

THE CLARION

The Magazine of The Parish of St Mary The Boltons

rooted in faith • open in thought • reaching out in service

December 2017/January 2018

Getting Ready for Christmas...

One of my favourite childhood memories is of the advent calendar that appeared each year in our house. When we were very young, my brothers and I would take turns each day to search out and open the little window to reveal an image, or perhaps a verse from the nativity story, until finally on Christmas Eve the biggest window would be opened to reveal a nativity scene of unspeakable beauty, at least to my very young mind. I can even remember peeking to see what it was going to be, and always forgetting how one peek would spoil the surprise.

Advent calendars have moved on since those primitive days, and I find a strange and horrible pleasure in looking to see what new versions are available to us in the shops and online. The Gin Advent Calendar is old hat, as are those that offer Lego, cosmetics, and of course chocolate; not to mention the themed calendars, reflecting the viewing and gaming habits of successive generations. What is common though, is the sense that Advent is about counting down to Christmas: counting the days (and for our children, the 'sleeps') away until Christmas day itself, when all that expectation is finally fulfilled. We all know what that means: in the popular mind it means that Christmas is over for another year and out goes the tree, the decorations, and sometimes even the unwanted gifts go back to the shops to be exchanged. Except of course, at least in Church it's not over and thank God for that. For us Christians, it is only the beginning of the story of our encounter with God in the person of that vulnerable child, come to be with us and among us; the beginning of the story that we

will see through to the end, at Good Friday and Easter. Even that is not the beginning or end



either, because God's love for his creation, and for us, begins when God declares Let there be... , and ends with the promise that he is with us always.

Perhaps what we need is a different way of looking at Advent, not as a counting down, but a counting up. In church we already do it, as we count up the Sundays from the First to the Fourth Sunday of Advent, and again, with the Sundays of Christmas, taking us to Epiphany, as the expectation of what God does in Jesus grows, week by week, and as the story of God's dealings with his people is told through the patriarchs and the prophets, through the story of the Nativity to the coming of the Magi. The story is a long one, as it reveals that God does not just come for one people, but for all

people, not for one nation, but for the whole world.

To return to the idea of the Advent Calendar, perhaps you might think of one of these for your household, and forego the calendar that slowly empties itself of the chocolate, the toys and the little bottles of spirits.

1. A Reverse Advent Calendar. All you need is a cardboard box, into which each day of Advent you place a tin or packet of food, which at the end of the season you can take along to the local food bank or homeless day centre, to share with those whose Christmas will be a hard and austere time.
2. Use the Church of England's booklet (which you can find at the back of church) called *#Godwithus; Your Christmas Journey*. Don't be disturbed by the trendy hashtag title: this is a useful little booklet that leads readers through the weeks of Advent and beyond, to engage with the Christmas story.
3. Make your own calendar for your family, where instead of little gifts behind the windows, you could insert some acts of kindness and generosity to perform for a member of the family, a neighbour or even someone you don't even know.

Let these weeks be a time of counting up and adding up and mounting up of expectation, of generosity of spirit, and of joy.

We wish you all an expectant Advent, a joyful Christmas, and a very happy and peaceful new year.

Jenny Welsh



... And Getting Ready for Advent

The Advent Study and Discussion Group will run for three sessions, on Tuesday mornings, 10.30-12 noon at the home of Katrina Quinton.

5 December

12 December

19 December

The sessions are on the theme of Hope: past, present and future. More information at the back of church or call the Parish Office.



www.churchyear.net/adventwreath.html

Advent Quiet: December is a particularly fraught period as people get ready for Christmas. Why not give yourself an hour of quiet and reflection once a week. The Church will be open each Wednesday evening from 6pm-7pm.

6 December

13 December

20 December

Come in to light a candle, pray, and join in a short service, focusing on a verse of scripture. Everyone is welcome.

The **Nativity Play** will be performed by our children as part of the All Age Eucharist, on **Sunday 10 December**. Do plan to come along, and support our young actors and their crew. If you think you can help, please speak with the Sunday School teachers, who will be glad to hear from you.

Nine Lessons and Carols: Sunday 17 December 7pm. This is one of the most

popular services of the year, with wonderful music from the professional Choir, led by John Ward, our Director of Music, and exuberant singing from the congregation.

The last Sunday in Advent is also **Christmas Eve**. There will be a normal Sunday provision of services (8am and 10.30am) in the morning. Christmas Eve will begin properly with the Crib Service at 4pm and culminate with Midnight Mass, beginning at 11.30pm.

Jenny Welsh



Advent

A child's essay on Advent

Advent is the best time of winter. Most people have a **Grippe** (German = flu) in winter. This comes with a fever. We also have one, but this one comes with lights and is spelled with a **K** (*Krippe*, German = crib).

