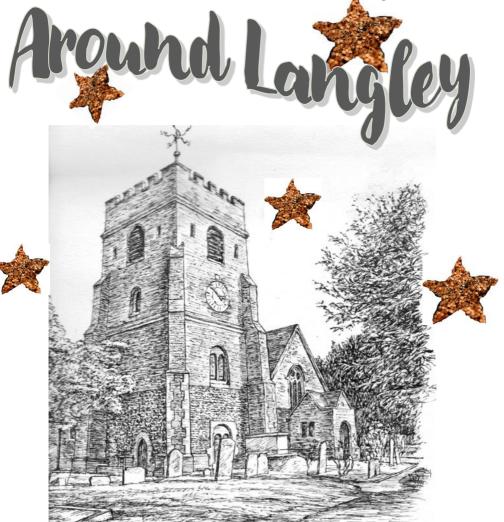
December 2020/January 2021



A FREE magazine published by the Langley Churches for the people of Langley

St Mary's Church

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Thank you, Sue, and Farewell

The Rev. Sue Lepp will be leaving Langley at the end of 2020 after more than four years with us as Curate at St Mary.

Sue has been a wonderful gift, not only to the Anglican churches, but to all the Langley churches, working on many projects ecumenically: Langley Carnival and Schools projects like Christmas Unwrapped for example. The success of Lighthouse Langley in 2019 owes a great deal to Sue. Readers will also remember that she has been a regular contributor to *Around Langley* which has been much appreciated, not least by the Editor! Her involvement in the wider community, such as TV Police Chaplaincy, Mencap and Bereavement Ministry has been greatly valued by many people of Langley and Slough.

Sue will be writing a valedictory message for us in the February issue, but for now we wish her all blessings in her new job in the Hambledon Valley—not too far away—and thank her for all that she has been to us in Langley.

Peace on Earth...

'Christmas is (or is not) cancelled' shout out headlines. Those to whom Christmas is the time for remembering the birth of Christ and celebrating the salvation he brought to the world, know of course that it is not something that can be 'cancelled'! We shall continue to celebrate the birth of Jesus—be it in our 'bubbles', with family, on Zoom, in churches with socially-distanced seating, or just in our hearts.

That is not to say that the social side of the celebrations, with festive meals and family get-togethers and gifts, is not important. And in the depth of winter and long dark nights, the sparkle of Christmas lights bring so much joy to people both sensually and metaphorically. It doesn't matter that we owe this to pre-Christian traditions marking the winter solstice, heralding the lengthening of daytime and the hope of Spring to come.

Thinking of Christmas traditions, I suspect many of us will deeply miss the singing of Christmas carols: there is nothing to stop us singing on our own or in our families, but that is nothing like joining in the hearty singing in churches. Having sung in a church choir for many a decade, I shall also miss the quieter Christmas anthems and other choral music. What I won't miss is the slight irritation I feel with carols that imply that Bethlehem is like Europe: 'See amidst the winter's snow'; 'snow had fallen snow on snow'; 'water like a stone' and so forth. Not to mention baby Jesus being held 'in the white arms of Mary", although 'in the olive-skinned arms of Mary', whilst more true, wouldn't fit in well with the music! In any case, most paintings of nativity that we are used to, depict 'white'-skinned Madonnas. The only reason all this matters is that it reinforces the cultural appropriation of Christianity as being of European origin!

Probably the best Christmas present the world will receive this year is the availability of vaccines against Covid-19. It is so important to have fairness in the distribution of the vaccine across the globe It is also important to pay attention to the economic crises caused by the virus and ensure that the post-pandemic recovery doesn't leave swathes of people around the world in poverty. Otherwise social unrest giving rise to oppressive governments becomes a real possibility. Not helpful at all for 'Peace on Earth'!

We wish all our readers a peaceful Christmas however it is celebrated, and a happy and healthy new year.

Anna Thomas-Betts

News from Around Langley



Please see their website, www.langleyforum.org/ for news and updates.

Langley Community Coffee Shop



I feel heartened by the news of the possibility of a vaccine by the beginning of December with others in the pipeline, especially the Oxford vaccine, which will cost far less than the one from Pfizer, the first to be announced. I was also personally delighted to know that Joe Biden had won the USA election. I hope that the new President will really care about others, about the health of his nation and the health of the world as we come out of the pandemic.

