

TIDINGS



Banstead United Reformed Church
Summer 2026



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Our minister's message

Dear friends,

As we come into the summer months, many of us will be looking forward to a holiday, a day out, or simply a little more space in everyday life. The longer days and warmer weather often help us slow down a little. However this summer looks for you, I want to offer a simple encouragement: your rest matters.

The words of the well-loved hymn *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind* are especially suitable for a good summer break:

*Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace.*

True rest is not just the absence of busyness, but the presence of peace.

The biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann described Sabbath as an act of trust, and that thought has stayed with me. To rest is to trust that the world will keep turning. Many people carry more than we realise — concerns about family, work, health, finances, church life, and the wider world. It is easy to feel weighed down by all these calls for our attention.

Through Scripture, Sabbath is presented as a gift. From the creation story, where God rests on the seventh day, to Jesus' reminder that 'the Sabbath was made for humankind', we are shown that periods of rest are part of God's vision for human life.

Perhaps rest is one of the invitations of summer: to notice again what is good. To share time with loved ones, enjoy a novel or an ice cream (or two). To take an early morning walk or pause long enough to watch the colours of a sunrise or sunset. These are the moments that remind us of God's goodness and grace.

Whether you are travelling this summer, or staying closer to home,

cherish your rest – it is a gift from God. I hope this summer brings you the peace and assurance that you are held in the love and care of God.

With every blessing,

Siobhán

FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the Summer 2026 issue of our Church magazine.

We are all delighted that Georgie Catt has arrived back safe and well from her time studying in Kyrgyzstan. She has contributed a very interesting account of her time there including details of the intriguing local cuisine and the exploring she was able to do in that area of central Asia. It is gratifying to hear how well she was looked after by her host family after the emergency surgery she had to have.

At the end of May we were delighted to receive a visit by friends from our partnership Church in Dessau. Our guests were Bernd and Ute Krause, Joerg and Bettina Rechenberg and Gotthold Hofmüller. We enjoyed a varied programme of activities whilst also reflecting on the importance of links such as this one. You can read a full account of the visit starting on page 8.

Did you know that we have a world record holder in our midst? Read about this and much more as we profile Diane Forzani in our Know Your Church Member feature.

Time Out is a Church group that has celebrated its silver anniversary this year. Read all about their anniversary celebrations on page 11.

We conclude our series of articles on features of our Church with a tour of our Church buildings, picking out a number of notable features and linking them to our Church's history. We have been greatly assisted in this by consulting the two books detailing the history of our Church written by Ernest Tickner and Ivan Brown

respectively, the book of reflections that was produced as part of our Church's 70th birthday celebrations in 2010 and numerous past editions of *Tidings* and its predecessor *The Bulletin*.

There are two 250th anniversaries to celebrate this year. On 4th July the Americans will commemorate the historic milestone of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This will be a time for them to reflect on their nation's past and look ahead to the future. Roy Jordan has contributed an article giving details of the events leading up to this significant event in history.

2026 is also the 250th anniversary of the birth of John Constable, the renowned British artist best known for his landscape paintings. David Skitt has contributed an appreciation of his life and work which can be found at page 18.

In the previous issue we included an article about St Paul's Church, Nork, and explained that we hoped to include articles about the other Churches in the Banstead Five in future issues. We are very grateful that Revd Kevin O'Brien, Deacon, has contributed a brief history of St Ann's Catholic Church for this issue of *Tidings*.

Finally, we are sorry to say that the next edition of *Tidings* will be the last, at least in the current format. There are a couple of reasons for this. Firstly, the software that we use to produce the magazine is Microsoft Publisher, and from 1 October this program is being discontinued. After this date it will not be possible to create new Publisher files, nor will it be possible to open or edit existing Publisher files. Getting to grips with any new desktop publishing program seems like too difficult a task for your current editors. Secondly, with the number of serving elders being reduced to 5, there are just too many jobs to be shared round, and something has got to give.

On a happier note, there is plenty to enjoy in this issue of *Tidings* and we hope you enjoy reading it.

Fiona, Diana and Cliff

Church Family News

Studies abroad

Hello everyone,



I've just returned from my four-month stint in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, studying Russian. I had an amazing time, although the language school was really intensive and it was definitely a challenge adjusting to Russian after the term I spent in Spain. I've noticed a huge improvement in my confidence when speaking, which I'm really happy about.

The city itself is great, and by the end of my trip I knew it like the back of my hand, as it's only small. I visited lots of museums, parks, galleries and restaurants where I tried the local cuisine. My first introduction to it was *bashbarmak* – long, thin noodles served in a clear broth with stewed horse meat. Up until that point, I didn't know that horse meat tastes like nondescript red meat, which was a pleasant surprise. The *kumuz* (fermented horse milk) we were served at the beginning of the meal was also a surprise, albeit a less pleasant one.

Bishkek makes a great base for seeing more of Central Asia. I went to Uzbekistan in the half-term break, which was just fantastic. I especially enjoyed Bukhara – it's a historical stop on the Silk Road



trade route, meaning there were all sorts of wonderful rugs and pottery and clothing in the markets. I went horse-trekking in Naryn, in the centre of Kyrgyzstan, and I was absolutely blown away by the views and the eagle show that we went to. I also stayed in a yurt not far from Issyk-Kul, the country's largest lake. It feels like a completely different country in winter and spring; winter is very

cold there (up to -15 degrees Celsius), so when the sun is out and the trees start getting greener, you really notice it.



