

December 2018

THE MESSENGER



Christian & Missionary Alliance Church, Naur, Jordan

I am Hassan a Jordanian pastor, married to Rula, father of two boys and one beautiful girl. God called me to minister in my country after I worked at public schools in Jordan from 1993-2006 as a counsellor. In 2006 I studied theology for four years for a master degree and in 2010 I started my ministry in a church at Marj al Hamam, I preach & teach the word of God to the church and we as church help people around us

In this season of Christmas, we usually expect a gift or prepare to give one to the dearest people in our lives, children, spouse, parents & friends.

Also, in this season we are very busy preparing, cleaning, and decorating our houses, it is time for good food and delicious sweets. We prepare our churches, ministry, sermons but are we far away from the real meaning of Christmas?

The Christmas season is the reminder of the most precious gift that mankind received in all history and we often do not appreciate this.

The birth of Jesus begins with it at least 3 things:

Joy: when the Magi saw the Star in the east, "they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." Matthew 2: 10.

After Jesus was born, the angel appears to the shepherd said to them "fear not behold I bring you tidings of great joy which shall be to all people" is great news that brings a great joy and it's not exclusive to a group of people or only for deserving ones, it's for all in all time, it's for you today.

Secondly, we must enjoy and appreciate the gift of Christmas which is love. Jesus was born because God loves us; He expresses his love to us when He touches our sorrow and feels our tribulations - to cry with us - His name is Emanuel which means God with us.

And lastly this is a gift of peace - everybody looks for peace and some countries try to make peace and it seems so difficult to have it in this season. We need to remember that He brings a gift of peace and it is like a gift that we receive and we need to open it, to smell it and use it

At the time Jesus was born thousands of angels appeared and they shouted "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace" Luke 2: 14. So our question is - why is there no real peace? The answer is He established peace in our hearts; He became the peace maker between us and God; He took our sins and give us His righteousness, so we can enjoy our relationship with our Father in heaven. Again, it depends on you and me; if we accept Him as our Saviour, we shall have an eternal life. Yes, peace starts with our minds and hearts.

This is the real meaning of Christmas and this is the real meaning of the gifts of Christmas. Do you want to enjoy these gifts, do you want this gift which is available to you and me, indeed to everyone, by accepting Jesus in our lives as a Saviour and Lord?

May God bless you to understand the real meaning of this season - the gifts of Christmas

Father Hassan

CHURCH SERVICES

St Michael's is a Church of England Church.

Our main morning service is at 10.30am. The first Sunday of the month is a shorter all age service, and on the other Sundays children leave for their own groups after about 15 minutes. There is a crèche for under 3's.

On the second and fourth Sunday of the month the service includes Communion.

The evening service is at 6.30pm and it is quieter and more reflective. Communion is celebrated on the first and third Sundays of the month.

There is a Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion service at 9am on the fourth Sunday of each month.



Christmas Services

Sunday 16 December 6.30 p.m.:
Annual Carol service. This is a traditional carol service followed by mince pies and mulled wine in the church hall.

Sunday 23 December 10.30 a.m.:
Morning service including the children's nativity play

Monday 24 December 3.30 p.m.:
Christingle service

Christmas Day 9.00 a.m.:
Book of Common Prayer communion service

Christmas Day 10.30 a.m.:
Morning service for all the family (45 minutes).

Please note there will be no evening service on Christmas Day

About Father Hassan (cover item)

Father Hassan's humanitarian outreach has meant that many Iraqi Christian refugees in Jordan turned to him for help. This is why the group Helping Refugees in Jordan (HRJ), helped Father Hassan start and run the 'Hope School' in Marj al Hamam. Now that UNICEF's funding for refugee education has almost stopped in Jordan, more children than ever need such charity schools. The Hope School is currently full of Syrian and Iraqi refugee children and youth and funds are needed to complete the building of two more classrooms, books, furniture, teachers, and food. Father Hassan and his team have been tireless in their work with this school and the children who attend.

Our Pulpit

In all the excitement of opening our beautifully restored and renewed church we have not mentioned the newly cleaned and renovated pulpit. Indeed, it has been moved further east to make room for our musicians. The result is that its message is more visible. If one looks carefully one can read the names inscribed on the sides.

Many people may not be aware that the pulpit was actually made as a war memorial immediately after the end of the "Great War". There are 13 names carved onto the sides of the memorial and one of our congregation

has traced the history of the names engraved there. All young or youngish men, most of them officers, several of them related to families then living in Pond Road and Blackheath Park. All killed in the carnage of the war, their bodies buried as far afield as Turkey, France, Belgium or in some cases unknown resting places; only "Known unto God".

