



St Nicholas News - November/December 2020 - £1

## Rachel Writes



The past seven months have changed many things. Life here at St Nick's has not escaped those changes. As I hope you are aware, this month's magazine is going to be the last. Over the past few months we have found that using a weekly newsletter, with regular 'thoughts for the week', from the team has provided more flexibility than a parish magazine. As we travel towards the new year, now seems the time to act and put our venerable magazine 'to bed'. I know some will mourn the magazine's passing, but the PCC are right in my view to think it is right to call time on it.

The 'closing' of the magazine strikes me as a good opportunity to look back. So much has shifted in our life together over the past twelve years since I joined you. Leaving aside the seismic shifts generated by the pandemic, I think we've witnessed a congregation that has grown in confidence and focus. Certainly, the profile of the congregation has changed. So many friends have gone to glory and we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. Many of those friends were long-term members of the congregations who had memories of Burnage stretching back decades. Our current congregation includes a good spread of ages, but the profile of our congregation is even richer than it was when I first came. I think there is greater confidence about how we do mission too. That is, I think there is real confidence about how we serve our local community and invite them into the life of Christ. St Nick's is always going to be an unusual parish - we don't have nursing homes or a church school, for example - so we have to be creative. Oh, how we've been creative! I don't think any of us could have expected the flurry of arts and theatre we've witnessed over the past decade or so.

For me, St Nick's has been and continues to be a very happy place to be. That's primarily because St Nick's has never lost sight of its central focus. At its heart is worship and worship centred around the Altar of our Lord. Week-by-week, even during the heights of lockdown, we managed to find a way to worship. If digital worship wasn't for everyone, we still kept the rhythm going. That rhythm is going to be crucial not just in the months to come, but in the years to come. To keep the structured and disciplined routines of prayer, including the wonderful Taize service, is going to sustain and deepen our faith.

So, as we say 'farewell' to our magazine, we look forward with hope. My thanks go out to the editors of the magazine during my time as Rector: Roy Cookson, Alison Mills, Rachel Varughese, Giles Elliot and Storm Janeway. Each has brought their own mark and each has been valued. Here's to the future!

Onwards!

*Rachel x*

## Editor's Note



As Rachel mentioned, this is to be our last magazine. I hope you have enjoyed the magazine this year as I took it on with much excitement back in January. It's been a huge year for me with my 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of being baptised last month, my 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of joining St Nicks coming up in a few weeks, I've started a BA in Theology, had the privilege of doing readings for the online Taizé services and started the Prayer Garden project, which will continue into 2021.

St Nicks truly has a wonderful congregation, amazing clergy and we are utterly blessed with a gorgeous building - but I think many of you know this already. May I take this opportunity to wish you a safe journey during this period of lockdown and that you have a peaceful and safe break at Christmas. God Bless and much love.

*Storm Janeway*

## Preparing for a wedding and Christmas celebrations in 2020

As many of you will know, Oliver Mills our Musical Director and son of the Churchwarden and Church Treasurer was due to marry his fiancée Lorna on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020. Ollie and Lorna had grand plans for their ceremony with members of the Greater Manchester Voices performing in the service. Their wedding guests were also expected to join them in church and at the reception to follow. Plans were all in place when the global pandemic struck, and wedding services and receptions were banned throughout the first lockdown.

Covid and a pandemic put paid to their plans and their wedding date had to be rescheduled along with that of many other couples including Ollie's cousin Lucy Crossley and her fiancé Scott who also had to reschedule their wedding from June, to October and now to June 2021. Ollie and Lorna's wedding day was rescheduled to Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November. Small wedding services were allowed as long as numbers did not exceed 15.

Following lots of discussion and the cancellation of their small reception, Ollie and Lorna had a beautiful wedding service in church on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November, which was intimate and emotional, thanks to Rachel's delivery of a beautiful service and just 10 guests. The church looked beautiful with flowers arranged by Ollie's Aunty Val Hagan.

The weather was a little chilly and it rained as we came out of church, but our spirits were not dampened by the conditions and we had a wonderful day.

The wedding party came back to the family home and we had a mini celebration in the garden under the gazebo (to ensure that we were in the open air but under cover to shelter from the elements) we all maintained our social distance.



Providing wedding services and receptions are allowed in Spring 2021, Ollie and Lorna will be celebrating their marriage in St.Nick's with their extended family and friends in May 2021 once again on 3<sup>rd</sup> May which will be the bank holiday Monday.

Congratulations to the new Mr and Mrs Mills

We are also planning ahead to our family Christmas celebrations and looking forward to the time when we can meet with our extended family and friends. Our tradition is to meet up with the Crossley family on Christmas Eve to enjoy a meal out together before gathering for Midnight Mass. We are

not sure whether we will be able to meet in a large group of more than 6 people, we will await news and direction from the Government nearer the time, but it is important that we all focus on getting together in whatever way we can via Zoom, phone calls or perhaps gathering in small groups.

