

Newsletter 4th January 2023



Dear Everyone

New Year's Greetings to you all, sending lots of good wishes and love. While we have hope and care for one another it is important to remember and pray for the many who have gone through so much hardship, anxiety and poor health, not of their own making. We think too of Ukraine, Iran, Afghanistan and all other countries facing unimaginable horrors of war, persecution, climate disasters and starvation. A great deal has been done by organisations and individuals to try and support those affected in all kinds of different ways, but while it sometimes seems so insurmountable we have to remember it is the many small acts of support and kindness that add up to the big things that in the end make changes for the good.

Supporting our community: In our way at Golders Green, we are supporting a food bank - thank you for your generosity in bringing in provisions and by making financial donations. You know who you are and people are benefitting. We are also open on Wednesday mornings to welcome people in for coffee, cake, conversation and a warm place to be. It is very enjoyable. Please spread the word so others know about it. Our Toddlers Group is opening up this week and numbers are growing. It is hoped the over 60's club will be starting again soon.

Night Shelter Project will be starting at our church in partnership with Alyth Gardens Synagoge, on Tuesday 28th February – 18th April. There is a notice from Nehar, below, who would welcome volunteers

Administrators post: We were sad to lose Jennifer as our Administrator. She did so much and will be missed in that capacity. We appreciated everything she did. We are, however, very pleased she is staying on to run the Toddlers Club for the time being. You will see below the advertisement for the new post and it is hoped that an appointment will be made as soon as practically possible.

Radio 4 New Year's Day Sunday Worship was devoted to a hymn that I know many of us like, "**Amazing Grace**" by **Andrew Newton**. It was an excellent programme, one of their best, with contributors talking about what the hymn meant to them and different communities. **The Archbishop of York**, Stephen Cotrell, preached about the transforming power of Grace and its abiding power in the world today if we recognise it. He outlined its power for demonstrating, no matter what kind of life you have lived, and Newton certainly had, as a slave trader and many other things He said that "Grace holds us as we worship the Christ-Child and Jesus calls us into a fresh way of life". His sermon is printed in full below. Please take time to read it as it is full of hope for all of us. The **Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin**, Suffragan Bishop of Dover, commented that, "*Amazing Grace is an iconic song within the black community, within the church, within the nation, it's international and I guess no particular group can say that this is theirs. We live in a world where many think that it's all down to them, it's all about them and suddenly this hymn smacks us on the nose and almost wakes us up to the realisation that actually it's not about us, it is about something greater than us that has*

chosen to dwell with us and isn't that just amazing in its own right that this God chooses to become Incarnate and live with us and release us from the kind of life that would be mundane that would hold us down and to give us the freedom that we don't have to live a life that betrays the fact that we are made in God's image."

To quote from the BBC programme notes, "John Newton was a middle-aged curate in Olney, Buckinghamshire when he wrote *Amazing Grace* in 1772; he liked to write hymns to match his sermons, and *Amazing Grace* was written to accompany a sermon for New Year's Day 1773. When Newton spoke of the amazingness of God's grace, he spoke from the heart. For this was a man who, in his youth, had been a foul-mouthed, debauched sailor; later he became a slave trader in the Atlantic Slave Trade. However, the grace of God broke through Newton's selfish, exploitative ways. Famously, it was during a violent storm off Ireland in 1748 that he cried out to God for mercy. After his survival he began his journey to faith. Through his encounter with God's grace and the call to repent and seek justice, slowly he became an abolitionist who influenced the whole anti-slavery movement. He came to understand that the one who once was lost, could be found in God's love. Newton's beloved hymn speaks beautifully into this ongoing season of Christmas. Grace holds us as we worship the Christ-Child and Jesus calls us into a fresh way of life".

If you would like to listen to the whole programme - the link is;

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001gk27>

With much love and many good wishes

Sally



Bernard cutting his birthday cake with Annie watching

Cynthia, Evelyn and Marina with Kamran

Other notices Include;

- + SERMON: Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell – *Amazing Grace*;
- + A Prayer for Women and Girls in Afghanistan;
- + WCC Christmas Message 2022;
- + Night Shelter Project – Nehar;
- + Advertisement for our new Administrator;
- + Food Bank Reminders;
- + Toddlers Club;
- + How We Are;
- + Prayers with Kamran;
- + Church Bulletin;
- + Church Rota;
- + Prayer List;
- + Links to Service

SERMON: Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell – Amazing Grace

Near the end of his life, the former slave trader John Newton said to a friend, “My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: that I am a great sinner, and Christ is a great saviour”. He had good reason to say it. John Newton had been a rebellious merchant seaman. Flogged with the cat-o-nine tails, press-ganged into the Royal Navy,

Escaped, then treated like a slave in Africa. Desperately ill. Recovered; became a slave trader himself, shamelessly bartering people for goods; lost what religious faith he had, became a Freethinker, anti-God and a notorious blasphemer. Got a job as a Merchant Navy Captain. Almost died at sea. Transported slaves across continents.

