

NEWSLETTER

4th July 2024



St Peter and St Paul – by El Greco

Dear Everyone – Greetings to you all.

It was so good to see Kamran back again on Sunday, almost fit and well, but still having to go carefully. We welcomed the Revd Kostakis Christodoulou from Edgware Parish Church, who came to support Kamran during the service and preach. It was good to meet him and we thank him for coming to us.

Mary and Martha- Sermon: Revd Kostakis gave a different twist to the story of Mary and Marth that many of us had heard and read, who often identify Mary, as the Spiritual one, and Martha, as the one who Served and did not sit at the feet of Jesus, as did her sister. He pointed out to us the importance of reading different biblical versions as they do not always tell the same story; the King James Bible (KJB), for example, has the verse at the beginning of the story telling us that it was who Martha also sat with Mary at the feet of Jesus and listened to him - until her work called her away. His sermon was enjoyed and he has kindly sent us the text (below) so we can recall the points he made, and, maybe read the story in the KJB for ourselves and wonder about our “distractions!

Christening: A wonderful baptismal service was held last Saturday for baby Zehra Elliana. The church was full with many of her family, friends, relatives from the Philippines and other members of our church family, all of whom came to support her. The service was taken by the Revd Helen Simms-Williams, from Emmanuel Church, West Hampstead, who took it with much joy and enthusiasm. This was followed by a party with a feast of delicious food arranged by the Philippine community and enjoyed by everyone present. We welcome Zehra Elliana, the youngest member of our Christian Community.



News of our Young Ones: How sorry we are to hear this week that **Poppy** after having three consecutive bouts of Tonsillitis has now gone down with Chicken Pox and is very poorly. Kelly let us know on WhatsApp and, of course, there are many prayers offered for a good recovery from all of us. She has had a very rough time recently. I remember being told there is an African saying that, “it takes a whole village to raise a child”. I hope I am correct. We can equally say that it takes a whole church family to surround one of our children with love and prayers when they are sick and, from the response of everyone, that is what is happening. I hope we have some good news from Kelly about Poppy and that they are both feeling held in Gods healing hands.

Samuel: Many congratulations to Samuel for being chosen as his school’s “Spotlight of the week” pupil. He was awarded this for his sponsorship walk through Hyde Park to raise money for a school in Gambia that needed basic amenities such as water, other provisions and to fund places for pupils in need. (There was a full article in a previous newsletter). Samuel who is in Y5 at St Mary’s and St John’s CofE High school, wrote about it and as a result was chosen for “his tremendous act of service”. You have done such a good thing Samuel and we are proud of you.

Ordinations: In Cathedrals across the country last Saturday there were many ordinations taking place with much joy and prayerfulness, of women and men who have found their vocations and dedicated their lives to the Service of God. One such ordination service took place at St Paul’s Cathedral, with the Bishop of London, the Rt Revd Sarah Mallully, officiating. We congratulate our neighbouring church, St Judes-on-the-Hill, on the ordination of Elinor Delaney, and wish her much fulfilment in her new role as curate. We congratulate, too, all those who were ordained on Saturday and wish them much joy in their priestly work.



Photographs by the Revd Em Kollveit, vicar of St Judes

Petertide: As many Ordinations take place at Petertide, Malcolm Guite has written a sonnet about St Peter (see the famous El Greco painting at the top of our Newsletter of St Peter and St Paul who share the same feast day) which really encapsulate, with affection the character of St Peter. He says, “The 29th of June is St. Peter’s day, when we remember the disciple who, for all his many mistakes, knew how to recover and hold on, who, for all his waverings was called by Jesus ‘the rock’, who learned the threefold lesson that every betrayal can ultimately be restored by love. It is fitting therefore that it is at Petertide that new priests and deacons are ordained, on the day they remember a man whose recovery from mistakes and openness to love can give them courage. So this poem is posted, not only for St Peter, but for all those called to ministry who have been or are about to be ordained in this season”.

