

# **ST. MARTIN'S MONTHLY**

December 2020

50p



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

(Registered charity no. 1132976)

[www.stmartinswestacton.co.uk](http://www.stmartinswestacton.co.uk)

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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 "September Magazine"

**They should reach the Editor by 18<sup>th</sup> December.**  
**The January magazine will be on sale by 28<sup>th</sup> December.**

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# NOTICES

## **Sunday services:**

10am – All Age Holy Communion. The service is also live-streamed on YouTube, see the link below.

6.30pm – Zoom Evening Prayer. See the service sheet for access details.

**Christmas Auction:** On Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December at 3pm, the Christmas Auction will raise funds for St Martin's Church. Please contact Camilla [camillareid@btinternet.com](mailto:camillareid@btinternet.com) for the catalogue and access information, as well as advance bids. Please do encourage family and friends to take part.

**Advent course:** "Living the Light" runs at 7.30pm on Wednesdays 2<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> December via Zoom. See the service sheet for access details.

## **Christmas services:**

- Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December: Carol service at 6.30pm on Zoom.
- Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> December: Children's crib service at 4pm in church; and Midnight Mass at 11.30pm in church and livestreamed on YouTube.
- Friday 25<sup>th</sup> December, Christmas Day: Holy Communion 10am, in church and livestreamed.

## **Would you be willing to join the rota for leading the intercessions for our 10am Sunday services?**

We would welcome more people to join this team if you are interested in sharing this important ministry. Please contact Margaret Jones if you are interested.



## YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJ9miga4kIhXkXjm-p2b0FA> Subscribe to be alerted when videos are posted.

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/stmartinswestacton/](http://www.facebook.com/stmartinswestacton/) You do not have to have a Facebook account to view the page.

**Finances:** We have lost a lot of income over lockdown. Many of you give financially through standing orders but if you give regularly in cash or by envelope, please consider giving direct to the bank or setting up a standing order. Our account details are: St Martins Church West Acton, Sort code: 40-11-58, Account 60482676.

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## **Christmas Letter**

Dear all,

The last year has been unprecedented in the history of St Martin's and in the history of the church. And now we are headed into our Advent and Christmas season. Included in this issue are the list of services and young peoples' provision over the Christmas time.

With all the darkness and confusion, I am reminded of the story of two travellers walking along a narrow path in a forest, when night-time swiftly came upon them. In a matter of minutes, the path became invisible and the terror of darkness lurked everywhere. To make matters worse a violent storm broke out with terrifying flashes of lightening, torrential rain and loud peals of thunder which shook the ground.

One traveller looked at the storm as an awful calamity, with every flash of lightening, he looked at the sky and cursed, strayed from the path and got lost. The second traveller looked on the storm as a blessing in disguise. He noticed that each flash of lightening lit up the path ahead little by little and taking one step at a time succeeded in staying on the path and made his way out of the forest.

The thunderstorm was the same for both travellers but for one it was a stumbling block for the other a stepping-stone. Sometimes that is the way life is, that there is just enough light to be able to take the next step.

So, when the light shines in this present darkness - what do we see? When faith lifts us up, can we see maybe a little bit of comfort and joy? These words comfort and joy hold together the hope that Christmas may bring a little joy and celebration after a difficult year. We are mindful of those who have lost loved ones or livelihoods, or who are potentially still not able to be together with family. The hope of a vaccine and easing of lockdown rules over Christmas lights up our path just a little.

Maybe that's the best we can do this Christmas to be grateful for the blessings we have. The message and traditions of Christmas can bring us some comfort and maybe our hearts will find some joy, always mindful of those less fortunate than ourselves. We are blessed with caring people at St Martin's who give generously of their money and time and care for others in the community.

Thank you for all your support over this difficult period and I pray for a light to shine in the darkness this Christmas, bringing a little comfort and joy.

Yours in Christ

Julia Palmer

## Lockdown Patchwork Project: latest news

Back at the start of Lockdown 1 Julia came up with a suggestion that the congregation should have a collaborative project to focus upon, to give us a focus and keep us connected as a community. And so the Lockdown Patchwork project to make a new altar frontal was born.



