

# THE BRIDGE



**December and January 2024-2025**

## **The promised King**

Matthew's Gospel tells us of visitors arriving in Jerusalem from the east. They ask where is the king. A promised king. The magi were not Jews, but they travelled a long way to see the new king. The magi were astronomers and astrologers. They studied the stars which they believed would show the future.

What they actually saw is still being debated. Was it a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn? A conjunction is when the two planets are close together in the night sky so produce a very bright 'star'. Other suggestions are that it was a supernova or a comet; no one really knows but it was a sign that could not be ignored if you were an astronomer/astrologer at the time. It was definitely an incredible piece of stellar engineering that would take millennia to arrange, and to happen at that specific time. God had been planning this birth and made sure it was announced.

The account of the magi's visit we have in Matthew's Gospel (chapter 2) starts when they go to Jerusalem to find out where the new king is. *"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.'"* It is an unusual way of saying it, '... who has been born king'. Normally it is, 'A prince has been born who will be king, but here we have the statement, '... who has been born king'.

A baby born king. You can understand why Herod was upset, he thought he was king, but this baby was already king, announced in the stars. There couldn't be two kings. He was out of a job if this king grew up.

Matthew's account continues with Herod's advisors saying that the promised king would be born in Bethlehem, a prophecy found in the book of Micah. It had all been prophesied centuries before. The other titles of the king in the prophecy by Isaiah (6<sup>6</sup>) are *Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*. These say that He will be a different kind of king than there had ever been before.

When we celebrate Christmas and remember the birth of the baby Jesus in a stable ... with the nativity scenes, angels, shepherds, animals, stars ... it can hide that this baby is King. Not will be King, but born King.

With the birth of Jesus, God's promise was fulfilled. God's plans were fulfilled with the birth of the Messiah, the promised one, our Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, **our King of Kings**. A baby in a manger.

On the last Sunday of the church year, Christ the King Sunday, we welcomed Dave and Mary Richardson to lead worship. Jim's friends, they are Licensed Lay Ministers in the Church of England at St Michael's Church, Bishop's Itchington, Warwickshire. It was a super service and Dave offered this version of his sermon as our seasonal, pastoral letter. With their daughter, Amy, they wish us all a happy Christmas. We wish the same for them and look forward to their next visit!



**SUNDAY WORSHIP in Church is at 10.30 a.m. followed by time to chat over coffee.**

**Sunday 1st December Advent Sunday** using URC Digital Worship presented by Rev Andy Braunston including Holy Communion led by Rev Jim Gascoigne.

**Sunday 8th December** informal as we light the Advent Candles and share reflections on praising God as three 'persons', prepared for us by Lisa Hamblin from Bush Hill Park URC.

**Sunday 15th December Family service with Nativity Play by the Beaver Scouts**  
Our time together will be led by Rev Martin Legg, currently our Interim Moderator.

**Beer and Carols at the Little Green Dragon**

15.00 for all the family      18.30 adults only

**Wednesday 18th December between 17.30 and 18.45**

**'Carols on the Green'** Churches Together for Crisis, on Winchmore Hill Green

**Sunday 22nd December** the last Sunday in Advent at 17.00 (No morning service)

**Carols by Candlelight** followed by sherry or soft drinks and mince pies

Other Christmas services will not take place at Winchmore Hill and Palmers Green, we will join with the other URCs in Enfield as follows:

**Saturday 24th December**

**Christmas Eve**

21.30 Lancaster Road URC

23.30 Bush Hill Park URC

**Sunday 25th December**

**Christmas Day**

10.30 Lancaster Road URC

10.30am Bush Hill Park URC



**Sunday 5th January New Year and Epiphany Sunday**

Service led by Jeevan Bethala including a celebration of Holy Communion with Rev Jim Gascoigne.

**Sunday 12th January** Informal worship sharing the Area Group service

**Sunday 19th January 18.00 Songs of Praise for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** hosted by St Paul's

**Sunday 26th January 2025** with Dr Paul Ashitey

**Sunday 2nd February 2025** Shared service at Palmers Green with Margaret and Stuart Jenkins, including Holy Communion

## CHURCH NEWS

### Ministry

The Pastoral Call (formerly Vacancy) Group consists of three representatives of the three churches in our pastorate, Palmers Green, Ponders End and Winchmore Hill. Over recent months they have reviewed expressions of interest in becoming our minister by three candidates, one of whom they feel confident to invite to meet us all. Over a weekend in the new year, the candidate will visit our churches to meet members and at one site will 'preach with a view'. We will use the Bridge circulation list to ensure that everyone has information about that weekend.

