

# Parish Magazine

£1



April / May 2018

Chichester Road, Croydon

[www.stmatthew.org.uk](http://www.stmatthew.org.uk)

Registered Charity No: 1132508

**Services at St Matthew's**

## **Sunday Morning Services**

**1<sup>st</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays**

**8.30 am Eucharist (Said)**

**10.00 am Parish Eucharist with Choir and Children's Groups  
followed by tea and coffee in the foyer**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday**

**8.30 am Eucharist (Said)**

**10.00am All Age Service**

## **Sunday Evening Service**

**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday 5.00pm Healing Service with Prayers**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday 6.00pm as announced**

## **Morning Prayer**

**Monday to Thursday 7.45 am**

**Tuesday**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday 3.30pm**



**Wednesday**

**10.00 am Holy Communion (Said)**

**Baptisms, Weddings and Banns of Marriage**

**By arrangement with the Vicar**

## ***St Matthew's Vision***

***'Celebrating God's love throughout the whole  
community***

***By what we believe and do'.***



## ***The Vicar Writes...***

Dear Friend,

During the month of May we celebrate two key festivals in the life of the Church. Ascension Day falls on Thursday the 10<sup>th</sup> May, and ten days later comes the Day of Pentecost, Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> May. Jesus ascends to the right hand of the Father in heaven and then the Holy Spirit is poured out upon the disciples - men, women and children - as they gathered together to pray "in one place". (Acts 2)

The Ascension assures us that the humanity which Jesus assumed when he entered this world, is now forever with God, which means that we will be forever with God. Pentecost assures us that the Spirit who came upon Mary and anointed Jesus at his baptism is now living in *our* hearts and lives.

During the nine days between 10<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> May we are called to pray "Thy Kingdom Come". We pray this prayer every time we say the Lord's Prayer, but this is a call from our Archbishop's to make this prayer our priority for this short and focussed period of time.

Many books have been written about the kingdom of God, but the essence of the meaning of these words is that the rule or reign of God in heaven, is brought to the earth. In himself, Jesus fully expressed the kingdom of God, so in his Church, we should also live under the rule of God. When the kingdom of God is present then sin, sickness, injustice, pain, suffering and death are done away with, and in their place comes light and life, joy and peace, and above all else, love. So when we pray "Thy kingdom come" we are seeking nothing less than the total transformation of this world through the goodness, grace and power of God. Until the Lord comes, this transformation takes place gradually, as people turn to Christ and find forgiveness and new life, and as we as God's people are being made more and more into the likeness of Jesus.

May we be willing to give of our time and effort to pray between Ascension and Pentecost to join in with what has become a global movement of prayer, so that by his Spirit God will move in our hearts, making a difference in us, so that we may make a difference in the world.

With my love and prayers.

*Simon*



## Messy Church

The next Messy Church will be on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> April at 3.30pm. Please pray for this important outreach into our community and come along to help if you can!

## Songs of Praise

There will be a special service of Songs of Praise on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> April at 6.00pm. If you would like a particular hymn or song to be sung at this service please contact Simon or Alison Radford. Please join us as we raise our voices in praise to the Lord.

## Annual Parochial Church Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> April

Our Annual Parochial Church Meeting this year will be on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> April, after the 10.00am service, starting around 11.30am. Please do try and come to this important annual meeting where churchwardens are elected and reports received.



## Christian Aid Week

This year, Christian Aid Week runs from 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> May. On May 13<sup>th</sup> there will be a special All Age Service followed by a barbecue lunch, to launch the week. Please come to the service and the lunch if you possibly can.

If you would like a Christian Aid donation envelope to support this year's appeal, please contact Terry in the church office.

Your support for this excellent cause is much appreciated.

# Addiscombe Festival

On Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> May this year's Addiscombe Carnival will be taking place at Ashburton Park, from 11.00am to 5.00pm. Please come along and support the stalls that the churches will be running, and above all, please pray that we will have an effective presence at this major community event.

## Stewardship Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> June

Stewardship Sunday will be on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, when there will be a presentation on the finances of the church. It is at this service that we invite everyone to review their giving to St Matthew's, so please pray first of all that the Lord will continue to meet all our needs out of the riches of his grace, and secondly please pray about the amount of financial support you are able to give to the church. Please do come to this special service.



Don't forget that Prayer Ministry for healing is available in the Lady Chapel after the 10.00am service every Sunday.



## An Easter reflection

Taken from the current (March/ April) bi-monthly issue of “Every Day With Jesus” Bible reading notes written by Selwyn Hughes; the theme is a “A Higher Love.” John 20 v 1-18; Song of Songs 8 v 5-7

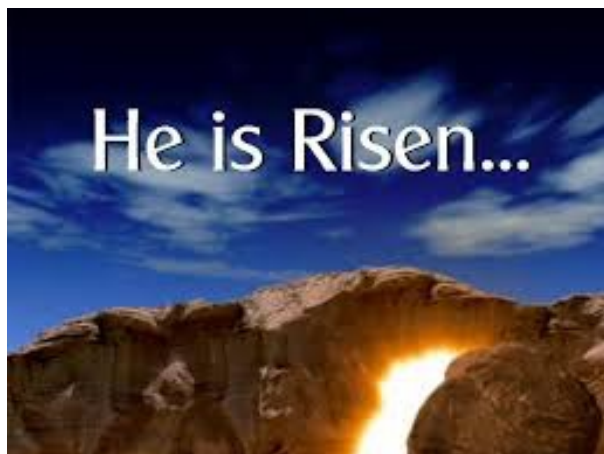


A God who would give Himself for me on a cross has got to be good.

