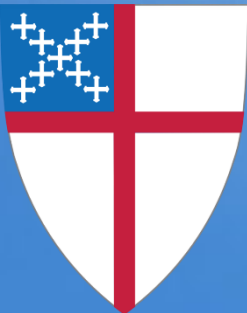


Winter 2023

IKON

The Ascension Messenger



Church
of the
Ascension
Munich

Points to Note

Worship

We worship every Sunday at midday in the Emmauskirche, Laurinplatz, 81545 München, Germany. For up-to-date news and details of services, check our website at: www.ascension-munich.org

Do also take a look at our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ascensionmunich and our YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UC4802rHFcPLNCJxnSGeZ3FA

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You can also contact the Junior Warden, **Sue Knowles**
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Senior Warden

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seniorwarden@ascension-munich.com

Financial Support

Our church receives no funds from any government body; we are entirely supported by the contributions of our members.

Donations and pledges can be made by bank transfer to:
The Church of the Ascension, Deutsche Bank
IBAN: DE49 7007 0024 0459 8702 00

2 Corinthians 9:7 *“Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”*

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Editorial

Dear sisters and brother is Christ,

I have to admit that as someone who grew up in Britain, the four saints I really know are David (Wales March 1st), Patrick (Ireland March 17th), George (England 23rd April) and Andrew (Scotland 30th November). So I have chosen the “winter” saint Andrew to grace the cover of this edition. Sorry ladies, I looked up December saints and came up with St. Ethelgiva, abbess of Shaftsbury, England, whose name I couldn’t resist, but I couldn’t find a suitable icon for her.

This is a bumper edition and it is heartening to have new contributors as well as people whose names have appeared in previous **Ikons**. One disadvantage of only having three editions a year is that some events, way back in the summer now, may be forgotten. If this causes offence, I apologise.

The usual features are included: My Bible, Bible Quiz, Outreach activities, Racial Justice Book Group, the Interview, News from the Vestry, Ascension Recipe, Congratulations and Coming Events as well as reports on what various activities the younger groups in our church get up to.

There are two items to which I would like to draw your attention particularly. Firstly, on the News from the Vestry page there is a report on the Mutual Ministry Review, an important indicator of how things are

going at our church. Secondly, don’t miss the item on the service during which Rev. Dr. Ali Gray was commissioned as Canon for Spirituality in the Convocation.

There are many items that are Christmas related and I hope you enjoy them especially the item on Visual Stories: The Adoration of the Magi by Rolf Schneider, Christmas around the World and the short story.

Before I close I will go back to St. Andrew. Relics, alleged to be some of those of St. Andrew, were kept in St Mary’s Cathedral, Edinburgh, Scotland. It was Augustine of Canterbury – see Deirdre’s report of her pilgrimage in Normandy – who was supposedly instrumental in bringing the relics to Britain.

It only remains for me to wish you a Blessed Christmas and a happy and healthy 2024 and to underline the message from Fr. Dan, that as we celebrate, we should be sure to look out for the many gifts of God in our lives.

Peace

Sue



Letter from Fr. Dan

These last few months the Vestry has been using a model, that I've shared here in the **Ikön** before, to examine the life of our parish and see how God is at work in our midst. The model is called **Gather, Transform, Send**. This model encourages us to remember that God gathers us in, from our various places, with our various histories, our many gifts, and our particular challenges. We are gathered in God's name for worship and for study, for service and for support.

God is the one who calls us together. Then, through these various activities and through our loving community, God transforms us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

We are transformed, each and every day, more and more into the likeness of Christ. We are transformed by the love of Christ. We are transformed by the peace of Christ. Transformed in community. Then, we are sent back into our families, into our workplaces, into our many relationships, into our schools and institutions in order to share the love of Christ with the world around us. Gather, Transform, Send.

This model is celebratory in nature, because it holds fast to the idea that God is at work among us. It helps us focus on the movement of the Holy Spirit. This model encourages us to remember that God is the leader of our church. God is the prime mover among us. God is the transformative



force that is leading, supporting and sustaining our church.

This time of year we are called, even more than usual, to look for God's work and celebrate it. As our year comes to a close, we have a lot to rejoice over. We've talked a lot about financial sustainability, and we are closer than ever to reaching that point.

In the last two years, we've nearly erased a deficit of around 30,000 Euros. This year we did this without holding a Bridge the Gap campaign...something we've had to do for the last several years.

God is moving among us.
Transforming us.
This is something to celebrate.

Each and every week, we now hear the joyful noise of children in our worship. Just a few short years ago, this sound wasn't heard that much among us. We are faithfully sharing the love of God with the next generation and this is something to celebrate.

Our Young Adult program is active and growing. God is moving, and we should celebrate this. We are growing in grace and number, and we should give thanks for these gifts of God.

Our Outreach Ministries serve those who really need to experience the tangible love of God. This is something to celebrate. Our Music Ministry faithfully helps us to worship in the beauty of holiness. God is moving, and we celebrate.

But God's transformative work doesn't begin or end with the Church. God is at work in your life at this moment.

This Christmas, as we give and receive gifts, be sure to look out for the many gifts of God in your life. Look for the ways that God is transforming you, stretching you and challenging you.

Ask God where you are being sent to share these gifts, share God's love, share God's peace... and do it all in a spirit of celebration.

Merry Christmas,

Dan

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Canon for Spirituality

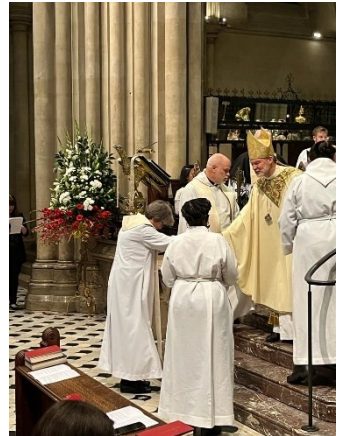
On Sunday 5th November a very special worship service took place in the American Cathedral in Paris. It was not only the All Saints' service, but also the installation service of the new Dean of the Cathedral. Others, however, were commissioned alongside him in what was a full and musically rich service. Among them was our own Ali Gray.

She was commissioned as a Canon for Spirituality in the Convocation. This is no small honor or task. She will be responsible for providing education, encouragement and mentoring on matters of spirituality. Of course, we know that she does this already, so it was very satisfying to see her gifts being officially acknowledged.

In the photo below, you will see that Ali is standing next to another woman robed in white. This is none other than Mpho Tutu van Furth, the daughter of the late Desmond Tutu, and a force for good in her own right. Since the inception of the Committee for Racial Justice and Beloved Community in the Convocation, there has been a need and call for a convocation-wide missioner to connect the Churches on this topic. In her sermon to our Convention in Wiesbaden, Mpho emphasized that 'God always answers our prayers'. With her coming forward to be the Canon for Racial Justice and Beloved Community, God certainly answered our prayers.



I was grateful to be at this service, and to have a small role in presenting the new Dean with the Convocation tippet seal and welcoming him into the Convocation. If you would like to watch all or part of the service, it can be found on YouTube here:



<https://www.youtube.com/theamericancathedralinparis>

Lois Stuckenbruck

Impressions of the Convocation Convention

This year's Convocation Convention was held from the 19th to 21st October in Wiesbaden and it was the first Convention I had attended. The theme was 'Beloved Community' and I felt as if we all had the chance to experience what that could feel like during our time together.



We started off with some business sessions where we discussed the Convocation's budgets and various resolutions that were proposed. To name a few, we talked about the Convocation's climate impact and an action plan to reduce it; the middle-eastern conflict; and we welcomed the new mission at Amsterdam into the Convocation.

During his address Bishop Mark emphasized the importance of prayer and that everything we do as a church should be rooted in it.

As a reaction to this, the Convention decided to proclaim 2024 as a Year of Prayer within the Convocation.

On Friday we finished the Convention and started the Festival of Gathering during which we had the chance to attend various workshops and three inspiring talks, all about 'Building Beloved Community'. Hearing what other parishes have experienced helped me understand our own initiatives better and led me to thinking a lot more about what 'Beloved Community' actually means.

The common worship was also very enriching and formed a binding element throughout the days we spent together in Wiesbaden. In the same way the times of fellowship shaped the experience for me, as I had the chance to get to know both the people from Ascension and from other parishes a lot better.

The conversations we had and the connections we built are what 'Beloved Community' is for me and thus I am very grateful for the opportunity to experience Convocation Convention this year.

Charlotte Rieger

Berggottesdienst Kampenwand July 16

We missed you all! The Berggottesdienst has been a tradition at Ascension that has fallen by the wayside since Covid. There is a movement by a few to make this an annual event again. It is advertised as an Ecumenical service which translated means Lutherans, one Old Catholic and for the last three years one Episcopalian /Anglican. Clair+ participated in two and Ali+ represented us last year.

Hopefully 2024 will be the year more Ascensioners will make the trek up the mountain or take advantage of the gondola ride to worship in this most beautiful setting. This year we were joined by some 4-leggers that thought our presence was for them. Fortunately, the altar flowers were saved and the cows stepped back with a little encouragement until the service was over.

It was lovely to see so many coming up the mountain to worship together. People found places to sit all over the mountain with family and friends. The weather was comfortable, although we encountered rain at times. After our agape meal, the clouds opened and the sun shone through. One of our little gifts of the Spirit that day!

George Battrick is our ringleader and Ascension organizer. He was joined by Sue Morris, Maurits de Lint (Sue's personal escort par excellence), Rainer Ullmann, and Rev. Clair Ullmann.