Christmas dinner might have to be cooked at our own houses and we may have to join together over a Zoom call, but we will be sharing the day one way or another.

One thing is for sure, we will celebrate Christmas, presents might have to be more focussed on gift vouchers this year and buying gifts on-line but the important part of Christmas will be the special Christmas Services including Christingle, and Midnight Mass.

Stay safe and well during the second lockdown and let's hope that we can all look forward to getting back to planning special family events in the new year.

The Mills Family  
November 2020.

## The Story is still the same

'Christmas may look different, but the story is still the same!' That's the message for Christmas in 2020. Coronavirus will make our celebrations this year look very different from usual. However, the message of the baby born in Bethlehem is still relevant!

In one nativity play, the highlight was to illuminate Jesus, with a light in the manger, when all the other lights were turned off. At the appropriate time, all the lights went out, including the manger one. The silence was broken when one of the shepherds loudly

whispered: 'Hey, you turned off Jesus.' Of course, nobody can turn off Jesus this Christmas!

The angels announced, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord.' (Luke 2: 10,11). The birth of this baby brings great joy and good news for everyone! As the king of the universe, He has come as our Saviour. In an uncertain world, He offers joy and hope, because He holds this pandemic in His hands. This is a real cause for joy!

'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests.' (Luke 2:14). We may feel anything but peace amid the anxieties over our current circumstances. How can a Jewish infant born to a peasant family in first century Palestine bring peace to our lives today? Jesus established peace with God through His death on the cross. Trusting the Prince of Peace for our lives brings God's peace amid the huge uncertainties we face. As the carol says, 'Joy to the world, the Lord has come, let earth receive her King.'

*By Canon Paul Hardingham*



**"The foodbank was there when we really needed it, it was an absolute lifeline."**

We don't think anyone in our community should have to face going hungry. That's why we provide three days' nutritionally balanced emergency food and support to local people who are referred to us in crisis. We are part of a nationwide network of foodbanks, supported by The Trussell Trust, working to combat poverty and hunger across the UK.

# HELPING LOCAL PEOPLE IN NEED

[Learn more](#)



 **2436**

We fed 2436 people last year

 **1193**

1193 of those fed were children

 **24360**

We provided 24,360 meals last year

**Where to Find Us** - Here are the opening times and locations for our foodbank centres. Everyone who comes to the foodbank for emergency food needs to have a valid foodbank voucher.

For enquires about services and donations or about how YOU can help. You can make a difference to your community:

**Contact: Telephone:** 07796 448 205 **Email:** [info@burnage.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@burnage.foodbank.org.uk)

## Hope amid uncertainty

'Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call Him Immanuel.' (Isaiah 7:14)

This promise to King Ahaz in 8<sup>th</sup> century Judah is fulfilled in the coming of Jesus at the first Christmas: 'God with Us' (Matthew 1:23). Ahaz faced the military threat of Syria invading Israel, but Isaiah tells him not to panic. He can trust God, who is in control of the nation.

For us, Coronavirus brings deep uncertainty as we come to another New Year. We live with the threat from the virus, economic uncertainty, separation from family and friends, the loss of loved ones and the anxiety that isolation brings. Yet the message of Immanuel brings hope, as it did for Ahaz! Christmas changes everything forever! God has declared in Christ that He is with us and for us, not absent from or against us. His love is larger than our sin, fears or guilt: 'If God is for us, who can be against us?' (Romans 8:31).

As we prepare for the most unusual Christmas ever, let's not forget:

God with us means that He is on my side and by my side. In the uncertainties of life, I am never alone. God with us means that everything will work out according to His plan. My life isn't just a series of meaningless occasions or mistakes. God with us means that even when others show they are not there for me, God is.

God with us means when circumstances change, He will give me the strength I need. God is with me: He isn't far away, but has made the journey into my world. Here is the hope for the future, once we get past the trees, gifts, turkey stuffing and pudding!

***By Canon Paul Hardingham***

## Foundation for Ministry - Manchester

During the summer of 2019 I was persuaded by my friend Nick Campbell (who himself is training for Ordination) to apply to join the Foundation For Ministry (FFM) course. Nick informed me it would help me identify where I am on my Christian journey. So, on Saturday 28th September 2019 along with two friends Sharon & Rhys I attended the course induction day. Here at St. Nicks. Jamie Mackenzie the course leader made us feel at equal and at ease. Jamie also reassuring us there were no assignments, no exams. (I wouldn't have minded that I really enjoy studying) also the course would be a really good starting point for anybody who feels they may want to look further into ministry. (Not me was my reaction to that sentence), however, I am not a person to quit and because the Church of England had paid for me to attend. I was determined to stay for the duration. We were introduced to Team Leaders who were in pairs. Alison Mills and June Partington gave the best pitch for me personally. That was one of the easiest & best choices I have made. It was easy to see early on that I was among a really good group of people from a varied background, whose own personal stories gave us all inspiration.

