

InSpire



Winter 2014/15

The Magazine of St Luke's Church, Maidenhead

And Is It True?

Vicar **Sally Lynch** reflects on the truth in the nativity stories.

"The bells of waiting Advent ring"

Most of us will be familiar with the opening line of John Betjeman's poem, *Christmas*, in which he describes the frantic preparations for the festival as he experienced them in the 1950s. He writes of decorating church and home, and of 'remembering' people in the gifts they are given. His light and festive tone changes towards the end of the poem as he asks, "And is it true?"

Well, is it true – this story that we have told for just over 1,900 years? Why not 2,000 years? The earliest gospel, Mark – written around 60 AD – has no birth story in it. John, the latest gospel, has no nativity but his dramatic opening, "In the beginning was the Word" takes us right back to the start of creation and theologically explains that God's purpose from the very beginning was to be in His world and he achieved that at a point in time in the eternal Word, Jesus, incarnate in human form. Only the gospels of Matthew and Luke have nativity stories, and when we read them we see that they are very different. These two gospels were probably written after the fall of Jerusalem – 80 AD? – almost a century after the events are said to have taken place.

If you have never compared the two accounts, you may like to do so (we did this in our 'Church Year' teaching series earlier this year). You will find huge differences: for example, Mary and Joseph live in two different places at the start (Bethlehem or Nazareth), and different people visit the baby.

If you reflect on our modern nativity plays you will find many omissions (there's no little donkey, no inn-keeper, and no lobster – see *Love Actually*!). So many questions are raised. How do we have these stories when none of the gospel writers was present? What really happened? Are the stories true?

At an historical level I suggest that

the details of the stories are probably not exactly 'true'. A deeper look into them reveals many Old Testament links and much theological teaching. We cannot simply merge the two accounts and make one historical story. I think it is more helpful to see the nativity stories as parables or 'overtures' to the whole gospel story of Jesus's saving action in the world. They set the scene and tell us clearly that Jesus is special, chosen, and, indeed, God incarnate. The theology of John's opening chapter is most helpful here. The details that have built up over time – those in the gospels and those we add to the crib – help us to place the story; say something of what it means to us (and, in a way that helps me to cope with all of the commercial and secular 'stuff' around Christmas, these things are also ways of expressing what people feel about the season – our trees contribute to that).

If the nativity stories are constructs that in some way express what we feel, believe, and 'know' about Jesus, then they are in the very deepest

sense completely true. They express our belief that God himself came to his creation as one of us. He identified wholly with us and knows just how it is to live in the mess of this life. And more – we know the end (and the beginning) of the story; he grew up and taught; healed, loved and died for us so that we might have, as John puts it, "life in all its fullness" (John 10.10b).

That in itself is amazing. But we do not have to wait for death to bring us into life. The incarnate Jesus – baby and man – lives in us now through his Spirit, and he comes to us weekly, daily, in the bread and wine of the Eucharist, bringing his strength and love to help us cope with the life that he experienced.

And is it true? You bet it is!

And is it true? and is it true,
This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,
A Baby in an ox's stall?
The Maker of the stars and sea
Become a Child on earth for me?

And is it true? For if it is,
No loving fingers tying strings
Around those tissued fripperies,
The sweet and silly Christmas things,
Bath salts and inexpensive scent
And hideous tie so kindly meant,

No love that in a family dwells,
No carolling in frosty air,
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells
Can with this single Truth compare –
That God was Man in Palestine
And lives to-day in Bread and Wine.

John Betjeman (1906 – 1984)

To read more about these ideas, see *The First Christmas* by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan.



SPECIAL DELIVERY

The amazing story of how a knitted Christmas scene – sent touring around our parish during Advent – had already clocked up 3,500 miles before Day 1.

Words: Sally Lynch

Last year, our knitters sent a knitted nativity set to St Matthew's Lutheran Church in Conestogo, Ontario, Canada, which adorned their altar over Christmas. This year, their knitters sent us one back in return.

It was blessed at St Matthew's on Sunday 16 November, during a service which marked ten years of their pastor Monika's ordination. Some of her family were there; among them her brother-in-law, Don, who took the precious box and met Herb, her brother, on Highway 400 – from where he took

it to work with him.

Herb just happens to be an Air Canada pilot and, the next day, was on the morning flight into London. And so the knitivity travelled all the way here in the cockpit, was posted first class in London on the Monday, and arrived at church two days later.

A better way to travel than the first nativity – and a bit faster! Thanks to Don and Herb for their help, and to all the Canadian knitters – especially the organist who added a little knitted beaver (Canada's national animal).

'Widening Links', Page 9



InSpire magazine is generally published thrice a year, except this year in which only one other edition has been printed (Autumn 2014). The editor wishes to thank everybody who has contributed to this issue. Disclaimer: Any views expressed in this magazine are solely those of the article's respective author(s), and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor; St Luke's Church, Maidenhead; the Diocese of Oxford; or the Church of England – unless stated otherwise.

For details of our many events and services, please see: www.stlukeschurchmaidenhead.org.uk



A Note From The Editor

When does Christmas begin? Technically, of course, not until 25 December, when the first partridge drops onto the doormat and the 'twelve days of Christmas' begin.

In some countries (among them Russia, Georgia, Ukraine, and, of all places, Ethiopia) Christmas is not celebrated until 7 January – the result of using the old Julian calendar. By contrast, in the Philippines, they get going extremely early – and drag it out for as long as possible. Formal celebrations begin only on 16 December, but it's said that Filipinos can be heard singing carols as early as September. (And you thought you've already grown sick of *Wonderful Christmase*!)

Bringing it back to Britain, there are many signs that supposedly herald Christmas as being 'nearly upon us' – too many, I sometimes think. For a lot of people, carol services mark the start of the season. For others, it's the primary-school nativity productions. Your Christmas may begin by watching washed-up 'celebrities' pulling a comedy plunger and switching on a town's Christmas lights – or, possibly, you face the mobs in the detestable, relatively modern, alien import, 'Black Friday'.

