

SPIRE

St. Stephen's Community Magazine
Easter 2015
Issue 22

InSpire:

Animals and the natural world

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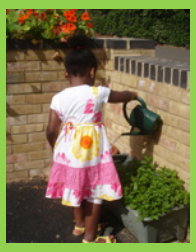
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WELCOME

Rebecca Lloyd
Editor



We are lucky in Dulwich to be surrounded by so much natural beauty. Most of the parish of St Stephen's is either woodland, park, or golf course. In this issue of Spire we look at how we relate to our natural world, and particularly to the animals in it.

We think about our pets: Katie writes about the Cinnamon Trust, an organisation that helps people look after their animals when they are ill, while I reflect on what owning a dog has taught me about spirituality.

St Stephen's is a very animal-loving church and Diana writes about our recent animal blessing service when we all brought our pets to church, while the vicar explains why we invite a donkey to our service on Palm Sunday and reflects on stories about donkeys in the Bible.

We also consider our impact on the environment around us. Eating in a more vegetarian way is one means of reducing our carbon footprint and the vicar writes about Rima, who has just opened a stall in Brixton selling vegetarian crepes with a Lebanese twist, while Adrian tells us about the solar panels Dulwich Wood School has recently had installed.

We have 'Hassocks'!

But we still need your help!

Thank you to all those who have generously helped us to replace our church kneelers with a set of rich deep blue ones.

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Thank you so much, the new kneelers make such a difference and comply with health and safety regulations.

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Office open on Saturday 10.30-11.30
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vicar@ststephensdulwich.org
Curate - Revd Dr Rebecca Lloyd
curate@ststephensdulwich.org
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t.lavelle181@btinternet.com
Director of music – Rupert Perkins
dom@ststephensdulwich.org
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Sandra Potter & Patrick Robathan
churchwarden1@ststephensdulwich.org
Parish administrator - Sarah Bucknall
parishoffice@ststephensdulwich.org

The team:
Rebecca Lloyd, Bernhard Schünemann, Katie Preusser, Christine & John Murrell, Diana Stoney, Linda Inniss, Caroline Sawle & Sarah Bucknall.

Our quiet friends

by Revd Canon Bernhard Schünemann



I don't know why in parts of our popular perception and culture donkeys have a reputation for being obstinate, stupid, sometimes pathetic or even ridiculous. Just like foxes are thought of as sly, this may have something to do with the world of fairy tales and fables. In this particular case of the reputation of donkeys the Bible is blameless. In the Bible donkeys are held in high regard and are considered of great value. They even get a mention in both versions of ten commandments: in Deuteronomy (5: 14) they are singled out as also needing a rest on the Sabbath day and in Exodus they are mentioned amongst the possessions that we are not to envy our neighbours for (Exodus 20: 17). Outside the Ten Commandments donkeys are especially mentioned as needing our support when they collapse under the weight put upon them even if it is by our worst enemy (Exodus 23: 5).

Most unusually a she-donkey features centre stage in the fable-like story of the seer Balaam and his donkey. It is the she-donkey who is able to see better than the seer: unlike the prophet, she can see the angel of God standing in the middle of the road. Balaam, who cannot see the angel, beats his donkey badly three times. She then becomes the first donkey who is given the power of speech by God, and after the donkey has spoken God himself scolds Balaam for mistreating his animal.

The idea that a donkey was present at the birth of Jesus is not directly mentioned in the Gospels, but the presence of a donkey at that event strays into the story via the positive view of donkeys and their baby-warming breath in Isaiah.

Nowadays donkeys are amongst the most badly-treated animals in Europe. Donkeys don't complain; at the very most they are stubborn and try to refuse to co-operate. Donkey rescue centres are still needed and are populated with many a donkey that suffered silently through its donkey life. The donkey that comes to St Stephen's on Palm Sunday is also a rescued donkey and it will come to us from Rotherhithe city farm. There donkeys now give confidence to disadvantaged children by letting themselves be ridden and stroked. Donkeys, of course, don't say very much, but perhaps they don't miss very much either. The donkey on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem must have wondered what was going on: all the waving of palms and the shouting and singing and the putting down of garments in his way. Did he know that Jesus had chosen a donkey to reinforce the truth that he really was a king? Perhaps he knew the donkey that had carried Jesus and his parents into Egypt, when they were first fleeing from the persecution of Herod. Perhaps a few days later he stood on the roadside when the palms were being trodden underfoot and the cross, being carried by that same Jesus, cast its shadow on the road in the heat of the midday sun. Donkeys have a big head, a kind face and a stubborn nature. As one commentator once observed about Palm Sunday: "And only the donkey and the children noticed that Jesus was crying."



