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# *The Spire*



**Christ Church Welcomes Fr Robert!**

**June and July 2026**

*The Parish Magazine of*  
**CHRIST CHURCH**  
— Southgate —

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# Welcome!

## From The Reverend Paul Ellerby

### Curate of Christ Church Southgate

The season of Trinity has arrived and we are going green! After the great festivals of Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost, the church calendar seems to quieten down a little. No dramatic stable, no empty tomb, no rushing wind and flames. But there will be a new Vicar!

At first glance, Trinity season can feel ordinary, but perhaps that is exactly the point. The Season of Trinity — sometimes called “Ordinary Time” — stretches across much of the year. Yet “ordinary” here does not mean dull or unimportant. It simply means ordered, counted time. And in many ways, it reflects the shape of most of our lives. We do not spend every day on mountain tops or in moments of excitement. Much of life is lived in the everyday: school runs, work, shopping, gardening, caring, cooking, worrying, hoping and simply carrying on.

Trinity season invites us to discover that God is present in all of it. The feast of the Holy Trinity reminds us that God is relationship: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, bound together in love and community. It is a mystery that theologians have pondered for centuries, but perhaps its deepest meaning is not something to solve so much as something to live.

If God’s very nature is loving relationship, then our faith cannot simply be private or inward-

looking. Trinity calls us to live connected lives — caring for neighbours, listening well, forgiving generously, and remembering that we belong to one another.

In church during Trinity season, we hear Jesus teaching what it means to live faithfully day by day. We are encouraged to grow slowly, sometimes imperceptibly, in kindness, patience and trust. Faith is not only about the extraordinary moments when everything feels clear and inspiring. Often it grows quietly, like seeds in good soil. And perhaps that is reassuring.

Because most of us know what ordinary life feels like. There are joys, of course, but also pressures, disappointments and unanswered questions. Trinity season gently reminds us that God does not only meet us in the spectacular moments. God walks alongside us in the ordinary Tuesdays as much as the great celebrations.

So, as the church turns green again, perhaps Trinity season offers us a simple invitation: to notice God already at work in everyday life, and to practise living with a little more love, patience and grace in the places where we already are. And to welcome our new vicar!

May we all enjoy being Ordinary people.

Fr Paul

## Institution and Induction of the Vicar

We are pleased to confirm the Institution and Induction of Fr Robert Coupland as our new Vicar will take place at a special service on **Monday 15th June at 7pm** attended by the Bishop of Edmonton. All are most welcome to come and make this a joyous, welcoming service and there will be an informal drinks reception afterwards.

**On 28th June after the 10 am service**, will we also have a bring and share lunch in Church House for everyone to have the chance to meet Fr Robert and welcome him personally.



### Note from the Editors

In this edition, we are delighted to share with you our interview with our new Vicar, Fr Robert, and hope you enjoy reading this before his arrival on 15th June.

A reminder that the deadline for copy for the June/July edition of The Spire is **Wednesday 22nd July** - do contact us at [christchurchspire@gmail.com](mailto:christchurchspire@gmail.com) - we would love to hear from you!

*Freya and Imogen*

## Services at Christ Church - All Welcome!

### Weekly Services

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>8.00 am</b> <b>10.00 am</b> <b>6.30 pm</b>	<b>Said Eucharist</b> <b>Sung Eucharist</b> <b>Evensong *</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>7.00 pm</b>	<b>Healing Service on First and Third week of the month</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>12.30 pm</b>	<b>Said Eucharist</b>



\* **Choral Evensong on the following Sundays in June and July:**  
 7th June, 14th June, 21st June, 5th July, 12th July, 19th July

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## The Basilica of St Paul Outside the Wall in Rome

There are many churches in Rome, and as a tourist, after a while, they all seem to blur into one. They are all built to the Glory of God, but some are more glorious than others. The choir trip to Rome included performances in several Churches and I must admit my favourite is the ‘ Basilica di

San Paolo fuori le Mura’, (St Paul without the Wall). The wall referred to was the ancient Aurelian wall. The Basilica is very different to other churches, and it seems welcoming and familiar. It is one of the four major papal basilicas in Rome.

Before visiting I hadn’t done any ‘homework’ on the building, so my first sight of it was a real pleasure. There is a courtyard with shady trees and plants. The cloister is one of the finest medieval cloisters in Rome. Although it’s quieter and less crowded than St Peter’s Basilica, it’s historically just as important. The mosaics above the portico immediately reminded us of the Mosaic Reredos behind the altar of our own church which is by the Italian artist Salviati. A real ‘Wow’ vista.

The church is a reconstruction of a great 4th century Basilica. There was a fire in the nineteenth century. Some of the mosaics from the thirteenth century remain, as does the marble tombstone under which the remains of St Paul are reputed to lie. Recent radio carbon dating has given credence to the tradition of the burial site. It is said that after Paul was killed a Roman claimed his body and buried it in a vineyard near the River Tiber. A shrine was built over his grave and over the years more ornate buildings were erected.

If you like church mosaics this building is a real treat, especially the huge 5th century triumphal arch mosaic, which is one of the oldest surviving in Rome. There are also portraits of each of the Popes.

The building is home to an Abbey of Benedictine monks, who are entrusted with the pastoral care of the complex.

The fact that our Church choir had the opportunity to sing in the Basilica makes it seem even more special. The Sunday before the planned trip we were treated to a preview of the pieces on the programme, by English composers from different eras. Although we visited as pilgrims, I would describe the Choir as ambassadors.

Hazel Miall.



