

# ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH

April 2022



AMWSS

50p

# **St Martin's Church, Hale Gardens, London W3 9SQ**

(Registered charity no. 1132976)

[www.stmartinswestacton.co.uk](http://www.stmartinswestacton.co.uk)

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Please ring the Parish Office on 020 8992 2333.

Articles for the next issue of magazine should be sent to  
Anna Sargent at [annasorensensargent@gmail.com](mailto:annasorensensargent@gmail.com)  
Please title your email 'Magazine' in the subject heading

**Articles should reach the Editor by 21 April.**

**The next magazine will be on sale by 1 May.**

## A Letter from the Vicar



Dear all,

This photo was taken by Dennis Melnichuk, a photographer and Christian missionary in the Ukraine. It depicts an elderly man hugging the foot of an almost true-size crucifix which stands planted in the pavement outside a Catholic monastery in the Ukraine. The picture was taken just as war started. Dennis Melnichuk posted the picture on social media and it 'went viral'. Dennis said: "I was feeling my heart quiver with unbelief and shock. But also, I felt faith rising in my heart."

The picture sums up the hope we have as part of our Christian faith. That at times of adversity God is *with us* working towards peace and justice in our lives and in the world. This picture also points us to the Easter story. On Good Friday we remember how Jesus died on the cross (the disbelief and shock) and then on Easter Sunday we remember how he rose again after he conquered death (faith rising in the heart). As the triumphant Easter hymn states:

'Thine be the glory,  
risen conquering Son,  
endless is the victory  
thou o'er death has won.'

Our hope this Easter is that our lives are more hopeful than in the previous two years, having lived through various lockdowns and a worldwide pandemic.

However, it is taking time to 'get back to normal'. Many people are still nervous about meeting others, some are experiencing 'long Covid' which we don't know exactly how to treat, and at the time of writing Covid infections are high and rising, but like the man in the photo, we cling to the Cross as we work out the future together.

Having a plan for the future of St Martins was the task of the PCC (Parochial Church Council) on an away day at the end of February. This was led by Rev Adrian Chatfield, a retired tutor from St John's College Nottingham and Ridley Hall Theological College, who talked about the purpose of the Church. We looked at the marks of a Church, which include: faithful worship of God; being faithful to God's mission; and being faithful in the service of the God's kingdom. Using this as a reference point, we then discussed the vision and mission of St Martin's and this is what we produced as a group:

'That the mission of St Martins is to be 'a loving, thriving Christian community, spreading the love of Christ, where all are welcome.' Our vision is: 'to connect with and serve the community of West Acton; to care for and support our church members; to nurture and support our young people; and to grow as disciples of Christ through inspiring worship, prayer and faith development. '

We will discuss this in more detail at the annual Church Meeting (the APCM) on Sunday the 24 April, to be held after the morning service. We will also put forward some plans for the five PCC subgroups (community, mission, worship, finance and property) which will take us into the next part of the story of St Martins. I would like to encourage you to be a part of it, and to use your particular gifts to help create a loving, thriving, welcoming community!

Wishing you a blessed Easter

**Rev Julia Palmer**

## UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

**Sat 2 Apr:**           **10.00 – 12.00 – Japanese Community Café**, with stalls and refreshments  
**10.30am Lent Litter Pick** - meet at Church to take part

**Sun 3 April**       **10am - Holy Communion** (BCP), Junior Church in Church Hall

**Sun 10 April**      **Palm Sunday**  
**10am – Procession**, walking from Twyford Gardens to St Martin's Church, followed by traditional **Holy Communion service**

### HOLY WEEK

**Thu 14 Apr:**       **Maundy Thursday**  
**7.30pm** – St Martin's Church - Service with traditional music for Maundy Thursday

**Fri 15 Apr:**       **Good Friday**  
**10.30am Walk of Witness** – start at Church and walk to St Mary's, Acton. Outdoor service in square.

