THE VOICE

December 2026
and January 2027



A COMMUNITY MAGAZINE FOR BOROUGH GREEN
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Editorial from the Church of the Good Shepherd
December 2026

A Time for Reflection and New Beginnings

As December arrives, our thoughts turn towards Christmas with its familiar traditions, lights, celebrations and opportunities to spend time with family and friends.

At the heart of Christmas is the story of a baby born into a world that was far from perfect, bringing a message of love, peace and hope. The message is as relevant today as it was over 2,000 years ago. In a world where there is often much to worry about, perhaps we can all find a little time to pause, reflect and share some of that hope with those around us.

For some, this is a joyful time; for others, it can be difficult or lonely. It is a good reminder that small acts of kindness, a friendly greeting or a little time spent with a neighbour can mean a great deal. These are the things that help make a village a community.

Before we know it, January will be here and another year will have begun. Rather than making long lists of resolutions, perhaps we can simply look forward with hope, appreciate the people around us and find ways to make a difference, however small.

In this magazine, throughout the year, you'll find a wealth of activities you could become part of to help keep our community thriving.

Thank you to everyone who gives their time and energy to our village life. Your contribution makes our community a special place to live.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and a peaceful, healthy and hopeful New Year.



Carole Simpson
Churchwarden

NOTHING FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS THIS MONTH



Christmas Supper Quiz

Saturday 12 December

6.30pm start

Tickets £15 supper included

Booking essential - Licensed Bar

A fun family event

Booking and dietary requirements call
Julie 01732 885437
At the Church of the Good Shepherd



Church of the Good Shepherd Food Bank

Thanks to your continuing generosity we have been able to support many local families in need.

Donations of non-perishable goods may be left in the Church's porch (where there is a list of the items we need most) on any day – the Church is usually open 10am - 4pm.

Thank you



For any enquiries regarding our Food Bank please contact Ian Simpson on **07801 135 460** or foodbank.cogs@gmail.com



Christmas donations before 20 December will be very welcome – thank you



Contacting the Church of the Good Shepherd



In the absence of a Vicar:

If you need to speak to someone from the church (including any enquiry about a wedding, a baptism or a funeral) contact one of the churchwardens –

Julie (885437) or Carole (07542 442 140).

If you have an enquiry about burial of ashes contact Elaine (667508).

COGS website **www.cogsonline.co.uk**

Christmas at the Church of the Good Shepherd
Join us in celebrating the festive season:

November 28th	**Start getting ready with our Christmas Fair 10 – 1pm, then find us at the village Christmas lights market.**
December 4th	**7.30pm Christmas wreath making workshop – decorate your door for the festive season.**
December 12th	**6.30pm Christmas Supper Quiz. A fun evening of food and festive facts for all the family.**
December 20st	**6.00pm Carol Service where we sing Christmas carols and hear again the Christmas story.**
December 24th	**4pm Crib Service where families come along to hear and sing the Christmas story. Don't forget your colouring competition entry (page 29) !**
	11.30pm Midnight Mass. Celebrate the birth of Jesus in a service of carols and communion.
December 25th	**10am All age Christmas Communion. A time to celebrate and worship Jesus's birth – and sing more Christmas carols!**

All are welcome!

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Notes from Borough Green Town Council

The Council met at 7.30pm Monday 2nd November 2026 at the COGS Annexe. Matters raised included:

