

PARISH Magazine



Croydon

Minster

and St George's, Waddon

Dec 2021 / Jan 2022



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and Iysha Arun*

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Jon Blanchard

Parish Diary

Croydon Minster

December 2021

Wed	01	5.30pm	Choral Evensong – Girls' voices
Thu	02	10.00am	Croydon Schools Music Association Concert
Fri	03	11.00am	Elias David Mynde Day Service
Sat	04	10.00am	COVID Memorial Service
Sun	05	8.00am	Eucharist (BCP)
		10.00am	Sung Eucharist
		3.30pm	Family Service: St Nicholas
		6.30pm	Choral Evensong
Mon	06	7.00pm	Cumnor House Boys' School Carol Service
Tue	07	12.00 noon	Lectio Divina on Zoom
		5.30pm	Choral Evensong (Boys' voices)
Wed	08	7.00pm	Trinity School Carol Service
Thu	09	7.00pm	Croydon High School Carol Service
			Minster Choristers sing in the John Rutter Christmas Concert at the Royal Albert Hall
Sun	12	10.00am	Sung Eucharist
		6.30pm	Choral Evensong (voices TBA)
Mon	13	7.00pm	Wilson's School Carol Service
Tue	14	9.30am	Minster Infant School Christingle Service
		12.00 noon	Lectio Divina on Zoom
		7.30pm	Whitgift School Carol Service
Wed	15	2.00pm	Minster Junior School Carol Service
Sun	19	4.30pm	Carols on the Minster Green with the Salvation Army Band, BBQ and Mulled Wine

Cover image: *Christmas at Croydon Minster*

Tue	21	4.00pm	BBC Radio 3 Recording Choral Evensong (for later transmission)
Wed	22	4.00pm	BBC Radio 3 Live Broadcast of Choral Evensong
Christmas Eve			
Fri	24	3.30pm	Telling the Nativity Story and Building the Crib
		11.30pm	Midnight Mass
Christmas Day			
Sat	25	8.00am	Eucharist
		10.00am	Sung Eucharist
Sun	26	8.00am	Eucharist
		10.00am	Eucharist with hymns and cantor
January 2022			
Sun	02	8.00am	Eucharist (BCP)
		10.00am	Eucharist with hymns and cantor
Mon	03		BANK HOLIDAY
Tue	04	11.00am	Eucharist
Wed	05	11.00am	Eucharist
Thu	06	7.00pm	Sung Eucharist for the Epiphany of the Lord
Fri	07	11.00am	Eucharist
Sun	09	8.00am	Said Eucharist
		10.00am	Sung Eucharist
		3.30pm	Family Service: The Baptism of Christ
		6.30pm	Epiphany Procession – The Baptism of Christ
Tue	11	12.00 noon	Lectio Divina on Zoom
		5.30pm	Choral Evensong (Boys' voices)
Wed	12	5.30pm	Choral Evensong (Girls' voices)
Thu	13	7.00pm	Choral Evensong (Men's voices)
Tue	18	12.00 noon	Lectio Divina on Zoom
		5.30pm	Choral Evensong (Boys' voices)

Wed	19	5.30pm	Choral Evensong (Girls' voices)
Thu	20	7.00pm	Choral Evensong (Men's voices)
Sun	23	10.00am	Visiting Preacher
		6.30pm	Choral Evensong
Tue	25	12.00 noon	Lectio Divina on Zoom
		5.30pm	Choral Evensong (Boys' voices)
Wed	26	5.30pm	Choral Evensong (Girls' voices)
Thu	27	7.00pm	Choral Evensong (Men's voices)

St George's

December 2021

Sat	04	11.00am – 3.00pm	Christmas Fayre
Sun	19	4.30pm	Carols on the Minster Green with the Salvation Army Band, BBQ and Mulled Wine

Christmas Eve

Fri	24	4.00pm	St George's Crib Service
		11.30pm	Midnight Mass, 11.30pm

Christmas Day

Sat	25	10.00am	Christmas Eucharist
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January 2022

Sat	22	6.00pm	Burns Night Dinner and Party (Booking Required)
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St George's Safeguarding Officers:

Anne Tanner	020 8686 3760 / 07715 581046
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The Light Shines in the Darkness

This edition of the magazine focuses on the theme of Christmas and contains some really interesting and thought-provoking articles.

St Nicholas is a much-loved saint. My own article seeks to explore Nicholas from a fresh angle, or at least an angle that often gets lost in the 'Santa Claus-ification' of the saint. So if you think you knew St Nicholas, read on!