I stayed with a host family for the last month, and it was lovely to feel like I was properly integrated into the culture. They could not have been more welcoming and caring, especially after my appendicitis surgery - that bit was definitely not in the homestay contract, but my host mum took it like a champ and

nursed me back to full health with lots of soup and tea.

I wish you all a wonderful summer, and I hope to see you soon.

God bless,

Georgie

Ruby wedding



Congratulations to Madeline and Richard Cranfield who celebrated 40 years of marriage on 19 April 2026 with a weekend away at the beautiful and sunny Rhinefield House in the New Forest, followed by a week at a large house in Exton, Hampshire with their family. The location seemed appropriate as they met through a mutual friend connected to the area.

Visit of friends from Kreuzkirche Dessau

We were delighted that we were able to further strengthen our ties with Kreuzkirche Dessau when we hosted a party of five from that Church from Thursday 28 to Sunday 31 May. Our guests enjoyed a packed programme of activities during that time.

On Friday, we went to Guildford. Our first stop was Guildford Cathedral. This was the subject of a detailed article in the Spring 2023 edition of *Tidings*. We had booked a guided tour which would



have been better if our guide hadn't been new to the job and reading from a script. Nevertheless, there was much of interest. The cathedral was consecrated in 1961, the last Anglican cathedral in the UK to be consecrated on a new site. It was built to a design by Sir Edward Maufe and in my opinion is more impressive from the inside where you get a real feeling of the fusion of space and light. It was interesting to hear of the difficulties encountered in its building due to the intervention of WWII. We heard

about the buy a brick campaign in the 1950s and saw the bricks signed by the late Queen and Prince Philip. Kathy Randolph was excited to tell us that she had bought and signed two bricks as a schoolgirl, although no-one can locate them now! It was that same community spirit that enabled the cathedral to be furnished in a time of post-war austerity as evidenced by the 1,500 hand-made kneelers that are still in use today.



The visit to the cathedral was followed by a walking tour of Guildford town centre. Highlights were the Tunsgate Arch, built as the portico to the town's Corn Exchange; Guildford Castle, thought to have been built by William the Conqueror in the 11th century, but where only the keep now remains; the castle gardens,

opened as public gardens to mark Queen Victoria's golden jubilee in 1887; and the town's links with Lewis Carroll. He wrote 'Alice Through the Looking-Glass' while living in Guildford. There is a statue of Alice with her sister and the White Rabbit on the lawn by the River Wey.



Supper on Friday was fish and chips at the Kirby's where David and Alison Skitt and Fiona Gayner joined the group of guests and hosts for a great social evening.



On Saturday, there was a choice of activities. Madeline and Richard took three of our guests on a cycle ride taking in Walton Heath and Reigate Hill. They set off after a leisurely breakfast and enjoyed views of Colley Hill and explored the Fort before lunch at the Junction 8 Café. The return

journey over the golf course brought them to Walton Pond for a rest and ice cream. They were all amazed to find they had covered 17.5 km without mishap.



The rest of the party visited Arundel Castle and were pleased to be joined by our minister. In contrast to the visit to Guildford Cathedral the previous day, the guide on a tour of the dry moat was well-informed and enthusiastic and really brought the history of the castle to life. The oldest part of the castle is the keep which sits atop the motte, an artificial mound over 100 feet high. The castle was badly damaged during the English civil war and although

some repairs were carried out in the 18th century, the castle was not fully restored until late in Queen Victoria's reign. The castle has been the seat of the Dukes of Norfolk and their ancestors for over 850 years. The Duke of Norfolk is also the Earl Marshal of England, in which role he organises major State events such as the opening of Parliament. The garden also boasts beautiful gardens which are worth visiting in their own right. We all joined together on Saturday evening for supper at the Cranfields.

On Sunday, Siobhan conducted our service for Trinity Sunday, and we were pleased to be joined by Cristina Cipriani, our Synod ecumenical officer. We sang part of a hymn in German and offered the Lord's prayer in both languages. Two of our guests bravely read the bible passages in English, with great energy and emotion. The fact that Cristina speaks fluent German was a definite bonus. Cristina also joined us for lunch afterwards at Ciao Italia.

Then it was time for our guests to leave and return to Germany. They were very happy that we had ordered such good weather for their visit! During our time together we were able to reminisce on the history of the partnership between our two Churches and how good it is to maintain our friendships. We look forward to a future return visit.

Cliff Houghton

TIME OUT 25th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



On 14th May, 10 members of Time Out met for a celebration dinner at the church to mark 25 years since the club first met. Banners decorated the room and there were photos of the club over the years and details of our meetings and outings. Our chairman and founder member, Diana Parsk, has kept very good records since the club began. It was good to see pictures of past members and to see how fashions - and our hair styles - have changed throughout this time. Of course none of us had aged at all!

It was a very convivial evening, which began with drinks and cocktails. Glenda proved to be an excellent cocktail mixer, even though it was her first outing in this role. She had been well tutored by YouTube!

A caterer had prepared a lovely three-course meal for us and there was much conversation and reminiscing as we ate. Diana had prepared an excellent speech going back over the 25 years and her brother Cliff had prepared a quiz for us with a question for each of those years.

Our meetings have included quizzes, outings, treasure hunts, crafts, music, games, tastings, and discussions on many different topics. Wine and nibbles and coffee and cake are always a part of the evening. Some evenings we just chat - we have always been a friendly and supportive group and we have all appreciated and valued the times we have spent together. We owe a debt of gratitude to Diana for having had the idea of starting Time Out and for organising the programme and the running of the group for such a long time.

