

Nothing inspires the vision of the divine in human life so vividly as contemplating a new born baby. At such a moment, most ordinary folk are able to grasp clearly the idea that human life is sacred, divinely created.

The love of a mother for her child makes us deeply aware, as at no other time, of the sacredness of human love; at such a moment one can easily believe that love is eternal.

Not only the mother, but also the father, even if hovering in the background, makes us aware of the meaning of the holy privilege of sharing in the work of creation. So this is the outcome of that wonderful love shared together by a loving man and a loving woman. This experience lifts our lives into a new dimension; it is an experience which to a greater or lesser extent we can all share.

This is why Christmas is the most human of all festivals, and why its message is so immediately grasped by ordinary people. This is why, in the Creed, Christians bow their heads and hush their voices as they say those tremendous words of our faith:

‘For us men and for our salvation

he came down from heaven;

by the power of the Holy Spirit

he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.’

This is why the Blessed Virgin Mary is so highly honoured. This is where the truth of the Christian faith is stated in simple words.

This is why the Christmas Gospel speaks to us most vividly about the meaning of Christmas and the meaning of the Christian Gospel, giving authenticity and the ring of truth to those beloved and familiar Christmas myths: the humble shepherds kneeling in awe; the Wise Men paying their wordly tribute; the angelic voices singing in the starry night their glorious song of peace ‘In the beginning was the Word and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.’

All this restores our faith in humanity, offering us a glimpse into the heart of the mystery of creation, understanding that we are created out of love and have a divine destiny, despite all the evil and cruelty in the world - as so terribly manifested so soon by Herod in a typical response by brutal and sinful men to pure goodness.

We both wish you all joy this Christmas.

Jean and Gordon Wilson

We are all deeply grateful for the unstinting service Gordon has given to the parish since Nicholas left us six months ago. May God be with Gordon and Jean during their travels to New Zealand and Australia.

Canon Wilson has received the following letter from Ron Metcalfe on behalf of the Hampton Hill Branch of the British Legion:

I would like to thank you for making our Remembrance Service a very pleasurable day for me personally and also I am sure other people found it the same.

Although it is a sad occasion for most of us who have lived through a war, it was consoling to think that you were concerned and did give the Church's blessing, it is very re-assuring to know that there are people who still care, and are aware of the price paid by so many men and women who gave their lives to ensure that we have freedom today.

Vicar Wanted !

The search for a new vicar continues. Since my original article in 'The Spire' last June in which I outlined the procedures for appointing a new incumbent, our Patron has twice advertised the vacancy through the Clergy Appointments Board. On the first occasion, few men expressed more than a cursory interest in the vacancy. One was seen by the Patron and Archdeacon but was felt not to be 'right' for the parish. As a result of the second trawl, a more suitable candidate emerged who was interviewed at some length and whom I subsequently showed round the church and vicarage. Regretfully, he decided that the churchmanship of the parish was too dissimilar from his own for him to wish to pursue the position further.

We now find ourselves in an invidious situation. The Patron has only until December to find a suitable incumbent before the patronage of the living reverts to the Bishop. As a last ditch attempt, he and the Archdeacon agreed to advertise the vacancy on the open market, ie in the classified columns of the 'Church Times'. (It is ironic that such a step was advocated by the PCC last May). The advert appeared on 11th November:

<p>THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES Hampton Hill (LONDON DIOCESE) requires an experienced INCUMBENT Population 6,000+. Churchmanship Central. Involved and articulate con- gregation.</p> <p>Preb. Robin Rogers, Vicarage, Church St., Hampton, Middlesex, TW12 2EB.</p>

Whether this will inspire a suitable candidate to offer himself for consideration remains to be seen. What is certain, is that it will be some months yet before we have a vicar. Most incumbents are required to give three months notice in their present posts. If patronage reverts to the Bishop, who knows what may befall? Whatever the demerits of the patronage system as presently constituted, Robin Rogers is a local man who knows our situation and the needs of our parish well. He has done his best to find the man for us. By the time you read this article, we pray that he will have succeeded.

Lesley Mortimer

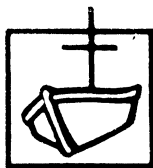
Harvest Supper 1988

Once again I was there, thanks to one of my friends from St. James's who fetched and carried me. It was Saturday 15th October and a better night weatherwise than last year. On arrival we found the usual warm welcome although I missed Nicholas and Susan at the door to greet us. Collecting from a choice of drinks we found a seat at one of the well-placed tables and sat down to enjoy ourselves, which we did, with a lovely supper of jacket potato and various salads followed by delicious flans and ice cream, tea or coffee.

