

JUNE 2023 ECO SPECIAL

SPIRE



HAMPTON HILL'S PARISH MAGAZINE

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SAVING

PLANET EARTH

How we can all play our part

WELCOME

Meet the clergy



VICAR Rev Derek Winterburn

Derek was born in Orpington, Kent, and ordained in 1986. He served in several diverse London parishes before becoming vicar here in 2016. He is married to Sandra, a teacher, and has two children. A keen photographer, he posts a picture online every day, combining it with a daily walk or cycle ride. He can be contacted at any time other than on Mondays (his day off).

Tel: 020 8241 5904

Email: vicar@stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk

ASSOCIATE PRIEST Rev Jacky Cammidge

Jacky was born in Abertillery, South Wales, and ordained in 2015. She is a self-supporting minister, married to Alan, and has three children. During term-time she runs Hampton Hill Nursery School, based in the church hall, with her family.

Tel: 079 5012 2294

Email: jackycammidge@stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk



Supported by

ASSISTANT PRIEST Rev Canon Tim Marwood

Tim taught in London primary schools for 36 years. He was ordained priest in 1996 and was parish priest at Petersham for 13 years, retiring in 2021. He is now a part-time Chaplain at Kingston Hospital. Tim is married to Jane, a former headteacher.

He supports Harlequins RFC, England cricket and walks his brown labrador, Ruby.

Tel: 073 6928 0040 Email: frtimmarwood@hotmail.com

ASSISTANT PRIEST Rev Canon Julian Reindorp

Julian was born in Durban, South Africa, and ordained in 1969. He has worked in parishes in East London, Chatham and Milton Keynes, and was Team Rector in Richmond until retirement in 2009. He continues to lead a busy life, is married to Louise and has four children, three stepchildren, and nine grandchildren.

Tel: 020 8614 6800 Email: julianreindorp@outlook.com



CHURCH OFFICE

Church & hall bookings

Nick Bagge

Nick deals with enquiries and Church and hall bookings. Open: Mon, Wed, Fri 0930-1230; Tue, Thu 1230-1530

Tel: 020 8941 6003

Email: office@stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk

Address: St James's Church, St James's Road, Hampton Hill, TW12 1DQ.



CHURCHWARDEN

Susan Horner

Tel: 020 8979 9380

Email: smhorner5@yahoo.co.uk



CHURCHWARDEN

Nick Bagge

Tel: 020 8941 6003

Email: office@stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk



CHOIR DIRECTOR AND ORGANIST

Thom Stanbury

Email: thom.stanbury@stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk



MINISTRY INTERN

Ashleigh Wakefield

Tel: 077 1256 2010

Email: ash@stjames-hamptonhill.org.uk

FINANCE TEAM

Treasurer Dawn Miller 020 8941 6508

Assistant Treasurer / Planned Giving Carol Bailey 020 8783 0633

Chair Laurence Sewell 020 8977 2844

ALMA Laurence Sewell 020 8977 2844

Ark Playgroup

Ash Wakefield 077 1256 2010

Bell Ringers

Susan Horner 020 8979 9380

Book of Remembrance Recorder

Janet Nunn 020 8979 6325

Brownies (HQ) 0800 1 69 59 01

Care and Contact (Visitors)

Derek Winterburn 020 8241 5904

Charity Support Team

Dennis Wilmot 020 8977 9434

Children's Champion

Lou Coaker 020 8979 2040

Church Cleaning Team

Debbie Nunn 020 8979 3078

Church Flowers Team

via Church Office 020 8941 6003

Church Safeguarding Officer

Annalea Gratton 077 7576 4419

Churches Together Around Hampton

Ann Peterken 020 8891 5862

Churchyard Records

Janet Nunn 020 8979 6325

Connections Café

Ash Wakefield 077 1256 2010

Deanery Synod

Lesley Mortimer 020 8941 2345

Eco-Church Team

Derek 020 8241 5904

Electoral Roll Recorder

Nick Bagge 020 8941 6003

Gardening Team

Lou Coaker 020 8979 2040

PCC Secretary

Nick Bagge 020 8941 6003

Properties Team

Bryan Basdell 020 8979 2040

Scouts

Richard Moody 020 8286 6918

Servers

Lesley Mortimer 020 8941 2345

Social Team

Derek Winterburn 020 8241 5904

Sunday Kitchen Team

Patricia Newton: lady.newton@icloud.com

Welcome Team

Janet Taylor 020 8979 0046

PREFER A DIGITAL COPY?

@ Email Susan Horner: smhorner5@yahoo.co.uk

FROM THE EDITOR...

