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Items for inclusion in the February 2014 issue are to be submitted by: Friday 10th January 2013

Welcome...

After editing the Parish Magazine for the last five years, I will be laying down my editor's pen after this edition. I only originally agreed to do one edition, but plans change, don't they?!



I have learned a lot and enjoyed my time as editor, but it is now time for fresh impetus and ideas and I am pleased that Reader and Webmaster (and photographer extraordinaire) David Ash will be taking over from next month.

I would like to thank all the contributors, both regular and occasional. It is down to them that the magazine has been such an interesting and varied read. I could not have done my job without them.

The January edition is always published a bit early so that it will be in churches in time for Christmas so depending on when you read this, I hope you have a very happy Christmas and/or peaceful New Year!

Thank you for reading.

Alan Haynes, Editor

From The Rector To be a pilgrim



‘Journey’ is getting to be an over-used word. ‘Join us in our development journey’ say recruiting adverts, meaning ‘Join us. We hope to grow.’ ‘Come with us on the journey’ say managers trying to persuade staff that a new project is not simply a way of getting more from them for the same pay.

It’s a pity. ‘Journey’ is such a potent image. It takes us out of habitual comfort and opens us to new experience. It demands choosing and packing only some of the familiar while trying to look open-eyed at what will be new and not yet known. If a journey is made in company, it brings new friends and new ways of relating (we hope) to old ones. Journeying helps us to discover more of our own strengths and weaknesses – and to grow in resilience and confidence. Any tough journey also exposes us to different ways of doing things, of understanding and taking hold of life in all its complexity and possibilities. It’s good to go travelling – and in the end to come home.

The Church’s story at Christmas and in January is full of journeys - to and from Nazareth, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Egypt; angels coming down from heaven, shepherds rushing from the hills, stately wise

men on camels and a young couple with a donkey. Above all, it is a story of God’s journeying into the vulnerability of all human experience in Jesus, the Word made flesh, then and now, there and here.

In all this Christmas journeying, there is one constant. It’s not certainty about destination or about what will happen when arrival comes. It is trust that the journey has point and purpose and is made in the richness of God’s promise, whatever happens and wherever it takes us and them. It is never futile. It always leads to freedom, truth and love

As Kenneth Kaunda, first President of Zambia, said at Nelson Mandela’s funeral, God’s freedom comes as we trust in the truth of God’s command that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and our neighbour of every race and faith as ourselves. For Jesus never gives commands without giving the grace and strength to do them. He gives us the motive, the vision and the energy for all our journeying with him who says, ‘Follow me’ from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom, death to life, through Cross to glory.

Christians in every age have sought

to do this literally in pilgrimage – actually journeying from ‘home’ to a ‘holy place’; the Holy Land, Santiago de Compostela, Assisi, Taizé, Lourdes, Walsingham, Holy Island – and so many more sites where through the ages, people have sensed that God is even more ‘touchable’ than at home.

For me, almost every year, it is Iona. Even this November (mild, dry and windless!), there is company and the starkness of rock, sea and ancient story to remind us of and renew us in remembering that the sometimes homely details of ‘normal life’ are held always within a love and purpose far, far greater than we often see. This year, I was drawn to the small shrine where St Columba was first buried over 1400 years ago. Bare but for a stunning wood cross carved by Louise, a lovely young priest who died tragically soon after making it, the shrine is tiny, dark and cold. But it speaks powerfully of the faith in which Columba journeyed to Iona from his native Ireland and in which thousands came to this simple place – and invites us to that same faith and to take it back home with us.

A very early Christian writer said, “Pilgrimage is much struggle, but you will not find the one you seek unless you bring him with you.” It matters that as we are able we do journey to these special places – and many more. They really are God’s gifts. But it matters even more that we are pilgrims in every part of our life, in

the company of Christ and his people.

The Church of England has developed a lovely new course ‘**Pilgrim**’, intended firstly for those beginning a new stage of their journey in Christ. But it is not just for beginners. We believe it is for all, that we may all be renewed in faith, no matter how long we have journeyed in Christ. We shall be following it during Lent as a parish-wide course, although some will be starting earlier.

It will form a core part of Confirmation preparation for those whose journey will bring them to receive God’s full promise at Bishop David’s hands in May. But none of us are above the need for renewal – and so we shall be inviting all to share in it.

There will be company. There will be challenge. There will, however, also be promise of growth for all in our faith, confidence and service of God’s kingdom in Kings Norton, a place no less special in God’s love and purpose than every ‘holy place’ in God’s world. It is here that for us faith must come alive – in worship, in community, in service, in lament and in celebration.

Do think about sharing in ‘**Pilgrim**’. It will make a difference to us, to the vitality of church – and we pray and hope to the communities of need and plenty in this parish.

Rob Morris

Thank you Alan; Welcome David!

This edition of the Parish Magazine is the last under Alan Haynes' resourceful, lively and very patient editorship. I am delighted and grateful that David Ash has accepted the mantle. The next magazine (deadline 10th January – note to self!) will be in his care.

