

The BRIDGE

Newspaper of the Anglican Diocese of Southwark



Christ
Centred
Outward
Focused

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© Will Bacon Photography.

'The world is crying for peace'

Over the past few months, Southwark Cathedral hosted *Peace Doves*, an extraordinary installation created by internationally acclaimed sculptor, Peter Walker.

Peace Doves is a large-scale, mass participation artwork featuring thousands of paper doves carrying personal messages of peace, hope and love. The messages are written by visitors, school children, and community groups from all walks of life. Each represents a voice in a greater call

for peace, making this installation a truly unique experience.

Bathed in gentle, evocative lighting and at times accompanied by an original score by David Harper, the exhibit transformed the Cathedral into a sanctuary of quiet reflection giving visitors an opportunity to take a moment of stillness and appreciate the personal messages.

Revd Dr Mark Oakley, Dean of Southwark said, "The world is crying for peace. Peter Walker's beautiful installation gives voice to the thousands who have written their

hopes on the soaring doves. Spending time with the installation has a distilling effect as it asks us to look up, to look beyond ourselves and the self-destruction we can all be engaged in, and to instead seek harmony, beauty, and a shared future shaped by peaceful relationships and justice."

The Cathedral hosted several events under the doves including concerts and Prayer Labyrinth evenings – emphasising peace and reconciliation. Younger visitors to the Cathedral also took part in a peace and reconciliation trail and made their own peace dove puppets.

Peace Doves were on display from 31 July – 13 September 2025.

If you missed the installation at Southwark Cathedral, it can be seen at venues up and down the country at different times of the year. Find out here: tinyurl.com/hu3nuzv2

The Cathedral's next major installation, a light show presented by Luxmuralis, takes place from 24-29 November. More details can be found here: tinyurl.com/2uk6evyv

Read more stories at southwark.anglican.org/blog or find us on social media @SouthwarkCofE



A view from The BRIDGE



This month marks *Black History Month*, when as a nation we give time to mark and celebrate the contributions of Black Britons, who have been part of the story of the nation for centuries, from Roman times to the present day.

In the present clime where there is a deepening, and sadly often confusing and somewhat divisive national conversation about identity, and where the complex issues of national identity are being contested on our streets, this observance takes on a new layer of significance (see page 8). Black History Month provides us with an opportunity and a platform to celebrate our rich and complex heritage. Throughout the month, the nation, local communities and churches are encouraged to reflect upon the wonderful mosaic of people who make up our United Kingdom, offer a deeper understanding of Britain's past and tell a hopeful story of our diverse communities.

This focus on a uniquely British history challenges the notion that black people are newcomers or a separate group and highlights their integral role in shaping the nation's culture, history and ongoing story. It acknowledges that being black and British is not a simple or singular identity, but a tapestry woven from diverse cultures, histories, and experiences. Reclaiming these narratives involves challenging myths and stereotypes and highlighting

authentic histories. This includes learning the stories of everyday people who have shaped their communities, such as here in the Diocese of Southwark.

Our diocesan annual thanksgiving service for *Black History Month* on 5 October, will focus on identity and explore how ethnic, cultural and social heritage interacts with our God-given identities in Christ. The workshop which follows the service will offer the opportunity to reflect on contributions of the black community to society and the church in each of our episcopal areas. It will also share what we are actively doing across Southwark to live out our Anti-racism Charter, advocate for anti-racist policies, promote diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. We're seeking to encourage our parishes and schools to organise or take part in local community events, workplace initiatives or educational programmes. At every level, we are calling on the people of God, to see Christ in each other, and to live and work to build a kingdom of mercy, justice and peace, where all feel they belong.

Other articles in this month's *Bridge* include celebrating black leaders in education around World Teachers' Day (5 October), welcoming our new apprentices, and giving news of the upcoming JPIC conference: *Jubilee*, in November.

Bishop Rosemarie

NEWS IN BRIEF

Southwark Cathedral welcomes new Canon Succentor

The Revd Shannon Preston has joined Southwark Cathedral as Succentor, after five years as Chaplain to the Community of St Anselm – a community based at Lambeth Palace that aims to give young people a profound experience of prayer, service and living in community. While with the Community, she served as a supporting priest at All Saints' Kingston and in a rural Oxfordshire Benefice.



The Dean of Southwark, The Very Revd Dr Mark Oakley said, "We are delighted to welcome Shannon to our community. She brings great experience of both ministry with young people and supporting people in their spiritual journey. It will be wonderful to have her wisdom and presence amongst us." Originally from Minnesota in the US, Shannon said, "I am thrilled about starting as Succentor at Southwark Cathedral. I am particularly excited about contributing to the community of this active Cathedral. I look forward to learning and growing with you."

Bishop Martin blesses the Athelstan train



Honouring England's first king at Kingston station, the new King Athelstan train unveiled by podcaster and historian, Tom Holland was blessed by The Rt Revd Dr Martin Gainsborough, Bishop of Kingston.

The dedication at Kingston Railway Station took place on Thursday 4 September which coincided with the 1,100 year anniversary of King

Athelstan's coronation in Kingston Upon Thames. South Western Railway is the only train operator to serve the town, where Athelstan and six other Saxon kings were crowned. The name was unveiled on one SWR's Class 450 trains, flanked by Saxon warriors. The event on Platform 1 saw local children from the King Athelstan Primary School donning crowns as well as a choral performance by the Tiffin School. Sir Ed Davey, the MP for Kingston and Surbiton, and Cllr Noel Hadjimichael, the Mayor of Kingston, joined Holland with tributes on behalf of the town and borough. The blessing concluded the ceremony.

Read more about King Athelstan 1,100 anniversary celebrations on page 4.

The Surrey church painting hidden for hundreds of years

Last month, *The Chaldon Painting* inside St Peter and St Paul, Chaldon was featured in BBC Radio Surrey's *Secret Surrey* programme. The article explored the painting – one of Britain's most extraordinary and oldest surviving murals which dates back to 1170 AD.

Read the full article here: tinyurl.com/mvf22zr4

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Next Issue: Submission deadline and guidance

The SEPTEMBER edition is due to be published online and in print during the beginning of the month. Material for that edition must be with Vernia Mengot by email by **FRIDAY 10 OCTOBER**.

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

 NEWS FROM OUR DIOCESE

New Archdeacon of Reigate named

The Bishop of Southwark, The Rt Revd Christopher Chesson, has announced the appointment of The Revd Dr Geoff Dumbreck (pictured) as the next Archdeacon of Reigate.



primary school and as trustee of the South Croydon Day Centre.

Geoff said, “It’s a great privilege to have been appointed as the next Archdeacon of Reigate. I’m excited to get to know the parishes and communities of East Surrey and Sutton and look forward to working in partnership with them as we share the love of God, making Christ known in our towns and villages. I have loved my time in South Croydon and will miss the community here – but I’m delighted to be staying in the Croydon Episcopal Area, ministering alongside Bishop Rosemarie, Archdeacon Greg, and the rest of the Area team.”

Having commended Geoff’s deep commitment to parishes and working collaboratively with our clergy and lay people, The Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett, Bishop of Croydon said, “I’m delighted that he’ll be staying in the Croydon Episcopal Area and look forward to working with him.”

Geoff’s last Sunday in the Benefice will be 7 December and he is expected to take up his new role in early January 2026.

