St Hilda’s News

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We are looking for more contributions from the St Hilda’s community, if you would like to contribute, please either call, email or send an article to the Parish Office.

If you would like help or to speak to a member of the ministry team please contact:

• Parish Office Tel - 01784 253525
  Email - office@sthilda.org
• Father Joseph can be contacted on 01784 254237

www.sthilda.org
Pandemic response is too centralised, say Welby and Mullally

TOO much central control is hampering the Government’s response to the pandemic, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, the Rt Revd Sarah Mullally, have said — and the same, they say, is true of the Church.

In an article published in *The Daily Telegraph* on Wednesday, they write that the Government’s response to the pandemic has largely been driven from the centre. This has included “shutting shops and pubs, closing schools and barring places of worship. . . Few of us have experienced the sheer power of government like that in our lifetimes.”

They continue: “But with a vaccine still far from certain, infection rates rising and winter on the horizon, the new normal of living with Covid-19 will only be sustainable — or even endurable — if we challenge our addiction to centralisation and go back to an age-old principle: only do centrally what must be done centrally…

“When it comes to Covid-19, the importance of local networks and communities becomes even greater. Scotland and Wales have shown that local public health is the best qualified to deal with local outbreaks. Local government, schools and voluntary agencies — including churches — can communicate well, act swiftly and measure risk and consequences on the ground. Giving them generous funding would be a good investment.”

They cite examples of churches responding to the pandemic at the parish level, including those “offering summer holiday experiences for families, or Hackney Church in east London, which has supplied over 100,000 meals since lockdown began”.

They acknowledge that the C of E is “not immune to the temptation to pull more decisions into the centre, to feel that ‘something is being done’. But it is a temptation that should be resisted. Often that ‘something’ might not be as effective as what could be done locally.”

They continue: “It’s a challenge for government, and it’s one we also accept in the Church of England. Where some have felt we have made too many decisions from the centre, we recommit to empowering clergy and parishes, which are and have always been the foundation of the Church.”

The *Telegraph* quoted “a source close to the Archbishop” as saying that he was “deeply concerned about Christmas and the impact of the ‘rule of six’ on the vulnerable, the needy, the poor and the elderly”.

The source continued: “He is concerned about families being kept apart and the knock-on effect that has, particularly on people who are on their own. The heart of the Christian faith is to love thy neighbour, which is increasingly difficult when strict rules are imposed by the centre.”
On Wednesday morning, however, Archbishop Welby wrote on Twitter: “The Rule of 6 is a matter for scientific advice as well as local and central government decision-making, and not for me to comment. We need to focus on the vulnerable and the impact on them.”

On Monday, the law was changed to address a rise in coronavirus cases, reducing the maximum number of people who can gather from 30 to six. It does not apply to places of worship, where there is no prescribed limit to the number who can attend; or to Covid-secure weddings, funerals, and other “life-cycle” services, where no more than 30 people attend.

Government guidance on places of worship, updated on Monday, says: “Whilst engaging in an activity in the place of worship or surrounding grounds, all parties should adhere to social distancing guidelines. 2 metres or 1 metre with actions taken to reduce the risk of transmission (where 2 metres is not viable) between households are acceptable. For example, use of face coverings.”

Since 8 August, it has been mandatory for worshippers to wear face covering, although the guidance says that “those who are leading services or events in a place of worship, and those who assist them (for instance by reading, preaching, or leading prayer) do not always need to wear a face covering”.

The guidance goes on to state that, once a worship service has ended, “participants should be encouraged to move on promptly, to minimise the risk of contact and spread of infection. . .

“Worshippers should limit their interactions with anyone they are not attending your Place of Worship with, i.e. if they are attending a communal service with one other household, wherever possible they should try not to engage in conversation with anyone outside of this group.”

**National prayer landmark bigger than Angel of the North granted planning permission**

A new national landmark dedicated to answered prayers has been granted planning permission.

The Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer will eclipse the size of the Angel of North and Brazil's Christ the Redeemer when it's built on the outskirts of Birmingham.