Four of us met before the service, took the gondola together and stopped at the restaurant at the Bergstation for a coffee to warm our bodies before continuing. It was there that Sue appeared with a big smile to greet us! George and Clair+ went on ahead to the Steinlingalm while the other three took a bit longer to enjoy the view and take pictures.



After the service we found a quiet table for our lunch and Ascension sharing. Eventually, we started our walk down to the gondola to return to our homes with warm tummies, a sense of peace and belonging, and love in our hearts. We do hope more will join next year. It would be even more fun!!!

Rev. Clair Ullmann +

The Gift of the Magi

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. She had put it aside, one cent and then another and then another, in her careful buying of meat and other food. Della counted it three times. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was nothing to do but fall on the bed and cry. So Della did it.

While the lady of the home is slowly growing quieter, we can look at the home. Furnished rooms at a cost of \$8 a week. There is little more to say about it. In the hall below was a letter-box too small to hold a letter. There was an electric bell, but it could not make a sound. Also there was a name beside the door: "Mr. James Dillingham Young".

When the name was placed there, Mr. James Dillingham Young was being paid \$30 a week. Now, when he was being paid only \$20 a week, the name seemed too long and important. It should perhaps have been "Mr. James D. Young." But when Mr. James Dillingham Young entered the furnished rooms, his name became very short indeed. Mrs. James Dillingham Young put her arms warmly about him and called him "Jim". You have already met her. She is Della.

Della finished her crying and cleaned the marks of it from her face. She stood by the window and looked out with no interest. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a gift. She had put aside as much as she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week is not much. Everything had cost more than she had expected. It always happened like that.

Only \$ 1.87 to buy a gift for Jim. Her Jim. She had had many happy hours planning something nice for him. Something nearly good enough. Something almost worth the honor of belonging to Jim.

There was a looking-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen the kind of looking-glass that is placed in \$8 furnished rooms. It was very narrow. A person could see only a little of himself at a time. However, if he was very thin and moved very quickly, he might be able to get a good view of himself. Della, being quite thin, had mastered this art.

Suddenly she turned from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brightly, but her face had lost its color. Quickly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its complete length.

The James Dillingham Youngs were very proud of two things which they owned. One thing was Jim's gold watch. It had once belonged to his father. And, long ago, it had belonged to his father's father. The other thing was Della's hair.

Ikon

If a queen had lived in the rooms near theirs, Della would have washed and dried her hair where the queen could see it. Della knew her hair was more beautiful than any queen's jewels and gifts. If a king had lived in the same house, with all his riches, Jim would have looked at his watch every time they met. Jim knew that no king had anything so valuable.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, shining like a falling stream of brown water. It reached below her knee. It almost made itself into a dress for her.

And then she put it up on her head again, nervously and quickly. Once she stopped for a moment and stood still while a tear or two ran down her face.

She put on her old brown coat. She put on her old brown hat. With the bright light still in her eyes, she moved quickly out the door and down to the street. Where she stopped, the sign said: "Mrs. Sofronie. Hair Articles of all Kinds".

Up to the second floor Della ran, and stopped to get her breath. Mrs. Sofronie, large, too white, cold-eyed, looked at her.

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair." said Mrs. Sofronie. "Take your hat off and let me look at it".

Down fell the brown waterfall. "Twenty dollars." said Mrs. Sofronie, lifting the hair to feel its weight. "Give it to me quick" said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours seemed to fly. She was going from one shop to another, to find a gift for Jim. She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the shops, and she had looked in every shop in the city. It was a gold watch chain, very simply made. Its value was in its rich and pure material. Because it was so plain and simple, you knew that it was very valuable. All good things are like this. As soon as she saw it, she knew that Jim must have it. It was like him. Quietness and value – Jim and the chain both had quietness and value. She paid twenty-one dollars for it. And she hurried home with the chain and eighty-seven cents.

It was good enough for The Watch.

With that chain on his watch, Jim could look at his watch and learn the time anywhere he might be. Though the watch was so fine, it had never had a fine chain. He sometimes took it out and looked at it only when no one could see him do it.

When Della arrived home, her mind quieted a little. She began to think more reasonably. She started to try to cover the sad marks of what she had done. Love and large-hearted giving, when added together, can leave deep marks. It is never easy to cover these marks, dear friends – never easy.

Within forty minutes her head looked a little better. With her short hair, she looked wonderfully like a schoolboy. She stood at the looking-glass for a long time.

“If Jim doesn’t kill me,” she said to herself, “before he looks at me a second time, he’ll say I look like a girl who sings and dances for money. But what could I do – oh! What could I do with a dollar and eighty seven cents?”

At seven, Jim’s dinner was ready for him.

Jim was never late. Della held the watch chain in her hand and sat near the door where he always entered. Then she heard his step in the hall and her face lost color for a moment. She often said little prayers quietly, about simple everyday things. And now she said:

“Please God, make him think I’m still pretty”.

The door opened and Jim stepped in. He looked very thin and he was not smiling. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two – and with a family to take care of! He needed a new coat and he had nothing to cover his cold hands.

Jim stopped inside the door. He was as quiet as a hunting dog when it is near a bird. His eyes looked strangely at Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not understand. It filled her with fear. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor anything she had been ready for. He simply looked at her with that strange expression on his face. Della went to him.

“Jim, dear,” she cried, “don’t look at me like that. I had my hair cut off and sold it. I couldn’t live through Christmas without giving you a gift. My hair will grow again. You won’t care, will you? My hair grows very fast. It’s Christmas, Jim. Let’s be happy. You don’t know what a nice – what a beautiful nice gift I got for you”.

“You’ve cut off your hair?” asked Jim slowly. He seemed to labor to understand what had happened. He seemed not to feel sure he knew.

“Cut it off and sold it” said Della. “Don’t you like me now? I’m me, Jim. I’m the same without my hair”.

Jim looked around the room.

“You say your hair is gone?” he said.

“You don’t have to look for it,” said Della. “It’s sold, I tell you – sold and gone, too. It’s the night before Christmas, boy. Be good to me, because I sold it for you. Maybe the hairs of my head could be counted,” she said, “but no one could ever count my love for you. Shall we eat dinner, Jim?”

Ikon

Jim put his arms around his Della. For ten seconds let us look in another direction. Eight dollars a week or a million dollars a year—how different are they? Someone may give you an answer, but it will be wrong. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. My meaning will be explained soon.

From inside the coat, Jim took something tied in paper. He threw it upon the table.

“I want you to understand me, Dell” he said. “Nothing like a haircut could make me love you any less. But if you’ll open that, you may know what I felt when I came in”.

White fingers pulled off the paper. And then a cry of joy; and then a change to tears. For there lay The Combs—the combs that Della had seen in a shop window and loved for a long time. Beautiful combs, with jewels, perfect for her beautiful hair. She had known they cost too much for her to buy them. She had looked at them without the least hope of owning them. And now they were hers, but her hair was gone. But she held them to her heart, and at last was able to look up and say:

“My hair grows so fast, Jim!

And then she jumped up and cried, “Oh, oh!”

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful gift. She held it out to him in her open hand. The gold seemed to shine softly as if with her own warm and loving spirit.

“Isn’t it perfect, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You’ll have to look at your watch a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how they look together”.

Jim sat down and smiled.

“Della” said he, “let’s put our Christmas gifts away and keep them a while. They’re too nice to use now. I sold the watch to get the money to buy the combs. And now I think we should have our dinner”.

The magi, as you know, were wise men – wonderfully wise men – who brought gifts to the newborn Christ-child. They were the first to give Christmas gifts. Being wise, their gifts were doubtless wise ones. And here I have told you the story of two children who were not wise.

Each sold the most valuable thing he owned in order to buy a gift for the other. But let me speak a last word to the wise of these days: Of all who give gifts, these two were the most wise. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are the most wise. Everywhere they are the wise ones.

They are the magi.

By William Sydney Porter (1862- 1910), whose pen name was O. Henry.

The Work of Christmas

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman

The poem “The Work of Christmas” is excerpted from Howard Thurman’s *The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations* and is used by permission of Friends United Press. All rights reserved.

<https://bookstore.friendsunitedmeeting.org/collections/howard-thurman/products/mood-of-christmas-and-other-celebrations-the>



Visual Stories: The Adoration of the Magi

For two millennia people have celebrated the birth of Christ as related in the Gospels of Luke (2:1-21) and Matthew (2:1-12). Only the latter, however, tells the story of the wise Magi (μάγοι in Greek). Guided by the star they journeyed from their distant home in the East to Bethlehem. They fell down, worshipped the new-born King of the Jews and offered him royal gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Depictions of the Adoration of the Magi are not attested much before AD 300. But from this time onwards their representation gained wide popularity. The Adoration of the (anonymous) Magi was not only found in static contexts, such as churches, catacombs and imperial structures, but was also present in small portable images, for example, metal and ivory vessels, ivory diptychs, gold glasses, ring stones, textiles and pilgrim items.

One of the earliest examples is the marble fragment of a child's sarcophagus (ca. AD 300), found in the Vatican cemetery (see fig. 1). It juxtaposes two different biblical narratives: the smaller scene on the left shows Ezekiel's prophesy of the Valley of Dry Bones (Ezekiel 37:1-14), which promises the resurrection of the dead. This apt and comforting Old Testament story leads to the New Testament narrative on the right: this shows the Adoration of the Magi who carry the gifts mentioned by Matthew. Interesting is the fact that there are three Magi (their number is not mentioned in Matthew) and that they do not fall down but approach Mary and the new-born Jesus upright as if in a "moving" procession. All three are portrayed as what Romans considered typically Persian: clean-shaven with long coiffured hair, trousers, a long-sleeved, double-belted tunic, a cape-like mantle over the shoulders, soft shoes, and a Phrygian cap. The first Magus points to the star that led them to Bethlehem. Mary is seated and dressed in a fashion similar to representations of the Roman empress. The heads of two camels in the background refer to the Magi's long journey and the heavy weight of their abundant gifts.

