

GRAPEVINE

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Trust in the Lord

Genesis 12 ¹ *The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you."*

Dear Church Family,
You have probably heard by now that Kate and I are being called away from St. John's which has been our home and church family for nearly 24 years. Like Abram (later becoming Abraham) we are not 100% sure of what we are moving on to – except it will involve me retiring and us taking a break from church ministry for six months.

The Church of England strongly encourages ministers to leave the parish and church when they move on, which is sad as the St John's family is where we both LOVE worshipping, but God has made it clear to us that now is the time for us to move, for two reasons,

namely it is time for someone else to lead the church into its next adventure and it is time for me to re-



tire from full-time ministry.

So what next for St Johns? You are a dynamic healthy church that is unusual in many ways. 1) The number of people who have come to faith as adults; 2) The amount of prayer that happens; 3) The way you are always up for a chal-

lenge and change; 4) the solid biblical faith that has been a hallmark for nearly 100 years and 5) the dynamic lifegiving presence of the Holy Spirit. All of which means St John's is in a good place for a hopefully short interregnum process while a new minister is found. God has it under control.

Our last Sunday will probably be the 6th October though we will be around a bit longer making sure everything is handed on properly. We have an excellent lay team in place and I will be working with them to make sure the ride is a smooth one.

We have had so much fun and blessings here – St John's is so incredibly dear to us both.

Yours in Christ,
Adam and Kate

Proverbs 3 ⁵ *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

St John's News

As I write yesterday was a glorious early sunny Summer's day whereas today is wet, chilly and almost Autumnal... but enough about the weather and back to the job in hand.

Holy Week, Easter services and activities enabled us to focus on events absolutely pivotal for our Faith, and indeed for our world. It was so right to walk through our own town with fellow Christians on Good Friday reminding and informing those who passed by of the one in whom we believe.

At the **6am Sunrise service**, darker than ever because Easter Sunday coincided with the clocks going forward, around 25 of us reminded each other 'He is Risen'.

Following on from **Frontline Sundays**, our morning and Life Service Sermons, Fruitfulness **on the Frontline**, are helping us see the different ways in which we can be

red dots. Speaking personally, it is so reassuring that, for example, **Moulding Culture**, or **Making Good work**, are **red**

dot activities when we do them with God's help.

Until the **recent Church Work Morning**, negotiating Our Church drive was demanding expert steering, due to the pot-holes, but Keith and Viv McGill did a wonderful levelling job, and along with other hard workers, achieved a real clean and clear up of our church grounds.

And, moving swiftly inside, **our new toilets** are a real thing of beauty and a joy forever, or at least for many years to come! Thankyou Dorin for excellent project managing.

Miriam Giles, with the Jesus Kids leaders, headed up an excellent **Workshop morning** at which eleven of our youngsters learnt more about Communion before being joined by their parents, when Adam led children and adults in a simple Communion service.

Five of our children and three adult leaders joined others at the excellent **Pentecost Praise** morning in Slade Green.

I deliberately held back on completing this news...until after the APCM... the Annual Church business meeting at which elections take place for the PCC.

Why? Because, at this meeting Adam shared the key news that **he and Kate are going to be leaving St John's in the Autumn, probably at the end of September**. We knew this news must come one day but that made hearing it no easier. For many at St John's Adam is the only Vicar you have ever known, indeed if you are under 24 you weren't even born when he and Kate arrived in December 2000 (and Ken and I weren't married, but almost!).

There will be many opportunities to thank and honour them for their love and faithful service but for now this, from someone on our House group WhatsApp sums it up, **'we are so sad but rejoicing for 24 years fabulous service'**. Indeed we are. Thank you so much God for Adam and Kate's ministry.

We were delighted to welcome little Seline Ristin into our Church family at her recent Baptism. We also continue to pray for those struggling with health issues and Hospital appointments.

So. Until August and SPARK, keep dry, cool, warm... as required!!

Estelle Woodcock



Open Doors

tians in Sub-Saharan Africa is being made worse by economic instability, climate change,

intrusive surveillance and suffocating restrictions force Churches underground.

