

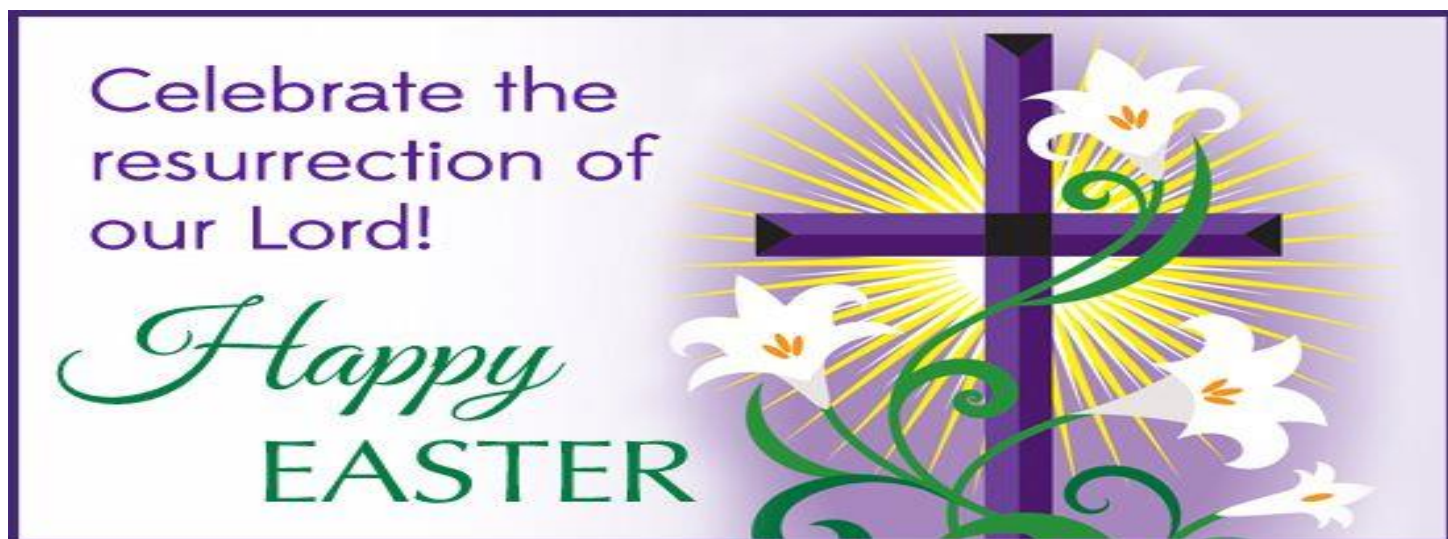


# The Pauline

March 2021

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Hello everyone

Happy Easter to you and all the joy that brings.

Thank you for all the wonderful articles in this edition of the Pauline - it's an absolute joy to receive those from near and far - please keep sending your news and thoughts in.

There are some fantastic events organised by 'In&Out' we have been able to 'walk' around London from the comfort of our sofa! informative and very interesting. A 'tour' - The Southern Polar region - with amazing photo's - that just made me want to go and experience the wildlife and sights for myself (planning that as soon as possible). On Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April we have an Easter Egg Hunt - with Art Attack and help us to build some bug hotels in our church gardens. Please book via Fran - poster with info later in the newsletter. Christian Aid week in May 10 -16<sup>th</sup> May - we are hoping to host a breakfast! Watch this space, lots more info on how you can participate and make a difference further down. Plenty of fantastic ideas to help with our quest to improve our eco system locally and far and wide. Elders continue to meet and with the guidance of our wonderful Minister and Church Secretaries we adapt and change our plans - hoping that we can worship together safely very soon. We are delighted to welcome Angela as a serving Elder and hope that Steve enjoys a well deserved rest. After 16 years of service Robert is handing over the duties of Treasurer to Dennis and we wish them both all the best.

As ever I would love to hear any news you would like to share and if you require assistance with something please let me know - we will always do what we are able to help. Please contact me Pat Granville -Overton [patgo123@aol.com](mailto:patgo123@aol.com), or 07742 859552.

## From Martin's Study

What a busy few months it's been!

Work on launching our new website is complete, so take a look here:

[www.stpaulsurc.org.uk](http://www.stpaulsurc.org.uk)



The pipes of our Lewis Organ have been removed and taken to Nicholson's Organ builders to be stored, ahead of being rebuilt at St. Mildred's Church, Addiscombe sometime in 2023. The console has been removed and the lower part of the case emptied. There is a piece in this Pauline with pictures and you can see more here: <https://www.stmildredsorganproject.com>

We have recently held our AGM via Zoom, giving thanks for God's guidance and strength during 2020, which has enabled us to adapt and grow through the challenges of the pandemic. You can find the minutes inside! There is much to be thankful for as we continue our journey through Lent, into Holy Week.

I am always struck, this time of year, by the dramatic change in tone of our hymns. We may not be able to sing at the moment, but the words cry out from the pages:

O sacred head, sore wounded,  
with grief and pain weighed down,  
how scornfully surrounded  
with thorns, thing only crown!  
How pale art thou with anguish,  
with sore abuse and scorn!  
How does that visage languish  
which once was bright as morn!

