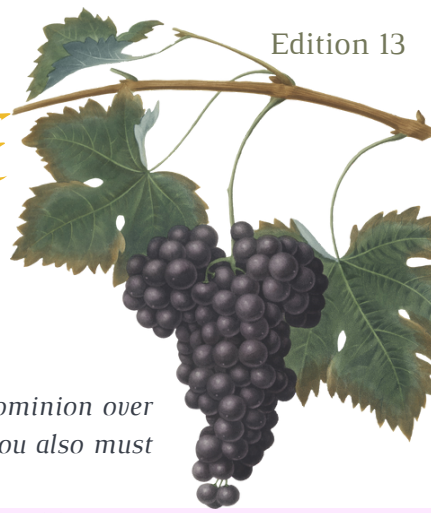




THE GRAPEVINE

The Newsletter of St. Mary and St. John the Divine, Balham



Happy Easter.

We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Romans 6

Rejoice my beloved friends for victory is ours. Christ's love for you has once more been displayed on the cross. His love is greater than any act of unloveliness we can commit. His redemptive desire for us is shown in the empty tomb as Jesus rises to new life. Now we who too will pass through death will also rise as he rises. Oh glorious day of which we never tire to tell. Death defeated and the assurance of life everlasting.

May the promises of Christ demonstrated and won for you at Easter comfort your heart now and always.

God bless you

Fr. Jonathan

--COMMUNITY HEROES CELEBRATION --

We are delighted that the dedication and hard work of Andy Stanfield have been recognised by the Balham and Tooting Community Association (BATCA). At their awards evening Andy was highly commended for the amazing work he does in providing activities and fun for adults with learning needs at the Gateway Club in the TSM school hall on Monday evenings. Members of the club and helpers were at the ceremony to share in Andy's delight at his award. If you would like to join the band of volunteer helpers, please contact Marian or Kamalini, who can tell you more.



--SATURDAY ACTIVITIES--

Lunch, crafts and games made for a lovely day in church on Saturday a couple of weeks ago. The creativity of the young people, not to mention their mothers, was very impressive, beautiful Easter cards and pictures quickly covered the tables. Lunch was delicious. We never know how much to provide and though, happily, the numbers grow with each event, there is always enough. Margaret's mum's rice was big treat!

--CORONATION CELEBRATIONS--

St Mary's will pull out all the stops for the coronation of King Charles. On Coronation Saturday, the plan is for a big screen in the church so we can join together with friends and neighbours from Balham to watch the coronation together. On Sunday, we will have a 'street party' after church in the Oasis garden with bunting, games and lots of scrumptious food. The more help we all put in, the more we will get out of this wonderful weekend of royal celebrations. Please contact Karen and Bruce.

--THE PATCHWORK QUILT--



'Would your Church like two of the patchwork quilts I made during lockdown? They will need finishing'. Along came 'Grandmother's Garden' and 'Gentlemen's Shirts'. Fortunately Christine had a plan. After a visit to the Scrapstore and the Wimbledon Sewing Machine Company, the necessary backing material was acquired and with over 150 special safety pins, tiny needles, special thread and happy hours of careful stitching, 'Grandmother's Garden' is well on the way to becoming a cosy quilt of great beauty. When both are ready they will be auctioned to raise funds for refugees.

--A WEDDING DRESS EXHIBITION?--

The Giving Group has a germ of an idea to put on a fundraising exhibition of wedding dresses in the summer - probably early July. We need your help in lending us your wedding dresses! Already we have promises from church members and friends, but we need a good number to get the exhibition off the ground.

However the 'make or break' issue for the exhibition is the availability of mannequins and tailors' dummies to display the dresses appropriately. Please contact Sarah or Wendy with your wedding dress pledges and any ideas about mannequins.



--WHERE IS THIS--



Do you where this is?

Who is it?

-- PEN PORTRAIT --

--MARGARET OLASEBIKAN--



Little more than a year ago, Margaret was attending church only rarely; now she is one of the regular worshippers and she contributes significantly to St. Mary's community life. Margaret is

the daughter of Olufunmilayo, (Olu), a long-term worshipper at St. Mary's. Margaret's parents came over to the UK from Nigeria in the 1960s and the family have lived in Balham since 1970. Margaret's father, also a member of the congregation, passed away in April 2016; her aunt died in September 2021 and, tragically, her younger brother died suddenly in November 2021. Olu 'clung on to God and kept everyone together,' which led to Margaret asking 'Who is this God?' She reached a turning point after Mtr. Berni's visit to the family and enrolled for the confirmation preparation classes. There she joined some younger candidates and they all enjoyed lively and fruitful discussions. Some of us attended their confirmation at the Church of The Ascension, Balham, in March 2022. Margaret finds studying the Bible with others is always rewarding.