It's expected to attract 300,000 visitors to the Coleshill site each year contributing £9.3 million pounds to the local economy.
Having already received approval from North Warwickshire Council, planning has now been ratified by the Secretary of State meaning building will commence in Spring 2021 with the hope of completion in Autumn 2022.

Welcoming the news, Richard Gamble, who came up with the idea, said: "It's been 16 years since the idea was first born. To finally receive the official consent is incredible. "We are building a very special landmark and it is an amazing opportunity for the British people to leave a legacy of hope for future generations."

The landmark will be made up of one million bricks - each representing a story of a prayer from someone around the world which has been answered by God. Visitors will be able to use a specially built app to track each brick's story.

Christians are being encouraged to send in their answered prayers so they can be represented in the monument.

Gamble continues: "We want to celebrate and remember all the prayers that God has answered for individuals throughout our nation's history. "Each answered prayer could provide hope to those who visit. Our desire is to create thought-provoking public art and offer a space for recreation and reflection for everyone.

"Our hope is that those who visit will see how God can bring peace in life's storms and be encouraged to reflect on the power and relevance of prayer."

Standing at 169 feet, the landmark will also host a visitor centre, cafe, bookstore and 24 hour on site chaplaincy service.

During its two year construction it will create 60 new jobs, while 20 full time positions will be filled thereafter.

Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands and a member of the judging panel who decided on the design, said: "I am delighted Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer has now finally got planning permission and work can get underway. "It's an incredibly ambitious, stunning project and is a landmark for the Midlands.

"It has been a long process, but this landmark will serve as a place of hope for many, and one that will help us remember the Christian heritage of our nation. A massive thank you should go to everyone involved who has turned this vision into reality."
The project has cross denominational support. Rev Yinka Oyekan, president of the Baptist Union of Great Britain is one of several senior church leaders to give their backing. He said: "Eternal Wall will be a permanent reminder of the power embedded in prayer, a power that produces an irrepressible hope enabling the scaling of any mountain. It will also be a lasting symbol of what faith can accomplish."

Those wishing to contribute to the landmark with stories of answered prayers can do so at eternalwall.org.uk/testimony

**Christian charity backs calls for frequent flyer tax and gas boiler ban in climate fight**

Christian environmental charity A Rocha UK has welcomed recommendations from the nation's first national citizens' assembly on climate change.

On Thursday, the group released its final report on cutting emissions to net zero.

Here are some of the key recommendations:

- **Surface transport**
  A ban on the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars by 2030-2035, with moves to quickly stop selling the most polluting vehicles and grants for low carbon cars.

- **Air travel**
  People should still be allowed to fly, but there should be limits to the growth in passenger numbers and frequent and long-haul flyers should pay more, with taxes that increase as people fly more often and further.

- **In the home**
  Efforts to retrofit homes to cut emissions need to minimise disruption in the home, put in place support around costs, and offer flexibility and choice to homeowners.

- **What we eat and how we use the land**
  A change in the diet to reduce meat and dairy consumption by 20%-40%, with education to help make the changes voluntary, and labelling food and drink products to show the emissions that come from different foods.

- **What we buy**
  Targets, standards and taxes to ensure businesses make products using less and lower carbon energy and materials, and carbon emissions labelling for products.

- **Where our electricity comes from**
Offshore wind, solar power and onshore wind should be used to generate electricity as the UK moves to net zero.

Andy Lester from A Rocha UK applauded the recommendations but told Premier it will be a big challenge for them to be implemented.

"They are realistic in as much as it's the direction of travel we need to take. But the big challenge is persuading the decision-makers that we need to do it really, really fast. And therein lies the problem.

"We've got a Government that is dragging its heels and we've got a global community that see climate change as a substantial problem, but one that we can still afford to kick down the road.

"So we welcome it [the recommendations]. We would say perhaps it doesn't go far enough. But delivering it is going to be difficult because it demands government attention, and demands a government shift to a much earlier date to shed fossil fuels. At the moment, we don't see that happening."

Lester said if changes aren't made soon the UK will start seeing harsher effects of climate change like extreme weather and food scarcity, things that are already happening in other parts of the world.