Congregation of creatures

by Diana Stoney

I feel that I should preface this article with a humble reminder that I have no claim to an education in theology - I am simply a member of our community who enjoys the companionship of a furry little creature. Honestly, some days my chaotic schedule leaves me feeling more like a zookeeper than nurturing pet owner. However, perhaps that is exactly why I've been selected to provide a narrative for the recent Animal Blessing Service. Because when you invite an animal into your otherwise ordinary life, the extraordinary happens.

When the notion of an animal blessing was first presented, I thought it was perhaps a bit silly, but at the very least, it may be a sweet way to spend the afternoon as a family. The number of venues willing to welcome the full range of creatures in our family – crawling, drooling, barking (and we have a dog too) – is staggeringly sparse. So when the church bells rang, and we were greeted with a warm welcome, dirty paws and all, it was such a touching reminder of how lovely our Church really is.

The congregation was both audible and visible in spectacular ways. A survey of the pews was quite a sight to see – as Dalmatians, terriers and cockapoos dotted the landscape. And the sound, oh the sound! We weren't your typical church choir. It was a poignant demonstration that every creature has a voice.



As the introduction was made and we settled in for the readings following the first hymn, it was endearing to witness the animals amongst us settle in as well. Like they'd been here a thousand times before. Of course they belonged. However, there was a gentle reassurance that "If anything unfortunate happens, there are wipes." – a motto I use regularly in life.

Not only did we sit and stand in unison, but we also exercised our voices. A highlight of the service was a musical item performed by Helen Schunemann and Karu,





a Border Terrier. As Helen began to play the Hungarian Stomp on her cello, Karu chimed in with a spirited howl – and much to the delight of the audience, we had an entire choir of dogs join in! Equal parts hilarious and heart-warming.

People brought more than just dogs. There were cats and rats – and reptiles too! We quite truly were a congregation of creatures, transformed into companions. And never has it been so obvious how paramount our duty as humans it is, to safeguard the harmony of our relationship with animals. It was a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge all the animals we share our lives with – but also to bless, give thanks and recommit ourselves to all the beings who share this world with us.

And as we all clambered out of the pews, and grappled to collect our leads, and treats, and coats, you couldn't help but feel the levity in the air. It was such a joyful occasion. The collective sigh of relief from all the pet owners (no one required an accidental wipe). Children and adults, alike, were eager to cuddle the creature next to them and behind them. And that impulse to embrace our companions didn't dissipate. The feelings of joy, frivolity and camaraderie have continued to resonate ever sense.

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Solar panels at Dulwich Wood

by Adrian Turpin

To run on solar power may seem an ambitious dream given the winter we've just had. But Dulwich Wood School has found a permanent place in the sun following the installation of solar panels on its roof.

The new system, which will reduce the school's annual carbon footprint by 4.7 tonnes of CO2, is the result of more than a year's hard work by staff, pupils and the Friends of Dulwich Wood association. If every school in the UK were able to do the same, the emissions saved each year would be equivalent to those created by a bus driven for 664 million miles - more than three times the distance to the sun and back.

The project began in 2014, when the local primary entered a national competition run by Friends of the Earth, which offered the chance for one school to win a set of solar panels worth £15,000. Despite more than 7,000 votes and a compelling music video starring some of the children, Dulwich Wood was pipped to the prize by a school from Walthamstow.

Happily, however, the environmental campaign group was so impressed that they found £7,500 in extra funding from their supporters. Spearheaded by the Friends of Dulwich Wood, the campaign to raise the remaining £7,500 required to complete the project brought together people of all ages and backgrounds from across the community, including the congregation at St Stephen's, who gave generously.