Because of the lockdown our Christmas lunch will have to be delayed and it is booked for the week after originally planned, hoping that it will be possible to meet then. So just to remind everyone: our lunch will be on 8th December, meeting at 12.00 noon at Wexham Park Golf Course. My contact numbers are 01753 541165 and

o78o5335o86 if you need to contact me. A short AGM will be held at the end of the Christmas lunch so that Robin Grayson can resign and hand over the Chairmanship of the Committee to John Bernard.

I wish everyone a happy Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year. 2020 is a year we won't forget.

Sheila Papali

Wot, no Christmas Fayre in 2020?

2020 has been a tough year, but brightened with acts of kindness and thoughtfulness. Sadly, we are missing our Christmas Fayre this year at St Mary's: it is usually a wonderful time to bring together so many in our community and catch up.

We wanted to bring the two things

together and instead of our Fayre with lots of stalls and raffles we



wanted to create an opportunity within the community of Langley for people to say thank you for something that someone has done for them to brighten their year.

If you would like to nominate someone for a public thank you, please email Sam

MacKenzie

<u>mackenziesam@waitrose.com</u> with the following information:

- Their name
- Your name and contact details
- The reason for your nomination.

We will draw one of the entries out of a hat so that at least one person nominated will receive a thank you hamper from the church to acknowledge their kindness.

We would like to publish all the nominations in *Around Langley* at a later date so will need to be back in touch for permission.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021

Elsewhere in this edition of Around Langley I have reflected on our experiences here in the Parish as I approach retirement at the end of January. One area not included there is our relationship to, and work with, the other churches in Langley. It has been a source of great joy and encouragement to share in different ways over the years. Gone, thankfully, are the days when our denominations looked on one another with suspicion or even hostility; Church of England, Baptist and Roman Catholic

churches now see themselves as part of the great family of Christians around the world. We may worship in a variety of styles, and even differ on some theological points, but we know that what unites us — our common faith in God through Jesus — is far greater than what divides us.

That unity has found practical expression in a number of ways: in shared activities such as the Good Friday Walk of Witness, Lent study courses, Harvest in the Park, Around Langley, and Lighthouse; and in shared support for initiatives such the Night Shelter and Foodbank. It has been a privilege to engage with our community together in these ways down the years — thank you, to all my fellow-Christians in Langley!

Each January we also celebrate our unity in a special Week of Prayer; this is an opportunity for Christians to come together across their denominations and traditions, to pray for the church and for the world. In 2021 this will run from Monday 18th to Saturday 23rd January, with a meeting for prayer each morning online at 9.30 am. Please check church websites (see p. 11) for login details nearer the time

Rev. Robin Grayson

Would you like to sponsor or support Around Langley?

If so, you may like to give £5 a year towards the costs of the magazine. Please make a donation at any of the sponsoring churches.

Leaving Langley

February we will have been here very days is the death of Alan Shannon in a nearly 15 years, the longest either of us house fire. Alan had done tremendous has ever lived in one place. It will be a work cataloguing all the 1300+ marked very strange end to my parish ministry. graves in the churchyard. This was the We started planning for my retirement first of many times of accompanying three years ago, and we had all sorts of family and friends in their journey of fun and games lined up for our final months - concerts, parties, a barn privilege of a parish priest to share dance, festival services – but none of these times of sorrow, as well as those that has been possible. Instead, like of joy such as baptisms and weddings. everyone else, we have had to adapt When I pop into the Red Lion next repeatedly to changing circumstances, and have had little direct contact with by someone whose mum I have buried parishioners, friends or family.

This 'retrospective' on our time in Langley seems therefore like a glimpse into a lost past, a time when things Involvement in local schools - taking were 'normal', but we had no idea how the gloomy winter months ahead, have been a governor at Marish

prepare for transition to a new life, and reflect on one that is coming to an end.

When Juliet and I leave Langley next A clear memory from our very early grief and remembrance. It is the great door, I am often greeted 'Hello, Vicar!' or whose daughter I have married. I shall certainly miss that sense of connection with the community.

assemblies and classes, easily that could be taken from us. Christmas services at St Mary's, and so Writing it is quite therapeutic as I face on – has been another great privilege. I



Page 6

Langley, and observed at close hand the near by. The home of Risca Male Voice dedication of staff and the importance of Choir is also just down the road, and Juliet our schools for the cohesion of our very hopes to find an amateur orchestra to play diverse population. I enjoyed the logistical in with our daughter. We aim in due course challenge of coordinating three 'Harvest in to visit Kenya again, where I have an the Park' celebrations in Langley Memorial invitation from the Archbishop, no less, to Park, which involved local schoolchildren and other organisations; and the first Lighthouse Langley in 2019 gave me the opportunity at last to don my orange wig and play the fool on stage – even at the end of the week there were still some little ones not quite sure whether I really was the same person they'd seen elsewhere!

