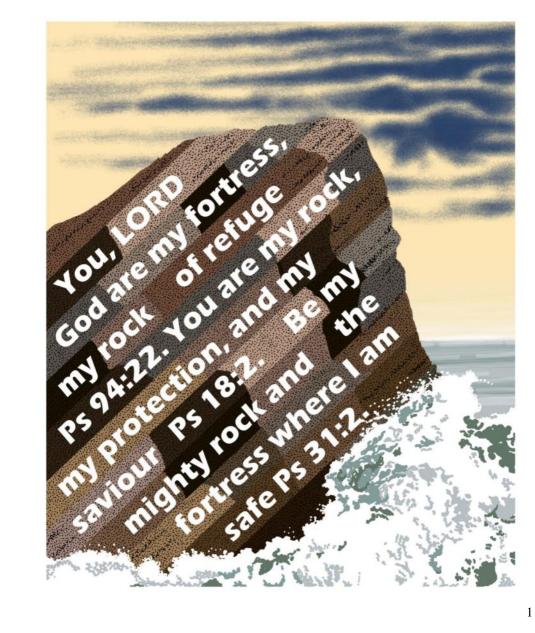


CROSSROADS

The Family Magazine of St Hilda's, Ashford, Middlesex No. 711 July/August 2020

Free - but donations welcome!



The Parish of **St Hilda**, **Ashford** in the Diocese of London

Charity Reg. No. 1134119

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Our Mission Prayer: Bless our Community. Make its people; Strong in Faith, Steadfast in Hope, And Generous in Love. Amen.

WE MUST BE DETERMINED TO BE 'ANTI-RACIST'

George Floyd is the latest in a long line of black people who, in recent years, have died at the hands of the police in America. This has led to a global outcry against racism, demanding fairness and equality in interpersonal relationships. But more than this, justice requires us to root out and re-order any system, structure, or narrative which privileges white people over people of colour and their cultures, norms, and perspectives.

Many consider racism against black people to be an American problem, but Britain's imperial history has given us our own particular brand. While many white people would publicly denounce overtly racist behaviour, many of our systems are inherently racist and some people remain willing and conscious participants in them.

That's why it's not enough to check our unconscious biases. We must be determined to be 'anti-racist', to work against the *status quo* wherever it disadvantages black people. This is fundamentally theological: affirming the inherent dignity of all people created in God's image.

In the UK, recent research demonstrates that black children are twice as likely to live in poverty than white children. Black people face discrimination in employment and health care. They are more likely to be stopped and searched by the police, to get sentenced to prison time and to be given longer sentences than white people. As a country, we have our own stories of excessive force and of the deaths of black people in police custody. Stories that do not end with justice.

These realities are well-known by black people in the UK, including black Christians. Black Brits share the pain of African-Americans suffering under the weight of the same sin and injustice, the same racism.

Yet, the lack of solidarity displayed by many white Christians and leaders has deepened this pain. The unity and witness of the church – as an institution and through its members in society – depend not just on shared faith, but also on shared love and shared burdens. The racial inequities of our churches often fail to speak prophetically to the world – this is a week for lament and repentance.

For those moved to compassion, it's also a time to listen, learn, and practise solidarity with your black brothers and sisters. Action is the way we bring about a new world. A world that cares, principally, for the 'least of these'.

Selina Stone, LICC (The London Institute of Contemporary Christianity see LICC.org.uk for more details)



ELECTORAL ROLL - ST HILDA'S CHURCH

If you consider St Hilda's to be your regular place of worship why not complete an Application for Enrolment on the Church Electoral Roll. Applications Forms are available by contacting the Parish Office by either emailing: office@sthilda.org or by calling 01784 253525.

Frances Forsbrey

ST HILDA'S REOPENING FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP

The doors of St Hilda's are re-opening for public worship on Sunday 5th July. There will be two services each week: on Sundays at 9.30am and Wednesdays at 9.45am.

The church has implemented a number of changes in terms of layout and procedures to ensure everyone who attends stays safe and healthy during these changing times.

To attend one of the services we request that you book a ticket through Eventbrite (see link on the church website) or phone the Parish Office. This is to ensure we can allocate seating as required whilst adhering to social distancing guidelines. We will be maintaining a register to enable track and trace if this is ever required.

Services will continue to be live streamed for the foreseeable future.

