

IN THE PEWS...

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2025



THE MAGAZINE FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERD
WITH ST PETER'S, LEE

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The photo on the front cover is of the lighting of the lamps service on Christmas Eve

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**The deadline for the April/May 2025
In the Pews magazine is
Thursday 20 March
Articles submitted after this date
cannot be guaranteed to be published.**

Around the Parish

Who to Contact While We Don't Have a Vicar

Many people will know that Bridget, our Vicar, is currently on sabbatical and soon after her return will be leaving us to become the next Archdeacon of Wandsworth. It will be a while until a new vicar is appointed. In the meantime, there are strong teams in place such as the Ministry Team, the St Peter's Management Group, the Eco Group, the Music Team, the Childrens' Church, the Youth Group and there are established or developing communication channels with the leaders of most of these teams. However, the Vicar was often the initial channel for communication so, for the moment, please address ministry and pastoral matters in the first instance to Chris as an Assistant Curate in Training or Cherry as Licenced Lay Minister, PCC issues to Pete Burns who will now chair PCC/Standing committee (or the PCC Secretary), and any other general issues to the wardens, Sue and James. Otherwise feel free to make contact via Fiona, our Parish Administrator, who can direct you to the right person.

You can find their contact details on the back page.

Youth

Youth has returned every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month, 6-7.15 pm, and we are gearing up for confirmations in June on Pentecost Sunday when the Bishop of Woolwich will be at our Church service to confirm those who want to take a step of faith. If you would like to be confirmed or know what it means, talk to Curate Chris.

Pioneering

A long time ago, in 2024, the Good Shepherd was approached to take on the Station Pub quiz because of the great relationships with the community fostered through years of work with F.U.S.S (friends and users of Staplehurst shops) via members of the Church. Since then, a team from the Good Shepherd comprised of Curate Chris, John Bramson and Simon Frewin and the newest member, Phil Wood, have run seven pub quizzes, raising over £600 for AFRIL, our partners in the Helping Hand foodbank and FUSS.

Over Christmas, Chris and Nathan Lechler had a great time leading a packed pub to a Christmas carol sing-along, which was well received.

We continue to think about how to be a light in our community through acts of service and incarnational presence as Curate Chris thinks about what's next with the Station Pub team.

Hithertones Choral Evensong

Join Hithertones and the Good Shepherd Choirs as they lead us in an evening of blissful choral evensong on Sunday 9th February. Enjoy a services of sung meditative prayers and music.

The services starts at 5pm with refreshments available from 4.30 beforehand.

Saturday Meditation Sessions

Our regular meditation sessions will continue through the year. They are on the second and fourth Saturdays in the month,

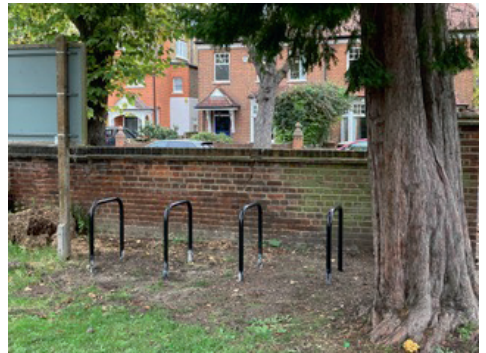
9 - 9.30am, in the Good Shepherd Church Office (the blue door opposite Wantage Rd). Come and join us for any session, or to find out more about it beforehand please contact Barbara (barbara.bird09@btinternet.com / 020 8463 0988). Each session includes a twenty minute period of silence. Watch out for additional sessions during lent.

Lent

Lent begins with a service on Ash Wednesday evening (5th March). Last year's Lent Group in the Station pub will be run again. Watch out for notices in church for more details and other events.

New Bike Racks

There are now bike racks installed at the Good Shepherd thanks to the work of the Church Eco Group. This is part of our commitment to reducing our impact on the environment and they already proving very popular for services and events in the



An Update on What's Happening at the Good Shepherd

Bridget, our Vicar, announced just before Christmas that she had just heard that she has been appointed to be the next Archdeacon of Wandsworth. Perhaps no surprise to many as in addition to being our Vicar and Area Dean, Bridget has acted as Archdeacon for the Lewisham part of our Archdeaconry during 2024 and has had a really positive profile in the Diocese. We had just celebrated 10 years of her fruitful ministry in our parish; she has led us through the development of our vision & the re positioning of St Peter's as a resource for social action, our recovery post COVID, our recent growth in numbers & engagement in the community and has set the inclusive cultural tone. We are grateful for all that she and her family have done.

