

NEWSLETTER

8th May 2025



Maesta by Duccio in Siena

Dear Everyone

As several of you asked if I would write up about the pilgrimage I went on, and include some of the photographs I took, I have written the article below. I had to limit the numbers of pictures and choose only those I thought would give you an idea of what we all saw. I have so many more. I do hope you find my adventure interesting as well as informative. I got more from it than I can possibly say and wished you had all been with me to experience all that it gave in so many different ways. .

Welcome to the Revd Albert Danquah who came to us from the Edgware Parish group of Churches.



It was so good to to hear his extremely stirring sermon on the book of Joshua and its link with the teaching of the New Testament. In stressing the huge leadership task of Joshua now that Moses was dead, the book of Joshua shows how Joshua's challenge to be a strong and courageous leader is fulfilled and how God fulfils God's promise to Israel. Albert emphasized that, like Joshua, we must rise up, be bold and strong. Wherever we can we must show how our leadership can make a contribution. We must blaze a trail everywhere we find ourselves, spiritually and emotionally, through whatever tasks are assigned to each of us. We must manage our resources and ourselves well. We **can** be a Joshua and we **will** make a difference. We can do this if we use what we have well. Albert asked us, "Will you rise up and do what God asks? Be Bold and courageous so **You can be a Joshua**". At this particular time Albert's challenge is so apt. I wonder how each of us can fulfil this challenge.

Raising funds for the Winter Night Shelter: On Saturday 10 May, we will be joining in a sponsored walk between some of the venues that support us across Barnet. Help us to raise funds for the Winter Night Shelter – a vital resource for those experiencing homelessness during the colder months.

Ifey and Florence will be running on behalf of our church and we would be grateful if you could sponsor them. Please get involved and get information on Sunday from Nehar. Thank you.



Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM): Just to remind you that the date for the APCM is this **Sunday 11th May after the Service**. It is not too late to make sure you get a form from Alexis or from the table at the side of the church so you can be on our Electoral Role or. ring Tracey at 020 8455 1873 or email her on, tracey@gg-pc.co.uk .

Bernard Bwanaop: We were so sorry to hear that Bernard has had to return for good to Malawi at short notice. Being in the diplomatic service he was only here for a given length of time, which was extended because of Annie's illness and death. He was so sorry not to be able to say goodbye to us, but I am sure we will send him a message of our love and appreciation of all he and his family brought to our church family. This means, of course that Cairo has had to return with him. She will certainly be missed by the Sunday School and ourselves as she was such a bright and articulate young girl, always so keen to let us know what she had been learning. We will miss them very much and hope they settle back well in Malawi.

Oke: Just to remind you, that during the service this Sunday, there will be a short memorial to Oke who died last year. His relatives are joining us to pay their appreciation to him, as we will, and give thanks for all he brought to us as a member of our church family.

Christian Aid turns 80 this year! This coming week, starting on Sunday 11th May, is Christian Aid Week, when we are asked to support their work by donating what we can for everything they do cross the world for people in in greatest need. Jenny has written an article (below). Please support them especially on their 80th anniversary.

Wednesday Morning Coffee: from 10.30am-12noon; coffee, cake and a chat. Afterwards there is communion at 12noon. We have started, under the watchful eye of Ifey, some gentle exercises to keep us fit and flexible. Do come and join in – exercises first – followed by cake and coffee!

Listening and Learning, Bible Study: This date of this next session will be put on the WhatsApp.

Toddler Group: Toddler group has started after the Easter Holidays. If anyone would like to help our volunteers, please talk to Kamran or Ifey.

With love, good wishes – Sally

Peace Pilgrimage to Assisi, Siena and Florence



I had an unforgettable pilgrimage, with a really great group of people, following the life and footsteps of St Francis across the places where he developed his ministry. We saw the richest of art created by such famous artists as Duccio, who changed the face of art in the 14th century and from then on how religious works were portrayed 800 years ago, so powerful in its imagery, realism, beauty and often humour. We visited churches and Cathedrals, picturesque towns with steep and winding streets, that were certainly a challenge, and stayed in stunning countryside. I can only put a small selection of pictures in this newsletter but I hope you get the feeling of what it was like.

