



Hampstead Parish Church

Magazine for January 2026

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

20+C+M+B+26

Fr Ben considers
Epiphanytide and the
Blessing of the Chalk

Charity News

ALMA
Angola London
Mozambique Association

Reviews

The Community Choir
Cyrano de Bergerac

Josh Mcminn describes
his recent trip to **Ukraine**

Restoring our Humanity

Fr Yin-An's Christmas



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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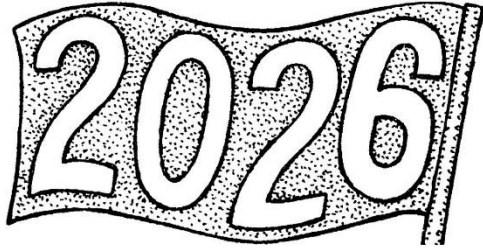
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January
2026

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Diary for January

Thu 1st *The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus*
 Sat 3rd 10.00am Gardening morning



Sunday 4th Epiphany

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

Wed 7th 10.15am Holy Communion
 Thu 8th 9.45am Hampstead Parochial School Epiphany service

Sunday 11th The Baptism of Christ

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



Mon 12th 7.00pm Hampstead Collective concert – see page 24
 Wed 14th 10.15am Holy Communion
 Thu 15th 7.30pm Community Choir

Sunday 18th Epiphany 2 / Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

8.00am Holy Communion
 10.30am Choral Holy Communion
 5.00pm Choral Evensong followed by Friends of the
 Music AGM in the Crypt

Wed 21st 10.15am Holy Communion
 Thu 22nd 7.30pm Community Choir

Sunday 25th Conversion of Paul

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



Wed 28th 10.15am Holy Communion
Thu 29th 7.30pm Community Choir

Sunday 1st Feb The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

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



Fr Ben writes

Very soon we will find ourselves in the midst of Epiphanytide; it is with good reason that an entire season has been dedicated to Epiphany, it is so rich in theological meaning and practical implication. In other words the Epiphany season has the potential to enlighten and enliven us, as we celebrate. We celebrate The Baptism of Christ, The Conversion of St. Paul, and The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, and of course the Adoration of the Magi.

In the Epiphany narrative there is the Christ child with Mary and Joseph, there are the magi (later referred as the three the wise men or kings going by the names of Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar), there are the scribes and the chief priest in Jerusalem, and unfortunately King Herod.

What all these characters in the narrative have in common is revelation. They all experienced extraordinary highlights of particular significance as to the nature of God. The wise men's first revelation of God is found in God's creation when they see the star, the second is found in God's word shared by the scribes and the chief priests about the birth in Bethlehem, the third is found in personal encounter with Jesus Christ, and the fourth is found in service as the magi give gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

I wonder where God will be revealed to you this year? The experience of the wise men shows us that God is already at work in all the world and in peoples and invites us to meet him there. As God is revealed to us in Scripture, sacrament, and service in all its forms we can know we will reliably encounter the God of Jesus Christ and we may just find a renewed sense peace, wonder, and solidarity.

So this year as we take the blessed chalk it and use it to mark 20+C+M+B+26¹ on our door lintels, may God bless all those in our homes, all those who enter our doors and all journeys to those in any need.

*Kind Regards,
Fr Ben*

January

Judy East

2026 is a year of anniversaries – for HPC I mean, obviously every year is someone or something's anniversary (there's a whole list, courtesy of the Association of Church Editors, further on in this issue), but this year the parish church prepares to note:

The death of John Harrison, clockmaker in 1776

The birth of John Constable, artist in 1776

The arrival of Martindale Sidwell as Organist and Choirmaster in 1946 and

The start of the Hampstead Players in 1976²

No prizes for guessing which two will feature most prominently in the life of the parish over the next few months. John Harrison never lived

¹ Christus + Mansionem + Benedicat

² We're also marking the centenary of the death of Charles Wood, about whom Geoffrey Webber writes in his music notes, but no connection at all to Hampstead as far as I know – unless you count performing his music.

nearer Hampstead than Red Lion Square as far as I can determine so quite why he was buried in our churchyard is a bit of a mystery, though he's not the only resident of Red Lion Square to make it here – perhaps it was the nearest available burial ground at the time. Constable did live in Hampstead for a while so I suppose it's possible he may have worshipped here. Thankfully Martindale Sidwell and the Hampstead Players have much more definite links! The church wouldn't be what it is today without them.

Estelle Lovatt writes about Constable further on in this issue and we hope to have an article about Harrison in March. There will definitely be much to hear about Martindale in next month's magazine and about the Hampstead Players too, later in the year.

So plenty to chase the January blues away if you're suffering from the aftermath of too much jollity – or not enough. January 19th (Blue Monday) is supposed to be the most depressing day of the year when you're three weeks out from Christmas and a long way from spring. So what a good thing Sunday 18th is the start of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and the day of the Friends of the Music AGM!

Though I've referred to it many times the magazine has never had space for one of my personal favourite poems – W H Auden's *Well, so that is that*. A poem that sums up Blue Monday perfectly, so this month, come what may, I'm squeezing it in!

Finally, looking ahead with Craft Fairs in mind, we'd love to have your old Christmas cards when you take them down. Please leave them at the back of church and I'll collect them up.