*Paul Gerhardt*

Not only do these words so powerful recall the image of Christ on the cross and the question 'Why?'; but this year I also see the grief of too many friends and families who have lost loved ones during Covid, the loneliness and isolation of lockdowns and those in quarantine and the anguish of those caring for the dying. What comes to your kind in these words by Paul Gerhardt?

And yet, almost unbelievably and imperceptibly, hope emerges like blossom from dead-looking branches. Last Sunday (21st), the URC South London Synod Area shared together on Zoom, in a service of thanksgiving to mark one year since the first lockdown. In the midst of such challenge and pain, we can know that God has been with us, giving strength and confidence to adapt and persevere. What have you been thankful for this past year?

Some of us may be fed-up with this third lockdown, we may be grieving and struggling. Some may be hopeful, getting out and about and thankful for the joy of Spring. Most of us will be a mix of the two. However we are at the moment, we can trust that Easter is always with us and we are resurrection people!

After darkness, light;  
after winter, spring;  
after dying, life:  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Come, whatever may;  
God will have her way;  
welcome, Easter Day!  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
*Fred Pratt Green*

I encourage all of us to enter into the dramatic change of mood that Holy Week and Easter displays, so that we may indeed, shout 'Christ is risen, Alleluia! Alleluia!'.

### **Maundy Thursday**

Thursday 1st April – 7:30pm

United Zoom service with Purley URC and South Croydon United Church

### **Good Friday**

Friday 2nd April – 9:30am

United Zoom service with South Croydon United Church

11am Croydon Walk of Witness on Youtube

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLt1wizx87s&ab\\_channel=JesusProduction](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLt1wizx87s&ab_channel=JesusProduction)

### **Holy Saturday**

Saturday 3rd April – 2-4pm

Easter Egg Hunt at St Paul's (Book a time slot with Fran as part of Covid precautions)

Giving Easter Eggs to our Community

### **Easter Sunday**

Easter Sunday

Sunday 4th April – 10:30am

Zoom Service

With every Easter blessing,

Martin



The Zoom services on Good Friday and Easter Sunday will use the regular St Pauls worship code:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84553912820>  
Zoom ID: 845 5391 2820  
or phone 020 3481 5237

## Ecosia Search Engine – [www.ecosia.org](http://www.ecosia.org)

Ecosia is an environmentally friendly search engine; it carries advertisements like most others, but uses the profits to plant trees worldwide. Unlike Google and many other search engines, Ecosia doesn't store your search data, sell your data to advertisers or use third party trackers. Lots of reasons to 'go green' with your IT.

### How it works



You search the web with Ecosia.



Search ads generate income for Ecosia.



Ecosia uses this income to plant trees.

### Over 121 million trees planted

1.3 sec

TO PLANT A TREE

OVER  
15 million

ACTIVE USERS

NOW  
121,052,59

TREES TOTAL

OVER  
12,858,770

EUR INVESTED

OVER  
9,000

PLANTING SITES

## THE TIME IS NOW

### Every action counts

This year every moment matters in our pursuit for climate justice and to bring this about, we need change at all levels: as individuals, churches and societies. Later in 2021 the UK government will host both the G7 and the crucial UN climate talks, COP26. We must use these opportunities to make our voices heard. You can start by signing [The Time is Now Declaration](#) and if you want to take another reinforcing action, please also sign Christian Aid's climate justice petition [here](#).



### Climate and Pastoral care webinar: processing grief for the planet

The climate crisis affects us all and there are those in society, particularly in the younger generation, experiencing real grief for the climate and the loss of nature. In this Climate Sunday webinar, on **Tuesday 11 May 2-3.30pm**, we aim to help churches to support their congregation in processing and dealing with grief for our planet. Receive more information, and sign up for this free event via Eventbrite [here](#).



# NEW LIFE FOR THE LEWIS!



Nicholson's Organ Builders arrived at St Paul's on Mon 1<sup>st</sup> March and began the process of removing nearly 1,500 pipes – some the size of an Argos pencil, others 16ft long and wide enough for me to slide in to.

The variety of shapes, sizes and materials was astonishing!



The largest and deepest sounding pipes were removed through the front of the case and the beautiful spotted-metal facia pipes returned to their home, so that you could be forgiven for thinking nothing has happened.

All of these pipes were loaded onto a lorry and taken to Nicholson's, to be carefully stored, before they are refurbished and rebuilt, ready for St Mildred's. The Lewis will be largely unaltered apart from a couple of new stops, all copied from other existing Lewis organs around the UK – a Mixture for the Great division, a 16ft Trombone to give a reed on the Pedal and a glorious Tuba will crown the organ!



St Mildred's will be keeping the current façade of copper pipes, but the Lewis will be its voice – hopefully to be installed in 2023.

Our Lewis console has been removed and work is underway to repair the hole in the chancel floor, replace the carpet and rehome the Allen console. The ground floor of the case has also been emptied, creating a huge amount of useful storage.

