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The Spire



**August and
September 2026**

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



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Welcome!

From The Reverend Robert Coupland

Vicar of Christ Church Southgate

Dear Friends,

It is a delight to address you in writing as your Vicar. Welcome to the August and September issue of the Spire.

As I mark my first few weeks as parish priest, I write with profound gratitude for the warmth, generosity, and faithfulness that have accompanied the beginning of this new chapter in the life of Christ Church. In the midst of meeting new faces, learning familiar names, and beginning to understand the rhythms that shape our common life, I have been struck by the depth of commitment that sustains this parish and by the quiet devotion that lies beneath so much of what we do together.

The Church now finds herself in the long, green season of Ordinary Time. After the great feasts of Easter and Pentecost, we enter these summer months without the drama and intensity of the major festivals. Yet there is something deeply important about this season. Ordinary Time reminds us that much of the Christian life is not lived in moments of spectacle, but in the steady and often hidden work of discipleship: in prayer offered week by week, in acts of service performed without fanfare, in friendships nurtured over many years, and in the patient cultivation of faith.

Our Sunday Gospels are littered with images of sowing, seeds, plant growth, and harvest. How

very fitting! Christ points us towards patience and trust. The kingdom of God unfolds gradually and mysteriously, often in ways that escape our notice. Growth takes time. Faithfulness is formed in the ordinary moments of parish life, in the seasons of abundance and in the quieter periods alike.

Every parish carries its own traditions, customs, and patterns of worship, and part of the privilege of this first season together lies in discovering how best we might continue to offer our praise and service to God in ways that are both rooted and alive.

Part of that process has involved rediscovering some of the customs and practices that have shaped the life of Christ Church over many years. The season of Ordinary Time invites us to attend afresh to those habits and rhythms through which the Church expresses her faith week by week. In recent Sundays, many have welcomed the opportunity once again to receive Holy Communion at the altar rail, reclaiming a posture of stillness and devotion at the heart of our worship. Likewise, the return of picnic lunches following the Thursday lunchtime Eucharist has provided a simple but valuable opportunity for fellowship and conversation beyond the liturgy itself. Such practices may seem modest in themselves, yet they remind us that the life of the Church is built not only upon great occasions and festivals, but also upon the regular, shared acts

of worship and companionship that sustain us over time. As we continue to settle into our common life together, I hope that we might cherish those traditions that continue to nourish our faith, while remaining attentive to the ways in which God continues to lead us forward.

The life of Christ Church over the past few weeks has given much cause for thanksgiving. The joy and care that surrounded the service of institution and induction, the warmth of our parish lunch, and the countless acts of generosity shown to me have all spoken eloquently of a community that understands hospitality as an expression of the Gospel itself. Beneath these visible occasions lies the daily labour of so many people whose faithfulness enables the parish to flourish, often unnoticed and always invaluable.

This time of year also marks an important transition in our musical life as the choral term draws to a close. For centuries, the pattern of choir terms and summer recess has reflected the natural rhythms of both church and school life and, so, our choir will enjoy a well-earned rest before returning in early September. Their ministry enriches our worship in ways that are difficult to quantify. Week by week, through anthem and psalm, through the familiar cadences of the liturgy and the beauty of sacred music, they help to lift our hearts and minds towards God. As we enter the quieter weeks of summer, we do so with gratitude for all that they offer to the life of this parish.

This year, however, the end of term carries with it a particular poignancy as we marked the retirement of Ian Winton from the choir after fifty-five years of faithful service. Such

longevity speaks not only of remarkable dedication, but also of a deep love for the worship of God and for the community gathered around it. For more than half a century, Ian has lent his voice to the praise of God in this place, accompanying Christ Church through changing times and changing generations. His contribution forms part of the living memory of this parish, woven into countless services, festivals, and ordinary Sundays. As he steps back from this ministry, we do so with deep gratitude for all that he has given and with our prayers and good wishes for the years ahead.

Ordinary Time teaches us that the life of faith is shaped not simply by great occasions but by constancy, perseverance, and attentiveness to God's presence in the everyday. It is in these ordinary weeks that seeds are planted, roots are strengthened, and communities are formed. As we move through the summer together, I remain thankful for the welcome I have received and hopeful for all that lies ahead. There will be much to discover, much to learn, and undoubtedly much to discern as we continue our shared life and worship.

For now, my overriding sentiment is one of gratitude: gratitude for your kindness, your prayers, your patience, and your encouragement. It is a privilege to begin this journey with you, and I look forward to the seasons yet to come, trusting that the Lord who has sustained Christ Church through so many years will continue to guide and bless us in the months ahead.

With my prayers and thanks,

Father Robert



Note from the Editors

We hope you enjoy this magazine, and a reminder that the deadline for copy for the October/November edition of The Spire is **Wednesday 16th September** - do contact us at christchurchspire@gmail.com - we would love to hear from you!

Wishing our readers a happy and peaceful Summer!

Freya and Imogen

The Vicar joins the Cubs

Most years towards the end of the summer term the cubs go on a history tour of the Green, starting with the Church. As Fr. Robert had only been with us couple of weeks, he seemed happy to learn a few new things about the locality and share his knowledge of the Church and Christianity.

Our tour started in the churchyard talking about some of the lives of some of the people who are commemorated on the memorials. We also looked at the decorations on the outside of the church and noticed the gargoyles on the stonework. We discussed who they might represent and the consensus of opinion was that they could be representing saints. During the discussion about what or who a saint is, we came to the conclusion that simplest description was a 'Holy Person.' Immediately one of the Cubs responded to Fr. Robert's definition, with the words, "*Like you then*". We all heartily agreed. The subject moved to talking about the Walker family and the health benefits of drinking beer brewed by the Taylor and Walker families.



Our walk took us past the house with the blue plaque telling us where the Duke of Chandos had lived. This was close to present day pillar box which we deduced from the initials GR on the outside of the box that it must have been positioned in the days of King George.

Having carefully crossed the road we quietly crept to the front of what is now the Beaumont Nursing home to find the plaque dedicated to the memory of the cricketing Walker Brothers, after whom the school that most of the Cubs attend, was named.



We then walked to Conway Park and looked at the mosaic which has been created. It illustrates the flora and fauna that can be found there.

