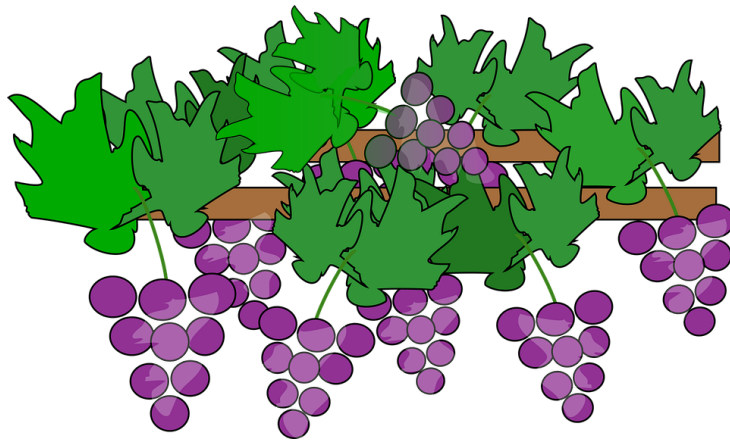


GRAPEVINE

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EDITION 2019



St. George's Anglican
Episcopal Church

Nuñez de Balboa, 43
28001 Madrid

(Metro VELAZQUEZ - Line 4)

SERVICES

Sundays	08:30 am	Holy Communion
	10:00 am	Family Eucharist
	10:00 am	Godly Play (Sunday School)
	11:30 am	Sung Eucharist
	11:30 am	Sunday School (as announced)
Fifth Sundays	08:30 am	Holy Communion
	11:30 am	United Service
		No Sunday Schools
Wednesdays	19:30 pm	Evening Prayer
Fridays	10:00 am	Holy Communion

GET IN TOUCH

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A MESSAGE FROM
OUR FORMER CHAPLAIN BISHOP HENRY SCRIVEN

Greetings and a very Happy Christmas from Catherine and me to everyone at St George's! I'm trying to stay as much as possible in the 'counter-cultural sparseness of Advent so as to better enjoy the full glory and light of Christmas.

That's hard when our culture tells us that Christmas begins on 1st December and ends on the 25th! But it's not a bad thing to face the pain and darkness (as John the Baptist had to in prison) so our witness to the living Jesus can be a defiant act of hope.

By the way, I am doing well after my 'cardiac incident' and we are looking forward to a week with Anna and her family in the USA and then on to Ibiza for January and February.

Do stay in touch!
Henry & Catherine Scriven



Photo by Roberto Nickson Unsplash



Caedmon's Hymn by Jenifer Effer

In Jeanette Winterson's autobiography, she writes of her excitement on discovering that the earliest recorded poem in the English language was composed by a herdsman in Whitby around AD 680. Whitby was only a few miles from the village where she herself was born and where she lived until she left her unhappy adoptive home at the age of 16 to pursue her vocation as a writer.

She read the story that Caedmon, who was employed by the monastery of Whitby, invariably fled when it was his turn to sing during a merry social feast. He was ashamed he had never had any songs to contribute. But one night a voice came to Caedmon in a dream and asked him to sing a song. When Caedmon responded that he had no idea how to sing, the voice commanded him to sing about the source of all created things ("Sing to me the beginning of all things"). "Thereupon", as the monk known as the Venerable Bede tells it in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (731), "Caedmon began to sing verses which he had never heard before in praise of God the creator".

Now we must praise the protector of the heavenly kingdom
the might of the measurer and his mind's purpose,
the work of the father of glory, as he for each of his wonders,
the eternal Lord, established a beginning.
He shaped first for the sons of the earth,
heaven as a roof, the holy maker;
then the middle-world, mankind's guardian,
the eternal Lord, made afterwards,
solid ground for men, the almighty Lord.

This short Old English poem was composed between 658 and 680 and is the oldest recorded Old English poem, often referred to as Cædmon's "Hymn"

It was designed to be sung from memory and was later preserved in written form. The poem has been passed down from a Latin translation by Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. It shows the early influence which Christianity had on the poems and songs of the Anglo-Saxon people after their conversion. It is worth remembering that the old English version of the poem when spoken sounds little like modern English being full of words of Germanic origin.



