



SPIRE

St. Stephen's Community Magazine
Christmas 2019
Issue 31

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WELCOME

Tomos Reed - Editor



Welcome to this Christmas edition of Spire! I am the still relatively new curate of St Stephen's and I have been invited to edit this edition. As a newcomer to this part of London, I have really enjoyed learning more about the people and the places in our local area. It is also a privilege to witness at first hand some of the inspirational personalities and organisations who contribute towards the atmosphere here.

Christmas is a wonderful and moving time of year at which Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus. This issue begins with a heart-warming story from the Vicar's Desk which reflects on that very moment from the point of view of one of the less important angels.

This is also a time in which we give thought to those less fortunate than ourselves. For many people Christmas is a time of love, family and outreach but we must also acknowledge that many face isolation, hardship and difficulty. I reflect upon how a painting by Leonardo da Vinci makes just this point. An inspirational article from Dulwich Wood Primary School on Empathy Goggles and news from the Kingswood Community Shop both demonstrate how many people in our area are striving hard to build up our sense of community and solidarity.

Recognising that all communities are shaped by their geography, we also have a fascinating article from Martin Knight on the River Effra, South Dulwich's 'lost' river.

Finally, we should not forget that Christmas is also a celebration! Eleanor Bracken shares with us some of her thoughts on celebrations and floral arrangements, whilst Sandra Potter takes a look at wassailing traditions, including a recipe for a warming Christmas punch.

The Spire team wish you all a very Merry Christmas!

IGNITE: Fridays, term time 7pm-8:30pm School years 6 and up: come join us every Friday as we have food, fun, and fellowship.

Meetings at St Stephen's Church in term time. Bring your friends as we unpack the basics of the Christian faith. All welcome!

Future Date for the Diary
On Sunday 26 January at 10am St Stephen's will be holding a special service to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. Addresses will be given by Peter Lantos, a survivor of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, and the Bishop of Woolwich. We hope that many people from the locality will be able to join us.

Baptisms & Wedding bookings
Please come to the church office on Saturdays between 10.30am and 11.30am.

St Stephen's Millennium Hall is available for hire. To book please visit <http://www.ststephensdulwich.org/millennium-hall/>



The team: Tomos Reed, Bernhard Schünemann, Christine Murrell, Sandra Potter, Martin Knight, & Sarah Bucknall.



The 2019 St Stephen's Christmas Cards, £1 per card. We are happy to deliver orders of 10 cards or more to addresses in the parish of St Stephen's; email schunemann@btinternet.com; the card is based on a painting by Elo Allik-Schunemann.



Music at St Stephen's

Our church choir is always keen to recruit new members, both adult and children: the primary requirements are enthusiasm and reliable commitment. The choristers practise on Fridays in term time, and the adults join them once or twice a month and for Festivals. Sundays 9am rehearsal for 10am service. For further information, contact Rupert Perkins

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The little angel with big worries

by Revd Canon Bernhard Schünemann



Little angel Benjamin thought to himself that he had been a good angel, but still with some trepidation he folded up his wings and knocked on the heavenly door of the great archangel Gabriel. Gabriel opened the door and asked him sternly, 'Is everything prepared just as I had asked of you? Have you prepared all the animals in the stable and got them ready for the great day?'

'I have done what I could,' whispered the little angel, overawed by being in the presence of such a great archangel. 'The noisily tweeting birds have had their instructions and they are ready to tweet less loudly. The great owl will not frighten the little child by spreading its dark wings, but instead he will sit in the rafters of the stable and give some

low light with his softly glowing eyes. The cleaning angels have brushed away annoying insects like flies and fleas. The snake is under strict orders not to slither into the stable. The farm cat is keeping the very cheeky mice in check, always aware that he is allowed to scare them away from the crib, but not to eat them.'

'I am just very worried about the ox and the donkey. The ox is so big, and he seems to be a moody, bored and slightly stupid sort of fellow. He has a rather disgusting tail that he wags around indiscriminately. I nearly fainted when he carelessly flapped it past my nose. And when he leans against the wall of the stable, the whole stable tilts and shakes dangerously, as if it might fall down. And when he snorts, all the dust swirls around the whole stable. I am not sure that we will get much cooperation out of him. As for the donkey, he is even worse! As you might expect, he is totally defiant and stubborn. He insists that because he has to do such very hard work all day, he has the right to a peaceful and undisturbed mealtime at night. He never leaves even a single straw

behind in the crib when he has eaten. Furthermore, I don't think either the ox or the donkey goes outside when they hear the call of nature.'