The cattle trough, which could be used by several animals was interesting, but the stocks really aroused the curiosity of the 8-10 year olds. None of us wanted to be punished in that way and we were pleased that in this country people are no longer subject to that form of punishment.

Having taken in as much history as we could cram into our evening it was back to the Walker Hall for the 'Grand Howl ceremony' to end the evening, and the very welcome fruit flavoured ice lollies for all.

Hazel Miall



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The Vicar of Bray

Amid the welcoming of our new vicar, Father Robert, to Christ Church Southgate, I was minded of a very different vicar! This was the infamous Vicar of Bray in the 18th century who clung doggedly to the financial rewards of his rich living at Bray, despite the switch back in political and religious changes as the restored Stuart brothers, Charles and James, gave way to William of Orange and George of Hanover.

The Vicar of Bray was satirised in a popular song of the time for his brazen cupidity for riches and position in the Church. This is illustrated in the rousing chorus:

**‘And this is law, I will maintain
Until my dying day, Sir,
That whatsoever king may reign,
I will be the Viar of Bray, Sir.’**

I trust that the Vicar’s career, reign by reign, will prove both informative and entertaining!

**‘In good King Charles’ golden days,
When loyalty no harm meant,
A zealous High Church man I was,
And so I gained preferment.
To teach my flock I daily preached,
Kings are by God appointed,
And Damned are those who dare resist
Or touch the Lord’s Anointed.’**

Here the Vicar gains promotion by preaching the Diving Right of King Charles II, 1660-1685, whose father Charles I had been martyred by Oliver Cromwell in 1649.

**‘When Royal James possessed the Crown,
And popery grew in fashion,
The penal law I shouted down
and read the Declaration:
The Church of Rome I found would fit
Full well my Constitution,
And I had been a Jesuit,
But for the Revolution.’**

Here our Vicar approves Charles’ brother, King James II, 1685-1888, and his conversion to Catholicism. He opposes the Penal Laws

that prevented Catholics from holding public office such as a Member of Parliament or magistrate. He is one of the few clergy to read the Declaration of Indulgence from his pulpit. This was an attempt by King James to override Parliamentary Legislation – at the last moment the Vicar of Bray switches his allegiance to the Glorious Revolution of 1688. This deposed the Catholic James II and put his protestant daughter, Mary II, and her Dutch husband William of Orange on the throne. Thus ended Absolute Monarchy in Britain. Parliament was now supreme.

**‘When William our Deliverer came,
To heal the Nation’s grievance,
With this new wind about I steered
And swore to him allegiance.
Old principles I did revoke,
Set conscience at a distance,
Passive obedience was a joke,
A jest was non-resistance.’**

Here the Vicar ridicules the notions of Passive Obedience and Non-Resistance, which some clergy adapted towards the new King, William III. These argued that obedience was owed to James, even if he was tyrannical. Clearly, the Vicar of Bray has no qualms in supporting the new King and the Protestant religion, and in throwing James and Catholicism overboard.

**‘When Royal Anne became our Queen,
The Church of England’s Glory,
Another face of things was seen,
And I became a Tory.
Occasional conformists base
I blamed their moderation,
And thought the Church in danger was,
From such Prevarication.’**

During the reign of Queen Anne, 1702-1714, the Vicar shows loyalty to the Queen and the Church by joining the Tory Party, a country party of small landowners who opposed the corruption of the Court party, also known as the Whigs. It was the Tory party who passed

the Occasional Conformity Act of 1711. This excluded from public office Baptists and Presbyterians who feigned loyalty to the Church of England by taking an Anglican communion just once a year to bypass the Test Act.

**‘When George in Pudding time came o’er
And moderate men looked big, Sir,
My principles I changed once more,
And so became a Whig, Sir,
And thus preferment I procured,
From Our Faith’s great Defender,
And almost every day abjured
The Pope and the Pretender.’**

During the reign of George I, 1714-1727, the Vicar of Bray switches his allegiance to the Protestant Hanoverians and away from the Catholic Stuarts and the First Pretender, James Stuart. He is now a Whig. The Whig party championed the supremacy of Parliament over the Crown. By the 19th century the Whigs have become the Liberal Party, just as the Tories had become the Conservatives.

**‘The Illustrious House of Hanover,
And Protestant succession,
To these I lustily will swear,
Whilst they can keep possession.
For in my Faith and Loyalty,
I never once will falter,
And George, my lawful king shall be,
Except the Times should alter.’**

NB. The Protestant succession to the British throne is the legal and constitutional requirement that the reigning monarch must be a Protestant and in communion with the Church of England. Established to prevent a Roman Catholic from taking the throne, these rules remain in effect today.

However, the Succession to the Crown Act, 2013, removed the ban on monarchs marrying Roman Catholics. While heirs can now marry Roman Catholics, the monarch must still be a Protestant and in communion with the Church of England.

John Partridge

In the Footsteps of the Northern Saints

By The Revd Paul Ellerby, Assistant Curate

Many of you will know that when I am not with you at Christ Church, I spend part of my week on the team at McCabe Pilgrimages. This is how I have earned a living since 2018 and it is this work that enables me to serve as a Self-Supporting Minister. In July, I had the privilege of joining 34 pilgrims (including Rosemary and Richard Lawson!) travelling ‘In the Footsteps of the Northern Saints’.

One of the most significant parts of the journey was walking between the Causeway and Holy Island. Wooden vertical poles are the only indicators marking safe route between the mainland and island. The sight of the poles stretching across the sand and mud is one of the most iconic views in Northumberland and to walk the route and follow in the footsteps of our medieval ancestors is a wonderful experience. We planted our own bare feet where pilgrims have walked ever since 635, when King Oswald gave the Holy Island of Lindisfarne to St. Aidan to establish his monastery.

If you have an interest in medieval English history, Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England, or the concept of



“Celtic Christianity”, there is one giant of literature: the Venerable Bede. His body resides in Durham Cathedral which was the final place we visited on this pilgrimage. Bede’s most famous work is *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, the first written history of England. Completed in 731, it is a key source of details about the life of St Cuthbert and the arrival of Christianity to Northumberland. St Cuthbert’s remains also lay at Durham Cathedral.