For more details see the weekly Newsletter No 9 which is available via the Home page of the web site

This church is prayer-conditioned. - Anon

THE TRANSFIGURATION (6th August) - a glimpse of Jesus' future glory

The story is told in Matthew (17:1-9), Mark (9:1-9) and Luke (9:28-36).

It was a time when Jesus' ministry was popular, when people were seeking Him out.

But on this day, He made time to take Peter, James and John, His closest disciples, up a high mountain. In the fourth century, Cyrillic of Jerusalem identified it as Mount Tabor (and there is a great church up there today), but others believe it more likely to have been one of the three spurs of Mount Hermon, which rise to about 9,000 feet, and overlook Caesarea Philippi.

High up on the mountain, Jesus was suddenly transfigured before His friends. His face began to shine as the sun, His garments became white and dazzling. Elijah and Moses, of all people, suddenly appeared, and talked with Him. A bright cloud overshadowed the disciples.

Peter was staggered, but, enthusiast that he was - immediately suggested building three tabernacles on that holy place, one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. But God's 'tabernacling', God's dwelling with mankind, does not any longer depend upon building a shrine. It depends on the presence of Jesus, instead. And so, a cloud covered them, and a Voice spoke out of the cloud, saying that Jesus was His beloved Son, whom the disciple should 'hear'. God's dwelling with mankind depends upon our listening to Jesus.

Then, just as suddenly, it is all over. What did it mean? Why Moses and Elijah? Well, these two men represent the Law and the Prophets of the Old Covenant, or Old Testament. But now they are handing on the baton, if you like: for both the Law and the Prophets found their true and final fulfilment in Jesus, the Messiah.

Why on top of a mountain? In Exodus we read that Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive the sacred covenant from Yahweh in the form of the Ten Commandments. Now Jesus goes up and is told about the 'sealing' of the New Covenant, or New Testament of God with man, which will be accomplished by His coming death in Jerusalem.

That day made a lifelong impact on the disciples. Peter mentions it in his second letter, 2 Peter 1:16-19, invariably the reading for this day.

The Eastern Churches have long held the Transfiguration as a feast as important as Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension and Pentecost. But it took a long time for the West to observe the Transfiguration. The feast starts appearing from the 11th and 12th centuries, and the Prayer Book included it among the calendar dates, but there was no liturgical provision for it until the 19th century.

CORONAVIRUS ITEMS

PRAYING DURING THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

British adults are praying for an end to the Covid-19 crisis, as well as for frontline workers and those living in poverty both in the UK and around the world, according to a new poll commissioned by Christian Aid.

The research, undertaken by Savanta ComRes, found that one in four (26%) British adults say they have prayed for an end to the Covid-19 crisis since lockdown, while an equal proportion (26%) say they have prayed for people working on the frontline and other key workers since the crisis began.

One in five (21%) British adults say they have prayed for people living in poverty in the UK or around the world since the lockdown.

The poll also indicated that the Covid-19 lockdown is slightly more likely to increase than decrease people's faith in God (5% vs. 2%), life after death (4% vs. 2%) and the power of prayer (5% vs. 2%). This was particularly true of younger Brits aged 18-24.

Chine McDonald from Christian Aid said: "At times of crisis like the world is experiencing now, faith can play a key part in helping people to cope with daily realities and pressures."

SADIO KHAN THANKS THE CHURCHES

Sadiq Khan has praised church leaders for providing hope and leadership throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Speaking recently to Premier radio, the Mayor of London praised the support he has received from faith leaders in the lockdown.

He spoke of "the massive contribution... (that) the leadership of the Christian community has provided. I've spent some time talking to the Archbishop, but also Bishop of London as well as Cardinal Nichols and a number of other faith leaders in the Christian community."

A minute, unseen enemy has shaken global society to its foundations. This is bringing about a new way of being-in-the-world... In the long run, this pandemic may hasten the emergence of a renewed vision of community and progress towards environmental renewal which we had hardly dared to think could happen. - *The Rev Dr Christopher Steed, Team Rectotr in the Totton Team, Hampshire and Visiting Professor at Winchester University*.

