

NEWSLETTER

23rd May 2025



*An Image of the Black Madonna and Child
by Filipino artist Henry*

Dear Everyone - Greetings.

When I wrote a piece for the APCM on how the newsletter started in 2020, I outlined one of the main objectives was that it should be a voice for members of our church family to write about your interests, remembrances of your lives, say what your favourite poems or books were, give your opinions, or anything that interested you and would interest others. Sometimes that happens and I am very grateful to those of you who have done so. I was especially pleased last week, to read on WhatsApp, Marlies's description of the Cathedral Church of Christ, Marina, Lagos, that is such an important part of her life and, I guess, a number of yours too. It was exactly the kind of thing I had been hoping for; a recollection to share with each other about what is important to us. Marlies, of course gave permission for it to be put in the newsletter. This brought forth a great deal of favourable comment on our WhatsApp. A response from Ifey, spoke for all of you when she said, "♥ this piece of history! It shows our deep root in Christian/Anglican faith. It is indeed a symbol of our spirituality, identity and continuity in the ministry of Christ and His values. This journey didn't just start yesterday and isn't going to end today either. Thank you for sharing. Loved it." And thank you Marlies from me too. If anyone else would like to say something about their favourite places, festivals, family moments, I would be more than grateful to receive them. Do let me know. The article is below.

Sheila's Funeral Date: The following message is from Sacha, Sheila's son.

"We are writing to let you know that the Cremation for Sheila Mary Grodzinski will take place at

**Golders Green Crematorium, 62 Hoop Lane, NW11 7NL
at 12:00 Noon, on Tuesday 27th May 2025.**

The family would like you to view this as a celebration of a life lived fully, so please wear bright colours. Family Flowers only. Donations, if you wish, to either: Homeless Action in Barnet or North London Hospice. Account name: North London Hospice Account number: 10702609 Sort Code: 20-36-32 Reference: IMO Sheila Grodzinski.

If you are unable to join us, then we have arranged for a webcast - access details available upon request".

Wednesday Morning Coffee: As usual our coffee morning is from 10.30am-12noon; coffee, cake and a chat. Afterwards there is communion at 12noon. Do come and join in.



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

Toddler Group: The Toddler group has started after the Easter Holidays. If anyone would like to help our volunteers please talk to Kamran or Ifey. Thank you for those who help with it; the support you give is much appreciated.

Day Outing to St Alban's: Please sign up for the Annual Pilgrimage to St Albans Cathedral. This will take place on Saturday 21st June. **Kamran and Tracey need to know by 8th june for a place** to be booked on the coach. There will be a list on the far table of the church for you to enter your name.



Ascension Day: The Service will take place at **6.30pm on Thursday 29th May**. There will be paper on the table at the side of the church for you to put down your favourite hymns/songs to be incorporated into the Service.

Friendship: What is it? Exclusively Church? National, Cultural, Individual or Selective? As a church we have spent many years stressing the importance of being together and welcoming each other in friendship into our richly diverse community; valuing each of us with our differences and similarities and learning about the work we do, the lives we live and our different cultures which we learn about, and from, each other. All this broadens and enriches our lives. It was therefore disconcerting last week to hear the Prime Minister making a speech in which he used language that intimated that migrants are making the UK an "Island of strangers" and the numbers of those who work in "cheap labour" jobs are contributing towards this and need to be restricted. We know that without all those that work in our hospitals, care homes, homes of the sick, hospices, schools and so many other areas, are the lowest paid carrying out jobs that are not easily filled and with long hours. Without those who do them all these institutions and many others would not be able to carry on. Apart from demeaning the work, and the people who do it, it is needs to be recognized that this is skilled work of patience and care. Devaluing what people do and the skills they/we have is unacceptable. It was, therefore, encouraging to see a letter from more than 20 senior faith leaders from across the UK's Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities who have united to sign an open letter, urging the Prime Minister to rethink the Government's recent rhetoric around migration and the unfortunate language used, but also the encouragement it gave to those who are hostile to anyone different to themselves, You can read the

letter here: <https://ipit.uk/faith-leaders-urge-rethink-on-pms-migration-narrative> . Below are two particular responses from different perspectives you might like to read.

