Coulsdon Cross

News & Views from St. Andrew's Church



July and August 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:

Saturday 5th July Interfaith Walk round Coulsdon, meeting at St Andrew's for 2 pm.

Sunday 6th July Deanery Confirmation service with Bishop Rosemarie, 5 pm at St Andrew's, followed by buffet. *Can you help with the catering by bringing a dish? Please sign up on the sheet at the back of church. Thank you!*

Wednesday 9th **July** PCC 7.30 pm Committee Room **Sunday 20**th **July 11 am** Service with the Royal British Legion to Lay up the Standard, followed by refreshments.

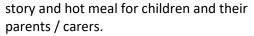
REGULAR EVENTS

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



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

Every first and third Wednesday 10 am Holy Communion (first

Wednesday Book of Common Prayer, third Wednesday Common

Worship with anointing and prayers for healing.) *Please note there* won't be a service on Wed 6th August



Dear Friends,



What do you love most about summer? For my money you can't beat a day at the beach. As kids we used to take our annual holiday at St Anne's on Sea – just next door to Blackpool. We had so many happy times running amok in the dunes and building sandcastles – do you

remember those special flags you could get to put on the top?

Sand is special stuff. As every child learns at primary school, it's made from rocks that have been worn down over millions of years by wind and water. In a way, we are like those rocks - not because we look weather beaten as we age! - But because we are always changing. After the summer holidays some of our younger friends will change schools or classes. For us older folk, change will come in other forms, perhaps a new job, home, or friendship. Every season of our lives is an opportunity to enter more deeply into the mystery of Divine Love. So surely we should welcome change?

Except most of us don't! Indeed, thanks to Google I discovered there is even a word to describe fear of change: Metathesiophobia. I think I might have that! How about you? If so, you might like to take comfort from the story of the reluctant oak tree.

As with all oak trees, this tree began as a little acorn, and it was very happy with its lot, having no desire at all to become a tree. Indeed, it had heard terrifying tales about trees that had been cut down or struck by lightning. 'No thank you!' said the little acorn to itself. It settled comfortably in the grass, and in the days and weeks that followed, sank snugly into the soil beneath. Yet the sun and rain had other ideas, and in

time the acorn became a small green shoot. The acorn was not at all happy with this development and resolved to resist further growth with every fibre of its being.

It just so happened that the park keeper noticed this fragile shoot and began to nurture it. Before it knew what was happening, the shoot was on its way to becoming a sapling! It was devastated and firmly resolved that it would not grow any leaves. But the park keeper was nothing if not persistent, and continued to care assiduously for this tender young tree. He fastened it against a stake to help it withstand strong winds, and regularly pruned its branches. In early spring, the first buds appeared, followed by the first leaves.

The young oak tree decided that this would truly be the end of the road: it definitely did not want any more change. With all its might, it forbade each leaf from changing colour in the autumn. But the gentle gardener had other plans. He continued to watch over the tree. He watered its roots and fertilized the ground beneath it. Over time, its leaves changed to a rich red. Groups of people began to gather, gazing in awe at the beauty of these blazing leaves against the autumn sky.

The huge oak tree became a generous home for human beings, animals, and birds. Yet it had still not come to terms with its lot. Then something happened that led to a seismic shift. A storm blew up, wreaking havoc. The next morning the park keeper came and saw that many of the oak tree's branches were broken. He carefully cut them away and tended to the damage.

After working for a long time at the base of the tree, the park keeper paused and turned his face towards the tree. The oak tree looked down at this man, whose countenance radiated wisdom, love and acceptance. And at that moment, something fundmntal changed for the tree. Rather than becoming resigned to its fate or tolerating its lot, it now recognized its life as a blessing. Its leaves rustled in the wind as it breathed in a new found serenity and uttered a wholehearted 'yes'!

The Lord cares for us just as that park keeper did the tree. He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5), but loves us with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3) and will stop at nothing to bring us to the fullness of life which is his gift. (John 10:10) Wow! Good news indeed and a great way to begin Summer! Happy growing everyone. Your friends,

Esther and Jessie the Vicarage Dog X

LOOKING OUT: A TIME OF WORSHIP AND EXPLORATION

By Rev'd Sue Thomas Some of you may remember me from the time I supported St Andrew's during the vacancy - it's a joy to be returning...

Over the coming months, I'll be worshipping with you at St Andrew's twice a month while also visiting a range of other churches across



the Diocese. I'm taking this time to listen deeply - to the Holy Spirit, to others, and to what might be emerging for the next stage of ministry. My heart is especially stirred by Pioneer and Fresh Expressions of church - places where faith is growing in unexpected ways, particularly among young families, children, and those exploring spirituality in new and creative contexts.

