

DEC 2024 / JAN 2025 CHRISTMAS

# SPiRE



HAMPTON HILL'S PARISH MAGAZINE YOUR FREE COPY



Happy Christmas!

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## Meet the clergy



### VICAR Rev Derek Winterburn

Derek was born in Orpington, Kent, and ordained in 1986. He served in several diverse London parishes before becoming vicar here in 2016. He is married to Sandra, a teacher, and has two children. A keen photographer, he posts a picture online every day, combining it with a daily walk or cycle ride. He can be contacted at any time other than on Mondays (his day off).

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### ASSOCIATE PRIEST Rev Jacky Cammidge

Jacky was born in Abertillery, South Wales, and ordained in 2015. She is a self-supporting minister, married to Alan, and has three children. During term-time she runs Hampton Hill Nursery School, based in the church hall, with her family.

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## Supported by

### ASSISTANT PRIEST Rev Canon Tim Marwood

Tim taught in London primary schools for 36 years. He was ordained priest in 1996 and was parish priest at Petersham for 13 years, retiring in 2021. He is now a part-time Chaplain at Kingston Hospital. Tim is married to Jane, a former headteacher.

He supports Harlequins RFC, England cricket and walks his brown labrador, Ruby.

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### ASSISTANT PRIEST Rev Canon Julian Reindorp

Julian was born in Durban, South Africa, and ordained in 1969. He has worked in parishes in East London, Chatham and Milton Keynes, and was Team Rector in Richmond until retirement in 2009. He continues to lead a busy life, is married to Louise and has four children, three stepchildren, and nine grandchildren.

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Time seems to be flying by and we are already getting immersed in Christmas preparations. I haven't been in the shops recently, so have been spared the Christmas music!

There seem to be fewer religious cards on sale this year which is very disappointing since this is the real story of Christmas. I know card companies have to cater for everyone, but surely there should still be some! I eventually found what I wanted on the internet.

The centre pages feature members of the congregation who have spent Christmas abroad. All totally different.

Joy, who is training for ordination, shares her *Simple Pleasures* and still enjoys splashing in puddles! One of mine is writing cards and sending handwritten letters, something of a dying art. I write a letter each week to a friend in Scotland and she replies. Nothing beats receiving a handwritten one.

On behalf of the *Spire Team* may I wish you a happy Christmas and peaceful new year.

Best Wishes

Janet

Editor



Cover photo: The wonder of the Nativity is at the centre of the Christmas story

## SPIRE

The Spire is published nine times a year for the Parochial Church Council of St James. We don't charge for this magazine but, if you

enjoy regularly reading it, we hope that you will contribute towards printing costs. Bank transfers to: 40-52-40, 00032595, Use Ref SPIRE. Cheques payable to the PCC of St James's Church, Hampton Hill, and sent to the Spire Appeal c/o the Church Office (see below).

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Yes, I'm free, but donations help me to go on being printed. Use the QR code (or see above) to 'buy' a subscription. \*£1.25 a copy

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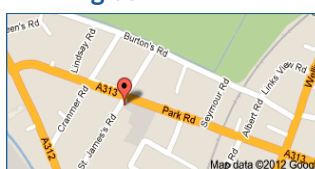
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## Finding us



The church is on the corner of St James's Road and Park Road. The hall is between the church and vicarage. There is ample unrestricted parking. Buses stopping nearby include the R68, R70 and 285.

## Follow us

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## Clerical Capers



'...er, does anyone have a torch?'

# DEREK WINTERBURN



**R**eading the newspaper or watching TV makes me feel helpless. There are so many stories in which I would love to make things better by 'waving a magic wand'. But there is so little that someone many miles away can contribute. (A Christian can of course channel some of that frustration into prayer.)

In this season I feel this most deeply about the situation in the Middle East, when we mark Jesus's birth in Bethlehem, today in the Israeli-occupied West Bank of the Palestinian Territories. What intensifies my sadness about the multiple conflicts in and around Israel are the casualties and fatalities of civilians; it is reported that more children have been killed than soldiers.

### God's frustrations

I imagine that God might have been similarly frustrated and saddened 2000 years ago as he looked at Bethlehem. The people he had nurtured had their freedoms curtailed; they suffered under a puppet king, installed by an oppressive empire. And to cap it all the people's leaders were deeply divided. How might he persuade them to change their ways?

