

European Anglicans

Summer 2023



What has helped you or your chaplaincy in your caring for creation journey?

Ahead of Creationtide this September, the Communications team are compiling a list of one tip per chaplaincy that has helped them become more eco-friendly. This could be as simple as swapping to paper cutlery over plastic, doing a beach clean or creating an eco-garden.

We want to know so we collectively support one another in the diocese. Email Amber in the Communications team on communications@europe.anglican.org and your tip will be added to the list.

European Anglicans Summer 2023



Editor:

Ruth Blanco
Head of Communications
ruth.blanco@churchofengland.org



Design:

Amber Jackson
Digital Communications Officer
amber.jackson@europe.anglican.org



Copy:

Rachel Farmer
Features Writer
communications@europe.anglican.org

Pictures:

Images are reproduced courtesy of chaplaincies across the diocese, and unsplash.com

Contact Us:

communications@europe.anglican.org



[@dioceseineurope](https://twitter.com/dioceseineurope)

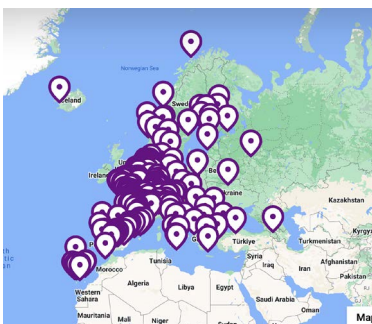
[Daily Prayer Diary](#) | [Website](#)



06 Ordinations in Brussels and Rotterdam



24 Racial Justice Conference



26 How the new website works and how to help people find your chaplaincy!

Contents

- 05** Stories from our chaplaincies
- 06** Ordinations in Brussels and Rotterdam
- 07** Meet our ordinands
- 08** Reflections on leaving Moscow – Canon Revd Malcolm Rogers
- 12** ‘Home grown’ chaplain has found his happy place
- 14** Double golden celebrations for worshippers in Strasbourg
The Revd John Murray
- 16** Campaigning Chaplain leads call for a day of Remembrance over slavery in the Netherlands
- 18** What it was like to be a part of the MES Scheme in Brussels
- 21** Extinction rebellion and the church
- 22** Walking the Camino de Santiago with the Archdeacon of Gibraltar and Italy & Malta, The Ven David Waller
- 24** Racial Justice Conference
- 26** How the new website works and how to help people find your chaplaincy!



Welcome to the summer edition of *European Anglicans*

In many ways it is ideal holiday reading for those of us lucky enough to be getting a bit of a break in the coming weeks. To those who are not – sincere thanks for keeping everything going. I am writing this from the departure lounge at Heathrow so regard myself as one of the lucky ones.

This edition is really all about journeys; some actual and some of faith and service. It strikes me that the whole magazine is a reminder that we are all on a journey. It is often haphazard, not quite taking us where we expect to end up and challenging us to trust that, even if we don't quite know what is in store, God has a plan.

We hear from Revd Canon Malcolm Rogers as he and Alison return from Moscow. When they set out in 2017 they could not have known that poisonings in Salisbury in England, a pandemic and a war would frame their time at St Andrew's and the journeys home particularly in the

last year would be so lengthy or arduous. The piece is too modest to mention that in the King's birthday honours list Malcolm was awarded an MBE and Alison a BEM. It is rare for a couple to be recognised at the same time but the honours are richly deserved.

Also, in this edition there are some wonderful word pictures from Archdeacon David Waller describing his experience walking the Camino. There are remarkable faith journeys too. They range from our latest ordinands setting out on their ministry to perhaps our longest serving priest Revd John Murray who has been in ministry for 50 years first as a reader and then for 40 years as a priest. Matt Thijs's story is very unusual. He began exploring his vocation at Voorschoten in the Netherlands and now after doing the Ministry Experience Scheme, training and a curacy there, he has become the new chaplain. Few have such an 'all through' experience.

Looking ahead there is an invitation to go to Freiburg in November for the Racial Justice Conference. Archdeacon Leslie Nathaniel gets us up to date with the plans for an important and exciting time.

Finally, I hope you are enjoying the place where you are reading this – our new and very blue website. It has been a long journey to launch but it offers so much more than we were able to show before. However, your feedback is crucial to make it even better so if you spot things that are not quite right or could be better then do let communications@europe.anglican.org know or indeed use the contact us form on the site.

Happy reading and warm wishes for a blessed summer.

Andrew
Diocesan Secretary

Stories from our chaplaincies



La Fustera

"At La Fustera today we celebrated the 40th Anniversary of Fr. Rodney's ordination which took place at Liverpool Cathedral on 3rd July 1983. People who couldn't be with us sent messages, Sue McNae made a beautiful card and of course we had cava & cake. Congratulations Fr. Rodney."



Church of the Resurrection, Bucharest

"[Here is a short video](#) about our work with Ukrainian refugees sponsored by USPG and Diocese in Europe. Many thanks for all your prayers and support for this project!"



Saint John the Evangelist, Anglican Church, Izmir

"We held a service of Thanksgiving and Dedication today, following the completion of our project to rewire and repaint St John's Church. Cleopatra lent a helping paw to the welcomers before the service!"

Do you have a chaplaincy pet like St John's the Evangelist? Share them on your preferred social media channel and tag @dioceseineurope so we can share your post!

