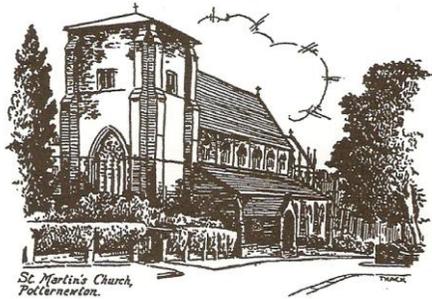


# Reach Out

## St Martin's Church Magazine

 THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
Diocese of Leeds



## January 2021



**Services:** Sunday Eucharist at 10am in church and via Facebook  
Morning Prayer Wednesdays at 10am on Zoom  
Evening Prayer Wednesdays at 5.00pm in church and via Facebook



<https://www.facebook.com/StMartinPotternewton/>

[www.stmartinleeds.org.uk](http://www.stmartinleeds.org.uk)



@FrNicholasLP

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Confession or for other matters please contact Fr. Nicholas.

# Reach Out

*St Martin's Church welcomes you to praise God and serve our  
diverse community together*

## *Editor's Comment:*

A Happy New Year to you all. We sincerely hope that this year is kinder to us than the last. There is comfort and reassurance in the seasons and cycles of the church calendar as we head once more towards Epiphany and Candlemas. I'm sure we all look forward to the day when we feel that life is returning to a little more normality – hopefully sooner rather than later – until then we try to remain patient like Anna in the Temple. Best wishes for 2021!

## **Contents**

Pastoral letter	pages 4-5
Calendar	pages 6-7
News	pages 8-13
From All Souls	pages 14-15
Covid experiences	pages 15-16
Mothers' Union	pages 17-18
Articles	pages 18-19
Advertisements	pages 19-21
Readings	page 23
Thought for the Month	page 23
Eco top tips	page 23
From the Registers	page 23
Information about St Martin's	page 24

# Pastoral Letter

## **CLAIMING AND NAMING**

Dear Friends,

At the time of writing this, the distribution of Covid vaccines has not yet begun anywhere in the world. However, I suspect that as we read this issue of our Parish magazine, you and I may be glad of at least one thing: finally the year 2020 is over! I would like to shout: take this past year away from me! I don't want to have anything to do with it anymore, I just want to forget it!

That would be a mistake, I know. Because I know, as you all do too, that even 2020 was an opportunity to change and grow, to do good things, and in our heightened needs to get closer to God. Which can mean only one thing: whatever happened in 2020, I still have to claim it as being part of my personal story and of the history of this world of ours, as God claims it too, Who is the Lord of History.

This business of claiming back what seems to be worthy of being discarded reminds me of one of the major feasts that mark the month of January in the Church calendar: the Baptism of Christ on 10<sup>th</sup> January. Let me explain why with a brief story.

Once in the Middle Ages there was a monk travelling with one of his novices from the abbey to a nearby village to run some errands. They parted at the city gates and agreed to meet the next morning after completing their tasks. According to plan, the next morning they met and began the long walk back to the abbey. The monk noticed that the young novice was unusually quiet. So he asked if anything was wrong. But the boy refused to answer. Now the monk was sure his younger brother was troubled. As they walked, the distance between the two began to increase. The young man walked slowly, as if to separate himself from his teacher. When the abbey came in sight, the monk stopped at the gate and waited for the student. "Tell me my son – he asked - What troubles your soul?" This time the boy replied, with deep sadness in his voice, "I have sinned greatly. Last night I sinned and totally betrayed my vows. I'm not worthy to enter the abbey at your side." In those days sins were confessed publicly, generally before the Bishop or before the Abbot. The teacher put his arm around the student and said, "We will enter the abbey together. And we will enter the cathedral together. And together we will confess your sin. Nobody but God will know which of us has failed."

At His Baptism Christ was not ashamed to step into the water with the prostitute and the tax collector, with the Gentile and the outcast. He stood shoulder to shoulder in solidarity with sinners. He bathed in our sin. He became the adulterer, the liar, the thief, the murderer. He Who knew no sin was made sin for us, so that in Him, we might become righteous. This is how Christ claimed us back although we deserved to be left behind. He identified with our sinfulness, even carrying upon himself our own sins, so that we may identify with His righteousness.

