

RICHMOND AND BARNES DEANERY SYNOD
praying together, learning together, working together

Wednesday 22nd May 2024 – 7.15 pm

At ST ANNE'S, KEW

MINUTES

- 1 Eucharist led by Rev Canon Dr Giles Fraser including hymn Breathe on me Breath of God.
Talk on Kew Theology and Gardening
St Anne's is next door to Kew Gardens and so a long overdue collaboration made sense. Kew Theology and Gardening (KTG) is a new venture intended to make a link between gardening and theology and to find a way of speaking about the environment that is different from the climate activism of groups like Just Stop Oil. Gardening is probably the most popular recreation there is. It involves kneeling down with your hands in the dirt, communing with nature in the quiet. It is a very spiritual activity. Christianity begins in the Garden of Eden and Mary Magdalene mistakes Jesus for the gardener after the Resurrection. Gardens symbolise new life, hope and joy. A recent KTG lecture spoke about how gardening encourages the quiet virtues of care, patience and humility. The Reverend Canon Nick Jepson-Biddle, Associate Priest of St Anne's, is the director of Kew Theology and Gardening. There will be lectures, study days, walks and inspirations for prayer. There will be outreach work such as bringing young people with special needs to do therapeutic gardening at St Anne's and reaching out to those in less affluent parts of the city. It is hoped that KTG will develop models for others to use. It is a very new venture and there will be scope for the Deanery to get involved as it evolves. There will be more information in due course.
- 2 Break.
- 3 Welcome by Rev Alex Barrow who thanked St Anne's and Rev Canon Dr Giles Fraser.
- 4 Minutes of the last meeting were approved (proposer Keith Walter, seconder Judith Russenberger).
- 5 Upcoming Diocesan Synod Elections
Elections to the House of Laity and the House of Clergy for the next term of Diocesan Synod are taking place in July. The term is 3 years from August 2024 and each year there are 2 meetings on a Saturday and 1 meeting on a Wednesday evening at St Peter's, Battersea. Diocesan Synod themes for the next three years will include clergy well-being

in times of change, environment (including net zero carbon), continuing implementation of the Anti-Racism Charter, and parish finances for growth in post-pandemic recovery.

A promotional video was shown (youtu.be/AvuvR0h_Dhg). In addition, Paula Brackenridge highlighted the importance of having a voice on the Diocesan Synod to steer Diocesan policy and that of the national church. Rev Alex Barrow also said it was good way of holding Diocesan leadership to account.

Nomination forms must be returned to the Deanery by Friday 14th June. There are 2 lay places and 3 clergy places to fill. If there are more nominations than places, there will be an election on Wednesday 5th July.

6 Operation Forgiveness Update



Paula Brackenridge said that the Deanery had now made their donation to [Operation Forgiveness](#) which had included pledges from individual churches. She gave a brief history of the project for the benefit of non-synod members present. She had also spent a morning in a primary school in South London with Jason, Tayo and Sarah, witnessing the amazing work they do. A full account is given on the deanery website (richmondandbarnesdeanery.org/deanery-response-to-knife-crime/). She praised the courage of Tayo and Sarah in speaking about Zac's murder and their journey to forgiveness; the receptiveness of the Year 5 class who were determined to make a difference after listening to and working with Jason, Tayo and Sarah; the way that Jason, Tayo and Sarah were able to talk about their Christian faith, present in the message they were delivering, even in a non-faith school. Paula said that she was proud that as a Deanery, we supported Operation Forgiveness. Rev Alex Barrow suggested that individual parishes may consider Operation Forgiveness if they are looking for a charity to support.

7 Climate Crisis, Net Zero and Eco Church update

Suzie O’Brien spoke about the following:

Global warming:

- The January–April, 2024 global surface temperature ranked warmest in the 175-year record at 1.34°C (2.41°F) above the 1901-2000 average of 12.6°C (54.7°F). According to NCEI's statistical analysis, there is a 61% chance that 2024 will rank as the warmest year on record and a 100% chance that it will rank in the top five.
- Vatican climate summit called by Pope Francis. Climate Crisis to Climate Resilience summit. Attended by Sadiq Khan.

www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2024-05/global-experts-and-leaders-convene-for-vatican-climate-summit.html

What’s been going on in Southwark Diocese?