Papa prepares the crib in our lounge three weeks before the Christ child comes and my little sister and I are allowed to help. Many cribs are boring, but ours is not because we have some awesome figures. I once put Joseph and the baby Jesus on the heating so that they would be warm, but it was too hot for them. The baby Jesus got black and Joseph shattered into pieces. One of his feet flew right into the cookie dough; not a nice sight.

My Mama scalded me and said that not even the Saints are safe with my stupidity.

It doesn't look good when Mary just stands there without her man or child. But thankfully I have lots of figures in my toy box and Joseph is now Donald Duck. For the baby Jesus I wanted to use Asterix because he is the only small one who would have fitted into the feeding trough.

But Mama said that you can't use Asterix as a baby Jesus, and it is better to use the burnt one. He is black, but anyway he is a baby Jesus.

Behind the baby Jesus are two ox, a donkey, a hippo and a brontosaurus. I put the hippo and the saurus there because the ox and the donkey looked a bit stupid. On the left of the stable come the three kings. Papa dropped one of the kings last year when he cleaned it and it broke beyond repair. So now we only have two holy kings, and a holy Batman as a replacement.



www.mrskathyking.com

Normally the holy kings have a lot of stuff for the baby Jesus with them, that is, gold, incense and purée, or something like it. One of ours has a shiny sweet paper instead of gold. The other has a Marlboro in his hand because we don't have any incense. But the Marlboro smokes quite nicely when it is lit. The holy Batman has a pistol in his hand. That isn't really a gift for the baby Jesus, but with it he can defend himself against the saurus.

Behind the three Saints are a couple of red-skinned Indians and an angel. The angel had lost a foot, and that's why we put him on the motorbike, to make it easier for him. On the bike he can drive when he isn't actually flying. On the right side of the stable we put Little Red Riding Hood. She is carrying a pizza and three beers for Oma (German = grandmother). We don't have a wolf, but we have a bear

behind the tree to act as replacement wolf.
That is all in our crib, but it is enough.

In the evening we switch on the lamp and then our crib is really good. We sit around it and sing some hymns about Advent. I like some of them, but most of them are boring.

My Opa (German = grandfather) taught me a poem about Advent and it goes like:
'Advent, Advent, the baldmoney [common plant in Bavaria used for making schnapps] burns, first you drink [one glass] then two, three, four,
And then you do your head in'.
Despite this poem being quite nice, Mama said I should not learn it.

Before you know it, Advent is over and Christmas too, and the same with the whole year. The presents are unwrapped and you get nothing more until Easter, unless it is your birthday before then. But one thing is sure, Advent will come again.

*Translated from the German by Verena Tschudin.
Original text source is unknown.*



Who was Jesus' father? (I)

This is the first of five of Hugh Beach's articles on the 'Paternity of Christ'

The belief that Jesus was conceived through the Holy Spirit, without the agency of a human father, and born while Mary was still a virgin, is deeply embedded in the doctrine and worship of the Christian Church. It was universally accepted by the 2nd century and, except for some minor sects, was not seriously challenged until the 18th century. It is enshrined in the creeds that most Christians consider normative, such as the Nicene Creed ('incarnate of the Virgin Mary') and the Apostles' Creed ('born of the Virgin Mary'), and

is a basic article of belief in the Catholic, Orthodox, and most Protestant churches. Yet the modern scholarly consensus is that the doctrine of the virgin birth rests on slim foundations. In this and succeeding articles I discuss this point and try to assess its significance both theologically and for devotion.

The principal claim for the miraculous conception of Jesus is found in the Gospel of Matthew. In Chapter I the first 17 verses consist of a genealogy demonstrating that Joseph, Mary's husband, was descended from Abraham and belonged to the royal house of David. However, this only makes sense if Joseph was in fact Jesus' father, as opposed to step-father as the rest of this chapter asserts.

Before Mary and Joseph have come together, she is 'found to be with child by the power of the Holy Ghost'. (1.18) An angel of the Lord appears to Joseph assuring him that Mary has not been unfaithful because 'it is by the power of the Holy Ghost that she has conceived' (1.20): 'All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, 'God is with us"'. (1.22-23) Making his point absolutely clear Matthew adds 'and [Joseph] had not known [Mary] when she bore a son, her first-born, to which he gave the name Jesus' (1.25).