Delving into the archives, David Morgan pieces together a wonderful description of 'Christmas in Croydon Parish Church 1879'. Often people imagine a 'proper Christmas' to be something like the Victorian era (Dickens died in 1870), but what is also noted in the article is that the focus of Christmas – Jesus Christ, 'perfect God and perfect Man' – remains at the heart of the celebration.

A fascinating article by Jon Blanchard opens up the parts of the Gospels we rarely consider, focusing on the genealogy of Jesus. If the sermon in 1870 was on the perfect divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ, then this article explores his humanity further. It is as if we have Jesus, in his humanity, on the TV programme 'Who Do You Think You Are?'. As for all of us there are impressive figures and some skeletons in the cupboard when it comes to his ancestors. The point is though that Jesus is truly human and has the ancestors to back this up.



*Statue in the St Nicholas Chapel,
Croydon Minster*

In a change of tone, we have some articles that answer a question many of us have: what do other people, places and communities get up to at Christmas?

From St George's we have a lovely personal reflection from Lynne Kerwood on the busyness of Christmas. Her piece reflects the preparations that are going on behind the scenes in a church, just as they do at home. I am sure we all share that sense that by Midnight Mass or the Morning Christmas Eucharist, we are about ready to 'melt' into it all.

The article 'A Bishop's Christmas' is not about me! It is Bishop Jonathan's reflections on what Christmas is like for him as Bishop of Croydon. I think you may find it a bit of an eye-opener and extremely interesting.

Finally, I asked the local Muslim 'Dialogue Society' to write about what Muslims do at Christmas. Some at the Minster will know Parahat Akmuradov from multi-faith events. That community impressively engages beyond itself, as we seek to do. I have given some commentary on the article to clarify some points and references that may not be instantly familiar to all.

2021 was a testing year, and last Christmas was not one we want to repeat, and yet, we can still confidently declare that, 'The light [of the Word of God, Jesus Christ] shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it' (John 1.5).

With Christmas blessings,

Fr Andrew

Christmas Reflection from St George's

Once again we are fast approaching yet another Advent! – and I have been asked to share with you some of our preparations at St George's in Waddon for the Christmas season. As many of you know we are a community-led church with most of our congregation living locally;

“ The Heart of Christ in the Heart of Waddon”

We have a large extended family at St George's which includes our lunch club, our knit and natter group, our monthly family breakfast friends and the local children from Brownies, Stepz and our local primary schools.

We have a Christmas Fayre at the start of December, when our hall is transformed into a Christmas Market Place with decorated stalls stocked with good things to buy, tombolas, side shows, tasteful presents for sale for friends and family, and of course a raffle with a main prize of a wonderful Christmas Hamper – I can personally testify how wonderful the Christmas Hamper is as I won it last year and my family were thrilled with its contents! And then when you feel a bit weary after all your walking around the stalls – and all that buying of gifts – you can have a little sit down and a chat with a friend over a well-earned cup of tea and a mince pie!

We hold our Advent Messy Church in the middle of December for the children and their parents and carers, we share arts and craft activities, we have a story time session where we speak about the Christmas story and the children are actively involved in sharing the message of Christmas, and we always have time for a meal together. The children take home the things they have made to decorate their homes and remember their time at St George's Messy Church.

For me the Christmas preparations begin in January, when ideas for my next Christmas script start running around in my head! However, the real work begins in September as I begin to pray about and write about my ideas for the Nativity script. Obviously the story is well known, however since I joined St George's eight years ago, I have written the scripts for our Children's Crib Service which takes place on Christmas Eve at 5pm. It is a special service when friends and family come along to watch the children 'perform' (I use the term very loosely although some of our little actors are worthy of an Oscar award!). This is always great fun with dress rehearsals, lots of hiccups (both literal and costume wise!) and sometimes a little mayhem, we never aim for a polished Nativity – which is probably just as well and I am assured this adds to the charm, and believe me year on year there has been lots of charm!

Our Midnight Mass rounds off the celebrations and is a time of reflection, with carols sung in candlelight and a time to totally unwind and melt into the true meaning of Christmas.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to come along to all or some of our wonderful events at St George's this December and to wish you all a peaceful, happy and blessed Christmas 2021.



Lynne Kerwood

Christmas in Croydon Parish Church, 1879

Just over 140 years ago the Christmas Day service at Croydon Parish Church was reported in the local paper as a significant and newsworthy event. Today our media outlets are so different. The service this year will be live streamed, technology willing, around the world via a social media platform. Individuals might Tweet out something about the service to their worldwide connections. Back in 1879 life was very different and some would say much simpler. The local Croydon paper was there to tell the inhabitants everything that was going on in the Borough. They had many reporters as well as volunteer correspondents.

