

FEBRUARY 2024 RETURN TO MILO

SPIRE


St James
Hampton Hill

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THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Meet the clergy



VICAR Rev Derek Winterburn

Derek was born in Orpington, Kent, and ordained in 1986. He served in several diverse London parishes before becoming vicar here in 2016. He is married to Sandra, a teacher, and has two children. A keen photographer, he posts a picture online every day, combining it with a daily walk or cycle ride. He can be contacted at any time other than on Mondays (his day off).

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ASSOCIATE PRIEST Rev Jacky Cammidge

Jacky was born in Abertillery, South Wales, and ordained in 2015. She is a self-supporting minister, married to Alan, and has three children. During term-time she runs Hampton Hill Nursery School, based in the church hall, with her family.

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Supported by

ASSISTANT PRIEST Rev Canon Tim Marwood

Tim taught in London primary schools for 36 years. He was ordained priest in 1996 and was parish priest at Petersham for 13 years, retiring in 2021. He is now a part-time Chaplain at Kingston Hospital. Tim is married to Jane, a former headteacher. He supports Harlequins RFC, England cricket and walks his brown labrador, Ruby.

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ASSISTANT PRIEST Rev Canon Julian Reindorp

Julian was born in Durban, South Africa, and ordained in 1969. He has worked in parishes in East London, Chatham and Milton Keynes, and was Team Rector in Richmond until retirement in 2009. He continues to lead a busy life, is married to Louise and has four children, three stepchildren, and nine grandchildren.

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FROM THE EDITOR

At the beginning of each year we try to refresh the articles we print in the *Spire*. This year is no exception and we have a revamped page 6.

Rev Tim Marwood will be selecting a hymn appropriate to the season and giving us the background to this hymn. Alongside it, Richard Melville will be delving into the archives to show us what was happening a century ago — both in the church and the country — in 1924 when Rev Harvey was the vicar.

We have a wonderful collection of magazines dating from November 1884. They can be viewed on our website. The paper copies are stored at the London Metropolitan Archives. They were keen to have them as they didn't have a record of magazines going back that far.

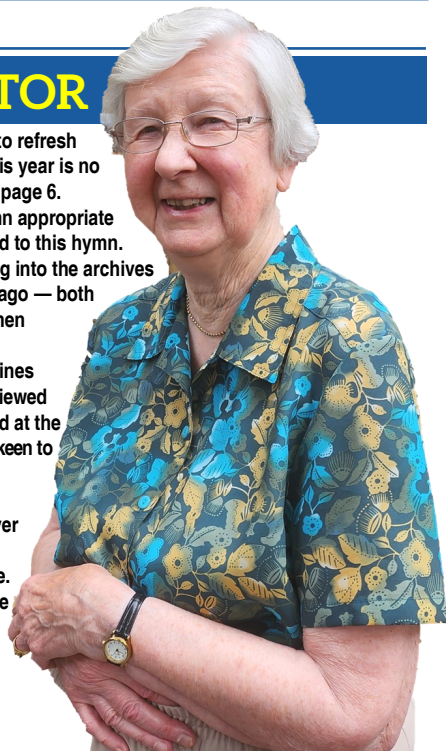
This month's cover and centre pages cover Ann Peterken's visit to Milo hospital to see first-hand how they use the money we raise.

As Easter is early this year, our next issue will cover March/April.

Best Wishes

Janet

Editor



Cover photos: John Mgina uses his new transport to cover Milo hospital's vast area.

SPIRE

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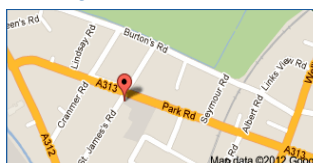
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Finding us



The church is on the corner of St James's Road and Park Road. The hall is between the church and vicarage. There is ample unrestricted parking. Buses stopping nearby include the R68, R70 and 285.

