

The Pauline

St Paul's URC Church Magazine

December Edition 2024



St Paul's URC

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CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM YOUR ELDERS

As yet another busy year in the life of St Paul's draws to a close, now seems to be an ideal opportunity to reflect on the highs and thankfully only a few lows of the last 12 months and to look at our hopes and aspirations for 2025.

Many thanks must be given to all three teams – In & Out, Worship & Discipleship and Management & Resources. They've all played a major role in ensuring that these things run smoothly and efficiently.

The In & Out team, together with their supporters have been exceptionally busy, providing us with a range of social events which encourage us and particularly newer members to get to know each other better. At the same time, funds have been raised for our church, but also many other deserving causes. To pick on a couple of events:

- * The annual fete with many involved was a great success, despite the inclement weather, and greatly appreciated by the wider community, as well as ourselves.
- * The recent Charity Card and Christmas Fair attracted a record number of visitors – once again thanks to so many of our church members and other friends who contributed, whether by baking cakes or generally helping. Great Teamwork!

Of course, we have had our challenging and sadder moments. We were very sorry to say goodbye to Martin Knight our Minister as he moved to a new role in Brighton. Only a few weeks later we also said goodbye to Ron & Bea Pollard as they made the move to Scotland to be nearer daughter Janet and family. We are so appreciative of the contributions of all three over the years, and wish them every happiness in their new homes and church.

During our period of vacancy, the Worship & Discipleship team have ensured we have a preacher and organist each Sunday. No easy task, but we are blessed to have both Fran and Joyce in our congregation to ably lead worship on many occasions through the year.

Special thanks must also be given to Sue, our Church Secretary, for her constant energy in dealing with the many extra vacancy duties despite never seeming to sleep! Vacancies always present a challenge, but we remain positive and continue to discover new talents within our own congregation.

Prayer time continues, and we are grateful to those among us who have contributed both to the reading and writing of prayers as part of our Sunday worship. The house groups initiative has been very successful, and we strongly encourage people to try them - it's not at all daunting, and those attending (despite an initial wariness) have been a little surprised to find they are enjoying the opportunity to share fellowship. Please do give them a go!

A highlight of the year has been to welcome several new members. We are delighted to see how quickly they have become involved with church life in a variety of ways. Warm Space has continued to flourish on a monthly basis – many thanks to those assisting with this. More help is always welcome – please speak to Fran if you can help.

Caroline has done a brilliant job again to ensure the Tuesday Guild continues its varied programme – all are invited to attend on Tuesday mornings – 10:15 for 10:30. Several who come do not attend services but nevertheless have been amazing at helping at church events, not to speak of baking excellent cakes!

The annual Shoe Box appeal had another successful year, being supported by church members as well as the wider community. Once again, great teamwork and thanks to all who worked throughout the year, culminating in the great packing event.

And, of course, the Church Garden has attracted much favourable comments and reaction from our neighbours, who are often to be seen resting on our benches, not to speak of folk just waiting by the bus stop. Eleanor and crew must be congratulated and thanked for their huge efforts, not forgetting Martin who did much heavy lifting in the early part of the year. What an achievement to achieve a Level 3 Award in our first year in the London in Bloom competition! Please speak to Eleanor if you can help with the constant maintenance needed - the garden is very much an ongoing process.

The Remembrance Service with Parade was supported by the uniformed organisations, such a good turn out with the church well filled by them, their parents and friends. Thanks to all the leaders who give up so much of their time.

The Book Club continues to provide another time for fellowship and discussion. More people are always welcome.

Finally, without the M&R team, our buildings would not be a welcome, safe and (hopefully) warm environment. Under Steve's able leadership, their work, whilst essential, goes largely unnoticed. However, you will all have seen the fantastically restored floor in the Large Hall. The new radiant heaters in the Sanctuary help to keep us warm on Sunday mornings, whilst much work continues to maintain the ancient, but still effective, heating system in our halls.

We are delighted that our halls are in more or less constant use seven days a week by a large variety of organised groups, along with all sorts of private family celebrations and events. The income from lettings helps cover the very large costs we inevitably incur. Of course, this all takes much work, both front-facing and behind-the-scenes. Huge thanks to all of the team involved!

Now, with Christmas approaching, we look forward to Narnia-themed events over the next few weeks. Junior Church have been looking at The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe this year, and on 8th December will be leading the Narnia service. How fortunate we are to have such lovely and talented young people in our congregation. Our grateful thanks and appreciation to their great leaders whose knowledge, experience and boundless energy ensure our young people grow in faith. The all-age Christmas Party is on Saturday, 21st December - please say if you are coming. Singers of all abilities are sought for our Christmas Eve Carol Service, always well attended by our neighbours. Please consider joining our pop-up choir!

