

# Parish

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# Magazine



December 2020/ January 2021

Chichester Road, Croydon

[www.stmatthew.org.uk](http://www.stmatthew.org.uk)

Registered Charity No: 1132508

## **Services at St Matthew's**

### **Sunday Morning Services**

#### **1st Sunday**

**8.30 am Eucharist (Said)**

#### **All other Sundays**

**10.00 am Parish Eucharist**

**followed by refreshments (Please bring your own)  
in the Prayer Garden, weather permitting**

#### **Tuesdays at 9.00am**

**Zoom Morning Prayer**

**Meeting ID: 970 706 9858**

**Passcode: stmatts**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday**

**10.00 am Holy Communion (Said)**

#### **All other Wednesdays**

**10.00am to 10.30am Private Prayer**

#### **Saturday**

**2.00pm – 3.00pm Private Prayer**

**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,

And so 2020 - the worst year the world has faced since 1945 - draws to a close. I am sure you are looking forward to 2021 with its hope for a vaccine and the real possibility that life will be able to return to something approaching normality. Until then it is vital that all of us keep going with social distancing, hand sanitising etc etc. but there is real hope that in the foreseeable future the world will have come through this time of pandemic.



In the meantime we have Christmas to look forward to! It should not surprise us that the government has put so much energy into finding a way for families to meet together to celebrate. People of all faiths and none enjoy sharing Christmas together with special food and exchanging gifts. It has a universal appeal, even if for many - perhaps the majority - the reason behind the festivities is pushed very firmly into the background.

Christmas really is all about sharing, and not just time, food and presents. Above all the birth of Jesus reveals something extraordinary about our Creator God: that he wants to share his very nature and being with the world - with us.

We have recently revised and updated our Mission Action Plan. Part of this process involved looking at our mission as the people of God in this place. The MAP team, together with the whole PCC, have agreed that the following statement represents our mission to Park Hill: "Sharing the love of God." I hope we can all agree that this is what God is calling us to do. The Good News that "Love came down at Christmas" the Love that gave himself up to death to effect the greatest rescue plan in human history, is too good to keep within the four walls of the church (or in our case, five walls!).

We trust that the church will be open for us to meet together on Christmas Day, as well as having online services to join in with. In whatever way you are able to celebrate this greatest of all gifts, may you be aware that the love of God, shared with the whole human race through the birth of this Child, is surrounding you and dwelling within you, not just at this special time of year, but every day.

Let us, in our hearts and minds, go once more to Bethlehem, with shepherds and angels, to see this thing that has come to pass and the babe lying in the manger. So may our knowledge of God's love grow, together with our desire to love God more and to share his love, which he has so freely shared with us.

With my love and prayers.

Simon

# Christmas Services at St Matthew's



6<sup>th</sup> December 10.00am

Advent Carol Service  
in church

Christmas Eve  
5.00pm

Christingle online

Christmas Eve 11.30pm

Midnight Communion  
online

Christmas Day 10.00am

Family Communion  
in church



All Welcome  
आपका स्वागत है  
நல்வரவு

Join our online services via  
[stmatthew.org.uk](http://stmatthew.org.uk)  
and please check there  
in case of further restrictions

## Christmas is about - Christ

‘They saw the young child ... and fell down and worshipped him’  
(Matthew 2:11)

He was born in the humblest of settings, yet heaven above was filled with the songs of angels. His birthplace was cattle shed, yet a star brought the rich and noble from thousands of miles away to worship Him. His birth was contrary to the laws of life and His death was contrary to the laws of death, yet no miracle is greater than His birth, His life, his death, His resurrection and His teachings. He had no cornfields or fisheries, yet He spread a table for 5000 and had bread and fish to spare. He never stood on expensive carpeting, yet He walked on the waters and they supported Him. His crucifixion was the crime of crimes, yet from God’s perspective no less a price could have made possible our redemption.

