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Parish Magazine



December 2021 / January 2022

Chichester Road, Croydon

www.stmatthew.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 1132508

Services at St Matthew's

Sunday Morning Services

1st 3rd 4th and 5th Sundays

8.30 am Eucharist (Said)

**10.00 am Parish Eucharist with Choir and Children's Groups
followed by tea and coffee in the foyer**

2nd Sunday

8.30 am Eucharist (Said)

10.00am All Age Service

Morning Prayer

Monday and Wednesday at 9.00 am in the Lady Chapel

Morning Prayer via Zoom

Tuesday at 9.00 am

Meeting ID: 970 706 9858

Pass Code: stmatts

Wednesday

10.00 am Holy Communion (Said)

Private Prayer

**The church will be open for Private Prayer
every Tuesday 9.00 am to 12 noon**

**Baptisms, Weddings and Banns of Marriage
By arrangement with the Vicar**

***St Matthew's Vision
Sharing the Love of God***

The Vicar Writes

Dear Friend,



As we prepare to celebrate Christmas and New Year, we are once again facing a high degree of uncertainty, as no-one yet knows what the Omicron variant of the Covid-19 virus may bring in its wake. All we can say for sure is that Christmas Day will fall on 25th December! We hope to be able to celebrate the birth of Christ with our usual mix of services in church, but maybe that will not be possible. Some of our services will also be live-streamed. Whether or not you are able to join us, all of us at St Matthew's wish you a truly blessed and joyful Christmas.

The birth of Jesus is above all else a great mystery. That the God who created the universe, whose word has unimaginable power, should decide to take on our flesh ought to cause our jaws to drop. Because we are so familiar with the manner of his birth - from the Annunciation by the angel Gabriel, to the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem; angels and the star, shepherds and wise men - we can forget the depth of this mystery. God is sovereign, almighty and glorious, yet he freely chooses to empty himself of his divine attributes and become an embryo in the womb of Mary. None of us can fully grasp the meaning of the incarnation, but that needn't worry us! Our faith is about how we as frail and fallen people are called to enter into a loving and eternal relationship with the God who is in his very nature and being everlasting love.

Because we are frail and fallen, it is impossible for us to reach out and find God unaided. Instead, the Lord has reached out to us, coming down from heaven to earth; entering our existence; becoming fully and completely human. The self-emptying of God is an act of sheer grace and love that makes it possible for him to find us.

So the birth of Jesus is so much more than a pretty story to be reproduced in a nativity play! It is nothing less than heaven breaking into earth, so that earth might be redeemed and lifted up to heaven. The incarnation took place in secret: only a tiny number of people knew, though the whole heavenly choir of angels could not contain their excitement as God shows the earth his favour. The human race is found to be the object of God's love, and offered the possibility of peace.

The secrecy of these events reflects the purpose of God. Our gracious God never forces himself on anyone. The Lord issues an invitation, which we are all free to accept or reject. Acceptance brings us to life, as the love that Jesus brings into the world touches our lives, cleanses us from sin, and transforms us from the inside.

Rejection leaves us precisely where we were - frail and fallen, and untouched by the grace and truth that Jesus embodies.

How will we celebrate the greatest and most mysterious of all births?

With my love and prayers.

Simon



'The Annunciation' – Fra Angelico (1395- 1455)

Christmas at St Matthew's



11th December 4.00pm	Christmas Tree Festival Concert*
12th December 10.00am	Communion with Nativity*
19th December 6.00pm	Carol Service*
Christmas Eve 5.00pm	Christingle
Christmas Eve 11.00pm	Carols by Candlelight
Christmas Eve 11.30pm	Midnight Communion
Christmas Day 10.00am	Family Communion*