Ordinations in Brussels and Rotterdam

Four people, each with a unique story of how God called them to serve, were ordained - three deacons and one priest at services in Brussels and Rotterdam on Saturday 1 July.

The three deacon candidates were ordained as Assistant Curates to serve in St Margaret's, Budapest, The Anglican Church, Lyon and Holy Trinity, Maisons-Laffitte. The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes, The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe led the Eucharist at the joyful occasion in Brussels

The newly ordained clergy will join their colleagues in leading our chaplaincies through prayer, teaching and worship. In doing so, they will further the



mission of the church: to be a church for all people and for all places.

Meanwhile Mark Hafkensheid was ordained priest at St Mary's Rotterdam. The Rt Revd Dr David Hamid, Suffragan Bishop, led the service.

Bishop David reminded the congregation member of their baptismal vows: "All the baptised are called to be active disciples. We serve God by being good neighbours, good parents, good children, good employers, good workers, good teachers, good musicians, good administrators, good friends!"

In his charge to the new priest, based on the Apostle Paul in Ephesians, he said: "As a priest it will be your task to make all these gifts of which St Paul speaks (the word of knowledge, increased faith, the gifts of healing, the gift of miracles, prophecy, the discernment of spirits, kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues) come alive in your people."

"Mark, your priesthood is more a verb than a noun. Priesthood is not a thing that you have and possess. Priesthood is about growing; it is walking a path.

Bishop David concluded: "Continue to grow into the priest that God wants you to be. Continue to be an active presence and sign of Christ's reconciling power and love among those who you are called."

We invite you to pray for those who have been ordained this year in the diocese and wider Church of England, and are about to begin this new chapter in their lives.

Meet our ordinands

Craig Taylor, to serve as Assistant Curate at the The Anglican Church, Lyon

Craig became a Christian shortly before entering university, where he studied physics. After graduating, he felt called to ordination and tested the waters of ministry by doing an internship with UCCF (United Christian Students) who support Christian unions at universities around the UK. [Read Craig's full profile on our website.](#)

John Wilson, to serve as Assistant Curate at St Margaret's, Budapest.

"Having made a complete mess of my life by the time I arrived at university in Chicago; it did not take long before I hit rock-bottom. Standing outside a nightclub on a wintry night, as the music blared inside, and the snow descended silently around me, I made two life-altering decisions..." [Read John's full profile on our website.](#)



Vivian Sockett, to serve as Assistant Curate at Holy Trinity, Maisons-Laffitte

Vivian graduated with a BA in Economics and Political Science from a top US college and champions the voice of the most vulnerable. [Read Vivian's full profile on our website.](#)

Mark Hafkensheid, to continue serving as Assistant Curate in St Mary's Church, Rotterdam

Mark has worked in many areas of the financial industry: Amsterdam Exchange, Euronext, and the New York Stock Exchange, but he also trained as a work-life coach where he nurtured his love for working with people. [Read Mark's full profile on our website.](#)

Reflections on leaving Moscow - Canon Revd Malcolm Rogers

On Wednesday 28 June, Alison, my wife, and myself walked out of the border control at Narva, Estonia, and left Russia. It was an emotional moment. For the last six years we have lived in Moscow where I have had the privilege to serve as the Anglican chaplain of St Andrew's. It has not been dull.

There was the World Cup when we saw Russia as Russia could be: open to the world. But we were also in Moscow during the fall out from the Salisbury poisonings, COVID and the invasion of Ukraine. We thought on 24 June that we were going to add a military coup to that list. It has been like living in a Russian fairy tale: at times unbelievably surreal, a bit wild, exciting, occasionally scary, always unpredictable.

We met with incredible kindness from ordinary people. When we took my father round Moscow in a wheelchair (and Moscow is not the most wheelchair friendly city) whenever we came to steps, several people would gather, unasked, to help carry the chair up or down. I was embarrassed by the number of times people would stand up to give me, a 60-year-old white haired man, a seat on the Metro. Shop keepers regularly gave us discounts when we were not aware that there were discounts. And even after the invasion of Ukraine, we continued to meet with kindness.

I have also not known a more obviously spiritually fruitful time than the six years we spent in Moscow. In Russia people still do God and church in a way that I have not seen in the UK. Every Sunday we had new people come through the door, many of whom appeared to be

genuinely seeking God. Of course, people came because we were a bit exotic, and because of the English. Several came because they said that it was easier for them to understand the service in English than in Church Slavonic. Others came because they were unhappy with the Orthodox, although I pointed out that in the UK people go to Orthodox churches because they are unhappy with the Church of England. But we offered something that looked like 'Church' and tried to offer a welcoming environment for all. We had several adult baptisms and 45 confirmations, mainly of young adults in their 20s and 30s, and a further 10 were waiting for confirmation when we left.

At times, in the earlier days of the war, people would open their hearts to us and tell us how broken and crushed they felt about what had happened. There was the person who messaged, "We are in shock. Not knowing what to expect and where to run. We pray and pray and feel very bad. We are safe but my soul is truly ruined. Just no words, just only cry. What has he done to our nation and our kids? Put us into fire." Overnight the dreams and hopes of many of our young bright English-speaking Russians, who looked to the West and saw a future in partnership with the West, were crushed. It was a bit like a Russian Brexit, only 100 times worse and far more brutal. It was not only

the foreigners who left. Many Russian young people in our congregation left the country, especially after mobilisation began in September 2022.