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For the very latest news go to our website or follow us on social media:

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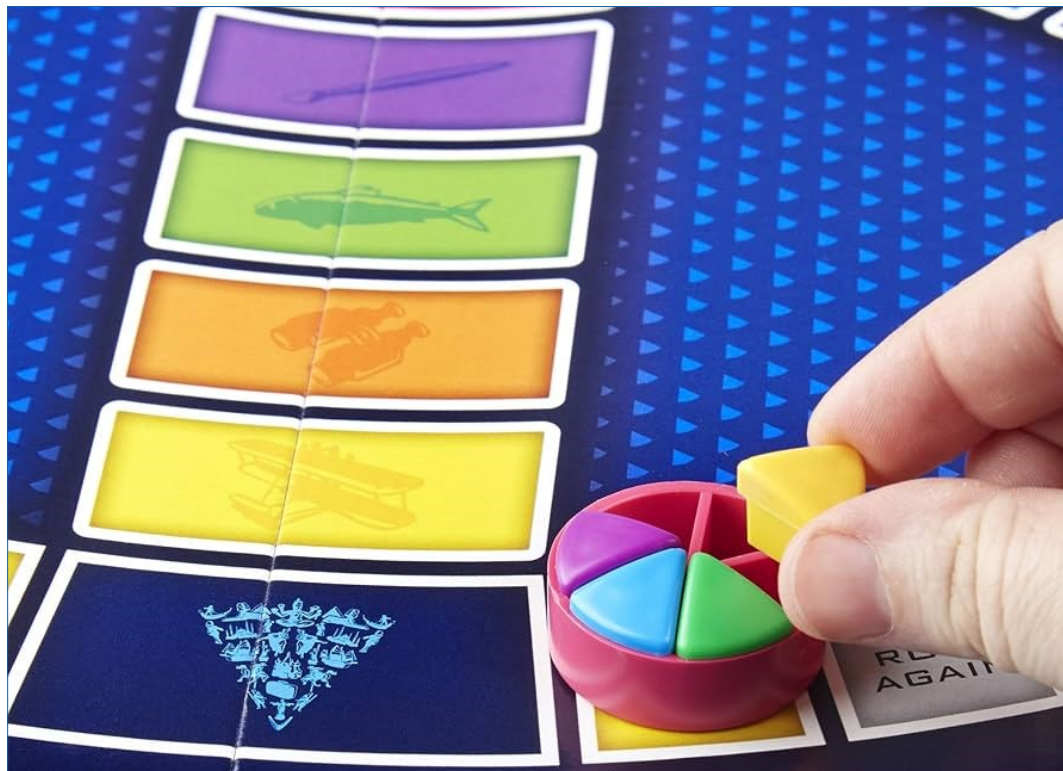
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Clerical Capers



'Next Sunday I think I'll do a new take on the Parable of the Virgins and the Oil.'

Keep trivia in its place and focus on wisdom



DEREK WINTERBURN

But this is not an article about how we should go back to using pen and paper (although I do!) Rather, I think this time of year, (the lead into Lent), is an opportunity to think about a deeper kind of knowledge.

It used to be said 'a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.' Perhaps the truth of that saying is better expressed 'trivia, — no matter how much — is not a good basis for life: go deeper.'

Reading the Bible, it is striking that the word in Hebrew for *know* is rarely used for

A neat distinction: *Knowledge* is understanding that a tomato is botanically a fruit. *Wisdom* is knowing not to put a tomato in a fruit salad!

Not a trivial idea

But perhaps that trivialises an important idea. Living well is more than having a high IQ or being able to win quizzes. We need to look deeper than the surface of life, the 'raw data' and ponder patterns and meaning.

This is why Proverbs says, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.' (Prov 9: 10).

This is not merely theological overlay, but a claim that wisdom flows from the wisest and deepest perspective of life.

How to grow in wisdom

So, as we approach Lent how do we grow in wisdom? Some ideas:

- Slow down, disconnect, stop... notice what is going on around
- Be open to new ideas or viewpoints by listening to others, or by reading fiction or non-fiction, etc.
- Try self-reflection, write a journal or prayer diary, ask 'what does this mean?'
- Worship - being mindful of God's presence recalibrates our vision (remember Proverbs 9: 10).

Living well is more than being able to win quizzes. We need to go deeper and ponder the meaning of life

'knowing facts', rather, the word is deployed relationally — knowing someone or knowing about someone. And that usage continued in the teaching of Jesus and the apostles.

Going deeper

There is of course another word, *wisdom*, that speaks more to our idea of 'deeper knowledge.' The Old Testament tends to speak of people who have skills as being wise. But in the Wisdom Books (e.g. Proverbs) wisdom refers to what we would call 'life-skills'

Most people have played the board game *Trivial Pursuit*. Since it was launched in the early 1980s it has sold hundreds of millions of boxes. The name of the game cleverly picks up the two meanings of *trivia*: unimportant, and common knowledge.