Bridget is currently on sabbatical but will be back at the end of March to lead us in our Easter celebrations and to spend time properly saying goodbye to people. Her

last Sunday is expected to be Sunday the 27th April, the Sunday after Easter, which will be a special service followed by a celebratory farewell event in the Hall.

Bridget's new job also means that the family will move, probably in the first week of May. That means that Nick, who is a Licensed Lay Minister (LLM) and has exercised his ministry in our Youth work, will also be moving, so the celebratory farewell is also for Nick and the whole family.

Bridget's sabbatical gives us time to put in place those things needed to sustain us through the interregnum (the period after she leaves and before we receive the next incumbent). Much of the formal responsibility passes to the Churchwardens Sue and James in an interregnum with the support of the Area Dean (whoever succeeds Bridget) and the Archdeacon (Chigor). However, much to the relief of the Wardens we are in a privileged position as we have a much wider team in place to share the responsibility:

Worship will continue with Chris and Cherry supported by the ministry team and visiting celebrants if Chris is not available to lead the communion. A focus of the Wardens and the PCC will be on finding a new Vicar who shares our inclusive values and who will lead us in building on our recent growth and help us in fulfilling our vision to "Shine God's light to our community and sharing the good news of God's love for all". We have a Mission Action Plan (MAP), Pete Burns is leading a team to compile a Parish Profile, Sue and



Christian Guided silent Meditation

come to me
all who are weary and are
heavy laden,
and I will give you
rest

MATTHEW 11:29

Meditation sessions 2nd and 4th Saturdays each month,
9-9.30 am, in the GS Office.
All are welcome to seek some peace and escape from our busy life
(involves a period 20 mins of silence).

James have met with the Patron and the Archdeacon (key figures in the recruitment process) and our aim is to minimise the interregnum. However, legally we cannot start the formal process until after Bridget has formally left the payroll, i.e. we cannot approve the Parish Profile or advertise until that date. Hence, the other focus of the Wardens, PCC and Ministry team is to work to a sustainable model that allows everybody to contribute to the health and life of our church fulfilling our baptismal vocations. Before she left, in her last sermon Bridget said that one thing that gave her the confidence to move on was that she thought that between us all we have the talent and capacity necessary to continue to grow as a church. We pray that God will enable that to be true as we also pray for God's power for Bridget in her new and exciting role and blessing on Nick and the Shepherd family.

Give to Go Green Project

In July the church applied for a "Give to Go Green" grant to draught proof the lobbies at the back of the church. The internal doors from the lobby to the church hall are left open during services to be welcoming, which caused draughts and heat loss.

The proposal is to repair the outer doors which are draughty and to replace the inner doors with new Oak veneered solid core doors with glass panels to allow



visibility into the church.

The door into the hall by the ramp will also be accessible door with a push button suitable for wheelchairs.

In November we successfully raised £3,500 with a quiz and other giving and the have now received the matched funding from the "Give to Go Green" grant.

The Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) has now approved the faculty application with a couple of provisos and the next step is to contact the companies who quoted for the work to let them know of the changes to the specification. The work should be completed by the summer and done concurrently with repair and redecoration of the lobbies funded from the normal maintenance budget.

A Little Help for Ukraine

With so much going on in the world which appals us it is dispiriting and depressing that there seems to be little or nothing we can do to alleviate the suffering. The poor, oppressed, sick, bereaved and persecuted have our prayers but here at the Good Shepherd we also try to give some practical support, however slight, to those in need.

In addition to the Helping Hands Food Bank which provides food, toiletries and other essentials to around 30 refugee families in Lewisham, we also run ESOL (English as a Second Language) classes for a number of Ukrainians who have fled the horrors of the Russian invasion of their homeland.

Prior to the Covid pandemic ESOL classes were provided at St Peter's for a small number of refugees. These ended with "lock down" but following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 weekly term time coffee mornings and ESOL classes have been run for Ukrainian refugees at the Good Shepherd on Tuesday mornings.

We have about 20 Ukrainians and a team of volunteers helping with the coffee and the classes. Initially the classes were led by a qualified ESOL teacher but after two years she is taking a well earned break in order to return to university.

