

KINGS NORTON

An aerial photograph of the Earth from space, showing the Middle East and surrounding regions. The image captures the curvature of the planet, with the blue of the oceans and the brown and tan of the landmasses. The Red Sea and the Persian Gulf are visible, along with the Arabian Peninsula and parts of Africa and Asia. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures of the terrain and the contrast between the dark space and the bright Earth.

Parish Magazine

Eastern Promise

The Middle East, birthplace of the Prince of Peace

Earthrise

The history behind the image of the century

Not Just a Market

Kings Norton's Farmers' Market : Fostering Community Spirit

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Welcome

EDITORIAL

In 1968, Frank Borman, commander of Apollo 8, gazed on the Earth from space for the first time and thought "This must be what God sees" (page 18). As violence rages yet again through what tradition calls the Holy Land, you may wish to contemplate the perspective provided by this month's front cover. Within the frame of the photograph lie the locations of most of the events of the Bible; the sites of the Christmas story; the landscape Jesus knew as home; the focus of the hopes and aspirations of at least three of the world's great religions; and the lives of all of those caught up in the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

What does God see as he looks down on all this from outside time? We can only speculate; but one thing is certain. His vision penetrates more deeply than ours. As the book of Samuel reminds us, "*People look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.*" And hearts are where hope is born.

Larry Wright's article (p.4) reassures us that hearts which welcome Christ can become a source of hope in a landscape of despair. Isn't that the point of Christmas, to remind us that God has not abandoned us to the mess we make of life but walks with us through it?

However you celebrate Christmas this year, with comfort food (p.28), seasonal movies (p.26) or creature comforts (p.31), united with family (p.36) or serving the wider community (p.7), may the light of which St John writes, the light that shines in the darkness, which the darkness cannot extinguish, bring you peace, hope and joy in challenging times.



See you next year!

David Ash

Eastern Promise

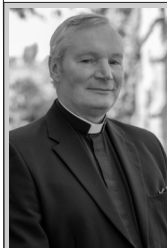
“Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet” wrote Rudyard Kipling in his ballad of the same name. A ballad narrating how an Afghan and a British officer who begin as enemies become friends after experiencing the qualities of the other.

We are used to speaking in terms of “The West” as shorthand for our Western way of life and the countries which share it, even though some Western countries are far from the Western hemisphere: Australia, New Zealand and Japan for example.

If we have a shared understanding about what we mean by “The West”, what do we associate with the term “The East”? We could be referring to Eastern Europe, but equally to the Middle East or the Far East. Eastern thoughts may conjure up images of exotic cultures, bustling noisy markets, mysterious beliefs and veiled faces. In more recent decades we have become used to the impact which vast oil wealth

has brought to part of what Kipling would have known as Arabia (The Middle East); vast modern cities surrounded by millions of hectares of sand. In the Far East, modern China stands as the great Eastern empire of power and wealth, alluring and threatening at the same time.

At Christmas, we are reminded of the Middle Eastern origins of the Christian faith: “Look to the East, O Jerusalem, from where God’s joy will come.” In the Bible, The East is used as a source of divine blessing, the Eastern promise. The Christ of prophecy was to come from the East. Jesus was born and died in Israel, the child of Bethlehem so beloved of the carols and the Christmas card imagery. Born into a Roman occupied Israel which was predominantly Jewish and he himself a Jew. In his time though there were many other ethnic groups living in Israel: Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Phoenicians, Persians, Africans



The Revd Larry Wright is the Rector of Kings Norton Parish



PHOTO BY JORGE FERNANDEZ SALAS

and others, and almost certainly Europeans.

The Mediterranean world of the first century was ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse, its importance as a trading economy saw to that. The Mediterranean Sea was by far the most efficient way to transport goods between East and West, North and South. We can imagine the richness and diversity of the languages spoken, the cuisine, the religious diversity. People travelling with their own idols or household gods tucked away in their clothing. The multitude of ceremonies and rituals taking place each day in homes and temples. These were the days not of countries but empires. Who ruled your

▲ THE
"LITTLE
TOWN" OF
BETHLEHEM
TODAY

region was more relevant than any notion of a nation state, a concept yet to be fully realised. Religion, language and culture defined people rather than something called a "country" and cities and ports were the centres for cultural and political life.

What do we see in this region 2000 or more years after the birth of the Prince of Peace?

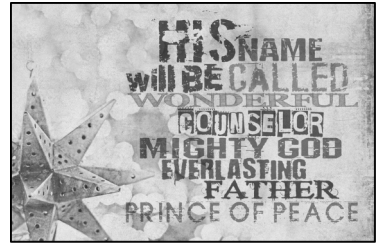
Certainly not peace. At the time of writing, the Israel-Hamas war still rages, its impact felt around the region and across the world. With no end to this conflict in sight, (the Little Town of) Bethlehem is empty of the usual pilgrims and tourists. Christ's birthplace will be unvisited or

even closed this Christmas. Yet the essential message of Christmas is one of hope amid the uncertainties and vagaries of this life and a reminder of the eternal in the midst of the temporal. Hope is such an important concept in times like these that being hopeful while others are despairing is a small act of courage in itself.

Those involved in the complex task of finding ways to end conflict and rebuild stricken nations could not do their jobs if they were without hope. The humanitarian agencies who work at the front line of places of conflict bring hope in practical forms. Those lobbying for peace and conciliation are driven by hope that a better way is possible.

People of faith have recourse to prayer as well as to practical action in times of such desperate need. Around the Middle East there will be Christians, Jews and Muslims praying and working for peace. They will do it without fanfare or media interest, behind the scenes, out of sight, undistinguished. The religious fanatics are not the only voices heard in such times but they are often the loudest and their hateful actions capture the headlines.

Those who revere Jesus, the Prince of Peace, acknowledge that such titles ascribed to him are as much a statement of our



own longings as a precise description of his role in the world. His followers become the harbingers of peace. They become a source of hope in a landscape of despair. They seek reconciliation among peoples and nations. They keep alive the language and poetry of peace in the midst of war. They also recognise the need to ponder the eternal while coping with the traumas of the present, seeing a greater purpose for humankind than the squabbles and conflicts we so easily inflict upon each other.

If there is Eastern promise this Christmas, may it be rooted in an unflinching hope and committed concern for a better way for peoples and religions to live in harmony. May our sense of despair not lead us into cynicism or despondency.

May Christmas be a time of celebration, not as a way of distancing ourselves from the realities of the world, but as a profound statement of the joy which is inherent in life whenever family, friends neighbours gather together in peace and goodwill.

Not Just a Market

A Meeting Place

These articles have from time to time expressed regret at the decline in the once thriving community spirit of Kings Norton. However, the Christmas period does show that there's still life in this respect. For example, the inviting atmosphere created by the Christmas Tree on The Green, the lights that adorn it and those on the street lamps around the Green are the annual gifts of the team that runs the monthly Farmers' Market, and a number of local businesses.

In fact, The Farmers' Market team plays a central role in the fostering of local community spirit, much more than the organisation of a very successful monthly market. It's a committed group of more than 20 local men and women, who are constantly looking for and developing additional opportunities to bring local people together.

Its members are all still driven by the motives of those who re-established the market in June 2006. They were three local professional people, who didn't just want to see a market in place again. Far more importantly, they wanted to create something that they felt had fallen by



MICHAEL
WRITES
REGULARLY
ON LOCAL
HISTORY



▲ MEMBERS
OF THE
FARMERS'
MARKET TEAM

the wayside: a new opportunity for local people to meet up with each other.

The “new” Market is a non-profit, non-political organisation which, as its members will proudly tell you, was the first farmers’ market in England to have the status of a Community Interest Company, a company set up to benefit local people and organisations. “Other farmers’ markets around the country have followed us,” says Phil Walsh, Chair of the current team, “but we were the first to be a CIC, and we think, still one of the

best in terms of fostering community spirit.”