Rob Morris

David writes:

“My first act as Alan's successor must be to wish Alan a happy retirement and to thank him for the trail he has blazed so successfully through the past 60 or so editions. He recently told me he only ever intended to edit one copy, which makes the length of his commitment all the more impressive. Speaking personally, I have yet to see a church magazine which can match ours for consistent quality of content or presentation, and I have heard many appreciative comments over the years, from Kings Norton and further afield, about the quality of our publication. (It is, after all, available online too and has a small international audience.) Much of the credit for that must go to Alan, and I plan to find a way to celebrate his achievement in one of the Spring editions of the magazine. Any thoughts or anecdotes you might be able to contribute to a short piece about him would be gratefully received.

You are used to emailing copy to Alan at **editor@kingsnorton.org.uk**. From now on, messages sent to that email address will come to me; but I would also like to introduce a small change. With effect from the February edition (deadline 10th January), please would you send all copy for publication to **copy@kingsnorton.org.uk**. If you use this address, all the material for the magazine will automatically end up in one folder on my computer and I will be spared the headache of hunting through my emails to find it.

If you have any creative ideas for additions to our already wide repertoire of articles, if you fancy writing a book review, interviewing a new church member for a "parish people" page or simply reporting or reflecting on something which has meant a lot to you and which you wish to share with others, please send it my way and I'll see if I can find room for it. All ideas welcome.

With warm wishes,

David Ash.”

Christmas Challenge 2013

We set ourselves the challenge of providing presents for 100 families in the parish who would otherwise have none. Each family lives in the parish and is one of the more than 300 families supported by the SWEET project, pioneers and partners in providing local family support as need grows and resources decrease. Jayne Cresswell and Jayne Hulbert, SWEET leaders and trusted colleagues, shared in our Untied Patronal Service on 8th December and, like me and many, were overwhelmed by the generosity of everyone's response.

On Tuesday 10th December the merry band of helpers therefore delivered the following gifts to SWEET for giving out locally this Christmas.

270 adults and teenage gifts

398 children's gifts

41 Christmas hampers

Gifts are still arriving! More were taken to SWEET later in the week. As a result we have decided to save the cash donations until January when the project will give us a list of things needed by families for us to buy.

Huge thanks to everyone who contributed and especially to Pauline Weaver, the instigator, to Sylvia Fox and to all who gathered, sorted, wrapped and labelled this huge mountain. Not 100 but over 130 local families will have a Christmas they thought beyond them – but if we have St Nicolas as our patron saint, what else should we be doing?!

As with the Foodbank, some may still raise doubts. Your clergy and many others know, often day by day, the increasing pressure and reducing resources for families in need in our parish, the work of SWEET in response and that there is much more to do. More to come in the February magazine.

Rob Morris

St Nicolas the saint – and Giving

As we celebrated our parish's patron saint and the life and work of the church in Kings Norton, we renewed our commitment to working with others for the common good of all in our parish and the wider world. But we must also take care of life 'at home'.

This year, our church income has not kept pace with our necessary church

spending. Costs for church, as for all, continue to rise. Some faithful givers have moved away. Some have now, we trust, gone to heaven. Income from weddings and funerals was less than we expected earlier in the year – and support for Saint Nicolas Place and the life of Hawkesley Church Centre has also made large demands.

In 2014, we may see some increases in income from wedding and funeral fees. We plan further cost reductions. We shall work, as always, to raise funds from elsewhere and to encourage donations and gifts – but we need first to ensure that all church members and friends are giving as we hope they can and will.

I am very grateful to the many who already give faithfully through St Nicolas, Immanuel and Hawkesley. Thank you.

But I also need to ask:

If you are a member or friend of St Nicolas, Hawkesley or Immanuel and have not yet made a pledge to give regularly, please do so today. Forms are in church or Parish Office for you to fill in and return.

If you have made a pledge to give regularly by envelope, please ensure that you are up to date with your pledge.

If you would like to make a one-off donation, please use the Gift Aid envelopes in each church if you are a taxpayer.

We have to find around £230,000 each year to sustain the life and work of this parish church. It all has to come from the giving and work of church members and friends. At the moment, this year and next we are likely to fall short by about £20,000. We are very grateful to everyone who has supported building works and repairs, but we must also ensure that the basic running costs are covered. If all are faithful, we shall bridge that gap.

Canon Rob Morris

Malawi-Birmingham Partnership – update letter for 2013

A personal note

Here in Kings Norton we will, once again, be contributing a good sum to the church in Malawi from our outward giving. Ruth Howman and I both have rich personal experience of life and work in Malawi and of the church's core place in education, health care, nutrition and justice. Under a new President, the

feisty and principled Joyce Banda, Malawi has made great strides in fair government and growth in what is still one of the poorest countries in the world. Our Partnership with the Malawian Church is a great privilege.