The Rt Revd Dr Francis-Dehqani's Response: Below is part of the speech in the House of Lords given by the Bishop of Chelmsford, The Rt Revd Dr Francis-Dehqani. Bishop Guli is herself a refugee who fled from Iran with her family after the murder of her brother and the attempted assassination of her father. She took the Prime Minister to task for his "island of strangers" immigration speech. Please read it and see what you think. She always speaks from the heart as well as experience.

"A Country of Strangers": Poem by Michael Rosen:

Following on from bishop Guli's speech, is a poem written by Michael Rosen, a very well-known poet who frequently writes and broadcasts. Michael is especially well-known and loved in schools by many children, young people, and their teachers, with whom he empathises strongly, whose feelings he knows well. His poetic response to the Prime Minister's comment, that we were in danger of becoming a "Country of Strangers". says it all, especially from his traumatic experience of losing his son from meningitis at 18 years old and, later, almost dying himself of Covid19 and the NHS staff who saved him. His poem has caught the imagination of many who are made to feel unwelcome and undervalued in the country where they had given so much of their lives working in areas of greatest need - and shortage - in hospitals, care homes, homes of the sick, hospices, schools and others. What do you feel about what he has written and the experiences we have all had in many of these areas? Do you empathise with what Michael says?

Pope Leo XIV: I think we all, whatever denomination we belong to, have cause to welcome the appointment of Pope Leo especially when his first words were about the importance of Peace and Unity. In his address at an audience for the ecumenical and interfaith guests who attended his inauguration mass: he said, "Unity has always been a constant concern of mine, as witnessed by the motto I chose for my episcopal ministry: how we too, although we are many, "in the One — that is Christ — we are one" (Enarr. in Ps., 127, 3). What is more, our communion is realised to the extent that we meet in the Lord Jesus. The more faithful and obedient we are to him, the more united we are among ourselves. We Christians, then, are all called to pray and work together to reach this goal, step by step, which is and remains the work of the Holy Spirit. *Reported by Bishop David Hamid - former Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese of Europe*



Leo P.P. XIV

With love and many good wishes – Sally



The Cathedral Church of Christ, Marina, Lagos, stands as a majestic edifice and spiritual landmark on Lagos Island, bearing testimony to the deep roots of Anglicanism in Nigeria. Beyond its soaring architecture, the Cathedral holds a unique place in Nigerian religious and colonial history.

The origins of the Cathedral date back to the mid-19th century, with the foundation stone of the first church building laid on March 29, 1867. Just two years later, in 1869, the church was formally established, marking it as one of the earliest Christian cathedrals in West Africa.

As the years progressed and the congregation expanded, plans were drawn up for a grander structure to reflect the growing importance of the Anglican Communion in Nigeria. The current building, designed by architect Bagan Benjamin, began to take shape on November 1, 1924. The new chapter of its construction was ceremonially inaugurated when the Prince of Wales, who would later become King Edward VIII, laid the foundation stone on April 21, 1925.

It would take over two decades for the architectural vision to be fully realised, with construction finally completed in 1946. Built in the Gothic Revival style, the Cathedral stands as a masterful blend of colonial influence and African spiritual heritage.

Among its most wonderful historical elements is its connection to Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the first African bishop in the Anglican Church and a heroic figure in Nigerian ecclesiastical history. Crowther rose to prominence as a scholar, clergyman, and translator of the Holy Bible into Yoruba.

In 1976, his remains were transferred to the Cathedral from Ajele Cemetery, which had been closed by the Lagos State Government. Today, a cenotaph within the Cathedral grounds stands as a solemn tribute to his life, faith, and enduring legacy.

The Cathedral Church of Christ, Marina, is not only a house of worship but also a symbol of spirituality, identity, and continuity. Its steeples and stones echo with the voices of generations past and present, offering a sanctuary of reflection amid the ever-changing tempo of Lagos.

hashtag#HistoryVille

Sent via BT



Migrants are not 'strangers' but Friends – Bishop Guli Francis-Dehqani

Bishop Guli said, "In the churches and different communities I am a part of, we are not an 'island of strangers'. Migrants are not 'strangers' but friends who fully participate and contribute as we worship, serve, and live life together. The vast majority have applied through official routes to come here to the UK to live, work, and study, and their contributions go far beyond a simple binary GDP evaluation."

