

SAINTS ALIVE

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALL SAINTS AND ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, KINGSTON UPON THAMES

Kingston Samaritans

Last Christmas, our volunteers at Kingston Samaritans were delighted to participate in the All Saints Christmas Tree Festival, to highlight how we offer emotional support 24 hours a day for anyone struggling to cope, including those who have thoughts of suicide. It was a lovely way to connect with members of your congregation and the wider Kingston community and we were so grateful for the donations of support that followed.

Without doubt, this year has been particularly challenging for many. Kingston Samaritans has continued to provide emotional support throughout the coronavirus pandemic at a time when listening to others has never been more important. Anyone can contact us on our free phone number **116 123** or by email to jo@samaritans.co.uk if they need someone to talk to.

We are very proud of our more than 140 volunteers, who work around the clock to provide a phone and email based listening service at our Kingston Branch, and like all Samaritans branches are applying strict guidelines with regard to hygiene standards and social distancing. On a weekly basis, this amounts to 290 listening hours of volunteering, with many additional volunteer hours to ensure the building and branch keep running.

Coronavirus is impacting all of our lives, with many people feeling anxious and stressed. There's no doubt that these uncertain and challenging times can affect our mental health and wellbeing. Many of our calls for help have been about coronavirus with people feeling concerned about isolation, mental health and illness, as well as family and finance.

Our research shows that the pandemic and the lockdown have particularly impacted three groups of people at an already high risk of suicide: middle aged men, young people and people with pre-existing mental health conditions, as they encounter increased loneliness, a loss of coping mechanisms, reduced access to peer, social and community support, and anxiety and uncertainty about the future.

Christmas can be a very tough time for many people, this year even more so with the prospect of social distancing. For some who may struggle to cope, we could be the only lifeline open when many other services are closed. Every call we answer could be the one that changes someone's life - the call that ends with someone finding the strength to carry on.



If you would like to support Kingston Samaritans this Christmas, please see below.

Wishing you all well this Christmas, from Mona Saha, Branch Director, Kingston Samaritans



If you would like to find out more about Kingston Samaritans, details are available on our branch website: [https:// www.samaritans.org/branches/kingstonupon-thames/](https://www.samaritans.org/branches/kingstonupon-thames/) or follow us on Twitter: @sams_kingston

To donate £10 to fund a volunteer to cover a 3-hour listening shift this festive season text **10XMAS** to **70450**, texts cost £10 plus one standard rate message, or you can donate any amount via JustGiving on <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/Donateashift>. All donations really make a difference. Thank you.

From the vicarage

All Saints

by | Revd Jonathan Wilkes



St John's

by | Revd Mark Stafford

Penetrating the beam of darkness

Wilfred Bion was a thinker and psychoanalyst of the 20th century who suggested that if we wanted truly to know or understand something then we needed, first, to be willing **not** to know it, to sit a while with its incomprehensibility no matter how uncomfortable that might make us feel. Light, he said, could only be seen among a penetrating beam of darkness. In this, he followed in the footsteps of the Romantic Poet, John Keats, who used the phrase “negative capability” to characterise the capacity of the greatest writers (particularly Shakespeare) to pursue a vision of artistic beauty even when it leads them into intellectual confusion and uncertainty. “It is,” Keats said, “that moment when someone is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.” I wonder whether Jesus is thought to have been saying something similar in Mark’s gospel, when he picks up a train of thought that the Old Testament prophets had followed before him, when explaining how parables worked: “seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.”

It’s certainly counter to our intuition and culture and yet I wonder if 2020 has taught us again to consider its wisdom. How many of us, this time last year, thought that we had a fair idea of what the coming 12 months would bring, only to be proved wrong beyond our imaginings. Of course, none of us would have claimed to “know” what was going to happen but our expectations would, quite probably, have been narrowly set, our assumptions clearly defined. And quite rightly so. Among the many things that this year has taught us is the idea that too many surprises and too much change is exhausting. We can’t start with a blank page all the time. We need enough “normal” for our optimal thriving. There are only so many new guidelines that we can bear.

