

Parish

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Magazine



December 2017/January 2018

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

Sunday Evening Service

1st Sunday 5.00pm Healing Service with Prayers

3rd Sunday 6.00pm as announced

Morning Prayer

Monday to Thursday 7.45 am

Tuesday

2nd Tuesday 3.30pm



Wednesday

10.00 am Holy Communion (Said)

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

***St Matthew's Vision
'Celebrating God's love throughout the whole
community
By what we believe and do'.***



The Vicar Writes...

Dear Friend,

And so this is Christmas... well, almost! Whether you are celebrating with family and friends or by yourself this Christmas, may you have a truly blessed time as we remember once again the extraordinary events in the little town of Bethlehem.

If you are going to be on your own on Christmas Day and would rather not be, please do let myself or Terry Mitchell know, as we are hoping to be able to offer hospitality to those who would like to spend Christmas Day with other people.

The story of Christmas is so familiar, as well as being overlaid with many traditions, that it is very easy to miss its meaning and implications for us and indeed the human race as a whole.

From the opening chapters of Genesis through to the last words of Revelation, the Bible is full of the Person of Jesus Christ, either obliquely as prophecy or parable in the Old Testament, or fully revealed in the New.

The picture that Scripture paints is multi-faceted and complex. This man is both the suffering servant of Isaiah and the conquering king of the Psalms; he is the Babe of Bethlehem and the rider on the white horse with a sharp two-edged sword. This Jesus is both the Lamb who was slain and the Lion of Judah.

In the story of the annunciation to Mary by the angel Gabriel, the reaction of Joseph, the journey to Bethlehem and the fear of Herod, we see the purposes of God unfolding before us like a flower to the sun, as the One who spoke the universe into being empties himself of glory and enters into the gloom of this world. As I write these words, Jesus is with me, and as you read them, he is with you. Emmanuel has brought the light, peace, joy and love of heaven into the world. No matter how dark things are in these days across the world as it lurches from one crisis to another, or in our hearts as we acknowledge the depths of sin within each one of us, the light of Christ is shining here and now as it shone from the Baby lying in the straw.

With the coming of Jesus into our night, a new day has dawned and we are called to come into his light and be transformed by his grace. His birth heralds the end of the reign of sin over the world and over our hearts. This means we can receive the new life of the Spirit who overshadowed Mary and will bring the life of the Saviour to birth in our lives, if we allow him to. This is at the heart of the Good News Jesus announces and embodies.

May our hearts and minds be open to receiving Christ afresh this Christmas. If you are able to join us for one of our special services you will be very welcome. Wherever you may happen to be, may you know the presence of Emmanuel - God with us - as both comfort and challenge. The comfort of knowing we are loved and forgiven, and the challenge to take up our cross and follow Jesus every day of our lives in the power of his Spirit.

May your Christmas be truly blessed.

With my love and prayers.

Simon



(“The Adoration of the Shepherds” by the Italian Renaissance painter, Giorgione, completed about 1505)



CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT ST MATTHEW'S

Sun	17 Dec	8.30am 10.00am 6.00pm	Said Eucharist Sung Eucharist Carol Service
Wed	20 Dec	10.00am	Midweek Eucharist
Christmas Eve		8.30am 10.00am 5.00pm 11.00pm 11.30pm	Said Eucharist Sung Eucharist Christingle Carols by Candlelight Midnight Eucharist
Christmas Day		10.00am	Sung Eucharist
Wed	27 Dec	10.00am	NO Midweek Eucharist



CAROL SINGING

There are two opportunities to sing carols to raise money for charity. The first is on Wednesday 6th December from 5.00pm to 7.00pm when we will be singing carols at East Croydon station to raise money for Crisis at Christmas. The second is on Saturday 9th December from 3.00pm to 4.00pm at the Whitgift Centre to raise money for the Croydon Churches Floating Shelter. Everyone is warmly invited.

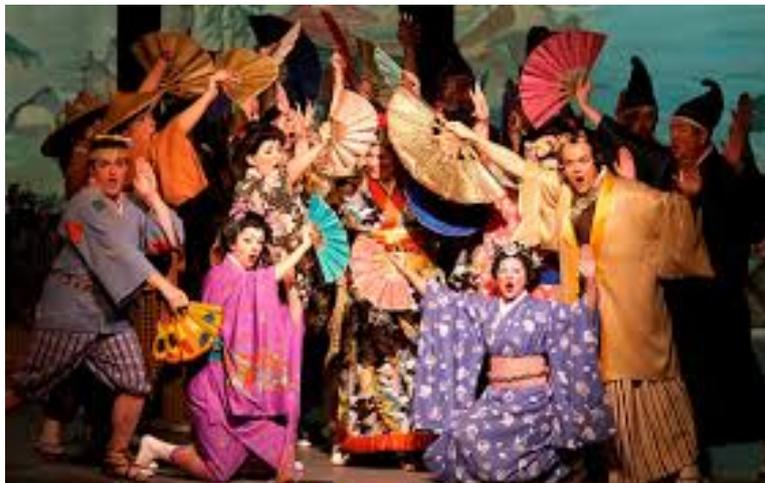


PERSECUTED CHURCH PRAYER MEETING

The next prayer meeting to pray for the Persecuted Church will be on Thursday 7th December at 7.30pm at the Vicarage. This is open to all and is a very informal hour of prayer to which you are warmly invited.

