



The BRIDGE

Magazine of the Anglican Diocese of Southwark Vol.31 No.2

Christ
Centred
Outward
Focused

© Tom Bradley.

SUMMER 26

Called to serve –
Diocesan ordinations
Pages 4–7

‘Wellspring’ –
stepping out in faith
Pages 12–13

Mothers’ Union
marks 150 years
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Cover: Farewell to Bishop Christopher: pages 16–19

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Right: Bishop Christopher
delivers his valedictory
sermon. Cover: Bishop
Christopher's mitre and
chasuble laid on the altar
at Southwark Cathedral.



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VIEW FROM...

I write this fresh from the experience of paying tribute to Bishop Christopher in front of a packed Southwark Cathedral on Saturday: like the rest of the role of Diocesan Secretary, both a huge privilege and an enormous responsibility. You can read the wonderful farewell interview with Bishop Christopher in this edition.

Throughout his time as Bishop, he has called us over and over again to 'speak well of each other', a refrain he repeated in his sermon at his Valedictory Eucharist, drawing on the words of St Paul's letter to the Romans where Paul instructs the faithful to 'live in harmony with one another'. This goes alongside thanksgiving for the glorious diversity that we see in Southwark and reflected across these pages. We celebrate those newly ordained to serve among us, read inspiring stories of mission and outreach and witness churches finding creative ways to engage their communities. Through innovative projects such as *Wellspring*, environmental initiatives during Great Big Green Week, support for children and families at home and abroad, and the faithful service of organisations such as the Mothers' Union, the common thread is a willingness to respond to God's call with imagination, compassion and faith.

Let us take the opportunity this summer to pause, reflect, and give thanks for God's many blessings in Southwark.

Nicola Thomas
Diocesan Secretary



Meet Southwark's bran

On Saturday 27 June, the Bishop of Southwark, the Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, ordained 12 Deacons to serve in our diocese, in a special service at Southwark Cathedral. The Venerable Dr Chigor Chike, Archdeacon of Lewisham & Greenwich, led this year's ordination retreat and preached at the service.

In his sermon about exploring God's call, Archdeacon Chigor (pictured right) said, "What a wonderful day we have, a chance to welcome into holy orders new people into the ministry of the Church of England. As they go into this

new phase of life and ministry... I pray that through the ministry of these 12 people more people will embrace the life that Jesus offers and receive the transformation that He gives."





d new Revs...

ORDAINED DEACONS

Croydon Area

Archie Warsap

St John the Evangelist,
Upper Norwood

Kingston Area

Samuel (Sam) Baker

Christ Church, Gipsy Hill

Damilola (Dami) Bamidele

St Thomas & St Stephen,
Telford Park

Michael (Mike) Clayton

All Saints, Clapham Park

Jacqueline Gray

Holy Trinity & St Augustine,
Tooting

Gemma Hill

St Paul, Kingston Hill

Joshua (Josh) Moxon

Holy Trinity, Clapham

Anne O'Neil

Richmond Team Ministry

Amelia Turncliffe

St Mary, Barnes

Woolwich Area

Alice Colwell

St Peter, Brockley

Anna Grabowska

St Barnabas, Dulwich

June Knowles

St Michael, East Wickham

Continued on page 6





SEVENTEEN PRIESTS ORDAINED

Seventeen people were ordained Priest in their Episcopal Areas in the Diocese of Southwark this Petertide – on Saturday 4 July. The Revd Carol Barrett Ford, Vicar of the Parish Church of St John-at-Hampstead, led the ordination retreat.

Croydon Area

The following were ordained Priest by the Bishop of Croydon, The Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett, in the parish church of Croydon Minster. Bishop Rosemarie was joined by the Revd Antonio Garcia Fuerte, Vicar of All Saints with St Margaret, Upper Norwood, who preached.

Charlotte (Charlie) Davies
Springfield Church, Wallington

Peter Greenfield
All Saints, Carshalton

James Griffin
St Oswald, Cheam North

In a separate ceremony, one ordinand was ordained Priest by the Bishop of Fulham, the Rt Revd Jonathan Baker, in the parish church of St Michael and All Angels Croydon. The Bishop of Southwark, the Rt Revd Christopher Chessun was in attendance.

Antonio Joseph (pictured)
St Michaels & All Angels with St James, Croydon

© Gregory Reynolds.



Kingston Area

The following were ordained Priest on by the Bishop of Kingston, the Rt Revd Dr Martin Gainsborough, in the parish church of All Saints, Kingston. Bishop Martin was joined by Dr Barnabas Palfrey, Tutor in Christian Doctrine & Spirituality and Director of Studies at St Augustine's College of Theology, who preached.

Judy Douglas
St Mary and St John the Divine, Balham

Judith Fraser
St Michael's & All Angels with St Stephen, Wandsworth

Sharon Hunt
St Mary, Putney



© Photo by Liam Hart and Jesse-Steve Amarey.



Pre-ordination retreat held at Wychcroft.

Mariia (Mary) Kilikidi
Merton Priory Team

Kardiatou (Kadia) Ly
St Peter, Vauxhall

Wa'el Qasim
St Leonard, Streatham

Michael Stokes
All Saints, Kingston

Woolwich Area

The following were ordained Priest by the Bishop of Woolwich, the Rt Revd Alastair Cutting, in the parish church of St Peter's Brockley. Bishop Alastair was joined by the Revd Carol Barrett Ford, Vicar of the Parish Church of St John-at-Hampstead, who preached.

Doris Barrera-Torrico
St Peter, Walworth

Laura Bucke
St George, Camberwell

Kayleigh Magrath
All Saints, Eltham

Winifred (Winnie) Obese-Bempong
Herne Hill Parish

Marieke Sybrandi
St George the Martyr with St Alphege & St Jude, Borough

Andrew Twesigye
St Peter, Brockley

Diocesan Synod: hearts full of thanksgiving

On Wednesday 8 July, Southwark Diocesan Synod Members gathered at St Peter's Church, Battersea.

