

Becket News

Issue 77/January 2021

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

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*Cover: Bishop Trevor Mwamba and Revd Dr Maija Priess,
Photo by Madeleine Resühr*

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A message from the editor

EVEN though it's January and we're fast heading for Candlemas, this seems to be something of a Christmas edition of Becket News. It was an unusual Christmas in so many ways, and thus it's only fitting that two of our articles are about Christmas in traditions unfamiliar to most of us – Ethiopia and Australia. We have not one Christmas sermon, but three contrasting ones from three of the priests who have helped to look after us these past months. Our churchwarden Susanne tells us about Christmas this year at the Mission to Seamen and about the challenges the virus has posed for their work. To continue the Christmas theme, there are reports on the Bazaar, which took on a wholly new guise and exceeded all expectations. As we go to press, the church is closed for services, but Madeleine updates us on plans for the next few months and we profile our chaplain-to-be. Plus the Arts Society Church Record is finally finished – Pat Pledger reports – and more. Enjoy the read!

An update from churchwarden Madeleine

This Advent and Christmas season has naturally been like no other, and, as I write, the church will be closed until the middle of February. Because of the ongoing pandemic, we made the decision to close the church following the advice of our locum, Revd Canon Dr Mark Dimond, and after discussions with members of the Church Council. Under the circumstances, it was the only rational course of action.

There is, however, very good news as well! On the third Sunday in Advent, serendipitously St Nicholas' Day and a particularly happy day in Germany, we were able to announce that we at last have a new chaplain,

Revd Jules A. Barnes, who will be coming to St Thomas à Becket in March. She will be officially installed by Archdeacon Leslie Nathaniel on 21 March. We are eagerly looking forward to meeting her in person (instead of only on Zoom) and she is looking forward, just as eagerly, to meeting the congregation. We were very pleased to have Mark Dimond with us for that service.

In November/December we were delighted to welcome Bishop Trevor Mwamba to Hamburg for three services of Holy Communion and hope that he will be able to come back to St Thomas's again in February if we are able to open again

then. Bishop Trevor is at present in Zambia, but planning to return to Germany soon.

On Christmas Eve, Susanne Hergoss led Evening Prayer for a small group of worshippers.

Our reliable local locum, Revd Dr Maija Priess, led the services on 13 and 20 December and also on Christmas Day, a happy service which began with young Ario Ghazaei bringing Baby Jesus to the crib and his father, Hossein, doing the readings and lighting all the candles on the Advent wreath. Let's hope that we'll be back to normal this year and will be able to have Midnight Mass and a children's service with Nativity Play as well!

The two Sundays following Christmas were Morning Prayer, led by Dorothee Möller and Susanne Hergoss.

A highlight of the pre-Christmas season was, of course, our mini-bazaar, both online and in the church, which proved to be very successful and good fun (see p.19).

Also during Advent, Fr Mark invited interested members of the congregation to his Advent Theologies, a series of talks and reflections (on Zoom) on four German saints, St Boniface, St Mechthild of Magdeburg, St Hildegard of Bingen and St Ansgar, who is particularly well known in Hamburg. The series was very interesting and also gave those of us who participated the opportunity to meet some past and present members of the congregation of St George's, Berlin.

To get the church ready for Christmas and then return it to 'normal' after Epiphany, the St Thomas à Becket family once again proved that many willing hands make light work. On the 1st Sunday in Advent, the Advent wreath was ready for the first candle to be lit, the tree was up and decorated and the crib set up. On the Sunday before Epiphany, a cheerful group reversed the procedure, leaving the church tidy and ready for our return as soon as safely possible.



A new chaplain for St Thomas à Becket

Revd Jules A. Barnes says she's absolutely delighted to be taking up the post of Chaplain to the Anglican Church of St Thomas à Becket Hamburg. She comes from the Diocese of Chichester in England where she has been parish priest in charge of St Margaret's Warnham for the past four years. Prior to that she was Chaplain to the Bishop of Bristol and a minor Canon at Bristol Cathedral, with a range of diocesan involvements. She started her ordained ministry ten years ago, in Wilton, Salisbury.

I can't wait to move to Hamburg and to take up my new role as Chaplain to St Thomas à Becket Anglican church. I look forward to getting to know you all, and the city, and to our future mission and ministry together. I want the church to be a sign of hope, that deals in abundance of life, and welcomes all who come there.'

In her current role, Jules has also specialised in vocations work, preparing postulants who feel called to offer for ordination, and serving at national level on the selection panels. Another interest is liturgy and music, and she relishes any opportunity to create bespoke worship for special events or gatherings. Her tastes are wide, but she will be keen to see some 'Evensongs' and 'Cho-



ral Eucharists', when we may once again sing in church.

Jules brings with her a breadth of pre-ordination work experience, too, having worked in contexts from the London Stock Exchange to easyJet and from NHS project management to media and family history research.

Her initial university was Durham, where she read music as an undergraduate. This was followed by an MBA. Later, when her calling to ordained ministry was discerned, she studied theology at the Cuddesdon College, University of Oxford. Somewhere in the midst of all that she also became a registered nurse, in order to have some first-hand clinical knowledge, before joining the NHS as a project manager.

Jules looks forward immensely to living in the port city of Hamburg, and has previously lived and worked in Berlin (where she worshipped and then was churchwarden at the Anglican Chaplaincy of St George).

The light shines in the darkness

Sermon on Christmas Day 2020 by Revd Dr Maija Priess

The following is the sermon by my grandfather Revd Jaakko Haavio (1904–1984) that he preached early on Christmas morning 1939. It is translated from Finnish into English and suits the actual worldwide situation well.

*(Background: The **Winter War** was a war between the Soviet Union (USSR) and Finland. It began with a Soviet invasion of Finland on 30 November 1939, three months after the outbreak of World War II, and ended three and a half months later with the Moscow Peace Treaty on 13 March 1940.)*

Dear friends,
You may have noticed that when the Bible tells us about the birth of the Redeemer of the world it takes us into a dark night, but all of a sudden a powerful light starts shining.

The prophet of the old covenant already said: ‘The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in the land of deep darkness – on them light has shined.’ [The Hebrew verb can be translated as ‘to live, to sit, to prevail’ or ‘to walk’.]

