

GRAPEVINE

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A New Start,...

Acts 1:14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. NIV

Dear Friends,
One day this pandemic will be over. We as church will have an incredibly important job to do – one that is hard for us at present but one which we will need to do, for the sake of the people of our town. We will have the job of rebuilding St John's, and of taking the message out into our neighbours, our colleagues, our friends, our families. No, I'm not talking of building something for ourselves, I am talking of working for God's Kingdom here in Welling and I fervently believe that we have a big part to play.

When the first Disciples saw Jesus ascending into heaven they were left a task to fulfil, and now that task is ours. So how did they go about it, and how can we learn from them? It all starts in Acts 1:12 and following. They prayed v14. They prayed constantly. That is the foundation of their building. Prayer. And we will keep on praying – every day as we have during

to breathe through it. We must not be led away from the truth. We must continue to build upon what God has revealed in scripture. No watering it down. They got ready v21. They appointed Matthias to replace Judas. We have to get ready, to have in place all that we need to build well, on Christ the Solid Rock, on His word by the power of the Holy Spirit.



Prayer Times

the pandemic, in ones and twos, in person and on Zoom until we see where God wants us and what he wants from us. They rehearsed the truth v15. We have the truth – all 1264 pages of it (NIV) – and that truth contains the word that bring life, when the Holy Spirit is allowed

Revelation 3:2 Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. We may face an unfinished task, but I look forward to working with you to bring the Good News to our town when we can meet face to face... But we mustn't wait for then. By prayer and action we have to push on now. With love,
Adam Foot, Vicar St. John's Welling and Priest in Charge St. John's Erith

St John's News

"The rules keep on changing and arrangements for the next few weeks are still very uncertain."

If those words seem familiar it's because I wrote them back in November! Somehow, they seem remarkably relevant as I write in mid January. Usually this post-Christmas magazine would contain accounts of the many activities and services over the Christmas period, descriptions of a packed church, memories of the regular tramp of feet, as schools and groups came to church to celebrate... But not this year! However, we had three carol services which enabled people to come into church, with the lovely Contemporary Service on Dec 13th, probably seeing the largest number in church since last March.

The traditional Carol Service with a small socially distanced choir was held on two consecutive evenings and was also available online enabling people to attend from the safety of their own homes, Covid infections already steeply on the rise. New Year has come and gone with 2021 currently feeling chillingly like 2020 although vaccinations are now offering real hope to all of us of an eventual return to something akin to normality... We can't wait. It seems right to consider how we can be a Christian Community even during lockdown and a shut church building and so Christian Community is the theme for our sermons and House Group studies this term... We are already being challenged! Linzi Golding is continuing to do a brilliant job helping our children and young people remain connected to each other and to Jesus.

Family News: From late Autumn more of our church family have had Covid-19 and it's been good that between 10 and 20 of us pray via zoom daily, for the many people and places impacted by the pandemic in our daily zoom prayer time never forgetting our Mission partners, Government and Church leaders both local and National... Do join when you can. Congratulations to Miriam Giles who has reached that significant age which the Government sees as the gateway to... Let's leave it there! As I write (Jan 16th) we have just received the news that lovely Eric Palmer has died after months of deteriorating health. We pray for Rita and the family. So... until April when it will be Spring and maybe I will be able to change the first paragraph. Keep well, keep safe, keep praying,
Estelle Woodcock

St John's Memorial Tree

What a privilege and joy to walk with people in their remembrance of loved ones. To know the joy and hope of faith, to understand that grief and faithfulness in coming to

remember those who have gone on ahead of them. The choices of music were wide and expressed something of who they were remembering. For some people, silence was enough, for others it was dancing and talking. Life does go on, but we all carry the lives of those we love close to our hearts, grief is part of the journey, giving way to joy at last in the Kingdom of God.

Revd Gordon MacBean



England in the Millennium

England is famous for many things,
From heroes to pageantry.

Nelson and Victoria, are symbols of
a once great nation.

Cathedrals and castles, tell of a wealth and
power, from a bygone age.

Castles flexing their strength, and cathedrals
showing their splendour,
cannot compare to the awesomeness
and majesty of God.

Who can question the wisdom of God; or
raise a stand against His creative acts.
And those who consider themselves smarter
than the Creator,
have become captives to their own folly.

Equality finds its true meaning in
the one and only Almighty.

For kings and paupers, yes even,
presidents and prisoners,

will find no status in the eyes of God.

The sum intellect of all the professors,
whoever existed in Earth's short history,
cannot compare to the Ancient of Days,
whose knowledge precedes the
beginning of time.

