



KINGS NORTON
TEAM PARISH

THE MAGAZINE
FOR CHURCH & COMMUNITY

February 2016

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Time For Treasure That Is Real	p.4
Kings Norton Deanery Pilgrimage	p.7
A Pilgrimage To Paris And Beyond	p.9
Shriven For Lent	p.14
A Covenant Sermon	p.17
Kings Norton Golf Club Moves Out	p.22
Introducing Lee Norfolk	p.26
Malawi Matters	p.34

A Church of England Team Parish serving all in Kings Norton and Druids Heath through the Parish Church of St Nicolas and the District Churches of Hawkesley and Immanuel
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I owe a lot to the 1944 Education Act. Among the many riches it bestowed by law on the children of Britain until relatively recently was the daily act of Christian worship which most of us know simply as “assembly”. I have fond memories of singing hymns, seated cross-legged in short trousers on the polished floor of the gymnasium in my primary school in the curiously-named village of Loose in Kent, famous for its village hall, the meeting place of the Loose Women’s Institute. One of my favourites (hymns, that is, not loose women) was John Bunyan’s “He who would valiant be”.

The version we sang was full of hobgoblins, lions, giants and foul fiends, all grist to the mill of a childish imagination. But it also carried the profound message, as you would expect from the pen of Bunyan, that life is a pilgrimage which, though it may lead through difficulty and danger, will eventually bring us home. “He knows he at the end,” we sang in our high-pitched voices, “shall life inherit”.

However you read the various invitations “to be a pilgrim” with us in these pages this Lent, never forget that God’s unconditional welcome for all, on which we insist so strongly in this parish, and especially at the Holy Communion, is there for you too, regardless of what you may have heard to the contrary.

The Editor

FROM THE REVD JANE PLATT

Time For Treasure That Is Real

Lent begins on Wednesday 10th February with Ash Wednesday. For forty days we draw closer to Jesus who loves us so much that he died for us. We do so by giving up those things, attitudes and habits which have made him seem at a distance and replacing them with more disciplined devotion and worship, study and prayer.

We make time for God, our treasure, and in doing so make time for ourselves. We can never experience the deep joyful, freedom and peace, the fullness of life that we celebrate at Easter, unless we have spent time being real with ourselves, through self-examination; so that our sorrow for our sins and our repentance is real, and we become real with God, and invite him to strip away the hypocrisy and masks we wear; so that our communion, our loving relationship with God and one another, may be more honest, vulnerable and real.

Time is precious. It is not on our side and eventually we will run out of it, so it is important that we don't waste it with what is unimportant and



unsatisfactory. The words said when the ashes are imposed on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday remind us of this: *"Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return"*

Those of us who conduct the many funerals that take place in this parish, often of people much younger than ourselves, are mindful of our own mortality. It is healthy and a relief to recognize that our time here will come to an end but, like most people, I tend not to think about my dying and assume that I will have plenty of time to sort my life out, so I continue to waste time.

Being real about our dying leads us

to rejoice in the reality of resurrection and the joy to come.

In our technological age, there are so many distractions which cause us to take our eyes off God. During Lent in the past, I have resolved to give up computer games and toffees as an act of self-denial. I have never wanted to do these things so much as then. I always failed, usually within the first few days. Thoughts of toffees and computer games dominated my thinking and my mind was on earthly things rather than where it should have been, focusing on Jesus.

Focus on self-denial can lead to all those negative criticisms from outsiders who consider Christianity to be morbid, negative and joyless, inducing guilt and self hate.

Yet self-denial is good. It reminds us of how much we struggle to put God first and therefore makes us more conscious of our need of God's help; but it is not the main focus of Lent.

Our main focus is the Christ we are called to follow. We turn away from the distractions, live more simply and use our time to fix our eyes on him so that we may follow him more closely.

More important than focusing on our weaknesses and mortality is focusing on Jesus. We are called to do what

we are called to do all year, but Lenten discipline gives us the opportunity to do it better; to love the Lord our God with our whole heart, mind and strength and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Sometimes we have to pray, "*Lord, I have lost my love for you. Please increase my desire for you,*" and show that we mean it by spending time listening to God, worshipping and reading the Bible and maybe a Lent book. There are hundreds of such books for sale on Amazon, some costing as little as a penny.

Perhaps you would like to come to

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one of the Open Bible groups which meet at Saint Nicolas' Church and share in Holy Communion with us on Wednesdays. This Lent, the Wednesday morning group is focusing on Easter by reading "*This Risen Existence*" by Paula Gooder.

Two practices that have helped me through Lent in the past have been prayer walking and reflecting on the Stations of the Cross. Prayer walking (simply praying whilst walking) has often been a practice of Evangelicals and reflecting on the "stations" of the cross a Catholic practice. In my last parish we combined the two.

Walking around the parish praying with our eyes wide open so we don't bump into anything, earths us in the reality of our context. We see businesses, community centres other places of worship, schools, those living in poverty and those who are wealthy. We bump into those we know and as we walk past homes we are reminded of those who live there. As we bring our present reality into the reality of God's presence we find

opportunities open up to share God's love.

The practice of praying, usually in a church building, at Stations of the Cross enables us to reflect more deeply on the journey Jesus made to Golgotha, where he was crucified. Each of the fourteen stations, which represent key moments in his final hours, from his agony in Gethsemane to his being placed in the tomb, enables us to reflect on the human evil which brought him there. As we share in his suffering we adore him and bless him.

May God bless you and fill you with his joy and life this Lent as you spend time with him and find real treasure.

Revd Jane Platt

Jane is one of three Honorary Assistant Priests serving the parish part-time until such time as a new Rector is appointed (Editor).

