The Pauline

May 2021 Minister Revd Martin Knight St Paul's URC Croham Park Avenue South Croydon CR2 7HF Minister1@stpaulsurc.org.uk www.stpaulsurc.org.uk <u>www.facebook.com/stpaulsurc</u> 0208 406 0667



Hello everyone

Inited

Church

Reformed

Yay- the weather is getting warmer at last - hopefully no more frosts; which means those lucky enough to have a garden/allotment; can soon start to plant out annuals and veggie plants.

In the month of May we had (there are most likely others) World Bee Day 20th May; No Mow May; Mental Health Awareness Week 10th - 16th May and World Naked Gardening day (!) on 1st - whilst the dates may have passed us by - the message is relevant always. Conserving nature, our own and others wellbeing is so important whether that's family, friends, a neighbour or a colleague - each conversation counts.

The Natural History Museum has some wonderful displays - Our Broken Planet: How we got here and Ways to fix it. is now open. It's a free, evolving display - topics explored are; the food we eat, the products we use and the energy we consume - well worth a visit.

Many thanks for all the contributions for our newsletter - please keep them coming in. It's great to be able to worship in person now; if you would like to come along and need assistance to get there please let us know. Volunteers would be very welcome for supplying/arranging flowers. If you would like to contribute towards flowers but not arrange them I am happy to do this so please contact me.

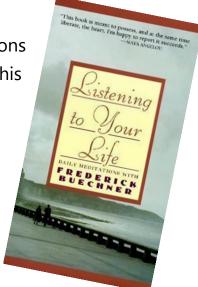
Junior Church have been busy raising funds for Christian Aid a car wash during the service was popular and fun, and the wind and rain held off for a fabulous Family Spring Trail from Coombe Wood gardens to prizes and refreshments at the church. Thanks to all involved

Pat Granville-Overton patgo123@aol.com, 07742859552

From Martin's Study

Over the past few weeks, I've been enjoying the daily meditations written by Frederick Buechner, which can be found in his wonderful book *'Listening to your life'*.

Buechner is a highly acclaimed American author, theologian and (much to the surprise of his friends!) ordained Presbyterian minister. I have found his short daily reflections to be both powerfully apt and very moving – giving me space to *listen to my life*, just as it says on the tin!



As I sit writing this note from my office, Buechner's words for today stay with me, not least as we approach the season of Pentecost.

'I believe that we know much more about God than we admit that we know. ...God speaks to us, I would say, much more often than we realize or than we choose to realize. God's message is not written out in starlight, which in the long run would make no difference; rather it is written out for each of us in the humdrum, helter-skelter events of each day; it is a message that in the long run might just make all the difference in the world.

...God speaks to us about ourselves, about what God wants us to do and what God wants us to become; and this is the area where I believe that we know so much more about God than we admit even to ourselves.

And the words that God says, to each of us differently, are *be brave…be merciful…feed my lambs…bear fruit…press on towards the goal.*'

That fantastic Pentecost scene of excitement and astonishment can, if we're not careful, lead us to believe that God's voice and the Spirit's movement in us, can be confusing and not easy to understand - like another language.

Perhaps we feel the same about hearing God in our daily lives or in our church life; that we expect a divine, other-worldly voice rather than the persistent, clear accent of God in the 'humdrum, helter-skelter' of life. God's Spirit word meets us in the people we meet, in the decisions we make about how we treat others, the internal and external messages we accept, and most especially when we put ourselves in the shoes of others.

God speaks to us about who we are as church through the decisions we make, how we spend our money, how we show love, how we welcome others and where our priorities lie. Pentecost reminds us that God's voice is heard more clearly and more often than we realise – and certainly more than we are willing to realise; partly because the cost of acting on what we hear can be high and very often is a call to change and to be renewed, which is unsettling.

Alongside the fiery movement of the Spirit at Pentecost, there is also the image of the dove, more associated with peace and calm. I have always loved the beautiful stained-



glass dove in the apse of St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, so it was a wonderful surprise to discover that St



Paul's has, not only a stained-glass dove, but one carved in wood.

As Buechner reflects, God's word speaks to each of us differently. There are times we need waking-up and calling to a new way of living. There are also times when God's word calls for peace, when we need to slow-down, which can, in itself, be a call to a new way of life.

