

COULSDON
PARISH
CHURCH
St. John



50p

February 2023

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Spring is on the way --

A warm welcome ""
to ALL our services""
and events!

February

1—Wednesday

10.30 a.m. House-Group Leaders meet, in the Old Church

2—Thursday

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

4—Saturday

10.00 a.m.. Gardening Morning in Garden of Remembrance (to 12.00)

10.30 a.m. MU AGM with Tea & Cake, in the Church

5—THIRD SUNDAY before LENT

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion, in Church *(and live-streamed
on Facebook/through church website)*

11.30 a.m. Baptism Service, in Church

7—Tuesday

9.45 a.m. Holy Communion, MU, in the Old Church

8—Wednesday

7.30 p.m. Life Group meets, in the Old Church

9—Thursday

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

11—Saturday

10.00 a.m.. Baptism Preparation, in Church

12—SECOND SUNDAY before LEN7

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion, in Church *(and live-streamed on Facebook/through church website)*

11.15 a.m. Family Service

16—Thursday

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

19—SUNDAY next before LENT

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

9.30 a.m. Worship Together, in Church

21—Tuesday

9.45 for 10.00 a.m. Pram Service for Babies & Toddlers, in Church

22—ASH WEDNESDAY

2.00 p.m. Pray, Knit & Chat, in the Old Church

7.30 p.m. Holy Communion with Ashing, in the Old Church

23—Thursday

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

25—Saturday

7.30 p.m. Utopians Unlimited present 'Patience', in the Church

26—FIRST SUNDAY of LENT

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion, in Church *(and live-streamed on Facebook/through church website)*

11.15 a.m. Family Service

28—Tuesday

7.30 p.m. 'Prayer for the World', in the Church

March

2—Thursday

11.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

3 - Friday

10.30 a.m. 'World Day of Prayer' - Coulsdon Methodist Church

4—Saturday

10.00 a.m.. Gardening Morning in Garden of Remembrance (to 12.00)

5—SECOND SUNDAY of LENT

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion, in Church

9.30 a.m. Parish Communion, in Church *(and live-streamed on Facebook/through church website)*

11.30 a.m. Baptism Service, in Church

AND COMING SOON ... BARN DANCE ... 25 MARCH



WHEREVER YOU ARE YOU CAN STILL JOIN US ONLINE FOR SOME SERVICES: Follow the Parish Communion services, etc. online live as they're streamed from the Church on Facebook via our website at www.stjohns.coulsdon.net (or watch later) .

FROM THE RECTOR ...



Dear Friends

It's often said that the church is not the building but the people. That's certainly true; the church could still exist, as it does in many places in the world, without a building to meet in. However, buildings, particularly ancient ones, can be a powerful physical sign of God's continuing presence in the community.

In the Old Testament days of Joshua and Samuel large standing stones were placed in significant places to remind the people of what God had done for them; they were to be a reminder to succeeding generations. After the Israelites crossed the Jordan to enter the promised land they were commanded to take twelve stones, representing the twelve tribes, so that when their children and grandchildren asked "What do they mean" they could be told about how God had rescued his people and brought them to a place of freedom and safety.

Later, Samuel commanded the people to erect a stone which he named 'Ebenezer', a name which means 'stone of help'. "Thus far the Lord has helped us," Samuel said after the people had rescued the Ark of the Covenant from being captured by the Philistines.

Our church spire, which dates from about 1807, may not be quite as significant a sign as that which commemorated the Israelites crossing the Jordan, or res-



cuing the Ark, but it is a sign of God's continuing presence in the neighbourhood. Taller than any surrounding building it points to the skies and reminds us that God is the creator of heaven and earth. And for those who don't know what it means it can be used to explain what the church is and why we are here as part of God's family.

As you may know the spire is in urgent need of repair, at an estimated cost of £235,000. We can already draw up to £73,000 from funds that have been collected over the last few years, but

we need to raise a lot more. Beyond the repairs to the spire there are also other important building works that need to be done.

On **Saturday 11th March** we will be launching our **Building Restoration Project** with an **Open Day** in church from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. There will be exhibits about the history of the church and the work that needs to be done; we will have children's 'treasure hunt' activities, refreshments will be available all day, and at certain times there will be some short presentations about the work we are planning. A small group has been moving this forward and is actively looking at other sources of funding. We will be distributing leaflets to every house in the parish with an invitation to the Open Day, and we hope that the local community will be very generous in helping to ensure this historic landmark lasts for generations to come. Imagine the scene if the spire had to be removed!

