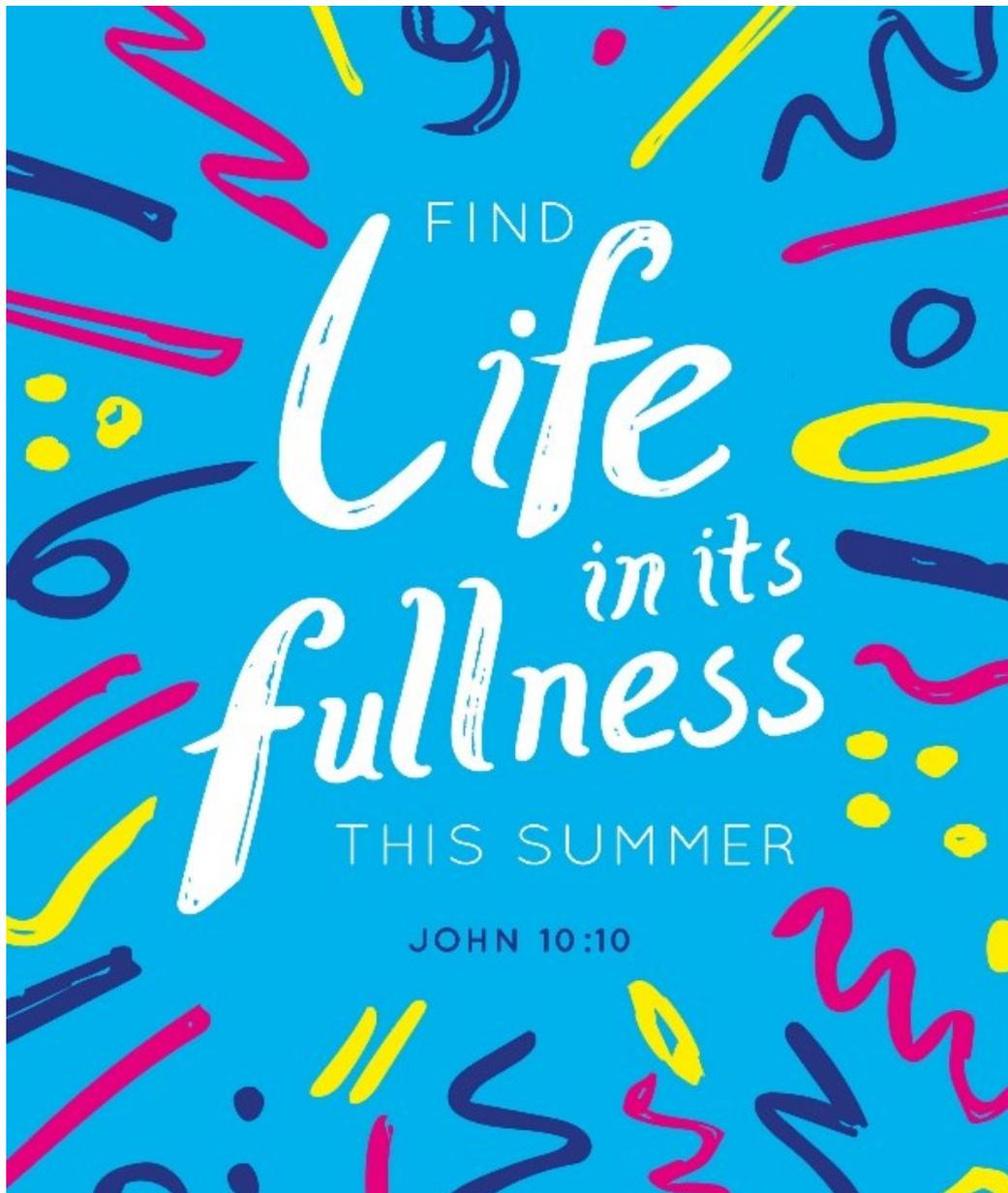


**ST ANDREW'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
HANDSWORTH, BIRMINGHAM**



**THE MESSENGER
PARISH MAGAZINE
AUGUST 2021**

St Andrew's Clergy

The Church is currently in Interregnum

Enquiries – 0121 551 2097 or

email vicar@standrews-handsworth.org.uk

Asst Priest – Father John Austen

Church Wardens – Carl Hart – 07967 410155

Lay Readers

Carole Sami – 07447 889657

Alison Thorne

Valerie Powell (Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Representative)

Stuart Jeffs (Director of Music)

Services

Sunday 10.00 – Parish Eucharist

Wednesday 7.00p.m. Evening Prayer

Friday 10.00 a.m. Morning Prayer

All services are streamed on Youtube.

Wednesday and Friday Services are also streamed on Zoom.