In his final presidential address, Bishop Christopher said: "I shall leave this Diocese with my heart full of thanksgiving for the faithful of South London and East Surrey – and especially for our God given diversity – which is

God's gift and blessing to us all and I give thanks for each one you."

Business included discussion of environmental concerns and carbon reduction, as well as initial feedback from the recent diocesan safeguarding audit.. Deanery Model Rules – the mandate that each deanery synod consists of two houses: clergy and laity – were put to Members to approve, as well as our diocesan Annual Report and financial statements for 2025. This was followed by formal questions, worship and farewell drinks in honour of Bishop Christopher's retirement.

'Statement of Needs' for next Bishop published

The Diocese of Southwark has published its *Statement of Needs* to support the discernment of who will become our next Bishop of Southwark.

You can find out more and read the *Statement* here: tinyurl.com/mr3artcr

Around the world with the Archbishop of Canterbury

The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE was installed as 106th Archbishop of Canterbury in a service at Canterbury Cathedral on 25 March 2026.

Since making her oath to His Majesty The King at Buckingham Palace, she has welcomed the Prince and Princess of Wales to Lambeth Palace and has been reintroduced to the House of Lords – taking her seat as one of the 26 Lords Spiritual, the group of Church of England Bishops that sit in the Upper Chamber of the Houses of Parliament.

Ahead of her installation Archbishop Sarah embarked on a six-day walking pilgrimage from London to Canterbury

– the first time in modern history that an Archbishop of Canterbury has undertaken a pilgrimage of this nature in the lead-up to their installation. This has been followed by many public appearances both in the UK and overseas. More recently her travels included a five-day pilgrimage in the Holy Land to visit Palestine and Israel, then over to Ghana and Cameroon to visit the Anglican Church of the Province of West Africa. Archbishop Sarah also has plans to visit the Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

Archbishop Sarah has met and prayed with His Holiness Pope Leo XIV at the Apostolic Palace in Vatican City and pledged solidarity with the UK's Jewish Community during a visit to the Stenberg Centre for Judaism. She continues to minister across all parts of the world calling for a kingdom of peace.

Bishop Christopher greets Archbishop Sarah, as she embarks on her pilgrimage to Canterbury.



New Honorary Canons

On Monday 3rd May at Choral Evensong, 13 Honorary Canons were installed at Southwark Cathedral by The Bishop of Southwark, The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun.

Honorary canonries are awarded to clergy in recognition of dedicated service to the diocese. Honorary Canons are granted a stall in the Cathedral Quire and take part in the life of the Cathedral through membership of the College of Canons. The latest Honorary Canons to be appointed are Michael Bailey, Paul Butler, Alun Ford, Kit Gunasekera, Melanie Harrington-Haynes, Ian Luke-Macauley, Jonathan Macy, Tracy Marlow, Elizabeth Newman, Stanley Njoka, Gillian O'Neill, John Pritchard and Joshua Rey. You can see the order of service here: tinyurl.com/yc2t2kxj

"Be diligent so to take your part with your brothers and sisters of the College of Canons in the Government of this holy place, that here the word of God may be faithfully preached and the sacraments duly administered; and in all things, so uphold the honour and dignity of our Cathedral and Collegiate Church that it may be a true Mother to the Churches of our Bishopric."



Memorial garden rededicated

On 6 July, The Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett, Bishop of Croydon, rededicated a memorial garden at Croydon Cemetery to rededicate the memorial garden in memory of the Lanfranc Secondary Modern schoolboys and teachers who died in a devastating air crash in Norway in 1961.

More than 200 relatives, classmates and family friends, gathered in the Lanfranc Memorial Garden for the service. The air disaster saw 39 people – including 34 schoolboys –

tragically lost their lives when a Vickers Viking aircraft crashed.

The garden serves as a peaceful place of remembrance for the Croydon community and has recently undergone a restoration after Suzy Stowell from Sanderstead – whose 15-year-old uncle Geoffrey Crouch was killed in the crash – scattered her father's ashes in the Memorial Garden two years ago and thought that it was badly in need of renovation. Suzy led a fundraising campaign supported by the Archbishop Lanfranc

Academy, which has since replaced the original school. More than £60,000 was raised, enabling the masonry and patio stones to be replaced and the whole area replanted.



Bishop Rosemarie tours the garden with Bishop Peter Price.

© Barry Holder



CLAPHAM'S BIG BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

This year, Holy Trinity Clapham (HTC) celebrated 250 years of ministry. HTC opened for worship in 1776 and the church is most famously associated with William Wilberforce and the group of friends known to history as the 'Clapham Sect'. They lived around Clapham Common and worshipped at HTC as they campaigned for the abolition of the slave trade and the spiritual and moral reformation of the nation.

Celebrations started on Sunday 31 May, with two identical services of thanksgiving for God's faithfulness over the last 250 years, both followed by a birthday meal.

Across a week of events, the church hosted an evening exploring the

continuing influence and impact of William Wilberforce, with MPs Marsha de Cordova, John Glen and Tim Farron in attendance. The Revd Jago Wynne also launched his new book, *'The Integrity Fix'*, which – inspired by Wilberforce's legacy – calls readers back to the transformative power of integrity.



The week also saw HTC's congregation gather with other churches to thank God and join in prayer for spiritual and societal renewal for the nation.

Find out more about HTC's celebration events and talks here:
holytrinityclapham.org/250-celebrations



Above: The Revd Jago Wynne and Susannah Wynne at a service to celebrate 250 years of mission.

Wimbledon Repair Café – a treMENDous success!

Beth Dubois, Churchwarden writes...

The first Wimbledon Repair Café, based at St Mark's Church Hall launched on 30 May and enjoyed great success. The endeavour is a collaboration between Merton Friends of the Earth and St Mark's Church, with support from Sustainable Merton and the Mayor of Merton Cllr Shuile Syeda, who paid the group a visit on opening day.

With the aim of helping local residents cut waste, save money, and extend the life of everyday items, volunteer repairers fix a range of household goods. These include electrical and mechanical items, clothing, toys and bicycles – and visitors can enjoy tea and coffee in the garden whilst they wait. All repairs are offered free of charge, but donations are encouraged.

