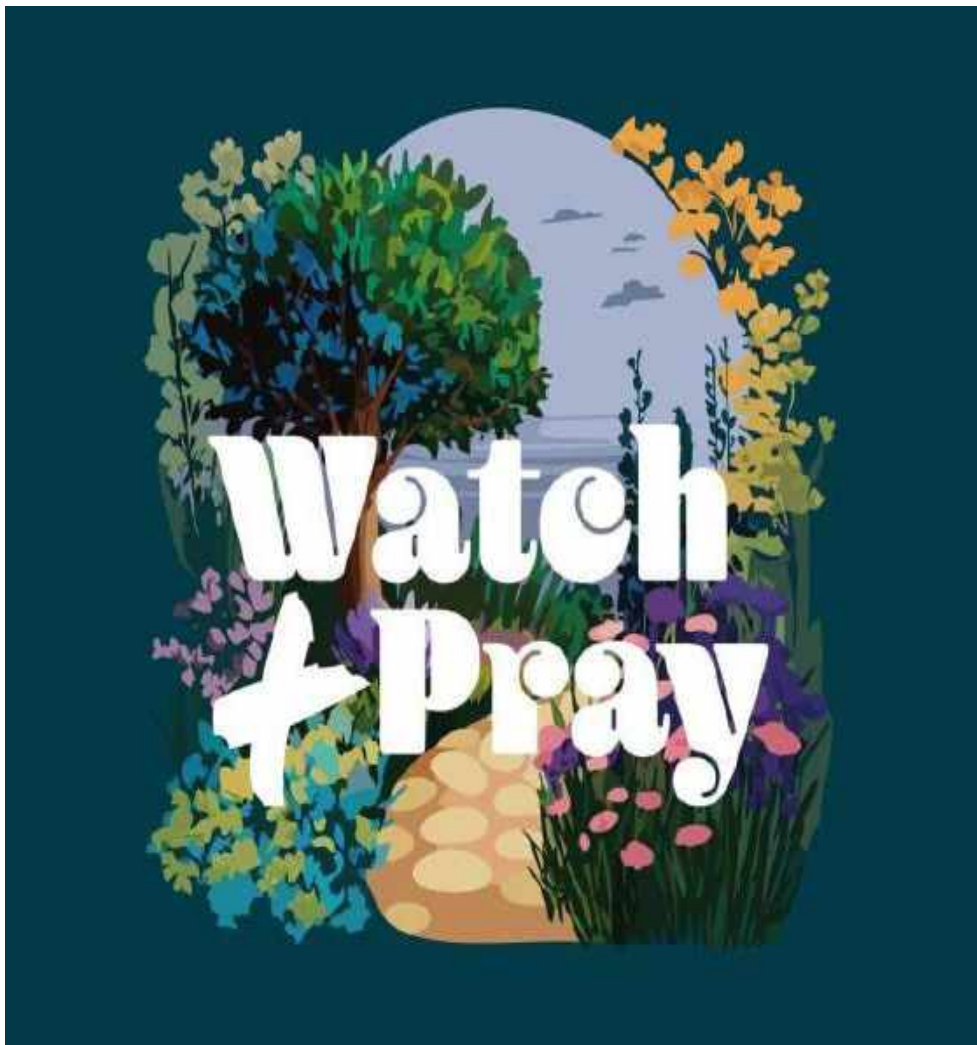




**THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF
ST ANDREW, KYRENIA**
in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf

FEBRUARY 2024





ST ANDREW'S TEAM

| | | |
|---|--|--|
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| | | |





SERVICE TIMES FOR FEBRUARY

**A service of Holy Communion
will be held
each Sunday morning at 10:30am**

ASH WEDNESDAY 14th FEBRUARY 10.30am

There will be a service of Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes

All are welcome

WELCOME



Thoughts From The Hermitage

FEBRUARY 2024



LENT COMES ALONG SHORTLY: TIME TO GIVE, OR TAKE, SOMETHING UP?

‘The English word ‘Lent’ is a shortened form of the Old English word *lencten*, meaning ‘spring season’, as its Dutch language cognate *lente* (Old Dutch *lentin*) still does today.’ Well, that’s what Wikipedia says anyway! But I never know whether to trust it or not; ‘though I do know that both Wikipedia and Britannica (another very popular ‘know-it-all-easy-to-go-to’ website on the internet) are unacceptable as ‘authorities’ in academia, and that references to them will either be ignored – or, more likely, struck out by the examiner’s pen!

Anyway, I have long been under the impression that the word Lent came from ‘lengthen’, because, in the ‘spring season’ in earth’s northern hemisphere, the days obviously were lengthening, as February gave way to March. That is, the hours of daylight were ‘growing longer’, and we could look forward to the spring equinox on March 21st and then lighter, sunnier, and hopefully warmer, days that would surely be coming, leading up to Easter. (Oh, I do like the idea that ‘Lent’ is the shorter version of a word for ‘getting longer’!)

Wherever the word comes from, Lent is undoubtedly the season in the church’s liturgical year when we prepare to remember the Passion of our Lord, especially as we journey symbolically with him through Holy Week, and then on to celebrate the mystery and miracle of Resurrection. I knew, from childhood – because I was told so – that Lent lasted for forty days because Jesus had fasted for forty days in the wilderness; and that he had been tempted, or tested, there, by Satan. As I grew a little older, I did my own ‘tests’ (or research) and realised that it was impossible to go without any food or water at all for forty days. I also consulted diaries and calendars and calculated that forty days from Ash Wednesday (the beginning of Lent) takes you to Palm Sunday, and that even if you don’t count Ash Wednesday as ‘day one’, you still can’t get to Easter Sunday in anything less than forty-six days!