Think about Jesus Christ this Christmas? But, I haven't had time to buy the decorations yet, let alone put them up.



was the night before Christmas,

when all thro' the house
Not a creature was stirring,
not even a mouse;

The stockings were hung
by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas
soon would be there;

The children were nestled
all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar plums
danc'd in their heads,

And Mama in her 'kerchief,
and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains
for a long winter's nap —

When out on the lawn
there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed
to see what was the matter.

Away to the window
I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters,
and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast
of the new fallen snow,
Gave the lustre of mid-day
to objects below;

When, what to my wondering
eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh,
and eight tiny rein-deer,

With a little old driver,
so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment
it must be St. Nick.

More rapid than eagles
his coursers they came,

And he whistled, and shouted,
and call'd them by name:

"Now! Dasher, now! Dancer,
now! Prancer and Vixen,
"On! Comet, on! Cupid,
on! Donder and Blitzen;

"To the top of the porch!
To the top of the wall!
"Now dash away! Dash away!
Dash away all!"

As dry leaves before the
wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle,
mount to the sky;

So up to the house-top
the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of toys —
and St. Nicholas too:

And then in a twinkling,
I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing
of each little hoof.

As I drew in my head,
and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas
came with a bound:

He was dress'd all in fur,
from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnish'd
with ashes and soot;

A bundle of toys
was flung on his back,
And he look'd like a peddler
just opening his pack:

His eyes — how they twinkled!
His dimples: how merry,

His cheeks were like roses,
his nose like a cherry;

His droll little mouth
was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard of his chin
was as white as the snow;
The stump of a pipe
he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head
like a wreath.

He had a broad face,
and a little round belly
That shook when he laugh'd,
like a bowl full of jelly:

He was chubby and plump,
a right jolly old elf,
And I laugh'd when I saw him
in spite of myself;

A wink of his eye
and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know
I had nothing to dread.

He spoke not a word,
but went straight to his work,
And fill'd all the stockings;
then turn'd with a jerk,

And laying his finger
aside of his nose
And giving a nod,
up the chimney he rose.

He sprung to his sleigh,
to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew,
like the down of a thistle:

But I heard him exclaim,
ere he drove out of sight —

Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night.

—Clement Clark Moore

How to hear from God by Solomon Chidi

I wrote this article because of the many enquiries I have received from Christians both in the Anglican church and other denominations on their concern about how to hear from God. Does God still speak today like in the days of the Prophets and Apostles?

If so, is it possible to hear from him? And what are the necessary steps to take before we can hear from God?



Yes, we can hear from God, according to the scriptures and people's experiences. God spoke to Abraham (Gen 12) , Moses spoke with God face to face, as the best of friends would (Exodus 33:1). Samuel (1 Sam 3:10-14), Solomon (1Kg 3:5-15) and Philip (Acts 8:26) via an Angel. God spoke and is still speaking to people through diverse means like:

Audible Voice This is the clearest (but rarest) way God speaks to us. God speaks to us through the audible voice when he speaks directly, and we hear him clearly, with our ears. Abraham, Moses, Samuel and Paul heard the audible voice of God.

The advantage: it is clear and so it makes people obey immediately.

The disadvantage: it has an immediate impact on the hearer and is capable of making them behave like robots.

Revelation Another way God speaks to us is by revelations and visions. Unlike the audible voice, revelation is indeed one of the most commonly used. It simply means ‘hearing God with the eye’; the inner eye. It can come in the form of visions and dreams. Revelation is received when we are at rest and our consciousness subdued, such as when we are asleep.

“For God speaks in one way, and in two, though people do not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on mortals, while they slumber on their beds, then he opens their ears” Job 33:16.

