



St Hilda's
Ashford

St Hilda's News

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We are looking for more contributions from the St Hilda's community, if you would like to contribute, please either call, email or send an article to the Parish Office.

If you would like help or to speak to a member of the ministry team please contact:

- Parish Office Tel 01784 253525
 Email office@sthilda.org
- Father Joseph can be contacted on
 01784 254237
 www.sthilda.org

Monuments with slavery links likely to be removed from Church of England parishes

Some artefacts will most likely be removed from churches in light of new guidance for parishes addressing concerns over memorials with links to slavery and other contested heritage.



The Church of England guidance aims to enable churches and cathedrals to consider the history of their buildings and congregations, and to engage with everyone in their community to understand how physical artefacts may impact their mission and worship.

It comes after the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke about the issue last year, saying that justice is crucial to forgiveness as he stressed a need to learn from the past so that it is not repeated in the future.

The guidance offers a framework to approach such questions locally and, where necessary, to engage with the relevant bodies who oversee changes to cathedral and church buildings. In June 2020, the Church of England announced a consultation on approaches to contested heritage following a series of cases around the country.

The guidance published on Tuesday has been informed by a wide-ranging consultation which has included every Church of England diocese and cathedral, and others including heritage bodies and specialists in church monuments.

The guidance notes that while churches and cathedrals are above all places dedicated to the worship of God, for a range of reasons, members of communities may not always feel welcome in these buildings.

A reason could be the presence of objects commemorating people responsible for the oppression and marginalisation of others.

The guidance specifically addresses the issue of heritage associated with racism and the slave trade, including plaques, statues, inscriptions and other monuments, and it is hoped that by doing so it will establish a methodology which can be used for other forms of contested heritage.

Becky Clark, the Church of England's director of cathedrals and church buildings, said: "With this guidance, the Church of England is seeking to provide a framework for parishes and cathedrals to lead discussions about how the heritage in our buildings can best serve our commitment to be a welcoming and inclusive Church today.

"Church buildings and their interiors have been adapted over centuries in response to practical needs, architectural styles, as well as to society itself.

“The issues of contested heritage require us honestly and openly to discuss ways in which our buildings can demonstrate our commitment to social and racial justice as a reflection of our faith in Jesus Christ.”

She was asked on BBC Radio 4's Today Programme if some “physical things” are going to be removed, and she replied: “It most likely does, but the most important thing about this framework is it's an aid rather than pre-empting decision-making processes.

“It doesn't insist upon any particular outcome or any particular course of action.”

The Dean of Manchester, Rogers Govender, who chairs the Church of England's Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC), said: “The Black Lives Matter protests which took the world by storm last summer have had a huge impact on how we view racism in church and society in general.

“Our history, faiths, attitudes, actions and heritage are all under scrutiny.

“This guidance on contested heritage offers practical resources for places of worship to respond to concerns over church buildings, examining how we can offer a balanced message and interpretation, ensuring we are not perpetuating a biased historic message.

“This is not about destroying heritage or history, but providing a more balanced view.

“This is essential and appropriate in the light of the discrimination and injustice experienced by people of colour in all walks of life, not least in the life of the Church of England.

“I would encourage all parishes and cathedrals to respond in a positive way to this challenge.”

On the Today programme last June, the Most Rev Justin Welby was asked if people should forgive the “trespasses” of people immortalised in the form of statues, rather than tearing them down.

He said: “We can only do that if we've got justice, which means the statue needs to be put in context. Some will have to come down.

“Some names will have to change.

“I mean, the church, goodness me, you know, you just go around Canterbury Cathedral, there's monuments everywhere, or Westminster Abbey, and we're looking at all that, and some will have to come down.

“But yes, there can be forgiveness, I hope and pray as we come together, but only if there's justice.

“If we change the way we behave now, and say this was then and we learned from that, and change how we're going to be in the future, internationally, as well.”

Vaccine rate in over 50s highest among Christians, but race bigger factor

Statistics show Christians are the most likely religious group among the over 50s to get a vaccine, but that race is a more significant factor in take-up, with figures suggesting around three in 10 older black adults are not being vaccinated.

