

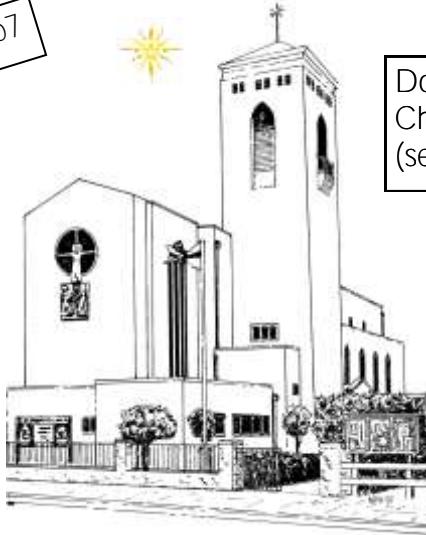
50 Pence



Christmas 2017

The Trident

Parish Hall Survey - p7



Do join us at our
Christmas Services
(see pages 8—9)

The Parish Magazine of

S^T THOMAS THE APOSTLE
BOSTON ROAD, HANWELL, W7 2AD

Serving Hanwell and Beyond

Registered Charity no: 1130519

www.thomashanwell.org.uk



@stthomashanwell



St Thomas The Apostle, Hanwell



ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE
BOSTON ROAD, HANWELL
CHURCH OF ENGLAND

WE DO HOPE THAT YOU WILL FEEL WELCOME TO COME TO OUR SERVICES

SUNDAY

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 8.00 AM | SAID EUCHARIST (BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER SERVICE) |
| 10.00 AM | SUNDAY SCHOOL (TERM TIME & NOT 2ND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH) |
| 10.00 AM | PARISH EUCHARIST |
| 6.30 PM | EVENING PRAYER (BCP)
CHORAL EVENSONG FOR SPECIAL FESTIVALS (PLEASE SEE NOTICEBOARD
FOR DETAILS) |

WEEKDAY CELEBRATIONS OF HOLY COMMUNION

TUESDAY	12 NOON
WEDNESDAY	2PM

MORNING PRAYER

7.30 AM MONDAY TO FRIDAY (8.00 A.M SATURDAY)

EVENING PRAYER

DAILY 5.00 PM (EXCEPT SATURDAY AND SUNDAY)

PEOPLE OF ALL FAITHS, OR NO FAITH AT ALL, ARE WELCOME AT ANY OF OUR SERVICES. THOSE WHO ARE FULL MEMBERS OF THEIR OWN CHRISTIAN CONGREGATIONS ARE WELCOME TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION IN ST. THOMAS'.

REGULAR MEETINGS

MONDAY	12.30 PM	HANWELL HOMELESS CONCERN
	4.45 PM	RAINBOW GUIDES
	6.00 PM	BROWNIES
TUESDAY	5.30 PM	BEAVERS
	6.30PM	CUBS
WEDNESDAY	10.30AM	MOTHER AND BABY/TODDLER GROUP
THURSDAY	7.00 PM	GUIDES
FRIDAY	10.30 - 12 NOON	'POP-IN'
	7.00 PM	SCOUTS (AT 'THE WARREN' TRUMPERS WAY)
	7.00 PM	CHOIR

FOR MORE INFORMATION LOG ONTO OUR WEBSITE:

WWW.THOMASHANWELL.ORG.UK

PLEASE E-MAIL US AT st.thomas.office@btinternet.com



From our Vicar

Dear Friends

2017 was a big year in the life of the worldwide Church, and its theme spilled over into many areas of the media. For 2017 marked the 500th anniversary of the start of the Reformation. With 95 brief observations **on the ‘errors’ of the Church, a convenient church door, and then a few** blows of a hammer, Martin Luther set in motion one of the most radical revolutionary events ever. His observations, or theses as he called them, were each about the length of a tweet, very blunt and very provocative (thank goodness world leaders no longer do that sort of thing!).