Church Website <https://www.standrews-handsworth.org.uk>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/StAndrews.Handsworth>

Twitter @StAndrewCE_HW

St Andrew's WhatsApp Group – if you wish to join please contact Carl Hart 07967 410155, Valerie Powell 07540 890068 or Stuart Jeffs 07910 484505

St Andrew's PCC

Carl Hart- Church Warden

Leonora Dore - Secretary

Richard Paton-Devine – Treasurer

Mary Bairstow

Chris Baker

Phil Bowen

John Emmins

Rachael Freckleton

Stuart Jeffs

Eileen Lawrence

Glory Omenma

Val Powell

Carole Sami

Alison Thorne

Margaret Zacheus

Magazine Editor – Eileen Lawrence parishmagazine949@gmail.com

Letter From The Clergy

The other day, an elderly friend of mine caught the No 11 bus to go to Tesco just by St Andrew's. Because of road repairs, the bus was diverted, she found herself on unfamiliar roads and ended up in Harborne!

When what's familiar gets disrupted, we can lose our bearings - and not just on the bus. All our lives have been disrupted for more than a year, including home schooling, not seeing family, working from home, or having hospital appointments cancelled.

Church has been disrupted too. No singing, no sharing of the wine, no chatting over coffee after the service. And of course, some people are anxious about coming back into church at the moment.

Things are changing though. Singing in church is allowed. And we can have more people in church. Slowly and carefully we can start to get our bearings once again. Many of us have had a favourite seat for years in church – perhaps now you'd like to get your bearings again in your old familiar seat. But maybe you have now been sitting in a different place, and may stick to it!

Being a Christian can be a mixture of sticking to the old and familiar and exploring something new. Members of the St Andrew's WhatsApp group have shared loads of photos – especially of their daily walks. There's been a deeper appreciation of seeing God in the natural world, especially in the Sandwell Valley.

With the ending of lockdown we can look forward to sharing again some of the familiar things we have missed in church. But Covid and lockdown have changed us all in different ways. Perhaps by raising doubts and questions that lay hidden before. But perhaps by helping us to see something that's very important in our life, which we hadn't realised before.

The notice sheet on 18th January had a poem, part of which is this:

*Life is not for hurrying on to a receding future,
nor hankering after an imagined past.*

*It is the turning aside like Moses to the miracle of
the lit bush.....*

Let's not hope to get back to things just as they used to be. That will never be possible anyway.

And let's not try to rush into something completely new.

Moses had the answer. Stopping from what he was doing, he turned aside to see the burning bush – and was surprised to hear the voice of God.

The journeys of each of us have been disrupted. So let's be patient, and notice what is new and surprising. My friend on the No 11 bus got disrupted on her journey because of the road works. But she discovered the unexpected! And God is to be found not just in the comfortable and familiar, but in what is different and even sometimes in what is uncomfortable.

Fr John Austen

As there was a Memorial Service for Janice Bissell at St Andrew's Church on 5 August 2021 I have re-printed the following article taken from June 2020 magazine.

Tribute to Janice Bissell—Chris Baker

As most people know, Janice Bissell a long-standing member of St. Andrew's Church, sadly passed away on 14th April 2020 from Covid-19. Janice had belonged to St. Andrew's church for many years. She was married there, and her son Alex was baptised there. Janice was a Sunday School Teacher for over 25 years mainly teaching the older group of children. She was always present on the Sunday School trips and at the parties and other activities we took part in and she even wrote some of the Nativity Plays the children performed each year. Janice was a member of the PCC and was a very efficient secretary for a number of years and she was also a member of the Halls Management Committee. Janice always volunteered to help at Sales and Bazaars and for many years helped to organise them. She was an excellent baker and could be counted on to make cakes for these events and for parties and other events held in church and there were never any of her cakes left

over. As a Recycled Teenager Janice took part in St Andrew's Talent Show that was organised and she and some other ladies performed the Charleston in true 20's style. In 2010 Janice moved to Walmley but such was her devotion to St. Andrew's and in spite of living a 2 minute walk from her local parish church and having to travel on two buses to get to St Andrew's; she continued to attend each week and was always one of the first people to arrive. Janice also came to Thursday Coffee Morning and other events held in church and she visited parishioners who could no longer attend church. Janice we will miss you at St. Andrew's and all you did for the church and on a personal note I will miss sitting next to you each week at Mass. I want to thank you for your wonderful friendship and support you have given me over the years and especially making sure I went to Walsingham a place I know held a special place in your heart as it will in mine thanks to you. Rest In Peace dear friend.

Chris Baker

Beverley James

On the same day as Janice's service, some members of St Andrew's travelled to Cheshire to support Gloria James. Gloria sadly lost her daughter Beverley shortly after the family moved to Cheshire. Her funeral took place on 5 August 2021. This is a very sad loss for Gloria who also lost her husband Fr Henley.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Janice Bissell's family and with Gloria James and family.



Key role for faith communities

Faith communities in the UK have played a critical role in supporting many disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of people during the pandemic. And the Government is going to need their active support if it is to speed up the process of recovery. So says a recent report, *Stepping Up and Stepping Out*, from the Good Faith Partnership.

The report calls for a social covenant for the post-Covid recovery phase that would strengthen partnerships between faith communities and the Government, local authorities and government agencies.

