

Like it or not, we're going to have to go through with this thing - the 'M' word. Yes, the year 2000 is but a few days away, as is the party and the threat of bugs creeping out of every part of modern life. So, why all the fuss?

Believe it or not, we owe all this hullabaloo to a monk from Scythia, a land between the Black Sea and the Volga, in about the year 500. The monk was called Dionysius, a Latin form of Denis. To distinguish himself from all the other Denises of his day he took another name; in his monastery he became Dionysius Exiguus, meaning 'Denis the Insignificant.' In about 500 Brother Denis Insignificant went to Rome and promptly became the most significant man of the moment - one could say of the millennium. For he calculated that Jesus was born in Year I of the New Era and so to Denis the Insignificant we owe the current numeration of years, and hence the millennium, now only days ahead.

Of course, Dionysius got it wrong - and so shall we. The insignificant monk who invented our calendar in fact dated New Year, the beginning of the era A.D., as 25th March Year 1, where New Year's Day remained until 1582, when Pope Gregory XIII changed it to 1st January. So for Dionysius the new millennium should begin on 25th March 2001! 1st January 2000 is nothing. We now believe Jesus to have been born in about the year we call 4 B.C. So all our calculations are but incorrect, incomplete attempts to root our era in the time of the Man, Jesus of Nazareth, who turned the world upside down.

And this is the only fact worth celebrating - the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. As every year, we shall celebrate it, rightly or wrongly, on 25th December and hope you will wish to join us at any of the services detailed here. For Christians, the Millennium is one more chance for joyful and serious proclaiming of the Good News of God's love for the world - for which God was and is prepared to risk everything. For it was in the insignificant young girl from Galilee, the insignificant stable in Bethlehem, that God takes human form. For us this means that every deed and word, however insignificant, can in fact turn out to be the most significant thing in the world - the reconciling embrace, bread and wine shared, the smallest act of kindness to a neighbour, a gift to those in need, a signature on Jubilee 2000's petition, a vote for justice and mercy.

Our loyalty to God, who time and again works through the insignificant, demands that we focus our lives on his love, whatever the date, whatever the year, whatever the millennium.

A very happy Christmas to you.

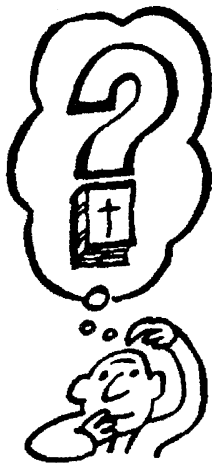
CHRISTMAS SERVICES

SUNDAY 19 th DECEMBER	6.30 p.m. Parish Carol Service
CHRISTMAS EVE	9.15 a.m. Morning Prayer 4.30 p.m. Crib Service 11.45 p.m. <u>Midnight Eucharist</u>
CHRISTMAS DAY	8.00 a.m. Holy Communion 9.30 a.m. <u>Parish Communion</u>
SUNDAY 26 th DECEMBER St. Stephen, Martyr	9.30 a.m. Parish Communion

"THE WORD OF THE LORD"

The Bible - how should we interpret it, how are we to learn from it today? The first "Questions People Ask" session was held at 6.30 p.m. on Sunday 7th November and was attended by about thirty people. Questions were initially addressed to Brian as chair and the two churchwardens, but they were quickly passed to the audience, whose thoughtful contributions greatly added to the discussion. The first question: "Is the Bible true?" goes right to the heart of Christian belief. It embraces not only all the other questions about the Bible but also all questions about how we are to live our lives. The believer's answer to this question may be "Yes!", but then a literally never-ending series of other questions begins. Yes, we believe in a creator God. Yes, we believe he is a God of love and that His love has a purpose for each one of us. Yes, we believe that the Bible has guidance for each one of us towards that purpose.

But - finding what that individual purpose is, and having the courage and diligence to follow it will be a lifetime's work. Each part of the work, the finding and the following, will be imperfect. Perhaps our evening together helped us a few steps on the way.



RINGING THE CHANGES

Life is full of changes and it was with this subject in mind that 35 members of the congregation set out to The Grail in Pinner for the parish weekend. One major area where we were powerless to effect change was the weather and only the most devoted wellington plodders braved the elements for a Saturday afternoon stroll with Tilly, Pat's guide dog.