MUSIC IN OUR CHURCHES AND CATHEDRALS

The Church of England, together with the Royal School of Church Music, has encouraged the Government to be proactive in ensuring music-making can resume in church buildings, once it is safe to do so. Responding to the latest guidance, the Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, said: "We are encouraging the Government to be alert to the consequences of our choirs' continued silence - and to take a proactive approach to allowing singing to return to our churches and cathedrals as soon as it is possible to do so safely.

"We look forward to a time where worship and music can once again be combined, in all their different expressions, as they have for centuries, turning our hearts to God."

During the Coronavirus pandemic, the Church of England partnered with the RSCM to provide <u>free hymns</u> for parishes for use in streamed worship, which have been downloaded more than 45,000 times.

In St. Hilda's streamed services we have used the RSCM resources as well as the contributions from our own choir. Ed

CARERS WHO ARE OVER 70

Many people over 70 in this country are becoming desperate. They have been the sole carers for their loved one since lockdown, and they are struggling. In order to cope, large numbers of them have turned to antidepressants.

The figures are eye-watering: during the pandemic this Spring, more than 1.4 million people aged over 70 were sole carers for someone who was sick, disabled and often also over 70. A reduction in support from paid carers made the situation even worse.

In a poll commissioned by Carers UK, 70 per cent of these unpaid carers said that the negative impact of caring on their own physical and mental health was one of the biggest challenges they faced.

I never thought the comment, "I wouldn't touch you with a six-foot pole" would become national policy, but here we are!



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HAPPY 60TH ANNIVERSARY

All the members of St Hilda's Entertainers were extremely disappointed not to be able to go ahead with this year's May production, "Now We Are 60", due to the coronavirus, especially as it is their 60th Anniversary. When lockdown occurred they were halfway through rehearsals, preparing a selection of short plays which, together, would have constituted a hilarious evening of comedy entertainment to remember. However, the show will go on – just one year later, in May 2021. Dates will be published in due course.

As it wasn't possible to present the show this year it was decided to produce, instead, a video of memories from members past and present, which was shared with all members and friends. This is a delightful memento which includes an anniversary poem especially written by Steve Smith and Tom Manly which is reproduced here, and gives a flavour of, and brief insight into, the Entertainers' amazing group. If you would like to watch the video the link is: https://youtu.be/tRU_moJAWJU

The Entertainers look forward to entertaining you and the local community again as soon as possible. Hopefully this will be with our next pantomime, "The Little Mermaid," planned for this December if restrictions have been sufficiently lifted. The script has been specially written by three members of the Entertainers, Dylan Harvey, myself and my daughter, Lara Winter.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy the poem and future shows. Stay safe and take care.

Neale Winter Chairman, St Hilda's Entertainers



HAPPY 60TH ANNIVERSARY ST HILDA'S ENTERTAINERS

We're St Hilda's Entertainers, We've been here for sixty years, In that time, had so much fun, Let's celebrate and say cheers!

Although we cannot cheer you, With our pantos and our plays, Or our singing or our dancing, Oh, we could go on for days!

We were formed in nineteen sixty, When the times were very strange, No internet or mobile phones, Oh, how things have changed.

The splendid folk who kicked us off, Are now, most sadly, gone, In our hearts we fondly remember, And bet they're singing along.

Les and Ivy, Doris, Jack, Fred, Reg and Nora, too, Dolly and the Nicholsons, They began our loyal crew.

And don't forget old Bunny B, His inspiration led the way, He started this all off, you see, 'Cos the Vicar wanted a play. So many others came and went, Moved on or grew to stars, But their legacy goes on and on, And never leaves our hearts.

We'll carry on, producing plays And pantomimes with glee, We think they really entertain The local community. So many people have joined our ranks, With enthusiasm and smiles, Playing many parts across the years, Bringing joy throughout the aisles.

We can't mention all our members, Yep, that is no joke, But certainly we can all agree They are our favourite folk.

And let's not forget the backstage crew, Without whom we've no show, Amazing props and scenery, Each year the standards grow.

The Church Hall's always been our home,
Of that there is no doubt,
Years ago it burned down twice,
But the show went on throughout.

You'll often find us in the DA, Or having a tasty curry, We are a very social group, We have a chinese, too, don't worry!

Our after-show parties are legendary, And go on very late, Formation dances to ZZ Top The time we have is great.

It seems we're always growing, Making friends and having fun, We wish that we could share this day With every single one.

