

December
2024

EDGEWAYS

Sacred Heart Parish Magazine

Vol. 35 No.10

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**‘Thank you, Ruth, for being Chair
of our PPC for two years...’**

‘Advent explained’ by Fr Nick King SJ (pp.6–7)

**Sacred Heart Primary School pupils
interview Canon David on his vocation (p.8)**

***FREE* but donations are always welcome**

Why do we have a new Lectionary?

The Lectionary is the liturgical book which contains the Mass readings. It is the means of God's Word reaching us: it is how God speaks to us today. As a conduit or bridge by which the Word of God reaches us, it is not merely a book, but a means of God's grace, and, as such, the Lectionary is very important.

Actually, this is not a new Lectionary – the selection of readings from Scripture is unchanged – but a new translation. The Bishops of England, Wales, and Scotland have chosen to switch from the Jerusalem Bible to the English Standard Version (ESV) and the Abbey Psalter.

Why is a new translation needed? Firstly, the Jerusalem Bible – which is a translation of a French translation from the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek – is very old, dating from 1969. Since then:

- many new saints (e.g. St John Henry Newman) and Feasts (e.g. Mary, Mother of the Church) have been added to the Church's calendar;
- there have been many advances in biblical scholarship;
- in a living language like English, word usage has changed (e.g. who says 'yonder' these days?); and
- the Jerusalem Bible uses language we would no longer consider inclusive.

It was also felt that a more dignified English was needed, a version more suitable for proclaiming the Word of God.

The Jerusalem Bible used a style of translation known as dynamic equivalence. This translates thoughts



rather than exact words. Dynamic equivalence is good for explaining the text, and good for children's versions of Scripture, but it tends to paraphrase, and therefore it tends to interpret original writers, rather than letting them speak for themselves.

The ESV, published in 2001, relies heavily on recently-published critical editions of the texts, and uses the formal equivalence method of translation. While taking into account the differences between current literary English and the original languages, formal equivalence strives to translate word-for-word as closely as possible. This makes the translation more transparent, leaving the preacher and the listener to interpret the Word themselves.

Therefore, the ESV's formal equivalence better reproduces the author's original style: for example, Mark is very clunky and breathless ('and...and...and'), whereas

Luke writes in polished Greek. St Paul has long, meandering sentences, which St Peter noted in 2 Peter 3:16: 'There are some things in [Paul's letters] that are hard to understand.' Such differences in style were obscured in the Jerusalem Bible.

The ESV accepts that listeners understand theological terminology – words such as grace, faith, sanctification, or redemption – which it retains because of their central importance to Christian doctrine. The ESV uses gender-neutral language where possible (e.g. 'brothers and sisters' where the author addresses men and women).

The Abbey Psalter is not so much a new translation as a revision of the previous Grail Psalter. A few improvements aside (e.g. the Hebrew חַסֵּד , *hesed*, is translated as 'merciful love', not just 'love'), the main change is to restore the lines and phrases omitted in the Grail Psalter. These omissions made the psalms easier to sing, but at the cost of editing Sacred Scripture.

One of the most popular changes to Holy Mass introduced in 1970 was the restoration of the Word of God. Written millennia ago, the texts are not always easy to understand. No translation can be perfect: it is impossible to completely transfer meaning from an ancient language into modern English.

While the new Lectionary is not a huge change from the former one, it helps us to understand better the readings, being both up-to-date and more faithful to the original authors. The new translation empowers us to be closer to the Word of God and discern its meaning for us today.

Canon David

n.b. Lest anyone think that King David married a nun, the new Lectionary clarifies that his wife was not 'Abigail the Carmelite' but 'Abigail from Carmel'!

'Thank you!' from Aid to the Church in Need

Aid to the Church in Need UK has written to offer their heartfelt thanks for our response to their recent appeal, which raised an astounding £5,630.19. Benefactors will double this amount for a final total of £11,260.38. Trading items raised an additional £906 for ACN. You can learn more about ACN at acnuk.org.

For Red Wednesday, in solidarity with Christians persecuted worldwide, Joe Ruston and Chris Woodward illuminated in red from Wednesday 20 to Sunday 24 November (photographed by John Stone).



Santa's Christmas sack is bursting with stories of interest to all tastes in this month's Edgeways!