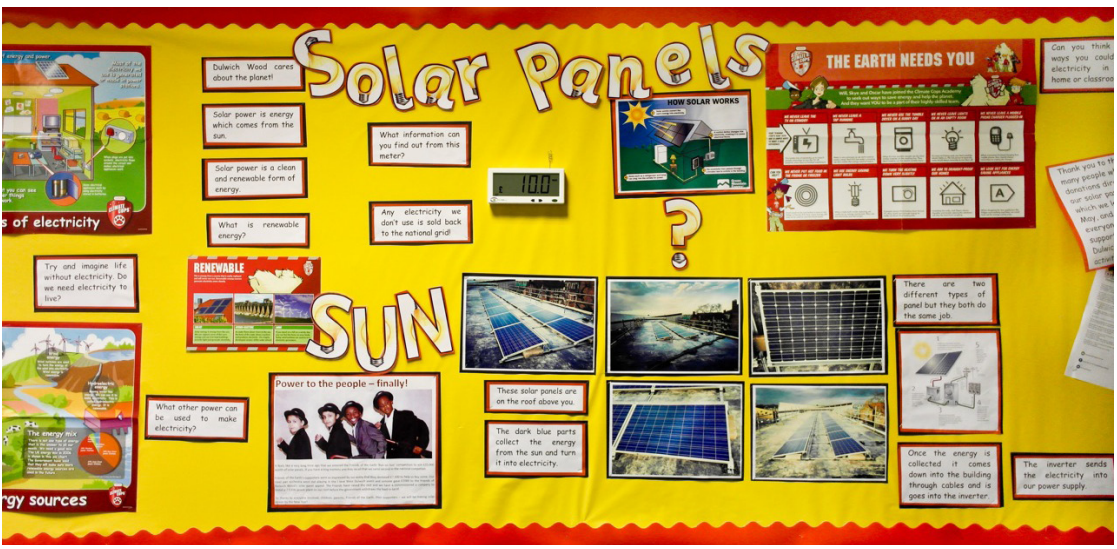
Pupils raised awareness by taking part in a mass lobby of MPs on climate change at Westminster. They also spread the word at the West Dulwich Festival, where a school steel band entertained the crowds. The day after that event the fundraisers were astounded to receive an anonymous donation of £2,000 (worth £2,500 with Gift Aid).

"We still have no idea who it was," says the Chair of the Friends of Dulwich Wood, Clare Scurfield, "but everyone connected to the school owes them and the many other donors a huge debt of gratitude."

The financial impact of the solar panels on Dulwich Wood is significant. Even in the school holidays they will be hard at work, repaying the initial outlay in fewer than seven years through savings and electricity sold to the National Grid. Over a 25-year lifespan, they are predicted to make a profit of £59,000.

But money, and even reduced carbon emissions, are only part of why this green-energy initiative is important. For Dulwich Wood's head teacher, Colin Lavelle, the panels' greatest value is to provide practical environmental education - pupils can even see how much energy is being produced at any time through a radio-controlled meter on public display.

That Dulwich Wood should walk the walk on climate change, rather than just talking the talk, is vital. The result is a concrete lesson in taking responsibility and in caring for the environment, as well as a practical demonstration of how global and local concerns can be intimately connected. Or as the strap line used by the school puts it: "My world, your world, our world".



Caring for our companions

by Katie Preusser

Be it a budgie, a tabby or a boisterous boxer, for so many people, there is no companion quite like a pet. For older people particularly, pets offer comfort, affection, routine and protection. But what happens when a pet's owner is too old to care for them any more?

That is where the Cinnamon Trust steps in. The charity helps older people, terminally ill people and their pets. When it can keep them together it will, and when they have to part, the Trust will make sure the pet goes to a loving home and that the owner is kept in touch.

What that means in practice is more than 12,000 active volunteers around the country providing care such as walking a dog for a housebound owner.

The Trust, which counts Sir Paul McCartney among its patrons, also provides a fostering service for pets whose owners are going into hospital and there is long-term care available for pets whose owners have died or moved into care homes. The Trust also campaigns for more residential homes to accept older people with their pets and it compiles a Pet Friendly Care Homes Register for each county.

The charity was set up by Averil Jarvis MBE and named after her corgi, Cinnamon, who died just as she was getting the Trust off the ground from her kitchen.

Three decades on, the Cinnamon Trust has helped around 250,000 people with nearly 300,000 pets, all under the motto: "Peace of mind and practical help for people



– love, care and safety for pets."

