

Becket News

Issue 76/November 2020



**The Anglican Church of
St Thomas à Becket**

**Zeughausmarkt 22, 20459 Hamburg
www.anglican-church-hamburg.de**

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Cover: Photo by Jo Dawes

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Locums and the lockdown – looking for a new Chaplain

When a Parish / Church / Chaplaincy or Congregation is without a permanent priest for any reason (vacancy, sickness, holiday, or it is a seasonal chaplaincy), a locum priest is appointed simply to ensure the continuity of worship, the availability of the Sacraments and the pastoral care of all who need it. (Church of England Diocesan Information)

When our last Chaplain, Revd Canon Dr Leslie Nathaniel, left our church to become Archdeacon of the East, Germany and Northern Europe in November, 2019, we started a long vacancy period during which we have welcomed and continue to welcome to our parish locum priests who perform all the duties of a Chaplain: the Sunday services, baptisms, pastoral care, etc. In the last *Becket News*, I reported on our first locum, Revd Ian Eglin and his wife Caroline, who were with us in December and January and very quickly became part of the church family.

The Eglins were followed by Revd Charles Wallace, originally from Canada, who was Headmaster of St

Thomas Choir School in New York from 2004–2019. Before that, he had served at St George’s Chapel, Windsor Castle and is now Priest-in-Charge at Bethesda Episcopal Church, Saratoga Springs, USA. We enjoyed his six weeks with us and his learned sermons.

On Ash Wednesday and the first Sunday in Lent, Revd Canon Mark Dimond, who is one of the priests at St George’s Anglican Church in Berlin, came over to conduct the services (more about Mark later). By then, the coronavirus was becoming a problem all over the world and was quickly turning into a pandemic. Nevertheless, our next locum, Fr Pete Wright, and his wife Penny flew over from Los Angeles to take up locum duties. However, as you all know, their stay was cut very short as they had to return to the US shortly after arrival (see separate article).

The lockdown that was in place all over Europe (and most of the world) also meant that the priest scheduled to come to Hamburg in June from Scotland could neither leave home nor enter Germany – which is why Fr Pete continued to prepare his online services for us, much longer than his planned locum period.

By July, restrictions had been lifted a little and churches reopened. Thanks to Dorothee for organising and leading Morning Prayer before our next locum, Revd Dr Nick Fisher was able to come over from the UK – driving all the way from his home in the Cotswolds to Hamburg in one day! Fr Nick's wife, Pam, a former children's nurse, joined him a little later. Nick and Pam have three grown-up children. Nick's first career was with the Birmingham Police Force, but he was always involved with church work as a reader and decided to study for the ministry after he retired. He was ordained in 2009 and became vicar in Northleach, Gloucestershire. At the same time, he was a visiting research fellow at the Institute of English Studies, University of London, specialising in literature and politics during the reign of Charles II. Nick retired from active ministry in 2019, but keeps busy, not only with his research, particularly into the life and works of the

poet the Earl of Rochester (John Wilmot), but also as a locum. Nick's first locum post was in sunny Tenerife, but Hamburg also turned on a hot, dry summer for him – Spanish weather at its best, which gave him the opportunity to explore Hamburg thoroughly on foot. Although we can't have refreshments after church, and stand around and chat inside, we're making the most of our porch and Nick always went straight out there after the service to talk to and get to know the congregation. We thank him and Pam for two interesting and rewarding months.

In September/October we were very pleased to welcome back Fr Mark, who was with us for four Sundays and celebrated the first baptism we have been able to have for many months. Mark comes from Wales and had a career in marketing and academia before his ordination. Mark is the son of a diplomat, was born in Japan and has lived in many different countries such as Russia, Sweden, France and Hungary. He

Living with corona

Ahead of this edition of *Becket News*, readers were asked about how they have experienced the coronavirus pandemic. Their answers to the following questions can be found throughout this edition. What have been the good things for you during the pandemic? What did you miss? What would you do differently in future?

taught history at several universities in Wales – Cardiff, Swansea and Glamorgan. He is married to Samantha, who is Head of Germany, Welsh Government, based at the British Embassy in Berlin, and they have three children, two at college and one still at school. Mark was ordained in 2011 and became Chaplain to the Archbishop of Wales/Llandaff in 2014. From 2017–2019 Mark was Residentiary Canon at Newport Cathedral. I'm happy to say that Mark will be coming again for three weeks in January.