"In the course of the next five to 10 years, the impacts on everyday life in Britain will become much more pronounced," he said.

The recommendations came as conservation group WWF announced nature is now in "freefall" as a result of agriculture, logging and development.
It said global wildlife populations have fallen by more than two-thirds since 1970. It's calling for swift action to tackle wasted food by retailers and consumers.

Parish life on the small screen

A new history of the Church on television explores how comedy and drama have placed clergy at the heart of social change

THE Vicar of Dibley and Rev can be mentioned in the same breath as the BBC’s two most successful comedies about vicars. There are substantial differences as well as some points of connection.
Both Dibley and Rev feature clergy struggling with their pastoral roles and their parishioners.
Beyond the obvious differences of a female and male central character and the contrast between the countryside and inner city, Dibley dealt more with the shock of the new as the rural congregation adjusted to a female vicar, and Richard Curtis’s scripts were timely responses
to the ordination of the first women priests, which had come after a five-and-a-half hour debate and an initial vote at the 1987 General Synod.

The comedy of the Church’s divisions registered in *Dibley*. The series directly confronted the tone and content of much real-life opposition to women priests. An oft-quoted line from the first episode has the new vicar declare “You were expecting a bloke. Beard, Bible, bad breath. And instead you got a babe with a bob cut and a magnificent bosom.”

Her emphasis on body and appearance appropriated the way in which female clergy had been objectified and sexualised by their opponents and in the media, such as the *Sun* headline: “The Church says yes to vicars in knickers”. An aura of comic unreality hung over *The Vicar of Dibley*, however, with humour coming from broad rural stereotypes and accents. The series itself tended to revel in being old fashioned, down to the more theatrical style of acting and the studio-based production.

The scripts rarely intersected with actual concerns shaping the Church of England, and seldom made jokes at the expense of the Church. Beyond the single issue of the ordination of women, the series eschewed seriously grounding its stories in ecclesiastical realities, suggesting instead considerable nostalgia expressed via an “unthought-about backdrop”.

For instance, being vicar of just one single parish is far removed from the four- or five-point parishes and joint benefices that defined the rural ministry by the time *The Vicar of Dibley* entered production. Much of the dramatic tension and darker comedy in *Rev* stemmed from the old and the worn-out aspects of the inner-city Church of England as it struggled to engage with its community.

ELSEWHERE on the BBC, the popular series *Call the Midwife* also placed Anglican clergy and religion in an inner-city setting. Following the memoirs of the midwife Jennifer Worth, whose work recalled the respect that the people in Poplar had for the Anglican Sisters of St Raymund, *Call the Midwife* dramatises the medical care and the religious devotions of the Sisters.

The Sisters at Nonnatus House coped with a world changing around them. Post-war immigration, multi-racial marriages, adulteries, homosexuals, prostitution, and mental illness are among the social and medical issues converging around the convent. The Anglican Sisters, though, are a respected moral force and place of comfortable resort for the people in the East End.

On screen, a recurring editing juxtaposition is the nuns at prayer with the midwives working, suggesting the mutual importance of the religious lives of the Sisters and the care they provide. *Rev*, courtesy of Tom Hollander’s scrupulous ethnographic research among inner-city vicars, including the vicar of the filming location, St Leonard’s, Shoreditch, is engrossed with the painful realities of urban ministry.
Its multi-faith and multicultural milieu is distinct from the rural stereotypes in Dibley, and characters in Rev use the correct terminology, from stipends and area deans to canon law and redundancy. A crisis point comes with the vicar’s emotional disintegration, his mental state shattering completely during a Christmas midnight mass, when a drunken congregation and a lost taxi driver reduce the service to a raucous and banal mess.

But Rev is also tinged with a metaphysical intensity, most notably when the titular vicar, the Revd Adam Smallbone, encounters and dances with a tracksuit-wearing man who may well be God, and who turns banal clichés into a spiritually meaningful exchange. The reviewer James Mumford criticised the series for presenting essentially an outsider perspective that disregarded faith or the supernatural: a strange comment, because it overlooked the mystical aspects of Smallbone’s ministry.