As well as building a bustling, thriving market, they achieve much more. They’ve done excellent work in supporting local organisations such as schools, Scouts and Guides, the Salvation Army, the Women’s Institute and the local food bank. They’ve given trees to local schools, and have created a far-sighted “Growing On” project, donating seeds and equipment to schools to support produce-growing projects.

Going even further, the group also plays an important role in visualising and organising

events that help bring the Kings Norton community together, most recently by arranging the planting of a Coronation tree on The Green by the Deputy Lieutenant for Warwickshire and Birmingham's Lord Mayor.

The current Farmers' Market brings back to life one of the longest established traditions in the Birmingham area. It dates back more than 400 years, from the time the parish was granted Royal Approval for a Saturday market in May 1616, by King James I.

All those men and women who run the Market are volunteers. There's a small team of directors, never more than five, which holds an AGM and a formal monthly meeting. All team members support the Market Day itself as stewards. They have to, because it's a long and demanding day, stretching from before 7 a.m. in the morning (for the market to open at 9 a.m. prompt) until around 3 pm in the afternoon. The work begins in earnest a few days before, confirming sellers and arranging with the suppliers of the stalls how many will be needed. "No Parking" signs have to be put up on the Friday evening, to prevent cars being left overnight, which would inhibit the building of the stalls (not always a foolproof strategy!).

The range of stallholders over the years underlines another

key motive for the market: excellence, originality and variety in the food they offer. Products sold at the market have included plant-based desserts, speciality coffees, teas and wines, artisan cheeses, craft ciders, handmade chocolates, locally made preserves, top quality cured meats, seasonal vegetables and salads, fresh fruits, juice (and even fruit trees), fresh meat and poultry. Though it's beyond the food brief, there are also sellers of products such as insect-friendly wild flowers and bespoke handicrafts.

Most producers are local but some are from as far away as Shropshire. Many of them have a special relationship with the Farmers' Market team and several have sold at the market almost since it began. "Some of them have become real friends and all are top quality producers," says director Elizabeth Charnley, who has also been on the team from the earliest days. "What they sell is truly fresh, not stored in refrigerators like supermarket produce: it lasts significantly longer." New sellers must be guided not to expect immediate results: "Especially with those offering unusual product lines, we advise them that a minimum of three monthly markets should be enough for them to judge whether to continue," says Elizabeth: "More often than not, they do!"

The community ethos of the market is underlined by the fact that at each market there's at least one community stall, free to local organisations or national charitable movements such as the Woodlands Trust.

The team always tries to make sure that its main objective is achieved, the opportunity for local people to meet. "For the organising team, while it's great to see people buying, there's really nothing like the buzz we get from seeing people strolling around the stalls, greeting friends and standing chatting," adds Elizabeth.

Local businesses help in this respect. For example Chas Mann, the motorcycle dealer overlooking the market, sets out tables and chairs for weary visitors, while the Bull's Head pub allows free parking in its large parking area for the duration.

The market is remarkably resilient to the weather: only one monthly market had had to be cancelled for that reason in 16 years. Footfall, the number of people attending, has recovered well from the closure of the market during Covid. It's now running at between 1200 and 1500 people.

The team continuously looks for events that can add special interest. For example, the concept of planting a tree to mark the Coronation of King Charles III came not from any national campaign, but from one team member who thought it would be right for the parish to plant a tree to complement the one planted to mark the King's mother's Coronation in 1953. The team made the approach to Birmingham City Council (which responded readily) and provided detailed briefings for the dignitaries involved. The event attracted a large crowd.

A highlight each year is the Christmas Market, normally a special evening event, early this year on Thursday 30 November (there is the "normal" December market on Saturday 9 Dec).



PHOTO BY DAVID ASH

The team always tries to imbue the Christmas event with as much glitter and sparkle as it can, complementing the festive lights that shine throughout the season. They arrange Father Christmas and his sack of presents, musical accompaniments by local choirs and additional Christmas-related stalls selling crafts and festive fare for consumption on the day. "We try to give the Christmas market the feel of a traditional country market, in the heart of the city," says Phil Walsh.

As significant in its own way as the Christmas market is the November market which happens on or around

Remembrance Day, and, as it did recently, always includes a moving Last Post at 11 a.m., again organised by the team.

"We think that the market is quintessentially Kings Norton, with the uniqueness of its setting and a distinctive atmosphere," adds Phil. "Just as important, there's the warmth and friendliness not only of the organising team and the stallholders, but of those who come to buy... and of course, to meet and chat."

▲ A FRUIT STALL AT THE KINGS NORTON FARMERS' MARKET

Adam & the Canary Bird



We are fortunate to live near one of Britain's most historic castles, now a romantic ruin, but in its grounds is a restored garden originally laid out for Queen Elizabeth I by Robert Dudley, the first Earl of Leicester, in the sixteenth century. The Queen was a frequent visitor and the castle is overlooked by a colonnaded aviary with pet birds of the time, including some canary birds. There is another Canary Bird near us and that is an old climbing shrub rose bearing neat, yellow, 5cm single flowers in the early spring. It is not scented but it is very pretty and very hardy. It does like about six hours of sunshine per day during the summer. Oh, and it is drought tolerant! We are well on the way to exceeding our target of less than 1.5 deg. C. increase in average temperature and heat resistance is becoming more important in our gardens. I can recommend Canary Bird to you from personal experience.

David Austin Roses have a list of fourteen drought-tolerant roses on their web site and they do know their onions when it comes to roses, if you know what I mean. Roses may be planted at any time when the

ground is not frozen, and I have personally had good success with rose plants supplied in containers.

From personal experience, can I recommend to you plant a specimen of "the finest garden tree", Golden False Acacia or *Robinia pseudoacacia* 'Frisia'? Green-yellow feathery leaves all summer turning a warmer golden yellow for drama in the Autumn. The golden Frisia does not have many of the white pea-shaped flowers but those it does have are adored by honey bees. It might be best to wait until the early spring for planting and put some slow-release fertiliser into the hole. Bone meal used to be the thing and steamed bonemeal was often recommended as it was claimed that it was free from bovine diseases. There are now other long-acting granular fertilizers available. In times gone by, farmers with an orchard near the house would bury old woollen overcoats as a fertiliser. All that remains are the metal buttons which show up when the old orchard is cleared for lambing ewes.

Gleditsia triacanthos or the Honey Locust "Sunburst" is another

feathery-leaved golden tree for your garden and is described as “elegant and adaptable”. It carries the RHS Award of Garden Merit. Be a bit wary when pruning these two trees as their soft leaves do conceal some spines!

Garden centres do stock some trees, but you might be better advised to try “Tree Nurseries Near You” on the internet for a cheaper deal.

Gardeners need patience and a talent for long-term planning. You will be amply rewarded if you plant the old shrub roses. They are tough and long-lived and, despite producing a single flurry of flowers, usually in early summer, they are well worth planting in the larger garden. They do need a bit of growing space, but they do not need pruning! The specialist rose nurseries still stock a reasonable selection and you will be enchanted by their wonderful names.

Take a stroll along the main street of Tombstone, Arizona. Just down from the OK Corral you will see a small museum. Enter the garden at the rear and you will see the world’s biggest rose tree! This is a staggeringly large example of *Rosa banksia lutea*. There is pretty big one in the Rose Garden in Rome, on the site of the old Jewish Cemetery. Small yellow flowers by the thousand are borne on arching branches in early spring.

Sometimes this rose would succeed in the UK when planted against the south-facing end wall of a cottage but now you might succeed in a slightly more open situation. Be adventurous and give it a try.

