



St Hilda's  
Ashford

# 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](mailto:office@sthilda.org)
- Father Joseph can be contacted on 01784 254237

[www.sthilda.org](http://www.sthilda.org)



## *Christmas Services at St Hilda's*

6<sup>th</sup> @ 9.30am - Eucharist (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent)

9<sup>th</sup> @ 9.45am - Wednesday Eucharist

11<sup>th</sup> @ 5.30pm - *An Advent Journey to Christmas*

13<sup>th</sup> @ 9.30am - Eucharist (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent)

13<sup>th</sup> @ 4.00pm - *Christingle*

16<sup>th</sup> @ 9.45am - Wednesday Eucharist

20<sup>th</sup> @ 9.30am - Eucharist (4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent)

23<sup>rd</sup> @ 9.45am - Wednesday Eucharist

24<sup>th</sup> @ 3.00pm - *Crib Service*

24<sup>th</sup> @ 11.00pm - *Midnight Mass*

25<sup>th</sup> @ 9.30am - *Christmas Day Service*

27<sup>th</sup> @ 9.30am - Sunday Eucharist

All services MUST be pre-booked to ensure we comply with Track and Trace regulations

Tickets for all services in Red are available for booking now,  
please call the Parish Office to book a seat or book via the Website

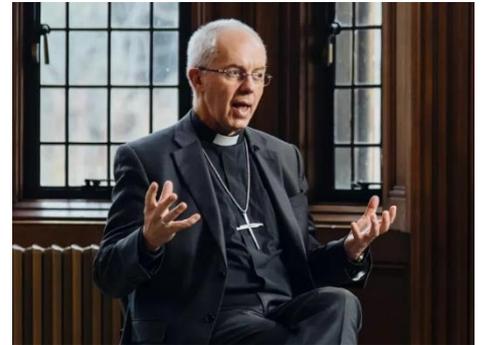
## Justin Welby backs campaign to combat Christmas loneliness

The Archbishop of Canterbury has lent his support to a new campaign aiming to combat loneliness over Christmas.

Justin Welby is backing efforts by a coalition of organisations to connect communities via a Great Winter Get Together.

The initiative of The Jo Cox Foundation, which is now in its fourth year, will run from December 14 to January 18.

As part of this month of activities, the Together Coalition is launching #ChristmasTogether, which calls on the public to reach out to someone and to sign up to bring Christmas cheer to someone as an NHS Volunteer Responder.



It comes as new research from The Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) suggested more than one in five people are concerned that they will not see anyone over Christmas.

The RVS said the next few weeks will be tough going for the most vulnerable people, amid continuing Covid-related restrictions.

A survey of 2,400 adults found that 22% fear they will not see anyone over the festive break, while around one in six said they were “dreading” Christmas.

Just over half of respondents said their plans for Christmas would be disrupted.

Since the second lockdown began, the RVS said it had reported a 36% increase in demand for support via its Volunteer Responders scheme.

Catherine Johnstone, chief executive of the RVS, said: “We are very proud of the support our wonderful volunteers have provided to those in need throughout the pandemic so far.

“However, we are already seeing a rise in requests for help as we approach the festive period and vulnerable people are inevitably feeling isolated.

“This Christmas is likely to be tough going for the most vulnerable in our communities and many will be spending it on their own. The help of volunteers is needed more than ever before.”

Kim Leadbeater, ambassador for The Jo Cox Foundation, said: “After such a difficult year the Great Winter Get Together is more important than ever.

“It has been inspirational to see how communities have pulled together during such challenging times and this campaign provides the perfect platform for this to continue.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: “This Christmas might feel very different than normal for many of us. What has not changed is what we are celebrating: The birth of Jesus Christ, who came to be with us, and who promised never to leave us.

“And so this Christmas, let’s take hold of this, and reach out to any who might be lonely or isolated.

"That is one of the messages of Christmas, and it is wonderful that the Together Coalition is promoting it, and encouraging all of us to join in."