Our next visiting 'locum' is actually a familiar face and a local – Finnish priest Dr Maija Priess, who has conducted several services in our church over the past few years. Maija's weekday job is as lecturer in the African Studies Department of the University of Hamburg, where she teaches Ge'ez and Amharic. Amharic is the liturgical language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. Maija will take services until mid-November when we will welcome Bishop Musanda Trevor Selwyn Mwamba of Botswana. Bishop Trevor is retired and now lives in Berlin as his wife, Mmasekgoa Masire-Mwamba, is the Botswanan Ambassador to Germany. They have three grown-up children. Bishop Trevor was consecrated bishop in

2005 but resigned from the position in Botswana in 2012. He moved to the UK and became team rector in Barking and assistant bishop in the Diocese of Chelmsford. Both Bishop Trevor and his wife are strong advocates of equal rights for women and we are very much looking forward to meeting them. Bishop Trevor will also be coming to Hamburg to conduct the Christmas services at St Thomas à Becket.

And while all these interesting locums have been helping us through the vacancy period and the pandemic lockdown and continuing restrictions, we have been beavering away, getting all the papers ready so that we could advertise for a new Chaplain – lots of forms and a new and thorough Chaplaincy profile to encourage applications. Our advertisement appeared in the Church Times on two successive Fridays at the end of September and we now have eight candidates. Many thanks to Archdeacon David Waller for his help and advice during this quite complicated process. Interviews took place in mid-October and we hope that, God willing, we will be able to welcome our new, full-time Chaplain to Hamburg in February, 2021.

*Madeleine Resühr
Churchwarden*

Pete and the pandemic: a very good thing

During the vacancy period, we have welcomed a number of locum priests to Hamburg and were happy to greet Fr Pete Wright and his wife, Penny, when they arrived here on 6 March from the USA, planning to stay until the end of May. By then, the corona virus was spreading rapidly and Fr Pete was only able to hold one service before lockdown when all churches were closed. Shortly after that, all Americans who were overseas but normally reside in the US were ordered home – meaning that Pete and Penny had to return to Los Angeles before the month was up.

What we didn't know is that Pete is a Californian IT whizz-kid and quickly had virtual services up and running. While he was still here, he streamed the service for the Third Sunday of Lent with Dorothee ably assisting him (many thanks, Dorothee!) and recorded the service for

Mothering Sunday with Penny. These services and the many that followed were posted to our Facebook page and the church website.

Pete assured us that he would be willing and able to prepare the Sunday services from his home in Redlands, near Los Angeles, for as long as we remained without a locum and under lockdown, and that is exactly what he did, Sunday after Sunday including the busy Easter week, until the end of June, well beyond his planned locum period and, very generously, at no cost to the church. These online services were a real treat – lively, imaginative, always introduced by a humorous story, illustrated with wonderful pictures from the Bible and including Pete's inspiring sermons. Before he left, Pete had told us that, as the services were for our church, we should also take part and continue to do the readings

Photo: Easter Day screen capture from church website/YouTube



and intercessions, and we soon had a good team of enthusiastic readers who sent him audio or video recordings of the Bible readings he sent us for each Sunday – a steep learning curve for some of us, but a great experience! Here I'd like to thank everybody who took part – Dorothee, Katja, Monica Emilia, Jonas, Fiona, Christian, Gillian and the Hansen family, Norbert, Nicki, Jens, Kwabena, Kelvin, Sandro and, of course, Penny. We even managed to get eight different languages together for the Pentecost service! Thanks also to Yotin for providing the music and singing.

Although Fr Pete was far away, the services he prepared and the fact that

we at St Thomas à Becket helped, in a small way, to bring them to life brought us closer together. We found that we could count on each other, help each other and be together while being physically apart and despite the difficult situation we all suddenly found ourselves in. Fortunately, all the services can still be viewed on our website so if you haven't seen them all or would like to watch one again, you still can!

