**STOP PRESS**

The Very Revd Dr David Edwards OBE, Provost of Southwark from 1983-1994 died on 25 April 2018. His funeral will take place in Winchester Cathedral at a date to be announced and his ashes will be interred in Southwark Cathedral at a later date.

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Bishops speak out for the ‘Windrush’ children

Southwark’s four Bishops have pledged their support for an amnesty for any minor who arrived in Britain between 1948 and 1971, and has been told by the Home Office that they are in the UK illegally.

They commended a petition asking that the government stop all deportations, secure ‘immigration amnesty’ and ensure the burden of proof lies with the Home Office.

Bishop Christopher also wrote to the Prime Minister, highlighting stories of people in the Diocese who are now called upon to ‘demonstrate their right to remain upon threat of removal’.

“I was really horrified when I learnt that many, much valued members of our community, our churches, who have made a major contribution to the life of this nation, are now suffering because they cannot prove their right to stay in this country’. He called for a ‘test of presumption’ - a right of indefinite remain unless the Home Office has evidence to the contrary’.

Bishop Christopher said: ‘This grave injustice to the Windrush generation is causing significant suffering. We ask for a change in government policy.

On 25 April the Home Secretary promised the ‘Windrush Generation’ greater rights at no cost and with assistance and to compensate people for the hardship they have endured.

In a letter to Bishop Christopher, Bishop Wilfred Woods - former Bishop of Croydon - wrote: ‘Alleluia! The campaign spearheaded by you and High Commissioner Guy Hewitt to persuade the British government to recover British values and keep its word with regard to British subjects born in the colonies and coming to the UK in good faith, has been successful beyond our expectations’.

‘The betrayal of commonwealth immigrants in Britain’ Bishop Wilfred writes... page 2

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‘...for hope and reconciliation’

On Friday 23 March a young man was stabbed just metres from the door of St Anselm’s Church, North Lambeth Parish.

The following Sunday, Palm Sunday, the 200-strong congregation, almost half of whom were children, marched out to the spot for the dismissal and blessing at the end of their service.

They used this moment to ask God for courage and hope in the face of tragedy, and kept a minute’s silence together to pray for all involved.

The Revd Angus Aagaard, Team Rector, said: ‘This is our way of showing solidarity and asking God through our worship to make a place of violence a holy ground, a starting place for hope and reconciliation’.

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I arrived in Britain on August 6th 1962, five days after the first Commonwealth Immigration Act came into force. There were thousands of other Caribbean, African and Asian immigrants already here.

Working as a Church of England curate at St Stephen’s, Shepherd’s Bush, I soon became aware of the sad plight of many immigrants.

Whole families were living in one room in which judicious placing of wardrobes squeezed enough space for a bed partially separated from the rest of the room in which the family did everything and the children slept. The kitchen was a shared cooker on the landing; and the toilet, also shared, would usually be on another floor. It is almost impossible to describe the genius and hard work and sacrifice exhibited by the women especially, to care for a family in these circumstances.

I thank God for these nameless, heroic women whose lives of sacrifice, with their menfolk, have made possible whatever success small or great, their descendants have managed today. As a priest who was welcome in these homes I saw these conditions at first hand.

At the same time in their interaction with the public these people faced covert and overt hostility and discrimination. The National Front was rampant, and Enoch Powell, MP and other lesser-known politicians were exploiting the widespread resentment of black people to further their political careers.

I became most concerned about what was happening to our people trapped in these circumstances, and began agitating, first with my Church superiors and later with politicians.

I spoke to my own Vicar, wrote to Bishop of Kensington, Bishop of London and Archbishop of Canterbury, sought and obtained interviews with the Labour Minister for Immigration in the person of the leader of the Liberal Party, Jo Grimond and Dr David Pitt, then the outstanding West Indian in Britain, arguing that specific help was necessary for immigrants in these circumstances.

Their answers were always the same... Britain was a country in which all sorts of immigrants had made their homes and become important members of society without special arrangements being made for them which would only cause resentment. In time these things would sort themselves out.

The advice to me personally was that I should concentrate on being a good Christian, finding new confidence to be witnesses for Jesus Christ. But native humanitarian organisations such as the Joint Council for Immigrants, were fighting to have a representative Immigrant voice protected.

I was not convinced, and set about encouraging Caribbean folk to form self-help groups in their neighbourhoods.

Whenever I got a chance to address such groups, I handed out written letters addressed to the Home Office applying to be registered as British citizens. To do this I am being approached by persons who took my advice and make a point of thanking me.

I was a very early member of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, immediately on its founding.

But native humanitarian folk such as Professor Michael Dummett and his wife Ann, and Indian and Pakistani businessmen founded this JWII and fought to have a representative Immigrant voice on any initiative, however weak, that Government was pressured into taking.

Meanwhile, immigrants, mindful of the need to survive in this country yet support children and expectant relatives back home, braved the bitter cold, snow and driving winds in the early, dark hours of winter to perform the unattractive jobs in hospitals and factories and in public transport and helped to keep the country going.