So I hope you might be able to join us at any time on 11th March, and that you will consider a generous donation to this important fund. You can make a donation at any time to the church account

Account name:	Coulsdon St John's Church PCC
Sort code:	40 52 40
Account number:	00030868
Reference:	BUILDING FUND

With all good wishes

Paul



FEBRUARY

... is one of those months when we all feel like staying home and keeping warm (if we can). But although this is a 'quietish' month in church our regular services are offering you a 'warm welcome' - with the heating on, friendly people to greet you and help you feel at home—and tea, coffee, squash and biscuits on offer after most services. So even if the weather is wintry, don't stay at home—wrap yourself (and your family) up and come and join in. And be sure not to miss the very special event at the end of the month!

LOVE TO SEE A TIDY GARDEN?

Why not come and join the small group that meets once a month on the first Saturday to keep the area of the churchyard put aside as the Garden of Remembrance neat and tidy. They would be delighted to have your help and you would get some gentle exer-



cise in the fresh air in really good company. **See you any time between 10.00 & 12.00 on Saturday 4 February.**

DELICIOUS CAKES ...

... will be on sale in Church during the morning of **Sunday, 12 February**. The Bereavement Visitors' Group will be raising funds to cover the expenses involved in the annual 'Service for Remembering' and the day-to-day running of the group. So whichever service you come to, please don't forget to bring your purse/wallet with you to ensure you can take something delicious home for your elevenses, lunch or tea! **AND** if you could help out by bringing a cake along on the day for the stall, the group would be delighted!



PANCAKES @ PRAM SERVICE – Tuesday 21 February



All babies, toddlers, pre-schoolers and their mums, dads, granies, grandpas or whoever looks after them on a Tuesday morning would be very welcome at our next **Pram Service** on **Tuesday, 21st February** at 9.45 for 10.00 a.m. start in the Church!. It will be on Shrove Tuesday so what else would we be doing other than making pancakes? Everybody will be able to join in—and we might get to eat some too! This is a time of fun and praise and there'll also be action songs, an interactive story, musical instruments and, of course, birthday celebrations. Afterwards there'll be time for chat and play, with refreshments! Do come – even if you've never been before – it really is fun!

ASH WEDNESDAY – 22 February

... is the first day of Lent, when there will be a Communion Service with Ashing at 7.30 p.m. in the Old Church. As always, everyone will be very welcome to come and receive communion or a blessing as they wish. During the service Paul or Sue will lightly rub the sign of the cross with ashes onto the foreheads of those who would like to receive it.

Historically, the ritual of receiving ashes started in the 8th Century, and ashes signified purification and sorrow for sins. Palm crosses from the previous Palm Sunday service are burnt to produce ashes for this service. The ash cross on the forehead is an outward sign of our sorrow and repentance for our sins – a very suitable way to start Lent.



A TREAT AT THE END OF THE MONTH!

Don't miss the opportunity to see a fully-costumed production of Gilbert & Sullivan's 'Patience' which is being brought to St. John's by the Utopians Unlimited. Their productions are always very entertaining and the joy the members take in performing certainly comes across to the audience making their presentations even more enjoyable. Buy or book your tickets soon—see poster for details.



UTOPIANS UNLIMITED

proudly present



Patience'

by Gilbert & Sullivan

Saturday
25 February

7.30 p.m.

St John the Evangelist Church

Canon's Hill
Old Coulsdon
CR5 1HA

In aid of St. John's Funds

**Tickets: £15 & £10 (inc. refreshment) available from St. John's
Parish Office on 01737 552461 or at stjohns@coulsdon.net**

Happy New Year - and from the hens too!

(People have been asking why they didn't feature at Christmas so this is all about them)



Olive is chief in charge of the coop. She is a bit fed up being cooped up because of the Avian Flu lockdown and it is not fun trying to keep the five of them occupied. The latest amusement is turning a large straw bale upside down so that they think they may find some tasty snacks - insects. They've taken to hiding their eggs all over the place. Sometimes eggs are found in the outdoor coop - the green house shown here. Other times they lay eggs in their nesting boxes ('bedroom' shelves hidden in the second picture), or they squeeze behind the indoor straw bale and lay eggs behind that.