Rather unusually after the Second World War names from that conflict were not added to the memorial, so our pulpit stands as a memorial to "the war that was to end all wars" and the idealism of the young to fight for king and country. Tragically, as we know war is not ended and we continue to pray for peace throughout the world. This remembrance Sunday at 10.58, before the two minutes silence, their names were movingly and slowly read out by a former Army Officer.



From the Registers - Baptisms

- 7th October: Roopa Kumar
- 14th October: Juliet and Lydia Smye-Rumsby
- 21st October: Inigo Perez
- 4th November: Abigail Worboys
- 18th November: Joyce and James Noone



Christmas Diary

Christmas Diary

Spire Club: Need some company Scrabble, jigsaws and more? We meet at the church hall on Wednesdays from 1.30 – 3.30: Tea and cake for all.

Thursday 29th November:

A demonstration of lighting options towards floodlighting the church will take place between 5.30 and 7.30 pm: All welcome to attend.

Monday-Tuesday 3-4 December:

Christmas Journey: we are sorry but only for booked schools

Wednesday 19th December at 5.30pm.

Some of the residents from the Gables are members of St Michael's. Every year we go there to sing Carols and celebrate Christmas with them. The Gables is at the village end of Blackheath Park. We look forward to seeing you. Please come and join us.

St Michael
& ALL ANGELS

“A London Summer” photo competition

We had a really wonderful selection of entries to our “A London Summer” photo competition and the judges spent a long time deliberating over the winning entries which are as follows:-

1. The first place went to Michelle Thornhill with her beautiful photograph of “A heron at the Barbican”
2. Second came John Clark with “Kensington Gardens - Evening Outing”
3. Third place went to Barbara Tomlinson with “Barbican Waterfall”
4. Fourth place was taken by Lucinda Peters with “On Blackheath”

Elizabeth Hingston's “Watering the allotment” received a special commendation. Many thanks to all the those who entered the competition with such delightful photographs.



First : A heron at
the Barbican



Second: Kensington Gardens –
Evening Outing



Third: Barbican Waterfall

Back in St Michael's for our Christmas Journey

The Christmas Journey happens each year over two days towards the end of the autumn term when some 300 children aged 6-7 visit the church with their teachers for around an hour and a half. They hear and see the Christmas story told and played out in short and simple scenes. It is like a reverse nativity play with the adults acting and the children watching, taking part and having the chance to ask questions. At the end, they will know why Christians think that the birth of Jesus is important for us all.

Jonathan Causer



Night Shelter – not everyone is happy at Christmas

Just this week, British ministers have been accused of being in a “state of denial” about poverty after it was revealed that 1.5 million people were destitute at some point in 2017. Particularly leading up to Christmas, when charities are launching festive campaigns, it's easy to feel helpless and overwhelmed by the suffering taking place in our world and not know where to start.

5 years ago, churches in Greenwich came together to launch Greenwich Winter Night Shelter (GWNS), a practical response to the increasing challenge of homelessness. Seven venues offer accommodation one night a week between November and March, the coldest months of the year. Taking referrals from Greenwich Council and other local referral agencies, GWNS seeks to provide a warm, welcoming space for people to have an evening meal, a comfortable night's sleep and breakfast in the morning. It is both a privilege and a challenge to



meet people of such diverse backgrounds and to be part of a small, emerging community.

If you would be interested in helping or getting involved, there are numerous ways of doing so. Volunteers can sign up for the following shifts: evening (6pm-10pm), night (9.45pm-6.45am) or morning (6.30-9am). If you'd like to be involved but do not feel so comfortable volunteering at a venue, we also need cooks to prepare evening meals. GWNS is an inclusive project that welcomes people of all different backgrounds, ages and faiths. Finally, we are a small Charity with almost 200 volunteers and only one part-time paid post. Financial donations are very welcome.

While this article's aim is to introduce a wonderful project and to encourage participation, I hope it also serves as a reminder that behind the headlines and statistics there are real people. Clearly, we cannot eliminate poverty overnight, but there are ways of protecting the most vulnerable in our community and improving local people's lives. One person at a time, initiatives such as GWNS help to make inroads into statistics which are so easily ignored. To find out more about volunteering for or donating to Greenwich Winter Night Shelter, please email gwnsprojectmgr@gmail.com. Thank you!

Katy Risdill-Smith



St. Michael's: making time for the things that matter.

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