**What do you get when you cross an atheist with a Jehovah’s Witness?  
Someone who knocks at your door for no apparent reason.**

# An Interview with Fr Robert Coupland



## The Spire:

First of all, we must start by saying welcome - it's wonderful that you'll be joining us very shortly!

Can you tell us a

little bit about your childhood growing up in rural North Yorkshire – and what was the biggest culture shock with moving to London?

## Fr Robert:

I moved to London just at the end of 2011, so I was about 19 at the time. I really enjoyed growing up in Yorkshire and all my family are still there, bar one brother who lives out in Bali in Indonesia - other than that it's just me who's betrayed the North and moved South! I grew up in a really lovely village in a fairly rural part of North Yorkshire, just outside York.

Moving to London was quite a culture shock, to be honest, even if it was just in terms of the sheer volume; a very loud place to live and get used to. I moved to the Victoria/Westminster area, so going from a tiny village in rural Yorkshire all the way through to really central London was quite a big deal.

## The Spire:

Did you know you wanted to be a priest from a young age or was it a sudden revelation?

## Fr Robert:

I do find this topic quite interesting because I didn't grow up in a Christian family at all, so I'm first-generation Church of England. My family weren't churchgoing, and I think the only time I went into a church before I was about 18 was for a school trip when we were learning about the Reformation.

I always had a sense that I wanted to do

something which involved people. I initially trained to be a sort of nursery nurse, so I worked in early years education. When parents or carers were dropping off the children and I could notice something was going on with them, I found myself spending the day thinking about what was troubling them, so I think that was something pastoral going on in me.

It wasn't until I started exploring what the church meant, mainly through my love of history really, that I was fortunate to meet a really good local vicar, Nicky; she was brilliant and she took me under her wing. I was able to find in her a bit of a model to express some of these things that were going on that I couldn't quite work out. I suppose I always knew that it was something like a vocation, but I didn't really have the vocabulary for it until I met Nicky.

## The Spire:

Working in St Paul's Cathedral, you must have been involved with large and complex events and services – what were you most proud of being involved with?

## Fr Robert:

I loved working at St Paul's Cathedral - I was there for just under six years, so the majority of my ten-year ministry has been there. I think the things that I really loved about it was there was a concrete sense of community, even though it's such a huge place with an enormous body of staff and volunteers.

Its saving grace for us clergy was the resident community because it gave us that sense of belonging to a particular place. The cathedral congregation is largely made-up of people visiting London, sometimes for the first time, and you didn't necessarily know who was coming through the doors on any given day. So having that smaller group of people that you not only worked alongside,

but lived alongside, it taught me a lot about how to be a person, which I really enjoyed.

I'm really proud of the work that we did while I was there. We lived through some very interesting times in the life of the nation; we had to experience COVID, which was one of the very first things that happened in my time - I think I was only there for four months or so beforehand. I was watching a big, well-known institution having to work out who it was again - being asked to close with the loss of income and sadly the loss of staff as well. It was quite an interesting time to ask questions of the institution, like what are we here for? Do we serve the purpose we say we do? So that was quite an interesting time intellectually to be part of that.

A big service that I'm really proud of is (naturally) the Queen's Platinum Jubilee service. That was amazing. I think that was probably the largest scale service I was part of and I love the fact that I wrote the prayers for that service which were read out for the world. I thought, wow, this boy from rural Yorkshire, from a working-class family who didn't go to church, suddenly writing prayers for a national service of Thanksgiving! It was an amazing project to be part of.

But there were also many meaningful services for London, such as the Grenfell Tower Memorial Service, and the 7-7 Bombings Memorial Service as well. Being able to be part of a team that crafted something where people could find expression to things that perhaps they didn't know how to communicate, or perhaps it was the only time they got to genuinely grieve, letting go of the more performative aspects of daily life.

And I learned a lot from the people who work there. One of the Virgers has been there for about 40 years, so he was an absolute mine of knowledge and had so many stories. There are a lot of moments in Amen Court, the resident community, where we would just sit around a fire pit and share stories

about the cathedral and things from its past. It was a great place to be.

### **The Spire:**

Are there any funny or embarrassing stories from that time you can share with us?

### **Fr Robert:**

Oh, there are so many I could pick! There was one hilarious time when I processed in to sing Evensong, which was the flagship service where the choir really gets to show off what they can do. I remember I sang the first set of responses and then suddenly the light bulbs either side of me in the lamps in our stalls just popped and this shower of glass just went all over me, in my hair, all over my book. And we kind of just froze and none of us knew what to do. So, all I did was pick up my book, tip the glass down, and then cross to the other side of the choir to finish the service. It was one of those moments where you're like, right, let's just do this with confidence and hopefully no one will notice; and actually, the congregation on the way out had no idea that anything had happened!

I was also part of the team that sets the orders of service, and we had to advise the administrators what to put in the orders of service, where to find the texts, and then we had to proofread them. We had some hilarious proofreading mistakes. Sometimes it went to print and then you just wanted the ground to swallow you whole at that moment when you saw it in the service.

### **The Spire:**

When you saw the advert for the vacancy at Christ Church, what made you apply for it?

### **Fr Robert:**

When I looked at the advert, and I saw that the word inclusive had been mentioned several times, I thought that was an important way for a community to define themselves, that they're embracing of all sorts of people.

Naturally, the musical tradition caught my

attention, coming from my background at St Paul's. Seeing a parish church that puts resource into its musical tradition and having child choristers as well, it's such a rarity these days, was something I thought was really quite unique and special. And the work around the environment - I really do care quite passionately about this cause and seeing that was a priority, not only for mission, but also for the way that the church operates as well. It's also just a beautiful part of London.

