‘Ashes-to-Go’

Southwark churches hit the pavements on Ash Wednesday offering ‘Ashes-to-Go’ to commuters, shoppers - and bus drivers!

Whilst across the Diocese last year’s Palm Crosses were burnt and Lent was ‘marked’ (literally) in church services - in the more built-up parishes clergy and laity took ashes out to the streets in a Lenten outreach.

In West Lewisham, for example, Deanery churches teamed up to offer ashes at key locations - Forest Hill & Honor Oak stations, Sydenham High Street and the SavaCentre.

The Revd Edd Stock described it as ‘a fab morning’... “A total of 55 people accepted ashing from the team and 170 prayer cards were given out explaining Ash Wednesday and Lent”.

A Lenten journey to the land of the ‘living stones’

On Monday 19 February, 84 pilgrims travelled together from Heathrow to Tel Aviv where they were joined by one pilgrim who had already travelled. They are taking part in the 2018 Southwark Diocesan Holy Land Pilgrimage, led by Bishop Christopher and Dean Andrew. They will visit sites of significance in the story of Jesus’ birth, life, death and resurrection - and meet the people of the Holy Land, the ‘living stones’. For all of them, this Pilgrimage offers the possibility of new insights into their faith story and a chance to see things from a different and ever changing viewpoint. It is often said that those who visit the Holy Land are never the same again.

Find out about where they went, what they saw - and their reflections at https://southwarkpilgrimages.com

Inside THE BRIDGE...this month

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PLUS parish news and pictures and

Faith is simple and very complicated

Being Christian and being a Christian are not quite the same thing. Jesus said love God and love your neighbour as yourself. So, Christianity for us subscribers should mean a conscious, careful way of treating other people, whoever they may be - and thus being inspired by the power of goodness that is God, which we are often not able to recognise or be sure about. Goodness can be so complicated, barely discernible. Faith too is simple and very complicated.

A really Christian deed is an action that all agree is unusually, morally good, and often not easily performed. This sense of what ‘being Christian’ and Christianity are about is in the language and all around us - shared even with the many people who feel themselves atheists. This usually means they cannot believe in the existence of God as the one eternal being in the life through which we so fleetingly pass, though God is no thing (as Rupert Shortt’s book says).

Our creator’s understanding of peace and love, the understanding we can find in our core being, was the life of Jesus who died and rose. The reality of that goodness and the nature of Jesus’s gospel teaching continue to resonate. Everybody surely believes in the extraordinary power of goodness. So what sets church people and those who do not do church apart? Christians following Jesus have no monopoly in their call to disciplehood.

The laity are the people, us. Clergy are called to service of the other. We laity are called to think of our faith, feel our mutual dependency, and try and recognise the hard truth of what loving neighbours means: our enemies, our friends. As people we are no better able to rise to the challenge than the leaders were in Old Testament times. But now we have the model of Jesus and the saints.

Of course the good news is not all about activism. If we are gifted for leadership we will be called. We may serve what God wants in every day in whatever way we can. Let us be not mobilised. The paths to answer any call are many and narrow. To be lost may be to find oneself.

Tom Sutcliffe

Lancelot Andrewes Medal for ‘invaluable part of the team’

The Revd Ann Gurney was presented with the Lancelot Andrewes medal by Bishop Christopher at a service in Holy Trinity Church, Ethelham in December. The service also marked her ‘retirement’ after serving the parish as a priest for 24 years, working with three incumbents, all of whom found her ‘an invaluable part of the team’.

In 1994 Ann Gurney was one of the first women to be ordained priest in the Church of England. However, she had already served the Church for forty years having made a Deaconess in 1954. In that time she served as a full time Deaconess in Lewisham, as Warden of Berridge House College of Education, as Principal of that same Gilmore House (in Clapham) where she herself had trained, and then as the Bishop of London’s Adviser for Lay Ministry.

Following her Ordination, she joined Holy Trinity Parish Church. The Very Rev Jeffery John, Dean of St Albans who was Vicar at the time, recalls “Bishop Roy phoned me up, and actually asked me, ‘Would you like a present?’ (meaning Ann). After that I always saw Ann as a gift of God, and I was not wrong! Her centred, focused, prayerful ministry was the perfect foil to the rather more neurotic (or chaotic) approach of both Father Graham Owen and me, so I felt we made a good team”.

Bishop Roy was also a paid in a message from another former Vicar, now Bishop of Dunwich, the Rt Revd Mike Harrison, who wrote: “You have given fantastic service to Holy Trinity and indeed to the wider Church over the course of your ministry and it was a true blessing to have you as part of the ministry team. I have lots of fond memories of you and your wisdom, and given how much I learned from you, I can only begin to imagine how your ministry has been a blessing to so many”.

