

I have been struggling these last few weeks to hold together in my mind two images. The one is from the two panels in the East Window of our church (behind the altar) and the other was on the television news. In this window at St. James's we have three panels and the outer two depict the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. As you look at the left panel, on a rich blue background, you see the newly born Jesus, lying in a manger, with Mary and Joseph delighting in him. Also just arrived on the scene are the shepherds and an angel. Balancing this on the right hand side of the window is a panel showing the arrival of the Wise Men, bearing their gifts and having followed the bright shafts of the star across a vivid blue sky. In this window Jesus is slightly older and is sitting up on Mary's lap.

The other image was from Afghanistan. It was a news report which began by tracing the plumes of a B52 bomber across a bright blue sky and then focussed on the warplane dropping its arsenal of explosives. The camera then panned down to earth to a mother with a crying child on her lap. The child is hungry and ill. Mother, father and children have trekked across a dusty landscape to the shell of a destroyed former clinic, but in vain. They have no milk, no medicine and the extended family have no gifts to offer, other than their sticking together.

Two images, but we live in one world, God's world, in which God chose to show limitless solidarity with us his creatures by becoming at one with us. We even call Jesus 'Emmanuel' which means 'God with us'. But there is more. We believe that God becoming one with us was not without purpose, far from it. God comes to us in human form in order that we might help reconcile the world to God's way of living. God's generosity challenges us to live generously. God's gift to the world of himself must make us ask the question, what do I give in return? Do I give only what I can comfortably afford? Do I give informed prayful support? Do I give of my own skills and resources to mirror God's endless generosity?

Can all our Christmas gifts this year be an expression of that divine generosity we see portrayed in the stained glass window in order that we can also see God's love portrayed today in meeting the needs of all humankind, such as that Afghani family on the TV news.

In her famous Christmas carol Christina Rossetti asks

*What can I give him,
 Poor as I am.
 If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb.
 If I were a wise man I would do my part;
 Yet what I can I give him, give my heart.*

Only you can answer that question 'What can I give him?' for yourself. But it does need an answer. Perhaps during Advent, the four weeks before Christmas we can ask that same question as we purchase and wrap presents for family and friends. Can you give God more of your energy, skill, attention or resources truly to celebrate the enormous generosity of God and the needs of our world in which we again sing

'Emmanuel', God is with us.

Come in and see the windows, come in and catch a glimpse of God and go out to give God of yourself. You are most welcome to join us at St. James' at any of our services to mark Advent and Christmas. The details are in this magazine and on display around the church.

Brian Leathard

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------|
| Sunday 23 rd December | 18.30 | Parish Carol Service |
| Christmas Eve | | |
| Monday 24 th December | 09.15 | Morning Prayer |
| | 16.30 | Children's Crib Service |
| | 23.45 | MIDNIGHT EUCHARIST |
| Christmas Day | | |
| Tuesday 25 th December | 08.00 | Holy Communion |
| | 09.30 | CHRISTMAS COMMUNION |
| Wednesday 26 th December | 10.00 | Holy Communion |
| St. Stephen, Martyr | | |
| Sunday 30 th December | 09.30 | Parish Communion |
| Monday 31 st December | 23.30 | Watchnight Service |

You are very welcome at these services
For more information, ring 0208 979 2069 or 0208 941 4424

Trade for Life - Give us today our daily bread

"Bread for myself is a material question, bread for my neighbour is a spiritual question". These words of Nicolas Berdyaev, from the turn of the last century, are a good place to start thinking about globalisation and development.

Recent months have not been short of terrible events and yet the persistence of extensive hunger in a world of unprecedented prosperity is surely an unpardonable scandal.

As Amartya Sen, the Nobel prize winning Economist, states in his book *Development as Freedom*: "Despite unprecedented increases in overall opulence, the contemporary world denies elementary freedoms to vast numbers of people. Sometimes the lack of substantive freedoms relates directly to economic poverty, which robs people of the freedom to satisfy hunger, or to achieve sufficient nutrition, or to obtain remedies for treatable illnesses, or the opportunity to be adequately clothed or sheltered, or to enjoy clean water or sanitary facilities."