From the Diocese

First of all, a big thank you to all who have given to the Malawi Fund in the past and to all who have sent contributions for this year. A special thank you to all who took part in the Church Crawl for Malawi in April this year, which was well supported across the diocese by intrepid Crawlers and by the many who opened churches to welcome them. The total raised now stands at an impressive £8,370 plus Gift Aid.

Our Diocesan partnership is with the four Dioceses in Malawi. All gifts to the Malawi Fund support the Dioceses in their essential work of enabling schools, hospitals and parishes to proclaim the Gospel in worship and in teaching, healing and serving the people of Malawi. The Anglican Dioceses, with our help, are working to increase self-sufficiency, but this is a long, slow process.

The long-established Malawi-Birmingham Partnership is expressed in many ways. As well as the much valued giving to the general fund and for special projects, Birmingham's support includes gifts in kind, some sent through our Malawi containers. Groups and individuals also visit in each direction. This year, a highlight was the fourth Skills Share visit of teachers and others from Birmingham. All the news of the Partnership and the Anglican Church in Malawi can be found on the website

www.malawipartnership.co.uk

We value your financial support, but we value your views too. We are engaged in a review of the Malawi Partnership to ensure it remains 'fit for purpose' in all its aspects. We have an independent reviewer, Canon Janice Price of Partnership for World Mission. She would like to hear by email from anyone with a point of view at janice.price@churchofengland.org. She also plans to visit Birmingham early in 2014 if you'd like to see her in person - details will follow. The target for giving to the General Fund by the parishes of our diocese remains at £60,000 for 2014. It will, we know, all be well used.

Rob Morris

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Café and Gift shop: Tuesday to Saturday 10am-3pm
Morning coffee, light lunches, afternoon tea.

Guided Tours: Friday and Saturday at 11am and 2pm.
Group tours can be booked at various times through the week.

St Nicolas Church is also open for visiting, services permitting:
Wednesdays 10am-1pm and 6.30pm-9pm; Saturdays 10am-12 noon.

Booking events and functions

Visit www.saintnicolasplace.co.uk to see our facilities for wedding and family functions and for corporate and community events and training – and our wide range of catering options. Viewing of rooms for any booking is warmly welcomed at a convenient time for you.

Just call 0121 458 1223 or Parish Office on 0121 458 3289.

Marriage and baptism enquiries for St Nicolas Church: Thursdays 6.30pm-8pm

Activities

Saint Nicolas Place is home to a wide range of activities every week alongside the full programme of activities of St Nicolas Church, including: Uniformed Groups, Seniors' Club, Community Choir, Social Support Groups, Zumba, Rhythm Time, Slimming World, Dance and Fitness Groups, Kings Norton History Society,

heritage group events - and we have room for more!

We are also developing rich local archive and study resources.

Just call 0121 458 1223 or 458 3289 for details.

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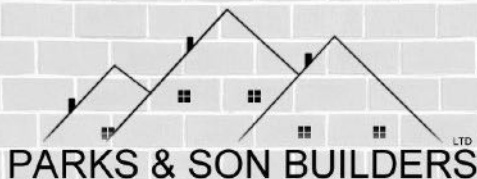
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opportunity to have fun and get to
know each other. We look forward to
seeing you there!

November 2013 Baptisms

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"

3 rd November	Anna Elizabeth Lee
3 rd November	Jessica Grace Pearce
3 rd November	Isabelle Louise Pearce
17 th November	Ellie-May Rose Cresswell
17 th November	Theo Anthony Dixon
17 th November	Jordan Theodore Johnson
17 th November	Julia Camella Johnson

November 2013 Marriages

"Those whom God has joined together"

8th November

Jason Marc Bainbridge and Sophie Jane Burton

Harry L Marks

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November 2013 Funerals

"I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord

- 1st November Jacqueline Lola Lightfoot, 90. Cremation at Redditch.
- 1st November Kenneth Raymond Gavin, 73. Cremation at Lodge Hill.
- 4th November Reginald Charles Jackson, 93. Cremation at Lodge Hill.
- 5th November Basil Stacey, 88. Cremation at Redditch.
- 7th November James Reginald Wilkins, 71. Interment of ashes in St Nicolas churchyard.
- 8th November Nona Johnson, 83. Service at St Nicolas Church, cremation at Robin Hood.
- 12th November Richard Howard Flint, 66. Service in St Nicolas Church, burial at Kings Norton Cemetery.
- 12th November Joyce McGloin, 81. Cremation at Robin Hood.
- 13th November Annie Mary Saunders, 89. Cremation at Lodge Hill.
- 15th November Ronald Seymour Hobbis, 85. Service at St Nicolas Church, burial in St Nicolas churchyard.
- 18th November Albert Edward Wallin, 88. Service at St Nicolas Church, burial in St Nicolas churchyard.
- 20th November Donald Frederick Hill, 84. Cremation at Lodge Hill.
- 20th November Jean Florence Blundell, 71. Cremation at Lodge Hill.
- 22nd November Barbara Mary Shipton, 67. Service in St Nicolas Church, cremation at Redditch.
- 28th November Leslie James Chapman, 72. Service in St Nicolas Church, burial at Kings Norton Cemetery.
- 28th November Sisara Lorenza Wainwright, 89. Burial in St Nicolas churchyard.