And as we are baptised in Christ we are not just claimed by Him, we are also named, aren't we? We naturally associate Baptism with naming and we all know how important our names are. We all like to be called by our right names. My name in Italian is Nicòla, but if I didn't choose to be called Nicholas, people would inevitably end up calling me Nícola, or Nicòle. Which as you can imagine can be rather embarrassing, especially if you have a beard... So, names are important.

1 John 3:1 says that we are named children of God: "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are." The Gospel of John (15:15) says that we are called Jesus' friends: "I no longer call you servants. Now, I've named you friends." In biblical times to know somebody's name meant to really know the person. If we are named, we are known, as children and friends are.

Probably we still don't know what the full consequences of this pandemic are going to amount to in the end. Physically, psychologically, economically we have all paid a price for this year in which a virus has plagued the population of virtually the whole world, and some have paid a very high price.

What we do know is that whatever happened and whatever may happen, we belong to Christ. We are His children and His friends. As such, even in the darkest hour we are not left alone to face what comes.

In light of this, my prayer for you today is this: may the assurance of Christ's presence, the power of His Spirit and the Love of God the Father fill your hearts with peace.

Yours in Christ,  
Fr Nicholas



# Calendar



## January

**Fri 1<sup>st</sup>**

### **Naming and Circumcision of Jesus**

**Sun 3<sup>rd</sup>**

### **Epiphany**

8.30 am

Morning Prayer in church

10.00 am

Parish Eucharist in church

(also streamed on our Facebook page)

PM

Evening Prayer in church (time varies each week – please ask Fr Nicholas)

**Weds 6<sup>th</sup>**

9.00 am

Community Kitchen until 2.00 pm

10:00 am

Morning Prayer on Zoom

5.00 pm

Sung Evening Prayer (also streamed on our Facebook page)

**Fri 8<sup>th</sup>**

9.00 am

Community Kitchen until 2.00 pm

10.30 am – Mothers' Union Wave of Prayer

7:30 pm

Quiz on Zoom – all welcome (see below for joining details)

**Sun 10<sup>th</sup>**

### **Baptism of Christ**

8.30 am

Morning Prayer in church

10:00 am

Parish Eucharist in church (also streamed on our Facebook page)

PM

Evening Prayer in church (time varies each week – please ask Fr Nicholas)

**Weds 13<sup>th</sup>**

9.00 am

Community Kitchen until 2.00 pm

10:00 am

Morning Prayer on Zoom

12:00 pm

Funeral of Roderick Leader

5.00 pm

Sung Evening Prayer (also streamed on our Facebook page)

**Fri 15<sup>th</sup>**

9.00 am

Community Kitchen until 2.00 pm

**Sun 17<sup>th</sup>**

### **The Second Sunday of Epiphany**

8.30 am

Morning Prayer in church

10:00 am

Parish Eucharist in church (also streamed on our Facebook page)

PM

Evening Prayer in church (time varies each week – please ask Fr Nicholas)

**Mon 18<sup>th</sup>**

Start of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

**Weds 20<sup>th</sup>**

9.00 am

Community Kitchen until 2.00 pm

10:00 am

Morning Prayer on Zoom

5.00 pm

Sung Evening Prayer (also streamed on our Facebook page)