I cannot begin to tell you how rare it is for a pipe organ to find a new home, let alone in a church only 2 miles away as the crow flies. It is a real joy that St Paul's 'Lewis' will sing again at St Mildred's Church, Addiscombe – a church with a vibrant musical life.

We look forward to an invitation to the grand opening Concert and the ongoing friendship between our two churches!

**Martin**

Bea has kindly prepared a report from the Synod meeting Martin & Bea attended. Whilst attending this - you may remember that many of us together with friends were enjoying an excellent talk (on Zoom of course) when we explored Shakespeare's and Dickens' London on a zoom virtual tour with Bob Atkinson. Thanks Bea.

### **South London Synod Together meeting March 13th 2021**

The opening worship was led by Alex Mabbs who showed how Jesus driving the market traders out of the Temple precincts demonstrates how the market should be resisted if God's will is to be done on earth. Later in the meeting we learned that Alex will be leaving Brighthelm to work in Northern Synod later in the year. He did say that although all his Sundays are busy between now and his departure he is still available to talk to churches about eco-church on other days, by arrangement.

We also learned that George Watt has been appointed Moderator of North London Synod.

We discussed the shortfall in the Ministers' Pension Fund. John Denison, our treasurer, was at pains to point out that this situation has not arisen through mismanagement, but rather as a result of more stringent government regulations concerning pension funds so that, by 2031, the fund will need £45.0 million more to meet its obligations. The meeting passed a motion committing this synod to participate in meeting this deficit, which will mean allocating a significant percentage of our investment income and any income from the sale of redundant church properties to the pension fund.

We watched a delightful video of Tom Hackett, our Children and Youth Development officer, presenting the Lundie Award to young Noah Boyce of Christchurch, Westgate, for his special Zoom services. I was particularly impressed that Tom had obtained an additional medal in chocolate, to make the occasion even more special for Noah. The award also included a cheque for children's work in his church.

We were introduced to our new Racial Justice Advocates, Sharon Henriques and Janet Layne and learned of some of the ways in which Mission Council is fulfilling its commitment to be active against racism. Kingston, for example, has installed a translation kit for Korean and discovered that as a result Koreans were participating much more fully in the life of the church. IT help should be available to churches needing to install such kits or to provide subtitles to sermons.

We broke into discussion groups to consider these questions:

1. The Eco Church scheme audits five areas of Church life: Worship, Buildings, Land, Community Engagement, and Lifestyle of members. In which areas do you think your Church is strongest and weakest? What could you make a priority for action in 2021?

2. How do you think the Synod can support Church members and Churches to reduce carbon emissions and care for Creation?

I can only speak for the breakout room that I was in, but it appears that a number of churches are working their way through the various stages of the eco-church award and have found the experience positive. One church turned the quest for a greener lifestyle into a competition to find the member with the lowest carbon footprint and the prize was won by an elderly lady who had been shielding for a year and was feeling quite isolated until her congregation acclaimed her and gave her the prize for most eco-friendly member.

Next Synod meeting; Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2021.

Welcome Angela Bannerman and Dennis Simmonds



Our new serving Elder and Treasurer – we wish them all the best and a huge thank you to Steve Catling and Robert Spurgeon for all their previous service with St Paul's

## 2021 UNLOCK Walk



UNLOCK presents its second virtual walk from April 24<sup>th</sup> it is based in Lambeth, Southwark and the City of London.

Look out for links to the walk on the St Paul's WhatsApp – a short part of the route will be presented each day with input from one of the churches which would have been visited.

These annual walks usually raise c50% of UNLOCK's income, which in turn supports the work of inner city churches around the country. This work focuses on helping those in 'text-shy' cultures to explore the Bible.

More information can be found here:

[http://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/support\\_walk.php](http://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/support_walk.php)



**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2021**  
**Praying with Vanuatu**



5<sup>th</sup> March 2021

## **BUILD ON A STRONG FOUNDATION (Matthew 7:24-27)**

This year the women of the Republic of Vanuatu prepared the service that was used all around the world on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March in prayerful acts of worship, although in these Covid 19 times, the services were conducted in a variety of very different styles.

Vanuatu in the South Pacific, 2000 miles east of Australia, lies in an archipelago of 80 islands and these islands include black and white sandy beaches, coral reefs, coloured fishes, lovely birds, fruits and nuts in the forest, all making the islands a pristine environment but they are vulnerable to frequent tropical storms, earthquakes, cyclones, tsunamis and active volcanoes.



As the Day of Prayer progressed, women, men and children of all ages were called to 'Build on a strong foundation' and live in unity, love and peace in the context of ethnic and cultural diversity like Vanuatu and so many other places around the world.

The World Day of Prayer, an international, inter-church organisation enables us to hear the thoughts of women from all parts of the world, their hopes, concerns and prayers. This annual service is celebrated in over 170 countries and each year the service theme begins in Samoa; with prayer in native languages travelling throughout the world - through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas before finishing in American Samoa some 39 hours later.

