



THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST LEONARD, LEXDEN

ORDINARY PEOPLE. EXTRAORDINARY GOD.



PARISH MAGAZINE
DECEMBER 2018 50p

A TIME TO PREPARE



As a child, I was not renowned for my patience. This was especially true in the run up to Christmas.

While we must never underestimate how difficult Christmas is for some, it remains a special time for very many. When I was a boy, I found Christmas a time of an immense joy. The weeks leading up to it became a whirl of excitement. This would usually climax in my waking up my parents at 4am in the morning on Christmas day: a gesture that was particularly appreciated by my Dad who had usually gone to sleep at 2am after leading Midnight Mass!

I've often heard a lot of judgmental talk about how appallingly early Christmas comes each year these days. I personally prefer the charitable interpretation that society as a whole has simply decided to indulge its childish excitement for Christmas, and that this excitement has now got the better of us. Either way, we do seem to lurch into Christmas in November, and then (and surely this is the *real* tragedy) not give it the full twelve days when we finally get there. What a waste!

For Christians, of course, Christmas is so very special that we have a dedicated season of preparation for it: Advent. Advent is so important that it is *this* time of preparation which opens the new Church year, rather than Christmas as might seem more logical.

Advent is a time for waiting. Advent is a time for reflection. Advent is a time to pause. During Advent, we wait patiently for Jesus's coming at Christmas by pondering the whole history of God's promises in the Bible. Not only this, of course: we also await patiently Jesus's coming again! And so the beginning of each Christian year is also about the very end of the Christian story.

Advent isn't intended to dampen our excitement about Christmas, however. Quite the opposite: if we take a breath and give ourselves time to prepare properly, then when Christmas finally arrives we are able to enjoy it all the more.

So as part of this great season of preparation, St Leonard's is hosting a series of Advent reflections which will accompany our beautiful candle-lit compline services on Wednesdays at 7.30pm, starting from the 28th November.

These reflections will offer an interesting twist on the themes often explored during Advent. Rather than the Patriarchs, Prophets, John the Baptist and Mary, we shall reflect on Matriarchs, Prophetesses, Elizabeth, and Mary – some of the many great women across the Bible.

This Advent, why not take the opportunity to withdraw from the whirl of pre-Christmas excitement – and the wave of pressure that often accompanies preparations for Christmas – to pause and spend a few moments in reflection?

Just a few short minutes away from the busyness of our lives in December, can allow God opportunity to bring us great refreshment. Perhaps our Advent reflections might offer one of those moments when you can pause?

Math

Thank you

Sue and Stephen Carter would like to thank the congregation of St Leonard's for their kind thoughts and prayers for their son Nick during his recovery from the car accident.

They are pleased to say that he is now fully recovered and is fit, well and enjoying life to the full.

Cover Photo - Candlelight at a Christmas Eve Service of Light

DIARY FOR DECEMBER

*Wednesday 28th November

7.30pm Advent Reflection followed by Compline

Saturday 1st

8.30am Men's Breakfast

10.30-1.30 Christmas Bazaar in the Hall

SUNDAY 2nd: Advent 1

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am All Age Eucharist

6.30pm 'From Darkness to Light'



Monday 3rd

7.00pm Eucharist

7.45pm PCC meeting in the Nicholls Room

Tuesday 4th

10.30am Holy Communion at Wren House

7.30pm 'Medley' house group (Rosemary 515245)

Wednesday 5th

10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee

10.45am Holy Communion at Woodlands

7.30pm Advent Reflection followed by Compline

Thursday 6th

8.00am Eucharist

Saturday 8th

10.30-12.00 Coffee Morning at 1 Acland Avenue

7.00pm Lexden Choral Carol Concert in Church

SUNDAY 9th: Advent 2

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Parish Eucharist and Junior Church

6.30pm Evensong and sermon

Tuesday 11th

2.30pm Mothers' Union & Lexden Ladies Carol Service in Church

Wednesday 12th

10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee

10.45 Parent and Toddler Group Carol Service in church

7.30pm Advent Reflection followed by Compline

Thursday 13th

8.00am Eucharist

12.30pm 'Constable' house group lunch at Kingsland (Hugh 564577)

