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NEWS

No 9 Summer 2018

news and features from St Margaret's

ORDINARY TIME

We have had much to celebrate recently: a royal wedding, the opening of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries, the St Margaret's Deanery school leavers' service. And in the Church's year we have partied: Christmas, Easter and Pentecost have marked turning points in the life of Jesus, and of the Church. But isn't it good, after any party, to clear up,

and to sit down with a cup of tea and relax for a while?

Ordinary time – marked by the Sundays after Trinity Sunday – is the Church's time to return to normality, and to walk with Christ in the everyday. There is a calm healing rhythm to our worship in Ordinary Time. All are welcome to rest in the simple, unfussy grace of God in our midst.

For the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ is about

redeeming the everyday, God at work among us in Morning Prayer on a dark wet morning, quite as much as in the glories of a solemn Christmas liturgy; in the washing-up quite as much as at a royal wedding. The extraordinary truth is that the grace of God abounds in the ordinary for us all, whether we know it or not.

Inside...

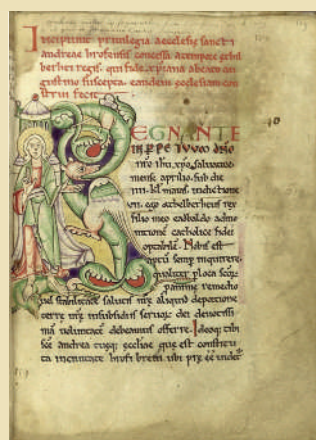
- Rector's reflections
- Priest Vicar profile
- Raleigh celebration preview
- St Margaret's festival in July
- Diary dates and milestones
- Did you know...?

...and more

PILGRIMAGE PREVIEW

Congregational group to visit Rochester in August

Founded in AD 604 by Bishop Justus, Rochester Cathedral is England's second oldest cathedral and the seat of the Bishop of Rochester. The present building is the work of the French Benedictine monk, Gundulf, and dates to AD 1080. The glorious Norman architecture of the nave, the crypt and the fine Romanesque facade, make this an inspirational destination for the St Margaret's pilgrimage to Rochester on Saturday 18th August, led by Priest Vicar the Reverend Ralph Godsall, former Canon Residenciary and Precentor there.



Rochester Cathedral became a major place of pilgrimage in the 13th century, when miracles were reported at the shrine of William of Perth, a Scottish baker who had been murdered nearby. Modern pilgrims still climb

the Pilgrim Steps, worn by the thousands of medieval pilgrims visiting the shrine, often lighting candles at the William of Perth prayer-station in front of the oratory.

Also drawing pilgrims and visitors to Rochester is the first fresco to be created in an English cathedral since the Reformation. Painted by Russian iconographer Sergei Fyodorov, the fresco on the theme of baptism was dedicated on St John the Baptist's Day 2004. It has become admired for its artistry and a focus of meditation and prayer.

In the Crypt, the oldest part of the Cathedral, is displayed a hidden treasure: the *Textus Roffensis* (c. 1120), pictured above right. It is a significant piece in the history of English-speaking peoples, telling us much about where English law and language began, and the extent to which present-day thinking is rooted in 7th century Kent. It contains the master copy of the coronation charter of King Henry I which influenced the wording of the Magna Carta of 1215 and later the American Declaration of Independence of 1776.

Rochester played a pivotal role on both sides of the English Reformation and has close historic associations with Westminster Abbey. During the late 17th and 18th centuries it was customary for the Bishop of Rochester to be also appointed the Dean of Westminster. Charles Dickens, buried against his wishes in Poets' Corner, is also closely associated with Rochester. The pilgrimage from St Margaret's will explore some of these associations which will include a guided tour of the cathedral by the Dean of Rochester.

All are welcome to join us travelling by train to Rochester on Saturday 18th August. See *Dates for your Diary* and *Contact* sections on p 3 for further information on booking.

FAREWELL TO PAULA

On 27th May we drank a toast with cake and many thanks to Paula Flynn. Having served as sidesman, reader and server since coming to St Margaret's over 35 years ago, Paula moved to Salisbury in 2015, and now serves the Cathedral there.



LUNCH IN THE GARDEN

The congregations of St Margaret's and the Abbey were joined by clergy and staff for the annual congregational lunch in the Abbey Gardens on 17th June. The Dean thanked everyone for their fellowship and contributions to the life of the community.



SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sunday School is now a regular feature of weekly Eucharist, and the children are enjoying activities in the community room. Leaders Kate Livingstone, Pippa Diggle and Nicola Fleming, are actively seeking further volunteers for the rota.



RECTOR'S REFLECTIONS: UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Did you know that St Margaret's Westminster Abbey is part of one of the world's largest Christian faith communities? The Anglican Communion comprises 85 million people in over 165 countries worldwide.

Christianity is the world's largest religion, with about 2 billion followers on every continent. The Anglican Christian tradition sits alongside the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox and Protestant Churches.

The word Anglican comes from the Latin *ecclesia anglica*, meaning English Church. Thanks to the expansion of British influence across the globe, especially during the 18th and 19th centuries, there are millions of people who are part of national or regional churches which call themselves Anglican (or Episcopal in some countries). These churches are collectively known as the Anglican Communion.

All Anglicans share aspects of their history, traditions and forms of worship. But no two churches are exactly alike even within a diocese, let alone within a province or between countries. This unity in diversity is one of the distinctive qualities of the Anglican Communion, compared with many other Christian traditions.

Anglican worship outside Britain began as early as 1578 in Canada, with the Book of Common Prayer often used in communities remote from its original British context. Following the American War of Independence, the parishes of Connecticut elected Samuel Seabury as their bishop in 1783. As the Church of England could not ordain him, he turned to the Scottish Episcopal Church for ordination as bishop. This move is seen by some as the beginning of an Anglican Communion with autonomous member churches.

Today the Anglican Communion comprises 39 autonomous national and regional churches plus six extra-Provincial Churches and dioceses. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the Communion's spiritual head; and one of our Priests Vicar, The Most Reverend Dr Josiah Idowu-Fearon, is its Secretary General. He is much involved in preparations for the Lambeth Conference in 2020, as well as trouble-shooting around the Communion.

It has always been a strength of the Anglican Communion that its member churches seek to co-operate despite significant differences on certain issues, among them the ordination of women and issues of human sexuality. Other Christian traditions look to the Anglican Communion to learn from its perceived ability to have good disagreements. Please pray for Josiah in his important work of reconciliation on behalf of us all.

PATRONAL FESTIVAL AND CONGREGATIONAL MILESTONES

Festal services

Sunday 15th July, St Margaret of Antioch: Feast of Dedication

11.00 am: Festal Eucharist followed by party in St Catherine's Chapel Garden

Thursday 20th July, St Margaret of Antioch:

8.00 am: Eucharist, followed by coffee and croissants

Ordination

Saturday 30th June: Christopher Rogers, a member of St Margaret's congregation since 2003 – and server, reader and sidesman – was ordained Deacon at Southwark Cathedral. Chris – and his dog Cuthbert of course – will be living in Catford, where he will be Assistant Curate at St John the Baptist. On 24th June, his last Sunday as a member of the congregation, he was blessed by Andrew Zihni.

Anniversary, memorial service

Sunday 15th July: Tara and Ryan Herr, who were married in St Margaret's last year, celebrate their first anniversary.

Tuesday 17th July, 12.00: A service of thanksgiving will be held for Lord Temple Morris, a member of the congregation who died on 1st May. An MP since 1974, he famously crossed over to Labour in 1990 in frustration with Conservative Euroscepticism.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Explorations in Faith

Sundays 16th, 23rd, 30th September;
and 7th October

12.45 pm – 1.45 pm

All are welcome as we explore Christian attitudes to the Holy Land.

St Margaret's Congregational Forum meetings

Tuesday 10th July, Tuesday 18th September,
Monday 12th November, all at 6 pm

St Margaret's Poetry and Arts Group

Saturdays 29th September, 27th October,
24th November, all at 7 pm

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

Pilgrimage to Rochester

Saturday 18th August:

Led by Reverend Canon Ralph Godsall, former Precentor at Rochester Cathedral. Details on notice board and bookings through Pamela Carrington (see contacts below).