What we need to know

But we only need a moment's reflection, to note that knowing lots of facts (e.g. the names of all the Prime Ministers since Robert Walpole) is of very little practical value. We need more in life than data.

In fact, we have more facts at our fingertips than any previous generation. An internet search, perhaps now powered by Artificial Intelligence, will give us an answer to any question — that is *probably* right! But has that exponential growth been matched by a similar increase in well-being?

Time lost to technology

It is now widely recognised that we are being shaped by our technology, particularly smart phones. Speaking personally, I know how easy it is to be distracted, and move from one webpage to another: 'surfing the internet'. Other people find time slips away when they are scrolling through social media.



St James Sundays

Holy Communion (said) 8am

Parish Communion 9:30am

Livestreamed on Facebook.

Together 3:30pm

Our shorter, all-age service, is at 3:30pm, making way for Messy Church once a month.

Messy Church 3:30pm 25 Feb, 24 Mar

Compline 8pm 18, 25 Feb; 3, 10, 17 Mar

A short service of night prayer for Lent

Mondays

Ark Playgroup 10am-12pm

£3 for the first child, £1 for any others.

Playtime with crafts, games and music.

Hearing Aid Clinic 1-3pm

Free NHS drop-in service — new tubes, batteries

Clinics run 1st and 3rd Mondays (5, 19 Feb)

Tuesdays

Connections Café 10:30-12:30

Join us for coffee, cake and conversation.

Come with friends, make new friends

Pop-up Cinema

Sunday 11 February 4:30pm

Casablanca (U) 1942 (1hr 39 mins)

Watch before the Lent Group starts (see below).

Better Together Meal

Tuesday 13 February 6:30pm

To mark Lent, regulars from The Good Guys invite you to a two course meal, including pancakes, in church. Book now (see page five).

Ash Wednesday

Holy Communion with ashing

14 February 9:30am & 8pm

Wednesday Lent Courses

21, 28 February; 6, 13, 20 March

Way of Life — Listening 2pm

The process of listening is a key skill in the journey of faith and strengthens our relationship with God, with others and with ourselves.

A Beautiful Friendship 7:30pm

Casablanca is the classic movie and provides a great basis for discussion of themes of sacrifice, repentance, suffering, loss and hope at Lent.

Come to either group — or both.

Mothering Sunday

All Age Service 10 March 10am

Our 9:30am and 3:30pm services combine to celebrate those in our lives who care, especially mothers, leaving with a gift from us.

How healthcare is



ANN
PETERKEN

Last September, I was very happy to travel to Milo, Tanzania, with doctors Adrian and Hilary Murray to live with them for the first week of their three-month stay. My previous visit, in 2011, was a few months after clinical officer Benaiah Kilwale, a friend of St James's for many years, had died. It was lovely to be going back in happier times to meet some of Benaiah's family and other friends.

Adrian's second-hand 4x4 had been driven to Dar Es Salaam and we soon filled it with the large suitcases of hospital supplies brought from England. We also collected two boxes of text books for Hilary's sponsored students, to assist their studies in 2024. There was just room for one back seat passenger!

The road distance from Dar to Njombe, the town closest to Milo, is about 440 miles, a bit further than London to Glasgow, but in Tanzania the main roads are almost entirely single-lane and there are many trucks to overtake. I soon knew that Adrian is just as good a driver as he is a doctor.

After spending a night in Njombe, we still had 75 miles to Milo. I was delighted to see for myself a new road which will greatly reduce this final leg of the journey when it is completed. We had left Njombe later than intended and arrived in Milo in the dark to find a welcoming party of four smiling faces, a hot meal and a log fire. Milo lies at a height of 2000m, twice as high as Snowdon, so the nights get cold and warm blankets are needed.

Refurbished wards

A high metal fence around the hospital site was a noticeable change since my last visit, a security measure requested by the Tanzanian government. We were greatly excited to see the newly installed bathroom areas in the paediatric, female and



Hospital staff Dr Benedict, centre, with a trainee nurse and driver, has been in charge since 2014

St James's has been supporting the remote hospital in Milo, Tanzania, for many years. Ann Peterken made a return visit with husband and wife doctors Adrian and Hilary Murray. She saw for herself the challenges St Luke's faces, but also how modest sums of money can transform its work. She explains how new and refurbished wards, mains electricity, and a motorbike are making a difference to everyday life.



