



# The BRIDGE

Magazine of the Anglican Diocese of Southwark Vol.31 No.1

Christ  
Centred  
Outward  
Focused

SPRING 26

Truth-telling in  
sacred spaces  
*Pages 4-7*

Social change in  
stained glass  
*Pages 10-11*

Energy  
Footprint Tool  
*Page 20*

Cover: Project Phoenix, St Barnabas, Dulwich — page 13

# The BRIDGE

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**Next Issue:**

Summer, published in August.  
Material must be emailed to  
Vernia Mengot by **26 June**:  
bridge@southwark.anglican.org

All photographs submitted  
must have permission to use:  
forms for children (form 10) and  
vulnerable adults (form 11) are  
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Printed on FSC® (responsible  
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Attendants at the  
*Truth-telling* gathering  
(pages 4–7), wrote  
their single-word  
truths that they felt the  
Church should honour.



© 'Truth' pebbles, Vernia Mengot.

# CONTENT

## Features

- 4 Truth-telling in sacred spaces
- 14 Sowing Seeds for Children and Young People
- 16 Chaplaincy
- 22 Pilgrimage to Rome & Assisi
- 24 Mothers' Union
- 26 Going Deeper in Liturgy

## Diocese

- 8 The next Bishop of Southwark
- 9 General & Diocesan Synod
- 19 INEQE Safeguarding Audit
- 20 Energy Footprint Tool

## Parish

- 10 Work and worship: social change in stained glass
- 12 Volunteer appreciation
- 13 Project Phoenix (cover story)
- 28 News in brief

## Reflect & pray

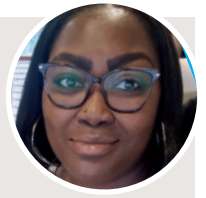
- 16 The Venerable Dr Geoff Dumbreck, Archdeacon of Reigate

## Schools

- 25 St John's, Angell Town – making a meaningful difference

## Look ahead

- 31 Events



## VIEW FROM...

**Welcome to the first edition of your new-look *Bridge* magazine. Having taken some time out to work behind-the-scenes on the redesign, I am pleased to finally be able to share this Spring edition with you.**

Spring is a time when we see nature in full bloom, a time for new beginnings and a fresh start and – much like the posies growing in my garden – these are our hopes for the *The Bridge*.

After reflecting during the Lenten season, travelling through the events of Holy Week to now celebrating Easter, I hope you will feel encouraged by the stories in this edition.

There is a range of special features, news and interviews in this first edition. We explore issues of honesty, justice and contested heritage at the recent diocesan *Truth-Telling Gathering*, hear tales of chaplaincy on the NHS frontline with Andy Dovey and learn how worshipping alongside children can open our eyes to God's world with Sharon Moughtin. We also explore social change through stained glass and go deeper in liturgy with Joshua Rey.

All this and more – alongside dates for your diary, fantastic news from our parishes and stories of the amazing volunteers who faithfully serve our churches.

Enjoy!

**Vernia Mengot**

*Editor & Communications Manager*

# TRUTH-TELLING IN



## Reflecting on history, mem

**On Saturday 7 February, our diocese hosted *Truth-Telling in Sacred Spaces* at Southwark Cathedral.**

Heritage – our buildings, memories, monuments and traditions – is often a battleground in which stories, interpretations and perspectives clash. This special gathering was an opportunity for clergy and lay leaders of Global Majority Heritage and allies within our diocese to reflect on how history, memory and contested heritage all shape our shared worship and church life.

Together, those present prayerfully explored themes of storytelling, healing and repair as part of a collective commitment to justice, reconciliation and mission.

In this edition, we hear from the Revd Ben Vertannes, Vicar at St John, Walworth who attended with a group from the parish. The church community at St John has already been engaging with Southwark’s Anti-Racism Charter (ARC) and Bible study resource, and its *Racial Justice and Inclusion* working group hopes to continue this journey by exploring the history that shapes their community.

**“In praying and listening together, we trust that God will shape us as a parish that can tell the truth about its past and live more faithfully into the future God is calling us towards.”**

# SACRED SPACES



## ory, and contested heritage

### Ben writes:

A group of us from St John's attended to learn more about the histories of South London, but also as a church beginning to wrestle with questions of belonging, change and how we tell our own story.

Our parish has seen extraordinary change, especially in the last decade. The northern part includes the site of the former Heygate Estate, where many members of our congregation once lived before new developments reshaped the area and dispersed long-standing communities. Many former residents were rehoused outside Walworth. Our church school, which stood next door for generations, closed in 2021.

Today, St John's congregation is culturally mixed with many members of West African heritage. The wider parish reflects a similarly varied picture: long-standing white working-class communities, families with roots in West Africa and the Caribbean, as well as the newer residents, including students and young professionals, many of whom stay in the area for a few years at most.

In this context, racial justice is not something we can discuss at a distance. Last Advent, with the support of Weisi Dennis (diocesan Racial Justice Development Officer), we worked through the ARC parish study resource together on Sundays after our main service. We were struck by



L-R: Bishop Rosemarie with keynote speaker Dr John Rogers.

Continued on page 6 

how quickly the conversations became personal and local. Questions about race opened up deeper conversations about regeneration, displacement, migration and who feels they belong, both within the church and across the parish.

Having spent Advent reflecting on our own story, the Cathedral gathering allowed us to step back and look outward. Members of our group heard details about Southwark's connections to global histories of enslavement that were new to them.

Yeanoh Jlu-Johnson reflected: "I learnt a lot about the history of the slave trade. I wasn't aware of the history behind the naming of Guy's Hospital and Thomas Guy's involvement in the transportation of enslaved Africans."

Lorna Lalor added: "There is so much more history to Southwark and its buildings, and links to slavery in Jamaica and the Caribbean, than I knew."

The day sent us back to Walworth asking questions about our own more recent inheritances: estate demolition; school closure; demographic change; migration; grief and resilience. How do we acknowledge loss without letting it harden into resentment? How do we cultivate anti-racism in ways that strengthen our common life across differences, including class? And who feels they belong, and where?

Rather than rushing into projects, we sensed a call to listen more deeply. As a parish, we have been praying about these questions, asking God to guide us into honesty, humility and hope.

As a next step, we are planning a Parish History Day on Saturday 6 June. Working with the Walworth Society, Southwark Archives, and artists now based in our former school building, we will invite congregation members and local residents



© Eve Milner.

to explore photographs and archives by decade, to share memories of St John's, its school and the surrounding streets, and to help create a timeline of moments that have shaped both church and neighbourhood life.

We hope the event will give longer-standing residents space to reflect, while also helping newer residents discover something of the community into which they have arrived. Part of the day will also look ahead. We are beginning to re-imagine our courtyard space outside church and plan to listen to local residents



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**Top:** Bishop Christopher and the Revd Sharon Hunt.

**Left:** Croydon Minster choir perform the world première, *Missa Brevis*, by Errollyn Wallen CBE, Master of the King's Music.

**Right:** Detail of the *Windrush* vestment.

about how it might become a greener, more open space - somewhere of peace, invitation and simple hospitality in the middle of a fast-changing neighbourhood. We are pleased to have recently been awarded a grant of £5,700 from the Southwark Neighbourhood Grants scheme for an initial phase of these outdoor works.

We do not yet know where this journey will lead. But in praying and listening together, we trust that God will shape us as a parish that can tell the truth about its past and live more faithfully into the future God is calling us towards.