Fiona Gayner

Know your Church member

Diane Forzani



No-one who attended the VE Day concert at our Church last year will forget the hilarious skit 'If I were not in the forces'. That it turned out so well was in no small measure due to Diane Forzani's skill in producing and choreographing it, somehow knocking into shape some less than promising raw material! But as we will discover, this should come as no surprise – Diane has been a dancer and choreographer since childhood.

Diane was born at Hillingdon Hospital in Uxbridge, Middlesex. Her Mum worked as a shorthand secretary for a couple of years before marrying her Dad in 1958, after which she became a full-time homemaker. Her Dad was a Senior Production Engineer and lectured at Kingston Polytechnic, as it was known at the time. He was conscripted for National Service in the Army and served with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in Germany. In 2008, her Mum was unexpectedly contacted by the International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery, who had been researching what happened to Amelia Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan. They had discovered that her Mum is a descendant of Fred Noonan.

Until the age of eight, Diane grew up in Southall, Middlesex. It was an idyllic childhood, with her Mum always at home. Her Mum didn't drive, so the family travelled everywhere by bus. Much of Diane's family also lived nearby including her great-grandparents, both sets of grandparents, and various aunts, uncles and cousins.

Diane has very fond memories of her family's Christmas gatherings, when her Mum and Dad would invite all the relatives over. Her Mum would secretly record everything on a reel-to-reel tape recorder, and it was always very entertaining to listen back

afterwards—especially after a few Advocaats!

Diane was very close to her paternal grandparents, who were always a big part of her life. They were happy-go-lucky, selfless people who taught her to get involved in the community and look after others. Her nan would sing on stage at any opportunity. They belonged to an OAP club and would take annual trips to the seaside. Diane would often go with them, sitting at the back of the coach and joining in the singalongs. Her nan would regularly take Diane to Olde Tyme Musicals dressing her up for the era and that was something her mother carried on with.

Diane was introduced to dance classes at the age of three by her Mum who would travel with her to shows, competitions and dance exams by bus, carrying the heavy tape recorder, making her costumes, and doing her make-up. It was quite an effort, but something Diane will always appreciate.

Last year, Diane's son Josh took her back to Southall to visit some of her old haunts. It was very different from how she remembered it—much busier and with little opportunity to park. It is now a very diverse area, with a number of mosques alongside her old church, St John's, which she was pleased to see is still standing. They visited one of her grandparent's former homes, and she had the chance to speak to the current resident and share some memories of her childhood there. She particularly remembers Sundays at her grandparents' house, by the open fire, the only source of heating in the house, toasting crumpets on a long fork. The small greenhouse at the back was full of tomato plants, and the smell of tomatoes on the vine still takes her straight back there.

Diane attended Featherstone Primary and Junior School in Southall before moving to Langley Vale in 1980, where she went to St Martin's Junior School and then Rosebery Secondary School in Epsom. Alongside this, she trained part-time at Laine Theatre Arts, attending every evening after school and on Saturdays. She later studied full-time at the Guildford School of Performing Arts for three years.

At her end-of-year show, Diane was scouted and joined a group called *Sharri*. Her first professional engagement was performing in a cabaret show at the Aradous Hotel in Bahrain. The act included a mix of modern jazz, classical dance, rock and roll, and even a full Fred Astaire-style tap routine. Her stage name at the time was 'Bambi'. They also danced with the pop group Showaddywaddy who invited them to perform with them whilst in Bahrain. Diane remembers it as an unusual and sometimes eye-opening experience living and working abroad at such a young age—she even remembers someone climbing a ladder to the group's ninth-floor apartment window in an attempt to meet them.



It is no surprise to hear that dance was Diane's favourite subject at school. She had a wonderful PE and dance teacher at secondary school, Mrs Butt, who took her under her wing and even drove Diane and her Mum to dance auditions. Diane also enjoyed commerce and still likes reading the business section of *The Sunday Times*. She was very keen on PE and athletics too—particularly long jump and high jump.

Diane's faith journey started in her childhood. The family attended St John's Church in Southall and later St Stephen's Church in Langley Vale, which is now part of the Parish of Epsom. She belonged to a liturgical dance group and often performed at Guildford Cathedral. Her Mum ran the Sunday School, and both her parents were involved in running the church youth club, which she loved—especially helping out in the tuck shop.

After school, Diane went to full-time dance college in Guildford for three years, where she passed all Royal Academy of Dancing exams with distinction and won the Best All-Round Dancer trophy at the end of her course. She studied ballet, tap, national dances, Greek, contemporary, jazz, singing, musical theatre and stage make-up. One of her ballet teachers, Madame Espinosa, was very strict and carried a cane. She also brought her King Charles Spaniel

to class—if any pupil wobbled during an arabesque, she would tap them with the cane and tell them off. Diane’s contemporary dance teacher was the actor Terry Scott’s wife, and they sometimes went to his house. Diane also organised and delivered popular fashion shows in partnership with Debenhams while at dance college. When she left, this was followed by a series of dance contracts in the UK and abroad.

In between contracts—what they used to call ‘resting periods’—Diane did temporary office work. While working at Petrofina in Epsom, she was offered a permanent role as a travel secretary, which she decided to take. Although she loved dancing, she is a real homebird, so it felt like the right decision.

Diane did not give up dancing entirely, though. She continued choreographing for local groups and performed with the Epsom Operatic Society for a number of years, appearing at local Epsom theatres. She also ran a cheerleading group in Langley Vale for a while.

After working in Epsom, Diane wanted a taste of London life, so she worked at the Industrial Society as a course administrator, and later at London Business School as Secretary to the MBA Registrar. She then moved back to Surrey and worked as an Office Manager and PA to the Managing Director of an investigatory company for ten years.

