

FEBRUARY 2021 DAY OF PRAYER

SPIRE



HAMPTON HILL'S PARISH MAGAZINE

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World Day of Prayer from
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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Meet the clergy



VICAR Rev Derek Winterburn

Derek was born in Orpington, Kent, and ordained in 1986. He served in several diverse London parishes before becoming vicar here in 2016. He is married to Sandra, a teacher, and has two children. A keen photographer, he posts a picture online every day, combining it with a daily walk or cycle ride. He can be contacted at any time other than on Wednesdays (his day off).

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Email: vicar@stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk

ASSOCIATE PRIEST Rev Jacky Cammidge

Jacky was born in Abertillery, South Wales, and ordained in 2015. She is a self-supporting minister and has been at St James's since starting her ordination training. Jacky is married to Alan, and has three children. During term-time she runs Hampton Hill Nursery School, based in the church hall, with her family.

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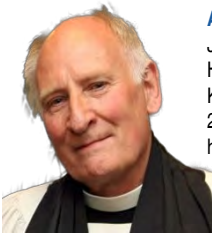


ASSISTANT PRIEST Canon Julian Reindorp

Julian was born in Durban, South Africa, and ordained in 1969. He has worked in parishes in East London, Chatham and Milton Keynes, and was Team Rector in Richmond until retirement in 2009. He continues to lead a busy life, often out and about on his trademark red scooter. Julian is married to Louise and has four children, three stepchildren and nine grandchildren.

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Email: julianreindorp@outlook.com



CHURCH OFFICE Church & hall bookings Nick Bagge

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Bell Ringers Susan Homer 020 8979 9380

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Church Cleaning Team Debbie Nunn 020 8979 3078

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Nick 020 8941 6003

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Assistant Treasurer / Planned Giving Carol Bailey 020 8783 0633

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PCC Secretary Nick 020 8941 6003

Properties Team

Bryan Basdell 020 8979 2040

Safeguarding Officer

Annlea Gratton 077 7576 4419

Scouts Richard Moody 020 8286 6918

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Welcome Team

Janet Taylor 020 8979 0046

Youth Group

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 Email Susan Horner: smhorner5@yahoo.co.uk — and start saving paper!

FROM THE EDITOR...

This year did not start as hoped and we are back in the thick of the pandemic and unable to print again. One positive is that some members of our congregation have already received their two vaccinations.

Meanwhile, spring is on the way – primroses in the churchyard, snowdrops in my garden, and bulbs appearing.

The centrespread features the World Day of Prayer. Catherine Gash, one of our representatives on the local committee, has written about the islands of Vanuatu. It is a very interesting read about a little-known nation.

Page 6 has a new look this year. Joining our series about different parts of the church, we are launching *Unsung Heroes*, highlighting some of the many people it takes to keep our church open. Not all are obvious as their work goes unnoticed by many of us.

We are all having to get used to meetings and events by Zoom, services on Facebook and Youtube. We are lucky to have a small team of people working so hard to keep us in touch and worshipping together.

Best Wishes

Janet

Janet Nunn



Cover photo: Children from the remote islands of Vanuatu, focus of World Day of Prayer.

SPIRE

The Spire is published nine times a year for the Parochial Church Council of St James. We make no charge for this magazine, but if

you are a regular reader we hope that you will contribute towards printing costs to enable us to expand our outreach across the parish. Cheques should be made payable to the PCC of St James, Hampton Hill and sent to Spire Appeal c/o the church office.

EDITOR

If you have a story idea or would like to make a comment, contact Janet Nunn, the editor.

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CIRCULATION

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To receive it by email contact the vicar.

NEXT ISSUE / COPY DATE

The March / April Spire is published on Fri 26 Feb.

Copy deadline: Tue 2 February.

PRODUCTION

Design Nick Bagge

Proof readers Susan Homer and Prill Hinckley

PUBLISHING

Printer Peter James Printing Limited

Telephone: 01932 244 665

Email: PJP123cards@aol.com

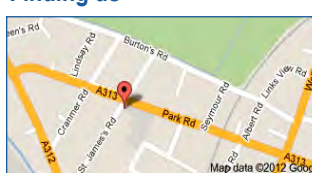
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Finding us




The church is on the corner of St James's Road and Park Road. The hall is between the church and vicarage. There is ample unrestricted parking. Buses stopping nearby include the R68, R70 and 285.