That some of such folk, now late in life, or their children who believed the assurances that they were valued British citizens should now find themselves hunted, uprooted and deported like common criminals, comes close to being a crime against humanity.

And all this in a country whose foundation, laws and unwritten constitution are clearly Christian; who assemble in churches to ask God for help in times of danger, and who castigate the immoral, unethical and inhumane behaviour of other nations or religious fanatics. Lord, have mercy and forgive.

The Rt Revd Dr Wilfred D. Wood
Christ Church, Barbados
April, 2018
Vicars shine Redhill shoes for Maundy Thursday

Clergy from St John the Evangelist and St Matthew’s churches in Redhill joined together on Wednesday 28 March to shine the shoes of local shoppers in advance of Maundy Thursday.

The Revd John Kronenberg and Dr Stephen Srikantha from St John’s, together with Andrew Cunningham and Helen Cook from St Matthew’s, set out their stall outside the Belfry from 12-2pm. The shoe polishing, which was free of charge, was inspired by the tradition of washing feet on Maundy Thursday.

John Kronenberg said: “Jesus washed his disciples’ feet on the night before he died. He held their dirty, dusty feet in his hands. Jesus asked his disciples to love one another as he loved them, serving each other in humility. This was done as a sign of Jesus’ love for all in Redhill”.

Mothering Sunday at St Richard’s, Ham

On Mothering Sunday, Guides and Leaders from the 3rd Ham & Petersham (St Richard’s) Guide Company cooked pancakes in church to illustrate the Revd Elisabeth Morse’s sermon on “Forgive us our Sins”, taken from the Lord’s Prayer.

Pancakes were tossed and served to the congregation! (Photo: Penny Frost)

Palm Sunday in South Croydon

Rocky the donkey led the Palm Sunday procession from St Augustine’s, South Croydon to St Peter’s, Croydon.

Worship was led by the Venerable Chris Skilton and the congregation were joined by members of the Croydon Sign Church and the South Croydon United Church and their clergy.

Pictured above with Rocky are the Revd Bill Warren (Vicar), the Revd Linda Fox (Assistant Priest) and Alistair Porster (Ordinand).

Looking back at Lent & Easter in Southwark

South Bank Churches’ annual Pop-up Church at Waterloo Station on Good Fridays at 11am was livestreamed on Facebook this year. Many Southwark churches were represented including the Cathedral, Christchurch Blackfriars, St John’s, St Anselm’s Kennington and St Peter’s Vauxhall.

Pop-up Church at Waterloo Station

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Photos: Christian Aid/Matthew Gonzalez-Noda

We believe in life before death
New Canon Missioner for Southwark Diocese

The Revd James (Jay) Colwill was Instituted and Installed as Canon Missioner for the Diocese of Southwark by Bishop Christopher and the Dean in Southwark Cathedral on Sunday 15 April. Jay comes to Southwark from Rochester Diocese where he was Vicar of Christ Church, Orpington and Assistant Diocesan Missioner.

In his sermon Bishop Christopher declared that “Jay is possessed of the clarity, frankness and energy to encourage our parishes to discover what they are called to be”. The full text of his sermon is available at http://bit.ly/2KhDSzo

Jay Colwill writes:

I am writing with a sense of both excitement and anticipation as I begin my ministry within the Diocese of Southwark (having been in role for a couple of weeks now). I join a Diocese and a mission team that has done much work in identifying a prayerful direction for the forthcoming season. I hope to share in that, and enable it, in every parish, chaplaincy or missional community (of young or older people) that I come in to contact with.

As someone who has ministered in a variety of parish and chaplaincy settings, I value the hard work and perseverance that is necessary to grow and sustain Christian community. Yet, I believe that God does want to enable your communities to flourish and grow (both spiritually and numerically).

Sometimes we can become disheartened or frustrated with the lack of growth in our particular setting or context. It can help to bring a fresh pair of eyes to consider why this might be, and how we might transform our “holy discontent” into prayerful action.

As Canon Missioner, I would like to serve parishes and missional communities in this way. It is very likely that I don’t know your community well (I have served in dioceses which border Southwark and travel through much of it often, yet I have not worshipped within it frequently).

Yet, this can be a benefit, in that I can come to you with a fresh pair of eyes. Many of my colleagues working in mission and community engagement are already doing this, and I don’t want to duplicate their good work. Yet, where it is helpful to you, I am ready to serve. Having ministered in urban, new town and suburban settings, and within a variety of church traditions, I hope that I will respect yours.

Mission, quite properly, takes many forms. I hope to encourage you as you share in the mission of God. My prayer is that together we will reach our communities and speak of ‘the hope that is in us, but do so with gentleness and respect’ (1 Peter 3.15).

Bishop’s Adviser for Hospital Chaplaincy

Bishop Christopher has appointed the Revd Alistair McCulloch as his new Adviser for Hospital Chaplaincy, succeeding the Revd Canon Ben Rhodes. Alistair McCulloch is Lead Chaplain at the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust.