### Cleaning

For many years Stuart has cleaned regularly and tended the hedgerows, and we are grateful. It has become more difficult to keep up with the increasing footfall on site and both Andrea and Dave have weighed in with extra hours. We have now secured the services of Vjollca who cleans the church premises three times a week, helped by Stuart ensuring that she has adequate materials and still keeping the borders around the church tidy. Andrea and Dave will 'line manage' so that we continue to offer a good level of care for the users of our suite of rooms. (V has current DBS certificates for adult and children work forces.) This is an opportunity to thank everyone who helps to keep things running smoothly and to remind all users always to leaving things as they would like to find them.

### Recycling milk bottle tops

Church House is no longer a collecting point for milk bottle tops. There was a problem about recycling coloured tops which has been simplified by using clear tops on all bottles. Plastic milk bottle labels now carry the legend that tops are widely recyclable; and Arla 'Cravendale' asks us to recycle plastic containers with cap on (despite it being coloured.) Our only option to support Macmillan by collecting milk bottle tops (and other items) is to make parcels and pay for delivery by a courier. See <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/donate/how-to-donate/other-ways-to-give/recycling-for-good-causes> Regrettably, we are not in a position to be able to do this.

### Situations Vacant

With regular attendance being quite low although cheerful and enthusiastic, and an Eldership of eight, some of whom are neither in the first flush of youth nor as fit as they might wish to be, it is time to be open about the struggle to stay afloat. The image of ducks gliding serenely but by means of little legs paddling frantically beneath the surface comes to mind. It is time for a reminder to all church members of the commitment to be faithful in worshipping together, as often as reasonably possible. It is time, too, to invite members of the community for whom the premises are a significant resource to consider what small contributions they might make.

- The Bridge would benefit from someone to curate content and another to 'desk-top publish'.
- The lead for church music would be glad of an occasional deputy at organ or clavinova.
- The treasurer would be glad of an assistant and an independent examiner of accounts.
- The AV/IT technician and the Lettings Manager would be glad of an extra pair of hands.
- As for press and publicity officer - we've been a long time without.
- Representative at Synod, Local Area Group or Churches Together.

Could one of these be you? If not, they are tips of icebergs so all offers of help will be welcome.

The  
**LITTLE GREEN DRAGON**  
Ale House

# BEER & CAROLS

**Sunday 15th December**

**3.00pm**

*for all the family*

**6.30pm**

*adults only*



Raising money for:

**SUSTAINABLE  
GLOBAL GARDENS**

928 Green Lanes, Winchmore Hill, LONDON N21 2AD

**CAROLS ON  
THE GREEN**

**5:30-6:45pm**  
**Wednesday 18th December**

Come and join us to sing carols and enjoy a glass of  
mulled wine, mince pie and other refreshments  
Please bring cash

The money raised will go to

**Crisis**  
and local charities tackling homelessness

**Carols on The Green** are led by  
St Paul's Church Winchmore Hill  
Charity Number 1133942



**Elders Meetings** normally have a fixed slot at 7.00 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month in the Parlour – 9th January and 13th February.

**Church Meetings** will be held quarterly, the next being at a time to be confirmed, early in the New Year.



### **The Light of the World**

Psalm 119 <sup>105</sup>, John 1<sup>9</sup> and 8 <sup>12</sup>, Revelation 3 <sup>20</sup>

An article by Stephen Gilbert, Christ Church URC

Born in London in 1827, William Holman Hunt was one of the founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood from 1848, together with Millais and Rossetti. They aimed to paint in a style from before that of Raphael (1483-1520) and other artists of the Italian High Renaissance.

Hunt worked on several versions of *The Light of the World*. The first, painted in oil on canvas over a panel in 1853, is in Keble College, Oxford. A smaller version of 1857, which was largely painted by Frederick G Stephens, is now in Manchester City Art Gallery. In 1900 Hunt painted another larger version of the subject, with some assistance from Edward R Hughes because of Hunt's failing eyesight. Inscribed on the frame are these words from the Book of Revelation, "Behold I stand at the door and knock: If anyone man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him and will sup with him and he with me."

