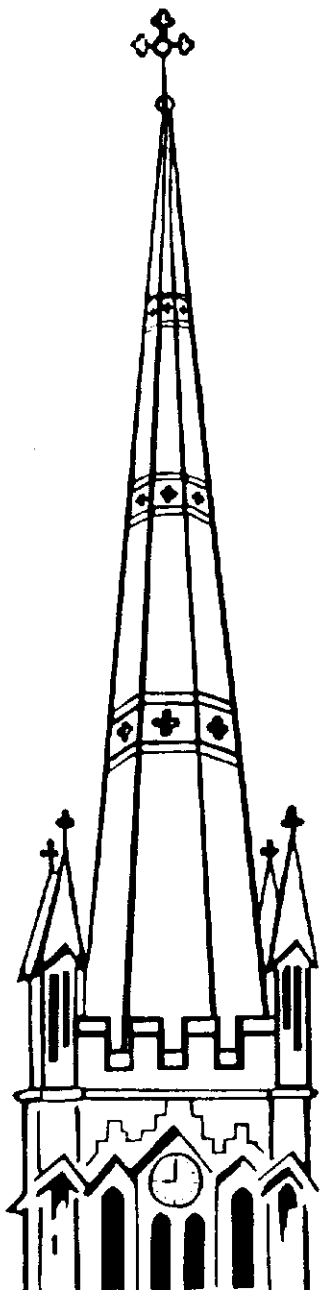


THE SPIRE

ST. JAMES'S CHURCH
HAMPTON HILL



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REGULAR SERVICES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS

HOLY COMMUNION	Every Sunday	08.00
	Every Tuesday	09.30
	Every Thursday	19.15
PARISH COMMUNION	Sundays, other than first in month	09.30
	First Sunday in month	18.30
INFORMAL SERVICE	First Sunday in month	09.30
EVENSONG	Sundays, other than first in month	18.30
PRAYER 'N' PRAISE	Every Sunday	20.00
MUSIC & MINISTRY		
WITH HEALING	Second Wednesday in month	20.00
INFANT BAPTISM	After due notice, at Parish Communion or by arrangement, on Sundays	15.00
SUNDAY SCHOOLS	Every Sunday (except first in month and during holiday periods) in Wayside	09.20

Recently I read that the Director of Channel 4 Television had said that the Channel was going to take a rather unusual line and actually concentrate on traditional Christian themes at Christmas. He was not going to follow the increasing trend to bury the message of God-becoming-Man under an avalanche of programmes which would titillate the senses. Comedy, humour, horror all have their place on the TV screen, no doubt, but many have been questioning for a long time whether the mix is right, and especially at Christmas. You will be able to judge what actually happened when Christmas is all over.

We have become accustomed too to the New Year being also a time for unbridled hilarity and trivia. Yet surely Christians ought to be able to do better than observe a purely secular festival. The Church has for many years reminded its members that Jesus submitted to the cultic custom of circumcision on the eighth day after Jewish custom; that brought it to 1st January when Jesus's birthday was calculated as 25th December. So the New Year began with a reminder of the physical tradition which some people thought was irrelevant (after all St. Paul had taught that everyone was a child of God - not only those who had a particular national background) and others thought was a wrong emphasis on a distasteful practice. In the Alternative Service Book which is now so widely used the compilers have emphasised that on the eighth day Jesus was named - given his name of Jesus. And that gives us a much better start to any New Year. Jesus means "Yahweh saves" or as we might translate "The Lord God saves". It reminds us that we have someone to look to in our time of need. And all of us know that at some time during the year we shall need the help of God. It may be that our own personal situations are such that we will need individual support of one kind or another. Or it may be that society will need special help to bring it through various crises. Many people would say that we in this country need the most urgent help now as the laws of our country are undergoing radical change in many fields, education and health being just two. It would be quite in keeping with the tradition of the Old Testament to call upon God in this situation. Certainly as the war in the Gulf continues and massacres occur daily in Sri Lanka, as oppression hurts the most vulnerable in South Africa and Burma, as corrupt governments in South America flourish, and as starvation hits Ethiopia again we would do well to remember that "The Lord God saves". There cannot be a better slogan with which to start our civil year.