Matthew's quotation comes from Isaiah 7.14–16. The prophet is speaking to a demoralized King Ahaz. King Rezin of Aram and King Pekah son Remaliah of Israel had gone up to attack Jerusalem, whereupon 'the heart of Ahaz shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind' (Isaiah 7.1,2). Isaiah's aim is to stiffen his morale. In the New Revised Standard Version this passage reads:

'There the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the *young woman* is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted'. (My italics)

In the first century it seemed reasonable to believe that God, who is all-powerful, could so order things that the birth of Jesus fulfilled an ancient prophecy. To us it seems clear that Isaiah was talking about his own immediate circumstances in the year 735 BCE. While mention of the name Immanuel (God with us) might imply some messianic connotation, the main thrust of the prophecy is to predict an early end to a very present threat. The belief that this story foretells the virginal conception of Jesus is further undermined by the fact that the word used by Isaiah in the original Hebrew, '*almah*', signifies a girl of childbearing age - without any reference to virginity - as in the modern translation above. Matthew was writing in Greek and it seemed natural to him to use the version of the Old Testament that had been translated into Greek by a group of Jewish scholars working in Alexandria in the third century BCE. (Supposedly there were 70 of them, hence the title 'Septuagint' for this translation). They must have assumed that a young eligible woman would be a virgin. At all events they used the word *παρθενος*, which

does mean 'virgin'. One can only assume that Matthew was unaware of this mistranslation. What was for him a clinching argument is for us a major stumbling block.

In the Gospel of Luke the assertion of Jesus' divine paternity is made in just seven words (four in Greek). The angel Gabriel appears to Mary, telling her that she is about to conceive, and she demurs 'since I have no knowledge of man' (επει ανδρα ου γινωσκω). The angel replies 'The Holy Spirit will come upon thee and the power of the most High will overshadow thee. Thus that holy thing which is to be born of thee shall be known for the Son of God' (1.33-35). In his next chapter Luke contradicts this by his account of the finding of Jesus in the temple (2.41-52). He starts by calling Joseph and Mary the 'parents' of Jesus. Later, when speaking to him, Mary refers to Joseph as 'thy father' (2.48). When Jesus explains that he must be about his father's business (2.49), meaning God's, this was beyond their understanding. If Jesus' divine paternity were true, Mary and Joseph could hardly have failed to understand this. In his genealogy of Jesus, Luke refers to him, rather mysteriously, as 'by repute (ως ενομιζετο) the son of Joseph' (3.23).

Nowhere else in the New Testament is there any hint that the conception of Jesus was unusual. Paul, the first to write, makes three explicit references to Jesus' birth. In each he assumes Jesus' full humanity and says nothing of any abnormal circumstance. The three are Galatians 4.4, which speaks of Jesus as 'born of a woman, born under the law' (υπο νομον); Romans 1.1-4, which says that Jesus was 'of the seed of David according to the flesh' (εκ σπερματος Δαυειδ κατα σαρκα), thus clearly implying that his conception was normal; and Philippians 2.6-7, in which Jesus is described as 'born in the likeness of men' (εν ομοιωματι ανθρωπων). Whatever Paul meant by these phrases, he can hardly have intended anything

anomalous or supernatural. His silence on this point must mean that he was unaware of any virgin birth.

In Mark, the earliest of the gospels to be written, there is no birth narrative. In a passage describing the family of Jesus there is no hint that his birth was anything but normal. 'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon' (6.3). The same applies to John's gospel, probably the last to be written, where Jesus is described as 'the son of Joseph, from Nazareth' (1.45). In a dispute with the Jews they refer to Jesus as 'the son of Joseph whose mother and father are well known to us' (6.42) The later chapters of Matthew and Luke also suggest nothing unusual in the paternity of Jesus. Some commentators take this as indicating the nativity chapters were later additions. (Vermes, Geza, *The Nativity*, Penguin, 2006, p. 162; Warner, Marina, *Alone of all her Sex*, Pan Books, 1985, p. 4.)

Obviously none of this comes close to proving that the miraculous conception of Jesus is a pious invention. At least it gives reasonable grounds for supposing that it might be. It remains to examine the implications, both for our belief in the divinity of Jesus and for the cult of Mary. These will be the subject of ensuing articles.

Hugh Beach (to be continued)



Thomas William Brian Parsons



Thomas was baptised at St Mary's on 5 November, here pictured with proud parents Fiona and David.

Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God.

(From the Baptism service)



New Charities for 2018 Announced

The Charity Committee was extremely pleased by the number of suggestions we received this year and thanks everybody who put forward a proposal. Every suggestion put to the Committee was worthy of consideration. As we do every year, we assessed every charity to find those that best matched the criteria for selection set out in our terms of reference. We are pleased to announce that the PCC has approved the three new charities that we recommended for support by our fund-raising during 2018. They are:

Teach a Man to Fish

This charity helps young people in developing countries to gain skills that will help them to help themselves when they leave school, either to get a decent job or set up their own

profitable business. The charity guides students to run a real business in their school through a combination of teacher training, a suite of educational resources, guided skills building and guided implementation. There is a particular need in Uganda where they work with a number of very low-resource schools in marginalised areas. Our support will enable them to help a greater number of such schools. This charity is our new principal charity so our support will continue in 2019.
www.teachamantofish.org.uk

Samburu Trust UK

The Samburu Trust operates locally through the OI Malo Trust, a Kenya registered charity. It is based at the OI Malo ranch in the Samburu country in Kenya, a troubled and remote part of that country. The Trust's programmes are designed to help the Samburu people to maintain their traditional values while assisting them with health and educational issues in a way that will avoid their dependency on the Trust. www.samburutrust.org

