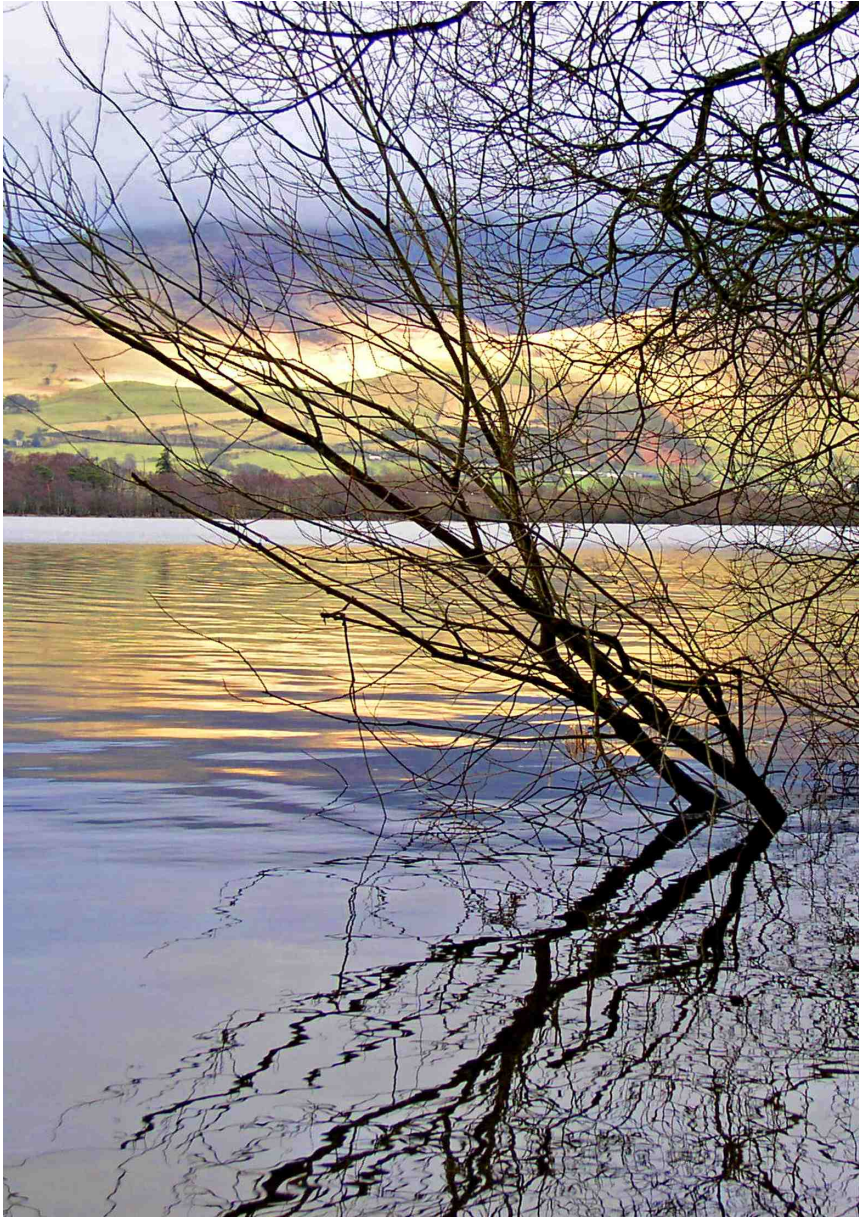


# ST. MARTIN'S MONTHLY

January 2019

50p



# **St Martin's Church, Hale Gardens, London W3 9SQ**

(Registered charity no. 1132976)

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Email: [stmartins@stmartinswestacton.com](mailto:stmartins@stmartinswestacton.com)

**SSM Assistant Priest** The Rev'd Brandy Pearson  
(c/o Parish Office)

**Permission to Officiate** The Rev'd Robert Pearson

## **Commissioned Lay Minister to Japanese Anglican Church UK**

Mrs Yuki Johnson (07572 324107)

[yukifunakawa@btinternet.com](mailto:yukifunakawa@btinternet.com)

## **Parish Administrator (weekdays: 9.30am – 1.30pm)**

Parish Office, rear of Church Hall,

Hale Gardens, W3 9SQ

020 8992 2333

**Reader** Dr Margaret Jones (020 8997 1418)

**Reader Emeritus** Mrs Lynne Armstrong (020 8992 8341)

**Commissioned Lay Minister** Mrs Jacqueline Nicholls (c/o Parish Office)

**Churchwardens** Mrs Liza Ambridge (020 8992 3029)

Mr John Wilson

**Director of Music** Mr Kenneth Bartram (c/o Parish Office)

**Magazine Editor** Lizzy Edgington

The Vicar is available for consultation and enquiries by appointment.  
Please ring the Parish Office.

Articles for the next month's magazine should be sent to  
The Parish Office (email: [stmartins@stmartinswestacton.com](mailto:stmartins@stmartinswestacton.com))  
Please title the email "magazine item"

**They should reach the Editor by 21<sup>st</sup> January.**

**The February magazine will be on sale by 2<sup>nd</sup> February.**



## **Looking forwards to 2019**

Happy New Year! The January kind of New Year this time, rather than the Church kind of New Year, which began on the first Sunday of Advent. It's traditionally a time for looking forwards to the next year, full of hope and perhaps some New Year's resolutions.