Familiar Story still remains in Iraq & Syria

Although the conflict and terrorism has eased (slightly) in Iraq and Syria, Christians continue to face challenges, including being unable to return to their homes.

Christian persecution is not new, it began around 2000 years ago when persecution scattered the early church and it began to grow and continues to grow today!!!

Paul wrote;

"Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel," Philippians c1 v12, before adding his courage has enabled others "dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear" c1 v14

Extracts taken from Open Doors—
compiled by **Jim Golding**

North Korea Remains at the Top of the World Watch List.

North Korea retains the number 1 spot for Christian Persecution, having been at this position for over 20 years, only falling to 2nd place in 2022 when Afghanistan was found to be worse.

Approximately 5000 Christians Killed Worldwide.

Sadly last year around 5000 Christians were killed for following Jesus and 90% of these were in Nigeria (around 4000), where devastating attacks on communities continue by armed bandits and Islamic militants. The country with next highest reported deaths is DRC with 261!

Militants Exploit Chaos in Africa

The sweeping violence against Chris-

poor governance and security across the region. It allows militancy to grow and flourish and, because of their faith, Christians are affected disproportionately!

Autocratic Governments Tighten the Noose

Across the world, more and more Christian Churches struggle as the autocratic governments increase their control. This includes, China, Iran and places like Nicaragua, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

Alarming Rise in Closure of Churches and Worship Places

Some 15000 churches or Public Christian properties were attacked in 2023, seven times greater than 2022! And two thirds were in China, where

JOBS: Dorin Mkala

Dorin moved from Zambia, a stable democratic Southern African country, to the UK in 1986 aged 29 with her husband, Terdy and two young children. They only moved to the UK because Terdy was sponsored by his employers to undertake a 3-year Chartered Accountancy Course.

Dorin had a career of her own before coming. As a young girl she dreamed of being a teacher. However, after leaving school, she changed her mind and trained at college as a Stenographer – trained in Shorthand and Office Management. She quickly found a job with National Provident Fund (NPF) in the Deputy Managing Director's office. After only a year, NPF recognised that her skills were worth developing and sent her to Nairobi (Kenya) for advanced training as Executive PA. The course included business studies, office management and report writing. She got a Diploma and when she returned, was appointed as Assistant to the Company Secretary, a legal department handling pension contributions and claims (equivalent of National Insurance) for about 8 years until 1986 when she left Zambia.

Although she came armed with references from her MD (Managing Director) to other Zambian MDs in the UK with the request "Please employ this lady", no jobs were forthcoming, and she spent the early months as 'just a mother and a wife' in Newham. Luckily one of the MDs she was referred to soon found a role for her with Zambian National Tourism Board in Piccadilly, writing promotional materials for prospective tourists to Zambia, mostly Brits. Terdy cared for the children and when in college a childminder looked after them. They were still focussed on returning to Zambia. Dorin's boss was, in her word, cruel and after 18 months she found another job working for a wonderful man who was a Director of Memaco, a subsidiary of ZCCM, a Zambian copper producer. Dorin met clients from China, Japan, the US and Europe who bought copper from Zambia. He really taught her business. In 1990 Quality Assurance Standard, BS 9001 was introduced in all operations including the production plants in Zambia. Dorin's boss asked her to take up the role and sent her for training in British Standards. It was a big decision as this was not an interim role and it involved travelling. Terdy encouraged her to take it, and stepped in to provide all that was needed for the children: "I'm their Father". They also decided to remain in UK for foreseeable future to give the children good education as Zambia's economy was facing



difficulties.

Now living in Bermondsey, Dorin embraced her new role travelling with BSI Auditors to the mines in Zambia. After 12 years in the company the mines were de-nationalised and sold off to various buyers, Dorin's office in London closed, but one of the buyers snapped her up, and redundancy on Friday was followed by new work the following Monday! Of Indian origin, they were good employers but not keen on Quality Assurance, and after 18 months she left and immediately found a new role as Quality Assurance Manager in a firm of Architects in Putney. That was in 2001, a new start

that marked the rest of her working life in Architectural Design and Engineering/Project Management firms.

