

THE CHURCH OF ST URSULA BERNE



February – March 2024

G. Arnaud 1/24

St Ursula's Church Jubiläumsplatz 2, 3005 Berne, Switzerland

Chaplain: Revd Helen Marshall

E-mail: office@stursula.ch

Day off: Friday

Lay Reader

Archana Jacob

archana.jacob@stursula.ch

Church Office: 031 352 85 67

Marriages, Baptisms and Funerals by arrangement with the Chaplain

Normal pattern of Sunday services:

10.00 Sung Eucharist with Junior Church and Crèche

2nd Sunday is normally All Age Eucharist

Our services follow the Church of England's Common Worship Order One (2000)

See Calendar of Services inside for details of the next few weeks.

Services in Thun: usually 18.30 on two Thursdays each month at Chapelle Romande, Frutigenstrasse 22: Eucharist and Bible study.

Contact: Church Office 031 352 85 67

ST URSULA'S BERNE

The church is one of the nine Swiss chaplaincies that have a resident chaplain (minister) and together form the Archdeaconry of Switzerland. This is part of the Anglican Diocese of Europe which stretches from the Canary Islands to Ankara, from Moscow to Morocco.

The church was built in 1906 on a site that had been given to the community by the British-Berne Land Co. An American lady, Mrs Castleman from St Louis, provided the bulk of the money for the building as a thank offering for the near miraculous recovery of her adopted daughter, who was treated at the clinic of the famous Professor Kocher.

The hall and the house were added in 1959. An English Missionary Society, the USPG, helped to support the church from its earliest days. Since 1977, however, the chaplaincy has been fully self-supporting, relying solely on its members and wellwishers for its financial support.

St Ursula's has a long tradition of ministry to all English-speaking people in the Canton of Berne and beyond. It also provides a home for Christians from many different denominations and cultural backgrounds. Regular worshippers are encouraged to add their names to the Electoral Roll and so play a full part in the life of the church. Details from the Churchwardens or any member of the Church Council.

See Calendar inside for details of this month's services

St Ursula's Church website: www.stursula.ch



St Ursula's Church Magazine

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Dear Reader,

This is the last edition of St Ursula's magazine to be produced in this format.

As you know, Querida, who had been the editor of this magazine for the last 13½ years, stepped down from the post at the end of 2023. We have not been able to find anyone to take on this task, so council have reluctantly decided to discontinue the magazine.

Information about future events, including services, sales etc. is already available on the church's website (www.stursula.ch) and (to a limited extent)

on the weekly notice sheet which can be picked up from church or found on the website (www.stursula.ch/Office/upload/notices.pdf). As an ongoing process, council is continuing to look at ways of making this information easily accessible to all. We will inform you as soon as we can.

In addition, Helen will continue sending her weekly emails to those who have requested them. If you currently do not receive these emails, please contact Helen directly as only she knows who the recipients are.

Things that will be missing in future are reports of past events and informative articles from Helen, Hector and others. It is possible that these could be published on the website in future. It is also possible that they may be discontinued.

As we will no longer be producing the magazine in this way, please do **not** pay your subscription for 2024.

If you have any thoughts or comments, please speak to a member of council or email council@stursula.ch.

- Tricia Carrick, on behalf of the Church Council

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

This year's AGM will be held on Sunday 28 April in the church starting at 11:30. We hope you will be able to attend this important church meeting. You will be able to collect the agenda from the church hall from Sunday 17 March. If you would like an agenda to be emailed to you, please contact me.

The meeting should be finished by 13:30 at the latest. Please bring a sandwich if you think you will be hungry. Note that no child care is provided during the meeting – perhaps parents can arrange this amongst themselves.

At the AGM we will elect two church wardens and six council members. If you would like to be able to vote at these elections, nominate someone for election or stand yourself you need to be a member of the Electoral Roll. There is more information about the Electoral Roll on page 14 of this magazine. The nomination sheet will be available in the church hall at the start of April. Please follow the instructions carefully if you wish to nominate someone for election. If you would like to know more about what is involved in being a church warden or a church council member, please speak to one of those currently doing the task – list at the back of this magazine. If you have other questions please contact me or the chaplain.

