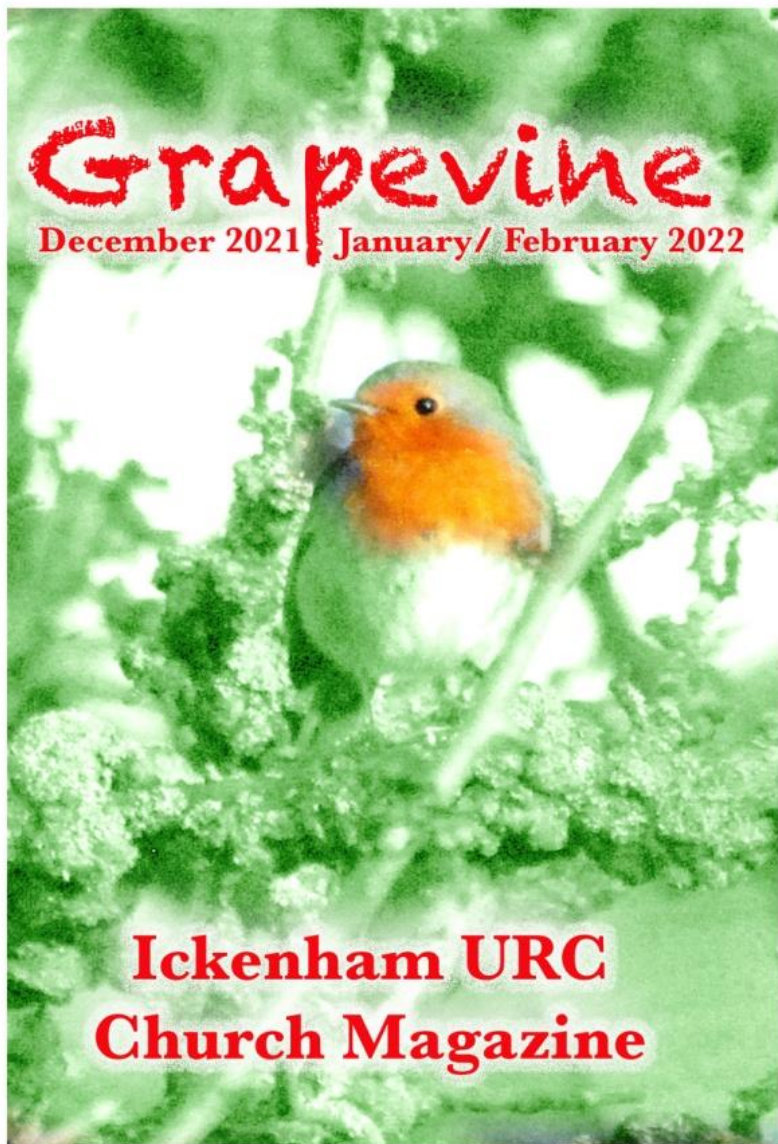


# Grapevine

December 2021 / January / February 2022

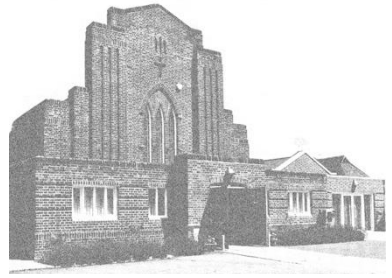


**Ickenham URC  
Church Magazine**



***MINISTER***

*In Vacancy*



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Please would you inform Shellie if you change address, phone number, or email address, in order to help us keep up to date records

**Children & Families Worker:**

*In Vacancy*

**Opinions expressed in Grapevine do not necessarily reflect the views of Ickenham United Reformed Church**

# *“But who do you say that I am?”*

## Church Anniversary Sermon by Bernie and Gwen Collins, Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2021



Today's New Testament reading Mark 10:35-45 comes from the end of the section of Mark's Gospel where Jesus has been trying to help the disciples to understand what he was doing, and what they should do – who he really is, and who they must become. That section began near the end of chapter 8, where Jesus asked the disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” And they answered, “Some say, John the Baptist, some say Elijah or one of the prophets,” as Mark had already told us when he recorded that King Herod was getting disturbed by

Jesus' reputation and the crowds following him.

Jesus asked, “But who do you say that I am?”

Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah.’ The King James Authorised Version and some others have the word ‘Christ’ there, straight from the Greek in which the New Testament was written, but the Good News Bible and some other recent versions try to convey the Jewish thinking of the disciples, and give the translation ‘Messiah’. Both those words, Messiah from the Hebrew language and Christ from

Greek, mean ‘anointed’, referring to the ceremonies for appointing a king or a priest. For those people in their cultures around 2,000 years ago, the words Messiah and Christ had a lot of meaning, indicating divine authority in the appointments, and complete allegiance by the people recognising them.

But for today, what are our answers, if Jesus asks, “Who do you say that I am?”, or if a friend or family member asks, “What’s so special about Jesus for you?” or “What does he matter to us now?”