At the centre of all of course has been the community of the church, and its life of worship, prayer and growing together. It is the greatest privilege of all to share in people's journey of faith, from children being baptised and confirmed, or adults discerning a call to ordained ministry, to a faithful Christian preparing for death. What a joy to introduce someone to Jesus on the Alpha Course, or to share in Bible Study where folk are still discovering new things even into old age! And the beating heart of it all is our Sunday worship, where we bring before God our own lives and the concerns of the world, and see them with fresh purpose and hope in the light of God's great love. We will certainly miss all that!

What lies ahead for us in retirement? We have bought a house in South Wales, to be near our children and grandchildren in Cardiff and Bristol. Risca lies on the Ebbw River, at the start of the hills, where there is plenty of walking to explore, mostly steeply uphill (or down); Langley does seem very flat by contrast! Bizarrely, we are moving from St Mary's Road to St Mary

Primary School for most of my time in Street, with another St Mary's Church very do some clergy training.

> Farewell, then, to Langley and a significant portion of our life and work. We hope and pray that it will continue to be a cohesive and supportive community, that can find grounds for unity even in its great diversity. God bless you all!

Rev. Robin Grayson

My time in Langley has involved "wearing many hats", most of which came to a sudden halt in March. Notable were working with children in Toddler Group, Sunday Cub and Home-Start; singing in St Mary's choir, playing the organ at St Francis, and viola the in Slough Philharmonic; working with Langley Neighbourhood Forum and running Fairtrade. I completed my 33 years of piano teaching, which has given much satisfaction, and I fulfilled a lifelong ambition of learning to ring in St Mary's Tower, following in the footsteps of my mother. I have loved working in the vicarage garden and welcoming people there, and we are sad that we may not be able to hold our final New Year Open House. Above all, the people have made Langley special for us – thank you for all your support and friendship. We will miss you all and look forward to what God has in store for us in Risca, as well as for all of you, our friends here in Langley.

Juliet Grayson

Responding to the 4th Industrial Revolution

In his presidential address to the Diocesan Synod last month the Bishop of Oxford, Steven Croft, spoke about the Fourth Industrial Revolution which he defined as "the change in the world of work caused by a cluster of technologies: ... artificial intelligence, ... rapid manipulation of data, robotics, machine learning and algorithmic decision making " The first three Revolutions, by the way, were brought about by steam, electricity and digital technologies. Although each technology builds on earlier ones, the fourth strongly depends on the third.

We know the consequences that all the past industrial revolutions had on the world of work in various spheres. What is different about the current, fourth one, is that it is predicted to affect every area of life and every profession in a multitude of ways: through robotics used in everything from medicine to retail: manipulative power of the media; with driverless cars; remote working and so on. This is unlike, for example, the steam engine that affected relatively small areas of life involving mostly mechanical devices.

All industrial revolutions affected employment, or 'the world of work'. There were certainly many job losses, but also the creation of associated new jobs and there was also the need for many people to retrain for newly developing

conditions. What is becoming clear now is that there will be a huge reduction in the need for human labour with the Fourth Revolution. We can no longer take jobs for granted and we are already seeing this in our labour market now. (See for example, Daniel Susskind's book: A world without work.)

This has been exacerbated by the current pandemic. A prediction is that the economic recession that will hit the world as a result of the pandemic will be even more damaging to humankind than the pandemic itself. One feature of the new economic situation that we can already see is the growth of the gig economy. There is the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a very few people or companies like Amazon, Google and Uber, while there is unacceptable levels of poverty either from job losses, or the conditions of labour.

The gig economy tends to treat workers as contractors to the parent company, with no employment rights like collective bargaining powers, regulated working hours or holiday entitlement. In parts of the world like California, this is already the law, passed by a popular vote, and it is said that in order to get the law passed, \$200 million were spent by companies on lobbying and advertisements.