I live by the cross. I know of no other place to be safe. The cross gives me the basis for believing that the heart behind the universe is good. I have no hesitation in giving Him my love, for I know through what He did for me on the cross that His heart is good. Easter

Day has been regarded by the saints throughout history as the most wonderful day in the Christian calendar. Every day of our lives is a response to our risen Lord. The resurrection life of Jesus works as well in December as it does in April.

And what is the meaning behind Easter? It is that God, our Ageless Romancer, has gone through death, the final barrier, in order to win us back to Himself. In his book, *Prayer*, Simon Tugwell says, “Our hope is God’s determination to save us. He will not give in.” He is a determined lover, this Man of Calvary. He came through what Paul calls “the last enemy”- death- to enable us to feel His life and His love reverberating in our souls. So don’t think of Easter merely in terms of the resurrection of Christ - that is a doctrine; but let us also think of Jesus and His resurrection - that is a dynamic. Let us make sure that in proclaiming the truth of God, we do not lose touch with the love of God.





## Praying for Croydon

### Croydon Street Pastors -The church in action on the streets

Our teams of trained volunteers, all from local churches, serve the Lord in Croydon's town centre most Friday and alternate Saturday nights. Since 2007 we've been ministering to those enjoying the night time economy, offering help and showing concern for their wellbeing. While the majority of pub-goers and clubbers enjoy a good time, for some the experience is not so positive. Street Pastors help those who are in distress or vulnerable, whether sick or drunk, victims of violence or crime, or maybe just needing to know where to get a taxi or night bus home.

As an initiative of Ascension Trust we work in partnership with Croydon Council and the Police. We also have an active link with the owners of late-night venues in the town centre.

Please pray:

- ☐ For safety, protection, sensitivity, good team morale and peace on the streets on the streets while they are out.
- ☐ For positive relations with Council, Police, and venue owners.
- ☐ For new members to join the team.
- ☐ For wisdom for those who oversee this work.



Croydon is the largest London borough by population size.

Croydon is the London borough with the highest figures for domestic abuse and violence.

In recent figures, Croydon was the London borough with the highest number of suicides.

## Remembering the Persecuted Church

### Death toll from Fulani herdsmen continues to rise in Central Nigeria



Nine people were killed by militant Islamic Fulani cattle herders in Nzharuvo village about 10 miles from Jos, Plateau State, Central Nigeria on the evening of 8<sup>th</sup> March. This happened as President Buhari rounded up his visit to the state where he commended the state government for its “peace building” initiative. Global Christian News was at the mass burial of the massacre

on Friday as families mourned the dead in makeshift graves. The dead were given quick burials because taking the corpses to the mortuary would be expensive for them and leaving them will serve no purpose, a church leader said. The Rev Andrew Okebe, speaking to Global Christian News, said the gunmen could be identified by the language they spoke during the attack - though they wore black gowns and wore black face masks. People fled into the bushes and those that were either too old to run or were invalids were killed. An entire family, who could not run out of their home, was butchered. A toddler hacked with a machete died two days later in hospital.

“As a pastor, I join other pastors to take turns every night as part of the community vigilante. We can only take turns to sleep at night, but the issue here is, just as they came, how do we defend our village with sticks and torchlights? We can only raise alarms so people can run. But how far can you run from the bullet of an AK47 in the dark?” said Pastor Okebe. “It is a shame that the herdsmen chose to prove to us that even with the visit of the president amidst tight security, they can destroy us and nothing will be done.” A church elder who wants anonymity said, “Of course Buhari only came to play politics and our governor is trying to prove that he has everything under control. They have played their politics; we are left to bury our dead. Nothing will happen. That is how life is now.”



## Pastor in Tajikistan calls for prayer after church raid

The pastor of a church in Tajikistan has called for prayer after secret police raided a church worship service on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018. Police took photographs and filmed the congregation. They also attempted to search church ministry offices, without the permission or presence of the church leaders. After the service, the Police questioned the two church leaders at length before leaving. The pastors of the church have already been given two warnings and fined. If a third fine and warnings are issued, the church faces the possibility of being shut down. The import and distribution of religious literature has to be approved by authorities in Tajikistan and similar confiscations have led to Christians being imprisoned. In July 2017, Pastor Bakhrom Kholmatov, a 42 year-old father of three, was jailed for three years after police confiscated “subversive” hymnbooks from his church.

The pastor of the church raided on 11<sup>th</sup> March writes: “Please pray for this situation; that the Lord gives us the opportunity to continue to freely testify about our faith in Jesus Christ; that we have the opportunity to have the necessary Christian literature for self-education and for testimony; that the Lord will not allow them to close our church.”

## Christians now targets of abuse in Kenya after Al-Shabaab attacks

Recent Al-Shabaab attacks on Christians in northern Nigeria have left children traumatised, shut down transport links and severed trust between Somali locals and Christians, who are now the targets of public abuse. Barnabas Fund’s project partner in the region writes, “Fresh Al-Shabaab attacks erupted in Lamu early 2018 with the militants targeting villages around the army base... pray for our children who are really traumatised by the situations happening in the field. I recall my firstborn asking me, “Dad why can’t you request for an airplane to take us out of this place?”



Movement between towns and villages has become a great challenge, as militants have planted landmines on roads. The few drivers willing to carry passengers are charging fares up to five times the normal rate. The murder of the three Christians at Qarsa primary school on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2018 has severed trust between Somali locals and

Christians, as locals are believed to know the perpetrators of the attack. Nearly all the Christian teachers in Wajir have fled the area and most of the communities in Wajir have grown hostile to Christians.”