Saturday 15th

7.30pm Wassail in the Hall

SUNDAY 16th: Advent 3

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Parish Eucharist with Junior Church

3.30pm Messy Church

6.30pm Evensong & Sermon

Monday 17th

9.30am Home Farm School Carol Service in church

11.00am Holy Communion at Hill House

Wednesday 19th

10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee

11.00am Carol Service at Woodlands

7.30pm Advent Reflection followed by Compline

Thursday 20th

8.00am Eucharist

10.15am Carol Service at Wren House

11.00am Kingswode Hoe School rehearsal in church

11.30am Carol Service at Cheviot

1.15pm Kingswode Hoe School Carol Service in church

SUNDAY 23rd: Advent IV

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Parish Eucharist with Junior Church

6.30pm Service of Nine Lessons and Carols



Monday 24th: Christmas Eve

2.30pm Crib Service

4.30pm The Service of Light

6.30pm The Service of Light

11.15pm Midnight Mass

Tuesday 25th: Christmas Day

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Christmas Eucharist

NO services 26th-29th December

Sunday 30th December: Christmas I

8.00am NO SERVICE

9.45am Parish Eucharist

6.30pm NO SERVICE



CHRISTMAS BAZAAR 2018

Saturday 1st December

10.30am – 1.30pm

Items will be welcomed for all stalls especially cakes and produce, bottles for the Tombola, gifts, toys and raffle prizes.

These can be brought to the Hall the day before **from 10am to 4pm** or by arrangement.

Please phone Tom or Kathleen Scrimgeour on 574797



A CABINET of Choice Jewels:
ST LEONARD'S CHURCH - LEXDEN

*The Christians Joy and Gladness
Set forth in Sunday & Festival Hymns*
WASSAIL

Christmas Carols!

Comrie & Jubilant
Singers Brass

present

An evening of music, revelry,
fun and light refreshment.



7:30 pm.

Saturday 15th December 2018

St. Leonards Church Hall

Lexden Road, CO3 4BL

Tickets

£8

bring your own
drinks and glasses

01206

241592

Junior Church December



2nd December	All Age Service
9th December	Prepare the way of the Lord - John the Baptist hears God's word and begins a ministry of baptising people as a sign of repentance. <i>Luke 3: 1-6</i>
16th December	Call to action - John the Baptist shares three kinds of teaching <i>Luke 3: 7-18</i>
23rd December	Rejoice in God our Saviour - Mary and Elizabeth meet and share their understanding of how God will change the world with the birth of Jesus <i>Luke 1: 39-45</i>
30th December	Why are you searching for me? On a Passover visit, the young Jesus separates from his family and stays behind in Jerusalem. <i>Luke 2: 41-52</i>

THE ADVENT SLEEPOUT CHALLENGE

TOGETHER
NETWORK



OMG+ SLEEPOUT

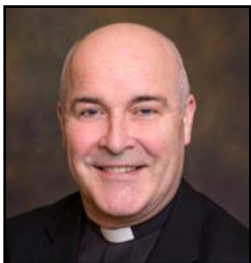
In a couple of weeks members of Junior Church and OMG+ will spend a night sleeping out in church to help fight homelessness. The aim is to raise awareness of the problem of poverty and homelessness, to give the children an opportunity to experience what rough sleeping is like, and to raise money for the Church Urban Fund, a charity which supports churches across England who run winter night shelters. We hope it will also be a lot of fun, and a memorable experience.

There has been 169% increase in homelessness since 2010, with an estimated 4751 people sleeping rough in England on any one night. The sleep-out challenge is a great way to do something special in the run up to Christmas to help some of the most marginalized in society.

You can support our young people in this challenge by praying for them as they sleep out, by sponsoring them (either online at

<https://sleepoutchallenge2018.everydayhero.com/uk/omg-sleepout>

or by finding David A or Siân), or by joining in and 'ditching your duvet'. If you'd like to be sponsored to join in at home by going without pillows or spending the night on the sofa, please let us know!



