



The BRIDGE

Newspaper of the Anglican Diocese of Southwark

Christ
Centred
Outward
Focused

Vol.30 No.3
April 2025



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‘Racial justice is at the heart of the gospel’

Lead bishops for racial justice have been appointed by the Church of England for the first time following backing from the General Synod.

The Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett, Bishop of Croydon and The Rt Revd Arun Arora, Bishop of Kirkstall have been appointed by the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of London as joint lead bishops for the Church of England on racial justice.

Their role will involve acting as advocates on racial justice throughout the Church of England, including promoting implementation of the recommendations of *From Lament to Action* – the landmark report from the Church of England’s Anti-Racism Taskforce.

Bishop Rosemarie (pictured) and Bishop Arun will also serve as joint deputy chairs of the newly created Racial Justice Board, a committee of the Archbishops’ Council that will oversee its work on racial justice.

They will also attend the Racial Justice Panel, an external independent scrutiny body that will provide assurance that the work on racial justice is being carried out effectively.

Their appointment comes after the General Synod voted to back the findings of the final report of the Archbishops’ Commission on Racial Justice, ensuring that crucial resources will remain available for racial justice.

The Archbishop of York, The Most Revd and Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell, said, “I warmly welcome and celebrate the appointment of Bishop Rosemarie and Bishop Arun.

“Their leadership comes at a significant moment, as we mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the 60th anniversary of the UN’s International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.”

The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally said, “Bishop Rosemarie and Bishop Arun have

set an excellent example in their pastoral roles as bishops and in their work at a national level. I am delighted that they have been appointed to this role and offer my full support.”

Bishop Rosemarie said, “I am delighted to be appointed to assist leading the Church of England in its work to deepen our understanding and practice of racial justice.

“Racial justice is at the heart of the gospel, as we seek to serve God, as people of all places and races – all unified by being created in God’s image and saved by the love of His Son Jesus Christ.

“There is a lot of good work being undertaken and our joint leadership roles will enable the Church to keep focused on working for a more racially just and equitable Church and society. I look forward to working in this collaborative role with Bishop Arun, as we seek to model partnership working.”

Bishop Arun said: “I am looking forward to working with Bishop Rosemarie in taking forward the continuing work of the Church



© Diocese of Southwark

in this Gospel work... and following Christ’s mission to celebrate a God of justice.”

Committed to safeguarding

The Bishop of Southwark, The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, has appointed Janet Ayoola as the new independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP).

The Panel plays a crucial role in the Safeguarding work of the Diocese, overseeing policy, procedures, training and practice. Janet will succeed Chris Smart, a former Detective Chief Inspector in the Metropolitan Police, with many years’ experience of managing child abuse teams in London.

Janet (pictured) has over 15 years’ worth of experience in social work,

predominantly in children’s services. She is a qualified social worker, committed to safeguarding and with extensive



experience in statutory services, independent consultancy and safeguarding advisory roles. Her expertise spans statutory child protection, independent social work and advisory roles in the third sector, where she has worked to empower charities and voluntary organisations to strengthen their safeguarding practices.

Speaking about the appointment Bishop Christopher said, “I am delighted that Janet will be joining our Safeguarding Advisory Panel in this role. She brings with her a wealth of safeguarding experience and expertise from both the statutory and public sectors. Recent high profile Church of England safeguarding cases have highlighted just how much change and learning is still required of us - and I have no doubt that Janet’s guidance will serve us well in this next stage of our work.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude, too, to Chris Smart, who has served us so wisely and well in this role.”

Janet said, “I am delighted to be taking up this role with the Diocese of Southwark. It is a privilege to support the Diocese’s commitment to safeguarding, especially during a time of unprecedented change in the Church of England. I value the opportunity to contribute to the development and strengthening of safeguarding practices that place the wellbeing of children, young people and adults at the heart of church life.”

Read more about safeguarding on page 12.



A view from The BRIDGE



The Anglican Diocese of Matabeleland's mission is creative and broad-based. The vision of the Diocese is not divorced from the real issues of life. It is about the life and work of the Anglican Church's as defined by the Five Marks of Mission.

Empowered by the Five Marks of Mission, the Diocese focuses on evangelism to spread the word in the communities. Close attention is given to Mark Three: "to respond to human need by loving service". Embracing this, the Diocese aims to provide accessible education and spiritual care, especially in rural areas where children walk long distances to school. It is a loving service, in so far as it alleviates the physical, mental, emotional and financial burden that children, parents and guardians face in those communities.

The Diocese works to mitigate drug and substance abuse by young people that is endemic in the country and provides a facility to deliver education and spiritual care at Mission Church.

There are informal ways of understanding gender difference and social relations in order to redress socialisation based on gender. For instance, young men are easily exposed to drugs and substance abuse thereby becoming vulnerable

to mental health issues. Girls, on the other hand become a secondary group exposed to vulnerabilities as they interact and have relationships with young men facing challenges with their mental health.

At all diocesan events we aim to provide a slot to focus on the wellbeing of children and young people. On Saturday 22 March 2025, a class of Form Ones (Year 7 students) were commissioned at St Cecilia Mission, Lupane. The theme was focused on young people. "Seeking the good for the care and protection of the young".

Bishop Cleophas

*The Rt Revd Cleophas Lunga
Bishop of Matabeleland*

The Diocese of Southwark has been linked with four of the five Dioceses in Zimbabwe for many years now. Each of the Episcopal Areas has a Link: Croydon with Central Zimbabwe, Kingston with Matabeleland and Woolwich with Manicaland. In 2001 the newest Diocese of Masvingo was formed and in 2009 that was linked with Southwark Cathedral. Each Link is supported by groups in both countries who share news and pray for each other regularly. Southwark Link groups also offer their generosity to the Dioceses in Zimbabwe.



NEWS IN BRIEF

The Bishop's Lent Call 2025

Each year, the Bishop's Lent Call raises funds for local community projects and our Link Dioceses in Zimbabwe and the Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East. This year's campaign is inspired by Jesus' words, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop for them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." (Matthew 19:14). We have been asking you to pray for and generously give to projects helping children and young people recovering from trauma and encouraging their mental wellbeing. As the Lenten season comes to an end, a huge thank you goes to all those who have been able to generously give to these causes and support The Anglican Council of Churches in Zimbabwe, The Princess Basma Centre in Jerusalem and Welcare in South London and East Surrey.

For details of the projects, resources and how to donate visit: tinyurl.com/2t4nzkdK

Ukraine stands



On 25 February, the team at Southwark Cathedral was delighted to welcome the Songs for Ukraine Chorus for a concert commemorating the third anniversary of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. With the support of the Embassy of Ukraine the concert featured works by classical and contemporary Ukrainian composers.

Sharing the joys of a more diverse church

Last month, The Venerable Dr Chigor Chike, Archdeacon of Lewisham & Greenwich and Rachel Smith, Head of Strategic Programmes Implementation, visited Blackburn's Diocesan Synod to share news of how Southwark's Anti-Racism Charter and other resources have helped embed Racial Justice in our diocese. Archdeacon Chigor encouraged those present to embrace the positives which come from growing a more diverse Church and asked "What can we do?" to fight racism. Rachel spoke about how to ensure greater visibility for issues around race and creating mechanisms for change.