### **The Spire:**

What are you most looking forward to in living in Southgate?

### **Fr Robert:**

Not saying that I don't know my neighbours here or anything like that, but there is something quite different about being a priest in a parish and having that sort of defined role in a community. I'm looking forward to that. I'm looking forward to getting to know the people of Christ Church and Southgate more broadly and the team. I've had wonderful meetings with Father Paul and Reverend Hazel, it's been really good to get to know them.

I've picked the music for my installation service, so I'm really looking forward to hearing that. But I'm also really excited just to sort of see what energy and passion is in the community and how I can help unlock it and help to direct it a bit, just to see what difference we can make to the people of Southgate too.

### **The Spire:**

Will you be bringing any pets with you to the Vicarage?

### **Fr Robert:**

Yes, I am. I will preface this by saying I am a dog person that has two cats. I have Myrtle, who is completely white, which is great for someone who walks around wearing black shirts all day because I am often covered in cat hair. She has one yellow eye, one blue

eye, she's deaf and she's got a heart murmur, so she's got a lot against her, but she's the most wonderful, easy-going cat ever and I've had her for about 8 years now. The new addition to the household is Misha. He'll be turning 14 in August, so he's an older cat, he's a ginger male, and he has cat IBS as well. So, I think the vicarage will turn into a sort of vicarage / veterinary surgery / animal sanctuary - don't be surprised if I get donkeys in the garden or something next!

### **The Spire:**

How can the community best support you as you settle in?

### **Fr Robert:**

I think it's probably worth saying that, although I've been ordained 10 years and had a kind of a ministry in a bishop's office and at the cathedral, and parish ministry is something that I really love, the last time I did it was in 2019. Perhaps a way to help me with the transition is to afford me a bit of patience as I learn the ropes, because I'm not coming from one parish to another. Getting back into the rhythm of parish life and the role and responsibilities that come with that. Pray for patience as I learn and grow into this role.

### **The Spire:**

What would be your best piece of advice to a congregation right now?

### **Fr Robert:**

One of my other hats that I wear is that I'm part of the diocesan vocations team, so walk with and journey with people who are exploring a sense of call to ordination or to lay ministry. And I think my advice to the people of Christ Church would be, if you have any niggling at all that you might be called to something, come and talk to me. Take it seriously. We're all given different gifts - God grants us wonderful things and we each have a unique contribution to make, so I encourage anyone to come forward and have a chat.

**The Spire:**

What's something people might be surprised to learn about you?

**Fr Robert:**

I have coeliac disease, which means I have to be completely gluten free. I'm an avid swimmer and I even took water rescue and lifesaving lessons, so I can be a lifeguard.

**The Spire:**

How do you like to spend your time outside church?

**Fr Robert:**

As mentioned, swimming is definitely up there and I genuinely love walking. I've done some amazing walks just in the UK - I've done the Great Glen Way in Scotland, various walks in Yorkshire, the Wolds Way, the Minster Way. I always try to go away in October and that's always to Scotland in the Highlands.

I do like baking. Being coeliac, it can make it tricky because there's a slightly different science to gluten free baking to regular baking and it's one that I haven't quite mastered yet. But that is something I enjoy, so I might be contributing to various cakes and sweet goods in parish life!

**The Spire:**

Tea or coffee—and how do you take it?

**Fr Robert:**

Tea, always. Strong, usually Yorkshire tea - well, strong and milky, if that can be a category of tea. Big mug - no sugar.

**The Spire:**

If you could be any animal – what would it be?

**Fr Robert:**

I do love elephants, but I don't know that I'd want to be one. Probably something that can fly, maybe an owl - something that would give me a completely different perspective on life.

**The Spire:**

If you could have dinner with any historical figure, who would it be?

**Fr Robert:**

Has to be someone from the Reformation era, like Cardinal Wolsey. I've got a lot of love for him - he's my secret hero.

**The Spire:**

Favourite service of the liturgical year.

**Fr Robert:**

I do love the Easter vigil - that's my favourite.

**The Spire:**

Favourite hymn

**Fr Robert:**

One of the Easter hymns, Walking in the Garden. I always love singing that. It's not a big rousing kind of hymn, but it's about the whole biblical narrative seen through gardens, and change, and flowers dying, rising again. There is something kind of romantic about it as well, which I quite like.

**The Spire:**

And the most important question of all, DC or Marvel?

**Fr Robert:**

I could be flippant and answer Star Wars to that question. But I think probably Marvel, I'm being honest.

**The Spire:**

Before we finish, is anything else you would like to share with the congregation?

**Fr Robert:**

I would just like to say that I'm so excited to begin this ministry. I can't quite tell you how much I'm raring to go. I am someone with lots of ideas, and I'm really looking forward to working with you all and to journeying with you in this parish.



# Queen Roberta and her followers arrive

Saturday 18th April was a very exciting day. After months of waiting and preparing, Roberta (named after Father Robert) arrived with her 5,000 followers. That's a considerable increase for our Parish Electoral Role!!

The Gardening Group was on hand to witness this important installation of the **BEES**.

The day unfolded as follows:-



Youla gets busy with the brush and gets sweeping.



There are trays to get ready as well. No rest - Roberta is on her way.



Patricia and Nick arrive with a humming box in the back of their car.



Careful now - don't drop the precious humming box.



The Bee-keepers inspect the travelling box.



All seems to be in order.



Release the swarm. Opening the Vent! Nick was the brave one.



