

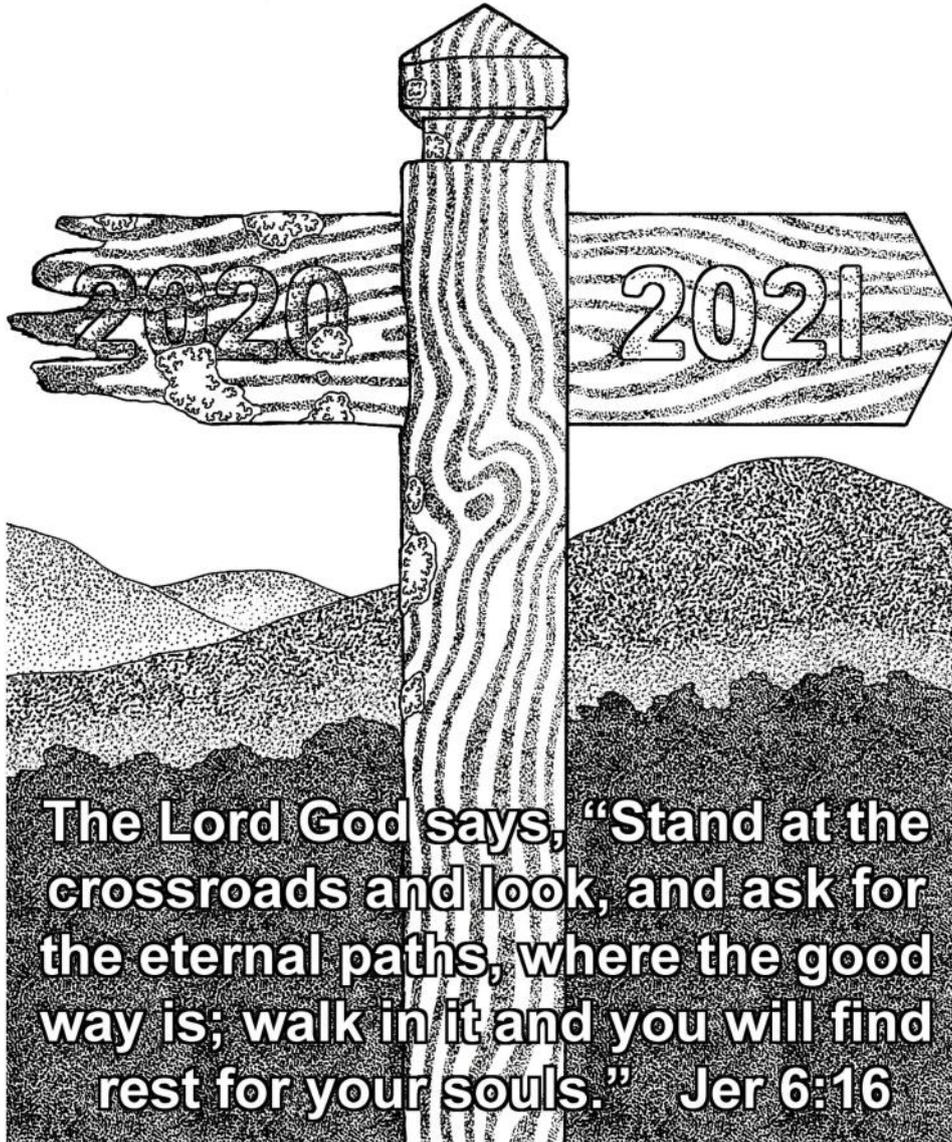
the **KEY**

Number 206

January 2021

50p

Website: www.bromleyparishchurch.org



News of Saint Peter and Saint Paul

BROMLEY PARISH CHURCH

Church Road Bromley BR2 OEG

"Proclaiming the Word and Work of God"

Member of Churches Together in Central Bromley



Vicar

Reverend James Harratt

vicar@bromleyparishchurch.org

Churchwardens

Martin Cleveland

Jane Cleveland

wardens@bromleyparishchurch.org

Parish Office Hours: 9:30am to 12 noon

020 8464 5244 – please use this number for all enquiries

Contact: Lynn Hedges, Parish Administrator

administrator@bromleyparishchurch.org

For contributions to the Key, or if you would like to receive the Key by email, please contact thekeyeditor@gmail.com



Dear Reader,

Wishing you a very happy New Year, and I hope your Christmas celebrations were as joyful and social as possible!

In this January edition of the Key, we begin with two sermons from Rev Dr Anne Townsend, the first having been delivered in Bromley and Sheppards Colleges, and the second from the Blue Christmas service at BPC. Andrew has kindly written a second article regarding his BPC memories, and we also have the usual Saints page, Diary Dates, puzzles, prayers and poems. I am also pleased to be able to share details of this year's World Day of Prayer—thank you Helen for passing this on to me.

Hoping to be able to see you all soon.

With love, Lisa.

The sermon is provided by Rev Dr Anne Townsend, it was delivered at Bromley and Sheppards Colleges on 6 December. Many thanks Anne for sharing this with the Key. Anne's Blue Christmas sermon also follows, for those who would like to revisit it.

ADVENT

During the last year I've experienced time differently from how I've experienced it in the past. It was one thing to be told by my experienced oncologist that my life expectancy was only for a few weeks after last Christmas, but it's another to spend a whole year – 365 days - expecting to die imminently.