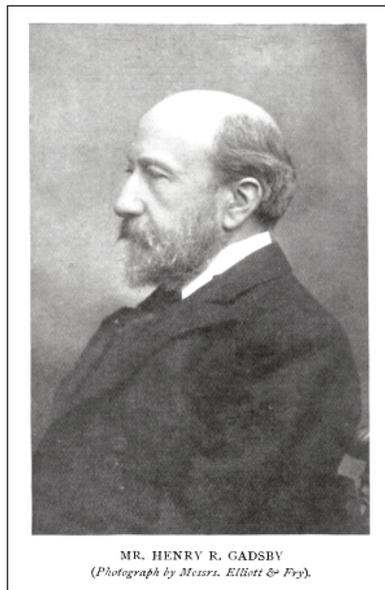
Christmas-Day in The Croydon Parish Church was the headline. The article went on to describe the service as having a “most impressive character.” The church was decorated throughout. “The chancel, pulpit, lectern, reading-desk, the pillars supporting the arches separating the side aisles were decorated with holly and other evergreens, which being judiciously and not lavishly arranged, greatly added to the effect.” A compliment for the flower arranging team!

Only two hymns were sung and interestingly they are not described as carols; “Hark the herald angels sing by Mendelssohn and Adeste Fideles.”

We are not told how many people attended but the church was “well filled.”

The officiant at the service was Bishop Tufnell, vicar of Croydon. Tufnell was a former Bishop of Brisbane who resigned his see and returned to England in 1873. He was assisted by Revd W. Wilkes, the curate, who read the lessons for that day. Wilkes was to go on to make a name for himself in Shirley with his rectory garden and with his work to establish Wisley as the headquarters of the Royal Horticultural Society. The third clergyman on duty was Revd A.W. Jephson, who intoned the service.

Much was made in the report about the music. The psalms were sung to settings by Hopkins, F. Cambridge, the longstanding organist here, and Irons. The Te Deum was by Gadsby in E flat, Gadsby (*pictured right*) being a prominent Victorian church musician whose music has now disappeared from the repertoire. The Creed was by Cambridge, in C; the Benedictus was by Elvey; the Kyrie was by Sir H. Oakley; the offertory sentences were by Barnby. As with Gadsby, very little music, if any, from these Victorian composers can be heard anywhere today.



MR. HENRY R. GADSBY
(*Photograph by Messrs. Elliott & Fry.*)

Wikimedia Commons / Albionmusic

The sermon by the “rt rev gentleman” was given much prominence in the paper. He used as his text the sixth verse of the ninth chapter of the book of Isaiah, “For unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

Tufnell alluded to the prophetic vision of Isaiah some 700 years before the birth of Christ and its literal fulfilment describing the union of two natures in one person in our Incarnate Lord, “Perfect God and Perfect Man.” The style of sermon writing then was very different to the engaging and inclusive style we listen to each week with our current staff team.

A collection was taken in the service for the support of the poor in the parish.

This year our Christmas service will be very different in style and in content to this one. It will still have at its core, though, the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ with its message of love and peace for all.

David Morgan

A Bishop's Christmas

My first Christmas after becoming a bishop was a really odd experience. Not because of what I was doing, but what I wasn't. I didn't have to arrange and advertise a carol service, or negotiate with the local garden centre for a large tree at a discount price. I didn't have to cajole servers to turn up on Christmas morning or for Midnight Mass or – worst of all – on the Sunday after Christmas. I didn't have to make gallons of mulled wine for the parish's carol singers on their final stop. I also didn't have to listen to them singing 'Away in a manger' when they arrived, knowing it was my least favourite carol. The whole rhythm of Christmas was completely different.

And to add to that, there weren't quite so many demands on my time, especially in the week or two before Christmas. Parishes are quite busy enough already without the complication of inviting the bishop; no-one schedules a parish anniversary or a confirmation during December. In case you're wondering, no, I've not been sitting around wondering what to do – but I have been able to get on with some things at a slightly more humane pace.

Celebrating Christmas itself is also very different from what it was. I always go to a parish in vacancy for Midnight Mass (the televised service from the Minster was the only exception). That's a pretty varied experience: you soon find out when a parish had depended completely on the now-departed incumbent for all things liturgical (the lowest point was a choir choosing 'Here we come a-wassailing' as the devotional anthem). It is also a great joy though, to be with different communities across the amazing diversity of our diocese, to celebrate the incarnation: God becoming flesh with us and for us in the place we are, and for the people we are.