We were delighted to have Joyce join the Eldership team this year and look forward to welcoming Linda and Eleanor as elders in January. Our thanks go to Steve, Cathy H and Pat GO for all they have done during their time as serving elders.

As we think about the year ahead, let us give thanks for all that has been achieved to keep our church an active one, and for our support and care for each other. As elders, we remain focused and positive about the future. Please remember that if any of you have concerns or issues, and would find it helpful to speak with an elder, we are always here for you. We always welcome your comments and/or suggestions.

We give thanks to God for our wonderful Church community and for the gifts & talents that everyone brings. We hope to see you and your families at our Christmas services and events and wish you all a very Happy and Blessed Christmas and a healthy New Year.



The Elders of St Paul's





NARNIA MANE -IA!



ALWAYS WINTER BUT NEVER CHRISTMAS.....UNTIL NOW!

WHY NARNIA?

This year the Junior Church have been reading and watching The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe on Sunday's and exploring the Christian symbolism within the story. They will be helping bring Narnia to life at St Paul's this Christmas and will be leading a very special Narnia themed Christmas Service on the 8th December at 10.30am. In the picture above you will find some of the children making 'stone' animals to display in the Sanctuary!

In addition, there will also be a Narnia-themed party on the 21st of December (12-2 pm); all are welcome of any age! (tickets are available now). On the evening of the 21st December, the Church Sanctuary will be open from 6-8pm to explore 'Narnia' whilst listening to some beautiful music played on the Church organ. Hot chocolate and Turkish delight (and other refreshments) will be available!

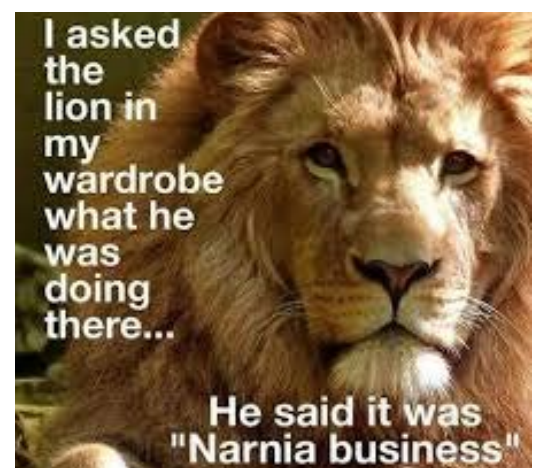
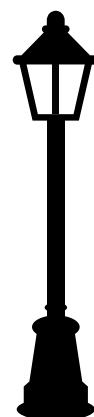
SNOWFLAKES!

The Junior Church, alongside the I&O & D&W teams & supporters, will be transforming the church Sanctuary into Narnia this Christmas. We hope that you all enjoy being part of 'exploring Narnia' and sharing this with our Junior Church.

We asked friends, local groups and those at St Paul's to help by making snowflakes to hang in the Church. The response has been fantastic and many beautiful and unique snowflakes have been created. And just like God created each snowflake to be perfectly unique, he made every single person to be perfectly unique also!

WHY NOT HAVE A READ?

The book Club have chosen the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe as their December read - why not join them to discuss the book? Or have a read ahead of the Junior Church led Christmas Service on the 8th December. If anyone needs a copy, you will find a few copies in the South Transept Chapel which anyone is welcome to borrow.



NARNIA CHRISTMAS PARTY

BOOKING
ESSENTIAL!

SATURDAY 21ST DECEMBER

12 - 2PM

ST PAUL'S URC, CROHAM PARK AVE, CR2 7HF

PARTY GAMES | CRAFT ACTIVITIES |
LUNCH WITH MR & MRS BEAVER |
TREASURE HUNT & FATHER CHRISTMAS!

Free entry!

Donations towards costs are
welcome on the day!



To book your free tickets: Info@stpaulsurc.org.uk

Explore Narnia by Lamplight Saturday 21st December 6pm - 8pm

Step through the wardrobe into our beautiful
Church Sanctuary.

The Church will be open from 6pm - 8pm to
enable people to explore 'Narnia' whilst
listening to some beautiful music played on
the Church organ.

No booking is required & free refreshments
will be available (including Turkish Delight!)

Snowflakes made by the St Paul's community
will be on display!



SANDWICHES FOR NIGHTWATCH

Throughout November the 7th/12th Scouts and St Paul's URC have been making sandwiches for NightWatch each Sunday.

We will also be doing this through January next year. If you can help on a Saturday evening in January, please contact Pat GO or Sue.



Thanks to all who have helped in November!

Pauline Report from the 7th/12th Croydon Scout Group and Croham Valley Explorers

With the Squirrel section for 4 to 6 year olds fully operational we now have all five sections meeting regularly at the headquarters. That together with the hall lettings managed very efficiently by Linda Dean means that our premises are occupied every weekday evening and at weekends. For sometime now we have been considering how we might improve our facilities and to this end a committee has been formed to draw up plans for an extension to the footprint. Although the timetable is uncertain we hope to work up the project next year and complete it by the summer of 2026.