Honorary Canons appointed

Two new Honorary Canons have been appointed and will be installed in Southwark Cathedral during Choral Evensong on Sunday 24 June.

Whilst sailing across the Sea of Galilee during the Diocesan Pilgrimage, Bishop Christopher and the Dean announced to a very surprised Nicole Burgum that they proposed to appoint her Honorary Lay Canon of Southwark Cathedral. They have also invited the Revd Chris Moody, Vicar of St Alfege Greenwich, to become an Honorary Canon.

Nicole Burgum is Diocesan Warden of Readers. She is a Reader at St Andrew the Apostle, Catford, where she has attened for all of her life. The Revd Chris Moody has been the Vicar of St Alfege, Greenwich since 2005. Having served in Surbiton and Lambeth from 1979 - 95 he then spent ten years in Leicester Diocese before returning to Southwark.

Bishop Christopher said: “I am pleased that these two faithful and outstanding servants of the Diocese accepted my offer to become Honorary Canons. They have each given long and dedicated service to the Diocese and I also look forward to them taking their full part in the life of the Cathedral”.

The Dean, Andrew Nunn, said: “I and my colleagues look forward to Chris and Nicole becoming part of the Greater Chapter of the Cathedral”.

Memorial service marks 25 years since the murder of Stephen Lawrence

‘Incredibly moving’ was how Bishop Christopher described the Stephen Lawrence Memorial service at St Martin-in-the-Fields on 23 April.

The service, which included addresses by Prince Harry, Prime Minister Theresa May, entertainer Lenny Henry and others, marked 25 years since the teenager was stabbed to death on an Eltham street.

Writing in the service booklet, Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon OBE, Stephen’s mother said: “This year marks 20 years since the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust was founded. I believe that the Trust has made a significant impact on many young people’s lives, giving them a positive future”.

Stephen’s murder and the subsequent investigations brought allegations of institutional racism in the police force and led Bishop Tom Butler to set up an inquiry into institutional racism in the Diocese.

The findings led to new structures to promote greater equality and opportunities for black and ethnic minority people in Southwark churches, which have been followed by other dioceses.

Bishop Christopher said: “It was good to hear the Prime Minister announce that 22 April is to become Stephen Lawrence Day. However, for Baroness Lawrence the journey ‘is not over yet… for there are many injustices that are still taking place today’.”

HymnPlus® for Thamesmead School

Bishop John Robinson C of E Primary School, Thamesmead has been awarded a Gold Quality Mark for Religious Education.

Deputy Head Teacher, Mrs Jo Richardson, comments: “Religious Education forms an integral part of our school. It feeds into our curriculum, our policies and our daily life and strengthens our understanding and acceptance of others. Our pupils embrace learning in RE, they work tirelessly to develop their understanding and ask questions to deepen their knowledge.

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Jesus-shaped Evangelism - a journey

Good News to share

The Venerable John Kiddle

The Archbishops’ of Canterbury and York are inviting us to use the days between Ascension and Pentecost to pray for a renewal of our witness. This reflects Jesus’ words to his disciples at the end of Luke’s Gospel. “You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

Parishes and Deaneries across Southwark are organising events and times of prayer during these 10 days which culminate in a service at Southwark Cathedral at 6pm on Pentecost Sunday, 20 May.

Drop us a line at The Bridge and tell us what your parish did.

The Diocesan Mission Team has produced some excellent resources to help our prayer and reflections about our witness; you can find details of these at southwark.anglican.org/kkc

National resources and other information are found on the website www.thykingdom.come.global

You might also like to use these six reflections on evangelism during the 10 days of prayer.

1. Drawing near
   ... to walk alongside
   while they were talking Jesus himself came near ... and went with them Luke 24.15

   Jesus, a stranger, meets two friends in their despair. They were desperate for good news. The question was, would they recognise it even when it was there in front of them? Jesus chooses not to confront them face to face.

   He does not demand they turn around immediately and head back to Jerusalem. Instead, he comes alongside them and walks side by side with them in what was pretty much the wrong direction.

   It’s rather like the parables he told. Quite literally a parable is a story ‘thrown alongside’. Its strength lies in its tangential, gentle and intriguing approach. It might pass you by, or it might just catch your attention and work its truth.

   The poet Emily Dickinson expresses this beautifully in one of her poems: “Tell all the truth, but tell it slant. Success in circuit lies.”

   Jesus invites us in our evangelism to be living parables, people who are prepared to take time to walk with others, side by side, gently and generously.

   Evangelism doesn’t begin with an invitation to others to join us on our journey. Jesus-shaped evangelism starts as we, like him, take time to join others on their journeys - even if it feels as if we are heading in the wrong direction. Jesus-shaped evangelism is side by side, which is often how the deepest conversations happen.

   Evangelism is seldom effective if it’s based on face-to-face confrontation.

   Jesus offers us a different model. It takes more time, it’s sometimes less straightforward and, more than anything, it takes seriously the lives, situations and journeys of other people.

   Where do you have opportunities to walk alongside others?
   What are the journeys that you can share?
   What are the things in us that make it hard for us to step off our own path to walk with other people?

