

# Parish Magazine

£1



August/ September 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**

**1st 3rd 4th and 5th 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**

**2nd 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**

### **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,

It has been great to welcome Revd Darius Weithers, his wife Grace and their two delightful daughters, Amayah and Talia to St Matthew's. Darius introduces himself later in this issue. As ministers in the Church of God, we are very conscious of our utter reliance upon his sustaining grace and strength, without which we would be unable to fulfil his calling, his will and his purpose for us as individuals and for the church as a whole.



Please keep Darius and his family in your prayers as he begins his time with us. I feel privileged to be asked to be a training incumbent, as my time to retire from active ministry draws ever closer! Please pray that the Lord will use these next four years or so of Darius' curacy to be a great blessing to Darius and his family as well as to us as we help to prepare him for the challenges ahead.

I would also like to ask for your prayers for me as I have been appointed Area Dean of Croydon Central Deanery, following Revd Bill Warren's departure. Many thanks in advance!

With the slightly slower pace of life in the month of August, I hope you will be able to take time to be refreshed by time away on holiday, or just to have a change of pace. We're not always good at attending to our own needs, but too much busy-ness can mean that we neglect our inner life, the life of the Spirit. The summer break can be a time to recapture that lost time with God in prayer or Bible reading, or just stopping *doing* for a while so we can refocus on *being*.

Worship is one vital key to maintaining a balanced life. The letter to the Hebrews encourages us "not to give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing..." (Hebrews 10.25). Our gathering as God's people is an important part of our discipleship. Alongside our worship services, there are also opportunities to be a part of a small group meeting in someone's home or at the church. These groups are also valuable in helping us to walk more closely with the Lord, as we "spur one another one towards love and good deeds" (Heb. 10.24). So I hope you will consider whether you are able to join one of our groups. Finally, having tried one service in this style, we have decided to make our All Age services Café Style worship, which includes both the sharing of food and drink around tables, and also the opportunity to share in discussion, rather than simply listening to a sermon. In order to enable people in care homes who want to join us, we are going to hold these monthly services at the later time of 11.00am, so please do make a note of when these services are taking place. The first one is on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September, at 11.00am on the theme of "Food,

glorious food!” Hope to see you there! May you have a truly blessed and restful summer, and may the Lord help us all to slow down and smell the coffee!

With my love and prayers. *Simon*

The (new) Curate, Revd Darius Weithers, writes...

The first time we walked into the worship space at St. Matthew’s was a really exciting moment for me. Yes, I was struck by the gorgeous modern architecture, and the beautifully artistic stained glass, but it was something far simpler that captivated me. “Look, it’s mum and dad’s flag!” I whispered to Grace. I have been in many sanctuaries in my days and, to memory, this is the first time I have seen a Guyanese flag that I didn’t hang myself. I cannot describe the sense of profound comfort and inclusion that I felt as I acknowledged that St. Matthew’s had unknowingly honoured my parents in this way. Beginning curacy, with all the change and upheaval, can be an anxious time. Yet the welcome you have extended to us as a family has been deeply affirming. We are really grateful for the many times God has reassured us, through the words and actions of our St. Matthew’s family, that we are precisely where He wants us to be.

Both Grace and I began following Jesus in our mid-twenties. Neither of us are church kids. Both of us have our own amazing stories of how Jesus met us in moments of crisis. If I could somehow describe myself in a few words, I would say that I am a passionate, creative, ragamuffin. What I mean by this, is that I consider the first and most important person I know, to be Jesus Christ. I honestly cannot say where I would be today if He hadn’t saved me from myself. I certainly wouldn’t be here with you as your curate. I belong to Him. I am a person who enjoys creating, and find I meet God through expressing myself in a variety of ways. I call myself a ragamuffin as a way of reminding myself, and those around me, that I am a walking, talking symbol of the grace of God.

When I look back at my life, and the rut that I found myself in throughout my early adulthood, I am forced to praise God for his patience, mercy and grace towards me. I am a man with many frailties, flaws and idiosyncrasies. I certainly very rarely impress myself. Yet, I am learning the reality that Paul of Tarsus spoke of in 2 Corinthians; that God’s grace is sufficient, and that his power is made perfect in my weakness. I am excited that Jesus is interested in ordinary people like me. Perhaps that is the thing that excites me most about the Christian faith. Jesus was known as a friend of sinners, which means that there is hope for all of us! I am extremely excited about this season where together we will all come to know further, the unique cross-shaped Love that only Lord Jesus the Messiah, can bestow.