Life has returned to normal after the wonderful service for the Coronation of Charles III, the concert in Windsor and all the street parties. We shall feature this in more detail in our next edition. It has been fascinating talking to people to see what they remember about the late Queen's Coronation in 1953.

This edition is about our Eco credentials – something dear to the King's heart, and one he and the Prince of Wales have championed for years. Derek describes what the church is doing to help, and Siobhan, on page 8, tells us about her life and her global efforts to save the planet.

It was heartening that King Charles had insisted that as many things as possible connected to the Coronation should be reused or refurbished.

This month we launch our annual appeal towards the cost of the Spire. Last year we raised £1400, but this still left a shortfall of £3,000. We are grateful that the church pays the balance as the Spire has become a familiar sight around the parish. All your donations are very gratefully received and there are several ways that you can now donate which you will find on the insert to this issue.

Best Wishes

Janet



Cover photo: Our focus is on climate change and what needs to be done to tackle it.

SPIRE

The Spire is published nine times a year for the Parochial Church Council of St James. We make no charge for this magazine, but if you enjoy reading it, we hope that you will contribute towards printing costs. Bank transfers to: 40-52-40, 00032595, Use Ref SPIRE. Cheques payable to the PCC of St James's Church, Hampton Hill, and sent to the Spire Appeal c/o the Church Office (see below).

I cost **£10** A YEAR*

Yes, I'm free, but donations help me to go on being printed. Use the QR code to give money. *£1.10 a copy

EDITOR

Janet Nunn 020 8979 6325
or janunh@btinternet.com

POSTAL ADDRESS

Spire, Church Office, St James's Church,
St James's Road, Hampton Hill, TW12 1DQ

WEBSITE

Prill Hinckley p.m.hinckley@blueyonder.co.uk

CIRCULATION

The Spire is available in church and local shops, is delivered across the parish, and posted further afield. For more information contact Susan Horner. 020 8979 9380 or smhorner5@yahoo.co.uk

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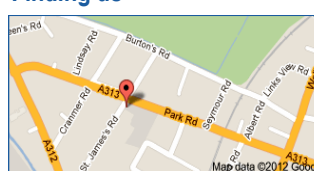
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Finding us



The church is on the corner of St James's Road and Park Road. The hall is between the church and vicarage. There is ample unrestricted parking. Buses stopping nearby include the R68, R70 and 285.

Follow us

For the very latest news go to our website or follow us on social media:

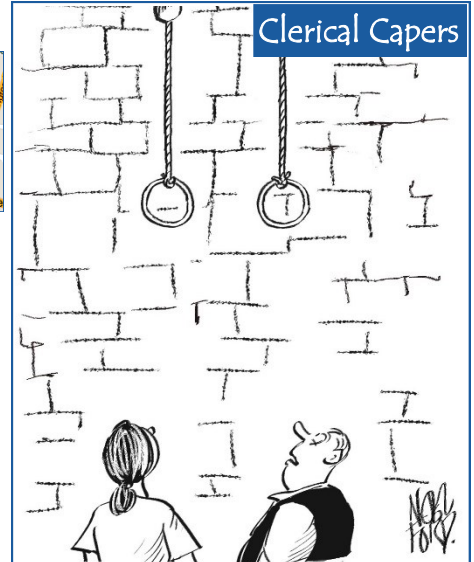
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Clerical Capers



'Apparently the new member of the bellringing team is also a keen gymnast.'

Time is running out to avert catastrophe



DEREK WINTERBURN

At this point in the argument, I ask 'For you, why might this be important?' As with child mortality, we might be motivated by obedience to God, compassion for those who suffer now, fear for future generations... All these are valuable reasons.

think that our government should sort it out for us, and miss the big changes that have been made. But most of all it is our human frailty to prioritise what is now, what is near and what is easy.

On the other hand, I believe that our individual actions can help strengthen the wavering intentions of politicians (our example and our votes) and decisive changes by our country will move forward the international changes.

Where have all the birds gone?

Perhaps my understanding of the preciousness of the natural world goes back to family holidays, and an amazing biology field trip to Pembrokeshire.

All this is focused when I remember the birdlife in our normal suburban family garden where I grew up, and compare that to the birds we have to woo into our garden today with seeds and nuts. For us, now, there are no sparrows, chaffinches, blue tits, thrushes or even starlings. (I am aware that others have sparrows, but even these are on the UK Red List.)

The broader picture is consistent: 30 million fewer birds in the UK in the past 50 years, 97% of wildflower meadows gone since the 1930s, and 25% of mammals at risk of extinction. And extinction is forever.