Have a Disruptive Christmas!

Bishop Stephen's Christmas Message

Most of us avoid disruption if we can. We go to great lengths to avoid the M25, M11, A12 and A13 at the merest whiff of disruption, delay or diversion. We give trouble a wide berth. We are unlikely to give shelter – even in the garage – to a pregnant teenager with nowhere to stay.

But during Advent, stress is still etched onto our faces as we scurry around Lakeside, Westfield, Chelmsford or Colchester, queueing for cards and piling up presents, buying things that people don't necessarily want at prices we can't really afford. It makes the carefree summer of 2018 and its scorching heatwave seem like a distant dream.

Yet Christmas is supposed to be disruptive. God needed to cause unprecedented disruption to the world. He had to generously transform his relationship with us by opening himself up to the reality of the dangers faced by a vulnerable baby and then as a provocative young man. This was the only way to change us.

he lives of Mary and Joseph were certainly turned upside down. From that Christmas morning onwards, the lives of billions of others have been shaken and transformed.

This Christmas, I look forward to all the joy and laughter that go with family gatherings and the usual trappings of a traditional Christmas. And I also look forward to finding peace and stillness with God. But I am increasingly aware that I probably need something else as well. I need the disruption of Christmas. I need the surprise. I need the challenge. And so does the world. So I will also be looking for the signs of the glorious disruption that Jesus continues to bring to our world and pray that you encounter that true spirit of Christmas too.

+ Stephen .

Thank you

From Father David



I have always believed that one of the most important aspects of Christian living is to be sincere and diligent in ministry of presence. By that, I mean simply being there. As Christ is for us, so we should be for others not only when they are in need, but also to share in the joys and loves of life. I witnessed the power and beauty of that ministry of presence on 6 November when so many of you from St Leonard's came to be present at my installation service at St Botolph-without-Bishopsgate and the reception afterwards. Thank you all so much your support and presence there, it meant a great deal to me. It was wonderful to look up and see so many smiling and friendly faces.

Thank you also to all those who were unable to attend and all who have given me gifts and cards and best wishes. These are all very special and I treasure them. Thank you to the churchwardens and all who contributed to my generous farewell gifts of the Baptism of Christ icon and the Benedictine Crucifix which I now wear at all time. Freddie is also thrilled with his white collar. Being a holy dog, he reserves it for feast days and holy days.

It was very fitting that my installation service was on the feast day of St Leonard. In her welcome, Bishop Sarah thanked you all at St Leonard's for looking after me so well. She was right to do so, and I would like to thank each and everyone of you for your kindness, love and support in all my time at St Leonard's. My thanks are on behalf of both Peter and me. We came with some trepidation, and you welcomed and loved both Peter and me with generosity and open arms. You have shown us great love (and even extended it to Freddie). We have received love abounding, and from many who are sadly no longer with us. We will continue to hold the memory of them and each of you in our prayers.

(Continued overleaf...)

My contact details are below. Please do remember that I am less than an hour away at the end of the railway track and next to Liverpool Street Station if you ever want to call in to say hello.

At my leaving service I quoted the famous Benedictine monk and theologian Thomas Merton, he said: "Every moment and every event of every man's life on earth plants something in his soul". You have planted much in my soul over the past nearly four and a half years and I am so much the richer for it.

I said in the notices at my installation service that St Leonard's is a great place of Christian love and charity in our midst – it is. It is a great place, and it is so because of each of you. May God continue to bless you in all that you do, and I will continue to pray for you too.

With God's love and blessing,

Fr David

Fr David Armstrong
Parish Priest
The Parish and Ward Church of
St Botolph-without-Bishopgate
London EC2M 3TL

Tel: 020 7588 3388

Email: priest@botolph.org.uk

PASTORAL CARE

Thank you for your prayers, cards and support for my recent authorisation by Bishop Stephen and commissioning as pastoral assistant.

