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Lifeline

MAGAZINE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN HAARLEM

Church	The English-speaking church community meets at the Old Catholic Cathedral of St. Anna & St. Mary, Kinderhuissingel 74, 2013 AV HAARLEM <i>Website: www.anglican-church-haarlem.nl</i>
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The English-speaking church community in Haarlem is part of the Anglican-Diocese of Europe and seeks to serve all English speaking people in the wider Haarlem area.

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Lifeline contains the official Haarlem chaplaincy news and various articles. However, the views expressed in articles are not necessarily those of the Chaplaincy or the Editor.

Recent issues of *Lifeline* can be found on <http://www.anglican-church-haarlem.nl/category/all/lifelines>

Fr. Derek Akker and **Sue** are well remembered for their pastoral care of our Chaplaincy a few years back, and often when our choir has sung in England, they have come to listen. Recently, during the sudden vacuum of Church worship caused by Covid19, Fr. Derek regularly contributed supportive and inspiring meditations, and is continuing to do so for the time being to the benefit of all. But who are Fr. Derek and Sue?

My long and winding road – by Fr. Derek Akker

Being asked by the Editor to write something of my life and faith journey posed a problem - what to put in and what to leave out. The reality is that I have left an awful lot out and been selective in what I have included; large sections of my life I do not touch.

My Mum married in 1941 and I came along some 5 years later. Unfortunately, to say the least, my birth father omitted to mention that he was already married, and Mum did not find that out until I was about 2 years old. I was 62 years old when I got this little niblet of family history.

Being a single Mum can never be easy but in the late 1940's and 50's it was particularly difficult. Mum tried her best, and I had a normal childhood, at least normal to me. We lived a fairly nomadic life, but had a base in south west London which we kept returning to, and to the person I called Nana; she was no relation, we lodged with her. But she was a lovely, caring 'Cockney' character.

In 1953 I went to the Swanley Home for Little Boys, founded towards the end of the 19th century for orphans and destitute boys from London. Outside of school we were cared for by a lovely, young Christian couple. They sowed the seeds of a loving Christianity for which I am grateful. They kept in touch with Mum and later I kept in touch with them until their deaths.



The education I received was so remarkable that the only thing I can remember is elocution lessons and having to repeat 'My father's car is a Jaguar'. Looking back, it is an amazing phrase to teach boys, many who had no father figure in their lives and if they had a father he would not own a car, let alone a Jaguar.



When this home closed I moved to another home/school run by a 'Christian' charity. It seemed to be run on the principle of 'spare the rod and spoil the child'. Corporal punishment in its various guises was a regular feature, which even by the standards of the 1950's was brutal. If you did not, or could not, fit into the regime you were singled. Believe it or not the Headmaster had a variety of canes on display in his office. He had honed the act of beating boys to a fine art - he had had years of practice. He got an OBE for his service to charity.

Educationally, I remember being singled out and hit regularly for day dreaming, not writing properly or just being 'thick' - their term. Today it probably would be recognised as having some form of learning difficulty. My mother was told, when I was eight, I would make nothing of my life.

We jump several years - Mum remarried or was it she got married to a great man, who became my Dad. We moved from south west London to Clitheroe, Lancashire. I finished my secondary education and started an engineering apprenticeship.

In my late teens the flame of religious curiosity was rekindled through the preaching of a very old preacher - at least he appeared old to me - who told the story of Jesus in a way I had not heard before, and I was hooked. - So started a journey along a long and winding road.

At the age of 21 I left engineering and took a place at Cliff College, a Methodist lay training college. I spent two years there, years of study, preaching and being part of mission teams travelling around the country preaching and sharing the good news. It was two marvellous years, a religious adventure. In December 1968 I was accredited as a Methodist Local Preacher.

On leaving Cliff College, I spent about 18 months working in local authority children's homes and then it was back to college to train as a social worker.

It was during this time that I met Sue, and we got married on completion of my social work training. We settled in Clitheroe and set up our first home together and had our first son. It was a lovely area to live.



I was also involved in local politics and was elected to the town council. I eventually became leader of a political group, by virtue that I was the only member.

After a few further moves we settled in Bury, Sue's home town. I eventually became a Social Work Consultant (Child Care) in Bury specialising in Child Protection (Safeguarding) and Juvenile Justice.

I left local authority employment and joined the Children's Society, with its roots in the Church of England working on experimental projects. These projects involved empowering local parents and children and building resources for their neighbourhood. During this period I took time out to study for a MA in Social and Community Work Studies.

