

# THE MAGAZINE

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through creativity  
& curiosity

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Hello everyone!

Welcome to the online version of the Spring/Summer 2020 edition of the St Paul's magazine!

Because of the current situation with Corona virus, we are not able to get the paper copy of the magazine to you as we normally would (though they will be available once we are all back in the church building).

But we did want you to see it because there are so many encouraging stories in it and we didn't want you to miss out.

So here it is. We have removed one or two pages that no longer make sense in the current climate but otherwise it is pretty much as is.

And while we're writing please can we invite you to stay connected during this very different time.

Connect in at 10am for Kids Online  
<https://stpaulsealing.com/kids-videos/>

Connect in at 11am for our Online Service by visiting [www.stpaulsealing.com](http://www.stpaulsealing.com) and scrolling down to the 'Live Stream' section on the homepage, or click on the livestream button on the app.

Do follow these links to take you to more of what you can access online from the St Paul's church family.

Sending our love to you and hoping to connect with you very soon.

Lindsay & Mark Melliush

## FOLLOW & contribute

Let us know what you think and what you want to see more of in The Magazine: [magazine@stpaulsealing.com](mailto:magazine@stpaulsealing.com)

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Get updates via our app: **St Paul's Ealing**



# hello & WELCOME



Dear Friends,

Our country has had so many narratives over the last couple of years. Endless discussion about Brexit. The uncertainty of a General Election. The New Year came, and we parted from Europe even though many of us still have no idea what that means. This has brought uncertainty for our local community, which is made up of such a beautiful mix of so many nations and cultures. I have heard a number of people express anxiety about residency and future security.

Then we have the narrative about the environment. Extinction Rebellion showed us one way of raising the issue and then onto the scene walked Greta Thunberg and showed us another. Children around the world are calling for action and change and as soon as possible. We have heard senior environmentalist David Attenborough adding his voice to theirs. These voices have provoked me to change and be more engaged with this issue. How about you?

We need to change. That's the call and it's a good call.

We must change in our approach to the environment. We have to change in the care of our neighbours by helping them to stay in the country that they love.

But amid all the change we need anchor points, the places that make it safe to venture out and embrace change. This magazine tells the story of many people's lives and where they have found their safe place. Through these pages you will hear how faith has shaped and reshaped people's lives to help us in the everyday.

Jack tells us of his journey into worship and how it made him think again. Sara writes of a surprising answer to prayer with neighbours she so appreciates. We hear how one GDPR panic moment turned into joy and relief. An article I found so inspiring is how a simple prayer meeting can change not just a day but a daily perspective.

Sit down with a coffee and enjoy reading some inspiring stories and articles on faith and life. I hope you will enjoy this magazine as much as I did.

Every blessing,

Mark Melliush, Senior Pastor



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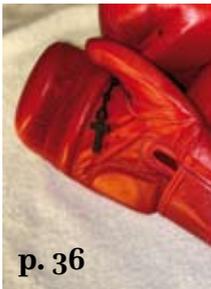
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## LIVE STREAM TALKS

The 11am & 6.30pm Sunday talks are live streamed each week

Watch the live feed on our mobile app or [stpaulsealing.com/livestream](http://stpaulsealing.com/livestream)

Download the App:  

[www.stpaulsealing.com](http://www.stpaulsealing.com)



# Choosing life

**Jacqui Hawkins is the administrator for the Wholeness Centre at St Paul's Ealing. Lindsay Melluish asked her what led her here**

**WHERE DID YOU GROW UP?** — I was brought up on the outskirts of Cambridge. My mother had severe mental health problems, as a result of which my older brother and I spent significant periods of time staying with relatives. My father often had to work evenings and weekends, so couldn't do the day-to-day childcare. Nevertheless, I have lots of memories of fun times with him, going on holiday and sailing on the Norfolk Broads. When my brother went to university, I lived with a foster family for my GCSEs and A Levels.

**WHAT DID YOU DO AFTER SCHOOL?** — When I was 18, I went to university in Reading to study French and German. I realised straight away that I had chosen the wrong course but in the time there I met my husband and became a Christian. My roommate Charlotte was a lovely person and I was struck by something different about her. She was a Christian and had a kind of inner peace and calm. Within a couple of months I had decided that I wanted what she had and made a commitment to Jesus after a church service where I was challenged by Deuteronomy 30:19: 'Listen, I have set before you life and death, blessing or curse, therefore choose life that you and your descendants may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him.' At the end of what had been difficult adolescent years I knew I wanted to choose life and avoid what may otherwise have been a path to self-destruction.

**WHAT COURSE DID LIFE TAKE AFTER UNIVERSITY?** — My first job was working in finance in a publishing company. I worked

there for five years during which time I moved with my husband to Ealing, where I had two daughters. I felt so fortunate that I was able to stay at home with my young family. At that time, we were going to Haven Green Baptist Church where I formed life-long friendships and grew in my faith and understanding of what it meant to live as a Christian.

**WHAT DID YOU DO NEXT?** — When my youngest daughter started school, I spent 10 years working for a Christian family funeral director. I then worked in the NHS for 17 years as a GP Practice Manager. During that time, after quite a long illness, my brother took his own life. This led me into a new phase of depending on and seeking God, particularly as I had to try to support my parents who had divorced and had not spoken to each other for over 20 years. I began to spend much longer in prayer about this situation. This led to me thinking more widely and deeply about the whole area of prayer.

**WHAT LED YOU TO YOUR CURRENT ROLE IN ST PAUL'S?** — In 2015, after my mother also took her own life, I started to sense that God was asking me to do something different and to leave my NHS role, but I had no idea for what. After an 18-month discernment process, I decided to undertake a three-year course in Spiritual Direction which appealed to me because it covered theology, pastoral care, spirituality and psychotherapy. I was also invited onto the staff at St Paul's Ealing as a Pastoral Assistant and was involved in setting up the Wholeness Centre.

**WHAT DO YOU MOST ENJOY ABOUT YOUR ROLE AT THE WHOLENESS CENTRE?** — It's good to be able to take the administrative load off the volunteer counsellor so they only need to focus on seeing the clients. I also enjoy



He has carried me in the dark times and proved himself to be a God of abundance and generosity



PHOTOGRAPHY: Roy Shiromani

providing a safe, welcoming atmosphere both in person and on the phone. It's a privilege to be able to pray for people who approach the Centre for Deeper Prayer and to be present and witness the transformation that can occur during just a short encounter with God.

**WHAT CAN WE PRAY FOR YOU?** — We are always wanting to grow the teams for Counseling and Healing Prayer. We are praying for a male

counsellor to join the team. Pray for me as I balance my role at St Paul's, the people I see for Spiritual Direction each month and seeing and caring for my four little grandchildren, my daughters and sons-in-law. Also, most importantly, to prioritise the time I give to God for reflection, listening and intercession. He has been so faithful to me, carried me in the dark times and proved himself to be a God of abundance and generosity. ▽



# ‘We are all the work of your hand’

## **Nicola Froggatt was part of the recent God in Clay Interest Life Group**

God in Clay was a pottery-making course that ran for several evenings over winter. It’s been years since I’ve done anything related to arts and crafts, so this group sounded like a great way of trying out something creative.

We met as a small group at Ania’s studio, where the art pieces already there offered lots of inspiration. We focused on hand-shaping rather than using a pottery wheel, which is an incredibly old way of forming vessels. It was amazing to think that people all over the world have been working with clay in this way for thousands of years.

Each session we tried out a different pottery technique. Ania is a great teacher and clearly explained the different steps involved. She also gave us the freedom to be creative and use these techniques to make things that particularly appealed to us – so we ended up with a wide range of dishes, bowls and vases.