And yet after another near-death experience, he began to ‘doubt his doubts’, started to study the Bible and gradually found faith taking root. Much later on he actually became a Vicar. One of my predecessors refused to ordain him because he hadn’t been to university. There were many other reasons! And yet... I can’t remember the Archbishop’s name but haven’t forgotten John Newton. Newton wrote many essays, poems and hymns - the best-known one begins,

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.*

It was the story of his life. All that time when John Newton had let go of God, God hadn’t let go of him. Amazing.

John Newton isn’t the only one to be amazed by God’s grace. The Number One British rap artist, Stormzy, sung of his own experience with these similar words –

*I'm Blinded By Your Grace...
... ever since you found me
I'm blinded by your grace
You came and saved me...*

This is my story too. Not as dramatic. Not so much darkness. But it was God’s grace that got me, the sudden - and at the same time slowly dawning, taking a lifetime to work out - realisation that changes everything, even how you deal with your own past, that God is no longer a vague ‘something or other over the hill and far away’, but close, real, with us and for us in Jesus Christ. I’m blinded by your grace. And of course you don’t deserve it. That’s what grace means - it’s God’s generosity; God’s energy, God’s searching and redeeming love. You can’t earn it and you certainly can’t buy it. And even if you’re looking for God, which of course some people are, the deeper truth is that God is looking for you. And God won’t stop. And there’s nowhere to hide, nor sin so foul and dark that God will turn away. The poet Francis Thompson felt God was actually chasing him –

*“I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him . . .”*

God’s amazing grace isn’t just for so called bad people. But drowning you’re more likely to be on the lookout for a lifeguard.

And although being good is good, there’s also the danger that we think our goodness is enough. And it never is. There’s always something we’re hiding. And we are lost in the confusion of it all. Most of us, in fact, are a muddle. There is good and bad in us. We are lost in the confusion of it all. Either excusing ourselves, or beating ourselves up. And you can end up turning from grace, the dark shadow of your own making when you face away from the light.

The Narnia author, C S Lewis, a Cambridge professor who also wrote sophisticated science fiction, fell away from faith as a teenager, saying he was “very angry with God for not existing”. He wrote about his road back to God in his autobiography, “Surprised by Joy”. ‘Joy’ he said, is like a signpost to those lost in the woods, pointing the way . . .

I call that grace. Amazing grace. And Jesus really cares about those who are muddled and lost or dwelling in darkness.

That's why he told so many stories about it. About a shepherd and a lost sheep who contrary to all sensible conventions doesn't play a percentages game and reckon there has to be loss as well as profit, and leaves the ninety-nine to go in search of the one who is lost. About a father and a lost son; who doesn't give up on his errant children; who welcomes home the one who had squandered his inheritance and pleads with the other to join the homecoming celebrations: "This son of mine was lost," he said, "but now he is found." Amazing grace. We cannot pass over or ignore the horrors of John Newton's life, but neither should we underestimate the power of God's grace in his redemption. It is indeed amazing grace. "I once was lost", he wrote - taking those words of the Father to the wayward son and making them his own – "But now I'm found; was bound, but now I'm free". And here we are in the darkest time of the year, celebrating again the light of Christ and seeing one year turn to another. May the light and grace of Christ save us.

Jenny's walk by the cliffs at Scarborough on Christmas Day



A Prayer for Women and Girls in Afghanistan from Jenny

God who created women, men and children in your own image, hear our cry as we remember the women and girls of Afghanistan.

In the midst of strife and suffering we plead for equity, justice and mutual respect.

In the denial of human fulfilment we pray for those who can no longer work, study or contribute to the well-being of Afghan communities because of their gender. Be their light and hope.

In the face of economic collapse, we hold up the impoverished, the hungry, the overlooked and the forgotten. Be their food and stay.

Be comfort and care to those who fear because of their gender and face discrimination and humiliation. Be their peace and protection.

Give us with them the courage to tread the path of compassion and justice, to recognise that we are all one in your eyes.

