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NEWS

No 11 Winter 2019

news and features from St Margaret's

ASH WEDNESDAY

The Wednesday of the seventh week before Easter is commonly known as Ash Wednesday, and is the first day of Lent. Ash Wednesday derives its name from the ceremonial imposition of ashes on the foreheads of worshippers in the liturgy of the day. The use of ashes in this way dates back well over 1000 years in Christian practice, and is a sign of penitence, human mortality and dependence on God alone. As ash is applied in the sign of the cross, each worshipper is told, *Remember that you are*

dust, and to dust you shall return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.

The weeks leading up to the commemoration of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus were originally a time of solemn preparation for baptism. Nowadays Lent is treated as a special time for all Christians to renew their discipleship and to offer themselves afresh in the service of God.

A GEORGIAN PANORAMA FROM ST MARGARET'S

Prévost panorama of London to be displayed

Sometime around 1815, perhaps not long after the Battle of Waterloo, Pierre Prévost, a French artist renowned for his massive panoramas of European cities, climbed St Margaret's tower, where he made detailed studies of the London he saw all around him. He apparently then merged his studies together into a six metre long 360° view on continuous paper, which was to be the basis of a gigantic 30 metre long finished painting. In 1817 his famous panorama delighted visitors

to a purpose-built rotunda in Paris.

Its subsequent fate is unknown, but, amazingly, the six metre preparatory version survived. Recently discovered in the south of France, the painting was sent for auction at Sotheby's in July 2018. Although the



Museum of London was keen to bid, it is in the throes of a major fundraising campaign to finance its move to a new location in Smithfield market in the 2020s. An appeal to the Art Fund, which had agreed matching funding, resulted in a last minute dash for further donors and a successful bid. The £200,000 painting is now at the Museum where it will go on display on 16th March.

Panoramas were an imaginative form of entertainment that attracted large audiences during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. London had its own permanent rotunda in Leicester Square, and temporary structures were constructed to tour famous views. So far as is known, Prévost's 30 metre London panorama was not displayed again, and destroyed after its appearance in Paris.

The six metre painting is impressive, and remarkably detailed, depicting a London that is surprisingly unfamiliar. In the view to the east (above), only Westminster Hall is identifiable among the other Parliamentary buildings, as they stood before the fire of 1834. A 'glass paper manufactory' stands just outside the Abbey precinct to the west; St Margaret's churchyard is still full of gravestones; Waterloo Bridge (then called Strand Bridge) is just being finished; Buckingham House is not yet a palace and cattle graze in St James's Park. St Paul's, however stands in the distance, and close examination reveals notable features such as the Banqueting House.

But why did Prévost come to St Margaret's? The vantage point means that the view to the south is completely taken up by the Abbey, and some famous landmarks are too distant to see. Francis Marshall, Curator at Museum of London responsible for the forthcoming display, postulates that it may simply be that Prévost had a contact in the church. However, he notes that, as well as being keen to take a view to France that hadn't been easily accessible for Europeans, the artist may also be revealing political views. After Napoleon's surrender and 12 chaotic years of war, a depiction of democratic stability in the form of Parliament may have been appealing.

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CAROL SERVICES

St Margaret's sidesmen filled 79 places at 11 carol services (other than St Margaret's own services) in 2018. Organisations ranged from our three local schools, to Parliament and the Department for Education, to the ICE-RICS and a local law firm, to The Passage and Singing for Syria.



ROYAL CONNECTIONS

St Margaret's congregation member John Birch, as a Council member of the Anglo-Norse Society was honoured to be able to present his wife Annie to both of the the Society's patrons – Her Majesty the Queen, and King Harald of Norway – at a festive event at the In and Out Club in November.



CAKE AND THANKS

On 9th December we thanked Andrew Vaughan in traditional St Margaret's fashion – with wine and cake. A loyal sidesman and reader for nearly 20 years, despite having moved to Lancashire in 2015, Andrew has stood down from duties, though he will continue to attend services when in London.



RECTOR'S REFLECTIONS: THE PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS

'We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness'.... Thomas Cranmer's much-loved prayer is used Sunday by Sunday at the Sung Eucharist in St Margaret's.

The prayer was an original composition of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury during the latter years of the reign of Henry VIII. The prayer was first published in the 1548 Book of Common Prayer, as part of the first complete Communion Service written in English. The prayer was intended to provide the laity with a prayer for worthy reception along the lines of the priest's private prayers before communicating.

