

Hampstead Parish Church

Magazine for December 2025

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY OF CHRISTIAN LOVE, FAITH, WITNESS AND ACTION

Holy waiting

Mthr Carol invites us to
seek a balance with
seasonal activity

Charity News

Bethlehem Arab Society
&
Mercy Ships

Even so come, Lord Jesus

Sermon
Handley Stevens

Quite a lot of music!

Check out all the
services and concerts

Christmas in Captivity 1942

Louise Reynolds writes
of her father's
experience of his first
Christmas
in Changi



HAMPSTEAD PARISH CHURCH

[Registered Charity No. 1129264]

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Youtube: youtube.com/c/hampsteadparishchurch

Sunday worship:

8.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

10.30am Choral Holy Communion (Common Worship)

5.00pm Choral Evensong (BCP)

Weekday worship:

Mon – Fri: Morning Prayer at 9.00am, Evening Prayer at 5.00pm

Wednesdays Holy Communion at 10.15am

Thursdays Rosary prayer on Zoom at 8.30am

Saturday Evening Prayer at 5.00pm

But please check the weekly email—sometimes we have to
make changes to our pattern of worship*

For Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, Home Communions and
Home Visits

please contact The Vicar

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December 2025

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Diary for December

Mon 1 st		Andrew, the Apostle
Tue 2 nd	6.00pm	St Christophers School Carol service
	7.00pm	Advent Reading Group on zoom – see page 10
Wed 3 rd	10.15am	Quiet Holy Communion
Thu 4 th	7.30pm	Community Choir
Fri 5 th	7.30pm	Christmas Lights Concert – see page 22
Sat 6 th	7.00pm	Hampstead Collective Messiah – see page 23

Sunday 7th Advent 2

8.00am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Choral All Age Holy Communion
5.00pm	Choral Evensong



Tue 9 th	time tbc	St Mary's School Carol Service
	7.00pm	Advent Reading group on zoom
Wed 10 th	10.15am	Quiet Holy Communion
	Time tbc	Heathside School Carol Service
	7.00pm	Maggie's Royal Free Concert
Thu 11 th	time tbc	St Anthony's School Carol Service
Fri 12 th	11.00am	Devonshire House Carol Service
Sat 13 th	8.00pm	Hampstead Jazz at Christmas – see page 25

Sunday 14th Advent 3

8.00am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Choral Holy Communion (Junior Church end of term crafts)
7.00pm	Monteverdi Vespers – see page 24



Mon 15 th	time tbc	SHHS Carol Service
Tue 16 th	7.00pm	Advent reading group on zoom
Wed 17 th	10.15am	Quiet Holy Communion
Thu 18 th	time tbc	Hampstead Parochial School Christmas Service
Fri 19 th	time tbc	Hampstead Arts Festival – see page 26
Sat 20 th	10am-12 4.00pm	Cleaning and Decorating the church Organ Recital with Joshua Ryan

Sunday 21st Advent 4

8.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Choral Holy Communion
5.00pm Service of Nine Lessons and Carols



Wed 24th Christmas Eve

4.30pm Children's Crib Service
11.00pm Midnight Mass

Thu 25th Christmas Day

8.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Choral Holy Communion

Fri 26th St Stephen

Sat 27th St John

Sunday 28th Christmas I

8.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Choral Holy Communion
5.00pm Evening Prayer

Mon 29th Holy Innocents

Sat 3rd Jan 10.00am Gardening group meets – blow away the festive cobwebs!

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY



Sunday 4th Epiphany

8.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Choral Holy Communion
& Blessing of the Chalks
5.00pm Choral Evensong

The Vicar writes

The season of Advent is upon us. It's a season of 'holy waiting', a season of activity; planning, stocking up for the great celebration. For some people it is a season of parties—in August this year I saw the first advert outside a pub reminding us to 'book your Christmas party'. It is also a season where we take some time to ponder the great gift of God's love in the mystery of the incarnation. During Advent we have time to reflect on the immanence and transcendence of God. Immanent in that God is with us in the person of Jesus, transcendent in that God always stands outside of time and place—one of the great mysteries of the Christian faith. Yet I imagine we don't spend all of Advent pondering on this great mystery. After all there are lots of practical things that need to be done during the month of December.

In the story of the birth of Jesus, we see Mary and Joseph face practical challenges (although theirs were perhaps a little more serious than some of our concerns each Christmas). There was the inconvenience of a census, requiring each person to return to their family town. There was the challenge of almost one hundred miles of travel so close to the birth of the child, away from the support of the female members of their immediate family who could attend the birth. Being unable to 'Airbnb' or book a hotel in advance, there was the risk to both mother and child, that must have weighed heavily on Joseph in the weeks preceding their journey—and during the travel itself. It was a challenge for both of them to deal with the birth of Jesus in such difficult circumstances. While we know little of the layout of the 'stable' (it was most likely a small room attached to the inn, as livestock were kept close to people's homes—or even in the home itself—for safety), it will not have been as comfortable as being at home.

