



Bexley Team News

St Barnabas, Joydens Wood
St James, North Cray
St John the Evangelist, Bexley
St Mary the Virgin, Bexley



CHRISTMAS SPECIAL EDITION

20/27 December 2020 Issues 40/41 Fourth Sunday of Advent/First Sunday of Christmas

So here we are at A Very (fill in the blank with your own choice of word) CHRISTMAS!

Here are some suggestions... "Merry" "Happy" "Different" "Confusing" "Lonely" "Quiet"

Whatever you decide to do over this Christmas period, please keep warm and safe, know that you are held in prayer, and remember that the truth of Christmas can NOT be cancelled. Remember that single incomparable, unchangeable Truth that John Betjeman described so wonderfully in his poem "Christmas" "That God was man in Palestine and lives today in Bread and Wine." God bless you all **Rev Ren**

We are all concerned about levels of COVID infections in local areas, and so we want to clarify the situation. Government and Church of England regulations allow Places of Worship to open even in Tier 3. The four churches in the Bexley Team have put in place procedures to keep those who attend worship as safe as possible and the clergy team want to underline these as we come towards the services planned for the Christmas period. If you feel you are in one of the at-risk groups you might prefer to pray at home and use the many prayer resources available online.

1. Face coverings must be worn unless there are age, health or disability reasons not too. Your covering should fit snugly so that it covers mouth and nose at all times.
2. Distance must be observed. 2 metres is advisable. Please only hold conversations OUTSIDE the church building. Fellowship after the service is a high-risk moment and a time to be very careful in order to protect each other.
3. DO NOT attend if you are unwell or if you have had contact with anyone who is unwell.
4. Be prepared that there may be extra ventilation so churches may be colder than usual."
5. Hand sanitiser will be available at all churches.

Saturday 19th December

St Barnabas, Joydens Wood 3pm to 5pm Christmas Reflection with music/readings (come and go as you please)

Team Services Sunday 20th December

There will be a **Team Zoom Service** at 10.00 am. Log-in details have been sent to regular members of our congregations on email. Do contact a member of clergy if you have not received this.

St James, North Cray 9.30 am Holy Communion
3pm to 5pm Christmas Reflection with music/readings (come and go as you please)

St Barnabas, Joydens Wood 10.45 am Holy Communion

St John's, Bexley 10.00 am Holy Communion

online Lessons & Carols from St John's may be found at

<http://www.stjohnsbexley.org/online-lessons-carols-2020.html>

St Mary's, Bexley 10.00 am Holy Communion

6.00 pm Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

(contact Andrew Hill for any ticket returns chaplain.glsescouts1@ntlworld.com_07306 330356.)

Wednesday 23 December 10.00 am Team Holy Communion at St Mary's

Team Services for Christmas

CHRISTMAS EVE

St Barnabas, Joydens Wood 11.15pm Midnight Communion

St John's, Bexley 11.30 pm Midnight Mass

St Mary's, Bexley 11.30 pm Midnight Mass

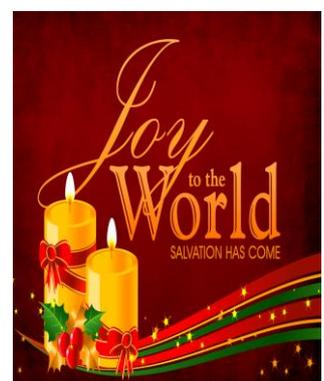
CHRISTMAS DAY

There will be a short **Team Zoom Prayers** for Christmas Morning at 8.30am.

St James, North Cray 10.00 am Christmas Day Communion

St John's, Bexley 10.00 am Christmas Day Eucharist

St Mary's, Bexley 10.30 am Holy Communion for Christmas Day



Team Services Sunday 27th December

There is no Team Zoom Service today

St. James, North Cray	9.30 am	Reflective Communion for the last Sunday of 2020
St Barnabas, Joydens Wood	10.45 am	Reflective Communion for the last Sunday of 2020
St John's, Bexley	8.00 am	Holy Communion
St Mary's, Bexley	10.00 am	Joint Holy Communion with St. John's
Tuesday 29 th December 10.00 am St John's Patronal Holy Communion		

Rev'd Edward's Reflection for Fourth Sunday of Advent

O Sapientia

O Adonai

O Radix Jesse

O Clavis David

O Oriens

O Rex Gentium

O Emmanuel

There's an ancient Hindu story about a group of blind men who are taken to encounter an Elephant. Each man touches a portion of the Elephant and experiences something different: The one who touches the tail thinks an Elephant is a rope, the one who touches the side thinks it is a wall, and so on. The Elephant is a metaphor for God – If we each approach God as individuals we understand God in different ways –and it is beyond our mortal scope to know the fullness of God's identity. There is a similar concept in Islam: Allah (literal translation: 'The God') has ninety-nine names, or titles: The Merciful, the Compassionate, and so forth. Muslims also talk of a hundredth 'secret' name which will be uttered by anyone reciting the Qur'an in full without their realising it.