Earlier this year, singer Sophie Ellis-Bextor, who is also backing the campaign, entertained fans during the Covid-19 lockdown by hosting "Kitchen Discos" which were streamed online.

She kicked off the #ChristmasTogether campaign through a video call with Owen McGhee in Scarborough.

Mr McGhee, 51, said: "I live alone, but until this pandemic, I never knew the real difference between being alone and being lonely.

"My mental health took a toll when I found out we weren't able to go out and meet people and I was struggling to find the motivation to look after myself."

The start of lockdown came at a difficult time when Mr McGhee was suffering with both his physical and mental health.

He referred himself for the NHS Volunteer Responder programme after hearing about its launch, which he said had been "the light at the end of a dark tunnel".

"The little chats lift my spirits and it's so nice to just have a conversation with someone new," he added.

"All of the volunteers are interesting and kind and the service has been vital for my mental wellbeing."

Father,

We pray for all those who are lonely this Christmas.

Draw near to them by your spirit, God, and comfort them.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

## **Archbishop of York says inequality highlighted by coronavirus pandemic should make us 'build a better world'**

The Archbishop of York has said he does not want things to return to how they were before the coronavirus outbreak.

Speaking to Premier, Stephen Cottrell said that UK society should focus on building a better version of the world once the pandemic is over.

"The last government came in on a manifesto to level things up, particularly in the North," he said. "And I think we have to acknowledge that covid has hit poorest communities disproportionately."

He added: "I don't want to go back to normal. I want us to build a better world. And part of that better world must be acknowledging inequalities of wealth and opportunity."

Cottrell praised the role that the church has played during the pandemic, helping with homelessness and setting up food banks, but said that he would like for the church to not need to do it at all.



"It's scandalous that we need food banks in a country like ours," Cottrell said. "It's a sign of failure," he added, before clarifying that the comment was not aimed at a particular political party but rather was "an observation that this is not how things are meant to be, and we could do it differently".

The Archbishop also highlighted that coronavirus has actually helped society to value one another more:

"Who would have thought this time last year, that if you ask somebody 'Who is an essential worker in the British economy?', they would have said 'The person who stacks the shelves in the supermarkets'? We've come to appreciate people in new and better ways, and therefore I think we can build on that."

Cottrell continued: "I'd like to see us living in a society where everybody has a stake, everybody has an equal opportunity...that's the kind of world I think we should build, and I'm looking for cross-party consensus.

"As a leader in the church, I will use my influence to speak up for those who don't have these things."

## **Some parents would 'cancel Christmas if they could'**

Struggling parents admit they would avoid celebrating Christmas if they could as they face financial and mental health pressures during the Covid-19 pandemic, according to new research.

Action for Children, a charity supporting vulnerable young people, founded by Methodist minister Reverend Thomas Bowman Stephenson in 1869, questioned two thousand parents and children on their feelings and concerns ahead of the festive season.

Sally Noden is a Children's Service Manager from Action for Children, she told Premier many of those surveyed would "cancel Christmas if they could."

"We did a real deep deep dive of families that have used the emergency fund and what we found was that people's living costs had gone up hugely, that people were really struggling to pay their bills ..."

"We seeing children who aren't able to attend schools, not because they can't go, but because of their anxieties, we are seeing children having nightmares around getting covid or family members getting covid and people dying ... we know that some families do struggle at this time of year but we are just seeing more and more families."

The polling found that one in six (17%) parents would "cancel" the festive holiday this year if they could, while over half of children (57%) think their parents will be worried about



making it a happy time for their family.

Nearly half (46%) of surveyed parents on Universal Credit said they were facing their first ever Christmas on the benefit, with 41% of these wishing they could cancel Christmas and 55% reporting plans to delay paying household bills, borrow money or sell belongings to pay for festive celebrations.

The findings come from an online survey, conducted by pollster YouGov between October and November, of 1,060 parents of children aged 18 and under and 1,031 children aged six to 15.

Polling revealed that around half of children (49%) reported feeling anxiety, a third felt lonely (33%), a quarter felt angry (26%) and more than a third (38%) said they were scared of falling ill or dying.

