

The Grapevine

Issue 3: June 2021



St Mary and
St John the Divine

BALHAM

Newsletter from St Mary and St John the Divine
Balham High Road, London, SW12 9BS

T. 020 8673 1188 stmarybalham.org.uk

Welcome to the latest issue of The Grapevine, which this month has a decidedly green theme!

2021 is a big year for environmental action on all levels. On a global scale, the United Nations Climate Conference, known as **COP26**, will be hosted by the UK in Glasgow this November, and we're teaming up with two other local Churches to lobby MP Rosena Allin-Khan ahead of this significant event.

Thinking more locally, at St Mary's Balham we've got off to a good start with our Climate Conversation event hosted by Wandsworth Council. We are now looking forward to playing our part in the national 'Great Big Green Week', with plans afoot for an Eco Fair on Saturday 25 September – save the date!

For the past year, the pandemic has dominated our thoughts. The climate and ecological emergencies have not gone away, however, and the need for action is ever more urgent. Every step counts, large or small – whether we decide to reduce food waste in our homes (see over the page for tips!), switch to a green energy tariff, or [write a postcard](#) to Boris Johnson ahead of the G7. What will **you** do?

Corridors of Greenery

Peter Wright

In our local community we can see signs of hope for us all to recognize our interconnectedness with the whole of creation and how caring for the planet links with our responsibility for social justice. Some schools have created wild/edible gardens giving the children a place to simply be and experience nature and a resource to be shared with other community groups. "Pollinator Pathways" led by Transition Town Tooting and "Balham in Bloom," encourage residents to grow plants which provide pollen for insects and so maintain a rich flowering and fruiting habitat. Gardens, balconies, patches of neglected land and tree pits are being greened by willing volunteers. "Beautify Balham" regularly litter-pick in the neighbourhood and encourage us all to take a greater interest in caring for our environment.



Corridors of greenery becomes a metaphor for those links that exist across communities if we are open to both seeing and nurturing them. Small acts of care and engagement have a part to play in making up the richness of our social existence.

Congratulations to children from Trinity St Mary's for winning the logo competition for the Balham in Bloom poster. Definitely a winning design! The poster is on the website: <https://beautifybalham.org/balham-in-bloom/>

**The earth is the Lord's,
and everything in it;**

We are called as stewards and disciples to be awake, be present, be active in the care of the earth and all living creatures. Climate change is happening and is a global justice issue. Whilst it does, and will continue to affect us all, it is our poorest siblings and neighbours throughout the world who bear the brunt. Pollution, erosion of land, melting ice, failing crops, raging fires, diseases and a list too long to contemplate of environmental afflictions that erode the common good of God's creation.

Our scriptures are steeped in emphasis from the very first to the very last of God's love and desire for justice and peace. Every small act we engage in contributes to healing and restoration.

- * Repent
- * Pray
- * Protest
- * Speak Out
- * Stop Doing Harm
- * Plant a tree!

With a year of global focus on the climate and creation now is the time to step up our participation as Christians alongside neighbours and strangers across the Parish and Beyond. Let SMB be present, awake and impassioned as together we reflect, learn, pray and act alongside others for climate justice and celebrate the coming of God's Kingdom here on earth.

The Revd Mthr Berni Excell
Assistant Curate

Pen Portrait

Laura Baggaley

Laura is a member of the St Mary's Balham Green Team and for the past two years has also worked as Environment



Coordinator for the Diocese of Southwark. She is passionate about caring for the environment and has particularly enjoyed participating in the recent 'No-

Mow May' campaign – her garden won't win any prizes, but it is a joyous riot of flowering weeds and bees!

Laura also loves cooking, focusing on sustainably-sourced food in her shopping, and aims for a 'zero waste kitchen'. Her husband and two daughters are equally committed to an eco-minded lifestyle, although they weren't so keen on her recent attempt at 'zero waste fermented carrot-top pesto'!

Simply taking a walk, anywhere, with anyone at anytime; but with some reservations of course!

Do you prefer the town? Just look around you as you walk; at architecture, historic features, unusual objects and enjoy them for their own sake. Accept certain noises.



Or do you like green and open spaces? Just feel the softer ground below your feet, listen to the birds, and to the sigh of the wind in the trees, and spot a butterfly or a busy bee. Look up at the sky but don't keel over, and enjoy the company of others doing the same even if they are strangers.

You can use your walk to think productively or through problems, or to think plain nonsense or make up poetry inside your head as you go. You can pray and meditate. You can even think wild thoughts and the unmentionable. It all counts.

But I don't have the time you say. You do have the time. We humans are designed to get up, get out and walk, and it's no surprise that throughout these challenging months it has played a huge part in helping people to stay sane and physically well.

Walking is just about the very best exercise one can do. Just ask **Rose Harley**, who hopes to get us up, if not actually running, at some point in the future.

From the Kitchen of St Mary's Thinking about Food Waste

If food waste were a country, it would be the third highest carbon emitter in the world (after China and the USA). Food wastage is responsible for three times as much carbon emission as aviation! It is heart breaking to think of all the people in the world suffering daily hunger, when we consider that 24% of all food produced is wasted.

Top Tips for reducing food waste!

- spend a week noticing what you throw away
- adjust your shopping accordingly
- make a meal plan, including plans for leftovers!
- stick to your shopping list
- bread often gets wasted – try freezing half the loaf
- if you know you won't eat your leftovers, freeze them in meal-size portions.

There are lots more ideas and recipes at the [Love Food Hate Waste](https://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/) website, which says that average family of 4 can save around **£60 a month** by reducing the food they throw away; there's nothing to lose and plenty to gain!

TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Rose Harley

What calms you down?
What allows you to think and just be?
What's relatively painless unlike the gym?
What is both a clean and green way for the planet and the neighbourhood?
What doesn't need any special equipment apart from something decent on the feet?

The Grapevine Editorial team

Sarah McDermott

Marian Shaw

Wendy Newall

Lillian Mathieson

Brenda Turner

If you have any contributions for us at The Grapevine, please email them to

Dawn Dukar at Dawn.Dukar@gmail.com

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Please note that issues of 'The Grapevine' are now available on the church website:

<https://tinyurl.com/StMaryGrapevine>



Online Donations

If you would like to make a donation to St Mary and St John the Divine Church online, please do so by visiting the link: <https://tinyurl.com/StMaryGive>. We appreciate your generosity in these times.

Thank you!