Follow us

For the very latest news go to our website or follow us on social media:

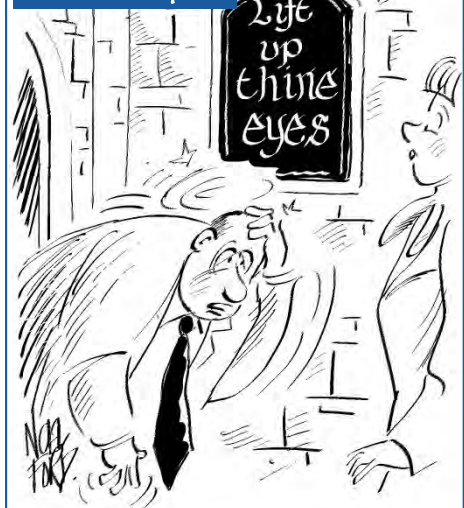
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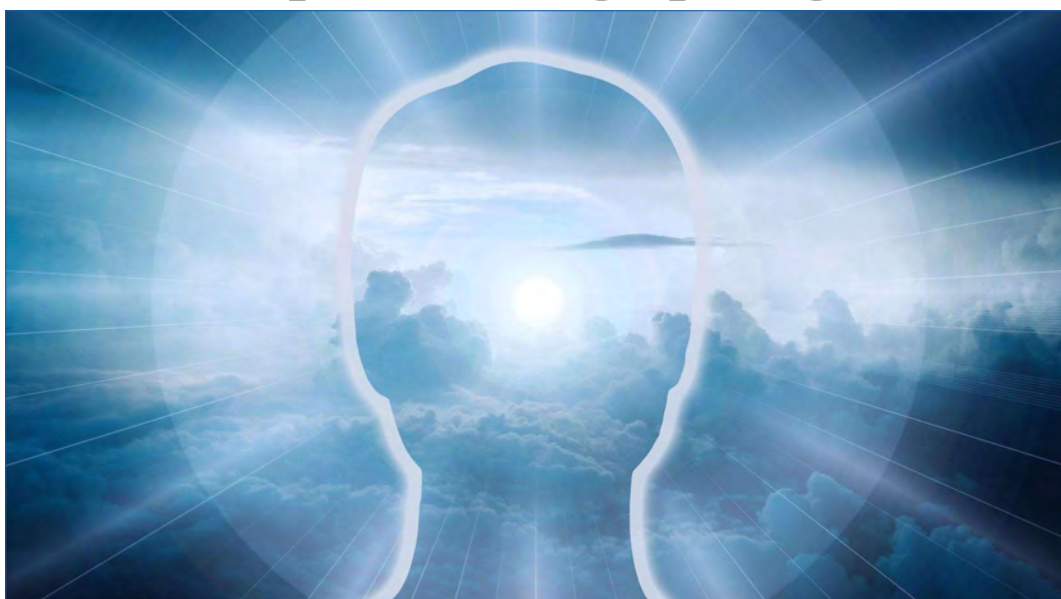
 @stjameshamphill

Clerical Capers



'Don't worry, I'm, not getting Covid – I didn't realise the sign meant there was a low door...'

Life on earth is just the opening page...



DEREK WINTERBURN

'ancestor worship', secular North American.) Nevertheless they offer imagination-stretching visions of life beyond this life.

Afraid about next step

Soul features a soul that does not want to be born (living in the *Great Before*) and *Coco*, a man who does not want to die. Both want to stay as they are (not-yet-born and living) but the flow of existence presses them to move forward; both are afraid. The destination beyond death is not clear, just described as the *Great Beyond*.

Coco uses the Mexican festival of 'Day of the Dead' to explore family loyalties. The story follows Miguel, who is transported to the *Land of the Dead* where he meets his dead relatives. The fascinating thing about this story-telling is that the Land of the Dead is full of brilliant colours, music, concerts and parties. The dead enjoy it! However, Miguel learns that the dead do not persist if they are forgotten by the living. And so a race against the clock develops.

Neither film works with Christian themes, and both have good but humanist morals at the end. *Coco* has elements of a Catholic culture, with slight visual references to Christianity. *Soul* is entirely secular (heaven and hell are mentioned just in an aside).

Neither film is 'Christian', and both end with a humanist moral. However they do open up the conversation about our existence beyond this life (and before it!).

Someone who has watched *Soul* might wonder what is in the *Great Beyond* and why are some people happy to go there — and are they right to be? A person who has seen *Coco* might be assured that no-one is forgotten in the *Land of the Dead*; for our Creator always remembers us.

That points up the great omission in these films: there is no representation of God. From the perspective of a Christian

believer the life beyond this life is focussed on *his* welcome and *his* keeping of us, in the company of others. So I will take courage to talk more about heaven as we have understood it, in the light of Christ's resurrection. Superficially our culture may look as if 'you only live once' but these films (and their popularity) suggest a curiosity, even a hunger for something transcendent. But they leave questions. Is the future life desirable? Is it eternal?

Criticised for being too Christian

In contrast to the secular Pixar films, CS Lewis's *Narnia Chronicles* are criticised as being too Christian. I think that is unfair; it was unfortunate that his most explicitly Christian story (*The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*) was the first, although there are many people who have read it without realising that the Lion, Aslan, 'is' Christ — including the original illustrator!