<b>Fri 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	9.00 am	Community Kitchen until 2.00 pm
<b>Sun 24<sup>th</sup></b>	<b><u>The Third Sunday of Epiphany</u></b>	
	8.30 am	Morning Prayer in church
	10:00 am	Parish Eucharist in church (also streamed on our Facebook page)
	PM	Evening Prayer in church (time varies each week – please ask Fr Nicholas)
<b>Mon 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b><u>Conversion of Paul</u></b>	
	End of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	
<b>Tues 26<sup>th</sup></b>	6:00 pm	Standing Committee on Zoom
	7:00 pm	1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting of the new Deanery Synod on Zoom
<b>Weds 27<sup>th</sup></b>	9.00 am	Community Kitchen until 2.00 pm
	10:00 am	Morning Prayer on Zoom
	5.00 pm	Sung Evening Prayer (also streamed on our Facebook page)
<b>Fri 29<sup>th</sup></b>	9.00 am	Community Kitchen until 2.00 pm
<b>Sun 31<sup>st</sup></b>	<b><u>Presentation of Christ (Candlemas)</u></b>	
	8.30 am	Morning Prayer in Church
	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist in Church (also streamed on our Facebook page)
	PM	Even. Prayer in Church (time varies; ask Fr Nicholas)

## **Links to services on Facebook / Zoom**

The Sunday Eucharist is streamed live if the service is in church; this is the link to view it at your leisure, as well as to follow live a sung Evening Prayer every Wednesday at 5:00 pm:

<https://www.facebook.com/StMartinPotternewton/>

Join Morning Prayer on Zoom, Wednesdays at 10:00 am, or Sunday Eucharist if it is not held in church .

If you know of people who do not have a computer or a smartphone, they can listen to the Wednesday Morning Prayer service by dialling this number: 0330 088 5830 (cost of a local call; not a premium number).

They will then be asked to enter the meeting ID When asked for Participant ID they should just press the hash button: #

*Fr Nicholas*

# News

## In church safety protocol

- 2m physical distancing to be observed at all times except with people of your own household.
- One-way system to be observed for entry-exit and for Holy Communion.
- Please be seated on one of the marked seats, starting with the front pews.
- The wearing of a mask in church is compulsory.
- Please do not touch objects or furniture unnecessarily.
- No singing during the service, except by a cantor.
- Sanitise your hands if possible with your own hand-sanitiser just before and after removing the mask for Communion.
- Communion will be by bread alone; having sanitised their hands, the priests will deposit the wafer onto your extended hand in silence.
- If you come to the railing for a blessing, the priest will bless you in silence.
- Please do not leave the Sunday Sheet behind after the service but take it with you.

Thank you for your co-operation and patience.

## Hillcrest Academy donation

30 children from Hillcrest Academy, one of our local primary schools, came to the Institute with four of their teachers on 4<sup>th</sup> December to present seven crates – duly decorated for



Christmas - full of all sort of good stuff: food and sweets for the clients of the Community Kitchen. We had a long chat in the hall, and the kids asked lots of questions. We took photographs and then they left us a homemade "Merry Christmas" banner that is now hanging at the entrance.

## Tots Christmas Service

As usual every year towards Christmas, we welcomed a number of toddlers on the 9th of Dec 2020 at 10.30am, and this year it was no different albeit only **one** nursery came. This made me reflect on the meaning of Christmas- does Christmas really make a difference to our lives? Starting with Mary outside the crib, I went on to narrate how our mother Mary was almost blinded by the light emanating from the angel, this is how the story began for the toddlers who came to visit St Martin's Church. Christmas carols played in the background on my mobile phone.

We then helped our Mother Mary back to the crib, and by this time, she had a big tummy, and the toddlers joined in a role playing exercise, they could be seen touching their belly - and because Jesus' parents could not find a hotel or a church to stay overnight, they went to a barn and it was at this place that Mary gave birth to a bouncing baby boy (our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ)!



We continued exploring this theme with the young people in what can be best described as an "informal" Christmas service. I say "informal" because it was a time of "play and wonder", colouring pictures of the crib, Christmas tree and there was a star on top of the image of a crib, and this caught the attention of the young ones and choosing the right colour wax crayons to use became a decision which required further thought. The appearance of the star in Bethlehem (which led the wise men and women to the exact spot which Jesus was to be born) was indeed significant, it was like a satellite navigator which gave them directions until they reached their destinations. We ended the service looking at the lit Christmas tree in church, and the toddlers were invited to take a mini-bear chocolate as a Christmas present.



A Christmas blessing ended this short service and it was time to say our good-byes.