We start by thanking **Ruth Naylor** for being such a cheerful and efficient Chair for the monthly PPC meetings over the past two years (*front cover*) and we also offer thanks for the generous donations to Aid to the Church in Need's annual **Red Wednesday** campaign (*p.3*).

Under Faith in the Parish, Canon David walks us through the **new Lectionary** (*pp.2-3*); former parish resident Fr Nick King SJ guides us through **the meaning of Advent** (*pp.6-7*); and Matteo Baccaglini offers a first-hand report on **being a catechist** (*p.5*).

Among our younger parishioners, pupils at **Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School** share their findings from an interview with Canon David (*p.8*), and we advertise new monthly **Prayer and a Pint** socials for Catholic young adults (*p.9*).

Musically, **James Marshall and Richard Zhang** astounded their audience with a concert for violin and piano (*pp.10-11*), and David Gammie gets his own back on Giles Kennedy, who wrote last month of 'Cecelia the Steinway', our parish piano, by telling us all about **our organ and its 2,669 pipes** (*pp.12-13*). We even challenge readers to name our organ – get thinking!



On parish groups, we report on the **Flower Group Coffee Morning and Demonstration** (*p.14*); the Friendship Group's talk on **avoiding scams** (*p.15*); and we list another round of **groups and charities looking for new members** (*pp.16-17*). You know what you have to do!

Parish work in the community continues, and we showcase **Merton Citizens** and other external activities (*pp.18-19*).

As we know it's Christmas, so we offer some **fascinating facts about Christmas** (*pp.20-21*). Then all of a sudden, it's panto season and we announce Edge Hill Players' production of **Dick Whittington and his Cat** on Saturdays 1 and 8 February 2025 (*p.25*). Already!

David Hurst

Corrections to November Edgeways:

- Aodhan Breathnach and Cathy Coleman, parishioners who cycled from London to Rome (*pp.10-11*), did not have sore bums at the end of the ride!
- In Catherine Craven's excellent interview with Eoin Kelly, Headteacher at Ursuline High School (*pp.14-15*), it should have read that Fr Kevin Donovan SJ, not Fr Gerard Mitchell SJ, baptised both of his children.

Being a catechist



One Sunday two years ago, I went to Mass at St Joseph's, New Malden. Fr Uche, the Parish Priest, announced at the end of Mass that he had been overwhelmed by applications for that year's First Holy Communion programme, and some children would have to wait till next year.

At the time, I had just returned to London after ten months working for the Church in Cambridge, and before that, I was living with the Jesuits at the student chaplaincy in Oxford. So, after these years of sharing faith in community, I was planning to refresh my faith by living 'anonymously', unanchored to any parish or group – but, like the disciples fleeing Jerusalem for Emmaus, the Lord always calls us back to community. Moved by the thought of children missing out, I approached Fr Uche to ask if and how I could help. He said: 'You could become a catechist.'

Before then, I had hardly spent any time around children. I was very worried that I wouldn't be able to hold their attention, let alone inspire their lives of faith! But the community of seasoned catechists was immensely supportive, offering all kinds of tips about how to make the most of our time together. I arrived armed with stickers, crayons, and, hoping to relate to the children, my leaving gift from Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School: a Good News Bible dated to July 2011. I was not ready for the children to point out that they had not even been born back then!

The sessions turned out to be great fun, and I particularly loved getting to know and spend time with a really great bunch of children. When I started, some of the parents and catechists warned me not to

expect too much of them. Ha! Two sessions in, a seven-year-old girl looked up from her connect-the-dots to ask: 'If the parable of the Prodigal Son teaches us that God forgives us, why does Hell exist?'

Aside the challenging content to cover, the kids valued discussing how they could apply what we learned together to their daily lives. What does the Sacrament of Reconciliation teach us about how to navigate playground quarrels? How can we reflect Christ's love for us to our parents and friends? Besides, as the lead catechist said to parents, to whatever extent faith plays a role in their family life – and the programme is also an invitation for parents to explore this question – First Holy Communion sessions are a time for children to reflect on the meanings of right and wrong and ask how they can become more loving people, capable of realising the fullness of their personhood.

Catechists are still in shortage, and so I have continued in subsequent years, now also at Sacred Heart Wimbledon. To anyone thinking of volunteering as a catechist, whether for First Holy Communion or Confirmation, I could not recommend this ministry highly enough.

