

Diocesan Secretary to retire

Bishop Christopher announces Ruth Martin's retirement

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Warm spaces

Warm and welcoming churches in Kingston Episcopal Area

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Walking through walls

The Woolwich Area Lay Conference 2023

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New Bishop of Kingston announced

On Thursday 2 February 2023 the new Bishop of Kingston, The Revd Canon Dr Martin Gainsborough was consecrated at Canterbury Cathedral. Bishop Martin succeeds The Rt Revd Dr Richard Cheetham who retired last year, in October 2022 and his consecration follows the announcement approved by His Majesty The King on 16 December 2022.

Sharing his excitement on the eve of the consecration, Bishop Martin said: "I am deeply conscious of the trust the Church has put in me and pray that I will be worthy of it. I think particularly of the clergy and parishes in the Kingston Episcopal Area (KEA) with whom I will share in God's mission in this place. My prayers are for them. I think also with thanksgiving of my family and friends, those who have supported me along the way, of colleagues old and new. The God who has come to us in Jesus Christ is doing a new thing!"

It was a day of consecrations at the Cathedral for a Eucharist with the ordination and consecration of Bishop Martin, The Venerable Dr Jane Mainwaring, Bishop of Hertford and The Reverend Dr Robert Munro, Bishop of Ebbsfleet. They took an Oath of Allegiance to the Sovereign and Oath of Due Obedience to the Archbishop, tended to them by the Principal registrar before the service.

The consecration service for The Revd Paul Thomas, Bishop

of Oswestry was also held at the Cathedral earlier that same day.

Welcomed by David Monteith, Dean of Canterbury the service began with The Procession of The Most Revd Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, who introduced the service, and led the presentations and declarations of the Bishop Designates.

The service attended by bishops, clergy and laity from across the country was described by Bishop Martin as "beautiful and very moving" as friends, family and parishioners joined to celebrate his consecration.

The first reading, Malachi 3.1-5 was read by Jamie Harrison, Chair of the House of Laity, General Synod and the second, Hebrews 2.14-end by Caroline Spencer, Lay Member of Chapter, Canterbury. The sermon was given by The Revd Dr Jason Roach, Director of Ministry, London City Mission (see page 12) and prayers were led by Annie Gainsborough, Amelie Mainwaring and James Munro.

The newly ordained Bishops were each given a bible, a ring, a pectoral cross and a crozier. The consecrations concluded with a round of applause from the congregation, which was described as "utter joy" by Archbishop Justin.

The Bishop of Southwark, The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, said: "I rejoice that Bishop Martin is now part of the Episcopal team and know that his deanery gatherings over the coming weeks will be an opportunity for him to be welcomed into



each and every community in the Kingston Episcopal Area. I commend him and his family to your continued prayers."

In the weeks leading up to his consecration and following the announcement, Bishop Martin visited churches, schools and projects within the KEA, meeting with clergy across Wandsworth and Lambeth, particularly during a day of visits accompanied by the Area Archdeacons, The Venerable John Kiddle for Lambeth and The Venerable Simon Gates for Wandsworth.

All photos © Eleanor Bentall. **Above, clockwise: Southwark Cathedral Chapter; Bishop Martin with new crozier; the laying on of hands during the service. Below: In the weeks before the consecration, Bishop Martin engages with pupils of St George's Primary School, Wandsworth; and Interfaith leaders from the Tooting community.**



A recording of the service can be found on Canterbury Cathedral's YouTube channel here: <https://bit.ly/319ALyx>.

A view from The BRIDGE



‘Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities but it is the same God who activates all of them... To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good’ (St Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, 12v4-7).

Were I to summarise this issue of *The Bridge* in one word, or two, it would be ‘Gift’ and ‘Giving’.

Gifts, of woolly hats as Christmas presents for prisoners in HMP Wandsworth; the knitted Christmas tree from St Michaels, Betchworth, coming together with local charities to knit teddies for children who have suffered trauma; and the ‘bags of hope’ from local developers and business leaders for primary school children in the Nine Elms Area.

And Giving, of time, love and renewing our commitment to use our lives to witness to God. As I write, Bishop Martin Gainsborough has just been consecrated as our new Bishop of Kingston in a beautiful service where he dedicates himself to God’s service, as a shepherd of all God’s people. The season of Lay Ministry is

underway (see page 10) to seek out and celebrate the contribution of Lay Ministers across our churches and communities. For me it is a great privilege to serve the Lord as a licensed Lay Reader in the Diocese, and there are so many and varied opportunities within our parish churches and in our wider communities.

We can reflect not only for ourselves but others we know to ask our brothers and sisters across our Diocese to reflect on the call to serve God which may be through formal ministry roles – and of course may also be though so many other ways. During this great season of Epiphany, what we might each offer as our gifts and what we are asked to share, includes God’s Love, God’s Hope.

In this issue we celebrate the gift of the loving service of our church buildings as warm spaces in a cold winter. We know the church struggles with challenges in our times as in previous times and it will always be so, but the Light has come into the world and whatever we face as a church, the darkness will not overcome it.

Ruth Martin



NEWS IN BRIEF

Three schools within the Diocese to be transformed as part of School Rebuilding Programme

Pupils at All Saints’ Primary School, The Minster Nursery and Infant School and the Minster Junior School in Croydon will benefit from transformative renovation projects as part of the School Rebuilding Programme.

The Department of Education (DfE) School Rebuilding Programme carries out major renovation and refurbishment projects at school and sixth form college buildings across England, with buildings prioritised according to their condition.

At the end of last year DfE announced that 239 school and sixth forms buildings are to be transformed as part of their revolutionary ten-year programme. The new buildings will be more energy efficient for future winter resilience and net-zero in operation, with old facilities replaced by modern education environments including new classrooms, sports halls and dining rooms.

Archdeacon of Southwark joins Land Commission

The Venerable Jonathan Sedgwick, Archdeacon of Southwark, has become a member of the Southwark Land Commission. Established by Southwark Council, the Land Commission aims to identify development land in the borough. Jonathan has lived in Southwark for almost 30 years and supports all the Church of England Parishes of the Borough of Southwark. On becoming a member of the commission, Jonathan said: “I love Southwark. I love its diversity, its vibrancy and its ambition to improve life for all its citizens. I am excited to be part of this important initiative.”

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Southwark Diocese, as part of *Churches Together in South London*, observed this year’s *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*, which took place in January. The theme this year explored how the work of Christian unity can contribute to the promotion of racial justice across all levels of society.



Resources are still available for download from: <https://bit.ly/3ZELm4n>.

A Prayer for the New Year

They shall be changed; but you are the same, and your years will not fail. (Psalm 102.28)

*God of unchanging, unchangeable love;
as you have seen us through the changes and chances of the past,
so bring us through all that lies ahead that, in whatever we face,
we may experience your constancy, know your faithfulness,
grow in grace and live in peace.*

Amen.

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Next Issue: Submission deadline and guidance

The MARCH edition is due to be published online on 1 March 2023. Material for that edition must be with Vernia Mengot by email by **FRIDAY 17 FEBRUARY**.

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...

Diocese news

Diocesan Secretary to retire in Summer

Bishop Christopher announced in December that Ruth Martin, the Diocesan Secretary, will be retiring in the summer. Ruth (pictured on page 2) is also a Licensed Reader in the Richmond Team Ministry and a Lay Canon at Southwark Cathedral.