All Welcome
आपका स्वागत है
நல்வரவு

***Join our live-streamed services via stmatthew.org.uk and please check there in case of further restrictions**

Date & Time	Event details
1 st January 11.00am	We propose to walk the Parish Boundary. Bring a packed lunch. The route would from St Matthew's over Lloyd Park back to East Croydon along Addiscombe road to Sandilands and return to the church. If there are enough of us the church will be opened to eat our lunches and perhaps provide a hot drink. The walk will take about two hours.
2 nd January 10.00am	Normal Sunday service conducted by Bishop Jonathan who will then plant a commemorative tree. We will follow with a bring and share lunch. Make this first Sunday of 2022 SPECIAL.
22 nd January Evening	We are hoping to hold a Burns Night celebration with a piper and a meal for a reasonable charge. Would you be interested? If so, let us know by email to churchadmin@stmatthew.org.uk .
5 th March	A show by the Utopians Unlimited.
23 rd April Evening	Our previous lead in the Choir and also organist, the very popular Caroline Jaya-Ratnam with Stephen Bryant Leader and Mark Sheridan, Cellist of the BBC Symphony Orchestra will be here to play an evening of popular classical English music. Their third welcome return.
May	The opportunity to look at the Church Records
5 th June	Queen's platinum celebrations – a street party in Chichester Road
11 th /12 th June	Flower Festival – theme “All things bright and beautiful”

A Christmas Reflection- Jesus, our Truth

(From 'At His feet' devotional by Chris Tiegreen- with permission)

Jesus was an enigma. He came into the world as a child of a working- class family from a notably un-noteworthy region of the country. He amazed people with His teaching and His miracles, but He always defied their expectations. When they expected Him to act like an average Galilean, He wouldn't. When they expected Him to act like a king, He wouldn't. No one could get a handle on exactly who he was.

The same is true for us today. The God-man, the Creator incarnate, defies our expectations as well. We pray to Him as our King, but He often leads us in the way of true humanity. Then we follow him as a human example, but He often insists on His kingly authority in our lives. He is not just our teacher, but our Lord. And He is not just our God, but our friend. The enigma of Galilee remains enigmatic today, even as we pray to Him. But what an enigma! He simultaneously fulfills our deepest needs for human fulfillment and for intimacy with the holy. He is exactly the answer to everything we didn't know we wanted.

Jesus said He came into the world to testify to the truth. This is what Christmas is all about. Think about it- infinite truth in a finite body! It is an answer to all those questions the philosophers have asked for centuries: Why are we here? Who made us? Where are we going? In Jesus, God pulled back the curtain on divine mysteries and made them visible. Not completely understood, of course, but tangible at least. He opened the window on all that has been going on behind the scenes in this drama we call life. We can see the divine in something as mundane as human history. An enigma? Yes. But a



blessed revelation, too. The incarnation gave us truth – in person.

'Adoration of the Shepherds'- Bronzino (1503- 72)

The Persecuted Church- for our prayers

While we will enjoy Christmas in peace and security, remember those for whom this is a distant memory. Here are some current entries (which I've edited) from the Barnabas Fund website.

Myanmar military shell Shan church for the second time.

The Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) attacked a church building in Pekhon Township, southern Shan State on 9 November, for the second time. There were no reported casualties, but windows and pews were damaged by artillery fire. A previous attack on the church in June 2021 forced several internally displaced persons to flee into the forest, resulting in the death of a new-born baby from exposure. The shelling is part of a spate of Tatmadaw attacks against churches and other Christian sites in Shan State, which according to the most recent census is 10% Christian.



The same anti-Christian atrocities occur in other parts of Buddhist-majority Myanmar, including Christian-majority Chin, Kachin and Karen (also known as Kayin) states and Kayah State, which also has a large Christian presence, mainly among the ethnic-Karenni population. In October 2021 the Tatmadaw shelled the town of Thantlang, Chin State, causing fires that destroyed or damaged more than 160 homes and three church buildings.

9 Pakistani Christians injured in shooting as Muslims try to seize land



At least nine people were wounded, three critically, after a group of Muslims opened fire on Pakistani Christians in an attempt to force them to give up land in Punjab that has been handed down through generations of believers. The shooting happened on 29 October as the Christians watered their fields in Trikhani, a village near the city of Burewala, in Vehari district. "They wanted

to kill us," said Raja Masih, who was shot close to the heart. "They fired straight at us." Christian families have resisted previous threats from Muslims to force them to sell their land, which they describe as "the history and legacy of our ancestors". A Christian added, "In any case, the Muslim offers do not reflect the real market value of the fields.