**Read more about St John's:** [tinyurl.com/5n7p6fr7](https://tinyurl.com/5n7p6fr7)

### **World premiere of *Missa brevis***

A special choral eucharist held to close the day featured the world première of the new mass setting '*Missa brevis*' (or '*short Mass*') composed by Errollyn Wallen CBE, Master of the King's Music.

Sung for the first time by the Croydon Minster Choir, the composition marks a seminal contribution to worship within all of Southwark's parish choral traditions, and is an adaptive and accessible composition designed for everyday parish use.

Commissioned by Southwark Diocese, the mass setting is part of our continuing racial justice work, grounded in the principles of the Anti-Racism Charter. The Charter offers a strategy and resource for enhancing ethnic diversity and inclusion in the churches and communities of south London and east Surrey. This latest piece of work illustrates an intentional focus through liturgy, teaching, prayer, word and work, to take strategic and practical actions to combat racism and inequality.

Director of Music at Croydon Minster, Justin Miller said, "It is a work of striking originality, combining rhythmic and harmonic vitality with lyrical beauty. It will be a wonderful addition to the Church's repertoire – enriching worship for both choirs and congregations."

**Read more about the gathering:**  
[tinyurl.com/5svufnvv](https://tinyurl.com/5svufnvv)



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## THE NEXT BISHOP OF SOUTHWARK

*Our Diocesan Bishop – The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun – will be retiring this summer, after many years of faithful leadership in our diocese. We'll miss him greatly – and there'll be an opportunity to give thanks for his ministry in due course.*

When a diocesan bishop retires, moves, or dies, the bishop's 'see' (their seat, centred on the cathedral) becomes vacant, so the Church calls this a '**Vacancy in See**'. Bishop Christopher announced his retirement in Advent 2025 and his ministry with us as our diocesan bishop will come to an end in August 2026.

The *Vacancy in See* is the formal period when the diocese and national Church work together to discern and appoint the next diocesan bishop.

Every diocese has a *Vacancy in See Committee*, which 'wakes up' and starts meeting when there is – or will be – a vacancy in the diocesan bishop's post. Its job is to help the communities of the diocese reflect on its needs, prepare key documents and elect some of the people who will serve on the group that will appoint the next bishop.

In our diocese the *Vacancy in See Committee* has three strands of work: a prayer group to keep the whole process rooted in prayer; a communications group to help people know what's happening and consult with our parishes; and a *Statement of Needs* group to turn all of that into the formal profile for the role of our next Bishop..

Throughout March, a diocesan-wide consultation was held to seek the views of our congregations and communities about what the next Bishop of Southwark should be like – and what their priorities should be. Thank you so much to everyone who completed our survey. This process has now closed, and the diocesan



staff teams will analyse and review all of the feedback ahead of further consultations by the Archbishops' and Prime Minister's advisers. There will also be an open public meeting for anyone in our diocese to attend, and details of this will be circulated shortly.

The *Vacancy in See Committee* has met several times since February and will continue its work until June 2026, when it will prayerfully agree the profile and priorities for the next Bishop of Southwark.

To help us pray for our communities and for the person that God is calling to become our next Bishop of Southwark, a special vacancy prayer has been written – see the back page of this edition.

May God bless us and guide us as we seek the next Bishop of Southwark.

**For more information about the *Vacancy in See* process – including a parish resource toolkit and schools resources – visit: [southwark.anglican.org/newbishop](https://southwark.anglican.org/newbishop)**

# General Synod

*The General Synod – the national assembly of the Church of England that considers and approves legislation for the whole Church – gathered in London from 9 – 13 February 2026.*



© Geoff Crawford, Church of England

The Most Revd and Rt Hon Sarah Mullally, DBE, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, delivered her first presidential address at the meeting.

As Synod marked 40 years since the landmark *Faith in the City* report, the challenges facing 21st century Britain were among the key items discussed. Synod members debated the issues facing people living in poverty, the care system for older and disabled people and the nation's mental health.

They also considered what progress had been made in establishing independent oversight of Church safeguarding and discussed the closure of the *Living in Love and Faith* process – which explores the Church's approach to identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. A new *Clergy Conduct Measure* was approved, representing a major overhaul of the Church's discipline and complaints process for clergy.

Improvements to clergy pensions were also on the agenda and a revised Code of Practice for Bishops' Mission Orders was approved under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011.

Synod heard about progress on increasing the representation of people from working class backgrounds in both lay and ordained leadership roles, as well as final plans to increase youth representation at Synod.

A Sustainable Church Flowers motion from the Diocese of Worcester – encouraging churches and cathedrals to adopt environmentally responsible use of flowers – also received Synod's approval.

# Diocesan Synod: Living out God's vision

*On Saturday 14 March, Southwark Diocesan Synod Members gathered at St Peter's Church, Battersea.*

In his presidential address, Bishop Christopher said: "It is by God's mercy that we have been engaged in this ministry... My friends we are not those who have no hope, we proclaim the hope of Christ."

This was followed by an 'Instrument of Delegation', which delegates Bishop Christopher's diocesan responsibilities to The Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallet, Bishop of Croydon, when he retires this summer (see page 8).

The President of the Southwark Mothers' Union, Penny Lochhead, then gave a presentation celebrating 150 years of the work of the Mothers' Union (see page 24).

Members heard about the increasing financial challenges faced by both the diocese and wider Church, as well as plans to address these. They also received an update on how the Diocesan Investment Programme is working to grow mission in parishes across our communities.

Youth Apprentice Evan Cummins, shared his experience as a member of the first cohort of this new training scheme, which sees people training for a qualification in youth ministry while serving in a local parish.

"Safeguarding is not just everyone's business, it's everyday business and is the essence of good pastoral care" words said by Michael Browne, Diocesan Safeguarding Officer as he gave an update on safeguarding and INEQE audit. See page 19.

Bishop Rosemarie and Weisi Dennis offered an update on our diocesan work on racial justice, living out God's vision of unity, dignity and justice – five years on from the adoption of our diocesan Anti-Racism Charter.

The Revd Steven Taylor gave a presentation on The College of St Barnabas, Lingfield for retired clergy. There was a eucharist followed by lunch, and the day concluded with a General Synod update and a focus on the *Vacancy in See* consultation on the next Bishop of Southwark.



## WORK AND WORSHIP: SOCIAL CHANGE IN STAINED GLASS

**Digital Communications Manager, George Clarke writes:**

‘Workers are honoured in glass’ reads the *Daily Mirror* headline from Wednesday 19 April 1967, describing ten unique stained glass windows that had been installed in the nave of Christchurch, Blackfriars. The panels show local professions around the Southbank area including baking, brewing, cleaning and engineering as well as office workers, hop merchants, printers, lightermen and more. Designed by Frederick Cole around the theme ‘work and worship’, they also depict 1950s scenes of Bankside Power Station (now Tate Modern), a multi-story housing development, a London double-decker bus and the river Thames. There are also two traditional stained glass windows, the Sanctuary Windows, positioned by the altar which show Baptism and Holy Communion.

after construction. The second, built around 1730, was a large church which served up to 17,000 people living in the dense slum housing around Southbank. During WWII this church and much of the surrounding area were destroyed in heavy bombing, and in the parish gardens today you can see a concrete memorial on the ground marking the spot where the burning cross fell from the roof and scorched the grass.

After the war the parish was forever changed, and a smaller congregation of 130 people met in a section of the ruined church. The new church, then, would serve a new purpose and reflect the local expansion of factories, docks, warehouses and industry – it became the base for the South London Industrial Mission, meeting the needs of workers in the wider area. Inspired by ministry during the Blitz – where traditional social barriers were broken down as people of all classes sheltered underground and often prayed together during the bombing – this industrial mission church asked questions of the Christian view of work and what it means to be a Christian in the workplace.