In Croydon, because of the lockdown restrictions, it wasn't possible to arrange the usual service event in a local church, but many were delighted to join in an on-line service organised by Wallington group of churches. There were other on-line services conducted around the UK as well as videos and reflections available on the website and YouTube, arranged by the International Committee. It was a lovely, thoughtful service that was thoroughly enjoyed and has already started to provoke ideas as to how future services may be conducted to reach as many people as possible. Many thanks to those from our church and surrounding area as well as local Care Homes who took part and gave thoughts and prayers, either through the on-line services or privately and quietly in their home. Next year the service will have been prepared by World Day of Prayer Committee members in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, so some home-grown ideas will be included then.

Sandie Savage





Since last May a small team has been reviewing our website 'image' to ensure it reflects St Pauls' welcome and vision. Our first was setup by Steve Catling in 2014 and was highly praised at the time when many churches didn't have websites. It has served us very well since then (and I recall was a big plus when attracting Ministerial candidates in 2015!) but by 2021 it appeared dated, lacked 'energy' and was more expensive to run compared with modern hosts.



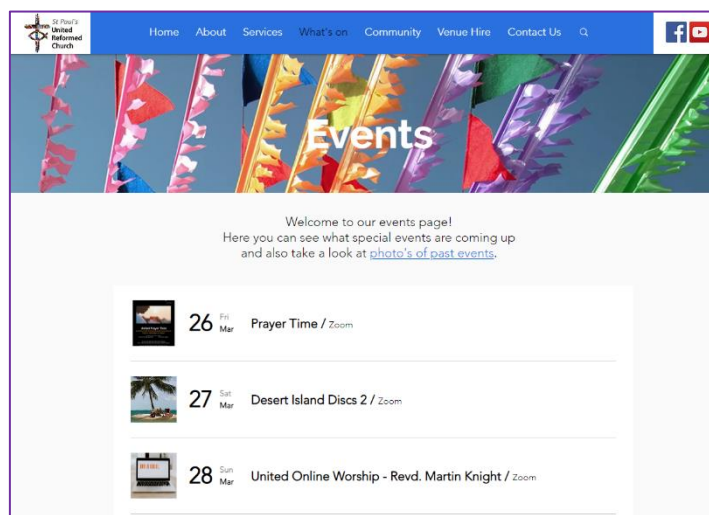
Our new site, on a 'Wix' platform is much easier to update and link with modern applications. It includes all the features you would expect including quick links to worship, exploration of our history and some lovely pictures to attract people to our church and hiring our halls.

There's more about the elders and various groups, a lively 'What's on' calendar of activities and lots of

potential to add other elements like event bookings, surveys and contacts.

It's vital that our new website remains up to date! At the moment Martin is the webmaster - the others in the team (Helen Steve and Sue) are aiming to be trained in updating very soon - if you would like to be part of the team serving St Paul's and our outreach in this important way please let any of us know and we'll rope you in

Sue Eardley 07971 068887



**WhatThreeWords – find St Pauls through “Weeks.Love.Enter” – thank you Heather!**

## When is it right to be angry?

1. A few of you will know a psychologist friend analysed me as angry, and others, that I have to take daily pills for 2 long term health issues, directly related to anger.
2. Having read the 'Woven' booklet, and others of you, who know your Bible, that there are many instances of God's anger, Garden of Eden, the Flood, Moses crossing the sea, Peter letting Jesus down, temptation in the desert, Sodom & Gomorrah, to name just a few.
3. Even in modern days, as I write this, Harry & Meghan, lack of good PPE for front line workers, NHS pay, the clear health inequalities, racism, white privilege, Malala on education or Greta Thunberg on Climate change. Channelled anger can lead to protests, motivation for change of a person, people or system.
4. Looking at history, many have stood up, with courage against government, inequality, injustice or to fight for a cause. Many in St Paul's do so, either as individuals, or to join major groups, such as Extinction Rebellion, CND, or write to their local MP, the relevant Minister, or even the Prime Minister.
5. Who is right? Should St Paul's get angry, where we are a wide church, of varying political stances, and let each have a voice? Just look at the Crusades, centred on Jerusalem, which is special to 3 major faiths, where atrocities took place. I leave it to you, a person of peace, but is now post - Covid the time to fight for a better world, as Easter approaches, giving hope to all?

David White



Junior Church - Palm Sunday

Pictures drawn by Riana and Ryan of triumphal entry to Jerusalem - Palm Sunday





Come to an Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2021

from 2-4 pm at St Paul's URC Garden, corner of  
Croham Park Avenue and Croham Road.

Build a bug hotel, take part in an 'Art Attack' on the  
theme of Easter and gather lots of yummy eggs!

Email Fran [franboto@aol.com](mailto:franboto@aol.com) or phone 07969173457  
to book your time slot.



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## **Christian Aid Week**

**10-16 May 2021**

Climate chaos is one of the greatest injustices we face. Together we STOP this climate crisis



**With every gift, with every voice, with every prayer, with every action, we stop this climate crisis.**

Our planet is changing, but some people are feeling the effects of this more than others. Weather extremes are now more frequent and more intense due to the climate crisis and one place that has experienced this is Kenya.