Thank you also for letting me know when people are unwell or missing from church and meetings. Your diligence has helped us to follow up with offering to visit, to show that we care. Please continue to help me in this way.

Margaret Smith

Mouse Tails



Rupert and Molly were getting so excited; "It's nearly Christmas, Molly!" cried Rupert, "have you made me a nice present?" "That," said Molly, "is for me to know and you to find out!" using a phrase that her Mum often used.

The twins had been busy scavenging for anything that they could use and, fortunately for them, it was the time of year when 'the pickings' were good; there had been children's parties, a bazaar, Messy Church and many other events involving ribbon, tinsel, crayons and such, they'd had an exceptionally good haul this year and had been able make some wonderful cards and gifts for their family and friends.

One evening when the twins were sitting down with Mum and Dad and Grandpa who had managed the stairs to join them in the balcony, they were discussing plans for Christmas celebrations. Grandpa had his service planned, Mum said that she and the other Mums were well ahead with plans for the Christmas Feast, Dad and Grandpa were ahead of the game with their festive drinks and the twins had almost finished their cards and gifts.

Grandpa, looking very serious, told them about the tragedy which had struck their distant cousins in the Hall. "It was such a shame that Bill and his family had been flooded out in the hall when a water tank had overflowed and water had flooded through the Hall. Their youngest, Jimmy, being very tiny, had been swept along to the edge of the stage and banged his head, knocking him out momentarily. Fortunately, his Dad had scampered down to him. scooped him up in his paws and taken him to their Hall cousins where he was wrapped up snug and warm in dry cloths and given a tiny sip of apple juice brandy (that Jed Hall had made for Christmas) to warm him up and to ease the shock, and he was soon back to his normal chirpy little self.



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Molly, who had tears running down her face, (for she was a very tender-hearted little mouse) said she was so glad that little Jimmy was now OK as she was very fond of her little cousin. Grandpa agreed that yes, it was the most important thing about the whole event; however, all the bits and pieces that they had made and saved for Christmas had been destroyed by the flood as well as their home. Mum said that the family must come to stay with them straight away for as long as was needed to find a suitable new home, after all, she said, isn't this what Christmas is all about, giving shelter to the homeless? Molly and Rupert had a quick whispered exchange and Rupert told them all that he and Molly had decided that they would make some extra cards and gifts for the family.



Grandpa said how proud of his family he was and that they truly understood the meaning of Christmas. Later that night the little family arrived in the balcony to a very warm welcome and Mum took Jimmy's Mum off to find a cosy spot for them to make their nest. Molly cuddled Jimmy, and Rupert did his best to make young Milly feel at home. Grandpa said goodnight and they all agreed that Christmas was going to be extra special this year.

CT

FRIENDSHIP LUNCH

**Our next Friendship Lunch
will be on**

Saturday 19th January at 12.30pm.

**Please sign up on the list
at the back of the church.**





A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

New and Traditional Carols

Lexden Choral Society
with
CRGS Chamber Choir

Audience Participation

ST. LEONARD'S CHURCH, LEXDEN

Saturday 8th December 2018
at 7.00 pm



Tickets – £12.00 (Students/U-18s £8.00)
light refreshments – (wine not included)
From: Mann's Music/Phone 01206 543280
lexdenchoral.org/ or at the door

Caring for the vulnerable in each generation: Safeguarding is the concern of every one of us.

As Christians, each of us is called by God to contribute in some way to ensuring that those who are vulnerable are cared for and respected. Within church communities such as St Leonard's, we have a particular responsibility to both protect and attend to the needs of children and vulnerable adults.

This has been a central theme of the Christian faith from its origins, of course. Jesus spent much of his ministry healing, restoring and honouring those who were considered outcasts by his culture: those whose vulnerabilities left them isolated, destitute and unvalued. A similar concern for the vulnerable informs Paul's image of the Church as a body within which "members may have the same care for one another", where those who are most vulnerable are to be considered "indispensable", and where "If one member suffers, all suffer together with [them]." In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus reminds all disciples that what we *fail* to do for the vulnerable is as important as what we do for them: "just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." So though words and phrases such as "safeguarding" and "safer-recruiting" may sometimes come across as awkward contemporary innovations with little to do with the Church, they in fact honour a profound and indispensable element of our Christian faith!

