

Marksman

A Paper of St. Mark's Church, Westmoreland Road, Bromley



JOY

December 2021, January, February 2022

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Joy

This edition of Marksman spans the great seasons of Advent and Christmas:

Advent is a season of expectation and preparation, as the Church prepares to celebrate the coming (adventus) of Christ in his incarnation.

The Christmas season is often celebrated for twelve days, ending with the Epiphany, the coming of the wise men the Magi to Jesus. There is an alternative tradition, in which Christmas lasts for a full forty days, ending with the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the temple on 2 February (Candlemas).

So, we make no apology this time for focusing on the Joy of Christmas – the feasting and giving, the festivity and fellowship, and above all the freedom to worship and SING Christmas Carols together in church. Remember last year when this was not permitted? One of the articles in this volume hones in the service of the traditional Nine Lessons and Carols, another on 'Joy to World', others range from Dickensian Christmas spirit to the Chronicles of Narnia.

Enjoy, and come to one or more of our Christmas services! Details are on the back cover but as a summary here is what is on offer at St Mark's:

Advent Carols – a service of darkness to light - Advent Sunday 28 November 6.30pm

Nine Lessons and Carols – Sunday 19 December 6.30pm

Crib Service – nativity for the young (and young at heart) - Christmas Eve 4pm

Midnight Mass (Choral) – Christmas Eve 11.30pm

Christmas Choral Eucharist – Christmas morning 10am

Eucharist for St Stephen's Day – Boxing Day, Sunday 26 December

Epiphany Choral Eucharist – Sunday 2 January 10am

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas and always.

...and very best wishes for 2022 to you all!

Canon Victoria Pask, Vicar

New Curate at St Mark's

Hello! My name is Lizzie and I am the new curate at St Marks. I was ordained deacon in Rochester Cathedral on the 25th September and was welcomed in my first service as a deacon and curate on the 26th September by the lovely people of St Marks (see pictures!) with a delicious cake at the after church party organized by our Reader Carol Robins and Pat Openshaw. Before ordination I was training part time (whilst I continued working) at St Augustine's



theology college which is based in both West Malling and Southwark. Although it was full on, I really enjoyed my time at St Augustine's, I learnt lots, and made some brilliant friends.

Some of you may have noticed that I am not at St Mark's as much as you may expect of your new curate. This is because I am a Self-Supporting-Minister (SSM for short) and I still have a day job that keeps me out of trouble Monday to Friday

I am part of the Financial Crime team at Charities Aid Foundation (or as it is often referred to, CAF), which involves trying to spot and stop things like money laundering, terrorist financing, fraud etc. And because I am SSM I still live where I have lived for the last seven years, in the not too far away Edenbridge. This means that when I'm not working or curating, I'm trying to learn my way around the parish and discovering the delights that Bromley has to offer.

In the few moments of spare time outside of work, church and my continued studies which are required of all new curates, I am a keen bellringer and rosary maker, and I love exploring new places and going for long walks (especially by the sea!).

If you see me about the parish or mooching about St Marks itself, please do stop and say hi, and I really look forward to getting to know you all and serving the parish!

Revd Lizzie Longhurst



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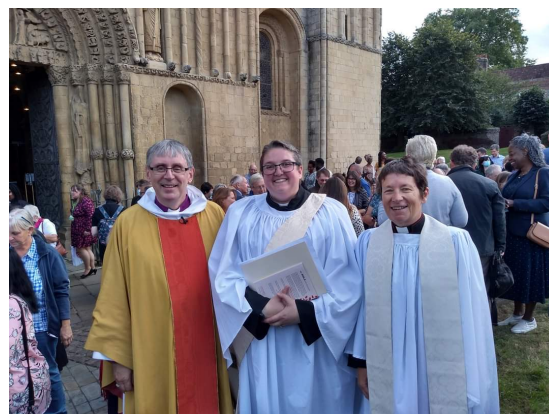
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The Joy of Giving

Here are 2 of my favourite Bible quotes on giving:-

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 KJV

But this I say, he which soweth sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

Proverbs 11:24 KJV

There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

We all remember the treasures the wise men brought which were of significant value and prophetic importance. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh are all gifts worthy of a king.