Christians locked in prayer room by Hindutva extremists in Karnataka, India

Radical Hindutva extremists in Karnataka state, India forcibly detained Christians in a prayer hall, accusing the pastor of carrying out forced conversions. On Sunday 7 November in Maratha Colony, Belagavi district, militants from the Sri Ram Sena (SRS) Hindutva nationalist movement forced their way into the room claiming that Pastor Lema Cherian was conducting illegal conversions. The extremists locked the pastor and at least 30 Christians in the hall before calling the police. Police declined to make any arrests, instead sending all present home and stationing around 20 officers around the building as a precautionary measure.

Whilst nine Indian states have laws criminalising conversions carried out through force, fraud or allurement, Karnataka is not among them. However, the chief minister of Karnataka recently confirmed that the state government is planning to introduce a new anti-conversion law. Pastor Cherian emphatically denied the allegations. "I was just leading a prayer with a group of interested people, like every Sunday," he said, "We have not forced anyone to come here; we are just practising the rites of our religion." "These are the usual false accusations," added Sajan K George, president of the Global Council of Indian Christians. "The only people using force were the [Hindutva] nationalists who locked the pastor and the faithful in a room, committing what is a crime under the Indian Penal Code."



Bible themed verses- Love

And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

(Deuteronomy 10:12)

Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

(Matthew 22: 37- 39)

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

(John 13: 34-35)

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

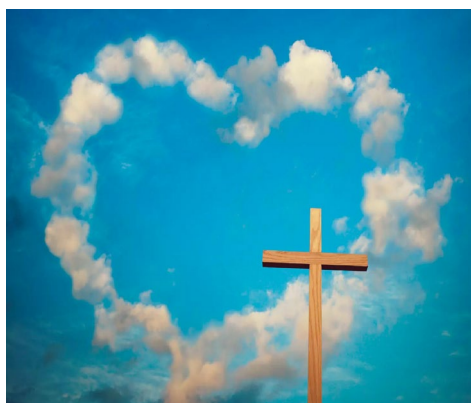
(Romans 8: 38-39)

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another.

(Romans 12: 9-10)

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself; is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

(1 Corinthians 13:4-7)



Prayers

A prayer to keep God at the centre during the Holidays

Lord, we worship You during this Christian season. You are our wonderful Counsellor, mighty God, everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. We choose to put You at the centre of our family life as we celebrate Your birth. Keep us from distractions and enable us to invite You into all our family activities. Teach us to pray and help us to glorify and worship You in our family this busy time of year. Thank you for being Immanuel, "God with us."

A prayer for refugees

Faithful God,
we pray for all families who have been forced from their homes
by war, or flood, or the need to find food.
Grant them courage as they travel,
safety as they seek refuge,
and hope for a secure future.
And may we, who have been given so much,
learn to be generous and compassionate to those who,
fearful and needy,
seek shelter among us. Amen.

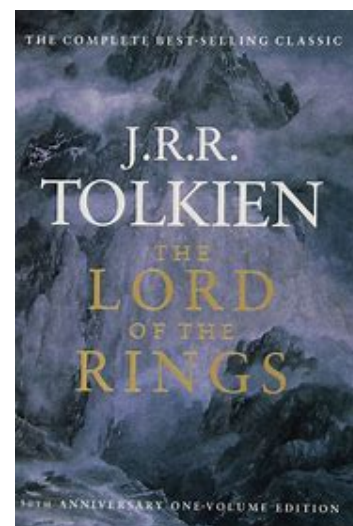
For those feeling loss at Christmas

Dear Heavenly Father, though Christmas is sometime hard because we miss the ones we love, help us to remember the gift You gave – Your Son, Jesus, a baby born to die. Thank you for this gift of love, help us receive it. In times of grief and sadness, remind us of the reason and fill us with Your peace. Thank You for carrying us when it's hard to walk.