2. Enquiring ... and listening
   he said to them, “what are you discussing as you walk along?” ... they said “but we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel” Luke 24.17, 21

   Jesus initiates a conversation. He begins by asking the two friends a simple question and then he listens.

   Interestingly, Luke in this chapter records more of what the two friends say than what Jesus says.

   Jesus probably knew what was bothering them. He might have jumped in with the most eloquent monologue about resurrection and salvation: he chose not to. He listened. It was important for them to tell their story.

   It’s a journey

   Disciples are not made in an instant. Though there are often very significant moments of discovery and decision, conversion and realisations happen as part of a process.

   Discipleship is a journey that takes a lifetime. Sometimes we expect from others instant responses to invitations and immediate leaps of faith which we wouldn’t make ourselves. We get disappointed and give up.

   It’s important to remember that the journey is on some sort of journey of faith and exploration.

   There are different stages on that journey and, at each of those stages, there are factors which will make people more or less open to taking another step.

   While they were talking Jesus himself came near and went with them.

   The one thing we can do is walk with others on that journey. Like Jesus, we can draw alongside, we can give time, we can build relationships and, more than anything, we can listen.

   It’s a great gift to be able to ask a few questions that create a real conversation:

   And once the conversation starts, listening, learning and discovery grow.

   Who is there today that you can spend some time listening to?
   What will you learn through that listening?

3. Telling the story
   ... the light of hope

   beginning with Moses, and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures

   “were not our hearts burning within while he was talking to us on the road” Luke 24.32

   Jesus listens first, then speaks. He has taken time, as he walked side by side with the two friends, to listen to their story and now he tells his. It’s a story that begins to change their story. A story of despair becomes a story of hope.

   The story Jesus tells the two friends doesn’t replace, ignore or discount theirs. It transforms it, it turns it inside out and upside down. What they thought had been failure, death and despair, becomes, as it is reshaped by Jesus’ words, a story of hope, life and a new beginning.

   This is the wonder of evangelism. It is not a set of words bought off the shell and spoken into a vacuum. It is the narrative of God’s
Journey on the road to Emmaus

5. Realisation … and faith

Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him and he vanished from their sight. Luke 24.31

It’s been a journey. Hope has grown as the stranger on the road listened and told a story with a new perspective. Hearts have opened as friends sat down together at table. Now, in a moment, eyes too are opened. They saw and they knew.

Faith is a journey, a lifetime’s journey. There are also, on that journey, moments of recognition and realisation. Those moments are table and bread, words and presence.

Christ is risen. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! He is risen indeed. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Faith is personal, but it is not private. It is discovered, lived and known in community. As the two disciples were describing their encounter, Jesus is there. While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ As we seek, like Mary, to be faithful to Jesus’ call not to hold onto him but to go and tell, we do not do so alone but as part of a joyful community.

As we seek, like the two disciples, to tell others about our own story of faith we are speaking about an encounter with the risen Jesus that is shared by thousands across the Diocese and millions across the world.

We can help create the space and then step back and allow Christ, who is always present, to be seen and known. Jesus-shaped evangelism looks for those moments on the journey when, even in the familiar, Christ is encountered and lives are changed.

Fascinatingly, the moment of realisation was also the moment when Jesus vanished from their sight. Realisation led to faith. It was a moment, but it was enough.

As you pray for those you journey with today, where, in all the busyness and constancy of life, might there be space for Christ’s living presence to be seen and known?

6. A community of joy … and witness

That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem. Luke 24.32

They told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. Luke 24.33,35

With hearts on fire, eyes open and lives changed, the two friends return immediately to Jerusalem.

Their joyful encounter needed to be shared, they could not possibly keep it to themselves.

He enters their home only at their insistence. As their guest he takes the bread, gives thanks to God and breaks it, they see him. The stranger on the road, the guest in their home, is Jesus. Jesus offers the gift of companionship, on the road and at table.

Companions are those alongside whom we walk and with whom we eat, quite literally those with whom we share bread. Companionship is a wonderful gift and it is at the heart of Jesus-shaped evangelism.

In our evangelism, food and hospitality play a key role. Our welcome and our generosity are vital, as we make space for others. But it might just be that the key moments can occur when we allow ourselves to be dependent on the welcome and hospitality of others. If it was true for Jesus it will be true for us.

Where might you welcome another person today? What might it mean to make space for them in your diary, or your home or your life?

As you seek to witness to Jesus, find people to pray with, to work with and to learn from. You are not on your own. Jesus’ shaped evangelism is rooted in who we are together. It does not simply call individuals to an individual faith, it draws people to Christ and to each other; in a community of joy and witness gathered around Jesus.

The Emmaus road story is, of course, so much more than a model for evangelism; it is itself our shared journey of faith, our daily journey of discipleship. It is the journey that inspires our vision for the Diocese of Southwark. Hearts on fire, walking, welcoming and growing.

Thank God today for the companions and friends who support you in your discipleship and witness.

love in Jesus that comes alongside the story of our lives, reshaping and transforming. That’s why it must begin with listening.