But of course, many people do support the so-called Special Military Operations, especially those who are older and only have access to government sources of information. Families are divided, especially between younger and older. Family members in Ukraine do not speak to family members in Russia, and vice versa. Couples are divided. But as the SMO have continued, fewer speak to us about their feelings. If you say the wrong thing to the wrong person, you can be accused of the very common offence of 'discrediting the Russian army'. One friend received the fine of the equivalent of a month's salary for carrying a bag that said, 'No war'. Any further offence will mean that she is sent to prison.

There is only one public narrative about the war in Russia, the official version: This is a defensive operation. The enemy is not really Ukraine, but NATO and a West that is Russophobic, that wishes to impose liberal individualism and that wants to break up Russia and destroy Orthodoxy and the Russian way of life. One older Russian lady leaving church one Sunday, said to me, 'It is terrible', and when I agreed, added 'It is all the Americans' fault!' People were delighted to meet us because they said that it meant that not everyone in the West hated them. That is one of the reasons why I argued that the UK sanctioning the Patriarch was an own goal. It certainly was not a deterrent: to be sanctioned in Russia is to wear a badge of honour. It was a playing to the gallery in the West, and in Russia it was not seen as a sanctioning of the Patriarch, but as a sanctioning of the Orthodox Church. It simply played into the propaganda machine that the West is against the Russian way of life.

Personally, there have been the difficult moments. If you are paranoid, then Russia is the country of your dreams. On one of our more memorable early Sunday morning BCP services, we had - among the very small congregation - MI5, FBI and their FSB minders. We did not think we were ever followed, but in our final week we went to a café for a farewell breakfast with our neighbours; when we came to pay, we were told that the bill had been paid for by the man (who I had not noticed) sitting on the next table to us. Someone in the know told us that it was a classic FSB 'signing off' routine. The non-paranoid interpretation is that it was a stranger being very kind! We did have to assume that everything we said, wrote or did was potentially listenable by algorithms, and we knew that people came to the congregation to report back to the authorities. But we had nothing to hide and our only defence was complete openness.

There was also a protest of about 30 people outside St Andrew's last Remembrance Sunday, waving banners and chanting slogans such as 'Defeat to Anglo-Saxon vampires'. The best was, 'Freedom to Scotland!' It was very ordered and very illegal, but nobody was going to stop them. I went over to speak with them. They asked me why the NATO ambassadors were gathering to celebrate the victory of England over Russia in the First World War. I really had to check that I had understood correctly that that was what they were saying, and I have no idea where it was coming from.

But despite everything - the paralysing bureaucracy, the times of fear and uncertainty, the difficulties of getting visas (for the last year we have only been able to get 3 month visas which need to be renewed in the UK) and an ever tightening of the political screw - I am immensely grateful for the privilege that we have had of living in Moscow among the Russian people, of being alongside

members of the expat community, and of sharing in the wonderful community that is St Andrew's. We have left not because of the situation, although that has not helped, but for family reasons. We are going to miss the place and the people dreadfully.

On the evening before we left, I was speaking with one of our more hawkish diplomats. We have had several conversations about God. He would not call himself a Christian. I was saying how powerless St Andrew's was, and how powerless I felt vis a vis the war. We have no influence, no contacts, and we are dependent on others. We cannot do anything to change the situation. And he challenged me: 'But you can pray, and you can speak for peace!'

I know that speaking for peace in the current climate is not popular, either in Russia or the West. In Russia it can get you put in prison. In the West it can lead to social disapproval. For both sides, there is a clear right and wrong in this war. For Russians, there is the right to defend yourself. For us, whatever your grievance with your neighbour, you do not invade them without legitimate international sanction (as Western powers we also need to remember that). Ukraine is a sovereign nation that has a right to defend herself. Awful atrocities have been committed, and people need to be held responsible. And how can we give ground to naked aggression, backed up by the threat to use nuclear weapons, without opening the door to future aggression of the powerful? It is not surprising that there is no movement for peace.

But I will speak for peace, because we have heard first hand of the destruction that the war is causing in Ukraine, and I have seen the devastation that





it has caused countless people in Russia. I am not prepared to settle for a situation in which thousands of people, Ukrainians and Russians, are still going to die; in which millions of people are forced to live as refugees and in which further millions may starve because grain is not going to reach them. The fighting has to stop. People have to sit down and talk.

As Churches we do have a role to play. Firstly, we are more intricately bound up in this conflict than we might wish to be. Religion is a significant factor in this war. We need to work with the world ecumenical bodies somehow bringing the different parties together, showing that what we have in common in our Lord Jesus Christ is greater than anything that separates us.

Secondly, as chaplancies we can pray. As Christians we follow a crucified Lord Jesus Christ. He chose, in love, to die for his enemies so that we might be reconciled to God. As he hangs on the cross, he identifies with the victims, and he takes onto himself the sins of the perpetrators (many of whom are victims themselves), on both sides of the conflict. But we also believe in the resurrection, that Jesus rose from the dead, that there is no death-situation that God cannot transform, and that Jesus is Lord of all. And as Christians we have the freedom to look for the compromise because we know the end of the story, and we can play the long game. An apparent crucifixion, or apparent surrender or defeat today will look very different in 40 years' time, and it will look even more different on the day that we pray for, when Christ will return, and God will bring to light all things, and establish his kingdom of right-ness, justice and peace. It is in that hope that we can speak for and work and pray for peace.