Look, as lovely as that all supposedly is, really it is all just distraction from the main event – the star of the show, the saviour of the universe... Baby J himself.

I've come to bemoan my annually growing list of 'Christmas traditions', but one welcome addition in recent years has been the church's very own Christmas Tree Festival. I love taking time to sit quietly, keeping myself to myself, and just thinking about things. It's something I know that I don't make enough time to do on a day-to-day basis, so it's wonderful to have the space and silence in which to do so, during what is otherwise a very hectic and busy time.

Wishing you a very happy Christmas.
Andrew Burdett, December 2014

Onward,

Andrew Burdett put his best foot forward for

Christian Soldiers

the penultimate stint of Bishop John's Thames Path Pilgrimage.



By any measure, allowing six hours to walk the eight-mile towpath from Marlow to Maidenhead was generous. Though this was a perfect cross-section of the Church of England, with almost all of the so-called 'pilgrims' north of 40, the projected average pace (amounting to little more than a crawl) was a woeful underestimate. Consequently, by lunchtime, the party was well ahead of schedule, fast advancing towards the day's halt at Boulter's Lock.

Arriving in Cookham just after 2:00pm, I knew I'd have to move quickly to catch the walkers up. I didn't know where they were, so I was pleased to see an

old friend approaching in the reverse direction.

"Martin?"

He greeted me warmly. "Andrew! What are you doing here?"

I explained that I'd come to join the Diocese's walk, which had been organised to allow Bishop John to bid farewell to each of his four archdeacons, as well as to inaugurate the new Thames Pilgrim Way. "The only problem is", I feebly admitted, "that I have absolutely no idea as to how far the party has got."

At this point, I was still half expecting the group to number few more than five walkers: there'd be a bishop, a vicar or two, and, I thought, a couple of Bible-bashing keen beans. Imagine my surprise, then, at Martin's reply.

"Ah, yes, we passed them about five or ten minutes ago. There must be about fifty of them."

I thanked him for his helpful tip-off, then started jogging to catch up with the mass. It took me a while before I finally caught sight of them all, through the trees and across the fields on the right-angle where Mill Lane joins the riverside. There they were: a line of Christians, the length of which I was really rather encouraged to see. They'd be laughing and joking, sharing stories and prayers. Very soon I'd be at the back, no doubt joining in with the chatter.

I couldn't have been more wrong. Everyone was silent. For the towpath users who passed us, it must have been an unsettling sight. Dog-walking mums and scooter-riding youngsters, strolling couples and bantering dads. They all passed our file with some uncertainty as to the intentions of this softly, silently-moving crowd. One chap, having walked past everyone else, *did* stop me to ask, but I was equally unsure of the cause of the piercing silence.



Finally, after twenty minutes, Bishop John rounded up the group at a suitable spot and, breaking the silence, led prayers. With everyone else now continuing on to the final leg of the walk, he shook my hand and apologised for the aloofness of earlier: "Towards the end of each day, we take an hour to walk in quietude, collecting together our thoughts. It gives us time to reflect on the things we've seen and the conversations we've had throughout the walk."

"You must have seen a lot of the land you've covered before," I put it to him, "but presumably never like this, in one go?". "No, actually there's a lot that's new to

me. Why would I have seen it when we all spend so much time driving?", he replied. "That's what's made the walk so enjoyable; being out in the fresh air, seeing the glistening Thames, meeting hundreds of people... and we've been blessed with the weather!" (The much-discussed 'Indian summer' of September kept dry all those who participated in the walk, with not a single day's rain across the ten days. Better still, the river-flanking foliage was resultantly coloured in delightful autumnal hues.)

Nearing the reception on Ray Mill Island, we were two hours in advance of the original estimated arrival time, but members of St Luke's (the evening's host parish) had worked around this to ensure everything was ready. Thus, with our renowned style, an elaborate tea was served to the lively pilgrims, all glad to accept a cake and a cuppa.

At 3:15pm, Revd Sally led a simple service with prayers, poems, and songs – ending a day that had, after all, offered space for serenity amid much laughter and adda.



Sharing the Fruits of Harvest

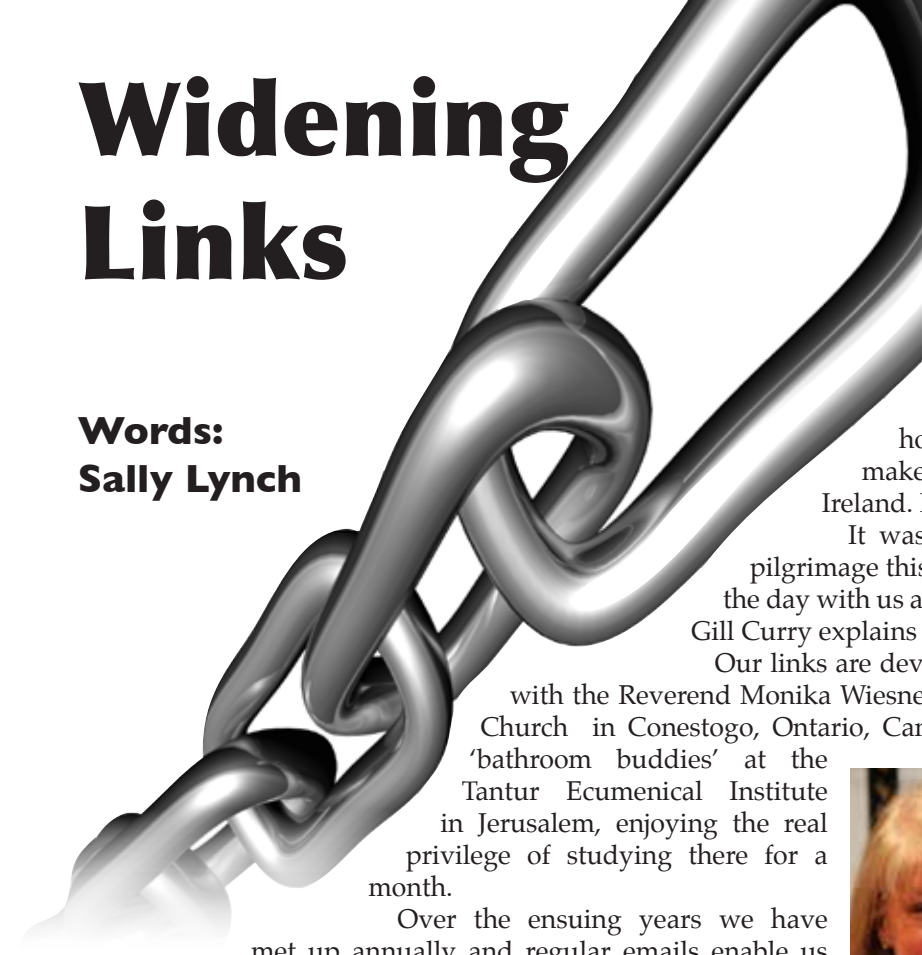
Our Harvest Festival worship on 28 September began in the shadow of Maidenhead Bridge, seeing Bishop John and the rest of the Thames Path pilgrims off on the last leg of their journey. We then made our own journey back to St Luke's, handing out apples (to celebrate the harvest) as we went.

