

Saints Alive!

*The parish magazine of
All Saints Church, Kings Heath*



December 2024
& January 2025



£1
(suggested donation)



Christmas Services at All Saints Church 2024

Sunday 22nd December

6.30pm Carols by Candlelight

Christmas Eve, Tuesday 24th December

11.00am - Carol Singing on the Village Square
12.15pm (any singers and enthusiastic bucket-shakers
welcome!)

3.00pm Children's carols with the blessing of the crib

11.30pm Midnight Communion

Christmas Day, Wednesday 25th December

8.00am Christmas Day Holy Communion

10.00am Christmas Day Holy Communion



From the vicarage

Dear friends and neighbours,

'As we dwell on the final month of Mary's pregnancy, let the ordinary women of Gaza and Israel embolden us to hope and pray they might be giving birth to the solution.' So ended the magazine letter this time last year. Since then, more than 50,000 babies have been born in Gaza.

The International Rescue Committee estimates that 183 women give birth in Gaza each day. 55% of them have health issues preventing breastfeeding. There are 625,000 school-age children in Gaza, but 90% of schools have been destroyed. Of the 42,000 who have died in the conflict, 8,000 have been children. Some 17,000 children are now unaccompanied, separated from their families by displacement or bereavement.

It is hard to imagine the impact of displacement, malnutrition, bereavement, uncertainty and lack of education is having on the neurological formation of infants and the mental health of children and young people. Two human things, however, glow among these bleak statistics. One is that people are still making love in Gaza. The other is that children play. There is unbearable pathos about both these thoughts, yet there is something irrepressible, powerful, defiant, too. There is something about making a moment, doing something recklessly beautiful, something eagerly tender when surrounded by destruction and uncertainty. There is an unknowing, powerful judgement upon our adult violence when a child makes a game amid the rubble.

Rather than feeling unmanageable guilt at the contrast, our fervent prayers for the children of Gaza and Israel this season might mingle with reflection, gratitude and prayer for all involved around childbirth, child development, child psychology and education in our own communities. It gives us specific things to pray for in anticipating the formation of a new Palestine one day beyond this terrifying conflict.

That Jesus be gestated, his parents displaced, that he be born, be suckled as a refugee infant, be taught, and find his voice under an oppressive regime surely matters. From such circumstances, sure, characters like Barabbas could emerge, their hatred mirroring that of the regime they hate. But Jesus proved that generous humanity can grow, too, all the more magnificent because it seems to defy the odds of violence. That Jesus be remembered and worshipped, and Herod and kind judged, gives us hope that playfulness and love will outshine the self-defeating violence that still seems unassailable another year on.

With prayers for all our neighbours of every faith,

David

The front cover photo shows our completed set of Nativity Crib figures, crafted by local sculptor Graham Jones. The figures were commissioned by All Saints Community Arts with funds generously donated by the All Saints Crafters in memory of Gill Cole.

Spirit Anointed: The Orchard Women's Conference

Isaiah 61: 'The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me...'

What a day! Our first experience of The Orchard Women's Conference on 5 October did not disappoint.

Inspired by a calling to 'gather the women', sisters Rachel and Amy Hughes created The Orchard with a focus on liberation and empowerment. The words of Jeremiah 17:7 talk of a tree that 'sends out its roots by the stream' that 'has no worries in a year of drought' and 'never fails to bear fruit.' The Orchard encourages women to feel 'empowered by the Holy Spirit to step boldly and purposefully into each season... Imperfect but perfectly loved.' The conference, held at the ICC in Birmingham city centre, was an incredible opportunity for women to set aside a day to encounter God; to gather, to pray, to worship (and to enjoy a nice lunch at one of the many Birmingham eateries, if you didn't fancy a packed lunch).



This conference has been running for a few years now, and this year's theme was 'Spirit Anointed', inspired by the words of Isaiah 61. A brilliant mix of speakers, prayer and worship, we heard from Amy and Rachel Hughes who shared their reflections on Isaiah 61. Amy reminded us of Jesus as 'the anointed one', where heaven meets earth through him. She spoke of the desperate need for an 'anointed church' where we break through, break chains and speak up for the voiceless. She mentioned Harvest (and perhaps 'harvest' could refer to those who do not yet know Jesus?) and the fact that we cannot harvest with blunt tools. How can we 'sharpen the church', sharpen the tools? If we are anointed, then we can achieve great things.

Rachel continued this message with a talk entitled 'The Exchange', with a focus on 'the GAME': the Gift (we are the beneficiaries of God's gift), the Anointing, the Mission (to give good news, to help the brokenhearted, etc), and the Exchange (beauty in exchange for ashes), and we were invited to 'give yourself permission to be true.'



To wrap up the conference before the evening session, we heard from Damilola Makinde on 'Agents of Divine Reversal'. She spoke of what it looks like to be God's agents as women, bringing new life to every aspect of God's world.

British worship singer, songwriter and artist Elle Limebear led worship as the 'Orchard Youth' joined us, and we relived our teenage years, jumping around to *Give me oil in my lamp* – a

particular highlight! The Orchard Youth is a wonderful extension of the conference, providing a separate space for girls aged 11-18 to feel inspired and encouraged by God's love. We were all brought together in the main hall to close the day as we all stand and grow in one orchard, women of God.

For those wanting a quieter space away from the main hall, there was the 'Soak Space' which was available throughout the day – no need to book, you could just come and go as you pleased for prayer and worship on a smaller scale.

'Connect with Others' provided a meeting space for solo attendees to buddy up. There was a fabulous Marketplace set up outside the main hall, showcasing charities and Christian makers, including The Orchard stall offering conference merchandise.

This day provided us with time to reflect and appreciate the beauty and richness of the community we are a part of at All Saints, but we were also grateful to be able to experience our faith with so many other wonderful women from all over the globe, and to witness a breadth of worship – all for one God.