Recently the safeguarding practices and policies of Church of England have been under review. A central aspect of these revisions is to ensure that safeguarding is seen as part of the calling and responsibility of *all* members of the Church, rather than something that is left to one or two special individuals.

That means that each of us – every single member of St Leonard's, has a responsibility in this regard. This need not scare us, however, because St Leonard's has clearly been a parish which has taken safeguarding seriously, and where good policy and practice has been in place.

(Continued on p27...)

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To understand what's needed of each of us, I would encourage you to read the House of Bishop's statement on safeguarding, *Promoting a Safer Church*, which is short and easy to read. You can find it by typing "Promoting a Safer Church, Church of England" into Google; or ask or email me and I'll send you a copy. At our last PCC meeting, we unanimously voted to adopt this statement as the position of St Leonard's.

At St Leonard's we are also blessed with an excellent Parish Safeguarding Officer, Julie Hinchliffe. Julie, the Churchwardens and I are getting to grips with what the recent national changes mean for St Leonard's, and are working to ensure our practice and policy complies.

For now, if any safeguarding concerns or questions arise, please make immediate contact with Julie (01206 562973) or with me (01206 577392).



MAGAZINE DEADLINE

FINAL DAY for items for the January edition:

SUNDAY 9th DECEMBER

Please submit items to the Editor
email: magazine@stleonardslexden.org.uk

Please include your name with any submission.
Items from unknown sources cannot be used.

Please limit text to 500-600 words maximum.
Longer articles may be edited. Thank you

In the Pink!



Sometimes it just has to be done! Online readers will appreciate the quantity of pink in this picture - especially the wig - very fashionable!

It was all worthwhile, because Liz Adams wore this at a **Wear it Pink Breast Cancer Now** party which she held on Breast Cancer Day in October, and raised a very healthy £350 from the event. Well done Liz !

The Silent Way

While on our recent holiday in Italy we were taken to one of the smaller lakes called Lake Orta. While there we spent a couple of hours soaking up the charm of the lakeside resort of Orta San Giulio. From there we were taken by boat to the small island of San Giulio. Our tour guide had told us that as well as the island's San Giulio Basilica there were also two paths on the island to explore. One was the Path of Silence, the other the Path of Meditation.

Jenny and I soon found these paths and decided to walk on before visiting the Basilica. We had chosen the Path of Silence and soon realised why it was so called. The path took us round the Basilica and about every thirty yards or so we came across a small plaque about a foot square which hung from a bracket. In four languages, one English, was a one-line saying, drawing our attention to the beauty of silence. There were ten in all and after reading the last we arrived at where we began, outside the main door of the Basilica. I decided not to enter at this stage but instead to retrace my steps so that I could jot down what was written on each of the plaques. The lines were as follows:

1. Listen to the silence.
2. Listen to the water, the wind, your steps...
3. In the silence you accept and understand.
4. In the silence you receive all.
5. Silence is the language of love.
6. Silence is the peace of oneself.
7. Silence is music and harmony.
8. Silence is truth and prayer.
9. In the silence you meet the Master.
10. In the silence you breathe God.

As I read through them again, quietly, I sensed the verse of Philippians 4:7 'And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Amen.

Tony Cross

Reflections on The Flower Festival



It seems almost unbelievable that is over two years ago that the idea was first put to me, and a year ago since I first started to plan. The idea of basing it on the Benedicite seemed appropriate as this exhorts the whole of creation to 'Praise Him and magnify Him forever', especially as the Festival was to be held over our Harvest weekend.

What next? Well first of all finding some twenty or so 'Volunteers' to do the arranging, and I was delighted that as well as our regular arrangers, we had five from other churches as well as members of Stanway Flower Club.