The Gospel of today tells us: ‘There were shepherds in the same country staying in the field, and keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them.’ The Evangelist John says the same as follows: ‘The light shines in the darkness’ (1:5).

God wants to say to us through the Gospel of today: The Redeemer is born to you who are sitting in the darkness. This is the eternal message of Christmas but it suits this current Christmas and the people sitting in the darkness especially well.

The shepherds found Baby Jesus in the middle of a dark night. They started walking in the dark night, having as their guide the divine proclamation, the Gospel of Christmas. In the light of the Gospel they found the way to the Child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger. In Him they found new hope.

Christmas still comes into the darkness. The darker the night, the brighter the stars shine. The deeper the darkness around us, the more wonderful to us is the holy birth of Jesus, His life, His death and His resurrection.

We can say that Jesus achieved

His biggest victories by night. Jesus was courageous and dared to go out into the night. When He had momentous decisions to make, He stayed the whole night praying alone on a mountain. He introduced Holy Communion in the night he was betrayed. When the night around Him had deepened, He established the Last Supper of love in remembrance of the new covenant that offers us the forgiveness of sins through His blood.

Jesus dared to go out amongst His betrayers. In fact He trembled and sweated blood in Gethsemane when the cup of anguish was not taken away but he had to drink it up. To His enemies He said: 'This is your hour and the power of darkness' (Luke 22:53). But in this darkness indeed the light was shining: Jesus took away the sin of the world, our sin. And when in Golgotha the sun darkened and 'darkness came over all the land' (Matt 27:45) Jesus cried in loud voice: 'It is finished' (John 19:30). The world was reconciled.

Starting right from this darkest moment of humanity when the Son of God died on the cross the light has shone until now, even for us in this difficult time of our lives. The light of the cross of Jesus is the only one that can eliminate

the darkness of hopelessness.

Jesus was born at night. He has loved and suffered in the night of the world. If He had not descended into the night of hell, we would not have any hope.

The message of Christmas is the message of hope now when we are worried about the coming weeks and months; what is behind the non-transparent curtain separating us from the future. Is 'night [already] coming, when no one can work' (John 9:4)? Or, will the Lord still be merciful to us?

Dear friends, fear not! Jesus is with us even at night. He is full of mercy and truth, every day with us. The powers of darkness that are opposing Him seem to hold the power sometimes, but their time is short. When the Lord moves his hand, they stop: up to here, not further! And according to the holy word, the day will come when 'the Lord Jesus will overthrow the lawless one that works in accordance with Satan, and destroy him with the breath of his mouth' (2 Thess. 2: 8, 9).

Great powers are moving. [Here I leave out description of the war at that time.]

[My addition: As Ethiopians always comfort each other, 'the Lord God is there', let us trust in

our Heavenly Father who knows the way out of corona according to His good will. Let us pray for each other, for the worldwide Church, and for all people.] ‘This is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith’ (1. John 5:4).

Dear friends! First of all we need power to become children of God and then remain His children. The Lord gives it to us through the message of Christmas. May the

message of Christmas flow among us here courageously and joyfully! Let this word: ‘The light shines in the darkness’ make us into one big family, the family of God because of the common faith. After the night comes day. Christ will be the light of that morning.

**I wish you all a blessed
Christmas.**

A different Christmas: Ethiopia

Religion in general plays an important part of life in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) has unique and impressive festivals which provide colourful ceremonies and celebrations. People dress in traditional white costume and celebrate festivals across the country such as Enkutatash (New Year 11 September), Meskel (Finding of the True Cross), Lidät (Christmas), Timket (Epiphany) and Fasika (Easter).

Christmas, called **Lidät** or **Gänna** (‘Nativity, Birth’) in Ethiopia and celebrated on 29 *tabesas* (7 January), is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. It is one of the major feasts of Our Lord. It is celebrated after 43 days fasting called *Tsoma Gähad* (Advent)

observed by the clerics only.

At Lalibäla, **Gänna** is celebrated in attractive ways due to the birth date of King Lalibäla (late 12th–early 13th century). It starts with a spectacular procession, priests and believers marching throughout the entire night, from one church to another. Several hundred families walking toward churches dressed in a sea of brilliant white cotton



is a common sight throughout the country. The Liturgy (*Qeddase*) begins at 6 a.m. and lasts some 3–4 hours; everyone stands throughout the service. The priests, deacons and *däbitära* (scholars versed in the liturgy and music of the church) lift their voices in hymn and chant. Also the believers sing in dialogue with the celebrants.

After the service, people go home to chicken or lamb or beef accompanied by *injera* (a sourdough pancake like bread made from a local grain called *t'eff*, Ethiopian millet), *watt'* and the traditional drinks (i.e. *t'älla* (homemade beer made from barley) or *t'äjj* (homemade mead, or honey wine)). The meal is served in beautifully decorated baskets or on big plates. The family members and visitors sit together and eat from a common plate with their right hands. The *injera* is used to scoop up the *watt'*. After the meal there is strong, aromatic Ethiopian coffee.

The festive mood usually continues until the late hours of the evening. The celebration of Ethiopian Christmas is marked by activities such as horse racing and authentic folk dancing. The joy of giving and sharing extends beyond religious beliefs and spreads the spirit of peace on earth and goodwill to all mankind throughout the world.



Especially in the rural areas, a popular game, *yaGänna Chewata* (hockey), is played with a curved stick and a round wooden ball and is conducted between two teams of young men and boys. According to Ethiopian legend, when the shepherds of the biblical Christmas story were informed of the birth of the Messiah, they expressed their overwhelming joy by using their staffs to break into a spontaneous game that resembles field hockey. Now Christmas has also come to be known by that name *Gännä*.

Only the children may receive presents, such as clothes.

*Text and photos:
Revd Dr Maija Priess*

A new kingdom of peace, love and justice

A Christmas sermon preached by the Rt Revd Dr Musonda Trevor Selwyn Mwamba, at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Lusaka, Zambia on Friday, 25 December, 2020.

On this Christmas Day may I invite you to meditate with me on verses 2 and 6 of the 9th chapter of the book of Isaiah:

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. (Isaiah 9:2)

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

The birth of Christ our Saviour occurs for us in our darkness. This metaphor of Isaiah's is a very relevant one for us and our time because we also, God knows, are a people who walk in darkness.

