

# HEATH STREET

BAPTIST CHURCH



*Newsletter 1058 - December 2020*



# Letter from the Minister

---

Hello to everyone!

No weddings at the church in 2020, but something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue, for the final newsletter of this strange year, in which my Christmas gift to Camden Registrar Office will be four yellow declarations of quarterly 'nil returns'.

Beginning with the blues, as might be expected, there is no shortage of sad news in the church this Advent. Just this week I've heard from Jean. Jean is a local guitarist who has played at the church on several occasions. He is also my first personal contact suffering from 'long covid', as far as I know. What I learnt from Jean brought home to me again how terribly serious a disease we are all up against. On a similarly blue note, several people from the congregation have been made redundant as a result of the pandemic, and quite a few self-employed members have seen regular work dry up entirely. I'm sure our prayers are all with

Jean, with everyone suffering from and bereaved by Covid-19, and with all those seeking new work and unsure about the future.

They say that Luther was once asked what he would do today, if somehow he found out that the world would come to an end tomorrow, and apparently he replied that he would plant a tree. That approach to planning cheers me up, and seems eminently sensible at a time like this, when so many plans are made in vain. So in the spirit of Luther's sapling, I'll share a few things we hope to do as part of Heath Street's ministry, even if it's distinctly possible that some or all of them may end up being cancelled (and will perhaps already have been cancelled by the time this newsletter reaches you!)

'Something old' is another reprise of our by-now traditional advent storytelling series, scheduled for 7.30pm on the

## Letter from the Minister continued

---

first three Fridays of Advent. These sessions will probably be recorded; hopefully they'll be filmed; and just possibly they'll be live-streamed. But the plan is for them to happen in good old reality too, albeit socially-distanced and appropriately disinfected. I would encourage everyone in the local area to come to all of them! It's tempting to say that not every church has the luxury of having its own storyteller, but actually that would be misleading. The art of the storyteller is no luxury for a Christian congregation. Telling stories is at the core of the worship and service of our storytelling Messiah. So this is a great chance to prepare ourselves once again for the coming of the Christ-child. Let's not neglect it, but let's allow ourselves to be led once more deep into the mysterious world of holy scripture as we sit at Wilf's feet (chairs also available).

'Something new' for 2021 is a year-long series of theology lectures which I am in the process of collating. My idea is to make a curated selection of modern

scholarship, so that if anyone were mad enough to watch all 53, she would get to 2022 with a reasonable grasp of some of the live conversations in contemporary theological thinking. The plan is to meet via Zoom every Friday night, where I'll first present a brief resumé of the lecture before my fellow zoomees discuss how cogent, convincing and/or comprehensible they found the week's offering.

When I started this letter I wasn't sure where I was going with the 'borrowed'! However, I've been preaching long enough not to let that stop me, so I'll sign off with something – or rather someone – who is both new and borrowed, the newest-born child of our shared congregational life, Ayla Rose.

I say borrowed, because all our lives and moments still belong to the generous God who has loved us and all creation into existence. All of us still belong to God, even though we are so often forgetful of God's awesome generosity, taking one

another's company for granted as if we enjoyed all the rights of ownership. How fragile a hold we have on life is something we've all been joyfully but painfully aware of with respect to Ayla Rose. As regulars will know she was born very prematurely, and mum Parisa and dad Behrang have been with her in hospital for some weeks now. Our prayers have been with them and remain with them. The hope is that mum and dad will be able to take Ayla Rose home for Christmas, and that grand-mum Zholiet will be able to hold her for the first time.

In prayer and with love

Ewan

# Bach in a Time of Lockdown

---

When I was a choirboy at Worcester Cathedral we sang for the 90th birthday of the composer, conductor and organist, Herbert Sumsion. I heard a story around then that, even at 90, he rose every morning and did what he had always done: sat at the piano and played a Mozart sonata. Who is your go-to composer to play live? For me it is Bach, partly because I feel physically comfortable playing his music; partly because I used to sing professionally as a solo bass-baritone and I loved singing him more than any other composer. In the lockdowns, I have reached for the St John Passion, sat, played and sung! Just typing that makes me breathe deeper.

