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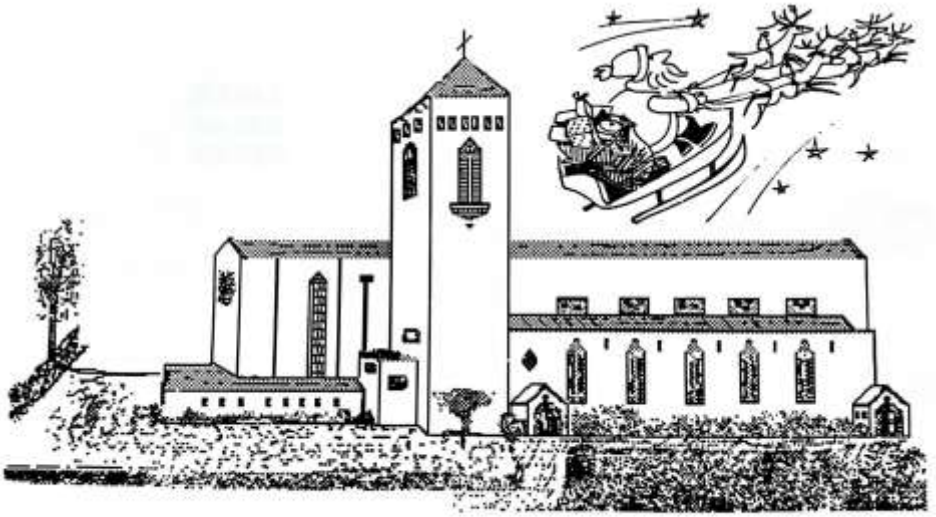
The Trident



The Parish Magazine of

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Said Mass Tuesday at Noon



Prayers for Christmas

Let your goodness, Lord, appear to us, that we, made in Your image, conform ourselves to it. In our own strength we cannot imitate Your majesty, power and wonder; nor is it fitting for us to try. But Your mercy reaches from the heavens, through the clouds, to the earth below. You have come to us as a small child, but You have brought us the greatest of all gifts, the gift of eternal love. Caress us with Your tiny hands, embrace us with Your tiny arms, and pierce our hearts with Your soft, sweet cries.

By Bernard of Clairvaux 1090 – 1153



Lord, This Christmas, please help us to keep you at the centre of our preparations and celebrations. May our thankfulness for the gift of your precious son, Jesus, motivate all that we think and say and do. May the joy of His coming shine from us and attract those who don't know what Christmas really means, so that they want to find out!
In Jesus' name
Amen.

Opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Church, the Vicar, the editors or the PCC.
Adverts in this magazine are not necessarily endorsed by the Church, the Vicar, the editors or the PCC.



From our Vicar

Dear friends,

This feels like a particularly important letter for our December edition of *The Trident* for three very special reasons.

Firstly, this is the final edition of *The Trident* in its current printed format. From 2027, our parish magazine will move online, with printed copies available for those who need them. This marks the beginning of a new chapter in the life of our magazine.

Secondly, we say a very heartfelt thank you to our wonderful editors, Sue Cunningham and Jill Ashcroft, who have faithfully edited *The Trident* for an astonishing 35 years and are now standing down! That is an incredible act of voluntary service, dedication and love for the parish. Through all those years, they have helped keep the church connected, sharing news, stories and reflections of the life of St Thomas'. Sue and Jill, thank you. You have given so much of yourselves, and we are truly grateful.

Thirdly, it is December: the month when we especially remember family and friends, giving presents, and of course celebrating the coming of Christ into the world as a baby.

As I was looking through some old copies of *The Trident*, I came across the December 1940 edition. The then Vicar, the Revd H. K. Beck, wrote about the many men from our parish who had left to serve in His Majesty's Forces during the Second World War. He reflected on how difficult it was to write to everyone at Christmas, and how many families were waiting anxiously for their loved ones to return.

He wrote: "Alas, some are prisoners of war; to their relatives and friends we offer our goodwill, the prayer that they are well and the hope that war will end soon."

He went on to describe what a strange Christmas it would be, with so many men away and children far from home. His words remind us that Christmas has not always been a time of peace and happiness for everyone. Even in the midst of celebration, there have been those who have experienced separation, fear and uncertainty.

