



**From Edward:**

I had a 'bit of a moment' on Thursday Evening: As might you if you were walking past the church between 6 and seven in the evening.

The choir have a 'plan' - I don't want to give too much away as we need to be sure we can pull it off, but if we can it'll be amazing (and I'll hopefully be able to tell you about it next week), but I can tell you the plan involves Christmas Carols.

We met on Thursday night for an extremely distanced choir practice, and it was the first time we have sung as a choir since March (acknowledging that we were slightly reduced in number, and we look forward for the time when we'll all be able to sing together) and my 'bit of a moment' really hit home as the younger choristers began the first verse of *Once In Royal*, and it was so clear that our church *was built to be filled with singing*, and to hear the choir singing in the church once again *made the church feel full again*.

Our Christmas remit is massively reduced this year and a principle reason for this is that congregational singing in the building is still restricted: What use is a carol service when we can't sing carols? But my hope is that through the Christmas programme (including the Christmas Trail which begins later this week) we are able to provide we may all be able to have a 'bit of a moment', and (at the risk of sounding like a *Call The Midwife* Christmas Special), find love, beauty and joy breaking through even in the most challenging and frightening of times.

Stay Safe!

Edward

**Sunday Services At St John's From This Week (13<sup>th</sup> December):** 8am & 10am Holy Communion

**Team Zoom Service:** 10am, Sunday, led by the Rev'd Matt Hodder. The link was sent out earlier this week. Please contact a member of the clergy if you would like it to be resent.

**Midweek Services in December: 10am Wednesdays:**

16<sup>th</sup> December: St John's.

23<sup>rd</sup> December: St Mary's.

30<sup>th</sup> December: To be Confirmed.

There will be an additional 10am Eucharist at St John's on the 29<sup>th</sup> December to keep the Patronal Festival (translated from Sunday 27<sup>th</sup>).

**Christingle:** Should you wish to make a Christingle at home, Edward has produced a video you can still view via [our website](#). Please also consider supporting the Children's Society's [Hope](#) campaign for children who are victims of and at risk from county-lines exploitation.

**Christmas Trail:** Please see the attached flyer for details of the Bexley Team Ministry Christmas Trail which replaces the Crib Services across our churches this year and will run from 18<sup>th</sup> December to 3<sup>rd</sup> January. If you'd like to assist in preparing the church grounds for the trail please email either Edward on [fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com](mailto:fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com) or the Reverend Sue Twynam on [susantwynam@btconnect.com](mailto:susantwynam@btconnect.com).

**Christmas Services:**

11.30pm, 24<sup>th</sup> December: Midnight Mass.

10am, 25<sup>th</sup> December: Christmas Day Eucharist

**The Feast of the Holy Family (27<sup>th</sup> December):** Please note that on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December there shall be no 10am service at St John's, but we are invited to join our friends at St Mary's for a joint service, also at 10am.

**Social Media:** Remember you can engage with us on Facebook (*/stjohnsbexley*), Twitter (*@stjohnsbexley*) and Instagram (*@stjohnsbexley*)

**Needing Support:** Team pastoral support is being coordinated by Assistant Curate Rev'd Matt Hodder. If you, or someone you know, is requiring assistance with accessing food, medicine, essential shopping or other need (or simply wants a chat!) please contact Matt on 07889873125 or [matthodder10@gmail.com](mailto:matthodder10@gmail.com).

**Readings:** Due to a technical hitch we have been unable to scan the Sunday Readings for December. We hope to rectify this as soon as we can. In the meantime, however, copies of the readings will be available in church and can be accessed individually online via the links in the devotional pattern. Thank you for your understanding.

**Church Security:** We have had a number of incidents in the church grounds after dark, including the lighting of fires. If you are near the church after dark and encounter any suspicious or criminal activity please do not hesitate to contact 999.

**Confirmations:** The Bishops of Rochester and Tonbridge are setting dates for Confirmations in the Sidcup Deanery next year. If you, or anyone you know is interested in Confirmation, Adult Baptism, or Formal Reception into the Church of England, then please contact Edward on [fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com](mailto:fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com).

**Public Libraries Consultation:** Public libraries provide a vital hub for resources and connection for all ages and cuts to library services can have a catastrophic impact on the whole community, not least the most vulnerable. Bexley borough has opened a consultation on the future of library services across the borough, please consider having your say [here](#). Please note that the consultation closes on 19<sup>th</sup> December.

**Christmas Hampers:** To support families in our communities who are most in need over the Christmas period, The Bexley Team are distributing food hampers to families in our local schools who receive free school meals or have specific needs. We are very grateful to all who have given donations or assistance so far. Please see the Team News for further details.

**Suspended Sermon:** Edward's sermons continue to be available [here](#) and are available from Sunday morning. This week's Sermon is entitled 'Story-Arc'.

**Lockdown Labyrinth:** Attached to this email is the pattern, along with some prayer resources for a *Lockdown Labyrinth*. Suitable for any level of crochet-ability.

**Situations Vacant:** We have a number of roles and activities which require volunteers to assist with the running and growth of our church. Please see the attached 'Situations Vacant' pack and contact Edward on [fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com](mailto:fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com) if you would like more information on any of the positions advertised.