Read more about Geoff here: tinyurl.com/bp92hpyr

Geoff is currently Vicar of the South Croydon Benefice and Area Dean of Croydon Central. In early 2025, he served as Acting Archdeacon of Croydon and he succeeds former Archdeacon of Reigate, The Rt Revd Moira Astin, now Bishop of Crediton.

Bishop Christopher said, “Geoff is a person of great pastoral skill and tremendous theological insight – and I am delighted to make this appointment. The Reigate Archdeaconry is one of the most distinctive part of our diocese, with areas of rural beauty as well as urban and suburban communities. It’s a place of great contrasts, great beauty – and great opportunity for mission and ministry. I have no doubt that Geoff will be a blessing to us all in his new role.”

Geoff grew up in Surrey and studied theology at the University of Cambridge, where he studied for his PhD before training for ordained ministry at Ripon College Cuddesdon. He served his curacy at the Parish of the Ascension, Cambridge, before becoming Assistant Chaplain at Peterhouse, the oldest college in Cambridge University. As a parish priest, he has sought to build strong links with his local community, serving as governor of a

Helen Smee installed as director of music at Southwark Cathedral

On Sunday 14 September, Southwark Cathedral installed its new Director of Music, Helen Smee. She is the first woman to direct the music at a London cathedral in a permanent role.



L–R: The Very Revd Dr Mark Oakley, Dean of Southwark, Helen Smee, The Revd Canon Michael Rawson, Sub-Dean and Canon Pastor and The Revd Kathryn Fleming, Canon Precentor.

Helen, a passionate advocate and campaigner for the role of women and girls in church music, joins the Cathedral having been Director of Frideswide Voices, the girls’ choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford.

A pilgrimage of solidarity

During a week-long visit to Jerusalem The Bishop of Kingston, The Rt Revd Dr Martin Gainsborough, and The Revd Helen Burnett, Associate Vicar at St Peter and St Paul, Chaldon and a founding member of Christians for Palestine set off on a pilgrimage of solidarity with churches in the Holy Land.

Having arrived at St George’s College Jerusalem, the visit included meeting with

The Revd Fares Naoum at Emmanuel Church in Ramleh, the Dominus Flevit (the Lord Wept) Church, The Princess Basma Centre, Christ’s Anglican school in Nazareth and St Philip’s Nablus in the Occupied West Bank and Vicar, Fr Jamil. The trip concluded with a visit to YMCA and Palestine Institute of Biodiversity & Sustainability in Bethlehem.

Read more here: tinyurl.com/5cbcryuv
Please note that this article is behind a paywall.



Bishop Martin stands in solidarity with clergy colleagues and members of the congregation at Emmanuel Church.

Day retreat for Southwark Diocese

Enjoy a time of reflection and restoration in Kew Gardens and at St Anne’s Church, Kew on Wednesday 22 October with the Revd Canon Dr Giles Fraser and Bishop Martin.

The day will be open to all parishioners across the Southwark Diocese (up to a maximum of 60 participants). Find out more and book your place here: tinyurl.com/yc4dtsws

Reflect on God’s heart for justice, peace and integrity of creation

The Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Conference will take place on Saturday 8 November 2025 at St John, Waterloo.

The conference will focus on social justice and action across our diocese with speakers and a workshop to inspire, challenge and encourage. The conference entitled: ‘Jubilee’ will be an opportunity to meet others, network, share stories and ask questions, and come together to reflect on God’s heart for the justice, peace and integrity of creation. This year is the 40th anniversary of the Faith and City

report – a Church of England report made recommendations to the Church about its place and responsibilities in urban priority areas. We are glad to welcome Bishop Rob Wickham, CEO of Church Urban Fund, as one of our keynote speakers.

There will be a marketplace on the day where you can access resources and information that may be helpful and chance to sign up for further training opportunities.

All are welcome. The event is open to those in our diocese and beyond – feel free to bring a friend, come as a group,



bring young people from your parish or your ministry team. There is a registration fee of £15 per person. Lunch will be provided as part of the ticket price.

Register here: tinyurl.com/3czw3kds

NEWS FROM OUR PARISHES



Balham's big green fair

On Saturday 6 September, St Mary and St John the Divine, Balham, hosted its largest ever eco-themed summer fête: Big Green Fair as part of Wandsworth's 'Sustainable September.'

Thanks to the work of St Mary's Church volunteers and a Climate Action Microgrant from the local council, the church was able to collaborate with local climate-conscious groups to turn their traditional church fair green.

Visitors brought along broken electronics to be repaired with Restart Tooting and Balham, signed up for mending workshops with Remyakit, made bug-hotels with the Scrapstore and were treated to a spectacular performance by Green Opera in the Nave.

Climate Action Balham, CREW Energy, Beautify Balham and Wandsworth Air Quality joined the fun: giving talks, promoting their causes and networking

with each other. There was also a large bric-a-brac stall, second-hand books, home produce and even up-cycled clocks made from old LPs.

Joining together to raise funds for the church charity, every corner of the church building and garden was taken over with more than 150 people joining the afternoon's activities, with nearly 30 volunteers helping to run the event. One volunteer said, "It is just so good to see so many different people pulling together for a great community cause. Especially in these turbulent times."



Climate action information stand.

Saxon pomp and glory

All Saints, Kingston was alive with Saxon pomp and glory on Thursday 4 September, known as 'Athelstan Day' in honour of King Athelstan, the first king of England, who was crowned on the site exactly 1,100 years earlier.

A group of pilgrims had walked or cycled a distance of 130 miles, all the way from Malmesbury in North Wiltshire (Athelstan's burial place) to attend.

Athelstan scholars and local dignitaries unveiled a series of stunning contemporary embroideries, each representing one of the seven Saxon Kings crowned at the site. This was chosen for its strategic position on the border between the powerful kingdoms of Wessex and Mercia, sitting on the banks of the Thames, the 'motorway' of the era.

The embroideries were created by award winning textile artist Jacky Puzey and embellished by Beatrice Mayfield with some of the designs featuring the faces of All Saints congregation members.

Tom Holland, known to many from the hugely popular podcast *The Rest is History*, gave a talk titled: 'The Golden Generations: The Founding Family of England' from Alfred the Great to Athelstan. Author, David

Woodman signed copies of his new book; 'The First King of England'.

An uplifting festival service included coronation classics from the All Saints Kingston and Tiffin choirs, a re-enactment of the coronation with local school children and a special poem, recited in Old English and written for the event by Edward Chapman.

The celebrations culminated with the Festival Eucharist on Sunday, with Bishop Christopher preaching, blessing both the embroideries and then blessing the carnival procession.

Recordings of the services and talks and a series of pictures are available here: tinyurl.com/2mbds9yk



Bishop Christopher blesses the carnival procession.

Recycling project raises £20K for community charities

Judy Gowing, Gift Aid secretary at St Mary, Barnes writes:

Over the last 18 years, the annual second-hand bike sale has become something of an institution in Barnes. By the time the gates were opened this year, the queue stretched all the way from the Lych Gate of St Mary, Barnes to the Olympic Cinema towards Castlenau Community Centre.

Throughout the summer many pre-loved bikes of varying makes, models and ages were brought into St Mary's, and our wonderful team of mechanics worked

their fettling magic on them. During this once-a-year sale, the bikes are sold on to new homes – creating the perfect recycling project. The proceeds will go to Castelnau Community Centre, AgeUK Barnes Green and Barnes Common Ltd – as well as St Mary's.