Southwark Cathedral Podcast

Hosted by The Dean of Southwark, each episode of this new podcast delves into faith, spirituality and mission exploring the Cathedral's work beyond the pulpit. The podcast is available on Apple, Spotify and Amazon as well as on the Cathedral's website and YouTube channel.

Catch up with the latest episodes: tinyurl.com/tnxtceza

Betsy Blatchley to take up new post

The Revd Betsy Blatchley, Pioneer Minister in the Arts, who leads Nine Elms Arts Ministry, will be taking up a new post of Abbey Missioner at Bath Abbey later this year. Betsy said, "I am immensely proud of all we have achieved and humbled by the amazing people I have had the privilege to collaborate and connect with – not least our incredible core team who have prayed, planned and delivered projects alongside me." Betsy's leaving and licensing dates in the summer will be announced in due course.

Read a blog by Betsy here: tinyurl.com/46fzd5hm

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Next Issue: Submission deadline and guidance

The MAY edition is due to be published online and in print on 1 May 2025. Material for that edition must be with Vernia Mengot by email by **WEDNESDAY 9 APRIL**.

Space limitations mean that we cannot guarantee to publish everything we receive and material may be edited. All photographs submitted for publication are assumed to have the necessary permission for printing. Please ensure that people are happy for their photographs to be submitted before you do so. Forms for permission for the use of photographs of children (Form 10) and adults who may be vulnerable (Form 11) can be found at southwark.anglican.org/safeguarding/diocesan-policies-procedures



IN FOCUS...

News from the diocese

Diocesan Synod: grace and good will

On Saturday 22 March, 97 members of Southwark Diocesan Synod met at St Peter’s Church, Battersea to discuss key issues affecting our parishes and communities.

The session opened in prayer, led by Adrian Greenwood (Lay Chaplain and Mentor to Diocesan Synod) and updates from the Diocesan Secretary Nicola Thomas. Members heard about the progress of several elections and were encouraged to complete an ethnicity survey – information gathered in relation to ethnic diversity across Church ministry.

In his Presidential Address, Bishop Christopher spoke about his recent pilgrimage to Turkey with diocesan curates. He affirmed his resolve to uphold the spectrum of theological conviction in the Diocese with grace and goodwill. Reiterating his charge to this Synod, he said, “Before I left for Turkey with the curates, some clergy of this diocese wrote to me not only to reaffirm their withdrawal from praying with deanery colleagues but also to say that they would now no longer even eat with them. I cannot condone this, nor can my fellow

bishops. I hope that minds will change as all remain loved and cherished in these difficult times.” He also encouraged deaneries not only to pray with one another, but to honour each other. Read Bishop Christopher’s Presidential Address in full here: tinyurl.com/ywf4njyt

Synod members heard a finance update on diocesan plans to divest from funds holding fossil fuels. They also received the end of year accounts and heard about highest ever levels of Parish Support Fund collection.

The Diocesan Secretary and Lucy McAuley, Southeast Regional Lead for the National Safeguarding Team, gave a presentation on safeguarding in the Diocese, the work the diocesan safeguarding team is doing and support it provides to parishes. Synod was updated on current national discussions around the independence of safeguarding from Church structures (see page 12), and our own national independent safeguarding audit, due to take place in 2026.

Representatives were also introduced to a new seven-minute briefing initiative, designed for use in all meetings and inspired by a technique from the FBI – based on research indicating that seven minutes is an ideal time span for concentration and learning. The briefing focused on learnings from the Makin Review – an independent review led by Keith Makin into the Church’s handling of allegations of serious abuse carried out over a period of 40 years by the late John Smyth.



Newly commissioned Deanery Vocations Champions with Bishop Christopher.

Rebecca Chapman, Lay Chair of Diocesan Synod and General Synod member, gave a brief update on February’s General Synod. This included legislative business for the Mission and Pastoral, National Church Governance and Clergy Conduct Measures, and discussions surround Church finance, Prayers of Love and Faith, sports ministries, and the future of Church safeguarding.

Southwark Against Modern Slavery representatives, Chris Elliott and Jennifer Hyde gave a presentation on Modern Day Slavery – the illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain – to raise awareness in local areas and help people recognise the signs of modern slavery and know how to report any concerns.

Bishop Rosemarie, supported by Rachel Smith, Secretary to the Racial Justice Committee, Weisi Dennis, Racial Justice Development Officer and Reg Amoah, Training and Resources Officer, presented an update on the Anti-Racism Charter. Synod members carried out group work

on racial justice and were encouraged to share the new anti-racism parish study resource with their deaneries and parishes, encouraging people to engage with the materials.

Bishop Martin and The Revd Peter Welby gave an update on their recent visit to our Link Diocese in Jerusalem and spoke about a covenant between our dioceses, designed to strengthen ties with Anglican churches in the Holy Land.

The Revd Canon Wendy Robins also led a session of group work entitled: ‘The Way Together’ focused on establishing better support for Diocesan Synod representatives during debates and exploring how to improve future sessions.

The day concluded with a celebration of the Eucharist where Deanery Vocations Champions were commissioned.

Election for Southwark Diocesan Board of Patronage

The Diocesan Board of Patronage (DPB) considers any vacancy in a parish that occurs for a benefice whose patronage it holds. Members may also be asked to consider proposals for pastoral re-organisation of a benefice whose patronage is in the hands of the DBP as, under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, the patrons are one of the ‘interested parties’.

Nominations are open to clergy, and laity who are on the electoral roll from across our diocese. We’re looking for three clergy members and five laity members elected by the Diocesan Synod’s Houses of Clergy and Laity respectively. All the details – including timescale and

nomination forms can be found here: tinyurl.com/dmk4j75v

Nomination forms must be returned by 12 noon on 29 April 2025 to: Charles Hudson-Beddows by email at governance@southwark.anglican.org or post to (Trinity House, 4 Chapel Court, Borough High Street, London, SE1 1HW)

Important dates:

- Nominations open – Tuesday 8 April
- Nominations close – Tuesday 29 April at 12 noon
- Online voting opens – Thursday 8 May
- Online voting closes – Thursday 22 May at 12 noon
- Induction/welcome meeting – Wednesday 4 June at 6pm

We welcome and encourage members from a wide range of church traditions, age and experience and we want to ensure that we represent the communities that we serve. As we continue to implement our diocesan Anti-Racism Charter, we’re particularly seeking to increase representation of Global Majority Heritage/United Kingdom Minority Ethnic (GMH/UKME) peoples as DBP members.

Lambeth Awards



On Sunday 16 February, Bishop Christopher presented Lambeth Awards to Nick Russell, Church Army Evangelist for his outstanding work in Greenwich, and to the late Araba Taylor, whose award was received by her sisters. Araba was a Tribunal Chair, Deputy Chancellor of the Diocese of Southwark and Deputy Commissary

of the Diocese of Canterbury. She was the first GMH judge in the Church of England.

The Lambeth Awards recognises outstanding contributions to the Church of England, the Anglican Communion and wider society.

NEWS FROM OUR PARISHES



Celebrating 25 years of welcome

Ish Lennox of St John the Evangelist, East Dulwich writes:

The Power of “Spending a Penny”

St John the Evangelist has always been more than just a church – it’s a hub for the community, a safe space where people of all backgrounds can gather, connect, and grow. Twenty five years ago, we opened the doors of our purpose-built community centre – the Goose Green Centre. Since then, it has become a beacon of hope, a place of welcome, and a springboard for life-changing initiatives. Among the many groups to benefit from this space is the Robes Project – a lifeline for those experiencing homelessness during the coldest months of the year.