'Well that is a bit of a worry,' mused the archangel Gabriel. 'What are we to do? Out of all of us angels, you know them best!'

After a few moments hesitation the little angel Benjamin dared to suggest, 'I think when God himself comes to earth he will make even the most stubborn humans and even perhaps the ox and the donkey come to their senses.'

'Well, let's hope so,' said the archangel Gabriel, firmly folding his angel hands and sending off an urgent prayer.

And then the miracle happened.

Totally exhausted, Mary and Joseph arrived at the stable. The tiny baby had just arrived. Mary was holding him in her arms. She placed the baby in the manger, but the baby shivered with cold.

This scene touched the hearts of the ox and the donkey. They stepped aside carefully. When they saw how cold the baby was, they breathed their soft and warming breath over the child, now and again going out and collecting some straw to cover the infant. Of course, they now stepped outside when answering the call of nature, and with their tails they swished away any annoying flies that had become rather curious about the infant in the crib. In short, the ox and the donkey received the baby with such love and care as only ox and donkey hearts can.

Looking down on all this, the little angel Benjamin thought to himself, 'this is most wonderful. I hope that human beings will be just as loving and welcoming when Jesus comes into their lives.'



Flower Arranging

by Eleanor Bracken

Eleanor Bracken, one of our very gifted team of flower arrangers at St Stephen's, takes some time out from what is, in the lead up to Christmas, one of her busiest times of the year. She shares her thoughts about an interest that gives her a great deal of pleasure and about which she feels extremely passionate.

Flower Arranging is a combination of many elements coming together in order to produce a visually pleasing design. Fresh or dried flowers may be used and occasionally even silk ones. The more traditional designs include triangular, vertical, crescent, Hogarth Curve (also known as the lazy "S") and oval. More recently, we have seen European influences such as the parallel design, sometimes called the Continental, become very popular. Church flowers are most commonly arranged in the triangular, oval and parallel designs.

In order to achieve a pleasing arrangement in any of these designs, the arranger incorporates the elements of texture, form, colour and space. The arranger also makes use of principles which include balance, rhythm, scale, proportion, harmony, dominance and contrast.



However, before attempting to arrange flowers, one needs a sharp pair of scissors, a suitable container, floral tape, water or water retaining material and conditioned flowers which should have been cut at an angle (e.g. 45 degrees) in order to maximize the uptake of clean water.

In order to maintain the life of the plant material, the flowers are placed in floral foam. More recently, manufacturers have produced floral foam which is 50% biodegradable in one year. Arrangers are also finding more creative ways to place stems directly into water and yet have a pleasing design so as to reduce the use of foam.

Flower arranging is taught at many community centres and church halls, but is harnessed and organised under the umbrella of NAFAS, the National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies, which consists of 21 Regions.

St Stephen's is in the London & Overseas Area, consisting of 34 local clubs plus a number overseas. NAFAS also trains demonstrators, speakers and judges at the Area and National level.

We even have a quarterly national magazine, The Flower Arranger. I am a member of West Wickham



Floral Art Group which meets every 4th Wednesday (except August and December) and Bromley & District Floral Society which meets every 1st Tuesday (except August). Bromley produces a flower show every year. This year it was 26th October, next year it will be possibly in June in order to utilise the different flowers which are available at that time of year.

Flower Arranging is a very rewarding hobby, produces beautiful designs and allows people to meet many new friends. Hence, the motto of NAFAS is Fun, Friendship and Flowers!

LEONARDO DA VINCI

Adoration of the Magi

by Revd Tomos Reed



softening it.

Surrounding the mother and child we see a very troubled cast and background. The eyes of the crowd are almost all sunken and their faces contorted. This even includes the young man on the very far right, who many critics are convinced is a self-portrait of da Vinci himself.

In the distance we see scenes of warriors on horseback, including wonderfully intense and anatomically detailed representations of their steeds. Beyond this, the collapsing and ruined buildings not only allow da Vinci to explore ideas of perspective but also suggestively symbolise the damaged world that the child has been born into, and by extension the conflicted world of the artist and the conflicts and problems of our own day.

During Advent, the season of spiritual preparation and reflection that leads up to Christmas, parishioners at St Stephen's have been paying special attention to studying St Matthew's Gospel. In particular, we have read and discussed the first four chapters, which very appropriately for the time of year cover some of the most famous elements of the Christmas story. They include the visit of wise men from the East, which the church celebrates at Epiphany or Twelfth Night (6th January) and the subsequent flight into Egypt of Mary, Joseph and Jesus as refugees trying to escape from the actions of King Herod.