The charity has moved out of Mrs Jarvis's kitchen into offices in Cornwall and runs two sanctuaries. These have no cages or kennels but instead are decked out with sofas, rugs and armchairs to help re-homed pets settle in. The most recent arrivals were nine squirrels who had been rescued as orphan babies by a lady in Wales and left to the Cinnamon Trust to care for when she died. Other unusual residents include three turtles.

The Trust is always keen to hear from volunteers who can walk dogs, help owners with simple tasks like fetching pet food or who can make themselves available as foster parents to pets. Anyone interested can check a regularly updated map on the charity's website that shows where volunteers are needed.

"We are always looking for help, whether it's from volunteers or spreading the wonderful word about what the Cinnamon Trust is doing," says Patrick Williams, at the charity's offices in Cornwall. "If you know someone who is struggling to care for their pets, do get them to give us a call."

It's not just the pet owners who benefit from the Trust's work. The charity's newsletters are packed with heart-warming testimonies from volunteers whose lives have been enriched by helping pets and their owners in a time of need.

The Cinnamon Trust can be reached on 01736 757 900, from Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm. For more information, to make a donation or to become a member or volunteer see www.cinnamon.org.uk



https://www.charitychoice.co.uk/cinnamon-trust-helping-elderly-people-and-pets-1075/donate

The Cinnamon Trust

Lebanom-nom

by Bernhard Schünemann

The time before Easter is often an opportunity to look at our lifestyles and on the ecological footprint that we are making. With that in mind I was surprised to hear a suggestion proffered by Arnold Schwarzenegger, of all people, that we could all go on driving our cars to our heart's desire if we only became vegetarian!

Whether he is correct about this or not, it is certainly right that both from an environmental and from a health point of view eating a more vegetarian diet is good for us and for our planet.



I was delighted, therefore, to discover that a friend of ours from our part of Dulwich was starting a new business venture called Lebanom-nom, creating and selling vegetarian crêpes with a Lebanese twist in a new food court in Brixton.

Rima is originally from Lebanon and she has always been a fabulous cook. She spent the last twenty years bringing up her children and perfecting her cooking and business skills. She has now created mouth-watering new recipes for filling crêpes, which she is launching in Brixton. Her signature filling is a Lebanese salad made of spinach, mushrooms, onions and of course lemon juice and Lebanese spices. You can have the salad in a crêpe just plain or you can have it with a coating of her own aubergine paste (slightly smoked) or humus. Other fillings include: vegetable omelette with green pepper; onion, parsley, spices and humus; olives, lettuce and herbs.

Rima comes from a Druse family, and some of her sweet crêpes and mini- crêpes are based on recipes that are favourites with people who have been fasting all day during Ramadan and who need a good energy boost after sun-down. These fillings are based on a kind of light clotted cream with a sprinkling of pistachio and syrup or honey on top, not overly sweet but wholesome.





You can find Rima's crêpe stall in the New Food Court in Brixton on Atlantic Road, just about opposite where the train station exits. This food court is a new venture which has just opened, and as well as Rima's Lebanese innovations you can taste street food from all over the world there. It's a good place to have a light meal either on the hoof or sitting down in a communal covered area. From a culinary perspective we are so lucky to live so near Brixton here in Dulwich!






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Getting a cat from Battersea

By Christine Murrell

"I think I'm ready now to get two cats to share my home." These were the words with which Joan greeted me in church one Sunday. As a volunteer at Battersea Dogs and Cats Home I had offered to help Joan to re-home two cats when her previous cat had died last year, but it had taken a little time for her to make up her mind that she really wanted more cats in her life.

So it was that we caught the train to Battersea one wintry January morning, arriving before the doors opened at 10.30 to be sure we were first in the queue. The cattery, built in 2010, is a state-of-the-art glass building which caters for all the cats' needs. Each pen is light and airy with full-length windows for them to look out onto the world, climbing frames, heated pads for them to curl up on and, most important of all, volunteers to cuddle up to. On the day we arrived we noticed there were some empty pens and were told that the previous weekend 66 cats had been re-homed!

Joan was looking for two middle-aged cats, preferably from the same family. Before we were even allowed to see any cats she had to pass Battersea's very rigorous set of criteria for being allowed to re-home.