Aristotle suggested that one way to persuade people was to appeal to reason - send an intellectual! A second strategy would be to impress by the messenger's credibility, authority or professionalism - send an expert! The third way to win people is to appeal to emotion, what he called *pathos*.

### Sending us a baby!

The stories of the Nativity are full of pathos. God had used reason before: Moses. He also had spoken through impressive characters; I think of John the Baptist. But now he was sending not an intellectual, or an expert, but a baby: Jesus! Of course, Jesus would grow up to be a masterly teacher and someone who truly lived out what he preached. But God's rescue operation did not begin with the Sermon on the Mount, or Christ on trial in Jerusalem, but in the manger in Bethlehem.

Francis of Assisi grasped the *pathos* of that scene when he staged a 'live crib' with real animals in Greccio in 1223.

## FOR CRYING OUT LOUD

He wanted to make the Christmas story more evocative by bringing it closer to people's own experiences. He said: 'I wish to do something that will recall to memory the little Child who was born in Bethlehem

will dismiss the sentiment. But maybe, just maybe, as Christians celebrate the nativity, Muslims reflect on the virgin birth of Jesus, and Jews remember the babies that were killed in Egypt under

**Maybe, just maybe, as Christians celebrate the nativity, Muslims reflect on the birth of Jesus, and Jews remember the babies killed in Egypt under Pharaoh, the plight of innocent children might be heard.**

and set before our bodily eyes in some way the inconveniences of his infant needs, how he lay in a manger, how, with an ox and ass standing by, he lay upon the hay where he had been placed.'

### Feel the love

The people he knew were familiar with the grandeur of the Church and its political power. Francis wanted them to *feel* the love of God, expressed in the humble birth.

There are many times when we should not make decisions on the basis of emotional appeals. But the ancients understood that reasoned arguments, or authoritative statements have their limits.

The Middle East has seen plenty of both of those and still there is war. Sometimes it takes a 'human interest' story to change the debate. (Do you remember the photo of Alan Kurdi washed up on a Turkish beach in 2015?)

### Peace at Christmas

No doubt many preachers will speak about peace at Christmas, and the world

Pharaoh, the plight of innocent children might speak in ways that are finally heard.

And meanwhile we can determine to set aside all the questions and hesitations we might have - and be ready to experience... to feel... , to worship the Christ Child, who came to bring peace. God's answer to our troubled hearts and world.



# St James

## Services Sundays

Holy Communion (said) 8am  
Parish Communion 9:30am **not 1 Dec**  
Livestreamed on Facebook

Together 3:30pm  
Our shorter, all-age service, making way for Messy Church once a month  
Messy Church 3:30pm **12 Jan,**

## Christingle

Sunday 1 December 10am  
An All Age service at which we will all make a Christingle candle. The service raises money and awareness for The Children's Society

## Tue-Fri (not Wed) Morning Prayer 9am

## Wednesday Midweek Communion 9:30am

## Mondays Ark Playgroup 10am-12pm (not 23, 30 Dec; 6 Jan)

Christmas Ark 10:30am-12:30pm **16 Dec**  
Join us for our Christmas party!

NHS Hearing Aid Clinic 1-3pm  
Free servicing for NHS aids while you wait at drop-in service on **16 Dec; 6, 20 Jan**

## Tuesdays (not 3, 24 Dec) Connections Café 10:30am-12:30pm Join us for coffee, cake and conversation.

Christmas Café 10:30am-12:30pm **17 Dec**  
Make an Advent candle table decoration and enjoy mulled wine and mince pies.

## Christmas Follow The Star CALM and BRIGHT

## Sunday 22 December Carols by Candlelight 6pm

Join us for a traditional service of carols and readings, led the choir. Followed by mince pies and mulled wine.

## Tuesday 24 December Children's Carols 3pm & 4:30pm

The Christmas story, complete with crib and children's carols. So popular we do it twice!

Christmas Night Communion 11:30pm  
See in Christmas with carols and readings

## Wednesday 25 December Holy Communion (said) 8am

Christmas Communion 9:30am  
Readings and carols



**Wreckage** Graham beside Russian fighter planes at Bagram airport.



**Greeting** Penny's Kenyan well-wishers.

# MY CHRISTMAS SPENT ABROAD

**C**hristmas is celebrated in some capacity in nearly every country in the world. Each has its own traditions, and these often evoke the strongest memories. For some it's the small things that stay with us, while for others work meant festivities came second.