As the birthday of the church, Pentecost is a reminder that God speaks and the church is called to listen, to reflect and to live God's life-giving tones in the world.

At St Paul's we are continuing to listen as God's spirit guides us to be evermore welcoming to all. May we not feel that we are awaiting a divine visitation to tell us what to do next, but rather trust that God's voice is heard in the humdrum of our daily lives and in the lives of 'the other'. God's voice is clear and strong... 'be brave...be merciful...feed my lambs...bear fruit...press on towards the goal.'

With every blessing as we journey together,

Martin

7th/12th Croydon Scouts & Explorers (6 - 18 years)

All sections are now meeting Face-to-face outdoors as much as possible, and weekly attendance has been excellent. We have attracted new members too, and also some badly-needed adult help. The omens are good for further Covid relaxation which will mean residential experiences and camps can go ahead.

The past month has seen some varied and really amazing activities. The Beavers made dragons from egg boxes and coloured card to celebrate St George's Day - St George is the patron saint of Scouts everywhere - the Cubs lit fires and cooked hotdogs in large aluminium 'billies', the Scouts enjoyed a widegame involving balloons on the top of Croham Hurst where three weeks earlier they renewed their Scout Promise as the sun set, and not to be outdone the Explorers went on an evening hike without managing to get too lost !

Future events include hosting the annual outdoor church parade and BBQ at HQ on 18 June, our Group AGM on 29 June, canoeing in July and a Beaver outing on Ashdown Forest in August.

We have received further good news on the financial front with funding in the form of the Government's Restart Grant. The Trustees will shortly be making decisions on how this money will be spent to benefit Scouting, but I am sure some will be used to extend our reach as well improving still further our facilities.

Christopher Dean Group Scout Leader & Explorer Scout Leader Tel 01883 723081



The Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill

This is a Private Members' Bill coming before Parliament in June 2021. It is supported by 100 MPs from seven political parties. Whilst it doesn't come from the government, a Private Members' Bill which has considerable support in this way can become law.



What will it achieve?

1.Reducing emissions. The CEE Bill makes sure the UK does its bit to keep global heating down to 1.5°C, which gives us a chance to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

2.Protecting the natural world. The Bill conserves and restores wildlife and the places we love. Doing this also removes some of the carbon dioxide we've put into the atmosphere

3. Joining up our approach. The Bill recognises the connections between the climate and nature crises. Other new UK legislation deals with them separately and does not provide the overarching framework we need for the scale of action required.

4. Taking responsibility. The Bill makes sure we don't push our responsibilities for climate and nature onto other countries. From our food to our phones, many of the emissions we cause are produced in other countries – and we don't currently account for them in our laws.

5.Building consensus. Weaning ourselves off fossil fuels means big changes. So it's important that everyone is on board with them. That's why the Bill also calls for a climate assembly to help Government and Parliament develop an emergency strategy on the way forward

6. The UK leading by example at COP26

2021 is a crucial year for the planet. In November, the UK is co-hosting the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (known as COP26). The conference has to be a success if we are to address the crisis. As co-host, the UK has a key role to play in getting all countries to commit to ambitious plans to reduce emissions.

What can individuals do?

1.Write to our MPs - there's a list of those already supporting the bill here <u>MPs & Supporters</u> (ceebill.uk) You can find out who your MP is here <u>Find MPs - MPs and Lords - UK Parliament</u>

2. Support the work of the CEEBill Alliance Supporter sign up (ceebill.uk)

3.Support local campaigns <u>Local alliances map (ceebill.uk)</u> Taken from The CEE Bill Alliance Website <u>The CEE Bill - Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill</u> (14/5/21)

Cathy Heath

Kindly sent in for us to enjoy:

A dialogue between God and Moses:

GOD: Moses, I've got good news for you and bad news.

MOSES: Almighty, let me hear the good news first.

GOD: I have chosen you to lead my people out of Egypt into the Promised Land. In order for this to be accomplished I will send ten plagues on the Egyptians, including water turning to blood, frogs, gnats, flies, cattle disease, boils, bad weather, locusts, darkness and death, after which Pharaoh will let you all go. Then he will pursue you to the shores of the Red Sea, which I will part to let the Israelites cross. Then the waters will return and drown the Egyptian army. Afterwards, the people will wander the desert for a long time (I will provide food and water), receive my laws and finally enter the Promised Land.