The Goose Green Centre: A shelter for many

The Robes Project, operating from November to April, provides night shelters across seven South London churches – offering food, warmth and a place to rest for those most vulnerable. Since 2017, St John’s has been privileged to host one of these crucial weekly nights at Goose Green. It’s not unusual for us to

welcome 12 or more guests each evening and our commitment is simple to ensure every guest feels valued and respected.

From warm meals to kind words, we’ve always focused on hospitality – but, as it turns out, even the most basic facilities can play a key role in making someone feel welcome. Yes, we’re talking about toilets. Because let’s face it, having access to clean, private and functioning facilities is a dignity every person deserves.

When we recently undertook the task of refurbishing our washrooms, we didn’t just want to upgrade the plumbing – we wanted to make a statement about gratitude, privilege and the kind of world we want to build. This led us to an initiative that quite literally changes lives: Toilet Twinning.

Twinning toilets, changing lives

If you’ve never heard of ‘Toilet Twinning’, allow us to enlighten you. This incredible project helps fund hygiene education and toilet-building in communities around the world where access to basic sanitation is a luxury, not a given. Without proper toilets, people face sanitation-related illnesses, miss work or school and struggle to break the cycle of poverty. For a modest donation, you can twin your toilet with one in a developing community, providing the resources for locals to build their own life-changing facilities.

When it came time for us to choose where to twin our toilets, the decision felt clear. Since 2003 our diocese has been



L-R: Charlie Smith, Local Councillor, Jim Nurton, Churchwarden, The Revd Gill O’Neill, Vicar, Ellie Reeves, MP, The Rt Revd Alastair Cutting, Bishop of Woolwich, Louise Pollard, Churchwarden and Martin Howell, St John’s Church, Goose Green Centre project.

linked with three Anglican dioceses in Zimbabwe. This long-standing relationship has been one of shared faith, support and mutual growth. As we reflected on this partnership, the idea emerged ‘If our dioceses are twinned, why not our toilets too?’

And so, with a mix of gratitude and purpose, our freshly refurbished toilets at the Goose Green Centre are now officially twinned with facilities in Zimbabwe – symbolising our global connection and the shared commitment to dignity for all.

A celebratory flush

To mark this special occasion, we were thrilled to welcome our local MP, Ellie Reeves to join in the celebration. The day was filled with laughter, stories and a profound sense of what it means to serve both our local and global communities.

Our newly twinned toilets stand as a reminder that small actions – when done

with love and intention – can ripple out to make a world of difference. If you haven’t yet twinned your own toilet, why not consider it? It’s a simple act, but its impact is profound – saving lives, restoring dignity and embodying the gospel principle that we are all called to care for one another.

Let’s flush out injustice

So here’s to 25 years of the Goose Green Centre, to the work of Robes and to the power of ‘spending a penny’ with purpose. Whether it’s a warm welcome on a cold night or the dignity of a private toilet – every little act of kindness brings us closer to a world where everyone can thrive.

Have a toilet? Twin it. Change lives. And join us in flushing out injustice – one loo at a time. For more information contact: office@stjohnseastdulwich.org

Ambulances for Ukraine

St Barnabas, Dulwich has raised £14,000 and sent two ambulances to Ukraine through Mighty Convoy.

Mighty Convoy – a non-profit organisation set up by Simon Brake – has delivered 44 ambulances and pick up trucks loaded with medical supplies to local partners, The Christian Medical Association of Ukraine, for onward distribution to medical units around Ukraine, where they are urgently needed.

St Barnabas already supports locally displaced Ukrainian refugees, helping them to settle, belong and rebuild their lives in the UK. This includes holding regular Ukrainian youth groups, a weekly language cafe, information events and monthly breakfast gatherings. As well as producing newsletters signposting to local networks and provisions, one-to-one advice and listening support plus practical support by providing donated items, such as laptops, bikes and household items.

Jeremy Gillard at the church said, “Personal connections have proved especially invaluable: both in helping Ukrainians to settle and integrate but also enriching hosts, volunteers and local supporters who have expressed how much they have learned from Ukrainian resilience and culture as they have got to know ordinary people who have faced, and continue to face, extraordinary challenges.”

If you or your church would like to contribute or drive an ambulance to Ukraine contact Simon Brake: simon.brake@mightyconvoy.org or visit: mightyconvoy.org



Giving thanks for Tim’s ministry

Earlier this year, friends gathered at St Bartholomew, Horley for a service to celebrate and give thanks for Pioneer, Tim Hill.

Tim (pictured) has been with Horley Team Ministry for five years, having taken up a post funded by the diocese’s Strategic Development Funding (SDF) programme just before the pandemic.

The Revd Canon Leslie Wells, Horley Team Rector said, “Tim’s ministry has seen him work closely with the local community, including eight schools and youth organisations in Horley. Being present and relationship building was a major part of Tim’s ministry and to have a presence on the Acres housing development.

“Tim also ministered alongside *SparkFish* school workers in bringing the Christmas



Journey to children and young people in Horley – a valued member of the SparkFish team.

“Those who have valued Tim’s ministry gave thanks to God for his work and prayed for Tim to know God’s voice as he discerns the next move in this new chapter of his life. We thank God for the last five years of Tim’s ministry and we now pray for his future and what God has in store for him.”

Cloud of Witnesses

Cloud of Witnesses – an exhibition at St John, Waterloo – is open until 27 April 2025. The Revd Georgia Ashwell, Curate at St John, Waterloo writes:

The vision for Cloud of Witness arose from the racial justice group at St John’s in response to the Diocesan Anti-Racism Charter. So much of the religious art we come across promotes a white depiction of God, Jesus and other biblical figures. This doesn’t help to open up our minds to the breadth of God, or indeed the

historical truth of Jesus – the Palestinian Jew. St John’s racial justice group had a vision for an exhibition that presented a diverse image of God.

St John’s, together with Art + Christianity and The Catholic Bishops Conference created the exhibition Cloud of Witnesses: images of faith and divinity today. This is an interfaith exhibition celebrating the diversity of God. The open call attracted 50 submissions that were narrowed down to 26 final pieces by a panel of judges.

This was a truly collaborative project and St John’s is so grateful for the partnership with Art + Christianity and the Catholic Bishops Conference, as well as our panel of judges; The Rt Revd Peter M Brignall, Monica Bohm-Duchen, Graeme Mortimer Evelyn, Alexis Stones, and Hassan Vawda.

The diversity of the exhibition is a treasure, for as Chine McDonald writes in her article for the exhibition catalogue:

“This diversity of encounters as reflected in the interfaith nature of this exhibition is important for us to get a true picture of who God is. In every inter-religious dialogue I am engaged in, I find points of connection, points of common humanity. It is therefore unsurprising that in the different ways in which God can be portrayed across religions, we might find resonance.”

When difference can so often lead to fear or division, an exhibition that embraces it is a precious thing.



Jesus Calms the Storm by David Robinson.

Pat Dockree receives Mayor of Bromley Award

Known to the Mottingham community for over 37 years, Pat Dockree recently received the Mayor of Bromley Award for community-based voluntary service.

Pat (pictured) ran the local playgroup for many years, and has been heavily involved in serving the congregation and parish community of St Edward, Mottingham Church for over two decades.