Jesus is wearing priestly robes and a crown of thorns to indicate His suffering and sacrifice. The full moon behind His head creates a halo effect. The lantern, which He holds, is a symbol of Christ as source of illumination, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path," (Psalm 119) and, "I am the light of the world." (John 8) The seven sides of the lantern may represent the seven churches of Asia mentioned in the Book of Revelation.

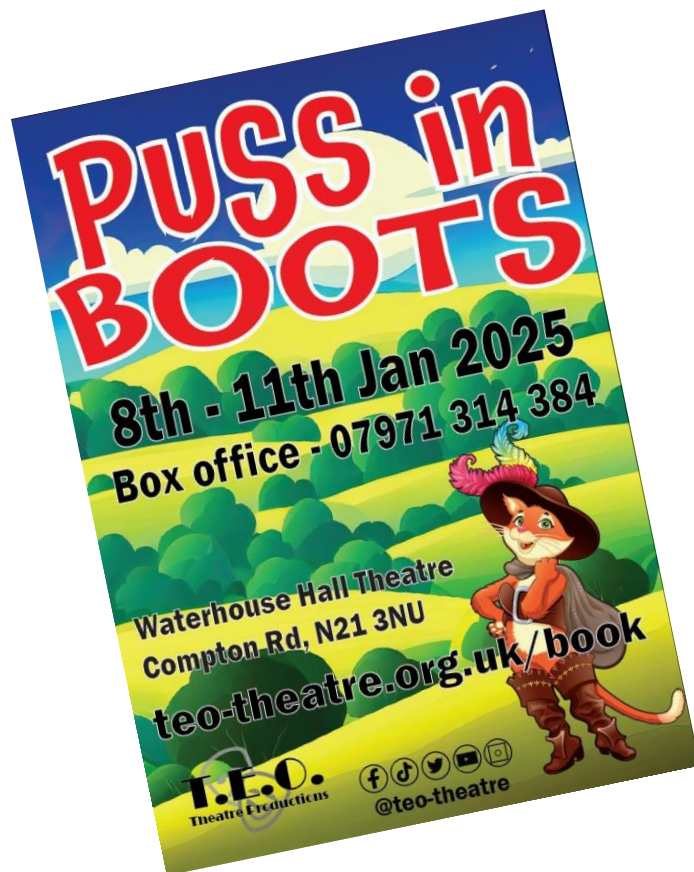
Jesus is knocking on the door which has no outside handle and which can only be opened from the inside. The door is choked up with weeds to show that it has not been opened for some time.

The painting became extraordinarily popular in the English]-speaking world. many engravings and pirated copies were made. It was considered to be a suitably edifying subject to be displayed in Victorian and Edwardian drawing rooms. (Christ Church and Winchmore possess copies of the picture.)

Between 1905 and 1907 the final version of the painting was sent on a tour of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, where many people queued for hours to see it. It had gained the status of a Protestant icon. In 1908 it was presented to St Paul's Cathedral where it can still be seen. Hunt was buried in St Paul's in 1910.

*The Light of the World painting now displayed on the north wall of our welcome area was originally in the centre of the chancel. It was moved to the east (formerly organ) transept when the light oak panelling was installed in 1964. Around the turn of the century it was moved to its present position to give it greater prominence. It was given in 1944 by a Royal Academy copyist, Mrs Hall, in memory of her husband, a Life Deacon of the Church.*

*There is a smaller copy in the Vestry which was treasured by Irene Ambrose, whom many of us remember with affection. It was a gift to us from her son, Bryant, quite recently.*



