

# **St John's Church**

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*December 2021/January 2022*

**£1**



Remembrance November 2021



What has the front cover to do with Christmas? Well, it is not what I had in my mind initially. Naturally my first thought was to find an image related to The Nativity, but nothing striking or original emerged from the usual searches. Moving on in the Christmas narrative brought me to the Flight into Egypt, when the Holy Family escaped persecution by Herod. Tapping in “family asylum seekers” brought up directly the arresting picture you see.



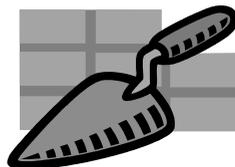
It shows a father, mother, and child being rescued from drowning off the Greek coast in 2016. As I write there is increasing controversy about the people who are trying to cross the Channel to reach our shores. Without getting political it does seem to me that the press are not giving a balanced coverage of this topic.

For a start it seems that nearly two thirds of the people entering Britain by this route are subsequently found to be genuine refugees and given leave to stay. Of the other third one must assume they are trying to find a better life than the one they have left. The one thing that they have in common is that they are all human beings undertaking a daunting challenge to get here. Even as I type there is a flash news from the French authorities saying that some thirty people have drowned while attempting a crossing.

Furthermore the number of people applying to enter this country as refugees is small compared to say France or Germany. In 2020 27, 000 people applied for asylum in the UK while 93,000 did so in France and 122,000 in Germany. In reality we are far from being a top destination.

So what would Jesus say to us now—indeed what is he saying through His Spirit? It seems to me that having been a refugee himself He would be seeking to find ways to improve the perception and handling of asylum seekers. Personally I would not dare to try to cross the Channel on a rubber dinghy, and admire the courage of those that do. Christmas is a season of goodwill—let’s pray that our leaders show this to the desperate people who risk their lives to join us.

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## December

- 5th. 8 am MP BCP lay led  
 11 am Family Worship - Fr Darren Collins  
*Philippians 1. 3-11 and Luke 3. 1-6*
- 12th. 8 am HC BCP - Rev Susan Marsh  
 11 am HC - Rev Fiona Souter  
*Philippians 4. 4-7 and Luke 3. 7-18* ★  
 4 pm Candlelight Carols
- 19th 8 am HC BCP - Rev Edward Cardale  
*Hebrews 10. 5-10 and Luke 1.39-55*  
 11 am 9 Lessons and Carols - Rev Sue Stilwell ★
- 24th. 4 pm Crib Service - Ven Janet MacKenzie ★  
 11 pm Midnight Mass - Ven Janet MacKenzie ★  
*2 Samuel 7. 1-5, 8-11, 16 and Luke 1. 67-79*
- 25th. 11 am Family Worship and HC - Ven Janet MacKenzie  
*Isaiah 9. 2-7 and Luke 2. 1-20*
- 26th **No services**

## January

- 2nd 8 am MP BCP - lay led  
 11 am Family Worship - Fr Darren Collins  
*Isaiah 60. 1-6 and Matthew 2 1-12*
- 9th 8 am HC BCP - Rev Susan Marsh  
 11 am HC - Rev Fiona Souter  
*Isaiah 43. 1-7 and Luke 3. 15-17, 21-22*  
 4 pm Christingle - Jo Brooks ★
- 16th 8 am MP BCP - lay led  
 11 am Morning Prayer - Rev Roger Chapman  
*Isaiah 62. 1-5 and John 2. 1-11*
- 23rd 8 am HC BCP - Rev Susan Marsh  
 11 am HC - Rev Iain Lane  
*1 Corinthians 12. 12-31a and Luke 4. 14-21*
- 30th 8 am MP BCP - lay led  
 11 am HC - Rev Iain Lane  
*Hebrews 2. 14 -end and Luke 2. 22-40*

**HC BCP: Holy Communion, Book of Common Prayer MP: Morning Prayer**



**Special Services for Christmas**

Jackie Spry writes:

“The **Food Bank** is holding its annual Christmas Gift Stall on Wednesday 15th December. People visiting the Bank can choose extra items from this Stall. Please can I ask you to donate appropriate food or chocolates on any of the Sundays before then, leaving them in the box at the back of the church. Thank you in advance for your generosity”

Gina Butler writes: “Every year we support various **charities at Christmas** and this year the PCC have decided to support the following; Save the Children, The Children’s Society, Hertfordshire Young homeless & Church Mission Society.



