

the arena

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newsletter

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DECEMBER
2020

Dear All,



Just under three weeks to go to go to Christmas - how has it crept up on us so fast?! Has the recent release from lock-down suddenly woken us up to all the things we need to do before the big day? At St James' we are also in 'catch-up mode' so these are the reminders that we need to share with you:

Eventbrite BOOK IN! Because of restrictions on numbers we need to ask you to book your places at the three big Christmas services this year. These are the details - and they will also be in the covering Arena email for easy copying:

Carol Service, Sunday 13th at 6.30pm:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/carol-service-with-epiphoni-tickets-131309737961>

Crib Service, Christmas Eve, Thursday 24th at 6pm:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/crib-service-tickets-131310008771>

Midnight Mass: Christmas Eve, Thursday 24th at 11.30pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/midnight-mass-tickets-131310492217>

Please don't
let this put
you off coming!

You need to register by 12noon on the day to be considered for a seat.



The Carol Service next Sunday will be sung by the brilliant young chamber choir Epiphoni (including Ros Ford) and the collection will go to the ARC Food Bank.

The Crib Service at 6pm on Christmas Eve will be a Christingle Service and will be led by our student-in-training, Joe Ammoun.

Midnight Mass at 11.30pm on Christmas Eve will be candle-lit as usual.

All of the Christmas services (including the Carol service) will be streamed on Facebook/YouTube afterwards.

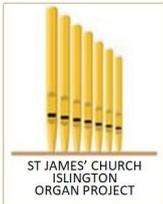


PACK-UP It is a real sadness that we can't offer our guests from among the street community a full sit-down Christmas lunch as we have done in previous years. This is one of the highlights of the St James' year - and we simply aren't allowed to serve a lunch in 2020. But we can say 'Happy Christmas' by sharing some gifts which they will really appreciate. The list includes the usual toiletries (for men and for women) plus anything else which you think would brighten their day. These can either be delivered straight to Pack-Up on Mondays between 11am and 1.30pm. Or you can bring them to the Vicarage on Arlington Square for onwards transmission. Thank you.

Nativity Treasure Hunt

Catriona Wilkinson (Burniston) loves Treasure Hunts and has designed one especially for us this year based on a

similar hunt she has prepared in her home village in West Yorkshire. We do hope this will be something that many of our families can take part in. Further details will be circulated in the next week or so. And there will be a prize...



ORGAN PROJECT I had hoped to be able to tell you in this edition of Arena the outcome of the Faculty application to rebuild the organ. It would have been a great end to a difficult year to have been able to wrap up this particular long-running saga. Sadly it is not to be. So what has gone wrong? In chronological order after the notices were posted in February: the pandemic closed the Diocesan legal team's offices for over six months and in the middle of that, the Registrar retired. Then there were some misunderstandings between the legal understandings of the words

insist and prefer. There's more: with the retirements of the Chancellor and his deputy due to take effect at the end of January 2021 they BOTH realised that they knew people involved in the case (population of London 8.5million!). Finally just as we thought, after the AGM, that it would be possible to settle the matter by paper-work, the chief Objector has held out for a full Consistory Court which can't take place until January at the very earliest. What bad luck all round.!



CARTOONS Thanks for the positive comments about the graphics in the Arena e-newsletter. Who said a picture is better than a thousand words? (Answer at the foot of the page). The internet makes it very easy for your busy editor to pull in all kinds of interesting pictures and graphics and if you are anything like me, they enable us to travel in all kind of directions as one thought leads to another. That is the beauty of Richard Dennison's pictures in Church and the reason why we have invested in the screen and data projector. To finish the year I thought you might enjoy this seasonal and rather witty picture (left). I think he would like it too!

REVIEW OF THE YEAR As I said to Bishop Joanne by zoom on Monday night, there is no doubt that the Covid-19 pandemic has hit the churches hard. So much of what we do depends on relationships and on our meeting up together. The closure of St James' has inevitably made it very much harder to keep up the links. So thanks to everyone who have gone out their way to keep in touch - via texts, emails and the odd zoom conversation. Thank you to all those who have been willing to contribute to the 35 streamed services as readers and performers, and especially to Sinead Burniston and more recently to Adam Dickson who have dealt with the technology so very well. Thanks too to the Sunday School team who have spent so many hours enabling our 'Sunday School at home' to be such a brilliant success. My prayer now is that the absence from Church has make us realise anew just how much it means to us and that each of us will do all we can to enable the Church to come back to life from now on! Happy Christmas!

Best wishes as ever,
John

BIRTHDAYS IN DECEMBER

Warmest Happy Birthday greetings -

To Bella Wilson who is 2 on Thursday 3rd;

To Ben Sabine on Tuesday 8th before he, Kerry and Chris leave Islington for the warmer climes of South London; to Matt Jean-Baptiste on Thursday 10th and to Pearl Wheatley who will be 8 on Friday 11th;

Across the pond to Illinois for Peter Gill's 1st Birthday on Tuesday 15th; on Saturday 19th to Christmas tree erector John Roden;

On Tuesday 22nd to Holly Campbell and to Sunday School leader and Hall Management Group convener Maria Burniston who celebrates her 60th birthday; on Friday 26th to Barry Jenkins who shares his birthday with Nazanin Zaghari Radcliffe for whose release we never cease to pray;

On Monday 29th to Lucy Haire who shares a very significant birthday with Nicole Jean-Baptiste; on Tuesday 29th to Hope Dixey who will be 8; on Wednesday 30th to Ivy Dennison who will be 4; and last but not least, to Amariah Greenaway who will be 8 on Thursday 31st!



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.

Answer: *Albert Einstein*