

NEWSLETTER

5th February 2026



Dear Everyone - Greetings to you all

Lent: Ash Wednesday is the start of Lent which is the beginning for all Christians of their preparation for Easter. We will be holding a service in church at 7.00pm, Wednesday 18th February, to which everyone is invited. Lent is an important time in all Churches when Christians come together to pray and meditate on Christ's journey to the Cross and his Resurrection. It lasts for 40 days during which Christians reflect on Christ's sacrifice, by fasting in some way, as he did in the wilderness, reflecting on their spiritual well-being by, for example, studying the bible, independently or together in more depth, reading books that support their spiritual and personal development, or, by increasing alms giving. Practices vary for each person but it is important to note this time by taking up something that will bring us closer to Christ.

Lent Reading: If you are interested in reading a book, that will help you reflect and question yourself spiritually and personally, I have listed several books below that you may be interested in. They are written by noted and recommended authors, who will take you deeply into thought, asking questions and bring greater awareness. I have listed a selection below for your interest. If you have any books you would like to recommend too, please let me know and I will keep adding add them to the list. I have an extensive library at home including copies of the books I have read and recommended. If there is one you might like to borrow please ask me.

Candlemas: Monday 2nd February was the Feast of Candlemas when most churches process with lit candles symbolizing Jesus as "The Light of the World". This arose out of the time, when Jesus was presented at the Temple by Mary and Joseph for circumcision as the law demanded. On entering the Temple, they were seen by Anna and Simeon, two faithful elderly people who had been waiting all of their lives for Jesus the Messiah. When he came they saw and knew him. We are told, Simeon took the babe in his arms and said, what we call The Nunc Dimittis that is said at Evensong in churches each day. "Lord now let your servant depart in peace for my eyes have seen my salvation" (Luke 2:29-32). Anna and Simeon knew they had before them the, "Light of the World". Mary, having heard this, says the famous words, "And Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart".

Birthday Celebration: On Sunday we celebrated the birthday of Parisima by offering a prayer for her well-being, now and in the future, and by singing Happy Birthday. We enjoyed a delicious cream birthday cake that Parisima provided for us. Thank you.



Sunday School Feedback: Every Sunday at the end of the Service our young people feedback to us what they have learned from their lessons with Ifey and Modupe. They call it, “Kids Message to Church”. They are so clear and confident and we learn a lot too. Last Sunday They had been looking at the Prophet Micah and his message, learning that we should, “Do Justice, Love Kindness and Walk Humbly with God”.

This is what they said:

Nwanneka: “We learnt about what God requires of us by looking at the Prophet Micah. Micah brought a message to a people who were being selfish, misleading the poor, even though they think they are religious and righteous. The people replied sarcastically to them about what God wants. God replied, He wants us to do justice, love one another, show kindness and walk humbly with God”

Sam: “God created us and this planet so we can live on it as God wants us to. By doing Justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with God”

Theo: “God wants us to be kind, humble and just”

Andrew: “Faith without action is no good”



Good News from Nwanneka:



“I have some good news to share. On Friday I got elected by teachers in years 3 and 4 to be a Junior Librarian. Being a junior librarian means that I can work in my school’s new library, give recommendations to others and make others love reading. On top of that, on Wednesday, me and a few others will get to meet special famous authors. I will also be on TV and in newspapers, so please look out for me. Thank you for listening to me”.

Congratulations to Nwanneka for her good news. She, with two of her class friends and staff, met Queen Camilla who visited her School and saw the new library. They appeared on ITV news at 6.00pm on Wednesday.

Intercessions: Jenny’s prayers on Sunday were based on the South African concept of “**Ubuntu**”. This concept includes the principle human virtues of practicing compassion, forgiveness, mercy, pardon, reconciliation and grace. Ubuntu was the underpinning of the 2008 Lambeth Conference held at Canterbury in an attempt to bring together the differing factions of the World-wide Anglican Church.

Jenny’s intercessions are printed below and, as with all our intercessions, they are helpful for us to guide our daily prayers.

Racial Justice Sunday: This coming Sunday is an important day in the calendar of the Church, particularly at this time when there is so much divisiveness in our society. The Rt Revd Rosemarie Mallett, Bishop of Croydon, a sociologist, and leading advocate for racial justice and Church inclusivity, has written the piece which is at the end of this newsletter. In it she calls us back to our shared identity in Christ amidst a world fractured by racism. Drawing on Galatians and Dr King’s legacy, she urges persistent, hope-filled action for justice rooted in grace. She challenges us to reject divisiveness and embrace the truth that racial justice is God’s justice.