Our vintage favourite annual for this month is the Stock. The seed catalogues of the sixties would list about 100 varieties. Now only some have survived, including the Brompton Stock, the East Lothian Stock and a very nice branching short variety from Chiltern Seeds. (Other varieties are listed). All the stocks are beautifully scented and, surprisingly, are related to the cabbage. Unfortunately, they share some of the pests of the cabbage too. I remember planting some in one garden whereupon they were consumed by the family’s pet tortoise. They are grown under glass in Holland as single stemmed plants for the cut flower market. Stocks are given the hardy annual treatment and, curiously, the paler leaved seedlings will turn out to give double flowers. Stocks will not disappoint if you can keep the leaf munchers at bay. The Victorians would grow them in large pots in their display greenhouses.

I notice that the hollies have a good number of berries on them this year so Happy Christmas to you all.



The Men's Group Do A Busman's Holiday

"I've waited ages for that bus and then blow me if three didn't come all at once!" How many times have you said that I wonder?

The Men's Group October meeting to the far reaches of Wythall laid that complaint well and truly to rest. Seven intrepid bus spotters assembled on a

bright, sunny Saturday at the Wythall Transport Museum situated behind Wythall Parish Church and the Caravan Club site.

At the entry kiosk, whilst the rest of us paid our fee, Mervyn, our resident Irishman, immediately struck up a conversation with one of the volunteers, who remarkably just happened to hail from his part of Ireland. Amazing what recognising an accent can do, isn't it? After a quick briefing from Mervyn's new-found friend about what was on offer, we were away on our exploration of the site.

All I can say is that it is a remarkable place, solely supported by volunteers, many of whom were working on restorations, although there were quite a few others providing for the needs of the visitors.

One thing they are not short of here is buses! There are approximately 100 of them, all housed in large garages as they would have been in their heyday, resting up before plying their routes of the West Midlands. There are loads



of vehicles we remembered from times gone by.

Long gone but dependable in their day, the Midland Red fleet was well represented. I'm sure my 145 single-decker school bus, which took me from Rednal to Bromsgrove via Barnt Green, Blackwell and Burcot, was there, and many others among us recognised buses from our school days. Memories came flooding back as we exchanged anecdotes of our journeys on these vehicles. The WMPTE buses from the bygone era, in their blue and cream livery were all there. How many of us remembered jumping on and off those platforms before the bus had stopped or as it pulled away, and remembered the conductors who ticked us off for taking the risk? The destination boards on the front of the buses brought back fond memories too.

As we walked around the exhibits, we suddenly realised that we had our own knowledgeable guide in our group. Richard Harper was a mine of useful (and some useless!) information about the vehicles, their history, and their routes throughout the West Midlands. His forte seemed to be early Black Country routes and buses as well as more recent local ones. Surprisingly he also was well genned up on bus designs and





▲ THE MEN'S
GROUP RELAX
IN THE CAFÉ
AT THE
WYTHALL
TRANSPORT
MUSEUM

engines. People have surprising hidden talents, don't they?

Moving into another large garage, we entered a real bygone age. Whereas many of the buses could still be imagined on the roads today, here were the original electric vehicles. The largest collection of battery electric milk floats and bread vans from various local businesses such as Midland Counties, Unigate, The Co-op, and other independent outlets. In the light of our enforced move, in the near future, to electric vehicles, it was really interesting to see again these early forerunners of the Tesla's of today, condemned to obsolescence by progress and the efficiency of the internal combustion engine.

And then it was 12.10 and the highlight of our visit. The one piece of the museum visit that everyone was looking forward to. Michael Kennedy even raced from the Coronation tree planting on the Green to meet us for this. What

was it? Answer: The vintage bus trip.

Half an hour of a journey through the countryside on a splendidly well-preserved and very rapid single decker. How we chatted and reminisced about our recollections of similar journeys in days gone by! We even had a uniformed Bus Conductor on board although, because the trip was part of the museum experience, there was no charge so no souvenir ticket or grumpy ticket inspector, which was a pity.

Returning to the museum in one piece after what was an exhilarating experience on the bus, we changed our mode of transport. Firstly, we looked in on the impressive model railway layout and then bought tickets at the station for the miniature

steam railway which proceeded to take us on two circuits around the site. We climbed aboard like overgrown school kids beaming as Mervyn took photos and video of us on our journey.

So, what was there left to do? Of course, coffee and cake in the café and then the obligatory visit to the souvenir shop where local history books and fridge magnets were bought.

As we made our way back to the car park and home, we were all decided that the Wythall Transport Museum was definitely a star attraction in the locality. You actually didn't need to have any previous interest in buses to have a great day out. Do try it you won't be disappointed.

▼EARLY
ELECTRIC
VEHICLES.
MILK FLOATS
AND BREAD
VANS



ROBERT POOLE

Earthrise



BILL ANDERS' FIRST PICTURE OF EARTHRISE. NASA

A historian uncovers the true origins of the image of the century

The recent death of Frank Borman, commander of Nasa's Apollo 8 mission in 1968, has focused attention on that incredible first voyage to the Moon.

It took place eight months before Apollo 11, where Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin explored the lunar surface for the first time. However, the

impact of Apollo 8's "Earthrise" picture – the sight of the Earth from the Moon – now seems even greater than that of the first landing.

For many years, the story behind the famous Earthrise

photo, was that the crew were caught off-guard by the blue orb rising from behind the Moon. But even if they were preoccupied, the astronauts knew it was coming.

Another unforgettable event during the mission was a reading by the crew from the Book of Genesis, broadcast to the world at Christmas. Detailed research I've conducted in Nasa's archives has revealed more clearly how much planning lay behind these dramatic moments. The famous Earthrise picture, a wonky snap taken in a hurry, was improvised, but it had been anticipated.

Earthrise restored

After entering lunar orbit, they nearly missed seeing the Earth. Only on the fourth orbit, when the capsule flipped round 180 degrees to point forwards, did they notice it. Borman confirmed to me that at that moment they were "taken by surprise – too busy with lunar observation on the first three orbits".

But the Apollo programme's director of photography, Dick Underwood, was anxious to set the wider record straight. He explained: "Hours were spent with the lunar crews, including the Apollo 8 crew, in briefing on exactly how to set up the

camera, which film to use ... these briefings were most comprehensive."

There were, however, battles within Nasa about what images the astronauts should focus on, with the management insisting on shots of lunar geology and potential landing sites. Dick Underwood explained: "I argued hard for a shot of Earthrise, and we had impressed upon the astronauts that we definitely wanted it."

Borman was joined on the mission by two other astronauts: Jim Lovell, who was the command module pilot, and Bill Anders, who had the title of lunar module pilot. Nasa had intended for Apollo 8 to test the lunar module, but it was behind schedule so the mission didn't take one.

At the pre-launch press conference, Borman had looked forward to getting "good views of the Earth from the Moon" and Lovell to seeing "the Earth set and the Earth rise".

The official mission plan directed the astronauts to take photos of Earth, but only as the lowest priority. When the key moment came, the astronauts were indeed taken by surprise, but not for long.

Anders was at a side window taking photos of craters using a camera with black and white film when he saw the Earth rise from behind the Moon. "Look at that picture over there! Here's the Earth coming up," Anders exclaimed.

Anders quickly took a sharp shot of the Earth emerging above the lunar horizon. Then he and Lovell argued briefly over who should have the colour film camera, while Borman tried to calm them down.

It was Anders who took the blurry, hastily framed, overexposed colour shot of Earthrise, later dubbed the image of the century. But in the other

camera was a much better shot, long ignored because it was in black and white.

That first mono image was spot-on. A restored "Earthrise" photo, recently coloured by experts using the later shots as a reference, conveys the stunning sight beheld by the astronauts.

This shot, revealing the Earth as a majestic but fragile oasis. As Lovell mused: "The loneliness out here is awe-inspiring ... it makes us realise what you have back on Earth." For Borman too it was "intensely emotional ... We said nothing to each other, but maybe we shared another thought I had: 'This must be what God sees.'"