When He died, few mourned His passing, yet God hung a black cape over the sun. Those who crucified Him did not tremble at what they had done, yet the earth shook under them. Sin never touched Him. Corruption could not get hold of His body. The soil that was reddened with His blood could not claim His dust. For over three years He preached the Gospel. He wrote no book. He had no headquarters and He built no organisation. Yet two thousand years later He is the central figure of human history, the perpetual theme of all preaching, the pivot around which the ages revolve, and the only redeemer of the human race. At this season of celebration and gift-giving, let’s join the wise men who ‘fell down and worshipped Him’. Let’s remember, Christmas is about Christ. (From United Christian Broadcasters-with permission)



Adoration of the Magi by Albrecht Durer

## The Persecuted Church- Beirut explosion



On 4<sup>th</sup> August an immense explosion rocked Beirut when about 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate fertiliser exploded in a warehouse in the port area of the city killing 160 people and injuring about 5000. Lebanon is no stranger to conflict and explosions are almost routine. But this blast, the equivalent of a small nuclear weapon, exceeded anything seen previously in the country. Hundreds of thousands

were made homeless.

When the disaster struck, Lebanon was struggling with economic and political problems as well as the Covid 19 crisis. The government has defaulted on its debt. The currency and economy were sliding, as banks struggled to cover people's deposits. With a poverty rate estimated to exceed 50%, the country's population was already desperate.

### Four Christian neighbourhoods among the worst affected.

For poor Christians in the capital and nearby, the explosion was catastrophic. The blast flattened the port area and apartments in the nearby crowded neighbourhoods crumbled. Four of the five neighbourhoods affected are predominantly Christian. Damage was caused to buildings 18 miles away. Businesses and homes were damaged or destroyed and the infrastructure of a large part of the city was demolished.

### Immediate help reached shocked and desperate Christians

Barnabas Fund partners in Lebanon responded immediately to help with critical needs including food, medical support and basic home security repairs. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, Barnabas has sent over £203,000 in emergency relief aid support starting in the few days after the explosion. Aid was targeted especially to help vulnerable people and on repair work to make homes safe.



## Support for vulnerable secret believers

Converts from Islam to Christianity live in great insecurity in a country torn by political and sectarian strife and were particularly at risk. Some of the Muslim-background believers from nearby countries who Barnabas helped, cannot receive other aid because coming forward would reveal the fact that they were converts from Islam, thus endangering themselves. Beirut is home to many Christian refugees from Iraq and Syria and helping them was also a high priority.

## An update from one of our project partners

“Where we come from it is disasters on all levels. The sanctions hit the economy in such a way that made it collapse. No fuel... means no electricity, no bread, no cars to move and no transport of goods,” came the words of a Lebanese Christian leader to Barnabas in late September. At the time of writing, coronavirus was also hitting Lebanon very hard, affecting the lives of all people and Christians in particular. He explained that bread was being strictly rationed as well as rice, sugar, vegetable oil and other staples. Medicine was also scarce, and very expensive if it can be found at all. In the midst of multiple crises many Lebanese, including Christians, are considering leaving the country. Since the August explosion, many who have a second non-Lebanese passport started leaving or plan to leave because they can see no hope for their children in this country.



Many Christians were among the estimated 5000 people injured in this terrible blast. Flying debris scattered for miles across the densely populated city. “Your prayers give us a lot of strength so we can absorb the shock and do our best to pass on the spirit to others around us” wrote another Lebanese Christian leader soon after the explosion.

## Bible themed verses- Acceptance

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

(1 Samuel 16:7)

“Know that the Lord, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.”

(Psalm 100:3)

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

(Ephesians 2:10)

“The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you.”

(Jeremiah 31:3)

But now, says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine.”

(Isaiah 43:1)

“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to me I will by no means cast out.”

(John 6: 37)





# Prayers

## A prayer for Advent 2020

How long, O Lord, how long?  
We wait for the vaccine that will ease our planet's fear,  
come, Lord of hope.  
We wait for the justice that will end our planet's hunger,  
come, Lord of hope.  
We wait for the ceasefire that will stop our planet's violence,  
come, Lord of hope.  
We wait for the change that will restore our planet's climate,  
come, Lord of hope.  
We wait for the return of Jesus that will complete our planet's destiny,  
Amen

O Lord, as we wait in a world of turmoil for an end to sickness and anxiety, facemasks and lockdowns, loneliness and job losses, enable us to keep our eyes fixed in You. Help us to be strong and take heart as we wait for You to deliver us. Give us grace to look beyond ourselves and remember others in far more difficult situations, especially our brothers and sisters in contexts of persecution or great poverty, where coronavirus has been yet one more hardship to add to what they already bear so patiently. Bless them and provide for them, we ask, in Jesus' Name. (Psalm 27:14)

(From the current Barnabas Fund prayer diary)

## For our witness during Advent

With hearts full of hope and expectation, Lord,  
we wait for the coming Kingdom.  
Make us people who serve others,  
distinguished by our generosity.  
Make us people who speak of Jesus,  
distinguished by our kindness.  
Make us people who are good neighbours,  
distinguished by our tolerance.  
And so may all those we know be drawn  
to the God who was, and is, and is to come.  
Amen.