*Fr Ericsson*

## **Comfort and Joy**

In the extraordinary year that was 2020, the 'tidings of comfort and joy' at the heart of the Christmas message had particular poignance and importance. After such a difficult year, we needed to hear Isaiah pronouncing God's words 'comfort my people' (40:1) and, as we looked forward to a low-key Christmas lit by the hope of a vaccine, we needed Isaiah's prophecy that a time is coming to 'rejoice' (66:10).

The Church of England put together a special Advent course on this theme: not the detailed courses it has produced in the past, but a weekly email with a short reflection (relating to the readings for the week) and a link to an online service. A group of us from the church met on Zoom to reflect upon these.

In the first week, the theme was the Readiness of Faith, with thoughts from Sam Wells, Vicar of St-Martin-in-the-Fields, London on God's invitation to return to him. In the second week, the broadcaster Simon Thomas spoke powerfully about how he found strength he didn't realise he had in the days after the sudden death of his wife: 'the peace that passes all understanding' that comes from Christ is not about enjoying a desert island, he said, but it is found in 'the most chaotic and fear-filled of times'. The group found this a very profound and moving observation. The third reflection came from the first national online Christingle service, led by Bishop Libby Lane, and it led us to consider how similar this service is to the Easter dawn service, where the candles of the whole congregation provide a surprising amount of light and we welcome the light of Christ into the darkness of our world.

The email and online reflections were followed by a booklet taking us through the Lessons and Carols from Christmas Day to 2 January. There were contributions from Kate Bottley, Jonathan Bryan, Bob Chilcott, Martha Collison, Stephen Cottrell, Guli Francis-Dehqani, Chine McDonald, Sally Phillips and Justin Welby. I know that several members of the church who could not attend Zoom meetings have been following these and I will be interested to hear your experiences of these.

As we look with hope to 2021 let us thank God for all the comfort and – yes – joy he brought us in 2020.

*Revd Jane*



## **Christmas raffle 2020**

As we were not able to hold any fundraising events this year such as the Garden Party or the Ceilidh the PCC agreed that we should hold a Christmas Raffle which was drawn on Sunday 13th December after the morning service. We are very pleased to announce that due to the generosity of all who bought and sold tickets and also donated the many prizes we have raised the wonderful total of £882.20

The support of you all has been truly magnificent - thank you so much.

*Sue Bain*

*And particular thanks to Sue Bain for organizing it, distributing and collecting tickets*

*- Editor*

	Prize	Ticket No.	Name
1 <sup>st</sup>	Hamper	927	M Lazenby
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Whisky	831	M Merritt
3 <sup>rd</sup>	M & S voucher	239	V Boone
4 <sup>th</sup>	Brandy	910	Dillon
5 <sup>th</sup>	Cadbury's Roses	600	L Williams
6 <sup>th</sup>	Vodka	704	M Bartlett
7 <sup>th</sup>	Chocolates	701	M Bartlett
8 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Teddy	938	Sonny James
9 <sup>th</sup>	Biscuits	408	P French
10 <sup>th</sup>	Dove Bodywash	57	Ayron
11 <sup>th</sup>	Red wine	38	A & M Thompson
12 <sup>th</sup>	Basket of Prosecco	810	M Idle
13 <sup>th</sup>	Biscuits	44	Florence
14 <sup>th</sup>	Magnolia Toiletries	694	Pearl
15 <sup>th</sup>	Chocolates	685	Hilary
16 <sup>th</sup>	White wine	595	D Sanders
17 <sup>th</sup>	Baylis & Harding bath toiletries	211	P James
18 <sup>th</sup>	Biscuits	814	D Rhodes
19 <sup>th</sup>	Rosé wine	957	Irvine
20 <sup>th</sup>	Quality Street	410	P French
21 <sup>st</sup>	Christmas Teddy	63	S Riley
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Rosé wine	204	P James

## **Chess and Check-mate**

Introducing virtual chess at St Martin's was far from plain sailing. It was a bumpy road, but also full of opportunities. The sessions were all encompassing involving children, toddlers and their parents - which further compounded the challenge, though in a good way. A little bit of history highlights that Chess has been historically a game which was played with those who were "smart" or "intelligent", while there might be some truth to this, this is one side of the story. I tell

a different story today, based on my experience of teaching chess in primary schools as well as in communities. I have observed that it is just "interest" which is the key to playing this game. I for one believe that intelligence is not static, but is developed over time, as individuals apply themselves to learning new things in life.