Since we rescued Olive, Peony, and Muffin eight months ago, they have improved plumage and condition. Olive's red comb is plush and she now has a fresh set of feathers. She's not looking so happy here as I'd disturbed her eating my apple core - getting hens to pose is really difficult. The other two are the Organic Rescues - Hannah and Phoebe - both strong fliers who enjoy warm porridge.

Hen Shed - not for human use!

The hens' shed (it's theirs now) is accessed by a tunnel from the outdoor coop. When we first got the hens we'd decided they could only have the end of the shed as a



'bedroom' (behind the inner door). It has a great perch and six nesting boxes - lots of choice, but they've taken the place over and made themselves very much

at home in the whole shed. They get bored, not being allowed out, so the five of them dug up all the newspaper that had been hidden under 6" of Aubrese (hemp) and straw - all completely messed up. They've even jumped onto the shelf, roosted on the edge of the potting box and laid an egg (left on shelf), so even this box is now theirs - we've moved the earth and put in straw. We can't wait for Spring when the hens' lockdown will end so that we can let them roam free and get (some) of the shed back! But there are some positives from having them cooped up. They handle well, are more tame, and queue up for grapes, jumping up quite high to snatch them from your fingers. Grapes are like chocolate is to us - for treats only.

It is a bubble of a world that they live in and entering it gives a sense of a break from routine. A cup of tea and sitting in with the hens, helps see things from a different perspective: time out to reflect, pray, and gather energy.

God, through his Creation, creates times for us to rest, drawing us together, so that as my tea mug says ...he covers us with his feathers so that we can find refuge under his wings (*Psalms 91:4*).



Sue

CROYDON MALE VOICE CHOIR coming to OLD COULSDON

On **Saturday 11th February** at 7.30 p.m. the CMV Choir will be giving a **Concert** at Old Coulsdon Congregational Church. Tickets - available from Malcolm (01737 554362 or at pastormalcolm@btinternet.com) or on the door - £15.00 each. Refreshments at half-time included.

MOTHERS' UNION - *Transformation - Now!*

FEBRUARY focus: Community Transformation



Mothers' Union is a Christian organisation that has been supporting families worldwide for over 140 years. Started by our founder Mary Sumner in 1876 in her local parish, we have grown into an international charity with over 4 million members in 84 countries. We demonstrate our faith in action. This happens as we work towards stopping poverty, stopping inequality, and stopping injustice. Our members work at grassroots level around the world—and bring hope and practical support to millions of people every year through parenting, literacy and community development programmes.

Our prayer is that we can:

Transform ourselves, personally and spiritually, to live out our faith

Transform the churches and communities we work with, and of which we are a part, to reflect Christ's kingdom

Transform Mothers' Union to be relevant for 21st century life.

"For with God nothing shall be impossible" - Luke 1:37

FAITH IN ACTION: Literacy brings hope in DRC

Basic literacy skills are essential for women in building confidence, asserting their



rights, generating an income and addressing the needs of their families.

MU literacy circles give them tools to share knowledge in a wide range of areas, including agriculture.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Masika fled her home due to rebel

attacks. Joining an MU literacy circle, part of the MU Adult Literacy & Agriculture programme, has given her new confidence, insight and agricultural knowledge. She is eager to share what she has learned.

Groups are coming together to make handicrafts, garden or bake, as well as planting trees to prevent landslides and protect their environment. The project's focus on agriculture means that learners are practising new techniques, growing new varieties of vegetables, at different times of year, to benefit from higher prices. They are learning to cook different foods, increasing their family nutrition and income. Participants are finding hope for the future and becoming role models in their communities.

PRAY for: those who are seeking new ways of doing things to be empowered by literacy skills.

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap the harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9

BRANCH DATES:

SATURDAY 4 FEB: 10.30am MU AGM & Coffee Morning including an illustrated talk about a recent visit to the Oberammergau Passion Play

Tuesday 7 Feb: 9.45am Corporate Holy Communion, followed by refreshments

Wednesday 22 Feb: 2.00pm Pray, Knit & Chat in Church - do join us! All welcome whether you knit or not - delicious cakes, good company and time to remember others in prayer.



DATE FOR YOUR NEW DIARY....SUNDAY 28 MAY - CREAM TEAS in the Rectory Garden (or church if wet) celebrating St John's MU Branch 75th Anniversary!