The television coverage of Luther and his impact was full and thoughtful, concentrating on his impetus and impact on future generations of the Church in all its forms. However, it did not go into great detail about his words. This is perhaps a shame, but, **when you read him you can understand why. Luther’s writings are full of passion, polemic, sweeping statements and very colourful language.** Yet there are moments of **gentleness and subtlety. Nowhere is this better shown than in Luther’s writings on Christmas.** For the man who could, in the most unflinching manner, go 15 rounds with **the pope, would become as sentimental as a three year old on Santa’s knee when it came to Christmas.** Did you know he is supposed to have been the first person to bring a tree indoors and decorate it? The legend is probably just that, a legend, but it illustrates how sincerely and simply Luther saw this season. For Luther recognised this was the moment when humanity was saved and transformed. He said,

‘[Jesus] descended from heaven into this humility and came to us in our flesh, laid himself into the womb of his mother and into the manger and went on to the cross.

This was the ladder that he placed on earth so that we might ascend to God on it.’

This ‘Christmas ladder’ like any ladder allows things to come down as well as go up, and Christmas reminds us that God comes down and shares his life with us.

It is this dynamic of the God coming and being among us that inspired Luther, and continues to inspire the Church today. For Luther, and the whole Church, this has an ethical consequence. Luther reflected on that first Christmas when there was no room at the inn, and how people in his day (and now!), would say they would never turn away Mary in those circumstances. He said,

‘Yes you would! You say that because you know how great Christ is, but if you had been there at that time you would have done no better than the people of Bethlehem. Childish and silly thoughts are these! Why don’t you do it now? You have Christ in your neighbour. You ought to serve him, for what you do to your neighbour in need you do to the Lord Christ himself.’

Wham; so as heaven is brought to earth, so too are we. At Christmas we seek the divine not just in a manger, but also in our neighbour. We do not need Luther to tell us that, but sometimes we need to hear it again.

500 years after Luther’s epoch-making action on that church door in Wittenberg I optimistically hope the world is a better place. 2000 years after Jesus’ epoch-making entry in Bethlehem, I know it is. May the joy of the Christ-child be with you and your loved-ones this season, and in 2018.

Your friend and priest

Fr. Robert



Parish News

2017 has been another very busy year at St Thomas', and 2018 promises to be just the same as we look to redevelop the Parish Hall. With that in mind please, please fill out the survey on P7 of this Christmas edition of the Trident.

Whilst having the future in mind, we are conscious that we have just come out of a season of remembrance when we have, as a parish, recalled those whom we have lost, but also those who have given their lives in the service of others. Remembrance Sunday was tremendously well supported by our church members and uniformed organisations who do so much in the community and remind us of the on-going significance of the season. A huge thank you goes to our young people and their leaders.

Musically 2017 has been bumper year with our new Director of Music (Ed Cooke) at the helm, and new Junior Choir Leader (Esther Matthews) whose role **sees her working with young people at Oaklands School. Esther's work beautifully** complements the other wonderful work done with our young people. In addition we plan to hold some community choir events so please watch this space.

Finally, in terms of music, St Thomas' has also held 3pm concerts on the fourth Sunday of the month, which have been an amazing experience for us and the musicians. We have hosted everything from Organ Recitals to Chamber Music and they have featured experienced musicians and some of the youngest and most talented performers in the area. Please do look out for these free concerts. This Christmas season is always joyously busy with the usual Christmas services for all to come and mark the season in their way. Please do come to one or more of the various services and events over Christmas, as we would love to welcome you to share with us.

Also, this time marks the return of the St Thomas' Church Panto. This year it is Puss in Boots which is another wonderfully witty and fun script by Ben Crocker. The rehearsals are going very well and it really does promise to be better than ever. Box Office details are on p17 in this edition of the Trident.

This Christmas promises to celebrate all that is good in our life together and we look forward to an exciting new year with all its variety, profundity and joy.

Greetings from Cambridge.....

For readers who are new to the Trident or who did not know me at St Thomas'; I am Sophie, I used to be a regular member of the St Thomas' congregation. Several years ago I felt that I was being called by God to a vocation of Ordained Ministry (to be a priest). Fr Robert and the congregation of St Thomas' were amazing in supporting me through the Church of England's discernment process and in December 2015 I was

recommended to train for ordained ministry. It's been quite a two years; I gave up working and moved to theological college (Westcott House) in Cambridge in September 2016.

I am training for two years, which is actually an incredibly short time. I am amazed at how different everything felt returning for the new academic year this September. Rather than spending much of my time completely out of my comfort zone and feeling that 15 years of working in financial services had been of no relevance, I now have a sense that I am beginning to know what I am doing. Only beginning mind you! I also can see how God is helping me to weave the skills and experiences of my past career into my future ministry.

