

NEWSLETTER

12th February 2026



Dear Everyone - Greetings to you all

Racial Justice Sunday: In his sermon, Kamran reminded us that each of us is created in God's image- every one of us. We are all equally loved by God and precious in God's sight. He quoted the famous saying by Jesus that, "You are the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13). Without salt that flavours everything there would be no taste. He again quoted Jesus saying "you are the light of the world; a city set on a mountain cannot be hidden" and basically that is us. We must be the "salt" that flavours life and the "light", where people can see us, through the faith and actions we bring to others. He asked us, "How do we do that?". We need each other. Our religion is about making us happy but that is not the end goal; helping and caring for each other is. We are all responsible for each other. Too many Christians stay silent and if we are silent things that are meant to be challenged get worse and the world around us decays. We have seen that happen in the past and now we see it in the present day. What can we do to be the "light" Jesus talks about, to be the "salt", "the city on the hill"- to be seen? We can work together to reach out to the marginalized, the oppressed, the outcasts, just as Jesus did. Our Faith and our Voices matter. We are the "Body of Christ" and as such must be seen to be so in words and deeds. Lent is the time to reflect and act on these words and in the context of Racial Justice by Loving our Neighbour"



The Bishop of Edmonton talks on Racial Justice. Bishop Anderson is not only our bishop but a globally recognised theologian committed to justice, inclusion, social transformation, and World Christianity.

In his talk, which is printed below, he covers many aspects of Racial justice and why all Christians should be committed to it. Bishop Anderson shows how Jesus redefines neighbourly love beyond boundaries, names racism as a distortion of the Imago Dei, and calls the Church to active mercy, justice, and solidarity in a fragmented and divided world.



Lent: Ash Wednesday is on Wednesday 18th February. It is the start of our preparations for Lent. We will be holding a service in church at 7.00pm that day to which everyone is invited. It is a time when we reflect on Christ's fasting in the desert being tempted by the Devil. Because of this we decide what it is we want to do that enriches our spiritual well-being by making our faith stronger and reach out more to others. Sometimes we might fast, study the bible independently or together, read books that give us insights on our spiritual and personal development, increase alms giving or by looking outwards taking up some work that supports others. Practices vary for each person, but it is important to decide about taking up something that will bring us closer to Christ.

Our Sunday School members fed back to us what they thought of in the context of having learnt about Racial Justice Sunday and standing up for Justice. They had been discussing Lent and Fasting too and what Fasting meant. They knew Fasting can include more than giving things up but doing extra things that help others in need. As Modupe said, quoting St James, "Faith without action is dead":

Theo, "We should help the poor and needy"

Andrew, "In Lent we should be kind to everyone"

Sam, "Lent is not just about Fasting. It is about giving stuff people really like so they see your true colours"

Poppy, "Ash Wednesday is about thinking for 40 days and nights and what you want to give up".

Lent Reading: If you are interested in reading a book, that will help you reflect and question yourself spiritually and personally. Jenny has added to the ones listed last week 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. If you have any books you would like to recommend, please let me know and I will keep adding them to the list.

Birthday Celebration: On Sunday we celebrated the birthdays of Anita and Andrew. Prayers were said for a good year ahead, Happy Birthday was sung and we all enjoyed their delicious birthday cakes.



Reminder - World Day of Prayer: The annual "World Day of Prayer" is taking place on, **Friday 6th March at 2.00pm in our church, Golders Green.** The service is compiled by the women of Nigeria, and it couldn't be

held in a better venue. The theme is, “I Will Give You Rest”. The 2026 materials bring us a powerful invitation drawn from Matthew 11:28-30. 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. 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 19th 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)

Application for an Adult Gambling Centre in North End Road: Feedback was given on Sunday about the the proposal made to Barnet Council for an, “**Adult Gambling Centre**”, in North End Road. This would be a few steps away from our church. We were asked by three of our local councillors and our MP Sarah Sackman if, as a church, we could help oppose this. As a result, a letter from our PCC containing our objections, was sent to them by the deadline of 10th February. The councillors and Sarah Sackman replied thanking us saying our voice as a church in the campaign in opposition was very important. Subsequently we heard that, because of the momentum building against AGC the planning application will now be deferred and heard at the Planning Committee who make the final decision, **in March**. This will give those who oppose and haven’t yet signed the petition more time to do so. Below is the letter we sent outlining our opposition with a link to the petition for you to sign if you wish to do do. Please also let your neighbours know about this campaign. Eco-tip from A Rocha for February. Would it be possible to have this in this week’s newsletter, please?