If you want to give to them please use the QR code above or the following link.

<https://givealittle.co/campaigns/22eb31cc-1774-4972-8b88-4ed59d80a5d1>.

Thank you and God bless”

### Weddings

Congratulations to **Craig Read and Lucy Byrne**, who were married at St Johns 9th October.

### Baptisms

On 6th November **Esme Cole**, and on 21st November **Arthur Colyer** and his mother **Sophie**. We welcome them into the Christian Community.

### New Vicar

The search for a new Team Vicar is progressing. After many rounds of meetings—including some with the Archdeacon and the Bishop of Hertford—the PCCs of St John's and St Michael's Birchwood will soon consider and approve a joint parish profile which describes the parishes in some detail, and sets out the qualities of the person they are looking to appoint. The Diocese will then advertise the vacancy before Christmas. Applicants will have until early February to apply, and if all goes well a panel chaired by the Bishop of Hertford, and including our Wardens, will interview candidates towards the end of February. If interviews lead to an offer being made and accepted a new Team Vicar should be in post by late summer.

**Parish Magazine** copy date for the next issue: **24th January**

Some of you might recall that about 30 years ago the Christmas Day ‘Songs of Praise’ was filmed by the BBC in St John’s church. I remember it very well, because I was there, having attended St John’s with my parents since I was about 7 years old. Pretty soon after this event, I confess that I did the very teenage thing of deciding that I didn’t believe in God anymore, and I stopped going to church...for over 15 years.



God is, however, very much a God of surprises (and huge determination!), and I unexpectedly found myself first returning to faith, and – even more shockingly – being ordained in 2019. As a curate in the Hatfield team, it’s been a joy to recently return to St John’s church and school to sometimes lead worship. I could *never* have predicted I’d be doing this 30 years ago. However, when I think about it, this turn of events perhaps shouldn’t really shock me. Because God has a habit of acting in very surprising ways, particularly at Christmas time.

It doesn’t get more surprising than God coming to us as a tiny, vulnerable baby Jesus on the first Christmas over 2000 years ago. It doesn’t get more unexpected than Jesus being born to humble parents, in a place where animals ate and slept. Who would have guessed that the first people to know about Jesus’ birth would be ordinary shepherds? And who could have predicted that the saviour of the world, would make friends with the outcasts of society, and allow himself to suffer and be killed on a cross?

Christmas reveals a startlingly unlikely God, who doesn’t force people to accept him through grand powerful gestures. In the birth of Jesus, we find a God of love who is willing to be with alongside us in the messiness of the world; who wants to know each and every one of us; and who refuses to deviate from his way of love and peace even in the face of pain and death. That kind of love is unstoppable and irresistible, which is how it brings unexpected people like me back to faith and ordination!

So, this Christmas, I really hope you enjoy the food, presents, lights, carols and time with the family. However, why not also take a moment to look out for God, who may just surprise you by offering not just ‘one special magical day’, but the incredible lifelong gift of knowing and sharing his limitless love.

**Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a blessed 2022.**

**Kathryn**



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It was a great pleasure to baptise Mabel and her Mum Bekki Harper on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at St Johns. It is always very special to baptise members of a family together – very much in the tradition of the early church, that we read about in the Book of Acts and Paul’s missionary letters.

In the picture is Dad, Daniel, and also their son Enzo. Enzo was baptised at St Johns by Paul when he first arrived at Lemsford five/six years ago. You can see Enzo’s Baptism candle, held by his Dad. we always encourage families who return for second and subsequent baptisms to bring along the original candle for re-lighting at their sibling’s service. A really joyful service!



