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The Online Link St. John's Hillingdon



No. 40 Thurs 17th - Weds 23rd December 2020
Registered Charity 1128058

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Your Sunday Service Link (10.30 am):

Click on the Loving, Growing sharing Image above from Sunday 10am or on

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89481452808>

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St. John's Church,

Royal Lane, Uxbridge UB8 3QP

www.stjohnshillingdon.org.uk



Thank you very much indeed for the many positive comments we have received following our online 'Carols for All' service that we held last Sunday at 10.30 am. It was wonderful to see children, young people and all ages involved. It was great that we could sing some carols together, and I know many of you have felt that this was the start of the Christmas season for you (even though it's Advent), or it made you feel 'Christmassy'. More carols to come! If you would like

a Bethlehem Carol Sheet (large print) sent to you, please do email or phone and we can sort that for you. Please invite people to join us online for our Christmas Services - details here in this edition and on our website. Unfortunately, we are not able to have any in-person services this Christmas. If we did we wouldn't have been able to sing carols due to current restrictions, but that's not the reason we haven't got services in church. so please read on . . .



Important Building News

The cupola works were finished on Friday 4th December. On Monday 7th December our Architect Alex Veal inspected the works and found them to be good and passed them. On leaving the building Alex noticed stones and mortar lying near the front entrance on the ground. He looked up and was able to identify the area high up that the flint stones and debris had fallen from. The area concerned is shown in the picture on the left, with an enlarged view below left.



Alex has advised that it is likely that more stone and mortar falls are likely. At our Zoom service on Sunday, I showed everyone a few of the stones that had fallen and some of these are quite large. This obviously presents a danger to anyone going in or out of the main entrance, anyone waiting outside, or anyone using the side path. This does mean that, for health and safety reasons, we can't open the building as we are two entrances and exits down.

St. John's Church building will therefore remain closed until repair works are carried out.

The barriers will now need to remain in place until we get this problem area of the building seen to. In many ways, it is fortunate that most of the falls (as far as we can tell) have happened when the barriers were in place for the cupola works. These falls of stonework do not seem to relate in any way to the works that took place on the cupola and it looks like the area concerned is where some previous repairs have taken place. It looks like these repairs have failed.

I anticipate that it is most likely that the building will need to remain closed for the first three months of 2021. We are, of course, hoping to get the works finished well before the end of March but we also need to be realistic. Plans are already in formation about the repairs and I will share how we are progressing with you all in a future edition of 'The Online Link' early in 2021.

God's Truths and Promises

What a wonderful thing it is to dwell on the truths of God and on His promises. It's even better to work at re-expressing a truth of God to yourself clearly and understandably, God will use you with that same explanation when you share it with someone else. Strive, struggle, experiment, and rehearse your words to express God's truth clearly. Then the time will come when that very expression will become God's word of revelation and strength to someone else. .Many of these wonderful and healing truths are found in the living word which is the Bible.

Here's one of those truths for you to reflect and work on:

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)

Therefore, **you can approach God with confidence to find grace and mercy.**

Don't let barriers, or perceived barriers, stop you from approaching and being with God. Turn to him now!

Keep reading, praying and discerning,

Alan

Prayers

Iran

Pray for 12 Christians arrested on 30 June after a secret meeting was infiltrated by Revolutionary Guards. Those arrested include elderly sisters Mina and Maryam. Ask God to protect them inside the prison and pray for a speedy release.

North Korea

Pray for six South Korean Christians imprisoned in North Korea: Kim Jong-Wook, Kim Kook-Kie, Choi Chun-Kil, Ko Hyon-Chol, Kim Won-Ho and Ham Jin-Woo. Pray for the success of international efforts to negotiate between Pyongyang and Seoul so that they can return to their families soon.

Schools and colleges, children and young people

We pray for all those involved in the shaping of young lives. We give God thanks for the sacrifice and commitment of teachers and all those involved in serving children and young people in education. We pray that all might be nurtured and cared for and that every needful resource would be made available – that all lives can flourish even in these difficult times and that no-one would be overlooked.



Fourth Sunday of Advent Sunday 20th December

Light a candle in your own home for Love.

For your special advent wreath [click here](#) and download.

You can then use this each week as we all light our wreaths together! Print the wreath out and add your own colour. Prizes for children who colour their own wreath. (If you can't print due to not having a printer, email us and we will send you one!) Instructions are included in the printout.

[Click here](#) for special Love colouring!

Prayer: Loving God, we thank you for your gift of love - shown to us perfectly in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Help us to grow deeper with the love of Christ, and help us to show that love in new and practical ways to those we don't like and to those we hate, as well as to those we are friends or family with.

Help us prepare our hearts for the Lord's coming by loving others as Christ loves us.

We ask this in the name of the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord. Amen.



Christmas Day

Light a candle in your own home for Christ our Saviour

We lit the first candle to pray for love.

We lit the second candle to pray for joy.

We lit the third candle to pray for peace.