In 1998, Diane joined The Royal Marsden Hospital, where she still works today as Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive. Through her work at The Royal Marsden, she has been fortunate to take part in a number of memorable royal occasions. Diane and Peter attended the Platinum Jubilee Party in front of Buckingham Palace, and she also helped to host a fundraising event there. She has taken part in a procession in front of Buckingham Palace with members of the Royal Family in attendance and had the very special privilege of serving a cup of tea to Her late Majesty the Queen during her visit to the Hospital. More recently, she has had the pleasure of meeting their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales. She also attended a Royal Garden Party. It was a

windy day, and Diane was worried that her hat would blow off. Her Mum suggested she put Velcro inside it—but when she took it off, she realised she had secured the wrong side of the Velcro, and her hair came with it... not quite the look she was going for!

Diane met her husband Peter when she was working part-time at Old Nick's wine bar in Sutton. Peter used to come in every Thursday with a group of friends, and she and Peter gradually got to know each other. She had booked a table at a restaurant—which needed to be reserved months in advance—thinking she would have a boyfriend by then... but she didn't. So, she invited Peter along as a friend, and the rest, as they say, is history. The date happened to fall on the evening of the Eurovision Song Contest, so they always feel obliged to watch it.

Many of us will remember both of Diane's children from their time at our Church. Josh now works for Day Aggregates as an Area Sales Manager and is the father of Diane's two lovely grandchildren, Lorenzo and Gianna. Brydie, despite the rather daunting title, is a Child Death Review Practitioner at Princess Alexandra Hospital in Essex. She is also a brilliant baker and runs a small cake business on the side.

Despite her busy working life, Diane still manages to find time for a wide range of interests and hobbies. She is a regular at the gym and enjoys yoga, Pilates, aqua aerobics, dance fitness and Zumba. She also enjoys entertaining, walking, reading and the theatre.

Diane has been involved with the Pilgrim Pantomime Company since 1995 as a choreographer, although she stepped down this year to allow others to take over. She regards it as a hugely rewarding experience, particularly working with such talented young people in the community.

At home, Diane has a 13-year-old labradoodle called Daisy, who brings her a great deal of joy. She also enjoys reading, especially on her train journeys into London. She particularly enjoys biographies, although the most recent book she read was Richard Osman's *The Impossible Fortune*.

Diane has recently become involved with the charity Tracks Through Pastures, which our church supported through its Christmas card donations. The charity offers animal-assisted therapeutic interactions, providing a non-judgemental, calming environment where people of all ages can explore their thoughts and emotions through structured programmes in the beautiful Surrey Hills.

With regard to her musical tastes, Diane enjoys a wide range of music. In particular, she likes anything she can dance to. On Sunday mornings, she often listens to *Pavarotti and Friends*, which was a tradition of her father-in-law before he went to church.

Diane says that her deciding to come to our Church was all the fault of Diana Parsk. Brydie was one of the attendants when one of Diana's daughters was May Queen. As part of the May Queen celebrations there was a service at our church and Diane immediately felt at home.

To finish this profile of Diane we asked whether there is anything readers might be surprised to learn about her. This is her reply:

'I have a phobia known as xylophobia—a fear of unpolished wood. I find it very difficult to touch anything that is not varnished, particularly wooden ice lolly sticks. Even writing about it makes me uncomfortable. I have also done two parachute jumps—one of which ended with me landing in a field of cows and being surrounded by them for quite some time. From time to time, I still enjoy riding pillion on the back of Peter's Harley-Davidson. I have also abseiled down the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth for the Royal Marsden—it was a very windy day, which made it even more of a challenge. Finally, I was part of a world record with Roy Castle. In 1977 I was one of 500 tap dancers gathered in the BBC Television Centre courtyard, around the fountain, breaking the world record for a mass tap dance. Coincidentally, one of my neighbours is currently in a tap group trying to break that very record, but they haven't managed it so far!'

JOHN CONSTABLE

John Constable was born on 11 June 1776. He was born in East Bergholt, Suffolk. He painted many notable portraits, from which he made a living at one time, and some significant religious paintings, but overwhelmingly he is renowned for his landscape paintings. He was a contemporary of that other British colossus of landscape painting, Turner, but comparisons between the two are irrelevant because they each offered something distinctive (nor was there much rivalry for Constable once said that there was not a person in the land who would not like to own a Turner - not accurate but hardly indicative of mutual antipathy).

Constable's landscapes were largely biographical i.e. of places



with which he was familiar. The Suffolk paintings of the neighbourhood in which he grew up are the most numerous. These include 'The Hay Wain', probably his most famous work. Hampstead, the Thames and Brighton all feature strongly as well. His great distinction was through accurate depiction of ordinary country activities to illuminate the beautiful in the everyday. You forget that

those working in these lovely pictures were performing gruelling work and drudgery. Constable wanted those workers and us still to marvel at the surrounding beauty. In hard or worrying times still to delight in the positive in life is a real gift. (Constable lived through war, civil unrest, poverty in agricultural regions, the Industrial Revolution and the turbulence of political reform).

The biographical nature of his work also comes out in connections to his family. So in 'Flatford Mill' we see not his father, who has just died, but his black hat in the pathway. Constable had to wait many years to marry Maria Bicknell, but they had seven children

and, by all accounts, a very happy marriage except for Maria's poor health. When she died, Constable painted a masterpiece :



'Hadleigh Castle' – one of his more dramatic paintings – that is filled with the brooding darkness of grief and the thrilling light of hope. You sense the passion in the man. He very often worked 'en plein air'. This outside work was difficult for a painter but Constable felt that it gave

authenticity to his work. It certainly made his depictions of clouds and skies stunningly good.