One in five (22%) parents reported their children having mood swings or panic attacks, while 13% of children admitted to suffering nightmares.

Carol Iddon, deputy chief executive of Action for Children, said: "Christmas should be the most exciting time of the year but instead children and young people are desperately struggling to get through this crisis, with parents wishing away the pressure of the festive season.

"Every day our frontline workers are helping parents keep their heads above water as some face the prospect of eviction or selling belongings to cover the cost of Christmas, while vulnerable children who should be enjoying a safe and happy childhood are suffering nightmares, panic attacks, or being scared of issues like death and illness."

She urged the Government not to reduce benefits payments next year.

In interviews, families told the charity of the difficulties they face in meeting their basic needs as coronavirus restrictions increase living costs.

Parents Caroline Rose and Neil Tugby, both aged 28 and from Sandwell near Birmingham, were both made redundant shortly after the first lockdown.

Their daughter Heidi was born prematurely and has been in and out of hospital while Ms Rose was on maternity leave.

With finances tight, the couple were helped by Action for Children to buy food and toys.

"I'm dreading Christmas as I'm struggling with my mental health, and Neil's hair and beard is falling out from all the stress too," Ms Rose said.

"I've found a part-time job but it's not enough and Neil found a temp job but because we're now shielding for another operation for Heidi, they had to let him go after only a few weeks.

"I think we have £12.12 in the bank right now. How am I going to pay our rent? We're probably going to lose our house as our savings have run out. I'm now considering selling my engagement ring. We'd definitely be cancelling Christmas this year if we could."

Mike Trower, 32, a single parent from Paignton in Devon, was forced to put on hold plans to open a new business as the Covid-19 crisis unfolded.

He described how his four-year-old son Cody's behaviour changed during lockdown.

"He now has real social anxiety," Mr Trower, who is also father to two-year-old Lara, said. "He regularly tells me he's sad and angry. He'll scream out the car window and cry and have a panic attack - it's because he's spent so much time with me this year and now he struggles to be on his own."

People are encouraged to donate to Action for Children's Secret Santa campaign to help support vulnerable children by texting CHILD to 70607 or visiting [iamsanta.org.uk](https://iamsanta.org.uk).

Heavenly Father,

We pray for all those in need this Christmas time. May they find joy in the birth of Jesus during this season.

We give thanks for the work of charities like Action for Children.

Amen

## British archaeologist claims to have identified Jesus' childhood home

A British archaeologist has said there is a "strong case to be made" that a house excavated in Nazareth is the childhood home of Jesus Christ. Professor Ken Dark of the University of Reading has spent almost fifteen years studying the site, and says that while it is impossible to say for certain that it was the home of Jesus, experts are "about as close as we will probably ever get to being able to say it was".

Claims that the home belonged to Jesus, Mary and Joseph's home were made all the way back in the 19th century, but archaeologists later dismissed the idea in 1930s, citing a lack of evidence. The first-century dwelling remained largely forgotten until Prof Dark launched a new investigation into the site back in 2006.



"I didn't go to Nazareth to find the house of Jesus, I was actually doing a study of the city's history as a Byzantine Christian pilgrimage centre," Dark told the BBC.

"Nobody could have been more surprised than me."

The archaeologist said that the dwelling was discovered beneath Byzantine-era church, which in turn lies under the Sisters of Nazareth Convent.

He said: "We know from written evidence this church was believed in the Byzantine period to have been built on the site of Jesus' home and the dwelling preserved in its crypt.

"It's almost certainly the Church of the Nutrition, which was dedicated to the upbringing of Christ, and mentioned in a 7th Century pilgrim's account."

The archaeologist added that the house was carved into the hillside by a "tekton" - a term used to describe someone who is gifted at stonemasonry. In the New Testament, Joseph is referred to as a tekton because of his skills as a craftsman.