Meanwhile our day-to-day activities continue apace with lots of badges and top awards gained. Attendance at meetings has generally been excellent and joining enquiries, particularly for Squirrels and Beavers, continues to amaze us.

Beavers, Scouts and Explorers have all held residential experiences this term. The Beavers had a sleepover the night before the Remembrance Parade, the Scouts a night hike and sleepover a week later, while the Explorers actually camped outdoors at Roverdene in mid-October.

The Remembrance Service was well attended with approximately 50 of us on parade. Afterwards I presented Gabi Covacci, our Beaver Scout Leader, with her Award of Merit for Good Service over many years.

In January after Winter Camp at Cudham Shaws five of the older Scouts move to the Explorer section. We will be sad to see them go, but it will enable three Cubs to move up to Scouts and two new members to join the Troop.

The dates for next year's Summer Camps has been set with the Beavers and Cubs camping together at Pinewood, the Scouts going to Breckland in Norfolk, and the Explorers travelling to the Lake District.

Chris Dean
Group Scout Leader



Moderator's Christmas Letter

As we enter the beautiful season of Advent, we are reminded of Mary's song in the Gospel of Luke, often called the Magnificat. Mary's song of praise reminds us of the joy and hope that comes from faith in God's promises.

In her moment of awe, Mary proclaims, "My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour." These words echo through the ages, inviting us to reflect on the miracle of the Incarnation. Mary's song is both deeply personal and universally hopeful. It reflects her humility and gratitude to God, who chose her to bear His Son, Jesus.



This Christmas, let us join Mary in glorifying the Lord for the gift of Jesus, who brings light into our darkness and hope into our despair. Mary's hymn also calls us to recognise the transformative power of God's love. She sings of the mighty being scattered, the proud being brought low, and the humble being filled with good things. In a world often marked by division and strife, we are reminded that God's kingdom upends worldly values and lifts up the marginalised.

As we celebrate Christ's birth, let us embody this spirit of humility and service in our Church and community. Additionally, the Magnificat encourages us to remember God's faithfulness throughout all generations. Just as God fulfilled His promise to Mary, we can trust that God is at work in our lives today.

In this season, let us share the good news of God's love and grace with those around us, being containers of hope and joy. As we gather for worship and fellowship in the coming Advent weeks, may our hearts be filled with gratitude and our spirits renewed. Let us celebrate the miracle of Christmas together, proclaiming with Mary the greatness of our God.

Thank you to all who participate in the life and witness of God's church. We are the visible face of Christ.

Wishing you all a blessed and joyous Christmas.

Bridget
Moderator for Southern Synod
United Reformed Church



2025 Cake Sunday's Dates!

Cake Sundays have been established for 2 years now and celebrate birthdays and other special celebrations amongst our church family each month.

If you are able to volunteer to provide a cake (plus some kind of gluten and nut-free alternative) on any of the dates below, please let Cathy H or Helen know. Candles and matches are available in the Kitchen.

<i>January 19th</i>	<i>April 13th</i>	<i>July 20th</i>	<i>October 19th</i>
<i>February 16th</i>	<i>May 18th</i>	<i>August 17th</i>	<i>November 16th</i>
<i>March 16th</i>	<i>June 15th</i>	<i>September 21st</i>	<i>December 21st</i>

Message from Bea & Ron

Greetings from Dunbar to all our friends at St Paul's.

A great deal has happened since we last got in touch. The most notable was Ron's operation at the Spire hospital in Edinburgh. Janet very kindly took two days off work to run us in on the day of the operation, and again to collect him once the surgeon had declared that all was well. Ron was amazed to come round from the anaesthetic to discover that the pain had gone. Since then he's been having physiotherapy to rebuild the strength and balance that had declined while walking was so painful.

Hamish took the role of Uncle Fester in "The Addams Family" which the local youth theatre put on, appropriately, around Hallowe'en. It was great fun to see him made up to look like a creepy bald guy and he filled the role energetically especially when it came to dancing on graves.

Kenneth's daughter Maisie has begun her first year reading biochemistry at Oxford. She's busy and very happy there. Her older brother Tom is doing a Masters in Mathematics at Birmingham.

Thanks to the St Paul's Whatsapp many of you have been praying for Neil and Chrissie Black after Neil had a bad accident on his bike. The latest news, shared at church last Sunday, is that he is progressing well and is no longer completely sedated. His smashed hip has been restored.

Bea has joined a women's group called Inspire and was delighted to be able to introduce them to Amnesty and Write for Rights. Many cards were written at the November meeting and everyone took a booklet home.

Euan is learning to play the bagpipes and next weekend he will play with Dunbar Pipe Band for the first time at the ceremony to turn on the Christmas lights.