As at this time we remember Mary, who bears your Son into the world, so through our solidarity with the women and girls of Afghanistan may your presence be known in hope and justice.

We pray for mutual flourishing in your image, whatever our faith, ethnicity or gender.

AMEN

WCC Christmas Message 2022 - Jenny

At the recent WCC Assembly in Karlsruhe, which reflected on the love of Christ that moves the world to reconciliation and unity, the moving and challenging question of a Muslim guest who addressed the delegates remained deep in my heart: "Is the love of Christ for Christians alone or it is also for me?"

The joyful message of the first Christmas states that the love of God in Christ is meant indeed for all people, for the whole of creation.

During the night when Jesus was born, an angel appears to shepherds who live in the fields and watch over their flock. The shepherds are frightened. The angel tells them, "do not be afraid!" and adds, "I bring you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born . . . a Saviour." Then many angels proclaim to the humble shepherds glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and goodwill toward people.

Our time is a time of fear. Some fear for the survival of future generations or the submersion of their home islands because of the climate emergency we are experiencing. Many are afraid today that they will no longer be able to feed their children tomorrow. Others are afraid that military conflicts may cause nuclear disasters. In our age of social networks, fear is leading to increasing hate speech, to a proliferation of conspiracy theories, violations of human rights, and threats to democracy.

The encouraging words of the angel – "do not be afraid!" – reflect the ancient Christian teaching that faith and love drive out fear. The angel of the first Christmas called the shepherds to have faith in the divine promise of peace on earth and God's goodwill towards humanity.

The words of the angel are addressed to you and to me today: "Do not be afraid!" The promise of the angels is addressed to you and to me today: "Peace on earth and good will toward people!" As we welcome this promise, God's Spirit makes us people of good will.

Who are people of good will? As Christians we are aware and confess that our very call and vocation as Christ's disciples is to be people of good will, agents of reconciliation, and peacemakers, living out Christ's love for the world. People of good will are also people of other faiths or people of no religion who share today in this compassionate love for their neighbours and especially for the most vulnerable, and live out in their daily lives the values of the kingdom. They are those from different ethnic backgrounds and cultures, who seek to live simply for the sake of the preservation and renewal of the whole creation. They are those who affirm today the dignity of every human being and resist the sins of Christian nationalism, racism, and xenophobia. They are our companions on the pilgrimage of justice, reconciliation, and unity.

As we welcome the beautiful message of the first Christmas, God's Spirit calls us to become agents of reconciliation in the places we live. Ours is a time of growing polarization in family life, local communities, churches, and nations; tensions that produce conflict and trauma.

At the first Christmas, God came to us in Jesus of Nazareth that we may be reconciled with God and become servants of reconciliation. With all good wishes for a blessed Christmas season, we invite you to welcome in faith and love the angels' promise of peace on earth, and to live as a pilgrim on the path to justice, reconciliation, and unity.

Night Shelter Project – Nehar

Our church will be hosting the **Night Shelter Project** every Tuesday from the 28th February - 18 April 2023. We will be hosting up to 17 homeless people who will arrive around 6.30pm. The food will be cooked and brought to our church by volunteers and served to guests by volunteers. We could do with more volunteers from our church who will be very welcome. **If any one feels called to serve the Lord in this ministry, please email me on neharbird@gmail.com**



Holy Family behind barbed wire by David Hayware

Church Administrator: Golders Green Parish Church

Golders Green Parish Church is part of the Diocese of London within the Church of England. We are a welcoming and culturally diverse Christian community in which all members feel they belong, can grow in their faith and are able to offer their gifts.

We are looking to recruit someone with an active Christian faith who is well organised, efficient and approachable.

This role enables more effective mission and ministry through provision of efficient administration and improved accessibility of the church to the local community. The post holder will be expected to work in the church office and not remotely.

The role requires someone committed to our vision who is warm, approachable, flexible, organised, and a team player and self-starter. Previous experience in administration is essential. References will be taken up on application. It is a Genuine Occupational Requirement for a practicing Christian to be appointed to the post.

Remuneration

Hours of work: 14 hours per week over two days

Salary: £12 to £14 per hour, depending on experience

Holiday entitlement: 20 days per annum, pro rata (in addition to Bank Holidays)

Applications by: 12 noon 20 January 2023

interview: 28 January 2023 11 am

Further information visit Church website:

<https://www.gg-pc.co.uk/Groups/390733/Employment.aspx> Applications by email to Rev Kamran Bhatti: kamran@gg-pc.co.uk

Toddlers Club

The Toddlers club will reopen on Tuesday 3rd January from 9.30-11.30am. It is held in church. There is a £3.00 entrance fee. For further details contact: 0 208 455 1873

How We Are

We send all those who are sick our love. Please continue to pray for all who have been unwell that they may gain in strength and good health as well as those who are grieving because of loss of a loved one.