Constable died suddenly in London on 31 March 1837.

Throughout his life, he always felt as though nature in wood, river and open fields, through its raw beauty and with the work performed around it, was issuing to him a call and invitation to use his gifts to depict its wonder. We all have reason to be grateful and are blessed that John Constable heard and followed that invitation and call.

David Skitt

A Story

This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody.

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

Looking round our Church

Last year, we initiated a new feature for *Tidings*, providing the history of various aspects of our Church buildings and their contents. To date we have talked about our mural, our memorial window, the Celtic Cross, the Spencer Hall, and our organ. For this issue, we will take a tour of the Church and look at other features that connect to our history.

There are several reminders of the support that the then Sutton Congregational Church gave in helping to establish our Church. This support largely came about due to the fact that our founder, Mrs Spencer, and many other original covenant members, came from Sutton. The Sutton Church gave £1,500 (a very large sum in the late 1940's) towards the building of the new Church, and this was handed over by Graham Glegg, the senior deacon, who also made a personal commitment to provide a communion table for the new building. Mr Glegg laid one of the foundation stones of the new building but died suddenly soon afterwards. Our communion



table was given in his memory by his wife. The two unnamed communion chairs were given by Harold Cotes, another Sutton member and our font was given to us by the Sutton Women's fellowship. The two named communion chairs were the gift of one of the founder members, Leslie Palmer, in memory of his parents Robert and Ethel.

Two foundation stones were laid for the new Church. The second was laid by Arthur Barfoot. Mr Barfoot was an active pioneer member of the group that met in the Infants' School during the war years and became the first chairman of the Church Council formed in 1943. He is remembered by the pew front behind which the sound desk now sits. This was given in his memory by his daughter with the inscription paying tribute to his lifetime of service '*Better a mite of help than a mort of pity*'.

Turning our attention to the pulpit, if you look carefully, you will see a small plate attached to it. The pulpit was given by Ethel Caird, another of our covenant members. She gave the pulpit in memory of her father, Revd Ira Boseley, a congregational minister. He wrote an interesting history of the independent congregation that met in Westminster Abbey in Cromwell's time. Interesting that Westminster Abbey was once the home of a Congregational Church! The pulpit was first situated in the original church Sanctuary, now the Church Hall, and moved when the present sanctuary was opened in 1957. Apparently, when the original



Church was opened in April 1951, the pulpit arrived in sections on the day before the opening service. It was only partially assembled on the Saturday morning of the service and the then Church Secretary, Dick Tilley, spent the service hoping it would not collapse whilst the Moderator, Revd Andrew James, was preaching. It didn't!

Above the pulpit steps hangs a metal cross which is a gift to our Church from the first group of young people to visit us from the Palatinate Church in 1962. The cross above the world, symbolising the victory of Christ, is the emblem of the youth movement of that Church and serves as a reminder of our link with the Friedenskirche, Ludwigshafen. It also helps to remind us that the gospel preached from the pulpit is the good news of the victory of Christ over the cross.

Returning to the communion table, the minister's chair is a reminder of Revd Arnold Anthony, a congregational minister who played an important part in the early years of our Church. On his retirement in 1935, he moved to Fiddicroft Avenue, Banstead, to be near his daughter. In retirement he provided the Sutton Church with the benefit of his wisdom and experience and Mrs Spencer made many calls on him when she instituted the first services in Banstead. He conducted a thanksgiving service in Banstead on VE Day, and he read the lesson at the Covenant service in 1946. He

and his wife were signatories to our covenant. Revd Anthony is also remembered in the naming of one of the other rooms in our Church buildings. The original building included a small room used as a Junior Church classroom and a small meeting room and was named the Anthony Room in memory of Revd Anthony who had died in 1949. In 2003, it was decided to reconfigure the room, with access changed to the Church vestibule, and it became the Anthony Library. The bookshelves in the library were the gift of Ronald and Peggy Mason, and other refurbishments were made possible by gifts from Mac and Ruth Kirby, the parents of our Church Secretary. These included the creation of a small room that is used primarily by those who prepare the beautiful flower arrangements that enhance our worship each Sunday.

The communion table also has a brass table lectern. This was a gift to the Church in 1972 in memory of Revd T Wemyss Reid, the part time minister of our Church from 1946 to 1949.

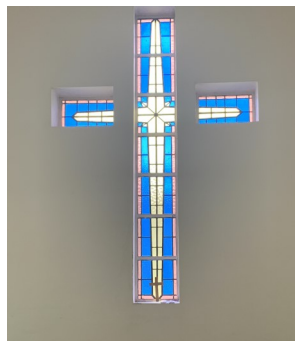
We were blessed that for many years we had Jim Davies, a very skilled woodworker, as one of our Church members, and he provided many of the artifacts in our Church. As well as the Celtic Cross that was the subject of a separate article in the Autumn 2025 edition of *Tidings*, his work includes the two tables on your left as you enter the Church through the centre doors, the cabinet that houses our mobile video screen, the small table below the pulpit and the mobile, foldable lectern.

Moving down the Church, we come to the piano. This is a fine instrument made by Welmar, a highly regarded English brand. The piano was a gift to the Church from the Nurse family in memory of Frank and Winnie, who were founder members of the Church.