Later in my life, older, wiser Christians explained to me that the Sundays in Lent ‘don’t count’ (“Every Sunday is a ‘little Easter’; yes, even in Lent!”) and the forty days of this season are simply made up of six weeks of six days each, plus the first four days, from Ash Wednesday to the first Saturday in Lent! But the main thing to take into account, I was told, is that “the Sabbath was made for man”, as Jesus himself observed, (Mark 2:27) and not the other way round - thus ditto for Lent – and the same for all religious ‘externals’, observances, practices, traditions, etc!

So, however you choose to observe it, perhaps the key thing to remember is that Lent is meant to be a positive, life-enhancing, spiritual discipline, and not a negative and life-denying, or soul-destroying, punishment. A 'practice' made (up) for us, and not something for which we were born to undergo. Superficially, it may seem like a good idea to 'give up' things for Lent (the 'old favourites' used to be chocolates or alcohol - or sometimes meat, at least on certain days of the week); but what's the point of that if you're going to return to them all again after forty (or fifty) days, on Easter Day itself, or whenever? Far, far better, I would have thought, to take up something new, or go deeper and more purposefully into something you already do. Perhaps to study some more, to join a group, to try out a new pursuit, to learn something. . .

There is also, it has to be said, a case to be made for stopping and, as it were, just listening! Listen to your heart, to your conscience, to God. Listen to 'the word' in silence; in the words (it is said) of the mystic Meister Eckhart, "Nothing is so like God as silence." So just 'Rest in the Lord', as the Psalmist said (37:7); or, as the poet William Henry Davies put it, 'A poor life this, if full of care, we have no time to stand and stare'. Whatever your preference as a Lenten 'spiritual discipline' (or attempt at one, if you are anything like me) may I offer my blessing and encouragement to each and every one of you.

With every blessing

Fr Alec Mitchell
Priest-in-Charge



Let us Pray

Prayer for the beginning of Lent

Lord, grant us the faith to wait together in darkness and uncertainty -
for it is there we will find you.

May we come to know you this Lent
in ways we have not yet discovered or even imagined.

Amen.



ST ANDREW'S NEWS

Dates for your diary -

LENT COURSE. To start on **Thursday, 22 February** and on the following four Thursdays (ie. Feb 29, Mar 7, 14, and 21) - starting at **10.30am** and finishing no later than 12 noon. The meetings will be held at The Hermitage and be preceded by the Office of Morning Prayer in the Hermitage Chapel at 10.00am prompt.



The theme of the Course will be '**WHY DID JESUS DIE? THEORIES OLD AND NEW**', and, as with the Christmas Unwrapped series in Advent, it will be an interactive, Biblically-based course.

Lent Lunches at St Andrew's



Lent soup lunches will be served in the church hall on Sunday 3rd and 17th March after the morning service. The lunch will consist of homemade soup, fresh bread and butter, plus a cup of tea or coffee. Volunteers to help with serving are needed so if you would like to help, please contact Earl.

There is no charge but Donations (200/300 TL?) will be appreciated. Proceeds will go to the Ras Morbat Clinic, Aden.

It is good for Christians to meet together informally, and food and fellowship are close friends!

We remember those to whom this meal would be a feast.

Synopsis of the January 2024 Church Council meeting

Services for Lent

Ash Wednesday 14th February - 10.30am

Maundy Thursday 28th March - 12 noon

Good Friday 29th March - At the Cross 12 - 3pm

Easter Sunday 31st March - Sunrise service at the Hermitage - 6am

Easter Sunday 31st March - Easter Sung Eucharist - 10.30am

A Lent course will start on Thursday, 22nd February for five weeks. It will be held at the Hermitage at 10.30am and be preceded by Morning Prayer in the Hermitage Chapel at 10am.

Lent lunches are to be held on Sunday 3rd and 17th March after the 10.30am service. Proceeds will go to the Ras Morbat Clinic Aden.

Refreshments will be served after the service on the 1st and 3rd Sunday each month. Volunteers are needed to help with serving tea/coffee, and if you are able to help please speak to Sally Birt.

The ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING will be held on **Sunday, 7th April** in the church hall after the 10.30am service. Only members who are on the electoral roll will be eligible to vote. If you would like to be included, please complete an Electoral Roll application form which are available in church or speak to a council member.

A message from Carol Blackwell-Gibbs

I would like to thank everyone who attended my dear James's Celebration of Life service and attach a copy of the video for you to view as a reminder.

www.funeralstreaming.co.uk/viewing-room/39422 For those who could not attend the service for various reasons, I thought that you might also like to see it.

To make a donation in memory of James, I have set up a direct link into JMECA cafdonate.cafonline.org/25238

With kindest regards.

Blessings

Carol



George's New Year Resolution lasted just a fortnight



FRIENDS AND PEOPLE OF ST ANDREW'S

As we read our newspapers and magazines, we learn that these are difficult days for so many. We pray for family and friends, and we pray for all those who struggle.



As most of us know St Andrew's Church is self-supporting, receiving no finance from outside. We give thanks to God that this summer has seen many making the journey to Kibris and coming to worship at our lovely church of St Andrew's again.

Of course, the reduced numbers over the past few years have left St Andrew's without the usual generous collections. If you wish to donate from wherever you are to support the work of the Church, you can make payments to the Church UK Charity bank account by cheque or bank transfer and details are given below.

Bank Details:
Bank – Unity Trust Bank, 4 Brindley
Place, Birmingham B1 2HB
Account No. 20372187
Sort Code: 60-83-01
Account Name – St Andrew's Church
Kyrenia UK Charity
BIC: CPBKGB22
IBAN: GB15UYTB60830120372187

Regular monthly Standing Order donations enable budgeting of church finances. You do not have to be a UK Taxpayer to contribute in this way. However, if you are a UK Taxpayer your Donations can be Gift Aided. Contact the gift aid officer at giftaid@standrewskyrenia.org for assistance with this.