LAST MONTH: BEETLE DRIVE



'Fun for all the family' was the billing for this event and that is exactly what it proved to be! Janice Hollobone was our compère and once she rang the bell to start a round there was an immediate hubbub of dice being shaken and much laughter and conversation until the winning drawing was completed and the shout went up 'BEETLE!!', the bell was rung and all play stopped for a few moments. Scores were totted up, people changed tables and play began again. Tea, coffee and cakes were served at half time before play resumed. Players ranged from toddlers to 90 year olds and everyone clearly thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The afternoon was also a successful joint fundraiser for both MU and St John's, and there's already been a request for another Beetle Drive in the Autumn—so watch this space!

A Reflection:

The process of community transformation begins with the transformation of individuals. In the story of Zacchaeus we see how his transformation of heart, through an encounter with Jesus, led to his outpouring of recompense to those he had cheated in his community. When Christ transforms our lives there is a permanent and profound change. The command to love our neighbour as ourselves becomes a joy rather than a duty. We can then pray with hope to be part of God's plans for transforming our communities, that they too will see permanent and profound change for good.

You might like to walk around our local community asking God to highlight where there needs to be transformation of some kind, and pausing to pray there. If you are not able to take an actual walk. prayerfully do so in your mind, asking God for the same insights.

Our monthly prayer:

We praise our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who came to earth to bring transformation to his people.

As we follow in our Lord's footsteps, may we, with kindness and understanding, also bring transformation to our communities.

Amen



Happy New Year!



Tollers Edible Garden started in March 2022 and came about because of one resident's concerns of increasing poverty and loneliness in our community. She converted her own front garden into a growing space for residents to get involved and provide fresh free food – the project grew from here.

Our aim is to bring our community together, utilising unused garden spaces and to create an environment where residents can learn and enjoy growing fresh vegetables to hand out free.

The Project has continued to expand and we now have three residents' gardens and the use of five large planters next to our Community Centre. This has enabled us to distribute FREE fresh fruit and vegetables to 137 local families between March and November.



This coming season the plan is to expand our growing spaces, bring the community together and reduce loneliness and food poverty within our area. To do this **we need more raised planting beds, therefore our priority now is to source used scaffolding boards to build these beds.** If you can help, please get in touch on the number below.

Tollers Edible Garden is a non-profit community group with no local authority funding or cash budget whatsoever. We therefore rely on donations from local businesses and residents to continue growing. We still have a long way to go and need support to help us grow and thrive but most importantly to ensure we can continue helping those in our community with the most need.



If you would like to volunteer or have any unused garden related materials such as, compost, bark, mulch, gravel, or unwanted tools please get in touch/leave a message on 07909 753008 (Nikki) or 07931 448129 (Janet).

Our ethos is one of companionship, laughter and honesty. We can't wait to welcome more like-minded people, who want to improve their community for the better. To join our project and help us make a difference, please visit our website <https://communityattollers.co.uk/tollers-edible-garden/>



Small Packets of Wildflower Seeds [labelled 'Save our Pollinators'] are available on the large table at the back of the church for just 50p, to raise funds for their community project—and donations can be left in the marked 'pot'.

An Open invitation to you ... to the 'One Church' programme...from Open Doors:

'Open Doors' is offering us an exciting opportunity to have contact with the Persecuted Church in S E Asia. Perhaps one of us could go to meet them, with a very small group, perhaps in London, to hear their story, along with two online updates in the year. Open Doors asks we pray monthly, and consider giving to churches in S E Asia. The Parish Church Council very much commends this and is looking for someone to take this role up. This is what has happened so far...

At St John's, we have supported the persecuted church through Open Doors in different ways:

- ◆ We have run Open Doors' House Group material, called 'What If?
- ◆ We have held two carol services using Open Doors liturgy
- ◆ We've supported the 'I See You' campaign with the Petition to Government in fabric squares
- ◆ We have Life Group who specifically support Open Doors
- ◆ We've also had talks from Andy Worthington, and others too.

On Wed, last week (18 Jan), I was at the House of Commons and the Open Doors World Watch List launch. I met Fikiru of East Africa saying, 'You're the reason that I am here', he said, 'No, you're the reason that I



my church prayed for him and people like him, almost weekly, and he said. 'You really understand because not many do. I will go back and tell my churches of the prayer and support that you give them. It is really good.