## Story behind the Easter hymn - "He Lives"

Jesus had just appeared to His disciples to confirm the reports of Mary Magdalene and the two that met Him on the road to Emmaus. Many of them hadn't believed and thought that someone had taken Jesus' body. BUT THEN HE APPEARED! Caught in the sudden amazement of it and marvelling at His appearance, the disciples were having difficulty grasping what had happened.

We know the phrase, "it's too good to be true," and we understand why one would say this. But Luke 24 v 41 is a figure of speech in the Greek that means the same thing. This was so wonderful, so magnificent that how could it really be true? They marvelled in unbelief and stood there gazing when Jesus said, "I'm not a ghost. Look at my hands and my feet. Touch me and see that I'm real." This certainly was a miracle of God.

In the 1930's, there was a preacher named Alfred Ackley who was born in Spring Hill, Pennsylvania, in 1887. He loved music as did his brother, Bentley, 15 years his senior. Both went on to attend the Royal Academy of Music in London. While Bentley devoted his life to playing and writing music, Alfred entered the preaching ministry. He attended Westminster Theological Seminary and, in 1914, he was ordained into the Presbyterian Church. In the 1930's he held a series of evangelistic meetings and, after one of them,



a young Jewish student asked the question, "Why should I worship a dead Jew?" Using the Scriptures to witness to him, Pastor Ackley began to explain to this young man how that Jesus was alive. "He Lives! I tell you; He is not dead, but lives here and now! Jesus Christ is more alive today than ever before. I can prove it by my own experience, as well as the testimony of countless thousands."

Ackley's excitement and zeal about his risen Saviour would not go away. Sparked by this young man's question and later refuelled as Pastor Ackley prepared his Easter sermon, the resurrection of our Saviour was ever on his thoughts. On that Resurrection Day as he rose early to prepare, Ackley switched on his radio and was shocked to hear a liberal preacher say something like this; "You know, it really doesn't matter to me if Christ be risen or not. His body could have turned to dust long ago in some Palestinian tomb. But what's important is that His truth goes marching on!" "It's a lie," Pastor Ackley yelled. He was worked up by what he heard and it mixed with his

continual thoughts of the Scripture, "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said." Ackley preached with great fervency both that morning and evening on the realisation of our Lord's resurrection. But later that night, he still could not shake the question of that young Jewish student and the words of that liberal preacher. It was then that his wife encouraged him to do something about it and write a hymn about the truth of our risen Saviour. After reading Mark's Gospel account of Christ's resurrection, Pastor Ackley began to pen the words to "He Lives." Moments later he was at the piano putting music to the words that the Lord had given him. Little did he know that it would soon become an extremely popular Easter hymn.

I serve a risen Saviour, He's in the world today  
I know that He is living, whatever men may say  
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer  
And just the time I need Him He's always near

He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Christ Jesus lives today  
He walks with me and talks with me  
Along life's narrow way  
He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Salvation to impart  
You ask me how I know He lives?  
He lives within my heart

In all the world around me I see His loving care  
And though my heart grows weary I never will despair  
I know that He is leading, through all the stormy blast  
The day of His appearing will come at last

He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Christ Jesus lives today  
He walks with me and talks with me  
Along life's narrow way  
He...



## Depression

During the past week (just prior to printing this issue) I have had discussions with four people who shared with me the pain and frustration of depression. So the material (including book reviews) I had intended for the next three pages is postponed till the June/July issue. Instead, I've incorporated some interesting background information followed by some (hopefully) helpful Bible verses on this topic, and finally a short reflection.

**Anxiety or depression affects nearly one in five UK adults** according to the Office for National Statistics which says the highest incidence of mild mental illness is in 50-54 age group and among women. Nearly a fifth of adults in the UK experience anxiety or depression, according to the latest official figures. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said a higher proportion of women than men reported that they suffered from the conditions, with the highest indication of anxiety or depression occurring in the 50-54 age group.

There was evidence of anxiety or depression in 19% of people aged 16 or over, with 21% of women reporting the symptoms and 16% of men. People who were divorced or separated were more likely to have



symptoms of mild to moderate mental ill health, with 27% showing signs of the conditions compared with 20% of those who were single, cohabiting or widowed and 16% of those who were married or in a civil partnership.

Higher levels were also recorded by those who were not in paid work – 23% reported they were experiencing mental health issues, compared with 15% of those in paid work. The ONS also revealed that 38% of those who said they were relatively unhappy with their health had some indication of anxiety or depression, compared with 11% of those who declared themselves to be relatively satisfied with their health. Carers were more likely to report mild to moderate mental health issues, at a rate of 25% of those questioned, compared with 17% of people who did not provide such care. The study is part of the ONS Measuring National Wellbeing programme, which surveyed 40,000 households between 2010 and 2011. The figures come from the general health questionnaire, which asked 12 questions about respondents' levels of self-confidence, stress, depression and self-worth.

The ONS said the types of mental illness recorded on the questionnaire did not include severe mental disorders. The latest figures released as part of the Wellbeing study also showed that 66% of people in the UK were satisfied with their health. In those aged 80 or older, satisfaction with health fell to 53%.

## Bible themed references – “Depression”

“The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; for you, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You.” (Psalm 9 v 9-10)

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you.” (Isaiah 43 v 2)

“For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall my covenant of peace be removed,” says the Lord, who has mercy on you. (Isaiah 54 v 10)

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” (2 Corinthians 1 v 2-4)

“It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; He will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.” (Deut. 31 v 8)

....fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41 v 10)

“I waited patiently for the Lord; He inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.” (Psalm 40 v 1-3)

“The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” (Deut. 33 v 27)

“You, Lord, are my lamp; the Lord turns my darkness into light.” (2 Sam’ 22 v 29)

“.... But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” (Isaiah 40 v 31)



## Dealing with depression

I've selected this item from the current issue of the quarterly "Word For Today" (United Christian Broadcasters) which is read by many in the congregation. My hope and prayer is that this will be an encouragement for those who are currently experiencing difficulties of this nature.