- Tricia Carrick, council secretary

From the Chaplain

Dear Friends,

It has been a pleasure to baptize several babies and young children during my time as Chaplain at St Ursula's. I have also baptized several older children, teenagers and adults. Just a month ago, twelve-year-old Felix was baptized. During that service I reminded Felix and all of us that baptism is a beginning; the beginning of our journey of faith, following Jesus.

If we are to move forwards on this journey, we need to read the Bible in order to learn more about Jesus, talk to God in prayer, and receive nourishment for the journey through the Eucharist. Very importantly, we also need to travel with others. Our Christian journey is not a solitary one; we need to be a part of the Christian community, to learn with and from others and to give and receive encouragement and support.



This is one reason why we are hoping to start up House Groups again at St Ursula's so that we can learn and grow together. As I write this, I am preparing for the Open Forum after church this Sunday when I will outline a model for House Groups and listen to any questions. I know that not everyone will be able to make the discussion on Sunday so below is a copy of the short handout I will give out on that occasion.

What are House Groups?

House groups are small groups which meet together regularly in someone's home.

Why? (Purpose)

- Deepening faith and discipleship, through study and reflection together
- Strengthening fellowship, through sharing and prayer
- Encouraging mutual pastoral care and support
- To further the ministry and mission of the church

Where? (Place)

- Groups to be organized on a geographical basis
- Meeting in people's homes. (Possibly one zoom group).
- Once a quarter, a central meeting for all house groups in church, with feedback

When? (Time and frequency)

- Every week, with the awareness that not everyone will make it
- Some groups in the evening and some in the day time

Who? (Members and leaders)

- House groups are for all
- Mixed groups – we may be with people we don't know – that we might learn from people of other ages, cultures and backgrounds
- 'Core' group who attend regularly, and 'Care' group of people who are linked to a house group and prayed for
- Leaders to be chosen by the chaplain. Two leaders per group. To be trained and to meet regularly with the chaplain for support.

What? (Content of study)

- Different ideas: reflections on the readings/sermon from the Sunday with questions related to application in daily life; studying book of the Bible; themes; study courses.
- All groups to use the same material – helps keep unity.
- NB importance of feedback from groups on what works well and what is needed.

How? (Other practicalities)

- Format of sessions: to always include a time of Bible study, sharing and prayer, (perhaps 30 minutes for study/discussion and 30 minutes for sharing and prayer). Varieties of forms of prayer would be encouraged. A suggested outline for the meetings could be given out, but also flexibility.
- Safeguarding, boundaries and confidentiality: all leaders and hosts should do safeguarding training. Need to be clear ground rules re confidentiality.
- Open and outward looking: all groups should be open to new members and not 'closed' groups. Groups to be encouraged to have an outward focus – to do some community activity or support a charity, or do something together in church.
- Focus for unity: important that house groups contribute to the unity of the church rather than disunity!
- Review: groups should be reviewed regularly: how long have they been running, who are the leaders/members?

Next Steps

- Listen to questions raised today and in the coming weeks
- Send out a questionnaire asking whether people would be interested in joining a 'core' group (attending regularly) or as a member of a 'care' group. Ask questions re availability (day, time, and frequency)
- Depending on the results of the questionnaire, set up 2 or 3 'pilot' house groups in different geographical areas.
- Ask those groups to give feedback after a period of time and see if we can set up more groups

I hope that all of you will think and pray about this and let us know if you are interested in being a member of a house group. A short questionnaire is available in church and I will also be sending it out in my email messages. I encourage you to join in a group!

With love in Christ, Helen

(Ed: The questionnaire is also available on the website – you can find the link on the "News" page (www.stursula.ch/whats_on.html))

Monks and Public Libraries

The title of this article could just as easily been “Rappen and Rumba” or “Cents and Cinemas”. If we ask ourselves how monks and libraries go together, perhaps we think of the Stiftsbibliothek in St Gallen, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, one of the most important monuments of its kind in the



world, in existence well before the early eighth century. But another thing that they have in common, and which they share with the waltz, the ten-rappen coin and the cinema film, is that they are all part of “yesterday’s world”. They have all gone out of fashion.

