

**Sending you the Christmas blessings of
love, joy, hope and peace**



**From our minister, Jane, all the Elders and staff
at Welwyn Garden City URC**

Message from the Manse

Its beginning to look a lot like Christmas everywhere you goaccording to the song by Jonny Matthis and because the shops have been full of Christmas decorations and gift ideas since early November. Yet so many people say - I don't feel Christmassy yet this year. It made me wonder what it is that makes you feel Chistmassy?

Is it the decorations in the shops, present buying, planning the big day? Writing your Christmas cards and the Round Robin Christmas letter? Making the cake? Stirring the pudding? Putting up your own Christmas tree and decorations?

This year we went to the Thursford Christmas spectacular - that really was very Christmassy with the excellent choir singing carol's and the dancers dancing to secular Christmas songs, the poems and the stories inviting us to set aside all squabbles and share the true message of the season with everyone. It truly was a Christmas fest and must have an enduring appeal judging by the number of people who go every year. One couple we spoke to are going again on Christmas Eve!

The Christmas Fayre is always a good start for me, to see the church full of people looking for bargains and helping us raise money for the church and Isobel Hospice, children coming to see Father Christmas, and a lovely spirit of welcome and working together.

The services during Advent give the opportunity, not only to count down to Christmas but to reflect on the promise that one day, when the time is right, Jesus will come again in all his glory. We find this rather a hard concept and Advent encourages us to be ready for the unknown day and hour and in readying ourselves to declutter our hearts and minds allowing Christlikeness to blossom in our lives. This Christlikeness reveals itself in unconditional love and open handed and open-hearted generosity, when our actions are spontaneous or, as Jesus puts it, the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing.

The Gift service is a great opportunity to put this into practice. The sight of your generosity and the generosity of people in Welwyn Garden City who bring their gifts too, speaks of the true spirit of Christmas, God's gift was after all from one heart to all hearts, whoever they may be.

Then there is Carol's by Candlelight where we welcome so many visitors who say it makes their Christmas, the Longest night where we have had the privilege and blessing of listening to peoples stories, the Christmas Eve Communion, all the children's celebrations, Community Cafe at Christmas, Thursday Clubs Christmas lunch. So many things to participate in and enjoy But are you feeling Christmassy yet?

The sad thing is that this awesome time of year when children's eyes sparkle with anticipation and we celebrate the coming to earth of Gods own son, wrapped in the flesh of

a new born baby, all the trappings and traditions we have created can, if we are not careful, become a chore, a duty, something that has to be done.

When we strip it all away and are left with ourselves and Jesus, we find that he wants nothing more than for us to make room for him to be born once more in our hearts this Christmas.

Carol and Jimmy Owens wrote this song to open their Christmas musical:

Christmas isn't Christmas till it happens in your heart
Somewhere, deep inside you, is where Christmas really starts
So, give your heart to Jesus, you'll discover when you do
That it's Christmas, really Christmas for you.

Jesus brings warmth like a winter fire, a light like a candles glow
He's waiting now to come inside, like He did so long ago.
Jesus brings gifts of truth and life and makes them bloom and grow
So welcome Him with a song of joy, and when He comes you'll know...

That Christmas isn't Christmas till it happens in your heart
Somewhere, deep inside you, is where Christmas really starts
So, give your heart to Jesus, you'll discover when you do
That it's Christmas, really Christmas for you.

Lets take time to pause in the busyness of this season and open our hearts to the wonder of the miracle of Jesus slipping into this world in a stable in Bethlehem to be Immanuel, God with us -not just for a life time but for all eternity.

Wishing you all the blessings of this Christmas season. Happy Christmas, to you and your families.

With love and prayers
from Jane

Secretary's Notes



Above is a Nativity picture that we are all familiar with the Christmas card depiction of the coming of Christ into our world with everyone in place.

Jesus birth is the underlying reason for Christmas celebrations although the true meaning has been lost over time by those who have drifted away from Christian belief in today's world. Many will recognise this picture, what it represents, and who the people in the picture are but will celebrate Christmas without acknowledging or giving thanks for its true meaning and significance. Christmas has become for many associated only with family get togethers, presents, feasts and parties.

Above all the elements of the Christmas story are brought together to tell the story in a single image but it is doubtful that all these people were altogether honouring Jesus birth. As a child I accepted that this was exactly as it happened but in recent years I have begun to reflect on the Christmas Story differently and I would like to share my thoughts.

Let me start with Mary a young girl betrothed to Joseph but still living at home in a small community at a time when women were looked upon as simply wives and mothers beholden to their husbands. I am sure she would have been afraid not knowing how to tell Joseph and her parents or how the villagers would react to her pregnancy. I am sure they would be doubting her explanation that she was carrying God's son and perhaps ridicule her for inventing such a story to cover her shame. Yet her faith in God encouraged her to accept that he had chosen her, confident he would be with her through all the difficulties she would be sure to encounter.

Joseph must have found it hard to accept her story and I am sure his first thoughts were that she had been unfaithful to him. He had decided to quietly break off the engagement

until an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a vision confirming Mary's story. Joseph was a man who must have had great faith in God as he decided to do as he had been asked and stand by Mary. This was a very noble and selfless act by Joseph who would become the earthly father to this special child. It must have been a daunting prospect for Joseph especially as he was to become a father for the first time without previous experience to draw on. He would be subjected to criticism from his friends and neighbours for letting himself be drawn into Mary's mess along with the gossip which would be going on in the village. I am sure they found Mary's version of events unbelievable.

Mary's parents must also have been people of great faith in God as a pregnancy out of wedlock would have been a disgrace to the family in their community. We are not told in the bible if they also had an angel visit them in a vision, perhaps they did.