DECEMBER 2015

MARRIAGES

5th Dec	James Howard George Kennedy & Sarah Michelle Bond
12th Dec	Jamie Leighton John Pemberton & Rachel Claire Emily Brecknell
19th Dec	Brendan Michael Henry & Samantha Claire Best

Kings Norton Deanery Pilgrimage

The Deaneries of Birmingham have been asked by the Diocese to organise pilgrimages to Birmingham Cathedral to celebrate its 300th anniversary. The Kings Norton Deanery Pilgrimage will take place on Saturday 13th February and all are invited to join in.

There will be various ways of travelling:

By coach : there will be various pickup points around the Deanery, at a cost yet to be determined.

By train : the time of the train departing from Barnt Green will be advertised and people will be able to

join the pilgrimage at the various stations en route.

On foot : there will be a map of a suitable route with joining places.

Own transport : for those who wish to make their own way.

It is proposed that we gather at the Diocesan Offices in Colmore Row, just outside the entrance to Snow Hill Station, at 12.00 noon. People will be invited to bring a packed lunch to eat here : there are plenty of places around that sell sandwiches for those who don't wish to bring food with them.



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At 12.30 p.m. we will make our way across to the Cathedral for a short act of worship, which will be followed by an opportunity to take part in three 20 min sessions ranging from a guided tour of the hidden parts of the Cathedral to a craft activity based on the Soul Boats project. Pauline Weaver, our Children's Worker, is already working with the Cathedral staff to ensure that families with young children are catered for as well.

The aim is to finish at around 2.30 p.m. Pilgrims will then be offered the

opportunity to stay in Birmingham for the afternoon, possibly with an arranged tour of the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

It sounds a really good idea and a great opportunity, so do try and join in. There are sign-up sheets in all of our churches, so please put your name down to register your interest and your preferred mode of travel. More information will be available nearer the day. Keep your eye on the parish newsletters!

Revd Jayne Crooks

Midweek Holy Communion During Lent

Ash Wednesday

12.00 noon and 8.00 p.m.

(this service will also include the ancient rite of ashing)

Every Wednesday thereafter during Lent

12.00 noon

Thursdays during Lent

There will be NO SERVICE of Holy Communion at 11.00 a.m. during Lent.

If this arrangement works well, the midweek service of Holy Communion may move permanently from Thursday to Wednesday at 12.00 noon to enable those who come to the Bible study on Wednesdays to stay for Communion. Please let the Churchwardens know if you have any comments on this proposal.

A Pilgrimage to Paris and Beyond

“You get to know people quite quickly when you're all sleeping on the floor of a church hall and there are two toilets between all of you. And walking ten hours a day gives a lot of time for conversations.”

Revd Giles Goddard

Pilgrimage seems to be coming back into fashion. Deaneries all around Birmingham have enjoyed a series of stimulating and moving visits to our Cathedral church as part of its 300th anniversary celebrations. On 13th November, the day of the Paris attacks, another pilgrimage set out to walk the 200 miles from St Martin-in-the-Fields, London, to Paris for the start of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, *COP21*.

In this startling coincidence of events pilgrims had quickly to reconsider the whole situation: whether to continue, whether there were security considerations or simply practical problems. With many questions hanging they went anyway.

The feedback from their experience confirms a good decision. This very visceral, violent and immediate event not only played through in quiet



conversation along the way, and in prayer offered for victims and perpetrators, but also in the speeches which opened the Paris talks. Articulated again and again was the fact that climate change is fundamentally tied up with the injustices of a world economy that creates inequality, leading to poverty, war and displacement of peoples.

President Obama neatly summed up the urgency of the threat posed by climate change, “the trend that affects all trends”, in his opening speech: *“I believe, in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., that there is such a*

thing as being too late. And when it comes to climate change, that hour is almost upon us. But if we act here, if we act now, if we place our own short-term interests behind the air that our young people will breathe, and the food that they will eat, and the water that they will drink, and the hopes and dreams that sustain their lives, then we won't be too late for them."

In the face of massive and complex global threats, where individually we feel so small, we might recognise in the idea of pilgrimage a metaphor for the power of faith as resistance. A few people walking, in solidarity, with a purpose towards a common destination.

A few people joined by another stream, and another, and another. One of the London pilgrims, Jean Leston, described the moving moment during the great multi-faith celebration that closed the pilgrimage when 1.8 million signatures, collected from faith groups around the world, was presented to the lead UN negotiator, Christiana Figueres, who promptly burst into tears.

This was the extraordinary power of many small actions patiently put together in the faith and conviction that every single one of us can make that difference. Presumably that many signatures begins to look like you have something to bargain with.

If you are interested in reading more about the Pilgrimage and other outcomes from COP21 take a look at the

website of Operation Noah, an ecumenical charity based in UK (operationnoah.org). It is one of the many organisations involved in the struggle for a sustainable world. The website offers a series of extremely well-written, science-informed and theologically sharp (and very accessible) resources.

And finally, a reflection on the nature of pilgrimage from someone who took part:

"Harry told me about the three stages of pilgrimage, what another pilgrim on the Camino [the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostella. Ed.] had told him. The first stage is pain. Boy could I identify with that! But if you can break through the pain barrier it frees you up to enter the second phase.

"The second stage is one of spiritual awakening. You stop listening to your body complaining all the time and start focusing on what's around you, letting your mind become more open and prayerful. You notice and feel more. You become more contemplative.

"The third stage is growing closer to God. That's the transformational power of pilgrimage. It's when you start talking to God in prayer and hearing his voice instead of your own. That's when you discover that Jesus really is in your midst."

Marilyn Hull

Birmingham Climate Action Group



FOODBANK NEWS

By the time you read this, we should be "back home" having had to expand beyond the warehouse at Hawkesley into two additional units (at ACCESS Storage) during December to cope with the phenomenal donations we received from churches, schools, colleges, workplaces and through supermarket collections.