### Autumn Term; Identity & Theology

As I worked through the weeks ahead, I was not only becoming more interested in the guest speakers, but I was gaining in confidence. When we broke off for the last hour in our groups Alison and June were encouraging us to lead the group sessions. This was interesting, made easier because their input was inspiring. When it was our groups turn to do the opening prayers we decided it would be good if we could BSL sign the course prayer, Because Julie and I have passed our BSL level 2 exams due to our 10 year old son Max being deaf from birth. I suggested I could teach the group to sign the prayer. We learnt it in one session and that is when group B put our mark on the opening prayers. It was really encouraging as the other groups signed along with us. That was a real confident booster for us all.

So, after the Christmas and New Year festivities were over, we returned for the Spring Term

### Ministry & Gifting

This topic covered What's My Shape. I started to learn so much about myself, once again Alison and June helped us to get a better understanding, each week we would talk and discuss each topic. Every time we left the room, we were all clear and happy for the progress we made.

Alison and June's personal experiences became one of my best resources.

Saturday February the 29th 2020 The Whole Course vocations Day.I found this day very productive I had an insight to what the FFM would offer. Every speaker had such an amazing story to tell, people from all walks of life gave speeches, examples and discussed problems, Each speaker spoke of a wide scope of ministry, at the end of the afternoon you had the

opportunity to discuss anything you were interested in, or just collect literature, email addresses or even phone numbers. For the rest of the weekend I reflected on my notes from the day.

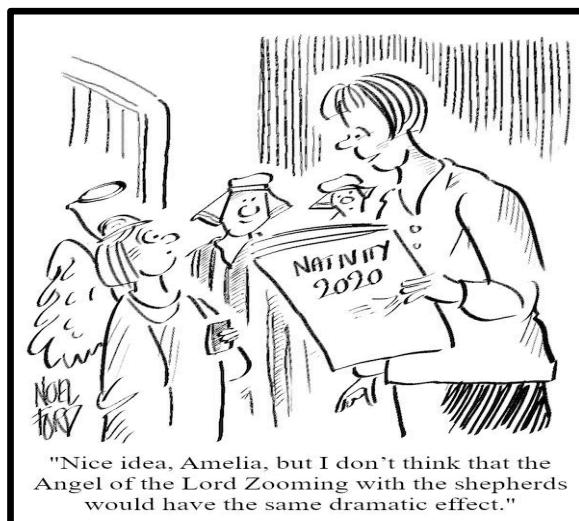
### Mission and Sustainability

This term was about ourselves as individuals. We started session 15 The Call to Mission also Session 16 Living and Communicating the Gospel the remaining 6 sessions were cancelled due to the coronavirus. Eventually session 17 to 22 were completed by Zoom meetings, unfortunately I only managed 17 and 18. Various circumstances prevented me from finishing the course online. I was quite disappointed as I really wanted to continue. However, keeping Julie, myself and the children safe and isolated became priority. As the course on zoom finally finished, Jamie announced there would-be catch-up sessions on the 5th and 12th September for anyone who hadn't completed the course online. Sadly, the session on the 5th of September was cancelled. Thankfully we did meet on the 12th of September, luckily, we were able to complete the remaining sessions, 17 to 22.

The 17th of October was to be our FFM celebration service. We received our certificates from the Bishop of Middleton, although our families couldn't be there with us, it was a really special morning. After a discussion with Alison Mills and a few other friends I prayed for Gods guidance to show me where the FFM may lead me. The following week I received an email from our rector Rachel Mann who suggested we could have a zoom meeting to discuss my vocation. Over the past couple of weeks Rachel and I have had two Zoom meetings, I explained I was curious about the ALM and I felt drawn to the Worship and Liturgy Elective.

Rachel said she would support me and would approach the PCC when they next meet in November. If I am successful, I can start the ALM course in January 2021. If I am allowed to go ahead, I will be very grateful and proud. It was during the FFM course located at St. Nick's that attracted me to join the congregation. The people here are so friendly and make me feel so welcome. So, from that first week of walking into the FFM with trepidation to possibly training for an ALM. I think it is fair to say the FFM course has been of a huge benefit to me, leading me to follow my heart under Gods guidance.

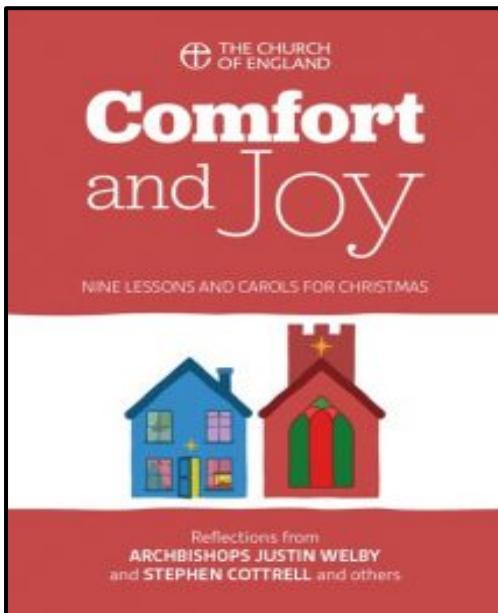
God's Blessings, Paul Brownsell



"Nice idea, Amelia, but I don't think that the Angel of the Lord Zooming with the shepherds would have the same dramatic effect."