Darkness in the sense of a people who have lost their values; in the sense of a people who are very scared and uncertain of the future; darkness in the sense of our failure to see and appreciate that every human being whatever their gender, race, religion, tribe, nationality, political affiliation, are all children of God the Creator of all things.

In the wise words of the Sufi mystic Rumi: 'Christ is the population of the world...there is no room for hypocrisy.'

Darkness in the sense of conflicts; conflict between races, between tribes, between nations, between political parties; between individuals; and within individuals. As portrayed in this indigenous American parable:

A Cherokee grandfather was teaching his grandson about life. 'A fight is going on inside me,' he told the boy. 'It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil – he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.'

He continued, 'The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too.'

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, 'Which wolf will win?'

The grandfather simply replied, 'The one you feed.'

The reality of life is that we are

inclined to feed the evil one.

As the Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr., said: 'I don't care who you are, I don't care where you live, there is a civil war going on in your life. And every time you set out to be good, there is something pulling on you, telling you to be evil. Every time you set out to love, something keeps pulling on you, trying to get you to hate. Every time you set out to be kind and say nice things about people, something is pulling on you to be jealous and envious and to spread evil gossip about them. There is a civil war going on.'

This is the darkness of our lives. We are all familiar with it. It's inside me, and inside you, and every other person, too.

St Paul with penetrating insightfulness wrote about this darkness in his letter to the Romans, 'I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.'

He went on to say, 'For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.' He cried out in desperation, 'Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?' Then he pointed to where hope and salvation lies:

'Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!'

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. For Jesus Christ is the Light of the world who dispels the darkness of the world and our inner darkness.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

This means God has entered our human chaos; our world of darkness is where God has chosen to be born in to redeem it, to make us right, to make us good, to make us loving.

He does so because the other name of the Prince of Peace is Immanuel – God with us – our Shepherd.

The Christmas story reminds us that our Shepherd who knows and loves us comes to feed the good wolf in us; and assures us of 'His Power beyond ourselves' that is present in life for us. Always.

In the hymns we sing, the prayers we pray, the readings and sermons we hear, the Eucharist we celebrate; these all lift us to the Divine, the Power beyond ourselves. And in every act of worship God's presence in our lives and world is refreshed.

Albert Einstein once said science

can tell us a lot about the universe, how old it is, how vast it is, what laws of physics control it. And he went on to say that science is, however, powerless to answer the most important question of all: Is the universe a friendly place and supportive of human hopes and aspirations?

Well, the Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace...Immanuel, our Shepherd, answers this important question. God who created the universe is present, loving, caring, at the centre of everything.

God's everlasting presence is with us in the good and bad experiences of our lives.

Rabbi Harold Kushner said: 'God's promise was never that life would be fair. God's promise was that, when we had to confront the unfairness of life, we would not have to do it alone for He would be with us.'

Yes, our world may not be a perfect world but it's God's world and that makes all the difference. God is here to take care of us, to help us, even as a shepherd cares for his sheep in a world of dangerous predators and threats of accidents.

Yes, we live in a frightening world and this year we have seen lives ravaged by the Covid-19 pandemic; but it is less frightening knowing

God is here with us. Our life is bundled up in the Life of God.

The birth of the Prince of Peace brings about a new way of living for us. It brings about a radical new ethic of love for enemies.

St Paul in his letters affirmed this radical new ethics proclaimed in Jesus: 'Do not repay anyone evil for evil...live at peace with everyone... do not revenge my friends...do not be overcome with evil; but overcome evil with good.' (Romans 12:17-21)

Peace is the message of Christmas. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, is born for us to give us his peace. It is a gift that the world cannot give. And His peace is both personal and national and global.

Translated in Hebrew peace is *shalom*. This gives us a richer and multifaceted meaning which is lacking in English. The word suggests peace is complete well-being, physical, psychological, social, and spiritual; and flows from all of one's relationships being right with God, with oneself, and with others. This is peace *wholesomeness*.

This is what Christ offers us personally. The most exciting thing about peace is 'Even the smallest person can change the course of the future.'

You see small acts of love, kindness and peace are very impactful. And

can make the world a better place by ending suffering at the hands of war, hunger, human rights violations, and injustice.

Every act of kindness we express creates a ripple effect that spreads from person to person with no end in sight. It touches generations to come. Kindness is contagious like a virus in which the outcome is divinely beautiful.

A heart of kindness is peaceful with the power to transform chaos to order; despair to hope.

On this Christmas Day as we celebrate the birth of the Prince of

Peace, our Immanuel, our Shepherd may we rededicate ourselves to be peacemakers in our homes, in our communities, in our nation, in our world. So with the help of God we can bring into existence in our world a new kingdom of peace, love and justice.

For unto us a Son is born who is God's loving presence in our lives; who soothes broken hearts, who binds up wounds, who renews us in life. This is a gift that we can all give. When this gift is given, God's love is present and Christmas happens daily.

A different Christmas: Australia

Christmas in Australia is very different from Christmas here in Europe because, not only is the whole continent upside down, the seasons are, too. So Christmas is in summer, 30°C or more in the shade, perfect beach weather and definitely not a snowflake in sight.

Growing up in the southern hemisphere, I longed for a white Christmas and, in spite of the heat, we sent each other Christmas cards with lovely snowy, glittery pictures and robins for the sake of tradition but completely out of character in that climate. I'm glad to say that I now get Christmas cards from down under with Australian scenes, the

beautiful native flowers like Christmas bush and Christmas bellflower, cute animals like kangaroos and koalas and parrots and cockatoos featuring prominently.

So how is Christmas celebrated in Australia? The Christmas tree is a bit of a problem because of the



heat. European pine trees are naturally hard to come by and, even if you manage to find one, it'll be dry as tinder after about three days and drop its needles all over the floor well before Christmas Day. We once tried using a branch from a eucalyptus tree, but the result was the same. The desiccated leaves curled up, then fell to the floor, forming a sad, grey ring around the 'tree'. It was a sorry sight, with the coloured lights and baubles hanging on bare brown twigs! We eventually resorted to an artificial 'umbrella' tree that only had to be unfolded and stayed green for many years, although it did get rather tatty after a while. I must admit, though, that I do prefer our fresh, real Tannenbaum.

