

# SAINTS ALIVE

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALL SAINTS AND ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, KINGSTON UPON THAMES

## Carols round the crib – The truth in pantomime

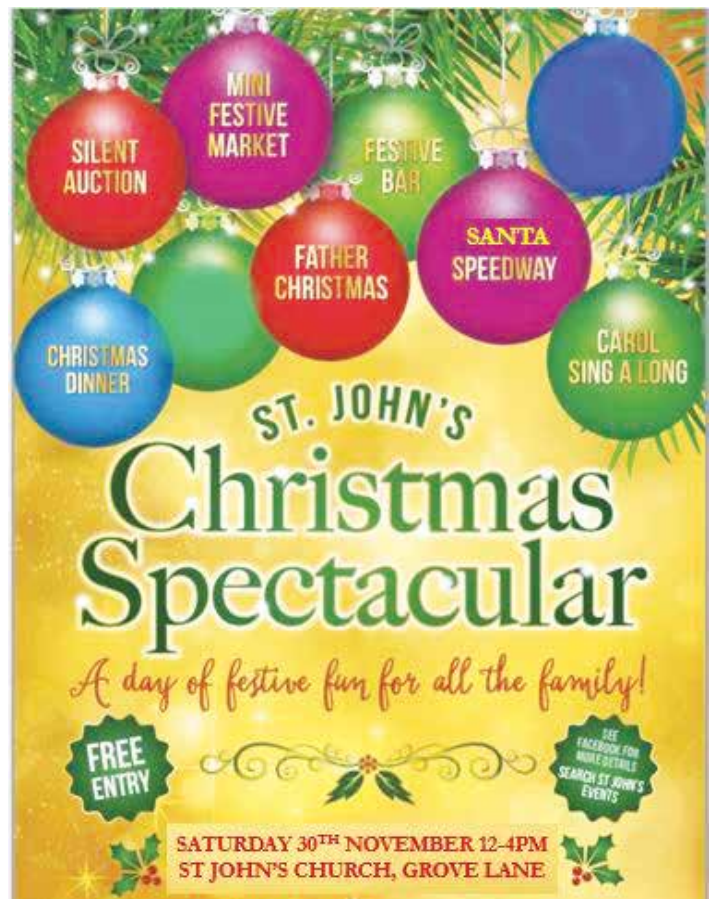
by | Revd Jonathan Wilkes



“N ow when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea, in the days of Herod the ki...” BOO! HISS! BOO! go the crowd, repeating, as encouraged, to heckle the reader every time the evil King’s name is mentioned. And when, later, they hear that “suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God” they cry “ABOVE YOU, ABOVE YOU” when asked where the angels came from, and then “OH YES THEY DID!” when taunted with “Oh, no they didn’t”, and so it goes on. Except that, interspersing the moments of sally and banter, there is stillness and reflection and prayer inspired by the story we know as if by heart and yet each year revisit to discover something new, or, sometimes, to bring an old wound for further healing and hope.

Crib services are a growth industry for churches at Christmas time and though the danger (and some of the jaded criticism) is that they will simply be an excuse to raid the dressing up box, and take a twee photo or two, that really needn’t be the final verdict. At their best they do what churches ought to do every time they open their doors: meet people where they are (in this case stirred into an excited state of sentiment and entertainment) and then

take them to a place where their deepest longings might be explored. You can’t speak to one unless you hear first the other, or rather, if you miss the first then no one will be listening at the last. For centuries – if we’re really honest – going to church was not only a cheap form of public entertainment, it was also the only place “to see and be seen” but that never stopped it from saying something essential to human reality. So, if you miss the pantomime this year, or if you’d simply like a place to weep and laugh in the same half an hour, we’re hoping to entertain and inspire in equal measure at All Saints on Christmas Eve at 4pm and 5.30pm. St John’s Crib Service takes place at 4pm on Christmas Eve.



