

Christian Aid

Parishioners put
best foot forward
to raise money

See page 5



Front-line care

Ministry in prisons
and hospitals
during Coronavirus

See pages 6-9



VE Day

Three-page special
report on Diocesan
celebrations

See pages 10-12



Boosting morale in Carshalton – with help from some friendly faces

You won't find gnome ministry on the curriculum at any theological college, but a parishioner at The Good Shepherd, Carshalton, has found her collection invaluable in bringing the local community together.



Nikki Potter began “accidentally” collecting gnomes some 20 years ago when her mother passed one on to her. Now she has around 60, ranging from the size of a thumbnail to about 3ft tall.

Usually the gnomes live in her back garden, but since lockdown they have gradually migrated to the front.

“When we first put the NHS rainbow in the window, I thought a gnome would look quite nice in the window,” said Nikki, “And then somehow what happened was that I started putting one out each day. Because they’re quite large, they’re too big for the windowsill, so I started putting them in the garden.”

By late May, Nikki was arranging 57

gnomes each morning. “I wanted to do something so that the children from church could have somewhere to walk to and something to see,” said Nikki.

Even the children who cannot come in person can take part. “I take a picture each day and put it on our church WhatsApp group,” Nikki added. “I hide a tiny little one among the rest of the gnomes, and then the children get back to me to see who can find the little one that’s hiding first.”

Community partners

Nikki’s gnome ministry, as it has been christened by another member of the congregation, does not end there. The gnomes have been pressed into service

to celebrate VE Day, to wave banners in support of key workers, and to hold candles during the 7pm prayers that many have been saying on Sunday nights during lockdown.

They have also helped parishioners to celebrate special events. “We had a diamond wedding anniversary, and obviously that couple couldn’t come out – they’re very elderly – so we put all the gnomes into a party and a sign saying ‘happy diamond anniversary’, and then somebody very kindly printed the picture off that I had taken, so they’ve got that.”

Others in the community, too, have appreciated Nikki’s efforts. “One lady said to me, ‘I come past every morning and it makes my mind cheerful for the day.’”

These gnomes are no strangers to good works: they have been helping to raise money for the Bishop’s Lent Call for several years now. Nikki hides the gnomes around the garden, and there is a competition to find as many of them as possible. At the same time, anyone who wishes can leave a donation.

The Revd Kevin Lewis, Incumbent at the Good Shepherd, said: “The gnome hunt is such a brilliant way of raising money for the Bishop’s Lent Appeal. Families have loved searching for the hidden gnomes, and this year it’s been so encouraging to see them out of hiding being a light of hope to the local community!”

Read more about the work being done at the Good Shepherd, Carshalton on page 4.

A view from The BRIDGE



Each month I am amazed by the vibrancy of the work which the churches of the Diocese of Southwark do as they seek to serve the people of South London and East Surrey.

This has never been more true than in the stories that we have been able to tell in these last three 'lockdown' editions of *The Bridge* as well as in the stories published on our Hearts on Fire and Fresh Expressions blogs (see southwarkcofe.tumblr.com and freshexpressionsouthwarkdiocese.com/stories).

These pages of *The Bridge* tell us so much about the way in which the people in our churches have been working to ensure that their communities continue to be fed both physically and spiritually during these most extraordinary times.

The uncertainty felt by lots of people has meant that many who would not normally come to our church buildings for services have been joining services that have been streamed online. It has been brilliant to see how our churches have been working together to make sure that we are providing services and prayers and support for all who want it, in whatever manner suits them best.

As well as this, hundreds of volunteers from our churches and from across the community have been working tirelessly to ensure that those in need are being properly cared for. They are working in local food banks, collecting,

packaging and delivering food to those who either cannot get out to buy food because of the virus or who have become more in need because their livelihoods have been affected by it.

Young and old together have been working to ensure that people have all that they need to get through this difficult period and the need for this is likely to continue well after lockdown ends because our economy has been radically affected.

Now that the lockdown is being lifted a little, many of our churches are beginning to think of how we will be church in the future. How will we manage the distancing and how can we maintain a streamed presence for those who still do not feel able to venture out of their houses to church and those not yet confident enough to want to come into a real building? It will be exciting to see what our new 'normal' looks like.

Yet, as we prepare for that, we will not forget the amazing work that those on the front line in our hospitals have done, and this month we look at the work of our chaplains in hospitals and prisons. For many years to come, we will remember those who have risked their lives to save the lives of others and those who have lost their lives in the process. Please continue to pray for them and their families and friends, giving thanks to God for all they have done.

Wendy S Robins

Please tell us your stories!



Inspiring things are happening all over the Diocese – please do let us know what is going on in your parish so that others can share in it too. Get in touch via e-mail at bridge@southwark.anglican.org, Twitter @SouthwarkCofE or Facebook at facebook.com/SouthwarkCofE

Voices from the Communion share COVID-19 experiences



Professor Esther Mombo, filmed as part of the Voices from the Communion series

During the lockdown, Southwark Cathedral and Southwark Diocese have been releasing *Voices from the Communion* as a way of sharing short theological reflections from members of the Anglican Communion around the world.

Contributors from as far away as Madagascar, Kenya and the United States have been asked to contribute a five-minute video clip which is released every Wednesday evening at 5.00pm, giving us an insight into their situation and reflections on it.

Contributors so far include two of our Canons Theologian: The Very Reverend Dr Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, ThD, Dean and President of the Seminary of the Southwest, USA; and Professor Esther Mombo, Director of International Partnerships and Alumni Relations at St Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya.

Two former priests in the Diocese have also shared videos: the Revd Canon Richard Sewell, Dean of St George's College, Jerusalem and Honorary Canon of the Cathedral; and the Revd Adam Boulter, Dean and Principal of St Patrick's Bible College in Toliara in South Western Madagascar.

In addition, videos have come in from the Revd Canon Dr Ellen Clark-King, Vice Dean and Canon for Social Justice at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco; The Most Revd Linda Nicholls, Primate of Canada; and the Rt Revd Ignatios Makumbe, Bishop of Central Zimbabwe which is linked with the Croydon Area. The Rt Revd Cleophas Lunga, Bishop of Matabeleland, linked with the Kingston Area, will be posted on Wednesday 3 June.