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Comfort and Joy – Nine Lessons and Carols for Christmas By John Kiddie



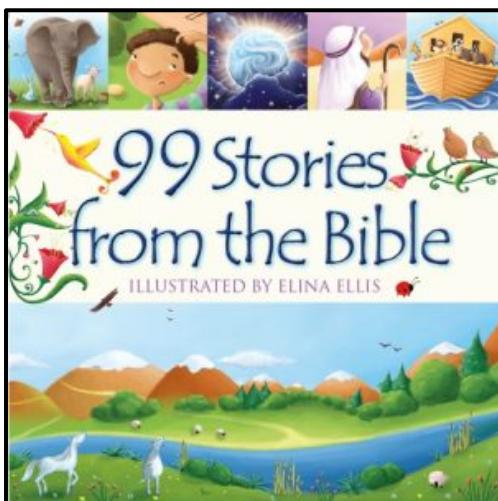
Churches all over the country will be marking Advent and Christmas in both new and familiar ways this year. 'Comfort and Joy', the Church of England's 2020 Christmas campaign, will help enrich your Christmas

It features daily reflections for the Christmas season from Kate Bottley, Jonathan Bryan, Bob Chilcot, Martha Collison, Stephen Cottrell, Guli Francis-Dehqani, Chine McDonald, Sally Phillips and Justin Welby.

Beginning on Christmas Day and ending on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, each day explores a Bible reading and a familiar carol, encouraging us to consider Christmas in these extraordinary times, and inviting us to hear again the message of the angels – good news of God's unfailing love for a world that is weary and hurting.

For more about 'Comfort and Joy', online services, and the free app featuring audio versions of all the featured carols, go to: [www.churchofengland.org/ComfortAndJoy](http://www.churchofengland.org/ComfortAndJoy)

### 99 Stories from the Bible By Juliet David and Elina Ellis, Candle Books

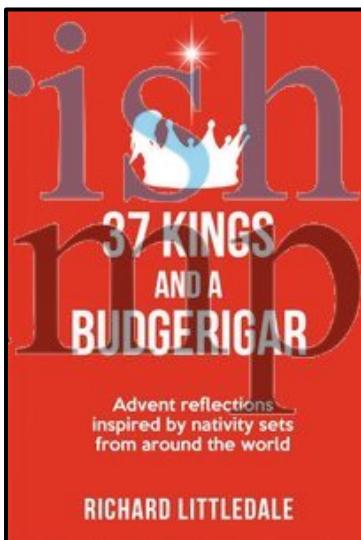


Here is an excellent way to introduce young children to the great Bible stories. Each story is told across a double page spread and there is a mixture of full-page art and spot illustrations throughout the book.

The stories cover: At the Beginning, Samuel Listens, Esther, A Blind Man Sees, and Jesus Walks on the Lake, right through to One Day Jesus Will Return.

## 37 Kings and a Budgerigar

By Richard Littledale, Authentic



For many of us, putting out a crib set is one of our treasured Christmas traditions. But what do these scenes really tell us about the original Christmas story?

Richard Littledale, a regular contributor to Daily Service and Sunday Worship on BBC Radio 4, shares reflections, Bible readings and prayers for each day of Advent, based on his own personal collection of nativity sets from around the world. Just like unexpectedly finding a figure of a budgerigar in one of his nativity sets, this accessible devotional will surprise you anew as you see the familiar nativity story with fresh eyes.

## Reflected Faith Series: Grace for all

Last month we thought about one key element of gathered worship – the Welcome. It is for everyone, regardless of how they look, or dress, their faith or their behaviour. This month, being the month of Advent and Christmas, let's focus on Grace.

God, in Jesus, did not wait for us to become perfect or reach up to Him but rather He came to us, in the daily mess of our lives; as and where we are. I recently heard someone say: 'God's nature is goodness', and the Bible confirms that this is true. He cannot help it. That's what He is. He is goodness, and grace, and forgiveness, and faithfulness, and all those wonderful attributes that come from the pure essence of love.

It's what we strive for – to be more like Him every day. Then our welcome to others will also be full of grace, His grace, and not guided by our own likes or prejudices. Instead, we can reach out to others spontaneously, from a heart of love.

This Advent and Christmas it will probably be harder to welcome people into our times of worship. Virtual is not the same as actual, and actual will include facemasks. But that does not mean that we should give up on reaching out to those who visit our church. This year, more than ever, they may need us. Many will be lonely this Christmas, far from their families.