We headed home with a real buzz; energised, inspired and full of hope and anticipation, excited and expectant for the Holy Spirit to continue to shine through our faith and our service to All Saints and our community.

If you're interested in coming along to next year's conference in Birmingham on Saturday 11 October, tickets are on sale here: <https://theorchardwomen.com/birmingham>.

Let us know if you can make it - it would be wonderful to share the day with you!

Sarah Jeffery and Grace Storey



Poetry corner

When leading intercessions recently Liz Haskins has quoted from the following poem, and suggested sharing it with readers of the magazine.

Leisure

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

William Henry Davies (1871-1940)

High days and holy days

6 December – What's in a (Christmas) name?

What do your family call him, that cheerful old man in a red robe and floppy hat who pops up everywhere at Christmas? Sometimes he's Father Christmas, sometimes Santa Claus, and in parts of Europe he's Saint Nicholas. That's his real name, abbreviated to 'Santa Claus' by Brits and Americans and then turned into a more homely, cuddly kind of name for the children. Whatever he's called, his function is the same: delivering presents to children at Christmas.

The first St Nicholas was Bishop of Myra, in the country we now call Türkiye, in the 4th century. He was known as the friend of the poor, and especially poor or abused children. At (or just before) Christmas he went around handing out presents to them, as well as rescuing some from dreadful circumstances. The red robe our modern Santa Claus wears may be a vague representation of a bishop's garment, and the floppy hat is his mitre! The original good bishop from 1,600 years ago is remembered by the Church on 6 December, and the lucky children in Belgium and the Netherlands get their presents then.

25 December – Why begin at midnight with Holy Communion?

The hour was first chosen at Rome in the 5th century to symbolise the idea that Christ was born at midnight – a mystical idea in no way hindered by historical evidence! No one knows the real hour of his birth. Certainly, in recent times, Holy Communion at midnight on Christmas morning has proved popular. One British writer pointed out its 'domestic convenience' in 1947: 'For where there are children and no servants, husband and wife may be unable to communicate at any other time.' Make of that what you will...!

25 January – Conversion of St Paul

January is a month of the beginning of great things. As well as the naming of the Son of God, we celebrate the conversion of the greatest apostle of the Christian faith. Many books have been written on Paul, and here is the briefest of introductions.

He was a Jew, born as Saul at Tarsus, and brought up by the rabbi Gamaliel as a Pharisee. A devout, fanatical Jew, Saul persecuted the Christians, and watched with satisfaction the first Christian martyrdom, the stoning of Stephen. Then, on his way to Damascus, Saul had a vision of Christ that stopped him in his tracks. He realised that this Jesus whom he was persecuting was in fact the Messiah for whom he had longed. Saul changed overnight. He was given a new name, Paul, and became an evangelist for the cause of Christ. He became a leader in the early Church, and his special calling was as an apostle to the Gentiles. He wrote epistles to the young churches that he founded – and thus, inadvertently, wrote a great part of the New Testament.

Life as the greatest apostle was hardly full of perks: Paul was stoned, beaten, mobbed, homeless, hated, imprisoned and finally martyred. Tradition has it that he was beheaded in Rome during the persecution of Nero in the year 64, and buried where the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls now stands. His mighty faith in Christ has kindled similar belief in many hundreds of millions of people down the centuries.

(adapted from www.parishpump.co.uk)

Music matters

'The word of life which fires us, / speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze': remembering Timothy Dudley-Smith, author of 'one of the few modern hymns that will truly last'¹ and much more besides.

In the last *Music matters* article a couple of mentions were made of Timothy Dudley-Smith, whom I referred to as 'surely one of the most prolific and celebrated English hymn-writers of the past hundred years' and who died in August aged 97. Here we take a look in more detail at the life and work of this author, who should officially be referred to as the Rt Revd Timothy Dudley-Smith, becoming as he did Bishop of Thetford following a period as Archdeacon of Norwich.

Born in Manchester in 1926, Dudley-Smith studied at Pembroke College, Cambridge and then trained for ordination at Ridley Hall in the same city. He served his curacy in Kent and then worked with young people as part of the University of Cambridge's mission in London's Bermondsey. Described in his *Guardian* obituary as 'a low church, old-school evangelical', he went to hear Billy Graham during the latter's first visit to the UK in 1954 and subsequently worked initially with the Evangelical Alliance and then the Church Pastoral Aid Society. In his later church positions he 'earned wide respect for the wise handling of often difficult situations' in managing issues of 'pastoral reorganisation and amalgamations', where 'local interests and loyalty demanded that firmness be tempered with sensitivity'.²

Moving on to his hymn-writing career, Dudley-Smith's obituary in *The Telegraph* affirms that 'he was, however, more widely known as the foremost hymn-writer of his time and wrote upwards of 450 hymns, of which more than 300 were included in about 250 hymnals throughout the English-speaking world. His greatest popular success was *Tell out, my soul* [based on the Magnificat, or Song of Mary] in 1962, but many of his other hymns are still sung.' The bare statistics alone are impressive – in our *Complete Anglican Hymns Old & New* there are 17 Dudley-Smith entries (behind Graham Kendrick and Charles Wesley, perhaps, but ahead of Isaac Watts and John L Bell & Graham Maule of the Iona Community, for instance); in the current *Ancient & Modern* he receives 41 credits, more than any other author.

Part of this is due to the fact that, as I wrote last month, 'there really does seem to be a Dudley-Smith hymn for every occasion'. *A&M* is organised thematically, with hymns for times of day and particular parts of the service or ceremonies; for high days, holy days and seasons throughout the church year; in categories such as 'Penitence' and 'Justice & Peace'; and finishing and with general hymns and then short chants. Of these 47 groupings (some of which are, it must be said, slightly more arbitrary than others) Dudley-Smith's hymns appear in 21, with texts for Christingle and Epiphany, Mothering Sunday and Good Friday, Pentecost and Trinity, Christian Initiation and Marriage, The Word of God and Holy Communion, Wholeness & Healing and Creation & The Environment, and a whole host more.