My academic work continues and I have started my supervisions; My first essay title was looking at the sources we use to make ethical decisions - Scripture, reason, experience and tradition - and how they interrelate (or not, depending on your view). My next essays are considering how the book of Lamentations in the Old Testament addresses the major concerns of readers in exile, and an essay on a rather different note; "**If we take the universe to be a creation, what are the principle marks of a creature?**"

Writing this article for the December Trident has prompted thoughts of Christmas. In particular, this year will be my last Christmas before I am, God willing, ordained Deacon next June. That means it will be my last Christmas off. In my past life, and now, Christmas and Easter are those times when I can relax more and spend time with family and friends. However, in my future ministry they are the pivotal points in the year and so the very busiest. I am definitely going to make the most of this Christmas and Easter!

The realisation that this year will be my last Christmas free is not the only thing that is helping me to sense the reality that if this year goes as it should I will be ordained next June. As I am in my final year, I am now exploring where I will serve my curacy. A curacy is in effect "**on the job training.**" Once ordained Deacon, I will spend three years working with a Priest in their parish learning through experience what it is to be a Parish Priest. After the first of these three years I will be ordained Priest and so spend the second and third year as a priest in curacy. It feels incredibly exciting to think about the parish I will serve when I am ordained, the incumbent (priest) who will train me and the congregation I will be spending those

formative years of my ministry with. I will of course let everyone know where my curacy will be once everything is finalised and the news can be made public.

Many of our lectures at Westcott this year are also taking on a very real feel. This term so far we have learnt about how we lead baptisms, weddings, funerals and the Eucharist. The training is a mixture of the theory (what liturgy is required and where did it come from) and the practical (how might we respond to difficult questions and situations). We are able to learn from some excellent lecturers who are themselves **ordained and have had a number of years' experience in parish ministry.**

I continue to hold St Thomas' in my prayers and appreciate that you keep me in your prayers. . I will be back to visit on Sunday 7th January and hope to catch up with many of you then.

Many blessings, Sophie



Prayer for the month of December



Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the Angels,
the gladness of the Shepherds, and worship of the Wise Men.
Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kind-
ness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from
evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear
hearts.

May Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

St Thomas' parish hall redevelopment

St Thomas' Parish Hall was built just over 50 years ago. Since then, it has been an amazing gift to the community. Each week numerous groups use it for various activities, making it an invaluable place for everyone from the youngest to the oldest in our community. The Hall is now in urgent need of some repairs to enable it to be a gift for the future. However, rather than just patching it up, we would like to take the opportunity to make the Hall an even better place for the community, offering improved facilities for new and existing groups and making it more attractive as a space for community events.

Thus, we would be really grateful if you could take a couple of minutes to fill in the survey below so that we can do our best to take account of your needs.



St Thomas' Parish Hall Survey

1. What is your perception/impression of the Parish Hall?

 2. What changes would encourage you to use the Parish Hall more? Tick all appropriate:
 - a. Improved external appearance
 - b. Improved internal appearance
 - c. Improved facilities (please specify below)
 - d. More activities/groups of interest to me
 - e. Promotion of existing activities/groups
 - f. Other (please specify below)

 3. **Are you aware of any potential groups which currently don't have a place to meet, and who might like to use the hall?**

Once filled in please return to: Parish Hall Survey St Thomas' Vicarage, 182 Boston Road, Hanwell, London W7 2AD or parishhallsurvey@gmail.com

SPECIAL SERVICES FOR CHRISTMAS AT ST THOMAS'S



Advent Sunday

10am on Sunday 3rd December

This is our first special service in the build up to Christmas. All our Advent services incorporate the lighting of the Advent Wreath by a child and reflections on the rich themes of the Advent season, traditionally called the Great Os (come and find out why!). This takes place within our Parish Sung Eucharist when there is also Sunday School for young people.

Christingle

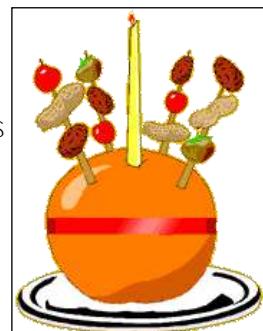
4pm on Sunday 10th December

One event not to be missed is our Christingle service – a candle-lit family celebration that raises money for the work of The Children's Society, a voluntary organisation of the Church of England.

