



The BRIDGE

Newspaper of the Anglican Diocese of Southwark



Christ
centred
Outward
focused

Vol.29 No.3
April 2024

Diocesan Synod

Renewing our hope
See page 3



Spring forward

Springing forward to
brighter days
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Lay Vocations champions

A network of
encouragers
See page 12



Spring has sprung in Southwark



© Revd Dhanaraj (Prem) Premraj, vicar of St Edward.

Hyacinths growing in the churchyard of St Edward, New Addington. See pages 6–7 for more Spring blooms from across our parishes.

Great is the company of women

On Saturday 23 March, a eucharist to celebrate women's ministry and commemorate the 30th anniversary of the ordination of women priests in the Diocese of Southwark took place at Southwark Cathedral.

It was an opportunity to celebrate the vast contribution of women to the life of the Church, as the service marked three decades since the ordination of women to the priesthood in the Church of England.

The service, led by The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark, began with a moment of reflection with The Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett, Bishop of Croydon. While a candle was lit, the congregation said, "God of light, we hold before you our foremothers: all who have been ordained in this Cathedral since 1994: and,

in particular, those who are now at rest in the peace of Christ and those who cannot be with us today".

The first reading, (Isaiah 6.1–10) was read by the Revd Professor June Boyce-Tillman MBE and the second, (2 Corinthians 5.11–21) by Dr Clare Dowding, Warden of Readers.

The Ven Moira Astin, Archdeacon of Reigate, preached. Focusing on words of encouragement taken from the readings, Archdeacon Moira spoke about being called into priestly ministry 'reconciling and in-breathing', saying, "Today we celebrate that we woman and men are being called, are living a reconciling life and are breathing the breath of God. As the Spirit works in us we love, we are at peace and we have joy in God and each other. This is the core of what God has called us to".

After the service the congregation enjoyed celebratory drinks and a selection of cakes specially baked to mark the occasion.



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A view from The BRIDGE



Our world faces constant challenges that trouble us deeply: the ongoing wars in Gaza and Ukraine are with us daily with terrible suffering and much of it among women and children. There are other conflicts, too, that do not make the news in quite the same way.

Alongside these, we are still facing fateful environmental challenges concerning climate change and environmental justice. In our nation, inflation and the cost of living continue to take their toll, and we know that what happens in one part of the world affects us in ways that perhaps we had not readily understood before. Wherever we look there seems to be trouble.

Mary Magdalene, in the garden on the first Easter morning, was overwhelmed by her grief at the death of her Lord, mistaking Jesus to be the gardener, until he called her by her familiar name “Mary”. Jesus reached out to her in the depth of her loss. Her despair was changed into joy as true reality dawned.

Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew said in 2017 that “our human dignity and welfare are deeply connected to our care for the whole of creation”. We are to steward the world and its resources. The garden of creation has enough for us all but this will only be recognised when our despair at planet peril is changed into a true reality of taking responsibility as stewards of creation. It is our

responsibility to ensure that the growth God gives is distributed equitably. Individually, we cannot make large changes; but if we each make small ones, cumulatively these will make a significant difference for the better. Caring for the environment in which we find ourselves, caring for our sisters and brothers – to whom God has given dignity and hope in Christ – are Gospel imperatives. There is only one way to care for a garden, and that is to work methodically and carefully – planting, tending, pruning, weeding where necessary. So it is in the world around us: where we should sow the seeds of future well-being and weed out injustice.

When Mary Magdalene mistook Jesus for the gardener, she was only partly wrong. Mary only recognised Jesus when he reached out to her, met her in the condition of her need and called her by name. We too may not recognise Jesus immediately, but he is present among us, reaching out to us, just as he was present to Mary that first Easter morning. May we all this Easter recognise his Risen presence in the world. May we tend and care for the garden of creation around us.

I wish you and those you love great joy at Easter as we encounter again the hope of the Resurrection – through the victory over suffering and death on the Cross – a joy that transfigures all creation.

Bishop Christopher



NEWS IN BRIEF

The Bishop's Lent Call 2024

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 Lenten message focused on the theme “Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” Amos 5:24. We asked parishes to pray for peace with justice in Jerusalem and the Middle East and resilience with well-being for Zimbabwe.



As the Lenten season has come to an end, a huge thank you goes to those who have been able to generously give to these causes. Money given will support Christians suffering at the hands of the war in Gaza and help develop projects in Zimbabwe where people's mental health is suffering, and their resilience is low.

Information on this year's projects, resources and how to donate are at: southwark.anglican.org/lentcall

Thy Kingdom Come

Thy Kingdom Come (TKC) is a global ecumenical prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray, from Ascension to Pentecost (9–19 May), for more people to come to know Jesus.

Join the global wave of prayer as every person, household and church is encouraged to pray during the 11 days in their own way.

To take part and join in visit: thykingdomcome.global

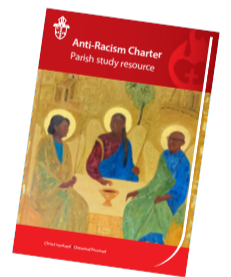
Fundraise, campaign and worship

Christian Aid invite you to take part in ‘Seven days, so many ways: 70k in May’ fundraising challenge. This year's Christian Aid Week (12–18 May) is focusing on stories from Burundi, where families are working hard to transform their lives. Show your support and solidarity with people all over the world by signing up to take part – you can cover the distance any way you like, take part by yourself or with a group, your church, friends, and family. You could, share your story on a dedicated Facebook page and inspire others – you can even bag yourself a welcome pack with a T-shirt when you raise the first £10!