- **Vacancies.** The Council welcomed Mr Jeff Howarth and he signed the declaration and took his seat. Other residents have expressed interest but that will still leave some places. This is a chance to serve your community and make a genuine difference to people's lives.
- **Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer.** We welcomed Mr Peter Cox to his first formal meeting since taking office - he will now be the man behind the clerk@boroughgreen.gov.uk email address.
- **Cllr Butterfill** announced the South East 4x4 Santa will be visiting on 11 December, timetable elsewhere in this issue, and there will be posters up at "Santa's Stops".
- **Potters Mede Bookings** will be handled by Rob Springett who will manage the diary and access to the hall, robertspringett75@gmail.com, but invoices will come from Peter above.
- **High St Assets.** The sharp-eyed amongst you will have noticed that we have moved the flagpole to a much more prominent and visible position outside Nisa, with the memorial bench and planter alongside. A new plaque in memory of Mrs Gladys Banks has also been installed and the family are very pleased. A salt bin has been installed near the disabled bay to ensure that end of the High St also has salt available in bad weather.
- **Christmas Lights Switch-on** will be on 28 November this year, so you should see our volunteer Christmas Light crews out and about in the coming weeks. We offer our grateful thanks for all their hard work and will be again supporting them with grant aid. Remember, their hard work for this year started the day the Lights came down in January - it really is never-ending.
- **Isles Quarry Bike Trails** are now open and our staff are carrying out regular checks on safety, but we are seeking a professional inspector.
- **TMBC Local Plan** consultation has now long finished, but the arguments continue between TMBC Leader, Matt Boughton, and Minister, Matthew Pennycook MP. The latter rejects TMBC's position that water supply issues do not justify the exceptional circumstance reason to delay implementation of our Local Plan.

  We want to thank Cllr Pete Gillin of Wrotham PC for the highly professional Parish Alliance response to the Local Plan, augmented with a foreword by Highgate Planning. The submission covers all the planning issues we believe make Borough Green Garden City unavailable, undeliverable and unsustainable. Member parishes will also submit this alongside their own more local responses.

(Continued on page 11)

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Advertising

Any commercial bodies or people offering services who wish to advertise should contact **Chris Atkins** email chris.atkins1952@gmail.com or phone **01732 366615** about rates and availability of spaces.

If you have something you want to sell, a caravan or cottage you want to let for holidays etc then contact Margaret Jeffery. The cost of such personal notices are just £2 per issue.

The views expressed in articles are not necessarily those of the Editorial Team. The Editorial Team cannot accept responsibility for wrong information received, or mistakes that occur in publication. The Editorial Team cannot accept responsibility for any delay in distribution. Publication of advertisements does not imply any form of recommendation. All articles in this magazine are covered by copyright and permission must be obtained before reproducing them in any format.

The total print run of the magazine is over 2000 copies and it is also available to read on the COGS, BG Community and Council websites.

Thanks

Thank you to the Borough Green Council for their generous grant and to all our advertisers for their financial support which makes the production of this magazine possible. Also thank you to all our distributors who get the Voice to every house in the community.

Articles for the next magazine

The Voice is your community magazine and it relies on the people of Borough Green to make it as interesting as possible. Organisations, clubs and individuals are welcome to submit articles on their activities and subjects likely to be of interest. The deadline for articles for the next magazine will be **Tuesday 12 January** and these should be sent to the address below. The next magazine will cover **February** so if you have any events planned for that month and you would like them to appear in the diary section please send to :-

m-jeffery@talktalk.net
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- **Speedwatch Group.** Mr Kevin Nolan reported that training sessions had been completed and the four qualified operators should be out and about soon, slowing traffic down through the village.

The next Borough Green Council meeting will be held on **Monday 7th December 2026 at 19.30 in the COGS Annexe.** The agenda will include a period for public contributions and questions.

Council Contacts

Chairman mike.taylor@boroughgreen.gov.uk **01732 882880**

Clerk clerk@boroughgreen.gov.uk

Full minutes are posted at MINUTES | mysite (boroughgreen.gov.uk



SOUTH EAST
4x4
RESPONSE

BOROUGH GREEN & PLATT CHRISTMAS SANTA RUN

FRIDAY 11 DECEMBER - FROM 17:00

SANTA WOULD LOVE TO MEET THE CHILDREN AND SHARE A SMALL CHRISTMAS TREAT

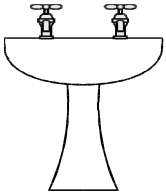
STOPPING POINTS AND APPROXIMATE TIMES

1. Pineview — 17:10
2. Blue Anchor pub car park — 17:20
3. Platt Memorial Hall — 17:30
4. Junction of Crow Hill and Crow Hill Road — 17:40
5. Junction of Normanhurst Road and Brockway — 17:50
6. Morgan Garage, Maidstone Road — 18:00
7. Borough Green High Street car park — 18:10
8. Junction of McDermot Road and Harrison Road — 18:20
9. Junction of Isles Quarry Road and Nisbett Drive — 18:30
10. Junction of Wyatt Close and Staleys Road — 18:40
11. Western Road car park — 18:50
12. Junction of Fairfield Road and Fairfield Road — 19:00
13. Junction of The Avenue and The Crescent — 19:10
14. Junction of Wye Road and Annetts Hall — 19:20