Twenty-seven of us traveled together on our Peace Pilgrimage. Many of us were Companions of the Nazareth Community whose base is at St Martin-in-the-Fields, who were joined by others who came together as a good group of friends. We started at Assisi, staying in, Monastero San Giuseppe, located in the old town. We were there for three days being well looked after by the nuns. We walked through the winding streets with many steps. I was very glad I had brought my stick and had the willing arms of companions to help me climb the steep paths of which there were many everywhere!



We visited the site of St Francis's home which is now a church with a statue of his parents standing outside.



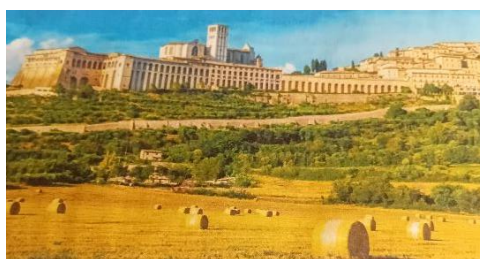
It was here St Francis, after deciding he wanted to become a monk took a vow of poverty. He gave away all his clothes and goods, much to his wealthy father's rage. He is said to have stripped all his clothes off in front of his parents. A bishop visiting the home wrapped him round in his cloak. His enraged father shut him away in the house to prevent him from achieving his aim and was only let out by the pleas of his mother. We walked to the Basilica of St Clare, where her bones lie. It is here that the famous Byzantine Crucifix hangs

which is said by tradition to have spoken to St Francis at the church of St Damiano, telling him “to build his church”.



It is said that St Francis thought God was telling him to re-build the ruined church but then realized God meant him to build up the whole Church of the people.

We then went on to the stunning Basilica of St Francis of Assisi which is listed as a world Heritage site; one upper and one lower basilica.



In the lower Basilica the body of St Francis was secretly transferred to the crypt in 1230. It was here that we had a guided tour by a Franciscan friar who talked us through the three Franciscan virtues of Poverty, Obedience and Chastity. These stunning frescoes were painted on the ceiling by Giotto (although art scholars still dispute this- but dispute they may, what we saw was totally stunning- a work of genius). The Friar, who came from Kenya, took us through the story of St Francis through the depictions of the three virtues portrayed in the ceiling art. He had the gift of storytelling and great knowledge of the frescoes that, not only held us spellbound, but made us see the symbolism and depth of the art that we wouldn't have seen if we had just looked up at them and admired them. We were not allowed to take photographs inside the Basilica, but every inch was covered with paintings of his life and were of great beauty, colour and skill.

The Hermitage of Carcaeri

The next day we went to The Hermitage of Carcaeri, developed round a grotto where St Francis used to retreat to pray. This was a challenge for some of us as it was high up in the hills, round twisting roads, in stunning, wooded countryside. Our guide had pity on those of us who were challenged by walking and arranged for a taxi, while others went by foot. Throughout the pilgrimage I was eternally grateful to those who lent me their arms so I could get to see these precious sites. The hermitage was hewn out of rocks and had narrow internal passages leading to rooms where the monks ate, slept and prayed. We were moved when we saw St Francis's narrow stone bed- how hard and cold it must have been. What a memorable place this was of deep spirituality, peace and witness, kept alive by Franciscan monks who still live there. We were intending to celebrate the Eucharist in the open air but the heavens opened and we were soaked. We held a service of prayer and intercession in one of the chapels instead. Returning, in the evening we had an address on Peace by Sam Wells, Vicar of St Martin-in the-Field's, who was one of the leaders of the pilgrimage. Jolley Gosnold, another of our leaders took compile each evening and looked after us with such patience and care.



Gubbio

After breakfast, the next day, we drove to the historical town of Gubbio, where there was much to explore. Gubbio, a once prosperous town whose wares supplied many Italian cities and beyond, thrived, we were told, until Christopher Columbus “discovered” America and changed all the trade routes which took trade away from the town. It was in Gubbio that legend told, St Francis was said to have calmed a vicious wolf who was terrorising the townspeople and killing the children. They pleaded with him to come and help them. Because he had a great love of animals and birds who responded to him, he went to the town and tamed the wolf who was no longer a problem to them. (Needless to say, this is one story about St Francis my classes of children loved to hear and did not forget what they had learned about him- bloodthirsty or what?!). The medieval alleyways and the Palazzo del Podesta by the Cathedral and Ducal Palace were stunning. There were processions of drummers in mediaeval costumes marching round the Palazzo and much bell ringing took place as it was a festival weekend. Our ears were ringing with it all.