Heroes of the faith: J R R Tolkein

J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* now stands high on any list of favourite books. Few people know that Tolkien was a Christian and that his beliefs underlie his writing. John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born in 1892 in what is now South Africa. When he was three, his father died, leaving him to be raised by his mother in Birmingham, England, under difficult financial circumstances. She became a Catholic and, after her early death when he was twelve, the young Tolkien was raised under the guardianship of a kindly priest. Tolkien was to remain a Catholic all his life.



From his youth, Tolkien displayed both a gift for languages and an extraordinary imagination. He began studying at Oxford University in 1911 but joined the army in 1915 to serve in World War I. He was married in 1916 but soon found himself facing the horrors of the trenches. He was spared almost certain death by contracting an infection that rendered him unfit for further frontline service. Although surviving the war, Tolkien remained scarred by it. He wrote, 'By 1918 all but one of my close friends were dead.' Tolkien worked as a researcher for the Oxford English Dictionary before becoming a lecturer at Oxford. After a succession of academic positions in the following decades he eventually became Professor of English Literature and Language at Oxford.

Tolkien became close friends with fellow professor C.S. Lewis and over the course of many conversations encouraged Lewis to shift from atheism to a strong Christian faith. With Lewis and others, Tolkien became a regular attendee of the now celebrated Oxford group the Inklings, whose members met regularly for discussion, often in a local pub. Although Tolkien wrote a number of academic works, his extraordinary fame came from his fantasy writing. During his long wartime convalescence, he began to create his own imagined history of what he called 'Middle-earth', a part of Earth's past set somewhere between the Fall of man and the coming of Christ.

Tolkien had four children and he would often tell them stories which involved Middle-earth. One such story was written down and, as *The Hobbit*, was published in 1937 to instant acclaim. Tolkien's invention of hobbits – small, insignificant people with no ambition beyond a quiet life in the countryside with plenty of food – was a stroke of genius. Asked to write a sequel to *The Hobbit* Tolkien found himself writing a longer and more epic account on

Middle-earth, telling how the hobbits became drawn into a great war between the forces of good against the power of evil. The story grew and the three volumes of *The Lord of the Rings* were published in 1954 and 1955. Almost immediately the work attracted both outstanding devotion and intense dislike, two views that have persisted. However, *The Lord of the Rings* retains an extraordinary popularity. In the 1960s *The Lord of the Rings* became a publishing phenomenon, something further encouraged subsequently by its successful filming at the beginning of this century. Tolkien worked on turning his complex and epic history of Middle-earth into a publishable form until his death in 1973, but that was only achieved by his son several decades later.

Tolkien celebrates a *Christian vision*. *The Lord of the Rings* mentions not just a supreme being who has made the universe but also frequently implies that he, not chance or accident, is behind what happens. There are pointers, too, that this being is not simply some cold, merciless deity but rather a being rich in grace: a God who doesn't just control but also cares. Although *The Lord of the Rings* is ultimately a triumphant book, we are left in no doubt that all earthly victories over evil are merely temporary and that, one day, God will bring about a final and eternal judgement that will put everything to rights.

Tolkien celebrates many *Christian virtues*. It is hard to think of any novel published in the last hundred years that so frequently praises 'doing what is right'. On page after page Tolkien reminds us of the great Christian virtues: courage, hope, joy, sacrifice, humour and friendship. We are warned that life hurts, that no one is immune to temptation, and that even the greatest victory is bittersweet. Perhaps one of the greatest virtues the trilogy emphasises is the need to show grace and mercy, even to those – like the loathsome Gollum – who deserve nothing of the sort.

Tolkien celebrates many *Christian values*. In an age where there are no moral certainties, it's good to be reminded of the reality of good and evil. Yet here Tolkien avoids any naivety: we see good individuals corrupted and bad ones redeemed. One striking and vital theme is the value of 'the little people': ultimately it is the utterly insignificant hobbits who achieve the final victory. That's a good lesson. *The Lord of the Rings* is an awesome work of the imagination. There is a delightful irony that in it Tolkien created a fantasy world far truer to reality – and far more uplifting – than most literature that claims to be realistic.