Reading his words makes us grateful for what we have, but also reminds us to hold in our prayers those who will be spending Christmas away from loved ones, those who are grieving, and those whose lives are affected by war and conflict. The Christmas message of peace is perhaps more

important now than ever.
Turning the pages of *The Trident* to December 1970, I found another reflection, this time from Fr David Caton. He wrote:
"When you write your greetings cards find time to remember your soul; as you stir your puddings stir up your will of faith, as you buy your presents turn your spirit to generosity and love for God, as you set up your decorations decorate your life with the spirit of prayer."
Fr Caton was concerned that Christmas was becoming increasingly secularised, and his words are just as relevant today. In the midst of all the preparations, shopping, cooking and decorating, it is easy to lose sight of what we are actually celebrating.
Christmas is not simply about presents, parties and pretty lights. It is about the extraordinary truth that God came among us as a child.
"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." (Isaiah 9:6)
The child born in Bethlehem, our Saviour Jesus Christ, came into our world to bring light into darkness, hope where there is despair, and joy where there is sadness. That is the real joy of Christmas, a gift that cannot be bought, wrapped or placed under a tree. It is the gift of God's love, given freely to us all.
You are all warmly invited to join us for our Christmas services at St Thomas'. Please see full list at the back of this magazine and also page 7 for details. Do come along to our traditional Carol Service on the 13th December at 6pm and sing the familiar carols and remember Christmases past, while celebrating the joy and hope of Christmas today. Whether you are a regular member of our congregation or have not been to church for some time, you will be most welcome.
We are now looking for someone to help take *The Trident* forward into its new online format. If you enjoy writing, editing, sharing parish news or simply helping to keep our church connected, please do get in touch.
May I wish you and your families a very happy and blessed Christmas. May we all find time to be grateful, to remember those in need, and above all, to remember what Christmas is really about: the wonderful gift of Jesus Christ, born among us to bring us the love and joy of God.
With every blessing,
Julia





..and that's a wrap..

It is with some sadness, that we come to the end of our time as editors of this magazine. After 35 years it's time to say goodbye.

When we started editing The Trident back in 1991, we each had 2 toddlers at home. Over the years we have produced a magazine every month, despite COVID distancing, 2 interregnums, moving house and the arrival of another baby each.

Before we go, though, we have some important thank you's.

We have had help from very many people, from collating and stapling, to writing, delivering, and the production for several years of 3500 Christmas Tridents, which we delivered to every house in the parish and a bit beyond. Some of you have been helping for more years than we have, so a huge thank you to all of you.

Thank you to Stephen, who has printed this magazine for us for the last year or so and to both Nick and Stephen for bailing us out when the printer jammed or a bit fell off!

Thank you to our advertisers, without whom there would be no magazine. Most of you have supported us for many years.

And thank you to all of you who have read our magazine over the years. In many ways it's changed - certainly times have moved on from when we literally did cut and paste with a pair of scissors and a pot of glue to a polished magazine with proper desktop publishing. But in other ways it's still the same magazine.

During all this time, we have had so much fun. We're sure that we will be best buddies for life! We have been proud of The Trident, and hope it will continue to inform, inspire and entertain long into the future in an updated format with a new team.

Jill & Sue

A couple more things ….

When we edited our first magazine in December 1991, we charged 18 pence. According to the ONS, and factoring in inflation over 35 years, the magazine would cost around 50 pence today, so we've got that about right.

You may have noticed that the picture of the church on the front of this magazine is different. This is the one we used for our December 1991 magazine including the addition of Santa and his sleigh. As part of being the new editors back then, we thought it would be nice to have a small themed picture on each magazine cover and that's what we did, ever since, on every magazine.



Special Services for C**hristmas at St Thomas'**



Christingle

4.00pm on Sunday 6th December

Our **Christingle** service is a candle-lit celebration for all ages that raises money for the work of The Children's Society, a voluntary organisation of the Church of England.

Community Carol Service

6pm on Sunday 13th December



We'll sing some traditional and modern carols and listen to bible readings telling of the Birth of Christ. Please do join us.