Annual meeting of readers and sidesmen

Wednesday 17th October, 6.30pm: vestry

Commemorations of the 400th anniversary of death of Sir Walter Raleigh

Sunday 28th October, 11am:

service of commemoration

Monday 29th October, 6.30 pm: lecture on the Life and times of Sir Walter Raleigh by Dr Mark Nicholls

RALEIGH COMMEMORATION

400th anniversary

As noted in the first issue of this newsletter two years ago, Sir Walter Raleigh was famously buried under our chancel immediately following his execution in Old Palace Yard. The 400th anniversary of this event, which took place on 29th October 1618, is to be commemorated at St Margaret's and elsewhere this summer and autumn.



So far, a commemorative service and a lecture have been confirmed at the church, and further possible activities are being investigated. The service at St Margaret's will take place on Sunday 28th October; the Dean of Westminster, the Very Reverend Dr John Hall will preach and special guests will be invited. On the evening of 29th October, Dr Mark Nicholls, leading Raleigh scholar and author of a recent authoritative biography, will present a

lecture on Raleigh's life. The Abbey learning department will use the anniversary for a youth project, the products of which will be displayed, together with a photo of the church's burial register, and images relating to Raleigh's life (such as this representation from the west window).

An ad hoc committee comprising the Rector, Victoria Dearborn, Terry Riggs, Becky Wallower and Sir Stephen Wright is researching possibilities and contacting numerous organisations. We are in touch with others arranging events – from the Tower to Devon to North Carolina.

NEW WEBSITE FOR WESTMINSTER ABBEY...

...and new pages for St Margaret's



In the redesign of the Abbey's website, hundreds of new photographs have been taken and new features added. The section on St Margaret's has been expanded and enhanced.

Planned events can now be found at the bottom of the main St Margaret's page, with a link to the booking facility. Under 'Worship at St Margaret's' are full details of services, and text of many of the sermons given on Sundays. Information on many of the people working and volunteering in the church (such as the wardens of the Congregational Forum, left) is included, and from this section you can now

download all nine issues of St Margaret's News. In the 'Visit St Margaret's' section are new photographs of the 'Top ten things to see and do' – two of which feature on this page – and a summary of the history of the church. Go to: www.westminster-abbey.org/st-margarets-church/.

STEWARDSHIP

The latest available figures for congregational giving and donations in the three months through May 2018 are:

	collections	donations
March	£771	£628
April	£1,982	£968
May	£996	£1,068

DID YOU KNOW...?

Blanche Parry

The key reason for Sir Walter Raleigh's fall from grace with Elizabeth I, and for his first spell in the Tower, was his secret affair with and marriage to Bess Throckmorton, one of the Queen's ladies in waiting. Both Bess and Sir Walter most certainly knew another of Elizabeth's ladies in waiting, Blanche Parry, whose monument of painted marble and alabaster (left) is now on the west wall of St Margaret's, just south of the main doors.



Blanche arrived at the Tudor court with her aunt, Lady Troy, who served the future Edward VI and Elizabeth I as children. Blanche too served the Queen from her childhood, rising to become her chief gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber (one of those controlling access to the Queen), and woman of the bedchamber, responsible for her jewels. She

was a close confidante, passing the Queen secret information and writing letters for her, and also worked closely with her cousin Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley, the Queen's chief advisor.

Blanche was born about 1508 in Bacton on the Welsh borders, now Herefordshire, and spoke Welsh. Her heart was buried in St Faith's parish church in Bacton when she died at 82. It was discovered 100 years ago that an embroidered altar cloth in St Faith's was a piece of Elizabethan clothing, perhaps even that of Queen, from whom Blanche recorded frequent gifts of worn garments. Cecil supervised her will, and the Queen paid for her monument in St Margaret's.

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PRIEST VICAR PROFILE

The Most Reverend Josiah Idowu-Fearon PhD

Josiah Idowu-Fearon is anything but the usual Priest Vicar at St Margaret's. Having had an early career training for the army of Nigeria, he thinks he might be classed as 'a living miracle' as he could easily have been dead: only seven of his 30 classmates at the military school are still alive.

At the age of just 17, he felt God calling him to the priesthood, 'like Abraham, with no looking back', but was only able to leave the military thanks to a special dispensation. His patience was tried as he waited to reach the age of 21 in order to be ordained in the Anglican Church, and he remembers almost turning away, until a tutor insisted he must 'just wait, just wait'.

