

SPIRE

St. Stephen's Community Magazine
Christmas 2017
Issue 26

InSpire: We invite you to join us!



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WELCOME

Angela Emmott
Editor



We share with you here experiences from some of our congregation, explaining why they come to St Stephen's regularly.

For many, the Christmas season is a time to attend a service reflecting on their own feelings and beliefs. Perhaps we can walk more confidently through the church door when we know we will recognise those familiar Christmas Carols; maybe hearing them on the streets and in the shops starts us thinking again of the true meaning of Christmas.

At St Stephen's, we love to see our church bursting at the seams with school services, those over Christmas... specially the 11pm Carols on Christmas Eve, followed by midnight mass. Join in the fun at the Crib Service on 24th December at 4pm. Babes in arms, toddlers to teens dress as angels and shepherds, and make up the Crib ready to represent Christ's Birth.

You can read in this edition, of James who teaches in our Sunday School; of Piers and Laura who come with their young family to learn at these 'Footsteps' sessions and how George and Rosie love singing in the choir. We talk to Joan and Rita about living on the Kingswood Estate and of how we will miss, the Revd Hazel Kimber. Read news from Dulwich Wood Primary School; the Scouts and Cubs, and Martin explains the complexities of our Parish boundaries. The Vicar has a strange story to tell!

Why do so many people feel part of our Community at St Stephen's? Come along and find out.

We wish you all a Happy Christmas and may the New Year bring peace and prosperity throughout our world.





The Cubs and Scouts, girls and boys aged 8 to 14, meet on Thursdays . The Cubs are in the Church hall, the Scouts at the Fort (up Grange lane).

Scouting is about fun, challenges and adventure through games and skills : we recently held a firework event for over 300 locally. When possible we take part in camps, district and county events

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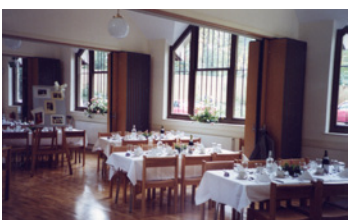
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Baptisms & Wedding bookings
Please come to the church office (via the church) on Saturdays between 10.30am and 11.30am.

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The team:
Angela Emmott, Bernhard Schünemann, Christine Murrell, Trot Lavelle, Martin Knight, Keith McCann, Rodney Emmott & Sarah Bucknall.

A Christmas Story

by Revd Canon Bernhard Schünemann



The weather had become very cold in December and the little red robin fluttering about the gardens of his neighbourhood was pleased that some of the humans had put out special bird feeders with a diet of seeds that kept him warm and fed. There were sunflower seeds, peanut splits and even a new arrival this year, Niger Thistle Seed that had a high oil content just right for this cold weather. The robin was contemplating his special role that one of his ancestors had played in the birth of Christ, the human saviour of the world: when the baby Jesus was in his manger in the stable, the fire which had been lit to keep him warm started to blaze up very strongly. A brown robin, noticing that Mary had been distracted by the inn-keeper's wife, placed himself between the fire and the face of baby Jesus. The robin fluffed out its feathers to protect the baby, but in so-doing its breast was scorched by the fire. This redness was then passed onto future generations of robins, or so he had been told.