I must confess that I like to ponder those practical, mundane aspects of the Christmas story as an example of the importance of the 'physical' to our life of faith. It is not only beautiful surroundings that can connect us with the Divine, so-called 'thin' places (usually wild places or ancient sites of pilgrimage) where we find such beauty that we feel close to God. I have felt the presence of God deeply by the

sea or in a beautiful forest—but there is also a place for what one writer calls ‘thick places’. In a recent Church Times article The Revd Dr Rob Hawkins observed: *‘We can end up thinking that spiritual should itself have a kind of ‘thinness’ to it, as if it should be always ethereal rather than bodily and material. By praising thinness, we take the risk that faith becomes way of relating to an invisible elsewhere rather than a being here: a means of escape rather than a means of coming home’.*

I imagine the stable in Bethlehem as a ‘thick’ place—a place of real human smells and sounds. The sound of a baby’s cry, and a mother’s reassurance. The smell of sweat and tears and the sound of laughter, the quiet conversation between Mary and Joseph, the knock of the shepherds, the gleam of a bright star glimpsed through an ordinary window. The incarnation assures us that God is with us in the ‘messiness’ and real—the unplanned and the imperfect. Something to reassure us as we wonder if we have ordered enough food, bought all the gifts we need, sent the cards or made the phone calls.

In closing I would also share with you a second observation from Rob Hawkins as we reflect on the mystery in Bethlehem—whose name means ‘the house of bread’:

I know of no thicker place than the altar rail. People kneel side-by-side, the threads of so many lives, different pains and joys, brought together and thickly woven with the grand story of God's love. In the bread and wine, all this love and longing thickens until it can be touched, tasted, and shared.

Wishing you a prayerful Advent season

Mthr Carol

Children’s Service : Christmas Eve 4.30pm

This is a short service during which the children act out the nativity story and sing some well-known carols. If your child would like to take part please come dressed as an Angel, Shepherd, Sheep or King (3 is only a tradition – there could have been more).



December

Judy East

“Advent was meant to be a time of sober reflection before the wonder of Christmas” so says Kevin Scully in our Advent Book *Five Impossible Things to Believe before Christmas*. “Holy waiting” as Mother Carol describes it above

The range of events on offer this December may challenge your attempt at a sense of waiting or sober reflections! You could be forgiven for thinking that the 12 days of Christmas have arrived early. We have concerts on 5th, 6th, 13th, 14th, 19th and 20th as well as the Carol Service on 21st. And then of course there are the school carol services when we play host to local schools to facilitate their festive celebrations.

Which doesn't leave much energy for the days after Christmas. But if you have a gloomy feeling that it's all over as soon as Christmas Day has passed don't despair because Epiphany is just around the corner – we'll be celebrating that on Sunday 4th January with the Blessing of the Chalks in the morning and Choral Evensong at 5pm as usual.

It's such a full magazine this month I'm keeping this as short as possible but do look through it and see what we have on offer. Christmas in Changi in 1942, Christmas now in the Holy Land, how you can help Mercy Ships by saving your stamps, as well as details of all those concerts I mentioned above.

They say nothing is impossible but I
do nothing every day.

Theodor Rosyfelt

Even so, come Lord Jesus

Sermon for the 2nd Sunday before Advent

Handley Stevens

Readings: Malachi 4.1-2a / Luke 21.5-19

Both our readings this morning were extracts from troubling prophecies about the future. In the concluding words of the Hebrew Bible, the prophet Malachi foresees a day of all-consuming fire, and as Jesus stands in the temple at the start of what he probably knew, or at least sensed, might well turn out to be the last week of his life, he delivers an apocalyptic discourse, a sermon which anticipates a cataclysmic disaster for Jerusalem and all its people.

Such prophecies of doom are not uncommon, and they could be replicated to-day. Do you worry about the risk that an unpredictable President in the White House and a coldly calculating ex-spy-master in the Kremlin could at some point miscalculate and unleash a nuclear-powered confrontation? I hope that's fanciful. But what about the slower-burning prospect of climate change, with warming air and warming seas gradually making some parts of the earth virtually uninhabitable, driving unpredictable movements of population, melting or at least shrinking the polar ice-caps and perhaps slowing or even stopping the Gulf Stream. I'm not by nature a worrier, but there is plenty of cause for concern about the world we are leaving to our children and grandchildren and the reluctance of some politicians to accept the evidence and take steps to do something about it.

Doom and gloom is not the message I want to share or you want to receive, but it is there in the world we inhabit, and it is there in the Bible, so we need to pay attention to it, and more particularly to see what Jesus has to say about it. The clouds are very real, but there is a silver lining. Both our readings this morning were prophecies of doom, but both conclude with promises of deliverance. In the concluding verses of the Hebrew Bible the prophet Malachi foresees a day of all-consuming fire, but 'for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings'. And in our gospel reading, after foretelling a period of doom and destruction, Jesus promises his disciples that 'not a hair of your head will perish; by your

endurance you will gain your souls'. As our own patron saint St John has it in the prologue to his gospel, 'the light shines in the darkness' (John 1.5).

So how are we to find the proper balance between fear and hope?