As Anglicans, depending on our tradition, we don’t always know how to celebrate the Saints, and we might find it awkward to Venerate their remains. Originally coming from a low evangelical tradition, I certainly fitted into this category. However, as this prayer from the Venerable Bede makes it clear, the Celtic Saints were simply evangelists, spreading the word they had received, the Gospel of Jesus, to bring salvation to the people they met – certainly something to celebrate:

*I pray thee, merciful Jesus,
that as thou hast graciously granted me
to drink down sweetly from the Word
which tells of thee,
so wilt thou kindly grant
that I may come at length to thee,
the fount of all wisdom
and stand before thy face for ever.
Amen*



Pilgrimage is a journey, and for the Christian it is a prayerful journey. As we journeyed together, we prayed and talked about life and death, friends and family, illness and recovery, hopes and fears, success and disappointment, creation and the world we live in. So, as we journey onwards, let’s keep praying.

Fr Paul



The Bible Study Group: Book of Micah

Over the last few months, we have been studying the book of the prophet, Micah. It follows the structure of classical Hebrew literature with the climax in the middle and a build-up and unfolding in an inverted mirror symmetry around that. It rather fits the shape of a scroll, appropriately.

Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah and there are notable similarities in their prophetic messages; but with just 7 chapters, Micah’s book is a quicker study than Isaiah’s 66 chapters! It is one continuous poem beginning with judgement against Samaria and Judah. Soon after the beginning of Micah’s ministry, the northern kingdom – Samaria – would indeed fall to the Assyrian empire and be swept away. Judah was invaded too, and the Assyrians stood at the gates of Jerusalem. The prophet Jeremiah records that King Hezekiah listened to Micah and sought the Lord’s favour, saving Jerusalem.

Micah was an ordinary man from the small border town of Moresheth. He goes on to bring his complaint about the corrupt practices of Judah’s leaders - snatching land, cheating people out of money, and lining their pockets from false prophecy. But straight after this we get the first message of hope. Micah prophesies that God will gather the survivors of his judgement and shepherd them.

Such is the conduct of Judah's leaders though – and despite Hezekiah – Micah foretells the fall of Jerusalem that will happen almost a hundred years later. It must have seemed a dark end but then along comes the dramatic climax of the promise at the centre.

Micah passes on God's promise that his reign will bring lasting peace and provision. Swords will be beaten into ploughshares. That's only worth doing if there is a permanent end to fighting, and Micah says that everyone shall sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees.

We move on to the unfolding from that climax; and with it, probably the most famous passage from Micah, which we read each Christmas from the gospel of Matthew. "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel." The light will dawn after the darkness of exile.

God pronounces that he has no use of sacrifices from his people. Their ill-gotten wealth may allow them to bring large numbers of rams and rivers of oil to the temple, but God is really looking for faithful and compassionate following. He wants his people to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with their God. In the inverted symmetry around the centre, just as the second chapter ends with a message of hope as God gathers his people, the second last chapter returns to Micah's complaint about the financial corruption in Judah and promises ruin. Chapter 2 only promised hope to the remnant!

So how will this prophecy mirror the first doom-laden chapter in its last? Well just as the last three chapters reverse the first three chapters, Micah finishes by promising God's compassion on us. He says, "You will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea." After all, who is a God like you, Micah poses; and that is where Micah gets his name from – Micah's name means 'who is like the Lord'. His message goes beyond that to his people; however strong the condemnation is, on Israel. And so, the poem-prophecy begins "Hear, you peoples, all of you; listen, O earth, and all that is in it." In that careful symmetry, the second last verse is a promise to wipe away all sins given to all people in the second verse.

And so, we learnt not only about Hebrew literacy style but also about the gift of prophecy - which brings God's word to transform unjust structures of society, challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation.

The Bible Study Group

Friendship, Love, and the Blessed Peace of Jesus

These are among the greatest gifts we find in our beautiful Christ Church, Southgate. We find them in our church family, united in the love of Jesus Christ. I would like to thank dear Father Robert, Rev. Hazel, Father Paul, Sandra, Jackie, Simon, Will, and our beautiful choir. I love their singing and I am sure many of you enjoy it as much as I do.

Last Sunday, we received Holy Communion at our holy altar. This was so wonderful and really touched my heart. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for being with me every day of my life. I adore your holy name and give thanks for your everlasting love, peace, and faithful presence.

from your Christian sister, Lynda Corcoran

The Choir Trip to Italy

In May, 6 choristers, 30 adults and 1 baby from the Choir of Christ Church Southgate headed off on tour to Rome. It was my first international trip as Director of Music of our fabulous choir, and where better to begin than a city of unparalleled history made up of over 3,000 years' worth of buildings and architecture, and the centre of the Roman Catholic Church, to which we owe much of our musical heritage.

Our concert programme demonstrated the results of this influence on English music before, during and after the Reformation. It explored the response of composers like Byrd, Sheppard and Tallis to the political and religious upheaval of the 1500s, alongside music by composers inspired by the English Renaissance, such as music for the Catholic revival by Stanford and Holst, and Vaughan-Williams' setting of a text by the non-conformist preacher John Bunyan, and finally modern classics by Tavener and Tippett. It also worked through Catholic and Anglican religious ideas and imagery including the Virgin Mary, obedience to the will of God, Jesus as the Lamb of God and his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, and our own hope in the life everlasting.

The tour got off to an unexpectedly wonderful start at the Episcopal Church of St Paul's Within the Walls. Built in 1873, it is the first non-Roman Catholic church to be built within Rome's city walls. We had decided early on to look for somewhere to sing for a comfortably familiar Eucharist service on Pentecost Sunday rather than a Mass. When the church announced that they were inviting Ambassadors from various African countries to celebrate the church's annual Africa Day, and that we needed to sing a hymn and the Sanctus and Agnus Dei in Swahili, I thought this decision had not at all paid off. But the choir sang these so very beautifully, alongside music in English by Vaughan Williams and Byrd, and in Latin by Tallis, that the service ended up being incredibly moving, with readings in Italian and another hymn in Igbo. As the (American) Rector said in his sermon – "If you want to see what Pentecost looks like, just look around you." The service is still available on the "St Paul's Within the Walls Episcopal Church" YouTube channel under Videos (Day of Pentecost – May 24, 2026) if you would like to see it.