Smile Lines

- How did one of the wise men feel when his gift was rejected?
Incensed.
- What's a New Year's resolution? Something that goes in one year and out the other.
- What happened to the man who shoplifted a calendar on New Year's Eve? He got 12 months! (*With thanks to ACE*)

Restoring Our Humanity: The Word Made Flesh

Fr Yin-An Chen

Christmas Day Sermon (John 1.1-14, Isaiah 52.7-10)

1. Our Christmas Question: Hope or Illusion?

Every Christmas, beneath the joyful carols and festive decorations, a deeper question quietly waits for us. *What are we really celebrating?* Because the truth is, this world is not gentle. It is often brutal and cruel. War continues to reduce cities to rubble. Climate change threatens our lives residing on this planet. Many people wonder whether humanity even has a future. And so we ask ourselves: *Are we too optimistic to hope? Or too pessimistic to believe that anything can change?*

This tension is not new. It is precisely the tension behind the words of Isaiah 52. The people are in exile—in placement physically, psychologically and spiritually. Jerusalem is destroyed. They believe God has abandoned them. Into that despair comes a daring announcement: *“How beautiful are the feet of the messenger who announces peace.”* God promises to change the facts on the ground. The Lord is returning to Zion. Jerusalem will be redeemed. And not secretly—the nations of the earth will see it.

Isaiah’s vision of salvation is cosmic. It reaches beyond one city, one people, one moment in history. But we must ask honestly: *What kind of salvation is this?* Does the return to Zion—or control of a holy land—automatically mean peace? Is this truly good news for the whole world? And if so, how do we announce it today?

2. Christmas Is Not Nostalgia

It is easy to treat Christmas as nostalgia. A beautiful story from two thousand years ago. A familiar scene repeated year after year. Some even question whether it really happened at all. And we may quietly wonder: *Why does it still matter?*

But Christmas is not about preserving a memory. We do not celebrate merely that Jesus was born. We celebrate who this child is.

What kind of baby is Jesus?

What kind of life does he embody?

What kind of power does he reveal?

We tell this story again and again because it shapes who we are.

Christmas is not meant to distract us from the world's pain but to form our imagination and our conscience in the midst of it.

3. The Word Made Flesh: God Shares Our Humanity

On Christmas Day, we hear the testimony of Saint John: *"The Word became flesh and lived among us."*

This is the heart of Christian faith—and it is a radical claim.

The God we believe in is not distant or detached. God does not leave us alone to deal with evil, struggle, and injustice. God chooses to enter fully into human life—to hunger, to depend, to be vulnerable, and even to experience pain and suffering. God takes on a humanity that must be fed, held, and protected.

This is not a God who overcomes the world by avoiding it. This is a God who confronts suffering from within. A God who shares our joy and anger, our sorrow and pain. Christmas declares that God does not abandon the world to its darkness. God comes to dwell in it.

Presenting an image of acting, Isaiah speaks of God's arm bared before the nations. And when that arm is finally revealed, it is not raised in violence or domination. It is wrapped around a vulnerable child, born to the poor, laid in a manger.

4. Christmas Empowers Our Humanity

This brings us to the heart of Christmas—and to our calling.

Our Christmas task is not to escape the world but to restore our humanity—and the humanity of others.

Because the Word has become flesh, because Jesus has fully shared our humanity, *we are empowered to live differently.*

In the mystery of the incarnation, our humanity is not bypassed or replaced. It is *taken up*. God does not save the world apart from human life but *through* it. In Jesus Christ, our fragile, conflicted humanity has been claimed by God and entrusted with holy purpose. This means that our most deeply human instincts are not accidental or naïve.

Our desire to strive for goodness and beauty is not sentimental idealism.

Our conscience that feels unsettled when we see exploitation, inequality, and injustice is not weakness.

Our refusal to accept cruelty as normal is not impractical.

These are signs that our humanity still remembers its calling. Through the Word made flesh, God takes this humanity—*our longing, our moral unease, our compassion*—and transforms it into a **channel of peace**, a **witness to hope**, and a **vehicle of good news** in the world. Christmas tells us that God does not only act *for* humanity but also acts *through* it.

5. Let Humanity Shine

This is why we do not need to “put Christ back into Christmas.” Christ has never been missing. And when Christ comes again, it will not be for symbolism, but to judge the living and the dead—based on what we did with the humanity entrusted to us.

Until then, our calling is clear.

Our Christmas task is to protect vulnerability, not exploit it.

To restore dignity where it has been denied.

To let humanity shine—where fear, violence, and indifference try to extinguish it.

Just as we treasure the baby Jesus, even in a manger—welcoming his coming and guarding his vulnerability—so we are called to treasure and protect the humanity we find in ourselves and in others.

And so, when we say “*Merry Christmas*,” we are not pretending the world is less broken than it is. We are proclaiming that **God has chosen to dwell within our humanity**. We are affirming that

goodness is still worth striving for, that injustice is still worth resisting, and that vulnerability is still worth protecting.

To say “*Merry Christmas*” is to bless one another with the courage to live fully human lives—lives shaped by compassion, conscience, and hope—because the Word has become flesh and lived among us.

So go from this place knowing that your humanity matters, that God is with you, and that peace can still be made known. Amen.

PCC REPORT

Helen Taylor, PCC Secretary

CHURCH AND PARISH ROOMS HIRE – HYMN BOOKS – 100 FROGNAL REPAIRS – EXTENSION OF ANDREW PENNY’S LLM (READER) LICENCE

There was a meeting of the PCC on 10 November 2025.

