

FOUNTAIN

The Magazine of

St. Francis Church



December 2017 / January 2018 60p

WELCOME TO THE FOUNTAIN



The Ministry Team letter has been written by Joan Gilbert, one of our Readers .

Dear friends,

Things are changing, as they always do. As I write this, it's getting cold. Advent, the Christian new year, is coming, and after that, the calendar new year. Josh has gone now, and is beginning his own new life, which is a change not just for him but for us all. I am at the beginning of my Reader ministry, with my shiny new licence, and am wondering what I want to be when I grow up. My husband Vince is retiring (and I'm not). What changes in our day to day life will that mean?

How about you? People get better, people get more ill, people die, people are born. People lose jobs, and find them. Change can feel terrible, and even good change can be scary and stressful, if for no other reason than that all the things we put in place to help us get through life don't work the same way anymore.

I could say that no matter what, God is with us in our changing lives. Trust, and hold on. I could, but I have mixed feelings about saying that. It's absolutely true, but sometimes when we're afraid or grieving, or just tired, it really doesn't help to hear it.

So I'll say God also works through the community. We are the body of Christ, and it is the love of God we show to one another. The Holy Spirit moves within and between us. So we hold on to one another, offering when we can, taking when we need to.

And may we know that the love and the peace of God do not depend on what happens to us.

From the registers:

Baptisms:

Arthur Geoffrey Phelan

Marriage:

Robert Vernon Steen Hill & Carole Tomlinson

Please pray for them as they continue on their Christian journeys.

Rest In Peace:

Please pray for those who have died recently:

Edna May Forder

Jennifer Nita Spinks

Please pray for those who mourn their passing.

A farewell letter from Josh:

Dear everyone at St Francis,

I just wanted to use this opportunity to say thank you – two words that are far too small to sum up everything I would like to say about the last four and a half years. I arrived at St Francis in June 2013, a week before the summer fete, and was able to enjoy a fantastic display of everything that happened in the church. I knew at once that I had walked into a lively, vibrant community, and was pretty sure that I would find plenty to keep me busy!

I wasn't wrong – from the worship and social events, to outreach and community projects, to changes in the church and our 80th Anniversary, we have been a very busy church over the last few years. And the results are there to see – St Francis is a church that is growing every day; growing in faith, in love and in number. That makes it a very exciting place to be, and it is down to the hard work and dedicated service of you all. So thank you - I shall miss you terribly.

But my leaving St Francis marks the start of a new and exciting chapter for me and my family – as I write we are in our new home in Darenth, surrounded by boxes but definitely moved in. Charlie seems delighted with her new bedroom, and Emma is working hard turning our house into a home whilst preparing for her new role as Vicar of the Darenth Valley Benefice. Please do pray for her and for all the members of those churches as they start a new journey together.

God hasn't yet revealed to me what my ministry is to look like in this place, and to be honest that can be frustrating at times, but I am also learning some important lessons. It is easy to talk about unswerving faith when everything seems clear and straightforward – but it is when things seem unclear that faith is most important.

I have no doubt at all that God has a plan for me, just as he does for every one of us.

My role at the moment is to spend lots of time at home with my beautiful daughter (tough, I know!), support Emma in whatever ways I can, and wait for God to call me. As soon as I have news, I shall let you know!

So thank you, everyone. Thank you for the wonderful leaving gifts – extremely generous, and lovely ways to remember St Francis. Thank you for the love, the prayer, the support and the encouragement. God bless.

The Parish Office has our new address.

Josh

DECEMBER

Week 1 Dec 3 to 9

Parish: All who live and work in Honeycroft and Parkway Gardens.

Give thanks for all who have been busy preparing our Christmas Tree Festival as they put the final touches together for next weekend.

World: Give thanks for the work of the Anglican Church in Tanzania, reaching out to mothers and babies affected by HIV.

Week 2 Dec 10 to 16

Parish: All who live and work in Valley Road.

