

ST JAMES GARLICKHYTHE NEWSLETTER

December 2020

Message from Father Tim

Dear Friends,

Just when you think there's a light at the end of the tunnel, you realise that the tunnel was longer than you thought.

That's how the last few months have felt at St James.

Just as we left one lockdown behind, another one was thrust upon us and now London has been moved into Tier 3 with further restrictions.

It would be easy to feel despondent about it all, and certainly St James has felt the impact of the pandemic in similar ways to so many other churches.

But I like to be a 'glass half full' sort of parish priest.

We have invested in a lot of hi-tech, and despite the teething issues, this has allowed us to broadcast services to many, many more people than would usually be either at our Sunday Eucharist or at livery services.

Which means that despite a pandemic, we are actually reaching more people than ever before. One Sunday Eucharist was watched by around 180 people and one recent livery service attracted over 200 online viewers.

This is something to celebrate.

For many people, travelling into The City is not an option at the moment, and livestreaming our services enables people to still feel part of the St James family from the comfort of their own homes, feet up with a glass of mulled wine in hand!

Of course, it's not a substitute for being together. The church is about physical proximity and love lived out in the flesh: that's the point of the Incarnation.

But we are where we are, and we are truly grateful for the kindness and generosity that have enabled us to keep going over the last few months.

Until we meet again.

Father Tim

Welcome to our December edition of the St James Newsletter. Featured are some diverse articles – including a beautiful piece by Father Daniel describing his journey to the priesthood. We also discover that we have a poet amongst us – Liz Wright has composed a fabulous poem.....about Harry the pigeon! I can hear Father Tim sighing already!

There's an update on work on the church – which is a little like painting the Forth Bridge – as fast as we finish one bit there's more waiting to be done. However, I'm pleased to say that work on the south side of the church – both eaves and windows – has been completed and that scaffolding is coming down this week.

It will soon be Christmas and it's likely to be a strange one this year.....but the New Year brings hope in its wake - and inoculations and freedom for many.

In the meantime, if there's anything you wish to share with our other parishioners please do let me know.

Have a very Happy and peaceful Christmas,
Johanne

My Journey to Faith, by Father Daniel White

Responses to being ordained I have learnt fall into 2 camps: A sense of great joy or one of fearful awe. For both my deaconing and my priesting last October, I was distinctly amongst the awe struck. The contrast between the 2 ordinations was stark: The grandeur, crowds and broiling heat of a summer's day at St Paul's, followed 2 years later by a socially distanced, mask-wearing ceremony on a cool autumn evening. Yet what united both was the beauty, the real sense of God's presence and again that sense of awe.

How then did I come to be ordained? God calls each and every baptised Christian to Himself, a calling which we reaffirm at confirmation. You cannot make yourself a disciple. As the gospel of Mark puts it Jesus "called to Himself those whom he wanted". Mark 3.13. We so often fall into the trap of believing that we are doing all the searching. I think maybe it makes us feel in control. But no, God searches us out, calls us to follow him. You really cannot make yourself a disciple. We are all called. Each and every one of us. The first time I felt that call was certainly memorable. I was 13 in my room in the outskirts of Paris. I picked up a small Christian evangelical tract called "2 ways to Live", which had a huge impact for a number of decades and that day certainly did on me. There are lots of words and phrases which are used for these moments: a "numinous event", "touched by grace", "an encounter with the Holy Spirit". However you describe it, I was thrillingly and joyously convinced that it was True. That it was all True. Christ really was God incarnate and really did rise from the dead. A feeling of light, of cleansing and incredible excitement filled me.

But then confusion. How does one fit in something so mind-blowing - the God who created everything that exists coming to live amongst us, dying and rising from the dead - into the ordinary life of teenager? This all happened so long ago, that only the trace of a memory remains. But it did change my life. As I grew up, went to University, started work, got married and had children, one of whom is now married in his turn, my Christian pilgrimage has been a meandering one, distracted by the pit-falls and temptations which afflict us all. In my case, a particularly urgent, driven nature pushing me on to make a great self-centred success of my career collided with those insistent questions which had been with me ever since that "numinous event" in my early teens. How can you make sense of the most stunning news ever told, this cosmos-shaking event buried in our human past - the incarnation, death and resurrection of God - with the often mundane life of commuting (well maybe not in lock-down 2020!), Tesco shopping and endless business meetings? In my mid-30s ruminating on this got me into a hole deep enough for it to be characterised as a "Crisis of Faith". I questioned everything I ever believed and, in the process, discovered that the "dark night of the soul" is dark indeed. But one thing I could never let go of, and never have: That Christ is God incarnate and that he is risen from the dead. Not as a metaphor. Not as a post-modern "truth" which "might be true for you, but not for me". Not as a comforting myth. But as the civilization-splintering depth-charge it was, is and always will be, rippling out from Palestine 2000 years ago and continuing to spread out into our future.