If you haven't been to one of our Christingle Services before, a brief explanation may help! The 'Christingle' itself, which symbolises the light of Christ's love, is a lighted candle mounted in an orange, which has a red ribbon or tape around it. Also mounted in the orange are four cocktail sticks, each bearing dried fruit or sweets.

The orange represents the world. The candle stands for Jesus, the Light of the World. The red ribbon or tape symbolises the blood of Christ, who shares in the suffering of the whole world. The fruits and sweets are symbolic of **God's Creation and His love for us.**

The highlight of our service is when the Christingles are lit. We then dim the lights in the Church and **everyone sings the carol 'Away in a Manger'. It's lovely to see the children's excited faces illuminated** by the Christingles. This service is a great way to remind the children about the true meaning of Christmas. Refreshments will be served in the Church Hall after the service.



Carols by Candlelight

6.30pm on Sunday 17th December

Candlelight, Carols and Choir - these are the ingredients that go to make our service of Nine Lessons and Carols so special. This is your chance to renew your acquaintance with the best of the traditional Christmas Carols, to hear some old favourites sung by the Choir and, we hope, to discover some new ones. Come and raise the roof, then enjoy a glass of mulled wine and some mince pies. Christmas really starts here.

Christmas Eve Children's Service

5pm on Christmas Eve



This service is very much one for the children. It is an informal service with no choir or organ. The Sunday School perform a short play based on the nativity and then we sing some carols and say our prayers. Some of the figures are placed in the crib at the back of the church. It is a delightful service and with all the eager anticipation of Santa Claus, it is a great way to remind the children of what Christmas is celebrating.

Midnight Mass

11.30pm on Christmas Eve

Midnight Mass has its roots in the very earliest of times when Christians on this most holy night to celebrate the first Eucharist of Christmas. It is both beautiful and joyous; a time to pause, reflect, and give thanks amidst candle-light, processions, traditional rituals, and the 'sweet singing of the choir'. It starts [at 11.30pm](#) so that your personal holy communion or Christmas blessing can be received as soon after midnight as possible. The service also includes the Christ-child being placed in the crib which is blessed during the service.



Christmas Day Family Communion

10am on Christmas day

This service is one for all the family, so bring your children, friends and relatives. When you enter the Church you will find the Christmas tree beautifully decorated.



CHRISTMAS QUIZ 2017!

This year our quiz is a little different, but we hope, just as enjoyable. Every answer contains either PIN or NEEDLE in consecutive letters. For example Q: What a sad tree! A: a weeping willow.
We hope you have some fun with it and there'll be a small prize for the person with the most correct answers. If you'd like to enter, please get your answers to us by January 14th. Good luck!!

1. They can certainly make you itch! (4,3,7)
2. A healthy vegetable. (7)
3. Eaten and enjoyed in chunks. (9)
4. Without a purpose. (8)
5. It can bleed a lot for a small wound. (8)
6. A series of bones stacked on one another. (6,6)
7. They point the way to a UK island. (3,7)
8. It helps when you have wind whilst sailing. (9)
9. They are hollow and can help put us to sleep! (10,7)
10. A notice often needs the point of this artistic sounding item! (7,3)
11. Describes somebody without a backbone! (9)
12. South American treat-filled container made for breaking. (6)
13. One of the human race who invented medicinal compound. (4,3,4)
14. A tasty rum one this, with some three and cream. (4,6)
15. A delightful Cotswold market town. (8,6)
16. Nickname of a New York attraction. (10,6)
17. It can pass a fine thread. (3,2,1,6)
18. It can be seen running around in Scotland. (4,6)
19. Making a polite request might see you going like this. (3,2,4)
20. A small harpsichord. (6)
21. They can make jumpers or scarves. (8,7)
22. Not wanting to spend, he might take d or p. (10)
23. A Liverpool group who threaded their way in concerts. (3,8)
24. **A comic opera with the master of the queen's navee. (1,1,1,8)**
25. A gear combination sends you from one direction to another. (4,3,6)
26. They helped the French to see better. (5-3)
27. Pinpinpinpinpinpinpinpin. (8)
28. This game sounds noisy and smelly! (4-4)
29. **Wm. Cowper wrote of this fellow's exploits. (4,6)**
30. **This delightful car grew from roots in the 1950's. (7,6)**
31. This popular game was as bagatelle, but is now electronic. (7)
32. It points to help sort out the points. (7,6)
33. Doing this you are hoping for a good strike in an alley. (3,3,7)
34. Another name for a miss. (8)