Please note: Advance vehicles will travel ahead of Santa's convoy to let children know when Santa is nearby. All times are approximate.

For more details, please contact Sue Butterfill
suebutterfill556@gmail.com or 07757 494621

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Our 120 Acts of Kindness Tree

Celebrating 120 Years of God's Faithfulness
In the **Church of the Good Shepherd**

- Our Kindness Tree is almost complete! -



What a wonderful response our Kindness Tree has received. Thanks to the kindness, generosity and care shown by people across our local community, the tree is now carrying **108 leaves**.

That means we need **just 12 more leaves** to reach our goal of **120 Acts of Kindness**!

Have you offered a helping hand, taken time to listen, checked in on a neighbour, encouraged someone who was struggling, or done something thoughtful for another person? However small it may seem, we'd love you to add it to the Tree. Every act of kindness matters, and together they tell an inspiring story of our community in action.

Blank leaves are available in the Annexe and the side porch. Simply write your act of kindness on a leaf and attach it to the Tree. If the Annexe is closed, completed leaves can be left in the basket in the side porch and will be added during the week.

Please feel free to take extra leaves or flyers to share with friends, neighbours and family members. The more people who join in, the sooner we'll reach our target.

Let's finish our Kindness Tree together and celebrate the many ways people are making a difference through simple acts of care and generosity, one leaf at a time.

Thank you to everyone who has already contributed. Your kindness is helping to build a community where people look out for and support one another.

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Monday Minis Toddler Time



Play and socialising for pre-school children and their grown ups. **Mondays 14 December** and **11 & 25 January** 10 to 12 noon in COGS annexe. No charge, just a donation for tea and coffee please.

Games, Tea & Chat



On alternative **Mondays** (for dates see diary section) at 2 - 4pm in the annexe to the Church of the Good Shepherd. Come and enjoy board games, tea and a chat. Plenty of room for new folk so, if you are wondering whether it's for you, do get in touch and ask for more information or just turn up at 2.00.
Contact Elaine Almond on 667508 or etalmond@aol.com

Cinema at COGS



Wednesdays 16 December and **20 January** 2pm in the Church of the Good Shepherd. Please check the Church's noticeboard for these months' presentations. All are welcome so come for an afternoon of free entertainment. Refreshments available during the interval.



Saturday 6 February 6.30pm
Family Bingo Night
Church of the Good Shepherd.



St Joseph's Catholic Church
Services over Christmas period

Christmas Eve 10pm Midnight Mass with Carols from 9.30pm
Christmas Day 9:30am Mass





Borough Green Baptist Church
Services over Christmas period

Sunday 20 December 4.30am Carol Service
Christmas Eve 5.15pm Carols round the Christmas Tree
Christmas Day 10:30am Morning Service

Events in the community
for the months of December and January

(Plus Library events, Lunch Club and Saturday Open House – see page 19)

November

28 COGS – Christmas Fair – 10.00 to 1.00



BG CHRISTMAS MARKET AND LIGHT SWITCH ON

December

3 SJCC - 10.00 Mass followed by Adoration

4 BG Primary School Open Day - 9.30 to 1.30



COGS - Wreath Making – 7.30 (Bookings only)

