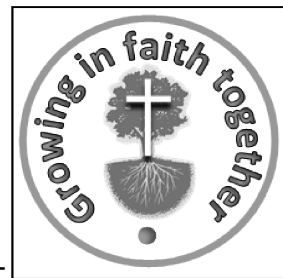


Unity

The Newsletter of Ealing Green Church

Ealing Green Church, The Green, Ealing, London W5 5QT



DECEMBER 2025

Ealing Green Church (Methodist & United Reformed)

Minister: the Rev Susan Male
07852497070 (*note new number*)
revsuemale@gmail.com (*note new email address*)

Church Office: office@egchurch.org.uk /
020 8810 0136

Open Tuesday – Friday 10am ~ 5pm

Website: www.ealinggreenchurch.com

Contributions to Unity: unitymagazine@hotmail.com

Superintendent	Rev Stephen Day	
Church Secretary	Position Vacant	
Church Secretariat	Position Vacant	
Choir Leader	Fleur Hatherall	020 8248 6774
Organist	Fleur Hatherall	020 8248 6774
Communion Steward	Nora Masih	
Unity Magazine	Lee Horwich	020 8567 2851
Unity Distributor		
Ecumenical Officer	Position Vacant	
Bible Reading Rota	Church Office	020 8810 0136

~ Groups ~

Monday Fellowship: 2nd & 4th Mondays monthly at 1.45pm

Choir Practice: before and after the service each Sunday

Full details can be found in the weekly notice sheet

~ You are welcome to come to any meeting ~

December 2025

Welcome to the December issue of the Unity newsletter.

This issue's contents are listed below. Thank-you all for your contributions.

Closing date for contributions for the January 2026 (yes, already) issue is December 18th.

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Front page: About right for the time of year?

If you have any pictures relevant to the time of year or some other event, please let me have them. Ideally a .jpg file.

Thanks, Lee

<p>"At Christmas, tea is compulsory. Relatives are optional." <i>Robert Godden</i></p>
--

Dear Friends

I cannot believe it is nearly December! Lee is asking for something for Unity, and I am slowly accepting that Christmas is going to have to be on my mind soon!

I am in fact just back from a pilgrimage to Rome with Ealing Abbey – so spiritually renewed within the busy schedule!

By the time you read this it will already be Advent. I promise not to let it go unnoticed. Can you do the same? In fact, by the time you read this we will have celebrated the beginning of Advent together.

Advent used to be seen in the Christian Calendar as a “Little Lent”. Like Lent it is meant to be a time when we pause to notice – to notice what Advent and Christmas are really about! You already knew that I know, but do you leave time to do it? Can you join me in being determined to fit prayer into your busy Advent schedule? Can you stop now and make a plan to meet with God regularly and spend time with him in Advent? You set your own goal ... and try to stick to it.

- **What are we meant to be thinking about?**
whether or not we would be ready if Jesus returned to us tomorrow?
- **What difference it made**
– and makes – for God to come into the world as a human – as a baby?
- **What our own response to that is?**
Peace, joy, love, hope?
- **Where do we find them?**
- **Where do we want to pray for them?**
The Prophets, John the Baptist, The people, Mary?
What part did each play?
Which do we most closely emulate?

What makes this Christmas different to last Christmas for you?

Like Mary, try to spend some time pondering what Christmas means to you and to the world.

Enjoy December ... and take it slowly

Sue



Letters, Emails and Texts.

From Gill Hatherall Pastoral Carol Singing

For the last few years a number of us have met together in mid December to go and sing Carols outside the homes of some of our housebound Church Family. We have enjoyed ourselves and the singing was appreciated by those we visited.

This year we are planning to do it again on Monday 15th December. We will meet at Church at 10 25am ready to leave at 10 30am. We will finish within 2 hours.

We would be delighted if more of our Church Family would join us to spread some Christmas joy....the more the merrier! If you are interested but have any queries, please contact Fleur or me.

See you there!