The entertainment was as usual light-hearted and talented: Charles and Jane Dobson played a piano duet and Jane, Pip and Anne Rowett plus David Taylor sang to us and there was an amusing musical melodrama with David Taylor, Jane, Pip, Helen Taylor, Margaret Revis and Jack Gostling, and with Charles at the piano. It was clever and most enjoyable. Our thanks to one and all who had a hand in providing us with such a happy evening. Another success for David Lloyd and the Social Committee.

Alison Thompson

The Annual National Service for Seafarers



Most Englishmen have read or heard quoted the Articles of War which mention 'Her Majesty's Navy, ships of war and forces by sea, on which under the good providences of God, the wealth, safety and strength of this Kingdom chiefly depend'. A very slight change would make these words from 200 years ago current today: if they were changed to 'Her Majesty's ships and sailors' all would agree that it is upon them, under the providence of God, that our very existence almost wholly depends.

The seafarers serve as ONE in peace and war. This was the theme of the service held in St. Paul's Cathedral on 19th October in the presence of H.R.H. Princess Diana, and the cathedral was full to capacity. The Band of the Royal Marines played before and after the service, and choirs from different Nautical Schools beautifully sang Psalm 67.

The Very Revd. W.J. Patterson, Dean of Ely, preached a very good sermon from Hebrews 13 'The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me'. He said we have a hope to look forward to and must praise the Lord continually and keep up Christian Fellowship. This is important for seafarers especially in the ports.

I was happy to be there and thought the Prayer for Seafarers very good:

'O God our Heavenly Father, we pray to Thee for all seafarers and all those who serve their needs; for the men and women of the Royal and Merchant Navies; for keepers of lighthouses and pilots of our ports; for all who man the lifeboats and guard our coasts; for men of the fishing fleets and those in docks and harbours; and for guilds and societies who care for the well-being of sailors and their families. Bless them according to their needs and shield them in all danger and temptations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen'.

Violet Clark

The Church's Urban Fund

Stamps

In November's magazine, mention was made by Eila Severn of my dealing in stamps to help St. James' contribution to the above fund, so here is a short progress report. With the £100 'talent' loaned to me I bought an accumulation of stamps, sorted and divided them and have sold them individually and in Auction. I have also been helped by a donation of stamps. My £100 investment has so far realised about £230 - and there are a number of stamps which are still (hopefully) going to be sold in future Auctions. I am shortly going to invest this larger sum in more stamps with the expectation of significantly increasing this figure of £230 by next May when we need to account for our stewardship in this campaign. I would like to thank those who have helped to provide this encouraging interim position. Could I once again appeal to anyone who either has stamps they would like to donate or who would like me to use my expertise to sell unwanted collections on a commission basis with my commission being donated to the Urban Fund?

Pip Rowett

Harvest Supper

Thanks to the generosity of many who made refreshments for the Harvest Supper and did not charge for the cost, together with a small profit made, I am pleased to say that the Social Committee have been able to donate the sum of £50 to the Church's Urban Fund.

David Lloyd

Christmas Card Delivery Service

As mentioned in the last issue, it is intended to try and operate a local delivery service with proceeds going to the Church's Urban Fund. The charge will be 7p per envelope and the area to be covered will be shown on a map to be put into the church together with the collecting box. These will be available from Sunday 27th November until Sunday 18th December.

Hal Severn

Community Service in our Churchyard

Many people will have noticed that a big clearance is taking place in the Churchyard. In addition to our regular Saturday Working Parties, which have been quite successful this year, we have been greatly helped by a small party of young men working under a lady supervisor every Saturday - called a Community Service Programme. We understand that these men have been before the courts and have been given long-term spells of work on Community projects. It was suggested that our Churchyard would qualify for work of this nature and we arranged that they should start work on Saturdays from the end of October. To date, progress has been considerable and we hope work will continue throughout the winter.

Most of us know that Ron Metcalfe looks after the Canadian War Graves area and, more recently, Michael Brunson has taken over a large section near the Garden of Rest. We have recently cut the holly hedge bordering on Park Road and our final leaf-clearing party will be on 3 December.

Janet and I would like to thank all those who have helped us this year.