MOSES: That sounds wonderful, Lord. What can the bad news possibly be? GOD: YOU have got to write the Risk Assessment.

** Facts - part one......

 'A SHOT OF WHISKEY' - In the old west a .45 cartridge for a six-gun cost 12 cents, and so did a glass of whiskey. If a cowhand was low on cash he would often give the bartender a cartridge in exchange for a drink. This became known as a "shot" of whiskey.
IRON CLAD CONTRACT - This came about from the ironclad ships of the American

Civil War. It meant something so strong it could not be broken.

3. RIFF RAFF - The Mississippi River was the main way of traveling from north to south. Riverboats carried passengers and freight but were expensive so most people used rafts. Everything had the right of way over rafts which were considered cheap. The steering oar on the rafts was called a "riff" and this transposed into riff-raff, meaning low class.

4. COBWEB - The Old English word for "spider" was "cob".

5. SHIP STATE ROOMS - Traveling by steamboat was considered the height of comfort. Passenger cabins on the boats were not numbered. Instead they were named after states. To this day cabins on ships are called staterooms.

6. OVER A BARREL - In the days before CPR a drowning victim would be placed face down over a barrel and the barrel would be rolled back and forth in an effort to empty the lungs of water. It was rarely effective. If you are over a barrel you are in deep trouble.

7. HOGWASH - Steamboats carried both people and animals. Since pigs smelled so bad they would be washed before being put on board. The mud and other filth that was washed off was considered useless "hog wash".

8. BARRELS OF OIL - When the first oil wells were drilled they had made no provision for storing the liquid so they used water barrels. That is why, to this day, we speak of barrels of oil rather than gallons.

9. HOT OFF THE PRESS - As the paper goes through the rotary printing press so friction causes it to heat up. Therefore, if you grab the paper right off the press it's very hot. The expression means to get immediate information.

Greening Your Church

Alex Mabbs opened this workshop with the assertion that Scripture teaches us that this world matters. Just as Adam and Eve were there to tend the garden we are here for the world, it is not here for us. Jesus's life demonstrated a ministry of service and his resurrection showed how God makes all things new, bringing life to the world. So this world matters.

Alex reminded us of our Christian brothers and sisters in the islands of the South Pacific who are facing the loss of their homes and livelihoods through rising sea levels. Their message to us is to lead a simpler life. We need a culture of recognition that there are people on the other side of the world whom we must help to survive. The key is to start doing something about it as churches and as individual Christians.

Transport: saving time can cost the earth. Food: use your loaf:

Local Organic Animal friendly Fairly traded



Energy: switch to genuinely renewable electricity. Christian Aid began the Big Church Switch in order to help churches do just that.

https://www.bigchurchswitch.org.uk/

To deal with rubbish and overconsumption, in order of effectiveness: Refuse-Reduce-Re-use-Repair-Recycle. Contact <u>https://joyinenough.org/</u> for inspiration.

We then saw a video of Rev. Helen Burnett a Church of England priest who has been jailed for blocking the highway as part of an Extinction Rebellion protest. Her testimony and that of others can be found on You Tube at

<u>https://christianclimateaction.org/2021/05/07/christians-in-court/</u> Less controversial ideas for action were presented to us through the examples of Marsh Green, Sedlescombe Chapel and Brighthelm . I was inspired by the way in which other churches have worked with their communities to establish gardens and play areas and by the collection of rainwater to flush the loos, saving water and the energy it costs to make safe drinking water, which we then unthinkingly waste by flushing it down sewers. A Rocha's Eco-church scheme, as presented to us by Pat a few months ago would be a good way to join in these achievements.

Tom Hackett, our Synod Children's and Youth Development Officer, reminded us of a survey reported recently in Reform which found that 9 out of 10 teenage Christians are seriously concerned about climate change but that only 1 out of 10 feel that their church is doing

enough. Here at St Paul's we have the objective of becoming a more child and youth friendly church; it is heartening to realise that working toward the eco-church award will help us to do just that. A full account of the survey can be found at https://www.youthscape.co.uk/research/burning-down-the-house

Those of us who attended the workshop have been sent a toolkit of web addresses and book titles to help us on our eco-journey. I can share this with anyone who is interested. Alex also recommended watching A Perfect Planet. For my part I would urge watching Ade Adipitan's recent documentary series on global warming as well. All in all, a great deal to think about and act on.