Matteo Baccaglini (OW '18)

Will you become a volunteer to help our parish's youth ministry, whether through catechesis or the youth group? Please email Rob Hitchcock, our Faith Minister, at wimbledonpfm@rcaos.org.uk. All volunteers will be DBS-checked.

Advent: what is it all about?

So, Advent is once again here, and we may be scratching our heads and wondering what it is all about. Let me offer three thoughts.

Firstly, Advent is, above all, a time for hope – a time of confidence that God is about to act in the mess in which our world finds itself.

Secondly, it is not 'all about Christmas'. Our task is to hear the Gospel spoken to us in a new and unfamiliar language.

Thirdly, is there room for God in the world that we have built? Advent is a long, slow period of preparation during which the readings in church, both on Sundays and on weekdays, are immensely rich, and deserve our careful listening.

And, as far as possible, we should not even use the 'C'-word until Christmas Eve. Until 24 December, we are simply 'on the way' – whatever they tell you in the shops, we have not got there yet. For the moment, we are on the road – and where is the road going to take us? It is taking us to that extraordinary moment of Jesus' birth in human form, the time when 'the Word was made flesh'.

So, Advent is not really a time for calculating what I might be getting for a Christmas present or even for asking 'What on earth are we to do about Great-Aunt Matilda this year?'

From the First Sunday of Advent, we start hearing the readings from a different translation of the Bible: the English Standard Version (ESV). It is always the case that unfamiliar changes to a much-



Advent Wreath with four candles, lovingly created by France Sansé Maki, Theresa Chan, and Angela Searle from the Parish Flower Group

loved text can cause pain. There is no point in complaining about it: we simply have to get on with it and ask what it is that God is saying to us in the wonderfully rich readings that Advent brings. So, see what you can do to relish the new and unfamiliar rhythms of the ESV. This is the version to which we are going to be listening, and our task is to learn to love this new version, for it is still and always the Word of God.

Advent is an immensely precious time of the year; and our task is to hear the voice of God whispering the divine consolation into our ears. In the darkening that we experience at this time of the year, where can we hope to see glimmers of light?

All the same, you probably find yourself looking around the world as it is today and wondering how God can possibly come into it this Christmas. There are wars wherever you look: in the Sudan, in Ukraine, and in God's beloved Holy Land; and there are alarming tensions in this country, and the sense that no one is very much in control.

The fact is, however, that our world is not enormously different to the world into which Jesus was born. Many people were hoping that a new world order of peace was emerging in the Roman Empire and that wars might soon be a matter of the past. Instead, there were to be appalling massacres as people quarrelled about who should be the next ruler of the world; there were endless struggles in the Holy Land about how to worship God properly; and there were squabbles about who should be closest to those in power.

Everywhere you looked, there was quarrelling and greed. In such a situation, was there any room for God? Well, I suppose that you might find yourself asking precisely that question with regard to this country today. Is there room for God in a place like this?



Well, happily, God offers us an answer: God is utterly in love with his Creation, and there is no possibility of his abandoning it, or abandoning us. That is what the great Feast of the Incarnation, towards which we have started our annual four-week journey, is all about.

So, a quiet gratitude, rather than frantic anxiety, should be our prayerful mood. Can you find a way into that godly disposition over the next few weeks? Then you will indeed be in a place where we can all joyfully celebrate Christmas Day.

Fr Nicholas King SJ



7.00pm via Zoom Mondays 6 January to 3 February
***Dilexit nos* Parish Reading and Discussion Group**

Start your 2025 on the right foot! Over five Monday evenings, we'll read and unpack Pope Francis' latest encyclical, *Dilexit nos* (2024), dedicated to the Sacred Heart, and discuss its relevance to our lives of faith, our parish community, and the wider world. Each session will last one hour. Participants will be expected, but not required, to read a chapter each week. Please email Matteo at wimbledonnewsletter@rcaos.org.uk or complete the registration form at forms.office.com/e/Sa3AzC3yaX.

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School pupils quiz Canon David

WRITTEN BY THE PUPILS THEMSELVES

As part of our topical studies on Vocation and Commitment in Religious Education, we were given the enriching opportunity to visit Sacred Heart Church on Tuesday 12 November. We visited for Mass and a chance to learn about Canon David's holy journey to priesthood, and his unwavering commitment to God – that is, his vocation.