Gill Hatherall

From Liz Burrell, Christian Aid Invitation to hear Bishop Sarah

I would like to warmly invite you to a service of Challenge and Hope on Sunday 7th December at St Stephen's Church Ealing at 3.30pm where the Chair of Christian Aid, the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE, Bishop of London will be speaking.

We would love you and members of your church to join us to hear Bishop Sarah share how the unstoppable power of hope continues to inspire and challenge us to unite in the fight against poverty and injustice.

Refreshments will be served after the service and if you have any questions please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Liz Burrell
Church Engagement and Fundraising Officer – North London

News of the Church Family

It was lovely to see **Barbara Hawkins** at the Macmillan coffee morning and also at the Tuesday coffee morning on her birthday last month. We continue to pray for her as she is struggling with a number of health issues which frustratingly prevent her from venturing out independently. She really appreciates our support and sends her love to all at Ealing Green.

Glynis Forbes is recovering very well following knee replacement surgery but is currently having disturbed nights due to pain. We pray that she will soon get a good night's sleep!

We give thanks that at a recent visit to the hospital, **Jean Rose** was prescribed new medication and an increased dose of pain patches. These are being more effective in controlling her pain so she is feeling much happier.

Pete Matia has had two short stays in hospital in the last few weeks. We pray that he will soon recover now that he is back at home.

We pray for **Ela Trail** who has been struggling on a number of occasions in the last few weeks as she has felt very unwell.

We have been pleased to welcome **Sidney, Amanda's** husband, once again as he is over from Hong Kong to help Amanda move into their new home. We pray they will settle quickly and happily.

Nora Masih has been feeling unwell for the last few weeks. We pray she will soon feel better.

Unfortunately the usual author of this part of the newsletter, **Gill Hatherall** has been unwell for the last 10 days with a 'chest infection verging on pneumonia'. She is hoping to avoid being hospitalised.

We also pray for **Margaret** and **John Axbey** as Margaret has been in hospital for the past week and she usually looks after John. So far he is managing on his own

We pray for all those mentioned above and for anyone else in our Church Family who may be struggling at the moment for any reason. We pray that they will be aware of God's presence with them and receive His comfort and strength for the days ahead.

We wish all of our Church Family and all the readers of Unity a Happy Christmas and a peaceful and healthy 2026.

Gill Hatherall

Unity

I generally start this piece looking at the weather, but of late, with temperatures well above normal followed by days of it being well below normal, the word 'normal' has lost some of its meaning so I'm going to steer well clear.

Our new Home Secretary, Shabana Mahmood, recently set out a new policy designed to 'solve' the immigration problem. It's debatable whether we, as a country, have an immigration problem. Certainly it is a right wing and right wing press saw that they believe is worth votes in some parts of the country where immigration is more of a bogey than a practical problem.

Ealing Green is a fairly diverse church. We welcome all comers and are blessed with membership from friends from all over the world and can probably vouch for the benefits of immigration in giving us a broader perspective than some other groups.

At any rate The Methodist, URC and other churches have issued a response that you can read on page 15 in this issue.

Apart from the church, I can personally vouch for the benefits of players from other countries in the continuing presence of Brentford in the Premier League (and I hope that, by that statement, I haven't jinxed the rest of the season)!

Helen has been arboreally active of late. You can read about her involvement with the fruit of a rare, ancient and onetime exotic tree that can be found in our part of the country.

I would also like to check to see if there are any of you reading this, or known to you, who would be available to help out at the night shelter that we will be running from 8th January. Actually we would like to hear from you if you have any suggestions – especially if you would like to volunteer to help on the overnight shifts.

Finally, December is, surprise, surprise, when Christmas happens, so, leaving the commercial aspects of this aside, it is a time for celebration and a time for the family, so I would like to wish everyone who reads this, all the best for the holiday period. It is a time to reflect on the blessings we have and to consider how we can help those who need it.