"Your words .....were my joy and my heart's delight." (Jeremiah 15 v 16)

People in Bible times dealt with depression. Elijah said, "I have had enough, Lord....Take my life." (1 Kings 19 v 4). Job said, "I hate my very life." (Job 10 v 1). David wrote, "My soul is downcast." (Psalm 42 v 6)

Now when you're *clinically* depressed you should seek professional help. But the kind of depression we're talking about here is when your motivation is drained, your desire to pursue God is gone, your conversations have turned sour, you're blind to your blessings, your enthusiasm is forced and you're in a daze regarding the future. Here are some possible causes:

1. *Sin.* Sin is like a stone in your shoe; you'll have no peace until you get it out. No holiday, job change, relationship change, or doctor will heal it. But the blood of Jesus will cleanse it. ( see 1 John 1 v 7)
2. *Greed.* King Ahab's obsession with owning Naboth's vineyard made him miserable and affected his entire family. (1 Kings 21 v 4)
3. *Comparisons.* Constantly comparing yourself to others will depress you. (2 Corinthians 10 v 12).
4. *Speaking negatively.* "The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences." ( Proverbs 18 v 21)
5. *Fatigue.* Jesus called His disciples aside to rest. Why? Because He recognised that when fatigue walks in, faith walks out. (Mark 6 v 31)
6. *Unforgiveness.* When you refuse to forgive someone, you carry then like an albatross around your neck. So, what's the remedy for depression? Often it starts with prayer and Bible reading. Jeremiah, who battled depression, wrote, "When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight."

## The Great North Wood

Several readers commented on how much they appreciated the article about Croydon's history in the February/March issue so I thought you might like some more local history. This is an edited version of an article written by Moira O' Donnell first published on [www.insidecroydon.com](http://www.insidecroydon.com), and republished here with permission.



It was a photograph of a Thornton Heath street sign on Twitter that set me off on a mission to discover more about the Great North Wood and its legacy in Croydon.

The Great North Wood is a sprawling ancient landscape of woods and commons and is itself a remnant of the vast wildwood that blanketed Britain after the end of the last Ice Age. It was named North Wood in Anglo-Saxon times to distinguish it from the huge South Wood which covered Surrey, Sussex and Kent. The Great North Wood stretched for several miles between the Thames and Croydon; from Deptford in the north to Selhurst in the south with the dominant trees being hornbeam and oak. It must have been a wild, beautiful and sometimes dangerous landscape, consisting of a mosaic of dense forest, scrub, gorse-covered heath, ponds and streams. With little human habitation, it would have been the realm of wolves, boars and other wild animals, making it an ideal place for criminals and other fugitives to flee for shelter from the law.



Throughout the Middle Ages the Wood was managed by local people for timber, charcoal, tannin and firewood and it even provided some of the raw materials to help build ships in Nelson's Navy, but by the Industrial Revolution and the Enclosure Acts from the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century onward, it lost its economic validity, and eventually much of it was partitioned and cleared, sold off for the housing developments of South London's suburbs. Today, all that is left is a series of scraps of the Great North Wood, in small woodlands, parks, cemeteries, sports grounds, railway embankments and even back gardens.

The largest remaining tracts are Sydenham Hill and Dulwich Woods. Evidence of the Great North Wood lives on in several place names, the most

obvious of which is Norwood itself. Other examples indicative of a sylvan past are Woodside, Selhurst and Penge. Then we have the place which inspired my quest – Colliers Water Lane in Thornton Heath. A collier was a charcoal burner, and from the Middle Ages till the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, charcoal was the commodity for which Croydon became best known. Charcoal was an important domestic and industrial fuel, and because of its rich woodland surroundings Croydon was a main source of fuel for London in the days before coal was brought down by boat from the north-east of England. In an account of Croydon written in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I we learn: “The streets were deep hollow ways and very dirty, the houses generally with wooden steps into them - and the inhabitants in general were smiths and colliers.”

The colliers of Croydon seem to have been a notorious lot, with their soot-blackened faces giving them the “Croydon complexyone” and they have been immortalised in several works of poetry and prose. For example, in “*Quip for an Upstart Courtier*” by Robert Greene, published in 1592, we find the following line: “Marry, quoth hee that lookt like Lucifer, though I am black, I am not the Divell, but indeed a collyer of Croydon.” A significant number of Croydon colliers appear to have been roguish characters, being regularly caught trying to pass off short-measure sack loads of charcoal. The punishment was for the perpetrator to be put in the stocks – pilloried — and have his undersized sacks burnt nearby. In the 1662 play ***Grim the Collier of Croydon***, the fictional Grim admits to having been “five times pillered, my Coles given to the Poor, and my Sacks burnt before my face.”

With their sooty faces and roguish tendencies, it is no wonder that the colliers were regarded as leading a rather harsh and uncouth way of life. So much so that in 1480, a London goldsmith who was outraged at the way he had been treated exclaimed that he would “rather be dwelling at Croydon among the colliers.” Today the Great North Wood is celebrated by Croydon’s North Wood Morris Men, both in their name and by the badge with the image of an acorn on their baldricks.



## Quotes



For Lent, the church home groups studied Hilary Brand's book "The Mystery of Everything" which is based on the film, "The Theory of Everything," about some aspects of Stephen Hawkins's life. All the following quotes are taken from this book.