Our class arrived at Sacred Heart Church for the morning Mass. Some of us had the privilege of reading during the Mass, helping to spread the Word of God. Additionally, some of us had the special honour of bringing up the gifts at the Offertory Procession. Each member of the congregation listened intently to our readings and watched with reverence during the offertory, leaving with hearts renewed and filled with joy.

After the Mass, we sat quietly in the serene church, awaiting Canon David. Soon afterwards, he greeted us with an exuberant smile. After introducing himself, we eagerly raised our hands to ask the questions we had prepared in advance. These questions focussed on the divine call he had received from God. Some of the questions we asked included: 'What did you want to be as a child?', 'What was your dream job?', 'When did you know you wanted to be a priest?', and 'What were the steps you had to take?'

His answers surprised and inspired us! We had assumed that his childhood dreams



would be similar to ours, but we were awestruck to learn that he had aspired to be a priest from a young age. He shared that becoming a priest requires studying Scripture and the history of the Church before being ordained by the Bishop. The preparation process takes six to seven years. One of the biggest sacrifices for him was giving up marriage, which he felt would distract him from his ministry.

Canon David also shared that his greatest joy comes from celebrating the Mass and supporting parishioners on their journey of faith. He explained how these moments deepen his connection with God and bring him immense fulfillment. He also spoke about his call to anoint the sick, describing it as a profound and sacred responsibility.

We thanked Canon David sincerely for his time and insights before returning to school. This trip was a truly memorable experience, highlighting the profound commitment and sacrifices required for a priest to fulfil his vocation.

Leanne Lobb and Nerain Mahadevan
Year 6 pupils at Sacred Heart

WIMBLEDON YOUNG ADULTS



An informal social for young adults. A place to build community, pray, have a pint, play piano, sing, play pool and darts.

7:30pm - 9pm

Parish Lounge

Sacred Heart Church

Cash bar

Any questions contact the faith minister; Rob:
wimbledonpfm@rcaos.org.uk

Saturday 16 November: concert by James Marshall & Richard Zhang



On Saturday 16 November, violinist James Marshall and pianist Richard Zhang hosted a concert in the church to raise funds for the parish Crib Appeal, in support of the Church in the Holy Land.

James was born and raised in the parish and has been playing violin with mum, Rachel, and dad, John, at the Family Mass since the age of six. Aged 10, while attending Donhead Preparatory School and having attained 142 for Grade 8 violin, he met his teacher, Boris Kucharsky, at the

Yehudi Menuhin School 'Come and Play Day', and James was accepted into his class. Having auditioned and been awarded his place in October 2017, James joined the internationally-renowned music school in April 2018. He is currently in his final year. Throughout his time at YMS, James has performed in many concerts as soloist and chamber musician.

Richard was born in Jiashan, China, in 2005 and showed a great interest in music at a very early age. He began playing the

Concert programme

Four Romantic Pieces
by Antonín Leopold Dvořák (1841–1904)

Sonata for Piano & Violin No.1 in G Major Op.78
by Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Sonata for Piano & Violin No.9 in A Major Op.47
by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1807)

Finale: Kreutzer Sonata by Beethoven

piano when he was six, studying with William Zhou. In October 2015, he met the harpsichord maker Ferguson Hoey at the China Music Exhibition, where he tried a harpsichord for the first time. Immediately realising his exceptional talent, Mr Hoey arranged for him to come to the UK and audition at the Yehudi Menuhin School, where he continued his piano studies with Marcel Baudet.

Richard has often given various solo performances in China and Europe,

playing in concerts in the Menuhin Hall, including with the Junior Orchestra. In 2024, he was awarded a scholarship to study at Guildhall School of Music and Drama and was selected by the Keyboard Trust to receive the Dr Weir Legacy Award to help support further studies.

James and Richard met as pupils at the Yehudi Menuhin School and have been performing as a duo for several years.

'Wondrous machine': David Gammie on our parish organ

'Wondrous machine' is how George Friderik Handel described the organ in his *Ode for St Cecilia's Day* – and that is just what we have at the back of our beautiful church.

Our organ boasts an amazing 2,669 individual pipes of all shapes and sizes. The largest pipe is 32 feet high – big enough to contain six tall men standing on each other's shoulders. And the smallest is the size of a tiny pencil.