The Revd Jane Andrews, Vicar of St Mark's, said, "We are an inclusive and welcoming church, eager to support projects that benefit the local community and help us care for the natural world."

The Wimbledon Repair Café joins a growing network of around 800 similar green initiatives across the UK and around 3,200 globally, as part of a movement that began in the Netherlands in 2009.

The idea grew from concerns about the increasing volume of household items ending up in landfill or incinerated due to minor faults – a problem only worsened by manufacturers' reluctance to provide affordable spare parts. By offering a practical alternative, organisers hope not only to reduce waste but also to re-skill the community and promote a more sustainable, circular economy.

Many Repair Cafés report a success rate of around 60 to 65 per cent. Certain items are excluded to avoid competing with commercial businesses, such as mobile phone repairs and standard clothing alterations. For items that can't be repaired, volunteers will offer advice on safe disposal.

In line with its community focus, the Repair Café also aims to be a social space where people can connect, share knowledge and build a culture of sustainability.

The Repair Café is a three-minute walk from Wimbledon Station. The free event is held on the last Saturday of every month from 10.30am to 12.30pm. For more information visit: stmarkswimbledon.org.uk

Left and right: The successful and well-attended launch of the Wimbledon Repair Café.





WELLSPRING: STEPPING OUT IN FAITH AND DISCOVERING WHERE GOD IS LEADING

The Revd Mandy Beck, St John the Baptist Kingston Vale writes...

St John the Baptist is a small church with a congregation of around 30 people on a Sunday. We could have just hunkered down and tried to keep things going, struggling to fill rotas and run small Sunday services, but we felt called by God to try something bold and new. We wanted to reach out and serve our community in new ways, engaging with people where they are. Jesus met people where they were, caring for the whole person and promising to bring life in all its fullness. If there is one single verse which inspired us, it was Isaiah 12 v 3: "With joy you will draw waters from the wells of Salvation." We want to bring and find joy.

Wellspring is a fresh expression of church we launched in October at St John. It's a community which aims to bring life in all its fullness to its members and the community in which it is set, caring for the whole person, body, mind and spirit.

Our vision is to create rich opportunities for the community to come together, and for the benefits of Wellspring to be shared more widely. We encourage members to feel empowered to develop their body, mind and spirit, and to share with and support one another. Recognising that St John's church members draw from the wellspring of spiritual blessing from the Christian tradition, our hope is to share that blessing with those of all faiths and none in our community.

We run a range of activities and from its launch in October 2025 to the beginning of June, we have 61 members, of whom 28 are not church members or on our electoral roll. Because the activities are in small groups of no more than 20, we are building relationships with those people. Along with the numerous physical and social activities they have joined, members have begun to join spiritual activities including walking the labyrinth, poems by the fireside and mindfulness. In an exercise class like stretch and

“We aim to bring to life a vision of caring for the whole person, body, mind and spirit. Not just for the congregation, but for the whole community, bringing everyone together in the spirit of love and inclusivity.”

breath, during the last 15 minutes there is a time of quiet stillness and people are asked to reflect on different elements of life, including six minutes of quiet prayer or meditation. These activities have opened the possibility of spiritual conversations and opportunities to talk about faith.

Mark Callis, Wellspring Committee Chair, writes...

The PCC set up a subcommittee to bring to life its vision of caring for the whole person, body, mind and spirit. Not just for the congregation, but for the whole



community, bringing everyone together in the spirit of love and inclusivity. The committee was made up of volunteers, which included some who were not regular members of the congregation. This is where the ethos of Wellspring really began. These volunteers learned new skills in listening, negotiation and being encouraged to speak up and put forward ideas for the group to consider. As Wellspring gathered momentum, so the committee grew in confidence and skills and members really started to believe in themselves and believed even further in Wellspring. Just over two years after the committee was formed, Wellspring was launched and is now a thriving members organisation that still has ambition to go even further.”

Wellspring has been made possible by a dedicated team, the commitment of its members, and the faithful prayers of many within the church. Keeping groups small has enabled meaningful relationships to grow, and it feels as though we are discovering new strength together.



Meditation in Nature

Second Wednesday in the month

£5 per session or free for Wellspring members.





The Wellspring logo design was created by a work experience student, Ella Rose; and the water drop design by Laura Coyne.

In the coming year, we hope to double Wellspring membership, increase diversity, and see Wellspring make a difference in many more lives.

For more information visit:
inthevale.org.uk



WHEN A CHURCH SAYS 'YES', A CHILD'S FUTURE OPENS UP

The Revd Greg Cushing, Vicar of All Saints, Peckham, shares how one child's story has helped shape his church's long standing partnership with charity Compassion UK and what it's taught them about loving their global neighbours...

Compassion is a UK-based charity that provides care and support for children living in poverty through sponsorship. The charity's holistic approach helps release children from economic, physical, social and spiritual poverty.

As a church, we've partnered with Compassion for many years. Over that time, we've heard many stories about the impact of their ministry in the lives of children and families facing extreme poverty, but one story in particular stays with us because Ronnie is part of our church family.

"I remember my first day of school for one reason: I was hungry," Ronnie says. Growing up in Uganda, Ronnie's parents had managed to scrape together enough for school, but not for lunch. Every day, Ronnie tried to be the "friendly" child in the hope that someone might share their

food with him. "When they didn't, my brain simply shut down. Learning felt out of reach and hope even further away."

Ronnie was nine when his parents discovered their local church could help. Through their child development project, run in partnership with Compassion, Ronnie started receiving support, including nutritious food. "The change was immediate: I could concentrate, my confidence grew, my future opened up."

That's the heartbeat of Compassion's church-led projects, and something we've seen lived out through our partnership: children being known and loved by their local church, receiving practical care, deeply relational support and the opportunity to learn how much Jesus loves them.

Today, Ronnie works as a teacher and, along with his wife and three daughters, is a much-loved member of the All Saints church family.