We learnt two ancient methods of making pots: pinching a solid ball of clay into shape; and rolling clay into coils that are then built up on top of each other to create a vessel. We also experimented with different decorations like coloured glazes, and using scraps of lace, fresh flowers and leaves to imprint the clay in interesting ways.

We also thought about the many verses in the scriptures that call God the potter and us the clay. Such descriptions of how God is shaping us inwardly seem to gain new meanings when you know what the process of turning clay into pottery involves!

The two things that particularly struck me during the sessions were first, how every handmade piece of pottery is unique; and second, how forming it requires the potter’s patience, care and attention throughout the process. Understanding this brings a special and comforting dimension to verses like Isaiah 64:8, ‘Yet you, LORD, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand’.

The experience was friendly, enjoyable and thought-provoking – and I am pleased to say also resulted in a nifty array of pottery to take home. ▼



## BELONG

*New to St Paul's Ealing or thinking of joining us? There are lots of ways to connect with us. Here are some regular events that will help you get to know more people*

### WELCOME SUPPERS

welcome@stpaulsealing.com  
020 8579 9444

If you want to find out more about the church family at St Paul's Ealing, then this is for you.

These events happen several times a year. They are an opportunity to share a meal together, meet some of the staff and ministry leaders and hear about the vision and values of our church and what we believe in.

### SPORT

#### BRINGING JESUS THROUGH FOOTBALL

Saturdays 2-4pm  
Blondin Park  
Contact: Damien Anstis  
savesjesus@hotmail.co.uk

#### MONDAY EVENING 7 A SIDE FOOTBALL

Contact: Mark Tate  
mark@gurnellgrove.com



PHOTOGRAPHY: Roy Shiroman

### LIFE GROUPS

www.stpaulsealing.com  
lifegroups@stpaulsealing.com

Our worship services are a very important part of church life, but it's at our Life Group meetings during the week that we can experience close friendship and mutual support, helping each other as we go on as followers of Jesus.

Various groups meet throughout the week. More details of the different groups and contact details for the leaders can be found on p45 or on the St Paul's church website.

### MEN'S AND WOMEN'S EVENTS

www.stpaulsealing.com  
ben@stpaulsealing.com  
lindsay@stpaulsealing.com

There are regular events run for men and women in the church, ranging from breakfasts to curry nights, socials and outdoor activities.

### ALPHA

office@stpaulsealing.com  
Wednesdays 7.30-9.30pm

Everyone has questions about life. Does God exist? What about all the suffering in the world? Does prayer work? This course provides a place to discuss these questions and many more in a friendly and comfortable environment.

We start by eating dinner and then the evening's topic is presented followed by coffee and discussion in groups.

# Encircling our children with prayer

## **RAE BOWDLER SHARES HOW SHE WAS INSPIRED TO START AN INTEREST LIFE GROUP**

I am privileged to have a friend, spiritual mentor and godparent to my two children and, during a recent meeting, we got talking about a book called *Praying Circles Around Your Children*, by pastor Mark Batterson.

While it is a short book, it really packs a punch. In it, Mark describes many stories of people who have prayed for each of their children and have seen prayers answered. He also details practical ways of ensuring we find out what God wants us to pray for each of our children. The thing that struck me most about the book was the importance of praying big prayers for our children – about their lives, their futures, not just the day-to-day stuff.

I felt the need to share Mark's tips with our church so I offered to host an Interest Life Group specifically to pray for our children. We meet most Mondays and, for the most part, we delve into Mark's book and pray for our children. For me there's no greater gift than coming together with fellow parents to 'encircle' our children in prayer.

Mark recommends using the Bible and praying the promises of God over each of our children. He suggests making prayer diaries and prayer lists that could well be transformational for our children. He also suggests we should share Bible verses with our children and be transparent about what we pray for them.

My two kids now recite many Bible verses by heart, but one that I have impressed upon their hearts is Philippians 4:13: 'For I can do anything, in the name of Christ, who gives me all the strength that I need'. I hope that through the rough times, they will be able to recall this verse and know that God's love is always with them. ▽



PHOTOGRAPHY: Bea Keytes

# The power of collective prayer

**Sara Robinson explains why she regularly attends Early Morning Prayers at St Paul's Ealing**

On Thursday mornings my alarm goes off at 5.30am. It is very hard to get out of bed. For much of the year, it is dark at that time. It is always cold, no matter the time of year. But having made the commitment to go to Thursday Prayers, I know it must be done and I make the effort.

Early Morning Prayers at St Paul's take place in the foyer every Thursday morning between 7 and 7.45am. They are usually led by Senior Pastor Mark Melluish unless he is away, when they are led by another one of the senior leaders. It is a small band of committed early risers who attend.

This prayer time is a very special time. We focus our prayers on the needs of the world, our nation, our community and on the ministries that are run from St Paul's. It is a time of outward focus; a time

of taking our hearts and minds away from ourselves and a time of awareness of our own place in the global community. It is often a very salutary reminder of how fortunate we are in the grand scheme of things.

## **A NEW STATE OF MIND**

It has, however, had a very unexpected side-effect for me as I leave church to drive to my workplace on the Heston/Southall borders every Thursday morning. I find that my mindset and my attitudes are different. I am invariably in a positive state of mind and feel much more able to cope with the problems that I know I will encounter throughout the day. So much so, that I have started to diarise more complicated matters and more demanding clients to Thursdays.

After the first few months of my attending Thursday Prayers, my team at work noticed a change in me. They began to question why I was so much more relaxed on a Thursday. They said that I was



My team at work began to question why I was so much more relaxed on a Thursday



PHOTOGRAPHY Polly Neill

much more approachable and seemed to be much less stressed! Gradually as the weeks went by, I began to explain what I did on a Thursday morning, and why I did it.

#### OPENING UP

I must confess that I have never found it easy to share my faith with non-Christians. But slowly, my attendance at Thursday Prayers has begun to change this. Working so close to Southall as I do, I work in a very multicultural environment with several colleagues of other world faiths, and with other colleagues of no faith at all. I found that I was beginning to open up about my Christian life and this then led to others around me talking about their faiths. Lively discussions ensued.

Nowadays, discussions about religious beliefs are no longer a taboo subject at all at work. Everyone at work now knows that I attend Thursday Prayers and that somehow, that attendance makes

me different. Virtually every Thursday, our open plan work environment is treated to lively discussions about Christianity and its place in the world, as one or other of my work colleagues starts to ask questions. It has been an amazing time of witness.

So, this Thursday when the alarm loudly reminds me that, notwithstanding the cold and the dark, I have an important commitment to fulfil, I will drag myself out of my warm and cosy bed and take myself to church, where I will be greeted with sympathetic smiles and a steaming cup of tea. Once more, we will take our focus away from ourselves and be reminded that no problem in this world is too vast to be tackled by the power of collective prayer. ▀



## ENCOUNTERING GOD THROUGH WORSHIP



”

Words are not my forte, but music reaches the very essence of who I am

**Jack Lewis is part of the worship team at St Paul's Ealing. Here he shares how his love of music has helped him move towards faith**

There are a couple of things you need to know about me before reading this article. The first is that I'm still grappling with faith – in fact, I'm currently doing the Alpha course at St Paul's. The second is that I'm a musician through and through – if you've been to the services you may have seen me playing the trombone, on occasion.

For most of my childhood, R.E. lessons were the extent of religion in my life. But when I moved to secondary school, I was expected to go to church four times a week at the abbey and sing in two of these services as part of the school's choir. Lots of things about church felt alien to me but the church and I did have something in common, music. Because of this, I often sat on the fence with faith. I struggled to see why some of my peers chose to embrace Christianity or what it added to their lives. However, I soon realised that it was my naivety which caused my awkwardness around faith rather than any objections I might have had to the beliefs of Christians.