The fact that you are here in church, may mean that you have already answered that question for yourself at least to some extent, especially if you have been here for many of the years we are celebrating today. But perhaps you also feel the need to think a bit more before answering, depending on who asks you and what the circumstances are.

So, as Gwen and I have been asked to lead worship today, and have had some time to think and pray about it, we’ll give you in this sermon what we believe God has led us to offer to you. Then you might like to share your own thoughts in conversation after the service or later.

Who do I say that Jesus is? I would start by saying:

- He is the one who reveals God to us, and reveals God’s will for us
- He is the one who speaks and demonstrates the principles by which God intends us to live
- the one whose life, death on the cross, and resurrection, showed us, and continues to show us now, that God loves us, and is ready to welcome us with forgiveness and healing
- He shows that God loves all of creation, and longs for us all to be in loving harmony with him and with each other.

The key principle that Jesus led people to when they asked him, was ‘Love God and love your neighbour’. Many people seem to say, “Having good relationships, being kind and helpful to those in need, is important, but you can do that without believing in God.”

I would say that loving neighbour without recognising and loving God

- is missing out on the creator who initiated and gives purpose to everything,
- And it is missing out on the one who shows us what true love is, That love is shown in the stories earlier in Mark's Gospel:
  - Jesus caring for people ill, or disabled, or social outcasts,
  - or people who are hungry, or tossed about by a storm,
  - or people oppressed by evil forces, whether spiritual or human powers, institutional sin or personal sin.

And Jesus loved us so much that he would

- give up his comfortable life,
- and even give up his life completely.
- Trying to love neighbour without loving God is also missing out on the one who enables us to realise our faults and failures, and to seek forgiveness and receive grace to live as intended.
- And it is missing out on the one who is working to bring everyone and everything into unity – and we can be part of that through faith in Jesus.

So now, if all of that is what we recognise in Jesus and who he is, let's think of what difference that makes in current circumstances.

Maybe you've seen pictures of lifeboats bringing refugees to shore. A volunteer who collects money for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution told me he has several times been gruffly challenged by people saying that RNLI should not pick up refugees crossing the Channel illegally in little boats. He said he has responded that Jesus had compassion for people suffering, whatever their illness or nationality or ethnicity. (Like the Good Samaritan story – where Jesus makes the point that our neighbour is not only from our own ethnic or religious group.) And so this volunteer said he asks the challengers if they are supporting work for peace and good development in the refugees' home countries so they don't have to become refugees.

For 20 years development agencies as well as troops have been in Afghanistan and other places struggling to overcome hatred and terror. This emphasises the need for international and interfaith relationships to be set in the context of God's goal and plan for unity and respectful peace between all peoples in creation. This New Testament conviction is set out in the letter to Ephesians, in the cosmopolitan, multi-faith city of Ephesus. From Ephesians chapter 2: "But now, in union with Christ Jesus, you who used to be far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For Christ himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people. With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies." (Eph 2:13-14 GNB)

Jesus himself indicated that his death would be a crucial part of God's plan straight after Peter identified him as Messiah, when he went on to start teaching the disciples that he must be killed. He repeated this again and again on their way to Jerusalem. Also in the remaining verses of Mark 8 he talked to the whole crowd as well as the disciples, about the ambition to gain in life, and his call for any who would follow him to deny ourselves, for his sake and the gospel. That teaching is repeated in this section of Mark's gospel, whenever the disciples argue about who is the greatest. It reaches its climax in today's reading about James and John wanting to sit in state with Jesus in positions of honour and comfort, being served by those around them. Jesus emphasised graphically that his role and theirs was to be servants, and to suffer for the sake of others.

In relation to that, we can now consider some more current circumstances where this would make a difference.

Industrialisation and consumerism, exploiting the world's resources, fossil fuels, and different peoples, have led to climate change, biodiversity loss and social and racial injustice. Halting this devastation can also be seen as part of God's plan, "to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head." (That's another quote from Ephesians, from ch.1, v.10). Now let's think of that in some particular circumstances:

- When seeking new jobs, or selecting courses to study, it is a time to think what type of job to have – not exploitative, but using gifts and talents to serve the community, and using resources of earth sustainably and for worthwhile purposes.
- The pandemic has strained economic and financial systems, and in rebuilding them governments should have due regard for environmental and social costs to vulnerable people and places, which are not usually counted in a system where wealth gained gives further power to those in control.
- Jobs and organisations for basic essential products and services should not be low status, low paid, for example in food, health and personal care, , cleaning, recycling and transport
- Local and seasonal sourcing of food and other goods would be more appropriate than prioritising economies of scale and choice which depend on more long-distance transport with consequent pollution and waste.

All of these responses are important if we recognise that God entrusted the care of creation to people made in God's image, and this needs wise stewardship, with Jesus's emphasis on loving your neighbour rather than gaining what you can at the expense of other people. "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36 KJAV). "If one of you wants to be great, he must be the servant of the rest" (Mark 10:43 GNB).



Now Gwen will add some examples from Papua New Guinea.