FEBRUARY tips and suggestions for Lent from A Rocha: This Lent, take part in Climate Steward’s Carbon Fast. Lent is a time when Christians traditionally fast and focus on God. The Carbon Fast will help you consider ways to live more simply, give you new ideas to cut your carbon footprint and invite you to focus on God and consider the whole of his creation. Beginning on 5 March, you’ll receive a weekly email containing key facts, suggestions for how you could reduce your carbon footprint and a prayer to lead you through this Lenten season. Each week features a different theme designed to help us take climate action in manageable ways that bear witness to a God who has promised to restore all of his creation. Find out more and sign up at climatestewards.org/resources/carbon-fast/



General Synod: is meeting this week in Church House, Westminster. It is the governing body of the Church of England made up from representatives elected from each diocese. It is divided into three houses, Bishops, Clergy and Laity. They consider and approve, or not, legislation that affect the whole of the Church of England. Please pray for General Synod members that they may debate difficult issues in peace and consideration.

With love and good wishes- Sally

Information and Links re Adult Gambling Centre

Below is the information about the Adult Gambling Centre.

The points of opposition agreed by the PCC and sent to Barnet Councillors and our MP:

- **There are at least seven betting shops in Golders Green already.** The proposal of an Adult Gaming Centre within 0.2 miles of these premises indicates that Golders Green does not need any more centres of gambling. It is already arguably too easy for potential and existing gamblers to indulge their inclinations and habits locally
- **An Adult Gaming Centre is more than a betting shop, as it includes an enhanced betting role with gaming machines and other aspects that encourage gambling. These exist to make money quickly to the detriment of the user, who often carries on in the hope they will win. The core purpose is to make money and gives nothing to the community**
- It is an intention it will have a 24 open access. This will be concerning for residents being disturbed by noise and the well-being of people walking home in the streets at night
- This Centre is in a very prominent position. It will impact negatively on the character of the immediate locality. It would do nothing to enhance the local environment or contribute positively to it
- An Adult Gaming Centre would be inconsistent with the family-friendly nature of surrounding businesses
- **It is likely to pose a risk of harm to children and other vulnerable persons. We, for example, have a Toddler's Group in church and next door is the nursery school. We also host night sleepers, periodically, who could be thought vulnerable and easily encouraged to use it**
- It could encourage compulsive gambling, or those who are already compulsive gamblers. This is a real sickness damaging to the individual and whole families. (This has been experienced by those working in schools, for example, who have seen staff members and families of children whose lives have been shattered by compulsive gambling of partners and family members).

Below are the links to our MP's letter of objection and details of the change of use to an AGC.

Letter from Sarah Sackman, our Member of Parliament, inviting people to sign: <https://sarahsackman.com/gambling-objection-letter-golders-green/>

[25/3796/FUL | Change of use of the ground floor commercial premises from a Bank Financial Services \(Class E\) to an Adult Gaming Centre \(sui generis\) | 4 - 6 North End Road London NW11 7PL](#)

Thank you for reading through this. If there is anything you would like to add or comment on, please let us know either through the church WhatsApp or emailing to Tracey@gg-pc.co.uk or Kamran using the same email address.

Bishop Anderson Jeremiah reflects on the Good Samaritan and Racial Justice.

“In the Gospel of Luke (10:25–37), a lawyer asks Jesus a question that seems academic: “Who is my neighbour?” This was not a request for information, it was a search for a limit. The lawyer wanted to know exactly where his obligation to others ended. He wanted a boundary that kept his life comfortable and his responsibilities manageable.

Jesus, currently on his journey to Jerusalem and the cross, responds not with a definition, but with a transformative story, the parable of the Good Samaritan. He presents us with a tension between religious obedience and ethical action, reminding us that eternal life is found not in the mastery of rules, but in the practice of a love that refuses to recognise borders and difference. Jesus uses this opportunity to illustrate the character of God and the need for a transformed social relationship.

The Divine Subversion: Why the Samaritan?

To understand the weight of the Good Samaritan, we must look at the reality of the time. The hostility between Jews and Samaritans was not a mere disagreement, it was a deep seated ethnic and religious divide. Samaritans were often viewed as ritually polluting and socially “other”. A common sentiment of the day suggested that even sharing bread with a Samaritan was an act of profound compromise.

By making the Samaritan the hero, Jesus was performing a divine subversion. The Priest and the Levite, those who represented the height of tradition, passed by the victim to protect their status and safety. But the despised foreigner stopped. Jesus was teaching that the neighbour is not the one who shares your background, it is the one who acts with mercy. By integrating the love of God with the love of neighbour, this framework prevents the latter from devolving into mere sentimentality. This frames the pursuit of justice not as a political fashion, but as a divine requirement.