Pat, who celebrated her 80th birthday in January is a skilled cook – she plans menus and shops for the quarterly community afternoon teas and the weekly Friday community lunches at the Church. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Pat helped the then vicar to set up a community foodbank at the church, serving vulnerable people in the local community. Since then, the foodbank has continued to run three times a week and Pat attends and assists at these sessions at least once each week.

During lockdown, Pat maintained regular contact – both by phone and through home visits – with those who experienced loneliness and isolation. Pat and other



members of the Pastoral Team continue this service to this day.

In 2009, Pat trained as a Commissioned Lay Pastoral Minister (formerly known as a Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary) and had regular involvement in taking communion to residents at Clairleigh Nursing Home as well as helping with entertainment, doing hand massage and chatting to the residents, offering spiritual and welfare support.

Annual ‘Church Ale’

This year’s annual ‘Church Ale’ fundraiser at St John the Divine, Merton, on High Path, South Wimbledon raised £3,000 for the Church and local charities.

The event took place on Friday 21 February and featured five Morris teams, ten real ales and curry made and served by members from the Merton Priory team.

The evening began with ringing from the church’s bell ringers. Morris sides at the event included Greensleeves Morris Men, The Belles of London City, London Pride, Black Swan and the Brixton Tatterjacks.

The event was also an opportunity to hear more about community campaigns

including one focusing on the River Wandle, recently impacted by a diesel fuel spill harming the ecosystem of a rare urban chalk stream. Another concerns the Trafalgar Pub – the oldest free house pub in Merton – which is facing demolition and redevelopment.

The Revd Alison Judge, Team Vicar at St John’s said, “We have a small congregation, but a big heart for the community. The Church is used regularly for community events and the Church Ale brings together creative groups who enjoy music, dance and, of course ale.”

Find out more about the River Wandle: tinyurl.com/373t9fdm and the Trafalgar pub: tinyurl.com/3dfkx4n2



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Zimbabwe link meeting



The Woolwich–Manicaland link group met on 16 March at St Margaret, Lee. It was an opportunity to hear news from Zimbabwe and discuss shared ideas on how to support friends there. Members of the Zimbabwean Mothers’ Union fellowship also joined the meeting and led worship.

If you would like to know more about the work of the link group, and receive mailings about future gatherings, contact The Revd Peter Organ: revpeterorgan@gmail.com

New vicar for St Mary, Barnes



The congregation at St Mary, Barnes has welcomed The Revd Calum Zuckert (pictured left of Bishop Martin) as their new Team Rector. The service was led by The Rt Revd Dr Martin Gainsborough, Bishop of Kingston, accompanied by representatives of Churches Together in Barnes, the Diocese of Southwark, local Councillors and many others.



IN FOCUS... Earth Day

Educate, advocate and mobilise

Each year on 22 April, the whole world comes together to acknowledge International Earth Day. Calling us all to protect the planet, Earth Day brings together billions of people as part of an environmental movement to inspire a lifetime of action.

The theme for Earth Day 2025 is: *Our Power, Our Planet*, inviting everyone around the globe to unite behind renewable energy and to triple the global generation of clean electricity by 2030.

By joining in Earth Action Day, collectively we can help educate, advocate and mobilise.

In Southwark Diocese, we are on a journey towards greater sustainability. In 2022, global conservation organisation – *A Rocha* – awarded our diocese with the Bronze Level Eco Diocese Award and we continue this ongoing momentum by taking steps to deepen our commitment to creation care. This reflects the 5th mark of Anglican mission: to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. Throughout our parishes and diocesan family of schools, we have been making practical changes to become more energy efficient and sustainable – striving to achieve our goal to become carbon neutral by 2030.

In this edition, we hear from Mark Burnett (pictured below), Chief Executive of the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education Multi-Academy Trust (SDBE MAT) about some of the practical steps schools within the Trust are taking to improve environmental efficiency.



Mark writes:

As a Multi-Academy Trust sponsored by the Diocese, we are committed to creating inspiring learning communities where

everyone can grow and flourish, rooted in God's love and bearing fruit abundantly.

Caring for God's creation is an important part of that vision. This Earth Day, we are celebrating the steps we have taken to reduce our environmental impact and encouraging others to join us in making a difference.

Our message is simple – schools, whether part of a Trust or not, have the power to make a real impact when they collaborate and share ideas. By thinking and acting collectively, we can cut costs, reduce waste, and become more sustainable. There are many resources available to help schools take positive steps, and even small changes can make a big difference.

The Diocese of Southwark is making great strides towards becoming an eco-diocese and schools have a key role to play in that journey. Shaun Burns and Sara Sanbrook-Davis from the Board of Education have developed excellent resources to support schools in improving their environmental efficiency. Sustainability does not have to be overwhelming – small, deliberate actions lead to meaningful progress. That has been my biggest takeaway from working with them as we all seek to tread more lightly on the earth.

In our Trust, we are committed to bringing schools together to create real change. Many schools, whether in the Trust or not, are already doing great work but often do not have the time to share it. By working together, pooling resources and embedding sustainable practices into everyday school life, we can have a far greater impact. Schools can support one another in making environmental care a natural part of teaching, learning, and daily routines.

Every school in our Trust now has LED lighting, including the three new schools in Lewisham that joined us in September 2024. This has significantly reduced emissions and saved money. We took a long-term view, knowing that while energy prices remain high and unpredictable, reducing running costs helps our schools plan for the future. This large-scale project has been welcomed by our schools and is improving their learning environments.

I would like to see some simple habits become second nature, such as all staff switching off devices at the end of the day. Longer term, I want us to work towards replacing traditional light switches with sensor-based ones, so lights are only on when needed. These are small but effective changes. They will not happen overnight but with deliberate action, we will reduce consumption and costs.

We have also recently signed a Trust-wide photocopier contract with Riso print systems, ensuring the use of energy-efficient machines that are better for the environment. This was a significant piece of work, but we know the long-term benefits will be well worth it.

Additionally, we are working closely with surveyors to ensure that upgrades such as new roofs and boiler replacements are planned with sustainability in mind. These efforts are already making a difference – schools are saving money that can be reinvested in teaching and learning, while carbon emissions are being reduced.