Find out more about the different ways to do the 70 kilometres challenge and how you can take part at: caweek.org/70kinmay

The Anti-Racism Charter (ARC)

The ARC is a strategy to enhance ethnic diversity and inclusion across the Diocese of Southwark. The charter was developed to actively counter, disrupt and oppose racial injustice. This year, as part of plans that will further support our Diocesan key principles, commitments and action plan for leadership and development set out in the charter, an ARC Study Guide will be available for you to use within your parishes. Look out for more information over the coming months. In the meantime, we encourage you to continue to use to the charter in your parishes.



Visit the website to download the Southwark Anti-Racism Charter Pack at: bit.ly/3VKHQGF

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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 2024. Material for that edition must be with Vernia Mengot via email by **WEDNESDAY 10 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...
Diocesan Synod

Diocesan Synod: Renewing our hope

On Saturday 16 March, Southwark Diocesan Synod met at St Peter's Church in Battersea, with a packed and varied agenda. Representatives from every deanery in the diocese met together to discuss key issues affecting our parishes and communities.

Opening Synod with his Presidential Address, The Bishop of Southwark, The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun spoke of the many challenges facing the Church and the world today – and the need for the Church to resist the anxiety of the times. He said, “Our renewed Southwark Vision – approved by this Synod at its last meeting – lays out our common diocesan vision and shared diocesan values. What we have chosen to value as a diocese – and what therefore we choose to prioritise in our common life – is joy, justice, hope, love, community, humility, and hospitality. Anxiety is not on this list; it was never even on the long-list. Why? Because anxiousness reduces our capacity of joy and our commitment to justice. It eats away at our hope and coarsens our love. Anxiety undermines community.

“My beloved brothers and sisters, as we enter Passiontide and Holy Week, let us not be anxious either for the Church or for the world,” he concluded. “The Lord is near where there is suffering, and he is near in the power his risen life. Rather, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let us make our requests known to God.

Let us entreat him for the good of his Church and the well-being of the world, and let us work for the same, committed to speaking well of each other and being Christ-centred and outward-focused in all things.”

As well as receiving an update on diocesan finances and property support, members heard the latest on the Diocese’s progress towards achieving Net Zero Carbon. They were asked to encourage their parishes to complete the Church of England’s Energy Footprint Tool (a simple way for churches to calculate their carbon footprint) by July – this will contribute to the planning and understanding of the Diocese’s overall carbon footprint.



“What we have chosen to value as a diocese – and what therefore we choose to prioritise in our common life – is joy, justice, hope, love, community, humility, and hospitality. Anxiety is not on this list...”

The Chairs of the Houses of Laity and Clergy (Adrian Greenwood and The Revd Lotwina Farodoye) gave a presentation encouraging diverse membership and involvement with the upcoming Diocesan Synod elections. A leaflet has been circulated to members and posted to all parishes and deaneries with details on how to stand for election, encouraging



Top (l-r): Bishop Christopher’s presidential address; Nicola Thomas presents the refreshed Southwark Vision. Middle: Charles Lamont (left) commissioned as the Dean of Revitalisation, and Guy Hewitt, licensed as public preacher, with Bishop Christopher. Below: Synod members take a vote.

participation from a wide range of church traditions, age, ethnicity and experience.

Following a presentation on the updated Southwark Vision, Synod heard about and discussed a proposed nine-year Diocesan Investment Programme to implement the Vision, through partnership funding with the national Church. If the investment programme goes ahead, key areas of work will include resourcing churches, hub churches, revitalisation, children and young people, innovation funding, diversity in vocations, estates lay ministry, and bilingual ministry. Synod endorsed the scope and scale of the Programme, for which the Diocese will seek funding

from the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board in April 2024.

Speaking to Synod on racial justice, the Revd Guy Hewitt, the national Church’s Racial Justice Director, encouraged members to engage in debates around equality and inclusion and noted the importance of accurate data to track progress. The Bishop of Croydon, The Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett, noted that the diocesan Anti-Racism Charter was now fully embedded within the Vision and governance structures, including the Board of Education and that focus would now turn to enabling parishes and deaneries to embed the Charter in their own areas. This includes parish study resources which are to be piloted over the summer. Grant funding from the national Church will resource dedicated support provision of training and resources for parishes, as well as an interactive racial justice programme for children and young people.

Synod members also shared in a celebration of the Eucharist, during which Bishop Christopher commissioned Revd Charles Lamont as the Diocese’s new Dean of Revitalisation and licensed the Revd Guy Hewitt as public preacher in the Diocese.



NEWS FROM OUR PARISHES



In loving memory of The Revd Canon Ivor Gill Smith-Cameron

Southwark Diocese mourns the death of The Revd Canon Ivor Gill Smith-Cameron, who died on Wednesday 20 March 2024.



Ivor Smith-Cameron was born 12 November 1929, in what was then Madras (Chennai) into the Anglo-Indian community of the British Raj.

After completing his studies at Madras University in independent India, he left for England in 1950 where he trained for the ordained ministry of the Church of England at the College of the Resurrection at Mirfield. He served his title in Chichester and then served his chaplaincy for 14 years at Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine.

Afterwards, he served as Canon Residentiary and Diocesan Director of Mission in Southwark and established a house-church near Clapham Common. Until 1994 he also served at All Saints, Battersea Fields, and in 1998 a selection of his sermons and talks was published called *The Church of Many Colours*.

Bishop Christopher said, "Canon Ivor Smith-Cameron is one of our great Southwark Global Majority Heritage (GMH) Pioneers and champion of racial justice and inclusion."

Expressing his condolences, Bishop Christopher said, "On my last visit, as Ivor was nearing his end, it was wonderful to see anxiety and concern transfigured into calm and peace as we prayed together. May he rest in peace and rise in glory."

In tribute, the Revd Prem Dhanaraj said, "Meeting Ivor was for me a transforming experience as was for many people. He was a person who was living a message, the gospel, both priestly and prophetically at the same time, all the time, very radical."