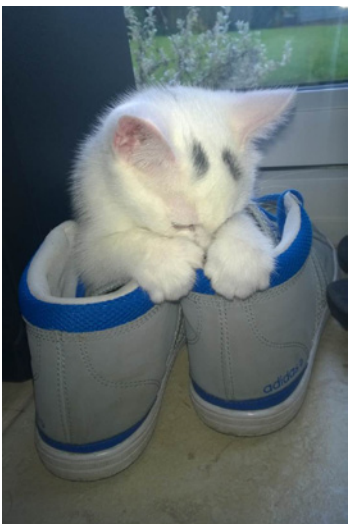
Finally we were allowed to make our way up the spiral staircase to the first floor and were shown two tabby cats who we played with for ten minutes. Joan said she would instinctively know when she met the cats that were right for her.

We were then shown into another pen with two beautiful eight-year-old black cats with white paws, white tummies and one with a white nose. Texi and Gemma were brother and sister and had been together since they were kittens. Texi leapt up onto the top of the climbing frame just to show us how agile he was and Gemma immediately jumped onto Joan's lap for a cuddle. So it was a done deal. We'd fallen for them and in return they made it very clear that they wanted to come home with us.

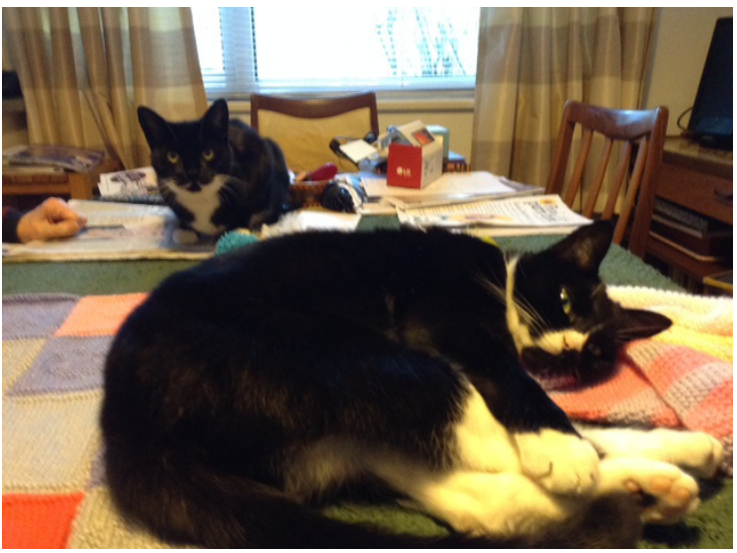
So two days later we arrived very excitedly at Battersea with two cat baskets ready to collect Gemma and Texi. There were lots of other people collecting cats and we had a long wait to see the vet who instructed us how to look after the precious moggies. Battersea vaccinated and micro chipped them, we had a month's free pet insurance and were given a goody bag of food for them and told not to let them go outside for four weeks.

They scratched the baskets and meowed all the way home but once indoors they settled in as if they had lived there all their lives, running around exploring every nook and cranny.

Of course, they're spoilt. When I visited a week later I saw that they have a beautiful climbing frame to play on and catnip toys to get excited about and they sleep on Joan's bed at night! At the time



of writing they still haven't been outside and sit by the window looking longingly at the trees and surrounding greenery. Lucky cats indeed to have such a playground to look forward to and lucky Joan who now has two companions to cuddle and look after and with whom to share her life. Thank you Battersea Dogs and Cats Home for giving such joy.



Do animals go to heaven?...

by Rebecca Lloyd



Do animals go to heaven? This question is controversial among Christians, yet most priests will tell you that they have been asked it, often by a child grieving the loss of a beloved pet. My answer is always that they do. I believe that God is working to save the whole of creation, not just human beings, and anyway, for us dog lovers, it wouldn't be heaven if it didn't have dogs in it (though it would be nice if when dogs are made perfect in heaven they become less likely to roll in fox poo!). Two particular verses in the Bible help give me confidence that I'm right: in Romans 8 it says that the 'whole of creation' is waiting in eager expectation for its salvation, and in the book of Tobit there is a strange passage where a man, an angel and a dog all go on a journey together as companions (6: 1-2).