Seeing Through the Eyes of the Victim

Jesus invites us to imagine ourselves as the traveller, beaten and abandoned on a dangerous road. Today, that road is visible in the suffering across our globe.

We see it across the world, in instances too many to mention, where innocent lives are devastated by the pursuit and abuse of power.

We see it time and again in the institutional racism highlighted by the reports of the Racial Justice Commission, which leaves many in our own communities half dead by the roadside of opportunity within the Church.

As we observe Racial Justice Sunday, we are challenged to look at those our Church and society often push to the margins, the Global Majority Heritage communities in this country, migrants and refugees, and the displaced. Can we see them not as “problems to be solved”, but as sources of moral agency and truth?

Racism as a Disfigurement of the Divine

We must be clear, racism is a sin. It is a sin because it disfigures the Imago Dei, the image of God, in our brothers and sisters. It begins when we turn away from justice and allow prejudice to become a social norm. When we prioritise individual rights over collective mercy, we lose sight of the Gospel.

For the prophets, God’s reign is defined by the presence of justice. Its absence is, quite literally, the absence of God. Our society often seeks refuge in rules and boundaries, but Jesus calls us to a larger vision, one where the other is recognised as a bearer of God’s grace.

Our praxis shapes our holiness. The prophet Micah says, “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (6:8)

A Vocation of Healing

Pursuing racial justice is not a political trend, it is a Christian vocation. Like the Samaritan, we are called to be attentive to the cries of those in pain. God does not simply watch from the sidelines, God engages in the work of transformation.

In the story of the Good Samaritan, the call to be a good neighbour brings to light the inherent theological contradiction within Christian communities that harbour racial indifference, serving as a rigorous tool for the Church’s self-examination. Through this story, Jesus critiques a theological posture where devotion is retained but justice is sidelined. We are called to move from a culture of silence to one of practical solidarity.

At the heart of our vision for every Londoner to encounter God’s love is the essential work of racial justice. Pursuing justice is more than a priority, it is the practical expression of our Christian discipleship.

We are called to be people of mercy and equity. We are invited to be “Good Samaritans”, people who become signs of God’s reign here and now. Let us embrace the challenge to work with God in bringing freedom and peace to every person, regardless of their origin, accent, or skin colour.

This Racial Justice Sunday, let us ask ourselves: Are we ready to let Jesus redefine who our neighbour really is?

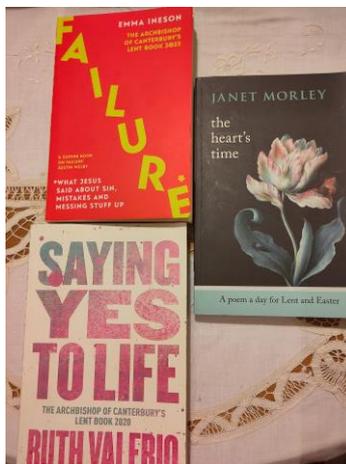
Suggested Books for Lent

In last week’s newsletter I offered some books you might be interested in reading for Lent. I asked if anyone had a favorite book they could recommend. In response Jenny sent her recommendations which I add to the ones already listed. They are:

‘Failure’: Bishop Emma Ineson (SPCK 2022). This is a really helpful and accessible Christian reflection on ‘what Jesus says about sin, mistakes and messing stuff up’. It’s so refreshing to read something that’s so realistic without being at all judgemental.

‘Saying Yes to Life’: Ruth Valerio (SPCK, 2020). This is a thoughtful reflection on themes in Genesis 1, describing how they relate to environmental, ethical and social concerns that have a global impact, and suggesting how we as followers of Jesus might respond.

‘The Heart’s Time’: Janet Morley (SPCK 2011). I keep coming back to this one. It’s a wonderful collection of poems, not all written from a Christian perspective: there’s one for each weekday of Lent, each accompanied by a short commentary. Do try it even if you don’t think you enjoy poetry - you might be surprised!!



Last Week’s Suggestions:

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)

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.

It was good to welcome Marlies back to us from her brother's funeral in the States. It has been a hard and sad time for her and we give her our love and prayers.

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=em85aDF5ZmJ5ZkVlb0x0DaDhY2paUT09>

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
15/02/26	Psalm 99 2 Peter 1:16-21	Sohail Sam	Tony	Bilan	Tim/ Naila	Onyeka	Nehar/ Sohail	Alexis	Rev Ibezim
18/02/26 Ash Wednes day	Joel 2:1- 2,12-17 Mat 6:1- 6,16-21								Rev Kamran
22/02/26 Bring & Share	Psalm 32 Romans 5:12-19	Cynthia Guy	Kai	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 Ephesian s 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 Dozie	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