Dorin was asked to review their HR Procedures, knowing very little about HR. Ever the ambitious one, Dorin accepted this new role and embarked on 5 years of undergraduate evening studies in Human Resource Management (and in 2015 a Master's too). She was admitted as Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, and later a Chartered member). As the company grew so did her remit and she was subsequently promoted to Director of HR and Business Systems, with HR, Quality, IT and Office Management managers reporting to her. She was appointed a shareholder in 2013, the first black woman to hold shares in the PM Group, and was promoted to Director of HR UK, commuting to Birmingham from Kent and staying in the company flat on weeknights, Terdy often joining her at weekends. When Covid hit in 2020 Dorin immediately started working from home and together with her senior colleagues arranged for all staff to work from home. She officially retired in August 2022, but was retained as a Consultant on 2/3 days per week until August 2023.

Dorin's overriding comment on her work life was that she has been so well provided for by a loving God through good employers who treated her well, trained where needed; that she has loved her work at every level; and that Terdy was a loyal and loving husband and father which enabled her to follow her career all the way to retirement. She is enjoying beginning the new challenges of working voluntarily in a less structured workplace, initially as project manager for the Church Hall development, and as PCC Secretary. What more awaits here or elsewhere?

Kate Foot

The Trinity, such a difficult concept, so hard to visualise in your mind, but fundamental to our faith. The idea of three individual and identifiable personalities but 'One

God' does not sit naturally with the way we understand the world we live in. Perhaps that's the point, God does not fit into our natural preconceptions because 'He is beyond our understanding'.

However, for as long as the Christian Faith has existed, Christians have tried to rationalize the Trinity in various ways. One that comes to mind is the 'clover leaf'. Three separate parts making up one leaf. Although this type of analogy may have some merit, the persons of the Godhead have different characteristics. This is where I find such analogies fall short and I have therefore sought, over many years, to find something much more penetrating and somehow deeper than the 'Clover Leaf' type concept.

A visualisation I have used over recent years came from my reading of the first chapter of Genesis where we find the account of the creation of the world. In verse 26 we read 'Then God said, "Let us make man in our own image, to be like us". This is such a significant verse because it uses different tenses: 'us' and 'our' (plural) and 'image' (singular): thus, introducing the concept of a multi-personality God'. I used the fact that we are made in God's image and that we are 'Body, Mind and Spirit' as a more helpful understanding of a triune God: Mind (Father), Body (Jesus) & Spirit (Holy Spirit). I have found this much more helpful than the clover leaf type analogy but the fact that we have allowed sin to mar God's image in us detracts somewhat from an analogy with a perfect, sinless God. My search therefore continued.

I have finally found something in nature which better helps me in my understanding of our 'three in one'

Beyond our Understanding

of the Trinity. We were never 'designed' to fully understand God. If we could, there would be no need for faith, and faith is a prerequisite of our salvation. "Now we see through a glass darkly" says Paul in 1 Corinthians v12, "but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

Picture if you will a beautiful white rose. It is perfectly formed and has a dazzling white colour. White is symbolic with purity and perfection. White light contains within it all the colours of the spectrum, so beautifully demonstrated every time we see a rainbow in the sky where the raindrops act as tiny prisms splitting the white light into its various colours. The colour of everything we see is determined by which of the colours of the spectrum a surface reflects. Things are seen as white when all of the colours are reflected together. At the creation of the world God said, "Let there be light, and there was light" (Gen 1 v3). It is this light that enables us to see everything in our universe and without it there would only be darkness. The white colour of my rose represents to me this God of creation, God the Father.

My rose also has a lovely physical appearance with all of its petals perfectly formed. In my analogy this physical form represents the 'Word made flesh', Jesus. The physical form and the colour of the rose are inseparable. If you remove all colour from the rose it becomes invisible and if you remove its physical form, there is nothing left to support its colour. Both are very different aspects of the rose, but each is totally dependent on the other.