**Penny Sewell in Kenya**

It was Christmas Day 1987 in the remote town of Lodwar in the arid Turkana region of north Kenya. We had just arrived the day before from UK. It was 43 degrees in the house! A group of about 30 local Turkana tribes-people arrived in front of our house for a traditional festive dance. Their singing, known as ululation, was a long, high-pitched, wavering sound that resembles a howl, and they wore ceremonial beaded costumes made from animal skins. This was an annual custom in thanks for the work undertaken in health, education and livestock support. On this occasion photographs were allowed, hence my record of this truly memorable event.



**Graham McHutchon in Afghanistan**

Suddenly the pilot sent the plane into a crazy corkscrew descent to avoid missile attack. Minutes later I was on the ground at Bagram airport, Kabul, it was 2001. The city had just been liberated from the Taliban, and I was there to



manage the BBC News operation. It was the holy month of Ramadan, due to end on 17 December, so, as well as feeding the hungry news machine in London, I also had to concentrate on the festival that breaks the fast for 13

local staff and their families. They all expected presents. Christmas would have to wait this year!

**Christopher Carson in Paris**



Over the many years my wife Dominique and I have been together, we have had many splendid Christmases in Paris, and pleasingly they all followed the traditions.

Most homes are adorned with a creche awaiting the arrival of baby Jesus, and the children's empty shoes by the fire, longing to be filled with presents. *Messe de Minuit* (Midnight Mass), is the most popular service in the calendar in France.

People then get together for *Le Réveillon de Noel* – a long dinner of oysters, smoked salmon, foie gras, escargots, followed by either goose, guinea fowl or turkey, and for desert, *Buche de Noel*, a Yule log inspired by a pastry chef who saw logs burning on a fire.



On Epiphany (6 January) there's another tradition – *La Galette des Rois*. Everyone gathers to cut the famous puff pastry cake, above, filled with frangipane. The youngest child goes under the table and points out the guests, who are then given their piece of cake. A cardboard crown is supplied with the cake and the one who has the fève, a coin, in their piece, gets to wear the crown.



**Paris** Midnight Mass is still a big draw



**Liz Wilmot in Sumatra**

I was a 'Shell child' (my father worked for the Dutch oil company) and grew up in Sumatra, Indonesia. We were a small community of international ex-pats living in a camp with virtually no laid-on entertainment or shops.



# Around the Spire



Most of the food came in crates from Singapore or Hong Kong. Older children were sent home to be educated and only came out to join us for the summer holiday, so Christmas was a sad time in many ways. In the absence of family, strong friendships formed.



With Shell's Dutch connections, *Sintaklaas* (St Nicholas) would arrive by boat on 6 December and hand out sweets. Then everyone helped to put on a pantomime. My mother was the resident artist and would paint scenery and make costumes, others would write scripts and songs. I don't know what the 1959 pantomime was called, but that is me, circled in the picture below, as an elf!

**Kim Lan Yap in Malaysia**  
I was thrilled to be cast as Mary in the Nativity play until I realised that the director, Mrs Chung, wanted Joseph to kiss Mary in front of the whole church right after the Virgin birth. Nowhere in the four Gospels was such intimacy



mentioned – I checked! Should Mrs Chung be allowed such artistic licence in the secrecy of our little backwater church in Klang town, Malaysia? The truth, of course, was that this Mary didn't want to be kissed by that particular boy. Mrs Chung had to give in to Mary's recalcitrance. And so it came to pass that such a first Christmas kiss was averted.

**Ros Daly in Singapore**  
It's 1956 in Singapore, humid and over 91°F. Our hand-made tree, topped with a fairy, was smothered with baubles, glass birds and chunky, clip-on electric candle lights, all bound round with weighty metal tinsel. Being so far from family, people would make house visits with gifts to add to whatever Father Christmas had brought. There was lots of alcohol, bonhomie and everyone smoked cigarettes! My father's friends arrived with a cardboard box for my mother. Out popped a brilliant ginger kitten with a prominent knot in the tip of his tail - a most propitious sign in Chinese folklore. *Ginger Knotty* became a household favourite.

When we finally left in 1959 my mother gave him to our Amah (nursemaid) who was delighted: she knew that our Christmas *Ginger Knotty* would always bring her happiness and beneficial fortune.