The central character in Rev undergoes excruciating personal, professional, and spiritual trials when serving his inner-city parish, in a large old church with a small congregation and largely irrelevant to the surrounding community. The scenario in Rev repeats the main plot dynamic of All in Good Faith (1985-1988), when a country vicar moves to, and struggles with, an inner-city parish. The comedy of Rev is more poignant and much grittier than the Richard Briers’s comedy, with one character calling the parish “heroin alley”.

Hollander’s alertness to the professional realities confronting inner-city vicars allowed him to build episodes around key changes in the profile of the Church. In one early episode, the tiny, aged congregation attending St Saviour’s is augmented but affronted when the large youthful congregation of an Evangelical Anglican church begins sharing the building.

As is the case with the series in general, the script gains a patina of reality from the use of ecclesiastical buzzwords and terminology. When the younger congregation begins reorganising the interior to shift pews and make a more flexible worship space, Smallbone frets that there is no faculty (a licence from a church court) to allow the changes.

The contrast between the large Evangelical congregation and the shrivelled community at St Saviour’s also ominously presages concerns that pervade all three seasons of Rev. Another reality that Hollander knew and used was the threat of redundancy hanging over many old inner-city churches. As redundancy seems to come closer, Smallbone worries that his church may become “toast”: the “ecclesiastical term for redundancy”.

The Vicar of Dibley, focused as it was on the ordination of women and their gradual acceptance by a conservative rural community, only occasionally touched on same-sex controversies in the Church. Some dialogue hinted that Geraldine’s diocesan bishop was homosexual, and a BBC producer mistook David Horton for a repressed gay Anglo-Catholic.

Rev embedded its narratives in painstakingly researched and painful realities. The series writer and star Tom Hollander, who played Smallbone, assiduously researched the lives and
work of inner-city vicars. The result was a series written with considerable empathy for the demands on vicars’ time and emotional well-being, but also acute awareness of the flashpoints of controversy in the modern Church.

ONE of these is human sexuality. The vicar of St Saviour’s is straight, but both his archdeacon and Reader are homosexual. The implication of being gay and in orders is forcefully suggested when the archdeacon fails to progress to a bishopric after he reveals his sexuality to an interviewing committee, an incident among others in the series showing the characters’ failed ambitions and dark inner lives.

Rev based its comedy on the thoughtful and accurate use of Anglican ritual, culture, and ethos. The final episode follows set days in the church calendar from Good Friday to Easter, and therefore from death to resurrection. The last episode ends with the tiny congregation reassembled on the church porch and holding aloft a Paschal candle.

That Easter service, and the symbolic representation of the light of Christ, ends Rev on a tentatively hopeful note, at least suggesting that a faith community will continue in the 21st century, even if the organised religion has died away.

**Mother Abbess Anne Clarke**

Ken Clarke has sent us the wonderful news that his daughter Kathleen (Sister Anne) has been elected Mother Abbess of Malling Abbey. Sister Anne joined the Abbey 10 years ago and, following a period of increasing commitment, took her final vows in 2015. The Clarke Family moved to Ashford in 1963: they chose St Hilda’s as their place of worship, and the children attended the Junior Church, where in due course, Kathleen was a helper to the young ones. Later, she gained a place at Kings College, Cambridge, and studied computer graphics and IT, becoming a software engineer. As time went on, she found herself increasing being drawn into pastoral work and became a lay chaplain.

Sister Anne is the ‘Writer’ (artist) of our Icon of St Hilda, which can be seen in the quiet corner of the south aisle of the church. It is a wonderfully strong but serene image, and seems to reflect the way of life of Malling Abbey.

Do visit their website at: https://www.mallingabbey.org

where you will see what beautiful grounds surround the Abbey, and read about the history – it was a nunnery from the C11th to the Dissolution, and then enjoyed a restoration in the C20th.

*We send heartfelt congratulations to Mother Abbess Anne.*
An extract from their website:

*God seeks us. The truth, beauty and holiness of God draws us into the community. The love of God working in and through the community, transforms us into the likeness of Christ. With joy and awe we need only say 'Yes'.*

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**News from St Hilda's Entertainers and our next event.**

On Thursday 24th September, we're going to meet via Zoom to read Alan Ayckbourn's "Confusions", which is a series of five interconnected one act plays. The scenes are all loosely linked by characters or locations but are separate stories.

