

— DIOCESE OF —  
**LONDON**  
EDMONTON AREA  
**Edmonton Newsletter**  
September 2023



### **Beyond Access and Inclusion**

There are very few places these days where people from all backgrounds, socioeconomic groups, professions, and of all abilities and disabilities can gather together and engage in a corporate activity. Most sports events, which many decades ago brought working class communities together and raised-up heroes from amongst their own, are now unaffordable to most people to watch either live or on TV. And players are elevated to a superstar status with financial rewards that pluck them up from their roots and catapult them into an elite minority beyond the reach of pretty much everyone. As social media draws people into ever more narrow groups of like-minded 'friends,' many people find themselves living in an ever-contracting world where their experience of diversity and difference is continually diminishing.

Uniquely in our 21<sup>st</sup> century world, the church is still a place where anyone and everyone can in theory find a place no matter their background, socioeconomic group, profession, ability or disability. I've yet to come across anyone who would say that they do not want their church to be more accessible to and inclusive of the full range of human embodiment, including disabled people. But 'access' and 'inclusion' are in fact difficult words. They imply that there is a group of people who hold the keys to enable and allow access by another group of people. And that there is a group who would like to 'include' others in what they do. They are in fact words that describe an unequal power balance between those who grant access and offer inclusion and those who are given access and are offered inclusion.

In the church we are not necessarily good at recognising unequal and unhealthy power imbalances and the narratives and traditions that maintain these. My question when it comes to disability, and we talk about creating access and offering inclusion is: access to what? And: inclusion in what? If what we are offering is access to an environment and culture that has an inherent ableist bias underpinning it, or inclusion within a community that is unwilling to change, then access and inclusion will only ever be tokenistic and ultimately diminishing of disabled people.

To move beyond this, we need to begin to think beyond access and inclusion and instead focus on 'belonging and participation.' A person belongs within a group when they are recognised and valued for who they are. Not labelled or categorised, the wheelchair user, the blind man, the deaf person, the woman with Down's Syndrome, but seen as a named and valued and loved individual who brings unique gifts and talents and perspectives into the group. And a person is able to participate when their presence, their views and perspectives, their story and experiences are able to change the group. When the group is open to this person adding to what they are and bringing new perspectives and possibilities into the lives of all group members.

Moving beyond the access and inclusion of disabled people and framing our striving to be a more diverse church within the idea of belonging and participation, means embarking on a journey of deep reflection and exploration. Where are the ableist biases rooted in the church? In the way we worship, the words we use, the theology we teach, the spirituality we explore, the way we model community, the attitudes we bring into the church. When we look closely at what we are as a church, we often find that we are not the diverse places of belonging and participation that we should be or think we might be but are in fact culturally narrow. Offering belonging and participation to a small group of like-minded people and pushing people who might bring disability or difference into the church to the margins, where the dominant group can pat themselves on the back for offering them what they think is access and inclusion.

The lives and stories and experiences of disabled people offer a profound challenge to the church. They ask a fundamental question: 'What do you value?' Do you value me as a disabled person? Do you value me as someone who is fearfully and wonderfully made? Do you value me as a person made in the image of God who in the diversity that I bring into the church is actually bringing a unique aspect of the diversity of God into your lives?

The key image to root this in is the parable of the Great Banquet from *Luke 14*. Having prepared his banquet and had all his guests reject his invitation, the house owner sends an invitation to the blind and lame and poor of the town and villages to come. His house is full, with every aspect of human diversity represented. To translate it into today, there are wheelchairs, crutches, white canes, guide dogs, hearing aids, British Sign Language, epilepsy, Down's Syndrome, autism and every aspect of human diversity that today we label as disability. This, says Jesus, is the Kingdom banquet in all of its glory. It's not that people are suddenly miraculously 'cured' as they cross the threshold. No, they bring their embodiment in all of its variety into the kingdom and that variety and diversity is absorbed into a glorious kingdom experience where all are valued, and all are able to fully belong and participate and add to what the Kingdom is.