*As most of you know, but maybe not all of you, we have had the privilege of serving as mission partners with the United Church in Papua New Guinea. First for 16 years when we were young, then on sabbatical in 2011 when Bernie was your minister, and lastly for 18*

*months in retirement. We have appreciated your interest, your prayers and your support. And so we want to give you an insight into the answers Papua New Guinean Christians give to Jesus' question "Who do you say that I am?" as they work out what it means in the context of issues facing them now.*

*Here are a couple of examples.*

*In 2014-15 we were teaching in the theological college. Huge deposits of natural gas had recently been discovered. Massive infrastructure projects were underway. Two of our Masters students chose to write their dissertations on this topic. For both of them the pressing issue was the social disruption caused by the project.*

*One student focussed on the local church's response to fractured social relationships. The other, who was a paramount chief, focussed on negotiations between company, government and landowning clans to minimise and if possible prevent further problems. For them Jesus is mediator in the midst of real, current strife and risk.*

*The second example is about the challenge of covid. We are getting messages questioning the safety of vaccines. Social media is being used to spread stories and video clips. We are hearing statements like: Jesus is a miracle working Saviour who will save us from this virus and therefore we should trust God and we should not accept vaccination. Papua New Guinea is 96% Christian. Church leaders have a big influence. In the Highlands, which we know best, there is no foundation of understanding or trusting scientific research. The answer to the question 'Who do you say that I am?' may have life and death consequences and the outcome is currently unclear.*

The bonus good news of the gospel is that when we realise we have made mistakes, God gives the opportunity for repentance, forgiveness, and fresh start. And this applies not just to individuals, but also through them to organisations and to whole societies.

Can we hope and work for respectful cooperation in communities and between nations? Can the whole atmosphere change:

- from confrontational to constructive,



- from adversarial to appreciative,
- from overly competitive to kindly celebrating each other's achievements?

We believe it can, when enough people recognise the power of God's love in Jesus, the love that initiated creation. It is the power that raised Jesus from the dead, and the love that gives us purpose in Christ's mission of reconciliation.

## *Family News*

### *Birthdays*



December			
9 <sup>th</sup>	David		
24 <sup>th</sup>	Glyn		
27 <sup>th</sup>	John		
January		February	
1 <sup>st</sup>	Dorothy		
5 <sup>th</sup>	Wendy	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Bryan
15 <sup>th</sup>	Julia	10 <sup>th</sup>	Liz William
		19 <sup>th</sup>	Edward
		26 <sup>th</sup>	David

## *URC Church Services/Festive Events*

### **Sunday 28th November**

11.00 a.m. Advent Morning Service at the URC

### **Wednesday 1st December**

1.00 - 2.00p.m. 'Food for Thought' in the Oasis

Please book on list in back of church or telephone Shellie D'Arcy

**Friday 3rd December**

6.00 - 9.00 p.m. Church open with a Festive Display on the theme of LIGHT and refreshments served in the Oasis  
Stalls of Christmas goods, a raffle and an update on CLICKRukiga

**Saturday 4th December**

10.00 a.m. - 12 noon Festive Coffee Morning with stalls of Christmas goods and Butterflies will have a stall.

**Sunday 5th December**

11.00 a.m. Morning Service at the URC led by Frank Murphy

**Sunday 12th December**

11.00 a.m. Morning Service at the URC led by John Pearson

**Saturday 18th December**

6.00 p.m. 'Carols by Candlelight' on the theme of 'Light' at the URC - carols, readings and choir items

**Sunday 19th December**

11.00 a.m. Morning Service led by Graham Hinton and with Holy Communion at the URC

**Saturday 25th December - Christmas Day**

10.00 a.m. Christmas Day Family Service at the URC led by Church Worship Group

**Sunday 26th December – No service at the URC**

## *Diary Dates*

**Church Meeting**

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2021 in church after service

**Elders' Meeting**

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2.30 p.m. - The Oasis

# Alfred Moon



Ickenham resident Alfred Moon celebrates his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday at the end of December. Alfred has lived in Ickenham since 1964, when he moved from Ruislip with his wife Helen and three children.

Alfred had been involved with Ickenham Congregational Church (now URC) from childhood, as his parents were enthusiastic members. Over many decades he played a very active part in the church, some of his roles being as Church Secretary and Sunday School Superintendent, leader of the Teens and Twenties youth group (still being in touch with some members) and leader of the Senior Dept. of Junior Church. His writing, directing and acting skills were evident in the shows and pantomime performed in aid of Shelter.

Alfred supported links between the URC and St Giles particularly through the Ickenham Churches Christian Aid Group. The group pioneered raising money by selling newspapers for recycling, leading to the epic Saturday morning collections in Warren Road where bundles of papers stored in various neighbours' garages were trollied out to the waiting lorry by helpers from both churches.

On retiring, with Helen, from 40 years of teaching in Junior Church, Alfred transferred his URC membership to the Society of Friends and continues to attend Uxbridge Quaker Meeting.

Alfred was a keen member of Swakeleys Tennis Club into his 90s, and until a few years ago was a familiar figure cycling along the local roads.