People sometimes quote St Francis, “Preach the Gospel and, if necessary, use words”. It sounds convincing and authentic. Actions speak louder than words. Living the Gospel must be more effective than preaching it, or, as is sometimes the case, hitting people over the head with it.

However, there is no evidence that St Francis ever said those words. Indeed, he was well known for his preaching and often preached up to five times a day. We do need to use words to tell the story of God’s love made known in Jesus; it’s just that all too often we use the wrong words, boring and clumsy ones, or perhaps even ugly or angry ones.

“We were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road?”

Wouldn’t it be brilliant if we could rediscover words that are beautiful, creative, generous and loving to go even halfway to telling a story that is more loving, gracious, generous and beautiful than we can fully grasp or convey? Wouldn’t it be fantastic if as we sought to tell that story hearts began to burn with hope and excitement and eyes began to open?

How might the story of Jesus, his birth, his life, his death and resurrection be a story that comes alongside, connects and transforms the stories of the people closest to you?
St Mary, Newington

It’s certainly no basis on which to build a cohesive local community.

“That creates a very different basis for ministry - pastoral care is difficult when there is less of a community. So we have focused on St Mary’s as a place for people to come and worship - lots of different people and different groups. The congregation – normally 90 – 100 – is very diverse with many from East and West Africa and so many different languages.

“We are also the church for groups from all around the world – an Ethiopian Church, Sierra Leonian Church, Zimbabwean church – this is a ‘House of Prayer for many nations’ (Isaiah 56).

“The other church communities are part of our ‘family’ – part of us. The Pastor of the Ethiopian church which meets Sunday afternoon joins our worship in the morning and recently helped us get Bibles for Bishop Christopher and me to take to Amincar speakers in the Calais refugee camp.

“St Mary has a significant ministry to refugees. Every Thursday the church is one of the Southwark Day Centres for Asylum Seekers providing support and advice. There are also many people with immigration issues in the parish and helping resolve them has meant Giles spending time in court in London - and elsewhere. Giles said: ‘One of our congregation who had been here 12 years was turfed out of bed at 3am and taken to a detention centre in Weymouth where after six months and several court appearances, they worked out he was fine to remain!"

Challenge

“When I came I set myself the challenge - take this place and make it work - a viable parish in terms of plant, finances and worship for the next generation.

‘After the war, the new church was ‘thrown together’ as many were and since then nothing has been done to deal with its obvious problems - people just managed its decline. So it was either going to shut or get sorted!’

And so, thanks to a deal with a developer, next year the derelict church hall will be knocked down and flats will be built in its place. In return the church will get a new church hall in the car park and enough money to sort out the front of the church including creating an attractive, safe forecourt and putting a curator’s flat into the tower which the parish can rent out when not needed.

Giles said: ‘The interior is fine and works well for worship - but we will at last have proper heating!’

“We’ll lose the car park but that’s OK – most of our congregation live locally. And the car park is a major problem in itself - a magnet for drug-taking, vandalism, anti-social behaviour.

“We’ve already met several times with the planning and heritage people (the tower and portico are Grade 2 listed). The planners seem happy and the heritage bodies like the idea of turning the tower from a dangerous liability into a functioning asset.

“We hope to start the work next year and, if all goes to plan, in three years we’ll have a new church hall, a business model to sustain it, more people living on the site which should help with the anti-social behaviour and the money to sort out the church inside and out’.

I joined the congregation for the Sunday 10am Mass (the other Mass is on Tuesday evening).

Warm and relaxed

There was a warm welcome for visitors and a lot of hugging and chatting among the congregation beforehand. It was interesting to see Giles bustling around getting the candles and all the worship paraphernalia ready – then wandering around chatting to people. The style is Anglo-Catholic, based on Common Worship, with ‘smells and bells’ but very relaxed. There’s a Sunday School during term times. Traditional hymns are sung to an organ but there’s no choir at present though they’re hoping to ‘rejuvenate’ it. Giles preached without notes walking around the aisle, interrupted by his toddler son. The Sunday School delighted the congregation as they role-played the story of ‘Doubting Thomas’ (photo below) and the service ended with ‘happy birthday’ sung to several people, Victoria sponge and coffee – and a lot more chatting.

All in all, it was easy to understand why Giles said: ‘We all get on well, we have fun, it’s a great church and I really love it. I had heart attack last year and had to have a few months off – during that time it was only right that I went to other churches on Sunday. But every week I really wanted to be back at St Mary’s’.

Bryan Harris’s PARIS PROFILE

Bryan Harris's PARIS PROFILE

St Mary’s Church, Newington, just down the road from the Elephant and Castle is far from impressive – an undistinguished 1950s building with a run-down Victorian tower and a scruffy forecourt surrounded by safety warnings and railings!

But don’t be put off! Inside it’s bright and functional and the warm, welcoming church family more than makes up for any deficiencies in the building. There are even plans to sort out St Mary’s unattractive ‘face’!