Earls Court Youth Club

The Club works with young people between the ages of 9-19, but up to the age of 25 for those with a disability. They have separate junior and senior programmes. The charity aims to provide a safe and welcoming environment for young people of all abilities and backgrounds in which they can enjoy a wide selection of activities aimed at promoting personal, social and educational development. They have a dedicated staff team made up of experienced and professionally qualified youth workers who offer information, advice and guidance on a wide range of issues. The club premises are in Ifield Road and the club serves the Earls Court area and surrounding district.
<http://www.earlscourtyouthclub.co.uk>
Anthony Williams, on behalf of the Charity Committee



Sound Seekers

In June 2017, St Mary The Boltons donated £2,647 to Sound Seekers to support their educational project work in Zambia.

We received their report, which is shortened here:

'Your donation is helping children with hearing loss in Kansenshi Primary School in Ndola District (pictured below) to gain an improved access and quality of education by building and equipping a new classroom block (with three new classrooms) in the deaf unit of this mainstream primary school.



Achievements so far

Construction of the new deaf units at Kansenshi Primary School began in July 2017 and has progressed well and is now at roof level. We plan to begin the process of procurement in November/December in order to equip the building by February 2018.

The need for this project

Out of 61 mainstream primary schools in Ndola, only three schools have deaf units providing separate classes for children with disabling hearing loss. There are ten primary schools with special needs units, catering for all disabilities, including children with hearing loss, but without specialist training, teachers lack the knowledge to effectively include children with hearing loss in class.

If children with hearing loss do not receive the additional support they need, or they are not even identified with hearing loss, they tend to fall behind in school, become isolated and drop out of school. There is no public secondary education for deaf children in Ndola.

At Kansenshi Primary School there are 2,150 pupils in total, with 91 students in the deaf unit, which is oversubscribed, and lacks the space or resources for children with hearing loss to be effectively supported. There are 16 trained Teachers of the Deaf in the deaf unit.

Thanks to the support of St Mary The Boltons Church, this project is enabling us to expand the deaf unit in Kansenshi School, by constructing a new unit with three new classrooms plus new equipment and learning resources to benefit more children with hearing loss.

Wider programme impact

As part of the wider programme, we are also supporting targeted outreach visits, where children in mainstream schools across Ndola District are being screened for hearing loss through our Hearing Assessment & Research Clinic (HARK) mobile clinic. Outreach visits began in June 2017 with regular visits to mainstream primary schools across Ndola District. So far, 653 primary school children (45% girls and 55% boys) were screened for hearing loss from these outreach visits.



Photo of the current pupils and Teachers of the Deaf in the deaf unit at Kansenshi Primary School

Thank you

Please pass on our gratitude to everyone at St Mary The Boltons Church for supporting this project.

Your support is helping children with hearing loss at Kansenshi Primary School to gain the support they need to thrive in school. You are changing lives.

We look forward to updating you on our progress.



Visit to the MediCinema at Guy's Hospital

The charity MediCinema makes available an experience of light, colour and escapism to hospital patients, their families and carers through the medium of cinema. The charity was established in 1996 and the cinemas are designed to accommodate wheelchairs, hospital beds and patients of all ages. It is pure escapism, taking seriously ill and recovering patients and immersing them in a cinema-going experience away from the wards and hospital environment.

The theatres are intimate, but still incorporate space, colour and a comfortable environment. They screen the latest box office releases and they are free. The cinema at Guy's Hospital is located on the second floor of the Southwark Wing and I was fortunate to be the guest of Anthony Williams, who in addition to his work at St Mary's, is a member of the Executive Committee of the British Cinema and Television Veterans.

The event at Guy's Hospital on the afternoon of 25 October opened with a talk by the charity's Chief Executive, Kat Mason, who gave an account of the origins of MediCinema and

how the cinemas are created. There are now six other hospitals, in addition to Guys, that host these cinemas. This was followed by a talk by Howard Lanning, a veteran of the film industry, who gave a presentation of his family's 80-year involvement with the film industry.

It was humorous and fascinating to see well-known films and personalities from 'the other side of the camera'. We saw clips from the earliest silent movies to Ghandi, the Great Escape and TV's Candid Camera. The afternoon concluded with an excellent tea and the opportunity to talk with fascinating people who had spent a lifetime in the film industry.

MediCinema does not receive any funding and relies totally on the support of the film industry and the public. It is a worthwhile, imaginative charity, which gives much to hospital patients with their associates and is one of the charities that will be supported by St Mary's in the coming year.

020 7188 3697 (at Guy's),

gsttmedicinema@medicinema.org.uk

There is also a MediCinema at Chelsea & Westminster Hospital.