Christmas morning is very different: in most years, like many other bishops, I go to lead worship in one of the prisons locally. Christmas Day is pretty dismal in prison:

Minster Records

Baptism

Leilani Banjo, Taffy Orugun

Confirmation

Max Freeborough-Gerrard, Sophie Garbisu,
Vera Atigla, Kassidy Card, Precious Nwokocho,
Chloe Stevens, Christian Stevens, Toby Watkins,
Edward (Eddie) Willmer, Taffy Orugun, Gilbert Wright,
Ernest Wright, Theodore (Theo) Reeves

Holy Matrimony

Martyn Newton and Victoria Winter

R.I.P.

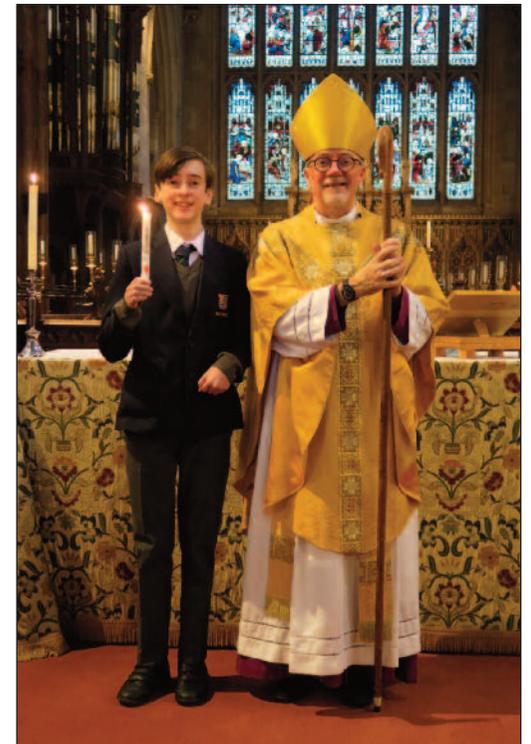
Marda Callender, Gordon Prickett, Sheila McPherson,
David Quinn, Oluremi, Sara (Sailor) Court, Margaret Roe,
Elizabeth Asubonteng, John Pilkington, Leon Berisha,
Peter Collins, Ros Harley, Robert Prizeman,
Shirley Eller, Ian Cook

there are only minimal staff, so there's no visiting and not much recreation time. At one service at a young offenders' institution we just sang charismatic praise songs. The chaplain explained that if we sang carols it might make the young men cry, and they couldn't afford to lose their dignity. Whatever the prisoners may have done to bring them there, it's a crucial day to try to bring the good news of hope, the promise of joy, into lives which have precious little of either.

Then there's family, and a drink, and good food: the one part of Christmas which has stayed the same. As you celebrate Christmas this year, in your rejoicing please pray for those who have little to look forward to in the year ahead, that the love, joy and peace of Christmas may be shared by all people.

Bishop Jonathan

*We welcomed Bishop Jonathan
to the Minster on 21st November
for our Confirmation service.
It was a joyous occasion, with 13
young people being confirmed.
If any parents would like to share
photographs of their children
taken at the end of the service
for publication in this magazine,
please send them to
office@croydonminster.org
or liz.watkins@intermain.org.uk*



St Nicholas – Humble, Vibrant, Compassionate

Did you know that we have a chapel in the Minster dedicated to St Nicholas? It is an ancient dedication dating from the medieval church but very much of contemporary relevance.

Nicholas is a very popular saint in the Greek and Latin churches, i.e. Orthodox and Western. There is little known about the historical Nicholas. We know he was Bishop of Myra (Lycia in modern Turkey) at the beginning of the fourth century. Beyond that Nicholas moves into legend, for example that he was imprisoned during the Diocletian persecution of the church in AD303–4 and that he was a signatory at the Council of Nicea, one of the crucial Ecumenical Councils of the Church that helped forge Christian orthodoxy (from which we have the Nicene Creed).

The most compelling aspect of Nicholas' legend is his being patron saint of sailors and children. The story goes that Nicholas gave three impoverished girls a wedding dowry each, to spare them from sexual exploitation. He brought the gifts at night to avoid detection. Sound familiar?

The patronage of sailors derives from the story of his saving the life of three drowned boys and three unjustly convicted sailors from the death penalty.

