

## Christmas Special



Issue 06 December 2014

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CHRISTMAS  
SERVICES &  
UPCOMING EVENTS

WHAT DOES  
CHRISTMAS MEAN  
TO YOU?

REFLECTION:  
LIGHT IN THE  
DARKNESS

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## CHURCH CONTACTS

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01474 352 253

Mr Dennis Ashurst  
01474 567 300

### Reader

Mrs Mavis Prater  
01474 812 330

### Pastoral Assistants

Mrs Daphne & Mr Ernie Lane  
01474 564 902

## OTHER SERVICES

### Church Hall Lettings

Mrs Marjorie Church  
01474 391 864

### Nursery Schools

Mrs Fiona Brown  
01474 356 316

### Powerhouse Manager

Mr Michael Welch  
01474 567 722

### Westcourt Residents Assoc.

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## MAGAZINE CONTACT

Mirjam Ngoy mirjamngoy@gmail.com

Would you like to contribute to the magazine? You could either feature in one of the articles or help with writing, design, photography and proof reading. Please get in touch with Mirjam.

Please be aware, the deadline for contributions to the next issue of the magazine is Sun 21st December and should include all your events up until (and including) April 2015!

## CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sun 14/12	16:00	<b>Christingle Service</b>
Sun 21/12	16:00	<b>Service of Nine Lessons &amp; Carols</b>
Wed 24/12	16:00	<b>Crib Service</b>
Wed 24/12	23:30	<b>Midnight Mass</b>
Thu 25/12	10:00	<b>Family Service with Holy Communion</b>

## REGULAR SERVICES

1st Sunday	10:30	<b>All Age Communion Service</b>
2nd Sunday	9:30	<b>Communion Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
3rd Sunday	9:30	<b>Communion Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
	18:30	<b>Joint Service with Riverview Baptists at the Christopher Centre</b>
4th Sunday	9:30	<b>Communion Service &amp; Sunday School</b>
5th Sunday	9:30	<b>Communion Service with Prayer for Healing &amp; Sunday School</b>
Wednesdays	9:30	<b>Communion Service</b>



# EDITORIAL



## HAPPY CHRISTMAS FROM US



Welcome to this special Christmas edition of The Pilot Magazine! I am very proud to say that this issue has been delivered to 5000 homes in Riverview and Westcourt.

Putting this magazine through your letterbox is our special way of wishing you a happy Christmas and blessed New Year!

We would also like to make you aware of all the services and events that are taking place at St Aidan's Church over this Christmas period. We would love you to join us for one or even all of the events!

Together with information about events, you can find reflections on the meaning of Christmas. We hope these will inspire you and give you some food for thought over the Christmas period.

Of course, we would like to keep you informed and get you involved with our news and activities the rest of the year too. So if you would like to subscribe to 'The Pilot' please read the information at the back of the magazine.

I look forward to seeing many of you at one of the services or events this Christmas.

Mirjam Ngoy - Editor



A picture from last year's Christingle Service. Will you and your children join us this year? The service will take place on Sunday 14th December, 16:00!

## NEWS ABOUT 'THE PILOT' MAGAZINE

**From 2015, The Pilot will be published on a 3-monthly basis and will have 16 pages instead of 12!**

So your next issue will be for January-March 2015. Please keep this in mind if you would like any information or dates included in the next issue of the magazine. The deadline to submit for the next issue is Sunday 21st December. Prices for the new magazine will be £1.00 per issue.

# REFLECTIONS

## MERRY IMPERFECT CHRISTMAS

Watching TV the other night, I was struck once again by the number of companies urging me to have a perfect Christmas. Every year we are bombarded. Get the perfect gift. Make your house perfectly clean. Get the perfect lights, the perfect tree, the perfect tinsel. Cook the perfect turkey. Set the perfect table. Have the perfect family. BE PERFECT.

No. Not this year.

This Christmas, you do not have to exude “Christmas Spirit.” What on earth IS that, anyway? Instead, pay attention to the Spirit. Notice the moments in which the kingdom of God breaks in – they will be small.

