

Coulsdon Cross

News & Views from St. Andrew's Church



February 2025

St Andrew's Vision Statement

A joyful, daring, diverse and generous Christian community, setting the world alight with the love of God.

Come and join us! All are welcome

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Friday 21st February – 7.15 pm Lifeboats Quiz Night at Purley Bury Bowling Club. Please speak to Bob Witham for booking details.

Wednesday 5th March – Ash Wednesday. Holy Communion with the imposition of ashes at 10 am and 7 pm.

Friday, 7th March – World Day of Prayer at Coulsdon Methodist Church. 10.30 am followed by refreshments.

Sunday 9th March – Lent Brunch after the service in aid of the Bishop's Lent Call – more details below.

Wednesday 12th March and every Wednesday up to and including 9th April Lent Group from 7.30 pm on Zoom. Please see article below for more details.

REGULAR EVENTS

Every Sunday 9.45 Parish Communion – (Junior Church on the 1st Sunday of the month 'Renew' all Age on the 3rd Sunday)

Every Monday 10 -12 noon Time 2B: Coffee, chat and craft in the church hall.

Every Tuesday Tots and Toys playgroup in the church hall. 11-12.30

Every second Tuesday Pop in Tea at 2 pm in church hall preceded by service in church at 1.30 pm.

Every third Tuesday 3.30 – 5.30 pm Messy

Church – craft activities, bible story and hot meal for children and their parents / carers.

Every fourth Tuesday 8 pm – Mothers' Union, Committee Room.

Every first and third Wednesday 10 am Holy Communion (please note that there will be **no service on Wednesday, 19th February.**)

7.30 pm Prayer group meet on Zoom. Please contact Reader Gerry for more details.

Dear Friends,

The first of February is St Brigid's day. Brigid is one of the three patron saints of Ireland – along with Patrick and Columba (also known as Colmcille). Not much is known for certain of her life, but she is said to have founded the abbey of Kildare around 470 AD. In Scotland she is known as St Bride.



The story goes that when she was made Abbess, St Mel of Ardagh who presided over the ceremony, accidentally read the rites of consecration of a bishop, so making Brigid the first woman bishop!

One legend says that Brigid was initially denied land on which to build her church. Then, the authorities decided were persuaded, very meanly, to give her just the amount of land that her cloak covered. Brigid had the last laugh when a miracle occurred, making her cloak grow and grow until it covered a huge expanse.

I like the sound of Brigid! She was very popular and known for her kindness and acts of charity. Another story about her tells how she wove a cross from reeds to explain Christianity, much like St. Patrick used the shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity. To this day, crosses are traditionally woven from rushes, reeds or even straw on St. Brigid's Eve.

Are you any good at weaving? I remember receiving a child's weaving loom one Christmas. Needless to say after my first disastrous attempt it got put away, never to see the light of day again!

Perhaps, like me, you are not much of a craftsperson - yet the image of weaving can speak to all of us, regardless of our skill level.

I found a lovely reflection for St Brigid's day – but unfortunately was unable to trace its author. It invites us to imagine God weaving a cross with the rushes of our lives.

“God weaves patiently and persistently... He invites us to keep offering him the shreds of our suffering and the stuff of our dreams and to take our place beside him to weave the shape of new creation.

To welcome the new with faith and courage.

To cherish all that has gone before,

To become an example of justice and peace.

Weaver God, accept the offering of ourselves, our separate strands, to be woven in and out, over, under and through.

Grant us eyes to see the whole, of which we are a part, to see the tapestry you weave, calling us beyond our aloneness and security, to be surprised by miracles.

O, if we could but perceive, out of parts we weave a whole.”

What a wonderful way to consider our Christian vocation, each one of us with our unique gifts making part of the whole that is Christ's body (1 Corinthians 12).

With the aid of St Brigid and all the saints, may we work together to offer our lives to our Lord's service, this February and always.



Wishing you a blessed month, your pals
Esther and Jessie the Vicarage Dog x

**CHRISTMAS
ADVENTURES AT ST
ANDREW'S!**

A huge thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make Christmas 2024 at St Andrew's so special. We were delighted to welcome lots of friends, old and new, to share the nativity story through the eyes of



some of the animals who were there. We were so blessed to share our worship with Sean and Steve the sheep, Shetland ponies Piper and Tiny Tim, Percy and Sid the donkeys, Flopsy and Thumper the rabbits and Fudge the guinea pig! A special shout out must also go to Toni, Julie and Jenny who helped clear away at the end (let the reader understand!).