Giving something or doing something for someone actually gives a sense of satisfaction and makes one feel positive about oneself. The joy of giving only happens when a person is full of gratitude for himself/herself and is ready to come out of his/her comfort zone to make a difference in another person's life.



Much like an attitude of gratitude, the joy of giving leads to a happier, healthier life. In fact, generosity sets off a series of reactions in the brain that improves mood, decreases blood pressure, reduces stress, boosts overall physical health, builds self-esteem, and even helps one live longer!

Generosity makes people and those around them happier. They aren't just generous with their money, they are also generous with their time, their talents and their words. They encourage others and inspire them to be better than before. They make their friends feel braver, stronger and cleverer. When giving to others, one's generosity is often continued down the line to someone else, or returned.

Here to conclude are 2 more of my favourite quotes:-

John Bunyan

You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.

Mother Teresa

Give, but give until it hurts.

Marian Smith

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Food and Festivity

Christmas is the great Christian festival, when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, born of Mary, son of God. It's a time of songs, presents, treats and feasts for family and friends. Today the season has been largely secularised, but remains a few days when we relax, exchange gifts and sense some magic in the air. Even when celebrations were effectively cancelled in 2020 during the covid pandemic, most of us managed to salvage a little of that special feeling, and eat the mince pies.

In Bromley, our notion of 'the festive season' is largely modelled on traditions established by Queen Victoria, and by her contemporary author, Charles Dickens. Nine children born in quick succession ensured that the Royal household in the 1840s did not lack little ones to squeal over present-giving, party food and lavish entertainment. Lighting and decorating an immense fir tree must have been a special delight, a tradition which Prince Albert brought from Germany, and introduced at Court. The Christmas Tree quickly caught the nation's imagination, and became an indispensable tradition here. Candles gradually became symbolic of gentle love and awe on most special occasions, long after they were replaced by gas and electric for mundane lighting. We still rely on scented candles to instil a serene and peaceful mood.



Charles Dickens was a hugely popular Victorian author, and his Pickwick Papers featured innumerable feasts enjoyed at hostelrys across the land. Groaning boards of meats, pies, game, fish, followed by plum puddings and jellies were standard fare for his jolly travellers. Even if many households who read the

articles rarely had the chance to enjoy such luxuries, the appetite for reading about mouth-watering banquets was as great then as it is now. The Dickensian Christmas was firmly established in The Christmas Carol, a moral tale pointing up the dire consequences of being too stingy to enjoy the celebrations. Luckily, like all good stories, Mr Scrooge sees the error of his ways, and gets to enjoy the feasting and seasonal goodwill.

Dickens himself lived in style at Gad's Hill near Rochester, and in 1866 hosted Boxing Day sports for 2000 local people, together with a house full of guests and relatives, who stayed till 7 January.

We will have chance to enjoy something even more spectacular in June 2022, when we celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. A unique commemoration of 70 years service by Her Majesty, and chance for us all to party in our own style.

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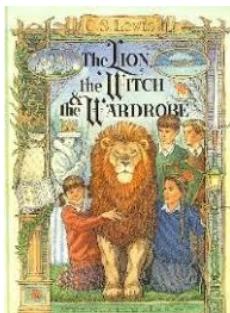
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Surprised by Joy

As a child I was entranced by reading 'The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe' and the other 'Chronicles of Narnia' by C.S. Lewis, a lay theologian, writer and academic, whose radio broadcasts on Christianity during The Second World War inspired many people. Perhaps you have encountered his books or seen the moving film 'Shadowlands' about how he found love late in life and the grief of losing his wife. The young Clive, or Jack as he was always known, had been wonderstruck by Beatrix Potter's animal adventures and later on the epic tales in the Norse sagas and Greek and Irish mythology, but how did his lived experiences influence his thinking, I wondered. Losing his mother, unhappiness at school and the horrors of the trenches in the First World War led him to stop believing in God and received wisdom. He wrote:

"Had God designed the world, it would not be
A world so frail and faulty as we see."