Reminder - World Day of Prayer: Please put this date in your diaries. The annual “World Day of Prayer” is taking place on, **Friday 6th March at 2.00pm in our church, Golders Green**. This year the service is compiled by the women of Nigeria and it couldn’t be held in a better venue. The World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice. The theme is, “I Will Give You Rest”. The 2026 materials bring us a powerful invitation drawn from Matthew 11:28-30. At a time when people worldwide are carrying heavy burdens, our Nigerian sisters offer profound insights into finding rest in God. **Rose is our committee member** for this service and invites you all to come and take part.



Listening and Learning, Bible Study: The date of the next session is Thursday 5th February.

Coffee: As usual our coffee morning is from 10.30am-12noon. Do come and enjoy coffee, cake and a chat.

Toddler Group: The Toddler group has resumed after their Christmas holidays. **We badly need more helpers for this group.** If you are willing to give some time to help between 9.30 and 11.30am on Tuesdays, please contact Kamran. (Kamran@gg-pc.co.uk)

Proposed Adult Gambling Centre in North End Road: Thank you to all of you who responded to the points that were made against the proposal to have an “Adult Gambling Centre”, in North End Road, a few steps away from our church. The letter containing our objections has gone to our Member of Parliament, Sarah Sackman, the two Councillors who asked if the church could help oppose it and, to the Planning Consultation Team who make the final decision.

With love and good wishes- Sally



Intercessions 1 February 2026 - Jenny

“I’m basing our prayers this morning on the Southern African concept of **Ubuntu**. It’s a Zulu word which describes how ‘my humanity is dependent on yours’. ...‘I am because we are’. We are created for relationships, with our fellow human beings, with the rest of creation. ...Ubuntu speaks of generosity, hospitality, compassion, caring, sharing. ... It sees people as more important than material possessions or profits. Our value is not dependent on status, race, beliefs, gender, or achievement. ... We matter because we are made in the image of God. We belong in God’s family.*

The words that follow are based in part on a litany written by Archbishop Desmond Tutu**. Please use it as your own prayer, reflection, lament.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Our God, our God, why have you forsaken us?

My God, our God,

When will we ever learn, when will they ever learn?

Oh when will we ever learn that you intended us for

Shalom, for wholeness, for peace,

For fellowship, for togetherness, for neighborhood,

For siblinghood, for family?

When will we ever learn that you created us

As your children

As members of one family

Your family

The human family –

Created us for linking arms

To express our common humanity

God, I am filled
 With anguish and puzzlement.
 Why, oh God, is there so much
 Suffering, such needless suffering?
 Everywhere we look there is pain
 And suffering.

Why must your people in Iran, in Sudan and South Sudan, in Nigeria, in Myanmar, in Ukraine and Russia, in Palestine and Israel, in so many other places that are on our hearts, why must they suffer so much?

Why must there be so much killing,
 So much death and destruction,
 So much bloodshed, so much suffering,
 So much oppression, and injustice, and poverty and hunger?

O God, my God, our God,
 Please is there some explanation
 For what is happening in these places
 Can you tell me please why
 Should your people suffer so?

I don't understand, oh God, my God, our God,
 Why, oh why, must there be so much
 Pain and suffering in your creation so very good and beautiful?

I am dumbfounded
 I am bewildered
 And in agony –

This is the world
 You loved so much that for it
 You gave your only Son
 To hang from the cross, done to death
 Love nearly overwhelmed by hate
 Light nearly extinguished by darkness
 Life nearly destroyed by death –
 But not quite –

For love vanquished hate
 For life overcame death, there –
 Light overwhelmed darkness, there –
 And we can live with hope.

And so we pray for ubuntu between the people of Gaza and the Occupied West Bank and the people of Israel; between the people of Iran and their leaders; between the people of Ukraine and President Putin;

We pray ubuntu for the people of Venezuela and the people of Greenland and for President Trump; we also pray ubuntu for refugees and asylum-seekers everywhere, whatever their needs and their reasons for seeking sanctuary, and for those leaders and authorities, including our own, who have the power to help them.

As we do this, God, through your Spirit lead us all to Ubuntu. Amen

In this week in which Dame Sarah Mullally was confirmed as the new Archbishop of Canterbury, it's good to pray for her as she takes on such a huge and challenging set of responsibilities. Holy Spirit, will you bless her with wisdom, discernment, compassion, pastoral sensitivity and courage, so that in every aspect of her role she models Jesus. We know that sections of the Church of England and the global Anglican Communion opposed her appointment and we pray that you will help her to deal graciously with the hostility and to stay confident in your calling. May she bring ubuntu to the whole Anglican church, here and around the world.