St Mary’s is a ‘survivor’ – often against great odds. Since its 13th century beginnings, it has survived several demolitions and rebuilds; an 1870s relocation to make way for Victorian road-widening and World War II bombs which left only the tower and a burnt-out shell. The present church was built in 1958 behind the front of the Victorian building.

Today the tower is considered ‘dangerous’ (hence the railings and notices) and the church itself – a victim of 1950s austerity – could use some 21st century comforts, like an effective heating system!

Indeed, when Canon Giles Fraser was invited to become Priest in Charge in 2012 it was even unclear whether there would be a St Mary’s for much longer. So not your usual parish – but then Giles Fraser is not your usual parish priest! Journalist, author and broadcaster, he had resigned his post as Canon Chancellor of St Paul’s Cathedral following the Chapter’s decision to evict anti-capitalist protesters from the Cathedral precincts.

He told me: “When I left St Paul’s Bishop Christopher told me ‘I’ve got the perfect place for you’ and he was right – St Mary’s enables me to combine my ministry as a parish priest with my other ministry, writing and broadcasting.

Uncertain future

“Mind you when I started it was not entirely clear that it would last – it’s a small parish, no money, plant falling apart, church hall closed and burnt out, all the problems of gangs, violence, drugs, literally on our doorstep – a very different challenge from St Paul’s”.

The area is changing – most is still what used to be called the ‘dangerous’ (hence the railings and notices) and the church itself – a victim of 1950s austerity – could use some 21st century comforts, like an effective heating system!

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Giles said: “The interior is fine and works well for worship - but we will at last have proper heating!”

“We’ll lose the car park but that’s OK – most of our congregation live locally. And the car park is a major problem in itself - a magnet for drug-taking, vandalism, anti-social behaviour.

“We’ve already met several times with the planning and heritage people (the tower and portico are Grade 2 listed). The planners seem happy and the heritage bodies like the idea of turning the tower from a dangerous liability into a functioning asset.

“We hope to start the work next year and, if all goes to plan, in three years we’ll have a new church hall, a business model to sustain it, more people living on the site which should help with the anti-social behaviour and the money to sort out the church inside and out”.

I joined the congregation for the Sunday 10am Mass (the other Mass is on Tuesday evening).

Warm and relaxed

There was a warm welcome for visitors and a lot of hugging and chatting among the congregation beforehand. It was interesting to see Giles bustling around getting the candles and all the worship paraphernalia ready – then wandering around chatting to people. The style is Anglo-Catholic, based on Common Worship, with ‘smells and bells’ but very relaxed. There’s a Sunday School during term times. Traditional hymns are sung to an organ but there’s no choir at present though they’re hoping to ‘rejuvenate’ it. Giles preached without notes walking around the aisle, interrupted by his toddler son. The Sunday School delighted the congregation as they role-played the story of ‘Doubting Thomas’ (photo below) and the service ended with ‘happy birthday’ sung to several people, Victoria sponge and coffee – and a lot more chatting.

All in all, it was easy to understand why Giles said: “We all get on well, we have fun, it’s a great church and I really love it. I had heart attack last year and had to have a few months off – during that time it was only right that I went to other churches on Sunday. But every week I really wanted to be back at St Mary’s”.

- Bryan Harris
Plaque celebrates the diver who saved Winchester Cathedral

On Saturday 17 March a local history plaque was unveiled at 118 Portland Road, South Norwood, the home of William Walker, the diver who saved Winchester Cathedral from subsidence in the early 20th century.

Ray Wheeler

Born in Newington in 1869, William was a Royal Navy-trained deep-water diver. Between 1906 and 1911, he spent more than five years reinforcing Winchester Cathedral’s waterlogged foundations with concrete, working in trenches as much as six metres deep, shifting thousands of bags of cement and concrete blocks. The cathedral had been in imminent danger of collapse as it sank into the peat soil.

He worked six hours a day in complete darkness, because the sediment suspended in the water was impenetrable to light. Heavy work, especially wearing lead boots, a bulky diving suit and a huge round copper helmet.

But he’d still find the energy to cycle the 70 miles home to his family in South Norwood at the weekend. William died in 1918 during the Spanish flu pandemic and is buried in Beckenham Cemetery.

Guests at the unveiling included Bishop Jonathan, the Dean of Winchester; the Very Revd Catherine Ogle; the Mayor, Cllr Toni Letts; many of William Walker’s descendants and local historian John Hickman. John had committed many months to the project, working with ‘People for Portland Road’, a local conservation group.

Helping someone arrange a Christian funeral?

Point families towards a new website which will help them plan a true celebration of someone’s life:

- a free online guide to planning a funeral
- perspectives from the Bible
- allows families to develop a bespoke funeral plan at home, in their own time

Help a family remember their loved one, by giving them a way to plan a funeral service together.

Order leaflets about the website now, so you can pass them on to bereaved families.

01793 418222 christianfuneral.org.uk

Southwark
Diocese in Messy Church first

Southwark has become the first Diocese to enter into a ground-breaking partnership with The Bible Reading Fellowship’s (BRF) Messy Church.