Moving further down, we come to the Sanctum. A plaque on the vestibule outside the Sanctum declares that Banstead URC was founded in faith in 1940 and extended in faith in 2000. This extension to the Sanctuary provides a flexible space which, depending on whether

the partition doors are open or closed, can either create a larger sanctuary or a separate meeting space. The original church building included a back window in the shape of a cross. This was



a particular wish of Jack Calder, who was a deacon in the 1950s and 1960s and was treasurer at the time of the building of the present sanctuary in 1957. When plans were being drawn up for the building of the Sanctum, it was regarded as important that the cross window should be taken down and repositioned in the rear wall of the sanctum. Jack Calder originally provided funds to allow the cross to be illuminated at night and it is

very gratifying that the cross continues to be illuminated.

In our 70th anniversary book, Revd Jennifer Millington, our minister at the time of the building of the Sanctum, tells an amusing story about the opening. The opening was to be performed by the Moderator with the Mayor of Reigate and Banstead in attendance. A problem surfaced when it was realised that strict protocol required the mayor to be seated in the front row of proceedings. Not a problem until it came to the dedication which took place in the Sanctum and required everyone to turn around, leaving the mayor at the back. So, a plan was drawn up to have a procession during the singing of a hymn whereby the Moderator, Mayor and choir would move down the Church ready for the dedication and everyone would be in the right position. Not quite. The organist, Brenda Houghton was still sitting at the organ at the front of the Church, whereas all the musical action was now to take place at the rear of the Church. Apparently, someone suggested a skateboard!

We will complete our tour of the Church buildings in the Fellowship Room. This was built behind the Church buildings in 1962 to provide additional space for a growing Church and to provide a comfortable space for Church meetings. On the wall hang the words of a traditional English song, which extol the

virtue of true Christian fellowship:

*Lo here is fellowship.
One faith to hold
One truth to speak
One wrong to wreak
One loving cup to sip
And to dip in one dish faithfully
As lambkins of one fold
Either for other to suffer all thing
One song to sing
In sweet accord
And making melody
Lo, here is fellowship.*

Cliff Houghton

Christian Aid Week



On 17 May, instead of the usual morning service, the Banstead congregation went to Reigate Park URC for a joint service to mark the start of Christian Aid Week. The service was led by the Revd Siobhan Antoniou and included a film showing Christian Aid workers helping local

Kenyans to grow plants and vegetables stacked on vertical tiers with water trickling down from the top tier. The Reigate Park children played a prominent role in the service and replicated (on a much smaller scale) the plant tiered system.

After the service, members of the two churches enjoyed a lunch of soups and desserts kindly provided by Reigate Park members. All proceeds from the service and lunch were donated to Christian Aid.

Roy Jordan

Two babies in the womb

A philosophical parable used by Ian Catt as a devotion. It turns the concept of a life after death on its head—instead of contemplating the unknown through the lens of the known, it does the reverse, imagining how something that is widely known and accepted may appear to those who aren't able to see the bigger picture.....

Twin babies are in the womb - and the first baby turns to the second one and asks, 'Do you believe in life after delivery?'

The second baby replies, 'Of course, there has to be something after delivery. Maybe we're here to prepare ourselves for what's to come next.'

The first baby replies, 'No way. There is no life after delivery. What kind of life would that be?'

The second baby says, 'I don't know, but I think there will be more light than we have here, and maybe we will walk around with our legs and eat with our mouths.'

The first baby says, 'That's absurd. Walking is impossible, and eating with our mouths, ridiculous. The *facts* are that we get our nourishment through the umbilical cord, and life after delivery is impossible because the cord is too short.'

The second baby says, 'I think there is something greater than this small dark place, something beyond what we can see.'

The first baby replies, 'But no one has ever come back from delivery. Delivery is the end of life, and after it is nothing but silence and oblivion. It takes us nowhere.'

The second baby replies, 'Well, I don't know for sure, but I believe we will meet our mother, and she will take care of us.'

The first baby replies, '*Mother?* You actually *believe* in a mother? If she's real, then where is she now?'

The second baby replied, 'She is all around us. We live in her. Without her, this world would not exist. The first baby replied, 'I've never seen her, so she can't exist.'

The second baby replied, 'Sometimes, when we are quiet, I hear her voice. I feel her loving presence. I believe life after delivery is real.'

St Ann's Church



In the 1920's, considerable house building took place throughout Banstead and Nork. At that time, many Catholic families moved into the area to join those already here, together forming a faith community without a church building. The Church the People of God had been working to bring about a church building for some time and it came to fruition when the plot of land that the church stands on today was purchased in December 1929 and a hut was moved from Epsom Parish and arrived at the end of February 1930. The hut was to be a chapel for Mass serviced by the clergy of St Joseph's Epsom. After it was erected, a meeting took place in the hut to consider and determine what was needed to make it a place of worship.

On 6 May 1931, Canon Christall, Parish Priest of St Joseph's Epsom, wrote to Bishop Amigo stating that the Parishioners 'humbly petition your Lordship that the church be dedicated to St Ann the mother of Our Lady'. A solemn opening by Bishop Amigo took place with Holy Mass on Wednesday 24th June 1931 with the hut being dedicated to St Ann and Holy Mass was said regularly twice a week.