For a brief moment in time,
England will become famous again.

As the eyes of the world gaze upon

Greenwich at the start of the new millennium.
If only the year of our Lord two thousand,
would herald an age of English
gospel preaching.

Then only would England be reminded
that righteousness exalted a nation.

**Written by Mushi Rahman
on Wednesday 11th August 1999.**

CRiBS Q&A's

Jason Vaughan and Shannon Causbysmith from CRiBS with some insightful questions and answers:

1. So Shannon, how does it feel to be the youngest and newest member of the CRiBS team?

I was welcomed with open arms (metaphorically of course) and made to feel part of the family at once. It has truly been amazing getting to know each person on the team and to see they work as one, even at these difficult times when we are more separated than ever.

2. What kind of work have you been doing with CRiBS so far?

So far, I have been busy, from making a film to working alongside children, my workload is very varied. However, a smile has never left my face,

3. What has been a highlight for you?

A highlight of mine has definitely been making our Christmas film. It allowed me to finally meet all of the team face-to-face for the first time.

4. What about a low-light? Has there been one?

A low point in my gap-year has been the ever-present cloud of Coronavirus but everyone has worked extremely hard and made it the best few months that we can.

Now it's time to turn the tables and for me to face your questions...

1. Ok Jason, so my first question is: Has CRiBS made a big impact on your life? And if so, how?

Absolutely, a very big impact. It's been my place of work for the last 20 years and, being a Christian organization supported by various individuals and churches it has operated within an atmosphere of Christian spirituality and practice pretty much from its inception. I cannot exaggerate the enormity of the

privilege and blessing this has been over the years.

2. What are your best bits of CRiBS? I do enjoy those times of year when we present a seasonal production. It's as if we become a travelling drama company for 2 weeks at Christmas and Easter – wonderful! It fulfils that part of me that would like to be an actor.

3. What about the low points? Were there any?

Although I didn't realise it at the time, but the moving on of CRiBS' CEO and founding director Gordon Raggett was a low point. But, look at the wonderful CEO CRiBS has to continue the work – we are blessed.

4. But how different is the CRiBS that I know to how it used to be?

VERY different! The Koru programme is a relatively new project, about 5 years old or so, and to have young people from Germany (and now the UK) work among us for a year has enriched us all at CRiBS in many ways.

We are so thankful to God for the support of St. John's over the years - only He truly knows what has taken place because of your love, prayers and support, and the full extent to which we have been blessed through them.

Jason Vaughan

(Primary team schools worker)

Shannon Causbysmith

(Koru gap-year student)



Christine ten Voorde (nee Potter)

Pat Wootton writes: I received this letter yesterday from Christine ten Voorde (nee Potter), who since retirement is living in the Netherlands, though once was a member of St John's and was married here in 1986. I was particularly interested to read that she is enjoying taking part in our online services. I wonder if she would mind if you used some of her information in Grapevine. There probably are not many folk who remember her and Gerrit, her husband, but Grapevine reaches several past members of our Church family. Can anyone interested in contacting Christine and Gerrit e-mail Pat, who will be happy to forward the ten Voorde letter to them via e-mail. Many thanks.



Seventh thought: Fakeaway Zoom night Now we are cooking!!

Eighth thought: Let's make and bake! Cakes, fudge, masks, Xmas decorations, jam, scarves, planters, advent candles, and fix boilers!

Ninth thought: Time to ease up and rest ?

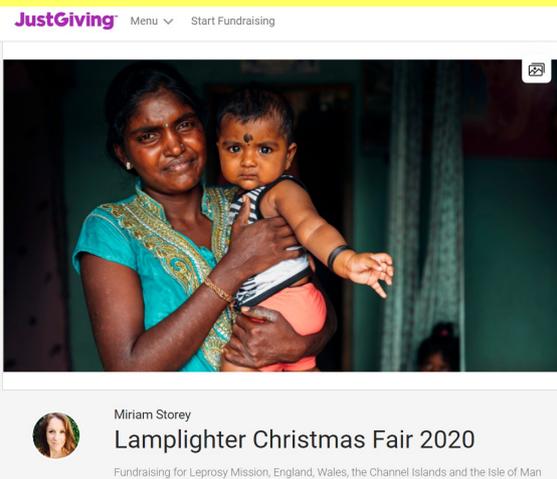


Small Acts — Big Love 2020

Twelve 'Thoughts of Christmas' on the cancellation of the Lamplighter Fayre:

First thought: Bliss!! A year off, no aching backs, chaos at home and exhaustion!

