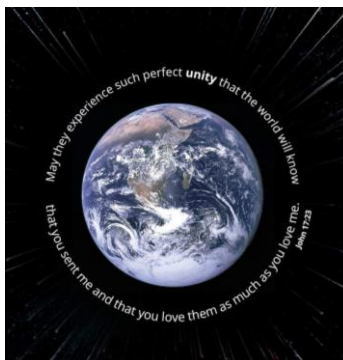


NEWSLETTER

Newsletter 25th January 2024



Dear Everyone – Greetings and hoping you are all well.

Week of Christian Unity: By the time you receive this newsletter it will be the tail end of the week of Christian Unity (WPCU) which takes place each year from the 18 to 25 January. This is a special week, with services and prayers brought together by “Churches Together”. It provides an opportunity to focus our prayers on Christian unity that we so badly need at this time. It gives us space to think, speak about and experience Christian unity personally wherever we are and whichever country we come from. Below is a prayer for Unity that we need to keep praying, particularly remembering those countries where war and hostilities are dividing people and congregations. We pray and work for reconciliation and friendship.

A PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Heavenly Father,
 you have called us in the Body of your Son Jesus Christ
 to continue his work of reconciliation
 and reveal you to the world:
 forgive us the sins which tear us apart;
 give us the courage to overcome our fears
 and to seek that unity which is your gift and your will;
 through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
 who is alive and reigns with you,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.
 Amen.

Listening to God in Nature - Jenny’s address: Last Sunday we continued the theme of “Listening to God”. This time the emphasis was on how God speaks to us through our environment; what it is we see in nature that we may take for granted, but, when we look more closely, our attention is drawn to them through their colours, shapes, movement, how they speak to us, that make us more aware and bring unexpected feelings of joy and recognition. Poppy, reading so clearly, from the first four verses of Psalm 19, spoke of the essence of the Glory of creation. Jenny’s address is below.

*“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge
They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice^[a] goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.*

The psalm expresses so truly how we do not always need words to show us the beauty and truth of things around us that will show different things for different people and we can stand in awe. What are those aspects of nature that does that for you?

Here is one of my images that makes me full of wonder when I see it from train or car. It is so stunning to see the huge wings stretched out just waiting to embrace you. I am in awe of those who designed and made it, of its towering shape and its reflection of light. It lifts my heart in sheer delight.



The “Angel of the North” at twilight.

A Rocha: Make ‘enjoying nature’: Linking with Sunday’s theme and Jenny’s address; A Rocha, to which we belong, also emphasizes the importance of looking at our surrounds, recognising and absorbing all the different kinds of nature around us and making it our priority - your priority. Below is an article from the Magazine that gives us ideas of what we could do to raise our consciousness about the beauty in creation and help to preserve it. It is giving monthly Eco tips that we might be able to do in the ways most appropriate for us.

URGENT MESSAGE RE The TODDLER GROUP: We do desperately need more volunteers to help on Tuesdays if the group is to continue. If you feel able to help with this or know anyone who would like to do so, please let Kamran or Tracey know on 020 8455 1873. Two of our regular helpers are going away for a couple of months and we would welcome replacements. It need not be every Tuesday but if we could get a Rota of people it would be so good and we could keep the Toddler Group going. Thank you.

Bible Study: As we are approaching Lent, Kamran would like to hear from you if you are interested in joining in with Bible Study sessions. These would take place during the 6 weeks of Lent. The suggestion is they would be on Thursday evenings in church or by zoom. Please let him know.

Future Events – Ideas: As mentioned last week It has been suggested it would be a good idea if we, as a church family, planned a variety of events, paced throughout the year, that we could join in together. Events such as, perhaps, a picnic on Hampstead Heath with a visit to the newly renovated Kenwood House; A retreat with an inspiring speaker; re- engaging with the St Alban’s Abbey Festival Day in June, that we used to attend each year; perhaps a visit to Canterbury Cathedral and a guided tour round the Cathedral; another barbecue in the vicarage garden with our Asian congregation that was so successful last year. These ideas arose from our Wednesday morning coffee group. There are many things we could do and would like to hear what you

think. Could you give it a thought and let Kamran know, talk about it over Sunday coffee or write ideas down on a paper provided on the table at the side of the church. We need to share our ideas.