Living under the rule of the Roman Empire they were forced to make a journey to Bethlehem to enrol on a census as this was the city of Joseph's birth. This could not have happened at a worse time as Mary was almost full term. Those who have experienced pregnancy will appreciate how difficult, tiring and uncomfortable this journey must have been especially in these ancient times. On arrival tired hungry and weary they were to find the only place for rest and shelter was a stable alongside the animals. If that wasn't difficult enough Mary then goes into labour giving birth to her first child without her mother present to offer comfort, support and reassurance. How frightening this must have been for them both. I am sure they prayed to God during this time until the baby was safely delivered and both mother and baby were well.

The Angels take news of the birth to shepherds who were in the fields sleeping alongside the sheep they were looking after as they did night after night. They were not held in high regard within their community, they would have been dirty, smelly and not most people's first choice to visit a king. Yet it was God's choice they be welcomed and in Jesus ministry we see this again and again him reaching out to the fringes of society.

The star was used by God to guide the Wise men on their journey to find the King. All three were waiting for a sign that this King had been born so set out to follow it. We are unsure if they all started out from the same place or met up with each other along the way but know that their journey took a long time and Jesus and his family were probably back at home before the wise men visited bearing expensive gifts. They could not have been at the stable in Bethlehem along with the shepherds as our picture shows.

Our idyllic Nativity picture when unpicked can give us much food for thought. It was the strength and faith of Mary, Joseph and their families that enabled Jesus God's son to be brought into our world in human form and we owe them our gratitude and admiration for their courage and conviction. They suffered but believed that God would be with them through all the trials and tribulations they would face. He didn't let them down. The dirty unworthy shepherds were welcomed in to see the newly born King. The wise men believed

in the prophesy that a new king was to be born and recognised the star was the sign they were waiting for and followed it in faith.

We all have challenges to face in our lives but if we have faith we can be sure that God will be with us in the good times and the bad times and will never desert us if we keep in touch by prayer. Just remember he is always on the end of this very special telephone line. Our lives will never be a bed of roses but we can find comfort in the knowledge that he will be there with us every step of the way just as he was for Mary, Joseph and their families.

God bless you all and I hope you all enjoy Christmas wherever you are spending it.

Joyce

Keeping you informed

- The Waitrose collection for Cellar raised £459 so thank you to everyone who deposited their tokens in support of Cellar.
- Laura Fitzgeralds help for Heroes cake stall in church on Sunday the 17th November in memory of her brother Matthew who died in Northern Island on the 18th November thirty years ago raised £173 pounds for the cause. (see Laura's article in this magazine.)

Thank you to:-

- Allen Kaye for all the maintenance work he has done throughout the year to help us keep our church spic and span, the wooden support he crafted for our Harvest Bread Sheaf, the work he has done in the grounds, culminating in the refurbishment work on the side rails in the Sanctuary. We are extremely fortunate Allen to have someone with your talent and expertise who quietly carries out all these tasks on our behalf. We would like you to know how much we appreciate your efforts on our behalf. Thank you from us all.
- Thanks also to those who have responded to our plea for volunteers and to those who haven't returned their forms from the last magazine to let you know it isn't too late to do so.
- Helen would like to thank the 16 volunteers who came along to help with the leaf clearing and garden tidying for winter on a wet Saturday afternoon. Well done for braving the elements.

- I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who helped to make our Christmas Fayre such a successful community outreach event again this year and for the money raised on the day by their efforts and donations. (See details in this magazine). Special thanks go to Mike for his awesome Grotto, setting up for the fayre and getting the church back to normal for Sunday Worship after the event along with all the other tasks he completed for the Fayre. Special thanks also go to my right hand buddy Allison for her support and advice which I value greatly.

Help needed

- Friday 20th December at 10am Completing the Church Decorations for Christmas.
- Saturday 4th January 10am packing Christmas away for another year. This is not my favourite job but has to be done and is less painful and time consuming if I have a team of willing helpers.

God bless you all for the help and support you have given me throughout 2019 and may I take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy and Healthy 2020.

Joyce

LOVE IN A BOX REPORT 2019

I am very pleased to report that we ended up with **84** boxes plus another **32** from Mary Magdalene Church making a grand total of **116!**

Two drivers arrived this year in the van, having driven down from Birmingham in the morning, picking up from churches and schools on the way back down to Eastbourne. As they didn't get to us until late in the afternoon when it was getting dark, we took a photo of all the boxes before they arrived. You might even be able to spot yours!! The van was packed solid by the time all ours were in!

Special thanks go to Carole and her friend Barbara, who collect suitable items for the boxes all year round. Carole tells me she has been doing it for so long it's become automatic, even when she is on holiday! Well done, Carole!

So thank you to everyone who took part this year and we hope that the children in Moldova will enjoy a Happy Christmas when they open our boxes.

Ann Meers



CHURCH FAMILY CORNER

Firstly, I apologize to all those friends with birthdays in October and November who didn't get a mention as my Family Corner somehow got left out of the last edition. However, I am repeating the various other bits of news that are still relevant, further down.

Our Birthday list for December starts with Melva on 3rd, followed by Margaret Br. On 4th, Roger S. on 5th, Philip R. on 7th, Muriel M. (103 on 15th!) and Howell on 29th.

Moving on to January, we start with Shaun C. on 6th, Rory F. who will be 13 on 16th, Ivy S. on 19th and Linda S. on 20th, We wish all our friends, young and older, a very Happy Birthday when it comes round and we hope they each enjoy their special day.