Human cost of climate change

I would expect some of my readers to be less moved by animals and plants, and more by the desperate situation of people losing their homes to the rising sea, or struggling to feed their families with different weather patterns. Others might be more concerned about increased migration, or even wars, caused by climate change. Still others will heed God's call in the Bible to humanity to care for the world and not to abuse it.

So I ask again, what do you put in the scales on the other side of one's own immediate comfort and needs? It is relatively easy to pretend this is not our problem and forget our country has had a large part in creating it. It is tempting to

Over the past century the child mortality rate across the world has tumbled. Broadly speaking, in every culture for thousands of years any child born would have had a one-in-two chance of making it to adulthood. Now, mortality is less than 5%.

While there may be a conversation to be had about the total size of the human population in the 21st century, surely there is no one who would rejoice that no longer will every second child will die prematurely? (see ourworldindata.org)

Care for the world

I have spoken on numerous occasions to groups about 'creation care', specifically about 'climate change'. I have tried to offer a variety of reasons why we (the human race, the UK, the church or just 'you and me') should act. I have concluded that although people get there in any number of ways, like childhood death, very few people think irreversible degradation of the natural world is acceptable.

Yes, I know there are some climate change deniers, but surveys consistently show that the great majority of the public does accept the almost universal scientific conclusion that the planet is warming and that that spells trouble for us and future generations. I believe that the debate needs to move forward to what practical actions need to be taken now and in the near future — and at what cost to us.

St James Sundays

Holy Communion (said) 8am

Parish Communion 9:30am

Livestreamed on Facebook.

Together 3:30pm

Our shorter, all-age service, is now at 3:30pm, making way for Messy Church once a month.

Mon-Fri

Morning Prayer (not Wed) 9am

Holy Communion (Wed) 9:30am

Ark Playgroup

Mondays 10am-12noon

Friendly playgroup for carers and under 5s during school term-time but not Bank Holidays. £2.50 for first child, 50p for others.

Connections Café

Tuesdays 10am-12noon

Join us for coffee, cake and conversation, with a free, walk-in NHS Hearing Aid Clinic on the first and third Tuesdays of the month. Plus, the chance to talk to a mental wellbeing professional about any concerns.

Big Green Day

Sat 10 June 2-4pm

We are once again part of the UK's biggest celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature. Come and learn how you can play your part.

Sun 11 June Car-free Sunday

This initiative is to encourage us all to reduce car use. Perhaps walking more, using public transport, or sharing car journeys.

Alpha Course

7:30pm Wednesdays

The course is for people asking the big questions about life, or wanting to reboot their Christian faith.

Messy Church

3:30-5:30pm 25 Jun

With singing, stories, crafts and food.

St James's Weekend

Sat 1 July 2-5pm

As part of our St James's Day celebrations we are throwing open our doors to the community. Climb the spire for unrivalled views, have a go at bellringing, take a guided church tour.

There will also be a prize raffle, bottle tombola and refreshments.

Sun 2 July 11am

Our celebrations start with a service, where the guest speaker is the Ven Richard Frank, Archdeacon of Middlesex, followed by a barbecue lunch in the vicarage garden.

Change our lives



DEREK WINTERBURN

One of the biggest news stories of the autumn and the winter has been the huge rise in fuel prices. Even with government intervention, bills for gas and electricity have markedly increased.

The church is a large building that is used each day, even if it is just for a few hours. As part of the refurbishment some further draught proofing was introduced, however we have to face the fact that without major work the windows, walls and roof are always going to 'leak' heat. So the PCC accepted in 2022 that the most obvious way to reduce the cost of fuel, and our carbon emissions, was to be more careful when we heat the building, and agree that we would aim for 18° in the building rather than 19°.

It is hard to make quick comparisons (heating is weather-related, and we had builders in) but our gas consumption has dropped by about a third over the past twelve months. As we have just moved out of a fixed-price contract, reducing carbon also saves money.

Nature in churchyard

Care for Creation is not just about climate change. The Eco Church scheme has an element called 'land'. As a church we are blessed with lovely surroundings: a planted area along St James's Road and the churchyard behind the church.

Although the Borough is responsible for the maintenance of the churchyard, and the Commonwealth War Grave Commission looks after those graves, volunteers throughout

the year care for the rest, with some Saturday morning 'intensive care' sessions. That might be some tidying up, large-scale pruning or clearance.

Recently, a small pond has been included in the 'wildflower' garden to encourage further biodiversity. Additionally the Mayor of London provided us with 50 tree 'whips' that have been planted along the

southern boundary wall.

Climate change

At the end of September we particularly focussed on sustainability issues, before Harvest. Helen Stephens, who heads up the Eco Church scheme, came and spoke at the morning service. She also officially presented us with our silver award.