By the middle of July, we had enough patches to put together a frontal for the main altar in the sanctuary, and Jill Burton guided the process of putting all the patches together and constructing the altar frontal in time for everyone to see it at the farewell communion service before Brandy and Rob left us.



But patches continued to come in, so that there were enough to make second frontal, this time for the Holy Spirit chapel. Again Jill Burton's expertise was called upon to direct and guide to construction process. This second altar frontal is now finished and can be seen on the Holy Spirit chapel altar.



Many thanks to all those who contributed to the process:  
Liza Ambridge, Lynne Armstrong, Ren Balcombe, Jill Burton, Bryony Franklin, Paige Grayson, Yuki Johnson, Azusa Kurose, Angela North, Anne Oughton, Julia Palmer Brandy Pearson, Camilla Reid, Joanna Reid. Apologies if I have missed anyone out. If so, please contact Liza Ambridge, who is keeping a list of who made which patch.

## Church of England Advent & Christmas 2020

**Comfort**  
and Joy



This Christmas the Church will need, in the words of St Paul in Romans 12.15, to 'Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep'. We will aim to celebrate where we can together in one place – but also embrace a wider community that wants to join in the celebration but may not be physically able – or emotionally ready – to do so. We hope that Comfort and Joy will enable us to build a campaign that both enables us to reconnect with the rich and joyous traditions of the past and to offer God's consoling love in the present.

Weekly reflections will be published on social media, and will also be available by email and app with accompanying prayer activities for children and families. The Nine Lessons and Carols for Christmas mirror the structure of a traditional carol service, exploring both Biblical texts and the words of much-loved Christmas carols.

If you would to follow the weekly online services, you can access them through the following links:

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/thechurchofengland>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/thechurchofengland>

- **29 November 9:00am:** Worship at Home for the First Sunday of Advent with St Martin-in-the-Fields
- **6 December 9:00am:** Worship at Home for the Second Sunday of Advent with HOPE Together
- **13 December 9:00am:** Worship at Home for the Third Sunday of Advent. A Christingle service with The Children's Society
- **20 December 9:00am:** Worship at Home for the Fourth Sunday of Advent with Marie Curie
- **22 December 9:00am:** - Worship at Home: A service of Lessons and Carols with Christian Aid
- **24 December 11:30pm:** - Worship at Home: Midnight Mass with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Dover
- **27 December 9:00am:** Worship at Home for the First Sunday of Christmas with Church Army
- **31 December 9:00am:** Worship at Home: A service with the Archbishop of York on New Year's Eve
- **3 January 9:00am:** Worship at Home for Epiphany with Embrace the Middle East

If you would like to find out more, you can access more resources here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/preparing-advent-christmas-2020-comfort-and-joy>

## **Christmas at a Distance**

Christmas is usually the time to gather with our loved ones, eating and gifting together. This year will likely look a little different. Though at the time of writing we'll be able to join three households for Christmas, many people will be anxious about the prospect, particularly where they or their loved ones are particularly vulnerable to Covid-19.

For those of us trying to figure out what Christmas will look like this year, here are some ideas which might help to capture some of the usual Christmas spirit.

**Video call your loved ones** – perhaps the most obvious option. Consider setting up an online film night or coffee morning, or checking in with friends and family you haven't spoken with in a while.

**Decorate with lights and wreaths.** For anyone walking past, seeing the twinkle of Christmas lights or the familiar shape of a Christmas tree can help to lift their spirits and make us all feel connected in our celebrations.

**Go for a walk yourself!** Taking a local walk to see everyone else's decorations is a lovely way to spend an evening, and the familiar lights may even lift your mood. We all have that one house in our area that goes all out every year, which is a joy to look at.

**Decorate a gingerbread house** – or even bake one! We've bought a kit to make it easier. It's a great activity to do within your household, and makes for a delicious treat once you've taken those photos for Instagram.

**Get in touch with your neighbours.** For many people this year, difficulties with travelling and health will mean a Christmas Day on their own. You might like to ask your neighbours if they'd like you to pop round to their front gate during the Christmas season for a chat.