His Ickenham friends of all ages wish him a very happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

# One Man In His Time

As seen by his great friend, Janet Sorenson



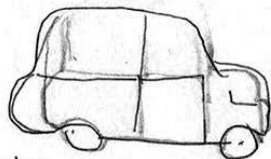
Coming home from shopping  
- lunch on rack behind!!



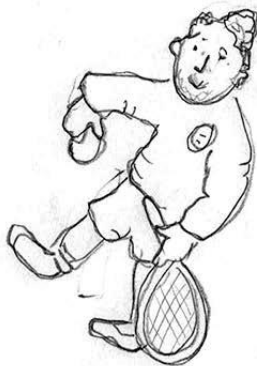
Annual Bluebell Trail  
- mindfulness



Speaking at my father's funeral.  
My father's choice of Gilbert & Sullivan



Given to bicycle-riding Minister by  
Alfred's father (I drove it a few feet!!) BML 548



**Tennis**  
Always Set and Match!!

**Helen & Alfred**  
Their joyous parties at Church  
and Warren Road



**Hello My Friend**  
I've just come to share  
something about our  
last thinking

*Editor. With permission of the artist and author of these memories of Alfred Moon I have added the following quote as a token of their great lives and friendship.*

"When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares."

- Henri Nouwen, *Out of Solitude: Three Meditations on the Christian Life*

We remember Alfred Moon.....

From Diana May

I remember the fabulous work he did **organising street collections for Amnesty International**. I served my time standing on draughty pavements rattling a yellow tin .....

Warmly  
Diana

P S our house was built in 1928, and when I put together a history of it, I noted that then "Swakeleys Road was called Back Lane .... Warren Road (where Alfred and Helen later lived) was unmade-up, and Woodstock Drive did not exist, being a wood with a prowling gamekeeper."

A few thoughts about dear Alfred from Jenny Reid:

- In 1989 the ecumenical group of Christian churches was re-established in Uxbridge. The new group was called 'Churches Together in Uxbridge' (CTU) and each member church was included in a rota for the position of chair. Either a lay or ordained person was appointed by their church. It was the turn of the Uxbridge Society of Friends from 1990 to 1991 and Alfred was in the chair for that period. I was CTU Secretary.
- This was the start of my friendship with Alfred. Sometimes I used to visit his home, enjoying his fresh coffee and sitting in front of his open log fire.
- When living at Warren Road, Alfred was frequently seen riding his bike around Ickenham
- A keen supporter of Amnesty International and wrote eloquent letters to support victims of conscience
- A quiet, reassuring presence

And finally.....

More fond memories from Alfred's life-long friend Janet Sorenson

## One Man in His Time (plays many Parts)

Who said that? .... I know a man who does.... And has done just that in my life .... Rejoicing : Thank God.

There will be many rejoicingly remembering profound Alfred and Helens gifts, in their church and personal lives. "A firm foundation ..... a cornerstone" in both - as I too know ... so special.

But this is my "road less taken" / taking 75+ years Love, Joy and Fun sharing. I pray my pictures (see previous pages) speak where words can stifle .... Of love, praise and gratitude.

"Our Father by whose servants ... is surely of Alfred and Helen.

"Very vulnerable" we were! (if it weren't for the houses in between)

We shielded every night! ... a God's blessing and a quote to consider ... or complete. Even the slow watches of the night. Sunday mornings 'we locked down' in Quaker solitude and silence ... together! ... in prayer ... sharing later.

Philosophy years courses, a joy together too ... a pregnant pause ... then Alfred's profound response ... always fostering the Maverick in me! Bless him.

Always "a solid joy and lasting treasure" in mine and so many ... young ... and much now older lives ... still!

The Moon Family and mine shared a philosophy of Love and Social Community driven by conscience.

Writing this re-instils ...thoughts that lie too deep for tears .... Of joy and love. Of a Soul Mate ...the lost now love of empathy of Listening .... And even rarer! Samaritan Wise ... hearing!

There is so much love roaring back as I write ... church socials, parties in the church and at Warren Road. Lights in a busy wide loving Christian Community. It was from kind Helen that my invitation to Northwood College for 6 weeks came ... allowed to leave 7 happy years later! "How please and blessed was I in my life to have such love and care .... Understanding and fun.

Alfred never! says 'you know where I am' (leaving you to do!!) Always come again soon please .... and I can, and do, talk, and go and do whenever I wish .... that is Love ... not a business appointment.

And, blessings, so much more ... house groups, pantomimes, Christian Aid, Amnesty, Multi-Faiths ... I was 'bound with chords of love' by Alfred and Helen.

I have for a long time, been the alone member of the family that Alfred knew, shared and loved ... "through all my changing scenes of life" ... much fun too ... (where has fun gone?)

My Fun Loving Good Shepherd, Soul Mate, Fellow Traveller, God's gift of such a friend, when we part ... Alfred, small now in his chair ... I say "bless you my child" and pat and kiss his head - gripping my hand - he always replies "bless you my child, please come back soon ... I heard the voice of Jesus say ... "Come!"

All the quotes are not homework, but so much the fun and joy Alfred and I share. So .....? Do you?





finding a chocolate, sweet or something even more 'exotic' you perhaps buy an item for the Foodbank for each of the days in Advent and making up a Christmas bag.