Above: one of the window panes, believed to be the only stained glass church window featuring a London red bus.

The unique windows are better understood when you know the church’s history. The current church, finished in 1959, is the third to be built on the site. The original building dates back to 1671 but sank into the marshy ground 30 years

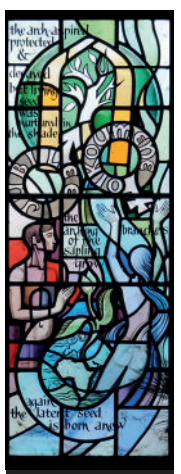
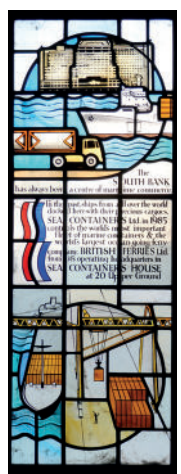
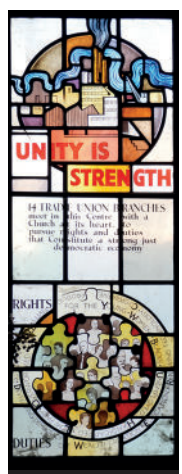
A visitor to this church could see themselves and their life in the stained glass windows – this is what Christian people looked like, and through this artwork not only were they made welcome, they were shown to be part of the fabric of the church itself. These designs reflect the history of the area’s social change, and while some of the professions and scenes in the windows are perhaps dated, the effect when you walk in is the same today. Ordinary life is celebrated all around – but as we look towards the altar, we see the two most important moments in Christian living elevated in the Sanctuary windows: baptism and Holy Communion.

The windows are utterly unique and invite us to reconsider faith in working life. Standing in the nave, you are reminded that faith is not just a Sunday pursuit – and God is no less interested in us when we are at work than when we are at worship. Looking at the artwork we can feel a kinship with Jesus who was himself a craftsman, and it is perhaps interesting that He chose as his instruments of Communion the products of human craft: bread and wine, and not the wheat and grape.

In 1984, additional panels designed by John Lawson were installed which further showcase local businesses like Sainsbury’s and Lloyds Bank, alongside the maritime industry, the trade union movement, Women’s University Settlement and scenes around Southwark and Christchurch. There is even a panel which shows a map and history of our diocese! The complimentary stained glass designs are very much worth visiting in person.



Top: Detail from an 1884–1984 panel, depicting the business James Adams & Son.  
 Middle: The Daily Mirror 1967 article.  
 Below: Several panels (from 1950s–1980s) depicting Southwark Diocese and various organisations or trades.





## Volunteer appreciation

**Laura Dreyfus, St John, Upper Norwood writes:**

*On 17 January St John, Upper Norwood, welcomed more than 100 volunteers to an evening to celebrate and say “Thank you” for their commitment and contribution to the mission of the church.*

St John’s heart is worship, hospitality and community outreach, accomplished through the hard work of its volunteers. The evening reflected, that together, they accomplish amazing things for the church and community.

During 2025, more than 106 volunteers supported the life and mission of St John, offering an astonishing 9,582 hours of time – the equivalent of 399 days of kindness freely given. Together, they served 8,705 meals, brewed 4,362 pots of coffee and shared 2,110 conversations at the Refugee Café.

Volunteers come from all walks of life and offer their time in different ways, whether weekly or occasionally, with each contribution forming part of a shared commitment to serve others. The numbers are inspiring, but the true impact of this is the thousands of smiles and lives quietly touched by the Christian church.

The evening also reflected something deeper about the heart of volunteering within the Church. Scripture consistently points to service as a response to God’s call, with Jesus himself saying, “I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22:27). By giving their time freely, volunteers consciously and subtly live out this calling through practical acts of kindness, generosity, and hospitality, supporting both the worshipping life of the church and its outreach into the wider community.

Those who attended expressed heartfelt appreciation for the event. “It was a truly enjoyable evening and well worth doing again” said one volunteer. Others spoke of feeling welcomed, valued and encouraged by the opportunity to gather together.

As the church looks ahead, this spirit of generosity continues to shape how St John, Upper Norwood, serves its neighbours and responds to the needs it encounters. The volunteer appreciation evening is a reminder that acts of service, offered freely and faithfully, remain central to the life of our Church.

# Project Phoenix

**Alison Venn, St Barnabas, Dulwich writes:**

*In December 1992, St Barnabas, Dulwich, a Victorian building, was consumed by fire. Four years later we moved into our new home. So, now we're 30 years old!*

It's a big birthday and we're relishing this joyful anniversary, welcoming back four of the visionaries whose creative skills gave us our 'new' building. You are invited to join us: look at their luminous contributions to the beautiful architecture and stained glass, listen to the music played on our fine organ and hear how our stunning church building rose from the ashes.

It's a story with many twists and turns, vividly told by writer Clare Stevens, author of *'Building for the Future'*. It took courage. We had no building, no sheet music, no hymnbooks, robes, altar frontals, crosses. But the church is the people. We came together the following night in a memorable service at Christ's Chapel, finding solace in shared pain and in the generosity of neighbouring churches. We borrowed chalices and plates, moved into the parish hall and resolved optimistically to 'keep calm and carry on'. Above the simple table which served as an altar we hung a blackened cross made by the 'Monday Men' from the charred timbers of the old church, wreathed in golden winter jasmine. A poignant symbol of hope and promise. *'I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, to give you a future and a hope'*.

We started boldly, heartened by the leadership of our Vicar, Revd Richard Cattley. It was a huge challenge for which no one had signed up, but what a privilege to work with our professional consultants.

**The new St Barnabas had to have the wow factor inside and for those walking past.**

It had to work for the 1990s as well as future generations to be a place for outreach and nurture, accessible, flexible, welcoming and sacred. In Larry Malcic from HOK, we found our architect – confident that we would have an inspirational building and a collaborative approach. So



The wow factor at St Barnabas. See also front cover.

© HOK

many people needed to feel reassured, so many permissions sought and stumbling blocks removed. The building which finally rose is significantly different from early design ideas with one exception: the glass spire, a majestic statement, a traditional symbol of divine presence in form, but contemporary in materials and technology.

This place of worship is a balance of structure and light, which floods the worship space with jewelled tones from the stained glass, a magnificent response from artist, Caroline Swash. The rich strips of colour beside the organ have the theme of an upward journey – a ladder to Heaven. The huge circle above it has a square within it, earthly within heavenly order. The colour and rhythm of glass and lead, unite in one magnificent gesture round the building resting in the intimacy of the chapel.

Director of Music, William McVicker worked with Kenneth Tickell & Co to design and build a striking organ, exploring how to balance the size and tone of the pipes to the acoustics of the building. The front pipes are copper, flamed to bring out the myriad of beautiful colours in harmony with the brickwork. Even the choir's new robes echoed the dramatic colours.

Thirty years on we're in good heart and voice and our spaces are packed with community and family activity. Step inside to *Project Phoenix* and see for yourself. There might even be cake.

**For more about events at St Barnabas visit:**  
[tinyurl.com/42zsmpt9](https://tinyurl.com/42zsmpt9)

# SOWING SEEDS OF FAITH WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

*Sowing Seeds first started as 'Diddy Disciples' around 16 years ago. It's a series of books and resources focused on Bible storytelling for children and young people – designed to be adaptable, flexible, formative and fun, with something for adults too. Our Editor, Vernia, interviewed theologian and Vicar at St Mary in the Wilderness, the Revd Dr Sharon Moughtin. She shared the story behind Sowing Seeds, its benefits to churches and schools and hopes for the future.*

## **What was your motivation behind starting Sowing Seeds?**

I was a professional Bible scholar and priest, then I had three children within fourteen months! They were wriggly, energetic, chatty – exactly what babies and toddlers should be – but impossible to manage in church, especially if I was leading the service or preaching. That's how *Sowing Seeds* started. It was less of a vision than a survival tactic!