## HOME/BIBLE STUDY GROUPS

Our Home/Bible Study Groups will start again at the beginning of September. You are very welcome to join a group. They meet weekly on Thursdays at 10.00am at 48 Engadine Close, Saturdays at 10.00am at church and also on various evenings at the home of David and Jan Williams, 2A Wisborough Road, South Croydon at 8.00pm. Please ask Simon for further details.

## LICENSING AT CROYDON MINSTER

On Monday 3rd September at 8.00pm Revd Canon Dr Andrew Bishop will be licensed as the new Priest-in-charge at Croydon Minster. Please pray for Andrew as he begins this new and important ministry in our town.



The next Messy Church events will be on Tuesdays 11<sup>th</sup> September and 9<sup>th</sup> October at 3.30pm. Please uphold Messy Church in your prayers as well as by helping on the day if you would like to.

## CAFE CHURCH

On Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September at the later time of 11.00am we will be having another Café Style service on the theme of "Food, glorious food!" This will include tasting of foods from around the world as well as our usual eclectic mix of music and an opportunity for stillness and prayer. Do come and bring a friend!





## **ST MATTHEW'S PATRONAL FESTIVAL AND LUNCH**

Please join us as we celebrate our Patronal Festival at 10.00am on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Our guest preacher will be Bishop David Atkinson. There will be a roast Sunday lunch afterwards.

Tickets are available from the church office, £10.00 for adults, £5 for children.

## **DEANERY SYNOD**

The next meeting of the Deanery Synod will be on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September at 8.00pm at St George's church Waddon. There will be a presentation about the Croydon Refugee Centre, which promises to be very informative. You are very welcome to attend.

## **HARVEST FESTIVAL**

This year our Harvest Festival will be on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> October and will be another Cafe Style service at 11.00am and will include a Harvest Brunch.

More details to follow but please add this date to your diary.



## A summer reflection      “Treasure God’s Word.”

The Spirit of God makes us like the Son of God, through the Word of God That’s why satan will put 101 roadblocks in your way to keep you from reading the Bible. Paul writes, “God’s Word can make you into what He wants you to be and give you everything you could possibly need.” God’s Word is like seed; it’s filled with potential. Jesus said, “The words that I have spoken to you.... is life.”(John 6 v 63) An amazing thing happens when you study the Scriptures. Your mind illuminates, your



heart resonates, and the truth comes to life in you. The Bible is more than just a doctrinal guidebook. It creates faith, produces change, causes miracles, heals hurts, builds character, transforms circumstances, imparts joy, overcomes adversity, defeats temptation, builds hope, releases power, cleanses minds, brings things into being and guarantees your future. You can’t survive without it; it’s as essential to your life as food. That’s why Job said, “I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.”

God’s Word is the spiritual nourishment you need to fulfil your life’s purpose. The Bible is described as milk, bread, solid food, and sweet dessert. As you fill your mind with God’s Word, the Holy Spirit will use it to transform you. “Let the message about Christ in all its richness, fill your lives ...with all the wisdom he gives.” How do you achieve that?

1. **By reading it.** If you read the newspaper but not the Bible, you won’t grow spiritually. You can’t watch TV for three or four hours, then read your Bible for three or four minutes and expect growth. Daily Bible reading keeps you within range of God’s voice. Do you want to grow spiritually? Develop a daily Bible reading plan and stick with it.

2. **By receiving it.** In the parable of the sower, Jesus talks about three unreceptive attitudes: a closed mind (hard soil), a superficial mind (shallow soil), and a distracted mind (soil with weeds) (Luke 8 5-15). James says, “Humbly accept the Word planted in you, which can save you.”(James 1 v21). These aren’t just good ideas; they’re life-changing principles. There are enormous benefits to memorising Scripture. It will help you resist temptation, make better decisions, reduce stress, build your confidence, stretch your thinking, and enable you to share your faith with others. Your memory is like a muscle; the more you use it, the stronger it becomes. Start by writing down a verse that has helped you, and then carry it with you on a small card. Review it aloud while you’re working, exercising, waiting and before going to sleep. (From UCB’s “Word for Today”)