The sarcophagus provides details not addressed by Matthew: there are *three* Magi and they have come with their camels. There is little suggestion that Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem; on the contrary the representation of Mary is stately.



Fig. 1. Roman Sarcophagus. ca. CE 300. Marble, 32x85x8 cm. Musei Vaticani, Museo Pio Cristiano 3145 (photo Museum)

The appearance of the Magi resembles that of captured Persians paying tribute to the Roman emperor (see fig. 3). In fact, early Christian art is leaning heavily on imperial imagery to depict the Adoration of the Magi. There is at this stage no kneeling and the Magi are fairly young and beardless and not as in later depictions, young, middle-aged and older with a beard.

By the sixth century the depiction has developed further as two 'twin' ivory diptycha show (notebooks with covers carved in low relief on the outer faces). The bottom panel of the Christian Etschmiadzin diptychon represents the procession of three Magi in Persian dress, the leading one with a beard. They approach the Infant Jesus in a hurrying, semi-kneeling pose. There are no camels and no star. Here the Magi are guided by two angels, one on the far right and the other near Jesus. New is the male figure sitting behind Mary's elaborate cathedra, probably Joseph. This diptychon is much nearer to the nativity story as we know it.

In contrast to the Barberini diptychon (see fig. 3) the large centre panel depicts, instead of a Roman Emperor, Mary with the Infant Jesus, this time in a larger format. Both are framed on each side by two smaller scenes based on stories around the birth of Christ. The top panel bears a triumphant cross, carried by two angels, and acts as a symbol of Christ.

While the composition of the imperial Barberini Diptychon is rather similar to that of the Christian Etschmiadzin Diptychon, its imagery is not. The bottom panel of the former depicts not one but two tribute processions of Asians. In both processions two Asians are hurrying in a semi-kneeling pose towards the centre. The one on the left shows two bearded Magi in Persian costume, carrying the same gifts as those on the child sarcophagus (see fig. 1). The one on the right depicts two half-naked and clean-shaven people, identified as Indians by their exotic company: a lion, a leopard and an elephant; India supplies the costly material of which the diptych is made.

The goddess Victoria in the middle of the bottom panel guides the four tribute bearers to the central panel. It represents the key figure of the narrative, a Roman emperor, possibly Justinian, in full array on a horse. He is accompanied by a high-ranking Roman officer standing in the smaller panel on the left. In the top panel the bust of Christ flanked by two angels reigns supreme over the world.

The two diptycha emphasise the close relationship between imperial and Christian imagery in the early Christian art of late antiquity, and show how both were conceived to link their conflicting narratives with each other. Eventually, the emperor is replaced by Jesus and His power is now absolute as was the emperor's before.

Representing the only other superpower next to Rome, Persians were seen by Romans and Christians in manifold ways. They were not only read as barbarians subdued by Rome but also as people of exotic origin and splendour, of legendary power, and finally as reliable eyewitnesses of the birth of Jesus, King of the Jews, who could be converted to the new faith, namely Christianity.

Ikon

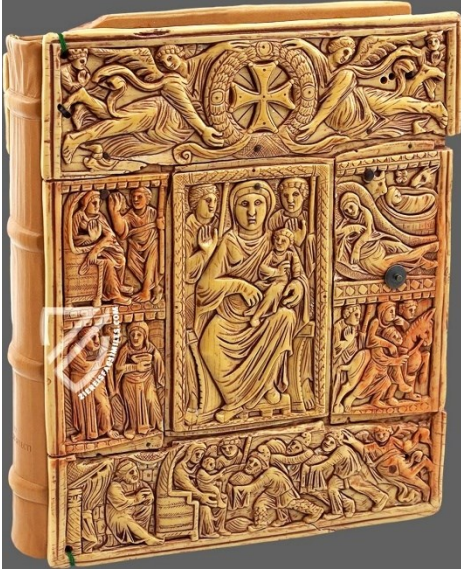


Fig. 2. Etschmiadzin Diptychon (facsimile).
Ivory, ca. 36x30cm. Yerevan, Matenadaran Ms.
2374 (photo Zierys Faksimiles)



Fig. 3. Barberini Diptychon. Ivory, ca. 32x 27x3
cm. Possibly from Constantinople. Louvre
Museum OA 9063 (photo Marie-Lan Nguyen,
Wikimedia Commons)

For Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria (4th century), the adoration of the Magi was the prime example with which to demonstrate the universal belief in Christ and His power over all people:

He was born in Judaea, and the Persians came to worship Him by prostrating themselves (προκυνῆσαι in Greek). He it is who even before his bodily manifestation won victory over the opposing demons and trophies of idolatry. So all gentiles everywhere, rejecting the custom of their fathers and the impiety of idols, are henceforth placing their hope in Christ and dedicating themselves to Him, as one can see with one's own eyes (Athanasius, *de incarnatione* 37.5).



Fig.4. Master of the Wenemaer Triptych, right wing. Oil, ca. 84x33 cm. Gent, Museum of Fine Arts 1903-I (photo Dominique Provost, Wikimedia Commons)

The Adoration of the Magi continued to be a popular depiction in Christian art and underwent in the passing of time various changes: the number three became established and the ages of the Magi came to represent the span of life. Gold, frankincense and myrrh could be replaced by other precious gifts. In the painting of around 1470 we come closer to what we today see as the core components of the Adoration scene (Fig.4): Mary with the Infant Jesus, Joseph in the background and three “kingly” figures, one of whom is kneeling (seems to be a high-ranking cleric) and one of whom is black. All this is far removed from the rendering given to us by Matthew. New composition, new style and new environment, but that is another story.

Rolf Schneider

My Bible: The Voice

Although this ‘new’ version of the Bible came out in 2012, I only discovered **The Voice** this summer on Bible Gateway – one of the 150 versions it provides online.

Chris Seay (church planter and third-generation Baptist pastor and President of the Ecclesia Bible Society) met with colleagues at the beginning of 2004 to plan for a new translation of the Bible which:

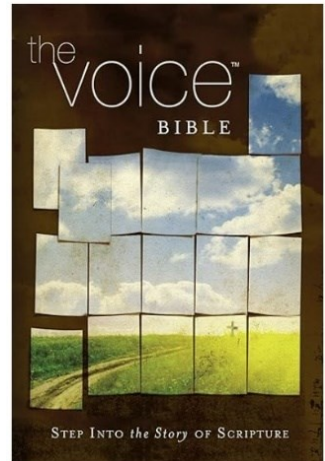
- is true to the different literary styles of the 40+ authors of what has become the Bible
- emerges from a dynamic, not word-for-word, translation
- honours the drama and literary beauty of the ‘narrative, poetry, song, truth, and wisdom’
- accurately understands and faithfully retells what the original languages convey
- uses a ‘screenplay style’ format, taking care as to how the words sound to the ear.

‘... *how the words sound to the ear*’. That more theatrical approach appealed greatly to me. Even more so as the theme of the Women’s Retreat this year was listening – and listening to David Suchet reading Bible passages during the former *Way of Love* groups led by the Rev. Ali online was so compelling!

The Ecclesia Bible Society had gathered a group of over 125 Bible and language scholars as well as artists, writers, poets and musicians to collaborate on the final text. And **The Voice** was released in its entirety in 2012 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

David B. Capes (Senior Research Fellow, Dean of Biblical & Theological Studies and Professor of Greek and New Testament at Wheaton College (IL)) who was lead editor of the project has written extensively about **The Voice** on the Bible Gateway site

<https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/The-Voice-Bible>.



Several of the team’s editorial decisions fascinate me. For example although there was ‘no attempt to make The Voice gender neutral or gender inclusive’, the team scrutinised who were being addressed and included ‘and sisters’ when ‘brothers’ obviously reflected a mixed audience.

Another example I could relate to: The names of God chosen differ from many (but not all) other translations:

- 1) **The Eternal** (rather than The LORD, Yahweh or Jehovah) to render the Hebrew *Tetragrammaton*,
- 2) **The Voice** (rather than The Word) to render the Greek *Logos* and
- 3) **The Anointed One** (rather than Christ) to render the Greek *Christos*.

These decisions have been bringing the text to life for me – some examples.

Psalm 106:4: *Remember me, O Eternal One, when You show kindness to Your people; don't forget me when You are saving them.*

John1:1: *Before time itself was measured, the Voice was speaking. The Voice was and is God.*

John 4:25-26: *Woman: These mysteries will be made clear by He who is promised, the Anointed One.*

Jesus: The Anointed is speaking to you. I am the One you have been looking for.

Carol Adeney



Bible Quiz

- 2 According to Matthew, where does Jesus's first public sermon take place?
- 3 To whom are Luke's Gospel & Acts addressed?
- 4 What tribe was Paul from?
- 5 On what island was Paul shipwrecked as he made his way to Rome?

Answers on page 27

Harvest Thanksgiving

This year's Harvest Thanksgiving service, like last year's, presented the parish members with an opportunity to put aside that stiff-upper-lip and customary CoA decorum.

Led by Donald Adewale in his wonderful African robes the parish members processed down the aisle with their harvest gifts, singing and dancing to the sound of "O Happy Day", the musical accompaniment provided by Patrick Resseng with his keyboard and powerful vocals.

Donald "encouraged" the clergy and acolytes to do the same, with himself and Fr. Dan taking the lead. Dan seemed to relish the opportunity to slip into a different role, if only for a few minutes.