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St Nicolas Parish Church *on The Green B38 8RU*

Sunday 8.00 am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30 am Holy Communion Oasis for 5-11's
2nd Sunday 10.30am Morning Worship/Parade for all ages
4pm Holy Baptism (1st and 3rd Sundays)
6 pm Evening Worship

Every Sunday evening we offer prayer, music and quiet for all to share in as you wish. Do come.

1st Sunday: Taizé Prayer 2nd Sunday: Holy Communion with Prayer for Healing
3rd Sunday: Night Prayer and reflection 4th/5th Sundays: Special services/Evensong (BCP)

Mon, and Wed, 9am Morning Prayer
Thursday 11am Holy Communion (BCP)

BCP is the Book of Common Prayer from 1662. Other services are a mix of ancient and modern words and music, mostly from the Common Worship Service Book 2000.

Hawkesley Church (Anglican/Methodist)

at Hawkesley Church Primary Academy on the corner of Shannon Road and Old Partway, Kings Norton, B38 9TR

Sunday 10.30am Worship and Children's Activities (5-11's):

1st & 3rd Sundays Holy Communion;
2nd & 4th Sundays Morning Worship.

Tuesday 10am Hawkesley Coffee Morning (every two weeks)

Immanuel Church

at The Fairway Centre on the corner of Wychall Lane and The Fairway, Kings Norton, B38 8XJ

Sunday 10.30am Worship - and Oasis for children of primary school age.

1st & 3rd Sundays Holy Communion;
2nd Sunday Joining with St Nicolas/Hawkesley
4th Sunday All Age Worship

Open Church

We open St Nicolas Church as much as we can so that all may share God's peace and promise in a space where they have been found and trusted for centuries. There is a place for you within its story. Please pray that more will know it as a safe place for prayer and healing, where sorrow and joy are held in God's love.

We welcome volunteers to share in our offering of welcome, refreshment and care through St Nicolas, Hawkesley and Immanuel, to steward St Nicolas in Open Church times and care for our churchyard, flowers and brasses. Do ask.

Open Church times

Do visit, pray, light a candle or share quiet conversation over coffee as you wish.

Wednesday 10.00 am – 1.00 pm and 6.30 – 9pm (Candlelit Church)
Thursday 6.30 – 8pm for all Marriage and Baptism enquiries
Saturday 10.00 am – 12 noon for coffee, knit-and-natter, prayer
with **Messy Church** for all ages every 2nd Saturday (Market Day)

Candlelit Church

Every Wednesday, 6.30 – 9 pm with informal learning together at 8pm.

Quiet spaces, candles, conversation, creativity and music.

Arrive at any time; stay for any length of time - as you wish.

Tiny Tots Thursdays, 9.00-10.30am in St Nicolas Church for 0-5's and parents/carers.

Bumps and Babies for new and expectant parents, in St Nicolas Church every Monday, 1.00-2.30pm

Growing in Faith

We are growing fresh ways for all to grow in faith – those making their very first step, those who have made many and those who are discovering God's love afresh after times of change. Please ask in each church for details.

Helping to keep our parish church open for all

It costs around £800 each week to keep St Nicolas open. We welcome all financial support through donations and especially through regular Planned Giving. Do ask for details and, if a taxpayer, please ask how you may Gift Aid your offering.

Baptisms and Marriages

Please visit St Nicolas on Thursdays between 6.30pm and 8pm to ask any questions and arrange bookings with our clerks. One of the clergy is also present to help if there is a question over whether your service can be held in this parish.

KINGS NORTON TEAM PARISH

People, Places and Contacts

Please use our website www.kingsnorton.org.uk, ask at services or Open Church times or at Parish Office on 0121 458 3289 (Tue-Fri 10am – 1pm). The weekly newsletter and monthly events diary have the latest information. Churchyard enquiries to Parish Office

MINISTRY TEAM:

Canon Rob Morris (Team Rector) 458 3289/459 0560
The Revd Dr John White (Team Vicar) 458 3289/07854 412949
The Revd Jayne Crooks (Team Vicar) 458 3289/459 3733
The Revd Donald Sampson (Methodist Minister) 458 3289/476 7223
Readers: Fay Fearon, Ruth Howman, 458 3289
David Ash and Mandy Butler
Children's Work Development Worker: Pauline Weaver 458 3289

WARDENS:

St. Nicolas Anne Hughes/Phil Burton 458 3289
Hawkesley Jim Clarke 550 3455 / 07939 838086
Elaine Cooper 624 0933 / 07951 325704
Immanuel Clare Dean 459 6185

PCC (Church Council) Secretary: Judy Ash Finance: Catherine Dehghani

Parish Administrators: Judy Ash, Sylvia Fox, Christine Gadd

Christian Giving Officer Jean Brownsword 458 3289

Churchyard Care Team Richard Harper 458 3289

Bible Reading Fellowship Julie Caley 458 3289

Flower Co-ordinator Alison Blumer 486 2837

Organist and Music Director Sylvia Fox 07778 449170

Tuesday: Training and groups 6-9pm; Friday: Juniors 6.30-7.45pm; Seniors/Adults 8-9pm.

