

# intouch

NEWSLETTER

The Kingswood Benefice of Clothall, Rushden, Sandon, Wallington, and Weston



KINGS  
WOOD  
BENEFICE

## Welcome to In Touch 2021!

I am sorry there has been a gap in output, but Christmas and the pandemic have kept me busy elsewhere. Still, back on track now and looking forward to sharing good news with and from you all. So, I will kick off! We were delighted that the Bishop of St Albans has granted our request to rename the benefice – so we are no longer the Benefice of Clothall, Rushden, Sandon, Wallington and Weston. Now we are The Kingswood Benefice – so much easier to say over the phone and we have our lovely logo completed thanks to Sandra Sargusingh and her clever graphics skills. We will gradually replace letter heading etc so watch out for the new logo. The news was announced at the zoom service on 3rd January by the Archdeacon of Hertford and Peter Taylor did a very natty short video clip which you can see on the benefice website <https://www.facebook.com/The-Kingswood-Benefice>. So, what is new with you? Are there any pictures of snow or early signs of spring that you can send us as In Touch works so much better when we share with each other; so, let's lift each other's spirits in these dark days. **With blessings to you all Fiona**

### HOLY DAYS

## It is all in the name!!

**1st Jan: Have you ever wondered where the name 'Jesus' comes from?**

*The name Jesus is a transliteration of a name that occurs in several languages. It is of Hebrew origin, 'Yehosua', or Joshua. There is also the Hebrew-Aramaic form, 'Yesua'. In Greek, it became 'Ἰησοῦς' (Iēsoûs), and in Latin it became 'Iesus'.*

*The meaning of the name is 'Yahweh delivers' or 'Yahweh rescues', or 'Yahweh is salvation'. No wonder the angel Gabriel in Luke (1:26-33) told Mary to name her baby Jesus: "because He will save His people from their sins."*

### ***A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus***

*Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy.  
Sustain and support the anxious,  
be with those who care for the sick,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may find comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us from  
your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
**Amen.***

If you would like to donate to any of our churches in the current crisis - details are below. We would be very grateful in your help to keep our churches going.

**Thank you.**

#### PCC OF RUSHDEN

LLOYDS BANK: 30-94-30 A/C 01845350

#### SANDON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

BARCLAYS BANK: 20-73-26 A/C 53610802

#### PCC ST MARYS CHURCH WALLINGTON

LLOYDS BANK: 30-94-30 A/C 01845466

#### WESTON PCC

BARCLAYS BANK: 20-41-12 A/C 40946850

#### PCC OF CLOTHALL

LLOYDS BANK: 30-94-30 A/C 01845245

## THE FOURTH GIFT

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*The fourth gift they had was  
Wisdom,  
The one they needed for themselves  
And the world.  
Wisdom  
To leave the familiar  
In search of a new security  
More precious than the gifts they gave.  
Wisdom  
To discover, in the starlit child,  
A significance above  
Gold, frankincense and myrrh.  
Wisdom  
And the eyes of faith  
To receive God's showing  
Of His Son.  
The gifts we read about  
Were three,  
But the fourth gift they had was  
Wisdom.  
By Daphne Kitching*



## Plants in your front garden

What's in your front garden? If it is sparse, why not consider adding some plants this year? Apparently, the presence of greenery can lower your stress levels as much as two months of mindfulness sessions. Plants can also help you to feel happier.

A recent trial study by the Royal Horticultural Society found that people who introduced ornamental plants such as juniper, azalea, clematis, lavender, daffodil bulbs and petunias had a significant lowering of the stress hormone, cortisol, and many reported that they felt 'happier'.



## Giorgione: *The Adoration of the Shepherds* (1505-10)



Giorgio Barbarelli, the painter Giorgione, is an elusive character. That he worked in Venice is certain, that he numbered the young Titian among his pupils is probable, but he neither signed nor dated his paintings and died of plague around 1510 in his early thirties. Little else is known about him. Paintings left in his studio at his death were completed by pupils, and Titian may have had a large hand in finishing this one.