While he said it wasn't possible to prove beyond any doubt, Prof Dark told the Jerusalem Post that it "was probably the structure believed by Christians from the fourth century at latest to be that house" and that there is "no archaeological reason why that identification is necessarily impossible".

## BAH Humbug 2020

Hands up if, like me, you are fed up with Christmas celebrations starting in November.

I recently had to restrain myself from knocking on the door of a house just round the corner from me who had sprayed a *Merry Christmas* on their window in early November. Possibly even before Remembrance Day! I wanted to point out to them that Christmas is a festival celebrated by Christians around the world and it is on the 25<sup>th</sup> December!

And as I am writing this I am hearing an announcement that Tuesday, the 1<sup>st</sup> December, BBC Radio 2 will be having a Christmas Party!



Now don't get me wrong: retailers do need to get their Christmas stock in and people do need to buy things to give as presents. I need to post presents to Canada in goodly time. But Mince Pies and Christmas Puddings on sale in October with a November sell by date! Oh, and don't get me started on Easter Eggs and Hot cross buns in shops before the end of December!

Yes I have made my cake, puddings and mincemeat, but they won't be served until Christmas Day! Though custom has it that we can have a mince pie after the Crib Service with a cup of tea. And no decorations, lights, or tree go up until a couple of days before the 25<sup>th</sup>.

My delight is in the crib Service, Midnight Mass and Service of the Day. And only then can Christmas presents be opened. (Ask my children!)

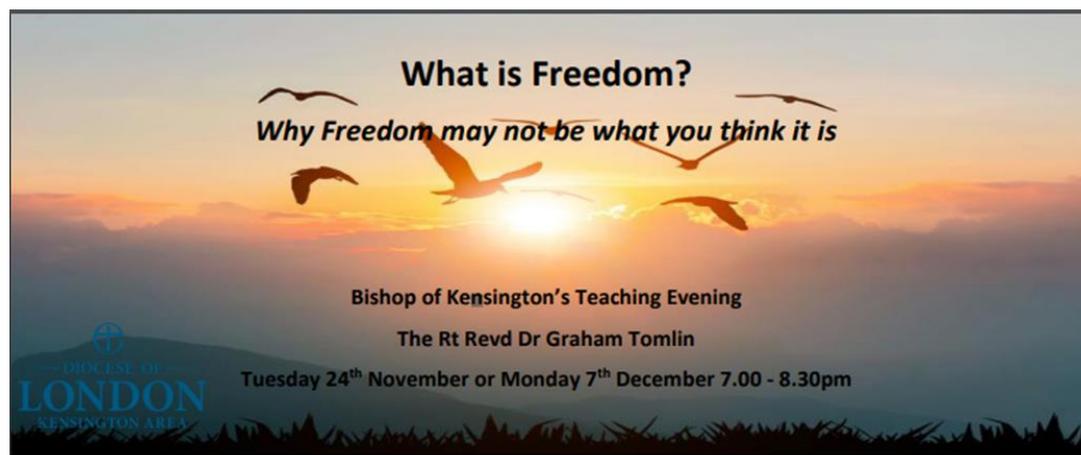
So why is it that Christmas, a major Christian Festival, which marks the birth of Christ, God's Anointed One, is so misappropriated. No other Faiths have their major Festivals so commercialised and trivialised.

Yes I am a right BAH HUMBUG, but I value my faith and its rhythms. So let us continue to mark Advent a time of waiting as we journey towards Christmas and then when the day

comes we can enjoy it with enthusiasm, with all of the attached traditions. Remembering the Christ child who grew up on earth among us and then died that we might have eternal life is so important that we should not cheapen and trivialise it.