The Genesis reading

In 1968, as now, space travel was viewed as a scientific and technological domain. But the mission was also sent by one of the world's most strongly Christianised countries, and the crew was not about to leave its cultural background behind.

It was a point of pride at Nasa that, whereas Soviet cosmonauts were tightly monitored and controlled, their own astronauts were free to speak their minds. Extraordinary as it now seems, they were left to decide for themselves what to say in their historic live broadcast from lunar orbit.

Borman knew that he had to come up with something special for the Christmas broadcast. A few weeks beforehand, he was told by a press officer: "We figure more people will be listening to your voice (during the

broadcast) than that of any man in history. So we want you to say something appropriate."

While Neil Armstrong's "one small step" message was carefully considered inside Nasa, no one in the agency knew in advance what Borman would say.

With only two minutes left before radio contact was lost as the spacecraft passed behind the Moon, Anders said: "The crew of Apollo 8 have a message that we would like to send to you."

He then read from the Book of Genesis: "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the Earth; and the Earth was without form and void." He continued: "God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."

Lovell and Borman took over to read the next verses, and Borman signed off: "Merry Christmas, and God bless all of you – all of you on the good Earth."

As Apollo 8 dipped out of radio contact, the world was left to absorb the impact. "For those moments I felt the presence of creation and the creator," Nasa's chief flight director Gene Kranz later recalled. "Tears were on my cheeks."

Somehow Borman and his colleagues found the perfect words to convey their experience. But Borman had thought about the assignment carefully, asking a publicist friend to help out with the text.

This was Simon Bourgin, science policy officer at the US Information Agency. Bourgin in turn asked a journalist, Joe

Laitin, who mentioned the task to his wife, Christine.

She looked in the Old Testament and suggested: "Why don't you begin at the beginning?" She recognised the primeval power of the creation story in the first book of Genesis, with its evocative description of the Earth.

Borman immediately recognised that this was just right, and had it typed up. He had superbly vindicated Nasa's trust in him.

While inspiration and a degree of freedom were involved in the Earthrise photo and Genesis reading, behind

their execution lay careful planning and professionalism.

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**DR ROBERT
POOLE IS
PROFESSOR OF
HISTORY AT
THE
UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL
LANCASHIRE**

Kathleen Rogers, president of the Earth Day Network, says the Earthrise photo played a pivotal role in encouraging people to take part in environmental activism. "It gave rise to Earth Day, which now has a billion people participating, and created an environmental movement worldwide," says Rogers. The posters for Earth Day in 1970 all featured the Earthrise photo, she says. "Before Earth Day, people talked about how space exploration had made it far clearer how unique we are. Once the photo was published, members of Congress and global leaders all started talking about how fragile the Earth was. Earthrise highlighted the uniqueness of Earth in that big black universe and it drove home to millions of people how dirty our planet was."

Church Flowers

I hope that, like me, on a Sunday, your gaze is occasionally diverted from the people leading the service so that you can admire the beautiful flowers in St Nicolas' Church. There are no flowers during Lent and Advent, but pedestals at the front are there most other weeks. At Easter, Harvest and Christmas the church is filled with flowers and sweet smelling greenery. On other occasions, there might be a wedding pedestal below the pulpit.

None of this happens by chance but through the hard work of a lady called Alison Blumer who has been in charge for around 25 years. I personally think she deserves a medal but, in lieu of that, she certainly deserves a mention in the Parish Magazine.

The pedestal flowers rely on donations. Individuals can request and pay for flowers on specific Sundays perhaps to recognise a birthday, anniversary or in memoriam. Not all Sundays are available. Wedding flowers are paid for by the church using income from wedding fees. Alison and Margaret Jelfs are responsible for arranging the wedding pedestals as they have the most experience.

Easter, Christmas and Harvest are the special times when Alison requests donations from the congregation and also calls on her additional six flower arrangers to fill the church with arrangements.

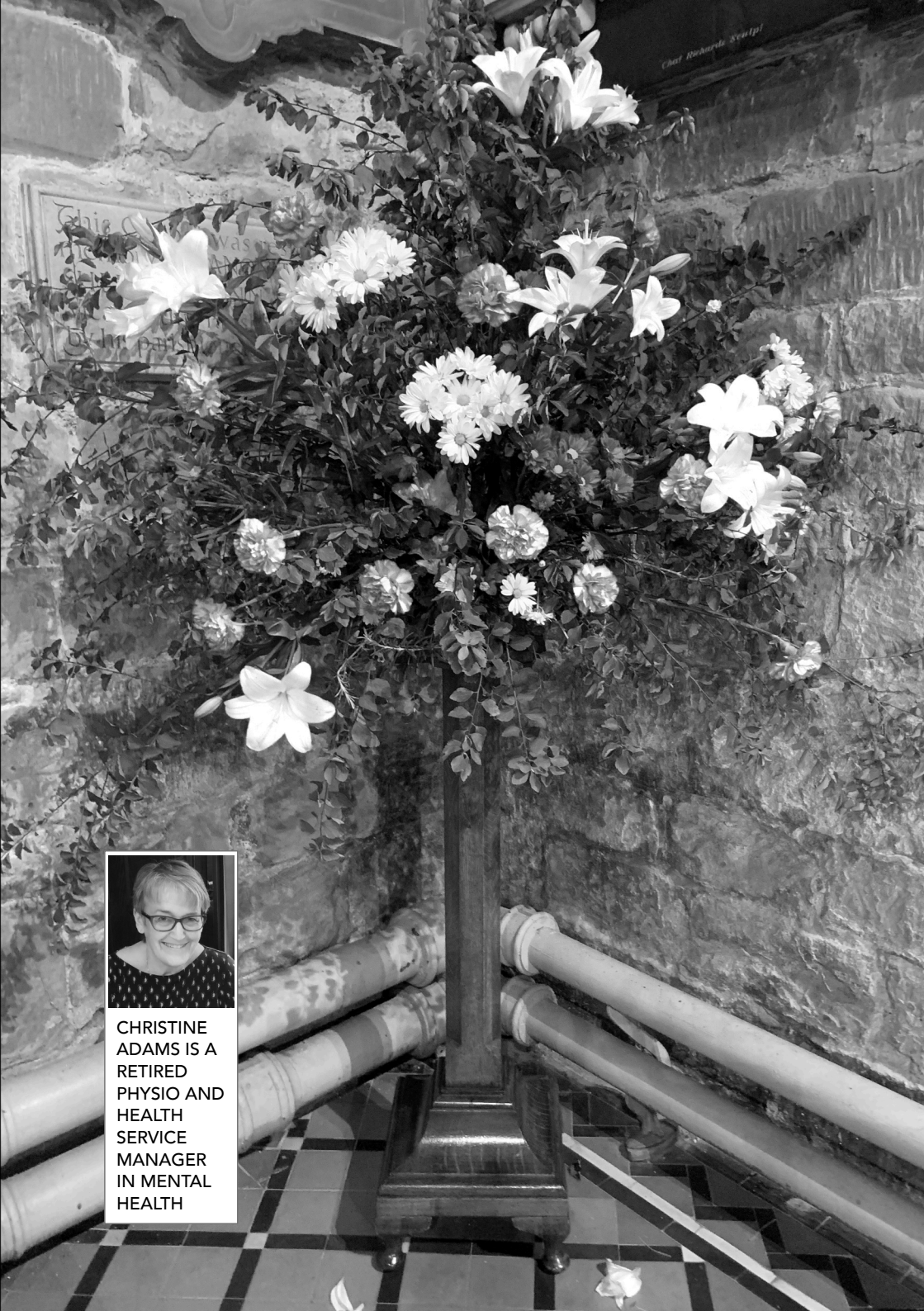
There are four regular flower arrangers. Their role involves even more responsibilities as Alison also has to order and collect flowers from

Barlows on the Redditch Road. The blooms are delivered by lorry from the Netherlands but occasionally certain flowers are not available and a visit to Birmingham flower market in Aston is necessary.