From ordination in 1971, to consecration as bishop of the Diocese of Sokoto in 1990 he held various ecclesiastical posts, including Provost of St Michael's Cathedral. Throughout, and since that period, he has continued his education with a theology degree from the University of Durham, a masters degree at Birmingham University and his PhD at Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria, as well as a DMin in the USA, and special studies in Arabic Language in Jordan. It is evident, in fact, that Josiah will never stop studying, and learning.

It was at Durham that he developed a particular interest in Islam and Islamic civilisation. Unusually this was triggered by his work on patristics (the study of the early church fathers), and the struggle of translating the unity of God in the Trinity. He saw in this a parallel to the prime tenet of Islam that there is only one God and his messenger is Muhammad to whom He revealed

his word. Studying for his masters degree at Birmingham, Josiah wrote a major paper on 'The status of a Non-Muslim (thumma) in an Islamic State', at which point he realised that he was being called to be a bridge builder.

Consecrated Bishop of Kaduna in 1998, Josiah looked to put this into practice, especially when faced in 2000 with a violent period of inter-religious conflict. Despite differences, he and a local Muslim cleric worked hard together on joint efforts to rebuild the city.

Looking for a still wider challenge, Josiah became Secretary General of the Anglican Communion in 2015. He says, 'My prayer and desire is to get both the right and left of the theological divide, north and south of our Communion to see unity in Jesus Christ as he prayed in John 17.21. Our Communion is a gift we need to embrace, in spite of our theological, ecclesiastical and cultural differences. This is what my ministry has taught me as an evangelical Christian living among my Muslim neighbours who have a different theological understanding of God.'

He doesn't downplay the challenging times, but takes heart that the other main international Christian groups look up to Anglicanism for its tolerance. 'We must continue to cultivate a culture of respect for differences.'

With his charismatic evangelical background, his role at St Margaret's might seem surprising. 'When we arrived in London, I wanted a place where I could share worship with other clergy,



and my wife Comfort wanted to be part of a real congregation,' he explains. The Bishop of London suggested several churches, and Josiah was attracted to St Margaret's partly as he had worked briefly with our former Rector, Andrew Tremlett when Andrew was a curate. He enjoys 'just letting the worship flow around' him here and is even adapting to the discipline of hour long services and 12 minute sermons.

And to get a sense of Josiah as a person, we posed some of our quick fire questions...

✦ **What's your favourite hymn?** My faith looks up to Thee. **Scripture?** Phillipians 3:10: 'That I may know Him'.

✦ **And your favourite book?** *What's so amazing about grace*, by Philip Yancey **Music?** Gospel. **Film?** Any war film – that military training kicks in. **Food?** I'm Nigerian: rice! I could eat it for every meal. **Holiday?** We like a hotel with sauna and jacuzzi. **Pastime?** Squash
✦ **And what's your guilty pleasure?** Nuts – bad for the cholesterol, but I can't resist...

ST MARGARET ALOFT

St Margaret mace on view in new triforium galleries



This silver mace topped with St Margaret and her dragon is one of several pieces related to the church in The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries opened by Her Majesty the Queen in

June (see Spring issue of St Margaret's News). It may be surprising to see the mace there, when we see it every Sunday but in fact both are part of a set of four, presented in 1758. The opulent design reflects the importance of St Margaret's when it had an extensive parish. Like many parishes from the medieval period onwards, the clergy and church wardens regularly 'beat the bounds', ie walked the parish boundaries, to ensure that local people knew where they were – an important factor, as residents of the parish could be married or baptised there, and were liable for taxes. The four mace heads would have been used in such ceremonies, and carry the arms of the City of Westminster and the names of the church wardens.

After Queen Elizabeth I's refounding of Westminster Abbey, St Margaret's remained part of the royal peculiar until 1840. However the church also had a parochial role: collecting local taxes, caring for the poor, overseeing the parish's legal administration. Only from 1840 to 1972 was it under the auspices of the Bishop of London (and within the Diocese), after which it resumed its status as part of the Abbey.

STEPHEN HAWKING

Ashes buried in Westminster Abbey



A service of thanksgiving for the life of Professor Stephen Hawking was held at the Abbey on 15th June. The Dean of Westminster the Very Reverend Dr John Hall conducted the service and led members of the family to the nave for the committal. Professor Hawking's ashes were interred between the graves of Sir Isaac Newton and Charles Darwin. Placing the ashes in the tomb was St Margaret's Senior Verger Nigel Harris.