

# The Pauline

## February 2024 Minister Revd Martin Knight

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Daily Devotions from the URC Wednesday, 7 February 2024 St Mark 6: 14 – 29 Prayer

Strengthen us O God, to relieve the oppressed, to hear the groans of poor prisoners, to reform the abuses of all professions; that many be made not poor to make a few rich; for Jesus Christ's sake. **Amen. Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658)** 

What Mark tells us is that power and politics, deceit and adultery,



This was the prayer and a small part of the reflection for the daily Devotion for 7<sup>th</sup> Feb, it reminded me of events worldwide in recent weeks. In December we took the time to reflect where we had seen God in action or seen the likeness of God in others with our Mirror Festival. Yet more to reflect on with events since the new year. Martin is sadly (for us) moving on to a new and exciting role and we will say a warm St Paul's farewell to him on Friday 19th April. This news brings so many opportunities for us all to carry on the work at St Paul's – with this in mind the garden crew met on last Friday; our stage 2 phase of the garden regeneration is almost complete leaving mainly maintenance going ahead – although anyone with a garden will know there is always something to do! Eleanor Redshaw has kindly agreed to convene the meetings going forward as Martin departs, we realise we really need some extra help on this group – expertise would be great but a willingness to help out; with guidance is really great too – please so let Eleanor know if you would like to join us. As you read through this edition its clear there is so much going on please support us as you are able. As ever I would love to hear from you with any news or information to pass on. Please write, email, WhatsApp or have a chat with me – Pat Granville-Overton. 07742 859552, patqo123@aol.com Thank you



# Dear friends,

As I write, I'm glancing out of the window at a dreich and cold day. Last week we had beautiful sun and almost 18°C. Meteorologists have now taken to calling last week's weather 'Fools Spring', with this week being called 'Second Winter'. The Climate Crisis means that the four seasons are nothing like as distinct as I remember them from my childhood. Waiting for Spring can feel like climbing a mountain;



reaching the top of one peak only to discover another taller one beyond – enjoying the Spring-like sun after one cold snap, only to find another waiting beyond!

After war was declared in September 1939, there was an 8-month period of inactivity in Britian known as the 'Phoney War' (or the Sitzkreig 'Sitting War' in Germany). A weird time of waiting and preparation. As we enter Lent, I have that same strange sense of anticipation and expectancy. We know what is to come – with Holy Week leading to Resurrection – but we still have this period of waiting.

'Lent is a traditionally a time of repentance and penitence, but it also offers an opportunity to see the world afresh, with a new sense of wonder. We are encouraged to look at ourselves and our world with a healthy realism, so that we can accept responsibility for our shortcomings, but also to recognise the nature and purposes of God and the never-ending renewal of possibility and potential in all created things.' Kate Galloway

You only have to look at the Community Garden, with its blaze of Spring flowers from bare earth, to see this 'renewal' in action! It is a reminder that God is always moving things forward!



For those reading The Pauline who have not yet heard, I have accepted a call to serve as Chaplain to the Brighthelm Community Centre and Church, and as Pioneer Minister with the LGBTQ+ community in Brighton & Hove. Alongside the profound sense of sadness at leaving St Paul's and South Croydon United Church, there is real excitement about the possibility and potential of the new role.

My last Sunday is on 21st April 2024, so we are currently in the middle of another strange period of waiting, preparation, thanksgiving, grief and hope.

A number of events are being planned to mark the end of my ministry at St Paul's and SCUC, which will give all of us space to give thanks for God's guidance and activity during the nearly 8 years I've been in South Croydon:

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April

Evening Party at St Paul's, tbc Final service at St Paul's, 10:30am Circuit Tea Party at SCUC, 4pm Leaving Circuit Service at SCUC, 5pm

Each year I am reminded that we must go through the struggle, soul-searching, and pain of Lent and Holy Week, before we can get fully embrace the joy of Easter. In a similar way I am finding that I need to engage with the sadness and grief of leaving friends, as a necessary precursor to celebrating what has been and what is to come! The process of seeing how far we've come, what has been achieved, mistakes made, things left undone – will help us to recognise the nature and purposes of God and the never-ending renewal of possibility and potential in the life of St Paul's and SCUC.



God is not finished with you yet!

With every blessing,

### Martin

Gill Rutter & Family would like to thank Martin and all memebers and friends at St Paul's for the Support and kindness you have given us at this time also for the beautiful Thanksgiving Service



#### Report from 7<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Croydon Scout Group & Croham Valley Explorers

Every January the Scout Group and Explorer Unit submit details of their membership on the basis of which we have to pay National Scout Headquarters for the various services they provide.

This January we reported a total Group membership of 85 and 14 Explorers. This is our highest number of youth members since 2002 and possibly since the Group was founded and is hopefully a reflection of the quality of Scouting we deliver. However, we have known for some time that we are 'running on air' as far as adult leadership is concerned. Luckily, towards the end of last year the Scout Association announced a new approach to volunteering, and on February 4<sup>th</sup> we invited parents to a meeting to explain the details. As a result a large number of the assembled volunteered to support us either as leadership team members, supporters or Trustees. We believe this 'transformation' will enable us to be stronger going forward and to attract even more young people into Scouting.

