



HURST GREEN NEWS

December 2020

The search for meaning

Kneeling

Moments of great calm,
kneeling before an altar
Of wood in a stone church
In summer, waiting for the God
To speak; the air a staircase
For silence; the sun's light
Ringing me, as though I acted
A great role. And the audiences
Still; all that close throng
Of spirits waiting, as I,
For the message.
Prompt me, God;
But not yet. When I speak,
Though it be you who speak
Through me, something is lost.
The meaning is in the waiting.

R.S. Thomas



Advent is traditionally a time of waiting. The Advent calendar or Advent wreath with four candles (cue the Two Ronnies) helps us mark that time of waiting as Christmas approaches. However I think we find waiting harder nowadays with so much available 'on demand'. Even today's Advent calendars help make the waiting more bearable by giving us gifts every day, (if you'd like to spend £30 for a cheese one or £40 for a make-up one, of course!)

That said, this whole year has forced waiting upon us. We are waiting for the pandemic to come to an end and life to return to normal. We are waiting for a vaccine to be found. We may have to wait for COVID test results. We may have had to self-isolate and find ourselves counting days until it ends. We may be waiting to see who we can be with at Christmas.

"The meaning is in the waiting" writes RS Thomas. The waiting of Advent this year will have a new depth, but what 'meaning' might we find? There are many things the pandemic has taught us but maybe one is how to live with uncertainty - something we also find hard when usually we seem to have a tight control on our lives.

If we turn our thoughts to the waiting in the Christmas story we are reminded that Mary and Joseph also lived with uncertainty. When the angel told Mary she was to give birth to God's son, Mary would have wondered, fearfully, how Joseph, her fiancé, might respond. When they travelled to Bethlehem their journey was risky. Would they make it? When they got there, were they going to find somewhere to stay? And though they were settled for a short while, quickly they had to flee for their lives as Herod got wind there was a new king in town and sent his soldiers to massacre any first born, baby boys. Life certainly wasn't all tinsel and fairy lights.

So as we wait for Christmas 2020, let's remember that Jesus was born into a family living with uncertainty. As Mary accepted her destiny from the Angel Gabriel she promised to trust God and yield to what lay ahead because she would not face it alone. "Nothing is impossible WITH God", she replied. Her words can also be ours this Advent and Christmas, however things might unfold. With love and prayers for a meaningful Advent and Christmas.

*Revd Canon Anna Eltringham, Oxted Team Rector
St John's Hurst Green and St George's Crowhurst*

Welcare

You may have read about Welcare in last month's Hurst Green News. Traditionally Welcare has benefitted from gifts each Christmas, especially from the Crib Services on Christmas Eve at St John's Church. Sadly due to current restrictions the Crib Services are unable to take place this year and Welcare cannot accept donations of food and toys. If you are able, you can still support Welcare's Families in Crisis fund and donate at: <https://bit.ly/StJWelcare2020>

As an idea of how your money will help: £5 will provide nappies and wipes for a newborn for 3 days; £10 will provide nappies and wipes for a toddler for a week; £15 a board game for a family; £20 a warm coat and £30 a pair of school shoes. Donations are also used to pay for attendance at breakfast / after school clubs; a man with a van to move a family out of unsuitable accommodation; or a bus pass for a family to get to school, for example.

For more information about Welcare visit www.welcare.org, email redhill@welcare.org or call 017307 780 884



Hurst Green churches
wish you a peaceful
and joyous Christmas



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www.moorhouseschool.co.uk

HURST GREEN CHURCHES WELCOME YOU

At the time of going to print, lockdown restrictions remain in place and there is still a degree of uncertainty as to what might or might not be permissible in the days leading up to Christmas. For that reason, we are unable to publish details of planned services and request that you check each of the church's websites for up to date information.

ST JOHN'S, CHURCH WAY

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(day off - Monday)
Assistant Priest: Mary Seller, 715675, 11 Home Park
Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary: Monica Fenton, 715769
www.stjohnshurstgreen.org.uk

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www.oxtedandwarlinghamparish.org

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YOGA for Your life – Body, Mind, Breath and Spirit

Yoga is a combination of physical and mental disciplines which make the body stronger and healthier and the mind calmer and more controlled, helping towards a healthier, more positive, and active approach to life.