UTOPIANS UNLIMITED

Once again we shall be welcoming Utopians Unlimited to St Matthew's in 2018. They will be performing another Gilbert & Sullivan operetta on Saturday 10th February at 7.30pm. Please save the date in your diary. More details to follow.



Reflection – “If Christ had not come”

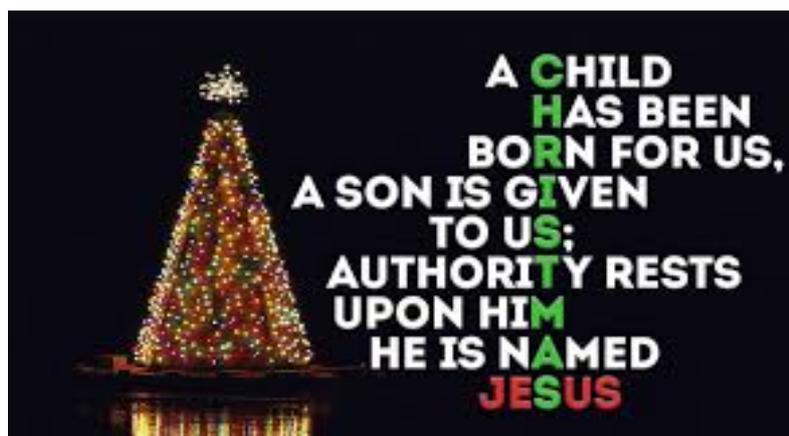
This is from the current issue (November/ December) of “Every Day with Jesus”(EDWJ) written by Selwyn Hughes.

For reading and meditation – 1 Timothy 3 v 1- 16

“He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, and was preached amongst the nations.” (v 16)

At Christmas it is appropriate to reflect on the fact that the world into which our Saviour came is a world of deep pain. Those who see only lovely sunsets, beautiful scenery and mother- love are not looking at the whole world. I often think of Oswald Chamber’s comment, that “Life is more tragic than orderly.” There will be some reading these lines whose hearts are heavy with grief and whose world has been turned upside down. If we are honest, there are time when it seems less like God’s world and more like the devil’s world, and there are some who believe that God has been excluded from His own world by the concerted efforts of the devil and sinful men and women. But it only seems that way. It is His world still.

Please understand this is part of the message of Christmas: the Son of God entered this world of pain and suffering, wore our flesh, measured its frailty and grew and struggled with the same problems with which we struggle. Before He died for us on the cross and was raised from the dead for our justification, He left this message with His followers: “be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.” (John 16 v 33) So, in all the growing madness of things, in all the frustrations and bitterness of the hour, come and pause by the manger and hear and know the truth of good news; this child will feel the bitterest of pains, but this will enable Him to enter into our sorrows and pain, and understand us. He is able to enter into our condition because He has been in our condition. Always remember; you were dear enough to God for the Saviour to be born.



Praying for Croydon



Croydon Churches Floating Shelter (CCFS)

“So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up.” Galatians 6:9

After 10 years of CCFS the need for a winter night shelter is greater than ever, as is the commitment of the churches to provide a refuge for the homeless.

From November until the end of March, seven days a week, (apart from a few days’ break over Christmas), the 20 host churches, and volunteers from over 40 churches across all denominations, provide food, shelter, love and acceptance to up to 14 guests per night. The night shelter seeks to practise Christian hospitality that leads to personal transformation through the power of God’s Spirit.

Please pray:

1. That all guests would feel welcome, safe and loved.
2. For wisdom for the Chairman (John Broom), Trustees and Co-ordinators as they make decisions about the running of the shelter.
3. For Croydon Council as it seeks to tackle the growing number of rough sleepers; that good housing solutions would be found.

Contact: John Broom: ccfscharity@yahoo.co.uk

4. We are providing shelter for six consecutive Sundays commencing January 7th. The rota is now available and clearly displayed in the foyer. If you can help please add your name indicating your availability.





The Persecuted Church

In each issue I try and incorporate an eclectic mix of news stories (good and bad) from the main charities working to highlight the plight of our Christian brothers and sisters. For a change, I've included just one item; about the

plight of persecuted Christians in North Korea. I can't acknowledge the source as I've forgotten who sent it. This secretive state is recognised as the worst place in the world to be a believer. Please pray for the country/person featured in the weekly Pews News, and a reminder that you are most welcome to join us for the monthly prayer meeting for the persecuted church held at the vicarage; publicity always given well in advance.