All our sections continue to run weekly meetings with high levels of attendance. At the turn of the year the Explorers held their annual ramble starting and finishing at the Scout headquarters in Woldingham. In January both the Beavers and Cubs celebrated the Chinese New Year by making lanterns and fans but alas there was no eating smarties with chopsticks this year. The Scouts made models at Warhammer in Croydon and enjoyed a Winter Camp in Sussex at the end of which two older Scouts moved on to Explorers. More recently the Scouts went to the Gang Show in Sutton. One of our Scouts was a member of the 100-strong cast and the star of the show! On February 5th the Explorers hiked from Addington Hills to Coney Hall finishing up at the fish 'n chip shop. Later that week a Unit team known as The Trainspotters took part in the Southern 50 Challenge Hike across the Chiltern Hills. I am delighted to say they completed the route and finished 25th out of 62 starting teams.

Looking ahead the Explorers have Operation Red Flare in late February and the Monopoly Run in London in April, the Scouts have the District Cooking Competition and County Night Exercise in March, and the Beavers and Cubs Fun Days, camps and Linking Days in April, May and June.

We shall certainly need all the help we can get to roll out such and ambitious programme.



Chris Dean

Group Lead Volunteer and Explorer Scout Team Leader

#### The Challenge

As we approach Easter, many are wondering 'Where is God'? Ukraine, Gaza, threats of WW3, if political leaders get it wrong. Brexit is still dividing the nation. Covid has changed some forever, and the young are fearful of climate changes, let alone social media encouraging knife crime, via the unregulated dark web.

Some in power or with great wealth, seem divorced from the reality that many face, whether medical, financial or religious, leading to hatred and division, in our society, and great tension.

LICC sees us as modern day disicples, with Home Groups, to support people, as we battle life's challenges. My plans have changed many times, and some question christianity, as I only attend, infrequently. My answer, is by all means judge me, but 24/7 and 365 days a year, I am trying to sort someone, or a national problem out. Hope takes prayer and action.

David White

# Save your stamps for RNIB

Collect stamps for RNIB and make a difference to blind and partially sighted people.



The RNIB appeal for used postage stamps is ongoing. There is now a collecting box on the table by the car pork entrance.

How stamps make a difference - by collecting stamps your're helping to break down the barriers that stop people with sight loss living life to the full. We accept all stamps: new or used, first or second class, foregin, first day covers, presentation packs or albums. Stamps are sold by weight and we raise £20 per kilogramme of stamps, so it's a brilliant way to raise money.

Cathy Heath

#### Reflections on last year

Another New Year! I cannot believe we are nearly mid-way into February 2024 already. Hope everyone had a great Christmas and here's wishing you all a happy and healthy New Year.

Looking back at events over 2023 they made for a very successful year since the events were enjoyed by all who joined us. We have such wonderful Managers who simply seem to get everything done without fuss. What stood out in particular for me was the week leading up to our Christmas Carol Service, a service always so well attended. The Christmas tree was wonderful. The blue tint of the lighting and the subtle decorations along with the lovely touch provided by Fran's Mirror Festival, not forgetting the Glitter Ball brought everything together.

During the Carol Service, looking around, I thought what a beautiful church we have. As my eye caught the tree which also stood out I looked even higher past the lovely poppies, hand painted by Guild members. Casting my gaze yet further up, up to the stained-glass windows depicting baby Jesus in a manger. Descending, again the poppies caught my eye. It was then something very strange caught my eye. Most of the tall stemmed poppies, which normally cast a dark shadow, were glowing an amazing white; astonishing! That in turn made my thoughts turn to all the young men and women who had given their lives for King and Country during both World Wars. Today so many of us wear poppies as a reminder of the courage, bravery and sacrifice of those who fought for our freedom. Jean Gundlach



#### St Paul's Croquet Club

Spring and summer are just around the corner and both are greeted happily by keen croquet players who have not had a game since last November. (And we were lucky to be able to play then as it was exceptionally mild.) We hope to start play on April 6th, weather permitting, and after a session spent tidying up the pavilion and preparing the lawn the afternoon before.



Once the season's play begins we meet at 2:30 pm on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday afternoons. If you are a busy person it is comforting to know that we can drop in and out of sessions whenever is convenient. Club mallets are available, so no-one needs to worry about equipment. Another worry that is often expressed is that croquet is a somewhat savage and over-competitive game. This may be true in some places, but at our grounds on the corner of Mayfield and Essenden roads the main club rule is: everything stops for tea. We are a sociable bunch. More experienced members are happy to pass on



advice and tips on tactics. And, let's face it, we humans take part in many games, from snap to rugby, and whatever they are, our enjoyment increases when we win.

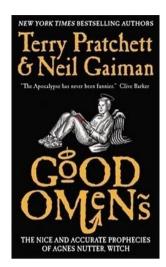
There are several social events over the course of the year, including a special tea party for croquet and tennis players (we share

the grounds with St Paul's tennis club.) Do come, and enjoy yourself along with us whenever you can manage. You'll be made really welcome.