Working closely with the Diocesan Bishop, the responsibilities of the Diocesan Secretary include being the Chief Executive of the Diocesan Board of Finance, Secretary to the governance of the Diocese through Diocesan Synod and also the Chief Operating Officer of the Diocese.

Ruth, having been in post for more than eight years, will retire from her post after

the 2022 Annual Report and Accounts are presented to Diocesan Synod in July. Bishop Christopher expressed thanks to Ruth for her exemplary service as Diocesan Secretary and for working closely with him as well as Archdeacons, other colleagues, and parishes across the Diocese though some very challenging years. He has asked Ruth to stay on part time for two years as Bishop's Lead for Strategic Development including Property Strategy, which will give continuity as the Diocese continues to emerge from the pandemic and recover.

The Revd Canon Andrew Zihni appointed Dean of Gloucester

It was announced on 19 January, by Downing Street, that The Revd Canon Andrew Zihni, Precentor at Southwark Cathedral, is to be the next Dean of Gloucester.

The Bishop of Southwark, The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, said of the appointment, "Andrew is a fine priest and colleague who goes to Gloucester with our prayers and good wishes. He has contributed graciously and effectively to the Diocese of Southwark both as an Assistant Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Assistant Director of Vocations and as Precentor at Southwark Cathedral, notably in his preparations for, and delivery of the Cathedral's response during our recent period of national mourning."

The Dean of Southwark, The Very Revd Andrew Nunn, said, "We are delighted for Gloucester Cathedral and for Andrew that he has been appointed as the new Dean. In his time at Southwark Cathedral, as both Honorary Minor Canon and latterly as Canon Precentor, Andrew has brought a huge amount to our life, and he will be very sadly missed. We are certain that the people of Gloucester will love him as much as the people of Southwark have."



New Year Honours...

The New Year Honours list recognises Revd Peter King, TD, for services in church and the community.

A BEM is awarded to Revd Peter King for services in the church and the community in South London. Revd Peter has carried out his ministry within the Diocese since 1983, he is currently a Minister in Secular Employment and has recently retired as a Judge of the Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber). He has a particular

interest in human rights, migration, peace and conflict resolution. He is also an accredited Mediator and a Member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.



Assistant Director of Lay Ministry appointed

The Venerable Carol Coslett has been appointed as the new Assistant Director of Lay Ministry, in the role previously held by Raewynne Whiteley.

Carol is currently Archdeacon of Derbyshire Peak and Dales, but is returning to Southwark Diocese, where she was the Rector of Betchworth and Buckland and also Priest in Charge of Merstham and Gatton. We look forward to her joining the team next month.

On her appointment, Carol said: "I am delighted to be returning to Southwark and

taking up this new role in directing lay ministries.

There are so many opportunities for the whole people of God to serve. Part of my role will be to help build up networks across all Episcopal areas, releasing gifts, and enabling individuals to recognise where God is working to follow their vocation. I am so much looking forward to walking with you all, so that we can journey together and welcome all to know where God is calling. I start in March moving from Derbyshire and I very much hope to be out and about visiting you all during the summer months."



© Diocese of Derby

Introducing the new Chair of the Multi-Academy Trust, The Venerable Jonathan Sedgwick

The Southwark Diocese Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) was established in 2016 to be the natural home for Church of England schools in the Diocese either wanting or needing to become academies.

The following year it welcomed its first schools and there are now 12 schools in the MAT – one secondary and 11 primary. Thanks to a small team of specialists the MAT work to improve the performance of schools, sharing ideas and good practice.

Dr Catharina Hickson, former Chair of the MAT, will be succeeded by The Venerable Jonathan Sedgwick, Archdeacon of Southwark. Catharina chaired the MAT during the most challenging times of the COVID pandemic, working closely with colleagues and board members, which includes The Venerable Dr Rosemarie Mallett, Bishop of Croydon and Ruth

Martin who extend their thanks along with Bishop Christopher as she continues as a Trustee and Vice-Chair of the board.

On his new role as Chair, Jonathan said: "My role is to lead the Trustees who support and challenge our Executive Team to ensure that we all keep focused on what is best for the children in our schools. I am delighted to say that I have found that this is the issue which is at the heart of what everyone is trying to do. Whilst the pace at which schools become academies may slow following the Government's recent announcement that legislation to require all schools to become academies would not now be brought forward, the direction of travel is still clear. So, our big challenge in the coming years – alongside the obvious financial ones – is how to bring on-board as many schools as we can sustainably manage."



New Director of Communications to join the Diocese

Last month we said goodbye to Sophia Jones, Director of Communications at the Diocese.

Sophia has left her role to pursue freelance communications work across the UK and internationally. We are grateful for all that she has achieved in taking our Diocesan Communications Department forward, particularly in supporting parishes through our communications during the COVID pandemic. We wish her well in her new endeavours.

Looking ahead, we are pleased to soon welcome her successor Anna Drew, who will join Southwark as the new Director of Communications and the Bishop of Southwark's Press Officer in April 2023. Anna brings with her a wealth of

experience, from her former role as Director of Communications at Canterbury Diocese and previous posts in the Methodist Church of Great Britain, including the role of Lead Media Officer.

Commenting on her appointment, Anna said: "I'm so excited to be joining the Southwark team. One of the things that really attracted me to this role is the great diversity of the Diocese, its parishes and communities – and the riches that offers as we seek to walk, welcome and grow together. I'm also inspired by the undeniable passion for social justice that is woven throughout all of Southwark's work. I can't wait to get started."





IN FOCUS...

News from our parishes

Telford Park share good news stories from their new-look Youth Nights

In September 2022 St Thomas with St Stephen launched their new-look Youth Nights on Thursdays for young people in the local area.

Running two sessions each week, one for younger youth (aged 6–8) and one for older youth (age 9–13), youth nights are an opportunity for young people to play football and other sports, have a free cooked hot meal, which is cooked and served by a different church member, play games, create with arts and crafts, and bake. They also hold a session called *Table Talk* to answer and discuss questions around faith, life and society. Eight 16–18-year-olds serve on a Young Leaders programme and since the new-look youth nights launched, around 60 young people attend, across the two sessions.

On 17 January 2023 the team moved their community centre to a new modern space in Clapham Park.

Sam Baker, Youth Minister and Sam Ewins, Youth Minister in Training writes:

As part of the youth programme at St Thomas with St Stephen we have run two weekly Youth Nights for young people in Clapham Park, South London, for several years. Youth ministries and young people across the country have been on a challenging journey throughout COVID and lockdowns and last year we decided that we needed something fresh to being a new chapter. Leaving behind some of what was and stepping out in faith to what might be – we have been blessed to see God work in some beautiful ways along this journey.

In September 2022 we launched our new-look Youth Nights on Thursday evenings for the local community. Young people get

the chance to play football, craft, dance, pool and table tennis; learn new skills; and discover a little of just how much God is for them in their lives. We've met some new and old faces.

Inspiring confidence

One of the good news stories is based on three young people who joined the club in September. When these three young people first arrived they were nervous, almost too afraid to come in. They stuck together and didn't engage with other people. After one week, you could see their confidence grow and by week three, their whole body language and facial expressions had transformed. We invited them to join us on our October half-term holiday, called *Haslemere Ventures*. They were so brave to come. The three of them enjoyed the holiday so much and they were hearing Gospel stories for the first time. These three young people continue to come to the Youth Night, even choosing to come over their own school awards ceremony in which they were receiving a prize. They simply will not miss it.