Yet, perhaps, one of the things we’ve learnt this year is **not to know** too much, not to rely on so much certainty that the edge of unknowing is blunted. Knowledge is limited, Albert Einstein wrote, but imagination encircles the world, and it is imagination that faith brings to human experience generally and especially at its major festivals, like Christmas. For Christmas imagines that the forces of creation dwell in us, that love will conquer all and that deep in the heart of a penetrating darkness, the like of which we have not known for generations, lies a beam of light that will guide our feet into the way of peace if we let go enough to allow it. Perhaps we’ve learnt again this year the pitfalls of certainty and the value of imagining the future we strive for as a precursor to creating it.

With every good wish for Christmas and beyond,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan".

Do you remember a time when Zoom was the noise that a rocket made, face masks were put on to give you the complexion of an angel and 3 tiers were the preserve of skilled wedding cake makers?

WOW! – How the world has changed and continues to change. I am sure that for all of us Covid-19 has and is having a massive impact on the way we live our lives.

Many of us live fearing for our own health or the health of loved ones. For others the way we work has changed. Rather than battling for a space on the train into town, we are battling for space to balance laptops and files on the kitchen table. Instead of not being able to hear the phone over the office clamour, we are now being drowned out by the demands of three-year olds and the background hum of Bing or the Telly tubbies.

Gathering in Churches stopped for a while, the clergy, Wardens and IT savvy Lay people connected phones to microphones, brought tripods which we balanced on piles of books and a spluttering, blinking, fuzzy and often inaudible form of Church burst into life.

For some, furlough has changed to redundancy and for others a cough has turned into a long stay in hospital or worse.

Life has changed and is changing and if I am honest the rate of change can be quite exhausting, it can seem as though we are racing on a treadmill, going ever faster, to remain standing still.

During this time of change I have found deep comfort in this evening prayer.

Be present, O merciful God,
and protect us through the hours of this night,
so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life
may rest in your eternal changelessness,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

This prayer gives hope, it gives foundations and it gives a sense of perspective.

God is changeless, his mercy and love are everlasting. All things will come to pass, this virus, our philosophies, political structures and struggles and us too, but God’s love is timeless and eternal, a love that creates and restores, a love that I believe is eternally there for us all. It is this love that we can depend upon and draw upon when all our resources, answers and understanding is exhausted. A love beyond our knowing that resonates somewhere deep in the soul.

It’s comforting to know that when everything else is changing so quickly, we can rely on God. When everything else seems to be transient and fragile, God’s love is robust and eternal, and when the gap between life and death is thinnest, God’s love is at its widest.

Mark

Practising for Sky Portrait Artist of the Year

Sally Ward, a member of All Saints' congregation and part-time civil servant/artist, has been busy preparing for a number of major art competitions over the past year. You may have seen her recently painting presenter and model Melanie Sykes on TV art competition Sky Portrait Artist of the Year where – at the time of print – she has won a place in the semi-final which will be broadcast on December 9th on Sky Arts (more details below).



To help her practise and develop her portfolio, a number of the All Saints congregation (including Ann Cornick and Lulu Forster), as well as friends and family have sat for her over the past 18 months. Ian Williamson (a spare-time artist himself) also volunteered to sit. It's been an interesting experience for both of them and we wanted to find out more about one sitting which took place shortly before the lockdown.

Ian arrived at Sally's studio/dining room in summer attire, despite it being February. At the last sitting Ian wore a vibrant African shirt and Sally is keen to use this for the final painting given the interesting patterns and colours. Ian sits in his usual spot, staring at a corner of the room – which he greets like an old friend, having spent a number of hours in this position already. Around the room are dotted numerous portraits which Sally has been working on recently to develop her practice – including one (a self-portrait) which was exhibited at the Mall Galleries as

part of the prestigious Royal Society of Portrait Painters' Annual Exhibition last year.