A key recommendation is the appointment of a Faiths Commissioner, on the model of the Children's Commissioner, together with an expert panel of faith leaders, with the aim of seeking ways of working which are more integrated. The partnership's survey identifies mental health and well-being, unemployment, and poverty as three special areas of concern.

The Bishop of London, the Rt Revd Sarah Mulally, writes in the foreword to the report about the importance of creating positive connections and collaboration between faith groups, government and local authorities.

c/o Parish Pump

COFFEE MORNING

We are hoping to open Thursday Coffee Morning again on Thursday 12th August if the daily Covid figures are still going down. Coffee Morning will be held in The Good Shepherd Hall at the back of St. Andrew's Church from [10.00.am](#) until [12.00.pm](#).

We look forward to seeing you so please come and join us for a drink and biscuit or maybe a slice of toast or even a cake and most certainly a chat with old friends. Take care and Keep safe.

Chris Baker

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

The parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) is one of Jesus' best-known stories. It beautifully presents the good news of the gospel: the story of God's generous and underserved love towards us. It's the story of us being lost yet also found by Him.

The younger son is lost when he demands his inheritance early, deliberately making himself independent and treating his father as dead! This reflects our own lostness as human beings, when we are cut off from the presence and grace of a loving heavenly Father.

After squandering his wealth, he finally comes to his senses: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' (18,19). However, even before he arrives home, his father sees him, runs to greet him, and welcomes his son back home. The celebrations for the son reflect the 'rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents' (7) for our own homecoming.

This story graphically demonstrates the amazing grace of God for each one of us. The older son's misunderstanding of the father's actions is a warning not to harden our hearts to the work of God's grace in ourselves and others.

‘There is nothing we can do to make God love us more. There is nothing we can do to make God love us less.’ (Philip Yancey).

The story is told of a father and son who had become estranged, and the father searched for him to no avail. In desperation, he put an advert in a local newspaper: ‘Dear Paco, meet me in front of this newspaper office at noon on Saturday. All is forgiven. I love you. Your Father.’ On the Saturday 800 Pacos showed up!!

c/o Parish Pump

Support Safeguarding Sunday

The Church of England is supporting this year's Safeguarding Sunday, on 10th October, by encouraging local churches to use their regular Sunday service to think about what safer places look like.

The ecumenical initiative from the specialist safeguarding charity thirtyone:eight provides bespoke resources, including films and animations, prayers, preaching notes, children's activity sheets, hymns and songs and a safeguarding pledge. A short sermon for use on the day will be provided by Bishop Jonathan Gibbs, the Church of England's lead safeguarding bishop.

Bishop Gibbs said: "Whether churches can give just a few minutes or dedicate their whole service, Safeguarding Sunday is a really helpful and important way of focusing on all the work that goes on 365 days a year in our churches to make them safe places. "From our children's and young people's activities to clubs for the elderly and foodbanks, our churches are involved in every community. Protecting vulnerable people is at the heart of the Christian message.

"Safeguarding Sunday is all about creating an opportunity for churches to show their communities that they take this responsibility seriously."

c/o Parish Pump

1st August: Ethelwold - Wessex saint who founded the first monastic cathedral

St Ethelwold (c.912 - 84) did great things for the church at Winchester, which in those days was the principle town of Wessex. He began as a simple monk, eager to restore the Rule of Benedictine in England, a major reform for the church of the time. So, after serving at the abbey in Glastonbury, he was sent on to restore the old abbey at Abingdon. The king thought highly of him, and used him to teach his son, the future king, Edgar.

When in 963 Ethelwold became Bishop of Winchester, he replaced the cathedral canons with monks, thus founding the first monastic cathedral in the land. This was a uniquely English institution, which remained until the Reformation. The monastic reform quickly gained momentum: with the King's support, Ethelwold restored old monasteries such as Milton (Dorset), New Minster and Nunnaminster in Winchester, while new monasteries were founded and richly endowed at Peterborough (966), Ely (970) and Thorney (972).

Ethelwold was austere, able and dynamic. Under his leadership, the monks excelled at music, illumination and writing. When Ethelwold set the monks to work

with the masons in the cathedral at Winchester, he built the most powerful organ of its time in England: it was played by two monks and had 400 pipes and 36 bellows. In music, Ethelwold's Winchester had the distinction of producing the first English polyphony in the Winchester Troper.

Ethelwold's monasteries also produced a surpassing new style of illumination, and his school of vernacular writing was the most important of its time: with accurate, linguistically significant translations. A major event of his episcopate was the consecration of Winchester Cathedral in 980.

c/o Parish Pump

8th August: Dominic - the saint who believed in learning

If you enjoy reading the Bible and in encouraging others to have faith in God, then Dominic is the patron saint for you. His passion for helping Christians to learn and proclaim their faith led him to found the Order of Preachers, or Black Friars, because of the black cape they wore over white habits. They are also known as the Dominicans.