We have been very pleased to welcome David and Olive Jones into our church family recently. They have moved to WGC from Bracknall and I was amazed to hear that they had celebrated their 67th Wedding Anniversary on 2nd August, beating the record of 65 years, held by Irene & Roger Simpson! If you can beat their score, please let me know!

We are also very pleased to welcome Cherylle back as an Elder, after her absence recovering from hip replacement surgery.

It was good to see TW back on Sunday mornings after her accident in Australia in the year.

Tim & Wendy's Wedding took place in church on September the service was conducted by Jane and



Eileen
earlier
our
28th,

attended by a number of their church friends. We were delighted to share their special day with their family and friends. Here are 2 photos I took at the reception at Tewinbury Farm.

We were pleased to hear that Jan H. is now back home after a spell in hospital with a chest infection. We send our good wishes to Howell as he continues with more treatment and to Allison as her doctors try out a new drug to alleviate her Crohn's disease symptoms. Following a recent blood transfusion (on Halloween!) she is feeling better now. We send our love and prayers to these friends.

Please continue to remember all those in our church family who are in need of our prayers at this time and pass on any new concerns to Jane, the Elders, Pastoral Elders or Pastoral friends so that no one gets forgotten.

Thank you

Ann Meers

On behalf of our Pastoral Teams.

WGC Churches Christmas Information

- St Mary Mags/Methodist Carol singing – 11am and 3pm on 21st December at Woodhall shops for 30 mins.
- Carol singing – All churches invited for carol singing on 12-1pm on Sat 7th December on Howardsgate.
- Focolare – plan to give away plaster cast models of child Jesus.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service 2020

18th - 25th January 4pm

At St Johns, Digswell. Parking – Monks Walk school. Refreshments afterwards.

Christmas Fayre Update

The Christmas Fayre was held on the 23rd November - everybody said how much they enjoyed it and how it was full of the spirit of Christmas. The two halls were full of smiles, conversation and general conviviality, It is good to think that it is a social activity as well as an opportunity for fund raising. Many thanks to everyone for their donations and help in making this a successful event and especially to Joyce for her excellent prior planning and 'on the day' organisation again this year.

The total monies collected on the day was £2671.09 - detailed below by stall. In addition £80.00 was received from stall holders and £15.00 from Target stamps.

Expenses were £389.44

In summary at this time the Fayre has raised £2376.65 - half of which will be donated to Isabel Hospice and the remainder to the Window Fund.

Stall

Catering and Refreshments	£321.70
Teas and Coffees	£188.70
Door	£169.20
Raffle	£225.00
Preserves	£158.50
Crafts	£165.20
Christmas Bits & Bobs	£107.25
Bric-a-Brac	£113.77
Pick - a - Bottle	£167.45
Home Baking	£101.88
Guess weight of cake	£16.00
Toys	£152.58
Jewellery and Nic Nacs	£84.00
Face Painting	£45.20
Father Christmas	£160.00
Plants & Garden Items	£158.00
Childrens Crafts	£23.11
Tombola	£104.00
Pick-a-Card	£55.80
DVDs	£83.15
Books	£65.60
Anson Court donation	£5.00
Total	£2,671.09

‘Congratulations to Ivana Poku, who many of us know as Mum to Henry and Mason. She has just published her first book, a heart-warming collection of honest interviews with new Mums, sharing their story of struggle and joy. It can greatly help first-time parents to have realistic expectations, and support them with some of the stress and dark days. Ivana is also running workshops for Mums-to-be and a support group for new Mums. Information at Mumsjourney.com, or type her name into amazo.co.uk books. ‘

Leaf Clearing

We had a successful leaf clearing on November 9th and a special thanks to everyone who turned up to help on a wet Saturday afternoon - lots of leaves are now stacked in the bins at the bottom of the garden making compost for next year. Clearing the leaves tidied up the church for the Christmas Fayre as well as allowing the spring bulbs to flourish next year in the Memorial Garden .

If anyone would like to help with other gardening jobs around the church please do get in touch with me

Many thanks

Helen

TARGET STAMPS.

We have just received a cheque for £15 from the Welwyn Hatfield Times newspaper for our latest collection of Target Stamps. So a big thankyou to everyone who has been cutting out the stamps from the back of the newspaper each week and putting them in the collecting box in the church. We now have a clean new box so please cut out the stamps if you get the paper to read the local news and pop them in the box on top of the sound system equipment.

Thank you

Ann

FUND RAISING for HELP FOR HEROES

Matthew (Tex) Marshall was a dedicated, quiet and unassuming soldier, proud to wear his red beret.

In memory of the thirtieth anniversary of the death of my brother, Matthew, in Mayobridge, Northern Ireland on 18th November 1989, I created a Help for Heroes - Hero Fund, keeping Matthew's name alive, bringing family and friends together and to raise funds for all Heroes.

Matthew was a steady, reliable and trustworthy paratrooper, well liked and respected by his platoon. Above all, he was kind and generous. Matthew lived his life to the full because he went out to meet it with an abundance of happiness.

After initial training, Matthew joined 3 PARA in November 1987 and with 'A' Company he commenced his first tour of Northern Ireland, at the height of the troubles. A soldier's life is not easy at the best of times; in Northern Ireland it required rare qualities of resilience.



Matthew served his country and risked his life in the interests of others. Matthew will always be remembered with honour, by all who knew him, in the army, at home and in his childhood and teenage years.

On Sunday 17th November 2019, I brought in cakes to enjoy with our coffee after our service led by the Worship Team, in return for contributions to Matthew's Heroes Fund.

I would like to thank our church family for their generous donation to Help for Heroes, totalling £173. Your gifts will help provide life-changing support and recovery services to our Nation's heroes and their families, and all in Matthew's name and memory.

We will remember them.