Canon Christall turned his attention to the future, the need for a permanent church building and a presbytery. In fact, the need for a presbytery became more important for the purpose of acquiring a permanent priest. This happened when the Reverend Edward Dockery took up residence as Rector on 3rd October 1936. There were to be two Holy Masses on Sunday at 8.00am and 10.00am,

along with daily Holy Mass at 7.00am except Thursdays when it would be at 10.00am. So the Church the People of God was really launched and they had a place to worship together. However, they were still part of the Parish Community of St Joseph's Epsom. The building was a Mission Station until January 1968 when the Reverend James Kenny was appointed the first canonically recognised Parish Priest. In Canon Law, St Ann's was at last formally recognised as a parish, with geographical pastoral responsibility for Banstead and Nork.

At this point it is important to refer to St Anne's School, (note the different spelling). The first beginnings of the school came about by Father Edward Dockery putting a notice in a Catholic paper in 1937 asking 'if for the love of God and very little money' would someone come to teach a small number of children.

A Mrs Elsie Smith, a qualified teacher and Catholic from Sutton applied and was recruited, and the school opened in 1938 in the chapel with fifteen pupils.

In 1944 Father Lawrence Ryan bought Court House and it became the site of the present school. Initially it was run as a private school by the parish with lay teachers until September 1954. However, Canon Moriarty along with Bishop Cowdery enlisted the help of nuns of the order of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God to run the school and the first Head Teacher was Sister Patricia Fitzgerald and she remained head until 1975.

In 1965 the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton was created and Southwark became the Archdiocese and St Anne's School gained Voluntary Aided Status in 1969. To that end the school has its own history, but it remains very much part of St Ann's Parish Community.

In continuing the history of the parish, it happens that just prior to the war in 1939, the congregation stood at about three hundred (300) for the faith community and the parish was still being built under the guidance of Father Edward Dockery. However, tragedy struck on a developing faith community in September 1943 when

Father Edward died from wounds received from a bomb that hit his car.

In May 1943, the Reverend Lawrence Ryan took up residence and it was during his tenure that the present church, other than a few additions, was completed in 1950. A Scout Group was formed in 1954, followed later by the establishment of the Girl Guides and Brownies in the 1960's.

The parish was growing at a pace and so many members were involved in fostering the faith community in many different ways; so many good and faithful servants of the Lord, too numerous to name. They were the ordinary parishioners over the years who remained steadfast in nurturing by loving and serving the Lord our God.

What was and still is so significant within the community of St Ann's is the depth of spirituality that has helped manifest itself since 1971 in ten parishioners being ordained to the priesthood and four parishioners ordained as permanent deacons.

A further significant aspect of the parish was the coming together of the Banstead Five Churches over forty years ago. In our diversity there developed a strong vibrant ecumenical movement that bore witness in so many ways in spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ.

More recently, the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton under our previous Bishop Richard Moth, who has now been installed as the Archbishop of Westminster, launched a Diocesan Pastoral Plan, The Word Who Is Life, The Call to Mission. As it relates to Epsom Deanery, of which St Ann's is part, this plan has been paused until a new bishop is appointed. We ask for your prayers that an appointment will happen soon. However, in the meantime, we continue to be a faith community, along with our sister and brother Christians of the Banstead Five Churches, to love and serve the Lord.

Kevin O'Brien

Recipe—Syllabub



Ingredients:

75g (3 oz) caster sugar
150ml ($\frac{1}{4}$ pint) white wine
300ml ($\frac{1}{2}$ pint) double cream
Juice of 1 lemon

Method:

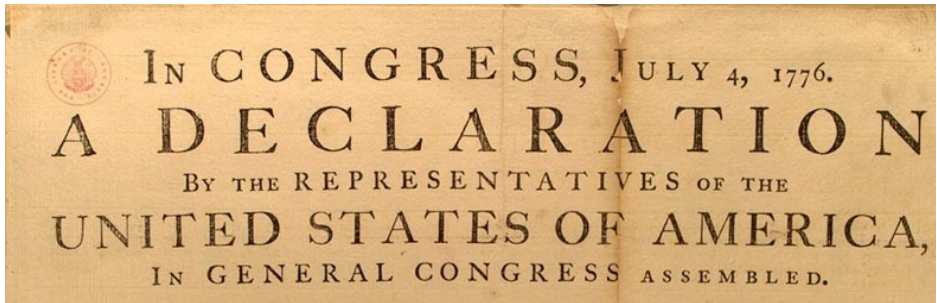
Add sugar to wine and stir until dissolved
Add cream and lemon juice
Beat with electric mixer until mixture thickens into soft peaks
Syllabub looks best when presented in wine glasses

Make the syllabub a day or two in advance to give some of the wine a chance to drop to the bottom of each glass. Once you have eaten the syllabub you can drink the wine that remains.

Kathy Randolph

The American Declaration of Independence

250th anniversary



Some written words ring out from the page and are remembered across the world. One such declaration was written 250 years ago by a small committee of colonials in America seeking independence. Thomas Jefferson was deputed to write the first draft. After a short preamble, he wrote these famous words:

'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness'.

The full Declaration is relatively short. It contains a brief explanation of the underlying philosophy, which fundamentally is that to secure these rights requires the consent of the governed. The document lists the main grievances the British Colonies in America have against King George the Third and the British parliament. These grievances include: the King's absolute tyranny over the Colonies; judges dependent on the will of the King; imposition of taxes without consent; depriving jury trials in many cases; cutting off the Colonies' trade with the rest of the world (through a naval blockade); sending mercenaries and waging war against the Colonies; a military independent and superior to the Civil Power; plundering the Colonies' seas, ravaging their coasts, burning their towns and destroying the lives of the people; taking

away charters, abolishing the Colonies' most valuable laws and altering fundamentally their forms of government.

The Declaration states that British have been deaf to the voice of Justice despite warnings from the Colonies. As a result, the Colonies go on to declare they ought to be free and independent states and consequently are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown.