There were three strands to the future crisis for which Jesus wanted to prepare his disciples. The first strand was probably his intuitive, prophetic sense that Jerusalem and the temple itself would be utterly laid waste, as it was in AD 70 by a Roman army under the command of the future emperor Titus. The days will come, he says, when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down, as it is to this day. This historic strand will doubtless have been particularly clear to St Luke, who wrote his gospel some ten or twenty years after that historical event. The second strand of the multiple crisis that Jesus could see coming was the personal persecution that his disciples would face, not just in Jerusalem, but wherever the Christian church became established around the Greco-Roman world, challenging the existing faith systems. Jesus' followers would need to stand firm in the face of such persecution, following his own steady example.

But the third strand of Jesus' apocalyptic teaching was his conviction that the final act of the great drama would see the fulfilment of the deeply entrenched Biblical expectation that life on earth would end with the coming of the Son of Man in great power and glory – the rising of Malachi's sun of righteousness, with healing in its wings. This would signal the triumphant outcome of the heavenly, existential, battle between the forces of good and evil of which we catch visionary glimpses in such books as Daniel and Revelation.

There are some interesting variations too in how we should respond to these different strands of crisis – national and political, personal, and apocalyptic. At the national level, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, Jesus says, you should flee for your life (vv 20-24). At the personal level of persecution on grounds of faith, Jesus calls his disciples to follow his own patient example. By your endurance you will gain your souls (v 19). At the apocalyptic level, Luke records Jesus as warning his disciples not to follow those who might claim to know that the end of the world is nigh (v 8); but when

the Son of Man does finally come again, with power and great glory (v.27) we are to stand up and raise our heads, because our redemption is drawing near (v.28).

In common with the rest of the early church, and perhaps Jesus himself in his humanity, St Luke probably believed that the end of the world would occur sooner rather than later. Terrifying as it might be to be caught up in such an awesome event, we should greet it with the same joy as we feel when the trees sprout fresh green leaves, and we know that summer is coming. When that great day comes, it will after all signify Our Lord's final triumph, and there could be no greater cause of celebration.

After two thousand years, we may wonder whether we have misunderstood the Bible's visionary language about the end of the world. What is certain is that there is an end for all of us, one by one, in death, and none of us knows when that day will come. In heaven there will be nowhere to hide from the truth about ourselves, and that's a scary prospect to contemplate – or it would be if it were not for the assurance we have that the love of our Lord Jesus Christ will be present at the right hand of the God of Truth and Judgment. If we have come to know him and love him in our life on earth, His love will meet us in heaven, so that each one of us may finally attain our unique destiny as his beloved children.

According to St Luke, Jesus concluded his apocalyptic discourse with these words:

Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with ... the worries of this world, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly.... Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man. (Luke 21.34-36)

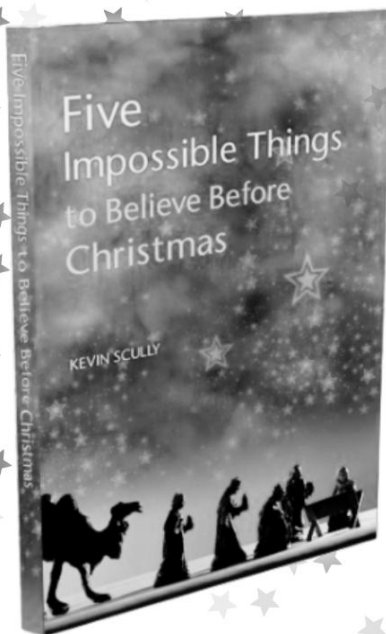
In the words that conclude the Book of Revelation:
Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus (Revelation 22.20).

Now that the time has come wherein
Our Saviour Christ was born,
The larder's full of beef and pork,
The granary's full of corn,
As God hath plenty to thee sent,
Take comfort of thy labours,
And let it never thee repent
To feed thy needy neighbours.

From Poor Robin's Almanack

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN-AT-HAMPSTEAD

ONLINE ADVENT READING GROUP



Join the Online Advent
Reading Group

We'll be exploring Five
Impossible Things to
Believe Before
Christmas by Kevin
Scully over four Zoom
sessions. A limited
number of copies are
available for purchase
from the parish office.

The group will meet via
Zoom on the following
Tuesdays:

25 November, 2 December,
9 December, 16 December

At 7:00pm

Email vestry@hampsteadparishchurch.org.uk for the
Zoom link. The link will also be posted in the
weekly newsletter.

CHRISTMAS IN CAPTIVITY

Louise Reynolds

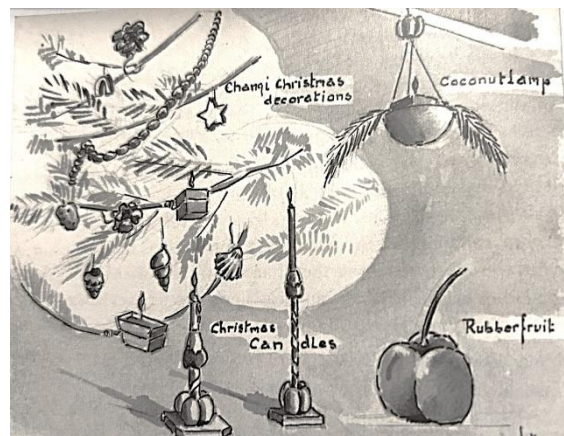
This year we've commemorated the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII with VE Day and VJ Day and I wrote in this magazine about my father's joyful letters home when he was released after three and a half years as a Far East prisoner of war. But how did he face his first Christmas in captivity in Changi, Singapore in 1942?

