

# ST. MARTIN'S MONTHLY

February 2021

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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<b>Magazine Editor</b>	Ren Balcombe
<b>Cover image by</b>	PJ Grayson

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> February.**  
**The March magazine will be on sale by 28<sup>th</sup> February.**

# NOTICES

## **Sunday services:**

10am – All Age Holy Communion on YouTube, link below.

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

**Sundays 11.30am Church Chat:** grab a cup of coffee and sit down for a chat with us after the Sunday service via Zoom – see the service sheet for access details.

## **Tuesdays 7.30pm Lent course 2021: The Bible**

Ever wondered why we read the Bible in church the way we do? Or even what it all means? This course from the Bible Society provides a bird's eye view of the world's bestselling book. It combines video teaching, group discussion, personal reflection and daily readings. We are running it on Zoom with St Marys' Church, Acton. The first session is on 23<sup>rd</sup> February – please see the service sheet for full dates and topics.

## **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.

## **Editorial letter**

Once again, we are in lockdown and our church building is closed. The newspapers are full of ideas as to how we should tackle our enforced isolation. We made bread in the first lockdown and mince pies in the second lockdown; we tidied our houses and gardens, and then rather hoped that 2021 would be easier.

By now most of us are weary of meetings on Zoom. Those who are working from home are tired of the frustrations of trying to maintain high standards. Others are less fortunate and fearful that there will be no new job opportunities. Children are restless and find life particularly difficult. And against this background there is the fear of the virus that may prove deadly or the other health problems that the NHS cannot address. We are optimistic about the vaccines but common sense tells us that it is likely to be some time before we can all meet physically without restrictions.

The good news is that “the Holy spirit is not in lockdown” as Sean reminded us in his poem last year. Our prayers continue, our services are available on Zoom, Facebook and YouTube, and Church members are keen to support each other. The Church council has been busy making plans for the rest of this year and there is a very positive wish to help each other in practical ways.

One thing to look forward to during this lockdown is our Lent course. Did you know that phrases such as *by the skin of my teeth, drop in the ocean, lick the dust, wheels within wheels, the straight and narrow, salt of the earth, no peace for the wicked* all came from the Bible? The vicar is planning an exciting Lent course which will give us all a fresh way of looking at our Bible. We really hope that everyone will want to joint some or all of the sessions which will be on Zoom on Tuesday evenings.

We remember that we have many blessings for which we thank God. Spring is on its way and St Martin's will be busy.

Margaret Jones

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## **Relationships in a New Year**

We use the word “relationships” to describe how we get on with other people. You can read in magazines how to improve your relationships, to build them, even to end them. And these relationships are with everyone – your family, your friends, your work colleagues.

We say people are “there for you” or “Not there for you”. They “put you down” or “are not ready for a relationship right now”. To my mind the most important relationship we have is with God.

It takes a lot of thinking about, the maker of everything having a relationship with you and me. Caring about us, loving us and looking after us. Like other relationships, the one we have with God has different aspects.

For example, there are times when something gives us great spiritual joy, and other times when we feel saddened or distressed by something, and wonder where the hand of God is in that situation. There is no easy way to deal with the tragic, the dreadful or the disasters of the world, and non-Christians will often say that these prove that there is no God. I have heard that a lot about this pandemic.

No, it does not. What it does prove is that God gave us free will, and that humankind has an infinite capacity to abuse that privilege. The relationship we have with our God is personal, and is about trust and love. One of the things that puzzled me as a child was the phrase “Fear of God”. I could not see why, if God was love and like our Father, we should be afraid of him. I had a super father, and loved him

very much. I could not relate to a fierce, angry Father, and this was not the sort of person I wanted to have a relationship with. It was only when I studied the phrases that this came from that I finally understood.

There are two Hebrew words which are translated as “fear”:

- yir'ah {yir-aw'}: respect, reverence, awe, piety, revered
- pachad {pakh'-ad}: terror, dread, object of dread

The word “pachad” is used when talking of what will befall God’s enemies, and “yirah” when talking of how we should treat God.

