

The BRIDGE

Newspaper of the Anglican Diocese of Southwark

Christ Centred Outward Focused

Vol.29 No.10 **December 2024/January 2025**

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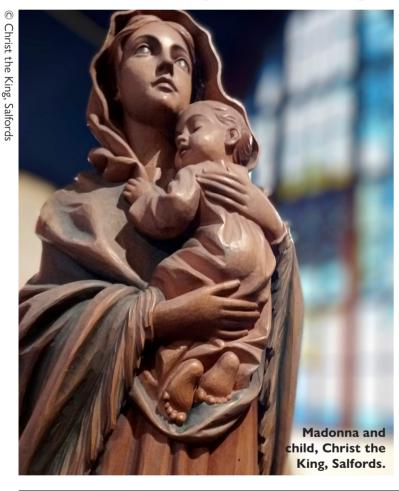


Lent Call 2025

Helping young people to recover from trauma
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Sharing the gift of Christmas





Growing younger together

On Saturday 9 November, Southwark Diocese hosted a Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) Ministry Conference, entitled Small Changes, Big Impact.

Organised by the CYPF ministry team, the conference explored how small changes in the way we reach and serve children, young people and their families can have a great impact on growing CYPF ministry in parishes – whether it's just getting started, growing or flourishing.

Sharing her experience, Sonnet Kelly, Flourish Minister at The Good Shepherd, Lee said, "I had a wonderful and insightful experience at the conference! Thank you to all involved in putting this on. I really have been inspired and encouraged by all the various seminars and their facilitators. The variety of topics covered as well as the practical support, lived examples and experience brought by the various facilitators in their settings was astounding."

"Growing younger together as a concept for our Church is a welcomed one as the

young people we serve really can and do minister to us all in a multitude of ways," she continued. "Having the conference set out in such way to acknowledge as well as celebrate that was phenomenal. Seeing the various familiar faces, meeting new ones and having the support and understanding from facilitators really did make for a family feel and I'm thankful to have taken part."

If you attended, please fill in the feedback form here: bit.ly/48FqBu1. Everyone is welcome to our follow-up training, even if they couldn't make the conference – sign up here: bit.ly/3AjGV7n.



© Andrew Moss. Roger Reid, Youth Minister, St Mark's Kennington



A view from BRIDGE



Advent and Christmas are seasons that draw on both the 'now' and the 'yet to come'. Each year we prepare again for Christ's birth now - today - even though his miraculous birth has of course already happened and the benefits of his birth, death, and resurrection fill our lives in this present moment.

At the same time, we prepare our hearts for the consummation of all things when Christ shall return to be all in all. We look forward to the time when there will be no crying, or death, or war, or sorrow. We look forward to a Kingdom in which all shall live in peace and freedom. How we need this hope.

At Christmas we give thanks for the Word made flesh - coming to dwell among us full of grace and truth, 'our God contracted to a span' and the beginning of our salvation. In the birth of a child, parents and onlookers glimpse the miracle of creation - a truth about our human existence becomes intensely real. With the birth of Jesus this is supremely so. He who is fully God, who is pure act and not subject to necessity, submits himself to the 'yet to come' of human growth and the necessity of a child dependent on its parents. We give thanks for this mystery of our faith.

As we face the challenges of our world together with all people of good will, I encourage you not to let the challenges before us drive your Advent preparation, or your Christmas hope, from your heart. They depend on each other. For without the ground of a wellprepared heart now, we will not see the gentle growth of what is yet to come. We risk losing our vision, losing hope, and losing purpose.

This Christmas especially, I also thank God for each of you, for your prayers and good wishes for me as I have been convalescing following the motor vehicle accident in which I was seriously injured at the end of September. I have felt upheld and greatly encouraged on my journey of recovery by the wave of prayer along with many kind messages.

May you and those you love know the peace and joy of the Christ child this Christmas and in the coming year.

Bishop Christopher



NEWS IN BRIEF

Raise your voices

This year, Christian Aid are urging people to raise their voices in a bid to offer support to families around the world living through conflicts. The charity has launched its Christmas Appeal and fundraisers are taking part in carol concerts and holding collections during Advent services. This year's appeal focuses on the plight of refugees in South Sudan, where more than four million people are without homes and thousands cross the border from Sudan every day, seeking refuge from war.



As the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan deepens, Christian Aid is calling for your support this Christmas.

To find out how to get involved, visit: christianaid.org.uk

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from the 18–25 January – the octave of St Peter and St Paul. However, some choose to observe it during Pentecost or at other times. Materials for this year have been prepared by the ecumenical community at Bose in Northern Italy. As we celebrate 1,700 years since the Council of Nicaea and the creation of the Nicene Creed, the scripture readings focus on belief. We are invited to reflect on the story of Martha's confession of faith in Jesus (John 11:17–27). Each is called to sit with Jesus' provocative question to Martha: "Do you believe this?"

Material and resources are available to download on the CTBI website: bit.ly/48xMKux

Thank you for your generosity!

Thank you to all our parishes for your generosity and commitment to the Parish Support Fund. The collection rate at the end of October was a fantastic 99.6%. Thank you for helping us resource mission and ministry across our diocese. As you prepare for Christmas, please visit our website for tips on encouraging generosity at your church. Gemma Curran's blog shows how you can bring gratitude and generosity into your Christmas preparations and Eve Reader, our new digital giving advisor, shares her five top tips for digital giving this season. Wishing you a joyful Christmas from the Giving Team.

southwark.anglican.org/giving/contactless-giving



The editorial team strive to make The Bridge accessible to all. We would love it if you could take some time to complete a short survey and tell us what you think about our diocesan newspaper, currently published ten times a year.

What do you like best... what would you like to see more of.... how frequent...?

Find the survey here: bit.ly/3Vo5kzU

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Next Issue: Submission deadline and guidance

The FEBRUARY edition is due to be published online and in print on 1 February 2024. Material for that edition must be with Vernia Mengot by email by WEDNESDAY 8 JANUARY.

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







Diocesan Synod: positively impacting parishes

The first Diocesan Synod meeting of the triennium (the three-year cycle on which Synod members serve) took place on 16 November at St Peter's Church, Battersea.

The session opened in prayer, led by Adrian Greenwood, Lay Chaplain and Mentor to Diocesan Synod. He, and The Revd Lotwina Farodoye were thanked for their time as Chairs in the previous triennium. Rebecca Chapman and The Revd Nicholas Lebey were welcomed as the new Chairs of the Houses of Laity and Clergy, respectively.

In his presidential address, The Rt Revd Dr Martin Gainsborough, Bishop of Kingston, spoke of the urgent need to care for God's creation – and the fact that this is a core part of the calling of every Christian. He said: "On this journey, we will seek to deepen our understanding of mission and evangelism, of discipleship, of a safe and healthy Church, and the central place that care for the integrity of creation must play within all these things. On this journey we must tackle the very real challenges our world faces, grappling with the results of our living beyond planetary boundaries.

To walk with Jesus, to love God more, to grow into the full stature of our humanity found in Christ, these things make little sense if we don't do all in our power to care for God's creation."

The full text of his Address is online here: bit.ly/4fdPqPF

Bishop Christopher also sent a message of thanks for the encouragement and support he had received following his motor vehicle accident - and thanked the Senior Management Team for their work whilst he was convalescing.