Ann Mulcare



The Theatre on our Doorstep



<http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk/>

Just outside the parish boundary, but still local to us, is a multi-award winning fringe theatre - the Finborough - about which *The New York Times* has said 'The tiny but mighty Finborough... one of the best batting averages

of any London company'. Like many fringe theatres it is on the first floor of a pub, in an oddly shaped room. It only seats 60 people, on benches which you are liable to find are in different locations each time you visit. How the theatre survives and delivers such extremely professional and varied productions is a mystery. It is a charity and receives no subsidies. The ingenuity of the set designers never ceases to amaze. The casts are usually mostly young people, but frequently include actors who work in West End theatres and the Royal National Theatre.

I discovered the theatre when Ginny Thomas, our former Vicar, was encouraging us to see a play about the church. The publicity for the play proved to be somewhat misleading, but it was still a play worth seeing, even though or perhaps because of, the leading actress being barely a foot or two from the audience. It is disconcerting at first but one soon adjusts to the intimacy. In October and November of this year they staged a play that was almost totally concerned with faith, *The Busy World is Hushed*, by a young American playwright called Keith Bunin. It is about an Episcopalian parish priest in New York with a troubled son. He challenges her faith, and her efforts to help him by encouraging an affair with a young man who is assisting her in writing a theological book, ultimately fails to help him. It is rare to find any play that deals with the fundamentals of religion and the theatre needs praise for staging it. Like many of the Finborough's productions, this was a UK première of a foreign play. The theatre has a reputation for new writing, rediscovering neglected work and staging premières or revivals of musicals. Incredibly, they can manage to get two musicians and up to 14 cast members all performing at the same time. In between the two religious plays, I have seen several other productions. Some were straight plays with only three characters, others were musicals. All have been good with very high -

and sometimes very powerful - standards of acting and production.

The theatre cannot afford understudies and for one show I attended a key member of the cast became ill. Those of us who were seated were asked to go downstairs to the bar while they tried to re-stage the show in some way. After 30 minutes it was announced that the performance would begin with one of the other cast members taking the key role. He was carrying a copy of the script but gave a superlative performance and it was hard to believe that the play could have been better performed. *Time Out* said that the Finborough is 'Probably the most influential fringe theatre in the world' and *The Stage* thinks that 'No small theatre in Britain has a larger impact on the theatrical ecology'. The theatre deserves support and, for a London theatre, ticket prices are remarkably modest as they usually range from £14 to £18. Access is by a rather steep staircase and the toilets are down in the basement via another such staircase, so be careful when you go. The theatre itself is air-conditioned and not many theatres can claim that. The Finborough web site is very comprehensive and if you book (the unnumbered) tickets on-line there are no booking fees. The theatre is located at the junction of Ifield Road and Finborough Road. In case you are wondering, I have no connection with the theatre other than as an audience member! I was encouraged to write about it by another member of our congregation who also goes to see productions at the theatre.

www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk

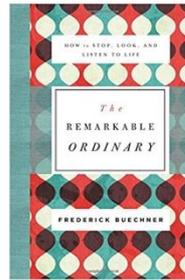
Anthony Williams



Monday Morning Book Group

The Book Group has now finished reading *Hanging by a Thread*, by Samuel Wells, looking at the story of the Passion and Crucifixion: a book about suffering, death, friendship, story.

After Christmas we reconvene to read a new book by American writer, Frederick Buechner, *The Remarkable Ordinary; How to stop, look and listen to life*. This is a series of mostly



unpublished talks inviting us to reflect on how art and faith teach us how to watch for and pay attention to the greatness in the ordinary, and find the divine in each moment of life.

We meet on Mondays,

10.45am – noon, at The

Vicarage. New members are welcome to join in the discussion. Speak with the Vicar.

Jenny Welsh



You are invited at Trinity's

Light up a Life

Christmas Carol Concert

Susan Metcalfe Residential

As proud supporter again of

Royal Trinity Hospice

We request the pleasure of your company at a special carol service

at St Mary The Boltons

Thursday 7 December at 7pm

Please join us for Guest Readers, Wine and Mince Pies

RSVP

susan@susanmetcalfe.com

www.susanmetcalfe.com

www.royaltrinityhospice.london

Registered Charity Nr 1013945

Date for the Diary

Saturday 20 January 2018, 7.30pm

Earls Court Society Concert

A Tale of Love and Darkness:

Melodies hebraiques

Our winter concert pays tribute to the Jewish art music movement of the late 19th and early 20th century when Russian Jewish classical composers dedicated themselves to preserving Jewish folk music and creating a new, characteristically Jewish genre of classical music. The movement spread into Europe with composers such as Alberto Hemsí gathering Sephardic melodies and even to America where Lazar Weiner drew upon Yiddish song and where the Klezmer revival began. Meanwhile non-Jewish composers such as Shostakovich and Ravel used Jewish folk music and prayer to create stunning art song. Come hear performances of this stirring and evocative music interspersed with the reflections of contemporary writers such as Amos Oz and Yahouda Amichai in contrast with earlier Eastern European writers.