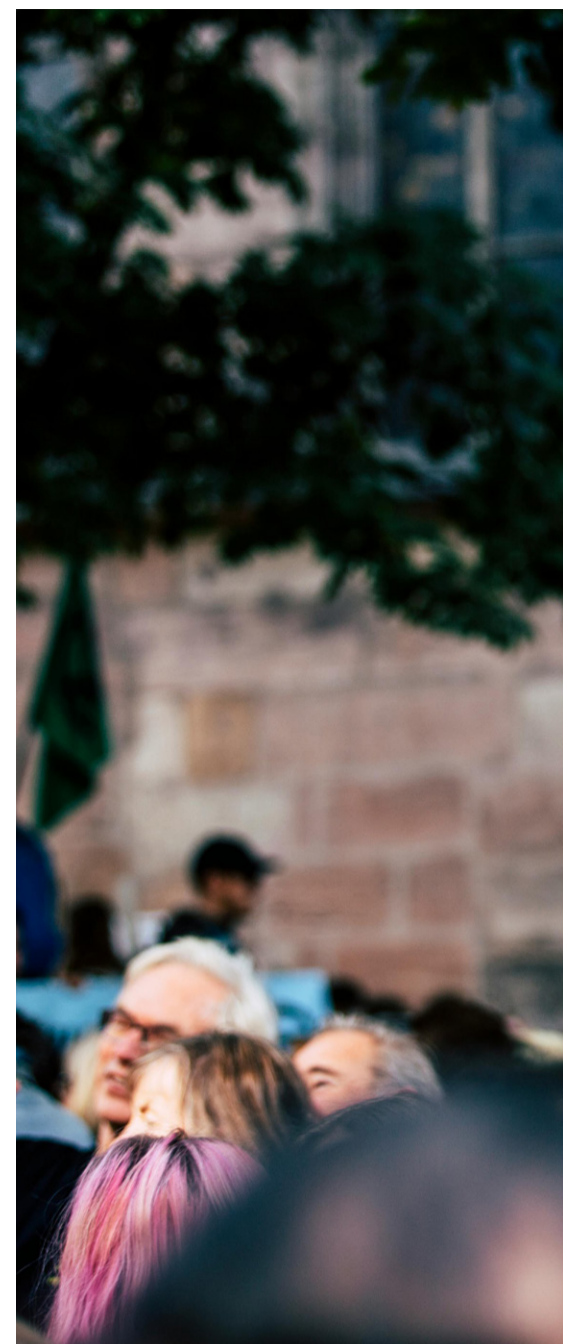
Making a difference does not always mean large, costly projects. Small, simple changes – like the type of paper we use or adjusting printing habits – can go a long way.



“The steps we are taking as a Trust show how collective action leads to tangible benefits, from cost savings to a reduced carbon footprint... Small actions, when shared across many schools, can create a lasting impact for future generations.”

We encourage all schools, whether part of a Trust or not, to take steps towards sustainability. By sharing ideas, working together, and making small but meaningful changes, we can create a greener future for the next generation. It is much easier when schools collaborate on this journey.

The steps we are taking as a Trust show how collective action leads to tangible benefits, from cost savings to a reduced



carbon footprint. I encourage all schools, whether part of a Trust or not, to explore ways to work together on this important issue. Small actions, when shared across many schools, can create a lasting impact for future generations.

As a Trust, we know that schools are under immense pressure, balancing multiple priorities with limited time and resources. Environmental sustainability is important, but we also recognise that finding the capacity to focus on it can be a challenge. That is why, with the help of Shaun and Sara at the Board of Education,

Green week eco pilgrimage

Join Bishop Martin and the Chaldon Pilgrims from 8–13 June to walk through our diocese. This will be a journey to connect, inspire, and change us as we walk together through creation.

You can join for the whole route, do individual day walks or attend evening eco festivals of story, song and creation.

For more information visit: tinyurl.com/3wkppjsk





“By thinking strategically and acting collectively, we can make sustainability more manageable – ensuring that school’s benefit from cost savings and efficiency improvements.”

we have looked, as a Trust, at the practical steps we can take on behalf of our schools to remove some of the heavy lifting.

By thinking strategically and acting collectively, we can make sustainability more manageable – ensuring that school’s benefit from cost savings and efficiency improvements without adding to their already full workload. Whether it is upgrading to LED lighting, securing a Trust-wide contract for energy-efficient equipment, or supporting schools with expert advice and resources, we are committed to making this journey easier.

Importantly, schools do not need to be in a Multi-Academy Trust to take this approach. Groups of schools can work together too. The key is to find a champion – someone who you can release for just a small amount of time to help drive the agenda forward across a small group of schools. The benefits of this kind

of collaboration would far outweigh any short-term costs or resource pressures. Maybe you know someone who could be that person – maybe ask them if they’d like to be a champion across a group of schools in your area? That’s all it takes.

It has also been great to meet with Sophie Roberts, the new Diocesan Environmental Officer, to explore ways we can share best practices across schools, churches, and communities. This wraparound support, involving both the Diocese and the Board of Education, gives schools the best possible foundation to think sustainably and take small but meaningful steps.

The Venerable Jonathan Sedgwick, Chair of the SDBE MAT said, “As a Trust, we believe that collaboration is the key to meaningful and lasting change. Schools are stronger when they work together, sharing expertise, resources, and solutions to common challenges. Environmental sustainability is no different – by supporting one another, we can make real progress while easing the burden on individual schools.

Schools do not have to do this alone. By working together, sharing ideas, and embedding sustainability into daily routines, we can create a lasting impact – one that benefits our schools today and future generations to come.

Children get creative for climate justice



Young people from around the UK have been showcasing their artistic talents and raising their voices for climate justice.



Children were tasked to come up with creative ways of sharing their opinions about climate change and their hopes for the planet – whether in drawings, poetry, sculpture or prose. Their artwork has been displayed in school and community exhibits, with students also writing to their MPs, as part of the project, to raise issues of climate justice and to share their artwork.

Pieces from each school were also selected for a national online gallery, as well as an exhibition which took place on Tuesday 4 March in London. The exhibition was aimed at urging MPs and Ministers to take action.

Schools up and down the country have been taking part in the initiative ‘Creative for Climate Justice’, calling for a fairer and greener future for all.

Registrations for this year’s project are now open to all primary and secondary schools, further education colleges and alternative provision providers in the UK.

The scheme is a partnership between CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam GB, Send My Friend to School and the Royal Society of Literature, with support from The Climate Coalition. It is aimed at helping young people raise their voices on environmental issues.

To find out more visit:
tinyurl.com/bdh6ynbv





**DISCIPLESHIP
& MINISTRY**
Dementia-friendly churches

Everybody welcome – building dementia-friendly churches

SAGE (Southwark and AGEing) is a Southwark diocesan working group to support churches in addressing spiritual, pastoral, missional and ethical issues raised by an ageing population.

In this edition, Joanna Cox Chair, of SAGE tells us how to make church more dementia-friendly.

Joanna writes:

‘All are welcome’ is a familiar message. Congregations are deeply committed to welcoming everyone – and not one of us wants our churches to be unfriendly to anybody. But often church members do not know how to make their church a more inclusive and comfortable

environment, either for a person experiencing dementia or for people who care for them.

SAGE recently organised a training session on developing dementia inclusive churches. With the help of Sarah Thorpe, Dementia Friendly Church Enabler from Lichfield Diocese, we explored the importance of helping a person with dementia feel accepted, and being relaxed when listening and responding, rather than worrying about exact details of words spoken. Today dementia is often recognised at a much earlier stage than in the past, so that someone with a dementia diagnosis often has several years of fairly independent living ahead of them. Sarah emphasised the need to focus on individuals’ abilities and gifts, and the value of creating an



Top: Sparkle project attendees enjoy planting with young people. Left: Painting hands. Right: Socialising at the Place to Be café at St Mark’s Woodcote.

environment where people can connect with others and learn together.

There are different ways in which churches can develop ‘dementia-friendly’ practices. Some local authorities offer extra encouragement – the Royal Borough of Greenwich presented St John, Blackheath with a ‘dementia-friendly’ award as part of ‘Dementia Inclusive Greenwich’, and the PCC at St Edward, Mottingham is also working to gain this recognition. Both churches have carefully explored the physical environment of their churches and followed recommended practices to avoid visually confusing features, and make use of clear and carefully positioned signage. For example, it helps to be aware that people need to be able to find their way out of the toilet as well as into it. Adjustments made can also benefit a wide range of people. It can also be helpful for a person experiencing dementia to have someone available to sit alongside them, to offer help with aspects of the church service that might appear confusing. The team at St John’s say that relating to people in a relaxed and friendly way is key:

“One of the most important things is to remember that people may forget what you say but they will remember how you made them feel.”