*Sowing Seeds* is Bible storytelling and worship materials based on Common Worship, but with body language as our 'first shared language', meaning everyone can join in. The materials started with a focus on very young children but, as the children grew and matured, so did our ministry to include children up to nine to ten years old.

## **What are the benefits of Sowing Seeds for children and young people?**

I love receiving feedback from churches and schools using *Sowing Seeds*. Four of the things that stand out in the comments received are that *Sowing Seeds* is flexible, formative, fun, and for all people –

including adults. There's lots of freedom to adapt the material as you like and there's no one right way to use it. There's material for different age groups as well as different church traditions available.

It also has a strong focus on growing vocations. I taught Old Testament in a theological college before ordination so being alert to people's vocational journey – no matter what age – feels natural to me. I often say that we could spend the first 16 years of someone's time in church telling them to "Ssssssh! Be quiet!" and then the next 60 years saying, "Why can't I hear your voice? Why aren't you taking a lead? Why aren't you volunteering?" when we've basically encouraged them to behave in that way. What if we skip that first part and from the very beginning celebrate the 'wrigginess' and desire to be heard that's so natural to many children?

*Sowing Seeds* gives children opportunity not just to be included in worship, but also to contribute and lead, for instance handing resources out, choosing actions within the storytelling, leading prayers, and more. I'm particularly excited about the new *God's Calling* materials in book three, which enable groups to tell the Bible stories including Jonah and the whale, the call of Samuel, Isaiah in the Temple, Mary and Martha, and the call of Peter the fisherman.

## **What are your future hopes and plans?**

I'm so looking forward to supporting churches and schools in using the materials in their context. Training is available for those who would find it helpful and I'm also excited about the



The Revd Dr Sharon Moughtin at last year's Thy Kingdom Come service at Southwark Cathedral.

new things we will learn on this journey. There are already new stories and worship ideas emerging. Worshipping alongside children can open our eyes up to the world and to God in such unexpected and beautiful ways.

**Is there a particular bible verse or scripture that you think captures the essence of *Sowing Seeds*?**

In Deuteronomy 5.3-4, Moses speaks to the people gathered before him. He says: 'It was not with our ancestors that the Lord made this covenant, but with us, with all of us who are alive here today. The Lord spoke to you face to face out of the fire on the mountain.'

The point is clear. The people that Moses is talking to were spoken to directly by God. The unexpected thing is that a closer look reveals that most of the people Moses is talking to were not there at all. This is the next generation; it was their parents who were at the

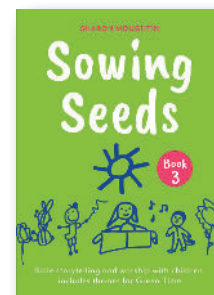
mountain. Moses hasn't made a mistake. He's making a vital point about storytelling in God's family. These stories are not just our ancestors' stories, which happened long ago to be passed on – they have become our story and our song.

**How can people get involved?**

Come and see! You can join us outdoors at St Mary in the Wilderness from 9.30am at All Hallows (SE1 0EP) for a communion service where adults and children worship together throughout using *Sowing Seeds* – or at St Anne and All Saints, South Lambeth from 11am for a communion service during which families go to the Lady Chapel for the readings, sermon, and intercessions to use *Sowing Seeds*, rejoining the adults at the Peace.

**For more information about *Sowing Seeds* visit: [sowingseeds-online.org](http://sowingseeds-online.org)**

“Worshipping alongside children can open our eyes up to the world and to God in such unexpected and beautiful ways.”





The Revd Andy Dovey,  
Lead Chaplain at Croydon  
University Hospital.

“People who wouldn’t ordinarily think about Christianity or faith – the unchurched – and in their most desolate, desperate and unfortunate times in hospitals, often, that’s where people find themselves.”

*After two decades in ministry and over 10 years’ service to the NHS, the Revd Andy Dovey, Lead Chaplain at Croydon University Hospital, has retired. In this interview Vernia talks to Andy about some highlights and challenges from his time in ministry, his dedicated service and the crucial role of hospital chaplains.*

**Congratulations on your retirement! What plans do you have for retired life?**

As well as being a Chaplain, I am also one of the external examiners on the Masters for Healthcare Chaplaincy at London Southbank University, so I will be continuing that and there is an opportunity to teach, which I already do at St Padarn’s Institute in Cardiff. We’ll be renovating the house and have already booked holidays to Norway and Marrakesh, and we want to do some travel in the Far East, when parts of the world settle down. I’m also chairing Croydon Camera Club – it’s my passion. I’ve only been there 18 months, and I got voted in as the chair last year.

**How did you mark your retirement with your colleagues at the Trust?**

There were two services, one with Bishop Christopher and the other with two Mayors of Croydon and three councillors, the Trust board and 84 volunteers – in some respects they are the ‘seekers’ and the ‘finders’ on the wards. It was a fantastic service. We also had the renewal of promises for our volunteers – my final service and goodbye, it was wonderful.

**Can you share some of your highlights from your many years in ministry?**

I think my biggest highlight was actually getting through recommendation for training, because I wasn’t recommended the first time. I did lots of study on my own, separately and was selected the second time. I am dyslexic – I left school at 15 and I couldn’t read and write. I spent 35 years in the oil and gas industry. During my ordination training, I had to do a BA and I was so proud that I got a 2:1 and I just couldn’t believe it, because theology is not about straightforward answers – it’s an exploration of your understanding and I think it makes it so much more difficult. When I was ordained, I had to do another BA, so by

the time I finished, I had two degrees. I was a volunteer at the hospital for 10 years and I hated it. I was also working at Wandsworth Prison as a Chaplain, but the Head Chaplain encouraged me to do more – I was in South Korea at the time working with the oil industry. My answer was “Yes but no”, but it was that gut feeling and I thought, well, let’s go for it.

**I was going to go on to ask you about any lows – there’s the COVID pandemic and then there was the tram crash in Croydon.**

I think that the tram crash was my next big thing because the Head of Chaplaincy was off that day when we had the call. We had hundreds of people flood the hospital and we had a makeshift emergency area set up. We were there for 18 hours that day. I worked with the police and doctors and headed up the team, and gradually we were really happy to say to people, “We found your relative, they are at St George’s”, or “They’ve gone home”, which was lovely. Ever since the crash we have a memorial service at New Addington. Ten years on, the Mayor invites me every year to lead the prayers for that service. That’s always stuck with me. The families know me and that was really powerful and made me realise how important chaplaincy was to the hospital because it wasn’t just about the relatives and the deceased, it was about the staff, too. They were absolutely traumatised because some of the things, some of the injuries they saw, it was horrific.

Croydon was one of the worst hit with COVID in the country and it literally shut us down within 24 hours. The wards were like a war zone. The corridors were empty. There was nobody around. It was a really strange environment to be in at that time.

**How would you summarise your ministry in three words?**

Compassionate, professional and dedicated.

**So, we’re entering spring – it is still a little bit cold outside – but obviously the evenings are lighter and soon it’ll feel like springtime. What’s your favourite season and do you have a specific time in the liturgical calendar that you really resonate with most?**

I like Christmas and Easter. You know, without Christmas – the ceremony of Christ’s birth and the glory and the promises that come with that, you wouldn’t have Easter. It’s a joyful interlude and a time to recap and think about what’s important in your life.