Dominic was born in Castile in 1170, the youngest son of the warden of the town and nephew to the archpriest of Gumiel d'Izan. Becoming an Austin canon of Osma cathedral, Dominic spent seven years as a priest, devoted to prayer and penance. In 1201 he became sub-prior to his community.

In 1208 the Papal Legate was murdered. It sparked a crusade or 'holy war' against the Albigensian heretics. Dominic worked for reconciliation, refusing to join in the violence and massacres against them. Instead he used instruction and prayer to woo the heretics back, which led to him playing a leading role in founding Toulouse University. That became the foundation for his work in establishing the Friars Preachers at Toulouse in 1215, which occupied the last seven years of his life. (Three times he refused a bishopric, believing that this work was more important.)

Dominic's 'order' provided communities of sacred learning, with monks devoted to study, teaching and preaching as well as the usual prayer. Dominic believed monks should do more than just commune with God; they should proclaim God's love to others. Dominic was an excellent organiser, and soon his order spread rapidly all over Italy, Spain and France. It met an acute need in the medieval church, and in time the Black Friars became a pioneering missionary force in Asia and even (much later) the Americas.

Dominic travelled widely from 1216 until his death in 1220. His simple tomb was later embellished by Michelangelo, and his usual attributes in art are a lily and a black and white dog, which is a pun (Domini canis) on the name of Dominic. The dog holds a torch in its mouth as a herald of the truth.

c/o Parish Pump

14th August: Maximilian Kolbe - Christian witness amidst 20th century suffering

Some people's lives seem to epitomise the suffering of millions, but also to shine with a Christian response to it. One such person was Maximilian Kolbe, 1894 - 1941, a Franciscan priest of Poland, and publisher extraordinary.

Maximilian was born at Zdunska Wola, near Lodz, where his parents, devout Christians, worked in a cottage weaving industry. Like thousands of others at the time, the family and their village were ground into poverty by Russian exploitation. In 1910 Maximilian entered the Franciscan Order and studied at Rome. After his ordination in 1919, Maximilian returned to Poland, where he was sent to teach church history in a seminary. But a new factor had entered his life: he was diagnosed with tuberculosis.

Living in post-war Poland was difficult enough, but with tuberculosis as well? Most people would have quietly withered away. Not Maximilian Kolbe. Instead, the tuberculosis gave Maximilian a sense of urgency - a sense of the transitory nature of life. He knew his time was slipping away.

Instead of teaching history, he determined to do something to help the Christians living in Poland

now, in the tatters of Europe after the First World War. And so, he founded a magazine for Christian readers in Cracow, who badly needed effective apologetics to help them hold to their faith in a chaotic world.

Soon, the obsolete printing presses (which were operated by Maximilian's fellow priests and lay brothers) were working overtime - the magazine's circulation had leapt to 45,000. Then the printing presses were moved to a town near Warsaw, Niepokalanow, where Maximilian now founded a Franciscan community which combined prayer with cheerfulness and poverty with modern technology: daily as well as weekly newspapers were soon produced. The community grew and grew, until by the late 1930s it numbered 762 friars.

Then in 1939 the Germans invaded Poland. Maximilian sent most of his friars home, to protect them from what was to come. He turned the monastery into a refugee camp for 3,000 Poles and 1,500 Jews. And the presses continued: taking a patriotic, independent line, critical of the Third Reich.

Kolbe was arrested by the Gestapo along with four friars. They were taken to Auschwitz in May 1941. Their names were exchanged for tattooed numbers; and they were sent to brutal forced labour.

But Maximilian Kolbe continued his priestly ministry. He heard confessions in unlikely places, and smuggled in bread and wine for the Eucharist. His sympathy and compassion for those even more unfortunate than himself was outstanding. Then came the final scene in his hard life. At the end of July, 1941, several men escaped from his bunker at the camp. The Gestapo, in revenge, came to select several more men from the same bunker who were to be starved to death. A man, Francis Gajowniczek, was chosen. As he cried in despair, Kolbe stepped forward.

“I am a Catholic priest. I wish to die for that man. I am old; he has a wife and children.” The officer in charge shrugged his shoulders - and obliged.

So Maximilian went to the death chamber of Cell 18, and set about preparing the others to die with dignity by prayers, psalms, and the example of Christ's Passion. Two weeks later only four were left alive: Maximilian alone was fully conscious. He was injected with phenol and died on 14 August, aged 47.

He was beatified by Paul VI in 1971. In 1982 he was canonised by Pope John Paul II, formerly Archbishop of Cracow, the diocese which contains Auschwitz. Present at the ceremony that day was Francis Gajowniczek, the man whose life Maximilian Kolbe had saved.

c/o Parish Pump

27th & 28th August: Monica and Augustine - mother and son

On consecutive days this month (27th and 28th) the Christian Church celebrates a mother and her son. The mother is Monica, and her son is Augustine. The story of their relationship and how, after a long process, they both came to share the same Christian faith is a moving one, and perhaps has a message for anxious parents today.