The agreement, which is the first of its kind with a Church of England Diocese, will see BRF provide consultancy services and advice to parishes in the Diocese through Lucy Moore, who helped set up the first Messy Church.

Lucy’s role will be to help the Diocese to start new Messy Churches and develop existing ones over a three-year period, through training and events at all levels of the Diocese, and establishing structures to enable Messy Church to continue to grow and flourish within the Diocese.

Canon Will Cookson, Diocesan Dean of Fresh Expressions, says: “Messy Church is a very important, fast-growing and worldwide fresh expression of church.

The proactive and collaborative approach that this new agreement brings will enable Messy Church to thrive in our Diocese and, we hope, be an example to others”.

Lucy Moore added: “This pioneering opportunity aims to maximise the impact and difference that Messy Church can make to local families, many of whom have never belonged to a church before”.

Messy Church at the ‘Love Streatham’ Fun Day

Plaque celebrates the diver who saved Winchester Cathedral

Photo above: The Dean of Winchester, Bishop Jonathan, Cllr Toni Letts and John Hickman

Below: the plaque in the shape of a diver’s helmet

Bible Society

Bible Society, Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon SN5 7DG. Donation hotline: 01793 418222 biblesociety.org.uk

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Let us pray
May
In 1934, Londoner William Hind set up a new film company. He named it after the part of London he came from, Hammersmith. So was born ‘Hammer Films’. They specialised in horror movies and one of the characters they made famous was Frankenstein and his monster. It is 200 years this year since 20 year old Mary Shelley published her novel ‘Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus’. It has captured imaginations since then and, when the movies arrived, gave us films that would scare the wits out of us.

But the novel was written to pose the greatest question that we ask. As one philosopher described it, Shelley is setting before us ‘the idea of asking your maker what your purpose is. Why are we here, what can we do?’

Dr Frankenstein creates this creature and so, in some ways, seeks to usurp the place of God. The creature is tortured internally, never asking to be born and yet here.

It is the place of art as well as science to make us face up to the deep questions of life and as advances in science move ahead at a faster and faster pace we can feel left behind in finding the answers. This is especially true for the Church, which often, and understandably, wants to take longer in thinking than society will allow. We can end up defining many advances as monsters.

In the Wisdom of Solomon it says: ‘I will tell you what wisdom is and how she came to be, and I will hide no secrets from you. (Wisdom 6.22)

God hides no secrets of creation from us and, made in the image of God, we are also given intellect to crack the secrets of life. But the challenge is to use it all with that wisdom so that monsters are not created.

Creator God, we are a wonderstruck by the beauty of the universe, by your weaving of creation, by the details of life, from the smallest to the greatest. May we use your gifts of intellect and free will wisely and not to make new monsters. Amen.

The Very Revd Andrew Nunn, Dean of Southwark

Please follow me on Twitter as I offer a prayer each morning so that you can join me in Morning Prayer. Go to @deansouthwark

Social Justice and the Common Good
St Hugh, Bermondsey recently played host to the first joint event between the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) department of the Diocese of Southwark and its Roman Catholic (RC) Archdiocese of Southwark counterpart.

The event, which took place on Saturday 21 April highlighted important work around Homelessness, Peace and the Environment from both traditions, with a focus on our common call as a response to faithful discipleship to social justice and the common good.

Presentations from the Revd Peter Holme’s (vicar of Norbiton, St Peter) about his work with the JOEL community and Alison Gelder, Director of Operations at ‘Together for the Common Good’ discussed homelessness, drawing on personal experience in front-line service to the homeless in London and challenging us to consider what ‘home’ means.

The Revd Catherine Shelley, Woolwich Episcopal Area Environmental Advisor, and Phil Rerton from the RC JPIC Kent area discussed the environment and the importance of lifestyle change. Bishop Michael Doe, one of our Hon. Assistant Bishops and Ann Milner from Pax Christi discussed Peace, particularly focusing on Palestine, prisons and non-violence in action.

There was also input from Bishop Richard whose special area of interest is the Environment and the RC Bishop Paul Hendricks (one of our Ecumenical Canons) who drew the session together, commenting on the key issues.

The event both shared common areas of work for the common good and acted as a springboard for further discussion and ecumenical response to our joint call to serve the least, the last and the lost; to be agents of God’s peace and good stewards of the lost; to be agents of God’s peace and good stewards of the lost and for the lost; to be agents of God’s peace and good stewards of the lost and for the lost; to be agents of God’s peace and good stewards of the lost and for the lost.

Join Bishop Christopher on
A PILGRIMAGE TO HOLY ARMENIA

A 9 day pilgrimage featuring monasteries, mountains, and remarkable bird life with Bishop Christopher and Bishop Hovakim Manukyan for the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association

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Happy to help...

When the heating at Rangefield Primary School on the Downham Estate stopped working at Christmas, the school had to close for three months whilst the repairs were completed.

However, moving to Forster Park Primary School in North Downham meant transporting over 350 pupils and staff each day by coach - and for safety reasons they could not pick up at the Rangefield site.

