



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*

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

30<sup>th</sup> @ 9.45am - Wednesday 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

## Can Christmas be cancelled?

On the run up to Christmas, many people will be faced with the dilemma of how to celebrate Christmas this year, as we struggle with the harsh reality of a pandemic. There were talks that stopping people from different households to get together would effectively mean to 'cancel' Christmas and ruin the religious festival. Beyond the demagogic rhetoric, can Christmas be cancelled? We can no more cancel Christmas than to stop a sunrise or sunset, but what we can is to embrace the true spirit of Christmas and an understanding of power that finds its roots in service and in the flourishing of the other. Is it the spirit of Christmas to put our loved ones in the way of physical harm? Is it the spirit of Christmas to put others at risk? This virus is not the follower of festivals, but we are. As Advent comes to an end and we celebrate Christmas, let us offer all within our communities the best possible Christmas present - life itself - by adhering to measures that protects us and others.

Christmas cannot be cancelled, because the incarnation cannot be stopped. The incarnation sees God entering into humanity and redeeming it once and for all. Christ is present with us in this Pandemic seeking to serve us in the here and now. God has not changed any more than Christmas can be cancelled. At all times, each one of us is called to be both an agent of Christ's service and an agent of Christ's transforming and transfiguring love.

As the prayer of St. Teresa of Avila teaches us:

Christ has no body but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which He looks  
Compassion on this world,  
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,  
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,  
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.  
Christ has no body now but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
compassion on this world.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

By living out this prayer over the Christmas season, we offer our families and friends the most precious Christmas gift possible – life, rooted in common good, the serving and flourishing of all. Have a blessed Christmas.

*Revd John Wasley and Fr Joseph*

## Worshippers urged to reserve seats as Christmas services reach capacity

Those wishing to attend services this Christmas time are being encouraged not to leave it too late to book their seats as church buildings reach capacity.

The Church of England has advised churches to set up free ticketing online booking systems to ensure adequate physical distancing can be maintained.

Covid-19 restrictions mean the already popular Christmas services are quickly filling up.

St Paul's Cathedral has no tickets left for its in-person Christmas services.



While York Minster took to Twitter to announce tickets for its 23rd and 24th Carols for Christmas services had sold out, although the services will be livestreamed.

Other churches have added additional services to their programmes to keep up with demand while advising online bookings.

The Church of England also urged churches to add their services and events to its 'A Church Near You' page.

A spokesperson for the Church of England said: "At Christmas, when around 6 million people of all ages wish to attend services to celebrate the birth of Jesus, Covid-19 has meant it is necessary to limit capacity of church buildings to keep everyone safe.

"Churches and cathedrals are using different methods to ensure as many people are able to attend services as possible, by free ticketing, increasing the number of services, outdoor worship, and broadcasting services online.

"There will also be a national online midnight mass led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, bringing Comfort and Joy to anyone who is unable to attend church in person.

"And The Daily Hope telephone line provides worship and music for anyone who is unable to stream services."

Heavenly Father,

We pray that everyone who wants to attend a Christmas church service will be able to do so.

We give thanks that so many have found comfort in your love during the pandemic and may more people come to know you during this Christmas season.

In Jesus' name.

Amen

## **Bishop for Prisons and Deputy Chaplain General commissioned by Archbishop of Canterbury**

The Bishop for Prisons and Deputy Chaplain General have been formally commissioned over Zoom by Justin Welby during a service of evening prayer conducted from Lambeth Palace.



The Bishop of Gloucester, Rachel Treweek, has been commissioned as Bishop for Prisons along with Revd Helen Dearnley who's now formally licensed as Deputy Chaplain General of Prisons.

Revd Helen, who is Anglican Chaplaincy Adviser for HM Prison and Probation Service, spoke to Premier about the position:

"My role is one of support on representing Bishop Rachel in her role, but I work full time for the prison service. And my job is to make sure that

every prison has Anglican chaplains who are well resourced and well supported, and that all those who are in prison can effectively practice their faith and through practicing their faith and be released into society and live law abiding and well rounded, meaningful lives."