35. Popular plants on a rockery. (7)
36. Take care driving round this on a narrow road. (7,4)
37. Can be a pleasure or a chore – but it costs money! (8)
38. **The top of life's ambition** – or a mountain. (8)
39. The splendid icing on the cake! (7)
40. Original home of the London money market. (12,6)
41. **A lump of wood which became a puppet and a children's film.** (9)
42. This creature sounds frightening up to a point. (8)
43. These look pretty in any garden. (5)
44. Not allowed except in the authorised place. (7)
45. Traditionally worn at business meetings. (9,4)
46. Diners pry round to locate it. (4,5)
47. **A little finger would be ideal to point at this children's pig.** (6)
48. **Some folk are awake longer than others because they ...** (4,4,5)
49. A vain or conceited person. (8)
50. An animal fat for cooking seen in a faulty tap. (8)
51. A reshaped pie tin could serve as this. (3,3)
52. The story of a magical flying nanny. (4,7)
53. A little bit of water in a great big one. (4,2,3,5)
54. Military manoeuvre. (6,8)
55. This band used to wish you were here with them. (4,5)
56. They can be found buff or blue – eggheads will know this one! (10)
57. You can steal this one with a letter and a little distance! (5)
58. His caretaker staged well earned publicity! (6,6)
59. This highwayman was left hanging around. (4,6)
60. You could be mad doing this on one leg! (7)
61. Angostura bitters are found in this drink. (4,3)
62. Pen lids go round for it. (7)
63. This view comes from 22/7 found in a tear-jerking vegetable. (7)
64. Applause. (8)
65. Musical naval officer with a Japanese wife. (10,9)
66. Fictional flawed diamond. (4,7)
67. Composer for the piano. (6)
68. Horror novel. (5,7)
69. Grape variety. (5,4)
70. Mini something. (4-5)
71. You think you know best! (11)
72. Evergreen collection. (7)
73. British jazz musician. (8,4)
74. Knighted rower. (7,7)
75. Finish with a dozy business (or quizzing) mate. (8,7)



First of all we would like to thank all of you who have kindly contributed to our Foodbank collection. We deliver the goods you donate to us to the Central bank in Ealing and they regularly provide us with figures, statistics and stories. This is what they have told us this month:

Ealing Foodbank so far has fed more people than they did in the same six months last year by about 14%.

The Foodbank users are referred by frontline care professionals, are welcomed and treated with respect, are signposted to other agencies and receive up to 3 vouchers in 6 months. Longer term support is available.

Ealing Foodbank helps to prevent housing loss, family breakdown and crime.

In May 2017 at the Hanwell Foodbank cafe a Syrian asylum seeker came with a 2 month old boy. She and her husband are highly educated and both had good jobs and homes in Syria. They had spent many months reaching the UK and had paid smugglers 20,000 Euros. Their family had not come with them as they were too scared to get on the boats. The wife had been trying to get pregnant before they left Syria and then during their journey she had a dream where Jesus was telling her she was going to have a baby.... she soon became pregnant! She asked if we could help with clothes and other items and we were able to refer them to Besom who provided them with a number of things. They were getting £35 a week to live on and when they came to the Foodbank they had totally run out of nappies... this was why they could not wait to go to another of the Ealing Foodbank cafes which was more local to them and operated the next day. The wife was hoping to sell her long hair to make some money.

Also, an Indian couple came a number of times. The wife had been working as a carer but her visa had run out so she was no longer able to work. The husband had been working in refrigerated conditions, but he had arthritis in his knee and this work was no longer sustainable for him. They had a baby and a school aged child, both of whom needed long term medication. They lived for quite a few months without an income, coming to the Foodbank from time to time and speaking regularly to the crisis advisors. They were Catholic and asked about the church and getting their baby baptised. They always appreciated prayer. They were also getting help from a solicitor to sort out their immigration issues. The crisis advisor later said that the wife has now got her leave to remain and was being helped to access English classes in the hope to get some office work.