An example of how this plays out in real life is portrayed in a mini-film series on Netflix which has been talked about more recently, "The Queen's Gambit", and I have also happened to watch all the episodes. This series portrays a young girl who upon learning the game of chess, becomes observed with the game, which eventually led to a new life for her, as she started playing competitively.

The virtual sessions involved introducing the chess pieces which have been identified as the Pawns, Bishops, Rook (Castle), Queen, Knights and Kings. In addition to this, I also spoke of the importance of using chess clocks to ensure the game is finished within a certain timescale.



We didn't get into detail on "chess openings" such as the "Queen's Gambit", since we didn't have enough time. And it might be possible to progress this in the new year.

Few individuals joined in the first few weeks, and as more people joined we welcomed a diverse group of people. Diversity in terms of language and ethnicity in those who joined. This reinforced the game of chess which cross cultural barriers, being a game which has been played in more than 139 countries. More recently, I have also learnt from Google that Check-mate comes from a Persian phrase "shāh māt" (شاه مات) - which means the king is helpless.

One of the participants had a chess board near them which was handy as they could actually move the pieces I was referring to, during the sessions using my demo board (see right). However it is clear from studies by different people all over the world, that chess can indeed improve thinking skills in individuals who dare to "try and learn", I don't know if this will inspire someone to play the game, but the "Queen's Gambit" has brought the game of chess to be a "cool" game again.



*Fr Ericsson*

## **PCC digest**

On Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December the PCC met online via Zoom and here is some information about its deliberations:

- Efforts continue to be made towards meeting the payment of 50% of our Parish Share by the end of the year, as we find ourselves unable to pay the whole amount because of the economic downturn caused by the pandemic.
- The PCC heard with sadness of the retirement of Emily for health reasons as coordinator and head cook of the community kitchen, as well as of two other team cooks. However, the PCC expressed its gratitude for all these years of outstanding and dedicated service by Emily to such an important ministry. Emily will retire after Christmas, and we are working towards amalgamating by then our Community Kitchen with an equivalent initiative by the well-known local charity Black Health Initiative that will allow us not only to continue hosting the initiative, but also to expand it from the current 30-40 clients to more than a hundred. More details will be made known in due course.
- As it does every year, also this year the PCC has reviewed and approved its Agreement with Matthew our Director of Music.
- The PCC has agreed to donate again £50 each to the following charities: St George's Crypt, Leeds Church Extension Soc., Anita's Baby Clinic in Kenya, Pafras, and Candle Lighters.
- The PCC is grateful to Valerie and Joy for offering to be our new Deanery Synod representatives. They replace our late Franklin, Maddy and Doris after several years of dedicated service in such an important role.
- The PCC has adopted a new Mission Statement for our Parish Church of St Martin, which reads: St Martin's Church welcomes you to praise God and serve our diverse community together.
- The next Zoom meeting of the PCC is scheduled for Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February at 6:00 pm.

*Fr Nicholas*

## **Thoughts for each day of the Week**

Sunday: "Good thoughts bear good fruit."

Monday: "The way to get started is to quit talking and start doing."

Tuesday: "Difficult roads often lead to beautiful destinations."

Wednesday: "Change your attitude and it will change your life."

Thursday: "Failure is the first step to learning."

Friday: "Focus on where you want to go, not on what you fear."

Saturday: "You are never too old to set another life goal."