St James's had contributed to. The hospital has about 50 beds. After I had left Milo, considerable refurbishment was undertaken and the photo below shows the gleaming female ward, now with a tiled floor. It is such an improvement for patients and their families.

Busy life for doctor

Benedict Sandagila has been doctor-in-charge since 2014. He spends most of his time in Milo,

while his family live 75 miles away in Njombe. Doctor Benedict's skills are used widely.

As well as outpatient clinics and surgical work in Milo, outreach clinics are held each Wednesday in six neighbouring villages on a rotating basis.

There are also Friday clinics once a month in two more villages. Benedict was able to take a well-earned break during Dr Benedict's stay.

A major change since my last visit was the provision of mains electricity in Milo, thanks to a hydro-electric scheme implemented by an Italian NGO about seven years ago. Previously the hospital had been dependent on its solar panels and small diesel generator.

The aged solar panels, installed in 2011, need costly new batteries, so the generator is still used to light the operating theatre when mains power is interrupted.

Transport for HIV work

Milo hospital also has a Care and Treatment Centre for HIV/AIDS, largely funded by USAID. Clinics held here and in surrounding villages provide diagnosis and antiretroviral treatment.

The medical administrator who collects, collates and forwards data to the Tanzanian health authorities is a lovely man called John Mgina. His father Joseph, now retired, was a nurse at Milo for many years.

John's ability to collect data from other villages and to follow up any patients who missed their scheduled appointments became very difficult when his old motorbike died.

The Charities Team at St James's decided that most of the £1000 collected for Milo last year should be used to buy a replacement.

John happily got his motorbike in December, as seen on the front cover. When Adrian and Hilary used the hospital car to return to Dar, John was able to transport Dr Benedict and the ultrasound machine to an outreach clinic.

Attending a Sunday service

While there, I attended an early morning service in Milo parish church. I greatly enjoyed the vibrant colours, the joyful singing and dancing, and the extra treat of seeing Harvest gifts brought to the altar. Sacks of produce from peoples' smallholdings conveyed thanksgiving for God's provision in a very meaningful way.

After the service I met Benaiah's widow, Mama Kilwale, together with John Mgina. Mama Kilwale is now 79 and mostly in good health. Two of her daughters are nurse midwives in the hospital and she has other children and grandchildren close by. We were invited to lunch in her home and her grandson Peter was there to translate for us. He graduated



Makeover The refurbished female ward has been transformed

improving



Sunday service Mama Kilwale and John Mgina with the parish church on the hilltop

last year with a degree in information technology and speaks very good English. Jobs are not easy to find, so he was volunteering as a science teacher in Milo primary school, whose headmaster was very pleased to have him.

Chicken dinner!

I also had the pleasure of visiting the home of John Mgina's parents, Joseph and Abigail. I knew Joseph from both of my previous visits when he was still nursing and it was lovely to now see him enjoying retirement. I was given a black hen which had to be left in Milo for Adrian and Hilary to enjoy.



Chicken gift The hen given by the Mgina family

Although Milo is remote, mobile phone reception in the Southern Highlands is very good and you can see the masts from Milo. Mobiles are widely used and I will always remember watching an elderly lady having her fingerprints taken as ID for a Sim card. This was in Milo's phone store, a very tiny wooden building.

Life getting better

Lives are definitely improving and I didn't see any hunger, but most of the people in Milo still depend on producing much of their own food to augment any income they may have. Their hospitality is humbling and very special, such a privilege to receive. Asante sana (Swahili, for thank you).



Paediatric Ward The new build was part paid for by our financial support



Around the Spire

THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER — FRI 1 MARCH

Palestine: 'I beg you, bear with one another in love'

THIS year, the World Day of Prayer service has been prepared by an ecumenical group of Christian women from Palestine, the land in which Jesus was born, ministered and died — where the Christian faith began and is rooted.

Those taking part in the service are part of a great wave of prayer in native languages encircling the globe, beginning as the sun rises over Samoa, continuing as it makes its way round the earth and ending back in the Pacific as the sun sets over American Samoa, just as the hymn says:

*As o'er each continent and island
the dawn leads in another day
the voice of prayer is never silent
nor dies the strain of praise away.*



harmonious solutions to bring an end to human suffering and give security and peace to all.