Lewis was trying to re-present Christianity as if it happened in a land of talking animals. He often explained that he wanted to help his readers 'feel what it is like to believe God' rather than be told about him as in Sunday School.

The last Narnia book is *The Last Battle*. In the final two chapters Lewis, in a dazzling sequence, depicts Aslan's world (the new heaven and earth) where old friends are reunited, bodies revitalised and wounds healed and even the world is remade. Every person is met by Aslan, in glory. There is a sense of fulfilment and finality, but also of adventure and an open-ended future.

'All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and title page, now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no-one on earth can read: which goes on forever: in which each chapter is better than the one before.'

Before Christmas perhaps you hoped, like I did, to see the Great Conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter — and were disappointed. On Christmas Day there was another great conjunction: the Pixar film *Coco* was broadcast on BBC One, while *Soul* was premiered on Disney+. *Coco*, released in 2017, has been extremely successful financially and it won two Oscars. *Soul* could not be released into cinemas because of Covid, but has been well reviewed and is likely to be another commercial success for Disney / Pixar. The popularity of these movies is reflected by their prominence in the Christmas Day schedules.

Belief in life after death

What is notable about both these films is two assumptions, that people have 'souls' and that there is a life after death.

Perhaps I should not be surprised, but I think the assumption of many Christian people is that non-religious people would be 'extinctivists'. Yet research has found that most people across the world are 'natural dualists', believing that there is more to us than simply our bodies.

Pixar produces animated movies that often seek to explore deeper themes than their immediate audience (children) would suggest. These two (*Coco* and *Soul*) are quite different in setting (Mexico, New York City), main character (a boy, a middle-aged teacher) and 'thought world' (Aztec



Services and events are subject to change. Go to our website for the latest information.

Public worship is one of the few exceptions to the Stay at Home lockdown message, but it comes at a risk in London. For that reason, our Sunday services will be online only.

Sundays

Parish Communion 9:30am

We are streaming this service on Facebook.

You don't need an account, just go to:

facebook.com/StJamesHamptonHill

Do not come to church as it is closed!

Join us afterwards for 'coffee and chat' on Zoom.

Coffee and Chat 10:30am

Join us 'at the vicarage' for this virtual coffee morning where you supply the coffee and chat! There's a link and in the weekly e-flyer.

Together at 11 11:15am

Our shorter, All-Age Service continues online.

The link is sent out weekly by emailing Derek:

vicar@stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk

Thursdays (but not 18 Feb)

Holy Communion (said) 9:30am

If you would like to come to church please check in advance via our website and follow the advice.

You must wear a mask in church.

Coffee and Chat 10:30am

Join us 'at the vicarage' for this virtual coffee morning where you supply the coffee and chat!

There's a link on the weekly e-flyer.

Fun Quiz Night

Friday 12 February 8pm

Continuing the successful light-hearted monthly contests. Using break-out rooms we will team you up with fellow competitors to compete in more challenges. Look out for our e-flyer for more information.

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday 17 February 9:30am

Communion with Ashing will take place in church.

To attend you must book, or watch online at 8pm.

See page 7 for details of the Lent Course.

Time to Pray

Monday-Friday

If you would like to receive the weekday

'thought for the day' podcasts, email:

vicar@stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk

E-news

If you would like to receive the weekly e-flyer,

with details of services and events, email:

vicar@stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk

The harsh realities for



CATHERINE GASH



Imagine a cluster of islands, about 1500 miles north-east of Australia, with a warm climate, sandy beaches, beautiful coral reefs, forests full of birds and waterfalls, no poisonous spiders or snakes and abundant tropical vegetation, including bananas, pineapples, mangos and coconuts.

Sounds like paradise doesn't it!

But wait a minute; this is a country which is also beset by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and frequent destructive cyclones. This life full of contrasts is the reality for the people of Vanuatu, a Y-shaped archipelago of 80 islands, 65 of which are inhabited, stretching for 400 miles in the Pacific Ocean.

By 1300 BC the islands had been settled by Melanesian peoples who form the majority of the population of around 300,000 today. Spanish explorers arrived in 1606 naming the largest island Espiritu Santo. The French and British followed, and in 1774 Captain Cook renamed the islands the New Hebrides.

Enforced change in way of life

On the heels of the explorers came traders with guns, knives and alcohol, and *blackbirders*, who tricked or kidnapped islanders into slavery on the cotton and sugar plantations of Queensland and Fiji.

The foreigners also brought diseases, which killed thousands of people. The traditional way of life was further impacted by missionaries, who not only brought Christianity but built schools, hospitals as well as churches, encouraging people to

This year's World Day of Prayer comes from the Republic of Vanuatu in the South Pacific. Home to some of the happiest people on the planet, it is also one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world with over 100 languages spoken in a population of 300,000. Its idyllic scenery belies destructive weather, while tribal traditions make it a challenging place to live, particularly for women.