## MARTIN HITS RIGHT NOTES!



**MANY** of the parts of our Sunday communion liturgy are set to music. For a number of years St James's has sung a *Frankenstein setting*, with different sections coming from different composers.

After researching a number of options, and not really finding one that suited, our Musical Director, Thom Stanbury, asked Martin Hinckley, who had composed one of the sections we already sang, to write a whole setting.

Martin, knowing our strengths, was able and willing. The full setting will finally come into effect on Advent Sunday when we

introduce the Kyries. Our service booklets now have an appendix with the musical notation for the setting, for those who read music.

Wonderfully we now have our own home-grown, but easy to sing, setting for the glorious words.

## LEARNING FROM PAST



**THE** failure to report abuse carried out by barrister John Smyth QC, by those who knew in the 1980s, as described in the Makin Report, as well as the failure of the wider Church to respond well to it from 2013, have for many led to a sense of shame and anger. Indeed, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, pictured, resigned in the aftermath.

I have found the coverage disturbing, thinking of the harm done to many young people. However, the failings of the past should not be mistaken for complacency about the present. Good safeguarding practices are now normal and St James's, like all parishes, has access to round-the-clock professional advice, and trained staff and volunteers in the parish.

The PCC regularly gives attention to the subject and we use good systems to monitor compliance. In truth, no area of public life can ever be described as 100% safe, but St James's continues to provide a place of safety for all people, younger or older.

Full details of our safeguarding can be found on the parish website.  
*Derek Winterburn*

## CARE HOME NEW SONG BOOK



**LAUREL** Dene is our most local care home providing residential, dementia and nursing care for older people. Once a month St James's leads a short service for some of the residents (the Baptists in Teddington share this ministry).

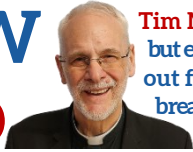
For about 30 minutes we sing hymns, listen to the Bible's message and pray together. Mostly Debbie Nunn is able to accompany the signing, but occasionally we resort to recorded music.

To help things along we have now created our own songbook for the 'Top 50' in large print, so that we are not printing single sheets every month.



Master The music of Sir John Rutter features in our carol service

## THE NEW AND OLD



**Tim Marwood** enjoys carols, but explains why he looks out for new tunes that breathe life into the words of traditional carols.

**W**hen other topics fail to ignite the conversation around the table at Christmas, you might like to ask 'What is your favourite Christmas carol?' From experience, I can guarantee a lively debate! Very strong opinions might be shared along the lines of 'It's not Christmas without *Hark, the herald angels sing!*, or *O, come all ye faithful* has got to conclude Midnight Mass, and so on...

Carols are the soundtrack to the Christmas season, just as coloured light displays outside our homes are now the backdrop.

### There's tradition...

Some carols have very ancient origins. Several were passed down the centuries, surviving even the banning of Christmas during the Puritan years.

I understand the importance of including several 'traditional carols' at key moments in services every year. Of course, these vary from parish to parish. In my last parish *Silent night* was a fixture at our carol service and many of the congregation sang it in German, their first language.

The traditional tune for carols can differ from church to church as well. *In the bleak midwinter* has two equally popular tunes, one by Gustav Holst (1834-1934) and the other by Harold Darke (1888-1976).

I enjoy the words and music of well-known carols, but I am also alert for a new setting that breathes fresh emphasis into old words. Gareth Chilcott's arrangement of *O little town of Bethlehem* is a good example. (There is a good recording on YouTube — search for *Chilcott Petersham*).

### Carols old and new

At our carol service at St James's Church at 6pm on Sunday 22 December we will sing a mix of carols, old and new, interspersed with readings telling the Christmas Story.

## REGISTERS

OCTOBER

There no entries for this month



One of the carols selected for this year's service is the *Sans Day Carol*. The words (below) are from *St Day*, the Cornish village named after a Breton saint, and the music is an arrangement written by Sir John Rutter, an English composer born in London in 1945.

Rutter was knighted for his services to music in the Birthday Honours in June this year. It is very appropriate that we are including one of Rutter's arrangements in our service as an acknowledgement of one of the most significant composers of church music in the last 60 years.