Ronnie's testimony shows us first-hand the transformative power of God's Spirit ministering through His people. Ronnie's three beautiful girls know security and

L-R: Ronnie and Greg, of All Saints, Peckham – proud partner with *Compassion*.

peace and can plan for exciting futures, all of which were just a daydream for him before his local church began supporting his family through *Compassion*.

We continue to be inspired through *Compassion's* Advocate Speakers who visit our Sunday services and share stories of hope. We now sponsor more than 60 children, standing alongside churches as they share Jesus' love in beautiful, holistic ways. It's wonderful to know that we in Peckham, are connected to, and can have a dramatic impact for children and their families on the other side of the world.

I also had the opportunity in Uganda to witness first-hand how local churches provide all the support *Compassion* enables them to give.

Jesus is the One enthroned. It's His body, His hands and feet who offer the support. It's simply a beautiful, God-glorifying charity. If your church is wondering about whether to partner with *Compassion*, I'd say go for it!

If you'd like to explore what partnership could look like for your church, you can email Lisa Leaf lisal@compassionuk.org

"It's simply a beautiful, God-glorifying charity. If your church is wondering about whether to partner with *Compassion*, I'd say go for it!"

Faith leaders build relationships and common purpose

The Venerable Jonathan Sedgwick, Archdeacon of Southwark writes...

Many of our clergy and lay leaders are regularly doing vital work building relationships with leaders of other faith communities. To celebrate this work and provide an opportunity to deepen these friendships, Bishop Martin (our lead bishop for interfaith work) hosted a garden party earlier in the summer. These relationships are vital in building the shared understanding and community cohesion which are so vital in the face of rising divisiveness in our country.

The Revd Susan Bolen who has built a strong relationship with the Wimbledon Synagogue attended with Rabbi Adrian Schell and members of his congregation. They spoke movingly of the challenges that many members of Jewish communities are facing at the moment as a result of a growing tide of antisemitism.

Jahangir Ahmad of the Dialogue Society shared some of the excellent work the organisation is doing, including their *Life of a Chickpea* project, which uses the simple idea of the many ways in which chickpeas can be used in food to break down barriers and build common purpose.

Other members of the Muslim community as well as people of Bahai and Sikh faiths shared their insights and new relationships were forged.

If you would like to get to know more about any aspect of interfaith work, please contact Archdeacon Jonathan or Bishop Martin.





Farewell to Bishop C

The Bishop of Southwark, the Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, retires this summer, having served in diverse communities across four dioceses. He shares his reflections on more than forty years of ministry with Anna Drew...

The first sense Bishop Christopher had that he may be called to ordained ministry came at the age of 19, when he encountered a fellow member of his confirmation class who came to the class from the local Young Offenders institution. "When we were getting near the confirmation, he said to me that anything he was given he traded for cigarettes. So I gave him a very small olivewood

cross from the Holy Land at the confirmation and said, 'This is of absolutely no value. But of course, it is a symbol of hope. I hope you will keep it.' A few weeks later, his chaplain wrote to me and said, 'Your friend wants you to know he holds your cross and he thinks you would make a good priest.'"

A chance conversation with a bishop the very next day set him off on the path of discernment – but not everyone was delighted with the direction he was taking: "Going through my papers, I came across the letter my father wrote to me expressing his concerns and encouraging me not to rush into ordination. And I loved my father. He had seen his role as being a provider for the family – and he couldn't begin to understand how a son that was



Inset left: 2011 – awaiting installation and enthronement.
Main: Southwark Cathedral, 2025.

Christopher

ordained might be able to provide for and support the family.”

The bishop in the diocese where he was ordained – without knowing the family context – wanted him to serve his curacy in the parish where his father was an employer, and where his identical twin brother worked. Christopher asked the DDO to say to the bishop that he was willing to go to any parish in the diocese but that one, given his father’s reservations – but was told, “The Bishop will not be interested in your opinions until you do what he’s asked you to do – to meet the rector of this parish.” He met the rector and served his curacy in the parish of St Michael and All Angels, Sandhurst – and found it transformative: “I went

there and it allowed my father to be reconciled to my calling. He saw that a priest was not just a ceremonial role.”

Bishop Christopher’s ordained ministry has led him to serve in diverse contexts, from rural Berkshire to an urban community in Portsmouth reeling from the downscaling of its dockyard, to the grandeur of St Paul’s Cathedral (as the first chaplain) and on to the great inner urban parish of St Dunstan and All Saints’ Stepney in the East End of London.

“Those contrasts have been what have formed and shaped my ministry – and I continue to give thanks for them,” he reflects. “And after eight years parish ministry, the then Bishop of London walked me three times round the crypt of St Paul’s, trying to



Top to bottom, L-R: Barista for Christian Aid, 2011; meeting the Queen, 2013. Bonda Mission, Zimbabwe, 2014; debating in the House of Lords, 2022; with Pope Francis, 2023; Borough Market Reopening, 2017; ecumenical pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi, 2026; displaying a portrait of himself by artist Rose Holland-Butcher.

persuade me – against my better instincts – that I should agree to becoming an archdeacon.”

What was it that made him so reticent to take up this role – which many would have seen as a promotion?

“I loved the parish I was in, and leaving it was painful. It took me some time to see how an archdeacon can resource, support, encourage, get alongside and provide a parish with the support it needs to go forward in its mission.”

He served as Archdeacon of Northolt in London Diocese, before ‘crossing the river’ to become, firstly, Bishop of Woolwich in 2005 and then diocesan Bishop of Southwark in 2011. As with his earlier ‘translation,’ the move to becoming ‘Bishop’ from ‘Archdeacon’ was daunting:

“The thing I remember most was feeling utterly inadequate – but for the grace of God. And so I think the experience of episcopal ministry initially increased my awareness that I needed to put my trust in God, and I needed to exercise this ministry by God’s grace, and certainly not out of my own ego.”

Both the Church of England and the society in which it serves have changed dramatically over Bishop Christopher’s time in ministry – what does he think have been the most significant shifts?