## Praying for Croydon

### Healing on the Streets (HOTS)

*WHAT A DAY!! GLORY TO GOD!!...Words of knowledge...everybody that we laid hands on...healed in the mighty name of Jesus...Salvation! At points...people waiting to sit in the chairs, it was like a conveyor belt! His kingdom came; his will was done on Croydon High Street as it is in heaven!*  
(Facebook post)

Healing on the Streets is a gentle, non-confrontational way of connecting with people on the streets of our cities and introducing them to Jesus. Every other Saturday, whatever the weather, we head to our usual spot outside Clas Ohlson in North End, Croydon, set out chairs, put up our banner, give out flyers to explain what we are doing, and offer to pray for healing for passers-by. We have been regularly amazed by God's kindness.

Please pray:

1. For safety for the team.
2. For people to find the courage to ask for prayer.
3. That through this ministry lives and community will experience the Kingdom and encounter the King.

Anyone wishing to get involved in HOTS will need to be trained and join a team. Info on HOTS' Facebook page.

Contact: Email: [hotscroydon@virginmedia.com](mailto:hotscroydon@virginmedia.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/HOTSCroydonChurches](http://www.facebook.com/HOTSCroydonChurches)



## Quotes

Holiness consists of three things: separation from sin, dedication to God, transformation into Christ's image. (James H. Aughey)

The great of this world are those who simply loved God more than others did. (A W Tozer)

Most men pray more for full purses than for pure hearts. (T Watson)

History is the long story of man trying to be God. (V Havner)

Christianity is not engrossed by this transitory world, but measures all things by the thought of eternity. (J Gresham Machen)

Man, made in the image of God, has a purpose- to be in a relationship to God, who is there. (Francis Schaeffer)

Christ understands loneliness: He's been through it. (Paul S Rees)

God has never promised to solve our problems. He has promised to go with us. (Elisabeth Elliot)

A holy God calls His people to holy living. (John Blanchard)

Try Jesus. If you don't like Him, the devil will always take you back. (Anon)

The problem with atheism is having nobody to talk to when you are alone.

Nothing in the world causes so much misery as uncertainty. (Martin Luther)

The Maginot Line has become a symbol of our tendency to think within the context of past experience rather than current reality and future potential.

(Dr David Jeremiah)

## Remembering the Persecuted Church

This is a special feature focusing on Christians in Nigeria which I've taken from the current prayer diary of Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW).

**“Holding onto hope: persevering when the situation looks bleak.”**

The church in the north and middle belt of Nigeria is experiencing a season of intense persecution. In most northern shari'a states Christians are treated as second class citizens, discriminated against in education, employment, and other aspects of public life. They cannot compete in certain elections or buy land to construct churches, and some remote communities are pressured to convert in order to receive wells or other amenities.

The death toll in terrorist attacks is rising. Between January and April 2018, Fulani herder militiamen claimed over 900 lives in predominantly Christian farming areas in six states, displacing hundreds of thousands. No perpetrators have been arrested, let alone tried, and beyond occasional condemnations, the government has done little to end the violence. And although the Boko Haram terrorist group has split, both factions continue to mount attacks and abduct women and children of all creeds.

### Leah's story

Some individual stories are particularly gripping. CSW is campaigning for the release of 15-year-old Leah Sharibu. Leah was one of 110 girls abducted from their school in Yobe State by Boko Haram in February. A month later, as the girls boarded trucks to



return home following negotiations with the government, the terrorists told Leah- the only Christian – that she would not be released unless she converted. Her friends begged her to pretend to convert so they could all leave together, but Leah refused, even after the terrorist's commander said she'd be killed. She was forced to get out of the truck and watch as her friends were driven to safety. It was a moment of extraordinary courage and integrity. Leah's father Nathan later said, "I am very sad....but I'm also jubilating too because my daughter did not denounce Christ." Rev Yunusa Nmadu (CEO of CSW Nigeria, added that through her actions Leah has already defeated Boko Haram.

**If you want to join the “Free Leah campaign” and send an email to the Nigerian High Commissioner visit the CSW website for more information.**

## Story behind the hymn “How sweet the name of Jesus sounds”

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer's ear!  
It soothes his sorrow, heals his wounds  
And drives away his fear

It makes the troubled spirit whole  
And calms the troubled breast;  
'Tis manna to the hungry soul  
And to the weary rest

Dear Name! The Rock on which we build:  
Our shield and hiding place;  
Our never- failing treasury, filled  
With boundless stores of grace

“Jesus! My Shepherd, Brother, Friend,  
My Prophet, Priest and King,  
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,  
Accept the praise I bring.”