When set alongside the parable of the last judgement, which begins: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory . . . before him will be gathered *all the nations* and he will separate them, one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats",

we see that if the hungry are to be fed it is a matter for the nations as well as for each child of God. In the words of Paul Ostreicher "Love is in large measure about justice. And justice is about economics and politics."

Christian Aid, in its trade for life campaign - which calls upon governments to change the rules that govern international trade so that they work to eradicate poverty, has it right when it sees trade and justice as having everything to do with the kingdom of God. For more details please talk with myself or Ann Peterken.

By helping to *make trade work for the whole world* we can follow in the path of the Jesus who multiplied loaves of bread to satisfy hunger. Please give this campaign your prayerful support.

John Williams

Report on the Meeting of the PCC on 31st October

The Vicar as chair welcomed our visiting speaker Keith Robinson, General Secretary of the Diocese of London. He had been invited to speak to us in response to our growing concern about the overall strategic planning of the Diocese.

Keith Robinson's Address

Mr Robinson introduced himself as a chartered accountant who had been in his diocesan post for only 18 months. He contrasted the differences of the ecclesiastical and commercial worlds. In particular he emphasised the relative weakness of the central diocesan authority to impose rules on individual parishes. This often made strategic planning very difficult.

He outlined the structure of the diocese and its problems, also the many good things it was doing in teaching and social work. The bishops were working hard to meet the pressing needs of the diocese; a new and important document: "The London Challenge" would shortly be distributed to parishes showing the plans to meet these needs. He was well aware of our own unhappiness with the apparent lack of coherent, long-sighted planning of structure and finance. However, he defended the Diocese's five-year plan, after which there should be no further call on reserves or subsidy, and no call to increase the common fund beyond inflation.

There were some searching questions from the meeting, which Mr Robinson answered candidly. He was thanked warmly for his presentation.

Parish business

The Vicar reported on the planning application for 8 new residences at the back of the Windmill public house. For reasons of road safety, road congestion and general overcrowding of the area the PCC were strongly opposed to the plan.

We have 6 candidates for confirmation. The service will be at our church on Sunday 9th December. We shall be hosts to other local churches with confirmation candidates. The open meeting to discuss our church music is planned for 24th November. Karl Bridge has been appointed as our organist with a contract until the end of February 2002.

The Vicar reviewed the progress of our Mission Action Plan. This is summarised in a pamphlet which we hope everyone in the parish, churchgoer or not, will have the opportunity to see.

There were reports from the Treasurer and from Committees. Our Charities Committee is able to make some donations to local causes. Although small they are very carefully targeted and of enormous value to groups of people in great need.

We were reminded of the Parish Quiet Day to be held on 26th January next year. More details of this event will be published later.

On behalf of all the parish the Vicar thanked Ruth Mills and Judith Winstanley for their very great contributions to the parish over many years. We all wish them a trouble-free move and happiness in their new home.

The meeting closed with The Grace.

NOW OPEN - MONDAY TO FRIDAY - 10.00 AM - 4.00 PM



The Mulberry Centre

West London's new walk-in cancer support centre, built within the grounds of the West Middlesex University Hospital but funded entirely by charitable donations is now open and offering support and information services to cancer patients of all ages, their families, carers and friends in a welcoming, non-clinical environment. One in three of us will be affected by the diagnosis of cancer during our lifetime. The Mulberry Centre provides somewhere to turn to, to ask questions, to read and talk to others who are in, or have been through, a similar experience to our own. The Centre is open to anyone regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or religious beliefs and offers access to an information library and the internet. Sessions of counselling and aromatherapy have now begun and massage, reflexology, yoga, t'ai chi and The Mulberry Centre support groups will all begin shortly.

VOLUNTEER THERAPISTS AND WELCOMERS ARE NEEDED AT THE CENTRE

If you would like to visit the Centre or require further information, please contact Jo Garside on 020 8321 6300 or by e-mail on themulberrycentre@WMUH-TR.NTHAMES.NHS.UK



Guide news Summer Term 2001

The Guides enjoyed a very active summer term. Thanks to the Scouts we were able to practise our camping skills at The Triangle during May. We put these into good use at our two summer camps. At the second camp we also took

Guides from 5th Hampton with us and together managed to win the Guide rounders and football competitions.