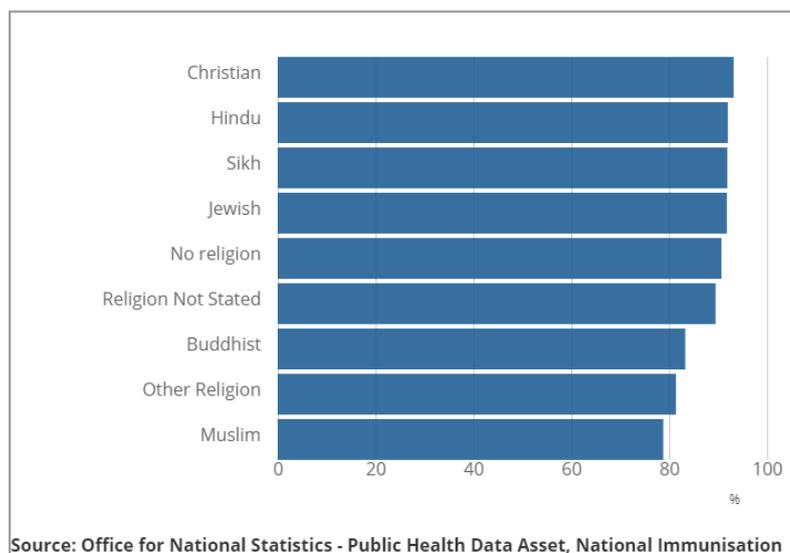
This compares with 93.7% of white British adults taking the vaccine, with estimates for all ethnic minority groups lower than this.

Rates were also estimated to be lower in people of Muslim or Buddhist faiths, those who do not speak English, those living in more deprived areas and disabled people.

It is the second time the ONS has published analysis on vaccination rates in older people broken down by age, sex, ethnicity, religious affiliation, disability and deprivation.

It analysed data from the National Immunisation Management Service (NIMS) on people over 50 between December 8 and April 12, linking it to people's NHS numbers.

Differences in geography, socio-demographic factors and underlying health conditions do not fully explain the lower vaccination rates among ethnic minority groups, the ONS found.



The lowest rates were estimated among those aged 50 and over identifying as black Caribbean and black African, at 66.8% and 71.2% respectively, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said.

Statistical modelling showed the odds of not having received a dose of a vaccine were 7.4 times greater for people from black Caribbean backgrounds compared with people of white British ethnicity.

After adjusting for age, sex, socio-demographic characteristics and underlying health conditions, the odds were still 5.6 times greater.

For people identifying as black African, the unadjusted odds were six times greater, while the adjusted odds were 3.4 times higher.

The ONS also found a relationship between proficiency in English language, as recorded in the 2011 census, and vaccination rates.

Estimated rates were 75.3% among those who do not speak English at all, 75.9% for people who do not speak English well, and 92.7% for those whose main language is English.

The vaccination rate among people living in the most deprived areas of England was 87.8%, compared with 94.5% in the least deprived, the ONS said.

Disabled people who reported being limited a lot in their day-to-day activities had a vaccination rate of 89.3%, compared with 92.3% for non-disabled people.



Boris Johnson at Jesus House church, Daily Telegraph, Geoff Pugh (PA Wire)

The lowest rates among religious groups were for those who identified as Muslim (78.8%) or Buddhist (83.3%), while the figures for people identifying as Christian or Hindu were 93.2% and 92% respectively.

The ONS said lower take-up could reflect access problems.

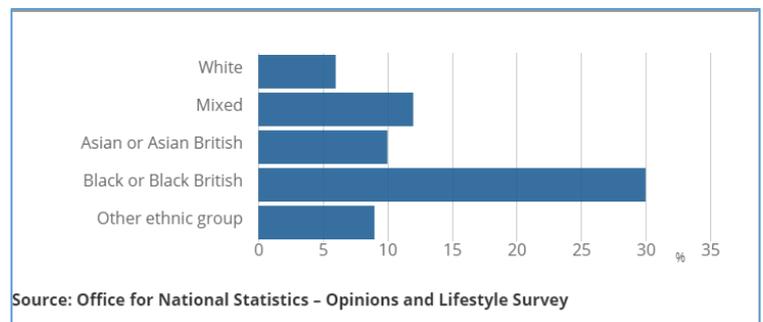
Hugh Stickland, head of strategy and engagement at the ONS, said the lower rates are “broadly similar to the groups who express vaccine hesitancy”, adding: “However, the reasons for lower uptake are likely to be complex, including for example being unable to travel to a vaccination centre.”