A quote from a Foodbank website *"December is always the busiest month for food banks," says Molly Hodson, head of media and external affairs at the charity. "There's a massive spike every year – December is 50% busier than every other month – and January is also high." These are the months during which a lot of families on low incomes pay a "poverty premium", says Hodson. "Winter is just a much harder time for people living in poverty, especially if they're on pre-payment meters for their gas and electricity. A lot of people end up making choices between eating and heating their home"*

A list of suggestions is available in the vestibule and The Oasis Cafe. Perhaps you could buy items to help cover 3 days for a family. Please buy the smaller packs of rice etc. rather than the big ones which are not easy to store if people are living in cramped conditions. They can't be split at the Centre either. Treats such as fancy biscuits or chocolates and sweets can be included but please don't include Christmas Puddings, Mince Pies or Alcohol.

Some of the suggestions are: Long life milk, Any variety of beans, Pasta, Rice, Toiletries, Baby food, Nappies size 5 or 6, Tinned fruit, vegetables, puddings etc. Please see the lists for more ideas.

Please make sure that there is 3 months shelf-life on the goods.

In order to give time for the goods to be taken to the Donation centre for distribution for Christmas we have suggested an early start but anything you can donate is ALWAYS welcome. Your donation will help someone in need and make a really big difference this Christmas.

Your bags/donations may be placed in the Foodbank Box in the Vestibule whenever you can and definitely by **December 11<sup>th</sup>**.

Thank you for your support.

*Alan                      /Patricia*

# *From the Fundraising and Social Group*

## **Looking forward with the URC**

Our two forecourt sales this year were so successful in terms of atmosphere and receipts that we have decided to have three in 2022, on 30 April, 11 June [helping to get the Festival off to a good start!] and 10 September. All of them will feature one of our famous plant stalls, books [including the special quality ones inside], bric-a-brac, vinyl records and various bits and pieces and be accompanied by a coffee morning with homemade cakes. Proceeds will be shared between the work of the church and two external charities, one of which will be Click Rukiga.

Earlier in the year there will be a Coffee Morning and Coin Mountain on 19 February and you don't even have to wait for that because we are supporting the Festive Community Night on 3 December with stalls of Christmas goods, alongside the Festive display in the church and refreshments and a raffle in the Oasis café, admission free. Christmas goods will again be on sale at the coffee morning on Saturday 4 December from 10am to 12 Noon, admission free.



If you have any queries, or think you may be able to offer us help or items for sale, please ring Richard Piper on 01895 634348.

*Richard Piper*

# **Are you too sad to celebrate Christmas?**



Some are mourning the loss of a loved one...  
Some are far from home...  
Illness, conflict, finances.....  
For whatever reason you struggle

## **You are not alone**

Join us in a  
Blue Christmas service at St Giles',  
Ickenham  
On Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> December at 6pm

*"The light shines in the darkness" John 1:5*

# *Giving to support the Worship and Mission of the Church*

We thank God that we are continuing to be able to worship together on Sunday mornings albeit with some limitations. We apologise for having to keep the front door open in this cooler weather. We pray that we will not have to face any more lockdown periods in the year ahead.

It has been encouraging to see that you have found the small offertory cards helpful as a reminder that you have made your donations to the work and mission of the church by standing order or other means. Small cards are available on the table at the back of the church as you come in.

Here are the figures for the donations for the nine months to the end of September with a comparison for the same period last year.

<b>Giving for</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
Cash/cheque	£1713.89	£2135.69
Freewill offering either online or by envelope	£14445.00	£15121.50

Many people are continuing to donate online or by cheque during and this has helped us considerably as we look ahead to the new financial year.

## *Church Gift Day Total*

Thank you to everyone who gave generously to our annual Gift Day in October. This year we received £1990 towards the ventilation in the Large (Meggeson) Hall. Once it is installed everyone using the hall will appreciate the benefit and we will comply with Covid related standards.

## *Every Little Helps.....*

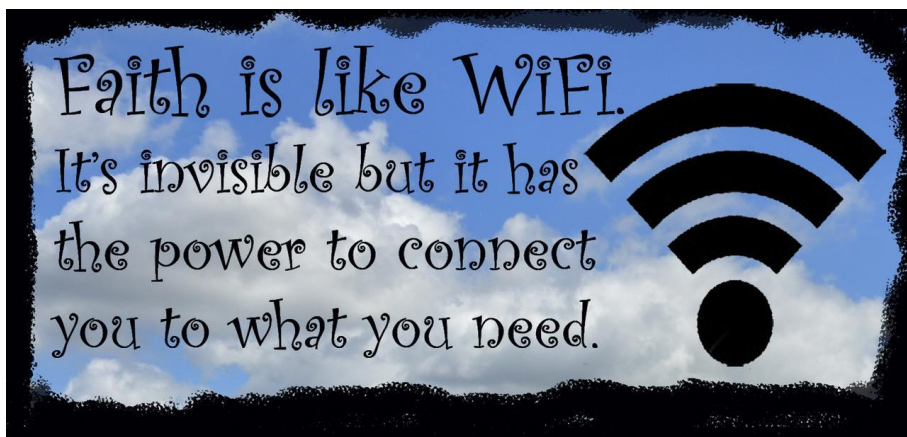


Thank you to the shoppers who use this way of helping the church as they buy from a variety of online suppliers. Since we joined the scheme in August 2020 you have helped to raise £199.45 by logging in at <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/ickenhamurc/> before logging in to your vendors such as Amazon, Boots, Sainsburys, and many other suppliers.