As for her future ambitions in the role, Revd Helen said she was hoping to build on the good work that's already underway:

"We live and we work as prison chaplains across hugely diverse prisons and across the whole country. And one of the first things I want to do is continue to build on that community of chaplains and that collegiality. I'm hoping to continue to recruit really good high quality chaplains to the service to retain those who are working with us by investing in them and making sure they know how valued and precious they are.

"And by helping equip people when they want to leave the service, to go back to minister in parish or wherever God is calling them to next. And I want to create a link amongst all prison chaplains that reflects that we are each called to the ministry, that we are compassionate in that ministry and that we are courageous in how we deliver our faith."

Revd Helen added that during the pandemic she has heard stories of people coming back to their faith or even discovering faith for the first time:

"I think you know, this year as well as every year, there are stories of real hope that we're here within our presence. And in many ways this year has been no different. There is real hope. And there is real optimism, that through faith that through the structures that the prison service provides that lives can be changed, and New Beginnings can be forged. And that's really exciting for all of us."

Prayers for Bishop Rachel and Revd Helen were read by the Archbishops of Canterbury, York and Wales during the service.

## Everything You Need to Know About the Meaning of the "12 Days of Christmas"

Did you know that the famous Christmas song started out as a game?



"The Twelve Days of Christmas" (or "12 Days of Christmas") is a holiday classic — and while it may not be as catchy as some of our other favourite Christmas songs, ask anyone what their true love gave them on the first day of Christmas, and they'd probably be able to sing right back, "A partridge in a pear tree!" Plus, a song would never factor heavily into the plot of a Hallmark movie if it didn't fully capture the Christmas spirit.

After hearing the song all season while decorating your Christmas tree, planning your most original holiday party, and baking the most delicious Christmas cookies — you may start to wonder, what does this mean?

Truthfully, not much of the song makes sense from a modern perspective. Why are there so many gifts? What do they mean? Who wants eight maids-a-milking, and what would you even do with them? Like many old stories, we have to understand the time it was first written to understand what it means. Let's take a look at the true story.

### **The lyrics we know are not the originals.**

Though some scholars believe that the song is French in origin, the first print appearance of the song was in the English children's book *Mirth Without Mischief*. If you haven't heard of it, that's probably because it was published in 1780. You can ask the person who shelled out \$23,750 at a Sotheby's auction for a first edition to borrow their copy, but you may not recognize the lyrics. In this version, the "four calling birds" were actually "four colly birds." The term "colly" is Old English slang meaning birds dark as coal, a.k.a. blackbirds. In other old versions of the song, the partridge we know and loved is replaced with a "very pretty peacock upon a pear tree." If you think that's weird, consider a Scottish version that gifts "an Arabian baboon." In 1909, British composer Frederic Austin penned the version we are all familiar with today.

### **The song started out as a game.**

Most historians believe that the song started out a "memory-and-forfeit" game in 1800s England. These types of games were played by British school children, and the rules were simple. When it's your turn, you repeat all the previously sung lyrics, and add the next one. If you can't remember a verse, you owe your opponent a "forfeit," which was usually a kiss or piece of candy.

## The song doesn't contain a secret code about Christianity...

You may have seen this theory floating around via chain emails and message boards. In a nutshell, the theory claims that during a time when Christians were punished for worshipping openly, "The Twelve Days of Christmas" song was used to secretly pass on the ideology of Christianity. In this theory, each gift symbolises a different aspect of the faith:

- ✚ The Partridge in the Pear Tree is Jesus Christ.
- ✚ The 2 Turtle Doves are The Old and New Testaments.
- ✚ The 3 French hens are Faith, Hope, and Charity, the theological virtues.
- ✚ The 4 Calling Birds are the four gospels and/or the four evangelists.
- ✚ The 5 Golden Rings are the first five books of the Old Testament.
- ✚ The 6 Geese A-laying are the six days of creation.
- ✚ The 7 Swans A-swimming are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven sacraments.
- ✚ The 8 Maids A-milking are the eight beatitudes.
- ✚ The 9 Ladies Dancing are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit.
- ✚ The 10 Lords A-leaping are the ten commandments.
- ✚ The 11 Pipers Piping are the eleven faithful apostles.
- ✚ The 12 Drummers Drumming are the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostle's Creed.