Pray for all who will visit the CTF this weekend, that they will experience the fellowship of St Francis Church and feeling truly welcomed and uplifted by the experience.

World: Give thanks for health initiatives in Ghana, which are helping mothers to protect their children from sickness.

Week 3 Dec 17 to 23

Parish: All who live and work in Howardsgate and the Howard Centre.

Pray for all who are preparing our many Christmas services and activities, that each event may be meaningful and inspiring to all who attend.

World: Give thanks for the Bollobphur Hospital, in Bangladesh, as it provides care for vulnerable rural communities.

Week 4 Dec 24 to 30

Parish: All who live and work in Stanborough Green and for those who worship at St Francis but live outside the parish.

Pray that this Christmas period may be an occasion of joy and celebration as we remember Christ's birth and what it means to each of us.

World: Pray for mothers in the Holy Land today; for church-run hospitals that serve them and their children, regardless of race, religion or financial status.

This month's suggestions for prayers for the World: (taken from the USPG Prayer Calendar). USPG (now known as US) is a charity St Francis has supported for many years.

JANUARY

Week 1 Dec 31 to Jan 6

Parish: Pray for those who live and work in Guessens Road.

Pray for all our groups as they return from the Christmas break and begin a new programme of activities.

World: Pray for the safety of religious minorities in Pakistan and the surrounding area, many of whom face daily threats and persecution.

Week 2 Jan 7 to 13

Parish: Pray for all who live and work in Dognell Green and Brockett Close.

Pray for those who keep our administrative systems running smoothly, especially all who work and volunteer in the Parish Office.

World: Pray for those who feel called to work through USPG in many different parts of the world, offering their skills in Your name.

Week 3 Jan 14 to 20

Parish: Pray for all who live and work in Fearnley Road and Colgrove.

Pray for our activities for families, giving thanks for the growth that has occurred.

Pray for Nikki as she continues to seek new ways to involve families in the life and worship at St Francis

World: Pray that more churches in Britain and Ireland might open their doors and reach out to their communities with God's love and acceptance, putting aside all judgement.

Week 4 Jan 21 to 27

Parish: Pray for all who live and work in Barn Close and Barnside Court.

Pray for our Finance Team, as they prepare budgets for next year and they continue to manage our everyday finances.

World: Pray for an end to human trafficking around the world. Pray that vulnerable communities may become aware of the tricks of the traffickers.

Week 5 Jan 28 to Feb 3

Parish: Pray for all who live and work in Elm Gardens.

Pray for our groups for parents and pre-school children, that they may experience fellowship and fun through play and other activities.

World: Give thanks for the commitment of the church of South India to safeguarding creation and campaigning for global justice.

CHOIR NOTES

Congratulations were given to Abigail Williams who, this term, joins Samuel Freedman as Head Chorister. A photo on the front inside cover shows Abigail and Samuel in the Song School.

After evensong in October we invited Gill Pinfold and her son David upstairs to the Song School to unveil a framed memorial to Geoffrey who was a bass in the choir for many years. In lasting memory of Geoffrey, Gill has paid for the manufacture of our new St Francis Award medals, which you will start to see on our senior trebles sometime in the new year. There is a photo of Gill and David also on the front inside cover.

We welcome back ex-head chorister Eleanor Adams as an alto in the choir this term – it is lovely having her singing with us again after a short break.

Auditions at St Mary's School Welwyn and Applecroft School took place in November when, as always, a very large number of promising candidates came forward for voice trials. You will see the lucky new probationers in the services around Easter time. Prior to this, they will start attending rehearsals and learning all about being a chorister at St Francis from January onwards.

Finally, as I am typing this report for the magazine, the choir have now started preparations for our Advent and Christmas music. A huge effort is made by the choir for these services – we sing more music in December than we would across an average three month period in the church! A slight change this year takes place at Midnight Mass, when a choir formed of “retired” girl trebles, and some of the current senior girls along with the men will lead the singing. I am very much looking forward to working with them at this service.