### Sans Day Carol

*Now the holly bears a berry as white as the milk,  
And Mary bore Jesus, all wrapped up in silk,  
And Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be,  
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.  
Holly! Holly!*

*And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!*

*Now the holly bears a berry as green as the grass,  
And Mary bore Jesus, who died on the cross,  
And Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be,  
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.  
Holly! Holly!*

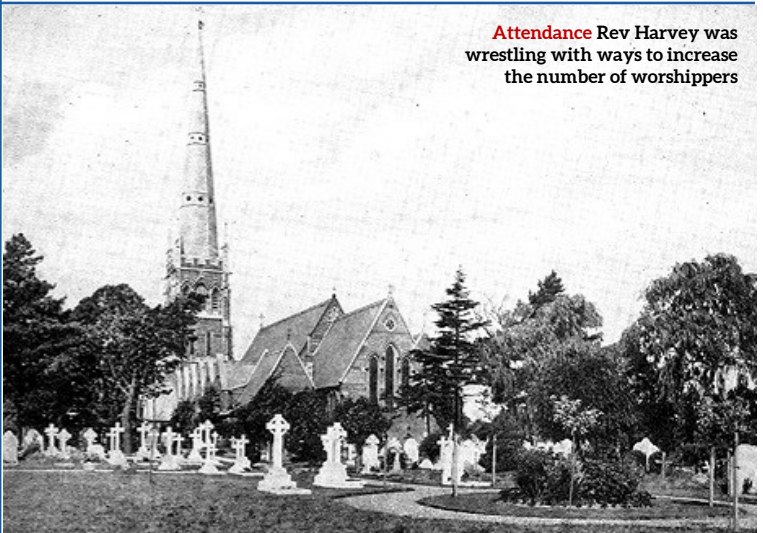
*And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!*

*Now the holly bears a berry as black as the coal,  
And Mary bore Jesus, who died for us all,  
And Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be,  
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.  
Holly! Holly!*

*And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!*

*Now the holly bears a berry as blood is it red,  
And Mary bore Jesus who rose from the dead,  
And Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be,  
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.  
Holly! Holly!*

*And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!*



Attendance Rev Harvey was wrestling with ways to increase the number of worshippers

## SO WHERE ARE YOU?



**Richard Melville** finds that then, as now, the church's focus was on ways to increase attendance!

**T**he magazines of December and January 1925 reflect the vicar's concern about communion attendance and the times of weekday services. A service on 22 December was planned to prepare for the Christmas Day services (at 6am, 7am, 8am, and 11am) and an adaption of the weekday early morning service. This was prompted, it seems, by poor attendance on Remembrance Day, then called Thanksgiving on the Sunday before Armistice Day.

### Poor turnout *My Dear People,*

The Services of Commemoration were not as well attended as they should have been.

Considering the number [124] from this parish who gave their lives for their brethren in Hampton Hill as much as in any other part of the Empire, it was only to be expected that a few would be absent. However, those who were present, and we were glad to see members of our District Council and our local Fire Brigade, were much impressed.

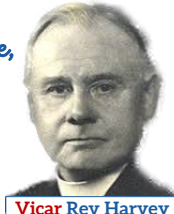
We have been asked by two Societies to have a Gift Sunday on 14 December. Children can bring toys and picture books to the Children's Service as presents to less fortunate boys and girls. They will go to the Waifs' and Strays' Society, and the Colonial and Continental Church Society for children in the wilds of Canada.

The Finance Committee will shortly issue a Budget for 1925. As our aim is to dispense with collections in Church, except for definite purposes, I hope more people will join the Assessment Scheme. Its scope is to include irregular and even non-churchgoers who are members of the Church of England.

Perhaps the daily 7.30am communion time is not suitable for those catching early trains. How would you like this service to be at 7am on three mornings and 8am on the other three? I should be glad to hear from any to whom this suggestion commends itself

I remain your faithful friend, and Vicar,

*Frederick Harvey*



Vicar Rev Harvey

### Missing property!

Captain Meayers would be glad if former members of the Lads' Brigade who still have their uniforms would return them at once. And many of the fifes (small flutes) belonging to the band cannot be accounted for. Their return, without delay, would be much appreciated.

### High demand for the nurse

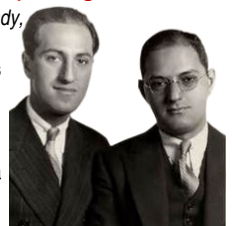
The Hampton Hill Nursing Association was started in October 1923, when it was affiliated to the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses.