6 SJCC - Mass - 9.30

COGS – All Age Worship - 10.00

BGBC - Service - 10.30

Bash the Trash - BGVH - 11.30 to 12.30

7 BG Council - COGS Annexe - 7.30

9 Sticky Fingers - BGBC - 10.00 to 11.15

10 SJCC - 10.00 Mass followed by Adoration

BGVH - Heart of Kent Hospice Charity Sale - 2.00 to 4.00



11 Santa 4x4 – 5.00 onwards – see page 11

12 **COGS – Christmas Supper Quiz – 6.30**

Wrotham Church – Christmas Concert - 7.00

13 SJCC - Mass - 9.30

COGS – Holy Communion with Canon Chris Stone and Children's Church - 10.00

BGBC - Service - 10.30

14 **Toddler Time - COGS Annexe - 10.00 to 12.00**

Games, Tea and Chat - COGS Annexe - 2.00 to 4.00

BGVH - u3a meeting - 2.00

15 COGS – Welham Jones Christmas Memorial Service – 6.30

16 **COGS - Film Afternoon - 2.00**

17 SJCC - 10.00 Mass followed by Adoration

20 **COGS - Breakfast Church - 9.00**

SJCC - Mass - 9.30

BGBC – Evening Carol Service – 4.30



COGS – Carol Service – 6.00

24 SJCC – No 10.00 Mass

COGS – Crib Service – 4.00

BGBC – Carols round the Christmas Tree – 5.15

SJCC – Carols from 9.30 and Midnight Mass from 10.00pm

COGS – Midnight Mass with Canon Brian Stevenson – 11.30

25 SJCC – Mass – 9.30

COGS – All Age Christmas Holy Communion with Canon Chris Stone – 10.00

BGBC – Christmas Service – 10.30

27 SJCC - Mass - 9.30
COGS – Holy Communion with Canon Brian Stevenson - 10.00
BGBC - Service - 10.30

31 SJCC - 10.00 Mass followed by Adoration

January

3 SJCC - Mass - 9.30
COGS – All Age Worship - 10.00
BGBC - Service - 10.30
Bash the Trash - BGVH - 11.30 to 12.30



4 **Games, Tea and Chat - COGS Annexe - 2.00 to 4.00**
BG Council - COGS Annexe - 7.30

6 SJCC – Feast of the Epiphany – Mass 6.00pm

7 SJCC - 10.00 Mass followed by Adoration

10 SJCC - Mass - 9.30
COGS – Holy Communion with Rev Clive Wood and Children's Church - 10.00
BGBC - Service - 10.30

11 **Toddler Time - COGS Annexe - 10.00 to 12.00**
BGVH - u3a meeting - 2.00

14 SJCC - 10.00 Mass followed by Adoration

17 **COGS - Breakfast Church - 9.00**
SJCC - Mass - 9.30
BGBC - Service - 10.30

18 **Games, Tea and Chat - COGS Annexe - 2.00 to 4.00**

20 **COGS - Film Afternoon - 2.00**

21 SJCC - 10.00 Mass followed by Adoration

24 SJCC - Mass - 9.30
COGS – Holy Communion with Canon Brian Stevenson and Children's Church - 10.00
BGBC - Service - 10.30

25 **Toddler Time - COGS Annexe - 10.00 to 12.00**

28 SJCC - 10.00 Mass followed by Adoration

31 SJCC - Mass - 9.30
Platt Church – Holy Communion with Canon Liz Walker – 10.30
(COGS joining with other parishes – no 10.00 service at COGS)
BGBC - Service - 10.30

Note: COGS Services maybe be subject to change in the interregnum

Abbreviations

COGS	Church of the Good Shepherd	BGBC	Borough Green Baptist Church
SJCC	St Joseph's Catholic Church	BGVH	Borough Green Village Hall

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10 - 1 and 2 - 5 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
and 9 - 1 on Saturday.

Ancestry - Monday 10.15 - 12.15 need to book an appointment
Natty Stitchers - Monday 10.00 - 12.00
TLC Bookworms - (second Monday of each month) 2.15 - 3.30
Scrabble - Tuesday 2.15 - 4.15
Coffee & Chat - Thursday 10.15 - 12.15
Baby Bounce & Rhyme Time - Friday 10.15 - 10.45
Friday 2 Book Club (second Friday of each month) 2.15 - 4.15

For more advice please call the library on 03000 413 131 or email boroughgreenlibrary@kent.gov.uk where staff will be able to help.

We look forward to seeing you.