The joy of a child going off-script during a Christmas play. A single line from a well-worn Christmas carol that suddenly sounds new, and fresh, and scary-in-a-good-way. The sight of your breath rising in front of you as you tramp through snow-covered fields with your dog. The shouts of children as they play outside, their snow-suit-shrouded forms ungainly, and their mittens-on-strings flopping at their sides. A quiet moment to yourself, re-reading the story of Christ’s incarnation by candle-light, tree-light - opening yourself again to the hush of amazement.

You see, all the perfection we are supposed to achieve at this time of year – all of that work – takes something from us. It takes away Christmas.



That first year there was no perfectly browned turkey, no perfect tree, no beautifully decorated home, no hushed angelic children’s faces gathered around a

**“THAT FIRST YEAR THERE WAS NO PERFECTLY BROWNEED TURKEY..”**

perfectly lovely crib. There was mess, and noise, and smelliness, and discomfort. Dirt and a fair bit of chaos. A crying baby. That is the standard.

So this year - maybe let things slide a little. I’m going to. Have a merry imperfect Christmas!

By Stacey Gleddiesmith  
[www.thinkingworship.com](http://www.thinkingworship.com)

## WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME...

Our Vicar Lusa has been going round our community to find out what Christmas means to people. You can find some of the quotes scattered throughout the magazine!



“Christmas is about spending time with family.” Kirsty, 26



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## EVENTS AT ST AIDAN'S

### DECEMBER 2014

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WED 03/12/2014, 10:15

#### **COFFEE MORNING**

Coffee morning with cake stall in the Powerhouse, St Aidan's Church. All are welcome!

SAT 06/12/2014, 10:00-12:00

#### **CHRISTMAS FAIR**

Join us in St Aidan's Church Hall. There will be stalls for home made cakes, jams, cards, knit-ware, groceries and toiletries. We also have two raffles and a lucky dip for children. Father Christmas might pay us a visit too. Light refreshments will be available. For more information, please contact Jenny (01474 352253).

SAT 13/12/2014, 10:00-12:00

#### **CHRISTMAS CHILDREN'S CRAFT MORNING**

A morning full of Christmas related activities for children at St Aidan's Church Hall. All are welcome!

SAT 13/12/2014, 10:00-15:30

#### **CAROL SINGING IN TOWN**

10 local churches and one school will be singing carols in the St George's Shopping Centre on behalf of Christian Aid. St Aidan's slot is between 10:30 and 11:00 - do come and join in. If you are in town on that day, do please be generous in your support for Christian Aid.

TUE 16/12/2014, 19:00-20:30

#### **CAROL SINGING AT THE DRIVE, RISE & WARREN**

We will be carol singing in the area of The Drive, The Rise and The Warren to support the work of the EllenorLions Hospice. Again all are welcome to come along to sing, or to collect donations.

WED 17/12/2014, 14:00

#### **CRAFT CLUB**

Join a friendly group of people to do some crafts in the Powerhouse, St Aidan's Church. All welcome!

WED 24/12/2014, 14:00-15:00

#### **CAROL SINGING IN VALLEY DRIVE**

It is becoming the tradition for us to sing carols to support the EllenorLions Hospices outside Tesco's in Valley Drive on Christmas Eve. You will be very welcome to come to sing or to collect donations.

### JANUARY 2015

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WED 14/01/2015, 14:00

#### **AIDAN LADIES**

Join us at the Powerhouse.

WED 21/01/2015, 14:00

#### **CRAFT CLUB**

Join us at the Powerhouse.

THU 29/01/2015, 14:00-16:00

#### **CAMEO (COME AND MEET OTHERS)**

Join us for a chat and drink at St Aidan's "Powerhouse" between 14.00-16.00. Suggested donation of 50p.

#### **ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN**

Every Wed during term-time at the Church Hall:  
After School Club: 15:30-17:00

#### **COMMUNITY CAFE WITH BREAKFAST**

Every Friday in the Powerhouse from 9:00-12:00.

## OTHER EVENTS

### GRAVESEND

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Advent Course: Walking Backwards to Christmas.  
For more information, email  
[info@stgeorgesgravesend.org.uk](mailto:info@stgeorgesgravesend.org.uk)

WED 03/12 11:00 St George's Church  
19:30 Holy Family Church

WED 10/12 11:00 St George's Church  
19:30 St Aidan's Church

WED 17/12 11:00 St George's Church  
19:30 Christ Church

# REFLECTIONS

## IT'S LIKE ANOTHER SILENT NIGHT

They called it the War to end all wars. The optimism was such that most people believed that the soldiers would be home by Christmas. Four years and 16 million dead is what it took before the cannons finally fell silent.