Pictures continue on Page 8.



Widening Links

Words:
Sally Lynch



I am delighted that we are broadening our vision to work more closely with other churches further afield.

We have had links with the church of St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, for some years through congregation members Ian and Jan Gilchrist, who attend both churches (they were married at St Martin's) and through sponsoring Don Luff's annual pilgrimage to Canterbury in support of The Connection (the amazing work that the church does with the homeless in London). It was a logical step, then, to make a joint trip with them, to Corrymeela in Northern Ireland. Richard Burdett has written about this on Page 16.

It was a real joy to visit St Martin's for our Advent pilgrimage this year. The Reverend Katherine Hedderley shared the day with us and helped us to reflect in the church on the season. Gill Curry explains a little about what we got up to on Page 17.

Our links are developing overseas through my personal friendship with the Reverend Monika Wiesner (pictured), the pastor of St Matthew's Lutheran Church in Conestogo, Ontario, Canada. We first met in July 2007 when we were 'bathroom buddies' at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem, enjoying the real privilege of studying there for a month.

Over the ensuing years we have met up annually and regular emails enable us to share ministry and discuss key ideas together. Last year I visited Monika ("Did I mention that I'd been to Canada..."?!), and this year Monika was with us, both in our visit to Corrymeela, and preaching from the St Luke's pulpit on the feast day of St Matthew. It was a sheer joy, and not a little emotional, for the two of us to celebrate communion together. We hope that the links between our churches will grow.



Already there are signs! As the photograph below shows, both our churches knit! When Monika was here, she was able to meet our knitters and brought small gifts for each from the St Matthew's knitters. The Advent 'knitivities' that we have traded with each other – as discussed on Page 3 – are a symbol of the connection between our two churches. As I write, the knivity is working its way around the parish and will return to church for our Christingle service on Christmas Eve.

- Week 1 the church of St Martin-in-the-Fields;
- Week 2 the church of St Matthew, Conestogo and pastor Monika;
- Week 3 the work of the Corrymeela Community;
- Week 4 the work of Revd Terrie Robinson as Director for Women in Church and Society, at the Anglican Communion.

Some of you may remember that we tried to establish links with St Luke's Hospital in Nablus, Palestine. Sadly this has not been possible, but as a church we will continue to support charities and agencies working in that area.

The Revd Terrie Robinson

Most folk will now know that earlier in the year Terrie, an Associate Priest at St Luke's, was promoted by Anglican Communion (where she has worked for some time) to the post of Director for Women in the Church and the World. This is a tremendous opportunity for women around the world to have someone to draw together work on their behalf. It is a huge role and also testament to the amazing work that Terrie has been doing. Clearly this means that Terrie will be able to give less time to us at St Luke's, but we commit to pray for her and her ministry and work.

To find out more about what she does, and about the work of the Anglican Communion, see: <http://www.anglicancommunion.org>



Prayer links

To demonstrate our church's commitment to our broadening links, we aim to pray for those with whom we have links at daily Morning Prayer.

Our Advent Pilgrimage to St Martin-in-the-Fields, London

Congregation member **Gill Curry** is pleased to have joined this year's informal Advent pilgrimage.



Assembling at Maidenhead Railway Station, we crossed central London – some via the Underground, a few by bus – to all convene at the crypt restaurant at St Martin-in-the-Fields for coffee and cake. We then met up with Revd Katherine Hedderley, who is part of their ministry team and who was actually baptised at our own St Luke's Church.

She took us on an interesting tour of the church, with lots of anecdotes and information about the work of this socially aware parish. The new, simplified interior, which takes it back nearer to its original design, is very 'plain' and I thought stylish.

St Martin's has an incredibly open-door policy to help the London rough-sleepers and homeless. Since my days in London, they have taken over the school buildings they owned next door. It now operates as a centre of help, refreshment, and shelter for those individuals who need it. Apparently some London businesses allow their staff to take an extended lunch hour once-a-week, to come and assist with the soup kitchen.

St Martin's parish includes Buckingham Palace, Downing Street, and the Admiralty, so it reaches a whole social spectrum.

In the entrance porch of the church is a large block of stone, with a carving of a new born baby resting on the rough hewn top surface. Named *In The Beginning* by sculptor Mike Chapman, this, we were told, was St Martin's Millenium project, and is very striking as an art installation. The only thing is that it rather spoils the entrance route for brides, of which there are quite a few, as this is understandably considered a prestigious venue for fashionable brides. One wonders how the sleeping homeless fit in with these social occasions – indeed, the Gilchests said that this led to an amusing story with

their own wedding ceremony.