Miss G Fozard, highly recommended to the Committee, started to work here in December 1923, since when her skilled help and attention have been much appreciated by all who required her services. That there was great need of a nurse is evident by the following figures taken for nine months. Cases, 98; Surgical 51; Medical 47; Visits paid, 1897.

### In the news 100 years ago...

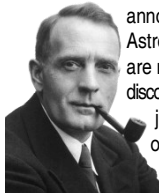
#### ■ 1 December *Lady,*

*Be Good, George* and *Ira Gershwin's* first collaborative musical, featuring siblings Fred and Adelle Astaire as a brother and sister dance team, opened at the Liberty Theatre, New York. It ran for 330 performances.



#### ■ 30 December

Astronomer Edwin Hubble announced to the American Astronomical Society that 'we are not alone'. It followed his discovery that the Milky Way was just one of many galaxies in our solar system. This came about using a powerful new telescope.



29 January Liberal Party chose David Lloyd George as its new leader. He was the first and only Welshman to hold the office of Prime Minister. Acclaimed as the man who won the First World War, his coalition won a huge majority in 1918, but he divided his own party.



# OPINION

Canon Julian Reindorp

## Two-state proposal

We will sing *O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie*, almost despairingly this Christmas, if we can sing it at all. With tensions and fighting all around this town, itself surrounded by a wall, one constructive partnership has emerged. It endorses what the international community has been saying for decades, but has done very little to help achieve — a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine. In October, Ehud Olmert, a former Israeli prime minister, and Nasser al-Kidwa, a former Palestinian foreign minister, presented to Pope Francis a joint peace plan for the Holy Land. It would begin with an immediate cease fire in Gaza.

The day before, Lebanon's Christian and Muslim leaders issued a joint appeal: 'God give our people hope to withstand this catastrophe.' It is these kinds of local partnerships that will ultimately be the key to any kind of progress towards a just and peaceful solution.

Amidst the grimness of the Middle East, with Hamas seeking to obliterate Israel and basing their forces beneath schools and hospitals, two Israeli responses threaten two key roles of the United Nations. They are seeking to ban the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees from their life-saving work of providing food and shelter in Gaza, and now also in the West Bank. Alongside this they want the UN to remove their peacekeepers from Lebanon. Their mission has been to protect the local population from Hezbollah, on one hand, and the Israeli Defence Force on the other. This is the bleak backdrop while we celebrate Christ's birth and indulge in our supreme consumer festival.

## What role for the UN?

Amidst the grimness of the Middle East, with Hamas seeking to obliterate Israel and basing their forces beneath schools and hospitals, two Israeli responses threaten two key roles of the United Nations. They are seeking to ban the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees from their life-saving work of providing food and shelter in Gaza, and now also in the West Bank. Alongside this they want the UN to remove their peacekeepers from Lebanon. Their mission has been to protect the local population from Hezbollah, on one hand, and the Israeli Defence Force on the other. This is the bleak backdrop while we celebrate Christ's birth and indulge in our supreme consumer festival.

## A Labour Budget

Back in June in our *Hard Questions* group we asked, 'Where was growth to come from? (We also asked, 'At whose expense?') We noted that Andy Haldane, former Chief Economist at the Bank of England, Torsten Bell, CEO of the Resolution Foundation and Paul Johnson, Director of the Institute of Fiscal Studies, were in favour of a ten-year plan for the growth of the economy, as well as changing the fiscal rules to reduce overall debt over 10 years rather than five, hopefully to allow for Government-led investment. Paul Johnson mentioned the possibility of a £30 billion black hole.

Against this background, Chancellor Rachel Reeves responded with a bold budget raising taxes 'to fill a £40 billion black hole' and an emphasis on investment and money for services, above all the NHS.

## Two key questions

How will companies respond to the extra £25 million bill they face in increased employers' National Insurance contributions? The Office for Budget Responsibility has forecast slower growth towards the end of the next five-year period. As one commentator said, if people say politicians are all the same, this is certainly not true of this budget. It is very clearly a Labour budget with Labour priorities.

## Cloud control

Our youngest granddaughter, Anna, four, came home from school recently very unhappy. She had been made to 'sit on a cloud'. Her mother asked why? 'I threw a little stick at another girl.' Brother Alexander, eight, responded, 'Mummy, it could have been worse. You can be made to sit on a cloud when it's raining when you have done something very serious. But Mummy,' he continued, 'I have never had to sit on a cloud.'