At these camps I qualified as a camp licence holder and will now be able to take the Guides away for longer periods to more exotic locations!

Our theme for the term was fitness, so in addition to the above we also canoed, swum, climbed and abseiled.

Susan Blay, Guider

SACKS OF RICE AND SOME ENGLISH LESSONS

This year's harvest gifts of rice found a worthy home at a hostel for homeless asylum seekers at Rodney Road in Whitton.

If anyone is under the misapprehension that those fleeing their home country find Britain a land of milk and honey, let me put the record straight. Life is basic and it's tough. At Rodney Road there are 44 people in 22 rooms and at any one time there are usually a number of families there. Because of the lack of space, a family will have to occupy one room, even though that might mean coping with small, highly active children in a confined space.

About 90 per cent of the residents come from Afghanistan. Some have members of their families left behind and have no idea about their well being. Communication is hardly possible when there is armed conflict. It is a desperately worrying time for them. In addition, they have to learn to adapt to a country whose systems seem very strange and in many ways less friendly than the close-knit communities they have known. There is little money for the extras which we might consider as basics-washing up powders and toiletries, educational toys and children's books, so during Advent there will be a large box at the back of the church for any such gifts you may care to donate.

These are a people who are deeply grateful for a roof over their heads, for the compassionate care of the hostel workers, for any outreached hand of friendship and support - but what do you do when you can't share a conversation about the every-day little things of life? Under the Taliban regime, women have not had the educational opportunities available to some of the men so they are at a particular disadvantage. While older children go to school and many of the adults attend college classes, mothers and older women find themselves confined to the hostel. St. James' Church has therefore made a donation to fund the provision of English lessons in the hostel and this money is being matched by a financial gift from another church. There is a poem by the North American writer, Jean Fox Holland which reads like this: "How many am I? With all my children's children Love makes me plural. One who knows sorrow for a long or little while learns a new language. Journeying is more than reaching destinations. Journeying is more". Let's pray that a little English will make the journey an easier one.

Freda Evans

BOOK REVIEW:
MISS GARNET'S ANGEL
by Sally Vickery, Harper Collins £10.99
(also in the local library)



Some months ago, a friend whose literary judgement I admire sent me a review of "Miss Garnet's Angel", suggesting that this would be exactly to my taste. I read it, and she was right! - and now I am trying to think why I found it so engrossing.

The story is simple: Miss Garnet - Julia - having inherited a small amount from her teaching colleague, Harriet, with whom she had shared a home in Ealing for many years, made a decision, sudden, unexpected and entirely out of character, to go and live in an apartment in Venice for six months. Whilst there, so far and so different from Ealing, she experienced an epiphany - her prejudices, her assumptions, even the memories of her past life were challenged. Woven into Miss Garnet's story is the narrative from the Apocrypha of Tobias and the Angel, and both draw their own unlooked-for and satisfying conclusions.

The background of Venice, her watery passageways and narrow bridges, her churches with their paintings and carvings of angels, her wonderful light - all bring an illumination and life into the novel. The light, the Venetian wine, lemon coloured prosecco, the golden mosaics of San Marco, together form the delicate filigree tracery through which thread the stories of Miss Garnet and her angel and Tobias and his angel, Raphael, the angel of healing, whose influence is all pervasive.

A wonderful book; read it for yourself. I have not done justice to its themes of love, death and the growth of the human spirit.

Margaret Taylor



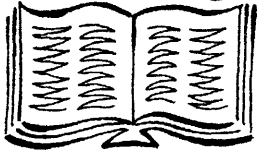
QUIET DAY

SATURDAY, 26th January, 2002, 10a.m. - 4p.m.
with The Ven. Malcolm Colmer, Archdeacon of Middlesex

Following the success of this year's Quiet Day
we shall return to the beautiful tithed barn at Brook Place, Chobham.