We thank the Christian women of Palestine for this service and pray that their stories will encourage and inspire women throughout the world.

Three Palestinian women

The service will share stories of the experiences of three Palestinian women, of different generations, who witness to the power of bearing together in love.

We will be encouraged to bear with one another in love despite difficulties and differences and to unite in prayer for just and

Local services

There are two services locally on Friday 1 March: St Mary's Church, Church Street, Twickenham, at 10:30am, and at Hampton Mission Partnership (formerly Methodist Church), Percy Road, at 2pm.

You must remember, Lent...

WE are offering two complementary courses for Lent, running for five Wednesdays from 21 February.

Afternoon group

The 2pm sessions are led by Tim and Julian and are produced by the Diocesan *Way of Life* team. Christians have a variety of spiritual tools to draw upon. Listening is a key practice. The series explores ways to pay attention to God's action in our lives and learn wisdom from one another's experiences.

Evening group

Then in the evenings at 7.30pm Derek and Jacky will lead a course



based on the movie, *Casablanca*. Using clips from the film the group will reflect on themes of sacrifice, repentance, suffering, loss and hope at Lent.

■ The film will be shown in church on Sunday 11 February at 4:30pm with tea and cake served first.

Come to a Shrove Tuesday meal

YOU are invited to supper in church on Shrove Tuesday, 13 February, at 6:30pm.

Cottage pie (meat or veggie) and vegetables, followed by pancakes and toppings, will be cooked by members of The Good Guys. Tickets cost £15 and include a glass of wine or a soft drink.



The men's group is meeting the cost of the meal, with all profits split between church funds and our Lent Appeal. Book now at:

<https://bit.ly/StJMeal>

or use the QR code. This is a community Event — everyone is welcome.



For our troubling times



At our waking The hymn brings reassurance when we need it most



TIM MARWOOD

The saying 'The one who sings well prays twice' is often attributed to St Augustine. True or not, the principle holds good with the hymn *Lord of all hopefulness*.

Written in troubled times

The hymn is just as helpful as both a prayer and a hymn for many occasions. Written in the troubled times of the 1930s, the words articulate our deepest hopes and fears and provide reassurance, no mean feat in four verses!

Memorable words set to the Irish folk tune *Slane*, make this hymn one of the most popular across churches of different traditions.

Although in hymn books the author is shown as Jan Struther, she was British writer Joyce Placzek, whose pen name came from her maiden name of Anstruther.

Struther's best known work as a writer (apart from this hymn) was the character Mrs Miniver, whose experiences reflected the life of an 'ordinary woman' in Britain as war loomed.

The book *Mrs Miniver* was published in 1939 as the Second World War began. She continued to write 'letters' from Mrs Miniver



Writer Struther



that reflected her character's concerns in wartime. Her work was turned into a film in 1942 and won six Oscars.

The impact of the film *Mrs Miniver* on audiences in the US was considerable and both Winston Churchill and President Franklin D Roosevelt later credited the film for America joining the Allies' struggle against Nazism.

These days, *Lord of all hopefulness* is usually sung to *Slane*, but the tune *Miniver* was written by Cyril Taylor especially for it.

Lord of all hopefulness

*Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
Whose trust, ever childlike,
no cares could destroy,
Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
Your bliss in our hearts, Lord,
At the break of the day.*

*Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
Whose strong hands were skilled at the plane
and the lathe,
Be there at our labours and give us, we pray,
Your strength in our hearts, Lord,
At the noon of the day.*

*Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,
Your hands swift to welcome,
Your arms to embrace.
Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
Your love in our hearts, Lord,
At the eve of the day.*

*Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
Whose voice is contentment, whose
presence is balm,
Be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
Your peace in our hearts, Lord,
At the end of the day.*

Have I got news for you...



RICHARD MELVILLE

Writing about local events 100 years ago is simple when most of the work has been done by our vicar back then, Rev Frederick Harvey, in his leaders in the magazine. Here are some of his gems from February 1924:

New Government

Dear friends,

Two notable events occurred in January of extreme importance to the political and industrial life of the country. For the first time the Labour Party have been called upon to govern. In many quarters this has caused much anxiety, but as Christians it is not for us to pass judgment until the Government has had a fair trial.