### **COMFORT & CALM**

Despite my reservations at the time, I look back and realise that I often felt an unexpected comfort – almost like a wave of focus and calm – when singing the worship music in the abbey. Something about the choral

repertoire of Dyson, Howells, Tallis and co. gave me peace at times when I was stressed or unhappy. The memory of this has always stuck with me and I have since noticed that I am most likely to have these spiritual feelings when I am listening to or playing music.

### **WHEN WORDS FAIL**

In writing this article, I have thought about why this might be the case. Being dyslexic, words are not my forte, but music reaches the very essence of who I am. Music is a language to me, and one that can convey feelings, emotions and the otherwise indescribable. Music helps me resolve conflicts in my mind; it's how I comfort myself when I am struggling and how I express excitement when I am bursting with joy. Crucially, I think music helps me to comprehend what I cannot articulate in words. It is from this perspective that other people's faith in God has become more relatable to me.

### **INTERPRETING EMOTIONS**

Like many musicians, I learnt to play the trombone through written sheet music. Through performing this music, one learns to interpret the emotions a composer was aiming to convey. However, in some forms of music, you are required to make music up on the spot - improvisation. This can be both daunting and liberating because without sheet music this emotional stimulus is gone, and something needs to fill that void. Because of this, I think improvising requires a small leap of faith. You must step

out of a place of comfort and start playing something from within you – there is no in-between.

### **GOD IN THE IMPROVISED**

For me, there is a synergy between improvisation and prayer. When I improvise, I believe that I am at my most spiritual. I am in a place where the music is seemingly materialising out of nothing. Some of the time my improvisations reflect what I want to say or how I am feeling. But, at other times it is like the music forming before me is changing me more than I am changing it. The fact that this happens to me gives me greater confidence in the idea of the Holy Spirit. It's easier for me to understand the idea that God might have a hand in the way this improvised music forms – in fact, I hope he does. When people talk about praying in tongues, I wonder whether improvising might be a sort of prayer language for me.

Since I've started playing in the worship band at St Paul's my understanding of faith has really grown. To me, it's a cross between the choral worship music I sang at the abbey and doing a gig in a packed live music venue. The raw energy that you get from the latter is present at St Paul's and yet it still induces that same calm in me that I felt at secondary school. Playing to and with people worshipping God through music makes it easier for me to imagine a point where I myself might have stronger faith. ▀



## ST PAUL'S KIDS

Hi all,

What a wonderful start to a new decade! It has been so good to see so many children attending our different groups and growing in their love for Jesus.

At the start of the new decade we have made a few slight changes within different areas of our children's ministry. We have changed the structure of Breakout, to ensure we have a God Slot where we can tell the children in our church and community about Jesus. We are also playing more games which intentionally build relationships with the kids, leaders and one another. And, of course, having a lot of fun on the bouncy castle, football, free games and the tuck shop.

After Easter in Beamers, Sparklers, Shiners and Crackers we are going to be launching a new curriculum! I am excited about how this curriculum approaches the Word in a multisensory way. There will be an app and family devotions to go with the new curriculum so you can follow along with the lessons we are doing on a Sunday. More information will be given to you closer to the time.

We will also be having an Easter Holiday Club and we would love to see your children there! We're looking forward to growing with your children in our love for Jesus.

Love Tamlyn

### BUMP TO BABY

Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month / 10-11:30am  
£3 per family

Bump to Baby is our little café for mums-to-be and parents and carers with their pre-walkers. We have coffee, tea and cake as well as toys and toast for the little ones.

### GREAT AND SMALL

Every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month / 10-11:30am  
£3 per child, additional siblings 50p

Great and Small is our big stay and play for the tiniest babies up to the big pre-schoolers. Toys, a bigball pool, slides, bouncy castle, crafts, singing and more.

### BREAKOUT

Every Tuesday during term time / 6-7:15pm / 50p

Join us for a fun packed kids club for years 3-6 in school. Come and enjoy the bouncy castle, tuck shop, football zone, four square, crafts and amazing leaders to hang out with.

### SUNDAY GROUPS

All Sunday Groups are at 9.15am and 11am

The children are split into different groups according to their age. We worship, learn, pray, have activities and build relationships.



### EASTER HOLIDAY CLUB

7-9 April 2020

Join us this year for the ultimate Under the Sea Holiday Club. We'll have dramas, messy games, crafts, sports and more as we explore how much God loves all of us.

To learn more and to sign up, visit our website. Don't forget to invite your friends!



# CHILDREN'S LIFE GROUPS

**Our Children's Life Groups are once again in full swing. We interviewed our Girls' Life Group to find out more.**

## **WHAT IS A LIFE GROUP?**

HANNAH: 'It is when several girls get together, have fun, eat snacks, learn more about God and know they're in a safe space'

ABBIE: 'It is a group where we are being trained to be people of God'

## **HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE LIFE GROUP IN A FEW WORDS?**

ANAYAH: 'Fun and a good way to learn about God'

ABBIE: 'A place to connect with other people'

ELLIE: 'Learning about God and talking'

## **WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF LIFE GROUP?**

ANAYAH: 'Communicating, making friends'

HANNAH: 'Having an interesting event happening in the middle of each week'

SARAH JANE: 'A place where we can just be a group of girls in a safe environment'

ABBIE: 'Having a safe space to confide in, something to look forward to when the week is tough, like in PE lessons'

*The girls have explained so eloquently what Life Group is all about. It is such an incredible place to see girls and boys grow in faith, friendship and life. If you would like to be involved in a Life Group and are in year 5 or 6, chat to Tamlyn.*

# A journey with God

**In October, we launched Pursuit, a monthly worship event for young people in Ealing. Izzy Cole shares how it began and what God's doing through it.**

As Christians, there are times in our lives, whether a moment where God moves powerfully or when it takes a long journey to get somewhere, where we think to ourselves, 'How did this happen?'

Last summer, we took a group of 14-18-year-olds from St Paul's, along with others from Bless Community Church in Ealing, to the last ever Soul Survivor summer gathering. Out of this time together something emerged that none of us were expecting.

We had an amazing week of camping, worshipping and filling our faces with an abundance of food. While all of this was going on around us, both me and Jacob, the Youth Pastor at Bless, felt God wanting us to push deeper into the connection that our churches had made.

As St Paul's Youth, we had been planning to start an event each month for our young people to explore worship and prayer more deeply. It was at Soul Survivor that we decided to join forces as churches in Ealing (Bless, St Mellitus, St John's and St Paul's) and Pursuit came to form.

We took inspiration from Psalm 100, where it says: 'Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.'

We launched Pursuit in October, where we hosted teenagers of all ages. In the first session, we immediately experienced young people praying for one another, singing their hearts out and pushing into their spiritual gifts.

We love joining together with other churches to create an event bigger than just St Paul's. We also love that it's not just an event we're putting on every month but a journey we're joining the young people to take with God. We've heard testimonies of young people and leaders experiencing emotional healing, encouraging prophetic words and a deeper understanding of the presence of God.

This season, until we feel God moving us in another direction, we'll be looking to deepen our foundations in Jesus, seeking to encourage the young people to explore his message as our cornerstone, discovering how he carries our cares and searching for where we place our hope.

We realise the importance of inspiring firm foundations in Jesus because of the reality that this generation is experiencing mental health issues, perhaps more than ever before. Helping our young people to journey with and process anxious feelings and depressive, negative thoughts is really at the heart of this season:





'But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint' (Isaiah 40:31).

If you'd like to hear the stories of what God is doing at Pursuit, then why not ask the young people themselves? We cannot wait for God to move more powerfully during our sessions and to share the stories of what God is doing with our community.

We're wondering how this happened but full of assurance that it's God at work in our ministries. ▼



## EXALT

**Years 7-9 / Sunday mornings  
9.15 & 11.00**

Exalt is the place to be on Sunday mornings. We start with breakfast such as muffins, pancakes and sometimes sausage rolls! We also play games before we start our topic of the term; exploring what it means to live like Jesus. We'd love for you to join us, getting to know Jesus better.