Margaret is a lifelong West Ham supporter. At school, aged about 13, Margaret wrote a play that was performed by her year group, in which she took the lead role. She enjoyed Biology, Art and History. Studying both World Wars and Russian history fostered her hatred of war. Yet her favourite classical music is Prokofiev's 'Dance of the Knights'. She enjoys reading Jane Austen and James Herbert. After school, Margaret got a series of clerical jobs in government departments, where her skills in data analysis were recognised. These days, Margaret's leaning towards the creative and the practical motivate her in a variety of part-time jobs, e.g. painting/decorating, plumbing/tiling, laying floating floors, assembling flat-packs and invigilating in school exams. We know that not least of Margaret's many skills is cooking. When asked to cater for the 80-100 people attending the concert for Ukraine last June, she relied on prayer to succeed in this enormous task. 'God really delivered for a worthy cause'. Margaret says that knowing God has made a difference to her: she recognises the hope and love that comes from God in a broken world. She and her mother have come closer as their spiritual lives grow.

-- UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE--

U3A (University of the Third Age) sounds dauntingly academic but it is not about accumulating certificates and diplomas but instead focuses on enriching the lives of retired people as indicated in its motto Learn, Laugh, Live. A national institution, it has branches all over the country, including here in Wandsworth.

Apart from whole branch meetings once month with a speaker, each branch has a large number of smaller interest groups which meet independently. In every group the emphasis is on learning from each other about a subject, exploring new interests or reviving old ones and having fun and companionship whilst doing so. A group is often led by someone with professional qualifications and meets in a member's home or in a public location like a cafe, or library once a week, every fortnight or monthly. Wandsworth has over 50 different groups including several foreign languages (ancient and modern at different levels), art (appreciation or practical), literature ditto, crafts of various kinds, history(general, ancient, local, or family), various games groups, visiting theatres, museums and art galleries, astronomy, walking in town or countryside at several different levels or even just social groups. Any member can propose a new group. It is up to each member which (and how many) groups they join and they can also join in special activities run by Surrey U3A.

A unique experience for many people is the chance to participate in a Shared Learning Project (SLP) in which a group of members from different branches do research under the guidance of a university, museum or other institution ; I have been involved in two such SLPs – one doing research for Bethlem Museum of the Mind (on the history of their medicine bottle collection) and the other on the biographies of men who were inmates over the last 300 to 400 years of the Charterhouse almshouses in London. The latter involved reading original documents (it's an amazing feeling handling a piece of paper that was written over three hundred years ago!) and bringing your own skills to the task – and there is always someone to offer helpful advice and suggestions.

The possibilities U3A opens are enormous, friendships are a bonus which can spill over outside the groups, and the cost is very low. The annual subscription is £16 for one person and £28 for a couple and most groups pay only for materials, tickets to any places they visit and occasionally also room hire if needed. I cannot recommend U3A too

More information can be found at the Wandsworth U3A website: u3asites.org.uk; the national U3A website is <https://www.u3a.org.uk>; or Penny Holloway at SMB.

-- CULTURE CORNER--

Punchdrunk's *The Burnt City* (<https://www.theburntcity.com/>) is an immersive theatre experience out of this world. Set

one half in Ancient Greece and the other in Downtown Troy, it tells the mythologies of the Trojan War, the Fall of Troy and the fate of all at the power of the pagan Gods. Prepare to put on a mask, leave phones behind and lose those you came with as you wander through 100,000s of sq feet across several floors in hundreds of rooms. Blending themes and exploring darker sides of human experience, it's not for the faint-hearted. If you can find the bar in Troy before the day's end, you can take breaks to quench your thirst or relieve hunger with live music & performances. After a pause, return; a Greek, Royal or even a 'God' may lead you to a new adventure through an unseen path. -- Jack Lawson.



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

<https://tinyurl.com/StMaryGrapevine>