

# PARISH Magazine

 Croydon **Minster** and St George's, Waddon Dec 2020 / Jan 2021



The Beloved Saint of Advent *Canon J.M. Rosenthal*

St Nicholas, Patron Saint of the Young, Pray for Us *Fr Andrew*

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Thanks to Rodney Vaughn *Various contributors*

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The PCC Secretary's Inbox *Sue Kibler*

## PARISH DIARY

### Croydon Minster

#### ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2020

Online provision will remain through Minster Facebook and YouTube pages.

*All service times are subject to change.*

#### ADVENT SERVICES

##### Sunday 6 December, 3.30pm

Celebrating St Nicholas – A Service for Children and Families  
(ticketed, open to all, maximum 60)

##### Sunday 6 December, 6.30pm

'Prepare the Way of the Lord' Words and Music for Advent  
(ticketed, open to all, maximum 60)

##### Sunday 13 December, 6.30pm

Community Carol Service  
(ticketed, open to all, maximum 60)

##### Sunday 20 December

Carols for Croydon  
(we hope this will be a carol service in the church grounds)

## CHRISTMAS SERVICES

#### Thursday 24 December, 3.30pm

Crib Service  
(ticketed, open to all, maximum 60)

#### Thursday 24 December, 9pm

First Mass of Christmas and Blessing of the Crib  
(ticketed, open to all, maximum 60)

#### Christmas Day – Friday 25 December, 8am

Said Eucharist  
(ticketed, open to all, maximum 60)

#### Christmas Day – Friday 25 December, 10am

Festal Eucharist  
(ticketed, open to all, maximum 60)

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**St George's**

All services are currently restricted due to Covid-19

**Sundays** 10am Eucharist

**Thursdays** 10am Eucharist with shared reflections on the readings

**1st Saturday of the month**  
10am – noon Community Breakfast

#### Parish Safeguarding Officers:

Anne Tanner 020 8686 3760 / 07715 581046  
Christine Crawley 020 8688 0609 / 07770 613948



## A Welcome from Fr Andrew

The focus of this month's Magazine Online is St Nicholas. St Nicholas is universally appealing and has gone on to transcend even the church by entering popular culture as Santa Claus (from 'Sinterklaas', the Dutch for St Nicholas). If you blur your eyes a little you can see that his floppy hat started out as a mitre, along with his other robes. Canon James Rosenthal, Vicar of St James, Merton and Founder of the St Nicholas Center (<https://www.stnicholascenter.org/>) tells us more about him in a guest article.

Why St Nicholas this month? Well, his feast day is 6th December, he has a chapel in Croydon Minster (possibly better known as 'the chapel with Archbishop John Whitgift's tomb in it') and he is patron saint of children.

My own article makes connections between St Nicholas and how the work of the church with children and young people is so important both to serve them and be faithful to the Gospel. Developing the spiritual formation of children is a gentle and precious task entrusted to the church, and one that we need to get right. I describe some of the work the PCC has been doing in thinking strategically about children and young people's ministry (you'll remember I hope the prayer cards from February this year). I pay tribute to the leaders and helpers of our children and young people's groups – what a year it has been for them and the children and young people.

The education of children is the theme of Jon Blanchard's article on St Nicholas and the Steiner method of education with fascinating insights and salutary notes too.

Also in this edition you can read about the two major themes of 2020: the Pandemic and #BlackLivesMatter.

David Morgan gives us 'The Long View' of the pandemic and Croydon, taking us back to the plague in medieval times and what we know of the church in Croydon then: a tale of absentee clergy with unusual haircuts (go to the article to see what that refers to – I trust I am neither).

Sue Kibler reflects deeply on Black Lives Matter and issues of race and racism within the church and society. Is this the moment when a recognition of the experience of many black people in this country can be a time for growth, healing and the building of a less divided nation? Can the Church be a sign of that reconciliation?

Two very important landmarks are also noted in this edition. Rodney Vaughn has been a great servant of this magazine, and passionate advocate and seller of it for many years. Warm tributes are paid to his contribution as he steps down. Also stepping down after 20 years of service are Dave and Ann Young who have run the church crèche all that time. I am certain the prayers of St Nicholas have upheld them in their care of the youngest children of our church. Rodney, Dave and Ann, thank you for all you have given in your service of the Gospel in this place. We pray for them and the discernment of how their roles can be filled.

In an edition honouring St Nicholas, it is right and proper that we have a contribution from one of our young people, Toby Watkins. Toby's lovely poem reflects on this past year and looks forward to the feast that St Nicholas begins to prepare us for as we celebrate the birth of the Saviour. In Toby's words:

It's Christmas Day! It's been an odd year,  
Locked down at home, with worry and fear.  
But now we can celebrate Jesus's birth,  
Bringing light, peace and happiness back to our Earth.

May the Mother of the Lord pray for us, may St Nicholas and all the saints pray for us, and may God in his mercy bless us all, and lead us to a good 2021.