Two of our concert venues were undoubtedly highlights. We were so fortunate to sing in the enormous Papal Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls, the second largest church in Rome, as part of their International Sacred Choral Festival. The choir sang from the Apse just to the east of the Altar, beneath which St Paul the Apostle is said to be buried, and gazed down the full length of the 432 ft long columned nave with its stucco-decorated ceiling for the duration of the concert. On the other hand, my view for the

duration of the concert was of the Choir of Christ Church Southgate. The next day we sang in the Basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, another of the seven major pilgrimage churches of Rome consecrated in 325 AD to house various relics of Jesus' crucifixion. The acoustic was one of the most beautiful any of us have ever had the pleasure to perform in.



Rome has something for everyone – some of the choir transported a book between piazzas and drank espresso after espresso, while others thought about the Roman Empire multiple times a day, taking in the Colosseum, the Roman Forum and the Circus Maximus. Conforming to stereotype, some of the sopranos and altos went shopping on the Via del Corso. Other highlights included the Vatican and its museums, the Trevi Fountain, and the Pantheon, which is my personal favourite – I enjoyed it so much I went twice, having already been twice before. And of course, the food...

Thank you to Andrew Gummer, tour manager extraordinaire, for masterminding the whole trip and finding such fabulous performance opportunities which will live so long in the memory. To everyone who supported the tour financially, either by coming to a Southgate Session or with a donation, including the CCA and our Choral Scholarship sponsors. To those who supported the tour in person, in some cases attending every single one of our concerts. And to the choir, for their hard-work, good-humour, and wonderful singing.

William Waine
Director of Music

Engagement News!

We are very happy to share the news of our engagement, which took place on the trip to Rome. We met online and, despite living in different countries, we feel very blessed to have been able to visit each other often and attend Church together. We are thankful to God for strengthening and guiding us through this time. We are no longer simply dreaming of our future together, but we can see it taking shape before us.

We still have a lot of planning to do as we enter this important stage of our relationship, but we look forward to our wedding in Christ Church, and to continue to grow together in faith and love. We are forever grateful to God for His faithfulness throughout our journey and look forward to the future He has prepared for us.



Best regards,
Julian Longworth and Polina Chemerys

Open Rehearsals with our Wonderful Choir

- Both Junior and Senior



"A church without a choir is like a body without a soul." — John Rutter

If you wander into Christ Church on a Friday early evening, beware - the Choir are rehearsing. Starting promptly, the Junior Choir will have a quick round of "An interesting thing that I did this week." The choristers tell tales of trips with the school to various theme parks, their relief felt at the end of exams, cricket matches played and training sessions completed and even how to cope with the sweltering weather in a hot school.

The Junior choir have already had a busy week, before they even start their rehearsals. Then it is on to the music. It's impressive to see the young choristers attack complex pieces written by John Rutter, Roth and even Schubert. We don't think that we sang in Latin when we were in primary or even secondary School. After half an hour of amazing music, the Junior Choir finish their session with the Chorister's Prayer.

**"Bless, O Lord, us thy servants who minister in thy temple.
Grant that what we sing with our lips, we may believe in our hearts,
and what we believe in our hearts, we may show forth in our lives.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen "**

Of course, no-one leaves without their dues - chocolate biscuits supplied by Will!

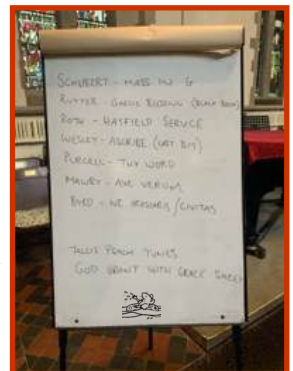


7.00pm and the rest of the Choir hurry in from their "other" lives and check the board, collect their music and make their way to their positions. A quick sip from water bottles and

all eyes on Will and Matthew ... no time for everybody's news - it's straight into the music.

We reflect on how lucky we are at Christ Church to have such an amazing and gifted Choir. People who are willing to give up their precious time to add to our worship. The beautiful acoustics and surroundings add to the unique and special experience of listening to a live Choir. Sound becomes thick in the air, and we feel that we are immersed in the moment. What a privilege to sit and listen. But not for long ...

All the spectators were invited to take part in a 'Round': "God grant with grace". This is a famous four-part psalm tune written by English Renaissance composer Thomas Tallis and first published in 1567. What a lovely way to end the rehearsals.





**"God grant with grace, he us embrace,
In gentle part, bless he our heart;
With loving face, shine he in place,
His mercies all on us to fall."**

Of course, the Congregation will hear the result of rehearsals during the Sunday service. So much skill goes into making something seem simple and effortless.

by Cathy & Richard Godfrey

Archive Choir Recording

In 1962 the choir made a recording to 'mark the centenary year of the Southgate Parish Church'. An old 33rpm of the recording was recently found during a sort out and given to Christ Church for our archives.

The recording featured the Vicar, The Rev'd Murray McLeod, reading from Ecclesiasticus 44 with the bells in the background, as well as a 'small but representative group of the choral and organ pieces sung and played ... during the course of the year'. These included 'Come Holy Ghost' and 'Rejoice in the Lord'.

The organist and Choirmaster at the time was Peter Branker, the accompanying notes list all those involved in the recording - including one current member of the congregation who was Head Chorister at the time.

We have converted the recording to digital format and made it, as well as the accompanying notes available on the website: <https://tinyurl.com/christchurch-choir-1962>

We hope you enjoy listening to it!



Services at Christ Church - All Welcome!

Weekly Services

Sunday **8.00 am**
 10.00 am
 6.30 pm

Said Eucharist
Sung Eucharist
Evensong *

Tuesday **7.00 pm**

**Healing Service on First and
Third week of the month**

Thursday **12.30 pm**

Said Eucharist

*** Please note that the choir will be on holiday during August and return
Sunday 6th September**





Parish Life in Pictures

June and July 2026

Fr Robert Institution and Induction

The Garden Team working on Front



Service Rehearsal



Ready to Welcome!