Under 'Canticles & Affirmations of Faith' come Dudley-Smith's 'Mag & Nunc', the aforementioned *Tell out, my soul* and his versification of the Nunc dimittis, or Song of Solomon, *Faithful vigil ended*. The former, which we have written about in these pages before, is overall an absolute banger of a

¹ John Betjeman on, unsurprisingly, *Tell out, my soul*. The words at the start of this heading come from Dudley-Smith's *Lord, for the years*.

² Obituary, *The Telegraph*, 13 August 2024. The photograph at the top of the *Telegraph* article shows Dudley-Smith alongside Robert Runcie, then Archbishop of Canterbury, and a canon by the name of Mark Santer...

hymn (according to *The Guardian* this was Dudley-Smith's 'first effort [at writing] any verse that might work in song') and it's not hard to see the reasons for its popularity – although its lines are not short (10 syllables each) and contain a few longer words that we don't often sing ('unnumbered', 'dominions', and 'stubborn', whose two syllables are strung out across a whole bar of music), the message of the Magnificat is straightforwardly and clearly rendered with repeated use of the hymn's title and other well-turned, striking phrases such as 'his mercy sure, from age to age the same' and 'the hungry fed, the humble lifted high' – it's hard to read them without singing! Although often chosen as Mary is celebrated on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, as we have done this month, the hymn is popular at weddings and essentially suitable for use throughout the year, paired as it usually is with a cracking unison tune, Walter Greatorex's **Woodlands**. As is usual in musical settings of Evening Prayer, the Nunc dimittis of *Faithful vigil ended* is more gentle and reflective, sung to **Pastor Pastorum** (also used for *Faithful shepherd, feed me*) by German composer Friedrich Silcher.

Also in that section of *A&M* is *We believe in God the Father*, Dudley-Smith's setting of the Apostles' Creed, and there are words using other canticles such as *All glory be to God on high* (based on Gloria in excelsis). Dudley-Smith has taken much inspiration from Biblical texts (*Beyond all mortal praise* from Daniel 2, the Epiphany hymn *In our darkness light has shone* from John 1), and in particular the psalms – he was on the editorial committee for 1973's *Psalm Praise*, a book we refer to often in Advent and Lent, and we have used a number of his psalm versifications in those seasons (Clare sang *All my soul to God I raise*, with words from Psalm 25, on Advent Sunday). Others familiar to All Saints include *Fill your hearts with joy and gladness* (based on Psalm 147, set in our book to **Ode to Joy** but which we pair, without a repeated last couplet, with the equally joyful and robust **Regent Square**); *I lift my eyes to the quiet hills* (Psalm 121); *Tell his praise in song and story* (from Psalm 34, sung to **Abbot's Leigh**, known for *Father, Lord of all creation* and *Lord, thy church on earth is seeking*); and *God is my great desire* (based on Psalm 63 and sung to *The God of Abraham praise's Leoni*, which we used to include in services partly at our children's request as it's 218 in our book and we live at number 218 – even our boys have a favourite Dudley-Smith hymn!).

Perhaps another reason for the inclusion of so many of Dudley-Smith's texts in hymnals is that their first lines so often make immediately clear the season or reason that they have been written: *Affirm anew the three-fold name* for Trinity Sunday; *Lord, as the day begins* as a morning hymn (clearly starting the day with some purpose, set as it is to the strident tune **Little Cornard**, familiar for *Hills of the north, rejoice*); or *Saint Luke, beloved physician* for that saint's festival.

Dudley-Smith 'claimed to be unable to sing or write music'³ but an article in the Royal School of Church Music's *Church Music Quarterly* from September 2022 described in some depth how his verses 'are not only written to be sung to hymn tunes: the texts themselves are musical, skilfully exploiting the elements that poetry shares with music – tone, mood metre, rhythm, tempo, form and allusion ... With a fine musical sensitivity, he is keenly aware of the sounds of words and their relation to both mood and meaning.' In his hymns Dudley-Smith employed more than 140 different metres, including some unusual ones and some with very long or very short lines of text, and he wrote 'consistently and extensively' about the music used for his words, expressing informed opinions about what worked most successfully with them and why he chose certain tunes to write for. The Revd Christopher Idle says that 'no-one could deny his feel for the music of words, their patterns, rhythms, pairs, and contrasts, worked over painstakingly until the precisely satisfying sequence and balance were found and settled on', with 'nearly every line [having] its rhyming partner (the verse typically rhyming ABAB rather than ABCB) ... as with the texts of his hymnological hero Charles Wesley'.⁴

³ Obituary, *The Guardian*, 22 August 2024 (Stephen Bates).

⁴ Obituary, *Church Times*, 16 August 2024 (The Revd Christopher Idle).

The *Telegraph* obituary notes that ‘he espoused traditional metre and rhyme and... adopted well-known existing tunes. This made his hymns eminently singable and is part of the reason for their continued popularity.’ In addition to some already mentioned, texts of his in *CAHON*, *A&M*, or from elsewhere that we have used at All Saints are published with, among others, **Breslau**, **Bunessan**, **Ellacombe**, **Lobe den Herren**, **Londonderry Air** and **Repton** (tunes which we know from singing alongside, respectively, *Take up thy Cross, the Saviour said*, *Morning has broken*, *The day of resurrection*, *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, I cannot tell* and *Dear Lord and Father of mankind*). Not bad company to be in!