Fr Andrew

# The Beloved Saint of Advent, Nicholas of Myra

Feast Days 6th December and 9th May

Among the host of heaven none is more beloved than the one-time middle eastern Bishop, Saint Nicholas. Born in Patara in what we now call Turkey in 260 AD, he likely had never heard of the North Pole. Yet he is 'the real one', and for that we give thanks. If you see a Santa's Grotto just tell Santa Claus and Father Christmas you know his real name.

His name means 'victory', and so he was indeed victorious in his faith, even under persecution and suffering. His wealthy parents died in a pandemic while he was still young. He grew up with the family's Christian values under the tutelage of his uncle who was a priest. He loved people and they loved him! He is patron saint most notably of children and sailors.

Nicholas is a symbol of faith and profound generosity. The legend about him is that he gave money to a poor family to save the three daughters from a dreadful fate by dropping money down their chimney: does that sound like anyone you've heard of elsewhere?

His miracles and legends captivate us and his primary goal is to share the story of Bethlehem, not himself, as the focal point of Christmas. If we listen to his words and follow his way of life, we indeed will find Christmas a time of pure joy.

St Nicholas is venerated in many places. There are over 400 churches dedicated to him in England, and at Croydon Minster, the stunning gold image of him in the St Nicholas Chapel is dazzling. His image is found in many icons and windows. Both Canterbury Cathedral and York Minster have St Nicholas chapels.

St Nicholas died on 6th December 343 AD. His relics are found in a basilica in Bari, Italy, that bears his name.

St Nicholas, pray for us!

**Canon J. M. Rosenthal**

***Founder, St Nicholas Society UK and Vicar of St James, Merton***

[www.stnicholascenter.org](http://www.stnicholascenter.org)

Loving God,  
We thank you for the example of **Saint Nicholas**,  
who fed the hungry,  
brought hope to the imprisoned,  
gave comfort to the lost,  
and taught the truth of Christ to all.  
May we strive to imitate him  
by putting you first in all we do.  
Give us the courage, love and strength of our saint,  
so that like him, being aided by his prayers,  
we may serve you through loving our brothers and sisters.  
In **Christ Jesus** we pray.  
Amen

# Living well through the next six months

**Living with COVID-19 will be hard for everyone this winter. The Prime Minister has asked us all to observe the Rule of Six. There are lessons and challenges that Christians can draw from this number to help us live well in these times.**

**> SIX MONTHS IS THE NEW HORIZON**

*Focus on Easter and lean back into the great themes of the church year.*

**> SIX DAYS TO WORK AND A SABBATH TO REST**

*Reclaim the gift of one day each week for rest and re-creation.*

**> SIX PEOPLE TO JOURNEY WITH**

*Rediscover church as small groups of people supporting one another.*

**> SIX WAYS TO BE SALT AND LIGHT**

*Identify the people and community organisations you can support.*

**> SIX PERCENT TO YOUR CHURCH**

*If your income is stable, increase your giving to sustain the local church.*

**> SIX PEOPLE TO PRAY FOR**

*Pray for people you know to discover the riches of our faith.*

**"...neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."**

Romans 8.37-39



[oxford.anglican.org/six](http://oxford.anglican.org/six)

## St Nicholas, Patron of the Young, Pray for Us

I don't know of a single church that does not say that it wants to grow its number of children and young people and to develop its work with them. If there is a church that doesn't want to do that then it is short-sighted about the long term future of the church, lacks hope and is betraying the Gospel.

As we honour St Nicholas in this edition of the magazine, whose feast day is 6th December, we are honouring the patron saint of children, amongst other things. So it is timely to think about how the young are part of the church, for they are clearly precious to Christ himself in the gospels and should be to the whole church as well.

There is a grim reality check we should be mindful of when it comes to the Church's work with children. For a start, of all the declining demographics in the Church of England it is children who are disappearing most quickly. The pandemic will not have helped that decline as crèches are still not permitted and children's work needs careful risk assessment around it and helpers who are confident that they feel safe. Online provision is never quite the same as meeting in person, and we are not trying to inform children about God, but rather to encounter the Living God: Zoom, Teams and anything virtual makes that a tough job. St Nicholas might ask us: how can you draw the young in your church – who are the church both now and of the future – into the very heart of worship, ministry and mission?

Secondly, there is the disgrace and outrage of the failure of the Church to protect the young and vulnerable. Every instance of sexual abuse associated with the Church is the breaking of a young life which is carried into adulthood. Cases of sexual abuse have been a scandal, literally stumbling block (from the Greek word 'skandalon') which has in the eyes of many rendered the Church untrustworthy of the care and nurture of children. The legend of St Nicholas tells of how he rescued three young women from forced marriage (a practice that is not unknown today). Bringing

children out of danger, protecting them and ensuring their wellbeing is so important. That is what our safeguarding is all about. St Nicholas might ask: how are you looking after children and shielding them from harm: emotional, physical and spiritual?