Rosalyn Young

## St Hilda's Parish News



**What is Freedom?**  
*Why Freedom may not be what you think it is*

Bishop of Kensington's Teaching Evening  
The Rt Revd Dr Graham Tomlin  
Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November or Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 7.00 - 8.30pm

*Freedom is one of the big ideas of our culture. We long for it, fight wars over it and guard our freedoms jealously. Some have seen the imposition of restrictions during the pandemic as an infringement of civil liberties. Christian faith also speaks of freedom, yet in ways that can seem strange, with ideas such as obedience, and the value of servanthood. What is a Christian understanding of freedom and how does it differ from secular ideas? During this evening, with opportunity for questions and interaction, Bishop Graham will explore how a Christian understanding of freedom can be truly liberating.*

This Zoom (of course!) event will be repeated twice. It is open to anyone in or connected to churches in the Kensington Area, and should be an excellent time to think together about how our Christian faith works out in practice in one of the most important ideas of our time.

If you would like to come, please register on Eventbrite here <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/what-is-true-freedom-why-freedom-may-not-be-what-you-think-it-is-tickets-126125931055> and the Zoom link will be emailed to you

We attended the first session earlier this week, I know several of you also attended and we hope you agree that it was very thought provoking which led onto a very insightful Q&A session.

We strongly recommend that if you are able to, to join the 2<sup>nd</sup> session on 7<sup>th</sup> December.

## Ashford Christmas Craft Trail - Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December

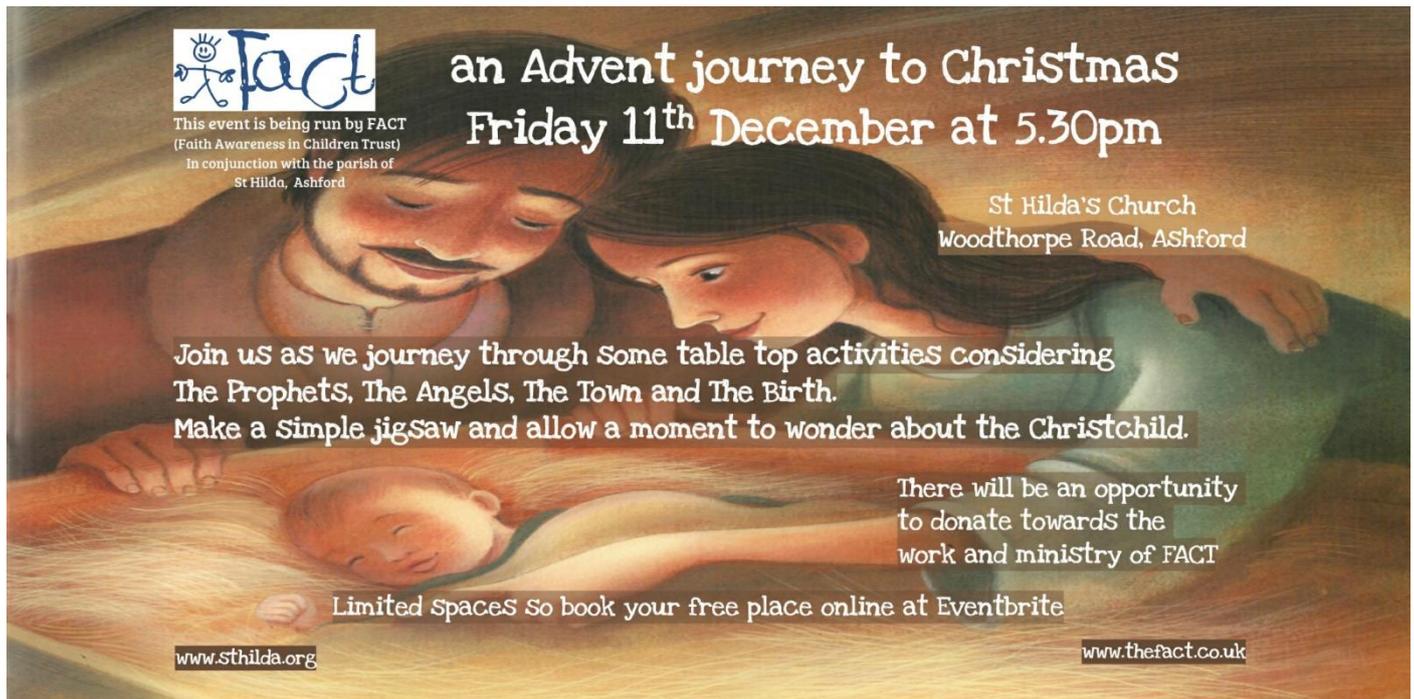
It's with regret due to the current climate, we have decided not to take part in this event. If anyone has already baked cakes for this event, would you please consider donating these to The Salvation Army (see below section).