Processing In



The Service



Fr Robert Institution and Induction Service



Bring and Share Lunch



Walker School end of year Service



Fr Robert's first Sunday Service



Ian
Winton
retires
from the
choir
after 55
years



The Church of St Sava, Belgrade



The largest church in the world by gross volume, the second largest Orthodox church in the world (beaten only by Christ the Saviour in

St Petersburg) and the largest Orthodox church in Serbia, St Sava's (dedicated to St Sava, the founder of the Serbian Orthodox church, the father of Serbian literature and education, and the first archbishop of Serbia) sits atop a high hill in central Belgrade. It is topped by a 12m tall gold cross and the chandeliers that light its vast interior spaces measure 20m across.

Recently completed (although scaffolding, ladders and builders are still in evidence, so I'm not totally convinced they're finished!) it was begun in 1935 and avoided the devastation of WWII and the many flare-ups of the Yugoslav Wars when so much of Belgrade suffered serious damage. Wars interrupted the construction but did not destroy it. I first visited when it was 'structurally completed' and opened to the public in the early 2000s, when you could go in among the scaffolding and plastic sheeting to watch artists at work on completion of the interior mosaics. But now all

that is finished and the overall effect is simply stunning.

The visible, white marble-clad exterior is built above a simply enormous crypt – the size of a cathedral in itself. The crypt in Orthodox churches is very important,

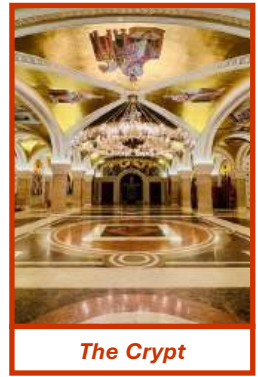
functioning as the Treasury, the burial ground of Patriarchs, and murals tell stories of apostles, saints, martyrs and local history. Every inch of the interior surface above and below ground – the crypt and the nave – is covered in gold mosaics and colourful frescoes. The floors

are marble. The mosaic styles, above and below ground, are a little different artistically but equally breath-taking in effect. Russian artists were employed to complete the 'upstairs' mosaics while 'downstairs' a mix of local Serbian and Russian artists worked together. (I believe Russia also contributed quite significantly to the funding required and many mosaics were completed in Moscow before being installed in the church.) The whole project was overseen by a very famous Russian artist and iconographer, Nikolai Mukhin.

Nine bronze doors on the outside of the building are embossed with the Lord's Prayer in twenty-four different languages (and multiple scripts – I can't even recognise some of them).

Alongside the Lord's Prayer are also two Orthodox prayers (reproduced in Old Church Slavonic, Serbian, Latin, Aramaic Hebrew, Greek, Russian, Arabic, and Armenian) – "O Heavenly King" and "Rejoice – Mother of God".

I think anyone who has the chance to visit this church will, indeed, rejoice! It's definitely one of my "go to" places.



The Crypt

Central view of the nave



One of nine bronze doors

Patricia Ashby

Planet International!

Let's look at International Eco Days



Jack's Lake in Hadley Woods

There are many days in August and September when we can take positive steps to conserve and enhance the world around us. Keeping things manageable, *Planet International* again chooses to focus on just a few of these – a couple for the holiday month of August and a few more for September when we are all back home again.

AUGUST

27th: World Lake Day reminds us that lakes are “one of the most vital natural resources on our planet”. Lakes are a source of fresh water, help maintain biodiversity, play a part in climate regulation, and offer recreational and economic opportunities. Locally, we have multiple lakes in Broomfield Park, the old boating lake in Grovelands Park, Jack's Lake in Hadley Woods... even picking up one bit of litter from the water's edge to keep the environment clean and protect local wildlife would make a contribution.

22nd: World Plant Milk Day is an opportunity to try one of the many alternatives to dairy milk. The aim is to help accelerate the transition from dairy to plant as a means of minimising our impact on the planet. Note that plant free milk usually has its own location in the supermarket, away from the dairy section – just ask a member of staff.

SEPTEMBER

5th: International Day of Charity is marked annually on this date. Commemorating Mother Teresa of Calcutta, it aims to bring people together to build more just and resilient societies through direct giving, volunteering, or collective action of some kind. Each of us can take part by aiding one of the many environmental charities such as Friends of the Earth, Climate Outreach, Surfers Against Sewage, to name just a few.

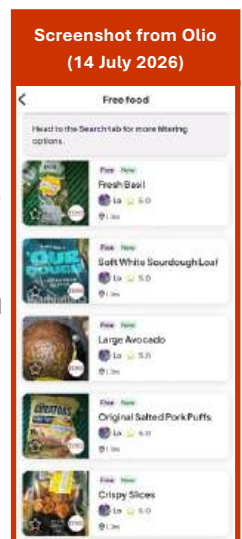
7th: International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies reminds us that a horrendous 92% of our world is exposed to air pollution, causing around 7 million premature deaths every year. It's definitely another day for leaving the car at home and using public transport...

12th: World Dolphin Day is a bit trickier to participate in directly from Southgate, but prayers for the greater protection of dolphins will never go amiss.

20th: World Clean-up Day is self-explanatory! Every single one of us can contribute towards managing mis-managed waste. The Green and Cannon Hill invariably offer the opportunity to litter-pick.

22nd: World Car Free Day – the name says it all – walk, cycle, catch the bus, use trains.

29th: International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste is one we can all contribute to, not only by careful housekeeping and minimising domestic food waste, but also by joining in initiatives such



as *Olio* which distribute local supermarket food that will otherwise go to waste. This is excellent for needy members of our community, but it is something we can all participate in – rich or poor. Your nearest Food Waste Hero is never far away and new foods are posted, ready for collection, every day of the week. Uncollected items go in the bin... but we can prevent this unnecessary waste by using the food instead. Download the free *Olio* App on your mobile.

So, there's plenty to keep us busy over the summer, wherever we are and whatever we are doing.

An Eco and Creation Care Initiative

Bats that aren't in the Belfry!

Bats have been found in churchyards for a very long time, often roosting in trees or buildings. A bat roost may be nearly as old as the building with around 60% of pre-16th century churches containing bat roosts. There are seventeen species of bat native to the UK: eight of these use churches or chapels for roosting, including some of the less common species such as the Natterer's bat and the Serotine bat. Some of the remaining nine species roost in large trees.