Although we all missed being able to go to church on Sundays and catch up with each other's news over a cup of tea or coffee afterwards, Pete's services made it a whole lot easier!

Madeleine Resühr

Helping the homeless in California

Greetings to all the folks at St. Thomas's. It has been a busy summer. Penny and I have been practicing the eremitical life (hermits) due to the pandemic that has gotten worse in my country (USA) since we returned from Germany in March. That has meant not dining out or even ordering 'take away.' That has given both of us the impetus to eat well, exercise a lot, and lose some weight.

We were scheduled to go to the island of Kauai in the Hawaiian Islands for August and September to pastor two Episcopal churches, but

that state's quarantine precluded that and our trip was cancelled. The priest they had scheduled for this December and January decided against traveling there, so we agreed to come instead. Imagine Christmas where it is HOT and you can go to the beach every day of the year.

I also wanted to again thank you for your kindness and sisterly/brotherly love for the donation to the homelessness organization for which I am the treasurer and board member in my city (Redlands, California), the Redlands Charitable Resources Coalition, Inc. (RCRC). We have been

in existence for 14 years, and I have been associated with it for about 10 years. I joined after I retired from my secular job at the Bank of America, because working on behalf of the poor is what I believe Jesus calls all of us to do in some way. That may be with actual 'hands on' or with donations of food, clothing, advice about anything they lack.

The program where the donation from St. Thomas is being used is our daily feeding program. When the pandemic hit in March, our local organizations that normally prepared hot meals for the homeless closed. Their volunteers were largely retired people who fit into the coronavirus 'high risk' category.

We have about 180 homeless in our city who depended on those meals. So the RCRC formed a task force and decided to ask the citizens of our community to make sandwiches and deliver them daily to our food station, which is located in the part of town close where most homeless congregate. My wife Penny makes 10 sandwiches almost every day. Monetary donations like that made by St. Thomas's go to provide food items that go into the food sacks (fruit, bottles of water, snacks, juice, cheese, chips, crackers).

We are fortunate to hold the daily feeding on the street in front of the



now closed organization that had the largest hot meal program, which means we are able to use their refrigerators to store what needs to be stored (the Lord really blessed us with that).

One of our RCRC programs is the annual printing of Resource Guides. These are small booklets that we give to the people of our city to give to the homeless instead of cash. Statistics show that money given to beggars too often is used by them to purchase drugs and alcohol. Our guides list all the places in our city where the homeless and those in crisis can obtain free food, clothing, medical and dental services, bus passes, haircuts, showers, laundry, local job postings, and internet

access. All 57 religious organizations in our town are provided with a supply of the guides. That makes every church, synagogue and mosque FULL SERVICE. No matter who calls them with literally any problem, the guides have the answer. The guides also have a map showing where each such organization is located. Also, our website contains even more information, rcrchelp.com. Every city should have guides and a website to help the poor. I'm the designer and webmaster for our website.

We also have a program whereby we will purchase a one-way bus ticket back home for a homeless person who has family or friends who will help them upon arrival. We work with the police department. The police verify the homeless person does not have any warrants for their arrest, verify the legitimacy of the people will-

ing to help the homeless person on arrival back home, and escort them to the bus station in a nearby city.

So again, thank you. Your donation continues to help the poor. You have truly blessed us.

*Text and photographs:
Fr Pete Wright*



Living with corona

May we remain blessed in Jesus Christ's name, amen. I don't even know from where to start if I'm to talk about what the coronavirus pandemic has brought to the whole world, but in all I give God all the praise for keeping us alive, and more importantly none of our church members was lost or found wanting. I missed the church and the interactions that I use to derive after church service. The coffee and the cakes. Mostly the drinking of our Lord Jesus Christ's blood. The melody of Anglican hymns. But all I know, one day the pandemic will be a thing of story and may Almighty God continue to protect us in Jesus Christ's name, amen.

