



HURST GREEN NEWS

January 2021

Happy New Year!

We begin another year, and we have an opportunity for a new beginning. It feels as though we could all do with a great many things changing, though not all of them are under our control. 2020 has been a difficult year for nearly everyone, and an extremely difficult year for some people. It has been difficult for our country and for the whole world. I don't think many people will be mourning the passing of this year. It has been a year of many unprecedented struggles largely as a result of the COVID-19 virus which has created a worldwide pandemic. We hope that 2021 will be better.

However, just because the year changes it does not mean that everything is different. COVID-19 will still be with us along with restrictions designed to keep us safe. We may find them frustrating, but they are both for our own protection, and for us to help protect others. In due course there will be vaccinations available for many, which will permit some sort of gradual return to normality. I suspect we are going to have to learn patience during the first part of 2021. The change of year is not a magic spell, making everything better.

That seems to me the general truth about New Year. We set out with many hopes, expectations and resolutions, only to find that they gradually fade. I have not been good at keeping New Year resolutions from childhood onwards. However, one thing associated with the New Year that has always spoken to me is the Methodist Covenant service, which has been part of my keeping of a new year since I was 14 years old. It is a service usually on the first Sunday of the year where we think seriously about our relationship with God: what God has done for us, and what we are prepared to do for God. The Covenant itself starts with the words "I am no longer my own but yours", and then explores what such a commitment might mean. It is a service many people find extremely (or even too) challenging, but I have always (well, since 14) valued this act of recommitment.

This year I will lead the Covenant service and make the commitment once again at the Methodist Church in Coulsdon. Sadly I will not be able to do the same in Hurst Green, where the Methodist Church still has its doors closed, and that will continue to be the case. At some time in 2021, Hurst Green Methodist Church will hold its final service, a Service of Thanksgiving for the life of the church through the years. We hope that will be a joyful occasion, joined by people who have shared its life through the years, but we know that it will be a time of sadness too.

So while I look forward to 2021 being better than 2020, I know it will not be a year of unalloyed joy.

Stephen Mares, Methodist Minister



Full of surprises!

It is the season of giving and two wonderful gifts have come my way in recent weeks which I'd like to tell you more about.

The first is that I have been made an Honorary Canon of Southwark Cathedral. You probably don't know that I am involved in work as the Dean of Women's Ministry within the Diocese in addition to my role as your Rector. The appointment was granted to me in recognition of this work as well as an encouragement to me, as with all canons, to act as ambassadors for the Cathedral. I am a big fan of Southwark Cathedral just near London Bridge. Having always served in this Diocese it really is for me a 'Mother Church', especially as it isn't too grand or over-bearing and instead like a real spiritual home where I know many of the chapter and some of the other canons. It is a privilege to receive this gift and I look forward to getting involved a little in the life of the Cathedral.

The second came as even more of a surprise. Back in April I had a phone-call out of the blue from the Bishop of Carlisle. In the course of the call I discovered he is 'Clerk of the Closet' and for a salary of £7 a year is the Bishop that advises the Private Secretary to the Sovereign on matters such as proposed Honorary Chaplains to the Queen (QHC). Then I discovered that was exactly what I was being nominated to be by my Bishop: to be one of 30 QHCs who support the Queen through prayer, preaching once a year at the Chapel Royal and in other duties as required.

My new scarlet cassock is currently in the making and I have a gilt brooch to wear with the royal cypher and crown within an oval wreath. I am really excited about the role and admire Her Majesty and her strong Christian Faith that provides comfort and hope to the nation. It will be a joy to serve her as she serves us.



What wonderful blessings!

Yours, Revd Canon Anna Eltringham QHC!

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Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary: Monica Fenton, 715769
www.stjohnshurstgreen.org.uk

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Hurst Green Garden Club

Organised chaos is how I think of my garden. Perhaps yours is more ordered. Nature has other ideas and left to themselves, plants will make their own plans, if only we didn't keep interfering. As Oscar Wilde once said 'I can resist anything except temptation'. How often do we leave a garden centre with yet another plant without much idea as to where it can go (well it's such a lovely plant)? We really should decide on a location, then find a plant which will prosper in its new home. Maybe some research beforehand and looking for a Nursery is part of the pleasure of gardening; or like today enjoying the view from my window with the last of the maple leaves hanging on the new shoots on the evergreens, early snowdrops peering through fallen leaves, winter vinca flowers just starting to show and hyacinths next to my chair in full scented flower.



Apart from wanting the rain to stop, what else could I possibly want? Well, maybe the coffee which is brewing! The Garden Club programme for 2021 is still being decided but if we still manage to hold a plant sale, perhaps you may find a plant that you can re-home. *Brian Parrott*

Online Advent Calendar with a Difference Bringing Tidings of Comfort and Joy!!