John Henry Newman stated that 'here below to live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often'. None of us finds change easy - whatever it may entail - but it is necessary and unless we are open to change, we die. Five areas were considered: how we cope with changes in our lives; changing morality and the recognition that individuals can make a difference; how Christian teaching and nurture can change our whole way of living; the changes in liturgy that we shall be facing in the next year and new ways in which we can possibly relate to children and young people. No, it wasn't as exhausting as you might think but we were kept busy!

There was an opportunity just to be together and to create spontaneous musical and prose entertainment which in days long gone used to happen around the family piano. That perhaps was the clue to planning future occasions. Today, changes in entertainment have resulted in less inter-action with each other; for a healthier society, we need to learn how to relate to one another, how to have fun doing things with one another. It is all part of the task we have as Christians to preach afresh in every generation the unchanging truth of God: the message that God's love changes everything.

Freda Evans

I went on the parish week-end to 'The Grail' at Pinner. Mum and I had a nice room with a television. There were lots of sessions to go to. The sessions were interesting.

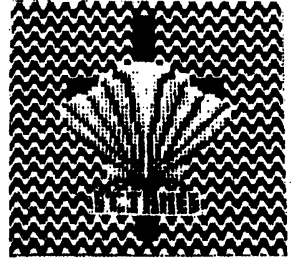
Some of us went for a walk on Saturday afternoon. We took Tilly the guide dog. It rained and we got soaked! On Saturday evening we had a D.I.Y. entertainment. Brian read a wonderful poem about the Loch Ness Monster. On Sunday everyone helped with the service. I enjoyed the meals and the best bit was not having to wash-up!

Jennifer Greville-Giddings

Age 8

BISHOP WAND SCHOOL MILLENNIUM CROSS

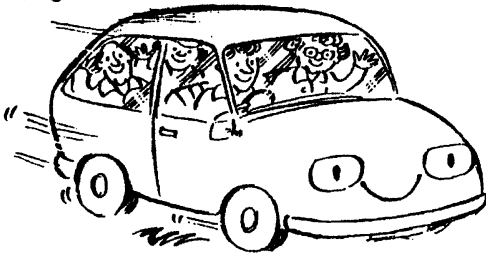
Bishop Wand School invited St. James's, along with all the parishes who send pupils to the school, to join in their millennium project. This is to take the form of a large cross comprised of six inch square canvas embroideries each one depicting a parish. Brian asked me if I would produce St. James's which I was very happy to do as a parent of three of the school's "old girls". Helen Taylor, another Bishop Wand parent and myself recently inspected the finished squares to date (about twenty of the expected forty or so) and it's obvious the whole will be most attractive.



The finished cross will hang in the entrance hall with a 'key' listing the parishes. I chose the St. James's shell motif to represent our church and hope that it will be a lasting reminder of our parish's link with the school.

Margaret Lawrance

more smiles per hour!



as a volunteer driver with VCG!

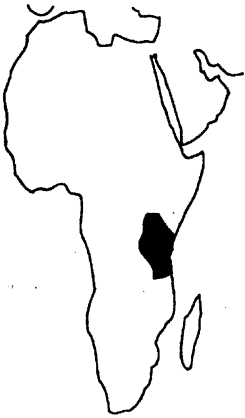
COULD YOU HELP FILL THE GAP FOR DRIVERS?

Our volunteer drivers offer the precious gift of independence to the elderly, frail and housebound who are unable to use public transport. They drive clients to hospitals, surgeries, day centres and hairdressers and offer general driving support. We, and more importantly your local community, would be most grateful for a few spare hours of your time each week (or month).

Help is also needed on the Greenwood Centre reception desk and in producing and delivering the newsletter.

If you can help, please contact Deirdre Curran on 020 8941 3902.

£2000 in Y2000 Our Millennium Project



St. James's Church has had a connection with south west Tanzania for about twenty years, through our support of St. Luke's Mission Hospital at Milo. So when we heard of some specific projects that Christian Aid was funding in this area of Tanzania, our search for a millennium project was over.

Here is some news on the projects that our appeal money will be supporting.

Community Based Health Care

A health care project has been running in the Ludewa district around Milo since May 1996. Its overall goal was to improve the health of the population of twelve villages by the year 2000, giving special attention to pregnant and lactating women and children under five. Due to low income and the lack of essential drugs, emphasis has been placed on prevention rather than cure in the form of health education. The education programme has included personal hygiene, sanitation methods, basics of nutrition and family planning. The mortality rate for under-fives has been reduced from 14% in June 1996 to about 10% in June 1999 and diarrhoeal diseases from 20% to 9.6% in the same period of time.

After a full evaluation of the project, Christian Aid have decided to continue it for another three years. Our money will be directed to this newly established project.