The Revd Brett Ward, Holy Trinity’s current Vicar said, “I’ve never ceased to appreciate her contribution as an encouraging colleague and a wise – and forthright – sounding-board. Her presence has been a source of insight, clarity and good sense, and it will continue to be – this is not a eulogy! We’ve all consistently appreciated her thoughtful preaching, which is unfailingly insightful, well-constructed and sound (and always containing something of her sense of humour which is both quirky and self-deprecating). And beneath all of that, there is her warm and generous heart.

In his sermon at the service Bishop Christopher said, “Ann has served the Parish and Congregation of Holy Trinity for the better part of a quarter of a century, unfairly humble and modest, steadfast and reliable. In the forty years she was made Deaconess, Ann must, I feel sure, have looked forward in hope to the time when it would be possible for her to follow her calling to be a Priest. Yet that very looking forward may perhaps have added an urgency and depth to the way she used the time between.

“It was to honour just such service, faithfully rendered over many decades without thought of earthly reward, that I had the Lancelot Andrewes medal struck and so it was right and proper to confer it upon her”.

Tom Sutcliffe

A view from THE BRIDGE

THE BRIDGE

To be lost may be to find oneself.

cloth, of a widow whose little gift was greatest because it was

and inaction.

vision. But answering the call comes variously - also in silence

model of Jesus and the saints.

Israelites were in Old Testament times. But now we have the

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Tom Sutcliffe
Students ask: ‘What makes a good city?’

Senior church leaders gather in South London

Senior church leaders gathered at Southwark Cathedral on 23 January to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. They met at the invitation of Churches Together in South London (CTSL), Bishop Christopher invited the leaders to share plans for 2018 and many common areas emerged, including CTSL’s upcoming Forum on 22 March at Livability in North Greenwich, which will take forward initiatives to tackle knife crime in the capital.

CTSL’s, Claire Crowley said, “It is a powerful witness to fellowship between denominations to see this large group of Christian leaders joining together to pray, reflect, discuss and eat together at a time when unity and partnership, is crucial for our city and world”. Photo (left-right): Bishop Paul Hendricks, Roman Catholic Bishop of Southwark; Revd Phil Barnard, Baptist Association Team Leader, Archimandrite Christodoulos Persopolou, Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Camberwell Archbishop Angaelos, Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London Claire Crowley Revd Dr Jongikaya Zibile, Chair Methodist London District Bishop Dr Bennett Thomas Power of the Living Word Ministries International (PLWMI) Bishop Moses Owusu-Sekyere, Apostolic Pastoral Congress Fred Ashmore, London Quakers

On a cold and rainy day at the end of January, a group of 26 Year 8 students met up with a team from the Diocese at the News UK building, near London Bridge.

Laura Tuhou writes

The students, from three C of E schools – St Martin-in-the-Fields, Tulse Hill; St Mary Magdalene, Greenwich Peninsula; and St Saviour’s and St Olave’s, Elephant & Castle - are taking part in this year’s Diocesan schools initiative, Battersea to the Barrier, which focuses on the question, ‘What makes a good city?’

At News UK we attended a learning session about fake news, and why it’s important for reporters to check their facts and sources. The students also got some hands-on experience investigating and reporting local news - they were tasked with writing and presenting a 90-second bulletin about top stories they’d researched using newspapers and their mobile phones.

Following a very windswept dash across the road and a break for lunch, we were treated to a guided tour of Southwark Cathedral with the Dean and his colleagues. Several learning stations had been set up to demonstrate how real life events, at or near the Cathedral, have been translated into news media. Topics included the sinking of the Marchioness; still-visible bomb damage to the building from the Blitz; and the 2017 attack on Borough Market and London Bridge. The students learned that it’s important to keep telling our city’s stories, because they help us to learn from the past and build resilience for the future.

The visit to Southwark Cathedral and News UK was the third in a series of six events throughout the school year, each with a different theme. Previous days included visits to Battersea Power Station (looking at real estate development), St John’s Waterloo and the Southbank Centre (learning about art in the digital age and community-building through theatre arts). The next trip will be on 12 March, for a visit to City Hall to learn about governing a city and the role of democracy.

Laura Tuhou is Research Assistant (Strategic Projects), Southwark Diocese

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THE LEWISHAM ALMSHOUSE CHARITIES OF WILLIAM HATCLIFFE AND ABRAHAM COLFE, REGISTERED NUMBER 228514 (THE “CHARITY”) CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CHARITY’S BENEFICIARY CLASS

The Charity is considering amending its beneficiary class and the trustees are undertaking a consultation to seek the views of those living within the London Borough of Lewisham who may be affected by the proposed changes.

For further details and to respond to this consultation, please visit www.lpchareties.co.uk where the draft Scheme, an explanation document and a response form can be downloaded/completed. Or write to request further information to:

Consultation Information
The Finance & Administration Manager
Clark’s Office, Lloyd Court, Slagrove Place.
London SE13 7LP
E-mail: admin@lpcharities.co.uk

All responses to this consultation must be received by no later than 9th March 2018.

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Be the host with the toast!