The Diocesan Secretary, Nicola Thomas, updated Synod members on the progress of several elections including those to the Board of Education, the Diocesan Council of Trustees, and the Vacancy in See Committee – a body required to meet when a bishop's post becomes vacant. This was followed by updates on the development of Southwark Vision and the Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP), which will support the development work with parishes focused on encouraging growth, diversity and work with children and young people. Jackie Pontin, Deputy Diocesan Secretary, gave an update on progress on the 2024 Annual Objectives, followed by a presentation of the 2025 Annual Objectives by Nicola Thomas. The Diocesan Board of Finance gave a presentation on a three-year forwardview, a review of the financial performance

of the Diocese in 2024 and presented a budget for 2025.

Among other business, Synod members also discussed and approved the renewed Diocesan Environment Policy, which aligns more closely to the national Church of England's target of reaching carbon net zero by 2030. The diocesan property strategy - a crucial framework to which supports and focuses on managing diocesan properties was also received by the Synod.

At the beginning of each triennium to ensure that those who chair our committees are represented at all levels of governance - Synod is asked to co-opt chairs of committees to the Synod - and appoint them to the Diocesan Council of Trustees, where necessary. During the meeting, the House of Laity approved the appointment of Nicholas Burt, His

Honour Nigel Seed KC, and Alan Saunders to the Diocesan Council of Trustees.

Members gathered together for worship and This Time Tomorrow was led by Olaitan Fatoye (Plumstead Deanery), followed by a Eucharist, with The Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett, Bishop of Croydon presiding. During worship, The Revd Alan Bayes was commissioned as the Diocesan Faith in the Countryside Officer.

After worship, Synod members were given an update on the Diocesan Board of Education, presented by Roz Cordner, Director of Education.

Details and papers for the Synod can be found on the Diocesan website here: bit.ly/3000Hv6







Photos by Maia Robins. Top: Synod members raise hands to vote. L-R: Members gathered at St Peter's, Battersea; Diocesan Synod panel; and Natalie Walters, Head of JPIC presents the renewed Diocesan Environmental Policy 2024–2027.

2025 Bishop's Lent Call

Each year, the Bishop's Lent Call raises funds for local community projects in Southwark and our Link Dioceses in Zimbabwe and Jerusalem, as well as calling parishes to a time of prayer and contemplation.

In 2025 Lent will begin on Wednesday 5 March and end on Thursday 17 April. On the back page of this edition of The Bridge, you will find a poster that you can display in your Church. As you keep a holy and prayerful Lent - we hope that this will encourage people in your parishes to generously support and help make a difference to help children and young people recovering from trauma and encourage their mental wellbeing. As in previous years, we will be offering digital resources that will be available on our diocesan website. Please look out for these resources and more information about our chosen projects in the coming months.





Information will become available here: southwark.anglican.org/lentcall



Kingston school recognised for tackling global poverty

Pupils at St Paul's Church of England Primary school, Kingston have been presented with a Bronze Award from Christian Aid's Global Neighbours scheme for their global citizenship work.

Christian Aid works in some of the world's poorest communities and the scheme is an accreditation programme that celebrates schools which are helping pupils learn about global poverty and the Christian responsibility to tackle it. It also gives schools the tools to play a confident part in creating a fairer world.

From an eco refill shop and litter picking, to a partnership with Hope Health Action in Haiti, the pupils and staff at St Paul's have been working hard to take their place as global citizens.

Miss Rebecca Simpson, Global Neighbours Lead said: "We are thrilled to be recognised for our efforts at St Paul's School in raising awareness about global inequalities and the actionable steps we can take to address them. Our students explore global issues in-depth, learning about injustices and drawing inspiration from individuals who have faced adversity and become courageous advocates for change.

"We are committed to being an anti-racist school and fostering responsible global citizens. We focus on environmental sustainability, equitable access to healthcare, and promoting inclusivity. Our students engage with local decision-makers on issues such as litter and environmental concerns, and they actively work to reduce food waste within our school. Their proactive stance and dedication reflect their commitment to making a positive impact and standing against racism and inequality. We are proud of their efforts and remain dedicated to supporting



their growth as empathetic and effective contributors to a fairer world."

Alison Brown, Global Neighbours Schools Programme Officer at Christian Aid, said: "The Global Neighbours scheme was launched in partnership with the Church of England's Education Office with a vision of helping young people understand more about the inequalities in this world and helping them to become courageous advocates for change.

"It's wonderful to see how staff and pupils at St Paul's have taken this to heart and are seeking to tackle injustice."

Any primary school in England can join the Global Neighbours scheme. There are three levels of accreditation: bronze, silver and gold. These are verified by independent assessors, who look for evidence across five areas: school leadership, teaching and learning; collective worship and spiritual development; pupil participation; and community engagement."

Find out more



The Global Neighbours scheme website is here: bit.ly/3UMG5qH

Korean ministry continues to grow

The Korean Anglican Church UK (KACU) has begun to offer a regular sung eucharist on Sundays at St Mark and St Andrew, Surbiton.

The first eucharist took place on 8 September, followed by a service for baptism and confirmation later that month. Nicholas Heechan Lee, a student and the youngest member of the congregation was the first to be baptised.

Peter Jaehyun Park, Elijah Namseung Heo and Susanna Soyeon Park were confirmed after completing adult confirmation classes taught over six weeks.

After being confirmed, Peter and Susanna have since enrolled to complete The Bishop's Certificate – a one-year course aimed at anybody who wants to grow in their faith. They join Monica Jungwha Yeom and Sunhee Park, pianist at KACU

Bishop Moses and The Revd Songwoo with the baptism and confirmation candidates and their godparents.

who are already taking part in the course. Enjoying taking the course, Sunhee said "It is absolutely delightful to learn so much from the course." Susanna said, "It is a great privilege to meet those who have a diverse background and deep faith in the classroom"

This Christmas will also see another group of candidates be confirmed and another baptism take place.

The Korean Mission Partnership was founded in 1889, to support the Anglican Church in Korea. It was formally launched when Archbishop Edward White Benson of Canterbury (1829–1896) consecrated the Revd John Corfe, a naval Chaplain to be the first Bishop of Korea at Westminster Abbey.

Last year, a special service took place at St John The Divine, Kennington where the Korean Mission Partnership was founded. During the service Bishop Christopher commissioned The Rt Revd Bishop Moses Yoo as Assistant Bishop and licensed his wife, Revd Dr Songwoo Hur as Deacon and Minister for the Korean Mission to serve the Korean community in south London.

Since then, Korean ministry has continued to grow in mission across Southwark's diverse communities and church traditions.



Songwoo said, "We praise the Lord to have all the grace in Korean mission. We offer a Korean Bible Group for young adults followed by Korean meals every Thursday, these have been running since 13 November and will continue until 19 December. This is the first pilot project for the Korean Anglican Church UK that has been offered to the community. Meetings are hosted by Christ Church, Blackfriars where many Korean university students stay."



Services and events to mark Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day took place across our diocese.

St John the Evangelist, Caterham Valley

In Caterham Valley, the Remembrance Sunday service was led by The Revd Jaimee Summers. The service included Elgar's Nimrod with Binyon's poem For the Fallen. The congregation sang the anthem Pie Jesu by Gabriel Faure, and the Solemn Melody by Walford Davies was played on the organ with Paul Miller on trumpet. Wreaths were laid in the

Memorial Chapel to remember those lost in wartime.



Christ The King, Salfords

A service of remembrance was led by The Revd Gerard Mee. A soldier silhouette statue and poppy arrangements were on display in the church gardens (see left main picture).

Good Shepherd, Carshalton Beeches



The Rainbows Montessori schoolchildren created a poppy board for Remembrance Sunday. They printed their hands and painted paper plates. They were also invited to join the church family and other associated groups to contribute to the remembrance art installation of a cascade of poppies at The Good Shepherd Carshalton Beeches.