Thank you again for your contributions and please continue to give.

Julie and Nicole

What to buy for Ealing Foodbank?

The mission of Ealing Foodbank is that when someone comes to us in food crisis, we are able to give them enough to feed themselves and their whole family, breakfast, lunch and dinner for THREE DAYS. Naturally, we never want to waste anything that is donated, but sometimes we are given things that we just can't use or give away.

So, here are some guidelines to help you shop! www.ealing.foodbank.org.uk



All food must be:
Long life - at least 6 months shelf life,
Small sizes are best (max 1kg).
Check the online shopping list to see what we need!!



We have a large supply of certain foods, so currently DON'T REQUIRE:
Dry pasta - any shape,
Baked beans and other pulses,
Tinned tomatoes,
Vegetable soup.



We cannot accept: Fresh or frozen foods,
Out of date foods,
Opened or used packets, catering or 'family' size pack,
Alcohol,

The Ealing Foodbank website has an up to date list of the items that are currently needed. **St Thomas' Church** has collection boxes in both the porches on Sundays and a list is always on these boxes. Alternatively, the website lists other local collection points, where you will also find a list of items currently needed.

THE ANGEL'S MESSAGE

Stoop down
Adore, and let
The light of Glory pour
Upon thee.
Come see,
For he is seeking thee.

So small and yet so wise
Creator of the world, He lies.

Oh, let thyself be found.....
And joy abound

R. M., A nun of Burnham Abbey



Programme of Events 2018

Month	Date	Topic/Speaker
January	10 th January	Women Artists-Hidden from History
February	14 th February	Introduction into Psychology
March	14 th March	Ambulance Service
April	11 th April	Games Night / WI Causes
May	9 th May	Wonders of Waste, a women's livelihood project in the Philippines.
June	13 th June	Bowling
July	11 th July	Art / Craft Evening
August	8 th August	Lonely Bouquets
September	12 th September	Knitting your way onto the front cover – from pattern follower to knitwear designer.
October	10 th October	AGM and quiz night
November	14 th November	Talk about Windsor Castle
December	12 th December	Christmas Party

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month, 7.30pm in the William Hobayne Centre, St Dunstan's Road, W7.
Visitors are very welcome (£3.00 please)

From the Editors



The year seems to go by so fast and here we are once again, approaching Advent and Christmas. We have some lovely services at St Thomas' to celebrate the season and we'd love you to join us - they're listed on page 8 and 9. We also have our Panto in early January, so please book your tickets soon. Happy Christmas from Jill, Sue and all of us at St Thomas'

Jill & Sue

Copy date for the January Trident will be Sunday December 10th
Copy date for the February Trident will be Sunday January 14th



St Thomas' Brownies

2017 has been a busy year for the Brownies. The highlight was our week's holiday at the seaside which was enjoyed by all. The girls have been challenged in many ways and have had opportunities to learn more in our 3 areas – themselves, the community and the world.

Our recent District Harry Potter Day was a huge success.

Recently all the girls have completed one of the following badges: Brownie Skills, Communicator, Environment and Crime Prevention. We have also been working in the small groups that we call Sixes. Each Six has completed several different challenges to help them to work together as a team and to have fun together.

Brownie numbers are consistently high and we are often unable to offer places to potential new members. We would love to be able to welcome new adult volunteers and are sure that they would have as much fun as we do working with the girls.



St Thomas' Guides

The Guides have had a busy year with a camp in May and another in August. We have also had evenings at the trampoline park and done firelighting at the Guide Centre in Northfields.

We were very proud of Eleanor, Jenny and Rose who completed the highest award Guides can get – the Baden-Powell Challenge. Becky and Maddie will also complete this in December. This has meant that the numbers in our Ranger unit have gone up. The Rangers are currently in the throes of completing their Commonwealth Badge.

The Guides have recently been doing their Craft Badge and each Patrol has taken part in a Go-For-It. This requires them to make decisions and to organise their own set of activities. It encourages teamwork and helps them to learn responsibility.