(By Canon J John, Philo Trust; with permission)

Mental Health issues

Since the beginning of the pandemic, several people have shared with me their difficulties in coping. Some comments that I've received were, "I thought I was going mad", "The boredom was awful", "I was unable to see anyone," "I felt so lonely" and "I wanted to die."

Last month I read an interesting article in a Christian publication about this topic; space doesn't allow me to reproduce this in full. Instead I have given some background information and extracted some points under two headings. Mental health issues impact one in four people in the UK and through the pandemic we have seen this statistic rise, with 39% of the population now

reporting a deterioration in their mental health.

There is little doubt that the pandemic has had a huge impact on the nation's mental health, with many professionals concerned that mental health could be the next pandemic. Mental health services for young people are currently oversubscribed and underfunded, therefore many in this category are not



getting the help they need. Homelife, too, has suffered during Covid-19 with a substantial increase in reports of domestic abuse, relationship break-up, loneliness and isolation plus an increase in suicide. My prayer is that the following suggestions may assist readers who are experiencing such problems.

4 ways to keep your mental health on track

1. Exercise

Moving your body can move mountains in your mental health. Endorphins boost your mood. Movement focuses your mind and gives you some relief from whatever is troubling you. You'll develop new strength and stamina. Feeling stronger physically can help you feel strong emotionally to persevere through challenges.

2. Journal

Journaling gets your thoughts out of your head and poured into the pages of your notebook. It can be therapeutic and cleanse your brain of swirling

thoughts. Interact with God and invite Him into the raw truth of **your situation**. **You might find it helpful to write some declarations.** A declaration can remind you of truth forgotten in pain.

3. Read and learn

Understanding what you're going through can be an important step in navigating through it. It might help to understand the different stages of grief, or the journey through disappointment. What does God say about our struggles?

Waverley Abbey Resource's Insight Series(waverleyabbeyresources.org/insight) comprises bitesize books on 19 different topics, which guide through anxiety, stress, bereavement and many other topics.

4. Speak to someone

Speaking out your thoughts and feelings unburdens your mind and soul. Whether that's a friend, a trained counsellor or a medical professional, having space to air your inner world helps mental wellbeing.

3 ways to help others

1. Ask

"How can I help?" is a powerful question. Sometimes a person won't know exactly what they need, but asking the question demonstrates your love and concern. It can be tough to reach out to other people if you're struggling. Receiving a short "thinking of you" text message or a call can let somebody know that they are not alone.

2. Send a surprise

An unexpected gift can be a lovely way to let someone know you are thinking of them and that they are not alone. Flowers, a plant or a book they might like can be a huge support and brighten someone's day.

3. Ask them to help you

Asking for help is hard. People generally feel more comfortable when offering their help than asking for it. A text like, "I'd really love some company for a coffee break today. Can you join me?" is much easier to respond to than: "Let me know if you'd like a coffee sometime." Or ask for help putting up shelves or fixing the shower. It helps establish a relationship in which you support each other reciprocally.

The Pandemic at The Diamond Riding Centre

How did they cope?

Looking back, I realise I wrote an article about The Diamond in April 2017 and some of you will know I have been a volunteer for many years. The charity is a very special place for disabled riders and much as I would like to duplicate everything that is on their website it is a better plan if I leave that to you! **diamondcentre.org.uk** Needless to say the pandemic caused huge issues. This is a very potted account of what has gone on (and I probably don't know the half of it!). I know this has little to do with our parish and not all of you will be interested – but please do take a few minutes to read it.



I cannot imagine all the things the staff had had to get to grips with suffice to say they have worked extremely hard. None of the 350 riders were able to come for their lessons. No volunteers allowed. There were staff changes with the need to cut back and some were furloughed.