The Revd Alan Gadd said, "Ivor and I left All Saints in 2005 and moved to a house in Brixton Hill where Ivor's unique energy and imagination found fresh outlets. He loved also to offer a brief experience of his native Madras and he promoted an annual series of group visits."

Read more about Ivor Smith-Cameron's life and ministry including the full tribute by Bishop Christopher: bit.ly/49qaTSF

Bags of blessing at Easter

St Matthew's Church, Park Hill Croydon, has been awarded a grant from Benefact Mission Money Grants 2024.

These grants are offered to parishes planning a new project and can help towards the cost of running events, providing resources, and outreach projects in the community.

On Monday afternoons the church runs a well-being café: *RENEW 121*, a space where it is 'OK not to be OK'. The café runs as part of a network of churches in Purley and South Croydon offering support and is open between 2–4pm for tea, cake and a chat or a place for quiet reflection.

This Easter, those who attend the café have produced little mesh bags containing an Easter decoration, small chocolate eggs and a card with a bible passage. The bags will be distributed to care homes in the parish by the Revd Ruth Chapman, Vicar at St Matthew's.

With the help of the grant, the church plans to make more little bags to distribute for different seasons of the year. The next bags will celebrate the summer holidays, followed by bags filled with lavender for the autumn.

More information about grants is at: southwark.anglican.org/support/for-our-churches/grants/

Maundy gifts for Southwark recipients

Each year Bishop Christopher requests nominations from across our diocese of people who have dedicated their lives to Christian service. On Maundy Thursday (28 March) Her Majesty The Queen distributed the Royal Maundy gifts on behalf of His Majesty The King at Worcester Cathedral.



Ceremonial coins were presented to 75 men and 75 women from around the country in recognition of their exemplary Christian service to church and community over many years. During the service, which commemorates Jesus washing the feet of the disciples at the Last Supper, each recipient received two purses: one red and one white. The white purse contains a set of specially minted silver Maundy coins equivalent in value to the age of the Monarch. This year Keghvard Vartanian, Patricia Ellis and Malcolm Surrudge received Royal Maundy.

Keghvard Vartanian

Keghvard Vartanian was nominated by His Grace Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church in the UK and Ireland, at the request of Bishop Christopher. Keghvard has been a dedicated member of the parish of St Yeghiche – an Armenian Church – for the past 40 years.

Ahead of the service at Worcester Cathedral, Keghvard said, "It is such a privilege to be a Maundy recipient and attend the Royal Maundy service. I am so humbled and honoured. I look forward to it very much.

"I am grateful to our Bishop Hovakim for nominating me and Bishop Christopher for making this possible. It is comforting to know that you are serving the church and community.

"I was born in Iraq and grew up in a Christian family who were survivors of the Armenian genocide. Christianity has become part of my life and our communal life has been centred around the Armenian Church since my childhood. I have also educated my son and daughter and I have now pleasure to educate my grandchildren in a Christian way.

"I have been actively involved in our church and parish since its inception. I was elected and continue to serve as a Vice Chairman of the parish council of St Yeghiche since it was established as a parish, in 2013.

"I have also been instrumental in the preparation of the diocesan governing bylaws, as well as the Article of Association of the Armenian Church Trust UK, of which I am a Trustee, and in the establishment of a new Armenian Diocesan Centre in West London."

Bishop Hovakim said, "Keghvard has always demonstrated exemplary Christian

service in our community, and his selfless contributions have left an indelible mark on everyone."

Patricia Ellis

Nominated by Bishop Christopher, Patricia Ellis has been a member of the Flower Guild as a Flower Coordinator at Southwark Cathedral for over 20 years and has been Team Leader for the past 12 years. She is a Chelsea gold medal winner and brings a wealth of both traditional and contemporary flower design to the Cathedral.

Sharing her love of floristry with many people in communities across the South East of England through demonstrations and flower festivals, Patricia explains how it all started, "As a member of Orpington Flower Club, I was asked if I would like to help do flowers at Southwark Cathedral. I started as a 'bucket girl' passing the flowers to an experienced church flower arranger. Gradually under her patience guidance I progressed to arranging the pedestals.

"Arranging the flowers at Southwark is always a joy, they bring a welcome to the congregation and visitors. We often have visitors sit watching us and have a chat. We have many special services and events including visits from members of the Royal family."

A faithful worshipping member of the Cathedral, Patricia said, "I feel privileged to do the flowers at the Cathedral and it is my way of giving thanks for all I have and praising God with the beauty of the flowers."

Before the ceremony she said, "I am looking forward to the Maundy Money service very much."

Malcolm Surrudge

Malcolm Surrudge was nominated by Archbishop John Wilson of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark. Despite living with two chronic illnesses, Malcolm has used his gifts as an artist to bring joy and encouragement to many. More recently, this has meant visits to prisons to help prisoners appreciate and make art. Malcolm has also restored many sacred images for free. He shares his gifts for the common good, both within the Church, and in the community.

Meet Southwark's Filipino Community

Revd S Anand Asir Anand, Associate Vicar at All Saints, Battersea Park, talks about the church's sacramental community mission to the unchurched Filipino community in London.

In 2018, with falling numbers of worshippers at All Saints' Church, Revd Jessie Anand and I were praying for guidance in mission. The church is opposite Battersea Park, and we were approached several times for spiritual help by Filipino people living or working locally, particularly those working as nannies for families. Not knowing the culture or religious traditions

of people from the Philippines, we turned to United Society Partners in the Gospel who introduced us to Fr Salvador Telen of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente Church (IFH) in the Philippines. We felt that God was prompting us.

We shared our vision with Bishop Christopher, who encouraged us and appointed The Ven John Kiddle, Archdeacon of Wandsworth, to support our mission for a 'Filipino chaplaincy'. Our first bilingual Eucharist, in English and Tagalog was in December 2019, with 15 people, including some from St John, Notting Hill.