“All have been very committed to the group and we are so grateful for the way that they have developed in their faith.”

Recently we have had to find a new venue for our Youth Nights, due to ongoing maintenance issues at one of our sites. Amazingly, the local community centre (*Clapham Park Cube*) have agreed to partner with us and use their space. The building was built in 2019 at the heart of the Clapham Park estate and is very modern. It has an amazing sports hall and



a beautiful space for all our usual activities. It is an incredible answer to prayer, and we kicked off there on Tuesday 17 January. The young people love it.

Youth leader a blessing to the team

Another way that we have seen God at work is through the story of one of our Young Leaders. He has just turned eighteen and has been attending our youth programme since he was 10. He recently shared his testimony at a worship night, saying, “Growing up as a black kid in South London is not easy... there are so many distractions... I thank God every day that he kept me on the straight and narrow... I know there are younger kids who look up to me”. He became a Young Leader in 2018 and has been an amazing role model to the next generation of young people who are in a similar position to his. Now he is over 18, he will be joining our team as an Adult Leader which will increase his responsibilities, a challenge we are fully confident that he will rise to. We thank God for the wonderful blessing he has been to the youth ministry, the young people and the team.

Holiday ventures

Our final good news story is based around a group of boys aged 14–15. The boys have been coming to our youth groups for almost four years now and have brought a lot of character and at points, their fair share of challenge. The boys were eager to come to the summer youth holiday with us at *Haslemere Ventures*. Going into the week we felt that these boys were at a place where they would go one way or another in their journey with us.

We prayed prior to the holiday that God would meet with them in unexpected ways. The boys started the holiday getting



into small bits of trouble and causing a few minor issues. However, about three days in they began to engage very well. On night five of the holiday a leader presents a talk that outlines what following Jesus looks like – there is then a chance for the young people to respond to what they have heard. Two boys on that night gave their lives to God. Since then, we have been able to set up a group on another night of the week, specifically for those seven, where we explore different aspects of faith. So far, we have looked at topics such as how and why do we pray, as well as, how to read the Bible. The boys have all been very committed to the group and we are so grateful for the way that they have developed in their faith.

New initiatives

We would appreciate prayer as we launch two new initiatives. One is a monthly Parenting of Teenagers Group for parents and primary carers of teenagers to meet, mutually support one another and discuss topics such as ‘How to talk to my teenager about... handling money, sex and relationships, resilience, identity and decision making’. A second new initiative is our new Youth Alpha Course for young people to explore life and faith as a follow on to our community Youth Nights.



Top: Monday Bible Group; joining in the fun. Bottom (left to right): The new Park Cube venue; football; Youth Alpha Group.

Keeping vigil – deaneries work together to bring hope



On Friday 6 January 2023, local people gathered to hold a peace vigil in Peckham Rye Park exactly one week after Kalabe Legesse, aged 29, was found dead with a stab wound.

Local churches, community volunteers and residents attended, and a short service led by the Revd Dele Ogunyemi, Vicar of the Parish of St Antony with St Silas, which includes the Park and Common. St John, East Dulwich and All Saints, Peckham supported. Members of other local churches were also in attendance, including Nunhead's Lighthouse Cathedral, whose choir sang. Those that gathered were joined by local councillor MP Harriet Harman, she spoke about the need for communities to come together to address knife crime. Street Pastors along with Ben Lindsay, of charity Power the Fight also took part. The family and friends of Kalabe, of Ethiopian Orthodox heritage were present and held their own vigil of candlelit prayer.

Reflecting on the experience of keeping vigil, Vicar of St John, East Dulwich and Area Dean, Revd Gill O'Neill said: "Sadly, this is the second vigil I have attended following the death of a young man due to knife crime. We can do nothing to rectify or mend what has happened, nothing we do will bring that young person back to life again, but we can at least make a demonstration of solidarity with a grieving family, and together insist that this simply is not right, and is not how things are meant to be. As we stood in the candlelit dark, I was reminded of God's searing question to Cain, in Genesis: What have you done? Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground!"

It is natural for us to want to go to the ground, to the place where violence has taken place, to allow ourselves to hear its cry of pain, to unite with it our cries for justice and healing, and from there to hope for an end to all violence, resolving to participate with God in the work of redemptive love.

Our prayers remain with Kalabe and his family."

St Francis Church, Selsdon

Churches across the Diocese are constantly exploring different opportunities to enable children and young people (CYP) to encounter and deepen their relationship with God.

St Francis Church, Selsdon is another one of our parishes where a culture has been created to welcome and actively involve CYP to grow spiritually. Jonathon Canning, Church and Community Youth Worker at St Francis tells us about some of the highlights and new ventures supporting CYP to explore their faith.

At St Francis the Sunday School, Revive has been focusing on building relationships with the new faces and re-establishing intimacy in the group. Jonathan said: "This has proven to work out well, and the group has again become a place where people feel safe to share, challenge and discuss." With more new faces set to change the dynamic amongst the group of 27 different young people, and at the end of the academic year 2022, Revive saw an increase in attendance averaging at 8.1% young people each week, a huge improvement on 6.1% from the previous term. This is a result of the introduction of new families joining the Church and some young people returning to church.

Jonathan spoke about church events including a boy's sessions, pre-camp talks and youth services contributing to the end of term success. One group, *Food for Body and Soul*, boasts a rotation of activities between cooking and games, with discussions around Biblical texts and ethics. A BBQ and the summer youth camp ended the school year. Jonathan said: "Moving forward we will continue to rotate on activities and talks, especially as it has been great to see how much more engagement there has been and I will be really looking to push for an off-site activity."

Jonathan holds support sessions with some of the young people at St Francis. He said: "Sessions are a very precious time to build relationships and is a chance to be able to offer extra support on a deeper level. It also remains a great way of staying in contact with those who are on our books but are struggling to attend church on any regular basis, or have moved away on to university, and being able to support them on their own faith journey."

"One new venture that I have explored with at the back end of the term is to develop an older boys and young men's group. We have a large number of young people that fall into this bracket and this is something that I feel God has really put on my heart. So far, I have done two sessions and on both occasions the group has been invited to joining us at church."

As well as a thriving youth club, there is also a football academy where over 100 children and young people attended during that term. Jonathan also mentors as part of *Quest Academy*, particularly working with secondary school children, describing it as "a privilege it is to be able to serve in this way



Top: Body and Soul fireworks event. Bottom: The football academy's first match of the season.

and I remain on good terms with all those I have mentored throughout the years when I see them either in school or on the estate."

The end of summer youth camp saw nine young people from St Francis attend, the highest number the Church has ever taken to a camp event. Jonathan said "It was an experience and memory they will keep with them forever! The camp site was in Peterborough, and there were around 2,500 other young people in attendance from Churches all over the country."

On kicking off the New Year, Jonathan said: "It has been a great start to the year... Really building on the momentum from the end of last year and in particular, summer camp and the last term."



"Sessions are a very precious time to build relationships and are a chance to be able to offer extra support on a deep level."

Find out more...

Support and resources for CYP ministry can be found here:
<https://bit.ly/3XiCeR7>





IN FOCUS... Warm spaces

A warm and welcoming community

This winter, more than ever, Warm Hubs in the community have become increasingly relied on by those who are struggling to heat their home, and those seeking a kind, friendly and unconditional welcome in this period of difficulty. This month, we heard from some of our parishes in the Kingston Episcopal Area about what they have been doing to keep their church warm and welcome, by not only providing a space for people to keep warm, but a space to meet other local people, play games and enjoy refreshments.