You can see that the Fear of God is not something to be taken literally in its modern meaning, but is actually respect, awe, wonder and love.

And the God that made heaven and earth, Mount Everest and a tiny ant, flowers and trees, the God who created humankind and gave them the capacity to love, is very much the God I have a relationship with. God put the seed of life on our world, and we developed from that seed. We are fortunate that we can have a relationship with him, and find in his love a strength that helps us through the trials and problems we have in our day to day lives.

Let me recommend a relationship to you: a relationship with God. He won't let you down, and is always there for you, makes you feel on top of the world and is ready whenever you want to talk to him.

Lynne Armstrong

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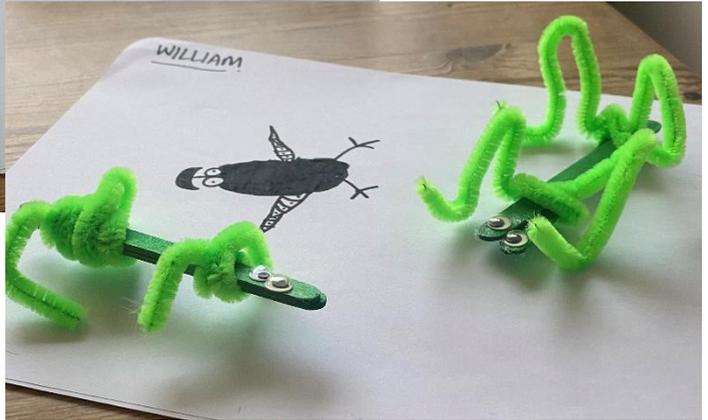
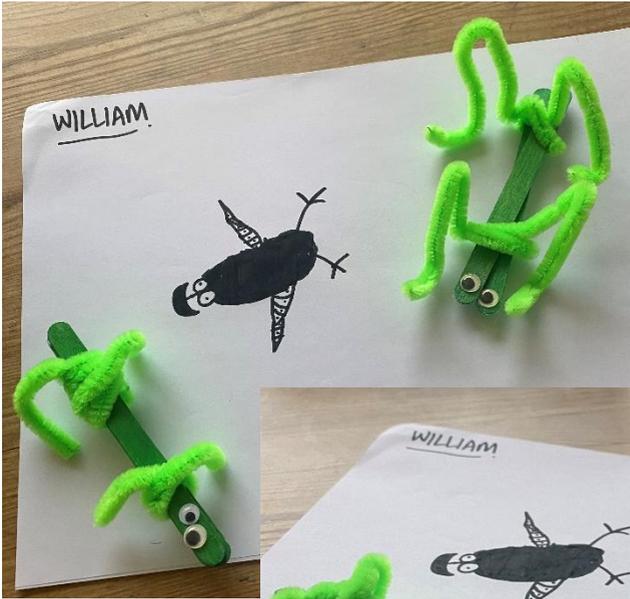
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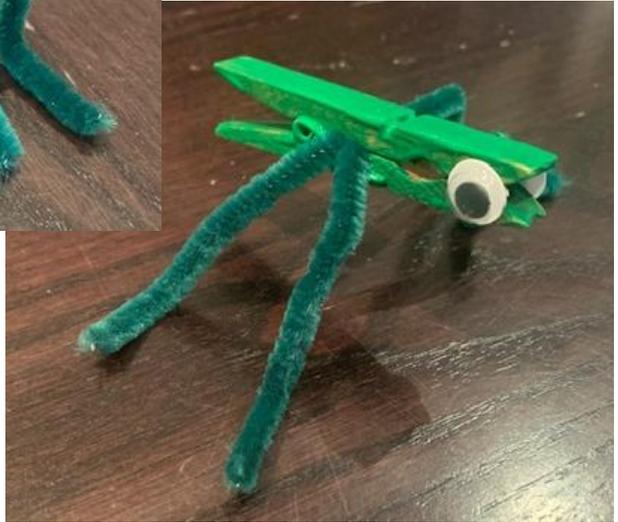
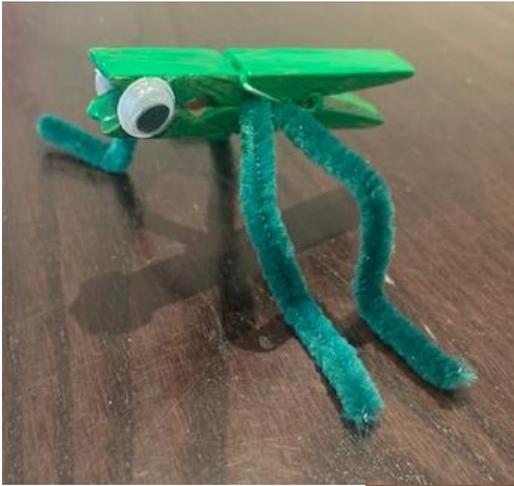
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## St John the Baptist

