



The BRIDGE

Newspaper of the Anglican Diocese of Southwark

**Walking
Welcoming
Growing**

Vol.27 No.4
May 2022

Creative outreach

From exercise classes to Bubble Church: how parishes are reaching people in new ways

See pages 6-7



Maundy Money

Southwark's nominees for the Queen's annual gift share their experiences

See page 8



A life of faith

As he prepares to retire, Bishop Richard reflects on two decades in ministry in Kingston

See page 12



Downing Street announces Bishop of Croydon Designate

On Tuesday 3 May, shortly after 10am, Dr Rosemarie Mallett was announced as Bishop of Croydon Designate by 10 Downing Street.

Bishop Christopher invited those present at the press conference in Southwark Cathedral which followed the announcement to greet the Bishop Designate with a warm round of applause. He then quoted from Psalm 98, saying: "Sing to the Lord a new song! We are singing a new song on Rosemarie's appointment. She will be the first female Bishop of Croydon and the second UKME Bishop with Bishop Karowei already in the Episcopal Team."

In her response, the Bishop Designate said: "It is such a wonderful day and all according to God's will. Thinking of the journey I made, the thought of being a Bishop was never in my mind, but to serve God wherever I was sent."

Speaking of the Croydon Area she added: "The more I got to know the people and

the area, the more I felt I was called there. This diversity and difference we talk about, Croydon has so much of it. I want to bring my joy of partnership working and the joy of diversity and to look at what the opportunities and challenges are to find the best ways to work together."

Accompanied by the Archdeacon of Reigate, the Venerable Moira Astin, the Bishop Designate embarked on a tour of the Croydon Episcopal Area, first stopping at the BME Forum Community Group Wellness Centre, based at the Whitgift Centre in Croydon.

The charity, of which she is an active supporter, runs a variety of health and well-being services for the community. The Director, Andrew Brown, thanked the Bishop Designate for her continued support and introduced her to the mental health team. She told them how important the work they were doing on the front line was, and suggested the need for a chaplain to support people's spiritual needs.



Bishop Designate Dr Rosemarie Mallett outside Crystal Palace Football Club.

The Bishop Designate then went on to visit Palace For Life, Crystal Palace's official charity foundation that supports young people from across South London. There she met Susan Patterson-Smith, Head of Pathways and Learning.

At St Matthew's Church of England Primary School in Redhill, Year 6 pupils took time out from revising for SATs to show her around the school. She was particularly inspired by their very own version of the Diocese of Southwark Anti-Racism Charter.

At St Matthew's Food Bank in Redhill, the

Bishop Designate spoke to volunteers about the amazing support they have received from the community for the project. She recalled how, as a parish priest, her church had a food cupboard. "Never did I know it would turn into this sadly much needed service," she said.

Finally, she visited the Welcare Family Centre in Redhill and spoke to the staff, chief executive Anna Khan and Trustee Chris Elliott about the vital services they are providing to families in the area.

The Bishop Designate will be consecrated at Southwark Cathedral on Friday 24 June.

Kingston priest named as new Archdeacon of Croydon

The Revd Greg Prior is to replace the Venerable Dr Rosemarie Mallett as Archdeacon of Croydon, it was announced on 3 May.

Greg has been Vicar of All Saints with Holy Trinity, Wandsworth since September 2004. He also served as Acting Archdeacon of Wandsworth in 2021 while the Venerable John Kiddle was on sabbatical. He will take up his new duties in the autumn.



Bishop Christopher said: "I am delighted that the Revd Greg Prior will be offering his pastoral gifts, zeal for the Gospel, and

long experience as a parish priest to the Croydon Archdeaconry and the wider Diocese of Southwark, where he has served faithfully since 2004. I commend him and Judith, as well as the whole family, to your prayers."

Dr Rosemarie Mallett, the Bishop Designate of Croydon, said: "Croydon Area is a place of wonderful diversity and faith plays a major role in many people's lives. I very much look forward to Greg joining the team

and bringing his gifts and skills to the work of the Archdeaconry."

Greg said: "I am both excited and humbled to have been asked to be the Archdeacon of Croydon. I look forward to serving alongside the new Bishop of Croydon and the Archdeacon of Reigate – together with the clergy and church communities of the Croydon Archdeaconry – in sharing the love of Christ with the vibrant and diverse people of greater Croydon."

A view from The BRIDGE



Tom Holland, in his best-selling book, *Dominion*, explores what it is that made “Christianity so subversive and disruptive, how completely it came to saturate the mindset of Latin Christendom; and why, in a West that is often doubtful of religion’s claims, so many of its instincts remain – for good and ill – thoroughly Christian.”

In other words, the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Christ; the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and birth of the church was positively disruptive to the culture of its time!

At Pentecost, we see this Spirit-breathed disruption at work: bringing nations and cultures together, challenging sin and bringing reconciliation with God. As we come out of COVID-19 (if indeed we are), I sense that the Church has gone through a process of disruption. Some of us might wish that it is simply an interruption to our pastoral and liturgical practices. Yet, in recent months, we have been compelled to consider new ways of gathering of discipling, of engaging with people in mission and new opportunities have presented themselves. This has been both exciting and challenging, as is the way when God is doing a new thing.

Thy Kingdom Come has been established in churches throughout the world as nine days (novena) of prayer and action. At the first Pentecost, the Holy Spirit stirred the whole people of God of different races, ethnic backgrounds. I’m excited that the resources of Thy Kingdom Come have a real variety within them to enable us to pray, act and witness in a way that the Spirit leads, for the good of your community.

Picking up on the Pentecost theme of both unity and diversity, this year, Southwark Diocese is promoting “Thy Kingdom Come: All God’s People”. Each day of the novena, you are invited to read, pray, reflect and act in response to a particular theme:

- social justice and refugees
- children and young people
- lay ministry
- racial justice
- disability and discrimination
- the environment
- the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee
- ministerial well-being
- the Persecuted Church.

It may be that one of these themes is most pertinent to you. Please feel free to “stop and stay” with one topic, allowing yourself to go deeper in prayer, reflection and action. We don’t want to be prescriptive. The needs of our communities and society are too wide for that.

Instead, we offer these resources to enable parishes to use them as they see fit. Additional copies of each resource can be ordered. However, wanting to become “greener” in our approach, we have ensured that all resources are available to individuals and parishes digitally at southwark.anglican.org/tkc

The Mission team also offers grants to encourage parishes to reach out to their neighbours through prayer and action. Please consider what your parish might do.

The past years have been very hard for many people. The “breath of the Spirit” is much needed! May “all God’s people” pray: “Thy Kingdom Come”!