## New series- Heroes of the Faith: Edward Jenner

There is currently much media coverage of vaccines to combat Covid19, so you might be interested in the background to this amazing man, sometimes referred to as the 'Father of the vaccine.'

It has been said of Edward Jenner that 'his work saved more lives than any other man on earth'. It's an extraordinary claim for someone who spent his entire life as a country doctor, but it may well be true.



Edward Jenner was born in 1749 in Berkeley, Gloucestershire, England, the son of the local vicar. His family had a long tradition of sending people into the church, but the death of Jenner's father left the family impoverished and forced the young man to take up another

career. From an early age Jenner had a great interest in science and the natural world and was apprenticed to a doctor. Learning the trade, he went on to work in London where his skills both as a physician and a scientist were soon recognised. He was invited by Captain Cook to be part of the science team on his second voyage to Australasia. Jenner, however, had no love of either travel or London life and soon returned to his home village as its doctor. Jenner's reputation as a caring and wise doctor grew among his community but he continued to pursue his long-standing fascination with nature. He was particularly interested in birds and his



careful studies of cuckoo behaviour gained him such respect in the British scientific community that he was elected to the prestigious Royal Society.

The great medical curse of the age was the killer disease smallpox. In Europe, around 400,000 people a year died from the disease. Typically, when smallpox swept through a village 20 to 50 per cent of those

infected died. A third of the survivors of smallpox went blind and many more were scarred for life. People were so desperate to avoid smallpox that they sought to be deliberately inoculated from sores of those who had a mild form of the disease in the hope that this would give them some immunity. It was a risky procedure with limited success: the great American preacher Jonathan Edwards died as a result of it.

In thinking about smallpox, Jenner pondered a dairymaid's intriguing comment: 'I shall never have smallpox for I have had cowpox.' Cowpox was a mild infection of animals which could be caught by humans with little harmful effect. Jenner concluded that there must be a possibility that smallpox could be prevented by inoculating people with cowpox. Yet as a scientist he knew that to be of any worth,



any experiments had to be conducted carefully. When an outbreak of cowpox occurred locally, Jenner deliberately inoculated a young stable hand with it. The boy suffered only mild effects and when, a few months later, he was inoculated with smallpox, he failed to catch the far more serious disease.

Encouraged, Jenner persisted with more inoculations and in 1797 sent a short communication to the Royal Society describing his results. His paper was rejected on the grounds that it had only 13 samples. Disappointed but not deterred, Jenner went away and carried out more work, eventually publishing his results at his own expense. Jenner called his new procedure *vaccination* after the Latin word for cow, *vacca*. Despite controversy, his method spread rapidly throughout Britain and was soon taken up across the world. Jenner refused to make money out of his discovery – he inoculated the poor for free – and in encouraging the careful use of the new technique he bankrupted himself. There is very little to say about the rest of Jenner's life. He continued as a doctor and consultant, kept up his interest in the natural world and died in 1823. His old adversary, smallpox, outlasted him but not for long. Increasingly confined to remote parts of the world, it was finally eradicated in 1980. Despite the turbulence of the times in which Jenner lived – the Napoleonic wars were raging – his fame became enormous

Edward Jenner was a committed Christian. He was typical of many believers in every age who demonstrate their faith through the way they live their lives. An amiable, quiet, warm-hearted Christian, ever ready with the appropriate Bible verse, Jenner was anxious that his discovery would be used as widely as possible. He was particularly concerned that praise should be directed not to him, but to the God who had made and used him.

Here is a man who became quite literally a household name across the world, yet his celebrity status left him unchanged. Jenner remained to the end of his life a man who was gentle, humble and gracious. So, at a time when the word *vaccination* is widely heard, spare a thought for Edward Jenner, the man who started it all.

## **'Taking it for granted'**

(The third and final reflection by Pamela Bird,  
former trustee of Carers Christian Fellowship to which I belonged before this  
charity closed in 2018)

### **OUR FUTURE** –read John 14 v 1-7

Our lives are temporal, here today and gone tomorrow, blown about like chaff. **We should never take tomorrow for granted** – we only have today. “Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative and God-provision. Your everyday human concerns will be met, give your entire attention to what God is doing right now”. Live fully for today for you do not know what tomorrow will bring.