As you begin/continue with your Christmas shopping remember to log in. To coin a familiar phrase “every little helps”

Your continued support and prayers are much appreciated.

*Patricia*



## Prayer Tree in the URC



Members of the community of Ickenham may not be aware that we have a Prayer Tree which is situated in the vestibule just inside the front door of the church.

It is there for anyone who would like the church to pray for them or anyone else. There are some paper leaves on the table for the name of the person or situation to be written on and then they can be placed on the tree. The prayers are retained on the tree for one month

from the date you write on them and we bring them in a collective and inclusive way to our service on the first Sunday in the month. If you have further concerns about anything and would like to talk with someone, please make contact with the Church Administrator (details on the front of ICN) and she will pass on your request.

*Celia*

*Creator God,  
Out of chaos you brought order.  
Out of nothingness you brought life.  
In the middle of all life stands the tree.*

*Trees provide the air that nurtures all your creation.  
Birds make them their homes.  
Cats climb them for protection.  
Trees recycle life that has come before.*

*Bless the trees of this word, loving God.  
Remind us to serve as their caregivers and protectors.  
Give them long limbs and long life.  
The gift of their breath is as special to us as the breath of the Holy Spirit.*

*Amen*





Remembrance Sunday has always been a special day for me and I feel that it is well done at our church, a view that was shared by my late dad, a navigator in Hudson

bombers during WW2 and not easy to please on such things.

I thought that the service led by Peter this year was well up to standard, as I found Leigh's reminiscences very vivid and the sermon thought provoking and appropriate. What would Jesus have advised if he had been in the War Rooms with Churchill? Perhaps he was? It was lovely to have the augmented choir [my apologies that I was growling away so close to them!] and John and Celia did a great job decorating the church on top of everything else that they do, but what a shame to see all the empty blue seats on a day when we traditionally have had to bring in extras. No uniformed youngsters so no parents, but also few or none of the usual "walk-ups". Our numbers in church on a normal Sunday are fairly unimpressive for the only Nonconformist place of worship in a community of 12000+, a situation which is partly Covid and Grim Reaper related but not entirely. We all know that in the past few years we have lost quite a few families and individuals as we have struggled to find a minister to lead us, in a denomination without many, and often failed to resolve our differences in a positive and brotherly way.

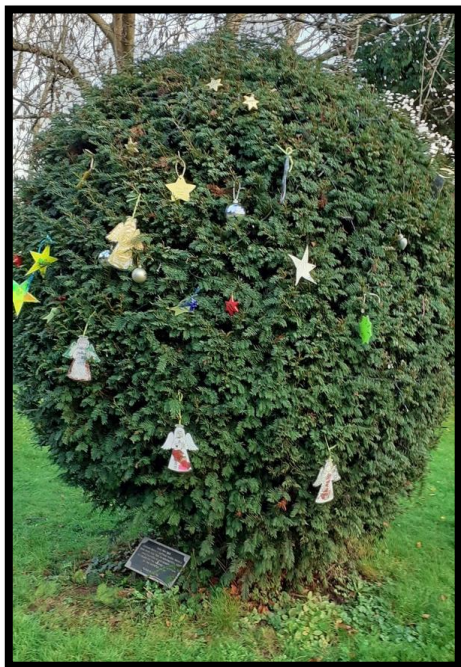
Thanks to the vision and hard work of Keith and others we now have a great set of premises, with the Oasis/corridor area in particular proving wonderfully versatile. I understand that room bookings are encouraging, the Food for Thought sessions have got off to a good start and we are making efforts to attract people in on Festive Community Night, but is there more that we can do to re-establish our relevance to the community? Or even attract back some of our previous regulars! Christmas Day will be another acid test.

*Richard*



## *Tree of Remembrance*

For a number of years a Tree of Remembrance has been set up in St Giles' Church in December and people have been invited to place a star on the tree in memory of a loved one.



This year the yew tree on the path between St Giles' Church and the church hall will be our Tree of Remembrance. If you would like to place a star on the tree, there are two ways you can do this, either by:

- (i) making your own star or bauble, writing on it the name of the person you want to remember, adding a ribbon or cord and placing it on the tree
- (ii) picking up a wooden star from Ickenham Butchers (3 Swakeleys Road), writing the name on it and placing it on the tree.

From Friday 3rd December (Ickenham Festive Community

Night) the tree will be decorated with lights. There is a seat in front of the tree where you can sit to pray and remember.

On Wednesday 5th January the stars will be removed from the tree and placed on the altar in St Giles' church. Prayers will be said over the stars during the 10am service on Thursday 6th January.