Micah 6:6 says that all the Lord requires of us is to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with Him. Open Doors invites St John's to meet someone like Fikiru from S E Asia, to be more intimately connected with the persecuted Church there. We already pray for the persecuted church and the PCC will commit to support this programme for two years if someone (and perhaps a second person) would get to know our persecuted brothers and sisters in SE Asia. It would be lovely if God is calling you to be that person(s). And we'd love to hear the story of that experience after you've met with them. A short magazine article would be great too! Please speak to Paul if you are interested. Thanks. **Sue**

KEEPING UP WITH TONY!

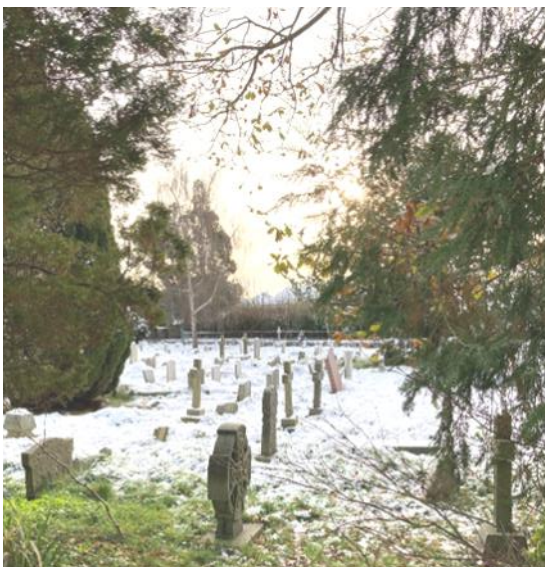
As I recover from an early morning start to get our daughter to the station, defrosting the car in temperatures of -3.5° , the sun is up and we have the most glorious of mornings to welcome our first real taste of winter.

Last Saturday (4th December) being the first one of the month, a very select band of gardeners put in a good couple of hours in the churchyard; pruning back some of the overhanging trees and clearing small branches away from the church's telephone line. The church path was swept clean, the gully along the front of the building was cleared, weeds growing out of the base of the building were treated to a spray of rust tainted distilled white vinegar (a bi-product of the ongoing motorbike restoration project), and a lot of the fallen leaves were raked up. Many thanks to John and Gill – especially Gill who keeps us going with her usual supply of chocolate biscuits and coffee.

*John demonstrates the long forgotten art of
leaning on his rake
whilst waiting for coffee and biscuits*



A first for me was an invitation to the MU Christmas Tea at the end of November, and what a wonderful afternoon of Tea, singing and celebration it was. Bouquets and long service awards were made by Nicy Roberts to Pauline A., Lynn H., and Elfi O. for 30 years, Pam R. – 38 years, Sheila B. and Vera K. – 40 years, and finally Wendy B. for 45 years (*unfortunately Wendy didn't attend as she was unwell – but what an achievement*). I didn't count how many people were there, but it must have been close to 100, and I was sat at what was termed "The Gentlemen's Table" with Jeremy F, Andrew K, Peter K, Ian D, and Bob C, where we enjoyed lovely singing by our church school choir, led and conducted by Karen Jackson, and later a series of Christmas carols as Rev. Paul led us on his accordion. A great time and huge thanks to Nicy for all that she does – and of course a lovely start to the Christmas festivities.



I spoke of the first taste of winter a moment ago and now a few days later this is what I found in our churchyard.

Doesn't it look lovely?

With Christmas upon us and the wonderful Service of Readings and Carols over – for which we must give huge thanks and recognition, not only to Nicy and Rev Paul, but to all the singers who had worked so hard to master the arrangements and given up Friday evenings for rehearsals – it was time for Enid

and I to pack our bags and load the car for Christmas in our daughter's thatched cottage in Wiltshire. This was the first time in some 30 years that we hadn't been at St John's for Midnight Mass, and more recently Rev Sue's Christmas morning services; still it was a joy for us to be able to attend another medieval church in the Lavingtons Benefice close to where Jo lives. This time it was St Peter's, Great Cheverell.

Situated at the end of a very narrow lane (just past the pub) this is how we found it on a daylight recce;
....



but later for the midnight service it looked like this. and what a sight it was, both from here at the gate, and inside where it was lit by literally hundreds of candles. A small congregation by our standards, but whilst they only have 38 on the electoral role, every pew was packed for a lovely traditional service.



Perhaps I should mention that we did watch Rev Sue's service later, but when I tried to make a spaghetti tower, I found that the uncooked variety worked best!! "Stupid boy" as Capt. Mainwaring would have said in 'Dad's Army'.