Find the videos at: bit.ly/AnglicanComm and on the Southwark Diocesan YouTube channel at: bit.ly/3c9ySaX

The Bridge is produced & published by:

Press and Communications, The Diocese of Southwark, Trinity House,
4 Chapel Court, Borough High Street, London SE1 1HW

Tel: 020 7939 9400 E-mail: bridge@southwark.anglican.org

The Editorial Team from Press and Communications:

Commissioning Editor:

Wendy S Robins

Editor: Abigail Sanderson

Advertising and Distribution:

Susana Rojas

Editorial Group:

Ruth Martin

Jane Steen

Editorial Adviser (vacant)

Wendy S Robins

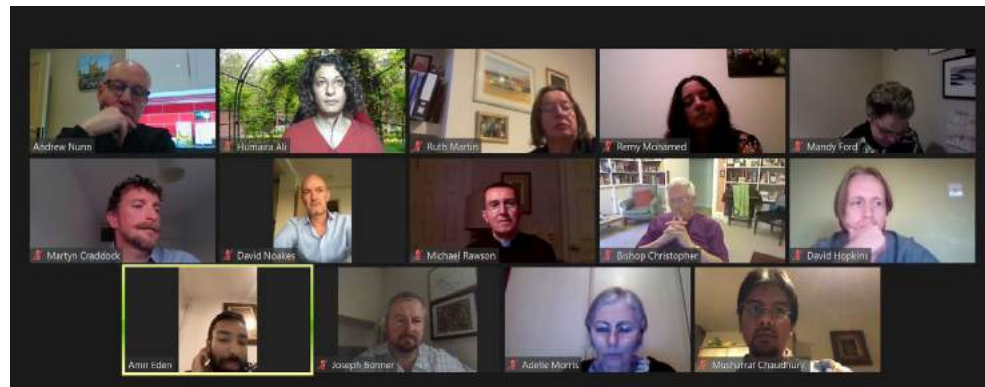
Next Issue: Submission deadline and guidance

The JULY edition is due to be published online on 1 July 2020. Material for that edition must be with Wendy S Robins by e-mail by **MONDAY 15 JUNE**.

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. So, 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 and adults who may be vulnerable can be found at southwark.anglican.org/safeguarding/diocesan-policies-procedures

A time for holding together: the annual Cathedral Iftar



For the past four years there has been a community Iftar held in the Cathedral, writes Andrew Nunn, Dean of Southwark Cathedral.

This year, of course, there was no opportunity to actually gather for the breaking of the Ramadan fast. So I organised a Zoom Iftar with Amir Eden, Chair of Living Bankside, the residents' forum in the Cathedral parish.

People gathered before the fast broke for that day and before the Muslims taking part went off to say their prayers and eat their food. Local councillors, community activists and representatives of local charities met and reflected on what was happening and how people were coping at this time.

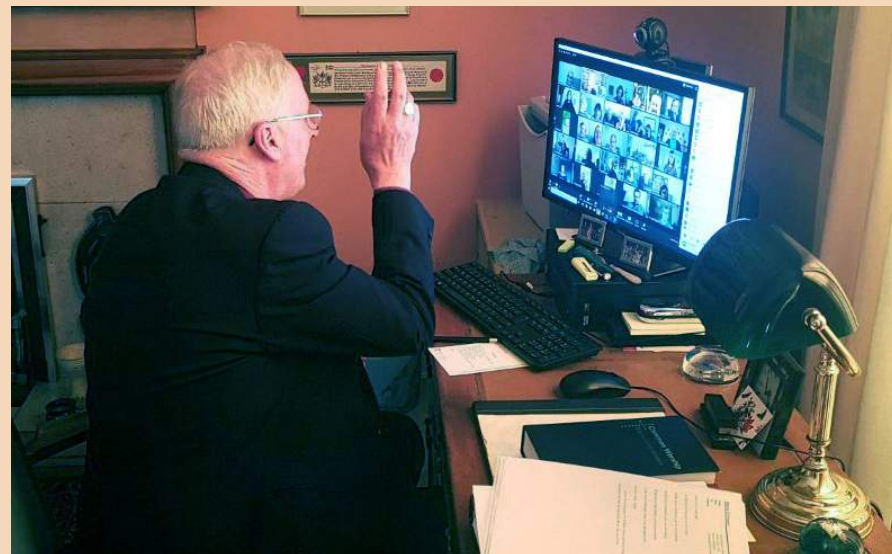
I reflected on 2017, when we had planned our first community Iftar and the terrorist attack on London Bridge and Borough Market happened. We met shortly after

the Cathedral reopened. The second Iftar was held on the evening of the first anniversary of the attack. Both of those occasions were powerful occasions for remembering and lamenting and for holding together.

Last year we met with some sadness because two of the stalwarts of our community, Marion Marples, one of the SPAs at the Cathedral, and Zakia Tafader, a local resident and mother of Amir, had both tragically died. Then this year we gather in lockdown. The Iftar has been a significant and powerful help through all of these events.

One of those present, Joseph Bonner, commented afterwards: "I came away from the encounter enhanced and energised. The spirit of hope was very evident. Bankside is a remarkable place, close to my being, with people of strength, vigour and friendship. Long may it continue."

Bishop Christopher licenses new priests over Zoom



Coronavirus crisis or no coronavirus crisis, the business of the Diocese must go on. And so Bishop Christopher has presided at the first four virtual licensings in the history of the Diocese.

The Bishop said: "It has been a great joy to license virtually, but legally and prayerfully, four very gifted priests to new ministry in the Diocese."

The first of the four priests to have been licensed was the Revd James Njue, confirmed as Priest-in-Charge at St Jude with St Aidan, Thornton Heath, on 7 April.

The Revd Jane Petrie came next,

licensed as Team Vicar in the East Greenwich Team Ministry on 22 April.

On 4 May it was the turn of the Revd Grant Bolton-Debbage to be licensed Priest-in-Charge at All Saints, Hatcham Park, New Cross.

And, on 19 May, the Revd Sandra Schloss was licensed as Priest-in-Charge at St Luke, Peckham.

The Bishop said: "With large numbers Zooming in to give support and encouragement, these have been very joyful occasions, each having a surprising depth of spiritual intimacy for which I am thankful. Rejoice and be glad."

Prayer and care around the world

An Ascension Day service streamed from the Chapel at Bishop's House marked the start of another global season of prayer for Thy Kingdom Come in Southwark.