### **OUR SALVATION** –read Revelation 21 v 21 +22 v 1-7

This is a personal matter, you cannot be a Christian on the strength of your parent's faith, or because you went to Sunday school, or because you go to church, do good, or give your money to the poor. Heaven is only for those who declare that Jesus is Lord and live according to the 10 commandments. Faith cannot be second-hand; we have to believe for ourselves that Jesus is Lord. **Do not take your salvation for granted!**

#### **So, let us pray & re-affirm our faith –**

I love you Jesus. I can hardly comprehend that you would give your life for me.

I ask you to forgive all my sins especially the sins of omission.

I ask you to come into my life.

By your Holy Spirit I invite you into my head, my heart & my soul.

I thank you that I will now meet you at your banquet in Heaven when you call me home. Amen.

If you have never prayed that prayer before, please be assured that Jesus has heard you. As we think about where we, and the world, are this winter, with the world gripped by a frightening infectious virus, with people having to change how they do life, and even how they do death, it is easy to get swamped by fear and worry as what the future will hold. Everything as we knew it has changed. We can no longer take anything for granted. **However, we have something that is very precious and that is our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.** No one can take that away from us and Jesus promised that He would never leave us or forsake us. May I suggest that instead of watching the news on the TV, you get your own Good News, your Bible and read the promises of God to his faithful people. You could start with Psalm 150, and then read Psalm 100.



## The preciousness of time

I am currently leading a Zoom church home group based on an Advent booklet ('**So What Are You Waiting For?**') written by Rev Lucy Winkett, Vicar of St James', Piccadilly. It is an ecumenical course in 4 sessions with accompanying CD and transcript. Apart from 'waiting', other themes are woven into this course including time and patience. While



researching one of the studies I incorporated some definitions of 'Time' and as we rapidly approach the New Year, with all its challenges and opportunities, these excellent quotes may resonate?

“Time flies over us but leaves its shadow behind.” (Anon)

“Time is what we want most, but... what we use worst.” (**William Penn**)

“The key is in not spending time, but in investing it.” (Stephen **R. Covey**)

“Time is free, but it's priceless. You can't own it, but you can use it. You can't keep it, but you can spend it. Once you've lost it you can never get it back.” (Harvey Mackay)

“The two most powerful warriors are patience and time.” (**Leo Tolstoy**)

“Lost time is never found again.” (**Benjamin Franklin**)

“There's only one thing more precious than our time and that's who we spend it on.” (**Leo Christopher**)

“The greatest gift you can give someone is your time because when you give your time, you are giving a portion of your life that you will never get back.” (**Anon**)



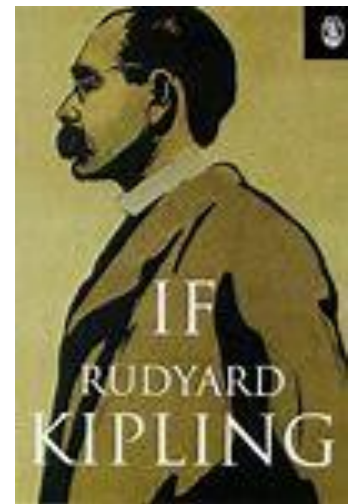


## Wisdom from the Cotswolds

Some friends who live in Wotton-Under-Edge recently sent me their Parish magazine. The name of their new Vicar, Rev Tim Hastie Smith, is familiar as he was formerly the Chief Executive of Scripture Union which I and others in the congregation have supported for many years. In view of the current crisis, I consider his 'letter' particularly powerful and relevant so, with his permission, I have produced it in full.

'Richard Rohr, (an American Jesuit priest whose superb, insightful writings some readers follow) has drawn up five truths that he regards as central to being able to live life fully and effectively, regardless of circumstance (he drew them up whilst working among prisoners in New Mexico serving life prison sentences) You don't have to be a Christian to accept these truths but all five are rooted in Christian understanding.