Separate statistics released by the ONS on Thursday show that 7% of adults in Britain reported vaccine hesitancy between 31st March 31 and 25th April.

This is a fall from 9% earlier in the year, from 13th January 13 to 7th February.

Black or black British adults were the most likely ethnic group to report vaccine hesitancy, and younger adults were more likely to do so than older people.

Three in 10 black or black British adults reported hesitancy, as did 13% of adults aged 16-29.



The ONS defined hesitancy as adults who have refused a vaccine, say they would be unlikely to get a vaccine when offered, and those who responded “neither likely nor unlikely”, “don’t know” or “prefer not to say” when asked.

Dr Ben Kasstan, a medical anthropologist at the University of Bristol, said the data raised urgent questions about the delivery of the vaccination programme in ethnic and religious minority communities and lessons learned.

He said: “Putting issues in accessibility aside, policymakers need to look at how long-running issues of trust and social exclusion may be being directed towards the coronavirus vaccine programme, and thinking intersectionally across race, religion, and socioeconomic status will be essential as we move forward.”

NHS England medical director of primary care, Dr Nikki Kanani, said acceptance rates were improving among all ethnic minorities.

She said: "This progress is a direct result of dedicated NHS teams who know and understand their communities, targeted engagement with faith leaders, pop-up clinics in places of worship, practical support like advice translated into more than 20 languages and strong, vocal backing from high profile voices like comedian Lenny Henry and TV star Adil Ray."

A Department of Health and Social Care spokeswoman said the Government is working to ensure no-one is left behind, adding: "Vaccines are our way out of this pandemic – they're safe, effective and already saving thousands of lives – and today's ONS statistics show vaccine confidence remains high."

Father,

We are sorry when we don't realise how fortunate we are to live in a rich country with advanced medicine.

Whatever we think of the vaccine, help us to be grateful for our healthcare options in the UK.

Please guide us and give us discernment.

Amen

British cuppa at risk from climate change, says Christian Aid

Climate change is putting the much-loved British cuppa at risk as extreme weather and rising temperatures hit tea-growing countries, according to Christian Aid.

The UK and Ireland drink more tea per person than any other countries in the world, with Kenya alone producing half the black tea drunk in the UK.

But in a new report, the charity is warning that climate change is going to slash optimal conditions for tea production in Kenya by a quarter in the next thirty years.

Dr Kat Kramer from Christian Aid told Premier more about the research :

"Climate change is impacting lots of people around the world, but notably those living closest to the land. Tea is a major export for Kenya. Tea plants, like all plants, have conditions that they like to grow in. And they like temperatures from around 16 to 29 degrees Celsius, they like a stable rainfall. But what we're seeing with climate change is that these conditions are not being met. And so something like 26 per cent of the optimal areas for growing tea within Kenya will become less and less optimal as time goes on, because of climate impacts."

Dr Kramer explained that water changes the biochemistry of the plants and the aromatic compounds which give tea its flavour:



"Some of these aromatic compounds will burst if the plant gets waterlogged and if there's too much water around, the plant doesn't receive the signals that it needs to make these. And then of course, the ones that it does make become more diluted, because there's more water that the plant has taken up and so the flavour of the cup of tea will change."

The research suggests areas with only average growing conditions will see production fall by 39 per cent by 2050.

Other major tea-producing countries including India, Sri Lanka and China also face rising temperatures and new weather extremes. Dr Kramer says:

"In India, we found that 88 per cent of plantation managers and 97 per cent of smallholders are already seeing climate change impacts."

The warning comes as the UK prepares to host the G7 meeting of major economies next month - where Boris Johnson has said climate and finance for poor countries to cope with global warming will be a priority.

And Dr Kramer says there is an opportunity for change :

"Within the next few years, we have a window of opportunity to act - there is still time available. I mean, one of the big questions for the G7 is around debt and around climate finance more generally. And it's how much these wealthy countries are willing to open their pockets to actually deliver a global recovery that is in solidarity with other countries that are also suffering tremendously."