In the course of the service we heard a moving testimony from Chiara Ridolfi.

For the traditionalists among us the last hymn was the much-loved "We plough the fields and scatter", without which no harvest service would be complete and then Reimar Volker (saxophone) and Gudrun Förster (organ) concluded the service by treating us to a masterful "My heart is filled with thankfulness".

After the service the congregation enjoyed a potluck in the Gemeindesaal where as usual the tables were groaning with food which reflected the culinary diversity of the parish. There was a silent auction of donated goods, edible or otherwise, and nearly all the items were sold. The auction raised a very respectable total of 275 Euros, and together with the generously supported collection, which totalled 442 Euros, was an encouraging expression of the generosity of the congregation and of our gratitude for the gifts of God.

Thanks to everyone who participated, particularly Donald and Patrick Resseng, and to all those who donated items for the auction and brought food to share. A particular thanks goes to the unsung heroes behind the scenes at the potluck, Tonda Kemmerling and her team: Nurtac Denton, Margaret Eeda,



Donald encourages the congregation to bring forward their gifts

Annette Holbein, Aileen Klarmann, Maria Ramadori Volker, Sue Morris, Teresa Morrow, Joy Schindel.

It was an edifying and hugely enjoyable morning of worship and fellowship, and I am already looking forward to next year.

Amanda Hoeschler



The procession begins.



Singing and dancing.



Harvest gifts.

Ascension Recipe

Ingredients

3 tbsp sunflower oil
3 medium tomatoes (ripe)
1 medium onion
2-3 tbsp tamarind (to taste)*
4-6 dried red chillies*
1 tbsp cumin seeds
2 tbsp white lentils (white urad dal)*
2 tbsp roasted peanuts
2 tbsp mint leaves
1 tbsp split chickpeas (chana dal)*
Salt as per your taste
4-6 tbsp water

Method

- Roughly chop the tomatoes and onion.
- Heat the oil in a pan and then add the cumin seeds, lentils, split chickpeas, and dried red chillies. Sauté for a minute
- Add tomatoes and sauté for 2 minutes.
- Add onion and tamarind and sauté for another 2 minutes.
- Add roasted peanuts and mint. Cook for a minute.
- Add salt to taste.
- Turn off the heat.
- Leave to cool and then put in a blender with the water and blend into a paste.



For the tempering:

3-4 tbsp sunflower oil
1 tsp of mustard seeds
1 tsp cumin seeds
3 cloves garlic
6-8 curry leaves*
2-3 dried red chillies*

For the tempering

- Roughly chop the garlic.
- Heat the oil in a small pan. Once the oil is heated add all the ingredients to the pan.
- Then pour these warm ingredients over the cold chutney.

Serve with Indian breads like dosa, appam, roti, and Idli.

*available at good Asian/Indian supermarkets and online

Margaret Eeda

An Interview with...

Philippa Cahil and Daniel Menzel

These two relative newcomers have got involved very quickly in the life of our church. They are familiar figures at the front left-hand side of the church as part of the tech team and are very welcome members!



So tech experts! Do you use technology for your job(s)?

Philippa: I don't at all, well no more than anyone working in administration does. I use computers and Zoom of course but am by no means an expert.

So what do you do?

Philippa: I work at the LMU as the Erasmus Outgoing Study Coordinator. You may have heard of Erasmus, a reciprocal exchange scheme that allows students to work or study abroad. It is a bit sad for me that the UK no longer participates in this, preferring their own Turing scheme that is only for British students. LMU and other universities have had to adapt to this new situation. It is as it is, but LMU has retained contacts with the UK.

And you Daniel?

Daniel: After my apprenticeship I worked as a graphic designer for a while, but I am now a Leutnant (2nd Lieutenant) in the German Air Force. I have committed myself for the next ten years and at the moment I am studying for a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Computer Science. I did my basic training in Gernersheim which is in Rhineland-Pfalz and then was posted to Fürstenfeldbruck where I attended Officer's School. Now we are here, and like it very much. We plan to be around Munich for as long as possible, at least two years until I finish my Master's degree. Once my contract is over, I would like to get a job that is near Munich.

How did you two meet?

Philippa: We met when I was living in Strasburg and working at the university there with a similar job to the one I have now. We discovered the modern wonders of online dating.

Exciting for an oldie like me. How does that work?

Philippa: You can decide how far you want to go outside the area you are living, and so set this geographical parameter in your search. As Daniel was, at that time, living in his home town of Weinheim and I was living near the German border, that meant that our area of search was the same.

Daniel: I visited Philippa in Strasburg.

Philippa: And we had our first date at the Historical Museum there. That was 2018.

And the rest, as one says, is history. Do you speak German or English together?

Daniel: German when we are with my family, but otherwise if it is just the two of us we speak English.

Philippa: Having spent thirteen years in France firstly in Limoges for my MA and then in Strasburg, when we first met I could not really have an adult conversation in German; my first degree in French and German at Durham was a long time ago, so we conversed in English.

Daniel was very modest when I asked him how he came to speak such good English.

Daniel: I really don't know. Maybe because I have relatives in the US and so I was exposed to English as a child.

Philippa: I have never known anyone speak such good English, never having lived in an English-speaking country.

So how is your German now Philippa?

Philippa: Good enough for me to work in that language. It was challenging in 2021 when I was looking for jobs, but in fact now German words come more easily to me than French ones do. I never thought that would happen.

How did you find the Church of the Ascension?

Philippa: We were looking for somewhere to get married. I grew up in the Church of England and Daniel grew up Catholic and as Christians we both wanted to get married in a church and we didn't know how that would work.

Daniel: So I came up with the idea of an English speaking church.

Philippa: We came one Sunday to have a look, and see how we found it. We soon realised that this is a fantastic Church. We were made to feel very welcome. We stayed for coffee and spoke to Ali. We loved Dan's sermon that day. I remember at the time it contained something so very appropriate. It was meant to be.

Daniel: And George asked me to join the Men's Night Out planned for a couple of days later. Which I did and I now go almost every time. It's really enjoyable.

Philippa: We quite quickly realised that the church was not just a place to get married but one in which to find a community.

Good to know. Do you have any hobbies you would like to tell us about?

Philippa: I practise yoga regularly. I discovered it here in Munich and go every Friday night.

Daniel: I am more an outdoor person. I like hiking, running, riding my bike.

Philippa: So he does things like getting off the train in Augsburg and riding his bike back home to Munich. Not something I am going to get used to!

Daniel: And I am not going to become a yoga enthusiast!

Is there anything else you would like to say?

Philippa: I just think it is important for me to mention how happy we both are to have found this community. The Young Adults Group is really taking off and it is good to be part of that. There's a lot of motivation and ideas for the group to do things together.

Daniel: There have been lunches and we have enjoyed those.

Philippa: There are plans by the group to do some advertising for the church at the LMU. There are a lot of young people who come to Munich but don't always know about the church. There has been talk of a flyer and Daniel could help with that because of his experience of graphic designing.

This charming couple got married in the Church of the Ascension on 28th October. We are pleased to publish a picture of this happy occasion.

A reception in the Gemeindesaal followed the wedding itself, to which the couple generously invited the Ascension congregation.

Philippa and Daniel's family celebrations were at the Brauereigasthof Hotel Aying that they chose for the friendliness of the staff and the beautiful location.

It was the only venue that confirmed for them it was available on the date they wanted and a visit for Probe Essen convinced them this was the place for them and they needed to look no further.



I am sure you will all join me in wishing Daniel and Philippa Menzel every happiness.

Sue Morris



Answers to the Bible Quiz

(See page 20)

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1 | Turning water into wine |
| 2 | On the mount |
| 3 | Theophilus |
| 4 | Benjamin |
| 5 | Malta |

Christmas around the World

Ascension is a very diverse and vibrant community with parishioners from all over the world. Four have contributed to this article with descriptions of Christmas customs in their home countries and personal family memories.



Christmas in Nigeria

Nathaniel Anene

Nathaniel explained that Christmas is a very exciting time in Nigeria when extended families come together to celebrate and also to discuss the welfare of the family like paying of school fees, hospital bills and support for each other. His native language is Igbo. New clothes in very bright colours are worn and this is a time for visiting friends.

A traditional Christmas meal depends on the circumstances of the family, but is often a chicken stew or beef, goat and lamb. Other dishes include pounded yam, and jollof rice. Rice is often offered to visitors at this joyous time of year.

Celebrations start on the 24th December and go on until 2nd January. On 25th December families go to church to give thanks to God. Nathaniel particularly wanted to mention Knock Out, a popular phrase for letting off firecrackers and bangers. Almost every Nigerian participates in Knock Out over the festive period.

He could not remember any special songs that he and his family sang, but enough to give a rendition of “We wish you a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year”!

In Igbo, “Happy Christmas” is “Ekeresimesi Oma”.

Christmas in the US

Jared Warren

My memories of Christmas as a child in the US have everything to do with food. Although my mother’s great grandparents were born in nineteenth-century Poland (the corner in the Austro-Hungarian Empire), occasional bursts of cabbage and other culinary traces of Slavdom were the only evidence that remained after a century. And so my mother’s Polish heritage was always only explicitly visible on Christmas Eve, when – for reasons none of us could quite articulate – my family hosted a Polish dinner.

Just before Christmas, we spent the better part of a day filling homemade pierogi (dumplings) with more fillings seemingly every year: potato and cheese, cabbage,

mushroom, blueberry, and prune. In the days before the climate had so noticeably changed the weather patterns around Christmas in New England, we often had snow outside the kitchen windows covered with steam from the boiling pots of water and the cooking pierogi fillings. Christmas Eve was spent baking breads and cinnamon rolls that we ate on Christmas morning.