'Home grown' chaplain has found his happy place

The new chaplain in Voorschoten in the Netherlands says he has finally found the job he's always wanted.

Matt is one of the first people to have begun his journey to ordination, trained, gone on to serve his curacy and become an incumbent, all within the Diocese in Europe.

Matt Thijs (39) leads the thriving and youthful congregation of St James, not far from The Hague. Having been ordained three years ago, he says he is excited about the future of the church as he takes on the chaplaincy role.



"Since I have been ordained there is nothing I have ever done in my life that feels as suited to me as being a priest," he said. Although Matt's parents are both Dutch, he spent a lot of time in the UK and other countries. He says it was this strong English connection that led him to join the Church of England.

An invitation to visit South Africa to help in a church came at the right moment for Matt. What was originally an extended holiday, turned into a full-time job and he began leading worship at St Martin's Church in Durban, a role he enjoyed for more than six years.

"It worked with all kinds of people from townships, helping young people get interested in church through music. That's really what my first interest in church was, the music and from the music into the worship."

While in South Africa, Matt met his wife Lizelle, who was



one of the first people to ask Matt if he had thought about whether God might be calling him into the church. "I wasn't sure at all if it was my thing, what with the robes and all sorts of stuff," he said.

According to Matt, the conversations about ordination kept happening and Matt and Lizelle eventually found

themselves back in the Netherlands, linked to the Anglican church in The Hague, where he worked as a pastoral assistant. It was here that the vicar, Andrew Gready, encouraged him to test out his call to ordination.

“I think I had to stop worrying too much about how other people did it, but trust that if God had called me, he called me to be myself and be a priest, not to be someone else.”

His first chaplaincy in the village of Voorschoten, is in the western Netherlands. The church was planted by

the Anglican church in The Hague and meets in the British School based in the village.

“That has set the culture from the beginning,” Matt said. “The fact that we’re not in a church building. In the past we had a lot of people connected with the school, but

now less English people are attending, and the number of other internationals and Dutch people who are coming has been growing.”

Each month they have around 120 people attending and a third of the congregation are under the age of 18. “We have always been a church that has a big focus on children and young people, and a priority on community and fellowship” Matt said.

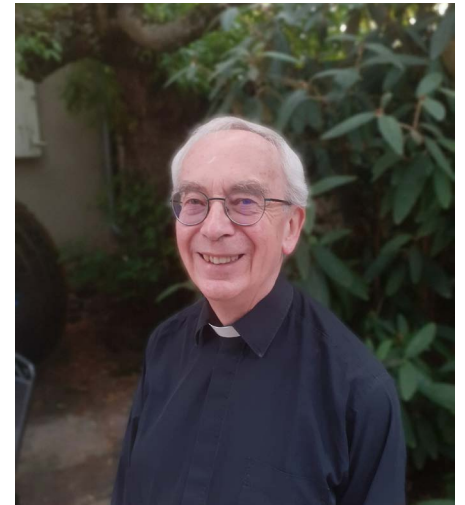
“We’re Anglican in a very European way,” he said. “If you came into our service, it wouldn’t feel like a little island of Britishness. We are more international. We use easier and accessible language, as for many English isn’t their first language, and we have a mixture of liturgy and informality, which is suitable for our context.”

Looking to the future, Matt said: “My hope is that we could become more outward looking. Covid put a break on everything and so we are focusing on rebuilding community. But the next phase is looking at being a missional church.”



Double golden celebrations for worshippers in Strasbourg

The Revd John Murray



It has been a year of celebrations for the Anglican church in Strasbourg as a flurry of special anniversaries all came together in July.

Retired chaplain, the Revd John Murray, combined a celebration of 40 years as an ordained priest with the 50th anniversary of the start of chaplaincy in Strasbourg. This year also marks his 50th year ministering within the Diocese in Europe, after he was licensed as a Reader when he moved to France in 1973.



“The internationalism of the congregation reflects how international European cities have become. There are people from everywhere, living everywhere, and that is reflected in our congregation.”

“Everything has come together this year,” he said. “We’ll be marking the special year with a service followed by a lunch for about 100.” The event will include John’s family and friends as well as ecumenical guests, including the local protestant church which they have been working in partnership with.

The chaplaincy meets in the Dominican church, the Eglise des Dominicains, in the middle of Strasbourg’s old university campus, where it has been hosted over the past 50 years.

A former civil servant, John has lived in the city for five decades, since taking up a role with the Council of Europe, where he worked until 2006.

“It was interesting work. And working with people from all the different European countries made it even more interesting, which is why I stayed.”

When John was ordained 10 years after arriving in Strasbourg, he was the first person in the Diocese in Europe to be ordained for non-stipendiary ministry, working as a priest alongside his normal job at the Council of Europe.

He said he has seen the church change and develop over the years. When he first joined the Anglican church in Strasbourg its congregation of less than 15 was mainly made up of British and American people living in the city.