Handbell Ringers Mondays 3-4.30pm and some evenings. (Please phone first to check we are meeting.)

Immanuel Music Group Susan Haynes 459 4711

Oasis/ Sunday School

Immanuel Nicky Moorcroft (Oasis leader)

St. Nicolas and Hawkesley contact via Parish Office 458 3289

Parish Magazine: Editor Alan Haynes 459 4711

editor@kingsnorton.org.uk

Treasurer (Subscriptions) Alison Blumer 486 2837

Advertising Manager Lynne Hayes-James via Parish Office 458 3289

Parish Website David Ash e-mail: webmaster@kingsnorton.org.uk

Bell Ringers Practice Tuesdays at 7.30 to 9.15 pm in the Tower

Ringling Mistress Angie Dunsmith 07710 958535

At Saint Nicolas Place

- Seniors' Club (Over 65's)** Every Wednesday 1pm – 3pm
Marlene Collyer, Anne Dent & Janice Boyett.
- Women's Fellowship** 2-3pm 1st Thursday;. Secretary: Carol Devic
- Guides and Brownies** Rainbows: Mondays 5.30 - 6.30 pm
Brownies (188th Birmingham): Tuesdays 6.00-7.30 pm
Brownies: Thursdays 6.30 - 8.00 pm
Guides (247th Birmingham):Mondays 7.15-9.00 pm
- Guides and Brownies** Rainbows (1st Kings Norton): Mondays 5.30 pm
at Hawkesley Church Centre Brownies (259th Birmingham): Wednesdays 6.30 pm
Guides (141st Birmingham): Thursdays 7.00 pm
- Scouts and Cubs** (St Nicolas, 198th Birmingham)
Tuesdays at Oddingley Hall, Beavers (6-8yrs): 5-6 pm Penny Hattersley 628 5694
Oddingley Road,B31 3BS Cubs (8-10½): 6.15-7.45pm Alan Haynes 07534 615489
www.myscouts.co.uk Scouts (10½-15½): 8 pm

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Email: info@saintnicolasplace.co.uk Website: www.saintnicolasplace.co.uk

Bookings/Events: Andrew Driscoll

Kings Norton Parish Office

St Nicolas Place, 81 The Green, Kings Norton, Birmingham, B38 8RU. 0121 458 3289

e-mail:- parishoffice@kingsnorton.org.uk Open: 10 am - 1pm, Tuesday - Friday

Parish website www.kingsnorton.org.uk

Please use Parish Office to contact clergy and lay officers, to place prayers and notices in
our weekly newsletter and monthly Events Diary – and for all churchyard enquiries.

Hawkesley Church Primary Academy

Shannon Road, Hawkesley, Kings Norton, B38 9TR 459 6467 Fax: 459 6468

Headteacher: Mr Graeme Gill

School website:www.hawkesley.bham.sch.uk

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship meets in Saint Nicolas Place on the first Thursday of each month, from 2-3.30pm. Each month we begin our meeting with prayers, then enjoy listening to a speaker and close by sharing in "tea and chat".

Annual subscriptions are £10 with an additional £1 each month for refreshments. Visitors are welcome at any meetings (cost £1.50).

Our next meeting is on 9th January (NB not the 2nd) and we are listening to John Smith as he tells us more about the World of Cinema.

Sylvia Fox (Chairman)

KINGS NORTON HISTORY SOCIETY

The first meeting in 2014 will be on Monday 27th January when BECCY SPEIGHT, National Trust Director for the Midlands, will give a talk about "OCTAVIA HILL, CO-FOUNDER of the NATIONAL TRUST". Doors open at 7.00pm and the talk will start at 7.30. Visitors are always welcome at the Society's meetings.

Claire Simpson, Chairman

The Seniors' Club

We meet every Wednesday from 1pm until 3pm in the Ashford Room, Saint Nicolas Place.

All retired folk are very welcome to come along and join us to make new friends. Our activities include: entertainment from singers, choirs and musicians, speakers who give interesting talks on a variety of subjects, quizzes, outings, games and raffles. It's a great place for meeting people and tea and biscuits are always served. All this for only £1. We look forward to meeting you!

Please contact Marlene on 459 1636 or Kings Norton Parish Office on 459 3289 for more details.

Men's Monday Nights Out

For more details please contact Alan Haynes on 07534 615489. Thank you.

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CHILDREN'S PAGE...

with Gail.

Hello everyone!