## Remembrance Lilies

With Christmas festivities around the corner we have unfortunately come to the decision that we will not be displaying remembrance lilies. We appreciate that this will be of great disappointment to the many of you who have purchased lilies in memory of loved ones. We will roll this over to next Easter, if however, you would like a refund, then please contact the parish office and we arrange for monies to be returned. Thank you for your understanding on this matter.

Remembrance art installation, we are planning to keep the display up until the end of the year, so that everyone can get to see this magnificent work of art in person.

**An Advent journey to Christmas – Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December @ 5.30pm**



**an Advent journey to Christmas**  
**Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December at 5.30pm**

St Hilda's Church  
 Woodthorpe Road, Ashford

Join us as we journey through some table top activities considering  
 The Prophets, The Angels, The Town and The Birth.  
 Make a simple jig-saw and allow a moment to wonder about the Christchild.

There will be an opportunity  
 to donate towards the  
 work and ministry of FACT

Limited spaces so book your free place online at Eventbrite

[www.sthilda.org](http://www.sthilda.org) [www.thefact.co.uk](http://www.thefact.co.uk)

**Salvation Army Foodbank Appeal**

In place of the Christmas Hamper raffle that we ran over the last couple of years, we will be supporting the mission of The Salvation Army with both their foodbank appeal as well as their Christmas Day afternoon tea delivery.

Below is a list of the items that they are most in need at the moment.

- Tinned meats
- Tea and Coffee
- UHT Milk
- Tuna
- Toilet roll
- Sugar
- Biscuits
- Cereal
- Christmassy chocolate bars



**THE SALVATION ARMY** Staines  
 Salvation Army  
 Church and Community Centre

**Please help us to help local families in need this Christmas**

Please consider donating in one of the following ways:  
 Donate via Just Giving  
[www.justgiving.com/fundraising/staineschristmasappeal](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/staineschristmasappeal)  
 or  
 Donate a toy via our Amazon Wish list  
<https://bit.ly/36h90hi>  
 or  
 Bring a NEW unwrapped toy to our address below (after lockdown ends)  
 Last delivery to The Salvation Army is 12pm Saturday 12th December 2020

We will also be delivering a gift and meal on Christmas day to those who will be alone.  
 Donations to this project would also be gratefully received  
[www.justgiving.com/fundraising/staineschristmasappeal](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/staineschristmasappeal)

*Happy Christmas and thank you!*  
*Jesus is the reason for the season, and He is the reason that we help others.*

**The Salvation Army, Woodthorpe Rd, Ashford, TW15 3JY 01784 423424**  
 Registered Charity no. 214779

### **Christmas services – help required**

Over the festive period, there will be a number of services held in the church often on consecutive days, and to ensure we maintain our high standard of being covid safe, there is a need for a 'clean' after each service (this will involve wiping touch points and chairs). If you are able to spend 15-20 minutes after any of the services to help out with this, please let Denise know.

### **Memorial Tree**

Waitrose has again very kindly donated a wonderful Christmas tree that will be used as our Memorial tree this year (picture on front cover).

As in previous years, we will be inviting everyone/ anyone to dedicate a 'star' with a message to a loved one to be hung on a branch of the tree.

This year, however, we will need to do things a little different to ensure we comply with covid guidelines. We will still supply the stars and these will spread out on a table close by so that you only touch the one(s) that you would like to dedicate, we request though that you bring your own pen. Donations are voluntary.

We will be opening the church on the 3 Saturday's before Christmas between 10.30 - 11.30am for anyone who is unable to come to church on Sunday's.

Alternatively, you can either send your message by email or phone the parish office and we'll complete one on your behalf.