My rose has one more important attribute. It is a scented rose that has a wonderful delicate fragrance. It is again a very different aspect of the rose character but which, without the physical form of the rose could not exist. This fragrance represents to me the Holy Spirit. In John Ch 16 v7 Jesus says to his disciples just before his crucifixion "But I tell you the truth. It is good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you", (NIV). Just a few weeks after Jesus glorious resurrection the Holy Spirit comes in power at Pentecost. One of the things I love about likening the Holy Spirit to the fragrance of the rose in this analogy, is that it is only as you get closer to the rose that you are able to appreciate its wonderful fragrance. It is only as we get closer to the Father through His Son Jesus that we can experience Gods Holy Spirit in our own lives.

So, there you have it, my pure white, beautiful, fragranced, rose, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is only one time in the year when my rose changes, and that is on Good Friday. It loses its scent, and the only colour remaining of the spectrum of light that makes up its normal white colour is red. On the cross when Jesus died for us, He cried out "My God, my God why have you forsaken me". The Father turns away from His Son and Jesus is left totally alone, a truly 'cosmic' moment. The remaining red colour of the rose represents the shedding of His blood for our sins and the ultimate expression of love. Praise God that on Easter Day the Father raises the Son, conquering death and darkness, and the full colour and fragrance of my beautiful white rose is gloriously restored. (Even its name reminds me that Jesus 'rose' from the dead, hallelujah).

It works for me, and I hope may help you in trying to understand the mysteries of our amazing God. My search is done.

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God. Whilst no analogy can ever hope to fully explain God I hope what I have written here may help you, as it has helped me, in my understanding

My Faith Journey: Jenny Cosser

Born in a Village outside Bristol, my family attended the Baptist Church, and as I have journeyed to various parts of the country we have worshipped in Baptist Churches in Evesham and Coventry. In 2015 when we arrived in Bexley Borough (to be closer to our grandchildren Ash and Ollie), Doreen Jones and Julia Stevens independently told us about St John's, Welling and how we would love it here. And we certainly did – our first visit in October 2015 felt like we had come home and God's Spirit welcomed us. Adam talked about the Holy Spirit and wow we were sold on this church.

I was baptised as an adult in Stoke Gifford Baptist Church in 1969, when I was 19, having been dedicated as a baby. In Evesham our children Em and Alex were small so we were involved with children's work. Our 31 years in Coventry at Quinton Park Baptist Church involved us in many roles – I was a Deacon for possibly 19 years at different times, I did children's work, helped with Alpha groups, was a house group leader, helped with our ladies' group and organised many church holidays away.



JESUS HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PART OF MY LIFE AND I HAVE ALWAYS HAD HIM TO CALL UPON.

At St John's, Mike and I were confirmed by Bishop James in 2018 – to Church Warden God gives a unique season and I started life as a Warden in a boot because I had broken my achilles in 2018 at Micah and John's wedding, and later that year Mike had a stroke. In 2021 I stepped down after an unusual three years.

I love my House Group (thank you Sheila and my friends there); Mike and I are on the prayer team (thank you Miriam); We are on the Welcome Team (thank you Loretta) and we help with drinks. I love to read, and my Bible is read a lot and I belong to several book groups. I sing with various choirs (love the church choir); am a member of the U3A and help with Food Bank.

Thank You to my friends from all over the Country who have travelled this journey with me. Prayers & Love, **Jenny Cosser**

May our lives help Jesus smile

***By our choices, with our voices,
May our lives help Jesus smile.***

Through the wood, or down your street,
Sing His presence, make life sweet,
Thank you for my hands, and feet,
My prayers, my laughter, the folk I meet,

***By our choices, with our voices,
May our lives help Jesus smile.***

Here from Heaven, Heaven sent,
Jesus Christ may I present

You can walk each day with Him,
Love for all, that is His thing,

***By our choices, with our voices,
May our lives help Jesus smile.***

Thank you for my eyes, my ears,
For my laughter, for my tears,
For your love which calms my fears,
Thanks for all these blessed years,