"Science without religion is lame  
Religion without science is blind" (Albert Einstein)

"Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently." (Henry Ford)

"Time is the most valuable thing we have, because it is the most irrevocable." (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

"The Bible was written to show us how to go to heaven,  
not how the heavens go." (Galileo Galilei)

"Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you and comfort to cheer you."  
(Anonymous – The Gideons)

"Doubt is not the opposite of faith; it is one element of faith." (Paul Tillich)

"The whole system of planets and universe can only function under the dominion and counsel of a super intelligent being." (Sir Isaac Newton)

"One of the greatest tragedies of our time is the impression that has been created that science and religion have to be at war." (Frances Collins)

"I have found the paradox that if I love until it hurts then there is no more hurt but only love." (Mother Teresa)

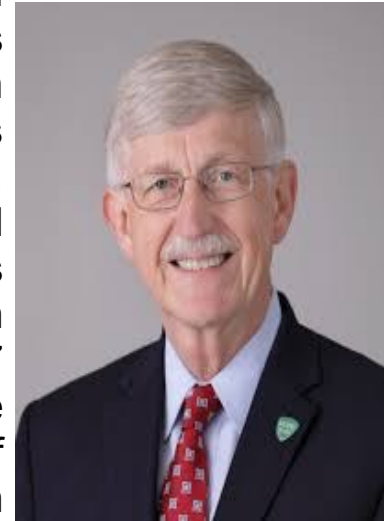
"God's mercy, God's grace, God's forgiveness - these are His gifts to you.  
They are all facets of His eternal love for you.  
That package is tied up in a bright red bow, a bow shaped like a cross."

"Will you hold onto the past, or will you focus on the road ahead?"



## Famous scientists with a strong Christian faith (new series) Francis Collins

**Francis Sellers Collins** (born April 14, 1950) is an American physician-geneticist noted for his discoveries of disease genes and his leadership of the Human Genome Project. He is director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland, United States. Before being appointed director of the NIH, Collins led the Human Genome Project and other genomics research initiatives as director of the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI), one of the 27 institutes and centres at NIH. Before joining NHGRI, he earned a reputation as a gene hunter at the University of Michigan. Collins also has written a number of books on science, medicine, and religion, including the *New York Times* bestseller, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (which I reviewed for a previous issue).



In 1993 National Institutes of Health Director Bernadine Healy appointed Collins to succeed James D. Watson as director of the National Center for Human Genome Research, which became National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) in 1997. As director, he oversaw the International Human Genome Sequencing Consortium, which was the group that successfully carried out the Human Genome Project.

In June 2000 Collins was joined by President Bill Clinton and biologist Craig Venter in making the announcement of a working draft of the human genome. He stated that **“It is humbling for me, and awe-inspiring to realise that we have caught the first glimpse of our own instruction book, previously known only to God.”** An initial analysis was published in February 2001, and scientists worked toward finishing the reference version of the human genome sequence by 2003, coinciding with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of James D. Watson and Francis Crick's publication of the structure of DNA. Another major activity at NHGRI during his tenure as director was the creation of the haplotype map of the human genome. This International HapMap Project produced a catalogue of human genetic variations—called single-nucleotide polymorphisms—which is now being used to discover variants correlated with disease risk. Among the labs engaged in that effort is Collins' own lab at NHGRI, which has sought to identify and understand the genetic variations that influence the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

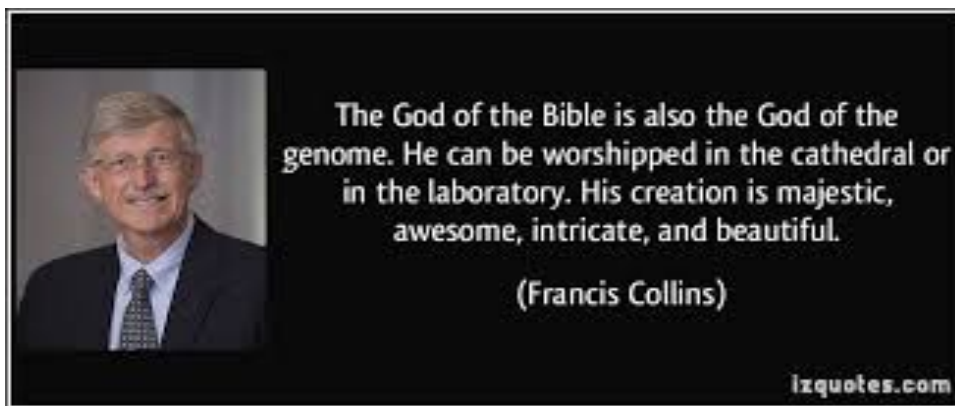
In addition to his basic genetic research and scientific leadership, Collins is known for his close attention to ethical and legal issues in genetics. He has been a strong advocate for protecting the privacy of genetic information and has served as a national leader in securing the passage of the federal



Genetic Information and Nondiscrimination Act, which prohibits gene-based discrimination in employment and health insurance.

Building on his own experiences as a physician volunteer in a rural missionary hospital in Nigeria, Collins is also very interested in opening avenues for genome research to benefit the health of people living in developing nations. For example, in 2010, he helped establish an initiative called Human Heredity and Health in Africa (H3Africa) to advance African capacity and expertise in genomic science. By graduate school Collins considered himself an atheist. However, a conversation with a hospital patient led him to question his lack of religious views, and he investigated various faiths. He familiarised himself with the evidence for and against God in cosmology, and on the recommendation of a Methodist minister used *Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis as a foundation to develop his religious views. He eventually came to a conclusion and became a Christian after a “leap of faith” when he saw a frozen waterfall during a hike on an autumn afternoon. He has described himself as a “serious Christian”.