“Weak is the effort of my heart,  
And cold my warmest thought;  
But when I see Thee as Thou art  
I'll praise Thee as I ought.

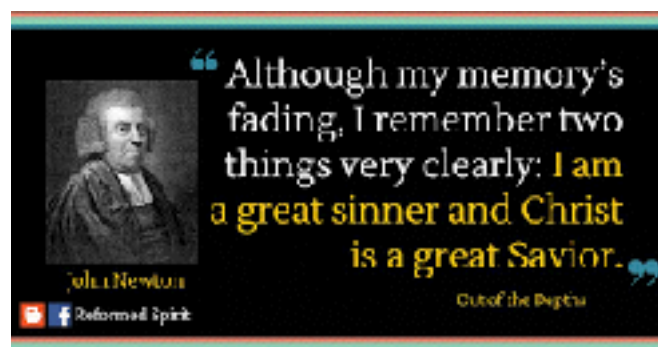
Till then I would Thy love proclaim  
With every fleeting breath  
And may the music of Thy name  
Refresh my soul in death

It was written by a most remarkable man, John Newton. In his young days he was very wild and wicked; a sinner of the blackest dye, but by the grace

of God, he was converted and became one of the holiest of saints , and the writer of this and many other beautiful hymns. The secret of his salvation lay in the happy fact that he had had one of God's greatest and best gifts; a godly, praying mother. She died when he was only seven, but she has so stored his mind with texts and Bible teaching, she had so prayed for him and dedicated him to God that her influence never left him.

John Newton was born in London, July 24<sup>th</sup>, 1725. He was an only child. His father was a sea captain and, at the age of ten, went to sea with his father. The young boy was thrown amongst a lot of loose and abandoned companions and quickly learnt their evil ways so much so that even among them he became notorious for wickedness. He would curse and blaspheme so terribly that even the men were surprised at his depravity. He was subsequently forced by the press- gang into the Navy. He was soon promoted to the rank of midshipman but was soon disgraced and later dismissed for insubordination. He took service under a West African slave dealer and was at one time captain of a slave ship, and engaged in the capture and traffic of slaves. At the age of 23 a ship in which he was sailing encountered a violent storm, sprang a leak and was in danger of sinking. In his agony and alarm Newton cried aloud, "May the Lord have mercy upon us." This was the first prayer he had uttered for years. The ship was saved and he began to think and reflect on his life. He took his Bible, read and prayed, and slowly the light of Christ shone in upon his soul. He also came under the influence of a godly captain who greatly helped him.

In 1779 John Newton became the Rector of St Mary's Woolnoth, Lombard Street, in London, where for twenty-seven years more he lived and loved and laboured. The church is close to the Royal Exchange and the Bank of England. His preaching attracted large crowds. No London clergyman of that day exercised a greater influence than did John Newton. His one desire was to show what Christ had done for him, and could do for others. Two years before his death, when, on account of his age and infirmities, he was pressed to discontinue preaching, his reply was, "What, shall the old African blasphemer stop while he can speak?"



## Famous scientists with a strong Christian faith

Galileo Galilei, though famous for his scientific achievements in astronomy, mathematics, and physics, and infamous for his controversy with the church was, in fact, a devout Christian who saw not a divorce of religion and science but only a healthy marriage: "God is known by nature in his works, and by doctrine in his revealed word."



Galileo never got his university degree. He studied for four years and dropped out, then studied on his own for two years, living as a tutor and publishing solutions to complex problems. This brilliance got him the chair of mathematics at the University of Pisa, where he immediately made enemies. The "natural philosophers" of his day made their discoveries debating the works of Aristotle. Galileo believed in observing nature under controlled conditions and describing the results mathematically. This difference alone created friction, but Galileo humiliated his enemies with public demonstrations of their errors—for example, Galileo proved, contra Aristotle, that bodies of different weights would fall at the same velocity. His enemies ran him off in two years. Friends got him the chair of mathematics at Padua, a more progressive institution, which he occupied for 18 years. These were his happiest and most productive days, during which he explored physics in ways that were to bear much fruit.