However, he was a brilliant scholar and teacher at Oxford, and later on, influenced by his good friend J.R.R. Tolkien, he returned to Christianity and became a committed Anglican, but was keen to overcome sectarianism and focus on common beliefs shared by all denominations.

Reflecting later on in the autobiography of his early life, 'Surprised by Joy', Lewis recalls his early days as a mixture of amusement and pain, but always suffused with an intense longing for a kind of sublime vision beyond words. He tells us of how he accidentally discovers this 'Joy' and then searches and yearns to experience it further. Eventually we and he reach the end of the quest and discover the true nature and purpose of Joy and its place in his life, when he is reunited with his Creator God and his Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

He said that Joy is like a 'signpost' to those lost in the woods, pointing the way, and that its appearance is not as important 'when we have found the road and are passing signposts every few miles'.

Sitting in a wooden paneled corner of his favourite watering hole 'The Eagle and Child' in St. Giles, Oxford, I can return again to the back of an old wardrobe, shake off my coat and emerge into a better and brighter world.

Carol Robins

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History of the 'Nine Lessons and Carols'



As Christmas time every year, one of the hallmark services of the year which typically takes place on or around Christmas Eve, is the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols. This traditional, joyous service is celebrated by millions around the world and combines to tell the Christmas story in nine bible readings alongside the singing of carols. In this article, I will look at the origins of this famous service.

The early beginnings of the Nine Lessons and Carols dates to the Victorian era. During this time, Christmas carols were starting to be introduced into public worship. Consequently, a prominent composer and organist at the time, John Stainer, incorporated carols into Choral Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral. This led to other Cathedrals including carols at Christmas that year.

With the popularity of carols growing, it was two years later in 1880 that the first formal service of Nine Lessons and Carols came about. This took place on Christmas Eve 1880 at Truro Cathedral, conducted by the then Bishop of Truro, Edward White Benson. It occurred because Benson was so alarmed at the high levels of alcohol consumption taking place at Cornish pubs, he thought a religious celebration of this kind would keep people out of them and instead entice them to come to church. The resulting service attracted 400 people and took place in a wooden building (as Truro Cathedral was still under construction), with the service ultimately becoming the first of its kind.

In recent history, the service has been popularised by King's College Cambridge. It was first held at the College in 1918 after the Dean of King's, Eric Milner-White, who had just served as an army chaplain in World War I, believed the horror of war had turned people against religion. He proposed to the College that the service - originally founded by Benson - would entice people back to Christian worship.

The consequent service in 1918 at King's was a huge success. Evidence of this was further highlighted years later in 1928 when it began being broadcast on the radio (and television in 1954), courtesy of the BBC. Since then, the service has been broadcast annually both here and around the world to millions of people. It now regularly takes place overseas too, with the colourful history of the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at King's certainly inspiring joy throughout the world.

Ed Tomalin

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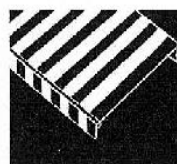
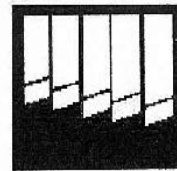
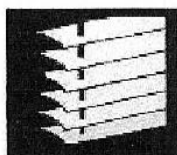
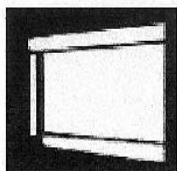


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Joy to the World

The well-known carol "Joy to the World" is a staple addition to carol services far and wide at Christmas. It's uplifting words perfectly encapsulates the joyous, celebratory mood that the birth of Christ represents in Christian faith. But what can we gleam from this carol that brims with so much "joy"?

The carol was written by celebrated hymn writer Isaac Watts in 1719. Interestingly, the carol is inspired and based upon Psalm 98, verse 4:

"Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises."