**Palmers Green, Winchmore Hill  
and Grange Park**

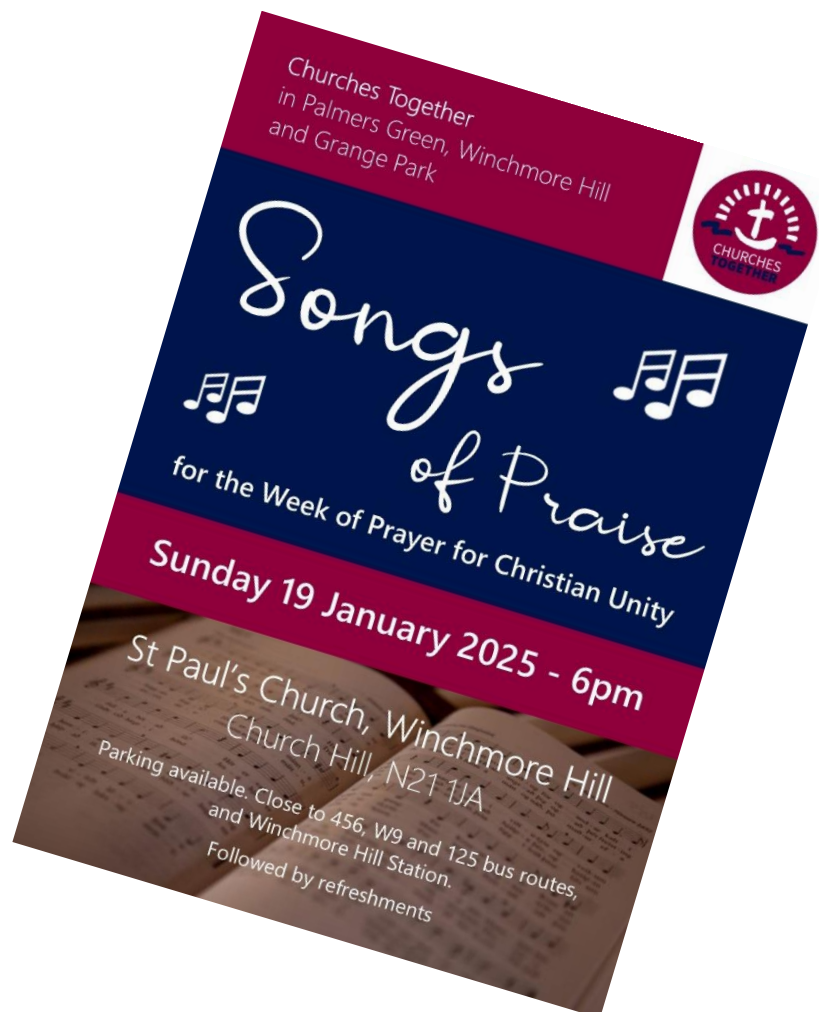
**Praying together** for the churches  
and the needs of our area.

Normally first & third Tuesdays:  
7th and 21st January, 4th and 18th  
February, 10.30-11.15

**Forum meeting** at 19.30 on  
**Tuesday 21st January** at St John's  
Vicarage

**Zoom Link** for prayer together  
(Meeting ID: 746 8020 4904  
Passcode: 8zq1F7)

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74680204904?pwd=TjJhQnBIYVVuUzNRY3ZXQTJ6MHEzQT09>



# Moving *Stories*

Commitment  
for **Life**  
Nov/Dec 2024

At WH URC we are committed to supporting our global partners in **ZIMBABWE**



Photo credit: Helen Lidgett

*Commitment for Life* wishes to thank Audrey Turner for years of selfless service to the poorest in the world through *Commitment for Life*. Audrey is pictured with a Certificate of Loyalty and Devoted Service, given to her at Chesterfield URC in September. In response, Audrey said how much she had enjoyed promoting *Commitment for Life* and the programmes supported by Christian Aid in our partner country, Zimbabwe. She said how much she valued the support of the church and local community in fundraising for Christian Aid over many years.