Jay Colwill

Read more about how parishes are finding new ways of connecting on pages 6-7



NEWS IN BRIEF

Wychcroft 60th anniversary celebrations

Bishop Christopher is extending an invitation to the 60th anniversary celebration of the work of Wychcroft, the Southwark Diocesan Retreat and Resource Centre. The event will take place at Wychcroft on 16 July, from 12noon to 4.30pm with a service of thanksgiving at 3pm. There will be an exhibition of Diocesan and local initiatives, as well as music from local church and school choirs. Tea and cakes will be supplied. Please bring your own sandwiches. Please do come and give thanks for the work of the Centre and the generosity of the St Mark’s Trust which supports it. Book here: 60-years-of-wychcroft.eventbrite.co.uk



Announcing the Bishop’s Certificate 2022-23

The Bishop’s Certificate in Discipleship is Southwark Diocese’s exploration of the Christian faith. It lasts for 10 months, starting in September, and it’s for anybody who wants to be more informed and confident about what they believe, read the Bible with more understanding, and reflect on their journey as a Christian. Please would you make the course known to anyone who might benefit. This year there is a free taster evening for anyone who is wondering whether it is suitable for them on Zoom on the evening of Monday 16 May. To find out more, and to request an application form, email bishopscertificate@southwark.anglican.org

Wanted: theatre chaplains

The pandemic has had a devastating impact on the theatre industry and now that theatres are open once more this ministry is needed more than ever. Theatre Chaplaincy UK provides pastoral support to all those working in the theatre, of all faiths and none. Its chaplains are each assigned a theatre, where they visit regularly, front of house and backstage, to offer support and a friendly, confidential listening ear to any in need. The organisation is looking to expand its team of chaplains and would love to hear from ordained and licensed lay candidates. To find out more, please email theatrechaplain@gmail.com

Fundraising film screening for Ukraine

London South Bank University is to host a film screening of the 2019 film *Mr Jones* on Tuesday 10 May at 6pm to help raise funds for Ukraine relief. The film tells the story of Gareth Jones, a journalist from Wales who travels to the Soviet Union in 1933 and uncovers the truth about a devastating famine in Ukraine in which millions died. Attendance is free but attendees are asked to make a donation to #HelpUkraine, the charity of the Ukrainian Association of Great Britain. Register here: bit.ly/3LwLQBY

Help wanted with ECLAS survey

Equipping Christian Leadership in an Age of Science (ECLAS), of which Bishop Richard is a founding member, is requesting help from any communicant members of the Church of England who hold a leadership role, lay or ordained in answering a survey. The results will be used to inform the organisation’s next phase of planning. Responding to the survey should take about 20-25 minutes. All responses will be anonymous as no identifying details will be stored and the deadline is 16 May. Please do share this request widely. Find the survey here: durham.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/eclas-survey

The Bridge is produced & published by:

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

Tel: 020 7939 9400 Email: bridge@southwark.anglican.org

The Editorial Team from the Communications Department:

Commissioning Editor:

Sophia Jones

Editor: Abigail Sanderson

Advertising and Distribution:

Susana Rojas

Editorial Group:

Ruth Martin

Editorial Adviser (vacant)

Sophia Jones

Alastair Cutting

Next Issue: Submission deadline and guidance

The JUNE edition is due to be published online on 1 June 2022. Material for that edition must be with Sophia Jones by e-mail by **FRIDAY 20 MAY**.

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



IN FOCUS...

News from the Diocese

SPAs reflect and reconnect during celebratory event

A morning of remembering, reflecting, reconnecting and re-visioning to celebrate SPA (Southwark Pastoral Auxiliaries) ministry was held at Trinity House on Saturday 2 April.

During the worship (the remembering session of the day), led by Sue Eastaugh, Archdeacons SPA for Wandsworth, those present were invited to light candles in memory of SPAs and others who had died and to remember others in need of prayers.

The reflection session was facilitated by UKME Representative for SPAs, Mitzi Isaacs, and Diocesan SPA, Wendy Stephens.

The SPAs discussed the challenges they had encountered in their ministry during lockdown; what they could celebrate; what they found helpful or uplifting; and what they might do differently going forward.

Some of the challenges they identified included connecting with people, staying safe, finding new ways of keeping in touch congregation-wide and dealing with technology. Difficulties around motivating volunteers were also cited. Their solutions included regular staff meetings, setting up an Angels Project to connect people offering help with those needing it, food



parcels, reaching out beyond the church, and simply going on walks with people.

Going forward, the SPAs planned to start bereavement visiting, keep in touch by phone, reach out to neighbours more, and spend more time listening and networking. In a moving reflection at the end of this session, each SPA fed back to the person next to them, whilst at the same time sharing with the others something that person had done over the past two years.

There was a time to reconnect over coffee and cake before the final session

Developing a church presence at Battersea Power Station



Bishop Richard and other guests receive an exclusive preview of the inside of Battersea Power Station on 6 April, before the development opens to the public in September.

The Bishop was joined by the Rt Revd Rob Gillion, Jackie Pontin, the Revd Canon Will Cookson, the Revd Canon Jay Colwill and David Airey of the Church Commissioners. Southwark Diocese has been working with Nine Elms Arts Ministry and the surrounding area to ensure that the new development has a Church presence.

Read an interview with Bishop Richard on page 12

of re-visioning entitled *SPA Mission Action Plan and onward training and development*. This was led by Archdeacons SPA for Reigate, Paul Budgen, and Representative for Onward Development of SPA ministry, Michael Brocket.

Paul presented the SPA strategic framework, "Loving, Listening, Learning", which explains why they do what they do, and how they will achieve this by creating a lifelong learning environment, communicating well and being collaborative with their incumbents.

The outcomes will be a pastoral culture where SPAs are able to offer more and better services, receive great feedback, promote pastoral ministry and operate well as part of the leadership team.

Paul explained that SPAs are a "really well-kept secret" but that they aim to change this.

Diocesan SPA Wendy Stephens said: "We all have gifts to offer. Our ministry is different from Reader ministry. If we hide ourselves in a corner, people won't know what SPA ministry is."

She also stressed the importance of SPAs training alongside and networking with incumbents and Readers.

Are you a great listener? Are you empathetic? Are you passionate about using your gifts to come alongside people in your parish and community? Then being a SPA could be for you. Find out more here: southwark.anglican.org/layministries

Keynote speaker programme announced for Southwark Diocesan Conference 2022

The first ever Diocesan Clergy and Lay Conference will take place from Thursday 1 to Saturday 3 September 2022 at Bacon's College in Rotherhithe in South East London and we are delighted to be partnering with one of our SDBE schools in this way.

The theme of the conference is "Christ centred, outward focused". Bishop Christopher said: "I am passionate about our Diocesan parishes, schools and communities sharing their faith widely. This conference will be a significant event for the Diocese as those engaged in licensed ministry, both lay and ordained, are invited to gather in person to reflect on how, as churches and individuals, we can be Christ-centred and outward-focused through mission, worship, the arts, and the provision we make for children and young people."

Some of the conference will also be live-streamed to enable those who do not hold the Bishop's licence to participate.



The Canon Missioner, Jay Colwill, said: "The conference programme is designed to offer content and resources reflecting the diversity of ministries across the Diocese and I am confident that the programme will provide delegates with an experience that is informative, engaging and enriching."

Alongside a number of excellent keynote speakers there will be a diverse programme of seminars and opportunities for joint thanksgiving, worship, hospitality and learning.

SDC2022: keynote speaker programme

Thursday 1 September

Francis Spufford: Communicating forgiveness to a culture that's forgotten it.

Revd Dr Melanie Marshall: Making friends and wasting time: can the Church learn anything from university?

Friday 2 September

Mark Russell: Helping children thrive, not just survive.

Revd Azariah France-Williams: Missing pieces lead to missing peace: why no one should be left behind for a Christ-centred church to be outward-focused.

Saturday 3 September

Mark Greene: Everyday faith, everyday fruitfulness.

Adjoa Andoh in conversation with Bishop Rob Gillion: A lay, purpose-driven approach to the miracle of life in church.

Invitations to register for the conference will be sent via email during May.