Mthr Carol and Huw Robinson gave a presentation on the use of our parish rooms, reporting that overall income from the hire of the church and parish rooms has increased 96.3% since 2023. A variety of groups use the facilities on a regular basis, including around 280 people each week from support groups alone. While utilisation rates are high, there remains considerable availability for church and congregational use, particularly on Saturdays and Sundays. The PCC welcomed these efforts to utilise our property to increase our long-term, predictable income while serving our community.

We approved a proposal to purchase new hymn books for the church using legacies from John Collins and Doris Asher, both of whom had a great interest in music. Mthr Carol noted that the Standing Committee has discussed the practicalities of using hymn books in our services.

Angela Gardner and Inigo Woolf provided an update on the legal advice received on our rights under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 in relation to 100 Frognaal. Following this advice, the PCC will commission a new survey before proceeding with the proposed external repairs.

With unanimous support, the PCC approved the extension of Andrew Penny's licence as a Reader (Licensed Lay Minister).

The PCC's next scheduled meeting will be on Monday 23rd February

A trip to Ukraine

Josh Mcminn (Jenny and Derek Bunn's grandson)

The preparation for our 36 hour drive to Ukraine did not go well. To help accustom myself to the long drives, I borrowed my Mum's car and took it out driving in the rain. While driving it home I cut her front tire on the pavement, necessitating a replacement. This did not instil my confidence for the impending journey, which we'd be doing in much larger, more unwieldy vehicles.

For that reason at least - I was very grateful for the prayers of Hampstead Parish Church.

The same day my brother took the car to Costco to replace the tires, I made my way to Teddington, where our donation ambulances were waiting for us. On the driveway were three big pickup trucks (the charity's director, Simon, told us they used to send old NHS ambulances, but discovered that 4x4s were much more appropriate for the front line).

We set off from London at 8am on Wednesday morning, and were on the Eurostar by 11. Arriving in Calais, we quickly passed through northern France, Belgium and the Netherlands, stopping for our first real break just before Düsseldorf. By then it was time for the long night's drive across the breadth of Germany and a day's driving through Poland.

By the time we arrived at the border with Ukraine, night was falling for the second time in our journey - a surreal experience.

The effects of coffee now failing us, me and my co-driver had taken to alternative stimulants. First we tried music, starting with the Rolling Stones and progressing to Rage Against the Machine. But more was needed. So we took to rubbing tiger balm on our faces and putting the air con on full blow - a trick I learned from an old housemate, which proved surprisingly effective.

At 8pm local time on Thursday evening, we arrived in Lviv. Total journey time: 34 hours. We were warmly received by our hosts at the International Christian Medical and Dental Association compound, who immediately took us into town for a celebratory meal.

I had been told by Ukrainian friends that Lviv is one of Europe's great cities, but only once I was there did I see what they meant. The grand stone houses, cobbled streets, and trams put it up there with Barcelona or Budapest.

Like Barcelona, the night's atmosphere is cordial, the streets filled with young people enjoying the various cafes and bars. I was told that the residents were determined not to let the war destroy their spirits.

Nevertheless, the city's curfew forced revellers out of the bars at 11 and off the streets at 12.

When I finally went to bed at 1, I was dismayed to find that every time I started to drift off, I dreamt of almost crashing the car and promptly woke up again. By 4am I had grown so tired of this I got out of bed and forced to myself to imagine the car crashing, as a way to break the cycle. It worked. At 5am I was woken by the sound of an air raid siren and rushed down to the hotel's basement.

When in the basement I learned that the cause of the air raid siren was a single MIG-31, which had taken off from an air strip in Russia, and had the potential to strike anywhere in the country. I looked at a little red map on my phone that showed the whole country under air raid alarm. Russia, not ignorant of this ability to wake an entire nation, apparently often send out their MIGs without launching a strike, just to sound the alarm, and grind people down.

Exhausted as I was from the drive the alarm broke me. I slept sitting on a chair in the basement, and thought of the residents of Lviv, who even though they are hundreds of miles from the front line, on top of everything else, have their sleep disrupted, and live in uncertainty about whether they'll be struck. It is a sort of tactic of attrition, which could so easily wear you down. The alarm sounded again an hour later at 6am, letting us know we could return to our beds, to rest for the last couple hours of the night.

The next day, we met with three soldiers, who thanked us for the gift of the ambulance, and told us about the front line. They explained to us how the truck would be used: a video on their phone showed another white pickup surrounded by a giant wooden chicken coop. To get into the truck you first had to open a mesh door on the side. All of this was for the drones. Because of drones, they told us, ambulances typically only last 10 months on the front line before they are destroyed. They thanked us for our donation and reminded us that despite the steady stream of charity aid much more is needed at this time.

We shook hands and went our separate ways: the soldiers, eastward to the front line, and us, westward to Krakow.

On the short journey into Poland, I reflected that the front line really isn't far from Krakow. Nor for that matter, Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Antwerp, Paris, or any of the places we'd driven through in such a short time. You could imagine the same air raid sirens in any of these cities.