**1-3pm - Meditations and prayers** (Church)

**1-3pm** - Good Friday activities for children in Church Hall

**3pm - Stations of the Cross** (Church) followed by refreshments (including 'hot cross buns')

**Sat 16 Apr:**       **8pm - Service of Light** with Easter Fire (Church and Church Garden)

- Sun 17 Apr: Easter Day**  
**8am – Holy Communion** (BCP)  
**10am - Holy Communion** with Baptism,  
 Junior church in Church Hall
- Sun 24 Apr: Low Sunday**  
**10am – Holy Communion** (BCP)  
**11.15am - APCM** (Annual Church Meeting)



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**In memoriam March 2011**

**Japanese earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster**



Early on the morning of 11th March 2011, I was busy as a care worker, visiting people in their homes. Arriving at the home of one of my clients, I found them glued to pictures on their TV screen live from Japan, showing the massive tsunami attacking the Eastern Japanese coastline. The family was eerily quiet as they watched, completely lost for words. I too was shocked. After I finished my tasks, I went outside and phoned my brother. He assured me that he and our family were all ok. Later, the communications broke down for a while. It was one of the scariest experiences of my life.

The memory of that day has stayed with me ever since, as it has for many Japanese people, even though more than 11 years have now passed. And it is not only the events of that day that stay with me, but everything that it has led to since. In particular, it has become a special day of commemoration, once I had begun to be more involved as a leader of the Japanese Anglican Church (UK). Church-based activities started



with a fundraising event at St Martin's on 29th March 2011 when the vicar at that time, Rev Nick Henderson, asked me to help the local Japanese mothers' group to organise a concert.

On 5th June 2011, a memorial service was held at Westminster Abbey with more than 2,000 people present, and we also took a small part in that service.

In April 2012, a year after the disaster, I went to Japan and visited Miyagi and Fukushima, two of the most badly affected areas in the north-east. As well as meeting survivors, and seeing the devastation, I was able to learn about the various support projects for victims run by the Tohoku Diocese of NSKK - Nippon Sei Ko Kai (the Anglican Church in Japan). They had worked with other Christian denominations trying to reach people in need. During my short trip, one vicar took me to a small hill in the town of Yuriage. I was shocked to see a vast grey land stretching for miles, where many houses and communities had once been. They had been completely devastated, wiped off the map by the tsunami.

We visited the Tozenji Buddhist temple. 235 people of their congregation had died in the disaster. I also saw about 400 emptied tombs around the temple's graveyard, as all of them had been swept away by the tsunami.



At the community hall of the temporary housing in Fukushima, Christian groups, including the NSKK, organised the meeting. I met evacuees from a village affected by accidents in the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant. One lady had been about to move into her newly built home just before the disaster, but then the house and villages were contaminated by radiation. It meant she and her family had to give up living in their brand-new home.

Since that first visit, I have made four further trips. Gradually the coastal landscape has been changed. Massive embankments to deal with the tidal waves have been built. Residents have moved to new housing development sited higher up hillsides. And through these years the NSKK has continued supporting victims, especially those who are most vulnerable.



The Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami produced many astonishing and shocking statistics. A report in 2021 identified that 19,749 people had died, 6,242 had been injured, and 2,556 people were still missing. This disaster was different from other disasters because it was a triple disaster – earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident. It also is an example of a mixture of natural disaster and human failure. The nuclear impact of the nuclear accident has created a great deal of uncertainty, and damage to the environment and community that will be felt for many years to come.

This year, on 13<sup>th</sup> March, we held a memorial service at St. Martin's, marking the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 2011 disaster. During the service, we heard read the testimony written by Reiko A, one entry in a book of collected testimonies of victims published by the NSKK. After escaping narrowly from the tsunami, Reiko had a very tough time living in the evacuation centre and in temporary housing. She wrote about how she often got depressed and felt weak, but she was also encouraged by people who visited and helped her.



She reflected on how fragile 'a normal life' is. She discovered the importance of fellowship and connection with others, which gives us a reason to go on living. In her mind, fellowship with others has become a 'treasure'.

We also heard a message from the Bishop of Tohoku. He talked about one continuing problem, common after any natural disaster, which is the issue of a lonely death among the victims who moved into new homes far from their familiar community. Many found great difficulty in making new friends. Since the

2011 disaster, 614 further deaths have been accounted as being directly attributable to the disaster.



In response, the victims support project still conducts 'shopping support', providing transport so people can visit shops together. There is also a programme of 'tea parties' for fellowship, at which people can sing well-known folk songs, join in exercise and enjoy sharing refreshments. The bishop also emphasized how important it is to maintain the fellowship of the community.

With the testimony and through the message of the bishop, we can see that fellowship is key as a means of connecting with others and providing mutual encouragement. It is simply connected to Jesus' golden rule, 'Love your neighbour'.