Borough Green Lunch Club

The club runs from 10.00 until 1.00 on both Thursday and Friday in the Village Hall, providing friendship, fun and food. New attendees very welcome. We are able to provide transport if mobility is a problem. For further information contact Pauline on 07503 156 713.



Saturday Open House

10-12 every Saturday at the Church of the Good Shepherd. Fancy a cuppa, cake and some conversation? Pop in. Everyone welcome.
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Changes to Car Parking at Borough Green Village Hall from 4 January 2027

From Monday 4 January 2027, we're making some changes to how the Village Hall car park works. We know parking matters to a lot of people so we wanted to explain what's happening and why.

What's changing

If you're coming to the Hall for an event, class, meeting or private booking, nothing changes for you. Parking will stay free. If you'd like to use the car park but aren't visiting the Hall, we'll be asking for a modest contribution towards its upkeep and maintenance. The charges are shown on page 23. We're also installing a height barrier. This is mainly to discourage larger vehicles, especially ones that take up more than one space.

Why we're doing this

This isn't about raising money. The car park has become much busier over the last few years. We only have a limited number of spaces and, with more vehicles using it, and bigger ones, Hall users are struggling more and more to find somewhere to park.

We believe these changes strike a fair balance. They protect the car park for the people who use the Hall and they still let the wider community benefit from it.

We appreciate this is a change from what some of you are used to and we're very grateful for your understanding and cooperation. Thank you, as always, for supporting your Village Hall.

The Trustees, Borough Green Village Hall

Borough Green & Wrotham u3a

It's party time for Borough Green and Wrotham u3a at our monthly meeting on **Monday 14 December** at 2 pm at Borough Green Village Hall, when we will be entertained by "Under the Influence". They are a group of five musicians with a great repertoire of favourites including songs by the Beatles, the Hollies and various Motown artists. After the fun (and dancing - optional!) we will be refreshed by mulled wine and mince pies.

On **Monday 11 January** at 2 pm we are delighted to welcome back the ever-popular Bob Ogley with his talk on Knole, also the subject of his new book. Those who have heard Bob will know what an entertaining and knowledgeable speaker he is.

We look forward to welcoming existing and new members (free) and guests (£5), including refreshments. Parking is free for village hall users, so please remember to register your car in the hall lobby when you arrive.

For further information, or to join your local u3a, please contact:
info@bgwu3a.org.uk or visit our website **https://bgw.u3asite.uk**

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A little change to parking.
A big contribution to our Village Hall.

Anyone using the Village Hall for hall-related purposes will still park FREE.

PARKING CHANGES FROM 4 JANUARY

Parking charges

Monday to Sunday, 7am to 7pm

Up to 30 minutes	**50p**
Up to 1 hour	**£1**
Up to 2 hours	**£2**
Up to 3 hours	**£3**

No return within 2 hours

How to pay

Card at the machine

RingGo app
Location code: **15528**

By phone
Call **020 3046 0060**

No ticket needed
Cameras read your number plate automatically, so there is is nothing to display in your car.

Why we're making this change

We believe these changes strike a fair balance. They protect the car park for the people who use the Hall, and they still let the wider community benefit from it.

Thank you for supporting your Village Hall.

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Tom Tugendhat MP's Column

We should all be able to rely on our post arriving on time. Whether it is a hospital appointment letter, an important document or a letter from a loved one, regular deliveries matter. For those who cannot easily access services online, they are particularly important. With email and text messages, people are sending fewer letters. But the post remains an important means of communication, particularly when original documents need to be delivered.

Too many residents have experienced an unreliable postal service. We have been told before that improvements were coming, but the problems persist. I have been holding Royal Mail to account over the continuing problems at the Tonbridge Delivery Office. I have also raised these concerns with the government minister responsible and asked for support. Despite the promises, we still don't have a reliable service. As Christmas approaches, we need to know that Royal Mail can deliver our cards and presents on time. Our local post men and women are familiar faces, and it is Royal Mail's responsibility to ensure they have the support and resources to do their jobs properly.