Jesus's death and resurrection is the axis around which the whole of the cosmos spins. He is the centre from which all of Life radiates. And when we are confronted with that question which he asked his disciples "Who do you say that I am?" He was asking the most vital and important question which we will ever have to answer. As I preached in my recent sermon for the 3rd Sunday of Advent, it is often true that we encounter God in the barren patches of our lives. It has certainly been true for me. Out of that crisis of Faith now over 15 years ago

came a growing conviction that God was calling me to the priesthood. After many years of discernment, theological study I am now a priest. It is certainly a surprise to me. My dearest wish is that I will be able to serve God and the congregation I serve with the gifts and all the help which God will provide me.

All I ask is for your prayers and your patient forbearance over the months ahead as I grow in experience and competence in my ministry.



Fr Daniel at St James after celebrating his first Eucharist

The St James Clock

Anyone who has visited St James lately can't fail to notice the scaffolding around the tower and the clock. Unfortunately, since the workmen carried out a closer inspection we've realized there's more work than we'd anticipated and the figure of St James needs significant repairs to large cracks.

The clock has been a prominent feature of St James and the neighbourhood ever since its installation in 1682 – and in those days would likely have been the only clock in the area, with local residents' dependent on its chimes to know the time.

The clock movement is located in the tower. There is debate about whether it was made by the clockmaker Thomas Tompion (1639-1713) or by his contemporaries and rivals the Wise family; but there is a reference to a Mr Wise in the vestry minutes from the 1680s. The Wise family were steeped in the tradition of clockmaking. John Wise was born in Banbury in 1624 part of an extended family of clockmakers. He was apprenticed in 1638 through the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers, eventually becoming the apprentice of Peter Closon (a renowned lantern clockmaker). At the end of his apprenticeship in 1646, he too became a member of the Clockmakers, before in 1653 moving to Warwick where he worked on several church clocks – unfortunately none of which are known to survive. By 1668, probably due to the better prospects, and with ongoing London connections, the Wise family were back in London, and between the years of 1670 and 1685, John Wise took his six sons on as apprentices – they all, bar the youngest, seem to have continued in the trade.

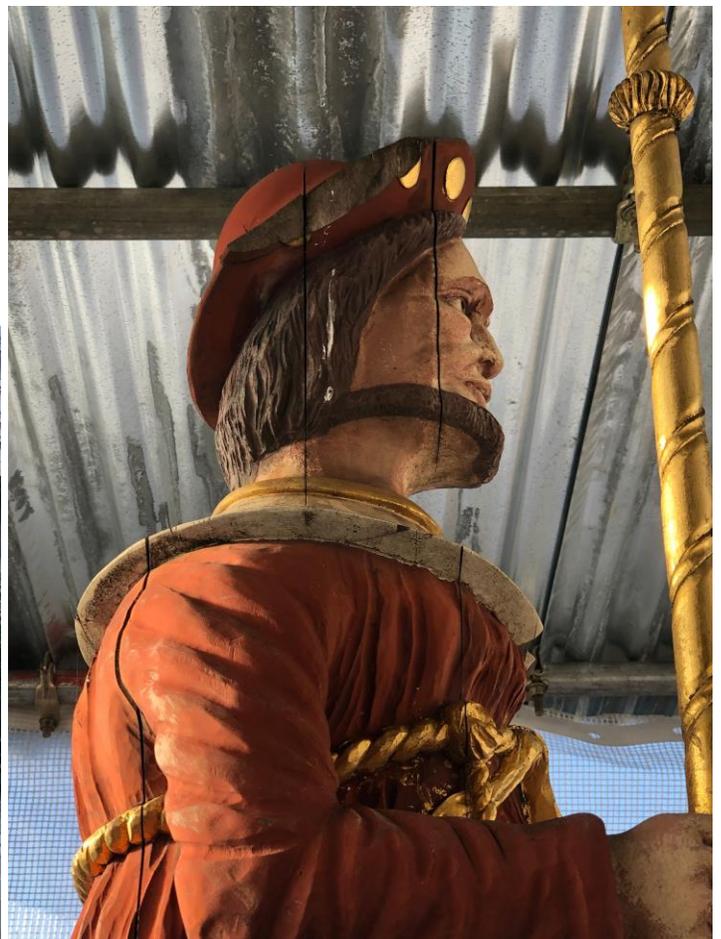
Over the subsequent years the clock movement has undergone substantial alterations, particularly in 1762 and 1856, but it has had a much less chequered history than the exposed and vulnerable clock case.