I am writing this on Epiphany Sunday, on which we celebrate the Magi visiting the Christ Child. In some parts of Spain and Italy, children receive their Christmas presents at Epiphany, reflecting the Magi bringing gifts to Jesus, which seems wonderfully symbolic.

In Junior Church this morning we thought about these gifts that the Magi brought, and how these tell us the Christian story – that Jesus was sent from God (frankincense for holiness), he died on a cross to save us all (myrrh for pain), and is King of all (gold for royalty). The whole gospel message encapsulated in

just three gifts! We then talked about what gifts we might bring to Jesus and some of the children decorated boxes to look like presents, writing on their gift tags those gifts they would like to give to Jesus this year. As usual, I learned more about God from our children than they could ever learn from me. Their gifts included their prayers, their treasure, and a desire to do all the things that Jesus would like them to do. We then walked down the aisle following a star (made of gold card and tied to a bamboo cane, just in case you are wondering how we managed to procure a star!) to leave the gifts with our nativity scene Jesus.

And so instead of New Year's resolutions, whether made or not, whether adhered to or not, perhaps this is a good time to reflect on what gifts we can each give to God this coming year. Our time? Our enthusiasm? Being there for others? Our prayers?

On the topic of prayer, 2019 is going to be a year of change at St Martin's, with interviews for our new vicar taking place later this month, so please do pray for wisdom and discernment among both the recruitment team and the potential candidates, so that we can find the right vicar for us and for whom we're the right parish.

I wish you a blessed 2019!

*Bryony Franklin*



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We were sorry to hear of the death of Janet Trussler, and  
a memorial service for her will be held at St. Martin's  
on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> January at 11am.

John would like you to attend if it's possible and he thanks  
everyone for their expressions of condolence.



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**Thank you...**



A big thank you to those who helped make the Christingles ahead of last month's service!

And another big thank you everyone who helped decorate the Church's Christmas tree which looked wonderful!



## **Mary, Joseph and the Donkey...**

In the days leading up to Christmas Eve, St. Martin's nativity figures travelled around West Acton visiting different homes. This was to reflect Mary and Joseph searching for a place to stay before taking up their place in St. Martin's. Thanks to the members of Junior Church for taking them in and for documenting their journey:







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# Icons

## By Siobhan Fraser, Icon Painter

Art rarely grows in isolation. New ideas and art forms that are aligned to changing painterly techniques often evolve from what went before. It might surprise us to think that the icons of the orthodox church evolved from Egyptian mummy paintings.

The Ptolemy dynasty in Egypt was Greek. Cleopatra as we know had strong ties with Rome, which in turn influenced early Christianity in Constantinople. At that time Egyptian mummies had portraits of the mummified person painted on wood using pigments and wax. This was a technique called *encaustic*, where the wooden panel is painted with chalk to make a fine white surface, on which the image is painted with pigments ground into warm wax. These mummy paintings have a beautiful fluidity and freedom because the pigment had to be used quickly before it cooled and dried.

Much ancient Greek and Roman art has been lost in the passage of time, though there are some wonderful examples emerging from new excavations in Pompeii and on the island of Santorini in the Mediterranean, north of Crete, which no doubt will throw further light on how decorative and holy art evolved two millennia ago.

With Christianity came the desire to portray the holy family and the saints. Paper was fragile and transitory and vellum expensive, so instead wooded boards coated with chalk, the mixture hardened with 'rabbit skin glue' or gelatin, made a durable painting surface. The very early icons are painted with encaustic paint and have the wonderful fluidity of the Egyptian paintings. But soon, in Constantinople, the technique of grinding up pigments with egg yolk provided a paint that was much slower to dry and more durable in differing climatic seasons. So the design of the iconic figure changed from fluid forms to the more static ones that we are familiar with today.

Gold is the other main medium that is associated with icons, and this tradition again comes from the mummy paintings. Gold, whether in Egypt or Constantinople, conveyed wealth and spirituality and became an integral part of the 'writing' of these holy icons.

If icons are new to you, one of the ways to understand them is to see how they are 'written' (we use the word written instead of painted,) how the boards are traditionally prepared and the pigments ground. In a way this is starting at the beginning in order to understand this wide and complex subject.

The boards would often warp in damp churches so the tradition of putting two braces in the back and carving out the area in the front to be written on, leaving the outside as a frame, known as the *kivitos*, held the board straight.

I find that one of the most important truths of writing an icon is that each stage should be perfect. There are no shortcuts. The boards should be prepared, cut and sanded to perfection. The *gesso*, that is the chalk and rabbit skin glue mixture, must again be perfect, sieved and sieved again until it is as smooth as cream.

This gesso is painted on the board in thin layers, each partially drying before the next layer is applied. At least seven layers should be painted and the board left to dry. Next the board is sanded down with the finest sand paper until the gesso has a perfect surface, with a sheen when it catches the light.