Water supply for Kiyombo Village

The health care project revealed the water needs of several villages and Kiyombo village has been selected as the first candidate for the installation of a gravity water supply system.

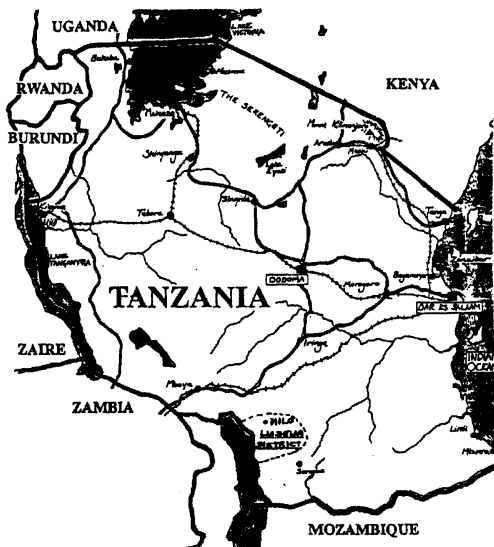
Kiyombo village is really a collection of hamlets spread over several kilometres in the Livingstone mountains, where water sources are unpolluted and constant. The system will serve the village population of 671 households, and is designed to reduce the women's burden of fetching water and to reduce morbidity by improving water quality. The villagers will contribute unskilled labour and make a financial contribution to the initial capital outlay, as well as collecting money for a maintenance account for future repairs. Two members of Christian Aid's area staff will visit Kiyombo in February 2000 and report back to us.

Thanks to various fund raising events and some generous donations, we have now raised about £8000 (a higher amount than our revised target of £7500 - great news!) A cheque for £4500 has already been sent to Christian Aid for the new health care project. Our next cheque will be for the Kiyombo project.

Special collections on three of the Sundays in Advent will go to this appeal, which we intend to close by Easter 2000.

Your generosity has brought a new start to hundreds of people in the new millennium. Thank you very much.

Ann Peterken



STROKE ASSOCIATION

This year, the Stroke Association celebrates its Centenary and, as part of these celebrations, all volunteers and staff with more than ten years' service were invited to a special lunch at a hotel in Birmingham. I have been a volunteer with the association for a long time, but I did not realise that I had ten years' service until I received my invitation! During those years I have visited two stroke victims on a weekly basis; - my first friend, an indomitable lady, has died, but my second friend is still struggling with her disabilities at home in Twickenham. Not to be able to move without great difficulty is painful and disabling, but to lose most of one's power of speech is frustrating and frightening beyond belief.

At the Centenary lunch, Association awards were given to staff and volunteers with more than twenty years' service and to several stroke victims whom friends and family had nominated as being especially courageous and determined. Among these was a parish priest who had made a remarkable recovery from a severe stroke and who now conducts all the services at his church, does all repairs to church fittings and fabric and has just redecorated the vicarage, including making the curtains! There were other remarkable people among the award winners, all with stories of great courage and perseverance. There is a branch of the Stroke Association in Hampton, carrying out their mission of reducing the effect of stroke on patients, mostly by the work of their Community Services. These include helping to improve the communication skills of people who have lost the ability to speak, read or write, visiting to offer emotional help and advice, providing information about services available and maintaining links with health authorities and social services, as well as with other voluntary organisations.

Over 100,000 people suffer their first stroke every year and 10,000 of these are under 55. If you would like to know more about the Stroke Association, or would consider becoming a volunteer (training given), please ask me.

Margaret Taylor, 977 1342

CHILDREN'S SOCIETY BOXES 1998-9

Further to my note in September's Spire I have sent the Children's Society a further cheque for £73.75 from the Children's Sunday School & 2 other boxes, making a total of £453.85 for this last year. This total was £40 up on last year reversing a decline in the previous few years. We would welcome additional box holders. Please contact Pip or Anne Rowett in Church or ring 892 4736.

Pip Rowett



During December CTAH will be distributing a copy of St. Luke's Gospel to every child in our local primary schools. This is a special gift to mark the millennium.

The Bishop's Millennium Bus will be touring schools in Hampton and Hampton Hill for three weeks from 20th March to 7th April 2000. If you can offer some time to help staff it on its programme of teaching the faith please talk to Rev Leathard.