In parts of Kenya in 2020, drought was followed by relentless rainfall and flooding, which damaged crops that had struggled to grow. Together, the climate chaos and coronavirus are a double threat to lives and livelihoods.

### **Climate chaos is causing a hunger crisis**

In Kitui, eastern Kenya, 8 out of 10 people depend on rain to grow crops. Without water, staple crops like maize and beans wither up and die. People can't earn a living and they go hungry.

People are forced to walk further and further to collect water. This daily burden robs them of the chance to farm and grow food for their families. Elderly women and children are especially vulnerable on these dangerous journeys and can face robbery or conflict as people battle over scarce resources. Cows, sheep and goats are becoming weaker and weaker. They can't produce milk or be sold. People are struggling to cope. Lives are at risk. Families need every last drop to survive this climate chaos.

Christian Aid has been working in Kenya since 1997. One of our long-standing partners in Kenya is Anglican Development Services – Eastern (ADSE). Christian Aid and ADSE are working together with communities in Kitui county to help them to adapt to drought as well as flooding, as climate chaos robs people of control over their lives.

ADSE helps communities build earth and sand dams, and rock catchments, so they can harvest water near their homes. Dams are simple and cost-effective natural storage solutions. They catch the rain when it falls, increase the amount of stored water available to communities, defend against intense rain and flooding, and free women and girls from making long and dangerous journeys to collect water.



### **Meet Rose: a loving, hard-working grandmother**



One woman who is experiencing the worst of the climate crisis is Rose. A grandmother, Rose is an experienced village leader. She is proud to be able to cover the costs of her grandchildren's education by working as a casual labourer.

After her husband died in 2006, Rose began to feel ill. She went to hospital and was diagnosed with HIV. She says: 'My faith has helped me to accept my status and I believe

that, with the doctor's advice, I will live a long life.' The medication Rose takes requires her to eat a balanced diet, but because of the long journeys to get water, she can't farm the vegetables she needs and she goes hungry.

In this desperate climate chaos, Rose battles to bring water home for her grandchildren. Every morning, after nothing to eat, she sets out on a long, dangerous journey, walking six hours to collect water.

While she walks, her stomach gives her stabbing pains. She feels weary under the hot sun and the full jerry cans are heavy (40 litres of water weigh 40kg). Her aching legs walk on, because if she gives up, her grandchildren will suffer hunger and thirst. 'We have to walk long distances. We are suffering,' she says.



## Rose needs every last drop to survive the climate chaos

Rose remembers her childhood when the rain was reliable and there was plenty of food. She wishes her grandchildren could have the same lives; instead, she hopes that her sacrifices will give them the chance of a better future. But the climate crisis is driving her to the brink. When she arrives home, exhausted, her grandson Charles cooks her a meagre bowl of porridge – but he knows she is still hungry.

But it shouldn't have to reach this breaking point.

There is a nearby earth dam just minutes away from Rose's home. It should be a lifeline. But it's not wide or deep enough for everyone's needs. It runs out of water too quickly.

Rose and her community need a bigger dam, to help them capture the rainfall and create a long-lasting source of water for their families.

## A song of hope and power

What happens when the search for water does not consume people's lives? What happened when people have the water they need to thrive?

We can find out by meeting Florence: a woman who has transformed her life with access to a dam full of water.

Florence is a soulful, joyful woman: full of life, love and laughter. The women in her farming group look up to her. She's courageous and kind – a survivor.

A few years ago, her husband died, leaving her a widow. At that time, she had no water to grow crops. Her children were hungry. Like Rose does now, she had to walk for hours to collect water. 'Life was miserable,' she told us.

Florence could easily have been defeated. But she is a fighter. With help from Christian Aid's local partner, Florence and her community were able to build a dam together, just 30 minutes from her house.

Using water from the dam, Florence grows tomatoes, onions and chillies on her farm. Her children can eat healthy, nutritious vegetables, and she has enough left to sell. It's her source of life and joy.

Florence also uses the dam to keep bees: the microclimate of plants growing around the dam means the bees don't need to search long distances for nectar. She sells the rich, golden honey at the market.

She says: 'I have been sustained by the earth dam. My life has changed. I am very happy. You can see it in my face: my face is shining. I have strength and power.'

## Blessings for all in need

You can see Florence's strength and power as she hauls heavy buckets to water her crops. You can see her strength and power as she sings to encourage the women with whom she farms. You can see her strength and power as she takes climate justice into her own hands.

Florence is a generous woman of faith. She knows others are struggling to cope without a reliable water source, and wishes the same blessings she has received will be granted to them: 'There is a village nearby – they don't have an earth dam. They are suffering. I am thankful to people who have donated to build this earth dam. I am praying God will increase their giving.'

## This Christian Aid Week, will you stand with people like Rose and Florence?

Please donate this Christian Aid Week (10-16 May). Your gift could help a community build an earth dam, providing a regular and reliable source of water in affected areas of Kenya.

