



All Saints

Shooters Hill

www.allsaintsshootershill.org

Newsletter

November 2017

The stories that shape us

Every family, every nation, every group and every individual has a story about a golden age that has shaped their politic, economic, and religious views of the world around them. In this month of remembrance, I invite you to spent time and read a gruesome story in the bible about a Levite's concubine in Judges Chapters 19 to 21, and then a gentle story in the bible about Ruth and her mother in Law Naomi in the book of Ruth. And do see if there are any similar stories in this month's headline stories in the news.

Human history is related through stories passed down from one generation to the next and those stories help to shape the decisions that the next generation takes. A six-year-old child after hearing the story of Elijah flying to heaven on a chariot of fire {2 King 2:11}, wanted to know whether the story was real or pretend? How would you help this six-year-old child? Like a good teacher you might say, "It's a great question", and, yes, some stories are real, others are pretend, and the very best ones use a mix of both reality and pretend to tell us something important - like in the parables Jesus used so powerfully. But like all good teachers you may ask the child what do you think about the story of Elijah flying to heaven? You have not given the child what to think but you have invited the child to think and become a member of the community in the interpretation of this story.

As Christians, whenever we engage with the bible stories, we become members of the interpretive community, and that is the biggest responsibility. We also do remember how bible stories have been used to promote harmful things in the name of God, and the stories of recent wars are one of the many harmful acts. WW1 ended nearly 100 years and WW2 over 70 years ago, but their stories reflect something like a rainbow of our human attitude towards each other. Has anything changed since then? Are this generation more loving, caring, and compassionate than our forefathers' generation because our society, technology, and knowledge, has come of age? Is this real or pretend? Good interpretation of any stories including bible stories begins with the need of critical research into history, language, anthropology and sociology; an artist's eye and ear to draw meaning wisely from the stories, and a humble, teachable heart that listens for the voice of the Spirit.

This six-year-old child's great question desires for us to address an urgent question that lies in the centre of stories we encounter. Like this six-year-old, we are always drawn to the blazing glory surrounding a story, (in this case) Elijah's departure as symbolised by the flying chariot

All Saints Church exists to help people live the best life possible through our commitment to serving God, the community and one another.

and horses in the story, while forgetting the actual life and message of the hero or even to follow his example. So why is this story here in the bible, and how can it help to shape us?

Elijah was putting his young apprentice Elisha through many trials and warning him about the spectacle surrounding his departure. The flying chariot and horses of fire and the many prophets were not the point but a distraction and temptation to be overcome. If Elisha resisted these distractions and resolutely focused on Elijah, he would be rewarded with a double portion of Elijah's spirit {v9; Deuteronomy 21:17}. For us particularly here at All Saints, we are faced with a similar story of Jesus' departure depicted in the painting by H Feibusch. What are we going to do? Are we going to speculate about Jesus lifted up with our head in the clouds like the disciples in the drawing or are we going to be his followers and resolutely focused on living and sharing Jesus' down to earth way of life empowered with his Spirit?

Like Elisha, we as today's interpreters must remember that it's easy to miss the point in bible stories or any stories. They do not aim to pass on factual information but to engage our interpretive imagination. As we do so, we need to put each story in its intended historical context and get a sense for the bigger narrative in which each story is born.

Stories of our times are no different from the bible stories. Some of them are bone-chilling stories regarding the low status of women and violent behaviour of men (*nothing has changed so far*) as documented in the book of Judges with the account of brutal rape, murder and dismemberment of a young woman, horrific inter-tribal retaliation and kidnapping of young women {Judges 19-21} at one end and the poignant tale of two courageous women Ruth and Naomi in the book of Ruth, forging a resilient life of dignity and beauty in the midst of brutality and moral failure.

God promised of David's descendants would one day come and take his father's throne, and a time of peace, unity, freedom would return. This kept their hope alive in difficult times. But when he arrived, the whole people were distracted by the imagery of a militant messiah rolling in with his army overthrowing their oppressors, restoring civil law and religious order. As they were waiting for the warrior king to make his entry, many were busy sharpening their daggers, spears, and swords, training their war horses and chariots; ***the messiah was busy arming his followers with faith, hope, forgiveness, love and service.*** As the Messiah armed his followers with a fresh interpretation of God's promises, he freed them from being both passive, complacent, and from desperate, violent behaviours. This is the kind of empowerment the children of God need today to face the huge challenges our stories bring. How do we deal with the political and economic story that seems at destroying the planet, or religious culture of using violent extremists at one end and complete hypocrites at the other. And do we face our own demons of greed, depression, addiction, lust? These are real and not pretend crises, and to find real solutions we need to be wise interpreters of past stories. Like Elisha, we may stay resolutely focused on the central body of the story, and not be distracted by all the surrounding noise, because the conclusion that we come out with from the stories we interpret will automatically shape us.

Like Elisha, whose move was not to compare himself with Elijah but to do God's bidding, we pray that Christ may bless us with a double portion of his Spirit so that we may begin to see the transformation God desires for us and this community. Amen.

Social events

We've a lot of social events coming up before Christmas. Please put them into your diaries and come to as many as you can. A full list is on the back page.