#### Ron & Bea Pollard

#### St Paul's Book Group — March and April 2024

The Book Club meets monthly alternating between lunchtime and evenings to allow more people to attend.

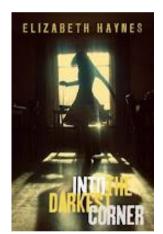


Thursday March 14th 12:30pm

Our book is Good Omens by Neil Gaiman & Terry Pratchett

We meet at Croydon Bowling Club CR2 6LN

If you are planning to attend and have food then it's helpful to order in advance – please speak to Celia or Cathy H



Thursday April 11th 7:30pm

Our book is Into the Darkest Corner by Elizabeth Hynes We meet at St Paul's Church Jubilee Room CR2 7HF New members are very welcome.

For more details please contact Angela Bannerman, Cathy Heath, or Sue on 07971 068887 / secretary@stpaulsurc.org.uk

Don't forget the AGM is on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>

March, after worship

A chance to find out about what we've done in the year, see the accounts, help to plan for future growth and explore what we would like St Paul's to be and to do over the next few years.



#### 2024 UNLOCK Walk - Saturday April 27th



This year's focus is West London, specifically Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham.

The walk is a circular 7.5-mile route stopping to visit 7 churches of different denominations en route. Do join us or sponsor us if you are able to raise much needed cash for UNLOCK's work with inner city churches.

Maps can be found here <u>WalkLeaflet37map</u> (unlock-urban.org.uk). I will also have some paper copies.

An area of contrasts, the walk covers part of the Grand Union Canal, Grenfell Tower, Notting Hill, White City, The

Trellick Tower (designed by architect Erno Goldfinger) and the infamous Westway. Start time – 8am East Croydon Station. More details will be available soon.

It's an opportunity to visit an area profoundly influenced by history and churches working to meet the challenge of inequality and poverty in their communities. Walkers will need:

Oyster card

Packed lunch

Comfortable shoes

Cash to make small donations at each of the churches visited

We meet at East Croydon Station at 8:00 am

Not able to walk? Then do consider sponsoring the group - More information can be found here: <u>Unlock - Donations (unlock-urban.org.uk)</u> also consider supporting Unlock with prayer – for future plans and all those taking part in the walk by hosting, administrating or walking- <u>Unlock - Prayer (unlock-urban.org.uk)</u>
Cathy Heath

Unlock works by running local projects in UK cities, where a trained Unlock Development Worker, accompanied by a local team, is employed to encourage and enable local people and their leaders to grow in faith and confidence by:

UNLOCKING REAL LIFE STORIES OF URBAN PEOPLE
REVEALING GOOD NEWS OF THE DOWN TO EARTH CHRIST
RELEASING LIFE CHANGING SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE

#### LENT APPEAL 2024

You will have seen in the news that the number of refugees being forced into sleeping on the streets has risen dramatically over the last few months.



The Government's efforts to reduce the huge backlog of asylum seekers has led to many newly-granted refugees (people who have recently been granted asylum) being evicted from their Home Office accommodation with nowhere to go.

These refugees have escaped conflict, persecution and unimaginable hardship, only to be made homeless once they have finally been granted asylum.

Please help us to help these individuals find somewhere safe and warm to sleep so they can recover from the trauma they have experienced and start to rebuild their lives.

Thank you.

For more information, please go to Housingjustice.org.uk

#### Sunday 18th February 2024 First Sunday of Lent Baptism

After the delightful service we were all invited to enjoy cake and bubbles to complete the celebrations at St Paul's.

On Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February we welcomed friends and family of Rowena and Matthew Fenton for the Baptism of the beautiful and very well-behaved Alice Christine Diana Fenton.

The following advert was sent in by Roger Brimble who is a Trustee of the Abbeyfield Sanderstead Society; seeking a cook to join their bank of helpers

#### ABBEYFIELD HOUSE SANDERSTEAD HAS A STAFF VACANCY!!

#### THE ABBEYFIELD SOCIETY

Abbeyfield houses are designed for the active elderly who no longer wish to live alone – you may already be aware of the House in Beechwood Road, Sanderstead. Residents are provided with supported accommodation and meals in a homely atmosphere, looked after by a resident Housekeeper.

Abbey **field** 

#### THE VACANCY

We currently have a vacancy to join our team who provide cover for the housekeeper and cook when she is on leave or otherwise unavailable. For this reason it is not possible to be precise about the number of hours or dates that will be required but we will endeavour to give as much notice as possible. The work involves preparing, cooking and serving the lunch and evening meal and clearing away afterwards. Lunch is served at 12:30pm and the evening meal at 5:30pm. We have a well-equipped kitchen and will provide you with all the help you need to get started. The hours are negotiable around the timing of the meals, but are approximately 9:00am to 1:30pm and 4:00pm to 6:30pm. The job is paid at a rate above the national living wage.

#### YOU!!

No specific catering experience is required – just family cooking will be sufficient. We are looking for a friendly and helpful person able to interact with the residents and staff and who would occasionally be available at short notice. Some days may be at weekends.