SUNDAY EVENING SERVICES

Please note altered times until further notice:

EVENSONG, or on the first Sunday in the month,	
PARISH COMMUNION	16.30 h
PRAYER AND PRAISE	18.30 h

As I am writing this much publicity has been given to the attack on the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Preface to the newly published 'Crockford's Clerical Directory', the standard reference book on Church of England Clergy. The Preface has always been written anonymously but has never before so far as I know, sunk to the level of personal abuse. It has criticised the institutional church many times and in sharp language, often legitimately. Very encouragingly many have sprung into print very quickly both denouncing the article and positively expressing support for the Archbishop in his difficult job. It is a sad way to end the year and I hope more than ever that we here at St. James will continue to uphold not only our Bishop in our prayers, as I asked last month, but also Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury.

I wish you all a very happy New Year, but above all a Year in which you may have personal experience that The Lord God Saves.

Nicholas Chubb

Letter to the Editor

Grass-roots Government?

When Synodical Government was introduced it was described as "Grass-roots Government". The people in the pews were to have their say and their opinions were to carry weight.

In the deliberations about homosexual priests which culminated in weak and wishy-washy conclusions - "all gas and gaiters" - as far as I know, the congregations were not asked if they were content with sexually deviant leaders. I understand from our own representation on the synod that they were not given the opportunity of expressing an opinion. If they had been, Dr. Runcie would have been able to say that with very few exceptions "the body of Christ" wished that body not only to be pure but to be seen on the side of purity. We were told not to stand in judgement. One has the greatest compassion for those unhappy souls born into one sex but possessing sometimes even the physical attributes and certainly the sexual longings of the opposite sex. But these are very few. Most "gays" have a choice. If they choose what the Bible - the word of God - has condemned through the ages, then they should not become priests.

The Bible Reading Fellowship notes for November have been concerned with the prophet Jeremiah whose unenviable task was to bring God's warning to his erring and licentious people.

"Prophet and priest alike are godless. I have come upon the evil they are doing even in my own house". Not only were the people going after other gods but things were very wrong at the top. "Shame on the shepherds who let the sheep of my flock scatter and be lost".

The Church of England has sat on the fence for long enough. What is needed these days are some Jeremiahs prepared to speak out for what is right and give a lead to the faithful even if they receive the same treatment Jeremiah did.

There are reasons why sexual licence is dangerous, that is why God has always warned His people. Sexual diseases do afflict innocent children "even to the third and fourth generations". We cannot look into the future of AIDS, but we can at least choose leaders who do not promote the very practices that threaten the future of mankind.

Margery Orton

Nepal and the Beetles

The real highlight and reason for the gathering on 14th November at Wayside was to hear from Margaret Cranston, home on leave from Nepal, but her talk was preceded by a Beetle Drive after instruction from David Lloyd in its mysteries. As I progressed round the tables, the various and delightful children helped me to add up my scores. Duncan Robinson was the applauded winner and received a prize. By the noise I think that the Drive was enjoyed by everyone.

After this, very good sandwiches and coffee were passed around by the children and then we struggled through another trial of mental strength - a Quiz by David Taylor who had compiled an interesting set of questions.

Then to Nepal. Margaret showed her beautiful and instructive slides, explaining the while about her life and mission in Katmandu and later in Gandaki Boarding School, Pokhara. Gandaki takes only the most intelligent boys who are most likely to make the grade to O-levels, and places are much sought after. She told us that 1,000 boys applied for 80 places. Football, which is so important in most boys' schools, cannot be played as there is not enough flat ground in this grandly mountainous country, so they play Volley Ball in a spacious Sports Hall which is separate from the school building.

Recently a girls' section has been started and this is where Margaret is in charge of about 20 girls and, as she said, in her spare time she teaches Maths.