The Prayer of Humble Access reflects the range of Cranmer's reading. Possible sources for its language include the Liturgy of St Basil, the

Book of Daniel, the Gospels of St Mark and St John, the Hereford Missal, the Litany and St Thomas Aquinas amongst others.

Most striking is the clear reference to the story of the Syrophenician woman pleading with Jesus to heal her daughter (Mark 7.24-30). As a non-Jewish foreigner, the woman is initially dismissed by Jesus; but she argues back, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs". Jesus commends her faith and determination, and the woman's daughter is healed.

In its 1662 Prayer Book setting, the Prayer of Humble Access is placed immediately after the Sanctus. The words of the Sanctus ('Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts...') draw on the image of God revealed in his holiness in the Temple (Isaiah 6.3). In response to this vision, the prophet Isaiah

declares his unworthiness to serve God. So, in the Prayer Book Communion rite, worshippers declare their unworthiness, and plead for the gift of divine mercy, before receiving the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ.

The Prayer of Humble Access has had a chequered liturgical history since its first publication in 1548. Its position has been moved to a variety of places within the Communion Service, it has been deemed optional for use, and has been omitted altogether from some Communion rites. But the Prayer of Humble Access has survived nonetheless to become one of the best known and most loved of Cranmer's liturgical compositions – a tribute to the quality of Cranmer's liturgical theology as much as his command of the English language.

Canon Jane Sinclair

SEASONAL SERVICES AND CONGREGATIONAL MILESTONES

Lenten services

Ash Wednesday – Wednesday 6th March
Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes
8am, 12.30pm, 5pm – Westminster Abbey

Sundays in Lent at St Margaret's
11am, Sung Eucharist
10th, 17th, 24th 31st March, 7th April
14th April: Palm Sunday Procession and Sung Eucharist, 10.30am Westminster Abbey

Westminster Abbey Day of Prayer

Everyone is welcome to the Abbey's annual Day of Prayer – *Waiting for God* – which takes place at St Margaret's on Saturday, 26th January from 10.00am to 2.30pm. Led by Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP, the day will explore how prayer in its different forms shapes us in faith, hope and love. It is followed by Evensong in the Abbey at 3:00pm.

Birthdays, death

Saturday 6th January: Rowan Horbury, 3rd birthday
Sunday 25th March: Freddie Livingstone, 4th birthday
26th November 2018: Death of Baroness Trumpington of Sandwich: socialite, Bletchley Park code breaker, Conservative politician and minister, she regularly attended Parliamentary Carols and other services at St Margaret's.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Explorations in Faith

Sundays 10th, 17th, 24th February,
24th, 31st March, 7th April
12.45pm – 1.45pm

With bring and share lunch after the service.
All are welcome as we explore Rowan Williams' book *Being Disciples* – essentials of the Christian life (SPCK, 2016).

St Margaret's Congregational Forum meetings

Monday 21st January; Wednesday 20th March;
Tuesdays 14th May and 9th July; Mondays 16th September and 11th November; all 6pm

St Margaret's Poetry and Arts Group

Saturdays 26th January, 23rd February,
30th March, 27th April, all at 7pm

Details of these sociable meetings can be found in weekly service sheets, or from Alan Stourton. All are welcome.

St Margaret's Annual Meeting

at One Great George Street
Wednesday 13th March, 6.30pm

All members of the congregation are warmly invited.

See Thomas play

Thomas Trotter will be giving a concert (including Bach, Liszt and Elgar) in Clapham South this quarter where, as with his 30th anniversary concert at St Margaret's, a video link will make it possible to see him play.

Tickets: www.slms.org.uk

Saturday 2nd February, 7.30pm
St Luke's, Thurleigh Road SW12 8RQ

World Day of Prayer Service

Friday 1st March, 2.30pm
at St Margaret's

CENTENARY REMEMBRANCE

Parliamentary remembrance service at St Margaret's

Parliamentarians gathered on 6th November to mark the centenary of the Armistice ending World War I. Our Rector Canon Jane Sinclair opened the service with the bidding prayer, recalling that,



'On hearing the news, both Houses immediately left their chambers, and came here to St Margaret's to give thanks to God for the cessation of hostilities after four years of unforgiving and traumatic warfare. Today we commemorate a pivotal moment in the history of this nation, and of Europe and the wider world.' The Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Theresa May MP, and Leader of the Opposition, the Right Honourable Jeremy Corbyn, laid wreaths at the high altar, and the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Right Honourable John Bercow MP read the words of the then Prime

Minister Lloyd George announcing the Armistice. The Speaker's Chaplain, the Reverend Prebendary Rose Hudson-Wilkin led the act of remembrance, during which Last Post and Reveille were sounded. St Margaret's also marked the centenary with a moving installation of *There but not There* (see St Margaret's News Autumn 2018 online: <https://tinyurl.com/yafoxgyv>).