Enter St Barnabas Church which opened its doors to parents, pupils and staff every morning and afternoon, as their pick-up point. On Maundy Thursday, to mark the end of term, the Church provided them with refreshments in the Church Hall.

The Revd Stuart Leck, Team Vicar at St Barnabas, said, “It has been a great pleasure to welcome the school into the church and we look forward to building on the relationships that have been created.”

Below: Bishop Karowei met staff, pupils and families whilst visiting St Barnabas during his visit to East Lewisham Deanery in April.
Constantine the Great and Christianity in Roman Britain

A lecture by Dr Sam Moorhead FSA, a curator at the British Museum at St George’s, Westcombe Park, on Tuesday 8 May (7.30 pm) will focus on Constantine, one of the most important and influential of all Roman emperors. 303 and his family are members of St George’s Church.

Constantine was acclaimed emperor at York in AD 306. The lecture will follow his rise to power and his adoption of the Christian faith which led to the growth of Christianity in the Roman Empire including Britain.

The British Museum has the best collection of fourth century Christian objects north of the Alps, and using those and other archaeological evidence, the lecture will outline the rich Christian heritage of late Roman Britain.

Refreshments will be provided and the evening is free and open to the public.
Horley Team Ministry celebrates three anniversaries

On Palm Sunday the three churches in the Horley Team Ministry welcomed Bishop Christopher to a service celebrating three anniversaries.

This year marks 800 years since the first clergy were appointed at the Parish Church of St Bartholomew and the 60th anniversary of the two younger churches in the Team, St Francis and St Wilfrid’s. The three congregations came together at St Francis’ Church where Bishop Christopher presided at Holy Communion and launched a packed year of events.

He amused the congregation when he referred to 19th century letters written by Bishop Anthony Thorold of Rochester describing Horley as an ‘odd little town’.

“How so much has changed and so much has remained the same,” he commented.

Since that time the Diocese of Southwark was created, St Bart’s had a major restoration which saw the south aisle built and two more churches established. Horley is now a growing town with Gatwick Airport within its boundary and yet it still maintains a village ‘feel’.

Bishop Christopher added: “Bishop Anthony’s letter is a good reminder that our past was someone else’s present and we are the unknown future they were blessing”.

The parish has a range of activities planned, including open days, a flower festival, concerts, fun days and theatre productions.

Horley Team Rector, the Revd Canon Les Wells, said: “It’s a really special year not only for our three churches. It is also a celebration of Horley and we are organising events at all three churches which aim to involve people of all ages”.

To see what events are planned go to www.horleyteamministry.org.uk

Bishop Christopher invites you to the Diocesan Pentecost Service

Southwark Cathedral
Sunday 20 May 2018, 6.00pm
Preacher: the Revd Canon Jay Colwill, Canon Missioner

Join us as we pray for the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with confidence and joy in sharing and living the Gospel

This service is the culmination of Thy Kingdom Come, nine days of prayer from Ascension to Pentecost

More information: southwark.anglican.org/tkc

Archbishop Angaelos at Southwark Cathedral

On Thursday 19 April, His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos OBE, Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London, attended Evening Prayer at Southwark Cathedral and, afterwards, spoke about the struggles facing the Coptic Church in the Middle East. The Archbishop is one of the Diocese’s Honorary Ecumenical Canons.

Sally’s 50-mile Easter Prayer Walk

Reader, Sally Carter Esdale from Wimbledon Team Ministry spent Holy Week in a five-day, 50-mile prayer walk from Southwark Cathedral to Windsor.

Her husband Charles, also a Reader, walked the final leg with her on Good Friday.

Sally’s aim was to raise awareness and money for The Leprosy Mission’s Premananda Hospital in Kolkata, India.

Sally has supported The Leprosy Mission since 1985. Since retiring from her teaching career last year, she has visited two Leprosy Mission hospitals and dedicated herself to speaking about the charity’s work in churches and community groups.

Sally said: “Last summer my daughter Eleanor and I walked Pilgrim’s Way to Canterbury from Wimbledon, to raise money for The Leprosy Mission’s work at Purulia Hospital in India”.

Later this year Sally and Charles are planning a tandem cycle ride from Southwark Cathedral to raise money for Premananda Hospital. “I can’t ride a bicycle because I’m useless at steering, but I can go on the back of a tandem – no problem,” says Sally.

If you would like to sponsor Sally and Charles or invite Sally to speak to your church or group, e-mail sally@tlnewvolunteers.org.uk

On Thursday 19 April, His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos OBE, Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London, attended Evening Prayer at Southwark Cathedral and, afterwards, spoke about the struggles facing the Coptic Church in the Middle East. The Archbishop is one of the Diocese’s Honorary Ecumenical Canons.

What did you do on London Marathon Day?

In Charlton Village the Revd Bennet Spong and a Christian Aid team sprinkled the Marathon runners with Holy Water – a double blessing on the hottest Marathon Day ever.

What did you do this year?

Why not drop us a line and let us know – a photo too, if you have one, (e-mail address on page 2).