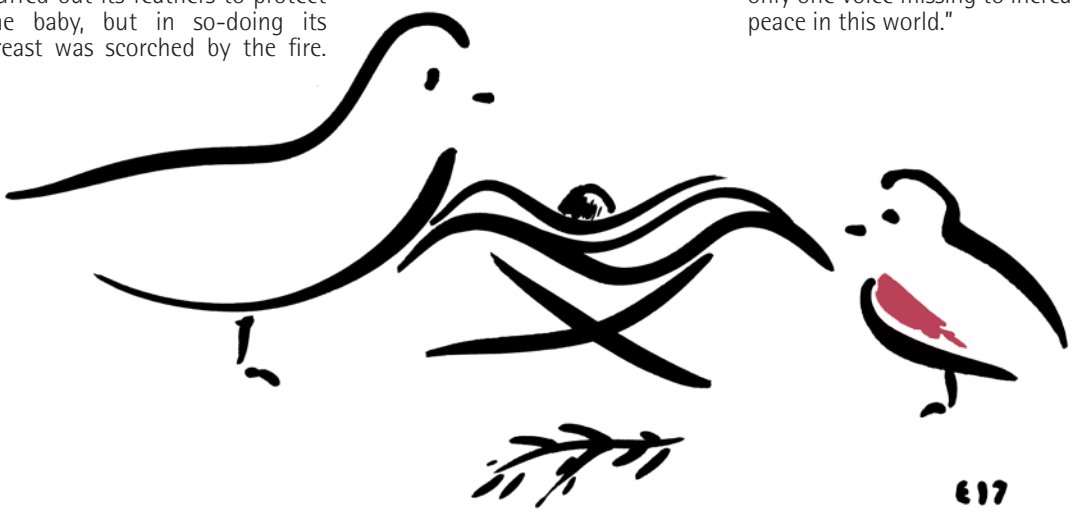
While thinking about this it had started snowing and the robin was joined in the fir tree by a wild dove. Now our robin was never short of topics for conversation with other birds, and he knew that the white dove, deep down, envied his red chest a little. Doves believed another ancient story about how the red chest had come about, a robin pulled a thorn from the crown of Christ whilst he was on the cross and that it was Christ's blood that created the bird's red breast. Doves, of course, had their own reason to be proud of their role in the salvation of the world going right back to the time of Noah in his ark.

"Tell me, dove", said the red robin "how much does a snowflake weigh?" the dove thought for a moment, looking at the flakes gently falling and she said, "nothing more than nothing." "In that case I must tell you a strange and awesome story," said the robin. "Last Christmas, I sat in a fir tree in one of the front gardens of this neighbourhood, some colourful lights had been rigged up in its branches. It had started snowing. It wasn't a snowstorm



or anything, the snow was just gently falling and slowly settling in the garden and on the branches of my fir tree. I moved a bit closer to the tree trunk. As I did not have anything else to do, I counted the flakes that were falling and settling amongst the needles of my branch. After some time I had counted three million seven hundred and forty-one of these flakes, flakes that you said weigh 'nothing more than nothing'. But then one more flake floated gently down. The three millionth seven hundredth and forty-second flake. And as the flake settled the branch broke off." Having told his story the red robin flew off.

The dove was left thinking, "perhaps we should never doubt that a single voice can make all the difference; perhaps there is only one voice missing to increase peace in this world."



Judith, a 'Choir Mum' tells us why singing and St Stephen's are important to her family



I knew I would need to find an outlet for my son's love of music from an early age. We were treated to singalongs in the car and opera in the bathroom! So, the search was on to find the right choir. Aged 7, George joined the choristers at St Stephen's, practicing on a Friday evening 6-7pm and at 9am on a Sunday for the 10am service in term time. He was the youngest and needed his gown altered, but not by much and he soon made friends amongst the other choristers. He wanted to arrive early on a Friday to fly paper aeroplanes around the church, eat toast and practise his flute in the amazing acoustics. I shall never forget the joy of the very first wage envelope George received when he exclaimed in delight how much he loved singing AND he was getting pocket money for it!

Singing challenging music (from past centuries) often in Latin has not put him off and I have noticed how George is always full of energy and happiness afterwards as he continues to sing as we walk along the road.

A few months later his older sister Rosie became a member of the choir, wanting to know what the fuss was about; that church could be more interesting singing in the choir! They are joined by myself, always sitting in the back pew so that I can turn and see them. Together we have enjoyed going through the seasons of the church year, from the Pet Blessing service in January where the choristers are accompanied by singing dogs, to the extra services at Easter, all the way through to the tremendously packed carol service at Christmas.



The choir are fortunate in having Rupert Perkins as their Director of Music where he has been Organist and Choirmaster for the past 2 and a half years, having grown up in the church, learning organ with Eric Matthes and Michael Spencer in the 1980s. Later he frequently accompanied for Michael Spencer, a previous Director of Music. Rupert also runs the South London Music Shop in East Dulwich and his own three children sing in the choir at St Stephen's.