The conversation has flowed since the sittings began. A pleasant initial discovery was that they were both at the same college – though many years apart and in different disciplines – Music for Sally and Science for Ian. The talk turns to art and Ian is interested to know what Sally's inspirations are. She says she has recently been returning regularly to the National Portrait Gallery to study some favourite early 20th century works – artists such as Henry Lamb, Graham Sutherland, and of course Lucien Freud. Sally loves the romanticism of these works, their often-muted palette and their emotional punch. Ian says he hopes he doesn't have the same reaction to his portrait as did the Churchills when Sutherland's famous painting of Winston was unveiled (Lady Clementine burned it!).

Sally says 'I have learned a lot from these sittings. I began with some charcoal sketches and then moved onto oils.' She had to discard one painting, and then worked from the sketches, photos and memory for the final work. For her, 'finding a likeness is always a difficult yet fulfilling journey for a portrait artist – part of it is understanding the sitter better. Finding the right expression is key so that it captures the essence of the person in front of you, and not just the physical features.'

In turn, Ian says the level of scrutiny has been challenging and thought-provoking. 'While sitting, I found myself wondering: Who is this person being painted? What really are his qualities and what does the artist see?' Sally recommends him to read Martin Gayford's *The Man with the Blue Scarf* which charts the author's own lengthy sittings with Freud, causing him similar introspection and quite a bit of anxiety!



[Continued on page 4 ...]

Practising for Sky Portrait Artist of the Year [Continued from page 3 ...]

Earlier this year Sally again won a place to exhibit with the Royal Society of Portrait Painters – a portrait of her mother was one of only around a 100 paintings chosen out of 2500 entries to stand alongside the works of some of the most renowned contemporary portrait painters in the UK and beyond. The exhibition took place in September and is now online to view.

The excitement has continued to build with her current appearance on Sky Portrait Artist of the Year this Autumn. Selected from over 1200 applicants, Sally joined 71 artists to compete in the televised heats earlier this year. She was required to paint a celebrity sitter in just four hours and to her delight she won her heat, and the judges put her through to the semi-final. The semi-final, in which the final 8 artists will again paint a four-hour portrait of a well-known figure, will be aired on Wednesday 9th December on Sky Arts (which is now free to view on Free view, channel 11). We hope you can tune in and we all wish Sally the best of luck.

Sally Ward paints portraits on commission and is a member of Kingston Open Artists' Studios. Visit kingstonartistsopenstudios.co.uk for more information. You can see more of Sally's work on her website www.sallyward-art.com or follow her work on Instagram @sallywardart. Sally will be appearing again in the current series of Sky Portrait Artist of the Year, on December the 9th on Sky Arts.

Ian Williamson is a member of the Artful Dodgers, an informal painting group based in New Malden and Kingston which usually meets somewhere different every Saturday morning to paint en plein air. They have held exhibitions in All Saints. For more details visit their website at artfuldodgers.wix.com/artful or the ArtfulDodgersArt Facebook page.

Doing what we can

There's a little phrase about prayer that goes "pray as you can, not as you can't". It's useful for reminding us that we're not asked to be giants, just ourselves, and it adapts well to other circumstances. Give as you can, not as you can't is a good one, too, reminding us that our generosity needs to be thought through as well as enthusiastic. And in the last months we've had to apply the "as you can, not as you can't" to our lives more widely, drifting in and out of lock down as they have been. By no means has it been possible to be back to normal, but we've made as much normality as we sensibly can. At St John's our Sunday service returned to the building with First Monday Club meeting there, too – well distanced. The skills we learnt about

online services stretched to weekday prayers and Diddy disciples for children. At All Saints we pressed on with three services on Sundays and one in the week, the café re-opened, Christmas Cards were sold, the Listening service (pictured here) resumed, with Knitting, Book and English Conversation groups pressing on regardless. We're doing what we can – we're doing **as much as we can** – in order to get the most out of life as it currently is because, though things are constrained, we won't get these days back. What days we get in the months ahead remain to be seen. Christmas will be different. But we'll do with it what we have to do with the frailties of our human nature – make the most of it.



Seven Saxon Kings at All Saints Church

by | Pippa Joiner , Learning and Engagement Officer

Kingston upon Thames occupies a unique place in English history. The town is traditionally identified as the coronation site of seven Saxon Kings, including the first 'Kings of England'. We, at All Saints Church, believe this important Saxon heritage should be memorialised for future generations.