We will be leaving for a cruise to the Canaries at the end of November to celebrate Ron's newfound freedom of movement.

We hope that you are all healthy and happy. The news we receive from St Paul's all seems encouraging. Well done everyone.

Singing at St Paul's!

We are looking for singers who are willing to lead from the front at our Christmas Eve Service!

We will be singing carols only (with a few descants) - no choral items! Vocal parts for your phone or computer available from Fran.

Rehearsals on Sunday 22nd Dec 12.30 - 1.30 and 24th Dec 5pm - 5.50pm. If you can attend both rehearsals that's great but one is fine.

Please speak to Fran if you are able to sing on the 24th Dec or would like to know more!



Southern Synod – Synod Together

St Andrew's Canterbury Saturday 19th October

This was my first Synod Together meeting. It comprises all ministers and church representatives from churches in Sussex, Surrey, Kent and the 12 London Boroughs south of the Thames. It takes place twice a year. There are also smaller Area Meetings which gather together in between these 2 main meetings and St Paul's is part of the South London Synod Area.

The morning saw the Synod Moderator (Bridget Banks) introduce the new Synod Strategy, which is a document for use at all levels within the Synod, from Synod Together down to local church meetings. The aims are to **renew** the life of Synod and local churches, **reimagine** ways of being church and **reorder** the way synod fulfills its duties

Renew – this focuses on supporting discipleship – helping individuals and churches grow in faith and continue to develop ways to reach out to their communities – church away days are one suggestion, so happily we are on track!

Reimagining church – includes:

Making full use of people resources available – including lay preachers and ministers, plus pastoral care to local churches. Our own lay preachers have participated in Synod training.

Financial support, In the form of the Strategic Mission Fund, Building Grants and Loans. St Paul's has benefitted from financial support over the last few years Advice and support for local churches – safeguarding, health & safety for example

Reorder – Synod aims to review the way it carries out its functions – for example, reviewing committees, use of financial resources and deployment of ministers

There was time set aside for Stories from around the Synod which I particularly enjoyed as I like to hear what other churches are up to! We heard about the Warm Space at West Wickham, emergency shelter rooms at Bromley, a soup kitchen in Streatham, Food for Thought at Margate (an alternative and inclusive take on worship) Dementia cafes and the congregation at St John's Orpington, where church members come forward to plan and take worship.

The afternoon saw a succession of Committee reports and closing worship. An interesting day out with an agreeable mix of business and cake!

Cathy H



Our thanks to Christine, Eleanor, Heather & Pat for the beautiful Harvest flowers this year!



Remembrance Sunday Parade - November 10th 2024



This year's Remembrance Sunday service was led by Major Lesley Baker of the Salvation Army. We joined many around the world by falling silent at 11am to remember those who have fallen in war. We remembered those at both St Paul's URC and St Georges URC who lost their lives in WW1 & WW2.

The service included a Parade and alongside our Junior Church we welcomed the 7th/12th Croydon, Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, and Explorers.

After the service the Uniformed organisations helped make sandwiches for Nightwatch.

Our thanks go to Lesley and all who contributed to this special service.





That's a Wrap!



The 2024 St Paul's campaign has been a wonderful success yet again! The support and involvement from the St Paul's community has been incredible. We are thrilled to share that 110 boxes were packed in October and picked up by the Christian charity Link to Hope at the end of November.

These boxes will be sent to families and elderly folk in Eastern Europe (Moldova, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Romania) this Christmas by Link to Hope volunteers.

We pray that these boxes and all boxes sent, bring joy and love to all who receive them. We give thanks for all the Link to Hope volunteers who will be working hard to get boxes to families and elderly folk this Christmas.

Our thanks to all who donated, wrapped and packed this year and in previous years - this only happens because of every one of you!

The next St Paul's shoebox campaign will begin in Feb 2025 and we will give guidance throughout the year on items needed. If you would like to learn more and/or get involved please chat to Helen or Pat GO.

Thank you all,
Helen & Pat GO





A hundred and fifty years ago, an Irish couple called Wellesley and Alice were called by God to minister to people suffering with leprosy. In faith they started The Leprosy Mission (TLM). But they couldn't do God's work alone. They needed people like you to stand with them, and with people affected by Leprosy.



Here at St Paul's we are also supporting TLM and our big fund-raising event is the cake sale during the Christmas Card Sale in November. For the last three years it has raised £300. Half is donated to TLM and the other half goes to the Guild funds which support various charities. We also receive individual donations and last year Tuesday Guild donated £335 to TLM.

If you would like to support them, your donations will enable TLM not only to carry out their core work of funding treatment, cure and rehabilitation but also to provide counselling to so many people affected by leprosy. Studies show the majority of people affected by leprosy have poor mental health. Leprosy is a cruel disease physically that can lead to the loss of limbs and blindness. Yet many say it is prejudice surrounding the disease that is the hardest to bear.