More information on the conference, including full details of the programme and FAQs, can be found at southwark.anglican.org/sdc2022

For any other queries, please contact SDC2022@southwark.anglican.org

Volunteering opportunities!

We are looking for volunteers to help ensure the smooth and effective running of the conference. If you – or anyone you know (aged 18 or over) – would be interested, please contact SDC2022@southwark.anglican.org



IN FOCUS...

News from our parishes

Gipsy Hill parish hosts day of fellowship for Farsi speakers

Christ Church, Gipsy Hill hosted a day of teaching, worship, food and fellowship for Farsi speakers on 9 April, with support from churches across the Diocese.

St Paul's in Kingston, St Peter's in Norbiton and Christ Church, East Greenwich joined Christ Church in welcoming 32 Iranian nationals, with representatives of five different churches and members of their ministry teams, for a day of celebration and home-cooked Iranian food.

The intention was to ensure the event was led as much as possible by the Iranians themselves, from the team who ran the kitchen to cook a delicious Iranian meal for 50 people, to a music group of men and women who led the sung worship. There were also intercessions and elements of the communion service led in Farsi. "The responsive Eucharistic prayer, spoken in English but with responses in Farsi was a beautiful culmination of the day's worship and teaching and a true taste of heaven," said Jonathan Croucher, Vicar of Christ Church.

The day ended with the fruits of a long day in the kitchen – three different rices,



and that a good number of churches around the Diocese were developing new ministries and seeing people join their fellowship."

Christ Church was able to offer baptism preparation for another local church but was keen to develop something that would unite this work and create a sense of community belonging across the Diocese. Thus the idea for the fellowship day was born.

Jonathan said: "The Lord has provided generously for this ministry – from that first encounter that enabled the first visitors to be welcome warmly in Farsi, to introductions to the Persian Anglican Community in London, to being joined over the past few weeks by the newly retired Revd Susan Height and her Iranian husband Ali, who are actively involved in the PACL."

He added: "Our eyes have been opened to the incredible move of God in Iran, the extraordinary growth in the Church there and the excitement of hearing how God has touched so many people's lives in wonderful ways as they have found themselves in life-threatening situations journeying from Iran to and through Europe. It is an indication of the risks Iranians face in professing faith in the Lord Jesus that we cannot use photos of the day that include our Iranian friends."

Christ Church is exploring starting a monthly teaching and worship event in Farsi, open to all in the Diocese. If you have Farsi speakers in your church who might wish to participate, please email vicar@gipsyhill.org.uk

"Our eyes have been opened to the incredible move of God in Iran, the extraordinary growth in the Church there"

lamb, shirazi salad and delicious Iranian sweets (see above).

More than 40 Farsi speakers have joined Christ Church over the past six months, with new individuals coming every month as others are moved on to accommodation outside London, most recently including a number of families with primary age children and toddlers.

The circumstances of each individual or family is different – their reasons for leaving Iran, their experience of Christian faith (some converting to Christ in Iran, others encountering the Lord in their journey through Europe or in their time in the UK), their occupations and status in Iran. A common thread has been their gentleness, integrity, desire to learn and their commitment to being involved in the whole life of the church.

Jonathan said: "It became clear that we were not alone in seeing numbers of Farsi speakers searching for Christian fellowship

St Mary, Wimbledon premieres seven new choral works



The choir of St Mary, Wimbledon premiered a collection of newly commissioned choral music at Evensong on 10 April, showcasing the talents of some of the country's best composers.

Prior to lockdown, the choir, directed by Max Barley, had commissioned seven well-established and local composers to create a collection of new choral music reflecting on the subject of Christ's Seven Last Words from the Cross.

The choral pieces, by Owain Park, David Bednall, Oliver Tarney, Ruth Byrchmore, Ken Burton, Esther Bersweden and Andrew Lenon, present a wide range of musical styles. Together, the collection forms a cohesive, distinctive and strikingly powerful meditation on Christ's sacrifice, his humanity and his purpose here on Earth.

After the Palm Sunday service, everyone was invited to gather for a bring and share supper, featuring recipes from the St Mary's cookbook.

St Anselm's gives community space to pray for Ukraine



From time to time over the last few years, we have hung up a blackboard on the railings outside St Anselm's Vicarage, writes Suzette Aagaard.

It is a handy spot: extremely visible at a crossroads where cars are often stationary and overlooking a pavement with huge footfall.

As the Ukraine crisis unravelled we felt it might be a useful outlet for people's thoughts and prayers. So we redeployed a large sheet of MDF, as well as some offcuts from a Christmas project, covered them with blackboard paint and hung them up.

Our prototype was rather amateurish but within a couple of hours the

board was full! In the past we have had to police the 'prayers' quite carefully but this time there has been virtually nothing inappropriate and most messages have been extremely touching. Next to the board is a small box where we leave lengths of blue and yellow ribbon for people to tie to the railings and the scattered bows, together with the prayer board, now form a visible statement of solidarity to the people of Ukraine.

We then offered out our very humble craft skills to other churches, providing five slightly more sophisticated versions to neighbouring churches around the North Lambeth Deanery, complete with chalk box and delivery service!

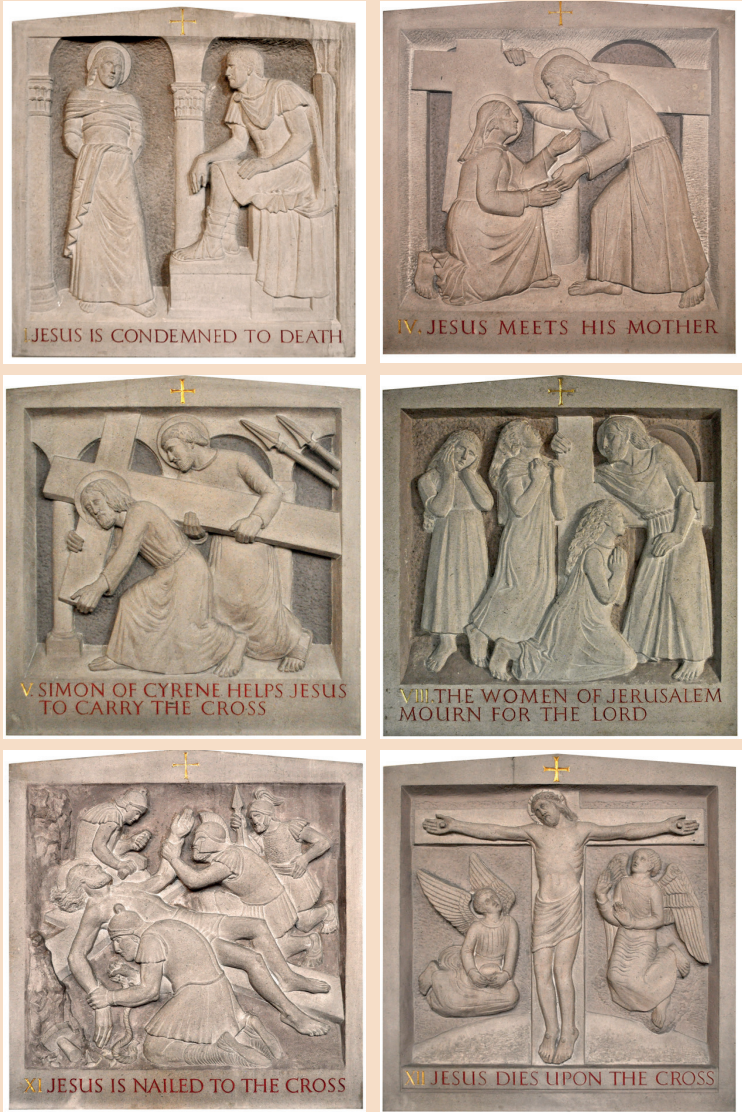
Marking Holy Week and Easter: a selection of stories from around the Diocese



Parishioners at St John, Catford take part in an Easter bonnet parade as part of their celebrations.