St George The Martyr, Southwark



Poppies from St Jude's, Southwark were displayed at the altar.

St Andrew and St Michael, Stockwell



The Revd Erica Woof led Lambeth's civic Remembrance Day service at the Stockwell War Memorial. Erica joined local MP Florence Eshalomi and the cadets of the 77 Rifles, Lambeth. On Armistice Day, St Andrew's primary school in the parish observed the national two-minute silence.

St Michael, East Wickham



The East Wickham and Welling War Memorial Trust, Festival of Remembrance was held at St Michael's Church. The Rt Revd Alastair Cutting, Bishop of Woolwich joined The Revd Yunghee Koh, Cllr Sue Gower MBE, Mayor of Bexley, DL David Easton and Daniel Francis, MP for Bexleyheath and Crayford.

All Saints, Putney

On 10 November, the church hosted a free concert for Remembrance Sunday 'In memoriam' which included choral and solo songs for remembrance by Vaughan Williams, Parry, Daley and Tavener.

Award-winning community garden

The community gardening work at Holy Trinity, Barnes (HTBarnes) has been recognised with two prestigious national awards. Helen Hewitt, Community Gardening Coordinator at Holy Trinity, **Barnes writes:**

In September, we were highly commended at the Church Times Green Church Awards 2024 and one of three shortlisted projects in the finals of the 'community and congregations' category. The awards recognise the urgent environmental crisis that we are in and seek to celebrate the efforts being made by individuals and congregations to care for creation. They were open to Christian groups and church schools of any denomination in the UK and Ireland.

We are delighted to have also received the Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) It's Your Neighbourhood Award of 'Level 4 - Thriving.' The award is part of the RHS Britain in Bloom campaign and focuses on community participation. Judges assess community gardens on three key areas: gardening, environmental and community action. They then consider if groups are just starting out (Establishing); have achieved something truly outstanding (Outstanding); or are somewhere on the spectrum in between (i.e. Improving, Developing, or Thriving).

This was our first year entering both competitions and we were up against tough competition from across the country, so it is wonderful to have our efforts acknowledged in this way. A huge thank you to all our volunteers, supporters, friends and funders who have contributed to this success.

The community gardening project at HTBarnes began in March 2023, with the aim of developing the land around Holy Trinity Barnes as a place of sanctuary and hospitality for the local community. We have created a vegetable garden on the site, where we grow organic food to supply our local foodbank. We are also developing areas of



green space for the local community to use, which are rich in natural biodiversity. The work is supported by the Nourish and Grow microbakery, which operates as a social enterprise.

More information



Instagram: @nourishandgrow_food Newsletter: bit.ly/4fxkWIS Email: grow@htbarnes.org



DISCIPLESHIP & MINISTRY

Lay ministry

Celebrating lay ministries

In 2025 we will be celebrating our Lay Ministers at Candlemas on Sunday 2 February. We are delighted that so many people are involved in sharing God's Good News with those around them and working with others in their churches and communities to show God's love to all.

The Revd Wendy Robins, Canon Chancellor & Director of Discipleship, Lay Ministry and Continuing Ministerial Education writes:

For the Celebration of Lay Ministry, watch out for the four videos we will be sharing of people involved in lay ministry, hearing their stories of discovering their vocations and how it feels to be involved in ministry. We are also providing people who can preach at your church at Candlemas or on a Sunday near to it. If you would like a preacher to join you, please contact Helen Medland: helen.medland@southwark.anglican.org

There are also resources for services on Lay Ministry Sunday and even a service outline. Look out for these on our diocesan website bit.ly/4eUR0pU

Children, Youth and Families ministry apprenticeships

We are excited to announce that we will soon begin to look for people and parishes to be involved in our apprentice-style scheme. We have been able to develop this initiative as a result of the money our diocese has been awarded by the national church for our Diocesan Investment Programme. Apprentices will be employed by the diocese for three years and will be enrolled onto a programme through Ridley Hall, Cambridge, which will mainly be delivered online. Apprentices that complete the programme will receive a Level 4 qualification in children's and youth ministry.

If you would be interested in learning more about this please contact Wendy Robins at wendy.robins@southwark.anglican.org

New scarves for Lay Ministers

We have created new scarves for our new Lay Ministers: green for Licensed Lay Pioneers, purple for Licensed Pastoral Lay Ministers and orange for Licensed Children, Youth and Families' Ministers.

Each of them will be given newly designed badges matching their scarves so that they can be more easily recognised. Our Readers have always had blue scarves and their own blue badges.



What do Lay Ministers do?

There are three types of lay ministry in the Diocese of Southwark:

• Licensed: People recommended by the parish, selected and trained by the diocese. Their ministry is nationally recognised and transferable to another diocese should they move.

- Commissioned: People recommended by the parish and selected and trained by the diocese. Their ministries are recognised across the whole diocese should they move parishes, and increasingly in other dioceses too.
- Affirmed: People selected and trained within the local context, which is usually the parish. Affirmation is about publicly acknowledging and blessing the ministries people undertake within the parish for example as communion assistants, welcomers, Sunday School leaders, or as part of a pastoral team. The diocese has also produced a resource, Affirmed Ministry Training, which provides details on affirmed ministry and suggestions for training.

There are so many different expressions of lay ministry. Some people serve in more traditional roles, such as Reader – someone who preaches and helps to lead worship at their church, as well as undertaking some pastoral work.

Then there are our Commissioned Pastoral Lay Ministers (CPLMs) –

formerly known as Southwark Pastoral Auxiliaries (SPAs). CPLMs work with others in their congregation to offer care and support for those around them. Some give their time to local care homes for the elderly or to assist hospital chaplains. Others help to lead the pastoral team at their church. The opportunities are many.

We also now have three Licensed Pastoral Lay Ministers (LPLMs) who offer pastoral support as well as preaching and helping to lead services. Wendy Stephens, our Diocesan Lead for Pastoral Ministry, is a prison chaplain. We are really hoping to add to the number of LPLMs in the near future, so do be in contact with the team if you are interested in this. There is so much to be done.

There are also Commissioned and Licensed Pioneer Ministers who work in the community with those who are not traditional church-goers and with church communities where English is not their first language.

We very much want more people to join those who are working as affirmed, Commissioned and Licensed Lay Ministers in the diocese and to celebrate all those who are already working as lay ministers.

For further information on any of these ministries please contact: Carol Coslett: carol.coslett@southwark.anglican.org









Clockwise from top left: Christian Okoh wears the lay reader blue scarf; Ethan Glackin-McColgan the lay pioneer green scarf; and Michael Brockett and Wendy Stephens the lay pastoral minister purple scarf. Patricia Nielsen and Katy Robb display the children, youth and families ministry orange badges.



Lay Ministry Taster Day

Saturday 25th January 2025 10-2pm @ Trinity House, SEI 1HW

Come along and find out more about the different types of ministries such as Pastoral, Pioneer, Reader and Children and Young People.

> With keynote speaker The Revd Canon Derek Walmsley, author of God Calls Everyone

To register your interest email: learning@southwark.anglican.org

What is a Deanery Lay Vocation Champion?

We have appointed a group of Lay Ministry Champions to help to promote the work of our lay ministers. Cherry Murdoch who is Lay Champion for the East Lewisham Deanery, and herself a Reader, writes:

'The Deanery Lay Champions role is to foster and affirm lay vocations in the diocese. They will promote the take up of training opportunities for the different lay ministries in deaneries and parishes. Their task is particularly to encourage the gifts of lay people for ministry to enrich the life of our churches'.