I love flowers and find the flower arranging process uplifting. I often find myself chatting to someone who has come to visit the church after getting married there 20-30 years previously.

If you would like to donate to the flower fund with Christmas approaching, please see Alison on a Sunday morning. If you would like to request flowers on a specific week (and this may or may not be possible) seek out the flower lady.

On behalf of our congregations and Ministry Team, thank you, Alison.



CHRISTINE
ADAMS IS A
RETIRED
PHYSIO AND
HEALTH
SERVICE
MANAGER
IN MENTAL
HEALTH

YOUR PARISH CHURCH

If you cannot find what you are looking for here, you will probably find it on the Parish Website (www.kingsnorton.org.uk). Alternatively, please ask questions at the Parish Office, which is open between 10.00 am and 1.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

**81 The Green, Kings Norton, Birmingham, B38 8RU • parishoffice@kingsnorton.org.uk
0121 458 3289 • www.facebook.com/kingsnortonteam**

THE MINISTRY TEAM

Rector	The Revd Larry Wright
Parish Lay Minister	Pauline Weaver
Curate	The Revd David Booker
Honorary Assistant Priest	The Revd Jayne Crooks
Lay Readers	David Ash, Cate Bennett, Fay Fearon, Ruth Howman, Parisa Pordelkhaki
Lay Preacher	Steve Wright
Music Minister.....	Sylvia Fox
Pastoral Care Team Coordinator.....	The Revd Jayne Crooks
Pastoral Care Advisor	Susan Farrell
Learning & Discipleship Coordinator.....	The Revd Mark Bennett

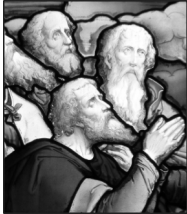
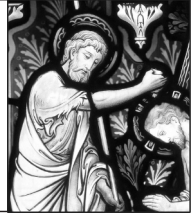
THE CHURCH WARDENS

St. Nicolas' Church.....	Peter Hay & Julie Hill, Mark Sandilands
Hawkesley Church	Jim Clarke

OTHER CONTACTS

Parish Administrator.....	Susan Farrell
Acting Finance Officer	Simon Hill
Verger and Groundskeeper	Shane Williams
Safeguarding Coordinator	Annette Dickers
Regular Giving	The Revd Jayne Crooks
Flower Arranging (0121 486 2837).....	Alison Blumer

We are a Church of England Parish serving all in Kings Norton through St Nicolas' Parish Church, and, in partnership with the Methodist Church, through Hawkesley Church, meeting in the Primary Academy.



We believe that the church in Kings Norton exists to be a worshipping, transforming partnership in Christ, to live out God's radical hospitality for all and to be equipped for work in God's world

1st Sunday of the Month

9.00 am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 am	Holy Communion (Children's activity : Muddy Church)
12.30 pm	Baptisms
6.00 pm	Taizé Prayer

2nd Sunday of the Month

9.00 am	Sung Matins (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 am	Morning Praise for All Ages (Child-friendly)
6.00 pm	Holy Communion with Anointing & Prayer for Healing

3rd Sunday of the Month

9.00 am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 am	Holy Communion (Children's activity : Godly Play)
12.30 pm	Baptisms
6.00 pm	Evening Worship

4th Sunday of the Month

9.00 am	Holy Communion with Choir (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 am	Outdoor Service in St Nicolas' Churchyard (Child-friendly)
6.00 pm	Compline (Night Prayer)

5th Sunday of the Month

9.00 am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 am	United Service

All services are held at St Nicolas' Church. For further details, see the weekly newsletter on the Parish Website at www.kingsnorton.org.uk

Christmas at the Cinema

The days of competing Christmas blockbuster movies in cinemas seem to be over. The arena of competition is now between cinemas and the streaming services: Apple TV, Disney+, Netflix, etc. They are all providing their own Christmas-themed movies this year. As an inveterate cinema goer, I'll leave streaming services to others and concentrate on the films worth seeing in a comfortable cinema seat alongside family or friends, eating popcorn or chocolates while enjoying the full, big screen sensation.

One pleasing consequence of the move to streaming services is that cinemas, lacking new films to show, provide a feast of classic Christmas movies at this time of the year. All the greats will be showing somewhere: *It's a Wonderful Life*, *White Christmas*, *Miracle on 34th St*, *A Christmas Carol* (including the Muppet version) and, for the hopelessly romantic, *Love Actually*. What is your favourite?

The outstanding new family film of Christmas 2023 in cinemas is *Wonka*. Directed by British director Paul King (*Paddington* and *Paddington 2*) it tells the story of how Willy Wonka rose from being a sweet seller in a

small shop to become an eccentric and famous chocolatier. Based on the best-selling 1965 novel by Roald Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, this is the third film to bring to life the magic and drama of the story. Roald Dahl's books all have their trademark darker side and *Wonka* is no exception. This time, the villains are corporate chocolate industrialists who are determined to keep newcomers out. Look out for Olivia Coleman as Mrs Scrubbit and Rowan Atkinson as a stuffy priest. Other well known British actors are also in the film but it will be Timothée Chalamet as the young Willy Wonka who brings the magic to the main character role. Though Chalamet has a reputation as a heart throb celebrity, the variety of the parts he plays (most recently the *Dune* franchise) has shown he has a depth and range of acting skills which deserves more credit. He's more than just a pretty face.

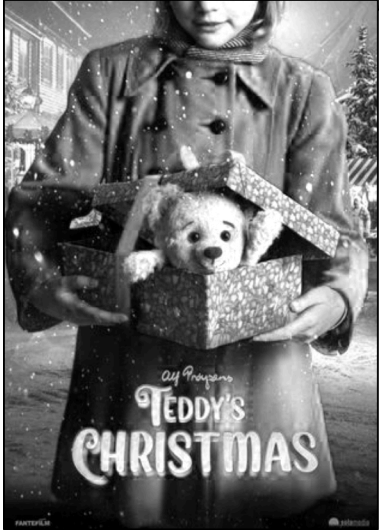
The other new Christmas film is *Teddy's Christmas*. Aimed at the younger family members, this heartwarming story of a Teddy which speaks and moves, voiced by actor Zachary Smith, is set in an imaginary Nordic village where harmony and happiness usually reign. A simple plot entails eight-



"MGM" writes on cinema, theatre and the arts.

year-old Mariann visiting a Christmas market and suddenly seeing an unbelievable sight. On the top shelf of a carnival game booth, the most adorable stuffed teddy bear has just moved his head and sneezed. Feeling an instant connection, Mariann can't think of any better Christmas wish than to win him as a prize. But when someone else wins Teddy, it is up to Teddy and his new hedgehog friend, Bolla, to reconnect with Mariann and discover the true importance of family and friendship. A delightful confection of a film which should cause no emotional indigestion. The UK release date is 1st December.

Finally, a curiosity of a Christian Christmas film which actually tells the nativity story but as a musical. Due to be released on 30th November, *Journey to Bethlehem* stars Antonio Banderas as Herod. Director Adam Anders is best known for his American high school movies (*The Prom 2020*) and he brings a high school prom feel to the nativity story. The film centres on the love story between Mary and Joseph and the conflict between love and honour when Mary becomes miraculously pregnant. All the elements of the Gospel accounts are included with a modern take on the attitudes and script. For a film unapologetically Christian in content it has received reasonably good reviews, so far.