Many families start Christmas Day by going to church – even if, just as here, it might be the only time they go all year. Services start early in the morning – in my parish in Brisbane the first service was



at 6.30 a.m. and the next at 7.30 a.m. As 80 per cent of the Australian population live within about 50 miles of the coast, thousands head for the beaches on Christmas Day, often taking a picnic lunch of cold turkey, prawns, salads and plenty of beer. A BBQ lunch is also very popular and the cry of 'Let's throw a few shrimps on the barbie!' can be heard all over the country.

After church, we went home and opened our presents, then headed for Mermaid Beach, south of Brisbane, where my aunt and uncle had a holiday house and the whole extended family got together.

The presents from the rellies were predictable – shorty pyjamas for the girls, home-sewn by Auntie Conty, who had always wanted a daughter to sew frilly clothes for but had three sons, and summer shirts or books for the boys.

A hot Christmas dinner was out of the question, so the mums (hardly any men cooked in those days – it's a long time ago!) spent the days before Christmas roasting chickens and ducks and turkeys and, instead of roast potatoes, etc., we had potato and rice salad, green salad and coleslaw, tomatoes and devilled eggs – much more suitable on a hot summer's day and much easier than trying to prepare anything much in



the tiny kitchen with two temperamental hot plates and an equally temperamental assortment of aunts and cousins.

The only thing that was served hot was the Christmas pudding. Cousin Betty always made the pud the old-fashioned way, boiled in a muslin cloth and with sixpences hidden inside. It was doused in brandy, set alight as tradition demands and served with gallons of custard and a good spoonful of brandy butter. If you found a sixpence and didn't crack a tooth biting on it, you would have good luck the following year. Then came the annual toast to the queen, Auntie Joan's single cigarette of the year, lit with great ceremony and applause from all and sundry, and finally brandies for the grown-ups, after which they all collapsed in easy chairs on the shady

patio for a postprandial snooze while we kids headed for the beach for some sun, surf and an extended game of beach cricket, hoping the washing-up would, by some miracle, be done by the time we got back, as that was traditionally our job. This ploy worked occasionally, but the 'oldies' could be pretty stubborn about it and waited patiently for us to come home. Fair enough, as they say down under. It's decades since I was in Australia for Christmas, but they're good memories of a childhood in the sun, and I really enjoy seeing the photos my family send me of them throwing those shrimps on the barbie and tucking into all sorts of good things outside on the verandah, in the park or on the beach.

*Text and photographs:
Madeleine Resühr*

‘Hark the Herald Angels Sing’

Sermon on Christmas Day 2020 by Revd Canon Dr Mark Dimond

(Isaiah 52.7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1.1-12; John 1.1-14)

‘The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it’

We can imagine Christmas with Jesus, because we have the stories in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew to draw from, as well as from other sources at the time. At Jesus’s birth, it was not a crowded scene. In fact, it was quite the opposite. We might imagine the innkeeper was the only one around, handing over, as it were, the key to the manger. Though really there was no key: there was no security. There was a bit of basic shelter, with a few animals around, and that is all. It was lonely, at least until the shepherds and the wise men turned up.

Loneliness, *Einsamkeit*, is our situation today. Loneliness is an unfortunate part of the Covid experience, for some worse than others. Here in Tenby, a coastal seaside town in west Wales, normally buzzing in the summer, it is very quiet, especially in the evening. Not a soul walks about the streets in the dark. The only thing that accompanies you is the howling wind off the Atlantic Ocean. And of course, on a clear night, you can see this strange and unusual alignment of the planets Saturn and Jupiter, on the south-western horizon. It is said

that it was this confluence of planets that fashioned a star above Bethlehem at the first coming of Jesus.

At Christmas, we usually have our loved ones around us, like a close planetary formation. This time, in our quiet, if not lonely Christmas, we have to rely more on the star than on the planets. And God is that star. He comes to meet us individually, and gives us fresh eyes. This is the meaning of *Logos*, the Word made Flesh, when we could begin to make sense of the world through the eyes of God. We don’t have to think too hard about it. It’s a simple gift to us, like the nursery rhyme ‘Twinkle, twinkle little star’. Jesus would have had that dazzling twinkle in his eye, as he met person after person in adulthood. ‘I am with you now.’

It is this possibility-made-reality that heaven and earth are together that comes through in music. I know that Thomas à Becket Church misses its music, and we can be thankful that there is at least an opportunity to listen to the Five Lessons and Carols online. One of the most uplifting hymns is *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*. It is often the

last hymn at the end of a carol service, and if you don't have a hoarse voice after singing it you've done well. Mendelssohn's version of it is wonderfully uplifting, a human response to the wonderful gift God has given us – 'glory to the newborn king', or, relating to the stars, 'join the triumph of the skies'. And if we feel hoarse after singing it, it is perhaps because we can't thank God enough!

So, if we feel downhearted this Christmas, because it's not like it normally feels, because we cannot sing, feast and laugh, in abundance, then remember what Christmas is *at its core*.

Christmas is the humility of God coming to us in the baby Jesus, the humility of Mary in accepting her role, the humility of Joseph not bowing to public pressure, even the humility of the self-effacing donkey. In a sense, God has it all covered at Christmas, in whatever state we are in. We have been humbled this Christmas, but the love of God is there in all its audacious humility, piercing, like the Bethlehem Star. And out of this star radiates the light of God, the love, the joy, the peace and the hope, and much more!

Amen.

Christmas Eve for seafarers

The year 2020 was an exceptional year for seafarers and for the three registered associations of Deutsche Seemannsmission (DSM) and Stella Maris.

On 10 December there was a

recording of the online Christmas service for seafarers. We started at 5.00 pm with a short meeting, then the recording started: readings, sermon, prayers, etc. Everything was recorded twice or three times. So it

took until 11.45 that evening. The music was recorded the next day. You'll find it online: <https://duckdalben.de/> – just scroll down a little.