**1. Life is tough:** A theme famously explored by American psychologist Scott Peck in *The Road less Travelled* his argument is that if you believe that life should be fun and fair you are in for a serious disappointment. This leads to either despair or denial. So, get real. Life is a mix of dross and gold. As Rudyard Kipling reflects in his perceptive, but desperately dated poem, *If*, Triumph and Disaster are both imposters. God never promised health and wealth in spite of the destructive, greedy lies peddled by the Prosperity Gospel.



**2. You are not as important as you think you are:** There over two and half billion people in India and China who have never heard of me! Moreover, history is littered by mighty monarchs and stunning artists who we know nothing of today. Furthermore, there are so many great artists and saints, died ignored, and in penury, deemed hopeless failures. So, the applause of mankind is valueless. But to this, the Christian would want to add, but you are, in fact, infinitely valuable. But your value lies in the absolute assurance that God loves you. God's love gives you value.

**3. Your greatest fulfilment will come through acts of selflessness and service:** Again, simply an observable fact. Whilst there may be exceptions, for most humans, giving and sharing, enjoying friendship caring for others, be they human or animals brings immeasurable joy that cannot be bought. Which begs the question, why do we spend so much time on things that do not bring joy, when bringing joy is available to all. Even Kerry Mucklowe found some joy in 'random acts of kindness'

**4. You are not in control:** This perhaps needs the caveat, that whilst we are not in control of events, we are in control (to a certain extent) of how we respond to them. As the old proverb goes, *you can't stop the birds flying over your head, but you don't need to let them build a nest in your hair*. For the Christian, the fact that we are not in control is made far easier to carry, by the belief that we know the One who is in control, and that God is loving. That, of course raises a challenge



too. How does a loving God allow suffering, being the obvious one? I would rather wrestle with that conundrum, than fall into the despairing view that all is hopeless, worthless, and valueless. The desperation of the final words in Kenneth Williams's diary '*Oh, what's the bloody point?*' written shortly

before he took an overdose say it all.

**5. You are going to die:** Simply true. Memento Mori. Remember that thou art mortal as slaves whispered in the ear of Roman generals during their triumphs. At the end of the day, Bishop, King, Knight, Rook, Queen, and pawn all get swept back into the same box. The knowledge that we will die should shape how we live. And clearly our views on what happens next (if anything) will play a big part.

I share these five observations not as some sort of knockdown argument but as a starting point for facing reality. They have certainly helped me, which doesn't make them true, but might make them worth reflecting upon.'



## Quotes

To be a missionary today, you only have to leave your front door. The world has come to us; we must offer Jesus to them.

God never said that the journey would be easy, but He did say that the arrival would be worthwhile.

The great secret of the spiritual life, the life of the Beloved Sons and Daughters of God, is that everything we live, be it gladness or sadness, joy or pain, health or illness, can all be part of the journey toward the full realisation of our humanity. It is not hard to say to one another: "All that is good and beautiful leads us the glory of the children of God." But it is very hard to say: "But didn't you know that we all have to suffer and thus enter into our glory?"  
**Nonetheless, real care means the willingness to help each other in making our brokenness into a gateway to joy.**

(Henri Nouwen)

Handle them carefully, for words have more power than atom bombs.

Man, made in the image of God, has a purpose; to be in a relationship with God, who is there. (Francis Schaeffer)

There is no joy in the world like the joy of bringing one soul to Christ.

Good words are worth much and cost little. (George Herbert)

Poster found in a church in France, which translates: "When you enter this church it may be possible that you hear 'the call of God'. However, it is unlikely that He will call you on your mobile. Thank you for turning off your phones. If you want to talk to God-enter, choose a quiet place and talk to Him. If you want to see Him, send Him a text while driving."

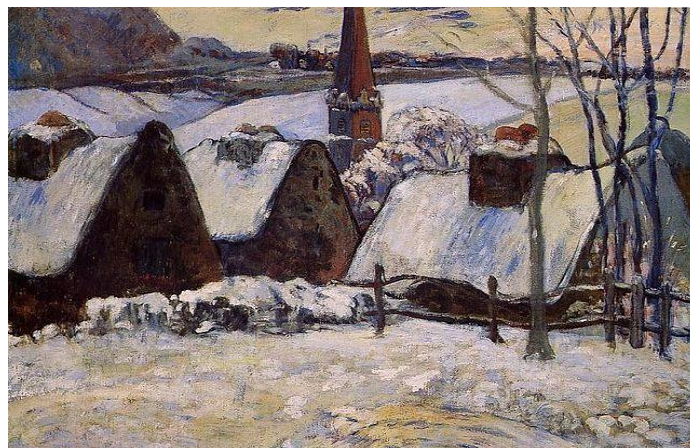
Each life is made up of mistakes and learning, waiting and growing, practising patience and being persistent. (Billy Graham)

Faith is to believe what we do not see, and the reward of this faith is to see what we believe. (St Augustine)

Christianity is not engrossed by this transitory world but measures all things by the thought of eternity. (Gresham Machen)



## Winter scenes by famous artists



Thank you, Monet, Pissarro, Gauguin, Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Caspar David Friedrich.