The 50,000 or so allied troops had already been prisoners for 10 months, surviving on a starvation diet of rice, vegetables and scraps of fish and they were beginning to be sent off by their Japanese captors to work as slave labour on projects such as mining, or in factories and shipyards.

My father, Eric Cordingly, a Rector in the Cotswolds, was now an army padre attached to the 18th Division of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers. He was determined to celebrate the Christmas message of hope for so many of the displaced men in his 'parish' who, he knew, were very homesick. He had created a church out of a small abandoned mosque which he called St George's and it attracted a loyal congregation.

In his diary he described how the men had enthusiastically decorated the church:

"Below the dome of St George's the atap roofed verandas twinkled with hanging lamps made from half shells of coconuts and inside a bully beef tin filled with palm oil and a floating wick. Then nearer still at the entrance stood a Christmas tree, a local imitation of our English fir reaching to the roof. Reflecting the lights from little lamps fastened to the branches were stars, small horse-shoes, all shapes and sizes of tinfoil covered objects. Then inside the church itself the pillars were covered in ferns and along the low



wall between the arches stood pots of coloured flowers. Both Dutch and British troops went out with trucks to collect all these decorations. But one's gaze was centred on the chancel here, in a mass of candlelight, the altar was emphasised as the focal point. The flowers and feathery green ferns enhanced the setting for the Celebration of Holy Communion that was to take place at midnight."

"On Christmas eve on the padang, a two acre green patch almost opposite the church, a stage was erected. Behind this, in curved rows, was a massed choir of a hundred and the theatre orchestra. It was around this platform that at half past eight three thousand men were grouped for a concert of carols. From the platform the impression I received was that of a vast sea of faces, and so the familiar carols went up in mighty roar."

"A Dutch naval officer gave a moving speech and depicted the blackness of our present life, he told of the black hour of the Dutch folk living in countries under the heel of the enemy. Then three men came forward and poured oil into a bowl and lighting this with a torch he spoke of the light of the Christmas message a light which shines so brightly now because of the blackness that at present surrounds the world. It was all very impressive. I gave a short precis of the ceremony in English and then said some prayers and gave the Blessing and so began our celebration of our first Christmas as prisoners."

Then 800 or so men gathered at his own church for midnight Eucharist. "Just after midnight, in an atmosphere that was real and moving, those familiar words "O come let us adore him" were sung, quietly hushed, and rising as a prayer after the final words of the Prayer of Consecration. The altar rails filled as men in turn knelt and received communion. The shabby green uniform of the Dutch army was emphasised in these rows of khaki clad figures. Present too were those maimed in battle, an empty sleeve, a stump of a leg. Outside the moon was reflected on the shiny surface of the palm branches and in the ear vibrated the persistent hum of the crickets. Streaming back to their billets were men who had recaptured a glimpse of our Christian Christmas. Peace on earth to men of good will, that was the prayer

in each person's mind, as was the thought of our own homes which are the successors of that first little Family, simple prayers but so real."

The camp cooks managed miraculously to provide special meals for the day. "For the first time we were able to drink coffee with tinned milk and in the evening we ate a most superior dinner. Ten scraggy cockerels carefully nursed for months, preceded by soup and followed by a fair imitation of plum pudding. It was the right colour and had dates in it."

As the year 1942 drew to a close he reflected on what they had experienced. "We are starving, not melodramatically but slowly, scarcely a third of the camp is fit enough for work. I am convinced an impartial observer would say that life centred round the church is maintained and, indeed, on the increase. Spiritually then, I believe we are in fair fettle. Bodily we are not in such flourishing condition. The suntan hardly hides the poor physical condition."

Little did they know what was to come. The work parties continued to be sent away and my father was sent up with F Force to the River Kwai on Easter Day 1943, where the men laboured on building the Thai/Burma Railway under brutal conditions. The Far East POW fatality rate was nearly one third.

25 years later he reflected again on these years which, surprisingly, he called "the most wonderful time of my life in spite of the grim and hungry times. One had the opportunity, as a priest, of doing something which is denied to us in our ordinary lives here at home. For once and for three and a half years the thin veneer of civilisation had been stripped from men. We were all down to bedrock. One saw people as they really were. I know that the services we shared in together were utterly real and sincere, and I suppose it was because we were, for a while, utterly real and sincere."



جمعية بيت لحم العربية للتأهيل
"المستشفى التخصصي للتأهيل والجراحة"
Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation
"Specialized Rehabilitation and Surgery Hospital"

Love and Peace in Bethlehem?