With love and blessings, Laura

Iris Waite

Iris Waite was a much-loved member of our congregation who in her younger days was a lively member of our choir. She died on 19 October at the age of 92 and her funeral at Harwood Park was attended by a good contingent from our church.

Iris was born in Romford and grew up in Ilford in a house just round the corner from her best friend, Sylvia. They sent secret messages to each other from their bedroom windows and became life-long friends.

At school, Iris was a studious and bright girl and, although very shy, became head girl. After school, she worked in the Haberdashery section of a big store in Upminster. On a holiday in 1947, she met a handsome, red-headed man called Arthur, whom she nicknamed Rusty, a name which stayed with him for the rest of his life.

They were married in 1950 and lived with Rusty's father and brother in Peartree Lane while they built their own house in Handside Lane. They moved there in 1958 and 118 became their family home. They had three children, Gillian, Jacqueline and Jennifer who remember Iris as a wonderfully caring, loving mother and a true home-maker. Jacqui and Jenny remember how they would wake up, or come home from school, to find a favourite doll with a new hand-stitched outfit.

Iris loved music and gardening. Many a passer-by would stop to admire her roses and rockery. She was active in the community, joining the WI and volunteering for Meals on Wheels. In her 40s, she began to work as a receptionist at the Knightsfield practice. Her family were very proud of her when she passed her driving test at the age of 60.

Iris's family grew as her daughters married and had children, in whom she was always keenly interested. "Being together is everything" she would say. She was a very good listener and a wonderful grandmother.

In 2009, she had the great sadness of losing her oldest daughter, Gillian, to cancer and in 2015 her beloved Rusty died at the age of 93. By then they had moved to a cosy house in Welwyn. In 2018, Iris moved to Foxholes Care Home. By now she was a great-grandmother and her family remember her for her gentle, warm, loving nature her funny little sayings, her wonderful sense of humour and her love for all the family.



Community Cafe' Volunteers

Appreciation Tea Party

Community Cafe

We had a lovely afternoon tea for the Community Cafe' volunteers on Wednesday 13 November. The tables were laden with delicious treats with festive red and green centre pieces. It almost felt like Christmas!

It was a celebration of appreciation for all the hard work the volunteers do at the Community Cafe' and for their support and dedication.

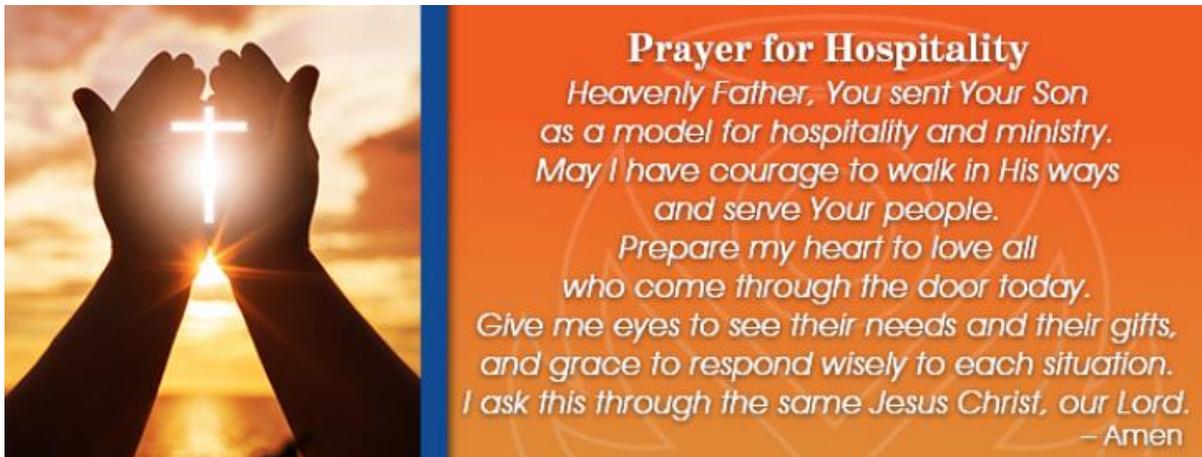


There are countless examples of hospitality in the Bible and God's two greatest commandments are to love God and love others. Hospitality is a virtue that is both commanded and commended throughout Scripture. In the New Testament, the Greek word translated "hospitality" literally means "love of strangers."

Hospitality can be defined as "the quality or disposition of receiving and treating guests and strangers in a warm, friendly, generous way." This definition describes the work our volunteers do. They welcome strangers into our Community Cafe' and they always ready with a listening ear and a cup of coffee. Relationships have developed where strangers became friends and those who felt lonely and isolated now feel valued and loved.

From beginning January until the end of October 2019 we had 1457 people attending Communtiy Cafe' compared to 1043 over the same period during 2018.

Well done everyone.



This beautiful prayer comes from the St. Raphael-Holy Angels website and I wanted to share it with you.

Heartland Group

For our annual Heartland 'Big Event' in 2020 we are hoping to invite the Wild Goose Worship Group (Plan A) but if they are unable to attend we will try to get them for 2021 and plan smaller events for 2020 (Plan B)

Heartland Group Events 2020 – Plan B

Please Save the Date

2 May 2020 – Our 'Little' Big Event – a Heartland morning. This will be a wonderful opportunity for us all to meet and spend time together.

The activities will include a scratch choir (This is a vocal workshop where we all learn songs together from scratch for a performance on the same day.), Prayer writing, 'God in a storybook' facilitated by Heather Whyte, and a hospitality group preparing food together. This will be followed by lunch including worship.

More information regarding venue etc, to follow.

July 2020 – Proposed date for the BBQ at Chiswell Green, hosted by St Albans pastorate.