Richard Harrison

Safeguarding at St Francis

You may remember that, at the APCM, Alison, on behalf of the PCC, spoke about Safeguarding and what is now expected of churches by the Church of England.

Since then, we have made considerable progress in implementing some of the changes that have been necessary. The PCC now includes Safeguarding as an agenda item at each PCC meeting. We have a Safeguarding Action Plan, put together by the Safeguarding Working Group, which highlights action that need to be taken and helps the PCC to be better informed about Safeguarding issues.

We now have Safer Recruitment procedures in place, so anyone who volunteers to take on a new role that means they will be interacting with young people or vulnerable adults will go through an informal interview. This will help people to understand the roles they have taken on better, as well as making sure we fulfil what are now legal requirements.

Training has been made available through the diocese. There is basic online training, which many people have now completed, and more in depth training in the form of a 3 hour course. We are very lucky that Andy Henthorn is a trainer for the diocese and he offered to run a course on a Saturday morning at St Francis which many of our volunteers attended.

We are also making sure we seek written permission to use images in any of our publications, and are waiting to see what the new Data Protection Laws mean for use before finalising our policies in this area.

In addition, parents may have noticed the introduction of signing in sheets/registers for groups which children and young people attend. Very soon a one off registration sheet will be circulated to all parents to complete on behalf of their child, this will ensure we have relevant information about any medical issues, parental contact details etc ,so that if an emergency arose we could deal with it efficiently.

Leaders of events have been asked to do risk assessments to make sure all our events take place in conditions that are as safe as possible. If you are volunteering at an event, please do ask the group leader if you can take a look at the risk assessment; it is important everyone knows what is on it plus you may notice something that has not been thought of!

Janet Packer and Alison Paterson

Wardens Report – November 2017

As we approach the end of another year (how time flies when you're enjoying yourself!), we have so much to share with you, namely a 'look-back' at the fantastic events that have taken place over the last few months, as well as a peek at the exciting things that will be taking place over the next few weeks.

Gourmet evening (aka Josh's swansong)

So, having been offered a final chance to enjoy the culinary delights of our Master chef Josh Young, before his departure to the depths of Kent, some 40 lucky diners sat down with high expectations....and we were not to be disappointed! Ably assisted by Georgia and the Apling clan Josh treated us to a delicious selection of canapés, followed by a fabulous 5 course meal. Here we go.....

First up was a wonderful mushroom soup, with wild sautéed mushrooms and a truffle infused cream....then we had seared scallops with roasted cauliflower purée, curried cauliflower florettes, macademia nuts, and a lemon oil.....

Now for the pièce de résistance.....fillet of venison in red wine and dark chocolate sauce....

Then, something to cleanse the palate.....courtesy of a gin and tonic granita, and last but by no means least.....a rich dark chocolate tarte with candied orange.

Light Party

Nikki has doubtless written much more about this wonderful event, so we don't want to steal her thunder! Suffice to say that she and the whole team put on a great show for over 80 children, Mum & Dads, Grandparents and a whole range of other St Francis friends. Many hands make Light Parties work, as they say!

A bit about (all-important) maintenance!

After a long wait for approval from the Council's Tree Preservation office, the church's trees have been cut back to reduce the risk of falling branches. High winds in the weeks whilst we waited for the permission made us nervous, but fortunately only small pieces were dislodged. Anyway, they look much healthier now and should be ok for another five years.

Sound and vision

The installers of the sound and vision systems made another fine-tuning visit which has made us much happier with the sound output now. Speaking to those who had been having difficulties hearing parts of the services has confirmed the improvement, but please do speak to us if you have any further difficulties.

The screens in the chapels are working very well and will make “overflow” congregations at the Christmas Services feel more a part of what is happening. The screen in the porch has been a great way of letting people know what is going on at church over the following weeks. Those of the Comms team involved in planning, producing and displaying these attractive notices have done a marvellous job - thanks!