God bless you

Church Notices

- Bible Study will next meet in the PARLOUR on Monday 1st December at 11am. All are very welcome.
- We are warmly invited to a service of Challenge and Hope on Sunday 7th December at St Stephen's Church Ealing at 3.30pm, where the Chair of Christian Aid, the **Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE, Bishop of London** will be speaking. St Stephen's would love for Ealing Green Church to join us to hear Bishop Sarah share how the unstoppable power of hope continues to inspire and challenge us to unite in the fight against poverty and injustice. Refreshments will be served after the service, and all are most welcome. Please see the poster on page 9 for more details.
- **Ealing Churches' Winter Night Shelter at Greenford:**
Greenford Methodist Church will be hosting the Ealing Churches' Winter Night Shelter on the following Wednesday nights: 26th November, 3rd December, 10th December, 17th December. They are struggling to identify volunteers to stay overnight and cover the Thursday morning shift, so can you, or do you know anyone who could help. Details of what is asked of volunteers on these shifts are:
Night shift (10 pm – 6 am): Be available in case guests need any assistance during the night.
They need at least one female volunteer overnight. Morning shift (5.45 – 9 am), Set up for breakfast. Engage with guests as they wake up. Dismantle beds and pack away bedding, with support from guests.
If anyone is willing to volunteer for any of these shifts, please contact **Rev Steve Day** at revstephenday@ealingtrinity.org.uk.
- **Iris Axon Concert Series:** The next concert in the series will be at Acton Hill Church on Sunday December 7th at 4pm, with pianist Ikuko Inoguchi performing works by Beethoven, Debussy, Liszt and Schumann, among others. Programmes at the door: adults £10, concessions and children £5.
<https://www.classicalconcerts-acton.com/>



Christmas Services:

- Carol Service: Sunday 21st December at 6pm, there will not be a morning service that day
- Christmas Eve: Carols on the Church Steps at 11am, followed by Holy Communion for Christmas Eve at Kingsdown Methodist Church at 6pm
- Christmas Day family service at 11am

Dates for your Diaries

- Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter will be running again on Thursday nights/Friday mornings for the first six weeks of the year, from Thursday 8th January. Please speak to Jane or Lee Horwich if you would like to volunteer.
- The church office will be closed for the holidays at the end of the day on 23rd December, and will reopen on Thursday 8th January
- The **Annual Covenant Service** led by the URC Moderator will be held on Sunday 11th January
- Church Council will next meet on Tuesday 13th January
- Foundation Safeguarding Training at Ealing Green Church: Sunday 25th January at 3pm.
Church Meeting & AGM will be on Sunday 22nd March

"The lights on the Christmas tree were still on. Dave got dressed in their glow. He loved this. The secret quiet of Christmas Eve. All the little coloured lights. All the boxes and bags spilling across the living room.

It wasn't the presents that were important; it was the impulse behind them. The spirit they represented. The spirit of giving."

Stuart McLean, Christmas at the Vinyl Cafe

THE UNSTOPPABLE POWER OF HOPE



The Rt Revd & Rt
Hon Dame Sarah
Mullally DBE,
Bishop of London

A service of challenge and hope

Sunday 7 December 3.30pm, St Stephen's Ealing

For 80 years the gifts, actions and prayers of Christian Aid supporters have made a difference to individuals and families whose lives have been shattered by circumstances beyond their control.

Please join us for worship and a sermon from the Chair of Christian Aid, Bishop Sarah Mullally as we hear how the unstoppable power of hope continues to inspire and challenge us to unite in the fight against poverty and injustice.

St Stephen's Church, St Stephen's Road, Ealing, London, W13 8HB.



Find out more at
email: lburrell@christian-aid.org

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From the URC Thames North Synod Moderator

As Christians we are people of hope and expectation. During Advent we look forward to the coming of Christ and even though we know that he has already come, it is a time of reflecting on the world that Jesus was born into, circumstances which has many resonances with us today. The people longed for light to come into their dark world and to be rescued from oppression. It is one of the amazing truths of our faith which we celebrate at Christmas that God became incarnate in Jesus and lived amongst us. He came to bring about change but he faced resistance and today that resistance is as great as ever.

We believe that although Christ has come, we still await the coming of his kingdom in all its fullness as the world goes through birth pains (Mark 13:8). And in the meantime, we are called to carry on the incarnational work that Jesus began to be light, to be peace and also to bring joy to our world.