“Although I would see our parishes, our churches, as the beating hearts of their local communities, I think ‘making your presence felt’ in Christ centred and outward focused ways is the challenge. Another great change has been that people would have understood ministry until very recently as ordained ministry. Of course, there has always been lay leadership in the Church – but ministry was seen as the preserve of those who were ordained. There’s a much broader understanding now of ministry as something that springs from our baptism – that is definitely a change for the better. All ministry, lay and ordained, is a participation in Christ’s ministry and always about calling.

“And the third thing that I want to highlight is the diversity of the Church and how we properly understand our duty of care to all God’s people, not just those who are ‘like us’. Southwark is a ‘global diocese’ – we only have to keep our eyes open to see the beautiful diversity which God has given us.

“But we always have to make that intentional extra step to cherish, celebrate and affirm those who are different to us, whatever that difference is. Encouraging a culture where people can speak well of each other, can be clear about their own identity, clear about their own theological convictions,

clear about their own priorities – but generous in the way they treat people whose priorities are different to theirs – is something which makes Church Christlike.”

What parting words might Bishop Christopher offer to the people of the diocese as he steps down from this role?

“Be of good courage and give thanks for the many blessings that there are in this wonderful diocese. Don’t duck the difficult issues, but face them as challenges and opportunities, and try and work as well as you can with others in joyful partnerships in the gospel.”

“Be of good courage and give thanks for the many blessings that there are in this wonderful diocese.”

Since this interview Southwark has bid ‘farewell’ to Bishop Christopher – his valedictory service took place at the Cathedral on 18 July. Read the full story here, where you can also check out the photos from the day and read Bishop Christopher’s valedictory sermon: tinyurl.com/etfft6wb



The Venerable Jonathan Sedgwick

Archdeacon of Southwark

In the first of the two accounts of creation in the Book of Genesis, as God calls the heavens and the earth into being, there are regular moments of divine appreciation as God 'saw that it was good.' And at the end of the sixth day when God has created 'humankind in his image,' God saw that 'it was very good.' But even this is not the crowning moment of the story and there is one more crucial detail. For next, God blessed the seventh day and 'rested from all the work he had done in creation.'

To stand back and appreciate with gratitude, to know that a time is holy and to rest from work, these things all speak of the delight of God in creation and of our calling to share in that creativity and delight. For 'rest' in these terms is not just the absence of work, but the knowledge that we rest in the love of God who delights in us – and who yearns for us to reciprocate with delight of our own.

The word we often use – 'recreation' – gives us an insight into how important it is both to rest and to enjoy something for its own sake, so that we ourselves are re-made. So much of what we do has a purpose, to change or improve ourselves or others but this is an invitation simply to be. And since so many of our purposes are ego-driven, this is an opportunity to be re-made as God's beloved children.

Though circumstances may not make it possible for everyone, the school summer holiday season offers a particular opportunity both to rest and to delight in creation. To rest, to be with those you love, to wonder at the beauty of earth, to turn off the emails, these are holy things and we should not feel that they are self-indulgent – in fact they are a divine command. Perhaps we could do more to give one another the space and encouragement to obey, including taking it seriously ourselves!

Quotations from Genesis 1 are from the NRSV.

Let us pray

Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd of the sheep, may you lead us this day into pastures that are green where we may rest, and beside still waters which will refresh us. Amen

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

Oh, say can you Battersea...

On Saturday 4 July, hundreds of Americans gathered on the lawn of St Mary's Battersea, to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence.

The event hosted by the Hamilton Society – an organisation which provides discourse for London-based, American and British centre-right professionals – also paid tribute to Benedict Arnold, an American-born British military officer who served during the American Revolutionary War.

Addressing those in attendance, The Revd Erin Clarke, Vicar at St Mary's, gave a short speech of welcome. American-born Erin said, "Like you, I have found myself living on this side of the ocean, and like you, I

find today a wonderful if bittersweet day, celebrating the 250th birthday of our dear nation but doing so from the other side of the Atlantic. It is often on our Independence Day that I most keenly feel the split in my identity.

"It is an utter joy to be celebrating 250 years of St Mary's Church, alongside 250 years of the USA. I hope and pray that we Americans can hold to our ability to dream: to see beyond what's in front of us, beyond the status quo. To work alongside unlikely allies, to have the dedication as well as the humility to build in the direction of a tomorrow we cannot fully see, cannot even fully imagine"

You can read Erin's the full address here: tinyurl.com/244zkj9v

Rivers of Life – bridging spirituality, ecology and art

During April and May, a range of churches along the river Thames joined forces to host the Rivers of Life festival.

The Revd Giles Goddard, Vicar of St John's Waterloo and St Andrew's said, "Rivers run through all of us and we all have something to contribute. Through the Rivers of Life festival, we wanted to bring parishes together to explore rivers, not just as spiritual symbols, but as living systems that connect us to ecology, creativity, and community."

The festival launched with a pilgrimage along the Thames, bringing together clergy from the festival's partnering churches and church members. More than 30 pilgrims walked 5.5 miles from Battersea Power Station to Southwark Cathedral, stopping at each church for prayer, reflection and conversation.

Creativity flowed through the festival programme, with printmaking workshops, a poetry evening and a talk

on art and the river. Southwark Cathedral hosted exhibitions on mudlarking and Royal Photographic Society images of London's waterways. A brainstorming session focused on reimagining the River Thames' future organised in collaboration with Southbank and Waterloo Sustains Us, Thames Estuary Partnership and the Environment Agency.

The festival ended with a conference on 'deep incarnation', entitled *Rivers of Life, Rivers of Spirit*. Bishop Martin joined parish leaders and environmental campaigners to explore the idea that divine spirit flows through all creation.



Festival-goers gather at low tide to sing and pray together.

© Eleanor Bentall.



150 YEARS OF THE MOTHERS' UNION

As it marks 150 years, we give thanks for Mothers' Union (MU) and the legacy of founder Mary Sumner, advocating for women's rights and motherhood, standing alongside families, and campaigning on serious issues including gender-based violence, poverty and injustice. Susan Gibbin, MU trustee writes...

Starting the year, The Mothers' Unions of Southwark and London gathered on London Bridge for the service of the Blessing of the River Thames.