You may ask what we do with your financial donations. In addition to keeping the church alive, in recent years the St Andrew's community have made generous donations to local charities including Tulips, The Sarioğlu Foundation, Karakum Special Needs School and internationally to The World Day of Prayer.

Thank you so much for your support.



TODAY'S WORLD

Turkish authorities respond swiftly after murderous attack on church

By MADELEINE DAVIES CHURCH TIMES

THE terrorist organisation Islamic State has claimed responsibility after an attack on a Roman Catholic church in Istanbul, on Sunday, left one man dead. Two gunmen opened fire at the Church of Santa Maria, in the Sariya district of Istanbul, during mass.

The Apostolic Vicar of Istanbul and the Apostolic Administrator of Constantinople, the Rt Revd Massimiliano Palinuro, told Vatican News that, shortly after the offertory, at the Sanctus, two armed people entered, firing several gunshots in the air. "And then the reaction of one of the faithful, who also had some mental-health problems, had the courage to protest against this, probably in response to this act," he said. "They responded by killing this person." "Our community is literally shocked," he said. "As a Christian community, we ask the authorities to shed light, to seek the truth. . .

“We ask for greater security and for the safety of the faithful, of the Christian community, which perseveres in the faith and courageously face very long journeys at times to attend the eucharistic celebration.”

The uncle of the dead man told local media that the victim was aged 52, the BBC reports.

Later on Sunday, Turkey’s Interior Minister, Ali Yerlikaya, wrote on social media that two murder suspects had been captured. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement on Telegram, “saying it was in response to a call by the group’s leaders to target Jews and Christians”, Reuters reports.

On Monday, the Anglican Chaplain in Istanbul, Canon Ian Sherwood, praised the response of the authorities. “Christians in Istanbul enjoy a perfectly peaceable life with their Turkish friends and neighbours of other spiritual persuasions,” he said. “There is great sorrow on hearing the news of the murder at a celebration of the mass at the very moment that we, too, were celebrating the eucharist in our own church. “The English Chaplaincy was impressed and grateful to see how quickly the Turkish authorities acted. As far as I know, within less than one hour, every open church in the city had a police presence assigned to it for protection and security.”

The Turkish government reports that 99 per cent of the population is Muslim. The charity Open Doors estimates that there are about 169,000 Christians in the country, and has observed “rising religious nationalism and a growing emphasis on Islamic values”.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom warned last year: “Remnants of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) – which maintained a presence in Turkey – continued to pose a threat to religious minorities. . . Plots to attack churches and synagogues also came to light.”



By Ben Hubbard and Nimet Kirac *New York Times*
Photographs by Nicole Tung
Reporting from Antakya, Turkey

The businessman fondly recalled his bakery and cafe in the ancient Turkish city of Antakya, where his staff made bread, cakes and cookies and locals gathered for breakfast, coffee and ice cream. It vanished in February, lost when the two powerful

earthquakes that struck southern Turkey heavily damaged the building that housed it and left most of the neighbourhood uninhabitable.

Twelve months later, the business is back, but greatly reduced. In a cramped, shipping-container-shaped box plopped in a dusty spot next to a highway, the baker, Caner Aris, and two colleagues now prepare a small selection of goods and welcome guests at a rickety table out front. They plan to remain here, Mr Aris said, until some part of their home town shows enough life to support a larger patisserie.

After the earthquakes on Feb 8, which killed more than 50,000 people in southern Turkey and damaged hundreds of thousands of buildings across 11 provinces, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed to swiftly rebuild the afflicted areas. In the months since, construction has officially begun at a number of sites. But during a recent visit to Antakya, historically known as Antioch and now the hardest-hit urban area, indications of significant reconstruction were nearly non-existent. Instead, the damaged city was still being dismantled, leaving the residents who remain facing an uncertain future.

Canan Icer cooked dinner over an open fire. "We are living in dust," said Mehmet Icer, her husband.



Across the city, abandoned apartment towers with missing walls line roads. Mechanical excavators hack at damaged buildings, reducing them to rubble to be hauled away and sending up thick dust



clouds that hang over the city and clog people's lungs. Other neighbourhoods are entirely gone, save for piles of debris where scavengers hunt for scrap.

Necmiye Feliz, second from left, cried as she recalled losing her daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter in the earthquake

"We are living in dust, we are dying in dust," said Mehmet Icer, 48, an unemployed bus driver sitting outside his modest house while his wife fried

eggplants over a wood fire. The quake had destroyed every other building in his immediate area, which was now an expanse of rubble. As the sun set, the darkness was pierced by distant lights in only a handful of apartments because everything else had been abandoned.

Much about life in the city feels temporary. Families sleep in tents outside their damaged homes. Huge numbers live in drab, prefab metal structures resembling shipping containers packed together in sprawling one-story box cities, where the government provides electricity and water. Around them, shops have sprung up in yet more of the boxes, lined up like train cars along the main roads. Inside them,

merchants eke out a living offering everything from haircuts to driving lessons to shoes.

One shop sells pet supplies. Its owner, Selman Anlar, said the quake had wrecked his home and his pet shop, so his family was sleeping in a tent. He now sells mostly birds, he said, a cheap way for families who have lost everything to add beauty to their lives. “In the face of stress, birds are the best option,” Mr. Anlar said.

Demolition workers in Antakya. Damaged buildings must be pulled down before new ones can rise in their place.



Such ephemeral accommodations are a drastic change for Antakya, a city with thousands of years of history, where intermixed churches and mosques recalled an ecumenical past, shoppers bought local sweets and cheeses in an arched bazaar and flowering

bougainvillea climbed the walls of stone houses. In dozens of interviews, residents lamented the loss of their city and expressed hope that whatever replaced it would somehow preserve its spirit.