Sadly, this is going to be the last children's page that I share with you. I have been doing this page for over four years now and it is time to pass it on to somebody else. I have learned so much about our God from doing this page and hope that you have too. So for the last time, together let's look at the feast of Epiphany.



Have you ever spent some time looking up at the stars? Have a try! I like to join the stars like a dot to dot to see what shapes I can see. Why don't you see if you can make shapes with the stars?

Can you think of some fruity sweets and a chocolate that has 'star' in its name?



Epiphany is celebrated on 6th January, 12 days after Christmas.

Epiphany means 'to show', 'to make known' or 'to reveal'.

The story is only found in Matthew's Gospel.

Note that it doesn't actually tell us how many wise men there were!



Matthew 2:1-12 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men[e] and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And, having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Can you think of any TV programmes that have ‘star’ in the title?



The Christian feast of Epiphany remembers the wise men that came to worship the Christ child. They were Gentiles (meaning they were not Jews), showing Jesus came to reconcile the whole world to God.

Right from the beginning of the life of Jesus Christ, even as a child before his public ministry, we were called to respond to Jesus and who Jesus was. This is shown in the story of the wise men that travelled hundreds of miles to worship this new king. Like us, they too must have been very busy, had other things to do, but they let Jesus interrupt their lives and call them to worship. So should we always make time to worship God.

Can you think of any songs with the word ‘star’ in the title?

Can you imagine how dark the sky at night would be without any stars? Just as the many stars light up the darkness of night, **Jesus is the one light**, the light of world.

For all the Saints

A Bible Character or a Christian from the pages of history, retold by Francis Williamson.

Felix Mendelssohn



To Felix Mendelssohn, the festivities that accompanied each New Year were absolute deadness: “The way people try to meet each other and thoughtlessly, jokingly, wishing each other a happy future, the way they try to get rid of the sadness with laughter and drinking, this they cannot do.”

Mendelssohn’s music expressed his sober-mindedness. Yet he also saw the beauty in nature which evoked a fresh romanticism and absence of superficiality, or escapism, in his music.

Mendelssohn was born in Berlin as Jakob Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. It was 1809, the year Haydn died; soon to come was Chopin’s birth. Though he was to live through Europe’s glory years, it had not started that way. His grandfather Moses had arrived in Berlin bedraggled and destitute a century before. Berlin did not welcome Jews, especially ones in this state and who spoke no German. Yet the family genius which was to be so evident in Felix enables Moses, some years later, to become a highly regarded writer and philosopher. Felix’s father Abraham was quite different in make-up. His talents were turned to finance, building up a huge bank from a little capital. Though Felix entered the world surrounded by prosperity, his main problem was that he was born a Jew.

One day as a young boy, he returned from school, his eyes streaming with tears. He rushed to his father telling of the taunts at school. During the singing of St Matthew's Passion, they had chanted, "Look at the Jew-boy singing to Christ." His father wasted no time and the very next day they were all taken to a Lutheran church and quickly turned into state recognised Christians with just a few drops of baptismal water. For the family this meant little.

Felix's love was music. This had taken hold from an early age. The flash of genius that had lifted his grandfather from obscurity to fame re-emerged in his grandson. He advanced so much that he first performed publically as a pianist at the tender age of nine. A year later, he had composed over fifty complete movements and was enchanting the highest ranking audiences in the land. This slightly built child prodigy astounded those who listened as he sang and played the most developed melodies.

At sixteen, the family moved into a prestigious and luxurious mansion. This soon became the social hub as he and his many friends pursued their interests in literature (Shakespeare having recently been translated into German) and music. All this proved fertile ground for musicians. However, there was a price to pay as this enlightened high society was motivated by pride, pleasures and mutual flattery. It followed the contemporary spirit of the age in Germany ridiculing the authority of scripture and divine revelation.

Mendelssohn's secular views were becoming challenged when he saw that some of the superior music he was performing had been inspired through a clear faith in Christ. In 1829, Felix performed St Matthew's Passion in Berlin to commemorate the hundredth birthday of Bach, a composer he admired greatly. Mendelssohn's interest went deeper, being as he was stirred by the spiritual aspects of the Passion. Having been confronted with the suffering and death of Christ, he now believed in it as a substitutionary atonement, a sacrifice he so needed, and in the process, reversed his view about the infallibility of the Bible.

Returning from a visit to England, he was asked to produce a work to commemorate the three hundredth anniversary of the Lutheran Church's Ausberg Confession. This prompted an investigation into the life of Luther. It is recorded that he became quite overwhelmed as he saw after Luther's

failure to find solace in the monastery, his guilt gloriously cleansed in Christ. Here God had clearly revealed himself to this contrite sinner. Felix expressed his new faith in his Reformation Symphony. From that time onwards, he always carried with him a copy of Luther's hymns.

Failure to be given the directorship of the Berlin Music Academy, the decadence he found in his new post as theatre director in Dusseldorf, and the death of his father all contributed to his desire to denounce the world and all its vanity and follow Christ. This quickly found expression in the time he gave to the study of the scriptures and the choice of subjects for his future works. At the age of twenty seven his 'St Paul' was first performed, everything about its composition reflecting an earnest believer.