If you, or someone you know, are interested please telephone 07941 005939 for any further information you require or to discuss the role further.

#### Coals to renewables

In issue 518 of The Norbury, the Editor talked about the demise of the coal industry and coal-fired power stations, which has seen a dramatic reduction in freight trains around the UK. Now David White replies with his experience whilst working for Government.

42 Years ago, one of my responsibilities was funding research into renewable technologies, from the first aerogenerator on Orkney, to the

Salter Duck, which generates energy from wave action. Even then we were planning the Servern Tidal Barrage (in Britian, planning approval takes ages!). Now we have huge wind farms both offshore and on land, with others developing the Pelamis for small-scale wave power off the Hebridean islands and we have seen many people installing solar panels allowing them to sell power back to the National Grid.

I was also involved in government funding research into North Sea oil, to maximise the economic benefit of this source of energy, before moving into atomic energy. I also spent twelve years dealing with British Coal, overseeing the closure of many mines and the industry's privatisation in 1994, where I had to account for £699 million sale to RJB Mining. During the Miner's Strike (1984-85), my own MP John Moore, had the task of

building up stocks at power stations for which he was rewarded with a Cabinet post as Health Secretary, before resigning (ironically) due to ill health and later moving to the Lords. Britian led research into clean coal, but nineteen years ago it was made clear that

unless a decision was made by 2006, to both extend the life of coal powered stations, as well as immediatley adding to our nuclear stock, the country would be energy deficient, with demand exceeding supply. I have visited the Big Pit in south Wales. a mine in the Forest of Dean and been 3,000ft down a RJB mine near Doncaster to see the coalface, and later to the National Coal Mining Museum at Wakefield where, when I told them what my Whitehall job had been, they wanted to leave me in the mine! I once saw Arthur Scargill at the reception in my Department looking worn out and rather pathetic; nothing like the energetic miner's leader who challenged Margaret Thatcher. The year-long strike had been back in the news in recent months regarding Police strategy during the dispute, and despite the passing years, for some families in former pit villages, feeling are still quite raw. There was a recent TV programme on this.

Another responsibility of mine was to give grants to the coal authority, requiring them to retain detailed plans of former mines in case of subsidence, or contamination and leaks due to flooding. I also helped set up Thorp - the Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant at Sellafield, to bring in foreign currency, but, where do we bury low, medium or high level radioactive waste?

2010 was a cold winter, when I saw snow at Sandbanks and at Poole, with palm trees having snow at their roots. I'm sure you'll remember the floods in Cumbria and the breaching of the railway at Dawlish, all due to the Jetstream moving south and warm air picking up huge amounts of water from the Atlantic, dumping it on land.

Global-warming, true or false? - you decide!

I was in favour of the Beddington waste project, rather than sending it all to landfill, which had to be continually monitored for methane gas. A professor of agriculture at my old University of Reading is doing research into how cows are responsible for climate change with their

bodily functions, so we are now being encouraged to give up eating meat!

Some preserved railways have found to their cost after using inferior imported coal from Poland, Russia or China whilst good-quality coal from Wales was lost. Some of you will have seen the once frequent coal trains feeding our power stations, or the occasional nuclear canister on its way to Sellafield. Through many will miss King Coal, until fusion is perfected, we will have to rely on gas and oil, with renewables playing a bigger role, despite their expense. The future will be challenging as glaciers melt, and controversial fracking will be added, to ensure a good mix of supply. Recent statistics from the Met Office show that over the last twenty years, we have had the highest average world temperatures. So, is global warming still a myth?

David White

#### The United Reformed Church-Waldensian Fellowship

invites you to 'An evening with Bruno Gabrielli and Monica Natali' on Zoom on Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, starting at 7.30 p.m. (GMT)

This husband and wife 'team' have been serving Waldensian and Methodist Churches in the south of Italy, and have been involved in issues related to refugees and migrants, for many years.

They are now in Palermo, Sicily, where Bruno is pastor to the central Waldensian Church and Monica is working as Deacon at the small Waldensian-Methodist church at La Noce, a poor working-class area of the city. The *La Noce* building includes a primary school, a centre for rehabilitation, housing for migrants, and bed and breakfast accommodation, as well as providing a home for a lively multi-lingual congregation. Never a dull moment!

If you would like to join us, the Zoom link is <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84476125567?pwd=MFFTR3F5c0REU2IOYkVLa2x1cU5qdz09">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84476125567?pwd=MFFTR3F5c0REU2IOYkVLa2x1cU5qdz09</a> Meeting ID: 844 7612 5567 Passcode: 326951

We look forward to seeing you on March 6<sup>th</sup>.

