

The Arena Weekly

Issue 63 2020-9

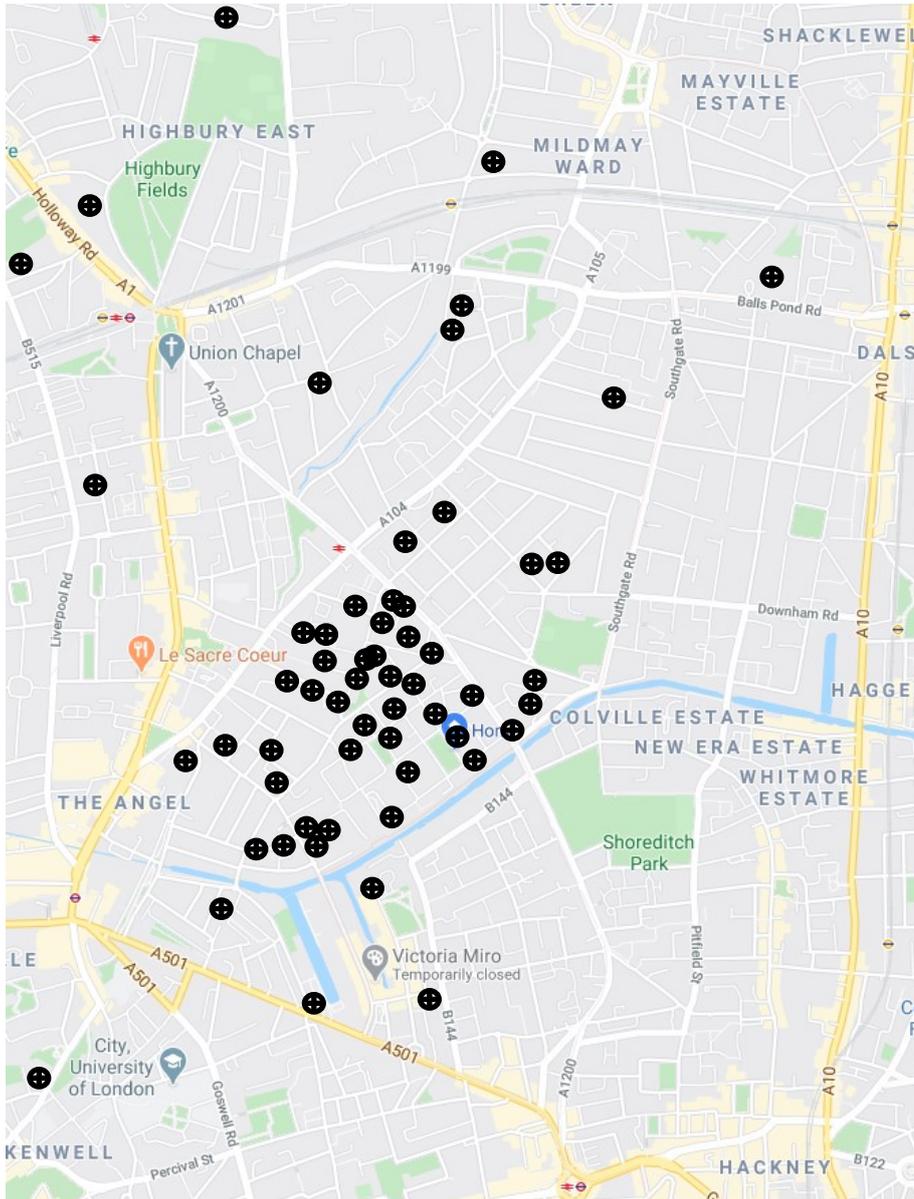
newsletter

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29 APRIL
2020



Dear All,

I hope you have all had a good week - but I guess you will also say 'but we haven't been anywhere!' That's what the lock-down does to us and of course we can't wait to get our freedom back - when the time is right.

But it occurred to me that you might like to see where the congregation of St James' lives, and where this Arena e-newsletter gets to.

Some of course live off the map, like Vera Taggart in Gerrards Cross, the Rodens in Hackney, the Jean-Baptistes in Upminster, Miranda Jules in Whitham and Rebecca Lee off the Seven Sisters Road.

And then there are those who like to keep us in their prayers much further afield, in Chiswick, Ruislip and Cheltenham.

Finally there are our internationally based friends, Travis and Suzanne Smith in Texas and Sebastian and Yuki Naniwa in Japan! That is some family!



AND A NEW SUGGESTION FROM SOUTH CAROLINA! Many of you will remember James and Megan Gill who have moved with work to the US. Currently also in lock-down they have just written to ask if our Second Sunday Choir would like to include them in a virtual choir - using the new technology that makes such ventures possible these days. James is pretty skilled at digital editing and so we are exploring this possibility in the hope of being able to add our own music to the Sunday streamed services.

We very much hope our own 2SC members will be up for the challenge. Each of us would record our parts at home and then James and Megan would put it all together before sending it back for Sinead to add the spoken elements of the service. It may take a week or two to get the hang of it so watch this space!



I am delighted that at least one member of the congregation has already signed up as a driver for the new Arc Food bank. The temporary closure of Pack-Up has led to a substantial increase in calls at the Vicarage door. We are very lucky that all the Anglican parishes in Islington are supported by the 'United Islington Charities' who issue us with 50 £5 Sainsbury's tokens which we can give to those who call. As you can imagine, however, we easily exceed that number in the course of the year and we as a parish continue to make sure that no one goes away hungry.

KNEELING The book that several of the parish are reading together at the moment (Luminaries by Rowan Williams) throws up all kinds of interesting thoughts which then get discussed in emails. Kerry Sabine, reading the chapter on ETTY HILLESUM, picked up on the idea of whether it was helpful to kneel when praying/taking communion. Kerry was reflecting on what she does in the light of what ETTY was saying about her body "needing to express what she felt about God by doing something physical" (like kneeling). What do you feel about kneeling? Has it gone out of fashion - and if so, why? Could there be a reason for doing it? Personally I am glad that at St James' we have a choice, at communion time, of standing or kneeling. But what about other physical gestures like using the blessed water at the door of the Church, making the sign of the Cross or lighting a votive candle? Do they help or not? We'd be really interested to hear your opinions as I hear in my head the song: *As I kneel before you, as I bow my head in prayer, take this day, make it yours and fill me with your love: Laudate Dominum...* But more on hymns next week.



FROM THE ARCHIVE
Congratulations to Laura Roden whose memory correctly went back to 26th August 2012 when Isla Seabrook was baptised at St James'. Also shown: her mum and dad, Sam and Joe, and her older brother Charlie. The small prize is on its way to Hackney.

Anyone able to identify who this is and what the occasion was? Text us (07989 281123) as soon as you have worked out the answer! Just to make it a little bit harder perhaps we ought to have an approximate date too?!



TAKING PART IN THE STREAMED SERVICES Thanks to Miranda Jules in deepest Witham in Essex, and to Rebecca Lee in Medina Grove for reading so well as part of the streamed service for Easter 3 last Sunday. As you can see we are happy to have these as either audio or video files (although we'd love to see more faces if possible!)

FINALLY welcome to Edith Coates who has recently become a reader of the Arena e-newsletter having had it sent on by a regular member of St James'. I am very happy to add further names to the circulation list - and of course it is free!

Keep safe!

Best wishes as ever,
John



May God bless every £1 we give so that St James' will be here, not just for today and for tomorrow, but for the future he wants to create.