Apart from *Tell out, my soul*, the most widely-known Dudley-Smith hymn is probably *Lord, for the years* – although particularly suitable for the turn of the year, or indeed to mark any new beginning or anniversary, it is another that can be successfully programmed at any time; Ian Bradley writes that ‘like much of the author’s work, it stands in the classic tradition of English hymnody, foursquare, robust and eminently singable’ (that phrase again!). It was written in 1967 for Scripture Union’s centenary (Dudley-Smith also wrote an extra verse for temporary use at the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II⁵), and as we have seen is often the case with his work, ‘abounds in scriptural references ... a wonderful sweep, both from thanksgiving to intercession and from the nation to the world to ourselves’ and is ‘hugely enhanced’ by its tune, in this case the ‘majestic’⁶ **Lord of the Years** which was written specially for the text by Michael Baughen, who had worked with Dudley-Smith at the Church Pastoral Aid Society and likewise went on to become a bishop, in his case of Chester. Baughen also composed the music for *I lift my eyes to the quiet hills*, and had provided an early tune for *Tell out, my soul*. (**Lord of the Years** is indeed a great and well-harmonised piece of music to accompany this deservedly popular hymn, although it will always make us smile remembering a wedding that we were at where it was used: at the start of the final line of music the tenor part has a soaring line which moves while the other parts don’t, and with each verse the choir’s tenors attacked this phrase with ever-greater enthusiasm, if not accuracy – I thought Clare was going to disgrace herself completely with laughter by the time we’d got through all five verses...)

In summing up his output, the *Telegraph* obituary stated that ‘although deeply-rooted in the evangelical tradition, Dudley-Smith’s commitment was of the thoughtful, inclusive sort which enabled him to minister easily in other traditions as well’; *The Guardian* opined that he ‘avoided the hardline conservatism of some of his colleagues and was generally approachable and modest. Modern trends in churchmanship passed him by as he grew older, one reason why his hymns may sound old-fashioned’. Only time will tell how many of them will still be known in 50 or a hundred years’ time, and how trends will again change, but it’s hard to see the best of his work dropping from the repertory, or to imagine anyone about to put together a new hymnal or a service to mark particular festival or occasion completely ignoring Dudley-Smith’s work, any time soon – while we are by no means familiar with, for instance, all of his entries in *CAHON* or *A&M* we have seen from the Wedding Festival concert and Birmingham Cathedral festival services mentioned last month that there’s always an appropriate new Dudley-Smith text to discover. And we will always need, in his words, to ‘tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord / to children’s children and for evermore!’


Ben Noakes

Music Co-ordinator

⁵ The *Church Times* obituary notes that Dudley-Smith ‘was often asked to provide a new hymn for a particular place or event, including some from globally faraway places. He would very often oblige in quick time, crafting a text with local resonance, but always usable in more general contexts.’

⁶ Ian Bradley: *The Daily Telegraph Book of Hymns*, 2005.

ALL SAINTS PLAYERS PRESENT...

Sn  ***ow***

White

Saturday 8 February 2025

Performances at 14:00 and 19:00

All Saints Church, Kings Heath

Tickets: £7 (adult), £5 (children and concessions)

£22 family ticket (2 adults + up to 3 children)

Tickets available in advance from Clare Noakes.

To book tickets for collection at the performance,

please email players@allsaintschurchkh.org

Payment can be made via PayPal –

details will be given on enquiry to the above address!

The ASYP Big Christmas Word Quiz 2024

Our annual festive fundraising quiz was a winner last Christmas, so we have a new quiz this year! It's a fun activity which can be easily shared with friends and family while supporting the running costs of the All Saints Youth Project. As with all charities, the current economic climate makes fundraising both a necessity and a challenge.

This year's quiz is now available electronically on the ASYP website allsaintsyouthproject.org.uk or direct by email from tedhammond74@gmail.com.

Last year we raised over £1,000 and this year our ambitious target is £1,500! Please join in the fun and enter the quiz this year. We suggest a minimum donation of £3 but your added generosity would be greatly appreciated. However, it is equally important that you share the quiz as widely as possible with family and friends: the wider we share the quiz, the more people will have an opportunity to support this wonderful work and raise funds for the charity.

Donations can be made through the ASYP website or by bank transfer – details are on the quiz.

Once again there is a prize for the winner (£30) and the runner-up (£20), plus all entries will be entered into a prize draw for one of three £10 M&S vouchers.

Lindsey & Ted Hammond

Live music in the Café

There are regular live music events in the Café on Fridays between 7 and 9pm.
Entry is free, and refreshments are available from the counter.

The general pattern is as below, but is sometimes subject to change:

<i>1st Friday of the month</i>	<i>Open Mic with Brumside Radio</i>
<i>2nd Friday</i>	<i>Strings and Things</i>
<i>3rd Friday</i>	<i>The Café Band</i>
<i>4th Friday</i>	<i>Voices</i>
<i>5th Friday (if there is one)</i>	<i>Oz and Bob play Blues</i>

On the subject of music, there will be carol singing in the Village Square to raise money for B30 & South Birmingham Foodbank between around 11am and 12:15pm on Christmas Eve and we would welcome anyone who would like to join us to sing – or to enthusiastically shake a bucket! Likewise do contact Ben & Clare Noakes (details at the back of the magazine) if you would like to sing in the choir for Midnight Mass, Christmas Day or the First Sunday of Christmas – see the flyer elsewhere in this issue for further information about services over Christmas.

From the archives

Historically Christmas was a key season for weddings and following six marriages in our church this year, plus A Festival of All Saints Weddings in September, weddings seemed an appropriate topic this December.

January saw the wonderful wedding of Tariro and Brian, a joyous event seamlessly combining British and Zimbabwean traditions. The bride arrived radiant and sparkling, apparently oblivious to the cold, and David conducted the traditional service with suitable ceremony amid the continuing vocal enthusiasm of both the All Saints and Zimbabwean choirs. The event was relaxed and full of joy and the celebrations continued long into the evening.



How different must have been the early weddings recorded in the archives? We can only imagine the lives of the young 19th-century couples, many living in hardship, employed in service or agriculture-related occupations. Or the emotion of rushed nuptials as young men signed up for the armed forces at the outbreak of war and the whole population lived in daily fear of enemy attack and air raids.