October 2020 – Big Event – Plan A

Training

Well done to Kathleen M who completed both her Safeguarding and Food Hygiene Level 2 Certification Courses.

Churches in WGC

It has been decided that there will be no Outdoor Carol service this year due to poor attendance in 2018.

After the next WGC Churches meeting on 21 November, I will be able to confirm whether there will be Carol Singing outside the Howard Centre on 7 December @ 11am – we awaiting confirmation from the Howard Centre Management.

Merry Christmas

I would like to take this opportunity to wish each and everyone a very Blessed Christmas and may 2020 be a year filled with good health, happiness and wonderful memories. If you are travelling, I wish you a safe journey and may the peace of God be with you wherever you are.

Thank you for reading my news. Some activities I am involved in will be after this magazine publication cut-off date, so I promise to fill you in on all these happenings in the next magazine. God Bless, Liz.

Let Every Day Be Christmas

Christmas is forever, not for just one day,
for loving, sharing, giving, are not to put away
like bells and lights and tinsel, in some box upon a shelf.
The good you do for others is good you do yourself.

– Norman Wesley Brooks

May you have....

May you have the gladness of Christmas which is hope;
The spirit of Christmas which is peace;
The heart of Christmas which is love.

– Ada V. Hendricks

'You will Overflow with Thankfulness' Colossians 2:6-7

Following a service held a while ago now. with the theme of *Count Your Blessings*, I wrote a list of my mine in a notebook, which I referred to in times of difficulty for comfort. I particularly liked Jane's A to Z challenge suggested on Sunday 6th October 2019 as it prompted wider thought.

I would like to share with you my list of blessings in the hope you are also inspired to write yours. I found it to be an amazing exercise and is a permanent reminder of the abundant blessings for which I am thankful. Praise the Lord!!

- A My **A**nointing, **A**nswers (to prayer), the time of **A**dvent
- B **B**ible, **B**ooks (my favourites include Green Leaf in Drought and Streams in the Desert)
- C **C**hurch (Community and building), **C**AP, **C**ar, **C**lothes
- D **D**octor, **D**entist, **D**og-walkers (I have met wonderful people walking Sam)
- E My daughter **E**rin, our **E**lders, **E**aster (my favourite time in the Christian calendar), **E**llie, my holistic therapist
- F **F**amily, **F**riends, **F**aith (to live by Faith not by sight), **F**ootprints (in the sand), **F**ood
- G The **G**ifts (of the Spirit), **G**race
- H **H**ome, **H**ope (it never fails), **H**ymns, **H**olidays, my **H**ealth
- I My **I**mmune system, **I**nspiration from our church members, people, books ...

- J Our reverend **J**ane, my pastoral Elder **J**oyce, **J**oanna, our talented pianist ... (that was easy!!)
- K Karate (the practice of which has given my husband and son much enjoyment), **K**erris, my physiotherapist
- L **L**MCC (the Lister MacMillan Cancer Centre), **L**ight (particularly in times of darkness), **L**ove, **L**aughter (wonderful medicine for the soul), the **L**ongest night service
- M My husband **M**ark, **M**usic (always lifts one's spirit)
- N **N**ovember (a month of Remembrance), **N**eighbours, **N**ature, in all in forms
- O **O**ceans, my **O**ncologist
- P **P**rayer, **P**eace (amid the hectic place of daily life), **P**ilates, my **P**harmacy, **P**atience, **P**ensions
- Q **Q**uiet (time for prayer and reflection), **Q**uality (time with family and friends)
- R My son **R**ory, **R**obert (our lay preacher), **R**eiki (healing), **R**ose (the lay preacher at Christ the King, Haldens), **R**esearch (particularly for the new cancer treatment I am having)
- S Our dog, **S**am, the changing **S**easons in all their glory, **S**tillness (being calm), **S**urgeon
- T My cancer **T**reatment, **T**rust (the cornerstone of all relationships), **T**heresa (a gifted reader)
- U **U**nderstanding (particularly Mark and God's intuitive understanding of me)
- V My **V**eins (which carry my cancer treatment every three weeks), the **V**icinity of Welwyn Garden City
- W **W**ater (to quench our thirst), **W**ind (for 'blowing the cobwebs away' on blustery days)
- X **X**-rays (the use of X-rays to create CT scans)
- Y **Y**ellow (the colour of glorious sunshine that brightens our day and a burning flame), **Y**oga
- Z **Z**en (the art of meditation)

May you too, overflow with thankfulness.

With love and blessings to you all, Laura

JONATHAN BOTTOMS

I was born at the old QE11 hospital in Parkway, Welwyn Garden City, attended the local schools - Parkway, and Stanborough. I also joined the local over the road at St. Francis Church.

When I finished school I went to the De College, where I did a business studies then got a job at a property management in London. Sadly my father, Douglas, a Elder at this church, died suddenly in

a happier note, my sister, Jenny, married in 1989. The same year I joined Rotaract, a group for young adults, set up by the Rotary club, where I took part in many social and community activities.

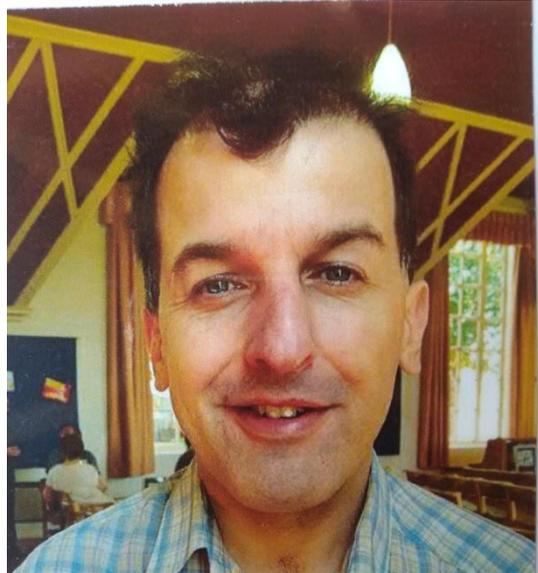
In 2001 I moved with my mother to a bungalow in Turmore Dale and then, in 2010 I got my own flat in Lemsford Lane.