Brown long eared bat at Wetherden Church © Chris Damant

Bats do not roost in the belfry ... too much noise! They usually use different roosts through the seasons. Bats need nursery roosts for the young, winter roosts to hibernate and also temporary roosts to digest their food and to sleep in during the daytime. They like to roost in clean, draught free, quiet crevices where the temperature is constant. Within churches or chapels bats are found in the eaves, porch, under roof tiles, in old timber joints, behind ceilings, hangings and commemorative plaques. They also roost within chest tombs, in holes or cracks within a wall, behind ivy or in lychgates. When roosting in trees they use holes, crevices, flaking bark and gaps behind ivy. Veteran trees are full of possible roosting places.

Churchyards tend to have a mixture of large trees, grassland, flowers, areas of long or tussocky grass, compost heaps, log piles and stonework. They are generally relatively free of chemicals, tend to have some areas which are not too tidy and may have been there a long time. All of this leads to a good population of insects which is food for the hungry bats.

Why not have a quiet sit in the churchyard at the end of the day, look to see if any swifts are swirling around the churchyard and then wait to see if any bats appear. Bats can fly long distances to forage for food so, even if you don't have roosting bats in your churchyard they may well come visiting.

The Bats in Churches project ran from 2019 to the end of October 2023 and their website batsinchurches.org.uk still holds a plethora of information and resources. Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the partnership comprised Natural England, Church of England (Cathedral and Church Buildings Division), Historic





Friends of the Christ Church Garden Update

We now have a small, committed team of gardeners at Christ Church who look after the front and back garden, the church yard and church house. They generously give their time, knowledge and expertise and we are beginning to see the results.

The front garden looked stunning for Father Robert's institution and for our many visitors.

We have maintained our mowing regime allowing parts of the church yard to continue to rewild, benefitting the grass, wildflowers and wildlife. Did you know that Graham scythes our wildflower areas (with the help of an expert, Matt of Friends of Broomfield Park)? If anyone is keen to see this and learn a bit about scything and have a go, please let Graham know.

We are constantly reviewing our flower beds and our wildflowers, whilst planting more seeds with bee friendly flowers and plants in mind, and our new bees are currently thriving very well. After the planting a few of us did 18 months ago, the south garden wildflower meadow now has the following in flower: hedge bedstraw, field scabious, common cat's ear, bird's foot trefoil, wild marjoram, lady's bedstraw (yellow), betony; and ragged robin has already flowered. The only one left is meadow cranesbill which we still await. Matt of Friends of Broomfield Park (who advised and helped) is very impressed with our success rate!

The rockery in the back garden is beginning to mature, and we are hoping to work on a seating area with log seats and a wooden table as our next project. Once finished this will be able to be used by all. This is by no means an exhaustive list as there is always a lot to do.

We welcome all who want to join us in caring for what God has given us. No experience is necessary - just come along and join in the fun! We are also currently asking for donations of any unwanted garden tools. Thanking all those interested in advance.

Sandra Anderson and Graham Cook

Graham adds:

I have been intrigued by, and carefully watered, a huge plant by the church sign. I thought it may just be a weird thistle but apparently (according to my friends at Broomfield) it is:

Acanthus spinosus, the spiny bear's breech, is a species of flowering plant in the family Acanthaceae, native to southern Europe, from Italy to western Turkey. It is an herbaceous perennial growing to 150 cm (59 in) tall by 60–90 cm (24–35 in) wide. The deeply cut leaves have spiny margins, and in early summer it bears erect, 1m (3 ft) long racemes of white flowers with maroon bracts.

Apparently, it was used as the model for the design of the top of Corinthian columns and a favourite of William Morris!



Open House London



Open City is a charity empowering communities to learn about, feel connected to, and have a role in shaping places where they live. Every year, buildings and other sites across all 33 London boroughs open to the public, so that Londoners can explore and learn about them for free.

As part of Open House London we will be welcoming visitors on:

Saturday 19th September 10am - 4.00pm

Sunday 20th September 12.30pm - 4.30pm

There will be tours and craft activities for all. Refreshments will be available. Keep an eye on the weekly notices for more details nearer the time!

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 4th September and Friday 2nd October**.

The next **Friday Foodie** evening will be held on **18th September** which will be a **Chinese snacks evening**. There will be a nominal charge for the food provided on this evening.

Please note: the CCA will be closed from Sunday 2nd August until Sunday 30th August inclusive and will re-open on Wednesday 2nd September.

Recent News: Friday Foodies continued with a Barbeque and Pimms evening on 19th June and a Pizza evening on 17th July. Cheese and snacks were also provided on Friday 5th June and Friday 3rd July. The CCA also supported the welcome lunch for Father Robert on Sunday 28th June.

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

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) 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 final **Parochial Church Council (PCC)** meeting before the summer break and the first for our new Vicar, Fr Robert, took place on Tuesday 21st July 2026. A big thank you to all our sub-committees who provided reports in advance of the meeting and enabled this summary to catch this edition of The Spire.

In his Vicar's Report, Fr Robert described how he is beginning the work of "examining, discerning and appraising our liturgy, activities, outreach, and output" as he gets the measure of his new role. (There is no specific **Outreach Committee** report this time, although many activities have continued.)

Looking at our buildings, the **Plant & Fabric Committee (P&FC)** reported a list of activities including obtaining a faculty to repair a crack in the small boundary wall, August painting of the choir vestry, kitchen and toilet, and a move to obtain a quote to rewire the choir stalls lights. **P&FC** is also considering whether the alarm system should be replaced. (This same question is being discussed by the **Finance & Standing Committee (F&SC)**). The office has a new modem and routine emptying of the septic tank is being arranged.

In a separate **Finance** report, the Treasurer confirmed that our financial situation is rather better than forecast, largely thanks to income from use of the church for local elections and for ABRSM examination sessions, with a small surplus on all day-to-day activities. The **PCC** agreed that Christ Church should pay the full amount suggested by the Diocese to the Common

Fund (£107.5K), and there was also discussion around the re-introduction of a Collection during services.

Still on the subject of buildings, the **Parish Centre Management Committee (PCMC)** reported completion of the asbestos sealing and removal process in Church House which means kitchen refurbishment work can now be completed and some of the materials stored on the stage can be removed. More painting will take place during August as well as further repairs to the flat roof. Fortnightly grounds maintenance is now being carried out by GP Garden Services. There is, however, a delay in finalising the new lease with UK Power Networks because the Diocese has asked for a site valuation which might enable us to benefit from a "better" rate.

