

Christmas Wishes

Wishing all my friends a joyful Christmas and a peaceful new year.
Best wishes Sheila

Happy Christmas and love to everyone at St Hilda's
Eileen Edwards

To Father Joseph and everyone at St Hilda's
Wishing you a safe and happy Christmas
Looking forward to receiving the vaccine
and Spring 2021.
God bless
Alan Sloan

Wishing everyone a peaceful and happy Christmas, and pray 2021 will bring us happiness and allow us to be together again
Darran, Denise and family

To all our dear Friends at St Hilda's,
Sending you our warmest wishes for Christmas and the New Year.
We have missed you so much and look forward to seeing you soon.
With love from
Valerie, Sarah and Emma Wrightson

Best wished to you all for a very happy Christmas and a less stressful New Year.
Betty and John Hunt

Wishing all my friends in the family of St. Hilda the peace and joy of Christmas, and praying for a happy, healthy 2021. Rosemary

Hello St Hilda's, as some of you may know I am in Amsterdam, I have been here since the end of November. I had planned to spend Christmas and New Year here with my son, as he lives here and would have been spending the holiday alone. Unfortunately, he has been really unwell and I therefore decided to come over early, it turns out I made the right decision given that the borders are now closed.

I have been taking part in the services via the live stream and feel as though I am there with you all.

I would like to wish you all the best possible Christmas you can have in these difficult times and a very Happy and Healthy 2021. Thank you all for your prayers, I continue to pray for you all. Lots of love Bobbie xx

Does history does repeat itself?

Are we living through unprecedented times? The following narrative sounds familiar:

By mid-December, the death toll seemed to be receding once more. Understanding the need for a celebration and to be with loved ones, the government did not officially impose a lockdown and cancel Christmas, but did devolve responsibility to various local authorities who had to decide what festive events should be allowed to proceed. Schools were closed across the country for up to three weeks over Christmas in an effort to suppress the virus, but shops, churches, and theatres largely remained open, even though this ran contrary to medical recommendations. Tough decisions had to be made about public events, such as carol services and Christmas dinners for the poor and needy... Elsewhere, carol services and Christmas plays were postponed until the following year... People were determined to celebrate Christmas... Newspapers reported that many shops were busier than ever in the run up to Christmas. Many had been forced to close in November and the beginning of December either by their local authority or simply because their workforce was ill, so people rushed to stock up on supplies once they had opened again. Theatres were open, as were churches...

However, it refers to the Influenza pandemic of 1918.

One hundred years later we are facing another Christmas in the grip of a virus that has devastated the world. Once again, difficult decisions have to be made about seeing loved ones, attending public events, and shopping safely. In 1918, the government did not impose an official lockdown, but if they had, it's quite possible many more deaths could have been avoided. Now we have something no one had in 1918: a vaccine that works. It has not been rolled out fully yet, but it is coming. George Bernard Shaw once wrote that "we learn from history that men never learn anything from history". But we have to learn now. Christmas in 1918 shows us how important it is not to drop our defences against a deadly virus, no matter how much we want to or feel that we deserve a good time.¹ Christmas cannot and will not be cancelled. The greatest love story ever told is that of the Incarnation, Emmanuel God with us.

Have a peaceful Christmas filled with hope.

Fr Joseph

¹ Adapted from an article by Dr Kate Lister, 'Influenza permitting': *What happened when Christmas went ahead during the Spanish Flu pandemic*, inews.co.uk, 9December 2020.

A Christmas Letter to Children from the Bishop of London



Dear Children,

Let me please start this letter by thanking you all. This has been such a difficult time for all of us, but the way this pandemic has affected children and young people is easily forgotten. You have done so much to change the way you live to help control the virus and keep those more vulnerable to the virus safe. I know that the way school has changed has caused a great deal of anxiety and uncertainty for all of you, but you've kept going and I hear from our schools so many stories of how hard you are still working and, more importantly, being so kind to one another. You have been an inspiration to me in difficult days.