The official marriage registers held in the Library of Birmingham along with other diocesan records concisely provide the legally-required information about the 6,059 couples who have been married at All Saints since the first wedding on 25 May 1863. Early records include scant detail but this gradually increases over time, offering a more complete picture of the All Saints community.

The first bridegroom, Robert Earp, was a mechanic and his bride Susannah Eaton had no stated occupation. Robert's father was a servant and Susannah's a shoe and boot manufacturer. They were both listed as being of 'full age' and their 'Residence' simply as Kings Heath. Sadly, we know nothing more about them.

Leaping through the decades we find more revealing entries. John Harvey, aged 31, was a soldier when he married Eveline Gardner, aged 29, a munitions worker, on 10 September 1916. Both gave the same address in Waterloo Road and their fathers' recorded occupations are a cooper and a woodturner. Further information about some of these couples, and the fate of the soldiers and their families, may lie within the church archives. Cataloguing the fascinating assortment of documents will undoubtedly bring some interesting stories to light.

Life for those in service or working on the land in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was a time of scarcity, hence the popularity of Christmas Day or Boxing Day as a suitable wedding date as traditional holidays would be the only time that they could guarantee to have off two days off work. In 1912 eight weddings were recorded on Christmas Day itself and in 1929, 1934 and 1935 there were five, seven and six weddings respectively on each Boxing Day.

'Multiple weddings', with several couples being married during one service, was a common practice in some churches throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. It could have been simply that the volume of people seeking church marriages required a more efficient use of the clergy's time.

Perhaps during the tough years of the Depression in the 1930s, 'batch weddings' where the service was read only once while several couples took their vows was less costly and the only way some could afford to marry in church. This would perhaps account for there being **nine** weddings at All Saints on Saturday 11 April 1936 and **seven** on one day in August later that year. A marked contrast to the weddings of 2024.

The number of weddings per year ranged from 50 to 70 throughout the early 1900s but, unsurprisingly, surged in the tensions mounting before the Second World War and peaked at 114 in 1939 with 26 in September as war broke out. The stories of some of these wartime weddings were shared during our recent Wedding Festival. They illustrate the determination and resourcefulness of a generation that scrounged ration coupons for a hastily-arranged wedding during leave, substituted wedding cake tiers with cardboard, wore dresses made from parachute silk and even walked up the aisle clutching a gas mask.

The number of weddings at All Saints has declined steadily since the 1970s, hence there have been fewer weddings in the whole of 2024 than there were on Boxing Day in 1934. However, this perhaps makes the 6,059 weddings which have taken place at All Saints since the first one in 1863 even more special. In particular we remember those who were married here during previous Decembers – and the devoted clergy who performed weddings for the poorest of their congregation on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Vivien Thickett and Marion Wilson

(photographs from A Festival of All Saints Weddings in September)



We are always pleased to receive contributions for *Saints Alive!* –thanks to everyone who has supported the magazine during 2024.

There is no magazine in January, but if you have any comments, suggestions, ideas for articles, *Getting to know you* responses, or would like to submit something for inclusion in the February edition or beyond, please contact Ben & Clare Noakes, Editors:

E: magazine@allsaintschurchkh.org T: 07967 730156 / 07929 593097

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

On the subject of weddings, the following note and photographs from Robin Dickson, a recent visitor to All Saints, were passed on to the Archives Group:

I visited All Saints last Sunday [17 November] after the morning service and wish to thank all the people who I met and who plied me with tea and biscuits!

I had wanted to make a visit for several years since discovering the photos and identifying their location. However, living in Northumberland, visits to Birmingham are all too rare. I came to see where my maternal grandparents were married: All Saints, Kings Heath, on 4 January 1922.

My mother's father, Horace Wright, married Marian Blundell. The group photo has all the guests labelled. Once again, please thank all the members of the congregation who welcomed me so warmly.



A reminder that you can sign up for the regular All Saints email newsletter here:

<https://landing.mailerlite.com/webforms/landing/o7a2q4>

From the PCC

Since the last issue of *Saints Alive!* there has been one PCC meeting on 19 November. The following is a résumé of the salient points in the meeting which readers may find of interest:

Finance: Our treasurer reported that expenditure to the end of October since the beginning of the year was more than expected for a typical October at about £125K. Income since the beginning of the year to the end of October was about £123K giving a deficit of about just over £2K.

He said that most items were as predicted. Some fundraising money raised from the recent silent movie night and talk on colonial Britain had not reached the church account in time and this would have improved the situation.

Some of the heating system repair work had been paid for from income and perhaps should have been financed from savings which would also improve the situation. However, savings had been used for some of the cost which had reduced the monthly expenditure somewhat.

The cost of utilities, especially the standing charge, continues to be relatively high.

Some money has been received from Churches Together in Kings Heath to cover the cost of the insurance for the Walk of Witness at Easter which is usually apportioned between the various churches and which had been initially paid by All Saints, but this was a relatively small amount.

The average monthly giving for the last 12 months was up about £300 compared with the previous 12 months but was down somewhat on the average earlier in the year. As a result, the treasurer was concerned that there would not be enough to cover the money given annually to good causes for 2025. This is usually based on 10% of regular giving and for 2024 had been about £8,500. It was not considered appropriate that it should come from savings or a bequest which was expected shortly. As a result, the treasurer felt that the order of £5K was a more likely amount that could be afforded given the current financial situation. The money is usually disseminated to the various chosen charities annually but one suggestion would be to pay it in two instalments, one at the beginning of the year and the rest in the summer when the financial situation may have improved.

There was also concern about the payment of the Common Fund to the diocese. For 2023 this had been £73K and for 2024, slightly more at £73.8K. Traditionally the amount has been based on an individual church's means; however the diocese has developed a new system for 2025 based on the actual cost of priests, curates' training etc apportioned between the various parishes, which has resulted in a new amount due from All Saints of £85K. This is a significantly higher amount than was expected or is affordable at this present time. It was decided to delay any decisions for the time being and review the situation at the next PCC meeting in January when the full financial situation for 2024 will be known.