- **Special Memorial Concert Sat 11 Nov at 7:30** Please help make this a success by coming and inviting all your friends. The Mayor is coming. The band are giving their time for us. Adult tickets are £10 but if you can volunteer to help you don't need a ticket. Children are FREE and we've got an activity pack for them with colouring, word searches etc. And it will be a brilliant evening full of great music.
- **Film night Sat 18 Nov at 7pm** We've found a great family film. Based on real-life. A real inspiration. And we're providing baked potatoes, beans and chilli.
- **Christmas party Sat 2 Dec at 7pm** Last year we had a great time. Let's make it better this year!

Shoe boxes: We have to have delivered them to the collection point by 18 Nov

This year, instead of collecting toys at a Toy Service, we're trying the Shoe Box scheme which delivers toys to underprivileged children in 160 countries.

Suggestions of categories to choose from include *something:g* fun, to love, creative, to keep clean with, to put on, to learn with, homemade and a few things NOT to include. We have empty shoe boxes in church for you to take for free and lists of what can and cannot put in them. More details at goo.gl/kFxtnQ Many gifts can come from pound shops

There is a £5 donation that pays for delivering your box. All Saints is happy to pay that as part of its mission giving and we can then get a bar code that will allow us all to follow the box.

HOWEVER, the shoe boxes have to be delivered to the collection point by Saturday 18 November so there's not much time to fill your box and get it back to church.

Rebuilding the Vicarage

We've just heard that the Diocese has got planning permission to adapt the current vicarage to include a vicarage for Herbert and several flat that it is expected will be rented to church workers, teachers etc. Building work will probably start in the spring and they've promised to make sure that Herbert is looked after.

Plumbing

We have had new water heaters fitted in the Hall and new control systems for the heating in the church and hall which we hope will be more controllable and save money.

Church Office

For information about activities at All Saints (including weddings and baptisms) please contact the Priest in Charge, Revd Herbert Aparanga.

To get it touch with Revd Herbert Aparanga please email

vicar@allsaintsshootershill.org, write to him at 106 Herbert Road

London SE18 3PU, call at the **Church** on any **Friday morning** between

10am – 11am (if the church door is closed look for the bell) or phone **020 8854 2995** (but this will only be answered and messages listened to on Friday mornings). General enquiries should be sent to **office@allsaintsshootershill.org**

For Hall Bookings see allsaintsshootershill.org and follow the links.



All Saints Shooters Hill: November 2017

We warmly welcome you to our Sunday Services

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5:7

5 November 2017 **21st Trinity**
10:30 AM **All Saints Sunday (HC) - Spirit of Holiness!**
Led by: Rev Herbert Aparanga
Reader: M Olarewaju: 1 Corinthians 3:9-15, John 14:15-27 Prayers: G Sheath
Sunday School
Refreshments: P Sheath, N Nelson Sidespeople: V Aigbirhio, J McQuillen

12 November 2017 **3rd Sunday before Advent**
10:30 AM **Remembrance Service (SoW) - Stories that Shape us!**
Led by: Rev Herbert Aparanga, Preacher: Rev A Cutting
Reader: O Ogunsemi, Psalm 23;2 King 2:1-15, Acts 1:1-11 Prayers: K Byfield
Sunday School
Refreshments: M Akpewrene, J Anyasi Sidespeople: A Okoro, F Decaneva

19 November 2017 **2nd Sunday before Advent**
10:30 AM **Holy Communion - Spirit of Life!**
Led by: Rev Herbert Aparanga
Reader: P Winslow, Philippians 1:20-30, Luke 20:27-38 Prayers: S Nwolu
Sunday School
Sidespeople: N Urmeokafor, M Umobi Refreshments: M Popoola, B Jatta

26 November 2017 **1st Sunday before Advent**
10:30 AM **Family Service - The King who Cares!**
Led by: Rev Herbert Aparanga
Reader: F Olarewaju, Isaiah 49:6, Matthew 28:18-20 Prayers: O Ogunsemi
Children in church for Family service
Sidespeople: K Endelay, H Nwolu Refreshments: S Okolie, C Naefulu

Please let Kathy Byfield know if you are unable to do any duties: pat.kat17@ntlworld.com

Weekdays in November (and some in December)

Church office and cleaning group Every Friday at 10am in Church

Tue	7 Nov 2017	8:00 pm	Bible Study at the Vicarage
Sat	11 Nov 2017	7:30 pm	Greenwich Concert Band in Church
Tue	14 Nov 2017	8:00 pm	Prayer group at the Vicarage
Wed	15. Nov 2017	8:00pm	PCC meeting
Sat	18 Nov 2017	7:00 pm	Family film night (with baked potatoes)
Tue	21 Nov 2017	8:00 pm	Bible Study at the Vicarage
Sat	2 Dec 2017	TBC	Christmas Party in the Hall
Sun	10 Dec 2017	4:00 pm	WOW opera

Saturday November 11th at 7:30pm

Special Memorial Concert

To raise funds to restore the church's memorial to the dead of the Parish in World War 1

Tickets available in church, at goo.gl/Q4hjR4 or on the door