How can you help with our 20th Anniversary Christmas Tree Festival?

Our main focus recently has been in preparing for the Christmas Tree Festival (Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th December – see diary dates below) in good time for this year’s 20th anniversary! As ever we rely on the good people of St Francis to pitch in: whether it is running a stall, entering a tree, providing prizes or being those who make the weekend special for all of our visitors. A special thank you as ever to those who support the Festival when they are in the Parish Office.

Please, please do take a look at the rotas on display in the Porch and try and put your name down to help us out for an hour or so.

A few important dates for your diary!

Christmas Tree Festival – Saturday 9th (12.00 – 6.00 pm) & Sunday 10th December (12.00 – 5.00 pm). This is our biggest event of the year, so please see if you can help out in any way – and make sure you come along, bring your family, friends, their friends, and their friends’ friends!

Advent & Christmas services:

Here’s a short summary of our Advent and Christmas services – please tell all your friends and families about them. To help you/them decide which services are most appropriate, we have marked with an asterisk (*) the services that are more suitable for young children and toddlers.

Advent Carol Service – Sunday 3rd December at 6.00 pm
Family Carol Service – Saturday 16th December at 4.00 pm *
Nine Lessons & Carols – Sunday 17th December at 6.00 pm
Christingle / Crib Services – Sunday 24th December at 4.00 pm and 6.00 pm *
Midnight Mass – Sunday 24th December at 11.00 pm
Christmas Day Family Service - Monday 25th December at 10.00 am *

2017 has been an eventful, but highly successful and enjoyable year at St Francis. We've said 'au revoir' to Josh, and said farewell to a number of dear friends who have sadly passed away. We have welcomed new friends into our Church, we have had some fantastic events, come rain or shine. Our Youth and Childrens' Church is going from strength to strength, as is our Women's Group. Under the leadership of Richard, Liz, Andrew and Robin, and with the enthusiasm of the many boys, girls, men and women in our choirs, choral and organ music at St Francis continues to thrive.

We have a strong, welcoming and committed Ministry team, with Jenny at the helm and Liz, Carolyn, Wendy and Joan also ready to steer the ship when needed. We have a very capable team on our PCC and Deanery Synod. So we're in pretty good shape as we turn another page and start the New Year.

God bless, with best wishes for a happy, healthy Christmas and 2018!

On behalf of the Wardens' Team (Clare, Craig, Liz, Stuart and Sarah)

Light Party

As I write this article the following words pop into my head....

Outstanding....AmazingFun...Fabulous...Inspirational...Family.....
Light...Worship...Church family....

these are just a few of the words I've have had said to me about the Light Party we hosted here on October 31st as an alternative event to Halloween for our Church community.

It was truly amazing to be able to take over our Church for 3 hours and have Light themed activities, worship & games for all ages in every area of our Church. It was amazing to see so many people from such a wide range of ages and to have our Beaver leaders and Pack with us.

The hall hosted some great Light themed arts & crafts, great conversations, refreshments and a truly delicious dinner! Thank you to Clare, Jenny, Janet & the arts team.

The Church hosted a fantastic hour of family friendly games, 'dog&bone', 'the cake game' & 'wrapping up' with toilet paper game. There was flour, sweets, bouncy balls, newspaper and other fantastic items that Jo & the games team used to lead some fantastic family classics.

Zoe led a brilliant all age family talk about Light. Followed by our song 'This little light of mine'. Paul then sang & played guitar and lead us all through some beautiful worship songs.

We also had board games, karaoke, light themed reflection & prayer, Eucharist and more arts & crafts.

I came away from our Light party feeling inspired and with a real sense of Church family.

You are all amazing and bring so much to our Church and our community. Each and everyone of us can go out and spread a little bit of Light and make a real difference to somebody's day.