Slowly the Bees become aware that the vent is open and venture into the open air. (The Gardening Group all stood at a very safe distance!)



Time to put on the Bee-suit



Both Bee-keepers inspect the Hive at close quarters.



A quick puff of smoke to quieten down the Bees



The transfer of the bulk of Bees from their travelling container to the new hive



The transfer continues, looking for Queen Roberta in every tray. Has she survived the journey?



Yes - And there she is. The Queen of the Bees - Roberta She is lively and healthy.



Meet Roberta - Queen Bee Can you spot her? She has a blue spot on her.



Can you see how the worker Bees all swarm around the Queen?



Now it is just a waiting game as the Bees follow their Queen into the new Hive. Patricia and Nick watched until the whole transfer was complete.



Perfect day for transferring Bees.

## Confirmation at St Paul's Cathedral on Holy Saturday



Holy Week is, of course, the high point of the Church year and it was a great joy for me to join with you for the first time to make the journey from the Stations of the Cross through to Easter Day Eucharist. I was particularly moved by the service of Solemn Liturgy on Good Friday, a new experience for me. As if all this wasn't enough, this Easter was made even more special because I was confirmed into the Church at St Paul's Cathedral on Easter Saturday.

I joined some one hundred and twenty other candidates for confirmation in this amazing setting for, what turned out to be, a marathon service of two and a half hours. Something of a test of commitment for my wife and friends who came to support me. I was also joined by Fr Paul who came to 'present' me. For the two of us, the service was preceded by a two-hour run-through which made for a long day, however I enjoyed every minute although I can't speak for Fr Paul! There was, thankfully, time for coffee and a biscuit following the rehearsal before the start of the service.

It was a great encouragement to see so many being baptised and confirmed alongside me, and particularly so many young people. We had two Bishops presiding, needed to keep the service to a manageable time given the number of people; acting Bishop of London, Emma, and our own Bishop Anderson. Also, in an ironic twist, I unknowingly met our new vicar who was part of the Cathedral team leading the service.

Following the presentation of the candidates by their Parish Priests, the baptism of those who required it was carried out at the font near the west door. The confirmation took place under the magnificent dome. We were called up in groups and Bishops Emma and Anderson moved along the semi-circle of candidates confirming each of us in turn. The actual confirmation is over so quickly but I found it genuinely moving and meaningful nonetheless. I take with me a wonderful memory of an important moment in my life.

*Richard Greenaway*



**Peter Branker**

## Choristers Reunited: St George's Day Did Not Drag On

On the evening of St George's Day, 23rd April, a group of choristers who sang at Christ Church in the 1960s and 70s got together at Brown's - better known as The Cherry Tree.

We gathered to enjoy each other's company and to remember, with affection, the remarkable Peter Branker (pictured), our late organist and choirmaster.

Peter has always been an inspirational, greatly respected and much-loved presence in our lives. As well as his musical talents as organist and conductor, he had the rare gift of being able to inspire a somewhat random group of (occasionally) unruly local



boys and young men into a very fine choir, laying the foundations of the musical excellence and strong fellowship which persist to this day. From a young age, our connection with one another has endured, and music has played an important part in our lives - for some professionally, and for all socially.

Through Peter's extensive connections in the world of church music, we were able to enjoy three week-long residences at Lincoln

Cathedral, and two at York Minster, during five successive Easter breaks from 1969-1973. These wonderful experiences always fuel our memories when we get together. We also sang at St Paul's Cathedral several times, and there were some one-off concerts at venues such as Claridge's. What a wonderful musical education we were privileged to have.

Amongst those present at our reunion were Paul Turner (pictured), who recently celebrated his 90th birthday; Ian Winton, still a stalwart of the choir after 55 years' service; Mick Meur of this parish; and three former Head Choristers Richard Mair, Les Roberts and Jonathan Alder. We were also delighted to welcome Will Waine as our guest and regale him with tales of times past.

Who knows – with a little help from our friend Will, we may be back singing in Christ Church one day.

As the chorister's prayer goes: **“Bless O Lord, us Thy servants who minister in Thy temple..”**

*Steve Williams – Christ Church Choir 1964-1975*

*With thanks to Les Roberts for helping with this article and to Keith Parker for photographs*



Paul Turner

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- ◇ completing a form available at the back of church, or
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- ◇ online using the following link:

<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/southgate-christ-church-london/>

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# Parish Life in Pictures

## April and May 2026

### Eastertide Services



# Decorating the church for Easter



Fr Robert, Graham & Will meeting at Old Deanery



Parish Walk at Lea Valley



Gardening morning and mowing



## Saint of the month: St Helier

### 16th July

Take the book of Samuel in the Bible, add a bit of Luke Skywalker father/son conflict from Star Wars, stir in a dash of Pirates of the Caribbean, and you sort of have the story of St Helier – the first saint and martyr of Jersey.

According to the legend, it all began in 6th century Tongeren (now in Belgium). A pagan couple badly wanted a child, but the wife was barren. In desperation they sought the help of a local Christian, Cunibert. He advised them to pray to the Christian God, and to promise that any child born would be 'given back' to God. So they did, and then the wife fell pregnant and gave birth to a son, Helier.

The parents were delighted – at first. But as the baby grew into a boy, it became clear that Helier was different from other children – he was precociously intelligent and could perform miracles. Helier's father found this unsettling and grew jealous of Cunibert's influence over his son. Finally he plotted to have Cunibert murdered.