Holy Trinity and St Augustine, Tooting.

Revd Angela Rayner, Vicar at Holy Trinity writes:

Many churches will have been thinking about how to respond to the dramatic increase in energy costs. It seemed clear that if we could find a way to heat our own buildings, we might offer a welcome to others. When Holy Trinity and St Augustine's began to think about it in Tooting, we were delighted to speak to some of the neighbouring churches in our Deanery and discover that Warm Spaces were already planned. Our two churches were joined by All Saints, Tooting, St Mary Magdalene, Wandsworth, and St Mary and St John the Divine, Balham, and we worked quickly to form a plan to open on different days to welcome visitors, and work on joint advertising and funding appeals. We have recently been joined

by St Anselm, Tooting, making it an ecumenical venture.

Holy Trinity and St Augustine's hand-delivered leaflets across both parishes to request volunteers, with a sign-up sheet to be completed physically or online. The idea was to require a minimal commitment (eight hours over four months) and to place new volunteers in a pair with a church volunteer that has been DBS-checked to ensure a good Safeguarding protocol. We were thrilled by the response. Over 40 people wrote to express an interest in being a part of our *Winter Welcome*. Local businesses were pleased to display posters both requesting volunteers and advertising the times that our churches would be open.

We began in December 2022 and have discovered that guests 'ebb and flow' according to weather and their need. The churches which are on busy thoroughfares receive more visitors, though some



Revd Philippa Boardman MBE and Revd Sam Parker with local people at St Mary Magdalene in Wandsworth.



Parishioners attending St Augustine's warm space were delighted to discover that th

weeks are quiet. Nonetheless, the *Winter Welcome* has proved an extremely good way to enable new relationships between neighbours to deepen relationships between church members and to invite people to visit the churches without any strings attached. Two volunteers even discovered they are neighbours and have lived on the same street for twenty years. On one occasion, a chance conversation at a bus stop about the 'state of society' led to a guest's two hour visit to the *Winter Welcome* and on another occasion a couple who'd lived in the area for two decades, but never visited the church were both welcomed and welcoming.

It is clear that our society faces a social deficit as much as a financial one, especially in large cities. It has been encouraging to gather around tables with people from a variety of backgrounds who'd be unlikely to otherwise meet. The opportunity to 'waste time' with tea-drinking, game-playing and conversation has been as valuable as the offer of a warm space.

Our churches might be visited more if we are able to find ways to welcome others through social activities that flow from our worship, without an expectation that belief will necessarily follow. That is to say, inviting people to attend Bible studies or Eucharists is asking a great deal from those without Christian faith, but asking people to volunteer to chat to others within a specified time frame provides a good purpose and a clear role for being



"The Winter Welcome has proved an extremely good way to enable new relationships between neighbours... and to invite people to visit the churches without any strings attached."

involved in church activities. We were clear on our leaflets that Christian faith was not required to volunteer, but I've had more spiritually enriching conversations at the intersection of faith, mental illness and politics at *Winter Welcome* than anywhere else recently.

We intend to throw a 'thank you' event for all of the volunteers to meet one another, and we will also evaluate the drop-ins across the Deanery at the end of the project. But our greatest piece of learning from *Winter Welcome* thus far has been about how our churches might offer ongoing excuses to strangers to gather for company and conversation. It is only by developing such relationships across our neighbourhoods (and these do not develop as easily and organically between neighbours as they might have done in the past) that we will build the trust necessary to share the Gospel.



at they were neighbours.

Christ Church, Gipsy Hill and Emmanuel, West Dulwich

Christ Church, Gipsy Hill and Emmanuel, West Dulwich run warm hubs to meet the needs of local residents. All are welcome to attend and enjoy the pleasant atmosphere and free food, advice, exercise and more.

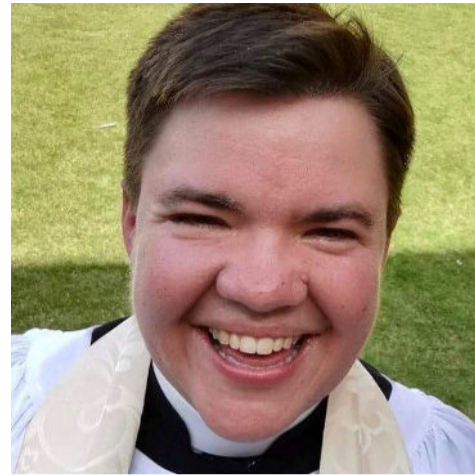
On Tuesdays, Christ Church, Gipsy Hill opens their doors at 11am to welcome all to take part in *Moving into Well-being* a small-group exercise class, free of charge, led by an expert instructor. At the same time, food is being carefully prepared so that lunch can be served at 12.30pm at *Open Door*, a convivial lunch club providing tea and coffee, a nutritious hot meal (vegetarian or not), and a chance to talk to others who may be experiencing isolation or have concerns with health and well-being, finances and employment. After lunch, those wishing to exercise their lungs can join in a choir practice, around the church piano.



“Open Door has been a key part of our mission from Christ Church... along with the new hub at Emmanuel Church... both places speak of God’s love for the communities we serve.”

On 20 December 2022, *Open Door* provided a festive Christmas lunch for 50 guests, together with carols by the Christmas tree. That same day the roving *Lambeth Health and Wellbeing Bus* was parked at the church, offering free medical advice together with vaccinations and blood pressure tests.

On Thursdays, Emmanuel Church, West Dulwich provides a Foodhub, in conjunction with Norwood and Brixton Foodbank, a warm hub from 11am–2pm in the Community Centre next to the church. It sees around 30 people enter each week for a hot meal, together with the opportunity to meet advisors face-to-face from *Centre 70* and *Brixton Advice Centre*, who offer guidance and support on issues such as housing, benefits, debt and employment.



Revd Angela Rayner, parish of Tooting, St Augustine.

Revd Jonathan Croucher, Parish Priest said: “Open Door has been a key part of our mission from Christ Church for eight years. After closing during COVID, we were delighted to be able to re-open along with the new hub at Emmanuel Church working with our wonderful partners at Norwood and Brixton Foodbank. Both places speak, we hope, of God’s love for the communities we serve where there are many who struggle financially, and not least as the increase in living costs has affected more and more people. We are so grateful that they are both now linked in with *Lambeth’s Wellbeing Network* enabling us to provide more support at the drop-ins with a range of services including flu-jabs and blood pressure tests.”

These projects are supported by Lambeth Together and Friends of Gipsy Hill together with a team of volunteers.

More information



To find out more about warm spaces visit:

<https://warmspaces.org/> and <https://www.warmwelcome.uk/>

Catford church combat local pollution

After almost two years of fundraising St Laurence, Catford have switched on their newly installed air source heat pumps.

A landmark grade-2 listed building in central Catford, St Laurence welcomed Catherine Barber, The Mayor of London’s Assistant Director for Environment and Energy, Janet Daby, MP for Lewisham East and Rosamund Kissi-Debra, founder of the Ella Roberta Foundation to the switch on event on Friday 16 December 2023.

On being the first parish to install air source heat pumps into their main church building, Canon Charles Pickstone, Vicar of the Church said: “Following General Synod’s 2020 decision for the Church of England to achieve net zero carbon by 2030, we are glad to be able to launch these zero-carbon heat pumps that will contribute to making the world a better place for future generations.”