*Provided by Jennie Collins*

# **From All Souls**

## **Epiphany East and West**

In the Churches of the West, in the Church of Rome, the Anglican and Episcopal Churches, and in many Protestant denominations, Epiphany is celebrated on 6<sup>th</sup> January (or sometimes the second Sunday after 1<sup>st</sup> January). It marks the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus and (as the Greek word 'epiphaneia', meaning 'manifestation' or 'appearance', suggests) it celebrates the showing forth of the Saviour to the Gentile world. In the Church of England, the Season of Epiphany runs from the end of Christmastide to the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (2<sup>nd</sup> February), also known as Candlemas.

Many customs are associated with Epiphanytide, including the eating of a special Three Kings cake, having one's house blessed, Star Singing (when a procession of children and young people go from door to door dressed as magi or kings, carrying a rod bearing a star, and singing seasonal hymns) and even outdoor winter swimming!

Eastern Churches – chiefly the Eastern Orthodox – may use the old Julian Calendar and so celebrate on January 19<sup>th</sup>. The feast is generally called the Feast of the Theophany, and signifies the appearance or the showing forth of God the Holy Trinity. The Gospel story associated with the feast is not the visit of the Magi, but the Baptism of Christ. We recall that at the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, recorded in all four of our Gospels, as John publicly baptises Jesus the voice of the Father is heard from heaven declaring, 'You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased' (Mark 1:11). The Holy Spirit, Third Person of the Holy Trinity, descends upon Jesus in the form of a dove.

The Orthodox treat this as a very great feast, more important still than the Nativity. In particular it marks the full revelation of the divinity of Jesus Christ. The holy icons depicting the occasion of the baptism are full of symbolic meaning. As Jesus enters the water, and the heavenly voice speaks, he humbles himself before St John the Baptist and submits to the baptism ordinary folk receive, though he is without any sin. His descent into the Jordan represents entering a 'liquid sepulchre', a kind of watery grave, from which he will rise bringing the offer of life to all mankind. His nakedness declares him the new Adam, restoring to us the original image of God lost through Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden. Three

attendant angels (another reference to the Holy Trinity) have their hands reverently veiled to receive him from the Jordan, like human worshippers receiving Christ at the Eucharist.

The festivals of the Christian Church are ways of celebrating and showing forth the key events in the Gospel story: they are in essence simple enough for a child to understand, yet they unfold mysteries to dazzle saints and archangels!

*Paul Stapleton, Reader at All Souls'*

## **Covid experiences**

### **A tale of two lockdowns**

As many of you will know, I wear two hats in my working life: as Priest (at St Martin's) and as Professor (at Leeds Trinity University). So, when lockdown struck in March, I experienced it in stereo, as my inbox was flooded with different sets of guidance from the diocese and the university. Of course, that guidance changed daily and sometimes hourly. It was bewildering, but one message was clear: we weren't going to be in church or on campus for quite some time.

I've spoken a lot about my experience of lockdown at church, but what of university? It was very strange to leave my office on 16<sup>th</sup> March (to rush off to a Lenten Group at church), and not to return until a brief visit to collect some things in September. I was used to going into work each morning and seeing students and colleagues, so lockdown felt like we had been caught in a power-cut and were having to find one another in the dark. So, as I did with the parish, I spent a lot of time phoning round students and emailing them to find out how they were doing.

The experience of keeping in touch with both students and people from church has taught me that, although we were 'all in it together' as the phrase went, everyone's experience has been unique. Some students managed well, but probably the majority have struggled in some way. Many young people suffer from anxiety or mental health problems, and this strange and terrifying experience has made their symptoms much worse. Students fear for themselves and their family members. Some students from the most at-risk communities had long journeys on public transport that they didn't feel able to make. Students have been ill or in isolation, students have lost loved-ones. Students who relied upon campus for basic study-needs

like a computer, an internet connection, or a quiet place to work, found it difficult.

But, both students and staff have gone to great efforts and to make it work. We've got online seminars, the chance for occasional socially-distanced and livestreamed lectures on campus, lots of internet resources. Staff have given students lots of support, and students have supported one another through WhatsApp and other channels. Students have passed their exams, and gained their degrees, despite all the odds. Graduation was online of course, but it marked a massive achievement.