Bea Pollard

Meet Dennis Simmonds - our Treasurer DENNIS SIMMONDS - FRUSTRATED TRAVEL AGENT!

During the restrictions of the last year our thoughts have naturally turned to travel and past adventures. Pat and I have been lucky enough in our lives to travel to a number of countries but when searching on a map, it is clear to see how many more there are yet to explore.

My interest in foreign parts started over sixty years ago sitting in my parents' lounge in Elstow, Bedfordshire (the birth place of John Bunyan) in front of our black and white television watching flickering images, and the stilted commentary, of Armand and Michaela Denis on their African safari adventures. Little did I think that 20 years later I would be living those adventures for myself. When I qualified as an accountant, Pat and I had been married for two years and had ideas of exploring other countries, with a particular interest in Canada. But, that was not to be and we found ourselves in the middle of Africa! I was lucky enough that my job gave us sufficient holiday time for me to fulfil my childhood ambition and to go on safari - and we did so every year during our eight year stay in Zambia. We also regularly visited one of the seven natural wonders of the world - the Victoria Falls, on the border with Zimbabwe. Working in Zambia on two year contracts also gave us biannual long leaves during which we took the opportunity to explore other parts of the world including Australasia and the Far East.

When we returned to the UK I found that my wanderlust was still there and I managed to secure a job that gave me travel to the Middle East. I think it was the foundation laid by our time in Zambia that led us to be somewhat adventurous in our more recent travels - foregoing

organised package tours for the excitement of self-planned journeys. Basically, I am a frustrated travel agent!

We have been able to travel to many countries and visit other wonders of the world. In this digital age we are able to view photographs and videos of these places very easily, but three in particular exceeded our expectations – the Taj Mahal in Agra, India, The Grand Canyon in Nevada, USA and Petra in Jordan. Photographs do not do justice to their beauty and enormity.

What was our favourite trip? Undoubtedly our visit to Jordan with its varied landscapes stretching from the Red Sea in the south through the desert at Wadi Rum to the greenery of the north with views across to the Golan Heights. From swimming, or rather floating, in the Dead Sea to crusader castles and the Roman ruins at Jerash, every day of our trip was completely different and we were able to gorge on our favourite foods – and the wines were not too bad either!

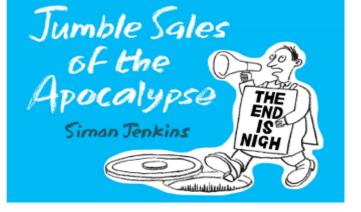
Where to next? We have no particular desire to get on an aeroplane in the near future, particularly not for a long haul journey, and a staycation touring Britain is very appealing. And there is so much of Europe that we have not explored yet. However, we do still hope to get to Vietnam and Cambodia at some time and return for a sixth trip to New Zealand.

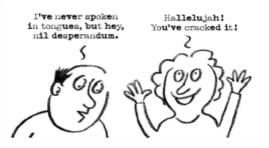
South London Synod Area meeting Tuesday 15th June 2021 at 7.30pm

Do you ever wake up in the night worrying whether Jesus might be a bit surprised at how the faith he started 2,000 years ago has ended up today?

How on earth did we get from Jesus to where the church is now?

Ship of Fools, the online magazine and community, has been tangling with that question since the last millennium, and in response has produced features such as the Mystery Worshipper, the 12 Days of Kitschmas, a lot of comedy, and an equal amount of impassioned theological debate.





Come along to our meeting which is open to all church members to listen and discuss with Simon Jenkins, editor of Ship of Fools, and author of *Jumble Sales of the Apocalypse* (SPCK, 2017), as he joins us for an evening of comedy and questioning faith.

The Zoom code is Meeting ID: 880 9277 9657 Passcode: 409162 https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88092779657?pwd=R0ZIa2ZTRVVQejczQVNiaWg4YVJnUT09

Is It Just Hot Air?