Bill Risebero

For many years, Hampstead Parish Church has supported the **Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation hospital** in Beit Jala, a suburb of Bethlehem in the West Bank. BASR was founded in 1960, a Christian organisation devoted to the rehabilitation of people of any faith - mainly women and children - who are suffering acute physical or mental trauma. However, the situation in Gaza led us this year to focus on the Christian-run **Al-Ahli hospital** in Gaza City and we were able to donate a substantial sum from our Easter collections.

More than 1600 medical staff have been killed in Palestine in the last two years, many of them targeted. Al-Ahli hospital has been bombed eight times. Of Gaza's 36 hospitals fewer than half are functioning, and that only partially. Despite the 'ceasefire', shooting and bombing continue. In Gaza, mains electricity is still cut off - it has to be self-generated, with expensive oil. Few medical supplies are allowed in, food and water are restricted by design, and millions are now homeless, with winter coming on. In the West Bank too, violence is increasing, with settlers destroying the November olive harvest, demolishing Palestinian houses and attacking farmers.

People are suffering not only from traumatic wounds but also mentally, from lack of treatment for diseases such as cancer, and from the malnutrition caused by deprivation. The needs have never been greater. But giving financial help has become more complex, as IT connections are destroyed and administrative systems break down. However, we at the Parish Church will continue to give as much material and prayerful support for Al-Ahli and BASR as we can.

Despite everything, there are a number of organisations operating, with great difficulty, on the ground in both Gaza and the West Bank, and giving real support to those in greatest need. These include:

Embrace the Middle East, to which the Parish has donated, and which supports work not only in Palestine but also in other nearby countries, including South Lebanon

Medical Aid for Palestinians, which has a team in central Gaza and runs a polyclinic which receives some 600 patients a day

The Amos Trust, which has a world-wide remit, but has a special focus on Gaza and a long-standing relationship with Al-Ahli hospital

MSF (Médecins sans Frontières), a team of volunteer doctors, which also spans the world, but has a special interest in urgently evacuating Gazan children to get medical treatment abroad.

I invite you to look up these and other references and consider if you might give, or might do more. At Christmas, we think of Bethlehem as a place of peace and love. We need to remember, with Martin Luther King, that 'hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that'. But we have also to see the situation more clearly, and recognise that peace is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of justice. As MLK also said, of his own struggle, '...the greatest tragedy...was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people'.



*Save your stamps
to save a life*



Christmas is the time of year when we probably use and receive more stamps than at any other. Please save yours and put them in the box on the shelf at the back of church and we'll pass them on.

For more information on Mercy ships visit: www.mscfoundation.org and follow them on LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram.

A Prayer at 80

Today dear Lord, I'm 80 and there's much I haven't done.
So could you let me live until I'm 81.

But then, if I haven't finished all I want to do,
Would you let me stay awhile--until I'm 82?

The world is changing very fast, and there's so much more to see
So could you manage with me Lord, until I'm 83?

With all this technology, there's so much more in store
So I'd really like to be on hand when I'm 84.

And if by then my heart is sound, and I am still alive,
I'd love nothing more than to be around when I'm 85

There are so many problems and so much needs a fix
You'd better let me see to it till I'm 86

I know, dear Lord, it's much to ask and I know it's nice in Heaven,
But really Lord I'd like to stay until I'm 87.

Perhaps by then I might be slow and I know it's getting late
But I think I'd like to serve you here when I'm 88

I will have seen so much by then and had so grand a time
I should be willing to call it quits when I'm 89.

But please make it a hundred Lord, a whole century old
And then Lord, if you want me, I shall do as I am told.

Submitted by Maeve Turner.

This poem exists in various forms online but no one seems to know who wrote it.

We thank them, whoever they are.

MUSIC SECTION

Music Notes ~ December 2025

Geoffrey Webber

Joyous news from amongst our choir members: 'Evensong' alto Jess Gillingwater has recently given birth to a daughter, Alma. While understandably taking a few weeks off, Jess hopes to be back with us soon. She, partner Steve (who also sings tenor with us from time to time) and Alma are all doing well.

Last month's 'Palestrina' Sunday was much enjoyed by the singers, and also we hope, by all who heard us, but this did not feature anything sung by the Junior Choir. Happily we are correcting that at the All-Age Communion on Sunday 7th, when the juniors will join the professionals to sing Palestrina's *Missa brevis*. Most of the mass is set for a standard four-part SATB ensemble, but the top voice is set as a canon in the final Agnus Dei, so the extra voices will be crucial to make that work. At Evensong on the 7th - our only sung Evensong in December - we sing music by brothers Henry and Daniel Purcell, with Henry's well-known masterpiece *Hear my prayer, O Lord* for 8 voices, and his less familiar anthem *Let mine eyes run down with tears* which explores the penitential element of the Advent season.

Biberach an der Riß is perhaps one of the less well-known ancient imperial cities of Germany, in the largely Roman Catholic region of Baden-Württemberg. During the middle of the nineteenth century one of its leading music figures was Adolfo Kaim, a tireless advocate of vocal performance who taught singing, founded various choirs and played a leading role in the 'St Cecilian' movement that favoured *a cappella* church singing, based to a greater or lesser extent on the music of Palestrina. He composed several masses in the 'Palästrina-Stil' including the one we're singing on the 21st December, the *Missa Jesu Redemptor*.