Siena

We left Assisi to go on to Siena. What a glorious city, with great architecture, history, art, and culture. We were taken to the Duomo (Cathedral) and Opera del Duoma Museum where the magnificent alter-piece by Duccio is kept (See top of the newsletter). It is a double-sided altar piece that was painted by 1308 and 1311 for the cathedral. We sat and gazed at it for ages in awe of its beauty and the skill of Duccio in creating such a marvelous work of art. No photograph can do it justice.



Siena is another UNESCO World Heritage Site. In the centre is the huge and intricately carved Cathedral towering over the Piazza del Duomo, a square that is great to sit in, drink coffee, as I did when I took a day off, and enjoy the people walking around and bask in the sun. Every year a huge horse race is held in the Square with Black and White horses racing against each other. The rules are too complicated to explain but the event draws large numbers and everyone has a great time. The Cathedral is quite extraordinary, (I

thought) with an ornate exterior with many carvings and black and white pillars. But inside, the huge pillars looked to me like stripes of liquorice and gave it a dark interior. The cathedral was built as a dedication to the Virgin Mary. Two columns there represent the two brothers, Romulus and Remus, who were, like Rome, the founders of the city; which is why several columns can be seen in the squares showing the wolf nurturing Romulus and Remus. There is so much of great artistry to see, including marble carvings by Michelangelo and a huge stunningly carved pulpit sculpted by Nicola Pisano. Most of the famous artists of the time have their art adorned in this Cathedral. It is truly rich in beauty with the genius of Donatello, Michelangelo, and Bernini to be seen. There was so much to take in. I loved Siena, and want to go back for a more leisurely look at everything. One interesting fact was, the 14th century city elders had planned an added construction to the cathedral to make it even bigger, The story is that they were vying in greatness with Florence, but, the Black Death arrived and put a stop to the expansion. You can still see the original construction where the Cathedral would have been extended.

Florence

I didn't go on the official tour of Florence as, like one or two others, I wanted to spend a day on my own in Siena thinking about all the amazing things I had seen and getting my head round them. I was more and more amazed at the thought that one man, St Francis, whose life had been completely changed by hearing the message of God; the teaching and life of Jesus, had had such a profound effect on so many aspects of creativity and released them into the world. A man who, among others, had been the inspiration for the resurgence of such art, buildings, the release of genius in so many artists of different types; as well as the creation of an order of male and female Franciscans who had affected people's lives down the centuries to the present day. I also thought of St Clare, who had been overshadowed in so many ways by St Francis, who too had formed an order of the poor Clare's and had achieved so much in her life. I did get to Florence on the last day when we went to the Convent of San Marco where Cosimo de Medici had commissioned Fra Angelico to decorate the walls with frescos showing episodes of Christ's life. It is hard to convey the sheer inspiration and beauty of what we saw. Each monk at that time was allocated a cell containing one fresco that he was to meditate on. The sheer creativity and detail of each one was stunning. Many of them, you will know, are copied now as Christmas cards and cards for Christian feasts. One, the Annunciation, is one of the most famous, another is a representation of the Last Supper which is at the entrance of the convent and, to our surprise, is the only fresco we have seen with a cat painted in it sitting by the table. I would love to show all of them but practicality makes it impossible. Below are examples of some. Each one is on the wall of its own cell. Can you imagine having a bedroom with your own Giotto painting on?!





We flew home with our heads full of such beauty, artistry and history showing what deep faith looks like and the many ways it can be conveyed. It is still hard to take it all in. We prayed together, explored many places of richness and colour and made links with the faith shown by the people of centuries ago that had meaning for us in our time 800 years later. We reflected on what we saw, often stunned by the great artists, sculptors and builders of the time and, most importantly, made very good friends. We were led and guided with great care by our leaders with their patience and support for us all for whom we were so grateful. Thank you to them. I would dearly like to go back and have more time to reflect on what I experienced, and, wonder at the sheer brilliance of human beings in all their God-given creativity who conveyed their faith down through the centuries for us to mediate upon in our own.

Hope you enjoy my reflections on this amazing pilgrimage - Love Sally

Christian Aid Week – Jenny

Christian Aid turns 80 this year! That is 80 years of fighting poverty and injustice, 80 years of offering hope to communities who need it most, of seeing poverty as an outrage against humanity that robs people of dignity, freedom and hope, of the ability to make choices about their own lives.