In horror at such treachery, Helier fled. He wandered far, eventually reaching a monastic community in Normandy, run by Saint Marculf. Here he settled, seeking a life of contemplation, but it was not to be. Marculf had received pleas for help from the very few residents of an island called Gersut, or Agna (now called Jersey). They, too, had had bitter experience of violent men who killed their loved ones without warning: the Vikings and Saxons and Vandals had each visited the island in turn. Now they sought some comfort from the Christians: would someone bring them the Gospel? They had no one to shepherd them.

Marculf could not ignore such a plea, and so he sent Helier and a companion, Romard, to Jersey. The two monks found a small community of fishermen on the sand dunes where the modern town of St Helier would later grow. Helier chose to settle on a tidal islet, nowadays known as the Hermitage Rock. Romard, it was agreed, would act as the 'go between' between Helier in his hermitage and the fishing village.

Helier had chosen a remote spot for the peace and quiet it would give him as he approached God. But one day he discovered that his tidal islet had another great advantage as well. While looking out to sea and praying, he suddenly saw the sails of attacking pirates, stealthily approaching the island in boats. Frantically, Helier signalled the shore of danger coming, and the fishermen and their families scattered into the surrounding marshes, beyond the reach of the bloodthirsty, lustful pirates. This happened time and again, and became so well known in island history that even today, small dark clouds on the horizon are still known as les vailes dé St. Hélyi (the sails of St Helier). As if that were not enough, Helier's prayers and the sign of the cross on another occasion stirred up such a storm that a raiding party was driven clear off the island.

One day the pirates finally caught up with Helier on his tidal islet. They beheaded him. Helier was deeply mourned, and has always been revered in Jersey for having brought Christianity to the island. When his head and body were sent back to France, a healing spring is reputed to have sprung up on the place where the boat came ashore, and so Helier is better known there as a healing saint. The traditional year of his martyrdom is 555AD. His feast day is still marked in Jersey by an annual municipal and ecumenical pilgrimage to the Hermitage, on 16th July.



Stained glass icon of Saint Helier in the Basilica of Our Lady, Tongeren

## Flowers of the Meadow

June really is the loveliest month for meadow flowers. Hopefully many of you will have left an area of churchyard grass to grow long, either for No Mow May or else in preparation for some nature spotting as part of Churches Count on Nature.

One of the showiest flowers in a meadow is the Oxeye Daisy, also called Moon Daisy and Moonpenny; the large white petals drawing pollinators into the bright yellow centre. Look out for a variety of vetches, members of the pea family. You may find Tufted Vetch – look out for 6-spot burnet moths on this one. Bush Vetch and Common Vetch are likely too, and a great many churchyards contain Bird's-foot-trefoil also known as Eggs and Bacon because of the mix of yellow and orange on the flowers. Richard Mabey, in his fantastic book *Flora Britannica* lists many names for Bird's-foot-trefoil including Hen and Chickens, Tom Thumb, Granny's Toenails, Cuckoo's Stocking and Dutchman's Clogs.

Lady's Bedstraw is often found in churchyards. It smells sweet when dried and would be added to hay stuffed in mattresses, particularly when preparing a bed for childbirth. Look out for the froth of yellow flowers (other bedstraws have white flowers) and the scent of honey. The Lady in the name is the Virgin Mary.

Perhaps your churchyard contains orchids, the most common one flowering in June is Common Spotted Orchid. The presence of orchids indicates an old grassland which has matured over time and developed a range of species within the soil. All orchids depend on a fungal partner, feeding the plant underground via the threadlike mycorrhizae.



Bumblebee on Bird's foot  
trefoil credit Rory Dimond



Tufted Vetch

Your churchyard meadow areas act as pitstops or cafes for insects and can buzz with life. Try and spend a little time enjoying them and seeing which pollinators are using them.



**Graham Cook adds:** we have many of these wildflowers growing both in the churchyard generally but also in the meadow we planted 18 months ago and is now showing evidence of our planting and will do all summer.

## Wildflowers at Christ Church

We planted a wildflower meadow in the South Garden in November 2024, and we are now starting to see the first flowers and will do all summer as the meadow is looking very healthy with a lot of diversity. The first flower is the Ragged Robin (pink flower).

Elsewhere in the church yard naturally occurring wildflowers such as the Cuckoo Flower (white) and English Bluebell (blue) are thriving as they have benefitted from our scything regime which opens up space for more daylight.

Interestingly, the Cuckoo Flower is part of the Brassicaceae family, which used to be called



*Cruciferae* which means 'bearing a cross' as they have 4 petals in the shape of a cross. Very appropriate for our churchyard to have them!

*Graham Cook*

## Planet International! Let's look at International Eco Days

There are international days of all kinds nearly every day of the year in the United National calendar, including International Day of Parents on 1st June and Innocent Children Victims of Aggression on the 2nd, Russian Language Day on the 6th, and so on. Thinking about almost any of these can throw up environmental issues or relevance, but this time we've decided we need to be a selective. Narrowing days down to those with an obvious environmental focus reduces this to five in June and one in July. As usual, some of these are rather remote from our daily life in Southgate, but the UN describes them in such a way that we can all contribute and feel part of the observance.

### JUNE

**03 World Bicycle Day:** Promotes sustainable transportation. Not everyone can be a cyclist, but our local cycle routes have been designed to help those who are able to move away from dependence on cars.

**05 World Environment Day:** This is the UN's primary day for encouraging global environmental action and each of us can focus today on doing our bit – every little helps!

**08 World Oceans Day:** Today focuses on marine protection, plastic pollution, and ocean conservation. We are a bit remote from the ocean, but we can at least do our best to limit our plastic use and dispose of waste items responsibly. Even taking toothpaste and make-up tubes to the local recycling point in *Boots* on Chaseside is a positive contribution here.