"Choi", the 55-year-old, managed to escape from the work camp where he was sent after being targeted and persecuted by the government for his Christian faith. "We couldn't raise our voice during a service, we couldn't sing out loud during a worship ... that was hard," Choi told Fox News through a translator. "Also, we had to hide so that other people could not see us." Despite having to hide his faith in plain sight while living in North Hamgyong province, Choi was still compelled to bring religion to others when he started an underground church. "There were about nine people," he said. "I couldn't do mission work because we had to keep it secret that we had a church. If that information had leaked, we could have faced the death penalty." North Korea is officially an atheist state where - except for a "show church" in Pyongyang that tourists are shown - public worship is forbidden. The country is ranked the most oppressive place for Christians in the world and has had that ignominious status for years.

"Choi's statements describing oppression, as well as his report of imprisonment for owning a Bible or practicing faith, align with everything we know about North Korea." The totalitarian state forces the estimated 300,000 Christians living there to hide their religious beliefs and fellowship among each other. "In a nation where the ruling regime demands total control over the general public, anything that challenges the government's power is seen as a threat, including religion," Jeff King, president of International Christian Concern, told Fox News. "As a result, the North Korean government does everything in its power to squash the spread of Christianity."

Quotes/reflections

“Most of our anxieties arise from the fact that we do not know how to sit in the middle of a room and just be still.” (Blasé Pascal)

“Faith is love in shoes; it goes out to serve the least, the last and the lost.”

“I would rather fail in the cause that ultimately will triumph, than triumph in a cause that ultimately will fail.” (Woodrow Wilson USA President)

(That sums up the message of Christianity as well as anything I know –Ed.)

“Man only likes to count his troubles; he doesn’t calculate his happiness.”(Fyodor Dostoyevsky)

“Prayer is nothing else than being on friendship terms with God.” (St Teresa of Avila)

“Our needs will never exhaust God’s supply.” (Anon)

“Nothing grows if nourishment doesn’t reach the grass roots; the same goes for the church.” (Roy Crowne)

“The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair and confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing ...not healing, not curing.... That is a friend who cares.” (Henri Nouwen)

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.” (Anne Frank)

“Some prayers need to be cut short at both ends and set on fire in the middle.” (D L Moody American evangelist)

“Joy and delight in the love of God is at the heart of Christian witness, but the experience of many of us- I dare say most of us – is that, instead of joy and delight, evangelism and witness bring nervousness, uncertainty and guilt.” (Archbishop Justin Welby)

“Most of scripture speaks to us while the Psalms speak *for* us.... I think the Psalms are like a mirror, in which one can see oneself and the movements of one’s own heart.” (St. Athanasius 296- 373)

Anno Domini

Across the nation, a thousand
“Marys” aged five
Innocent of baby bumps
Tea towels slipping
Act out scenes shortly before,
and after, an unsterile birth.
Quite unaccountably,
We hope again for the world.

A lorry driver spends his Christmas
Discovering where joy meets sorrow
In foreign war zone.
He causes children’s faces
To light up
We see it on TV.



Messiah shakes cathedral vaulting,
Thrills the ear’s drums, bones and
spaces,
Twitches the corner of
Some holy place’s curtain.
We glimpse dimensions beyond
Musical virtuosity.

At the darkest time of year
Once, a birth floodlit worlds
For shepherds and kings-
Changed everything.
Anno Domini

Suns burnt supernova
When God fused with man.
Flashes of that brilliance reach through, despite
All that we have done to “Xmas,”
and cause our tired eyes
To melt with tears.

(Anonymous)

Story behind the carol- "Silent Night"

The words of Silent Night were written by a Priest called Fr. Joseph Mohr in Mariapfarr, Austria, in 1816 and the music was added in 1818, by his school teacher friend Franz Xaver Gruber, for the Christmas service at St. Nicholas church in Oberndorf, Austria. Fr. Mohr asked Franz Gruber to compose the melody with a guitar arrangement. It was several years later that Franz Gruber wrote an arrangement for the organ. Historians who have conducted research in recent years believe that Fr. Mohr wanted a new carol that he could play on his guitar. There is a legend associated with the carol that says, Fr. Mohr wanted the carol to be sung by the children of the village at the midnight Christmas Eve service, as a surprise for their parents. But in the middle of practising, the organ broke and not a note would come from it! So the children had to learn the carol only accompanied by a guitar. They learnt the carol so well that they could sing it on its own without accompaniment.



However, there are no records to indicate that a children's choir was involved or that the organ was broken! At Midnight Mass in 1818, Fr. Mohr and Franz Gruber sang each of the six verses with the church choir repeating the last two lines of each verse. Mohr set down the guitar arrangement on paper around 1820 and that is the earliest manuscript that still exists. It is displayed in the Carolino Augusteum Museum in Salzburg. There are a number of manuscripts of various 'Stille Nacht' arrangements that were written by Franz Gruber in later years. The original words of the song were in German (and it was called 'Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht') and translated into English went:

Silent night, holy night,
Bethlehem sleeps, yet what light,
Floats around the heavenly pair;
Songs of angels fill the air.
Strains of heavenly peace.