What is apparent is that the psalm has nothing to do with Christmas, suggesting that Watts did not have Christmas in mind when he wrote, what then would have been considered, a hymn. Furthermore, the contents of the psalm indicate "Joy to the World" is not about Jesus as the



new-born king, but rather his second coming.

Aside from the fact this joyous carol was not originally written for Christmas, its message is still incredibly pertinent and

translates magnificently to the Christmas story and what the birth of Christ signifies. The reference to "every heart prepare him room" in the first verse of the carol reminds us of the Christmas story, where Mary is unable to find room at the inn, as well as the literal confirmation to maintain our belief in Christ.

The sense of celebration through the repetition of 'repeat the sounding joy' in another verse of the carol, relates to the sense of fulfilment that Christ's birth represents to Christians and the sense of elation that comes with it. The buoyant lyrics urges everyone to sing with 'joy', which is particularly fitting with the unity shown by congregation's, who come together every year to sing and celebrate the birth of Christ with friends and family.

In conclusion, it is very apparent why this carol is so popular around the world, as its upbeat nature certainly resonates with the masses, at what is arguably the most upbeat, joyous time of year in Christian faith.

Ed Tomalin

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Family & Friendship

It is important to surround ourselves with family and friends, both for support and comfort in times of joy and distress. Studies have shown that having a strong network of supportive family and friends is a strong protective factor against mental illnesses and helps to increase our mental well-being. There is a big difference between family and friends. We don't choose our family; we learn to live with them. On the other hand, we choose our friends based on our preferences and our shared interests, and because we feel good when we are with them.

The concept of family and the importance of family in society originated in the minds of mankind since primitive times. In ancient times people gathered in clans and all members of the clan helped each other and called each other relatives. Important questions were decided at meetings in a circle of friendly and caring people.



Stable relationships with friends, families and partners are especially important for young people as they can influence physical health, promote self-esteem and a sense of belonging and assist in the development of problem solving and social skills. Friends are frequently closer than a person's own family. We often tend to relate to friends differently than we do with family. If you have a very close family, and can talk about anything without being judged, then you are very lucky and it is quite extraordinary.

Both family and friends make us happy. Family is important, but good friendships may be more important for your health and happiness in the long run. People often feel more comfortable with their friends than their family. Family members tend not to forget stupid or humiliating things one may have done in the past and have no qualms about bringing them up at the dinner table. So, maybe if some people are more comfortable around friends than family, it's perhaps because friends tend to be more respectful than family.

I, however, am very pleased and grateful to have had in my life a loving family and wonderful friends.

Marian Smith

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Marksman

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Church Services

All Sundays	- unless otherwise stated	10am Choral Parish Eucharist	6.30pm Evening Service
Sun 5 Dec	<i>2nd Sunday in Advent</i>		
Sun 12 Dec	<i>3rd Sunday in Advent</i>		
Sun 19 Dec	<i>4th Sunday in Advent</i>		6.30pm Nine Lessons and Carols
Fri 24 Dec	<i>Christmas Eve</i>	4.00pm Crib Service	11.30pm Midnight Mass
Sat 25 Dec	<i>Christmas Day</i>	10am Christmas Eucharist	
Sun 26 Dec	<i>St Stephen</i>	10am Said Eucharist	
Sun 2 Jan	<i>Epiphany</i>		
Sun 9 Jan	<i>1st Sunday of Epiphany</i>		
Sun 16 Jan	<i>2nd Sunday of Epiphany</i>		
Sun 23 Jan	<i>3rd Sunday of Epiphany</i>		
Sun 30 Jan	<i>Candlemas</i>		6.30pm Choral Evensong
Sun 6 Feb	<i>4th Sunday before Lent</i>		
Sun 13 Feb	<i>3rd Sunday before Lent</i>		
Sun 20 Feb	<i>2nd Sunday before Lent</i>		
Sun 27 Feb	<i>Sunday Next before Lent</i>		6.30pm Choral Evensong

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