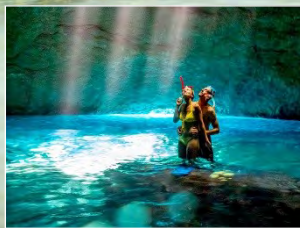
move from scattered villages to central locations with more formalised governance.

The islands were administered jointly by France and Britain, with no rights for the native peoples, who were stateless in their own homeland.

The island of Espiritu Santo assumed great importance during

World War Two when it became a major Allied base. Independence was granted in 1980, when the Republic of Vanuatu was founded as a parliamentary democracy. The name Vanuatu means 'country that stands up' and its motto is *In God we stand*.

To the Ni-Vanuatu (the people of Vanuatu), land is very important,



Caves, volcanoes and tribes are all part of Vanuatu. This year's service is entitled *Build on a Strong Foundation*, pictured above.

communities, helping one another and sharing care of young and old, growing food and making items for their own use or trade with other islands. Each island had its own gods and ways of worship, but there was also tribal warfare between islands and cannibalism was practised.

Creole-cum-English language

Some 113 languages and numerous dialects were spoken until recently, but the official languages are French and English, and Bislama, which is the most widely spoken language.

Bislama is a creole language derived from English, with Melanesian grammar and pronunciation. Children in towns are taught Bislama in the early years, while local languages predominate in rural areas where schools may be a long way away.

Primary education is not free or compulsory and secondary education cannot easily be afforded as the fees are typically three times the average income. Consequently the literacy rate in Vanuatu is low.

Visitors to Vanuatu find the people resourceful, laid-back and friendly. The majority live in rural areas, although nearly a fifth (45,000) live in the capital city of Port Vila on Efate.

There is a great difference between life in the cities and life in the far-flung islands. Travelling between the islands takes time and there are few metalled roads, but the advent of the mobile phone has transformed communication.



to be honoured, not exploited or owned. Traditionally the Ni-Vanuatu lived in small self-sufficient



Tanna Island is remote even by Vanuatu standards. Tribes speak 20 different dialects and live alongside an active volcano.

happy people



Powerful cyclones leave devastation in their wake.

Cash crops have hit the poor

Traditionally the economy of Vanuatu was based on subsistence agriculture, with an exchange system between the islands. The soil is very fertile and staple foods include yam, taro, sugar cane,



tropical nuts and greens as well as the coconut palm, which is viewed as the tree of life because all its parts are useful.

Pigs and fowl are kept and seafood is plentiful. However, the demand for cash crops and cattle has now limited the amount of land available for traditional food, leading to malnutrition among poorer people.

The government is the biggest employer and tourism, construction and off-shore financial services are the main industries, but much of the wealth generated does not stay in Vanuatu. Some obtain seasonal work on farms in New Zealand.

The legal age for marriage is 18 and families typically have three or four children. The life expectancy for women is 70.

The health of women and children is a key national priority, but maternal and infant mortality is still high. In rural areas access to clean water and good health care is limited and family planning services are not generally available.

Traditionally, men and women came together in the village meeting house to debate important matters, but the role of women was greatly undermined during the colonial period. The constitution now provides for gender equality, but it is seldom implemented.

Women make up 40% of the workforce, but are usually in less well-paid jobs than men. Nearly 60% of women say they have experienced physical or sexual violence.

World Day of Prayer 2021

Today, 83% of the population are Christian, with seven different denominations represented. The (Women's) World Day of Prayer was introduced to the republic by Canadian missionaries in 1946

and Vanuatu is one of the first countries to begin the worldwide wave of prayer.

The writers of this year's service report that it has strengthened the ecumenical relationship. The Vanuatu committee's prayer is that the voice of Vanuatu will be heard across the world. The theme of the service is "Build on a Strong



Foundation" – something this nation threatened by all manner of natural disasters knows all about.

At the time of writing, we do not know where or how the local service on **Friday 5 March** will take place, but it will happen even if only online. Please take part, support the people of Vanuatu with prayers and donate generously if you are able, either in person or online via the WDP website: www.wdp.org.uk.



Pentecostal churches are proliferating in Vanuatu, fed by dissatisfaction with politicians and a fear of witchcraft.

Around the Spire

Milo hospital welcomes new test machine



Lab staff pictured receiving training to use the machine

MILO HOSPITAL in Tanzania has taken another step in its fight against disease with the delivery of test equipment largely paid for by St James's Church.

The biochemical analyser will be used to look at blood and urine samples to diagnose and treat diseases. St James's has supported Milo, a mission hospital run by the South West Tanganyika Diocese of the Anglican Church, for nearly 40 years.