Thirdly, in a secularising, pluralist society, which can be hostile to religion – or parodies of true religion which taints everyone – many parents struggle with the task of bringing up their children as Christians. Simple practices such as prayers at bedtime or the saying of Grace at mealtimes have disappeared even in regular churchgoing families. Church is seen in society as a branch of the leisure industry or very ‘niche’ and an optional extra. St Nicholas might ask us parents and the wider church of all generations: do you value the Faith enough to pass this gift to our children?

Fourthly, we are often disposed to beat ourselves up about failure rather than detect the work of God’s grace. As someone once said subverting an old expression, ‘The devil’s in the headlines; God is in the detail’. Headlines don’t tell the whole story; our children’s leaders all know of beautiful moments and instances of real insight and spiritual depth and encounter with Jesus Christ for our children. If we despair we lose hope and energy. At the Minster, St George’s and St Andrew’s we could all say in loud lament, ‘Where are the children and young people?’ By historic standards (or the 1950s at least) our numbers are terribly low. Still there are children and young people about: serving, singing, praying, there’s Messy Minster and Messy Church. We cannot look back and bemoan decline in numbers of children and young people, we have to roll up our sleeves and reveal the depths of the love of God: we have to serve them as things are today and not how they once were.

So the way we support children in church is to support them directly but also their parents, and they in turn need support from grandparents and others who are wise and have the experience of years. That means to nurture the young we must value the elders. It is all interconnected and intergenerational.

We also need to count our blessings. The Minster for example has many children and young people passing through the doors and, like St George’s, works with schools in our locality in which there are opportunities to tell the Good News of Jesus Christ. There are children and young people’s groups, Kingfishers and Blue Door Group receiving teaching and exposed to prayer. And children and young people sing in our choirs and are exposed to Christian worship and teaching. Perhaps if we spread our view more widely we see that the Minster is supportive of *Croydon Drop In* which does important work with older teenagers and young adults in the area of mental health.

What would the patron saint of children and young people say to all that? I think he would offer his prayers and say that the church is not them and us, young and old, but rather we are all God’s children, and Every Child Matters.

At the beginning of this year the PCC gave time to consider a strategy for our work as a church with children and young people. You may recall the Candlemas prayer card that came out as we prayed for ours to be a church in which all generations were represented, but that made a special intention of prayer for and work with children and young people.

Heavenly Father,  
you nourish your Church with your love:  
help the Body of Christ in this place  
to nurture everyone, especially her children and young people,  
that, together, we may  
deepen our knowledge,  
grow in wisdom  
and always be ready to give an account of the hope that is within us.  
Amen.

Fr Andrew

## Advent with a Difference

My closest association with St Nicholas was during the six months I spent as a young man working in a residential community caring for learning disabled children. This was run on the principles of the Austrian esoteric thinker, Rudolf Steiner.

Steiner's teaching seemed to have influenced every aspect of life there: the organically grown food, the homeopath medicine, the live music (and no television) and taking myths and rituals seriously. In many ways it was very attractive although I found the earnestness of the full time members stifling.

But what was undeniably impressive was that the children were treated with respect and dignity although many of them had very serious problems with behaviour and communication. This meant that at times they were subject to discipline, dressing and behaving properly. As a result they learnt self respect. The whole basis of the care was Steiner's belief that the spiritual and physical were integrated and those children who appeared to be beyond usual communication were as valuable as any other human being.

Steiner took religious myths and rituals very seriously and gave a central place to Christ. But this was where I began to have my serious doubts. As far as I could make out, they did not believe in God as Christians understand. Far from being the Son of God, Christ, I was told was like St Michael, an expression of the Great Sun Spirit. For Steiner the four great festivals of the Christian year were the winter and summer solstices (Christmas and St John's Day) and the spring and autumn equinoxes (Easter and St Michael's Day).

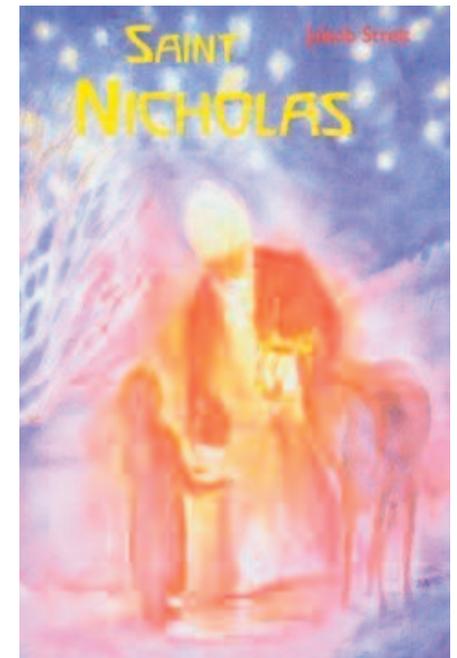
These festivals were celebrated with care and imagination by the community and I was particularly impressed by how Advent was celebrated.