The Bishop presided over the short service at 8.00am, with a longer Ascension Day service being broadcast later from inside Southwark Cathedral – the first time that a service had been held there in many weeks.

Video reflections from members of the Diocese were released on all of the subsequent nine days of Thy Kingdom Come, each sharing thoughts on a different theme. The subjects included Creation, Education, Work, Faith and more.

Young people from the Diocese also shared their thoughts in videos released daily throughout Thy Kingdom Come.

Parishes around the Diocese also celebrated. The Good Shepherd, Lee, for example,



encouraged parishioners to pray for five people to come to know Jesus, and took prayer requests over Twitter (above left).

St Mildred, Addiscombe, meanwhile, marked the occasion by displaying a message of love and positivity from inside the church in rainbow-coloured letters (below left).

"I like this picture as it has people and houses and community within the words – which links God together with the world," said the Revd Roger Hagon, vicar at St Mildred's.

Watch Bishop Christopher preside over the Ascension Day service at: bit.ly/SouthwarkAscension. Find the videos of the Cathedral services at: cathedral.southwark.anglican.org

The Revd Nigel Hinton, Associate Vicar at St John, Dormansland, and St Peter and St Paul, Lingfield, writes for the Hearts on Fire blog about celebrating Thy Kingdom Come in lockdown: southwarkcofe.tumblr.com

Find the daily videos for Thy Kingdom Come on the Diocesan YouTube channel at: bit.ly/SouthwarkYouTube



IN FOCUS...

New ways of being Church

It's Ready, Steady, Cook at The Good Shepherd

When Robbie Kurz's hours were cut at the start of the Coronavirus crisis, the catering company employee knew he wanted to do something useful to fill them.

A chef by training, Robbie is head of food and beverage at a large contract catering company in central London.

With most of the staff furloughed, he said, "I had quite a bit of time on my hands. So I suggested to Kevin (Lewis, Incumbent at the Good Shepherd) that I commandeer the church hall kitchen and start cooking."

The food comes primarily from FareShare, a charity that redistributes surplus food to community groups on the front line. However, as the project has grown from 10 meals a night to 50, Robbie noted, "we've had to supplement the donations with stuff we buy in, funded by financial donations to the scheme".

On 21 May, the Community Suppa project delivered its 2,000th meal since they began cooking on 27 March.

Robbie's experience of developing recipes for his company has come in extremely useful — with FareShare you don't get a choice in the food you receive, so every day the Community Suppa team take pot luck. He said: "Whatever comes in the

night before, we come in in the morning and then decide what's on the menu that night, *Ready Steady Cook* style!"

Robbie is helped in the kitchen by Chris and Verity Handley, who come in a few nights a week: "The kitchen is only really big enough for one person or a couple," Robbie said, "we can't work with people outside of our own households."



"One of the midwives at the hospital told us it is such a treat and the best part of their day to receive a meal!"



Robbie Kurz serves the dish of the day at The Good Shepherd, Carshalton.

Meanwhile, two teams of volunteers led by Miranda French take it in turns to deliver the meals every night.

Twenty of the meals go to the St Helier Hospital maternity ward, which is in a separate building and therefore cut off from the hospital canteen by the new isolation regulations. The food is greatly appreciated, according to Nikki Potter, one of the Good Shepherd volunteers: "One of the midwives told us it is such a treat and the best part of their day to receive a meal!"

The other 30 meals are assigned according to need, whether that is because the recipient is in financial difficulties, cannot get out of the house and so on.

Robbie said: "Miranda goes around talking to people and she gets a sense of who's more in need than others, and some people have a meal every other night, one or two are every third night, and some chaps, who originally came out of a

shelter into their own accommodation, we support them two or three times a week."

Kevin Lewis said of the project: "The generosity, kindness and flexibility of our volunteers has been amazing. This project sprung up out of nowhere, we made it up as we went along, and it evolved very quickly into something extraordinary."

"We've been listening to God for new ways to find and meet needs in our community, and this provided the opportunity to repurpose and reimagine other ideas in an immediate and effective way."

The project has been helpful for the volunteers, too, as Robbie explained: "It's a general feeling amongst the group. We've all been able to do something to contribute rather than sit at home and twiddle our thumbs. It's just a nice feeling, coming together."

Read more about the work going on at the Good Shepherd, Carshalton on page 1.

'Opening their souls to the viewer': local artists illustrate the Stations of the Cross for St Peter and St Paul, Lingfield

We started planning earlier this year for our Stations of the Cross art exhibition, writes Liz Moor, Parish Administrator at St Peter and St Paul, Lingfield.

This was the second time that Lingfield Parish Church had asked the local community to produce artwork for the Stations of the Cross. We turned again for help to local resident Sarah Thilo, a big contributor to the previous event.

Sarah had, since then, started an art therapist course at Tobias School of Art and Therapy in East Grinstead. When she mentioned it to her fellow students, the whole class asked if they could participate too.

Fourteen students — most of them artists or teachers but all from different walks of life, religions, generations, countries and ethnic backgrounds — each chose a Station of the Cross to respond to artistically.

When the COVID-19 outbreak put paid to our original plans to display the artwork at St Peter and St Paul Church



The Second Station by Sophia Louise Butler (left) and the Eighth Station by Jaquelynn A Taipe-Margiotta (right)

over the Easter period, Sarah suggested we hold the exhibition online instead. Richard Holroyd, our Churchwarden, then had the idea of releasing one image per day on our website in the run-up to Easter Sunday alongside daily reflections.



painting the Eighth Station, I felt that what Jesus wanted us to remember was an important commandment, 'To love thy neighbour as yourselves'."

It was my job to post the images and prayers on the website and Twitter. Uploading the artwork each day seemed very poignant in the current climate. The daily reflections worked almost in perfect harmony with the sentiment and emotions a lot of us were feeling.

An artist opens part of their soul to the viewer when they display their work and you could feel this in the artwork produced. One believed the artists really cared about the subject and the messages conveyed. I certainly felt connected to the passage to Easter Sunday, at an especially important time, when the church was closed.

Richard said: "It was strange journeying through Holy Week at home but I found great help from the daily Stations of the Cross on the church website."