As well as the work of Deanery Lay Champions we have regular taster sessions for those who want to explore lay ministry: the next one is on Saturday 25 January in-person at Trinity House (see details above).



We are the light

The Royal School of Church Music has released Hymnpact - a subscriptionbased resource for primary schools and churches, providing hymns and songs that are appealing to children and adults alike.

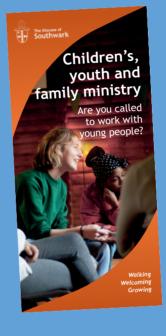
We are the light is the song which Southwark Diocese can use as part of the Celebration of Lay Ministries. The song can be used in your parish or school or shared with community choirs.

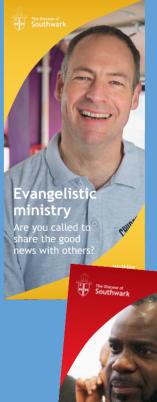
Download the instrumental and performance track, the music scores and parts and teaching notes and hymn tracks here: bit.ly/418dH69

Lay Ministry resources

The Discipleship and Ministry department can arrange for you to receive leaflets on Reader Ministry, Pastoral Ministry (Licensed and Commissioned), Children's, Youth and Family Ministry, Evangelistic Ministry, with the Church Army, Lay Pioneer Ministry and a general leaflet on Lay Ministry. The leaflets give all the information needed to explore the various lay ministries on offer in our Diocese. You can also contact Helen by email: helen.medland@southwark. anglican.org













The Church of England's theme for Advent and Christmas is 'Follow the Star: Calm and Bright'. Drawing on the world-famous carol, Silent Night, it invites us into the still centre of the Christmas story, to contemplate Mary holding the new-born Jesus, the Light of the World.

The year it's all about bringing peace and joy during the busy Advent and Christmas season. Find out more about the national campaign and download resources for your church here: bit.ly/4ialV3E

As we journey from Advent to Epiphany, we invite you to join us in celebrating the brightness of the Christmas story through the gift of giving and storytelling, and to take time to reflect and look out for those who need help most this season.

In Southwark we have launched our #SouthwarkAdvent campaign in partnership with the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education.

Last year, instead of opening the doors to a cardboard calendar, we opened the very real doors to churches across our diocese, and collectively told the nativity story. This year, we're shining a light on the work of our diocesan family of schools, and sharing some of the ways children engage in Advent, Christmas and Christian faith.

The campaign features appearances from the staff and pupils at Christ Church, Purley, The King's, Kew, Immanuel and St Andrew's, Lambeth and Archbishop Tennison's performing at St Matthew, Croydon.

Keep an eye out throughout December for our #SouthwarkAdvent blogs and films, and please do share with us what you're doing in your parish this Advent and Christmas either by email or by tagging us on social media. If you missed last year's #SouthwarkAdvent Calendar we'll be sharing it again each day on our newly launched TikTok account.

Giving and stewardship during Advent: A Christian reflection

This season of anticipation and hope, offers us an opportunity to reflect on our giving and stewardship. It calls us to examine what we treasure and to direct our resources toward what matters most. The nativity story is steeped in generosity: wise men bearing gifts, and Mary and Joseph opening their lives to a divine call.

In a blog post, the diocesan Giving Team highlight useful resources to share and

encourage a spirit of generosity. Read the full post here: bit.ly/3Zxn4dl



Top: Children at Immanuel and St Andrew CE Primary School, Streatham play Christmas carols on steel pan drums. Bottom: This year Christ Church, CE School, Purley partnered with The Children's Society to make Christingles – a symbol that represents the birth of Christ and the light of the world.



Advent procession



On 1 December a candlelit service combining readings and music took place at Southwark Cathedral to mark the beginning of the season of Advent.

Looking out for each other this Christmas

During this season, we often see people join together from different spheres of life – the distinctiveness and variety of God's gifts and people is what gives our diocese its unique character as a family of faith.

As the world came together to promote the rights and wellbeing of persons with disabilities on World Disability Day (3 December), The Revd Jonathan Macy,

Diocesan Disability Adviser, shares his reflections and encourages us to look out for each other in times of need this Christmas.

Revd Jonathan Macy writes:

My role as Diocesan
Disability Adviser is more
than worrying about
reasonable adjustments or
accessible church buildings
but brings in a range of
issues for a range people. At this time
of year I am especially reminded of the
direct relationship between disability
and poverty.

Christmas is a strange time of year. In one way its meaning is clear – the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ, but other things are also pulled into view – some helpfully, others not. A helpful one is the Robes sleepout at Southwark Cathedral (see page 12) which highlights the ongoing problem of homelessness, and naturally hand-inhand with homelessness comes poverty.

According to statistics, a proportion of people living with disabilities generally earn less, and are dependent on the State, which can sometimes result in fewer

opportunities. Two thirds of food bank users have a disability. Simply having a disability adds about £6,000 to your annual bills. And this is all before one looks at questions of isolation and loneliness.

We know the ultimate answers to poverty in all its forms – spiritual, physical, societal, financial – will only be fully found in the New Heavens and New Earth for all who believe in and follow Jesus the King, Christ was born in the simplest of circumstances but gathered to Himself a people to serve and worship Him – a service and worship that is here and now.

This Christmas I encourage you to look out for those around you, those searching not only for extra support or human connection but also for that relationship with God, the One who answers all questions of poverty. Maybe you can bring the most important gift they will ever know or could imagine – the opportunity to come to know our Lord and Saviour lesus Christ.

(Statistics taken from The Church Urban Fund, Scope, Joseph Rowntree, Trussel Trust and Government data including the Census.)

Christmas card images from around our parishes

Another year, another competition! Like last year, we reached out to our parishes on social media asking for their best festive photos that could be used as one of our diocesan Christmas cards.

A huge thank you to everyone who responded and sent in some of their best 'Christmassy' pictures. We shortlisted the entries choosing a card for each Episcopal area - (1) Croydon area, (2) Kingston area, (3) Woolwich area as well as one for the Diocesan Secretary's digital card (4)









1: Christ the King, Salfords, by The Revd Canon Dr James Rosenthal.

2: All Saints, Tooting, by Tahir Shams.

3 & 4: St Stephen's Church, Dulwich, by Elo Allik-Schunemann.

Taking a leap of faith

This season we bring our communities together and invite people to know of God's kingdom and love is through telling the Christmas story. Here, The Revd Fiona Weaver, Vicar at St Mark, Woodcote tells us about a Christmas community service for adults living with a disability, their families and care givers.

Fiona writes:

In 2021, we opened the doors to our 'Place to Be' café to provide a muchneeded community service, specifically to set up a dementia-friendly space and address issues of social isolation.

After a number of conversations with a friend and neighbour who works for the Alzheimer's society and whose mother

had dementia, we shared an idea about a dementia friendly space. We applied for a Croydon Area Mission Grant for financial support to get this going. The grant helped with set-up costs, the parish matched that funding, and we employed a coordinator. Our volunteers are members of the congregation and local community.

Once everything was in place, we took the leap of faith, and the café opened. Since then, it continues to stay open and runs every Friday from 2.30 to 4.30pm with



The inclusive and accessible nativity at St Mark, Woodcote.

around 30 people regularly attending. We provide a wide range of activities including seated exercises, singing for the brain, a photography course, craft activities.