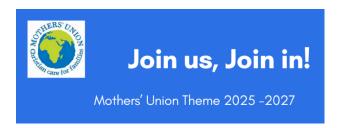
I've also offered to preach or preside occasionally, so you may see me up front from time to time as well as in the pews. It is a real gift to be part of your community during this season. As I explore what's already unfolding across the Diocese, I hope to draw out golden threads of learning and possibility - for whatever comes next.

Please do say hello - I'd love to hear your reflections and stories as we journey together in faith. I'm very much looking forward to being with you. Sue

sue.thomas431@gmail.com 07712 5076142

MOTHERS' UNION AT ST ANDREW'S

Have you ever wondered what the Mothers' Union is all about? Jo Denvil has kindly put together the following article:



WHO WE ARE...

1876 – MARY SUMNER wife of a Hampshire Rector set up a group to support mothers bringing up young children. She wanted to enable disadvantaged women to helpin bringing about a better society.

1892 - The movement had 60,000 members in 28 dioceses.

1896 Mothers Union Central Council formed.

2025 – Membership stands at 4,000,000 over 83 countries. Membership is open to all men and women

WHAT WE DO...

Restore and strengthen family relationships everywhere Offer prayerful, practical and financial support to people of all faiths and none everywhere

Advise national and global institutions on Women's issues and gender rights.

AIMS...

To create a peaceful and safe space for everyone Fight for gender justice everywhere Build individuals' self-reliance.

Occasionally we meet with other branches. We engage with the following initiatives through prayer and practical support

- UK holidays for disadvantaged families
- Support of prisoners and their families

- Support of local Refuge and victims of abuse
- Gender based rights initiatives
- Adult Literacy and Parenting programmes
- Care of families with children in hospital
- Visiting the housebound

OUR WISH LIST...

To increase the membership and welcome some younger people. "My wish for our group would be for us to continue to listen and learn from each other, and to support and empower families in our community and around the world through prayer and through action." Why not come along and see for yourself? You will be made most welcome. St Andrew's MU meets every 4th Tuesday at 7.30 pm in the Committee room. Meetings are a mixture of worship, social events and fellowship.

MOTHERS' UNION PROGRAMME

- Tuesday July 22nd at 7.30pm:'CARE-4-CALAIS' Raquel de Salis to speak on her Experience working with refugees in Calais
- August (TBC) WAVE OF PRAYER
- Tuesday September 23rd at 7.30pm THANKSGIVING SERVICE
- Tuesday October 28th at 7.30Pm A CAMINO PILGRIMAGE (TBC)
- Tuesday November 25th at 7.30pm NEHEMIAH PROJECT (Prisoner rehabilitation)

Contacts: Ann Witham (01737 553084), Maureen Bashforth (01737 555343), Jenny Atkinson (020 8668 9725), Jo Denvil (020 86685792)



NEW SERVICES MAKE IT EASY TO TAKE PART IN HEALTH AND CARE

RESEARCH Our friend Lizzie Mills works in the Communications team at

King's College Hospital.

Without research, there would be no new treatments or advances for conditions like diabetes or cancer. Every time someone



receives a test or a scan, or a treatment for a health condition, it's because of the many millions of people who take part in health and care research.

The new Be Part of Research service makes it easier than ever to find and take part in health and care research. The free online service matches volunteers to health and care studies, based on your interests, which can be done online or at locations near you. Through Be Part of Research, you can find and take part in research into nearly every major health condition - as well as social care research.

Simply sign up online and choose the areas of research you're interested in. You'll be matched to suitable studies and sent clear information about what's involved and how you can take part, if you choose to.

Whatever your state of health, you can help find new and better ways to treat conditions, and improve care. You can even take part as a healthy volunteer. Your family may have been particularly affected by a particular condition, or you may have experienced an illness and want to make life better for others living with it. Sign up to Be Part of Research today and make a difference to the health and care of tomorrow. With your help, research can go further and faster. For more information, visit https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/join

ECO CHURCH "THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S AND THE FULLNESS THEREOF"

Ann Witham writes...