After placing your star, you might like to use the following:

Loving God, thank you for NAME, for all the joys and sorrows we shared. Be with me, I pray, as I stumble through this Christmas.

May your light guide me and your love strengthen me to cope with each new day. Amen.

The Lord is my Shepherd; I have everything I need. He lets me rest in fields of green grass and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water. He gives me new strength. He guides me in the right paths, as he has promised. Even if I go through the deepest darkness, I will not be afraid, Lord, for you are with me.

(Psalm 23, verses 1-4, Good News Bible).

*Jenny*

## *Local Area Group Service of Thanksgiving*

On Sunday 3rd October the Thames North Synod Local Area Group (LAG) held a service of thanksgiving at Christ Church Uxbridge for those who had survived the covid pandemic and particularly remembering those who had worked so hard to protect our health and keep us all safe.

The five Churches in the LAG are:  
URC of Eastcote and Northwood Hills  
Trinity Church Harrow  
Ickenham URC  
St John's URC Northwood  
Christ Church Uxbridge

It was encouraging that all Churches were represented with a good turn-out of 11 from Ickenham.

Peter Williams played the organ and led a multi-Church Choir who gave an excellent performance of "A Heaven on Earth" by Sally DeFord.

Pat Smith did the bible readings, John Miller appeared as part of a video montage of what the Churches response had been to covid and our friend Jean Wilson-Main gave prayers.

The Revd George Watt our new Synod Moderator gave a very positive address entitled "Let your Light Shine" which can be watched on the Christ Church You Tube.



After the service we enjoyed refreshments with cakes made by the Churches and in response to a suggestion that our cake might reflect our church, Katie Holland (14yrs) made Ickenham's offering, which was well received.

*Keith*

## God's Church

The blue sky above is the vaulted heights of my cathedral,  
The tree branches, fan vaulting of crafted stone;  
God's church, that He built -

Not man-made created out of desire to worship,  
Nor to enhance the worship of our own  
Feeble minds, dependent on atmospheric aid:

This is the church the Lord hath made  
With His own fair hand.

I sit upon my pew, a trunk of fallen tree,  
God comes, and sits down next to me.

I have a view of exquisitely arranged church flowers:

Who arranged these, this week, and every other, in the early  
hours? Our Father:

Just as He blesses me with angelic choir and music from the  
pipes:

And I hear the hymns of joy, joined by the congregation from  
the branches.

Communion is not taken at set time in bread and wine,  
But by communion with God - every time I eat and drink.  
There are no words from minister or priest,  
Only silence to let my heart be filled by God - silence to receive  
His peace.

There are no sermons:

Save that of space; for me to wait, to HEAR God's word: and  
think

How I best live His word upon life's street:

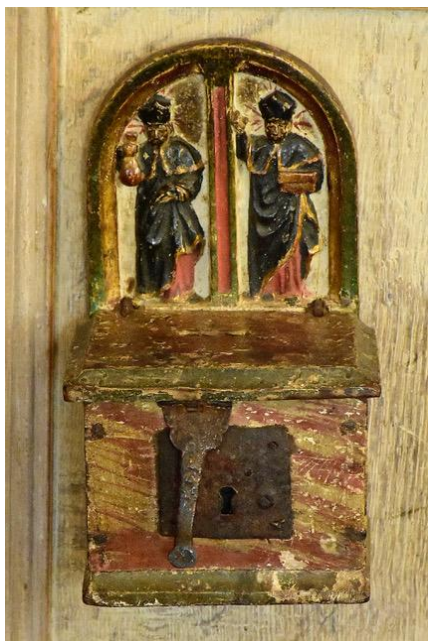
It is a church of sky; - nay, a room, in God's vast house,  
Where we simply meet.....

Suzanne Munro

Good Friday 10-4-20



## *Competition Pictures in September, October, November Issue of Grapevine*



The items in the pictures were both seen in the National Trust property, Parham and research has given me an answer to the one on the left but the one on the right is still a guess. The comment I overheard from one of the guides was that it was used by postmaster Henry Bisshopp to measure the distance it took to deliver a letter. Did every "postman" in the 17th century have one? I think not. However research has discovered it is actually a hodomotor or waywiser used by surveyors. Unless someone knows otherwise!!

As to the box on the right it looks like a collection box that was originally in a church somewhere, possibly the St. Peter's Church in the grounds of Parham.



## Who was Henry Bisshopp?



Henry Bisshopp lived in the Parsonage House, a family property in Henfield, near Horsham in West Sussex. In 1643, Parliamentary troops searched the house to arrest him, as he was a known Royalist sympathiser. He hid in a hole in the floor of a bedroom with his dog, Charles. Remarkably the dog remained still and quiet and so they avoided detection. This painting commemorates this event. After escaping to Virginia, America, for two years, he returned at the Restoration, whereupon Charles II granted him the office of Postmaster General for seven years. Bisshopp found the work to taxing and asked to be relieved of the position after only three. However, his lasting legacy was his introduction of the 'Bisshopp mark', to be stamped on letters – the forerunner of our modern stamp.