Raising awareness and training:

- Pilgrimage walks with Bishop Martin in March.
- Earth Day in April – Planet vs. Plastics campaign.
- Deanery Website there is a 20 mile walking route around our churches - richmondandbarnesdeanery.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Walk-the-Deanery.pdf - If you are interested in organising a Deanery walk, please get in touch.
- March for Nature, 22 June. extinctionrebellion.uk/restore-nature-now/ Judith Russenberger is involved and encourages others to join. The march is preceded by Creation Cries Out Ecumenical Service: 11am, Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception, 114 Mount St, Mayfair, London, W1K 3AH. Includes children’s outdoor nature-based church. Register at christianclimateaction.org/2024/04/30/restore-nature-now-march-and-creation-cries-out-service/
- September 17th – Climate Chat in the Church, St. Luke’s Church.

- St Augustine’s Theological College is starting an MA course in September entitled “Theology for a Planet in Crisis’.



Theology for a planet in crisis

With strong support from its Chair of Trustees, Bishop Martin, St Augustine’s College of Theology has committed itself to be more ambitious in addressing the climate and ecological crisis in its worship and use of resources, but also in the way theology is taught and in how students’ spiritual and ministerial formation is fostered.

St Augustine’s is the Church of England’s longest-standing non-residential theological college. With teaching centres in Southwark and Kent, the college attracts people from across the South East, including the Diocese of Southwark, and from a wide range of backgrounds. People come to St Augustine’s to study theology full-time or part-time, often as part of training for licensed lay or ordained ministry.

As part of this programme of development, the college is launching a new master’s degree (MA) pathway – which will be ‘Theology for a Planet in Crisis’, delivered from September 2024. The pathway will enable students to engage with the questions raised by the climate crisis in theological depth and from a wide range of perspectives. A key

element will be practical learning through placements undertaken with agencies working in areas of ecological concern. Like St Augustine’s other postgraduate programmes, this MA pathway is aimed at people who have previously studied theology (or equivalent), including clergy and licensed lay ministers, and who wish to undertake further studies as part of their continuing development.

The pathway will be delivered as and in partnership with St John’s, Walworth – the first church within Southwark Diocese to receive a Gold Eco-Church Award.



Top and left: People study theology at St Augustine’s, often as part of training for licensed lay or ordained ministry. Right: The Revd Ellen James, Priest-in-Charge at St Christopher, Walworth addresses learners at St Augustine’s.

Further details

More information, including how to apply, can be found here: bit.ly/4K5Gf

Contact Rebecca Young, Head of Operations at: ryoung@staugustinescollege.ac.uk

For details about open events: bit.ly/4b3xc8B

You can also visit St Augustine’s YouTube channel: bit.ly/3v7PMH

Practical help for churches:

www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/webinars-getting-net-zero-carbon

Rolling webinars:

- Knowing your Ant from your Elder – Wednesday 22 May.
- Planting your Tree in the Communion Forest – Monday 10th June, 12-1pm
- Your Church, your Swifts – Tuesday 11th June, 12-1pm.
- Ancient Yew Trees, Wednesday 12th June, 12-1pm
- Solitary Bees - Thursday 13th June, 12-1pm
- Blueing the Church - Friday 14th June 12-1pm

And a vast library of webinar recordings:

- Helping schools cut their carbon, Feb 2024.
- Fundraising from environmental grant-makers
- Fundraising from community-led grant makers
- Becoming a net zero carbon church
- Conservation pitfalls and how to avoid them.
- Briefings on updated faculty rules in light of the NZ commitment.

Jonathan Walters: Net Zero 2030 Programme Manager, Diocese of Southwark.

(His work covers all Diocese Property. Churches, the Cathedral and Schools).

Role:

1. Develop and oversee plans for NZ and to get Diocese as near as possible to 2030 target.
2. Work with Eco Church on programme alignment. Gold award also needs to be Net Zero
3. Help with funding applications at Diocesan and individual church or Deanery level.
4. Help churches through DAC process and with funding applications for Give 2 Go Green.
5. Develop range of resources to support net zero mission.