We collected well over 12 tonnes of food during December and the vast majority of it was wise giving of a kind that would be really useful and nutritious for our customers. There has been the odd pantry clear-out or bizarre gift, but this year it is clear that most givers have much more idea of what is needed and that they are supporting "normal" people who have simply run out of resources to feed themselves and their families.

Most customers are still those who attend only once, and then often reappear a few months later, to give instead of receive, as they were so deeply grateful for the help they received, and the way it was given. Indirectly, it has become a bit like *Send-a-Cow* and similar farming-based charities in Africa, India and South America. The principle of "pass it on". Once you have been helped yourself, you are enabled to help others again.

For some, of course, it has to be a longer-term life-line, as income and benefit struggles take time to unscramble.

More familiar too, now, is the name of the Trussell Trust, which appears in literature about food and general poverty, as a provider of statistics and case studies. It is good that they are trusted to bring accurate and impartial information, but I hope that it never becomes so accepted, that the impact of the problem is pushed out of mainstream attention.

The extra storage couldn't come free, but those who give financial gifts instead of (or as well as) food gifts have made it possible. Thank you to all who give, in every way.

Sylvia Fox

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A NEW GUIDEBOOK FOR ST NICOLAS' CHURCH

I wonder how many of you have ever looked up and thought about the heads which appear to hold up the roof in St Nicolas Church? Well, a new guidebook (see opposite page) has been produced to help all of us, visitors and regulars, who come to our beautiful and ancient church.

It's entitled **LOOK UP!** and seeks to delve into the stories behind the characters who lurk below the rafters of St Nicolas', namely the

corbels. It is very difficult most of the time to get a good look at these carved figures and so the photos in the booklet are a real help to seeing them as they really are. The accompanying text also helps to set these characters in perspective.

The booklets cost £2. They are well worth buying and reading and are on sale in St Nicolas' Church and in the bookshop in St Nicolas' Place.

Revd Jayne Crooks

Bourne Jaffa & Co Solicitors

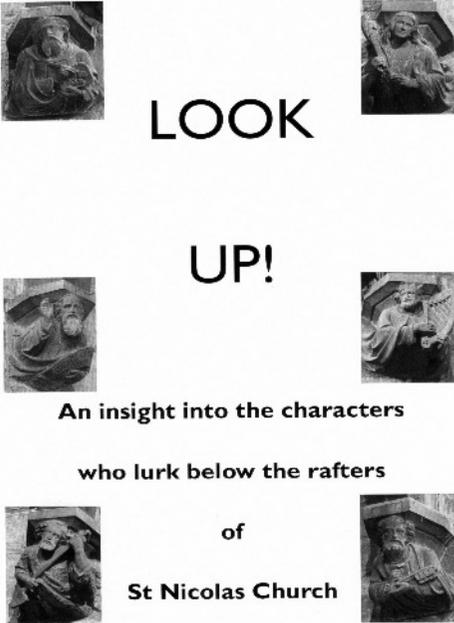
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The Women's World Day of Prayer

On the first Friday of each March, women from all around the world gather together and pray using words, reading, prayers and songs chosen by the women of one chosen country. This year, the ladies of **Cuba** have designed our service in order to tell us more about Cuba, to enable us to study, pray and worship together and to share in



fellowship. Please join us at **Cotteridge Church at 2.00 p.m. on Friday 4th March**, or at **7.00 p.m. at St Nicolas' Church**. Ladies from all the churches represented by *Churches Together in B30* will be leading the service, plus some from West Heath and Longbridge too. If you have never come before, please try it this year.

Shriven for Lent



We don't often use the term "to shrive", yet **Shrove Tuesday** is enshrined as a day of special celebration across the United Kingdom and wherever else in the world Brits lay their heads!

Shrove Tuesday is the day before Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, a "moveable feast" as it is the start of 40 days before the Holy Week of Easter. As a time of using up forbidden Lenten foods it is celebrated with some gusto in Brazil, where the festival of *Mardi Gras* (literally Fat Tuesday, a day of gorging) with a carnival of mammoth proportions. Carnivals preceding Lent, big and small, are popular across Europe. In Venice the tradition of masked balls now occurs over a number of days, the masks being works of art in themselves. In Britain we celebrate with pancakes, hence Pancake Tuesday! (The word *carnival* is from old Italian for the

removal of meat, referring to the Lenten fasting.)

As far back as AD 1000 it was recorded that "in the week before Lent everyone shall go to his confessor and confess his deeds. The priest will then *shrive him* (that is, *absolve the penitents of their sins*) and judge what he must do by way of penance." The word *Lent* derives from *lengthen* (of the hours of the daylight). The celebration of the days before Lent with pancakes may go back to pagan practices. They were offered to the gods to help them fight against winter and bring in the spring. They would be offered up on the altars and later burned on sacrificial fires. The hot, round shape and golden colour symbolized the sun.

From as far back as the 12th century Shrove Tuesday was celebrated in towns and villages across Britain with

unruly and often downright dangerous games of *mob*, or *Shrovetide*, football. Heaving masses would struggle to drag an inflated pig's bladder towards a goal. As the games were held on the public highway they almost died out in the 19th century with the introduction of the Highways Act of 1835 when they were banned. If you fancy a game though, mob football is still played at Shrovetide in Alnwick (Northumberland), Sedgfield (Co. Durham) and nearer home, Ashbourne in Derbyshire and Atherstone in Warwickshire.

On Shrove Tuesday, traditionally a half holiday, the church bells would ring out at 11 a.m. heralding the start of pancake races across the country. Folklore has it that these races began in 1445 in Olney, Buckinghamshire when a woman was late in bringing her pancakes to the church to share. As she ran she tossed the frying pan to prevent them burning. This is part of the tradition still celebrated at Olney today on Pancake Tuesday. All competitors must wear an apron and a scarf and pancakes must be tossed at the beginning and end of the race.