Different places have different cultures, and we can all think of things that in times past were commonplace, but which seldom happen now. Many years ago, I remember staying with a family in France and feeling surprised when the whole family went off on a Monday afternoon to the town’s public baths for their hot showers. Some of these changes can be explained as “progress” – electric trains, jet aeroplanes, pocket telephones, or as “improvements”. If we can pay with a card or an app, why bother fiddling with loose coins or waiting for the shop assistant’s complaints at giving change for a hundred-franc note? Why pay a fortune and join a long queue to see the latest movie when we can stay at home in the warm and watch it later on Netflix (or six months later for nothing on public television)?

It is notoriously difficult to spot when change is due. Fortunes can be made – and lost – in the business world. This magazine could be an example – go to the National Library (where else?) and look at an issue from fifty years ago!

Going to church has also slipped out of fashion in Western Europe. Many sources provide statistics, but few of these are reliable, and they are all hard to interpret. What people say they do is not always what they really do, and perhaps more so with the reasons why they do it. If we hear that people were asked whether they believed in God and in Malta 94% said that they did, but in the Czech Republic only 16% said they did, does this help us with useful information?

It is easy to be put off by small things. You don’t like the music. The words do not make sense to you. You are bored by the sermon. You don’t understand what people are doing. There’s too much standing, or sitting, or listening. Your neighbour doesn’t talk to you. But these are truly small things. At a deeper level, our business in church is hope, joy, peace – and love. These will never slip out of fashion.

- *Hector Davie*

A Word for the Month – Redress

As I write, I am in Britain, where the news of the week has centred on a story that has been called ‘a scandal’, ‘the greatest miscarriage of justice in British history’. The media have built the story into a major ‘news’ item, although most of the events occurred several years ago, and have already given rise to a public inquiry which was set up in September 2020.



In brief, the UK Post Office introduced a new computerized system at the end of the 1990s to help the thousands of local post offices, small and large, with their accounting. At the end of each day, the system produced a report and a balance, which should have been the same as the amount of cash left in the safe. Often it was not the same, and if this happened, the postmaster (who was often a village shopkeeper) had to make good the difference. If this did not happen, she or he was accused of theft or fraud – or with false accounting. Some 3500 people were accused, 900 charged with criminal offences, and many of them sent to prison in the years between 1999 and 2015. They suffered bad health, family problems, bankruptcy – a few even committed suicide.

It was not until 2019 that a group of these people appealed and had their convictions quashed, and not until 2020 that the Post Office apologized and admitted that the computer system could have been at fault. (The issue has been in the news this week because a TV dramatization has highlighted the slowness of the appeals process – over 750 of the sufferers still have a criminal record.)

What can a Christian make of this? Great sympathy for the accused: we are reminded to stand beside all prisoners, and not only those wrongly punished, and most governments have laws to compensate people who are victims of injustice. But many people have suggested that the Post Office itself, or its management, or its investigators, or its computer suppliers, should be punished in return for what has happened.

The New Testament brought a new way of looking at our relationship with our neighbours, with its focus on God’s ‘dwelling among us’, God’s gift to us, the ‘grace and truth’ that came in the living and dying body of Jesus. No longer

would we instantly seek revenge – the earlier rule (“an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth...” (Exodus 21:24)) was replaced by Jesus’ command “But I say to you: Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also, and if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, give your coat as well, and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to the one who asks of you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.” (Matthew 5:39-42).

The old rule was itself an attempt at “justice” – vengeance had to be limited: something that is often forgotten even today. But the essence of revenge is force, vim, vigour. As Paul reminded the new Christian community in Rome, who were having difficulties in understanding the idea that God’s forgiveness did not have to be earned, but was free, it is not our job to punish anyone who has wronged us – this is God’s business. “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God.” (Romans 12:19)



Jesus makes clear that our first duty towards people who have wronged us is to forgive them. And Luke tells the story of Zacchaeus, the tax collector. The Roman system of taxation in their distant provinces was widely disliked – it involved “public servants” who paid the tax out of their own pockets in return for the right to demand a contribution from individual people – people like Joseph, Mary’s betrothed, who had to go to Bethlehem to be put on the list. This provided many opportunities for corruption. While Zacchaeus seems to have been more honest than most, he told Jesus “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.” (Luke 19:8)

Zacchaeus offers to redress the situation between himself and anyone he may have wronged. When we think of dressing, we think of clothes. But dressing means making something fit for purpose, setting it upright. Dressing a stone means chipping away the edges to make it the right shape, dressing a salad means arranging it in a way that is attractive to eat.