## Detoured by the telescope

In 1609 Galileo heard of a device to make distant objects appear closer, and the applications of such an instrument were immediately obvious to Galileo. He quickly put together a telescope and displayed it to the Venetian Senate, which was so impressed, it immediately doubled his salary. That winter he turned his telescope on the sky and made some astounding discoveries. In complete contravention of accepted beliefs, he saw that the moon was not a smooth sphere, that Jupiter had moons, and that Venus had phases, indicating it orbited the sun. He published a small pamphlet describing his observations in 1610. It made him world-famous. At 46, after 20 years of quiet study, he was now in demand. Lured to Tuscany with a grand salary, Galileo abandoned his wife and put his daughters in a convent. He made a triumphant visit to Rome, where the papal court vied to do him honor. The head of church astronomers confirmed his discoveries, and Jesuit astronomers jostled to look through the telescope.

## Controversy over heliocentrism

In the Christian world prior to Galileo's conflict with the Church, the majority of educated people subscribed either to the Aristotelian geocentric view that the earth was the center of the universe and that all heavenly bodies revolved around the Earth, or the Tychonic system that blended geocentrism with heliocentrism. Nevertheless, following the death of Copernicus and before Galileo, heliocentrism was relatively uncontroversial; Copernicus's work was used by Pope Gregory XIII to reform the calendar in 1582. Opposition to heliocentrism and Galileo's writings combined religious and scientific objections and were fueled by political events. Scientific opposition came from Tycho Brahe and others and arose from the fact that, if heliocentrism were true, an annual stellar parallax should be observed, though none was. Copernicus had correctly postulated that parallax was negligible because the stars were so distant. However, Brahe had countered that, since stars appeared to have measurable size, if the stars were that distant, they would be gigantic, and in fact far larger than the Sun or any other celestial body.

## Impact on modern science, arts and media

According to Stephen Hawking, Galileo probably bears more of the responsibility for the birth of modern science than anybody else, and Albert Einstein called him the father of modern science. Galileo's astronomical discoveries and investigations into the Copernican theory have led to a lasting legacy which includes the categorisation of the four large moons of Jupiter discovered by Galileo (Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto) as the Galilean moons. Other scientific endeavours and principles are named after Galileo including the Galileo spacecraft, the first spacecraft to enter orbit around Jupiter, the proposed Galileo global satellite navigation system, the transformation between inertial systems in classical mechanics denoted Galilean transformation and the Gal (unit), sometimes known as the *Galileo*, which is a non-SI unit of acceleration. Galileo is mentioned several times in the "opera" section of the Queen Song, "Bohemian Rhapsody". He features prominently in the song "Galileo" performed by the Indigo Girls and Amy Grant's *Galileo* on her *Heart in Motion* album. Twentieth-century plays have been written on Galileo's life, including *Life of Galileo* (1943) by the German playwright Bertolt Brecht, with a film adaptation (1975) of it, and *Lamp At Midnight* (1947) by Barrie Stavis, as well as the 2008 play "Galileo Galilei".

Galileo died on 8 January 1642 (aged 77) at Arcetri, a location in Florence positioned among the hills south of the city centre.

## **“Croydon’s health in the 1930’s” (part 2) by Kenneth D James**

### **Hospital Provision**

The official reports comment regularly on the overcrowding and shortage of beds at Mayday Hospital, the town’s main hospital. Expansion took place gradually, but not quickly enough to cope with the rising population. It had previously provided infirmary services for the Croydon Workhouse located at Queen’s Road, and perhaps the stigma attached to its Poor Law origins placed it at a disadvantage compared with Croydon General Hospital, which was a voluntary hospital. The Croydon Isolation Hospital also suffered from land nearby being encroached upon by industry and by its proximity to a sewage farm. The shortage of nurses was also commented on and it was pointed out that there was no scheme of preliminary training with salary attached. In general it would seem that hospital provision in Croydon was less satisfactory than health care in the community.



### **Slum Clearance and Housing**

Each of the reports of the Medical Officer of Health refers to streets condemned as unfit for human habitation, especially in the older parts of the town. The problem of re-housing the people displaced seems to have slowed up demolition and left the unfortunate occupants longer in their slum houses than should have been the case. Regular

reference is also made to the health risk involved in the proximity of industrial premises to residential housing. Nevertheless, a rolling programme went forward during the 1930’s and the building of the New Addington estate undoubtedly eased the situation.