His Lord gave him Cecile Jeanrenaud as a wife, a Pastor's daughter who enthusiastically shared his faith. At a subsequent visit to England, he was personally requested by Queen Victoria to conduct the 'Elijah'. After the performance, Prince Albert wrote him a note saying, "To the noble artist who, surrounded by Baal-worship of debased art, has been able by his genius and science to preserve faithfully, like another Elijah, the worship of true art... to the Great Master Who makes us conscious of the unity of His conception through the whole magic of creation... inscribed in grateful remembrance by Albert". (May 1847)

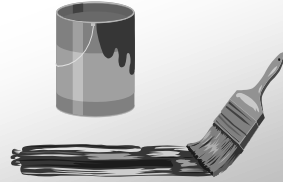
Six months later when just thirty eight, Mendelssohn, following a sudden illness, passed on to Glory.

Francis Williamson is a Missionary with
Birmingham City Mission and Pastor at
Kings Norton Baptist Church.

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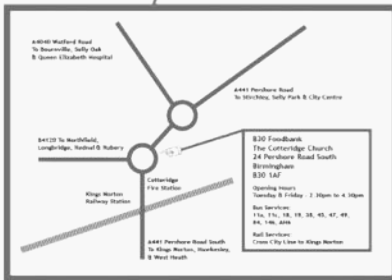


Food bank has been now been running since mid September and business is most certainly picking up. One Friday afternoon in later November, we served 50 people in the space of 2 hours, and this deluge made us do some sums at our subsequent steering committee meeting. We calculated that we actually need 2 tonnes of food to keep us running for 4 weeks - that is a considerable amount of food!

This is the reason why there is "off site" storage at Hawkesley HUB - of food that is particularly long-dated. This means we can use the shorter dated food wisely and there is no wastage, as well as ensuring that the room at Cotteridge Church is still available for other users.

It also means that, whilst the shelves are currently quite healthily stocked, it doesn't take much to create shortages. Any specific shortages are made up by purchases, using money given as gifts as direct debits or one-off donations.

Recently, Knit and Natter helped us to purchase fruit juice, tinned meats (particularly useful for those who have no cooking facilities) and hot chocolate. My trolley in Co-op, Stirchley did look rather bizarre with multiple purchases of ham, corned beef, fruit juice, etc! I haven't done shopping with a calculator before - but it meant I spent every penny of their generous donation.



Please keep up your own generosity of "buying one extra item" each time you shop. It really does make a big difference for those who use Foodbank.

Many thanks,
Sylvia Fox.



Brahms

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Brahms: Tragic Overture

Mozart:

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Peter Marks, conductor

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Barbara Shipton



'Methodism was born in song.' There is much truth in that statement. The hymns of Charles Wesley inspired the early Methodists, many of whom had had little formal education. Such people were able to express their experience of God through music and word and become more mature in Christian love.

Barbara Shipton was born into a Methodist tradition of Christianity as her father, William, was a resourceful and dedicated ordained Minister. Her mother, Grace, was a very formidable co-worker with him as well as a mother seeking to bring up her three children, John, David and Barbara to follow the same faith.

Most of Barbara's education took place in a Methodist Boarding School at Colwyn Bay. From there, she trained to teach at Westminster College, Oxford where she also received special training in organ playing.

This was one of the many gifts Barbara brought to Hawkesley when her husband, Dudley, became Headmaster of the new Anglican /Methodist School. Later, having taught there for some years, Barbara went on to teach at Edgbaston Church of England School for Girls. She eventually became Headmistress of the Junior and Infant part of the school, but illness forced her into an early retirement.

However, Barbara's zest for life stayed with her.

Two hundred and twenty five people attended her funeral at St. Nicolas on 22nd November, which would have been her sixty-eighth birthday. Her daughter, Rachel, and son, Mark, were surrounded by many relatives and friends from the various local groups in which Barbara shared her enthusiasm and quest for worthwhile adventure. These included The Kings Norton Society, Kings Norton Tennis Club, the Wine Club, a Gym, and The Quinbourne Choir for which she played.

Barbara's strong Christian faith undergirded her life. During the past two years, her short times in hospital were numerous. Not once did I come away from visiting her having observed any sense of self-pity, depression or spiritual defeat - not even after fifteen years of her battle with cancer.

Happily, our celebration of her life was enriched by some fine singing of great hymns. For me, the service gave testimony to the Spirit's ability to sustain us, even in intense sorrow, with resurrection faith. Thanks be to God.

Rev'd Donald Sampson

Bishop's Comment Every Child Matters

Waking up one mid-November morning to the BBC Radio 4 news headline of the failings of Birmingham's statutory Children's Services made a depressing start to the day. Every story of an abused child is appalling. Even one child damaged, injured or killed in 'the largest local Authority in Europe' is one too many.