And we pray now for people known to us who need to know God's peace, because of abuse, stress, fear, guilt, mental or physical illness, financial worries, relationship breakdown, bereavement, redundancy – we can bring all of those issues and absolutely anything else to God, confident that nothing can shock him or make him turn away from us, but that he loves each of us more than we can possibly imagine.

..... a moment of silence when we can each pray silently for people we know.....

God our provider and healer, we hold before you everyone we've just prayed for. May they know your loving presence surrounding and accompanying them.

We end with more words from Desmond Tutu:

In the Eucharist as we offer the bread
That bread is all the bewilderment, the anguish, the blood, the pain, the injustice
The poverty, the hate, the anger, the fear, the death, the war, the bombs.....
And we offer it all together with the perfect all self-sufficient sacrifice
Of the Lamb without blemish
For peace, for transfiguration, for compassion
For civilians, for soldiers, for peace, for politicians, for family, togetherness

Oh my God, our God, oh my Father,
When will we ever learn
When will they ever learn?

**Adapted from God Is Not a Christian by Archbishop Desmond Tutu (2011, HarperOne)*

***The words I'm using are in part based on a litany written by Archbishop Desmond Tutu published in An African Prayer Book (1995, Random House Inc) and adapted for use by Metropolitan Community Churches:*

<https://share.google/C35RtFAml1n2gtwsc>

Suggested Books for Lent



Bewilderment: A Spiritual Guide by Robert Atwell former Bishop of Exeter – Canterbury Press

How we Learn to be Brave: Decisive Moments in Life and Faith by Mariann Edgar Budde Episcopal Bishop of Washington – AuthenticMedia.co.uk

I Julian by Claire Gilbert – Hodder and Stouton

Journalling the Psalms by Paula Gooder – Eden Christian Book Specialists

Listening to the Music of the Soul by Bishop Guli Franci-Dehqani – SPCK publishing

Women of Holy Week: An Easter journey in nine stories by Paula Gooder – Church House Publishing
(*This one is great for younger readers*)

Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett - Racial Justice

As I write this reflection, the freshness of the New Year is sadly fast waning, but the challenges that it has brought appear to be waxing, and the world feels even more fragile and fractious than last year. The whole world feels like it is being shaken to its core.

They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. Psalm 82:5

The challenge that looms large for many at the macro level is the threat of the collapse of the world order as we know it, and more locally in our country the tearing of the social fabric that binds communities, through increasing levels of bigotry and racial and ethnic exclusion being promoted in the way migration, identity, belonging, and nationhood are discussed. Relationships between countries, and between ethnic and religious groups, are being deliberately destabilised, and pertinent to this fracturing of relationships is the perniciousness of racism.

Marking an anniversary, renewing a call

In February, we will mark the 30th anniversary of Racial Justice Sunday, and this gives an opportunity for us to refresh our understanding of the importance of racial justice for peace and reconciliation in our world, to renew our call to rediscover our shared identity in Christ, and to reject the divisiveness that some on the political far right would wish to promote.

This divisiveness also includes the way in which, in recent months, the far-right political movement, led by figures such as Steven Yaxley-Lennon (aka Tommy Robinson), has used overt Christian symbolism on platforms and marches while preaching that the United Kingdom belongs to “native Britons”, and using the language of a Christian nation to justify exclusion, racism, and Islamophobia. Such actions and language generate both theological and social tension.

Scripture and racial justice

The defining text for racial justice in Galatians is summed up in Galatians 3:28:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

It is absolutely clear that the biblical theology expressed in the letter to the Galatians directly opposes the Unite the Kingdom movement’s focus on ethnic and national selection. The central argument of Galatians is that no one is made right with God by “works of the law” but solely by grace. Because salvation is a gift, no race or ethnic group can claim superiority or “preference” from God.

The cross is a sign of sacrifice for the “other”, not a tribal marker. Using the cross to promote “ethnic exclusivity” is a direct offence against God and the way of Christ. Treating one race as superior and another as inferior is a “Christological heresy” because it suggests that Christ’s blood was not sufficient to bind all humanity together.

Justice as a gospel issue

It always intrigues me when “people” (that ubiquitous term that can mean anyone and everyone) want to dismiss work on racial justice by indicating that those who work on this issue are pursuing a secular political

agenda. It is essential to understand that justice is not just a legalistic concept but a divine principle that permeates our actions and attitudes.

It should go without saying that racism is a gospel issue, for those who posit or display racist attitudes and behaviour contradict the work of Christ and God's unwavering commitment to justice. God calls us to "act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him." Advocating for justice means ensuring fairness, equality, and equity in all our communities.

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Galatians 6:9

This is not just a spiritual sentiment but a fact of being, for if you are in Christ, you are called to oppose systems of oppression that divide people into racialised categories, as lesser or higher, of insiders and outsiders.