On Christmas Eve after a holiday service at my family's church, we hosted a few guests for pierogi, kielbasa (sausage), my great-grandmother's cabbage soup, freshly baked breads, and then borscht and an ever-rotating set of vegetables. Because of the timing of our Christmas Eve service, dinner was always served late, and the anticipation of Christmas and the attendant presents was always mingled with the thrill of being permitted to stay up later than usual.

In Polish, "Happy Christmas" is "Wesołych Świąt".

Christmas in the Philippines

Joy Schindel

It's been over forty years since I last spent Christmas in the land of my birth, the Philippines. Christmas has never been the same since I left in 1982.

I grew up in a big family with ten siblings. At Christmas, naturally, we had artificial Christmas trees and artificial snow, plus glittery, shiny decorations. It is a tradition in Manila to visit the big stores and look at the "Belen", i.e. the Bethlehem nativity scenes.

From the 16th to the 24th of December people wake up early to celebrate the "Misa de Gallo" (the Mass of the Rooster) at 04.00. This is a favorite tradition as churchgoers enjoy the cool air at that time and after the service there are warm treats, rice or cassava delicacies.

Another enjoyable tradition is caroling. Choir groups or wannabee chorus singers practiced English and Filipino carols and visited households to serenade them, hoping for a donation for a community project. There was usually hot ginger tea (for the vocal chords) or thick tsokolate (native chocolate).

These are some of my Christmas recollections. On Christmas Eve the whole family attended Midnight Mass. After mass we returned home to a Christmas banquet of Filipino and non-Filipino dishes: suckling pig, glazed ham, pancit (noodles), lumpia (spring rolls) and all different kinds of cakes. We exchanged and opened gifts and celebrated until the wee hours of the 25th. On Christmas Day itself almost everyone was fast asleep until half of the day was over and all leftovers were eaten.

I know that to this day, everyone gets excited about Christmas. They start playing Christmas songs as soon as the “ber” months begin (September... October....) and Christmas decorations and lighting become visible everywhere. I am no longer used to that. I like the season of celebrating Advent and being less materialistic while pondering on the “Reason for the Season”. But Christmas is and will always be a special time. We thank God for giving us His Only Son on this special day. Thank You, Lord!

In Tagalog, “Happy Christmas” is “Maligayang Pasko”.

Christmas in The Netherlands

Maurits de Lint

In the Netherlands, children do not receive presents for Christmas. This became painfully apparent to me when I, as a 7-year-old, witnessed my German cousins unpacking their presents. What can console a 7-year-old on such an occasion you may ask? Well, the knowledge that you have a special place in the heart of a beloved saint: Sinterklaas (Saint Nicholas).

All Dutch children grow up understanding that every year, towards the end of November, Sinterklaas comes sailing towards the Netherlands on his steamship. Accompanied by his helpers (conveniently all called ‘Piet’) and his trusty grey horse Amerigo, he is welcomed by crowds of children and their (grand)parents. The weeks after he is everywhere, visiting children at their schools, in shopping streets and at home. On television a daily news show is dedicated to him, the ‘Sinterklaasjournaal’. During this time, children look forward to the 5th of December, Sinterklaas’ birthday. On that day, in the evening, his helpers put bags filled with presents in front of children’s doors. And when all the children are overjoyed and playing with their new toys, Sinterklaas quietly leaves for Spain, to return in a year’s time.

Inevitably, there comes a point where children realise that the story that is told to them, what they believed in, is not true. However, based on my own experience, I can say that there will always be something that remains. A core that is true if you will. Sinterklaas is a person that speaks to the imagination by the good deeds that he does; through his selflessness and generosity. That is what Sinterklaas is about. One might say that in our collective effort to hold up the story of Sinterklaas, we as a nation practise our generosity and our selflessness. In this sense, Sinterklaas just might be a very good practice run for Christmas.

In Dutch, “Happy Christmas” is “Vrolijk Kerstfeest”.

Compiled by Amanda Höschler



Lent Madness

In the Winter 2022 edition of this magazine (see page 33) Deirdre Tincker introduced us to the idea of Lent Madness, instituted by Scott Gunn and Rev. Tim Schenk of the Forward Movement. See also the Summer 2023 edition to read about last year's winner.

There is no reason for a dreary Lenten discipline. To whet your appetite here are the saints that will be voted on this year. Why don't you join us and add your own vote? You can do this at:

<https://www.lentmadness.org>

The image features a tournament bracket for the 2024 Lent Madness.org event. The bracket is set against a purple background with the text "2024 LENTMADNESS.ORG" at the top. The bracket is divided into four rounds: ROUND OF 32, SAINTLY 16, ELITE 8, and FAITHFUL 4. The Round of 32 includes 32 saints, with names such as Thomas Cranmer, Thomas the Apostle, Henry Muhlenberg, Albert Schweitzer, Adomnan of Iona, Joseph Vaz, Pirani of Cornwall, Cornelius the Centurian, Rafiq of Lebanon, Clare of Assisi, Henry Whipple, Jackson Kemper, Pachomius, Cyprian of Carthage, Canaire, and Barbara. The Saintly 16 round includes saints like Kassia, Casimir, Lazarus, Joseph of Arimathea, Rita, Zita, Brigid of Kildare, Julian of Norwich, Gertrude the Great, Gertrude of Nivelles, Ambrose of Milan, William Byrd, Polycarp, Andrew the Fisherman, Hyacinth, and Rose of Lima. The Elite 8 and Faithful 4 rounds are currently empty. At the bottom of the bracket is a colorful illustration of 32 diverse saints, each with a golden halo, standing in a line. The text "THE GOLDEN HALO" is written above the illustration. The Forward Movement logo is in the bottom left corner.

Carol Adeney, Jeanne Glenz, Sue Morris, Kristi Nowak, Roy Palmeri & Deirdre Tincker.

Outreach

A Visit to Wildpark Poing

On Saturday 22nd July Jill and Angela accompanied the families of children who attend the Christophorus Schulverein in Trudering to Wildpark Poing. This institution supports children who are mentally challenged. Armed with feeding bags containing carrots, bread and apples the children happily set off and fed the free-roaming deer at the park.



Gabriela von Westerholt with whom we have worked in the last few years and who has just retired, sped us on our way with encouraging words and a thank you to Church of the Ascension whose donation each year makes this outing for the children, their siblings and their parents possible.

“...vielen, vielen Dank, liebe Jill, für die warmherzigen und lieben Worte! Ganz liebe Grüße, auch an Dich liebe Angela. Vielen herzlichen Dank für Eure großzügige Spende, damit können wir die Eintritte komplett bezahlen und ein kleines Eis ist vielleicht auch noch für die Kinder möglich!”

The Outreach Committee is very grateful to be able to offer a lovely day out to these children and their families. Do please join us next time!

The Münchner Tafel

A big thank you, Ascension!

The Outreach Committee would like to thank everyone who made a contribution to our stand at the *Tafel* this year, whether it was a mug, a puzzle, a book, a game or a toy. And thanks to all the women at the retreat in October who filled the colourful bags for the children. And thanks to all our knitters who knit such lovely items. And thanks to those who step up and help distribute all these items and the toiletries and Christmas chocolates on the day.

The committee is truly grateful and we are proud of your generosity.



Angela Schneider

Editor's Note

Read a fuller report of the visit to the *Tafel* and details of support for refugees in the next issue.

A Pilgrimage in Normandy

This summer I participated in Ken Dimmick's pilgrimage to Normandy. Many of you will remember Ken who served as Interim before Dan joined us. At the end of August, I travelled to Paris and met up with Ken and the other pilgrims: six in all. The theme of this pilgrimage was Crossings: physical, spiritual, emotional.

Ken planned the pilgrimage so that we spent two nights in every city and while most days we had morning and/or evening prayer or compline as well as discussions about what we saw and experienced, there was always the feeling that we were on holiday and were meant to be having fun exploring these "crossings". Actually, I don't remember the last time I had as much fun as at the Eric Satie House in Honfleur. Eric Satie, you say, wasn't he that strange musician and composer who wrote that spare piano music? Where does he fit into a pilgrimage? Believe it or not, he does: you can find his crossing in Wikipedia. But I digress.

Because Bishop Mark was on holiday and could not give us his blessing, we opted to go to early Mass at St. George's Anglican Church in Paris which meant we arrived earlier than anticipated in Rouen, the first stop on our journey, where we saw the execution place of St. Joan of Arc and the amazing Rouen Cathedral. Other stops on our route included Caen and the Normandy beaches, Liseux, Mont St. Michel, and St. Malo. On our pilgrimage we visited beautiful churches, cemeteries, medieval towns, and historic places, all of which symbolized "crossings" of one kind or another. We saw the ruined castle of William the Conqueror, his grave, the Abbey of Bec-Helouin, home of Lanfranc and Anselm. We also saw the Bayeux Tapestry: 600 characters, 500 animals of all kinds, 200 horses, 50 trees embroidered over the entire length of a linen canvas 50cm high and 70m long, and 380 Latin words describing the astonishing story of William the Conqueror's accession to the throne of England in 1066. It is thought to date to the 11th century, within a few years of the battle. In addition, we were introduced to St. Boniface, Jacques Cartier, St. Augustine of Canterbury and St. Thérèse of the Little Flowers.