# Update on the Roof Fund Raising Appeal

## A note from Jan Williams

Hello again. I have reserved a space in the Parish Magazine to keep you up to date on progress raising the funds for the work on the roof.

In September Simon “officially” launched the appeal for donations towards the roof repair. Fortunately, we have already had a couple of legacies. We also have funds for the maintenance of the building from the annual Church budget and which we have used to explore the extent of the problems.

People have asked how many panels there are on the roof. The answer is 2,500 (£200 x 2,200 = £500K). We so far have funding for 408 panels, so we have a bit of a way to go. If you can please gift aid your donation as it does make quite a difference. You can gift aid your donations as long as they’re not more than 4 times what you have paid in tax (either income or capital gains) in a tax year. Don’t forget it is the total amount for all the charities you are supporting.

We are very grateful to those who have contributed already. The money contributed to the roof goes into a restricted fund which means it can only be used for the roof. If, for whatever reason, the project does not go ahead, then those who have contributed can be given their-money back.

We have identified a list of trusts which we will be approaching for donations. Some trusts require us to be at a particular stage of the project before we can apply to them. Some require us to have a significant amount of funds already accumulated so they will match what we have. Rather obviously called “match funding”. So once somebody has agreed to give us some money, we can add that to our pot to get more match funding.

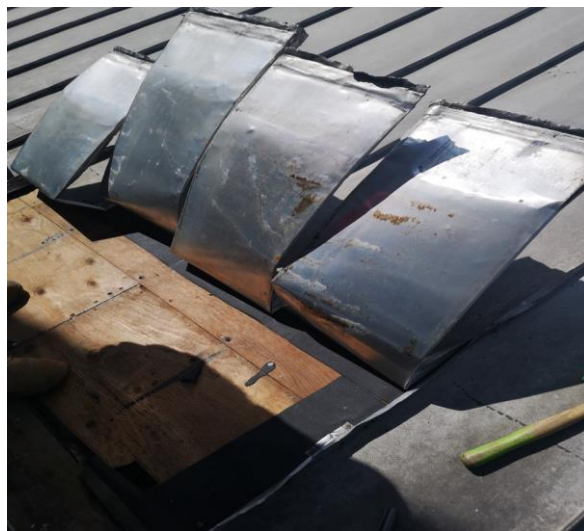
We have been identifying other trusts that do not have any timing conditions. One we approached was interested but because of COVID they are just helping those they are already helping. However, they suggested that we go back in a couple of months’ time. We will have to go to a lot of trusts as the amount given by the trusts could be small. I am most grateful for the help from John Ingman and Barney Powell in supporting me in this work and to Terry for handling and recording your donations.

The trusts also ask a lot of questions to understand things about us and our building. To collect the facts they need, we are asking those who used our building in better times to complete a questionnaire so we can collect the relevant facts-

Before I close, here are a few pictures of the state of the roof which will bring home the problems we face. As you can see, the staples (nails) which hold the



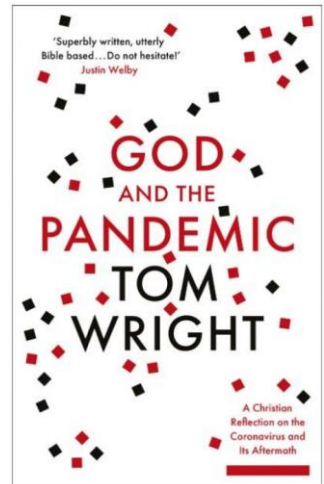
aluminium panels in place have corroded and could easily be pulled out by hand. These photos were taken by the architects when they and the experts investigated the problems with the roof so they could write the report. Don't worry they put the panels back!