In the last issue I recorded that I had baptised two children and one adult on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at St Johns.

The photo here is of one of children, James Clark, in the arms of his Mum Hilary. His dad is Edward. It was again a joyous occasion as the picture clearly shows.

I do love Baptisms!

## School Report

We have really enjoyed our first half term of bubble free time at St John's, being able to hold our collective Worship in the church again and would like to thank the Bishops Hatfield team for leading us every Wednesday along with Jo Brooks from St John's Church. We have several cases of Covid at the moment in school and are back to separate bubbles for a while till it calms down.



We are all hoping and planning for continuing with our Christmas events but will have to make a judgement nearer the time.

We have had some lovely events already this term with Yr 5 participating in the local schools Fun Run and successfully getting several runners through to the final against the other WGC school 'Sports Families'. They all did very well in the final too and we were so proud of all the Yr 5 children who ran for St John's.

We often have workshop days courtesy of North Herts Museum. These are always excellent and closely linked to our curriculum topics. This term Class 2 had Toy Workshop day which beautifully supported the topic of toys they were doing for history, looking at toys now and in the past, discussing materials they were made from and what was most popular in the past and now. It was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Class 4 had a real treat after we applied for a concert visit during the Hatfield House Music Festival. They went by coach to St Etheldreda's Church and watched a wonderful performance by the Purcell Orchestra, comprised of lots of young talent musicians, of Holst's Planet Suite (Mars, Venus, Pluto and Uranus). A well known children's author and illustrator was there to create an art piece to reflect each of the pieces as they were played. What an experience for these children! They were so amazed by what they heard and saw and came out absolutely buzzing. We were then presented with one of the art pieces a few weeks later!

We are so thrilled to be able to be back in church (although temporarily halted currently) and some of our school choir were able to sing at the church Harvest Festival, along with the church choir members. So wonderful to see them all together again and what a beautiful sound they made!

**S**t Albans Verulamium Museum is always an exciting educational visit and no less this year for Class 3 as they, like many other classes, have not been able to have a school trip. Exciting in itself but such a great day of learning and exploring what life was like in Roman times and helping them with their history topic this term.

Our final mention this time is for our simple but very moving Remembrance Day Service on our school playground, which we were able to go ahead with and invite parents to as it was outside and socially distanced. Children in classes 2, 3, and 4 had covered three large crosses with poppies they had made and Class 1 made their own wreath. We gathered together, prayed together, listened to Bethany play the Last Post on her trumpet and had our silence together, before laying our tributes to the fallen. *Pictures inside front cover*

**W**e are hoping our choir will join the church 4pm Carols by Candlelight Service on the 19<sup>th</sup> December all being well!

**Mandy Evans** Headteacher

**Richard Cuthbert**, Chair of Governors, writes:

**T**he School are looking for a new Clerk for the Governors. If you are interested please ring the School, or contact me, [richard.cuthbert@stjohns561.herts.sch.uk](mailto:richard.cuthbert@stjohns561.herts.sch.uk)



The School LSA has developed a St John's 150<sup>th</sup> celebration gin with 'Spirit of Hertfordshire'



local distillers. Again do contact me or the School if you would like to order bottles for Christmas pressies etc... The school get a donation for every bottle sold. One supporter, knowing the school's motto, 'I came that they may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10), texted: "It's the holy spirit!"... :-)

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**R**ecently I read about a book called *The Woodchip Handbook*, by Ben Raskin. My interest was sparked and I bought it, then read it from cover to cover!! It has many gems that are relevant to the church gardens. We are currently renovating the hedges on the church boundaries, it is a task that will continue over several years. The front hedge of Western Red Cedar has seen the most progress so far, but we are still taxed with managing the ivy which clings around its base – cue ‘Woodchip’ – to encourage the cedar and suppress the ivy. The North Hedge, facing the school is an even bigger challenge. A third of it has been nearly obliterated by the School Sycamore overhanging it, so we are planting Hazel, Holly and Yew saplings that will take time to grow but will tolerate the darker environment better- cue ‘Woodchip’- to nourish the saplings.