Eco & Care Creation (E&CC) expressed delight that the new bees are now in residence, although the swifts visible in the summer evening skies have not moved into our swift boxes. The gardeners have been out in force and the results of their hard work are there for all to see. A full account of their achievements will be found elsewhere in this magazine. **E&CC** also reported continued attention to our 'green housekeeping habits' in church and careful monitoring of energy use, as well as integration of our concern for the environment into the liturgy.

Finally, the **Social Responsibility Committee (SRC)** reported that the stall & coffee takings raised £850 which has been sent to North London Hospice, and will raise funds for Nightingale Cancer Support Centre from now until December. £378.50 was also sent to Christian Aid and the usual Harvest Quiz will take place on Saturday 3rd October.

Patricia Ashby

Date for your diaries!

The Legendary Harvest Quiz will be taking place on Saturday 3rd October at 7pm - see notices for further details
All proceeds will go to Noah's Ark Children's Hospice



Stewardship

Mick Meur, Stewardship Recorder



My last report was in the April Spire so I thought I would provide an update on Stewardship generally as we are now in the second half of the church's financial year.

Estimates of the year end results are always difficult as donations can quickly change at any time, However, it looks likely Stewardship income will be less than it was in 2025.

Donations to the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) are down by just under 2%, this is not as bad as I thought it would be earlier in the year. A review of giving over the past 10 years or so shows that every year we lose two or three donors and this trend looks likely to continue. Normally we expect to gain new donors at the same rate, but so far this year we far this year we are three givers down compared to the end of 2025.

So, if you were planning to sign to join our Stewardship but haven't yet, if you were planning to increase your giving, but haven't yet, here is a reminder of what to do ... Don't delay, act today, join the congregation already giving regularly using the Parish Giving Scheme.

Cash donations are surprisingly holding up, about two thirds is thankfully in the blue gift aid envelopes. The remainder in the plate still attracts gift aid under an HMRC scheme for small donations.

Contactless donations from the tablet at the back of church are holding up, but perhaps not as popular as I anticipated when it was installed a few years ago. If you are a regular user of this method, I would encourage you to consider using the Parish Giving Scheme instead.

I am always happy to discuss such matters and can be contacted by telephone on the contact number in the Directory at the back of The Spire or email me on mikestatistics@gmail.com

HOW YOU CAN HELP!

Please consider joining the Parish Giving Scheme now.
This can be set-up easily by:

- ◇ completing a form available at the back of church, or
- ◇ making one telephone call to their dedicated helpline number 0333 002 1271 - when calling please quote our parish code 230623352, or
- ◇ online using the following link:

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

Or scan the QR code
on your smartphone or tablet



Parish Walk in Shenley – 30 May 2026

On a Saturday morning, an intrepid group of walkers from the parish braved the thundery shower forecast to take a walk in the fields around Shenley in Hertfordshire. As is often the case, we set off from the Church House car park in a car pool and started our 6.8km walk from in front of the L'Italiana bistro on the edge of Shenley village.

Soon after, we arrived at the village pond. It is a fair-sized pond, some 30m across, with a duck house on an island in the middle and a War Memorial Garden at one end. There were quite a number of large carp, many over a foot long, swimming in the pond. What surprised us was that on one side of the pond sits a curious dome-like building, 12 ft in diameter and 15 ft tall, with a door having 3 small, barred apertures but no windows. It turned out to be a lock-up called "The Cage on the pond in Shenley" that was used for the detention of village miscreants pending justice or for the drunkards to sober up. It dates from before 1810 and is now a listed structure.

We went past the parish church and the local primary school before turning onto a foot path leading out to the open fields. Part of the woods that we passed through was recently re-planted as a community woodland. We followed a trail through the woods and fields and at one point, we had to make a detour as the original foot path had crops grown on it. We were very much tempted to report this to the authorities. As we went through Pursley Farm which houses new Padel Ball courts, it dawned on us that this is a quite a popular new sport.

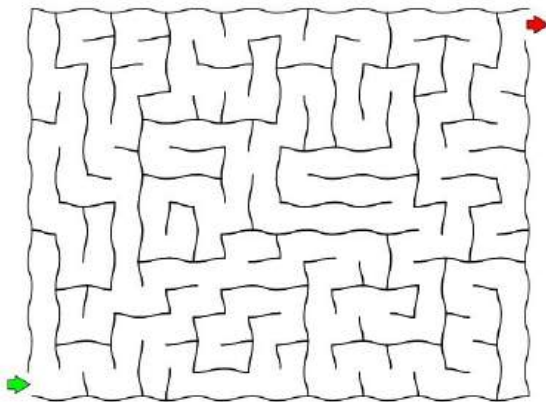


Arriving back to our cars, it was only fitting that we finish off with a pub lunch at the White Horse before going home after a very pleasant outing. It was a thoroughly enjoyable day!

The weather was very kind to us throughout and we had intermittent sunshine all the way without any hint of thunder or rain, and it was dry underfoot. Someone is certainly looking after us!

Ronald Lo

Solve the Maze!



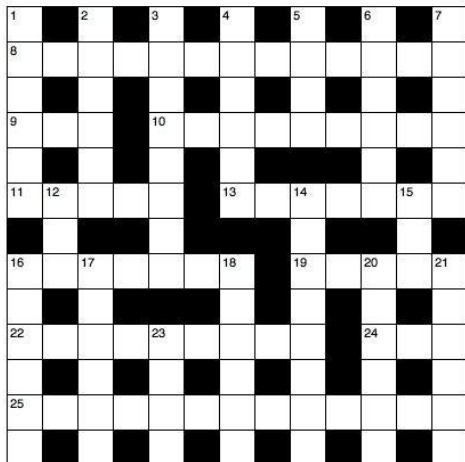
Children's Corner

Find the mouse!

Well done if you found Walker the Mouse throwing a ball to Graham in the first picture at the top of page 15 in the last edition.

To celebrate Summer Holidays, Walker is taking a swim somewhere in this magazine - can you spot him?