“We will never have the same soul we had before the earthquake — we should be realistic,” said Ayhan Kara, the founder of an association aimed at giving locals a say in the city’s reconstruction. “Many things will change, but we are insisting that this city keep its soul.”

Mr Erdogan has announced grand plans for the earthquake zone, but progress is slow. The

government has promised to build 850,000 new units in the afflicted provinces, for both residences and businesses, though construction on only about one-quarter of them has begun, the Urban and Environment Ministry said.

Across the affected provinces, about 1.9 million people remain displaced; 1.3 million of them are receiving government aid to rent elsewhere; and more than 500,000 are living in 330 container cities, the ministry said.

The government has set up programs to assist people who lost their homes, including grants and low-cost financing to help them rebuild. But many quake victims said they did not understand the process, or that the disaster had left them too destitute to take advantage of the government’s help. “It depends on money, and we don’t have any money,” said Eylem Dahal, 42, sitting outside the prefab container that her family of four now calls home. Their house had collapsed, she said, displacing the

family, destroying their upholstery workshop and rendering them jobless. The shelter they live in now feels cramped, but she said at least the family did not fear it would collapse if another earthquake struck.

The scale of the destruction in Hatay Province, where Antakya is the regional capital and largest city, has slowed recovery efforts. The Turkish government has planned to build 254,000 new units in Hatay, but damaged buildings and mountains of rubble must be removed first.

In an interview, the mayor of Hatay, Lutfu Savas, said 38,000 buildings in the province had been scheduled for demolition, but only half had been removed so far.

Other aspects of life reveal daily struggles in a broken city. Factory owners had difficulty finding workers because so many had fled elsewhere in Turkey. The quakes damaged many schools, leaving displaced families scrambling to enrol their children near where they had settled.

On what was to be the first day of school last month, parents and children streamed into a new prefab structure near a container camp in Defne, a hard-hit district next to Antakya. The space around the all-white building had no grass, no trees and no signs to make it feel like a school. About 800 children had already enrolled, administrators said. Most lived in container shelters nearby, as did many of the teachers.



Some residents of Antakya now live in the shadow of their damaged homes, in villages consisting of tents and prefab containers. Hulya Karadas, a mother of three, said that her children's school had survived the quake but that she could not afford the bus to send them there. So she enrolled them in the prefab school, even though it was hot and lacked computers and places for the children to play. "Here they just play in the street," she said.

Conditions are even worse for the many Syrian refugees in Antakya, who were generally poorer before the quakes and struggle to get government aid. About 250 Syrian families had settled in makeshift tents scattered in an olive grove next to their former neighbourhood, which was razed after sustaining heavy damage.

"When it rains, we get flooded inside," said Ayman Omar, 48, whose family of eight lives in the camp. The government provided electricity and water and aid groups had built latrines, but residents had to deal with snakes, rats and bugs, Mr Omar said. He had not enrolled his children in school and did not know if the family was eligible to move to a container city. "If they could move us to containers, it would be cramped, but cleaner than this," he said.



Syrian children play near a tent camp in Antakya.



Various plans for the future of Antakya and its historic sites are underway, but one solution is already rising in Gulderen, a hillside village nine miles to the north. Gulderen has become a sprawling construction site, with towering cranes lifting supplies and workers pouring concrete to build 122 new towers containing 2,300 apartments.

Gulderen, a village north of Antakya, now bustles with dump trucks and cranes working at a large government-funded construction project.

Engineers at the site said the development was on solid ground away from the fault line that runs through south-eastern Turkey, and that the buildings under construction would be quake-resistant. They expected many people from Antakya to move in, adding that supermarkets, clinics, cafes and parks would be added later. Beyza Sepin, an interior architect on the project, said life in such a complex would be different from what locals were used to, but suggested that conditions were so hard since the quake that people would adjust. “People miss the environment of a home,” she said. “I am sure the locals will bring the spirit of Hatay here.”

UK wrong to halt UNRWA funding after terrorism allegations, says charity spokesman



Displaced Palestinians receive bags of flour at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees school in Rafah, on Sunday

THE UK Government’s decision to suspend funding for the UN’s agency for Palestinian refugees has been criticised by Christian Aid. The UK’s decision follows allegations that staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were involved in the 7 October attacks against Israel.

On Saturday, a spokesperson for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office said that the UK was “temporarily pausing any future funding”. The Government was “appalled” by the allegations, the statement said. It went on,

nevertheless: “We remain committed to getting humanitarian aid to the people in Gaza who desperately need it.”

The UK is one of nine countries that have suspended funding. They include UNRWA’s biggest funders, the United States and Germany.

The chief executive of Christian Aid, Patrick Watt, wrote on social media on Saturday: “Allegations against individuals working for UNRWA, however serious, cannot justify collective punishment of Palestinian people through the withdrawal of aid. The UK govt has got this call badly wrong.”

On Friday, the commissioner-general of UNRWA, Philippe Lazzarini, said that the Israeli authorities had provided the agency with “information about the alleged involvement of several UNRWA employees in the horrific attacks on Israel on 7 October”. He continued: “To protect the agency’s ability to deliver humanitarian assistance, I have taken the decision to immediately terminate the contracts of these staff members, and launch an investigation in order to establish the truth without delay. Any UNRWA employee who was involved in acts of terror will be held accountable, including through criminal prosecution. . . .

“Anyone who betrays the fundamental values of the United Nations also betrays those whom we serve in Gaza, across the region, and elsewhere around the world.” The specific nature of the allegations has not been made clear, but the BBC said that reports in the Israeli media “suggest UNRWA vehicles and facilities may have been used for the attack”.

“I urge countries who have suspended their funding to reconsider their decisions before UNRWA is forced to suspend its humanitarian response. The lives of people in Gaza depend on this support, and so does regional stability,” Mr Lazzarini said on Saturday.