Could you imagine your church being like this? If you want to set out on a journey of reflection and change, there are resources and help available. Visit the disability ministry area of the diocesan website for a range of downloadable [resources](#), including the 360 Accessibility Audit tool, Quick Wins, Making worship accessible, 'Strength made perfect' a 6 session study course, and much more. And help is available from me in my role as Diocesan Disability Ministry Enabler. Contact me at [john.beauchamp@london.anglican.org](mailto:john.beauchamp@london.anglican.org).

**The Revd John Beauchamp, Diocesan Disability Ministry Enabler**

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## EDMONTON EVENTS



### Churchwardens' Training Day

10am-2pm on 7 September 2023 at [London Diocesan House](#)

Please join us for a morning of training and information sessions from 10am to 1pm, followed by lunch and a chance to meet your fellow wardens and other diocesan staff. RSVP ASAP to: [maura.roni@london.anglican.org](mailto:maura.roni@london.anglican.org).

### Parish Administrators' Meeting

10am-2pm on 16 November 2023 at [London Diocesan House](#)

Edmonton Parish Administrators are meeting again for some useful information, sharing best practice as well as fellowship and refreshments. RSVP to [maura.roni@london.anglican.org](mailto:maura.roni@london.anglican.org) by 1 November 2023.



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## CLERGY MOVES



### The Revd Jim Linthicum

Jim trained for ministry at the Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington. He was ordained in 2001 and he served as a Non-stipendiary Minister at St Mary the Virgin Monken Hadley from 2001 to 2006 while also serving as a Hospital Chaplain at Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals. He has been the Senior Chaplain at Great Ormond Street Hospital since 2006. **Jim will resign this post with effect from 4 September 2023.**

## NEWS

### Diocese of London's Eco-credentials Earn Diocese Bronze Award

The Diocese of London is celebrating a Bronze Eco Diocese Award from A Rocha UK, the Christian charity working to protect and restore the natural world and equip Christians to take better care of the planet. The Bronze Award is recognition of the Diocese's commitment to protecting and nurturing the environment. Across the Diocese of London, already over 40% (184) of churches participate in the Eco Church scheme, and over 20% have received awards, with two Eco Church Gold awards, 17 Silver and 69 Bronze awarded churches.



The Eco Diocese Award criteria also includes ethical investment, collaborating with other dioceses and faith groups, and ensuring environmental issues are embedded in training and development. The Diocesan Creation Care Group is now targeting an Eco Diocese Silver Award, with an ambition that by 2030 every church will be an Eco Church. Find out more about Eco Church on their [website](#).

#### **The Bishop of London, the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally, said:**

"This award is the culmination of years of hard work from churches and colleagues across this Diocese. I would like to pay tribute to those across our areas and parishes who have contributed, particularly our Head of Environment and Sustainability Brian Cuthbertson, and our Compassionate Communities and Net Zero teams for their tireless dedication to forging a brighter future for our planet and its people.

"As stewards of God's creation, we have a fundamental responsibility to act sustainably and protect the world we live in. From rewilding to school partnerships to recycling projects, the actions of our churches and people fill me with hope for the future."

#### **A Rocha's Helen Stephens who presented this Eco Diocese Award said:**

"From the stories, conversations and initiatives, I get a sense of great commitment and energy around creation care. We at A Rocha UK look forward to seeing even more progress across the Diocese in the future."

## TRAINING AND EVENTS



#### **Autumn Lecture Series 2023 – Here I Stand, I Can Do No Other**

6 Sept-20 Nov 2023 at [St Martin-in-the-Fields](#)

This year's Autumn Lecture Series investigates those things in which we believe deeply – and for which we would be prepared to make a costly stand. We hear from those who have lived for the things they believed in, as they offer insight, prophecy, challenge, controversy, hope, warning, courage and vision. Our 2023 lecture series addresses a divided world and a planet in crisis. Through these compelling and diverse voices it asks the question: 'And where do you stand?' What

are the things that hold your life together, lie at the very core of all you are – for which you would be ready to offer your life? Full details [here](#).