The horses were very well looked after and initially had a long holiday in the fields until the staff were allowed to ride them. Sadly, we had to say goodbye to several horses. As I write I think numbers have risen to 21. A few of the 350 volunteers became the Cleaning Crew when they were eventually allowed back in very small numbers. This work involved gardening, painting stables, fences, cleaning tack, poo picking the fields and I can't remember what else! There are now many new volunteers who have had training but unfortunately several of the regulars they had, have not returned.

As a bit of freedom from lockdowns was allowed, lessons were available to able bodied over 13 years (had to be able to tack up a horse, mount and dismount) and this helped enormously to up the charity's funds. The government's Kickstart Scheme which is funded, allowed them to train two young people. The first two have completed the training and one has become a member of staff.

Many riders have had to be reassessed for riding by the physiotherapist and senior instructor and sadly a few are unable to ride again as their muscles have

become so tight or their disability has worsened during the pandemic. Very gradually disabled riders returned starting with those who were brought by parents/carers and did not need a person walking beside or leading the horse. The parent/carer was taught to help with things staff and volunteers were not allowed to do like helping the rider get on the horse. Obviously, everything had to be Covid safe and still is. The tack and anything the rider had touched was and is, still sanitized.

Currently schools are beginning to bring children back and it is lovely to see them enjoying themselves. On a happy note, The Autumn Fair exceeded all expectations. A very happy (but exhausting) day. Jo Topping

St. Matthew's Roof Fund – Progress Report

The PCC has recommended that the aluminium roof supports being replaced with zinc, which will be longer-lasting, safer and more environmentally efficient. This will ensure that the roof will last approximately 100 years instead of the 50 years from the church's construction in 1972. We await the approval of the DAC (Diocesan Advisory Committee) of Southwark. Then we can ask the architects to draw up a design for the roof to incorporate the additional insulation. Then we can apply for planning permission from Croydon Council. Once we have been granted planning permission we can apply for funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and other major foundations and charities.

All users of the church, including hirers of the hall and of the church itself, have been sent a questionnaire to enable us to gauge the real benefits to the wider East Croydon area of the building as a local community centre. Their responses will certainly strengthen our case, if we can demonstrate how vital the church premises are to local well-being and social cohesion in a multi-cultural and multi faith population.

During our 50th anniversary celebrations of St. Matthew's life in 2022, it will be important to draw as many people as possible to visit the church so that they feel themselves to be stakeholders in the vital amenities provided by the church on its various premises and able to bear witness to its great benefit to the local community.

We have also entered the 'BIG GIVE Christmas Challenge which runs from the 30th November to 7th December. We are hoping to get many donations from a wide audience and the amount donated will be doubled from the money that has already been pledged. For full details, see www.thebiggive.org.uk/s/christmas-challenge and the promotional video on the St. Matthew's website.

“In the beginning was the Word.....” by Barney Powell

To write well is the highest calling. All we have is words. And words make sense of the world. Words are things that move people to action and Christianity is loud with words, words of encouragement, of command, of compassion. The Bible, whose words are filtered through many languages from Aramaic to Hebrew, Greek and Latin, tells a timeless, clear story for the ages regardless of interpretation of differing shades, connotations and nuances of meaning which our present-day versions have undergone.

If the Bible is simply literature, then it is the best written record of the past we have, because it is a book of living notions preserved from a past not of stones but of words – love, faith, hope, honour, pity, pride, sacrifice and other fruits of the spirit like peace, joy and self-control, which sustain us in



defeat and adversity. If Kipling’s ‘If’ is the nation’s favourite poem, it is because it speaks to infinite possibilities. What he calls the ‘tools’ we stoop to build us up from downfall can never wear out, but can be forever primed and repurposed to achieve our recovery. These ‘tools’ have names bestowed on them from the days of the mediaeval Morality Plays and are known collectively as ‘The Five Wits’, namely, Memory, Imagination, Fantasy, Estimation and Common Sense – most easily remembered from the human hand with the thumb as memory stick, the middle finger the tallest and most fanciful and the little finger the shortest on reason and logic.