The advantage: it is common because almost anyone can dream. “When there are prophets among you, I the LORD make myself known to them in visions; I speak to them in dreams” (Num 12:6)

The disadvantage: dreams need interpretation, and visions or dreams without interpretation are not helpful. So we must pray for interpretations anytime we receive a message from God through dreams. Inward Witnessing (or Inward Voice).

This is the most common way God speaks to us as individuals, and it implies receiving God’s voice through our own spirit. If God’s audible voice is like a high-tension wire, Inward voice is a low-tension wire. God’s voice comes to us through our spirits. It appears as if our minds are telling us something.

People with the gifts like words of knowledge or words of wisdom (1 Cor 12:4-11).

The advantage: we have the feeling of peace and joy through this medium. “Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people” (Ps 85:8a).

The disadvantage: of all the ways that God speaks to us, this appears to be the most misunderstood by us because we tend to take it as our own thoughts. Again the devil is a spirit and he speaks in a similar way too but his voice brings turmoil instead of peace.

The Mosers by Nathan Moser

Like many of us at St. George's Church, the Mosers (who attended from 2009 – 2013) are somewhat of a nomadic family! Nathan is an American who was born and raised in Ecuador. Amy is from Thessaloniki. Katerina (now 17) and Nathan K. (15) were born in Chicago and Melina (11) was born in Madrid! They seem to commute to different countries for work! After serving as Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament at the SEUT seminary (Madrid), Nathan moved with his family to Thessaloniki where he has been teaching biblical courses at various Colleges and Bible Institutes.

Little did the Mosers know that their time at St. George's in Madrid would propel them to a ministry within the Anglican Community of Thessaloniki! While Nathan is an ordained clergy in another denomination, he was granted a Bishop's Licence for Ecumenical Ministry in the Church of England while at St. George's that enabled him to also serve in Thessaloniki.

Nathan is thrilled to partner as an «ecumenical minister» with a small group that worships in a very historic city –Thessalonica! The Mosers have also been involved in hosts of other activities that span denominational boundaries. Every Saturday they help provide food and clothing to over 60 Greek families who urgently need help. Nathan delivers a short message from the Bible and provides pastoral care every Saturday to those who come. Amy assists the ladies and encourages them in their walk of faith.

Please remember to pray for the Mosers as they serve in Thessalonica (Thessaloniki). If you're unsure just how to pray –well, you're free to read their mail to find out just how to do that. It's a letter written to the Thessalonians but with 'open-access'. St. Paul reminds us there to «pray ... so that the word of the Lord may spread quickly and be held in honor.» * 2 Thessalonians 3:1.

The Mosers can be reached at nmoser@earthlink.net



Climate change: A topic for Christians? by Rainer Schmidt

Part I

The year 2019 is coming to an end and we will all soon be watching the typical “year in review” television programmes which will summarize the most important events of the year 2019. One particular focus will be the rising awareness, among politicians and citizens alike from around the world, of global warming. The past year has seen a huge rise in climate protests and activities from groups like “Fridays for Future” led by 16 year-old Greta Thunberg, who already enjoys an iconic status among climate activists, or by the “Extinction Rebellion” movement. New climate activist groups seem to emerge on an almost daily basis.

On the other hand, there are climate change deniers or sceptics, who deny or downgrade the importance of the influence of human industrial activities on recent changes to the global climate. Some climate sceptics simply deny the influence of humans on climate change, whereas other more radical sceptics deny the existence of climate change at all.

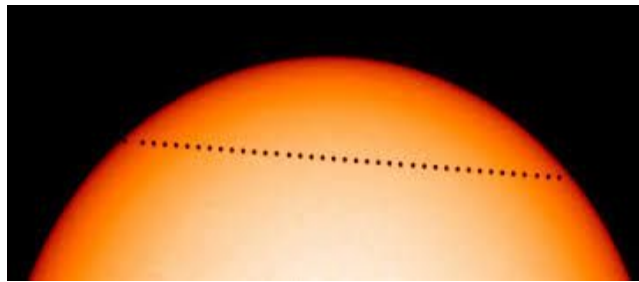
One of the more radical sceptics U.S. President Trump, on November 4th 2019, initiated the official protocol to withdraw his country from the 2016 International Paris agreement, signed in 2016. By 2019 all countries, without exception, had signed the agreement, so its withdrawal would leave the United States as the one single country in the world not participating in that agreement.