The next third of the North Hedge has healthy Hawthorn, Privet and Holly in it but also lots of ivy– cue ‘Woodchip’ - to improve the soil. The final third is yet to be renovated as there is only so much that the little band of gardeners can do.

The author of the *Woodchip Handbook* thinks hedges should have a focus on wildlife, which is obvious in the countryside, but in the church gardens there are other considerations including the thoughts of families of those buried or remembered within it and although ivy is good for wildlife it is a rampant weed as well.

**H**aving read the book I am delighted to report that *Woodchip* is the answer: laid deeply, it will suppress the ivy, enable a rustic path to define an area of meadow and feed the saplings and shrubs in the hedges. There is much more to report on this book but I am very glad I read it. I could have left it alone untouched and then I would not have benefitted from the information and advice within.

There is a similarity with the Bible here: it needs to be read, it has lots of relevant answers for today and it will sustain you – cue the Diocesan Strategy to “Go deeper into God”

P.S. I already have some snowdrops out in my garden, they will be over by the time the majority of varieties are blooming in February -when we will offer an invitation to view these along with tea and cake in aid of church funds.



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I'm not sure what kind of mask you prefer. I prefer the cloth ones as I find that the disposable type start to irritate and tickle my skin rather quickly. And I find the elastic more comfortable on my cloth masks too. Would I ever have started an article with these sentences even two years ago? Getting back to the elastic, I have noticed that the repeated on/off routine eventually stretches the elastic and it snaps or goes saggy.



School life can certainly hasten that process. In a typical day I think I put on or take off a mask about fifty times. **On** for walking the corridors between classrooms and for queuing in the canteen, **off** when patrolling outside the building; **on** for working closely with individual students, **off** when standing at the front of a class addressing a whole class of students.

The rules also keep changing depending on the local levels of Covid infection. Currently my school has low levels of Covid and so we can follow the advice to encourage the students to remove masks during lessons – it is so much easier to engage with students that way.

However, until only a week or so ago the advice was for the students to wear masks during lessons. This yo-yo approach seems frustrating but probably is the most appropriate way to reflect ever-changing levels of infection in schools. After all, we could never adopt social distancing in a crowded school environment and so masks are the key defensive measure indoors.

As we head towards the end of term and the Christmas holidays school feels remarkably normal overall. The students seem content, perhaps apart from those facing imminent GCSE mock exams beginning next week! Hopefully we won't have to be considering more stringent Covid measures as we look ahead to the start of next term.

The Queen has named The Venerable **Jo Kelly-Moore**, Archdeacon of Canterbury as the next Dean of St Albans. The Dean leads the ministry of the Cathedral, the mother church of the Diocese of St Albans and one of the Church of England's 42 cathedrals.

Dean-Elect Jo's appointment follows the departure of the Very Revd Jeffrey John who was Dean from 2003 to 2020 and who is now an Anglican Chaplain in Paris. The appointment of the Dean is made by the Crown on the advice of the Bishop and other leading figures in the diocese following a rigorous selection process involving a church and civic panel. The panel was chaired by the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, emphasising the reach of the Cathedral across all the communities of the Diocese of St Albans.



Speaking about the appointment, the **Bishop of St Albans, Dr Alan Smith**, said: "This is a timely moment to welcome a new Dean to the Cathedral and the Diocese after eighteen months of lockdown. Jo brings outstanding experience to our Cathedral from Holy Trinity Cathedral, Auckland, Aotearoa, New Zealand and from a leading post in the Church of England as Archdeacon of Canterbury – a post also playing a key part in the ministry of Canterbury Cathedral with its international dimension.

"That makes Dean Jo well placed to build on the legacy of Dean Jeffrey in establishing public understanding of St Albans Cathedral as the home of Britain's First Saint, St Alban. She will commend herself to the community in St Albans and more widely in the diocese and beyond through her warmth and the sense of quiet command that she conveys. I warmly welcome her."

