

roundabout



Parish Magazine of St. Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane with St. Luke's Church, Bromley Common

Issue 571 April 2026

Hope Springs Eternal



On Good Friday Christians gather to remember the crucifixion of Jesus. This year we have a three-hour service planned, which focuses on the seven last words of Jesus from the cross. Alongside the usual reflections and time of quiet, some of our musicians will be performing movements throughout, as a string quartet. It will offer a significant space to consider the cross and all that it means for us today. Each section will be 25 minutes long, starting at 12 noon; you can come and go throughout the three hours. Between 12 noon - 3pm we remember that darkness covered the land which is interpreted as a sign of God's judgment and symbolises the weight of sin that Jesus bore. Then at 3pm, the light that all light comes from was extinguished and all who witnessed it were left in a state of confusion and deep sorrow. Life had been going well along a path and now suddenly, things would never be the same again.

Life continues to shock us, and the sense of darkness and evil can overwhelm. Steve's article in March, focused on the big news of the UK's most successful Winter Olympics. Now, only a month on, the picture is very different as the effects of war between the USA, Israel and Iran are being felt across the world. Security fears grip Europe, tourism issues affect countries reliant on revenue it produces, fuel prices rocket globally and congestion in the strait of Hormuz is affecting food and building supply chains. The outlook can seem bleak and raises fear, doubt and a sense of hopelessness for the future. How can the world continue to cope under the strain? How can so few people in power wreak such havoc for billions?

It's hard to understand how things got to this point, or to forecast what's next, but as Christians there is a lot we can do. The Easter narrative does not end on Good Friday, darkness does not win as Jesus not only took on our sin but also defeated death and was resurrected. This means that Jesus is alive today and we can take the light of Christ with us wherever we go. In fact, it is our role as Christians to be bringers of hope, to help people to believe that there is a better future on offer with Christ. Alexander Pope's poem, 'An Essay on Man' was written in the 18th century and it is where the title I chose for this article derives from. The poem says, 'Hope springs eternal in the human breast: Man never is, but always to be blest.' This line stresses that hope is fundamental to human nature. Humanity holds an innate desire for something better, a spirit of optimism; so, hope acts as a constant and renewing force within our lives, no matter what is happening around us. Hope in Christ gives us strength and resilience against all odds. What an incredible gift to have - and to offer.

Isaiah 40:31 - 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.

Yours in Christ

Revd Becky Willoughby

As members of St Augustine's with St Luke's we seek to offer everyone in our Parish opportunities to hear, experience and respond to the call of Jesus Christ and to plan and deliver initiatives that will grow our church.

Congratulations - to Gordon Blyth who celebrated his 90th birthday in March, with a family trip to Brighton, followed by the football.



Easter Experience

Easter is just about Easter eggs and bunnies, isn't it?

Well no! Virtually all scholars of antiquity agree that Jesus of Nazareth was a real historical first century person, baptised by John the Baptist, and crucified by order of the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate.

But wouldn't you have liked to be there with Jesus and his friends in the last week of Jesus's life to see what really happened?

To wave palm branches and shout Hosanna! with the crowd, as Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey.

To join with the sellers and buyers in the Temple and see Jesus drive out the sellers.

To be there in the Upper Room for the Passover celebration, as Jesus washes his disciples' dirty feet and then gives them bread and wine to symbolise his own body and blood. To see Judas slip out.

To be there in the Garden of Gethsemane as Jesus prays, and to see Judas lead soldiers to Jesus for them to arrest him.

To be there to hear Pontius Pilate sentence Jesus to be whipped and crucified, even though finding no evidence to convict him of anything.



To hear how Jesus dies on the cross.

To hear from Mary Magdalene about how - when she went to the tomb to anoint Jesus's body - it was empty. To hear how when the gardener spoke to her it was really Jesus - alive!

One hundred and fifty Year 2 children came to St Augustine's this year to go back in time to first century Jerusalem and experience exactly that, thanks to some committed actors from our church, including Revd Steve.

As someone who enjoys helping one half of a class with a craft activity and hearing about their experiences, while the other half are on their 'time-travel' tour, it was good this year to be able to watch the other half of the class enjoying their experience of the first Easter!