Rice Pudding & Reflections



Winter is setting in, the nights are long, and we seek for cosiness, seizing any opportunity to hunker down with comfort food, a good book, a box set. Reflecting on another year rapidly drawing to its close has made me a bit nostalgic, the curse or blessing of old age! Nostalgia has been defined as “the customs we observe as groups which are shaped by our culture, beliefs and traditions, and which provide us with psychological acceptance and belonging. Our brain has a script of feelings and experiences, for example, from previous holidays. The nostalgia of the traditions, the same music, same films, decorating and the food of the season calls out to us. We will always keep some of our traditions, as letting them go feels like letting go of a part of our identity.”

In 2020 and 2021 we responded to the darkness of Covid and lockdown by baking banana bread. Now, as a recessionary darkness looms over 2024 and beyond, and devastating wars and rumours of wars, apparently rice pudding is the go-to comfort food. This much-derided, bland nursery food, popular since Victorian times, is now chic.

Rice pudding is a bit like Marmite, you either love it or hate it! I’ve always loved it. The rice pudding of my childhood was thick, creamy, an added tin of evaporated milk making it uber-rich. It was always baked in the oven in an oblong enamel dish, and we would fight over the resulting “toffee” on the top. My mother said that her uncles, Royal Navy seamen and much travelled, referred to it as Chinese wedding cake. Some of the best rice pudding I have ever eaten was in India, with fruit jewels and slivers of gold or silver leaf across the top. In

school, with a blob of indeterminate red jam in the middle, we called it “murder on the mountain”! Now it is available as tinned or fresh from the chiller cabinet, cooked on the hob or in the microwave as well as in the oven, the treat to eat. Definitely something to sustain the body over the winter months.

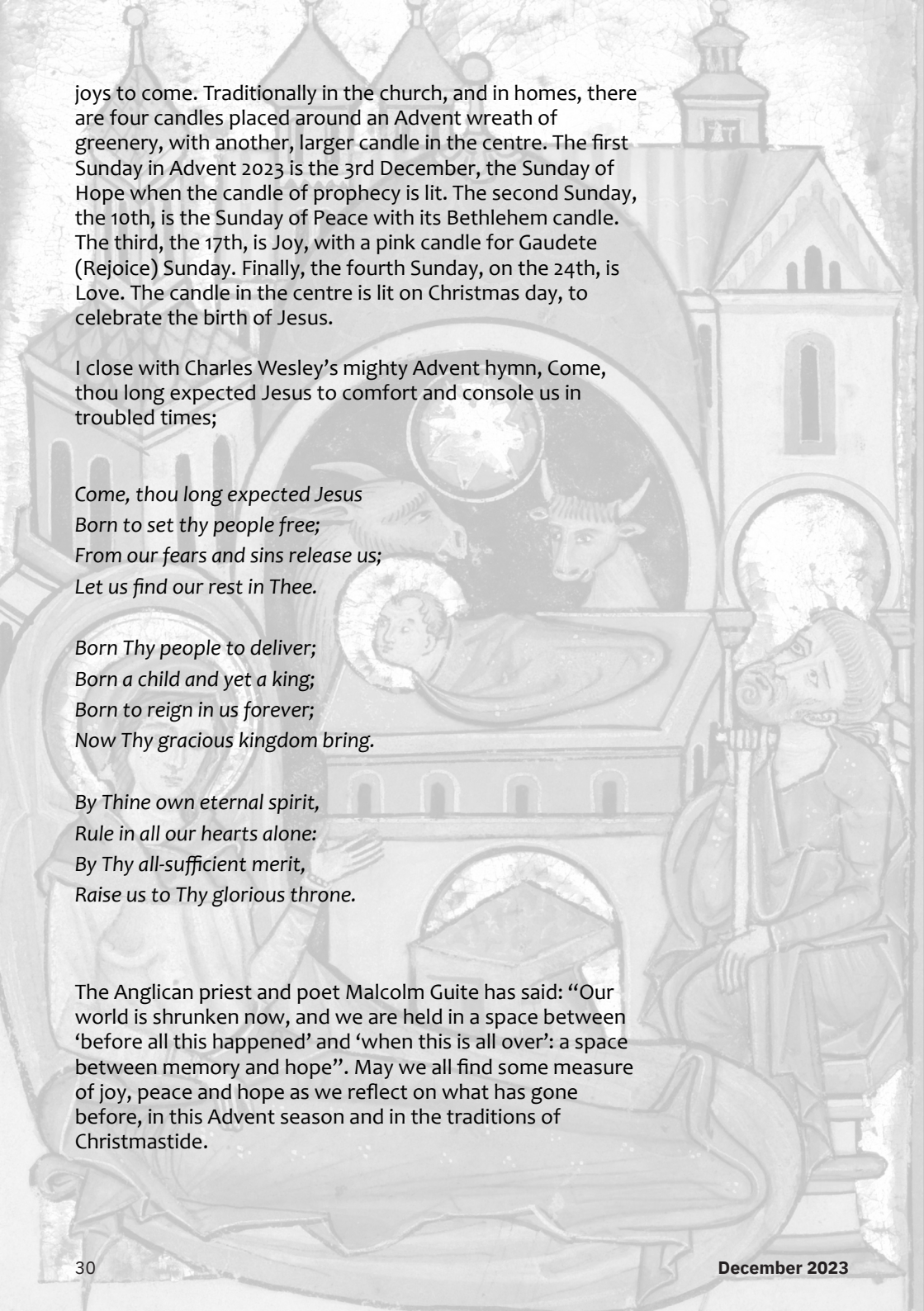
These memories and reflections allow me to segue neatly into the approaching of Christmastide and some more of the associated customs. Nostalgia and memory play a key part in our celebrations, though occasionally some can be a bit more subtle.

In Germany, the Feast of St. Nicholas, Sankt Nikolaustag, is celebrated on 6th December with a day’s holiday. In the south of Germany, it is primarily a religious festival, celebrating Nicholas of Myra, a fourth century Greek Bishop who gave gifts to the poor in secret. The day before Sankt Nikolaustag children clean their rooms, then polish a pair of boots or shoes and place them by the front door or on a windowsill. They might even leave a bit of hay or a carrot for St. Nicholas’ donkey. If the children have been good, their shoe will be filled with small gifts and treats. If they haven’t, then it’s a shoe filled with sticks or twigs!

In Poland and Germany, boys used to dress as bishops and beg alms for the poor on the eve of Sankt Nikolaustag. In the UK and the USA, and increasingly around the world, the celebration of the arrival of Santa Claus, or Father Christmas, with gifts for the children on the night of Christmas Eve, is a derivation of the German custom.

In December, Christians mark the season of the coming of Christ, the Messiah. Advent tends to be thought of as the run up to Christmas, especially commercially. (I confess that I am somewhat appalled by what is considered to be suitable content for an Advent calendar by some companies.) In the early days of the Christian church, the period of Advent matched that of Lent, lasting 40 days, and the emphasis was on the anticipated Second Coming of Christ. Now the birth of Jesus Christ, as well as His Second Coming, is marked especially on the four Sundays before Christmas.

The liturgical colours of Advent and Lent are purple, symbolising penitence, repentance and preparation for the



joys to come. Traditionally in the church, and in homes, there are four candles placed around an Advent wreath of greenery, with another, larger candle in the centre. The first Sunday in Advent 2023 is the 3rd December, the Sunday of Hope when the candle of prophecy is lit. The second Sunday, the 10th, is the Sunday of Peace with its Bethlehem candle. The third, the 17th, is Joy, with a pink candle for Gaudete (Rejoice) Sunday. Finally, the fourth Sunday, on the 24th, is Love. The candle in the centre is lit on Christmas day, to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

I close with Charles Wesley's mighty Advent hymn, Come, thou long expected Jesus to comfort and console us in troubled times;

*Come, thou long expected Jesus
Born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee.*

*Born Thy people to deliver;
Born a child and yet a king;
Born to reign in us forever;
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.*

*By Thine own eternal spirit,
Rule in all our hearts alone:
By Thy all-sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.*

The Anglican priest and poet Malcolm Guite has said: "Our world is shrunken now, and we are held in a space between 'before all this happened' and 'when this is all over': a space between memory and hope". May we all find some measure of joy, peace and hope as we reflect on what has gone before, in this Advent season and in the traditions of Christmastide.