All the artwork is on display until Pentecost at www.lingfieldparishchurch.org

Walking alone but together in support of Christian Aid

St Peter and St Paul, Chaldon stands at the halfway mark of the Pilgrim Way from Winchester to Canterbury, writes the Revd Helen Burnett, Vicar of the parish (pictured right with Jane Edwards, Churchwarden, and Molly the dog).

In 2019 we made our first ever parish pilgrimage. There were tears and laughter, prayers and blisters, but by the time we arrived in Canterbury we had caught the pilgrim bug.

Fast forward to 2020 and a very different and damaging contagion was in our midst and our happy band of pilgrims were locked down in Surrey. Instead of setting out for Winchester, we were grounded.

We decided that we would keep the spirit of pilgrimage alive in a different way. Where better to roam for our daily exercise than the byways of Tandridge Deanery? Our pilgrimage would be undertaken separately, with each of us walking as much or as little as we could during the week of 10-15 May in support of Christian Aid.

Each day began with a shared a SoundCloud reflection based on the writings of Julian of Norwich and ended



with a sharing of Pilgrim News on Zoom and Night Prayer. We may have swapped community for solitude but as we shared our photos, prayers and thoughts, the wider church community came with us. Suddenly the pilgrimage had become accessible to anyone.

We were truly blessed by the company of our honorary pilgrims. Whether we walked half a mile or 110 miles in solitude we were surrounded by God's glory in Creation and by God's people in prayer; we never truly walked alone.

In all, we totted up a total of 558 miles and £2,047 for the work of Christian Aid. The original 15 pilgrims came from St Peter and St Paul, Chaldon; St Luke, Whyteleafe; and St Mary, Caterham.

Laptop donation to school shows 'hope in the future'

When Archbishop Tenison's School had to move its teaching online in response to the Coronavirus crisis, our leadership team was determined that the secondary school's uniquely Christian ethos would be at the heart of this new way of working, writes Elizabeth Gregory, SIAMS Leader at the school.

But while the move to online learning was successful for many, not every family has access to a computer. So, through the generosity of the school's long-standing partners the Worshipful Company of Dyers, the school has been able to provide personal laptops to children with no other means of engaging with learning at home. As one grateful student noted, the company has showed him "hope in his future".

However challenging these times may be, and even though they are not able to be present at school, staff and students alike have found they can be very much together as a community.



We use a Microsoft Teams subscription as a platform for staff and students to communicate, upload learning resources and support group worship.

The school partnerships have demonstrated faith in action and helped the school to live out its vision as Jesus commanded his disciples in Matthew 5:16: "Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven."

Wallington 92-year-old goes the distance for Christian Aid

92-year-old Ron Morris has raised more than £1,500 for Christian Aid by walking nearly 25 miles around the almshouses where he lives in Wallington.

When Ron realised that the lockdown would affect his church's usual door-to-door fundraising activities, the St Michael and All Angels, Beddington parishioner pledged to walk 200 x 200 metres in the grounds of his home over Christian Aid week.

He said: "Love never fails. Coronavirus impacts all of us. But love unites us all. As this virus spreads across the world, love rises up in response. Your love protects. From storms, from drought, and now from Coronavirus."



Organist 'walks' the Camino in lockdown

Graham Long, Director of Music at St George, Forest Hill, had a more ambitious lockdown project than most: when the restrictions came into force, he decided to 'walk' the Camino de Santiago.

Of course, walking the actual route was impossible, so Graham settled instead for covering the equivalent distance of the French route from Sarria to Santiago by tramping the streets around Hayes in Kent, where he lives.

Walking for his prescribed one hour a day, Graham covered the 115km distance in 25 days. He chose places to walk that most closely resembled the landmarks he might have passed in Galicia, and stuck as far as possible to leafy wooded trails, listening to the birdsong and imagining himself far away from the city.

As with any pilgrimage, Graham said he used the time for contemplation. "During



the walks, it has been great to observe nature, buildings and houses. It was also a great time to reflect on many things whilst walking – good for the soul and also for fitness," he said.

Having 'walked' the Camino, Graham went on to tackle the 136km route from Southwark Cathedral to Canterbury over 22 days, once again following a centuries-old pilgrims' route in his imagination.

Church life gets a new look at St Mary Magdalene, Wandsworth Common

At St Mary Magdalene, Wandsworth Common, church life continues in all kinds of ways during lockdown.

Junior Church members have been using their artistic skills to make Thank You Key Workers banners (right), the congregation has donated toiletries for residents of Ronald Gibson House, the local care home, and everyone has been



getting to grips with Zoom to continue their Home, Prayer and Bible Study groups.

Parishioners are shopping for one another, collecting prescriptions and helping out in all kinds of ways – and an online fundraising quiz has boosted morale all round.

Although the congregation could not worship inside the church at Easter, they brought the cross outside so that everyone could still celebrate.

It was covered in Palm crosses for Palm Sunday, bare for Good Friday and wreathed in flowers to mark Easter Sunday (left). The cross will also make its return in a starring role for Pentecost.



DISCIPLESHIP & MINISTRY

Ministry on the front line

The Coronavirus crisis has left no one's life untouched, but in some places – hospitals, care homes, prisons – it has left even more of a mark. Over the next four pages, we hear from people in the Diocese who have gone fearlessly to the front line and witnessed the effects of the pandemic first hand, as they share the highs and lows of ministering to the most vulnerable.

Courage and challenge in a time of crisis



Table talk:
hospital chaplains
and visitors gather
at the 2019 Pan-
London Meeting of
Chaplains to discuss
their work.

There is no doubt that hospital chaplains across the Diocese have risen to the immense challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, writes the Revd Alistair McCulloch, the Bishop's Adviser for Healthcare Chaplaincy.

They have demonstrated energy, commitment and sometimes considerable imagination. As in the parishes, we have had to cope with a fast-changing situation and adapt our ministry to the varying needs of our patients, their families and NHS staff.

Throughout the crisis, all our chaplains have continued to offer pastoral support to patients and their families; in some cases we have had to be quite inventive about this, especially in Hospital Trusts

where face-to-face visiting may have been suspended on some (or even all) wards and units.

In these cases, chaplains have provided support for patients and for relatives on the phone which has been equally well appreciated.

One colleague described how, at the height of the outbreak, he spent four hours on the Intensive Care Unit praying with the dying and supporting staff. At the same time he was on the phone or FaceTime with family members who were not able to be present in person and linking them up with their loved ones so that they were able to say goodbye.