A very exciting experience recently involved all choristers taking part in a concert with a professional orchestra led by Nicholas Ansdell-Evans, which was for many their first experience of singing at such an event.



As a professional singer all her life, my mother's dream is being fulfilled to have grandchildren who also love singing. Imagine her pride at having two choristers!

We came to St Stephen's primarily for the music, but we have benefited from far more and thoroughly enjoy being part of this friendly church community.



Judith Wise has been attending St Stephen's since September 2016 with George and Rosie. Their older sister Ruby sings in the choir at Alleyn's School.

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An insight into why one family feels at home at St Stephen's by Piers and Laura Moth



As a family working in healthcare and teaching, it has always struck us that the early years are of great importance in shaping a child's development and future. As a result it was important to us to find a church that could connect with our children and us as a whole family.

It doesn't always feel it when I'm trying to get my children to do their homework but it is essentially easy to teach your children to read, do maths and tell the time; you follow a set of principles which they have to follow too. There is a right and a wrong and, with repetition, they learn the set of rules. But teaching them to connect with and talk to God and develop their own relationship with him is different, and can sometimes feel overwhelming as a parent, particularly with young children, (ours are 3 and 4 years old). I have often worried about whether I am offering them the right guidance and how I can help them to learn to walk with God through their lives.

We moved to the area when the children were babies and spent some time finding the church that was right for us, the church that would help to guide us all as a family and to teach us as parents how to guide our children and help them connect with God. In St. Stephen's we feel we've found it. The children look forward to the weekly Footsteps Sunday School and the teachers use simple games and teachings, which help the children understand how God is relevant to them and their lives and it makes them want to talk to and ask questions about Jesus. We can revisit what they learnt during their sessions and it provides us with ways to talk to the children about the bigger issues of life.

Our children have been attending footsteps for about a year now and it has been wonderful watching them grow and develop, engage more with the teachings and ask more and more questions. Even at a young age they have developed an understanding of how Jesus walks with them and I know we couldn't have taught them this without the help of Footsteps.

Away from the children, the Church provides wonderful support, guidance and blessing for adults. As a family we have been faced with some serious health issues and St. Stephen's has been able to offer us support, advice and guidance for our own spiritual needs as well as a space to reflect with, and talk to God.

Ever since our first visit, we have felt very much at home amongst the welcoming congregation, and certainly, as a family, we had found our home to worship. The Church offers a family so much more than a Service, and has been very forthcoming in inviting us to join its community and join the many outlets it has to offer, both in and away from the Church.

As a church St. Stephen's has a huge amount to offer to families and provides an enriching experience of family worship.

Laura is a respiratory physiotherapist and Piers a peripatetic music teacher



Busy lives and a sad goodbye

by Bernhard Schünemann and Angela Emmott



The Revd Hazel Kimber, who has just moved to Manchester to be near her family, had lived on the Kingswood Estate since 1968. In her professional career as a teacher she rose to being deputy head of Rosendale Primary School. As a resident of Kingswood she worked tirelessly on various residents' initiatives. For her it was a passionate concern that the older residents, many of whom had lived on the Estate since it was built in the mid- 1950's, should relate well to the newer and younger families that were beginning to move in towards the end of the 1980's and 1990's. Many of these younger residents were from much more diverse backgrounds and it was one of Hazel's achievements that there was much harmony and sense of common purpose amongst neighbours, leading to a very successful refurbishment of the whole Estate. Hazel was thus an intuitive 'community organiser', long before Obama started the movement in Chicago!

As a voluntary priest, ordained as her retirement drew near, she was a member of the first Ordained Local Ministers' Group initiated by the then Bishop of Southwark. Hazel worked in two churches, first at Emmanuel Church, West Dulwich and then here at St Stephen's. All the Vicars that she worked with during this period would, I think, agree that Hazel was uniquely gifted spiritually, rooting everything that she did in prayer, and seeking out to help and support those who were lost and hurt.

At her November farewell in church we heard from many, differing generations, of her unfailing support to their families in times of sickness and distress. Present in St Stephen's as we listened to the tributes to Hazel were two long term residents who also counted her as a good friend.