Election Hustings: Several of us went to the election hustings last Thursday at Alyth Synagogue. As Jenny has written an overview of the evening, below, I just want to say that those of us who went agreed it was an enjoyable evening as well as an informative one. The organisation of the session with the four

candidates was so effectively conducted; mainly because the chair, Alyth member, Michael Skapinker (*Contributing Editor at the Financial Times*) gave a master-class on how to conduct a meeting. Each candidate was given time to say something about themselves, followed by timed responses to written questions sent in beforehand. Towards the end, questions were allowed from members of the audience. I couldn't help feeling that lessons could be learnt from the way this husting event was conducted in contrast to those organized on television. My one disappointment was that there was little time given to discussing the acute housing issues, the NHS and Water pollution. But for all that it was good to be there, to meet the candidates and many of our friends at Alyth who were so hospitable. Thank you everyone involved.



Stained Glass Windows of Alyth Synagogue

Nehar's Intercessions: Continuing on with the theme of the Election, below are Nehar's intercessions when she prayed for our responsibility as Christians to vote and be mindful of those who gain power through the ballot box, with the importance of their governing wisely, with integrity, for the benefit of all people.

Forthcoming Events: Sunday 7th July, a Memorial Service for Alexis's mother, Alice Najjemiba, will be held in church during our usual morning service. Alice, much loved by us all, was a faithful member of our church for many years and greatly missed;

Saturday 20th July at 3.00pm, there will be a "Service of Song" for Okey who was a much respected member of our church;

Sunday 21st July at 1.00pm, a joint Barbecue with the Asian Church will be held in the vicarage garden. Last year it was a great success with lots of opportunity to meet together and enjoy each other's company as well having delicious food.

Listening and Learning Together: Bible study: As the next session falls on 4th July, when most people will be concentrating on other things, it has been cancelled! Future dates have yet to be agreed and will be in the next newsletter.

Wednesday Morning Coffee: from 10.30am-12noon; coffee, cake and a chat – and it is fun - so do come and join in. The 12noon communion has restarted as Kamran is back with us.

Baptism and Confirmation Service Date: Remember that Bishop Jeremiah will be visiting us on **Sunday 22 September 2024**, to baptise and confirm our candidates at the 10.00am service. **Please put this date in your diaries**

Food Bank: Again, thank you to those who have contributed so generously to the food bank. Your donations are much appreciated by the volunteers at All Saints who run it and especially by the families who make good use of all you provide.

Much love and good wishes – Sally



Rhododendrons in full bloom in the church garden

Mary and Martha – the Revd Kostakis Christodoulou

Which sister sat at Jesus feet and learned from Him?

1. Mary & Martha Learned Together of Jesus

Mary and Martha were witnessing “the glory of God” as Jesus calls their brother Lazarus from his grave to live again! These were women of great faith who accepted and learned of Jesus.

Many people feel Mary was the spiritual one; Martha, the practical one.

Mary and Martha were real women. They lived with their brother, Lazarus, in Bethany, a small village within easy walking distance of the old city of Jerusalem via the Mount of Olives.

“Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus” and wept at Lazarus’ death. (John 11:5, 32–36.)

We read of Mary and Martha on only three occasions, each of which reveals different sides of their characters.

We are first introduced to Mary and Martha in the book of Luke. The story told leaves the feeling that somehow Martha is not the spiritual equal of her sister Mary. Jesus and his disciples have come to Judea from Capernaum.

1. Luke 10:38: *“Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.”*

Many have mistakenly assumed that Mary sat at Jesus’ feet while Martha worked in the kitchen. Not so.

In verse 39 Luke carefully explains that *Martha “had a sister called Mary, which **also** sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word.”*

King James Bible says that: *“a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. **39** And she had a sister called Mary, which **also** sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word.”*

They *both* sat there to hear the words of eternal life from their Lord. Mary and Martha were learning of the Saviour together.