My working life has changed for the better since lockdown. I have a rhythm to my day where I stop for lunch and dinner with my husband. I can watch the sunrise and sunset from my house, and I've seen the seasons change during my 'daily exercise'.

During lockdown, I found that my two vocations have come together more fully than ever before. Since March, I have lived and worked and prayed in the same house:



**Jane de Gay** @Woolf2016Leeds · Mar 29

Praying for the world from my kitchen table this [#PassionSunday](#).  
The cross (from Jerusalem) was a gift from a parishioner.  
The candle was from a student.  
I'm praying for both communities.



I have given lectures and led church prayer groups from the same room; presided at Communion and eaten meals from the same kitchen table. I start every day by praying in my study, lighting a candle and seeing the morning sky through the window. I pray for the whole of my day and for all of the people I will meet, then I turn 90 degrees to my desk, switch on my computer and set to work. My life is no longer about swapping hats, but about living an integrated life as Priest and Professor and wife, with God at the heart.

*Revd Jane*

# **Regulars – Mothers' Union**



## **Belated Christmas message**

*Unfortunately, due to printing deadlines for the December magazine we were unable to include this in time for Christmas but Jennie was still keen to share the Christmas message from the Worldwide President of the Mothers' Union:*

"My Dear Friend,

The spirit of Christmas is here with us again! It is my favourite time of the year with the glow of the candles, the warmth of family and friends, the heavenly sound of Christmas Carols and the feeling of a life filled with endless moments of peace and joy.

One of the blessings of this time of the year is the opportunity I get to connect with you wherever you are; and as I think of you, I remember over 2,000 years ago when our Lord Jesus Christ was born, in a manger with humble beginnings, among peaceful animals and in the company of loving parents. Isaiah puts it over so nicely in Chapter 9 Verse 6,

*"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given ... and His Name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*

As I reflect on the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, and the change from the hustle and bustle of everyday life to lockdown with new lifestyles, I think of the journey that Mothers' Union has been on in this unprecedented time. There was loss of income from closing our conferencing facilities at Mary Sumner House and members were not able to meet and carry out their usual activities. This resulted in lots of cuts so Mothers' Union could survive the crisis. Some were painful but in all things our members were faithful and we survived by the Grace of God. This gives us many reasons to thank God for his goodness and to prayerfully celebrate another joyous season.

Many of us look forward to the excitement of receiving and opening gifts at this time, but the gift that God gives us is one that is lasting and lives in our hearts forever. It is the birth of his son Jesus Christ in whose Word we can trust, in whose Presence we have confidence, and by whose Power we can do all things.

Let us take this time to celebrate... meaningfully by spending a little time to pray and give glory to God. In the spirit of love, let us also

remember those whose Christmas season may be a difficult one. Let us pray that God will touch them, soothe their hearts, heal their pain and fill their lives with his peace.

The Worldwide Board of Trustees and all at Mary Sumner House join me in wishing you God's blessings for a wonderful Christmas. This Christmas Eve night, we will be thinking of you and we will be lighting a candle for you while singing, "O Holy Night."

May your Christmas sparkle and your New Year shine with the peace, love and joy of the Christ Child! Warm Christmas Blessings to you! With my love and prayers as always,

**Sheran Harper, Worldwide President**

## Articles

### **SAINT OF THE MONTH: George Fox     January 13<sup>th</sup>**

When my wife and I lived in East Lancashire a few years ago one of my favourite places to walk was on Pendle Hill. It is a great lump of a hill rising out of the surrounding countryside to a height of nearly 2000 feet above sea level and it totally dominates the farmlands and little towns around it.. The view from the top is stunning (you can actually see Blackpool Tower over 30 miles away on a good day).

The area of course is most famous as being the home of the Pendle Witches who conducted their weird rituals on and around the great hill in 1612. But it is also closely associated with our Saint of the Month - George Fox who was inspired there to found the Society of Friends (now more commonly known as the Quakers).

George Fox was actually born in Leicestershire in 1624 and grew up in those turbulent times leading up to the English Civil War. He possessed a naturally questioning mind and, at the age of nineteen, he left home to "seek the Truth" as he put it later in his journal.