Gaza represents UNRWA’s largest operation: about 40 per cent of its staff work in the Strip, reaching 13,000 before the outbreak of hostilities. Mr Lazzarini reports that 3000 “core staff” continue to report to work. Since 7 October, 152 have been killed.

On Sunday, the UN secretary-general, António Guterres, said: “While I understand their concerns – I was myself horrified by these accusations – I strongly appeal to the governments that have suspended their contributions to, at least, guarantee the continuity of UNRWA’s operations. “The abhorrent alleged acts of these staff members must have consequences. But the tens of thousands of men and women who work for UNRWA, many in some of the most dangerous situations for humanitarian workers, should not be penalised. The dire needs of the desperate populations they serve must be met.” Two million civilians in Gaza depended on aid from UNRWA. The majority of UNRWA’s employees are refugees themselves. Before the latest conflict, more than 9000 worked in the agency’s 278 schools in Gaza, educating almost 300,000 children. It was delivering cash and food aid to 1.1 million people – a number that has since risen. Up to 1.9 million internally displaced people are said to be residing in 154 UNRWA shelters or near by.



As people celebrated the beginning of 2024, Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders (MSF) teams were busy welcoming new life into the world.

Sierra Leone

Staff at an MSF-supported maternity unit in Sierra Leone helped mum Abie welcome her newborn on 1 January.

Many women in Sierra Leone live in remote and rural areas far from healthcare facilities. They cannot afford the transport to reach hospital, while roads are usually poor and there is a nationwide shortage of ambulances. Sadly, by the time a woman experiencing childbirth complications does manage to reach healthcare, it may be too late.

Lucky for this mother and baby, both are healthy and doing well.



South Sudan

In Bentiu camp – home to more than 100,000 displaced people – two baby girls were born on the first day of 2024. The first was born in the opening hour of the new year, weighing 3.3kg. Her mother hopes she will become a doctor.



Iraq

Shortly after midnight in the city of Mosul, a little boy was born. “We are still undecided about his name,” says his mother, Almas. “We need more time to choose a unique name for him, but I am happy for his well-being and I hope he becomes a dentist when he grows up.”



Ethiopia

MSF has three maternal health projects in Ethiopia. And, in total, 10 mothers gave birth on New Year's Day 2024.

These photos show the first babies from two of the projects – one in Kule Refugee Camp in the Gambela region, and another in Abi-adi, Tigray.



Afghanistan

Born at 00:02 on 1 January, Zubir was the first baby born into MSF's care in Afghanistan in 2024. His mother, who was considered at high risk for childbirth complications, arrived at MSF's Khost Maternity Hospital in active labour.

"People in my village know about this hospital and all mothers who start having contractions come directly because they feel safe here," she said.

Afghanistan is home to MSF's busiest maternity services worldwide. The MSF team at Khost Hospital, and Boost Hospital further away in Helmand Province, provide safe delivery services to women with complicated or risky pregnancies and receive referrals from across their regions. Every month, MSF assists more than 4,000 births at these two hospitals alone.





THE DIOCESE OF
CYPRUS AND THE GULF
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN
JERUSALEM AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Diocesan News

Announcing Bishop-elect the Revd Sean Semple

Archbishop Hosam Naoum, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East, and the Synod of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf are pleased to announce the election of the Revd Sean Semple to be the sixth Bishop of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf.



The Revd Sean Semple is currently the Rector of the Benefice of Ross with Walford and Brampton Abbots in the Diocese of Hereford. He has served on various committees in the Diocese including chairing the Council for World Partnership and serving as Rural Dean of the Deanery of Ross and Archenfield.

Sean has served in 3 provinces of the Anglican Communion. Before coming to the Diocese of Hereford, Sean served as a priest in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, and the Diocese of Natal, South Africa. He was ordained priest in the Diocese of Natal

in 2011 following a decade of ordained ministry in the Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. Sean's undergraduate studies in Psychology and Theology were undertaken at the University of Natal and the University of South Africa, followed by post graduate studies in Spirituality and Clinical Psychology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the University of Nicosia respectively.

Sean is married to Jenny and they have five children and one grandchild.

A date for the service of consecration, and installation in the two cathedrals of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, St Christopher's Bahrain and St Paul's Nicosia, will be announced shortly.

There has been no further news published from the Diocese this month. However, The Association of Friends of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf have recently published their latest edition of The Olive Branch and you can read an extract here:

 **The Olive Branch** 
Association of Friends of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf

Winter - 2023 - 2024

AROUND THE DIOCESE

We pray that 2024 will be a healthier and happier year.
Be vigilant and keep safe.



*A lunch gathering of ex-Bahrain folks
See this article on page 2*



*Your committee planning the future after
the AGM in All Hallows
See the article on page 4*



*Friends Northern Gathering in York
See this article on page 3*



*Al Ahli Hospital prior to the Israeli attack
See this article on page 5*



*Bishop Clive and Friends having coffee
and cake at the end of the day in York
See this article on page 3*



*A Christmas crib for 2023
See the article on page 6*

From the Chair, Revd Chris Butt:

Dear Friends

It was an honour to be elected as Chair of the Association of The Friends at the AGM at All Hallows by the Tower in August and I'd like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Ian Calder, for all that he has given in leading the Friends in recent years and, with Penny, so ably representing the Friends at the Diocesan Synod. The breadth of their experience in providing locum ministry in parishes in both Cyprus and the Gulf has been a real gift to the Diocese. At that meeting Rachel Bainbridge was also elected Treasurer, so we welcome her in that role and thank Helen Smith for taking responsibility for the Friends' finances previously.

At our first committee meeting, immediately following the AGM, I was asked to produce a brief questionnaire to send out to our membership. The aim of that questionnaire was to determine whether the Retreat at Launde Abbey should be arranged for 2024, but it also gave opportunity to ask for your opinion on our current programme, on possible other future events and activities and to reflect on how we might best welcome those returning from time in Cyprus and the Gulf, but also those who have come to study in universities here or who have come to work in the NHS and other positions, many from other countries. Thank you to all who responded.