First of all we had a meeting to outline our plans and to allocate subjects, then another to order flowers from a florist (friend of Maggie Whiteman) who obtained them for us at a wholesale price of about £900 inc. VAT, a large part of which was paid for by your donations and sponsorship by four local businesses.

Running alongside this was our excellent catering team, planning their menus and obtaining promises of cakes, scones, etc. I have never seen so much cake in one place before! Also we were filling in rotas for stewarding and musicians who played organ, piano and recorders so beautifully for us throughout Saturday and Sunday afternoon - many thanks to you all!

Then came the BIG DAY - arranging. I have to emphasize that although I made some suggestions, it was mainly down to the imagination of all who took part - we had wonderful 'clouds and lightning', and who can forget the 'fowls of the air' or the 'mountains and green things' which even included grapes, a lettuce and broccoli. Sun, moon and stars appeared in the Lady Chapel and the 'priest' was soon adorned with beautiful flowers - to mention but a few, they were all wonderful!

(Continued on p 37...)

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And then it was the day for visitors, and they came in a steady stream throughout Saturday and Sunday afternoon until we paused for a Songs of Praise. We then had a trickle all day Monday, meaning that with the proceeds from the concert on Saturday evening (who can forget the children with their 'Badgers and hedge...HOGS and 'Grannies and Grandads' who all had to Praise the Lord!) With the proceeds from the catering, and donations from visitors and those from Lexden Methodist Church who visited and had a cream tea on the Tuesday, we raised just over £1,200 for CAP.

A big thank you to all who helped to make such a success of this venture. Would I do it again? This would take a lot of consideration...possibly - but not next year! I hear the sigh of relief from the arrangers!

Peter Hearsom

A Poem - Sunday Service at St Leonard's

The church bell rings, it seems to say
Come to church, it's Christmas Day,
The door's wide open, friends are here,
I take my seat and kneel to pray,
Remembering those who were not there.
The candles flicker, the organ plays,
The choir processes with songs of praise,
With voices raised in song and prayer
We wait in line for bread and wine,
We kneel in homage to our God.
With spirits high we mend our way;
No better way to start our day.

Wyn Kenway

*This poem appears on page 57 of Alice Goss's book, **Without Walls**.*

Musical Theatre - Val's talk to the MU

Members of the Mothers' Union enjoyed an interesting and informative talk by Val Massey on October 9th entitled 'Musical Theatre'. It was a superb resumé about the history of the musical, painting vivid pictures of actors, actresses and scenes from a variety of musicals.

In many respects the USA musical such as 'The Lady and the Tramp' by Rogers and Hart flourished long before musicals in England such as 'The Mikado' became popular and 'Oklahoma' had no chorus, consisting instead of a variety of songs by Hammerstein and Roger. We learnt that 'Carousel' introduced children for the first time in a musical and 'Showboat' was about the colour bar in the South Pacific.

Andrew Lloyd Webber wrote 'Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat' for school children and later amalgamated with Tim Rice in composing 'Jesus Christ Superstar'. 'Les Misérables' was first performed at the National and later Cambridge Theatres; it was originally not expected to be a hit, but has lasted for a very long time and is easy to take on the road.

Sometimes buildings have the back wall taken out of theatre to accommodate scenery and cast and then rebuilt after the final performance. A theatre is chosen for a particular show; 'Billy Elliot' and 'The Lion King', with music by Elton John, have been the most successful. 'Phantom of the Opera' and 'Les Misérables' are like operas with music sung throughout. 'The Sound of Music' made Julie Andrew's name as Maria. Eventually, she became Mary Poppins.

Val gave us a short quiz with prizes to jog our memories and also remarked about the price of tickets – some costing £500 each in several London theatres whereas in New York that sum of money will buy you a return air fare from the UK and a ticket to a musical.

Wigs are often acrylic as in 'Grease' but real hair is also used. Costumes are collected and washed daily, but shoes are not shared nor borrowed. '42nd Street' is characterised by a huge stair case with the entire cast tap dancing, but not all musicals such as 'The Beautiful Game' were successful.

Janet Crees