Built in 1912, our organ just predates the age of reliable electricity and, apart from the modern blowers in the south tower, it is entirely operated by air, stored in eight big wind reservoirs. One and a half tons of heavy weights sit on top of the reservoirs to keep the air under high pressure.



Linking the keys and stops to the pipes is the 'tubular pneumatic' action, comprising hundreds of metres of thin metal tubing that convey the pressurised air to the right place. It is set in motion by a labyrinth of wooden rods, levers, and small inflatable 'motors' that admit air into the pipes.

During the 20th century, most of these old pneumatic organs were modernised, and their tubing replaced with electric contacts and wiring. Miraculously, our organ survived intact with only a few running repairs but, by 2010, it was in danger of total collapse. With generous financial support from the parish and the Heritage Lottery Fund, we were able to commission a complete cleaning and restoration – a mammoth undertaking which took 18 months to complete.



Our organ celebrated its 112th birthday on 8 December, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Its wondrous mechanism is all in pristine working order, enabling it to fulfil what is surely its primary function – to lift our spirits and inspire us as, in the words of the mystical French composer Charles Tournemire, 'the voice of our prayers'.

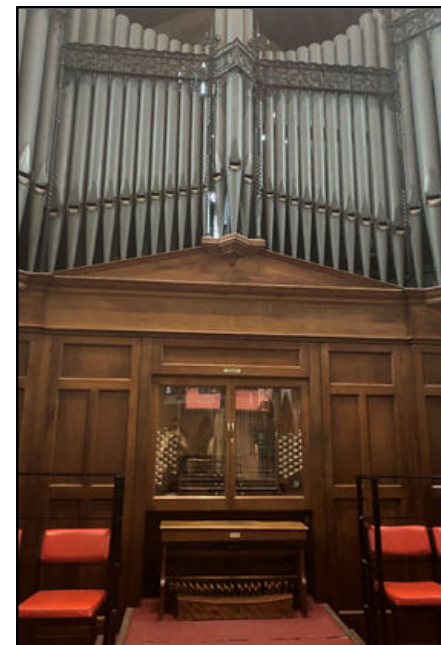
For Tournemire, 'organ music in which God is not present' was like 'a body without a soul'. Maybe most of us would not go quite as far as that – my favourite recent guilty pleasure was playing the theme music from *Mission: Impossible!* But the organ's finest hour was perhaps two years ago, when international celebrity David Briggs, who gave the reopening recital in 2011, returned to improvise a stunningly dramatic and moving accompaniment to the silent biblical epic *King of Kings*. For David, our wondrous machine is one of the most inspiring instruments in the world – and he should know: he has played them all!

David Gammie

A challenge from the editor: our piano has been charmingly named 'Cecelia the Steinway' (see November *Edgeways*, p.9). Send us your ideas for a name for the parish organ at dthurst52@gmail.com.



Visit the parish YouTube channel [@sacredheartwimbledon](https://www.youtube.com/@sacredheartwimbledon) for a series of videos on the organ removal and restoration project.



Saturday 23 November Parish Flower Group Coffee Morning and Demonstration

On Saturday 23 November, the Parish Flower Group met for a Coffee Morning and Demonstration to invite new volunteers to take on this important ministry. Patricia Turner wrote about the group in October's Edgeways (p.19), which you can re-read at sacredheartwimbledon.org.uk/edgeways. To find out more about the Parish Flower Group and to volunteer, please contact Patricia at sacredheartflowers@outlook.com.



Friday 6 December: Friendship Group learns to avoid scamming

'Just say 'no!''

This was the core message that the Friendship Group heard in a recent talk on 'Avoiding Scams'. The talk was given enthusiastically by Hanna Lumley and Ranjeev Sohal, who are Trading Standards Officers for Merton, Richmond, and Wandsworth Councils. The talk was so engaging that the members were at one in suggesting that Hanna and Ranjeev return and give a similar talk to the wider parish.

There is of course much more to their message and invaluable advice, so an open meeting has been arranged for **7.30pm on Wednesday 2 April** in the Upper Hall. Don't think you know it all: you will be surprised at the true stories the officers relate to get home the message. Please put the date in your diaries.



An update from the Parish Environment Group



Following the principles of *Laudato si'* (2015), the revived group is researching the installation of a Parish Prayer Garden, with ecological messages, in the orchard beyond the presbytery. We are also looking to learn from Wimbledon Green Churches Group and Sustainable Merton. Ursuline High School is in the process of applying for CAFOD's LiveSimply award, which the parish was awarded in 2019.