The online advent calendar produced by the Oxted Team of Churches will still be available in January even though Advent is over! Do take a look if you haven't done so already: otoc.uk/advent-calendar



Click open a window every day in the lead up to Christmas. Rather than a chocolate treat, you will be presented 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 or group of people each day.

A Moving Experience

A moving experience features in probably everyone's lives, usually in situations of joy and sorrow such as weddings, funerals, new birth, but there will be other occasions too that you can no doubt think of. How many moving experiences do you have in your memory bank? I know I have a surprising number, once you start thinking about it and inevitably they are tied in to an emotional reaction. Recently, in November, we have had such experiences added to by the St John's All Souls drop-in time on Sunday, 1 November and the St John's Remembrance streamed service, both much appreciated. Also the national observance at the Cenotaph and the Royal Albert Hall occasion, both very different from the usual, but both extremely well and thoughtfully done. Who knows, in this 2020 pandemic year what experiences we might add about the way we have celebrated Christmas? At least the pandemic cannot take away the real meaning and message of Christmas, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, so hopefully Christmas will lift our spirits and it will be a 2020 Christmas experience to remember.



The moving experience I have in mind for this article is moving house. Probably many mixed emotions will surface, after all a chapter of your life is being left behind. Although we are in a pandemic at the moment, moving is still allowed. In fact there will be a change next door to us very soon.

There are a variety of reasons for moving house, some of them because it is our choice and we look forward to it, whether upsizing or downsizing in the particular situation, but other reasons include when it is dictated to us. This may be due to a change of job to another area of the country or there may be a family reason and we need to be nearby, either to be available to help or to be helped if we are no longer in a position to care for ourselves independently. If you have had to move to a new

area of the country was it daunting, or in a more positive approach, rather exciting? Leaving friends behind is hard, still our friends though, but not likely to be seen very often, but making new friends helps.

Whatever the reason for moving, it is usually a big upheaval. The good intentions of making it an opportunity to review our possessions and dispose of those no longer required or, to be honest, are just clutter, is never as simple as it sounds, especially if the occupants cannot agree.

Estate agents are probably the first port of call, then a solicitor and if purchasing a property, a mortgage to arrange. Eventually, after all formalities, an actual moving date. Fingers crossed there is no break in the chain. Perhaps moving to a rented house or flat is more straightforward.

Moving day arrives, big question, will the weather be kind? The removal van arrives and suddenly the task of emptying your house or flat by the usually genial group of men begins. It has always been men when we have moved. Moving out and moving in does not necessarily happen on the same day, so finding somewhere to stay the night or even travel to a new area appears on the to do or to arrange list. Moving in day arrives and with it the endless questions, where does this go madam, or sir? I know the most important thing is that bedroom furniture is in so you can make the bed, ensuring somewhere to sleep after what will no doubt have been an exhausting day. Hopefully there will be much to look forward to, new neighbours, new friends, new church if it is important to you. All quite exciting.

A Moving House Experience will have its blessings and positives and I think to balance the experience, time to make any negatives history. Looking back we realised in our moves how many people became involved, helping to make it happen. It made me realise how much we rely on everyone's talents and skills, I believe God-given, which made it a moving experience to give thanks for. *Monica Fenton*



The Tawny Owl

Our largest common owl, with a wingspan of 99cm, the tawny owl is found throughout the UK (except Ireland) in woodlands, parks and gardens. It makes the familiar 'twit twoo' call during the night and early hours, actually made up of a 'ke-wick' sound from a female and an answering 'hoo-hoo-ooo' from a male. Tawny owls are their most vocal in the winter months as they establish their territories before the breeding season. They are often heard calling at night, but not often seen. In the daytime, one may be seen if disturbed inadvertently from its roost site in woodland up against a tree trunk or among ivy. Look for pellets below roosting places.

The tawny owl lives for about 4 years and is mottled reddish-brown, with a paler underside, a big, round head, rounded wings, large, dark eyes, and a dark ring around its face. Like other owls, it can turn its head through 270 degrees. Their forward-facing eyes cannot move in their sockets, so they must turn their heads instead. They feed on small animals like voles and mice, looking out for them from a favourite perch. Nesting usually takes place in spring in hollow trees or an old crow's nest.

Find out more about the work done to protect wildlife across Surrey at www.surreywildlifetrust.org. Sign up for the regular e-newsletter with information on local wildlife, events and volunteering and what to look out for throughout the year.