The following day, St James's hosted a meeting of Churches Together at which Kate Chesterman, from Just Stop Oil and Christian Climate Action, challenged the audience by telling how she believed that her Christian vocation was to take non-violent direct action.

Earlier this year the church was also able to welcome the



Oak tree Dominating our churchyard is this mighty oak, recorded on the Woodland Trust's ancient tree inventory

Last Summer, A Rocha, the Christian environmental charity, granted us a silver Eco Church award. After a brief pause for celebration, our efforts are now focussed on achieving a gold award. Of course, in the end the only reward we should be working to is averting a global warming catastrophe. And with the tipping point not so far away, there's no time to lose. But what can we do?

Friends of Bushy and Home Parks for a talk on hedgehogs!

Since then the congregation has taken the annual self-survey, and in Lent we offered a second-hand book sale, and both puzzles and plant 'swap shops'.

WEEKEND AT ST JAMES'S CHURCH

THE GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK

We are now looking forward to the Great Big Green Saturday 10 June.

Events run from 2-4pm in the churchyard:

2.00 Crafty tales - storytelling for younger children.

2.15 A walking tour of the churchyard - introducing the wildlife.

3.00 A conversation with Siobhan Peters (see page 8)

3.20 A walking tour of the churchyard - introducing the wildlife

Throughout the afternoon

- Drop by and find out more about carbon footprints, food and energy etc
- 'Can you spot it?' hunt for children
- Prayer trail around the church
- and there will be refreshments, including cake.

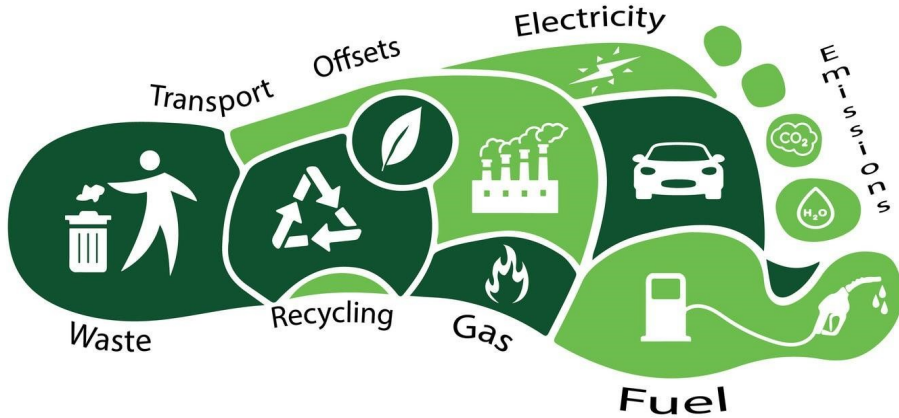


Efficiency Retaining heat in a 160-year-old church with a large roof and many windows is challenging



for climate

Reducing our carbon footprint



Everyone can help limit climate change. From the way we travel, to the electricity we use and the food we eat, we can make a difference. Start with these ten actions to help tackle the climate crisis:

- **Energy** Much of our energy and heat is powered by coal, oil and gas. Use less energy by lowering your heating, switching to LED light bulbs and energy-efficient electric appliances, washing laundry with cooler water or hanging things to dry instead of using a tumble dryer.
- **Transport** Our roads are clogged with vehicles, many of them burning diesel or petrol. Walking or riding a bike instead will reduce greenhouse gas emissions – and help your health and fitness. For longer journeys, consider taking a train or bus.

- **Eat more veg** Eating more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and less meat and dairy, can significantly lower our environmental impact. Plant-based foods generally produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions and requires less energy, land and water.
- **Travel** Flying burns huge amounts of fossil fuels, producing significant greenhouse gas emissions. Taking fewer flights is one of the fastest ways to reduce your environmental impact. When you can, take the train or skip the trip altogether and meet online.
- **Food waste** When you throw food away, you're also wasting the resources and energy that were used to produce it. Always compost any leftovers.
- **Reduce, repair, recycle** Electronics, clothes and other

- items we buy cause carbon emissions at each point in production. To protect our climate, buy fewer things, shop second-hand, repair what you can and recycle.
- **Energy sources** Ask your utility company if your home energy comes from oil, coal or gas. Most offer energy solely from renewable sources, such as wind or solar. Or install solar panels on your roof to generate energy for your home.
- **Travel** If you plan to buy a car, choose hybrid or electric. Cheaper models are coming on the market. Even if they still run on electricity produced from fossil fuels, electric cars help reduce air pollution and cause significantly fewer greenhouse gas emissions than petrol or diesel-powered vehicles.