It was translated into English in 1863 by John Freeman Young. The carol was sung during the Christmas Truce in the First World War in December 1914 as it was a song that soldiers on both sides knew! By the time that the carol was famous, Fr Mohr had died. Franz Gruber wrote to music authorities in Berlin saying that he had composed the tune, but no one believed him and it was thought that Haydn, Mozart or Beethoven had written it! But then the 1820 manuscript was found and in the top right corner Fr Mohr had written: 'Melodie von Fr. Xav. Gruber.' It's now one of the most, if not the most, recorded songs in the world!

Martin Luther and the Reformation

November 1483- 18 February 1546) was a German professor of theology,

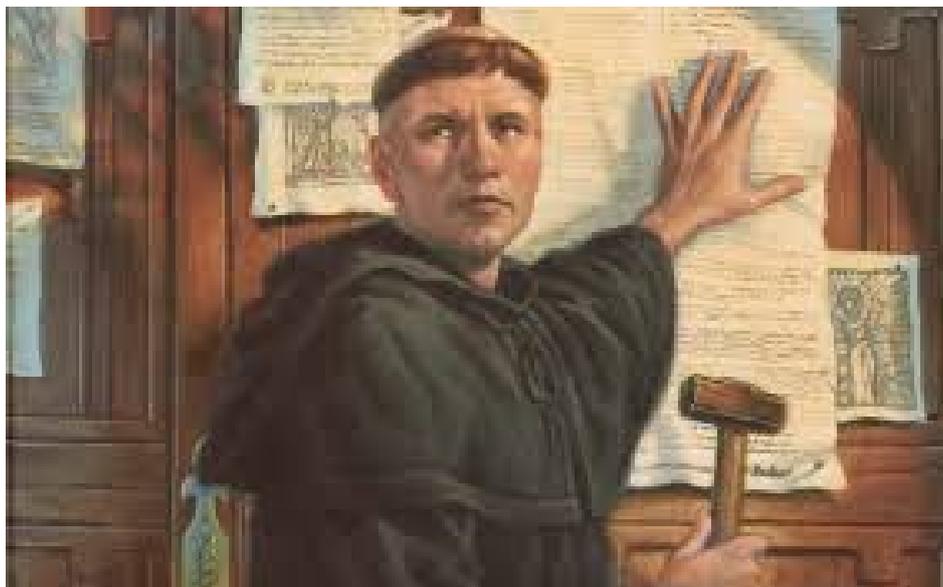


composer, priest, and monk, and a seminal figure in the Protestant Reformation. Luther came to reject several teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. He strongly disputed the Catholic view on indulgences that freedom from God's punishment for sin could be purchased with money. Luther proposed an academic discussion of the practice and efficacy of indulgences in his *Ninety-five Theses* of 1517. His refusal to renounce all of his writings at the demand of Pope Leo X in

1520 and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms in 1521 resulted in his excommunication by the Pope and condemnation as an outlaw by the Emperor. Luther taught that salvation and, consequently, eternal life are not earned by good deeds but are received only as the free gift of God's grace through the believer's faith in Jesus Christ as redeemer from sin. His theology challenged the authority and office of the Pope by teaching that the Bible is the only source of divinely revealed knowledge from God and opposed sacerdotalism by considering all baptized Christians to be a holy priesthood. Those who identify with these, and all of Luther's wider teachings, are called Lutherans, though Luther insisted on *Christian* or *Evangelical* (*evangelisch*) as the only acceptable names for individuals who professed Christ. His translation into the German vernacular (instead of Latin) made it more accessible to the laity, an event that had a tremendous impact on both the church and German culture. It fostered the development of a standard version of the German language, added several principles to the art of translation, and influenced the writing of an English translation, the Tyndale Bible. His hymns influenced the development of singing in Protestant churches. His marriage to Katharina von Bora, a former nun, set a model for the practice of clerical marriage, allowing Protestant clergy to marry. Luther dedicated himself to the Augustinian order, devoting himself to fasting, long hours in prayer, pilgrimage, and frequent confession. Luther described this period of his life as one of deep spiritual despair. He said, "I lost touch with Christ the Savior and Comforter, and made of him the jailer and hangman of my poor soul." Johann von Staupitz, his superior, pointed Luther's mind away from continual reflection upon his sins toward the merits of Christ. He taught that true repentance does not involve self-inflicted penances and punishments but rather a change of heart.