-Bill Carslake

In early March 2020 I was fully set to embark on a UK tour playing Bach's St John Passion, one of my favourite pieces of all time. But of course this, like all other live performances, was cancelled, and there was a huge Bach-shaped hole

in my calendar. Easter, for me at least, was not going to be the same without numerous performances of at least one of the Bach Passions! As is often the way at that time of year, many of the tunes from the St John Passion were revolving around my head, so my first lockdown project was to record a version of 'Es ist vollbracht' ('It is accomplished' / 'It is done'), from the St John Passion, part 2 no. 30, the aria sung by Jesus as He dies on the cross. I recorded it onto an app on my phone, layering up the parts painstakingly one by one, and eventually recording the vocal part too, my debut in classical German singing. I managed it just in time for Easter, which felt like a way of remembering the Easter story, even if just for myself. This isn't the first time I've taken solace in Bach's music, either through playing or listening. Each piece by Bach seems to open up a huge array of emotion, from awe, to grief, to joy, to peacefulness (to name just a few), and each revisit, a greater depth of feeling and sense of being held by a force so much

cy, - Lord,  
me - dich,

have mer - cy Lord on me, re - gard my - bit  
er - bar - me dich, mein Gott, um mei - ner - Zah

**A** ALTO SOLO

14  
14  
16  
16  
18  
18  
20

let weep and sing. Have ye  
not bar  
cy, - dich, on me, mein Gott,  
me - bar  
cy, - me  
- gard my bit  
mei - ner  
20

# Bach in a Time of Lockdown continued

---

greater than myself.

-Flora Curzon

My keyboard sits in a corner of the flat, overlooking the neighbours' gardens and the terraced houses opposite. Some mornings I'll sit and watch the birds landing and taking off from the trees, the occasional cat or fox skulking over garden sheds and under dividing walls, and leaf through Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier, picking my way through a Prelude and Fugue or two. Some of these are etched deeply, note for note, in my memory, having been brought out time and again as performance staples; some are still unfamiliar enough to force me to really concentrate, brow furrowed, fingers flailing as I try to track the multiple sinewy, criss-crossing lines across the page. For the first lockdown, my wife was working from home and therefore was an involuntary audience for all of these domestic performances. Now there are three of us, and our three-week old daughter Eleanor is perfectly capable of signalling any discontent at an over-long fugue or poorly executed cadence! More pragmatically, Angela Hewitt's more

assured recordings will be providing a soothing aural backdrop to various fits of crying, nappy changes, and the occasional bliss of looking into a newborn face full of total restfulness, calm and contentment.

-Peter Yarde Martin

The last Bach I performed was BWV 114 and its alto aria *Du Machst O Tod* with my Baroquestock friends, and I am currently singing *Erbarme Dich* from St. Matthew's Passion as I teach it to one of my online students. Many classical musicians would opine about Bach's intellectual merits, but I always found his importance as a composer and his position as the 'father of western music' daunting as a performer. I was taught that Bach made the rules and therefore only he could break them. As I slowly approach adulthood I have begun to associate Bach with much happier (and not intellectual) things: auditions, gainful employment, friends and coffee. *Schweigst Stille, Plaudert Nicht* BWV 211 (the coffee cantata), which features a love song to coffee, gives me permission to maintain my addiction over lockdown.

-Emily Gray



# Letter from the Treasurer

---

Anyone who has attended a real live service at Heath Street this autumn will have marvelled at the new, big, beautiful, brass collection plates whose main feature is that they accept contactless payment of voluntary offerings. Courtesy of the Good Box Company, these use the same system you may have seen at museum or cathedral entrances and exits.