There was a large picture window in the sitting room which just before 1 December was covered up by a large wooden panel. There were twenty-four removable panels in this covering and each day up to Christmas one of these was removed to reveal a translucent picture on tissue paper. This was the most impressive Advent calendar I have ever known. It meant that in daylight hours the room gradually became lighter. And on Christmas Eve that room was where the Christmas Tree was put up, illuminated by burning candles.

In the dining room there were three tables. On each of them was an Advent wreath and the central light fitting overhead was replaced by an old bicycle wheel covered in greenery with four candles. On the first Sunday of Advent one candle was lit on each wreath and there was no other light in the room until on the next Sunday another candle was lit on each wreath. As we approached Christmas, we ate in greater and greater light.

On St Nicholas' Day, St Nicholas himself came to visit to give good girls and boys a small present. This is a Dutch custom, from which we get the name Santa Claus, Claus being a form of Nicholas. One of the men of the community wearing a false beard was St Nicholas and I was his assistant in mask and wig.

All these rituals were carried out without self-consciousness or any clergy. To be timid and apologetic celebrating rituals dilutes their power to speak to us. Steiner's followers knew this for certain.



*Cover design for 'St Nicholas' by Jakob Streit  
(Wynstones Press, 2003)  
illustrated by Georges Feldmann*

However all the things I have mentioned (the tree, the wreath, the calendar, St Nicholas) are Northern European. The Christmas crib is the most famous Southern European contribution to Christmas and I cannot remember seeing one in this community. A crib, unlike the other things, is unambiguously Christian.

Although I have never known a community in which Christmas was prepared for with such care and imagination, I came to see that the whole point of Christmas was bypassed. I found it particularly irritating that when the crucifixion was mentioned it was called “the mystery of Calvary”. This seemed to me to be avoiding admitting that the central act of redemption was a squalid, cruel and seemingly insignificant public execution. At Christmas we celebrate that God is with us, but so that we can recognise that God is with us in his death on the cross.

I left the community the day after Palm Sunday and reached an Anglican monastery where with great relief I took part for the first time in the ceremonies of Holy Week. This was celebrated, not because Christ is the Great Sun Spirit that rises every morning, but because God Incarnate has overcome death once and for all by being identified with human suffering at its most wretched.

In contrast to Steiner’s approach to life as I experienced it in this community, I came to appreciate the depth of Christian orthodoxy.

**Jon Blanchard**

***The Church Times***

Price **£2.95** (of which £1.50 goes to the church)

Monthly/Annual subscriptions available

*Contact Denise for further details*



*A Christmas Crib in an Italian church*

*Photograph: Jon Blanchard*



## Thanks to Ann and Dave

Huge thanks are due to Ann and Dave Young who have decided to step down from running the Minster crèche for under 5s after what must surely be a record 20 years of service.



Ann volunteered to run the crèche back in 2000 when previous coordinator Wendy Pikula wanted to retire. She was the ideal candidate, having spent her whole working life as a teacher for children with severe learning difficulties and latterly as a senior teacher/governor, as well as having two pre-school children of her own at the time, Megan, then aged 2 and Ella, a babe in arms (Freya had not yet been born).

Dave had already been on the crèche rota before Ann took it on, so in a way his service is even longer than Ann's!

As well as efficiently managing the rota to ensure enough adult helpers each week, Ann and Dave brought the key skills of gentleness, patience and extraordinary diplomacy in defusing toddler battles to the job. One other particular benefit of having the pair in charge (from a selfish parent's point of view!) was that they hardly ever took a week off. This made for a wonderful sense of continuity for nervous customers (children and parents alike). If the children could see the familiar and kindly faces of Ann and Dave in the room, they were sure to settle more easily than otherwise and as a parent you could sneak back out to church with greatly lessened anxiety.

Ann and Dave are well known to a large number of children and young people throughout the Minster community, from the current generation of babes and

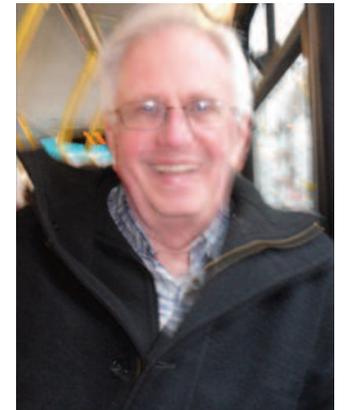
toddlers, right up to the most hulking of teenagers, university students and young twenty-somethings. Ann comments: 'We have loved watching the children develop in confidence and many of them grow up in the church. Building relationships with the parents and families and seeing them become involved in the church has been lovely too. The friendships we have made and the love and support from all the helpers and families that we've been given has been fantastic. The funniest moments have always been the gems the children come up with, the battles over Thomas the Tank Engine toys (we could never provide enough at one time) and mediating 'buggy battles' too.'