Whatever its origins, the eating of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday is a tradition to treasure, not least because they couldn't be simpler to make. Fresh, hot pancakes are delicious, whether served with lemon and sugar, fresh fruit, golden syrup, a savoury filling or straight from the pan.

Then let us celebrate the start of Lent

together in church on 10th February, Ash Wednesday, imposed with ashes, repentant and shriven as we gear up for the joys of Easter!

*An (almost) infallible **Recipe for Pancakes** (from *The Dairy Book of Home Cookery*, 1968)*

Sift 100 grams flour and a large pinch of salt into a bowl. Beat to smooth creamy batter with 1 standard unbeaten egg, 125 mls milk (or half milk and water) and 1 tablespoon of melted butter. Stir in a further 125 mls of milk.

Heat frying pan over medium heat with a smear of butter. When the pan and the butter are hot, pour in a small amount of batter mixture, enough to coat the base of the pan thinly and evenly. Fry until golden brown. Turn over with fish slice or spatula or toss. Fry until golden and mottled. (Don't worry if the first one is a bit soggy. Subsequent ones will get better!) Eat immediately with the filling of your choice.

I sometimes make this variation: Fill the pancakes with stewed apple, chopped nuts and a pinch of cinnamon. Roll and line in a grease, rectangular oven dish. Pour over some melted butter and a tablespoon of orange juice and sprinkle with sugar. Bake for about 20 minutes, served with cream, custard or Greek yoghurt.

Thelma Mitchell

Hawkesley Pancakes!

That unmissable annual event, the Hawkesley Church Pancake Party, takes place this year on Shrove Tuesday (of course), 9th February 2016. The doors open at 7.00 p.m. Pancakes will start to appear around 7.30 p.m. and the evening will include a quiz. A charity collection will be taken in support of the Parish Lent Project for Malawi (see page 34).

By the time you read this, we will have paid in to the bank the money from the Advent "Change Jars" and the Giant Christmas Card at St Nicolas' Church.

The card, in particular, has changed our greeting and giving quite significantly at St Nicolas'. Once again, the 83rd Brownies came up trumps in designing a card that was large enough to enable many people to share Christmas greetings with each other and not just in English. We had Christmas greetings in Welsh, Italian, Swedish and German. Each greeting was accompanied by a tiny parcel, made from hammer beads at a Brownie meeting a couple of Thursdays before Advent Sunday.

As well as being a lovely thing in itself, it raised just under £150 for the Leprosy Mission, the price of three donkeys in their *Gifts for Life* catalogue. The change jars made up the difference, and added a whole extra donkey too!

As previously mentioned, a donkey is a



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priceless gift for someone whose mobility is limited by numb feet or disability. A donkey can become a valued family member: personal transport, load transport, the supplier of useful manure for the vegetable garden, and a cheerful companion in a world where many shun you and turn you away.

This gift, made through the simple act of not giving cards to those we would see on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (and replacing the cost of cards with a donation) has given three other individuals or families a very valuable gift indeed.

Thank you for your generosity.

A Covenant Sermon

At the start of the New Year, members of the Methodist Church make a distinctive resolution. In their annual Covenant Service, often celebrated on the first Sunday of the year, the church joyfully celebrates God's gracious offer to Israel, "I will be their God and they shall be my people." This offer is then extended beyond Israel to all women and men in Jesus Christ, who also provides the supreme example of what it is to live in such a relationship with God.

Our church at Hawkesley is a joint Anglican-Methodist partnership. At this year's Covenant Service, the Reverend Caz Hague, Hawkesley's Methodist Minister, preached this sermon.

This is our Covenant Service. What does "Covenant" mean? What is this service all about?

We often talk about renewing our Covenant with God. However, it is not really our Covenant, but God's. The Covenant between God and Israel was one that God initiated and God made. God chose the Israelites to be His people.

And then, as we heard in the reading from Jeremiah, it was God who decided to make a new Covenant with His people. We start by accepting that it is God who first made the Covenant.

So God makes a Covenant with Israel. "Why with Israel?" you might ask. "Surely God would have chosen the wealthiest, or the most powerful or



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the most civilised.” But God did none of these. Instead, He chose a group of slaves, who lived in a foreign country. An odd choice to be “His people”.

But when you look at it, isn't this how God always acts? His Son was born to a poor girl and her fiancé who could only afford to sacrifice a few pigeons for Him in the Temple, the pauper's offering. Jesus' first visitors were not the rich and famous but a few shepherds, outcasts in their day. And then, when He grew up, Jesus chose the poor, the lame, the sinners, not the rich or the powerful, not even the religious.

God comes to those without power, to those who do not merit it. But He comes to them with love, a love that is free, that does not need to be earned or deserved.

This is where we are today, not at a point where we choose God but where God has chosen us, has reached out to us, to you and to me. We are at a place where God loves each one of us sitting here.

So the Covenant is God's and is about God reaching out in love to us. It's an important image, but it highlights a danger. We tend to think about it as if it applies to us individually; but let us go back to today's reading from Jeremiah:

“The Lord says, ‘The time is coming

when I will make a new Covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.’”

God does not make His Covenant with individuals, but with the whole nation. Even more than that, He makes it with a nation that has split, Judah in the south and Israel in the North. He makes it with both parts.

And then we look at Jesus, sitting at the table with his followers. He did not make the Covenant with individuals but with the twelve disciples. The number twelve is symbolic; it is a number which symbolises the whole nation. Jesus was for all, not just the chosen few.

It is true that not everyone responds to God, but in making this Covenant God has everyone in his view. It is very easy for us to forget how wide God's Covenant really is. We can be tempted to see it as being for those of us who are sitting here, the baptised, the believers. But no! This is a Covenant for everyone. All classes, all ethnic groups, all people.

Those of us who are here are not the sum total of those whom God wants to include in his Covenant. We are the few who are ready at this moment to accept it. So, as we prepare to respond to that love, we stand not just for ourselves but for the whole of our community.