## UPPER ROOM

**Years 10-13 / 3rd & 4th Sunday / 11.00**

Join us after worship up in the prayer room for open discussion about some of the challenges of being a Christian in our current culture.

## WEDNESDAY NIGHT YOUTH

**Every Wednesday / 7-8.30pm / All years**

We love to hang out as a whole youth group every Wednesday to worship, play games and spend time in small groups. We're intentional about deepening our faith so come and take the opportunity to develop your faith and friendships. PS. There is always food available!

## PURSUIT

**2nd Saturday of each month / 7-8.30pm  
All years**

We're teaming up with our friends from Bless Community Church to pursue God through prayer and worship. Come and join us each month as we seek to hear what he wants to say in and through us! We'd love for many to join us so invite friends and other churches.

## SOCIALS

We love to spend time together so be sure to check out our website for the latest social events and join in!

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When I look back at those jobs I didn't get and think about where I get to work now, it makes me wonder if God was guiding me and had a plan the whole time



# A faith that makes a difference

**Ben Strain caught up with Jasper Miles about his experiences of starting out in a career and why we can have hope in our political system!**

**TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF** — I have been married to Katy since December 2018 and we live in Northfields. I've been in London since 2017; before that I was in Liverpool doing a PhD in British Politics. Currently I am trying to find a post as a full-time lecturer in Politics while doing short-term lecturing at universities around London. I am a Liverpool football fan and enjoy watching and playing cricket.

**HOW DID YOU START COMING TO ST PAUL'S?** — Katy brought me to St Paul's a couple of years ago while we were dating. She invited me to come along, see what it was like and meet her friends. It's been great that over the last few years they have become my friends too and I feel part of a lively, welcoming community.

**WHAT HAS HELPED YOU AS YOU'VE SOUGHT TO START YOUR CAREER?** — It can be tough after university to find a job and start building a career. One of the hardest things is the way it slowly wears you down when you are facing job applications without a reply as well as unsuccessful interviews. You begin to question, 'Am I really good enough?' So far, I've been able to continue pursuing what I feel passionate about but this summer I came close to throwing it in. I had three job interviews, which were all unsuccessful. 'Why should I put myself through this?' I thought. But at that low point my faith really helped.

At the New Wine United gathering I heard a talk by a guy who works at Goldman Sachs. He shared how for years he simply pursued career success, always chasing the next promotion at the neglect of everything else. Then he realised that there are so many other things in life that matter, and your career doesn't define who you are. That showed me the value of faith and trust in God. It reminded me that I am still loved and I'm not failing. Since then I have had a new

perspective. When I look back at those jobs I didn't get and think about where I get to work now and the difference I feel I am making in my students' lives, it makes me wonder if God was guiding me and had a plan the whole time.

**DO YOU HAVE ANY WISDOM FOR YOUNG ADULTS WHO ARE CURRENTLY APPLYING FOR JOBS?** — Try and step back to make sure you are getting a broad perspective on what you want to do and where you want to go rather than being too fixated on one path towards it. If there is something you really want to do, then persevere! But also surround yourself with people who are going to support you. Don't become too isolated, as it can be a very lonely experience applying for jobs.

**WE ARE ALL AWARE OF THE CHALLENGES OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM IS FACING. WHAT REASONS FOR HOPE DO YOU SEE?** — I think there are always reasons to be optimistic and that the political system will work itself out in time. It is just one of those uncertain periods of history and we have been through them before! I think people of faith and the church do have a big role to play. That's not to say that we will all come to the same views, but Christians should involve themselves in politics, take part in discussions and put our views forward. This doesn't only mean what's happening at Westminster, it could also be about our local community: being involved and making a difference there is just as important and meaningful. ▽

*The young adult group at St Paul's is for 18-30s. Our vision is that Young Adults would find a strong sense of community at St Paul's and together we would go further in living lives that reflect Jesus. We have all sorts of things going on for Young Adults including life groups, teaching nights and socials. Get in touch or check out the website for more info.*

*For more information or to get involved contact Ben or David. Their contact details can be found on page 44*





## ST PAUL'S WOMEN

Welcome to the pages for St Paul's Women. I hope you enjoy reading about Rosalba Ostik's journey to doing an Ironman. That's quite something! As well as that you can read here about what's on at St Paul's for women. There's other stuff on the website too so do keep checking to make sure you're in the know. I look forward to seeing you at one of the events. And if we've not yet met, please come and introduce yourself.



With love, Lindsay

### CONNECT

Thursdays | 9.30-11.30am | Crèche provided

Connect is the network of Life Groups for women who are around during the day on a Thursday. It's a place where women can make friends and share the nitty gritty of life. There's coffee and worship and then a chance to join one of the groups for discussion.

There is usually a range of topics to choose from, including a Bible study and one or two other areas of interest. We encourage everyone at St Paul's to be in a Life Group. If your preference is for an all-women's group then Connect is for you. For more information check the website.

### AWAKEN!

Awaken is an event for all St Paul's Ealing women and their friends. It takes place periodically on Saturday mornings throughout the year. There's breakfast, worship, relevant teaching addressing issues women face in the 21st century and ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes we host other events, besides breakfast. Look for publicity on the website or in church on a Sunday.

### PRAYER TRIPLETS

Contact the church office for more information

Prayer triplets are a place where real support can happen. In these prayer triplets we aim to find great strength through the deepening of relationships, growing of trust and opportunity to 'bear one another's burdens'.

# A race of faith



**In 2019, Rosalba Ostik took part in an Ironman Triathlon, one of the toughest physical and mental one-day sporting events. During the year she was training for it she was struggling with her faith. She shares how she's learning to keep trusting in God.**

I have loved sport since I was a child and always trained and kept active. I like challenges and 10 years ago I started doing triathlons, which are endurance races combining swimming, cycling, and running. The Olympic Triathlon distances are a 1500m swim, 40km cycle and 10km run. However, I dreamt of taking it much further and completing an Ironman, which consists of a 3.8 km swim, a 180km cycle followed by running a full 42km marathon.

## GETTING READY

My journey to getting to the point of seriously considering an Ironman first involved overcoming my fears of swimming in open water. When I first started training for triathlons, I would have panic attacks when trying to swim in freezing cold lakes at 6am. It took great efforts to force myself to face my fears and continue to swim in open water until I eventually taught my mind to overcome what my body was not wanting to do.

Then in 2018, I decided to sign up for a full Ironman event. I had started preparing a year before the event and had a very strict training regime. I trained six days a week, swimming in lakes, cycling long distances and lots of running. I combined high intensity interval training with long endurance training, and I had to be very disciplined and organised with my time as I also have three children.

## STARTING OFF

About six months prior to the Ironman I started participating in organised events to test my progress. I started with a 10km race and I came second in my category. I then did a 50km mountain bike competition in Ecuador. After an accident I ended up with four stitches in my mouth. I did an Olympic triathlon in the UK where I came third in my category. I did a Half Ironman in Greece where the sea was so rough that many of the participants pulled out. I did a Half Ironman in the UK and finally the Richmond Marathon. ▶



My life has been like an Ironman, full of hardships to overcome. I've experienced many obstacles, but they have helped me to become strong mentally

► The time leading up to the Ironman event was extremely challenging for me. Not only was the training physically demanding and required great discipline, but it was also stressful and mentally taxing. During this time my family had other challenges too. My husband was taking some time off work and making significant career changes. This added extra uncertainty to our lives. Sometimes my husband would be frustrated when he experienced challenges. There were several times when things didn't go according to plan and I felt let down, disappointed and angry with God. I was fearful of what the future had in store for us and I was struggling to remain positive and hold onto my faith.