Over 200 bikes were donated to us this year and we sold the vast majority within the first hour. It was fast and furious at times, and despite occasional outbursts of rain, it was a very happy community event raising an amazing £20,000 for charity.

Wardens walk the extra mile

The work of a churchwarden is never done but walking Hadrian's Way might seem to be, to some, taking the role to another level!

Nevertheless, much needed funds for the maintenance of Christ the King, Salfords and supporting Plan International UK – a charity helping children in war torn areas of the world, was just the inspiration needed for Hazel and Sian (pictured below) to go walking again.

Following their last mission to walk The Camino to Santiago in Spain, Hazel and Sian walked 84 miles from Segedunum at Wallsend on the river Tyne to Bowness in Solway. Stopping for the occasional detour to visit interesting sites such as Lanercost Priory.

They said, "We enjoyed stunning scenery, insights into the history of the wall, fresh air and time to think and reflect. We ended our journey attending a Celtic Service in Carlisle Cathedral. A fitting end to our challenge."



Prayers for peace

On International Day of Peace (21 September) and in response to Bishop Christopher's call for parishes to pray for peace in Gaza and the wider Middle East, the congregation at St Mary, Caterham offered silent prayers – hanging white doves to a tree inspired by the Peace Doves at the Cathedral. The music group also sang *Shalama* by Keith Duke.



“The legacy of Mary Sumner underpins the work we do”

On 9 August, Mothers’ Union (MU) representatives across our diocese celebrated Mary Sumner Day. Mary Sumner was the founder of the Mothers’ Union which started 149 years ago. Susan Gibbin, Trustee of Southwark MU writes:

Our mission within the Church is focused on Christian care for families. The legacy of Mary Sumner underpins the work we do in supporting families at home and overseas through, our prayer, our fundraising, and our campaigning. We also make sure to take time to celebrate Mary Sumner and her work each year through a variety of events across our diocese. This year members were welcomed at St Mary, Oxted (pictured below) for a service of

holy communion, prayer and worship. We also had the great privilege to recognise the 50 years’ service given by Valerie Adamson and Mary Cook, members of St Mary’s Church.

In the Kingston Area, four of the MU group at St Andrew, Ham completed a 10-mile sponsored walk around Richmond Park. They raised £1,575 for the 2025 MU Summer of Hope Appeal – ‘Stitching Hope into the Fabric of Lives in the Solomon Islands’ – and to support the domestic abuse refuge in Richmond as part of their MU RISE UP campaign. This would not have been possible without with generous donations from the congregations at St Andrew’s, as well as two other local churches in Ham – St Richard’s and St Peter’s.



Members of the St Andrew, Ham MU group completed a 10-mile sponsored walk around Richmond Park.



Raising money for the Melanesian Mission – a mission agency working with the Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACoM) in Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Vanuatu and the UK.

Ursula Hodges, Branch Leader said, “Before the walk I was in touch with the Melanesian Mission – who asked if we could raise £900 to pay for 10 sewing machines to be sent to the Solomon Islands. We have achieved that goal. The

rest of the money will be divided between the main Summer of Hope Appeal and paying for the ‘moving in’ packages and other resources needed by the women taking shelter in our local Richmond domestic abuse refuge”.

To find out more about the Mothers Union please contact Rosemary Walsh, secretary to Southwark’s MU: rosemary.walsh@southwark.anglican.org or visit: tinyurl.com/ejkch3wd

The power of music



Christopher Woodward, Director of Music at St Barnabas, Dulwich writes:

Taking 36 choristers of Dulwich Children’s Choir (Years 3–8) to Norwich Cathedral for five services was no small undertaking – especially with the Feast of St Thomas and a full procession on the Friday, and a great Cathedral Eucharist two days later. We were grateful for Norwich Cathedral’s warm welcome; opportunities for parish choirs to sing in such places stretch, inspire and engage young musicians who might not otherwise have the chance.

The standout was Sunday Eucharist: processing down the glorious nave alongside our Parish Choir – around 70 singers in total – was quite a sight, and an even better sound.

The children were energised by the space, the liturgy and the repertoire they rose to sing. Between services, activities on

the water and at height kept spirits up and friendships growing. We also offered a short concert in a local parish church, sharing music with a new community.

Feedback from our young people was telling: they relished the acoustic, the discipline of singing back-to-back offices, and the pride of representing our parish. Cathedral clergy were generous in their praise, noting that our chorister line was ‘as good as any they had heard.’ Thanks be to God.

What next? As our choir goes from strength to strength, we look forward to welcoming prospective choristers this term. As we prepare for Christmas, we hope to make a recording in the new calendar year to mark the church’s 30th anniversary of consecration. Whether in our corner of SE22 or the vast spaces of Norwich Cathedral, both remind us of the power of music and community – and why choirs like ours are needed.

100 years young

On 1 September, Elise Tanner, parishioner at the Church of St John the Baptist, Catford celebrated her 100th birthday.

Elise has lived in the Southend area of Catford most of her life, having moved from Stoke-On-Trent to be with her husband, who had been evacuated to the Midlands during the war. She still reads her daily Bible notes and attends services most Sundays and Wednesdays, with a weekly gift of a bag of sweets for the Rector.



Elsie Tanner and The Revd Peter Organ, Team Rector of the Catford (Southend) & Downham Team Ministry, who share a birthday in September.

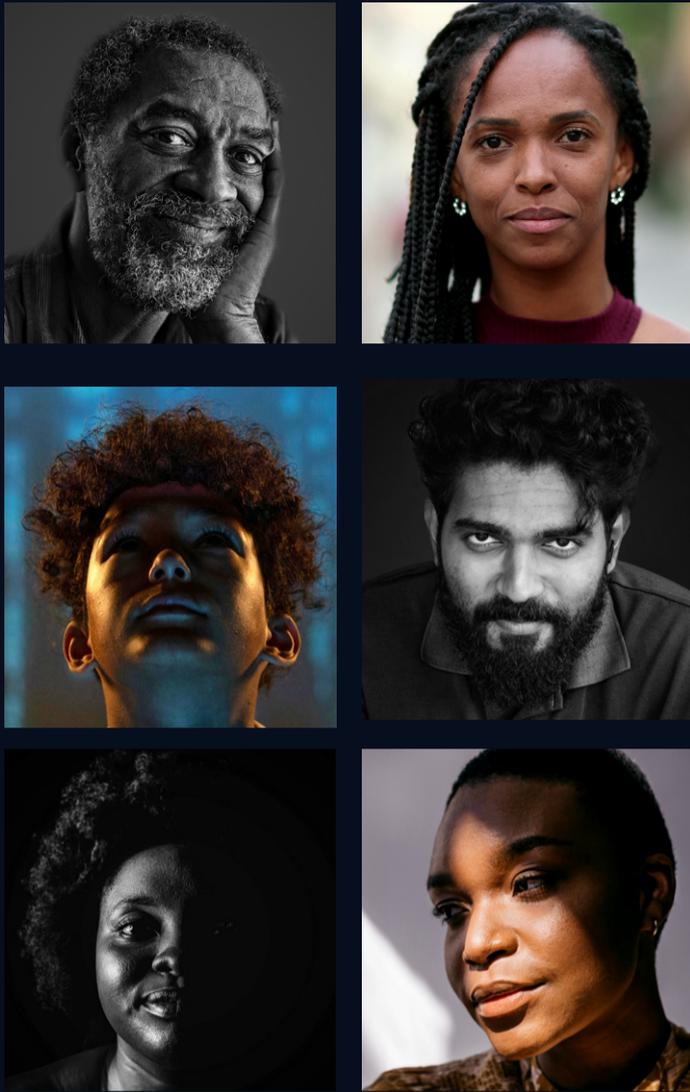
New parish priest for St Hilda’s

Last month, the parish of St Hilda’s with Saint Cyprian, Crofton Park, Lewisham welcomed Canon Julian Sampson as its new parish Priest.