Later – and just out of interest we followed a signpost to Little Cheverell, down a lane marked '**Narrow Lane – Absolutely no passing places**', but at the end of which (and on a busier road) we found Great Cheverell's little sister – St Peter's, Little Cheverell.

No services here this time, but we will certainly time our next visit for when there is one.

With Christmas over it was down to Cornwall for New Year with a very good friend in another old cottage in the village of Bathpool. Very quiet without a church (closed

for good after Christmas 2020), no pub, and no shop; just the river Lynher cascading down from Bodmin Moor to eventually reach the Tamar and Plymouth Sound. Lots of chat round a roaring fire whilst the weather raged outside, but we did manage to get out on New Year's Day for lunch at a smashing pub at Instow. It was

good to return there as I'd raced my catamaran there in the Dart 15 Nationals (too many) years ago, but it had retained its charm even if the traffic and parking seemed worse!

With January now well underway it was good to get back to Old Coulsdon and St John's; but perhaps glad in just a small way that I am no longer a churchwarden, as this is what faced Ralph and Gill after a recent storm.



Hopefully there's no damage done, but another job to do and money to spend, and we should be grateful that our wardens were on the scene so quickly.

Finally a brief mention of the Trefoil Guild who held an early Burns Night party last week. Enid was 'aglow' when she came home (swears she didn't have any whisky) but had enjoyed one of Malcolm Newman's fine talks, and a meal of



Haggis, Neeps, and Tatties that were carried in by 'Highlander' in full dress uniform. Some of you may know that wild haggis are strange little creatures with two long legs on their right hand side and short ones on the left, so that they can graze in an anti-clockwise direction round the mountain. Others have scoffed at this description but I'd like to quote a short piece found in a book about the natural history of churchyards that I was given for Christmas.

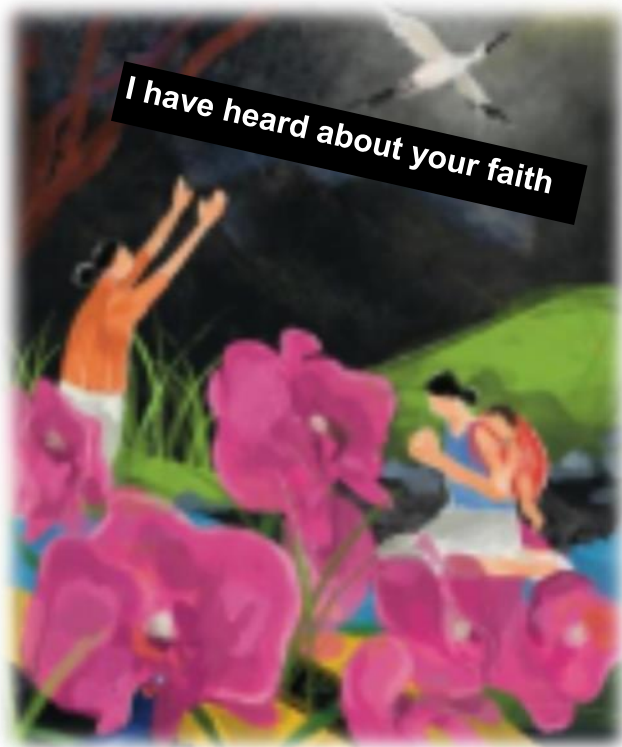
"He hath very sharp teeth, and is therefore accounted a deep-biting beast: his legs (as some say) are longer on the right side than on the left, and therefore he runneth best when he getteth to the side of an hill"

***The Historie of Four-Footed Beasts:
Edward Topsell, 1608***

These fine words written over 400 years ago must surely prove my point!

HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE

Tony



THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Each year we invite you to join us to pray for the world and in particular for a country which has written the service. However, the Order of Service booklet contains many details about the writing country, including history, geography, flora and fauna and other basic facts.

This year's writing country is Taiwan—located in the Western Pacific region and with an approximate population of 23.6 million people. It is a densely populated multi-ethnic country. ...with 16 officially recognized indigenous languages. It is constantly in the news now, but it's encouraging to know that there are many Christian women who are waiting for our prayers. The subject for the service,

which was given to them over 3 years ago, is ***'I have heard about your faith'*** (in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers). If they have heard of our faith, it would be very disappointing if we didn't bother to support them on this one day in the year and, having done so, on many other days too.