All my colleagues report how they have provided more support for hospital staff



who have been under huge (sometimes intolerable) pressure over the past weeks and months, not least following the death of a nursing colleague from COVID-19.

This could raise so many issues; the grief for the loss of a colleague and friend, the need to continue to work while mourning, the stress and anxiety around becoming infected and even dying and the risk of infecting our families and friends.

All this has been especially keenly felt by many of our nurses who are from the Philippines and elsewhere who have no family in the UK; all this and the added pressure from family to return home in order to be "safe".

The drop-in and phone support sessions that many of us have regularly offered

Bringing calm to troubled waters

During the past few months at Surrey and Sussex NHS Healthcare Trust, the chaplaincy practice and service has been very much tested, writes the Revd Stanley Njoka (pictured near right, with the Revd Alistair McCulloch, in a photograph taken before social distancing measures were in place).

All the chaplains are very involved in supporting patients, including those who are COVID-19 positive. They also provide telephone support for families who are not able to visit their relatives. In the meantime, the chaplains have continued to offer solace and spiritual guidance to people of all faiths and none.

Staff support

Chaplains support staff who are dealing with the emotional challenges of the pandemic, including staff who have been redeployed across the hospital and staff who provide end-of-life care.

We are also proud to support new nursing staff who have just arrived from overseas and have worried friends and relatives abroad. We offer pastoral support to staff and, though some are scared of dying in a foreign country, they have continued to care for our patients with courage and confidence.

We have received many calls for support from the staff and patients, and developed new ways of offering spiritual succour. We also provide religious resources, such as Bibles, Qurans and rosaries. These materials have been very much appreciated by people looking for any source of hope and strength.

In the chaplaincy team, we changed our working patterns to be able to provide prayers and spiritual support to the Intensive Care and Emergency department nurses. During the peak of the crisis, the chaplaincy team worked from 7.00am till 8.00pm to be able to offer prayers in the morning and during the evening handover, as a way of offering support, encouragement and reassurance. This has been very much



appreciated by the staff, including those who have no religious affiliation.

We also provide cards so staff can write their prayer requests, and we have been quite overwhelmed by the number of the cards we receive.

Bereaved families

Compassionate end-of-life care is in the heart of our chaplaincy department and integral to our Trust values. It is always so difficult to comfort those who are afraid or seeking answers about death and dying, to administer Last Rites, or to connect families for prayers and final goodbyes to their dying relatives while using digital equipment.

We know that families have not been able to attend funerals or had the same system of support as they did before COVID-19. This inspired me to call bereaved families, lend a listening ear and offer to facilitate a memorial service after the pandemic is over. Many of the families we talked to mentioned to us that they had not been able to attend funerals owing to the government restrictions, or perhaps they had been in isolation or could not travel to where the funeral was held. To date, we have offered bereavement support to 450 grieving families by phone.

We often feel frustrated and helpless as we wish we could offer people a

therapeutic hug or just a therapeutic touch. The struggle of holding the silence or ministry of presence whilst supporting people one-to-one is an added challenge when you are using phones or Zoom.

BAME

It has been extremely concerning to hear about the disproportionate impact of Coronavirus on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. We have been working hard to support the religious and cultural needs of colleagues from all BAME backgrounds, including with prayers and, recently, ensuring that our Muslim colleagues had the space to pray and give advice about fasting during Ramadan.

We also provided an Imam's number for phone prayers and blessings, as well as copies of the Quran and Quran cubes.

Easter, Passover and Ramadan celebrations were all affected by the pandemic. However we have assured colleagues that we will one day come together and celebrate.

Wider involvement

We have also been very much involved in other areas such as BAME peer-to-peer support groups, a Clinical Ethics Advisory Committee, and COVID-19 strategic meetings among others.

"I've had the chance to witness amazing work"



Soon after the lockdown began, Mia Hilborn, Hospitalier at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Trust, appealed for Chaplaincy volunteers, writes the Revd Michael Rawson, Sub Dean and Canon Pastor of Southwark Cathedral.

There is usually a team of 100 chaplaincy volunteers/students at the Trust and this dropped to two with the outbreak of COVID-19. With the prospect of three months' working from home and living around the corner from St Thomas', I jumped at the opportunity.

As a volunteer I officiated at the funerals of people who had died in the hospital and had no living relatives. It was a humbling and poignant experience and opened a window on the challenges facing funeral directors who continue to ensure those at the end of life are treated with respect and dignity.

I have visited patients on the wards, dressed in full PPE gear, which brings home the real challenge facing healthcare professionals. In ministry we rely on being close to people, perhaps holding the hand of the dying and being able to see faces and smiles. Wearing a mask and visor distances us from others.

All the staff of the hospital continue to be under immense pressure and I have been involved as a well-being adviser in the Rest and Recharge zones which aim to support staff during breaks on their shift, serving them drinks and being a listening ear.

Volunteering has been enriching, seeing young and old on their journey with COVID-19, nourishing my vocation as a priest and pastor and also giving me the chance to witness at first hand the amazing work being carried out by those in our health and care systems.



◀ for our hospital staff have been hugely appreciated. Staff have responded to us with gratitude for our continued presence and comforting support. One colleague reported to me last week that he had just come back from a meeting which he had not been looking forward to... In fact what

happened was that he was presented with a "great big cake"!

Our chapels and prayer rooms have, for the most part, remained open and available to staff and patients as quiet spaces (left), although we have not been able to hold any of our regular services.

Some colleagues have streamed Sunday services while others have offered prayer support and encouragement through regular email updates to staff. Here at the Royal Marsden we set up a "virtual prayer group" for staff offering encouraging scriptures, videos and topics for prayer, some of which have been shared by members of the group.

The response to this has been great and we now have some 60 to 70 regular

members. It will be interesting to see how many of these start coming to chapel when we are able to restart services!

I have to say that the way that my colleagues in chaplaincy have risen to the challenge of the present crisis is altogether impressive and inspiring.

It has been tough much of the time and we have been really grateful for all the offers of support we have received from the parishes, not least from both clergy and lay people wanting to volunteer as chaplains in these days (see the Revd Canon Michael Rawson's story about doing just that, right).

We are also incredibly grateful for all the prayers which have been offered for us and for the healing work of all our hospitals.