AUGUST CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 8 One of the titles given to the Messiah in Isaiah's prediction (Isaiah 9:6) (6, 2, 5)
- 9 International Nepal Fellowship (1, 1, 1)
- 10 Single (1 Corinthians 7:27) (9)
- 11 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's seminal book about Soviet prison camps, The — Archipelago (5)
- 13 Treachery (2 Kings 11:14) (7)
- 16 Of India (anag.) (2, 3, 2)
- 19 'God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the — ' (1 Corinthians 4:9) (5)
- 22 Follower of a theological system characterized by a strong belief in predestination (9)
- 24 'Put these old rags and worn-out clothes under your arms to— the ropes' (Jeremiah 38:12) (3)
- 25 They brought together all the elders of the Israelites in Egypt (Exodus 4:29) (5, 3, 5)

DOWN

- 1 The season when kings 'go off to war' (2 Samuel 11:1) (6)
- 2 Simon Peter's response to Jesus by the Sea of Galilee: 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a — man' (Luke 5:8) (6)

- 3 Beaten with whips (1 Kings 12:11) (8)
- 4 'You shall not — adultery' (Exodus 20:14) (6)
- 5 Encourage (Hebrews 10:24) (4)
- 6 Service of morning prayer in the Church of England (6)
- 7 'Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and — him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving' (4, 2)
- 12 Run (anag.) (3)
- 14 Member of 17th-century party that denied the right of autonomy to the Church (8)
- 15 'We will triumph with our tongues; we—our lips' (Psalm 12:4) (3)
- 16 Earnings (1 Corinthians 16:2) (6)
- 17 'I rejoice greatly in the Lord that—you have renewed your concern for me' (Philippians 4:10) (2, 4)
- 18 How Paul described Philemon (Philemon 1) (6)
- 20 Multiple territories under the rule of a single state (Daniel 11:4) (6)
- 21 'You have been unfaithful; you have married foreign women,—to Israel's guilt' (Ezra 10:10) (6)
- 23 This month (abbrev.) (4)

JUNE SOLUTION



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 The Reverend Robert Coupland
Address The Vicarage, 1 The Green, Southgate, London, N14 7EG
Phone 020 3524 7402
Email vicar@christchurch-southgate.org

Assistant Priest The Reverend Hazel Miall
Address 85 Conway Road, Southgate, London, N14 7BD
Phone 07980 740587
Email assistantpriest@christchurch-southgate.org

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 Vacancy

Sacristan	Vacancy	
Sidesmen	Judith Lo	8882 3335

Sub-committee Chairs/contacts

<i>Outreach</i>	via the office	
<i>Plant and Fabric</i>	Kate Carroll, katecarroll1@aol.com	07974 437966
<i>Social Responsibility</i>	Vacancy	

Electoral Roll Officer	Patricia Ashby	8886 2528
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Parish Safeguarding Officer	Jackie Anderson	8245 0305
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Parish Magazine “The Spire”

<i>Editorial Team</i>	Freya Carroll and Imogen Cooper Copy to be sent to christchurchspire@gmail.com	
<i>Treasurer</i>	Hilary Meur	01707 890345

Flower Arrangers	Contact the Parish Office (see previous page for details)	
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Parish Centre/Church Halls

<i>Chairman</i>	Philip Miall, 85 Conway Road, N14 7BD	8882 6738
<i>Secretary</i>	Clare Boulton, 321 Gladbeck Way, Enfield, EN2 7HR	8367 5961
<i>Lettings</i>	christchurchparishcentre@gmail.com	
<i>Treasurer</i>	Michael Meur	01707 890345

Christ Church Association Bar

<i>Contact</i>	Pat Collins christchurchassociation@gmail.com	
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Friday Coffee Morning

	<i>Every Friday morning 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 p.m. in Church</i>	
<i>Contact</i>	Hilary Meur	01707 890345

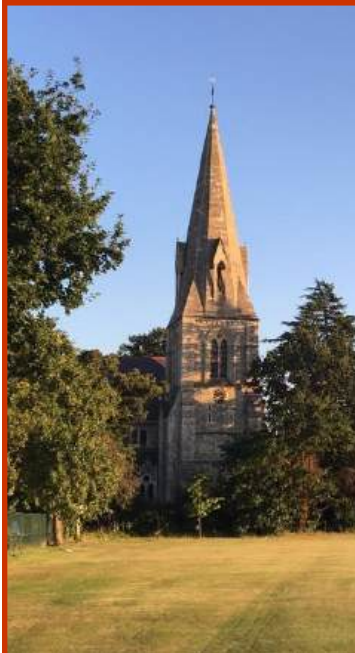
Scout Group	The Reverend Hazel Miall, <i>Cubs</i> Stephen Smith, <i>Group Scout Leader</i>	07980 740587 8882 0991
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Bellringers	<i>Practice held Wednesdays 7.30 p.m.</i>	
<i>Captain</i>	Martin Sutcliffe, 46 Brookdale, N11 1BN	8368 1974

Young Fogeys	<i>For the active and retired, though you need not be either!</i>	
<i>Contact</i>	Ian Cameron Black	8886 4942

Bible Study Group	Simon Walkden	07799 132656
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Christ Church Southgate
The Church on the Green N14
Where everyone is welcome

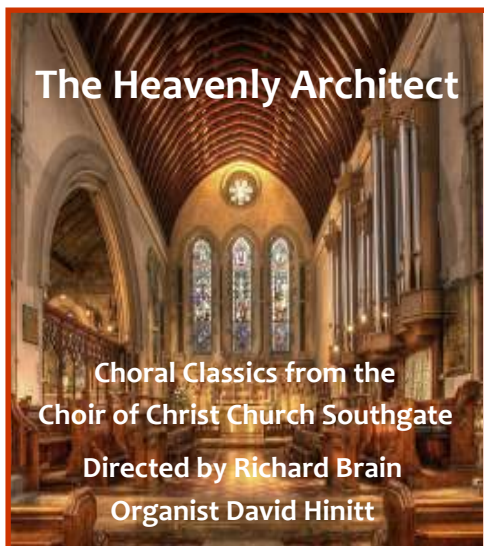


Christ Church Southgate is an Eco-Church, we have achieved the Silver Award.

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

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

CHRIST CHURCH Southgate

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!**

Christ Church Southgate is a Registered Charity (1131606)
We rely on your generous donations to finance our ministry