It is not surprising perhaps that, growing up at a time when Catholics and Protestants were busy fighting and murdering each other, he should decide he needed a third and better way to work out his Christian life. He decided that such things as priests and church buildings were unnecessary - people could more easily contact God all by themselves if they knew how to do it. Religion and politics were far more mixed in those days than they are now and so when George Fox talked about his faith he got into trouble

with the authorities and found himself in prison for the first of many times.

Then in 1652 George had his life changing moment on Pendle Hill. As he stood on its bare and windy summit with the tremendous view all around him he tells us he had a vision of "a great people waiting for him". I understand that modern Quakers regard this moment as the beginning of the Society of Friends for within a few days of this vision George had started to attract large crowds to whom he preached his ideas about personal contact with God. His ideas spread like the proverbial wildfire and the Society of Friends grew at great speed.

In 1669 Fox married his long term friend and assistant Mary Fell and they worked - and suffered persecution - together till he died. Two years after their marriage he was asked to travel out to develop the work in Barbados where he encountered slavery and worked among the owners to improve the lot of the slaves. A year later he moved north into America where among the native "Indians" he found considerable success.

Such travel was hard in the 17th century and when he returned to England he reports he felt tired and ill. Nevertheless he spent much effort trying to arrange a more secure future for his followers by petitioning Parliament to end the persecution of all who "dissented" from the government's laws about worship. Just before Fox died in 1691 he achieved success when the Declaration of Tolerance was made law and all dissenters became free to worship as they desired.

Fox died in 1691 and therefore in our Anglican Calendar we celebrate this remarkable man on January 13th each year. It may seem strange and unexpected that we should include among our "Saints" a man who wanted to abolish many of the things we value in the Anglican Church and which we find helpful in our own contact with God -our rituals and music, our clergy and the purpose-built Church buildings. But Fox was truly a holy man and, although we may disagree with some of his views, he does remind us that the basic purpose of worship and prayer is our own personal contact with the Lord.

I've often thought that I would like to label all our congregations a "Society of Friends". Because the name describes so well that the chief aim of the Christian life is our friendship with each other and, most important - our friendship with our loving God.

*Brian Pearmain*

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# Readings



<b>January 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Isaiah 60:1-6 Matthew 2:1-12
<b>January 10<sup>th</sup></b>	Genesis 1:1-5 Mark 1:4-11
<b>January 17<sup>th</sup></b>	1 Samuel 3:1-10; John 1:43-end
<b>January 24<sup>th</sup></b>	Genesis 14:17-20 John 2:1-11
<b>January 31<sup>st</sup></b>	Malachi 3:1-5 Luke 2:22-40

## THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

From the book: *Peace of Heart in All Things*, by Brother Roger Shutz, founder of the ecumenical community of Taizé, GIA Publications

Nothing is more beautiful than a face made transparent by a whole lifetime of sorrows and joys, of combats, and of inner peace.

## Eco top tips

### **January – On the internet**

1. Enjoy texting: at 0.014g of carbon dioxide a text it's a very low carbon cost way to communicate
2. Think before you click: each web search requires energy on your computer, laptop or 'phone and more at the server finding the webpage for you, costing 4.5g CO<sub>2</sub>e a time. Just 10 searches a day adds up to 16.5kg CO<sub>2</sub>e a year.
3. Switch to using a green search engine on the internet such as [www.ecosia.org](http://www.ecosia.org) , which plants trees to absorb the carbon emissions from your web searches.
4. Email with care: an email generates 4g CO<sub>2</sub>e and a large email with lots of attachments up to 50g. Don't stop communicating, but think before you copy everyone in!

*Jemima Parker, Diocesan Environment Officer*



## Transport

Would you like to come to Church services when they start up again but cannot get there by yourself? Please let us know and we will try to come up with a way of getting you here to worship with us.

## Community Kitchen

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in" (Matthew 25:35)

Started in July 2014, The Community Kitchen is undergoing some changes – watch this space for updates.



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