One of the main ways it raises funds for this vital work is Christian Aid Week, which begins next Sunday, 11 May. It's one of the biggest acts of Christian witness in the British Isles, which began as a small local event in 1957 and is now a national movement mobilising churches to take action in the fight against poverty and help bring hope to communities in crisis. That hope has never been so desperately needed!

This is Amelia, a farmer in Guatemala where the climate crisis is drying up rivers and killing precious crops.



She relies on the land to feed her eight-year-old son, Lázaro, and four-year-old daughter, Yakelin. Amelia says: **'I worry about what my children will eat.'** The cruel injustice is that Indigenous communities like Amelia's have done the least to cause the climate crisis, yet they endure its impact the most. As their farms are devastated, the search for solutions becomes critical: **'With high heat, there is little we can do but adapt.'**

Amelia's hopeful that she can combat extreme weather by changing the way she farms. With specialist training from Christian Aid's partner, Congcoop, Amelia's planting resilient crops, conserving water and making fertiliser. She's also a leader in her community, sharing her knowledge with other households, so

that one day, no family will worry about their children going without food. This is the unstoppable power of Amelia's hope in action.

If you'd like to bring hope to communities like Amelia's and help Christian Aid continue to respond to emerging crises and fight poverty around the world you can give online here: <https://give.christianaid.org.uk/donate/CAM-009429> or call 0207 523 2493. Alternatively, I'll be in church on 25th May and will be happy to receive donations then which I'll take into Christian Aid's office that week.

Thank you very much.

Jenny Brown

PS: If you'd like to know more about the first 80 years of this amazing organisation you can find a super overview here: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/our-work/about-us/our-histor>

How We Are

As always, we send our love and prayers to all those who are sick. Please continue to pray for them that they gain in strength and good health; that God's healing hands may be upon them. Pray also for those who are grieving because of the loss of a loved one.

Please continue to pray for Keith, Sheila and Myfanwy and her former carer, Janet, who is seriously ill in hospital.

We pray for Anita Houghton, Chuba Agbim, Eunice Adiele, Gideon Onwutalu, Sir Edmund Onochie, Rose Ochwada, and Sheila Grodzinsky.

We hold all the above in our hearts that they may be filled with God's healing love.

Please continue to let us know of family members and friends who are sick and would welcome our prayers, either by WhatsApp, email, Kamran@gg-pc.co.uk or by phone, 020 8455 1873

Topic: Church Wardens' Personal Meeting Room

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/8585545365?pwd=em85aDF5ZmJ5ZkVlb0x0DaDhY2paUT09>

Meeting ID: 858 554 5365

Passcode: J4FbKf

Reader:

Intercession:

Hospitality:

Eucharist Minister:

AV Desk:

Contact details:

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

GGPC Rota May – June 2025

Date	Bible Passage	Reader	Intercessor	Refreshments	Eucharistic Minister	AV Desk	Duty Manager	Service leader
11/05/25	Luke 1:67-79	Dozie	Tony	Naila	Daniel/Ezim	Ruth	Synthia	
18/05/25	2 Thessalonians 3:1-4	Keith	Simon	Nora	Nehar/Nwadi	Onyeka	Shaniv	Alexis
25/05/25 Bring & Share	1 Samuel 17: 32-37	Cynthia	Rose	Cynthia/Chinwe	Tim/Naila	Shaniv	Chinwe	
01/06/25	1 King 8: 46-51	Abi	Nwadi	Bilan	Ifeyinwe/Onyeka	Daniel	Florence	Jenny
08/06/25	TBC	Guy	Jenny	Naila	Nehar/Nwadi	Dozie	Shaniv	
15/06/25	TBC	Nwenna ka	Nehar	Nora	Daniel/Ezim	Ruth	Synthia	Nehar
22/06/25	TBC	Sim			Sally/			
29/06/25 Bring & Share	TBC	Andrew	Alexis	Cynthia/Chinwe	Tim/Naila	Onyeka	Chinwe	Alexis
06/07/25	TBC	Elizbeth	Kai		Ifeyinwe/Onyeka	Shaniv	Tim	
13/07/25	TBC	Sohail	Nwando	Bilan	Nehar/Nwadi	Daniel	Florence	Jenny