The hospital is run by husband and wife doctors Adrian and Hilary Murray, who gave up jobs in north Wales to volunteer in August 2019.

St Luke's hospital, situated in the village of Milo in the southern highlands of Tanzania, is a three-hour drive from the nearest town. The hospital has 50 beds and serves an estimated 150,000 people who travel up to 40km, often walking for two days to reach the hospital.

The Murrays visited St James's to explain their mission before heading to Africa.

The personal touch was helpful and we have since supported them more closely, including helping to buy X-Ray equipment last year in addition to the analyser.

Sending heartfelt thanks to St James's for our support, Dr Hilary said: 'The machine is so small and yet it can do so much. We purchased a range of reagents (chemicals need for operation of the machine) and should have an adequate supply for the next 9-12 months.'

'We are going to publicise what tests can now be done here to the two nearest hospitals as neither of them can do some of the tests that we can now offer.'



The biochemical analyser

Census 2021



HOUSEHOLDS will soon be asked to take part in the nationwide survey, which has been carried out every decade since 1801, with the exception of 1941. Information from the census helps to decide how services such as housing, GP surgeries or bus routes are planned in our local area.

Census day is 21 March and this will be the first digital census. Households will receive a letter with a unique access code, allowing them to complete their questionnaire online. Paper copies will be available on request.

For more information visit the website census.gov.uk or email: ChristopherStokes16@field.census.gov.uk.

Inspiring views from on high

Steeplejacks carrying out repairs in 1947



PRILL HINCKLEY

The gracefully tapering Portland stone spire was completed in the New Year 1888. This followed the successful building of the tower, both of which celebrated Queen

Victoria's Golden Jubilee. On 3 January, in warm sunshine, the vicar, Rev Henry Bligh, and his intrepid wife, together with the churchwardens and other parishioners, climbed the scaffolding to the summit where Mrs Bligh placed the capstone in position.

The choir up in the new belfry sung the *Te Deum*, which was heard by parishioners and the innumerable schoolchildren below, but not by the party so high above!

Vicar's wife threw buns from above

When the ceremony was completed, Mrs Bligh threw buns out of a large clothes basket down to the crowds below to, it was reported, 'their amusement and delight'.

Climbing a staircase to about 85ft, then a ladder to the middle look-out, parishioners could experience the spectacular view for sixpence. It was the tallest structure in the then Borough of Twickenham, standing 157 ft high, and it remains a prominent landmark.

From the lower platform in the steeple, which is 83ft above the ground, a fine view of the surrounding countryside can be seen, including Box Hill more than 12 miles away.

Wellington bomber crashed

In December 1940 a British Wellington bomber crashed on to 63 Park Road, then the home of Lady Stanton, the crew having bailed out. The tip of the plane's wing knocked off a cross from one of the four pinnacles at the base of the spire.

Much-needed repairs to the clock and spire were

undertaken in 1947 following an appeal. The spire had been badly shaken by wartime bombing raids and steeplejacks set to work making good the damage.

At that time the spire still supported the original cross and weather vane, pictured above.

It must have been removed at some time between then and 1989 because another spire renovation then reported that the 'new' cross was taken down, repaired, and re-fixed in a new capstone by the steeplejacks.

In 1989 various defects were discovered in the spire as a result of a quinquennial inspection. (Churches are inspected by an architect every five years.)

The February 1990 edition of the *Spire* reported: 'The appearance of steeplejacks' ladders signalled a warning of trouble, and now, sadly, we have confirmation from the architect's inspection that the spire may not be as solid as we thought.

'It is under attack from the insidious effects of dampness, frost, and atmospheric pollution which are causing areas of masonry, where the spire rises from the tower, to crumble. Stonework on both tower and spire is eroded, and the cross at the top is split'.

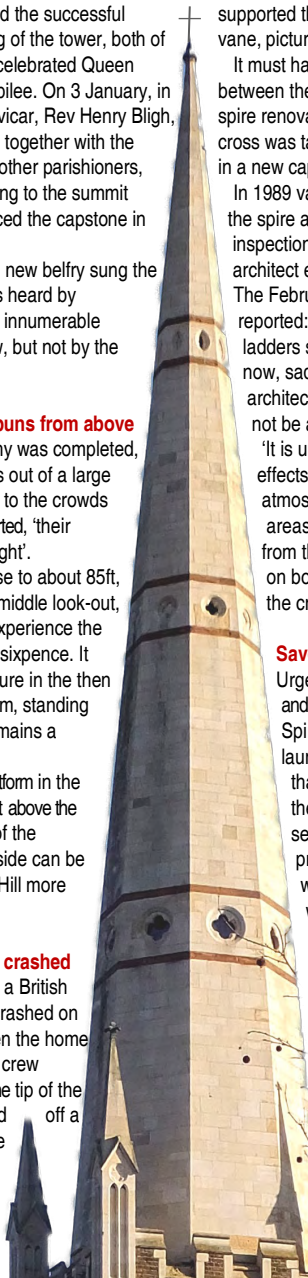
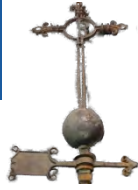
Save Our Spire!