We then went back to the crypt restaurant where we had a delicious lunch, before visiting a contemporary chapel in the other part of the crypt. It had a beautiful modern wall tapestry and some interesting African wooden carvings. Another part of the crypt houses a community room for Soho's Chinese-speaking Christians – St Martin's maintains strong links with this community, regularly holding services in Chinese.

We then had some time to ourselves, which was spent in many different ways. A walk by the Thames, a visit to one of the nearby galleries, or just sitting quietly in the chapel. We all returned to the chapel for a very short closing service, at which we lit candles.

I learnt a great deal about the busy life and hard work of this well-known London church. I had visited it before – and, once, even gave a pint of blood in the old crypt – but greatly appreciated the opportunity to go back: it was an interesting and enjoyable day.

Photograph (bottom): Brett Jordan



'Can I Do This?'

Words: Rita Buckland

Photograph: Andrew Burdett

Last year after a wedding in church, Sally showed me a photograph of a "Welcome" greeting she had seen whilst visiting another church and asked me if I could do one for St Luke's. My initial thought was, "Can I do this?" as although I have done countless cross-stitches I had never composed one myself without a chart; previously I have only worked from kits.

I thought about it for a few months and when Nicola filled in as Parish Administrator, she copied the photograph for me and I decided to 'have a go'.

Searching through various books and magazines I had bought over the years my prayers were answered. I stitched the word "Welcome" and the verse on the fabric to start

with and tacked a temporary frame around this. The cross at the top came from a book and I then found in a book the ivy border, which to my delight fitted beautifully. Next came the diagonal corners – which came from a wedding 'Order of Service' pattern in a magazine. The various other items all came from books. In the middle at the bottom is a font with a shell over it. I thought the shell appropriate as Sally uses one in baptisms. On each side of the font are the candles used in all church services and the Tudor roses can be found in the stained glass windows on the south side of the church.

Once started the whole project took about a month to complete. For my first attempt at composing a cross-stitch from scratch I felt it went well. I hope everyone enjoys it.

A Christmas Carol

Church chorister **Roger Bevitt** looks into the composition of *In The Bleak Midwinter*.

'In The Bleak Midwinter' Hymn 55, Common Praise

Christina Rossetti (1830—1894), the talented writer and sister of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, founder of the Pre-Raphaelite group of artists, wrote the words to *In The Bleak Midwinter* as a Christmas poem for a magazine in about 1872. It was first published as a hymn in 1906.

John Betjeman said of the words that, rather than depicting Bethlehem, the description in the first verse was

"more like those Victorian pictures of winter scenes with the Thames frozen over. Yet the carol captures the idea of the Incarnation more vividly perhaps than any other".

The free nature of the poetry, with none of the verses having the same syllable count in corresponding lines, requires flexibility in the musical setting. Gustav Holst (1874—1934), who, in spite of his name, was born in Cheltenham, named the setting he composed for the words after the nearby village of Cranham. This is the version in our

hymn book, and the one which is most suitable for congregational singing. It achieves the necessary flexibility by allowing a different number of syllables-per-note and notes-per-syllable, without changing the basic music.

In 1909, Harold Darke – then a student at the Royal College of Music – composed a more elaborate setting for the words, and this you are probably also familiar with: it is frequently sung by our church choir and many others, and often included on choral recordings of Christmas carols.

Co-ordinating St Luke's shoebox contributions is hard work but rewarding, says **Janet Trinkwon**.

The 2014 launch for Maidenhead's contributions towards Operation Christmas Child began on 1 November.

A speaker from Samaritan's Purse, the organisation which annually runs the project,

told of her experiences when she went with last year's lorry to Bosnia. She showed a video of the team arriving, and the wonderful faces of the children who were each subsequently given a shoebox filled with gifts.

Most of these children have never received presents and their smiling faces of pure joy brings a lump to the throat, making all the hard work worthwhile.

In 2012, more than 750,000 shoeboxes were sent and last year the total was over 900,000. This year we expect to send more than a million boxes to sixteen countries throughout Eastern Europe, central Asia, and Africa.

Many thanks to everyone at St Luke's who assisted with this year's effort: knitting hats, mittens, or contributing other items; making up the boxes, or donating money towards the operating charity. We sent a total of 40 boxes to the Maidenhead collecting station, one of 92 such centres throughout the UK. This year, Maidenhead sent a total of 6,543 boxes towards the appeal – an amazing number.



Photograph: Samaritan's Purse

St Luke's Christmas Tree Festival 2014

With 50 Christmas trees, the church's fourth Christmas Tree Festival was the biggest yet. *InSpire* magazine's pictures start here.



Tony Sheldon Travel



With assistance from her nan, Heather McDonagh, 13-year-old Jess Pollard fulfilled decoration duties on her father's company's Christmas tree. Tony Sheldon Travel is Maidenhead's only independent travel company, and was bought by Mark Pollard – formerly a General Manager there – in 2007. Since he took the company over, the business has moved to a more central location: it can now be found on Brock Lane.

Church of the Good Shepherd, Cox Green



Little Munchkins Nursery

Sarah Brown (left), a pre-school assistant, and Louise Halliday (right), a supervisor, spent time decorating the Little Munchkins tree with decorations that the children had made. "The children are so excited for Christmas", said Louise. "They're all really looking forward to seeing the finished tree."