David Allan

PLANT SALE — Sunday 17th May 2026

The St Augustine's with St Luke's Flower Guild will be holding a plant sale after the 10am service on 17th May in the Garden Room at St Augustine's Church.

The proceeds from the sale will be divided between Christian Aid and the Memorial Scroll Flower Appeal which provides funds to enable the purchase flowers for the Church throughout the year.

Cathy Fyfield

Game Station

Game Station takes place on Wednesdays in the Garden Room from 3.00 - 4.30pm with games to make you think. It is a great place for primary aged children and their families to meet together, enjoy a board game, and to explore their creativity. It is also the perfect opportunity for all ages to have a chat and make new friends.



Game Station provides a variety of traditional board games and puzzles along with magnetic building kits, gears, and other STEM* toys. We also have an art and craft corner with plenty of card-making materials, so if you have forgotten to buy a card for a special occasion, don't panic. Come along to Game Station and make your own personalised card!



There's no charge for Game Station, and you don't need to book; you simply turn up. We provide healthy snacks for the children and hot drinks for adults. What's not to love? We look forward to seeing you there.

*Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

Catherine Lord, Family Worker

Good Friday Meditation: Haydn, *Seven Last Words from the Cross*

Sometimes words fail us. Perhaps this is when we need to turn to music that can touch the heart and soul to express our deepest emotions and passions.

This year, for our Good Friday service from 12.00 - 3.00pm we will be focusing on the seven last sentences that Jesus spoke from the cross as he was being crucified: 'Father, forgive them, they not what they do', 'Today you will be with me in paradise', 'Mother, behold your son', 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me', 'I thirst', 'It is finished', and finally 'Into your hand, O Lord, I commend my Spirit'.

In 1786 the Austrian composer Joseph Haydn wrote a series of seven short pieces to be played during a service just like this in Cadiz in Spain. It soon became one of his most popular woks and Charles Burney, the English music historian, described it as 'perhaps the most sublime composition without words ever written'. Haydn had a strong Christian faith and often dedicated his works 'to the glory of God'.

Each piece is a musical meditation on Jesus' words. Haydn captures moments of loneliness and abandonment, searing pain and anguish, that finally yield to a spirit of hope, reconciliation and a radiant vision of paradise. At the very end, we hear the slow pulse of a heartbeat which quietens and then finally stops. We are left in the mystery of silence.

We are very fortunate to have a quintet of string players who are able to bring this beautiful music to our church. Drop in for just half an hour or set aside the full three hours for a very special Good Friday opportunity to 'wait and watch with Christ'.

Alan Mitchell

The Great Daffodil Appeal

At the beginning of March I stood for two hours in the doorway of Morrison's in Petts Wood wearing a huge yellow hat and a yellow tabard collecting money for Marie Curie's Great Daffodil Appeal.

I really enjoyed chatting to people as they donated and giving them a small daffodil badge to wear, especially the children who were always delighted to have a badge of their own.

Marie Curie is such a worthwhile charity to support. Their nurses and healthcare assistants work night and day in people's homes in the UK providing expert end of life care and vital emotional support. It's always free of charge to the people they look after and for their families and friends.

Marie Curie bring 75 years of experience and leading research to the care they give at home, in their hospices and over the phone. They care for anyone with a terminal illness.

Sue Goodger

Do you sometimes feel that life throws up strange coincidences?

I recently met Nick and Mandy, two stalwart helpers who put the church furniture back in place following the ARK session on Wednesdays. Nick stopped for a coffee from Welcome Space and told me that he had just gained his yellow tag in Taekwondo, which meant nothing to me. However, during our chat, I understood the level of achievement it represented. Until a year ago, Nick was helping at the Living Well foodbank in Penge. He was also borrowing a tent from them to make his life easier, as he was living on the streets and had been for over a year.

In our March Roundabout we featured an article from Rebecca Day at Hope into Action and I learned from Nick that it was only when he met Rebecca that his life took a different path. At present, he is living in a Hope into Action flat while, with the charity's help, he looks for more permanent accommodation. So, being part of our community and, after a year's training, getting a yellow Taekwondo tag, life is looking better. He still works at Living Well.