With freedom beckoning, Ann and Dave are now looking forward to being able to come to Sunday services slightly more often than has been possible to date and maybe also – shocking thought – to taking the odd Sunday off Croydon Minster altogether.

**Tiffany Willmer**

## Thanks to Rodney

Warm thanks also go to Rodney Vaughn, who has recently retired from the Parish Magazine committee after 25 years of faithful service. Before Covid, Rodney was almost always to be found standing near the Minster's west door after the Sunday morning Eucharist, selling copies of the magazine, with a friendly welcome for everyone. He has put a huge amount of work into the magazine over 25 years, editing dozens of issues (probably close to 100, though I haven't been able to work out exactly how many!), recruiting and supporting new editors and liaising with advertisers, as well as being the public face of the magazine in church every week. I joined the Parish Magazine team as an editor at the end of 2008 and I remember being invited to the editors' annual



dinner at the Little Bay restaurant to get to know the rest of the magazine committee; there seemed to be a great deal of information to take in and I wondered what I was letting myself in for, but with Rodney's kind encouragement and appreciative response to my first efforts, I soon settled into the team and have been editing two or three issues a year ever since. I've recently taken on responsibility for editing every issue and I'm going to miss Rodney's calm and cheerful support, but it's good to know that he will still be around at the Minster for chats over coffee when life gets back to normal.

**Liz Watkins**

Several of our regular magazine contributors have shared their memories of working with Rodney.

Rodney is very good at making friends with newcomers to the church. Because he is so friendly and welcoming, I think for many new members of the congregation he is probably one of the first 'regulars' they meet at Croydon Minster. As a result when he does interviews he manages to find a particularly wide variety of people to write about – all different ages and religious backgrounds and nationalities – and often he would be able to suggest someone very interesting for me to interview as well.

He is always so appreciative and full of thanks when you send him an article – more than one would be with just standard politeness – he sounds genuinely enthusiastic about things and is a very sunny and happy person to work with.

**Tiffany Willmer**

His generosity and compassion are as big as the sky over the plains of Nebraska where he is from. He has an almost magical capacity to seek out and welcome those who are feeling lost and in need of help, and his efforts on their behalf have often been at cost to his own resources both financial and emotional. In his presence one feels accepted and warmly welcomed. He puts people at ease and gets the best from them, especially when being interviewed for the magazine! He is a gem!

**Sue Kibler**

I got to know Rodney when I first came to the Minster and began to submit articles for the magazine. I was very grateful for his encouragement and the care which he took over the magazine. He became a personal friend. He visited me when I was ill and on one very difficult occasion took me to hospital and accompanied me for a consultation. I know he has been unfailingly loyal to the Minster as sidesman and editor of the magazine. He has also often befriended vulnerable people who have attended the Minster. I have been very glad for his friendship.

**Jon Blanchard**

I owe you a great deal of thanks Rodney, for encouraging me to write about the history of our church. I have found out so much and I hope I could convey even some of that to the readers. As a result I have now published two books, write regularly for 'Inside Croydon' and recently had one of my Remembrance articles reprinted in 'Moose Jaw Today' in Canada as that was where one of our former parishioners joined up for the Great War.

**David Morgan**

I would just like to thank Rodney for all his hard work, diligence and effort in acquiring copy for the magazine over the past 25 years. It has been much appreciated.

**Diana Hemmings**



Don't miss this festive treat, highly recommended by the St Nicholas Society!  
<https://www.delish.com/uk/food-news/a34344245/biscoff-biscuits-christmas-santa-claus/>

## Pandemic Priests

The year is 1348. Edward III is the monarch, 21 years into his long reign. Gonville Hall, the forerunner of Gonville and Caius College Cambridge, is founded. Two Parliaments are called. The first one took place in the January and February, the second one in April. That second one was the last Parliament to sit until February 1351. A year that began normally, though, was completely changed by a pandemic. Sounds familiar?

The Black Death arrived, probably carried by an infected sailor arriving at the port of Melcombe, in what is now modern-day Weymouth. By the November of that year the disease had reached London. The whole of society and the routines of daily life were turned upside down. It even brought a temporary truce to the Hundred Years' War between England and France. Pope Clement VI had to issue a Papal Bull protecting the Jewish population in Europe against popularist aggression during the pandemic. Someone is always to be blamed in such times for things that go wrong. And in that year, history tells us, John of Tonford is the Rector of Croydon.