**Why do you think chaplaincy and spiritual care and having chaplains in hospitals is so important?**

That’s a really good question, actually, and it’s an important one. Over the years we’ve seen recruitment of lots of overseas nurses and daily prayers in the worship centre before they start work is absolutely paramount to lots of nurses. I think us being there to support staff in their spiritual and religious needs is really important. For example, during COVID doctors and nurses had to make really

difficult decisions, with limited resources. They might say, “How do we prioritise and who do we say ‘No’ to?” and in that, they have the guilt that they carry that they couldn’t care for everybody – and we would be there beside them. Chaplains also open the doors to a whole new group of worshippers.

People who wouldn’t ordinarily think about Christianity or faith – the unchurched – and in their most desolate, desperate and unfortunate times in hospitals, often, that’s where people find themselves.

**Are there any words of encouragement you would give to anyone thinking about a vocation to chaplaincy?**

I would say if you’re a person with lots of compassion and really want to walk the path that Christ walked in finding people and providing God’s grace to them on a difficult journey where they are lost, lonely, stressed and frightened – healthcare chaplaincy is for you.

**Do you have a favourite scripture and if so, why?**

Numbers chapter six: ‘*The Lord bless and keep you*’ because that’s something that we say to people to invite God’s grace to be with them and it’s not about them rejecting or accepting it. It’s my call from God to do that and leave it to God’s grace on how that impacts their life.



## The Venerable Dr Geoff Dumbreck

*Archdeacon of Reigate*

*Holy Week can feel like an emotional roller-coaster, as we follow Jesus on a journey that would change the course of history.*

On Palm Sunday, we shout 'Hosanna!' as we wave our palm crosses, commemorating Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. But this celebration is short lived; in the Gospel readings set for Monday to Wednesday, the mood turns darker. We hear how Jesus was anointed at Bethany with perfume, bought for the day of his burial. We hear him anticipate his death and predict his betrayal.

On Maundy Thursday, we celebrate the institution of Holy Communion, but we also ponder Jesus' commandment to 'love one another' – a love demonstrated when he washes the disciples' feet. We recall the darkness that enveloped him as he left the upper room, knowing that his arrest was imminent.

On Good Friday, we recall Jesus' crucifixion and death. Reflecting on Jesus' suffering, we call to mind our own pain and distress, and the many evils that afflict the world. We are invited to identify with Jesus in his anguish, and to lay our burdens at the foot of the cross.

But the desolation of Good Friday is not the end of the story. On Easter Sunday,

we rejoice once again, as we celebrate Jesus' resurrection. An instrument of execution – the Cross – is transformed into a symbol of hope. Death has been defeated. Christ has opened the gates to everlasting life. Alleluia!

### Let us pray

Lord Jesus, enliven our faith  
as we follow you through  
Holy Week.

May we rejoice that you have  
entered our lives.

May we know the love that  
led you to suffer and die for us.

And may we live lives filled  
with hope, as people of  
the resurrection.

Amen

For daily prayer and reflection you can  
access the Church of England's *Everyday  
Faith* page at: [tinyurl.com/3xbnknkh](https://tinyurl.com/3xbnknkh)

# A service of welcome

*On Sunday 11 January 2026, The Revd Dr Geoff Dumbreck was collated and installed as Archdeacon of Reigate during choral evensong at Southwark Cathedral.*

Geoff, formerly the Vicar of the South Croydon Benefice and Area Dean of Croydon Central, succeeded the Rt Revd Moira Astin, who was appointed as Bishop of Crediton in the Diocese of Exeter in July 2025. He served as Acting Archdeacon of Croydon in early 2025.

Following his installation at the Cathedral, a special service of welcome also took place at St John, Redhill, where many from across Reigate Archdeaconry joined to share warm wishes and welcome Geoff to his new role.



The Revd Dr Geoff Dumbreck with the Revd Joyce Forbes.

Read more about Geoff here:  
[tinyurl.com/bp92hpyr](https://tinyurl.com/bp92hpyr)

## INEQE Safeguarding Audit

*The Church of England has commissioned the INEQE Safeguarding Group to carry out an independent audit of all Church of England dioceses and Cathedrals.*

Southwark's audit has now started and we are being independently audited on five National Safeguarding Standards – a framework that is essential for the Church to understand the quality and impact of safeguarding activity.

Over the last few months, we have been asking parishes to share their contributions by completing a survey and we encourage you to share your views.

The deadline to complete the survey on the INEQE website is fast approaching and you have until Wednesday 8 April 2026 to submit your responses.

There are plenty of resources available on our website with information to support you in your parish with how to contribute to the audit.

For more information, please visit: [tinyurl.com/3v5jb2e9](https://tinyurl.com/3v5jb2e9)





## Has your church completed the Energy Footprint Tool this year?

*The Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) is open for churches to submit their 2025 energy data. We encourage each church to submit its entry before the deadline of 30 June 2026.*

The EFT is designed to give churches a clear and simple way to understand their annual energy use, by entering information from gas and electricity bills to calculate the energy footprint. This supports good stewardship, helps you make informed decisions about energy efficiency, and plays a part in caring for God's creation.

Completing the tool helps your church to:

- \* Understand its carbon footprint and track progress year by year.
- \* Identify ways to reduce energy costs and emissions.
- \* Improve eligibility for carbon reducing grants – EFT completion is an essential step for many grant applications, including *Give to Go Green*.
- \* Play a role in the diocesan and national picture – supporting the Church of

England's work to reduce emissions and protect those most affected by climate change.

The Rt Revd Dr Martin Gainsborough, Bishop of Kingston and lead Bishop for the environment, says:



'We are hugely grateful that 75% of churches took the time to complete the tool last year – this was a huge improvement from 58% the previous year. The increase has really helped our Net Zero team to be more strategic in planning and targeting resources, and we hope to see even more churches completing the tool this year.'

**Please check who in your church is completing the EFT this year.**

A walkthrough video is available on our EFT blog at: [tinyurl.com/k53357dk](https://tinyurl.com/k53357dk). Online training sessions will be held on 5 May, at 12:30–1:30pm and 6:30–7:30pm. To sign up, email [JPICadmin@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:JPICadmin@southwark.anglican.org)

# Exploring God-given gifts – Lay Ministry taster day

**Linda Long, Lay Ministries Champion, Lambeth South Deanery, writes:**

Along with over 60 others, I attended the Lay Ministry Taster Day at Trinity House on 31 January, and it was buzzing! It was really wonderful to see so many people from churches across the diocese and to appreciate the sheer breadth of work that the Church is involved in. Some folk were wanting to dive further into God's calling on their lives and explore ways to train for or grow and deliver their ministry better. This included children, families, schools and youth ministries, lay readerships, pastoral, estates and pioneer ministries. This list by no means covers it all, as the opportunities laid out were as broad and diverse as the range of God-given giftings in those present.

There really was something for everyone, with a number of breakout rooms where those attending could go to find out more about the different lay ministries – with plenty of practical ideas, demonstrations and talks too – and speak to a wide range of representatives in each field. It was also an opportunity for me, as a Deanery Lay Ministries Champion – passionate about the engagement of the whole body of Christ – to talk to others and to find out more about what is going on across the diocese. Did you know that evidence suggests that over 100,000 people each year, including children and young people, are



affected by Modern Day Slavery? One session, led by *Southwark Against Modern Slavery* – which aims to join churches and others across the diocese by raising awareness of the signs of Modern Slavery, violence affecting young people and domestic violence – explored the ways lay people contribute to social action and justice.