In the twentieth century, an ever-present fear of nuclear annihilation cowed the spirit and caused the young among us to contemplate the end of humanity on the planet. Today, because of nuclear proliferation and the evidence of mutually assured destruction, we may safely return to addressing the real, eternal, existential problems of the human heart in conflict with itself, the universal truths which give meaning to story: victory and defeat, triumph and disaster, courage and fear, hope and disappointment, trial and error, gain and loss, pleasure and pain, love and hate, happiness and misery, laughter and tears. The writer and the poet labour to illuminate these poles of meaning through the artifice of fiction and the observation of fact. It is their place and privilege to help raise the human heart and spirit to an enduring understanding

of our need to be our better selves, to find a common voice and harmony in overcoming conflict.

The immortal principle in the human being is the soul, the essence of the self, the vital, individual life force which breathes mind into the body, but is itself incorporeal. This is the element in our existence which gives us extra-sensory perception of our wider consciousness and awareness of how much any life matters, the realisation that no meaningful valuation of human beings can be made other than in terms of our innate worth to other people. The duty of the scribe, the writer and the poet is to record these things lest they be ignored or even forgotten, so that humankind prevails. For, as Cervantes wrote, the pen is the tongue of the soul.

Quotes

Pray as if everything depended on your prayer. (William Booth)

The best protection against Satan's lies is to know God's truth. (Anon)

Some read the Bible to learn, and some read the Bible to hear from heaven.
(Andrew Murray)

God loves us not because of who we are, but because of who He is. (Anon)

We need more Christians for whom prayer is the first resort, not the last.
(John Blanchard)

A life in thankfulness releases the glory of God. (B Sundberg)

Nothing in this world bears the impress of the Son of God so surely as forgiveness. (Alice Cary)

Use your gifts faithfully and they shall be enlarged. (Matthew Arnold)

Hope can see heaven through the thickest clouds. (Thomas Brooks)

There is no true holiness without true humility. (Thomas Fuller)

The intellect joined to God for long periods through prayer and love becomes wise, good, powerful, compassionate, merciful and long-suffering; in short, it includes with itself almost all the divine qualities.

(Maximos the Confessor)

Love came down at Christmas (Christina G Rossetti)

2022 -The year ahead

I was recently perusing some back copies of the excellent Bible reading notes, 'Every Day with Jesus', written by the late Selwyn Hughes, when I reread this entry for 1st January 2017. Even though we're three weeks away from the dawn of another year, I want to include it as it's both comforting and challenging.

"We begin a new year by focusing on the theme of walking in freedom. It is a time to turn the tables on the things that are mastering us and, through the strength and grace that God gives us, learn to live life to the full. In the above text Paul tells us that he will not be mastered by anything. Rather, he has willingly given himself to the master. In 2 Corinthians 5: 14 he says, '*Christ's love compels us.*' The word 'compels' could also be translated 'masters.' Paul was saying that his life goal was to not be mastered by anything other than Jesus.

Today's text can be seen as the greatest declaration of life purpose there has ever been. Those who have not given themselves to a relationship with Jesus will most likely be motivated and mastered by material things, circumstances, the world, disappointments and a whole host of other matters. As together we contemplate the year ahead, I cannot promise you a new set of circumstances or an easy path. Life is often difficult, and it is more than likely that this year will have its share of pain and disappointments. But, in the name of Him who sits on the throne, I can promise you that, as you seek to trust his Word and His truth then, like the apostle Paul, instead of being mastered by them you can walk in freedom.

God can break every shackle that binds us – whether it is the pull of our old nature or that of the devil himself, it's not a change in our external circumstances that we need – it's a change in ourselves. Self-mastery will not achieve this but giving ourselves in trust to God will. Make up your mind to submit to His loving care – beginning today."