It is not allowed in Nepal that any religious section should try to make converts and many Christian Priests have prison sentences and other forms of discipline if it is thought that they are encroaching, so Margaret says that Christians can only influence by their behaviour, outlook and general treatment, in a Christian way, of all people. And so the children come to her to ask questions, eg, "What do you believe?", "Who is this Jesus?", and other queries showing interest.

From the pulpit during the 9.30 am service next morning, Margaret spoke to us again about her fulfilling life and put her photographs in the South Aisle for all to see after the service.

Alison Thompson

The Rev. Beryl Bennett

On 31st December the Rev. Beryl Bennett retires from her part-time charge at Hampton Hill United Reformed Church. She has made a notable contribution to christian church life during her time here. A native of Wellingborough in Northamptonshire she has also been as far north as Barnard Castle in Durham in her ministry. Under her leadership the URC has flourished, and children's and young people's organisations have used the church hall to the good of the community at large. The Church itself has had a very notable 'face-lift' which presents a welcoming invitation to the passer by. (Are we at St. James envious of the church's position in the High Street?). Beryl has been an active member of the Hampton Council of Churches, serving a term as its Chairman recently. We suspect that she will be much in demand as a preacher when she has no church to care for on a daily basis. Fortunately she is to continue to live locally and we at St. James's wish her a happy, well-earned retirement in Princes Close.

Building on the Rock: Prayer 'n' Praise, 1st November

Our speaker from the Bible Society gave her testimony to illustrate how she came to believe that the bible is the Inspired Word of God. How, because of circumstances she found herself (without training or experience) responsible for exports from her father's bicycle company, and how with God as her partner she discharged this well (20,000 sales after two years) and helped to keep people employed during times of recession. (Not that she believes in a prosperity gospel, rather that God is faithful).

She spoke of the value of the bible, the Maker's Handbook, using the illustration that few would attempt to use a computer without reading the manual (and some would have difficulty even then!) yet human beings as a whole neglect to read their Maker's Handbook, the bible, and many depend on unnecessary drugs (eg.valium) as a result.

Reading regularly has the value of enabling you to store up good passages for the times of trouble that come to us all. She spoke movingly of a time when, following an accident which damaged her knee, she found herself alone at night in a hospital bed in a place where nobody spoke English, and how she found peace and comfort through remembering Romans 8:28. From this she explained how glad she was to be involved in the work of the Bible Society, which aims to make the word of God available in every language. They are particularly pleased to have financed a printing press for bibles in China, where many believers are hungry for the word.

At the end of the service, Margery and Violet led us all in prayer for the healing of her leg, which was continuing to cause pain, and this seemed a fitting end to what had become a very personal and challenging expression of faith. May we all learn from her example!

Stephen Lisseter

Lighting the way for Christmas

The ceremonial lighting of the Hampton Hill Christmas trees on 30th November was yet again an occasion to be remembered.

The procession led by the Mayor and Mayoress made its way through crowds lining both sides of the High Street.

A marines band tunefully provided music befitting such an occasion, playing with great vigour and professionalism. They in turn marched before a float with children dressed as shepherds depicting the nativity scene, closely followed by Santa on his sleigh.

The heralds of Christmas wended their way through a crowd full of true community spirit.

There must have been hundreds of people with their children out on this chill night to greet them, yet there was a feeling of real warmth all around.

Stan Vince

Mothers' Union

St. James's members met together on 2nd December to celebrate the 90th anniversary of their branch.

There was a Communion Service at 11.30 am, taken by the Vicar, and the preacher was the Rev. Rupert Brunt who was an old friend of most of us. He spoke of the days gone by when Mary Sumner formed her first Mothers' Union in 1897.

After the service we mingled and chatted while enjoying a glass of sherry or fruit cup. We were delighted to welcome and talk to our visitors Rupert and Connie Brunt and Brenda Oliver. Dick Waltham took a few photos of us, standing on the altar steps and holding our glasses aloft.