Blessing the oils at the Chrism Eucharist on 14 April in Southwark Cathedral. Bishop Richard presided and Bishop Karowei preached as the clergy of the Diocese gathered to renew their ordination vows on Maundy Thursday.



Six of the 14 Stations of the Cross at St John the Divine, Richmond. These stations were sculpted in the 1950s by Freda Skinner, a British sculptor and woodcarver who was head of sculpture at Wimbledon School of Art from 1945 to 1971 and replaced an earlier set of painted stations. The photographs were taken by Peter Moore in 2015.



St John the Divine, Kennington rounds off its Easter celebrations with a visit from the Easter Kangaroo (left). The Barnes White Rabbit helps Vicar the Revd Stephen Stavrou distribute Easter eggs to the expectant congregation at St Michael, Barnes (below).





DISCIPLESHIP & MINISTRY

New ways of doing church

Exercising God's ministry in new ways

The pandemic has taught us that 'doing church' can take many forms. Here, Director of Communications Sophia Jones shares some of the initiatives that are reaching out to communities in Southwark.

Thy Kingdom Come, the global prayer movement in which the Archbishop of Canterbury invites people around the world to pray for the 10 days between Ascension and Pentecost, takes place this year from 26 May to 5 June.

The Diocese of Southwark produces resources annually for parishes to use for prayer and reflection during this time. This season, like Lent and Advent, can be a time of reflection about where God is calling us as individuals and as a church community.

Churches across the Diocese are finding new ways to connect with and minister



"It's really exciting to know that God's Spirit is already at work, churning people up, causing them to look at issues around them"

to their communities. The Revd Canon Jay Colwill, Canon Missioner and Director of Mission for the Diocese of Southwark, says: "COVID has caused us to reassess how church is shaped. Of course, the key elements – baptism, the Eucharist, the gathering of people, in person as well as online – are important and they are not to be neglected.

"Nevertheless, we have been compelled to consider new ways of gathering, discipling and engaging with people in mission. New opportunities have presented themselves and that's really exciting. God is doing a new thing. I would like to hope that the Diocese is able to support and equip parishes as they join in with that."

The Revd Juliet Evans, priest at St Swithun, Lewisham, runs fitness and physical well-

being classes. She says: "During COVID I randomly decided to train as a fitness instructor and personal trainer and opted to do things like exercise referral. I try to specialise in the people who are on the outside of health normally, so older people and those who are already with conditions to safely help them with exercise."

Juliet sees her fitness classes, which she leads in the church building as opposed to the church hall, as a crucial extension of her ministry. "I was aware at the end of COVID, and now, that isolation is massive issue, that health and movement are massive issues. There are lots of people who fall outside of the regular health network. I suppose I immediately first saw it as a food bank type of thing but for movement, that anyone could do it and that I would be able to help those who wouldn't be able to fit into a normal group by encouraging health for every size and the joy of movement as well as stretching and pushing people where they need pushing," she explains.

Juliet runs her classes on a Monday morning, Tuesday evening, Wednesday morning and Thursday evening. Older people come to the morning classes and the evening classes are attracting young adults. "We are tying in our Wednesday morning senior group with a refugee café in the hall at the same time so creating a community vibe," she says.

Jay echoes the importance of health and well-being, "We know that in 2022, issues around health and well-being are critical, as well as climate crisis, racial and social justice and economic inequalities. So many other big issues present the Church with an opportunity and a challenge to speak into them and practise what they preach and preach what they practise," he says.

He believes what this looks like on the ground is "that the Holy Spirit is already at work in our communities, inspiring people both in the church and outside



the worshipping life of the church to identify issues of import which need to be addressed. That's really exciting to know that God's Spirit is already at work, churning people up, stirring them up, causing them to look at issues around them."

Springfield Church, Wallington, has identified "issues of import" in their community and are addressing them. Parishioner Jean Grima says: "We have been running CAP (Christians against Poverty) Job Clubs and Money Courses for a number of years out of the Vanguard Way Community Centre on Roundshaw Estate, Wallington.

"We want them to be a friendly place where you will get practical help as you seek employment or to better manage your money. We needed to move online during the pandemic but have just finished

a successful 'in-person' Money Course where all attendees are all now in a better position to manage their money."

She adds: "For me it's primarily about blessing our community and helping people in the community to flourish, but also guests often ask to be prayed for and ask about our faith – and we have current members of Springfield Church who we connected with through the Job Clubs and Money Courses that we've run, which is such a wonderful thing!"

The Revd Canon Will Cookson, the Diocese of Southwark's Director of Pioneering Ministry and Dean of Fresh Expressions, says: "We love the variety of approaches of different churches who are looking to engage with people in their contexts. Each parish is unique with a unique context and we always encourage churches to work out what they have to

A fitness class at
St Swithun, Lewisham.



Thy Kingdom Come: 26 May to 5 June



In Southwark Diocese this year, Thy Kingdom Come has a theme of “All God’s People”, recognising that in our diversity of ethnicity, place, and vocation, we are united under Jesus Christ, the Servant King.

Each day between Ascension and Pentecost we will be focusing on a different theme, from social and racial justice to disability and discrimination. To help you pray “Thy Kingdom Come”, we have gathered resources for each theme: a prayer, further reading and suggestions for actions you might wish to take aimed at adults, children and young people, and all ages. Each day also includes resources for people working with children and young people.

Packs of these materials have been posted to parishes. Visit southwark.anglican.org/tkc for more details and to order more resources.

Season of Lay Ministries

In order to celebrate those in lay ministry in our Diocese, Bishop Christopher has declared the four weeks from the 1st Sunday after Trinity (19 June) to the 4th Sunday after Trinity (10 July) as **A Season of Lay Ministries**.

To help mark the occasion, a series of sermon outlines and prayers will be emailed to clergy and lay ministers in time for Vocations Sunday on 8 May. Find more information at southwark.anglican.org/lay-ministries



offer, what their context is and what God is encouraging them to try.”

He adds: “Juliet at St Swithun’s is on a journey that has the exciting possibility of bringing different aspects of well-being – physical, mental, spiritual – to offer her parish and it has hugely exciting possibilities that we want to support and encourage. As it is developed, we hope that it can become something that has the possibility of being contextually adopted elsewhere.”

Juliet explains that she is trying to make church more available, “not through the back door, but more through the journey on the edges and to be really valuable, meeting people’s actual needs. People need to move more. They need to meet each other. To me, the Church’s fundamental gift to the community is to be the curer of souls. We should be healing people and

actively being healthy is part of healing so it is almost being proactively healthy and healing and talking about healing of all kinds. We have some people who do the exercise and movement because it is good for their mental well-being. Those sorts of conversations are heavily important.”

Bubble Church, at The Ascension in Balham, is a thriving ministry for babies, toddlers and their parents. A few years ago, the leadership team was discussing the need for a Breakfast Church for young families in the area. Nothing really came of it until the COVID pandemic.