The day finished with a talk by Lucy Moore from the Growing Faith Foundation. Lucy spoke powerfully about her own calling and ministry, using the story of the disciples' encounter with Jesus on the road to Emmaus. We are all broken, scarred and yet we are all called by Jesus to continue his mission, through our shared service and ministry to others. So please do come to the next Lay Ministries Taster Day or join a taster session and find out more about what God might be calling you to over the coming season.

**The next taster session will take place on Wednesday 15 April at 7.30pm. Find out more and sign-up at : [tinyurl.com/2p9t58tu](https://tinyurl.com/2p9t58tu)**

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## Follow the call of Jesus

**Ruth Reid, Deanery Lay Chair writes:**

*Bermondsey and Rotherhithe Deanery marked the diocesan Celebration of Lay Ministries at a Candlemas service at St James Church. About 70 lay leaders and ministers, from across the seven parishes, joined together for a special time of thanksgiving and celebration.*

People from different parishes and ministries shared their stories of ministry, prompted by three topics – 'tell us something special about you', 'tell

us about your ministry in your church' and 'how can we support you to develop your ministry?'

During the service which followed, people were asked to stand when their particular ministry was mentioned and with over 12 different ministries in all, the congregation affirmed them with the following words, "We thank you for and affirm your service in Christ's Church in this deanery and ask for God's Spirit to fill you with grace, resilience and peace as you continue to follow the call of Jesus to this ministry."



Pilgrims approach the Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi.

© Wendy Robins.

## Along the pilgrim way

*In March, Bishop Christopher led an Ecumenical Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi with our brothers and sisters from the Archdiocese of Southwark.*

### **Bishop Christopher writes**

The pilgrims were led by Bishop Paul Hendricks who is an Auxiliary Bishop in the Archdiocese of Southwark, Canon Michael Branch the Dean of St George’s Cathedral, our own Dean of Southwark, and myself. I am glad that Bishop Rosemarie was among our happy band of pilgrims drawn from our two dioceses. In Rome we visited the late Pope Francis’ tomb in the basilica of St Mary Major. It is the simplest of all the papal tombs - just a plain stone laid flat, with ‘Franciscus’ inscribed on it. Above the tomb is a cross, depicting Christ the Good Shepherd. It was very moving to pray there and see this simple witness to a Christian life lived not for the love of power – which has no place whatsoever in the Kingdom of God - rather proclaiming the power of God’s love. In Assisi there was also utter simplicity as we joined the throng of pilgrims venerating the mortal remains of St Francis – Il Povarello – as we approach the 800th anniversary of his death.

Together we proclaimed that Christ has died, Christ is Risen, and Christ will come again. We experienced the reality of spiritual ecumenism – the joy of praying

and journeying together along the pilgrim way.

### **Bishop Rosemarie writes**

A highlight was preaching at the Church of San Damiano – where St Francis discerned his call and St Clare founded her community – on International Women’s Day. Standing in a place central to the history of female religious life made the moment especially meaningful.

### **Dean Michael writes**

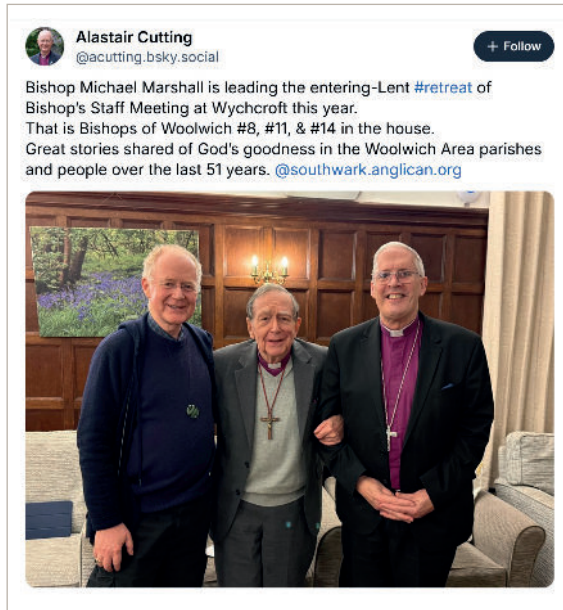
The sense of community we felt taught me that, while maintaining the integrity of our respective Anglican and Catholic beliefs, we must come together in a world experiencing many horrors.

In Rome we saw Pope Leo XIV, whose Latin title, Pontifex, carries the meaning of bridge-building between faiths. His Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, Cardinal Kurt Koch, put it well: In a world full of opposing currents, Christians are challenged to live “in one Spirit” despite diversity. “If Christianity itself is a divided heap, then it cannot offer society very much.” We ended the pilgrimage feeling enriched by being together, in the knowledge we share a common, living heritage.

**Read the full story in our blog:**  
[southwark.anglican.org/  
 ecumenicalpilgrimage](https://southwark.anglican.org/ecumenicalpilgrimage)


# A blessed Lent

Bishop Christopher and the diocese Senior Staff Team began the season of Lent with a retreat at Wychcroft Retreat and Resource Centre. Joining together in prayer and silence, the group were led by the Rt Revd Michael Marshall, former Bishop of Woolwich. It was a chance to pray for the whole diocese and wish all a blessed Lent.



**Alastair Cutting**  
@acutting.bsky.social

Bishop Michael Marshall is leading the entering-Lent #retreat of Bishop's Staff Meeting at Wychcroft this year. That is Bishops of Woolwich #8, #11, & #14 in the house. Great stories shared of God's goodness in the Woolwich Area parishes and people over the last 51 years. @southwark.anglican.org



# Thy Kingdom Come – praying for more people to come to know Jesus



*Thy Kingdom Come (TKC) is a global ecumenical prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray together for 11 days from Ascension Day to Pentecost (14–24 May 2026), with the intention that more people come to know Jesus.*

This year, *TKC* centres on the life-changing presence of God through His Holy Spirit. It is an invitation to rediscover the God who accompanies the rhythms of daily life – in moments of joy and celebration, in seasons of sorrow and uncertainty, and in all the quiet spaces in between. He is not distant or removed, but present and active, drawing near to His people; He longs to reveal Himself to those who do not yet know Him.

*TKC* encourages us all to journey through scripture, reflecting on stories that reveal God's transformative presence, and how His power and love change the lives of individuals and communities – as well as pray for five people we know to come to faith.

Every person, household and church is invited to get involved in ways that are meaningful and accessible to them. Whether you have joined *TKC* before, or are taking part for the first time, we warmly invite you to participate.

Resources for adults, families and children are available on the *TKC* website: [tinyurl.com/m4ye29zz](https://tinyurl.com/m4ye29zz)

## The Bishop's Lent Call: Helping children and young people to flourish

The Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call for 2026 asks you to pray for and raise money to support projects that focus on the work of schools that will help benefit children and young people to flourish here in our diocese and in our link dioceses in Zimbabwe and Jerusalem.

Thank you to all those who have already made generous donations towards the projects supported by this year's Lent Call. At the time of going to print around £5,000 has been raised. To find out more about the projects that we are supporting visit: [southwark.anglican.org/lentcall](https://southwark.anglican.org/lentcall)



DONATE HERE

# FAITH-FILLED GRANDPARENTING

L-R: Penny Lohead, MU Diocesan President, Ish Lennox, MU Member, Dorothy Lupinda, SAGE working group and MU member, Joanna Cox, Chair of SAGE, Hilary Richardson, MU Member and Comfort Fearon, MU Provincial president.