The wise men are often described as kings or magi, with their journey, probably from Persia, regularly acting as a creative inspiration for artists down the centuries. Whilst Matthew's Gospel describes gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, there is no mention of the number of wise

men. However, tradition and most artists have settled on three.

Leonardo da Vinci's depiction of the Adoration of the Magi follows these longstanding traditions, but his representation of this scene has made the deepest impression on me because of its peculiar and unusual nature.

Housed in the Uffizi Museum in Florence since 1670, the painting was begun in 1481 when da Vinci was still a relatively young man but remains unfinished. Following a five-year restoration, completed in 2017, we are now presented with a splendidly bright image in which it is possible to clearly observe Da Vinci's charcoal outlines.

Its monochrome incompleteness, along with the contrast between the portrayal of the central figures, Mary and Jesus, and the surrounding characters and scenery heightens the painting's impact and drama rather than



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'Our Little Effra'

by Martin Knight

Across College Road from St Stephen's Church (1), at the foot of Low Cross Wood Lane, is a new information board illustrating the history of the main attractions of Dulwich. Installed by Dulwich Estates, and complementing others from the Dulwich Society, they tell of the events, buildings, people and topographical features that have shaped Dulwich over the last 400 years. However, one notable omission is the River Effra and its role in forming and maintaining the character of South Dulwich (*the solid black line on the map*). The Dulwich headwaters of the Effra (*blue lines with direction of flow on map*)

Prior to a surge of 19th century building, our Effra began as springs in Peckarmans Wood, accessed from an iron gate near the junction of Crescent Wood Road and Sydenham Hill (2). The springs were in the central and highest part of the prominent wooded watershed that extended in an arc for of 5 miles along the ridge of hills between Streatham Common and Nunhead (green hatching on map). From 300 feet above sea level, the springs drained steeply down in a northerly direction to form the Ambrook river (3). This still flows above ground alongside the Green Chain Walk, following the former Crystal Palace High Level railway line:

The Ambrook/Effra then passes through two small ponds to the edge of the Dulwich and Sydenham Hill Golf Course, descending 120 feet in less than ½ a mile (6). Here it skirts around the Grange Lane Allotments, Golf Clubhouse, and South London Scout Centre (6a). The stream then follows a more obvious valley, parallel to Cox's Walk, towards Dulwich Common (4). 'The Grove' just east of here on Lordship Lane was the site of Dulwich Wells, whose waters briefly rivalled the better-known



(2: The wooden leat collects excess water from the steep slope below Crescent Wood Road, to protect the path from erosion
3: The Ambrook stream flowing in its well-marked clay channel.)



Sydenham Wells and Beulah Spa.

Our Effra was joined here by other small streams from East Dulwich and Forest Hill, to flow north-west across what were once the water meadows of Dulwich Court, now Dulwich Park (8). There is no channel to follow here, only a few surviving oak trees winding towards what is now the Park Lake. A resurgent stream now drains the lake over a 3 foot high weir and turns north-west towards the alms-houses of Edward Alleyn's Old College in a prominent 6 foot wide channel.

Opposite the College Chapel it was joined by a ditch that brought more water from Sydenham Hill via the Mill Pond (5) opposite Dulwich College (7). The ditch was later filled in to produce College

Road's wide grass verge, but there is a tall iron 'stench pipe' opposite the College Chapel (8a) marking the line of the Victorian pipe that once carried Effra water from Dulwich Woods.

Land use in the upper Effra basin: St Stephen's Parish is an unusual, inner urban area, as it contains a significant swathe of natural woodland, three Nature Reserves, and an 18-hole Golf Course. In addition, there are three schools, several sports grounds, and numerous allotments. There can be few other residential areas within four miles of a major metropolitan centre with such a low population density and less than half of the land built over.

The woodland clothing the steep-sided Norwood and Sydenham Heights was a natural boundary between the growing London metropolis and its rural hinterland, as well as an important resource. It has been coppiced since at least Elizabethan times, for building, tanning and glass-making materials, and charcoal burning.

In the 19th century transport improved, London's environment deteriorated, wealthier citizens moved to the higher ground of Norwood, Sydenham, and Forest Hill to take advantage of the fresh air, clean spring water, and sweeping vistas. Their large houses were expensive to maintain, and most have now been converted into flats or replaced by smaller, higher density properties.