In November the campaign by the



Deutsche Seemannsmission started in the newspapers about donating presents to seafarers on board the ships, called 'Weihnachten im Schuhkarton'. People donated warm stockings, gloves, beanies, toothpaste, shampoo, soap and of course sweets. All in all, more than 1,400 packages arrived at the different stations of DSM and were brought to the seafarers on board the ships.

When I was asked to join the crew to bring these packages to the ships, I agreed to help. Then I was asked to prepare papers (and myself) for a short service to be held when seafarers ask for it on this special day, 24 December. After a short briefing at 8 o'clock we packed all the gifts into cars and started our tour. I didn't know that, due to corona, the seafarers would not be allowed to come down to the pier. So we had to climb up the long gangways to bring everything on board the ships. Do you know how high ships are? Endless for a person who is afraid of heights – but of course, I survived! A well trained colleague of mine was my anchor. We visited five ships somewhere in the port of Hamburg and we looked in smiling faces – after very long terms of work at sea. Some have been working for more than 12 months without any



Photo: Susanne Hergoss

chance to leave the ship, because of restrictions in the different ports. And most of the seafarers do not even have a chance to go home soon either because there were no flights or flights were and will be cancelled.

On Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus, a baby boy. Most of the seafarers have not yet been able to hold their own new-born sons and/or daughters in their arms. And on top of all that, most of them have to stay in quarantine so that they might have the chance to get a flight. For most of them it means staying in their room and contact just by electronic media. And yet there is no timetable for a change in their situation. These are the people

who give us the chance to have fresh fruit for our Christmas meals ...

In the afternoon there was a little break before I went to St Thomas à Becket to lead Evening Prayer. About 20 people attended and everything went well.

Afterwards I went to my workplace at Seemannsheim Krayenkamp. The cook had already started to give people the very German meal for Christmas Eve: Kartoffelsalat und Würstchen. Because of corona there was no big gathering like in former years. Everybody had to take the meal to his room. At 9 p.m. I started to take the Christmas gifts to every seafarer in our

house. All of them got a little preserving jar with a blue 'ocean' and a little globe inside. This was meant to be the world stuck in the corona pandemic, sometimes feeling unable to escape (closed glass), but the orange ring has the same colour as the lifebelt on board a ship to save them. And of course they got a little explanation in German and in English, their calendar for 2021 with all the addresses and phone numbers of the Deutsche Seemannsmission worldwide and the sweets as every year. After a long chat with the reception's nightshift, I went home, tired but happy.

Susanne Hergoss

Bizarre bazaar beats corona blockade

As the last edition of Becket News went to press, we were in a 'will it or won't it?' dilemma regarding whether or not a physical Mini-Markt could take place on the date of the bazaar, 21 November, as planned. Corona prevailed and it was indeed cancelled.

There is nothing like a challenge to unleash talents and agility. Undeterred, bazaar stallholders mobilised their talents to make the best out of the situation and find new sales channels.

A mail-order operation was estab-

lished for Christmas cards, a web store ingeniously implemented in Google Docs to sell handicrafts, British produce was imaginatively packaged in the form of hampers promoted as gift packs (see article overleaf) to turn them into a





best-seller and the book shop was opened on demand. Opportunity was provided to pick up and purchase items after the church service on Sundays, all carefully managed to conform with corona regulations and keep everyone safe. Many of the regular bazaar visitors came to pick up their orders and were grateful for the opportunity. Although we were not able to sell food to eat on the premises, a major source of income from our usual bazaar, our redoubtable churchwarden Madeleine ensured sufficient supply

of home-baked biscuits and cakes to take away.

All this paid off. Net income from sales excluding Christmas cards was just under €3,800. The Christmas card income was almost exactly the same as in 2019, with many taking the opportunity provided on the form to add a donation, which yielded an additional €700. Donations made in association with the other purchases, plus generous support from Claus-G. and Anne Budelmann and Nick and Linda Teller as compensation

for lost bazaar income, yielded a further €4,600.

So all in all, the amazing sum of €14,000 was raised during the pre-Christmas corona lockdown.

A big thank you to Judith, Nicki, Wendy, Arwen, Valerie and Madeleine for leading the charge, to the bazaar working group that came up with ideas for how to cope with the situation; to Victor and Monica Emilia who served as stallholders in church and who were extremely persuasive sellers, and to the many, many supporters who made things to sell and helped spread the word. But perhaps the biggest thanks go to all those who shopped with us, taking the new format in their stride.

Of course we missed the buzz and

community spirit and the chance to welcome the many regular visitors and newcomers to the bazaar, but the corona experience has got us trying new ways of doing things. The online sales operation has enabled us to reach out to a wider community and made it possible for people not located in Hamburg to buy things. We have established new levers for our goal to increase income from the bazaar in the future.

Extraordinary times call for creative talents and we are blessed to have these in abundance.

Thank you!

*Text and photographs:
Monica Schofield*

Bringing joy – produce and hampers

It all began with a video call with the STB Bazaar Group in September – the idea of preparing Christmas hampers was born when the ‘Virtual Bazaar’ was discussed. The idea was originally to sell the British produce through the hampers but, because the produce was so popular in its own right through the order form system, we had to source separate goods for the hampers! The only common product were the chutneys, jams and marmalades which several people from

the congregation, in particular Ellen Ziesmann and Mary Sanderson, very kindly made at home and delivered regularly to the West Room at the back of the church.

The virtual orders came pouring in in early November, and we were extremely pleased to see the number of people who also wanted to be included on the church mailing list.

Keeping weekly stocktakes of products, we had to order via the Internet, mainly from British



Shopping, Geesthacht who gave us 15% discount. Our thanks go to them for their support here. Robert Berridge (English Books) also supported us with teas and chocolate goodies. The wine was sourced from Vino in Osdorf who also supplied us with the hamper straw whenever we needed it.

Sourcing the hamper boxes was a challenge. At first, we bought cheaper boxes left over from last Christmas but we soon cleared out the stock of these in the shops and had to find more at a higher price. Each week our Saturday mission became finding more tartan boxes! In total we bought 85, exceeding our target of 30 by over 50!

A total of around €2,500 was taken in after costs on the produce and hampers. This we can be very

proud of and our thanks go to the team behind the scenes and selling Sundays from the end of November right through to Christmas (mainly Victor, Monica-Emilia and Fiona). It was a wonderful way to get the young adults involved. They were a fantastic help and we hope they will be with us next time, too.