Two centuries earlier painting was mostly about the drawing of accurate lines with colour added as an ornament. Gradually more light and shade appeared in painting, but now came the discovery that figures could be shaped by colour, and Giorgione produced all his effects with it, even if painstakingly exact portrayal remained the root of his craft. His biography in Vasari's 'Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects' tells how Giorgione argued with sculptors who claimed their art superior because it showed all the aspects of the human figure when walked around while painters could show only one side of a figure. Giorgione asserted that a painted scene could show 'all the various aspects that a man can present in many gestures' so that the viewer could take them in at a single glance.

So Giorgione's figures possess a natural human reality perhaps more strikingly

present to us than in painters working before him. The two shepherds, hats removed, are the heart of this picture. One kneels while the other moves cautiously forward as if fearing to wake the small and vulnerable child kept from lying on the bare earth only by the fabric of his mother's rich blue robe. All eyes are on the Christ child, all that is except Joseph, seated within the cave-like stable and lost in thought as he contemplates his hands. Mary and one of the shepherds hold palms and fingers flat together in the familiar attitude of prayer, but Joseph is yet to reach that point. His fingertips touch, but he has not brought his hands together. The small woven fence which separates him from his virgin wife emphasises his detachment from the scene.

But human figures and animals occupy less than one-third of Giorgione's painting. He is thought of as the painter who originated the 'landscape of mood', conjuring settings whose atmosphere permeated all and spoke a painting's meaning as clearly as the people shown in it. God the Father has achieved his aim, seen his Son safely born into the world. A rumour of angels hovers above, but tree and rock, sea and city breathe an air of calm glory, a rest after labour and a new world begun.

## Domenico Ghirlandaio: *Adoration of the Magi* (1488)

Luke's story of the birth of Jesus with its overcrowded inn, its angels and shepherds, prompts in us warm thoughts of care and nurture pushed about as far as they can go by sweet carols like 'Away in a Manger'. The remainder of our vision of Christmas we take from Matthew's mysterious tale of the visit of wise men travelling westward, paying homage and offering kingly gifts. But if we go no further we do not see how dark a tale Matthew really tells. We cannot avoid Herod's fearful brooding, but would prefer not to spoil Christmas with its savage outworking, the merciless fury of his child massacre. Bracketing this atrocity is Joseph's panicked flight from Israel with his family and their barely less terrified return.

At first sight Domenico Ghirlandaio's sumptuous tableau conforms neatly to our glamorous notions about exotic kings and their gifts. The regally dressed Magi, one youthful, one more mature and another of old age, approach in order of seniority. Mary commands the scene with placid self-assurance and her right hand, raised as if to bless, mirrors that of her son. Angels flutter in celestial symmetry, inviting us to join them in singing 'Gloria in Excelsis Deo' while rays of divine sunshine fall from heaven. High on the right Ghirlandaio's artistic flashback reminds us of the first telling of the Saviour's birth to shepherds. It is the perfect day.

But this alluring charm veils an appalling abomination. To the left stands Rome, the symbolic eternal city, its Colosseum and other landmarks clearly visible. But between the city wall and the heads of the red-smocked artist and his black clad patron horror unfolds on green grass leading to the shoreline. Mothers and their children are being attacked with brutal ferocity. Swords slash, women fall, and swaddled babies lie helpless on the ground. A terrified toddler tries to run but is trapped by the sea. Herod's annihilation is under way. Matthew's Christmas story is both majesty and murder, and Ghirlandaio's painting is all the more striking because it faces the tale without flinching.

Yet now the worst shock. Two white-robed children are ushered into the presence of Christ by two Johns, Baptist and Evangelist. Only when we move closer to take our place in the scene do we see that both children are wounded and bleeding, innocent victims whose significance can be as contemporary for us as we care to make it. Commissioned as an altarpiece for an orphanage Ghirlandaio's masterpiece reveals both loving humanity with its worshipful care for those newly born into it, and the insensate barbarity of its opposite, into which it seems, human beings are also born.