Another problem concerned the sub-letting of large Victorian family houses into flats. This had caused considerable over-crowding and attendant health problems. Particular concern was caused by the basement flats with insufficient light and ventilation, and with problems of dampness. Some attics were being used to accommodate families also. In 1936, 650 families out of 17, 539 were suffering from overcrowding. The passing of the 1936 Housing Act 1936 gave the local health authority power to deal with the situation, and this was appreciated.

(The third and final part in the October/ November issue)

Reflection “Humble  
Love” (Suggested reading  
Philippians 2 v 1-11)



When Benjamin Franklin was a young man he made a list of twelve virtues he desired to grow in over the course of his life. He showed it to a friend who suggested he add “humility” to it. Franklin liked the idea and then added some guidelines to help him with each item on the list. Among Franklin’s thoughts on humility, he held up Jesus as an example to emulate. Jesus shows us the ultimate example of humility. God’s Word tells us, “In your relationships with one another, have the same mind set as Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant.”

Jesus demonstrated the greatest humility of all. Though eternally with the Father, He chose to bend beneath a cross in love so that through His death He might lift any who receive Him into the joy of His presence. We imitate Jesus’ humility when we seek to serve our heavenly Father by serving others. Jesus’ kindness helps us catch a breath-taking glimpse of the beauty of setting ourselves aside to attend to others’ needs. But as we rest securely in our Saviour’s love, He will give us everything we need to follow Him. (From the current issue of UCB’s “Word for Today.”)

Beautiful Saviour, I am your servant. Please help me to live in Your love and be a blessing to someone every day. We can serve because we are loved.



## Bible themed quotes- “Endurance”

“Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance.” (Romans 5 v 3)

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” (Romans 12 v 12)

“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Jesus Christ had.” (Romans 15 v 5)

“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so you can endure it.” (1 Corinthians 10 v 13 & 14)

“....being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you might have endurance and patience.” (Colossians 1 v 11)

“You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.” (Hebrews 10 v 36)

“Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12 v 2)

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know the testing of your faith produces perseverance.” (James 1 v 2 & 3)



## Vigo

This Galician port city in the top left-hand corner of Spain lies on a majestic, broad inlet from the Atlantic below La Coruña and Pontevedra. In early high summer it is a radiant place, its sea waves sparkling in the sunlight, the red roof tiles of its shoreside villas reflecting vibrantly in its



rays. From here most of the Spanish emigrants to the New World sailed to Cuba and Mexico. It was also from here that the first trans-Atlantic telegraph cables were laid via Ascension Island to the Americas. An early morning dip in the near-crystalline waters of any of the tiny coves along the shore will set the weary traveller up for a day of heightened visual and spatial awareness.

Traces of the Roman Empire are clearly visible in the Romanesque-arched buildings and the great stone moles along the docks. The lively spirit of the people is well captured in this text (in English) on the wall above the marital bed in the rented flat: “Life isn’t about waiting – for the storm to pass. It’s about learning – to dance in the rain.” And everywhere there is music – guitar strum and radio throb and thrum in perfect harmony, while the



young nod and sing along to their Spanish mix of rap and reggaetón. Below it all rumbles the counter-cultural beat of insurgents everywhere with their chants more of rupture than rapture. The *Gallego* dialect musically elides with the neighbouring Portuguese to the south.

The *Islas Ceís* (“Iz-lass Thay-iss” islands) are a gateway to the port half-an-hour offshore and a natural paradise. Some of the most beautiful beaches in the world curve around their little coves in gentle crescents of pure white sand – more lovely even than New Zealand or the Caribbean. Stout locals loll in hammocks strung between the trees and slim Lolitas with brazen bare bottoms skip along the sand at the water’s edge, while their mothers sprawl topless in the dunes to bronze themselves in the golden shower of heat. The sun picks out the vivid colours of the sea as it laps the

beach. These run from azure in the shallows through turquoise and aquamarine to cobalt blue in the deep.