For two years the Tagalog Mass was celebrated once a month. Filipino people who play an active role in charities within their communities were invited to use the church space, and the work grew. Many came for help, although not for the chaplaincy.

At the end of 2022, Fr Andres Palantes of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP) started helping to support the growth of the chaplaincy. The mission was renamed 'Filipino Community' (FC), and Helen Bulusan (All Saints, Battersea Park) became FC Coordinator. The community now reaches out to Filipinos



Left: All Saints, Battersea Park. Above (l-r): Anand Asir Anand, Bishop Brent Alawas, Bishop Christopher and Jessie Anand.

of all faiths or none. Charitable work continues, especially for those who have suffered abuse in the workplace. Spiritual support is provided through sacraments, bible study and prayer, and there is strong emphasis on fellowship.

FC holds Tagalog Mass on the first Sunday of every month, and a bible study and prayer group on the third Sunday. The fourth Sunday focuses on skill development.

Fr Andres also encourages FC members to attend the regular Sunday morning Eucharist at All Saints, which has raised congregation numbers and invigorated our

church community. We produced a tote bag, as merchandise to advertise the FC. The Rt Revd Dr Martin Gainsborough, Bishop of Kingston, recently attended the Tagalog mass and met many FC members.

The ECP Primate, Bishop Brent Alawas, also recently visited and met with Bishop Christopher, strengthening our partnership. We are grateful for Archdeacon John's continued strong support and look forward to developing this mission.

Join worship or get in touch through the All Saints, Battersea website: bit.ly/49ajDah



Celebrating culture and transforming communities

Wandsworth has been announced as the next London Borough of Culture.

The London Borough of Culture award was launched by Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London in June 2017, inspired by the UK City and European Capital of Culture programmes. Each Borough of Culture receives £1.35m to deliver a spectacular year of creative and cultural activities that celebrate local communities and showcase London's diversity.

Wandsworth will start its year in 2025, with the theme 'Culture connects, unites, heals, nourishes and activates'.

The Revd Betsy Blatchley, Pioneer Minister in the Arts in Nine Elms said, "It's great news and I am very much looking forward to seeing how Nine Elms Arts Ministry – and the wider Church in Wandsworth – can be involved."

So far, the award has involved 12 London Boroughs, including past winners Lewisham (2022) and Croydon (2023).



Nine Elms, Battersea.

Palm Sunday procession in Peckham



Members of St John, Peckham share the joy of their Palm Sunday procession.



IN FOCUS...
Spring has sprung!



Spring forward – it’s a new season

Our editor, Vernia Mengot, writes: Spring has sprung and flowers are blooming. It’s that time of year, when the sun peers over the dark clouds and we enter a new season – springing forward to brighter days.

On page 10, The Ven John Kiddle asks us to reflect on gardens and trees in the bible – contemplating the goodness of the Garden of Eden and the pain and cost of redemption that we meet in Gethsemane. Archdeacon John asks us to contemplate generosity as we reflect on the vine and then the tree of life – symbolising the promise of eternal life; joy, healing and justice for the world.

And in thinking about our world and care for creation – the fifth mark of Anglican

mission – we find ourselves drawn to reflect on the love we have for all that surrounds us in the world. As we enter this new season we share joy and hope in the life that nature brings us, surrounding us wherever it might be. Inside a church building where an array of beautiful floral displays adorn the altar, or outside – a

church garden boasting green spaces that offer calm and tranquillity.

Thanks to our parishes throughout the diocese for sharing these wonderful images of Spring on their patch. Here, we feature some of the wonderful gifts that gardens have to offer, through a variety of wild flowers, daffodils and posies.



St Matthew, Redhill.



Flower Guild arrangement at Southwark Cathedral.



St Barnabas, Downham.



St Luke, Charlton.

Work out your church’s carbon footprint to help care for God’s creation

The Church of England’s Energy Footprint Tool is now open for churches to enter fuel and power use from 2023.

The data collected from the tool will help your church understand its carbon footprint and will mean you may be eligible for grants to help kick-start your net zero projects.

This work is an essential part of caring for God’s creation, by helping to combat global heating and climate change.

Find out more: bit.ly/3wOz2Vb



Christ Church, Wimbledon.



St Peter & St Paul, Mitcham.



IN FOCUS...
Diocese news

Recommendations of slavery report welcomed

The Board of Governors of the Church Commissioners has warmly welcomed the report of the independent Oversight Group, the recommendations from which will shape a new £1 billion fund for healing, repair and justice.

The Oversight Group was established following the Church Commissioners' research into the links between the CofE and transatlantic chattel slavery. The research found that Queen Anne's Bounty (a predecessor fund of the

Church Commissioners' endowment) had links to African chattel enslavement.

Chaired by Bishop Rosemarie, the Oversight Group was tasked with advising on the Church Commissioners' response to these historic. You can read the full report at: bit.ly/3vn8YAa

The Church Commissioners welcomed the clear-sighted ambition of the Group and its hope for the scale and impact for the Fund for Healing, Repair and Justice. They acknowledged suggestions around more wide-ranging research and truth-telling must be taken as seriously as the financial ambitions of in the recommendations.



"...a catalyst to encourage other institutions to investigate their past..."

Bishop Rosemarie said, "No amount of money can fully atone for or fully redress the centuries long impact of African chattel enslavement, the effects of which are still felt around the world today. But implementing the recommendations will show the commitment of the Church Commissioners to supporting the process of healing, repair and justice for all of those across society

impacted by the legacy of African chattel enslavement."

The Oversight Group has also recommended that the programme should be ultimately owned and run by black communities. The aspiration is for the programme to start operating later in 2024.