Strength in the oak tree

By MARIE CURBIE

IT ALL BEGAN when a squirrel left me an acorn. It had started to sprout, so I potted it. Every autumn, when the leaves dropped, I gathered and painted them, giving them to my yoga students as a token of the qualities of the oak — the power of love, protection and strength. The tree needed a permanent home. By chance, a friend said her son David had bought a farm in Cornwall and was planting 700 trees. I asked if he would like 701? He said yes, and the yoga oak was planted by Bodmin Moor in June 2022. David turned out to be a forester, so our yoga tree couldn't have been in better hands. It just goes to show that we can all do something, however small, to help the planet.



From little acorns Marie Curbie on a visit to her tree in Cornwall

Around the Spire

CHURCHES COUNT ON NATURE

The churchyard census needs you!

THERE ARE approximately 10,000 churchyards in this country. They are comparatively undisturbed and are havens for wildlife, especially in urban areas. As part of *Love Your Burial Ground Week*, there is a particular initiative to reckon up the biodiversity of churchyards. *Churches Count on Nature* takes place between Saturday 3 and Sunday 11 June, and St James's will be joining in and taking a survey of the animals, plants and fungi.



well be through a mobile phone. *iNaturalist* is an easy to use app. One simply points the camera at a plant or animal and uploads it with one's best guess at what species it is, which is then checked by the AI and in due course real people. *iNaturalist* will read the geographic data from your photo and assign your observation to our churchyard. (If you prefer not to start an account and upload photos, the related app *Seek by iNaturalist* will identify the species for you and then you put the name on the list in the porch by hand). At present we have logged 139 species but we are rather 'light' on animals, including insects, birds and mammals. Observations can be submitted at any time, not just the *Counting on Nature* week. So please join in! The churchyard's webpage is: <https://bit.ly/StJiNat> or use the QR code on your phone.



This census is open to anyone who is interested. The animals, especially, are elusive and the more eyes involved, the more spotting is likely to happen. You are welcome to visit the churchyard anytime in the week and have a look around. There will be identification charts and a running list of species under the porch between the church and the hall. The most convenient way of recording observations might

Two of our friends have died

AMY HAMILTON passed away in April at the great age of 106. She moved to Hampton Hill in the 1970s and lived in Uxbridge Road and then The Wildemess. In 2012 she moved to a retirement village in Nailsea, near Bristol, to be closer to her daughter and spent the last three years in a care home.

On her 100th birthday she received a card from the late Queen, and Amy celebrated her birthday by going on a cruise.

She was a very faithful member of St James's and regularly attended the 0800 Holy Communion Service on Sundays and weekday service.

Donations to RNLI

Amy was a keen member of the Hampton Hill Association and enjoyed their outings and the music group. She was also a supporter of the RNLI and donations in her memory are to go towards their valuable work.

Amy had lots of friends in Hampton Hill and will be fondly remembered. She had a lovely smile



Amy

and took a keen interest in all local activities.

Janet Nunn

■ **Sallie Colak-Antic** was well known locally. She had lived in Park Road and latterly in Wolsey Road. When her health began to deteriorate she moved into a care

home in Woking to be near her son and his family. She passed away at the age of 91 on Coronation Day.

Her funeral will be held in St James's Church and we will carry a fuller obituary about her colourful and varied life in the next edition of the magazine.



Sallie

A legendary adventurer

God is with us 24/7



Boyle in Canadian military uniform



Food for thought Family time at the table



JANET NUNN

anniversary of his death. This only stopped when the Queen of Romania died in 1938. There was a very elaborate memorial to Joe Boyle in the churchyard. Apparently the ancient stone cross at the head of the grave and an urn were brought to England by Queen Marie.

Exhumed and flown home

In the 1980s the church received a request for his mortal remains and the gravestone to be removed and flown to Woodstock in Ontario. Several local people objected and a consistory court hearing took place in the church to settle the matter.

It was decreed that this should happen very early one morning, in the presence of the vicar, Rev Nicholas Chubb. The grave was excavated and the remains taken to Gatwick Airport and flown to Canada, where he was given a full military funeral.

Part of the agreement was that they should provide a stone to put in its place, which is still visible today, stating that his remains were exhumed in 1983.

If you follow the path from the lych gate straight ahead to where it turns right, his grave, pictured, is a flat stone on the right-hand side.

■ You can read much more about the life of Joe Boyle on our website.



The original gravestone

His full title was Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Whiteside Boyle DSO and it is probably one of the most notable graves in our churchyard.