These two opposing views on the issue of climate change raise the question of whether we, as devoted Christians, should take a stand on this topic, and should the Christian church do so?

To answer this question, I would like to give a brief overview of the underlying effects scientists claim are responsible for “manmade” climate change. From a strictly scientific point of view, the problem is clear. Human industrial activities, and principally the CO₂ emissions involved, are responsible factors for the rapid changes in the global climate over the last 100 years and beyond.

The global climate has changed before, in the history of our planet, but never so quickly and drastically as it is doing right now. To better understand the mechanism responsible for climate change, it is useful to consider Mercury, the planet closest to the sun in our solar system.



One would expect Mercury to be the hottest planet of all simply because, being closest to the sun, it catches most of the sun’s rays. In fact, the planet Venus is the hottest. Unlike Mercury, Venus has an atmosphere. During the day, temperatures on Mercury can rise up to +400 degrees Celsius (°C), but during the night, the temperature drops to -180(°C) and the average temperature is approximately +170°C.

What happens is that Mercury’s surface is heated during the day by the sun, but then quickly cools down during the night. The situation on Venus is quite different. The average temperature is about +460°C with very little variation between night and day. The planet gets heated during the day by the sun, but the dense atmosphere hinders the planet’s surface by cooling down considerably during the night. On our planet, things are similar to those on Venus, where the surface gets heated during the day, and cools down only very slowly during the night due to the shielding effect of the dense atmosphere.



The examples of Mercury and Venus demonstrate that it is the nightly cooling-off process that is the problem - if the atmosphere of our planet earth gets denser and contains an increasing amount of CO₂. On both planets, Venus and Earth, the sun's heating effect during the day is also slightly reduced by the denser atmosphere, but the cooling-off process during the night is hindered drastically. This effect is called the greenhouse effect.

A more scientific explanation is that the incoming sunlight has a smaller wave-length (higher energy) and can pass through the atmosphere more easily, whereas the heat that gets rejected from the planet's surface during the night in the form of heat radiation has a higher wave-length (lower energy) and gets absorbed more easily by the atmosphere. On Earth, the atmosphere is getting increasingly dense due to the increasing concentration of CO₂ caused by human industrial activity, which increasingly hinders the cooling off during the night.

Although this explanation for global warming creates no doubts among scientists, some climate change sceptics cast some doubt on these scientific findings or sometimes criticize the entire scientific process. In the next issue of "Grapevine" in the second part of this essay, I will discuss the different positions in the debate about climate change and the role of the Christian church.

Discipleship by Renmus

What is a Disciple? In the Gospel accounts, not only Jesus but John the Baptist and the Pharisees are stated to have had disciples, and Jews in general were referred to as Disciples of Moses. Luke refers to the early Christians as disciples (Acts 6.1f and subsequently). The philosophers of Ancient Greece were surrounded by disciples. More than simply followers, a disciple was a student, one who had such a need and such a high opinion of the Teacher, that he was willing to leave home and go to live with the itinerant Rabbi 24/365, thus learning not only from the words of the Master but from his lifestyle.

In the closing verses of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus gives to his disciples his 'Great Commission' which is "Go and make disciples". This does not mean that each had to make followers of himself but to be a leader, a teacher and an example to people in the world that they would themselves heed the call of Jesus to his first disciples to "Come and you will see" (John 1:39).

At the end of his ministry to us in early 2019, Bishop Henry wrote in Grapevine that he thought that our greatest need at St George's was 'Intentional Discipleship'. The aim of Discipleship given was that of 'equipping Christians to live their everyday lives as followers of Christ', that is 24/365 as with the disciples of Jesus, not meaning that we get up and leave home but to follow his Spirit which he sent to and for his disciples. The NT letters to the young churches are full of references to our 'new lives' in Christ and our need to learn.