"Political leaders must acknowledge that words matter because they influence how people perceive and treat vulnerable people. It can never be acceptable to dehumanize migrants as if they are not deserving of dignity, compassion, and rights." "The Christian faith enjoys a rich scriptural tradition to help us understand how God views the 'stranger', in turn, therefore, modelling how we should do likewise. The divine pattern is clear in its inclusivity: the foreigner and outsider must be treated as equal, welcomed with love and accepted as neighbour." *(Taken with permission from the Church Times)*



"A Country of Strangers" Michael Rosen

Michael wrote this poem because of the experience he had when he caught Covid 19 so badly it was thought he would not survive. He was put in a coma in intensive care which lasted for 40 days, and when he came round he had to stay for another 7 days; 47 days in all. He was so frail he had to be cared for in hospital and later at home, with much devotion and skill to get his strength and health back. He was moved to write the poem as a result of the Prime Minister's comment about this country being an "Island of Strangers". I hope it resonates with all of us who have benefitted from the NHS, and those who come from many countries, who work in it and keep it going for all our benefit. Thank you to all of you. Remember you are no strangers but our friends in our church family and beyond. We remember that we are all one in the Body of Christ, that God saw what God had created and it was Good – and - don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

I lay in bed

hardly able to breathe
but there were people to sedate me,
pump air into me
calm me down when I thrashed around
hold my hand and reassure me
play me songs my family sent in
turn me over to help my lungs
shave me, wash me, feed me
check my medication
perform the tracheostomy
people on this "island of strangers"
from China, Jamaica, Brazil, Ireland
India, USA, Nigeria and Greece.

I sat on the edge of my bed
and four people came with
a frame and supported me
or took me to a gym

where they taught me how
to walk between parallel bars
or kick a balloon
sat me in a wheelchair
taught me how to use the exercise bike
how to walk with a stick
how to walk without a stick
people on this "island of strangers"
from China, Jamaica, Brazil, Ireland
India, USA, Nigeria and Greece.

If ever you're in need as I was
may you have an island of strangers
like I had.



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. We remember and pray for Sheila Grodzinsky's husband, Peter, and her children Sacha and Natasha and her grandchildren. May she rest in peace.

Please continue to pray for Keith, and for Myfanwy who is back home from hospital in hospital. We pray for Anita Houghton, Chuba Agbim, Eunice Adiele, Gideon Onwutalu, Sir Edmund Onochie, Rose Ochwada.

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

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

Date	Bible Passage	Readers	Intercessor	Refreshments	Eucharistic Minister	AV Desk	Duty Managers	Service leader
04/05/25	Joshua 1:1-6	Sohail	Nwando	Bilan	Nehar/ Nwadi	Daniel	Florence	
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	Chinwe	Alexis
25/05/25	1 Samuel 17: 32-37	Cynthia	Rose	Cynthia/Chinwe	Tim/Naila	Shaniv	Shaniv	
Bring & Share								
01/06/25	1 King 8: 46-51	Abi	Nwadi	Florence	Ifeyinwe/Onyeka	Daniel	Sohail	Jenny
08/06/25	TBC	Guy	Jenny	Christina	Nehar/ Nwadi	Dozie	Ruth	
15/06/25	TBC	Nwennaka	Nehar	Bilan	Daniel/Ezim	Ruth	Tim	Nehar
22/06/25	TBC	Sim	Alexis	Naila	Sally/Tony	Onyeka	Alaiza	
29/06/25	TBC	Andrew	Kai	Cynthia/Chinwe	Tim/Naila	Shaniv	Florence	Alexis
Bring & Share								
06/07/25	TBC	Elizabeth	Nwando	Nora	Ifeyinwe/Onyeka	Daniel	Synthia	
13/07/25	TBC	Sohail	Tony	Bilan	Nehar/ Nwadi	Ruth	Shaniv	Jenny