

Formed by the Spirit

The Newsletter of the Southwark
Diocesan Spiritual Formation Group

Opportunities, events, resources and articles
on prayer and spirituality

Issue 22: November 2014



Contents:

What's on? Events, courses, opportunities...	2-4
Tools for prayer: Meditation for children	5
A prayer walk in your church grounds?	6
Hearts on Fire: Local prayer initiatives	7
Reflection for Advent: Journey's End	8

When evening comes,
you will be examined in love.

[John of the Cross: *Sayings of Light and Love*]

**'Time to be Quiet –
a Morning with Julian of Norwich**

Saturday 22nd November, 10 a.m. to 2.p.m.
38 Marryat Road, SW19 5BD *
led by Rev'd. Cynthia Jackson

Want some quiet time before the Christmas rush? We shall be exploring readings from Julian of Norwich, a 14th century mystic. There will be time for silent prayer, music, bible readings and an opportunity to sit and reflect, or walk on the common. Tea and coffee provided but bring your own lunch.

For further information and to book a place contact Cynthia Jackson:
e-mail: revcynthia@timetalk.co.uk or
telephone: 0208947 5940

* The 93 bus from Wimbledon Station stops at the end of Marryat Road. There is limited parking on the drive at 38 Marryat Road.

At the London Spirituality Centre

The Church of St. Edmund the King
Lombard St. London EC3V 9EA
[near Bank Tube station]

For details of these and other course/ events go to <http://www.spiritualitycentre.org/>

Art and Soul:

A Creative workshop for spiritual directors
Saturday 22 November, 11am - 3pm
A gentle day to explore the theme of Autumn – surrender and transformation. We will have time to ponder and participate in contemplative prayer on this theme, and use collage as a means of prayer and heart expression with recycled materials provided – no experience necessary. Cost is £30

Spirituality Through Poetry

Saturday 29 November, 11am - 4pm
Led by Julia Keeling
and Kenneth Boyd Browne

The second in a series of days drawing on the inspiration and personal experience from a number of mediums within the Arts to help us look deeper and reflect on our own spiritual journey.

Cost is £40

Holy daring:

*Taking up the adventure
of following Christ*



Mondays, November 24th and December 1st,
6.30pm to 8.30pm

in St. Matthew's House, Croydon CR0 1PE
[close to East Croydon station]

We will use artwork, poetry and biblical based prayer to explore what it might mean for us to take up the adventure of following Christ. We go so far in our discipleship – but do we live by 'holy daring' and what might happen for us if we did so?

Led by Chris Chapman.

To book, please contact Chris Chapman
chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org 020
7939 9474

Walk the labyrinth

A reflective workshop and
labyrinth walk for Advent
at St. John's Waterloo,
[opposite IMAX / main line station]
Saturday November 29th
10.30am to 3.30pm



There is a stand alone introductory workshop at 1.30pm but you are free to come and walk the labyrinth at other times during the day.

Further information from Les Acklam
lesacklam@gmail.com

Events at the Meditatio Centre

St Marks, Myddelton Square,
London EC1R 1XX
phone: 020 7278 2070
email: meditatio@wccm.org

The Eight Big Problems of Life: Vanity & Pride

Wednesday 26 November 6.30 pm – 9.00 pm

Led by **Laurence Freeman OSB**

Please join us for the final talk in the series.
Cost £15.00 (Concessions £10.00) Drinks will be provided.

To book online

<http://www.wccmmeditatio.org/events-laurence-freeman-centre>

Christmas: The Season of the Gift

Friday 19 December and Saturday 20 December

In the midst of the frantic consumerism of Christmas we offer an opportunity to find peace in the busyness by reflecting on the deeper meaning of gift- the giving and receiving that takes place when God becomes fully human for us and in us. We are pleased to welcome two spiritual teachers to lead this reflection and time of prayer.