To be a disciple means, above all, learning. Henry urged us to get together in small local groups for Bible Study and Prayer. Our learning should not be limited to a few minutes listening while trying to concentrate in a comparatively large group on Sundays. Even if such help transpires, we need to follow the example of our great Christian forbears and get into the habit of reading the Bible at home, on our own. There is a great variety of easily readable modern translations. To read a Gospel straight through is very edifying and the shortest, Mark, can be read in the time it takes to watch a game of football on the television. The letters to the churches and to individuals, which vary in length and density, were meant to be read or listened to as a whole. A read-through like this is beneficial to gain a comprehensive impression of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus or of the intention of the writer of each letter. But to learn what is the message to each

individual, smaller portions should be taken, preferably daily. There is a wealth of helpful daily programmes available on the Internet or in written form, with comments and explanations of the background and of difficult points.

Speed-reading or completing a passage merely to move the marker on another page is not the intention. Since long back in the Middle Ages or earlier, many have followed a method of meditative reading known as *Lectio Divina*. Reading is followed by meditating on the meaning of the passage. Then prayer before further contemplation of the text and its meaning and effect on the life of the reader. What is the Holy Spirit saying to me? Do I need to take action and, if so, what?

In church the reader finishes by announcing 'This is the Word of the Lord' and we acknowledge this by thanking God for his Word. Think about this. The Word of the Lord is the Word of Life. It surely merits that we should do more than listen to a brief passage occasionally. In the well-known first chapter of John's Gospel, read at Christmas, Jesus Himself is announced as the Word. We can hardly call ourselves his disciples if we are not listening to Him! And we can hardly obey the Great Commission and make disciples if we are not disciples ourselves.

Black Friday by The Editor

Many of us spend part of our working week longing for Friday. Despite the often heavy traffic, it is Friday evening when we first savour the joys of a weekend when at least some of us do not usually have to go into work.

It is also the first real moment of the week that we can consider dedicating a few quality hours to our family and friends, and perhaps to do some shopping to ensure that we have enough provisions in stock for when time is tighter. It may be time to make a list of what we need to pick up at the market.

For those of us who grab a parking space, or hoof it under our own steam, the idea of flying into a foreign capital to stock up may be somewhat bewildering. On another Friday, every year, we commemorate the death of Jesus Christ, the man who offered us the bread of life.

As Christmas approaches again, and the relentless shopping spree continues, it may be a perfect time to reflect on that first Good Friday. If investing in commodities that do not last forever is so important; how much more important it is to invest in those that do.



THE CHURCH COUNCIL

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Church Wardens	Anne Cole, Rebecca Rico Irwin
Diocesan Synod Rep and Ferede Secretary	Celia Paterson
Synod Representatives	Elizabeth Pacey, Jenny Effer
Honorary Treasurer	Karen Mullins
Church Council Secretary	Adam Hill

ELECTED MEMBERS

Church Council	Patricia De Juanes Iain Deuchar Diana Grayland Angela Irwin Adam Hill Melissa Pearce Carol Skinner Gillian Trotter-Park
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OTHER APPOINTMENTS

Administration Officer	Liz Mason
Church Flowers	Louise Bueno
Director of Music And Organist	Stephen Knight
Deputy Organist	Diana Davies Burr
Safeguarding Officer	Melissa Pearce
Data Protection Officer	Anne Cole

FORTHCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

Friday Dec 20th

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

Christmas Show

16.30 Family Service, Christingle

11.30 Sung Eucharist with carols

THE GRAPEVINE

Our church magazine is entirely made up of stories, messages and thoughts from our congregation, friends and helpers of St. George's. A big thank you to all of those who have contributed!

If you have a written article you would like published in our magazine or if you would like to write for future editions of Grapevine, please get in touch with our Editor.

Grapevine Church Magazine Editor

Iain Deuchar

iaindeuchar@live.com



We hope you have enjoyed reading Grapevine
and we look forward to the next Spring edition!