Sunday Club



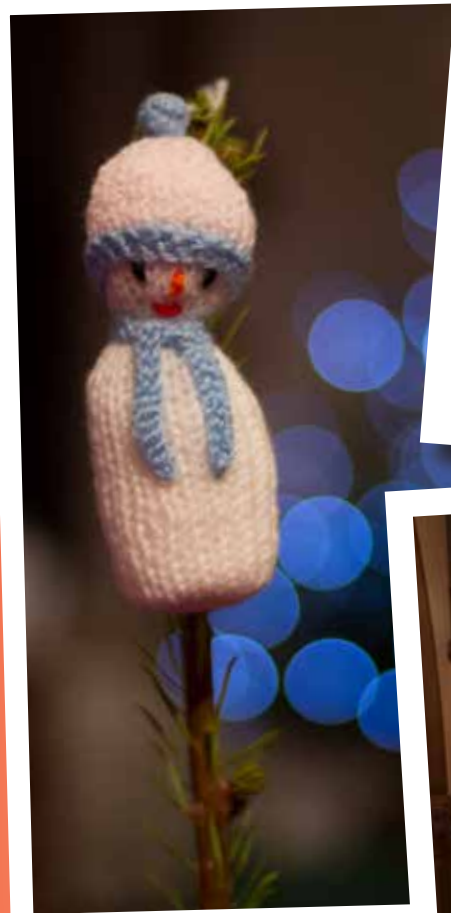
One of the St Luke's Sunday Club leaders, Jill Bevitt, lent a hand to the youngsters' tree. Inspired by the church's summer arts project, 'Noah', the Sunday Club tree features handmade animal-shaped decorations. "It was mainly the children's work – I'm just doing the finishing touches", Jill insisted.



Foxley Rainbows called in to hang decorations on their tree. Each member of the group, which meets on Mondays in Bray Village Hall, had made a mini version of themselves, using a cardboard base and wool for hair. Clockwise from top-left: Abbie, 5; Chloe, 6; Emma, 5; Amy, 6; and Roobi, 6.



Foxley Rainbows



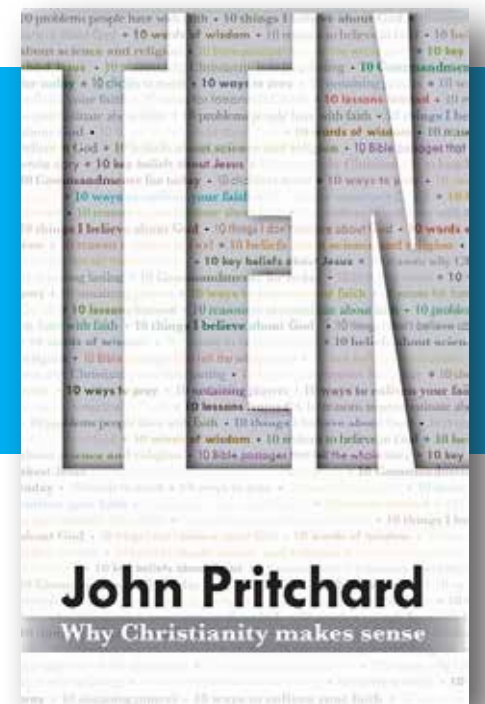
A Good Read

Sonya Clarke accepts Bishop John's reading challenge – starting with his latest book, *Ten*.

Bishop John recently challenged us to read three books a year. I guess he didn't mean Philippa Gregory, or Agatha Christie, or even James Patterson, but I believe he meant books relating to our Christian life. I have taken up that challenge and at the Licensed Lay Ministers (LLM) Conference, held in June, I found Bishop John's book *Ten* whilst browsing around the book shop. Whilst it was not the only book I purchased, it is – so far – the only one I have read.

For me, someone who prefers reading fiction to fact, this book is a very good read. It is incredibly easy to get into, and in fact at the beginning suggests that it doesn't have to be read in chapter order. There are seventeen chapters, but if you get hold of a copy you'll see why the last of these cannot be read. I found that Chapters 15 and 16 were both worth re-reading, for a least a second time.

I strongly recommend this book which, for the more ardent reader, can



probably be finished in one or two sessions. Give it a try and feel the warmth of Bishop John's walk with God. May we continue to walk together in the love of our Lord.



Our stall at the Charities Fair – which was visited by Home Secretary, Theresa May MP – raised £390. Thank you to everyone who made and bought produce!

IF WALLS COULD TALK

On a church trip to Northern Ireland, **Richard Burdett** discovered a community seeking peace in a still troubled region.

In my first term at Bristol University in 1980 I met four people who became great friends, one of whom, Patricia Manning, came from Northern Ireland and who was of a very protestant background. Living in the country just outside Londonderry (and definitely not Derry) she told us about the Troubles and what life was like when they went shopping in Belfast with its checkpoints and no-go areas, and the general sense of feeling they were defending a part of Britain from being taken over by the Irish Republic.

Later, moving to Maidenhead, I

shared a house with two fellow graduate trainees. Les Shortall was from Dublin, of Catholic stock, and spoke with equal enthusiasm for how he saw the existence of Northern Ireland as a problem that could only be resolved by its being absorbed into a united Ireland.

Although I had made several visits to Dublin, Cork and other parts of the south, I had never been to Northern Ireland, so when Ian Gilchrist announced that he was organising a trip to the Corrymeela Centre on the north Antrim coast, I immediately signed up. My son,

Matthew, was also keen to come, so on a sunny September Friday morning we met others from St Luke's at Heathrow and flew out to Belfast City airport. Matthew and I spent the day looking round the city centre and we then all converged at the main bus station from which we were collected and driven up to Corrymeela.

The community was founded in 1965 by Ray Davey, who was the first Presbyterian Chaplain at Queen's University. In that role he foresaw the need to build bridges between the polarised communities in Belfast, and when the opportunity came to buy a

former holiday camp at Ballycastle, he was instrumental in raising the funds to acquire it. When the Troubles erupted in 1968, the community he established there became even more important, and over the following years it has worked hard on its objective of promoting reconciliation and peace-building through the healing of social, religious, and political divisions.

Our party of 20, about equally split between those from St Luke's and those from Ian's "other" church, St Martin-in-the-Fields, were made very welcome at the Centre. We enjoyed shared meals, worship in the Croi (a building that is both in the shape of a human heart and the shape of an ear, to symbolize the importance of love and listening), and various discussion sessions, including a talk by Alf McCreary, the religious affairs correspondent for the *Belfast Telegraph* who had reported on the Troubles, the Good Friday agreement, and the subsequent easing of tensions. Most topically he had, that Friday, just written the obituary for the Reverend Ian Paisley, and he spoke about how in his later years Ian had changed and

been instrumental in helping the peace process.