Footsteps in the sand

It has been a very real privilege and pleasure to have become part of St Thomas à Becket Church at a time when the congregation, behind masks, has been making its first tentative steps after lockdown towards a new 'normal' (whatever that will eventually turn out to be). Thank you for making me so welcome.

One positive outcome of the pandemic so far has been to make us better appreciate many things we had been taking for granted – such as the physical contact between friends involving a hug or a handshake, and the opportunity to sing together in church. It has forced us to reflect on what it means to be 'fully human', something we will have the opportunity to try better to experience once a vaccine becomes available.

For some, the current circumstances will have been testing their Christian faith, but there is one brilliant image that they (and we) can take to heart. The story of the



Photo: Alessandro Catelean from Freemages.com

two pairs of footsteps in the sand is immensely reassuring. You will remember that the narrator, at the end of his or her life, notices that for much of it there were two pairs of footprints, but during the difficult times, there was just a single set. The narrator accuses God of abandoning him or her during those periods, but the explanation given is that on those occasions God was actually carrying the narrator.

Continuing blessings on the St Thomas à Becket congregation during the coming months, and long may you all thrive!

Revd Dr Nick Fisher

Living with corona

My house plants are looking amazing as I am home more and have time to water and talk to them!

Singing. I really miss both choir singing and singing with the congregation. I have found myself listening to Choral Evensong on Radio 3 and singing along to all the pieces I know.

I would have branched out in my cooking earlier – there was a lot of cheese on toast at the beginning. Now I'm much more creative.

Urban pilgrimage: the tale of Hamburg

The term ‘urban pilgrimage’ sounds a bit of an oxymoron. Pilgrimages usually imply walking out into the wilderness, following a long and lonely ancient trail, and then arriving at some holy place. The Camino route to Santiago de Compostela is one such traditional example. Can it be possible, though, to follow a route through a noisy city over several days and gain spiritually from such an exercise?

I arrived in Hamburg on a balmy late September afternoon to settle in as locum priest at the Thomas à Becket Anglican Church. On the first Sunday, someone in the congregation handed me a booklet: ‘Stattwege: Pilgern durch Hamburg’ (Alternative paths: a pilgrimage through Hamburg). ‘*You should try this,*’ he said. I had been wondering where to start my discovery of Hamburg as a city. So I went on his recommendation and set out on a three-day walking trip.

By the end of the three days, I had covered some 20 miles across the city. I had mostly meandered along quieter streets rather than followed the predictable tourist trail. But I also understood more about the interweaving of the spiritual life and a city’s character. I had already been several years before on a day’s urban

pilgrimage in London, following the guide *A Pilgrim’s Guide to Sacred London* by Jason Goodwin and John Michell. Yet there is something about being in a foreign place that allows you to collect new thoughts and gain extra perspectives. I felt I discovered something of the soul of Hamburg.

Topographically, the city straddles the river Elbe, with numerous canals criss-crossing the city centre and a large lake located just to the north. The huge red warehouses in the harbour area remind you that it is a *Speicherstadt*, a storage city, moving imports and exports in and out of Germany. It is a city on the move, based on its credentials as a key Hanseatic city, which, together with Lübeck to the north-east, once orchestrated the whole network of trading ports in Northern Europe. All this movement is reflected in the religious imagery around the city.

For me, three saints, who were themselves once ‘on the move’, stand out. The first is St Ansgar. He was not in fact from the area, but from Picardy in France, and was sent by Charlemagne to establish Christianity in the north of Europe in the ninth century. By a circuitous route he established the city of Hamburg, having already founded an abbey at Corvey in Westphalia, been on a

missionary expedition to Jutland, and reached Lake Mälaren in Sweden. On Hamburg's Trostbrücke stands a statue of Ansgar, who is carrying a church, symbolic of the church on the move, perhaps made more poignant because he is standing on a bridge, a metaphor for a connection to another place (incidentally Hamburg has more bridges than any other European city). Ansgar was led to each place by spiritual visions moving him. This prayer from his *Pigmenta* illustrates such movement towards something new:

*Fill us with your forgiving mercy
and guide us each of our days.
Then we'll get there,
where we will see your blissfulness
with our eyes.*