1348 is a difficult time for everybody. The King and his wife, Philippa of Hainault, lose their 14-year-old daughter, Princess Joan, to the disease. She dies in France on the way to Spain to marry Pedro of Castile and is buried in Bayonne Cathedral. A small bronze statuette of her, called a weeper, can still be seen today on the side of her father's tomb in Westminster Abbey. Two of her brothers, the young royal princes, Thomas and William, both under 2, died that year as well. As many as 2 million people in this country may have died. Whole villages and small towns were abandoned with no-one left to do the work. Croydon would have suffered along with everywhere else. Infected people first developed black swellings in the armpit and groin. Later dark marks appeared on the skin as a result of internal bleeding. A high fever, with a vomiting of blood, accompanied these symptoms and death often came swiftly.

A contemporary chronicle written at the Cathedral Priory at Rochester, now held in the British Library, describes the devastating effects of the pandemic on its

local population.

“A great mortality... Destroyed more than a third of the men, women and children. As a result, there was such a shortage of servants, craftsmen and workmen, of agricultural labourers, that a great many lords and people, although well-endowed with goods and possessions, were yet without service and attendance. Alas, this mortality devoured such a multitude of both sexes that no one could be found to carry the bodies of the dead to burial, but men and women carried the bodies of their own little ones to church on their shoulders and threw them into mass graves, from which arose such a stink that it was barely possible for anyone to go past a churchyard.”

Such a shortage of workers resulted in a complete turnaround in employment. Instead of rushing to find new work, survivors turned down employment. Examples can be found where they would only do their job for triple wages. Because of the doles handed out at funerals, those who once had to work now began to have time on their hands and some money in their pocket. As a result, churchmen, knights and other wealthy folk were forced to thresh their own corn, plough their fields and perform every task themselves in order to make their own bread.

It may be because of all the upheaval with the pandemic, it may be that not very much happened during his tenure in the Rector's post, but John of Tonford doesn't appear to have left much of a mark. This hadn't been the case for his predecessor. Richard de Bury became the Bishop of Durham; he was a patron of learning, wrote a book entitled *Philobiblon* and was among the first individuals to build a substantial library. John might not even have come here. Absentee Rectors were not uncommon in those days, as men of the cloth could have oversight of multiple churches. He could have organised the daily running of the church remotely; sending messages by horseback! Zoom meetings were still some way off! We know that he was Rector in 1348 because the Archbishop of Canterbury's registers show that he presented John de Horstede to the Croydon Vicarage in that year. Croydon was such an important church that it had both a Rector and a Vicar. The latter was the one who carried out the day-to-day work. We don't know exactly when John began his tenure. We do not know, either,

when John ceased being rector. We do know, however, that his successor, William de Leghton, was collated into the post in January 1351.

Our pandemic priest John presumably hailed from Tonford in Kent, just south of Canterbury on the River Stour. There was an old Friary there, on which site there was later built a manor house. The 'ford' part of the name is to do with the shallow crossing of the river at that point. Many, many years later the Kent artist Thomas Sidney Cooper, during the Victorian era, painted this ford in an idyllic country scene entitled 'Banks of the Stour, Tonford, with Cattle'.

Archive material also shows that there was a Priory at Canterbury. The Prioress who was elected in 1356 was Cecily de Tonford. She resigned in 1366. It is good to know that there were at least two holy people from Tonford!

The only other relevant reference to Croydon in the records of the Archbishop of Canterbury of the time reveals a redistribution of the income received by the Croydon church while John was in post. At that time when there was both a Rectory and a Vicarage, the Archbishop's decision clarified who got what in terms of rents and tithes. The Rector, John, was to receive all the great tithes within the parish. That refers to corn, hay, falls of wood and timber cut within the parish amongst a very long list of other tithes. However, the Rector had to pay for any repairs to the walls or roof of the chancel of the church himself!

The pandemic not only affected John's time as Rector. It also impacted on the selection process for his successor. The new Rector of Croydon, William de Leghton, is listed as being collated into the Croydon church by Archbishop Islip on 12th January 1351. Significantly, he is the only person on the list of Rectors to be described as a sub-deacon. Back in the 14th century, a churchman described in this way would only have taken minor orders. It meant that he had the tonsure, the special haircut, and all the protections of clerical status, but had yet to take full orders and thus lead the Eucharist. Given that the position of Rector of Croydon was an important one in terms of income and status, it is surprising that someone should be appointed who was not fully qualified. One possible explanation could be that there was a lack of

clergy to go round. Many priests died in the Black Death outbreak in the late 1340s. Visiting the sick and administering the last rites to dying parishioners made the priests very vulnerable to infection. William de Leghton came to the notice of influential churchmen and was given the Rectory in Croydon. He held the post for only a year though.

In March 1352 William was collated to another Rectory in the Canterbury Diocese by Archbishop Islip. This time it was at St George's, Ivychurch on Romney Marsh. The simple entry in the church records here lists him as rector, with no mention of him being a sub-deacon. This could mean that he completed his holy orders within the year of being appointed to Croydon. St George's is an impressive building, built in the 13th century, now known as 'the Cathedral of Romney Marsh'.