Prayer:

O God Most High, you love justice, hate oppression and promise both liberty and justice.

Anoint us by your Spirit, that we may bring good news to the downtrodden,

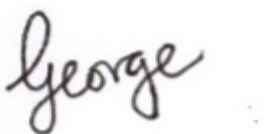
bind up the broken and set the captives free.

Help us proclaim your favour, that those who mourn will be comforted,

tyrants face justice, and our earth be renewed according to your will. Amen

Revd Andy Braunston Prayers from the Heart - The URC Prayer Handbook 2020

Wishing you a very happy Christmas and a blessed and peaceful New Year on behalf of the Synod Staff.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George".

Ealing Free Food Guide link

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1R5C-pZk3DhZ2BH3Chvtf6_ZgRitAPWnv/view?usp=drive_link

Hounslow Free Food Guide link

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NMJ9BN_fMaTz13eOi_tWrnRoKicwMpSj/view?usp=drive_link

Ealing Borough main changes

- Please check the Ealing Soup Kitchen (ESK) facebook or Instagram pages for all ESK seasonal events and any alterations to opening and closing times, over the Christmas and New Year bank holiday periods.

Please also remember these services are strictly for Adults over 18, NOT for families, children, infants or babies - please DO NOT bring under 18s to any service

- Felix Fresh Food Market at Green Man Lane. A2 Dominion Housing Association is working with The Felix Project distributing free surplus food now every Friday 1pm – 3pm. Go along with your own bag and collect some food. Outside Mahaba Café, Green Man Lane, Singapore Road, West Ealing. W13 OEP. For more information contact:
community.investment@a2dominion.co.uk

Please also advise any recipient of the guides to always check relevant social media, website pages or by calling the service for up to the moment information to avoid disappointment. This is always very important ahead of Christmas, New Year and any public holiday

To note - these services are always subject to change

"What do you think of Christmas?"

"I like it," she said. "I think we should have it every year."

Liz Flaherty, One More Summer

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

There has been a lot noise in the press over the last few months about the European Convention on Human Rights, not least by the right wing parties declaring that this is much of the cause of the Immigration 'crisis' and other problems affecting our country. As a consequence the Conservative and Reform parties have declared their intention to withdraw from the Convention. This will align us with Belarus and Russia.

Our churches, and roughly 300 other organisations have issued a joint statement on the 75th anniversary of the ECHR. It's an important statement/document, so I hope you will forgive me taking two pages to reproduce it

"The ECHR has increasingly come under fire from some leading politicians and media organisations... based on myths, over-simplifications, inaccuracies and scaremongering, particularly around migration."

Full statement:

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is fundamental to our democracy and enables ordinary people, of all backgrounds, to hold the state and public bodies accountable. These rights are needed more than ever in an unstable world, with growing political polarisation and authoritarianism, environmental instability and technological upheaval, to ensure the dignity of us all.

The ECHR was born out of the horrors of World War II, with the UK playing a leading role, setting minimum standards which governments across Europe agreed to abide by. This has improved respect for human rights across Europe (no signatory has used the death penalty for 25 years) and facilitated cross-border cooperation on issues of joint interest, like crime and human trafficking.

In the UK, the ECHR and the Human Rights Act (HRA) have protected the rights of ordinary people every day up and down the country; from victims of sexual violence to LGBT+ service personnel, public interest journalists to mental health patients and victims of serious injustice (from Hillsborough to Windrush).

The ECHR helped bring peace finally in Northern Ireland, through the Good Friday Agreement, and has improved the quality of public services. We reject the narrative that human rights are not in the

interests of the public – everyone in our society would be much worse off without these key protections.

In recent months, following a trend established over several years, the ECHR and HRA have increasingly come under fire from some leading politicians and media organisations. This has often been based on myths, over-simplifications, inaccuracies, and scaremongering, particularly around migration. Leaving the ECHR would not solve policy problems like the backlog of asylum cases, or people risking their lives through Channel crossings, but would bring about years of legal uncertainty, undermine our international position, and cause harm to the rights of both migrants in the UK and our wider communities.