On Sunday 10 January, our online junior church meeting focused on John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus. Our young people created locusts to remind us of John's diet of locusts and wild honey. We also discussed how we are all different and all called to serve God in different ways.







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## Dates for the diary

**February:** LGBT+ History Month. This year's theme is Mind, Body, Spirit, linked to a National Curriculum subject. Visit [www.lgbtplushistory.co.uk](http://www.lgbtplushistory.co.uk) for more information.

**30<sup>th</sup> January – 6<sup>th</sup> February:** National Storytelling Week 2021 is run by the Society for Storytelling, and includes events with writers and artists to celebrate storytelling.

**1<sup>st</sup> February – 7<sup>th</sup> February:** Children's Mental Health Week. This year's theme as set by Place2Be is Express Yourself.

**2<sup>nd</sup> February:** Candlemas, the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple, follows the account of the presentation of Jesus in Luke 2:22-40.

**4<sup>th</sup> February:** Time to Talk Day brings the nation together to get talking and break the silence around mental health problems. Find out more at [www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk).

**11<sup>th</sup> February:** International Day of Women and Girls in Science aims to support and celebrate the work of women and girls in scientific work around the world. Find out more at [www.womeninscienceday.org](http://www.womeninscienceday.org).

**12<sup>th</sup> February:** Lunar New Year. Also known as Spring Festival or Chinese New Year, though it's celebrated by various Asian countries, regions and cultures with different traditions and customs. 12<sup>th</sup> February this year begins the Year of the Ox, an animal attributed as being hardworking and reliable.

**14<sup>th</sup> February:** Valentine's Day. Originally, the Feast of St Valentine observed the life of an early saint called Valentinus.

**16<sup>th</sup> February:** Shrove Tuesday, also known as Fat Tuesday and Pancake Day, is the last day before Lent, observed with the burning of the previous year's palms, confession and eating pancakes.

**17<sup>th</sup> February:** Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, six and a half weeks before Easter. It is a solemn day of fasting, repentance and prayer, and Christians traditionally are marked by ashes with the sign of the cross.

**20<sup>th</sup> February:** World Day of Social Justice has as its theme this year Closing the Inequalities Gap, and encourages people to raise their voices against social injustice across the world.

**26<sup>th</sup> February:** Purim, translated in English as the Feast of Lots, celebrates the divinely orchestrated salvation of the Jews who were marked for death by their Persian rulers in 5<sup>th</sup> Century BCE. It is traditionally celebrated with readings, gifts of food, charity and feasting.

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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:**

"With your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall."  
-Psalm 18:29

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."  
-Numbers 6:24-26

"For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you."  
-Isaiah 41:13

### **From *Amazing You* by Phillipa Hanna**

"When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?"  
-Psalm 8:3-4

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."  
-Jeremiah 29:11

St Martin's, West Acton, London



# 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