For more details and to join us, please contact David at dthurst52@gmail.com.

Groups in our parish and volunteering opportunities: what will you join; where will you help?

Continuing last month's appeal from groups seeking new helpers and members, here is the second half of our list of groups and ministries.



Parish in the community

From 'Churches Together' to 'Merton Citizens', the parish has representatives taking part in many interesting activities in the wider community. Please contact David at dthurst52@gmail.com.

Parish Office reception

Could you politely receive visitors and answer and transfer telephone calls? Please contact Thelma at wimbledon@rcaos.org.uk.

Teams of Our Lady

We are groups of 3-5 couples who meet monthly for support and to deepen our faith and relationships with God as couples. To join us, please contact Chris and Louisa at celliott138@gmail.com.

Lectio Divina

We meet every Friday 11.00am to 12 noon via Zoom for a prayerful reading and sharing of the coming Sunday's Liturgy. To join us, please contact Bridget at bridgethandley@hotmail.co.uk.

Mothers' Prayers

We meet every Thursday from 8.00pm to 9.00pm via Zoom for a prayer focussed on children, using the International Mother's Prayer Book. To join us, please contact Maria at mmisse@hotmail.com.

Christian Life Prayer Group

Our prayer group meets every two weeks to understand God's work in our everyday lives. To join us, please contact Ruth at ruthjkelly@yahoo.co.uk.

School of Community

Our friendly and welcoming group meets at 7.30pm every Friday in the Lounge to discuss faith in our daily lives. To join us, please contact Giovanni at giovanniperuzzo@gmail.com.

Raphael Pilgrimage to Lourdes

We accompany sick and frail pilgrims to Lourdes each August. To volunteer, please contact Angela at searlearn@aol.com.

Tuesday Yoga Group

We meet each Tuesday morning in the Lounge for yoga. To join us, please contact Anne at anneremedios@outlook.com.

Friendship Group

We meet at 2.30pm on the first Friday of each month for informal social activities – with tea and cake! To join us, please contact Judy at judyruston@gmail.com.

Wimbledon Circle of the Catenian Association

We are an international association of Catholic men and their families. We meet monthly for friendship, social companionship, and charity fundraising. To join us, please contact Tom at tomconlon.uk@gmail.com.

Faith in Action Homeless Project

We are a local day centre for the homeless, open during the day every Wednesday and Friday. To volunteer with us, please contact Grace at team@mertonfaithinaction.org.

Christian CARE Merton

Volunteers are needed to support families in need in Merton with friendship, furniture, and in other ways. To volunteer with us, please contact christiancaremerton@gmail.com.

Manna Society

Manna's day centre supports homeless people near London Bridge. We make food collections four times a year. To volunteer with us, please contact Bridget at bridgethandley@hotmail.co.uk.

Nightstop

Could you offer someone in need your spare bedroom, a warm meal, and somewhere safe to stay for a night? Nightstop hosts welcome young homeless people while the charity helps to find a permanent solution. To volunteer with us, please contact Chris at president190704@svp.org.uk.



Would you like to write for Edgeways?

Do you have an article that you think would be a great addition to YOUR parish magazine? We're always open to contributions! Contact the editor at dthurst52@gmail.com.

Addition to November Edgeways: Further to his request for financial help to support a prisoner's appeal (p.5), Mike Cairns has written a fuller history of John, which he would be pleased to provide on request, either electronically or in hard copy. Please email Mike at cairns.mt@gmail.com, or call him on 07847 666274.

Merton Citizens...

Merton Citizens is a diverse community organising alliance made up of fifteen local organisations, mainly school and religious groups, including Sacred Heart Wimbledon and Wimbledon College, who work together to create greater impact and build relationships with the council, NHS, and other decisionmakers.



Since our parish helped to found Merton Citizens in April 2018, the alliance has established relationships with elected representatives and paid officers from Merton Council who deal with housing, health, social care, and civic pride. We are now invited to meet regularly and report on our work with these representatives and officials.

Merton Citizens is one of six local alliances in South London, the others being Lambeth, Southwark, Croydon, Wandsworth, and Greenwich/Lewisham Citizens. We are local chapters of the nationwide Citizens UK.

After an extensive listening campaign to identify issues and priorities, we are working on four key areas affecting our communities: mental health, housing, welcoming refugees, and the Living Wage.