Although there is now hope on the horizon with the coming of a vaccine, we are about to have a Christmas that will be very different from any before. My dog Bracken has been making the best of the situation by inventing a new game, which gives him hours of fun. He likes to steal the baby Jesus from our nativity and then hare around the flat with him until we manage to catch Bracken and rescue Jesus from being chewed! We are all having to make new plans, maybe you won't be able to see all the people you would normally see. Please remember if you find this all very stressful; that is okay and it is always good to talk to someone about how you feel, we all feel worried or sad at times and it is very normal to do so. A phrase you hear a lot at Christmas is "Comfort and Joy" and I pray you will find that this year through all the mess.

It is funny that the first people to hear the Christmas message of comfort and joy were a group of shepherds who heard it from the angels telling them about Jesus' birth. These were poor men who lived in the fields with the sheep in a country that was ruled harshly by the Romans. I wonder if they thought that message would mean that someone was going to kick the Romans out or they would get better jobs? God's plan was different. In Jesus he came to be with people in all the mess of a stable, but also in all the mess of our lives. The wonder of Christmas is it reminds us that in all the mess that is happening now, Jesus is still with us and he still brings comfort and joy.

When I last wrote to you, I said that you could send me an email and that I would pray for you. I want you to know that you still can. Lots of you did and I was very privileged to be able to pray for you. If you want to, please pray for me too. Being a Bishop can mean

dealing with some difficult things and I would be very grateful if you asked God to help me and give me wisdom.

I hope you have a very happy Christmas and I pray that you would experience the comfort and joy that God gave us through Jesus.

Bishop Sarah

Email your names for prayer to bishop.london@london.anglican.org



Some 'Christmas Cracker' jokes! (Answers on the Puzzle Page)

What does Santa clean his sleigh with?

What did Adam say on the day before Christmas?

What do elves post on Social Media?

What says Oh Oh Oh?

Christmas Around the World

A few snippets of how Christmas is celebrated in other countries, if you are interested in any other country or would like to hear more on these, please let us know and we will share.

Christmas in Portugal

Father Christmas ('Pai Natal') is believed to bring presents to children on Christmas Eve, rather than Christmas Day. The presents are left under the Christmas Tree or in shoes by the fireplace. However, some people say that the presents are brought by the Baby Jesus rather than Father Christmas.

The traditional Christmas meal in Portugal, called 'Consoada', is eaten during the evening of Christmas Eve and consists of codfish with green vegetables and boiled potatoes. This is normally followed by shellfish, wild meats or other expensive foods.

After the meal, people go to church for the 'Missa do Galo' or 'Mass of the Rooster' service. During the service an image of baby Jesus is brought out, and everyone queues up to kiss it. It is then put in the nativity scene (the presépio) that every church will have. After the service people return home and open their presents.

Before leaving for the service, parents secretly put the baby Jesus in the nativity scene in their houses and put the gifts under the Christmas Tree, so that Jesus will 'miraculously' be in his manger by the time the family returns home! Children run to check the nativity scene as soon as they enter the house as no baby Jesus means no presents!



Christmas in New Zealand

Many towns have a Santa parade with decorated floats (made by local businesses and churches, etc.), bands and marching teams. This can be any time from mid November onwards and is really a commercial event but everyone enjoys them. As it's warm, Santa is sometimes seen wearing 'jandals' (New Zealand sandals) and he might even swap his red top for a New Zealand 'All Blacks' rugby shirt!

Children in New Zealand leave out carrots for Santa's reindeer and Santa might be left a beer and some pineapple chunks!

Christmas in Jamaica



The Christmas day meal is usually prepared on Christmas Eve. The Christmas Day breakfast includes ackee and saltfish, breadfruit, fried plantains, boiled bananas, freshly squeezed fruit juice and tea. Dinner is usually served in the late afternoon and this may include turkey, chicken, curry goat, stewed oxtail and very importantly rice and peas.

Jamaican red wine and rum fruitcake is traditional and is eaten in most homes. The fruits in the cake are soaked in red wine and white rum for months before Christmas.