Second thought: That's not good enough. Purulia's patients need food, multi drug therapy, eye surgery, physio, vocational training, clean private toilets.



Third thought: Miriam Storey's suggestion of a Just Giving Site that would at least give folks a chance to donate.

Tenth thought: No!! Let's have, Christmas bundles, games and raffles, and squeeze in a car wash!

Eleventh thought: I think we just created our 1st Virtual Fayre!!

Twelfth thought: Light the tree lights, Abigail sing the 12 days of the Lamplighter Fayre and reveal the total.

Amazing £4,600!! But Why?

Because in the COVID year of 2020 The Leprosy Mission funds were way down and we couldn't ignore our friends at Purulia hospital. And every November we always have a Lamplighter Fayre for them and last year thanks to YOU we did too.

Bless you all for your support .

Jackie and Keith Mackley



Fourth thought: How about making and selling chutney?.....cue Miriam, Keith and Kerstin in Bedford.....Wow chutney everywhere!

Fifth thought: How about 'Bubble Fundraising'? Anyone got any ideas?

Sixth thought: Family hot chocolate evening...nice one Pat!



When I was asked for my hopes for 2021 the last line of the first verse of O little town of Bethlehem came into mind, in the current climate of Covid19 the hopes seem to be balanced out by a fair amount of fear. As someone used to dealing with positive and negatives numbers in mathematics I started to draw up a mental balance sheet for this New Year and found there often seemed to be a plus to cancel the minus.

| Minus | Plus |
|--|---|
| We will wear masks forever We will spend our lives in Zoom meetings No one will visit me Essential shops only open No travel, holidays or eating out Isolation and loneliness The vaccine will not be freely available yet Can't manage technology Its all over the world everyone can get it Restricted air and car use No face to face housegroups I will lose touch with church family | No one sees my wrinkles and I save on lipstick I can wear my pyjamas all day and turn off the video No more tidying Essential spending only fashion takes a back seat Your healthy bank balance gives opportunities to share Acts of kindness from friends and neighbours mean a lot There is a vaccine. It is free! In time it will be available Time to rediscover the phone and the postal service We are in this together-really a world wide family Has the air ever been cleaner or pollution lower What an achievement mastering the skype/Zoom/whatsApp More opportunities to meet & pray nearly every day |

In looking at my balance sheet I don't want to seem like Polyanna and gloss over the way fears can be overwhelming. Every cloud does not have an obvious silver lining but the end of that carol quotation states that 'The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight'. And the source of our hope and the calming of our fears can be found in our faith, Hebrews 11v1 reminds us: *'Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.'*

Kate Finney

MY HOPES FOR 2021

I have a list of hopes – good health, good weather, the end of the pandemic, the growth of family bonds and friendships... The list goes on, but is there more to 2021 than this?

During 2020, and all the 'differences' I encountered, I can say that my faith has been stretched, but strengthened. That through the ups and downs, I have seen yet again God's faithfulness has been strong and not wavered?

In March God told me to pray - for government and neighbours, key workers and the sick, those lost and alone, the homeless, and for my many friends at St John's. As I have taken time to pray and read my Bible I have been aware yet again of God's faithfulness through its pages. A faithfulness that is for all generations.

My biggest hope for 2021, however, is for all of you. I use the words of St Paul in Ephesians ch 3 'that from His glorious, unlimited resources God will empower you with inner strength through His Spirit. Then Christ will make His home in your hearts as you trust in Him. Your roots will go down into God's love and keep you strong.

May you know God'

Val Gompers

If you are struggling and would find daily paper Bible reading notes helpful, please get in touch. I am happy to order through Luke for you.

To have vaccines that are effective and allow us to shake hands, hug and be sociable again. More importantly that our churches grow in strength and fellowship, having a strong influence in our local communities in offering prayer, sanctuary and places of healing and friendship.

My focus at the moment is to learn from those around me, leaning on people's experience and being part of ministry with others. I am enjoying the teamwork in place at both Churches and how people draw together to face the challenges that we encounter.

I would hope my family can be on holiday in a tranquil place where we can be together and enjoy ourselves in a place of beauty. Below is a beach at St Lucia in South Africa in 2016.



The prospect of being priested in September is sobering. The harvest is great, and the labourers are few, yet we are all endued and imbued with God's love and empowered by his Holy Spirit. What appears to be impossible is everyday reality with God. My hope and prayer is that we walk in the light and share the love that Jesus has given us generously and freely.

Gordon MacBean