Whilst the original forest was dominated by native oak and hornbeam, the current woodland includes introduced species like horse chestnut, colonisers such as holly and birch, and escaped garden shrubs. In response to public pressure, much of the remaining woodland is now protected and managed by ecological groups, local authorities, and private



(4. The dry Ambrook valley on Dulwich and Sydenham Hill Golf Course. Note the foreground terrace, and the steepening towards Dulwich Common. 4a. Flood runoff on Dulwich Common from Sydenham Hill beyond).



landowners, including Dulwich Estates.

The western, northern and eastern boundaries of Dulwich are marked by steep inward facing slopes, though their hills are less wooded and more accessible than Sydenham and Crystal Palace. However, all of Dulwich's Effra headwaters had to focus on the narrow Herne Hill gap, between the west Norwood and Camberwell watersheds in order to join other branches of the Effra in Brixton and finally reach the Thames.

On the lower slopes of the Sydenham ridge, Dulwich and Sydenham Hill Woods give way to allotments, the Golf Course, and playing fields. This was the original Dulwich Common - largely unimproved grassland used for grazing livestock, since the undrained clay land was heavy and wet, subject to frost and fog in Winter. In medieval times it was also relatively inaccessible because it had no road over the hills and was of marginal use to successive owners, the first of whom was Bermondsey Priory.

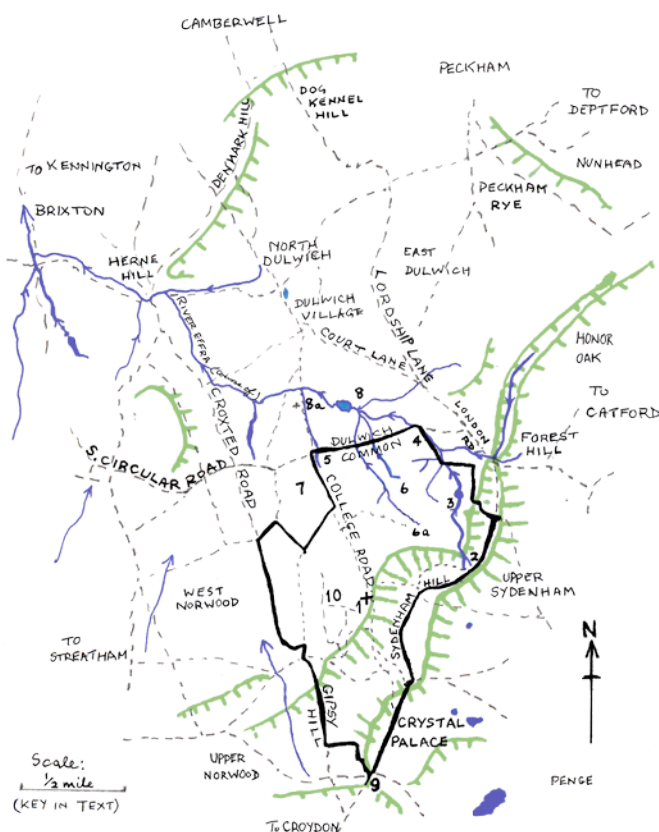
Further north still, around the Village, the confluence of the growing Effra headwaters produced the lush water meadows used for dairying and livestock fattening. Accessibility was better here, but unlike neighbouring Camberwell and Peckham, the soils of Dulwich were less suitable for crop growing or market gardening. This land was the main part of the Manor of Dulwich that Edward Alleyn acquired, and where he built his College of God's Gift; much of it is still controlled, leased, and/or managed by Dulwich Estates. Residential development has been confined almost entirely to the margins of our Dulwich basin, where are located still the only through roads and railways - along Lordship Lane in the east, Upper Sydenham and Crystal Palace in the south, Herne Hill and Denmark Hill in the north, and

West Dulwich and 'the Norwoods' on the west.

It is notable that Dulwich is characterised by six popular schools (two of them in St Stephen's parish alone), whilst commerce and industry are almost completely absent, mainly because of the absence of a route focus. Dulwich is more widely known for its Picture Gallery, its sports clubs, cultural and amenity groups, and literally on its borders are Horniman's Museum and the site of the Crystal Palace (9).

Whilst it is acknowledged that many of these defining characteristics can ultimately be traced back to the vision of Edward Alleyn and other influential figures, I hope it is now evident that the environment and physical features of 'our little Effra' have also played an important part.