John S. Bremner, Chairman, United Reformed Church Waldensian Fellowship <a href="mailto:bremner.johns@gmail.com">bremner.johns@gmail.com</a>

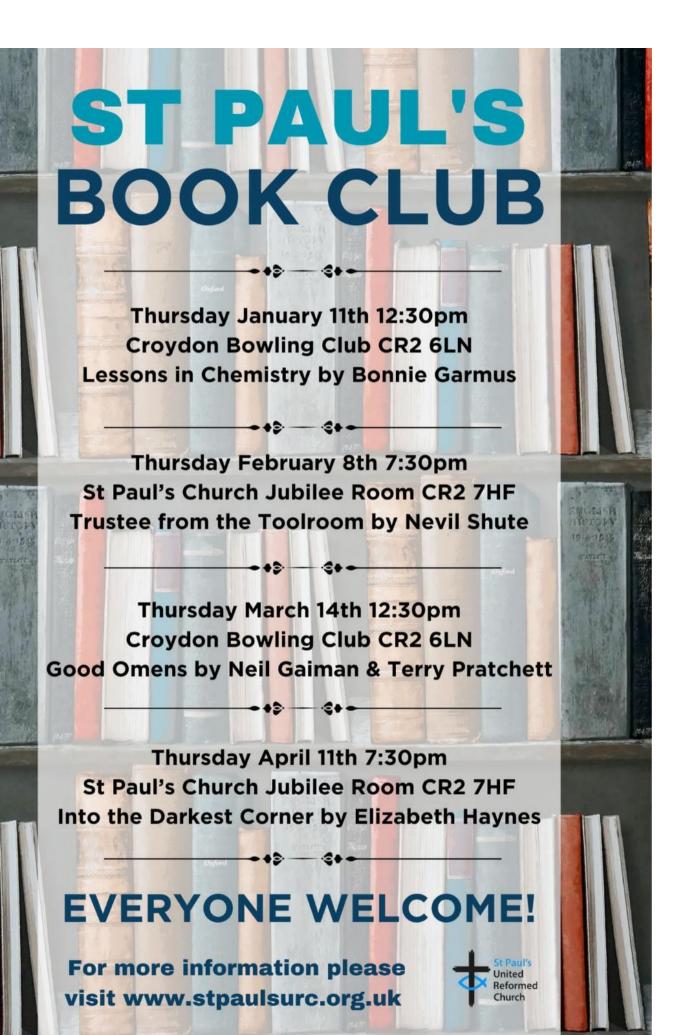
Home St Paul's is launching Small-group meetings. We have had seasonal studies at Lent or Advent – but they are short term and don't allow for deeper relationships to

form. SO, what might they look like? Groups of 8-10 people, meeting fortnightly all year. They are confidential spaces - what is shared in the group, stays in the group. This is so important for trust and honesty to grow. The life span of each group is about 2 years, and then there is a mix up to avoid cliques or stagnation. They are not mandatory, but hopefully something that people *want* to join and the initial two groups expand.

Daytime group is on Thursdays 10.30-12 – 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month from 7 Mar Evening group on Wednesdays 7.30-9 - 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of the month from 28 Feb. Both groups will be at 372 Selsdon Road CR2 7AB. Please self-select your group depending on your availability. **Details from** Franboto@aol.com







#### A day in the life of Poonam Kalra – Jean Gundlach's sister.

Many will know that Jean's sister sadly passed away recently after a long illness. Jean sent in this newspaper article about her work. As it may be difficult to read I have typed it below.



Her day starts early, with prayers. A compassionate animal lover, Poonam Kalra wakes up at 5 and the first thing she does after saying her prayers is taking out her four pet dogs for a morning walk. "I spend about 45 minutes with my pets in the fresh air. Morning tea can wait" says Poonam. Go to her spacious house in Sarbha Nagar at any time of the day and you will find it spic and span. She gives the credit to Geetu, her domestic help, who ensures to keep everything in order. With her husband D K Kalra and their only daughter Supriya away at work – Kalra is posted in Mumbai as senior manager, Bank of Baroda, and Supriya works with the Borderless World Foundation, an NGO for orphan girls in Kashmir – Geetu is her companion at home. To Poonam, Geetu is like a family member and she sings the same lullaby for her one-year-old son, Rohit, which she sang for Supriya when she was small. After all the morning rituals, she heads for 'Darpan', a school for special (autistic) children, by 10:30 am. Poonam spends more than four hours with these children. "I love to work for these angels. They are so affectionate. My work is like a coordinator there. I do not consider myself a working woman because I do all these services voluntarily." Poonam is all thanks for her school, Dr Graham's Home at Kalimpong in Darjeeling, where she learnt "how to face challenges in life". "This school sheltered all those children whose parents disowned them. We were taught to do all kinds of work. Perhaps, that is why I am

here today", says Poonam. Back home, she first goes to her pets, serving them food, before she takes her own lunch. As the clock strikes 3, Poonam isolates herself for an hour to practise Reike (a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation that also promotes healing). "I enjoy evening tea with my friends and also watch television for some time. The evening is only for myself. I listen to music and cook anything I feel like," Poonam tells us. But however busy she may be, Poonam never forgets to meet an old couple living in her neighbourhood. "The old lady is like my mother. She cannot move around much I take care for her dog too. I am there for any help they require." Her house is an open place for stray animals who make it a point to be there in time for dinner. "I feed five pet dogs at night. They are very docile and after the meals they sleep on my porch. I make sure that each of them gets proper bedding". During rains, you can find them on the porch during that day too. It's not only stray dogs that get her attention. "Whenever I get a phone call about any sick animal, I arrange for a doctor and medicines. These animals cannot speak; they need care, love and affection, like children."