For hundreds of years the skilled work of craftsmen and women, in stained glass, sculptured stone, carved wood, and embroidered textiles, has captured important historical and religious events for display in ancient cathedrals and churches. The All Saints Kingston community is proud to be continuing this tradition in 2020 by commissioning a depiction of the story of the seven Kings (who, tradition tells us, were crowned here in Cyniges-tun, a notable West Saxon estate), to be displayed in the church.

The seven empty niche-style panels at the east end of the church immediately suggested themselves as the perfect place to frame these seven Kings and the idea for this important cultural and historic chronicle was born.

An open competition was held for this exciting textile project and professional designers and University Departments of Art and Design submitted work. The panel of judges, including architects Ptolemy Dean, unanimously selected the designs proposed by art student Sophia Pearson. She chose to feature the dramatic figure of each of the seven kings encompassing the rich imagery of major events from his reign.

These striking designs were then developed into needlework compositions by award winning contemporary embroidery artist and designer, Jacky Puzey. She brought her expert knowledge of 21st century textile techniques to the project, to combine traditional embroidery expertise with modern digital technology. The thread to stitch these beautiful bespoke artworks has been specially selected for its durability and the permanence of its colours, ensuring they will last for decades, and possibly centuries to come. The final embellishments of hand embroidery stitches and beadwork are by Beatrice Mayfield, a visiting lecturer at the Royal School of Needlework.

It is fitting that the first panel, which is now in place for you to admire and enjoy, should be that of King Athelstan, the first ruler who could be considered to be King of England.

We gratefully acknowledge the work of the people of All Saints who instigated this project and drive it forward.

We give thanks for the trio of talented women giving life to this initiative.

We are also indebted to the dedicated supporters whose contributions enabled us to commission the first of these panels.

To ensure the completion of this important historical and cultural project, to create seven beautiful works of art, as a visual record of Kingston's Saxon Heritage, to inspire and enlighten our community and visitors from all over the world, now and in the future, we are inviting donations, large or small, from individuals, community groups and businesses, all of whom will be recognised for their contribution to this iconic project in the



Visualisation of the seven embroideries by Jacky Puzey

heart of Kingston Upon Thames. To find out more about how you can support the project by making a donation please visit the heritage section of the All Saints Church website.

You can also learn more about the project and kings through our social media channels. Every week in November and into December we will look at the seven kings in turn, sharing the panel designs and the inspiration behind them. Please visit Facebook and Instagram @allsaintschurchkingston to find out more.



Athelstan embroidery panel by Jacky Puzey. Photograph by Taz Kyprianou

Learn it tuition

There are a variety of reasons why children come to us for tuition. Whether to prepare for SATs, GCSEs or 11+, or simply because the child is struggling at school and could do with some extra help. We've even had those who don't 'need' tuition, as they are already well ahead of their peers, but they are not getting sufficiently challenged at school.

We have been tutoring at our centre, in Surbiton, since 2004. Prior to that we each taught in schools for many years, both primary and secondary. In our last posts we were both assistant head teachers in large London secondary schools.

At our tuition centre (diagonally opposite to Waitrose in Surbiton) we take children from ages 6 to 16 for tuition in Maths and English. In our sessions there are up to five children in each group, though they are not taught as a whole class. Each child has their own individual programme, which is structured around the findings of their initial (and ongoing regular) assessments. So not only are they getting the targeted and focused help that they need, but the children also do enjoy coming for tuition with other children.

In a typical session our Learners will do four or five activities, some on the computer and some using our exclusive written resources. Unlike other tuition centres, that are often not staffed by fully qualified teachers, we do not simply use a computer program to progress the child. We use the computer as a tool, akin to an on screen text-book, and draw upon our teaching and tutoring experience to select the computer-based activities that they do.

Over the years we have tutored so many local children at our centre (in a number of cases whole families of siblings) that there is a good chance, if you ask around, you will know someone who knows someone who has used us. Every now and then we hear from former parents of the positive impact that we have had on their children's lives, with some even studying the subject for which they initially came to us for help at 'A' and degree level.