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Hurst Green Singers' spring term rehearsals will be via Zoom and we can therefore invite singers from other choirs. You would be very welcome to join us and if you are interested, here are the details:

We will be singing Elgar's Dream of Gerontius with rehearsals commencing on Tuesday 12 January at 8pm and running for ten weeks divided into two segments: 12 January - 9 February, and 23 February - 23 March, taking us to Holy Week / Easter with a week off for half term.

The Dream of Gerontius is a work for voices and orchestra in two parts set to the text of a poem by Cardinal John Henry Newman. It tells of the journey of a man's soul from this deathbed to his judgement before God and is widely regarded as one of Elgar's finest pieces, with some wonderful choruses.

The first half of rehearsals will be a talk around the music, its structure and format, the composer and historical context, and sometimes a guest speaker. In the second half, we will learn one of the choruses. Our Music Director will teach us our parts and conduct us, and there will be an accompanist. You will be on mute so no one else can hear you! Sometimes, we'll also sing along to a recording so that we can hear the other voice parts and orchestra. Please email hurstgreensingers@gmail.com for further details. The cost for joining for this term is £40.

East Surrey Walkers

I am a dedicated walker and thus I must admit to a positive prejudice; however I cannot overstate the mental and physical benefits of walking and not least the simple pleasure of being outside in the countryside. We are always delighted to welcome new walkers and you'll find a range of walks to suit all abilities.

I include a small selection of our planned local walks. There are, of course, longer and more strenuous walks and details are on the website: www.eastsurreywalkers.org.uk.

Hurst Green: Sat 2 Jan 10am meet Holland Sports Club, Mill Lane, 4 mile easy walk

Oxted: Mon 18 Jan 10am meet Old Godstone Road near Bushey Croft, 3 mile easy walk

Farleigh: Wed 20 Jan 10am meet car park near Little Green Farm 5½ mile leisurely walk

Crockham Hill: Friday 5 Feb 10am meet car park at the village hall 5 mile easy walk

Redhill: Wednesday 17 February 10am meet car park at Earlswood Common on the A2044, 6½ mile leisurely walk

Woldingham: Friday 26 February 10am meet South Hawk car park near Gangers Hill 6 mile leisurely walk

We wish you enjoyable walking. *Stephen Hanks, Publicity Officer, East Surrey Walkers*

New Year Resolutions

Christmas gone and the tree and lights packed away for another year.
January bites, it's cold and dark
and spring doesn't seem all that near.
And resolutions made on New Year's Eve -
Intentions we all mean to heed -
but more salad and long walks in January -
that's not likely to succeed!
Should we not change tack a little -
try different things through the year?
Each month just a little difference
to bring hope, good health and good cheer.
January we could resolve to try learning
something different every day
and in February we could endeavour
to bring gladness to someone's day.
March could be the time to start cutting back
on the things we're not meant to eat
and to curb bad habits could be April's goal.
Now wouldn't that be a feat?
We could say no to more packing and plastic
and start those long walks - not drive!
Come summer months we could proudly
show that we're helping the world to survive.
Maybe we should try to do something
that we've never tried before.
We could give of our time and volunteer
and find we like it for sure!
Next New Year's Eve might find
us delighted, in all that we have
achieved, and in giving
and striving for better,
find we're blessed
in what we've received.

Sue Fox

(written in December 2019)



PARISH REGISTERS

Marriage

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in their future lives together:*

19 December Rebecca Coomber
and Allan Thurston

Funerals

*Our sympathy goes to all
their relatives and friends:*

19 November Arthur Smith
24 November Michael House

St John's Book of Remembrance

To have a name entered, please
email office@stjhurstgreen.co.uk

Overwhelmed

I seem to spend a fair proportion of my time feeling overwhelmed. Pulled in so many directions, work, caring for the children, ensuring I am supporting our local community and the wider humanity. So many things to consider in my head, am I doing enough to reduce my carbon footprint? Am I eating healthily? Am I teaching my children important lessons?

For generations the earth has continued to spin at the same speed, time has continued to be measured and passes without influence. And yet our lives become increasingly hectic, our working days longer. There seems such urgency as we rush from one activity to another, our minds almost moving on to the next task before we have finished the first. How much enjoyment can we truly be getting when our mind has already moved on?

I could possibly be classed as outdated, but I feel that when I am with a colleague or a friend, I should not to respond to my phone. I try not to let my mind wonder into the weekly shopping list or the permission slip I need to complete for my daughter's school trip. I try not to think of the insurmountable list of things I need to get done before I collapse into bed.

Life, or my life at least, seems to have become a checklist of items to be done. Even a telephone call to a friend or a small errand must be timetabled in to allow me to maximise efficiency, every aspect micro managed.

Louise Kirk

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