Poonam, who ends the day with a word of thanks to God, says; My motto of life is to live one day at a time. Do your best and set an example so that others can learn from your work.

Anupam Bhagria

## **Farewell to Daphne Topple**

On Sunday 10th the Revd. Daphne Topple passed away.

Over a long career in teaching and ministry Daphne changed lives. With her faith as a cornerstone Daphne had a profound influence on so many students and Christians and was for a few years a non-stipendiary minister for URC churches in

South Croydon, including St Paul's, with her strongest links to Purley URC where she was Assistant Minister.

Daphne was a remarkable force in the URC and a huge support to so many people, seeing their potential and encouraging them to use their talents to further the Kingdom. She bore her increasing health problems with great fortitude and left a legacy of encouragement, vision and practical action. May Daphne rise in glory and continue to provide inspiration.

# **Christmas Events**

#### **Christmas Fair:**

In November St Paul's hosted the annual Charity Christmas Card and Gift Fair. The event was very well supported by various charities, The Guild and Uniformed organisations and we welcomed many visitors on the day. The Sanctuary was open and filled with festive music and children's crafts were on offer again this year. The St Paul's stall raised £300 for the Church and the St Paul's raffle raised £84 for The Royal British Legion.

Thank you to everyone who helped set up, manned stalls, cleared up and attended the event.





#### **Church Christmas Lunch:**

It is always wonderful to come together to share a delicious meal and great company and the Christmas lunch was no exception. Thanks you to Fran and helpers for a truly delicious lunch!





# **All Age Christmas Party**

This was a fun and very successful event which welcomed people of all ages including members of our community to join us for party games, craft activities, music and a truly magnificent spread.

We were delighted to welcome a very special guest who took up residence in the Jubilee room which was transformed into a magical Grotto. Every child got to spend time with Santa and it seems they had all been been very good this year! Special thanks go to Natalie, Cathy D, Cathy H, Jeanette, Martin, Sue, Pat S, Stuart, Linda, Santa's Elf and Santa for all their hard work and making the event one to remember!



# Junior Church Nativity Service

What a wonderful service led by the Junior Church.
The children read beautifully - well done all!















God Bless Us All!



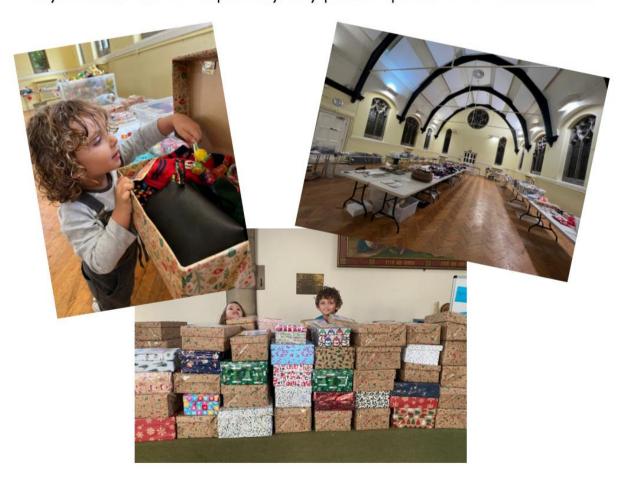
# ST PAUL'S SHOE BOX APPEAL

# This year we packed 118 boxes which have been sent to families and elderly people in Eastern Europe by Link to Hope.

Link to Hope have now sent over a million shoe boxes since the charity started in 1992 and its such a joy to be supporting such an amazing charity. Thank you to The John Fisher School, Town's Women's Guild and to all who donated, sorted and packed. It is a team effort and what is so great about this project is that everyone can get involved in some way, whether through donating items or money, knitting scarves, hats and gloves, covering shoe boxes or packing the boxes.

#### We plan to do this again this year so keep Saturday 19th October free!

If you would like to help in any way please speak to Pat GO or Helen





What a great start to the year! In January over 60 people took part in a New Year themed quiz, enjoyed a fish and chip supper and raised £506 for the Noah's Ark Children's Hospice.

Thanks to everyone who came along and donated so generously. Thanks also to Quiz

Master Chris Dean!



children's Hospice

#### About the charity:

Noah's Ark was established by Michael McInerney following the death of a child in his close family in a local hospital. Unhappy with the options available for the child, he launched Noah's Ark's care for children and families in 2006 after years of fundraising.

We are now one of the UK's leading children's hospices, providing care for over 350 children and their families every year. We believe that every baby, child and young person who is seriously unwell, and their loved ones, should have access to expert and compassionate palliative care from the point of diagnosis. Partnering with London's NHS trusts and social care organisations, we have built a home, a community and a team to make that difference.



We invited groups within St Paul's or a local organisation close to our church, to contribute to our Advent and Christmas celebrations by creating a mirror/reflection display in our Church.

Where have you seen God in action in 2023?
Where have you seen the likeness of God in others? It might be only a glimpse but nevertheless a reflection of God's love and goodness:

Thank you to everyone who took part and created one of the beautiful window displays and to Fran Boto for organising the event. If you did not get to see the displays we have included pictures for you to enjoy.