At St. Martin's, we also value fellowship. On 13 March, people came not only from Ealing but from south and north London to the memorial service. The Minister and Consul-General of the Japanese Embassy, and their colleagues, and some members of the Fukushima Association in London also came to join us.

A week after the service, I received a copy of an article that had been published in the local newspaper of Fukushima, Japan. It reported our memorial service briefly, with a photo. Separately, the message from the editor said, 'thank you all for supporting us from the UK for the last 11 years since the

earthquake. We are pleased to convey the warm feelings of everyone to the citizens of the [Fukushima] Prefecture. We appreciate this very much.'

We human beings are powerless in the face of a natural disaster of the scale of the earthquake and tsunami of 2011. There was nothing we could do to prevent it. But we can foster fellowship to support each other as people rebuild their lives and communities. And we can also keep remembering and praying for them.

**Yuki Johnson**

Licensed Lay Minister, Japanese Anglican Church (UK)



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## LIVING IN LOVE & FAITH

### **Living in Love and Faith**

How do questions about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage fit within the bigger picture of the good news of Jesus Christ? What does it mean to live in love and faith together as a Church?

These are some big questions – and ones that the Church of England have invited us to explore through the “Living in Love and Faith” course. This church-wide ‘learning together, listening to one another, and listening to God’, is part of discerning a way forward for the Church of England in relation to matters of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage.

The course contains a variety of material on topics relating to identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage and looks at these from different aspects:

- teaching from the Bible,
- the inherited teaching of the Church,
- emerging Christian views on these topics
- the complexities underlying these topics, and
- understanding different views and encountering different experiences.

We are running the course over five Sundays at St Martin’s during March and April. If you haven’t been able to join us, but would like to view the course booklet and videos, you can do so separately. The materials can be accessed here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/living-love-and-faith/living-love-and-faith-learning-hub>

Note that you will need to register on the site to access and download the materials.



Following the course, the Church of England have also invited us to complete a survey. This asks whether our engagement with the course has deepened our understanding, invites our feedback on the course, and asks how we hope that engagement with the course will make a difference both here in our local church and more widely in the national church. The survey needs to be completed by **30 April** and can be accessed here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LLFCourse>

So, if you would like to view the materials and complete the survey, please do. Or if you would like to discuss any aspects of the material or the course, and/or feed into our response, please do speak to Rev Bryony or Rev Julia.

### **Learning outcomes of the Living in Love and Faith course**

As a result of engaging with the Living in Love & Faith resources, it is hoped that people and church communities will:

- be inspired by scripture's glorious and joyful vision of God's intention for human life.
- have discovered how to engage with rich biblical, theological, historical and scientific thinking about human identity, sexuality and marriage in a way that deepens their desire to know God and follow Christ.
- have a deeper understanding of the Church's inherited teaching on Christian living in love and faith, especially with regard to marriage and singleness, and of emergent views and the Christian reasoning behind them.
- have heard the voices and encountered the experiences of people who would otherwise have been invisible to them.
- have learned different ways of reading scripture together well, allowing it to exert its transforming and revelatory power.
- find help for everyday Christian discipleship in all its diversity, physicality, messiness and grittiness.
- be alert to the interaction between the life of the church and its cultural contexts and equipped to engage in the public square about what it means to be human and sexual.

**Rev Bryony Franklin**

## Background to 'Living in Love & Faith'

**27 January 2017** - the General Synod of the Church of England published paper GS 2055, *'Marriage and Same Sex Relationships after Shared Conversations: A Report from the House of Bishops'*. The report set out 'where the conversation had got to' on the hotly debated subject of sexuality, gender identity, and marriage in the Anglican Church. 'Shared Conversations' was a 2014-2016 project involving over 700 people across the Church of England at all levels (bishops, clergy and laity) holding face-to-face 'facilitated conversations' in assorted groupings and reporting back on their findings, based on the question: *'Given the significant changes in our culture in relation to human sexuality, how should the Church respond?'* To quote from the original Church of England resource notes, 'it is hoped that this process will encourage and enable people who take a wide range of views to discern that which is of Christ in those with whom they profoundly disagree. There is no preconceived or prescribed outcome beyond this.'