## CHARITIES WE SUPPORT ST LUKE'S, MERCUBURI



## GROWING IN AFRICA



A dramatic growth in the Anglican Church in parts of Africa is placing new demands on it. Derek Winterburn reports on how our donations are helping the expansion plans.

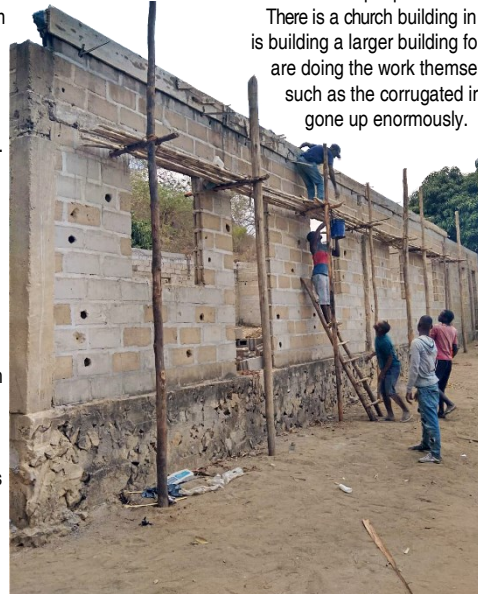
St James's has a link parish through the London Diocesan partnership with the Anglican Church in Angola and Mozambique (ALMA). The growth of the church in this part of Africa has been dramatic and it has moved from

being under the direction of South Africa to being a Province of its own called *Igreja Anglicana de Moçambique e Angola* (IAMA). This has complicated the link at diocesan level as London is now matched with 12 dioceses in two countries!

### A parish of 44 villages

There are just over 50 parish-to-parish links. Ours is with the parish of Mercuburi in Northern Mozambique, led by Father Mauritio Namilo.

The parish is much larger than Hampton Hill - it includes the main town and 44 villages! The church has welcomed an influx of refugees from the conflict in Cabo Delgado.



### Disputed election results

Most recently there has also been unrest over the disputed General Election results. There have been riots in Mercuburi and it would seem that the police shot and killed at least seven people.

There is a church building in Mercuburi, but the congregation is building a larger building for 500 people. Although they are doing the work themselves the price of raw materials, such as the corrugated iron sheets for the roof has gone up enormously.

### Our support

Elsewhere, smaller churches are not robust and often suffer damage from the more extreme weather.

St James's has been able to send £1245 for this — we have a lot of sympathy for any church with building costs as we have had to repair our roof and sort out the heating!

**BUILD Work slowly progresses on a new church**

## FRIENDS OF ST JAMES'S WITH CHRISTOPHER CARSON



DECEMBER is the time of year to reflect on our efforts of scattering the seeds for the development of St James's and our desire to improve our

financial position while also raising our importance and usefulness in the community.

In September we launched Friends of St James's and more recently the stand-alone website was set up and went live, and as I write this piece the Ceilidh is just around the corner and has attracted more people from outside the church than the congregation — which is very encouraging.

Our Christmas cards will also be going through many letter boxes between now and Christmas Day. Visitors to the church for carol services and concerts will also be presented with a Christmas card with our warmest wishes for them and their families at this most important time of the year.

Our programme of reaching out 'to grow St James's' is well underway and I would like to encourage you all to invite people to our events, whether that be the Ceilidh, the Carols by Candlelight Service or the various activities that



A5 Christmas cards are on sale at 50p each or in packs of five for £2.50. They can be bought in the Church Office (for opening times see page 2) or by phoning 020 8941 6003. Payment by cash or debit/credit card.

are already planned for 2025. We have made a good start and are on our way to building our numbers and making St James's a neighbourhood hub for the community.

Thank you for all your support, and I hope Christmas and the new year bring you peace and joy.

website: [friendsofstjames.org.uk](http://friendsofstjames.org.uk)



# SIMPLE PLEASURES

The things we do when we take time out

As many of you will be aware, in 2004 I was involved in a road traffic accident. As a result, I have spent much time in hospital over the years and had many operations. I have also had to restructure the way I approach work and family life and my leisure time. I can no longer do many of the things that I would have written about prior to my accident: climbing mountains, trekking, dancing, mountain biking, sitting in trees! I loved to be active and outside, often doing things that led to a feeling of complete physical exhaustion. Now, even the thought of doing such things fills me with dread! However, over the years I have discovered a great many gentler pursuits that fill me with a similar delight.