Paul does not deny the existence of different races or cultures, but rather he insists they no longer determine a person's standing before God. In the "new creation" (Galatians 6:15), these distinctions are celebrated rather than used as tools for division.

Learning from Galatians

If we look back at Galatians 2:11–14, we see that Paul rebukes Peter for withdrawing from eating with Gentile (non-Jewish) believers. Paul's critique of Peter is that his behaviour was "not in step with the truth of the gospel".

For Paul, this distinction being drawn by Peter indicates racial prejudice, which he sees as a form of hypocrisy that denies the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice for all. Peter's withdrawal was rooted in a fear of his own ethnic group's opinions. We all need to confront the social or political fears that prevent us from pursuing genuine racial reconciliation, and instead promote a message of hope and solidarity against division.

The gospel transcends borders and includes people from every nation and tribe.

Undaunted hope

2026 is also a milestone year for Martin Luther King Jr Day (MLK) in the USA, marking 40 years since its observance as a federal holiday. One of the themes for this year's MLK Day is Undaunted Hope. It remains a holiday despite the rollback of various Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programmes.

The legacy of Dr King continues to serve as a source of undaunted hope in the ongoing pursuit of racial justice. Racial justice is God's justice, and the Bible assures us that one day God will establish ultimate justice. King's work emphasises that the "arc of the moral universe" does not bend toward justice on its own; it requires individuals to actively bend it through personal integrity and collective action.

Dr King's vision of hope was not passive; it was a blueprint for active "new beginnings". As he said, "the time is always right to do what is right." We can't solve all the injustices in the world, but we can act in our local context to help change the lives of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Matthew 5:6

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.

Please pray especially for Keith who is now feeling better after recovering slowly and was able to come to church on Sunday.

We think of Ruth; whose father's funeral took place in Wales on Thursday 15th January.

Ruth is caring for her mother. We send our love and prayers to Thomas and Elizabeth and the rest of her family.

We hold in our prayers, Marlies, whose brother died suddenly on January 4th- a terrible shock to her and her family. We send our condolences.

We also hold in our prayers, Festus, whose sister Felicia, died in Nigeria last week.

We pray for Daniel, for Keith, Relia and Myfanwy; for Anita Houghton, Chuba Agbim, for Eunice Adiele, recovering from an eye operation, for Gideon Onwutalu, Sir Edmund Onochie, Rose Ochwada. Please keep Kelly's father John in your prayers.

We hold all the above in our hearts that they may be filled with God's healing in their health and, if bereaved healing in their grief.

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=em85aDF5ZmJ5ZkVlb0xDaDhY2paUT09>

Meeting ID: 858 554 5365

Passcode: J4FbKf

AV Desk: 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	Warden on duty	Service leader	Preacher
08/02/26	Psalm 112:1-9 1 Cor 2:13-16	Dozie Andrew	Nwando	Silvia	Ifeyinwe/ Onyeka	Daniel	Ifey/Shaniv		Rev Kamran
15/02/26	Psalm 99 2 Peter 1:16-21	Sohail Elizabeth	Tony	Bilan	Tim/ Naila	Onyeka	Nehar/ Sohail	Alexis	Rev Ibezim
18/02/26 Ash Wednesday	Joel 2:1-2,12-17 Mat 6:1-6,16-21	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC		Rev Kamran
22/02/26 Bring & Share	Psalm 32 Romans 5:12-19	Cynthia Guy	Nehar	Cynthia/ Chinwe	Nehar/ Nwadi	Shaniv	Ifey/Shaniv		Rev Kamran
01/03/26	Psalm 121 Romans 4:1-5,13-17	Conny Sim	Rose	Christina	Sally/ Tony	Ruth	Nehar/ Sohail	Nehar	Rev Ibezim
08/03/26	Psalm 95 Romans 5:1-11	Andrew Abi	Alexis	Nora	Daniel/ Ezim	Onyeka	Tony/ Bilan		Rev Kamran
15/03/26	Psalm 45 Ephesians 5:8-14	Keith Elizabeth	Simon	Naila	Ifeyinwe/ Onyeka	Shaniv	Ifey/Shaniv	Jenny	Rev Ibezim
22/03/26	Psalm 130 Romans 8:6-11	Sohail Elizabeth	Kai	Silvia	Nehar/ Nwadi	Daniel	Nehar/ Sohail		Jenny
29/03/26 Bring & Share	Psalm 118:1-2,19-29 Matthew 21:1-11	Sam Daniel	Jenny	Cynthia/ Chinwe	Tim/ Naila	Onyeka	Tony/ Bilan		Rev Ibezim