Our carol service at 5 pm on the 21st will feature as usual an expanded 12-voice professional choir, with contributions from the Junior Choir. Our organist will be Matthew Martin, the Precentor at Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, who has recommended a piece by former Organist of York Minster Philip Moore that we will sing - a lively new setting of the text 'The Angel Gabriel' with a spiky organ part. Our music will also include a 12-part work by Pomeranian composer Andreas Hakenberger and a setting of 'The Holly and the Ivy' by former Director of Music Martindale Sidwell. Our extra singers will include former choir member Mike Entwisle (who sang for Sidwell) as well as Mike and Alicia's son Max, a counter-tenor.

Our music at Christmas has a strong early-music element this year, both the vocal music and the organ voluntaries. At midnight we sing the famous French baroque *Messe de minuit* by Marc-Antoine Charpentier, based on traditional French Noël melodies, composed in 1694 when he worked as *maître de musique* at the Jesuit church of Saint-Louis. We also sing Dutch composer Jan P. Sweelinck's motet *Hodie Christus natus est*, which has a memorable refrain sung by the tenors 'Hodie, hodie', like a street cry; by the end of the piece one can hear all the people shouting 'Noël!' in response, as the excitement of Christmas builds. Our organist will be Luke Fitzgerald, until recently Assistant Organist at Coventry Cathedral and now Director of Music at Pembroke College, Cambridge. He will be playing the ever-popular *Noël Suisse* by Louis-Claude Daquin, a virtuoso keyboard player who held all the top posts as organist in Paris in the early 18th century.

On Christmas morning we sing the serenely beautiful mass setting the *Missa bell' amfitrit' altera* by the Flemish composer Roland de Lassus (or Orlando di Lasso as he styled himself when working in Italy). The work is a parody mass on an unknown secular model, but the title suggests a possible Venetian connection since Amphitrite was a sea-nymph. It survives in a manuscript dated 1583 in Munich, where Lassus had worked since 1556. Our motet is a rarely sung gem by William Byrd, *Descendit de caelis*. Much of this sounds as if it could have been written a generation earlier by pre-Reformation composers, but there

are modern, madrigalian elements as well, bringing to life the text which is a Respond for Christmas Day in the Sarum rite.

Monteverdi Vespers of 1610

Instead of singing Evensong on Sunday 14th December our two church choirs will be giving a concert performance of Monteverdi's famous 1610 Vespers at 7.00pm, with an orchestra of period instruments assembled by Jacob Garside. The professional choir will sing the psalms and antiphons, joined by the older boys of the Junior choir for the Psalm *Nisi Dominus*, in which extra tenor singers are required, and the upper voices of the Junior Choir will sing the refrain 'Sancta Maria' in the instrumental sonata based on this chant. Monteverdi's music was intended for liturgical performance for feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, so the work is particularly appropriate for the season of Advent. As well as the 'Sancta Maria' chant, we hear the beautiful Marian hymn 'Ave maris stella', in which the opening and closing verses are set by Monteverdi in a rich 8-part texture. The work ends with the Magnificat, the song of Mary as sung in every service of Vespers (and Evensong) in which Monteverdi provides a bewildering variety of musical idioms and different vocal and instrumental textures. Famous amongst these is one of two 'echo' sections in the work with one of the tenors placed far apart from the main ensemble.

Music List ~ December 2025

Sunday 7th December – 2nd Sunday of Advent

10.30 am. All-Age Holy Communion

Organ Prelude *Choral Phrygien* Jehan Alain

Opening Hymn 6

Mass setting (Ky/S&B/AD) *Missa brevis* G. P. da Palestrina

Gradual Psalm 72.1-7 Tone

Offertory Hymn 285

Communion Motet *Wachet auf! ruft uns die Stimme* J. S. Bach

Post-Communion Hymn 'Little donkey'

Organ Postlude *Choral Dorien* Jehan Alain

5 pm. Evensong

Organ Prelude *Prelude in D* Henry Purcell
Introit *Hear my prayer, O Lord* Henry Purcell
Preces & Responses Thomas Tomkins
Psalm 11 William Boyce
Canticles *Evening Service in E minor* Daniel Purcell
The Lord's Prayer Robert Stone
Anthem *Let mine eyes run down with tears* Henry Purcell
Hymn 17
Final Amen William Mundy
Organ Postlude *Voluntary in D* Henry Purcell

Sunday 14th December – 3rd Sunday of Advent

10.30 am. Holy Communion

Organ Prelude *Herr Christ, der einzig Gottes Sohn* (BuxWV 192)
Dieterich Buxtehude
Opening Hymn 5
Mass setting (Ky/S&B/AD) *Short Communion Service* Adrian Batten
Gradual Psalm 146.4-10 Joseph Barnby
Offertory Hymn 401
Communion Motet *A tender shoot* Otto Goldschmidt
Post-Communion Hymn 278
Organ Postlude *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* (BuxWV 211)
Dieterich Buxtehude