The fresh seafood on the mainland is an exquisite feast of prawn, squid, crab, mussel, cod, hake and sole set off with crunchy, dressed salads and the delicious white wines of the region. But what is that strangely familiar sound breaking in on this peaceful midday meal? It can't be, but it is – the sound of the bagpipe (*la gaita*) with a sweetly tuneful air, quite unlike those Scottish dirges with their ringing shrillness of a call to arms. This is a city of a certain splendour. It is no resort, but a thriving commercial entrepôt. Its people are immensely proud of their public squares and intimate private gardens. There is no litter or dog turd on the streets – no need for caustic Croydonian humour here: “Want to learn Yoga? Begin with the Downward Dog movement – then pick up after him!”



In many ways, Spain - in all the magnificent variety of its terrain and temper – is the most civilized of European countries. Its people are amiable to a fault. They have none of the food fetishes of the French, rudeness of the Italians, dogmatism of the Germans, woodenness of the Swiss or – let us admit it – common oafishness of many English. They are

proud, but at the same time humble, supremely comfortable in their own skins and kind to all comers, wanting us to share with them all the bounty and blessings of their legacy. Arrival this time has been by plane direct to Santiago de Compostela. Next time will be by the *camino*, the pilgrim route, to earn the honour of their company.

(Barney Powell)



## Questions we ask about dementia

As a member of the church Pastoral Care Team it is a privilege taking Holy Communion to residents of local Care/ Sheltered Homes. During a recent visit one resident became rather confused and distressed. On summoning the staff I was informed that this person suffered with dementia and was having an “episode” which manifest itself unexpectedly; other team members have experienced this in the Homes we visit. Some readers may find this article (which I’ve edited from the Pilgrims’ Friend Society summer magazine) helpful, especially if they have family members (or friends) who suffer in this way.

**Q:** My relative has been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease- does that mean they will get dementia?

**A:** Dementia is a set of symptoms (a syndrome) that are caused by physical and chemical changes in the brain. Alzheimer’s disease is one of those causes.

**Q:** My mother has dementia- does that mean I will too?

**A:** Studies with identical twins show that our genetic inheritance is not as important as our lifestyles. The science of “epigenetics” shows that some genes are switched on or off, or even changed, as a result of the way we live.

**Q:** Are there ways of preventing dementia?

**A:** A 35 year study called “The Caerphilly Study” showed that having a healthy diet, not smoking, moderate alcohol intake and regular exercise helped prevent or delay the onset of dementia. Increasingly, the importance of avoiding negative emotions, such as depression and feelings of loneliness is being emphasised. Interacting with others is said to benefit the brain more than any type of cognitive stimulation. Study after study show that the most important things are laughter (which releases enzymes that reduce stress), exercise, diet, and cognitive stimulation, all within the context of social engagement.

**Q:** My relative doesn’t remember who I am, and doesn’t talk – so what’s the point in visiting him?

**A:** This was answered, movingly, by author Christine Bryden, who has lived with dementia for over 20 years. She said, “If I enjoy your visit, why must I remember it? Why must I remember who you are? Please allow Christ to work through you. Let me live in the present. If I forget a pleasant memory, it does not mean that it was not important to me.” When facts are forgotten, feelings remain, and you take with you your love for your relatives. Even if they don’t talk to you, you can sit alongside and talk to them, perhaps going through a magazine, or a newspaper.

## Love thy neighbour

Most of us wouldn't be able to identify our neighbours in a police line-up. Isolation is on the increase and the government has even appointed a minister for loneliness. I've edited an article in the current issue of "Christianity" and concluded by incorporating some challenges.



Eight out of ten people in the UK would be unable to identify all of their neighbours in a police line-up, according to a recent study by Eden Project Communities. The poll of more than 4000 UK adults also revealed that 10% of Londoners cannot identify a single one of their neighbours. Another survey by OnePoll found that just 12 % of respondents felt strongly connected to their community. Reflecting on the findings, Max Chambers, co-founder of Next door, a private social network helping neighbours connect better, comments: "The research reveals the UK is in danger of sleepwalking towards the slow death of our neighbourhoods." Chambers believes social

media is a key factor in rising levels of isolation: "Organisations like Facebook and Twitter allow us to live in a bubble with people we already know, maybe that we went to school with, or know through work," he says. "It's meaning we're interacting with different kinds of people less and less."

Neighbours are no longer the first port of call when we find ourselves short of the proverbial cup of sugar, or looking for the lowdown on local information. Convenience stores are (as their title suggests) conveniently placed! Other goods and services are available at the click of a button, or a short drive away. Local information is readily available on smart phones. Another issue is busyness and, while the rise in time spent commuting most significantly impacts family life and personal well-being, a further effect is the way it squeezes out time and motivation to engage with the local community. The loneliness epidemic, understood to be affecting nine million people across all age groups, has got so severe that, in January, Tracy Crouch was appointed as minister for loneliness, part of a project begun by the murdered MP Jo Cox.