Then, after more chat, we took our seats at a very long table put up along the South Aisle of the church and we had a tasty cold lunch of turkey, sausages, potatoes in jackets, salads, etc. followed by biscuits and cheese.

The anniversary cake, made beautifully by Laura Collins, was then cut by past and present enrolling members - the first cut being made by Mrs. White our oldest member, while tea and coffee were being served.

Hettie Burgess

The M.U. anniversary cake was enjoyed by many more after the informal service at 9.30 am on Sunday 6th December. This service involved many members of the M.U. led by Jean Wilson. Some representative families, including Vivienne Prentice and members of three other generations of her family down to three-months old Owen, followed "Mary Sumner" up onto the raised platform for the service, and we were able to watch the many young children dancing spontaneously to the joyful hymns. The family of the uniformed groups was also involved and there was a special welcome to the new Beavers. Cubs paraded large notices to remind us of the other parts of the world in which the M.U. and the Scout and Guide Movement are active. A very happy occasion.

Roma and Ron Bridges

Our next monthly meeting will be on 6th January, and as this is the day of the Epiphany, the Vicar will be our speaker and talk to us about it.

C.C.G. Christmas Fair, 21st November

This was a bustling, jolly occasion and it, together with The Grand Draw at The Star the night before, brought in over £700.

Thank you, all of you who brought me gifts for the Christmas Present Stall (or left anonymous packets of very saleable items on my front step). Practically everything was sold and we made £105 towards the total. We were delighted - as were the people who benefitted from the many attractive bargains.

It was a proper Village Family Af-Fair (!) and as such, especially enjoyable. Happy Christmas Presents everyone.

Margery Orton

Stewardship Annual Review

Arising out of the House Groups of the 1987 Stewardship Campaign there was a general desire for more fellowship and corporate activity. So we took some action and everyone present in the Parish Hall on Thursday 3rd December participated in the discussion to plot the ways forward from the reported views of all the House Groups.

Before the discussion, and after prayer led by Nicholas and the introduction of Moya Smith as the new Stewardship Chairman, Ron Bridges reported on the increase in our income from pledged giving resulting from the campaign, as previously set out in "The Spire". It was felt, however, that we still need to bring more people into the life of the church. The campaign has laid foundations on which we need to build for the future, and we need to spread this message amongst the whole parish. Action is already being taken on forming new discussion groups to increase our understanding of practical Christianity, and these will start early in 1988, so look out for details of these.

The main part of the evening was then directed by Ruth Mills who, after briefly reporting the views of the Stewardship House Groups, organised us into five groups to discuss and encourage further thought in five different spheres. Within each group we were asked to choose from topics raised by the House Groups, and directed to come up with some concrete plans to implement one or more of the suggestions. There was plenty of scope for expression of opinions and much lively discussion. The reporting back to the whole meeting produced some carefully considered and practical solutions which we are optimistic about carrying into effect immediately. Other suggestions will take longer to bring about and will require wider consideration within the family of St. James's: please make your thoughts known so that we can consider them.

The proposals produced at the meeting in the different spheres included:

Liturgical As many barriers to people feeling fellowship and a welcome in church may result from the physical constraints of the building, a flexible arrangement of chairs would help, and a re-arrangement of the choir stalls to make a small quiet chapel would be especially desirable at the 8.00 am Communion. In the meantime everyone could be encouraged to sit in the front pews by putting ropes across unneeded rear pews.

Properties This group's ideas overlapped with those of the previous group in so far as both felt that money which could be realised by the sale of Wayside could be put to good use to finance modifications to the church. This group proposed a glazed room for children with a one-way communication with the rest of the church, and that meeting rooms should be made available within the area of the church. Usage of the church itself should be increased.

Social "Newcomers' Parties" should be re-introduced, starting with one in early June 1988. Newcomers to the parish over the past couple of years would be identified by members of the congregation and invited to a social gathering to take place in church. The main purpose would be simply for church members and new residents to meet but there would be slides or a video on the history of the parish and the work of St. James's.