Another well-regarded saint in Hamburg is St Gertrude of Nivelles. Gertrude was from what is now Belgium, and she set up a monastery in Nivelles. She is venerated in Hamburg, because of her instinct for welcoming pilgrims, and showed particular hospitality towards Irish monks and nuns going to and from Europe. In one alleged incident Irish monks were caught in a storm, but prayers using her name quelled the waves. The church dedicated to her in Hamburg once stood next to the Hauptkirche St Jakobi (St James's), and a statue from that obsolete church is now displayed perhaps rather too subtly on a façade of an Italian restaurant in the adjacent square. It took a few minutes to spot. As a reminder of pilgrimage, a multidirectional pilgrim's Camino sign stands outside St James's, a reminder of who is the ultimate patron saint of pilgrims.

The third saint who makes his mark is St Paul, elevated in 1910 to the name of a Hamburg football club, St Pauli, now in the second division of the Bundesliga. St Pauli has never won any major silverware, but prides itself, like St Paul, on doing things a bit differently. Beyond the football fare, the club likes to help the underprivileged, what it calls the social 'ragtag', setting up self-

help groups and ensuring inclusivity of minorities. On the emblem of the St Pauli district read the words 'faith, hope and love', overlaying a picture of a cross, an anchor and a heart. You realise the extent of the link between Christianity and sailing when you walk back towards the Hafen City, the harbour city. On the way, you spot the *Seemannsmission*, as well as the proliferation of Scandinavian seafarers' churches, finished off with the consonant-filled *Flussschifferkirche*, floating on the water.

There are many other treats in store in the city, from the golden fish door handles at St Trinitas Altona to the dove-like Christ as a hanging rood in the St Marien-Dom, from

the surviving and imposing church tower of St Nikolai designed by George Gilbert Scott to the dramatic three-cross display outside St Georgskirche. You realise how the architects and artists must have been divinely inspired.

Returning to base at the Thomas à Becket Church, I thanked the member of the congregation who had the initial suggestion. And then I realised that the soul of the city was in microcosmic form in the church itself. Thomas Becket was also the patron saint of Merchant Adventurers. The church here was first founded on the back of the English-based Guild of Merchant Adventurers that paved the way for a new English-speaking church in





1611, by far the oldest Anglican chaplaincy in Germany. The spirit of the city was even in the veins of the members of the congregation themselves. One member looks after the sailors from all around the world in the local Seemannsmission around the corner. Another leads the ‘Wanderers’ group, who venture on a day’s walk somewhere in the vicinity of Hamburg.

Urban pilgrimages can be inspiring. They come with provisos: you have to endure the inevitable noisy bustle and the numerous passers-by. In a time of pandemic, though, little urban spiritual excursions may be the only ones possible. Nonetheless, there are overlaps between urban pilgrimages and traditional pilgrimages. They involve the same experience of walking, stopping, reflecting and map-reading. They also include surprises and encounters with strangers. I had bumped into several sailors on the steps of the

seafaring churches who just wanted to talk: sailors often lead a lonely existence, especially in the time of Covid when they can’t easily return to their mother country because of quarantine restrictions.

Each and every city will have its underlying spiritual flavour which informs its sense of identity. The trick is to avoid the clichéd tourist routes and main thoroughfares. Discover the less publicised treasures instead. In Hamburg you only have to walk to the other side of the Außenalster (the main lake) and look back at the spire-piercing city skyline, superbly portrayed in a painting called ‘Stadtansicht Hamburgs’ (1681) by Joachim Luhn in St James’s. Or, by contrast, with a microscopic eye, spot a reed organ ‘made in Liverpool’ on display in a merchandising shop hidden in an underpassage beneath Hamburg’s main square. It’s a commemoration of the Beatles’ presence here in the 1960s. They too left a joyful, if not spiritual imprint on the city as locals were finding themselves in the post-war years.

By going on an urban pilgrimage you discover a huge amount about spirituality and place, as well as your place in spirituality.

*Text and photographs:
Revd Canon Mark Dimond*

Christmas cards available to order

In this new digital world into which we have all suddenly been plunged, where physical contact and travel have been severely restricted, perhaps sending a handwritten card to someone is a gift that will be especially appreciated this year.