It's hard to believe this all started Way back in nineteen sixty, Who'd have thought, way back then, We would even get to fifty! Although this isn't how we planned To spend our special Birthday, Together we will meet again, Whatever comes our way.

Sixty years is no mean feat, And here's to sixty more Entertaining the local people Has never been a chore.

To audiences watching every year, To members who've come and gone, We will never forget you, The Entertainers live on!

So now it's twenty twenty, And we've Birthday wishes due, We wanted, of course, to celebrate, And share it all with you. But lockdown issues make it tricky To do what we should do, To get on stage and have some fun, With celebrations true.

And so from all of us, Every member past and new, We wanted to do something, Let us entertain you!

Come one, come all, and join with us, To say what should be said, That's "Happy Birthday" S-H-E, Let's look to the future instead.

Happy Birthday St Hilda's Entertainers!



Summer is.....

dawns of heat
a cat too lazy to birdwatch
grass cuttings scenting the air
laughter from garden paddling pools
Wimbledon
swifts circling high
airless bedrooms
hailstones on the lawn
sun patterns on the sea
an ice-cream melting on the sands
flower festivals
villages re-appearing from shrinking reservoirs
weary commuters
a hedgehog snuffling in the dark







Terry Rickson

WANTED Your contributions! or

Thank you Neale and the Entertainers and Terry for your contributions, but apart from these, this magazine has again relied on material from Parish Pump. This suggests to me that it is time for a new look with a new editor. Any volunteers?

a new editor

Ed

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BISHOPS WARN OF 'ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM'

Church of England bishops recently joined with counterparts from around the Anglican Communion in signing a statement warning of 'Environmental Racism.'

The Archbishop of Canterbury together with the Bishops of Salisbury, Oxford, Truro, Dover, Woolwich, Sherborne, Loughborough, Kingston, Reading and Ramsbury, and former Archbishop Rowan Williams have joined a list of eight archbishops and 38 bishops worldwide in signing an open letter stating that black lives are predominantly affected by the effects of climate change, as well as police brutality and the spread of Covid -19.

Published by the Anglican Communion's Environmental Network, the letter reads (extract):

The world is slow to respond to climate change, hanging on to an increasingly precarious and unjust economic system. It is predominantly Black lives that are being impacted by drought, flooding, storms and sea level rise. The delayed global response to climate injustice gives the impression that #blacklivesdontmatter. Without urgent action Black lives will continue to be the most impacted, being dispossessed from their lands and becoming climate refugees.

We stand at a Kairos moment – in order to fight environmental injustice, we must also fight racial injustice.

We call attention in particular to the impact of environmental racism on indigenous peoples decimated by the effects of colonisation. Tribes of people were enslaved, and annihilated by harsh conditions and by diseases for which they had no immunity in the first decades of colonisation."

The Bishops went on to mention the "growing and alarming rise in the number of people becoming refugees due to climate change. It is estimated that there are 40 million climate refugees in the world today, and by 2050 that number could reach one billion.

"Even in the midst of the wealthiest countries Black people bear the brunt of environmental racism. Dumpsites for toxic chemicals are situated near poorer Black communities. These communities become food deserts - lacking both access to nutritious food and safe water.

"Take action for climate justice to show #blacklivesmatter."

THE CHURCH AND THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY

The events of recent weeks have shone a spotlight on the history and legacy of the slave trade, prompting renewed reflection by many organisations in this country and across the world.

The Church of England's history in this regard is complex: marked both with pride in the role of William Wilberforce and others who led the long fight for the abolition of the slave trade and shame in the role of many other individuals, and the Church itself, in the trade in human beings.

The bicentenary of the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade 1807 celebrated in 2007 provided unprecedented opportunities to acknowledge the Church's complicity. In a debate in 2006, the General Synod of the Church of England voted to issue an apology for the church's role in sustaining the trade.

The then Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, told the debate that the Church ought to acknowledge its corporate and ancestral guilt.

He said:

"To speak here of repentance and apology is not words alone; it is part of our witness to the Gospel, to a world that needs to hear that the past must be faced and healed and cannot be ignored ... by doing so we are actually discharging our responsibility to preach good news, not simply to look backwards in awkwardness and embarrassment, but to speak of the freedom we are given to face ourselves, including the unacceptable regions of ... our history."