David Nunn

The Social Background to the Gospels

The Hampton Council of Churches arranged two lectures on the Social Background given by Miss Angela Lewis, BD, former Head of Religious Education at St. Anne's Convent, Ealing, on 17th and 24th October.

The first lecture was illustrated from St. Luke's Gospel, and Miss Lewis carefully brought out the concern of Our Lord for those on the fringes of Jewish society: the poor, the outcasts, the aliens, the sinners, the downtrodden women in society. Examples:- Zechariah's wife, Elizabeth, childless and held in low regard because of this, raised to the position of mother of John the Fore-runner. It is the shepherds who rush to worship the new-born Christ in Bethlehem, the wretched, the poor watchmen over sheep, sleeping rough in the fields. 'I am come to preach good news to the poor', Jesus says in Nazareth, and in his sermon names two aliens, the widow of Sarepta and Naaman the Syrian who benefited from God's concern through Elijah and Elisha, gentiles, not Jews.

Miss Lewis surveyed the Gospel from this point of view, and it was a delight to hear her bringing out Our Lord's concern for the under-privileged, the out-siders, the gentiles, the suffering, those in great need.

The second lecture concentrated on the social background of the Passion narratives and here Miss Lewis drew almost exclusively on St. Matthew, bringing out the attitudes of the soldiers, the Jewish authorities, the crowd, the Centurion.

At the end Miss Lewis gave out leaflets about her present work with the down-and-outs in Westminster, and this seemed very appropriate. Thank you.

Hannah Stanton

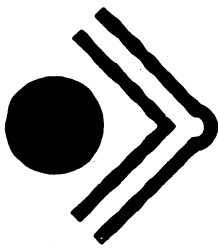
The HHA's Exhibition of Local Arts

I arrived about half an hour after the opening to find the room quite full with lively, interested visitors. It was also well filled with busy workers engaged each in his or her speciality and it took some time to circulate. It was an added bonus to see so many of my friends both among the workers and lookers. I bought a few things and would dearly liked to have bought more. I was sorely tempted by the engraved glass and the floral arrangements.

I was particularly intrigued to watch Dick Waltham calmly applying himself to his calligraphy which is so beautiful - what a steady hand he has. Near by Maurice Frankau was painting a portrait. Both men were so absorbed in their work in the midst of this moving, chattering crowd. I could not resist the pure white cotton crochet where the ladies sat skilfully plying their art. The Children's Corner showed budding artists at work with loads of poster paints and large brushes and free expression. Someone remarked to me how very pleasant it was to have live, accomplished music as a background or to be really listened to if such was your desire.

People were still arriving when I left, including Toby Jessel who seems to manage to get to most places and in a relaxed mood too. It was a splendid afternoon and most people seemed to be enjoying it as much as I did.

Alison Thompson



the bible reading fellowship

'When we moved, my cookery notebook went missing and I feel quite lost without it!' 'I'm pleased with my 'new' camera, but as it was second-hand it didn't have an instruction manual, so I don't understand all its finer points'. 'When we go on holiday to a new place, the first thing we do is to buy a large-scale local map'. You could describe the Bible as a map for our life's journey or as an instruction manual for life or as a book of useful tips from many people's experience for making the best of life. All these descriptions would have some truth in them, but also all of them would leave out a lot and might even be misleading.

The Bible does give us hope in coping with our circumstances, but reading and using the Bible is not as straightforward as using a map, an instruction manual or a cookery notebook. This is because the Bible was written a long time ago - some of it as much as 3000 years ago. It was produced by many different people writing for many different purposes. And it's a very long book - or rather collection of books.

Why should we bother with it then?

Above all, because the Bible tells us about Jesus Christ. In the New Testament we have direct accounts of his life and teaching by those who knew him, and of how he lived on in the hearts and lives of those who began to spread his 'good news' all over the world. In the Old Testament we have the books that Jesus himself was brought up on and which formed the 'landscape' of his mind. Because the Bible is so long and varied and rich, we need help to get the best out of it. You could say that we need a manual to clarify the manual!

The 'Notes' provided by the Bible Reading Fellowship aim to give us just such help. If we stay with them, they will take us steadily through the whole Bible but we shall be encouraged to read just a manageable section regularly. The Notes give useful 'background' information; help in discovering different layers of meaning in the passage we're studying; help in discovering what God might be saying to us, and help in learning to live 'in Christ' at each moment of our everyday experience.