14 years ago I wrote 'Is it getting warmer?' article, followed by an 18-point green audit for St Paul's, and in recent weeks, many will have seen the programmes by Ade Adepitan, Greta Thunberg and Sir David Attenborough, so it is time for a review. The pandemic has shown we are all affected by large issues. Starting with the Green Audit, not bad, but issues still outstanding are:

- a. An environmental issues noticeboard
- b. We are still spaced out, of course due to Covid
- c. List best ractise
- d. Hippos in the toilet cisterns
- e. Solar panels on the church roof (if government or URC grants are available).
- f. Council does not allow separation of waste e.g. cans, paper, etc.
- g. Influence friends and neighbours.
- h. List numbers for home energy audits
- i. Annual review of energy use and recycling, with targets.

At the end of this year, Glasgow is holding COP26, in November, but due to Covid variants, it may have to be held virtually or postponed. Britain has set ambitious targets, but the real truth is, politicians have to try and influence us, to make substantial, permanent changes, e.g. on transport, how much we consume, where we take our holidays, domestic heating, let alone farming, to eat less meat.

Britain started the industrial revolution, and we have been lucky in having vast resources of coal, gas and oil, then moving on in 1957 to nuclear power. I was funding renewable projects o behalf of government, 40 years ago, many of which are now common place like solar power, off/on shore wind, biomass, letting the private sector mass produce, let alone improving home insulation and new builds. The young are worried about the future of our planet.

Most of you will see me walking, as I only use public transport to go further afield, or with a lot of shopping. I try to re-use paper to send notes to many, keep my thermostat down below 20, and of course, save on water, hence why I am single! As Christians, we are only stewards, should consider all mankind in our daily choices, but the elephant in the room, is how do we, or others have a certain level of living, let alone happiness, by limiting economic and population growth?

Professor Lord Stern warned about inaction, and now Greta Thunberg wants urgent action, but is it political suicide to say 'no'? The West uses 20 times more than a person in a developing country, so surely they have a right to live, especially those in low lying islands or cities, which will be flooded, due to glacier and polar melt, let alone wetter winters and more and arid springs or summers. Is what you, your community, country or world consume necessary? Are we not spiritual beings, who have made a mess of things?

So cut our waste, whether it be food, or other items, we will probably have to go back to the village mentality, live, marry and die within the same area, travelling less, the same applies to stop shipping containers or flying, all over the world, make better use of energy, use IT to send text, email, zoom or video conferencing, using home as a place to work, grow food, except to manufacture, use price or taxation or the law to force change.

In a democracy, all have a voice, unless we listen, there will be more wars, due to shortages, more mass migration, but more disease may limit growth, as Malthus warned, let alone inequalities, lead to mass civil disobedience. Both old and young have a conscience, so speak, listen, the choice is yours. Will technology help, to some degree, yes, but we only have one earth, as Barbara Ward said in the 1970's, it is our home, look after it, or we may become extinct, like the dinosaurs.

David White

Photos from our Spring Trail and Christian Aid Car washing



Synod Area Meeting - Saturday 11 September 2021

St Paul's is hosting the first in-person Synod Area meeting for many months. Yes, we hope we will be able to socially distance and all be together again. Just like old times! For those who would prefer to stay at home or are away on holiday the meeting will be available on Zoom - there's no excuse!

We've invited Dr Justin Thacker, currently Director of Church Action for Tax Justice, soon to join Christian Aid, to talk to us about global poverty and the pandemic, and how we as churches can work towards a fairer world.

An ordained URC elder, Justin trained as a paediatrician before embarking on theological studies. He has been Head of Theology for the Evangelical Alliance, Chair of the World Evangelical Alliance Theological Commission, Academic Director of studies at Cliff College, and is an enthusiastic youth group leader setting challenging dilemmas for discussion.



Thursday June 10th - 7pm, Zoom - A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles

St Paul's Book Club

Thursday July 8th - 12:30 Coombe Gardens (Coach House Café - with lunch) – Longbourn by Jo Baker

Thursday Aug 5th - time and venue tba - A Single Thread by Tracey Chevalier

Zoom meeting ID: 895 1764 1003



Jean would like to thank all our friends at St Paul's for all the love and support during David's battle with the Big C. He has been told that it is clear but will need further check ups. The kindness with transport, shopping, cards, potted plants and all the many phone calls and most important your prayers were so appreciated during the tough 18 months it is at times like this that the family church is so important.