William de Leghton's name can be found, too, in Maidstone in Kent. In 1357 he is appointed as the master of the Hospital of St Peter and St Paul in Maidstone, known as 'le Newerk de Maydeston'. Originally this was a place of shelter set up by Archbishop Boniface. The exact date of its opening is unclear, but it would have been in the middle to late middle of the 13th century. This was a place of shelter for poor folk, including lepers. It had accommodation for 12 people, with the Master resident on site. Each person residing there was given a daily allowance of bread, beer and a 'daily dish of pittance'. This is the original meaning of the word 'pittance', referring here to a small dish of food.

Both John's and William's time as Rector of Croydon passed under the radar. In a time of pandemic, then as now, people were out to survive, the best way that they could. In 1348 many saw the pestilence as an Act of God. Today we look at it more scientifically but it doesn't stop fear, concern or uncertainty. Prayer remains a comfort for many today, just as it would have been in the time of the pandemic priests. Stay safe.

**David Morgan**

## The PCC Secretary's Inbox

I found a mysterious email in my Inbox shortly after the first lockdown began – an invitation to a Zoom meeting of MEACC. To my shame I had never heard of this organization: Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns Committee.

I decided to take a risk and attend, and found it a very diverse group of both lay and clergy from many ethnicities (including white) numbering about 30 from churches all over Croydon. Despite the challenges of Zoom it was a well facilitated meeting with positive energy. The theme was 'Othering and Language' and the leader gave us a handy tool to use called 'Oops/Ouch'. If someone feels what has been said is offensive they say 'ouch', which gives the speaker the chance to understand why and say 'oops'.

After a general presentation and introduction of the theme we were randomly sorted into 'Breakout Rooms'. In the first session we looked at the concept of 'othering', where it comes from, and why people are afraid to talk about race. In my group someone looked up 'BAME' on Google, and the definition (which I'd never really noticed and was horrified by) is basically anybody who isn't white. OUCH! We noted how othering is a 'sin thing' as Galatians 3.28 tells us, 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus'. However as individuals we can never truly experience what it is like to be someone else, so there will always be a sense of 'other'. We and all creation are one, but we are individuals within it. The problems begin when we start to believe 'other' is in some way 'lesser'.

In the second breakout room we were asked to choose a narrative from the Gospels that demonstrates othering and look at it through the lens of Christ. My group chose the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4.7–29) and noted there were several 'otherings' – she wasn't Jewish, she was a woman, and she had a history of sexual misconduct. Jesus broke that exclusion on all levels by engaging

with her, understanding her and offering her the water of life. Someone made the very important point that if we know our 'otherness' we can only be one if we trust each other. Someone else pointed out that it is also possible to 'other' oneself, as Peter did when he refused to have his feet washed at the Last Supper.

In our third and final breakout room session we were asked to consider the phrase 'the BAME people in our church'. We were invited to deconstruct it, identify how it is othering and then reconstruct a new phrase. We noted that 'our' is itself an othering term, and in any case surely the church is God's, not 'ours'! Othering denotes a majority, implying the minority is somehow lesser, and putting them in a box.

Back in the main group we were informed of Archbishop Justin's new phrase 'Global Majority Heritage' (quite a mouthful and not too catchy) to communicate the fact that globally white people are in the minority. At least it feels less othering than 'BAME'. Archdeacon Rosemarie spoke eloquently about how important otherness can be. She said she is herself, she is black, she is a woman and proud of it all. She said she hates the term 'colourblind' because there is no such thing, and if she is in a room with 15 other white male clergy she doesn't want to be told there is no difference! She ended the meeting in prayer.

Having attended such an energetic, positive and thought-provoking gathering, I am finding myself challenged to examine my own heart to consider how I engage in othering through my thoughts and actions. I am trying to enhance my awareness through engaging with several media. We were invited to get a copy of *Ghost Ship: Institutional Racism and the Church of England* by A.D.A. France-Williams, a very uncomfortable but important read which highlights how extensive racism is in the church. There have been some worthwhile programmes on television, such as 'Black is the New Black' and David Olusoga's series 'Black and British – A Forgotten History'; 'The Unwanted: The Secret Windrush Files'; and 'Britain's Forgotten Slave Owners', as well as 'Enslaved with Samuel L. Jackson'. At the moment I am reading *Becoming* by Michelle Obama – an

interesting insight into how she felt she had to live the maxim 'you've got to be twice as good to get half as far'.

All of these are making me think, challenging me to become aware of racism and othering around and within me, and causing me to wonder if institutional racism applies to the Minster. Evidence of historical connections with the slave trade have come to light recently, so an investigation may be appropriate. Meanwhile I am looking forward to continuing to participate in MEACC meetings.

Sue Kibler

*PCC Secretary, Croydon Minster*

## Parish Magazine Committee

Magazine Editor: Liz Watkins, 07973 172807

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Liaison with advertisers: Debbie Miller

Proofreading: Alice Bishop, Craig Holmes

Please email contributions to [liz.watkins@intermain.org.uk](mailto:liz.watkins@intermain.org.uk)

**Deadline for the February / March 2021 issue:  
Thursday 21 January**

**Please note:** The views in the articles of the magazine reflect the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the editorial board.