Continuing Care A youth club for 11 - 14 year olds was proposed, but finding interested staff was important. It was suggested that we might look at other such youth clubs locally to see how they operated and use personal contacts to identify possible members. Children's opinions would be sought and the club would need to be widely publicised.

Education and Publicity A special quarterly edition of "The Spire" was recommended to be distributed to all households in the parish. Articles on topics of wide interest would be invited from a wider group of contributors, and reports from other local churches would be included.

This turned out to be no evening for slumber in the back rows. It was one in which everyone present fully participated. Motivation came from Ruth for whose excellent efforts the members of the Stewardship Committee are most grateful.

Moya Smith and Brian Shailer

WAYSIDE MONDAY CENTRE

A Listening Post

All who are under stress, anxious,

depressed, lonely or bereaved

are welcome

Mondays (except Bank Holidays) 10.30 am - 1.00 pm

25 St. James's Road

Bereavement Course

Several members of St. James's Church attended a bereavement course organised by the Hampton Council of Churches recently. Talks were given by a widow and a widower, a hospital chaplain, a solicitor, an undertaker, a hospital consultant with special reference to child deaths and a G.P. advising on the care of the dying at home. Each talk was followed by time for questions and discussion.

We all felt that the course had been most valuable. Everyone has to face bereavement at some point in their lives, and we also need to support others who have been bereaved. It was an opportunity to think about both these situations and to benefit from the experiences and advice of those who have themselves been bereaved or who have professional involvement.

Thank you to All Saints, Hampton for providing the premises and refreshments.

Susan Horner

A Meditation: "The Light was even then coming into the World"

Imagine you are sitting in the dark, you know there is a candle and matches to hand. You want light, you stretch out your hand, you find the matches, you open the box, take out a match, strike it and from its little light you light the candle - the match light is only fleeting but the candle's light lasts much longer; the flash of the match is necessary because without it your candle could not be lit. From its light you can light another candle - if by now you know that you wish no longer to be without light in the darkness and have taken care to have laid in a supply of candles for your needs.

The first thing is to know that you are in the dark and want light, the second is to know that light is at hand if you stretch out your hand to the source of that light; YOU have to take action, you have to strike the match having opened the box, you have to use its flash quickly to light the candle, you have to rejoice in its light, you have to replenish constantly the store of candles that you may always be sure that light is at hand - you only have to feed this knowledge by reaching out and availing yourself of that light.

Consider, meditate on Light, its sources, the action necessary to top up those sources. You are asleep in your chair, you awake in the dark, you have to shake off sleep, rise up, walk, avoiding obstacles, to the light switch which you know is there and press it; the light comes on. You cannot see the wires, the connections which have put your private light in touch with the power station, but you know they are there and functioning just as the power station is there and functioning. You also know that if a fuse blows you yourself have to take the action to see that it is mended.

Consider the Light of the World which was burning when the whole universe was still in darkness and knew not that the light was there at hand. A light which never fails. To know that, when it is dark if one reaches out ones hand, that light will not fail is Grace indeed. We cannot see the Light that is God with the naked eye but O, Holy Father, how good it is to experience it. Give us grace, Lord to remember You and Your dear Son and the Power of the Holy Spirit when we are in darkness, give us grace to reach out and to have faith that the darkness is only one part of the picture and that we only know in part but You know the whole and where You are and abide there is no darkness for Your Light has conquered it and will give light to ours. Praise be to God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ - The Light of the World.

Margery Orton

Social Committee News

Don't forget the Parish Children's Party on Saturday 9th January at 4.30 pm in the Church Hall, School Road. There will be lots of fun, games and refreshments. If you have not already done so please put your children's names and ages on the list in church so that the numbers coming will be known and the games and refreshments arranged accordingly. The cost will be 25 pence per child which can be paid in advance or on the day.

At the time of writing these notes there were some tickets left for our outing to HOLIDAY ON ICE '88 at Wembley Arena on Saturday 30th January. A coach leaves the church at 12.30 pm and we should be back by 6.00 pm. The all-in price is £8.00 per person. It looks an exciting and colourful show so hurry along and book your place before they are all sold. There is a list on the notice board in church.