Almighty God,

May You help us be more aware of the impact of climate change on our communities

May You walk alongside those who work on the land and who rely on rainfall for their existence

May You help us appreciate daily the wonder of creation

And may You help us recognise that we are interdependent upon each other.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Truro choristers invite children around the globe to join G7 singalong

A SONG prompted by the UK's hosting of the G7 summit in Cornwall next month and emanating from Truro Cathedral is resonating with children around the world.

The song, "Gee Seven", is written by Sir Tim Rice, set to music by Peter Hobbs, and arranged by Joseph Wicks for the Truro Cathedral Choir. It was released on Friday on Spotify and other streaming platforms.

The "Sing2G7" project grew out of a vision shared by the cathedral's director of music, Chris Gray, and a chorister parent, Esmé Page, to "put children's voices at the heart of G7 and make the summit relevant to their young lives".

The ambition is to have 50,000 young singers posting their rendition of the song online, coming together for a “mega-Zoom” global rehearsal before the summit starts on 11 June. By Friday, 12,000 children had already signed up from 18 countries, including 60-70 Cornish primary schools. The Truro choristers’ dream is to be invited to sing it to the world leaders in person, with choirs from the G7 nations patched in via Goonhilly Satellite Earth Station.



“We bounced ideas around getting children’s voices heard at the summit and decided the easiest way to bring people together across different cultures was song,” said Mr Gray on Thursday. As patron of the choir, Sir Tim had been the obvious man to approach. “We didn’t think we would get him, but we thought we would ask. He was very willing and receptive, and it was very quickly a partnership.”

The song is catchy and quirky, described by Mr Gray as “an extravagant romp round the number seven throughout history. In most of it, he is setting what the leaders are doing into a cosmic context, with the seven wonders of the ancient world, seven stormy seas — lots of number sevens.

“It’s a great way of engaging children: not too heavy for the age group, just a way of bringing them into knowing what the G7 is, so that they ask more questions.”

Nor is it overtly political. The most political it gets, says Mr Gray, is the last stanza: “Let nation speak to nation/Don’t let the others down/ Don’t forget the not so fortunate/Or we’ll run you out of town.”

Mr Gray continued: “Greta Thunberg is on the video to represent young leadership, but we’re deliberately not using the children to make a statement about climate change. It’s about encouraging them to aspire to leadership and engage with the issues.”

For the 35 choristers — boys between 8 and 13, and girls between 13 and 18 — making the video has been an experience never to be forgotten. It is shot by the renowned film-maker Chris Yacoubian, with the sound engineer Andrew Gemmill, and all filmed under strict social-distancing conditions.

“It’s been wonderful for them after going through the last year of pandemic,” said Mr Gray. “The choir are in their cassocks — we didn’t want to compromise on that — and we use both piano and organ in colourful ways; but we don’t want to make religion a barrier.” The choir school has produced educational resources on the website for schools to use.

The Dean of Truro, the Very Revd Roger Bush, said that the cathedral was very proud of the project. “The production values are of the highest order,” he said on Friday. “There are some stunning perspectives looking down from the roof, which have brought the building to life in ways that you don’t normally see.

“We wanted something that wasn’t owned by the cathedral but could be widely dispersed and of real interest to the summit coming next month. It’s not overtly religious, but the values that drive it forward to engage younger people and school-age children are at the heart of what we are trying to do. It’s a melodious message for the summit members when they come next month.

“And anyone who gets Pythagoras into a pop song has my respect.”

Challenges of staying faithful in isolation

Ed Kessler explores how different faith communities have conducted worship under lockdown.



COVID-19 presents unusual challenges to religious practice, because most religious people draw comfort from being not alone, but part of a faith community. In a series of 30 interviews, I asked religious leaders in the UK how they were coping, and for their reflections on the rapid transition to online platforms.

Predictably, technology was a significant challenge, and insufficient computer-literacy reduced (and sometimes prevented) participation in online community life. Many did not have a proper infrastructure — technical or legal — in place. Congregation membership lists had to be updated, and consent had to be obtained so that data protection and privacy rights were secured.