Historians tell us that the population of the 13 British American Colonies in the 1770's was about 2.5 million. Of these, about one third wanted to remain in the British Empire, one third wanted independence from Great Britain and one third wanted to focus on establishing and developing their settlement. This population was spread over 13 Colonies which were: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

Many in the Colonies had hoped for a reconciliation and looked for support from King George, but unrest was increasing. Great Britain was raising more revenue from its Empire and the American Colonies considered this was unjust. The Boston Tea Party occurred in 1773 and some Colonies had started a war against British troops in April 1775. In August, King George proclaimed a Rebellion Act and sent German mercenaries to help suppress the uprising in the American Colonies.

As a result, on the 2nd July 1776 in Philadelphia, a majority of the Second Continental Congress voted for independence from Great Britain. Initially, only nine Colonies had supported it. The Congress consisted of delegates from the legislatures of the 13 British Colonies and two days later, on the 4th July, it adopted the formal written Declaration. Earlier, in June, Congress had appointed a Committee of Five (John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Robert Livingston and Roger Sherman) to write a document containing its justification for this decision. Jefferson was asked to write a draft, which he did in the second half of June.

Congress edited and shortened the Declaration. John Hancock, as President of the Congress, was the first to sign it with his flamboyant signature. The atmosphere when delegates signed the Declaration was reported to be sombre but defiant. They knew that if they were captured and convicted the punishment for rebellion was hanging. Not all the delegates were available to sign but the final parchment version has the signature of 57 delegates plus that of Mary Katherine Goddard, who was Postmaster of Baltimore and owner of the Maryland Journal and was asked to publish it.

In the next few days, the Declaration was publicly proclaimed, read to the Colonials' troops, printed and circulated.

Thomas Jefferson was from Virginia and was influenced to some extent in his phrasing of the Declaration by the Constitution of the Virginian Colony. This in turn had reflected the 1689 English Declaration of Rights, which ended the reign of King James the Second. The British men, John Locke and Thomas Paine, are also thought to have had some influence on Jefferson's wording. Jefferson went on to be the American Minister in France for five years and he favoured France against the British. He became Vice-President of the USA from 1797 to 1801 and President from 1801 to 1809. During his Presidency, he concluded the Louisiana Purchase from Napoleon in 1803, which doubled the territory of the USA. In 1804 he sent the famous Lewis and Clark expedition across this new territory to find a route to the Pacific Ocean. As with some of the Colonies, Jefferson was full of contradictions. Despite his anti-slavery belief, he owned around 200 slaves.

We can perhaps share the American celebrations on 4th July of its 250th anniversary of Independence as we remember that it was in large part achieved by the spirit and resilience of British Colonials.

Roy Jordan

Morning Has Broken

‘Morning has Broken’ continues to be a favourite hymn. The words were written by Eleanor Farjeon, a poet and children's author, and is set to a simple traditional Gaelic tune. Perhaps its greatest strength is that it does what it says on the tin – reminds us what an utter privilege it is to experience the beginning of a new day.

It is easy to forget how special that is, because morning happens every single day of the week. The magic is lost in the mundane. That is not a tragedy of course; it's part of its power. I'm sure that at some time we have all been caught dumbstruck after opening the curtains to find a glorious morning scene awaiting us, and wondered if anyone else had ever viewed such a marvel. Who has not been lifted in spirits by the warm glow of the morning sun, has not sighed at sight of the snow-covered earth, not yet spoiled by human feet, and has not simply been humbled in the miracle that is the beginning of a new day? Well, you'd have to be made of stone if you haven't.

Mornings might not catch us dumbstruck each day, but the miracle happens all the same. Each one a heaven-sent calling to us. A fresh start. A new day again and again. A chance to learn a new skill, be better, be kinder. And if we miss that chance many times over, we still get another one.

But let us not forget what an utter privilege that is too. Mornings don't just happen on beautiful Spring mornings—mornings come even if we'd rather they didn't. Mornings bring their fair share of heartache, and they often bring hope that is dashed by midday.

Yet still they come, and we are the lucky ones really, aren't we? To see the sun rise must be one of the greatest blessings we on earth are given. Enjoy the summer ones in the coming weeks!

Spencer Mitchell

Summer Sun



Great is the sun, and wide he goes
Through empty heaven without repose;
And in the blue and glowing days
More thick than rain he showers his rays.

Though closer still the blinds we pull
To keep the shady parlour cool,
Yet he will find a chink or two
To slip his golden fingers through.

The dusty attic spider-clad,
He, through the keyhole, maketh glad;
And through the broken edge of tiles,
Into the laddered hay-loft smiles.

Meantime his golden face around
He bares to all the garden ground,
And sheds a warm and glittering look
Among the ivy's inmost nook.

Above the hills, along the blue,
Round the bright air with footing true,
To please the child, to paint the rose,
The gardener of the World, he goes.

Robert Louis Stevenson



Service Details

Our morning worship at 10:30am on Sundays is held in the Church building and on Zoom.

The Zoom link for services is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9922047878?pwd=SmxXY0lKckkvcFhJdFM1UTFHYjR0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 992 204 7878

Passcode: 126600

Recordings of the services are available on our website
www.bansteadurc.org.uk

Tidings is edited by Fiona Gayner, Diana Parsk and Cliff Houghton

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We are happy to receive your contributions, ideas and suggestions for *Tidings* at any time but copy for the Autumn 2026 edition should be with us by

Sunday, 13 September 2026 at the latest.





TIDINGS - Summer 2026