Do we not all need to redress any broken relationships between ourselves and our neighbours, and even more, between ourselves and God? If so, we can be sure that God has taken the first step, and in Christ, we can follow boldly along the Way.

- *Hector Davie*

Treasurer's Report – How 2023 turned out

Dear all

The final figures for 2023 are still being worked on. Currently we have a 27k deficit in the Church and a similar excess in the Charitable association. So overall it will be a break-even more or less, or a small deficit. However it means we cannot put anything in the building fund without reducing our other reserves. I sent out a thank you email to our pledgers at the end of the year. If you did not receive it, please check your spam folder, or the alternative reason is because I do not have your email address. If you would like to join my very irregular email list, please send a mail to treasurer@stursula.ch.

We did not have an official pledge Sunday in 2023. This is because we want to make it more of a focus all year round. Therefore if any of you would like more information about regular giving, please ask me, or send me an email. In 2024 we will need more funds, and so I encourage all to consider their giving at this time. If you can, please give to the Church. You can find more information also on our website under our Finance pages.

Our event income in 2023 was good, but less than in previous years. It is getting harder to get food supplies in at a reasonable price, and the British corner shop UK has just become bankrupt, so that is one less supplier. We also notice that some of the congregation generally do not support fundraisers, and we would really love to know why. What would you like to see at an event? What sort of event would attract you? Do let me know. If we were to do some smaller pop-up type events in 2024, would you support them, and what would you like to see? Clearly we will also target the wider community, but what attracts our own community will probably attract the wider non-Church-attending community. Soon it will be our Spring sale. I hope to see lots of you there. A lot of people work very hard for our events, so it is great if they are well attended and are what people want.

The AGM is coming up at the end of April, and as I am officially retiring from work in 2025, I think this will be my last year standing as your treasurer. I am therefore looking for someone to train up to take over in 2025. Could that be you?

Best wishes

Sue



Services and Readings for February and March 2024

Sunday 4 February – Second Sunday before Lent

10:00 Eucharist

Proverbs 8:1, 22-31

Colossians 1:15-20

John 1:1-14

Sunday 11 February – Sunday next before Lent (All Age)

10:00 All Age Eucharist

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Mark 9:2-9

Wednesday 14 February – Ash Wednesday

18:30 Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes

Isaiah 58:1-12

Psalms 51:1-18

2 Corinthians 5:20b – 6:10

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Sunday 18 February – First Sunday of Lent

10:00 Eucharist

Genesis 9:8-17

1 Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:9-15

Sunday 25 February – Second Sunday of Lent

10:00 Eucharist

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Romans 4:13-25

Mark 8:31-38

Sunday 3 March – Third Sunday of Lent

10:00 Eucharist

Exodus 20:1-7

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

John 2:13-22

Sunday 10 March – Mothering Sunday (All Age Service)

10:00 All Age Eucharist

Colossians 3:12-17

Luke 2:33-35

Sunday 17 March – Passion Sunday

10:00 Eucharist

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Hebrews 5:5-10

John 12:20-33

Sunday 24 March – Palm Sunday

10:00 Eucharist

Liturgy of the Palms: *Mark 11:1-11*

Philippians 2:5-11

Mark 15:1-39

Thursday 28 March – Maundy Thursday

18.30 Eucharist

Exodus 12:1-14

1 Corinthians 11: 23-26

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Gospel of the watch: *Matthew 26:30-75*

Friday 29 March – Good Friday

10:00 Family Service

14:00 Liturgy of the Cross

Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12

Hebrews 10:16-25

John 18:1 -19:42

Sunday 31 March – Easter Day

10:00 Eucharist

Acts 10:34-43

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Mark 16:1-8

Sunday 7 April – Second Sunday of Easter

10:00 Eucharist

Acts 4:32-35

1 John 1:1 - 2:2

John 20:19-31

For Your Diary - February and March 2024

February

Thursday 1 February	Thun Service
Sunday 4 February	MISSION SUNDAY
Saturday 10 February	Church Clean-up Day (9:00-13:00)
Sunday 11 February	All Age Eucharist
Monday 12 February	Church Council meeting
Tuesday 13 February	Shrove Tuesday - Pancakes 18:00
Wednesday 14 February	ASH WEDNESDAY - Eucharist 18:30
Thursday 15 February	Thun Service
Saturday 17 February	Men's Group (9:00 -12:00)