We have been producing Christmas cards by recycling used cards in aid of the historic English Church of St Thomas à Becket for over 30 years. The project was started in 1986/87 when we sold just 300 cards. On average over recent years, we have made and sold 5,000 cards each year. The double cards, using motifs cut from used Christmas cards, are handmade throughout the year by a small team of volunteers, most of whom have worked on the project for many years. Motifs range from religious and nativity scenes, winter landscapes, robins, Christmas scenes, animals, humorous, and other festive themes such as wreaths, flowers, candles, etc. The cards, complete with envelopes, are 148x110 mm and have a Christmas and New Year greeting in English and German. All cards are quality-controlled.

Usually we sell the cards

at our annual Church Bazaar in November and through the various English-speaking clubs and societies and at other events. This year, because of the corona restrictions, selling the cards is a huge challenge and we have looked for alternative ways of reaching potential customers.

For the first time, cards can be ordered using the **order form on the church website** (go to posts and follow the link to the form) or by telephoning **Judith Holst** on **040 880 0727**. The cards will also still be on sale, subject to Hamburg corona restrictions, at some events including the **Church Mini-Market**, planned for **21 November** (see p.18), and after the church service on Sundays from 22 November until 20 December between 12:00 – 13:00.

Judith Holst



The martyrdom of Thomas Becket

This year marks the 900th anniversary of the birth and 850th anniversary of the martyrdom of Thomas Becket, who gave his name to our church – a good time to recapitulate a little.

Thomas was born on 21 December 1120 in Cheapside, London, son of Gilbert and Matilda Becket. Mercers' Hall now stands where their house once stood and Thomas was baptised in St Mary Colechurch, which was conveniently at the bottom of their garden. For many years, Gilbert's textile business flourished and he was able to send his son to grammar school in London. His fortunes waned, however, and Thomas had to go to work as a clerk.

His intelligence did not go unnoticed and he soon began to work for Theobald of Bec, Archbishop of Canterbury. Theobald was so impressed by the young man that he recommended him to King Henry II who made him Lord Chancellor in 1155. He held this post until 1162 when he succeeded Theobald as Archbishop, having been consecrated priest just one day before that ceremony. Once Archbishop, Thomas quickly began to put the interests of the church before any royal or secular interests, a change of heart that angered the King and led to a serious dispute that ended in court. Thomas was convicted of contempt of royal authority and had

Living with corona

The weather was lovely in the spring and working from home gave me an opportunity to break up working days with walks and runs around the park and along the Elbe. We instigated a family Zoom on Sunday afternoons. I have had more contact with cousins over the past 6 months than in the years before. It has brought us together as family.

Hugs. Haven't hugged anyone for 6 months. The chance to hear live music, go to the theatre and travel (though I haven't really missed the trips to Brussels).

We've all learned that so many meetings and workshops can work online with the right sort of chairing so no need perhaps to travel as much. Good for the planet. However, personal presence does make a difference, so will try to find a balance.

I would like to start hugging for real again!



to flee to France, where he spent several years in exile. Pope Alexander eventually intervened on his behalf and he was able to return to England in 1170. However, he almost immediately angered the King again when he excommunicated three

bishops who had had the temerity to crown the heir apparent, Henry the Young King, at York. Legend has it that King Henry II then spoke the famous words: ‘Who will rid me of this turbulent priest?’ which were interpreted by four Norman knights as an order to kill Thomas. His fate was sealed; the four knights cut him down in Canterbury Cathedral as he was on his way to Vespers.

He was canonised just two years later and a veritable Thomas Becket cult spread throughout Europe. As a result of his fame, his body was removed to a splendid tomb in the centre of the cathedral 50 years later, a tomb which has been visited by thousands of pilgrims since.

A whole series of events had been planned for ‘Becket2020’, including an exhibition of artefacts in The British Museum showing caskets made in about 1200 to hold the saint’s relics, jewellery, manuscripts and scenes from his life and martyrdom. Many of the events had to be cancelled in the wake of the corona pandemic, but this exhibition has only been postponed – so if you’re planning a trip to London next year, check the museum’s website for updates of what looks like a great special exhibition of London’s principal saint and our namesake.