As soldiers were dug in their trenches, on Christmas Eve of 1914, any remaining optimism had been sunk in the mud and the blood of the Western Front. Still that first Christmas did contain a moment that continues to inspire many, one hundred years on. After yet another day of fighting on Christmas Eve, British soldiers on the Western Front saw their German counterparts light and lift candles into the air. From their trenches came the sound of a Christmas carol whose melody was familiar to British ears.

And so, as the Germans sang "Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!", the British joined in: "Silent Night! Holy Night!" As their voices echoed together in song, the loud rumbling of cannons and guns fell silent for the first time in a long while. Soon, soldiers from both sides emerged from the safety of their defences and walked, unarmed, into no-man's land. There the singing continued, gifts were exchanged, and a prequel of the 1966 football World Cup final was played.



Sadly, the Christmas Truce did not last long enough. The forces of destruction proved stronger than the call for peace. Perhaps a subtle indication of the odds we all face when confronting the brokenness of our world. Still, the power of the moment remains.

The story of Christmas has an enduring power to break boundaries and unite enemies. And it continues to inspire today, leading us to stop a while and remember the powerful truth behind the fact that "Christ the saviour is born".

Let's join in the song of angels who proclaimed above the silent night of Bethlehem: "Glory to God in the heavenly heights, peace to all men and women on earth who please him." And we raise a million voices shouting love so that, this time, our voices may not be covered by the sound of destruction.

By Rev. Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy

## WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME...

"Christmas is about a spirit of giving and showing love to other people. Not necessarily about spending on gifts."  
Chris, 59



"Christmas means celebrating with my family and friends."  
Valerie, 58







## WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME...

“Christmas means a lot to me, because it’s about celebrating Jesus’ birth, but also making peace with others, joy around us and love and pray for one another.”

Marie, 37

“Christmas is a school full of young, glowing faces, enchanted by the huge statue of a dazzling tree for ever green. The sounds of carols echoing down corridors every day. The earnestness and innocence of young folk as they read again the wonders of the Nativity and act the very characters. A Christmas packaged in a real present, wrapped in kindness and tied with expectancy...”

Mrs Dymond



## CHRISTMAS AT GENESEE ABBEY

I keep thinking about the Christmas scene that Anthony arranged under the altar. This probably is the most meaningful “crib” I have ever seen. Three small wood-carved figures made in India: a poor woman, a poor man, and a small child between them. The carving is simple, nearly primitive. No eyes, no ears, no mouths, just the contours of the faces. The figures are smaller than a human hand - nearly too small to attract attention at all.

But then - a beam of light shines on the three figures and projects large shadows on the wall of the sanctuary. That says it all. The light thrown on the smallness of Mary, Joseph, and the Child projects them as large, hopeful shadows against the walls of our life and our world.

While looking at the intimate scene we already see the first outlines of the majesty and glory they represent. While witnessing the most human of human events,



I see the majesty of God appearing on the horizon of my existence. While being moved by the gentleness of these three people, I am already awed by the immense greatness of God’s love appearing in my world. Without the radiant beam of light shining into the darkness there is little to be seen. I might just pass by these three simple people and continue to walk in darkness. But everything changes with the light.

Excerpt from Henri Nouwen’s *The Genesee Diary* (December 25, 1974). © Henri J.M. Nouwen. Published by Doubleday Religion, a division of Random House.

God's Love Ignites - God's Love Unites



  
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**OUR MISSION**

To share God's love  
in the community.



**SUBSCRIBE TO 'THE PILOT' MAGAZINE**

Would you like to receive all the latest St Aidan's News and Events on your doormat? Please fill in this slip and drop it, together with £5.00, at The Vicarage, St Gregory's Crescent, Gravesend, DA12 4JL (next to Church Hall). You will receive the next five issues of the magazine (every three months).

Yes, I would like to receive the next five issues of the magazine and have enclosed £5.00 (please tick box).

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