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If hosting a Big Brekkie is your cup of tea order your free fundraising pack at cawweek.org/southwarkbridgebrekkie
Cloud of ‘Doubt’ - Southwark Cathedral’s Lent Installation

Since 2012, Lent in Southwark Cathedral has been accompanied by art installations which aim to make visitors to the Cathedral think and reflect.

This year, internationally renowned artist Susie MacMurray is displaying a new work, ‘Doubt’, until Good Friday, 30 March. This new site specific installation is created in direct response to St John’s, Dormansland, anniversary of restoration. The restoration project centred on the church's new sanctuary like a dark cloud. Doubt was conceived through the connections of the weight of darkness and uncertainty suspended from above, and stems from a conversation Susie had with a soldier who had served in Afghanistan who spoke about feeling a dark weight hovering behind his neck all the time he was in the war zone.

A former classical musician, Susie retrained as an artist and now has an international exhibition profile, showing regularly in the USA and Europe as well as in the UK.

The Dean, Andrew Nunn, said: “Clouds feature a great deal in scripture and in the Christian tradition. Popular imagination might expect faith to be lived out in bright, clear sunshine, but from that moment when Moses climbed the holy mountain, shrouded in cloud, and experienced the presence of God, it has been a familiar experience and theme. The Gospel writers described a similar event in the Transfiguration of Jesus and as Jesus died on the cross the clouds brought night into day and the onlookers were plunged into darkness. ‘The medieval mystical tradition in this country did not shy away from the cloud which can exist in the world of faith. ‘In The Cloud of Unknowing’, a 14th century book written anonymously, the writer says, ‘Beat with a sharp dart of longing love upon this cloud of unknowing which is between you and your God.’”

Susie MacMurray’s installation draws us into this apophatic tradition. We recognise our doubts and sense the darkness but beat both ‘with a sharp dart of longing love.’”

‘All Change’ on the DAC

Bishop Christopher and other guests joined members of the Diocesan Advisory Committee at a special lunch before its February meeting to welcome Philip Fletcher as the new DAC Chair.

Presentations were made to Paul Parkinson, who has chaired the DAC for the past five years, and to the Revd Canon Dr John Thewlis, who has been an adviser for 26 years. Warm tributes were paid to them both.

Left to right are: New Chair of the DAC, Philip Fletcher
Former Chair of the DAC, Paul Parkinson
The Revd Canon Dr John Thewlis, retiring as DAC Adviser after 28 years and (far left) Bishop Christopher and the Chancellor of the Diocese, Philip Petchey

St John’s marks 25th anniversary of restoration

St John’s, Dormansland, marked the 25th Anniversary of the restoration of the church following a devastating fire, with a weekend of celebrations on 27-29 January 2018. It included an exhibition of pictures, artefacts and reminiscences from the fire and restoration, a concert centred on the church’s new organ (installed following the fire), and a Service of Thanksgiving.

The fire took place on 26 October 1990, destroying the original pipe organ, stained glass windows and chancel roof, leaving it open to the elements. Firemen knocked a hole in the nave roof to prevent further damage.

The restoration project included replacing what was lost, casting a new floor slab, fitting a damp course, constructing a dais, installing a new organ and vestry, and conserving water-damaged fabrics and documents.

A replacement pipe organ was considered prohibitively expensive, and exceeded the insurance cover. However, thanks to the expertise of church member and organist Richard Williams, the restoration team were put in touch with Ernest Copeman Hart, who built ‘the Rolls-Royce of electronic organs’ at vastly cheaper cost. The organ was then enlarged to double its size.

The anniversary concert, entitled ‘The Power and Prazz of the Organ’, was led by internationally renowned organist and bass baritone Laurence Williams, a former organist and choir master at St John’s, supported by his father Richard Williams and a chorus of professional singers and musicians (photo below).

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THE BRIDGE... March 2018 5
Celebrating lay leaders: lay ministry in Southwark

How is God calling us to live as disciples in the whole of our lives? That is the question being asked by a new advisory group set up to explore how best the Diocese can support and encourage those in the Church who are not ordained.

One of Bishop Christopher’s key priorities, as set out in Strategy for Ministry, is to empower the laity at every level of Diocesan life, and the Lay Leadership and Lay Ministry Advisory Group (LL&LMAG) is central to taking this work forward.

“This is about culture change,” says group chair Anne Deering.

“We’re talking about a huge shift in focus, from inside the ‘gathered’ church to out in the world in the ‘sent’ church, for our Monday-to-Saturday lives. And this change needs to be embedded in everything we do.”

The first stage of that shift is well under way. Since the end of last year, the LL&LMAG has been working with 20 pilot parishes to assess where the Diocese already stands in terms of lay leadership and lay ministry, gathering good news stories and information on what is currently working well.

The hope of the LL&LMAG is to find ways to show that people’s service in the “sent” church is just as valuable as more church-based activities.

In the words of the Revd Canon Jeanne Roberts, Director of Vocations and another member of the advisory group, “the aim is to re-energise the whole people of God in the Diocese, to make them realise that they are valued, and that they have a life of discipleship.”