Augustine was born in 354 and grew up in north Africa in the area we now call Algeria. His mother, Monica, was a deeply committed Christian. His father was not. In those circumstances she was deeply (one might say desperately) concerned that her clever young son should also believe and be baptised. But, in the way of wilful offspring, he steadfastly refused. Eventually Monica's patience ran out. She stood outside the priest's house and noisily asked why a mother's anxious prayers had not been answered. He appeared at a window and rebuked her. "It is not possible," he said, "that God has not heard your prayers and will answer them in His own way."

He was right, but it took a long while. By now Augustine had a mistress and a young son, and had moved to Milan in Italy, where he became Public Orator. However, it eventually happened – a moment of conversion in a garden, instruction and then baptism

by the great Bishop Ambrose of Milan. Monica's prayers were answered. Her gifted son was ordained and shortly became a bishop in Hippo, north Africa, and one of the greatest theologians and teachers of the Christian Church. Monica died the year before that happened, but I think we may assume that she died content. Her priest many years earlier had been right!

You can read the story of Augustine's journey to faith in his '*Confessions*'.

c/o Parish Pump

WHAT IS THE PCC?

The Parochial Church Council is the governing body of a parish church. It is also a charity. A PCC with an annual income of more than £100,000 must be registered with the Charity Commissioners; those with an income below this threshold, whilst not currently required to register, must comply with all other charity laws. The PCC has legal status and the Church Representation Rules apply.

WHAT DOES THE PCC DO?

The PCC is a team made up of members of clergy and lay members of the church. Together they are responsible for the overall wellbeing, practical as well as spiritual, of their church, the church members, and the church buildings.

The PCC also has a duty to promote the mission of the church within the wider community. Some of the responsibilities are devolved to the Minister and Churchwardens but to quote from the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure 1956 section 2 'It shall be the duty of the minister and the PCC to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish'. Members of the PCC have the right to be consulted, to know what is proposed, and to have the opportunity to express an opinion on it.

The Minister is Chairman of the PCC though he may on occasion ask another member to chair a particular meeting. A treasurer, a secretary and vice-chairman will usually be elected to office at its first meeting after the

Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). The PCC will also appoint a standing committee, typically the Minister as chair, the churchwardens, the treasurer and two elected members.

THE PCC MEETING

The PCC is required by law to meet at least four times a year (one meeting may follow on from the APCM) though some PCCs may decide to meet more frequently. There is a strong argument for holding more frequent, but shorter, meetings and in any event good practice suggests a maximum two hours for each meeting as a general rule. The PCC should take time at these meetings to consider and discuss, and if appropriate vote upon, matters concerning the Church of England generally or referred to the PCC by the Bishop or by the deanery, diocesan or General Synod. The PCC may also on occasion decide to send information, an opinion or a motion to the deanery synod. The PCC meeting should be a forum for open discussion with every member feeling able to ask a question or voice an opinion.

WHO CAN BE A MEMBER OF THE PCC?

If you are 16 years old or over, have been on the electoral roll of your parish for at least 6 months and are an actual communicant, **YOU** can stand for election to your PCC as a lay representative unless you are otherwise disqualified (see below).

WHO CAN'T BE A MEMBER OF THE PCC?

You must not permit yourself to be nominated, chosen or elected to the PCC if you are

- a) disqualified from being a charity trustee under section 72(1) of the Charities Act 1993.
- b) included in a Safeguarding & Vulnerable Group Act 2006 barred list or if you have been convicted of an offence mentioned in Schedule 1 of the Children & Young People Act 1933.
- c) disqualified from holding office under section 10(6) of the Incumbent) Vacation of Benefice) Measure 1997.

Carl Hart

Why should the PCC discuss diversity? Mary Bairstow

Thomas (my youngest son) and I were researching black leadership in the police last year in light of the George Floyd murder and BLM campaigns. We were both shocked when we searched and found that the West Midlands Executive team did not appear to be at all diverse.

Thomas was practising writing letters trying to address these inequalities and so we worked on a letter challenging the make-up of the committee as well as noting the requirement to educate police officers. Thomas had a lot of help with this but this is a paragraph taken from the letter.

“You need to set a good example. I cannot see how your top team (Executive team) is such a top team when there are no people from the black community. In 'The Guardian' last year Mike Fuller, the first ever black chief constable, asked why there are no other black chief constables.”

So imagine how we would feel if someone outside St Andrew's, a new and interested clergy-person for example, was to question the make-up of our top team!

I am sure those of us on the PCC would be upset, we'd feel perhaps unnecessarily challenged; after all it's been a hard year for the PCC with the interregnum and the pandemic with great concerns about safety of our church members while seeing our church finances draining away. It has been particularly hard for the two church wardens – thrust into a role they were not expecting to be called to do at this time.

However, I would like to see this as a great opportunity. We have recognised the issues and need to think carefully and prayerfully about how to work to change things.