So, although our normal church services may be disrupted, we have to remember that services are not the church; WE are the church. In what has been an extraordinary year, perhaps we can each of us find an informal way of sharing our Christmas joy with anyone whom God sends our way.

This month: Have a think about what it is about Christmastime services that people love. How can we distil that into a socially distanced service or meeting, a virtual experience or into an envelope or maybe a box to their doors?

By Revd Dr Jo White

## God in the Arts

*The Revd Michael Burgess concludes his series on animals and birds as seen in art and scripture... this month he considers a 13th century painting by Gerald of Wales.*



During this year we have explored the beauty and wonder of our world in the rich variety of all creatures great and small. In the months of lockdown and restrictions, many of us have used the time to look afresh at the world of Nature and have learnt to value it once again.

When we look at the life of the 6th century Irish hermit saint, Kevin of Glendalough, we see someone who had that special relationship with the birds and animals. An otter, the wolf and a wild boar were his co-hermits. We are told that during Lent as he was kneeling in prayer in his cell, he held his arm out

of the window. A blackbird mistook the arm for the branch of a tree and built its nest in the saint's hand. The saint waited until the eggs were laid and hatched and the fledglings had flown.

One of the earliest depictions of this story is a marginal drawing in *The History of Ireland* by Gerald of Wales in the early 13th century and now in the British Library. He visited Ireland several times and was entranced by the marvels he saw and the tales he heard.

To accompany the story of St Kevin, an unknown artist drew the saint sat in his cell, cradling the blackbird gently in his left hand. Seamus Heaney captured the story in a poem in which he wondered if the saint was self-forgetful in all those months or perhaps in agony. The poet praises St Kevin because he sought no reward, but offered time and patience to care for this sign of new life.

So much has happened to us during this year for good and ill, and we wonder what the new year will bring. Perhaps St Kevin can inspire us to journey with faith and hope, and to travel through the months ahead with a renewed concern for the created order around. The Gaelic name Kevin means loved. Like him, we pray that we will love and cherish this planet, and care for the wonder and beauty of birds like the blackbird and all the animals. Then we can rejoice with him in the wonder of Creation that displays the handiwork of God the Creator.

# PUZZLES



## Crossword Clues

### Across

- 1 Rely (Psalm 62:7) (6)
- 4 'He stretches out the heavens like a — , and spreads them out like a tent to live in' (Isaiah 40:22) (6)
- 7 What the dove carried the olive leaf in, when it returned to Noah's ark (Genesis 8:11) (4)
- 8 Annoy (1 Samuel 1:6) (8)
- 9 Judah's last king, who ended his days as a blind prisoner in Babylon (Jeremiah 52:11) (8)
- 13 'They all — and were satisfied' (Luke 9:17) (3)
- 16 Eliphaz the Temanite was one; so was Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite (Job 2:11; 16:2) (4,9)
- 17 National Association of Evangelicals (of the USA) (1,1,1)
- 19 Popular song for New Year's Eve, Auld — — (4,4)
- 24 Able dock (anag.) (8)

- 25 The number of stones David chose for his confrontation with Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (4)  
 26 Elgar's best-known 'Variations' (6)  
 27 Soak (Isaiah 16:9) (6)

## **Down**

- 1 Money owing (Deuteronomy 15:3) (4)
- 2 Conciliatory (Titus 3:2) (9)
- 3 'Do this, whenever you — it, in remembrance of me' (1 Corinthians 11:25) (5)
- 4 A group assisting in the governance of the Roman Catholic Church (5)
- 5 One of the gifts Joseph's brothers took with them on their second journey to Egypt (Genesis 43:11) (4)
- 6 'Reach out your hand and — — into my side. Stop doubting and believe' (John 20:27) (3,2)
- 10 Be outstandingly good (2 Corinthians 8:7) (5)
- 11 'What — — that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?' (Psalm 8:4) (2,3)
- 12 Horse's feet (Judges 5:22) (5)
- 13 Notice (Deuteronomy 17:4) (9)
- 14 Comes between 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah (4)
- 15 One of Israel's northern towns conquered by Ben-Hadad (1 Kings 15:20) (4)
- 18 Narnia's Lion (5)
- 20 One of the two rivers in which Naaman would have preferred to wash (2 Kings 5:12) (5)
- 21 Avarice—one of the evils that come from inside people (Mark 7:22) (5)
- 22 Knight Grand Cross of St Michael and St George (1,1,1,1)
- 23 Jacob's first wife (Genesis 29:23) (4)

## **Silent Night**

This much-loved carol comes from Austria, where it was first sung as *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht* on Christmas Eve, 1818. It was written by Father Joseph Mohr, a young priest at St Nicholas parish church, in the village of Oberndorf bei Salzburg. As Christmas 1818 approached, he asked the local schoolmaster, Franz Xaver Gruber, to compose a melody for his carol. Gruber was organist in the nearby village of Arnsdorf, and so was happy to oblige. On Christmas Eve they presented the carol to the church during the midnight mass. The carol went on to become loved world-wide; and the version sung by Bing Crosby is the third best-selling single of all time.