Passionate about community engagement, Julian has served in the Diocese of Birmingham for the past 20 years, including Chaplain to HMP Birmingham, ministering in two inner-city parishes and leading on interfaith relations in the diocese. Julian was licensed on 23 September by Bishop Christopher and celebrated his first eucharist at St Hilda’s on Sunday 28 September.



Black History Month



“Who do you say that I am?”

Matthew 16:15

On Saturday 4 October, we hosted a special Black History Month (BHM) Service – a celebration of identity and belonging at Southwark Cathedral.

Drawing inspiration from Jesus’ words in Matthew’s Gospel, this year’s theme explores how cultural and social heritage interacts with our God-given identities. The service gave people an opportunity to look back at the significant contributions made by black people to the Church and society, while also looking forward to a future free of racism and inequality.

In partnership with the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education, there were contributions from young people from schools across the diocese through music and fellowship of being God’s multi-ethnic kingdom realised in one place.

The annual service was then followed by a workshop led by Southwark’s Area Racial Justice Leads.

World Teachers’

Exploring our BHM theme and the importance of quality education, for this World Teachers’ Day (5 October), we spoke to four black leaders in education from our South London schools, who have dedicated their careers to helping shape the lives of children and young people in our diocese – inspiring young minds and nurturing generations.

“Teaching has allowed me to walk in my purpose”

Christine Graham, Headteacher at St Mary’s Lewisham CE Primary School

From an early age, I felt a calling to teach. At just four years old, when my mother worked as a childminder, I would gather the children and play ‘school’ and I was always the teacher. Even in my later jobs, I was the one who explained, guided and taught others. Yet – despite this gift – I never imagined I would one day become a teacher, let alone a headteacher. Growing up, there were very few teachers who looked like me and that absence shaped my view of what was possible.

have gone on to university. Former pupils still send me messages, telling me that my example inspired them to step into leadership roles and teaching. That is the true power of education – it shapes not only what we know, but who we believe we can become.

As Proverbs 22:6 reminds us, “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” For me, teaching is about more than knowledge – it is about identity, belonging, and legacy.

“Education plays a key role in helping us to appreciate the breadth of influences that make us who we are”

Sola Ingram, Headteacher at St Mark’s CE Primary School, Lambeth

From a very young age, I have always had an interest in working with children and making a difference in their lives. My mum and sister ran nurseries and as a teenager I helped out during school holidays and in my spare time. Initially my interest was more towards social work but spending a year as a class Teaching Assistant prior to going to university inspired a love for primary education and the teaching profession. I have been involved in education for over 30 years and 25 of those years have been in Lambeth Education. I have been the headteacher of St Mark’s Primary School for the last 10 years.



It was only after my children were born that I realised how important it was for them to see black teachers and role models in their classrooms. I wanted them to experience a sense of belonging and pride in their identity, to know that they too could take up space in education and leadership. Leaving a secure job as a housing officer at Southwark Council to pursue teaching was daunting, especially as the youngest of seven siblings in my black Caribbean family – none of whom had gone to university. But I felt a deeper calling to answer.

Since then, teaching has allowed me to walk in my purpose. As a teacher and headteacher, it is a privilege to have become a role model for many colleagues and children, including my two boys Rohann and Warren, and nieces and nephews – eight of whom



Not only do I have a deep passion for working with children and young

Day: inspiring young minds

people, I feel that I have an ability to motivate, connect with and inspire them in their learning and personal development. Before I went into the teaching profession, I taught children in Sunday School within a church setting and this also contributed to the strong sense that I was being called by God to teach in schools.

Having a sense of belonging and identity is important for each one of us and for me it is multi-faceted and an enhancing experience rather than being limited to just one thing or another. Being a black, British man born in London, being of Nigerian heritage, raised near Birmingham in a mixed family, married to an Eritrean wife and being a born again Christian, provides me with a wide range of identities and influences that have shaped me, made me who I am and brings me into connection with others. I think education plays a key role in helping us to appreciate the breadth of influences that make us who we are. Whilst we can celebrate those things that are quite distinct to ourselves – education helps to broaden our minds to see and appreciate the commonalities that unite us, such as the appreciation of shared values and qualities like kindness, humour and faith.

To be honest, from previously being the organiser of many Black History Month events and activities in a number of the schools that I worked in, I no longer promote BHM within my school. Black histories are broad and diverse from each other, and I now don't feel comfortable about narrowing its focus to mere 'story telling', or 'drumming' of specific events in history, focusing on the same black icons during the month of October. Instead, I just ensure that black poets, artists, authors, historical figures and black presence in different historical periods appears within and across our curriculum. It remains a constant feature across the school and across the whole year. It just feels more natural to be focusing on the work of Stephen Wiltshire when Year 2 are looking at the London Skyline in Art or the life and achievements of Mae Jamison, during the Year 1 topic about space. Occasionally I get asked by a parent why we aren't celebrating Black History Month and I explain to them that at St Mark's, we celebrate Black History Year!

"Education is critical, it is around the willingness of people to look beyond colour and every school should have a teaching community that represents its school"

Renata Joseph, Headteacher at Saint Cecilia's CE School, Wandsworth

I always wanted to be a teacher. I am from a family of teachers; they are all based in Grenada. I was born in Wandsworth, and I grew up and was educated in Wandsworth. I worship at a Pentecostal church, but I have a deep care and affinity to the Anglican tradition as that's what I was brought up in. I am first generation immigrant to the UK; both my parents are from the Caribbean. I didn't see any black teachers when I was at school in London in the 80's and 90's. My parents were aspirational to me; they wanted me to go further – I have always had great encouragers at school and at home.



I entered teaching in the independent sector, and I was the first black teacher at that school. Education is critical, it is around the willingness of people to look beyond colour, and every school should have a teaching community that represents its school, as there are fewer opportunities for people from ethnic backgrounds, but the progress has been significant.

Since the murder of George Floyd, we reviewed our approach to addressing racial inequality at Saint Cecilia's and worked together to understand the challenges and issues that arose post 2020. We started running support and listening activities, such as 'lean and listen', and the response from pupils has been good. They feel able to talk about sensitive issues during PSHE lessons and during mentor times – having structured conversations in a way that is safe.

We aim to listen to and learn from the black community and supported by our Christian ethos, this can be done through the continuous development of the curriculum, challenging policy by opening up conversations at all levels of school leadership and governance about race, racism and racial stereotypes – exploring how Saint Cecilia's might address racial equality in practice. We

have one of the most diverse governing bodies in Wandsworth and we were intentional about the recruitment of people from GMH communities and women.

Black History Month has to evolve otherwise it just becomes an echo chamber. At Saint Cecilia's we'll be reading books by black authors and link this through to our focus to develop a curriculum that supports cultural inclusion and responds to the differences in pupils' lives.

We tell pupils 'you are known, you belong and you are loved' – embracing each child, made in the image of God, a reminder that they are valued regardless of their background.