7 pm. Vespers of the Blessed Virgin Mary (1610)

Claudio Monteverdi

(Ticketed Concert - see poster below for details)

Sunday 21st December – 4th Sunday of Advent

10.30 am. Holy Communion

Organ Prelude *Arabesque* (24 pièces en style libre) Louis Vierne
Opening Hymn 18
Mass setting (Ky/S&B/AD) *Missa 'Jesu Redemptor'* Adolfo Kaim
Gradual Psalm 80.1-8 E. J. Hopkins
Offertory Hymn 11
Communion Anthem *This is the truth from above*

Trad. / Vaughan Williams
Post-Communion Hymn 3 (ii)
Organ Postlude *Choral* (24 pièces en style libre) Louis Vierne

5 pm. Christmas Carol Service

Wednesday 24th December – Christmas Eve

11.00 pm Holy Communion

Organ Preludes *Ou s'en vont ces gais Bergers* André Raison
Noël Suisse L.-C. Daquin
Opening Hymn 29
Mass setting (GI/S&B/AD) *Messe de minuit pour Noël*
M-A. Charpentier
Gradual Hymn 21 (omit v. 3)
Offertory Hymn 32
Communion Motet *Hodie Christus natus est* J. P. Sweelinck
Post-Communion Hymn 30 (omit vv. 3-5)
Organ Postlude *In dulci jubilo* (BWV 729) J. S. Bach

Thursday 25th December – Christmas Day

10.30 am Holy Communion

Organ Prelude *In dulci jubilo* (BuxWV 197) Dieterich Buxtehude
Opening Hymn 34 (omit *)
Mass setting (GI/S&B/AD) *Missa Bell' amfitrit' altera*
Orlando di Lasso
Gradual Hymn 22
Offertory Hymn 25
Communion Motet *Descendit de caelis* William Byrd
Post-Communion Hymn 26 (omit *)
Organ Postlude *Praeludium in D* (BuxWV 139)
Dieterich Buxtehude

Sunday 28th December
No choral services

Aidan Coburn *Director of the Junior & Community Choirs*
Geoffrey Webber *Director of Music*

Christmas Lights

A Community Concert

Hampstead Community Choir
The Junior Choir
and
The Hampstead Players

There will be a retiring collection for charity

Celebrating 10 years of the **HAMPSTEAD COMMUNITY CHOIR**



Friday 5th December 2025 at 7.30pm

**HAMPSTEAD PARISH CHURCH
CHURCH ROW, NW3 6UU**

Tube: Hampstead (Northern Line) Buses: 46, 268
Parking is difficult in the immediate vicinity

For their charity this year the Choir have chosen C4WS who provide the night shelters in local churches during the winter.

The Big Hampstead Messiah

Saturday 6 December 2025

7.00pm – 10.00pm

A community performance of Handel's *Messiah*

Aidan Coburn (conductor)

The Hampstead Collective

The Players of the Hampstead Collective

Belsize Baroque

Colla Voce Singers

Hampstead Community Choir

Community Chorus

Tickets £15 from thehampsteadcollective.com or at the door



Organ Recitals

Saturday 20th at 4.00pm

Joshua Ryan, *St Alfege, Greenwich*

Saturday 28th February at 4.00pm

Andrew Dewar, *Paris*

Saturday 21st March at 4.00pm

George Inscoc, *St Paul's Cathedral, London*

Further recitals on

18th April, 23rd May, 20th June and 18th July

There's no charge for these organ recitals but we welcome donations to help cover costs.

MONTEVERDI

VESPERS of 1610



The Choirs of
Hampstead
Parish Church

Orchestra of
Period Instruments

Conductor
Geoffrey Webber

Celebrating 50 years of THE HAMPSTEAD CHURCH MUSIC TRUST

Tickets
Adults £20
Concessions £15

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fom.org.uk
or at the door if available

Information 020 7794 5808

Sunday 14th December 2025 at 7.00pm
HAMPSTEAD PARISH CHURCH
CHURCH ROW, NW3 6UU

Tube: Hampstead (Northern Line) Buses: 46, 268
Parking is difficult in the immediate vicinity





Hampstead Jazz at Christmas with Tara Minton & Friends
Saturday 13th December 2025 at 8.00pm (doors open 7pm)

Hampstead Jazz Club proudly presents a Christmas show like no other in association with Hampstead Parish Church. Firmly established as one of the most enchanting musical events of the festive calendar in London, this year we are delighted to welcome the wonderful singer and harpist Tara Minton & friends.

The Parish Church of St John-at-Hampstead, Church Row, NW3

Tickets: £22.50 (last year tickets sold out, so grab yours now)

Child tickets (under 15yrs old): £10

From hampsteadjazzclub.com

Having worked with everyone from Melbourne Opera to Björk, Australian-born Tara Minton is one of the brightest stars in the jazz world. 'Otherworldly.' Sunday Times 'Rich with blissful harmonies.' Uncut Magazine 'Ethereal and free-spirited.' Mojo Magazine

You are warmly invited to join us for what is sure to be an unforgettable evening of Christmassy musical magic.