THE HUNGRY GARDENER

Hygge, Kings Norton Style



Claire is a keen kitchen gardener, ably assisted by her son Charles.

Winter isn't my favourite season. I feel the cold and I struggle with the lack of light. I try to warm up by going outdoors and gardening. This helps with the low light levels at this time of the year. If I get too cold I need hot baths to warm up and I will walk around the house with a hot water bottle. I'm not a winter natural! Are there better ways to journey through winter?

This year, in August, my cousin had his wedding near Copenhagen. Charles and I went on a Danish adventure. I learnt some Danish on the language learning app Duolingo (we're a language learning family. It's part of the adventure of visiting somewhere new: start the adventure before you get there!). Charles learnt some French on Duolingo (we were visiting the French side of the family) and he got some new Lego too. The Danes are said to be one of the happiest nations, particularly in Autumn and Winter.

Our adventure started me thinking: can we bring some Danish *hygge* to Kings Norton and make our journey through winter gentler? Copenhagen is positioned at an equivalent latitude to roughly Newcastle. Aalborg in Northern Denmark has an equivalent latitude to mid-Scotland. Both weather patterns and light levels are similar.

The word "hygge" is a noun, a verb, an adjective and even forms part of other words. It is thought to derive from the word "hug" but does not have a direct translation in English. So what is it? *Hygge* is an atmosphere, a feeling of cosiness. Togetherness in a small group of friends with whom you are completely comfortable. It is a feeling of warmth and of being secure, especially when there is a raging storm outside and you are safe and warm inside. It is about being present,

feeling comfort and being in harmony with those around you. If you've come across the term "slow living", it is incredibly similar. According to the book 'My Hygge Home' by Meik Wiking, *hygge* is many things; so maybe it is better to look at the scenarios that could be described as *hygge*. My husband was working with a Dane this past week. He mentioned *hygge* and it brought a warm smile to his Danish colleague's face. A welcome word in a foreign land.

In the winter, when the light levels reduce to roughly seven hours just prior to the winter solstice, the feeling of light in winter is really important. The Danes are passionate about candles for this reason, bringing light from darkness. According to the European Candle Association, each Dane burns around six kilos of candle wax each year. Danes are also passionate about wood burners and open fires. Our family doesn't light many candles, partly because of the fire hazard posed by combining them with the presence of a delightful, energetic, nearly-8-year-old boy. We do have a wood burner, the safest thing we can have! St Nicolas' Church lights many candles over Christmas. My favourite winter tradition is Christingle. The smell, the atmosphere and the light are inspiring.

Low light through the winter can induce low feelings. One antidote is to enjoy the outside light when the sun is rising, to take a walk at lunchtime and to savour the sunset. A walk will also support your circadian rhythm and help regulate your sleeping patterns. It is worth also considering a Vitamin D

supplement as a deficiency is not uncommon.

When planning the lighting in your home, Meik Wiking recommends soft wall lights in the living room and two pendant lights over the dining table to help you to see the faces of your companions. In the bedroom, he recommends bedside lamps and in the more functional rooms (bathroom, kitchen and office) a functional light to help you see your food, face and work clearly. We have a Hue lighting system in our home. This can really create a warm environment and helps us set a mood through the use of various hues of light .

Hygge is a room designed around what people want to do in it rather than what you need to store in it. This is a really interesting way to view things, as I have always thought about what stuff goes into which room rather than what I want to do there. Do I want to play board games with my family? (Yes I do!) Share hot chocolates with family friends, maybe a glass of wine and chats? So, if you are moving into a new home, it can be a very powerful thing to consider before you fill the room. Of course for the Danes, a living room would not be complete without extra blankets, cushions and soft rugs.

Hygge is that bit of Christmas after Christmas Day and before New Year, what some call "betwixtmas". We tend to wear our PJ's all day, lie on the sofa watching family films and have the freedom just to be as a

family, taking a break from being on the go all the time.

Hygge is home grown food. A big part of *hygge* is the feeling of being safe and secure in your own home. What better way to feel secure in your food security than grow some of your own, be it on your window sills or, if you have the space, in your back garden? Preserving the summer bounty to give it as gifts at Christmas. Preparing and eating food is very important too. I feel that the preparation may be the most important part. The Danes are big lovers of cake and coffee. They love baking and creating meals that take some love and time. Making things like sourdough is particularly *hygge*: it takes a few days to make and the smell of freshly cooked bread is definitely *hygge*.

A *hygge* neighbourhood is one where neighbours lend things to each other and share food when they have too much or too little. In the summer we were travelling a lot, to the wedding in Denmark, to look after grandparents overseas and for a family holiday in Devon. I couldn't keep up with the volume of food I was producing, so it was really amazing to share extra eggs, courgettes, beans and tomatoes with our next door neighbours on either side. They really appreciated it. I was so relieved to find a good home for the food. It meant that we would come home to more fresh produce.

After learning about *hygge*, I feel that we are already doing a lot of *hygge* things as a family. We keep the board games within easy reach in the living room. We have a cosy log burner and

our lighting would meet with *hygge* approval. But I don't think we are ready for the candles yet. I believe that a massive takeaway is making sure that there is enough comfort within easy reach like blankets, not just for us but for our guests also. I guess that means I should crochet some more blankets. Those that know me will be thinking, "Any excuse!"





Remembrance Sunday 2023





PHOTOS BY DAVID ASH



More young people in the UK are living with parents and grandparents

In a recent court case in Pavia, northern Italy, the judge sided with the complainant, a 75-year-old woman, and ordered her adult two sons to move out of her home. The woman's case was a last-ditch attempt to get the men to find what one journalist termed, somewhat elliptically, "more autonomous living arrangements".

Italy has long had a culture of multigenerational living. As news reports have rightly noted, however, the cost of living crisis and the jobs market combined have resulted in more and more young professionals living with their parents for longer.

Whether out of preference or by necessity, more and more young adults in the UK too are living with parents and grandparents. Multigenerational households are the fastest-growing

household type in England and Wales.

Being able to pool resources has obvious financial benefits. It eases the pressure you might feel at the beginning of your career or when you're starting a family. It can make things easier for your elders too, especially if they are retirees struggling to make ends meet. And its emotional and relational benefits are clear.

However, living with parents and grandparents is not a commitment to take lightly. My research shows that tensions can arise when family members across generations with different expectations come together.

The benefits of living with your parents

The sense of financial stability that communal living can bring to individuals and families is



DR PRABASH EDIRISINGHA, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN CONSUMER CULTURE AND MARKETING, NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY

noteworthy. Having elderly relatives can make it easier for young parents to arrange childcare. It also makes organising adult care within the family easier too.

Families can thus save the money that would have otherwise been spent on care services, for children's education, or hobbies and other family activities that improve their collective quality of life.

Having more time to spend together can also lead to stronger relational bonds. It can foster greater understanding and empathy between family members. Gardening and cooking together can relieve loneliness. It can provide a sense of security for the young and the elderly alike.

Research shows that for the youngest household members, living communally can nurture a sense of aspiration and boost their wellbeing. Children, in particular, have been shown to develop a more resilient approach to dealing with difficulties when growing up within in a multigenerational home.

The challenges of multigenerational living

For most people, there will be a certain amount of anxiety

over how much your personal time might be impacted. Being able to set boundaries and protect your physical and emotional privacy is crucial.