Bishop Rosemarie continued: "This work and the Fund matter because the legacy of African enslavement continues to have a significant impact on communities today and inequalities persist till this day. The impact is measurable and apparent in everything from pregnancy and childbirth outcomes to life chances at birth, physical and mental health, education, employment, income, property, and the criminal justice system. We hope this initiative is just the start and is a catalyst to encourage other institutions to investigate their past and make a better future for impacted communities."

Read more at: bit.ly/4a3wjFZ

The Lord is Risen – Indeed!

Easter Day marks the beginning of 50 days of celebrating Jesus' resurrection. As we celebrate the joy of the resurrection at churches across our diocese, Revd Canon Jim Rosenthal, Priest-in-Charge at Christ The King, Salfords, shares a reflection on Eastertide.

The celebration of the birth, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ is a recipe for hope and renewal. All we must do is make a firm commitment to the one who enters God's world in human form and becomes – as we hail him in this diocese– in his divinity and majesty.

Our call as Christians, who worship in the extraordinary beauty of Anglican ritual, is to be Christ for the other. Jesus proclaims 'I will not leave you comfortless' and thus the gift of the Holy Spirit is thrust upon Mary and the Apostles on the day Eastertide ends, called Pentecost – the cause of our joy. Then through word and sacrament, we too, share that Pentecostal power (when is the last time you smiled?)

Understanding the message as well as the call to active ministry is not easy and sometimes feels a huge absence in our

community life. In other words, we are here for each other, and we mean it!

It is often said that our faith and practice bewilder some in the complexity from virgin birth to empty tomb.

May this Eastertide, ending 50 days from Easter Day, be the catalyst for good, like the many initiatives and the myriad of charitable offerings churches make.

So has Christ left you and me, gone? Yes, physically, but his grace and power remains in his Church universal – exceeds all we can even imagine and sustains us for our travelling to God until we are called home.

For now let there be peace in our world and in our very beings.

Now the queen of seasons, bright with the day of splendour, with the royal feast of feasts, comes its joy to render; comes to glad Jerusalem, who with true affection welcomes in unwearied strains Jesus' resurrection.

John of Damascus



A new wave of giving through digital

In 2023, contactless and online giving for churches in Southwark Diocese raised an astounding £927,605.87 – thank you! Once again Southwark has the largest percentage of parishes actively using digital giving compared to other dioceses. The Diocesan Giving Team writes:

In 2021, Southwark was a pilot diocese in the Digital Giving Rollout, run by the national Church. The Church of England helped resource an array of contactless machines that were given to a pool of our parishes. What started as a ripple of 86 churches has now developed into a new wave of giving!

Aided by Hannah Starkins, our enthusiastic Digital Giving Adviser, we have seen an incredible growth in digital donations and are extremely pleased that 84% of parishes in Southwark Diocese now have at least one form of digital giving (contactless or online). This has grown by nearly 20% in the last 12 months. As we recognise the shift from how we traditionally donated to church, we are grateful to the National Giving Team for initiating the digital rollout that boosted this culture change.

Among the difficulties of the rising costs of living, there's no denying a spirit of generosity – given from God – that flows through our parishes and parishioners. We are so grateful for every person who has given to their church, as well as visitors, and give thanks for your support, conscious that many have given sacrificially to the work of God's Kingdom.



Gabriel from St Mary, Bermondsey.

Digital giving creates more opportunities for people to give and is just one of the many ways we can encourage a culture of generosity. Fewer people carry cash, it is an easy way for visitors to give and helps any fundraising event!

As we rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus, and God's creations bud and bloom around us, we hope you find time to reflect and rejoice in how God's generosity has provided for you and your church in recent times.

The Giving Team are here to support you and your church, so please get in touch. No query is too big or small. And if your church is yet to use digital giving, we encourage you to jump on board – we will help you get set up.

More information



Register for 'try before you buy' at: bit.ly/40xbGg or email hannah.starkins@southwark.anglican.org
Read more about contactless giving at: bit.ly/4ahGU0t

Fr Fadi preaches at Southwark Cathedral

On Sunday 17 March, the Revd Fadi Diab, Rector of St Andrew's Anglican Church, Ramallah, and St Peter, Birzeit, was invited to preach at Southwark Cathedral.

During his sermon, he spoke of the fear and uncertainty facing all those in the Holy Land, the need to stand up for those relegated to the margins, speaking truth to power and the urgent need for peace in this area.

Fr Fadi came to the UK as part of a visit with Friends of the Holy Land and their ecumenical support of Christians in the region.

At the start of his sermon, Fr Fadi who is Chair of the Holy Land Committee of Friends of the Holy Land said, "My visit to the UK this time takes place during a time of great tribulation. Since the first week of October life in the Holy Land has been turned upside down."

Following the service, Fr Fadi was in conversation with the Very Revd Dr Mark Oakley, Dean of Southwark.

Born and educated in the West Bank, Fr Fadi is the Rector of St Andrew's Episcopal Church, Ramallah and St Peter's, Birzeit. His ministry includes midweek youth service, Bible study, women's group, youth group, Sunday school, an acolyte

programme, a new choir and a celebrating family program. Fr Fadi provides leadership and pastoral support for St Andrew's school, the Episcopal Vocation and Training Centre and his sister parish in Birzeit with a developing elderly home project, St Peter's.

Fr Fadi's vision includes supporting the Christian community spiritually and socially, strengthening Christians in the Holy Land to enabling them to stay in the area and to continue witness to the Gospel of Christ.

Founder of the Youth Connection for Peace Programme, a member of the Palestine-Israeli Theologians Forum, a member of the Palestine Advisory Council of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship and co-author of Kairos Palestine document and board member on Kairos-Palestine – he has presented workshops at the World Council of Churches on the theological understanding of the Palestine Israeli conflict and spoken widely at churches in the USA.