Rowan Williams - The Gift of Christmas 1

Friday 19 December 7.00 pm (meditation at 6.30 pm)

Followed by a conversation with Laurence Freeman and responses from the participants

Laurence Freeman - The Gift of Christmas 2

Saturday 20 December 10.30 am – 3.30 pm
A retreat day with talks, meditation and discussion

Cost: Friday 19 Dec: £10

Saturday 20 Dec: £25 (Concessions £20)

Both days: £30 (Concessions £25)

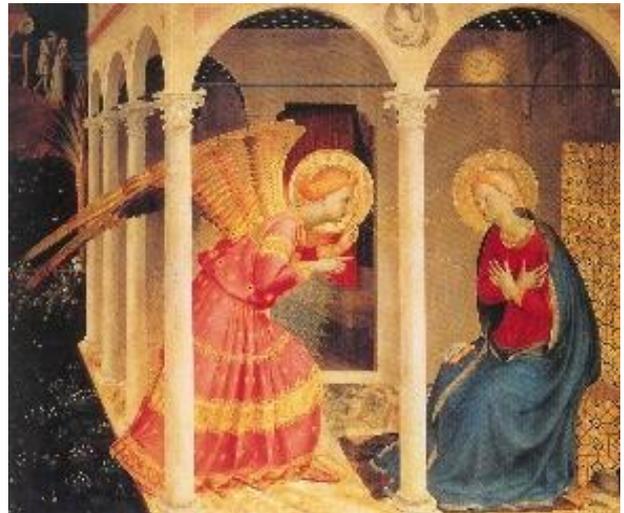
Booking is essential

To book online

<http://www.wccmmeditatio.org/events-christmas-season-gift>

Advent mystery in painting and poetry:

Exploring the mystery of God made flesh through the eyes of Mary



Mondays December 8th and 15th
6.30pm to 8.30pm in Trinity House
4 Chapel Court, SE1 1HW
Led by Sr. Magdalen Lawler SND

Evenings devoted to exploring the mystery of God made Flesh through the eyes of Mary, in particular. The basis for this reflection will be through scripture, which will be enhanced by the contemplation of well-known paintings. Poetry will help us to find language for a mystery that we struggle to express and to recognise in the unfolding pattern of our own 'annunciations'.

For information and to book contact Chris Chapman
chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org 020 7939 9474

Giver of bread and breath:

A meditation on the Lord's Prayer
A Quiet Day at Wychcroft,
Wednesday December 3rd, 10am to 4pm

Please Note:

This day is now fully booked

All will be well

The Spirituality of Julian of Norwich
Wednesday February 4th and 18th
7pm to 9pm in St. Matthew's House,
Croydon CR0 1PE
[close to East Croydon station]



Julian of Norwich was a woman of prayer, a theologian and spiritual guide. These two sessions will introduce some of the key themes of Julian's thought and explore their contemporary relevance.

Led by Chris Chapman, *Spiritual Formation Adviser*. To book:

chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org
020 79399474

Path for Life:

*Ways of Life as tools for growth
in relationship with God*
Tuesday March 10th and 17th
10.30am to 1pm

In Trinity House, London SE1 1HW

We will explore:

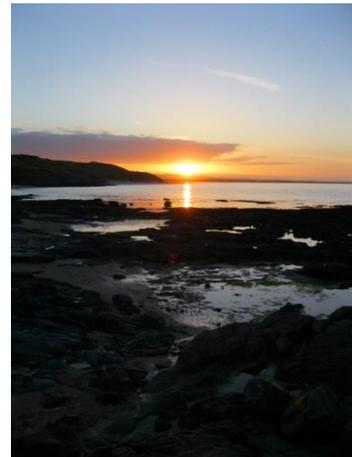
- Why a way of life might make a difference to our following of Christ
- Possible ingredients of a way of life, for example prayer, study, work and relaxation
- Meeting the difficulties: the complex lives we lead

Led by Chris Chapman, *Spiritual Formation Adviser*. To book:

chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org
020 7939 9474

Wychcroft Retreat Weekend: The Saving Grace

Friday 20th February, 6.30pm
to Sunday 22nd February, 2.30pm
As Lent begins we follow Jesus from the hiddenness of his life in Nazareth to the moment when he invites those who hear him to walk in his footsteps. How does Jesus emerge afresh in our own lives? Where will we go in his company? Alongside input there will be generous space for quiet reflection, supported by a range of prayer resources



Wychcroft is the Diocesan retreat and training centre near Godstone, Surrey. It is a quiet and welcoming house set in beautiful countryside.

The cost of the weekend is £122

For more details and to book contact:

Chris Chapman 020 7939 9474
chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org

Paradise Lost?

Reflections on loss and recovery
based on Angus Anderson's painting
The Fall

Tuesday 3rd March, 2015, 10.30am to 1pm
in Trinity House, London SE1 1HW.