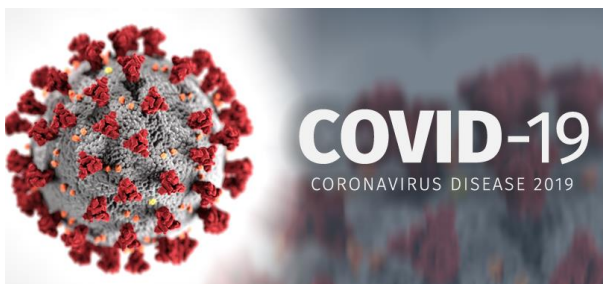
Finally, we are not alone in our problems with the roof. David and I recently visited a church in the Vale of Glamorgan in connection with some family research. In 1796 David's 4 times great grandfather baptised his son in the church, both were called John Williams. The church wardens told us that their church was always under threat of closure because of the challenges of keeping it repaired. Another local church had been closed due to lack of funds to do the repairs.

## Book review: 'God and the Pandemic' by Tom Wright

I read this mid-summer and cannot possibly do justice in one page to this extremely well-written and thought-provoking book. The author has been a leading New Testament scholar for decades and has served in several pastoral roles including the Bishop of Durham. In this short book (77 pages, which I read in one sitting but will reread, slowly), Wright addresses the global pandemic and discusses how Christians might reflect upon and respond to it in light of Scripture, culminating in the person and work of Jesus Christ.



During the past year there have been multifarious theories in the media purporting to explain the origins of the virus: Wuhan wet market or laboratory (blame the Chinese), WHO, a hoax, God's judgement on a sinful world, prelude



to a 'New World Order', population control via vaccine etc. Wright doesn't proffer easy, slick, ready-packaged answers; instead he suggests that Christians should view the enormous challenges related to this crisis with 'lament and prayer'. His intention is

modest as he wishes to provide a Christian 'reflection' on the situation that is rooted in Scripture and which accounts for God's work in and through Christ as ways to encourage the church to be the Spirit-empowered church that God intends.

The book is not a complex analysis of the treatment of evil or the nature of God and it certainly isn't intended to answer the many 'why' questions that inevitably emerge. Wright doesn't present a programme of practical advice on how to respond; indeed, the book seemed like a casual conversation with him as he draws on many years' experience of learning to address some relevant issues. The author looks at examples in the Old Testament including Job and the assumed reasons for suffering. In a subsequent chapter he turns to aspects of Jesus' ministry including his encounter with the man born blind (John 9: 1-3), the Lord's Prayer and much more.

And finally, Wright reminds us, "Part of the answer to the question, "Where is God in the pandemic?" must be, 'Out there on the front line, suffering and dying to bring healing and hope

## Another reflection      **Saying the Right Thing**

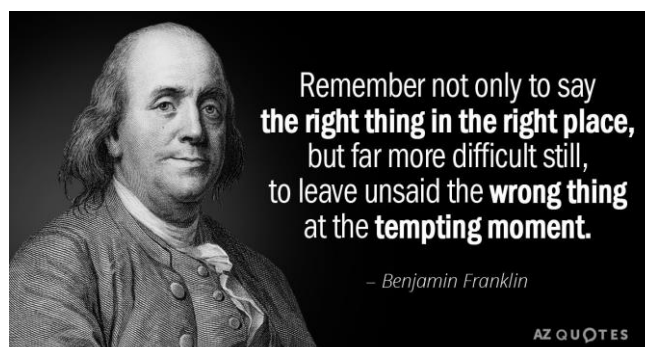
I've included these gems after overhearing an asinine, aggressive and pointless argument between two passengers who were sitting behind me on the no 64 bus last week.

William Penn, founder of the British colony of Pennsylvania in 1677 formulated six principles for conversation.

1. Avoid company where it is not profitable or necessary, and on those occasions speak little and last.
2. Silence is wisdom, where speaking is folly and always safe.
3. Some are so foolish as to interrupt and anticipate those that speak, instead of hearing and thinking before they answer, which is uncivil, as well as silly.
4. If you think twice before you speak once, you will speak twice the better for it.
5. Better to say nothing, than not to the purpose. And to speak pertinently, consider both what is fit and when it is fit to speak.
6. In all debates, let truth be your aim, not victory or unjust interest; endeavour to gain, rather than to expose your critic.'

In short, never speak without thinking! Give yourself time to incorporate wisdom in your words, avoiding those that make others feel intimidated or inferior. One of the best ways to persuade other is by listening to them. A gossip talks about others and a bore talks about himself, but a good conversationalist talks about what interests you and listens attentively to what you have to say. Sometimes the more you speak, the less people remember.