Our biggest customer, who sent 20 hampers to her customers, sent us a voice message saying how much joy we had brought and how much positive feedback she had received on giving them – and she would like to order 20 again for 2021.

Thank you to all who contributed to the British produce and hampers by making, donating, selling or buying them.

*Text and photographs:
Wendy Sprock*



Extraordinary result for card project

What started as an ordinary year in January 2020 for us all – pre-corona – ended with a totally unexpected and extraordinary result just before Christmas for the church's recycled card project. The interim net profit was virtually the same as in 2019 and, together with the extra donations, amounted to €5,654.56. And then early in the New Year we received a further generous donation from the former Honorary British Consul and his wife, Claus and Anne Budelmann, bringing the final total for the 2020 card project up to €6,500.

For newcomers to Hamburg, the project for recycling used Christmas cards, and selling them in aid of 'The Historic English Church of St Thomas à Becket' was started in 1986 when we sold 300 cards, with a net profit of DM 145. In the past few years about 5000 cards have been made annually.

'After the bazaar is always before the bazaar.' A friend from the handicrafts group at the Norwegian Seamen's Church in Hamburg told me this in the 1970s, and it certainly applies to the cardmakers. Work starts mid-January – after Twelfth Night by tradition – by appealing for people's used cards, and it

continues throughout the year in an almost seasonal rhythm. We're a fairly small team – Debbie Faddul, Jane Harding, Sarah Meister, Linda Rainer, Mary Sanderson, Cathy Schierholz, Katrin Schnetzer, Ellen Thomas, Lorna Yadzani and Caroline Yarnold. Some of us live quite centrally, others further away – Mary in Altes Land, Debbie in Schleswig-Holstein; and Caroline, a former member of the congregation, and back in England since 1998, continues to collect used cards in her village, sort them rigorously, and chop them to size. Most of us have been working on the card project for a long time, even decades. We think recycling cards makes sense, and not only ecologically. Old used cards could be thrown into the blue bins, but one wouldn't throw away €5,500. We come from various confessions and religious backgrounds but we all want to continue helping

We need your cards

But please hang on to your used cards for us until we know when the church will be open again, when they can be safely taken there. And no cards with glitter or sparkle, please, as it rubs off onto other cards.



to maintain the pastoral and charitable work that the Church of England congregation in Hamburg has been committed to since 1612.

2020 started quite normally with collecting and sorting thousands of used cards – about 25,000 of them – a lot from friends in Hamburg, but mainly from other church communities and friends in Britain, where more cards are written. Multiple large wine boxes of unsorted cards were brought back from the UK in March – just before the first lockdown. In our innocence we all thought everything would be over by the autumn – so sorting and chopping went ahead in the spring, and new base cards were ordered

from the printers in June. Glue was bought and sticking the ‘new’ cards started during the summer so that they would be ready for selling in the autumn in the various English-speaking societies, the Bazaar and the Victorian Christmas Market – or so we thought.

Fast forward now to the end of September, and the ‘will it or won’t it’ Bazaar situation (see Monica’s article on page 19). The decision was taken to sell cards online with a separate order form, and pre-paid postage, but also with the option for people to come and choose individually here and after church on Sundays. Sarah and Ellen came (here) on nine days for a whole

day in the autumn and we sorted the cards into categories, and then packed them ready to take to the post – 47 packages altogether of varying sizes – two even to the UK and several elsewhere in Germany. A similar number of cards was sold directly from here or after church.

And now to all the VERY heartfelt thanks: to Mr and Mrs Budelmann for their continuous encouragement of the card project and for their kind and generous donation; to all our fantastic old and new customers for buying cards, and for the kind extra donations; to all those in Britain and in Hamburg who collected their used cards for us; to all the English-speaking clubs, and to

others, who usually sell cards on our behalf, and who publicised our ‘new procedures’, and to those who even sold internally for us; to those who produced the complicated online form, and lastly to the truly WONDERFUL card team – who always work very precisely and professionally, and with such attention to detail that we have so many regular customers – even in a pandemic.

Finally, an appeal for used Christmas cards – with the hope that we can sell both directly and online next autumn. It has been an extraordinary year and thank you to everyone who helped us.

Judith Holst

Money matters – where we stand

There is never a good time to have a pandemic, but if it has to happen, from a financial point of view, having it in a vacancy period helps. During a vacancy, the church saves on the stipend, and this protected us from the full financial consequences of the corona pandemic. In fact, we ended the year with an operational surplus between our income and expenditure of €16,552. The tremendous efforts regarding the alternative bazaar and mail order sales of Christmas cards not only yielded sales income but

also resulted in a surge in donations at the end of the year that rescued a concerning situation.

The overall income was €86,386: 15% below budget, and the lowest in years, but the expenditure of €69,835 was 29% less than planned and about half that of a normal year.

Our past drive to get people to donate by bank transfer helped mitigate loss of income due to the church closure. On the other hand, the downward trend in regular donations observed pre-corona has continued. Corona also delayed

development of a much-needed campaign for a donation recruitment drive.

In a year such as this, we can give thanks for this result. Many chaplaincies, particularly those more reliant on events for income, have struggled. However, our 2020 income is substantially less than what we need to meet our normal annual financing needs. We will face challenges to cover our costs in 2021. We did not plan a benefit concert for 2020 (fortunately), but this plus the bazaar are key fundraising events. Both rely on a large

gathering of people, i.e. a return to 'normal'. We pray this may happen by the second half of 2021, but we need donors to ensure we have a stable income.

However, the glad tidings are that we remain solvent thanks to collective efforts and willingness to be generous even in challenging times. A big thank you to everyone who has managed to keep up their regular payments, large or small, and especially to those who have been so generous in compensating the bazaar income. We are very grateful.

Monica Schofield

Apart but not alone – Saturdays on Zoom

During the first lockdown last spring, a group of choir members started meeting on Saturday evenings to say compline together, initiated by Yotin and Arwen. Gradually the word spread and the group grew to include other members of the congregation, friends of the church and family members.