**Build a festive fort.** If you're feeling adventurous, get the tent out and fill it with blankets and cushions! If it looks a bit chilly out there, you can still build a blanket fort in your front room. It's an easy way to make your environment feel a little different without going anywhere. Make sure you take cookies.

**Game night.** Listen. Sometimes you just need to pull yourself away from the glow of the screen and move some cards or dice around, fuelling ongoing rivalries around who's better at recognising patterns or who knows the rules properly. If you've got three or more people in your household, the options are endless! For anyone restricted to two players, we can recommend Arboretum, Odin's Ravens, Trash Pandas, Bananagrams and Boggle.





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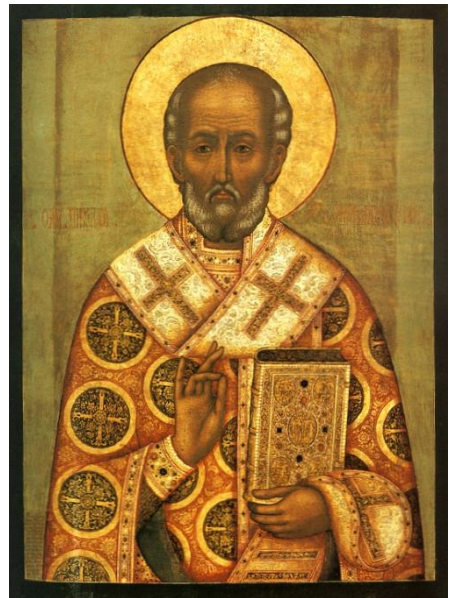
## Dates for the diary

**1<sup>st</sup> December:** World AIDS Day raises awareness about HIV and expresses global solidarity with people living with HIV.

**3<sup>rd</sup> December:** The International Day of Disabled Persons aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilise support for the dignity, rights and wellbeing of people with disability.

**6<sup>th</sup> December:** On St Nicholas' Day, children traditionally wake up to small presents from St Nicholas in their shoes. In many households, this is the beginning of the Christmas season.

**10<sup>th</sup> December:** Human Rights Day commemorates the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1948.



**15<sup>th</sup> December:** International Tea Day is celebrated largely in tea-producing countries, and draws attention to the needs of tea trade workers and calls for Fair Trade practices.

**19<sup>th</sup> December:** On this day in 1783 William Pitt the Younger becomes the youngest ever Prime Minister at just 24 years old.

**21<sup>st</sup> December:** National Robin Day raises awareness for the need to take care of small birds and other wildlife to help them through the winter.

**24<sup>th</sup> December:** Christmas Eve.

**25<sup>th</sup> December:** Christmas Day! Widely celebrated, Christmas Day celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. Gifts are exchanged, feasts are eaten, trees are covered in lights and toys. Traditionally the time leading up to Christmas Day involves nativity plays, carol services and commitments to reflection and acts of service for Christians.



**26<sup>th</sup> December:** Boxing Day. Historically, servants and tradespeople were given a “Christmas box” gift from their employers and customers.

**31<sup>st</sup> December:** New Year’s Eve, or Hogmanay, typically involves gift-giving and visiting friends and neighbours. There are customs and superstitions around the moment of New Year’s, which take note of your activities at the stroke of midnight as well as the first person to step over the threshold.



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## **Devotionals**

Over the years, I've found great comfort in reading a daily devotional. It's an opportunity to spend just a moment with God in stillness before rushing about my day, and often the selected quotes encourage me to think about something I hadn't considered before. Below are a few verses selected for December.

### **From *Jesus Calling* by Sarah Young:**

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."  
-Isaiah 9:6

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."  
-Psalm 23:4

"We live by faith, not by sight."  
-2 Corinthians 5:7

"Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."  
-Philippians 2:6-7

"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arm."  
-Deuteronomy 33:27



## From *Amazing You* by Phillipa Hanna

"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."  
-John 8:32

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."  
-Matthew 6:34

"No-one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all their efforts to search it out, no-one can discover its meaning."  
-Ecclesiastes 8:17





## **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:  
(except July, August and December)

3pm Bible Study and Evening Worship in Japanese

Every **Wednesday** in the Parish Room

11am: Informal Eucharist followed by the Coffee Club at 11.30am