Melody	Young	Christmas	First
Single	Priest	Eve	Sung
Bing	Organist	Father	Stille
Version	Midnight	Joseph	Nacht
Third	Mass	Mohr	Heilige
Silent	Night	Loved	Carol
			Austria

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

## Organisations

**Confirmation Classes**

For young people and adults by arrangement with the Minister.

**Rainbows**

For girls aged 5 to 7 years.  
Wednesday evening, 6 pm to 7 pm, in the church hall

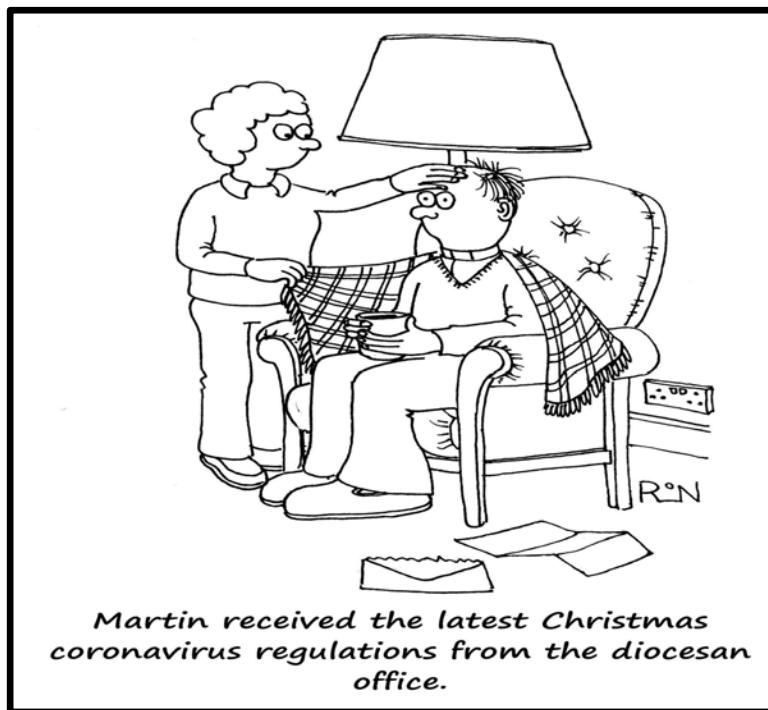
## **Church Hall Bookings**

Church Hall and Glass Room are available for hire.

Details are on our website:  
[www.st-nicholas-church.org.uk](http://www.st-nicholas-church.org.uk)

For bookings please contact:

Alison Mills (0793 207 1977)  
[alison@glensidemills.co.uk](mailto:alison@glensidemills.co.uk)



## **RECTOR'S APCM REPORT**

This is a report I could not have imagined writing back at the end of February. Back then, I was celebrating my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, with a whole year of events planned for my diary. Back then, we were looking forward to Holy Week and Easter and the promise of a new building project, and a summer of relaxation, parties, and hopefully good weather. Back then, the talk was of a new virus that was especially affecting certain parts of Italy. We looked on in horror as thousands of people in Lombardy died, and the living were locked down. Many of us thought that it could not happen here.

Viruses we have discovered do not respect how we see ourselves or our plans. Viruses are not interested in borders or walls, and if some communities have been especially affected by it, it does not care about what we think or believe. The world we knew was turned upside down.

Still, we thought, this won't be for long. I remember thinking, back at the start of lockdown, 'give us a few months and we'll be back to normal.' I remember saying to many people, increasingly via online means, 'Oh, we'll have one heck of a party once we're back in our building.' Well, we're back in our church building and the party has been rather different to the one I'd anticipated.

As I look back over the past eighteen months since our last APCM, I am so proud of this fellowship and family of St Nick's. We have grown in depth and in number, we have paid our way and we have sought to face the many regular challenges with humour and spirit, and that's before we come on to the challenges presented by Covid. I can only thank the Church Wardens and PCC for their good sense and support. I can only thank you for your fortitude and forbearance.

However, there is no way around it. The fact that we are holding this APCM in October and via a video conferencing system, Zoom, reveals the sheer, shattering impact of a virus on our life here at St Nick's.

How we have addressed the challenges of Covid shows a lot about who we are here at St Nick's. I've often said in the past few months, 'We are St Nick's, we can handle anything.' I believe that sincerely, and I believe it based on a strong evidence trail. Within days of lockdown, the leadership of the parish committed to offering a digital version of our services and, as regulation followed regulation, I was impressed by the fleet-footedness of this community. Once again huge thanks must be offered to the Wardens, who worked closely with Fr. Alan, Rev'd Andrew and me, to ensure that we were lockdown- and then COVID-secure compliant.