**15 February 2017** – 'GS 2055' was then discussed as a 'take note debate' by the General Synod of the Church of England, involving all three Houses (Bishops, Clergy and Laity) which then voted on the motion separately. 'Take note debates' are not usually held on contentious subjects – they are normally open-ended discussions of 'neutral' topics – but after debate, there was no clear majority in favour of the 'take note debate' so it remained unresolved. The Bishop of Norwich said at the time, "There is no simple and easy answer to this issue beyond committing ourselves to engagement with each other when the views on what we should do are profoundly contested."

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, issued the following statement shortly thereafter:

"No person is a problem or an issue. People are made in the image of God. All of us, without exception, are loved and called

by Christ. There are no 'problems', there are simply people. How we deal with the real and profound disagreement – put so passionately and so clearly by many at the Church of England's General Synod debate on marriage and same sex relationships today – is the challenge we face as people who all belong to Christ. To deal with that disagreement, to find ways forward, we need a radical new Christian inclusion in the Church. This must be founded in scripture, in reason, in tradition, in theology; it must be based on good, healthy, flourishing relationships, and in a proper 21st century understanding of being human and of being sexual. We need to work together – not just the bishops but the whole Church, not excluding anyone – to move forward with confidence. The vote [GS, 2017] is not the end of the story, nor was it intended to be. As bishops we will think again and go on thinking, and we will seek to do better. We could hardly fail to do so in the light of what was said this afternoon. The way forward needs to be about love, joy and celebration of our humanity; of our creation in the image of God, of our belonging to Christ – all of us, without exception, without exclusion”.

**'Living in Love & Faith'** is the outcome of more than two years' work by the House of Bishops following that 2017 debate. It launched in October 2020, with an Appeal from the Bishops to the wider Church of England - clergy and laity - to engage with the debate and use the resources they have provided (book, course, podcasts, questionnaire, etc.):

'Now, as we lead the Church of England into making whatever decisions are needful for our common life regarding matters of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage, we appeal to you to join us in this period of discernment.'

In their Appeal, published in the book that forms the basis of the Living in Love & Faith (LLF) resources, the Bishops ask us, the ordinary laity of the Church of England, to walk with them "in a new stage of our common life in Christ so that, 'speaking the truth in love', godly discernment and right decisions can be

made over contested matters of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage, for 'we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ' (Ephesians 4.15)."

The Living in Love & Faith course (5 sessions) and book, the online resources and the online questionnaire, are the means whereby we can all join in the conversation, and engage with a collective endeavour being undertaken right across the country. This is our opportunity to learn, consider and be heard ahead of debates in July 2022, and votes in the General Synod in 2023. St Martin's is now three sessions into the five-session course, held in the Church Hall at **11.15am** straight after Communion.

If you would like to read about other people's experiences of 'Living in Love & Faith', the Diocese of Chichester is some distance ahead of St. Martin's in reporting back - they have published a review paper, adopted by their Diocesan Synod on 5th February 2022 and made available online:  
[https://cofechichester.contentfiles.net/media/documents/document/2022/02/LLF\\_synod\\_paper\\_final.pdf](https://cofechichester.contentfiles.net/media/documents/document/2022/02/LLF_synod_paper_final.pdf)

The Diocese of Chichester made a comprehensive analysis of their findings and the directions that debates took them, including the balance of arguments and the ways in which different age groups reflected differing trends of thought. It is a very interesting read, especially if you are already engaged in LLF yourself (either individually online or collectively in the course sessions). Their report reflects the depth of their discussions, the rigour of their analysis, and the honesty of the participants, as is evidenced in these two points:

*'That a significant number of Christians [in the Diocese of Chichester] have a sincerely held opinion that this current process [LLF] was effectively all about ushering in a change in the doctrinal and liturgical position of the Church of England. It also needs to be recognised [...] that many of those who wish to adhere to the church's traditional teaching increasingly feel intimidated and fearful to speak out.'*

*'That many LGBTQI+ Christians [...] continue to be badly hurt by discrimination in the life of the Church, and that to be regarded as an "issue" rather than as a person has contributed to dehumanisation.'*

Absence of evidence is *not* evidence of absence – if you don't want your unexpressed view to be 'taken for granted', or you would actively like your view to be heard in the conversation, please join your fellow parishioners in this 'period of discernment' - this is the moment!