Whole-life discipleship

But living as a disciple of Jesus – at work, at the school gates, in the community – takes confidence. Part of the advisory group’s work is to discover the best ways of supporting people in living out their faith on the front line. It will report on this to Diocesan Synod in July, with a view to trialling various ideas and recommendations.

Sharing best practice is already emerging as a theme. Adam West, one of the lay champions working on the project, whose church, Holy Trinity and St Matthias in Tulse Hill, runs many community projects including his own men’s group, believes that communication is key.

He describes how a member of his congregation set up a group for people who were socially excluded. “It started small and it’s been going for five or six years now. But it does need encouragement. I guess that’s what having the pilot parishes is about: finding out how we got to where we are, and how we can help others to do that. And I’m sure there are things happening in other churches that we could learn from as well.”

He also stresses the need for lay people to be given the freedom to step up to leadership roles because, “actually, that’s what we’re called to. We’re called to do the stuff Jesus would do if he were here in physical form. It’s what Christian worship should be about, doing those things that need doing.”

Out in the world

Hundreds of people in the Diocese are already getting on with just that. Over at Guy’s and St Thomas’, for example, scores of chaplains and pastoral assistants offer support to the 15,000-plus staff, as well as thousands of the patients who pass through the hospital’s doors each year. Rosy Skinner, at 81, is the longest serving chaplain there, having started in the mid-1990s alongside one full-time chaplain and one other volunteer.

These days, visits patients in a rehabilitation centre in Brixton, most of whom are elderly people who have had falls or strokes. She offers to pray with them if they wish, or just keeps them company, and sometimes finds herself comforting friends and relatives who can be distressed by the changes in their loved ones.

Rosy is trained as a Reader and preaches at Holy Trinity Clapham once a term but says that she feels more called to minister from the pews than the pulpit. “I find that lay leadership is really important to me, because my father was a priest, my brother was a priest. I just feel that I can do far more being part of the congregation and talking to people. I’ve always wanted to do ministry out in the world.”

In a hotel in South Croydon, meanwhile, Rosie Edser spends every Wednesday running a school for between nine and 10 refugee children under the umbrella of the Croydon Refugee Day Centre. The hotel is one of two in the area where recent arrivals are housed while they wait to hear the outcome of their asylum applications.

The difficulty at first was finding somewhere to hold it. The families were struggling to get their hands on three things they needed to travel: buggies, warm coats and Oystercards. But Rosie worked on her relationship with the hotel manager and had a breakthrough. “They decided to let us meet there in the hotel itself. There’s no communal space that we can hire, but on their good will we can go in the dining room.”

Now the group meets to do maths and English, and to play games and do jigsaws. “They love jigsaws,” says Rosie. “I had an 18-year-old Eritrean boy the other day who said, ‘Please, please can I do this Thomas the Tank Engine jigsaw,’ just because he was intrigued – he’d never met one before.”

Rosie and her fellow volunteers provide a service that is badly needed but, she says, they get just as much out of it. “Sometimes they hear a siren and they immediately flush and start crying, thinking that there’s about to be shooting. And it’s a kind of privilege to go, ‘Welcome to England, you’re safe.’ Most of the time you’re the first friendly face they’ve seen since they arrived.”

Work on the fringes of the church can come in many forms. Andrea Campanale is a lay pioneer leader of the Sacred Space community in Kingston, a core community of about 12 people who seek to find new ways of being Good News in the community.

Sacred Space have set up stalls at Kingston University fresher’s fairs, helping students to think about their being well in terms of body, mind and spirit. They visit steam punk fairs several times a year, where they seek to build relationships and offer to pray with people. They also attend New Age fairs, which is where Andrea’s calling began, when she first became aware of an interest...
The Bridge... March 2018

Leadership in action
Karen Waple, from Christ Church South Nutfield and another lay champion, has also experienced the positive benefits of taking on new challenges. She has worked with children’s groups, been on the PCC and is now the pastoral team coordinator. But one of her biggest tests is getting up to preach, “People say, ‘Oh, you sound really confident.’ Well, no, I’m not at all. I am very nervous,” she says, “but it’s a good thing to get involved in. It makes you feel part of the community.”

Plus, she says, it has inspired others: “A couple of people have said to me when I’ve led a service, ‘Well, if you can do it I can do it’.”

Clearly, leadership doesn’t necessarily look the way you expect it to, as Busola Ade Ojo of St John’s Deptford discovered when she took part in the Whole Life Worship series.

St John’s has a very active congregation – the church’s mission statement is “everyone a worshipper, everyone a minister and everyone a missionary.” Even so, Busola and her fellow students found it eye-opening when the leader of the training put up photographs of the people with a role at St John’s and asked whether or not they saw them as ministers too.

“It just gave us a greater understanding of what worshipping God is,” she says. “We don’t see the people that work in the church as ministers normally, just the reverend who is. But every single person who plays a part in that church is a minister.”