Thank you.
Caroline Corfield



Christmas Lunch



This year, the Tuesday Guild have kindly agreed to cook the St Paul's Christmas lunch!

Sunday 15th December

Please let them know you are coming by signing your name on the notice board in the corridor (by the kitchen) or speak to Christine. All are welcome!

Please indicate if you have any dietary requirements.

Cost: £6 for adults and £3 for under 12s - payable on the day please

Looking forward to seeing many of you there for what will be a wonderful get together!

Commitment for Life – An Introduction

Commitment for Life is a wrap-around commitment to praying, learning, giving and advocating for specific developing countries, which are selected by Christian Aid. Current areas are Bangladesh, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Zimbabwe.

Focusing on one area enables us be well-informed and target our response to God's love by caring for those struggling in other parts of the world. It will enhance our overseas giving and awareness considerably and complement what we do locally. Prayers & Raising awareness/Learning about a specific area – Lots of posters and information are supplied. We can focus on a different area each year and dissemination can be done via:

- o The Pauline
- o WhatsApp
- o Displaying material/posters
- o Annual service

Giving - 1% appeal. This can be done in different ways:

- 1% of church income
- Annual appeal - Congregation invited to give 1% of disposable income. This would be a guideline and is discretionary (as any donations are) and entirely up to individuals.
- Fundraising event(s)
- Combination of the above
- Note that 75% of any donations go directly to Christian Aid for the 3 areas.

Advocacy – Commitment for Life is linked with Global Justice Now, which receives 5% of donations, and suggestions are made for petitioning MPs etc.

The following will need to be decided:

1. Which area to start focusing on (many churches rotate and focus on a different country each year)
2. How we would like the giving to operate - an appeal to individuals / a percentage of overall church income / fundraising events / a combination of some or all.

Cathy H + Pat GO

St Pauls's Community Garden Update

Our Community Garden, at St. Paul's, has continued to progress well during the summer months. We have been given Corinna Preston's Memorial Bench, from Croham Hurst School/ Old Palace Garden, after the Junior School closed. It has already been securely located, under the large pine tree – in sun in the morning, but shade in the afternoon. Sue treated it with a preservative, so it now looks very smart. We already have Corinna's stained-glass window, in the South Transept and have her father, John's, bench opposite in the garden, surrounded by the wooden pergola and the Rambling Rector rose bushes.

The Garden Gang has planted many crocuses and allium corms/bulbs, winter cyclamen and quite a few baby wallflowers.

The lawn has been mown and edged, the beds weeded and bushes pruned. Recently, Christine and Robert replaced the red geraniums, in the pots, with pretty flowering cyclamen.

The best news is the result of our entry in the 'London in Bloom – It's Your Neighbourhood' Competition. There were 600 gardens submitted in our category. Sue Eardley and I attended the Awards Ceremony at R.H.S. Wisley Hilltop Education and Conference Centre, on October 3rd. We were delighted to be presented with a Level 3 Certificate (out of 5 Levels), which was a very pleasing and encouraging outcome. We were only 2 marks off a Level 4so we will try again next year!

Eleanor Redshaw



BARN DANCE



So much fun was had at the well supported Barn Dance in September. The Bonabrill band were back to lead us through some fantastic dances. The Bonabrill band first played at St Paul's in 1977!

Thanks go to Andrew and Alex Dean for running the bar, to Olivia and Joshua for selling so many raffle tickets, to Pat and Tory for the delicious food and to Helen and Chris Dean for organising the event.

We are delighted to report that the event raised £530 for Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance and the Surrey Wooden Spoon Charities who have now received a donation of £265 each.

The Bonabrill band are keen to come back again so look out for another Barn Dance in 2025 or 2026!

SAVE THE DATE

Unlock Walk 2025 – Saturday 12th April

“The focus will be on the Battersea area. The biggest landmark we’ll see is Battersea Power Station, one of the largest brick buildings in the world, now an upmarket shopping and residential complex having been derelict for decades after closing in 1983. The route will loop towards Brixton and Windrush Square, with its celebration and archive of Caribbean people’s experiences in the UK.

We will be thinking of power in several ways, as we will see the place which generated a fifth of London’s electricity, plus many changes made to London’s landscape by the rich and powerful. We will also see evidence of God’s very different kind of power working through his love and holy spirit in his people in local churches. We will also reflect on the power of the good news of the down to earth Christ and of his word to change us and others.”

Unlock - London Walk

St Paul's now has a Instagram account!



Our thanks go to Charlotte Ballard for setting this up. We are already on Facebook and also post on numerous local sites but this will help increase our outreach.

If you have your own Insta account and you haven't already, please follow St Paul's (handle: stpaulsurc) and help share our message far and wide!