Maya Levi - Soprano
Clara Kanter - Mezzo-Soprano
Mayda Narvey - Cello
Charis Hanning - Piano
Darris Golinski - Reader

www.maydanarvey.co.uk
www.ismenacollective.com



GLASSDOOR

We are collecting warm clothing as part of our commitment to the Glass Door Homeless Charity. There is a box at the back of church for donations needed:

All male winter clothing, specifically coats, boxer shorts and shoes

Socks

New underwear

Sleeping bags

Bags, particularly rucksacks

Shoes and boots in decent condition

Clothing, including coats, jeans, t-shirts and sweaters



Silent Prayer

The Silent Prayer meetings continue in church on Wednesdays, 11am to 12md.

Future dates are:

13 December

10 January 2018

14 February

These meetings are designed to give an opportunity to join with others for silent prayer and meditation. The space behind the altar is a perfect setting, having a quiet air of spirituality, silence and serenity. We begin with a short reading, then two sessions of twenty minutes in which we sit quietly in prayer or meditation with a short break between. If you are practised in meditation or simply wish to join others for the first time, you are welcome.



Clare Ziegler

8 September 1939 – 14 November 2017

Clare has been a member of this congregation for many years, and her faithful and prayerful presence were a real blessing to us here. Clare initiated the Silent Prayer meetings in church some two years ago and we are particularly thankful to her for this legacy.

The Service of thanksgiving for her life took place on 28 November. The Tribute, given by Sophie Ziegler, follows.

‘The Mary Oliver poem [When death comes] that Toby’s just read was one of Clare’s favourites and leaving this world having ‘just visited’ it was her *bête noir*. I can quite safely say, she didn’t, she had the most extraordinary impact on so many people’s lives. She was ‘a bride married to amazement’. Endlessly questioning and searching, always curious and interested and delving deeper and deeper into her spiritual self, sharing all she learnt along the way. And she was ‘the bridegroom, taking the world into her arms’. Those arms were so all encompassing and gentle, she never turned anyone away.

There are people who enhance your life, people who you see and feel better for having done so, somehow enriched, emboldened, happier – Clare was one of those. During the last few weeks it has been made abundantly clear she spread her compassion, kindness, wisdom and generosity around a very wide circle of treasured friends and family. The wonderful letters Dad, Tobes, Colin and I have received have reiterated again and again quite how extraordinary she was. The same words keep being repeated: she was so ‘intuitive’, so ‘kind’, such a ‘special friend’, a beautiful soul’, full of ‘empathy’ and ‘humility’, so ‘wise’, a wonderful ‘listener’.

And she listened, she REALLY listened. As Caroline so aptly put it: ‘I always left her feeling that next time I visited I would listen more and talk less, but she was such a skilled listener, it was easy to rattle on. Clare made me realize that being a really good listener isn’t just a question of shutting up and letting the other person talk; it’s something far more profound and difficult’. She was the recipient of so many secrets, you couldn’t help but open up to her. She was also extraordinarily and sometimes

rather unnervingly direct, there was very little beating round the bush, as Sam said ‘while her Godmotherly questions sometimes seemed alarmingly probing to the shy and awkward teenage me, I always knew that she was on my side’. And she was, she was on everyone’s side. We used to tease her that tact wasn’t her second name, but it was, she very rarely pushed further than anyone secretly wanted or perhaps needed to be pushed.

She was never false, you knew exactly what she was thinking, which fortunately was generally favourable, but if it wasn’t, you soon heard about it. She had no truck with false grandeur or hated snobbery with a passion. As you can see from the photos, she was incredibly beautiful, VERY sexy (Dad’s words), and REALLY naughty. She delighted in doing the unexpected, never one to be hidebound by tradition and expectations. She took me off to The Rocky Horror Show when all my peers were being ferried to and from Pony Club and we’d always be sneaking out for a frowned-upon cig when Dad’s back was turned. She never lost that naughty streak; so many people mentioned her mischievous smile in their letters.



Her relationship with Dad has been a lesson on how to ‘do’ marriage. They have been the personification of the Oak Tree and the Cypress in Kahlil Gibran’s *The Prophet*: neither one over-shadowing the other, but giving one another space to blossom and bloom with

support, respect and love. In the last few years they have seemingly got closer and closer, each filling in the gaps where the other needed it, laughing together about the trials and tribulations of life and looking after and out for each other.

On a personal note, she was quite simply the best step-mother anyone could ever be lucky enough to have. She appeared in mine and Colin's lives when I was eight and he five. I wasn't pleased. As far as I could see we were doing pretty well on our own and Dad's obvious delight in her was, I thought, somewhat unnecessary. However hard as I might try, I couldn't sustain the wicked step-mother fantasy. She returned from their honeymoon able to mimic incredibly effectively the raucous scream of a mating chimpanzee, which she could do at the drop of a hat whenever requested. She followed it up by showing us how to imitate the bagpipes by karate chopping our throats; a total crowd stopper and still my top party piece.