During his visit to the UK, he also visited Lambeth Palace and met with the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Fr Fadi's sermon and conversation with the Dean of Southwark can be viewed on the Cathedral YouTube channel at: bit.ly/43u4vYX



L-R: Fr Fadi in conversation with Dean Mark.

Magnificat! From praise to passionate action



The fourth Croydon Episcopal Area Lay Conference took place on Saturday 2 March. People from all over the Croydon area gave up their Saturday, braved the rain and came to St Bede's School, Redhill, to learn and share, inspired by the *Magnificat* – the song of Mary, Mother of God.

The day kicked off with an introduction by Bishop Rosemarie (pictured). Morning worship followed, accompanied by music from Emmanuel Church, South Croydon.

Afterwards, people attended stimulating workshops from 'Blessing the Older Generation' to 'Children Becoming Kingdom's Citizens'. During lunch, people mingled and visited the stalls provided by the Diocese of Southwark, Live Together and others.

The keynote was delivered by Dr Elaine Storkey – philosopher, sociologist, and theologian. Known for lecturing, writing and broadcasting, Dr Storkey spoke about the *Magnificat*, and its relevance for the modern world, discussing the crisis of identity and family we are all experiencing.

More workshops followed, including 'Making church work for people of working age' and 'Working together

for climate justice in your church community'.

One attendee said, "The keynote speaker was passionate and gave a clear interesting speech. It was a good opportunity to catch up with friends and a good chance to meet others. I valued both of the workshops I attended."

Another added, "Fellowship; worship together; interesting and thought-provoking keynote speech; good variety of workshops".

Delegates returned to participate in a Q&A with Dr Storkey.

Another attendee described the day as providing "Opportunities to engage with like-minded Christians and seek information/practical tips on becoming even more passionate about promoting our faith. The keynote speaker was engaging and thought provoking. Interesting variety of workshops and facilitators made it hard to choose just two!"

The conference finished with a closing address from The Venerable Moira Astin, Archdeacon of Reigate, thanking the many volunteers who made the day possible.

Clergy Support Trust

Majestic

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

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Celebrating World Book Day

World Book Day took place on Thursday 7 March and colleagues at Trinity House took the opportunity to share their favourite books.

With libraries closing or reducing their opening hours across the country and despite libraries providing opportunities for families to access free books, computers and information, low literacy (the ability to read and write) is a growing problem. Low literacy can affect confidence as well as the ability to access key information, resources



and support and poses challenges for children which can affect their outcomes.

As we celebrate the joy and wonder of books it is a good time to support children and adults in our communities, schools and parishes to improve their literacy.

Watch a video or read our blog at: bit.ly/3PfwQML



IN FOCUS...
Southwark Vision

Southwark Vision: Multifaceted growth for a multifaceted diocese

In our series unpacking the priorities of the Southwark Vision, Will Cookson writes:

It has long been the Church's priority to seek growth. From the very early days following Christ's resurrection and ascension, we see an absolute passion and commitment among his followers to share God's good news and 'add to their number those who were being saved' (Acts 2:47). This drive, this passion, did not arise from anxiety, but from confidence. The early disciples were not concerned primarily with the size of their group, nor preoccupied with questions of influence nor sustainability. Rather, they were driven by the sheer joy and goodness of the news they had to share – and the drawing of ever more diverse and needful people into God's kingdom.

It is in this spirit that we are seeking growth for our parishes and our wider diocesan family – trusting that the God

who calls us is faithful and is already at work in our communities. One of the joys of leading the Mission Department is seeing the breadth of mission across the five marks of mission and how that is playing out in our parishes. We are seeking to help parishes explore how they can re-enforce and overlap the different marks of mission. How can we seek to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom in our social action projects? When we proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom how can we respond to human need by loving service? It is important that we seek a holistic approach, which is what Southwark Vision is seeking to help and guide us, with Christ at our centre and being outward focused.

At the heart of this is a passion to see our local churches thrive. Over the coming decade, we will be seeking to embed in our diocese a culture of missional innovation and risk-taking alongside a focus on healing – one that seeks holistic renewal in churches of all traditions and sizes. Our new Dean of Revitalisation,



Image: © Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes, Ceri Richards 'The Supper at Emmaus', MMAC.

Revd Charles Lamont, will be a key addition to this work alongside other colleagues in the department with a focus on supporting our parishes that currently have smaller regular attendance figures to become places of vitality and well-being.

Of course, if we look back to Acts, it's actually the Lord's job to add to our number those whom he is calling, alongside a care for the poor. And so we mustn't be made anxious by the magnitude

of this task, but rather emboldened and faithful in offering God's good news to those whom we encounter.

The Revd Canon Will Cookson is Director of Ministry and Dean of Fresh Expressions and Pioneering.

Details of Southwark Vision and the core document can be downloaded at: southwark.anglican.org/southwark-vision



LET US PRAY...

APRIL

The Venerable John Kiddle
Archdeacon of Wandsworth

Gardens

The coincidence of Easter and Spring, at least in the northern hemisphere, is a happy one. As we celebrate the new life that burst open the tomb, we see around us creation bursting into colour and song, new birth and growth.

It feels natural to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus outside with fire or flowers. The Easter season is well marked by time spent in a garden or a park, sitting or walking, in silence and in prayer.

This edition of *The Bridge* has a beautiful ecological theme running through it. Our joy in the wonder and beauty of creation, our work to sustain and treasure it, and

our calling to ensure that justice and generosity shape the way its fruits are shared – all this flows from our faith, our Easter faith.

Why not take time this month, in these weeks of Easter, to contemplate the many intricate connections between creation and our faith?

You could, for example, reflect on gardens and trees in the bible. Here are some that tell the story of salvation and the journey of our discipleship.