Running the café made me realise the need to hold a carol and nativity service that was inclusive and accessible. I wanted to provide an act of worship where no one needed to worry if someone fidgeted about, wandered around or shouted out. I also wanted the service to be an opportunity for relatives and care givers to relax and enjoy worship without worry or embarrassment.

In the first year we kept things simple with nativity story told through carols and readings and the congregation placing figures in the stable. Being able to see someone in the grips of dementia with a huge smile and excitement at placing Mary or Joseph in the crib was the highlight of my Christmas. This experience enabled me to start planning earlier last year.

A group had started attending the Café from The Params - a local residential care home for adults with disabilities. I asked

the Activity Coordinator at the home if we could work together on last year's service and discovered that they had previously acted out the nativity story at the home. I invited them to repeat their performance in church. We planned our accessible service around the adults from the home and they were as excited as I was - it was a huge success and there was not a dry eye in the house.

We've been planning this years' nativity service to be held on Saturday 14 December. We are also working on becoming more dementia-friendly and inclusive as a church. The café has been a leap of faith and a huge learning curve for St Mark's and the benefice. This has all been made possible with the support of the mission grant and advice from the Alzheimer Society.

For more information about mission grants visit: bit.ly/48MoLrz

Grants are also available with the Benefact Trust, Find out more here: bit.ly/3WU1Kxd



IN FOCUS... News from the diocese

Peace vigil for faiths of the world

The Croydon Inter Faith Children and Young People's Vigil for Peace took place at Croydon Minster on 11 November.

The Revd Canon Dr Andrew Bishop, Priest-in-Charge at Croydon Minster, Bishop Rosemarie and Bishop Martin (lead bishop for inter faith work in Southwark Diocese) welcomed children and young people from many of Croydon's faith communities for an event focused on peace initiatives.

The Venerable Jonathan Sedgwick, Archdeacon of Southwark writes:

Conscious of the falling leaves all around us – people of all ages took part and wrote their hopes and prayers for peace on paper sycamore leaves, which were laid around a beautiful art installation of a tree representing the faiths of the world. This was presented by children from both Croydon Minster Infant and Junior School.

Young people from the Guru Granth Sahib sang prayers of peace from the Sikh tradition and 14 year old, Rayyan Arif recited words from the Quran and offered his thoughts as a young Muslim on the shared belief that we are all created in God's image. Picking up the theme of Armistice Day, young people from Oasis Academy, Coulsdon told real stories of young men from the local area who had lost their lives in war, and how facing up to the horrors of war can remind us of the importance of working together for peace.

There were also beautiful reflections on peace from young people from the local Hindu community and the St Cyprians Greek Orthodox Primary School. Picking up on the theme of the lark which was such a powerful memory from the trenches of World War One, Laurence Qin from The Whitgift School played The Lark by the Russian composers Balakirev and Glinka.

"We have come", said Bishop Martin "because we were inspired by the commitment of children and young people in Croydon of different faiths to build relationships and work together for peace." The bishops joined civic leaders including Councillor Kola Agboola (Civic Mayor of Croydon) and Colonel Ray Wilkinson (Representative Deputy Lieutenant for the Borough of Croydon) as well as Penny Smith-Orr (Chair of Faiths Together in Croydon) who had made the event possible.

Bishop Rosemarie drew threads of the vigil together, expressing her delight in the parakeets of Croydon which were such a colourful and visual reminder of the way our lives were enriched by our diversity. After a short time of silent reflection, Bishop Rosemarie invited everyone to come and take away one of the leaves for peace which in the case of sycamore leaves, she reminded us, were also seeds of new life.



Children and young people at the inter faith peace vigil, at Croydon Minster.

The Makin Review

A review of the Church's handling of allegations of serious abuse carried out over a period of 40 years by the late John Smyth was published in November 2024.

The Makin Review describes the experiences of victims and survivors of John Smyth's abuse, the actions of Church participants to identify good practice and failings in the handling of the allegations relating to Smyth. It answers the questions set out in the Terms of Reference, makes criticisms of organisations and individuals, and reaches decisive conclusions about the lapses and failings that enabled Smyth to commit sickening abuse.

Following publication of the Review, Bishop Christopher wrote to the diocese expressing his concern for all those affected by the issues detailed in the report and urging parishes to engage with its recommendations. He said: "It is imperative that we do not miss the opportunity to learn the lessons of this review — especially with regard to diligence in reporting, care for survivors and the need to continually reflect on

and review our culture and practices. It is rightly said that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility — but as church officers and ministers, we bear a particular duty to ensure this responsibility is taken seriously." The full letter is available on the diocesan website here: bit.ly/4gaBDdE

A pilgrimage of solidarity

The Rt Revd Dr Martin
Gainsborough, Bishop of Kingston
writes:

In early November I returned from a 10-day visit to the Diocese of Jerusalem, visiting Anglican churches and institutions in Jordan, Palestine and Israel. The visit, my first to the Holy Land, left me simultaneously concerned about the future for Christians and all the people of the Holy Lands, and inspired by the resilience, faithfulness and witness to Christ that I saw in the Anglican churches, people and clergy that I spent time with.

In 2021, Bishop Christopher signed an agreement with Archbishop Suheil, Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, to create a covenant link between our two dioceses. While we are linked through the Anglican Communion with every other Anglican diocese in the world, covenant links are a mark of a special relationship between two dioceses. The Diocese of Southwark already had such links with our partner dioceses in Zimbabwe, and recently also signed one with the Diocese of Barbados.

Covenant links don't mean very much unless there is a true depth of relationship between our dioceses. Bishop Christopher's personal relationship with Archbishop Suheil and his successor, Archbishop Hosam, is very strong, and many members of our diocese also have their own strong personal links with parts of the Diocese of Jerusalem. Yet a series of events, including Covid and the tragic war in Gaza and Lebanon over the past year, have conspired to prevent the intended common life between our dioceses from developing as hoped.

When I was appointed as Bishop of Kingston, Bishop Christopher asked me to take the lead on building our covenant link with the Diocese of Jerusalem into a reality experienced at all levels of both our dioceses. The security situation notwithstanding, I was determined to spend some time in the Diocese of Jerusalem on a 'pilgrimage of solidarity' to emphasise to our Anglican brothers and sisters there our commitment to them, and to building a mutual life together in Christ.

And how much we would gain from a deeper mutual life. Palestinian Christians are suffering unimaginably due to Israeli occupation, illegal seizure of land, lack of



L-R: Bishop Martin, Archbishop Hosam and Peter.

economic opportunity, and a lack of hope for a good future for their children. And yet in the midst of this suffering, those I met reveal what it is to be a disciple of Christ, sharing in his suffering and so also in his glory (Romans 8.17). This is not due to their suffering alone, but because of their witness to Christ within it. To take a few small examples: the Arab Evangelical Episcopal Vocational Training College in Ramallah, creating economic opportunities for the young people who attend there; the Schneller School near Amman, providing vocational training for children who could not otherwise afford it; or the welcome to refugees at St Paul's Church in Ashrafiya.

We are exploring ways in which our covenant relationship with the Diocese of Jerusalem can be experienced in all parts of our diocese, paying particular attention to our partner's focus on young people, which dovetails well with our Southwark Vision priorities. There is a small Link Committee working on developing the relationship with our partners but The Revd Peter Welby, Link Secretary would love to hear from more people who would like to keep abreast of the Link as it develops and play a part. My hope and my belief is that by sharing a life in Christ with our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land, we will find our own following of Christ here in Southwark greatly enriched.