A Festival Service at Southwark Cathedral was held earlier in the summer and as our annual diocesan event this year was even more special with the recognition of 150 years of the Mothers' Union worldwide. We also celebrated with Bishop Christopher ahead of his retirement.

Nationally the Mothers' Union marked 150 years of faith, service and transformation with a landmark

anniversary service at St Paul's Cathedral on Wednesday 10 June. The service was an opportunity to bring together MU members, senior church leaders, partners from across the Anglican Communion and supporters from across the charity sector. Led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Revd Sarah Mullaly, it was one of the largest eucharists ever held at St Paul's Cathedral, filled with more than 1,500 members who gathered to give thanks for a movement that has grown from a small parish initiative in Hampshire to a global Christian organisation of four million members in more than 80 countries.

Members from across Britain and Ireland, alongside partners and guests from the worldwide Mothers' Union family also gathered at the Emmanuel Centre in Westminster on 11 June for the MU's Annual Gathering. The day opened with prayer and worship led by Mothers' Union Bishop Ambassador, Bishop Kelly

of Basingstoke, before Worldwide President Kathleen Snow and CEO Bev Jullien welcomed members to a day of celebration, reflection and looking ahead. As friends reunited and new connections were made members reflected on Mothers' Union's journey over the past 150 years. One of the talks was given by Southwark members Hilary Richardson and Liz Pullen, who shared with those present about the *Tea@2* project supporting parents at the Evelina London Children's hospital.

Celebrations continued with past and present trustees, programme leaders and branch leaders joining Bishop Christopher at his home for afternoon tea. The sun shone bright and all were thanked for their continuing ministry across the Diocese.

Branch, deanery and area events included the Big Picnic and 'Talents'. The first picnic took place on 13 June in the Reigate Area. Members and friends from across the Reigate Archdeaconry met at Manor Park, Sutton for food, fellowship and fun in the sunshine. As part of charitable giving and challenges the use of talents has been taking place in areas, where individuals are encouraged to turn £15 into £150 – for example, by making 150 knitted hearts to share with those in local hospices.

In July, MU members were invited to a Heritage Open Palace Experience (HOPE) Day at Lambeth Palace. HOPE days offer a rare opportunity to explore the historic home of the Archbishops of Canterbury – a place of faith, hospitality, and service for over 800 years. Proceeds from ticket sales were given jointly to Southwark and London Mothers' Unions.

On 9 August, parishes across the country celebrate the legacy of Mary Sumner. Resources can be found here: tinyurl.com/5n6drux4

From the 30 September to 3 October 2026, a worldwide gathering will take place in Durban, South Africa, where Southwark Diocese will be represented. This historic gathering will bring together members from across the world to celebrate our legacy, strengthen our global fellowship and boldly explore what it means to be the next generation Mothers' Union.

Wherever we are in the world, we continue to bring hope, advocate for change, and build communities rooted in dignity, justice and love.

If you don't have a Mothers' Union link or branch in your parish and would like to know more, please contact us at: mu@southwark.anglican.org



Members of the Mothers' Union celebrate their 150th anniversary at St Paul's Cathedral (left) and Bishop's House (above) .



Great Big Green Week: celebrating the richness of God's creation

Joining communities around the country, churches across our diocese took part in this year's Great Big Green Week (6–14 June 2026) to celebrate the richness of God's creation on their doorstep and take practical action to care for it.

Activities throughout the week ranged from nature surveys in churchyards, to environmental stalls at summer fairs, gardening projects, film screenings and a whole host of other events designed to help people connect with their local environment.

Many churches used the week to participate in *Churches Count on Nature* – a national initiative encouraging people to discover and record the wildlife living in churchyards and burial grounds. At St Paul's Clapham, children took part in a bug hunt – exploring the churchyard and nature garden with sweep nets, binoculars and magnifying glasses.

Elsewhere, churches used the week to bring people together for conversations about creation care and climate action. St Thomas with St Stephen Telford Park hosted a screening of *The People's Emergency Briefing* – a short film designed to help communities understand the

latest facts of the climate and nature crises and explore practical action. The event included discussion and reflection spaces, attracting people both from within and beyond the church community. Reflecting on the event, vicar the Revd Nicki Pennington said, "People with no connection to the church came along and lingered at the reflection spaces. The discussions were really energised and some amazing ideas and perspectives were shared. Some asked about partnering with us in future, not out of a sense of obligation, but because they recognised shared concerns and wanted to do something together. We also discovered local groups already working on issues we care about too, opening up possibilities for future collaboration."

Sophie Roberts, Diocesan Environmental Officer said, "Overall, the week demonstrated the many ways in which churches can care for God's creation while building connections within their communities and opening doors for partnership and mission. Thank you to everyone who took part and shared their stories and photographs."

Read the full story here:
tinyurl.com/3ydvrbha

'Unforgettable' Culture Day for Holy Trinity

Last year, Holy Trinity C of E Primary School, Wimbledon held its first ever Culture Day to celebrate diversity and inclusion. Returning for another year, the whole school community came together to celebrate belonging with a day of fashion, arts, music, dance and culture.

Jasmine Burnham, Year 1 Class Teacher, Subject Leader of the Junior Leadership Team and Diversity and Inclusion and Staff Governor said, "There are moments in the school year that remind you precisely why we do what we do. Our recent Culture Day was, without a doubt, one of those moments. This year, we centred our celebrations around the profound theme of belonging. Our aim was to explore how diverse cultures support each other, how we all connect as a community, and specifically, how music and dance from around the world belong together. The energy in the school was electric, paving the way for a truly unforgettable day of unity and discovery."

The day started with a fashion show, with children dressed in vibrant traditional clothing, representing their heritage with immense pride. Specialised workshops led by parent volunteers aimed at each year group, gave children an opportunity to learn more about music and dance. The children also participated in a whole-school art project, where they designed their own individual puzzle piece. Each piece was uniquely decorated to represent the child's individual identity, and the pieces were then joined together to form a jigsaw – all beautifully different yet flawlessly fitting and belonging together. The day ended with a high-energy, collective workshop, which included a traditional Chinese dragon dance performance. The theme of belonging extended far beyond the school gates and children in Key Stage 2

took part in a writing activity to send letters to children in Ukraine.