The truth of these legends is lost in the mists of time, so how might they be important to us today?

First is the priority of care for those who are denied justice. In Nicholas' day children had no legal or other form of status. That was a given in the Roman Empire. Unless affluent, they were profoundly vulnerable. That is true across the globe today. This is totally contrary to the teachings of Jesus, who points to the child as an exemplar of the Kingdom of God and in special need of care and protection.



Illustration from 'The Life of Saint Nicholas' published by Weduw H. Bontamps, 1805: Saint Nicholas of Myra, standing, with mitre and staff; at his feet a tub with three children, who were rescued by him

Anonymous artist, ink and watercolour on paper

Limburgs Museum / Wikimedia Commons, public domain

In saving the unjustly convicted sailors Nicholas shows that due process is integral to justice. In the days of Twitter storms and social media condemnation we are losing the art of measured judgement and are rushing to condemn. Nicholas warns us away from that nasty basic impulse to point the finger. He does that surely in the spirit of Jesus' hesitancy to judge, despite being the Judge of All.

Secondly in Nicholas we see someone who delights in the Gift of Life and wants to see life in others. How we live our lives – from conception to a natural death – is increasingly contested, even amongst Christians. Nicholas brought his gifts by night so as not to be noticed. We don't see, and barely acknowledge, the Giver of our lives. In dark times part of the Christian task, in the spirit of Nicholas, is quietly and patiently, yet insistently, to promote the priority of life.

Of course, we all know what happened to Nicholas in the 20th century. His legend became the face of the Coca-Cola marketing campaign that distorted Nicholas' legacy through rampant consumerism and commercial marketing. Santa Claus. It is so far removed from the humble and generous Bishop of Myra.

That said, Nicholas was no 'bah-humbug' sort of person and nor should we be. Let us ask the prayers of Nicholas that we might be humble in generosity, vibrant in our daily lives and always compassionate to the needs of the vulnerable. Then we can truly say we honour this great and popular saint. Why not go into the St Nicholas Chapel and standing by the statue of Nicholas, recommit yourself to this task.

The feast of St Nicholas is 6th December.

Fr Andrew

Some material is drawn from 'Saints on Earth: A biographical companion to Common Worship' by John H. Darch and Stuart K. Burns.



Croydon
Minster

Services for
CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Spring 2022

Sunday 9 January, 3.30pm **The Baptism of Christ**

Sunday 6 February, 3.30pm **Candlemas**

Sunday 6 March, 3.30pm **Lent**

Sunday 10 April, 3.30pm **Palm Sunday**

Friday 15 April, 10am **Good Friday**

We welcome children in church
so that **children** and parents and carers can be with us
to see, hear, sense, smell and touch
the presence of God here.

www.croydonminster.org

Muslim Reflections on Christmas

The following article was commissioned to help us think about what other faith communities might do at Christmas. In it Parahat Akmuradov and Iysha Arun of the Dialogue Society, an Islamic Educational Charity, which has a local base, offer their reflections. It picks up some of the shared inheritance of Christianity and Islam, along with Judaism, as the three monotheistic world religions which all point to the significance of Abraham as a common ancestor in the faith. Of course, what is not shared is the Christian assertion of the divinity of Christ – the whole point of celebrating Christmas – that ‘the Word became flesh and dwelt among us’ (John 1.14).

The practical response of Muslims to the loneliness that many feel at Christmas is inspiring and impressive. This year it is something that the Minster is responding to, in partnership with Old Palace School, with a Christmas lunch on 21st December, which Fr David is leading on.

The section ‘Who are Mary, Jesus and angel Gabriel in Islam?’ is very informative, and would be a great subject of discussion in a future dialogue. What is also interesting is that the article refers to a legend of Jesus breathing life into clay birds. The legend, deriving from the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, is accepted by Muslims, but is not part of the orthodox Christian tradition!

*For Christians the meaning of Christmas is summed up in the verse ‘he shall be called Emmanuel, meaning God is with us’ (Matthew 1.23). It is good to know that this inspires in Muslims the sense of ‘unity in our differences, community and peace’, and may we build on that together. **Fr Andrew***

Muslims, just as Christians and many other faith traditions, uphold a variety of different interpretations of their faith. Although the majority of Muslims do not

celebrate Christmas Day as a religious celebration there are a few who may do so for cultural reasons. Nevertheless, Christianity and indeed individuals such as Mary, Jesus and the angel Gabriel and the values celebrated during Christmas (including family and solidarity) all play significant roles in Muslim understandings of faith.