St Laurence is close to one of the most polluted sections of south-east London’s traffic system, the Catford Gyratory. Not far away, Ella Kissi-Debra tragically died in 2013 of air pollution-related asthma, the first asthma death to be formally recognised as being related to traffic pollution.

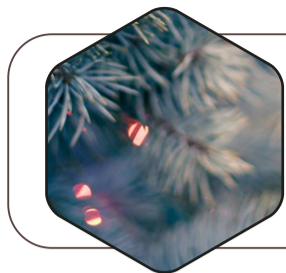
Rosamund Kissi-Debra has said: “The Ella Roberta Foundation is delighted that an Anglican church in one of the most polluted parts of south-east London, near to where Ella lived, has completed a project to replace their old polluting gas boilers with air source heat pumps, thus demonstrating their commitment to clean and healthy air. We hope that this will be a beacon project that will inspire other churches and community centres to do the same.”

At the launch event Janet Daby MP said: “We all need to play our part, St Laurence is playing their part, I’m hoping that this will begin a domino effect. The centre is so well-used and to know this heating system is here and will not be emitting any CO2 carbon emissions is fantastic!”

The Deputy Mayor of Lewisham, Councillor Brenda Dacres, who attended the launch on behalf of Lewisham Council said “It’s a really important statement St Laurence is making.”



Christ Church, Gipsy Hill provided Christmas lunch for 50 guests.



IN FOCUS...

Christmas round-up

Thousands celebrate Christmas at Southwark Cathedral

The Advent Procession on the last Sunday of November marked the beginning of a busy and joyful advent season at Southwark Cathedral.

From school events and charity carol services to spectacular services of lessons and carols and the family friendly Crib service on Christmas Eve, the Cathedral was the site of many celebrations of Christmas for communities across London.

Charities such as Marie Curie Cancer Care, The Trussell Trust and Crisis hosted their carol services and the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, once again hosted his annual carol service which this year was on the theme of serving London's

communities. Throughout the service, led by the Dean of Southwark, the Mayor paid tribute to the work carried out by organisations across the city, from food banks to refugee groups. The mayor also took the opportunity to thank the Dean "for his advice, his support and his friendship over the years" and for being "one of London's finest servants" at what was the Dean's final mayor's carol service before his retirement.

Throughout the month, the Cathedral was filled with wonderful music produced by the Cathedral's musicians. Highlights included the Merbecke Choir's Advent performance of Bach's Mass in B Minor, the boys and gentlemen of the Cathedral Choir's performance of Benjamin Britten's A Ceremony of Carols, and the Cathedral's ever popular services of lessons and carols.

From traditional choral arrangements to congregational carols, to a brass quintet and Christmas number ones from years gone by, the Cathedral's Community Sing-In saw the Cathedral filled with festive cheer as people of all ages joined together to celebrate the true gift of Christmas at Southwark Cathedral.



The Spirituals Choir at one of the many Cathedral Christmas events.

© Greater London Authority

Betchworth community knit 'Teddies for Tragedies'

Each year St Michael, Betchworth produce an 8ft "knitted" Christmas tree together with local people for different charity projects.

This year the theme was *Teddies for Tragedies* and little bears were knitted for children who have suffered trauma of one kind or another.

Teddies for Tragedies began in 1991. The charity started after a washable knitted teddy was added to a consignment of medicines from Somerset going to a refugee camp in Sudan. On receipt of the teddies, the Doctor said: "For some children these teddies do more good than the medicines because they give them hope". The teddies go to refugee camps, orphanages and hospitals in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and South America, wherever a need for help is found.

Pam Armitage from St Michael said: "This is the sixth year we have produced a tree. This year we think that a lot of our teddies will find their way to the Ukraine. A huge thank you to all the amazing people from our lovely village and beyond who have spent all year knitting Teddies. They are all beautiful and I am sure will be much loved by the children that receive them."



A big thank you from HMP Wandsworth Chaplaincy



On Thursday 22 December a team of chaplaincy volunteers delivered a woolly hat to every prisoner in HMP Wandsworth as part of their Christmas appeal.

Wendy Stephens, Chaplain at HMP Wandsworth, reports back on the success of 'Hats for HMP' and tells how donations to *The Wandsworth Prison Welfare Trust* has made a difference to prisoners.

Wendy said: "We received over 1,500 hats for Christmas, with 600 more since then and they are still coming in. This will mean that we can continue to give out hats to prisoners arriving during the winter months. That afternoon, I watched from the office window to see the prisoners going out to the yard for exercise sporting their new hats and it was lovely to see. Many came up to me on the wing to thank the chaplaincy

team and I explained that the hats were donated by people from far and wide, including churches within the Diocese.

"Thank you to everyone who very kindly gave a donation to our new charity, *The Wandsworth Prison Welfare Trust* including members of staff at Trinity House – the Diocesan offices – who instead of sending Christmas cards to each other donated to the Trust. Staff members also wore Christmas hats and jumpers for their family day in the week leading up to Christmas. They raised over £500.

"Deaneries surrounding the prison donated gift bags for Christian prisoners which were distributed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and because we received more than needed it meant that afterwards we could give these out to prisoners coming in over the weeks.

"So, to everyone who has contributed in some way or other to bringing a little extra to the lives of those in prison last Christmas, a big thank you!"

If you would like to donate to the Wandsworth Prison Welfare Trust, please visit: <https://bit.ly/3ITpYcg>.

“Thank you to everyone who very kindly gave a donation to our new charity.”

“Deeply moving” Orthodox Christmas service

Celebrating Christmas with The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, Revd Len Abrams, Priest-in-Charge at Christ Church, South Nutfield writes:

On Saturday 7 January we did Christmas all over again at Christ Church, South Nutfield. The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church held a service to celebrate Christmas according to the Julian calendar (established 45BC) which has a 13-day difference to the Gregorian calendar (established 1582) which celebrates Christmas on 25 December.

The service was attended by about 45 adults and children, from the growing Ukrainian community of refugees and residents in Surrey and Kent. The service included a special gathering around the crib scene (pictured) for the children to hear again the story of Jesus' birth, explained to them in Ukrainian. Afterwards, we all gathered in the church hall to chat and enjoy refreshments, including traditional Ukrainian Christmas treats.

One worshipper said that she was not a refugee from the current Ukraine conflict

but had lived and worked in Reigate for many years. However, the nearest Ukrainian Orthodox church was too far to attend regularly so she was overjoyed at being able to celebrate a traditional Christmas in her local area. For those attending who were forced from their homes by the war, it was clear that the service was deeply moving and a great comfort. Ariana, age 15, said that the service reminded her very much of home.

It was back in July that the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church held the first of their regular monthly services at Christ Church, South Nutfield. Since then there have been regular services on the fourth Sunday of each month at 1pm, after our CofE morning worship.





IN FOCUS...
Diocese news

'Bags of Hope' for children in Nine Elms



Nine Elms Arts Ministry distributed over 600 Bags of Hope to children in local primary schools during the Christmas period. Each bag contained a Nativity story book, activity book, crafts, felt-tip pens, stickers and some sweet treats.

Many local developers, businesses and residents took part in this festive community project by donating biscuits, chocolates, sweet treats and other items – as well as helping to sort, pack and deliver the bags – with Riverside Radio giving over its space for storage and packing and promoting the campaign on all its shows.

The aim was to share some Christmas joy amidst the challenges of the cost-of-living crisis and create an opportunity for families to enjoy creative time together over the holidays as well as reflecting on the true story of Christmas.