"Every day is an opportunity to shape futures, challenge injustice, and create spaces where young people can flourish"

Dean Gordon, Executive Headteacher at the Phoenix Federation and Governor at Trinity CE School, Lewisham

I've spent my career working in education because I believe deeply in the transformative power of schools; not just as places of academic learning, but as spaces where young people discover who they are and what they can become. I'm passionate about equity, representation, and nurturing environments where every child, regardless of their starting point or personal situation, feels seen, valued, and inspired to thrive.



I was inspired to pursue a career in education by the teachers who saw potential in me before I saw it in myself. I'm Jamaican born and growing up in Jamaica, I attended Basic School – early childhood education from the age

of three. Ms Helen, my Basic School teacher was the first one that made me believe that I could be a teacher. Her belief and encouragement planted a seed that's grown into a lifelong commitment to education. Teaching, for me, is a calling – it's about service, legacy, and impact. Every day is an opportunity to shape futures, challenge injustice, and create spaces where young people can flourish. That's a privilege I never take for granted.

Education is central to identity, especially in the context of black history. It's through education that we reclaim narratives, challenge stereotypes and affirm the richness of our heritage. When young black students see themselves reflected in the curriculum, in leadership, and in the stories we tell, it fosters a deep sense of belonging. The question "Who do you say that I am?" invites us to reflect on how others see us and how the way we see ourselves impacts this. Education plays a vital role in shaping that self-perception and being in an executive leadership position empowers me to have a voice in policy changes.

Black history is not just a month. However, in October, with the rest of the country, we'll continue celebrating black history by centring voices, stories and achievements that too often go untold. That means assemblies, classroom discussions, creative projects and community events that honour the past while inspiring the future. At the Phoenix Federation – where I work, we will be having a celebration of different cultures where children and their parents will be showcasing important aspects of their culture through different media. Personally, I'll also be taking time to reflect, read and engage with the wider community – because black history is not just a month, it's a living, breathing part of who we are every day. I am black every day!

More information



To read more about this year's BHM service of Thanksgiving; and for more information about BHM services and events taking place across Southwark this month visit: southwark.anglican.org/black-history-month

You can also read a series of blog posts here: southwark.anglican.org/news-events/news/blogs



IN FOCUS... *Anti-racism*

Crucial to Christian faith

In 2021, we launched our Anti-Racism Charter (ARC) – a strategy to enhance ethnic diversity and inclusion across the Diocese of Southwark. The Charter was unanimously approved at Diocesan Synod in March 2021, following a discussion led by The Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett, Bishop of Croydon and Diocesan Lead on Social and Racial Justice, who was Archdeacon of Croydon at the time.

Encouraging Christians to stand against racism in all its forms, the aim of the ARC is to encourage parishes to actively counter, disrupt and oppose racial injustice. It focuses on three key principles and includes six diocesan commitments and a 12-point action plan for leadership and development.

The key principles of our ARC are:

- an explicit theological understanding that God's kingdom is multi-ethnic, and that it is through our baptismal covenant that we recognise and respect the dignity of every human being and our unity in Christ
- an intentional focus in our theological studies, liturgy, teaching, prayer, word and work to take strategic and practical actions to combat racism and inequality
- a clear strategy for increasing and sustaining diversity in our governance structures at diocesan and parish level so as to ensure representation and participation of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds at all levels of our organisation.

Implementing the Charter with intentionality requires dedicated resources and for this we are grateful to the Racial Justice Unit of the National Church for

funding our recruitment of a Racial Justice Development Officer and Racial

Justice Training & Resources Officer, who joined the team our diocese earlier this year. Both Officers support and enable our parishes practically to embed the ARC within deanery and parish structures and our diocesan family of schools through data-monitoring, training, programmes, networking and events.

To further support our parishes in exploring and implementing the key principles of the ARC and to encourage practical action, a parish study resource has been released by the team this year. It's a Bible study programme that consists of four parts, each of which has been contributed by a different person from our diocese – reflecting a diversity of experiences and perspectives. People can engage with these resources in their parishes and share their feedback. Email the team to request copies of the resource via racial.justice@southwark.anglican.org or submit your feedback here: tinyurl.com/bdenn8uh

Commenting on how the issue of anti-racism is so crucial to Christian faith, Bishop Rosemarie who is also joint Lead Bishop for Racial Justice for the Church of England said, "Anti-racism matters because we are all equal in the eyes of God. We want people to recognise that gospel imperative to work to ensure that all can be included in, that all are welcomed in and all people can find their place in our churches, in our communities and in our institutions and can know that not only are they welcomed, but that they can feel that they belong."

Read more about the ARC here: tinyurl.com/nhz9zj4p

Picturing changemakers

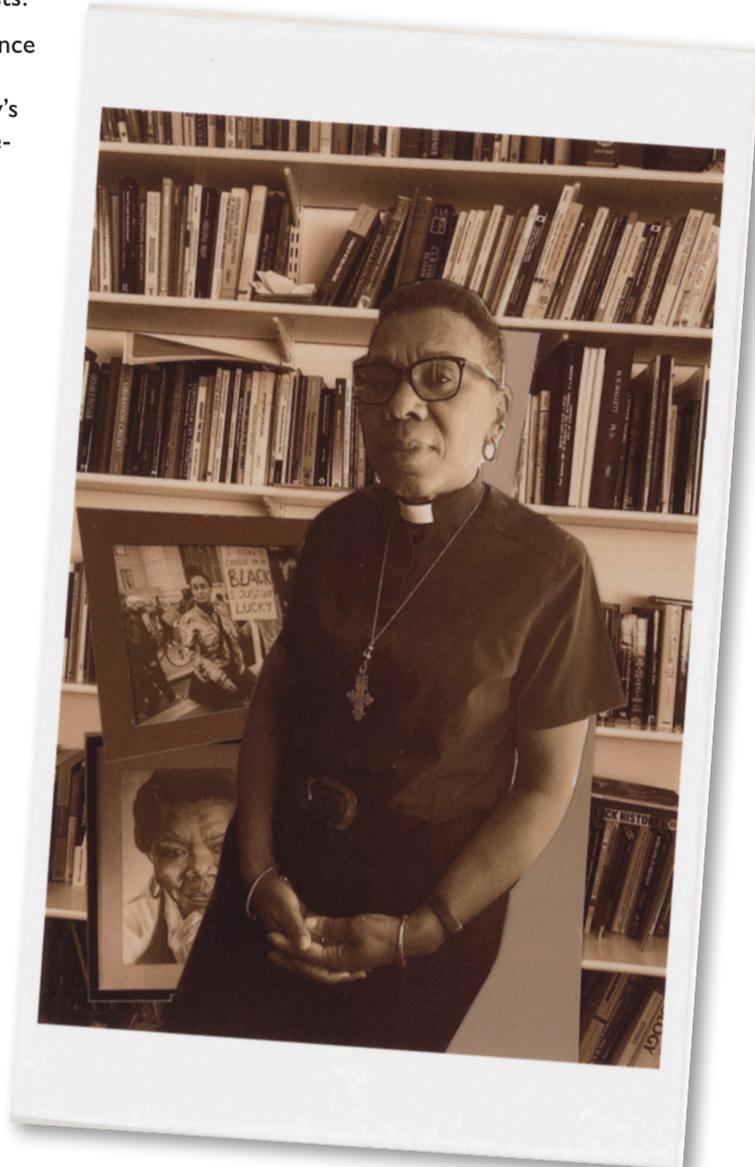
In partnership with the CHANEL Culture Fund, The National Portrait Gallery is showing a collection of contemporary commissioned art by eight artists who have created works highlighting untold narratives as part of the Artists First: Contemporary Perspectives on Portraiture programme.