What have some British Muslims done over Christmas?

As a Muslim, I believe that dialogue and building bridges with the ‘other’ is a principle of my faith. Thus, I have participated in various inter-faith activities. I would like to share with you one example from my friends at the Dialogue Society, who facilitated a ‘Festive Meal on Christmas Day’ in partnership with the Rumi Mosque. The event – which was for a Mosque to host a Christmas meal on Christmas Day for those who had no-one to celebrate with – tuned into a large issue in our society. The main objective of the event was ‘to tackle the issue of loneliness and ensure that no one in the local community felt left-out during the festive period, especially in a city which is ranked one of the loneliest in the world.’

Who are Mary, Jesus and angel Gabriel in Islam?

Despite there being some fundamental differences in belief when it comes to Mary, Jesus and the angel Gabriel – between Islam and Christianity, Muslims uphold significant respect and love for all three.

Muslims acknowledge Jesus (peace be upon him) as one of the greatest prophets in Islam. In the Qur’an, God All-Mighty mentions Jesus by name no less than 34 times; 26 times as ‘Jesus’ and 8 times as ‘the Messiah’.

Muslims believe that Jesus (called ‘Isa’ in Arabic) was a prophet of God and was born to a virgin (Mary). They also believe he will return to Earth before the Day of Judgment to restore justice and defeat al-Masih ad-Dajjal, or ‘the false

messiah' – also known as the Antichrist. All of this may sound pretty familiar to many Christians.

Mary (called 'Maryam' in Arabic) has an entire chapter in the Qur'an named for her – the only chapter in the Qur'an named for a female figure. Mary is mentioned more times in the Qur'an than in the entire New Testament of the Bible.

Just as they do with all the other prophets, including Mohammed, devout Muslims recite "peace be upon him" after every time they refer to Jesus by name.

Muslims believe that Jesus performed miracles: The Qur'an discusses several of Jesus' miracles, including giving sight to the blind, healing lepers, raising the dead, and breathing life into clay birds. The story of Jesus' birth as told in the Qur'an is also the story of his first miracle, when he spoke as an infant in the cradle and declared himself to be a prophet of God.

What Christmas means for Muslims

Unity in our differences, community and peace.

Parahat Akmuradov and Iysha Arun
of the Dialogue Society, an Islamic Educational Charity

The Church Times

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

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Contact Denise for further details

Farewell to Ronny

Dr Ronny Krippner, our Organist and Director of Music, is leaving Croydon Minster to take up the post of Director of Music at Ripon Cathedral. Our thanks and prayers go with Ronny as he continues to serve God through music in his new post.

Ronny writes: 'As my time at the Minster is now slowly coming to an end, I am simply astounded how quickly those eight or so years have passed. I'm so very grateful to all the lovely people at the Minster for their kindness and their unflappable support of our music tradition. It was music and the beauty of the Minster services that made me come to Croydon – and I have never looked back.'

Ronny's last service with us will be Christmas Day. His reflections on his years at Croydon Minster will be published on the Minster's website during December, before his departure.

Parish Magazine Committee

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Deadline for the February / March 2022 issue:

Thursday 20 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.

The Ancestors of Jesus?

If someone wanted to find out more about Jesus the obvious thing to do is to read the gospels. But if they started at the beginning with St Matthew's gospel, they could be very puzzled if not put off completely, particularly if they try reading the traditional English translation: "Esrom begat Aram; and Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat ..." and so on for sixteen verses.

But Matthew is doing something rather clever in order to tell us about Jesus. The gospel opens "An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham". The Greek word translated here by genealogy (meaning an account of one's descent from an ancestor or ancestors) is *genesis*, the opening words of the Hebrew Scriptures: Jesus marks the beginning of a new, redeemed creation. He is the fulfilment of the promises of God to the Hebrew people first in Abraham and then in David. The name "Jesus the Messiah" is sometimes translated as Jesus Christ, Christ meaning the Anointed One. Jewish belief in the Messiah was the hope for a king, hence the identification with David. Abraham is promised he will be the father of many nations and that is also fulfilled in Jesus.

Matthew sums up the list of names pointing out there are fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the deportation to Babylon and another fourteen from then until the Messiah.