Year 6 students Abi Dugmore and Lucas Marchant shared how proud they were to celebrate diversity at school.

Abi said, "We had an amazing fashion show – it was beautiful to see everyone displaying their family background and traditional cultural clothing! For the rest of the day, we did activities like, decorating a puzzle piece each with things that represent our culture too. Then, in the afternoon we watched a Chinese dragon good luck dance in the playground, which was brilliant! We are very thankful for all the different cultures in the school, because we all see the world in different eyes and have different ideas."

Lucas added, "I was part of the fashion show, and it was so fun! Me and loads of other children in other year groups had the opportunity to walk through the school and show off our fabulous traditional clothing. There was music and everyone has a smile on their face and clapped and cheered for us! No one seemed to be nervous to show off their cultures. As we walked through, everyone felt proud of themselves and their culture. It felt like we were all united and it felt like every culture in the whole school was celebrated."



Celebrating 'belonging' with a day of fashion, arts, music, dance and culture.



MEET SOUTHWARK'S NEW MUDLARK-IN-RESIDENCE

Mudlarking is the act of searching the muddy banks and shores of a tidal river for historical artefacts, antiques, and lost objects.

Earlier this summer, bestselling author and renowned Thames mudlark Lara Maiklem joined the team at Southwark Cathedral as its first Mudlark-in-Residence, a post believed to be the UK's only permanent mudlarking role within a cultural or heritage organisation.

Lara (pictured above and also known as 'The London Mudlark' to her 350k+ online following) has been mudlarking on the River Thames for almost 25 years. She has worked closely with Southwark Cathedral since 2019, contributing to its programme of exhibitions, talks, tours

and public events celebrating the history of and revealed by the Thames foreshore, including the Cathedral's sixth annual Heritage Craft and Mudlarking Festival that took place on Saturday 25 July.

Lara said, "I've so enjoyed bringing mudlarking to Southwark over the last seven years, and being made Mudlark in Residence really is a great honour. Being so close to the river, the Cathedral is where mudlarking belongs and I'm looking forward to working with the wonderful Cathedral team to continue the exhibitions, talks, tours and festivals that have put Southwark Cathedral at the heart of the mudlarking community."

Further details: tinyurl.com/mtbzpe7y

"I've so enjoyed bringing mudlarking to Southwark over the last seven years, and being made Mudlark-in-Residence really is a great honour."

Discover signs of hope for all parishes

Southwark Mission Conference 2026 will be held at St John Waterloo on Saturday 21 November.

Each year, our diocesan mission team hosts a conference exploring a different aspect of mission to help our parishes thrive in their call to follow Christ. Previous conferences focused on the mixed ecology of church, ministry with children and young people and the rich biblical theme of Jubilee.

Across our diocese, we are seeing parishes flourish through countless mission initiatives – re-missioning and revitalising congregations, planting fresh expressions, grafting new life onto existing roots, and pioneering entirely new ways of being church.

This year, our theme is *Signs of Hope*, seeking to share home-grown stories of growth and innovation in order to help churches of all traditions to thrive and grow.

One of the exciting developments in recent years in Southwark is the establishment of new Hub Churches – churches that have developed something new that can be shared with other parishes to help them grow. We hope to share a wide variety at the conference via seminars and a dedicated marketplace. So far, *Spring*, *Lifting Young Voices*, *Growing Younger Together*, *Sparkle*, *Youth Ministry in Communion*, *Body & Soul* and *Bubble Church* will be there – and we hope to announce more in the next couple of months.

We hope that you will feel encouraged to come, hear, be inspired and think through what changes (many of them small) Christ might be nudging you to make. These may be changes to what you do in your

“As we have sought to be an innovative and creative diocese, I have seen the real fruit in so many of the initiatives that are being shared at this conference.”

church services, or new ways of engaging with those outside the Church.

Bishop Christopher said, “As we have sought to be an innovative and creative diocese, I have seen the real fruit in so many of the initiatives that are being shared at this conference. I would urge you to come with a team from your parish to hear and learn and see what small changes you might make to see a big difference in your parish.”

Canon Will Cookson, Director of Mission said, “These conferences are one of the highlights of my year – encouraging one another; supporting our parishes; hearing stories of what God is doing amongst our parishes. I do hope that you will come and be encouraged.”

For more information please see our booking form:

tinyurl.com/Signs-of-Hope

If you have any questions or queries, please email:

mission@southwark.anglican.org

Peckham youngsters head to Hastings

Children and young people from St John Peckham travelled to Hastings Haven Resource Centre for a retreat over the May bank holiday weekend.

Temitope Adeloye said, "This was their very first caravan holiday experience. It was a unique and enriching opportunity for them to live together, work together, lead prayers and bible study, learn the scriptures by heart, share responsibilities, learn new skills, strengthen relationships and develop leadership roles throughout the retreat."

The retreat programme included Bible study, prayers and an opportunity to learn Christian songs – as well as activities such as cooking, baking, knitting and swimming. The days coincided with the heatwave and the young people could hardly wait to jump into the swimming pools.

They also learnt practical first-aid skills including basic life support and resuscitation techniques and listened to a talk on youth and crime, delivered by Barrister Dr Victor Onipede.

The feedback from the young people who attended the retreat was overwhelmingly positive – it was a time to bond with friends and create lasting memories and valuable learning experiences.



Sharing the spirit of joy, creativity and fire

The Day of Pentecost marks fifty days since Easter Day and brings the Easter season to an end. In this edition, we look back at how St John Upper Norwood marked the feast of Pentecost with a whole parish celebration, one which brought together every corner of our community in a shared spirit of joy, creativity, and fire.

Laura Dreyfus writes...