### KEEPING GOING

One day during this time I was alone in my bedroom and I started to pray. I realised that my life has been like an Ironman, full of hardships to overcome. I've experienced many obstacles, but they have helped me to become strong mentally. I realised that God has been my coach. All these years I have been training small distances and then increasing them, testing my fitness and keeping going. As I sat in my room, I played the Hillsong song *Oceans (Where feet may fail)* on my phone and I started to cry. It was exactly what I was feeling. It reminded me to look back at what God has done for me and be grateful.

I opened my Bible at random and read Deuteronomy 6:10-12 which had helped me 10 years ago during another period when I was feeling weak in my faith. 'When the Lord your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.' Sometimes we forget that the things we have are because of the grace and faithfulness of God.

Suddenly my daughter Emily came upstairs with her keyboard and said, 'I've been learning a song on YouTube'. It was *10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)*. She normally only plays pop music! She'd never played a worship song to me before. It's a song that has kept me going through difficult times before. This made me determined to go to church the next Sunday. I did and went to the front for prayer where I felt a connection with God and a greater trust in him again.

### REACHING THE END

I managed to complete my Ironman in just under 15 hours. It was extremely gruelling both mentally and physically, but I did it. It was approximately two hours of swimming, nine hours of cycling and a four-hour marathon. At one point I was feeling so



When I first started training for triathlons, I would have panic attacks when trying to swim in freezing cold lakes at 6am

weak and afraid of not finishing that I decided to pray and ask God to give me the strength to keep going. Finally, with tears in my eyes I achieved my goal.

2019 ended well for our family. God proved himself once more and despite all the worries throughout the year I had overcome my personal challenges. In January my husband was offered a new job role. The difficulties of 2019, the uncertainties about the future and my Ironman events have shown me that it's scary not to know what's going to happen, but that even when I don't know what the future holds, I need to keep going and not give up on my faith. ▽





PHOTOGRAPHY: David Cervera



# A small town boy in a big city

**Oscar Carshagen shares some of his journey of learning to find his value in Jesus**

I grew up in Bloemfontein, a small and very conservative town in South Africa. A vastly different place to London. This was where I spent my childhood and university days and began my walk with Jesus. I then spent three years working in Johannesburg before deciding to see what opportunities I could take hold of further afield.

London seemed like a place of great opportunity for a small-town boy like me. In January 2017 I emigrated from South Africa to work as an accountant at one of the 'Big 4' financial services companies in the City.

On coming to London my primary goals were to establish myself in the office, make friends and make the most of all that London had to offer. These goals seemed well within reach considering the 'work hard, play hard' mentality in the City and so began my pursuit of what I thought would be a fulfilling life in London.

It did not take me long for my sense of identity to be questioned as my measures of success became ensuring I had high billable hours and a good attendance record at every work function with an open bar. I had a small, loving group of friends around me, including Tamlyn who is now the Children's Pastor at St Paul's Ealing and in February this year became my wife. They warned me about many of the pitfalls I chose to overlook including investing most of my time in shallow friendships that were not uplifting.

By the end of 2017, because of my lifestyle I was battling depression, something I had struggled with in the past. I soon realised that the goals I was measuring myself against were not bringing me any joy. I started to relook



My measures of success became ensuring I had high billable hours and a good attendance record at every work function with an open bar

at where I held my value and identity realising once again that I could not place my value in my work and social life but only in Jesus.

The turning point came in early 2018 and it led me on a long journey of re-establishing my relationship, identity and value in Jesus. A key revelation on this journey was that we do not derive our value from our performance in the workplace or social standing, but rather from the price that Jesus paid for our sins on the cross.

This has enabled me to strive to live out my faith in my workplace. This is not always easy in an environment where talk about politics and religion is highly discouraged. This has meant I have to show people my faith and relationship with Jesus by how I treat, love and respect people on a day-to-day basis.

We all have daily interactions with people that are in desperate need of love and the key is to recognise that we can show them their inherent value by loving them like we are loved by Jesus. ▀



## ST PAUL'S MEN

*The aim of the men's ministry at St Paul's is to gather guys for encouragement, friendship and fun. We meet about six times a year for things like BBQs, curry nights, pub trips and breakfasts. The men's ministry is currently led by Ben Strain (ben@stpaulsealing.com).*

# A coffee break with

**Jos Melliush describes how the Sozo Foundation is helping young people in South Africa enhance their career prospects**

As I began my gap year, I knew I wanted to see some of the world, so I started to investigate different options. Being part of a church that is so well connected in different mission areas, I was not short of options. One project which stood out to me was the Sozo Foundation in the township of Vrygrond in Cape Town, so I contacted them. After a few months of ironing out details and planning, I was sat on a plane embarking on a two-month trip to South Africa.

## WHAT SOZO DOES

The Sozo Foundation (Sozo) is a charity that came out of the Bay City Church near Vrygrond. In the mornings Sozo runs the Youth Café, which offers the uneducated or unemployed 16-25s the chance to train in six different areas: Barista; Baking; Hair and Beauty; Technical; Graphic Design; and the General Educational Diploma (GED). This training provides the students with the skillsets to go out of the township and get jobs to earn an income for themselves. In the afternoons the centre is used to run Educentre, where students



can come after school and use facilities that may not be available to them at home (computers etc), alongside having access to tutors who provide help where needed.

## HOW TO MAKE AN IMPACT

During my time with Sozo I had the opportunity to work with Youth Café and

Educentre students. When in the café I worked in the Barista School, connecting with the students, helping them with CV writing, and generally being in community with them. After about two weeks, I started to brainstorm ways in which I could make a difference and leave a positive impact. I came up with the

# a difference



idea of starting a roastery. It would give the students the extra skill of being able to roast coffee beans. It would create jobs: the long-term vision is to have an industry-size roaster, roasting beans to sell commercially and providing employment to the alumni. It would serve as a social enterprise. The funds

generated would enable Sozo to sow back into the Barista School, therefore enabling them to offer training to more unemployed youth in and around the community. This would make the Barista school self-sustainable. It would serve as a marketing tool: having Sozo products ►



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I started to think about ways in which I could make a difference and leave a positive impact on Sozo and the Barista School

► in coffee shops would spread the word, and the work, of Sozo.

### THE DANCING GOAT

We started planning and figuring out the details. We decided on the name ‘The Dancing Goat Roastery’ because of one of the stories of how coffee was discovered. A farmer walked into a field with his tribe of goats and noticed that the goats, after eating a certain bean that he had not seen before, started dancing. He tried the bean and felt the urge to dance. The bean was a coffee bean and they were experiencing a caffeine high.

### GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

Starting such an enterprise required a large amount of funding, so we set out fundraising. I teamed up with the teacher from the Graphic Design School and we made plans to shoot a video which we would send back to the UK to start to spread awareness of the project. We collated archive footage of Sozo and shot some new footage, interviewing an alumni Barista student, following her progress. This video was shown at St Paul’s Ealing and another church who have supported Sozo. The response took us by surprise. People were very generous and within a few months the final target was reached. As I write this, the final parts of the roaster are being assembled and the preparations to start the roastery are happening. ▽

*For more info:*  
[thesozofoundation.org.za](http://thesozofoundation.org.za)



# AN ANSWER TO PRAYER

**When Sara Cornejo visited her neighbour, who had been suffering with a two-week hiccough, she called on God for help**

For the past 20 years I have had an amazing God-sent neighbour who is now in his 70s. He has been like family to me: so kind and generous, always helping his neighbours, including me, with things such as DIY, advice with the flat, pruning fruit trees etc.

Sadly, two years ago he was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease and earlier this summer his wife asked me to go and see them. When I got there and saw them both I just wanted to cry. He hadn't slept for two days and had been suffering with a hiccough more than two weeks. This was not a normal hiccough; it had a horrible sound that came from his throat and prompted his body to spasm every time it happened.