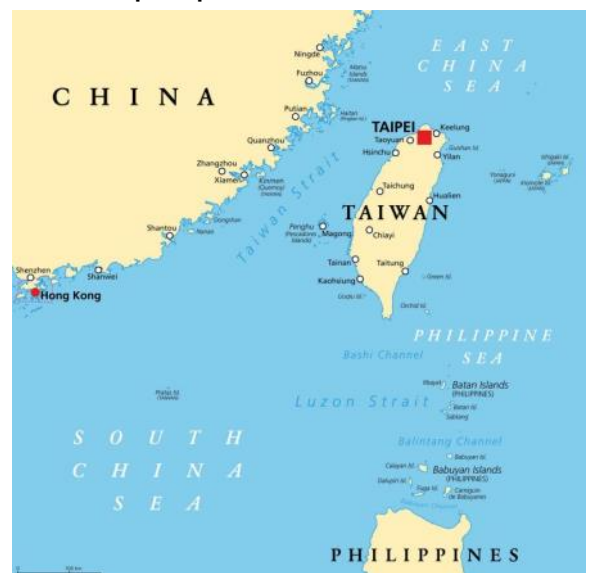
The artist of this picture, Hui-Wen HSAIO, has used several motifs that highlight Taiwan's best-known features to express how the Christian faith brings peace and a new vision to Taiwan.

The women in the painting are sitting by a stream, praying silently and looking up into the dark. Despite the uncertainty of the path ahead, they know that the salvation of Christ has come.

The Mikado pheasant and the Black-faced Spoonbill, two endangered species, are both of unique significance to the Taiwanese people. Their distinctiveness symbolize characteristics of the Taiwanese people--confidence and perseverance in times of difficulty.

The green grass and Phalaenopsis (Butterfly) orchids stand out against the dark background. They are the pride of Taiwan, which has a worldwide reputation as the "Kingdom of Orchids". Green grass represents the Taiwanese as simple, confident, strong and under God's care.

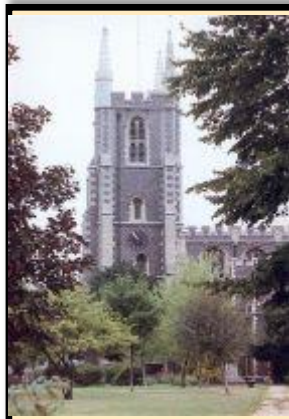
The earliest record of Taiwan church women's participation in the World Day of Prayer dates back to March 1935 in the Taiwan Church Press. Since then, WDP has become an ecumenical prayer worship service



that is familiar to the ears of Taiwanese Christian women. Each year, the worship handbook is translated into 13 languages including Mandarin-Chinese, Taiwanese, and indigenous languages that are used during worship services.

Why not join us on Friday 3 March at 10.30am at Coulsdon Methodist Church and stay for refreshments and fellowship with members of other local churches? This is a service traditionally written by women but everyone is invited to pray for, and with Taiwanese Christians.

Your local committee



LUNCHTIME RECITALS @ CROYDON MINSTER

40 minutes of Music on Fridays at 1.10pm (to 24 March except 3rd March) The recitalists are local students as well as students from London's conservatoires who are often trying out a programme before an international event, so the quality is really high. Bring a Packed Lunch.

Free Entry – Donations to Minster Funds - **All Welcome**

A birthday to mark, though not to celebrate!

10 years of a food bank is probably nothing to celebrate, as sadly I think that food banks and community food shops and other ways for people to access free or low-cost food are here to stay in these days of high inflation and poor economic performance.

We do give thanks for God's provision through all our volunteers, donors and supporters. It has been amazing how we've been able to meet so many needs, both with food and in other ways.

Covid forced us to rethink how we worked, so for nearly three years we have been operating on a deliveries-only basis to keep clients and volunteers safe. It has also meant working more closely with partner food banks and food stops in the south of the borough. We will continue to seek ways of sharing the bounty we have been blessed with.

There have been challenging times since the first client stepped across the Food Hub threshold at Purley United Reformed Church in January 2013. But the feedback we continue to receive from clients, ticket partners and partner organisations makes it all worthwhile, knowing we are doing what we have been called to do in fulfilling the initial vision given to the local clergy back in 2012.

Trevor Jones, Chair of Trustees, Purley Food Hub



Read news of the Hub's very first client overleaf

Our first client – moved to tears by kindness

Our very first client was referred to us by Nigel from Langley House Trust, a Christian organisation devoted to helping ex-offenders. Nigel recalled:

‘Stephen had recently been released from prison He was in his late 40s and had a long history of prison sentences. His marriage had broken down and he wasn’t in touch with his children. He had no access to money for food or anything. We had a book of Food Hub tickets and I suggested he might like to come to the Food Hub.