As many of you know I am a bell ringer at St. Etheldreda's Church in Hatfield, ringing between 9 and 9.30 before rushing here for the 10.30 service, which is why I am sometimes late arriving for the start of the service. I took up bell ringing in 1998 and helped to ring in the Millennium two years later.

My other interests include football, music and railways. My interest in football means that I am a supporter of Arsenal and have attended home and away matches in the past. I like classical music and have been to many concerts in London. I also have a keen interest in railways and have been on train holidays to Switzerland, Germany and France.

I have enjoyed many other holidays to countries as far a field as Canada, USA and Russia, as well as the UK and Europe. I am greatly blessed with a very supportive mother, sister and brother-in-law and two nephews. My oldest nephew works for a computer firm and my youngest nephew is at university in Liverpool.

I look forward to helping Robert at the Christmas fair, where we are responsible for the book stall and I always enjoy sharing Friendship Lunch on 3rd Sundays after the Worship Team service. I also take part in delivering flowers to members of the church who cannot attend. I was Christened and grew up in this church and have greatly appreciated and enjoyed being part of the church family.



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Havilland course. I company former 1987. On

I Do Not Know What Lies Ahead

Once more, Matthew and Jean offer you a prayerful hymn, chosen by Joyce.

We all know only too well how useful hindsight might have been. But wouldn't it be wonderful if we only had the benefit of foresight. However, this beautiful hymn does just that. Not giving us the ability to look into the future but giving us the confidence to rely on One who stands near and to trust his guidance. What an amazing opportunity.

1. I do not know what lies ahead,
The way I cannot see;
Yet One stands near to be my guide,
He'll show the way to me:

The chorus of this hymn give us strength to rely on God's constant guidance, knowing that everything that happens is planned by Him, and we promise to face tomorrow's problems, no matter what they are, with trust and hope.

Chorus

I know Who holds the future, And He'll guide me with his hand.
With God things don't just happen; Everything by Him is planned.
So as I face tomorrow, With its problems large and small,
I'll trust the God of miracles, Give to Him my all.

Reading this next verse we are reminded that no-one knows how long we will live, and rather than be depressed by this we should surely be hopeful that God will care for us. Our faith will be our strength.

2. I do not know how many days
Of life are mine to spend;
But One who knows and cares for me
Will keep me to the end:

Chorus

What an uplifting end to this hymn. That throughout our lives, whether in joy or grief, we have our Lord close by who knows exactly what we are experiencing. In the closing line, 'I'll trust His loving care', such an amazing end to any prayer.

3. I do not know the course ahead,
What joys and griefs are there;
But One is near who fully knows,
I'll trust His loving care:

Whisper project wins funding for expenses

Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith are rejoicing with us about a new financial award towards expenses for the Whisper schools project in 2020. It's our biggest local grant yet, following those awarded for previous years by Herts County Council SACRE committee, and from Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council. This new money will be from the Police and Crime Commissioners fund, including proceeds recovered from criminals, to help meet the objective of reducing Hate Crime. The grant is administered by Herts Community Foundation. And the money will cover the travel and communications expenses needed to support the project, insurance, booking fees for some of our events, plus occasional purchases related to lessons and events.

Here is a short extract from the funding application: "Young people who encounter our faith visitors in school, or attend our events, are challenged to appreciate diversity, and people of faith. The project reduces prejudice in these formative years which reduces bullying at school, and will have lasting benefit for more peaceful society, social cohesion, and lower levels of hate crime in the longer term."

In many schools in Welwyn, Hatfield and Hertford, children from religious families may be the only one from that background in their class. So they are susceptible to isolation and bullying. Our experience to date shows children from religious families love it when a visitor comes from their own faith - it gives the child confidence to own their cultural heritage in school and helps the other pupils respect them, especially if the faith visitor has been interesting and given the children a great experience."

During 2020 the project aims to visit more primary schools, to increase our work in secondary schools, and to develop the local network we have just launched for local RE teachers – Welwyn Hatfield and Hertford Encouraging Religious Education (WHHERE). At the first meeting we had a talk from a Buddhist friend from Amaravati monastery at Gaddesden, and at the second a specialist from BRF delivered a training session on teaching Christianity-around-the-world. And we have already seen WHHERE generating new invitations for our faith visitors to get out to see primary classes.

Date for your diary – July 19th afternoon

WH Interfaith has booked Kadam professional dance/poetry company who are developing a 50-minute multi-cultural performance for WGC Centenary celebrations and it will be held in the gardens in Howardsgate. There will be some limited seating which can be booked in advance, and plenty of space for families to sit on the grass or stand nearby. How exciting! The photograph is of one of the dancers who came to entertain us after the Interfaith Supper at Focolare on Nov 14th. All being well, some local school children will also be

involved in the July performance. (And seed money for this event has been secured from a separate grant application thanks to County Councillor Barbara Gibson).

Peace, Wendy



Christmas by John Betjeman

The bells of waiting Advent ring,
The Tortoise stove is lit again
And lamp-oil light across the night
Has caught the streaks of winter rain
In many a stained-glass window
sheen
From Crimson Lake to Hookers
Green.