**“Everyone enjoys a fitting reply; it is wonderful to say the right thing at the right time.”      (Proverbs 15:23)**



**Never get rid of newspapers,  
they are a great source of entertainment!**

Homicide victims rarely talk to police

Miracle cure kills fifth patient

Bridges help people cross rivers

City unsure why the sewer smells

Starvation can lead to health hazards

Federal Agents raid gun shop and find weapons

Diana was still alive hours before she died

Marijuana issue sent to a joint committee

Bugs flying around with wings are flying bugs

Barbershop singers bring joy to school for deaf

17 remain dead in morgue shooting spree

Total lunar eclipse will be broadcast live on Northwood Public Radio

Worker suffers leg pain after crane drops 800-pound ball on his head

1. Why was Theresa May sacked as nativity manager?

**She couldn't run a stable government.**

2. Why don't Southern Rail train guards share advent calendars?

**They want to open the doors themselves.**

3. What's the difference between Ryanair and Santa?

**Santa flies at least once a year.**

4. Kim Jong Un will play Santa this year in the South's annual pantomime.

**He said he fancied a Korea change.**



# Christmas Quiz

I have two x £10 Waterstones tokens in my wallet for the first two clever readers who can give me the correct answers.

1. The French word 'Noel' is often used around Christmas, but what was its original meaning in Latin?
2. In what country did Silent Night originate?
3. What was the original title for The Little Drummer Boy?
4. In what country did the custom of putting up a Christmas tree originate?
5. What animal parts were the first artificial Christmas trees made from?
6. What plant-based Christmas tradition did servants in Victorian England popularize?
7. What country is the Poinsettia, with its red and green foliage, native to?
8. What old Christmas tradition signals to people passing by that the residents of a house are Christian?
9. How many wise men/ Magi/kings does the Bible say visited the baby Jesus?
10. What is the most popular meal for Christmas in Japan?
11. In what European country are children given gifts by St Basil on Jan 1<sup>st</sup> instead of December 25<sup>th</sup>?
12. What cartoon character is a Christmas Eve staple in Sweden and is watched by millions of Swedes every year?
13. In what European country might you find money under the tablecloth when you sit down to eat the traditional Christmas Eve supper?



**The Parish Church of St Matthew, Croydon**

<b>Church Address</b>	Chichester Road Croydon CR0 5NQ	8681 3147
<b>Parish Office Email Address</b>	churchadmin@stmatthew.org.uk	
<b>Website</b>	www.stmatthew.org.uk	
<b>Parish Administrator</b>	Terry Mitchell	8681 3147
<b>Hall Bookings</b>	Contact Parish Administrator	
<b>Vicar</b>	Revd Simon Foster revsimon@stmatthew.org.uk	8688 5055
<b>Assistant Priest</b>	Revd Linda Fox linda.stmatthews@gmail.com	07736708828
<b>Readers</b>	Paul Parmenter Alison Radford	8689 5874
<b>Director of Music &amp; Choir</b>	Michael Strange	
<b>Southwark Pastoral</b>	Carolyn Tweed	
<b>Auxiliaries</b>	Sue Collins	
<b>Churchwardens</b>	Stephen Collingwood Rohini Abhayaratne	8686 2815
<b>PCC Secretary</b>	David Williams	8768 3599
<b>Treasurer &amp; Gift Aid Recorder</b>	Terry Mitchell	
<b>Sacristan</b>	Gillian Bridger	
<b>Assistant Sacristan</b>	Jerry Savage	
<b>Electoral Roll Officer</b>	David Williams	
<b>Magazine Editor</b>	Steve Tucker stephen.tucker123@btinternet.com	8681 6872

**Parish Committees and Organisations**

<b>Young Church (Sunday 10am)</b>	Judith Spencer-Gregson	8688 6640
<b>Fundraising Team</b>	Jane Passfield	
<b>Fellowship Team</b>	Lucasta Grayson	
<b>Communications Team</b>	Revd Simon Foster	
<b>Fabric Team</b>	Stephen Collingwood	
<b>Finance Team</b>	Richard Tweed	
<b>Pastoral Team</b>	Revd Simon Foster	
<b>Circle Dance</b>	Sally Ditzel	07568338204

