



by kind permission of Clare Weatherill

NEWS

No 1 Summer 2016

news and features from St Margaret's

CELEBRATING ST MARGARET

We will be commemorating St Margaret of Antioch on her feast day, Wednesday 20th July, with a said Eucharist at 8am, and at our patronal festival on Sunday, 24th July with a sung Eucharist at 11am.

The preacher on the 24th will be Ralph Godsall.

Our patronal sermons are never less than interesting, but St Margaret of Antioch will doubtless pose the usual problem

for him. There is scant evidence about Margaret's life or her history. It may even be that she wasn't a single individual at all, but is instead a conglomeration of several early saints martyred for their faith. The daughter of a rich man in 4th century Antioch, she is said to have become a Christian and dedicated her virginity to her faith. Her refusal of a marriage proposal arranged by her father resulted in a series of cruel tortures. As usual, there will be a party afterwards in St Catherine's Chapel Garden, hosted by the Priests Vicar this time, during our brief interregnum.

UP ON THE ROOF

Work scheduled for completion this summer

St Margaret's quinquennial inspection (a complete survey of the fabric that churches carry out every five years) concluded that significant repairs and replacement would be required to several areas in the church. Priority was given to the roof and stone work as problems there were potentially dangerous, or threatened to affect other parts of the fabric.

Repairs to the north aisle have been completed, but the south aisle and vestry have required a full replacement and reconfiguring of the lead roof surface over the historic timbers. In addition, work to hoppers and gullies is being carried out, and masonry, especially around the windows and downpipes opened, inspected and repaired as required.



Forum inspection

The new congregational forum began its first ever meeting in May with an inspection of the works being carried out on the roof of the south aisle, led by Will Nixon, one of the Daedalus team supervising the work.

The new forum is one of three established under the recommendations of the review that was carried out in 2015 –

all contribute to the Rector's Advisory Committee.

The congregational forum is designed to be an active committee driving forward initiatives to shape and track progress on the recommendations of the review. The four wardens elected in March have been joined by four members of the congregation with complementary skills and experience. Responsibilities fall like this:

Congregation: John Durham
Stewardship: Edward Osterwald
Faith development: Greg Meier
Parliament Square and visitor experience: Stephen Wright

Fabric: Brian Miller
Sidesmen and readers: Terry Riggs
Communications: Becky Wallower
Palace of Westminster: Lady Wilcox

The forum will meet approximately every other month and report back through this newsletter and special announcements as required.

- **St Margaret's festival**
- **Rector's reflections**
- **Congregational forum**
- **Security and staffing**
- **Stewardship**
- **Did you know...?**
- **Diary dates / milestones**

...and more

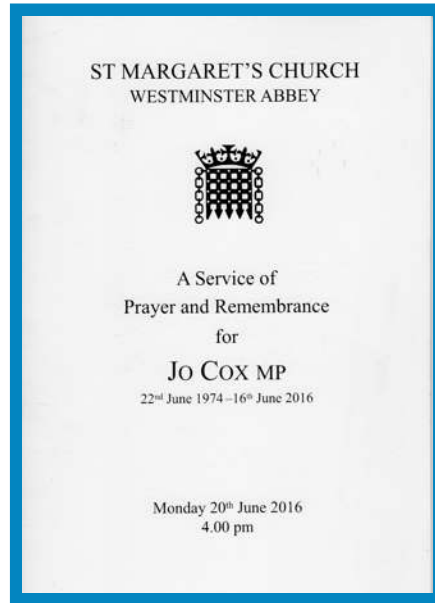
ABBEY WEEK

The short update called Abbey Week is published to provide a full list of services and news items about internal matters within the Abbey community. A supply of these is now available each week in the Vestry for members of the congregation.



JO COX REMEMBERED

A moving service of prayer and remembrance was held in St Margaret's just four days after she was tragically killed. It was attended by party leaders, the Speaker of the House, Lord Speaker and Archbishop of Canterbury.



BELLS

St Margaret's wonderful ring of ten bells – two of which date back to 1729 – will be heard quite a bit this summer, for Andrew Tremlett's farewell service, for the patronal festival, and of course for Canon Sinclair's institution.