I think that some won't appreciate the strain and demands placed on our leadership team behind the scenes, and I certainly spent a lot of time with my head spinning as I sought to communicate the latest position from the Diocese and the National Church not just to St Nick's but to the wider Deanery. From a liturgical point of view, our online church would have been impossible without the gifts of Ollie Mills, who rose and continues to rise magnificently to the challenge. He did so right in the midst of a time when he and Lorna had to postpone a long planned wedding and negotiate the stress and disappointment generated by that.

We've gained so much, from discovering that coffee mornings and PCC meeting can be held digitally through to the rediscovered power of the landline or letter writing. Most of all, we've been reminded that Church is not simply the building.

However, things are not how we would hope. There has been a profound cost to this time and I say to each and everyone of you, as much as I say to myself, please be kind to yourself and others in the months to come. We are tired and we are likely to feel a bit frayed. It may be tempting to lash out. There is a long way to go yet, and we have to pace ourselves. I know that many of us want solutions and actions done immediately. However, God's Kingdom is not built in a day. We can rest in God's time. Certainly, one thing I need to prioritise is some rest between now and Christmas. If I need to do that, so do you.

I'm so sorry that we've been unable to hold many of our social events over the summer. Our Saturday Café has had to be mothballed. We have also lost some amazing and lovely people

from our fellowship in the past year and a half, though we have met new friends too. Some of those who have departed, like Dr Beth Clarke, have moved away for work. Andrew our curate has travelled on to pastures new. Others have gone to glory, including Amelia Woodall, James Tyler and Eunice Wilshaw. I am especially sorry that we couldn't hold the funeral for Eunice that we planned and hoped. As the restrictions 'bit', what was going to be a huge event slowly became a family-only funeral at the Crem. It was beautiful, but not what we had imagined. I still hope we shall be able to hold some proper memorials for our departed friends in due course.

During lockdown and in recent months, it has been essential that the PCC, with the sterling support of Andy Mills, our Treasurer, ensure a level of financial security. A lot of income is generated by the hall and that was switched-off in March for several months. Even with the most optimistic vision of the pandemic, in which we can keep our hall open, it will be months before we are close to generating the income we would expect.

I am, therefore, immensely grateful for the financial generosity shown by so many at St Nick's. It means we are keeping our head above water. Generating income will be one of the big challenges for every church in the months to come, and I'm afraid that much of the financial burden will come back to existing congregation members. This year we cannot hold a Christmas Fair, an event which usually generates about £1000 for us. Instead, the PCC proposes a one-off Gift Day on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November in which we invite our regulars and Electoral Roll members to make a one-off gift of at least £10. We hope you will give generously. Your generosity will help ensure that we continue to pay our Parish Share in full and have some to spare to ensure that ministry in its various forms is sustained.