Joe Boyle was born on 6 November 1867 in Toronto, Canada, and he died quietly, aged 55, on 14 April 1923, at Wayside, St James's Road, which was the home of an old Yukon friend, Edward Bredenberg. (Some of you will remember it as a church house when the hall was in School Road.)

One reference I found said he was 'a man with the heart of a Viking and the simple faith of a child'. Members of his family and others of high rank attended his funeral.

Klondike gold mining

Better known as Klondike Joe, the adventurer became a businessman and entrepreneur in the UK. He grew up in Woodstock, Ontario, where in his early career he recognised the large-scale potential of gold mining in the Klondike fields.



Family Joe and Flora

In 1909 he married Elma Louise Humphries while on a visit to Detroit and they had one daughter, Flora.

At the time of the First World War, Joe was 46 and too old to serve in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, but in 1916 he was appointed an Honorary Lieutenant Colonel, allowing Boyle to wear a uniform which he embellished by adding maple leaves made from Yukon gold.

Close friend of Romanian Queen

In February 1918 he served as the principal intermediary on behalf of the Romanian Government in effecting a ceasefire with revolutionary forces in Bessarabia. This is where he met Queen Marie of Romania, who remained a close friend.

Every year from 1923 it is said a woman in black brought flowers to his grave on the



ASH WAKEFIELD

Scavenger hunt

Hide a number of items around your home and ask your family to find them.

Bib-Lego scene

Read a bible story and build a scene from it using bricks or Lego.

Build a fort

Gather together as many cushions and blankets as possible and build the grandest fort in your neighbourhood. Maybe even make some posters to go inside!

Indoor Picnic

Why not make a picnic and eat it indoors while watching a movie.

Being a Christian is so much more than attending a church service on a Sunday. Don't get me wrong, attending is great, but it's not the whole deal.

As Christians, we are called to worship and sing praises every day of our lives – yes, seven days a week, 365 days a year, every day for the rest of our life.

One of the best ways to follow Christ is by coming together as a family. All important decisions mean more if you call a family meeting. Why not unite with Christ?

Here are just a few ideas for you to explore faith at home together with your children.

Meal Time

Meal time is family time. Even if you don't sit down every day, meals are a great time to be together and just talk and laugh.

Ask Alexa

Say to Alexa (other virtual assistants are available), 'Ask Church of England to say Grace' before you eat, or 'Ask Church of England to say the Lord's Prayer' before bed. You could even say, 'Ask the Church of England for this week's service' while playing a board game.

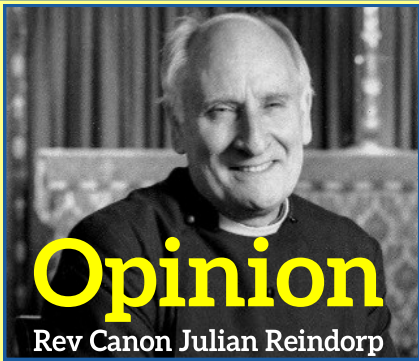
At the beginning of this article, I said these were faith-forming ideas, but only two of these mention faith. Let me explain. That is because faith is not always about church or doing something religious. Faith is formed in the ordinary details of everyday life. Faith is the way you talk to each other, laugh together and meet challenges collectively.

When your children are young, it's all about the way you interact with them and how you show them you love them, whether that is baking a cake or making slime.

Take this time to weave wonder into your conversation and to say thank you to God for all of the little blessings in your life, by providing memories for your children to hold in the future. They are loved, not only by you, but by God also.



Tent Build a blanket fort and camp indoors



Opinion

Rev Canon Julian Reindorp

STRIKES & CONDITIONS

Joining bus drivers, nurses, the posties and teachers on the picket lines, they all wanted to talk about their working conditions, while the media just want to talk about the rate of pay. On a family level if the train drivers, not badly paid, 'lost' all the conditions they were striking for, millions of people like my wife with her health issues and my eldest stepson with his learning/speaking difficulties, would probably never travel on British Rail again. The closure of all ticket offices and driverless trains would have a huge effect. I noticed that a number of Northern train operators would not have driverless trains for safety reasons. I/we hope there will be a constructive compromise and some ticket offices and support for train drivers will remain both for travelling and getting on and off the trains. There was no mention of this in the media.

ASYLUM CLAIMS

In May we still had over 160,000 people waiting, many for up to two years, to have their asylum claims assessed — technical legal limit six months — and meanwhile they cannot work. Conservative MPs in particular are complaining about the use and cost of hotels and the parts of their constituencies that may have to host these asylum claimants. Tim Loughton, Conservative MP and former minister, has suggested the government needs thousands of people to tackle this rather than the 1500 it has now. Germany, as an example, uses up to 10,000 civil servants to process claims. Meanwhile, the Government focuses on those crossing the channel in boats, who they have made illegal. It is now being forced to consider more legal crossings.