On 31 October 1517, Luther wrote to his bishop, Albrecht von Brandenburg, protesting the sale of indulgences. He enclosed in his letter a copy of his

"Disputation of Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences", which came to be known as the *Ninety-five Theses*. Hans Hillerbrand writes that Luther had no intention of confronting the church, but saw his disputation as a scholarly objection to



church practices, and the tone of the writing is accordingly "searching, rather than doctrinaire." Hillerbrand writes that there is nevertheless an undercurrent of challenge in several of the theses, particularly in Thesis 86, which asks: "Why does the pope, whose wealth today is greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus, build the basilica of St. Peter with the money of poor believers rather than with his own money?" Luther objected to a saying attributed to Johann Tetzel that "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory (also attested as 'into heaven') springs." He insisted that, since forgiveness was God's alone to grant, those who claimed that indulgences absolved buyers from all punishments and granted them salvation were in error. Christians, he said, must not slacken in following Christ on account of such false assurances.

Luther had been suffering from ill health for years, including Ménière's disease, vertigo, fainting, tinnitus, and a cataract in one eye. From 1531 to 1546 his health deteriorated further. In 1536, he began to suffer from kidney and bladder stones, arthritis, and an ear infection ruptured an ear drum. In December 1544, he began to feel the effects of angina. Luther's final journey, to Mansfeld, was taken because of his concern for his siblings' families continuing in their father Hans Luther's copper mining trade. Their livelihood was threatened by Count Albrecht of Mansfeld bringing the industry under his own control. An apoplectic stroke deprived Luther of his speech, and he died shortly afterwards at 2:45 a.m. on 18 February 1546, aged 62, in Eisleben, the city of his birth. He was buried in the Castle Church in Wittenberg, beneath the pulpit.

A second reflection - "Praying in God's will"

For reading and meditation- John 14 v 1-14

"And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father."

The current bi-monthly issue of EDWJ is entitled "The God of all Comfort" in which the writer, Selwyn Hughes, explores several aspects including "Life is Unjust," "Mender of Broken Hearts," and "The Anatomy of Grief," I was recently discussing with a friend the frustration and mystery of unanswered prayer and found this latest meditation by Hughes extremely helpful and insightful. I hope and pray that readers will, too.

"Another pain that arises in the soul of some is the pain of unanswered prayer. My guess is that thousands of you reading these lines are carrying that pain within you and don't know what to do about it. This pain lying unresolved in the soul can sometimes lead to the sabotaging of the Christian life. The spiritual growth of many Christians has come to a halt because they have been unable to resolve the pain of unanswered prayer.

When I was a pastor, I visited a woman one day because I had heard that she didn't plan to come to church anymore. When I enquired if this was true she said "Yes, I asked God to help my grandson to pass his examination and he failed. God let me down. How can I trust Him for other things when He couldn't help me in a simple thing like that? My attempts to explain that our prayers are not always answered in the way we wish didn't seem to help her. She was unwilling to face the fact that the child was lacking in natural ability and that perhaps he needed coaching. She blamed the whole situation on God and left the church a bitter and disillusioned woman.

Consider this: prayer would be dangerous if all our requests were answered. I have prayed for certain things over the years that I am glad God did not give me, for I can see with hindsight that if He had then it would not have been good for me. The only prayers that are guaranteed to be answered in the way we desire are the prayers we ask in Jesus' name.



In other words, the kind of prayers that Jesus would offer were He in our shoes. His prayers were always focused on bringing about the will of God in His life. Let it be so for us."

Bible themed references- "Friendship"

"He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed." (Proverbs 13 v 20)

"A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." (Proverbs 18 v 24)

"Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.....then David and Jonathan made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul." (1 Samuel 18 v 1-3)

"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you." (John 13 v 14 & 15)

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down his life for his friends." (John 15 v 12- 15)

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." (Philippians 2 v 3 & 4)

"And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins." (1 Peter 4 v 8)



The Smith's Bellows

A couple of years ago a filmed recital of The Lord's Prayer was refused for Christmas showing in cinemas as a curtain-raiser for *Star Wars* on the grounds that it might be offensive to non-Christians. The C. of E. was up in arms over this denial of airtime over the holiday, expressing righteous indignation, even outrage at this 'discrimination'. But did it not rather complain too much? In an increasingly secular society, Christianity may no longer command the moral and ethical heights it once laid claim to or even the default religious allegiance it once took for granted. Now that so many other faiths and interests are competing for attention and following, the showcasing in this form of such an explicitly Christian message (outside the context of TV programmes like *Songs of Praise*) may be regarded as mere propaganda or sponsored advertising, i.e., just another product. In this case the medium is not, after all, the message.

To paraphrase William Hazlitt: if we wish to know the force of human genius, we should listen to blind Andrea Bocelli singing *The Lord's Prayer*; if we wish to see the vanity of empty lyrics, we may listen to the myriad Yuletide warblers. To quote Hazlitt himself: 'Those who speak ill of the spiritual life, although they come and go by day, are like the smith's bellows: they take breath but are not alive.' May the Force be with you this Christmas (with *Star Wars* you haven't a prayer)!