“It’s now become bigger and much more international over the years, with people from all over the world. We have about 50 worshipping each Sunday. From being very British and English speaking, there are now a lot of people who prefer to worship in English rather than French, but they’re not British or even Anglican.”

Although the congregation had been mainly international business people and diplomats, it is now people from a whole range of backgrounds including asylum seekers and people who are on very modest incomes.

He said: “I really like it because it is such a broad range of people, backgrounds, cultures and church affiliations, it feels like the church ‘catholic’ should be – everyone together.”

“The internationalism of the congregation reflects how international European cities have become. There are people from everywhere, living everywhere, and that is reflected in our congregation.”

Looking back on his half century in Strasbourg, he has seen the establishment of the Diocese in Europe and a new Archdeaconry of France.

He said: “This chaplaincy has been so much a part of my life that it’s wonderful to have this moment. I’m also happy that the celebration of my 40 years of ordination is part of a much broader celebration. It’s going to be a very happy day I think.”

Campaigning Chaplaincy leads call for a day of Remembrance over slavery in the Netherlands

Following in the footsteps of a group of campaigning women from the 19th century, the chaplaincy of St Mary's, Rotterdam, is leading a call for the Netherlands to establish a national day of Remembrance to mark the end of slavery in the country.

This year the Netherlands is holding a Slavery Memorial Year to mark the 150th anniversary of the end of slavery in the country and in its former colonies in Suriname and the Caribbean.

In the light of this national focus, St Mary's Chaplain, the Revd Jennifer Pridmore, has been spearheading an appeal for the Dutch government to further respect the voice of the descendants of its formerly enslaved peoples through establishing an official day of Remembrance.

The initiative began after Jennifer discovered that members of St Mary's in the 1800s had played a key role in ending slavery for people from Suriname who lived and worked in the dockland area around the church.

"We began a journey of investigation and relationship building with people of Suriname descent in our neighbourhood," Jennifer said. "We learned that a group of women from St Mary's, wrote a letter to King Willem II in 1842 advocating for the immediate end to slavery in Suriname.

After some searching, our churchwarden, Willem Gebuis, was able to track down the letter in the official archives in Den Haag."

According to Jennifer, this extraordinary group of women, called the Rotterdam Ladies Antislavery Committee, had been inspired by an anti-slavery talk from English reformer, Elizabeth Fry, and began to meet and produce pamphlets to promote the cause.

Supported by the Founder and Director of SurinameOso, Annie Zinhagel, who helped piece together the story of the Rotterdam Ladies, Jennifer learned how the women had courageously taken a stand, in a society where women had no official voice or status. They had gathered 129 signatories and sent their letter directly to the King, appealing to him as a person of faith to abolish slavery. Although their letter was technically illegal, King Willem did write back to say they would look at the issue sometime in the future, but asked them to stop their activities in case it caused unrest in the colonies. However, the women didn't stop and they continued to campaign and raise funds until the Netherlands eventually became the last country in Europe to end slavery in 1863.

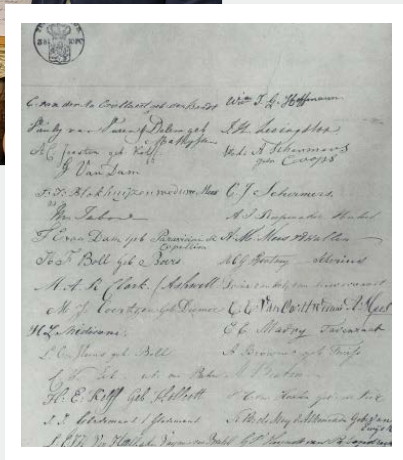
"In September when the Church Council met," she said, "we discussed the discovery of this letter to King Willem, the need to be active in racial justice and reconciliation and the deep-seated desire, particularly from the descendants of formerly



enslaved people, to have Ketikoti marked as an official day of Remembrance.”

Jennifer said, “The council and then the Deanery unanimously voted to send a letter to Prime Minister Rutte asking him to take a stand for racial justice, for racial reconciliation, to make Ketikoti an official national day of Remembrance and have the Cabinet urgently look into and address all of the points raised by a report from the Slavery Memorial Advisory Group.

It said that “too much time has already passed with regard to the shameful matter of enslavement” and asked that descendants of formerly enslaved peoples in the Netherlands be respectfully acknowledged.



“We understand that this doesn’t solve any of the big the questions, right the wrongs of years and it doesn’t fix every racist action right now, but it is a step. We hope that we can join our voices and our support with all of those for whom this is a daily living issue, and let them know that we support them as people uniquely created by God and deserving of respect.”

Jennifer said she is grateful for the full support of the Anglican church in the Netherlands, she said: “When the letter was sent and word was sent around, it was read, promoted, and woven into sermons across the deanery the following Sunday. It is so important, and so lovely to work together with a united voice on this.”

The letter was sent to the Prime Minister’s office, with copies to the office of the King. A few days later, the King made a speech at a Ketikoti celebration – taking full responsibility for the role of the government and the Royal Family in slavery. In addition, the Prime Minister’s office acknowledged receipt of the letter, thanking the chaplaincy for their engagement, and noted that they understand the Memorial Year to be part of a wider call for recognition. They will also consider a public holiday on Ketikoti.