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE?

Anglican bishops have allowed clergy who choose to do so, to bless same-sex, committed relationships. I worry that we place such emphasis on texts from Genesis 'Male and female created he them' stories, written possibly 3,000 years ago, and also an understanding of gender and sexuality that has been dramatically changed over the past 70 years.

One suggestion: if we look to the Scriptures, Hebrew and Christian, for a model for lifelong committed relationships, God made covenants with Noah, Abraham and Moses, and in the marriage service the prayer over the rings says, 'These rings are to remind them of the vow and covenant they have made this day'. Covenants are gender-neutral, they can be made between any two people (David and Jonathan in 1 Sam 20: 16) and our understanding of marriage has changed hugely over the centuries. As I said to my former bishop, I am sad that the Conservative government has supported same-sex marriage before our church.

TWO CHILD LIMIT

A Private Members' Bill brought by the Bishop of Durham to abolish the two child limit on receiving Universal Credit (i.e. more than two children cannot receive the benefit), has got through the House of Lords. Now it is up to the Government in the House of Commons. This present policy is the most significant contributor to driving more children and families into poverty. The Child Poverty Action Group says it pushes 50,000 children into poverty, and 150,000 children already in poverty are made worse off.

SO OLD?

I was feeling very pleased that recently I had taken weddings, baptisms and funerals as well as a number of services. Then I crossed London to see a granddaughter, aged 12. I did rather totter to their front door after the journey. She opened the door and said, 'Grandpa, you're now so old you can hardly walk!'

Don't cry for us, Argentina!



DENNIS WILMOT

David and Shelley Stokes were missionaries to indigenous tribes in the remote north of Argentina for 17 years — and St James's Church supported them for 11 of them.

They have now retired back to England, and are fully immersed in suburban life in Salisbury, which is quite a contrast.

England for them does mean a more comfortable life in many regards. Shelley gets to play her violin, including at their local church, where David takes some services. It is even nice to attend 'normal' Church of England services!

Home comforts appreciated

They appreciate the NHS. The English climate is more tolerable, compared to the fierce heat of a northern Argentinian summer. And while we are concerned with inflation of 10%, that compares favourably with the 40% they faced when in Argentina (and where now it is 100%). And our political turmoil of late is considered normal in Argentina.

The couple's global lifestyle has rubbed off on their children. Sarah is a doctor providing medical care for refugees in Thailand, whilst Jonathan is cycling from Columbia right down South America.

On the day I spoke to David and Shelley, Jon had recently spent nine days in Misión Chaqueña with his indigenous childhood friends.

Argentina draws you in

David says Argentina has a unique charm 'which attracts you back and is not easy to forget. The people are so very friendly, and strangers often stop you in the street



Suburbia David and Shelley Stokes settled back in UK

just to enquire about you. They are always willing to help no matter how bad things are'.

The changes from the relocation have come about slowly. For six months they simply enjoyed attending church without a deeper involvement. And in a sense they are still missing the magic of South America.



Family David and Shelley, Sarah, Jon and his wife AJ

Reflection



Almighty God, the fountain of all goodness, bless our Sovereign Lord, King Charles, and all who are in authority under him; that they may order all things in wisdom and equity, righteousness and peace, to the honour of your name, and the good of your Church and people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

REGISTERS

MARCH

FUNERALS

- 6 Patricia Jean Mitchmore, 90, Hampton
- 29 Ronald James Edward Fishlock, 98, Hanworth

INTERMENTS OF ASHES

- 25 Francis (Frank) William Rycroft, 93, and Anna Rycroft, 92, Northolt

APRIL

FUNERALS

- 5 Margaret Catling, 92, London
- 17 George Long, 82, Twickenham
- 28 Barbara Kathleen Currie, 91, Hanworth



A walk on the wild side

Siobhan grew up on a smallholding in Devon, and rather unexpectedly set off from there to Oxford University to study Chinese, adding a further degree in environmental policy, and professional qualifications in accountancy and economics. Serving in the Foreign Office, she enjoyed a career that took her around the world, supporting international environmental cooperation and climate change negotiations. She moved to the area in 2004, raising her children while making good use of Bushy Park and the River Crane. She first came to St James's to find out about Eco Church events. Siobhan also sings in the choir.