Part of the problem has been that the diocese currently has a deficit of £1.7m due to Covid but is hoping to get some financial assistance from the Church Commissioners for 2025 as part of the post-Covid recovery. All Saints' post-Covid recovery is understood to be good at circa 90%, much better than a lot of other churches.

The treasurer reported that overall, at this time, the church balance net worth was circa £203K, but as reported previously, did include the as yet unpaid long-term loan of circa £170K to the Development Company with no specific repayment date.

Safeguarding: David, our vicar, reported that there have been no incidents since the last issue of *Saints Alive!* but there is an ongoing issue in The Robin Centre which is being dealt with adequately.

The parish dashboard is a diocesan means of monitoring the status of safeguarding in individual parishes in terms of, for example, training. This is a live website-based set-up and continuously requires updating. All Saints is currently almost up to date and any outstanding issues are in hand.

Discussion took place regarding the extent to which leaders and helpers including musicians for young people's groups and activities should be adequately checked and trained. It is clear that leaders should be and it was considered appropriate that others who regularly help in these situations should be checked and trained as they are in the public eye and also as good practice. David said that he would seek advice from Eira, our safeguarding co-ordinator.

Churchwarden's report: Vivien, our churchwarden, provided an advanced report which covered a number of issues including the need for more church cleaning; much work done and ongoing on decluttering by discarding unwanted items and reorganising items to be kept; and making provision for motorised buggies to be parked in the north aisle.

During the meeting, she raised the issue of the Christmas tree for this coming season and the need for it to be purchased and erected in advance of the Christmas services.

She also felt that there was a need for cleaning and polishing of the church to be more structured. Consideration is being given to having a monthly session with a rota of two organisers and to invite members of the congregation to help as much or as little as they are available. A list of tasks would be drawn up for different areas of the church and the organisers would allocate tasks from the list for each session until all tasks have been completed and then the process would start over again. This way all tasks would be completed over a period.

Oversight: David said that a meeting had been scheduled to take place on Sunday 24 November at 12:30pm at St Bede's Church, Brandwood between the different churches in the Oversight Group. He was pleased that a number of people from the congregation including our churchwarden had shown interest in attending to progress the project. They would report the outcome at the next PCC meeting.

Lone working: Discussion took place regarding the safety of people undertaking tasks in the church on their own such as Beatrice, our sacristan, and the flower ladies. The diocese has produced a guide giving recommendations and individuals who regularly attend church on their own should be made aware of these recommendations. Anyone reading this and wishing to have more information should contact the vicar or a PCC member in the first place.

Christmas charities: It is usual for donations from the Christmas services to be dedicated to three chosen charities. The charities are chosen each year. This year it was felt that one of the charities should be one that supports war-torn zones, and another a local children's charity.

Members to give thought to this with a view to finalising the choice by the next Standing Committee meeting in early December. Discussion took place about the means by which the congregation could donate to these charities including traditional 'on the plate' donations but also digitally by card reader and QR codes in the church and included on the service sheets.

Reordering: This is back on the agenda and is an exciting development. David feels that now is the time to continue with this project which was probably the origin of the idea to redevelop the site in the first place. Since it is some time since the original concept was conceived and things have changed like different service patterns, availability of space and the nature of the congregation, a fresh approach is necessary.

David proposes a core group to redevelop proposals but also a workshop involving the whole congregation. The core group would need such skills as architectural, technical, finance, liturgical, musical, children's activities, lighting, sound, IT and secretarial. The process would involve concept design, outline costing, faculty approval, detailed design and implementation. The proposals would require PCC approval. It is understood that the All Saints Crafters have allocated all their recent takings to the project.

Archiving: The archiving of church documentation continues apace led by Vivien, our churchwarden. There is currently a need for additional money to finance the project. A notice has already been placed in the church newsletter to this effect and money has already been received from donors. More money is required and more announcements are to be made together with means of donating such as by traditional methods and digitally, and possibly giving at a particular service to be allocated to the project.

Lunch Club: The Lunch Club has recently moved to the All Saints Community Café from the Chapel Room which is temporarily being used by the Youth Project while the new development is completed. It has also gone from taking place weekly to monthly. Pre-Covid there were regularly 25 attendees but this has dropped to 14, and now sometimes fewer. The Club has been running for some 60 years so it is a well-established All Saints activity which has served the local community well over the years.

Liz, the Lunch Club leader, has decided to retire after many years of excellent service. At this point, it is indeterminate as to how it will continue in the new year. If a new leader can be appointed it may well remain in the Café which is more convenient in that food is already available and so would be a good transition.

Warm Lunches: It is hoped that this will once again take place managed by All Saints Community Catering (ASCC). The Christmas lunch is going to take place again as in previous years. Both these activities serve a diverse local population.

Church heating: Having resolved the problem of a leak in the heating system, at the time of the meeting the same specialist heating company, TBM Heating of Worcester, that repaired the leak was scheduled to attend church to establish and resolve why the boiler was not starting. Since then, this has happened and the problem resolved so hopefully the system will be operate satisfactorily for the foreseeable future.

Future meetings: The following is the schedule for Standing Committee and PCC meetings for the next year. The April SC meeting has been brought forward a week to the second Tuesday of the month as the third Tuesday is in Holy Week.

SC meetings: 10 December 2024; 18 February, 8 April, 17 June, 21 October, 9 December 2025.

PCC meetings: 21 January, 18 March, 20 May, 15 July, 16 September, 18 November 2025.

Tony Cocks
PCC Secretary

Birmingham – the pen maker to the world

Come and hear Jim Andrew's fascinating talk about how Birmingham helped improve literacy rates in the 19th century by becoming the pen nib manufacturer to the world. By 1913 Birmingham was producing 1,500 million pen nibs a year.

Saturday 25 January at 3pm in All Saints Church.