Our duty is plain — to persevere in our prayers for Parliament that those in power may, under the guidance and grace of Almighty God, work for His Glory, the good of His Church, the wellbeing of our Sovereign and his Dominions, and so bring about a state of affairs in which peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, are firmly established among us.

The railway strike is a serious matter, as it affects the whole community, and does much harm to the industry of the country.

But here again, without trying to place the blame for such a state of affairs, we must pray for a speedy settlement on grounds which are equitable to all concerned.

We recently dedicated the window in the baptistry to the memory of Rev Richard Coad-Pryor. Rev R Scott performed the ceremony of dedication and preached the sermon. We shall long remember his comforting words of advice.

Frederick Harvey

The Choir

The choir were busy practising a performance of *The Crucifixion*, to be sung during Lent. They would have liked to have learned another sacred cantata for the

season, but such was the price of music it would happen only if members of the congregation bought them the copies.

The Girls' Club

The committee entertained the girls at a party in the Boys' School. The evening included competitions, games and dancing. The gift of a gramophone was much appreciated by the girls, who are very grateful to Mrs White for her handsome present.

Mothers' Union

A Deanery meeting at the vicarage attracted 40 people, despite the very wet weather. Mrs Staply gave a most interesting, instructive and helpful address. Mrs. Harvey entertained the visitors to tea afterwards.

IN THE NEWS 100 YEARS AGO



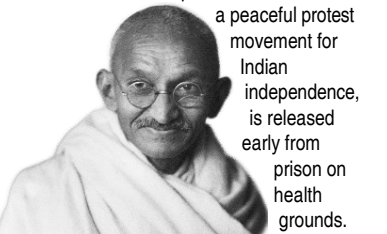
■ The Royal Greenwich Observatory begins broadcasting hourly time signals known as the Greenwich Time Signal or the 'BBC pips'.

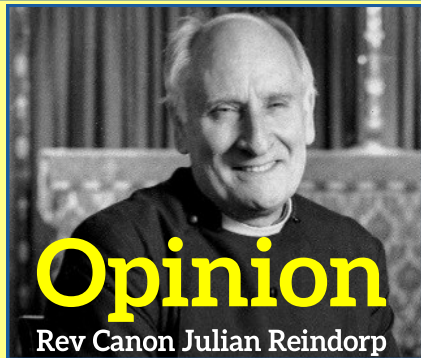
■ American swimmer Johnny Weissmuller, right, sets a 100m world freestyle record of 57.4 seconds in Miami.

■ George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* is performed for the first time by Paul Whiteman's Orchestra at the Aeolian Hall, New York.

■ Mahatma Gandhi, pictured below, who led

a peaceful protest movement for Indian independence, is released early from prison on health grounds.





Opinion

Rev Canon Julian Reindorp

MIDDLE EAST'S FUTURE?

As I write this we are getting hourly accounts of what is happening in Gaza, what seems like the destruction of a small country with 2.3million people. At the same time some of the 700,000 illegal Jewish settlers on the Palestinian West Bank, now armed, are pressuring the Palestinians who have lived there for generations.

What happened on 7 Oct, including 230 hostages brutally taken by Hamas, has unleashed a war that at one level has been building up over the past 75 years, since the 1967 Six Day War. People accept that Israel, like any other nation, has a right to protect itself, but did we realise what this would mean?

Now Israelis and Palestinians have a deep distrust of each other. Behind the scenes the surrounding Arab nations also want the destruction of Hamas. You can perhaps destroy an army, but can you destroy a movement?

The Israeli Government, particularly as represented by their ambassador in this country, does not believe in any kind of Two State solution for Israelis and Palestinians side by side - the policy pursued by the United Nations, the US and ourselves. But with the 700,000 illegal Jewish settlers increasing daily in the Palestinian West Bank is this any longer realistic?

Christians in the Holy Land feel very vulnerable. Jews and Moslems feel their Holy sites are threatened. It is to this huge task of containing violence, rebuilding first relationships, then communities, that people of faith, that all people desperate for peace, need to work and take risks. This is surely the work of more than one generation.

HOMELESSNESS

Despite Government claims to the contrary, homelessness is on the increase. Shelter's national figures over Christmas were 14% higher than a year ago. Some 309,550 people are in some form of homelessness, the majority in temporary accommodation, 'in a tiny hotel room or outside freezing in a doorway'.