Yoga promotes mobility and strength. It will help to maintain and improve posture, creating an awareness of the way you stand, move and breathe in your daily life. Yoga Therapy has developed as a way to bring Yogic tools to be applied to specific health concerns or physical/mental/emotional issues in a one to one session. A Yoga Therapist will use their skills in body reading to assist in the assessment of functional and postural imbalances that may cause discomfort or pain, observing breath and the individual's manner and thought patterns. Priorities and goals will be developed together with the Therapist and a home practice will be given in order to develop a daily practice to bring about the desired changes and move the client towards balance and wellbeing.

The physical practices of yoga (asana) will often involve adjustments, modifications for an individual in order to facilitate release of fascial restrictions. Through regular practice imbalances, stresses and disturbances in the body can be controlled and bring long term relief.

Breathing forms one of the fundamentals of all Yogic work. Breath is life! Breathing techniques (pranayama) can increase capacity and energy, improve control of your breathing, and allow the body to work in harmony with the breath. It has been shown that pranayama can reduce blood pressure when practised regularly, and some of the techniques are bringing relief to those with complications from COVID-19 and other respiratory conditions.



Some of the most beneficial aspects of yoga for modern living, and particularly at this time with so many changes and challenges, can be found in the practices of meditation and mindfulness, along with the rejuvenating and healing effects of deep relaxation (Restorative Yoga). Through developing a deeper awareness of the connections between the body and mind, and by practising techniques that have proven to be effective, everyone can develop an understanding of how they think and feel, and how to begin to take control of those thoughts and feelings which no longer serve you. This will allow you to move towards a more fulfilled and contented life.

The practice of Yoga needs to be done with commitment, willingness, and enthusiasm to discover more about you and what your body, mind and spirit yearn for.

An open heart and mind will make Yoga a healthful, rejuvenating experience to enhance every aspect of your life. If you have a specific issue or need, a Yoga Therapist can help you develop a practice to bring change and enhance your life.

If you would like to benefit from the amazing changes that yoga can bring, Yoga Teachers and Therapists in the local area can be found on a Facebook Page - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/345872649196988>

Penny Roberts - www.penrobyoga.com

Coming Soon an online Advent Calendar with a difference

Bringing Tidings of Comfort and Joy!!



The Oxted Team of Churches has come together this year to give you an advent calendar with a difference. The calendar will be online with an opportunity to click open a window every day in the lead up to Christmas, starting on 1 December. Rather than a chocolate treat, you will be presented each day with: an uplifting message, a reflection, some jokes, a prayer, a blessing or singing and lots of other lovely surprises, brought to you by a different person / group of people each day.

So join in the festive cheer from home daily starting on 1 December on the Oxted Team of Churches website otoc.uk/advent-calendar.

East Surrey Walkers

Like everything else, East Surrey Walkers is on hold for these few weeks. Hopefully it will start up again once this lockdown is over. Please check the website for the latest information: www.eastsurreywalkers.org.uk.

In the meantime, consider the following good reasons to take up walking, which is the daily brain medicine we really need:



Walking boosts your mood even when you're not expecting it; enhances creativity, especially when you're seeking a solution; sparks connections between brain cells; improves working memory; yields the right rhythm for thinking; is a powerful way to mainline nature. These all seem powerful reasons to take up walking. Just Google it to find out more!

Pamela Cunliffe, East Surrey Walkers

Join St John's to share the light at our Christingle (via Zoom)
4 - 5pm, Christmas Eve (Thursday 24 December)
 Visit stjohnshurstgreen.org.uk for information and to book a ticket.

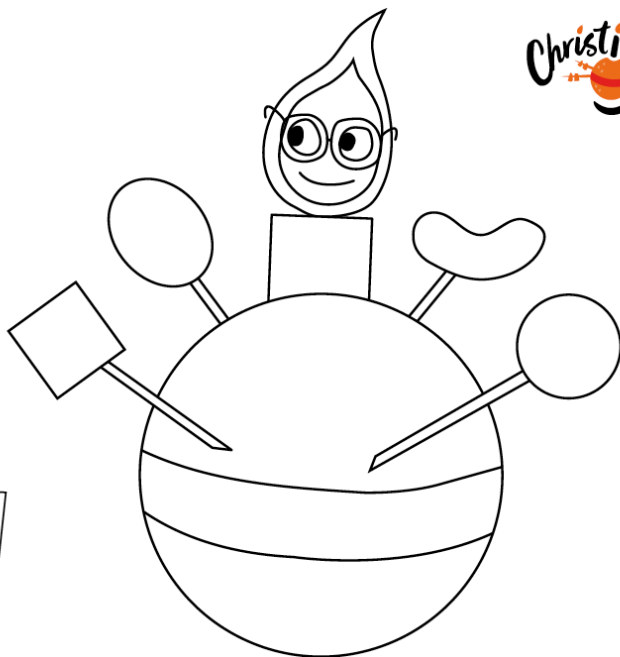
**The
Children's
Society**



Share

the

light!