Merton Citizens 'WINS' have included:

- Campaigned for local authorities to shift £1.85m of their budget towards mental health services, particularly for children and adolescents.
- Resettled refugee families through the Community Sponsorship scheme.
- Persuaded Merton Council to become an accredited Borough of Sanctuary, treating all refugees with dignity.
- Campaigned for Merton Council to join the Lift the Ban Coalition to allow asylum seekers the right to work.
- Persuaded Merton Council to become an accredited Living Wage employer – and we are now campaigning for the Council's supply chain to follow.
- Campaigned for Merton Council social care contracts to pay their employees the Living Wage.
- Worked with Merton Council housing officers on an empathy-first training – now delivered with YMCA residents who have experienced homelessness.

To find out more and join our parish's representation, please contact David at dthurst52@gmail.com.



...and other parish work in our local community!

Merton Faith & Belief Forum

- **Tuesday 12 November:** A parish representative attended the inaugural 'Conversations with Council Leaders' in Vestry Hall, Morden. The event was hosted by Ross Garrod, Merton Labour Council Leader, and Cllr Ellie Stringer, Deputy Leader.
- **6.00pm Wednesday 15 January:** First meeting of the Climate Action Subgroup at the Morden Civic Centre or by Zoom, hosted by Rob Potter, Climate Engagement Officer. If you are interested in attending, please contact David at dthurst52@gmail.com.

Merton Citizens – Health & Housing, Living Wage

- **Thursday 5 December:** Over 200 people took action on 'Health & Housing' and the 'Living Wage' during South London Citizens' 'Day of Action' at Waterloo Station. Decisionmakers from the NHS and London Borough of Lambeth committed to actions for change.
- **7.00pm Wednesday 5 February:** The Wimbledon Synagogue will host a Scriptural Reasoning Interfaith Evening.
- For reports on 'Welcome Refugees: Borough of Sanctuary', housing, mental health, and the Living Wage, please contact David at dthurst52@gmail.com.

Merton Citizens – Mental Health

- **Thursday 28 November:** A parish representative attended training on how to revive the parish 'Be Well Hub', a referral service linked to NHS mental health 'Talking Therapies'. The training was coordinated by South London and Maudsley NHS (SLAM), and entitled 'Learning Opportunities and Sharing Feedback on Be Well'.

Centre for Community and Theology

- **Wednesday 20 November:** Austen Ivereigh, in association with Citizens UK, launched a report on synodality, community organising, and Catholic Social Action, with a foreword by Cardinal Vincent Nichols, at St Margaret's Church, Canning Town.

Catholic Union

- This group strives to achieve public engagement for the common good by contributing to the dialogue between religion and politics. Join the group at catholicunion.org.uk.

Festive Christmas facts

Disclaimer: Please notify the editor of any errors/inaccuracies, which I will take up...with ChatGPT!



Christmas was once illegal: In the 17th century, Puritans in England and New England banned Christmas celebrations because they viewed them as overly indulgent and rooted in paganism.

Rudolph was created for advertising: Robert L. May created the character of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer in 1939 as a promotional story for the Montgomery Ward department store.



Santa Claus wears red thanks to Coca-Cola: Coca-Cola's advertising campaigns popularised Father Christmas' iconic red suit in the 1930s. Earlier depictions had him in various colours.

Japan's unusual Christmas tradition: In Japan, Christmas isn't a religious holiday but it is widely celebrated with a quirky tradition: eating Kentucky Fried Chicken, thanks to a successful marketing campaign in the 1970s.



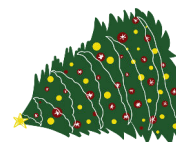
Boxing Day's charitable roots: On Boxing Day, servants who had served their masters over Christmas would head home. Their masters would give them a box to bring to their family, containing gifts, bonuses, and food.

The first public Christmas tree: The first public Christmas tree display is thought to have been in Tallinn, Estonia, in 1441. This predates widespread private displays in homes.



Pest infestations: Over 25,000 bugs and mites can live on a single Christmas tree. However, most of them are harmless to humans and die off in indoor conditions.

Dangerous trees: Electrical Christmas tree lights were first used in 1882 by Edward H. Johnson, a friend of Thomas Edison. Before that, candles were used, which posed a significant fire hazard.