CONTINUES OVERLEAF
Celebrating lay leadership and lay ministry in Southwark Diocese… continued

The discipleship course, Fruitfulness on the Frontline, gave Lis Vernon, of St Paul’s, a practical place to start living out her faith in the workplace. 

For Ruth Ruse, also at St Paul’s, it came as she was deciding what to do in her retirement. She now works with one of the church’s four mother–toddler groups and is also involved with the church school, reading one-to-one with children and accompanying the Year 6s on visits to a school for severely disabled pupils.

There’s a strand from Fruitfulness on the Frontline. ‘Make a difference wherever you are,’ says Ruth. ‘I think for me that was a particular challenge: I don’t just have to be sharing the Gospel in a more specific way. I can be a Christian and show my faith in all sorts of ways, and that’s what I’m trying to do in the context in which I volunteer.’

The centre opens every Tuesday, offering tea, coffee, companionship and a meal. In addition, a trained member of the congregation can provide benefits advice and help people with appeals and form-filling. The majority of the regulars are single men over 50, says Cath.

“We’ve found that there are a lot of single guys out there who are just a bit socially excluded, perhaps with mental health or substance abuse problems, quite lonely and a bit lost.”

Open Door offers them a space to chat. “To play table tennis and sometimes to pray – we build up relationships with people,” says Cath, “so you tell if someone’s got something that’s particularly troubling them, and there have been opportunities to pray with people.”

Primarily, though, it’s a place to give practical help, and, as Pauline says, “Meets a need within the community, and is clearly something that’s valued by the people who come.”

Building on ministry

In addition to discipleship and leadership, lay ministry is also under the spotlight, with the Diocese planning to significantly increase and diversify the current range of licensed and commissioned ministries on offer, and to affirm and celebrate the variety of ministries that are already in existence.

It’s about continuing to value the Readers, SPAs and Church Army evangelists that the Diocese already has and extending that recognition to others, showing that everyone’s work for the Kingdom is equally important, whether they are clergy or youth workers, street pastors or pioneers.

In the words of the Diocesan Director of Vocations, “We can work out the best way of discerning and enabling lay ministries to flourish so that everyone can fulfill their God-given potential and calling, and become the person they were created to be.”

One of this invisible army of volunteers is Rosemary Hill, Reader at St John with St Andrew, Peckham. She has been a mainstay of the Church for 20 years, operating as PCC Secretary, running an ecumenical discussion group and more.

It stems from her family history of service, she says: “My father was a churchwarden and local councillor and would bend over backwards to make things right for other people. And we would joke that whenever anyone had trouble in our village, my mother would take Marigolds (rubber gloves) and go and cook, clean or look after.”

Even so, it took her years to find her vocation as a Reader: “I’m a bit like Jonah. I ran away from it for donkeys’ years.” It wasn’t until she had left her job in adult education and joined the Children’s Society that she realised where God might be leading her. “You can almost see that I fell into it, really,” she says. “I fell in the water and I got thrown up by the whale.”

“Since being licensed, Rosemary has valued the ongoing support of her vicar and a mentoring scheme she took part in several years ago. “I think that is very useful,” she says, “having someone to go to perhaps every 18 months, to say, ‘Well, this is what I’m doing. What more can I do, or what less can I do?’” Because I think that’s one of the issues – actually knowing when to do less, so you can try to empower others to take over the roles you’ve been doing.”

Children and families worker Rachel Gardner (right) also values the external support she gets. She is employed by St Peter’s Woodmansterne and is part of the Reigate Deaneary children and youth group set up by Diocesan consultant Hugh Ruddell-Smith. “I think it has been a really helpful network,” she says. “People say they value talking about what’s working well or the challenges they’re facing, and chatting it through with others who are going through similar things.”

Like Rosemary, Rachel took a while to find her vocation, and applied for the role only at the fourth time of asking. “I just woke up and I felt like God was saying, ‘If they haven’t found anyone, actually you’re meant to be doing this.’”

The hope of the advisory group is that, ultimately, everyone in the Diocese will be able to find how they are called, whether that is in a traditional lay role or forging a new path in the community.

As Diocesan Secretary Ruth Martin concludes: “Minute by minute, day by day, we are all called to what it means to be a Christian, which isn’t always easy. Lay leadership is not about who does what in church, it’s about whole-life discipleship.”

The Lay Leadership and Lay Ministry Advisory Group will report to the Diocesan Synod in July.

If you have been inspired by any of these stories to take part in the consultation or volunteer to undertake a pilot study, or if you simply want to share your views, contact the advisory group through Charles Hudson-Beddoes, Assistant Secretary to the Diocesan Synod, at charles.hudson-beddoes@southwark.anglican.org

Lis Vernon, of St Paul’s Fruitfulness on the Frontline, The discipleship course, Fruitfulness on the Frontline, gave Lis Vernon, of St Paul’s, a practical place to start living out her faith in the workplace. 

For Ruth Ruse, also at St Paul’s, it came as she was deciding what to do in her retirement. She now works with one of the church’s four mother–toddler groups and is also involved with the church school, reading one-to-one with children and accompanying the Year 6s on visits to a school for severely disabled pupils.