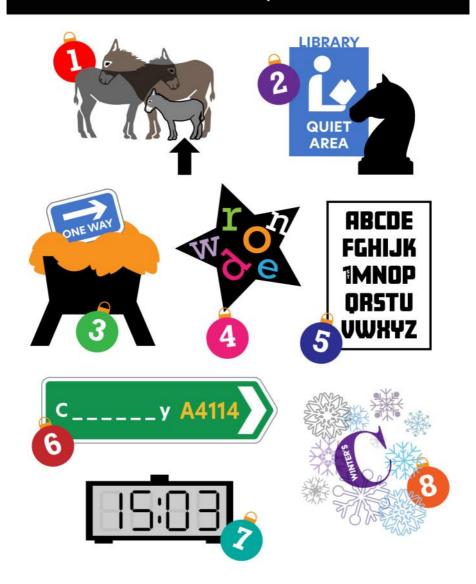
It is up to us all to do all in our power not to sleep walk into the horrors of an unfair world of labour.

Anna Thomas-Betts

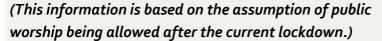
More puzzles for Lockdown ...

(Devised by Angus MacKenzie. Answers on page 15.)

Can you work out the name of Christmas Carols from each of the pictures?



Regular Weekly Service Times





Holy Family (Roman Catholic) (Trelawney Avenue)

Sunday 10.00am Webinar service

5.00pm Mass

Mon, Wed 11.00am Mass or Service of the Word and Communion

Thursday NO SERVICE

Friday 11.00am Mass or Service of the Word and Communion

Saturday 5.00pm Mass

(Please contact holyfamilylangley@yahoo.co.uk if you need any further details.)

Langley Free Church (Baptist) (Trelawney Avenue)

Sunday 10.30am Morning Worship (Also available on YouTube) 2nd Sunday of month 10.30am Holy Communion (Also available on YouTube)

St Mary's (St Mary's Road)

Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

St Francis of Assisi (London Road)

Sunday 11.00am Holy Communion or Morning Worship

(also available on Zoom)

Christ the Worker (Parlaunt Road)

Sunday 9.30am Holy Communion or Morning Worship

All group activities in our churches are suspended until further notice, but church opening times for public worship are given above. See also Parish Directory on p. 19 for contact details for churches.

Langley Christmas Services 2020

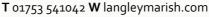


Restrictions on worship are subject to change, but it looks likely that we can have public worship in our churches after 3rd December. However, services will still need to observe social distancing guidelines and spaces will be limited, so we are planning for some services to be only online, as indicated below. The live services are expected to be oversubscribed.

This means that prior booking will be necessary for attendance at all 'live' services in church buildings (please call or email as below).

Church of England Churches

Christ the Worker, Parlaunt Road, St Francis, London Road, St Mary, St Mary's Rd E langleymarish@gmail.com F www.facebook.com/ParishofLangley



Sunday 6th December 4.00pm Online Christingle Service Sunday 20th December 7.00pm Online Carols 'by Candlelight'

Thursday 24th December 4.00pm Online Crib Service

11.30pm Midnight Communion at St Mary's

Christmas Day 8.00am Holy Communion at St Mary's

9.30am Holy Communion at Christ the Worker

10.00am Online Holy Communion

Baptist Church, Langley Free Church, Trelawney Avenue

E pastor@langleyfree.org.uk F www.facebook.com/Langleyfreechurch
T 01753 473219 W www.langleyfree.org.uk

Sunday 20th December 10.30am All age Christmas Service

6.30pm Carol Service

Christmas Day 10.30am Christmas Day Celebration



Roman Catholic Church, Holy Family, Trelawney Avenue

E holyfamilylangley@yahoo.co.uk **T** 01753 543770 **W** www.holyfamily.co.uk

Thursday 24th December 7.00pm Mass at Holy Family Church

9.00pm Mass at Holy Family Church

Christmas Day 10.00am Mass at Holy Family Church

A recorded Christmas Mass will be available on Christmas Eve from 4pm

Faith Matters

Musings at Christmas

The Bible has been described as a 'story about a disaster followed by a rescue mission'. The main characters of this story are two men, Adam who brought about the disaster (Gen 3) and Jesus Christ whom St Paul called 'the last Adam' (1 Cor. 15:45) who was sent 'to seek out and save what was lost' (Lk 19:10). The narrative will be finally wound up with the second coming of Christ and the final judgement of the world (Acts.17:31).