Of course, we know that unconditional love does not come freely. If we think back to the story I told at the start of this sermon about the mother who loves her son despite everything, he drove her crazy. She had to accept a lot to love him.

It is a wonderful image but as we know that things get in the way. Few of us really have such perfect relationships. There is hurt and pain, and to overcome them can be difficult; but if we want to rebuild relationships, people need to be forgiven. We know that to do it is costly.

It is the same with our relationship with God. We drive God crazy with the things we do. God does not let pride or selfishness spoil our relationship with Him. Instead, He shoulders the cost of forgiving us. God has made the Covenant possible by forgiving what we have done wrong.

When we receive God's love, it changes us. It forces us to respond. The

Covenant prayer is about our response to God. We often think about God's love as a fuzzy, comfortable feeling. This prayer reminds us that responding to God is about doing exactly what God asks of us, about doing something specific. It may be something that matches our natural inclinations, or it may be something that goes against them. I never expected to find myself preaching! But this Covenant prayer is about offering ourselves to do God's will, whatever it is, in response to His love.

And so we stand here, firstly because God came first, God loved us, God calls us. Secondly, we recognise that God's Covenant is with the world. And finally, we know that God has paid the price of forgiveness. We stand here forgiven.

How do we respond?

Revd Caz Hague

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**We believe that the church in Kings Norton exists
To be a worshipping transforming partnership in Christ
To live out God's radical hospitality for all
To be equipped for work in God's world**

St Nicolas' Parish Church

on The Green, Kings Norton, B38 8RU

Sunday	9.00 am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
	10.30 am	Holy Communion (with "Oasis" for 7's-11's)
2 nd Sunday	10.30 am	Parade Service (Morning Worship) for all ages
	4 pm	Holy Baptism (1 st and 3 rd Sundays of the month)
	6 pm	Evening Worship (see below)

Every Sunday evening we offer prayer, music and quiet for all. 1st Sunday: Taizé Prayer, 2nd Sunday: Holy Communion with Prayer for Healing, 3rd Sunday: Night Prayer (Compline) and Reflection, 4th/5th Sundays: Evening Prayer or Evensong (B.C.P.).

Mon & Weds	9 am	Morning Prayer
Thursday	11 am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

Hawkesley Church (Anglican & Methodist)

at Hawkesley Academy on the corner of Shannon Road and Old Partway, Kings Norton, B38 9TR

Sunday	10.30am	Worship and Children's Activities (5-11's)
		1 st & 3 rd Sundays Holy Communion
		2 nd & 4 th Sundays Morning Worship
Tuesday	10am	Hawkesley Coffee Morning (every two weeks)

Immanuel Church

at Saint Nicolas' Place, 81 The Green, Kings Norton, B38 8RU

Sunday	10.30am	Worship (with "Oasis" for those at Primary School)
1 st & 3 rd Sundays		Holy Communion;
2 nd Sunday		Joint service with either St Nicolas or Hawkesley
4 th Sunday		All-Age Worship

Open Church

Visit, pray, light a candle or share conversation over coffee as you wish.

We open St Nicolas' Church as much as we can so that all may share God's peace and promise in a space where they have been found and trusted for centuries. There is a place for you within its story. Please pray that more will know it as a safe place for prayer and healing, where sorrow and joy are held in God's love. We welcome volunteers to share in our offering of welcome, refreshment and care through St Nicolas,' Hawkesley and Immanuel, to steward at St Nicolas' during Open Church and to care for our churchyard, flowers and brasses. Do ask.

Wednesday	10.00 am – 1.00 pm 6.30 pm – 9.00 pm : Candlelit Church with informal learning together at 8.00 pm. Quiet spaces, candles, conversation, creativity & music. Come and go as you like.
Thursday	6.30 pm – 8.00 pm for all Marriage and Baptism enquiries
Saturday	10.00 am – 12 noon for coffee, "Knit & Natter" & prayer. With Messy Church for all ages every 2nd Saturday (Market Day).

For Young Children

Bumps & Babies: for new and expectant parents, in St Nicolas' Church every Monday from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm. **Tiny Tots:** for 0-5's and their parents or carers every Thursday in term time at 9.00 am in St Nicolas' Church

Growing in Faith

We are exploring fresh ways for all to grow in faith, those making their very first step, those who have made many and those who are rediscovering God's love after times of change. Please ask in each church or see our website for details.

Help us to keep our Parish Church open for all

It costs around £800 each week to keep St Nicolas' Church open. We welcome all financial support through donations and especially through regular Planned Giving. Do ask for details and, if a taxpayer, ask how you can Gift Aid your offering.

Baptisms and Marriages

Please visit St Nicolas on Thursdays between 6.30 pm and 8.00 pm to ask any questions and arrange bookings with our clerks. One of the clergy is also present to help if there is a question over whether your service can be held in this parish.

More details at www.kingsnorton.org.uk



KINGS NORTON GOLF CLUB

Moves Out



One of the many organisations that add lustre to the image of Kings Norton is its golf club. KNGC, as we shall call it to save space, is one of the region's most highly respected and prestigious clubs: it has played host to such greats as Lee Trevino and Sevvv Ballesteros and several national tournaments.

But, of course, it's no longer actually in Kings Norton. It moved out in 1970 to its current spectacular location in Weatheroak. This is the story of that move, which, as you might expect, was the source of a great deal of controversy.

There's nothing to see of the original course, which was created in the 1890s between Wychall Lane to the north and Rednal Road to the south. The area it occupied is now the modern housing development which includes evocative golf-related roads and streets such as The Fairway and Chip Close.

The only evidence of the original club

is the building just off Wychall Lane that is now the headquarters of Kings Norton Bowling club (pictured below). The bowlers bought the property from the golfers just before they moved to Weatheroak in 1970, along with enough space to establish new bowling greens.

