



roundabout



Parish Magazine of St. Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane with St. Luke's Church, Bromley Common

Issue 550 March 2024

Lent

In this time of Lent, prayer, fasting and reading God's word (the Bible) are traditionally the call of the church to the people of God. In response, many will abstain from life's little luxuries like chocolate, biscuits, caffeine or alcohol, to name but a few. Also, many will attend a Lent course as a way of exploring their faith in more depth.

However, for many in our community Lent is, at best, an ancient custom or is not even thought about in this modern age. By contrast, Easter is more recognisable as a special time, I suspect, because of the associated Bank holidays, making it a long weekend. Yet, for Christians, the process of Lent is indeed the road we must take so that, as we arrive at Easter, we are truly focused on the enormity of God's sacrificial love for all humankind.

In fact, it is precisely because we live in a time of consumerism and materialism that a time of self-examination is needed. Giving up something is a start, but it is only when we take time to discover those things in our life that draw us away from God, that we can truly adjust our focus back to the Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe that when we do this, we find a precious gift more valuable than gold or silver – salvation! Through the forgiveness of our sins, we are drawn back to look directly into the eyes of Jesus Christ on the cross. This may sound very dramatic, yet God's passion for each of us holds no bounds.

So my prayer in this time of Lent, is that we hold fast to the teaching of God, removing the stumbling blocks that become a barrier between us and God. Instead, let us look to the cross of Jesus Christ and embrace his love for all eternity.

I wish you all a happy and blessed Easter.

Rev'd Steve Spencer, Vicar



As members of St. Augustine's with St Luke's, we seek to follow Jesus' command—to share God's love with our community.



Theology Degree Course

I started my degree in September 2018, studying Theology, Ministry and Mission at Augustine's College of Theology. The academic study continued beyond my Ordination as a Deacon in 2020 and as a Priest in 2021.

Although based at the West Malling Abbey (and occasionally at the Southwark site) the course is accredited by Durham University, hence my Graduation with a BA Honours degree in Durham Cathedral in January.

The course was intense and made up of many interesting 'modules' involving theoretical assignments, group projects, engaging with many different worship traditions and several practical placements. For example, I did my Chaplaincy placement in Feltham Young Offenders' Institution.

The course for Ordinands included a mandatory residential element which meant that we had to attend six to seven residential events each academic year. At times this was tough on my husband Adam who was left 'holding the fort' at home for many weekends over the years.

There were many modules which challenged and shaped my theological views, but the highlights for me – apart from my Ordination and Graduation – were the Spirituality module, Christian Ethics module (which led to my decision not to eat meat anymore) the Silent Retreat and the Leadership modules.

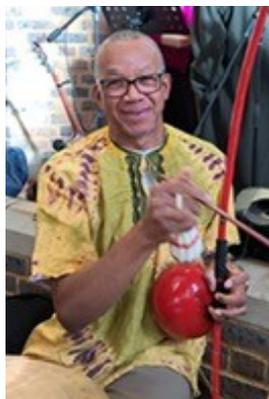
I have never regretted embarking on the training for Ministry, but I am glad that we as a family did not realise at the time what it would cost us all in terms of sacrifice. Sometimes ignorance is bliss!



Rev'd Rachel Winn

A Special Musical Instrument

It was fascinating to watch Keith Pinnock, the percussionist in our music group at St Augustine's, as he played an unusual instrument for a recent service. It is called a berimbau.



It is a Brazilian musical bow and consists of a gourd, a string and a flexible stick. A caxixi, a shaker in the form of a closed basket filled with seeds or other small particles, is held in the hand that holds the stick. This produces a rattling sound when the string is struck with the stick. A further sound can be made when the gourd is pressed onto the body and released.

This amazing instrument originated in Angola and is commonly used in Brazil, having been brought there by African slaves in the 19th century. How blessed are we to have such talent in our congregation.