Joan Willsher came to Kingswood in 1993, so 26 of her 91years have been lived almost in the shadow of St Stephen's. She told me she had been coming to services for 20 years or so, before that she had come sometimes but now it feels like 'home'. "It's so friendly," she says "the smile at the door makes all the difference to your day. Christine, Gaby and all the other sidespeople who are at the door when you come in, make you feel so welcome." Joan gets to talk to them at coffee too, and relies on these contacts to give her a lift back and forth to church.

She loves the choir, something not many churches have nowadays, she adds. Joan attends a weekly Singing Club in East Dulwich, organised through Link Age Southwark (previously Dulwich Helpline), who offer transport facilities. I saw her 'Favourite Memories Songbook' provided through the professional teacher: songs old and new, hymns and carols. They are practising for a Christmas Concert. She also goes to the Craft Club in Kingswood House. Joan is a great friend of Hazel and will miss her very much. They shared organised holidays, outings, prayer times, friends and memories; she hopes they can keep in touch.

Rita Miller told me her family arrived 'with the bricks' moving into a brand new home on the brand new Kingswood Estate. She was 15. Now 66 years later she says she could never imagine living anywhere else! For many years she attended the Ichthus Christian Fellowship which had been run locally, but for the last 10 years she has come to St Stephen's Church, when she too can get a lift in! She found that she already knew others in the congregation, who lived nearby and attended the activities she

enjoyed. Yes she belonged to the Prayer group and Bible study that Hazel pioneered. Rita enjoys the music at our church too, especially the choir and, like Joan goes to the singing sessions in East Dulwich. She goes to a Reminiscence Group at Kingswood House and also to the Rainbow Craft Club and to an exercise class in the Community Shop. Rita says Kingswood is a great place to live but if only they had a supermarket too, it would be even better!



Rita, Joan and Hazel have come with other local people on adventures with the 'Out and About Club' organised through St Stephen's, all of which has added to the sense of community felt here in South Dulwich.

News

from Helen Jary, Deputy Head



With only a few weeks to go Dulwich Wood Primary School is gearing up for Christmas. St Stephen's Church has been booked for Christmas Carols led by Years 2 to 6, (19.12.17 at 6.30pm). It will be a wonderful celebration of Christmas featuring singing, drumming and ukuleles! The younger children will be joining forces with the Nursery School and celebrating Christmas in the School Hall complete with angels, reindeer and Baby Jesus!!

'The Friends of Dulwich Wood' (our supportive parent association!) are well on their way to planning the school's Winter Fayre (08.12.17). There will be an amazing raffle, Christmas gifts and goodies to make and buy and of course a Santa, Elves and a grotto!! This is a much anticipated event which raises funds for the school. Some of the funds raised over the year are going to be used to buy every child in the school a Christmas present and support the cost of taking all the children to the theatre to see a special Christmas version of Cinderella.

'The Friends' and their children have already begun practicing their carol singing in the music room, they will be singing at Sydenham Station in the lead up to Christmas, around Crystal Palace, at the Alleyn's Head and at the West Dulwich Christmas Fair. Children from the school will also be singing carols for local old people at their Christmas Dinner!

The last day before the Christmas holidays will be Christmas class parties, a chance to wear Christmas jumpers and eat popcorn watching or taking part in the legendary whole school Talent Show.

Dulwich Wood have so much to look forward to - Happy Christmas!

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Term time teaching for children during the 10am service

by Christine Murrell and James Fraser.



Our Children's groups at St Stephen's are called Footsteps. Our aim is to teach the children to follow in Jesus' footsteps by following his example to love and serve others.

We aim to give children an opportunity to know about God, Jesus and stories from the Bible and we try to encourage children to worship God in their lives. We provide opportunities for children to share a sense of belonging with the whole church fellowship and offer families the support they need to bring up their children in the Christian faith. We provide a happy and comfortable atmosphere in which to develop good feelings about the Church and Christianity.

By giving time to organise and help in Footsteps our leaders are able to serve God and their community and to grow in their spiritual lives.

Recently I talked with James Fraser, who is a member of St Stephen's and regularly teaches in Footsteps. James has two young sons aged 5 and 8 and I asked him why he comes to St Stephen's and what his aims are when he takes Footsteps.