As we open our hearts and minds again to the revelation of God in a vulnerable new baby, born in a borrowed room in a strange village to a young mother, we can see that it is possible to show love and care in very difficult circumstances. Mary and Joseph coped with the uncertainty and eventually settled and flourished.

This is the natural hope and expectation of all who bring children into the world, the vast majority of whom seek and receive practical and emotional support from family, friends, and skilled assistants.

The great challenge, in a 21st Century city of over a million people, is to identify those children who are at risk because the attention they receive is inadequate or downright dangerous.

Our crisis is an unholy mix of fragmentation in social patterns, parental breakdown and the delegation of neighbourly responsibilities to statutory intervention alone.

Health, Social and Economic care for families with complex needs is the subject of much research and insight. Having an adequate number of resourced professionals and volunteers to help those caring for children move from dependency to flourishing freedom is vital.

Nonetheless, if we believe the slogan 'Every Child Matters' then the reduction of risk to an acceptable level of the ordinary adventures of growing up is the urgent duty of everyone in each community.

One of the main priorities of Giving Hope Changing Lives, Birmingham's social inclusion process, is Children and Families. Our Report engages with a wide range of related issues, from employment and health, to debt management, education and training. The Children's Society and other partners are taking more responsibility in helping Peter Hay and colleagues in their leadership of change and improvement.

This Christmas, let us all commit to ending the risk of child abuse in our city, and at the same time build up our skills and support in parenting and child care. We celebrate the love, compassion and care that gives children the best start and every opportunity to develop their personalities and talents.

+David Birmingham

Opposite: On Sunday 1st December, the Pearsall family were all Baptised in St Nicolas Church - Scott, Jenny and baby Mabel.



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198th News



IceScout is winter camp, organised by the County of Birmingham and takes place on the first weekend of December. Between 300 and 400 Scouts and Explorers braved the elements and took part in a whole variety of scouting activities. The pictures show some of our scouts learning about radio communication and being creative with solder moulds. Others learned about firefighting, sign language and knots, amongst many other things.



The Kingdom of God is justice and peace

At 6pm on most first Sundays each month, we offer worship in the style of the Taizé Community (based in France but wholly international.) Next is Jan 5th. So many of all ages, as here, find Taizé worship deeply refreshing in its simple use of the Bible, chants, light and silence.

As with all ways of worshipping, it can become just a 'thing in itself' - a personal preference for those who like it. But as in all living worship, Taizé services draw us deeper into God's heart so that God can renew and refresh us to go out to serve and love in Christ's world. It's not surprising. The Community grew out of dangerous commitment to shelter those fleeing Nazi persecution, whatever their belief. God's love is so much more than warm feeling. At Taizé, and here too we pray, it is source and inspiration for growing God's Kingdom through Christ's redeemed people. Advent indeed!

“The Kingdom of God is justice and peace And joy in the Holy Spirit.
Come now and open in us the gates of your Kingdom” (*Taizé chant 115*)

Rob Morris

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KINGS NORTON FARMERS' MARKET

Kings Norton Farmers' Market was re-established in 2005 and we meet on The Green, Kings Norton on the 2nd Saturday of each month, from 9am to 2pm.

The Market has proved to be a popular venue with shoppers and has won the FARMA (National Farmers' Market Association) Midlands Farmers' Market of the Year Award in 2007 and 2008 and was Regional Finalist for 2010.

There is an average of 30 stalls selling a wide range of produce varying from fresh vegetables, green grocery, bread, fresh and cooked meats, pastries, cakes, pies and eggs – all locally produced. Other vendors sell fish, home made soup, honey, plants, flowers and many other products combining to make a visit to the Market a unique shopping experience.

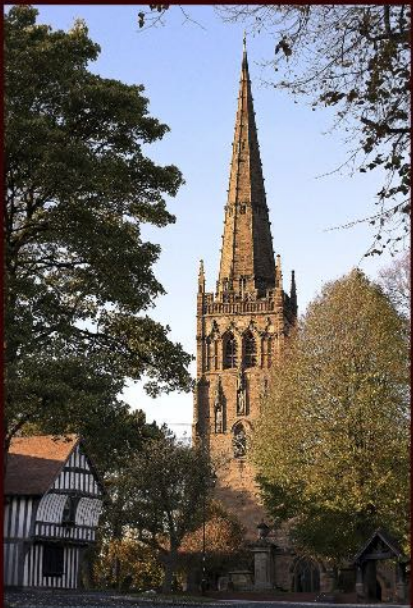


Our motto is “GET FRESH” because we believe in local fresh produce being made available to the general public directly from the producers.

We are a Community Interest Company and all profits generated by the Market are used to support local community projects.

Please note that whilst parking is at a premium on The Green, there is free parking available in the car park of the Navigation Inn, in Wharf Road, a short walk from The Green.

For more information, please go to our website: www.kingsnortonfarmersmarket.co.uk or telephone Terry Bowen (0121 459 9383) or Rod Kent (0121 458 1887). Thank you.



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