During the pandemic, the Nine Elms Arts Ministry was a founding partner in the award winning Create and Learn Play Kits project, where 10,000 packs of creative resources and stationery were distributed to primary school children most in need across Wandsworth.

On the recent project, Pioneer Minister of the Arts in Nine Elms, Betsy Blatchley said: "It was amazing to see so many in the community – and particularly in local businesses – catching the vision for the 'Bags of Hope' – the generosity was overwhelming. In the same way that the Create & Learn Play Kits projects started with a tiny seed of an idea, so this project was all about the power of collaboration and community. Seeing the children's faces

“*It was amazing to see so many in the community – and particularly in local businesses – catching the vision for the 'Bags of Hope' – the generosity was overwhelming.***”**

when they received the bags definitely made all the hard work worthwhile."

Find out more about the Nine Elms Arts Ministry visit:
nineelmsartsministry.org/



Top: Primary school children receive their 'bags of hope'. Bottom: Volunteers sort and pack bags.

Plaque in honour of Folajimi Olubunmi-Adewole installed

On Sunday 22 January a plaque in honour of Folajimi Olubunmi-Adewole was installed by charity, *Living Bankside*, at Cathedral Square.

Folajimi Olubunmi-Adewole, a resident of Southwark, lived in Bermondsey. On 24 April 2021 he selflessly and bravely jumped from Cathedral Square into the River Thames to rescue a woman who had fallen from London Bridge. Tragically, he did not survive whilst attempting to save another. Folajimi supported local charities and was committed to helping others – his selfless courage, kindness and positivity, an inspiration to all.

The plaque, blessed by Bishop Christopher, was officially unveiled by the Deputy Mayor of Southwark, Cllr Michael Situ and among several dignitaries in attendance were The Lord Mayor, Nicholas Lyons, and Lady Mayoress, Felicity Lyons, of City of London and Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan.

Living Bankside has wider plans to dedicate Cathedral Square – which is north of Southwark Cathedral by the



© Living Bankside

River Thames – as a special place for peace and reflection.

In his opening remarks at the ceremony, Amir Eden, Executive Chairman of *Living Bankside* said: "I hope that we can all take inspiration from Jimi. He's a hero. This means so much to his family and friends and we are glad to have worked with them to recognise Jimi's selflessness. Jimi touched so many lives positively. He was an inspiration whilst alive and will continue to be an inspiration for generations to come. He was one of us, a South Londoner. We are all very proud of him, he represents the very best of us. Let us serve those in need in memory of him."

The Bishop of Croydon welcomes Church Commissioners' Research

The Bishop of Croydon, the Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett, welcomes the Church Commissioners' Research Into Historic Links To Transatlantic Chattel Slavery which was recently published.

Bishop Rosemarie, who is the Diocesan Lead on Racial Justice, said, "The Church Commissioners' 'Research Into Historic Links to Transatlantic Chattel Slavery' is deeply significant and I urge people to read it. It forms part of a renewed Church of England focus on Racial Justice and reconciliation, in line with the 'From Lament to Action' report recommendations, which include the

Racial Justice Commission's work on Contested Heritage. The investment being put into this work programme is a step in the right direction."

A predecessor fund of the Church Commissioners' endowment, Queen Anne's Bounty, had links with transatlantic chattel slavery. In response to the findings, the Church Commissioners' Board has committed itself to trying to address some of the past wrongs by investing in a better future. It will seek to do this through committing £100 million of funding, delivered over the next nine years commencing in 2023, to a programme of investment, research and engagement.

Blessing of the Thames

Each year the congregations from the church of St Magnus the Martyr on the north bank of the Thames and Southwark Cathedral on the south, meet in the middle of London Bridge for a ceremony that brings out the crowds. The purpose of the event is the annual Blessing of the River Thames. The river is a significant part of the life of the city and emblematic of London. Thousands of people travel it each day, and even more cross its

bridges. However, there is a dark side as well. The untold story of the river is that many hundreds of people, mostly young men, attempt to take their own life in its waters each year and too many of them succeed. So, whilst the event is one of joy, remembering the Baptism of Christ and his blessing of the water, there is the need to pray for all those for whom the river is life giving or life threatening.



DISCIPLESHIP & MINISTRY

Season of Lay Ministries update

Celebrating the work of lay people

The Season of Lay Ministries ended on Sunday 29 January and many parishes took the opportunity to celebrate the work of their lay people both within their church and in their community. Revd Canon Wendy Robins, Director of Discipleship, Lay Ministry and Continuing Ministerial Education writes:

There are so many opportunities for people to become involved in licensed, commissioned and affirmed ministries working with our children, young people and families or as lay pioneers in our communities and estates or working as pastoral assistants in our parishes, hospitals or prisons. In our parishes we also celebrated those who act as welcomers, servers, or offer hospitality, or arrange the flowers or so much more.

Through the season our parishes have heard their Readers, SPAs and other Lay Ministers talk about their work and share what it means to them to be involved. It has been wonderful to hear about their experiences and we hope that others will want to become involved too. If you would like to explore becoming more involved you can find out more about affirmed, commissioned and licensed ministries (details right).

If you are interested in being a Commissioned or Licensed Lay Pastoral Minister or Reader, please contact Sue Stewart in the Vocations Department



Jackie Pontin, Reader at St John, Shirley, and Deputy Diocesan Secretary, delivers her sermon during Epiphany.

(details below). Sue will support you with details on how to register for a Vocations Forum and the next two forums will take place on Saturday 4 February or 11 March 2023. Your incumbent will need to sign you up.

On 11 March we are holding a Lay Ministry Information Morning on Zoom. Please contact Helen Medland in the Discipleship, Lay Ministry and Continuing Ministerial Education Department (details below).

God wants us all to be working together to share God's love with those around us. We hope that the Season of Lay Ministries has encouraged you to think about what God might be calling you to become involved in.

Exploring your call



Find out more about Lay Ministries here: <https://bit.ly/3DexQuE>.

Email us:
layministry@southwark.anglican.org
sue.stewart@southwark.anglican.org
helen.medland@southwark.anglican.org



LET US PRAY...

FEBRUARY

The Very Revd Andrew Nunn

Dean of Southwark

(follow @deansouthwark to see the Dean's daily morning prayers on Twitter)

It was a lovely sight, looking out from the Deanery across the Thames and seeing the snow settling on the dome of St Paul's, covering the footpath outside the house, cloaking the garden in that soft, startling blanket. But, goodness, it was cold. Every cold snap this winter brings increase to our anxieties – will we be able to pay the bills? Should we turn the heating up, or just wrap ourselves in another blanket? And if I feel that anxiety, fortunate enough to be able to manage my energy bills, what must it be like for those who simply can't?

I remember growing up in Leicester. It was before most houses had central heating; mum got up early to make the fire and, when we got up, our school clothes were hanging on the clotheshorse in front of it to take the chill off them. Jack Frost would have been at play overnight decorating the insides of the bedroom windows with fern-like patterns. That was a long time ago; but it feels as though we are revisiting times past.

The Warm Spaces initiative is a great response to the current needs of many in our communities. It's simplicity also springs from our faith, from our experience of God. I'm not thinking here of that warm feeling inside that worshipping alongside my sisters and brothers can create, but something more fundamental than that.

Being in the warm embrace of God is something that scripture speaks to us of in a variety of ways. The prophet



Hosea draws such a tender picture of God; it warms my heart just reading it.