Led by Angus Anderson and Chris Chapman

This session will centre on a painting by Angus Anderson: *The Fall*. We will use this and other artworks together with poetry and spiritual writing to explore both common and personal experiences of loss, and pathways to recovery.

Contact:

chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org 020 7939 9474 for more information and to book

Meditation for Children

Amanda Vasey

I have been meditating from college days and about 12 years ago began meditating in the Christian tradition. I meditate twice a day following the John Main tradition and lead a group at Clapham which meets every week in the Methodist Church. I was a teacher in a small one entry church school in inner London and decided I wanted to share this gift with my class. My class that year was year 3, so 7 and 8 year olds. Half the class was Muslim and I was determined that the meditation would be open and accessible to all. The first people I approached were the parents who were extremely supportive, then the head teacher and the clergy associated with the school. Once I felt I had support where to begin?

I began with an introduction lesson about meditation traditions round the world. I asked the pupils to choose a position they were comfortable in. Some sat in chairs, others on the floor, backs to the wall with crossed legs. To help them sit up straight I asked them to imagine they had a piece of string down their spine and then to pull it from the top of their head. I began with a guided meditation using waves on a beach and got them to focus on the sound, I spoke in a quiet almost monotone voice encouraging them to imagine they were pebbles being moved gently by the sea. This began at 5 minutes and built up to 10 over the term. I'd tell them they didn't have to join in but should keep quiet and not disturb others, and gradually they all would close their eyes and were still for the whole time.

When I felt they were ready I introduced silent meditation and explained about the use of a mantra. I told them I used the Aramaic word *Maranatha* meaning 'Come Lord'. They were encouraged to either use that or a 4 syllable word or phrase from their faith tradition. I explained the 4 syllables were important to help their breathing and concentration. One boy loved Star Wars and his mantra was Luke Skywalker! The class took to the silence incredibly easily; again we started with 5 minutes and built up to 12. Sometimes the pupils would lead. We used 3 chimes to begin and end the session. Many of the pupils took their skill home and showed their family how to do it; how amazing to meditate together as a family! Parental feedback was fantastic and my whole relationship with my class deepened and developed, I had several pupils with special needs both for learning and behaviour and all made progress. If work was too intense they would ask to meditate for a few minutes to ease their frustration, allowing them to refocus.

I am now a supply teacher and with the teacher's permission have led several one off meditations with classes throughout the primary range including one group of 60 reception age children. They take to it like ducks to water. I believe meditation is a positive skill that we need to give all pupils as soon as possible, just as we teach the alphabet. There are several resources aimed at meditating with children available from the World Centre for Christian Meditation (my class appears on the first DVD).

Finally my advice is: just do it, have a go. Some might see it as hippy – a New Age fad – but to do it well requires immense discipline and focus. Meditation can serve children well in their school life and in their spiritual development. At conferences I have attended most people are from the Catholic tradition, but with the advent of the Mindfulness initiative I hope meditation will be present in all schools. Regular meditation will improve the mental and emotional well being of children and give them a method of coping with life's stresses and challenges.

A prayer walk in your church grounds?

Kim Honey tells the story of the prayer walk around the churchyard of St. Margaret's Chipstead

If you have been in the churchyard in the last couple of weeks you will have seen our beautiful new prayer stones. Placed at strategic places around the churchyard, there are seven stones, each one carved with one of the seven 'I Am' sayings from John's gospel. The stones form a prayer walk from the lych gate, meandering past the church itself and leading down towards the new Orchard building. However, this has not been a new project but has been planned and prayed about for three years!



In 2011 the diocesan Spiritual Formation Adviser, Chris Chapman, came to talk to us about creating sacred spaces within the church and churchyard. We had been given a grant to help with this project and were excited at the idea of creating a focus for prayer and contemplation outside in the churchyard, and the opportunity to use scripture as a prompt and a focus for prayer in this natural area. It was while walking with Chris around the churchyard, and looking afresh at this beautiful space, that the idea of the prayer stones was born.

After much discussion and research we made contact with Simon Keeley, a stone carver and sculptor. Simon has undertaken several prestigious commissions, including work for Westminster Abbey and Harley Street, London. Much of the work he has

done is on a far grander scale than our seven simple stones, and having seen his website we felt we couldn't possibly afford him but contacted him anyway! And, in answer to our prayers, we discovered that Simon was most taken with the idea. He was just taking on a new apprentice for a year's apprenticeship and felt this would be a lovely project for them to work on together, so agreed to do the work for us within our budget so long as we could provide the stones.