Thank you all once again Love Jean Gundlach

Jean has sent these words of wisdom to amuse us all.

Those who teach must never cease to learn Encouragement is the oxygen of the Soul Power may last 10 years but influence lasts a hundred We treat others how to treat us What we treasure most is in our hearts Life is chance, Growth is optional - choose well Speak will for your enemies. You made them Few people listen until you get it wrong! Experience is a tough teacher given the test first and the lesson afterwards No lock has been made without a key To achieve something great you need to plan and not quit rough times Let dreams, not worries be your driver



Jean Gundlach



- Welcome and Apologies: The Minister welcomed everyone to the meeting. 19 present, apologies from Joyce W, Heather C, Heather R, David W
- 2. Minutes of last meeting on 21 March were accepted. No matters arising.
- 3. **Finance Update:** Dennis Simmonds, new Treasurer, thanked Robert Spurgeon for all his work and the excellent handover and support he had proved for Dennis in the new role. Dennis outlined the current financial position which was looking positive with a healthy level of income projected for the year ahead. In response to a question Robert responded that he was meeting the loss adjusters in the coming wee to discuss our insurance claim for loss of income from last year.
- 4. **Welcome signage:** The Minister went through a circulated paper detailing the proposals for improving signage and wayfinding outside and inside the premises. This was a refresh with more detail of projects provisionally agreed in November 2019. Important pints were raised as follows:
- Signage should be 'welcome to the church' not 'welcome to the car park!'
- It is important to have an internal noticeboard that those hiring the halls can use to publicize their groups
- It may be worth seeking professional advice on wayfinding and the best investment in signage
- We do have some significant expenditure coming up, on stonework repairs and heating system replacement and need to account for that although we do not yet have estimates for these to be able to do so.
- Concerns about reducing the beech hedge the aim is to lower its height and reduce its depth to make it less forbidding, not removal
- A question about whether the defibrillator could be stored indoors rather than on the sign the community scheme we are signed up to will provide replacement if stolen plus installation, etc and is a very good deal but needs to be outdoors. No power supply is needed.

The meeting agreed nem con the resolution as follows:

After components of our Vision project were halted during the uncertain financial circumstances caused by the Pandemic, St Paul's URC Church Meeting, held on the 16th May 2021, acknowledges our improved financial position and now encourages and empowers the Elders and Teams to move forward with the projects laid out in the May 2021 'Welcome Signage' document. The meeting accepts the estimated budget of £7,490, which falls within the remainder of the budget agreed at the November 2019 meeting.

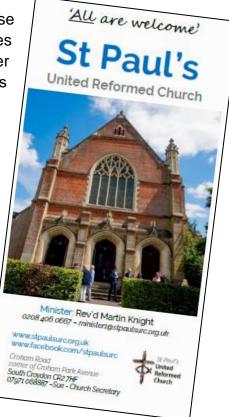
Date of next Meeting : There being no further business the next meeting on 18 July (focusing on the Child and Young People Friendly Church project) was announced and worship completed at 11.50am

Our Welcoming Church

Have you seen our new leaflet available for visitors and those using the halls? The tri-fold leaflet covers all our current activities and links with our new website and Facebook page for further information. Why not pick up a copy and let us know if there's anything missing or if it could be even better!



Psst! There's a church behind all this...and a bus stop on the right. Would you know it?



Church meeting agreed to improve the signage for St Paul's with a welcoming sign at the car park and another at the bus stop – people can see it is a church but do they know who we are and all that we do?



Connect Health

Connect Health are running NHS physiotherapy sessions in the large hall almost every weekday now which is a great way to welcome people from across Croydon to our buildings and reach out to our wider community. Do say hello if you're passing - people seem very interested in seeing our beautiful sanctuary and finding out about all the things going on at St Paul's.

Church

St Paul's Charity Quiz

save t

SATURDAY 26TH JUNE 2021 7 PM - 9:30 PM

LOCATION TBC: ZOOM OR AT ST PAUL'S URC

MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW



The Ryan THERAPY

www.stpaulsurc.org.uk