Taking note of your responses, we will not be arranging a Retreat at Launde Abbey this year. We would hope to arrange a welcome event for the new Bishop of the Diocese, when he is elected. Depending on that timing, it could possibly be at the AGM in London on July 15th. We warmed to the suggestion of a regular Zoom prayer meeting for the Diocese and initially plan for that to be quarterly. This could bring together Friends, not only in the UK, but

in different countries of the world. Finally, we recognized the importance of continuing to network with Chaplains and Chaplaincies, so that those coming to the UK can connect with the Friends and continue our prayerful support of the Diocese in future years.

We live in traumatic days, no more so than in Israel and Gaza at present. May we hold Archbishop Hosam in our prayer who, while there is no elected bishop, is acting bishop of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf. In his words: 'We entrust the countries of our Lord's earthly home into the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, asking him to have mercy on us all and to give us his peace and blessing.'

May that peace fill our hearts and all the congregations of Cyprus and the Gulf this Christmas and the coming new year.

Chris Butt

Experiencing Hospitality

One of the richest experiences of living and working overseas is the gift of hospitality, the opportunity to enjoy the welcome, the friendship and food together with others, and it is particularly special in someone's home. And, of course, hospitality is central to the Gospels. Jesus is always eating with people and his enjoying a meal in their home is a sign of his welcome of them.

Since returning from Bahrain, we have become increasingly aware of those from Bahrain who have come here to work or to study and I am sure that this is multiplied across the various countries of the Gulf and Cyprus. Some have come to work in the NHS as doctors, nurses and physios bringing a compassion and expertise that is needed in our stretched health service. I think of Robert and Pushpa and their children, who arrived over a year ago, to work as a

Physiotherapist in St Bart's and Critical Care Nurse in St Thomas Hospital in London. Others are here to study: just recently Mary, from Kenya, recently gained a distinction in a Masters in International Hospitality at the University of Hertfordshire; and Belinda is here in Birmingham doing a Masters in Public Health Administration and has connected with our Church.



A lunch gathering of ex-Bahrain folks

The realization of this has made me think. How can we as Friends reflect the hospitality of Jesus to be more active in being hospitable and responding to those who our coming to the UK to enable them to feel welcome? We clearly need the support of Chaplains and Chaplaincies to be proactive in letting us know who is coming, but perhaps we can supply a network of those willing to offer welcome and hospitality in different parts of the UK.

Chris Butt

**Friends Northern Gathering
18th October 2023**

It was wonderful to be able to meet again this year in our regular venue, the Bar Convent in York. The day's activity began with meet, greet and coffee, followed by a Eucharist Service. Then lunch and finishing with a visit to Fairfax House near the York Museum, which involved us being divided into two groups,

like last year, for a guided tour by the expert volunteers.



Friends attending York 2023

Those attending numbered 24, not quite as many as last year as a number of folk were unable to attend. Anyhow for the Eucharist, our thanks go to Revd Chris Butt for leading, to Bishop Clive Hanford for preaching, to thanks to others who took part in the service.

A retiring collection was taken in aid of the work of the Convent, this year you generously donated £100.

Following the service we enjoyed a most delicious lunch, and a lovely time of fellowship and chatter together before proceeding to Fairfax House. Initially we had planned visit the York Museum, but that was discovered to be affected by the unsafe concrete called RCCS. So Fairfax House was happy entertain us, however, we had again this year to divide into two groups for the tour, which was not a main issue. It was indeed a very interesting tour learning the history of the house and those who lived in it.



Bishop Clive and group having coffee

Following the tour we set off to a tea room while others left to catch trains/buses. Our thanks to all attendees and we look forward to seeing you all again in 2024. The proposed date is Wednesday 18th October 2024.

God's Blessings to you all
Ron & Bernice Maitland

South West Day in Gloucester – March 18th 2024

Following on from a successful day in Gloucester last year, there will be another day of gathering for the Friends in Gloucester next March the 18th. The format will be similar, meeting at St. Mary de Crypt from 10.30, with time to be together, a Eucharist in the Robert Raikes Chapel, lunch, a different tour of Gloucester Cathedral and Tea to finish of the day between 4.00pm and 4.30pm. There will be a cost of somewhere between £20 and £30 to cover the expenses.



The gathering in Gloucester

If you would like more information do contact me at canonlan@virginmedia.com or on 01452 537845. There will be a reminder nearer the time when you can let me know if you are able to come. In the meantime every good wish and blessing to you all.

Canon Ian Calder

Friends AGM at All Hallows by the Tower on Monday 7th August 2023

The AGM events are so fulfilling with many memories of conversations with old Friends or those we have not seen since the previous Friends event. We don't have the usual full report as our Bishop Michael has now retired, however, the event followed a regular format of meet and greet, followed by the AGM and Eucharist. As always the lunch laid on by the All Hallows team was outstanding.

Please note that our next AGM for 2024 will be earlier than usual now on the Monday 15th July. We have moved the date forward to enable the Revd Katherine Hedderly, Vicar at All Hallows, to attend as she supports us so much.

What follows are some photographs of the day, I am sure you will recognise many familiar faces and it is lovely to see all the smiling faces at this great annual event.



Friends at All Hallows by the Tower



Your committee planning the future



Friends at All Hallows by the Tower



Friends at All Hallows by the Tower



Friends at All Hallows by the Tower

On the 17th October 2023, the Diocese of Jerusalem issued the following notice as a result of the Israeli attack on the Al Ahli Hospital.



Al Ahli Hospital prior to the attack.