RECTOR'S REFLECTIONS: COSTLY CHOICES

For his final sermon on 26th June, Canon Tremlett reflected on the very long week in politics that had gone before. Here we precis his key points.

'No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.' (Luke 9.62)

This has been a week of fundamental change for the future of the United Kingdom. And a week in which St Margaret's has played its most prominent role since the end of the World War II. We can see the effect of costly choices here. Parliament has paid tribute to Jo Cox MP, who was murdered just days before, and filled St Margaret's to pray for Jo and her family. Anyone in public service attracts a high level of exposure. In terms of public scrutiny and physical vulnerability, standing for public office or public service can be very costly. And the Referendum and subsequent events show further costly choices being made. The decision that the United Kingdom will be outside of the European Union will have less impact on the generation who voted most clearly for change, but a fundamental influence on the lives of those in education or entering the workforce.

What does our Christian faith have to say to us? Research shows that although there has been a reduction in institutional affiliation to the Church over the past 50 years, there has been no change in faith, in belief in God. A similar thing is happening politically, where party membership is 1/10th of the post-war figure, but we still believe in the political process. This all points towards an increasing consumerization of public life, whether in politics or the Church. We pay our taxes; we expect the same service as we get in the supermarket. We are consumers of public services. But religion and politics require something of us: our commitment, signing up to a manifesto or a creed. In political life, it means that many of us want to complain about democracy, but will rarely get involved ourselves. In Church, it's sometimes called 'vicarious religion': that's to say, the public is pleased that it's happening, but not if it means doing it ourselves: 'believing without belonging'. Nothing could be further from the Christian gospel. There is no such thing in the Christian faith as disconnected believing. To be a Christian is literally to be a 'little Christ', a disciple, a follower of Jesus. And this is every bit as important, not just in our personal devotions, but also in the living out of our lives, and how we are engaged in society. The country is now set on a new course: whatever the rights or wrongs, we should not put our hand to the plough and look back. And so, too, with this amazing church on Parliament Square, which for more than four hundred years has served this community and now has the opportunity to do so even more imaginatively and deeply.

DIARY DATES AND MILESTONES

Institution and Installation of the Ven Andrew Tremlett as Dean of Durham

Sunday 17th July: 2.30pm, Durham Cathedral

Invitations and details are being sent to those who have replied to letters. The contact at Durham for queries is Eva West: eva.west@durhamcathedral.co.uk.

Installation of Canon Sinclair as Rector of St Margaret's

Sunday 4th September: 11am Sung Eucharist with Installation of Canon Sinclair by the Dean of Westminster, The Very Reverend Dr John Hall. The wardens will host a reception in the church afterwards.

Sunday 11th September: following 11am Sung Eucharist, Canon Sinclair will host an open house in St Catherine's Chapel Garden.

Milestones Anniversary

Sunday 3rd July: 40th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood, Reverend Ralph Godsall
In this section we hope to include a listing of milestones – marriages, baptisms, memorial services, anniversaries of all kinds – for the coming quarter or, in the case of births and deaths, for the recent past. Please contact John Durham with details for October to December.

SIMPLY GIVE

"Stewardship follows from our belief that human beings are created by the same God who created the entire universe and everything in it. To look after the earth, and thus God's dominion, is the responsibility of the Christian steward. And that Christian stewardship extends not only to our care for the natural order, for creation, but in a more mundane way, how we use our personal gifts and resources to the glory of God".

So began the Rector, Andrew Tremlett, in the first of a series of sermons in May on stewardship. It is a message that the congregation is taking more to heart, as evidenced by gradually increasing contributions in recent years – the total went up to more than £24,000 last year. The best way by far to ensure regular giving and automatic collection of Gift Aid (where appropriate) is via standing order. Forms are available for anyone wishing to set one up – just ask a vergger or sidesman.

More details will be publicised here about events, schemes and activities that can add to our stewardship. The goals set for the next year are to increase congregational giving to £30,000, and to bring in a further £20,000 through fundraising. Congregational giving in the three months to May has been: March – £1826, April – £3203, May – £ 3150.