"As Christians we need Christian community, worshipping with others and receiving communion together is powerful. I feel we grow more together than alone. Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." I enjoy the form of service at St Stephen's and appreciate and learn from Bernard's teaching. The structure of the Christian church appeals to me and with it the cycle of the year. We use the church lectionary when preparing lessons for Footsteps so that they are following and learning the same gospel reading each week that is read in church.

I teach young children in primary school and in Footsteps I hope to be able to give children access to the Christian faith by using my gift of teaching. One of the most important challenges is being able to communicate with the children. Often we have to think how to communicate quite complex ideas and through doing that I am learning myself.

When preparing a lesson I look for an objective and try to hook them from the start to get the message across. To do this I try to introduce the main point in a practical way. For example when we were learning about the parable told by Jesus of the rich man and his vineyard we used Playmobil characters at the start of the lesson. Another time when talking about God's gift of water we started the session with several bottles filled with different liquids that the children could taste and identify.

I feel privileged to be able to teach the children in Footsteps and to be able to encourage them to help each other, pray for each other and learn to follow God and love His church."

Matthew ch19. v14: Jesus said "Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these."

Christine Murrell has been teaching Footsteps for over 25 years, starting when her own children were young and her daughter joined the Brownies at St Stephen's.



James Fraser is a primary school teacher working with 8 & 9 year olds at James Dixon Primary School, Anerley.




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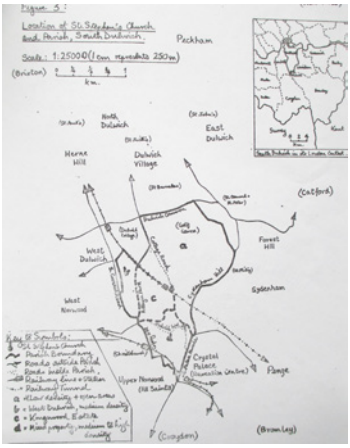

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An Overview – taking a look at our neighbourhood

by Martin Knight



How would you describe where you live? There are many possible answers to that question, depending on your experience of the area, where you are at the time, who you are addressing, and why. Here I will attempt to describe the location and principal features of our St. Stephen's Parish.

To the Diocese of Southwark (including Dulwich Deanery), St Stephen's Parish is in South Dulwich, but how often does anyone use that name? Dulwich, yes, but South Dulwich …?

The postal address of the Church is College Road SE21, but that includes a substantial area that is not part of St Stephen's. Network Rail call the station next door to the Church 'Sydenham Hill', but none of the Parish is in Sydenham. Administratively it is almost identical with College Ward – but that puts us in the wide and varied Parliamentary Constituency of Dulwich and West Norwood. Of course, some residents may feel orientated in other ways, and others may well not be aware of St Stephen's at all!

The Parish forms a rough triangle 1¼ miles north to south and ¾ mile west to east, located 4 miles south of the City of London, in the Borough of Southwark (see accompanying map). Its south-eastern boundary runs the length of the Sydenham Hill and Crystal Palace ridge, but Crystal Palace is more associated with Upper Norwood and Penge than Dulwich. Our northern boundary is set by the schools and sports grounds along Dulwich Common, while on the west and east sides it is bounded by busy main roads (Croxted Road/Gipsy Hill and Lordship Lane respectively). Historically, the Parish was the almost empty southern tip of the large medieval Parish of Camberwell, effectively part of Surrey's 'Great North Wood'. St Stephen's was only built and endowed in response to the rapid growth of south-east London in the 19th century, the building of Paxton's 'Crystal Palace' on the Sydenham Heights, and the re-establishment of Dulwich College on Dulwich Common (see Michael Goodman's book 'The Story of St. Stephen's Church', available from the Church).