There are two sets of Notes for adults: **NEW DAYLIGHT** gives a daily Bible passage (printed out) with helpful comment and suitable prayers; you can use it with or without your own Bible. **GUIDELINES** is used with your own Bible, where longer readings and fuller commentary can be used as convenient within one week. For children (say 7-11) there is **COMPASS**, a series of handouts whose puzzles, cartoons and picture stories introduce children to reading the Bible for themselves. (It uses the Alternative Service Book for Sundays). All three titles are published three times a year. The Bible Reading Fellowship Notes can be obtained from your local Group Secretary - Janet Jeffries - or from most Christian Bookshops or direct from the BRF in London.

Mrs Doris Childs

Mrs. Doris Childs died in Devonshire on 10th October 1988, and her ashes were brought to St. James's Church on Friday 21st October and were buried in the graveyard. We had a lovely Memorial Eucharist of Thanksgiving, and the Rev. Seymour Harris conducted the service. I was very honoured to give the address.

I felt that we were most thankful for Doris's staunch loyalty to St. James's, and for her very varied and whole-hearted service to this church. My contact with Doris went back to 1949, when my mother and I returned to Hampton Hill after the War. Stan, Doris and Michael were living in Fairlight, and I remember meetings for prayer and fellowship there. Doris took part in the Nativity Play in 1951, and was involved in the Drama Group at that time.

Doris's interest in children and young people was maintained throughout her life; until very lately she was attending regularly the Committee meetings of the 3rd Hampton Hill Scout Group. All her life she carried forward this concern about the children; in the early years, she and Mrs. Casey cooked at the Cub Camps and she involved herself in dramatic productions with them. All this was part of a magnificent family involvement with Stan and his work with the Scouts, and then when Michael and Yvonne, who have taken their full share and more of giving life and vigour to the uniformed groups of young people' in the parish.

Doris was very interested in the Church of England Children's Society, and she organised the first Christingle Service which is now a regular feature of our Christmas worship. She continued to organise it until last Christmas. I hope she will approve of how we do it this Christmas!

She was a faithful member of the Mothers' Union from an early date, and had the 50 years membership certificate awarded to her this last summer. She served on the MU Committee for a number of years as Treasurer, and as representative on Liturgy.

It was her idea that we should have a Book of Remembrance in which are recorded the names of the congregation who have died. She and her sister gave the book and the table on which it stands in memory of their mother.

She was secretary of the Liturgical Committee for many years, taking a great interest in the worship and the various functions taking place in the church. She was always ready to voice her displeasure if she felt not enough consideration was being paid to the children. She had courage in saying what she thought, and great courage also in trying to cope with her increasing deafness, which was a great trial to her.

We were grateful for Doris, Stan and the family, for so many years a part of the congregation and glad to pay tribute to someone who had made an out-standing contribution to family life, the community and the church.

Hannah Stanton

Have you a pain that won't go away?
Have you a sorrow which is eating
away the joy of your life?
Or maybe a friend in trouble?
Come and sit and pray in the peace of a
quiet church. The music will help you
to relax and unfold and you will go
away stronger for tomorrow.
We'd like to see you there at our
Healing Services.

***Life is fragile
— Handle
with prayer***



Christmas Arrangements

Please see 'Services and Dates to Note' for the times of the special services over the Christmas period. These include no less than five school carol services which no doubt will result in huge influxes of cars in the neighbourhood of the church on the days in question.

Christingle Service,

4.30pm Sunday 18th December

Jesus said, 'I am the Light of the World' (John 8:12).

From Advent through to the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (February 2), the Church celebrates the anticipation, the birth and the early months in the life of Christ. As part of our celebration, we are holding a Christingle service and, at the same time, helping The Children's Society in its work with children and young people throughout the Country.

A Christingle service gives us the chance to enjoy singing seasonal hymns and carols while thinking about the needs of children and young people. Each year, The Children's Society helps more than 11,000 children and young people through 120 or more projects, ranging from centres for families under pressure to help for runaways and young people living rough on the streets.

What is a Christingle? The word means 'Christ-light' and that is what the object symbolises. It is made up of an orange to represent the world, four sticks for the seasons and fruit and nuts to stand for the fruits of the earth. Around the orange, we put a red ribbon to represent the blood Jesus shed to redeem the world and on the top there is a candle to symbolise Jesus, the Light of the World.