A huge personal thank you to everybody who helped me with the Light party! The Ministry team, kitchen team, arts team, games team, beaver leaders & Anthony for the beautiful candle lights.

Teamwork makes the dreams work.

Nikki

Children's and Families Worker

St Francis of Assisi, Welwyn Garden City

Women's Group

On Friday 3rd we had the last Women's group meeting of the year, unfortunately perhaps due to the weather and the fireworks it wasn't as well attended as some of our earlier evenings have been. We had a very interesting evening of discussion about some of the women who feature in the bible, Joanna, Deborah, Mary Magdalene and Abigail facilitated by Joan, Wendy, Alice and myself.

There was some interesting discussion regarding Jesus and feminism, maybe a topic for a later meeting?

In addition we kept hands as well as heads busy by creating decorations for our tree for the Christmas Tree Festival, whilst enjoying mulled wine, mince pies and Sonja's lovely carrot and banana cake.

We already have some provisional dates and activities for next year but look out for our bookmark at this year's CTF:

Singing evening : Friday 26th Jan

Movie night: Friday 20th April

Guest speaker: hopefully late June/early July

Craft evening: Friday 9th Nov

Alison Paterson

Our Altar Servers – an update

At the end of October we said 'Goodbye' to Matthew Henthorn, as he left for Australia. After visiting family there he plans to spend some time exploring the country, funded by working. Matthew was a loyal member of the St Francis Serving Team for many years. He started as an acolyte at the age of about 9, once he was big enough to carry a candle without tripping up. In his mid-teens he moved up to the role of crucifer. We now have a vacancy for someone to carry the processional cross at the 9.15 service once a month. Meanwhile there must be a reduced team from time to time.

On a brighter note, four young members of the congregation have commenced training as servers, and they will be starting to help as probationers at the 9.15 services in December, assisting the serving team and seeing what they are learning applied in practice. They will serve as acolytes at one of the Christingle services on Christmas Eve.

The Advent and Christmas season is one of two periods in the church year that are particularly busy ones for all servers (the other is that of Easter). We have to ensure the church and altar are prepared for both Carol Services, both Christingles, Midnight Mass and Christmas Day, with all of the additional candles in place and lit, as well as providing a team to serve at each of these services.

In addition to our need for an additional crucifer we still need an extra server for the 8.00 services, to ensure there is cover if one of the four regular servers is unable to serve.

Jesus would have been used to altar servers, as would the early church. Once the Israelites had been brought out of Egypt God told Moses to appoint men to assist the priests (Numbers 3 vv. 5-11). If you think He is calling you to be a server please come and talk to me.

Anthony Packer

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READINGS DURING DECEMBER:

Sunday Dec 3 Advent Sunday	Isaiah 64:1-9 ; 1Corinthians 1:3-9 Mark 13: 24-end
Sunday Dec 10 Advent 2	Isaiah 40: 1-11; 2Peter 3: 8-15a Mark 1: 1-8
Sunday Dec 17 Advent 3	Isaiah 61:1-4; 8-end 1Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28 (just gospel at 9.15 due to nativity play)
Sunday Dec 24 Advent 4 Midnight Mass	2Samuel 7:1 - 11,16; Romans 16: 25-end Luke 1: 26-38 Isaiah 52: 7-10; Hebrews 1:1-4; John 1:1-14
Monday Dec 25 Christmas Day	Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:8-20
Sunday Dec 31 Christmas 1	Isaiah 61:10 — 62:3; Galatians 4:4-7 Luke 2.15-21

READINGS DURING JANUARY:

Sunday Jan 7 Epiphany	Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12
Sunday Jan 14 Epiphany 2	1 Samuel 3:1-10; Revelations 5:1-10 John 1: 43-end
Sunday Jan 21 Epiphany 3	Genesis 14:17-20; Revelation 19: 6-10 John 2: 1-11
Sunday Jan 28 Candlemas	Malachi 3:1-5 ; Hebrews 2:14-end Luke 2: 22-40