DISCIPLESHIP & MINISTRY

Ministry on the front line

“Prison staff have exhibited extraordinary courage, away from the public gaze”

The Revd Canon Tim Bryan, Bishop's Adviser on Prison Chaplaincy, reflects on an extraordinary few months in prison ministry

In contrast to hospitals, it is understandable that prisons have not been at the forefront of people's consciousness in the past three months with so many other pressing issues and concerns.

And yet there has been some extraordinary work going on in the five prisons within the Diocese (HMP Wandsworth, HMP Brixton, HMP Belmarsh, HMP Isis and HMP Thameside) to ensure that prisoners and staff have been safeguarded during the pandemic.

These are complex places with lots of staff and residents occupying a relatively small space, so the challenges of maintaining physical distancing yet encouraging positive and supportive relationships has been very real.

Vital element

Whilst, sadly, there has been serious illness and some deaths nationally, the extent of this has been considerably less than anticipated; a recent Public Health England (PHE) report concluded that the restrictions introduced had played a significant role in this. As with other areas of public service, prison staff have exhibited extraordinary professionalism and courage, away from the public gaze, in supporting those in their care.

Chaplaincy teams across the country continue to be a vital element in this daily operation of prisons, offering faith resources and contributing to the care of all, and particularly those who are dealing with loss and anxiety.

Importantly, the lack of social visits and restrictions on attending funerals has meant that new ways have been developed to maintain connections with family and significant other people, with additional phone credit provided and live-streaming of funerals. And amongst all this, chaplains are not immune from sickness and anxiety themselves, though often returning to a place of service and care for others.

An integral part of many prison chaplaincy teams is the band of Christian



volunteers from local churches and organisations who are dedicated to supporting prisoners through worship, Bible studies, Alpha, bereavement and restorative justice programmes such as Prison Fellowship's Sycamore Tree programme. In collaboration with chaplains, these people become part of that transformational community through whom God changes lives.

Complex future

Sadly, the need to reduce visitors to prisons has meant this work is currently on hold but faith literature is being widely distributed, prison TV and radio stations are carrying faith services, and many people are praying for a continuance of God's work in people's lives.

Coming out of this pandemic for prisons is complex, as the potential for a new spike of infection remains very real. There will need to be a critical balance between the restoration of important activities such as family visits, education, work and religious activities and also ensuring the prison environment remains free of the COVID-19 virus. Do pray that senior prison leaders will have wisdom in determining this balance, for the resilience of prison staff and that those held in custody will remain properly supported.

Tim Bryan appointed Bishop's Adviser on Prison Chaplaincy

The Revd Canon Tim Bryan (right), formerly Co-ordinating Chaplain at HMP Wandsworth, and now Chaplaincy Adviser HM Prisons and Probation Service (Midlands, Yorkshire and NE), was announced as the Bishop's new Adviser on Prison Chaplaincy at the end of April.

Bishop Christopher said: "I am very grateful to Tim for agreeing to act as my Adviser on Prison Chaplaincy. I will Commission him for this role in due course and he will be a source of expertise and information on prison issues in the Diocese."



I was delighted recently to accept Bishop Christopher's invitation to become his Diocesan Adviser on Prison Chaplaincy (see box above). Although I came to prison chaplaincy relatively late within my working life, and after a career in the Metropolitan Police, the 11 years I spent at HMP Wandsworth were undoubtedly the most significant, humbling and joyous experience of Christian service. Not that the environment or the circumstances of people's lives were always easy but throughout my time there I was blessed with extraordinary Christian fellowship.

Others from local churches, Christian organisations and individuals committed

themselves to support me and the chaplaincy team, and to work within the strictures of the prison system, in order to bring God's message of hope and reconciliation to all who would listen.

I became a passionate supporter of them, and of chaplaincy and the role it has in the mission of the Church and as a vehicle for God's love. I know this is an attitude shared by the Bishops and Archdeacons of the Diocese. If there is anything I can do that might encourage you or your church to experience this then we need to have a conversation. Prison ministry is not for everyone but for those it is they are grateful that prison chaplaincy exists.



LET US PRAY...

The Revd Tim Clapton
Chaplain, HMP Wandsworth

As usual, our Chaplaincy department at HMP Wandsworth has been busy, but we have found ourselves working in new ways.

Our weekly church services are recorded on the prison radio and broadcast each Sunday morning. We have also been putting weekly printed material under each door with news, general encouragement and prayers.

We devised a simple Morning and Night Prayer from Common Worship and these have been warmly received and used regularly by the men.

There has been an increase in the number of men whose loved ones have died because of the virus. Obviously they are not able to attend funerals so we now use a video link to the funerals and relatives. Lighting candles in the chapel is always a comfort and

a private time for men to pray and weep.

Our SPA, Wendy Stephens (below), was not initially able to come into prison owing to the restrictions. She had been doing much of the bereavement support before April. But she has been supporting us by recording intercessions and sending greetings to the men she has been visiting. Thankfully she begins work again in the department next week.

We have noticed that as the pandemic continues the mental health of prisoners becomes a challenge. Quite naturally men are sometimes worried about their relatives. We are visiting and trying to be as visible on the wings offering prayer and scriptures. It is wonderful to see how men are being sustained by their faith.

Please do pray for those in prison and their relatives.

*Safeguarding God,
whose son transforms us through his suffering
and vulnerability.
Hold us when we are afraid,
be present when we are locked away,
and free us from our prison of doubt and fear.
With those we love, surround us with your grace
and in these days be glorified in our lives turned
to you.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*



To listen to an audio version of this prayer, visit our website:
southwark.anglican.org/news/dailyprayer

HMP Wandsworth hears world premiere of gospel track

Staff and prisoners at HMP Wandsworth were the first to hear a new song recorded by the Soul Sanctuary Gospel Choir when it premiered on the prison's radio station on Pentecost Sunday.

Rise Within Us was recorded on choir members' phones, and put together to form a piece of 'sung scripture' based on Acts 2. This is a form of improvised speech and singing which forms part of the choir's monthly ministry at St James, Piccadilly.



Clarence Hunte, Choir Director, said: "We are honoured to have been asked by the chaplaincy team at HMP Wandsworth to sing there again, even though this time it's virtual."

Find a recording of the song at: youtu.be/fap_HUJ8jC8

"I sat and held the patient's hand, and thought: 'I can't let him die on his own' "

Only a few months ago, Jane was working for NHS England on a project benchmarking performance and practice for hospitals. She had retired from her role as a senior nurse two years before, and spent her Sunday mornings singing in the choir at St John, Shirley. And then the Coronavirus crisis happened.