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## Croydon Minster APCM Report

Our Annual Parish Church Meeting was held on Sunday 11 October, woven into the 10am Eucharist.

The service proceeded as normal with the New Testament and Gospel readings, after which the core business of the APCM took place, namely re-electing Churchwardens Pamela Hall and Arlene Esdaile. Melvyn Mead and Karen Stewart were also re-elected as Deputy Churchwardens.

The five current members of the Deanery Synod were also returned; they are Liz and Laurence Gough, Denise Mead, Susan Williams and Stephen Willmer.

No new members were elected to the Parish Church Council. The vacancies will be carried until the next APCM in April 2021. Six members of the PCC who have served their three-year term of office retired. They are Brian Barclay, Penny Hall, Patricia Hay-Justice, Jenny Muschamp, Rebecca Paulraj and Liz Vernon. Many thanks to them for their service on the PCC.

Three questions were received by Fr Andrew before the meeting regarding fundraising, the use of the hall and care of the homeless, which will be responded to as part of our Mission Action Plan.

Fr Andrew gave a homily reflecting on the Gospel reading Matthew 22.1-14, 'Blessed are those who are called to the wedding banquet', where Jesus likens the Kingdom of Heaven to a wedding banquet. This reading was the one set for this Sunday by the Lectionary, and is coincidentally very appropriate for our APCM. God's Kingdom isn't some 'pie in the sky' but is to be visible now on earth – 'Thy kingdom come'. If our church is to look like the Kingdom of God we must go out (as in the Gospel parable) and invite everyone in – rich, poor; young, old; men, women, children; black, brown, white; good and bad. There is no expectation

placed on anyone at this banquet other than they are ready to be clothed in the ways of the Kingdom. Fr Andrew quoted Colossians 3: 12, 14: 'As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience... Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.' The image of the wedding banquet in the Gospel speaks to our worship as a church. It also speaks of the invitation to all comers and the task of hospitality, and our mission of being sent out as a church. It speaks of the call to grow in holiness and being clothed in Christ, which is our heavenly call and vocation as a church. There are so many challenges and needs we see around our parish where we can bring the healing reconciling love of Jesus Christ. So for all that challenge and for all that we endeavour to do in our worship, witness and mission, we give thanks and ask God to help us grow and be fruitful, rejoicing in Him always. As we look forward to 2021, we celebrate the 10th anniversary of this church being made a Minster. May we use next year as a launch pad to think about how we conceive our mission and purpose; who we are today in the life (God willing) that will be after the Covid pandemic. May the Minster be known as an open church in spirit and in practice, where everyone is welcome, and may we all be clothed in Christ.

The Accounts and Reports compiled into a folder were placed on the altar as an offering of the life of the Minster in 2019.

The service then continued with prayers of Intercession, leading on to the Preparation of the Table and celebration of the Eucharist.

**Sue Kibler**  
***PCC Secretary, Croydon Minster***

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**Denise Mead**

She can be contacted on:

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07957 149005 (mobile) in emergencies

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<b>Hon Curate, St George's</b>	Revd Peter Smith	07856 365561
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<b>Croydon Minster</b>	Arlene Esdaile	020 8657 5187
	Pamela Hall	07966 521761
<b>St George's</b>	Christine Crawley	07770 613948
	Carol Milgate	07984 112804
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<b>Verger and Parish Administrator</b>	Denise Mead	020 8688 5971 (home)
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<b>Croydon Minster</b>	Debbie Miller	020 8688 8104
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# Times of Services

**\* REGULAR SCHEDULE IS CURRENTLY SUSPENDED \***

## **Croydon Minster**

Morning Prayer, weekdays (excluding Tuesday), 8.30am

### **Sunday**

8.00am - Eucharist

10.00am - Sung Eucharist;

Creche (ages 0 – 4), Kingfishers (4–10) and Blue Door Group (11+)

6.30pm - Choral Evensong

### **Monday**

11.00am - Eucharist

### **Tuesday**

8.30am - Eucharist

9.00am - Morning Prayer

11.00am - Eucharist

5.30pm - Choral Evensong sung by the Boy Choristers \*

### **Wednesday**

11.00am - Eucharist (Book of Common Prayer)

5.30pm - Choral Evensong sung by the Girl Choristers \*

### **Thursday**

7.00pm - Choral Evensong (men's voices) \*

### **Friday**

11.00am - Eucharist

### **Saturday**

10.00am - Eucharist

\* Term time only

## **St George's, Waddon**

### **Sunday**

10.00am - Parish Eucharist, Noah's Ark (ages 5–11)

### **Thursday**

10.00am - Eucharist with Discussion (Traditional Language)