- **£4.40** could teach 10 farmers how to plant **drought-tolerant crops** that can survive the drought.
- **£10** could buy a pair of taps at a **water point** which will be installed at an earth dam, making it easier for people to fetch water.
- **£42** could buy 350kg of **cement**, which is needed to build an earth dam.
- **£545** could pay for a **skilled labourer** to work on the construction of an earth or sand dam.

Every pound raised, every prayer said and every action taken, are expressions of our Christian love and compassion, of our belief that all life is equal and precious in the sight of God. Together, we stop this climate crisis, and give brave, hard-working women like Rose the chance to thrive.

You can also join us as we call on the UK Prime Minister to lead the world with ambitious climate action that will also address inequality.

Also, pray with us for a radical change of heart for politicians, and that as a global community we will care for our common home and for people living in poverty.

We can all be part of the solution. All we need is courage and determination.

Stand together with us to fight this climate crisis.

Join us this Christian Aid Week.

**Together we stop this climate crisis.**

Join us at **caweek.org**

**Also from Christian Aid**



Give thanks for your vaccine through URC fundraiser

**The United Reformed Church (URC) is hoping to raise £10,000 for its '[Give Thanks for Your Vaccine](#)' fundraising campaign, developed with Christian Aid.**

So far, £4,815 has been raised.

In the UK, nearly 18million people have had their first dose of a coronavirus vaccine. But for the poorest and most vulnerable communities across the world, there is little hope of a vaccine rollout. These are people who already face lack of water, food, and basic healthcare.

Christian Aid is already on the ground, helping keep people safe from coronavirus with practical support, but with donations, the charity can do more.

To help the charity, the URC's fundraising campaign aims to help people show gratitude for their vaccines and help to protect our global neighbours while the vaccine is out of reach.

The Revd Dr Kevin Snyman, URC [Commitment for Life](#) Programme Officer, explains: "Although some pharmaceutical companies have promised not to profit from COVID vaccines, the fact remains that many of our Commitment for Life partner regions, already facing the hard edge of climate disruption, must deal not only a shortage of vaccines, but also the turbulent dangers of debt required to pay for protection against Covid-19."

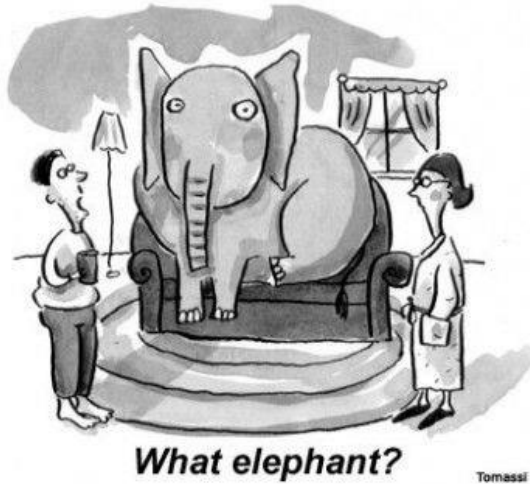
If you or your family member has received a vaccine and would like to express your gratitude by helping the campaign, please make a donation [here](#).

<https://urc.org.uk/latest-news/3740-give-thanks-for-your-vaccine-through-urc-fundraiser.html>

Kindly supplied by Cathy Heath

## Holiday Forum in a day – Naming the elephants in the room

Thanks to Covid, Holiday Forum (usually held in Derbyshire) went virtual last August. So popular was the event that a mid-year meetup was planned. This took place on Zoom on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> March. The two key speakers were Professor Anthony Reddie (Director of the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture, Regent's Park College, University of Oxford) and Rev Dr Munther Isaac, Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem. And the elephants...which lives need to matter more in our churches than they currently do?



Munther Isaac spoke about the plight of the Palestinians, with a focus on Palestinian Christians who have a long history in the Holy Land, but have little or no power or agency. Just one example amongst many; there are no Covid vaccines available to Palestinians, yet under UN law Israel has a responsibility to care for its occupied people. The URC, via Commitment for Life, has Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories as one of its partner countries. The message from Palestinian Christians was clear – ‘love your neighbour’ and please share our story.

Anthony Reddie (Reddie was originally a slave name) spoke about black lives matter and the church. ‘Whiteness’, he explained, wasn’t perceived as the shark in the sea, but the sea itself – it’s all around us. He spoke at length, but had the same message as Munther – ‘love your neighbour’ and listen to them. With that in mind, here are the thoughts of Forum Chaplain, Lola Brown

### THINKING OUT LOUD

*So you say my life matters but my culture, my music and nothing that is me is reflected in the order of service. Does my life really matter?*

*So you celebrate an All-saints day and the eurocentricity is obvious, no black saints are ever mentioned and worse still you act as though they don’t exist,*

*And I am supposed to believe you when you say my life matters?*

*So you hold remembrance services and high percentages of congregations in your area are black and you never mention any of their soldiers who gave their lives for the sake of war and for the so-called mother country?*

*Does my life really matter?*

*I am riding the waves and constantly flying against the winds of racism in established churches but like the eagle I fly and rise higher, and nothing shall keep me down in Christ; because in Him my life really does matter and the gates of hellish racism shall never prevail.*

- *Thank You Lord for constantly helping us to battle these raging storms and for not taking the wind out of our sails.*
- *Thank You Lord for the wisdom to manoeuvre and for Your light in the darkest of places.*
- *Thank You for the destiny helpers that you have placed to work alongside us.*
- *Help us to be reminded that our lives really do matter in You.*

Anthony Reddie is the key speaker at Holiday Forum 2021 (face to face and virtual!)