October 17th 2023

In a solemn observance of a global day of fasting and prayers for peace, reconciliation, and an end to the harrowing conflict, Christians stood united in the Holy Land. However, this day of reflection was marred by a brutal attack on our Al Ahli Anglican Episcopal Hospital in Gaza during the Israeli airstrikes there. Citing 2 Cor. 4:8-9a, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed." We reflect on the unwavering spirit in the face of adversity.



In the strongest terms, the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem condemns this atrocious attack that has transpired in the heart of Gaza. Initial reports suggest the loss of countless lives, a manifestation of what can only be described as a crime against humanity. Hospitals, by the tenets of international humanitarian law, are sanctuaries, yet this assault has transgressed those sacred boundaries. We heed the call of Archbishop Justin Welby, who implored for the safeguarding of medical facilities and the rescission of evacuation orders. Regrettably, Gaza remains bereft of safe havens.



Please enter through the choir stalls

Sung worship opens doors, argues Andy Thomas

THE choir at St John's, Waterloo, was, in many ways, a very ordinary choir, of the type to be found in many English parish churches and beyond. It consisted of volunteers from the congregation with a mix of musical abilities and experiences.

There was a core group on whom I could rely, Sunday by Sunday, alongside others whose attendance was more sporadic. We led the hymns and other sung parts of the worship, and sang a piece during communion – usually something short but effective, taken from Iona, Taizé, or international repertoire.

To me, however, this was a very special choir. I had arrived in late 2010 and agreed to develop the music on a voluntary basis, focusing firstly on building a choir. With essential support from a new vicar and proactive choir members, we had built it from scratch, despite being told that it had been tried before and failed.

The impact on the worship was significant: the hymns were now sung at a good pace – previously they dragged – and the choir piece during communion led to genuine, prayerful silence, once the distribution was complete, rather than the usual hum of chitter-chatter.



What really struck me was the way its impact rippled beyond the worship and into the church community. For example, my namesake Andy was new to the community and rediscovering his Christian faith. In conversation one Sunday, he let slip that he enjoyed singing. As he was a shy, self-effacing man, it took a while, but, eventually, I persuaded him to join the choir.

Shortly after I left in 2016, I asked him to comment on his experience of doing so. "How much richer has my whole church, worship, and companionship experience been for the spirituality of our music," he wrote. "I feel so much more part of St John's because I was asked to sing. They had the confidence I didn't. But now I do have it and I carry it in everything I do both in church and outside."

Singing in the choir transformed Andy's experience of St John's. It gave him a sense of belonging, enriched his experience of worship, and bolstered his self-confidence in a way that had an impact on his life beyond the church walls.

Furthermore, the choir membership reflected the ethnic diversity in the congregation – at one point, I counted eight different nationalities. This enabled us to draw it out and celebrate it – for example, by singing repertoire that was distinctive of the

different cultures. The choir even helped the gathered community to process difficult events, such as the death of Holly, a long-standing member who was famous for wearing a decorated bedpan as a hat for the Queen's Jubilee.

I'll never forget how the choir broke out into spontaneous singing during the final hymn, the Sunday morning after Holly died, and how that turned the worship from one of awkwardness, where people didn't know how to respond, into a brief celebration of her long and colourful life.

ST PAUL described the Church as the body of Christ — one that is made up of many members performing a variety of functions, like the different parts of a body. Church music is one of those functions, and that is often the extent of the inspiration we draw from that metaphor as church musicians.

Yet there is so much more we can learn from it. In particular, what I hadn't appreciated until reflecting on my experience at St John's is how church music helps us to build the body of Christ.

Paul outlined two stages to building the body of Christ: first, the body is knitted together by the Holy Spirit; then it is built up and invigorated by love. In terms of the first stage, music is often connected with an experience of the Spirit, whether as part of "Spirit-led" worship, or prompted by the evocative sound of a robed choir or instrumental group.

What St John's and many other churches have taught me is that you don't need either of those things to connect with the divine — to catch a glimpse of a reality that transcends this one, and is profoundly greater than it. Experiencing a diversity of voices singing in straightforward harmony can give you a powerful sense of a Christlike reality where individuals truly listen to and accommodate each other: one that is diverse yet unified — shaped by the individuals that comprise it, but greater than the sum of its parts.

Furthermore, the uncertainty that is characteristic of leading voluntary, developing choirs or instrumental groups forces you to make room for the Spirit. At St John's, there were occasions where I changed the choir piece ten minutes before the Sunday-morning rehearsal because (say) no men had turned up, and found that the revised choice worked better than the original choice would have done. At least once, to bolster one of the sections, I drafted in an unsuspecting newcomer, who then found their home in the choir.

Once it has been knitted together by the Spirit, the second stage is that the body is built up by love: by acting towards one another as exemplified by Jesus. Part of this is what Paul referred to as "discerning the body of Christ" — enabling everyone, in all their diversity, to engage in worship.

I have already described how the congregational diversity that was represented in St John's Choir helped us to reflect it during worship. In terms of engaging those beyond the immediate community, singing in a church choir — including one that is nascent and developing — enables spiritual growth, instils a sense of belonging, and

can even transform your self-identity by giving you a part to play in the worshipping community.

These three elements, which are also central to Paul's understanding of baptism, make joining a church choir an effective means of incorporation into the church community.



Compiled by Rev Gill Nisbet of the Barnabas Team

Epiphany: The Light in the Darkness

Barnabas Team December 2023/ January 2024

Opportunities: Watch this clip (to the end) from the opening ceremony of the Paralympics from 2012. Watch these golden athletes challenge us to 'allow God to love us into the fullness of life, praying that our lives will be a blessing to all, in and through all circumstances'. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tH7cVtRqce4>

Epiphany celebrates the revelation and manifestation of Christ the King to the Magi, and, ultimately to the gentile world.

In his autobiography, John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, shares his Emmaus Road (Epiphany) experience like this: 'In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where someone was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before midnight, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death' (John Wesley 1738).