In his 2006 book *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*, Collins wrote that scientific discoveries were an “opportunity to worship” he said that the overall aim of the book was to show that “one can be intellectually in a rigorous position and argue that science and faith can be compatible”, and that he was prompted to write the book because “most people are seeking a possible harmony between these worldviews [science and faith], and it seems rather sad that we hear so little about this possibility”.



The late Christopher Hitchens referred to Francis Collins as a ‘Great American’ and stated that Collins was one of the most devout believers he had ever met. He further stated that Collins was sequencing the genome of the cancer that would ultimately claim Hitchens’ life, and that their friendship, despite their differing opinion on religion, was a close one.

## More Jews coming to faith in Jesus Acts 2 v 47

More Jews believe in Jesus today than in the past 2000 years combined, and while Judaism continues to grow at 0.91%, thousands of Jews are finding true peace in Jesus Christ. Despite a turbulent history with the Christian Church that has left many Jews resistant to Christian evangelism, God is healing the wounds of the past and creating a new relationship of respect and communication between Jews and Christians. The Jews are “a people holy to the Lord your God...a people for his treasured possession, out of all peoples...of the earth. (Deut. 7 v 6). God’s love for the Jewish people is continually affirmed in both the Old and New Testaments.

Judaism traces its heritage to God’s promises to Abraham and his descendants that “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you” (Genesis 12 v 2) and “I...will be your God, and you shall be my people!” (Leviticus 26 v12)

The Old Testament outlines the struggles of the Jewish people to obediently follow God and to obtain and keep the Promised Land. It also describes a history of persecution that has persisted through time. Judaism is usually ranked the sixth-largest world religion with approximately 14 million followers, less than 0.2% of the world’s population. Most are concentrated in Israel and the United States. In recent years many new avenues have opened amongst Christians to better reflect God’s love for the Jews and to share the gospel more lovingly and effectively. God is also moving within the Jewish community. Followers of Judaism around the world are proclaiming Jesus as Messiah and Lord. Such Jews, many of whom regard themselves as Messianic Jews, follow Jesus Christ within their Jewish identity and culture.



An estimated 20,000 Messianic Jews live in Israel, a dramatic increase from under 10,000 in the 1990’s. Globally, there are roughly 1.7 million Messianic Jews – another huge change from only 40,000 in the 1990’s. God is faithfully guiding His beloved chosen people to the Truth of Jesus, the Messiah that He promised to them long ago.

(From the current edition of “Speak Life Daily” with their permission)

## Dissolving World by Barney Powell

In age you look back on the life of your changing world and wonder what still holds good and true. The business of living has become so much more visibly and tangibly multi-dimensional. As wrote the poet who once daubed these words in capitals on the high-walled, smut-stained rail track approaches to Paddington Station: 'Far away is close at hand in images of elsewhere'. It is this imagery which has so raised our consciousness of both the physical and metaphysical worlds we inhabit. The kaleidoscope of childhood patterns has multiplied a million-fold and now we can truly feel the poet Louis Macneice's 'drunkenness of things being various'. So it is with thought and knowledge: the space and time dimensions of each have expanded almost beyond reason. And yet what is it that we hold fast to and what grounds us in reality? We are, above all, biological creatures, bound to the earth by the twin hungers for both physical and spiritual sustenance.

The sea change is well underway: the tides of technology have swept all before them, obliterating or truncating conversation and driving much of the natural world into abstraction. The virtual world has taken over much of our time as the bubble of imagination gives, as Shakespeare says, 'to airy nothing a local habitation and a name'. We are hard-wired to our devices, glued to our small screens and monitors, our mobile phones clamped to our ears like limpets or beaded hands-free round our necks. Our dalliance with worldly things is complete. We've scarcely time to stop and see the future for all the beguiling futurology that presents itself to us. Money and morality have all but lost their currency as stores of value as they are dissipated by excesses and extremes of social inequality and subjective emotion.

The righteous indignation of the world takes up the cause of social justice without reflecting on what is truly fair or just. Just as individuality gives way to the struggle for social justice in the name of solidarity, so does religion give way to the clamour for human rights, equality and environmental causes as the principal tenets of belief in the future. Networking through social media – far from providing an open forum for reasoned debate – simply encourages populist ranting and seriously detracts from government's ability to exercise its rationale for intervention under democratic mandate. Key issues become irreducible to any sort of lucidity.

Yet some things, like faith, remain indissoluble. R. S. Thomas puts it best in his *The Bright Field*:

*Life is not hurrying  
on to a receding future, nor hankering after  
an imagined past. It is the turning  
aside like Moses to the miracle  
of the lit bush, to a brightness  
that seemed as transitory as your youth  
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.*

### Marcelin's story

Marcelin lost his home, livestock and possessions when Hurricane Matthew struck. He's fighting hard to care for his daughters. Can you help us provide secure new homes for families like Marcelin's?



**Marcelin still hasn't recovered from Hurricane Matthew, which hit Haiti in September 2016, destroying his home, possessions and livestock.**

'I lost pigs, goats, everything in the house. I have nothing left,' he says. He now lives in an old concrete shower block, a tiny space he shares with his teenage daughters. There are no windows or doors, and the only furniture is a single bed that the girls sleep on. Marcelin has fought hard to raise his children alone but can no longer afford to send them all to school. He gets up at dawn each day to work the land, but the changing weather frequently destroys the food he grows and the family often go hungry. **Marcelin fears his daughters' hunger could lead them to be exploited by predatory men in exchange for food.**

### How we are helping

Our local partner in Haiti is helping people prepare for disasters. Ahead of Hurricane Matthew, we warned communities, helping evacuate around 5,000 families, potentially saving many lives. We then gave out much-needed shelter kits, hygiene kits, food, seeds and cash transfers. We're also building disaster-resistant homes to give people safe, secure places to live. Of the dozens of new houses we built before the hurricane hit, only one lost its roof in the disaster. **But there are still lots of people like Marcelin we haven't yet reached, and we need your help.** Could you donate to help people like Marcelin? A gift from you could help families like Marcelin's to thrive. £25 could buy a hygiene kit (pictured) to prevent disease after a disaster.