Throughout the week, the familiar rhythms of parish life were filled with the colour and energy of the season. Across our groups, people of all ages got stuck in creating stunning flaming banners to adorn the pillars of the church, vivid signs of the Spirit's presence among us. The banners were made by *The Hub* (our Thursday group), *Messy Meals* (our Wednesday group), our Friday toddler group *PlayTime!* and by the children themselves at *Pentecost Camp*. Each one was a small act of devotion, and together they transformed the church into something really rather special.

At the heart of the week was Pentecost Camp 2026, which welcomed 30 primary-school-aged children for a weekend full of wonder. Scavenger hunts, Lego, science workshops and baking, campfires, fireworks, sparklers, pyjama prayers, hot chocolate and a full cooked breakfast, it was quite a weekend! A huge thank you to the 30 children who brought such energy and delight, and to the superb team of volunteers whose generosity and creativity made every moment possible. You are, quite simply, amazing!

The week came to a close with a joyful all-ages High Mass on Sunday, a service which felt exactly as Pentecost should. Full of sparkle, full of life, and full of people – young and old – all gathered in one place.

Pentecost calls us back to something simple: that the Church is, above all else, its people. This year, St John's felt that in every banner hung, every biscuit baked, and every candle lit. Thank you to everyone who played a part.

A lasting memorial at St Augustine, Lee

Members of St Augustine's Church Grove Park gathered on Sunday 7 June to celebrate the Feast of Corpus Christi and witness the dedication of a new memorial in honour of a much-loved and long-serving member of the congregation, Jane Upcott, who died last year.

Jane was an enthusiastic and talented musician who sang in the choir for many years and composed liturgical music which is widely used in parish worship.

The memorial takes the form of an exquisitely-carved wooden flower stand, commissioned by Jane's goddaughter, Louisa Hymers, as a lasting tribute to her godmother's faithful service and enduring place in the life of the parish. It now stands in St Augustine's Church as both a practical and beautiful addition to the worship space, and as a reminder of Jane's commitment to the church community she loved.

The commission was undertaken by Michael Leal, a member of the congregation and professional wood carver.

Martin Cartwright, Churchwarden said, "Michael has created a remarkable piece that

combines fine craftsmanship with reverence and simplicity and reflecting the beautiful wood carvings throughout the church, making it a fitting memorial for someone who contributed so much to parish life over many years."

The Revd Mother Delorine Green dedicated the flower stand during the service and it was an opportunity to give thanks for Jane's life and witness, and to commend this memorial to the glory of God.

Martin added, "Those who attended were deeply impressed by the quality and beauty of Michael's work. His distinguished career has included participation in restoration projects at the Houses of Parliament, as well as contributing to the intricate wood carvings featured on the Royal Barge used during Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee River Pageant on the Thames. The flower stand at St Augustine's demonstrates that same exceptional attention to detail and artistry, now dedicated to the service of the Church.

"The project has been a wonderful example of



Louisa Hymers (left) commissioned the flower stand, which was carved by Michael Leal (right).

faith, generosity and talent coming together within the parish community. Louisa's thoughtful gift, Michael's skilled craftsmanship and the church's prayers and thanksgiving have combined to create a memorial that will be appreciated by worshippers and visitors for many years to come.

"As flowers are placed upon the stand week by week, it will continue to honour Jane's memory and remind all who see it of a faithful parishioner whose life enriched the community of St Augustine's Church."



Ordained scientists gather at Launde Abbey

The annual gathering of the Society of Ordained Scientists was held at Launde Abbey in June.

During a special *Renewal of Commitment* eucharist, the Revd Dr Michael Brooks (from St Augustine of Canterbury, Honor Oak Park) was made a companion of the Society.

For more information about the Society of Ordained Scientists visit: ordsci.org

L-R: The Revd Dr Michael Brooks, the Rt Revd David Walker, the Revd Dr Lucas Mix and Mr Peter Aknai.

The BRIDGE



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Publishing dates

Edition	Copy deadline	In our parishes
Autumn	4 September	2 October
Winter	20 November	31 December
Spring	27 February	7 April
Summer	26 June	3 August



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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Children Youth and Families (CYF) Foundation training.

Join a diocese Foundation training day and feel equipped for CYF ministry. Aimed at volunteers and others who would like training on how to support or lead a CYF ministry in their church.

Telford Park: 26 September
Greenwich: 17 October

Details and booking:
tinyurl.com/bdejnn2u

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

Weekend of prayer

Join us for a diocesan weekend of prayer for the discernment of our next diocesan bishop on 12–13 September. We pray for our next diocesan bishop. We invite churches, clergy, congregations and individuals from across our diocese to join together in a time of prayer. Information and resources, including the vacancy prayer and ways to pray guide can be found here:
tinyurl.com/mt4amtrj

St Mary's Tatsfield Annual Golf Day – Friday 18 September, 10am

Join us at the Parkwood Club, in the Surrey Hills. 10am bacon, sausage or egg roll and a chance to chat with others. Tee off 11am for 18 holes followed by a one course lunch. Cost £60 with a deposit of £15.00 payable upon booking. A raffle follows prize giving with profits shared by The Chartwell Cancer Trust and St Mary's (to help maintain our ancient Pilgrim Church). Contact marjorybroughton@gmail.com or 07790 241070 for queries or to register and please have your handicaps at hand when booking. Location is Chestnut Avenue TN16 2EJ.

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.

For more information see our booking form: tinyurl.com/Signs-of-Hope

SOUTHWARK ◆ CATHEDRAL ◆

Scan the code to
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Diocesan job vacancies

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

Current vacancies:
southwark.anglican.org/vacancies

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

"Live life abundantly"

Honouring our communities – sharing our stories.
We are calling for nominations from within our diocese
for parishes, chaplaincies, schools and Christian groups
and initiatives who "live life abundantly" (John 10:10).

Nominations close 15 August. Those shortlisted will be honoured and
their work shared during our Black History Month thanksgiving service.

Find out more and make your
nomination here:
tinyurl.com/dzdrz78e



Black History Month service
Southwark Cathedral
Saturday 3 October
11 am Eucharist
1 pm Celebration and workshops

Register for the service here:
tinyurl.com/47mnyxr3



Black
History
Month