Reflect on the garden of Eden (Genesis 1 and 2), contemplating the goodness, beauty and wonder of creation.

Reflect on the garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22), contemplating the pain of



with the risen Christ in the garden. Her eyes blinded by tears, she hears a voice call out her name, "Mary"; and, in that instant, she knows... that *Christ is Risen!* He is risen indeed, alleluia!

God of life
For beauty, goodness and fruitfulness, we give you thanks

God of salvation
For your redeeming presence in prayer and pain, we give you thanks

God of belonging
For the love we know in you and in one another, we give you thanks

God of eternity
For the promise of justice and joy, healing and peace, we give you thanks

God of resurrection
For the living, transforming presence of Christ in us and in the word, we give you thanks.

Alleluia!

life, the depth of prayer and the cost of redemption.

Reflect on the Vine (John 15), contemplating our life in Christ and with each other in the life-giving generous community of the Spirit.

Reflect on the Tree of Life (Revelation 22), contemplating the promise of eternal life, joy and healing and justice for the world.

And return, always, to the stunning story of Mary's personal encounter

WHAT'S ON



Please send details of your next events for MAY ONWARDS to Trinity House **BY WEDNESDAY 10 APRIL**

April

SATURDAY 13 APRIL

* **BLOOMSBURY** – Churches Together in Britain and Ireland ‘*Hope for Justice*’ Conference. Focusing on the critical issue of police and criminal justice reform/transformation within Britain, specifically from the perspective of racial justice. This meeting is your opportunity to share your views and vision for policing in Britain, as we journey toward the third decade of the 21st century. 11am–4.30pm at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, Shaftesbury Avenue, London. Details at: bit.ly/3Pvbxal

Concerts at St John the Evangelist, Upper Norwood

COFFEE CONCERTS: 11.30am – 12.30pm (coffee & cake 11am)

Saturday 6 April: Eleanor Meynell, Piano

Saturday 4 May: Stockwell Winds – Serenade No 10: Gran Partita, Mozart

Saturday 1 June: Jayden Lamcellari, cello; Julian Chan, piano; finalist Haslemere Intl. String Competition

ORGAN CONCERTS: 7.30pm

Thursday 18 April: Miriam Reveley, (Jesus College, Cambridge)

Thursday 16 May: George Herbert, (Chapel Royal, Hampton Court)

Thursday 20 June: James Gough, (Southwark Cathedral)

Venue: *St John the Evangelist, Sylvan Road, Upper Norwood, SE19 2RX*
Admission FREE, retiring collection.
Details at: sjun.org.uk

🎵 Croydon Minster

40 minutes of music – lunchtime recitals, Fridays 1.10pm

19 April Peyao Shan, piano

26 April Kirsty O’Neill, soprano

3 May NO RECITAL

10 May Antoine Pichon, piano

17 May Sutton High School

24 May Old Palace of John Whitgift School

31 May Sarah Parkes Bowen, flute

Free but donations gratefully received.
Details: croydonminster.org

Foundation. 6:15pm at All Saints Church, Kingston Upon Thames, KT1 1JP. Free. Details and reserve a ticket at: bit.ly/4avZ26h

SATURDAY 27 APRIL

* **NORTH KENSINGTON** – Unlock London Walk. The route, about 7 miles, includes a variety of streets, green spaces and places of interest. Half a dozen churches along the route open to provide welcome and hospitality, as well as showcasing the work that they do in their own communities. Details at: bit.ly/3x8XQr3

MONDAY 22 APRIL

* **DULWICH** – London Historic Buildings Trust – *Building Futures* free training workshop for local people, groups and communities developing historic building regeneration projects in the boroughs of Southwark, Lambeth, Croydon and Bromley. 10.30am–2.30pm at Kingswood Arts, Kingswood Estate, Seeley Drive, SE21 8QN. Free. Details and to book, email: info@londonhistoricbuildings.org.uk

TUESDAY 16 APRIL

🕊️ **ONLINE** – National Estate Churches Network: *London Local Group* meeting – an opportunity for everyone involved in social housing estate ministry within the M25 to share the joys and challenges of estate ministry. 1–2pm. Free. Register at: bit.ly/48LvHUc

SUNDAY 21 APRIL

* **CAMBERWELL** – St George’s Church Camberwell – 200year celebration Eucharist and party. 11am at St George’s Church, Newent Close SE15 6EF. Free. Details from: bit.ly/48UZdXC

WEDNESDAY 24 APRIL

* **KINGSTON** – Faith Talks: Immigration – What Needs to Change? Hosted by Bishop Martin, with expert speaker, Dr Krish Kandiah, of *The Sanctuary*

May

THURSDAY 9 MAY

🕊️ **ONLINE** – Torch Trust: Introduction to *Sight Loss Friendly Church*. A brief overview of what it means to be a sight loss friendly church. If you’re thinking of signing up your church or if you’d like to refresh old knowledge, join us for an overview of our services and hear of personal stories about sight. 2–2.45pm. Free. Register at: bit.ly/31GANQp

SATURDAY 11 MAY

🎵 **SOUTHFIELDS** – Putney Choral Society Concert: Vivaldi Gloria and Magnificat and Dan Forrest Requiem for the Living. 7 pm at St Paul’s Church, Augustus Road, Southfields, SW1 6EW (accessible facilities). Tickets: £22 (incl. programme & refreshments), at the door (card only) or from: bit.ly/49YNusws

26 MAY – 8 JUNE

* **BLACKHEATH** – Art Gallery Exhibition: local gallery, exhibiting in our beautiful church; with musical opening evenings. All net proceeds go to local charities and foodbanks. St Michael & All Angels, Blackheath Park, SE3 9JL. Free. Details at: se3.org.uk/smag

June

MONDAY 3 JUNE

🕊️ **ONLINE** – Torch Trust: *Sight Loss Friendly Church* Q&A. Meet our expert panel from Torch Trust and ask your questions around welcoming and including blind and partially sighted people in all aspects of your church. 2–3pm. Free. Register at: bit.ly/49PVcVI

The Bridge is your newspaper



Each edition is packed full of stories and features from across the diocese. Please send your stories, hires pics and listings to Vernia at: bridge@southwark.anglican.org.