## Reflections

Further thought -provoking reflections including extracts from the “Mystery of Everything,” the Lent study book which I’ve already mentioned.

“Wherever you are, God is there. It’s a scary thought especially if you’re carrying guilt you choose not to admit. It may seem possible to hide, but it’s an illusion, rather like the child who thinks if they put a blanket over their head, they become invisible. But if you want help, and aren’t too proud to admit it, then the knowledge that God understands all about you and is always close at hand can be profoundly comforting.”

“Each one of us comes from and returns to a home. It need be little more than a refrigerator, microwave, TV, bed, sofa and shower, but if that is all home means then our society will be deeply impoverished. If we are to enrich our world, then our homes need to be places where hospitality is practised, where neighbours are greeted and looked out for, where family is valued; and not least, sacred spaces, where God is met and listened to.”



“For many of the great early scientists, Galileo, Kepler and Newton, for example, their starting point was very much belief in God. It was a God who had not only given them rational minds but set out the universe in ways that seemed rational and predictable — the sun *a/ways* rose and set, the apple *a/ways* fell to earth. They believed in a rationally intelligible universe, because they believed there was a great rational mind behind it. Therefore it seemed to them that since they had a God-given capacity to investigate and a universe that obeyed God-given laws, science itself was a God-given task.”

“Look at the church down the ages, and you will see an establishment (or more accurately, several rival ones) constantly seeking power and control, for the church, like all human institutions, is prey to human self-seeking. But look at those individual Christians who inspire you e.g. John Wesley, William Booth, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. You see something very different: people who’ve discovered that following Jesus means giving up self in favour of weakness and grace.”

“Behind all shattered plans in the life of a Christian there is a divine plan. Let the pain lead you to hold more strongly the hope that in allowing your dream to be shattered, a greater and wiser purpose has been at work that one day in the future you will acknowledge was the best.”



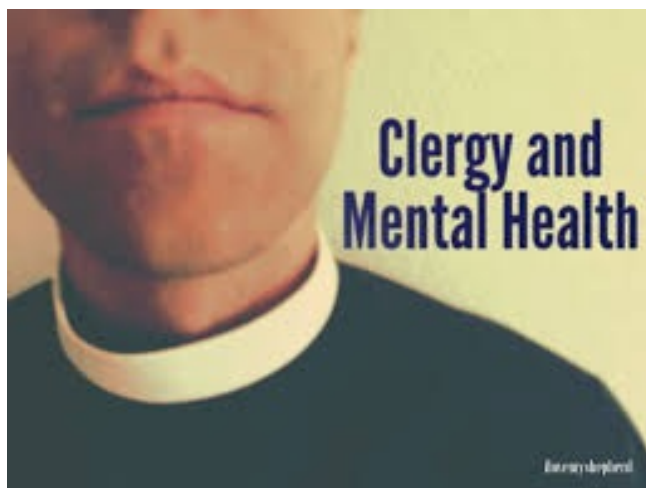
## Loneliness and mental health are biggest issues clergy encounter

Loneliness and mental health problems in communities are the two biggest social issues encountered by Church of England clergy, new research has revealed.

A survey of more than 1000 senior clergy highlighted loneliness and isolation as major concerns – with 76% saying this was a major or significant problem in their area. There was an increase of 20% in six years of those reporting mental health issues in their area. Homelessness was another growing issue, with 23% identifying this as a major or significant problem, up from 14% in 2011.

Conducted by the Church of England and the Church Urban Fund, the survey also found that one in five churches run a food bank either alone or in partnership – with 93% supporting one by providing a venue, volunteers or donations. Of those quizzed, 70% of churches run three or more community-benefitting organised activities such as parent-toddler groups, lunch clubs for older people, youth work, and night shelters. The findings also show churches in the most deprived area of the country are the most active when it comes to providing activities — with 34% running six or more ministries — such as debt advice and job clubs.

The Bishop of Lambeth, Tim Thornton, said the research shows the “deep commitment” of the Church of England to the “well-being and flourishing of communities across the country.” “The Church of England is uniquely well-placed with its presence in every community to respond to a range of different needs, increasingly working in partnership with other organisations including local schools, charities and businesses,” he added. Paul Hackwood, executive director of the Church Urban Fund, said the long-term presence of churches in local communities means they are “typically embedded” in and “actively nurturing” networks of relationships within their area.



I was recently sorting and clearing out files of old paperwork and miscellaneous items when I unearthed this gem which my mother gave me over 30 years ago.

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof over your head, and a place to sleep...you are richer than 75% of this world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish some place...you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation... you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture or death...You are more blessed than three billion people in the world.

If your parents are alive and still married...you are very fortunate.

If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful...you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not.

If you can hold someone's hand, hug them or even touch them on the shoulder ...you are blessed because you can offer a healing touch.

If you can read this message, you have just received a double blessing that someone was thinking of you, and furthermore...you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world that cannot read at all.