### **Christmas Wishes**

We would like to invite everyone to send in any Christmas wishes that we can publish in the newsletter. These will be printed in the last newsletter before Christmas.

Please send your Christmas wishes by email or post to the parish office.

### **St Hilda's Church Email**

Please note, the old email is no longer accessible. If you need to contact the parish office, please use – [office@sthilda.org](mailto:office@sthilda.org) or the new main email [sthilda28@gmail.com](mailto:sthilda28@gmail.com)

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

# A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

With Father Steve Gayle  
& Father Joseph Fernandes  
15—24 March 2022

If you are interested in finding out, there are brochures at the back or the church, alternatively speak to Fr. Joseph.



## GOING BACK TO CHURCH

THINGS TO REMEMBER

**THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

**HOW TO GREET PEOPLE**

**THE BEST WAY TO UNDERTAKE REGULAR TASKS**

**WHERE WE'RE UP TO ON THE ROTAS**

## Tea and Chat after Sunday Service

With new lockdown in place, this is a great opportunity for you to have a cup of favourite brew whilst have a chat amongst the St Hilda's Community.

We would like to invite you to join us for a virtual Tea and Chat after the service on **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December 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 – **945 2428 2823**
- Enter password – **066039**

2. Join via telephone – cost of a local call.

- Dial – 0203 051 2874

## 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.

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 8<sup>th</sup> December @ 10.30am**

The codes are as per the following, to join follow the instructions above

- Meeting id – **993 6205 7729**
- Password – **493198**

**Canaan Ministries** are now fully re-open (with normal shop hours). HOWEVER, if you are unable to get into the shop, they are able to deliver anything you require. Just simply phone or email them and they will look after you.

They sell a vast and diverse number of products; it is difficult to keep everything they sell on their website.

They would like to thank you all for your much-needed continued support.

In addition, please join the (Canaan) Facebook group, as it will be the best way for them to keep everyone up to date in this fast-changing situation that we find ourselves in!

Any other information can be found on their website [www.canaanchristianministries.co.uk/](http://www.canaanchristianministries.co.uk/)

### Galatians 3 v 27

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

### Crossroads

Please email Rosemary at [crossroads\\_ashford@hotmail.com](mailto:crossroads_ashford@hotmail.com) if you have anything to be included in the parish magazine. The December edition is now available on our website.

### This weeks services

#### Sunday Eucharist – 6<sup>th</sup> December @ 9.30am

This service can be viewed via our Facebook page, our new YouTube channel (St Hilda's Ashford), and Twitter.

#### Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December @ 9.45am

To attend either the Sunday or Wednesday service please book a ticket on Ticket Tailor (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](http://www.sthilda.org)) for updates and the weekly service sheet.

### Vacancy – St Hilda's

We have 2 vacancies for cleaners on a job share basis for the Church Hall,

the requirement will be 2 hours per day 7 days a week.

The hours will be either early mornings or late evening.

References will be required

If interested please contact the Parish Office.

**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	Eileen Gilbert	Elizabeth Savill-Burgess	Chick Wilson
Michael Browne	Jim Hennessey	Delphine Scrivener	Peter Wilson
Pamela Claridge	Jean Iddiols	Riley Shaw	Jo Wood
Robb Clarke	Jane Johnson	Anne Shenton	Erin
Rebecca Cohen	Libby Mills	Elsie Stone	Joey
Ann Considine	Raymond Nation	Roy Stone	Martyn
Michael Dixon	June Prentice	Sandra Swain	Nic
Peter Garner	John Radford	Rev. Peter Taylor	

### **The Recently Departed**

#### **Prayer**

Almighty God,  
 give us grace to cast away the works of darkness  
 and to put on the armour of light,  
 now in the time of this mortal life,  
 in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;  
 that on the last day,  
 when he shall come again in his glorious majesty  
 to judge the living and the dead,  
 we may rise to the life immortal;  
 through him who is alive and reigns with you,  
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, now and for ever.  
 Amen