Baptism/Confirmation classes: Kamran is starting classes soon for those wishing to be confirmed. Please let him know if you, or any member of your family, would like to be confirmed. Now we have a newly appointed Bishop of Edmonton (Revd Canon Dr Anderson Jeremiah) it will be so great to have him confirm members of our church family.

Wednesday Morning Coffee: from 10.30am-12noon. Our time of gentle exercise is going well followed by coffee and a chat – and it is fun so do come and join in. At 12noon we have a short communion service.

Tim’s Father, Cecil: celebrated his 100th Birthday with his family. He received a birthday card from the King and many other cards and gifts. It was a very happy occasion with Champaign and a delicious birthday cake made by friends from Wales. Here are some joyous pictures:



Facebook page: For those of you who are on facebook, Kamran has set up a Golders Green Church facebook page. You can join it by going to facebook and searching for [Golders Green Parish Church](#). So far we have 4 followers!

Icons: Several of you have said how you like the different icons and paintings that I put in the newsletter. I especially love the mediaeval ones as they contain realism and humour particularly of the Holy Family in different situations. They do not show the often vapid sentiment towards Mary that is so often portrayed in later ages. She is seen as a feisty woman, which, considering the kind of life she must have lived is more true to the times and how mothers are. People of the middle ages had a much more realistic view of life. This one, taken from a manuscript, shows Mary fighting off the Devil, with an Angel holding an applauding Jesus – love it!



With love and good wishes – Sally



Listening to God in Nature - Jenny's address

We are continuing the theme of listening to God, this week thinking about how we can listen to God through Creation. How does that work, what does it mean for us as followers of Jesus?

The starting point is in Genesis, where we see that God created everything that exists. He spoke, and it happened, and was very happy with it. The point is that God *chose* to make everything that we call the natural world, nature, creation. Why did he go to all that effort?

We know from the Bible and our own experience that God is all about relationship. He is love, and he made the natural world so he could be in a loving, two-way relationship with it. Every relationship depends on some form of communication, including God's relationship with Creation. We've just sung that lovely worship song 'All heaven declares the glory of the risen Lord', which is based on the first two verses of Psalm 19: *'The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech.....'*

'Declare', 'proclaim' and 'pour forth speech' are ways of communicating. It might therefore be helpful to think of the created world as a language. That may sound a bit weird, but maybe that's because we haven't

learned that language yet. Some languages are easier to learn than others, as you probably remember from school. I tried learning Japanese once, and it was really hard – the structure, sound, characters and grammar bore no relation to English – so I gave up. That’s a shame. When you learn a language it’s not just about the words, but it helps you understand the lives and culture of the people who speak it, so when I visited Japan, although I had a fabulous time, I missed out on quite a lot because everything had to be translated.

Learning to listen to God through his creation is a bit like learning a different sort of language - one that doesn’t use words but still helps us to know him better. Psalm 19 goes on to say:

*The heavens] have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
4 Yet their voice^[b] goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.*

The absence of words clearly didn’t bother the psalmist, so it shouldn’t bother us either.

I’m a great fan of David Attenborough. If you’ve ever watched any of his films you’ll know that one of his key themes is the way everything is connected: all living things rely on something else for their flourishing, and in turn enable other things to flourish. That’s why God created such variety, though I don’t think David Attenborough would put it that way. For instance, we need bees and other insects to pollinate our food crops. Without them most of our crops would fail. But the numbers of bees and other insects are declining dramatically, for all sorts of human-caused reasons - loss of habitats, use of chemicals, and the climate crisis. That’s a really important message that we all need to hear: when David Attenborough talks about the loss of biodiversity, he probably doesn’t realise that he’s helping us listen to God through creation.