Ann Peterken

FROM THE OCTOBER REGISTERS

Baptisms

- 10 Holly Holloway, 71 Pigeon Lane
Daniel Hunt 23 Langton Close, Addlestone
- 31 William Hardy, 15 Seymour Road

Funerals

- | | | |
|----|---|----|
| 11 | Violet Shell, 121 Burtons Road | 78 |
| 29 | Doris Fricker, 20 Pigeon Lane | 95 |
| 29 | Pauline Cander, 184 Fulmer Close, Hampton | 68 |

Many people may be unaware that clergy actually have days off! At St.



James's, this is usually Friday for Freda and Saturday for Brian, so if you do not get an immediate answer to a message you left this may be the reason. There is always somebody available if needed, so do try one of the other clergy if necessary.

Reminder: Freda's number is 941 4424. It was incorrectly printed in some editions of the Spire.



There was a commemoration service at St. James's on All Souls' Day, 2nd November. Many people attended this deeply moving and comforting service. If you would like the name of a loved one entered in our Book of Remembrance, please speak to Margaret Hobbs.

Calum Anthony, the baby son of Huw and Morag Taylor, was baptised at St. James's on Sunday 7th November. Huw

is the eldest son of Alan and Helen Taylor who left us to make their home in Suffolk and it was lovely to welcome them again.

Our two candidates for Confirmation at All Saints Church, Hampton on 18th November were Ruth Williams and Anne Cowlin. Please remember them in your prayers.

Many thanks to Ruth Mills for organising our Parish Weekend and congratulations on attaining her M.A. Well done, Ruth! Her thesis was on the prophet Jeremiah and there must have been months of very hard work involved. We send our greatest sympathy to Valerie Maddox on her bereavement. Arthur Maddox died only two days before their Golden Wedding Anniversary. This couple were residents of Hampton Hill for many years before moving away and they always kept in touch. Arthur, known as "Smoke", was one of the first in the Stewardship Scheme which was started in 1961 and they were active members of the social committee.

Sadly, we have also heard that the Rev. Ray Carter has died suddenly. He was the retired vicar of St. Mary's Church, Teddington and has preached at St. James's. His widow Jean worships with us and we send her our deepest sympathy.

David Revell has sent us his new address:

55 Long Ridge, Brighouse, West Yorkshire UD6 3RZ Tel: 01484 720186

It is very good to see Megan Parry out of hospital and around again. We would like to thank Megan for delivering the Spire on the High Street for many years. Now she would like someone else to take over this job. Please let us know if you can help.

Another plea for help: do any of you have video skills? We would like to make a new video of the baptism ceremony to show to young parents who want their baby to be baptised but do not know much about the service. Any help in making this film would be very welcome.

Finally, our thanks to Gordon Stowell, who regularly illustrates this magazine, for the cover design this month.

The Churches Together in Teddington are helping to provide lunch on Christmas Day for lonely and elderly people at Elleray Hall. Help is needed for:-



1. Transport for the guests to arrive between 10.30 a.m. and 11.30 a.m. and leave at 3.30 p.m.
 2. Kitchen help from 9.00 am onwards. An hour or two would be useful.
 3. Greeting and chatting to guests, and waiting at tables.
 4. Providing Christmas cakes, small presents and cards for distribution at the end.
 5. Serving teas, washing up and preparing bags of food and presents.
- Please telephone Stella or Trevor King on 020 8977 3891, before 11th December if possible.

DATES TO NOTE IN DECEMBER

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|----|--------------------|--|
| 2 | 14.00 | Holy Communion followed by tea |
| 4 | 09.30 | Church Leaf Sweep and Gutter Clean! |
| 5 | 09.30 | ADVENT 2 - CHRISTINGLE SERVICE |
| 8 | 13.30 }
19.00 } | Hampton Hill Junior School Christmas Concert - Church |
| 9 | 13.30 }
19.00 } | Hampton Hill Junior School Christmas Concert - Church |
| 12 | | ADVENT 3 |
| 14 | | St. John of the Cross, 1591 |
| | 19.30 | Hampton Community College Carol Service |
| 15 | 19.30 | LEH Senior School Carol Service |
| 16 | 14.30 | LEH Junior School Carol Service |
| 18 | 11.00 | Churches Together Around Hampton Carol Singing - Old Sainsbury's |

FOR DETAILS OF CHRISTMAS SERVICES SEE FRONT OF MAGAZINE

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| 27 | John, Apostle and Evangelist. Bank Holiday |
| 28 | Holy Innocents. Bank Holiday |
| 31 | John Wycliffe, Reformer, 1384. Public Holiday |

COPY DATE FOR JANUARY MAGAZINE: 9TH DECEMBER