For Western Christians praying the daily office of Evening Prayer in the last week of Advent, the Magnificat is preceded each evening by one of the 'Great O Antiphons', all of which begin with a name, or title, for the Messiah as we prepare to celebrate His Incarnation.

O Wisdom; O Lord; O Root of Jesse; O Key of David; O Dayspring; O King of the Nations; O God With Us.

Take time to pray through them slowly. Say the words out loud, repeat them. Which resonate or sit comfortably with us? Which confuse or are unfamiliar? Which of them jar against our understanding of who Christ is? If we were to compare our responses we would no doubt find that we do not all have the same answers – But in seeking to build a personal relationship with Christ, each of us approaches God as the blind man approaching the elephant. Not one of us has the complete picture.

Seven Antiphons: Seven names: Seven ways of understanding. Meditate on each one. Research. Reflect. Discuss. Share:

O Wisdom

O Lord

O Root of Jesse

O Key of David

O Dayspring

O King of the Nations

O God With Us.

Rev'd Matt's Reflection for Christmas/ 27th Dec

Each time we revisit the Christmas stories as told by Matthew and Luke, I'm amazed at how there always seems to be more to reflect upon with each passing year. In Luke's account, just as the shepherds are telling Mary and Joseph about the heavenly host of angels which appeared to them on the hillside, he writes:

"But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart." (Luke 2:19)

I find this short statement fascinating, and it's the small details like this which make Luke my favourite gospel. One theory goes that Luke, in the process of writing his two part account of Luke-Acts, spends some time visiting the people that knew Jesus well. This quite possibly would have included Mary and some of Jesus's brothers and sisters. We'll never know if this is factually accurate, but features like this help us to imagine the real people behind the story that we've come to know so well.

We can very easily forget in amongst the singing angels and gift giving Magi, that at the heart of this story are a young mother and her husband, who nurtured and raised God's Son. The Saviour of the world still needed to have His nappy changed. The Prince of Peace learnt to crawl on the floor of their home. The Son of man needed a hug when He was poorly.

Christmas is the moment when the holy and the mortal become one. It is a point in time which ought never be downplayed or reduced to something insignificant. But it is also the time when God became like one of us. Let us 'treasure up all these things and ponder them in our hearts'. Let us eat, laugh, cry and rest, for the Saviour has come. Let us praise the Lord.

Missing Christingle? To enjoy the Children's Society National Christingle Service go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owhrpUY3Nfw&feature=youtu.be>

Bexley Team Christmas Trail

The Christmas Trail is ready to go! For the next two weeks (From Saturday 19th December – Sunday 3rd January) each church in the Bexley Team has a unique, outdoor, family-friendly trail to enjoy, which helps us tell a part of the Christmas story. To take part just go along to one (or all four) of the churches and follow the instructions. We have also recorded a series of short reflections on a similar theme to each trail, but this time aimed more at the adults. You can listen to them here....

A Special Message - St Mary's Church

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83gCEX_YiFE

Any Room in the Inn? - St James' Church

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGsUdM04PCs>

Special Visitors - St John's Church

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-VsJx6X-fl>

Follow the Star - St Barnabas' Church

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvsVb8b3ayE>



Team Zoom services On **Saturday 2 January**, as 2021 begins, we will begin trialing a new pattern, which will continue throughout the winter months, and which we will keep under review. We will be offering a short Zoom Service on **Saturday evenings at 5.30pm**. In Jewish understanding, the Sabbath begins as night falls on the Eve of the Sabbath, and for Christians it is an opportunity to put aside the cares and concerns of the Monday to Saturday week of tasks and activity and to prepare ourselves to keep Sunday as 'a Day of Holy Rest'. This service will include material to help us to reflect on the week that has past and will be suitable for all ages. The Zoom link will be sent round in advance.

Deanery Confirmations These will be on Sunday 18th April 2021 at 6.30pm at Holy Redeemer, Lamorbey with Bishop James. Please speak with any of the Team clergy if you are interested in being confirmed.

St Mary's

Christmas cards- If you would like to leave Christmas cards for members of St. Mary's in the box in the Churchwarden's pew on your right as you enter the church, Mary will sort them and leave them in the cross-aisle in alphabetical order of surnames. Please be sure that you have written the surnames on the envelopes. Cards not showing a surname will be left in the box.

We regret to announce that two past members of St. Mary's, Betty Richardson and Edna Brooker have recently passed away. Edna's funeral will be at St. Mary's on 6th January at midday.

St John's

Giving to St John's: You can give financially to the continuing upkeep and ministry of St John's via our Just Giving page: www.justgiving.com/stjohntheevangelist-bexley Sermons are posted each Sunday at fatheredwardbarlow.wordpress.com

Social Media - engage with us via Facebook (/stjohnsbexley), Twitter (@stjohnsbexley) and Instagram (@stjohnsbexley)

THE BEXLEY TEAM CLERGY

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*A very Happy Christmas
and best wishes for 2021 from
the Bexley Team Clergy*