Until last year I worked at a national level for Vision UK – the umbrella organisation for eye health and vision impairment. The majority of my career has been in supporting collaborations across health, social care and education. It's fair to say that much of this has been through committee and working groups – in particular looking at strategy for change. Much of the sector has historically had white and able leadership. This was despite me working for a number of years at a local and national level to address some of the very relevant issues of sight loss in diverse communities.

So towards the end of my time at Vision UK we had begun to try and look inwardly at Committee Representation. Our first step was to analyse the make up of our committees. We asked lots of questions but they included questions about ethnicity and disability. The process was challenging; It is always hard to look inwards and not feel defensive. But the aim was to develop strategies to address this.

We wanted to change in the wake of a growing yearning for change in the community. We asked questions about the barriers and looked carefully at how we recruited people to these roles.

In looking at this issue for St Andrew's my hope is that we start to look at things in a similar way. What questions do we want to ask? What resources are members aware of that might help us look at some of the barriers. For example, after sitting on a NHS Trust body on diversity at work I was made aware of some research by Stonewall looking at discrimination at work for LGBT communities.

I feel as a Christian community we need to openly discuss our different backgrounds, the way our culture and heritage affects how we worship and how we respond to challenge. I think it's important we accept people's experiences of barriers and be open to making changes.

I will finish with one small personal reflection ... When I first was licensed to administer the chalice I was very nervous about the whole thing. I questioned Fr Peter's ability to discern the will of God.

My confidence was not helped by my Dad (retired Anglican vicar) asking if he was aware I was “dexterity-ally challenged” (that is I drop and break things). Imagine how I felt then when an older black member at Church came up to me and told me quite forthrightly that she could not accept a woman administering the chalice in trousers. It was important she felt that I wore a skirt. It was a barrier to her and easily remedied by me without compromising any of my beliefs about gender and representation at Church. You might disagree as there are all sort of arguments you might give for changing or not changing what someone wears to Church. However, I hope I was acknowledging an aspect of her culture that could not be compromised and as such enabling our 'shared worship' to continue.

Mary Bairstow

EURO 2020

What a beautiful start to euro 2020! Now I am not the biggest football fan! Well, I say this but live in a house of obsessed foot ballies. So, I got drawn into the Euro 2020 with a dream we could win this! I loved it. The passion, the team spirit, the united world, communities, races, genders all amazing feelings, and this coming fast on the back of what has been an horrendous year. However, we have been given the green light of hope of normality and England has put together an amazing young talented spirited group of young men to add some excitement to what would have been I feel a rather drab team.

However sadly although we made it to the semi-finals, then the finals with what must be some of the best football I have ever watched that kept me hyperventilated, dehydrated and dedicated! It was not to be, we lost out to Italy in the finals which I have to say also was one of the dirtiest team players! But don't even start me on that!

However, what has saddened me the most and left me deflated and heart broken is how we as a country (ENGLAND) has chosen to repay our young black players!! I say we because it is we. If you are born and bred here you are British, that's it for me. Utter disgrace! Racism is alive and kicking folks! Just mess up for England if you're black there's no coming back. Negative yes! Angry yes. Lost faith Oh no! Because in Gods eyes we are one and that is what keeps me believing that we can overcome this! I was therefore compelled to write a poem to express my emotions around this. Hope you like it

Thank you.

Val Powell

Lay Reader St Andrews Church

More than just
Colour

*At the start we all loved it united and proud
No one even noticed any difference in the crowds.
Singing the anthem with smiles and with cheers
Emotions were overcome, no worries or fears.
But our team were defeated we missed out on the
cup.*

*The spirits that were happy were no longer up.
Instead of great praises and reward to our team
For making us all proud of our England dream
Instead, they face racism, hate and abuse!
And the colour of their skin is now the excuse.*

*Rashford, Sterling, Sancho and Saka
Could be anyone else what would it matter.*

*But because they are black that is the latter
How messed up and ignorant can some people be?
That the colour of a man's skin is all you can see
So, we didn't make it we didn't win the cup
These talented guys made us proud to hold our
heads up.*

*God made us all equal in the image of him.
He was not bothered by the colour of skin.
“Love one another as I have loved you”.
That’s all God really wants us to do.
Man has no power to segregate and to hate.
When God calls us, we will all walk
together through the same Judgement gates!*

*Valerie Powell
Poetry Emotions*

Social Justice

Young people today are often very concerned about social and political justice. The 'Gen Z' generation (those born in the 21st century) are especially worried about climate justice, as they would term it. They are conscious that over the next 50 to 80 years of their lives, the problems arising from not taking action now will rebound on them in years to come, and may by then be unsolvable.

A recent survey in the summer of 2020, by Youthscape for Tearfund, of 630 young British Christians online and a further 23 participating in focus groups highlighted key issues they were concerned with – and the top 3 were all over 90%:

96% about discrimination, such as racism, sexism, homophobia

94% about poverty, in the UK or abroad

92% about climate change.

They see justice as an important part of their faith, and 84% regard action on climate change as part of basic justice. Two-thirds, 66%, said they had not heard a sermon on climate change, and half, 51%, said no church leader had spoken to them about it. Only 9% felt their church was doing enough on this topic.