Barney Powell

British Values

Any attempt to pin down and define a set of basic *British* values is bound to falter in the face of semantics and individual viewpoints. Those official totems quoted by the Home Office and in the schools – Democracy; The Rule of Law; Liberty; and Mutual Respect (and Tolerance of those with Different Faiths and Beliefs) – are largely abstractions hallowed above the heads of citizens as part of a collective covenant which all should aspire to keep. At the personal and individual level those human values which are most closely guarded and cherished are a set of much



more concrete notions – fair play; honesty (and an abhorrence of corruption); justice (as a matter of faith); free speech; and (most important of all) a sense of humour – this last being the great emollient and lubricator of all social and commercial dealings, the great prism through which all our ills and trials are refracted. Together they make up a kind of intangible cultural heritage, honoured in its day-to-day observance and contemned in its breach.

The heritage we are heirs to is born of the harsh abrasions of temper and temperament that characterise the settled relations between the diverse inhabitants of the British Isles. Thus, Anglo-Saxon phlegm and Norman gentility are challenged and stirred by Celtic passion and imagination, for it is the Irish, Scots and Welsh who provide the leaven for the English loaf to rise. Above all, it is the armoury and mantle of the English language in all its pomp and pith - invested as it is with the expressive suppleness of many cultures - that move us to certain decision and action. For nobody will do anything in life until and unless he or she sees the need to do it, invariably prompted and persuaded by the power of language. It is the chief instrument of British 'soft power' in the world and, when lifted from its lawyerly trances and directed to the unambiguous and good, the British pen does indeed become, as Cervantes put it, 'the tongue of the soul'.

The swelling of the population with migrants from all corners of the world has given rise to the notion of 'multi-culturalism' - an awkward construct coined in an attempt to acknowledge and support the several distinct cultural traditions and belief systems in our society – when simple 'pluralism' would quite adequately cover the existence and tolerance of these differences. In many ways, the UK is a microcosm of the future in its adaptation to diversity as an imperative of the coming world order. As one of the world's oldest democracies with a culture rooted in the common law, neighbourliness and an international outlook, it naturally embraces all comers. There is a misplaced concern that somehow this cultural pluralism will involve the sacrifice of particular groups' identities, including that of the host culture. What is more, there seems to be an official preoccupation with avoiding any suggestion that the host's cultural community values are central. The State need not worry, for it is in the real world of human contact and inter-action between strangers – in the new community centres which the churches and the mosques have become – that the hopes and fears of all in our society may be met and the many artificial differences between us reconciled. The 'Big Society' is us.



Christians Against Poverty (CAP)

Some readers may recall an article about CAP which I included in a previous issue about two years ago. As a supporter, I receive their bulletins / updates on a regular basis but I 'm including an extract (with their permission), which I've heavily edited, from their latest communication entitled "Iceberg Poverty." If anyone wishes to know more about CAP please see me, or visit their website.

"In the last couple of years, the lid has begun to be lifted on UK poverty. There's a reason that words such as "voiceless" and "forgotten" fit so well alongside "UK poverty." June's horrendous Grenfell fire tragedy in Kensington really turned the nation's attention to the way poverty creates vulnerability. The average household income amongst CAP clients is just £14,693- more than £11,600 less than the national average – with 63% living below the poverty line. Across the debt counselling and finance industries, our work has played an important part in giving a voice to these vulnerable people. Through our 21 years of in- depth experience, we've discovered there is a type of poverty beyond "vulnerable, and it's this category that our clients fall into. We've created a new term to communicate the unique and debilitating nature of their circumstances – *Iceberg Poverty*.



The difference between CAP and other debt counselling agencies is that we are expertly equipped to help those who are *dangerously* vulnerable.

These are people who have often suffered multiple life traumas eg loss of a baby, mental breakdown, becoming a full-time carer, bereavement, family tensions, suicidal thoughts, loss of benefits etc- *this is the iceberg*. Here are two examples from a recent weekly prayer bulletin:

- Client C suffers from panic attacks, depression, fibromyalgia, carpal tunnel, hypoglycaemia, slipped disc and ME.
- Client M was supporting an alcoholic husband. She then had a stroke, leaving her with anxiety, depression and memory loss. She was unable to work and then used all her savings to pay for the funerals of family members who died in a natural disaster.

Amongst our clients, the reasons for getting into financial difficulties are rarely "because they spent too much;" just 4% cite "overspending" as a primary cause of debt. UK poverty is a complicated beast. We don't pretend to have every answer, but treating people as precious individuals is a fair place to start – the love of the church and the financial knowhow at CAP are a powerful combination.



Volunteering at The Diamond Riding Centre A very special place for disabled riders

Many years ago I wrote an article for the magazine and decided it was time I should do another - especially following Alison Radford's talk at the last All Age Service.

I first became aware of The Diamond way back towards the end of the 70's when I was working with parents and children. A few of the children had varying disabilities and one child began to ride at the centre - my interest began! The centre had only been open a few years at this point and now has grown considerably. Riders range from 4 years to 65 years; riding benefits children and adults both physically and mentally and it is great to see the improvements. Some riders are very disabled, others you wouldn't realise have a disability. The Centre (a charity), apart from paid staff has about 300 volunteers who do varying jobs from serving tea and taking part in lessons to keeping the centre in good order (volunteers are given training where needed). There is also a programme for junior volunteers who are given training and then work on Saturdays.