Mass with Nativity (10 am)

10am on Sunday 20th December

Our Junior Church leads us in telling the Christmas story through word and song

Crib Service

4pm on Wednesday 24 December

A simple, heart-warming service for families and children as we gather around the crib.



Midnight Mass

11.30pm on Christmas Eve

Please join us at St Thomas' to celebrate the first Eucharist of Christmas in this candlelit service.

Christmas Day Family Communion

10am on Christmas day

Come and celebrate the birth of Christ. All ages - friends & relatives welcome.

From the Eco Group



Going Green This Christmas

Wrapping paper enough to wrap Guernsey! The paper used in the UK each Christmas is estimated to be enough to wrap the whole island of Guernsey. With so much waste generated during the festive season, Christmas is a great opportunity for all of us to make a few simple changes that are kinder to both people and planet.

As Advent approaches, the Eco Group at St Thomas' is celebrating some encouraging steps forward and looking ahead to a greener Christmas for our whole church community.

November Highlights

November has been a busy and fruitful month for the Eco Group.

We launched our **Toilet Twinning campaign**, helping to fund life-changing sanitation projects in communities around the world. Every toilet twinned brings improved health, dignity and opportunity to families who need it most, while reminding us of our global responsibility to care for one another.

We have also taken the **first steps in rejuvenating the church back garden**. Early work has begun to transform this valuable green space into an area that will benefit people and wildlife alike. Over the coming months we hope to create a more welcoming, biodiverse and environmentally friendly garden that can be enjoyed by the whole community. Thank you to everyone who has donated or helped out so far - it's not too late to join in!

Another highlight has been the wonderful support for our **Fairtrade Advent Calendars**. Choosing Fairtrade products helps farmers earn a fair living while encouraging more sustainable farming practices. Supporting Fairtrade is a simple but powerful way to ensure that our Christmas celebrations reflect our Christian values of justice and care for others.

How Can We Make Christmas Greener?

Christmas should be a season of joy, generosity and thanksgiving. It can also be a time when we think carefully about our impact on the world around us. Here are five simple ways we can all play our part:

1. Choose Fairtrade treats and gifts

Support farmers and producers by buying Fairtrade chocolate, advent calendars and festive foods. Every purchase can help create fairer and more sustainable livelihoods for communities around the world.

2. Reuse and recycle wrapping materials

Reuse gift bags, ribbons and cards, or wrap presents in recycled paper and decorate it yourself. A little creativity can save a lot of waste.

3. Take part in a Christmas jumper swap

Looking for something to wear to a Christmas do? Don't buy a new outfit, see if you can swap or buy second hand.

4. Give gifts that don't cost the earth

Consider homemade gifts, charity-shop treasures, experiences or consumable treats rather than always buying new items.

5. Celebrate creation together

Start a family tradition such as decorating a tree for birds, taking a Christmas nature walk, or planting a tree as a symbol of hope and care for God's world.

Everyone Can Play a Part

None of us can do everything, but all of us can do something. Small choices, multiplied across our church family, can make a significant difference. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, let us also celebrate and protect the wonderful creation God has entrusted to us.

Thank you for your support of the Toilet Twinning campaign, the church garden project and our Fairtrade Advent Calendar initiative. We look forward to seeing these projects continue to grow in the months ahead.

From everyone in the St Thomas' Eco Group, we wish you a very Merry and Green Christmas. Don't Doubt, Do!

Bess

USPG PARTNERS IN GLOBAL MISSION

The Leprosy Mission are no longer collecting postage stamps, but the good news is that USPG are collecting them, so please carry on leaving them in the box at the back of the church.

WellFound is one of the charities that we support at St Thomas' This is the story of three brothers who worked with them.

Three brothers left two big cities to find a project where they could work hands on and make a real contribution. They found a charity called WellFound and travelled to Sierra Leone where the charity has a remote field base.

The brothers travelled to the city of Moyimi, where they joined the WellFound team and local people who were working on a new well. The drilling was hard and tiring, but the brothers and local people took turns at the drill, and a friendship grew. With nine people sharing the work, the job felt possible.

Two days later, when the drilling was complete, they walked 1,400 tiring steps to see the dirty water source the village women had been using every day. After seeing it for themselves, every drop of clean water felt worth the effort.