We lit the fourth candle to pray for hope.

Now we light the Christmas candle and we rejoice that Jesus is born. He is the love, joy, peace and hope for all the world.

A Saviour is born to us today. Alleluia!

Lord Jesus Christ, you bring the life of God into the world.

Fill us with your light, now and always. Amen.



Christmas Services (via Zoom)

Journey to Christmas Sunday 20th December at 10:30am

Christmas Eve

Christingles and Carols at 4pm with a special collection for the Children's Society

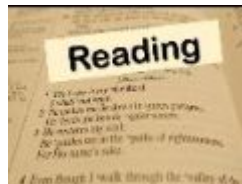
Midnight Holy Communion at 11:30pm.

Christmas Day

Christmas at Home at 10:30am

There will be a national service open to all on Sunday 27th December, all are welcome to join information to follow. There will be no service taking place on zoom or in church on this day.

For the latest news and updates visit www.stjohnshillingdon.org.uk



Matthew 1:18-25

18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

19 Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

22 All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").
 24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.



Planning for a low waste Christmas

The amount of waste produced in our homes usually increases by around a third over the Christmas period and in just the few days between Christmas Eve and Boxing day we manage to rack up over 5% of our annual carbon footprint in the UK, making it one of the most wasteful and environmentally damaging times of the year.

But it doesn't have to be this way and as awareness of our impact on the planet grows so does the movement towards a greener Christmas, with more and more people making the effort to search out sustainable alternatives.

This year, Christmas may well be a quieter affair, with far fewer social gatherings and festivities, providing us with the ideal opportunity to rethink our Christmas habits and nudge us towards a low waste Christmas. Here are some hints and tips to help:

1. Choose recyclable wrapping paper or try making your own consider using reusable fabric, old magazines make great wrapping paper. Avoid using sticky tape try tying with ribbon that can be reused. Make your own gift tags from old cards.
2. Think about giving gift experiences or gift vouchers via email.
3. Plan your Christmas meals (write up meal plans) to avoid food waste, try not to overbuy to minimise waste. If buying sweets or chocolates try refill packs if you already have tins or tubs.
4. When planning your Christmas table choose linen table cloths and napkins vs paper.
5. Look for recyclable Christmas crackers or have a go at making them yourself.

News from A Rocha across the world- we are all united in our care of creation

Since its launch in July this year, A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand has welcomed the first five churches to their Eco Church NZ network. It follows the success of the Eco Church award scheme pioneered by A Rocha UK, which now has around 3,000 churches registered across England and Wales.

Whilst the schemes differ slightly, the ethos behind them is the same: both aim to support churches to actively care for God's earth as an integral part of their mission. A Rocha Aotearoa NZ have articulated this as a response to 'three biblical challenges':

1. Living a faithful life and following Jesus through caring for God's earth.
2. Loving our neighbours in a resource-limited world – whilst the earth's ability to support human life is being rapidly depleted, the poor will be the ones that suffer the most.
3. Reflecting and protecting the glory of God – because caring for God's earth is an essential part of the church's mission in the world, churches can and should be agents of restoration and healing in their local communities. This includes modelling ways of living sustainably.

In partnership with *Para Kore*, A Rocha Aotearoa NZ has also launched a Zero Waste programme, which supports churches to reduce their waste through training workshops, resources and waste audits. The pilot began in August 2020 with seven churches in Christchurch and in March 2021, A Rocha Aotearoa NZ plans to expand this to churches in Auckland.

To find out more about the Eco Church NZ project, visit their website: ecochurch.org.nz . *Chris Rodrigues*

Praying for the Planet

It is good to remember our beautiful planet in prayer, meditation, awareness or involvement, with love, hope and gratitude.

We are about to witness an exciting planetary alignment when Jupiter and Saturn appear so close together in the sky that they seem to merge. It will be on the solstice, December 21st, so two important planetary events on the same day. They have not looked as close as this for nearly 800 years. Some believe that their alignment in 7BC was the star of Bethlehem followed by the magi at the time of Jesus' birth, and another name for this conjunction is the Star of Bethlehem or the Christmas Star.

To see them, look above the south-southwest horizon about 45 minutes after sunset. You can start looking now to see them moving closer, and then moving apart again after the 21st. Jupiter is the brighter of the two. *Jane Upchurch*



St John's

The church has a number of brasses, the best of which is the Le Strange Brass, dated 1509. It is said by Pevsner to be the most ambitious brass of the Middle Ages to survive in Greater London. It represents John, eighth Lord Strange of Knockin with his first wife Jacquetta, daughter of Richard Woodville. Her sister, Elizabeth, was Queen of Edward IV and mother of the Princes who were murdered in the Tower. Lord Strange died in 1479 (his wife predeceased him) and was buried in Hillingdon Church.

Saint John the Baptist, our patron Saint, was born when his parents were elderly. He prepared the way for the coming of Jesus. The window in the south wall of the chancel, based on the idea of the tree of life, shows episodes in his life. He was always truthful, even though this led to him being beheaded.