**17 World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought:** This observance concentrates on land rehabilitation and drought resilience. Imagination is definitely required here... prayer may be the best local starting point.

**21 International Day of the Celebration of the Solstice:** Not a strictly Christian one, but thankfulness for the sun and the rain allow us to join prayerfully with this celebration of the Solstice as a symbol of the natural cycle, too.



Image from Wikipedia

**JULY**

**11 World Population Day:** The UN says that while social, today focuses on sustainability and resource management – something we can all practice today and every day in our daily lives.

Other days in these two months that we can keep in mind include International Day for the Fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (June 5th), World Food Safety Day (June 7th), Sustainable Gastronomy (June 18th), World Rural Development Day (July 6th), and World Wild Horse Day (July 11th).

And finally, an all-encompassing **International Day of Hope on July 12th** – lifting our spirits in what is often desperate and despairing world.

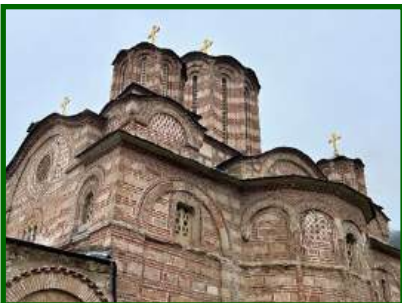
*An Eco and Creation Care Initiative*



Image from Freepik

## Fortified Monasteries in Serbia

Alongside their Christian religious purpose, Serbian monasteries were seats of learning, wealth and art. But during the middle-ages, they were liable to regular attack from neighbouring Saracen populations, notably Turks. Often located in deep valleys to hide them from view, their vulnerability lead them being fortified – the central churches and monastic accommodation were surrounded by castle-like walls with towers, ramparts, a well and a donjon. Serbia is peppered with such structures, many still active centres of monasticism today.



**The brickwork and gold crosses at Ravanica**

On Palm Sunday, during a conference in Belgrade, I was fortunate enough to join a day-long excursion to two of the most famous monasteries, Ravanica and Manasija (also called Resava, after the river that runs alongside). Both had offered protection to the local populations during the many medieval insurgencies and both remain active monasteries today. (In fact, Manasija is now a convent.)

The oldest is Monastery Ravanica. Ravanica was built in the late 14th century by Prince Lazar. (Subsequently canonized, his remains are kept here in a reliquary.) Ravanica was destroyed by the Turks, rebuilt, devastated

again during the 19th century Serbian Revolution, and finally damaged and desecrated by the Germans in WW2. The surrounding ramparts are in decay and none of the original monastic cells or buildings survive, but the fully restored stone and red brick church at its centre is quite breathtaking – the church of the Ascension of the Lord. I have a thing about bricks, and what I saw here simply blew me away! Photography is forbidden inside the church, but being allowed to picture the beauty of the exterior features was more than a compensation – multiple cupolas with gold crosses (fairly recent additions)



**Brickwork details**

against the densely wooded valley sides. The intricate detailing of brick and stone ornamentation is probably the finest I've ever seen anywhere. The brickwork has a strong Byzantine influence and is typical also of other late-medieval Morava churches. Interestingly, the decorations here also feature a griffon... but nobody knows why!



*The griffon on the exterior north wall*

Monastery Manasija is newer and a little more complete. The donjon (fortified food store) here is so enormous that once locked down under siege, the population inside the walls could have survived for a year or more! The now ruined walls are still undergoing restoration and there is a (controversial) plan to rebuild them in their entirety.



*The Church of the Holy Trinity, Manasija, with the donjon tower behind*

Perhaps even more controversially, there is a plan to rebuild and re-roof the ruined dining room of the original monastery. We were able to climb the ramparts to enjoy the views.

The church of the Holy Trinity is very different from the church of the Ascension. Invisible until you have walked under an enormous porticulis and climbed the path through the base of the thick, fortress walls, it is a creamy sandstone structure in the middle of an immaculate formal garden. Apart from grey, leaded cupolas, it has a bare, almost brutalist appearance. Here, we met the most delightful monk, Brother Simon, who was happily showing visitors



*Brother Simon*

around inside. He had lived in UK for 36 years until "I am running back here to be monk. I am very happy monk."

The church was built in the first decade of the 15th century and our happy monk pointed out the image of the founder Despot (or *Prince*)

Stefan Lazarević, high on the wall to the north side of the main door. He was later canonized in the Serbian Orthodox church but there seems to be some disagreement about where he is buried... It is claimed that his remains are preserved both here in the church of the Holy Trinity and also nearby in the church of St Stefan in the Monastery Koporin. (Neither Brother Simon nor our our tour guide mentioned this and I have, as yet, been unable to clarify this.)



*Reliquary of St Stefan, with frescoes, marble floor and candelabra*

The frescoes in both churches are in poor repair, but in the church of the Holy Trinity in Manasija, they have been the victim of water ingress as a consequence of repeated stripping of lead from the roof. The most recent occurrence was on government orders during WW2, the lead being needed for munitions, but the roof is now fully restored again.

Patricia Ashby

## Swift Boxes



We are pleased to announce that the Swift boxes and sound system are now up (high on the north wall of Church House) and ready to welcome their first guests! Anyone who would like to go and have a look can see them from the car park behind Church House.



Huge thanks to all you kindly donated and especially to Matthew from Friends of Broomfield Park for all his advice and Laurie for fitting them so brilliantly.