The KNGC story began in November 1892, when a group of local enthusiasts founded the club. Of course, Kings Norton was still very much a rural village, and it was easy to find and rent enough land for their course. There was a ready response from local people: within a year there were 150 members, the men paying an annual fee of a guinea and the women five



shillings. Deals were struck with local farmers for grazing rights ... sheep were a good way of keeping the fairways in trim!

By the 1960s, KNGC had been a successful and respected club for many years and was, in every sense, part of the scenery in Kings Norton. But in early 1966, club captain Cyril Wharrad thought it wise to create a committee to look into, and indeed safeguard, the future of the club.

At that stage, a move away was not even contemplated, but subsequent investigations unearthed some disturbing facts. Birmingham Corporation was under pressure to find space for new housing and had powers to make compulsory purchases. At best, KNGC's security of tenure would only last another ten years!

Though many members resisted the prospect, a move had to be considered. Discussions with Birmingham Corporation established that it was willing to buy the course and allow KNGC three years to move out. The price offered was £680,000 plus various tax benefits.

The die was cast at a special members' meeting in St Nicolas Hall on 9 November 1966. It was a stormy



meeting at which many conflicting views emerged. A number of members expressed fears that the character of Kings Norton would be changed irrevocably, but in the end the vote to proceed with the sale was carried by a large majority.

Though conclusive, the decision was only the start of an extremely difficult period. In particular, local residents, who had not been consulted, showed their extreme resentment by forming an action committee, clearly stating their objective to overturn the plan. This made a public enquiry inevitable. Both the club and the local residents hired expensive QCs to present their arguments over a tortuous five day session in July 1967.

Unsurprisingly, it then took another six months for the authorities to consider the evidence, but towards the end of the year the long awaited announcement was made:

the relevant “government inspector” had recommended that the move be abandoned.

It looked as though the residents had won: the village would retain a key element of its rural charm and the club would have to struggle on with the ever-present threat of demise by compulsory purchase. But for residents there was the nastiest of stings in the tail. At the same time as that recommendation was announced, it was also revealed that the then Minister of Housing, Anthony Greenwood, had overruled it, saying that the Government Inspector involved had not taken sufficient account of Birmingham Corporation’s pressing need for building land. Highly undemocratic,



but the residents had no choice but to accept defeat.

KNGC proceeded to examine seven sites for the new course, including Druids Heath, Cofton Hackett and Beoley, but Weatheroak was always the preferred location, with its rural acres and the potential for the imposing Weatheroak Hall to become the new clubhouse (pictured above). In March 1968 the club agreed to buy a 150 year lease from the Bournville Village Trust for the Hall, along with nearly 200 acres of adjacent land. This, with various other land purchases, would help achieve the club’s innovative vision of a course comprising three ‘loops’ of nine holes each, 27 holes in all.

The last round on the old course was played on Saturday 31 October 1970: the following day, many of the same golfers played the first-ever round at Weatheroak.

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The club's vision has been fully vindicated. Now it has a substantial membership of around 1000 men and women. Weatheroak Hall, recently the subject of a major refurbishment to its meeting and dining areas, is fulfilling its potential, not only as a magnificent clubhouse but also as an increasingly popular venue for weddings, private parties and corporate events.

The club is always happy to consider applications for membership, details

about which can be found on its website., www.kingsnortongolfclub.co.uk. The website also includes extensive information on hiring the venue for private events.

Pictures are courtesy of Kings Norton Golf Club. A book on the first 100 years of KNGC, 'The Road to Weatheroak' by Peter Ricketts, is an invaluable source of information.

Michael Kennedy

DECEMBER 2015

BAPTISMS

- 6th Dec Rihanna Leigh Grace Brown
 Bella Paige Lilly Keenan
 Myah Grace Thornton
 Oliver James Bench
- 20th Dec Ivy-Mae Evelyn Anne Hughson

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Introducing Lee Norfolk

Kings Norton Team Parish has a new Mission Partner

I'm not sure what images the original name of *CMS* conjures up for you (it ceased to call itself the Church *Missionary Society* several years ago) but, as a child, I remember the speakers who came to talk to us about their work. They seemed, to a child's mind, to be from that "old school" world in which "enlightened England" sent out missionaries to convert those in "unenlightened lands afar". I have to confess that this did not do much to impress a small girl, some of whose family members lived in those distant, far lands!

The people who helped me to understand that *CMS* was not a society which thought that we in the West had all the right answers and the right to impose them on others, however culturally inappropriate, were Margaret Knill and Doug & Joyce Banbury. Margaret worked for *CMS* and was for many years this Parish's Link Missionary and the Banburys were both Junior Church Leaders and Readers here.

Margaret showed through her work what it really meant to be a Mission Partner, an enabler of projects owned



and run by local people in developing countries, tackling problems and difficulties that they themselves had highlighted. Since Margaret's retirement (she now lives in Kings Heath), we have been linked with several other partners, but their work has been in such sensitive areas of the world that we have been forbidden to publicise it, which has made it very difficult to feel a part of what they do.

However, all of that is about to change. Our new Mission Partner is a young man called Lee Norfolk, whose work we will be able to follow more openly. After his initial training at *CMS*

Headquarters in Oxford, he is going to Bolivia to support a project for street children. **Lee will be joining us at St Nicolas' on Feb 14th at the 10.30 a.m. service** before he flies out to South America.

The Anglican Diocese of Birmingham is developing a link with Bolivia, much of it through the work of CMS, so this is an additional connection for us here in Kings Norton. CMS has mission partners

working in many fields, principally health care, agriculture and education.

To find out more, visit the Society's website (www.cms-uk.org). Do please pray for Lee and come and hear him tell us more about this exciting project on 14th February.

Sylvia Fox

CMS : In Their Own Words

“In our 200+ year history, more than 10,000 people have served as CMS mission partners. Today, you'll find them working in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Europe, including in the UK.