There are 22 parts in total, so depending on how many people join, there may need to be some doubling up.

We would welcome anyone from the congregation who fancies joining us, without the pressure of being physically on stage!

If you are interested please let us know by Tuesday 22 September on [shentertainersmembers@gmail.com](mailto:shentertainersmembers@gmail.com)

And if you would like to try your hand at Shakespeare, we will be doing a “greatest hits of Shakespeare” on November 5. Same sort of thing, just reading some of the most famous scenes, probably including the Macbeth witches, Romeo and Juliet balcony scene and other “good bits”.

Hope you can join us

Sue Pinfold

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**St Hilda’s is Open**

Over the last few weeks we have welcomed many people back to the Church services, whilst those who continue to self-isolate join the worship via Facebook live.

In recent weeks, approx. 40 people attend on Sunday and a further 12 on the Wednesday services.

We would like to welcome you all back, but only after you have carefully thought about your own personal situation.

We can assure you that the church is as Covid friendly as possible with clear segregation, hand sanitiser availability, as well as the requirement for all to wear facemasks during their time in the building apart from when receiving communion.

If after considering this, you feel you are still not ready to return for any reason, please remember the ministry team are still here for you, and if you wish to speak to Fr Joseph, please either contact him direct or call the Parish Office and Denise will pass on your message.
St Hilda’s Parish News

The Great Ashford Jumble Trail
Following the great success of the Ashford Jumble Trail, another is being arranged
Put the date in your diary – Sunday 18th October
St Hilda’s will again be participating and will be appealing to you all for:
1. Help on the day and beforehand (collecting, sorting etc.)
2. Any donations
   a. Clothes
   b. Toys and Games
   c. Ornaments
   d. Toiletries
   e. Anything else!

Please contact the Parish office if you are either able to help out, have donations you require collecting or whether you have questions.

Pilgrimage
The pilgrimage to the Holy Land that was planned for this November has unfortunately been postponed to March 2022.
Those who have booked this, will shortly be contacted by McCabe with your options, which will be either your booking will be carried forward, or you can cancel and your deposit will be refunded.

Appeal
We have been contacted by a local community project for any unwanted embroidery thread, cotton, wool, or other sewing threads. This includes wool, but no fabrics please.
If you have any that you would like to donate, please either contact the Parish Office or leave in the box at the back of the church. Thank you

Ask the Vicar
Fr. Joseph would like to start a new section in the Newsletter titled ‘Ask the Vicar’, anyone can ask Fr. Joseph any questions where you would like some clarification. It could be faith related, theological, Biblical, doctrinal, or Christian life in general. Fr. Joseph’s replies will then be published in the Newsletter.
NB we will anonymise any names to respect confidentiality.

To ask a question, either send direct to Fr. Joseph or in a sealed envelope to the Parish Office marked ‘Ask the Vicar’.
So, if you have any burning questions you now have the opportunity to raise them!
Electoral Roll
If you consider St Hilda’s to be your regular place of worship, why not complete an application for enrolment on the Church Electoral Roll. Forms are available from the Parish Office, as well as at the back of the church.
Deadline for applications to be received by The Electoral Roll Officer 25th September.

APCM 2020
The date for the APCM this year is
• Sunday 25th October at 11.30am.
This year due to government and Church of England restrictions the APCM will be held via Zoom. As not all will be ‘present’, we are planning to distribute packs and the relevant voting forms to everyone by mid-October. Further details to follow as we are currently in the planning phase for this.

• As Fr. Joseph has mentioned over the last few weeks, we would like you all to consider applying to join the PCC. If you would like to learn more about being a PCC member, please speak to Fr. Joseph or a Churchwarden (Bobbie or Stuart).
• PCC nomination forms will be available at the back of the church from Sunday.

If you have any Parish News you would like to share, then please send them into the Parish Office.