Snopes breaks down the many historical and logistical errors in this theory. But the biggest flaw in this claim is that if Christians lived in fear of even mentioning the basic tenants of Christianity, how were they able to sing a song that mentions the word "Christmas" in every lyric?

### ...but it does have one big reference to Christianity.

That being said, one thing historians can agree on is that the twelve days over which the song takes place *is* a reference to Christianity. "The Twelve Days of Christmas" historically did not reference the days leading up to Christmas, but the twelve days following it. The period begins with birth of Christ on December 25th, Christmas Day, and ends with the coming of the Three Wise Men on January 6th, the Epiphany or Three Kings Day.

### Giving someone all the gifts mentioned would be pretty pricey.

Since 1984, PNC Bank has been tracking the price of giving each gift mention in the song with the PNC Christmas Price Index. The index uses current market rates to calculate how much each gift cost on average to the modern consumer. The PNC index is in US\$ though.

The Metro have therefore estimated the cumulative costs of gifts based on the number of times they are mentioned in the song (e.g. A partridge in a pear tree is mentioned in every verse, for a total of 12 times). If you were to buy gifts this way, you'd have to buy 364 gifts at a total cost of £43,070.80. So, "The 12 Days of Christmas" is much better as a song than an actual gift!

## Christmas Traditions Part II

Part II of a few bits and bobs looking at some Christmas Traditions.

### Christmas

Christ--- the anointed one: maesse - festival

It was in the church calendar for Christians in Rome by 336 AD - Earliest mention is by Pope Julius 1 in 4<sup>th</sup> Century: "*Natus Christus in Betleem Judeae*" Birth of Christ in Bethlehem, Judea.

As early as 400AD an imperial prescript ordered closure of theatres at Christmas, Epiphany and Easter. By 567 the 12 days of Christmas lasting from 25<sup>th</sup> Dec – 6<sup>th</sup> January was followed.

### Evergreens symbol of continuous life

- ❖ Holly - the prickliness of the holly is a reminder of the crown of thorns Christ wore on the cross Protection. Linked to Sun God
- ❖ Yew - immortality, renewal, regeneration, everlasting life, rebirth, transformation and access to the Otherworld and our ancestors.
- ❖ Laurel - victory over persecution and suffering
- ❖ Mistletoe - Symbol of life in dark months of winter. Given by Druids as a Blessing.



### Xmas Tree



There is a story of how St Boniface, sent to convert the "heathens" in Bavaria- threw down a mighty revered oak which was replaced by either a fir tree being revealed behind the fallen tree or a new fir tree growing from the oak roots. The following year decorations were hung on it by the local converts.

The triangular shape of traditional firs can be regarded as representing the Trinity

Martin Luther, the 16th-century Protestant reformer, first added lighted candles to a tree. Walking toward his home one winter

evening, composing a sermon, he was awed by the brilliance of stars twinkling amidst evergreens. To recapture the scene for his family, he erected a tree in the main room and wired its branches with lighted candles

Prince Albert brought the German tradition of decorated trees and when it was widely known others copied their Queen.

Following the end of the Second World War, Norway has gifted a tree to the UK annually as a thank you, which has been displayed in Trafalgar Square.