We were also delighted to see such a bumper crowd at our service of 9 Lessons and Carols. Special thanks to our super talented organist and director of music, Christopher Woolmer, choir mistress Ann Heavens and the gifted folk of St Andrew's choir. It was great to hear the message of Christmas through carols old and new and enjoy a glass of mulled wine afterwards!

Thank you too, to all who acted as welcomers and sidespeople; to Carol Frost and her flower arranging team for decorating the church so beautifully; to Cynthia Stanley, our dedicated sacristan, and to head server Eve Smith and her serving team for their care and reverence in assisting at the altar.

In the words of Saint Mother Teresa; "I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot: together we can do great things." Thank you!

CONFIRMATIONS AT ST ANDREW'S

On Sunday 6th July Bishop Rosemarie is coming to St Andrew's to confirm candidates from the Croydon South Deanery. Is the Lord calling you to take this next step in faith?

Many of us were baptised (also known as 'christened') as babies or toddlers. Perhaps some of us were squeezed into the family Christening gown?



During the service, promises were made on our behalf by our parents and godparents, that we would be brought up to follow the way of Jesus. Perhaps gifts included a copy of the Bible. Do you still have your Christening Bible? If so, Confirmation classes provide a wonderful opportunity to dust it off and to reacquaint yourself with the promises of God that lie within.

We are planning a simple confirmation course that is suitable for all ages (the minimum age for confirmation is 10). We will do our best to ensure that the time suits as many as possible. Please speak to Esther or Gerry for more details.

At Confirmation a person makes the decision to honour – or 'confirm' the promises made for them by others. The bishop lays hands on the head of each person to be confirmed and prays for the Holy Spirit to come upon them saying; "Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit." Christians believe that confirmation unites a person more firmly in their relationship with Jesus and increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in them. It is a wonderful occasion to celebrate all that God has done and is doing. Please pray for those who are considering taking this important step.

KEEP YOUR NOGGIN ACTIVE!

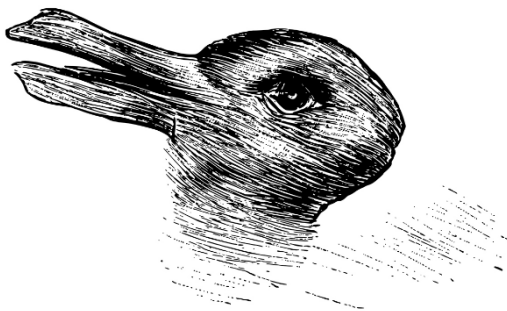
Our friend Lizzie Mills works in the Communications team at King's College Hospital.

Your brain is one of the most complex things in the universe. It's what makes you the person you are. And just as we can protect other areas of our health, we can take steps to keep our brains healthy and reduce our risk of developing conditions such as dementia in later life.

1. Love your heart. What's good for your heart is good for your brain. So by staying active, or eating well for example, you'll also be looking after your brain.
2. Stay inquisitive. Taking time for your mental wellbeing, getting a good night's sleep and regularly challenging your brain in midlife can help protect it as you age. Research suggests learning languages, playing musical instruments and singing all appear to be particularly beneficial, but learning generally is positive for your brain.
3. Keep connected. According to research, social isolation is linked to an increased risk of dementia. So keeping connected to the people around you is a great way to give back to your brain.

With a few simple steps, we can all help keep our brains sharp, boost our memory, and improve our overall well-being. Take care of your mind, and it can keep looking after you.

"The brain is a wonderful organ; it starts working the moment you get up in the morning and does not stop until you get into the office." (Robert Frost)



What animal do you see in the picture? There are 2 possibilities!

2025 LENT BRUNCH

Please put Sunday 9th March in your diary – the first Sunday of Lent and the day of our Lent Brunch over in the hall after the 9.45 service.

All are welcome to enjoy a simple repast of breakfast pastries and cake, cheese, fruit, yoghurt and assorted juices. The brunch is free – but donations are invited to support the work of the Bishop's Lent Call, which this year is raising funds for projects that help children and young people recover from trauma and which encourage their mental wellbeing – here in Southwark and also in the Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East and our Link Dioceses in Zimbabwe.

Jesus said; Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.
(Matthew 19:14)



LENT GROUP

This year's Lent Group will use the course 'Christ and the Chocolaterie' by Hilary Brand, inspired by the film Chocolat. There will be five group sessions which includes extracts from the film, group discussion questions, exercises and meditations, suggestions for individual reading and related Bible passages. No preparation is needed – and the last session will include a chocolate feast!