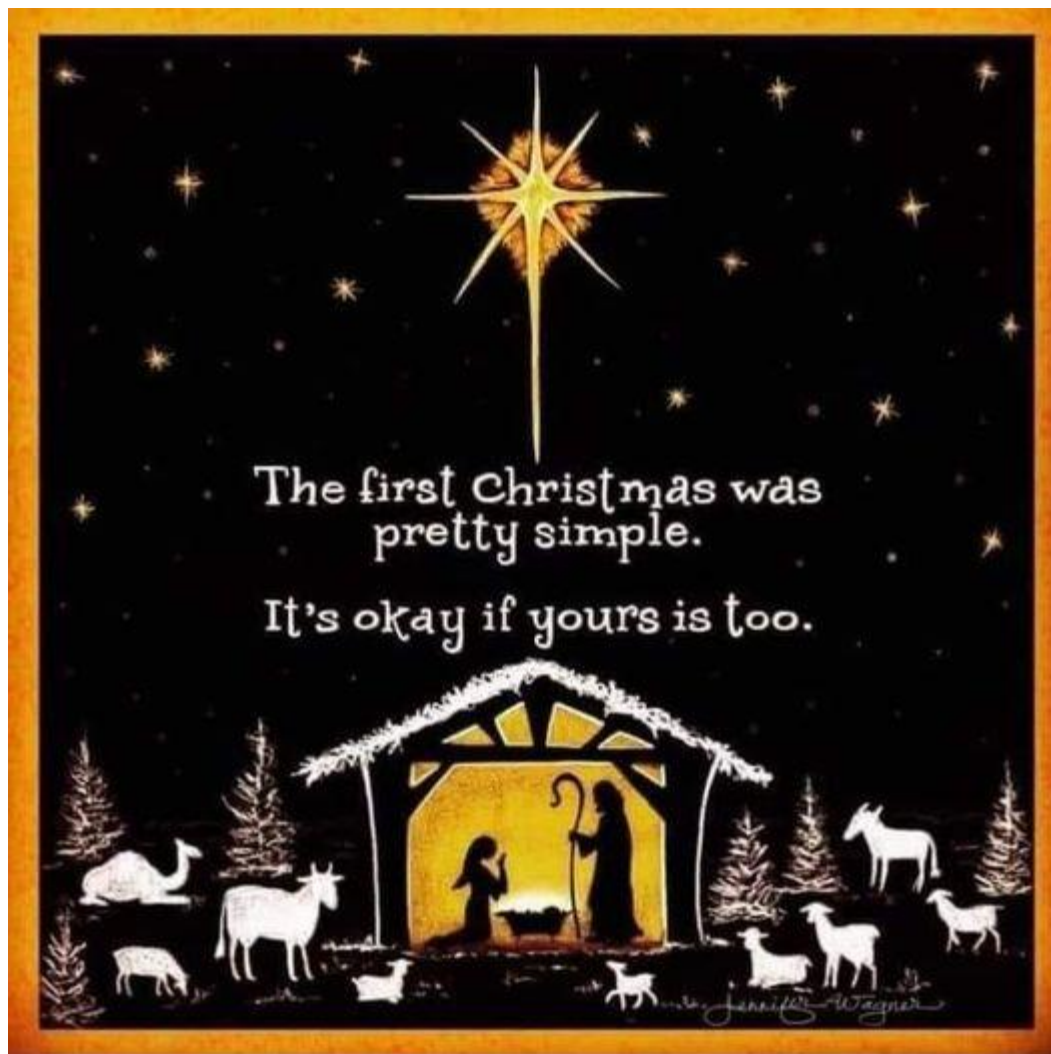
Photo credit: allybally4b, Pixabay

**Zimbabwe continues to battle a climate crisis, with drought causing emergency food insecurity for thousands of citizens this year.** The Christian Aid team has worked with communities to build capacity and enhance resilience methods for planting to ensure a good crop yield. There has been an emphasis on advocating for debt relief as Zimbabwe faces international financial pressure. Additionally, efforts to promote gender inclusion and advocate for good governance have continued, with a focus on empowering faith leaders to engage in meaningful dialogue and advocate for their rights.

Keep watch for Vhaina's story, a single mother of six who has been trained as a sesame seed farmer by our partners, Sustainable Agriculture Technology (SAT).

Zimbabwe has been facing a severe drought, and SAT has been working with over 3,800 farmers to develop weather-resilient crops and create infrastructure to support e-commerce, enabling financial freedom and improving livelihoods. Thanks to this support, Vhaina now has more opportunities and can better provide for her family.





**Church Secretary:** All enquiries should be made either by telephone to the Vestry answering service on 020 8882 4776 or by e-mail to [WHURC@btconnect.com](mailto:WHURC@btconnect.com)

**Lettings:** Speak to Dave on 077 8061 6040 or e-mail: [Lettings@winchmorehillurc.co.uk](mailto:Lettings@winchmorehillurc.co.uk)

**The Bridge Editor:** Jim Gascoigne: 020 8886 7421 or [the.manse@zen.co.uk](mailto:the.manse@zen.co.uk)