Speakers in the debate acknowledged that while the Church had played its part in justifying slavery, Anglicans including Wilberforce or John Newton, the former slave ship captain turned minister and composer of the hymn Amazing Grace, were powerfully motivated by their Christian faith. Wilberforce brought bills before Parliament for 20 successive years until legislation to abolish the trade was passed.

The Church is mindful that slavery still exists today in other forms. The Church alongside other organisations is actively working to educate and reduce instances of slavery. In May 2019 the National Church Institutions issued a <u>Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement in accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015</u>.

This statement document considers both historic and current forms of slavery. The Church works closely with the Clewer Initiative with the aim of removing instances of human trafficking.

Recent research has highlighted other links between the wider Church and the slave trade. An article in the Daily Telegraph on June 19, 2020 highlights

how a number of individual clergy received payments under 1833 Abolition of Slavery Act compensating them for slaves which they or their families 'owned'.

A spokesperson for the Church of England said:

"While we recognise the leading role clergy and active members of the Church of England played in securing the abolition of slavery, it is a source of shame that others within the Church actively perpetrated slavery and profited from it.

"In 2006 the General Synod of the Church of England issued an apology, acknowledging the part the Church itself played in historic cases of slavery.

"The Church of England is actively committed to combatting slavery in all its forms today, particularly through the work of the Clewer Initiative which works with our 42 dioceses to help support victims of modern slavery and identify the signs of exploitation in their communities."

Recent events have also prompted debate about statues, monuments or other commemorations to those linked to the slave trade in public places in the UK, including some historic churches.

31st August: RAYMOND NONNATUS - redeeming slaves from a living death

Raymond Nonnatus (1204–40) is a good patron saint for anyone who does not take life for granted. The account of his own life begins with the story of how his mother died just before his birth, and of how Raymond was somehow extracted from her dead body just in time to save him. ('Nonnatus' means 'not born').

Raymond grew up in Portello, Catalonia and became a monk, joining the Mercedarian Order. Perhaps because of his gratitude for his own life having been spared, Raymond developed a passionate desire to see other people set free to live the lives God had given them. Whatever the reason, Raymond made the difficult and dangerous journey out to Algeria in order to redeem many slaves from a living death. So passionate was he to free them, that he even offered himself as a ransom for others' liberation

While in Algeria, Raymond preached Christianity to the Muslims, and was put into prison, before eventually being sent back to Spain. The Pope sent for him, but Raymond was so weakened by his suffering in Algeria that he died on the way to Rome. But by then Raymond was content. Just as his life had been given back to him, so he had used it to give life back to others.

ATOMIC BOMBS OVER HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

Atomic bombs were dropped over two Japanese cities 75 years ago. This first was at Hiroshima, on 6th August 1945, when the centre of the city was totally destroyed, and 80,000 people were killed immediately. A further 60,000 died by the end of the year. It was the first city in history to be hit by a nuclear weapon.

Three days later the US Army Air Forces dropped a second atomic bomb on Nagasaki, killing 40,000 people immediately and about 33,000 more by the end of the year. It was the second (and last) city to experience a nuclear attack.

Both cities had military significance, but most of the dead were civilians. Japan surrendered to the Allies on 15th August. There is little doubt that a conventional invasion of Japan would have cost many more lives, but there is still much debate about the legal and ethical justification of atomic bombing. The Vatican felt that the inventors of the weapon should have destroyed it for the benefit of humanity, and the Rev Cuthbert Thicknesse, Dean of St Albans, prohibited using St Albans Abbey for a thanksgiving service for the end of the war, calling the use of atomic weapons "an act of wholesale, indiscriminate massacre".

Nagasaki was targeted in place of Kyoto – the original choice – because of Kyoto's historical, religious and cultural significance. It was also where Henry Stimson, the US Secretary of War, had gone for his honeymoon.

Hiroshima was further devastated just over a month later, when it was struck by Typhoon Ida. Both cities have been rebuilt, with peace memorials.

Four years later the Soviet Union detonated an atomic bomb, and the United States responded by developing a hydrogen bomb – a thousand times more powerful.

Tim Lenton

WHEN THE POPE WAS DECLARED TO BE INFALLIBLE

It was 150 years ago, on 18th July 1870, that the Vatican issued the declaration of Papal Infallibility. It preserved the Pope from the possibility of error when he defined a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Roman Catholic Church.