On the Saturday afternoon, we enjoyed a trip to the Giant's Causeway, which was truly spectacular in the early autumn sunshine and made

all the more enjoyable by the handheld audio guide with its tales of giants, camels, and giant's boots. However, the promised display of the Northern Lights failed to materialise in the evening!

After lunch on Sunday, many of us returned to Belfast for an extra night, so that on Monday we were able to take one of the famous black cab taxi tours. This I found very difficult because despite the obvious reduction in tension and removal of security measures in the city centre, Belfast still has some communities that are deeply divided. People may not actually be killing each other on a daily basis, but the walls still exist to

keep opposing factions apart. It does not seem to me the basis for a long lasting peace.

Thirty years ago at my housewarming party in Green Leys, my friends Patricia and Les finally met. Although from opposite sides of the divide, they got on extremely well together and the evening was filled with laughter. It was such a clear illustration of what Corrymeela stands for – the basic truth that, in talking to our enemies or those we dislike, we can begin to understand them, and in sharing our common humanity we can build a more peaceful world.

Thank you Ian for organising this visit.



Photograph: Sally Lynch



Photograph: Richard Burdett

Greenbelt:

Louisa Ellins was one of more than 20,000 at Greenbelt 2014,

What links the Sermon on the Mount, Sinead O'Connor, and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*?

The answer is they all appeared on the programme at this year's Greenbelt. Now in its 41st year, the festival broadcasts an inspirational mix of thought-provoking debate, hum-along music, witty comedy, pre-bookable showers, "Help, where's my tent?", and (this year at least) rain and mud.

With more than a thousand different acts across three-and-a-half days and seventeen venues, it's easy for even seasoned Greenbelters (who are likely the world's most sociable and friendly people) to become overwhelmed, and that's before they even begin to explore the rest of the site.

Greenbelt has moved from Cheltenham Racecourse to a new venue this year – Boughton House in Northamptonshire – and the organis-

ers made sure the landscape became part of the festival. Orpheus, part of Boughton's 21st Century Garden, was used to great effect as the labyrinth walk. A gradually sloping path takes the visitor down into an inverted pyramid with a still pool at the centre, allowing you time to ponder and talk with God. Immensely powerful, even in the rain!

A hill rising from the soil excavated when Orpheus was created became 'The Mount', the venue for daily talks or 'sermons'... can you see what they did there?

But not all the talks were so closely linked to the Bible. Environmental awareness and sustainability is a key theme and the festival offers a full programme of talks, with subjects including 'food and faith' and palm oil. Among other things, it's inspired me to eat better quality meat, less often to be kinder to the planet. On a completely different note, but just as

interesting, was 'What did Brian ever do for us?', which followed a showing of *Monty Python's Life of Brian*.

The huge number of different churches and Christian communities involved allowed guests to explore many different ways of expressing faith and Christianity: from Forest Church to Taizé, and from the Iona Community to the LGBT-focused OuterSpace. The G-Source tent hosted a variety of charities and organisations including Christian Aid, Divine chocolate, and Inclusive Church.

The key part of any year's programme is the Sunday morning open air communion. Although there are a few other services and sessions on at that time, the overwhelming majority of Greenbelters join in on the occasion. This year I took the plunge and joined the on-stage 'scratch' choir, who were let loose in front of the microphone after only three rehearsals (no auditions required). I loved every

a festival that might just change your life

a Christian festival of arts, faith, and justice, held in late August.



minute and it was definitely the highlight of my weekend.

No less incredible was the programme of gigs and performances during the weekend, this year headlined by singer-songwriter Sinead

O'Connor. Her set list showed she's more than the one hit wonder we thought she was, although nothing compared to the audience reaction when, without warning, she played that song halfway through the set.

Other performers ranged from the politically charged folk musician Grace Petrie, to Malian blues-rockers Tinariwen.

Every evening, beside the lake, the talented Square Peg Circus seamlessly performed song, dance and hold-your-breath acrobatics in *Rime*, a retelling of Coleridge's epic poem.

Even with the huge amount of choice, Greenbelt offers a different pace of life and, for us (my husband James and I), a chance to spend quality time with friends from Northamptonshire who we don't see enough of. This year, Ruth Humphries joined us and it was great to get to know her a little better.

I've tried to give a flavour of the festival, but it's far better to experience it first-hand. Greenbelt 2015 takes place from 28 to 31 August and tickets will be available soon. For more details visit: www.greenbelt.org.uk

Photograph: Louisa Ellins
Above photograph : © Greenbelt Festival Official Pictures



Sunday Club out and about



Photograph: Roger Bevit



Photograph: Andrew Burdett



Photograph: Ian Harris

Saddling up, members of Sunday Club and Sparklers made up this year's sponsored Ride & Stride team.



Photographs: Ann Burdett



Half term's outing to Bekonscot model village was greatly enjoyed by the children who came along – whilst grown-ups were kept entertained by the Kids' Treasure Hunt.



Photographs: Andrew Burdett



Youngsters – both by age and at heart – finding delight in sparklers at the Youth Church firework and bonfire party.



3:30pm to
5:45pm, with a
two-course meal.
£1 per person.

Dates for 2015:

Saturday 24th January
Friday 20th February
Friday 13th March
Saturday 11th April
Friday 29th May

Saturday 11th July
Friday 7th August
Saturday 26th September
Saturday 14th November
Saturday 5th December

If you can, please let us know if you're coming, so we can cater for everyone: admin@stlukeschurchmaidenhead.org.uk



Photograph: Andrew Burdett

When The Time Comes...

Words: Sally Lynch

One of my favourite canticles is the Nunc Dimittis – a beautiful text from Luke 2:29–32. In this song the aged Simeon praises God and states that can now die, fulfilled. Simeon believed that he had been promised that he would not die until he had seen the Saviour of the world. When Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem, Simeon was there, and he took Jesus into his arms and uttered the words we now know as the Nunc Dimittis.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen: thy salvation,

Which thou hast prepared: before the face of all people;

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles: and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

At the end of a Christian funeral I say these words quietly as I lead the coffin out of church – quite sure that those who have ‘died in the Lord’ will already have met Him face to face and seen their own salvation.