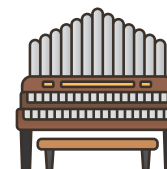
Trees were banned under the USSR: During the early years of the Soviet Union, Christmas trees were banned as a religious symbol. They were reintroduced as 'New Year trees' during Joseph Stalin's regime.

The first Christmas card: The first-ever commercial Christmas card was commissioned by Sir Henry Cole, a British civil servant, in 1843, and designed by John Callcott Horsley.



A Christmas card in silk: During World War I, silk Christmas cards were created for soldiers to send home to their families. These delicate cards featured embroidery and heartfelt messages.

The first Advent calendar: The first Advent calendar with doors was created by Gerhard Lang in Germany in 1908. It featured 24 small pictures that could be affixed to a cardboard backdrop.



The breakdown of a wondrous machine gave us Silent Night: *Silent Night* was first performed on Christmas Eve in 1818 in Oberndorf, Austria. It was composed by Franz Xaver Gruber and Joseph Mohr because the church organ was broken, so they needed a song for guitar accompaniment.

Christmas liturgies at Sacred Heart

Monday 16 December – Saturday 21 December

- 10.00am Mass
- 5.45pm Confessions (heard until 6.15pm)
- 6.30pm Mass



Wednesday 18 December

- 8.00pm **Advent Penitential Service with individual Confessions**

Saturday 21 December

- 10.30am Confessions (heard until 11.30pm)



Sunday 22 December • Fourth Sunday of Advent

- Usual Sunday Mass schedule: 6.30pm (Saturday), 8.00am, 10.00am, 12 noon, 5.00pm, and 8.00pm



Monday 23 December

- 10.00am Mass
- 6.30pm Mass

Tuesday 24 December • Christmas Eve

- 10.00am Mass (of 24 December)
- 3.30pm Children's Christmas Crib Service
- 5.00pm Vigil Mass
- 7.30pm Vigil Mass preceded by Carols from 7.10pm
- Midnight Midnight Mass preceded by Carols from 11.30pm

Additional car park spaces will be available at Wimbledon College from 3.00pm on Tuesday 24 December to 2.00am on Wednesday 25 December.

Wednesday 25 December • Christmas Day

- 8.00am Mass of the Dawn
- 10.00am Mass of the Day
- 12 noon Mass of the Day



Weekday Masses after Christmas Day: On Thursday 26 December and Wednesday 1 January, Mass will only be celebrated at 10.00am, as these are bank holidays. On other weekdays, Mass will be celebrated at 10.00am and 6.30pm.

Christmas collections: By diocesan rule, the collection at all Christmas Masses is your gift to the priests of the parish.

Reserved seats for Christmas Eve Masses: The front four rows of seats on the left-hand centre aisle (Ambo-side) of the church will be reserved for frail and elderly persons and wheelchairs, until five minutes before the carols begin. Thereafter, they will be available to all.

Crib Offerings: The Christmas Crib will be displayed in the St Ignatius Chapel. Please take care when lighting votive candles, especially if children are involved. The Crib Offerings will be sent to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, earmarked for medical and humanitarian needs, via the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. They will support the humanitarian aid convoys to Gaza, enable the provision of schooling and clinics, and help to rebuild the communities devastated over the last two years in the Holy Land.

The Edgeways team wishes you and your loved ones a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year!



The PERFECT Christmas gift



Sacred Heart Photobook: A 32-page, full-colour, hardback photobook with quality images of features inside the church and live concerts that have taken place.

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TUES 17 DEC 2024 7.45PM

Sacred Heart Church, Edge Hill,
Wimbledon, SW19 4LU

MULLED WINE & MINCE PIES
6.30PM UPPER HALL

RAFFLE AND BAR



Invite you to their

Christmas Celebration

AN EVENING OF TRADITIONAL CAROLS
& FESTIVE SONGS

Katy Lees, Katy's Songbirds, Giles Kennedy
Robert Rathbone, Jason Ching, Tom Lees
Ursuline & Lantern Arts Youth Choir
Sacred Heart Choir
Putney & Wimbledon Brass Band
Edge Hill Players
Dessert Lounge Singers

When people come together, incredible things happen

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AN ORIGINAL PANTOMIME

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY
WENDY TANSEY & TERRY MARSH

1ST & 8TH FEBRUARY 2025
2.30PM & 7PM

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