Urgent work was needed and an SOS (Save Our Spire) appeal was launched. The money was, thankfully raised, and the work, which included sealing the base to prevent further water getting in, was completed later that year.

You will find much more about the history of our church, including more archive photos, on our website. Go to:

stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk and follow the links to *History*.

Climbing the spire is usually a popular attraction at our annual open day in July



More to church than Sunday



Line-up of wardens who served from 1983-2008



NICK BAGGE

How many people do you think it takes to run a church? No, it's not one of those jokes about light bulbs (although if you are wondering, in our case it's just the one person), but you might be surprised if I told you it was about 70 people, almost all volunteers.

You may wonder what they all do — which is where this new column comes in. In each issue we will be focusing on different aspects of the church, such as church management, cleaning, gardening, flowers, finance and music. But let's start with the clergy, churchwardens and PCC.

The clergy

St James's is led by Derek, our vicar (known as the incumbent), who is employed full-time and based in the vicarage. He is responsible for all the services in church (in our case three on Sundays, midweek Holy Communion, and Morning Prayer). Covid has pushed some of these online and others have been temporarily cancelled.

The vicar can also be called on to officiate at funerals. These could be in church, or the churchyard (in the case of ashes), or at the local crematorium. Weddings and baptisms occur throughout the year. Derek also leads school assemblies and puts on additional events, including Lent, Advent, confirmation and wedding courses, quiz nights, and more. And some people still think the vicar only works on Sundays!

Derek is aided by Jacky, a self-supporting (unpaid) minister, who began her ministry as a curate, first as deacon and then priest, before completing her training to become an Associate Priest. We are also fortunate to



In review: Derek at APCM

have Julian, who has retired from full-time ministry, but now supports Derek.

Churchwardens

Churchwardens are perhaps the greatest unsung heroes of the Church of England. Wardens are elected annually and can serve for a total of six years. The role is part-time and unpaid. We currently have just one warden, Gwynneth, whose main job is to support the incumbent and be someone they can turn to for advice, while also providing feedback as a 'critical friend'.

Wardens should care for the congregation, encourage people in their faith, help shape the mission plan, and resolve disputes.

The other main role is to be responsible for the fabric of the buildings, including maintenance and leaks!

Parochial Church Council

The PCC is the church's governing body. Members are elected for up to six years at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). The PCC also includes clergy, wardens and Deanery Synod representatives.

Together they are responsible for the overall wellbeing, practical as well as spiritual, of the church, the church members, and the church buildings. The PCC also has a duty to promote the mission of the church within the wider community.

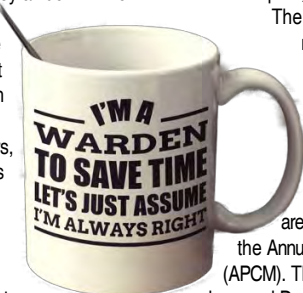
The PCC meets about seven times a year. Many of the members also belong to the various committees, or teams, that focus on specific aspects of church business. These include finance, properties, future building development, music, pastoral visitors, social events and worship.

Your church needs you!

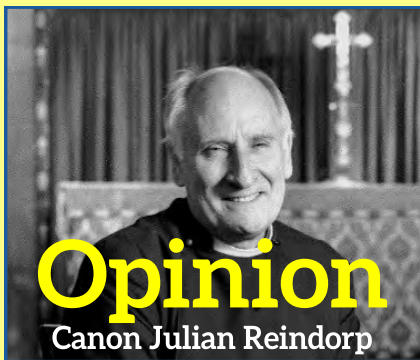
Perhaps more familiar volunteers to many of us are the Servers, who assist the priests during services, and the Welcome Team who hand us a hymn book and service booklet.

Other volunteers are involved with the Ark Playgroup, Connections, Messy Church, Churchyard and Garden. Church flowers need to be replaced weekly, the choir need to rehearse for services, and the altar linen does not get clean by itself. We will be saying more about these in future issues.

If the success of a church is measured by its volunteers I would say we have much to be thankful for — but there is always room for new recruits. Perhaps this column will help you to find a role you could fill.



Charities kept going throughout lockdown



Opinion

Canon Julian Reindorp

POPE & GLOBAL WEALTH

A historic new partnership between some of the world's largest investment and business leaders and the Vatican has just been launched, called the Council for Inclusive Capitalism. The core group, known as 'Guardians,' responsible for more than £10 trillion of investments and employing 200 million workers in 163 countries, will meet with the Pope every year. Speaking to them, Pope Francis said: 'You have taken up the challenges facing our planet by seeking ways to make capitalism become a more inclusive instrument for integral human wellbeing.' Lady Lynn de Rothchild, founder of the Council, said: 'We will follow Pope Francis...listen to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor. Capitalism has created enormous global prosperity, but it has left too many people behind, led to degradation of our planet, and is not widely trusted in society.'