It was Martha, the caring hostess, who provided for her remarkable visitor. Martha felt she needed help and asked Jesus to ask Mary to help her.

2. Their brother Lazarus was dead a few months before

A few months before this incident, we find Mary and Martha at a time of crisis: their brother Lazarus was dead. Jesus had gone with his disciples

John 10:40 : *“beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized.”*

After Lazarus’s sisters sent word to Jesus, it was Martha who went out to meet him, while Mary “sat still in the house.” (John 11:20.) These sisters teach us the need to turn to Jesus for help in our crises.

Here are two sisters with different personalities, yet both possess great faith in their Lord. Each of them separately declares the same words to Jesus:

John 11:21, 32: *“Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died”.*

But it is Martha who expresses her faith that Jesus can yet restore life to her brother:

John 11:22: *But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”*

After Jesus describes the **hope of the Resurrection**, Martha is not “distracted” on this occasion, and declares her testimony with conviction,

John 11:27: *“Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”* Martha’s faith is well placed.

It is this scene, more than any other, which most clearly illustrates the faith Mary and Martha had in the Lord.

Martha has been called “practical” and Mary “spiritual.” In reality, both were practical, both were spiritual. Both loved and served Jesus; All three bible accounts confirm this.

3. On another occasion both Mary and Martha supported Jesus

Jesus apparently felt comfortable in this home in Bethany. Both Mary and Martha prepared the food this time; Martha again served Jesus, and also Lazarus, sat at the table with him.

It was normal in those days to care for the feet of travellers, and since Jesus had journeyed from the wilderness, Mary saw to his comfort by anointing his feet with a costly ointment.

John 12:1–3 (NIV): *Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honour. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. ³ Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.*

We need to learn the lesson these two sisters teach us. We need balance in our lives. Get the priorities straight

Do you want to make your devotion to Christ a priority in your life?

Luke 10:42: *“...but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken from her.”*

The good part which Mary had chosen was to listen to the Lord's teaching. In the final scheme of things, the things Jesus said that day were of much more importance than what He ate.

Today, if we are too busy to talk with the Lord; to pray and study His word; to meditate on life's purpose and to enjoy a peaceful, private time with Him, then we need to refocus on the right priorities.

The question here is one of priorities, Luke records that: *“Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”*

These two sisters did not have notice of Jesus’ arrival at their home, so they had no chance to prepare a meal.

Do we spend more time planning and executing a Sunday dinner than we do studying the scriptures that day?

Do we value a perfectly clean home over spending time teaching and loving our children?

The story of Mary and Martha shows that we should not be so occupied with what is routine and worldly that we fail to cherish the spiritual. Jesus’ gentle rebuke to Martha is much the same as any loving parent would speak to an upset child:

Luke 10:41: *“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things,*

How are we “distracted” today? Are household tasks a hindrance and burdensome? Are we disorganized, frustrated, overstressed? Are we victims of crises, reacting to pressures of time and circumstance rather than acting to control them?

There are times when the work must be done. But it can be done with a positive attitude and without complaining.

There is a principle to be learned here. Obviously, Martha felt anxiety. Was she placing more emphasis on the food than on the person she would serve?

Martha is worried and distracted by many things.

Are you worried and distracted by many things? What worries or distracts us?

Are you over-anxious, overworked, overtired and over-worried?

Regardless of gender or even age. We live in age of distraction

The 8 Biggest Distractions

1. Technology
2. Other People
3. Our Thoughts
4. The News
5. Money
6. Social Media
7. Food
8. Shopping

Martha's problem is that she "was distracted by her many tasks." She was multitasking, something that isn't new to our age. We are told that all these things distracted her. She was diverted from the Lord.

Martha had the Lord of glory in her own home, but she was so busy working, trying to make him comfortable, that she never had time to stop and listen to what he had to say to her.

Mary's sister had the responsibility of making all the preparations for the Lord's visit. We are told about **'all the preparations that had to be made'**.