*The new Dean is being inducted at 4 pm on Saturday December 4th. You can apply for tickets or watch it streamed on YouTube—details on the Cathedral website.*



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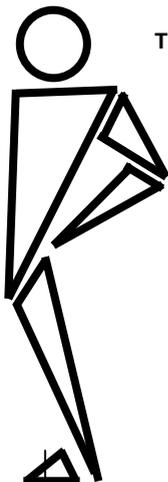
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We enjoyed a meeting of the members of LLHG in early November at the Long and Short. It was an informal meeting, where the future of the group was discussed. We decided to dedicate 2022 to working with St John's School to celebrate the school's 150th Anniversary. Our guests were Richard and Sarah Cuthbert, who requested our help to mark this special year. The group will fully support the celebrations by offering images, articles and going into to the school to talk to the children. It was also suggested the children produce a display for the 2022 Fete with help from the group. The 150th Anniversary date falls around the time of the Lemsford Fete 2022.

On the 4th May 1872, the first entry in the Head Teacher's Logbook was made by Mrs Mary Seaman, (stern lady in middle of image below) the first Head Teacher. On that day, seventy-seven children, ranging in age from three to thirteen, were enrolled. They were divided into two classes - one being taken by Mrs Seaman and the other by her husband Walter, her assistant. They were all taught in one room, the room now used as the dining room in the oldest part of the school. The school was approved by the Government on the 16th May 1872.



Suggestions raised at the meeting were:

**Timeline** Events marked in a timeline from 1872 to present day. All the head teachers, world events (i.e., WW1) and local events (i.e. opening of the new school canteen).

**Adopt a Child** Find an image of child who attended the school, and a pupil writes about their life and the world around them. When they attended the school and when they left and what they did.

**Newspaper** Pick a year for a group of children and ask them to produce a newspaper/school magazine. An example of this would be 1921, when Mr William C. Ladbury was headmaster, Brocket Hall was bought by Sir Charles Nall-Cain of the Node Codicote, later to become the first Lord Brocket.

**Memories** Ask anyone who went to St John's School to write a short memory of the school. An example of a memory is the picture ca 1961 (*inside back cover*) donated by the late and much missed member of the group Jean Dance. Are you in it? A clue is the headmaster top row second left Mr Dennis W. Jones (1960 - 1962). We have quite a few pictures of the school—an earlier one from 1941 is also shown.

**Monthly Events** The group will find 12 events (one for each month) and pass the information on to the school to discuss and where possible mark with a presentation at an assembly.

**Walks & Talks around the village** The group has offered to take groups of children out around the village and parish to understand the history of the area.

Richard will present these suggestions to the school. They will pick out the ones that are possible to achieve and use as part of the school curriculum as we appreciate that comes first. **If you have any ideas you wish to pass on please contact me at [info@lemsfordhistory.co.uk](mailto:info@lemsfordhistory.co.uk)**

**So to make 2022 a special year we need your help.** Everyone that went to St John's, family, friends etc, is invited to write a page about their favourite memories with if possible photos showing the happiest days of your life. Please send then to [info@lemsfordhistory.co.uk](mailto:info@lemsfordhistory.co.uk) We would end the year with a very special record of St John's 1872 – 2022 for past generations to read but, more importantly, the children of St John's to read and understand what a special school they are attending.



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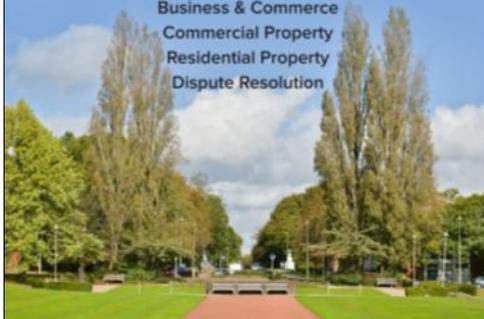
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**L**est we forget: we received an email on Remembrance Sunday. “My mother recently died, and her funeral was on the 11th November. Going through the family deed box I found a letter written to my grandfather, Charles Hubert (Bert) Wright who was a Lieutenant in the York and Lancaster Regiment. It was written by the sister of Pte Harry William (Jack) Welch on 11th November 1918. Her name was Helen Scott, and she lived in Stanborough. It would appear that my grandfather had sent his condolences to their family and this was the first confirmation of what the Welch (and Scott) family had feared . It read: (edited extracts)