Christmas in The Netherlands

For most children in The Netherlands, the most important day during December is 5th December, when Sinterklaas (St. Nicholas) brings them their presents!

St. Nicholas' Day is on the 6th December, but in The Netherlands, the major celebrations are held on the 5th December, St. Nicholas' Eve. The name Santa Claus comes from the name Sinterklaas.



Christmas in Bangladesh

December 25th is a public holiday for Christmas in Bangladesh even though only about 0.3% of the population, of about 170 million people, are Christians! (Over 85% of people in Bangladesh are Muslims.)

Christmas is known as 'Borodin' (or 'Bara din') which means 'the big day' in Bengali.

Happy/Merry Christmas in Bengali is shubho [or shuvo] bôrodin (শুভ বড়দিন).

Christmas in Finland

Finnish people believe that Santa Claus or Father Christmas lives in the north part of Finland called Korvatunturi (or Lapland), north of the Arctic Circle. People from all over the world send letters to Santa Claus in Finland. There is a big tourist theme park called 'Christmas Land' in the north of Finland, near to where they say that Father Christmas lives.

It means that Santa doesn't have far to travel on Christmas Eve to deliver presents to people in Finland! If he doesn't get a chance to deliver the presents personally, he will often leave them under the Christmas Tree.



In Finland, Santa might also be known as Joulupukki! (This really means 'Christmas Goat' as it was traditional in Finland that there was a Yule Goat who was scary and asked people for presents - and certainly didn't give any out! Over time the goat became the gift giver and then Santa took over the gift giving duties but the name of the Christmas Goat was still retained in Finland!) Joulupukki rides with reindeer leaves gifts under the Christmas tree but if you have been naughty you could end up with a bag of coal!

Christmas in the United States of America

Some Americans use pop-corn threaded on string to help decorate their Christmas Tree. Making gingerbread houses is also popular to make and eat at Christmas! Eggnog is a 'traditional' Christmas drink in the USA.

Christmas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Christmas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is more of a religious festival rather than being commercial. Most people won't have any presents.

Christmas Eve is very important with Churches having big musical evenings (many churches have at least 5 or 6 choirs) and a nativity play. These plays last a very long time. They start at the beginning of the evening with the creation and the Garden of Eden and end with the story of King Herod killing the baby boys.

Christmas in Argentina

Houses are beautifully decorated with lights and wreaths of green, gold, red and white flowers. Red and white garlands are hung on the doors of houses. Christmas Trees are also very popular and they are often decorated by 8th December (the feast of the Immaculate Conception - when Catholics celebrate when Mary was conceived). Some people like to put cotton balls on the Christmas Tree to represent snow!

The Nativity scene or 'pesebre' is also an important Christmas decoration in Argentina. The pesebre is put near to the Christmas tree.



Christmas in Japan

Fried chicken is often eaten on Christmas day. It is the busiest time of year for restaurants such as KFC and people can place orders at their local fast food restaurant in advance! There was an advertising campaign by KFC in the 1974 called 'Kentucky for Christmas!' (Kurisumasu ni wa kentakkii!) which was very successful and made KFC popular for Christmas!

The traditional Japanese Christmas food is Christmas cake, but it's not a rich fruit cake, but is usually a sponge cake decorated with strawberries and whipped cream. The 'shortcake' emoji [🍰] is Japanese Christmas cake!

Christmas in Greenland

In the villages of Polar Inuits, families like to visit each other and have parties. They drink coffee and eat cakes and exchange brightly wrapped parcels. Traditional presents are model sledges, a pairs of polished walrus tusks, or sealskin mitts. Everyone in the village gets a gift and children go from house to house, singing songs.

Christmas in Madagascar

Most people go to Church on Christmas Eve in Madagascar. The services start about 5.00pm and last until after midnight! Different groups in the Church, especially children, perform songs and plays celebrating the birth of Jesus. People also go to Church on Christmas Day as well. After the Christmas Eve or Christmas Day service, churches give out sweets or biscuits to the people in the Church.