We will meet on zoom on Wednesdays beginning 12th March (Ash Wed is 5th March) There will be services at 10 am and 7 pm on Ash Wednesday. Sessions will be led by Gerry, Lauren and Esther. We will prepare all the weekly resources so there is no need to get the book, but it is widely available from online retailers.

NEWS FROM ST ANDREW'S CONTACT GROUP

Contact Group Co-ordinator Monica Jefford writes;

Presents are a key part of Christmas and new year celebrations, giving pleasure with an element of surprise and the opportunity to show appreciation and love. For some it can be a worry - what do you get for the person who already has 'everything'? Some recipients feign polite appreciation and resort to the practice now termed as re-gifting. So, imagine being on the receiving end of your 'true love's' 364 gifts over a twelve day period. Surprise would rather be an understatement! However, even before the delivery van had turned the corner the logistics of what to do with your gifts would be all too apparent, particularly if you lived in an apartment block or didn't have any garden. It is unlikely the neighbours would be amused either. None of this bothered our Pop In guests today as Ann Heavens and Richard Pilliner directed them in singing the 12 Days of Christmas carol with actions. A regular agenda item for the post Christmas lunch entertainment and opportunity to relish the memory and speed challenges required to keep up!

The children's book 'Mystery without Mirth', author unknown, provides the earliest record of the 12 Days of Christmas lyrics in 1870.

Frederic Austin (1872-1952), the well renowned English baritone singer, music teacher and composer (1905-30) set them to music in 1909. It is a cumulative song with lyrics taking the form of two line stanzas.

Why twelve days? Is it the time taken for Christmas to fall on same day each year, for Jesus to be born, the number of Apostles or months in a year?

Since first brought to the public conscious there has been much speculation regarding the meaning. There have been various theories but the common thread appears to be the hidden message, possibly an underground catechism for the oppressed Catholics of 1500-1700.

Suggested representations for the gifts received are:

- 1 A Partridge in a Pear Tree. Partridges are thought to sacrifice their lives for their young, as Jesus gave his life for us.
- 2 Turtle Doves, representing the Old and New Testaments
- 3 French Hens, meaning Faith, Hope and Charity (the theological virtues)
- 4 Calling Birds = 4 Gospels
- 5 Gold Rings, 1st 5 books of Old Testament (Pentateuch/ Torah)
- 6 Geese a Laying = 6 days of creation
- 7 Swans a Swimming = 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit
- 8 Maids a Milking – perhaps signifying the ‘common man’ whom Christ came to save?
- 9 Ladies Dancing - the fruits of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Galatians 5:22-3
- 10 Lords a Leaping - the 10 Commandments
- 11 Pipers Piping - the faithful apostles?
- 12 Drummers Drumming - 12 Doctrine points in the Apostles’ Creed



We have a varied programme planned for our 2025 Pop Ins, culminating in celebrating our 35th Anniversary in September. Do join us on a 2nd Tuesday of the month (1.30pm/2-4pm), there is something for everyone including delicious sandwiches, cakes and Stella’s famous scones!
Monica and the Contact Group volunteers x

AWAY FROM IT ALL

Ann Witham, our eco-church co-ordinator writes:

During January and February our newspapers and magazines are full of advertisements for holidays both here and abroad and to help



forget the cold and dreary weather it is comforting to daydream about all the wonderful destinations we could visit. We are fortunate that for most of us it is possible to take a break from routine but we remember those who for financial, health or caring reasons are unable to get away.

It might be too big a challenge to be a fully sustainable and ethical traveller but with small changes we can ensure we are helping to protect the environment and can benefit places we visit. Sometimes flying is the only option but now it is possible to reach many destinations in Europe by train and even further afield. France has in fact banned short haul flights where a train alternative of two and a half hours or less exists.

Research shows that 80% of travellers visit just 10% of destinations. Try swapping hot spots like Rome or Athens for less busy regions which may still have magnificent buildings or spectacular scenery. If you are visiting a popular destination consider staying outside the centre so income reaches rural neighbourhoods. Alternatively, avoid peak season to reduce the pressure of excessive tourist numbers.

If you are in search of wild life both here or abroad choose small group companies that offer responsible watching and where local nature experts lead tours centred around conservation and the local community. Stay away from manufactured experiences such as elephant rides or swimming with dolphins where animals are often mistreated and forced to behave for tourists.