**Anna Sargent**



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## **Ukraine, a long time ago**

Elena and Jacob and their three children lived on a small plot of land just outside a town called Stanislav. They were Jewish, they went to the local synagogue, and from time to time the Rabbi came to visit them. Elena had inherited the house and land from her parents, and the little family had moved there just before their second son was born. Their baby daughter had been born there. Jacob was a watchmaker and jeweller, and went to into town every day to work, whilst Elena looked after the house and children and managed a smallholding, growing wheat and vegetables.

Jacob had a brother and sister in America, and he and Elena were planning to emigrate there at some point. The social and political situation in Russian Ukraine was very harsh, and they wanted better for their children's future.

They lived close to a major route to the West, and there was a cavalry barracks close by. One day the two sons, Reuben and Samuel, came running into the house. They told their mother that they and their friends who lived close by had been playing with stones trying to knock over a broken jar. A stone had ricocheted up and hit one of the Russian cavalry horses which was passing. The soldier had been very angry, they said, and had told them they would be punished.

The last time anything like that had happened, the angry soldiers had set fire to a hamlet not far away. Several families had lost their homes, and some people were killed. Elena was very worried, and started to pack up the house. When Jacob came home and she told him about it, he agreed that the best thing to do was to go before anything awful happened.

They spent the night packing their possessions into their wagon, and next morning they all went into town with Jacob to collect the contents of his shop and his tools, and when they had packed it all up, they set off for their new life, heading for the coast.

They took a large sailing ship to England, planning to go on to America from there. Elena was very, very sick on the ship. She hated the whole experience, feeling like she would rather have

had to deal with the soldiers. She hated it so much that she wanted to stay in England, saying she never wanted to set foot on another boat ever again.

Jacob persuaded her to carry on – he told her that the voyage would be the last one she would ever have to do, and it would lead them to a whole new life together. She agreed to one more voyage... and Jacob bought the tickets to the next stop. She was really unhappy at the idea, though, and nearly turned back half way up the gangplank! Jacob told her that the next time the ship stopped and she got onto dry land they would be in America, so she carried on.

What no one had told Jacob was that on the way to America, boats stopped at Queenstown in Ireland to take on fresh water. Queenstown, now called Cobh, was a large port - it has one of the biggest natural harbours in the world. So, when the boat docked there, lots of people disembarked, including Jacob, Elena and the children. Their goods were unloaded, and they prepared to start their new life, thinking they had arrived in America!

One little problem was that they did not speak, or read, the language. Imagine Jacob's delight when he heard someone talking Ukrainian? He found out about somewhere for the family to stay short-term. This was great, they thought! Elena was so happy to be on land again, and she discovered that some of the sickness had been for another cause entirely, and she was expecting another baby!

The man Jacob had spoken to introduced them to a whole community of refugees, all of whom they could understand. They found a synagogue, and Jacob even found someone who was looking for someone to join him in his business as a clockmaker. This America was an amazing place, they thought.

They settled in, found a little patch of land and a house, and began living in 'America'. When the boys started school in the village, they came back full of excitement. They were not in America, they were in a place called Ireland! Well, the whole family was so surprised and amazed, and Jacob went to ask the Rabbi what he thought they should do. His advice was that if



they were happy, then the Lord had guided them to the place they should be.

The family settled into their Irish life, and other children came along too. The third girl, Sarah, was born in 1872. She went to school in the village, too, and met and played with Irish children, who were Roman Catholic. She made particular friends with a young boy, Daniel, and they became sweethearts, aged 16.

This caused a lot of problems between the families. Jacob and Elena were not at all happy about Sarah marrying a Christian, and Daniel's parents did not want him to marry a Jewish girl. But Sarah and Daniel didn't care, they loved each other, and so they took matters into their own hands and ran away to London, where they lived happily together until Daniel died in 1891.

And so, you have the story of my grandmother, Sarah, born in Ireland of Ukrainian descent, and how she came to be England. She never went back to Ireland, but two of her sisters and a brother tracked her down when they were grown up, and settled here too. And the rest is my family history!

**Lynne Armstrong**



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### **Usual Sunday Services**

8am: Holy Communion, BCP

10am: Parish Communion (CW)

(All-Age Service – non-Communion –  
first Sunday of the month)

6.30pm: Evening Prayer on Zoom

Junior Church (except first Sun of month)

### **Japanese Anglican Church UK**

(third Sunday of the month except December)

3pm Bible Study and Evening Worship in Japanese