Let's all pray for their arrival.



## Christchurch Association News

The Christchurch Association (CCA) provides a social centre for the parish and runs the "Top Step Bar", serving soft and alcoholic drinks upstairs in Church House. We are able to take contactless payments as well as accepting cash. The CCA Top Step bar opens early **at 6pm** on the first Friday of each month, with complimentary **cheese and snacks** available through the evening. The next such occasions are **Friday 5th June and Friday 3rd July**.

The next **Friday Foodie** evenings will be held on **19th June** which will be a **Barbecue and Pimms evening** and on **17th July**. There will be a nominal charge for the food provided on both of these evenings.

**Recent News:** Friday Foodies continued with Greek and Turkish snacks on 24th April and a Fish and Chips evening on 15th May. Cheese and snacks were also provided on Friday 10th April and Friday 1st May.

We would like to thank all those who supported these events.

All CCA memberships became renewable on 1st January, and membership costs just £2 per year. Please check your membership status with Michael Greenaway, and renew at the bar if necessary.

The Top Step Bar is open on a regular basis as follows:

- ◆ **Sundays** from 7:30 to 10:30pm
- ◆ **Wednesdays and Fridays** from 8 to 11pm
- ◆ Early opening at **6pm** on the first Friday of every month



*The CCA is a Registered Club with membership open to anyone who worships at Christ Church, lives in the parish or uses the church halls. Membership costs just £2 per year and new members are always welcome. Please contact Michael Greenaway ([christchurchassociation@gmail.com](mailto:christchurchassociation@gmail.com)) for more information or if you would like to become a member*

Steve Smith/Pat Collins (Chairman/Treasurer, Christchurch Association)



## News from the Committees

The **Parochial Church Council (PCC)** meeting on 28th April was unusual in that it did not receive routine sub-committee reports. The focus of the meeting was instead the approval of the Annual Report for the Annual Parochial Church Meetings on 31st May.

Under Any Other Business, however, it was reported that work to identify the cause of the problem with damp in the choir vestry, kitchen and toilet areas has been carried out. Enabling remedial work and redecoration will be overseen by the **Plant & Fabric** and **Finance & Standing** committees and it is intended the work will take place over July and August.

One other item of news, relevant to the **Parish Centre Management Committee** concerned the lease of the electricity substation on the Parish Centre site. The **PCC** approved the recently negotiated change in rental terms offered by Eastern Power Networks plc on the basis of an increased rent of £425.



## The 2026 Electoral Roll

*Patricia Ashby*

Thank you to everyone who has recently checked that their name is on the Electoral Roll and especially thank you to the sixteen people who completed application forms for enrolment. I'm pleased to say that our numbers have gone up a little this year – our total has increased by ten from 187 to **197**. This is good news, but there may still be a few people who attend services regularly but whose names are not yet on our Roll.

I'm writing this now because after the APCM on 31st May, the Roll re-opens and you can apply for enrolment at any time. The bottom line is that you need to be baptised. This may be holding one or two people back, but I know there are also other worries and I would like to try to dispel them.

People are sometimes worried because they don't live in the parish. That is not a problem. Quite a few people live outside of the parish boundaries. The only stipulation is that you should have attended Christ Church regularly for at least six months. Everyone is welcome.

Another anxiety is that although someone comes here 'regularly' (maybe monthly or for particular services, etc.) they are already on the Electoral Roll in another parish. Surprisingly, that does not have to be a stumbling block either. You can be on the Roll of more than one parish if the incumbent is happy. There can be all sorts of reasons for attending more than one church.

Probably the biggest issue is worrying that membership commits you in ways you hadn't foreseen. That is absolutely not the case. There is no commitment of any kind (and certainly no financial commitment). Christ Church asks nothing more than that you belong. You are then free to interact in any way that suits you, but only if you want to or if you feel able.

Finally, people have sometimes asked me "Does it matter whether I'm on the Roll or not?". The simple answer to that is **yes! It does matter**. For example, the number we submit to the Diocese each year determines the number of seats we are allocated on the Deanery Synod where we can contribute to wider Mission Action Planning, help to decide the financial contribution the parish makes to the Diocese (the "parish share") and keep connected with other parishes. It also enables you to be on our PCC if you would like to do that, to be a sidesman, vote at the APCM, and so forth. So yes, for us as a community and for you personally, it matters a lot. It's well worth being on our Roll.

By the way, the Church of England is the only denomination to have such a legalistic, parish-based voting system requiring a formal Electoral Roll. Other denominations (Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, etc.) maintain membership lists or registers, but these are not called "Electoral Rolls" and do not have the same legal status or purpose.

Thank you again. Please contact me if you have any questions.

*Patricia Ashby, Electoral Roll Officer*

## PARISH DIRECTORY

### Parish Office

*Open on Wednesdays and Fridays 10 a.m.— 4 p.m.*

*Please phone beforehand if you have any special requests or needs.*

*N.B. Notices for the Sunday pew sheets should reach the Office no later than 10 a.m. on a Friday. If possible, please e-mail them.*

*Mail* 1 The Green, London N14 7EG  
*Phone* 8886 0384  
*Email* office@christchurch-southgate.org  
*Website* www.christchurch-southgate.org

### Clergy

*Vicar* *From 15th June:* Fr Robert Coupland  
*Address* 1 The Green, Southgate, London, N14 7EG  
*Email* vicar@christchurch-southgate.org

*Assistant Priest* The Reverend Hazel Miall  
*Address* 85 Conway Road, Southgate, London, N14 7BD  
*Phone* 07980 740587  
*Email* hazelhmiall@btinternet.com