WHY NOT SOCIAL HOMES?

We all know there is a housing crisis. We are told we need to build at least 300,000 additional homes every year. Shelter, the housing charity, says 90,000 of them should be social housing, what we used to call council houses. Since just under two-thirds of homes are privately owned or partly owned, the rest rented and with growing council waiting lists, this might seem a fair allocation. In the past five years we have built between 5,000 and 6,000 social homes a year. Something is surely wrong with our national priorities.

MUSLIM WISDOM

After the recent terrorist incidents in France, the rector of the Great Mosque of Paris, Cherm-Eddine Hafiz, praised the courage of President Macron's speech defending the French republic against the political ideology of separatist political Islamism. In his view, Islamism had become a 'gangrene in Muslim society' and an 'illness within Islam'. He issued a call to all French mosques, Imams, and theologians to push back against extreme ideology in their role as educators. He said: 'I have to accept that people will make fun of me. Freedom of expression is part of our democracy... Muslims can live normally, in modernity, without worrying about what happened 1,400 years ago.'

RABBI JONATHAN SACKS

Lord Sacks, as he became, died in November, but as chief rabbi for Orthodox congregations in the UK he became a much-respected national commentator. Each year he wrote a book on an aspect of our national life, including *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations*; *The Great Partnership: Science, Religion and the Search for Meaning*; *The Home We Built Together: Recreating Society*; *To Heal a Fractured World: The Ethics of Responsibility*; *The Politics of Hope*; *Future Tense: Jews, Judaism, and Israel in the 21st Century*; *Celebrating Life: Finding Happiness in Unexpected Places*; and *The Persistence of Faith: Religion, Morality and Society in a Secular Age*.

A keen Arsenal supporter, Sacks told the story of watching a match at Highbury with George Carey, then Archbishop of Canterbury and another Arsenal fan. Arsenal lost 6-2 to Manchester United. The next day a national newspaper carried a diary item stating: 'If the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chief Rabbi between them cannot bring about a win for Arsenal, surely this proves God does not exist?' The next day a letter appeared: 'To the contrary, what it proves is that God exists. It's just that he supports Manchester United', signed Jonathan Sacks.

FATHER CHRISTMAS & TRAVEL

In a particularly tense week of the Brexit negotiations in December, Simon Coveney, the Irish Foreign Minister, came on TV and announced that the Irish government had met and after careful thought had decided to lift the travel restrictions for Father Christmas and his reindeer. They were free to visit every home in the land, provided they observed social distancing.



DENNIS WILMOT

Last year was a highly unusual and difficult one (as is 2021 so far). Charities everywhere suffered from the double-whammy of increased demand whilst at the same time having reduced income; but it isn't all grim news and St James's has seen some good stories come out of the Covid-19 crisis.

In some cases, it is as though our charity supporters were trying to make up for being helpless by giving more and so making a positive difference.

Our Lent appeal in March 2020 raised £2,662 compared to £2,013 in 2019, which speaks for itself. Most of this went to our CMS partners David and Shelley Stokes in Argentina, as well as the London Diocesan ALMA appeal for 'Wheels for climate change emergencies'. (ALMA supports the Church of England's work in Angola and Mozambique).

Other benefactors were MILO hospital and the London Churches Refugee fund. Despite the difficult financial situation for the church, the PCC approved £1,500, split between Welcare and Bishop Wand School.

Another really interesting story is our Harvest appeal for the Upper Room where we donated £1,402 (up from £605 in 2019); and much more food was collected by church members and local schools. The Upper Room have been right at the forefront of supporting those affected by the pandemic and early on were fighting hard to get back to providing hot meals to the poor and homeless.

Inevitably with many events not running this year, especially the St James's Day raffle and auction, and a reduction in large personal donations, the total amount



The Upper Room, which we supported with cash and food donations

raised for our charities was down overall: £6,894 (excluding Christian Aid and the Children's Society), compared to £10,048 in 2019.

When David and Shelley Stokes retire this year we hope to switch funding to a newly-established ALMA link with a diocese in Mozambique. In addition, being able to support Welcare and The Upper Room, most affected by the pandemic, shows we can help where it really matters.

With God's help, we can continue to make a difference.

Right: Welcare's Anne Khan with a volunteer.



Lent Course to tackle climate change

WE ARE FACING our greatest challenge: global warming. This, along with the damage we are still doing to the environment, means that

we all have to make radical changes to our whole way of life.

Many of us who care about this issue are understandably pessimistic about the future, but faith in God should make a difference. It should enable us to see what is happening and what we can do, individually and together, with God's help.