84% of CofE emissions come from heating systems, so the fastest way to decarbonise is to look at this area.

It is recognised that it may be difficult in terms of cost, capacity and technical difficulty

for many of our churches to replace gas boilers, so alternative options for significant emission reduction are also being developed. Some interim ideas include:

- Move to a hybrid heating systems (so air source heat pumps supported by occasional use of gas or oil boilers).
- Move the majority of the church activity to zoned areas within the church space heated by clean electricity
- Move some church activity to other buildings such as church halls and schools where heating systems may have lower emissions.
- An approach to legacy funding also being developed.

Give to Go Green Grant Funding Opportunity:

- Southwark Diocese has been successful in being selected - one of 7 Dioceses selected nationally.
- Churches invited to apply for up to £10K in match funding.
- To be eligible the project must be part of the NZ plan, the church must have completed the energy toolkit (deadline is 27th July) and they will need to fundraise themselves to receive the match.
- Webinar for more information, 10th June 7.30-8.30pm.
- Successful projects will be announced in August
- Invitation to submit ideas for innovation project funding.

And please remember to fill in the Energy Audit before 27th July.

www.churchofengland.org/about/policy-and-thinking/our-views/environment-and-climate-change/about-our-environment/energy-footprint-tool

Carbon Confidence in an Hour – Online training session with Jonathan Walters.

- Climate science basics
- The missional aspects of climate change.
- The diocesan footprint
- Addressing Climate Change in Church.

Jonathan will train to be a trainer, after which is happy to offer a training session online for the Deanery and any members of the congregations that are interested in September.

If people are interested, we could plan a trip to visit St John's, Waterloo which achieved

its Gold Eco Church award. Also, it would be interesting to see in any newly built churches are net zero and also to visit one of those.

For the last year Judith Russenberger has been praying outside the Shell Offices in Waterloo for one hour (8am-9am) each Wednesday and invites anyone to join her. 19th June will mark one year since she started. You can read some of her reflections [here](#).

Rev Alex Barrow said we should pray about the heating situation in churches and for informed decisions to be made to solve the climate crisis.

Rounding off with a bit of inspiration!

Eco-friendly hall opens

On Saturday 20 April, Holy Trinity, Tulse Hill opened its new hand-built hall.

Building works took place over a seven-year period with the help of over 600 volunteers and a handful of contractors. The hall is made from recycled and upcycled materials including straw-bales, which are a waste product of agriculture. The building is carbon-negative and almost entirely recyclable. Unique in its design and execution, the hand-built structure extends over three floors and includes space for seating of 120 people. It is hoped that the building will be in use for more than 150 years.

During the opening, visitors had the opportunity to explore the building, experience its beauty and understand



more about its negative carbon footprint, while learning about its construction.

Talking about the opening, the Revd Richard Dormandy, Vicar said, "This has been an incredible journey of endurance and joy on which we've all learnt so much. Now we start the gradual transition towards making this amazing resource a first-class neighbourhood hub."

For further details contact Richard by email at: richdorm@googlemail.com

8 Area Dean's Notices

The Rev James Hutchings will retire as Team Rector for Barnes on 7th July.

The Rev Dr Hannah Swithinbank, Assistant Curate at St Philip & All Saints with St Luke, Kew will be ordained priest on Saturday 6th July at All Saints, Kingston.

The advert for a new Team Rector for Mortlake and East Sheen will go out shortly.

9

AOB

Parish Support Fund (PSF)

- PSF material will be sent to parishes at the end of June
- Please remind your PCCs to put PSF on agendas July-September
- Deadline for pledges is 15th September.

The Diocese will also be running a legacy campaign this year to encourage churches to consider including legacies in their stewardship campaigns. Rev Alex Barrow pointed out that most churches do not have a legacy policy and there are inheritance tax advantages when leaving gifts to charity.

10 The meeting closed with the Grace.

The next meeting of the Deanery Synod will be on

Monday 30th September 2024 – St Richard's, Ham