Shrove Tuesday = Pancakes

It is a tradition in the UK to eat pancakes on Shrove Tuesday – the day before Lent begins. You are all invited to drop in at the church hall from 18:00 on Tuesday 13 February and participate in this tradition. Pancakes and drinks will be provided. There will be savoury and sweet toppings.



March

Tuesday 5 March	Council Meeting
Thursday 7 March	Thun Service
Saturday 9 March	Spring Sale
Sunday 10 March	MOTHERING SUNDAY - All Age Eucharist
Tuesday 12 March	AED Training (19:00 – 20:00)
Thursday 21 March	Thun Service
Saturday 23 March	Men's Group (9:00 -12:00) Gardening Day
Sunday 24 March	PALM SUNDAY
Monday 25 March	Annunciation Day
Thursday 28 March	MAUNDY THURSDAY - 18:30 Eucharist followed by silent watch
Friday 29 March	GOOD FRIDAY - 10:00 Family Service 14:00 Liturgy of the Last Hour
Sunday 31 March	EASTER DAY - 10:00 Proclamation of the Resurrection and First Eucharist of Easter

Future Dates

Thursday 4 April	Thun Service
Tuesday 9 April	Church Council meeting
Sunday 14 April	All Age Eucharist
Thursday 18 April	Thun Service
Saturday 27 April	Men's Group (9:00-12:00)
Sunday 28 April	AGM 11:30
Tuesday 7 May	Council meeting
Thursday 9 May	ASCENSION DAY - 10:00 Eucharist
Sunday 12 May	All Age Eucharist
Sunday 19 May	PENTECOST - Bring & Share Lunch
Monday 20 May	Whit Monday
Sunday 26 May	TRINITY SUNDAY
Saturday 1 June	Summer Fête
Saturday 7 September	Autumn Sale
Friday 22 & Saturday 23 November	Christmas Bazaar

Church clean-up day – 10 February 2024



Come along and help us clear out and clean up our attics and basements and everything in-between. There is something for everyone. We will start at 9:00 and finish by 13:00.

Snacks will be provided.

If you have any special talents you would like to offer, or you see something you would particularly like to work on, please let Sue know, otherwise we will allocate you a task when you arrive.

PS: if you would like to help, but really aren't up to cleaning; then please pray for a fun and successful day. That is a big help 😊

- Sue Higson



Spring Sale
9 March

Summer Fête
1 June

Autumn Sale
7 September

Christmas
Bazaar
22&23
November



Spring is in the air

Spring will be here soon; the days will be longer and hopefully warmer. I am always very excited to see the first flowers blooming and enjoy nature's colourful joy.

Our first sale of the year will take place on Saturday 9 March so please **Save the Date!**

Our wonderful volunteers are already coming up with creative ideas and if everything goes according to plan, we will be offering delicious home-baked goods and a great selection of refreshments.

You will also be able to browse the stalls with our second-hand books and choose from a wide variety of gift items. So whether you're looking to re-stock your shelves or need a unique card (Mothering Sunday is coming soon) we are here!

As always, a big THANK YOU to our volunteers for their time, support and precious help. Entering this wonderful season with all of you by our side is a blessing.

Would you like to help?

If you would like to be part of our amazing team, please contact the Church Office for further details. We always welcome helping hands and fresh ideas.

Updates

For more updates and additional information, please stay tuned to St Ursula's website www.stursula.ch and Facebook page. Moreover, Helen with her weekly emails will keep you updated with any future events taking place at St Ursula's.

Sending you warm wishes for a lovely sunny Spring.

- Church Office

Electoral Roll Revision

Each year our Electoral Roll is revised just before the Annual General Meeting (AGM) – you will find more information about the AGM elsewhere in this magazine. At the AGM we elect representatives to the church council and also the churchwardens. In order to vote at these elections, you must be on the Electoral Roll. You must also be on the Electoral Roll if you would like to nominate someone for election.