At this stage I trace out the outline of the icon I am going to write, not every detail, but the basic proportions. Again this must be done perfectly because tempera paint is unforgiving. Unlike oil paint or acrylic one cannot go back and satisfactorily over-paint. A mistake means one has to wipe the whole board and start again.

I put the gold down at this point. Gold can be thought of as 'bright' when it comes to a decorative surface, but it is actually 'dark' and putting it down first gives a much better sense of colour value to the subsequent use of the pigments.

Red ochre *bole* is used to under-paint where the gold is to go, water gilding or varnish gilding the gold leaf is next. This is always difficult and one has to be a complete perfectionist here. Then the colour goes down. I work from dark to light, building up the fine layers of pigment, suspended in the oily egg yolk, until the required luminosity of tones has been acquired. This takes time. You cannot hurry an icon. They become living images before one's eyes, the paintings like everything to be 'just so' and the icon painter has to remember she or he is only a conduit for the spirit, nothing more.

The illustration is from an early renaissance painting of the Virgin and Child that I copied from a photograph I took in a dark museum in Turin. I have included her as this demonstrates the stages, from putting down the gesso the stamping the gold.







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## Editorial

I used to be good at sticking to resolutions, but in recent years less so... Maybe my resolutions aren't very realistic or maybe they should be less about abstaining from something for the sake of it. Instead maybe I should pick a resolution through which I learn something about myself or improve my outlook on life?

A typical resolution for me is giving up chocolate, only to find myself half-way through a chocolate biscuit on day three before I remember. Another one is giving up buying coffee from a coffee shop – to break an expensive habit. Only to crumble after a matter of weeks.

This year I wanted to try and do something that was (personally) more meaningful. Maybe a new resolution each month would help keep focus and be easier to keep



to, so I set about searching for inspiration online. I came across one plan that I thought I'd share with you all:

### **Dry January:**

This is a popular one and probably a good one after the excess of Christmas. For the children I am thinking maybe a sugar-free January...

### **February: "Like"**

The idea here is to think about what we say and how we say it. "Like" is one of those words that is used far too much, but I think there are other close contenders... When I hear the phrase 'going forward' I cringe slightly, but also struggle to think what we used to say before it became widely adopted. I think for me I'm going to try and avoid the word "don't" – specifically when talking to my children.

### **March: Sweets**

This could be tied in to giving up something for Lent which starts on 6<sup>th</sup> March this year, and challenge yourself to keep going until Easter – Easter Sunday is 21<sup>st</sup> April this year.

### **April: Screen time and children**

The idea here is to have less screen time when around your children, to lead by example. Maybe if you want your children to tear themselves away from their devices you agree that there are no screens for the whole family after 9pm or at set times such as at the dinner table? Or maybe just switch everything off and find a good book to read?

## **May: Fasting**

The philosophy behind this one is two-fold. Firstly, if done properly, fasting can benefit your health. If you follow something like the 5:2 plan, stick to it for two weeks rather than the whole month. The second thought is that it could be spiritually beneficial. The Islamic festival of Ramadan starts 5<sup>th</sup> May and continues to 4<sup>th</sup> June which encourages individuals to refocus themselves away from worldly activities, to practice self-discipline and empathise with those less fortunate.

## **June: Grumpiness**

If you get hangry and fasting is tough, this is the month to focus on being positive and for being grateful for everything that you have. Try not to be grumpy, work out what triggers bad moods and avoid it, or change your routine. Some recommend setting a reminder on your phone to smile or laugh regularly throughout the day – hopefully without terrifying your colleagues/school mates. Alternatively, you could take up a class in laughing yoga – a good form of stress relief.

## **July: Social Media**

Maybe to reconnect with people in person or refocus on what is important to you, give up whichever social media platform you are most addicted to this month.

## **August: TV**

Switch it off, talk more, go out (hopefully we will have some sunshine this year) ...

### **September: Declutter**

Take stock of everything that you have and work out what you can donate for someone else to enjoy and what should really go in the bin.

### **October: Disposable Plastic**

Where possible, think twice about what you buy and what you need. Maybe treat yourself to an environmentally friendly re-usable coffee-cup or water bottle.

### **November: No eating after dinner**

In the run-up to Christmas and all the indulgences that come with it, this might be a good one to try. One view is that we function better if we eat our largest meal in the morning and we sleep better if we eat our smallest meal in the evening. It could also be interpreted as giving up puddings for a month...

### **December: Sitting down too much**

As the days get shorter we are liable to spend more time indoors. Set an alarm and get up and away from the desk, off the sofa and out of the car at regular intervals. Regular exercise and screen breaks are all beneficial. Get a pedometer and set a daily target.

Whatever you decide to do, if anything, HAPPY 2019!



## **The Parish of St Martin Hale Gardens, London W3 9SQ**

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### **Usual Sunday Services**

8am: Holy Communion  
10am: Parish Communion  
6.30pm: Evensong

Our Junior Church meets in the Church Hall at 10am  
except when there is an All-Age or Parade Service.

### **Japanese Anglican Church UK**

meets every third Sunday of the month:  
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