**Church Open:** St John's is open during the day on Sundays and Wednesdays for Individual Prayer. Please collect a laminate card from the table by the door and leave it in your pew.

**Bexley Foodbank:** Our Foodbank Donation Point remains open and you can bring your donations when the Church is open on Sundays and Wednesday. You can also give financially [here](#).

**Parish Office:** Tuesday office hours have been suspended due to Covid Tier-Two restrictions. We will reinstate our usual times when we return to Tier-One, in the meantime, for Baptism and Wedding enquiries, please email Edward.

**Track & Trace:** In order to support the NHS in containing the spread of Covid-19, we are recording Track & Trace information for those who enter the building. There are three ways to give your data:

- 1: By scanning the QR code displayed in the building using the *NHS Covid-19* App.
- 2: By completing the slip provided and placing it in the Track & Trace box (please use your own pen).
- 3: By emailing Edward ([fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com](mailto:fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com)) directly with your name and the date and time of your visit. Please mark the subject header: St John's Visitor Track & Trace.

**Giving:** St John's continues to need your support financially throughout the current emergency. If you wish to give regularly please use the standing order form attached to this email or for a one off giving please use our [JustGiving Page](#). If you have a social media presence please also help us out by sharing this link.

**EasyFundraising:** If you're shopping online please remember you can give to St. John's by shopping via [our Easy Fundraising page](#). There is also a link from our website.

**Talkline:** If you're feeling lonely, isolated, stressed or anxious *Counselling Matters Bexley's* new *Talkline* offers free, non-judgemental counselling and support and can also give you information on other relevant services. Freephone: 08000472600 or email [mail@cmbtalk.org](mailto:mail@cmbtalk.org). The line is open from 5pm-9pm every week day and 9am-9pm on weekends and bank holidays.

**Memory Cafe:** For anyone in Bexley Borough living with dementia and those who care for them, to offer friendship and support, the *Christ Church Erith Memory Cafe* will take place over Zoom on Thursdays from 10.45am-11.45am. For access details please contact Christchurch Erith Project Worker Jacki Clement at [cceprojectworker@hotmail.com](mailto:cceprojectworker@hotmail.com).

**Prayers for use during the Coronavirus Outbreak:** The Church of England has produced a booklet of prayers to aid devotions at home during the current crisis. It is available [here](#), along with other prayer resources and advice (scroll down the webpage for the booklet).

**Daily Hope:** The Archbishop of Canterbury has launched a free national phonenumber with hymns, reflections and prayers to enable worship from home throughout the lockdown. Details are available [here](#) and you may wish to pass the information on to those you know who cannot access resources online.

**Domestic Abuse:** As you will have heard, the current situation has seen an unpleasant increase in incidences of Domestic Abuse. Bishop Simon has commended advice issued by the national church in response to this and details can be found [here](#).

**Bexley Team News:** The weekly newsletter connecting us with our sister churches across the Bexley Team is attached to this email.

**Toddler Church Fun!:** We are still considering how to safely hold our Toddler Church in line with social distancing and hygiene requirements. We are grateful for your patience and support during this time. Toddler Church activity packs from last term are still available on our website. If you would like us to produce further resources in a similar style then please email Edward.

**Devotional Pattern:** Readings for December with suggested prayer intentions are attached to this email.

**‘Not Another Cookbook’:** The Sidcup Ladies Luncheon Club has produced a charity cookbook (containing over 80 recipes!) with all proceeds going to *Cancer Research UK*. Copies are priced at £7.95 and can be ordered by emailing [sandra.vamplew@btinternet.com](mailto:sandra.vamplew@btinternet.com). Local delivery is free.

**Face coverings:** Please be aware that it is a requirement that face coverings must be worn in places of worship unless you have a legitimate exemption. Thank you for your cooperation.

### **This Week Please Pray For:**

...On this Gaudete Sunday, all that we have to rejoice about.

...all currently suffering with Covid-19.

...all are who continuing to shield or self-isolate.

...the sick in need of our prayers, Gill Rogers, Carol & Peter Amura, Margaret Quick, Gladys Verran, Mavis Johnson, Samantha Pout, Ray Mace, John Wright, George Berry, Marie Berry, Peggy Davy, Ann Harlow, Joyce Forrest, Dorothy Samuel, John Beddison, David Watkins, Nicola Johns and any others known to you.

...the recently departed, Tommy Wetton.

...those whose anniversaries fall at this time, Phyllis Webb, Lawrence Webb, Sheila Tapley, Dorothy Guy, Philip Langford, Haydn Smith, Valerie Upson, Ada Servant.

*Come, Lord, and visit us in peace  
That we may rejoice before you with a perfect heart. Amen*  
(Advent Antiphon)

**Our Safeguarding Statement can be read at**  
<http://www.stjohnsbexley.org/safeguardingstatement.html>

If you or someone you are concerned about is in immediate danger, please call the police on 999

<https://bexleywomensaid.org.uk/>

<https://mensadviceline.org.uk/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/promoting-safer-church/domestic-abuse-and-covid-19>