I am also sure that in Simeon’s day the arranging of funerals was far less complicated, than it can be today. People lived close to their families, funerals took place quickly and mourning rites were straightforward. Today many people live far away from families and death is still somewhat of a taboo subject – not anticipated or discussed easily. Those of us who officiate at funerals too often meet with families who have no idea of what their loved one might wish to happen ‘when the time comes’, and not infrequently vicars hear of longstanding church folk who may have been housebound (and even still visited by church members) but whose family do not contact church and whose funerals end up being taken by secular

officiants in crematoria in an bland way with no hint of their lifelong faith and belief in the resurrection.

It is neither wrong nor morbid to think about and plan for our own funeral and that of our loved ones (in the right context, of course). As a priest it is a privilege to talk about death and to plan a funeral with someone who knows they are dying.



Many of us do not know when the time will come.

So... I would encourage all of us to reflect, pray and talk with family or friends about our own wishes and theirs. We plan for birth and weddings – why not for death too so that we can have ‘a good end’. We also take the pressure off our families. Arranging a funeral can be difficult when there are many children, siblings or cousins all trying to do ‘what’s best’.

It won’t surprise you to know that I have written down the basic details of what I would like my own

good ending to be – hymn choices, Bible readings, music, and so on. There is no reason why we can’t all do this, and ensure that a copy is given to those who are most likely to need it.

Here is a little check list of things to consider and make a note of:

- Do I want a burial or cremation? (and do I want a specific location?)
- Is there a specific undertaker I’d prefer?
- Have I prepaid for my funeral? (with whom?)
- Do I want a Christian service, or a humanist one?
- Do I want to go to church, if so, which one?
- Do I want hymns.. which ones? (perhaps saying why)
- Are there special pieces of music I would like at the start and end?
- Is there a special reading/poem? (and who might I like to do this?)
- Is there a specific bible passage I’d like read?
- Do I want flowers? What sort?
- How do I want to meet God, with specific clothes or a gown?
- Do I want my friends mourning me in black or a celebrating my life by wearing bright colours?

Of course for most of us these are difficult things to discuss, but being prepared can relieve pressure from many people at the end.

If you would like help in thinking about these things I am always happy to chat with you. I would also be very willing to place a copy of your wishes in a sealed envelope in the church safe (you can change them whenever you like).

Thinking about what is right for us when the time comes will enable each of us, like Simeon, to “depart in peace”.

In 1970, when I was 21, my Uncle died suddenly (writes **Sue Curley**). We were very close: he had lived with my parents since before I was born.

A piece of paper was found stating that I was to be his heir, but although my Uncle had signed the piece of paper it was neither dated nor witnessed making his ‘Will’ invalid.

As was the custom then, a notice was placed in the *News of the World* for anyone who had a claim to my Uncle’s Estate to contact the solicitor – and she did. My Uncle’s wife who had left him some 37 years before came forward and took what should have been my £5,000 inheritance (in 1970 you could have purchased a detached property for this sum). I had never been told that he had been married so this all came as something of a shock! How upset he would have been.

The importance of ensuring that you have a legal Will is shown in the television programme *Heir Hunters*. For those who die intestate unless bona fide blood relations are found, the money from their Estates go into the Government Treasury coffers.

At St Luke’s we are so fortunate to have a beautiful and active church which has been at the heart of the local community since 1866.

As we have benefited from the generosity and hard work of those people who have gone before us, may we in our turn support the generations who follow us.

Would you consider leaving a Legacy in your Will to St Luke’s church? Funds may be used for a specific purpose or as the future needs of the church require.

Your solicitor would be able to advise you. Legacies may be in the form of a set gift or the residue of your Estate, this is the sum of monies left over once your loved ones have received your gift to them.

If you wish to talk with someone about the possibility of you leaving a Legacy to St Luke’s please contact the church treasurer, Richard Burdett.

A Short Foot Note

The most recent report from **Roger Bevitt** and the rest of the ramblers.

The summer season of evening walks finished with two short rambles at the end of August, one of which explored a new permitted path at Pinkneys Green. The other took in the pleasant hamlet of Berghers Hill and would – with careful map reading – have taken us around the outside of Odd’s Farm. However, we found ourselves inside the locked gates of the attraction’s car park, faced by an undignified climb in semi-darkness to get out and avoid an uncertain back-track.

The Autumn Season began – and, I’m afraid, ended – with our moonlight walk early in September. It was dusk, with a perfect clear sky, as we set out from Aston for a leisurely three-mile stroll over the hills to Remenham and back via the towpath. When we reached a point above Remenham we still had a sky with no clouds, no mist... and no moon. We were going to be back in the pub before the moon appeared. (Note for next time: before setting out, check the time that the moon rises, and avoid routes that take one down on the opposite side to the moon and make its rise later still.) Luckily the group were willing and able to extend the walk to almost five miles by continuing over the hills to Henley before reaching the towpath. A lovely orange moon appeared over the hills at 8:40pm and rose in the sky to be beside a moving string of bead lights from the planes taking off from Heathrow. The lights of the pub at 9:30pm also were an attractive sight.

On a Sunday afternoon early in the New Year, we plan to walk round a local lake (floods permitting) and view the wintering wildfowl. See the pew sheet nearer the time for details.