The dogma of papal infallibility is one that has, not surprisingly, made other parts of the universal Church particularly uncomfortable. But although it was often assumed in the medieval Church and earlier, it was not proclaimed in so many words until the First Vatican Council of 1870. It was then that Pope Pius IX wanted to emphasise his own spiritual authority after he was dethroned as ruler of the Papal States following Italy's reunification. Voting on it took place during a thunderstorm, which some saw as significant.

Papal infallibility applies only when the Pope speaks 'ex cathedra' – from the chair. After 1870 no such decree was made until in 1950 Pope Pius XII defined the Assumption of Mary – the taking of Mary, body and soul, into heaven at her death – as an article of faith.

Some believe that Pope John Paul II's declaration in 1994 that women could never be ordained was infallible, but this is disputed.

Tim Lenton

WHAT IS LURKING IN YOUR GARDEN?

Is there something alien in your garden which is beginning to worry you? Something that is growing too fast, spreading too fast, for you to keep up with?

Gardeners across the country are being asked by the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) and the University of Coventry to find – and report – the next Japanese knotweed before it 'jumps the garden fence' and causes havoc.

Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam both began innocently, as pretty ornamental garden plants. Then they escaped and have since marched across the UK like something out of War of the Worlds, causing immense damage to homes and waterways.

So now the question is: can you help a citizen science project to identify the *next* plant which could become a similar menace? The project is called Plant Alert. It offers you an easy way to report any ornamental plants in your garden that you suspect are becoming aggressive. Just go to: https://bsbi.org/plant-alert

Scientists say to look out for: vigorous growth, prolific self-seeding, longer flowering periods. Plants which are logged on the Plant Alert app will be studied by botanists, and potentially restricted from sale.

Kevin Walker, head of science at BSBI, says: "Bitter experience has shown that species that are invasive in gardens are also the ones that are likely to 'jump the fence' and cause problems in the wild."

WATCH OUT FOR THIS PREDATOR

If you like bees, then keep an eye out this summer for a dangerous invader from the Continent – the Asian hornet. A single Asian hornet can consume 50 honeybees in one day.

In recent years the Asian hornet has spread across Europe, devouring honeybees by the tens of thousands. They are most likely to be found in southern England after crossing the Channel from France, or in imported soil, plants and fruit.

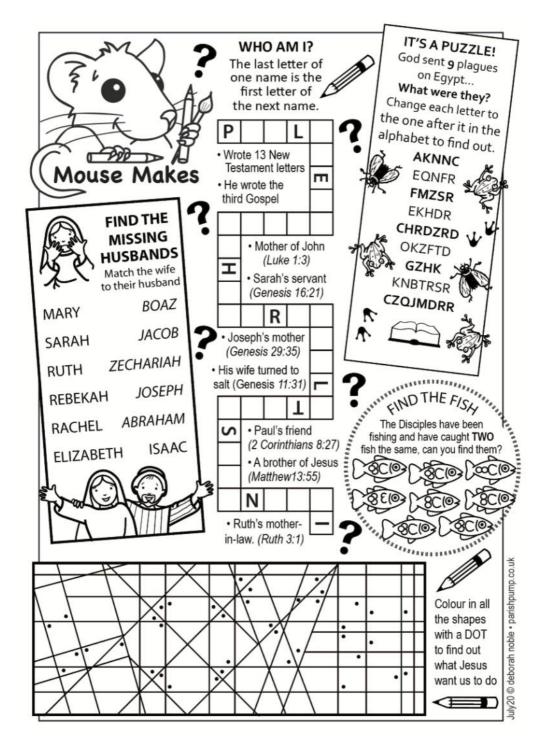
An Asian hornet is mostly black, with thin yellow stripes, an orange face and yellow legs. Measuring 1.2 inches, it is slightly smaller than the European hornet, and is of about the same threat to humans. But they are deadly when it comes to honeybees. Asian hornets wait outside of honeybee hives and pounce on emerging workers, chopping them up alive and taking back the thorax to their own young.

If you think you have spotted an Asian hornet, report it through the 'Asian Hornet Watch' app:

Asian Hornet Watch app for iPhone Asian Hornet Watch app for android

If you find a nest, don't try to remove it yourself – it can be dangerous and should only be done by experts.

More details at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/asian-hornet-uk-sightings



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