SERVICE CHANGES

As notified in the Rector's May letter to the congregation, a modern language service was introduced to St Margaret's on the first Sunday of each month from 1st June. Traditional language will be retained on the other Sundays of the month. This was recommendation 6 of the 2015 review. The Sunday where Common Worship (Order One) is used will steadily be combined with additional activities pre- and post-worship (such as an adult Sunday School and congregational lunch) that would seek over time to build a wider and younger congregation at St Margaret's.

FAREWELL RECTOR

Congregation thank Andrew Tremlett for six years' service

A large congregation gathered for the Sunday Eucharist on 26 June to celebrate Andrew Tremlett's service as Rector of St Margaret's. Speaking at the farewell reception held after the service, Iain Murray noted that much had changed in the Abbey, in Parliament and in St Margaret's since Andrew joined in 2010. Over almost six years, he had served as Rector, become Sub-Dean, established the Westminster Abbey Institute (of which he was Chairman), and overseen the first review of St Margaret's since 1972.



Ali Tremlett had also made a great contribution, particularly in her establishment of the Sunday school run on very professional lines with a group of enthusiastic volunteers from the congregation.

Personal highlights of Andrew's period as Rector included running the London Marathon cheered on by the congregation, a fruitful sabbatical to the Holy Land improving his Arabic, and the marriage of his daughter Lizzie in the church. Speaking in response, Andrew commented that as it was the third time in a week at which he said goodbyes, it couldn't help but be an emotional occasion. He thanked all the wardens, verggers and priests vicar who had supported him, and mentioned especially Aidan Oliver for the fine musicianship, Nigel Harris for his loyalty and kindness, and Pamela Carrington for her unsurpassed knowledge.

Personal highlights of Andrew's period as Rector included running the London Marathon cheered on by the congregation, a fruitful sabbatical to the Holy

SECURITY AND STAFFING

Greater integration with Abbey services brings changes for St Margaret's

The congregation will have noticed that security at the west end doors to the church has been stepped up over past months. This isn't because of any particular threat, but a result of a decision, partly prompted by the 2015 review, that St Margaret's needs to be on the same footing as the Abbey for establishment matters such as this.



Beadles (ie security staff) are responsible for checking bags and monitoring those attending, but have proven to be flexible in their approach. During the week they conduct bag searches in the church rather than on the porch, in order not to put people off entering, and the stewards on duty alongside the beadles on Sunday mornings are being helpful in greeting people in a welcoming way.

Over the course of 2016, we will see more operational integration, to include cleaning and visitor services staff.

DID YOU KNOW...?

Sir Walter Raleigh

Famously a favourite of Queen Elizabeth I, Raleigh the adventurer seriously displeased her in 1591 by secretly marrying one of her ladies in waiting; both were imprisoned in the Tower. His fortunes waxed and waned through Elizabeth's reign, but he never lived up to his early promise.



Elizabeth's successor James I sentenced him to death for treasonous complicity in the Main Plot, but gave him a final chance to prove himself with a well-funded voyage to the Americas to seek the legendary El Dorado. Having failed to bring back riches, Raleigh's death sentence was reinvented, and he was beheaded in Old Palace Yard in 1617. His body was interred beneath the chancel of St Margaret's Church, but his wife, to whom he had remained devoted, took his head and kept it until her death 29 years later. Despite legends either way, there is no firm evidence as to whether it was ever reunited with his body in St Margaret's or not.

Contacts for St Margaret's

Vestry / Senior Vergger, Nigel Harris:

t: 020 7654 4840

e: nigel.harris@westminster-abbey.org

Rector's Secretary, Pamela Carrington:

t: 020 7654 4847

e: pamela.carrington@westminster-abbey.org

Newsletter queries, suggestions and distribution list matters by email to Becky Wallower:

e: becky.wallower@dial.pipex.com

PRIEST VICAR PROFILE

The Reverend Garry Swinton

Garry Swinton initially filled in as Priest Vicar at St Margaret's during Peter Cowell's sabbatical in 2002 and was asked to stay on. The previous year he had been appointed Chaplain at Grey Coat Hospital (GCH) and Westminster City School (WCS), which had an even closer bond with the church then. Before that, and since his ordination, now 28 years ago, he had previously served at churches in Surbiton and Wandsworth, and as Succentor at Southwark Cathedral.