Life and time were turned upside down yet again last Sunday, when we spent the day waiting for the phone call telling us that our first great-grandchild had finally arrived in our world. When you're swinging between birth and death, time seems different. It's further confused when you're caught in a pandemic with its unpredictable lockdowns.

In Peter's epistle, we've just heard something baffling about time: "With the Lord one-day is like 1000 years" and vice versa. Help! It goes without saying that God doesn't get confused about time as I do!

We know that the ancient Greeks made sense of our different experiences of time by distinguishing two different categories - *Chronos* time which is linear, and contains past, present and future - we can measure it. Then there's *Kairos* time which is about lived experience – it's a quality that we can't quantify – it often contains the numinous.

I'm struggling for words to communicate my meaning. R S Thomas captures my dilemma in his well-known poem, "The bright field". He writes that "life is not hurrying onto a receding future, nor hankering after an imagined past. It is the turning aside, like Moses to the miracle of the lit bush, to a brightness that seemed as transitory as your youth once, but is the eternity that awaits you." My good friend, Carys Walsh, has just published her book, "Frequencies of God: walking through Advent with R S Thomas". She reflects on some of his poems and how we might place them in the context of each day of Advent.

Taking Thomas' well known poem, "The Bright Field", she teases gems out of each line. I'll focus on the final six lines. Carys writes that the poem proceeds "at first along an unreliable access of past and future (one is 'receding' and the other is 'imagined') before settling on a movement that is neither past nor forward, but 'turning aside', stepping away from the trajectory of linear time and towards *kairos*."

And in this 'turning aside', 'like Moses' to the burning bush, we see again the bright field-light of the earlier part of the poem, but now it is as if the field is doubly transfigured by this image with all its overtones of God's revelation in the brightly burning, never-consuming fire of Moses encounter with God; the sacred at the heart of the ordinary.

“In the closing lines of the ‘Bright field’, Thomas takes this further into the image of transfiguring light. It’s sudden flaring branches into two ideas: the brevity of a human life bound in time, flaring brightly for a while before dying down, and, alongside this, a brightness that is also, he says, ‘the eternity that awaits you’. And still the image branches out: in the word ‘eternity’, Thomas may refer to life beyond death, or to that moment that is experienced with such intensity that we are left with a sense of the eternal even in the temporal. The echoes reverberate on, and *kairos* and *chronos* collapse, somehow, into one.

“The note on which the ‘bright field’ ends is a curious one, striking as it does a kind of spiritual *hiraeth*. This is the Welsh word for an intense and wistful longing, born out of separation. But unlike its cultural counterpart, which suggests a nostalgic longing for what might never have been,

in the ‘bright field’ this *hiraeth* is a yearning, or a plaintive hope for what *already* exists - is present – yet all too often missed through failure or inability to acknowledge its presence.

“Yet in this layered poem of revelation and acceptance, Thomas suggests that more is required than a plaintive hope, if God is to be revealed.

He suggests that we are called to accept that we are living lives caught between the past, with its ‘transitory brightness’, and the ‘eternity that awaits’ us.

“We are called to accept the invitation to ‘turn aside’ and step out of *chronos* time, to experience the moment of epiphany that hovers at the meeting place of divine revelation and human participation. We are called to accept the collapsing of time which comes through the season of Advent, and the experience of gift and grace. “

Here we are - busy with Christmas preparations – “will I be too late if I post my parcels next week”, “has the pudding had long enough to mature properly” and so on ...

In all that *chronos* time, let’s step aside, to find and treasure those moments when time turns into *kairos* time.

like the moments when one of us finally breathes our last, or when our first great-grandson, baby Ted, took his first breath at 3.00pm last Sunday afternoon.

Anne Townsend

Extensive quotations from the book by Carys Walsh, “Frequencies of God: Walking through Advent with R S Thomas”, 2020, Canterbury Press

Below is Rev Dr Anne's Blue Christmas sermon, delivered at St Peter and St Pauls on 20 December 2020.

BLUE CHRISTMAS

You could say that what my mother did best at Christmas was to purse her lips tightly, and to start whistling tunelessly. This signalled that she was finding everything too much. The term "Blue Christmas" wasn't known about all those years ago, when I was little. But, in 1948, it became popular with Elvis singing, "I'll have a blue Christmas without you!". I reckon my mother should be crowned as queen of "Blue Christmas".

Her dread of Christmas wasn't her fault. She trained as a doctor when very few women did this - one result was that she never learned to cook! When she had her own family, my grandmother rescued her by inviting us to stay every Christmas. It was a warm, golden time of delicious home-made food, laughter, broken rules, fun party-games, rummaging through the attics for dressing-up clothes. The highlight was Grandma appearing around 5.00am on Christmas day, encouraging my brother and me to break the rule of "no presents till after breakfast". Granny stood up for us when mother told us off, for breaking some of her Christmas commandments. Granny introduced us to a world that was not brimming over with strict "do's and don'ts".

But the inevitable happened. When I was 11, my wonderful grandmother died – and Christmas became the time when we focussed on mourning our loss. No one actually talked about death. We pretended everything was fine. Since Mother couldn't cook Christmas food, we lunched in one of the few restaurants open, and endured an uncomfortable mealtime – when brother and I were supposed behave perfectly, to show the other diners how well we'd been brought up.

After granny died, there were no fun presents. It was fairly soon after the War, and there wasn't money to buy toys or games. My parents saved for our education – so for Christmas, I might get a new item of school uniform. My brother (who was at boarding school) was once given a trouser press, which the school required all 10 year olds to own.

