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# NEWS

No 4 Spring 2017

news and features from St Margaret's

## EASTER 2017

**At St Margaret's, we mark the most important season of the church's year with the Easter Liturgy, a service in four parts.**

We recall the Vigil of Saturday night, an ancient feature of the Easter celebrations. From its earliest times the Church would keep watch through the night and meditate on the mighty works of God through key passages from scripture telling of God's saving love.

The Service of Light proclaims the resurrection of Christ from the dead in word and action, in silence and sound. Symbolising Christ, the light of the world, the Easter candle, is lit and the light is carried through the church and passed to the congregation.

The Liturgy of Initiation, when baptismal vows are reaffirmed, reflects the close link between baptism and Easter that has existed since the second century.

The celebration of the Eucharist is the proper climax to the Easter Liturgy when we are sacramentally reunited with our risen Lord.

## Holy Week and Easter at St Margaret's and the Abbey

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April, Annual Day of Prayer:**

10.00am – 3.00pm, St Margaret's

**Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April, Palm Sunday: 11.15am**

Eucharist and procession, Westminster Abbey

**Maundy Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> April: 5pm**

Choral Eucharist with washing of feet in the Abbey, with watch at St Margaret's until 9pm

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> April, Good Friday: 10.30am**

Matins and Litany, St Margaret's

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> April, Holy Saturday: 8.00pm**

Vigil and first Eucharist of Easter, in the Abbey

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> April, Easter Day: 11.00am**

The Easter Liturgy, St Margaret's

## ART FOR THE SUMMER

### Mothers: inspiration for consideration

The next art installation at St Margaret's will be a painting inspired by the theme of hospitality – one central to the principles of the Benedictine community of the medieval Westminster Abbey. The Reverend Regan O'Callaghan's work, the 3 Mothers, was commissioned by the former Bishop of London the Right Reverend and Right Honourable Richard Chartres in 2007. Initially installed in Diocesan House, the 3 Mothers have been exhibited in the Jewish Museum, St James's Piccadilly, Lambeth Palace and elsewhere around London, as well as in St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne.



The triptych depicts three smiling women from the congregation of St John on Bethnal Green, seated around a table. They reflect the diverse nature of the congregation there, as well as of the local East End community and London itself. Each woman is a wife, mother and grandmother, a person of faith and a committed hard-working member of the church, something the artist wanted to celebrate. The three women also symbolise the important role of women, particularly older women, in the Church of England. The opened hand of Mother Pearl is held out to greet the viewer to the table, a place of fellowship and hospitality, while Mother Becky and Mother Miriam look on. Their gestures and gaze gently inquire from the viewer what they bring to the table. The stars on the tablecloth symbolise the many descendants of Abraham. The colours the three women wear represent the Christian liturgical seasons and the gold leaf a belief in the sainthood of all believers and the eternal and all encompassing light of God.

### The Reverend Regan O'Callaghan

Originally from New Zealand, Regan O'Callaghan moved to the UK in 1993 where he later studied art and religious studies, including the technique of icon writing (painting). In 2001 he was ordained into the Church of England. He combines his religious ministry with art, leading art projects and workshops, and has painted important commissions including an icon for St Paul's Cathedral London. He believes in a ministry of encouragement where art is the facilitator. Regan's art practice has built on the technique of icon writing, combining contemporary themes with traditional techniques, and is inspired by the natural environment and humankind's connection with their surroundings. He is a freelance artist working in the Abbey's Education Department.





# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**St Margaret's Congregational Forum meetings**  
Mondays 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 10<sup>th</sup> July: 6pm

**Poetry and Arts Group**  
Saturdays 28<sup>th</sup> April and 20<sup>th</sup> May (AGM):  
check notes in weekly service sheets for times and venues, and contact Alan Stourton for further information

**Lunchtime recitals**  
Mondays 22 May to 26<sup>th</sup> June, 12.45pm:  
Aidan Oliver has again organised the annual series of ten lunchtime recitals at St Margaret's, featuring a great range of music, vocalists and instrumentalists.

**Explorations in Faith**  
Sundays 21<sup>st</sup> May, 25<sup>th</sup> June, 24<sup>th</sup> September, 15<sup>th</sup> October, 19<sup>th</sup> November, 12.30-1.45pm: Sessions will be held regularly after the service, and you're invited to bring and share some lunch.