There’s a strand from Fruitfulness on the Frontline. ‘Make a difference wherever you are,’ says Ruth. ‘I think for me that was a particular challenge: I don’t just have to be sharing the Gospel in a more specific way. I can be a Christian and show my faith in all sorts of ways, and that’s what I’m trying to do in the context in which I volunteer.’

The centre opens every Tuesday, offering tea, coffee, companionship and a meal. In addition, a trained member of the congregation can provide benefits advice and help people with appeals and form-filling. The majority of the regulars are single men over 50, says Cath.

“We’ve found that there are a lot of single guys out there who are just a bit socially excluded, perhaps with mental health or substance abuse problems, quite lonely and a bit lost.”

Open Door offers them a space to chat. “To play table tennis and sometimes to pray – we build up relationships with people,” says Cath, “so you tell if someone’s got something that’s particularly troubling them, and there have been opportunities to pray with people.”

Primarily, though, it’s a place to give practical help, and, as Pauline says, “Meets a need within the community, and is clearly something that’s valued by the people who come.”

Building on ministry

In addition to discipleship and leadership, lay ministry is also under the spotlight, with the Diocese planning to significantly increase and diversify the current range of licensed and commissioned ministries on offer, and to affirm and celebrate the variety of ministries that are already in existence.

It’s about continuing to value the Readers, SPAs and Church Army evangelists that the Diocese already has and extending that recognition to others, showing that everyone’s work for the Kingdom is equally important, whether they are clergy or youth workers, street pastors or pioneers.

In the words of the Diocesan Director of Vocations, “We can work out the best way of discerning and enabling lay ministries to flourish so that everyone can fulfill their God-given potential and calling, and become the person they were created to be.”

One of this invisible army of volunteers is Rosemary Hill, Reader at St John with St Andrew, Peckham. She has been a mainstay of the Church for 20 years, operating as PCC Secretary, running an ecumenical discussion group and more.

It stems from her family history of service, she says: “My father was a churchwarden and local councillor and would bend over backwards to make things right for other people. And we would joke that whenever anyone had trouble in our village, my mother would take Marigolds (rubber gloves) and go and cook, clean or look after.”

Even so, it took her years to find her vocation as a Reader: “I’m a bit like Jonah. I ran away from it for donkeys’ years.” It wasn’t until she had left her job in adult education and joined the Children’s Society that she realised where God might be leading her. “You can almost see that I fell into it, really,” she says. “I fell in the water and I got thrown up by the whale.”

“Since being licensed, Rosemary has valued the ongoing support of her vicar and a mentoring scheme she took part in several years ago. “I think that is very useful,” she says, “having someone to go to perhaps every 18 months, to say, ‘Well, this is what I’m doing. What more can I do, or what less can I do?’” Because I think that’s one of the issues – actually knowing when to do less, so you can try to empower others to take over the roles you’ve been doing.”

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Sue Atkinson to run her 10th Marathon

Sue Atkinson, Bishop David’s wife, will be running her tenth marathon on 22 April – in London.

She has taken part in the London Marathon before several times, and also Edinburgh and North Kent.

Two years ago Sue ‘celebrated’ her 70th birthday by running the 100k (63 miles) Thames Path Challenge, from Putney Bridge to Henley on Thames to raise money for MacMillan Cancer Care.

She was joined by her son-in-law for the second half (photo right).

She has run for various charities including Christian Aid, but most of her sponsorship has been for NSPCC. Sue has a passionate concern for ChildLine - the phone service set up by Dame Esther Rantzen to help and support abused children.

If you would like to support Sue in what is likely to be her last marathon (given the punishment she has been giving her knees!), please go to https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sue-atkinson3

St Augustine’s College celebrates its students

Andrew Nunn quoted Paul’s second letter to Timothy, ‘I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.’

“We know nothing about these women, save their names and the part they played in making Christ known; that faithfulness enduring in Timothy and in those he, in turn, inspired. A humble witness that doesn’t seek acclaim for itself but for the working of God’s love.” This was the ministry the Dean prayed the students would emulate.

During the service, students - lay readers, independent students, ordinands and curates - were presented by the Revd Dr Alan Gregory, Principal of St Augustine’s.

If you are interested in theological study, St Augustine’s offers courses from Certificate level up to Master’s Degree at Southwark and West Malling. There are also short courses and workshops, open to everyone. Details are available from 01732 252656 www.staugustinescollege.ac.uk.

Lay Champions reception

Lay Champions from all pilot parishes were invited to a recent reception at Bishop’s House as a ‘thank you’ for their involvement in the project and an opportunity for Lay Champions from different parishes to get to know each other.

The event was also an ideal opportunity to hear what practical activities are taking place across the churches of the Diocese as well as to share ideas for future actions.

In his address, Bishop Christopher highlighted the importance of the lay champions, and praised the ‘fantastic lay leadership in all our communities’ - noting that our work needs to be ‘led by the spirit’ and that ‘Christ is the one who calls’.