I absorbed my mother's dread of Christmas. When I had my own family she was my model.

When our children were small, John and I worked in up-country Thailand, for 16 years as missionary doctors. It took two weeks by boat to get from England to Thailand. Aeroplanes were too expensive. We only saw our relatives every three or four years, when we returned to England for 10 months home leave.

Thailand Christmases were, for me, almost unendurable times of deep grief, and longing to be back "home" in England. Christmas food was problematic – all those years ago, traditional English Christmas food was unavailable.

Occasionally, when visiting Bangkok, I was able to afford to buy a packet of expensive, imported, Paxo sage and onion stuffing, Bisto gravy, or even a tiny Christmas pudding. Our local chickens were scrawny, with more bone than flesh on them, so we often had fish instead. Of course, I was thrown into childhood feelings to do with my mother and her Christmas food.

In those days, missionaries had very small incomes. Often at Christmas there wasn't enough money to buy our children toys. I made gifts for them, which they were polite about –but we all knew they longed for proper toyshop toys. I never looked forward to Christmas – it was a time of mourning and grieving losses.

Then on one amazing Christmas the tide turned. That Christmas Eve, I sat quietly weeping for parents and brother 6,000 miles away. Up-country Thailand didn't have telephones, and so I couldn't chat on the phone (and FaceTime was unknown). I was especially distressed that we had no money to buy Christmas food extras - our missionary society's income was very reduced that December. I sat - half praying politely and half screaming at God, "Why have you allowed this to happen ... couldn't we just have a decent Christmas without scrimping and scraping ...?" Then, out of the blue, the hospital porter appeared and asked me to go to the hospital front gate. Off I went.

I was gobsmacked! The hospital drive was filled with limousines. An elegant lady came forward and explained that the Bangkok British wives group had decided to fill their cars with English Christmas food, and to deliver it as a surprise to all the missionaries working in the hospital. I couldn't believe it. There was custard, and potatoes – which we usually never saw - as well as Christmas puddings and cakes, packets of stuffing, cream, fresh milk, turkeys, gravy, all sorts of vegetables and bottles of wine – everything necessary for a traditional English Christmas meal. I gazed unbelieving at my basket bursting with goodies, realising that God had given us not just any old Christmas lunch but a totally amazingly meal. The generosity of those strangers eased some of my aching loneliness.

You and I have probably experienced similar feelings during this pandemic, when we haven't been able to see and cuddle those close to us, sit close to those who are ill, and hold our dying loved ones in our arms. But God is there, waiting to come to us through the goodness of strangers - helping us in so many different ways.

At Christmas in Thailand, all the hospital workers would meet in the dark at 5.00am and process up the main staircase to the top floor. Then we'd divide into two streams – each snaking along to the far end of the long hospital corridor. Then we sang the Christmas carol, "Joy to the world, the Saviour's come!" Sometimes singers at one end of the corridor echoed the other, or sang an impromptu descant. The patients' relatives slept in the wards under and around the beds. They woke up, listened to us singing, and wanted to

know what was going on. We explained that Jesus had come to our world to bring God's love to us.

In *that* year ("the year of the British wives group") during *that* particular singing, it was as if God cuddled me safely in his arms - comforting me in my longing for my family that Christmas. We may long for God to do just this for us as we are stuck in Tier 4 unable to be with loved ones – and, equally, God longs to comfort us in what ever way we most need. Perhaps for you this "Covid Christmas" can become your year of a "British wives group".

Tomorrow night, the 21st, it's the winter solstice, the longest night of the year. In the olden times, the church celebrated the feast of the Apostle Thomas on that day – in more recent times it's been changed to July 3. Thomas, often nicknamed 'the doubter', is my favourite apostle. Like many of us, during 2020, the year of the pandemic, he was afraid, lonely, doubted God's goodness and simply couldn't believe that Jesus could possibly have risen from the dead. When I read how Jesus treated Thomas so gently, compassionately and with such empathy, I'm more able to trust that God longs to help us – to strengthen our wobbly faith and despair, to ease our pain, to soothe our loneliness and feelings of abandonment, and our terror that our basic needs won't be met. Many of us know all about such feelings – they've been part of our experience since the pandemic struck our world. It reminds us of Thomas' struggles to believe in Jesus, it connects up with these present long, long nights just before Christmas, and our fears that we'll be overwhelmed by darkness and grief, as most of us live through our current losses.

Looking at all the empty places here in church – due to deaths and due to coronavirus – I'm reminded of so many treasured people I've loved and lost, for whom I grieve at Christmas. I think of others I was planning to be with – and now unexpectedly and suddenly cannot see. I remind myself that Christmas dinner and hugs from relatives will usually keep safely for a few weeks or months. I learned about this in those 3 year separations when I was a missionary in Thailand.

May each one of us personally experience God's comfort and help in managing our battered emotions through these dark days, either directly or though the love of other people.

In our darkness, may we truly know God's light. *Amen*

Andrew Davis wrote an article for the previous edition of the Key, and has written a follow-up article here! If any readers have memories of Church activities please do be confident in sharing them!

My ramblings published in the Christmas issue of your magazine, memories of a chorister in Michael Bailey's choir in the late 1960s, have, it seems, been productive.

I want you all to know that I've had some really lovely e-mails, from your church office, from Richard S. (a fellow chorister all those years ago and still, it seems, 50+ years later, a member of your worshipping community) ... and from Michael Bailey too. A dear friend of Sheila (my Mum) also took time to phone me – and we had a lovely “catch-up” chat.

It seems you may now be subjected to more memories of “the old days” (yes: please DO go for it, RS!).

Maybe it'll be interesting for you if I tell you a bit about what happened to me immediately after I could no longer sing treble – my voice changing.

I was about 15 and a half when my voice changed. This corresponded with my O-level year and, indeed, I continued singing at Temple (and Bromley Parish Church) to the end of that academic year.

I was then given an academic scholarship so was able to continue into the sixth form at City of London School. Back at BPC, I had been recruited to teach in the Sunday school. I remember spending “free lessons” in the Library at school working on preparing my Sunday school lessons ... but, as I mentioned in my earlier article, I really had very little idea. I was dreadful!

At some stage, it must have been suggested that, post-choir, bell-ringing might be “the thing” for me. I remember a guy, called Hanscombe I think. A former chorister (I remembered him from when I'd first joined Mary Walker's choir), now a bell-ringer. I certainly attended a few bell-ringing practices ... but when I once failed to catch the “sally” at one moment and my trainer, fortunately grabbing hold at the last moment and being swung up to the roof of the ringing chamber thus saving the “stay” from being cracked ... I felt I was NOT a bell-ringer!

I also remember a sort of tentative church youth club. We met in that room beyond the choir vestry – the room which had the organ blower at the far end.

I'm not sure it was a great success. I just remember some of us sitting round, some on old sofas, some on the floor (Sammy was there, I think) ... but have no recollection at all of what else might have happened. Not a great success I think. But, Bromley Parish Church, well done for trying!

Now, 50+ years later, I have been thinking about how I came to be the Christian I am.

YOU, at Bromley Parish Church, taught me about the Christian life. Michael Bailey saw my musical possibilities. Actually, since I last wrote, I've been able to write to him, to thank him. But once I was no longer able to sing treble all those years ago, you didn't forget me. You were concerned for me, concerned to find where my next calling might be – and to support me. As I hope I've shown above.

I hope I've not let you down. Some of my pupils over the years asked to be confirmed. Three or four of my pupils even became my godsons: what an honour!

Here in 2020, during the pandemic, I find myself worshipping online each week at 11.15 a.m. on Sunday mornings at the Temple Church. The music is wonderful and they still use the old words...

House Cleaning service

Regular - bi weekly - Monthly - one off cleans

Call Lena Daley today to book your free home quote on 0203 609 2417

DBS checked - Affordable - Reliable

Church Rooms for hire.

Available for hire for meetings, study and Exercise Classes, etc.

We have varied, comfortable, no smoking accommodation with kitchen facilities and disabled access and toilet facilities to the rooms.



Rooms can be viewed on:
www.bromleyparishchurch.org



HOME CARE PREFERRED

AWARD WINNING CARE AT HOME

Plus lots of friendship, fun and support



PROUDLY PROVIDING QUALITY SUPPORT AT HOME AND IN
THE COMMUNITY FOR PEOPLE SINCE 2012
CALL AND SPEAK TO A MEMBER OF OUR FRIENDLY TEAM:

0203 6565 605

HealthInvestor
Awards 2019

Finalist

HealthInvestor
Awards 2016

WINNER

www.homecarepreferred.com/bromley

27th Jan: St Angela Merici, helping children in need

With international concern about the welfare of children, Angela is a good saint to remember. Not only did she herself survive a harsh childhood, but she went on to dedicate her own life to helping children in need.

Angela was born near Lake Garda, in Desenzano, where she was orphaned as a young child. The 1480s were hardly an easy time for orphaned girls, but somehow Angela survived to grow into her teens, when she became a Franciscan tertiary. However miserable her own childhood, Angela chose to let it work for good in her life: she decided to devote her own life to the education of poor girls. Girls! This was a time when most of the *men* were illiterate!

But Angela was an audacious woman, and she had only just begun. She and some close companions set to work in the name of Christ, seeking out the poor families in their community. Angela taught the young girls all that she could, and prayed with them, assuring them that even they were precious in the eyes of their Creator.

All of which left the Roman Catholic Church badly baffled. What should they do with religious sisters who had taken no vows, still wore their lay clothes, and who, instead of walling themselves up in some nunnery to lead an enclosed life, spent their days in a decidedly mobile, highly visible fashion – out and about in community support?

It wasn't until 1565, some 25 years AFTER Angela's death, that the Church decided it approved of such work. By then the Ursuline nuns, as they were by then called, were going from strength to strength. They still flourish today, with some 2400 Ursuline Sisters in 27 provinces on six continents. They have been well described as 'the oldest and most considerable teaching order of women in the RC Church.'

It took nearly 300 years, but in 1807 the Roman Catholic Church decided that Angela, unveiled, unenclosed and unsupervised as she had been, had been a saint after all – and 'made' her one.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER (A WOMEN LED, GLOBAL, ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT)



Press Release



BUILD ON A STRONG FOUNDATION

Women of the Republic of Vanuatu (located in the South Pacific Ocean) have prepared this year's service. The black and white sandy beaches, coral reefs with coloured fishes, lovely birds, fruits and nuts in the forest, all make the islands a pristine environment but they are vulnerable to frequent tropical storms, earthquakes, cyclones, tsunamis and active volcanoes. Women, men and children of all ages are called to 'Build on a strong foundation' and live in unity, love and peace in the context of ethnic and cultural diversity like Vanuatu and so many other places around the world.

World Day of Prayer is an international, inter-church organisation which enables us to hear the thoughts of women from all parts of the world; their hopes, concerns and prayers. The preparation for the day is vast. An international committee is based in New York and there are national committees in each participating country. Regional conferences meet to consider the service and then local groups make their plans. Finally at a church near you on **Friday 5 March 2021** people will gather to celebrate the service prepared by the women of Vanuatu.

The Day of Prayer is celebrated in over 170 countries. It begins in Samoa, and prayer in native languages travels throughout the world – through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas before finishing in American Samoa some 39 hours later.

For further information and resources, together with details of services in your area see the WDP website: wwdp.org.uk

Please use this space to pass messages on to the Church community – whether it is a prayer request, a thank you, a craft idea, a recipe...



Church of England Daily Hope free phone line – 0800 804 8044 - please spread the word.

The Church of England have set up a free phone line, available twenty four hours a day, particularly for those in mind who are unable to join online church services during this period of restriction. On offer are music, prayers, reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone.

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
1 Samuel chapter 26 - 27:1

When King Saul wasn't fighting the Philistines to stop them invading Israel he was still trying to hunt down David.

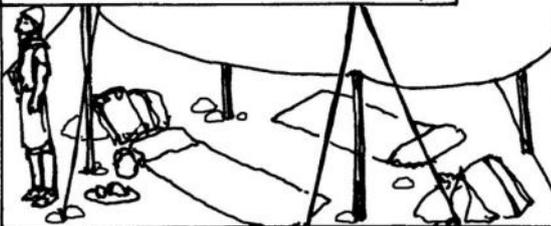
People came to tell King Saul where David and his men were hiding. Saul took 3000 of his best soldiers and went to look for David...



When David heard that Saul was near, he crept up to the camp.



He saw that Saul and his army commander Abner were sleeping in the middle of the camp.



Who will come with me into the camp?

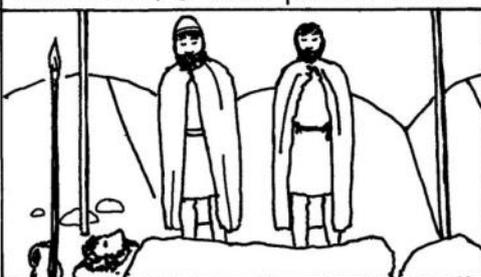


Abishai said he would.

That night God made all the camp sleep soundly.



David and Abishai reached the centre and found Saul

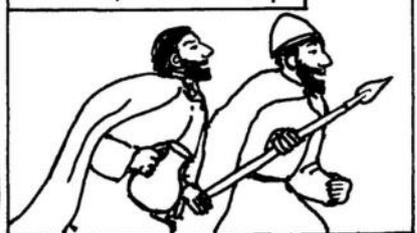


This chance is from God! I'll kill him!



No! God chose him as king!

They took Saul's spear and water jar and crept out of the camp.



When they had got far enough away, David shouted



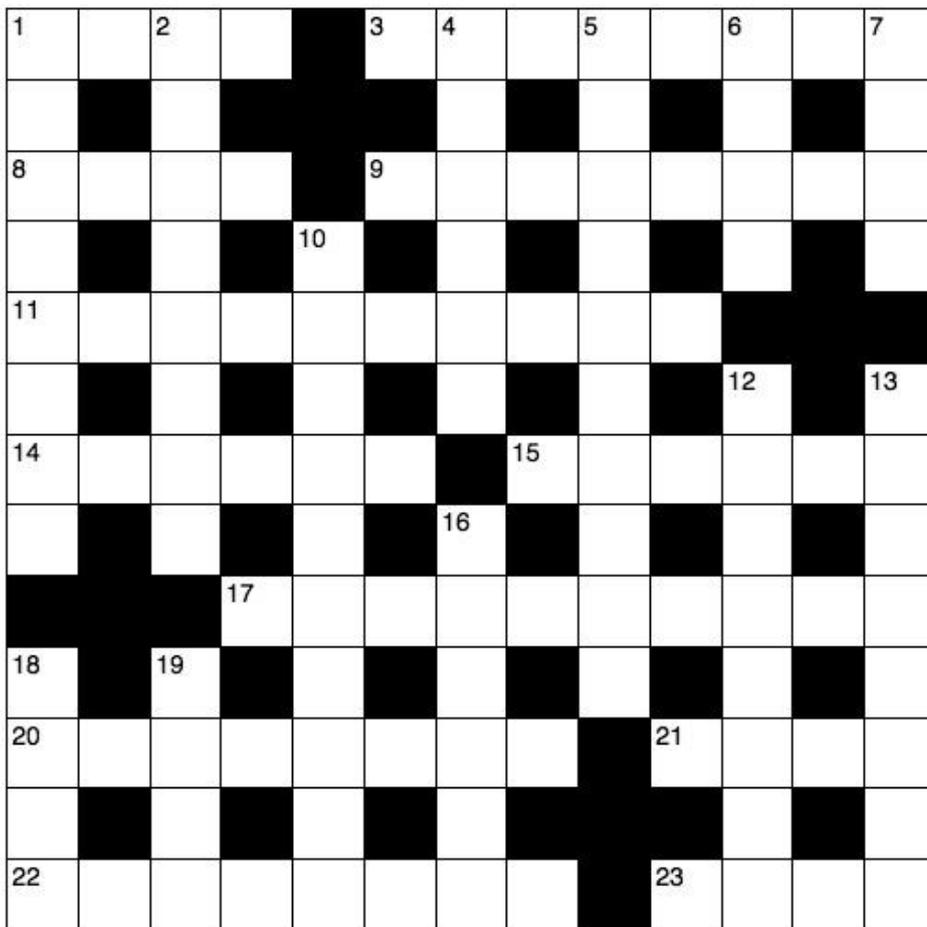
Abner, why didn't you protect your king? I've taken his spear and water jar!

King Saul heard David and shouted back



David, I'm so sorry! I won't try to harm you again!

But David knew that Saul would try again to kill him, so he left Israel and went to Philistia.



ACROSS: 1, Cock. 3, Snacks. 8, Play. 9, Par-
adise. 11, Faithfully. 14, Emesh. 15, Unseen.
17, Armageddon. 20, Benjamin. 21, Beri. 22,
Capitals. 23, USPG.
DOWN: 1, Cup of tea. 2, Charisma. 4, Heap up.
5, Challenged. 6, Lois. 7, Slew. 10, The Serv-
ant. 12, Lewdness. 13, Unending. 16, Daniel.
18, BBFC. 19, Snap.

Across

- 1 'Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a — began to crow' (John 18:27) (4)
- 3 Fetters (Job 33:11) (8)
- 8 Perform on a musical instrument (1 Samuel 16:23) (4)
- 9 Paul describes it as 'the third heaven' (2 Corinthians 12:2-4) (8)
- 11 Loyal (Deuteronomy 11:13) (10)
- 14 Hens? Me? (anag.) (6)
- 15 Not visible (Matthew 6:6) (6)
- 17 Predicted site of the final great battle (Revelation 16:16) (10)
- 20 Jacob's youngest son (Genesis 35:18) (8)
- 21 One of Zophar's eleven sons (1 Chronicles 7:36) (4)
- 22 For example, London, Paris, Rome (8)
- 23 United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (1,1,1,1)

Down

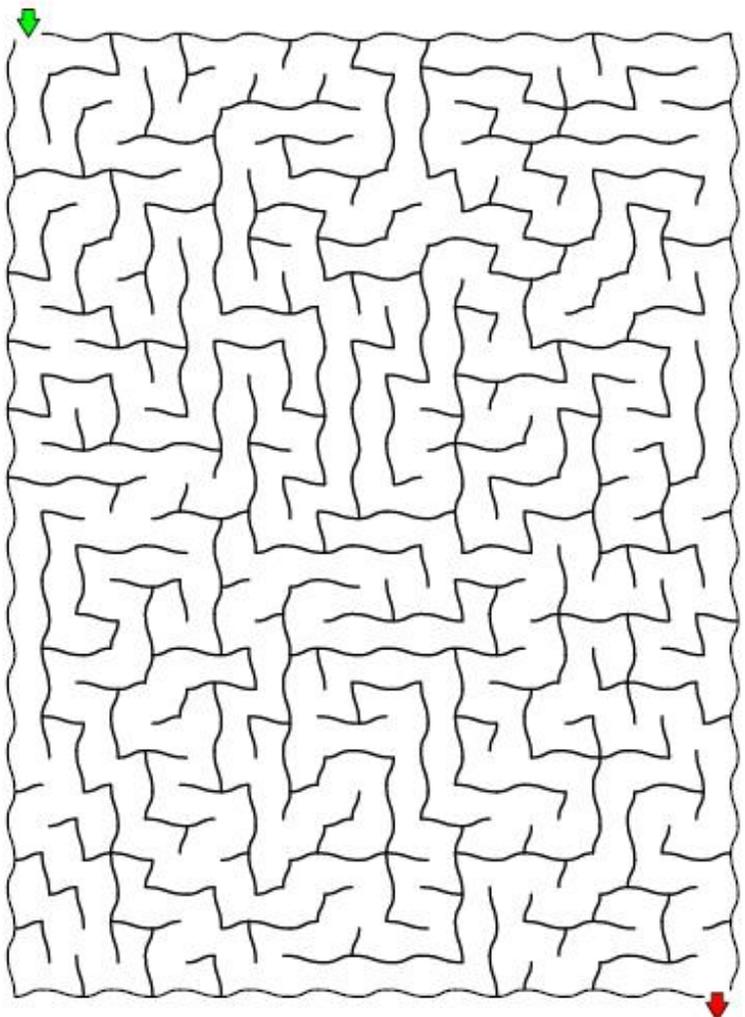
- 1 Favourite church activity: Fellowship round a — — — (3,2,3)
- 2 Divinely bestowed powers or talents (8)
- 4 Pile together (1 Thessalonians 2:16) (4,2)
- 5 Commanded to justify (John 8:13) (10)
- 6 Timothy's grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5) (4)
- 7 Killed (Psalm 78:34) (4)
- 10 One of Graham Kendrick's best-known songs, — — King (3,7)
- 12 Indecency (Mark 7:22) (8)
- 13 Unceasing (Jeremiah 15:18) (8)
- 16 He prophesied 'the abomination that causes desolation' (Matthew 24:15) (6)
- 18 British Board of Film Classification (1,1,1,1)
- 19 Pans (anag.) (4)

		3						1
	1						7	5
		8	9	5			3	
4	5			6				
				3			1	2
	9			7	2	5		
7	3						8	
6						1		

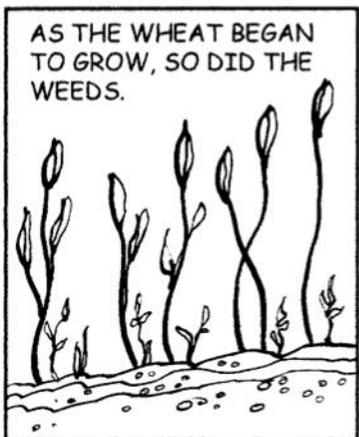
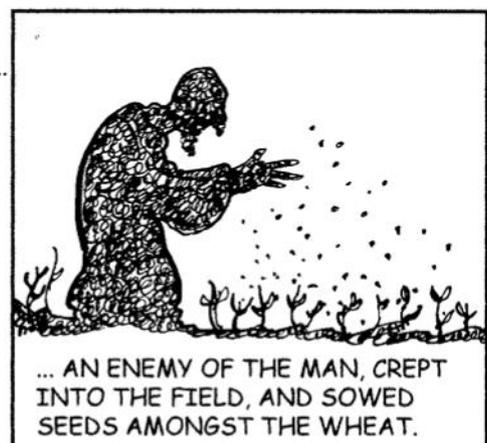
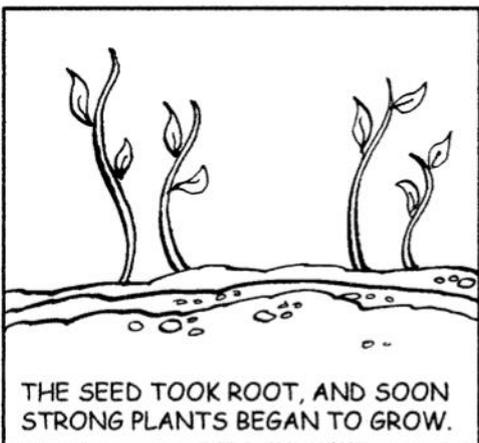
Sudoku:

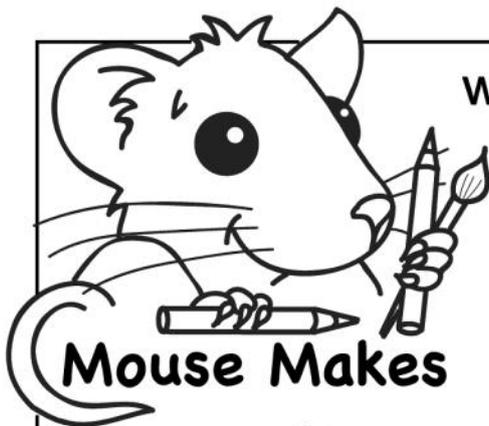
Insert numbers 1-9 into each row, column, and 3x3 box

© 2008 KrazyDad.com



The tale of
the
Wheat
and the
Weeds





What happened after Jesus had been born in Bethlehem?

READ Matthew 2:1-12

Who came from the East?



Why had they come?

What were they following?

Who was alarmed by their arrival?

Who had the prophet written about?

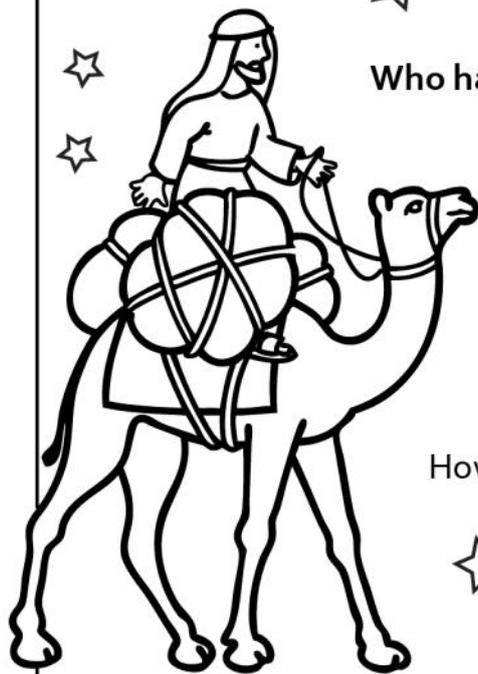
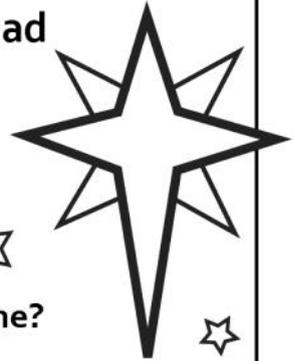
Where were they then sent?

What were they to look for?
..... and why?

Where did the star lead them?

Who did they see? What did they do?

How were they warned to go home another way?



READ Matthew 2:13-23

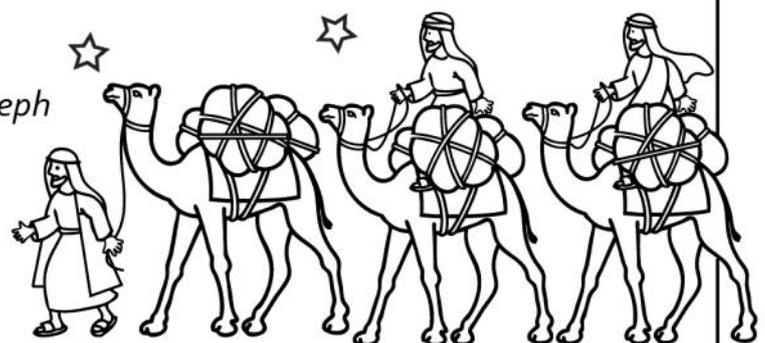
Who appeared to Joseph?

What was he told? Why? What did he do?

Who then became angry?.... and why? What horrible thing did he then do?

When Herod died where was Joseph told to take his family?

Where did Jesus finally grow up?



Prayer for New Year 2021

Dear Father God,

Here we are, nervously wobbling on the brink of this New Year. All our hopes, expectations, plans and possibilities for last year stolen by the relentless pandemic.

The landscape of our lives has been shaken and changed, Lord. Nothing is the same. Normality has been redefined. 2020 was a year like no other. How dare we move into the uncertainty of 2021?

Lord, we dare - because of the one, wonderful certainty we do have - that You have been with us through it all. Thank you that You sent Jesus to save us, to offer us that bigger reality of life for all eternity - if we put our trust in Him, Jesus, who never changes.

You promise that You will never leave us or forsake us. We **will** be able to navigate the challenges lie ahead, if we keep our eyes on Jesus, our compass; if we trust His Holy Spirit to lead us, however strange and unfamiliar the days of 2021 may be.

You are with us! You are with us! You are with us!

Thank you, Lord of the years, that You know and love each one of us, and that we are safe in Your hands. We can go forward.

In Jesus' Name,

Amen.

By Daphne Kitching

2021

At the passing of time I'm aghast
Another New Year coming fast!
Can it be that much worse
Or more of a curse
Than this horrible year that has passed?

By Nigel Beeton

HAPPY NEW YEAR

(An acrostic poem where the first letter of each line spells out the title of the poem)

Heaven's gift of another year
As the old departs and the new is born,
Plans for a future and a hope
Preparing us for each new dawn.

Yesterday has gone forever,
New days and ventures lie ahead,
Even darkness turns to light
When we make the Lord our head.

Yielding to the Holy Spirit
Ever mindful that He's there,
As we live our lives before Him
Rejoicing in His loving care.

By Megan Carter

A New Year's resolution-prayer - following in His footsteps

Almighty eternal, just and merciful God, grant us the desire to do only what pleases you, and the strength to do only what you command. Cleanse our souls, enlighten our minds, and inflame our hearts with your Holy Spirit, that we may follow in the footsteps of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

St Francis of Assisi (1182 – 1226)

As a New Year begins

A prayer by Karl Barth (1886 – 1968). This most prominent Protestant theologian of his time spent much of his life resisting the Nazi movement, and so knew a thing or two about entering a New Year undaunted by troubles all around him.

O Lord, our Father! At the turn of the year... our hearts are filled with sombre thoughts... our ears are deafened by the voices of the radio and the newspapers, with their numerous predictions for the coming year. Instead we want to hear Your word, Your voice, Your assurance, Your guidance. We know that You are in our midst, and are eager to give us all that we need, whether we ask or not.

...We ask for one thing only: that you collect our scattered thoughts, getting rid of the confused and defiant thoughts that may distract us, and thus enable us to concentrate on your limitless generosity to us. You were abundantly generous to us last year, and will be no less generous to us next year, and in every year to come. Fill us with gratitude to you.

Diary Dates for January

Public worship is temporarily suspended following the increase of Covid infections in and around the Bromley town area and the subsequent move into tier four regulations. Our services continue to be live streamed and can be found on our YouTube channel via our Facebook page. Updates to the current situation and changes to services will be posted on our website

www.bromleyparishchurch.org

Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer are said daily at 8.30am and 5.15pm, please join in from your homes.

A service booklet can be found on our website at

www.bromleyparishchurch.org, if you would like a paper copy please email the church office at administrator@bromleyparishchurch.org

**Church remains open for private prayer Sundays and Wednesdays
12noon – 2.00pm**

Our QR code can be found at the entrance into church for those with the NHS Test and Trace app.

Please follow the safety measures in place when entering church.

Face coverings are mandatory.

Saturday 2nd January

No Collection of Starter Pack donations this morning

Sunday 3rd January**Second Sunday of Christmas**

9.00am Family Breakfast Club ~ Zoom, meeting details available from the parish office

10.30am Parish Communion

12noon-2.00pm Church open for private prayer

Wednesday 6th January

10.30am Prayer during the Day

12noon-2.00pm Church open for private prayer

Thursday 7th January

10.00am – 11.00am Healing Prayer meeting ~ prayers will be said from homes for the sick and those in need.

Saturday 9th January

10.00am – 12noon BPC Gardening Club

Sunday 10th January**Epiphany**

10.30am Parish Communion

12noon-2.00pm Church open for private prayer

Wednesday 13th January

10.30am Prayer during the Day

12noon-2.00pm Church open for private prayer

Sunday 17th January

Second Sunday of Epiphany

9.00am Family Breakfast Club ~

Zoom, meeting details available from the parish office

10.30am All-age Worship with Communion

12noon-2.00pm Church open for private prayer

Wednesday 20th January

10.30am Prayer during the Day

12noon-2.00pm Church open for private prayer

Sunday 24th January

Third Sunday of Epiphany

10.30am Parish Communion

12noon-2.00pm Church open for private prayer

4pm Godspace TBC, details will be published on the Church website

Wednesday 27th January

10.30am Prayer during the Day

12noon-2.00pm Church open for private prayer

Sunday 31st January

Candlemas

10.30am Parish Communion

12noon-2.00pm Church open for private prayer