## Who is my neighbour?

Jesus' definition of a "neighbour" in the New Testament was a challenge to his Jewish listeners. As demonstrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus placed no limit on who they should regard as their neighbour; ie anyone with whom they came into contact- Jew *and* Gentile.

## How to be a good neighbour

- Welcome new neighbours with a knock on the door to introduce yourself.
- Stay alert for opportunities to help. Look out especially for those who are vulnerable.
- Surprise neighbours with random acts of kindness.
- Be hospitable by opening up your home.
- Invite neighbours to church services and other outreach events.
- Offer your time and gifts eg babysitting, gardening, repairing clothes.
- Regularly pray for them.
- Set up a neighbourhood Facebook group or sign up to [nextdoor.co.uk](https://nextdoor.co.uk)

*Neighbours* has been going for 33 years. It's not just the characters and occasional (OK, frequent) conflicts and problems that viewers keep coming



back for. It's also the close bonds formed among Ramsey Street residents. There is a harvest field right on our doorsteps, with opportunities to ease loneliness, offer prayers, exchange favours, organise gatherings, form friendships and provide

vital help. And in all of these things, and more, people get to hear about Jesus. The more we break into this ground, the more we will see just how fertile it is for beautiful and unexpected things to emerge. Let's see where being good neighbours will take us.



“If I ever reach heaven, I expect to find three wonders there: First to meet some I had not thought to see there; second, to miss some I had expected to see there; and third, the greatest wonder of all, to find myself there.”  
(John Newton)

An automobile accident had rendered one motorist unconscious. As he was being carried away, he opened his eyes and began to struggle desperately to get away. Afterward, he explained that the first thing he saw was a “Shell” sign and somebody was standing in front of the “S.”

### **Favourite songs of Bible characters**

Noah: Raindrops keep falling on my head.

Adam: Strangers in Paradise

Moses: The Wanderer

Samson: Hair

Job: I've got a right to sing the Blues

Daniel: The Lion Sleeps Tonight

Methuselah: Stayin' Alive

Elijah: Up, Up and Away

Lazarus: The second Time Around

## The Parish Church of St Matthew, Croydon

<b>Church Address</b>	<b>Chichester Road Croydon CR0 5NQ</b>	<b>8681 3147</b>
<b>Parish Office Email Address</b>	<b>churchadmin@stmatthew.org.uk</b>	
<b>Website</b>	<b>www.stmatthew.org.uk</b>	
<b>Parish Administrator</b>	<b>Terry Mitchell</b>	<b>8681 3147</b>
<b>Hall Bookings</b>	<b>Contact Parish Administrator</b>	
<b>Vicar</b>	<b>Revd Simon Foster revsimon@stmatthew.org.uk</b>	<b>8688 5055</b>
<b>Curate</b>	<b>Rev Darius Weithers d.o.weithers@gmail.com</b>	<b>8686 1095</b>
<b>Reader</b>	<b>Paul Parmenter Alison Radford</b>	<b>8689 5874</b>
<b>Director of Music &amp; Choir</b>	<b>Michael Strange</b>	
<b>Southwark Pastoral Auxiliaries</b>	<b>Carolyn Tweed Sue Collins</b>	
<b>Churchwardens</b>	<b>Stephen Collingwood Dr Rohini Abhayaratne</b>	<b>8686 2815</b>
<b>PCC Secretary</b>	<b>David Williams</b>	<b>8768 3599</b>
<b>Treasurer &amp; Gift Aid Recorder</b>	<b>Terry Mitchell</b>	
<b>Sacristan Assistant Sacristan</b>	<b>Gillian Bridger Jerry Savage</b>	
<b>Electoral Roll Officer</b>	<b>David Williams</b>	
<b>Magazine Editor</b>	<b>Steve Tucker stephen.tucker123@btinternet.com</b>	<b>8681 6872</b>

### Parish Committees and Organisations

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

### Youth Groups and Clubs

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

For details of other activities taking place at church during the week that include Aerobics, Bach Choir, Philharmonic Choir, 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.