Everybody enjoys the Christingle service. The church is bound to be full so come early!

Parish Carol Singing

It is planned to have Carol Singing around the Parish, starting probably at 7.30pm from the church, on Wednesday 21st December followed by light refreshments (coffee, tea, mince pies, etc.) at Wayside. Please come along and exercise the vocal cords.

Church Flowers

Many people I know like to see flowers in church, especially at festival times. At Christmas the flowers are expensive and not available from gardens. For many years the flowers have not been subsidised by the PCC - they have always been paid for by donations. The money at present is very low, so if we are to have the church looking at its best during the festivities we shall need some more money. If you would like to make a contribution, this can either be given to me or Eila or put in the appropriate box at the back of the church.

We shall be decorating the church on Friday 23rd December from about 9.30am and helpers are always welcome, also any flowers or suitable greenery you may have. If anyone would like to join the regular rota of flower-arrangers, please let me know, and garden flowers are always welcome for use in church.

Helen Taylor

Harvest Collection

Contributions in the Harvest envelopes raised a total of £212 for the Sudan Appeal of Christian Aid.

'Autumn' Evening

As a result of the Hampton Hill Association evening of music, words and movement, £378 (including a donation of £20 from Tesco's) is being given to the Princess Alice Hospice.

Advance Notice

A Folk Dance evening is to be held in the Church Hall on Saturday 3rd March 1989. The proceeds will be given to the Church Urban Fund. More details nearer the time but put the date in your 1989 diary!

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We send our very sincere and warmest congratulations to Steve Lisseter and his fiancée, Pamela Seward, on their recently announced engagement. We pray that God may bless them and their marriage.

From the Registers

Baptisms

September 18	Lauren Jane Savage	56 Rivermeads Ave., Twickenham
	<i>(It is regretted that an error occurred in this entry last month)</i>	
October 23	Sarah Louise McBride	11 Gloxinia Walk, Hampton

Funeral

October 10	Gladys Sophia Palmer	Laurel Dene	aged 90
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Memorial Eucharist and Burial of Ashes

October 21	Dorothy Edith Childs	2B Seymour Road	aged 87
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Services and Dates to Note

December	1	20.00	MU Discussion Group, 4 Seymour Road
	3	09.30-12.30	Churchyard Working Party (Leaf-clearing)
	4	08.00	Holy Communion
		09.30	Informal Service
		18.30	Parish Communion
	5	20.15	Stewardship Committee, 5 Oxford Road
	6	09.30	Holy Communion
		20.00	PCC (Vestry)
	7	14.30	MU Meeting
		Evening	Readers' Re-licensing, St. Paul's Cathedral
		20.00	Healing Ministry in church
	8	19.15	Said Evening Prayer
	11	08.00	Holy Communion
		09.30	Parish Communion
		17.00	Said Evening Prayer
		18.30	Prayer 'n' Praise
	12	20.00	MU Discussion Group Supper, Wayside
	13	09.30	Holy Communion
		19.30	Rectory School Carol Service
		20.00	Tuesday Club Christmas Party, Wayside
	14	19.00	Hampton Hill Junior School Carol Service
	15	19.15	Said Evening Prayer
	16	14.00	Lady Eleanor Holles Junior School Carol Service
	18	08.00	Holy Communion
		09.30	Parish Communion
		16.30	Christingle Service
		17.00	Laurel Dene Service
	19	19.30	Lady Eleanor Holles Senior School Carol Service
	20	09.30	Holy Communion
		19.30	Bishop Wand School Carol Service
	21	19.30	(Time to be confirmed) Carols round the Parish
	22	19.15	Said Evening Prayer
	24	15.30	Crib Service
		23.45	Midnight Service (Holy Communion)
	25		<u>Christmas Day</u>
		08.00	Holy Communion
		09.30	Parish Communion
		17.00	Congregation Carol Singing
	26		<u>St. Stephen</u>
		10.00	Holy Communion or Morning Prayer
	27		<u>St. John the Evangelist</u>
		10.00	Holy Communion or Morning Prayer
	28		<u>Holy Innocents</u>
		10.00	Holy Communion or Morning Prayer
	29	19.15	Said Evening Prayer

Advance Notices

January	1		<u>The Naming of Jesus</u>
		18.30	Parish Communion with Healing Ministry
	6		<u>Epiphany</u>
	8	18.30	Epiphany Carol Service
	26	20.00	PCC