On 15th May 1815, it was noted in the Vestry records 'that a new carved figure of St James be put up above the clock'. It is believed that this replaced the previous figure which had decayed. Then on 1st May 1897 there was a serious fire on Garlick Hill. This moved down the narrow street, destroying dwelling houses before spreading to the tower of St James – where is burnt the clock case. This was subsequently restored due to public subscription. In WW2 the surrounding area was devastated during the Blitz - but the church survived with incendiary bombs extinguished through the heroic efforts of the local fire watchers and a bomb that landed in the church failing to detonate. However, unsurprisingly the exterior was battered, the windows smashed, and in 1941 the protruding oak clock case 'was burned and hurled to the ground' For unknown reasons a claim was not made to the War Damage Office until much later in 1968, but by this time it was too late, the claim wasn't paid and so the church remained without a clock and unable to raise sufficient funds to replace it.

Then in early 1987, there was a meeting between the Upper Warden of the Vintner's Company, Michael Fairbank, and churchwarden of St James, Michael Giles to discuss the possibility of restoring the clock. By January 1988 the project was in full swing. This was a major and costly undertaking – costs were estimated at £62,323.05 – but with the support of our generous benefactors and the input of a talented and dedicated team the St James clock was successfully fully restored.



Current Clock Scaffolding



Close up of the statue of St James in Dec 2020

Roy Peppiatt is a member of the Worshipful Company of Joiners & Ceilers, and was their Master in 1989-1990

He vividly remembers the St James Garlickhythe turret clock project as the contract to recreate the new case was awarded to his joinery company – although it quickly turned into a labour of love rather than profit! He worked closely with Michael Giles, churchwarden of St James. Due to the destruction of WW2, they had to work from old photographs taken in the 1890s, to recreate the same scale and proportions. Michael did the design drawings, which Roy used to create the beautiful clock we see today. The whole structure is supported by a main beam, that's visible from inside the bell ringing chamber. A steel was attached to bear the weight with careful stress calculations. One of the challenges at the time was finding a carver to carve the figure of St James. By the 80's Roy said the craft of carving was considered a dying trade – quite different from today – and there were only a few craftsmen still working. They gave the commission to an East Ender, Charlie Griffin. He was apparently incensed when a hole was bored through the length of his creation to hold a lightning conductor!

The whole project generated a lot of interest in its day with the BBC Blue Peter team filming progress. At one time, we at St James had our very own Blue Peter badge – but that seems to have since disappeared – although maybe it will turn up one day lurking in a dusty corner!

Reverend Dr Alan Griffin

We were all deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Revd Dr Alan Griffin, our former Rector.

I'm sure you'll enjoy and appreciate this excerpt of an article he wrote for the Prayer Book Society.

"It's as well to tell ordinands that parish life is not all cucumber sandwiches with their crusts cut off. As I walk about my parishes an occasional young man (it's always a man) grins at me and says 'More tea, vicar?' I'll always respond: 'I never touch the stuff myself'.

Parish life can also be mucky and painful. Thank God it isn't always so. But as in the Gospels Christ attracted an entourage of odds and sods (whom the religious establishment of his day disliked), so now the Church also attracts odds and sods (and, of course, I'm thinking only of the clergy!).

Christianity can be a messy and sometimes bloody business: inevitably so when egos and sin and pride are involved. Whenever I need encouragement (and I often do) I turn to the Prayer Book Ordinal and read the formula used at my ordination to the priesthood..."