Famous Church musicians - J S Bach

Johann **Sebastian Bach** (1685-1750) was a German composer and musician of the late Baroque period. He is known for instrumental compositions such as the Cello Suites and *Brandenburg Concertos*; keyboard works such as the *Goldberg Variations*, *The Well-Tempered Clavier* and the Toccata and Fugue in D minor; and vocal music such as the *St Matthew Passion* and the Mass in B minor. Since the 19th-century Bach Revival, he has been generally



regarded as one of the greatest composers in the history of Western music.

The Bach family already counted several composers when Johann Sebastian was born as the last child of a city musician in Eisenach. After being orphaned at the age of 10, he lived for five years with his eldest brother Johann Christoph, after which he continued his musical formation in Lüneburg. From 1703 he was back in Thuringia, working as a musician for Protestant churches in Arnstadt and Mühlhausen and, for longer stretches of time, at courts in Weimar, where he expanded his organ repertoire.

Bach enriched established German styles through his mastery of counterpoint, harmonic and motivic organisation, and his adaptation of rhythms, forms, and textures from abroad, particularly from Italy and France. Bach's compositions include hundreds of cantatas, both sacred and secular. He composed Latin church music, Passions, oratorios, and motets. He often adopted Lutheran hymns, not only in his larger vocal works, but for instance also in his four-part chorales and his sacred songs. He wrote extensively for organ and for other keyboard instruments. He composed concertos, for instance for violin and for harpsichord, and suites, as chamber music as well as for orchestra. Many of his works employ the genres of canon and fugue.

Leopold, Prince of Anhalt-Köthen, hired Bach to serve as his *Kapellmeister* (director of music) in 1717. Prince Leopold, himself a musician, appreciated Bach's talents, paid him well and gave him considerable latitude in composing and performing. The prince was a Calvinist and did not use elaborate music in his worship; accordingly, most of Bach's work from this period was secular, including the orchestral suites, cello suites, sonatas and partitas for solo violin, and *Brandenburg Concertos*.

(Part 2 in February/ March issue

Winter scenes by famous artists



Paintings by Van Gogh, Monet, Avercamp, Pissarro and the Limbourg brothers (Book of Hours)

Christmas Quiz

2 x £10 Book Tokens await the first two lucky people with all (or most of) the correct answers. Ed.

1. South Africans eat the deep-fried caterpillars of the Emperor Moth on Christmas Day; true or false?
2. Which Christmas film sequel features a cameo by Donald Trump?
3. The Grinch attempts to steal Christmas from which fictional town?
4. In which year was the first Christmas card sent? 1743, 1843 or 1943?
5. How do you say 'Merry Christmas' in Spanish?
6. What famous scientist was born on Christmas Day in 1647?
7. The GPO stopped delivering letters on Christmas Day in England in which year? 1940, 1950, 1960 or 1970?
8. Who first appeared in a 1939 booklet written by Robert L May?
9. Eating a KFC meal is a tradition in which country?
10. Where did gingerbread houses start? And when?
11. How many turkeys were purchased at Christmas 2013 in the UK? 1M, 8M, 10M or 20M?
12. Which journalist, writer and poet wrote the first ever King's Christmas message - it was for George V in 1932?
13. What did Tom Smith of London invent in 1847 after getting the idea on a trip to Paris?
14. What, with parts called 'lametta', was invented in Nuremberg, Germany in 1610?
15. Which American state's Spanish translation literally means 'covered in snow'?
16. Often used in Christmas floral displays, what is Euphorbia pulcherrima?
17. In which country did eggnog originate?
18. There are more than 110 different varieties of which popular vegetables?
19. What is 'The Buche de Noel' better known as?
20. Which relatively new Christmas tradition was created by stay-at-home mum Carol Aebersold?



The Parish Church of St Matthew, Croydon

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	Alison Radford	
Director of Music & Choir	Michael Strange	
Southwark Pastoral	Carolyn Tweed	
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Fellowship Team	Vacant	
Communications Team	Revd Simon Foster	
Fabric Team	Stephen Collingwood	
Finance Team	Revd Simon Foster	
Pastoral Team	Revd Simon Foster	
Circle Dance	Sally Ditzel	07568338204



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