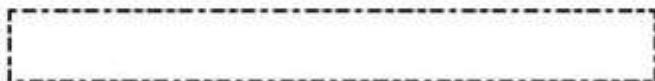
We are always pleased to welcome new volunteers as we have a big waiting list of girls wanting to be Guides!

The opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Church, the Vicar, the Editors or of the PCC. The editors reserve the right to edit items sent in for publication.

Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus

Colour in Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus, and cut out carefully.
If you want to stand them up, cut out the rectangle below, wrap
it into a circle, and tape to the back of the picture just
above the bottom edge.

If you would prefer to hang the picture up,
attach a loop of ribbon to the back.



St Thomas' Players Presents:
Puss In Boots

a Ben Crocker Pantomime

Adults: £10

(Thursday all Tickets: £5)

Children: £5

Showing at
St Thomas'
Parish Hall,
Hanwell , W7
on: 4th and 5th
Jan at 7.30pm; 6th
at 1pm and 6pm.

Box Office: 07850 889948 (Sue)
Email: stickets@me.com



Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

In 1897, on the advice of her father, 8 year old Virginia O'Hanlon wrote this letter to the editor of New York's since-defunct newspaper The Sun. The paper's editor, Francis P Church, replied by way of an editorial "Is There A Santa Claus?." This went on to become, and indeed still is, the most reprinted English-language editorial in history. Virginia herself went on to become a teacher, and as a result of her short, inquisitive letter, received fan mail for much of her life. She died in 1971, aged 81.

Dear Editor,

I am eight years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says "If you see it in the Sun it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O'Hanlon

115 W.95th St

VIRGINIA, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, VIRGINIA, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no VIRGINIAS. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the

united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, VIRGINIA, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank GOD! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, VIRGINIA, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

ST THOMAS' **50+** FELLOWSHIP 4TH OCTOBER 2017

It was very thoughtful of Izzy, the 'first daughter' of the vicarage to share with us the information of her dissertation. Titled 'Laughter in the Bible and Humour in Medieval Art' on Wednesday.

There were twelve of us in the audience. Izzy arrived with pictures and illustrations, and began her talk. She provided a lots of information in a very short time. IT transpired that the heirarchy in those days did not believe in laughter – it was frowned upon – **some even jas the temerity to say that our Lord Jesus didn't laugh.** The Puritans believed this as well. The general consensus was that laughter distorts one's face, therefore anyone who had the notion to laugh was seen as a simpleton, 'diabolical'.

Can you imagine being around during that era, in such a joyless society, not being able to burst into a natural fit of laughter?

There was mention, in Izzy's talk, of drollies, Sidellas, Ludlow Cathedral, gargoyles, gurning and some current TV programmes (but perhaps not in that order) and we were reminded that laughter and tears intertwine at times.

Izzy then touched on various incidents of laughter in the old testament. For example, Sarah, wife of Abraham, laughed when she was told she would have a son in her old age – so did Abraham when he heard the news. Noah in the ark was also mentioned. Izzy then talked about the famous New Testament reading '**Camel through the eye of a needle'. It was all very thought provoking and we left** for home with our thoughts on the information we had received.

I personally believe there would have been laughter when Jesus called the little children to him and blessed them, and if memory serves me well, there is a verse in scripture that says '**There will be joy in Heaven.**'

I believe that laughter is better than frowning. It is therapeutic and very good for us except when used for mockery.

Is this a coincidence? Whilst visiting Caroline Baxter in her Residential Home, (she sends her love to all in the parish), I saw a box, on the table in the hall and on it was written one word "Wishes". One resident had written her request "More laughter please".

I found the whole subject very fascinating and I sincerely hope that those 15,000 words written by Izzy Chapman get her a First.

Eileen Sinclair



Brownie Post

The Brownies will be running a Christmas postal service as a way of helping people of the parish this Christmas. The post box will be in the Church from Advent Sunday, 3rd December, until Sunday 17th December. There is no charge for this service and we are able to deliver to some streets outside our Parish. We include Midhurst Road but not roads to the other side of Midhurst Road (Salisbury Road, Mayfield Avenue etc). We deliver to Townholm Crescent, Humes Avenue, Studley Grange Road etc up to and including Green Lane and we deliver up to Oaklands Road, but not to Deans Road.

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move on their journey,
there are gestures
of wonder, and at midnight
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