# From the vicarage

## All Saints

by | Revd Jonathan Wilkes



# St John's

by | Revd Mark Stafford

### In search of a haven

We've spent quite a bit of time recently working out whether we could be this year's home for The Haven, a quite wonderful project run by Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness providing homeless people a night shelter through the coldest months of the winter. Through some wonderful staff funded by the Ministry of Housing, and the good will of an army of 300 volunteers (*want to help, too? see below*), our church will be transformed, as were the Everyday and John Bunyan churches last year, into a place of refuge for homeless people away from the cold and wet. We've drawn a deep breath – as it will be complicated – but otherwise not hesitated to say “yes”.

The word “haven” comes from the Old Norse “*hofn*” and is related to the German, “*hafen*” meaning a harbour, from where it connects to the Old French and Latin, “*portus*” meaning a port. Havens are not only places of safety and refuge, they are also points of entry and exit, beginnings and endings, somewhere to set off from and somewhere to return to – ports. The venue for this year's haven has been telling a story about such beginnings and endings for centuries, and Christmas is one of those moments when it does so with particular clarity. A new birth, a child, born into a frightening and dangerous world, tells us about the promise and possibility that each of us bears if we are but willing to listen for the voice of love and start again. At Easter the precursor is death, an ending, but there are similarities at Christmas time. The tomb into which Jesus is laid on Good Friday resonates with the womb from which he bursts forth on Christmas day:

Were we led all that way for  
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly  
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,  
But had thought they were different; this Birth was  
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.  
*(The journey of the Magi, TS Eliot 1927)*

At Christmas, especially, it's tempting to use easy language of hope and optimism when thinking about new beginnings but experience often shows us that hard and bitter agony accompanies it. Personal change, if possible at all, can feel like pulling teeth, while it clearly remains to be seen what will be born in our nation from our current Brexit labour. Yet what the indomitable cycle of the season reminds us is that hope and possibility will not give up. Year after year Christmas returns to tell us again that we are heard, that we are believed in and that we can learn and grow if we are but willing to keep searching. When it comes, may it not only bring you the rest and refuge you need to face the coming year but also the means to relinquish what you no longer need and the light to find what you do.

*To offer help or support to the KCAH Haven contact Sophie Mayor,  
Night Shelter Co-ordinator: [sophie.m@kcah.org.uk](mailto:sophie.m@kcah.org.uk)*

Jonathan

September and October have been very moving months, both emotionally and physically, for myself and for my wife, Lucy.

After 10 years in social work I have moved away from a profession that I enjoyed. I have made my last home visit, written my final assessment report and attended my final care planning conference. I have left behind the colleagues and families who I have worked so closely with and am moving on to form new relationships, develop new skills and grow as a minister and as a child of God as I join the Church at St. John the Evangelist.

I have also moved my middle daughter to Manchester, as she embarks on her new life as a student at the university.

For all of us, moving on can be challenging. We must be prepared to build on past success, learn from past failure and seek fresh opportunities if we are to grow and develop.

As a student social worker I was often reminded that moving people on to better situations is best achieved through: 1. making a clear assessment of the current situation; 2. planning for the move; 3. making the move; 4. reviewing and checking if the desired outcome has been achieved. Whilst this model of change is great for social work, as Christians we could add prayer to the list, as this is an essential aspect for moving us on in our journey of faith. Maybe the model should say pray, assess, do, reflect, and pray some more.

The move to St John's is something that I have been thinking and praying about for some time. I am looking forward to building on the great work which has been achieved in the Church and in the community. During the time I have spent at St John's, I have valued the family feel of the Church, a community Church aiming to be at the heart of its community.

As a Church, we need to be able to take stock of where we are, pray about where we would like to be, plan how to get there and be brave in moving forward.

As God's pilgrim people we are called to be people moving forward in our journey of faith. Each of us has a role to play in proclaiming His Gospel to a waiting world.

I would like to encourage you all to think about your individual role in the Church; What are you bringing to the body of Christ? How are you helping the Church to grow and develop? If we are to grow, we need to be brave in exploring our own individual ministries. Perhaps God is calling you to work with children? to lead prayers? to read? to set up house groups? or to move into full-time ministry?