We call on politicians to stop using our human rights as a scapegoat, level with the British public about the significant costs of ECHR withdrawal (such as the impact on the Good Friday Agreement) and end the escalating, irresponsible rhetoric targeting migrant and minoritised communities, which has devastating real-world consequences for people who are often already made vulnerable by wider social and economic marginalisation and stigmatisation.

We also call on the Government, whose party predecessors were architects of the HRA, to make the positive case for our human rights protections and how they empower ordinary people across the UK. It is an important part of our country's safety net, not an inconvenience which must be tolerated. Its rights are common-sense, pragmatic protections which improve services at home and increase international cooperation abroad.

Now is the time for a full-throated defence of the ECHR and HRA. No one has human rights, unless we all have human rights.

Signed by almost 300 organisations (294 actually) including:

The Methodist Church in Britain, Revd Richard Andrew, President of the Methodist Conference.

The United Reformed Church, Catriona Wheeler, Moderator of the General Assembly

The Methodist Church's appeal to:

Stand with Refugees

This is the URC and Methodist Church's response to the recent statement on policy from the government's Foreign Minister



At a time when we are witnessing increasing anti-migrant sentiment in some local communities and in politics, it is more important than ever to show that not only are refugees welcome here, but that our communities stand wholeheartedly together.

The 'Communities Together with Refugees' campaign is a cross-community moment which aims to demonstrate unignorable public support for refugees and people seeking asylum. Coordinated by the Together with Refugees coalition, in which the JPIT denominations are founding members, it will show that our communities stand together with refugees and against those who would seek to sow division and hate.

Focused on the first weekend of December (5th -7th December 2025), the idea is to have public displays of orange hearts – a symbol of compassion for people fleeing war and persecution – in thousands of different ways, from posters in community spaces, to giant Christmas decorations on town centre trees or orange heart-shaped biscuits given out at community events. All these gestures of care and solidarity will show that we stand together and in community with refugees.

Response to asylum reforms 21st November 2025:

Leaders of the Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches have issued the following statement in response to the government's announcements this week on proposed changes to its asylum and returns policy:

"Let us keep loving our neighbours.

Public debate around migration has increasingly been shaped by voices that trade in fear, resentment, and the scapegoating of those who already carry heavy burdens. We fear that the tone and content of the Home Secretary's recent announcement on asylum policy reform risks deepening these fractures rather than healing

them.

What threatens our social fabric is not the presence of vulnerable people seeking sanctuary, but rhetoric and policy that sets neighbour against neighbour and encourages suspicion instead of solidarity.

The solution is not to try and appease those who seek to divide us, but to build a fair, compassionate and well-managed asylum system, that reflects Britain's values and responsibilities.

Our Christian faith compels us to hold that such a system should prioritise human dignity, and treat people as any of us would wish to be treated.

That means it must be resourced to make decisions swiftly rather than leaving people in limbo for months or even years; allow those applying for asylum to work, support themselves and contribute to society; enable families to be together if possible; and encourage integration into local communities.

Yet many of the UK government's new proposals would have the opposite effect, and place more demands on vulnerable individuals and an overstretched system.

We welcome the promise of new safe regulated routes for people to be provided with sanctuary in the UK, sponsored by individuals and communities.

We have long believed this to be a far better approach to tackling dangerous channel crossings than ever more hostile policies. In this, we glimpse seeds of hope.

Our churches continue to be enriched by the involvement of those who have sought refuge in this country, and our experience is of people who wish to contribute positively to British society.

Our calling and commitment is to keep loving our neighbours, and our heartfelt longing is for our society's approach to immigration to embody those values."

Revd Richard Andrew, President of the Methodist Conference
Revd Lynn Green, General Secretary, Baptist Union of Great Britain
Catriona Wheeler, General Assembly Moderator, United Reformed Church

Mespilus germanica (Medlar to you and me)

I am privileged to belong to a happy little gang of dog-walkers who meet at the coffee shop in Pitshanger park. Recently one of our number discovered a long-forgotten medlar tree, which he has lovingly nursed back to full health, and he has also bought some more young trees, thus creating a little "medlar orchard". These little trees have now started to produce fruit, and lo and behold another one of our group has managed to turn these lovely little medlars into delicious jam, which will shortly be on sale at Ealing Green Church.