The Metropolitan Cathedral provided the backdrop for St Augustine’s College of Theology’s Celebration of Awards. In his sermon, the Very Revd Andrew Nunn quoted Paul’s second letter to Timothy, “I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.”

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Bach as he wrote it...

Bach's St Matthew Passion, first performed in Leipzig on Good Friday 1727, remains one of the most monumental and inspiring musical works of all time. Yet for many years after Bach's death, it was neglected, until Felix Mendelssohn resurrected it in 1828.

Martin Neary writes

I first fell under the spell of the St Matthew Passion when, in my teenage years, I was overwhelmed on hearing it at the Royal Festival Hall. Twenty years later, in 1978 at Winchester Cathedral, I directed the first complete performance in the UK using baroque instruments. The specialist players helped recreate the sounds for which Bach was composing.

These are the sounds we shall be hearing at St Michael and All Angels on Sunday, 11 March, when, as part of the Barnes Music Festival, the English Chamber Singers and the St Michael's Choir will be accompanied by period instrumentalists in what may well be the first such performance in Barnes.

The Riепeno choir, which sings the first and last chorales of part 1, will be the exceptional Tiffin Boys' Choir. Bach's Passions, however, are not only about the music; a Passion is also a ritual. In the St Matthew Passion the chorus of Choir 1 represents the disciples, Choir 2 the wider company of believers and the two choirs together the crowd.

In the course of the unfolding drama there are in the arias, moments of sublime contemplation, provided by the soloists and instrumentalists; there is also the essential element of audience participation, through the singing of the chorales, many of which have become familiar to English congregations.

The outstanding team of soloists will be led by tenor Robert Murray as the Evangelist, with Laurence Williams as Jesus, Colette Boushell (soprano), Elisabeth Marrow (contralto), Magnus Walker (tenor) and Michael Ronan (bass), who also sings the part of Pilate.

The performance begins at 7.15 pm. At 6.00 pm there will be an interval of 15 minutes, during which you are invited to bring simple picnics; the bar in the Community Centre will also be open. Tickets are £40, £30 reserved and £20, £15 unreserved from barnesmusicfestival.com (020 7223 5473).
Ongoing

* BEDDINGTON - Quiet @ St Mary's - 3rd Thursday each month 11am - 2pm. Various tools for quiet including labyrinth

* BOROUGH – St George the Martyr Community Cafe and TimeBank every Thursday 2pm to 4.30 pm. Meet people, get advice, help one another

* ELTHAM - Sing with an orchestra. Hymns, light classics, popular standards 3pm last Sunday each month (not Aug or Dec.) ElthamPk Methodist Ch.

March

Thinking about the Christian Faith: Lent talks in the South Croydon Benefice Thursday evenings at 7.30 pm at St Augustine's Church. Admission free; tea and coffee served from 7pm 1 March; What worship means to me - The Very Rev Andrew Nunn 8 March; Why I share Good News – Bishop Karowei 13 March; My understanding of God – Bishop Robert 15 March; Why I read the Bible – The Venerable Chris Skilton 22 March; Why I pray – Bishop Christopher

Friday 2 March

- NEW CROSS - Women's World Day of Prayer Service 7.30pm, St James' Church. 'All God's Creation is Very Good!' service from Suriname

Thursday 8 March

- HACKBRIDGE - Taizé at All Saints at 7pm First Sunday every month
- KEW - Homemade cakes and teas 3-5pm on Sundays at St Anne's Church. Suspended - until May (building works)
- WARGINGHAM – Water Aid lunches in St Ambrose Church Hall, 12-1pm first Wednesday
- ZIMBABWE ANGLICAN COMMUNITY at St Mary's, Newington – Shona Mass, Second Sunday of month at 2pm. Mothers' Union last Saturday 2pm

Saturday 3 March

- CROYDON - Come and Sing Handel's Four Coronation Anthems. Choral workshop and informal evening performances at St Matthew's Church with the Croydon Bach Choir. 10am until 6pm. Pre-registration and payment is essential at http://www.croydonbachchoir.org/events/

Tuesday 6 March

- KEW - 'Climate Change and A Faithful Christian Response' a conversation between Dr David Atkinson & Fr Nicholas King, SJ (Churches Together in Kew event) at The Barn Church, Atwood Avenue. 7.45pm - 9.15pm

Wednesday 7 March

- CATERHAM - Lunch with Music at St John's Church, Caterham Valley, Trinity Laban Chamber Musicians (Piano, Violin and 'Cello). Admission Free - Donations welcome. Tea/Coffee from 12.15: performance at 12.45 - 1.30pm. Bring your own 'Munch'

Friday 10 March

- REIGATE - 'Musical Reflections' by the Reigate and Redhill Choral Society. 7.30pm at St Mary's Church

Sunday 11 March

- DULWICH - Organ Recital by Richard Hobson at Christ's Chapel, Dulwich College. 7.45pm. Admission free

- DULWICH - Concordia Chamber Choir Spring Concert - 7.30pm at All Saints Church, Lovelace Road. Poulenc's Gloria & 4 Motets and works by Vaughan Williams, Messiaen & Stravinsky. Tickets £12 at the door, or £11 in advance from www.concordiachamberchoir.co.uk. (Conc available)

Lunchtime Concerts at Croydon Minster

- Fridays at 1.10pm
- 2 Michelle Candotti (Piano)
- 9 Alexa Campigilia (Cello), Ezgi Sarkicigog (Violin), Daniel Ruizhur (Piano)
- 16 Students from Whittgift School
- 23 Monasterium – new young professional vocal ensemble
- Free event - donations requested.