So I'm keen to hear about your experiences. Please visit www.tomtugendhat.org/royalmail and let me know how often your post arrives and whether delays have caused you particular difficulties. Your responses help me build a clearer picture of the problems and show Royal Mail where its service is failing our community.

Alternatively, please email me at tom.tugendhat.mp@parliament.uk or call my office on 01732 441563. You can also follow me on social media @TomTugendhat. If you would prefer to write, you can see how long it takes Royal Mail to deliver your letter to my office at 130 Vale Road, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1SP.

PARISH ALLIANCE SHOPPER BUSES

MONDAYS ROUTE 70 - 10.00 Wrotham Square, 10.05 Borough Green Station, 10.11 Platt, Wrotham Heath, Offham, West Malling, Leybourne Chase, to Larkfield. Returning from Tesco at 12.45.

FRIDAYS ROUTE 58 - 9.30 Wrotham Square, 9.35 Borough Green Station, 9.38 Platt, Wrotham Heath, Addington, Trottiscliffe, Ryarsh, Birling, Leybourne, West Malling, East Malling to Larkfield and Maidstone. Returning from Maidstone at 1.00.



Local Government Reorganisation

The Government has announced that they have withdrawn their previous plan to reorganise councils in Kent and Medway into 4 unitary authorities. However the Government remains committed to the reorganisation programme and all options and proposals remain under consideration with an outcome expected by early next year.

Local elections will go ahead in May 2027 on existing council boundaries. New councils will be established for 2029, with elections to shadow councils in May 2028.

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www.boroughgreenvillagehall.co.uk

Potters Mede
Rob Springett 07557 885 153
robertspringett75@gmail.com

Defibrillator Locations

a) **24 hours a day**
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Potters Mede
The Recreation Ground
The Fire Station

b) **When premises are open**
The Medical Centre
BG Primary School
Fourways Dentists



Name _____

Colouring Competition. Bring your completed entry to the Church of the Good Shepherd crib service on Christmas Eve at 4pm. A prize for the best entry – no upper age limit.

Tonbridge and Malling Ramblers

You don't have to be a Ramblers member to try up to three 'taster' walks with us. If you're new to our walks, please contact the walk leader to check that their walk will suit you. For details of these and other upcoming walks, including those for January, and walk leaders see our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/tonbridgeandmallingramblers or visit www.tonbridgeandmallingramblers.org.uk.

December	Route	Distance in miles
Thursday 3rd	Circular walk from the Bucks Head pub in Godden Green, passing through fields, woods and some quiet lanes. Moderate difficulty; six stiles.	4.6
Thursday 10th	Leisurely circular walk from St Mary's Platt via Basted and Claygate Cross with a mix of woodland, open fields, quiet lanes and some good views. No stiles.	4.8
Sunday 20th	Circular walk from Plaxtol Spout exploring the tranquil Kent countryside. We'll walk along quiet country lanes, winding paths through the Bourne valley and rolling orchards characteristic of the Kent Downs. Moderate difficulty.	5
Sunday 27th	Wateringbury Wassail - walk beside the River Medway towards Yalding, cross the railway line towards Nettlestead, then head through the deer park with a steady climb behind Roydon Hall. Return to Wateringbury via Pizien Well. Moderate difficulty.	6
Thursday 31st	Our last walk of 2026! From West Peckham we'll follow the Greensand Way and then descend through the Oxen Hoath estate with fine views of Hadlow Tower. We'll return via farmland, orchards, quiet lanes and alongside Hazel Wood. The second half of the walk is a steady incline. Moderate difficulty; about five stiles.	5.3

Walks usually start mid-morning. There's a short half-way break (bring refreshments) and we usually finish near a pub. Most walks are dog-friendly (see website).

Tonbridge and Malling health walks are free, fun and friendly, perfect to help you get active, meet new people and improve mental health and wellbeing.

The Platt walk leaves from St Mary's Church steps at 10am on Mondays. To attend a walk just come along 10 minutes before the starting time of the walk (no booking necessary). Outdoor clothing and footwear is advisable. The walk (may include hills) lasts for 60-90 minutes. Refreshments are served in the Church afterwards.

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