Mary Plummer

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Ghostbusters

Disturbing newspaper items in recent weeks revealed that care home residents reporting ghosts, animals and stalkers in the home and the garden, have been referred to exorcists and dementia clinics. These are devastating prospects for families and patients, who fear they are losing their minds.

Now so many of us are living much longer, many more will suffer Age Related Macular Degeneration. This is where light sensitive cells in the retina are not regenerated as they die off and central vision is lost. This causes blind spots, so reading, writing or even watching television are daunting tasks.

The brain doesn't like these gaps in the images it receives, so many go on to develop Charles Bonnet syndrome, where the brain tries to complete the broken images from memories and imagination, with funny results!

Anyone suffering from this knows that it is no laughing matter. It is an isolating and incapacitating disability, but a sense of humour can help.



I know it's not reality I see, so I cheerfully admit to seeing sea grass in the washbasin, goblins in red woolly hats walking along the footpath and very detailed images of exotic birds in my garden. We all laugh and carry on as before, while privately, like Dylan Thomas 'raging against the dying of the light' but also rejoicing in what I have seen and done and thankful for the blessings I still enjoy.

If you know of anyone distressed by such apparitions, tell them my story and advise an eye examination and remember that the louder you laugh the less it occurs. You will earn their eternal gratitude.

Adrian King

Spring Concert

Bromley Oecumenical Singers' Spring Concert was absolutely fantastic. It was a joy to be there. There were so many people that the church was almost full. It was good to see so many seats being taken up.



The percussionist, Keith Pinnock, created the atmosphere together with the other instrumentalists. The concert started with Adiemus, Songs of Sanctuary written by Karl Jenkins.

There was an organ solo played by Jeff Blyth. The audience were tapping their feet to the music and really enjoying it.

There was also a challenging quiz.

Everyone had fun trying to guess the names of some marches and who composed them.

The proceeds from this lovely concert raised much needed funds for the charity 'Hope into Action Bromley'.

Jean Archer

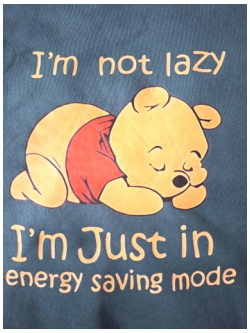
Hoodies



I have probably got the best uniform for work, jeans, a hoodie, and trainers - so much more comfortable than the days when working in an office dictated that formal wear had to be worn every day. All well and good until my then boss's wife went on holiday without him. Before leaving she had washed and ironed enough shirts for him to cover her absence. As the week progressed the weather turned somewhat warmer than predicted. When I took his morning coffee in one day, he appeared flushed in his appearance. I suggested that he should follow the rest of us and remove his jacket. His reply was, "I can't do that!" It turned out that after oversleeping that morning in his rush to get to work he managed to pick a shirt that had not been ironed, and it was badly creased!



Fortunately, my large collection of hoodies are simply wash, dry and wear. They cover a wide range of colours, some with messages on the back. Most of the time I am at work I am on the move, a bit of a blur to those around me. Some of the teaching staff call to me to slow down or even stop, the reason being that they want to read what is written on the back, a kind of thought for the day. I have also been stopped by people in the supermarket telling me that they needed to read what the hoodie said. One even kissed me and told me he would marry me if I weren't already taken!



During the recent half term A Little Girl I Know and I were busy. We had set ourselves the challenge of sorting out her bedroom, organising the wardrobe and decluttering her desk. My task may have seemed lesser, but it was time consuming sorting out and organising the paperwork for a group we run together. I kept telling myself, when my enthusiasm was flagging, that it would be worth it in the end and would hopefully save me some time moving forward.

After a few days of hard work she had finished her tasks, the only evidence was a pile of bags for the tip, some for the charity shop, and some clothes for the clothes bank nearby. I was so proud of her. She told me she was happy with the result, but that she was exhausted.



Today I am wearing one of my favourite hoodies. I kept reminding myself of the message, as I knew with the best will in the world there was absolutely no way that my half term task would be done in just one day. Now that it is almost done, I am really pleased with the outcome. The message on that hoodie says – *Keep trying… remember that you don't have to get it all right today. Keep going and try again tomorrow.* Something we should all try to remember each and every day.