“During the pandemic we thought that might be weirdly a good time to launch it,” recalls the Revd Luke Steven. “We started it off in October 2020 and had the idea of Bubble Church, with bubbles referring to your socially distanced area so each family has their own blue bubble which is a blue

little circle of carpet which they sit on or next to.”

Families arrive, they have a coffee and croissant, then sit on their bubble carpet. Luke continues: “The service starts and it’s about 25 or 30 minutes of puppets and songs and a Bible story. Each bubble has a little canvas bag that will have some kind of object in it each week – either a craft or something to play a game with, or an object to use to reflect and pray.”

Launching Bubble Church during the pandemic couldn’t have come at a better time for the young families in the area. “We thought we would do it in the middle of the pandemic because that is when all of these families were so desperate to have something, anything to do with their children and it really took off,” Luke says. “It was a bit of a risk but people started coming from the beginning including new

people. That has continued, so now, a year-and-a-half or so on, there’s a congregation of 100 people who are all new.”

Luke believes that many of them have come because of The Ascension’s reputation as being a good place for children and families. The church has run a toddlers’ morning on Thursdays for several years and for about three years it has been running Puppet Praise on Tuesdays. “All of the local nannies know about Ascension as well as lots of local parents,” he says. “Our coffee shop, Parish Coffee, is open through the week and is a big beautiful space where nannies and children love coming.”

Will adds: “The Ascension has experimented with something as a result of the COVID pandemic that appears to be bearing real fruit and we are working



Bubble Church at The Ascension, Balham (above); Jean Grima and Job Club at Springfield Church, Wallingford (below).

◀ Continued from page 7

with them to see how others could run it. There is a real priority for the Church to work with families and this has great potential to play a significant part in our response.”

Both St Swithun and The Ascension have found creative ways to reach out in their communities. “The key is to support our parishes in encouraging imaginative and creative ways of sharing the good news of Christ, especially to those who are not part of a church and often through new ways,” Will says.

“We do this through supporting parishes and churches with Greenhouse, which is a learning community to work out what a church can do in its context to pioneer and start a fresh expression or congregation, lay pioneer pathways; Pioneer curates; Resourcing and Hub churches, training and support. These support the Diocesan strategy in regard to new congregations and Fresh Expressions of Church (fxCs) to help encourage new life in new ways across the parishes of our Diocese.”

He adds: “It is a real privilege being involved across the Diocese supporting and encouraging the wide diversity of parishes that we have. We have seen a large take-up in so many different ways. We have seen churches starting some

140 fxCs with a wide range

of ideas and expressions; we have seen our

Pioneer gatherings grow and develop where Pioneers (lay and ordained) can be encouraged, challenged and gain new ideas; we have seen Pioneer curacy be embraced and we expect that, working with the Vocations Department, the largest number of Pioneer curates this year will be ordained.”

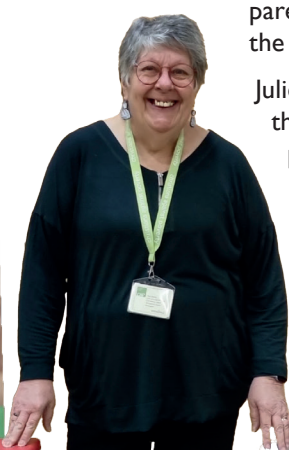
Luke’s advice to other churches thinking about starting a Bubble Church is to keep it simple. “The format is so simple and repetitive,” he says. “It is almost the same every week and that is just not a problem, especially when you are dealing with really small children. They know all the words before they do the songs and the little bits of liturgy that we have designed and they act out Bubble Church at home. All it involves is some puppets and a team of about six people.”

His own team has grown from six people to 50. More than half of them are Bubble Church grown-ups and children. There is also a group of children who lead from the front alongside the service leader.

Luke’s hope is that the Bubble Church congregation which has formed will “go deeper in their faith in God. It is that transition between coming along on a Sunday and having a fun time with your family and eating a nice croissant to then actually the stories and words that we are hearing on Sunday morning making a difference in your daily life,” he says.

He explains that this has started to happen with a midweek group of 14 people solely made up of Bubble Church parents who meet to share fellowship in the style of Bubble Church.

Juliet, meanwhile, is keen to go outside the church this summer and has plans to take her hula hoops to the local park and encourage some community hula hooping. “Playfulness is what I am trying to get into things here,” she says. “Faith and church doesn’t always have to be serious. It can be joyful too. We are finding joy in the misery of feels like the news around us all the time.”



“Prince Charles was a wonderful stand-in!”

The Prince of Wales distributed the Royal Maundy money on behalf of the Queen this year, at a service taking place in St George’s Chapel, Windsor. Below, we meet the nominees from Southwark.

Rita Hendy

Rita has given a life of service to her local community and the parish of Christ the King, Salfords as a vergers. She is an active member of the Church of England Guild of Vergers.

Rita said: “I had the great honour of having my name put forward by Bishop Christopher to be one of the 96 men and 96 women to receive Maundy Money. I was allowed one companion and chose my son (pictured right, with Rita). It was stipulated that your companion must be able to look after you, so he seemed like a good choice.”



She added: “Everything was very well organised as you would expect, which helped any nerves. All the gold plate was on show and St George’s Chapel was beautifully decorated. It was just about full and a very good setting for the pomp and pageantry. It started with the College of St George and Chapel Royal Procession, which was impressive in its own right. Then came the arrival of the Duchess of Cornwall and the Prince of Wales. I wasn’t able to see very much of the duchess but I could see her hat processing up the aisle! The service itself was very moving; the music and singing were excellent and needless to say added to the occasion.”

Sydney Wager

Sydney has been a Reader at All Saints, Tooting for many years, where he offers a respected and confidential pastoral ministry. He is gentle and wise, supportive of the clergy, and still active liturgically. His preaching ministry was greatly appreciated because of the breadth of his sympathies and interests. Sydney is a past President of the Leone Association and, until recently, President of his local Rotary. The motto of the Leone Association – “originate and emulate all good things” – is a good summary of Sydney’s approach to life and ministry.

Iris Mgotsi

Born in Sophiatown, South Africa, Iris attended St Peter’s School, run by the Community of the Resurrection, and was taught alongside many of those who would become future leaders in post-colonial Rhodesia and post-apartheid South Africa. She decided to go into nursing as she was unable to pursue her first love, singing, because she was black. She moved to the UK in the 1960s and then back to South Africa before returning to the UK. Her life has been one of service, both in South Africa, where she was known as “Mama” because of her service to the community, and in the UK. She now worships at Southwark Cathedral.



Mary Ricketts

Mary (pictured right) has been a Churchwarden at St John the Divine, Richmond since 2015. She has also served as a member of the PCC and on Deanery Synod. Among her many volunteering roles, she has worked with Isleworth Voluntary Care Network; Hounslow Night Shelter Project; and homeless charity Glass Door. Mary has also supported Afghan and other refugee groups by teaching ESOL classes in the community.

Mary said: “When I picked up the first envelope from the Royal Almonry Office emblazoned across the top with ‘E II R Buckingham Palace’ in red, I was very excited. I couldn’t imagine whatever it could be. It was very special for me, particularly as one of my aunts had been a recipient more than 50 years ago.”