Can I encourage members of our “regular” congregation (even if you aren’t an every-Sunday sort of person) not to make a habit of using this contactless facility? Why on earth would I say that, as Treasurer? Well, two reasons, at least. The money deposited this way gets put in our Church bank account in one lump, each week (good), but minus a handling fee (not so good). So we lose a little from your donation, and I also don’t know that it is from you – so if you have signed up for

Gift Aid, I can’t reclaim your specific tax paid (or thank you properly).

What is the alternative? If you still use cash, then the offering envelopes are still available and you can write your Church PIN and the date, or your name and address and the date if you haven’t yet got a PIN. (Ask me if you want one, or have forgotten your number.)

Or please use BACS from your bank account to our Church account – either by setting up a standing order for a weekly, monthly or any-other-frequency transfer, or by one-off transfers whenever you like. At least one person in the congregation has our bank details already set up on her mobile phone and can zap a donation during the collection in the service. A little bit of effort to set this up, whether for one-off or regular giving, and easy-peasy thereafter.

Of course if you aren't convinced that any of this is for you, we shall be delighted to have your money as part of the nice little chunk that comes in virtually from occasional visitors tapping the new plates. No Church Treasurer would ever say no to money contributing to our mission, would she?

Bank details:

Heath Street Baptist Church

CAF Bank Ltd

Sort code 40-52-40

Account number 00014178

With love and best wishes, Gaynor



# Sunday Club in Devon

---

In August, I was lucky enough to go on the Sunday club trip to Devon. We were collected in front of the church by Wilf in a super luxury minibus. Once we had all bundled on with our luggage, Wilf realised he had forgotten the most crucial piece of equipment, the air rifle. We left London and arrived in Exeter about five hours later after many rounds of a game called Mafia. We picked up some food on the way to the barn where we were staying. We met Alice and Nigel, who were so kind and allowed us to stay in their barn, which was cosy and rustic. There was a trampoline, tennis court, table tennis and many other activities which kept us busy for many hours in the evenings. We spent our four days swimming and kayaking in the river. We also went to an amazing natural water slide called Shilley Pool, played loads of great board games and of course ate lots of amazing homemade flapjacks and cake. On the last night we went to Wilf's

parents' house nearby, where we met Wilf's sister and her son James, who was extremely funny and kind. First we went on the water slide in the garden, then we played Capture the Flag in the churchyard, followed by a delicious dinner of pizza and Wilf's mother's amazing homemade ice cream. This was a perfect end to an amazing, action-packed trip. Thanks so much to Wilf for arranging the trip. I had a great time with wonderful people.

–Joe Coury-Reid



# THE | OXFORD & CAMBRIDGE SINGING SCHOOL

## Christmas Course 2020

**Saturday 19 December**

Heath St. Baptist Church, Hampsstead

**Suitable for children aged 7-13**

We very much hope to be able to host a course on the 19th December 2020 at Heath St. Baptist Church.

We will be adhering to Government Guidance at all times.

According to the 'tier' system, which was in operation before lockdown, and is planned for the post-lockdown period, singing is permitted—subject to safeguards being in place. This would enable a course to go ahead before

Christmas, and we are keeping our fingers crossed that this will be possible.

We have some wonderful repertoire planned, including:

O Holy Night

The Coventry Carol

The Little Drummer Boy

Joy to the World

Quem pastores.

Until the tiering system becomes clearer for December, we request that you do not book a place on the course at this stage, but that you email me on: [samantha@oxbridgesingingschool.com](mailto:samantha@oxbridgesingingschool.com) so that I can reserve a space for your child or children. We're determined to add a sprinkle of festive magic where we can, because this year we all need a little magic more than ever.

Should you have any queries in the meantime, please do let me know, and we hope to be able to welcome your children to the singing school's Christmas course next month.

Very best wishes,

Samantha Wickham & the Oxford & Cambridge Singing School team

# Remembering the Revd. Dr. Marie Isaacs

---



The wall plaque in memory of our last Minister at Heath Street, Marie Isaacs, was put up in a quiet corner of the Extension Cemetery, across the road from the parish church, St John at Hampstead,

when Marie's ashes were buried nearby. A few months ago, her friend Sharon Williams (a member of our congregation whom we rarely see because she no longer lives in London) realised that the paint had faded and the words were barely legible. Sharon commissioned the original makers to repaint the lettering and here is the result.