# ROBOTS IN THE AISLES

## Religion meets science at St Margaret's

Robots could be found scooting through the aisles of St Margaret's on 9th March as 86 sixth-form students from seven schools from across greater London took part in a conference organised as part of Westminster Abbey's education programme, in collaboration with LASAR (Learning about Science and Religion).



Entitled *If not post-truth – then what truth? unfolding the road map of knowledge*, the day-long course aimed to restore young people's belief in the powers of scholarship, reason and inquiry as ways to get closer to truth.

Providing the framework were leading thinkers and academics from Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Reading, Canterbury Christchurch and elsewhere – and a magician. The sessions tackled the power and the limitations of science, aiming to

prepare the sixth-formers for ethical questions that are likely to arise from developments in computer science and robotics in their working lifetimes.

# COMMUNITY ROOM

## Sunday School revived and music office rehomed

With more children coming along to weekly Eucharist again (and more to come, perhaps in future including Abbey Wright's recently baptised grandson Freddy, below), the Sunday School will

restart as soon after Easter as possible, once the safeguarding checks are complete for the teachers. This revives the project that Nicola McFarlane – who sadly died earlier this year – worked so hard to set up with Ali Tremlett in 2009. Coordinated by Pippa Diggle, the teachers will again operate on a rota.



Occupying the community room during the week is St Margaret's music office in the persons of Director of Music Aidan Oliver and Music Secretary Suzanne Wilson. With all the church's music and its practice room housed up in the tower, it made sense for them to move over from Dean's Yard.

When not in use, their desks are concealed behind movable screens. The windows have been suitably insulated and better heating installed to make the room more comfortable for all users.

# DID YOU KNOW...?

## The reredos carvings

The opening of the reredos is one of the glories of Easter Day, when the exuberant gilt carving emerges again after Lent. But the central work has a rather confrontational history behind it.



Having bought the magnificent east window in 1758, the churchwardens were reproached by the Dean and Chapter, who felt that its depiction of the crucifixion was too 'high church'. St Margaret's churchwardens nevertheless remained determined, setting a lime wood carving of the supper at Emmaus below the window for emphasis. This bas-relief, based on Titian's famous painting (left), puts the Eucharist firmly at the centre of the church.

It was created in 1757 by Sefferin Alkin (or Alkin) a political refugee from Denmark carving in stone and wood. He first came to notice for his work at Stourhead for Henry Hoare in the 1740s, later collaborating with Robert Adam, William Chambers and others. A pamphlet of 1761 remarks that the piece is 'well executed by Mr. Alkin, of St. Anne's Westminster', but some feel that the surrounding reredos is the superior work. Added in 1905, this was carved by Charles Kempe, an artist in the high Anglican style whose stained glass and altar carvings feature in many cathedrals.

# STEWARDSHIP

The latest available figures for congregational giving, in the five months to February 2017 are:

October – £2896     January – £797  
November – £2199     February – £1522  
December – £2850

We will report on fundraising next quarter.

# CONTEMPORARY LANGUAGE SERVICE

A short survey will be circulated to all on the St Margaret's mailing list shortly after Easter, to canvass views on the contemporary language Sung Eucharist held in the church once a month on Sunday morning.

Please complete the survey and return it to the Rector's Secretary, no later than Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

# Contacts for St Margaret's

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

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## STAFF PROFILE

### Aidan Oliver, Director of Music

Ask any member of the congregation what they most value about worshipping at St Margaret's and music is guaranteed to feature. And a key figure behind that excellence is Aidan Oliver.

Although Aidan was a répétiteur at the National Opera Studio in Covent Garden in 2003 when he took the reins from Simon Over, this was his first 'proper job'. He had just completed a masters in musicology at Kings College London at the time, following his degree at Kings College Cambridge and a year's scholarship at Harvard University. Having read classics at Cambridge – Mary Beard was his tutor there – he might have entered a life in academia. But as he was also a Choral Scholar at Kings and conducted widely around Cambridge, it seems music was never far from the foreground.

Like many musicians, he now pursues a portfolio career. For Philharmonia Orchestra, he directs and prepares Philharmonia Voices for many of their broadcasts and recordings, and for the Royal Opera, he serves as organ accompanist and off-stage conductor. This year he has also recorded a CD of British choral music with the Huddersfield Choral Society and Thomas Trotter, and directed Dulwich Choral Society's performance of Bach's St Matthew Passion at Cadogan Hall.