You can contact Peter at: pw@portaladvisory.com



Stained-glass tribute to Joan

A new set of stained-glass windows in memory of Dr Joan Greenwood OBE (1933-2019) has been unveiled at St Stephen, South Dulwich.

Joan was a midwife and long-time churchwarden of St Stephen's. During her career, she served as the Midwifery Officer at the Department of Health and shaped critical maternity policy in the NHS. She then went on to advise governments in several African countries. Her dedication to her profession was recognised with an OBE and an honorary doctorate from the University of Hertfordshire. Beyond her professional achievements, Joan was deeply committed to St Stephen's, serving as a churchwarden for many years. Her legacy to the church funded muchneeded lighting improvements and enabled

the commissioning of the stained-glass windows in her memory.

Designed by stained-glass artist, Roland Mitton, the windows were installed in







"The stained glass also features imagery evocative of the Middle East, such as the sun, pyramids, and date palms, which complement the biblical scenes depicted below. loan's interests are delicately woven throughout, including a Hebridean sunset. This scene would have delighted her, along with depictions of wildlife like blackbirds, hedgehogs, corncrakes, red squirrels, and her beloved cats. The entire design is framed with borders of vine, grape, and sheaves of corn, completing the association with the Eucharist.

"The windows hold a central message of the incarnation; they enhance our current 'Lady chapel' which over recent years has become a place of private prayer and contemplation for many casual visitors to the church as well as for regulars.

"The Hebrew Midwives commemorated in two of the trefoil windows are very precious heroes in the Bible, as they are amongst very few named women heroes in the Bible even though they are arguably of similar importance to Moses, preventing genocide amongst the people enslaved in Egypt."

Shirley welcomes new priest-in-charge

On Thursday 3 October, The Revd Jenny Walpole was commissioned, licensed and welcomed as the new Priest-in-Charge at St George, Shirley by Bishop Rosemarie and The Venerable Greg Prior, Archdeacon of Croydon at the end of a fifteen month interregnum.



Golden celebrations

Three couples who worship at St John the Baptist, Old Malden and are part of the Church's Mothers' Union branch celebrated their 50th golden wedding anniversaries.

Marilyn Taylor and Richard Burket met at Holy Trinity, Tooting and were married there in August 1974. Monica Henn and Edward Drake met while on holiday in Torremolinos and were married at St Nicholas, Pyrford in September 1974. Elizabeth Miles met Anthony Pullen in



the choir at St Michael & All Angels, Southfields and were married there in September 1974.

Congratulations to all! © John Eggitt. L-R: Liz, Anthony, Monica, Edward, Marilyn and Richard.

Battersea church celebrates 150 years

To celebrate 150 years of St Luke's Church in South Battersea, a series of celebration events took place from 14-17 November.

the windows reflect the Middle Eastern

the Book of Exodus, Shiphrah and Puah,

incorporated in the details alongside Joan's

name. These elements serve as a poignant

symbol of Joan's lifelong dedication to the

heritage of the Holy Family, with the

names of the Hebrew midwives from

care of mothers and babies.

Antony Lewis-Crosby who has been a member of St Luke's church community since 1974 writes:

The church buzzed with people, we started celebrations with a discussion on building communities, an open day and finally, a celebration service followed by a parish lunch. The celebrations were organised by a team of volunteers working to create a programme for the whole community - near and far that make up the parish of St Luke's.

The opening event was the discussion evening that took place on 14 November - the actual anniversary of the original dedication of the church. Chaired by Sean Curran of BBC's Today in Parliament, the panel consisted of Bishop Martin, Sarah Rackham, former leader of the Katherine Low Settlement, Mohamed Ali of the Eleys Network, The Revd Canon Giles Fraser, broadcaster, journalist and Vicar

of St Anne's, Kew and Timothy Walker, local historian. Excellent questions came from students at Graveney and Emannuel schools.

For the Open Day, St Luke's was transformed with stalls for many of the outreach projects that the Church supports. Hundreds of people came to enjoy all the activities, musical offerings by our church organists, local musicians and local schools, and broadcaster Gyles Brandreth joined us for a talk. A large congregation joined the celebratory service on Sunday led by The Very Revd Dr Mark Oakley, Dean of Southwark. Among the congregation were nine clergy - previous incumbents at St Luke's, Finna Ayres, the Deputy Mayor of Wandsworth Councillor and Idris Jones, the oldest member of the church, who turned 100 earlier this year.



200th anniversary Sunday service

The congregation at St John, Waterloo held a special Sunday service to celebrate the church's 200th anniversary. Bishop Rosemarie presided and preached.





Southwark Cathedral hosts Robes' SleepOut

On Friday 29 November, Southwark Cathedral hosted the annual SleepOut in aid of the Robes Project. So far, nearly £50,000 has been raised for the charity, with donations still coming in.

Having started 14 years ago, the Southwark Cathedral SleepOut is the homeless charity's main fundraising event. Each year, groups from across the Diocese of Southwark give up the comfort of their homes to sleep out in the churchyard to raise awareness of homelessness. This year's Cathedral cohort included the Dean of Southwark, The Very Revd Dr Mark Oakley, the Sub Dean, The Revd Canon

Michael Rawson and a group of young people from *Junior Xpress* and *Youth Xpress* who raised nearly £5,000.

Those sleeping out and their supporters were treated to an evening of entertainment featuring the South London Jazz Orchestra and Swing Patrol as well as an interview with TV judge, Holocaust Educator and Author Rob Rinder conducted by the Dean. During the interview, Rinder expressed gratitude for his own home, noting that "(when) we share the gratitude of our families and the safe spaces we call our homes. When we do that alongside each other and Robes, we have an enormous power and understand what it means to be unhoused." Also in

attendance was the Worshipful the Mayor of Southwark, Naima Ali, who made a surprise visit, commenting to the organisers that the event was "a beautiful reminder of the strength of community and the impact we can achieve together".

After the excitement of the evening, it was time for the group of 96 adults and children to bed down for the night. The atmosphere of the evening carried into the following day as those who slept out enjoyed a hot breakfast before returning to their homes. The Sleep Out itself then gave way to the Big Cathedral Knit where knitters and crocheters assembled blankets for those experiencing homelessness across the capital.

The Robes Project has operated across Southwark and Lambeth since 2007, providing shelter for people experiencing homelessness. During the winter of 2024/25, the Robes Project will once more be running its Winter Night Shelters and weekday drop-in centres which provide vital support, advice, and shelter to those most in need.

You can donate to the Robes Project here: justgiving.com/campaign/so2024



L-R: The big Cathedral knit. Sleepers in the Cathedral churchyard.

GIVE TO GO GREEN

Give To Go Green is a match-funding project from the Church of England helping to double local donations for carbon-cutting projects. As its second phase concludes, Southwark Diocese would like to thank all churches involved.

As we write, the first four campaigns have concluded with nearly £25k of congregational fundraising over their targets. This was match-funded by the Church of England by a further £24k – a total of around £50k for all these



initiatives aimed at creating a more sustainable future.

The 12 churches that took part launched community-driven fundraising efforts such as walks, quizzes, shared lunches and breakfasts, and concerts which saw remarkable results. Some fundraised in eco-friendly ways, such as recycling books and clothes through apps, reducing landfill and donating the money to their church campaign.