It would be so good if you could let us know either by **WhatsApp, the newsletter, phone or email** about anyone who is not well, bereaved or would appreciate our prayers. It is so important we remember, pray for them and do not leave anyone out.

Please pray for a recovery for **Naila's** shoulder that has been causing her a lot of pain and discomfort for some time. Let us hope the medication she is now receiving will ease it.

Please pray for **David Agbim, Gideon Onwutalu and Rose Ochwada**. We hold them in our hearts that they may be filled with God's healing love.

Please continue to pray for **Alice** who is being cared for at home by **Alex**. We pray that she is surrounded by God's loving Care.

We pray as we always do for **Simon and his father Michael** and wish for strength for them and their family.

We pray for **Tony** and hope he is back with us soon.

Rota for January 2023

Date	Bible Passage	Readers	Intercessor	Refreshments	Eucharistic Minister (Chalice)	Av Desk	Service leader
08/01/23	Acts 10:34-43	Sheila	Nehar	Sally	Nwadi	Shaniv	Alexis
	Matthew 3:13-17						
15/01/23	I Corinthians 1:1-9	Dozie Chidozie Onwuama	Annie	Rose	Ezim	Elizabeth	
	John 1:29-42						
22/01/23	I Corinthians 1:10-18	Nwanneka	Alexis	Nehar	Ifeyinwe	Thomas	Nehar
	Matthew 4:12-23						
29/01/23	I Corinthians 1:18-31	Abi	Jenny	Silvia	Daniel	Tony	
	Matthew 5:1-12						
05/02/23	I Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16)	Sam	Sally	Sheila	Nehar	Onyeka	Ify

Prayers with Kamran

- ❖ from Mondays to Thursdays, Kamran will be in church at 9.00am for a short time of prayer with anyone who would like to join him. This does not have to be compulsory; you are welcome to stay home and pray for the church and the parish each day for 15-20 minutes;
- ❖ he will also be in church each day for those who would like to visit and talk with him. Please consider making an appointment to ensure that he will be available to meet with you;

Topic: Church Wardens' Personal Meeting Room

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/8585545365?pwd=em85aDF5ZmJ5ZkVlb0x0aDhY2paUT09>

Meeting ID: 858 554 5365

Passcode: J4FbKf

One tap mobile

+442034815240,,8585545365#,,,,*400416# United Kingdom

+442039017895,,8585545365#,,,,*400416# United Kingdom

Dial by your location

+44 203 481 5240 United Kingdom

+44 203 901 7895 United Kingdom
+44 208 080 6591 United Kingdom
+44 208 080 6592 United Kingdom
+44 330 088 5830 United Kingdom
+44 131 460 1196 United Kingdom
+44 203 481 5237 United Kingdom

Meeting ID: 858 554 5365

Passcode: 400416

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/j/8585545365>

Church Bulletin
The Parish Church of Golders Green
Parish Notices: 01/01/2023

Sunday Service: 10 am - After the service, Prayer ministry is available for anyone who wishes to receive prayers.

Sunday School – please continuously keep our children and team in your prayer.

The Community Coffee Morning – All welcome. Every Wednesday from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Communion Service will follow straight after.

The Toddler Group – Every Tuesday from 9.30am to 11.30am. Please join us for song, laughter, play, reading, crafts, tea & coffee, biscuits & fruit.

Prayers for the Church ministry and mission: Please pray for the Senior Circle about to start soon. The Soup Kitchen which started in July. For the ongoing Church Maintenance issues. Pray for the Church Choir, Children Ministry, The Toddler Group, and the Mission of the Church.

For your prayers: Please remember Myfanwy in your prayers as she is grieving the loss of her sister. Please continue to pray for Tony, Mike Houghton, Eunice and Naila for God's healing.

Rota for Sunday 08 Jan 23

Reader: Sheila
Hospitality: Sally
AV Desk: Shaniv

Intercession: Nehar
Eucharist Minister: Nwadi

Contact details:

Parish Priest: Revd Kamran Bhatti
Office Tel: 020 8455 1873, Website: www.gg-pc.co.uk