## A HOPELESS SITUATION?

I suggested they should go to hospital straight-away, but they said they had already been, and the prognosis they had been given was not good. They were told that the hiccough was a side effect of medication my neighbour was taking to treat his Parkinson's Disease and there was nothing they could do because he was under the care of a specialist.

His wife had been so stressed with all of this that her whole face was covered with nasty blotches that looked much to me like eczema. Their distress and suffering were heart-breaking to me and I just felt that we needed God's help.



## PRAYING IN SILENCE

I asked if I could pray, and they said yes. For some reason I felt the need to pray in silence while gently touching my neighbour's back. I did this for a long time until it felt right to end the prayer (by this time his wife had become impatient and gone to another room).

When I finished the prayer, my neighbour got up out of the chair and the hiccough had gone completely. We could not believe it. Also, he looked different: he was smiling and seemed surprised that the prayer was answered. The whole energy of the place had changed. I felt God's presence. We hugged each other, both with broad smiles on our faces.

## TEARS OF JOY

I went home weeping all the way, so moved by this answer to prayer. The next day I phoned to ask how they were. I was told that my neighbour had slept well all night and was feeling well (no hiccough) and fresh in the morning. Also, his wife's eczema was gone from her face completely.

Because of this, my faith has grown, and so has theirs. I was happy and content for weeks. I have also received so much from this dear neighbour and was so happy our Lord did this for him and is continuing to do so, it seems. ▽

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When I finished the prayer, my neighbour got up out of the chair and the hiccough had gone completely. We could not believe it

## FAMILY COURSES

*At St Paul's Ealing we love to celebrate family. Here are some of the courses we currently offer*

### MOTHER TO DAUGHTER

As girls become young women their relationship with mum becomes crucial for guidance and loving support. Mother to Daughter is a course which aims to strengthen these relationships between mothers and their girls in years 6 to 9. The course is split into four sessions for the mums on their own and four sessions for the mums and their girls together. Topics for mums include the power of example, communication, building confidence and encouraging personal value.

### FAMILY TIME PARENTING TEENAGERS

The teenage years can be challenging but they needn't be the nightmare many talk about. This course aims to encourage confidence in those parenting the teens and provide some tools to make this season of life manageable and enjoyable.



PHOTOGRAPHY: Bea Keytes

### FAMILY TIME PARENTING CHILDREN

Raising children in the 21st century is a big responsibility! This course is for all parents of children under 12 and provides an opportunity to meet together in an informal, relaxed atmosphere, listen to a talk about a parenting topic followed by discussion in small groups. Topics include: Having a vision for your family, family identity, family values, influences on our children, building relationships, guiding, shaping and discipline.

### PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

The pre-marriage course is run one evening a week for three weeks and is designed for one or two couples at a time. The course runs regularly throughout the year and is aimed at those who have decided on or are considering engagement. These evenings consist of both discussion time and space alone to think through key issues that you may face entering into marriage. Most couples find the course to be a helpful, good experience and a lot of fun!

### CREATED FOR CONNECTION

For all couples who are married or living as married, who want a relationship that lasts a lifetime, these evenings aim to provide the setting for relevant teaching followed by a chance to discuss things, just the two of you, in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. Topics covered include understanding differences, effective communication, resolving conflict, parents and in-laws, good sex and much more.

*Please check the website  
[www.stpaulsealing.com](http://www.stpaulsealing.com) for information  
about upcoming course dates.*

# ‘Communication is key’



Edna and Paul Daniel, who have two daughters, attended the Family Time Parenting Teenagers Course recently.

We wanted to do the Course because we were seeing significant changes in the two years our eldest daughter Isabel, 13, had been at high school. We hoped the Course would give us similar tools to those gained in the Parenting Children Course many years ago which we had

thoroughly enjoyed and implemented.

The format for the evening is relaxed: a welcome drink followed by a talk, interspersed with discussion with those around you. After a break for tea or coffee and cake there's a break-out session in groups with time to reflect on what has been said and to see if we have managed to implement anything with our teenagers during the week. Sharing experiences during this session proved to be incredibly valuable.

Of the different, interesting and useful topics each week the one that spoke the most to us was Boundaries and Battlefields, which helped us to consider setting positive, healthy boundaries for our daughter. It gave us some guidelines on how to face issues together and distinguish important conflicts from unimportant ones.

Security, Sex and Substances, a delicate topic to discuss and face, was useful as we tackled some big issues in helping our teenager to face the world in which she is emerging as an adult, including various disorders, both physical and mental, and signs to watch out for.

Another session focused on the huge pressure of advertising and the media in society. We talked about handing on responsibility and working out a basic monthly allowance to give her freedom to spend it as she wants and resisting adding to it on demand. Also important was how to help our teenager stay safe in cyberspace.

We have seen the benefits from the Course as we feel more equipped with tools and understanding to deal with different situations as they arise.

We've been implementing what we discussed and learned on the course. When a situation arises and we feel a bit stuck and don't know exactly how to deal with it, we've noticed that we will approach the situation more calmly and with more understanding. We've learned that communication is key. ▽



# Restoring dignity & hope

**Find out how the CAP debt centre is helping people take back control of their lives**

Christians Against Poverty is an international debt counselling agency, offering free debt advice to clients in the safety and security of their own home. Our aim is to see dignity and hope for a future restored to clients through retaking control of their finances.

Creating a budget will show how much extra money a client has with which to repay all debts. CAP will renegotiate an affordable repayment scheme with all creditors and use the client's extra money to make repayments.

However, CAP recognises that financial chaos is usually only a part of the story. Loneliness, depression, anxiety, insecurity, unemployment and shame at being in this situation are just some of the issues faced by clients. Part of our role is to offer support and a listening ear in a loving, non-judgmental way.

Most clients are offered prayer at the end of each visit. Many have also benefited from coffee morn-

ings, Christmas lunches, Christmas hampers, outings to Richmond Park and Kew Gardens to name but a few events.

Azniv Pambakian, who until recently headed up CAP at St Paul's Ealing shares a story:

One client, a Muslim, was in the middle of a divorce from her second husband. She has two children. On the first visit, she talked of her relationship breakdown and quoted words from the Koran about love. So, I talked about how Jesus spoke on love and relationships. After two hours, I left. On the second visit, she wanted to continue talking more about how Jesus said we should love one another. She rang later that week, to say she had been so impacted by our talks that she was taking her husband back to love him as Jesus would have her love him. With his income, they would be able to repay their debts. How wonderful for a relationship to be healed by God's love! ▼

*Christians Against Poverty (CAP) is a national organisation which offers free debt counselling and support in conjunction with local churches. To contact the Ealing branch, based at St Paul's, phone 020 8579 8882*

## CHURCH IN THE COMMUNITY

*Sometimes a bit of extra support is needed. St Paul's Ealing is involved in a multitude of community groups that offer this*



### THE BESOM

The Besom enables us to serve the poor through the donation and delivery of furniture, clothes and other necessities and through helping with painting and gardening.

### CHRISTIANS AGAINST POVERTY (CAP)

CAP is a national organisation which offers free debt counselling and support in conjunction with local churches.

### CAP JOB CLUB

Ealing CAP Job Club is a club where jobseekers can meet weekly to encourage one another, increase their work-related networks and gain practical skills for finding work.

### THE SOUP KITCHEN

The Soup Kitchen serves free hot food from 2-6pm on Saturday and Sunday to those in need of it. St Paul's Ealing is one of seven local churches enabling the ministry to happen.

### EALING COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF ENGLISH (ECSE)

ECSE gives English Language lessons and support to refugees and immigrants. To attend or join our team of volunteers contact Stefan Anstis.