At first he was too proud, even though he was going without food, but we persuaded him. He had difficulty walking but he walked the two miles to Purley, received three bags of food and walked the two miles back. He was overwhelmed by the care and kindness he was shown and left in tears. He was so proud of the food he received. He laid it all out in his bedroom on a chest of drawers. The food gave him the ability to hang on in and start to feel he could cope. If he hadn’t received food he would have gone back to crime.

Over the next 2½ years he went back to the Food Hub several times, and also received bus tickets so he didn’t have to walk back. He moved to another house in Battersea nearer to his children, then got an interview for a flat and moved into his own flat in Battersea. I don’t think he would have succeeded without the Food Hub’s support. You were there when he needed you most.’

As we start the new year, the news from the Hub is “the need has never been greater. We can never stress enough that we are truly grateful for each and every single tin/packet/jar that we receive for our clients. So our warmest thanks to all the countless individuals, families, churches, schools, businesses and community organisations who have made it happen, contributing your time, effort and money so generously and cheerfully. **We wouldn’t be here without you. THANK YOU.”**



There’s a box for goods in the church porch if you would like to help the Hub.

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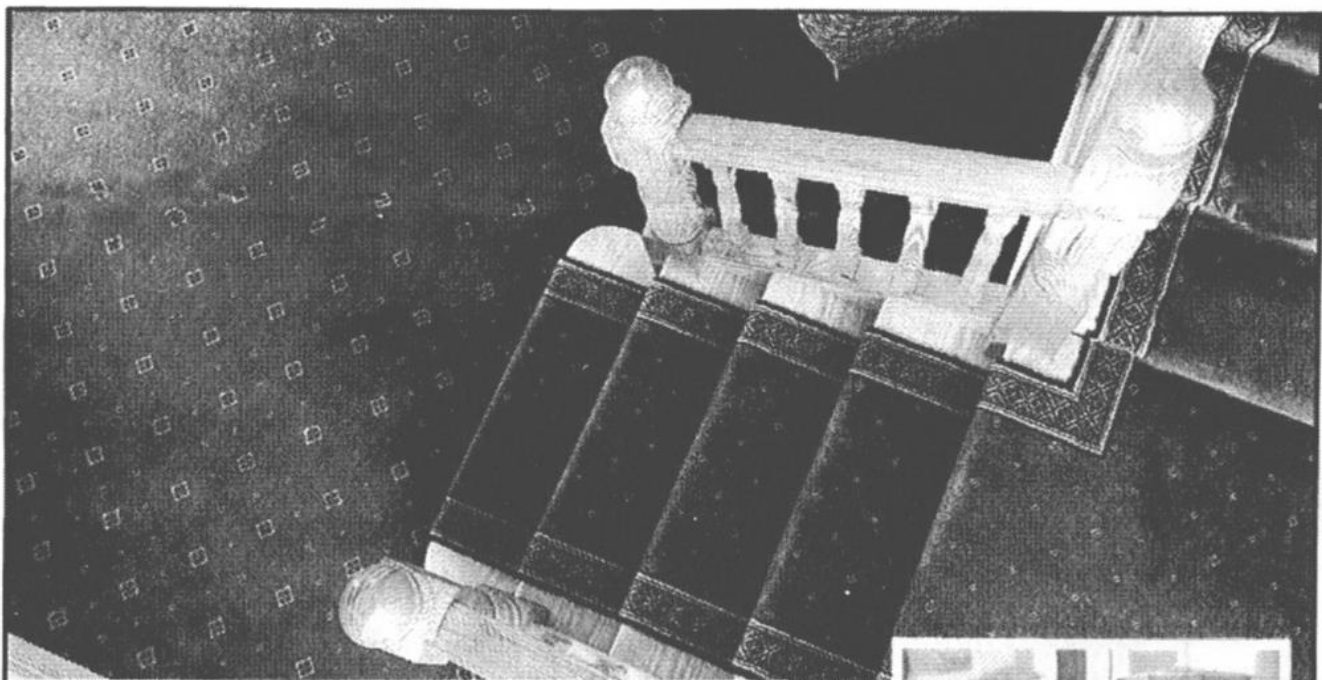
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