Printed copies are distributed direct to each parish and an online version can be read or download at: southwark.anglican.org/thebridge

To advertise in *The Bridge* please email Joseph: Joseph.Callanan@southwark.anglican.org



This newspaper is printed with premier paper and the Diocese is part of the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and a Carbon

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Email your upcoming events to bridge@southwark.anglican.org



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A network of encouragers



Lay champions with their certificates.

On Sunday 3 March at Choral evensong, just after the Honorary Canons had been installed, Bishop Christopher Commissioned nine people to the office and work of Deanery Lay Vocations Champions.

Recommended by their Area Deans and appointed by the Bishop of Southwark, the champions' task is enthusiastically to encourage clergy, church leaders and the laity to recognise the value of lay vocations

and lay ministry. Working with their Area Deans, Lay Chairs and others in their deaneries who wish to encourage people into lay ministry, they are charged with finding new ways by which those vocations can be nurtured and affirmed.

Those commissioned and their deaneries were Michael Brockett (Croydon Central), Marie Williams (Croydon North), Linda Etheridge (Croydon South), Julie Mason (Charlton), Susan Patterson (Dulwich), Cherry Murdoch (East Lewisham), Praise Ojiya (Southwark and Newington) and Darren Latty (Plumstead). This network of encouragers will work with The

Revd Carol Coslett, Assistant Director of Lay Ministry, from the Discipleship, Lay Ministry and Continuing Ministerial Education Team.

Find out more



We'd love a Champion in every Deanery so please contact Carol if you would be interested in working with a Champion: carol.coslett@southwark.anglican.org, or if you would like to offer to help, get in touch with your Area Dean.

Is your church election-ready?



In 2024, there will be more than 42 elections taking place worldwide. On 2 May 2024 the elections for Mayor of London take place and we await the date of the UK General Election.

As a church, regardless of party preference or none, we are called to pray for our leaders and government. No matter how we choose to vote, we reflectively pray that those in Government will stand for Justice and Peace.

For a quick guide on voting, voter registration, new ID rules and how to get your church election-ready, visit our website: bit.ly/4a6mneV

Honorary Canons at Southwark Cathedral

In recognition of long and dedicated service to our diocese, Bishop Christopher has offered Honorary Canonries to Revd Esther Foss, Revd Dhanaraj (Prem) Premraj, Revd Patrick Eggleston and Revd Rachel Taylor.

Appointments are made in consultation with the Dean and with the Area Bishops.

Honorary Canons from part of the College of Canons and are ambassadors of Southwark Cathedral.

Revd Esther Foss, Dean of Women's Ministry

"To use a couple of good northern words, I was both flabbergasted and chuffed to be invited to become an honorary canon at Southwark Cathedral. I felt very emotional during the service and was so overwhelmed I even managed to leave my preaching scarf behind! It was wonderful to share this special occasion with friends, colleagues and family.

"I am looking forward to learning more about the work of the cathedral and how I can support its wider mission and

consolidate links within the deanery and parish, as well as using the role to advocate for women in ministry."

Revd Dhanaraj (Prem) Premraj, Priest-in-Charge, St Edward, New Addington

"Bishop Christopher's letter about the installation as an Honorary Canon of the Southwark Cathedral made me speechless at first, tears of joy were unstoppable. I thanked God for the way God has led me in pastoral ministry all these years. I am so grateful to Bishop Christopher for this recognition and honour. The installation service was a moving experience. Bishop Christopher preached an inspiring sermon,



L-R: Dean Mark, Dhanaraj Premraj, Rachel Taylor, Bishop Christopher, Esther Foss and Patrick Eggleston.

'I want to know Christ'. This for me was God's call as I continue to serve God in the Diocese of Southwark now as an Honorary Canon. The installation service led me to rededicate myself to serve God in this great Diocese and the Cathedral. It brought so much joy to my family, Deborah, Adithya, and Amrutha, and friends and family in India. It meant a lot to my faith family at St Edward, New Addington, where I serve."

Revd Patrick Eggleston, Team Rector of Thamesmead Team Ministry

"To have been made an Honorary Canon was not something I had been expecting at all. So, it was a lovely surprise to hear the news from Bishop Christopher. Thamesmead, because of its location, can feel far removed from what is happening at the centre of the Diocese. So, it is very good to feel that we have been noticed and honoured in this way. I say 'we' because this honour is as much for the parish and my ministerial colleagues as it is for me.

"It is nice to know too that I am following in the footsteps of the late Chris Byers, the last Team Rector to have been

recognised in this way. The parish in Chris's day was very different, and his approach to ministry was very different too. But we share, I think, a common bond of a love for the place and its people. And a gratitude to God for bringing us here."

Revd Rachel Taylor, Priest-in-Charge, Holy Cross, Motspur Park

"I am delighted and honoured to be appointed an Honorary Canon of Southwark Cathedral. This has always been my home diocese – the place where my vocation was nurtured, tested and affirmed, and the Cathedral the place where I was first ordained. The whole of my ordained ministry has been in Merton Deanery, the last five years as Area Dean, and as I continue to serve the people of this place, and to develop deeper links with the mother church of the Diocese, there is a real sense of being where I am meant to be, serving the people I am meant to serve. Southwark Diocese, its people, its clergy and its cathedral are all very special and it's a privilege to be a part of them."