There is a full timetable each week including over 60 riding, vaulting and carriage driving sessions. Although I have worked here for years I still find things going on that I wasn't aware of.

Over the years I have made many friends. I spend most of my time with the horses and riders but am happy to muck in with anything. During the week I do a fixed day and a half which cover about 9 lessons and then I go in again if the Centre is short of volunteers (which is quite often!). Other jobs - a bit of grooming, working in the yard, helping an instructor with training and whatever else I am capable of! Another session I enjoy is helping in the holidays when riders are assessed by the physiotherapist. I used to ride on the ride back which happens on Monday mornings when some of the horses have been in the fields in Croydon Lane over the weekend and a few volunteers ride them back to the Centre.

I am a bit wimpish now and don't like the wet, cold winter mornings! However, I do still ride occasionally. The horses are given care second to none. They are loved, well fed, exercised and given regular care from the vet, farrier, dentist, saddler and physiotherapist. There is so much I could write about the Centre but just giving you a taster is probably enough! This is not an advertisement for the Centre but if you are interested do visit the website or speak to me.

<http://www.diamondcentre.org.uk/>

Jo Tarring



Santons

The first Santons appeared in Rome around the end of the sixteenth century heads hands and feet carved in wood and attached to a wooden or metal frame. By the eighteenth century this art form had spread across Italy and Provençal churches but was banned during the time of the French Revolution. Religious symbols were banned from public places cribs in churches were destroyed and so families tried to express their devotion more discretely at home. Jean-Louis Lagnel (1764-1822), a statue maker created the first Santons in Marseille. Being modelled in clay fired and painted they were produced in large quantities and were inexpensive. The first Santon fair took place in Marseille in 1803 and workshops and santon makers continued to increase constantly creating new models. Traditionally Santons represented characters of the Nativity and Provençal folklore but nowadays they represent scenes from everyday life and no longer just bought at Christmas time as they belong to the field of popular art and traditions.

The making of the Crib was a family ritual. On walks in autumn people would gather everything required for the scene: moss, rosemary, thyme, bark, olive tree sprigs, stones etc and pick up lumps of clay. Santons can be bought at the fairs. The characters are displayed in a traditional manner.

The Virgin Mary stands before the donkey. Joseph stands before the ox the Three Kings and the camel. The shepherd and shepherdess are followed by the miller behind whom the shameful innkeeper is hiding. Among them stand figures of popular folklore displayed according to size tallest in the foreground and smaller in the distance. (Maureen Sareen)

This is where technology is taking us

Hello! Is this Gordon's Pizza?

No sir, it's Google's Pizza.

Did I dial the wrong number?

No sir, Google bought the pizza store.

Oh, alright - then I'd like to place an order please.

Okay sir, do you want the usual?

The usual? You know what my usual is?

According to the caller ID, the last 15 times you've ordered a 12-slice with double-cheese, sausage, and thick crust.

Okay - that's what I want this time too.

May I suggest that this time you order an 8-slice with ricotta, arugula, and tomato instead?

No, I hate vegetables.

But your cholesterol is not good.

How do you know?

Through the subscribers guide. We have the results of your blood tests for the last 7 years.

Maybe so, but I don't want the pizza you suggest – I already take medicine for high cholesterol.

But you haven't taken the medicine regularly. 4 months ago you purchased from Drugsale Network a box of only 30 tablets.

I bought more from another drugstore.

It's not showing on your credit card sir.

- I paid in cash

According to your bank statement you did not withdraw that much cash.

- I have another source of cash.

- This is not showing on your last tax form, unless you got it from an undeclared income source.

- WHAT THE HECK? ENOUGH! I'm sick of Google, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. I'm going to an island without internet, where there's no cell phone line, and no one to spy on me

Dear Dad, I am coming home to get married soon, so get out your cheque book. LOL I'm in love with a boy who is far away from me. As you know, I am in Australia and he lives in Scotland We met on a dating website, became friends on Facebook, had long chats on WhatsApp, He proposed to me on Skype and now we've had two months of relationship through Viber. My beloved and favourite Dad, I need your blessing, good wishes and a really big wedding. "Lots of love and thanks, Your daughter, Megan

My dear Megan, Like Wow! Really? Cool! Whatever....