Christmas Quiz by Rosalyn Young

1. In which book/ books of the Bible will you find accounts of the Birth of Jesus?
2. In which town did Joseph and Mary live?
3. Why did they travel south and to where?
4. Who was the Emperor of Rome at the time?
5. Who were the first recorded visitors to the baby Jesus?
6. How did they know to visit the baby Jesus?
7. How many people are recorded as following the star?
8. Who did they visit, seeking, "He who is born King of the Jews"?
9. How did they then know to go to Bethlehem?
10. What were they asked to do after visiting Bethlehem? Did they do it?
11. How old was Jesus when they visited?
12. They brought gifts: can you name them?
13. Why did the Mary and Joseph go to Egypt?
14. Where did they finally come to live?

Score 1 point for each correct answer, with 2pts for both correct answers in questions 1, 3 and 10, and 3pts for question 12.

Award yourself with a pat on the back and a generous prize of extra cake, mince pies, chocolate or something liquid for getting Full Marks - 19pts!!

(Answers next edition).

Christmas Quiz – Part II

1. What year marked the first Christmas Jumper Day?
2. Which country introduced the tradition of the Christmas Tree?
3. What is the biggest selling Christmas single of all time?
4. What is a female turkey called?
5. In which city were the McCallister's planning on spending Christmas in Home Alone?
6. What is a Smoking Bishop?
7. Traditionally, when should you start making a Christmas pudding?
8. In which Christmas movies does Tom Hanks play 6 of the characters?
9. In what year did Mariah Carey release 'All I Want For Christmas Is You'?
10. Where are the traditional Christmas plant Poinsettias from?
11. Since 1966, a 13-metre tall Yule Goat has been built in which country for advent?
12. In which modern day country was St Nicholas born?

(Answers next edition)

Faith of the famous: Christian celebrities and what they said in 2020

Tyson Fury

Christian boxer Tyson Fury gave thanks to God after being crowned the WBC heavyweight champion:

"First and foremost I want to say thank you to my Lord and saviour, Jesus Christ. Those who bring evil against me will not prosper, those who stand in the dark can never come into the light. All praise be to the one and only true God, Jesus Christ."



Billy Vunipola



"God put me in a position to spread his word, and I didn't do that, which is what I'm trying to do now. I've definitely had more people asking me questions as to why I have such a strong faith and why I'm willing to stand on my own in certain situations, because of my faith. It's nice to share it with other people and for them to ask questions."

Roberto Firmino

Footballer Roberto Firmino shared a video of his baptism on his Instagram page.

In the caption of the video the Liverpool forward said: "I gave you my failures and the victories I will give you too. My greatest title is Your Love Jesus! "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, new things have come!"



Mark Wahlberg



Actor Mark Wahlberg sat down for an interview with the "Today" show in the U.S. and shared the details behind his prayer life and why he is so outspoken about his faith.

Catholic Wahlberg said: "I will not hide the fact that I love the Lord and I want to be committed to serving the Lord, but I also don't jam it down anybody's throat. But it's better to never have known God than to deny God. I mean, that's not a good look. That's not a good look."

Justin Bieber

Justin Bieber took to his Instagram page throughout the year to speak about his beliefs with a number of messages from the Gospel:

"I follow Jesus. Following Jesus doesn't make me better than anyone else although I know a lot of Christians have made people feel that way.

Another thing to know about following Jesus is that a lot of the time it doesn't change our circumstances. What it does do is give us an ETERNAL JOY that lasts through trials and painful seasons. Although people have failed me, Jesus never has."



St Hilda's Parish News

June Hurdle

We have received the sad news of the passing of June Hurdle.

June was one of the founder members of the St Hilda's playgroup and well known in the St Hilda's community before moving to Crowborough. June passed peacefully on Saturday at 6.15am after a short time in a nursing home since leaving hospital earlier this year, her husband Tony and family were by her bedside at the time. Rest in Peace.

Tea and Chat Sessions

We will be taking a short break from the Tea and Chat sessions, these will resume in the New Year.

How can we serve those who are not online?

To support those who do not have internet access, here is a helpful tool to try:



Daily Hope offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line. The line – which is available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044 – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind.