*An African proverb says, "An old person has eaten wisdom," and the diocesan group Southwark and Ageing (SAGE) wants to encourage all older people to find ways to share their wisdom and offer their experience.*

In partnership with SAGE, Southwark Mothers' Union facilitated a workshop for a group of grandparents on Valentine's Day to discover the joy of faith-filled grandparenting.

Grandparenting is just one of the ways in which many older people spend time offering their support and love to their families and make ensure that *"One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts"* (Psalm 145:4). They play a unique and powerful part in nurturing faith across generations. During the three workshops opportunities for craft, teaching and prayer, the group explored creative ways to spark meaningful conversations, strengthen spiritual identity, and grow in

confidence in sharing God's love within the family.

Adrian Greenwood led a session which gave space for men to reflect on their influence, share stories, and be encouraged in passing on values, wisdom, and faith. Hilary Richardson facilitated a session on exploring practical ways to share faith with grandchildren of all ages, followed by Ish Lennox, who led the group to reflect and hold space for those whose children or grandchildren no longer attend church.

Susan Gibbin, Southwark Mothers' Union Trustee, said, "We give thanks for the opportunity to find a safe space to share our feelings, bring them to God and think about how we can discover hopeful, faith-filled ways to keep loving and praying with and for our grandchildren."

**This year Mothers' Union celebrates 150 years of transforming lives through faith, community and action. Read more here: [mothersunion.org](https://mothersunion.org)**

# Making a meaningful difference



*The St John's Angell Town CE Primary School community recently came together in a truly heartwarming way to support those affected by Hurricane Melissa in Jamaica.*

Led by the School Council, the school held a special day where children arrived dressed in Jamaican flag colours. Families were invited to donate money, food, new clothes, sanitary items and toys, and the response was incredibly generous. It became a genuine whole school effort, with everyone contributing in their own way.

The money raised was sent directly to the Jamaican Hurricane Melissa Appeal, while all donated items were delivered to Brixton Soup Kitchen to be packaged and shipped to Jamaica. The children took great pride in knowing that their actions would make a meaningful difference to families in need.

A particularly special moment came when the children received a personal

letter from Jamaican Prime Minister, Andrew Holness, thanking them for their kindness and generosity. This recognition made them even more proud of what they had achieved and reinforced just how powerful their courageous advocacy can be.

Patrick Williams, Headteacher at the school said, "We are incredibly proud of our School Council and the compassion they have shown through this fundraising campaign. Their commitment to supporting communities affected by Hurricane Melissa demonstrates the strength of character we nurture at St John's. Receiving a formal letter of thanks from the Prime Minister of Jamaica was an unexpected honour, and it meant a great deal to our pupils. It affirmed for them that even small acts of kindness can have a meaningful global impact."

**A prayer for the people of Jamaica and the Caribbean: [tinyurl.com/42dryfkx](https://tinyurl.com/42dryfkx)**

Above: Pupils of St John's Angell Town Primary School display a personal letter from Jamaican Prime Minister, Andrew Holness, thanking them for their kindness and generosity.

# GOING DEEPER IN LITURGY

*The Revd Joshua Rey, Vicar at Holy Trinity Roehampton, is Chair of the Bishop's Advisory Group for Liturgy. We caught up with him to talk about Going Deeper in Liturgy (GDL) – a peer-to-peer initiative that aims to help parishes receive fresh insight and an opportunity to reflect on the worship they offer for their communities, week by week.*

Parishes are invited to welcome small teams of visitors to their main act of worship. The team is there to see what it feels like to join in with the main Sunday service for the first time, to reflect on how this worship looks to someone who is unfamiliar with it and gather examples of good practice for wider sharing.

Joshua says it's about, "helping parishes make the liturgy more missional. Parishes need to ask themselves, what is the experience for somebody who comes to church for the first time? How can they find this attractive? What can they hook on to, even if they don't know what it's all about?"

"You could go to a different church every Sunday for six years and never really have the same experience, but they'd all be really wonderful. And the aim of GDL is for services to be as wonderful as they can be, and as welcoming and open and missional as they can be," adds Joshua.

By participating in GDL, Joshua learnt that "It was just incredibly encouraging to know that things that we think are usual practice, like some of the things we do after the service, like offer refreshments, or how we welcome people... people found that welcoming and encouraging. It was

very affirming to have a sense that some of the things we do are really quite good."

When the visit finishes, the team give feedback to the parish, for example Joshua told us that on visits, "I didn't radically revise the service after a GDL visit, I just helped to tighten up a few things and help parishes reflect on their welcome and worship."

On plans for the future, Joshua says, "We just want to grow. It's a very simple model... there are two bits to it; there's parishes that want a visit and there's a team of individuals who can be members of visit teams and we need both of them to grow at about the same rate. Right now, there are a lot of parishes wanting visits and not enough visitors. So, we've just got to keep them growing at the same pace."

There are also plans for a good practice online 'library' and a celebration of GDL, bringing all the teams together at the end of the year. Joshua would like more people to be able to volunteer, he tells us: "Being a part of the visiting teams is an opportunity to experience a range of worship styles, liturgy and church tradition."

**The GDL team are looking for lay and ordained volunteers who are willing to spare two to three Sundays per year. Support and guidance will be provided. If you're interested in this opportunity, please contact [liturgical.resources@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:liturgical.resources@southwark.anglican.org) for more information. Visit: [tinyurl.com/2ftf8pnj](http://tinyurl.com/2ftf8pnj)**



“The aim of GDL is for services to be as wonderful, welcoming, open and missional as they can be.”

Above: The Revd Joshua Rey, standing beneath a newly cast bell for Holy Trinity, Roehampton.

## Local council elections



*Local elections will take place on Thursday 7 May 2026, with more than 4,850 council seats being contested across 134 councils.*

These elections shape decisions about housing, social care, transport, environmental action, youth services, and the wellbeing of our neighbours. Although churches are non-partisan, church involvement in elections matters because we are deeply connected to the hopes, fears, and needs of the people we serve and the wider community.

If your church is a polling station, ask yourself if you could set up a separate space to offer voters tea and biscuits? Are your noticeboards up to date? Is there information about Jesus if people are curious?

We've put together resources to help you prepare for elections: [southwark.anglican.org/elections](https://southwark.anglican.org/elections)

### Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson visit St Paul's Primary School in Walworth



L–R: The Venerable Jonathan Sedgwick, Chair of SDBE MAT; Angela Batchelor, Headteacher; Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson, Florence Eshalomi, MP for Vauxhall; Prime Minister Keir Starmer; and Mark Burnett, Chief Executive, Southwark Diocese Board of Education Multi-Academy Trust (SDBE MAT).

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Photo by Lauren Hurley, No 10 Downing Street.



## Bishop Cleophas coming to Catford

*Bishop Christopher has announced the Rt Revd Cleophas Lunga – currently Bishop of Matabeleland in Zimbabwe – as the next Vicar of St Laurence, Catford.*

Bishop Christopher said: “It will be a joy to welcome Bishop Cleophas and Soneni Lunga to the Diocese of Southwark and I am delighted that he has accepted my invitation... During his 15 years as Bishop of Matabeleland, Bishop Cleophas has forged close and mutually beneficial links with the Diocese of Southwark which has companion links with four of the five Anglican Dioceses in Zimbabwe.”

Cleophas who has been married to his wife Soneni for over three decades, said, “Soneni and I are overjoyed and indeed excited at the reality of joining you in participating in the mission of God in Catford.

“It gives us a sense of renewed purpose. The new season holds the promise of a positive relational culture that galvanises people of diverse backgrounds. This is a promise that ought to be shared as it is central on momentum building on the work which the St Laurence community is undertaking.”