At school my main interest was the arts and as only maths was compulsory at GCSE level I learnt very little about science. Later in life I realised there were huge gaps in my knowledge and I tried to



do something about it but it was difficult to find a suitable course for an older person. I noticed that Purley College was offering an evening course in AS environmental Science and my daughter (a science graduate) reluctantly admitted that I might "just about manage it". I may have forgotten much of what I was taught but the one thing that really struck home was the vital importance of soil. It is fundamental to life on earth and yet we are losing fertile soil 50-100 times faster than it is able to rebuild. It takes 100 years to build just half a centimetre of healthy soil.

Soil is the foundation of our food system and 95% of global food production relies on it. It provides plants a foothold for their roots and holds the necessary nutrients for them to grow. Soil filters and purifies water and absorbs large amounts of water helping to prevent flooding and droughts. It is a significant carbon sink, absorbing and storing large amounts of carbon dioxide. Peatlands can lock up four times more carbon than forests. However when soil becomes damaged or degraded it can release CO2 or methane back into the atmosphere thereby accelerating rather than decelerating the impact of climate change.

Soil provides diverse habitats for a vast array of organisms. A single gram of healthy soil can contain 50,000 species of micro-organisms. This biodiversity is essential for healthy and sustainable ecosystems. Many life saving drugs have also been discovered in the chemically rich and biologically diverse environments found in soil. When our mental and

physical health is improved by enjoying our gardens, parks and the wider countryside we should remember we are relying on soil.

It is alarming to discover how damaged and vulnerable soils have become. The UN estimates that 30% of the world's soils are now degraded, whilst in Europe it is estimated that between 60 and 70 percent of its soils are unhealthy. There are multiple human reasons for this including deforestation, urbanisation, agricultural intensification and soil erosion. The way land is used for agricultural purposes is very important. Intensive farming methods tend to lead to soil degradation but if farmers can switch to regenerative agricultural practices soils can rebuild and become more fertile. These include regular crop rotation, sustainable grazing and mixed use farming methods such as planting trees and hedges along side crops but there will need to be much discussion nationally and internationally about the best ways of feeding the earth's growing population.

We may not have a farm but there are ways we can help. Avoid the use of fertilisers and use only natural plant foods. Try to cover your soil with plants to stop it being blown or washed away and leave piles of leaves and dead plants for longer to provide homes of insects which will help to increase the biodiversity in your soil. Why not take part in an earthworm survey? They play a vital role in keeping our soil healthy but they are in critical decline; or you could visit a regenerative farm — Sitopia Farm near Greenwich grows vegetables, fruit and flowers. It is open in the third Saturday of each month where you can make purchases and explore the farm.

"Let the fields by joyful and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice" Psalm 96

CLIMATE LOBBY

On July 9th Christian Aid and the Climate Coalition are organising a mass lobby of parliament to call for leadership to tackle the climate crisis. For more information visit: www. Christianaid.org.uk campaigns@emails.christian-aid.org

FAITHS TOGETHER IN CROYDON INTERFAITH WALK SAT 5th JULY



We do hope you will be able to join us for an interfaith walk with Faiths Together in Croydon on Saturday, July 5th meeting at St Andrew's for 2 pm. After a tour of our church we will walk together to the Coptic Orthodox Church of St Mary and St Shenouda on Rickman Hill, which many of our church family will remember as St Francis'. After a look around this beautiful place of prayer and worship we will journey to the South London Sanatan Mandir and Community Centre on Chipstead Valley Road, where we will enjoy food and fellowship with our Hindu neighbours.

We are blessed to be part of a diverse and wondous world and look forward to getting to know our neighbours and learning from them.

"God is not upset that Gandhi was not a Christian, because God is not a Christian! All of God's children and their different faiths help us to realize the immensity of God." Desmond Tutu.

"To me, religions are like languages: no language is true or false; all languages are of human origin; each language reflects and shapes the civilization that speaks it; there are things you can say in one language that you cannot say or say as well in another; and the more languages you speak, the more nuanced your understanding of life becomes. Judaism is my mother tongue, yet in matters of the spirit I strive to be multilingual. In the end, however, the deepest language is silence." Rabbi Rami Shapiro

Please do let Monica or Esther know if you are planning to attend.

NEWS FROM THE CONTACT GROUP

Monica Jefford writes...

As anyone living in Coulsdon knows, and those planning to move here ought to, is that life has its ups and downs. Our town's geographical features of hills and vales mean that residents and visitors are exposed to their variation on a daily basis. It is also a reminder that life is not all about ecstatic mountain top experiences with wide expanses of sky and glorious views but also the lower valley mess to contend with.