### EALING FOODBANK

The Ealing Food Bank gives boxes of non-perishable food to local families in crisis who have been given vouchers by social services or other agencies. Contact Nell Fox to find out more or to sign up as a volunteer.

### ST PAUL'S COMMUNITY PLAYSCHOOL

Our playschool is an Ofsted regulated Christian playgroup for children aged 2 ½ years and above, which is open to all faiths and cultures, and is overseen by St Paul's Ealing.

### EALING CHURCHES WINTER NIGHT SHELTER

The Night Shelter provides a bed for the night, a hot evening meal and breakfast in the coldest months for people who would otherwise be sleeping rough.

### PRISON MINISTRY

The Prison Ministry sends volunteers from St Paul's Ealing into Wormwood Scrubs to lead chapel services and help with Alpha courses. St Paul's Ealing also supports organisations like Kairos and Angel Tree.

*For contact details for each of these groups, see page 44*



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Most people don't ask for help when they could because it can seem so difficult to ask; yet can be such a helpful thing to do and can heal many relationships and lives

# HOW DO WE resolve conflict?

**Senior Pastor Mark Melliush offers biblical wisdom about how to deal with conflict in families, workplaces and in church**

Every one of us engages in some way with conflict in life. It might be an argument with a friend, a colleague or within your family. Conflict is part of life and sadly it often happens with those we love. Why is that? When we become Christians shouldn't things be different?

In Genesis, the very first book of the Bible, we see Adam blaming Eve and Eve blaming Adam so perhaps conflict is all part of our brokenness as humankind. But wasn't it supposed to be different in the New Testament?

When people look at the church and how Christians should live, they sometimes quote the following verses: 'And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity' (Acts 2:44-46).

## **THE IDEAL AND THE REALITY**

This passage from Acts can give the impression that peace and joy, as was experienced then, will be the overriding experience for Christians in the church. Yet turn just a few pages on and we see pictures of the early church where people are called out for lying (Acts 5), or where we see some of the church leaders arguing about theology (Galatians 2), or personal disagreements (Acts 15:36-41).

As Christianity spread, there were growing disputes among people and Paul highlights this

when he says, 'For I'm afraid when I come, I won't like what I find, and you won't like my response. I am afraid that I will find quarrelling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorderly behaviour' (2 Cor 12:20).

It seems to me that conflict is, sadly, part of life. Certainly, it is part of our world, as we know only too well from reading our daily news. So, what are we to do with this? How best do we deal with conflict? Should this be the case among those who call themselves Christians?

## **A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

I would suggest that if we don't expect conflict or we try to suggest that conflict is not part of a Christian's life then there is perhaps a bit of a disconnect between belief and practice. The expectation that there will be no conflict in the church or in our lives is incongruent with Biblical theology. Jesus came into this world to help deal with the consequences of our destructive patterns of behaviour and we proclaim that through him our wrongs are dealt with and forgiveness is experienced. However, this didn't change our underlying human nature. The difference that Jesus makes is that we can now live a life that is more pleasing and acceptable to God, but it will not be sin-free before heaven.

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When we have conflict to deal with let's remember that none of us is perfect and no one person is ever to blame

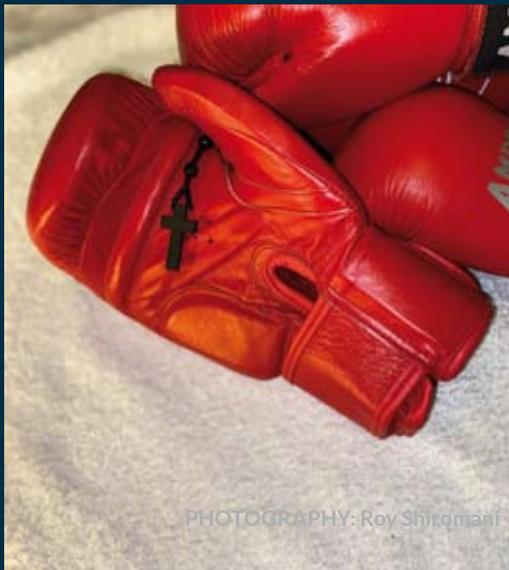
### MANAGE CONFLICT OR IT WILL MANAGE YOU

Conflict therefore is always going to be part of our lives and that's ok. The book of Ecclesiastes says, 'Not a single person on earth is always good and never sins' (7:20). What's not ok is handling it badly. Each of us will need to learn how to manage conflict otherwise it will manage us. If we can learn to make it something we learn and grow from we will be better people because of it.

### STRIVING FOR PEACE

1 Corinthians says, 'Let love be your highest goal' (14:1). The New Testament makes it clear that friction among Christians, as with other groups, is normal and should be anticipated. This in no way undermines the goal of love but rather helps us all understand what love must overcome to reach its fulfilment. When we have conflict to deal with let's remember that none of us is perfect and no one person is ever to blame.

In the Bible we are given some thoughts on dealing with conflict. In Matthew 5:9, Jesus says, 'God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.' Reconciliation and peacemaking are all about helping people to live at peace with one another. That includes us. The writer to the Hebrews goes further with this advice, 'Work at living in peace with everyone' (12:14). So, it is quite clear that God wants his followers to resolve conflicts when they arise.



In Proverbs we are encouraged to control our tempers and overlook wrongs if possible (19:11). This suggests to me that we should forgive wrongs if we can and not even mention it to the other person. I guess this might be for minor happenings in our lives.

### RESTORING RELATIONSHIPS

However, if the hurt is of a more serious nature then the Bible suggests we should try and address it together. The Bible gives further instructions on how to work at restoring the relationship. 'So, if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God' (Matthew 5:23-24). We are then given a pattern of how to go about this in Matthew 18, 'If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense' (18:15). So first we should do this privately and seek to restore our relationships.

If that doesn't work, then we should seek the helps of others (Matthew 18:16). This might be through a friend, pastor or relationship therapist. Most people don't ask for help when they could because it can seem so difficult to ask; yet can be such a helpful thing to do and can heal many relationships and lives.

Jesus reminds us in Matthew 7:5 that conflict is never one-way. 'First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.' In any conflict situation we must remember that both parties have created this situation and we must assess our own behaviour or attitude before criticising another's. Paul says in Philippians 2:3-4, 'Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.'

So, our goal or hope might be that as we live, work and worship together, we can resolve conflict peacefully through humility, listening, kindness and forgiveness. ▽

# When despair turned to joy

## Warren Smillie explains how prayer changed everything in a stressful work situation

I was going through the worst period of my working life, with a relationship breakdown and a real fear of losing my job. It started when I visited a client to assist them with filling out a form. We had completed the form together and I remember folding it up and placing it in my bag. The client is older, disabled and doesn't speak much English, so completing the form had been quite a task.

### STRESS AND PANIC

Later that week I needed to hand the form in but couldn't find it. It wasn't in my bag. I immediately became stressed, as with new GDPR rules, it was a serious data breach if I had lost it. I ransacked my home searching for it. Had I shredded it by mistake? Could it have fallen out of my bag as I had been walking back to the bus? Had someone picked it up and now had the client's personal details including financial ones?

For anyone having such information stolen is awful, but for this client the problems it would cause would be

serious. He wouldn't know how to check his accounts, he couldn't easily get to the bank, change his details, freeze his account, or properly explain the problem at the bank, due to his limited English. My home looked like a bomb site and I had to concede I didn't have it.

### FEAR AND PRAYER

If there is a breach of data protection, you need to inform people, and the company then informs the commissioner's office, who investigate. So, after already being fearful of losing my job, this was almost too much to bear. I had no choice but to talk to my manager about it, with whom I had previously experienced some problems. After praying, the meeting went well. She agreed that I needed to head back to visit the client and explain the situation using a translator as best as I could.