We are proud of the fact that the hard work we put in to helping children achieve their potential is reflected on Google and our Facebook page via genuine reviews from local parents. Here are excerpts from some of those reviews...

... flexible, understanding and truly professional.

I couldn't recommend Learn It Tuition enough to any parent wanting their kids to reach their potential ... and more.

Grace and Chris were absolutely amazing. Very friendly and patient and also very professional.

I have no hesitation in recommending Learn It as It has helped grow in confidence and secure really great GCSE results. Thanks Guys, they couldn't have done it without you!

Learn It TUITION

Maths & English
tuition for
ages 6 - 16

by **FULLY QUALIFIED** teachers

Our centre is conveniently located in Surbiton (KT6 4FE) and consistently rated 5* by our parents on Google

Please visit our website to see the Covid safety measures we are taking during the ongoing pandemic

Call Grace & Chris on **0203 004 9444** to book a **FREE** taster lesson with assessment

learnittuition.com

It is obvious they love their job! Great impact on kids and quick progress!

Grace & Chris are amazing teachers, would highly recommend 'Learn It Tuition' if you are thinking of extra tuition for your child. In fact don't go anywhere else!

So if we sound like the tuition solution you are looking for then please get in touch with us. We will be more than happy to chat with you about your concerns and arrange a free taster lesson with assessment.

St John's Nativity Trail

Sunday 20th December 4pm-7pm

Trail begins and ends at St Johns Church

£1 Per Trail Map

Dress up as your favourite Nativity Character

Mulled Wine, Festive Treats and Hot Chocolate

BOOK AT:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/st-johns-nativity-trail-tickets-130190217445>

 **St John's Church**
St John the Evangelist & Hall

All Proceeds to our Chosen Christmas Charity 

Virtual concert marked All Saints concert date

On Saturday 13th June, Thames Philharmonic Choir expected to be performing in All Saints Kingston. Instead, the choir concluded a virtual concert with a virtual choir recording of Spanish renaissance composer Victoria's motet *O Quam Gloriosum*.

The recording was masterminded by Music Director Harry Bradford, with input from Accompanist James Orford and a number of soloists willing to work together remotely. Together they created individual part tracks plus a full SATB track, with accompaniment, which we could use to practise alone as well as for our weekly online rehearsals. But then we were on our own:



Music Director Harry Bradford

using one of the rehearsal tracks played through headphones while we recorded ourselves singing, using a phone or pad. For some of us it was a chastening experience, being used to listening to our neighbours, rather than effectively singing solo! "What you miss is being in a room with lots of other people, making a big sound; having a big body of others around you, and learning from one another," says Alto Annie Dobell."

This was the result:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=24&v=X7l3Pt9AKxA&feature=emb_logo

For the concert itself, we dressed up in our DJs and smart concert wear, had our music in our folders, and gave it our best, even though we couldn't hear one another. The programme was one of celebratory music, including Handel's *The King Shall Rejoice* and *Zadok the Priest*, Parry's *I was glad*, and Howells' *Collegium Regale Te Deum*.

Altogether a very different experience from singing, in front of an audience, in All Saints Kingston. As Soprano Liz Potter put it: "What a tremendous occasion the virtual concert turned out to be. A huge thank you to Harry and James for all their hard work in enabling it to happen. Harry's inventiveness in supporting our Tuesday practice sessions has been awesome."



Accompanist James Orford

In October Jackie was able to report that "the Choir is back to live rehearsals – in the Covid-secure environment of St Margaret's Putney. The Choir has to split into two, each half rehearsing for an hour, with a break in between to ventilate the church, and a break in the middle of each individual hour for the same reason. So quite complicated, but everyone is happy to be back to real singing."

Read more about the Choir's experience of Singing alone all together in our blog:

<https://www.thamesphilchoir.org.uk/post/singing-alone-all-together>

For more information, contact: Jackie.morgan5@btinternet.com

Booking All Saints Church

The church is open for all bookings that the current restrictions allow. Contact the Vestry Office on info@allsaintskingston.co.uk or call **020 8546 5964**.