2026 brings

- 110th anniversary of Conscription being introduced
- 100th anniversary of the birth of Queen Elizabeth II
- 100th anniversary of Winnie-the-Pooh book published
- 80th anniversary of Avro Lancaster first flight
- 40th anniversary of Top Gun film released
- 30th anniversary of Pokémon launched
- 25th anniversary of The Lord of the Rings first film released

Charity News



ALMA is the Diocese of London's Companion link with the Anglican Church in Angola and Mozambique, and part of the network of Companion Link Dioceses throughout the Anglican Communion. The original covenant was signed on 12 July 1998.

A renewed Covenant was signed on 13 July 2008 during the Rivers of Life service in St Paul's Cathedral.

You can follow ALMA on Facebook and Twitter (@ALMALondonD) where it's easier to look at what they're doing.

The essence of ALMA is relationships, and links between individual parishes, schools or other organisations are an important part of ALMA's work.

Currently there are 44 London parishes twinned with parishes in Angola and Mozambique. Six schools are formally twinned and others are developing connections.

Since 1998, visits between Angola, London and Mozambique have increased considerably; and so too has our understanding of each other and the very different contexts and circumstances in which we minister. There are encouraging and inspiring reports of visits in this section.

As visits between link parishes and schools have taken place, we have all learnt a little of what it is to walk in each others' shoes. Do visit their pages and be inspired by the deepening friendships within ALMA.

There are issues that affect our partners in Angola and Mozambique outside normal church life. The Church both in London and in Angola

or Mozambique campaigns on HIV/AIDS, Malaria/TB, Debt, Trade, Post Conflict, Environment

ALMA Wednesday Morning Prayer

We hold an ALMA Morning Prayer each Wednesday to enable us to pray together as a Partnership in the Gospel, and you are warmly invited to join us. You can find the latest ALMA Morning Prayer on the ALMA YouTube channel and subscribe to receive it each week.

The ALMA Partnership is always undergirded by prayer: each Wednesday in London we pray for parishes in Angola, Lebombo, Nampula and Niassa in rotation in our Diocesan Cycle of Prayer. However, lessons from Covid-19 and lockdown, along with improved communications technology, mean this can be something we do together rather than separately.

Taken from their website almalink.org

MUSIC SECTION

Music Notes ~ January 2026

Geoffrey Webber

Sharp-eyed readers of our service sheets will notice one small but highly significant change as we begin 2026. The hymn numbers will now be given an 'REH' number rather than an 'NEH' number. (The details are given partly for the benefit of the choir members who need to find the music to sing the harmony parts.) Thus we welcome the Revised English Hymnal into our liturgy (as approved by the PCC³), the successor to the New English Hymnal that was first published in 1986. There will be no drastic change in our hymn repertory, as all the

³ See PCC Report on page 9

commonly used hymns in the NEH remain in the REH, but it will be much easier for us to introduce some of the newer hymn repertoire that has emerged over recent decades, which will mean either new words, new music, or both at the same time.

The Foreword to the REH, written by Bishop Rowan Williams, talks in particular about two areas of hymn-writing that have become more important in recent times: “...the last half-century or so has generated a significant number of hymns that articulate something of the Church’s social vision, its calling to be an agent of God’s justice; and increasingly, the pressure of environmental concern has produced some fresh writing about the material world to which we belong and which we are called to nurture and respect.” (I remember sitting directly in front of the former Archbishop of Canterbury when he came to preach at Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, and was most impressed by his confident singing of the bass line of the hymns!)

The content of the new books was drawn up by a panel of seven clergy and musicians, notably Rev. Dr Gordon Giles, Canon Chancellor of Rochester Cathedral and an expert on hymnology, and the late Dr Simon Lindley, for many years organist of Leeds Parish Church and Secretary of the Church Music Society. Like the NEH, the REH contains a substantial liturgical section of music for the liturgy beyond hymns, including Taizé chants and eight congregational settings of the Mass, including the Thorne setting that we currently use at Hampstead when the choir is absent.

The approach to the altering of older texts remains generally conservative, but the editors say that “we have been sensitive to the concerns of some worshippers about the non-inclusive natures of nouns such as ‘men’ and masculine pronouns and possessive adjectives such as ‘he’ and ‘his’. We have not amended classic or well-known texts, but in the case of translations, and of hymns written during the last hundred years or so, small changes have sometimes been made where this does not affect the integrity of the text.” My choice of hymns from the new book, as always subject to the Vicar’s approval, will continue to be based on the recommended ‘suggested hymns’ list, Sunday by Sunday, so that our communal singing matches well with the liturgy of the day. As with the NEH, the REH has no section of hymns

designed specifically for younger children, so we will continue to look elsewhere with respect to All-Age services.

2026 marks the centenary of the death of one of the most widely-sung composers of Anglican church music, Charles Wood. I have long had an interest in his music, having worked at the same Cambridge College that Wood served for around 35 years till his death in 1926. In recent months I have been planning to celebrate this anniversary by developing a collaborative scheme that will see the performance of all of his church music in the three places where Wood lived and worked, in Armagh, Cambridge and London. Several 'new' works will be performed from new or first editions, and naturally our own choir will be singing its share of music by Wood spread out through the calendar year. To kick things off, we will sing his unpublished Communion setting in C minor on Epiphany Sunday, and a major highlight will be the performance of his wonderful St Mark Passion in March. The full list of choirs taking part in this collaboration is as follows: in Armagh, the choir of St Patrick's Col Cathedral and the Charles Wood Summer School (directed by David Hill); in Cambridge the choirs of Selwyn, Gonville & Caius and King's Colleges; and in London the choirs of Hampstead Parish Church, the Royal Hospital Chelsea, Holy Trinity Prince Consort Rd, and Westminster Cathedral. More on this during the year!