“This is unheard of,” said Jennifer, who believes the King’s speech was long planned, and not a result of their letter.

“This is so important, not only for formerly enslaved people, but it’s important for people of every culture to know that this is acknowledged and owned and that there is a genuine desire to move forward.”

Jennifer and other members of St Mary’s are continuing to work with local people in both the local Suriname and Caribbean communities, including their own parishioners, to learn and understand more about the colonial history of slavery in the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the continued effects on the descendants of these formerly enslaved peoples.

what it was like to be a part of the *MES Scheme in Brussels*



MES (Ministry Experience Scheme) is a year-long internship that's run in many Anglican dioceses. It's designed to give young people who are exploring their vocation and what God is calling them into an opportunity to experience ministry.

We talked to Guido Bowen, from East Sussex, about his MES year in Holy Trinity, Brussels.

Guido lived in Leeds until he was 16. After that, he moved with his family to Sussex, where he also came to faith. Originally part of the Roman Catholic Church, he discerned a calling to the Church of England.

It was through a conversation with a friend who had taken part in the scheme in Norfolk diocese that Guido decided to do some research. He found a map of where you could do MES in the Church of England on their website and noticed a little diamond hovering over Europe. "It was

a winter's evening, early January 2022, on my laptop coming across MES in Europe when I decided to get in touch with the coordinator." he explained.

After being asked why he chose to do his placement in Europe, he replied: "I understand vocation to be something that needs to be approached holistically in order for me to understand how God calls every aspect of myself."

"So to discover and explore that vocation, in Europe, very much made sense for me, because it meant that I could pull from all my experiences, be that professional, personal, or academic, and flesh that out in that context, where, in a sense, I am most truly who I am." he added.

As he doesn't speak French, initially he was concerned about whether language would be a barrier: "Most of my time was in English-speaking communities in

Brussels. That said, it wasn't something that played on me very much. I wasn't worried about not being able to communicate with people. It wouldn't be a barrier for somebody who's not as confident with languages."

He pointed out that the Diocese of Europe is a unique case study. It is not a province of the Anglican Communion, but it is a diocese. It's morphed and grown into its own entity that has a real sense of serving European rather than just expat communities.

"Understanding the ways in which that demographic change is playing out in ministry and mission is something that's important to take that to our diocese in England, where perhaps those demographic shifts have been slightly slower." he added.

Another 'important lesson' that he learnt was that the Church of England in Europe is a small minority compared to the number of Christians in England who are part of the Church of England. He explained that: "it means is that there is a sense of our place is not being the established church, but it's being a church among many parts of the body.

"That in turn encourages ecumenical relationships and interdenominational relationships. Because we know that we cannot survive purely on our own. We have to build real connections with other churches if we are going to serve God's people in Europe.

He called it a 'lesson in humility.' A reminder that we should not rely purely on ourselves, but reach out to through mission and look at our partners, as we seek to serve our communities and congregations. MES interns have a wide range of opportunities. They can design liturgy, plan worship services and lead them, intercede regularly and have pastoral encounters with



people. Guido was also involved in missional aspects of the church like Holy Trinity's Community Kitchen. Interns have monthly educational supervision meetings during which they discuss theology that helps them discern how God is calling them. These meetings also give interns a

chance to discuss how they are being impacted by what they are experiencing.

The Diocese in Europe MES scheme has a unique element: a pilgrimage to the Holy Land led by Clare Amos, Director of Lay Discipleship and Ministry Experience Scheme for the diocese.

Guido was moved by the experience of standing on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. It was there, where the fishermen were when Jesus called them to come and follow him. "You see the lake stretching out before you," he said describing the sight, remarking on the serenity and tranquillity of the place.

It made Guido realise what the disciples were giving up when they chose to follow Jesus. They were giving up the beautiful reflection of the water, the mountains and hills surrounding - all in exchange for uncertainty and new territories.

He said, "Seeing this in person gave me a sense of the personal sacrifices and surrender to Christ that we are all

called to as his disciples. We shouldn't rest in our status quo but be ready to leave even if we do so in sadness, trusting that God will lead us, be with us and continue bearing fruit in our lives."

Guido said that being in a publicly recognised position within the church helped him discern how he's understood what God is calling him into by allowing him to hear the perspective of the wider church.

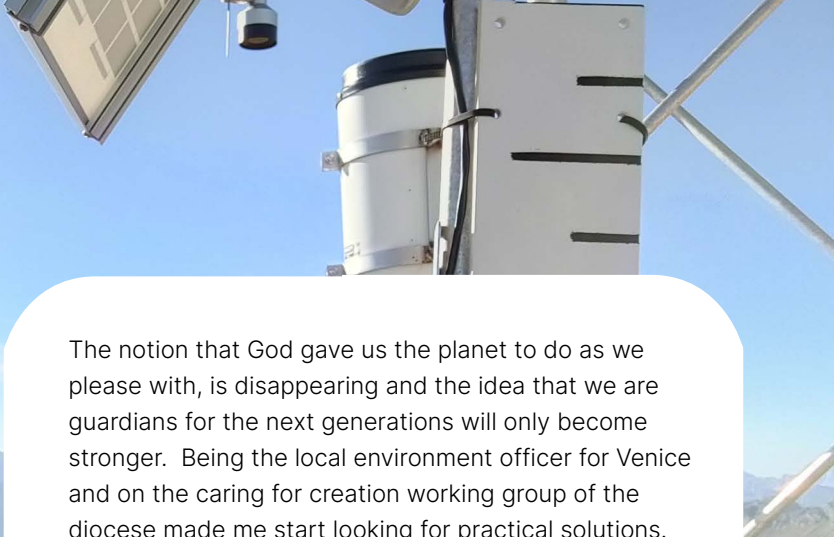
"People have pointed out that I sign a lot when I preach, so I incorporated it unknowingly into my preaching," said Guido, who previously worked as a Learning Support Assistant and used Makaton sign language frequently. "But it was something people picked up on, and that's a real gift. So I leant into it and saw how that could be a way of engaging people."