We are a people on the move, moving towards a greater understanding of what it means to be the Church of God in this place, at this time, and gaining a better awareness of our own personal discipleship.

# Walking the way

by | Martin Corner

In March this year, with my wife and two friends, I walked part of the Camino to Santiago de Compostela. We took the Portuguese route, north from the Spanish border. With mistakes and diversions, we walked 120 km in nine days, with one day's rest. Except for one day, we carried our packs, six or seven kilos of everything we'd brought from England. We slept in small hotels, being too old for bunks and dormitories. Feet and legs got tired. There were some very long hills. We passed through old towns and the green hilly landscape of Galicia. Water was never far away, though we had only one morning of rain. At the end we found ourselves, almost with surprise, in the luminous space of Santiago's great square, in front of the golden cathedral, bathed in sunlight. I put my hand on the (bronze) shoulder of St James, also a pilgrim, and said "We made it."

So, what did it mean? What does it mean to be a pilgrim in the 21st century? The stories around the shrine at Santiago are dubious. James is said to have travelled to Iberia after the death of Jesus and preached. Not impossible; Paul, we know, planned to go to Spain. People got around, even in the ancient world. Then he is said to have gone back to Palestine and been martyred (Acts 12, 2). But his remains were conveyed by sea to his old parish, Galicia, where they were buried, to be rediscovered by a local bishop in the ninth century and reinterred in what is now Santiago. The shrine drew people from all over Europe. Thomas a Becket made the journey three years before he was murdered. Thousands still do. We met a man in his seventies who'd walked all the way from Seville. St James, in reality or legend, still has his pull.

But for me? When you read the title of this piece, you probably read it at least half metaphorically. The Way, after all, is the earliest metaphor of the Christian life (Acts 9, 2). So, it is easy (perhaps too easy) to turn pilgrimage into a metaphor: it stands for the "journey" of life, "walking" through our days. We go home and try to apply that, to the commute, to the trip to Aldi. But what is metaphor and what is real?

We need metaphor to talk about things. But it can also be a way of not talking about things, a strategy of evasion or deferral; the metaphor is handy, and we'll come to the reality later. Talking of death as "passing" is to use metaphor as evasion. When someone dies it is not, in reality, passing from one space to another. Living a life is not, in reality, walking a path.



Religious talk can become so invested in metaphor that it is unclear what is really being talked about. Walking the way to Santiago was not a metaphor; it was putting one foot in front of another and doing that again and again. It was getting up each morning with one simple thing to do: to get on the road. For me the meaning was there in the immediate, not hovering behind in some deferred reality. That was what the walk gave me. But there we go: metaphor again.

# Change

by | Louise Walton, Kingston University Faith Advisor

“Change is in the air” – isn’t it just?! Sometimes it seems that everywhere things are being turned on their heads and no one knows what the future will bring. Yet it has always been thus: change and uncertainty are historically the norm, not the exception.

One relevant phrase I hear a lot at the moment is “Change means opportunity”. It can mean that but that doesn’t remove the challenge of change either.

A beautiful passage from the Old Testament (Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8) talks of how there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens. However, this does not mean that you only get one thing for one season and another from another activity. Christians have long realised that the deepest and most fruitful periods in our lives can often be the most painful or the most barren, even though we might not experience that fruit or depth at the time.

A season of change may be a time of reflection, growth *and* opportunity as well as a time of pain, loss, and confusion. Jesus’ time in the desert was barren *and* meaningful; his experience of Passover was joyful and excruciating – just as our lives can be complex *and* filled with simple truths.

We are multi-faceted creatures, capable of feeling more than one thing at one time and in different ways. Our lives are rich with meaning and mystery. We should not always rush to interpret what type of season we are going through or determine what



we should get out of it. Perhaps it would be better to reflect, learn and sometimes just let realisations come slowly to the fore, alone and with others. After all, the Spirit moves in mysterious ways and the mystery in itself is something worth experiencing.

## Might this be God...?

Could this be God then,  
when the rugged old oak  
splashes rain on my head?