The programme includes artists work through a variety of media including installation, textile, painting, collage, drawing and film and coincides with a series of special events with participating artists.

Exploring the importance of community and inspired by the Gallery's collection of cartes-de-visites, Panama-based artist Giana De Dier has created a series of small photomontage portraits for display alongside the historic cartes, highlighting contemporary changemakers from Britain's African and Caribbean diaspora who are making a difference within their communities today.

One of the works features Bishop Rosemarie (pictured) and is currently on display as part of the collection.

For more information about the display visit: tinyurl.com/csxt3a8c



© 2025, Giana De DierPhotography. **Rosemarie Mallett by Giana De Dier, Inkjet photomontage, 2025 Commissioned for Artists First with kind support from the CHANEL Culture Fund, 2025 NPG S37(12)**

Clergy lament co-opting of Cross at far right protests

In response to the Unite the Kingdom march on Saturday 13 September, our diocesan bishops strongly endorsed a statement issued by the Diocese of London about 'deep concerns' regarding the march.

They said, "We are deeply concerned that the march will cause fear among minority groups. We wish to reject intolerance and we stand in solidarity with all the people of South London and East Surrey celebrating the rich diversity of our communities as we continue to work for a truly united nation of all faiths and races."

You can read the full statement here: tinyurl.com/2kbd22nz

Since then, a group of Church of England bishops and senior clergy have joined leaders from across denominations in speaking out against any "co-opting or corrupting" of the Christian faith and symbols to exclude others.

The bishops of Winchester, Manchester, Southwark, Croydon, Bradford, Woolwich and Kingston were among the signatories to a joint letter from church leaders voicing concern at the use of Christian symbols, particularly the cross, at last week's 'Unite the Kingdom' rally.

They joined with senior leaders in the Methodist, Baptist and Pentecostal

churches; the Church of Scotland; the Salvation Army; the Catholic social action network Caritas and leaders of major cross-denominational groups such as the Evangelical Alliance and Churches Together in England in the letter which appears in the media today. Other signatories include the former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Williams, leaders of Christian charities such as the Bible Society, CARE and the Oasis trust, as well as prominent clergy and theologians.

The letter acknowledges that many of those involved in the rally felt a "deep sense of frustration at feeling unheard and forgotten in the democratic process" but that it also included "racist, anti-Muslim and far right elements".

"As Christians from different theological and political backgrounds, we stand together against the misuse of Christianity," they write.

"The cross is the ultimate sign of sacrifice for the other.

"Jesus calls us to love both our neighbours and our enemies and to welcome the stranger.

"Any co-opting or corrupting of the Christian faith to exclude others is unacceptable."

Read the full text of the letter here: tinyurl.com/4ad2aax



VOCATIONS

Children and youth apprentices visit Ridley Hall

As part of our vision to nurture ministry that is both Christ Centred and Outward Focused among the youngest in our communities, we recently appointed four new Children and Youth Apprentices: Evan, Helen, Matthew and Sheila.

Each apprentice will work in selected parishes as part of a three-year programme and to kick things off, the foursome recently visited Ridley Hall in Cambridge. They will work part-time in a parish, helping to grow and lead children's and youth ministry, while also dedicating one day a week to study online with Ridley Hall, as they work towards a Certificate in Higher Education in Theology, Mission, and Ministry.

During the visit, the group met their tutors who gave them an introduction to the course that they will study – exploring

how the programme will run online, how it connects with their practical ministry in parishes and the support they will receive along the way.

The apprentices also enjoyed a tour of the college, gaining a sense of its history and the many people who have studied there and gone on to serve Christ in different ways. This helped them to see that they are now part of something much bigger.

One of the apprentices Helen said, "Going to visit Ridley Hall was a really wonderful experience. It was so good to connect with Jess and Jo in person before the online course starts and also learn about what to expect in the coming months and years. It was really special to have time together as a group to get to know each other a little better as we embark on these next three years. We have already started sharing ideas and supporting each other and I look



L-R: Helen, Matthew, Rachel (Head of Strategic Programmes Implementation), Evan, Jess (course tutor), Wendy, Sheila, Louisa and Jo (course tutor).

forward to that continuing as we serve and grow the children and young people in our parishes."

There was also time to enjoy Cambridge and its sights, before the weekend closed with breakfast and a Eucharist in the college chapel led by the Programme Lead, The Revd Canon Wendy Robins.

"It was a moving moment as the apprentices laid their prayers and hopes at the altar, committing their ministry into God's hands" said, Louisa Ley, Apprentice Coordinator who joined the group during the visit.

The new programme has been made possible through national funding from the Church of England, and forms part of the wider Southwark Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP) – a long-term initiative designed to support mission, ministry, and growth across the diocese.

Southwark hopes to place more Children and Youth Apprentices in selected parishes. If you are interested in hosting an apprentice in our next cohort, please email: Louisa.ley@southwark.anglican.org



Apprentices: Helen, Matthew and Evan and Sheila.

Ambassadors for Christ

Last month, course participants and leaders from Horley Team Ministry and Holy Trinity, Redhill, came together at Timperley Messy Church to award certificates of credence to everyone who completed the first year of Magnify, the Estates Ministry Course.

Estates Lay Pioneers are people who come from estates, know the estates, and are able to engage in culturally relevant outreach in their home context.

The *Magnify* course is designed to 'reach the parts other courses do not reach.' No previous qualifications or educational achievements are necessary. It consists

of thirty two-hour sessions spread over a year with 6–8 participants and two facilitators meeting in hubs around our diocese. The course is split into three terms, covering who we are in Christ, sharing the faith and living as an ambassador for Christ.

The Revd Kerry Jane Evans, co-leader of the group said "We have had a year of growth, from tentative beginnings to a solid group of ambassadors for Christ. The benefits of *Magnify* will resonate through our communities for years to come. I can't wait to see what year two brings."

Those who have successfully completed year one of *Magnify* may now go on



Magnify course participants pictured with the certificates.

to year two, the next stage towards becoming a Commissioned Lay Estates Pioneers via the Estates Greenhouse Course.

You can find out more about *Magnify* here: tinyurl.com/ybaztyzz



Parish Development and Renewal: collaborative learning environment

In our series unpacking the priorities of the Southwark Vision, Jeremy Clark-King writes...

Overcoming transport chaos and torrential thunderstorms, teams from parishes across our diocese gathered on Thursday 11 September at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine for the first session of the Parish Development and Renewal Programme.

Rooted in both our diocesan vision: *Christ Centred, Outward Focused* – and our commitment to valuing parishes, this programme brings together lay and ordained leaders to explore models and processes that help to better understand the unique strengths and gifts within their parishes. Through this shared learning, leaders begin to discern God’s calling as they plan and implement ways to reach out to their local communities.

The Programme is part of our nine-year Diocesan Investment Programme, funded in partnership with the national Church. It is part of a plan to reach parishes of all styles, sizes, and locations to develop

and renew healthy, effective and faithful ministry and mission.

During this first weekend, the time we spent in plenary sessions, small group conversations, and during meals provided rich opportunities for connection around shared ideas – as well as an opportunity to explore our hopes about how God has been showing up in our lives and the Church in various places around our diocese. We ended the weekend expressing appreciation for the other participants. Valuing each other and expressing that is often overlooked and it was a powerful moment as people felt that they, and their contribution, had been ‘seen’.