All Saints, Peckham encouraged parishioners to get on their bikes or go vegetarian for the six-week campaign and then donate money saved from unused petrol and uneaten meat to their Give to Go Green campaign for more efficient lighting. One of our first churches, St John the Baptist, Eltham used the tag line 'Warm Seats, Warm Hearts' to raise money for heated pew cushions. In November last year, the boilers at St John's were condemned and they've been without heating in the church ever since. "The issue with the boilers. gave us the opportunity to think about a carbon net zero means of heating the church", said The Revd Caroline Risdon (pictured). "Heating projects are considerably expensive and take a long time, so we looked at heated pew cushions as an interim measure. The Give to Go Green campaign enabled us to fundraise successfully for this cost and our congregation and community were really energised and engaged in the fundraising. We hosted a Mexican Supper, recycled books, held a raffle and enjoyed a hymn-along together. We grew closer as a church family and fundraised more than we were aiming for! Our order for heated pew cushions has just been placed and we are looking forward to not only a warmer Christmas in 2024 but flexibility as we become a greener church in the future."

Working together using eco-friendly practices, and partnerships with local businesses our *Give to Go Green* churches have promoted green solutions to their congregations and the wider community demonstrating the importance of Christians taking care of God's creation.

As always, huge thanks are due to dedicated volunteers, sponsors and the community in making *Give to Go Green* such a success in Southwark. They have helped make a lasting impact, inspiring environmental awareness and action for generations to come.

More information

Read more about the churches involved here: bit.ly/48RtUyk

CofE application details are here: bit.ly/4fMARmJ

Raising awareness of modern slavery



Anti-Slavery Day takes place every year on 18 October.
The day is an opportunity to raise awareness of the rise in modern-day slave. On Saturday 19 October, Southwark Against Modern Slavery (SAMS) held a day conference at Reigate Methodist Church. Jennifer Hyde, Co-Chair of SAMS writes:

The conference was opened by the Bishop of Croydon, The Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett, who spoke powerfully about the role of the Church in social justice. Detective Chief Inspector Kerry Loveless, Surrey Police Lead on Modern Slavery, gave attendees an insight into some of the cases the police have been working on locally where slavery has been involved. Following her talk, no one could be left in any doubt that slavery is taking place throughout Surrey, 'right here, right now'.

Other speakers on the day included, The Rt Revd Richard Moth, Bishop of Arundel and Brighton, who spoke about the Christian response to modern slavery, The Rt Revd Dr Alastair Redfern, Chair of the Clewer Initiative, who urged the Church to ensure modern slavery is high on its agenda at a time when many have lost sight of it. We then heard from The Venerable Moira Astin, Archdeacon of Reigate and members of SAMS on their work in raising awareness of modern slavery. Several local charities and organisations also had stalls in the marketplace throughout the day.

In total, around 70 people attended – their eyes opened to what is going on around them and gaining confidence in knowing how and what to report when things 'just don't feel right'.

More information about the work of SAMS and how they can help you can be found here: bit.ly/3CtXk9V



Eco Church

Southwark Diocese is on a journey towards greater sustainability, and to our commitment to caring for creation. A core 'mark' of Anglican mission, this is an important and growing part of the life in our parishes as we grapple with the climate emergency and seek to reduce our carbon emissions - aiming for a target of Carbon Net Zero by 2030.

One of the easiest ways for churches to take action and reduce their carbon footprint is to register with the Eco Church awards scheme. The scheme introduced by Global conservation organisation -A Rocha provides a framework for environmental action.

According to the charity's latest data, 95 church communities in the Diocese of Southwark have registered for the Eco Church Awards Scheme (see map).

Congratulations to the 20 parishes who received their Bronze and Silver awards this year:

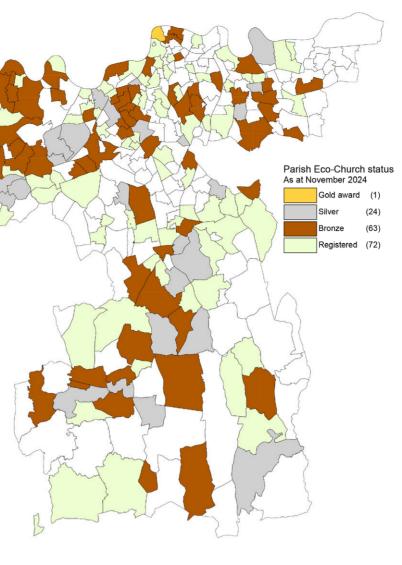
Bronze

- St Barnabas with Christ's Chapel, Dulwich
- 9 Springfield Church, Wallington
- St Peter's Church, Norbiton
- St Mary the Virgin Church, Caterham
- 9 St Mary of Nazareth Church, West Wickham

- 9 All Saints Church, Kingston upon Thames
- St Andrew's Church, Coulsdon
- St John the Divine, Merton
- 9 St Alfege Church, Greenwich
- 6 Christ Church, Colliers Wood
- Emmanuel Church, South Croydon
- St John the Divine, New Malden

Silver

- St Peter and St Paul's Church, Lingfield
- St Anne's Church, Wandsworth
- St Mary Magdalene Church, Wandsworth Common
- Saint Mary the Virgin, Horne
- St John The Evangelist, Caterham
- Church of St Peter and St Paul, Chaldon
- St Mary's Church, Wimbledon
- Southwark Cathedral



What can you do?

There is a questionnaire as part of the framework to help you see what you are already doing well in your church and get a clear sense of what steps to take next. The questionnaire is divided into five key areas, making it easy for different members of the congregation and clergy to take responsibility for filling in different sections. These are worship and teaching, buildings, land, community and global engagement and lifestyle.

By taking some simple actions and regularly updating the Eco Church answers, you could qualify for your bronze, silver or gold Eco Church Award sooner than you realise.

Find out more here: bit.ly/4hX3ZcW

Meet our new Diocesan **Environmental** Officer



This month we welcome Sophie Roberts as our new **Diocesan Environmental** Officer. Sophie has joined the Justice, Peace and **Integrity of Creation** (JPIC) team in the Mission and Evangelism Department to support the diocese's work in safeguarding creation.

Sophie will be supporting our parishes on their journey to becoming better stewards of God's world, particularly through A Rocha's Eco Church Scheme. At a diocesan level, she will be leading the charge towards achieving our Eco Diocese Silver Award by 2027.

For support on environmental matters or with the Eco Church scheme, email: sophie.roberts@southwark. anglican.org

Keep up with the latest news and sign up to our environment newsletter here: bit.ly/4g7Z6fe





IN FOCUS... Southwark Vision

Our values: hope

In our series unpacking the priorities of the Southwark Vision, Jo Gavin and Imani McEwen write...

Christmas is a season rich with meaning for Christians offering a time to reflect on God's promises, His faithfulness and the wonderful gift of hope. For children, young people and their families, this season is a vivid reminder that hope isn't just an emotion but a solid cornerstone of the Christian faith which is rooted in the birth of Jesus and the redemption Christians believe He brings to the world.

The Christian understanding of hope is so much more than wishful thinking. It is an assurance grounded in God's unchanging nature and the fulfilment of His promises. During Christmas, schools might teach young people and their families the story of Christ's birth, an event that illuminates the enduring truth of hope in so many ways, from Mary's Magnificat when the Angel Gabriel speaks to her saying that

she will have a son, right through to the Wise Men bringing their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrhh which also signify hope when we celebrate Epiphany. The message of Christmas – that God sent His Son into the world to save humanity – reassures children and young people that God's love is real, present, and active in their lives. It is a hope that does not disappoint because it rests on the steadfast foundation of God's character.