Or when the brisk wind  
snatches at my hair  
and lifts the load from my back?

Might this be God then  
when the lime tree scatters  
the earth with luminous yellow hearts?

Or when the scarlet rose hips  
glossy with dew, spread  
the power of peace within me?

Could this truly be God then  
when wind, leaves, earth and rain  
create in me this happiness?



©Sue Burley

In the middle of packing and preparing to move, Mark kindly found time to meet for a chat about his recent appointment as team vicar at St John the Evangelist and to share a bit about himself with Saints Alive.

Mark grew up in Tamworth – his father was an engineer and he inherited a love of machinery, getting his first old motorbike at the age of 14. It seemed a natural step for Mark to go into an engineering role straight from school, working at fixing buses. Developing this theme, he went on to study transport distribution and logistics at the University of Huddersfield, afterwards becoming a research assistant at Birmingham Polytechnic (now Birmingham City University). However, he felt a calling to ministry and undertook training at St John's Nottingham theological college.

Mark's curacy was in Stafford within a group of three churches – one on the outskirts of the town and the other two village churches. He also assisted at a local airforce base when their chaplain was away. In 2001 he was appointed to the incumbency of St Michael the Archangel, Retford, in a ministry that included churches in Scofton, Babworth and Sutton-cum-Lound and with a chaplaincy role at a hospice in the parish. He also taught on the Bishop's certificate course for lay readers.

This was clearly a very busy and demanding role and a time came when he felt in need of a change. He turned to what many of us would feel is an equally demanding occupation, retraining at Nottingham University to become a social worker. Upon qualifying, he joined the Reception and Assessment team of Nottinghamshire County Council, where he was responsible for making the initial visit after referral to assess whether the children referred are at risk, whether they need to be moved or whether they can stay where they are. Following on from this, he was part of the long-term child protection team and then the fostering team.

He moved to Kingston to work for an independent foster agency predominantly working to help unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in Greater London as well as outlying areas. He therefore feels particularly in tune with the support St John's gives to the work of Kingston charity, Kingston Community Refugee Sponsorship.



Once settled in Kingston, Mark started to attend evensong at All Saints and it was during this time that he felt that God was challenging him to something different. He received permission to officiate and from then on was part of the ministry team, preaching and officiating when needed. And then the vacancy arose at St John's ...

He is married to Lucy and between them they have five children and two granddaughters. He retains his love of all things mechanical but especially pre-war cars and is looking forward to being back in the garage working on his 1934 Austin 7. However, regular readers of Saints Alive will know from Mark's article "Reuse, repurpose, recycle" in the May/June/July issue that he is an environmentalist and his practical car choice for day-to-day use is a hybrid. He admits to a fondness for flowery shirts and as he is also colour blind we can look out for some interesting colour mixes!

Mark is looking forward tremendously to building on what has already been achieved at St John's and to being once more in a community parish church. His ministry officially starts following his welcome service on Monday 28th October at 7.30pm. All good wishes to Mark and Lucy as they start this new phase in their lives.

## Kingston's Community Sponsorship of Refugees – Update

by | Vince Daly

Readers of Saints Alive may remember our 2018 report on the formation of a charity called Kingston Community Refugee Sponsorship (KCRS). KCRS was formed to support refugee families beginning a new life in Kingston under the UK government's Community Sponsorship programme. KCRS is an example of inter-faith collaboration with a board of trustees including clergy and lay leaders from local Anglican (including both All Saints and St John's), Jewish, Methodist, Muslim and Quaker communities.

KCRS now has some sixty members, both individuals and organisations. Since its launch in June 2018, KCRS has been working towards three goals: raising sufficient funds to support its first refugee family whilst they integrate into British life; drafting a comprehensive plan for this support, in sufficient detail to satisfy Kingston Council and the Home Office; locating suitable accommodation for the family to rent. They have now reached their funding target and have received Kingston Council's approval of their resettlement plan. What remains to

be done is the rewriting of that plan to fit the Home Office's new requirements and finding suitable accommodation, ideally to be available for rent at housing benefit rates.