“God is raising up gifted, passionate Christian leaders in these regions. Working alongside these men and women means we get to learn from each other, pray for each other and be part of what God is doing worldwide, which is exhilarating.

“We need mission pioneers, particularly in the UK, to reach people beyond the edges of the church. That's why CMS invests in a comprehensive pioneer mission training programme.”

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Come & Play

The Thoughts of a Children's Worker

Today we have had the first snow of the winter. It has been the lightest of coverings, not much more than a heavy frost really. But oh the excitement! To a child, snow is both magical and fun. Despite the small amount, snowmen were made, snowballs thrown, snow angels created and lots and lots of slipping and sliding accompanied by squeals and giggles. Children can play with the most basic and limited of materials, empty boxes, puddles, sticks, blankets.

Play is a basic right for a child, it is essential for healthy development and well-being. Play is not just about recreation and relaxation. Children learn through play and exploration, which can be solitary but often it also needs and benefits from interaction not just with other children but with adults. What happens, though, if the adult doesn't know (or has forgotten) how to play?

If your own experience of play was poor or you are too nervous or self-conscious to join in then it can be very challenging to play. It is

especially challenging for a lot of adults to join in with play and not to take over, to enable the child to lead.

But not every child has the full range of opportunities to play. How often is child given toys and games to play with to keep them occupied while adults do other things? There is an amazing array of toys on the market and many of even the most basic toys are expensive. We know that, in Kings Norton, poverty affects 41% of children, so very often toys become not a necessity but a luxury. I know of several local families for whom the toy shop is the one with the St Mary's Hospice shop sign above it.

So, in 2016, we in Kings Norton have a new project, the creation of the Kings Norton Toy Library. The idea is that it runs just like a normal library but instead of borrowing books, you can borrow toys. We have already had a lot of toys donated (you may see in St Nicolas'



Church something that resembles a jumble sale) and are applying for funding both to install proper storage facilities and to purchase the remaining toys. Alongside the library will run “come and play” sessions for families using toys and games from the library, showing families how to use the items available. There will also be story sessions incorporating craft activities, designed to show families how to extend play from a story book.

As ever, to make this project work we will need your help. All of the toys need to be cleaned sorted and catalogued, not just at the start of

the project but each time the library is open as returned items will need to be checked and cleaned before they can be used again. We will need people to help staff the library, to make refreshments, to help run the play and story sessions and to help with administration. Donations of good-quality toys are also welcome.

If you are interested then do please come and find me and have a chat. Don't forget, I might be in a blanket fort, building snowmen or on the floor playing.

Pauline Weaver



Harry L Marks



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Pauline Weaver Adds...

While I was writing the article on the previous two pages, I visited Bell's Farm Primary School to tell the Christmas story to Years One and Two (six and seven year olds). The *Godly Play* version that I used includes the adult Christ and refers to His death upon the Cross.

In the "wondering" that followed, I asked them what they thought the most important part of the story was. Some of them thought the most important part was Mary and Jesus, but the majority thought that the most important part of the story was that Christ died on the Cross.



The story doesn't end with the baby in the manger. The baby grows up and the crib leads us to the Cross.

Lent begins on Wednesday 10th February and this year we will be exploring the theme of the resurrection using Paula Gooder's book "*This Risen Existence*" to guide us. This is a slightly different focus, looking at the Resurrection itself rather than events that lead up to it, and what the Resurrection means to us. Do join us.

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KINGS NORTON History Society

The Society's meeting on Monday 29th February will be a talk by Betty Hagglund entitled "FAITH & ACTION: QUAKERS & THE FIRST WORLD WAR", stories of peace, war, conscience, relief and faith. The Society meets from 7.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. in the North Hall of St Nicolas' Place. There is a fee of £3 for visitors, who are always welcome at the Society's meetings.

Claire Simpson, Chairman.

AN APOLOGY FROM THE EDITOR

The Editor wishes to apologise to Claire Simpson for attributing to her an article about nail manufacturing in Birmingham in the January edition of this magazine. The article was, in fact, written by Sylvia Fox. He would also like to admit responsibility for a gender malfunction which resulted in Erica Elliot's being referred to as "Eric" in the same edition. The Christmas editing season can be quite pressurised, but that is no excuse.



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1st Dec	Reginald Dennis Ludlow	87	SN.Bu.QN
3rd Dec	Raymond Kingsley-Taylor	85	SN.Bu.CY
8th Dec	Denise Elizabeth Black	61	SN.Bu.CY
11th Dec	Maurice Patrick Brosnan	80	Bu.CY
14th Dec	Clive Cecil Jones	81	Cr.RH
15th Dec	Kathleen Lilian Dark	71	Cr.LH
17th Dec	Joan Lucy Palmer	84	SN.Bu.BE
18th Dec	Charlotte Doreen Garrad	94	Ce.LH
21st Dec	Albert William Cooper	98	In.CY
21st Dec	Joy Beverley Kitson	60	SN.Cr.RD
22nd Dec	Annie Gill	78	SN.Bu.CY
30th Dec	Kathleen Gadsden	59	SN.Cr.LH

SN : Service at St Nicolas' Church, **Cr** : Cremation, **Bu** : Burial,
In : Ashes interred, **BE** : Brandwood End, **CY** : Churchyard,
KN : Kings Norton Cemetery, **LH** : Lodge Hill, **PB** : Perry Barr, **QN** : Quinton,
RH : Robin Hood, **RD** : Redditch, **SC** : Sutton Coldfield, **WI** : Witton,
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Malawi Matters

Our Lent Project this year at St Nicolas' is to discover more about Malawi.

Many charities work in Malawi, amongst them *Tearfund* and *Christian Aid*, and our own diocese has had a link with the four dioceses of Malawi since 1966.