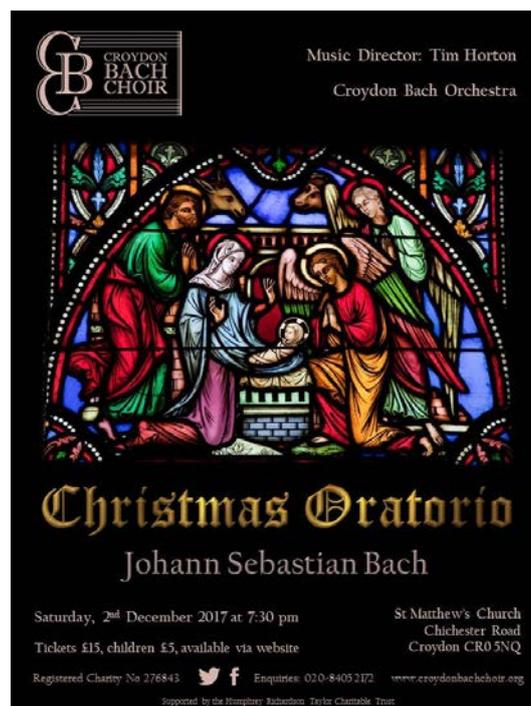
I suggest you two get married on Twitter, have fun on Tango, buy your kids on Amazon, and pay for it all through PayPal. And when you get fed up with this new husband, sell him on eBay!. LOL Dad

Misc

Christmas comesToo late. I (Mike B)) often find myself in conversation with somebody who would have liked a lift but did not know to ask!! ASK NOW! Thinking of such if you or somebody you know cannot get to one of the services through disability or any sort, then we will do our best to arrange for a car to collect you, but we do need to have advanced notice. Michael Buckley will be very pleased to talk to you about this and make appropriate arrangements, ask:0208 654 2582 or email MikeB@vmars.co.uk

We are officially on the Cinnamon Trust pet carers list and have been asked more than once to "foster" somebody's pet while they are in hospital etc - One lady fell around 8am and we had her two dogs by 5pm, so they are very attentive with a strap line of caring for elderly, the terminally ill and their pets . However we are not just willing to look after elderly pets, (we are unqualified to look after elderly owners!) but are happy with yours while you are away from home for a period, either planned well in advance or otherwise. House cats are possible, but not "escapees" please! We love having a dog about, so why not ask. No charge but donations to St Matthew's Church.

Sheila and Michael Buckley 02086542582 mikeb@vmars.co.uk



The poster features a central stained-glass style illustration of the Nativity scene, with Mary, Joseph, the infant Jesus in a manger, and several angels. The text is arranged around and below the illustration.

CROYDON BACH CHOIR
Music Director: Tim Horton
Croydon Bach Orchestra

Christmas Oratorio
Johann Sebastian Bach

Saturday, 2nd December 2017 at 7:30 pm
Tickets £15, children £5, available via website

St Matthew's Church
Chichester Road
Croydon CR0 5NQ

Registered Charity No 276843   Enquiries: 020-8405 2172 www.croydonbachchoir.org

Supported by the Humphrey Richardson Taylor Charitable Trust

The Parish Church of St Matthew, Croydon

(a member of Churches Together in Addiscombe)

Church Address	Chichester Road Croydon CR0 5NQ	8681 3147
Parish Office Email Address	churchadmin@stmatthew.org.uk	
Website	www.stmatthew.org.uk	
Parish Administrator	Terry Mitchell	8681 3147
Hall Bookings	Contact Parish Administrator	
Vicar	Revd Simon Foster revsimon@stmatthew.org.uk	8688 5055
Reader	Paul Parmenter Alison Radford	8689 5874
Director of Music & Choir	Michael Strange	
Southwark Pastoral Auxiliaries	Carolyn Tweed Sue Collins	
Churchwardens	Stephen Collingwood Rohini Abhayaratne	8686 2815
PCC Secretary	David Williams	8768 3599
Treasurer	Terry Mitchell	
Gift Aid Recorder	Terry Mitchell	
Sacristan	Gillian Bridger	
Assistant Sacristan	Jerry Savage	
Electoral Roll Officer	David Williams	
Magazine Editor	Steve Tucker stephen.tucker123@btinternet.com	8681 6872

Parish Committees and Organisations

Young Church (Sunday 10am)	Judith Spencer-Gregson	8688 6640
Fundraising Team	Jane Passfield	
Fellowship Team	Lucasta Grayson	
Communications Team	Alison Radford	
Fabric Team	Chris Grayson	
Finance Team	Richard Tweed	
Pastoral Team	Revd Simon Foster	

Youth Groups and Clubs

Rainbow Guides (Wednesday 6.10-7.30)	Zoë Sheehan	07855 779458
Brownies (Wednesday 6.30-8.00pm)	Laura Easton	
Ten O'Clock Club (Tuesday 10-12noon)		
Cubs (Tuesday 7-8.30pm)	Michael Smaldon	
Scouts (Tuesday 7.30-9.00pm)	Chris louannou	07729 303130
Guides (Wednesday 6.45-8.30pm)	Zoë Sheehan	07855 779458
Beavers (Friday 6-7.15pm)		

For details of other activities taking place at church during the week that include Pilates, Bach Choir, Philharmonic Choir, Breathe Easy, Children's Ballet, Children's Drama and U3A Groups. Please contact the organisers direct. Details from the Parish Office which is usually open Monday to Friday 9.30am -12.30pm.