*Curate* The Reverend Paul Ellerby  
*Address & Phone* via the office  
*Email* curate@christchurch-southgate.org

### Lay Readers

Cathy Dallman, 4 Greenacre Walk, Southgate, N14 7DB 8886 5918  
 Jackie Anderson 8245 0305  
 Sandra Anderson 07947 027265

### Churchwardens

Kate Carroll, katecarroll1@aol.com 07974 437966  
 Graham Cook, grahamrcook@hotmail.com 07535 800741

### PCC

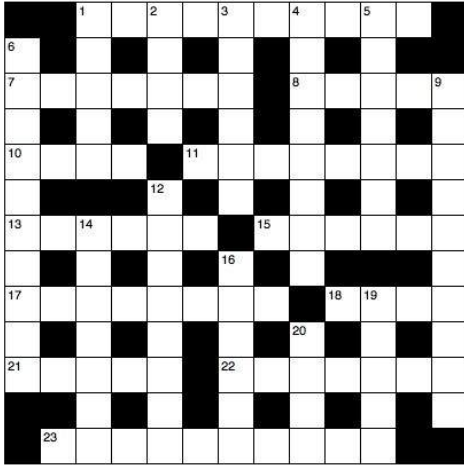
*Secretary* Caroline Robertson 8886 0384  
 office@christchurch-southgate.org  
*Treasurer* Clare Boulton, 321 Gladbeck Way, Enfield, EN2 7HR 8367 5961  
*Stewardship* Michael Meur, address via the office 01707 890345

### Music Department

*Director of Music* William Waine  
 music@christchurch-southgate.org  
*Organist & Assistant*  
*Director of Music* Matthew Warbis  
*Treasurer* Ian Winton, 7 Foxgrove, N14 7EA 8882 3680



# JUNE CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

- 1 Evil (Genesis 6:5) (10)
- 7 Musician called for by Elisha when he met the kings of Israel, Judah and Edom (2 Kings 3:15) (7)
- 8 The request that led to the institution of the Lord’s Prayer: ‘Lord, — us to pray’ (Luke 11:1) (5)
- 10 ‘We are hard pressed on every —’ (2 Corinthians 4:8) (4)
- 11 Fraud (2 Corinthians 6:8) (8)
- 13 ‘His troops advance in force; they build a siege ramp against me and — around my tent’ (Job 19:12) (6)
- 15 Where Rachel hid Laban’s household gods when he searched his daughter’s tent (Genesis 31:34) (6)
- 17 ‘Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be —’ (1 Corinthians 12:1) (8)
- 18 Nomadic dwelling (Genesis 26:25) (4)
- 21 ‘As for man, his days are like —, he flourishes like a flower of the field’ (Psalm 103:15) (5)

- 22 Or I live (anag.) (7)
- 23 Those guilty of 1 Across (Romans 13:4) (10)

### DOWN

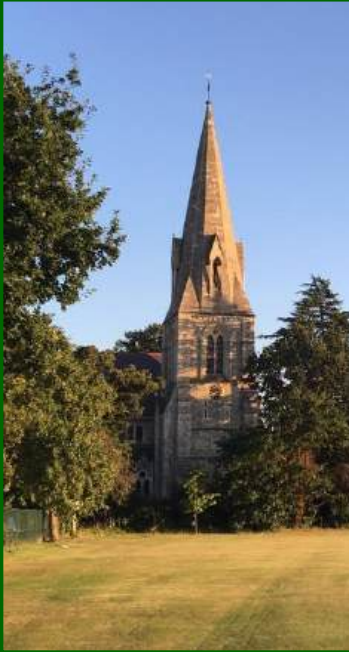
- 1 ‘God so loved the — that he gave his one and only Son’ (John 3:16) (5)
- 2 ‘Away in a manger, no — for a bed’ (4)
- 3 Mob ten (anag.) (6)
- 4 ‘Each — group made its own gods in several towns where they settled’ (2 Kings 17:29) (8)
- 5 Began (Luke 9:46) (7)
- 6 Speaking very softly (John 7:32) (10)
- 9 Workers Ruth joined when she arrived in Bethlehem with her mother-in-law Naomi (Ruth 2:3) (10)
- 12 Put in jail (Acts 22:19) (8)
- 14 Aceturn (anag.) (7)
- 16 Discharge (Acts 21:3) (6)
- 19 ‘All these—come from inside and make a man “unclean”’ (Mark 7:23) (5)
- 20 ‘Let us rejoice and be glad and — him glory!’ (Revelation 19:7) (4)

### APRIL SOLUTION





**Christ Church Southgate  
The Church on the Green N14  
Where everyone is welcome**



**Christ Church Southgate is an Eco-Church, we have achieved the Silver Award.**

**We are committed to caring for God's earth in the different areas of our life and work and are actively working to reduce our environmental impact**

**"We believe in inclusive Church – church which does not discriminate, on any level, on grounds of economic power, gender, mental health, physical ability, race or sexuality. We believe in Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ."**

**The Heavenly Architect**

**CHRIST CHURCH  
— Southgate —**

**Choral Classics from the  
Choir of Christ Church Southgate  
Directed by Richard Brain  
Organist David Hinitt**

**CHOIR CD**

**'The Heavenly Architect'  
Choral Classics from the Choir of Christ  
Church, Southgate.**

**Music includes Parry I Was Glad,  
Mendelssohn Hear My Prayer,  
Wesley Blessed Be The God and Father  
and many more!**

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We rely on your generous donations to finance our ministry**