A message from Jo Wood

I am so grateful to learn of the 'Daily Hope'. For folks like myself its not only a delight and great but the considered thought to consider us who have no computer or knowledge to use one, it really is a wonderful thought and a brilliant idea so appreciated.

Thank you so so much.

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

Canaan Ministries are open until Wednesday this week between 10 -4 for click & collect or arranging a delivery to you. 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/

John 3:16

For God so loved the world
that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who
believes in him may not
perish but may have
eternal life.

Crossroads

Please email Rosemary at 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

Midnight Mass @ 11.00pm

This will be live streamed only via our Facebook page

Christmas Day Eucharist @ 9.30am

Sunday Eucharist – 27th December @ 9.30am

This service can be viewed via our Facebook page, our new YouTube channel (St Hilda's Ashford), and Twitter. Please note, there will be no Junior Church this week.

To attend either the Christmas Day Eucharist or the Sunday service please book a ticket on Ticket Tailor (link on the website), or call the Parish Office.

There is no service on Wednesday 30th December

Please remember that face coverings are mandatory in Church.

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

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 June Hurdle



Heavenly Father,
May our Christmas season be
A time of reconciliation and
peace
May the love of Christ be with us
May His Peace surround us.

May our Christmas be a time
Of healing, giving and sharing
May Your spirit be with us
As we share and care in Jesus'
blessed birth,
Amen!

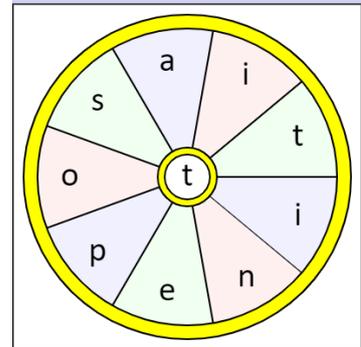
Puzzle Page

Christmas Wordsearch

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

- BETHLEHEM
- FRANKINCENSE
- GABRIEL
- HEROD
- JESUS
- JOSEPH
- KINGS
- MAGI
- MANGER
- MARY
- MIDNIGHTMASS
- NATIVITY
- NAZARETH
- SHEPHERDS
- STABLE
- STAR

Wordwheel



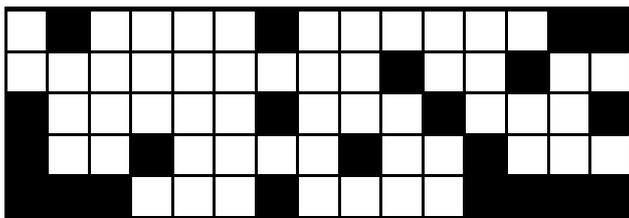
How many words can you find using the centre letter? There is one 10 letter word, a traditional Christmas plant.

Quote Slide

				R	E					P									
				R	A	S	L			A	E	I	T						
				T	O	I	L	T		A	N	N	R	N	A	Y			
I	H	W	T	H	T	M	H	S	A	I	T	R	L	Y					
C	H	E	I	K	E	E	Y	O	D	O	U	R	M	L					

Instructions

Slide the letters into the grid to produce a quote from Charles Dickens.



Riddle

If you have a three litre jug, a five litre jug and an unlimited supply of mulled wine, how would you get exactly four litres without estimating?

Christmas Cracker Riddle Answers (page 5)

1. Santatiser!
2. It's Christmas, Eve!
3. Elfies
4. Father Christmas walking backwards!

Answers from last week

Wordsearch

				R	E	V	I	U	Q										
T													U					T	
E	I																	E	
T	O																	I	R
R			U																Y
A				Q	U	E	E	N	Q										
U				U					U										
Q			Z	I	U	Q			E										K
				P					S										C
			Q			Q	U	I	T		A								
			U								U								
	A								Q										
Y			T	N	I	A	U	Q											
									H	C	N	E	U	Q					

Sudoku

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

Word Wheel

9 letter word –
Mistletoe

Riddle

8, (Infinity, Zero)