The holly in the windy hedge
And round the Manor House the yew
Will soon be stripped to deck the
ledge,
The altar, font and arch and pew,
So that the villagers can say
'The church looks nice' on Christmas
Day.

Provincial Public Houses blaze,
Corporation tramcars clang,
On lighted tenements I gaze,
Where paper decorations hang,
And bunting in the red Town Hall
Says 'Merry Christmas to you all'.

And London shops on Christmas Eve
Are strung with silver bells and
flowers
As hurrying clerks the City leave
To pigeon-haunted classic towers,
And marbled clouds go scudding by
The many-steepled London sky.

And girls in slacks remember Dad,
And oafish louts remember Mum,

And sleepless
children's hearts are
glad.
And Christmas-
morning bells say 'Come!'
Even to shining ones who dwell
Safe in the Dorchester Hotel.



And is it true,
This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,
A Baby in an ox's stall ?
The Maker of the stars and sea
Become a Child on earth for me ?

And is it true ? For if it is,
No loving fingers tying strings
Around those tissue fripperies,
The sweet and silly Christmas things,
Bath salts and inexpensive scent
And hideous tie so kindly meant,

No love that in a family dwells,
No carolling in frosty air,
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells
Can with this single Truth compare -
That God was man in Palestine
And lives today in Bread and Wine.

CHURCH DIARY DECEMBER 2019

Sunday 1 st	10.30-11.30am Advent Sunday 4pm Pet Service	Advent Sunday Gift Service with Communion led by Jane
Tuesday 3 rd	10-12noon 12.30-2pm	Community Coffee Morning Lunchtime Discussion Group
Wednesday 4 th	1.30-3.30pm 7.30-8.30pm	Baby Group Christian Meditation in Vestry
Thursday 5 th	9.30-11.30am 2-4pm 4.15-6pm 8.00pm	Chatter n Tots Thursday Club Cellar Bible Study at Sanjays
Friday 6 th	10.00-11.30am	Exploring the Bible in the Quiet Room
Saturday 7 th	10.00-11.30am	Breakfast Church
Sunday 8 th	10.30-11.30am 2nd Sunday in Advent	Morning Worship led by Robert Harvey
Tuesday 10 th	10-12noon 12.30-2pm	Community Coffee Morning Lunchtime Discussion Group
Wednesday 11 th	10 am– 12 noon 1.30-3.30pm 7.30-8.30pm	Knit n Natter Baby Group Christian Meditation in Vestry
Thursday 12 th	9.30-11.30am 1pm 4.15-6pm 8pm	Chatter n Tots Thursday Club Christmas Lunch Cellar Bible Study at Sanjays
Friday 13 th	10.00-11.30am 2pm	Exploring the Bible in the Quiet Room Parents & Tiddlers

Sunday 15 th Fellowship Lunch	10.30am 4pm 3rd Sunday in Advent	Morning Worship led by the Worship Goup Young Families Christmas Special
Tuesday 17 th	10-12noon 12.30-2pm	Community Coffee Morning Lunchtime Discussion Group
Wednesday 18 th	1.30-3.30pm 7.30-8.30pm	Baby Group Christian Meditation in Vestry
Thursday 19 th	4.15-6pm 8.00pm	Cellar Bible Study at Sanjays
Saturday 21 st	6 00– 9pm	Longest Night Service
Sunday 22 nd	No Morning Service 3pm 4pm	Coffee & Mince Pies Carols by Candlelight
Tuesday 24 th	Christmas Eve 11.30pm	Christmas Eve Midnight Service including Communion
Wednesday 25 th	Christmas Day 10.00am	Christmas Day Service
Thursday 26 th	4.15 – 6pm	Cellar
Sunday 28 th	10.30 am	United Harpenden/URC Morning Worship led by Jane at WGC

CHURCH DIARY JANUARY 2020

Friday 3 rd	10.00-11.30am	Exploring the Bible in the Quiet Room
Saturday 4 th	10.00-11.30am 2 – 4.30pm	Breakfast Church Tea Dance
Sunday 5 th	10.30-11.30am Food Bank Sunday	Morning Worship including Communion led by Jane
Tuesday 7 th	10-12noon 12.30-2pm	Community Coffee Morning Lunchtime Discussion Group
Wednesday 8 th	10-12noon 1.30 – 3.30pm 7.30-8.30pm	Knit n Natter Baby Group Christian Meditation in Vestry
Thursday 9 th	9.30 – 11.30am 4.15-6pm	Chatter n Tots Cellar
Friday 10 th	10.00-11.30am 2 – 4pm	Exploring the Bible in the Quiet Room Parents & Tiddlers
Sunday 12 th	10.00 am- 10.45 am 11am – 12 noon	Family Friendly Service led by Wendy Morning Worship led by Martin McPhee
Tuesday 14 th	10-12noon 12.30-2pm	Community Coffee Morning Lunchtime Discussion Group
Wednesday 15 th	1.30 – 3.30pm 7.30-8.30pm	Baby Group Christian Meditation in Vestry

Thursday 16 th	9.30 –11.30am 2 – 4pm 4.15-6pm	Chatter n Tots Thursday Club Cellar
Friday 17 th	10 am	Exploring the Bible in the Quiet Room
Saturday 18 th	10 – 11.30am	Breakfast Church
Sunday 19 th	10.30am Fellowship Lunch	Morning Worship led by the Worship Group
Tuesday 21 st	10-12noon 12.30-2pm	Community Coffee Morning Lunchtime Discussion Group
Wednesday 22 nd	10-12noon 1.30 – 3.30pm 7.30-8.30pm	Knit n Natter Baby Group Christian Meditation in Vestry
Thursday 23 rd	9.30-11.30am 4.15-6pm	Chatter'n Tots Cellar
Friday 24 th	10.00-11.30am 2 – 4pm	Exploring the Bible in the Quiet Room Parents & Tiddlers
Saturday 25 th	10 – 12 noon	Big Garden Bird Watch
Sunday 26 th	10.30am 11.45am	All Together Worship led by Jane Church Meeting
Tuesday 28 th	10-12noon 12.30-2pm	Community Coffee Morning Lunchtime Discussion Group
Wednesday 29 th	1.30 – 3.30pm 7.30-8.30pm	Baby Group Christian Meditation in Vestry
Thursday 30 th	9.30- 11.30am 4.15-6pm	Chatter & Tots Cellar
Friday 31 st	10.00-11.30am	Exploring the Bible in the Quiet Room



How Well Do You Know Your Christmas Carols?