CHARITY CHRISTMAS CARD & GIFT FAIR

St Paul's welcomed charities and local small businesses on Saturday 9th November to our annual charity card sale. The event was well supported and all the stall holders were pleased with the fantastic turnout. We welcomed back Soul Symphony who delighted us all with some traditional Christmas carols. The atmosphere was one of joy and our thanks goes to those who helped with refreshments, stalls, activities and welcoming visitors and to all who came along. The pictures below really highlight the joy that was had! *Next years Fair will be on Saturday 16th November.*

Helen & Pat GO



ST PAUL'S BOOK CLUB

Jan 9th at 12 noon

Croydon Bowling Club, CR2 6LN

**Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage
in Antarctica / Alfred Lansing**

Feb 13th at 7.30pm - Jubilee Room, St Paul's

St Paul's Church Jubilee Room CR2 7HF

Human Croquet / Kate Aktinson

March 13th at 12 noon

Croydon Bowlling Club, CR2 6LN

The Seven Sisters / Lucinda Riley

April 10th 7:30pm Jubilee Room, St Paul's

Church Hall CR2 7HF

Shy Creatures / Clare Chambers

EVERYONE WELCOME!



**For more information
please visit
www.stpaulsurc.org.uk**



SANDERSTEAD UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Sanderstead Hill CR2 0HB
next to the Library



CONCERT

Sunday 15th December at 3pm

CROYDON SYMPHONIC BAND

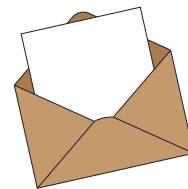


in an entertaining
hour of music with
marches, popular
classics & seasonal
favourites to take us
into Christmas



followed by tea, mince pies & stollen cake
Admission by programme at the door
just £8 (or £4 if you're 18 or under)

Letters to the Editor



Me 4 TV/Media

Having just been to the first Guild talk on broadcasting in London, brought back memories over the years.

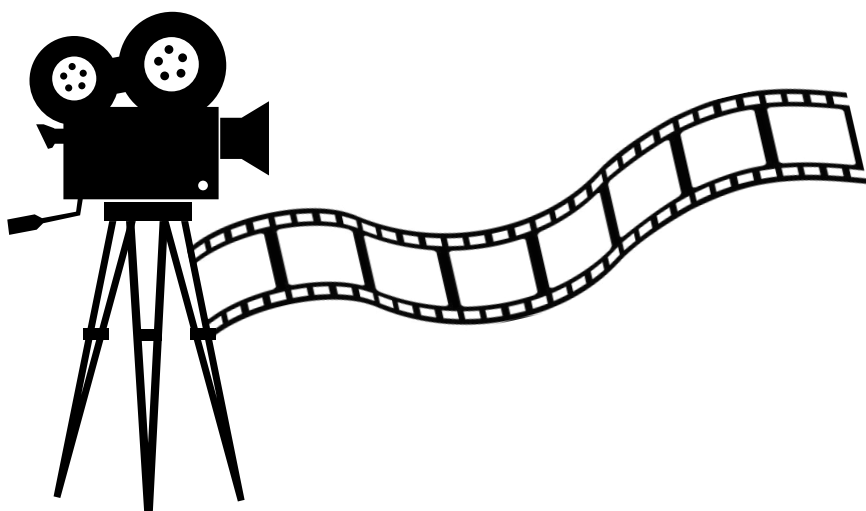
It started 40 years ago, when I drove to ATV in Elstree to pick up New Scientist magazines, while there I passed actor, Sam Kydd. This is now where there is a James Bond stage, and is the home of Eastenders and Strictly Come Dancing.

In the late 80's I applied for Tomorrow's World audience tickets and took my mother to see the programme being made, when Raymond Baxter spoke to my mother. A few years later, when Bob Symes took over, I was at Olympia being trained to use a BBC camera. Mid 90's, while at Earls Court motor show, while talking to Richard Noble about his land speed record car, Jeremy Clarkson came out of the studio as Richard was next to me to be interviewed. 2 years later, I was to speak about his car on FM radio, also mentioning that I belonged to a transport club, so was referred to as a nerd. This time I met Sylvester McCoy, who had been Dr Who. In the late 90's I was at Holmfirth and met many of the stars of 'Last of the Summer Wine' when filming on location. Later that year I took my mother to Teddington Lock studio for audience involvement, with Peter Sallis acting as warm up man.

As most know I am interested in politics, so ended up near College Green in 2010, to see MP's being interviewed, on my way home at Victoria Station, I met David Dimbleby. My father used to have breakfast with his father Richard Dimbleby, some 70 years ago.

Recently, about 10 years ago, I was on a phone in on C5 Matthew Wright, followed by a letter I dropped off to Broadcasting House then at the start of Covid, I went to ITN in Grays Inn Road, for a letter to Jeremy Vine, which is made there. Last year I was again on the 'phone in' with him, where a cabinet minister had to resign over a tax problem. A few days later I was held on another 'phone in' on the NHS on Sky News, but they took another call, from no less than Sir Rod Stewart, so I missed out, with his comments ending up in the newspapers. Then to finish, Sue brought Sky News to St Paul's last autumn, to promote the Warm Space initiative, where she was interviewed, with the rest of us in the background.