In the village of Borma, the brothers worked alongside local children and the WellFound team on school gardens and other projects. They also helped paint the school, giving it a fresh new look.

For the brothers, though, the highlight of the trip as seeing what access to clean water and practical opportunities can mean for children and their communities.

The last project was in the village of Mobeh, where the team built and improved a cookstove inside a small hut. When the first bricks came out a little crooked, the team took them down and started again. Rebuilding helped everyone understand how the stove should fit together. The tight space made the work difficult, but they stayed with it and the finished stove showed what a willing team can learn and build together.

Looking back, the brothers feel deeply thankful for Jamilla's (WellFound's Equality Worker) wise words and wonderful cooking to the joy of seeing clean water flow in Moyimi.

In Guinea-Bissau, just after the rains, the community are working hard to prepare new market gardens. Land is being cleared, soil prepared and garden beds made ready for planting. For these people, this is about much more than growing vegetables, It is about tackling hunger. This is a daily struggle especially for families with young children. When there is not enough food, health suffers, children can struggle to concentrate at school, and families have fewer opportunities to improve their livelihoods.

A successful garden not only supplies food, it can provide a small income from selling surplus produce.

At the same time, new wells are being built to provide reliable water needed to make these gardens work.

For the brothers, this is what makes the work so meaningful, and together they and the community are turning water into food, food into opportunity and opportunity into hope.

From the Ealing Foodbank

Thank you for continuing to support the foodbank. There are several local shops and supermarkets that have collection points and they're all listed on the Foodbank website: https://ealing.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/

There are other ways in which you can help.
If unable to drop-off at a local collection point, you can leave food donations in the green box in our church porch. However, there may be some delay in transfer to the Foodbank warehouse.
Monetary donations may be made through the Foodbank website, as above.
** please remember that our magazine is produced a month in advance - we publish the shopping list available to us at the time of going to press, so it's a good idea to check the most recent list on the website (see above) or Twitter: @EalingFoodbank or Instagram: ealingfoodbank.

November Shopping List **

Tinned fruit & custard, tinned sardines & mackerel, breakfast cereals, tinned tomatoes and pasta sauce, instant coffee, tinned vegetarian meals (chilli, bolognaise, curry etc).

Thank you, but the foodbank has plenty of pasta, baked beans and soup at the moment

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POP- IN ON FRIDAYS



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FROM 10.00AM TO 12 NOON

*COME FOR TEA, COFFEE, BISCUITS AND A CHAT
*MEET YOUR FRIENDS AND MAKE NEW ONES!
*STAY FOR TEN MINUTES OR THE MORNING!

December Dates

Friday 4th - tea, coffee and cake
Friday 11th - tea, coffee and cake (TBC)

The POP-IN is run by the Hanwell Neighbourly Care Scheme.

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November

Sat 28th	St Thomas' Christmas Fair (1-4pm)
Sun 29th	**1st of Advent**
	Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter (ECWNS)

December

Sun 6th	**2nd of Advent and also Christingle at 4pm**
	ECWNS
Sun 13th	**3rd of Advent and also Carol Service at 6pm**
	ECWNS
Sun 20th	**4th of Advent - Mass with Nativity (10am)**
	ECWNS
Thurs 24th	**Christmas Eve**
	Crib Service at 4pm & Midnight Mass at 11:30pm
Fri 25th	**Christmas Day 10am Mass**
Sat 26th	**St Stephen's Day**
Sun 27th	**1st of Christmas**

Please pray for:

Those who are housebound, sick or in need: John Ball, Caroline Baxter, Osa Boating, Nigel & Davina Brooks, Ivan Carter, Noel Chardon, Jenny Cornwell, Amy Dobbin, Leo & Estriana Douglas, Merfyn Edwards, Geraldine, Celia Griffith, Darren Hancock, Alison Johns, Ian King, Everard Lendor, Nick Lunn, Jane Marland, Marleen, Dermot Molloy, Izzy Neale, Marion Newlands, Elizabeth Nsefik, Cynthia Noel, Sarah, Julia Schumman, Colin Spooner and Linda Williams

Those who have recently died: Stuart Minty

ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE
HANWELL

If you would like to donate to St Thomas', you can use this QR code to donate on your smart phone. We're always grateful, so thank you!

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