## Lochs & Glens Holiday Group

**This is the last opportunity to come away with a group from Church - 4 places remain largely due to illness, so snap them up quickly**



c/o Springfield, 12 Ranmore Avenue, Croydon, Surrey CR0 5QA  
Telephone: 020 8654 2582 Email: [mikeB@vmars.co.uk](mailto:mikeB@vmars.co.uk)

### **Loch Tummel Hotel – 6 Day Spring Break - Friday 27th April to Wednesday 2nd May**

The cost includes everything except Lunches from the moment you leave Croydon in a modern coach to the moment you get back.- **£290 each. Now beat that!**

We have our usual 57 seat coach, and you know what the company will be like as these annual visits have become a real family affair. Tummel is one of the new hotels with a stunning location which we last visited three years ago. You can come touring for the day or do your own thing, like walking in the hills, paper guides provided in the Hotel.



***Our 4 day all new touring Itinerary is included in the £290. FOR DAILY DETAILS AND MORE INFORMATION CONTACT ABOVE.***

## More from my Canadian cousin, Sheila



I was in the six item express lane at the store quietly fuming. Completely ignoring the sign, the woman ahead of me had slipped into the check-out line pushing a cart piled high with groceries. Imagine my delight when the cashier beckoned the woman to come forward looked into the cart and asked sweetly, "So which six items would you like to

buy?" Wouldn't it be great if that happened more often?

Because they had no reservations at a busy restaurant, my elderly neighbour and his wife were told there would be a 45 minute wait for a table. "Young man, we're both 90 years old," the husband said. "We may not have 45 minutes." They were seated immediately.

All eyes were on the radiant bride as her father escorted her down the aisle. They reached the altar and the waiting groom. The bride kissed her father and placed something in his hand. The guests in the front pews responded with ripples of laughter. Even the priest smiled broadly. As her father gave her away in marriage, the bride gave him back his credit card.

John was on his deathbed and gasped pitifully, "Give me one last request, dear," he said. "Of course, John," his wife said softly. "Six months after I die," John said, "I want you to marry Bob." "But I thought you hated Bob," she said. With his last breath John said, "I do!"

A man goes to see the Rabbi. "Rabbi, something terrible is happening and I have to talk to you about it." The Rabbi asked, "What's wrong?"

The man replied, "My wife is going to poison me."

The Rabbi, very surprised by this, asks, "How can that be?"

The man then pleads, "I'm telling you, I'm certain she's going to poison me. What should I do?" The Rabbi then offers, "Tell you what. Let me talk to her, I'll see what I can find out and I'll let you know." A week later the Rabbi calls the man and says, "I spoke to your wife on the phone for three hours. You want my advice? The man said, "Yes" and the Rabbi replied, "Take the poison."

**The Parish Church of St Matthew, Croydon**  
(a member of Churches Together in Addiscombe)

<b>Church Address</b>	Chichester Road Croydon CR0 5NQ	8681 3147
<b>Parish Office Email</b>	churchadmin@stmatthew.org.uk	
<b>Website</b>	www.stmatthew.org.uk	
<b>Parish Administrator</b>	Terry Mitchell	8681 3147
<b>Hall Bookings</b>	Contact Parish Administrator	
<b>Vicar</b>	Revd Simon Foster revsimon@stmatthew.org.uk	8688 5055
<b>Readers</b>	Paul Parmenter Alison Radford	8689 5874
<b>Director of Music &amp; Choir</b>	Michael Strange	
<b>Southwark Pastoral</b>	Carolyn Tweed	
<b>Auxiliaries</b>	Sue Collins	
<b>Churchwardens</b>	Stephen Collingwood Rohini Abhayaratne	8686 2815
<b>PCC Secretary</b>	David Williams	8768 3599
<b>Treasurer</b>	Terry Mitchell	
<b>Gift Aid Recorder</b>	Terry Mitchell	
<b>Sacristan</b>	Gillian Bridger	
<b>Assistant Sacristan</b>	Jerry Savage	
<b>Electoral Roll Officer</b>	David Williams	
<b>Magazine Editor</b>	Steve Tucker stephen.tucker123@btinternet.com	8681 6872

**Parish Committees and Organisations**

<b>Young Church (Sunday 10am)</b>	Judith Spencer-Gregson	8688 6640
<b>Fundraising Team</b>	Jane Passfield	
<b>Fellowship Team</b>	Lucasta Grayson	
<b>Communications Team</b>	Alison Radford	
<b>Fabric Team</b>	Chris Grayson	
<b>Finance Team</b>	Richard Tweed	
<b>Pastoral Team</b>	Revd Simon Foster	
<b>Circle Dance</b>	Sally Ditzel Sallyditzel1960@gmail.com	07568338204

**Youth Groups and Clubs**

<b>Rainbow Guides (Wednesday 6.10-7.30)</b>	Zoë Sheehan	07855 779458
<b>Brownies (Wednesday 6.30-8.00pm)</b>	Laura Easton	
<b>Ten O'Clock Club (Tuesday 10-12noon)</b>		
<b>Cubs (Tuesday 7-8.30pm)</b>	Michael Smaldon	
<b>Scouts (Tuesday 7.30-9.00pm)</b>	Chris Iouannou	07729 303130
<b>Guides (Wednesday 6.45-8.30pm)</b>	Zoë Sheehan	07855 779458
<b>Beavers (Friday 6-7.15pm)</b>	Tracey Hague	

**For details of other activities taking place at church during the week that include Pilates, Bach Choir, Philharmonic Choir, Breathe Easy, Children's Ballet, Children's Drama and U3A Groups. Please contact the organisers direct. Details from the Parish Office which is usually open Monday to Thursday 9.30am - 12.30pm.**