Another challenge that faith leaders identified was the competition that technology created. Shifting religious life online created an immediate religious free market. Similar to an economic free market, which has little or no government control, religious adherents (“consumers”) in the religious free market could choose to move from one place of worship to another with little restriction. Technology provided freedom to attend a place of worship anywhere in the world, only a click away.

Rabbi Charley Baginsky reported that members of her congregation also tried the religious services of other faith communities, not just other denominations of the same community. “I can attend a Christian Easter service, or I can go and watch what the mosque is putting on in a discussion. . . How do you maintain a sense of identity in such a marketplace?”

Most faith leaders also reported a growth in attendance, and reaching a wider audience for lectures, community prayers, and other communal gatherings. This was partly because online services do not require a physical crossing of the threshold, which can be intimidating if you are unfamiliar with the practices or members. Exploring someone else’s community is straightforward, because it does not require a face-to-face encounter, and sometimes allows for anonymous presence.

Attendance growth went beyond attracting those living in the same region, as the Nottingham Muslim leader Musharraf Hussain said: “I was actually invited to give a lesson in Italy about a week ago. And I’ve been contacted by some people from India, in Kerala, where they want me to do a series of lectures. . . This whole concept of a global village is becoming a reality.”

MANY of the participants reflected on religion as being, intrinsically, a communal activity. As the United States scholar Robert Putnam found, not only do religiously involved people know more people: religious life provides a sense of community and group solidarity.

Amid the social-distancing guidelines, the Roman Catholic priest Fr Alban McCoy commented that communities needed to “reconfigure the notion of presence”. This was particularly important for Christians, as the Anglican priest the Revd Jack Noble explained: “As a Christian, of course, we have that deep stream of sacramental theology that says: stuff matters. You know, people present bread, wine, oil, water, fire — those things are ways in which God reaches us.”

In addition, only a small number of people were allowed at funerals, and mourners observed safe social distancing. New ways were developed to overcome the lack of physical presence, as Rabbi Reuven Leigh explained: “The way that they’ve been doing the funerals has been driving [the hearse] through the community. People come out on to their doorsteps to offer their last respects, and there’s a video going behind [the hearse].

“It’s strangely gripping. You would think there’s nothing to see, but I sat there for a good half an hour, just watching this column weaving its way through the community.”

This strategy extended the meaning of physical presence at a funeral from the cemetery to the doorstep, and even to Rabbi Leigh’s living room.

MOVING prayer from a house of worship to the home raised many issues, notably concerning gender dynamics. The shift to prayer at home was hard for those who were used to communal congregational prayers, such as Muslim men, who not only had to abandon attending the mosque, but also to come to terms with praying in a domestic space. The Muslim female communal leader, Julie Siddiqi, pointed to the gender implications, which offered Muslim women an opportunity to assert themselves, religiously, in a familial setting.

This raises the question whether religious responses to Covid represent a renewal of practice or a change in it. The reflection of the Hindu leader Shaunaka Rishi Das may help to answer this. “Hindus are spending a lot more time in their family spaces, a lot more time meditating and chanting, and time together as a family. . . It’s not doctrine, this is just how it’s happening.” This suggests that the answer lies not in doctrine, but in our homes.

In the end, as the Revd Dr Michael Volland said: “What we have realised is being with other people is not to be taken for granted. It’s a great gift, a precious gift — and we’re all longing to be together.”

Dr Ed Kessler is founder director of the Woolf Institute in Cambridge.

War Stories by Derek Scott

Angels in WW1

Early in the war an artillery exchange between the Allies and Germany around the French town of Albert, damaged the angel which stood on top of the church. The angel was now in a horizontal position and a rumour circulated among the locals to the effect that the war would not end until the angel stood vertically again. This of course did not happen. The angel was restored after the war ended.

In 1914 when the war began, the British Expeditionary Force was sent over to France. Their first action was at Mons in Belgium. Despite fighting well they were eventually forced to retreat.

Unfortunately a small party got separated from the main force and they had Germans all around them. The lieutenant ordered no talking, no fires, no smoking and remain hidden until dark when we will find our lines.