If you would like to stand for election yourself you must have been on the Electoral Roll for at least the preceding six (6) months. A list of such people will be displayed on the notice board from Sunday 7 April.

The current list of members of the Electoral Roll will be displayed in the church hall from the middle of February. However, if you are not able to go to the church hall and want to know whether your name is on the list, you can email me (pcarrick@sprintgill.org) and I will check.

If you are not already on the Electoral Roll, may I encourage you to consider joining – it costs nothing and gives you the chance of being more involved in the life of our church. You can find an application form in the church hall and on our website, or you can contact the church office to get one sent to you. Please fill in this form and return it to me. The closing date for the receipt of applications is Sunday 31 March. If you have questions about the Electoral Roll or are unsure whether to join please speak to me or to a member of council.

- *Electoral Roll Officer (Tricia Carrick)*

AED Training



You have surely noticed a green box on the wall outside the hall door. If you are observant, you will have seen them all over the place in Berne and elsewhere. It is called an Automated External Defibrillator or AED for short. We all know what they are for – to help in the case of a sudden life-threatening cardiac arrest (not the same as a heart attack).

But would you know how to use one in an emergency?

Although defibrillators are easy to use, research has shown that the response is better and faster from people who have been trained. The company we bought ours from offers a free, short (about one hour) training course (in German). This will take place on Tuesday 12 March, starting at 19:00. You are invited to come along and learn more.

If you need more information please contact the Church Office.

Junior Church News

Nativity Play

The traditional Nativity Play at St Ursula's took place on 17 December. Narrating, acting and listening to, the birth of Jesus is indeed a joyful, educational and meaningful celebration for our Christian congregation and beyond. The children chose the characters they wanted to impersonate and rehearsed under Tricia's orchestrational talents. The cast was complete, Christmas Carols resonated in a full church, the story of Bethlehem touched our hearts, the light of God amidst darkness and sorrows strengthened our faith, the Spirit of Christmas was amongst us, thanks to the children.



Looking ahead in 2024

The Junior Church started the New Year by reflecting on the meaning of the Three Wise Men and their gifts to the young Messiah. The children were also focusing on the light of God as inspirational and orientational guidance.

Singing hymns, reading the Bible, looking at Christian art, talking together about what it means to be a young Christian today and many more entertaining activities are planned for the upcoming Christian celebrations in the liturgical calendar of 2024.

Thank you for your support and prayers.

- Isabelle Wienand

Nativity Play

The traditional Nativity Play took place on 17 December 2023. It was the usual re-telling of the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. This year 12 children took part, with five having small speaking parts, which they all learned very well with the help of parents and JC teachers. They all were stars – Mary, Joseph, the Angel Gabriel, the Emperor and the Innkeeper. In addition, we had a small number of shepherds and angels who significantly helped in telling the story.

Another star of the play was the fire, around which the shepherds sat and warmed their hands. You can see it in this photo, but it is not a really clear picture. However, those who could see it thought it was amazing – with the flickering flames.



Thanks go to everyone who took part. We want to thank especially Joanna, who was not only our narrator but also helped some of the children learn their parts. In addition, she joined in with setting everything up and with the clearing up. And we had two excellent readers – Manu and Christopher.

Despite having written the script and guided all the preparation, Helen was unfortunately unwell on the day and could not attend, so David led the service. Helen appreciated seeing the photos and also hearing the reports of the event afterwards.

Finally, thanks must go to all the adults who made this actually happen – far too many to mention here.

- *Tricia Carrick*

Christingles

On the afternoon of Christmas Eve, around eight families gathered for the traditional “Crib and Christingle” service. There were 13 children and 16 adults present who appreciated this short service reminding us of the birth of Jesus and the symbolism of the Christingle.

The children enjoyed looking into the crib and placing the “baby Jesus” into the manger.



The second part of the service was all about the Christingle. Everyone received a pre-made Christingle and Archana explained the symbolism.

A Christingle consists of:



- An orange, representing the world
- A candle pushed into the centre of the orange, then lit. It represents Jesus as the “Light of the World”
- A red ribbon wrapped around the orange, representing the blood of Christ
- Dried fruits skewered on cocktail sticks pushed into the orange, representing the fruits of the earth and the four seasons.