# Readings and Prayers

---

**November 29 – December 5**

**Isaiah 64.1-9**

29th	John-Henry Baker
30th	Fiona Ranford
1st Dec	Margarite Biadun
2nd	Coco Ellenbogen
3rd	Victoria Tjirimuje
4th	Andrea MacEachan
5th	Ali Ghasempour

**December 6-12**

**Isaiah 40.1-11**

6th	Annie Fang
7th	Thomas Roy
8th	Mysie Johnson
9th	Nathalia Bell
10th	Anselm King
11th	Leila Ranjbar
12th	Sarah Harper

**December 13-19**

**Isaiah 61.1-4,8-11**

13th	HK
14th	Jen Finamore
15th	Lydia Baker
16th	Nomsa Ndebele
17th	Joachim King
18th	Theresa Thom
19th	Wilf Merttens

---

**December 20-26**

**2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16**

20th	Francesco Giannoccaro
21st	Selena Barrera
22nd	Beza Geberegziabher
23rd	Laura Somers
24th	Gabrielle Falardeau
25th	Cole Ellenbogen
26th	Ewan King

**December 27-Jan 2**

**Isaiah 61.10-62.3**

27th	Elya Ghasempour
28th	Evelyn Baker
29th	Frida King
30th	Nesa Thorne
31st	Rhona MacEachan
1st	Edward Humphreys
2nd	Josh Somers

**January 3-9**

**Jeremiah 31.7-14**

3rd	Susan Le Quesne
4th	Nathan Biadun
5th	Gaynor Humphreys
6th	Ottilie Johnson
7th	Thaddeus King
8th	Isabel Somers
9th	Beryl Dowsett



## Weekly Activities

---

<b>Sundays</b>	11 am-12 noon	Divine Worship (including Sunday Club for children)
<b>Wednesdays</b>	4.30 pm	Storymakers Club
<b>Daily</b>	9:00 pm	Compline Historically speaking, Compline is the last of the daily monastic services – a short bedtime liturgy.  To be hosted by the Minister on Zoom every evening through Advent, with a liturgy booklet given out beforehand. Zoom link to follow.

Please see the church website for updates: [heathstreet.org](http://heathstreet.org)

For requests regarding church membership, Baptism or opportunities for Christian ministry in the church, please contact the minister:

Copy for the next newsletter should reach Eleanor Patterson ([eleanorlaise@gmail.com](mailto:eleanorlaise@gmail.com)) not later than Wednesday 16th December.



## Online Activities

---

### *The Heath Street Home Companion*

Songs, prayers and news from Heath Street people far and wide.

[www.heathstreet.org/activities/the-heath-street-home-companion](http://www.heathstreet.org/activities/the-heath-street-home-companion)

### *Storymakers Club*

Online sessions of the after-school club aimed at children age 7 to 13.

For details, contact Wilf at

[childrensworker@heathstreet.org](mailto:childrensworker@heathstreet.org)

### *Storytelling*

David: The Story of the Shepherd King

David: The Story of the Shepherd King

Storyteller Wilf Merttens' new storytelling show David: The Story of the Shepherd King retells the legendary centrepiece of the books of Samuel for the 3rd millennium, and finds out it is just as full of shock, longing and ambiguity as it was in the beginning.

[www.heathstreet.org/media](http://www.heathstreet.org/media)

### *Oldtime Nursery*

By arrangement.

If you would like to arrange a virtual session from the Minister's house to your one, please contact him at [ewan\\_king@me.com](mailto:ewan_king@me.com)

# Victoria and Francesco's wedding





HEATH STREET BAPTIST



Minister Ewan King  
Heath St Baptist Church  
84 Heath St, Hampstead, NW3 1DN, London | ewan\_king@mac.com  
www.heathstreet.org 020 7431 0511