15 minutes of fame maybe not for me. David White.



Please send your letters and contributions for the next Pauline to Patgo123@aol.com

Next Pauline copy date is
January 20th 2025

WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN TO YOU?

It's that time of year again when we all seem to go mad, sending cards to people we have not seen for years, receiving presents we do not want, having to put up with certain relatives, spending over budget, trying to outdo neighbours on the number of Christmas lights one displays, overindulging on food and drink, embarrassing oneself at the office party or trying to sing out of tune at the local carol service.

For Christians it is a time to think back over 2,000 years to when the birth of God's son became real, which still affects us today, spending time with family and friends during the darkest days, and remembering those less fortunate than ourselves.

Many follow traditions held dearly amongst families from when we were younger, and Christmas as we know it today has been formed from other traditions over history, some of which I will now try and summarise:

25 December – in early day of Christianity, Christmas was celebrated on 1 or 6 Jan, 25 March or 20 May, with the latter being used most, as lambs were mentioned, which would be Springtime. It was not until AD354 that Rome celebrated the nativity on 25 December. In September 1752 England changed from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar (Russia did not do this until 1918), which meant 12 days were lost, so what had been 25 December became 6 January, but in the countryside 'Old Christmas' continued for 100 years.

Year 0 – it seems that our calendar is also out, as Herod died 14 BC, and the census took place between BC7-11.

3 Wise men – the bible does not mention how many wise men there were, only that 3 gifts were given, gold, frankincense and myrrh. These men were not kings as we recognise, but rulers of cities or provinces, and their relics lie in Cologne cathedral.

Star of Bethlehem – depending on the birth year, astronomers have searched for the star, could it have been Halley's comet or a supernova? The latest explanation seems to be Saturn in conjunction with Jupiter.

The Crib – St Francis of Assisi erected the first crib in Greccio on 24 December 1224.

Holly & Ivy – despite Romans and Norsemen decorating their houses and temples with evergreens, this carol commemorates the pagan contest between holly (male) and ivy (female).

Mistletoe – this parasite, was highly prized by Druids, if grown on an oak, so is never used to decorate churches.

Boxing Day – this originates from when boxes were opened in churches, the day after Christmas, with the contents given to the poor, or to servants in large households. The name was first used in 1849, and even today some give boxes at Christmas.

12 Days of Christmas – though a much loved song from 12 Lords to a Partridge, was a period to celebrating ending with burning of the greenery and 12th night cake

David White



C.S. Lewis-a brief look at the man himself..



Clive Staples Lewis was born in Belfast in 1898. As a boy, Lewis was fascinated with animals; he fell in love with Beatrix Potters stories and often wrote and illustrated his own animal tales. Along with his brother Warnie, he created the world of Boxen a fantasy land inhabited and run by animals which may have influenced his later works of Narnia. His Grandfather was Rector of St Mark's Anglican Church in East Belfast. They have a 'lion' doorknob from which a young Lewis is said to have taken inspiration. You can even buy a replica doorknob from the church shop apparently!

A brilliant and imaginative thinker, Lewis was a scholar and professor of English literature with positions at Oxford and Cambridge (where he taught up until his death in 1963). Yet he became best known for his popular works of children's fantasy and his writings and talks on the Christian faith. He is best known as the author of The Chronicles of Narnia, but he is also noted for his other works of fiction, such as The Screwtape Letters and The Space Trilogy, and for his non-fiction Christian apologetics, including Mere Christianity and The Problem of Pain. Lewis also served and was wounded in the trenches during WW1.

Although raised in a Christian household, Lewis went through a period of atheism in his youth. His journey back to Christianity was marked by intellectual inquiry and spiritual longing, culminating in a profound conversion experience.

Lewis's conversion was influenced by a Sunday walk he took with J.R.R. Tolkien and Hugo Dyson in 1929. During the walk, the conversation turned to myth and reality, and Lewis's atheism began to give way to belief in God. Lewis later described Tolkien and Dyson as the "immediate human causes" of his conversion.