### **Feasting**

The Romans had a festival called Saturnalia in honour of the God Saturn. The Romans knew that the solstice meant that soon, farms and orchards would be green and fruitful. To mark the occasion, they decorated their homes and temples with evergreen boughs. They partied giving presents, turned rules upside, lit candles and had a time of misrule. The date moved over a period of time ending with 25<sup>th</sup> Dec.

### **Carol Service**

Nine Lessons and Carols from Kings was based on an order drawn up by EW Benson and held in a wooden building which served as the Cathedral whilst Truro Cathedral was being rebuilt. It was held at 10pm on Christmas Eve. His son later wrote: "My father arranged from ancient sources a little service for Christmas Eve: 9 carols and 9 tiny readings which were read by various officers of the church beginning with a chorister and ending through the different grades with the bishop."

In 1918 the Dean of Kings, Eric Milner White planned a service based on this and it has become an established event since.



*Rosalyn Young*

## **Christingle 2020 Style**

For many years, St Hilda's Church has held a Christingle Service at the beginning of December. This year, despite the many restrictions currently in force, St Hilda's was determined to maintain this meaningful tradition. The money raised at the Service is very important to The Children's Society as it supports their work giving disadvantaged young people a better chance in life.

In previous years, a group of Mothers' Union members have met in the Church Hall on the Saturday morning, to prepare 150 Christingles ready for the Sunday afternoon Service. This year, of course, preparations had to be on a much smaller scale. On the morning of Sunday

13<sup>th</sup> December, the children who attended Junior Church learnt about the meaning of the Christingle, and then made their own.

In the afternoon there was a socially-distanced service in Church, led by Fr Joseph. The children and adults who came were presented with bags containing all the essential parts they would need to make their Christingles later, at home.

During the Service, Christine Taylor explained the history of the Christingle and what each part represents:



- The orange is the world,
- The red band is Jesus' blood,
- The four sticks are the four seasons and the four points of the compass,
- The sweets and raisins are the fruits of the Earth
- The candle represents Jesus, the Light of the World, and
- The silver star is the star over Bethlehem.

Candles were distributed to the congregation and lit. The Church lights were then turned off, leaving just the glow of the many candles shining in the quiet darkness.

During the Service, it was a pleasure to hear the choir singing three songs, Shine Jesus Shine, Sing Christingle and Away in a Manger.

A big 'Thank You' to everyone involved, those who helped bring this lovely Service together and those who kindly donated a total of **£143** which will now be sent to the Children's Society.

*Chris Davenport*

## Alternative Xmas Carols 2020

- Once in Royal Lockdown City
- While shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night, socially distanced on the ground
- We Three Kings of Orient are bearing vaccines from near and far
- Good King Wenceslas looked out on the feast of covid
- Oh Little Town of Bethlehem, how still we see you lie
- Now in tier 3 from tier one, oh why, oh why, oh why
- God Rest you Merry Gentlemen let nothing you dismay
- Forget the horrid virus and enjoy Christmas Day

*Derek Scott*

## St Hilda's Parish News

### 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
  - Toilet roll
  - Christmassy chocolate bars
- Tuna
  - Sugar
  - Biscuits
  - Cereal

### 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 Saturday 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.





## 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 20<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 – **937 7034 8770**
- Enter password – **578226**

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

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

- Meeting id – **990 9098 2694**
- Password – **504931**

**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/)

**Philippians 4 v 13**

I can do all things through  
him who strengthens me

**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 – 20<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 23<sup>rd</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  | Jim Hennessey            | Delphine Scrivener | Peter Wilson |
| Michael Browne | Jean Iddiols             | Riley Shaw         | Jo Wood      |
| Robb Clarke    | Jane Johnson             | Anne Shenton       | Erin         |
| Rebecca Cohen  | Libby Mills              | Elsie Stone        | George       |
| Ann Considine  | Raymond Nation           | Roy Stone          | Joey         |
| Michael Dixon  | June Prentice            | Sandra Swain       | Martyn       |
| Peter Garner   | John Radford             | Rev. Peter Taylor  | Nic          |
| Eileen Gilbert | Elizabeth Savill-Burgess | Chick Wilson       |              |