Sue Goodger

Kondoa Link

In February about 30 of us from a variety of Rochester parishes met up to share our experiences of recent visits to Kondoa. In the live link-up with Bishop Given he updated us on events in Kondoa diocese in 2023 and his aims for 2024. These include

- To build the children's ministry and support their development as good Christians
- To build a new diocesan office
- To continue to encourage the Bible College

Bishop Given's enthusiasm and vision is contagious and he thanked everyone for the support and encouragement that we give.



The Head Teacher at the school, Conjesta, sent a video message with an update on her current challenges and showing us the new school buildings. At the end of 2023, the Government changed parts of the curriculum. Now children will have two years less schooling and will have to incorporate two more subjects – Swahili and Tanzanian history – into less time! There are to be weekly Government Inspections. The good news is that the new school building looks great and is now fully in use.

The many and varied presentations from the different parishes show how relationships are continuing to grow and the positive connections these are having. Hilary and I did a short presentation on our trip and the privilege we felt at being part of this experience. We finished with a short service with songs and many prayers asking for God's support for all the work in Kondoa.

Debbie Brockwell

Our Pastoral Care Team

One of the long term effects of the Covid pandemic has been that of isolation. People have been reluctant to get back to social activities which they had participated in before Covid. At St Augustine's with St Luke's our response to this was to set up a Pastoral Care Team and 15 of us undertook the training we needed to do that.

Two years on we have seen the very real need for this service within our church and local communities, underpinned by the Christian message of love. The Pastoral Care Team themselves are supported by refresher sessions covering listening skills, spiritual care with different age groups, coping with stress, loss and bereavement.

We also have a prayer team and you can send in prayer requests for yourself or others to the parish office 020 8295 1550.

Debbie Brockwell

Do you know anyone with Parkinson's?

The Bromley Branch of Parkinson's UK now have a WhatsApp group for members to get to know each other and exchange positive information and constructive suggestions related to living with Parkinson's.

They have also just set up a Tai Chi class on Fridays in our parish, at Chantry Studios, 20 Chantry Lane, Bromley, BR2 9QL. Contact number 07553 082148.

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Flowering Traditions

Our Easter devotions and celebrations are particularly early this year. In a world of increasing regulation, I find it heartening that this one quirk remains although I that not everyone would support me on this. Some years ago at Easter, we were on holiday on Malta and again, it fell at the very start of April. On Easter Saturday we visited one of the smaller churches in Valetta – there are a lot! As soon as we went in, the scent of Easter lilies was overpowering. The flower arrangers told us the lilies had needed lots of encouragement and extra heating to be at their best, which had clearly been expensive, but she said “Now they are rejoicing with us!”



Countries which have Christian and Orthodox traditions express the Easter season in different ways, suited to their own geography. In Russia and other Slavic countries for example, they substitute pussy willow for palm branches. They are blessed on Palm Sunday and taken home to display until the following year.

I have another precious memory of celebrating the Easter season. (When I was teaching, all holidays had to be in school holidays!) We were in Cape Town at the start of a Garden Route Tour and it was Palm Sunday. Having only just flown down from Johannesburg, we were a bit disorientated and were strolling along, glued to our street map (pre-smart phones). We found ourselves outside St George’s Cathedral, so peeped round the door and were met with a wonderful sight.



The service had started, so we squeezed in at the back. Before us was a packed cathedral, but what stunned us were the palm branches. On the end of every pew were palm fronds, each one probably eight or nine feet tall, arched over the whole of the main aisle. The service was memorable not only for that, but for the volume of the hearty singing and the booming voice of the Archbishop of Cape Town.

Whatever flowers you have to hand this Easter, let us thank God for their beauty and the pleasure they bring us.

Mary Plummer

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A Buddhist experience in Sri Lanka

According to recent figures, over 70% of the Sri Lanka population follow Theravada Buddhism, the country's official religion. The countryside I visited in January, between Colombo, Kandy, and Galle, bore this out, with large significant temples, stupas and smaller temples dotted throughout the land.