Music List ~ January 2026

Sunday 4th January – Epiphany

10.30 am. Holy Communion

Organ Prelude *Psalm 23 (Carey)* Charles Wood

Opening Hymn 71

Mass setting (GI/S&B/AD) *Communion Service in C minor*
Charles Wood

Gradual Psalm 72.10-15 William Boyce

Offertory Hymn 67

Communion Anthem *Born under starlight* Rupert Jeffcoat

Post-communion Hymn 52

Organ Postlude *Festival Voluntary* Flor Peeters

5 pm. Evensong

Organ Prelude *Fidelis* Percy Whitlock
Introit *Three Kings from Persian lands afar* Peter Cornelius
Preces & Responses Humphrey Clucas
Psalms 98, 100 Sidwell / Clucas
Canticles *The Fourth Service* Adrian Batten
Anthem *Tribus miraculis* Hans Leo Hassler
Hymn 69
Final Amen Harold Darke
Organ Postlude *Postlude in D* Healey Willan

Sunday 11th January – The Baptism of Christ

10.30 am. Holy Communion

Organ Prelude *Magi* Janet Graham
Opening Hymn 552 (omit v. 4)
Mass setting (GI/S&B/AD) *Missa brevis* Lennox Berkeley
Gradual Psalm 29 Tone viii/I
Offertory Hymn 74
Communion Motet *O pray for the peace of Jerusalem* John Goss
Post-communion Hymn 466 (omit v. 2)
Organ Postlude *Epiphanie* Gaston Litaize

5 pm. Evensong

Organ Prelude *Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam* (BWV 684) J. S. Bach
Introit *Da zu dir der Heiland kam* Richard Wagner
Preces & Responses Humphrey Clucas
Psalms 46, 47 Luther / Parratt
Canticles *Magnificat (on Old Scotch chant) & Nunc dimittis*
Charles Wood
Anthem *Ascribe unto the Lord* Samuel S. Wesley
Hymn 575
Final Amen Harold Darke
Organ Postlude *Allegro maestoso & Fugue (Sonata II)* Felix Mendelssohn

Sunday 18th January – 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

10.30 am. Holy Communion

Organ Prelude *Christe qui lux es et dies* Samuel Scheidt

Opening Hymn 73
Mass setting (GI/S&B/AD) *Missa Octavi Toni* Orlando di Lasso
Gradual Psalm 40.1-12 Tone vi
Offertory Hymn 396
Communion Motet *Alma Redemptoris mater* G. P. da Palestrina
Post-communion Hymn 472
Organ Postlude *Fantasia* Pieter Cornet

5 pm. Evensong

Organ Prelude *Adagio* (Sonata I) Felix Mendelssohn
Introit *Heilig! (Deutsche Liturgie)* Felix Mendelssohn
Preces & Responses Humphrey Clucas
Psalm 96 Percy Buck
Canticles *Evening Service in E* Sydney Watson
Anthem *And Paul sent and called the elders* (St Paul)
Felix Mendelssohn
Hymn 537
Final Amen Harold Darke
Organ Postlude *Con moto maestoso* (Sonata III) Felix Mendelssohn

Sunday 25th January – The Conversion of St Paul

10.30 am. Holy Communion

Organ Prelude *Pastorale* (Op. 26) Alexandre Guilmant
Opening Hymn 605
Mass setting (GI/S/AD) *Missa brevis No. 7 in C* Charles Gounod
Gradual Psalm 67 Tone vii/2
Offertory Hymn 205
Communion Motet *O salutaris hostia* (Missa brevis No. 7)
Charles Gounod
Post-communion Hymn 407
Organ Postlude *Postlude on 'Why wandrest thou sadly in darkness'*
Alexandre Guilmant

5 pm. Evensong

Organ Prelude *Fantasia in C minor* (BWV 562) J. S. Bach
Introit *Exsultate iusti* Ludovico Viadana
Preces & Responses Humphrey Clucas

Psalm 119.41-56 Pye / Walmisley
Canticles *Evening Service in F minor* Alan Gray
Anthem *Alma Redemptoris mater* (8 vv) Orlando di Lasso
Hymn 204 (ii)
Final Amen Harold Darke
Organ Postlude *Toccata and Fugue in D minor* (BWV 565) J. S. Bach

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



The Joy of Singing

Judi Bevan

Hampstead Community Choir celebrated its 10th anniversary with a party after the Christmas Lights concert on December 5th. Much fun was had with spontaneous recitals by some members including Ruth Peel and Matt Sargent as well as delicious food and wine organised by Gill Sumner.

When Chris Money started the Community Choir at Hampstead Parish Church in October 2015, urged on by Sheena Ginnings, it initially mustered 24 members but then dropped to 11 regular members. The first performance took place at Handley and Anne Steven's wedding anniversary in the spring of 2016 when they sang *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*. David Moore, who ran the junior choir, was delighted with the idea and, although there was little money for the project, he both played and conducted for the first Christmas Lights concert.

Help came soon from the church's Friends of the Music group, who provided some useful finance and some of its members joined the choir. Today we have 75 singers including a growing number of younger people as well as some more experienced singers who lift the choir to new levels.

In 2019 David left and handed over to Aidan Coburn, who runs the Junior Choir, supported by Geoffrey Webber, our music director. Geoffrey had taught Aidan at Cambridge.