1 PUFFIN MUG

My enthusiasm for wildlife goes back to my earliest childhood, and the South West Coastal Footpath is still very much my happy place. My enthusiasm, however, was not matched with much skill to start with. My family still remember a particularly cold, wet and windy walk along the cliffs of North Devon, at New Year, where we hoped to see the local puffin population – who were, of course, wintering miles out to sea and not due to come back to the cliffs to nest until sunny April!

2 SEAL SCULPTURE

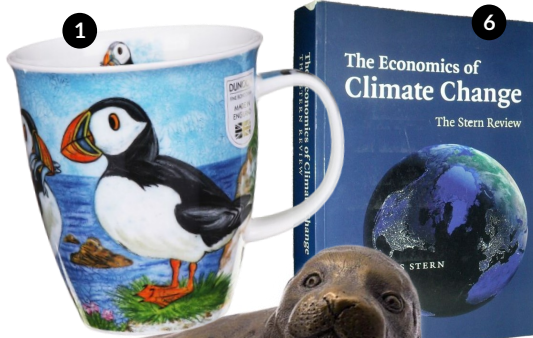
More recently, the winter wildlife watching has been better planned, but still subject to bad luck. An equally cold, wet and windy trip to the North Norfolk beaches to see seals should have been fascinating - if only we had not arrived one day too late. 'Oh yes,' said the locals, 'it was an amazing sight, biggest ever... but they all left yesterday.' There were just a couple of seals left, the last to raise their pups – a lovely sight, before a consolatory visit to a warming local pub.

3 CHINA BOOK

Aged 18, with about six months of Mandarin under my belt, I put on my backpack and headed to China for a solo trip of around three months. I had two main aims – to see the amazing natural landscapes of China, and to understand more about religious observance in China at that time. I travelled far and wide, visiting Chinese temples on sacred mountains, finding Christian churches in unlikely places, and seeing huge Buddha statues carved into the cliffs.

4 CHINESE CAMELS

This trip was also the first of many visits to the town of Lijiang, where I later helped the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh work with their local counterparts to set up a long-term field station for high alpine botany. I also helped to set up a number of projects on climate science, and visited some of China's most fragile ecosystems. I found myself scrambling around in temperate rainforest hoping to glimpse the pandas one week, and visiting grasslands where farmers were trying new techniques to combat desertification the next. The one predictable element in all these visits was the rain – I do like to bring it with me wherever I go. That was not so surprising in high mountains; but considerably more unusual on the trip to the edge of the desert in China's north-western province of Ningxia – they had not had rain for years... before I arrived!



Perhaps it was growing up in idyllic Devon that gave Siobhan Peters her eco enthusiasm and the desire to travel the world to encourage cooperation to fight climate change. That and optimism when seeking out elusive wildlife!

5 ELEPHANT COLLECTION

I have also had the privilege of working more briefly with projects in Tanzania, Ethiopia and South Africa. In Tanzania I worked with a women's group in the town of Dodoma, with a pilot project to build ultra-low cost solar cookers from local materials. The aim was to improve women's health by reducing indoor air pollution and to protect local biodiversity.



That initial project was flawed – not everything works first time – but it has gone on to much greater strengths since then. Visiting Ethiopia, it was impossible not to be aware of the impact of shifting climate patterns in cycles of conflict and drought, but hugely uplifting to understand local efforts to adapt and build peace. In South Africa, the trip was almost derailed by an encounter with a bull elephant, who was in no mood to let us pass, no matter how good our intentions!

6 STERN REVIEW BOOK

I came back to London in 2004, where I supported the UK's efforts to revitalise the UN climate change negotiations, building a broader consensus for action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by considering the wider benefits for air quality and fuel poverty. This helped bring countries with disparate interests back to the table at a time when negotiations had stalled. The debate around the economics of tackling climate change was particularly fractious: would it further impoverish the global South? Would it set back global efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals? I led the team that supported Lord Stern to produce his authoritative review, and presented the findings to leaders around the world. Of course, there is so much more to do to avert the climate emergency that we now face, but there are many inspiring examples of climate action around the world, and we do have the technologies and the know-how to make an enormous difference at this critical time.

7 QUEEN'S AWARD

My contribution was recognised in the Queen's birthday honours in 2007, where I was appointed a Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George, for services to the economics of climate change.

8 LAVENDER, BUTTERFLIES AND BEES

My personal carbon footprint is much reduced these days, as I am no longer involved in climate diplomacy. My work in the UK supports efforts to reach Net Zero, and in my spare time, I focus on gardening for wildlife. My lavender bushes support a thriving colony of bees, and a tangled old buddleia on the railway line behind my house attracts a steady stream of butterflies. Even though Long Covid keeps me close to home these days, I'm looking forward to taking part in the UK-wide Big Butterfly Count, from 14 July-6 August.