She added: “I watched the press for news of the Queen’s state of health hoping that she would make it. However, I must say Prince Charles was a wonderful stand-in. He was so smiley from the moment he walked into the chapel and very special to talk to albeit for about 30 seconds!”





IN FOCUS... News from the Diocese

Breaking bread at the Southwark Grand Iftar

Hundreds of guests gathered at Southwark Cathedral on the evening of 22 April to break their fast at the sixth annual Southwark Grand Iftar, which was being held in person for the first time since the pandemic.

The Iftar, which is hosted by Living Bankside in partnership with Southwark Cathedral and supported by the Association of Muslim Lawyers, first took place as an act of solidarity in the wake of the 2017 London Bridge terrorist attacks.

The iftar – a meal after sunset during the month of Ramadan – has since become an annual opportunity for the community to celebrate their unity and shared values of hope and compassion.

Andrew Nunn, Dean of Southwark, said of the event: “What a joy it was to be able to host Living Bankside’s Grand Iftar at Southwark Cathedral after two years of online gatherings. It was a really uplifting evening.”

The focus of the evening was on compassion and giving. Andrew gave a welcome, and was followed by Ahmed Uddin from Harper Road Mosque, who explained the significance of Ramadan; Remy Mohammed, President of the Association of Muslim Lawyers, who spoke about the association’s work; and Amir Eden, Executive Chairman of Living Bankside.

Other guests included Councillor Barrie Hargrove, Mayor of Southwark; Lynn Cooper, the Greater London High Sheriff; Councillor Kieron Williams, Leader of Southwark Council; Kilvinder Vigurs, Director of the Probation Service in



Guests at the Southwark Grand Iftar break their fast.

London), Councillors David Noakes and Helen Dennis; and Inspector Tom Cornish.

The Borough Welsh Chapel Choir sang *Sanctus*, *Rachie* and *Calon Lan*.

Elsewhere in the Diocese, the Most Revd Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, attended an inter-faith iftar hosted by the Old Kent Road Mosque on 6 April. The other guests included the Revd Andrew Moughtin-Mumby, Rector of St Peter, Walworth, and the Revd Helen Harknett, Priest-in-Charge of St Philip, Avondale Square.

The Archbishop said: “It was a joy to be welcomed by Muslim friends at the Old Kent Road Mosque to an iftar gathering. This Nigerian Muslim diaspora are building friendships between Muslims and Christians locally and coming together over common concerns.”

A life less ordinary: exhibition celebrates Clapham man



An image from Jim Grover’s latest photography exhibition, *Behind the Shop Facade: The Life of Maurice Dorfman*, which was staged in Clapham Library throughout April. Jim, an award-winning photographer and Churchwarden at St James, Clapham, spent 18 months researching the subject of his photo-essay. Until his death in 2020, Maurice had owned and run Jeannette Fashions, the longest surviving traditional shop on Clapham High Street, for 60 years.

Jim said: “For me, he is one of life’s unsung heroes who richly deserves the tribute that so many have helped me create in his honour. Whilst his shop facade and home will inevitably disappear in the wake of the never-ending development of Clapham High Street, Maurice Dorfman will now never be forgotten.”

Read more at: www.behindtheshopfacade.com

Bishop Christopher lobbies for improved aid to Afghanistan

A letter about the crisis in Afghanistan by Bishop Christopher, written in his role as Lead Bishop on Foreign Affairs and Immigration, was published in *The Telegraph* on 30 March.

The letter was co-signed by the Rt Revd John Perumbalath, Bishop of Bradwell, the Rt Revd Declan Lang, Bishop of Clifton, the Rt Revd John

Arnold, Bishop of Salford, and the Rt Revd Tom Neylon, Auxiliary Bishop of Liverpool.

It calls on the Government to increase its contribution to the humanitarian response and to work with others to find solutions to the crisis, saying: “The £286m promised by Britain is insufficient, and does not reflect our historic responsibility. Britain must lead by example.”

Order, order! Lambeth MPs give clergy private tour of Parliament

Clergy from across Lambeth Archdeaconry met Lambeth MPs at the House of Commons on 18 March.

The MP for Vauxhall, Florence Eshalomi, said: “It was an absolute pleasure to welcome members of the clergy from across Lambeth to Parliament alongside my fellow MPs for the area, Bell Ribeiro-Addy and Helen Hayes. The discussion was wide-ranging and

purposeful. We agreed on the important role that faith has to play as a moral force in politics and the ways in which the clergy can be an integral voice in the dialogue around the many pressing issues that society faces today. I look forward to working with them all in future.”

The Archdeacon of Lambeth, the Venerable Simon Gates said: “The three MPs in Lambeth are excellent constituency MPs and we wanted to see how



to support them and pray for them as well as meet them in Parliament to see their work. We had a tour and a discussion over lunch. Then we were fortunate to be able to see all three of them at ‘work’, asking questions of the Minister for Levelling Up Communities on the Report by the Independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities published last summer, in the House of Commons in the afternoon.”



DISCIPLESHIP & MINISTRY

Kindness and generosity

“Everywhere you look, people are doing things for others”

Wherever we turn these days, we are confronted by headlines about rising food and fuel prices, and the need to tighten our belts, writes London South Bank University’s Phil Dudek.

Yet, far from tightening their belts, many in the Diocese are instead giving more – of themselves, of their resources and of their prayers.

Reflecting on the importance of generosity and kindness in the coming months, Bishop Christopher says: “During a cost-of-living crisis, there will be an onus on some people to think hard about being more generous, not less. This is for precisely the reason that others will be struggling.”

This generosity is central to our shared faith, he believes. “Philippians 2 strikes to the heart of the matter,” he says. “The Apostle Paul commends, ‘...be of the same mind, having the same love... Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.’”

This principle is central to the way the Diocese is organised, as Gabby Parikh, the Director of Giving, explains: “The

Diocese pays for vicars and provides them with additional support to help,” she says. “By supporting them, we enable parishes so they can serve their communities. We ask parishes to make a pledge and they are really generous: we have had a 99% collection rate most years since 2015.”

She adds: “It’s the principle of informed generosity. It’s fundamental to our DNA. It’s about proportionality, a family partnership.”

Acts of outreach

According to Bishop Christopher, this principle is well practised throughout the Diocese and its parishes: “A lot of focus has gone on giving to the Parish Support Fund which overwhelmingly supports the parochial ministry,” he says. “But elsewhere, local initiatives have seen churches hosting food banks, night shelters, and advice drop-ins, and providing volunteers for all of these.

“Other than the simple but vital compassion of parish visiting, these acts of outreach have often been to people at the edge of society. Some of these, especially food banks and advice centres, will face greater pressures as inflation increases, and energy bills mount.”

Simon Brindley, a Reader in the Parish of



Kindness and generosity of spirit in action at Hope Café, St Paul, Herne Hill.

Herne Hill, can testify to having seen a great deal of kindness and generosity at work in his part of the Diocese.

Among the projects offered by St Saviour’s and St Paul’s in Herne Hill are the Hope Café, which offers food and drink to rough sleepers and a place for church members to find companionship; the Ministry of Food, which provides food for those, for example, with a newborn baby or a family member in hospital; and the Parish Hardship Fund, which enables fast fundraising for those in urgent need.

However, Simon believes that the essence of kindness and generosity is found not in the major projects but instead in the day-to-day acts of individuals within his parish.