The church is not a museum, but a living church serving all who live in the parish and those from outside who wish to worship here. People have come to our church for over 800 years for the baptism of their children, to be married, and for the burial of their dead. *Christine Bartlett*



The "Le Strange" brass (near the Grundon Room steps) is rated by the Monumental Brass Society as a national treasure.



The Hillingdon Foodbank face challenging times this Christmas due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Foodbank is in need of:

Tinned Products only: Meat(all types), Fish, Vegetables, Fruit and Puddings.

Jars: Jam, Pasta Sauces, Curries and other sauces.

500g-1kg Bags of: Granulated Sugar, Pasta, Rice and noodles.

Packets of: Potato Mash, Biscuits, Christmas cakes, Sweets, Crisps, Heathy Bars and snacks.

Bottles/Cartons of: Long life Milk, Fruit Juice and squash.

Children's Toys Pre wrapped with a label stating what age and whether the gift is for a boy/girl.

You can drop your donations to:

Participating local Supermarkets:

1. Sainsburys York Road Uxbridge UB8 1QW
2. Sainsburys Lombardy Retail Park Coldharbour Lane Hayes. UB3 3EX.
- 3.Sainsburys Long Dr, South Ruislip, Ruislip HA4 0HQ.
- 4.Tesco Bulls Bridge Industrial Estate Hayes UB25LN
5. Tesco Extra Glencoe Rd, Hayes UB4 9SQ
6. Waitrose 52 Green Ln, Northwood HA6 2XB

Current Participating Churches with donation boxes.

St Martin's Church Eastcote Rd, Ruislip HA4 8DG. Monday to Sunday 09-00 to 16-00 hrs

Or Alternatively

Delivery to: Hillingdon Foodbank Warehouse Address:
30 Oxford Road. UB9 4DQ.



**The
Children's
Society**

**No child
should feel
alone**

The Children's Society

St John's will again be supporting this fantastic charity this year during our **Christingle and Carols Service on Christmas Eve at 4pm via Zoom.**

You can **donate** online [click here](https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/how-you-can-help/donate) or by typing into your web browser:

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/how-you-can-help/donate>.

The page will give you an option to choose to give monthly or a one off payment, the one off payment allows you to choose from £10, £30, £50 or alternatively you can type in how much you would like to give.

This can be done at anytime.

You can also pay by **cheque** made payable to 'The Children's Society' and should be sent to:

Freepost RSYH-HEEE-XZEG

The Children's Society

50 Banner Street

London

EC1Y 8ST

Or by Phone

contact the supporter care team on 0300 303 7000 where they will be able to take payment securely.

If you are having problems please call or email Nikki.

The Children's Society Home Coin Boxes.

Please hang on to your collecting boxes for the time being. The Children's Society do not want us to be placed at unnecessary risk by handling boxes, counting coins and taking trips to the bank. If you are a box holder, you will be contacted when we are able to collect your box.

Find out more about the Children's Society here: <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/about-us>

Support the Children's society by visiting the Christmas card

shop here: <https://www.charitycardshop.com/thechildrenssociety>

St John's will again be supporting this fantastic charity this year watch this space to hear about our Christingle Services.



The Online Link

The next issue of the online link will run from Christmas Eve to Wednesday 6th January.

How to join the Sunday service from your landline/mobile (without Internet)

- Dial **020 3481 5237** or **020 3051 2874**.
- Enter meeting ID Code **894 8145 2808** then the # key
- You will be asked to enter your participants' ID. Ignore this, and just press # key
- There is no password. If you are asked for one, then just press the # key.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT about helping charities by sending them your used stamps. Look online for a list of those who participate. or see below message:

The Bible Society

The Bible Society are collecting used postage stamps to raise funds. Please send stamps to Bible Society, Stamp Appeal, Post Room, Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon SN5 7DG – thank you!
Christine Bartlett

CHURCHES, households, schools, and businesses in the UK are being invited to take part in a new “bin-twinning” campaign to support [waste-collection projects](#) in Haiti, [Pakistan](#), and [Uganda](#).

It was launched this month by the Christian charity [Tearfund](#), which also founded the “toilet-twinning” campaign to improve sanitation in developing countries. Participants are being asked to donate £45 towards the projects, in exchange for a “bin twin” sticker for their bin.

“As Christians, we’re called to be good stewards of God’s creation; so reducing our waste footprint should be part of our response, especially as so much UK plastic ends up abroad. We hope twinning their bin and seeing the Bin Twinning sticker will help people become more mindful of how much waste they generate, as they support innovative start-ups tackling the waste crisis overseas.”



CHEQUES

Payable to:
Hillingdon Parochial Church Council
St. John's Church
Royal Lane
Uxbridge
UB8 3QP

STANDING ORDER

Set up a Standing Order with your bank or building society using these details:
Barclays Bank, 142 High St,
Uxbridge, UB8 1JX
Sort Code: 208916
Account No: 20465615

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