St Margaret's and the Abbey provide a stable base and backdrop, not just for Aidan, but for his family too: Lois and their sons were stalwarts of the congregation and Sunday School for years

when the boys were small. Orlando is now in his final year at the Abbey choir school, where he is Head Chorister. Also musical, Tristan enjoys composing as well as playing piano and violin.

Among the attractions of the post, Aidan lists the friendly community, the unique role of the choir serving Parliament, the Sunday liturgy, working with Thomas Trotter and other musicians of such superb calibre, and the remarkable location. Top highlights include the annual Parliamentary Carol Service, a good showcase for the church's music, and the popular summer recital series. Recently, the moving memorial service for Jo Cox MP, when Parliament rose as one to process to St Margaret's, holds particularly strong memories.

For the future, Aidan would love to make a recording with the choir and Thomas, and see the creation of a girls' choir at St Margaret's. 'It would provide a rare opportunity for girls in London,' he says, 'as well as a counterpoint to the Abbey choristers.' He is also determined to continue to offer the best of all periods of music from a wide range of traditions. This definitely includes contemporary settings and works as he believes it's essential that music continues to develop. He looks for pieces that are expressive and have a connection to the long tradition of polyphony to get the balance right.

And to find out more about Aidan, we posed some quick fire questions...

✦ **What's your favourite hymn?** O Jesus I



have promised. **Setting?** Mozart's Coronation Mass. **Service?** Pentecost, for its music.

**Religious text?** I'd go for Pilgrim's Progress.

✦ **And your favourite author?** Thomas Hardy.

**Pastime?** Watching cricket, and playing tennis with the children. **Animal?** Cat. **Food?** Roast chicken. **Music?** VW, Mendelssohn and Berlioz.

✦ **If you had a time machine where would you go?** The premiere of the Creation in 1798 in Vienna: Haydn was a remarkably lovely man and the occasion was apparently astonishing.

✦ **Who has been your greatest influence?** Without doubt, Richard Hickox, who took me under his wing and taught me about not just conducting, but being a generous colleague.

✦ **Reincarnated in a different life, what would you be?** An international cricketer!

✦ **What's your guilty pleasure?** I do like a gritty Scandi-noir or trashy crime thriller...

## ANNUAL MEETING

### Reports and plans

A change of venue and positive progress characterised this year's Annual Meeting, held for the first time at the Institution of Civil Engineers just off Parliament Square on 9th March.

The four elected wardens were returned unopposed: John Durham (Congregation), Brian Miller (Fabric), Edward Osterwald (Stewardship), and Terry Riggs (Readers and Sidesmen). After the meeting the four wardens appointed by the Dean and Chapter were also reappointed: Greg Meier (Faith Development), Becky Wallower (Communications), Lady Wilcox (Palace of

Westminster), and Sir Stephen Wright (Parliament Square/Visitor Experience).

Reports reflected the exceptionally wide range of events and interests that feature at St Margaret's. Parliamentary Warden Sir Peter Bottomley remembered especially, as did others, the church's role in the memorial for Jo Cox MP, four days after her murder in April (Parliament's procession from Westminster pictured below). On behalf of the Congregational Forum, Ed Osterwald described how recommendations from the 2016 review were being managed and reported. Suzanne Wilson welcomed a soprano and a bass to the choir. It was hoped the choir and Thomas Trotter would record a CD in 2017.

From James White we learned that the St Margaret's Society of Change Ringers had rung on 36 occasions in 2016 (50% up on 2015), including for a wedding, three funerals and 15 services of thanksgiving. Alan Stourton described the

nine meetings of the Poetry and Arts Group, where poetry and literature were read and discussed by between 16 and 23 people each time. Willem van der Lee noted that he was winding down after 10 years as liaison with Churches Together in Westminster, but felt it was important for the church to continue to be represented and to build strong links in the area.

The Rector highlighted the continued strength of the Sunday congregation and the music, as well as the successful links with schools championed by Garry Swinton and Mark Birch. She gave heartfelt thanks for the welcome and support she had received from all quarters of the congregation, volunteers, clergy and staff, especially Nigel Harris and Pamela Carrington. She saw opportunities this year to increase the congregation, preaching and music and build on strengths including hospitality, pastoral offices and welcoming visitors. She hoped that by encouraging one another we could develop faith education, build contacts in our area and review best use of our space, so that St Margaret's would continue with its Sunday congregation, prayer, partying and Gospel centred life.