"Our boss said, 'Well, anyone who's a nurse, you could offer yourself back to the front line.' I do a job share, and myself and my job share partner went to a South London NHS hospital to work in intensive care, and we've worked there since 1 April," Jane says.

It was a steep learning curve: both Jane and her job-share partner had been ward sisters previously and had never worked on ICU. "The staff were managing a traumatic situation," she says. "Some of them were moved to tears. They were shocked and trying hard to treat this new disease without known protocols, they'd had to use every bed available, it was just awful."

Even when a routine was established, staff were working outside usual norms. For a start, no visitors were allowed. "It was just staff, never any visitors, no outsiders in there. All the patients were in induced comas, basically anaesthetised, so every patient was unconscious at all times, whereas normally in ICU you've got people being weaned off their ventilators or opening their eyes."



every machine, three or four pumps by every bed, all beeping at different pitches, it was a cacophony of sound, and in the middle of it I just watched. I sat and held his hand, and thought, 'I can't let him die on his own.' "

Her voice breaking, Jane also recalls how they put a little knitted heart into a dying patient's hand, so that the man's relatives would be able to have something that their loved one had held at the end.

"We had to write cards to the relatives," she adds, "and my job share partner said, 'What on earth am I going to write in this card?' And I said, 'Well, what would we want to read?' So we just made sure they knew we were sat with him when he died."

But alongside the "unbearable moments", when even experienced nurses broke down and cried, Jane says there were moments of grace, too. The hospital chaplains provided care and support, and staff could access counselling services. The camaraderie of working together under pressure, the relationships that were built, and the kindness of strangers, buying food for the front-line staff, also left their mark.

"You do help each other on, and people do their absolute best. It's amazing how many people did survive and how many people did get better and left the hospital," she says.

Jane's faith, too, helped, as did the community at St John, Shirley. "It would have been unbearable otherwise," she says. "Everybody was praying like mad at points: please let this work, please let the families not be too upset. You just send prayers over the airwaves and hope."

"You do help each other on, and people do their absolute best"

And then there was the PPE. "Every day we had a different batch from a different country, a different colour. For a while we had those jumpsuits that the police wear at murder scenes.

"The interesting thing was that everybody looked the same. So you didn't actually know who anybody was until you got really close up and looked them in the eye. And that was really interesting, it was a leveller. You didn't know if they were a doctor, a porter, a cleaner, a nurse."

Jane was there to act as a runner for the usual ICU nurses, drawing up drugs and keeping an eye on patients' vital signs. She was also available to provide care and comfort, at a time when no one else could. "I sat with a man as he died, as they turned the machines off," she says. "In the middle of this room with lights on,



IN FOCUS...

VE Day celebrations

Diocese marks VE Day with a call for peace

As the country celebrated the 75th anniversary of VE Day on Friday 8 May, Southwark Cathedral played its part with a live-streamed service from the Deanery.

The Dean, Andrew Nunn, presided and Bishop Christopher preached. He talked of his mother's account of what happened that day, 75 years ago, written as a "14-and-three-quarter-year-old schoolgirl" in her exercise book, saying: "We do not remember this in a spirit of triumphalism, but rather in thanksgiving to God, for deliverance from evil against all the odds

and sombre remembrance of the human cost, which was great."

That human cost was recalled in the montage of photographs of relatives and loved ones who had lived and served during those years which accompanied a recording of Southwark Cathedral choir singing John Ireland's anthem, *Greater Love*.

People from around the Diocese had shared these before the service; some of the stories that came with the photographs are shown on these pages.

A recording of the service can be found online at: bit.ly/SouthwarkVEDayService

Tilly Richardson sent in a photograph of her parents, Colonel David Tildesley and Mrs Leslie Tildesley.

September 1939 was a busy month for her father, who enlisted the day after war was declared and also married Tilly's mother.

He saw action in Italy, where he was awarded the first of his two Military Crosses in 1943 for a night of fierce action that culminated in a wounded Colonel Tildesley leading the survivors of what was intended to be a night advance in an attack in broad daylight.

His second Military Cross came in 1944, again in Italy. The citation praised his determination and cool courage as he defended a farmhouse from continual short-range machine gun fire.

Colonel Tildesley survived the war, dying in 2018 at the age of 101.



David and Leslie Tildesley

This photograph shows Sandra Elsom's parents. It was taken in Trafalgar Square, on the occasion of their engagement, not long after VE day.

Sandra writes: "They met as teenagers when mum was evacuated from London to Cornwall and ended up being billeted with Dad's aunt. They had celebrated 68 years of marriage when Dad died in 2015."



Olive and Trevor Richards

Alison Burtt sent in pictures of her father and father-in-law.

She writes: "My father, William Hartley, served with the Royal Engineers and was in Bremen, Germany on VE Day having accepted surrender from German Soldiers a few days before.

"My father-in-law, Gerald Burtt, served in the Royal Artillery and was a Japanese POW working on the death railway on VE Day."



William Hartley



Gerald Burtt



Geoffrey Gowlland

This photo of Captain Geoffrey Gowlland was sent in by his daughter Jessica Kingsley.

He is pictured with General Montgomery, right, on 6 May 1944, at Royal Naval Air Station Hatston (Orkney).



Donald Viner

Andrew Viner sent in a picture of his late father in RAF uniform.

He writes: "It was taken in 1940 when he joined up as a volunteer. His mother had it taken because she thought he would never come home.

"He served as an instructor during the war but had a nervous breakdown when crews he worked with were killed in raids over Germany. After convalescing in Blackpool, he was sent to India and later to Burma. He caught dengue fever which troubled him for the rest of his life and he died aged 53.

"On VE Day my father was in Burma and after VJ Day he was sent back to India. The RAF refused to demob him because of the Indian uprisings. He joined in a one-day mutiny and was discharged two weeks later. The people who organised the mutiny were convicted and sent to Reading Gaol."

Christine Crewe sent in an image of her father, Alfred.

She writes: "Mum and Dad met at the nurses' New Year's Eve dance at Banstead Hospital, Sutton, Surrey, in 1937. Mum had moved south to train as a nurse in Sutton and Dad's father, a concert pianist, was playing at the dance when Dad accompanied him to help.