When darkness came the sentry noticed a mysterious light moving towards him. He called the sergeant who summoned the lieutenant who told the group to stay while he investigated, however, everyone followed him. The light beckoned the soldiers onwards, and when it turned round it showed a pair of angel wings on its back. It continued to lead them until they reached the British lines, and then it disappeared. It became known as the angel of Mons.



Sheep and Lambs Together

Creative and Reflective activities for All Ages

16th May 7th After Easter

Read John 17 : 6-19

Take a piece of A4 paper and divide it into 3 columns. Then write the following at the head of the columns: **Sorry/ Please/Thank You**. These are some of the things we say to God when we pray.

Then using the right column write something you want to say sorry to God for; something you want to ask God for (Please) and something you want to Thank God for. Then spend some quiet time saying this to God.

Repeat this for each day of the week.

Maybe it will become your regular practice of prayer.

If you have any balloons in the house you could choose a word: sorry, please or thank you, and write it on a strip of paper. Put the strip of paper inside a balloon and then blow up the balloon. This reminds us that prayer is so much bigger than we imagine, and our simple thoughts/words can do amazing things.



St Hilda's Parish News

If you have any Parish News you would like to share, then please send them into the Parish Office.



Fr Steve and Liz are celebrating a new arrival to the family, a granddaughter.

Nellie was born on 3rd May.

Mother and baby are in good health

Congratulations from all at St Hilda's

Canaan Ministries are open for any of your needs. Just simply phone or email them and they will look after you. They also offer a delivery service.

Any other information can be found on their website www.canaanchristianministries.co.uk/

1 Peter 3 : 22

who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

This weeks services

Sunday Eucharist – 16th May @ 9.30am

This service can be viewed via our Facebook page, our new YouTube channel (St Hilda's Ashford), and Twitter.

Wednesday Eucharist – 19th May @ 9.45am

Tickets can be booked for this week's services via the links on our website and Facebook page or by contacting the Parish Office.

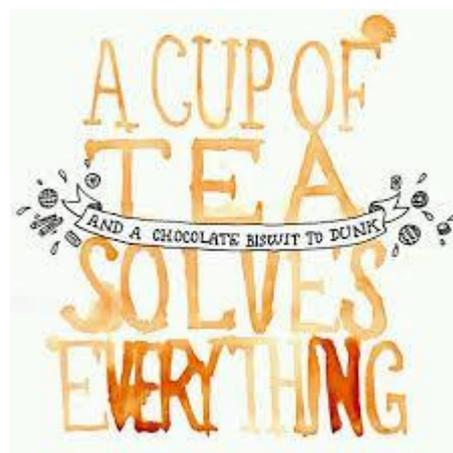
Please remember a face mask must be worn whilst in the church.

Tea and Chat after Sunday Service

We would like to invite you to join us for a virtual Tea and Chat after the service on **Sunday 16th May 2021 at 11.15am**. See below on how to join.

The meeting is hosted by Zoom.

- Download the Zoom app – www.zoom.us
- Click – Join a Meeting
- Enter the Meeting id – **937 5973 9102**
- Enter password – **430111**



Please hold in your prayers and thoughts this week those who are affected by the Corona Virus as well as the family and friends of those below.

The Sick

James Bedford	Peter Garner	Pat Parish	Rev. Peter Taylor
Michael Browne	Eileen Gilbert	June Prentice	Sheila West
Robb Clarke	Alison Griffiths	Margaret Reid	Philip Willerton
Daniel Cohen	Jim Hennessey	Elizabeth Savill-Burgess	Chick Wilson
Rebecca Cohen	Jean Iddiols	Delphine Scrivener	Peter Wilson
Mary Congdon	Jane Johnson	Riley Shaw	Jo Wood
Ann Considine	Pat Kyle	Elsie Stone	Erin
Michael Dixon	Libby Mills	Roy Stone	George
Jackie Forsbrey	Raymond Nation	Sandra Swain	

The Recently Departed

Rev John Congdon Gillian Shepherd

Prayer

God our redeemer,
 you have delivered us from the power of darkness
 and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:
 grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life,
 so by his continual presence in us he may raise us
 to eternal joy;
 through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
 who is alive and reigns with you,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.
 Amen