***By our choices, with our voices,
May our lives help Jesus smile.***

Peace on earth, peace for children,
Joy of God, food for millions,

There's so much more, if you will it,
Through Father, son, and Holy Spirit,

***By our choices, with our voices,
May our lives help Jesus smile.***

And when we breathe our last,

May we be proud of all our past,
Think of all that Holy fun,

And of the race that was well run

***By our choices, with our voices,
May our lives help Jesus smile.***

Mike Cosser

Tyndall Road Housegroup

The Tyndall Road Housegroup came into existence over twenty years ago, when the Housegroup in Ingleton Avenue needed to relocate – the late Harry Hall offered his house.

Although membership has varied, for the last fifteen years the group has stayed fairly static and currently has nine members (Harry and Sylvia Costi, Sheila Hall, Roger and Trish Large, SiewKee Lim, Haydn and Chris Moyle, Doug Snow). Sadly Haydn has been unable to attend due to poor health for over a year.



We meet on Thursday evenings (except the last of the month) and the format of our meetings is fairly standard, with refreshments at the start; notices; study; and prayer. Our studies usually follow the recommended Housegroup material (hopefully Estelle will give us a gold star!!) and we have been challenged in recent weeks by the studies connected with being red dots in our day to day lives – how does that work out practically.

A little about the members:

Haydn and Chris moved to Welling in 1975 and came to St John's to have their first daughter, Angela, baptised. The rest is history.

Harry and Sylvia came to St John's in 1988 after Sylvia's father died. They attended a "Saints Alive" course (similar to Alpha) and together made a firm commitment.

Shelia (and her late husband Harry) came to St John's in 1987 after some personal problems. They were struck by the love of the people and again attended a "Saints Alive" course - week six was make your mind up time and they made up their mind up to follow Jesus.

Roger and Trish first attended St John's in 1980, just before their son Stephen was born with a feeling about needing to attend church. Six years later they again attended a "Saints Alive" course and their subsequent confirmation was an incredible experience, feeling the Holy Spirit moving in the church.

SiewKee (with her husband Kim) moved to Welling in 2008. SiewKee looked for a church similar to her previous Evangelical church in East London, tried St John's and has stayed ever since.

Doug first attended Sunday School at St John's in 1969 when his family moved to the area. He has been part of the church ever since, having been confirmed in 1973.

An interesting fact – for five of the members, Thursday is a busy day, as they are involved with helping out at Open Door in the afternoon!

Doug Snow

CARE (Christian Action Resources and Education), who are General Election party neutral, have released a website with Christian 'pre-election' resources that can be accessed by scanning the QR code or going to the web page www.engage24.org.uk



Included is a Prayer Diary titled '[40 Days of Prayer for the General Election](#)' a copy of which is available to view at the back of Church. Weekly prayer points are also accessible from the site as well as a [Blog](#) with a Christian commentary on up to date election developments.

Additional resources include:

- Weekly [Podcasts](#) providing viewers with election information to prayerfully consider,
- Interviews with a number of [Christian MP's](#),
- An interactive [quiz](#) on key policy areas to sign post which party aligns to your views.

Wildflower Rockery

Behind the church (near the North door, ie the exit door by the toilet), we have planted an old pile of rubble with native wildflower plants. 'Rockery' sounds nicer than 'pile of rubble'.

It's meant for the insects and for the plant species themselves rather than for show, so it doesn't have the wow factor you might imagine but as each plant comes into flower there is some colour in Spring and particularly in Summer.

We are really blessed to have the church grounds that we do. With that, we take responsibility to use it well and to make a few beneficial changes where we can, although it does pretty well as an extension of the woods as it is. Planting nectar species for

the insects provides something the park does not have a great deal of in the fields. Some of the garden variety flowers at the front of the church do that too.

I think the wild marjoram is my favourite as it looks good and really attracts bees and butterflies. If you want to know what other species are out there, ask me or have a look yourself. They are all from seeds from plants out in the wild (I have to add - only taken where there is an abundance) or from a supplier that can vouch for the source.

Bob Morris