We are looking for our second cohort of parishes to join us from 2026. Over three weekends a year (Thursday evening through to Saturday afternoon), for two years, participants will gain insights into themselves and their communities. Every gathering invites participants into a collaborative learning environment infused with curiosity, including the wisdom of all in attendance. Rather than assuming that leadership skills are for only those who embody specific roles, the programme



is built on a conviction that all people can become skilled practitioners of congregational development. Facilitation skills and tips for creating and maintaining healthy small groups are shared as all participants have a go at leading.

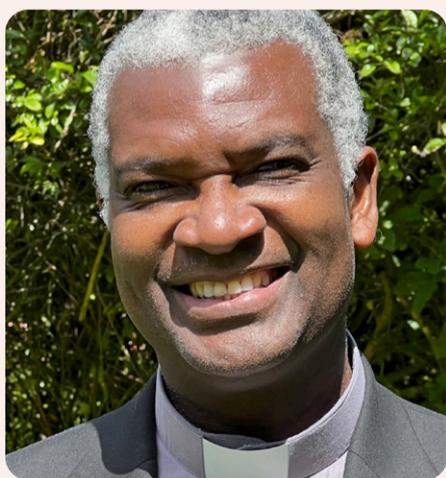
Jeremy Clark-King is Director of Ordinands for the Diocese of Southwark.

If you would like more information, please contact the Director of the Programme, Jeremy Clark-King by email at: Jeremy.clark-king@southwark.anglican.org

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



Shared learning: participants of the programme gather to explore models and process during a session with Jeremy (top) and The Revd Lotwina Farodoye (bottom).



LET US PRAY

The Venerable Dr Chigor Chike
Archdeacon of Lewisham & Greenwich

Black History Month

The month of October has become widely accepted as Black History Month. Many churches and other institutions will use this month to look back at history and try to highlight the contributions

that black people and people from Global Majority Heritage (GMH) communities have made over time.

What has made this necessary is the effort over centuries, sometimes concerted and at other times unconscious, to minimise the

contribution of black people in various areas of life. That effort in service of a false narrative, developed in the mid-1400s and sought to undermine the humanity of people of African origin.

But that tendency to say that a person or a people is less human than oneself is actually more common than one may think. It usually happens in the context of war and conflict. In more recent times we have seen it in the Nazi depiction of Jews and in the Rwandan conflict in the depiction of Tutsis. As we well know, both led to devastating consequences.

It might be that the awareness of our common humanity is such a strong barrier against harming each other, that those determined to harm others have to first remove it. I sometimes imagine something similar to an incident described in the Old Testament.

In *1 Kings 20*, the Prophet Micaiah described how a spirit seeking to stop the wicked king, Ahab, went to put lies on the lips of Ahab’s prophets. I can imagine lies being used to destroy human relationships in a similar way.

When he was asked how – aware of how effective our sense of our common humanity is in stopping us harming each other – he said he would put the lie on people’s lips that other people are less human than they are.

In our diocese, like many others across the country, we continue to work hard to repair the damage done by one such lie – the one that pertains to black communities.

Let us pray for the effort being made to tell the true story about Black people.

May we collectively do what we can to stop attempts to dehumanise any people and hold dear our God-given gift of being human together.

Amen.

WHAT'S ON



Please send details of your next events for OCTOBER ONWARDS to Trinity House **BY MONDAY 13 OCTOBER**

October

SATURDAY 11 OCTOBER

🎵 **NEW CROSS** – Lewisham Choral Society welcome the Frisian Chamber Orchestra to perform Puccini *Messa di Gloria* and Beethoven 5th Symphony. 7pm, Goldsmiths Great Hall, University of London SE14 6NW. Tickets £2–£18 at tinyurl.com/36jne39

SUNDAY 12 OCTOBER

* **LOCAL** – *Sight Loss Sunday* – a Torch Trust initiative, dedicated to enabling blind and partially sighted people thrive in Christian community. *Sight Loss Sunday* is a chance to celebrate blind and partially sighted people in our congregations and communities. Theme: 'Who does God call?'. Details & resources: tinyurl.com/286ydp5 or email slfc@torchtrust.org

12–18 OCTOBER

* **WANDSWORTH** – Prisons Week: *Fine Cell Work* is a charity that empowers prisoners to rebuild their lives. Visit an exhibition of quilts stitched in prison, at St Mary's (12–18). Join us on Thursday 16 for a talk by *Fine Cell Work's* Katy Emck QBE and learn about how prisoner lives have been transformed: 6–8pm, St Mary Magdalene Church, Wandsworth Common, 210 Trinity Road, SW17 7HP. info@smmwandsworth.org.uk

MONDAY 13 OCTOBER

* **SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL** – Community of the Cross of Nails: *What is Ours To Do? Reconciliation in everyday living*. 6.15–8pm. In partnership with St Ethelburga's Centre

for Reconciliation and Peace. Discover ways of developing reconciliation in your everyday lives. Free. Register: tinyurl.com/3w4hz6k5

SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER

* **SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL** – *Southwark Against Modern Slavery*. Hear experts share their knowledge and experience. Learn about modern day slavery and what we can do as individuals and churches. 10am–3.30pm, Southwark Cathedral, SE1 9DA. Free event, lunch included. Booking: tinyurl.com/6uzd63sf

TUESDAY 21 OCTOBER

🕊️ **ONLINE** – 6:30–8pm. Every Day Justice: Foundations for Social Action. Explore how justice can be a natural part of our everyday discipleship and be outward looking to the needs of our local communities. Free. Register: tinyurl.com/yhck4stz

🎵 Croydon Minster

40 minutes of music – lunchtime recitals, Fridays 1.10pm

- 10 Oct Croydon High School
- 17 Oct William Bracken, piano
- 24 Oct Xiaqiangege Liu & Andy Deng, piano duo; Kiana Umali Garvey, violin
- 31 Oct Sophia Kannathasan, violin
- 7 Nov Margalida Moll Salord, piano
- 14 Nov Amelia Qian, piano
- 21 Nov Pavlos Triantaris, organ
- 28 Nov Anglo American Duo
- 5 Dec Laine Theatre Arts Choir

Free but donations gratefully received. Details: croydonminster.org

JUBILEE: JUSTICE PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION CONFERENCE



SATURDAY 8TH NOVEMBER 2025

ST JOHN'S CHURCH, WATERLOO

Join us for a day focused on social action and social justice, with speakers and workshops to inspire, challenge and encourage. We will be coming together to reflect on God's heart for justice, peace and integrity of creation.

Register: tinyurl.com/4ccs4twp

Southwark Ecumenical Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi: 2–9 March 2026

This Ecumenical Pilgrimage for the Diocese of Southwark and the Archdiocese of Southwark will be led by The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark, and Bishop Paul Hendricks, Auxiliary Bishop for the Kent Area of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark.



Tour includes four nights in Rome, three nights in Assisi and return flights from a London Airport to Rome.

Costs, details and booking are here: tinyurl.com/3x99cuxy

November

SATURDAY 8 NOVEMBER

* **WATERLOO** – The Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Team will be hosting the JPIC Conference: *Jubilee* at St John's Church Waterloo. See above details to register.