Years ago I went on a silent retreat for the first time. I had no idea what to expect, so I took a pile of edifying books with which to fill the time. The nun who was my spiritual director thought that was a very bad idea and told me to leave them in my bag. Her instruction was, instead, to go into the garden and look at a flower. I wondered why, but did as I was told and soon found out.

When we look carefully at a painting or sculpture: it can tell us about the artist – her skills, personality, what she thinks is important. I discovered on my retreat that the same applies when you really look at a flower. You become aware of the intricacy of its design – the colour, texture, shape, scent and the sheer beauty and joy of it. If you’re open to it, you learn something about the God who made it – it’s one of the languages through which our relationship with him can grow.

I remember one sunny spring day walking past some gardens, and getting an overwhelming sense that God must have had a lot of fun creating the flowers, with so many colours, shapes, scents and textures – such a wonderful gift from a spectacularly creative God who enjoys what he’s made and wants to share his enjoyment with us. That was a moment when I got to know God a bit better.

Luke 12: 22-28 is a well-known passage, where Jesus tells his disciples to reflect on the flowers and birds around them, and listen to what they say about God and how much he cares and provides for us. Among other things it’s a lesson from Jesus in the language of Creation.

If we do what Jesus says, and we’re really attentive to the natural world, we’ll hear what God is using it to tell us. But listening isn’t enough: we can’t just sit there, we have to respond to what we hear. That might involve being willing to change.

There can be a tension between knowing how important it is to listen to God through Creation, and how we actually treat what he’s created. We human beings, at least the richer ones around the world, have got used to exploiting and even wrecking God’s beautiful world. Our lifestyles depend on that, but we don’t have to listen very hard to Creation to know that we’re getting it very wrong. Climate change caused by our lifestyles is generating more extreme weather events than ever, including in this country. We’re losing biodiversity everywhere, with plants and animals becoming extinct faster than ever before. The worst effects are on the

people who've done least to cause the problems – the poorest communities and countries – which is a huge and avoidable injustice.

If as Christians we want to honour God, we have to honour what he created. And if we don't honour what he created, we're dishonouring him. It's as simple as that. We therefore need to think about what honouring the natural world looks like. An important part of that is enjoying and appreciating it, and acknowledging that it comes from God. You don't have to go far to enjoy God's creation: it can be as simple as smelling a flower, visiting a park, watching birds from our window, admiring a houseplant. The other side of the 'honouring' coin is about caring for Creation and not harming it. That's harder, but just as important. There are all sorts of things we can do, or stop doing. For instance, using less plastic; not using single-use cups; buying things that will last; taking our own reusable bags to the shops; going onto a green electricity tariff; cycling, walking or using public transport more; if we plan to buy a car, thinking about an electric one..... each of us can make our own list.

I noticed in the Sunday School room that one of the children has made a new year resolution to grow some flowers in her garden. That's brilliant, especially for the bees!

As a church, we have our bronze Eco-church award, but we've lost ground on that and there's a lot of catching up to do. For us, honouring God and Creation means thinking green about every aspect of church life, making our building and everything we do in it as low-carbon as possible; attracting more pollinators and birds to the church grounds; praying more for God's amazing creation; repenting of what we've done to it; learning new songs to praise God for it, and learning more about the issues. The children are already doing a lot of that and have set us a very high bar!

More widely, Government policies have to get a lot greener, and this year we have a great opportunity with the general election to do something about that. We can ask candidates what they'd do about climate change and the environment, and tell them what we think of that. They need to know these issues are important to us, and that we'll be watching them if they get elected.

There's a lot we can do, but it has to start with really listening to God. The language of Creation is one way of doing that, and thankfully it's nowhere near as hard to learn as Japanese! If we're attentive to nature, and really expect God to speak through it, we can be confident that he will!