Christingle is about sharing light and hope with others, especially those in need. How will you share the light this year? You could start by colouring in the picture above and placing it in your window for people to see.



The making of a fabric map of Hurst Green and Holland: a Creative Community project during lockdown - Rachel Lickiss

We had the idea to make a map at Hurst Green Fair in 2019, thinking it would be good to display in our gazebo. We wanted to include artwork by local residents but by the time we were ready to ask for this, lockdown had started.

I worked on the design and decided on a map about 90cm square plus borders for lettering and illustrations. The main road network was drawn out to this scale and then transferred to fabric which was stitched in place.

We put out an appeal for people to draw community buildings, their home, or indeed any other building in the villages. Later, we circulated a list of community buildings we still needed so that people could fill in the gaps. A drawing by everyone who contributed has been used, some to decorate the label on the back of the quilt as we could not have two of any one building on the map. Scans of the drawings were reduced to be only a few centimetres in each dimension. These were printed on specialist fabric and stitched to the map in approximately the correct location - the village centre got rather crowded!

Pictures of houses were stitched to the side borders and lettering applied to the top and bottom borders. The final stage was to use photographs of the projects and events run by Creative Community. These were printed onto fabric and attached in the space just inside the borders with threads indicating the location of projects in the villages.

We hope that events will again be possible next year and we will display the map at those. Other plans to display it or produce small versions of the design are also being considered.



Hurst Green Gardening Club

We may be suffering a lockdown, but nobody told my garden. Everything is carrying on as if we didn't exist, governed only by the weather, each plant fighting for its place. We just decide which ones will get a bit of help. Except for weeds, they have their own rules, but any plant can become a weed. Just look at my garden!

Always have something to catch your senses: shapes, colours, smells, sounds. At the moment fatsia, clematis, honeysuckle and cyclamen are magnets for insects. The abelia just goes on forever. My hollies are sagging with berries, ready for the annual invasion of redwing tourists who stop over for just long enough to strip them. While I enjoy the maples cascading colour to the ground, the bulbs already give a hint of things to come. Whatever the weather, get outside; you don't have to do much and it often helps if you don't! *Brian Parrott*

Online Christingle

We know that many families looking forward to Christmas will be wondering how, with all of the uncertainties we're currently facing, we can celebrate this season well and with hope. Christingle is a joyful, hope-filled celebration of Jesus, the Light of the World, that takes place around Christmas. It's the perfect start to your Christmas. Even if we can't all be together in one place, we can be together in spirit.

St John's Christingle service will take place via Zoom at 4pm on Christmas Eve.

To join us you will need to register at eventbrite.co.uk/e/128552392667.

Spaces are limited, so please register to avoid disappointment. Donations from this service will go to the Children's Society to help disadvantaged children and young people in the darkest of situations.

If you are able, you can donate here:
<https://thyg.uk/CUS042148>

To make your Christingle during the service, you will need:

- An orange, satsuma or clementine
- Some red ribbon, paper or wool to tie around the Christingle
- A small candle to insert into the orange
- Some foil paper
- 4 cocktail sticks
- Some dried fruits and/or sweets of your choice that can easily be placed onto the cocktail sticks e.g. dolly mixtures

Put the date in your diaries, register for a ticket and follow our website for more information: stjohnshurstgreen.org.uk

Oxted Shines

For many people, Christmas will look a little different this year. It will be hard for friends and families to meet up, and some of us may even find ourselves in isolation or quarantine during a season which usually brings people together. This is why the local churches wanted to spread a little joy throughout the village, reminding people they are not alone.

From Advent Sunday on 29 November, join with us to brighten every street by making a star to display in your window. It can be as big or small as you like, and you can use anything you have handy: paints, crayons, lights, glitter... the limit is your imagination!

We've chosen the symbol of a star because for us as Christians it reminds us of the star that the wise men followed to find the Christ child who came to bring joy to the world.



But it's also a symbol that holds meaning for people of other faiths and none. Stars can represent hopes, dreams, wishes... things we all need more than ever this year. We hope looking at these stars will bring light and hope to all at the end of a dark year.



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