Compline gave way to evening prayer as the days lengthened and resumed as they shortened again. On 19 December, more than 30 of us from several continents met for Nine Lessons and Carols and again on Christmas Eve for carols at midnight.

Our Zoom services have become an important means of fellowship for many of us. If you would like to get the weekly invitations, including to our Candlemas/Christingle service on 30 January, please email Yotin and Arwen: music@anglican-church-hamburg.de

Photo: Monica Schofield



Faith, hope and love



*And now abide faith, hope and love, these three;
but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:13)*

Sometimes things just happen without us even looking for them. Anthony Peter contacted me in church in early October and asked me if we would be interested in face masks as a donation from his son-in-law and I immediately said yes, since I had already been thinking about this idea to raise funds for St Thomas à Becket in conjunction with the bazaar.

Anthony asked me to create a simple design and then literally cut and paste this on the sample masks, and his wife Mariane kindly modelled the samples each time for me to see what they would look like! He ordered 200 for us so we can sell them all year round and not just for the Advent period leading up to Christmas.

The masks arrived in time for our first Mini-Market selling day on 22 November and we sold a few immediately. We have sold around 20 so far and we hope to sell more in 2021.

THANK YOU very much Mariane and Anthony Peter and their son-in-law Sebastian Schnetgöke (Hersfelder Kleidwerke GmbH).

*Text and photographs:
Wendy Sprock*



Church recording project completed

A lot of water (and research) has passed under the bridge since the church recording team started this project, following the inaugural meeting, in June 2014. There have been periodic updates to keep you informed, but we are now delighted to tell you that the record was finished and bound at the end of 2020. It is currently under wraps and we plan to present it to the church at a special ceremony after the new chaplain starts.

A church record is a comprehensive record of the interior of a church – the church furnishings – and involved the various members of the team researching, identifying and recording the details of everything inside the church. A lot

of hard graft, many team meetings and work inside the church went into this project and the final task, that of getting the record professionally bound, produced an interesting reconnection with a former member of St Thomas à Becket's congregation.

We had to find a book binder for our record. Judith Holst informed us that Angela Sutton had her own book binding business in the UK. Many of you will remember Angela and her husband, who lived in Hamburg from 1987–93. Angela sang in the church choir when Ruth Luecke and Jill Knight were in charge of the music. Both Angela and her husband were on the church council at different times and Peter Sutton

was involved in the fund-raising for the restoration.

Angela Sutton has been binding and repairing books since 1971 and taught the subject at various establishments for many years. She has her own bindery in Malvern, Worcestershire, where she also runs courses



and gives personalised tuition (www.angelasuttonbookbinding.uk).

Angela was delighted to take on the job and said, 'It's nice to think I have been able to do something for St Thomas's, as it was quite a central part of our lives when we were in Hamburg, and I was always very fond of the building'.

The Arts Society Hamburg Church Recording Team (Mary Sanderson, Judith Holst, Eileen Broadbent, Peter Alexander, Liz Nietz, Beate Echt, Nicki Schiller, Madeleine Resühr, Peter Eckford-Jones, Pat Pledger – coordinator) are looking forward to presenting the record to the church in the coming months and here you can see how beautiful it looks.

*Text and photograph: Pat Pledger
(hamburg@theartssociety.org)*

Staying in touch

Missing the church during Covid-19? Keep an eye on our website: anglican-church-hamburg.de and our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/stbhamburg/> If you're on Facebook, there's an Anglican Church of St Thomas à Becket group you can join. And if you're not on our emailing list, please mail communication@anglican-church-hamburg.de with your first and last name and ask to be added. Finally, do you know people in the congregation who don't use the Internet or social media? Could you give them a call to see if they're feeling scared or lonely or need some help with shopping?

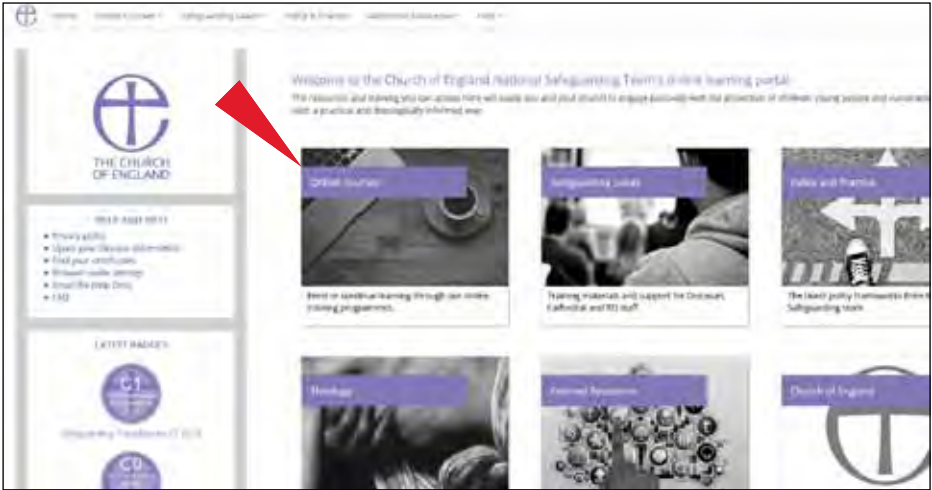
The safeguarding team needs YOUR help

Are you an active member of St Thomas à Becket? Are you wondering how you can be of service to your church while the building's closed? **Start a free safeguarding online course!**

Behind the closed front door and quiet sanctuary there's a flurry of activity as the parish of St Thomas à Becket prepares for the arrival of our new priest in March. There's

music to learn, cleaning to do and the chaplain's flat to set up, sadly all seriously hampered by Covid-19 regulations.

However there is something very meaningful that all parishioners can do, from the comfort of their own homes: an online safeguarding course – <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-training> *contd. overleaf*



Who should take the courses?

Anyone who is interested, and anyone who has an active role in running our church in any capacity.

What do I need to complete the first course C0?

- a computer with Internet access
- about 2–3 hours, however the course can be stopped and started again over months, if necessary

This is important preparation for the arrival of our new priest – to be able to communicate the message to her that we take safeguarding seriously and can prove it by showing our parish course uptake (which at the moment is very low).

Should you have any further questions about courses, please do not hesitate to contact Madeleine Her-

ring: madeleineherring@t-online.de or tel 040 279 6514.