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at Dulwich Wood Primary school

by Headteacher, Helen Rowe

At the beginning of the Autumn Term Dulwich Wood launched new branding proudly displaying to the community the 'Creative, Caring, Confident and Collaborative' ethos that we believe in. Community and collaboration are at the heart of our learning, so naturally Christmas is an ideal time for us to reflect on how we develop our learners to become empathetic global citizens, collaborating together as a team.

Empathy doesn't just mean treating others better – it means doing better. By instilling an appreciation of others and developing the skill of being able to disagree, but at the same time listening to different ideas, we grow in tolerance and in awareness of our differences.



In our learning each and every day we use our empathy goggles to see other peoples' points of view and put ourselves in their shoes. We listen to what others want and need, especially the elderly, homeless and those less fortunate than ourselves, to ensure that they can celebrate this special season of loving and giving. Our learning about mental wellbeing through Mindapples also taught us that 'giving' by helping others makes us feel good too!

If we can empathise, we can communicate, collaborate and lead better. Each year, our democratically elected School Council is given the task of choosing a charity to promote and support through donations. This year they have chosen Care4Calais.



Care4Calais promotes awareness of the humanitarian crisis that is the plight of refugees fleeing war in their country and who have become stuck in various camps in and around Europe whilst they wait for their request for asylum to be recognised. Currently they live in makeshift camps, unable to work and earn money to provide for themselves and their families.

Care4calais is a UK registered charity run by volunteers and 100% of any donations go to supporting refugees. The organisation collects and donates anything from clothing, bedding, blankets for the coming winter season, household items, toiletries and food supplies. Once collected, the donated items are sorted and delivered to the areas most in need.

The children of Dulwich Wood will donate coats, shoes & key kitchen items to help the refugees, many of whom are children too. This will support them during the coming winter months.

This year the children will collectively celebrate Christmas through events including the Nursery, Reception & KS1 Performances; the Choir singing at the Kingswood Community Shop, and by participating in a Christmas Jumper Day in aid of Save the Children. We warmly welcome you to attend our KS2 Christmas Performance in St Stephens Church on Wednesday 18th December at 6:30pm where we will share the collaborative and empathetic meaning of Christmas through our wonderful singing and words of reflection.



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Jo Hunt, manager of the Kingswood Community Shop, brings us news from this invaluable local asset at the centre of our community...

The Kingswood Community Shop's vision is to 'create a healthy, happy and vibrant community' where everyone is empowered socially, financially and emotionally for their mutual benefit and well-being. How this works in practice is best illustrated with an example.

Originally from Ethiopia, a mother with a young child began engaging with the centre in 2016. She started off with a 'Customer Care' course and then spread her wings to become an active member of the gardening and healthy eating project.

In 2017, she signed up to a series of free ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses and carried on with these into 2018. She also joined the 'Knit and Natter' group in late 2018 and attended other wellbeing events along the way.

In 2019, with her child reaching nursery age, she began looking for work, a task she had not undertaken for some years since relocating from Birmingham, where she had been employed in a factory. One of our current volunteers supported her in updating her CV in April 2019, and by May 2019 she was successful in securing a job at a local school. She happily remains there to this day.

The project has been vital in keeping her socially included and has increased her overall wellbeing and motivation, whilst supporting her to enhance her employability skills in pursuit of her personal goals.

As well as providing a safe source of support and confidence-



building skills, the Kingswood Community Shop, with the help of the Lent Appeal from St. Stephen's, provides ESOL courses because a good command of the English Language is vital for helping people to integrate with their neighbours and is essential for improving employability.

KCS are currently expanding through development of new activities in support of service users' aspirations.



Please do pop by or contact us: 020 8670 1578/kingswood@cpct.org.uk - we value your ideas and involvement as we constantly strive to serve the needs and wants of our local community.





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Here we come a wassailing!

by Sandra Potter

Wassailing's roots go back to before Christianity was widespread in England. One legend says that a Saxon maiden named Rowena presented Prince Vortigen with a bowl of wine, toasting him with the words 'waes hael,' meaning 'good health.'

On New Year's Eve, the lord of the manor would wish his friends and tenants 'waes hael,' and demonstrate seasonal goodwill to his servants with gifts of money and food. In turn, they replied 'drink hael,' and the New Year celebrations could begin, including the singing of wassail carols such as the one opposite.