## TALKING



Most of those at St James's will have discovered I love chatting! I have a deep conviction that 'coffee' on a Sunday morning is an integral part of church. Here is the place we make friends, enjoy fellowship and grow in community. Equally, there is nothing I enjoy more than catching up with a friend over a cup of tea.

## JUMPING IN PUDDLES...



Growing up, we had a dog, so the daily routine included a walk. My favourites involved big puddles and Wellington boots! It did not bother me that my boots ended up full of water, especially since the water so quickly warmed up, and I loved the noise of the squelching as we walked back to the car. The important thing was to remember to empty the boots outside of the car! I must admit, I still enjoy puddles (hugely), though I am less enthusiastic about the water seeping into my boots.

## ...AND DANCING IN THE RAIN

Even more delight, is to be found dancing in the rain! On a recent Sunday afternoon, a sister and I went out amidst a torrential downpour, taking her little dog with us. My sister and I had an absolute riot; however, the little dog was much less enthusiastic, and it was for her sake that we cut short our fun; small dog cradled protectively in my sister's arms. It is one of those outings we always remember with the biggest of smiles!

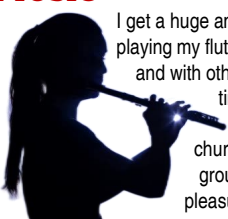
## PICNICS IN THE PARK

I am not big on inviting people over for dinner or catering for large crowds, but I love a chance to gather with family, and especially an opportunity for my boys to spend time with their aunts, uncles and cousins. We are a big family, so a bring and share picnic at a local park is a wonderful way to spend birthdays or other special events in a fun, relaxed and informal way.



## MUSIC

I get a huge amount of enjoyment out of both playing my flute and singing, both on my own and with others. It is not so easy to find the time for practice at the moment, but the joy of singing in church and playing with the music group at college keeps that pleasure alive.



Clockwise from top: Jumping in puddles; poetry; and picnics



# PASTIMES REBOOTED



**Joy Beauchamp** had to rethink her downtime after an accident. She still enjoys some childhood activities— and she does like poetry after all!

## POETRY

As an adult, I have rediscovered poetry. My mum loved poetry, and as children she introduced us to the poetry of AA Milne, Spike Milligan, Lewis Carol and Edward Lear. I enjoyed it hugely. Even more, I enjoyed her enjoyment of it, and I think her enthusiasm would have been completely persuasive, if it had not been for the intensely analytical approach taken to the study of poetry at school. By the end of my school years, I was convinced I most definitely did *not* like poetry! Recently, I have been delighted to find I do like it after all. Usually, it is still the enthusiasm of others that acts as its means of introduction, and the joy of hearing it read out loud. Favourites include Lemn Sissay, who I was lucky to meet, above, Mary Oliver, RS Thomas and George Herbert. I also love the poetry of the Song of Solomon and 2: 8-14 is on the shortlist for my funeral.



## SITTING BY THE RIVER

I feel so incredibly blessed to live near the Thames. Often, it's the place I go to do morning or evening prayer. Usually, I take a tub of duck food with me, and it is a great pleasure to feed the birds. The river is beautiful in all weathers. Being by the water I find restorative and the richness of plant, animal and bird life reminds me of the goodness and constancy of God, even when the rest of life feels difficult or stressful.



## BEING IN CHURCH

It may not surprise you to learn that I love being in a church. Empty churches, full ones; traditional Anglo-Catholic or modern evangelical — and everything in between! I love the smell of churches, the music, the people. And I love the Eucharist. What an intense delight it is to celebrate the diversity of God's Church and to be a part of the Body of Christ. I am not particularly worried about the denomination of church in which I find myself either. My curiosity (or is that nosiness?) means I find it fascinating to be in a community where things are done very differently. However, the Church of England is my first love and after a time of travelling and exploring it is always good to return home.

## FAMILY STORYTIME

My boys and I love our evening ritual of reading together. Over recent months we have worked through *The Chronicles of Namia* and *Harry Potter*. Having just finished *The Hobbit*, we are now reading *The Lord of the Rings*. I am not sure who is most disappointed if we don't have time to read.