Whereas Abraham and David are obviously positive examples of God's care for the Jewish people, the conquest of Jerusalem by Babylon is not. But in fact it was this defeat that inspired a radical reappraisal of the nature of God. Normally if another nation conquered you, it meant their gods were stronger than yours, so you should start worshipping their gods. But the Jews still held on to their belief in God as

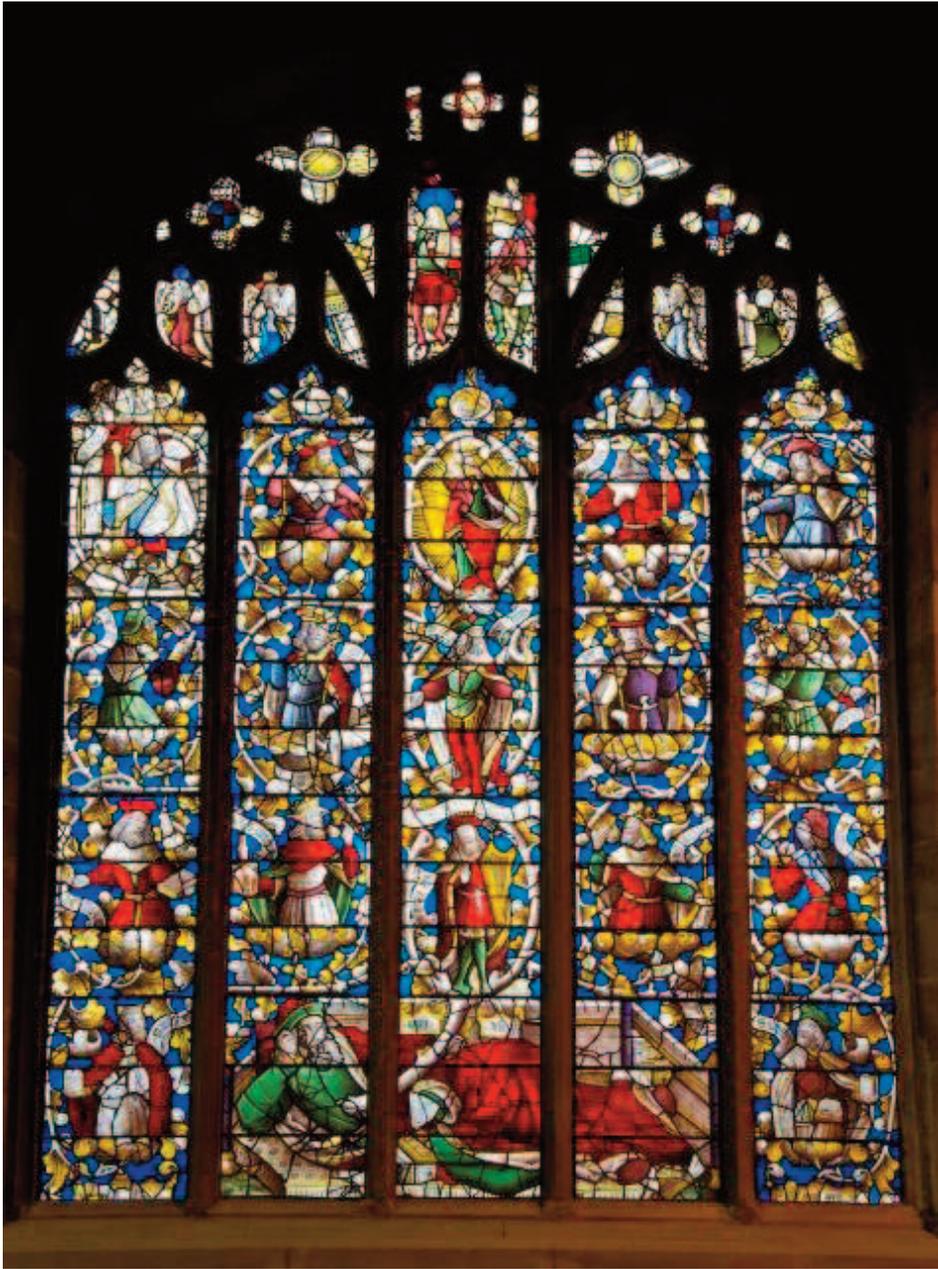
revealed to them. God was not just their local god and source of their success. There was only one God, the God of all creation who was known in suffering and defeat as much as in safety and prosperity.

The list is one of men, as you would expect. However there are four women from the Hebrew Scriptures particularly mentioned and here something odd is going on. There is something not quite respectable about the women chosen. Ruth, David's grandmother, and Rahab are definitely not Jews. Rahab is a prostitute, Solomon's mother had sex with David (his idea) while her first husband was still alive, and as for Tamar, you can read in Genesis 38 how she disguised herself as a prostitute in order to become pregnant by her father-in-law. The inclusion of Rahab is surprising – although the Bible is clear she is a prostitute, she is described as living at a much earlier period. Matthew deliberately chose to include her, just as he deliberately did not mention obvious virtuous women such as Sarah or Rebecca.