For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

1 Corinthians 13:12

# **Mirror Festival Contributors**

Thank you to all the groups that have created these beautiful displays:

- Amnesty International Croydon branch
- Junior Church & Creche
- RNLI Croydon branch
- Rutherford School (Garwood Foundation)
- Scouts
- Shoe Box Appeal for Link to Hope
- Soul Symphony Choir
- South Croydon United Church
- St Paul's Book Club
- St Paul's Croquet and Tennis club
- St Paul's Elders
- St Paul's Garden Project
- Soul Symphony Choir
- St Paul's Teams
- St Paul's Tuesday Guild

Thanks to Chris Richards for making the frames and to Robert Cooper for playing the organ at the event





















The beautiful decorated windows resulting from the Mirror Festival (full size pics on our website!)

## **Clear Out and garden days!**

Some along and help us have a Spring Clean in the church and garden

Get these dates in your diaries now!! All welcome – even if you're not up to active work – encouragers, tea makers and enthusiastic ideas people all welcome

Garden Afternoon – Saturday March 16th, 2-4pm Spring Cleaning and minor decorating - Monday March 18<sup>th</sup> 1-5pm Wednesday March 20<sup>th</sup> 12-4pm Garden Morning - March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 10-12noon Spring clean 11-3pm





How can we become better at caring for creation and improving our lives and the lives of others through healthy, eco-friendly and sustainable living?

Lent gives us the opportunity to reflect on the practice of fasting and commit to giving up something that brings a real benefit to nature and helps address climate change. Below are some changes you could make that will help the environment. Take time to pray, reflect and consider these options – pick one or two or however many you'd like (you never know the changes might just stick!)

**Go plastic free.** Even if you can't become totally plastic-free, make it your goal to at least reduce your use of plastic. Read Tom's month without plastic blog <u>here</u>.

**Switch off from digital.** Explore technology-free times or areas of the house, switch to 'airplane mode' for the first hour in the morning and the last hour at night, 'switch off Sundays', reach for your Bible over your device(s) and write a list of outdoor things that you enjoy.

**Boycott fast fashion.** Emily reflects on how our clothes bring us closer to our neighbour with less impact on nature <u>here.</u>

**Buy less or second hand.** Read <u>here</u> how mum of 2, Nic started with small changes: using Facebook marketplace and eBay more to invest in second hand clothing and toys.

**Buy local or in bulk.** Hannah shares how learning more about our food system has impacted what her and her family choose to consume. Read her blog <u>here.</u>

**Become zero waste**. Try to reduce your waste a bit every week. Give a home-made gift instead of buying a present, upcycle items or see what food shop items you could buy differently, spend a bit more on loose fruit and veg for example.

Spend more time in nature. With weekly themes, these 'Get Outside in Lent' outdoor resources will help you connect with God as Creator. Celebrate his creation in different ways in Lent Invite wildlife into your garden or church garden. Read John's tips on greening our gardens for nature's benefit here. Invite and encourage others in your church community to be part of the journey, planting seeds as part of the children's ministry or getting a group to help build and stock up a hedgehog home. Try a plant-based recipe or diet. Cook yourself vegan or plant-based meals once a week and take it from there. As time goes on, cook more vegan/vegetarian meals, to eliminate as many animal products from your diet as you can. Explore tasty recipes with Meat Free Monday or read about Kayleigh's veganuary experience here.

Grow your own. Find out what you can sow and grow on a month-to-month basis here. Read how Vishadhi is using homegrown food to bless her local community and food bank here. Change your method of transport. Walk or cycle for repeated errands, choosing one day a week to walk, cycle or take public transport where you are able to. Read about how Paul and his wife, Tara are changing the way they travel (and more!) here. Take a step to save energy in your home. From draught-proofing windows and doors to swapping your bath for a shower, here's a list of quick tips. You might be surprised at how many of these changes you've already made!

For more information please visit

Go Green (er) for Lent - A Rocha UK

- United Reformed Church
- 1. Welcome and apologies There were 31 present, including 29 members. Apologies from Heather, Heather, Joyce W, Gill R, Peter, Dawn, Jeannette
- 2. Minutes of last meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2023 were accepted.
- 3. Minister Announcement. The Minster had advised members during worship that he had accepted a call to a pioneer minister post in Brighton, from early May. This new role was created by Synod and mentioned at October Synod Together. He expressed sadness at leaving St Paul's but excitement at the new opportunity and confidence that St Paul's was in a good place to grow with hope and vision through the real sense of welcome. Martin explained the next steps a "Visionary Companion" would be assigned by the pastoral committee after Martin leaves to help St Paul's scope their future, likely a shared ministry with other churches as at present. An Interim Moderator would then assist in preparing the joint pastorate profile to attract a Minister.

Questions were asked about Iona, the SCUC arrangements, the new job support, and how Martin's roles would be covered. During the next 3 months, plenty of discussion is needed about sharing roles, and strengthening of the Worship and Discipleship team alongside practical issues such as ensuring continuing support for the garden, tech and sound in the church.