More than this, however, I feel that dogs are close to God since the way they act towards us can often tell us something about the way that God loves us. It's easy to get sentimental about this basic survival instinct dogs have to bond with humans, but the quality of unconditional love we receive from our dogs can be deeply moving. I light up my dog's whole world just by getting back in from work, and she's never happier than when she's close to me. When I was studying at theological college two of the tutors owned Labradors and I befriended both dogs. One, very elderly and arthritic, once spied me on the other side of the garden when I had been away for a while and suddenly raced like a puppy across the flowerbeds to greet me, and I was irresistibly reminded of the father's joyful greeting to his prodigal son in Jesus' parable. The other was once in the room when I was getting an (undeserved, I felt) telling-off, and came and sat next to me and put his chin on my lap and looked at me with such an expression of sympathy that I couldn't but experience him as showing me how God felt about me in that difficult situation.

The monks of New Skete in the USA breed German Shepherd dogs. They think that dogs can help us grow in our spiritual lives: 'The connections we have with the animal world, especially with our dogs, have an important role to play in our growth and self-understanding. Put simply, we don't hide in front of our dogs:



we see ourselves as we really are. Whether it involves the love and generosity of spirit expressed in getting our dog necessary and expensive medical treatment, or experiencing our uncontrolled anger erupting over an accident on the carpet, dogs have the capacity of bringing out the light and dark in human nature. By taking such moments of personal insight seriously, we have a daily touchstone with reality: we can change and grow. Perhaps one of the reasons we are so devoted to our dogs is that they help us become who we're supposed to be'.

I think that the love we share with our dogs is a tiny foretaste of heaven already, and so I'm sure that when I get there, I will find the dogs I have loved wagging their tails with joy to see me again.





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Easter at St Stephen's – 2016

Holy Week

March

Palm Sunday – 20th

8am Holy Communion (BCP - 1662)

10am Procession with donkey, brassband and singing - together with the other churches in the area. Assemble next to the shops in Seeley Drive ready for 9.45am The Procession is followed by a dramatised reading of the Passion and the Eucharist in the church

Monday 21st

8.45am Holy Eucharist

7pm Stations of the Cross

Tuesday – 22nd

8.45am Holy Eucharist

7pm Concert by the choirs of Sydenham High School – tickets at the door

Wednesday 23rd

9.45am Holy Eucharist

Maundy Thursday 24th

8pm The Maundy Thursday Service starts in the church hall with an informal parish supper, followed by a commemoration of the foot washing, a Holy Eucharist and the watch service until midnight. Our choir will sing for this service. Everyone is welcome to all or part of this event!

Good Friday – 25th

2pm Good Friday Liturgy with choir, sermon and Veneration of the Cross

Easter Sunday – 27th

6am – Dawn Service: Vigil of readings, the lighting of the Easter fire, the blessing of the Easter Candle and the first Communion of Easter.

8am Holy Communion (BCP - 1662)

10am Choral Eucharist for Easter

Regular Services

Sundays

8am	*Holy Communion (BCP)*
10am	*Choral Eucharist with Sunday School during term time*
12noon	*Holy Baptisms*

Monday to Friday

8.30am	*Silent Prayer followed at*
8.45am	*by Morning Prayer*

Tuesday

9.30	*Mindfulness Meditation*

Wednesday

9.45am	*Holy Eucharist*

Kingswood Community Baptist Church

Dulwich Wood Federation Primary School,
Bowen Drive, SE21 8NS
Pastor: Mawuli Doe
(info: Sandra Surrey 07986 002389)

Wednesday 23rd: 7:30 pm teaching on the meaning of Christ at Ketra Hall.

Palm Sunday Procession (see above) at 10am followed by service at 10:30 am

Good Friday service 10:30 am

Easter Sunday service 10:30 am

Regular Services

Sundays 10.30am
Wednesday 7.30-9.00pm Non-denominational Bible Study Ketra Rooms
Saturday Prayer Group 10am-12noon
37 Kingswood Drive, Pastor Mawuli's home

St Margaret Clitherow RC Church

4 Kingswood Drive, SE19 1UR
Fr. Leonard Tatt
Parish Priest (020) 8670 1639

For information about services, Holy week and Easter services please visit the church website:
www.stmargaretclitherowdulwich.org

Regular Services

Sunday Mass	10.30am
Portuguese Mass	9.00am
Wed – Fri Mass	9.30am
Holy Days: Mass	9.00am & 7.30pm