David Lloyd

Christingle 1988

Our annual Christingle Service will be held on 3rd January 1988, at 4.30 pm. Many of you know that the proceeds of the service go to the Children's Society which does such good work for many of our unfortunate young people. All organisations like it need as much money as they can get to continue, let alone increase, their work. As we have all been made aware during the last months many children are at risk every day and it is a sad fact of life that we need the voluntary organisations to help those for whom no-one else cares. So please come to it if you can. This year our cubs and scouts are putting on a short play for us to see and we shall sing some of the familiar hymns and carols. There will also be the usual christingle oranges for the children which are not only delicious to eat afterwards but tell us in symbolic form about God's love for the world and remind us of how much we owe to our Creator and Saviour.

Lent Groups

Lent groups under the auspices of the Hampton Council of Churches will commence on 22nd February and run for five weeks. It is hoped to have between twenty and thirty groups meeting all over Hampton and Hampton Hill. All six churches in the H.C.C. will be participating (the first time for many years that this has happened) and we are hoping for a good response.

The course we shall be following is the third part of the "Not Strangers but Pilgrims" which we have already followed for the past two years. This year the title is "Who on earth are you?" and it is based on five passages from St. Luke's Gospel. There may also be a radio programme to go with the course but so far we have no details of this. Everyone taking part will need a copy of the course book which costs £1 and will be available after Christmas from Jean Western.

Before the course starts a list will be put in each church giving dates and times of groups (evenings and daytime) covering every day of the week and people will be allocated to a certain group according to where they live and the evening or day for which they have expressed a preference. It is hoped that the groups will be mixed denominationally and not dominated by any particular group so that people get to know each other.

At the end of the course we hope to have a grand get-together of all who have been taking part as we did after "Yours and Ours".

So if you want to take part make sure you order a copy of the book (same title as the course) from Jean Western and put your name on the list when it appears in church in January.

Helen Taylor

Around the Spire

Some ex-pupils of Lady Eleanor Holles School may remember Miss Hilda Denney, who taught at the school for many years, even before it came to Hampton Hill, and was, in her last years there, Deputy Headmistress. By all accounts she was quite a character and a leading "feminist". There will be a Memorial Service for her in our

church on 9th January at 11 am and anyone who would like to come will be very welcome.

The latest Severn arrived on 10th September, to be called Owen James, son of Roger and Ann. He comes to join a sister and brother, Annalea and Michael. We wish all the family every good wish and hope to see them among us. (Apologies for the delay in recording this but an earlier entry was unfortunately omitted in error.)

Among our invalids, Margaret Bramall continues to make good progress. Dilys Melville has not been so well recently, however, so please remember her and anyone else who needs our prayers.

From the Registers

Baptisms

November 29	Kelly Ann Brookes	'Lavernock', Seymour Road
December 13	Kristian Paul Fitchett	1 Edward Close

Funerals

December 2	William Henry Sandys	196 Uxbridge Road	aged 59
9	Richard James Seymour Boyce	formerly of this parish	aged 82
11	John William Robinson	58 Wordsworth Road	aged 67

Confirmation

December 8	Carol Ellen Badun
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Dates to Note

January 3	16.30	Christingle Service
5	15.00	Editorial Board
6		EPIPHANY
	14.30	Mothers' Union
	20.00	Parish Communion and Launch of Fellowship Groups
9	11.00	Memorial Service to Hilda Denney
	16.30	Children's Party
13	20.15	Stewardship Committee
	20.00	Hall Committee
19	20.00	Hampton Council of Churches
21	20.00	P.C.C.
24	16.30	United Service at Methodist Church for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
28	20.00	Properties Committee
30	12.30	Coach leaves for "Holiday on Ice"
February 3	20.00	Deanery Synod
16	20.00	P.C.C.
21		Thinking Day Service for Guides and Brownies