A highpoint of the pilgrimage was the celebration of Mass in a side altar in the Basilica of Sainte-Thérèse in Lisieux. As we were setting up, a young man appeared who introduced himself as Melvin, a deacon studying in Rome on holiday in France. He was delighted to learn that there was to be a Mass in English and Ken asked him to serve as his acolyte. He was a bit taken aback when we were all offered the chalice, and to this day I don't think he realized he had participated in an Anglican/Episcopal Mass. A serendipitous meeting.

Ikon



*St Michael's Mount from
our Ferienwohnung*



*Ken and pilgrims. Missing from the photo
Deirdre and Adekude*

This short article cannot do justice to the marvelous time we spent together on pilgrimage. Ken is planning the 2024 Pilgrimage and I understand we will be starting in Barcelona and travelling to Perpignan, Carcassonne, Albi, Toulouse and possibly Lourdes. I've already signed up and will keep you informed.

Deirdre L. Tincker



Know that even when you are in the kitchen, the Lord
moves amidst the pots and pans.

Teresa of Avila (1515 – 1582)

Women's Retreat

If you're like me, you may walk around with "To Do" lists and responsibilities filling your constant thoughts. Errands, Zoom meetings, appointments, practices, laundry, people to care for, meals to cook, etc.. The noise of it all in my head can be deafening, at times overwhelming. And so, when one first hears about the CoA Women's Retreat each year, it would be no surprise if the voice in your head immediately said: "Oh, I'm too busy for that! I can't set my life aside for an entire weekend!".

But, incredibly, twenty-six women (a new record!) were able to say YES to attending this year's retreat.

Once again held at Kloster Armstorf, we gathered Friday 29 September through Sunday 1 October. We arrived to a warm welcome from the Franciscan Sisters as well as our Retreat Coordinators: Carol Adeney, Joan Case and Angela Schneider. I've heard participants say arriving each year feels like coming home again. Indeed, the location is instantly cozy and feels safe; a true sanctuary. We were greeted with smiling faces, hugs and lovingly-prepared meals made with ingredients from the Klostergarten. After a lively first dinner, we worshipped together before learning about this year's theme: Listening.

On Saturday, we dived right in. Not only did we discuss what listening means, what it looks like, as well as why it's important, we truly practiced listening. Because we were blessed with gorgeous weather, we were able to spend a large portion of the day outside, listening to nature. We listened to our bodies through morning Yoga, led by Nurtaç Denton. We listened to others as we chose and shared quotations related to the theme, and expanded on them. In the afternoon, we examined what it means to "listen with your heart" and all that brings with it. After tea and a lovely walk, Jo Westcombe led us in mindful listening/meditation. The day ended with the sounds of music and laughter drifting through the halls.

Sunday we reflected on it all before again worshipping together, with Rev. Clair celebrating. As we sat in the pews, I couldn't help but think that when we spend time encouraging and strengthening each other, we grow closer to God.

Which brings me back to the beginning: When women hear about an opportunity to gather and "retreat", there are countless reasons why they may say "maybe next year". But my hope is that ALL women will at some point experience sitting side by side with our "sisters", praying and worshipping together. God's voice can sometimes feel lost in the din of daily life. This time away offered us, as individuals, a respite from life's distractions and time to listen to God.

Ikon

But it also reminded us that we need each other, this community – we need to share and we need to listen. Being in retreat is an opportunity to be more ourselves but also to love and learn from each other. When we listened that weekend, we said to each woman present: You are valued, by us and by God. You are not alone, no matter how heavy your daily burdens become.



I encourage you all to add “spiritual retreat” to your personal “To Do” lists.

Teresa Morrow



The Lord’s Prayer may be committed to memory quickly,
but it is slowly learnt by heart

Frederick Denison Maurice (185 – 1872)

Between a Coffee Hour and a Tea Ceremony

Coffee and tea have a special flavor because they remind me of two places significant to my soul and tranquility: our Church in Harlaching and the dojo where I practice Zen near the Ostbahnhof.

Coffee hour is an important time for me to connect and learn more about the community and hear peoples' stories.

The tea ceremony is linked to being present, to paying attention to every detail and movement, to being focused in silence.

Silence is a dominant part of the Zen retreat that is held twice a year in a country house. During the retreat we meditate for several hours during the day. There's the classic sitting meditation (Zazen) in the lotus position, the walking meditation that, in winter, we also did outside in the snow, and Samu, the work practice in which we tend the garden or clean the house always with awareness and attention.

Samu in Zen practice is very important. During the year it can happen that you go to meditate in the Zen dojo on the day when you have to clean it together in silence even with people you don't know. And for me it's the most revolutionary moment because the place where you practice the Zazen meditation is everybody's home and we all take care of it together.

It's amazing how even when not talking you create a harmony of movements, as if we have all known each other forever; a lawyer cleaning the bathroom and a student maybe vacuuming the room next door as if it were a Saturday morning in a house in Haidhausen after breakfast.

And that's really powerful because it breaks down barriers and we become all equals, it makes us realize the significance of caring for the commonplace, and caring for a room reminds us of the importance of caring for ourselves, nature and the world around us.

For a moment there's no longer mine or yours, it's me focused on caring for ours.

In a comic strip that made me smile there's a monk in prison because he's a killer: the ego killer. "Ego cleansing" is to me the exercise of stepping back while making room for others with the knowledge that there is room in the world for everyone's talents and ideas.

Ikon

A while before Easter I also came to the Church of the Ascension out of a desire to practice hope at a difficult time in my life. At first I was not used to the songs, to hearing so much talking during the ceremony.

But now I see the wonder in every moment of the service, as well as the significance because in our church people have a very active role that makes every detail and moment of the celebration really special.

To then be at coffee hour with an enriched soul, with Joan, Helen and the volunteers who take care of the coffee hour and, with a smile, fill a cup for me and now know me and jokingly say "the usual" as if ordering a dry Martini.

And then there is you, and your stories as I hold my cup filling it with something new.

Chiara Ridolfi



Leave results to God.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806 – 1861)

Racial Justice Book Group

I remember very well how Idi Amin made headline news with his expulsion of Asian Ugandans in 1972 so I approached this book, which we discussed on 15th July, with interest and curiosity. *We Are All Birds of Uganda* is a multi-generational book weaving two main narratives: that of Sameer, the successful, high-achieving lawyer in London of the present day and that of his entrepreneurial grandfather, Hasan, in Kampala before Idi Amin seized power.

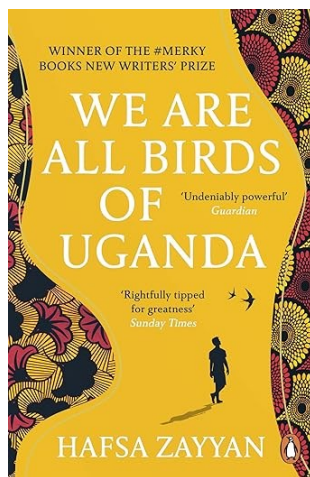
This very resonant book is about belonging and dislocation whether it be nation, family or culture. It raises the question of identity, which is not always defined by the passport you have or the culture you belong to. The sub-story involving Sameer's friends, Jeremiah and Rahool, highlights the ever-present, underlying discrimination, which erupts with a violence that takes your breath away. The racially motivated attack, which forces Sameer to review his own life and achievements, sees his pride, his certainty and his easy assumptions crumble away to reveal the ugliness of racial discrimination in the UK today.

The narrative now moves to Kampala, where Sameer's story and that of his grandfather connect.

When Hasan was expelled, he left his house to his Ugandan manager, Abdullah, in the hope that he would someday return. Hasan never returned. Sameer, looking for his roots, travels to Uganda and meets Abdullah's granddaughter, Maryam, and romance blossoms. Through her eyes we are shown modern-day Kampala, seemingly flourishing, but also fraught with racial tensions. Here we witness the legacy of Uganda's colonial past and have a foretaste of its future with the new colonisers, the Chinese.

The last lines of the book with its indeterminate ending reflect the uneasiness and the fear pervading the narrative throughout. It's very powerful and very appropriate.

Angela Schneider



Ikon

On 7th October the group discussed *We Need New Stories: Challenging the Toxic Myths Behind Our Age of Discontent* by Nesrine Malik.

Space does not allow us to print the excellent review of this book by *David Case* but we write what myths are postulated by Malik and then David's concluding sentence. (Ed.)

The myths are:

- The myth of gender equality
- The political correctness “crisis”
- Virtuous origin (the tendency to airbrush history to construct narratives of national pride)
- The free speech “crisis”
- The “damaging” identity politics
- The myth of the reliable narrator (voices that refuse to acknowledge their privilege).

It is a strange book. Many of us in the Racial Justice Book Group struggled with it, certainly at the beginning, mainly because of its style, but concluded that the book offers numerous helpful insights.



God does not want us to do extraordinary things.
He wants us to do ordinary things extraordinarily well.

Bishop Charles Gore (1853 – 1932)

Young Adults Group

Sharing stories is revolutionary, and our stories in the CoA's young people's group are indeed diverse and vibrant.

We've come to Munich for the most diverse of reasons: for study, for work, for love, for hope for a better future, and it's special to have found each other here, at the Church of the Ascension - not by chance, as Fr. Dan would say. Meeting young people with a common vision of life and a desire for personal and community spiritual growth is priceless when away from home. As one group member says, "it is special to be reminded that I am not alone in being religious in my generation".

The Young Adults Group at CoA started off in 2019 where a small group would meet for a time of eating together, praise and worship, Bible study as well as meeting up for social events. However due to Covid and many people moving away, group meetings became irregular. Charlotte and Shema felt called to revive this much needed fellowship and thus the group was reborn as the 'Young People of CoA' in April 2023.