One in 53 people in London is homeless, totalling 167,000 — including 82,000 children due to chronic underfunding in social housing, the highest number ever recorded — 4,068 actually on the streets. Suella Braverman, former Home Secretary, claimed 'sleeping on the streets is a lifestyle choice'. In June last year the Prince of Wales and the Royal Foundation launched a five-year programme to end homelessness, through locally linked programmes.

DISABILITY DOWNGRADED

When in December the Government doubled the number of ministers dealing with immigration, Tom Pursglove MP, former Minister for Disability, was replaced by a parliamentary under-secretary. The policy Co-Chair of the Disability Benefits Consortium said, 'Despite making up nearly a quarter of the population, disabled people are yet again being treated as if they didn't matter.'

MP HELPS ROUGH SLEEPER

Former Conservative Minister David Davis MP, and Guto Harri, former No10 Director of Communications, were walking home from Parliament. Davis saw two men 'knocking seven bells' out of another on the floor. They both intervened, and Davis took the man to his flat for the night and then to hospital in the morning. Before becoming a politician Davis trained with the SAS as a reservist!

WRONG FAITH!

I was touched to receive by phone a picture message from two grandchildren aged three and seven thanking me for their Advent calendars. But I remembered a couple of years ago, Alexander, the eldest, then five, when he received his said to his mother, 'Grandpa Julian always remembers, because he is a Moslem.' I have since tried to get his understanding of the world's faiths in the right order!

Thank you for your support



DENNIS WILMOT

We began 2023 with our Lent Appeal, which raised a welcome £2,440, slightly down on the previous year. This was split between the

Diocese of London's project supporting those traumatised by conflict, and our link church of St Luke's Mecuburi, in Nampula, northern Mozambique.

Fundraising was generally down on 2022, perhaps due to the cost-of-living crisis and the after-effects of Covid, with people less inclined to come out and engage.

St James's put effort into helping people's mental health and combatting the effects of isolation. This led to engagement with the national charity MIND. Whilst some benefited from counselling, and a trauma workshop was reasonably successful, the numbers were not high enough to justify the charity's continuation of visits to our Tuesday Connections Café.

Church funds for charitable giving

The PCC's commitment of £1,500 from church funds meant we were able to maintain our support for the charity Welcare and the Bishop Wand School. We pray that these donations can continue in the future.

The St James's Day weekend raised more last year from food, drinks, tombola and tower tours. £457 went towards church running costs and £1,000 to St Luke's Hospital, Milo, Tanzania. This included a bookstall and sizable personal donations.



Playtime Local families gained from our support for Welcare

In September, Sir Michael Pownall, a trustee of The Upper Room, came and spoke to us. His visit had a positive result. Our Harvest Appeal for the charity raised £1,300, £147 up on 2022, and we were named as their eighth best supporter of all the churches in London.

Refugees and our link parish

A quiz night in November raised money for two charities. £205 went to the London Churches Refugee Fund and the next day its chair, Rev Chris Brice, preached and sold Christmas cards. £205 also went to our link church of St Lukes in Mecuburi, northern Mozambique. This was added to the £1,250 collected during Lent.

We raised £2,338 for Christian Aid Week, and there was a big increase for the Children's Society, now £1,033, as people signed up to direct debit payments. The total collected for charity in 2023 was £10,808.

Welcare speaker on 4 February

If you would like to learn more about Welcare, join us on 4 February, when its Chief Executive Officer, Anna Khan, will be at our 9:30am service.

There will also be the chance to talk to her afterwards in the hall over coffee.



Welcare Anna Khan has been its CEO since 2013

Beatitude for the overlooked

IN the spirit of the Beatitudes and Psalm 145, Malcolm Guite wrote this sonnet about the ones we overlook, but God knows and loves intimately. Reproduced from the *Church Times*:

Blessèd are the ones we overlook;
The faithful servers on the coffee rota,
The ones who hold no candle, bell or book
But keep the books and tally up the quota,
The gentle souls who come to 'do the flowers',
The quiet ones who organise the fete,
Church sitters who give up their weekday hours,
Doorkeepers who may open heaven's gate.
God knows the depths that often go unspoken
Amongst the shy, the quiet, and the kind,
Or the slow healing of a heart long broken
Placing each flower so, for a year's mind.
Invisible on earth, without a voice,
In heaven their angels glory and rejoice.