Admittance £5 including tea, coffee and cake (under 16s just £3).

Pay on the door or get your tickets in advance after the Sunday morning service or from All Saints Community Café.



Birmingham pen nibs were sent all over the world – this is how they were advertised in Germany

Wordsearch – the gifts of the three kings

What about their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh? One Victorian scholar has offered a possible explanation. He was the Revd John Henry Hopkins, an American Episcopalian minister, who in 1857 wrote the much-loved Christmas carol *We three kings of Orient are*.

Gold, said Hopkins, was a gift that would have been given to a king. Frankincense had traditionally been brought by priests as they worshipped God in the Temple. Myrrh was a spice that the ancients used in preparing bodies for burial.

If that is true, then you could say that the kings, in choosing their gifts for this infant, honoured Jesus with gold because he was King of the Jews, with frankincense because he was to be worshipped as divine, and with myrrh because he would also be come a sacrifice and die for his people. The kings were the very first Gentiles ever to worship Jesus – what faith they had!

(from www.parishpump.co.uk)

N	L	E	T	N	I	F	M	F	R	L	M
M	C	A	R	O	L	E	A	H	B	G	I
T	H	R	E	E	R	O	G	I	F	T	S
E	S	H	B	U	R	I	A	L	T	S	A
M	W	G	O	Y	R	N	E	H	T	H	C
P	O	S	D	E	R	U	O	N	O	H	R
L	R	G	I	E	L	W	E	P	T	R	I
E	S	N	E	C	N	I	K	N	A	R	F
C	H	I	S	G	C	I	T	S	S	Y	I
I	I	K	O	N	N	D	V	N	E	M	C
P	P	L	A	S	I	D	A	I	E	I	E
S	D	A	G	S	P	I	D	H	D	G	P

Gifts

Gold

Frankincense

Myrrh

Henry

Hopkins

Carol

Three

Kings

Orient

Worship

Temple

Spice

Ancients

Bodies

Burial

Honoured

Divine

Sacrifice

Die

Gentile

Faith

Accessing and paying for the magazine

The *Saints Alive!* magazine is available in digital form on the All Saints website at <https://allsaintschurchkh.org/about-us/publications/>, with hard copies available to pick up from the back of church each month. The suggested donation for each issue is £1, but cost should not be a barrier to anyone in the church reading the magazine in either online or printed form. Cash donations can continue to be made via the slot at the back of church; alternatively a standing order can be set up to pay in advance for a year's-worth (10 issues) of the magazine – please see the form below – or a cheque made payable to All Saints Kings Heath PCC can be sent to the Parish Office (address is on the back page). The form gives the individual the ability for their payment to go towards one of three areas – please select the General Purpose Fund (GPF) and delete the other two. The church's Charity Commission Number is 1145723. Finally, if you or someone you know would like a copy of the magazine posting out each month then please contact us as below to arrange this.

Ben & Clare Noakes
Editors

magazine@allsaintschurchkh.org
07967 730156 / 07929 593097

STANDING ORDER MANDATE AND BANK PAYMENT INFORMATION	
<i>(Please detach and send to your bank) or use for Internet Banking Payments</i>	
To: The Manager	
Address: _____	

Postcode: _____	
Please pay to HSBC PLC, Kings Heath Birmingham Branch	Sort Code: 40-11-15
For the credit of:	
The PCC of Kings Heath Parish All Saints Church	Account Number: 71801163
the sum of £ _____	First payment on _____ / _____ /20
and monthly / weekly thereafter on the same date until cancelled by me, or on.....	
Reference: G.P.F. V.D.F. M Garden Magazine <i>please delete the ones that do not apply</i>	
<i>Please cancel any previous mandates to this beneficiary on this account number.</i>	
Name: _____	
My Sort Code: _____	My Account Number: _____
Signature: _____	Date: _____

If you bank online, you will be able to use the details below to set up a standing order:

Or you can scan this QR code to donate to the church:

Name: The Parochial Church Council of All Saints Church
Account no: 71801163
Reference: GPF (magazine)
Sort code: 40-11-15



If you have any problems or questions about setting this up, or the church's finances in general, please contact Steve Brittle, Treasurer on 01905 772171 or zena_steveb@btinternet.com.

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Luke chapter 2 verses 1-7

The Roman Empire charged the countries it had invaded taxes, based on the number of people and what they earned.

Emperor Augustus gave orders that all people in the Empire were to be registered so they could be taxed.



This census was before Quirinius became Governor of Syria* (* whose own census started riots - Acts 5:37)

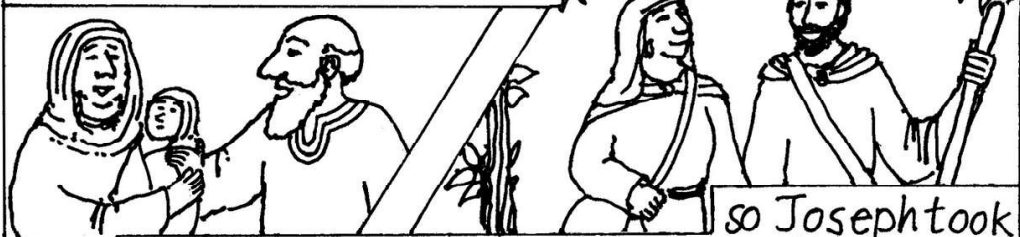


When the order came, Mary and Joseph were living in Nazareth.



But Joseph was descended from King David, who had been born in Bethlehem...

so Joseph took Mary to Bethlehem to stay with his family.



Come and meet everyone!



A normal home in Bethlehem.

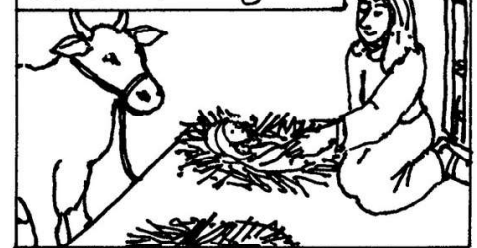


While they were staying there, Mary's baby was born.