“I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else” C.S. Lewis



TO LUCY BARFIELD

My Dear Lucy,

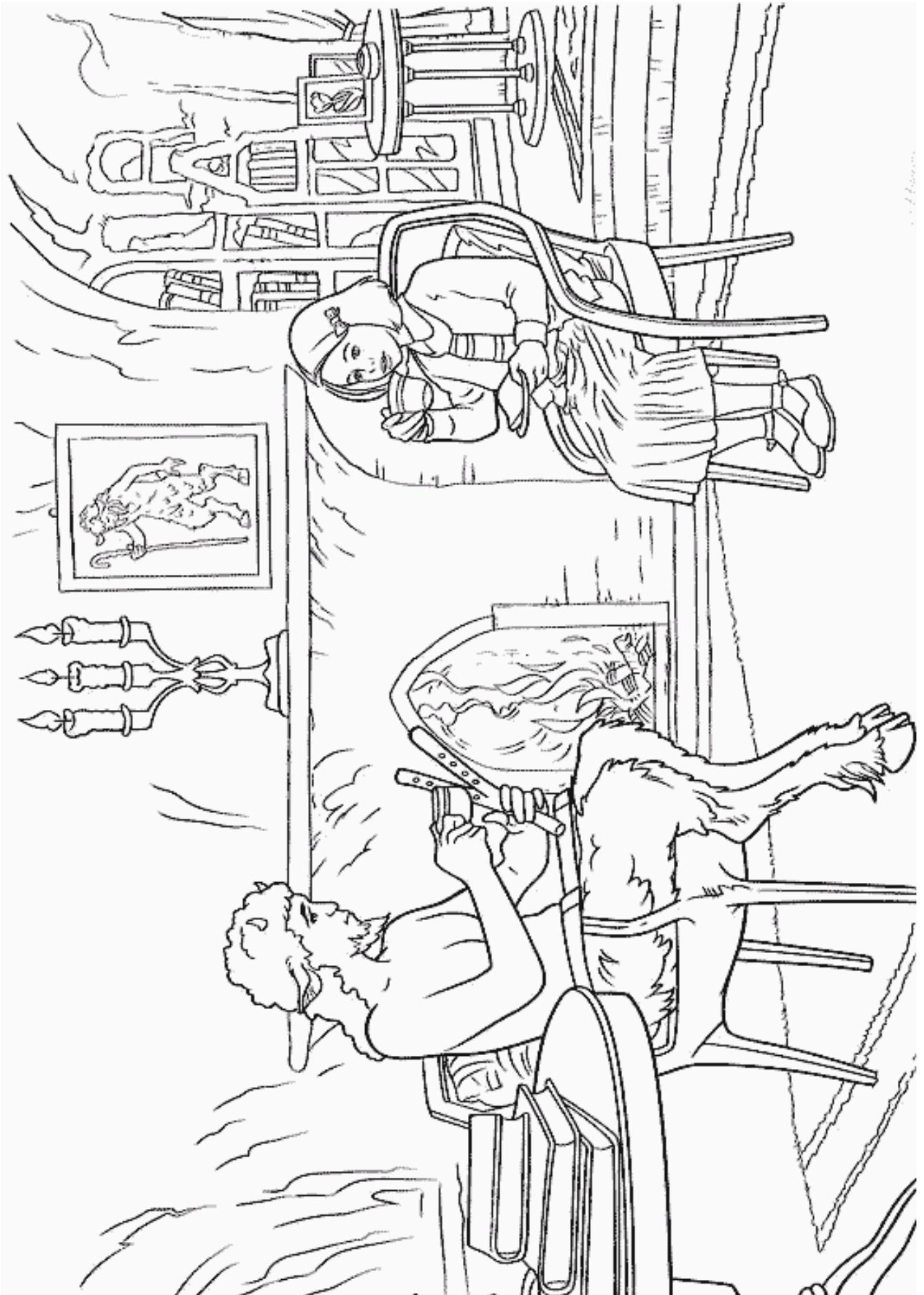
I wrote this story for you, but when I began it I had not realized that girls grow quicker than books. As a result you are already too old for fairy tales, and by the time it is printed and bound you will be older still. But some day you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again. You can then take it down from some upper shelf, dust it, and tell me what you think of it. I shall probably be too deaf to hear, and too old to understand, a word you say, but I shall still be

your affectionate Godfather,

C. S. LEWIS

The character of Lucy Pevensie is said to have been inspired by June Flewett, an evacuee who stayed at Lewis' country home in 1942 and named after Lewis's goddaughter Lucy Barfield, to whom he dedicated The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe.

Narnia colouring page! Enjoy!



Christmas at St Paul's

*Always winter but never
Christmas...until now!*

Sunday 8th Dec: Narnia-themed youth-led Service 10.30 am

Sunday 15th Dec: Christmas Gift Service
Gifts to Purley Food Hub

Saturday 21st Dec: Narnia Christmas Party 12 pm - 2 pm
To book your free tickets please email: info@stpaulsurc.org.uk

Saturday 21st Dec: Explore Narnia by Lamplight
6 pm-8 pm No booking required

Christmas Eve: Carols by Candlelight at 6.30pm
Refreshments after the service

Christmas Day: 10am at South Croydon United
Aberdeen Road, CR0 1EQ

Sunday 5th January: Epiphany Service led by Junior Church



Happy Christmas!