Saturday 17 March


March 2018

Tuesday 24 March

- EAST DULWICH - Sung Evensong, led by the Choir, at St John's Church, 6.00pm followed by a short organ recital by Andrew Chadney, (St Stephen's, Norbury). All welcome.
- OXTED - Fauré "Requiem" performed by Oxted Limpfield Choral Society, 7pm at Oxted URC

Wednesday 21 March

- WESTMINSTER - Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group 4 to 5 pm in the Hinsley Room, Mount Street Terrace. Discussion of Amoris laetitia - Pope Francis's encyclical on the family
- Friday 23 March & Sunday 25 March

April

Wednesday 18 April

- WESTMINSTER - Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group 4 to 5 pm in the Hinsley Room, Mount Street Terrace. Discussion of Amoris laetitia - Pope Francis's encyclical on the family
- CHELSEA - Getting ready for the Spirit: Making the most of liturgy from Ascension to Pentecost, including the opportunities of "Thy Kingdom Come". PRAXIS day 10.30am - 3.30pm at St Luke's Church, Sydney Street W3. The cost £20; £15 for affiliate members. No charge for ordinands, readers or others in training. Details from: http://praxisworship.org.uk/praxis_south.html

Saturday 21 April

- SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL - St Andrew's Cathedral School from Sydney in concert at 2pm to celebrate ANZAC Day.
- REIGATE - Organ concert at St Mary's Church at 7.30pm to celebrate the restoration of the Norman and Beard organ. Free but please book via www.stmaryreigate.org
CofE issues Lent Plastic Challenge

The Church of England has issued a Lent challenge to churches and congregations to give up single-use plastics – to reduce the actions which damage God’s Creation.

‘To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth’
The Anglican Communion Fifth Mark of Mission.

Over 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic have been produced since the 1950s. That’s enough plastic to cover every inch of the UK ankle-deep more than ten times over. Just 9% was recycled. A lot ends up in the sea – where by 2050 we could have more plastic than fish (by weight).

The ‘Lent Plastic Challenge’ has daily suggestions on how to cut down your use of single-use plastics – go to http://southwark.anglican.org/downloads/plastic_free_lent.pdf

Bishop to lead two Autumn pilgrimages

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Then from 8 – 12 October Bishop Christopher will lead a pilgrimage reflecting on the life and work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. It begins in Berlin at his parent’s home and takes in key sites associated with the plot to overthrow Hitler. They will visit the Jewish Memorial to the Holocaust, and Flossenburg where Bonhoeffer was executed.

Details can be had from the Rev Charles Bradshaw, 39 Mill Lane, Hurst Green RH8 9DF.

The Parish Support Fund and Southwark Vision - 2018 meetings

There’s still time to join in one of the meetings about the Parish Support Fund

• to share and celebrate the good news stories from around the Diocese;

• to become more familiar with our Diocesan aims and objectives for the coming years.

Date/time Archdeaconry
Thurs 1 March Reigate (11 for 11.30am – 1pm)
Mon 5 March Croydon (10 for 10.30am – 12)
Tues 6 March Southwark (7 for 7.30pm – 9pm)
Thurs 8 March Wandsworth (7 for 7.30pm – 9pm)
Mon 12 March Lewisham & Greenwich (7 for 7.30pm – 9pm)

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If you can’t attend the meeting in your Archdeaconry, you will be welcome on any of the other dates. All meetings will follow a similar pattern, being one and a half hours long with refreshments beforehand.

To give us some idea of numbers, it would be helpful if you could let us know if you are attending by email to psf@southwark.anglican.org or by phone to the Parish Giving Communications Officer, Gabby Parikh on 020 7939 9438.

The Bishop of Southwark’s Lent Call 2018

During the weeks of Lent we will bring you more information about and from the people and places in Southwark, the Holy Land and Zimbabwe for whom we are raising money this year.

https://southwarklentcall.com

Parish Support Fund
The Diocese of Southwark

Log on to southwark.anglican.org/tkc to:

• Download free resources
• Order free copies of prayer postcards and prayers for workers by 26 March 2018
• Apply for prayer grants of up to £100
• Find out what’s happening in the Diocese

Hearts on Fire with a Vision for growth

The Bridge - in print, in your parish... and on line at www.southwark.anglican.org/thebridge