Such landforms occur as a result of tectonic activity, erosion, deposition and weathering. They play a crucial role in determining the type of vegetation and wildlife that can live in a region. Their nature determines precipitation patterns, temperature variations and wind movements. Where people choose to live and how they use the land for agriculture and other activities is influenced by their presence, as are the opportunity or challenge for transport such as road and railway construction. Coulsdon's are no exception.

One resident, directly affected by landforms and their impact is Bob Charman who, with wife Marion, came to Tuesday's Pop In to share pictures and anecdotes of his global travels. This desire was stimulated when living in Crowborough and Bob had to construct storm drains in their 'sunken' garden to deal with underwater springs. Landscaping afterwards included a rockery leading to a love of Alpine flora. The rest is history reinforced by Coulsdon's sloping horticultural opportunities.

Guests and volunteers were delighted to be transported to numerous interesting places and enjoy the beauty of its flora and fauna from the comfort of the hall. We saw places most of us are unlikely to visit including Iran, Kazakhstan, Northern Greece, Patagonia, Spain and Turkey. Each country's flora was botanically identified, many of which had a comparable English version. To name a few, Crocuses, Irises, Tulips, Orchids, Gladioli and a personal favourite Fritillaria were seen in rocky outcrops, by lakes and in desert scrubland. The anemone got a special mention for its role as an expression of goodwill when Bob and his party met a Turkish family also mountaineering.

An occasional trip home showed us the Star Fish Fungi in Oxshott Wood, which pre-flowering looks like a golf ball. Human transfer of its spores is suspected as otherwise it only grows in New Zealand and Hawaii. Floral scenes were interspersed with those of fauna accompanied by more anecdotes - such as tales of separating bulls for contraceptive purposes (!) and a bear that helped Bob with his campsite ablutions with melted snow – later rampaging through the mess tent finally convincing all Bob was not seeing things in the early morning light.

Concerns about scaling one of Coulsdon's highest peaks, Rickman Hill (155m), paled into insignificance as we gazed at the Julian Alps in Slovenia (2755m), the Torres del Paine (Towers of Pain) in Spain (3050m) and a complex mountain range between Kazakhstan and China (7010m).



Not counting UK territories 'our' best is Ben Nevis (1345m). Also shown were the Cross Pass Linking North and South Caucasus in Georgia and Argentina's Perito Moreno Glacier.

The afternoon was made complete by the celebration of a guest's 90th birthday. A special cake with candles, card, present and singing We Wish You a Happy Birthday were enjoyed with her Pop In friends.

A pair of binoculars or telescope maybe handy for the next Pop In as Prof. Alan Heavens is going to share mysteries of 'The Sky at Night' and by day. Never fear if all this exercise and mountaineering has played havoc with your arthritis - our speaker in August will be able to give you a few tips. We look forward to seeing you then.

Monica and the Contact Group volunteers x

JUNE THOUGHTS FROM JESSIE

Dear Human friends,

For this double edition of our mag, I would like to talk to you about Thomas the Apostle, whose feast day falls on July 3rd. I like Thomas because I have a nephew named Thomas, and also because Thomas was a twin just like my mum. The name Thomas in Aramaic and Greek (Didymus) means twin. Mum likes being a twin as she never has to buy any new clothes! She and her sister, Sarah, spend a lot of time talking on the



phone. Sometimes they even talk about me. However I am glad that I don't have a twin because then I would have to share my food – and my mum!

Another reason I like Thomas is that he wasn't easily fooled. When will you humans realise that one treat snapped in two doesn't fool any of us? Thomas had to see physical proof of the Risen Lord before he would believe. I have to see my roast chicken too – though smelling it cooking does prompt some cautious optimism.

Thomas was like the squeaky wheel who got the oil – he asked and he got what he wanted. This tactic never fails for me either. Thus Thomas is also remembered as the first person to explicitly acknowledge Jesus' divinity when he proclaimed 'My Lord, My God' in John 20:28.

Thomas is also seen as being courageous and willing to stand by Jesus in dangerous times. In John 11:16, when Jesus tells his disciples he will visit Judea, a dangerous place for Jesus to be—Thomas said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him". I am fearsome in my defence of the vicarage — and woe betide anyone who loiters in our driveway — as some amorous partygoers found out to their cost on Satuday night! Mum said she'd never seen anyone move so quick!

Scholars believe that Thomas was probably born in Galilee in the early first century and died around 72 AD in Madras, India.

In the apocryphal Acts of Thomas, it is said that Thomas, as a carpenter, offered to build a palace for the Indo-Parthian king Gondophernes, that would last forever. The king gave him money, which Thomas gave away to the poor. When asked to show his progress, Thomas explained that the palace he was building was in heaven, not on earth. The king unsurprisingly threw him in prison!