RALEIGH COMMEMORATIONS

Ten days of events on 400th anniversary of death

Following more than a year of preparations, St Margaret's marked the burial near the church's high altar of Sir Walter Raleigh on 29th October 1618, following his execution in Old Palace Yard. As



well as the commemorative service at which the Dean of Westminster preached, the church also hosted an exhibition, a symposium and a lecture.

Hundreds of people attended the events, including descendants of Raleigh, those related to his life through family homes or churches, and academics from museums and universities.

Biographer Dr Mark Nichols reviewed the intertwined facts and myths surrounding the legendary adventurer. Professor Eric Klingelhofer and Dr Bly Straub from North Carolina described archaeological discoveries from sites of the two

colonies funded by Raleigh. Documents and prints related to Raleigh's life and death were displayed, including the Orinoco voyage pictured above and the entry of his burial from church records, while creations by students participating in an Abbey education project were on show around the church. Among clay tobacco pipes dating from Raleigh's lifetime to the 20th century was displayed a rare 1620 example depicting Raleigh's head threatened by a sea monster.

DID YOU KNOW...?

Father Smith

The walls and aisles of St Margaret's bear memorials to many musicians. However, one of the most famous in his day, appropriately buried south of the chancel near the organ console in 1708, has none: he is Bernard Schmidt, a German organist and organ builder who became known as Father Smith. Important churches across England still bear evidence of his work at the end of the 17th century.



He was organist at St Margaret's from 1676, having tuned the Abbey organ from 1665. He also served as organ maker to King Charles II, with an apartment at Whitehall, and was keeper of the King's organ jointly with John Blow. In 1684 Smith famously beat Renuus Harris in the 'Battle of the Organs' to build the Temple Church organ by having Blow and Purcell demonstrate the capabilities of his version.

Two stops still incorporated in the Abbey's present instrument are from Smith's major 1694 works. In the same year he began his most notable commission: the organ at Christopher Wren's new St Paul's Cathedral. Smith's campaign to increase the size of the organ there annoyed Wren who had already designed the case, causing him to curse Smith's 'confounded box of whistles.'

STEWARDSHIP

The latest available figures for congregational giving and donations in the three months to end of November 2018 are:

| | collections | donations |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| September | £1,345 | £1,131 |
| October | £750 | £970 |
| November | £1,032 | £837 |

Canon Sinclair and Ed Osterwald will be working with Paul Baumann, the newly installed Receiver General, to simplify the process of making regular contributions to St Margaret's through standing orders, and to ensure that Gift Aid is applied consistently to such donations. In addition, both are working with the Ongoing Fund Raising Committee, which decided to hold a fund-raising dinner at Lambeth Palace in the spring of 2020, and to seek sponsorship, to help finance the proposed new window on the north side of the church (see p 4).

PRIEST VICAR PROFILE

The Reverend Andrew Zihni

'My family wasn't at all churchy,' says Andrew Zihni. In fact, going back a couple of generations can be found grandparents of Muslim, Eastern Orthodox, Buddhist and Roman Catholic traditions. Finding his way to ordination in the Church of England was, obliquely, through education and music.

Born in Hong Kong, he started boarding school near Tunbridge Wells at seven before going to Eton at 13. Through the pull of its fine music tradition and Eton's Chaplain, a continuing friend and influence, he became involved in Chapel and felt the first inkling of faith. However, his love of music undiminished, Andrew dreamed of becoming editor of *Gramophone* magazine and spending his evenings at the opera: 'the perfect existence.' Although still much involved in music at Oxford, he continued to consider questions of faith, and through discussions with clergy there and his home diocese, he finally realised he simply couldn't run away from it. With his family's wholehearted support, he went straight on to St Stephen's House Oxford to study for the priesthood, and ordination in 2002.