“I’d make the really important point that it’s not just the headline-grabbing generosity and kindness that matters. Like the widow’s mite, it’s the countless small acts, often unseen, that matter as much in God’s eyes,” he says. “The clergy play an important part but everywhere you look

there are church members doing things for others.”

Volunteering especially is an important act of kindness and generosity, particularly when it may be harder to give financially.

“It is probably the case that the demands of modern life put as much of a premium on our time as they ever have for church members,” Simon says. “So, getting volunteers for things like putting chairs out on Sunday and so on can be a struggle. Overall, however, the levels of voluntary time given in the parish in my view remain high, whatever that involves.”

He adds: “Sometimes I have experienced kindness and generosity creating a marvellous virtuous circle. I used to give more free legal advice to neighbours in the community. Ron the plasterer would do small plastering jobs in my house for free in return. Eustace the carpenter would do small woodwork jobs for free in return and Jim the electrician would do small electrical jobs. We supported each other.”



LET US PRAY...

MAY

The Very Revd Andrew Nunn

Dean of Southwark

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

*It came to pass
Upon a bright and sunny day
When May was young; ah, pleasant May!*

That is how Christina Rossetti, the poet who wrote about “the bleak midwinter” wrote about May. It is a month that has had something of a special place in people’s hearts and imaginations. If you are a member of a trades union you might think about marching to celebrate the rights of working people; if you have a village green you may think of dancing round a maypole; if you are at

Roehampton University in this Diocese you may think of crowning a May King or Queen. If you are of a more catholic persuasion you may be used to giving special attention to the Virgin Mary throughout the month. Whatever you think of doing we can all agree, “ah, pleasant May!”

The reason that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is celebrated in May is probably because in the pre-Christian Greek world the goddess Artemis was celebrated in this month. Her cult was one of the things that kept the city of



can focus on the position of women around the world. It would be wrong to celebrate Mary in May and forget the plight of so many girls and women around the world and within our own communities. Women are suffering in Ukraine; girls are being denied their right to an education in Afghanistan; women are murdered on the streets of our own cities. We want women and girls everywhere able to say:

*It came to pass
Upon a bright and sunny day
When May was young; ah, pleasant May!*

Ephesus prosperous and busy, hence all the tension that erupted in the city when Paul arrived with his new and challenging teaching about Jesus which we read of in Acts 19. When I was leading a pilgrimage to modern day Turkey a few years ago, we read this chapter on site and relived the riot as we sat in the remains of the theatre. It brought the whole story to life.

Perhaps as we keep May this year we

**Lord Jesus,
as we celebrate the goodness
of your mother
may we also recognise the
needs of all women
and create safe places, safe
cities and safer lives
for all our sisters.
Amen.**



Please send details of your next events for JUNE ONWARDS to Trinity House **BY FRIDAY 20 MAY**

May

FRIDAY 6 MAY

* **LAMBETH PALACE** — Church Army is hosting an Open Day in the gardens of Lambeth Palace. Guests will be offered complimentary tours of the gardens by Lambeth Palace volunteers. £5. 12noon-3pm. Lambeth Palace, SE1 7JU. Book at: churcharmy.org/lambethgardens

SATURDAY 7 MAY

* **ZOOM** — Reigate Archdeaconry Social Justice Focus's spring webinar looks at what happens next for victims of modern-day slavery. Speakers include DCI Kerry Loveless of Surrey Police, and Bishop Alastair Redfern, Chair of the Clewer Initiative. 10am-12noon. Free. Book here: bit.ly/3Dibj5h

* **CROYDON** — Christians in the Middle East: a presentation by Archbishop Michael Lewis, Anglican Primate of Jerusalem and the Middle East. From 2.30pm. St Michael's Croydon, Poplar Walk, CR0 1UA. Register by emailing stmandaa@outlook.com

SATURDAY 14 MAY

♪ **CROYDON** — Come and Sing Haydn's *Maria Theresa* Mass with members of the Croydon Bach Choir. Open to singers of any standard who are able to follow a score. £25 (free for students). 10am-5.30pm. St Matthew's Church, Chichester Road, Croydon, CR0 5NQ. Please bring your own lunch. Book here: bit.ly/3v1Xb7j

TUESDAY 17 MAY

* **BERMONDSEY** — The Revd Richard Carter, Associate Minister for Mission at St Martin-in-the-Fields, leads this event talking about his book *The City is My Monastery*. St Hugh's Church, Bermondsey, SE1 3PT. Free but numbers are limited. Email Spidir's Sally Lowe on sallylowe1943@gmail.com to book a place.

WEDNESDAY 18 MAY

* **SHADWELL** — Sport and Estates: the perfect combination. Find out how to share the love of Christ on the sports fields of your community at this day-long conference. Workshops from Scripture Union, Kick and the Salvation Army. £10 (lunch included). 9.30am-4.30pm. St Paul's Shadwell, EIW 3DH. Book here: <https://necn-sport-and-estates-london.eventbrite.co.uk>

St Mary, Farleigh: Compline by Candlelight 2022 Sundays @ 8pm		
May		
1 May:	The Revd Ruth Chapman (The Revd Dr Andrew Reed, founder of Reedham Orphanage)	
8 May:	The Bishop of Southwark (George Bell, Bishop of Chichester, supporter of Christians in Nazi Germany)	
15 May:	The Revd James Ashton (CS Lewis, author, academic, theologian)	
22 May:	Ian & Sylvia Jones (JB Dykes, hymn writer)	
29 May:	Tony Roberts (The Revd John Flamsteed, first Astronomer Royal)	
June		
5 June:	Elizabeth Lanyon (The Making of a Monarch: the history and significance of the Coronation)	
12 June:	Rosemary Moore (Father Peter de Smet, missionary to Native Americans)	
19 June:	The Revd C Dowland-Pillinger (John Dalton, physicist, introducer of atomic theory)	
26 June:	Canon Simon Jones (Fr Gabriel Hebert SSM, monk interested in the Liturgical Movement)	

All Saints Arts Festival, Brudenell Road, Tooting SW17 8DQ Book via www.wandsworthfringe.com		
11 June	Fuzion Four: Jazz concert	2.15pm-3.30pm
14 June	Wonder of Nature: Baroque recital	7.30pm-8.30pm
16 June	Lost Souls Poetry: Open mike poetry	6.30pm-9pm
17 June	Duelling Organs Extravaganza: Organ recital	7pm-8.15pm
18 June	Singingforsane: Singing for mental health	10am-12noon
18 June	Eco Community Concert – celebrating diversity	6pm-8pm
20 June	Richmond & Wandsworth LGBT Equality & Ally group Poetry	7.30pm-9.30pm
23 June	Stop the World, I want to get off: one-woman poetry show	7.30pm-9pm
24 June	Summer Sounds: Wandsworth Music Key Stage 1 concert	11am-3pm
24 June	GiantFolk – A FolkJazz Evening: Contemporary folk concert	8pm-10pm
25 June	Senior Street Sextet: Jazz concert	7pm-9pm
26 June	The Beautiful World of Holiness: Musical Meditation on the Psalms	3pm-5pm
29 June	Summer Sounds: Wandsworth Music Key Stage 1 concert	11am-3pm

THURSDAY 19 MAY

* **ELTHAM & MOTTINGHAM** — Eltham & Mottingham Deanery is hosting an advice and signposting session for disabled people, their carers and the wider community. 4pm-8pm. Free. St John's Church, Eltham High Street. Email: jacquiework9@gmail.com.