Thank you very much for your letter received this morning. Needless to say this sad news was a terrible blow to us; we knew something must be wrong as my brother had written to us so regularly; we all inclined to the idea that he was a prisoner especially as we had not been notified that he was killed or wounded. It seemed to add to the bitterness of the news that it arrived on the very morning that fighting ceased! I am thankful indeed that the fighting is over but how I wish that my dear brother could have lived to see this day. When you have a few minutes to spare I wonder if you will let me know if his death was instantaneous & also if his grave is marked in any way. We are so anxious to hear all we can about him. I don't know where your home is but if ever you are near these parts, we should so like to talk with you; of course that may be out of the question. I wonder where the Battery officer's letter strayed? I have never received it.

*It just seemed apt that I found this letter on 11th November, (the day of my mother's funeral) and I felt its contents should be shared; the contents so heart breaking. I was very surprised to find your records after putting "harry welch stanborough" into a search engine on Saturday. Your notes/pages echoed the contents of the letter especially the part about only finding out about Harry's death on the Armistice.”* Dr Paul Wright

This information was loaded onto our WW1 website including images of the original letters provided by Paul. See them in full at [www.lemsfordww1.co.uk/HarryWilliamWelch.html](http://www.lemsfordww1.co.uk/HarryWilliamWelch.html)

This letter also connects to St John's 2022 as Helen Scott was a school mistress. Please support LLHG and St John's School in 2022 by sending in images and memories to exhibit at the Lemsford Fete 2022 to [info@lemsfordhistory.co.uk](mailto:info@lemsfordhistory.co.uk)



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**D**ogs are tremendously important to us because of the affection they bestow as pets, and their utility. Guide dogs, Companion dogs, guard dogs, sheep dogs, sniffer dogs, retrievers—they are essential.

DNA tests show that dogs were bred from grey wolves, but exactly where is unclear. It seems that they were first taken up by hunter/gathers more than 15,000 years ago, well before agriculture was developed. One theory is that wolves adopted man rather than the other way around. Man was clever enough to track down meaty animals, but did not consume every bit of them, leaving scraps for the wolves. One can imagine dogs running alongside early man, lurking in the shadows of their campfires, protecting them while they slept.



Gradually they became part of family groupings, as witnessed by graves where high status humans were buried with their dogs. But in Biblical times dogs were not so highly valued. Proverbs 26:11 “Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool who repeats his folly.” Revelation 22:15 “Outside {the City of God} are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practises falsehood.” Psalm 22: “For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet.”

There is one passage though that shows dogs in a better light. Luke 16:19: “There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.” Traditionally this was interpreted as dogs being uncaring, but the modern view is that dogs were in some way performing a healing function.

**M**uch has changed in the last 2,000 years because of selective breeding. The oldest modern dog breeds are no more than 500 years old, and most date only from about 150 years ago. One thing has not changed though —they could not do without us, and we without them.

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Lord Jesus Christ,  
your birth at Bethlehem  
draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching  
earth:  
accept our heartfelt praise  
as we worship you,  
our Saviour and our eternal God.  
Amen.

*The Church of England*

*And  
finally ....*

**MONK WHO  
CLAIMS**  
**HE SAW FACE OF  
JESUS IN HIS  
MARGARINE TUB**

By Mairi Allam  
Chief Editor

FULL STORY  
PAGE 6

Said: "I can't  
believe it's  
not Buddha"

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The image shows a woman in a Buddhist-style orange and black robe holding a margarine tub. The tub has a picture of a Buddha's face on it. The background is black with white text. The text is arranged in a way that looks like a newspaper headline. The woman's eyes are closed, and she has a serious expression.



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# TOGETHER

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