No captions were received for the horse picture ..... so they had nothing of interest to pass on.

*John*

### *From the Co-ordinator*

#### *Somerset Sojourn and more*

Celia and I managed to get away for a couple of weeks towards the end of September and spent a most relaxing and enjoyable time in the village of Norton Sub-Hampden.

The village nestles in the valley below the impressive and interesting Hampden Hill with its quarry, whose stone was, and still is, used to build the local houses and buildings. Hampden Hill also has beautiful views over the Somerset levels and the Mendip Hills. Also, must make a mention of the excellent Prince of Wales public house situated on the top of Hampden Hill!!

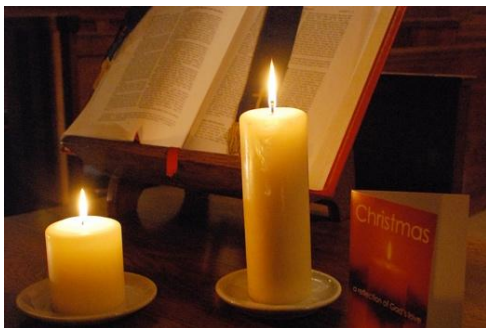
I digress, the reason for mentioning this adventure was a visit we made to Wells to see one of Britain's finest and really most beautiful Cathedrals. It was when going round the Bishop's Palace, in the grounds of the Cathedral, that I was a pleasantly surprised to come across a painting of Bishop Thomas Ken, the subject of a feature in the last issue of Grapevine. Of course, he was one of the Bishops of Bath and Wells, so it should not have been much of a surprise to see him framed and on the wall with all his contemporaries.

Seeing the expanse of the Bishops Palace and Gardens, left me feeling that life as a Bishop would have been quite a comfortable existence in their palatial surroundings

Back to more practical matters, the content of this issue. As you can see it is packed with articles of interest. It also covers all the services during the period of what is one of our most important seasons in the calendar of our church and the Christian Community.....Christmas with the birth of Jesus. Such a wonderous time to celebrate and come together in prayer and song.

The service led by Bernie Collins and ably assisted by his wife Gwen was a most beautiful way to celebrate our Church Anniversary and Gift Day. Bernie has very kindly allowed me to share with you the word and message he and Gwen brought to our church on that day. It is long but I felt it should not be split and shared in the March, April, May issue of Grapevine.

The work of our church goes forward with the new Spiritual and Pastoral Group, our Fund Raising Group, our Finance, Property and Lettings Committee, but most of all the work going on in the background with our new Moderator to move forward towards achieving a new minister, which could be achieved with the proposed possible joint pastorate with Christ Church, Uxbridge. We must all pray and hope that the effort and work that is going into this endeavor will, in due time, come to a successful conclusion.



It just leave me to wish you all a Very Happy, Joyous and Spiritual Christmas and may the New Year bring peace and goodwill to us all.

*John*

## *Regular Activities*

<b>Sunday</b>	9.45am	Choir Practice	
	11.00am	Morning Worship & Junior Church	
	6.30pm	1 <sup>st</sup> , 4, 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	No Evening Service
	6.30pm	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday	Choral Evensong at St Giles'
	6.30pm	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday	'18:30' - Worship + The Word at St. Giles' Church

Holy Communion is normally included in the third Sunday morning service each month.

<b>Monday</b>	10.30 –	Tea/Coffee in The Oasis Café
	12.30pm	
<b>Tuesday</b>	10.30 –	Tea/Coffee in The Oasis Café
	12.30pm	
<b>Wednesday</b>	10.30 –	Tea/Coffee in The Oasis Café
	12.30pm	
<b>Thursday</b>	10.30 –	Tea/Coffee in The Oasis Café
	12.30pm	
	1.45pm-	Meditation Group (3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the Month) in The
<b>Friday</b>	3.00pm	Chapel, St Giles' followed by tea in the Thompson Room
	10.30 –	Tea/Coffee in The Oasis Café
	12.30pm	
<b>Saturday</b>	10.00am	Coffee Morning (at main fundraising events)

**Church Office** - 01895 634 280

Shellie D'Arcy (Administrator/Lettings Officer) 01895 634 280/07792 143 888

**Children & Families Worker:**

Position Vacant

**For Cubs, Scouts and Beavers -**

Chris Potter (Group Scout Leader) [c.potter@hotmail.com](mailto:c.potter@hotmail.com)

Gary Childs (Chairman) 01895 634487; email [gary.childs@Crick.ac.uk](mailto:gary.childs@Crick.ac.uk)

**For Guides** - Hilary Parker - [hilaryjparker@hotmail.com](mailto:hilaryjparker@hotmail.com)

**For Brownies** - Susannah Parker [susannah.may@ledvance.com](mailto:susannah.may@ledvance.com)

**For Rainbows** – Nicola Joyce - [nickyjoyce72@googlemail.com](mailto:nickyjoyce72@googlemail.com)

**Happy Days Pre-School** - Sandra 07752 479 750 (9.30am – 3.00pm)