FRIDAY 20 MAY

* **MARYLEBONE** — Friday Food 4 Thought seminar – Disorder or dialogue: the medicalisation of human suffering. Speaker: psychoanalytic psychotherapist Alex Dalziel. £10. The Browning Room, St Marylebone Parish Church, 17 Marylebone Road, London

NWI 5LT or online via Zoom. Book at: form.jotform.com/221033556035042

SATURDAY 21 MAY

♪ **SOUTHFIELDS** — Putney Choral Society will be performing Haydn's *Creation*, with orchestra and professional soloists conducted by Christopher Braime. £17 (includes programme and refreshments). St. Paul's Church, Augustus Road, Southfields, SW19 6EW. Book at: bit.ly/3v4Bu6t or on the door – payment by card only.

SUNDAY 22 MAY

♪ **STREATHAM** — Organ recital by Angela Sones. 11.50am (about an hour). St Peter's Streatham, Leigham Court Road, Streatham SW16 2SD. Find out more at: stpeters-streatham.org

THURSDAY 26 MAY

* **CLAPHAM COMMON** — A Mind of Their Own: building our children's emotional well-being, an event run by speakers from Care for the Family. £4. 7.30pm-10pm. St Barnabas Church, Northside, Clapham Common, SW4 9SW. Book here: bit.ly/3Kssn4x

June

SUNDAY 5 JUNE

♪ **CATERHAM VALLEY** — Music to honour the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. As part of an ongoing programme of music to celebrate the Jubilee, St John the Evangelist, Caterham Valley will perform a special RSCM anthem composed by Thomas Hewitt-Jones. 10am. St John the Evangelist, Clareville Road, Caterham Valley. For more information, email johnwoodhousecat@gmail.com.

MONDAY 13 JUNE

* **SOUTHWARK** — SPIDIR AGM and Study Day. Guest speakers the Very Revd Andrew Nunn and the Revd Canon Thomas Sharp. Donations invited for the lectures on the day. 10am-3pm. Garry Weston Library, Southwark Cathedral. To reserve a place, email: sallylowe1943@gmail.com

SATURDAY 18 JUNE

* **BROCKHAM** — Brockham Open Gardens 2022, featuring more than 10 beautiful gardens, plant and craft stalls and children's fun competition. £7 (under-12s free). No dogs in the gardens. 2pm-6pm. Enquiries to: sallymholland22@gmail.com

If you wish to include details of your upcoming events, please email bridge@southwark.anglican.org

Faith, connection, science and care for Creation: looking back on two decades as Bishop of Kingston

After announcing earlier this year that he would retire in October 2022 on the 20th anniversary of his consecration, Bishop Richard talks about the issues that have shaped his faith, and shares the joys and challenges of his two decades ministering to the people of Kingston.

In the 35 years since his ordination, the question of how we live out our faith as Christians has been a constant thread running through Bishop Richard's ministry. "From the start, I have wanted to encourage people to think deeply about the Christian faith in the midst of our plural and deeply secularised world," he says.

As Bishop of Kingston, he spoke on doctrine at his first clergy symposium and, during two extended rounds of parish visits, gave a talk entitled "So What Do We Really Believe?". "It was fascinating, really," he says, "because once you open up a door for people's questions they come tipping out."

It is this same question about the living out of faith that underpins two of the Bishop's interests: the intersection between science and faith, and the environment.

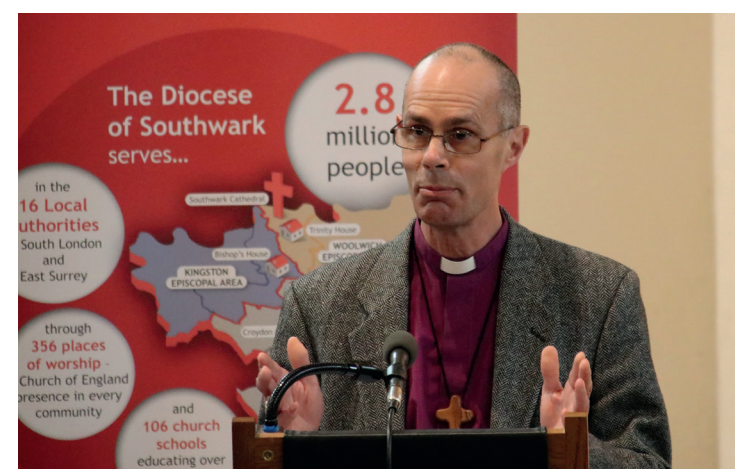
"It's been there right through my life," he says, "a really important conversation between the language of theology and the language of science, and how they interact in exploring the deepest realities of our existence."

Today, he says, climate change and biodiversity are "one of the big, if not the biggest issues" of the 21st century – not just because of the science but because care of the environment is "deeply, deeply rooted in our Christian faith and our understanding of the Gospel and God's salvation".

As a result, one of his proudest achievements is Southwark's progress towards becoming an Eco Diocese. "I'm really pleased that we've developed the Eco Diocese process and that many of our churches have become Eco Churches," he says. "If you go back a few years, it was still the case that environmental issues tended to be seen as something for those who were interested in those sorts of things. Now, I think, it's much more deeply embedded in the mainstream life of our church."

He is also keen to celebrate the achievements of others. "Right across Kingston we've got loads of examples of very good and imaginative mission and ministry and people engaging in all sorts of ways in the communities they are serving," he says. "Just seeing what people are doing in these areas has certainly brought great pleasure and encouragement to me as a Bishop. And I've tried to do what I can to encourage them because far and away the life of the Church is in our day-to-day ministries."

Having chaired the Board of Education for a time, witnessing the work going on in our schools has been another highlight,



Clockwise from bottom left: Bishop Richard commissioning Andrew Wignall to St Mark's Academy in 2018; at the priests' ordinations in 2018; visiting the food bank at St Luke, West Norwood in 2019; with Ibrahim Mogra in the Sea of Galilee in 2015; speaking at Diocesan Synod in 2018; opening the Quiet Garden at All Saints, South Wimbledon, in 2019.

the Bishop adds. "It's been a delight to engage with some of the young people and the questions they're asking."

There have, of course, been challenges too. "We've become a very busy church," he says. "One of the challenges, particularly for me as a Bishop, has been, how do I keep and develop a really good theological engagement with what's going on, thinking about these things and finding time to do that in a way that's meaningful."

Keeping a balance, and paying attention to the things that resource and encourage you, are vital, he believes. "I think if you've

got those things in place, you're much more likely to be fruitful in ministry and a blessing to others."

From October, that balance will be easier. The Bishop will continue his work with ECLAS (Equipping Christian Leadership in an Age of Science) and the Anglican Communion Science Commission. He also plans to keep up his academic links with the University of Roehampton and King's College London. But at the same time he will be spending time with friends and family and seeking to improve his tennis game from its "current rudimentary level!" Until then, he concludes, "I want to say a

huge thank you to the many, many people I've been able to engage with and whose ministries I've seen."

To them, and to everyone, he has a message of hope after the exhausting years of the pandemic. "We need that real trust in God and the pattern of God's saving love, and the trust in the death and resurrection of Christ that brings profound hope in the midst of the hardest time," he says. "That sacrificial and self-giving love that recognises the suffering and the death and the sheer evil in the world which the cross of Christ does embrace but doesn't leave us there."