In addition, making joint decisions can be confusing, which, in turn, can lead to frustration, or, worse, a lack of trust and confidence. This can impact negatively on family bonds.

If these issues are not adequately addressed, they can result in stress levels harmful to adults and, most importantly, children. Overcrowding, in particular, can have both emotional and sanitary consequences. This was made particularly visible by COVID.

A research study conducted by the Centre for Aging Better revealed that 31% of adults in Britain reported having mental and physical health problems during the pandemic. This was the result of the poor-quality housing conditions typical in overcrowded homes.

This chimes with research from the US, that found that, of 39,923 suspected COVID-19 cases in New York, the adjusted rates of infection increased by 77% for those in multigenerational families.

Overcrowding has been shown to be more prevalent in black



British and British Asian communities. Research has shown that it was harder for family members to self-isolate and shield from COVID-19. Infection rates were also higher in homes where people live in crowded conditions with shared facilities. Due to the increasing popularity, there is a growing demand in the UK for suitable homes that can accommodate multiple generations.

A study by the industry research provider, the National House Building Council, identified a potential demand for around 125,000 purpose-built homes in the UK that can cater to intergenerational family needs, such as privacy, freedom and personal space. Developers are duly introducing features like level-access, knockout panels and privacy floors to purpose-built homes.

Nearly half of the 1,019 UK residents recently surveyed by the insurance providers Legal

and General said that multigenerational living had a positive impact on their lives and could help addressing current social problems. A third of the respondents believed that governments should provide incentives to encourage more people to live in this way.

The Canadian federal government has started to do just that. In January 2023, it introduced a home-renovation tax credit scheme which provides a one-time 15% incentive – up to \$50,000 – for families who are looking to expand and adapt their homes for multigenerational living.

In many countries across the world, of course, this type of household is the norm. This is an old but new way of family living. To harness its full potential, you need to consider its potential challenges.

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It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas

Michael Buble is already singing (thanks Asda, I really wanted to hear that at the beginning of November). But yes, as I write this, it is early November and it's already starting to look a lot like Christmas. The shops are decked out, the Christmas ads are on the telly and mince pies are everywhere. Some of you may love getting your tree and decorations up early, some of you may prefer to wait until Christmas Eve.

It doesn't really matter. If putting your decorations up early brings you joy, then go for it. You might have a colour-themed tree with matching decorations all symmetrically positioned or you might have a tree that looks like an explosion of random decorations with no order or balance to them. It may not surprise you when I admit that's me. Decorations don't match, put on wherever there is a space, old and new and home-made.

You might have a real tree or a fake one or a tinsel one. I remember our first fake tree: silver tinsel, and we had it for so long that, by the end, it had hardly any tinsel left on it and the cat would regularly climb it so we had to tie it down. The



PAULINE IS THE
LAY MINISTER AT
ST NICOLAS'
CHURCH, KINGS
NORTON

cat was probably bigger than the tree. It was only a small one.

Then there are the lights, the ornaments and of course, the crib scene. From my tacky plastic glitter-covered 1970s heirloom through to the new felted one from Iceland and the musical one with the corny voiceover, they are all special to me.

Christmas can be a difficult time of year for many people. They may have lost loved ones, be unwell, be alone or find it hard to make ends meet. It can be hard to celebrate or to be “merry and bright”, but if there are things that we can do that bring us joy or give us some comfort

then we should do them and not worry about what others think.

In our Christmas services and events this year we have tried to provide things that will fit your mood, from giving gifts on St Nicolas’ Day (this year supporting Toys 4 Birmingham) through to the fun of our “Come and join in” Nativity or the traditions of Midnight Communion. This year, we have two new events: “Jingle all the way” involves lots of Christmas music as you try to find the missing carols while you explore our churchyard and the church, which is transformed into Nazareth and Bethlehem. Then we have “Blue Christmas”, a service for those wanting something more quiet and contemplative and featuring our handbell ringers.

However you choose to celebrate, whenever you decide to put up your tree, whatever way you decide to decorate it, I hope that you find comfort and joy this Christmas.

Funerals October 2023

9 October	Benjamin Patel	20 days	In.CY
25 October	John Dann	95	Cr.LH
30 October	Maureen Petrovic	87	In.CY
31 October	Carter Lewis Stanley	Stillborn	SN.Bu.KN

Bu : Burial, Cr : Cremation, CY : Churchyard, In : Interment of Ashes

Churchyards & Crematoria

LH : Lodge Hill, KN : Kings Norton, SN : Service at St Nicolas’ Church

The Tilbury Buffet

I recently watched a repeat television programme called “Flog It!” The format went like this. Members of the public would bring items to different locations. Antiques and other items would be valued and some would be sold for the vendor. This particular episode was broadcast from the International Cruise Terminal at Tilbury in London.

When I was at sea, the building was called the Tilbury Riverside. It was a very clever piece of engineering, constructed in the 1920s. The pier itself was connected to two huge arms which would rise and fall with the tides of the River Thames. The ramps for the foot passengers moved with the pier. It really was a well-conceived feat of design.

When I first went to sea in 1957 on the P&O S.S. Stratheden, our ship would start her voyage by moving through the locks at Tilbury Dock and would then berth at Tilbury Riverside to receive passengers. They arrived mainly by train, having travelled the 27 miles from Fenchurst Street Station in London.



Eddie remembers Tilbury as it used to be

For me, Tilbury evokes many feelings & memories : of people emigrating to Australia, saying a last goodbye to England; of new arrivals from the Caribbean on the Empire Windrush full of hope and prayers as they set out on a new life; and many others too.

In my day, the building was a gloomy, cold place adjoining the station (*photo, right*). There was a buffet & bar in typical British Rail style

with limp sandwiches and bottles of warm beer. The lads at sea, when feeling somewhat homesick, would say that they could not wait to get back to Tilbury Buffet!

When a passenger ship arrived at Tilbury, passengers would disembark at the terminal and then, usually in the afternoon, the ship would move into the docks, where the crew would receive their pay and sign off. Before this, once all the passengers were ashore, the buffet would fill up with crew members looking forward to going home. More memories, more emotions.

Tilbury is where my sea career really began. I, too, could be heard reminiscing on occasion about the delights of the Tilbury Buffet! It was used by most of the P&O ships such as the Chusan, the Chitral and the Corfu, which would dock further up the river at the King George V and Victoria Docks but would load and disembark passengers at Riverside. And of course, all the crews of those vessels would talk nostalgically

about the Tilbury Buffet while they were at sea.

King George V Dock, by the way, has since become the London City Airport. It was filled in with rubble from demolished buildings in 1986 before the airport was built on top of it and the runway was constructed on a concrete raft floating over steel piles driven into the dock bed. Another feat of clever engineering!



Jennifer Hughes Lic Ac, MBAcC

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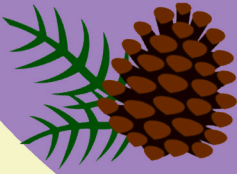
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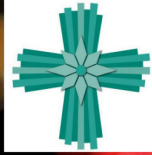


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Christmas In St Nicolas Church

9 December 10am-1pm Jingle All The Way

A musical trail around church and churchyard

10 December 10.30am St Nicolas Day Service

16 December 2pm Come and Join in Nativity

Dress up & join in the with lots of carols

17 December 4pm Carols By Candlelight

Join us singing carols old and new

23 December 4pm Blue Christmas Service

A quiet and contemplative Christmas Service

Christmas Eve 5pm Crib Service

Christmas Eve 1130pm Midnight Communion

Christmas Day 9am and 1030am Communion

All events are free

Donations to our church bells appeal

Parish office: 81 The Green, Kings Norton B38 8RU
0121 458 3289 www.kingsnorton.org.uk
Charity Number 1134799