After serving his title in a former mining town in Sheffield Diocese Andrew headed south to become a Minor Canon at St George's Chapel Windsor and Chaplain of St George's School, where he also taught Latin. His day job since 2014 has been as a Director of Ordinands for the Southwark Diocese. He spends much of his time interviewing prospective candidates. 'It's not like the Apprentice,' he says, '10 weeks and you're fired.' Instead, he feels it's a privileged role

combining of psychotherapy and spiritual assessment and, patently, considerable empathy.

He's clearly found a great affinity for education in his work, and the opportunity to become a Priest Vicar at St Margaret's suited his interests and experience perfectly, he says. 'I understand the peculiarities of Royal Peculiars, and leapt at the chance to take services more frequently, to preach and teach.' He very much enjoys the social elements of St Margaret's too – Explorations in Faith, the Rochester pilgrimage, wine receptions – and sees such a distinctive, lively, diverse congregation as a blessing.

And where does he see himself in another 10 or 20 years? 'I really haven't a clue,' he says. 'I'm a great believer in openness – the right thing appears right when it appears. I might thrive in a diocese or a cathedral environment.' It's instructive, he believes, to find out what others think he might be good at, a method that can be seen as central to Christian discipleship.

Music still pervades his life and he remains 'a real opera nerd', with a vast collection of recordings and regular visits to Covent Garden. As Andrew divulged in a recent sermon, he is clearly something of a gastronome too, and shares a love of food and of history with his partner Lloyd, whom he met at Windsor. They also share a home in Addiscombe where their Jack Russell Bertie, is much indulged (above).

And for a glimpse behind his own dog collar, we've asked Andrew a selection of our quick-fire questions ...

✦ **What's your favourite hymn?** *How shall I*



sing that Majesty, as much for the Coe Fen tune as the words: wonderful. **Setting?** Duruflé's *Requiem*. **Service?** Any service of the Eucharist – it's the foundation of our belief. **Scripture?** Matthew 7.7 – 'Seek and ye shall find' – it spoke to me at school and is the heart of mission.

✦ **And your favourite book?** Balzac's *Père Goriot*, a lesson about love... **Music?** Richard Strauss's *Rosenkavalier* **Film?** Adaptations of EM Forster and his ilk **Food?** Italian – anything Anna del Conte might cook. **Holiday?** Also Italian...

✦ **What is your guilty pleasure?** Foie gras and champagne – and as an animal lover I really do feel guilty.

✦ **In your new time machine, where and when would you travel?** I'd be embedded in an amazing Edwardian country house, alive and in its glory, perhaps running the estate.

✦ **Given the gift of reincarnation, who would you be?** Oh, a Diva no doubt – probably Montserrat Caballé.

A NEW WINDOW FOR ST MARGARET'S?

Feedback being sought for north window



Since an oil-incendiary bomb exploded outside the north wall of St Margaret's on 25th September 1940, two of the five Victorian coloured glass windows have been mainly clear glass. One of our congregation, Gillian Perry, regularly sits where she has a view of these, and has often thought she would like to see them in colour once more. Gill is offering a generous bequest to help to do just that.

It seems that all five windows originally had artistic panels in the centre (eg after Holman Hunt's *Light of the World*, left, to the west and Boticelli's *Nativity* to the east), three themed panels at the bottom and angels at the top. Four of the five windows were by the artist Edward Frampton, and conceived between 1888 and 1893. Rather than replicate Victorian glass work, however, the small committee investigating potential options has a vision for a window that:

expresses in bold light and colour the sense of blessing, hope and peace implied in Numbers 6.24–26: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

invites the viewer, inside or outside, to engage with the God who blesses us, affording the viewer inspiration to fulfil God's wish that we all might bless our neighbour beyond the church walls, is of the highest artistic quality, uses jewel-like, bright colours (cf Chagall glass) that, in combination, illustrate softness, introspection and peace, with a brilliant belief of joy and trust in God's countenance, complements the context of St Margaret's building and art in general, and in particular the neighbouring range of coloured glass windows.

Some initial designs have been commissioned from glass artist Alan Davis, and these, with fuller descriptions of the existing windows, and the vision of the committee, are on display in the south aisle during January. None of the designs has yet been chosen, and it is possible that one may be developed further, or completely new designs commissioned.

It is also possible that the adjacent, mainly clear window, may also be brought into the scheme.

The views and ideas of the congregation are welcome, and can be sent to the Rector.