St John's

Christmas Services

20th December Nativity trail 4pm-6pm
(pre booked for social distancing)

Midnight Communion: Christmas Eve at 11.30pm

Christmas Day: 10am Christmas Communion

Sunday Services

1st Sunday of the month: 10am All Age Communion

11am – 1pm Private prayer

7pm – Evening worship on Facebook

2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays of the month: 10am – Holy Communion with Diddy Disciples via Zoom

11am – 1pm Private prayer

7pm – Evening worship on Facebook

3rd Sunday of the month:

9am – Holy Communion

10am – Sacred Space with Diddy Disciples via Zoom

11am – 1pm Private prayer

7pm – Evening worship on Facebook

Weekdays

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday 9am said Morning Prayer

Wednesday 1pm Holy Communion

All Saints

Christmas Services

Carol Service: Sunday 20th December at 4.30pm

Children's Services: Christmas Eve at 4pm and 5.30pm

Midnight Mass: Christmas Eve – 9pm and 11pm

Christmas Day: 9.30am – one service as usual. (No 8am service.)

Epiphany Carol Service: 10th January at 6pm

Sunday Services

8am Holy Communion

9.30 Sung Eucharist (with Children's Church).

6pm Sung Evensong

Weekdays

Weekday Communion Services (*during Coronavirus restrictions see website for further details*)

Tuesday and Wednesday 12 noon Common Worship;

Wednesday 5.30pm Choral Evensong

Thursday 10.30am Book of Common Prayer;

Friday 11.30am Praytime – brief songs and prayers for Toddlers and Carers; 12 noon Silent Prayer



All Saints

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Organist and Director of Music: David Condry - contact via PA to the Rector

PARISH PEOPLE



St John's

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All Saints & St John's are part of an Anglican Team with St John's Kingston Vale

Saints Alive has a circulation of 3000 and is delivered to homes, businesses and St John's School in central Kingston. Thanks to all involved in its production, especially production facilitator PDC Design & Print (Kingston). If you'd like to get in touch, please contact the editor, Isabel Isaacson, on 020 8974 8275 or isabel_isaacson@yahoo.co.uk or Revd Jonathan Wilkes on 020 3132 8717 or jonathan@allsaintskingston.co.uk

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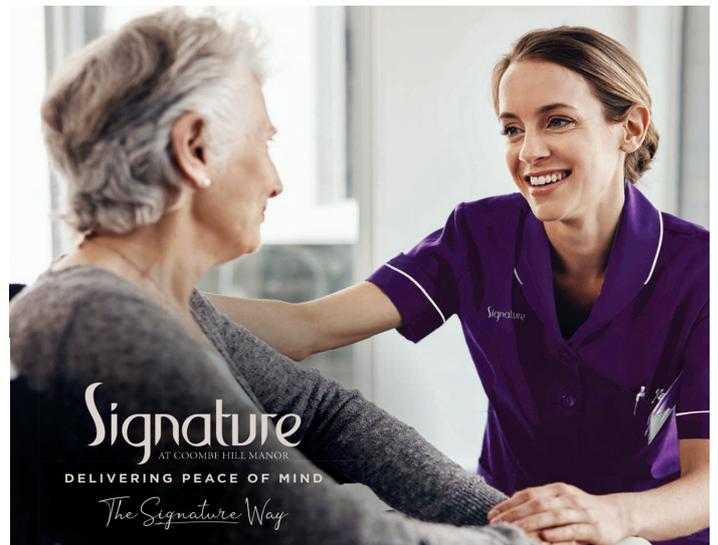


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When is the right time to consider care options for you or your loved ones?

With winter upon us and increasing uncertainty around public health, now might be the time to consider Signature at Coombe Hill Manor. If you are considering care for you or a loved one contact us today – we are actively welcoming new residents.

In our luxury homes across London and the home counties we offer assisted living, nursing and dementia care in apartment style accommodation with expansive communal areas that allow for social distancing.

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To find out more about how Signature at Coombe Hill Manor can provide total peace of mind for you and your loved ones, please contact Jane or Mark today.

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