#### **Your Next Move**

10am on 12 Sept 2023 at [London Diocesan House](#)

For those considering a move in the Church of England this is a full day workshop which takes participants through the complete process including:

- Evaluating your skills and experience
- Preparing applications
- Researching posts and churches





- Presentation Skills
- Preparing for interviews
- Advertising and Recruitment in the Church of England

A light sandwich lunch is served with vegetarian, vegan, gluten and dairy free options available. Please note this training is only open to Clergy in the Diocese of London and is especially relevant for final year curates (Yr3). [Book here](#)



### **"Inhabiting the Bible Through Story: The Use of Imagination"**

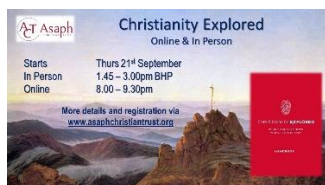
6.30pm on 13 September at St Peter Belsize Park

Dr Paula Gooder, Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral, will give the 2023 Donald Barnes Memorial Lecture. Paula is a distinguished theologian, writer, broadcaster and lecturer on Biblical Studies specializing in the New Testament. She has a wide knowledge of the culture, social and faith history of the early church. Paula has lectured extensively on St Paul, but recently has written and talked on "The Women of the Bible", often shadowy figures, who yet played vital roles in the Early Church supporting Jesus, St Paul and the disciples. Paula is a compelling and engaging speaker. The lecture will be followed by a drinks reception. Free admission - retiring collection.

### **Gentle and Lowly - 10 Week Course**

8-9.30pm 19 Sept to 28 Nov 2023 at [Christ Church Cockfosters](#)

Christians know what Jesus Christ has done – but who is he? What is his deepest heart for his people, weary and faltering on their journey toward heaven? Jesus said he is "Gentle and lowly in heart." This course reflects on these words opening up a neglected yet central truth about who he is for sinners and sufferers today. [Book here](#)



### **Christianity Explored - 7 Week Course**

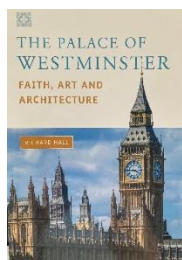
1.45-3.00pm 21 Sept to 7 Nov 2023 at Poynter Road, EN1 1DN

A course designed to introduce people to the foundation of the Christian faith by looking at who Jesus is, through the lens of Mark's Gospel. The study uses three basic questions to explore the subject: Who is Jesus? What did he achieve? How should we respond? [Book here](#)

### **An Introduction to Pastoral Care**

7-9pm on 3 Oct to 28 Nov 2023 at The Centre for Training and Development, Hemsworth Street, Hoxton, N1 5LF

Are you interested in caring for others, whether in a small group or visiting them at home or in hospital? Do you want to care for anyone at their point of need? This course will give you an insight into what pastoral care is all about and what good practice looks like. [Book here](#)



### **'The Palace of Westminster-Faith, Art and Architecture' Presentation**

6pm on 7 October 2023 at St John the Evangelist Friern Barnet N11 3DP

Richard Hall, an architectural historian and a visiting lecturer at the University of Westminster, has recently published an illustrated guidebook to the Palace of Westminster, focusing on how the nation's historic faith is embedded within the building's architecture, its interiors, and its art and iconography. There will be drinks on arrival followed by the presentation at 7pm. The event is free of charge and donations to support St John's church will be gratefully received on the day. [Book here](#)

### **Clergy Study Day**

9.30am-4.15pm on 23 November 2023 at Church House, Westminster

We warmly invite you to join us for a special Study Day on the Theme of Moving into Advent: Preparing to Welcome Christmas to provide a space for teaching, reflection and catching up with friends from across the diocese. We are delighted that Paula Gooder and Bishop Jonathan will be giving keynote talks and we shall be hosting a range of workshops for you to choose from. A hot buffet lunch will be served.





RACIAL  
JUSTICE  
UNIT

## Being Built Together

Embrace the Power of  
Engaging Discussions

Celebrate the Rich Tapestry of Diverse  
Anglican Networks and Communities

Strengthening the Church through  
Collaboration and Inclusivity

**SPECIAL KEYNOTE SPEAKER: CHINE MCDONALD**

**12-13 October**

**The Hayes Conference Centre  
Hayes Lane Swanwick, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 1AU**

[Click For More Info](#)

Events can be advertised in this publication and are done so on the understanding that they do not represent a specific view of the Edmonton Episcopal Area.