A tradition that beautifully illustrates this message is the Christingle service. The Christingle is a symbolic object that teaches children the story of God's love and the hope found in Christ. You can make a Christingle using an orange, representing the world, wrapped with a red ribbon symbolizing the blood of Christ shed for humanity. Four cocktail sticks, often adorned with fruits or sweets, signify the fruits of creation and the four seasons, while a lit candle placed at the top represents Christ as the light of the world. Also the foil symbolises us, reflecting Jesus' light into the world and how



young people can do this too, as we seek to enable adults to see importance of young voices and young leaders in ministry, giving them opportunities to shine their light for Christ. The act of lighting the candle, particularly in a darkened church, creates a powerful visual representation of how Christ's light dispels darkness (see picture on front page). This can deeply resonate with children, young people and families, showing them that no matter how difficult life may seem, the light of Jesus is always present, offering guidance and hope. A Christingle can also be used at Candlemas - when we celebrate the presentation of

Jesus in the temple when Simeon sees Jesus and declares in the Gospel of Luke

"Lord, now you let your servant go in peace; your word has been fulfilled: my own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel."

In today's world, many children, young people and families face uncertainty, a lack of hope, anxiety, loneliness and the rising cost of living. As we look to 2025 with hope, the Christmas

message offers a counternarrative rooted in God's enduring promises. How can we allow children, young people and their families – both at church and those who have yet to discover church – to experience and share the hope of the season and the light of a hope in Jesus.

How do we enable the hope of Christ to shine brightly in the hearts of children, young people and their families by putting them at the heart of all ministry and mission? By doing so, they can withstand the pressures of growing up through having a deeply rooted faith and people to support them on their faith journey.

If this is something that you are thinking about, we would encourage you to sign up for some CYP Ministry training that will take place in the new year. This will be on a range of topics ranging from volunteers, schools ministry and children, youth and families ministry here: bit.ly/3AjGV7n

Jo and Imani are CYP Mission Support Officers for the Diocese of Southwark.

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



LET US PRAY...

DECEMBER

The Venerable John Kiddle

Archdeacon of Wandsworth

The Dawn from on High

This edition of *The Bridge* spans the liturgical seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. These weeks from Advent Sunday to Candlemas are rich and beautiful.

As I reflect on these seasons there is one verse that plays in my heart. It is from Zechariah's song, *The Benedictus*. In the power and joy of the Spirit, he gives thanks for the birth of his son John.

By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us¹ Those words hold together – with beauty and gentleness – the breadth and the intimacy, the hope and promise, of the gift we celebrate in these eight weeks.

As you prepare to mark these seasons, why not spend some time looking at a picture, or better a painting, of the dawn. Let it speak to you. See the layers of colour – the deep red spanning the horizon moving upwards through orange and yellow to white and then upwards through light blue to violet and dark blue and the night.

See the wonder, the hope, the stillness. See with Zechariah, the loving promise of



the tender mercy of God, for you and for the world.

During Advent, we watch and wait as those looking for the glimpse of light on the horizon. At Christmas we rejoice with angel choirs of heaven in the birth of tender love, like the rays of the sun kissing the dark land. During Epiphany, we see that love making itself known and we embrace the transformation it brings, like the glorious arrival of a new day.

Take time in these weeks to enter gently and hopefully into the journey of these seasons. **Make time** to see the dawn and welcome afresh the gift of God's love.

Let us pray

God of tender mercy
Your love breaks on your world
like the dawn
Give us grace to turn towards

your light
And to welcome your love.

And to welcome your love.

So may we, through these holy weeks,

Be renewed in hope
And strengthened to live your
transforming life
With compassion and kindness,
With faith and joy.
Amen.

1: Luke 1.78

Please send details of your next events for FEBRUARY ONWARDS to Trinity House BY MONDAY 13 JANUARY

December

UNTIL 21 DECEMBER

* West Wickham – St Francis of Assisi, West Wickham will be hosting a Community Christmas Tree Festival. Refreshments available. We are raising money for Welcare Bromley, a charity that provides practical and emotional support and advice to families in need. Ravenswood Avenue, BR4 0PA. Free. Saturday 14: 10am–1pm Sunday 15: 12–3pm Wednesday 18: 10.30am–1pm Friday 20: 10am–1pm Saturday 21: 10am–1pm

UNTIL 4 JANUARY

* BATTERSEA – HeART of Christmas:

Magical immersive light experience that
takes you to the heart of the festive
season. Art and community project
by Nine Elms Arts Ministry. 12–8pm
daily at art'otel London, art'beat
Studio Battersea Power Station 1,
Electric Boulevard, SW11 8BJ (opposite
Battersea Power Station). Free, no
ticket required; family-friendly (children
must be accompanied at all times).

January 2025

13–15 JANUARY

* SOUTHWARK – Leading your church into growth: Be Inspired. Be Encouraged. Be Equipped. St George the Martyr, Borough High Street, London SE1 1JA. Cost £105 (discounts available). Details and booking: bit.ly/4hQ0JQi

UNTIL 27 JANUARY

* SOUTHWARK – Bankside 52, Not Out – a 52-year journey through the changing heart of Bankside. Southwark Cathedral. Free. Details: jmayhook.art



Looking forward in 2025 – save the dates!

SATURDAY 5 APRIL

WOOLWICH AREA LAY CONFERENCE

Calling all emerging and lay leaders in our churches. Venue Ark All Saints Academy, London SE5 0UB. The Rt Revd Alastair Cutting, Bishop of Woolwich said, "The Woolwich Area Lay Conference has gone from strength to strength in recent years in training and resourcing our lay leaders. Join us as we look forward to seeing *Thy Kingdom Come* in the Woolwich Area." Registration opens early in the New Year."

SUNDAY 8 JUNE

THY KINGDOM COME

10th anniversary celebration event at Southwark Cathedral.

SATURDAY 20 SEPTEMBER

KINGSTON AREA LAY CONFERENCE

Confident Faith in a Changing World. For all lay people in the Kingston Area.

10am—4pm at St Saint Cecilia's Church of England School, Sutherland Grove SW18

5JR. Keynote Speaker Rowan Williams.

Details to follow.

SATURDAY 8 NOVEMBER

DIOCESAN JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION CONFERENCE

Details to follow.

Christmas at Southwark Cathedral

THURSDAY 19 DECEMBER

Community Christmas Carols – an enchanting afternoon of community Christmas carols.12.45pm. Free, ticket details at: bit.ly/4i73kFP

FRIDAY 20 DECEMBER

Cathedral Choir Concert – experience the beauty of Handel's Messiah and a selection of beloved carols, performed by the renowned Southwark Cathedral Choir. Conductor Simon Hogan, organist James Gough, and the Chameleon Arts Orchestra. 7.30pm. Tickets (from £12) at: bit.ly/4g8CFX

SUNDAY 22 & MONDAY 23 DECEMBER

Cathedral Carol Services — experience the magic of the Cathedral at Christmas with a traditional service of lessons and carols sung by the Cathedral Great Choir. 6pm. Free. See Cathedral website for ticket details.





The editorial team strive to make The Bridge accessible to all. We would love it if you could take some time to complete a short survey and tell us what you think about our diocesan newspaper, currently published ten times a year.

What do you like best... what would you like to see more of.... how frequent...?

Find the survey here: bit.ly/3Vo5kzU

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

THE BISHOP OF SOUTHWARK'S LENT CALL 2025



Jesus said; Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.

Matthew 19:14

The Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call for 2025 asks you to pray for and raise money to support projects that help children and young people recover from trauma and which encourage their mental wellbeing. We are supporting this type of work in the Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East, in our Link Dioceses in Zimbabwe and here in our own diocese. Visit our website to find out how you can become involved and help:

southwark.anglican.org/lentcall







HOW TO