*I took them up in my arms...
I led them with cords of human kindness,
with bands of love.
I was to them like those who
lift infants to their cheeks.*

(Hosea 11.3-4)

Like Jesus cradled in the warm embrace of his loving mother, God cradles us close to the divine heart. We find a warm space with God and knowing that comfort we draw others in to find both physical and spiritual warmth, and from that warm space we can watch the snow gently fall.

**Embracing God,
may I feel the warmth
of your love
and draw others
close to you.
Amen.**

The Revd Canon Caroline Clarke is licensed as an Honorary Canon at Southwark Cathedral



The Revd Canon Caroline Clarke, Assistant Priest at Clapham, Holy Trinity, and Area Dean of North Lambeth was licensed by Bishop Christopher as Honorary Canon at Southwark Cathedral, Church of St Saviour and St Mary Overie on Sunday 22 January.

St Peter, Woodmansterne induction service

On Wednesday 11 January the Revd Alison Elson's Institution and Induction Service took place at St Peter, Woodmansterne



Left to right: Deputy Lieutenant Joojie Hamilton; The Venerable Moira Astin; The Revd Alison Elson; Bishop Rosemarie; Councillor Frank Kelly (The Mayor of Reigate and Banstead) and The Revd Martin Colton (Area Dean).

WHAT'S ON

Please send details of your next events for MARCH ONWARDS to Trinity House **BY MONDAY 20 FEBRUARY**

February

FEBRUARY – APRIL 2023

* **LOCAL** – The Leprosy Mission. Your church can hold a *Leprosy Sunday* or organise an event that will transform lives in Bangladesh. Details and resources: <https://bit.ly/3CFhafn>.

SATURDAY 11 FEBRUARY

* **CROYDON** – Jonathan Veira, fresh from his BBC award winning JV live shows. 7.30pm, St Mary Magdalene with St Martin Church, Canning Road, Croydon CRO 6QD. Tickets £10, from the parish office (Tue–Fri, 9am–12pm, phone 0208 656 3457) or online: <https://bit.ly/3CGtwUN>.

SUNDAY 12 FEBRUARY

* **LOCAL** – CTBI Racial Justice Sunday. 22 April 2023 marks the 30th anniversary of the racist killing of black teenager, Stephen Lawrence, in southeast London. Resources produced by CTBI will provide readers with opportunities to pray and take action on racial justice-related matters. More details and download resources: <https://bit.ly/3YqjJ5S>.

THURSDAY 16 FEBRUARY

♫ **WESTMINSTER** – Charity Concert in support of Christians in The Holy Land. Friends of the Holy Land presents the London Welsh Male Voice Choir supported by The Priests. 7:30pm, Westminster Cathedral, Victoria Street, London SW1P 1LT. Tickets £20–£60 from: <https://bit.ly/3CVPy5S>.

🎵 Croydon Minster Luchtime Recitals 2023

40 minutes of music on Fridays at 1.10pm. Bring a packed lunch.

17 February: Riccardo Pes, cello.
24 February: Yoon Seok Shin, piano.
3 March: World Day of Prayer (no recital).
10 March: Daphne Trio.
17 March: Antonio Morabito, piano.
24 March: Vanessa Hristova, viola & Lily Petrova, piano.

Croydon Minster, Church Street, Croydon CRO 1RN. Details: croydonminster.org. Free entry – donations to Minster funds.

MONDAY 20 FEBRUARY

🕊️ **ONLINE** – Church Urban Fund *Growing Good workshop*. Are you planning on running a Growing Good course? Join our online training session to help you prepare and get the most out of your course. Noon–1pm. Free. More details or to book: <https://bit.ly/3QxjTsf>.

TUESDAY 21 FEBRUARY

🕊️ **ONLINE** – Power the Fight, Music, Justice and Youth Work Training. Explore contemporary UK music culture and its intersections with social media, criminal justice and trauma-informed practice in youth work. 10am–12pm online. £86.83. More details: <https://bit.ly/3GStkzn>. For a CYP grant: <https://bit.ly/3W4WX9P>.

SATURDAY 25 FEBRUARY

* **GREENWICH** – Special service of Choral Evensong to mark the 300th anniversary of the death of Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723). The Chapel Choir will sing music by Purcell, Howells, and Parry. The preacher will be the Revd Prof William Whyte, Professor of Social and Architectural History at the University of Oxford. All welcome, 4pm at the Chapel of St Peter and St Paul, Old Royal Naval College, London SE10 9NN. Free.

MONDAY 27 FEBRUARY

🕊️ **ONLINE** – Church Army Discovery Event. Find out how you can train as a Church Army Evangelist. Join our Discovery evening and find out what we do, our vision and values, and about joining the Mission Community. 7–9.30pm. Free. Further details or to book a place: <https://bit.ly/31XBM6D>.

TUESDAY 28 FEBRUARY

🕊️ **ONLINE** – Southwark Diocese Evangelical Union host an evening with John Casson of L'Arche. L'Arche builds communities of shared lives between people with and without learning disabilities. 7.30–8.30pm Zoom. Free. For more details or to book: email Revd Jonathan Macy, Southwark Diocese Disability Adviser: jegmacy@gmail.com.

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

March

WEDNESDAY 1 MARCH

🕊️ **ONLINE** – Tackling serious youth violence. An introduction to *Operation Forgiveness*, an early-intervention initiative to address knife crime. The programme is delivered by churches to local schools. Led by Jason O'Shea, Southwark Diocese Serious Youth Violence Engagement Officer. 7.30–8.30pm, Zoom. Free. To book email: JPICAdmin@southwark.anglican.org

SATURDAY 7 MARCH

* **ADDISCOMBE** – Croydon Leaders' Event. Bishop Rosemarie and the CYP Team would like to invite all leaders from the Croydon Episcopal Area who support ministry with children and young people aged 8–19 to this event, to share stories, hopes, challenges and ideas and build connections with other leaders in this ministry and with the Bishop and Archdeacons. 10am–1pm at St Mildred, Addiscombe. Free. To book: bit.ly/3Ff3E2v.

SATURDAY 11 MARCH

* **MUSWELL HILL** – Equip Youth and Kids Leaders' Conference. Transform your youth and kids ministry with practical training while connecting and worshipping with hundreds of youth and kids ministry leaders from across the UK. 10am–4pm, St James Church, St James Lane, Muswell Hill, London N10 3DB. £18. More information: <https://bit.ly/3Xo1ZPS>. For a CYP grant visit: <https://bit.ly/3W4WX9P>.

SATURDAY 25 MARCH

♫ **CROYDON** – Croydon Bach Choir Spring Concert. Performance of Handel's dramatic oratorio "Samson". 7.30pm at St Matthew, Croydon CRO 5NQ. Tickets £16 (buy 3 get 4th free!) via <https://bit.ly/3XJY3sX>.

SATURDAY 25 MARCH

* **WOOLWICH** – Woolwich Youth Forum. Encourage your young people (aged 13+) to join the Bishop and Archdeacons of their Episcopal Area to have their say on topics important to them and build connections with other young people. In person, 1–3pm. Free. Details from Imani McEwen: imani.mcewen@southwark.

Getting started with Lent Call

To help you get started, we have put together some fundraising activities and ideas to support this year's Lent Call projects.

Schools and parishes, too, will have plenty of their own ideas, and we encourage you to share them on social media using the hashtag #LentCall2023.

Do something sporty... Do something creative...
Do something else... Do something at school...