Medlars were originally grown 3,000 years ago in parts of Asia ,and were introduced to Britain during the Roman occupation. Medlars are rich in vitamin C and were popular to eat during medieval winters. The French thought they had magical powers against witchcraft and sorcery. We can't promise THAT result but we can promise that you will enjoy this delicious local medlar jam !



Helen



A little background:

The medlar tree (*Mespilus germanica*) boasts a rich history spanning over 3,000 years, during which it transitioned from an ancient staple to a forgotten curiosity.

Despite its Latin name, which suggests German origins, the tree is native to the Balkan

Peninsula, Crimea, the Caucasus, and Northern Iran.

Cultivation of the medlar began in the Caspian Sea region, spreading to Greece around 700 BC and then to Rome by 200 BC. The Romans introduced it to Western Europe, including Britain, where it became a crucial fruit during the Middle Ages. It was particularly valued as one of the few fruits available in winter, providing much-needed vitamin C when other fresh produce was scarce.

Charlemagne even mandated its planting on his imperial estates in the 8th century.

The fruit's unique requirement for "bletting" – a process of softening, traditionally after a frost, until it reaches a dark, mushy, and sweet consistency – made it a winter delicacy. Its unusual appearance led to many bawdy nicknames in medieval literature, with references appearing in works by Chaucer and Shakespeare, often used as a symbol of decay or bawdiness.

The medlar's popularity peaked in the 17th century but declined as other fruits (like tropical produce and new apple cultivars) became more widely available and affordable. By the 20th century, it had largely vanished from commercial cultivation in Britain and much of Europe, becoming a niche item for enthusiasts. Today, medlar trees are primarily grown for their ornamental value and as a historical relic, though they are still found in old gardens and sometimes naturalized in woodlands.

Despite all that, it makes an interesting jam – and Helen has some to sell if you fancy trying a modern version of a 3000 year old delicacy.

A Christmas Story Involving Deep Frying

I was looking for a Christmas story for this issue of the newsletter and came across this 'new' author. The subject seemed reflective of the time of year with an interesting slant on tradition, so, here is a Christmas story involving a deep fried turkey:

In a frosty picture book village in the Cotswolds, where chimneys puffed cheerful smoke and carollers hummed forgotten tunes, the Pickwick family lived. Their cottage, nestled behind a row of ancient yew trees, was the picture of British Christmas cheer, usually. This year, however, a culinary crisis was brewing.

Arthur Pickwick, the family patriarch, a man who believed the King's Speech was best watched with a proper cup of tea and a slice of dry roast turkey, had been swayed by his adventurous son, Leo. Leo, recently returned from studying in the American South, had arrived bearing a mysterious, heavy-duty metal apparatus and a glint in his eye.

"A deep-fried turkey, Dad!" Leo announced, placing the gleaming fryer on the kitchen table. "Crispier skin, juicier meat. It's

a game-changer, I tell you."

Arthur sniffed sceptically. "Frying a whole bird? In that contraption? It's not proper," he grumbled, eyeing the family's ancient, reliable Aga range with loyalty. "What about the stuffing? The bread sauce?"

"We'll have all that, Dad. The frying just makes the main event spectacular," Leo cajoled.

Christmas Eve was spent assembling the imposing contraption in the garden, safely away from the cottage. Neighbours peered over fences, whispering about the Pickwicks' latest eccentricity. Arthur, wrapped in his favourite woolly scarf, reluctantly supervised, clutching a fire extinguisher with a determined grip.

Christmas morning arrived crisp and bright. While the sprouts boiled and the puddings steamed on the Aga, Leo, looking slightly less confident in the chilly air, heated the immense pot of oil. The turkey, a hefty nineteen-pounder from the local butcher, was meticulously seasoned.

"Right," Leo said, checking the thermometer. "Steady now."