REGISTERS

NOVEMBER

BAPTISM

12 Noah Alexander Tiffin, Teddington

FUNERALS

8 Patrick (Paddy) Robert Gray, 80, Hampton Hill
21 Brian Thomas Boorman, 77, Teddington
30 Janet Elizabeth Jeffries, 84, Hampton

DECEMBER

No entries for this month





SIMPLE PLEASURES

The things we do when we take time out

Our world of wonder



Ros Daly

FOOD HEAVEN

Most of my childhood was spent in my birthplace, Singapore, with its eclectic food culture of Chinese, Malay and Tamil, all foods I enjoyed from an early age. I've also been fortunate enough to have worked in both India and Nepal in later life and I can seldom resist slipping a chilli or two into most of what I cook. Spicy food apart, there's nothing like getting your hands into a good dough, whether for bread or pastry. I feel it puts you in touch with the heart of life itself.



CALMING TREES



Spending quiet time amongst trees fills me with peacefulness and releases me from life's pressures and troubles. You can have some amazing encounters with trees. I particularly recall one early autumn

on Cannock Chase with husband, John, when we stepped amongst the oaks of Brockton Coppice, pictured, to watch sparkling insects hovering in the shafts of sunlight. Dry for weeks, it had rained the night before. Suddenly, there was a popping sound. Every oak around us was masting — shedding its acorns one by one and on and on. We stood under a rain of acorns for some considerable time, utterly enchanted.

GREY MATTER



I like to keep up with current affairs and read the economic and political commentaries. It's good to know what's going on and it helps to keep 'the old grey matter' up to speed, as does doing cryptic crosswords which I enjoy.

Reading is a must: early European civilisation; its religions, art and culture fascinate me, the Celts in particular, but also early and late Stone Age cultures, their practices and developments from hunter-gathering, through mastering pyrotechnics to knowing the procession of the stars, the visible planets, the seasons and the equinoxes.



SING ABOUT IT



Sacred music is a special joy, whether listening or participating and I have sung in four groups, including a madrigal choir. Today I sing in our church choir under the guidance of Thom Stanbury and it is an enormous pleasure. Being a part of the music and joining with others to produce this wonderful sound is a pinnacle experience. Music has always been a part of my life, whether 'enforced' as a child, or by choice as an adult. I will always be grateful to my parents for my basic musical instruction.

THE NATURAL WORLD

Caring for nature, plants, creatures, and habitats means a lot. I adore birds. We feed them every day from specialist feeders in our garden. Migrating birds are a wonder and the sight of a full skein of geese in flight, the lead bird forging a way for those behind in its slipstream is truly breathtaking. It makes my heart sing. I also adore 'animal companions'. I've always had a dog or a cat. Treat a pet with loving kindness and they will reward you with something unique, unconditional love.

PLANET EARTH

I love natural phenomena. If there's thunder and lightning at night I will open the curtains. Likewise, if there's a bright moon I'll let the moonlight flood inside. The Milky Way

from the Australian bush is pretty amazing too; the stars are so bright they are transfixing. Once, flying from LA to London, upstairs on a 747, the captain invited me into the cockpit (before 7/11). I sat in the jump seat behind the co-pilot. It was utterly silent, with a myriad of pale green and pink lights on the controls and this huge windscreen looking into the night. Up ahead was the Aurora Borealis. At 36,000 feet it hung like a towering curtain of shimmering, white pipes of light, like a church organ filling the sky.

THE HIGH SEAS



All my life I have loved the sea, whether beside it, in it, or on it. Utterly beautiful and utterly dangerous, I've been lucky enough to cross all the oceans, bar the Arctic and the Southern, by ship. Once, crossing from New York, there was a bad storm. In the morning a passenger found a swallow on the deck. It lay, exhausted, in an open shoe box placed safely behind the deckchairs. Then, when the storm was over, it was gone. I often imagine what it was like for that bird, swept far off course by the storm, alone and lost in the darkness and then, suddenly, it sees the ship. What a miracle! For me, faith is like that. A safe place when all around you is tossing on the storm of life.

GREETINGS CARDS

I love sending and receiving greetings cards, whether for Christmas, Easter, birthdays or other occasions both joyful or sad. It means so much to know someone cares and has taken the time to be lovingly in touch.