This year's Lent Course will tackle the challenge head on. It will run for five Thursdays from 25 February-25 March at 8pm via the Zoom platform. To sign up for the course please email Derek: vicar@stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk, or find the link on the weekly e-Flyer. A booklet is available to buy too. Let's all play a part in saving our planet from damage we have caused.

REGISTERS

NOVEMBER

FUNERAL

24 Robert Feldman Barrs-James, 90, Teddington

DECEMBER

FUNERAL

9 Ann May Studds, 89, Hampton Hill



A clear head on beer!



JON HOLLOWAY

There's been a lot of talk about our increasing alcohol consumption during lockdown. Many people will have made New Year's resolutions to cut back: *Dry January* and *Sober October* are both big events these days. What happens when you want a cold beer on a hot day, but you need to drive later and you're fed up with diet Coke?

Whatever the reason, there are some seriously good low alcohol and alcohol-free beers out there, on our doorstep.

First, the 'rules'. The definition of alcohol free does vary, in some countries it's lower than 0.05%, but a generally accepted view in the AF community is that anything less than 0.5% ABV qualifies. For comparison, it's about the same level of alcohol as found in a banana or a slice of toast.

Medically speaking, you can't get drunk on it, and an AF beer has significantly fewer calories than an alcoholic one — it's one of life's few genuine win-wins. The ingredients are identical: water, malted barley or wheat, hops and yeast. All the brewers do is carefully control the fermentation process to ensure the alcohol content doesn't exceed 0.5%, and hey presto, great tasting beer with no hangover!

What started out as curiosity in January 2020 became something of a hobby for the rest of the year, and I've now tasted over 60 different AF beers, of all varieties and styles.

Nirvana Brewery's Bavarian Helles Lager

Kickstarting with a classic lager, this London-based brewer produce their flagship lager in Bavaria and the result is crisp and clear, packed full of strong lager flavours and a lovely biscuity taste.



Thornbridge's Zero Five Pale Ale

A smooth and hoppy classic pale ale, with a lightly fruity flavour. Currently available in Hampton Hill High Street, this is an easy-drinking beer, nicely refreshing on a hot and sunny day.



Drop Bear Beer's Bonfire Stout

This small brewing company, based in Wales, comes with a touch of Australian influence.

This is their stout, and although it's definitely not Guinness, they've made a fine job of it.

It has a great smoky taste to it, with hints of roasted coffee, and a touch of chocolate in the complex flavour-mix.

Maisels Weiss

The Germans are famous for their alcoholic and non-alcoholic beers, and this 0.5% Weissbier doesn't disappoint. The texture and head are the same as the real thing, and the bottle even needs a swirl at the end of the pour to get the last – and tastiest – bits of the residue out.



Coast Beer Co Hazy IPA

A Scottish AF brewery are notable for their 0.0% range of hoppy IPAs. There are many to choose from, but I have listed this one, seen below, for those that like a bit of haziness in their beer. It has a refreshing tropical twist thanks to the variety of hops used in the mix.



Sport Zot Blond

When Belgian beer gets a mention it's often associated with seriously strong 'double' and 'triple' beers served in 1/2 or 1/3-pint glasses. This low alcohol offering, also available locally, makes for a truly decent Belgian blond beer, genuinely comparing to a full-strength version.



Jumpship Yardarm Lager

Another recent start-up based in Edinburgh is now producing a tremendous alcohol-free craft lager. The lasting flavour has real depth and is a far cry from the mass-produced lagers of the big brands, and well worth the additional postage to have it shipped down from Scotland.



Harviestoun Brewery Wheesht Dark Ale

Although I'm not a big fan of darker beers, this was a real eye-opener. Another Scottish brew using a mix of grains – barley, wheat, rye and oats – it knocks out a smooth-roasted flavour with hints of chocolate and spice. Perfect for a chilly night in by the fire.



Beavertown Lazer Crush IPA



Packed full of stunning hops and full of flavour, and on sale locally, this IPA is an absolute must-try, and was a welcome addition to the wider Beavertown range.

This beer comes with zesty citrus and grapefruit background flavours, and has been a real hit on the AF scene. Great artwork on the can as well.

Shipyards Low Tide APA



Brewed in the UK, with a true American pale ale recipe, this is possibly my favourite of the lot, and properly compares to the original Shipyards APA. A really smooth pour, with a decent head, and a great softly fruity aroma. It's becoming more widely available, especially online, and is usually stocked by the larger supermarkets.

Availability

Availability of AF beers is definitely improving, with local stores stocking a few, and supermarkets are starting to increase dedicated sections.

Online remains the best option for choice, especially for the smaller craft brewers.

If you would like some pointers from what I have discovered, email me and I can get you started: afhampthonhill@gmail.com