As I was walking back to the client's house, I was praying hard, "Please Lord, let the form turn up". I remembered some years ago, a friend telling me a story of someone losing something they really needed, and praying, and then checking a pocket in their bag which had previously

been empty, only to find it was there. I was praying and checking my bag all the way there.

I was thinking about how I was going to explain myself to the client, profusely apologise for losing the form, how I could describe the process that he would have to go through at the bank and how a potential change in bank details could affect him. I arrived at his front door only to find that he wasn't in. Nightmare. I was about to leave when I saw him and his friend coming back to the house. Praise God.

### JOY AND GRATITUDE

As I sat down to speak with the client, I looked at the table next to me and there was a piece of folded paper. I picked it up, opened it, and saw that it was the form! I was overjoyed. After speaking with him, I left and, as soon as I was out of sight, I literally jumped for joy in the street and praised God. I could not believe that I'd found the form and was immensely grateful for God's great favour. I could swear that I folded the form and put it in my bag. There's no doubt in my mind about it. Honestly, I think it was a miracle. ▽

The entire way there, I was praying hard, "Please Lord, let the form turn up"





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Ironically it is certainty which I find uncomfortable.

It is too much of a conclusion; a full stop and an ending





# ‘I want to keep asking questions’

**John Murphy-Woolford reflects on how he expresses his faith in God in the two very different sides to his working week**

There are two different sides to my week. On the surface they may look very different, but I think something significant connects them and flows between them.

Tuesday evening is the doorway through which I transition from creative visual artist to business professional working for the Knightsbridge department store Harrods, where I have been for 25 years. Wednesday to Friday I am the Service and Communications Manager working with 10 full-time managers, giving decision support and strategy advice for the Fine Watches and Aftercare departments.

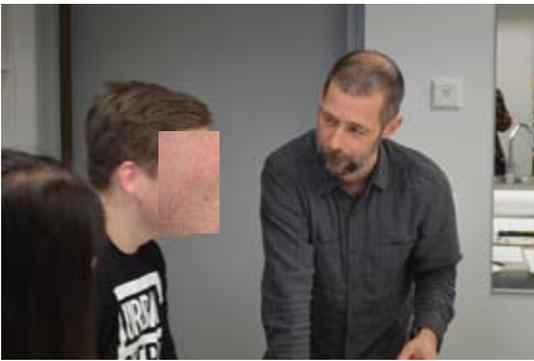
When I am not at Harrods, my main passion is art, which I have been enthusiastically looking at, thinking about, creating and sometimes teaching since I was a teenager. I make oil paintings, prints, drawings and collages.

## **THE CREATIVE PROCESS**

Making art is solitary, reflective and intuitive. It can also be messy, both physically and regarding how resolved or certain the creative process is. There is always a cascade of questions: ‘Will this colour or that colour work best? Which will be the best

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A healthy, considered dissatisfaction with either my own art or the current accepted ways of working at Harrods and motivated search for alternatives is one expression of my faith



Above: John teaching art in Finland

Right from top: Self Portrait, Red Skeleton & Daffodils are some samples of Johns work. More can be found on his website [johnmurphywoolford.com](http://johnmurphywoolford.com).

composition? Will this image be ugly or beautiful? Why am I interested in this subject? What will it say to people? What does it say to me?’

My role at Harrods is basically finding ways of making the departments I work for run better and be a coaching and advice resource for the managers. This could be anything from improving negotiation skills across our retail team, drafting Standard Operating Processes to guide performance or consulting on the implementation of a new internal watch service workshop.

How do these two different worlds sit contently next to each other? I think they are united by a curiosity and a desire to reach people, held in place by my faith.

### **EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES**

Faith and trust in God are the departure point from which I can be open, curious and questioning. To try and to test things: ‘How can I be more helpful, kinder, truthful and productive at work? How can I model integrity? In what ways could my art be an act of worship, responding to God’s creativity? How and what can be communicated through my art? Why make it at all?’ Ironically it is certainty which I find uncomfortable. It is too much of a conclusion; a full stop and an ending. I want to keep asking questions, exploring possibilities, finding new answers and ensure I am a participator rather than an observer.

Harrods is still a strange place to work, even after 25 years. The level of unnecessary and unapologetic luxury can some days be challenging, and I must find ways of connecting to people and make a difference beyond this extravagance.

### **HEALTHY DISSATISFACTION**

Making art for all my adult life has not made its production easier or how it affects us (if we allow it) any more known or complete. It is, however, one of the richest ways for me to connect with the world. If I am to contribute anything to either of these activities I must start from a position of confidence; by believing something to be true. I believe God is with me and for me. He has knit me together and given me a faith which then needs to be used. A healthy, considered dissatisfaction with either my own art or the current accepted ways of working at Harrods and motivated search (or leap) for alternatives is one expression of my faith.

Being creative, curious, and open as well as discerning help to bring two worlds together and keeps me surprised and constantly learning about the person God has made me. ▀



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## PCC

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| EALING COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF ENGLISH | Dominic Jury   | dominic.jury@ecse.org.uk      |
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# Celebrating our failings

TEXT *Lucy Avery*

I've recently discovered a podcast series called *How to Fail*. In each episode, journalist Elizabeth Day asks an interviewee about three times in their life when they've failed and what they learned from them. In one she interviews campaigner Gina Miller about failing to graduate with her law degree, surviving an abusive marriage and raising a daughter with special needs. Another is an interview with former Google X chief Mo Gawdat who's come up with an equation for happiness after struggling with depression and the death of his 21-year-old son.

I'm interested in people rather than cold, hard facts. Give me a biography over a text book any day. I love learning what's made someone who they are. Whenever I read an article about someone or watch a film, I'm compelled to Google the interviewee or the actor to find out more about their life.

If I was on *How to Fail*, the first failure I'd talk about is getting a U (Ungraded) in A-level Chemistry. I think I only did Chemistry because my best friend did. More than anything I was embarrassed to have sat in that classroom for two years and seemingly taken nothing in. But because of that failure I went to college for a year and did A-level History, which I then went on to study at university.

My second failure was when my teenage boyfriend dumped me for what I think was the third time. We stayed friends but I started to spend more time with his friend Phil who I realised I got on well with and could really talk to. Fast forward a few years, we got married and still are 19 years later.

My third failure is that Phil and I lived in a one-bedroom flat until our two children were 7 and 5 years old. It meant a lot of de-cluttering, not a lot of privacy and made it hard to host friends. But it brought us close as a family. When the kids were babies and woke up in the night, we were right there in the same room to comfort them. And I can see now that the fact that we didn't have a big mortgage to pay took the pressure off us financially and meant we could focus on enjoying the kids.

Isn't failure just a necessary if sometimes painful part of life? If we didn't fail, we wouldn't need Jesus. I'm so grateful that we have a God who accepts us as we are, failings included. ▀

## ST PAUL'S EALING'S MISSION, VISION AND VALUES



### VISION

*Our aim is to provide a safe place where people feel welcome, whatever their background. Through community, our aim is to reach out to all, offering an abundance of generosity, kindness, hospitality and love.*

### VALUES

*Our core values are: love, kindness, generosity, creativity, passion, optimism, enthusiasm and compassion. At the core of our identity is God, the transforming power of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Our faith is guided by the Bible and Holy Spirit as we seek to be a church that lives out God's Kingdom on Earth.*

### MISSION

*Our desire is to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ and how his transforming power can change lives for the good. St Paul's Ealing wants to:*

- *Be an outward-looking community where its family and visitors can experience God's love*
- *Show kindness and compassion to all*
- *Pursue Jesus and experience His presence*
- *Actively worship God and seek to live out biblical principles of church life*
- *Be a blessing to our community and build bridges with local, national and international partners*
- *Actively seek opportunities to plant churches both at home and abroad*