The story continues that on that very night the king's brother died and was taken by an angel to see the palace Thomas had built in heaven. He was allowed to return to life the next day and tell his brother all he had seen. As a result, Gondophernes asked Thomas for forgiveness and converted to Christianity.

To this day, Saint Thomas is venerated as the Apostle of India, where he is recognized as the founder of the Church of the Syrian Malabar Christians or Christians of St. Thomas.

Thomas is the patron saint of the blind (due to his occasional spiritual blindness); Craftsmen (e.g., architects, carpenters & masons); Geometricians; and Theologians.

Holy St. Thomas, you were known for your scepticism, yet you came to trust deeply in the Resurrected Lord. Help us today to trust in God's plan for our lives, even when we are filled with doubt. May we surrender our fears and uncertainties to Him, knowing that He is always faithful. Pray for us, St. Thomas, that our trust in God may grow stronger each day. Amen

St Thomas

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SYRIAN
DIDYMUS
MALABAR
APOSTLE
GALILEE
TWELVE
APOCRYHPA
INDIA
CARPENTER
GONDOPHERNES
DOUBT

Play this puzzle online at : https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/8537720/

2026 CHURCH PANTO

St Andrew's Panto needs YOU! Are you a budding actor/ singer/ dancer?

Do you like dressing up and making a fool of yourself? If so, this call is for YOU! Having had a year and a bit off, we are resurrecting the grand tradition of the St Andrew's Pantomime and hope to put on a show in early February next year. We need new (and old) cast and crew members.



If you're over 7 years old and would be free to rehearse on Sunday afternoons in January 2026, please let Ann Heavens know as soon as possible. Old hands will tell you that it's great fun, ('Oh no they won't', etc) and very popular with our audiences, as well as raising funds for the church. No previous experience required. Talent as a performer preferred but not essential. Ability to have a good time definitely needed.

Hoping to be inundated with eager actors! Ann ann.heavens@gmail.com

SUMMER PRAYERS

Come summer with me, Lord; summer deep down in my soul; restore my faith in summer's time, in rest, in joy, in play, in you...

Summer in my heart, Lord, and dwell there as if time would never end, as if all time were children's time, eternal time when school is always out and joy is ever in... Let others summer in my shade, Lord, and share whatever summer's peace is mine to give, whatever summer's light is mine to shed, whatever summer's warmth is mine to share...

Good God of every season and every day this week, come summer with me, Lord, and let the child in my heart spend this summer in your love...

Amen. (Fr. Austin Fleming)

A Summer Blessing

May you walk with God this summer In whatever you do, wherever you go

Walking with God means...
Walking with honesty
And with courage,
Walking with love
And respect
And concern for the feelings of others

May you talk to God this summer And every day and in every situation

Talking with God means...
Praying words of praise
For the beauty of creation
Saying prayers of thanks
For friends and good times,
Asking God's help
In all your decisions
Expressing sorrow
When you have failed

May you talk with God every day. Amen.

JESSIE'S JOKES!

One Sunday the vicar informed his congregation that he was moving on to a new parish. After the service a woman came up to him crying: "This is terrible news Father, just terrible. You can't leave us! Refuse the move and tell the bishop to find someone else for the other church."

The priest put his arm on the woman's shoulder and said "I realize this is difficult news for you Mrs. Johnson, but who knows? Maybe the next priest for this parish will be even better than me."

"Oh sure," Mrs. Johnson says in hysterics. "That's what they told us the last time." \odot

I was talking to my mate Martin Shaw and he told me has a brother called Rick. I said pull the other one. \odot

The vicar decided to liven up his sermon by telling a chemistry joke. Unfortunately there was no reaction. ©

Just as we were heading, to bed my wife asked, "Did you put the wheelie-bin out?"

"No, Love, I'll do it in the morning" I replied.

"What about the cat?" she said.

"Well, I'll ask him but I don't think he'll be able to push it." ©

"Well your advice was rubbish" said my mate Barry Blogs as he returned from the bar. "That gorgeous woman just laughed at me and walked away. Why did you advise me to tell her my name was Massey Ferguson?"

"I didn't, you idiot," I replied. "I told you to change your name to attract her." ©

So I said to the vicar: "This is a lovely old church vicar".

He said: "It's Norman".

I said: "Oh right, this is a lovely old church Norman".

CONTACTS AT ST ANDREWS

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(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, 3rd Holy Communion with prayers for healing.