I've a sneaking suspicion that Colin and I could both be pretty bloody in those days and I don't think there's anyone else on earth who could have dealt with us and Dad in a better way. She filled the gaping hole that had been left when Mum died. She brought back feeling and warmth into the house. She 'did' emotions which we all tried very hard not to. I hate to think how we'd have turned out without her. Toby of course wouldn't have turned out at all and he was the most amazing and wonderful addition to the household.

And while she was dealing with all of that, she also managed to affect many other people's lives. She'd started her work life doing teacher training and then became a Social Worker in Tower Hamlets. After she met Dad and had Toby, she set up a Montessori School in Cottesmore Gardens where he and seven local friends spent a blissful couple of years. She

followed him to Bousfield [School], over the road from here, and taught there for a while, following it up by looking after children who had been excluded from school. She spent time protesting at Greenham Common, meditating at Findhorn and extensive periods of silent retreat. She played in a cello quartet and the piece you'll be hearing later [Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major by J.S. Bach] is one she particularly loved.

Then, through this church, she became involved in setting up the Cruse Bereavement Centre in Notting Hill. She trained as a counsellor, volunteering at the London Lighthouse and then seeing people for many years at home. She retired from Cruse in 2011 and did the Diocese of London training course to become a Spiritual Director. On completion of the course clients came to her for help and advice on their own spiritual journey. It was a rich and varied career and through it all ran the thread of care for others, helping people who had problems and issues.

She was also exceptionally brave. She battled for years with depression and anxiety and more recently with Parkinson's. Two and a half years ago she had a pulmonary embolism, which really should have ended her life. Anyone who saw the grit and determination with which she clambered back from the edge couldn't doubt the extraordinary strength of character she possessed. When Clare fell down the stairs four weeks ago, none of us ever imagined it would end like this; we thought another miracle would take place and we'd have her back home, back where she belonged.

Gradually realizing that wasn't going to happen was extraordinarily hard to take on board. On reflection, I can see it was a blessing for her. The Parkinson's was taking its toll and was only going to get worse. She hated how debilitating it was and felt as though she wasn't taking part in life as she'd always done, or contributing in

the way she always had. But she was; she was as wise a counsel, as calming and loving a presence, still a rock in a very precarious world. She needed reassurance that she was loved and valued and nothing less than the person she'd always been. I like to think that in hospital during those last couple of weeks when she was surrounded by her family and friends she knew how much she was loved and heard the voices of all those people who came to see her, say goodbye and thank her for being her. I am going to miss her so, so much. I know you will too. The only thing that brings me some form of consolation is knowing that she wasn't afraid of dying. She's on her way to a place she firmly believed in, where her body won't let her down and the worries that sometimes plagued her won't anymore. And then added to that I think of all the people she'll meet up with again: her parents, Nanny, Nick, Judy and so many more. I imagine her comparing notes with Mum about Dad; I'm sure they'll have a lot to talk about. She left her mark indelibly in the hearts of all who met her and she'll live on in them. Clare definitely didn't just visit this world.'

The bronze sculpture Pietà in the St Luke's chapel was Clare's initiative and gift to St Mary's.



Year's Mind December-January

Ethel Doris
 Angela Raynor
 Sybil Sassoon
 Georgia Pemberton
 Margaret Payne
 Alexandra English
 Patricia Coghill
 Charles Dwight
 Joyce Mundy
 Victoire Ridsdale
 Gerda Turner
 James McGowan

George Bosworth
 Jacqueline Lewis
 Edward Sloane
 Doris Stone
 Charles Foster-Taylor
 Georgina Davson
 Mary Irvine
 Beatrice Spicer
 Basil Robinson
 Wendy Wood
 Timothy Pringle
 Elizabeth Graham
 Anstice Goodman
 Tilly Halliwell
 Anthony Sheil
 Clarissa Morse
 Frances Perry
 Anthea Smith
 Alexander Fleming
 Ffreebairn Simpson
 Robert Collins



Readings for December 2017

Sunday 3 Dec., First Sunday of Advent

10.30am Isaiah 64.1-9
 1 Corinthians 1.3-9
 Mark 13.24-37

Sunday 10 Dec., 2nd Sunday of Advent

10.30am Isaiah 40. 1-11
 The Nativity Play will be the Gospel

Sunday 17 Dec., 3rd Sunday of Advent

10.30am Isaiah 61. 1-4, 8-end
 1 Thessalonians 5. 16-24
 John 1. 6-8, 19-28

Sunday 24 Dec., 4th Sunday of Advent

10.30am 2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16
 Romans 16. 25-end
 Luke 1. 26-28