Ikon

*[Note: In future editions of the **Ikon** we will use the title “Young People of CoA” which is the name which this group now uses. Ed.]*

I feel so grateful to be part of this open and meaningful community; "come as you are" could be a sentence that best describes our group. Everyone is welcome with their unique traits, talents and opinions, with absence of judgment, but only support and understanding.

Every month we organize social gatherings such as get-togethers at the Biergarten or potlucks where we have had the pleasure of trying specialties from all over the world (from Idlis, pickles, salads, roasts, cakes and so much more). Our meetings are also a great chance for newcomers to integrate better in a new city, coming together for free-time activities and making new friends.

In the future we plan to organize leisure activities such as visits to Christmas Markets, Karaoke, Pizza, Bowling and much more.

But most of all we hope to devote time to spiritual growth, worshipping together and sharing our stories. We want to focus on how we can choose to live with Christian values and how these can be applied in our daily life – in our profession, family, neighbourhood; as humans, citizens, change-makers, bearers of light in a time in history when there is so much need of light.

Chiara Ridolfi



The fruit of silence is prayer.
The fruit of prayer is faith.
The fruit of faith is love.
The fruit of love is service.
The fruit of service is peace.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910 – 1997)

Sunday School

Sunday School was started last year to rebuild the children's ministry in the Ascension community. Thanks to Rev. Canon Ali's leadership and an ever increasing group of volunteers, Ascension is able to offer this on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month. The hope is that a children's program will eventually be offered every Sunday.

The children are invited into a welcoming space where they can have fun, make noise and explore the chosen reading through craft, singing, story-telling and play. So far to name just a few examples, we have gone on a bear hunt, planted seeds, sculpted our own coin designs out of clay, and even had a Puppet Show which was a highlight!

These activities are all focused around a particular theme or Bible story that helps to find meaning and explore how God's love is present in each of our lives, from youngest to eldest.

What age group does Sunday School target?

The target age group for Sunday School is 10 and under, however children slightly over that age bracket are still very welcome to join in if they would like to. Smaller children are accompanied by parents/guardians. We hope that as this ministry continues to grow we'll have the option to split the session into two groups to cater better to the children's various developmental stages.

If I was interested in volunteering, how could I get involved?

Firstly, it's great if you want to volunteer, whether that's facilitating or assisting the facilitator. Whether you have experience running Sunday School or not, your ideas and help are welcome. You will be supported to develop your skills in working with children.

To keep everybody safe, it's a requirement for everyone involved in Sunday School (including parent/guardian helpers) to do the Safeguarding online training provided by the Convocation and to obtain a Führungszeugnis (police check). Please contact Joachim Zeller (safeguardingofficer@ascension-munich.com) and he will guide you on how to start the process.

We welcome all ten-and-unders to the Sunday School and look forward to meeting our new helpers soon.

Laura Baird

Auction of Talents

A few photos from the range of Talents for which bids were received.

African Head Wraps: Elpinah Riedmeyr



Lois
being
adorned



Four satisfied customers!

Cream Tea in the Garden: Sue Morris



Hats are worn!



Even more hats!

The Thesaurus Linguae Latinae: Martin Shedd



An awful lot of words!



Even more words!

Flight over Upper Bavaria: Cuno Wulf



Preparing for Flight



The Alps!

The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible: Loren Stuckenbruck



The Professor in his Element!

The Schliersee Walk: Roger Houghton



At the grave of Princess Sophie (a sister of Prince Philip) in Schliersee

The Munich Spearbearer (Doryphoros): Rolf Schneider



The Spearbearer at LMU

An attentive Audience!



Checking the Lecture Notes!

Gilbert and Sullivan Revival

At the end of September we were once again royally entertained by the Munich Savoyards, this time with a performance of *The Mikado* and what a delight it was. First performed at the Savoy theatre in 1885 and following on from a Japanese exhibition in London which was the best advertisement possible, the première brought the house down and ever since then *The Mikado* has been one of if not the most popular of Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas.

Amongst the original Ascension Savoyards we were pleased to welcome back Steve Tachell as the officious Pooh-Bah and Alison MacKenzie as the formidable Katisha. We also had two new soloists – Martin Shedd as the heavily-disguised Nanki-Poo and Lena Petri as one of the charming maids from the ladies' seminary.



As with many of Gilbert and Sullivan's productions, the show satirizes aspects of Victorian Britain's politics and aristocracy and also, like many of the operettas, it depicts a topsy-turvy world but this time with a Japanese setting.

Throughout the performance the audience watched with rapt attention, thoroughly enjoying the wit and humour which play such an important part in Gilbert and Sullivan's productions. Coupled with first class singing and superb acting this was a performance to remember, much much more than the concert performance advertised.

Well done Savoyards. We hope to see you again soon.



Barbara Norman

Women on the Go

A walk in the Truderinger Wald

On Saturday 5th August nine intrepid women defied an inclement weather forecast and met at 10.00 at Waldheimplatz in Waldperlach for a ninety-minute walking tour in the forest. Eleonore Dascalu led us along narrow forest paths, over moss and tree roots and around or through puddles and mud. Our first stop was St. Joseph's Chapel, where there is a statue of St. Joseph holding a somewhat older baby Jesus in his arms. We then walked to the Lourdes Grotto, a replica of the grotto in Lourdes. There are benches around the grotto, but everything is outdoors. For the first hour of our walk, the rain was merely a drizzle and there were some sunny intervals. However, while we were gathering in front of the grotto for a photo, the sky darkened. Shortly afterwards, the heavens opened and St. Peter blessed us with rain in abundance. During the thirty minute trek back to Waldheimplatz we got thoroughly soaked.



After the walk, we had lunch at the restaurant Terra Kreta, near our starting point. The food was excellent and the company inspiring, but some coats and other clothes were still wet after our meal. Fortunately the rain had stopped by the time we left the restaurant and we had the chance to dry off a bit more at Eleonore's house nearby, where we met for coffee and cake. Thank you Eleonore for organizing this wonderful walk!

Cathy Pilgram

[On 11th November our intrepid ladies undertook a further walk – this time in Buchenhain – followed by lunch at the Rabenwirt restaurant in Pullach. Ed.]

News from the Vestry

During October and November we undertook a Mutual Ministry Review (MMR). This is a process by which the Priest in Charge and the Vestry assess how well they are fulfilling their mission, goals and responsibilities to each other and to the Ascension community at large. Basically, it is a health check that works to underpin community life in a way that sustains vitality and resilience.

We engaged the Rev. Canon Linda Grenz, an external facilitator, to help. She prepared a questionnaire, analyzed inputs received, wrote a report and then gave comprehensive feedback to the Vestry. The report, which is available in the Members Access section of our website,

<https://www.ascension-munich.org/mutual-ministry-review>

highlighted a number of things: In particular:

- We have had a major turnaround in the two years since Fr. Dan arrived
- The Church is growing and it is noticeable that families with children are now present
- The Young Adults group is thriving
- There is a sense of joy in the community helped especially by effective worship services with inspired sermons and wonderful music
- We are a caring community which is appreciated and valued; evidence of the Holy Spirit working in and through us
- The major concern is financial sustainability.

In her debrief with the Vestry, Linda explained that the situation we find ourselves in is not dissimilar to that of other church communities, noticeably in respect of finances and periodic fluctuations in the presence of children and youth. She also pointed out that unlike many other churches she detected a sense of joy which in her experience is something that is seldom clearly evident.

While there are many things for which we can be grateful, there are also a number of aspects for us to consider carefully, in particular we are challenged to review the following:

- Given the large number of ministries we undertake and support, noting the demand this places on a small core of people, and the importance of avoiding burnout, should we concentrate on fewer activities?
- The system for pastoral care broadly functions satisfactorily, and in a crisis works well, but the routine arrangements are opaque and greater attention could perhaps be placed on offering the Eucharist to those unable to attend church

- Some aspects of administration and communication should be given attention
- How should we engage more effectively with those currently outside our community to express the love we have for Jesus and to invite them to join us?

The MMR has been successful in that it has prompted us to take time to examine how we are working together; it has given us many helpful insights into what we as a community value, what is working well and what merits attention, and has offered us a good opportunity to reflect on how the Holy Spirit might wish us to move forward.

With all of that in mind, you should note that the Vestry is in a period of prayerful reflection and discernment. We are taking the findings to heart and are considering them along with the outcomes of other work we have been doing on our values as a community and how we can transform to become better messengers and advocates of the gospel with our families and friends, and beyond our walls.

In addition, it should be noted that part of the Vestry's ongoing discernment includes determining whether we wish, by mutual agreement with Fr. Dan, to ask the Bishop to appoint him as our Rector.

You are encouraged to read the MMR report and if you notice something in particular that surprises or disturbs you, or if you feel that something important is missing, please contact Fr. Dan, one of the Wardens or a Vestry member. At the same time, we invite you to continue praying for the wellbeing of the Ascension community and the work of the Holy Spirit in and through us.

May we be blessed abundantly as in the past, as we strive to fulfil the mission of the Church, which is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.

David Case (Senior Warden)



There are two things to do about the Gospel – believe it and behave it.

Susanna Wesley (1669 – 1742)

Ikon

Congratulations

- To those who have had birthdays since the summer edition.