In celebration of this, we have produced a Lent calendar with facts, figures, prayer points, questions, and even some new language to learn, all to increase our understanding of life in the country.

We will also have copies of the diocesan DVD, *Matilda's Malawi*, for

anyone to borrow if they wish, to find out more about the projects which the diocesan link has supported over the last 50 years. Readers with an internet connection can find the video online at

www.cofebirmingham.com/malawi/

Later in the year there may be an opportunity to give financially to our diocesan link and other related charities; but for Lent, we are not asking you to give financially, as you have been so very generous in Advent, at Christmas, and throughout the year for the SWEET Project and the Foodbank.





Saint Nicolas' Place

www.saintnicolasplace.co.uk

The Tudor Merchant's House and the 17th century Old Grammar School set around the Norman foundation of St Nicolas' Church and containing the 18th century Saracen's Head constitute the finest collection of mediaeval buildings in Birmingham. They are owned and managed by Kings Norton Parish church for all to discover, enjoy and use.

Café : Monday to Saturday 9am-4pm

Gift Shop : Tuesday to Saturday 10am-3pm

Guided Tours: Friday and Saturday at 11am and 2pm.

Group tours can be booked at various times during the week.

Booking: Visit our website for details and photos of our facilities for weddings, family functions, corporate and community events and training. We offer a wide range of catering options too. You are welcome to view at a time to suit you. Call us on **0121 458 1223** to arrange a visit or email info@saintnicolasplace.co.uk.

Marriage and baptism enquiries are welcomed at St Nicolas' Church on Thursdays from 6.30pm to 8pm.

Activities

Saint Nicolas' Place is home to a wide range of activities every week including Uniformed Groups, Seniors' Club, Community Choir, Social Support Groups, Zumba, Rhythm Time, Slimming World, Dance and Fitness Groups, Kings Norton History Society, and heritage group events. We still have room for more. We are also developing rich local archive and study resources.

CONTACTS

If you cannot find what you are looking for here, you will probably find it on the parish website (www.kingsnorton.org.uk). Alternatively, please ask questions at services, during Open Church or at the Parish Office. Situated inside Saint Nicolas' Place on Kings Norton Green, it is open from Monday to Friday between 10 am and 1 pm.

81 The Green, Kings Norton, Birmingham, B38 8RU
parishoffice@kingsnorton.org.uk 0121 458 3289

THE MINISTRY TEAM

Please note that, while the parish is without a Rector, authority is in the hands of the Churchwardens, Anne and Phil, and of the Area Dean, the Revd Melusi Sibanda. Our honorary assistant clergy, working part-time, are:

Hon Assistant Priest	The Revd Jayne Crooks
Hon Assistant Priest	The Revd Jane Platt
Hon Assistant Priest	The Revd Robin Mortimore
Methodist Minister	The Revd Caz Hague
Children's Work Development Worker	Pauline Weaver
Readers:	David Ash, Mandy Butler, Fay Fearon, Ruth Howman
Pastoral Care Team Co-ordinator	Anne Hughes

THE CHURCH WARDENS

St. Nicolas' Church	Anne Hughes & Phil Burton	
Hawkesley Church	Jim Clarke	0121 550 3455 or 07 939 838 086
Immanuel Church	Clare Dean	0121 459 6185

OTHER CONTACTS

Parish Administrator & P.C.C. Secretary	Judy Ash
Finance Officer	Catherine Dehghani
Regular Giving	The Revd Jayne Crooks
Church Facilities Manager	Sylvia Fox
Churchyard Care	Anne Hughes
Flower Arranging	Alison Blumer 0121 486 2837
Oasis (Sunday School) Tiny Tots & GPS	Pauline Weaver
Oasis (Sunday School) Immanuel	Nicky Moorcroft

MUSIC

Church music, choir training and handbells are overseen by Sylvia Fox (07 778 449 170). Choir practices are held on Fridays (tuition from 4.45 - 6.30 pm, juniors from 6.30 - 7.45 pm, adults from 8 - 9 pm). Handbell practices are held on Mondays (3.00-4.30 pm) and on some evenings. Please phone first to check.

Bell Ringing Julie Winterbourne 01 244 7171 julie18881@gmail.com

Practices for bell ringers are held on Tuesdays from 7.30 to 9.15 pm in the church tower.

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Women's Fellowship

Carol Devic (Secretary)
2-3pm, 1st Thursday of the month

Guides and Brownies

Rainbows: Mondays 5.30 - 6.30 pm
Brownies (188th Birmingham): Tuesdays 6.00-7.30 pm
Brownies: Thursdays 6.30 - 8.00 pm
Guides (247th Birmingham): Mondays 7.15-9.00 pm

Guides and Brownies

at Hawkesley Church Centre

Rainbows (1st Kings Norton): Mondays 5.30 pm
Brownies (259th Birmingham): Wednesdays 6.30 pm
Guides (141st Birmingham): Thursdays 7.00 pm

Scouts and Cubs (St Nicolas, 198th Birmingham)

*Tuesdays at Oddingley Hall,
Oddingley Road, B31 3BS
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Beavers (6-8yrs): 5-6 pm Penny Hattersley 628 5694
Cubs (8-10½): 6.15-7.45pm Alan Haynes 07534 615489
Scouts (10½-15½): 8 pm

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News of The SWEET Project

The hundreds of Christmas presents donated via St Nicolas' Church to the SWEET Project in December (see page 27 of our January 2016 edition) all found their way to good and grateful homes. Jayne Cresswell, the project's Director, has been in touch to say that they have 300 families on their books, some of whom have up to eight children. Everyone in these families received gifts, including the adults, and the children all got three presents each. They are in contact with a further 200 adults, all of whom received a gift.

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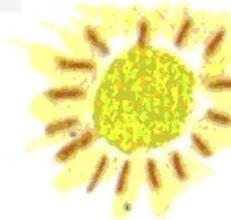

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