Gangaramaya Temple, Colombo

A 19th century merchant bought and drained the land in order to build a temple. It now has many impressive buildings which serve the worshippers and community in many ways. There are vast, colourful statues of Buddha, carvings on every available piece of stone and the people are very proud of the enormous Bo tree, centrally placed. Visiting involved walking carefully between many devoted worshippers throughout the large complex.



The Temple of the Tooth, Kandy

This Temple owes its name to the central shrine which contains a relic – a tooth of Buddha. The site was previously the Royal Palace of the Kingdom of Kandy and the Sinhalese Kings were custodians of the tooth. Once a month when there is a new moon, there is a public holiday in Sri Lanka when worshippers fill the Temple. The 'digge' (drummers' pavilion) provides much needed shade for the white-clothed women and men who wait for the monks' teachings and there are long queues to approach the tooth and offer lotus flowers in worship.

Yatagala Rock Cave Temple, Galle

The entire Temple grounds are built around a mass of large boulders. Concealed beneath are dozens of small caves. Then, climbing up the hillside, the buildings and caves housed more colourful images and statues of Buddha, a 9-metre long reclining statue being the most significant. The caves are said to have been used by monks for over 1500 years. They thrive today and we saw two large rooms filled with children learning about their faith. The final room was devoted to 12 Hindu deities and there is great respect and understanding between the worshippers.



Although Sri Lanka is predominantly Buddhist, I came away with the impression that Hinduism, Islam and Christianity are very much alive and well amongst the Sinhalese people.

Christine Fisher

There's always one!

Honestly if I had a pound for every time I've heard a group leader or teacher say, "There's always one", I would be a wealthy woman by now. I have to admit I have started to say it too.

A Little Girl I Know came home from school a tad exasperated recently. Instead of being the child doing the wrong thing, she was annoyed that she was the only one doing the right thing. In that particular lesson the children had been talking when they were asked to keep quiet, and before long they were throwing balls of paper across the classroom. The teacher seemed not to notice their behaviour.

As I walked in our local park recently my mind went back to this incident; how the teacher had failed to see A Little Girl I Know getting on with her work amidst the chaos in the room. I felt sad, especially for those who felt it was necessary to behave in this way. I took a moment to talk to God about it, and asked Him to be with A Little Girl I Know especially that day. I went on, knowing that she would be safe in His care.

Later that day, at the school where I work, the children seemed to struggle with lining up at the end of break. As I walked up and down the four class lines there were children talking to the person behind them and facing the wrong way. My colleague, a lady of many more years' experience than I, raised her voice. "What is going on? There is only one direction you should be looking". She looked at me almost laughing, realising she had just referenced the favourite pop group of A Little Girl I Know. I smiled and said, "There's always one!" That day there were definitely more than one!

A few days later I saw the Greylag Geese in the photograph, four facing one way, the fifth the opposite. I smiled and thought of how difficult it must be for God to get us to do what He wants us to. I am grateful for His patience with me. I wonder how many times He says, "There's always one" when He is talking about me...



Bellringing at St Luke's

The peal of eight bells at St Luke's were installed in 1910 and have been rung ever since by a dedicated bank of bellringers. We practise on Thursday evenings and occasionally participate in outings elsewhere to ring the bells at other churches.

We always need new recruits to join us. Bellringing is not physically demanding and full instruction is given in basic bell handling skills. Once these are mastered, ringing as part of a team takes place, which is both stimulating and fun.

Contacts: Tower Captain, Christopher Lawrance (0208 462 3485), Steve or Rachel.

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March Diary 2024

Sunday Services

Sunday 3rd March

10am Cafe Church

St Augustine's Church.

Exodus 20: 1-17, John 2: 13-22

Sunday 10th March

Mothering Sunday/Parade

10am Holy Communion

St Augustine's Church.