Epiphanies are those 'Aha' moments that simply turn our lives around. Those times when we see and experience something in God's world that turn our lives around full circle. Watching those celebrated Christmas movies such as 'A Christmas Carol' and 'The Grinch', we see peoples lives turned around by something that happens to them. Lives that come to see things in a new way.

When you reflect on your life, what have been the God filled moments where you have experienced something that has changed your life of faith around completely?



The painting above is not your usual Epiphany painting. We are more used to the splendour of the 3 wise men arriving to offer their gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh to the newborn Jesus. There is a lot going on in this painting. If you look carefully, you can just about spot the wise men offering their gifts to Jesus in the left of the painting. Otherwise, people are gathering wood, a child is tobogganing on the frozen river, and everyone is trying to keep warm.

Jesus was not born in luxury; he experienced poverty. He experienced life with all its ups and downs. Exceptions were not made for the Son of God. For the artist, Jesus' birth is part of village life. The extraordinary takes place within the ordinary; it is just a matter of recognizing it. Can we sometimes be so busy looking for the supernatural that we do not see God in our everyday lives: at work, at home, and with our families? Reflect on where God has been abundantly present in the ordinary experiences of your daily life this past year.

- What is the star you are following in life?
- Are you following the light that leads you to Christ?
- What makes you radiant with joy and hope?

May God Bless you with 'Aha' moments during this Epiphany season.



Diocesan Prayers for February



Sunday, 4 February 2024, ORDINARY TIME

St John's, Derynia, Cyprus - Pray for those who are currently taking part in diocesan synod, and for wisdom and vision in all that is planned and done.

Sunday, 11 February 2024, ORDINARY TIME

St Christopher's Cathedral, Bahrain - Pray for the Holy Spirit to keep leading the People of God, and for all who teach and illuminate the Spirit's ways both old and new.

Sunday, 25 February 2024, LENT II

Holy Trinity Church, Dubai, UAE - Pray for our fellow dioceses of Jerusalem and Iran, and for our Primate Archbishop Hosam.

Living God, you bring us together in community
And teach us to love one another as you have loved us.
May we be beacons of your light in the communities in which we are set,
That through truth, justice and action
We may see your kingdom come upon earth,
In Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.



For our brothers and sisters at St Andrew's

We remember the needs within our church family of those that particularly need our prayers. These include:

Duncan Hadfield, Sandi Richardson, May McKenzie, Anne Futcher, Nasim Akhtar, Garry Allcock, Shane Barnes, Jenny and Bob Hayward and Padmesh Gartaula.

We pray also for strength and grace for those who carry the burden of care.

We remember those who have died and those who mourn their loss.

"The prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well ... pray for each other so that you may be healed" James 5: 15-16



QUOTES OF THE MONTH

When sports coaches and managers step down, it's usually at the point where their team is failing. But [Jürgen] Klopp's announcement [that he will stand down as manager of Liverpool FC] comes with his side leading the Premier League table. I applaud his decision. There's a lot to be said for going when you're at the top of your game — far better than to wait till the fans bay for your blood.

David Walker, Bishop of Manchester, *Thought for the Day, Radio 4, 27 January*

I guess religious people — especially people like me who exercise some religious authority — are often accused of being a bunch of hypocrites. They think we say one thing in public and another in private. But if someone says to me: 'Vicar, you're a hypocrite, I'm never coming to church'. My response is; 'Yes, I am a hypocrite and there's always room for one more'

Rachel Mann, Archdeacon of Bolton and Salford,
interview, The Daily Telegraph, 19 January



If you would like to contribute any articles or comments
to this magazine please contact
the Editor, Anne Lloyd at graniannie@hotmail.com

*Living God, help us at all times to be Christ to others
and to see Christ in all people.*

Cod & prawn pie with saffron potatoes

Prep: 20 mins **Cook:** 50 mins **Easy** **Serves 4**

Elevate fish pie with a touch of saffron to make a meal you can serve without compromising on your healthy eating routine

Ingredients

1 tbsp olive oil
1 yellow & red pepper, deseeded and finely chopped
2 large garlic cloves, chopped
2 bay leaves
1 tbsp smoked paprika
150ml vegetable stock, made with 2 tsp bouillon powder
500g carton passata
240g pack frozen raw, peeled, large wild red shrimp, defrosted
2 x 280g packs skinless cod loin, cut into large chunks
9 pitted green olives, quartered
3 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley (optional)
320g broccoli florets or green beans



For the saffron potatoes

3 generous pinches of saffron threads
1 ½ tbsp olive oil
2 large garlic cloves, finely grated
725g large potatoes (about 4), peeled and thinly sliced

Method

STEP 1 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/ gas 6. Warm the olive oil in a large non-stick pan over a medium heat and fry the peppers, garlic and bay leaves for 10 mins, stirring often until the peppers have softened.

STEP 2 Meanwhile, prepare the saffron potatoes. Put the saffron threads in a small heatproof bowl with 1 tbsp boiling water, the olive oil and garlic, and stir well until the liquid turns yellow. Set aside. Bring a large pan of water to the boil, and cook the sliced potatoes for 5 mins until tender but not collapsing. Drain well.

STEP 3 When the peppers have softened, sprinkle over the paprika and stir briefly, then pour in the stock and passata and cook for 5 mins more. Remove from the heat and stir in the shrimp, cod, olives and parsley, if using. Tip the stew into a large, shallow pie dish (suggest 30 x 20cm, and about 6.5cm deep).

STEP 4 Arrange the potato slices over the stew in an even layer – they don't have to be neat – then generously brush over the saffron mixture.

STEP 5 Bake the pie for 30-35 mins until bubbling at the edges and the fish is cooked through. When it's almost finished cooking, boil or steam the broccoli or green beans to serve alongside the pie.



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