Together we can inspire each other in our efforts to raise money for those people around us who are suffering with their mental health and well-being. Every pound you raise for the Lent Call will go towards helping projects working to improve the mental health and well-being of people in your local community.

For this year's projects, resources and how to donate visit: <https://bit.ly/40CqYkT>.

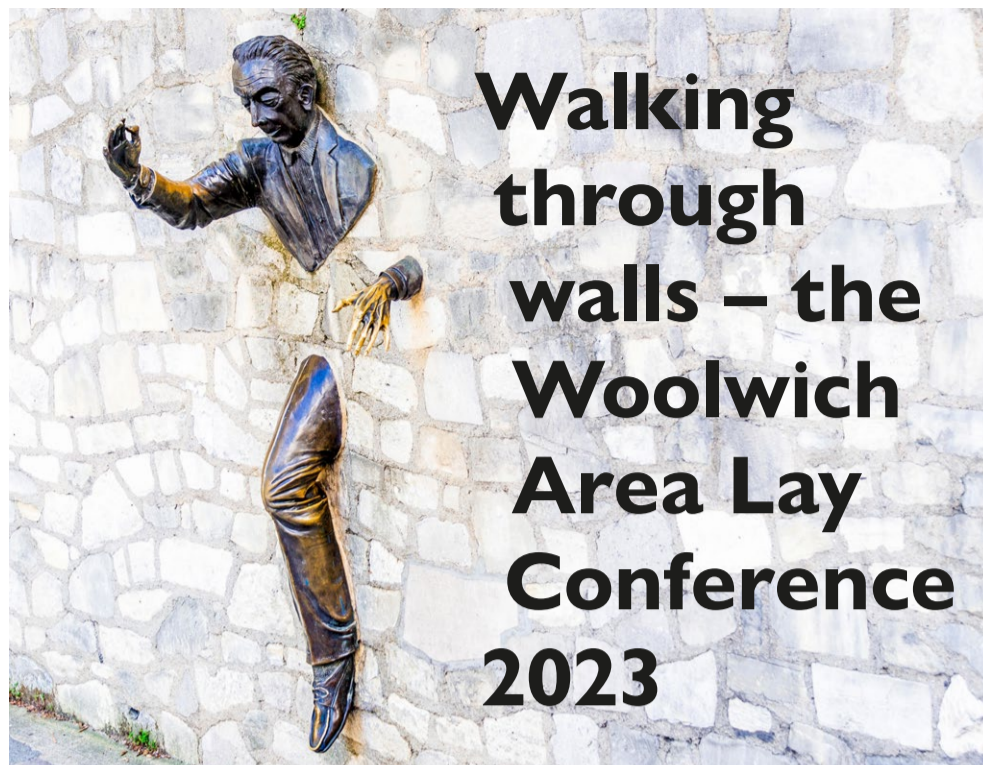


Are you well organised, pro-active and capable? Do you want to contribute to addressing inequalities in society?

Administrator required for a national Christian charity to help us deliver our learning and development programmes for church leaders.

Full details of the post, including an application form, can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3k96dwk>

Deadline for applications: 9:00am, Monday, 13 February 2023. Interviews: Monday, 20 February 2023, at: St Michael's House, Coventry Cathedral.



Walking through walls – the Woolwich Area Lay Conference 2023

The conference for Lay people will take place on Saturday 1 April and will focus on breaking down barriers in our churches. Jason Roach, Director of Ministries at London City Mission will open the event and speak about breaking down the barriers of race in our churches. Paul Brown, Pastor of City Hope Church, Bermondsey will close the conference speaking about making our churches places where people thrive no matter what class or background they come from.

Both take inspiration from Ephesians 2:14: Jesus is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.

The day will include worship, fellowship, lunch, a prayer space and marketplace and attendees will also be able to choose two 60-minute workshops.

In this month's Bridge we spoke to Jason and Paul during a quick-fire 60 second interview, we asked them both a few candid questions about life.

60 second interview with... Jason Roach

Where would we normally find you on a Sunday morning?

Often preaching at a church somewhere in London on behalf of London City Mission, before heading to the service at my own church which meets in the afternoon. It's on an estate in North Battersea, South-West London.

What barrier that you find in churches are you most determined to break down?

I'd love to pour out the gift of sight on us as believers, so that we see more of Jesus in each other. This I believe, would break all kinds of barriers down in our churches.

What is your favourite verse in the Bible?

Today it's Psalm 118:6 "The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"

Which man or woman is your hero?

My wife labours to love me and our four children daily with great grace. We sometimes look up to ideal versions of people as heroes rather than the reality. I see my wife up close every day. She is a true hero.

What's the best advice you have ever been given?

Put your trust in Jesus.

What single thing would make the world better?

More people trusting in Jesus

What makes you angry?

People referring to Africa as a country.

Where do you go to pray?

My bike.



Jason Roach

What's the best thing about South London?

Battersea Park

Tell us something kind that someone did for you.

Fed me and six others in addition to their 18 dependent children (mostly adopted because other family members had died) out of their poverty.

Which three Bible characters would you most like to meet?

Other than Jesus – Moses, Daniel and Peter.

When you were young, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I would be a Doctor.

If there was an hour extra in every day, what would you do with it?

Go rock climbing.

If you were on BBC Strictly Come Dancing, what dance would you do?

Street Dance.

60 seconds with... Paul Brown

Where would we normally find you on a Sunday morning?

At City Hope Church, in Bermondsey.

What barrier that you find in churches are you most determined to break down?

There has been a complete loss of the gospel story across much of the working class areas of our nation. I believe the often unseen barrier of class differences must come down. Only then will we effectively reach out to those who identify as working class, only then will we 're-evangelise' this nation.

What is your favourite verse in the Bible?

That's a difficult one! The passage that is often in my mind is the one Jesus turned to in Luke four – Isaiah 61:1.

"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners".

Which man or woman is your hero?

I could list many: William Booth and George Whitefield are up there for me but if I had to name just one it would be the northern Irish, footballing genius, George Best.

What's the best advice you have ever been given?

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

What single thing would make the world better?

Kindness

What makes you angry?

Bullying and injustice on all levels. Where the people in positions of power take advantage of the powerless.

Where do you go to pray?

I don't have a specific place, I'll pray anywhere! In my bedroom, in my office, walking down the street, I don't really mind where as long as I am praying.

What's the best thing about South London?

What I love about my part of south London is the sense of community. The fierce affinity people have with place. People sharing life together. The pubs. The boxing clubs. Millwall.

Tell us something kind that someone did for you.

I could tell you so many of acts of kindness that people have done for me and my family, from the provision of holidays, of money and of groceries when they were desperately needed. And money to buy a family car.

Which three Bible characters would you most like to meet?

Jonah as I'd like to hear what it was like inside that huge fish, Daniel to ask him about his life and of course how he felt in that lions' den and Mary, the mother of Jesus, imagine the insights and stories she would have.

When you were young, what did you want to be when you grew up?

An artist. When I was young, all I wanted to do was paint and draw.

If there was an hour extra in every day, what would you do with it?

I'd use those extra hours to enrol on a stand-up comedy course.

If you were on BBC Strictly Come Dancing, what dance would you do?

You will never get me on Strictly, Grandad dancing is not a pretty sight.



Paul Brown

More information



Bookings are now open for all lay people in the Woolwich Area to attend the conference. Tickets are free, and you can find out more and book at <https://bit.ly/3XKgUUL>.