There was time on groups to discuss hopes and fears, things to keep and things to let go; worship is paramount, buildings could be a burden for a small congregation, clubs, rotas, guild, events are core elements that units us and important to continue. Further discussion likely over the coming weeks.

- 4. Small groups / Home groups The narrative from Martin's 14 January sermon had been circulated and Martin and Fran explained the idea in more detail. There was time in groups to discuss the proposals and feed back. Two initial groups will start fortnightly from 18<sup>th</sup> Feb and all were invited to sign up for their availability. There was some concern about cliques forming and this will be monitored with groups re-forming every 2 years.
- **5. Finance report** Thanks to Dennis for presenting helpful data in time to study. Noted the significant drop in Freewill offering (FWO) despite maximizing profit on lettings we remained in deficit of around £1500/month. There was however

support for repayment of the unused Synod loan, and support for the need to withdraw some of our investments to provide funds for 2024. It was pointed out that during the year the St George's Fund had been incorporated into the St Paul's accounts as a restricted fund.

The Minister ran through the net surplus from recent events The quiz night in March was £409, the table top sale in March raised £97 and the one in October £77, the Summer Fete £503, the wine tasting in September £311, the Christmas Fair £281 and the Christmas Lunch £69.

Some of the traditional funds used for accounting are now outdated and need replacing. There was a brief discussion about the proposal that St Paul's registers as a charity in its own right – it is currently an "Excepted" charity under the Synod registration. Direct charity status is required for organizations with over £100k turnover which has been the case for 2 years.

"St Paul's Church Meeting, held on Sunday 28th January 2024, accepts the Treasurer's advice that St Paul's URC register as a charity with the Charities Commission, and with the Elders' serving as Trustees for said charity." Carried unanimously

Dennis pointed out the anomaly of various funds such as the organ fund and proposed reducing the static funds.

- **6. Admin support** Sunita Ricketts, who had been previously to St Paul's events had generously offered volunteer administration one morning a week from February for initially a year. The meeting welcomed this kind offer and Sunita will start with the contacts database and publicizing of events.
- **7. Forthcoming events** –The Minister outlined events coming up and Holy week services.
- **8. Any Other Business** David requested a review of publicity and the importance of using the poster sites well.
- 9. Date of next meeting Following the AGM Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March after worship

# St Paul's Garden Gang

Our gardens have been transformed thanks to a grant from Synod and lots of enthusiastic volunteers under Martin's creative leadership. Now we've established the garden (phase 2) we're maintain it as a showcase of our faith community to those using Croham Road. So many meaningful conversations have happened with passers-by as we've been digging and planting.

The first activity days are March 12th, 6pm March 16th, 2-4pm March 22nd, 10-12noon

All welcome! We need people with creative gardening ideas and those who just want to do as they are asked in the outdoors alongside nice people! So, if you have any interest in getting some fresh air and light activity and/or getting dirty to build the Kingdom please let Eleanor Martin or Sue know! 07971 068887 <u>secretary@stpaulsurc.org.uk</u>





Our new "Quiet space" created in the South Transept.



#### **FOOD LIST - MARCH 2024**



At Purley Food Hub we provide food and household essentials for local people going through hard times. Please consider donating any of our Top 10 priority items in March:

- Small Jars of Coffee
- Small Bags of Sugar (500g)
- Tinned Meat such as Beef, Chicken, Ham
- Jars of Jam
- Tinned Tomatoes
- Packet Custard requiring only water
- Tinned Rice Pudding
- Tin Openers
- Unisex Deodorant
- J Cloths & Kitchen Sponge Scourers

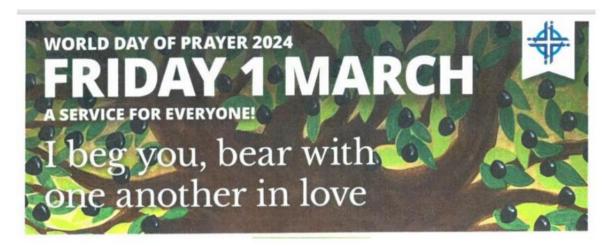
We thank all of our supporters for your continued generosity. Since 2013 you have helped us to provide food for just over 38,000 people in crisis - equal to more than 340,000 meals.



#### **PURLEY FOOD HUB**

Tel: 07546 635295 | Email: purleyfoodhub@gmail.com Website: www.purleyfoodhub.net Charity no: 1152807 | Company no: 08557885





The service content has been prepared by The Christian Women of Palestine World Day of Prayer, local services:

#### Sanderstead United Reformed Church

Sanderstead Hill, CR2 OHB

The service will commence at 10.30am

(TFL 403 bus stop outside the church)

The service will be followed by Refreshments
All are welcome

The service will be streamed on the Sanderstead website, www.surc.org.uk and follow the link to streamed service. It can then be watched live or on YouTube later on.

# **Our Lady of the Annunciation Church**

147 Bingham Road, Addiscombe, Croydon, CR0 7EN. *The evening service will commence at 7pm* 

All are welcome to share in Prayer