The Parish is a low to medium density middle class suburb set in a hilly, green and leafy environment, which makes it unusual for an Inner City area. It does not have an obvious 'core' (a prominent historical, commercial, or community focus) within it (do we count St Stephens Church and Hall? Kingswood House? Paxton Green? Dulwich Prep London and Kingsdale Schools?) There are other prominent foci just beyond its borders, eg Dulwich College, Dulwich Village with its Picture Gallery, the Horniman Museum in Forest Hill, and the Upper Norwood Triangle (the 'Vicar's Oak'). Shopping centres are farther away at West Norwood, East Dulwich, Forest Hill, Sydenham, and Penge; however, cheap public transport to all these centres is surprisingly limited from St Stephen's (no buses pass through the heart of the Parish, for example).

Most of the half of the Parish north-east of College Road is not built-up: it includes Dulwich and Sydenham Hill Golf Course, Dulwich Woods, schools, sports clubs, and allotments. The south and west half includes Kingswood Estate (a 1950-60s low-rise development), private apartment blocks, houses and gardens, and residential amenity land. College Road and the Victoria-Orpington rail line form a sharp boundary between the two halves. Many properties are 'pieds-à-terre' (in cul-de-sacs which tend to encourage social exclusiveness rather than community). Since employment in the Parish is limited to local services and three large schools, most residents commute to London or elsewhere for work from the local stations, along with hundreds of others coming up from Kent who park there. College Road is a toll road for vehicles, but is a popular route on the London Cycle Network, and much of its traffic is now cycles and motor cycles. While, inevitably, most of St Stephen's congregation come from within the Parish, some come from as far away as Beckenham, Clapham, Honor Oak, Camberwell and even Surbiton. The Church is popular for weddings, and over three hundred are expected to attend at Christmas; all will find a warm welcome.

In future Issues I will describe and explain more fully particular features of St Stephen's Parish and its environs. Meanwhile, further information is available on the Church website, or on www.martindknight.co.uk .

Martin Knight is a retired Head of Geography from Wilsons School, Wallington (formerly in Camberwell), was born and bred in Dulwich, and has been an active member of St Stephen's for over forty years.

Christmas at St Stephen's

December

THURSDAY 7

7pm A Carol Service with multi-faith readings to celebrate the 50th anniversary of St. Christopher's Hospice - with celebrity readers Helen Hayes MP, Huw Edwards, Rabbi Julia Neuberger, Lord Turnbull, also Dulwich Chamber Choir & Sydenham High School Choir

SUNDAY 17

6pm Lessons and Carols with the St Stephen's choir and readers from the 3 churches and other members of our community

SUNDAY 24 CHRISTMAS EVE

4pm Blessing of the Crib Service with the St Stephen's choristers. A service of carols, readings and a procession to the crib. Children may wish to come dressed as one of the characters of the nativity story

11pm Midnight Mass with the St Stephen's choir

MONDAY 25 CHRISTMAS DAY

8am Holy Communion (BCP)

10am Christmas Day Choral Eucharist with the St Stephen's choir

Kingswood Community Baptist Church
Dulwich Wood Federation Primary School,
Bowen Drive, SE21 8NS
Pastor: Mawuli Doe
(info: Sandra Surrey 07986 002389)

3rd-24th Dec - 21 day fasting and prayer

Sunday 17th
10.30 Carol service

Christmas Day
10-11am Christmas Day service

Regular Services
Sundays 10.30am
Wednesday 7.30-9.00pm Non-denominational Bible Study Ketra Rooms
Saturday Prayer Group 10am-12noon
37 Kingswood Drive, Pastor Mawuli's home

St Margaret Clitherow RC Church
4 Kingswood Drive, SE19 1UR
Fr. Chris Keen
Parish Priest (020) 8670 1639
http://www.stmargaretclitherowdulwich.org

Christmas Eve
5pm Children's mass
10pm Carols and 1st mass of Christmas

Christmas Day
10.30am Christmas Day mass

Regular Services
Sunday Mass 10.30am
Portuguese Mass 9.00am
Holy Days: Mass 9.30am & 7.00pm
Sacrament of Reconciliation
Saturday: 5.45pm-6.00pm

Regular Services

Sundays
8am Holy Communion (BCP)
10am Choral Eucharist with Sunday School during term time
12noon Holy Baptisms

Monday to Friday
8.30am Silent Prayer followed at 8.45am by Morning Prayer

Wednesday
9.45am Holy Eucharist