He's still Chaplain at WCS and GCH, and also teaches GCSEs. He oversees about 15 services for the schools in St Margaret's each year, and leads confirmation preparation. He is also on the Guild (like a PTA) at Grey Coat, where the interaction with adults dealing with matters other than students makes a welcome change. One Guild member has likened his approach to something like the Vicar of Dibley to her PCC.

The priest vicar role offers a healthy contrast to education, he feels, as there is both flexibility in what he does and when, and he can

concentrate more on his own need for worship. 'As a priest, you have a need to be fed as well,' he feels. That personal moment that comes with leading a service in the sacristy at St Margaret's is perhaps his favourite aspect, 'though I like preaching,' he says, 'especially when it's all finished... I tend to spend a lot of time preparing.' He reckons the best thing about St Margaret's is the friendly, interesting congregation, and he appreciates it when people want to discuss sermons, something that he finds happens much less elsewhere.

To get a little insight into what Garry is like behind the cassock, we posed some quick fire questions...

✦ **If you hadn't become a priest, what might you have done?** I never wanted to do anything else, but I would love to have travelled more in my work, so something like British Council or diplomatic work, helping people in difficulties abroad, might have been really fascinating.

✦ **What's your favourite hymn?** Praise my soul

the King of heaven **Scripture?** The Creation Story **Setting?** Messaien or Langlais **Service?** Easter

✦ **What do you like doing outside work and church?** Walking through London, discovering new things, never gets old. And I'm loving being able to do up the house I got in Cornwall with the small inheritance my parents left me.

✦ **Favourite author?** Alexander McCall-Smith **Music?** Elgar **Film?** The Sound of Music! It was the first thing I saw, aged five **Sport?** Football, to watch **Leisure activity?** a spot of gardening **Food?** Japanese **Holiday destination?** Isles of Scilly

✦ **Who has influenced your life the most?**

Overall, it has to be my parents more than anyone, though there are many people who have shaped where I was going at various points.

✦ **What one thing would you most like to achieve in the next five years?** I'm not so ambitious for myself; more than anything I love to see the students making their breakthroughs, discovering what will motivate them.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY INSTITUTE SUMMER PARTY

The Westminster Abbey Institute celebrated its second birthday with a reception in the East Cloister of the Abbey on the evening of 8 June. It was attended by a wide cross section of the contacts and friends that the Institute has made in its first two years including Parliamentarians, Government officials, academics and commentators. I attended as a representative of our Rector's Congregational Forum.

The gathering was addressed by the Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster, the Rt Hon Theresa May MP, the Home Secretary, and Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury, President of the Supreme Court. The speakers warmly congratulated the Institute, not least its Chairman, the Venerable Andrew Tremlett, on

its early achievements. The speakers stressed the importance and value of the Institute's work in helping its partner organisations around Parliament Square to revitalise the moral and spiritual aspects of their work in public service. In her reply Claire Foster-Gilbert, Director of the Institute, expressed her pleasure and satisfaction in the Institute's achievements so far and spoke of her hopes for its development.

I came away confident that the role of St Margaret's as the Church on Parliament Square will fit well with the work of the Institute in programming lectures, seminars and discussion groups for many of the public service organisations in the area.

-- Stephen Wright

ST MARGARET'S SUPPORT STAFF

In September, Nigel Harris will have served 28 years at St Margaret's. Canon Sinclair will be his fourth Rector, and Aidan Oliver is his fourth Director of Music. Although he is familiar to all, the scope of his role as Senior Verger is less well known. Special services, concerts, weddings, memorial services and other events take place virtually every week (151 in 2015), involving much liaison with Abbey and external bodies, and highly-detailed arrangements for the day. Career highlights so far have included the wedding of Viscount Linley, and the Queen Mother's stalwart support of the opening of the Field of Remembrance. Nigel's favourite aspect of the job, though, is helping people – as anyone who has worked with him will happily confirm.