From the Registers

We welcomed into God's church by baptism:

Willow Brudenall
Dylan Darienzo
Tori Patton
Harvey Patton
Stefan Mohr

We celebrated the marriages of:

Lee Woodbridge and Jade Kelly
Morgan Goford and Rachel Fletcher
Peter Smith and Gemma Harriss
Martin Simmonds and Carly Timms

We blessed the marriage of:

Karim Mobaritz and
Susan Richards-Benson

We commended into God's care at their funerals:

Geoffrey Knight
Vera Wheeler
June Wells
Ivy Sparks
Joyce Wilkins
Roy Baldry
Molly Lewis
Gilbert (Jock) McKenna
Frederick Williamson
Royston Woodruff
Ernest Philps
Beryl Burrows
Philip Littlejohn
Francisca Knowles

You may enjoy these opportunities for spiritual growth in 2015:

Pilgrim

This new course from the Church of England is written by, among others, Bishop Stephen Cottrell. It has two stages (*Follow* and *Growth*) so far and four units in each. We ran the first of the *Follow* stage in the autumn and will repeat it next year, along with others from each stage. Each session includes a short DVD, discussion, Bible reflection, and shared learning.

For more information see the website:
www.pilgrimcourse.org

Teaching Courses

Two mini courses this year will focus on the Old Testament story in the spring, and on Christian Spirituality in the autumn.

Lent Course

The content has yet to be decided but there will be morning and evening sessions to allow as many people as possible to join in.

Pools of Stillness and Quiet Days

Our (roughly) monthly Pools of Stillness evenings start with a short reflection and then allow space for folk to be quiet and still in church. They end with Compline (Night Prayer) at 9pm. If you have not tried this simple breathing space in a busy week why not come along. We aim to have three quiet days on Saturdays next year – the first is booked for Ascot Priory on 28th March.

Celebrated harpist Elizabeth McNulty gave a 45-minute recital at St Luke's in October (**Andrew Burdett** writes).

With music by Handel and Fauré, as well as lesser-known composers Dussek and Spohr, the programme gave the lunchtime audience a flavour of harp music from across the last four centuries.

McNulty, who is Principal Harpist with The Kantanti Ensemble, opened with the three movements of Handel's *Concerto for Harp*.

After the concert, Elizabeth invited the audience to move forward to see her beautiful instrument in closer detail.

An informal questions-and-answers session allowed attendees find out how the pedals affect the sound produced by the strings; how Elizabeth's fingers quickly became blistered when she returned to the instrument, having not played for a short period of time; and how she transports the large instrument to concerts, at home and abroad.

In summer 2015, following the success of 2013's two-week long programme of concerts and events, our Music Festival returns. To be updated with further details, email the Parish Office on admin@stlukeschurchmaidenhead.org.uk



Photograph: Andrew Burdett



Vicar:
Revd Sally Lynch



Associate Priest:
Revd Terrie Robinson



Licensed Lay Minister:
Sonya Clarke

The Church Office

Open Mondays,
Tuesdays,
Wednesdays,
and Fridays,
9:30am to
11:00am.

admin@stlukeschurch
maidenhead.org.uk

☎ 01628 622733

Who's Who at St Luke's?

Ministry Team
Reverend Sally Lynch 01628 783033
Reverend Terrie Robinson 01628 634017
Sonya Clarke 01628 632626

Pastoral Coordinator
Sue Hinchliffe 01628 784724

Churchwardens
Johanna Raffan 01628 680913
David Sopp 01628 673617

Assistant Churchwardens
Don Luff 01628 638602
Peter Goford 01628 638238

Flower Organiser
Joan Harnby 01628 622140

Electoral Roll Officer
Jill Bevitt 01628 6633464

Gift Aid Secretary
Ann Cooke 01628 472147

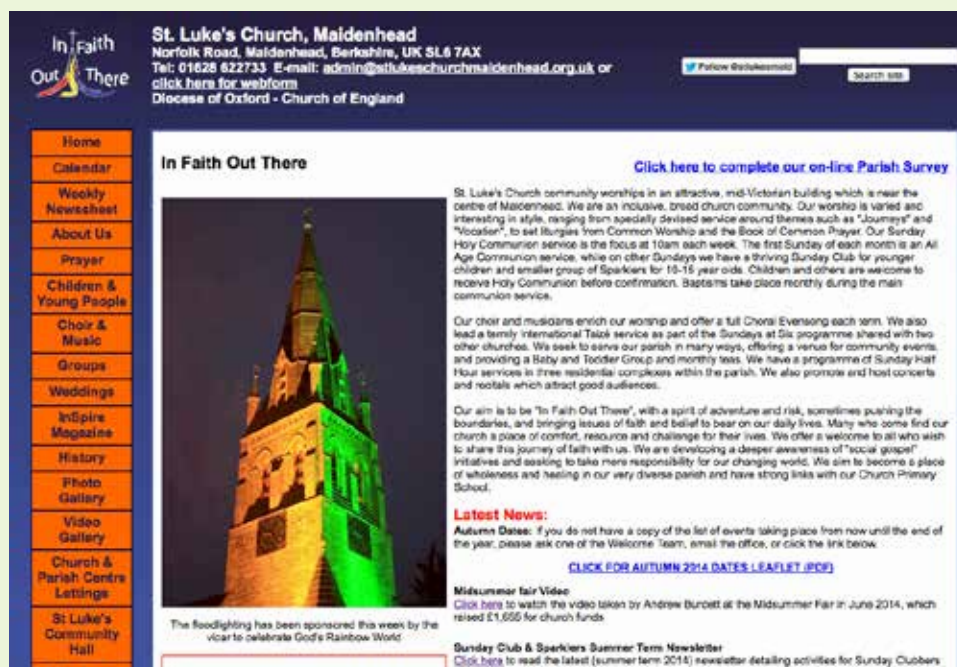
Director of Music
John Cotteril 01628 636514

PCC Secretary
Raph Hinchliffe 01628 784724

PCC Treasurer
Richard Burdett 01628 631486

Parish Administrators
Ruth Hymphreys and Mary Klymenko

The Church Website



To view the latest pew-sheet, learn about the history of our church, or find out more about St Luke's many prayer and discussion groups,

find us online at
www.stlukeschurchmaidenhead.org.uk

And Finally...

If clergy can be defrocked and lawyers debarred, doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, models deposed, dry cleaners depressed, bed-makers debunked, and organ donors delivered. And perhaps, too, we can hope politicians will be devoted...

Seen on bunkerhill.org