SATURDAY 8 NOVEMBER

🎵 **ADDISCOMBE** – Croydon Philharmonic Choir perform 'Magnificent Mozart' – Requiem, Regina Coeli, Laudate Dominum, Ave Verum, plus Ravel string quartet. 7.30pm at St Mildred, Addiscombe, Bingham Road CR0 7ED. Tickets: £5–£20 at tinyurl.com/mr343yv6 or on the door.

SATURDAY 22 NOVEMBER

* **SOUTHFIELDS** – Every Day Justice: Foundations for Social Action. Explore how justice can be a natural part of our everyday discipleship and be outward looking to the needs of our local communities. 10am–1pm at St Barnabas, Southfields, SW18 5EP. Free. Register: tinyurl.com/yhck4stz

Job vacancies



Our diocese offers a variety of roles that support our mission and ministry. Current vacancies: southwark.angican.org/vacancies

TUESDAYS 11, 18 & 25 NOVEMBER

🕊️ **ONLINE** – Diocese of Southwark carbon literacy training: become 'Certified Carbon Literate'. Across three 2-hour evening sessions we'll explore the theology of creation care, the science of climate change, and what carbon footprints mean for us as individuals and the church. Free. Register your interest: tinyurl.com/3j7va28e



This newspaper is printed with premier paper and the diocese is part of the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and a Carbon Capture customer. This means that we are part of the Woodland Trust's Woodland Carbon scheme, a scheme that aims to mitigate the CO2 emissions generated by the production, storage and distribution of the paper purchased. For every pack of the paper sold, 5p of the wholesale price goes directly to the Trust. Of this, 2p goes towards Woodland Carbon and 3p to their other work, such as the protection and restoration of ancient woodland.

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



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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



IN FOCUS... Prisons Week

God's word is not chained

Prisons Week runs from 12–18 October 2025. It's a week when the Christian community, through individuals and churches are encouraged to pray for prisoners and their families, the victims of crime and their communities, those working or volunteering in the criminal justice system, including prison chaplaincies and the many organisations who are involved in caring for those affected by crime both inside and outside of our prisons.

Wendy Stephens, Prison Chaplain writes:

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Prisons Week and the focus is on the words 'God's Word is not Chained' from 2 Timothy 2.9, the reading for Sunday 12 October, Prison Sunday. Many things in life can bind us: fear, anger, abuse, rejection or shame. This is as true for those held in prison as those who are not and unless that bondage is addressed the consequences of this can be very dark.

Hopelessness and helplessness can overwhelm, destructive behaviour continues unchecked becoming an imprisonment of body and soul.



"As prison chaplains we have a duty to help ensure those prisoners who might feel hopeless and helpless find a way out of the bondage that keeps them chained to a life in prison!"

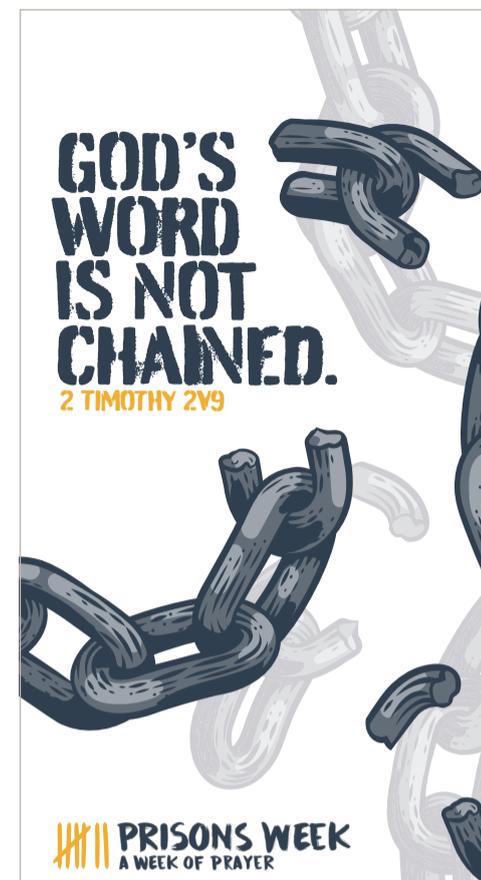
As prison chaplains we have a duty to help ensure those prisoners who might feel hopeless and helpless find a way out of the

bondage that keeps them chained to a life in prison.

One of the charities which provides a valuable lifeline to prisoners and ex-offenders is Fine Cell and you will find a short piece about the valuable work they do below. There will be an exhibition of quilts made by prisoners at HMP Wandsworth over the years at St Mary Magdalene Church, Wandsworth Common during Prisons Week. For more information see page 11.

I would also like to encourage churches to consider signing up to the *Welcome Directory* – a list of faith communities who have signed up to provide places of welcome for people leaving prison. Many find faith in prison and having somewhere to go where they feel safe and supported when leaving prison, may make the difference from re-offending or going straight. You can find out more about the *Welcome Directory* and register here: welcomedirectory.org.uk

In this Prisons Week, please pray for the five prisons in our diocese and the two others which fall just within Guildford Diocese, in Banstead. Please think about how you as individuals and churches can help the people for whom you are praying. You can find out more and download resources here: prisonsweek.org. Copies of the Prisons Week prayer leaflet can be obtained through the 'contact us' link on the website or by emailing info@prisonsweek.org please provide the quantity required and name and address details. Look out, too, for the daily prayer for Prisons Week on our diocesan website.



© prisonsweek.org

Find out more

For information about Fine Cell Work visit: finecellwork.co.uk

For information about Prisons Week visit: prisonsweek.org

Empowering prisoners to rebuild their lives

Fine Cell Work is a charity that encourages and empowers prisoners to rebuild their lives and non-criminal identities.

Since 1997, the charity has been using skilled needlework through rehabilitative initiatives to help people in prison realise their potential and give them hope for a better future. With its post-release programme, which began in 2017, Fine Cell support people to stabilise and reintegrate into society after release – its primary goal to reduce crime.

There is significant compelling evidence that shows that every person who

embarks on a successful rehabilitation process reduces the rates of violence and crime in society. With the help of work skills, money earned and saved and the opportunity to start over – the charity strives to help prisoners and prison-leavers finish their sentences and live meaningful, independent, and crime-free lives. Having helped more than 8,500 prisoners, Fine Cell is the only charity that provides paid, professional, high-quality craft opportunities to people in prison.

Prisons Week shines a light on the people that make up Fine Cell Work – volunteers, stitchers and prison leavers who are part of its post-release

programme. The programme is an opportunity to give voice to the charity's mission: to see lives transformed and empowered through community, encouragement and hope, achieved with help of a needle and thread.

A Fine Cell stitcher said, "Every stitch brings the light of hope in our darkest days of struggle. There is always a story behind the stitcher who wants to make a difference from the inside out."

The Fine Cell Work story is one that is based on the belief that change is possible in the most miserable places. That beauty, creativity and excellence can transform lives that are forgotten.

This month Fine Cell Work will be on display at St Mary Magdalene, Wandsworth Common, London, SW17 7HP from 12–18 October. There will also be a Talk by Founding Director, Katy Emck OBE on Thursday 16 October, 6–8pm.



Prisons Week Prayer

Lord, you offer freedom to all people. We pray for those in prison. Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist. Support with your love prisoners and their families and friends, prison staff and all who care. Heal those who have been wounded by the actions of others, especially the victims of crime. Help us to forgive one another, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly together with Christ in his strength and in his Spirit, now and every day.

Amen.