Thank you very much for your support and for taking safeguarding seriously.

Madeleine Herring

European Anglicans
Want to read more? The Diocese in Europe's 'European Anglicans' Annual Review of 2020 addresses several of the topics covered in this edition of Becket News including reflections and recommendations from the Diocesan Working Group on Racial Justice and safeguarding in the light of the IICSA report. To read these articles and more, go to europe.anglican.org and search for 'Annual Review 2020'.

Healing racism and embracing diversity

Raising awareness of Cultural Diversity, and Healing Racism: a big title for a big task! Seven St Thomas à Becket parishioners are now members of the new group, formed in response to the repercussions of George Floyd's death in the USA, and our Bishops' paper on racial justice, 'Breathing Life'.

The new group has met four times since its inception in August 2020. Though the first meeting was in person, the last three have all been online due to Covid regulations. The group had decided to arrange a variety of events, from educational to cultural, mixing social activities with discussion of serious issues.

Therefore many plans wait for when we can meet, post-Covid.

To give us some context, one member, Yotin, discovered a YouTube series called 'Conversations on Race' that has been put together by a clearly active Kings Cross Church in London. These videos have begun to offer us a foundation for our discussions, and it feels very much like we have a lot to learn and share, about racism, our experiences, about our respective cultures, and the diversity we bring to the group.

The group is growing, with one or two new people joining us each time we meet, and we welcome more new members. There is an easy-going commitment to attendance, meaning members can attend when it suits them, especially if they have an interest in one of the events. There is never any compulsion to share anything personal.

Our next meeting online is Thursday 4 February from 18.15 to 19.45. If you have questions or queries, please contact Yotin Tiewtrakul (yotin@gmx.de), Monica Emilia, Valerie Müller (valbo@hotmail.de) or Madeleine Herring (tel 040 279 6514).

Madeleine Herring



Photo: Jo Dawes

Remembrance Sunday 2020

*At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.*

On Remembrance Sunday, 8 November 2020, we held a special Remembrance Service to commemorate the contribution and sacrifices of British and Commonwealth military and civilian servicemen and women in the two World Wars and later conflicts. Despite the corona situation and following strict hygiene and distancing regulations, we were able to come together for a Holy Communion service led by Revd Canon Dr Mark Dimond, who had come all the way from Berlin especially to officiate. We were also honoured to pay our tribute and respect together with several British and Commonwealth officers and their families who are currently at the Führungsakademie der Bundes-

wehr – the German Armed Forces Staff College.

After the service we were also fortunate to conduct a very moving Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Commonwealth War Graves at the Ohlsdorf Cemetery. Despite the restrictions, this ceremony was attended by about 30 guests, including the British Honorary Consul for Hamburg, Nicholas Teller. Poppy wreaths were placed on behalf of the British Consulate, the Officers at the Führungsakademie, the Royal British Legion, the Anglo-German Club, the Anglican Church of St Thomas à Becket and the two Hamburg-based Lodges under the Grand Lodge of British Freemasons in Germany.

Unfortunately the 6th traditional



Photos: Petra Osinski



Remembrance Dinner at the Anglo-German Club, which had been scheduled for 5 November 2020, had to be cancelled due to the restrictions.

However we still managed to raise €706 for the Poppy Appeal this year and I would like to thank all who supported this worthy cause and our Remembrance Sunday services, especially the British Honorary Consul, Revd Canon Dr Mark Dimond, the British Liaison Officer at the Führungsakademie, Lt Col. Benjamin Davenport, and the Chairman of the Anglo-German Club, Claus-G. Budelmann OBE.

Most importantly I would like to express our gratitude to all the active members and veterans of HM Armed Forces who joined us on that day for their service and for protecting our freedom.

Norbert Schoen

Obituaries

Lottie Lankenau

Lottie, 87, died on 24 November after a period of ill health that had taken her in and out of hospital and prevented her from attending church as frequently as in earlier years, despite the support of her younger son Tobias. Often also accompanied by her friendly, immaculately behaved dog Jasper, she made a lively contribution in several areas after starting to attend services at St Thomas à Becket at the turn of the century.

Lottie grew up in South London and remembered singing at an early age to entertain neighbours packed into crowded Brixton air-raid shelters. Not so long afterwards, her skills and outgoing personality won her a place on the stage, at the Windmill Theatre and later in the

Royal Ballet. Marriage to a highly successful young industrialist then intervened, and she had two sons to raise.

After a divorce, Lottie proved a highly successful cook at a Cotswold hostelry that would today be labelled 'gastro-pub'. She proved equally proficient as a live-in carer. She had a gift for making friends. After moving to Hamburg, she put the skills honed in earlier years to the service of St Thomas à Becket. Besides running bric-a-brac stalls at annual Bazaars, she was the driving force behind two flea markets that each raised a four-figure sum for our church. She also frequently contributed the week's Shared Prayers that used to be included on the Sunday service sheets. For the Hamburg Players, for years she was their most experienced make-up lady, also running the backstage green room occasionally.

Among recent chaplains, Lottie was especially close to Matthew Jones. Her somewhat flamboyant, larger-than-life personality enlivened many a social gathering. Yet she was also a sympathetic listener. Her life was imbued throughout by faith in Christ and well-founded endurance in face of frequent ups and downs. She will continue to be missed by many of us.

Hertha Krawczyk

Hertha Krawczyk, a familiar face in the congregation for several decades, died on 27 October 2020. Having lived at one time in England, her command of English was good. She displayed a lively interest in our church while also supporting her local German church in Klein Borstel. The journey from there by public transport took Hertha almost an hour. Hertha reached the age of 90 on 9 July 2020, and her two daughters and their spouses brought her to church the following Sunday for what proved to be her last visit. She will be most affectionately remembered.

Hermann Wirth

Hermann Wirth passed away on 31 October 2020. Hermann, a retired paediatrician, came from a large, loving and caring Christian family. Hermann's wish was always to help others which he did passionately. He was deeply involved in helping migrants in Hamburg and even bought a car so as to be more mobile for them. Hermann will be remembered as a true philanthropist who will be sadly missed, but his kind and heart-warming smile and the good memories remain forever.

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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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