Covid struck only months later but when lockdown started in March, Aidan kept the choir going on Zoom. It was quite a challenge to have everyone singing together on their screens but it kept the spirit going.

A gifted tenor who has sung in some of the world's great opera houses, Aidan joined the church choir more than 20 years ago and began conducting the Junior Choir in 2019.

Aidan and our regular pianist, Nathan Mercieca, became friends at the London Oratory School. They are both accomplished musicians with professional careers yet they clearly enjoy conducting and playing for us. Nathan is a sought-after counter tenor who sang at the Queen's funeral while Aidan has sung at La Scala in Milan and at Glyndebourne. There are, however, no auditions for joining the choir. "Aidan's philosophy is all embracing," says Chris.

'The church is never as alive as when the Community Choir performs. It is the best of what music making should be', says Aidan.

The choir's ethos is about community inside and outside the church. Not all choir members come to church on Sundays but they do get introduced to our plays and concerts and some have begun attending as a result of participating in the choir. Some are also members of the Hampstead Players.

In the past 10 years, the choir concerts have raised thousands of pounds for charities, most regularly the C4WS Homeless Shelter which operates at the church through November – January. It has also raised money for The Listening Place, which helps people with suicidal feelings. Each Christmas, the choir sings carols at the Henderson Court day-care centre, an event started by founder member Diana Finning eight years ago.

The founder members also include Elisabeth Beesley, Marilyn Brooks, Peter Ginnings, Anne and Handley Stevens, Nicki and Jon Siddall, Jess Mathur and Margaret Willmer. They are all still enthusiastic participants which, as *The Times* wrote in a leader column early in December, “shows the morale boosting power of choral singing”.⁴



The Hampstead Collective

Monday 12th January

7.00pm

Kurtág 100: Kafka Fragments

Rebecca Hardwick / Tamsin Waley-Cohen

Monday 2nd February

7.00pm

Mendelssohn: String Octet

The Players of the Hampstead Collective

Monday 2nd March

7.00pm

Agrippina's Betrayal

Rebecca Hardwick / Jacob Garside

The Players of the Hampstead Collective

Featuring music by Handel, Schütz and Buxtehude

Monday 6th April

7.00pm

Piano Recital: Matthew Fletcher

Featuring Schumann's Fantasia in C

⁴ The Community choir meets on Thursdays in term-time - 7.30pm in the church. Contact details on page 32

Monday 4th May

7.00pm

Purcell: Dido and Aeneas

The Hampstead Collective / The Players of the Hampstead Collective

Tickets and more information at www.thehampsteadcollective.com



Organ Recitals

Saturday 28th February at 4.00pm

Andrew Dewar, *Paris*

Saturday 21st March at 4.00pm

George Inscoe, *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.

Cyrano de Bergerac

Review - Judy East

The tale of Cyrano and Roxane has been around for a long time. It's been described as comedy, as drama and even found its way into sci-fi. The enduring fascination of unrequited love never fails to stir the hearts of audiences. It challenges our perceptions of each other and the criteria on which we judge – it's Beauty and the Beast without the happy ending. Which is a lot to cram into 2 ½ hours.

I'm always slightly unnerved by apparent heckling from the pews – too many real experiences (!) - so was comparatively relieved when Cyrano (Jake Berry) burst onto the stage – nose prominently outlined in red (an inspired idea which avoided the need of prosthetics which I imagine are best left to the professionals. Though really the Players are so professional these days one of them could probably have....) Jake inhabited the part right from that first dynamic entrance and we never felt anything but sympathy for him and his love for the beautiful Roxane. And there's the problem at the heart of the play. She is beautiful – he isn't. Christian is handsome – Cyrano isn't. In his own eyes as well as other people's he doesn't fulfil the conventional norm. The story is said to be based on Savinien de Cyrano de Bergerac, a 17th century French novelist, but I'm sure countless instances of looks being the deciding criteria can be found as long as there has been story-telling.

The triangle of Roxane, Christian and Cyrano worked well. Katie Donovan excelled as the maiden at the heart of the triangle, falling in love with, one might think, the wrong man – who after all does she actually love? She finds Christian deficient when he can't find the words and in the end, long after Christian has died, she realises how much she really loves Cyrano – but it's too late. He also dies and she's left alone. Tom Benn well depicted the bumbling lover, Christian, genuinely in love but also genuinely tongue-tied. And then there's his love rival – the brash and flashy Count Antoine de Guiche. What a dynamic performance from Christophe Monplaisir, the balance between his love and his over-confidence nicely done.

What of Cyrano's friends? For he does have friends – not everyone judges him by his appearance. Two excellent supporting performances from Adrian Hughes and Simon Young as le Bret and Rageneau.

And then the chorus – nuns to start with, who are apparently retelling an old story for the benefit of a new novice. Do they do this reenactment regularly? Are they far removed in years from the action of the play-within-a-play? Or is their "present" the time of Cyrano's death (and so some fifteen years since the battle and Christian's demise)? And if I wasn't clear on that I was even less clear on which of them was which. Most of them had four, five or even six parts which

they donned and shed with panache. And most of them died. (I particularly liked the flutter of red paper to indicate the blood as each succumbed).