The history of the Christingle can be traced back to the Moravian Bishop Johannes de Watteville, who started the tradition in Germany in 1747 as “an attempt to get children to think about Jesus”. (*from Wikipedia*).

- *Tricia Carrick*

Christmas Bazaar 2023

St Ursula's Christmas Bazaars have always been perfect for getting you into the festive mood.

This year too, we had it all: delicious Christmas cakes, crumpets and home-baked goods, our beautiful Christmas wreaths and decorations, patchwork and other fine Christmas gifts, mulled wine and mince pies, second-hand books, children's activities, tombola and a raffle. We were also happy to welcome some old and new stalls from independent sellers whom we hope to see again in the future. Our restaurant was open on both days and our visitors could enjoy our mouth-watering dishes on offer.

Organising the Christmas Bazaar has never been an easy task. Many things behind the scenes may even go unnoticed. For example, we need to move furniture around a lot, even empty the church of all the chairs in order to set up the stalls. And for this we need many helping hands.

With the much-appreciated effort from all our volunteers, their passion, patience and dedication we managed to overcome all difficulties once again in order to come together and spread Christmas joy all around us.

All our volunteers worked really hard and dedicated lots of hours of their personal time. So, a big THANK YOU to all of them for their help, their support and generosity.

I hope that everyone who helped with and attended the bazaar had a great time and that we were able to bring the Christmas spirit into everyone's homes.

Our first Book and Food Sale of 2024 will be on **Saturday 9 March** from 10:00 – 14:00. Please use the flyer with this magazine to advertise this event.

- Church Office





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Lent is just around the corner (Ash Wednesday is on 14 February this year), and for many churchgoers, Lent is a season of slow and dirge-like hymns, with slow and plodding tunes in mournful minor keys.

Jesus' painful journey to the Cross makes it hard to think of Lent as a season of rejoicing, even if we recall Martin Luther's apocryphal remark "*Remissio peccatorum soll dich fröhlich machen*" – forgiveness of sins should make you rejoice. Yet several of our best hymns were written to remember this painful journey, and this one on our back cover has stood the test of over 300 years, and is still fresh and perfectly understandable.

It was written by Isaac Watts, the very gifted son of an active nonconformist from Southampton. This was the end of the 17th century, and Britain was recovering from the extreme Protestant views of Oliver Cromwell. His father had been to prison twice for sharing these views, and Isaac junior was brought up as a Free Church member – a Congregationalist. He received a classical education, but was not allowed to go to Oxford or Cambridge, which were only open to members of the Church of England. Instead, he studied in Stoke Newington, now a suburb of London, and later became pastor of a large independent chapel there, Mark Lane, and helped to train preachers.

He wrote books on geography, astronomy, grammar and philosophy, but showed a particular talent for writing verse. This hymn is one of his best known (others are *Our God Our Help in Ages Past*, *Jesus shall reign* and *Joy to the World*). He published it in 1707, although he almost certainly wrote it some ten years earlier.

As a hymn it is very good. Each line follows the same metrical pattern. Everything rhymes perfectly, with one exception (God/blood – and even this probably rhymed in the local dialect Watts spoke). The language is simple and direct, although the words "survey" and "wondrous" in the first line grab our attention – but they are meant to do this. The repeated words at the start of verse 3 ("his head, his hands, his feet") are balanced by "my soul, my life, my all" in the last line of the hymn.

We seldom sing the fourth verse. Indeed, the whole hymn is a bit too vivid for our modern tastes, especially when we realize that Watts was a Protestant and a Non-conformist, at a time when the established church was leaning heavily in the direction of Roman Catholicism. The use of images and ceremony in worship was politically a hot issue, and here was a Protestant Congregationalist gazing at a crucifix. At a time of religious and political mistrust, Watts rises above all these divisions, and concentrates on the essential message, the one which St Paul kept stressing. As Paul wrote to the Galatians (3:14) "May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world."

- *Hector Davie*

¹ When I survey the wondrous Cross
on which the Prince of Glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

² Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the cross of Christ my God;
all the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

³ See from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingling down;
did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

⁴ His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er his body on the tree;
Then I am dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.

⁵ Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were an offering far too small;
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

Isaac Watts (1674-1728)

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