Madeleine Resühr

What's happening about the Bazaar?

As a result of the corona restrictions, it was pretty clear since the summer that a 'business as usual' bazaar was not going to be possible. A bazaar planning team worked creatively to think of what could be done. The idea of a 'virtual bazaar' with online sales was born.

It was a really neat idea, until we read up on EU regulations for selling foodstuffs online. In any case, many stall-holders and other members of our congregation lobbied hard to have at least a small event in church to keep up the tradition and provide an opportunity to buy the produce collected: British products, home-made jams and chutneys, Christmas crackers and puddings, the renowned recycled Christmas cards, mince pies, scones, cakes, handicrafts and books, books, books...

The Hamburg health authorities gave their blessing to hold a 'mini-market' in church on Saturday, 21 November, as long as we avoided selling food and followed strict hygiene rules. So we were all set to go, but as this edition of *Becket News* went to press it was clear that corona cases are rising and it is increasingly unlikely even this will be possible. We have not given up entirely, and are looking for the means to make sales of the above possible, for example after church and through to Christmas.

Please check the church website for news and, if anyone wants to purchase items, please email us at **bazaar@anglican-church-hamburg.de**. Please see separate information regarding online ordering of Christmas cards on page 15.

*The wardens, stall-holders
and helpers*

Peregrinations of a pudding or two

Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without a pudding! For many traditionalists all over the world who were born into or adopted British Christmas traditions this conviction still holds true and conjures up memories of mothers and grandmothers stirring immense quantities of dried fruit and other

magical ingredients to make the pudding. Lucky silver sixpences were thrown in at the last, and often the pudding matured, liberally laced with brandy, for several months before being borne in to cries of delight as the festive finale of Christmas dinner. Despite its enticing aroma, and richly satisfying taste, Christmas



pudding is considered by some to be – how can one put this? – rather heavy.

The fact is that in Anglophile Hamburg in 2020 many people could not imagine Christmas without a pudding. Members and friends of St Thomas à Becket often buy theirs at the church's annual bazaar in late November. Together with other popular products like Christmas crackers, sweet mincemeat, teas and biscuits, the puddings are brought to Hamburg from all over Britain by cars driven by a handful of kind friends. This ensures that we can purchase quality goods at a reasonable price and resell in Hamburg at a profit without asking unacceptable prices.

This year the travel restrictions caused by the corona pandemic have

meant fewer trips to Britain by our wonderful 'carrier pigeons'. Whereas one can normally reckon with selling up to 30 puddings, the end of September found us with no way of bringing any over at all.

A family member who has just returned to Germany from London and was about to ship her household goods back to Hamburg suggested packing some puddings in with her things. A kind friend bought 20 excellent puddings, the first of the season, from a great grocery chain and at a reasonable price. He proudly photographed his purchases and handed them over to the removal people.

The dismay was great when the delivery arrived in Hamburg. Only nine puddings had survived the passage and, although still intact, showed signs of having had a rough crossing!

The following Sunday we packed the car with all the British products we had received so far and set off to bring them to church. On the autobahn we were flashed by the car behind us which drew alongside while the driver called out, 'You've got a flat tyre!' As luck would have it the next exit was only a minute or two away, so we drove cautiously off the autobahn and drew up at a nearby petrol station.

The tyre was as flat as a pancake. We unpacked the boot of the car, taking particular care of the small box with the puddings, only to discover we had no emergency tyre. We repacked the car.

A call to the helpful people at the ADAC was cut off half-way through and we could not get through to them again. Our car had been sold with a guarantee of assistance in the case of a breakdown, so we phoned the company concerned and, in no time, they sent a burly hero to our rescue – at the wheel of an enormous tow truck! It did rather seem like a case of overkill for a flat tyre, but we were very glad to see him.

We watched fascinated and filmed as he secured the car with the help

of steel slings and hoisted it gently in the air where it rocked a little as he manoeuvred it skilfully onto the floor of his truck. When he was finished, he shook his head and said, ‘The rear end was rather heavy,’ at which we burst into gales of laughter and gasped, ‘It must have been the puddings!’