There are two distinct traditions of wassailing. One involves merry-makers going from one



house to another, wassail bowl in hand, singing traditional songs and spreading good wishes. This grew into the more familiar tradition of Christmas Carol singing. The other form of wassailing was practiced in fruit growing regions. The

celebrations involved a Wassail King and Queen leading noisy revellers between orchards. The Wassail Queen would offer a gift to the best tree by placing a piece of wassail-soaked toast into its branches.

The wassail drink consisted of warmed ale, wine or cider, blended with spices, roasted apples, curdled cream, honey and eggs, all served in a huge bowl and passed around with the traditional "wassail" greeting. Wassail was traditionally served on New Year's Eve and again on Twelfth night, but apparently, wealthy people drank it all the 12 days of Christmas!

If you want to have a go at making a traditional and warming wassail drink, a recipe is adjacent.

- 2.25l dry cider (or apple juice for a non-alcoholic version)
- 15g root ginger
- 6 cloves
- 1 blade of mace
- 1/2 small nutmeg, grated,
- 1/2 level teaspoon ground coriander seeds
- 1/2 level tsp cardamom seeds
- 225g granulated sugar
- 2 lemons
- 275ml water
- 2 egg yolks
- demerara sugar
- 6 small cooking apples

Bruise the ginger, then put it into a large pan with the cloves, grated nutmeg, mace, coriander, cardamom and sugar. Finely grate the rinds of the lemons and add this to the spices with the water. Bring these ingredients to the boil and simmer for five minutes.

Squeeze the lemons, add the juice to the spices with the cider, and heat the mixture slowly. Put the egg yolks into a bowl and gradually beat in half a pint of the hot, but not boiling, liquid. This should make a good froth. When the rest is almost at boiling point whisk it into the basin.

Meanwhile, core the apples and put them in a roasting tin, fill the centres with demerara sugar and bake them in a moderately hot oven about 190C/375F/Gas Mark 5 for approximately twenty minutes. Put them into the wassail.

Drink and enjoy!



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Christmas 2019 at St Stephen's

Tuesday 10th December

7.30pm Dulwich Choral Society Christmas Concert
- Carols and Christmas Music for all the family

Sunday 15 December

6pm Lessons and Carols with the St Stephen's choir and readers from our community

Christmas Eve - Tuesday 24 December

4pm Blessing of the Crib Service with the St Stephen's choristers, a service of carols, readings and a procession to the crib. Children may wish to come dressed as one of the characters of the nativity story. Please donate a children's toy and place beneath the Christmas tree for deprived local children

11pm Midnight Mass with the St Stephen's chamber choir and other singers

Christmas Day - Wednesday 25 December

8am Holy Communion (BCP)

10am Christmas Day Choral Eucharist with the St Stephen's choir

Advent Bible study on the first four chapters of St Matthew's gospel led by our curate Tomos Reed: (1) Thursday 28 November at 12.30pm and 7pm; (2) Thursday 5 December at 7pm; (3) Thursday 12 December at 12.30pm and 7pm; (4) Thursday 19 December at 12.30pm and 7pm. Choose either the lunchtime or evening session.

Regular Services

Sundays

8am Holy Communion (BCP)
10am Choral Eucharist with Sunday School during term time
12noon Holy Baptisms

Monday to Friday

8.30am Silent Prayer followed at
8.45am by Morning Prayer

Wednesday

9.45am Holy Eucharist

St Margaret Clitherow RC Church

4 Kingswood Drive, SE19 1UR
Fr. Luke Marappillil

Parish Priest (020) 8670 1639
<http://www.stmargaretclitherowdulwich.org>

Regular Services

Sunday Mass 10.30am
Brazilian Community Mass 9.00am
Holy Days: Mass 10am & 7.30pm
Sacrament of Reconciliation
Mon to Sat 30 mins before Mass or at call

Christmas Eve

5pm Children's mass
10pm Carols and 1st mass of Christmas

Christmas Day

10.30am Christmas Day mass

Kingswood Community Baptist Church

Dulwich Wood Federation Primary School,
Bowen Drive, SE21 8NS

Pastor: Mawuli Doe
(info: Sandra Surrey 07986 002389)

22 December Carol Service and nativity
play: 10.30am - 12.30pm
24 December Christmas Eve Evening
Service: 8.00pm - 10.30pm
25 December Christmas Day Morning
Service: 11am - 12pm
31 December New Year's Eve Service
9.00pm - 12.30am

Regular Services

Sundays 10.30am
Wednesday 7.30-9.00pm
Non-denominational Bible Study Ketra Rooms
Saturday Prayer Group 10am-12noon
37 Kingswood Drive, Pastor Mawuli's home