The classes have continued under amateur leadership, doing its best to follow the

excellent example of the professional guidance. The group is divided into Beginners and Advanced. I have been helping with the advanced group and have been struck by the good humour and friendliness of the Ukrainians. The majority are older women with families very much caught up in the war back home. There are a few retired men. Both the men and women are a "high powered" bunch. We have a former economics professor and a retired intellectual property lawyer. Some are here until it is safe for them to return home, others, particularly those with children, have decided to make England their home – at least until their children have completed their education.

As a native English speaker, helping to teach a foreigner English is a fascinating exercise. English is an extraordinary language with so many exceptions to any rules about spelling and pronunciation that the exceptions seem to outnumber the rules. Take, for example, "ough": it can be pronounced uff as in rough, tough; enough; oh as in though; although; ow as in plough; bough; ah as in in borough; thorough; off as in cough; oo as in through and or as in ought, bought and brought!

And then there are the idioms. We had great fun going through all the expressions which come from cricket: he's on a sticky wicket; he was bowled a googly; he was stumped etc. Then there are all the French words and expressions in common

use which retain, more or less, a French pronunciation: rendez-vous; tete a tete; je ne sais quois, joi de vivre; dejas vue etc as well Latin (et cetera), German (schardefreude) and Italian (al fresco) phrases and words. The Americans don't help with their contrary spelling and odd usages (side walk; trunk; theater; labor etc). We have to explain that generally we Brits do understand US slang, spelling and pronunciation but Americans are mystified by British idioms.

Imperial measurements are another area of mystification. How do you explain that there are 16 ounces to the pound, 14 pounds to the stone, 1,760 yards to the mile and 12 inches to the foot? And that's before one gets to pints, gallons and British Thermal Units! It's all very difficult to fathom!

The good news is that although English is difficult to get right it is surprisingly easy to understand and people are generally very good at making sense of what they hear however oddly it is pronounced or however grammatically incorrect any sentence is and our Ukrainians are, hopefully, settling in to their new homes and making some sense of what is going on around them.

Just before Christmas we all went on a tour of

the Houses of Parliament. We learnt that during the blitz the Houses of Parliament were hit by air raids 14 times, killing four people. A bomb fell through the roof of the chamber of the House of Lords and landed on the floor. Fortunately, it didn't explode. The House of Commons was completely destroyed by incendiary bombs (as was the Good Shepherd Church) and not rebuilt until 1950. This brought home what Ukraine is currently suffering and that our beautiful planet continues to be bedevilled by the horrors of war.

By welcoming these Ukrainian refugees, and helping them settle in their new surroundings and to make sense of them, we are, I hope doing a little, a very very little, to alleviate a tiny bit of the suffering caused by the horrors of war.

Richard Clough



Report from the Stewardship Campaign

Before the Stewardship team steps down at the next APCM, we wanted to thank you for your response to last year's campaign and give you an update on the result.

The Stewardship campaign was not heavily branded but encompassed six sermons, four talks, 2 booklets and multiple Mailchimps from July to October on our use of all our God given resources and on our role as members of the church community. In that context, some sermons focussed giving of time and money for our own mission and ministry.

We hope that we learnt something as a church on the more holistic but less measurable themes. However, the church also did respond financially with a 50% increase in regular giving and with some generous

donations. THANK YOU! This has meant that an expected deficit turned into a small surplus in 2024 and that significant funds have been generated to help us meet the challenges of 2025.

In addition in November we also successfully raised £3,500 with a quiz and other giving and we have now received the matched funding from the "Give to Go Green" grant – Sue will provide a fuller update on this project in a couple of weeks time.

Over the Christmas period, it was visible that our church community is very well supported by volunteers: thank you, thank you, thank you –

it was so good that we were able to welcome so many of the local community into church. Many of these tasks are also faithfully carried out during the rest of the year but perhaps not so visibly.

There is still plenty of opportunities to exercise our different gifts to build up the body of Christ in service to the world. And some real needs to be met.

The existing Stewardship team have decided that as a final huzzah we will try and arrange some form of volunteering opportunities event so that people can find out what activities are going on and what is involved. We hope to identify potential jobs with people's talents and vocations – watch this space.



STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

What's Happening at Foodbank

As we step into the new year, we wanted to take a moment to extend our heartfelt gratitude for your support throughout the past year. The Helping Hands Foodbank partnership with AFRIL has continued to support around 40 families and people, ranging from young families to older individuals. We supply food, groceries, laundry and toiletries. We also offer warm friendly cafe and space for the members.

Recent Achievements:

- Christmas donations and card: With your help we were able to make the holiday period a little more special with donations and cards. The AFRIL members really voiced their appreciation and thanks.
- The Mayor of Lewisham, Brenda Dacres, spent a morning at the Foodbank in December. She met the team and sat down with the Foodbank members. She listened to their stories and understood the



impact that the Foodbank makes in our community. She plans to come back soon!

- Volunteer Support: We have welcomed new members to the volunteer team, and this makes a big difference. If you are interested in joining, talk to one of the church team

How You Can Help:

- Donate: You can still bring donations to the vicarage porch for the time being, bring to church services (leave donations by the font) or bring to the church office on Tuesday or Thursday mornings. St Peter's Hall is open for donations on alternate Friday afternoons (the day before Foodbank Saturdays).
- Volunteer: We always welcome new volunteers. Whether you can give a few hours or a whole day, your time makes a difference.

Thank you once again for your incredible support. Together, we are making a positive impact and bringing hope to those who need it most.

St Peter's Hall

As a result of deliberations over the last few years, the PCC (our church's governing body) decided in early 2024 that that we should use the St. Peter's building to serve the community, and to fulfil our priority to pursue social justice for all. This may be through our own activities, or by offering space to other charities and organisations that are involved in social justice.

A committee was set up to oversee the development of St Peter's into a building and a set-up to facilitate these aims.

We entered into a partnership with an organisation, Lee Green Lives (LGL), who provide services for the local community and particularly those in greatest need. They had been based in Leegate but of course had to move out to make way for the redevelopment. They will be running day-time activities on most weekdays but there will still be spaces for our own initiatives.

As part of the committee and wardens' work, a process to de-dedicate St Peter's has been co-ordinated by the Churchwarden (James) and is now complete. This means that we have permission not to hold services there, can make most changes without referring them to the diocese and will no longer be able to celebrate marriages there. This doesn't mean that we can't hold public service at St Peter's just that we won't have regular services. Indeed, we have committed to running at least two services a year.



Lee Green Lives occupy the building several days a week but there is still room for us to pursue many of our own activities such as the Foodbank at St Peter's. We also continue to hire out the building to members of the local community for parties and other events. Our own outreach activities include subsidising the use of the Hall by groups such as an ex-prisoner group, an AA group aimed at parents and carers with children and a Syrian refugee group who run dance sessions as well of course at Foodbank.

After 25 years using St Peter's, the Living Word Christian fellowship gave notice that they will not renew the Hall Hire Agreement when it expires at the end of December. This move was not unexpected, but it is a loss, and a loss of income. However negotiations are nearly complete with another church, New House of Sion, which is a largely Spanish and Portuguese speaking church aimed at those communities. As you can imagine, we believe it is important to ensure that

their beliefs and ways of preaching the gospel are compatible with ours. However, as they already use a number of other Church of England churches, we hope that this will not be an issue.

This year is set to be an exciting one as we extend our activities and look to further develop the building.

Our Fairtrade Stall - The Fairtrade Kitchen Cupboard

The Fairtrade stall at the Good Shepherd is part of our commitment to sustainable and fair trading relationships with individual and third world producers

We will be running stalls after the morning service at the Good Shepherd on the following dates:
Sun 23 February,
Sun 2 March and
Sun 16 March.

Don't forget to stock up on fairtrade chocolate for Easter.

We take payment by card or cash, or by IOU if you are a regular at the church. The stock is stored at the Good Shepherd, so you can also



ask Gail or John M to supply you with items any time we are there, even if the stall is not set up. You can order online too at www.thefairtradekc.co.uk. For online orders, we take the payment from you in person when we deliver, not online when you place the order. If there are any other ways to shop that would make it easier for you to buy from us, please have a chat to Gail about this.

Morning Prayer

A Short Service of Prayer and Bible readings said in community

Every Wednesday 9.00-9.30am
in the parish room (ramp entrance)

Services at the Good Shepherd

Sunday morning service -
10.30am

Wednesday morning service -
9.00am Morning Prayer

Youth Group -
First and Third Sundays - 6pm

Meditation Group - Second and
Fourth Saturdays 9 - 9.30am



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