Match the title with the lines from the song.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| ___ O Little Town of Bethlehem | 1. Good tidings we bring to you and your kin |
| ___ What Child Is This? | 2. Long lay the world in sin and error pining |
| ___ Love Came Down at Christmas | 3. Please have snow and mistletoe and presents on the tree |
| ___ Go, Tell It on the Mountain | 4. Remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day |
| ___ Jolly Old Saint Nicholas | 5. From angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold |
| ___ We Wish You a Merry Christmas | 6. Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the babe, the Son of Mary |
| ___ Of the Father's Love Begotten | 7. The ox and lamb kept time |
| ___ Carol of the Bells | 8. Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light |
| ___ God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen | 9. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation |
| ___ Bring a Torch Jeanette Isabella | 10. The world, they treat you mean, they treat me mean, too |
| ___ Pat-a-Pan | 11. And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains |
| ___ Sweet Little Jesus Boy | 12. On December five and twenty |
| ___ O Holy Night | 13. From the eastern kingdoms come the wise men far |
| ___ Silver Bells | 14. Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light |
| ___ It Came Upon a Midnight Clear | 15. Children laughing, people passing, greeting smile after smile |
| ___ Hark! The Herald Angels Sing | 16. The blind will see, the lame will walk, the dead will rise again |
| ___ I'll Be Home for Christmas | 17. O'er the fields we go, laughing all the way |
| ___ Away in the Manger | 18. Star and angels gave the sign |
| ___ Sing We Now of Christmas | 19. Peace on Earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled |
| ___ Angels, We Have Heard on High | 20. Treetops glisten & children listen to hear sleighbells in the snow |
| ___ Silent Night | 21. Lean your ear this way |
| ___ Mary, Did You Know? | 22. The men of olden days gave the King of Kings their praise |
| ___ We Three Kings | 23. Behold, throughout the heavens, there shone a holy light |
| ___ O Come All Ye Faithful | 24. He is Alpha & Omega, He the source, the ending He |
| ___ Joy to the World | 25. Let Earth receive her King! Let every heart prepare Him room |
| ___ Little Drummer Boy | 26. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes |
| ___ The Holly and the Ivy | 27. Round yon Virgin Mother and Child |
| ___ Fum, Fum, Fum | 28. Beautiful is the mother! Hush! Hush! Beautiful is her Child! |
| ___ Jingle Bells | 29. One seems to hear words of good cheer from everywhere |
| ___ White Christmas | 30. The playing of the merry organ, sweet singing in the choir |

What's on in the Church

Dec 2019

Group Name	Day	Time
Strong Zumba	Mon	4.15pm-5.15pm
Men's Games Club	Mon	7pm - 10pm
Hatfield Tai Chi	Mon	7pm - 9pm
Pregnancy Yoga	Mon	7.30pm - 9pm
HomeStart Parent & Toddler Group	Tues	10am - 12noon
Community Coffee Morning	Tues	10am - 12noon
Lunchtime Discussion Group	Tues	12.30pm - 2pm
Slimming World	Tues	3.30pm, 5.30pm, 7.30pm
CBT Skills Group	Tues	5.30pm - 7.30pm
Knit and Natter (2 nd & 4 th Wed)	Wed	10am - 12noon
Carers in Herts (3 rd Wed)	Wed	12noon - 2pm
AA Meeting	Wed	12.30pm-1.30pm
Baby Group	Wed	1.30pm - 3.30pm
Zumba	Wed	4.15pm-5.15pm
NHS Carers (1 st Wed)	Wed	6pm - 7.30pm
Christian Meditation	Wed	7.30pm - 8.30pm
Pregnancy Yoga	Wed	7.30pm - 9pm
Chatter & Tots	Thurs	9.30am - 11.15am
Thursday Club Social Group for 50+ (1 st & 3 rd Thurs)	Thurs	2pm - 4pm
Cellar Club - Food for the Homeless & Vulnerable	Thurs	4.15pm - 6.30pm
Slimming World	Thurs	5 - 9pm
WGC Folk Dance Club	Thurs	8pm - 10pm
Trefoil Guild (2 nd Thurs)	Thurs	8pm -10pm
Explore The Bible & Prayer Group	Fri	10am - 11.30am
Start to do Art	Fri	1pm - 2pm
Parent & Tiddlers (2 nd & 4 th Fri)	Fri	2pm - 3.30pm
WelHat Council Dance Class	Fri	6.30pm -7.30pm
Archaeological Society (1 st & 3 rd Fri)	Fri	8pm - 10pm
Slimming World	Sat	7.30-12.30pm
Breakfast Church (1 st & 3 rd Sat)	Sat	10am - 11.30am
Tea Dance (1 st Sat)	Sat	2pm - 4pm
Chiltern West Gallery Quire (2 nd Sat)	Sat	2pm - 5pm
Worship Service	Sun	10.30am - 12noon