July

15th Jo Westcombe
 17th Joy Schindel
 23rd Donald Adawele

August

2nd Rémy Bethmont
 13th Rosie Mayer
 17th Angela Schneider
 21st Malcolm Phillips
 28th Liz Wink
 29th Claire Bartesch, Sue Morris

September

4th Bob Nowak
 8th Kaye O'Connell
 10th Rolf Schneider
 19th Ali Gray

24th Dan Morrow
 25th Jane Scheiring
 28th Steve Knowles

October

17th Penny Dite
 24th Janet Day-Strehlow,
 Susanne Moskopf
 31st Rainer Ullmann

November

10th Jeanne Glenz
 15th Una Hladek

December

2nd Claire Ullmann
 3rd Leo Klingl
 5th Carmen-Rita Dacre

- To all other children who have had birthdays recently.
We don't yet have a good list!
- Congratulations to our Rev. Ali who has been commissioned as Canon for Spirituality within the Convocation.
- To Martin Shedd and Elija McCormack on their wedding on 29th July.
- To Philippa and Daniel Menzel on their wedding on 28th October.
See photo on page 27.
- To Nathaniel Chiedozie Anene on having been granted a residence permit after a very long wait.



Martin and Elija



Donald's 70th

Thank You and Goodbye

Dear members of the CoA family,

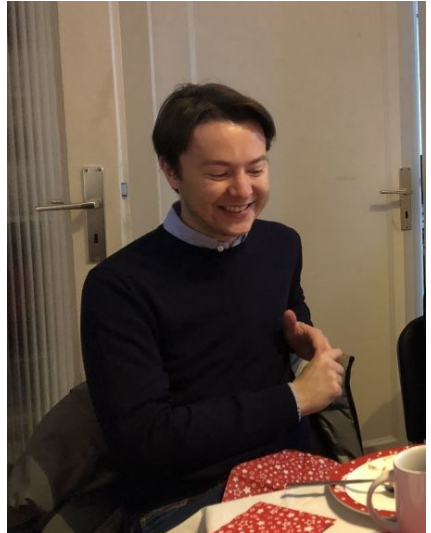
when I first came to Church of the Ascension one year ago I never could have imagined how much this place would come to mean to me. At CoA I have met so many incredibly kind and inspiring people. All of you, without exception, have been nothing but kind to me. I have been given lifts, invited for coffee, dinner, tea parties and so much more. So many of you have opened your hearts and houses to me, and I am deeply grateful for that.

Now, one year later, I am already about to leave again. As per December 1st, I will have a job in the Dutch parliament as a policy advisor. This is something I am very excited about, but at the same time I am sad to leave Munich, and CoA in particular, behind. The fact that you were able to make me feel so at home, on a personal as well as a spiritual level, I think says something about CoA. To me, this is a church the way a church should be: open, warm and welcoming. A reflection of God's love.

I thank all of you from the bottom of my heart.

May God bless you all.

Maurits de Lint



It is better to be faithful than famous.

Theodore Roosevelt (1858 – 1919)

Worship in Augsburg and Nürnberg

Services at St Boniface, Augsburg

- Every Sunday at 16.30 in the Ev. Luth. Auferstehungskirche
Located in Garmischer Str: 2a, 86163 Augsburg-Hohenzoll.
- Our vicar Rev. Lutz Ackermann can be reached via mobile 0157883006272
- All services take place on site and also via Zoom (ID 92937226600) no password required. All welcome, no exceptions.
- Advent and Christmas services:

December 10, 16:30, Eucharist Service, in Church

December 17, 16:30, Lessons and Carols

No service on December 24, but:

December 25, 16:30, Christmas Day with Eucharist Service

<https://www.facebook.com/ChurchOfStBonifceAugsburgEv>

Services at St James the Less in Nürnberg

At St. James the Less we normally meet every 2nd and 4th Sunday for worship at 16.00 in the Jakobskirche in downtown Nürnberg

Jakobskirche – Church of St. James the Less

Jakobsplatz 1
90402 Nürnberg

No matter who you are, or where you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome.

Please check out our Facebook page before you come, as the situation is not always certain.

<https://www.facebook.com/stjamesnuremberg>



Coming Events

Saturday 2 nd December	Service of Lessons and Carols at Erzabtei St.Ottilien	15.30 – 17.00
Sunday 3 rd December	Sunday School Adult Formation	12.15 – 13.30 14.00 – 15.30
Saturday 16 th December	Golden Girls	14.00 – 16.00
Sunday 17 th December	Youth Group Meeting Carol Sing	12.00 – 13.15 14.00 – 15.30
Wednesday 20 th December	Service of Lessons and Carols at St Willibrord's	19.00 – 20.15
Sunday 24 th December	Crib Service Midnight Mass at St Willibrord's	16.00 – 17.00 22.00 – 23.15
Monday 25 th December	Festival Christmas Day Eucharist	12.00 – 13.15
Sunday 14 th January	Sunday School	12.00 – 13.15
Monday 15 th January	Worship Committee	18.00 – 19.00

Regular Events

Sundays 12.00-13.15 Service with Holy Eucharist.

It sometimes starts at 12.15 so please see the church calendar for up to date information.

Coffee hour in the Gemeindesaal follows the midday service on Sundays. Come and join us!

Tuesdays 08.30 – 09.30 Morning Prayer online.

Thursdays 19.45 – 20.30 Compline online.

Vestry Meetings take place from 19.30 – 21.30 on the last Wednesday of the month.

Choir Rehearsal is on Sundays at 10.30. The choir doesn't usually meet on the first Sunday of the month.

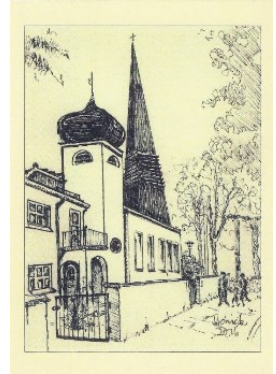
Look at the Calendar on the church website to find out about other events.

Emmauskirche

This is the first in a series of articles about the church building in which we are privileged to worship every Sunday.

Perusing the Website of the Emmauskirche I discovered a few interesting facts.

- Harlaching has only existed as an independent parish since 1940. Prior to that the evangelische Christen of Harlaching worshipped in the Lutherkirche in Giesing, which was founded in 1927.
- Understandably however the people of Harlaching wanted their own church, and in 1930 the plot of land at Laurinplatz was purchased. At this point the fledgling parish was meeting in private houses and in Cafe Ludl on Athenerstrasse. This was obviously not an acceptable long-term solution.
- Therefore in January 1935 a "Kirchenbauverein" was set up, and a "Bethaus" (prayer hall) was erected together with living accommodation for a Diakon. These are now the Gemeindesaal and the Church House respectively.
- In 1940 Harlaching became a parish in its own right and the first priest, Pfarrer Edgar Neumann, was installed in 1941. Pfarrer Neumann served as military chaplain during World War II but returned to his parish to preach again on 16th September 1945. It was Harvest Festival.
- With the arrival of a new priest, Pfarrer Hans Bauer, in 1951, the parish decided to adopt the name "Emmauskirche". Building work commenced with the laying of the foundation stone in August 1963, and the new Emmauskirche was consecrated on 4th October 1964.
- In 1970 the Church of the Ascension was given the opportunity to use the church for worship services as guests of the Emmauskirche. Initially meant as a temporary measure due to Ascension not owning a church building, the arrangement continues to this day.

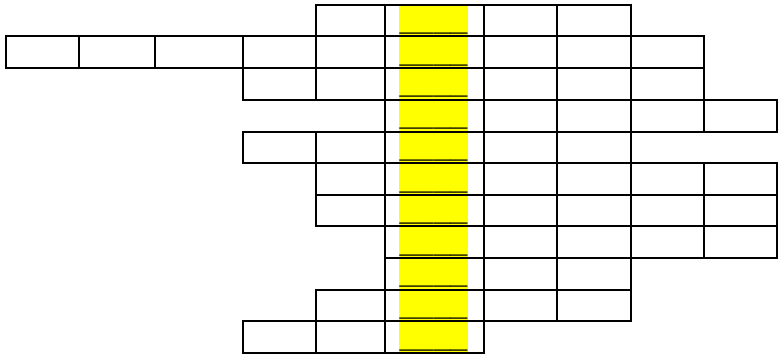


Amanda Höschler

Closing Words

In these popular hymn titles one word is missing. Fill in the missing words and then put them, letter by letter, into the puzzle (with answer 1 into the first line and answer 11 into the last line) and find the mystery message, reading down the yellow column.

1. It came a midnight clear.
2. While watched their flocks by night.
3. Angels from the of glory.
4. in the manger, infant of Mary.
5. In the mid-winter.
6. Away in a
7. Hark the herald sing.
8. Once in Royal’s city.
9. to the world.
10. Infant, infant lowly.
11. The holly and the



The mystery words will tell you what the editorial team and the Vestry wish you this Christmas.

Sue



upon	1
shepherds	2
realms	3
Child	4
bleak	5
manger	6
angels	7
David	8
Joy	9
holly	10
ivy	11

Imprint / Impressum

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Please help us to fill the magazine with the life of the church and send any ideas or contributions for the next issue of the Ikon to the editor for consideration: sue.morris@web.de

Please note ...
if you want to have anything announced during the church service or in the bulletin, you will need to first run it past the Senior Warden, David Case.

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Back Numbers

You can find all the previous issues of the Ikon on our website at:

<https://www.ascension-munich.org/parish-magazine>

This is issue number 17

The Church of the Ascension is an Anglican/Episcopal Church in the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

We extend a warm welcome to all!

Our Purpose and Mission

We offer worship in English, serving Greater Munich and the surrounding area. We welcome people of all nationalities to join our community and share in our journey towards a deeper knowledge of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

We seek to:

- Proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ by word and deed
- Celebrate God through beautiful and meaningful worship
- Minister to one another through worship, fellowship, Christian education and pastoral care
- Care for people in the wider community through outreach projects, both alone and together with others.