The set was admirably simple with very few pauses for scene changes – just a few boxes more than adequately conveyed the different scenes. And the “balcony” scene using the pulpit so effective. Would Juliet have loved Romeo if he hadn’t been goodlooking? Or Romeo fall for Juliet? We were reminded that we must doubt it.

There was a formidable production team behind the actors which just shows how much more there is to putting on a play than getting up on the stage. Lighting, sound, costumes, fight arrangers, make up – the list goes on and on – more behind the scenes than in front in fact but all contributing to an immensely satisfying whole – a thoroughly good night at the theatre.

Celebrating Constable’s 250th birthday

John Constable RA (1776-1837) is buried alongside his wife Maria and their children, in the family tomb in our churchyard – in the bottom left hand corner if you’re looking for it.

Estelle Lovatt FRSA and tour guide, offers these notes as an introduction to his life, particularly his time in Hampstead

Born in 1776, we celebrate Constable’s 250th birthday in 2026.

The great English Romantic Realist landscape artist loved living in Hampstead. Feeling a tremendous connection with the area, he said, “*Here, Hampstead, let me take my everlasting rest.*”

Born in East Bergholt, Suffolk, he found himself living in Hampstead after he fell in love with the green location and early Georgian & Regency architecture. Painting, sketching, drawing, teaching and lecturing here.

He first discovered Hampstead as an art student at the Royal Academy. Walking from there through central London up to the Heath, he said he would walk the “*three miles from door to door [from Central London to Hampstead]...see nature, and unite a town and country life*”. Painting the lush, verdant, green landscape as it reminded him of his family farm and Suffolk home.

Hampstead, some 450 feet higher than the city of London, was far enough from the crowded, polluted, metropolis of town, providing a refuge for his family, and wife of ill-health. With the freshest air, as Constable noted, “*Hampstead is the lungs of London*”. With “*the finest views, unsurpassed in Europe, from Westminster to Gravesend, Kent, and the dome of St Paul’s*”, to paint.

Constable spent the last 19 years of his life in Hampstead. Capturing sights he claimed included, “*views of Child’s Hill, fields in Hendon, church spires in Harrow on the Hill, and even Windsor Castle!*” Sketching farmhand labourers hard at work on the Heath tending cows and sheep, horses, donkeys and dogs. Underneath ash, birch, elm, oak and fir trees growing beyond hedge rows around the Heath’s ponds.

Here Constable affected some of his most experimental painting techniques. Including cloud studies for his most famous, iconic, masterpiece, ‘**The Hay Wain**’, National Gallery. Although it depicts the River Stour and Willy Lott’s house, it’s believed Constable painted this scene from sketches by Whitestone Pond. Completing this canvas in the back garden shed, of his home in Hampstead. Not in Suffolk!

Constable valued how “*Every day in Hampstead makes me long for a walk*”. He preferred the grainier landscape of the Heath instead of formal city parks. Seeing them as unnatural, artificially cultivated, spaces. Saying, “*the gentleman’s park is my aversion. It’s not beauty because it’s not nature!*” Adding, “*My art is found under every hedge; in every lane - therefore no one thinks it’s worth picking...[But] the landscape is too large to go unnoticed...[and the] Canvas takes the place of God’s work; the landscape is God’s plan in eye; because since the Creation, no two days are alike, no two hours are alike. No two trees are alike. No two*

leaves are alike.” As he used “a thousand greens to capture the complexity of nature’s beauty.”

To book tickets for Estelle Lovatt’s ‘*Constable’s Hampstead walk*’ please see www.estellelovatt.com or www.estellelovatt.eventbrite.com

Fuelling children’s potential

The international children’s charity World Vision has recently published a new research report, *School meals in our words: Choosing our future*, to demonstrate the positive ripple effect that meals at school are having on children’s lives across the globe.

The report comes at a time when the World Food Programme has warned that, despite a significant increase in government-led school meals programmes, it is estimated that half the world’s primary school-aged children go to school hungry.

Yet World Vision found that children worldwide consider school meals very important to their daily lives. The regular food gives them the energy to learn, and a reason to come to school on a regular basis.

World Vision prioritises school meals through its Child Sponsorship programmes and through partnership with the School Meals Coalition. In 2024, nearly one million children were provided with school meals through World Vision projects.

From Parish Pump



Readings for January

10.30am

5.00pm

Sunday 4th Epiphany

Isaiah 60.1-6

Baruch 4.36 - end of 5

Matthew 2.1-12

John 2.1-11

Sunday 11th Baptism of Christ

Isaiah 42.1-9

Joshua 3.1-8

Matthew 3.13-end

Hebrews 1.1-12

Sunday 18th Epiphany 2

Isaiah 49.1-7

Ezekiel 2.1 – 3.4

John 1.29-42

Galatians 1.11-end

Sunday 25th Conversion of Paul

Jeremiah 1.4-10

Ecclesiasticus 39.1-10

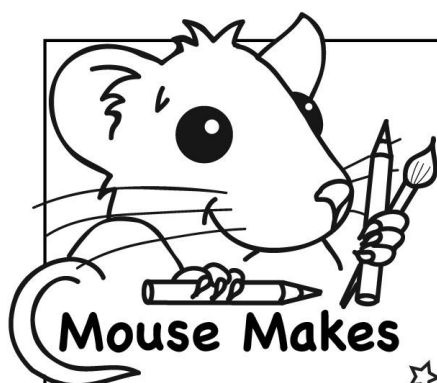
Matthew 19.27-end

Colossians 1.24 – 2.7

Well, so that is that *W H Auden*

Well, so that is that. Now we must dismantle the tree,
Putting the decorations back into their cardboard boxes --
Some have got broken -- and carrying them up to the attic.
The holly and the mistletoe must be taken down and burnt,
And the children got ready for school. There are enough
Left-overs to do, warmed-up, for the rest of the week --
Not that we have much appetite, having drunk such a lot,
Stayed up so late, attempted -- quite unsuccessfully --
To love all of our relatives, and in general
Grossly overestimated our powers. Once again
As in previous years we have seen the actual Vision and failed
To do more than entertain it as an agreeable
Possibility, once again we have sent Him away,
Begging though to remain His disobedient servant,
The promising child who cannot keep His word for long.
The Christmas Feast is already a fading memory,