Jesus not only fulfils God's promises to the Jewish people, but to everyone, including sinners, men and women alike. God's promise to Abraham was that he would be the father of many nations.

But there is a final twist to this passage which concludes "Jacob (was) the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born who is called the Messiah". Jesus is legally the son of Joseph and so heir to all those ancestors, but it is quite specific Joseph is not said to be the father, unlike every other man in the list... Jesus is the son of Mary. After that long line of male ancestors, the parent that matters is a woman.

Some Christians feel uncomfortable with the virgin birth of Jesus, and if it was just a freak of nature it wouldn't be important. What it means here is that God is making a new beginning with Jesus. This is although he fulfils the Jewish hope (and Matthew



The Tree of Jesse: a window from the early 1500s in the church of Llanrhaeadr-yng-Nghinmeirch, Denbighshire, Wales

is the most enthusiastic of the gospel writers in quoting from the Hebrew Scriptures) God's intention is for the whole world, which is now reconciled to God through Jesus. God does not achieve this ultimately through the work of kings, warriors, prophets or other men, but through a woman who is not defined just as the wife or daughter of a man, but a person in her own right.

A note on the illustration opposite

The figure of Jesse, the father of David, is lying down at the bottom of the picture and a tree grows out of him with his descendants. Directly above him is King David holding a harp and at the top are Mary and Jesus.

When I visited this church there was a charming Welsh lady laying out Fairtrade goods with an honesty bowl. She told me that the village children, seeing Jesse holding his hand to his ear, call him "Jesse with his mobile".

Nearby is the holy Well of St Dyfnog. The village is not to be confused with Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant, Powys.

Jon Blanchard

Some of my past articles for this magazine can be read on my blog at 'View from the Pew – A lay Anglican looks at Christian tradition now'

<https://anglicanchurchlife.wordpress.com/blog/>

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Croydon Minster's Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) is

Denise Mead

She can be contacted on:

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07957 149005 (mobile) in emergencies

office@croydonminster.org

mad_mead@tiscali.co.uk

J.B. Shakespeare

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Contacts

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ST GEORGE'S CHURCH

Barrow Road, Waddon CR0 4EZ - 020 8688 7006

Priest-in-Charge	Revd Canon Dr Andrew Bishop	020 8688 8104
Advisor and Assisting Priest	Canon John Ackland	07831 516662
Assistant Priest	Revd Alan Bayes	07792 846452
Priest, St George's	Revd David Adamson-Hill	020 8688 7006
Hon Curate, St George's	Revd Peter Smith	07856 365561
Lay Readers		
Croydon Minster	Elaine Cooper	020 8686 7315
St George's	Marcia Grant-Che	07969 653110
Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary	Diana Hemmings	020 8667 0575
Churchwardens		
Croydon Minster	Arlene Esdaile	020 8657 5187
	Pamela Hall	07966 521761
St George's	Christine Crawley	07770 613948
	Carol Milgate	07984 112804
Director of Music	Dr Ronny Krippner	020 8688 8104
<i>(until 25 December)</i>		
Verger and Parish Administrator	Denise Mead	020 8688 5971 (home)
Vicar's PA	Angela Bond	020 8688 8104
Master of the Ringers	Shirley McGill	020 8406 3083
PCC Secretaries		
Croydon Minster	Sue Kibler	07941 744101
St George's	Lynne Kerwood	020 8688 1666
Treasurers		
Croydon Minster	Deborah Miller	020 8688 8104
St George's	Carol Milgate, Treasurer	07984 112804
	Ethel Dixon, Assistant	

Times of Services

Croydon Minster

Morning Prayer, Monday – Friday 8.30am

Sunday

8.00am – Said Eucharist

10.00am – Sung Eucharist

6.30pm – Choral Evensong

Monday

11.00am – Said Eucharist

Tuesday

11.00am – Said Eucharist

5.30pm – Choral Evensong (Boy Choristers) *

Wednesday

11.00am – Said Eucharist

5.30pm – Choral Evensong (Girl Choristers) *

Thursday

7.00pm – Choral Evensong (Men's Voices) *

Friday

11.00am – Said Eucharist

* Term time only

St George's, Waddon

Sunday

10.00am – Eucharist

Thursday

10.30am – Eucharist