With Arthur on standby, fire extinguisher poised, Leo slowly and carefully lowered the massive bird into the bubbling oil. The resulting sizzle and aroma were immediate and intoxicating, a rich blend of spices and poultry that cut through the cold morning air.

For forty-five minutes, they stood guard, the smell drawing curious villagers closer to the fence line. Arthur began to relax, a faint smile touching his lips as the bird turned a magnificent, burnished gold.

When it emerged, glistening and perfect, even Arthur had to admit it looked divine. The turkey was presented at the dining table with a flourish, taking pride of place among the silver and crackers.



The first slice was a revelation. The skin crackled like perfectly roasted pork rind, the meat inside was astonishingly moist and flavourful. Silence fell over the table, broken only by enthusiastic chewing.

"Well," Arthur finally declared, helping himself to a second, generous slice. "Perhaps... perhaps the Americans are onto something after all."



The deep-fried turkey was a resounding success, a new, albeit slightly unconventional, tradition born in the heart of the Cotswolds. It was a Christmas where tradition met innovation, and where the Pickwicks discovered that sometimes, the best festive magic comes in an unexpected, crispy package. Al

Last chance

Here is a brief plug for the Ealing Charity Christmas shop. You will find it in Christ Church. It's open, 10:00 to 16:00 until Thursday the 18th of December.



Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter

Just a word in case any of you know anyone willing to help for a week or two please can you let us know.

Thanks Jane and Lee



"In the old days, it was not called the Holiday Season; the Christians called it 'Christmas' and went to church; the Jews called it 'Hanukkah' and went to synagogue; the atheists went to parties and drank. People passing each other on the street would say 'Merry Christmas!' or 'Happy Hanukkah!' or (to the atheists) 'Look out for the wall!'"

Dave Barry

Collection Point

The Torch Trust

Torch Trust is an ecumenical Christian ministry that focuses on the spiritual support and encouragement of blind and partially sighted people. For over

60 years we have been providing accessible resources and a variety of ways to connect and support people living with sight loss.



Purpose Statement

Torch Trust exists to enable blind and partially sighted people to encounter Jesus, grow in their Christian faith and thrive in Christian community.

Christian

Torch is boldly Christian and our particular calling is to stimulate and nurture blind and partially sighted people's Christian faith journeys. This means we have a focus on both sensitive outreach to those who do not yet identify as Christian, and supporting the discipleship journey of those who do.

Inclusive

It also means that we seek to be inclusive, looking for ways to engage all blind and partially sighted people and not just those who we have regular contact with.

Personal

We recognise the importance of a personal approach that deeply values and nurtures relationships.



Our Beginnings

In 1958, Ron and Stella Heath were brought into touch with some visually impaired young people from a training centre near to where they lived in Reigate, Surrey. They opened their home and their hearts to these young people who were keen to explore the Christian faith. They began looking for Braille reading material to help these young people grow in their faith. That's when they came across Miss Ada Trench, an 83-year-old lady living in Cumbria who produced a Christian Braille magazine called 'Torch'. They ordered

six copies for the young people but were soon contacted by Miss Trench asking if they would take over editing it.

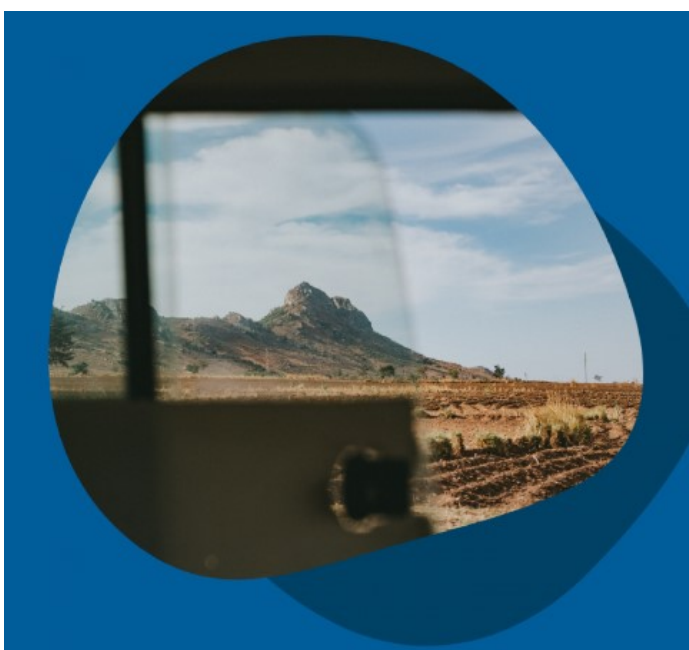
Through correspondence from people all over the world sharing how vital this little magazine was to them, the Heath's came to realise the scale of the need for Christian resources for the blind not just locally but internationally. The Torch Trust was founded in 1959 and began developing a growing selection of Braille Christian literature alongside continuing to support more and more blind people.

