

the arena

Issue 83 2021-1

newsletter

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JANUARY
2021

Dear All,



We hope you had a great Christmas - even if it had to be scaled down a bit from normal! Thanks for all your kind messages; they really were appreciated.

While the highlight in St James' before Christmas was probably the Carol service (still available on YouTube!) we managed to hold all the other services too including the Crib service with student Joe Ammoon leading a Christingle full of videos and Christmassy songs.



Which reminds me, there are still boxes of Smarties to share with our children. We were really glad to get some back from the 2019 Crib service, full of 20p pieces for the orphan children in Bonda. If we can distribute new boxes some time soon I hope you will take part in that again this coming year!! But what of 2021?

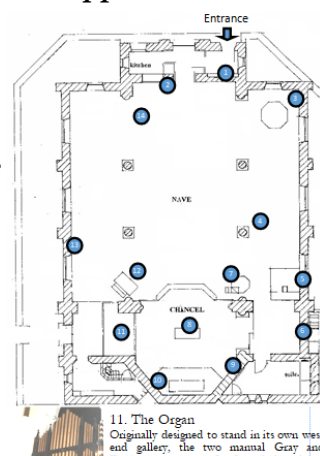
WEB CAMS With Tier 4 and some families still affected by Covid (hoping you get better soon!) we are continuing with a skeleton programme of services/Sunday School, cross that we can't yet stream these services because our i-Pad has a fit of the sulks after continuous use since March! We had hoped the new webcams - mostly paid for by a generous grant from the Cloudesley charity - would be available next week. But we had a major blip getting a new landline into the Church (which couldn't happen until Royal Mail gave us an official postcode; we have never had one up until now!) This means that the installation can't take place until Thursday 21st January. So huge apologies: no streaming until the end of the month!

REMEMBER THEM ??!



One of the many things we couldn't do in the autumn was to admit Tayah, Ava, Amariah, Matilda and Barnaby to First Holy Communion - and also baptise Ava and her sisters Ivy and Bella. But we can now and so we look forward to celebrating with them at 10am on Sunday 31st January. By then the webcams will be working so their families and friends who can't be with us will also be able to share in the service. But do come and support them in Church if you can.

NEW CHURCH GUIDE In one of Harry Walters' books about Popham Road just after the war ("The Street") I came across this: *On Sundays the bells from our local Church would peal out. The church, St James, was a very fine church inside, beautifully built like a miniature Cathedral...* As we are getting so many more visitors these days I thought a guide to the Church was long overdue. While we have enough material for a fuller booklet in time, for the moment I have put a few laminated A4 coloured sheets in Church which give a history of the Church on one side and a map and explanations to 14 of the main features on the other. There are also some black and white copies to take away. Please help yourself.



FACEBOOK, TWITTER AND INSTAGRAM During these days of semi-lock down in particular, Kerri Allen our Communications Officer would like to encourage members of the congregation to keep up with events at St James' on Facebook - and to post pictures and comments for us all to share too. She also hopes to set up an Instagram account as that is where most young people seem to get their information!

MUSICAL VESPERS AT CANDLEMASS Our Church looks particularly beautiful after dark and the new series of *Musical Vespers*, arranged on major Church festivals, gives us the opportunity for some quiet reflection and some wonderful live music. The next occasion is at Candlemass, this year on Sunday 31st January, when we look forward to music for piano, cello and voice. The next Musical Vespers will be on Passion Sunday, March 21st. They start at 6pm and last for about 40minutes. All are welcome.

Wishing you every blessing for 2021 as we come out of a dark year into a new one, full of promise and hope. There is much to look forward to and plenty to achieve together.

As ever,
John

Birthdays in January

BIRTHDAYS Very many happy returns on Wednesday 6th to Annie Bryan and to Sergio Villicana; on Monday 11th to Bow Wheatley who will be 7; on Tuesday 19th to Beatrix Ford who will also be 7 and on Friday 22nd to Chris Wright; on Wednesday 27th to Joyce Harvey and to Eleanor Fryer who will be 1; on Thursday 28th to our Organist and Administrator Adam Dickson and on Sunday 31st to Aly Carter who will be 21.



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.