## 7<sup>TH</sup>/12 Croydon Scout Group and Croham Valley Explorer Scouts

All our sections are currently meeting weekly and virtually using Zoom. Since January there have been several very successful activities using this medium. Beavers have had a talk by a lady from Water Aid while the Cubs enjoyed a joint celebration of Mothering Sunday and Commonwealth Day with the Cub Pack in Hay on Wye. Their Leader is Alison who is the daughter of Helen Warburg (nee McLeod). Our Beavers and Cubs have also been earning badges such as Cook, Road Safety and Animal Friend. Both the Scout and Explorer sections have had their own virtual live tour of Wapping Police Station where the 'Met Marine Policing Division' is based. They hope to visit the base later in the year perhaps combining this with 'mudlarking' on the Thames foreshore. Three Scouts took part in the County 'Bake Off' and one reached the final round coming 16<sup>th</sup> out of 120 entries.

As announced at the church AGM we shall be resuming face to face meetings from 29 March and as the Government's 'roadmap' unfolds over the spring and summer we will hopefully be able to accommodate larger numbers. This is just as well because we are receiving numerous membership enquiries from parents who are probably keen to get their children off mobile phone devices and the internet !

Looking ahead we have booked Bears Wood campsite for a Group Day on May 8<sup>th</sup>. The Scouts and Explorers are booked for some canoeing on Norwood Lake in June and July, and the Beavers will be walking the Winnie the Pooh Trail on Ashdown Forest one Saturday or Sunday this summer. Scout Camp is in Dorset from 14 to 21 August.

Our Executive Committee (Trustees) have been busy this year and we are most grateful for their support. New noticeboards have been erected outside our headquarters and these advertise our section meetings. We also have a letterbox fixed to the gate. Work starts soon on replacing the flooring inside the building and we have gone for a very robust laminate, no expense spared! This will make the hall even more attractive for local lettings.

As a Group we want to be open for more young people in the community, but we do desperately need Leaders to achieve this. If any member of St Paul's would like to discuss Scout Leadership with me my phone number is below.

Christopher Dean - Scouter in Charge - Tel 01883 723081





## The United Reformed Church

### FIFTY YEARS ON!

2022, the year in which the United Reformed Church celebrates its half Century (in a world, hopefully, recovering from, coming to terms with, the momentous, cataclysmic effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic), will undoubtedly be a time for reflection, reassessment and renewal.

During the 1960s the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches, developed and set out structures for the proposed union: faith and order, doctrinal statements, services for worship, ministerial selection and training schemes, strategies for relationships with other denominations/faith groups, national and international bodies. These and other agreed procedures and policy statements are set out in the Scheme of Union and the URC Manual.

In the decades since the Second World War, the Congregational, Presbyterian and Churches of Christ denominations, from 1972 the United Reformed Church, have been directly involved in a variety of initiatives, many of them ecumenical:

In the late 1940's, The 'Forward Movement' to gain more church members, more churches and more ministers.

The 1950s, British Council of Churches' 'Church without Walls'. As a newly ordained minister I took part in 'The Next Ten Years', a programme introduced by Howard Stanley, General Secretary of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. In 1959, Howard Stanley advocated a thoroughgoing review of all aspects of denominational life.

Eight Commissions underpinned this task, with regular reference to every local church meeting. One important result of this process was the publication of 'A Declaration of Faith' (1967), it could be argued, one of the most substantial and important of all twentieth century Reformed statements.

From the 1960s, increased emphasis on the concept of Family Church and the introduction of education handbooks 'Partners in Learning'.

The 1970s saw the publication of the Churches Unity Commission's 'Ten Propositions for Christian Unity'; the URC Service book and Contemporary Prayers for Public Worship.

The Christian Stewardship programme: Church Related Community Workers and Supplementary Ministries schemes were a product of the 1980's

Forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and we have the Walking the Way, Stepwise programme.

As the United Reformed Church celebrates its first fifty years of worship and witness and prepares for the next fifty years, I would suggest we need to look again at three fundamental pillars of our faith: **Worship, The Great Commandment and The Great Commission:**

## Worship

In the words of Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple (1881-1944), "To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God - all this is gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable".

## The Great Commandment

Jesus said "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with your entire mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, you shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these". Mark Ch. 12 v30-34

## The Great Commission

Jesus said "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age". Matthew 28 v16-20

## Past, Present and Future

Time for some blue sky thinking? When some seventy years ago I learned to drive, my instructor underlined the importance of regularly looking into the rear view mirror every few seconds. Perhaps there is a lesson here - moving forward but with constant awareness of what is behind!

The Roman god, Janus (January), god of beginnings and transitions, is depicted as having two faces looking in opposite directions, one towards the past the other towards the future!