**The Recently Departed**

Pamela Claridge

**Prayer**

O Lord Jesus Christ,  
 who at your first coming sent your messenger  
 to prepare your way before you:  
 grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries  
 may likewise so prepare and make ready your way  
 by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of  
 the just,  
 that at your second coming to judge the world  
 we may be found an acceptable people in your sight;  
 for you are alive and reign with the Father  
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, now and for ever.  
 Amen

## Puzzle Page

### Join the 'Q' Wordsearch (puzzle created by Terry Rickson)

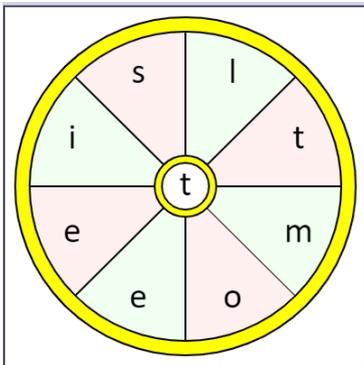
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| T | K | O | C | O | Q | C | D | L | H | D | I | F | R | C |
| R | A | D | U | S | B | V | K | R | J | U | L | M | P | Y |
| A | N | J | K | Q | U | E | E | N | Q | B | K | S | O | N |
| U | M | L | S | U | D | W | J | S | U | Z | J | T | S | J |
| Q | S | P | Z | I | U | Q | F | V | E | J | B | A | K | L |
| Z | M | R | Y | P | X | A | D | T | S | L | S | C | V | P |
| S | O | Q | Q | B | Z | Q | U | I | T | K | A | R | W | O |
| P | Z | U | W | D | U | S | E | J | L | U | M | X | J | K |
| O | A | F | J | O | M | K | X | B | Q | V | P | Z | A | I |
| Y | V | D | T | N | I | A | U | Q | N | O | R | B | F | T |
| N | K | E | L | F | K | L | R | D | H | C | N | E | U | Q |
| T | D | Z | M | J | L | J | P | E | M | D | T | Y | E | V |

- QUACK
- QUAINT
- QUAY
- QUARTET
- QUEEN
- QUENCH
- QUERY
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- QUIET
- QUIP
- QUIT
- QUIVER
- QUIZ
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### Sudoku

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|   | 3 |   |  |   | 2 |   |   |   |   |
| 6 | 5 |   |  | 4 |   |   |   | 9 | 2 |
|   |   |   |  | 7 |   |   |   | 3 |   |
|   |   |   |  |   |   |   | 8 |   | 1 |
| 1 |   | 2 |  |   | 8 |   |   |   |   |
|   |   | 6 |  | 9 |   | 2 |   |   |   |

### Wordwheel



How many words can you find using the centre letter?  
There is one 9 letter word, one of the Evergreens.

**Riddle**  
Turn me on my side and I am everything  
Cut me in half and I am nothing  
What am I?

### Answers from last week

#### Wordsearch

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |   |
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| N | L |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  | A |
| C | O | U |   | B | O | D | I | A | M |   |  |  |  | R |
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| T | O | C | O | N | W | A | Y |   |   |   |  |  |  | B |
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| K | E | N | I | L | W | O | R | T | H |   |  |  |  | O |
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#### Futoshiki

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| ^ |   |   |   |   |   | ^ | v |   |
| 5 | 2 |   | 6 |   | 1 | 4 | > | 3 |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | v |
| 3 | 6 | > | 4 | < | 5 | 2 | 1 |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 6 | > | 3 | 1 | 2 | 5 | > | 4 |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1 | 4 | > | 2 | < | 3 | 6 | 5 |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4 | > | 1 | 5 | < | 6 | 3 | 2 |   |

**Word Wheel**  
10 letter word –  
Traditions

**Riddle**  
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