The following Sunday we succeeded in storing the goods in the church at last and sold one pudding immediately after the service. At this time we are not sure if the bazaar, greatly reduced in size to a ‘mini-market’ will take place at all because of corona, but if it does I can recommend the now legendary Christmas puddings. I have even bought one myself!

Nicki Schiller

Church Wanderers reloaded

Church Wanderers, the St Thomas à Becket walking group, met again on 3 October for the first time in several months for a gentle socially distanced walk through the woods and fields of Wohldorfer Wald, starting from Ohlstedt station in the north of Hamburg. We were 14 walkers of all ages and two dogs and enjoyed being outdoors, walking and talking. It was good to see more of people than just head and shoulders in a video call and was a welcome chance to





chat, especially for those who feel anxious about spending time with other people in church.

The group has not been meeting since Nicki Schiller stood down as coordinator at the end of 2019, noting that the group would need new walks and, above all, new walk leaders to be sustainable. If I still lived in Hamburg, I would willingly take on the challenge, but distance (up to two hours each way by car and considerably longer by train) means I can't manage once a month. However, I can commit to leading a walk once a quarter and so put out feelers to the Wanderers to gauge interest. The response, at little more than a week's notice,

speaks for itself. There have already been offers from within the group to lead other walks, so we could end up doing more than just the four I can lead.

The Wanderers really epitomise our church's mission statement, to be 'a welcoming, active and inclusive church, growing in our relationship with God and the wider community'. Wanderers include people from a range of age groups and origins, both from within our congregation and outside. And during the pandemic, meeting to walk together is one of the few activities we can still safely do. The only requirement is the ability to walk, although our walks vary in length and strenuousness, and more demanding ones are flagged in advance. We usually walk on a Saturday and try always to use public transport.

Our next walk is planned for January 2021, date to be advised, and will probably start at Rissen S Bahn and head down to the river and back towards Hamburg. If you would like to know about future walks and are not already on our mailing list, please email me at dawes@dawescom.de with your name and email address and ask to be added to the list.

*Text and photographs:
Jo Dawes*

Money matters

We are living through extraordinarily challenging times. Protection measures for COVID-19 are having a profound effect on the incomes of many. Thanks to strong reserves plus the fact we are in a vacancy period without the need to pay a full stipend, STB is weathering this storm better than many organisations; the treasury team does not have to lose sleep regarding the current situation. Many chaplaincies whose income is more dependent on events are faring less well and are reliant on emergency support from the Diocese.

STB's budget for 2020 was finalised just as lockdown in Hamburg took effect and could be adjusted to take into account the anticipated loss of income from the loose change collections and envelopes collected during services. Fortunately, most donations are made by bank transfer. Very grateful thanks to all who have kept up payments.

On the basis of the strength of our reserves, we have been permitted to move forward on appointing a full-time chaplain, despite the fact we are forecasting an income deficit. This is obviously not sustainable. Donation income is in decline and we have to turn this around other-

wise we will run out of money. The Chaplaincy Council had planned to launch a fund-raising campaign in 2020 and address new sources of regular income, but church management issues relating to COVID-19 have had to take priority. This must be our top priority for 2021, however, and ideas are welcome..

On a positive note, there was a generous and prompt response to our appeal for donations to a hardship fund set up in April aimed at providing small grants to those facing acute financial need due to the current situation. Within about a week just under €9,000 was raised. We have been able to support quite a few people with small grants or micro-loans, and perhaps this fund can be retained for future needs as it is a simple way to connect donors and those who need a helping hand.

A big thank you to all of you supporting the church financially. Without your commitment and generosity we cannot run our operations. We need to raise around €134,000 a year. I am proud of the fact that in the recent past we have been able to cover our costs. Please help to continue this.

Monica Schofield

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For other ministries please see following page

For the latest on how Covid-19 is affecting services and events, please see Facebook: stbhamburg or our website: www.anglican-church-hamburg.de

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For clergy and council members please see previous page

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