The story starts with God making the first couple in his own image and likeness and placing them in a garden to enjoy and look after. Llike the words of St Catherine of Siena describing how God the Father once confided in her, saying: ' When...I created man, I looked into myself and fell in love with the beauty of the creature I had made - for it pleased me, in my providence to create man in my own image and likeness.' In full trust, God then gave Adam and Eve free will. He also urged them to beget many children (need I add that they were in the image and likeness of their parents?) God's only demand was that they acknowledge his sovereignty, ordering them not to eat from the forbidden fruit of one tree, an order which they disobeyed. Thousands of years later, the Church would call this,

'a happy fault'. A pattern follows in which God repeatedly makes a fresh start and people, time and time again, let God down. Think of the people's sinful ways in Noah's time, the worshipping of the golden calf at Sinai and the murmuring against God at Massa and Meribah. But God's love remained steadfast. His plan would not be thwarted. God led them on to Canaan, the promised land. Through the kingly house of David a messiah would be born, God Himself becoming a man, Jesus the Son of God and the Son of man. He then saves humanity entering into an eternal covenant between Himself as head of the human race and God the Father

At the heart of the Old Testament is the covenant God made with the Jewish people. God's oath, a promise He made, is a landmark in Jewish history and is written in the Jewish people's DNA: "I will adopt you as my own people and I will be your God"(Ex 6:7). From time to time God tested the people's fidelity and often found them wanting. God punished them but then mercifully forgave them. Over time, God's words of the covenant came to be used in the short formula: "God is with us": in Hebrew "Emmana-u-el, in English "with us-is-God".

The Jews knew that God was with them. They remembered the events on

Peace on Earth and Good Will towards Men



Mt Sinai: Moses' personal encounter with God and the physical effect of this encounter e.g. the skin on Moses' face becoming radiant (Ex 34:29). But God's 'face' they never saw. They believed they would die if they saw God's face. They had though, some signs of God's presence, that God was 'with them', a column of smoke by day and a fire by night as they moved on. impressively, they perceived the visible glory of God, later known as Shekinah, a shimmering light suggesting the divine presence (Ezekiel 40 and 43). In the Old Testament, the question of the personality of the Shekinah as distinct from God is not discussed.

It was Jesus who, step by step, first hinted at and then decisively affirmed his divinity to the bewilderment of many of his contemporaries (Jn 10:31-33). How mind blowing it is that we know that the Son of God became a man and that we can see Him, in the sweet face of Jesus. And about the Father, Jesus' words to Philip are so revealing: "If you see me, you see the Father" (Jn 14:9). The concluding words of Matthew's gospel leave us no doubt about his continued presence: "I am with you always; yes, to the very end of

time" (Mt 28:20). I will always be your Emmanuel.

Some people may wonder why the Angel of the Lord told separately both Mary and Joseph, to name the baby Joshua instead of Emmanuel as the prophet Isaiah had foretold (Is 7:14). Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua which means 'the Lord Joseph and Mary would have called Jesus Yeshu at home, in their local Aramaic dialect; from the formal Hebrew Yahshua, or in today's English Joshua or Jesus. Yah is for Yahweh and Shua is for Saviour. The purpose of the incarnation is not for God to be with us: God is always with us, an Emmanuel and "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:23). But the purpose of the incarnation is to redeem us, to save us - to be a Jesus, i.e. a saviour for us.

The message of the angels to the shepherds at Christmas in Bethlehem reveals God's loving plan: Glory to God in heaven and peace to people on earth. In heaven God is experienced in his glory. On earth the experience of peace in our heart is a sure sign of his saving presence.

Alfred Agius

The Parable of Unjair Wages

For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ² He agreed to pay them a denarius ^[a] for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

So begins Jesus' parable in Matthew's gospel, of the vineyard owner who decides to pay all his workers the same wage, irrespective of the hours they worked. A difficult parable for most of us to make sense of. The unfairness of it all jars with us now, and it did, even in Jesus' days.

We tend to see the parable as teaching us about God's infinite mercy, freely available to everyone, 'deserved' or not. Also as recognising the autonomy of the vineyard owner to choose how he spent his money, and as a gentle admonition to the labourers (to us) not to be jealous of God's benevolence to others.