As the ministry grew, so did the need for space for machines and for the many volunteers who caught the vision. Torch moved several times, not only adding space but expanding the ministry into new areas such as providing holidays and a residential community. But, whilst the ministry of Torch has changed over the years in response to God's call, the needs of blind and partially sighted people and the changing societal context, the core mission has stayed the same. Torch remains committed to reaching out with God's love to people losing their sight, to providing resources and fellowship to support visually impaired Christians in their discipleship, and to help the church and society recognise their gifts and include them.

We continue to produce 'The Torch' twice a year and send it out to encourage over 4,500 people in 80 countries. Over the years, Torch has become involved in work with blind and partially sighted people in several countries including Spain, Romania and Malawi. We have also sought at times to convene, encourage and equip Christian sight loss charities in many countries and are always open to exploring new relationships.

Torch Malawi

Torch's work in Africa is sited in the Central African country of Malawi, with a centre called "Torch House" on the edge of the city of Blantyre in the Southern Region. There are also about 60 Torch Fellowship Groups throughout the country, and key voluntary workers mainly located in the valley of the River Shire. This is in the extreme South



of Malawi, where the incidence of blindness is at its worst, due to the widespread eye disease known as River Blindness (Onchocerciasis).

At Torch House in Blantyre there is a Braille production unit, mainly producing Scripture volumes in local languages but also in other African languages. So far the languages involved are Chichewa, Sena, Shona, Bemba, Igala and Hausa. Christian booklets and tracts are also produced, mainly in English and Chichewa, which include informational leaflets to help those suffering from HIV/AIDS and, more recently, Covid-19.

There is also a giant print production facility for partially sighted people. So far this has been producing the Chichewa New Testament in giant print (20 point). As well as the Braille production unit, there is also a free lending library of Braille and giant print books.

At Torch House, a staff of three Malawian people is headed up by Blessings Namate, the Administrator, and overseen by a local board of trustees. Financial support comes almost entirely from Torch Trust UK and the gifts of our supporters. The Malawian government, together with local NGOs, provides some educational facilities for blind children, and also a very limited amount of employment. Generally speaking, blind people are extremely deprived, unable to get employment or resources, and often resort to begging on the streets. However, many of them are Christians and appreciate the literature Torch provides.

Thank you and God bless you

Please give generously to this charity, which is proposed by members of Ealing Green church

Thank you and God bless you.

"Want to keep Christ in Christmas? Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, forgive the guilty, welcome the unwanted, care for the ill, love your enemies, and do unto others as you would have done unto you."

Steve Maraboli, Unapologetically You: Reflections on Life and the Human Experience

December Rotas

Dec	Time	Preacher	Prayers	Reader	Set-up	Welcome	Flowers	Coffee
7 th	11:00	Service at Kingsdown - No morning service at Ealing Green						
14 th	11:00	Holy Communion – Rev. Sue Male						
21 st	-	No morning service at Ealing Green						
21 st	6:00 pm	Carol Concert at Ealing Green – Rev. Sue Male						
24 th	11:00	Carols on the church steps – Rev. Sue Male						
24 th	6:00 pm	Holy Communion at Kingsdown						
25 th	11:00	Family Service at Ealing Green – Rev. Sue Male						
28 th	11:00	Circuit service at Ealing Green with Rev John Swarbrick						

"Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before! What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!"

— Dr. Seuss, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all