Try to be an independent traveller and avoid package holidays. To ensure income goes directly into local communities stay in locally owned accommodation, eat in family owned eateries and shop in local shops and markets instead of tourist stores and international chains. Before you go do some background reading. This is particularly important where the political and cultural situation may be very different from our own. A knowledge of local customs and traditions shows respect to those who welcome us.

Travel is a wonderful way to enrich our experiences and recharge our batteries. By making positive decisions about how and where we will travel we can ensure we are playing our part in trying to protect the planet and are providing jobs and economic benefits for the people and places of the countries we visit.

COMMONWEALTH DAY

Did you know that the second Monday in March is Commonwealth Day? Marked every year since the 1970s, Commonwealth Day recognises the unity and diversity of a remarkable family of nations. The Commonwealth is an association of 54 member states with a combined population of 2.4 billion citizens, almost a third of the world's people. Commonwealth countries span Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe and the Pacific and are diverse – they are amongst the world's largest, smallest, richest and poorest countries.

Westminster Abbey hosts a special service of celebration, which is attended by the monarch and other members of the Royal Family. They are joined by a 2000-strong congregation of High Commissioners and Ambassadors, faith leaders, honoured guests, and school children and young people from across the United Kingdom.

On Saturday 22nd February, visitors are invited to explore the rich cultural tapestry of the Commonwealth with a day of activities, performances and events for all ages. Admission is included in the price of a visitors ticket to the Abbey. You can book online at <https://www.westminster-abbey.org/>

FEBRUARY THOUGHTS **FROM JESSIE**

Dear Human friends,
Happy February! This third and final month of winter is called “y mis bach” by the Welsh, which means “little month”. With only 28 days – or 29 on a leap year, it will soon fly by, so



let’s make the most of the spring flowers which are beginning to appear and all the blessings of this time of year, including St Valentine’s Day! I have a lot of boy friends – including Lennie, who I see most days at the park. I hope you like the picture of us together 😊

I asked my mum who St Valetine was – she explained that he’s a bit of a mysterious figure, and that some people even think he was two people! According to tradition, Valentine was a Roman priest who was martyred during the persecution of Christians around 270 AD. He was buried on the Via Flaminia, an ancient Roman road, and it is said that Pope Julius I built a church to mark his grave. Other sources identify him as the bishop of Terni in Italy who was also said to have been martyred in Rome, and whose relics were said to have been later moved to Terni.

I like bones but I do draw the line at human bones! Many different churches around the world claim to house Valentine’s relics. These include his skull (which is on display at the Basilica di Santa Maria in Rome), one of his shoulder blades (this can be seen at the Basilica of Peter and Paul in Prague) and some of his blood can be seen at Whitefriar Street Church in Dublin! He appears to have made it as far afield as Missouri where some of his relics are said to be kept inside a wax effigy in front of the altar of Old St. Ferdinand Shrine in Florissant. To each his own!

The impact that St Valentine has on the church is rooted in the story that the Emperor Claudius II temporarily prohibited marriage – because

he thought it was stopping soldiers from performing their duties effectively! However, Valentine disagreed and continued to perform marriages. He was consequently arrested and beheaded. It is believed that before he died, he healed the blind daughter of his jailor, and left a note to her, signing it, "your Valentine." His dedication to the sanctity of marriage and sacrificial love makes him an important figure within the church.

St Valentine is the patron saint of lovers, people with epilepsy, and beekeepers.

I don't think Lennie and I will be tying the knot any time soon – I'm quite happy at home with mum and I don't want to share my steak dinners. Love has its limits you know! Happy Valentine's Day!

Jessie x

God of wonder and of joy: grace comes from you,
and you alone are the source of life and love.
Without you, we cannot please you;
without your love, our deeds are worth nothing.
Send your Holy Spirit, and pour into our hearts
that most excellent gift of love,
that we may worship you now with thankful hearts
and serve you always with willing minds;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