If you want to be part of the move to sponsor refugee families in Kingston then you could become an individual member of KCRS (£10 per year). This would put you on a mailing list for progress updates, announcements of KCRS events, calls for help, etc. and allow you to join the KCRS Facebook group to communicate directly with other KCRS members. You might also encourage your faith institution / school / employer to become an organisational member (£100 per year).

If you know of or can discover any rented accommodation in Kingston that might become free in a couple of months from now then KCRS would love to hear from you. You can contact KCRS at [KingstonCRS@gmail.com](mailto:KingstonCRS@gmail.com) or via their website (Google: "Kingston KCRS") where you can also find additional information.

# All Saints Christmas Tree Festival

by | Jane Paice

Join us for the All Saints Christmas Tree Festival launch on Saturday 14th December to kick start the Christmas season. The church will be filled with Christmas trees decorated and supported by our generous sponsors, lighting up the church and raising funds for eight very worthy charities:

Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness,  
Kingston Samaritans,  
Medecins Sans Frontieres,  
Momentum,  
Refugee Action Kingston,  
RNLI,  
Kingston Welcare,  
World Vision UK.

Christmas crafts for children will be on offer between 10am and 12noon. The Mayor will open the Christmas Tree Festival at 11am, followed by carols with the choir, and mince pies. Do come and join us.

Interested in sponsoring one of the Christmas trees? contact Jane Paice on [paicejane@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:paicejane@yahoo.co.uk) to understand the package we offer.

**Launch with carols and crafts:** Saturday 14 December, 10-12

**Christmas Tree Festival:** Saturday 14 December to Tuesday 7 January



Thames  
PHILHARMONIC  
Choir

Saturday 7th December 2019  
7.30 pm All Saints' Church  
Kingston KT1 1JP

**A Christmas  
CRACKER**

**Vivaldi:** Magnificat  
**Haydn:** Missa Sancti Nicolai  
**Vaughan Williams:**  
Fantasia on Christmas Carols  
**Christmas carols**  
for Choir and audience

Soprano: Claire Ward  
Mezzo-Soprano: Bernadette Johns  
Tenor: Philippe Durrant  
Baritone: Hugo Herman-Wilson

**Conductor:** Harry Bradford  
**Thames Philharmonic Choir**  
**Organist:** James Orford

TICKETS: £20, £16 (concessions for under 18s), £5  
Box Office: 07522 524 081  
Online: [www.thamesphilchoir.org.uk/concerts](http://www.thamesphilchoir.org.uk/concerts)

A photograph of a stack of wrapped Christmas crackers. The wrapping is red with gold floral patterns and gold ribbons.

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A photograph of a young girl with her arms raised, jumping joyfully. She is wearing a blue sweater and a dark skirt.

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## November Events

**Fri 1st All Saints:** 1.15 lunchtime organ recital: Matthew O'Malley, All Saints, Kingston  
**Sun 3rd All Saints:** 9.30 Patronal Festival  
**Mon 4th All Saints:** 1.15 Lunchtime concert: Jessica Summers (soprano)  
**Sat 9th All Saints:** 7pm Metropolitan Police Fundraising Concert  
**Sun 10th All Saints:** 11am Remembrance Service  
**Mon 11th All Saints:** 1.15 Lunchtime concert: Elia Stavrou (piano)  
**Wed 13th All Saints:** 5.30pm Choral Evensong  
**Thu 14th All Saints:** 5pm Christmas Lights Switch-On Service  
**Fri 15th All Saints:** 1.15 lunchtime organ recital: Seb Gillot, St Cuthbert's Philbeach Gardens  
**Sat 16th All Saints:** 7.30pm Kingston Choral Society Concert: Mendelssohn: St Paul  
**Mon 18th All Saints:** 1.15pm Lunchtime Concert: Patrick Massey (piano)  
**Thurs 21st All Saints:** 1pm Topical Lunch: speaker Councillor Liz Green  
**Fri 22nd All Saints:** 1.15 lunchtime organ recital: Jonathan Lilley, Waltham Abbey Church  
**Sat 23rd All Saints:** 7.30pm Kingston Chamber Concert  
**Mon 25th All Saints:** 1.15pm Lunchtime Concert: South London Saxophone Quartet  
**Fri 29th All Saints:** 1.15 lunchtime organ recital: Stephen Disley, Southwark Cathedral  
**Sat 30th St John's:** 12noon-4pm Christmas Spectacular