Some churches organise specific events that provide meeting places for people experiencing dementia. Often their carers come too, and very much appreciate the opportunity to talk with others in a similar situation. For example, St Mark, Woodcote offers a weekly ‘St Mark’s Place to Be Café’ – a dementia-friendly community space specifically addressing issues of social isolation. With the help of advice from the Alzheimer’s Society, an employed coordinator, and volunteers from the congregation and

local community, the sessions offer a wide range of activities. These have included seated exercises, singing for the brain, a photography course and craft activities.

Other churches have thought about where they can involve those experiencing dementia by integrating them into other activities they offer. The ‘Sparkle’ intergenerational community project started by St Michael, Southfields (and running at St Michael, Wandsworth Common, St John the Divine, Earlsfield and St Stephens, East Putney) enables intergenerational relationships to ‘spark’. They put on a range of activities that young people do together with many older ‘grandfriends’. The sessions are so dementia-friendly that Sparkle now receives referrals from GPs and social prescribers looking for activities for those living with dementia. They find that even when struggling with short-term memory, many people can remember how to interact with a child, perhaps by helping with a craft. This gives a real sense of purpose and enjoyment.

However most important of all is to make churches places where those with dementia and those who care for them a space where they can relax and know they are accepted. A dementia-friendly church goes beyond welcome; it is a church that recognises that people with dementia are not problems to be dealt with, but fellow people of God.



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More information



A resource sheet with links to advice on developing dementia inclusive churches and good practice can be found on our diocesan website – southwark.anglican.org/sage



IN FOCUS...
Diocese news

A song to celebrate women's ministry

The National Association of Diocesan Advisers for Women's Ministry has created a project to launch a song to celebrate female priests in the Church of England.

The project aims to bring people together from across the Church and its communities to celebrate women's ministry. The group wants to commission O Hooley and Tidow (Yorkshire-based band of Gentleman Jack fame), to write a song celebrating some of the first women to be ordained – including Southwark priests The Revd Margaret Mabbs and The Revd Jemima Prasadam.

From 1942 Margaret campaigned for women's ordination and was amongst the first to be ordained priest in 1994 at the age of 70. She retired from ministry aged 92.

Jemima was the first South Asian woman to be ordained in the CofE. She is also the mother of the current Bishop of Huddersfield, The Rt Revd Smitha Prasadam.

A crowdfunding webpage has been set up, where people can donate to help the project reach its £5,000 target.

For more information, visit: tinyurl.com/5n96ujx



Light up the world in prayer

Thy Kingdom Come (TKC) is a global ecumenical prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray from Ascension to Pentecost (28 May – 8 June) for more people to come to know Jesus.

In its 10th year, TKC calls for every person, household and church to pray for 11 days in their own way. Since it began in May 2016, God has grown TKC from a dream of possibility into a movement which unites more than a million Christians in prayer. It takes place in nearly 90% of countries worldwide, across 85 different denominations and traditions – so that friends and family, neighbours and colleagues might come to faith in Jesus Christ.

This year's theme for Thy Kingdom Come is 'Light up the world in prayer' and to mark the global wave of prayer, Southwark Diocese is inviting people to join a family-friendly diocesan celebration on Sunday 8 June 2025 from 3–5pm at Southwark Cathedral. The event is open to all and free to attend. Come along to celebrate the joy of Pentecost with an afternoon filled with fun, creativity and interaction, and an exciting programme of activities for all ages. Refreshments will be provided.

To book, visit: tinyurl.com/2m7uf6xj

Young Mayor of Lewisham

Year 10 student, Shane Grant from Trinity School, Lewisham has been elected as Young Mayor of Lewisham.



The Young Mayor's Election takes place every year, involving young people in the democratic process and decision making in Lewisham. The Young Mayor is democratically elected by young people across the Borough, with nearly 10,000 people voting.

The election does not just provide a day of activity for schools, but a year-round programme to support and develop young people's voices and citizenship across the Borough. The young mayor provides a focus and a channel for young people's views to be heard by decision-makers, with support from young advisers and the Young Citizen's panel.

David Lucas, Executive Headteacher at Trinity School said, "Shane Grant is a star, inspirational individual, and a very proactive leader. Shane won with a large margin and we are excited to see what he will achieve in this role."

Shane – who is part of the Pupil Leadership Team at Trinity – will serve one-year term as a spokesperson for the Borough's young people. He'll inform and advise the Mayor on issues relating to young people, as well as oversee a budget of at least £25k.



A journey as disciples

On Monday 10 March, Bishop Christopher and members of his staff team accompanied 24 curates from across our diocese (pictured above) on a pilgrimage to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor named by St John in the Book of Revelations: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (1:4-11).

The group visited each of the sites of the cities in which the churches were set and

reflected upon what the Spirit was saying to the Churches both then and in our world today. The visits were enhanced by reading and reflecting on Revelation together each evening.

Look out for an article reflecting on the pilgrimage in the May edition and read a series of blogs on our website here: tinyurl.com/2tj2p95d

Clergy Support Trust

Majestic

Three incredible cathedral choirs perform together, for a charity service in celebration of Anglican clergy.

Clergy Support Trust Festival **Tuesday 13th May, 5pm**
www.clergysupport.org.uk/the-bridge **St Paul's Cathedral | Free**



IN FOCUS...

Southwark Vision

Supporting and growing vocations

In this series, we are sharing information about our Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP) and how you and your parish can get involved – to help us implement Southwark Vision and meet the missional challenges of our time.



© Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes, Ceri Richards The Supper at Emmaus, MMAAC.

This month, we share with you new initiatives just getting underway that focus on how the DIP will actively contribute to realising our Vision of encouraging greater diversity in our lay and ordained ministries – contributing to helping us grow younger as well as more diverse as a diocese, as well as sustain and develop our parishes.

This includes a research project to try and identify why, for example, candidates may start but not complete their discernment journey. It will also explore how we might make the discernment and training process more accessible to those who are under-represented in ministry. These include those from our estates, GMH applicants and those who may have not had the same educational opportunities as others such as a higher or university education.

Our Dean of Cultural Diversity, The Revd Canon Roxanne Eversley (roxanne.eversley@southwark.anglican.org) and Vocations Researcher, Anne O'Neil (anne.o'neil@southwark.anglican.org) lead on this important work. If you know anyone who has started their vocational journey and dropped out – or if by reading and reflecting on this, you feel that 'people like me' are not represented in our lay and ordained ministries please get in touch with them.

Additionally, later this year we are launching an Apprenticeship-style training scheme for those looking to work in children and young people's ministry. By closely working with our parishes, particularly those in estates, we are looking for a diverse group of candidates for this training which will start in September.

We are seeking to appoint up to eight paid youth and children's work apprentices to form an initial pilot cohort. They will work in a parish where they will develop skills, gain experience, and grow youth and children's work. Alongside this, they will also study Theology, Mission and Ministry with Ridley Hall Cambridge, to achieve a Certificate in Higher Education qualification (Level 4). Look out for details on how to apply in May.