A guided day of reflection to enable us to use Lent positively
The cost will be £5, payable at the time of booking with Freda
There will be a clipboard at church

BOOKS of



the BIBLE

★ JOHN ★

Soon we will read St. John's lofty expression of the person of Christ and his dealing with us in the Christmas gospel. St. John's gospel brings us the fullest disclosure of the mind of Jesus in the four gospels, given through straight conversations, which often merge into the deeply thought responses of the writer, and through the unforgettable discourses. We get a wonderful portrait compared with which the other earlier gospels are but photos.

The gospel has different strands. There are seven healings and miracles, starting with the Wedding at Cana and finishing with the extraordinary story of the raising of Lazarus. They can be seen to illustrate aspects of Christ's relationship with us; his effect on us, Christ our guide, our light, our life. They are mirrored by Christ's proclamations;

I am the bread of life, light of the world, good shepherd

I am struck by Jesus' close relationship with and dependence on his Father, both in the discourses delivered in controversy with the Jews and in the intimate conversations with the inner circle of disciples.

The controversy with the Jews over chapters 5 to 10 forms an important part of the narrative and is gripping in places because of the directness with which Jesus addresses them. The Jews condemn him for healing (i.e. work) on the Sabbath and for blasphemy, because he states he is the Son of God. Jesus' reply is that his teaching makes no headway with them; their home is in this world. They reveal in action what they learned from their father the devil, a murderer and liar. They retort that they are descendants of Abraham; Jesus says "before Abraham was, I am" - a dramatic moment!

The final discourses to his close disciples are completely different and seek to prepare them for his departure from the world. He says he has a dwelling-place for them, that he is the way, the truth and the life, that he will send the Advocate if they love him and obey his commands, and then he and his father will visit them.

They are linked to him as the branches to the vine. He asks them to love each other and states that they do not belong to this world which consequently hates them. Soon they will not see him, then they will see him and their grief will be turned to joy. In the world they will have trouble, "but courage, I have conquered the world".

The final tender prayer (chapter 17) speaks of the love between the Father and the Son, that they may glorify each other. He asks the Father to protect those whom he gave to the Son, that they may be one and may have the same love as the Father has for the Son.

I find these discourses give a believable view of Jesus, that you can imagine yourself in quiet conversation with him, a very human and approachable person. To finish, I would say that the drama, intimacy and insight in this gospel make it a unique witness of the life of Jesus.

David Taylor

DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE SAINT?

Is there a saint whose life has inspired you or with whom you feel a special 'rapport'? If you feel you could write a short article about a particular saint for next year's 'Spire', please let the editors know.

AN ANGEL IN THE DESERT

If you saw the Times on 9th November, you may have read about the young woman (to me a girl, the same age as my daughters) of 34 who, almost single-handed, is running a refugee camp for 3500 people in Nowabad, Northern Afghanistan, five miles from the front line. She arrived last month bringing supplies and she is the only woman aid worker there. She has organised winter tents and distributed blankets and plastic sheeting and food for people who have spent the last fifteen months living in holes in the ground with no clean water, few blankets and little food, on a desolate plateau where the cold north winds blow.

There is a picture of her smiling as she plays with barefoot children. It gives me a feeling of great happiness so that I need to write it down, that in spite of all the gloom and darkness in this world, there is still so much goodness. Even if we have not the strength or freedom, the means or gift of leadership, the will or guts to carry out such acts of love and compassion with bombs falling and guns firing nearby, we can at least thank God that there are people like Karen who do, and we can remember them in our prayers.

Greta Rosten

COULD YOU SPARE HALF AN HOUR A MONTH?



Some of those who deliver the Spire month by month are moving out of the area and others are becoming older and less mobile. We would welcome a few more volunteers to deliver each month or to stand in, when our 'regulars' are on holiday. Chelsea Close and Fairlight are two areas we would particularly like covered, but there are many more roads for which an extra pair of hands, and feet, would be welcome.

A batch of about 30 magazines is brought to your door, usually a day or two before the first Sunday in the month, and you deliver them to houses in a street near you. This usually only takes about half an hour and can be done at a time convenient to you. We know that many local residents who are not regular worshippers at St. James's welcome the Spire. If you think you could help, please contact one of the editors or the clergy.