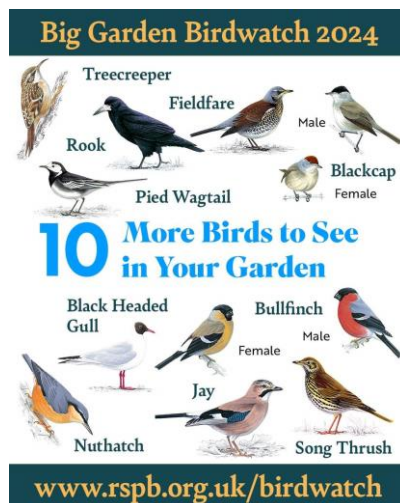
A Rocha - Your monthly 'Eco-tip'

As mentioned above "A Rocha" has produced a calendar for 2024 which contains twelve 'eco-tips' for the year, with an easy idea for every month to inspire each of us to aim for a greener lifestyle. Small actions can make a big difference, especially if lots of us do them

One of its other projects is called 'Wild Christian'. This is for individuals and families who want to enjoy and learn about nature together, take practical action at home and in their local areas, and join with other voices to have an impact at national level.

That's why the calendar focuses on easy-to-implement tips so that all of us can do something, regardless of our lifestyle or schedule. It encourages us to live more joyfully and sustainably with God's creation. With that in mind, here's January's eco-tip!

Maybe our Sunday School children might like to take part in some of the activities, like bird watching, or drawing something they like from nature, for example. They could then show and tell us about what they have done on Sundays in the Service as they usually do so well. Jenny mentioned that one of our children has already made a new year resolution to grow some flowers in her garden. That's brilliant, especially for the bees! There is the Big Garden Birdwatch soon that all of us could do.



A Rocha's Eco-Church Monthly Eco Tips: January's tip is to:
Make enjoying nature your priority. From bird watching to writing about or drawing something that inspires you in nature, growing your own fruit or veg or visiting an area of outstanding natural beauty in the UK. Be sure to fall in love with nature in a new way this year.

You may remember that we are signed up to A Rocha's Eco-church award scheme; their and our aims are important regarding conservation and ecology. Before Lockdown, we did achieve a Bronze Award, but our participation has slipped since then. **Small actions can make a big difference, especially if lots of us do them.** The eco tip for January is above and another will be given for each month. See what you can do in trying to develop some of the ideas.

Rocha UK's Wild Christian email" at:
www.arocha.org.uk/wild-christian

A Franciscan Blessing

“MAY GOD BLESS YOU WITH HOLY ANGER AT INJUSTICE, OPPRESSION AND EXPLOTATION OF PEOPLE,SO THAT YOU MAY TIRELESSLY WORK FOR JUSTICE, FREEDOM, AND PEACE AMONG ALL PEOPLE.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU WITH THE GIFT OF TEARS TO SHED WITH THOSE WHO SUFFER FROM PAIN, REJECTION, STARVATION OR THE LOSS OF ALL THAT THEY CHERISH, SO THAT YOU MAY REACH OUT YOUR HAND TO COMFORT THEM AND TRANSFORM THEIR PAIN INTO JOY.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU WITH ENOUGH FOOLISHNESS TO BELIEVE THAT YOU REALLY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THIS WORLD, SO THAT YOU ARE ABLE, WITH GOD’S GRACE, TO DO WHAT OTHERS CLAIM CANNOT BE DONE”

(A FRANCISCAN BLESSING)

How We Are

We send all those who are sick our love. Please continue to pray for all who have been unwell that they may gain in strength and good health as well as those who are grieving because of loss of a loved one.

We pray for Margaret Morgan who died at her nursing home surrounded by her family. We remember her and all she did for this church for many years with love and gratitude.

Kelly's Father, John Rudge, has been diagnosed with a mouth cancer. He is waiting to hear what kind of treatment he is to receive. Please pray for him, for Kelly and her family and for Gods healing hand to come upon him.

Paula, Sylvia's mother, died recently in Italy. Sylvia was with her and Sanjiv flew out to be with her. We send our love and prayers to them.