For more information, please contact Apprenticeship Coordinator, Louisa Ley by email at: louisa.ley@southwark.anglican.org.

You can read more about the key elements of our Diocesan Investment Programme on our website: tinyurl.com/4ff8w89h



LET US PRAY...

APRIL

The Venerable John Kiddle
Archdeacon of Wandsworth

Holy Week

I wonder how you will spend Holy Week this year? Or perhaps a better question is, how will your journey through Holy Week?

The eight days from Palm Sunday (13 April) to Easter Sunday (20 April) offer a rich and opportunity to grow closer to Christ, deeper in our faith and stronger in our love for God and God's world.

Many of our parish churches offer daily services through Holy Week; the liturgy itself giving shape to the journey we are invited to walk together. It's not a journey to walk speedily, or noisily. It's a quiet, reflective, gentle journey that becomes, as we let it, an inner journey of renewal.

If you are able, it is well worth making the space to attend services in Holy Week; perhaps even, if you can, every day.

If you aren't able to get to church, how about doing something to create a journey for yourself? To help you do so, why not take aspects of the Holy Week liturgy and use them for your own reflection?

The Psalms

The Psalms are a rich thread woven into the tapestry of Holy Week. They enable us to enter into the experience of suffering of Christ and of the world. They help us express both lament and longing – as well as faith and trust.

The Passion

Take time to read the passion narrative – the story of Jesus' last week – in one of the gospels. Read slowly, entering into the drama through the different people in the story, and allowing the story of Christ to be your story.

Here are some Psalms and a passage from Luke's gospel for each day:

- **Palm Sunday:** Psalm 118.1–2, 19–29 and Luke 19.28–40
- **Monday:** Psalm 41 and Luke 22.1–23
- **Tuesday:** Psalm 27 and Luke 22.24–53
- **Wednesday:** Psalm 102 and Luke 22.54–71
- **Maundy Thursday:** Psalm 42 and Luke 23.1–25
- **Good Friday:** Psalm 22 and Luke 23.26–49
- **Saturday:** Psalm 142 and Luke 23.50–56
- **Easter Sunday:** Psalm 118.1–2, 14–24 and Luke 24.1–35



The Stations of the Cross

You could walk with Jesus on his way to the cross reflecting on moments on that journey, known as the Stations of the Cross. There are many beautiful and moving works of art in churches and online depicting these moments.

You can subscribe to podcasts reflecting on the Stations of Cross on the Church of England website: tinyurl.com/2xmcnp34. (Or just search for Church of England Stations of the Cross.)

You may also find the reflections on the Stations of the Cross from CAFOD helpful: tinyurl.com/36sj6erh

In the way that works for you, may you find that God walks with you through Holy Week and blesses you richly on that journey.

*God of grace and glory,
Bless the journeys we make this
Holy Week
Enrich our silence and deepen
our stillness
Softener our hearts and broaden
our minds
May we walk more closely
with Christ
May our love be rekindled
And our faith renewed
So bring us to Easter with
hope restored
And joy overflowing.
Amen.*

WHAT'S ON

Please send details of your next events for MAY ONWARDS to Trinity House **BY FRIDAY 11 APRIL**

April

SATURDAY 5 & 12 APRIL

- * **GREENWICH** – Reclaiming Narratives: commonly called by the name of Esther Smith. Join acclaimed writer & artist Kandace Siobhan Walker in a two-day creative writing workshop inspired by the stories of Black people connected to St Alfege Church through the centuries. 11am–3pm at St Alfege Church, Greenwich Church Street, London SE10 9BJ. Funded by Royal Borough of Greenwich for Black History 365. Free, must book: tinyurl.com/54nr4mnn

SUNDAY 6 APRIL

- ♪ **PETERSHAM** – Petersham Passion. Jeremy Summerly, conductor, directs a charity concert, JS Bach's *St John Passion* and *St Matthew Passion*. 5pm at St Peter's Church, Petersham, Church Lane TW10 7AB. Proceeds to St Peter's & local community projects. Suggested donation £15, tickets: tinyurl.com/PetershamPassion. Details: events.stpeterspetersham@gmail.com

SUNDAY 6 APRIL

- ♪ **NORBURY** – Passiontide devotional performance of Mozart's *Requiem* given by the choir and a period orchestra. 6.30pm (doors open 6pm), at St Philip's Church, Beech Road SW16 4NW. Admission free, retiring collection. Details: stphilipsnorbury.org

WEDNESDAY 9 APRIL

- * **ZOOM** – Diocese of Southwark Lay Ministry Taster session. For details or to book please contact Carol Coslett, Assistant Director of Lay Ministry: carol.coslett@southwark.anglican.org or phone 02079399456 or book via learning@southwark.anglican.org

WEDNESDAY 9 APRIL

- * **SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL** – *Unmaking Mary*: The Director of Theos, Chine MacDonald, talks about her new book in which she argues that for two thousand years, the Virgin Mary has been depicted throughout art, literature and culture as symbolising the perfect mother. 6pm Southwark Cathedral. Free (donations welcome), tickets from: tinyurl.com/3p8tzyz.

THURSDAY 10 APRIL

- ♪ **MERTON** – Organ recital with Alexander Binns, Derby Cathedral Director of Music. 7.30pm at St Mary's Church, Church Path, Merton SW19 3HJ. Bar in interval. Tickets £15 on the door. Details: tinyurl.com/jv36zf47

UNTIL 10 APRIL

- * **SOUTH LAMBETH** *A Thousand Tongues*: an exhibition of visual narratives by UK asylum seekers. Mon–Fri, 2–5pm at St Anne and All Saints Church, Miles Street, London SW8 1GY. Free.

SATURDAY 12 & 26 APRIL

- * **GREENWICH** – Hidden Spaces Tour. Join our tour guides to discover spaces usually closed to the public. 11.45am at St Alfege Church, Greenwich Church Street, London SE10 9BJ. Ticket £9, booking: tinyurl.com/3jp55cbe

WEDNESDAY 16 APRIL

- ♪ **SELSDON** – Tenebrae service, moving and contemplative preparation for the events of Holy Week. Reflect through scripture and music. 8pm, at St John the Divine, Upper Selsdon Road CR2 8DD. Details: stjohnsselsdon.org.uk

SATURDAY 26 APRIL

- * **GREENWICH** – Untold Stories: Women in St Alfege Tour. Join us to hear the fascinating stories of women connected to St Alfege Church through the centuries – from organists to bellringers, from scientists to suffragettes. Visit the bell ringing chamber and look at rare historic manuscripts. 2.15pm at St Alfege Church, Greenwich Church Street, London SE10 9BJ. Ticket £9, booking: tinyurl.com/54nr4mnn

SUNDAY 27 APRIL

- * **SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL** – Embodied Theology: What we do with our bodies in worship. Ever wondered why certain bodily things happen during the Sunday service? Why are the Gospel book and altar kissed, why do some bow halfway through the Creed...? Come and find out and ask Canon Roxanne Eversley all those questions you've been wanting to ask. 9.45am no ticket required.