In October, the Apocalypse Singers travelled to Berlin and visited two parishes in the Charlottenburg Deanery, where they sang at a concert and at a service. Among the audience and congregation, it was good to see people who had previously visited churches in the Hampton Deanery as part of the London Diocesan/Church in Berlin partnership.

Thank you to all those who bought cards at our Charity Christmas Card sale after Parish Communion on 14th October. A wonderful total of £800 was taken for the charities concerned.

Confirmation will take place at St. James's at 6.30p.m. on 9th December. Our candidates will be Kathryn and Clare Williams, Kim Fitchett, Rebecca Grant and Jennifer Greville-Giddings. Please come and support them and remember them in your prayers.

Michael Futter and Rose Frier are both now out of hospital. Betty Stewart and Janet Jeffries have recently had operations. We send them our love and best wishes for speedy recoveries.

Ella Leathard has asked us to say a big "thank you" to all her friends in Hampton Hill who have sent such kind support during her current illness. She has been delighted to receive prayers, cards and good wishes from people at St. James's. Ella has just begun a course of chemotherapy but is able to remain at home in Berwick rather than travelling the 65 miles to her nearest hospital in Edinburgh.

Have you got any currency - notes or coins - from countries which are about to join the Euro? French francs, German marks, Italian lire and many more can be used by charities. Ramani would be very happy to take your hidden centimes, pfennigs, etc. for the work of Christian Aid.

Congratulations to Pastor Anthony Ball of Isleworth Congregational Church, long-time resident of Hampton Hill and weekday worshipper at St. James's. Anthony has just completed a retirement hobby - an MA in Philosophy of Religion - with distinction!

We also congratulate Dick and Mary Wilde on their Ruby Wedding Anniversary. Love and prayers accompany you from all your friends at St. James's.

Bhanu Vyas, who has run Rina's stores in Windmill Road for many years, is retiring on the 1st December. We send on best wishes for a well earned rest.

COME, LORD JESUS

Come to us, Lord Jesus Christ,
come as we search the scriptures and see God's hidden purpose,
come as we walk the lonely road, needing a companion,
come when life mystifies and perplexes us,
come into our disappointments and unease,
come at table when we share our food and hopes,
and coming, open our eyes to recognise you.

Donald Hilton

FROM THE OCTOBER REGISTERS

Baptisms

- 21 Matthew Inwood, 14 Winchendon Road, Teddington
Jack Napier-Jones, 2 Chapter Way, Hampton

Funeral

- 3 Fred Basham, 4 Rectory Grove

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DATES TO NOTE IN DECEMBER

- 1 1000 onwards Christingle Workshop and Leaf Sweep and Gutter Clean
Helpers wanted!
- 2 **ADVENT SUNDAY**
0930 Christingle Service
1830 Words and Music for Advent with the Apocalypse Singers
- 4 2000 Parish Church Council
- 5 1430 Women's Forum: Evelyn Jennings - Embroidery
- 9 **ADVENT 2**
1830 The Bishop of Kensington presides at **Confirmation** with
Holy Communion at St. James's
- 12 1900 Hampton Hill Junior School Carol Service in Church
- 13 1900 Hampton Hill Junior School Carol Service in Church
- 14 1430 The Lady Eleanor Holles Junior School Carol Service in
Church
- 17 1930 The Lady Eleanor Holles School Carol Service in Church
- 18 1830 Hampton Community College Carol Service in Church
- 19 1930 Women's Forum: Mulled Wine, Mince Pies and Music

**FOR DETAILS OF CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT ST. JAMES'S
SEE BOX AT FRONT OF THIS EDITION OF THE SPIRE**

- 26 St. Stephen, the first Martyr
27 St. John, Apostle and Evangelist
28 The Holy Innocents

WATCH NIGHT SERVICE 11.30P.M. NEW YEAR'S EVE

Many people like to observe the New Year without necessarily making a song and dance of it! If you are one of those people, why don't you come and join us at St. James' for a reflective half hour of readings, prayer and gentle music - and if you are minded, a glass of celebratory drink to finish.

COPY DATE FOR JANUARY MAGAZINE: 9TH DECEMBER