Subject to the completion of the statutory requirements, Bishop Cleophas will be licensed as the new incumbent late Summer 2026.

**Read more about Bishop Cleophas:**  
[tinyurl.com/47p3a5fu](https://tinyurl.com/47p3a5fu)



## Heartfelt farewells

Bishop Christopher joined the congregation at Christ The King, Salfords on the eve of Candlemas to wish happy retirement and heartfelt farewells to The Revd Canon Jim Rosenthal as he retires from ministry to the Hospital of St Nicholas in Salisbury.



## Pancake bonanza

Shrove Tuesday came to the Windmill Benefice in style this year, as more than 60 locals gathered at the Smallfield Church Hall for its much-loved *Pancake Bonanza*. It was a celebration full of community spirit, with neighbours old and new coming together to enjoy delicious pancakes – sweet and savoury – with a range of toppings all devoured with great enthusiasm, followed by a quiz with some fiendishly tricky questions, making it a memorable evening.

# Shining with community spirit and hope

*On a recent visit Gemma Curran, Generous Giving & Funding Adviser, to All Saints, Benhilton as part of its stewardship campaign and the launch of the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), one thing shone unmistakably bright: this is a church alive with community spirit. Perched on its hill, All Saints is more than a landmark – it is, a beacon.*

The PGS is a convenient and secure way to support church giving, manage regular donations and reduce parish administration. It provides a simple but efficient way for you to give regular financial support to your church and enables more stable and predictable funding for mission and ministry in your parish.

The church's mission statement – "Setting the hearts of our community on fire with the love of Christ", is a lived reality, seen

in its warmth, fellowship and shared commitment to serving the wider community.

That spirit was evident in the recent repainting of the inside of the church. The huge task became a day of fellowship. Congregation members, rolled up their sleeves, picked up brushes, and transformed the space together. One member described "a joyful feeling of fellowship with everyone busy caring for their church". Not only did they brighten the church – they strengthened bonds as a community, reminding each other why they cared for their church so deeply.

The launch of the PGS marks an encouraging step in sustaining this mission, helping generosity to flourish for everyday ministry and the long-term future of the church. This is especially vital as

All Saints faces the significant challenge of raising £1 million to stabilise and secure its historic building. The scale of the task is serious, but the determination of the congregation is equally strong. They know this is not simply about preserving stonework but safeguarding a spiritual home that has served its community faithfully for over a century.

Through prayer, perseverance, and an outward looking vision, All Saints is committed to repairing its building and strengthening its role as a joyful, missional church. With the love of Christ at its heart, it strives to ensure every person feels welcomed.

A beacon on a hill indeed – shining today, and with the support of its community, for many years to come.

**More information: [gofund.me/18f0d2139](https://gofund.me/18f0d2139)**

**Clergy Support Trust**

## Majestic

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



**Clergy Support Trust Festival**  
[www.clergysupport.org.uk/the-bridge](http://www.clergysupport.org.uk/the-bridge)

**Tuesday 12th May, 5pm**  
**St Paul's Cathedral | Free**

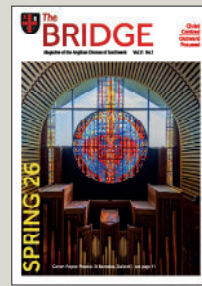
## Tell us what you think of our new *Bridge* magazine

We're so excited to finally print and distribute the first copy of *The Bridge* magazine. Changes to the format, style, design and frequency are all based on your previous feedback. Remember, this is your diocesan publication, and we want to make sure that your views continue to shape the future of *The Bridge*. Please let us know your thoughts by completing this short survey here: [tinyurl.com/2996staz](https://tinyurl.com/2996staz)

Edition	Copy deadline	In our parishes
Spring	27 February	7 April
Summer	26 June	3 August
Autumn	28 August	2 October
Winter	20 November	31 December

## The BRIDGE

To read this online or to access past issues, please scan the QR code.



Church **Mice...**  
**Wasps** in the West End,  
**Pigeons** over the Pulpit,  
**Ants** in the Aisles,  
**Squirrels** in the Sanctuary  
**Rats** in the Rectory,  
**Cockroaches** in the Crypt



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 be our problem

**0800 056 5477**  
**CLEANKILL.CO.UK**

The Kingston Episcopal Area Racial Justice Group presents *Stories of Identity and Inclusion*.

Sunday 19 April, 4–7pm

All Saints, Kingston, The Market Place KT1 1JP

Come, hear and share reflections on national identity in a spirit of openness and fellowship. Speakers will share their own stories, with a chance to respond in reflection, followed by worship at choral Evensong. Bishop Martin will preach.

Sign up here: [tinyurl.com/pykrh668](https://tinyurl.com/pykrh668)

*Rivers of Life, Rivers of Spirit*  
Friday 22 May 1–5pm

St John, Waterloo, London SE1 8TY

What we can do to heal, care for and protect our rivers? This mini-conference brings together church leaders, environmental activists and community practitioners to explore deep incarnation – the idea that divine spirit flows through all creation.

£10 plus booking fee via Eventbrite.

More details and booking: [tinyurl.com/dmasu6rb](https://tinyurl.com/dmasu6rb)

**Faith Talk: Modern Slavery**  
Wednesday 20 May

All Saints, Kingston

Speakers and panellists debate the Christian response in the 'public square' on today's big issues. Free. Tickets: [tinyurl.com/y2er72h6](https://tinyurl.com/y2er72h6)

**The Hill Singers Chamber Choir**

Choral concert

Saturday 20 June, 7.30pm

at St Matthew's Church, Durham Road, SW20 0DE

Details: [hillsingers.co.uk](https://hillsingers.co.uk)

**Leading Your Church into Growth**  
2 day conference

11–12 September

St John Walworth Centre, SE17 1NQ

£65 per person (subsidised by Southwark Diocese). A practical, hope filled two-day gathering for clergy and lay leaders who want to see real, sustainable growth in their parish.

Impact from last year – 89% left with an achievable plan for growth.

Details & registration: [tinyurl.com/56bwswp5](https://tinyurl.com/56bwswp5)


**Southwark Mission Conference 2026:**

*Signs of Hope*

Saturday 21 November

Our theme for our annual Mission conference is *Signs of Hope*. We will share our stories of growth and innovation in different contexts and traditions across the diocese. Come and be inspired and help your parish thrive.

Look out for details on our website events page.

**Diocesan job vacancies** 

We offer a variety of roles that support mission and ministry across our communities.

Current vacancies: [southwark.anglican.org/vacancies](https://southwark.anglican.org/vacancies)

**SOUTHWARK**  
◆ CATHEDRAL ◆

Scan the code to view events.



Email your major events to [bridge@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:bridge@southwark.anglican.org)



The Diocese of  
**Southwark**

# *Vacancy prayer*

*Brothers and sisters, pray for us, so that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified everywhere.*

2 Thessalonians 3.1

## **Let us pray!**

God of all times and places,  
send us a Bishop who will lead us  
faithfully through days of rejoicing  
and nights of challenge,  
with prayer and Scripture,  
with love and laughter,  
with bread and wine.

Send your Holy Spirit to guide those  
entrusted with this process.

May they recognise the person of your choice,  
with ears that are open and hearts that are wise.

Make us thankful for all that has gone before,  
ready and hopeful for all that lies ahead,  
led by a Bishop whose ministry is a blessing  
to everyone in Southwark Diocese,  
as we hear the good news of Jesus and  
delight in the love of God.

**Amen**

Christ  
Centred  
Outward  
Focused