Now to decide what to sort out during the next break from work and college…

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April Diary 2026

Sunday Services

Sunday 5th April	St Augustine's Church
Easter Sunday	
6am Holy Communion	Exodus 14: 10-31, 15: 20-21, Matthew 28: 1-10
10am Holy Communion	Acts 10: 34-43, John 20: 1-18
Sunday 12 April	St Augustine's Church
10am Holy Communion	Acts 2: 27-14, 22-32, John 20: 19-31
Sunday 19th April	St Augustine's Church
10am Morning Worship	Acts 2: 14a 36-41, Luke 24: 13-35
5.30pm Holy Communion	St Luke's Church
Sunday 26th April	St Augustine's Church
10am Holy Communion	Acts2: 42-47, John 10: 1-10

Mid-Week Holy Communion Services

Wednesday 22nd St Augustine's Chapel, at Midday

Holy Week and Easter Services 30th March–5th April

Monday	7.30pm - Compline: a quiet evening service in St Augustine's Chapel
Tuesday	7.30pm - Compline: a quiet evening service in St Augustine's Chapel
Wednesday	7.30pm - Compline: a quiet evening service in St Augustine's Chapel
Maundy Thursday	7.30pm - Service of Servanthood at St Augustine's Church
Good Friday	12.00 Noon – 3pm Vigil at the Cross at St Augustine's Church
Easter Sunday	6.00am - Dawn Service of Holy Communion,
	10.00am - Celebration Service of Holy Communion

Weekly Groups

Welcome Space & CAMEO – all welcome

Every Thursday 11am – 4pm. Join us for friendship and food.

Why? Group – all welcome

Every Thursday 1.30pm – 2.15pm. Join us in a discussion on the 'whys' of the Christian faith.

Children's Activities @ St Augustine's Church

ARK ~ For Preschool and below

Every Wednesday (including half term) at 10am - 11.45am. No booking required.

Game Station ~ For Primary School children

Every Wednesday (including half term) at 3pm-4.30pm. No booking required, just come along and play games to make you think.

Youth Club ~ For 11–17-year-olds

Every Sunday at 5pm -7pm. You need to register at families@st-augustines.org.uk

Messy Church ~ For the whole family

Thursday 30th Doors open at 3.30pm – 5.15pm, party tea at 3.45pm then craft activities, games, time with Messy Gilbert, sing-along. Fun for all the family. Book on Eventbrite or simply turn up on the day.

Contact Details: office@st-augustine.org.uk or www.st-augustines.org.uk

Staff Contact Details

Vicar:	Revd Steve Spencer	020 8467 1351 or 07778 784331
Curate:	Revd Becky Willoughby	07874 398445
Family Worker:	Catherine Lord	07874 398964
Licensed Lay Minister:	Alan Mitchell	07985 070734
Licensed Lay Minister:	Verity Mitchell	07379 294826
Churchwarden:	Hilary Chittock	07884 195700
Churchwarden:	Jeff Blyth	07557 349279
Parish Safeguarding Officer:	Andrew Gurney	07482 315545
Parish Office:	Victoria Bouwer	020 8295 1550
Open Weekday Mornings	email: office@st-augustines.org.uk	

The 10am service will also be live streamed on our YouTube channel, www.st-augustines.org.uk

St. Augustine's Church Rooms and St. Luke's Hall are available for hire. To book a room at St. Augustine's, contact Liz Carter on 07906 645140. To book St. Luke's Hall, contact the Church Office on 020 8295 1550

Contact details for all church and uniformed organisations are on our website www.st-augustines.org.uk
Our vicar Steve Spencer can also be contacted at vicar@st-augustines.org.uk

23rd Bromley Scouts

The 23rd Bromley Scouts' Jumble Sale will be held on Saturday 18th April. Doors open to the public at 2pm. Entrance 50p.

We will not be selling furniture, microwaves, TVs etc. just Bric-a-Brac, clothes, shoes, toys, books, small electrics/electronics and jigsaws.

So please start collecting items and even ask your neighbours and friends.

Items can be brought to the HQ from 3pm - 8.30pm on Friday 17th April and also 8.30am - 12 noon on Saturday 18th April.

April Edition: Editor - Sue Goodger : Layout - Tanya Wardley

The May 2026 edition will be printed and published on the St. Augustine's and St. Luke's website
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