UNTIL 27 APRIL

- * **WATERLOO** – St John's Waterloo, exhibition themed on racial justice and inter-faith integrity, forms part of St John's Waterloo 200th anniversary celebrations. Free. Please check opening times before visiting: tinyurl.com/43cydake

May

SATURDAY 3 MAY

- ♪ **KENSINGTON** – Prom Praise: Wonder. *The All Souls Orchestra*, *Prom Praise Massed Chorus* and guest artists will reveal more than just the planets, revelling in masterpieces which celebrate the magnificence of Creation. 7.30pm at the Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2AP. Tickets: tinyurl.com/4zkx6rxt

FRIDAY 9 MAY

- * **WATERLOO** – Lecture – *Life above: Birds, Ecology and Us*: Is Christian life just about heaven above? Or is there an ecological form of discipleship that pays attention to the birds in the skies too? Lecture by Professor Colin Beale, a world expert in ecology. In association with St Augustine's College of Theology and St John's Waterloo. 5–7.30pm at St John's Waterloo. Free, book at: tinyurl.com/2ca2vrps

SATURDAY 17 MAY

- ♪ **PUTNEY** – *Putney Choral Society*: Mozart Requiem & Pergolesi Magnificat. Music Director Jamie Powe; professional orchestra & soloists. 7pm at St Paul's Church, Augustus Rd, Southfields, SW1 6EW. Tickets £25 (incl. prog. & refreshments), booking: tinyurl.com/5bc2s2se or on the door (card only).

June

SUNDAY 8 JUNE

- * **SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL** – *Thy Kingdom Come*. 10th anniversary celebration. This year's theme is '*Light up the world in prayer*' and to mark the global wave of prayer, we're inviting you to join a family-friendly diocesan celebration, 3–5pm at Southwark Cathedral. The event is open to all and free to attend.

20–22 JUNE 2025

- * **HERTFORDSHIRE** – The Messy Church Conference: *All Together*. A weekend of inspiring keynote speakers, informative workshops, two Messy Church sessions and fun together with the global Messy Church family. High Leigh Conference Centre, Hertfordshire. £335. Bookings close 9 May. Tickets: tinyurl.com/2s3nedtd



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IN FOCUS...

Lay ministry – Readers

Walking the journey with others as others have walked a journey with me

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

I'm Cherry Murdoch (pictured), Lay Reader at The Good Shepherd with St Peter's, Lee. I am a Deanery Lay Champion and have just stepped back from my role on the Lay Council. South London has been my home since I was



four, there is a great vibe here, it's an enjoyable place to live, green with lots of parks, unpretentious, multicultural and vibrant.

The Lay Council was formed to broaden training opportunities for lay people, develop their gifts in ministry and reflect the diversity of South London. I hoped to contribute my perspective as a Lay Reader and as a current student at St Augustine's College. I have found the training hugely beneficial and transformative, but I was concerned that the time commitment and academic study might discourage some candidates despite the support that St. Augustine's offers.

When I trained back in the 1990s as a Reader, we had 20 in my year. The numbers have dropped over the years and the current average age of a Reader is 68. The numbers are picking up post-Covid and I hope with the support of the Lay Council and Lay Champions, more people will come forward. It was a privilege to be on the Council and be part of an initiative to encourage people to develop their talents in the service of God.

Lay training is important, and the diocese plays a vital role in supporting parishes with lay training opportunities. I hope to put words into action as a Lay Champion and work with the Chapter and Deanery Synod to understand the challenges in accessing diocesan training as well as promoting local training at deanery and parish level.

The biggest barrier to training is time. I can't see as many people in their 40s having the time to attend an intensive training as I once did. This is not because people don't want to help or learn more, they just don't have the time as they juggle jobs, childcare, family commitments and cost of living. That's why as well as encouraging people into licensed and commissioned Lay Ministries, the Council will now look at ways to bring training for affirmed Lay Ministry to the parishes.

Currently, I lead services and preach but as I get older, I see my role more about building others up in their faith by listening, praying and encouraging people in their faith journey. It's about being a Barnabas (son of encouragement) and walking the journey with others as others have walked a journey with me. I am so grateful for those who have supported me on my faith journey and that's what I want to do for others. We in the Church have been blessed and we need to pass on that blessing to others.

Find out more

You can find out more about Lay Readers and lay ministry on our diocesan website: tinyurl.com/2x4nwjaz



What is the Lay Council?

The Southwark Diocesan Lay Council brings together practitioners and others to celebrate, grow and support lay leadership and ministry in its many forms in our diocese.

It has been established in the light of Southwark Vision, diocesan participation in the national initiative Setting God's People Free, and as a recommendation of the Lay Leadership and Ministry Advisory Group Report which was presented and endorsed by Diocesan Synod in July 2018.

A key part of our intent to focus on the flourishing of all God's people – the Lay Council aims to recognise the charism of lay people in their ministry and leadership as Christians in society as well as in the Church.

The Lay Council is involved in nurturing lay leadership and ministry, supporting the development of affirmed, commissioned and licensed ministry and encouraging collaborative working between lay leaders and lay ministers and clergy in both the gathered and sent church.

Leading the focus on lay leadership are The Revd Canon Wendy Robins, Director of Discipleship, Lay Ministry and Continuing Ministerial Education and The Revd Jeremy Clark-King, Lead for Curate Training and Development.

The future of Church of England safeguarding

Nicola Thomas, Diocesan Secretary writes:



Safeguarding is at the very heart of everything we do – and that could not be achieved without the efforts of our ministers and volunteers in parishes across our diocese. We

are so grateful for their hard work and dedication in helping our churches to be safe and welcoming places for all.

In February, the General Synod (which is the Church of England's national governing body) discussed the Future of Church Safeguarding in a rigorous and respectful debate. You can watch the proceedings via this link: tinyurl.com/5n7xnbwp

The discussions, following several high-profile safeguarding cases, sought to ensure that the lessons of the past were embedded in frameworks that support

our communities in the future. Essentially, the General Synod approved a move towards more independent safeguarding structures in dioceses and nationally.

The General Synod asked for more work to be done on the legal and practical requirements for a fully independent safeguarding model (known as Model 4), but agreed to move some elements of safeguarding to an independent model in the short term (Model 3). The combination of putting in place Model 3 now with work towards Model 4 has now been dubbed Model 3.5.

This model includes:

- Setting up an external scrutiny body, which is likely to be on a statutory basis in order to give it regulatory power – and so would require legislation.
- Transfer of most functions currently delivered by the National Safeguarding Team (NST) – except policy development – to an external employer, eventually and after all.

- Development, consultation and legislative processes are complete.
- Further work to determine the legal and practical requirements necessary to implement model 4 – which would involve the transfer of all 85 safeguarding teams in dioceses and cathedrals to the same external employer as the NST.

The motion, including amendments, was overwhelmingly approved.

We particularly welcome the General Synod's amendment to the motion to "lament and repent of the failure of the Church to be welcoming to victims and survivors and the harm they have experienced and continue to experience in the life of the Church." We owe a huge debt to the courage of victims and survivors of abuse – we must learn from their experiences and work to make our churches safer for all.

These big structural changes cannot happen immediately. There are processes to follow in order to ensure everyone is

properly supported while detailed policy development work is completed, and legislative processes are implemented. We are forming a response to the Charity Commission (as are all dioceses) on the changes regarding practical obstacles and challenges, especially for trustees who are responsible for safeguarding in their organisations.

In the meantime, there is currently no change to the way parishes, Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) and incumbents work and support safeguarding in our diocese and parishes. Parishes will be kept updated and supported through any changes as they come into force.

For more information about safeguarding support, please visit: southwark.anglican.org/safeguarding