Having decided to use Portland stone, we followed up a suggestion from Simon and contacted Albion quarry directly who suggested we go down to Portland to have a look for ourselves. God was clearly ahead of us on that trip too, because when we got there the Quarry Manager spent a good hour and a half with us, chatting about what we were doing, took us to the largely disused smaller quarry where there were many natural looking small boulders and as we picked out those we liked, marked them up for collection. When asked the cost he shook his head and said "No, there's no charge, you can have the stones. I really like the idea of what you're doing - just send me a photo of the stones once they're carved and in the churchyard, I'd love to see them!"

Once at Simon's studio the stones were painstakingly prepared and carved and one by one were transported to St. Margaret's, ready for the special service held on 5th October, when Bishop Jonathan came to lead a wonderful and joyful service of blessing and dedication of the stones.

We very much hope that the beauty of the stones themselves and of the words carved into them will provide pleasure, comfort and solace to regular members of our congregation and also visitors to the churchyard and those who come to tend graves. It has been a long time in the planning and creation, but we are delighted with the result, which we hope will enrich and enhance the already beautiful and sacred space that surrounds our church.

Kim Honey

Hearts on Fire

*Were not our hearts
burning within us
while he was talking with us
on the road,
while he was opening
the scriptures to us?*
[Luke 24: 32]

Bishop Christopher has invited us to renew our commitment to walking with Jesus, allowing the Spirit to guide our path and to kindle the fire in our hearts.

Through 2015 I hope to be working with local groups across the diocese to offer events, resources and initiatives in the spirit of 'Hearts on Fire'.

The three headings – *Loving God*, *Walking with Jesus*, and *Led by the Spirit*, suggest some different forms these initiatives might take:

Loving God:

A focus on exploring different ways of prayer and challenging people to take up the adventure of centring their lives in God.

For example:

- A 'school for prayer' with sessions introducing and experiencing different ways of prayer
- A 'House of Prayer' event aimed at resourcing churches in taking local initiatives related to helping people grow in prayer [for example a prayer table, a ways into prayer day, creating prayer stations in the church building or grounds].
- A quiet day

Walking with Jesus:

A pilgrimage based event – maybe in the local area. The physical journey is shaped by reflections on what it means to walk with Jesus more closely day by day.

For example:

- A walking pilgrimage over a day or a weekend, with communal prayer and individual prayer exercises woven in.
- A 'how to prepare a local prayer walk' event for local churches, with a guided route around the parish that can be undertaken by individual or groups.
- A prayer labyrinth

Led by the Spirit:

A discernment centred event, helping people explore how they listen and respond to the Spirit's leading within daily life and in the context of significant life choices.

For example:

- A week of guided prayer
- A 'how do we listen to the Spirit' day –exploring tools such as the examen, lectio divina, journaling, spiritual direction and retreats.
- A series of sessions on the theme of discerning and living our Christian vocation [with 'vocation understood in its widest sense].

If you would like to be part of putting on such an event in your local area, working with people from other churches and ecumenical partners, please get in touch:

chris.chapman@southwark.anglican.org



Loving God
Walking with Jesus
Led by the Spirit

Luke 24:13-35

Where our journey ends

'We are now approaching St. Pancras International where our journey ends.'

As I heard the train announcement I wondered whether I would get a similar message towards the end of my life journey. One thing is for sure: the follow up instruction to 'please make sure you take all your belongings with you' will not apply. As Job said:

'Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked shall I return there [Job 1.21].

Both natural and liturgical season remind us that all things end – and yet begin. The open-handed trees stripped of leaves, the bare earth and the brief day hint of our own day of letting go. Advent shifts our gaze to the final days when so much that seemed important will be swept away. And yet in this moment and beyond this moment there is birth, beginning, and the budding of a yet hidden spring. We are taken back to 'the mother's womb'. Life is renewed in her child of Love.

It is sobering, but liberating, to live in awareness of journey's end. Knowing we must one day let go can help de-clutter our attachment to trivial things. Only the giving and receiving of love matter in the end. It is time to savour and to spend.

Savour the gift of being alive, of having breath, of the rain and the sun, of music and beauty, of the people in your life and what they give you and are for you.

Spend who you are and what you care for. Dare to live, for this is the moment given to you. Don't hold back in sharing what you have. Now is the moment to love, whatever the cost. Nothing can be saved in the end.

Now, as we see our final destination, we dare to give and live.