On a personal basis, young people felt we should recycle more things (97%), use less plastic (89%), pray about change (85%), eat less meat (73%) and sign petitions or go on a march (46%) for instance. Two-fifths, 40%, said most of their friends would agree with them. They recognise that influencing their family is important (56%) as well as changing the way they travel. In general, they didn't see the church encouraging them in this direction, but rather dragging its feet. It was the injustice element that concerned them most (86%).

Many felt their faith supported them in their concerns, because they felt people should care for God's creation. Three-fifths, 58%, considered their church was not doing enough.

c/o Parish Pump

Each day I read a book called Grace for the Moment by Max Lucado its a book of inspirational thoughts for each day of the year and I thought I would share the following reading with the magazine readers.

Chris Baker

The title for the day was Reason for Joy.

You have a ticket to heaven no thief can take,
An eternal home no divorce can break.
Every sin of your life has been cast to the sea.
Every mistake you've made is nailed to the tree.
Your blood - bought and heaven - made.
A child of God – forever saved.
So be grateful, joyful - for isn't it true ?
What you don't have is much less than what you do.

Max Lucado

Editor: The Ven John Barton on God's search for us.

Let Jesus Christ find you

Jesus said, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.' John 14:1-6

We come to church regularly to meet God. But actually, God comes to meet us. He comes to us personally though His Word; and in Holy Communion, Jesus arrives under cover of bread and wine, saying 'this is My body; this is My blood'.

The whole Bible is the story of God searching for us, not the other way round. It begins with Adam and Eve running away and hiding, and that's how it continues to this day. But it ends with a dramatic vision of reunion.

In the meantime, humanity is invited to stop, turn round, and face God who is in pursuit. 'Turning round' is what 'repentance' means.

Becoming a Christian is letting Christ find us; being a Christian is becoming an apprentice in His workforce.

Not long before His crucifixion, Jesus taught His apprentices about His death - and theirs. "I'm going to prepare a place for you, and I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also."

When we contemplate dying, it may seem like a journey into the dark. But we will not go alone. Never alone. As we reach out into the darkness, Christ is reaching out to us. Just as He has been reaching out to us throughout our lives, so He is there to grasp us as we breathe our last. "I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also."

For the disciple, death is a union - a reunion with Christ. It's the most natural thing in the world. So, we pray that at our end, we may reach out into the darkness, to find we are grasped by the One who has already prepared a place for us.

c/o Parish Pump

‘On Holiday with Jesus’

August is the month when schools are off and many of us go on holiday. This year will be very different, with many opting for a ‘staycation’! The good news is that Jesus offers us a true rest:

‘Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.’ (Matthew 11: 28-29). Are you feeling tired or burdened and in need of a holiday? Jesus invites you to spend it with Him!

The Invitation: Our holiday destination is Jesus Himself: ‘Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened.’ We can come just as we are, with all the burdens and sadness we carry from the last 18 months. Jesus doesn’t offer a ‘quick fix’ to deal with our issues; He simply offers Himself!

The Promise: Jesus promises us the gift of refreshing, sustaining and everlasting rest. When we go on holiday, we usually look forward to doing very little and yet this is not the kind of rest Jesus offers. His rest involves taking up His yoke and learning from Him! A yoke was the wooden collar that ran across the shoulders of a pair of oxen to enable them to work the fields. Jesus says: 'My yokes fit well. They do not rub your neck and shoulders. Come to Me and get yoked to Me. Make an act of loyal obedience and trust in Me. And you will find a deep peace and satisfaction that you could never find anywhere else. I have come for you!'

What's so amazing about this holiday is that you can get rest by simply staying at home!

c/o Parish Pump

Reflected Faith Series: Who is in the building?

In England, hopefully by the time you read this, all the lock-down and social isolation measures will have been relaxed. Church buildings and services will be 'back to normal'. Working folk will be back in their workplaces, and all will be well with us all.

I live in hope – but I am well aware that the reality will be different. It's the difference between a switch that turns the light fully on or fully off and a dimmer switch that allows the brightness to increase or decrease slowly. All of us will need time to 'rest' before we get our mojo and energy levels back up again. This last 16 months or so have been hectic and traumatic for everyone in different ways. That's why coming into the quietness and space of a church building can be so uplifting.

This month:

Listen out for / read the opening words of the service. Most often they will be the following or very similar: 'The Lord be with you'. And the congregation replies, 'And also with you'. It's a simple acknowledgement that we have come together with the same intention – to meet with God. And

Just pause for a moment and drink in those words and the huge meaning contained in those short phrases. God is not just here for some of us, but for all of us. We are not only with those we can see, but with God Himself. How amazing is that! May those words enable you to stand up straighter again and give you strength for the days ahead.

c/o Parish Pump

Reflecting on the Bible (or ‘Meditating on scripture’)

Many children enjoy boiled sweets – especially trying to see how long they can make them last. The pleasure of holding the flavoured sweet in your mouth is far better than crunching it up in a few seconds!