Tara Minton – Harp/Vocals

Clare Wheeler – Vocals

Sara Colman – Vocals

Trish Clowes – Tenor sax

Miguel Gorodi – Trumpet/flugelhorn

Ed Babar – Double bass

Simon Roth – Drums

Supported by The Duke of Hamilton.

Profits from ticket sales will go to Hampstead Parish Church and Hampstead Jazz Club musicians' support fund.



Maurits Dolman, Chairman of the Friends of the Music introduces the return of an old favourite

The Hampstead Arts Festival resurrects!

The Hampstead Arts Festival welcomes you to a three-day festival the weekend before Christmas. It offers a brilliant series of varied events - from intimate chamber music, and an interwoven musical and literary evening, to late-night jazz, Bach at Brunch, a lovely and lively performance for children, and exuberant piano and string duets. All of this is curated by our excellent artistic directors Gemma Rosefield and Benjamin Nabarro, whom many of you will already know. Tickets can be ordered on the website: <https://www.hampsteadartsfestival.com>

The opening concert will be in our Parish Church:

Music Among Friends

Friday 19 December, 7:30pm

Britten – *Three Divertimenti*

Mozart – *Clarinet Quintet in A major*

Beethoven – *Septet in E-flat major*

Artists:

Benjamin Nabarro · Claudia Ajmone-Marsan – violins

Rachel Roberts – viola · Gemma Rosefield – cello

Robert Plane – clarinet · Naomi Atherton – horn

Emily Hultmark – bassoon · Enno Senft - double bass

A festival opening that sets the tone: spirited, lyrical and full of joy. Britten's playful *Divertimenti* leads to Mozart's *Clarinet Quintet*, a work of incomparable beauty and serenity, and one of the most radiant achievements in all chamber music, written by Mozart for his friend Anton Stadler. Beethoven's magnificent *Septet* brings the concert to a resplendent close - a work in the classical divertimento style, mirroring the opening Britten pieces, but on a scale almost orchestral. A youthful masterpiece of virtuosic entertainment, sublime beauty, warmth and wit.

Tickets £30 (£20 for over 65s, £10 under 26s, under 16s free)

Sponsored by TK International

See their website for details of the other concerts in the series on 20th and 21st December.



Bring not a bagpipe to a man in trouble. – Jonathan Swift

**

Christmas is weird – at what other time of the year do you sit in front of a dead tree and eat sweets out of your socks?

**



It happened in December

2nd December, 1697

Sir Christopher Wren's St Paul's Cathedral opened in London.

The original cathedral had been severely damaged during the Great Fire of London in 1666. While some repairs had taken place and services continued in the ruins, it became clear in 1668, when the nave collapsed, that a permanent solution was necessary.

Construction of the new cathedral took 33 years and spanned the reigns of five different monarchs.

19th December, 1843

Charles Dickens' classic work, *A Christmas Carol*, was published.

Dickens produced this iconic work in a six-week flurry of writing that began in October 1843 and finished on 19th December. By December 24th, the first edition of 6,000 copies had sold out and by 2nd January 1844, a second edition of 3,000 copies had also been sold.

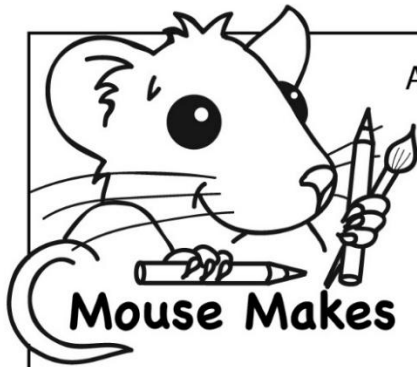
28th December, 1918

The results of the first General Election in Britain in which women were allowed to vote, resulted in David Lloyd George becoming Prime Minister.

After years of campaigning, 8.5 million women had become eligible to vote. However, this was still only about 40% of the British female population.

From ACE – the Association for Church Editors





At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus,
God's Son and our Saviour
coming into the world as a baby,
and we look forward to the time
when Jesus will come again,
not as a baby but as the
King of kings and Lord of lords!

read
John 14:3

A baby needs clothes
to keep warm like
a snuggly sleep suit
or a vest and nappy.

What were you dressed in?
Jesus was wrapped in

read Luke 2:7

A baby needs somewhere
to be born like at home
or in a hospital.

Where were you born?
Jesus was born
in a stable in

read Luke 2:1-6

A baby needs
somewhere
to sleep like
a crib or a cot.
*What did you
sleep in?*

Jesus slept in a

read Luke 2:7

A baby needs
a name.

*What name were
you called?*

Jesus was given
a special name
that had a
special meaning.

read
Matthew 1:21-23

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

NADOLIG LLAWEN ☆ NOLLAIG CHRÏDHEIL ☆ NOLLAG SHONA
JOYEUX NOËL • FELIZ NAVIDAD • BUON NATALE • GOD JUL • FROHE WEIHNACHTEN

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