Revd Dr Alan Griffin

The White Ship – by Lester Hillman

Wednesday 25th November was the Feast of St Catharine of Alexandria, and also the 900-year anniversary of the White Ship Disaster which sank in 1120; a 'Twelfth Century Titanic' that caused ructions throughout the century and has been linked to the assassination of saintly neighbour Thomas Becket. He was born just up the road off Cheapside, around the time that the news of the White Ship sinking reached London and the implications were being taken in. He was murdered on the 29th December - with this year being the 850th anniversary of that event.

Two hundred souls went down with the ship, including William Adelin, the only legitimate son and heir of King Henry I of England, his half-sister Matilda, and his half-brother Richard. Some ascribe the foundation of St Bartholomew's Smithfield (by Rahere) to a wake-up call following the White Ship Disaster. Smithfield and the meat market may have a link too. Berold, a high-end meat purveyor was the only survivor of the disaster. He was the son of a butcher and might qualify as the First Royal 'Warrant Holder'.

A Church like St James so close to the Thames, Queenhithe and seaborne trade might well have been mindful of the White Ship and the accusations that a St Catharine Day blessing may not have been factored in at the sailing on St Catharine's Day. (The crew were very drunk and when priests arrived to bless the vessel with holy water before her departure, they were waved away with jeers and spirited laughter) I wonder if the St Catharine Light House, Isle of Wight 65 miles due north of the shipwreck off Barfleur might take its name from this event. The vessel was bound for Southampton.

Lester Hillman, is a historian specialising in London. He regularly runs events and talks, bookable via Eventbrite.

'What's on' in 2020 / 2021

Although it's unfortunately rather difficult to predict where one lockdown starts and another stops, there are some certainties.

So here are some dates to put in your diary: All services will be available via live streaming too of course.

Christmas Eve	Thursday, 24 th December @ 5 pm, Vigil Mass
Christmas Day	Friday, 25 th December @ 10.30 am Eucharist, Andrew Baars and Caroline Lenton-Ward will be performing.
Ash Wednesday	Wednesday, 17 th February @ 10.30 am
Mothering Sunday	Sunday, 14 th March @ 10.30 am
Palm Sunday	Sunday, 28 th March @ 10.30 am
Maundy Thursday	Thursday, 1 st April @ 7 pm
Good Friday	Friday, 2 nd April @ 3 pm
Easter Sunday	Sunday, 4 th April @ 10.30 am
Patronal Festival	Sunday, 25 th July @ 10.30 am

St James has created a Chantry list where the names of the departed are remembered on the day they fell asleep and on All Souls Day. If you would like a loved one to be included, please send their full name and date of passing to: sjgchantrylist@gmail.com

The Life and adventures of Harry Pigeon

I must admit I'd never taken a huge amount of notice of pigeons – they were just part of the street furniture of our towns and cities. Doing their own thing, going about their business, not bothering me and me not bothering them. All that changed early one morning outside my gym in Lewisham. On the pavement, sad and huddled, was a pile of fluff. As I'm the type of person who feels obliged to transport bees and insects away from the imminent danger of pounding feet – walking on by was never going to be an option. On closer inspection I realised there were some distant signs of life...but clearly something needed to be done. A busy pavement in Lewisham was no place for such a small chick...so I picked him up and carried him home. Once home I went straight onto Google (how did we manage before?) to see what I should do. Initially I wasn't sure which sort of bird he was – but I worked it out by comparing his beak and online photos that he was a pigeon – of maybe 12 days old. Luckily, the internet is a mine of information on how to do things – including raising baby birds – and once you get used to handling them it's not so difficult. Although patience and perseverance are a necessity! Kaytee baby bird formula is also a must.

Harry is all grown up now, has learnt to peck up food (a lot of tapping encourages that behaviour) can fly, and coos aggressively when he thinks his personal space is being invaded (how ungrateful). He does go outside, but doesn't like being left alone and isn't at all streetwise – so a future release isn't on the cards just yet. However, in captivity pigeons can live 20 years so I do need to come up with a plan! In the meantime, I've made friends with other pigeon carers and now have to go everywhere with a Tupperware box of pigeon food – well lockdown has been tough for our City pigeons too!