Recently I have been challenged more than usual to think about work: is it a universal *right* to work, what happens if there aren't enough opportunities for paid work to go round, does voluntary work count as 'work' and so forth.

Paul's statement, 'The labourer is worthy of his reward' (1Tim.5:18), or rather our interpretation of it, has come to imply to many of us that the reverse must also be true: that is, you don't deserve a reward unless you are a



labourer and earn it.

The major difficulty with that thought is that, by extension, we even tend to associate human worth with the job one does. At one level, this clearly goes against our understanding of each of us being precious to God. At a more mundane level also, it clearly goes against our understanding of fairness: what about those who cannot work because of physical or psychological disability, for example?

About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?' 'Because no one has hired us,' they answered....

The economic aftermath of the pandemic (and the Fourth Revolution, see page 8) should make us think deeper about wages and work. Just thinking of our country (rather more manageable than thinking about the whole world!), how can those who, through 'no fault of

their own', no longer have a job, be enabled to care for themselves and their families financially?

The oft-mooted concept of a universal basic income—with its many flaws—might be something to re-consider in some form, although no country has managed to implement that so far. A major disincentive would be the economic cost, of the provision itself as well as the loss of tax revenue. We only need to think abut the cost to the nation of the furlough scheme to understand the immensity of such schemes. But was it an example of what might be achieved?

There will also be a consequence that there will be no incentive for people to work. But could this lead to people in necessary, but less glamorous, jobs being paid a decent wage?

There are no simple answers here. But Jesus says that the Kingdom of Heaven is like this vineyard owner. So, as 'Kingdom people' should we not at least be exploring what is possible?

The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. ... when those came who were hired first, ... each one of them also received a denarius.

Anna Thomas-Betts

Did you know ... about Grammagrams?

Everyone these days will be used to letters being used as syllables, or parts of words—as in "C U L8R"- if only in text messages. Grammagrams are similar, but are whole words that can be expressed entirely by a string of letters. NE for ANY, NV for ENVY, OPM for OPIUM are all examples of grammagrams. So what words could these be?



NME	XS	NRG	DVS
TDS	KND	IV	D&D
RKDN	BUT	BD	SKP
ODS	XLNC	FX	DK

The longest grammogram is said to be XPDNC—unless you know better? Tell the Editor if you do!

Answers to the puzzle on page 9

- Little Donkey
- 3. Away in a Manger
- 5. First Nowell
- 7. Past Three o'clock

- 2. Silent Night
- 4. Star of Wonder
- 6. Coventry Carol
- 8. See Amidst the Winter's snow



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Rotary is one of the world's largest and most successful global membership and humanitarian service organisations.

You may be familiar with Langley & Iver Rotary already from our stall in Langley Memorial Park in the summer to planting crocuses in the autumn highlighting End Polio Now to our Christmas float that travels around Langley & Iver in December with Santa!

For more information please contact David Oliver – davidloliver@btinternet.com or visit https://www.facebook.com/ langleyandiverrotaryclub

Dee S Clark



B.Sc(Hons) MChs Dip.pod.med.

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Langley & Iver Rotary Club ...



... hope to be able to run their usual Christmas Collection around the streets of Langley between 11th and 18th December. Santa will be in attendance with his float, music and socially distanced elves.

The collection will be in aid of several local charities, many of which are struggling to

cope during this pandemic. Look out for posters and our Facebook page for the time table.

There will be opportunities to contribute on-line and by contactless payment.

We look forward to brightening your evenings.

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St Mary's Church www.langleymarish.com/stmary

Rev. Robin Grayson o1753 542068 r.j.grayson@btinternet.com (until 31st January)

Curate: Rev. Sue Lepp 07930 520562 revdsuelepp@gmail.com (until 13th December)

Hall Lettings: Simona de Gregorio. tel. 07968 408813

churchcentre@hotmail.com

St Francis Church www.langleymarish.com/stfrancis

Hall Hire: Mrs Joy Raynor 01753 676011 joyraynor@aol.com Licensed Lay Minister: Mr Bill Birmingham 01753 548646 billbirmingham@gmail.com

Christ the Worker Church www.langleymarish.com/c-t-w/

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Holy Family Catholic Church www.holyfamily.co.uk

Parish Priest: Canon Kevin O'Driscoll Deacon: Rev. Graham Jones Hall Hire: Mrs Maria Boland

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