As we look forward to the next fifty years in the life of the United Reformed Church, we would do well to keep in the forefront of our minds, **Worship, The Great Commandment and The Great Commission** and our response, seeking answers to the question:

How best can we experience and implement these three fundamental pillars of our faith, in our personal lives, in the fellowship of the Church locally, nationally and internationally?

*Charles Meachin January 2021*



## St Paul's URC Annual General Meeting (Zoom) – 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021



**Present:** 22 Members. Apologies: Steve and Sandie Savage, David White.

The Minister opened the meeting with a prayer, and shared greetings from the Minister who remained on sick leave but hoping for a phased return around Easter. .

- 1 **Notes of previous meeting:** The notes from 7<sup>th</sup> February were agreed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere.
- 2 **General Reports for 2020:** These were summarised by the Minister, reflecting the tremendous challenges of nine months of the year being in and out of lockdown due to Covid-19, and the impact that had had (positive and negative) on our church community. Highlights and questions included:
  - The progress being made with the Vision work that had continued with an action plan monitored and progressed by the elders. .
  - The sterling work being done by the three teams supporting spirituality and worship., in reach and outreach, and maintenance and resources..
  - The junior church team had developed separate online sessions which had extended the reach to new families.
  - The Guild has had to suspend meetings but is looking forward to planning for the resumption of talks and social events during the summer.Thanks were expressed to all who had worked so hard to keep things going during 2020 and paid tribute to all that has been achieved.
- 3 **Treasurer's report and accounts:** Robert Spurgeon presented the accounts, noting the impact of 9 months' lost lettings and the consequent deficit in 2020 of £22,028 (£13,210 last year). It was covered by transfer from the capital fund; investment values had also diminished by around 3.3% over the year. There is a possibility that some of the business loss may be covered by insurance. Of particular note the organ fund had benefitted from a donation in relation to the organ pipework and expenditure to clear the organ loft and console to create useable spaces.

**Adoption of accounts was proposed and seconded and agreed unanimously.**

Robert Spurgeon had given notice that he was not standing for re-election, after 16 years in the role. He was sincerely thanked for all his work over the years and a small presentation was made.The elders had supported Dennis Simmonds' offer take over as Treasurer from Robert for three years initially and this was agreed unanimously by the meeting.

***'On the recommendation of the Charity Trustee's, St Paul's URC Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 21st March 2021, appoints Dennis Simmonds to serve as Church Treasurer for a period of 3yrs, before seeking re-appointment after a review.'***

The examiners were also thanked; Steve Savage agreed to reappointment for 2021 and a second examiner will be sought ahead of the next meeting. This was agreed unanimously.The Finance group was thanked for their work during 2020 supporting the Treasurer and elders and were reappointed for a further year. The group comprises Caroline Corfield Dick Richardson, Sue Eardley and the Treasurer.
- 4 **Church Secretary Appointment:** Following agreement of the constitution in February, Sue Eardley and Bea Pollard were formally re appointed as Joint Church Secretaries for a further period of five years.

The AGM closed at 12.35



## **St Paul's South Croydon Church Meeting – 21 March 2021**

*Minutes of the Church Meeting held on Zoom, 11.30 (after online worship)*

1. **Welcome:** 22 members present. Quorate. Apologies from Steve and Sandie Savage, David White
2. **Minutes of last meeting** on 7 February 2021 were approved. No matters arising not covered below.
3. **Election of Elder** – Steve Catling was standing down after two terms as elder, and was sincerely thanked for all his work and valued contributions. A small presentation was made.  
  
Angela Bannerman had been nominated and agreed to stand as serving elder for an initial period of three years and was elected nem con.
4. **Covid 19 and worshipping in person** – the Minister outlined the elders' discussion and provisional date for in-person worship after 12 April – i.e. 18<sup>th</sup> April. This was however dependent upon the government lifting restrictions and a risk assessment which will be done by the sub-group once data is available and presented to Elders. Easter services will be online and include a shared Maundy Thursday service with Purley URC and SCUC, online Walk of Witness on Good Friday and Easter Sunday morning zoom worship service, although SCUC are meeting in person.
5. **Launch of new website** – The Minister has developed the new site with a small support team and it is planned to go live this week. There may be some disruption during transfer but hopefully only for a day or so.
6. **Any Other Business** – Easter Saturday Egg Hunt in the church grounds 2-4pm  
Bea Pollard has written a Pauline report from the recent Synod Together meeting  
David has noted persistent littering near the bus stop and all are encouraged to help clear up /report it if it recurs. Easter eggs will also be given out to those walking past the church, with a little card from St Paul's with new website details!
7. **Next Church Meeting:** 16 May 2021, 11.30 after the service possibly in person.  
The meeting closed at 1pm – we blessed each other with the words of the Grace.

CCFS had been asked if we could continue providing 6 meals and a dessert each night for The Hub - 'A safe place to stay' for 2 more months.

We have been allocated Wednesday's in April.  
If anyone would like to provide a meal please let me know.  
Pat Granville-Overton patgo123@aol.com 07742859552