Ode to Harry - by Liz Wright

Splat hits the inhospitable paving slab
Pile of ragged feathers with pulse
Too weak to live

Good Samaritan hovers up
Blue light emergency run to cat box
Cunningly nested with leaves and twigs
Beak placed in fledgling food
Carefully warmed, deliciously drowsy
Fat soft crop
Pigeon heaven

I am brought up very nicely
I go to church every Sunday morning
I ride on trains and buses
I hop around the sitting room
I flutter around the garden
My behaviour is unparalleled and
I have manners to die for

But! Woe! I have caught an infection
Emergency rush number two
To vet for antibiotic
Not once, but twice if you please
Such dedicated loving care
Brings me back to health
Superb and robust

But I have to tell you Harry dear, that
I do not like you
I really, really don't
And I suggest you take the air
With my full permission
To go and
Re-populate
Trafalgar Square

And Joanna Warrand suggested the following ditty as being the most appropriate!

Little birdy flying high
Dropped a message in my eye
Thank the Lord that cows don't fly!

Mailing List

If you would like to join our mailing list and receive a daily prayer message please contact adminSJG@london.anglican.org

Alternatively, you can sign up to our quarterly mailing list

To join a service at St James virtually go to:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2R7WbUSIa_VxVjoveNF1tw/featured

To donate to St James or to support the collection if you are joining a service, please use the attached Virgin Giving link:

https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/donation-web/charity?charityId=1016718&stop_mobi=yes

As it's Christmas, I thought it would be nice to have a cake recipe.

This one is terribly easy to make – just mix it up in a bowl – and cook it until the knife comes out clean.

The ingredients are in old money – so they're very straightforward too – I measure an oz as a heaped(ish) tablespoon. You don't have to be too precise.

Sticky Ginger Cake

Ingredients;

4oz butter, 3oz soft brown sugar, 4oz golden syrup, 4oz black treacle, 1tbsp marmalade or chopped stem ginger (or a bit of both)

2 eggs, 8 tbsps of milk

4oz SR flour, 4oz wholemeal flour, 1tspn ground ginger, 1tspn mixed spice, ½ tspn bicarb

- Mix the butter, sugar, syrup, treacle & marmalade together in a saucepan on a gentle heat and leave to cool.
- Sieve the flour, spices and bicarb together
- Beat the eggs and milk together and add to the cooling treacle mix.
- Pour all the wet ingredients into the flour etc, and mix up making sure there are no lumps.
- Pour mix into a greased and lined tin and bake @165 degrees C. Takes 55mins to 1hr plus depending on your oven type.

Leave to mature in an airtight tin for as long as you can bear – 3-4 days is good! Decorate and eat.

Salvation Army

If to wish to donate to the Salvation Army Christmas gift appeal it's not too late. Major Sally will be in St James on Sunday to collect the gifts gathered under the tree, but if visiting us is not a possibility for you, this year you can donate using these details:

Hoxton Salvation Army BAC's Details are:

Sort Code: **60-01-73**

Current Account: **00178123**

The payment reference is: **SA Hoxton HO21/ Christmas gifts.**

And finally...

Malcolm Brown has obviously been opening up the Christmas crackers and finding some pretty terrible, but very topical jokes...

Why did Mary and Joseph have to cancel their video conference call?
Because there was no Zoom at the inn...

Why will there be fewer Christmas presents this year?
Because Santa's little helpers have to Elf isolate...

Why can Father Christmas bank on the reindeer delivering the Christmas presents this year?
Because they have herd immunity...

Why couldn't Mary and Joseph get to Bethlehem this year?
Because all the Virgin flights were cancelled....

In the meantime, Penny and Bill Fraser are having problems in Waitrose...

Wordsworth on Covid 19 (Anon)

*I wondered lonely as a cloud
Two metres from the maddening crowd
When all at once my name was called
To enter Waitrose hallowed halls
This was the pensioners special hour
My wife said "buy a bag of flour"
But I forgot when through the door
What I had gone to Waitrose for
The Waitrose staff are very kind
I told them it had slipped my mind
They asked what else I had forgot
They clearly thought I'd lost the plot
I phoned my wife again to ask
She reminded me of this special task
I need some flour to make a cake
With all that cream you made me take
"Ah yes of course" I had to lie
I dared not ask what flower to buy
But then I saw them next the tills
A bunch of golden daffodils*

Have a very Happy Christmas from us all at St James Garlickhythe