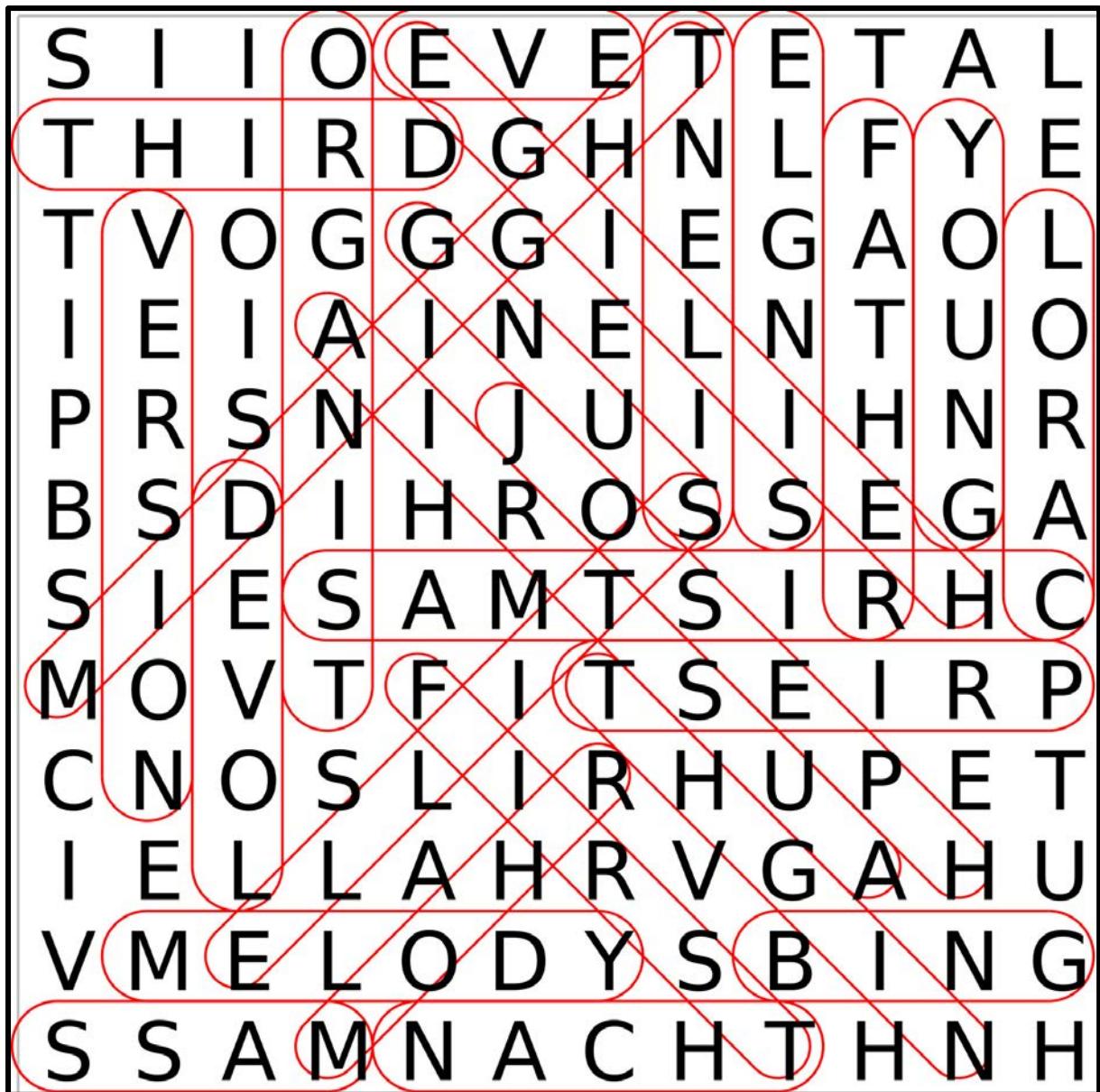
As we look forward, we look forward with hope. None of us yet quite know how the months ahead will unfold. However, they shall do so in the light and company of Jesus Christ. In the midst of our travails and challenges, he is present and calling forth the promise of a new day. In the next year or two, the Diocese will be restructured along new patterns and we at St Nick's are very well placed to meet them with confidence. I am also delighted to report that the PCC remains committed to developing the next stage of our building and reordering plans. To deliver this project will take energy and talent from across the congregation, as well as finding funds to the order of £250,000. It will be a challenge, but it is also a signal of our intent to worship in delight and hope and serve our community with kindness and courage. St Paul famously says, 'Faith, hope and love never end. But the greatest of these is love.' Let us continue to be what have always sought to be: a community which models the love which never ends.

Rachel

## PUZZLE ANSWERS

**ACROSS:** 1, Depend. 4, Canopy. 7, Beak. 8, Irritate. 9, Zedekiah. 13, Ate. 16, Job's comforter. 17, NAE. 19, Lang Syne. 24, Blockade. 25, Five. 26, Enigma. 27, Drench.

**DOWN:** 1, Debt. 2, Peaceable. 3, Drink. 4, Curia. 5, Nuts. 6, Put it. 10, Excel. 11, Is man. 12, Hoofs. 13, Attention. 14, Ezra. 15, Ijon. 18, Aslan. 20, Abana. 21, Greed. 22, GCMG. 23, Leah.



# The Parish Church of St Nicholas Burnage

<b>Sunday Services</b>			
8.30 am	Eucharist (BCP) ( <b>Currently Suspended</b> )		
10.30 am	Family Service and Eucharist ( <i>Please see recent guidance or contact the Church Warden</i> )		
For Saints and other weekday Services, please see the Diary page inside the magazine. Holy Baptism on 3rd Sunday of each month at 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion is taken to the housebound by arrangement with the Minister.			
<b>Minister</b>	Rev'd Canon Rachel Mann 0161 432 7009		
<b>Curate</b>	Rev'd Alan Simpson		
<b>Churchwardens</b>	Mrs Alison Mills (07932071977)  Ms Jane Cawley (07745 392 374)	<b>Organists</b>	Mr Oliver Mills (07786 337087)  Ms Elizabeth Bray
<b>Assistant Wardens</b>	Mr Fred Murphy Mrs Grace Manley Ms Jill Lomas Mrs Julie Crossley Mrs Louise Hollingsworth	<b>Hon. Treasurer</b>	Mr Andrew Mills (07802403991)
		<b>Minutes Secretary</b>	Mrs Ann Ackerman
		<b>Deanery Synod</b>	Mrs Grace Manley Mrs Christine Price
<b>Elected on PCC</b>	Mrs Lyn Rimmer, (electoral Roll Officer) Mrs Margaret Witty Mr Tony Witty Mrs Alison Cullen Ms Michaila Roberts Mrs Julie Bodgers Ms Nicola Naylor Mr Giles Elliott	<b>Magazine Editor</b>	Storm Janeway
		<b>Magazine Distribution</b>	Mrs Brenda Maclese

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