“Once again, I want to stress that the sermon illustration I just used is purely fictional and is not based upon anyone here in the congregation.”
Tea and Chat after Sunday Service

We would like to invite you to join us for a virtual Tea and Chat after the service on **Sunday 20 September 2020 at 11.15am**. See below on how to join. Any queries please call the Parish Office.

The meeting is hosted by Zoom.
There are 2 ways in which you can join the Tea and Chat session

1. Join via a computer or tablet, for a video style experience (like Skype)
   - Download the Zoom app – [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us)
   - Click – Join a Meeting
   - Enter the Meeting id – **921 8336 7918**
   - Enter password – **901967**

   - Dial – 0203 051 2874
   - Enter Meeting Id – **921 8336 7918** – and follow instructions (you will be asked to press # and 1)
   - Password – **901967**

More Tea ... – Weekday Tea and Chat

The second of the weekly Tea and chat sessions where you are able to ‘meet up’ over a cuppa. In this weekly session, we have introduced a topic for discussion – **This week however, there is no topic and would welcome everyone for a general chit-chat.**

If you haven’t yet joined one of these sessions – give it a try, you can connect either on-line or via the telephone, we would like to see or hear as many of you as possible and encourage you to join us. We encourage all those who haven’t yet joined one of the sessions to do so, and if you have any apprehension in doing so, please call the Parish Office and Denise will guide you through the process – it is quite simple once you’ve done it once.

This week the Tea and Chat will be held on **Tuesday 22 September @ 10.30am**
The codes are as per the following, to join follow the instructions above

- Meeting id – **947 9533 1295**
- Password – **506112**
Canaan Ministries have re-opened, and are following the latest government legislation in relation to the current guidelines on social distancing.

Opening times - Monday to Saturday 10am – 5pm (closing during lunchtime 1pm – 2pm), so there will be plenty of time to see and serve everyone. Free local home delivery is also possible.

We would like to thank you all for your continued support, and we hope, your much needed support in the future.

Crossroads
Please email Rosemary at crossroads_ashford@hotmail.com if you have anything to be included in the parish magazine. The September edition is now available on our website.

This weeks services
Sunday Eucharist – 20 September @ 9.30am
This service can be viewed via our Facebook page, our new YouTube channel (St Hilda’s Ashford), and Twitter for those of you who are unable to attend in person.

Wednesday Eucharist – 23 September @ 9.45am

To attend either service please book a ticket on Eventbrite (link on the website), or call the Parish Office. Please remember that face coverings are mandatory in Church.

Please see our website (www.sthilda.org) for updates and the weekly service sheet.

Deuteronomy 10:17
For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe,
Please hold in your prayers and thoughts this week those who are affected by the Corona Virus as well as the family and friends of those below.

**The Sick**
- James Bedford
- Pamela Claridge
- Robb Clarke
- Rebecca Cohen
- Ann Considine
- Chris Davenport
- Michael Dixon
- Jim Hennessey
- Jane Johnson
- Libby Mills
- Raymond Nation
- June Prentice
- John Radford
- Elizabeth Savill-Burgess
- Delphine Scrivener
- Riley Shaw
- Anne Shenton
- Elsie Stone
- Roy Stone
- Sandra Swain
- Rev. Peter Taylor
- Chick Wilson
- Peter Wilson
- Jo Wood
- Nic
- Martyn
- Joey

**The Recently Departed**
- Christopher Court
- Cyril Winter
- Shirley Warrender

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Prayer

Almighty God,

whose only Son has opened for us
a new and living way into your presence:
give us pure hearts and steadfast wills
to worship you in spirit and in truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen
Puzzle Page

Word Snake

Instructions
Can you find 11 words relating to the subject ‘Wet’
Start at the Red letter and follow a path, until all the letters are used.

Riddle
What word in the English language does the following:
The first two letters signify a male, the first three letters signify a female, the first four letters signify a great, while the entire word signifies a great woman.
What is the word?

Sudoku

Word Wheel

How many words can you find using the centre letter?
There is one 10 letter word, title of the next Entertainers event.

Answers from last week

Wordsearch

Os and Xs

Word Wheel

9 letter word – Electoral

Riddle
They were all married couples