Martha was very conscious of all the things she had to do. Her activity wore her out. She was busy preparing her home for the Lord, but she worked so hard that she could not enjoy the Lord's presence when he was there. All she could think about was her 'lazy sister'

Things became so bad that in the end Martha turned on Jesus and complained,

10:41: 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!' Martha was cross with Mary. Martha was over-anxious, overworked, overtired and over-worried. She was worried inside and busy outside. As a result, she asked Jesus to 'tell Mary to help me'.

It is not a good thing to be distracted, whether from a task, from a relationship, or from life.

We need to weigh our values against our priorities. This will help us better judge what is important in our lives.

In Luke 10:42, Jesus speaks of one thing being needful: *"And Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."*

What in our own lives have we chosen that is good, lasting, and eternal?

Have we separated the trivial from the important? Have we developed an eternal perspective? Are we distracted...?

Have we got the right priorities? What do you think?

Lord we pray for leaders who are elected to have hearts to serve all sections of our community, remembering the vulnerable, those in need, those struggling financially, those on the fringes of society, the ill and the elderly.

We pray for leaders who will stand up for righteousness and justice, ready to speak out against those who seek to disrupt and divide the nation. We pray that they will seek to serve under your authority, seeking to do your will for this nation. We pray your protection over them and their families.

Lord as we look at this nation - which once took the Good news to so many nations – we see empty churches and people who have turned away from You. Lord we pray for revival, for repentance, for hearts to be turned back to you once again – to the one and only true God.

Lord you said, *“If my people who are called by my name humble themselves and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear their voice, I will forgive their sins and heal their land”*.

Lord, we pray for all those who have strayed, both in and out of the Church, those who have followed their own way, their own ambitions, we pray for a turning back, for repentance, for a hunger and thirst for You. Forgive spiritual leaders who have compromised your word to fit in with the world and have failed to stand firm for your truth, those whose words and actions have led the chosen astray and those whose actions have grieved the Holy Spirit.

Lord, you have called us to be holy as you are holy. We remember that we are chosen by you, that we are a holy nation, a royal priesthood. Forgive us for conforming to the ways of the world. Help us Lord to stay above worldly influence, help us not to fall into temptation. Deliver us from the evil one, the tempter, the father of lies, who is always looking ways to lead us astray.

Help us to stay focused on the mission you have given us – to go out and make disciples, to bring light in darkness, to love our neighbour as ourselves.

We pray for other countries in our world seeking regime change, a new government or new political leadership, we pray that you will break down spiritual strongholds of the enemy in countries where your name is not above other names, where your kingdom has yet not come and your will is still not done, we pray may your kingdom come and your will be done in all the earth.

A Sonnet for Petertide, and for those being ordained – Malcolm Guite



St. Peter

Impulsive master of misunderstanding
 You comfort me with all your big mistakes;
 Jumping the ship before you make the landing,

GGPC ROTA

July 24								
Date	Bible Passage	Readers	Intercessor	Refreshments	Eucharistic Minister	AV Desk	Duty Managers	Service leader
07/07/24	2 Corinthians 12:2-10	Ash	Tony	Florance	Nwando/ Nehar	Onyeka	Florance	
	Mark 6:1-13							
14/07/24	Ephesians 1:3-14	Elizabeth	Sally	Silvia	Sally/Tony	Ruth	Tim	Jenny
	Mark 6:14-29							
21/07/24	Ephesians 2:11-22	Poppy	Nwando	Sally	Tim/Naila	Shaniv	Chinwe	
	Mark 6:30-34, 53-56							
28/07/24	Ephesians 3:14-21	Sam	Kai	Cynthia/ Chinwe	Ifeyinwe/ Onyeka	Dozie	Alexis	Nehar
Bring & Share	John 6:1-21							
		Abi	Jenny	Naila	Daniel/Ezim	Onyeka		