## December Events

**Sun 1st All Saints:** 6pm Advent Carol Service  
**Mon 2nd All Saints:** 1.15pm Lunchtime Concert: Mary Young & Athena-Mae Cetin (violin duet)  
**Fri 6th All Saints:** 1.15 lunchtime organ recital: Daniel Justin, St John's Cathedral, Norwich  
**Sat 7th All Saints:** Thames Philharmonic Choir, incl. Haydn: St Nicholas Mass  
**Sun 8th All Saints:** 9.30am Baptism of Constance Linnea Potter Boyer and Baptism of Joel Chi Lei Chan  
**Mon 9th All Saints:** 1.15 lunchtime organ recital: Stephen Westrop  
**Sat 14th All Saints:** 11-12noon Christmas Tree Festival Launch  
**Sat 14th All Saints:** 7.30pm Eclipse Christmas Concert  
**Sun 15th All Saints:** 4.30pm Community Carol Service  
**Sun 22nd St John's:** 6pm Candlelight Carol Service  
**Tue 24th All Saints:** 4pm and 5.30pm Carols Around the Crib; All Saints 11pm Midnight Mass  
**Tue 24th St John's:** 4pm Children's Crib Service; St John's 11.30pm Midnight Communion  
**Wed 25th All Saints:** 8am Holy Communion; 9.30am Christmas Day Service  
**Wed 25th St John's:** 10am Christmas Communion

## January Events

**Sun 5th All Saints:** 6pm Epiphany Carol Service  
**Sat 25th All Saints:** Burns' Night  
**Mid-October to Tuesday 17th December All Saints:** Cards for Good Causes  
**15th November-24th December All Saints Grounds:** Alpine Village and Christmas Market  
**Sun 26 All Saints:** 12noon-2pm Book Group: On Beauty by Zadie Smith

## All-Year-Round Events

**All Saints:** The church and cafe are open daily and visitors are welcome.  
On weekdays and Saturdays from 11am to 12.15pm trained listeners are available to offer pastoral support to people who wish to speak with someone in confidence. Little Saints toddler group is on Tuesdays & Fridays.  
**St. John's:** Please note that due to the current building works Little Groovers will not be happening until December at the earliest and the Community café will probably not be open again until the new year.

### Coffee at All Saints

Join us for coffee at All Saints  
on Thursday mornings  
11am-12.30am  
Bring a friend, make others, enjoy a chat ...

### All Saints Knitting Circle

every Tuesday  
10am-11.45  
All Welcome  
for more information contact the church office  
020 8546 5964; info@allsaintskingston.co.uk

### All Saints Sunday Services

8am Holy Communion  
9.30 Sung Eucharist (with Children's Church).  
6pm Sung Evensong

### Weekday Communion Services

Tuesday and Wednesday 12 noon Common Worship;  
Thursday 10.30am Book of Common Prayer;  
Friday 11.30am Praytime - brief songs and prayers for  
Toddlers and Carers; 12 noon Silent Prayer

### St John's Sunday Services

**1st Sunday of the month:** 10am All Age Communion  
**2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays of the month:** 10am Parish  
Communion with children's church  
**3rd Sunday of the month:** 9am Holy Communion  
10am Sacred Space with children's church  
Morning Prayer is said in Church at **9am** on Wednesday,  
Thursday and Friday

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Amanda Bullen - [amanda.bullen@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:amanda.bullen@hotmail.co.uk)

**Organist and Director of Music:** David Condry - contact via PA to the Rector

## St John's

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All Saints & St John's are part of an Anglican Team with St John's Kingston Vale

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FEB/MAR/APR 2020 - 10 JAN