PUZZLE TIME: ST VALENTINE WORDSEARCH

S G O S S V P A Y L E A S M V
S S B Y C F G O Y S T A X Y I
W L U Z I R Y M N D C T Y S P
P E S R L N O A U R Y Z H T W
F D V Z E L E M I Y R Z P E D
Y E H F R L Z F E T A Y X R E
R P I Y C W I E M S U H N I D
Q Y M A W C Z E U W R K I O I
B E T S E C Y I M Z B W C U C
E H E R W B D Y C Q E Q F S A
Q V S R A U R E X W F G N J T
V W O B A M M A R R I A G E I
H Z W L S R E P E E K E E B O
H M C Z B K C B W P H J V E N
D D P U R I F Y U B Y J T O L

beekeepers
dedication
marriage
sacrifice

Claudius
February
martyr
relics

JESSIE'S JOKES

Can February march? No, but April may. 😊

Why do melons have to get married in a church? Because they 'canelope' 😊

Why did the apple go out with the raisin? It couldn't get a date! 😊

A bishop was astonished to hear little Mary say that a person must be very brave to go to church these days. "Why do you say that?" asked the bishop. "Well, I heard my uncle tell my aunt last Sunday that there was a canon in the pulpit, that the choir murdered the opening hymn and that the organist drowned the choir!" 😊

Vicar: "Did you like my homily on 'The Milk of Human Kindness'?"

Parishioner: "Yes, but I wish it had been condensed!" 😊

How does a pirate start his prayers?

Arrrr Father... 😊

Two men are walking through a graveyard when they come across a headstone with the inscription "Here lies a politician and an honest man."

"Good heavens", says one of them, "I wonder how they managed to get two people into that small grave?" 😊

As they were leaving church one Sunday, a man confided to his friend that he was suffering from insomnia. The friend replied that he had no trouble at all getting to sleep. "Really" the first man said, "Do you count sheep?". "No" was the reply, "I talk to the Shepherd". 😊

Definition of "Anglican": A branch of Protestant Christianity that tends toward tolerance in matters of doctrine and theology, but will resist to the last any attempt to introduce a new hymn. 😊

I didn't go to church today,
I trust the Lord to understand.
The surf was swirling blue and white,
The children swirling on the sand.
He knows, He knows how brief my stay,
How brief this spell of summer weather,
He knows when I am said and done
We'll have plenty of time together. (Ogden Nash)

On interviewing the church warden who was retiring after 40 years of service to the church:

“You must have seen a lot of changes in that time”

“Yes, and I've resisted every single one of them.” 😊



'Post modern Proverbs'

1. If you want your dreams to come true, don't oversleep.
2. The smallest good deed is better than the grandest intention.
3. Of all the things you wear, your expression is the most important.
4. The best vitamin for making friends...B1.
5. The 10 commandments are not "multiple choice."
6. The happiness of your life depends on the quality of your thoughts.
7. Minds are like parachutes...they function only when open.
8. Ideas won't work unless YOU do.
9. One thing you can't recycle is wasted time.
10. One who lacks the courage to start has already finished.
11. The heaviest thing to carry is a grudge.
12. Don't learn safety rules by accident.
13. We lie the loudest when we lie to ourselves.
14. Jumping to conclusions can be bad exercise.
15. A turtle makes progress when it sticks its head out.
16. One thing you can give and still keep...is your word.
17. A friend walks in when everyone else walks out.
18. The pursuit of happiness is the chase of a lifetime!

CONTACTS AT ST ANDREWS

Woodmansterne Road CR5 2DD Website: standrews.coulsdon.net

Vicar: Rev'd Canon Esther Foss – 020 3620 1885
(*Day off – Friday*)

Email: estherfoss79@gmail.com

Reader: Gerry Daley – 07717 233858

Email: gerrydaley@btinternet.com

Churchwardens: Sheila Linney 07815 091206

Toni Best 07767 308375

SPA & Messy Church Co-ordinator Jenny Atkinson

Treasurer: John Linney E-mail: jlinney1@aol.com

Baptisms/Weddings: standrewsoffice@yahoo.com

Contact Group Co-ordinator: Monica Jefford

Hall Lettings: hiringthehallatstandrews@gmail.com

Safeguarding: Karen Bowey, Sara Jane Davidson

Junior Church: Beth Ten Cate

Parish Canine Rep: Canine Jessie Foss

(Days off Monday – Sunday. Don't contact unless you have treats. Thank you.)

PARISH MAGAZINE:

Editor: Rev'd Canon Esther Foss (details as above)

Parish Administrator: Danielle Stobart, Parish Office 020 86762966

(open Monday and Wednesday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.) E-mail:

standrewsoffice@yahoo.com

USUAL SERVICES

Sunday 9:45 am Parish Eucharist (1st Sunday Junior Church, 3rd Sunday Renew All Age Eucharist) Wednesday (1st and 3rd) 1st 10.00 am Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion, 3rd Holy Communion with prayers for healing.