We keep in our prayers **Sheila Grodzinki, Anita and Simon, David Agbim, Chuba Agbim, Eunice Adiele, Gideon Onwutalu, Annie Bwanaope and Rose Ochwada**. We hold them in our hearts that they may be filled with God's healing love.

Please pray for a full return to health for **Tony**. We pray that God's healing spirit may come upon him and help him make a good recovery.

Please continue to let us know of family members and friends who are sick and would welcome our prayers, either by WhatsApp, email, Kamran@gg-pc.co.uk or by phone, **020 8455 1873**

Jesus on the Margins - Anderson Jeremiah*

Don't forget the On-line event from St Paul's Cathedral with our new **Bishop of Edmonton in discussion with Paula Gooder on "Jesus in the Margins" on Tuesday 6th February between 7.00 and 7.45pm. ***



Jesus on the Margins

Anderson Jeremiah

Premieres online on Tuesday 6th February, 7.00-7.45pm

Online event premiered on YouTube and then available on catch-up.

Anderson Jeremiah and Paula Gooder talk about Jesus in the Bible, in history, and in our lives. They explore his suffering, death and resurrection, how much stories and images of him matter, and how we can live as disciples of Jesus today. We also hear something of Anderson's own faith story, his influences in Black, Dalit and Liberation Theologies, and his journey from Dalit background in South India to his life as a priest and scholar in the UK today.

The Revd Canon Dr Anderson Jeremiah takes up the role of Bishop of Edmonton in the diocese of London from spring 2024. Previous to this, at Lancaster University he has been Senior Lecturer and Associate Dean (Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and People) in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences while serving as associate priest of St Paul's, Scotforth, in the diocese of Blackburn.

Dr Paula Gooder is Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral, a distinguished New Testament scholar and the author of numerous popular and academic books.

The event is free, but if you are able to make a donation to the continuing learning programme at St Paul's Cathedral when you register for the event we would be very grateful.

[Register now](#)

Prayers with Kamran

From Mondays to Thursdays, Kamran will be in church at 9.00am for a short time of prayer with anyone who would like to join him. Kamran will also be in church each day for those who would like to visit and talk with him. Please consider making an appointment to ensure that he will be available to meet with you;

Topic: Church Wardens' Personal Meeting Room

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/8585545365?pwd=em85aDF5ZmJ5ZkVlb0xDaDhIY2paUT09>

Meeting ID: 858 554 5365

Passcode: J4FbKf

Reader:

Intercession:

Hospitality:

Eucharist Minister:

AV Desk:

Contact details:

Parish Priest: Revd Kamran Bhatti

Office Tel: 020 8455 1873, Website: www.gg-pc.co.uk

GGPC Rota January – February 2024

January 24 – February 24								
Date	Bible Passage	Readers	Intercessor	Refreshments	Eucharistic Minister	AV Desk	Duty Manager	Service leader
28/01/24	Acts 2:17-21	Nwennaka	Sally	Nehar/Chinwe	Nwadi/Nehar	Shaniv	Alexis	Nehar
Bring & Share	Luke 2:22-32							
04/02/24	1 Corinthians 9:16-23	Khan	Jenny	Naila	Ezim/Daniel	Tony	Cyntia	
	Mark 1:29-39							
11/02/24	2 Corinthians 4:3-6	Elizabeth	Alexis	Silvia	Sally/Tony	Onyeka	Florance	
	Mark 9:2-9							
18/02/24	1 Corinthians 9:24-27	Sam	Anne	Sally	Ifeyinwe/Onyeka	Dozie	Tim	Jenny
	Mark 1:40-45							
25/02/24	2 Corinthians 1:18-22	Abi	Nehar	Nehar/Chinwe	Tim/Naila	Ruth	Chinwe	
Bring & Share	Mark 2:1-12							
03/03/24	2 Corinthians 3:1-6	Keith	Nwando	Ezim	Nwadi/Nehar	Shaniv	Alexis	Alexis
	Mark 2:13-22							