After his internship, Guido is ready to take the next step in his ministry. He told us: "You're putting yourself out there in terms of people are hearing and seeing the way that you are as a Christian. So, it can be quite exposing quite overwhelming at points. It's important to me to take time to process that and to see how that links with other aspects of myself." He plans on attending retreats and pilgrimages including stewarding a Youth pilgrimage to Walsingham before starting ordination process in his home diocese, Chichester.

Finally, Guido offered advice for others considering the MES year: "There is no expectation that doing the scheme is signing yourself off to become a priest. MES is for all sorts of vocations. It can be an entry point into youth or children's ministry, hospital or prison chaplaincy, and so much more."

"It's just giving you a space to be able to listen for God's calling and experience the ways in which he's calling you." he added.





Extinction rebellion and the church

“Climate change is no longer a scientific problem since we know the cause and what we have to do, but instead is a societal problem”

This month, we hear from one of the members of the Caring for Creation working group – Warren Cairns about his motivation to be involved, and how his faith inspires his environmental actions.

“The first thing that really made me decide to care for the environment and dedicate my career towards it was the discovery of the ozone hole in 1985. I remember being amazed in 1985 that we’d managed to do such a thing, and it started me on my way to studying measurement science. This was because the satellites had completely missed it because the software rejected the data because it was too low. It was only discovered by someone going into the field and doing what we now call ground truthing, where you take measurements and compare them to satellite readings. I started to learn about climate during my degree at the University of East Anglia.

The notion that God gave us the planet to do as we please with, is disappearing and the idea that we are guardians for the next generations will only become stronger. Being the local environment officer for Venice and on the caring for creation working group of the diocese made me start looking for practical solutions.

My conviction is that climate change is no longer a scientific problem since we know the cause and what we have to do, but instead is a societal problem and how to enact change made me join and become an activist. I took part in an Extinction Rebellion protest in Venice we were protesting against the degradation of the Venetian lagoon due to climate change and over use by mankind.

Individually we need to reduce our consumption, this doesn’t mean going without, but carefully choosing so we don’t need to replace so often. So away with fast fashion and pre-ripped jeans. Try to eliminate single use plastics by having a refillable water bottle, sit in the cafe and drink from ceramic cups instead of leaving quickly with a disposable one.

Cycle for distances less than 5 km, use your car less, go by train and public transport more often. If you need to make a car journey, offer someone a lift. If you must fly, stay for longer, try to arrange more than one meeting in the same place.

More important is collective action, disinvest in fossil fuels, vote for parties that take climate change seriously, and take action. Join Extinction Rebellion or another group, and get involved with us across the diocese.”



Walking the Camino de Santiago with the Archdeacon of Gibraltar and Italy & Malta, The Ven David Waller

Due to the blessings of the Diocesan sabbatical policy for its clergy I was given the gift of three months in order to ‘Study, Reflect and be Refreshed’ as it sets out the three commendable goals.

So while my sabbatical began on Maundy Thursday this year, the initial part of it was spent attending an intensive Spanish language course – four hours a day for three weeks!

The main section of my sabbatical involved walking, on pilgrimage, the Camino de Santiago in northern Spain and specifically the ‘French Route’. I chose this, being a ‘first timer’ as it is the most popular route of several available and has the most hostels or ‘albergues’ along the way. It meant I visiting cities such as Pamplona, Burgos and Leon before arriving at Santiago, along with many interesting small villages and towns along the way.

There is so much to say about walking the Camino, but perhaps a few highlights here. My first day began in the early morning of Tuesday 9 May, about 6.30am, when I found myself taking the first steps on the official route. I had stayed at the municipal albergue in St.Jean de Pied Port in southern France that previous night. A lower bunk bed in a communal room of eight beds.

The first highlight was this initial day when I was to cross the Pyrenees. The weather closed in with visibility down to a couple of hundred metres and incessant driving rain. I just followed the person walking several meters ahead of me in the mist, hoping that whoever was at the front knew where they were going. Just keep taking the next step. We were all deeply grateful for the ‘way-markers’ that dotted the route regularly.

Then, with lots of steep upward inclines and energy levels being sorely taxed, out of the fog appeared a van with a colourful awning and an enterprising French man who sold us absolutely divine hot chocolate. I can't tell you how welcome this was! He also told us how far we had to go – information that was both valuable and encouraging – to Roncesvillas the next town on the Camino. I arrived there late in the day, tired, but so glad to be given a bed for the night after a rather gruelling twenty six kilometre hike. It seemed that anything was achievable after that experience.