There is a way of doing much the same with a Bible passage, and it is called *Lectio Divina* or ‘holy reading’. Centuries ago, before Bibles were widely available, the abbot of a monastery would gather his monks together and read to them the Bible passage that was set for the day. He would read it three times and the brothers were encouraged to listen attentively and choose a phrase to remember. They would then go about their daily work in the garden, in the kitchen, in the infirmary or wherever. Through the day they would meditate on the phrase they had chosen and, rather like sucking a boiled sweet, would draw out the meaning for themselves.

You might like to try something similar: choose a passage from the Bible and begin to read it very slowly as if it were addressed to you. A few verses from Psalm 103 would be a good place to start.

Stop when a phrase captures your attention. Maybe it touches you in some way, attracts or even disturbs you. Repeat the phrase slowly over and over again, taking its meaning into yourself. Let it sink in slowly. What does it have to say to you? Why do you think it caught your attention? Where is the connection for you? What memories does it evoke? Is there a word, a phrase, a sentiment, or an image that you can hold on to?

Move into prayer, expressing to God the thoughts and feelings that have spontaneously arisen in you. Let your mind be at rest and your heart open to the love and peace of God. When you are ready, carry on with reading the next bit of the passage or just leave it there for the day.

Follow the example of the monks and return to your phrase or phrases during the day.

Ann Persson has written a book for BRF entitled *Time for Reflection: meditations to use through the year*, which may be helpful. The meditations are based on the Christian calendar, the seasons of the year in nature, and also the theme of time. They will offer you further ways of exploring the greatest book ever written.

Ann Persson's 'Time for Reflection: Meditations to use through the year', BRF £8.99

c/o Parish Pump

Word Search clues & answers

The Transfiguration

On 6 August the Church remembers the Transfiguration of Jesus. The story is told in Matthew 17, Mark 9 and Luke 9. The mountain may well have been one of the three high spurs of Mount Hermon, which rises to 9,000 feet. Jesus was suddenly transfigured before Peter, James and John. His face began to shine as the sun, his garments became white and dazzling. Then Elijah and Moses appeared, but why? These two men represent the Law and the Prophets of the Old Covenant, or Old Testament. But both the Law and the Prophets found their true and final fulfilment in Jesus, the Messiah. Elijah and Moses were handing on the baton, if you like. Now God's dwelling with mankind would depend on the New Covenant based on Jesus' death on the cross.

Transfiguration	covenant
Mountain	face
Peter	exodus
James	mount
John	sinai
Radiant	sealing
Beloved	Moses
Son	law
Well	Elijah
Pleased	prophets
Dwelling	
Mankind	

L N U N W R O L A O L L E W O
S P W P E T E R A D I A N T T
I B E L O V E D W E L L I N G
N O I T A R U G I F S N A R T
A O I O D S A N O S T N T O N
I W T M N S U D O X E N N H E
I L A M F F E N B V H S U W W
O A U C L A A F O E P N O O E
M E U T I O N C S L O D M M M
L N M O D O W E E I R N D H G
T A M N N O M A A J P J S O E
N P D O N A S W L A O P S M O
S R L O J E E O I H T A E J E
I E A O D N I K N A M I T S U
A I E E N G A J G E I A D E A

Online Activity Portal

For all young people and families, we have created an online portal packed with free ideas and resources to keep the whole family busy, with indoor and outdoor games, quizzes, dance, nature trails, park activities, food videos and cook-alongs and so much more.

When read, you will be able to find all of these activities on our website. We are hoping the portal will launch during the first week of the school holidays so check back regularly;

www.BringitonBrum.co.uk

Information c/o Shebina Gill

Those struggling over the holidays don't forget the following places are doing free kids meals when an adult pays

Morrisons – free kids meal with an adult meal

Asda – free kids meal with an adult spending £3.50

Marks & Spencer – kids eat free with an adult spending £3.50

Bella Italia – kids eat for £1 with any paying adult spending £3.50

Sizzling Pub & Grill – kids eat for £1 with any adult meal 3pm – 7pm Mon – Fri

Tesco – kids eat free when an adult spends £1

Hungry Horse Pub – kids eat breakfast for free every day 8am – 12noon with a paying adult

Farmhouse Inn – kids eat for £1 with a paying adult (2 children can eat per adult)

Beefeater & Brewers Fayre offer children a 3 course meal for £4.99

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I hope you enjoyed the August 2021 edition of the Parish Magazine. Feedback is that the new sized font is much better so this will continue until we are back to printing in the Church Hall. As we enter the summer holidays I hope you have a lovely 'staycation' and if you are travelling abroad – stay safe. On the current topic of racism I came across the following verses.

*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **Galations 3:28***

*But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them. **John 1 2:11***

The poor man and the oppressor have this in common:

*The Lord gives light to the eyes of both. **Proverbs 29:13***

Then sings my soul...

“HOW
GREAT
THOU ART”



**ST ANDREW'S CHURCH
HANDSWORTH**