And already the mind begins to be vaguely aware
Of an unpleasant whiff of apprehension at the thought
Of Lent and Good Friday which cannot, after all, now
Be very far off. But, for the time being, here we all are,
Back in the moderate Aristotelian city
Of darning and the Eight-Fifteen, where Euclid's geometry
And Newton's mechanics would account for our experience,
And the kitchen table exists because I scrub it.
It seems to have shrunk during the holidays. The streets
Are much narrower than we remembered; we had forgotten
The office was as depressing as this. To those who have seen
The Child, however dimly, however incredulously,
The Time Being is, in a sense, the most trying time of all.
For the innocent children who whispered so excitedly
Outside the locked door where they knew the presents to be
Grew up when it opened. Now, recollecting that moment
We can repress the joy, but the guilt remains conscious;
Remembering the stable where for once in our lives
Everything became a You and nothing was an It.
And craving the sensation but ignoring the cause,
We look round for something, no matter what, to inhibit
Our self-reflection, and the obvious thing for that purpose
Would be some great suffering. So, once we have met the Son,
We are tempted ever after to pray to the Father;
"Lead us into temptation and evil for our sake."
They will come, all right, don't worry; probably in a form
That we do not expect, and certainly with a force
More dreadful than we can imagine. In the meantime
There are bills to be paid, machines to keep in repair,
Irregular verbs to learn, the Time Being to redeem
From insignificance. The happy morning is over,
The night of agony still to come; the time is noon:
When the Spirit must practice his scales of rejoicing
Without even a hostile audience, and the Soul endure
A silence that is neither for nor against her faith
That God's Will will be done, That, in spite of her prayers,
God will cheat no one, not even the world of its triumph.



WISE MEN FROM THE EAST

The Wise Men came
from a land far away,
they had seen a star
that shone brighter than day.

The star was a sign
of the birth of a king,
so they followed that star
to pay homage to him.

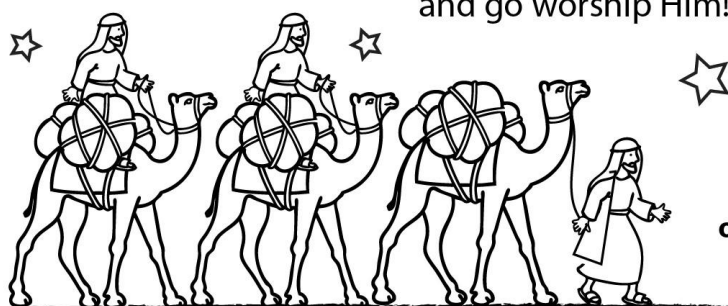
They found him in Bethlehem
as the prophets foretold,
they gave him three gifts:
myrrh, frankincense and gold.

The star led to Jesus
our saviour and king,
let us join with the Wise Men
and go worship Him!



DID YOU KNOW ?

Stars shine different
colours, the colour we
see depends on the
temperature of the star.
The hottest stars shine
blueish-white, then
yellowish-white,
yellow, **orange** and the
coolest stars shine **red**.



Read the story
of the Wise Men in
Matthew 2:1-12

S B E T H L E H E M J O I Y
T K J E S U S K I N O W W C
A G O E P I P H A N Y O I V
R I U M E S S I A H G R S I
K F R A N K I N C E N S E S
I T N G O L D M Y R R H M I
N S E I J V S I G N B I E T
G O Y A C H R I S T C P N M

Can you find
these words in
the word search?

WISE MEN • MAGI
STAR • SIGN
JOURNEY • BETHLEHEM
VISIT • JESUS • MESSIAH
CHRIST • KING
GIFTS • GOLD • MYRRH
FRANKINCENSE
WORSHIP • JOY
EPIPHANY

A few dates for your new diaries....

February

- Mon 2nd The Hampstead Collective
Wed 18th ASH WEDNESDAY
Sat 21st Friends of the Music Celebration of the life of
Martindale Sidwell
Sat 28th Organ Recital

March

- Mon 2nd The Hampstead Collective
Sun 15th MOTHERING SUNDAY
Sat 21st Organ Recital
Sun 22nd The Passion according to St Mark by Charles Wood
Sun 29th PALM SUNDAY

April

- Mar 30th – Apr 4th HOLY WEEK
Sun 5th EASTER SUNDAY
Mon 6th The Hampstead Collective
Sat 18th Organ Recital

May

- Mon 4th The Hampstead Collective
Thu 14th ASCENSION
Sat 9th or 16th Craft Fair (tbc)
Sat 23rd Organ Recital
Sun 24th PENTECOST