Another moment was the Pilgrim Mass at the mountain top village of O'Cebrerio. Pilgrim masses were held in almost every parish church along the Camino and I was fortunate enough to receive the sacrament regularly because of the consistent welcome pilgrims received. At the end of the mass there is traditionally the 'Pilgrims Blessing' as we are sent on our way.

In this village, as about fifty of us gather around the altar in a circle, the parish priest (a Franciscan friar) produced a loose leaf book in which he had the words of the blessing in many, many languages. So we heard the words in Korean, Afrikaans, German, French, Italian, Spanish, English and so on. He invited people to come to the altar, to stand in the priest's place, and read in their own language – and all those he invited were women – too many to be just coincidence I think – it was very moving.

We were then given a small painted polished stone each with the yellow 'Camino way-marker arrow' painted on it. It was, the priest said, to remind us that God's love is with us and guides us in The Way. Very powerful message for all of us.



I deeply valued the twenty or so kilometres walk each day with so much beautiful scenery, with people to have passing conversations with, or longer deeper talks over a meal. I loved the simple joy of carrying all that I needed in a ruck sack. I relished the solitude and the first early morning chill in the air, often walking in the mist, as the sun rose behind me and the crunch of the gravel on the path beneath my feet. I listened to morning prayer on my phone each day as I walked, and on other occasions managed to say midday prayers in churches and chapels I passed that were open.

On Friday 16 May, I entered Santiago and it was a somewhat emotional moment as I realised that sense of having achieved something important – the 790 kilometres of the Camino Frances.

The question now of course is how to integrate all the learning, praying, experience of the Camino into everyday life – let's just say that's a work in progress

Racial Justice Conference

Join us at our international ecumenical racial justice conference November 2023

The Racial Justice Group in the Diocese in Europe is excited to invite you to the diocesan Ecumenical Racial Justice Conference this November in Freiburg, Germany.

This conference is a unique opportunity to gather together with fellow advocates, activists, and specialists from across Europe and beyond who are committed to fostering a more just and inclusive society. The event will reflect on the racism of the past and present, acknowledge where we are today as a church and build practical actions together for the future.

To secure your place at this transformative event, [please visit our website](#) and complete the simple registration process. Early registration is strongly recommended as spaces are limited.



Who should attend?

This conference is open to everyone with a passion for creating a more equal society. It is for people within all churches across Europe who have a passion for justice. We especially welcome young people who can dream of a more just world, and people who may have been minoritised.

What is the purpose?

To analyse racism and the colonial heritage – searching new perspectives on the prevailing narrative of history

To address the reality of racial injustice- visible and invisible- that still prevails in the life of the church, faith communities and the society.

To build practical ways of overcoming racism and envisioning a roadmap for a community free of racial prejudices

To promote a culture of belonging, affirming that the Kingdom of God belongs to everyone.



What will you gain from attending?

Insightful Discussions: We have brought together many experts and voices from the church and beyond to share their stories and guide us in bible studies, talks and discussions.

Collaboration and Networking: Connect with like-minded individuals from diverse backgrounds and denominations who share a common passion for racial justice. Build meaningful relationships, forge new partnerships, and discover opportunities for collaboration beyond the conference.

Practical Tools for Action: Acquire practical tools, resources, and actionable steps that empower you to make a tangible impact within your own community. Gain the knowledge and skills necessary to challenge prejudice, promote inclusivity, and advocate for racial justice in your spheres of influence.

Together, let's work towards a future where racial justice is no longer a distant dream but a reality we proudly uphold. We look forward to welcoming you at the Ecumenical Racial Justice Conference and embarking on this empowering journey together.

How the new website works and how to help people find *your chaplaincy!*

To coincide with our new website, the Communications team has gone through an extensive exercise to improve how your chaplaincy information is featured on europe.anglican.org.

As before, every chaplaincy has a page on the diocese website via the [‘Find a Church’](#) section. The difference is that now the information on your page is linked directly to your A Church Near You page, the national Church of England’s church finder.

This means that you can update your chaplaincy website address, location, header image or welcome message on the diocesan website yourself!

If you update your A Church Near You page, the diocesan website will automatically update the same information.

Why did we use A church near you? (ACNY)

A Church Near You receives more than 70 million page views each year and 80 percent of people who come to the site are first-time visitors, so there is a huge opportunity to use the site to encourage local church attendance.

The site also offers free music downloads, copyright free images and other useful resources via the [Resouces Hub](#). Once you are an editor, you will have access to all of these materials.

If you are already an editor

Simply login and update the information. The information will then automatically update itself overnight, therefore, if you don’t see the changes immediately, allow 24 hours. If you need support, contact the Communications team on communications@europe.anglican.org.

If you need a refresher on how to use A Church Near You, visit the [editor’s helpdesk](#), which contains plenty of helpful guides on how to use the platform. You can also ask Ruth or Amber in the Communications team.

If you are yet to become an editor

If you’re not yet an editor on A Church Near You, [register](#) first. Then [log in](#), find your chaplaincy on the site and choose ‘Edit this church’ from the top menu bar to request access.

Find [more information](#) on becoming an editor, approving an editor or managing an editor’s account here.