"After the dance, Mum and Dad didn't see one another until a few weeks later when they bumped into one another at the Belmont Pub in Sutton. From then, they were inseparable, being very much in love. They were engaged on 17 March 1938 and married on 5 September that year. They lived in Sutton together and my eldest sister was born on 21 June 1939, only a few months before World War Two broke out.



Alfred Crewe

"Dad volunteered for the RAF and wanted to fly but was prevented owing to an underlying health problem. But he served as ground crew and was responsible for communications in his platoon, learning the Morse code to good effect, a skill he never forgot. He spent much time in North Africa and Italy during the war, and would sometimes bump into my Uncle Don (one of Mum's brothers) who was in the British Army stationed in Italy.

"When the bombing in London heightened, Dad's father 'packed Mum off' to her parents in Birmingham, as she had two small children then, my sisters Anne, born 1939, and Valerie, born 1942. When Dad was on leave in England, he was happy to spend time with my Mum and my sisters, whom he adored. Perhaps

not being able to fly saved his life during the terrible air raids that took place.

"After the War, there was much rejoicing but Mum's health was not good for some years, so Mum and Dad waited until 1949 when I was born and Dad said he looked forward to being able to see his third child grow up, something that had been missing with his first two. Dad would have liked a boy and had chosen the name Christopher, but this was quickly changed to Christine when I was born a girl!

"I can still remember the post-war rationing and the treat of bread and dripping on the tea table. We were all grateful, though, for the sacrifices that had been made for us by everyone in the War. For me, my childhood post-war was a precious, calm, carefree time."

Margaret Cave sent in a photograph of Charles Medhurst from the congregation at Christ Church East Greenwich, taken in Singapore in 1945.

She says: "Charles has been a member of Christ Church, East Greenwich for 95 years on 15 May – he was baptised when he was two weeks old and the only time he hasn't attended weekly was when he was serving in the Navy during the war.

"He has done every role in the church from Churchwarden to choir member. He still arranges flowers and bakes cakes for the church."



Charles Medhurst



Joyce Owen

Caroline McCowen sent a photo of the medical team in the Naval Hospital at Trincomalee, Ceylon, taken during World War Two.

She says: "My Mother, Joyce Owen, seated bottom row on the right, was sister in charge of the hospital aged 21 years! Such a young age for much responsibility."



Sidney and Doreen Dafters

Susan Munnery shared this photo of her parents.

"My father served in the RAF, travelling to places such as India and Egypt," she writes. "My mother was too young to serve but lived through some very difficult times as her father was in the Navy (serving on HMS Hood – but by a quirk of fate not on its last voyage) and they lived in Portsmouth before moving to Reading where she met my father. Both cities were bombed significantly.

"However they both had good memories of life at that time and afterwards despite the ongoing restrictions and rationing. They married in 1949.



Douglas Lucas

Cherry James shared a photograph of her father and a friend, name unknown.

She writes: "This is my father, Captain (though probably Lieutenant at the time) Douglas Lucas, with a friend who was killed in Italy where this photo was taken, probably in 1945.

"My father is on the left and would have been only 18 at the time. He had given up pipe smoking well before I was born a number of years later!"

To see more...

Find a video of the VE Day service at: bit.ly/SouthwarkVEDayService



St Michael's Primary, Southfields hangs out the bunting for VE Day

The national lockdown did not stop St Michael's CE School, Southfields, from marking the 75th Anniversary of VE Day in style, writes Caroline Jopp, PCC Secretary at St Barnabas, Southfields.

Ann-Marie Grant, the school's headteacher, had originally planned for a whole school tea party and picnic, complete with bunting; red, white and blue costumes; and plenty of wartime music.

Instead, the children were invited to send in their decorated bunting, and photographs of their home-made air raid shelters, traditional British teas and their patriotic outfits.

In the meantime, the children of key workers who were still attending school were treated to their own exclusive Royal Tea Party, with Mrs Grant hosting them, resplendent in her own special regal hat!

A one-off VE Day Newsletter was also created and sent out to all the St Michael's families, which included interviews with local Southfields residents who shared their memories of VE Day, including dancing the Conga around the neighbouring streets.

Not to be outdone, the entire staff contributed a photograph of themselves with their 'favourite thing', which was then featured in a special montage to the popular tune from *The Sound of Music* soundtrack. This seemed especially fitting as the film is set at the start of World War Two and the song focuses on the positives in life when times are hard and children are unsettled: bit.ly/StMichaelStaffVEDay

The bunting, which was created at home by the pupils, was then laminated and put up on the school fence for anyone walking past to enjoy, and hopefully to ponder the sacrifice made all those years ago.



St Silas, Nunhead honours vicar lost in air raid



On 11 May 1941, the Revd Stanley Francis Tolley, vicar of St Antony with St Silas, Nunhead, was killed while on air raid duty. On 8 May 2020, 79 years later, the parish had planned to dedicate a plaque in his honour (above) which would have been placed in the narthex of the church.

The Revd Dr Malcolm Torry, self-supporting minister at St Silas, said: "The dedication will now have to happen on a later date when we can again gather in the church building. But one thing that we have been able to do is put up the banner that had been prepared for the event."



VE Day memories from St John, Richmond



Mary Ricketts, a Churchwarden at St John the Divine, Richmond, shared this painting of a Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve vessel. Her father skippered a vessel just like this one during World War Two.

St Michael, Barnes rings the bells for VE Day



The Revd Stephen Stavrou, vicar at St Michael and All Angels, Barnes, led an Act of Remembrance from in front of the Memorial Altar inside his church at 10.55am on 8 May.

"As we remember the many soldiers, sailors and airmen who gave their lives restraining evil and opposing tyranny, so we also come in thanksgiving for the many years of peace that the nations of Europe have enjoyed," he said.

The short act of worship ended with the church bells ringing and two minutes of silence.



Chair: Biddy Taylor

E: biddytaylor.spidirchair@gmail.com
020 7622 4912

For information about training courses to become a spiritual director, contact Jacky Sutcliffe:
E: spidircourse@gmail.com
07870 744257

Finding a spiritual director

Please go to our website,
www.spidir.org.uk,
or contact Biddy Taylor (above)

To see more...

Find a video of the Diocesan VE Day service at: bit.ly/SouthwarkVEDayService