Sunday 24 Dec., Christmas Eve

11.30pm Isaiah 53. 7-10
 Hebrews 1. 1-4
 John 1. 1-14

25 Dec., Christmas Day

10.30am Isaiah 9. 2-7
 Titus 2. 11-14
 Luke 2. 1-20

Sunday 31 Dec., 1st Sunday of Christmas

10.30am Ezekiel 34.11-16, 20-24
 Ephesians 1.15-end
 Matthew 25.31-end

Readings for January 2018**Sunday 7 January, Epiphany**

10.30am Isaiah 60. 1-6
 Ephesians 3. 1-12
 Matthew 2. 1-12

Sunday 14 Jan., 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

10.30am 1 Samuel 3. 1-10
 Revelation 5. 1-10
 John 1. 43-end

Sunday 21 Jan., 3rd Sunday of Epiphany

10.30am Genesis 14. 17-20
 Revelation 19. 6-10
 John 2. 1-11

Sunday 28 Jan., 4th Sunday of Epiphany

10.30am Deuteronomy 18. 15-20
 Revelation 12. 1-5a
 Mark 1. 21-28

Sunday 4 Feb., 2nd Sunday before Lent

10.30am Proverbs 8. 1, 22-31
 Colossians 1. 15-20
 John 1. 1-14

**SUNDAY SERVICES**

8.00am Eucharist, 10.30am Sung Eucharist
 The meeting room at the back of the church is available for people with pre-school children. There is a baby changing facility in the wheelchair accessible toilet in the hall.

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Usually Morning Prayer is said daily at 8.30am and Evening Prayer at 5.30pm, except Public Holidays.

St Mary's Church Bank Details:

Account name: PCC of St Mary with St Peter & St Jude
 Account number: 80692190
 Sort code: 20-80-14

Parish Office

St. Mary's Church House 020 7835 1440
 The Boltons, SW10 9TB
www.stmarytheboltons.org.uk

Vicar

Revd Jenny Welsh 020 7835 1440
 07864 807959

vicar@stmarytheboltons.org.uk
 (Day Off Thursday)

Parish Administrator

Max Noak 020 7835 1440
 Mon to Fri 10am-2.00pm
office@stmarytheboltons.org.uk

Verger/Caretaker

David Ireton 020 7244 8998
 (Day Off Thursday) 07881 865386

Churchwarden and Vice-Chairperson of the PCC

Antony Bryceson, 020 7937 1055
 Edward Quinton, 020 7373 6094

Members of the PCC

James Bell
 Leo Fraser-Mackenzie (*Deanery Synod Representative*)
 Margarete Geier (*Deanery Synod Representative*)
 Sheila Gibbs
 Joanna Hackett (*PCC Secretary*)
 Brian Hallock
 Ann Mulcare (*Deanery and Diocesan Synod Representative*)
 Katrina Quinton
 Katrin Roskelly
 Camila Ruz
 Ann Tait
 Kelly Webb
 Anthony Williams

Director of Music

John Ward 07853 406050
boltonsmusic@gmail.com

Treasurer

Carolyn Stubbs 020 7835 0074

Assistant Treasurer

Bill Gallagher 020 7384 3246.

Electoral Roll Officer

Fiona Parsons (call Parish Office)

Gift Aid Secretary

Philip Bedford Smith 020 7937 3626

Clarion Editor

Verena Tschudin 020 7351 1263

Reading at St Cuthbert's and St Matthias' School

Sheila Gibbs 020 8788 9744

Social Secretary

Margarete Geier 020 7373 1639

Sunday School

(call Parish Office)

Safeguarding Officer

The St Mary The Boltons' Safeguarding Officer is Clair Gordon. Her role is to help us to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk. She person is the first point of contact for children, adults at risk and other members of the congregation regarding suspicions of abuse and other safeguarding concerns.

If you have any concerns, please contact Clair on 07850 944 834. In the event of Clair not being available, Kelly Webb may be contacted on 07971 552 014.

Alternatively, speak to: Sheryl Kent, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser: 020 7932 1224
Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) helpline: 0845 120 4550
Family Lives: 0808 800 222 (Previously Parentline) Childline: 0800 111

Children's Champion

The St Mary The Boltons' Children's

Champions are Chris and Katie Fowkes. Their role is to ensure that the voices and needs of the children and young people are heard and reflected in parish life. They can be contacted via: katie.fowkes@talktalk.net / 07810 831505

Contributions for the February Clarion should be sent to the Parish Office by 22 January 2018.

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

**Sunday 17 December
7pm**

• candle-lit • professional choir • sing-along carols

Spend some time in stillness in our beautiful candlelit church.

Hear the story of Christmas unfold in the familiar nine lessons.

Listen to moving choral music from our professional octet of singers.

Join in heartily with all the traditional carols.

Enjoy the cheerful festive organ music before and after the service.

Share the Christmas cheer and stay for a glass of mulled wine and mince pies.

The PCC of St. Mary with St Peter & St. Jude, West Brompton is a Registered Charity, No 1133073