There was no space in the guest room to put a new baby!



So they made a snug bed for Jesus in one of the mangers.



Who's Who

The Parish Office phone 0121 444 0760
is currently playing up... if it's not working
please try reaching Angela on 0121 443 4579

Worship (for clergy see back page)

Children's Worship Co-ordinator	Grace Storey	07813 322697
Youth Group (year 7 upwards)	Jenny Warbrick	0121 444 0260
Music Co-ordinators	Ben & Clare Noakes	07967 730156 07929 593097

Church upkeep

Vergers	Liz Haskins	c/o 0121 444 0760
	Paul Smart	c/o 0121 444 0760
Sacristan	Bernice Mattis	c/o 0121 444 0760
Altar Linen	Wendy Ross	0121 444 1423
Head Server	Tony Price	01564 824420
Electoral Roll Officer	Tony Cocks	0121 441 2945
Parish Magazine	Ben & Clare Noakes	07967 730156 07929 593097

Finance team

Treasurer	Steve Brittle	01905 772171
Expenditure Officer	Vacant	
Income Officer	Ted Hammond	c/o 0121 444 0760
Insurance & Investments	Tony Cocks	0121 441 2945
Gift Aid	Philip & Martha Ann Brookes	0121 444 5655
Envelope Giving Scheme	Martha Ann Brookes	0121 444 5655

Groups, clubs and organisations

All Saints Ramblers	Des Workman	0121 443 5292
	Christine Powell	
Badminton Club	Des Workman	0121 443 5292
	Steve Brittle	01905 772171
Bible Reading Fellowship	Des Workman	0121 443 5292
Lunch Club	Elizabeth Turner	0121 604 6086
Meditation Group	Daniel Wilson	0121 449 9869
Safeguarding & Child Protection	Eira Jones	c/o 0121 444 0760
Traidcraft	Gill Parkin	0121 604 6127

Planned giving: All are invited to join the planned giving scheme, contributing by Direct Debit (Parish Giving Scheme), Standing Order or Weekly Envelope. Taxpayers – please sign a Gift Aid declaration for reclaiming of tax and use of payroll giving if possible. Contact the Finance Team for further information. The church's Charity Commission Number is 1145723.

Parish Office: For enquiries about baptisms, baby naming services, banns and marriages, please contact the Parish Office: 9:30am-3pm Monday-Friday or via parishoffice@allsaintschurchkh.org.

Ministry to the sick: Visiting the sick at home or in hospital – please inform the Ministry Team of anyone who is sick. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved and oil is kept for ministry to the sick.

Ministry of healing: Laying-on of hands and anointing – last Saturday in the month at 9:15am as part of Morning Prayer, occasional Sunday evenings (as announced), and at home or in hospital as requested.

Communion of the sick: At home or in hospital, as requested, communion is taken, monthly, to the long-term sick or housebound.

Other ministries: For blessing of homes, celebrations of anniversaries, thanksgiving after childbirth, confession and counsel, please contact the Ministry Team.

Parochial Church Council (PCC)

Officers	Lay Vice Chair Martha Ann Brookes 0121 444 5655	Secretary Tony Cocks 0121 441 2945	Treasurer Steve Brittle 01905 772171
Members	Jim Andrew Margaret Andrew Sarah Baker Philip Brookes Tim Cuthbertson	Roger Drew Margaret Healey-Pollett (Reader) Tariro Mukoja (Assistant Curate) Brian Miles David Warbrick (Vicar)	Claire Wesley (Reader) Daniel Wilson Sarah Wilson Des Workman Sheila Workman

All Saints Community Development Company (ASCDC)

Chair	Sarah Wilson	c/o 0121 444 0760	office@allsaints-cdc.co.uk
Projects Co-ordinator	Andy Savage	c/o 0121 444 0760	andy@allsaints-cdc.co.uk
Facilities Manager	Dave Priday	07732 137772	david@allsaints-cdc.co.uk
Administrator	Angela McDermott	0121 444 0760	angela@allsaints-cdc.co.uk
Hall & Room Bookings	Angela McDermott	0121 444 0760	angela@allsaints-cdc.co.uk

All Saints Community Projects (ASCP)

Chair	Mary Miles	0121 449 0851
All Saints Youth Project	Vicki Willinger	0121 443 1842

The Robin Centre for Older People

Centre Manager	Paula McGrath	0121 444 8111
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Ministry Team

Vicar	David Warbrick	4 Vicarage Road, 0121 444 0260
Assistant Curate	Tariro Mukoja	07305 523619
Churchwardens	Vivien Thickett (interim)	c/o 0121 444 0760
	Vacant	
Licensed Readers	Margaret Healey-Pollett	c/o 0121 444 0760
	Claire Wesley	0121 444 2778
Reader Emeritus	John Parkin	0121 604 6127
Pastoral Care Team	Juliet Bick, Becky Frall, Margaret Healey-Pollett, Tariro Mukoja, Wendy Ross, David Warbrick, Jenny Warbrick, Des Workman	c/o 0121 444 0260
Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Eira Jones	safeguarding@allsaintschurchkh.org 07497 781681
Prayer Circle	(for confidential prayer requests)	parishoffice@allsaintschurchkh.org 0121 444 0260

Worship

We have reopened for our Sunday services (said at 8am, sung at 10am and an evening service at 6:30pm), and 11:30am Wednesday service.

We will continue to provide an online order of service via the website and newsletter for those at home.

Up-to-date information can be found at www.allsaintschurchkh.org and we look forward to seeing you again soon.

All Saints Church, Kings Heath

2 Vicarage Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham B14 7RA

Administrator: Angela McDermott

Parish Office: 0121 444 0760

parishoffice@allsaintschurchkh.org

www.allsaintschurchkh.org



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND