



THE PARISH CHURCH OF
ST LEONARD, LEXDEN

ORDINARY PEOPLE. EXTRAORDINARY GOD.



PARISH MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2020 50p



A New Year of Discipleship

It's January, a time when we look for a new beginning. In our restlessness we seize the opportunity of a new year to seek renewal, a new start. We look for ways to motivate and refresh our lives, some of us with new year resolutions, indicators of our dissatisfaction with the way we are. Gym memberships experience a surge at this time of year with 'January joiners'; diets are begun, smokers decide to stop. We want to do something good.

After the general election I was struck by the similarity to the aftermath of the referendum in 2016: the sense of shock and disbelief among many, and fear of what may lie ahead. But in both cases, the result was the view of the majority, and perhaps the outcome of the election has shown us that a second referendum would not have changed anything. What has been highlighted is the degree of discontent and unhappiness in our society. People are desperately looking for a strong leader to sort things out.

Two thousand years ago in the Holy Land, people were also looking for a strong leader to come and solve their problems for them. However, they had already decided what sort of leader that should be, and when the Messiah came, his way was different, and they didn't recognise him. We have just celebrated his birth, when humble shepherds believed the message of the angels, and left their flocks to see him. In January we recall the visit of the Magi, educated and wealthy men, who travelled from a long distance with gifts, because he had been revealed to them as the Prince of Peace.

His coming into the world was a new beginning, a turning point. He affected the lives of everyone who encountered him. Some followed him and listened to his teaching; others saw him as a threat and tried to get rid of him, but there was no denying his impact. He preached a new lifestyle, not based on self-advancement, status and wealth, but on seeing

and treating each other as he saw us, as beloved children of our Creator, as brothers and sisters, every one of us with the same feelings, needs, worries and aspirations. This was not, and is still not, a comfortable way of thinking in a society which prioritises self-interest, rivalry and possessions.

Jesus's leadership style is still our greatest example; his is a way of thinking and living which brings hope as we embark on the year ahead. As developments unfold in 2020, we pray that they will be born of wisdom and compassion and will be for the common good. There will be many for whom the future is uncertain, and we can reach out to them. No parent wants to rely on the Foodbank, but it is a reality for many, driven by desperation. The charity Christians Against Poverty (CAP) exists to give families the chance to escape from crushing debt. We can give generously to charities such as these and be certain that we are doing something to help others. Even if we can't personally see who benefits from our giving, we can be sure it will have a positive impact on someone else's life.

We are blessed at St Leonard's with a large and loving congregation, but we can only continue to be active and serve our community if we are strong and flourishing. That relies on our commitment, on goodwill and on seeing ourselves as part of the process. Without us, there is no St Leonard's, and some of the hardest workers are not getting any younger. As a new year's resolution, perhaps we could all consider doing one new thing to help keep our building welcoming, and sustain our work, mission and worship. There is so much to do, and together we will be able to help shape the year ahead, and contribute to a better future, for others and for ourselves.

Have happy and blessed new year.



Cover image 'Candle' by Martha Simpkins (digital artwork)

JANUARY DIARY

Saturday 4th January 2020

8.30am Men's Breakfast in the Nicholls Room

SUNDAY 5th January: ·EPIPHANY

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am ALL AGE EUCHARIST

6.30pm Evensong and Sermon



Tuesday 7th

10.00am Holy Communion at Wren House

7.30pm 'Medley' house group (Rosemary)

Wednesday 8th

10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee

Thursday 9th

8.00am Eucharist

SUNDAY 12th: BAPTISM OF CHRIST

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am PARSH EUCHARIST with Junior Church

3.00pm OMG+

6.30pm Evensong and Sermon



Monday 13th

7.00pm Eucharist

7.45pm PCC in the Nicholls Room

Tuesday 14th

2.30 pm CAMEO meets at 10 Wroxham Close

Wednesday 15th

10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee

Thursday 16th

8.00am Eucharist

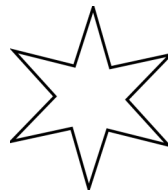
2.30pm 'Constable' house group (Hugh)

Saturday 18th

8.30am Women's Breakfast in the Nicholls Room
12.30pm Friendship Lunch in Church

SUNDAY 19th: EPIPHANY 2

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church
6.30pm Evensong and Sermon



Monday 20th

11.00am Holy Communion at Hill House

Wednesday 22nd

10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee

Thursday 23rd

8.00am Eucharist

SUNDAY 26th: EPIPHANY 3

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST with Junior Church
6.30pm Healing Eucharist

Wednesday 29th

10.00am Eucharist followed by coffee

Thursday 30th

8.00am Eucharist

Saturday 1st February

8.30am Men's Breakfast in the Nicholls Room

SUNDAY 2nd February: CANDLEMAS

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
9.45am ALL AGE EUCHARIST with Christingle
6.30pm Choral Evensong





From the Editor

A very Happy New Year to you! I hope your 2020 is happy, peaceful and fulfilling. My apologies that the magazine's publication was a little later this month. I realised too late that, to accommodate the Christmas holidays, I needed to have set

the submission deadline a week earlier than usual. Next year.... That said, had I been more organised, I would have missed the opportunity to deliver Bishop Stephen's exciting news (p. 14) to you— literally hot off the press. December, leading as it does to the jolting turn of another year, is always hectic and tiring. This year a tumultuous election made it even more so. A number of our articles this month reflect on endings but others highlight positive new beginnings, and Viv's opening words draw us back from the hurly-burly of politics to the grounding and unifying message of our faith. Someone dropped a small contribution into the 'Items for the Magazine' box I've placed at the back of church that was, I think, pointing in the same direction. It simply quoted an old adage:

'However black the clouds may be, In time they'll pass away, Have faith and trust and you will see, God's light make bright your day.'

As promised, this month's cover is Martha Simpkins's digital design depicting a luminous candle. Do keep sending me your news, articles and advertisements.

All best wishes

Ruth

Thank you!

We are extremely grateful for the many lovely Christmas cards we received from you.

Thank you!

With love,

Matt and family.

Have you been bereaved in the last few years?

You may remember that, last summer, we ran a new group called **Lexden Bereavement Group** for people who live in the area. The group was led by three volunteers who are not trained counsellors but are trained in bereavement care.

This was a pilot group, the aim being to offer a friendly and safe place in which those attending could share their bereavement stories with others in a similar situation over a cup of tea. Those who came listened to, encouraged and consoled each other.

The group met fortnightly and, after eight sessions, the participants made favourable comments about their experiences:

"I found the course very helpful and enjoyed the company of people in the same situation."

"I enjoyed being in a small group."

"We have all become friends."

The next group will start on Thursday 9th January and will take place between 2.30pm and 4pm.

If you, or anyone you know, would like to join us, please email her on margaret@stleonardslexden.org.uk.

Margaret, Janice and Marion



ST LEONARD'S PARENT AND TODDLER GROUP



Some of you will already be aware that, after much heart searching, I have decided it is time for me to hand over the reins of the Toddler Group to someone younger. This was a decision that has been hard to take; this group has been a big part of my life since I set it up on 8th January 1997.



Once I made my decision to retire, I was concerned that it might be difficult to find someone to take over. I had tried to find a replacement but, whilst they were happy to help, nobody wanted to run the group. However, I am absolutely delighted that Siân has offered to take my place. She has been helping us when she could for some time and is wonderful with the children and mothers, and much more up to speed with regard to advertising on Facebook and other social media than I am. She also has the advantage of meeting people who

might be interested at the school gate and, because of her willingness to take on the role of running the group, I shall be retiring at the end of this Christmas term.

This group was the vision of Revd Stephen Carter and it was he who persuaded me to set it up. I agreed to do so for a year until it was up and running, and then I intended to let someone else take over, but I loved running it and being with the young children so much that I have continued until now. I have been fortunate over the years to have been blessed with helpers to whom I owe so much. Through the pages of this magazine I would like to thank them for all their hard work and for the fun and laughter I have shared with them.

Stephen came initially to help with refreshments despite his many other duties which often took him away.

Trisha Kirk, who many of you won't know as she moved some time ago, who came to sweep the floor and help get the toys out, returning at the end of the session to help clear up.

Chris Andrews, who came to make the refreshments and wash up.

Janice Chambers, who began to support us when her younger daughter attended the group and stayed on to help until she went to work.

Alan Sermons, who helped so much when his two daughters attended and still comes to lend a hand when he can if we need him.

All our wonderful Youth Workers who, like Thea, have been amazing.

Amy Adams, who is our latest helper, and is a great addition to the team.

Finally, two remarkable people who have worked beside me over the years, both freely offering their own special skills and supporting everything I have done:

Firstly, Ellen Bartlett, who began to help when her daughter attended with her baby and then stayed with me for ten years.

Secondly, Daphne Wielobob, who offered her help when Ellen left and has been with me for almost thirteen years. I don't think I could have continued so long without her. She has agreed to stay and help Siân and I know they will make a wonderful partnership.

Heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you and also to the parents who have helped when extra help was needed. I couldn't have managed without you.

My thanks must also go to Teresa and Matt who have both supported the group in every way.

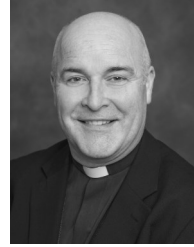
Every blessing.

Pauline Jarvis



The Church of England
in Essex and East London

Diocese of Chelmsford



January 2020

New Year message from The Right Reverend Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Chelmsford.

Live gently and enhance God's creation in 2020

When I'm having a bad day – or just as importantly, when I'm feeling a bit too pleased with myself – I say to myself that one day I will be my successors' predecessor. I find this helps me put myself in perspective. It also helps me to pray that the decisions I take are not simply for the good of the diocese while I'm bishop, but will be for the benefit of future generations in East London and Essex. As I pray for our diocese on the eve of 2020, I also wonder what our world will look like when the Bishop of Chelmsford writes their New Year message in 2070 or 2120.

This past year has seen concern for the environment grow. Where once we talked about sustainability, we now question whether the fundamentals of our present existence on this planet are sustainable at all. We now tend to talk about climate emergency not just climate change. As this emergency deepens, it is the poorest and most vulnerable who are suffering most.

In October, I took my staff team to the Franciscan Friary at Hilfield in Dorset to learn how a community of Christians can intentionally adapt their lives to not only reduce their environmental impact but also positively enhance their corner of creation. Please visit them yourself and learn from them. Their heat comes from biomass. Much of their power from solar. Their food is LOAF (local, organic, animal-friendly and fairly-traded). Their animals naturally tend their wildflower meadows and they generously work with their neighbours to create corridors to support natural habitats.

How would our attitude to God's creation differ if we, like the Franciscans, had to draw our water from the ground directly beneath our feet? Would we discharge the waste and chemicals into the soil and drains that we currently do?

Please join me this year in seeking to live gently in the world and enhance God's creation. You are your successors' predecessor. In 2020 bless the inheritance that you bequeath them.

I wish you a peaceful, gentle and sustainable 2020.

+ **Stephen**

Bishop Stephen Cottrell to become the next Archbishop of York

Just as this edition of the magazine containing Bishop Stephen's New Year message was about to go to press, the following announcement was made by the Diocese of Chelmsford and Downing Street...

"The Right Reverend Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Chelmsford, has been nominated by Her Majesty the Queen as the new Archbishop of York in succession to the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Dr John Sentamu."



Archbishop of York designate, Bishop Stephen, with The Most Reverend Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury. (Photo: Diocese of Chelmsford)

Bishop Stephen's letter on his appointment as the next Archbishop of York



The Church of England
in Essex and East London
Diocese of Chelmsford

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17 December 2019

Dear friends in Christ,

Downing Street announced this morning that I am to be the next Archbishop of York. I am humbled and excited to be called to this position of leadership and service in our Church, but I will also be sad at leaving the diocese where I was born and grew up. Being the Bishop of Chelmsford will always be one of the greatest honours of my life.

Please pray for me and for Rebecca as we prepare for this move. Please pray for the Diocese of York and for Archbishop Sentamu as he prepares for his retirement in June. Please pray for the dioceses and communities of the Northern Province and for Archbishop Justin and the whole Church of England.

I don't know exactly when I will be laying down my responsibilities as your bishop, but I will write again in the New Year with the details of what will be happening.

I love and will always love the diocese of Chelmsford. I love its diversity. I love its creativity. I love its possibility. I will continue to pray for the churches and people of East London and Essex and all who live and serve here; and I give thanks for all the joys I have shared with you these past nine years.

Thank you for the trust you have put in me. As we look forward to Christmas, may the song of peace that the angels sung echo in our hearts and lives and fill us with joy.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell
Bishop of Chelmsford

Greetings from the Via Dolorosa, Jerusalem

November 2019

As many of you know I am in Jerusalem doing some voluntary work at the Ecce Homo convent run by the Sisters of Zion and the Chemin Neuf Community.

Deborah Graham and I started working here for three months on 1st October and so our time here ends on 30th December.

The convent is near to the first 'station of the cross' on the Via Dolorosa, which is probably the busiest street in the Old City. The locals say that November has been the busiest they have ever known it to be for the last 30 years. It certainly seems that way too as there are hoards of tourists walking about between 9am -4pm and the 80 bedrooms here are full most of the time. We also have lots of groups visiting Ecce Homo for pre-booked masses. In addition, there are between 600-1000 people coming here each day to see the Lithostrata (which is in the basement of the convent).

At the start of Advent a few Christmas trees went up in hotel gardens. Some lights were put up in the shopping mall and one or two 'pop-up shops' appeared selling Christmas decorations. Hotels and churches held an annual bazaar, and, in the Basilica of the church at Ecce Homo, a mass to celebrate the 'Feast of Christ the King' was held on 23rd November, which was very well attended.

Without doubt the run up to Christmas here is totally different to the same period in England: the weather has been gloriously sunny so far and it looks to be continuing that way. There are crowds of people outside, but they want to 'see the sites' rather than spend money on mate-



rial goods. Furthermore, I have yet to come across a shop selling Christmas cards or wrapping paper, and in the main department store on Jaffa Road there is no hint of Christmas being just a few weeks away either. Not a piece of tinsel anywhere!

However, Bethlehem and the Church of the Nativity are unbelievably busy: the queue to see the spot where Jesus was born was three hours long when I visited last week. It is likely to get even busier in the run up to Christmas and, because of that (and the hassle of getting through the various check points in order to get to Bethlehem) it is probable that I will go to a service at St George's Cathedral (which is just outside Jerusalem's city walls) during the festive period.

I look forward to seeing everyone again shortly and, in the meantime, send my best wishes for a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Sharon Kennedy

(Photographs: Sunrise over Jerusalem, taken from the rooftop of Ecce Homo)



Christmas Bazaar 2019



Thanks are due to all who helped in any way to make the 2019 bazaar such a success especially the stall holders and catering team. We had a very good attendance which contributed to the excellent community spirit and financially we raised £1850, £200 above 2018.

Kathleen and Tom Scrimgeour



Thank you from the Cake Stall— Christmas Bazaar 2019



Thank you, thank you, thank you – to all you lovely people who gave so generously of your time and culinary efforts to make the Cake Stall a huge success again this year!

We were able to showcase your talents splendidly – many cakes of all shapes, sizes and flavours, several varieties of bread, loads (but still not enough!) scones and other savoury items, together with a quite amazing array of jams, jellies, marmalades and chutneys – the largest selection ever!

I should like to take this opportunity to thank Margaret, Yvonne and Sally for not only baking their socks off but also for their ongoing suggestions and support every year.

So, on behalf of the Cake Stall team, thank you again and we send you Christmas greetings and our wish for a healthy and happy 2020!

Mary Hanmer

Friendship Lunches

Four years ago David Watkins and I held the first Friendship Lunch at St Leonard's. We were delighted to welcome 25 people and very quickly the numbers have risen to 35 as our normal number. Sharing a meal in friendship and spending time chatting in a happy environment is our aim, and we warmly welcome people from Lexden to join us. We are so lucky to have a large, very willing and happy band of cooks and servers who I can't thank enough for their help. We had hoped to run a lunch in December but my helpers and the church were a bit too busy then. So, our next lunch will be on **Saturday 18th January 2020**.



We look forward to seeing you all in 2020.

Beverley Kettell *bev@stleonardslexden.org.uk*

LEXDEN LADIES GROUP

On December 10th we joined the Mothers' Union for our annual Carol Service which, this year, was arranged and taken by the Revd Maggie Whiteman. (See details in Mothers' Union/CAMEO article on p. 25.)

The collection was donated to the Operation Smile charity.



After the service we all enjoyed tea and mince pies prepared and served by Lexden Ladies.

Our next meeting is not until **March 3rd 2020** at **2.30pm** in the church ,when we are looking forward to a concert by the Ukulele Band. We are making this an open event and all are invited. Do make a note in your diaries!!

We wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Margaret

Tel: 579629

Bridge Drives

For nearly 20 years, we have been holding monthly Bridge Drives in aid of Church funds. Over the years we have raised over £40,000!

The Drives started in the main hall with an average of 18 tables but, as numbers dwindled for various reasons, we moved to the Nicholls Room and we now have only four or five regular tables.

This loyal remnant enjoy playing very much and want to keep the group going but we would really like some more players. We are a really friendly and welcoming group so why not come and join us? If you would like to come along but would like some more information first, please contact either of us:

Brenda Cant

Jean Holden



Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

We held our Annual Joint Carol Service with Lexden Ladies on 11th December in church. It took a slightly different form this year and marked the last meeting of our membership as a branch of the Mothers' Union, although some members wish to keep their affiliation.

We are grateful to The Revd Maggie Whiteman for taking the service and compiling the Order of Service with Jean Holden with thought-provoking readings and well-loved carols.

Sheila Cook led the prayers and Janet Crees played the organ.

As was explained in the December magazine, in the New Year we propose to move on by forming a new fellowship group: CAMEO (Come And Meet Each Other). This group plans to meet in each other's houses approximately six times a year, with one meeting being a church service.

Our first meeting will be on Tuesday 14th January at the home of Jean Holden, 10 Wroxham Close at 2.30 pm. Please come and join us!

We were pleased to welcome Vivien Chapman, Area Deanery Chairman to our Meeting. She presented Jean Holden with a bouquet of flowers from our members in gratitude of her unstinting devotion during her time in office as Interim Enrolling Member.

After the Service, Lexden Ladies provided us all with tea and coffee, mince pies and Stollen cake.

We would like to wish all a Merry Christmas and a peaceful, happy and healthy 2020.

Jean Hallett





**JUNIOR
Church**

January

5 th January	All-age Eucharist
12 th January	The anointed time - God's affirmation of his Son. <i>Matthew 3.13-17</i>
19 th January	An encouraging start - What it means to be church. <i>1 Corinthians 1.1-9</i>
26 th January	Cross purposes - What unites us in Christ. <i>1 Corinthians 1.10-18</i>



Bringing the message of Christmas to parishioners at home

As many of you know, Junior Church put together little bags of gifts and thoughts to send out to members of the church who struggle to attend physically. We include chocolate, toiletries, flowers and crafts and usually the children write messages or draw pictures to include. This Christmas we thought it would be nice to include an original and seasonal message. I wanted to share with you the poem that I wrote to include in their Christmas bags this year.

We think it is really important that the children know how lucky they are to be able to get to church even if sometimes it isn't their first choice of Sunday morning activity! We also wanted to thank everyone that has ever taken a bag to someone - they are most gratefully received and we do get lots of lovely thank-you notes which we always read to the children.

Kirsty Harvey

With lots of love from Rachel, Daphne, Janice, Kirsty, Linda, Rosemary, Kerry, Susie, Thea and all the children at Junior Church

A Dark Night



A dark night, a stable, a baby arrives
When a sudden bright star appears in the skies
A dark night, some shepherds, awoken with fright
By visions producing a wonderful light
A dark night, they follow, hardly believing that they
Might find the Christ child, angels leading the way
A dark night, a manger instead of a bed
No silk pillow, but straw, supporting his head
A dark night, a mother; tired, afraid
Can't comprehend the difference she's made
A dark night, a gathering, a worshipful scene
But to us, here and now, just what does it mean?
Our dark nights, like that one, feel far from the sun
But Christ's light shining down joins us as one
A dark night no longer, due to that baby boy
May your Christmas be filled with peace and with joy.

Changing the view ... public planting in Lexden

One way I seek to demonstrate my faith is by trying to improve our local area by planting up planters in six public locations in Lexden. The idea is to make the journey to work a little more pleasant for people by giving them something nice to look at whilst stuck in traffic queues!

As the public planting I do is aimed at cheering up the passing motorist, it needs to have a visual impact from 20 yards away. This is quite different to plantings designed for nearby pedestrians. For example, the council planter at the town end of Crouch Street contains a variety of plants including conifers, pansies, polyanthus and variegated ivy.



The first of two lozenge shaped beds at the Lexden end of Crouch Street contains wallflower borders with a few yellow/green variegated shrubs for instant colour. The second gets driven over occasionally so tough bellis belle are included to border (and protect) existing sweet williams!

The steel planter near Norman Way suffers occasional vandalism so I need tough plants that can survive being evicted! Bellis belle are useful again; these will have a mixture of daisy like flowers.

Near the bottom of Glen Avenue, I have put four wooden planters. This year they contain nothing but orange or yellow flowering pansies. Occasionally people try to steal the planters but abandon them when they find they have no base so they sometimes need replanting!



I also plant up the half water butt near the Chinese takeaway at the top of Straight Road. Being mindful of cultural differences, I avoid including any white flowers if possible here due to their association with death and mourning.

My last location is the Hill House nursing home near Lexden Church, where there are two planters on the wall.

Whether planting in public spaces or in our gardens, the choice of winter flowering plants is more limited compared to summer but these are my preferences (in order).

1. Pansies or Violas. For winter, I opt for cheerful colours such as yellow, orange or red.
2. Bellis belle are tough with a good root system and have attractive, daisy-like flowers.
3. Polyanthus, which I prefer to primroses as the flower stems are taller. (Vine weevil can be a problem but I've only experienced in planters using old soil, not the ground, and there is a soil spray available.)
4. Wallflowers. These have a shorter flowering season compared to the bedding plants above.

Happy New Year and happy planting!

Andy Hamilton



The old water trough near Lexden Church

Christmas Tree

We are so very grateful to the Doubleday family, owners of The Barn Plant and Garden Centre, Turkey Cock Lane, Stanway for the gift of our Church Christmas tree.

Tom Scrimgeour



Spinalonga



Several years ago, Win Kenway recommended I read the book *The Island* by Victoria Hislop. Little did she know the effect it would have on me. It tells the story of Spinalonga, an island located near Agios Nikolaos in the north east of Crete in the Gulf of Mirabella, which was used as a leper colony from 1903 to 1957. I was so inspired that I immediately wrote to LEPRAs who began to send me details of their fundraising events.

Many of you will remember the time when I needed to raise £1700 to join one of their charity walks. The plan was to trek across Crete and end up on Spinalonga, where Victoria, an ambassador for LEPRAs, would meet us and explain how she did her research. At St Leonard's we raised an amazing £2400 which was gratefully received by LEPRAs, but sadly the trip was cancelled due to lack of support.

This year three friends and I decided to have a holiday together and it was suggested we go Crete so I could visit Spinalonga. In mid September I finally got to see the island.

Spinalonga has a remarkable history. Its position makes it an ideal fortress and the island has been used as such from ancient times. In 1579 the Venetians erected a new fortress there, whilst later the Ottomans developed it into a settlement with over a thousand residents. This was abandoned when Ottoman rule ended in 1903. The Crete government then ruled that the lepers who lived all around Crete should be rounded up and confined to the island. They were more or less declared 'dead' to the rest of the world and were stripped of all assets and dignity. They were rowed across the short stretch of water from the little town of Plaka. On arrival, they walked through the dark, forbidding Dante's Gate, an arched tunnel so curved that neither end



is visible from the other. Once through, they saw the place that they believed was to be their home until they died. Agonisingly, they could see across the water to the mainland where life went on without them.

At first, conditions were appalling. With no one in charge it was a matter of survival. With little help from the government the lepers lived in rags, fought each other for food and lived among the fortress buildings. Gradually some form of order was introduced, and they began to rebuild some of the former



Turkish houses. They used the same method of collecting rainwater as their predecessors and used the Turkish laundry to wash their clothes. The Ottoman mosque became a hospital, the ramparts became a cemetery, and the houses became just about habitable. The Venetian church became a place of worship, although initially the priest could not even persuade people to help him bury the dead. There was no doctor, so residents had to treat each other as best they could – not just for leprosy but for any other illnesses which befell them.

In 1930 a young man called Remoundakis arrived and things began to change. He pestered the Cretan government until eventually money and provisions became more readily available. Shops were built selling items



from the mainland, a school was established, while cafés and meeting places gave the residents much needed entertainment. Life became almost bearable, and kindness and hope was restored in some measure. Apart from living with leprosy, everyday life on Spinalonga was not dissimilar to that on the mainland. Indeed in some cases it was better. By the mid-1930s Spinalonga had electricity before it reached the mainland. During World War II, it was the only place in Crete *not* occu-

pied by the Germans.

In 1937, the Greek government helped build a new hospital and doctors were brought from Athens to tend to the patients. In the meantime, doctors elsewhere were working on a cure for leprosy. Although they were unable to reverse the disfigurements caused by the disease, they were able to halt its progress. Today leprosy is completely curable.

The last patients left Spinalonga in 1957. Some with very advanced symptoms were taken for further treatment in Athens' hospitals, but others with less noticeable effects were allowed back into the community where some still live today.

Spinalonga has become a prominent archaeological site, second only to Knossos, thanks to books like Victoria's. Everyone it seems wants to know more about how the lepers. Are the published accounts accurate or do they over-romanticise their life? Unfortunately, it is impossible to tell, as the buildings are now in ruins. The reason being that, after the last lepers left, the Greek government - possibly ashamed of the treatment the lepers had received - ordered the buildings to be demolished and any files kept on the patients were burned. Lepers did not talk about their experiences. It was as if the colony had never existed.

It was a beautifully clear, hot day when I saw Spinalonga. We made the short crossing in a small boat much as the lepers had done, and went through Dante's Gate into the sunshine. I'm not sure what I expected but, despite its history, the island was captivating. Yes, it is rocky and fortified, but climb up into the hills and the views are quite magnificent. The trees afford much needed shade and, had I not known of its history, I would have described it as a beautiful, peaceful, island. However, in the depths of winter it must be a very cold, bleak place, and the proximity to the mainland brought home to me just how heart-breaking it must have been - not just for the lepers but also for those they left behind - to be so near and yet so far from each other.

Rosemary Elden





MOUSE TAILS

The Church mouse community had a wonderful Christmas. Thanks to all the lovely events put on by the humans prior to Christmas, they had found and stored lots of bits and pieces that would help them to make their little cards and gifts. Many of the events included food and drink, and the mice paid *particular* attention to these.

Once the Church services had finished on Christmas Day, the mice all congregated in front of the Nativity scene to hold their own traditional service led by Grandpa. The choir sang all their favourite carols, accompanied by young Tommy Organ on his trusty mouth organ. They especially loved 'Away in a Manger' and 'We Three Kings'. The young mice enacted a Nativity mime, which was a first for the mice, and their parents watched very proudly as they performed the story as portrayed by Grandpa.

After the service, all the mice scampered up to the Hall and there was much admiration for the decorated Christmas tree, for which every family had made little decorations. As with all family get-togethers, there was much chatting and exchanging of news. Next on the agenda was the opening of cards and gifts. Dad had made the twins a sled and they were hoping for a bit of snow. Mum had knitted hats and scarves in brightly coloured scraps of wool. Molly had very cleverly made scavenging bags for Dad and Rupert and had knitted a hat and scarf for Mum. Rupert had woven her and Molly little baskets and, for Dad and Grandpa, he'd fashioned walking sticks.

Everyone admired each other's gifts and cards and the youngsters played happily. Meanwhile, the Mums were arranging a feast from all the contributions and a wonderful spread it was. The Dads, of course, were comparing notes on the wines, beers and cordials that they had made. They all settled down to begin their feast. Grandpa said the grace and a prayer of thanks that they were fortunate to be together, safe and warm and among their friends and family. Everyone tucked in and the Mums received much praise and applause for the super spread.

When everyone was full to bursting, they chattered away contentedly but soon the youngsters were keen to play their traditional party games: 'pin the tail on the cat', 'blind mice bluff', musical bumps and so on until the Mums decreed that "Enough was enough," and they sat down to enjoy some cordials or water. Molly and Rupert, as teenagers, were allowed a small drink of wine and felt very grown up indeed!

After a while the entertainment started. The choir sang festive songs accompanied by Tommy Organ who also played a medley of jolly tunes to which most of the mice hopped around in their interpretation of dancing.

Soon the youngest mice were either nodding off or asleep and were promptly tucked into their nests, tails and whiskers twitching as they dreamt. Everyone else sat round in a circle to hear tales of 'the old days' and many favourite stories were retold.

All good things must come to an end and each family retired to their nest for a good night's sleep, congratulating each other on the splendid day they had enjoyed. Very soon, all that could be heard were the contented snuffles of peacefully sleeping mice. **CT**



COFFEE MORNINGS

Frances Bonner, once again, hosted her Christmassy coffee morning on 14th December at her home where she warmly welcomed us all with mince pies and Stollen cake and Christmas cheer.

Thank you very much, Frances.

Approx. £165 was raised for church funds and related charities.

No coffee morning has been arranged for January, but Yvonne Romain has kindly offered to hold one in February. Details in February's magazine....

Jean Hallett



A Visit to Berlin: East and West



The 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall in November last year made me recall a memorable visit to Berlin in 1965 at the height of the Cold War. I don't think there were any cheap flights in those days but, since I am a train enthusiast, I was only too happy to go by train – a journey which lasted the best part of a day and a half, and included travelling through the night. This was before the Channel tunnel was built, so no Eurostar. You had to cross the channel by ferry or hovercraft. I can't remember now which crossing I took: was it Calais, Ostend or Hook of Holland? I do know the train was waiting and took me all the way without having to change. And I well remember that, when we got to the East German border, the engine had to be changed to a steam engine as the railways in East Germany were not electrified. It was the dead of night and a rather intimidating atmosphere: bright searchlights and armed guards with Alsations who came round to inspect our passports.

I stayed in West Berlin with the family of a German friend but, as British passport holder, I was also able to go across the border into East Berlin. I remember going through the infamous Checkpoint Charlie and the grim-faced border officials. I remember vividly the utter contrast between the prosperous, affluent, bustling West Berlin and the terrible drabness and lack of traffic in East Berlin – and always the feeling that I was being watched, which I probably was! This feeling of being watched was reinforced when I returned one evening to go to the Opera: the original pre-war opera house lavishly maintained by the East German regime.

It never occurred to me at that time that only 25 years later Germany and Berlin would be reunited, the Communist government of East Germany (the so-called German Democratic Republic or GDR) would be no more and the Berlin wall would have crumbled. I should have remembered the last verse of the evening hymn 'The Day Thou gavest Lord is ended': 'So be it Lord thy throne shall never like earth's proud empires pass away, thy kingdom stands and grows for ever, till all thy creatures own thy sway.'

Hugh Beavan (Photo by Max Letek on Unsplash)



Poets' Corner

After all pleasures as I rid one day,
My horse and I, both tired, body and mind,
With full cry of affections, quite astray;
I took up the next inn I could find.

There when I came, whom found I but my dear,
My dearest Lord, expecting till the grief
Of pleasures brought me to Him, ready there
To be all passengers' most sweet relief?

Oh Thou, whose glorious, yet contracted light,
Wrapt in night's mantle, stole into a manger;
Since my dark soul and brutish is Thy right,
To man of all beasts be not Thou a stranger:

Furnish and deck my soul, that Thou mayst have
A better lodging, than a rack, or grave.

George Herbert (1593-1633) *Christmas (I)*



Holocaust Memorial Day 2020

Stand Together

27 January is the day for everyone to remember the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, and the millions of people killed under Nazi persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur.

27 January marks the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp. In 2020 we commemorate the 75th anniversary of this liberation. This is a significant milestone and is made particularly poignant by the dwindling number of survivors who are able to share their testimony. 2020 also marks the 25th anniversary of the Genocide in Bosnia.

The theme for HMD 2020 is 'Stand Together'. It explores how genocidal regimes throughout history have deliberately fractured societies by marginalising certain groups, and how these tactics can be challenged by individuals standing together with their neighbours, and speaking out against oppression.

In the UK, thousands of local events and activities take place every year – each one an opportunity for people to reflect on those whose lives were changed beyond recognition, and to challenge prejudice, discrimination, and hatred in our own society today.

I took part in the University of Essex's annual Holocaust Memorial Week whilst I worked there: attending talks, making lanterns and sharing in the reading of names. It was always an incredibly moving experience. Details of events planned locally this year can be found on the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust website: <https://www.hmd.org.uk/>

"Don't be content in your life just to do no wrong, be prepared every day to try and do some good."

Sir Nicholas Winton, who rescued 669 children from Nazi-occupied Europe.

RCW

REGULAR SERVICES

Sunday:	8.00am Holy Communion <i>(BCP using Common Worship Lectionary)</i>
9.45am	PARISH EUCHARIST and Junior Church, or ALL-AGE EUCHARIST (1st Sunday in the month)
6.30pm	Evensong and Sermon
Monday	9.00am Morning Prayer
Tuesday	9.00am Morning Prayer 5.00pm Evening Prayer
Wednesday	9.00am Morning Prayer 10.00am Eucharist
Thursday	8.00am Eucharist 5.00pm Evening Prayer

Please check the diary in this magazine for occasional variations

MAGAZINE DEADLINE

Deadline for items for the **FEBRUARY 2020** edition:

SUNDAY 12th JANUARY

Please submit items to the Editor

email: magazine@stleonardslexden.org.uk

or post in the box at the back of church.

Please include your name with any submission and limit text to 500-600 words maximum. Longer articles may be edited. Thank you.

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