1 Samuel 1: 20-end, John 19: 25-27

Sunday 17th March

10am Morning Worship

5.30pm Holy Communion

St Augustine's Church.

Jeremiah 31: 31-34, John 12: 20-33

St Luke's Church

Sunday 24th March

10am Holy Communion

St Augustine's Church.

Philippians 2: 5-11, Mark 11: 1-11



Holy Week & Easter Services 25th - 31st

Tuesday 7pm - Compline: a quiet evening service in St Augustine's Chapel

Wednesday 7pm - Compline: a quiet evening service in St Augustine's Chapel

Maundy Thursday 7pm Service of Servanthood at St Augustine's Church

Good Friday 12.00 Noon - 3pm Vigil at the Cross St Augustine's Church

Easter Sunday Dawn Service at 6.00am, Holy Communion at 10.00am at St Augustine's

Mid Week Holy Communion Services

Wednesday 13th and 27th St Augustine's Chapel, at Midday

Weekly Groups

ARK (term time only)

Every Wednesday, St Augustine's Church, 10.00am - 11.45am. Booking essential see below for church website details

Warm Space & CAMEO - All Welcome

Every Thursday 11am - 4pm. Join us for Food and Friendship. On 7th making daffodils and posies

Lent Course - every week until Easter

Tuesday 7.30pm via Zoom. Thursday 10.00am in person in the Chapel at St Augustine's Church

Monthly Groups

Youth Connect - Friendship and Food for School Years 7+

Saturday 9th March - Easter Surprise

Saturday 23rd March - Movie Night with popcorn and snacks

Cheerful Walkers

Tuesday 26th March - 10.30am at Commonsides Car Park Keston for a walk to Holwood Farm shop and Cafe. If you need a lift contact Pam Poynter

Mothers' Union

Wednesday 20th March - 2.00pm Lent Meditation in the Garden Room.

Friends Re-United

Monday 25th March at 12.30pm - Garden Room at St Augustine's Church

Forget Me Not Café

Tuesday 19th March at 1.30pm - Garden Room at St Augustine's Church

Staff Contact Details

Vicar:	Rev'd Steve Spencer	020 8467 1351 or 07778 784331
Curate:	Rev'd Rachel Winn	07311 330202
Licensed Lay Minister:	Alan Mitchell	07985 070734
Licensed Lay Minister:	Verity Mitchell	07379 294826
Churchwarden:	Hilary Chittock	07884 195700
Churchwarden:	Jeff Blyth	07557 349279
Parish Safeguarding Officer:	John Murray	07482 315545
Parish Office:	(Linda Spencer	020 8295 1550
(Mon - Fri 10:00 - 1:00)	(Victoria Bouwer	email: office@st-augustines.org.uk

The 10am service will also be live streamed on our You Tube channel, www.st-augustines.org.uk

St. Augustine's Church Rooms and St. Luke's Hall are available for hire. To book a room at St Augustine's, contact Liz Carter on 020 8467 8155. To book St Luke's Hall, contact the Church Office on 020 8295 1550

Contact details for all church and uniformed organisations are on our website www.st-augustines.org.uk

SEEKING.....

A Family, Children and Youth Worker at St Augustine's with St Luke's; a joyful, growing, community focused church, seeking an experienced and enthusiastic person, to develop and enhance our existing work in growing discipleship and outreach within our church congregation and the wider community. The work associated with this role is a priority for the mission of our church. A warm welcome awaits.

Please share this information as widely as possible.
(website www.st-augustines.org.uk)



Daffodil gifts to our Community

This year we will be giving out 'Daffodils on the Green' on Friday afternoon, 8th March from 3pm (until the posies are gone) so that school children can take some for their loved ones.

March Edition: Editor - Mary Plummer Layout - Tanya Wardley

The April 2024 edition will be printed and published on the St. Augustine's and St. Luke's website
Editor - Ann Hanrahan 0208 467 5629, Layout - Adrian King email: aandcking@icloud.com

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