I returned to the Anglican Church in the 1980's. We wanted a local church that was a youthful church and had activities for children. St Francis became our spiritual home. I made plans for the resumption of a lay ministry. Eventually I took the road to ordination and was ordained in 1988 as Deacon and as Priest in 1989.

My first incumbency was at St Stephens's and All Martyrs in Bolton. The church was nicknamed the 'Flowerpot Church' as it was made out of terracotta. We had 5 good years there but one building project after another was getting a bit too much. After a short period in the Lichfield Diocese we moved to the Chester Diocese and the parish of St Barnabas, Hattersley. The parish was some 12 miles from the centre of Manchester and was built in the 1960's to rehouse those from Manchester who were living in sub-standard housing.

I enjoyed my time at St Barnabas and would have stayed there longer but unfortunately I had to retire on health grounds.

There is a journey that takes place alongside this very practical one, it is the spiritual journey. It is often a secret, unspoken journey because it can be difficult to put into words. My journey has been a rich one, rich in its variety of experiences within the wide range of traditions that is the Christian Church. I was given some sound advice both at Cliff College and later during ordination training: 'if you are expecting to find the answers, you may be disappointed - what we hope to give you is the skill to ask the right questions'.

On this journey I learnt to be suspicious of those who speak too enthusiastically of the 'truth' and use the expression 'the truth is' to justify their position. Such an enthusiastic, dogmatic attitude can suffocate their religious curiosity and questioning.

I also learnt that the Christian journey can have a range of experiences from the dramatic to the still small voice. There have been moments when the journey was like a gentle stroll, in good company and pleasant surroundings, or times where I have had a serious caffeine rush. There have also been rough dark moments, where a dark cloud seemed to just hang there. Such a phase could be a lonely one devoid of any glimmer of light. It was at times a tough, uncompromising track. But these did come to an end when *'a great moment knocks on the door of your life, often no louder than the beating of your heart, and it is very easy to miss it'* (Boris Pasternak). There were times when I was not attentive enough, but I got there in the end.



Amongst the many things I have learnt during this journey is that I am a flawed person and while this remains a challenge, it is also necessary, hopefully preventing me from acquiring a 'holier than thou' attitude. I also knew I was loved. I am reminded how important and riveting the story of Jesus is. I was hooked 50 years ago by the Jesus story and I'm still hooked today.

Fr Derek Akker

[next Lifeline some personal reflections from Sue]



Music Matters

Thankfully we have been able to have our church services again since 14 June and latterly even with tea after the service! Our music during the service is still through the use of CDs.

However, since July choirs are allowed to practise again under a strict protocol. Those of you in our ACH social app will have seen a few photos taken during our practices. Singing at a social distance in a staggered formation takes some getting used to in the beginning, but after a while your ears get attuned to it. At our last practice we tried singing in a distanced circle and that worked very well! As you can imagine it is a joy to be able to sing together again as a choir!

We are now trying to work out a good way of being able to sing as a choir in our services to support the worship of our church. We cannot sit in our usual places as this does not conform to the protocol, but moving in and out of our seats to sing in a semi circle will probably be the way forward for now.

The effects of speaking and singing are still subject of investigation, with the latest view that the volume of both speaking and singing has a greater effect on the distance aerosols travel. Obviously it also has to take into account whether it concerns individuals or a group of singers. As you can imagine we are following this closely. In any case, when we do return to singing in our services we will adhere to the protocols!

At this time I have no idea how the situation will develop in the coming months with the Advent and Christmas season looming! Under the present church protocols our Advent and Christmas Carol services are not possible in their usual form, but maybe we can for example sing the Advent service twice at consecutive times so that we can have double the numbers. It all depends on how the Covid-19 situation develops during the coming months.

Rest assured that we are doing our best to return to singing in our services in the safest possible way for all of us! In the meantime we will be practising in order to be ready when that moment comes!

*Martin van Bleek,
Director of Music*



From the Council

AGM - Annual Chaplaincy Church Meeting

The date of the **AGM** is top of the agenda! - the intended date is Sunday 4th October after our service with Rev. Ruan Crew as Chair.

This is also the preferred date for our **Harvest Festival**.

These dates will be confirmed - announcements will be made at church and via our regular email newsletter.



Advent Discussion Group November 2020

Life to the Full is an ecumenical course for discussion groups and ideal for Advent.

This course explores what it might actually mean to experience fullness in the midst of our busy lives. What does it look like? Why does it seem so elusive? What causes us to run on empty? How can we help each other to experience this fullness.

In November 2019, the Advent Discussion group started the York Course **Life to the Full** but due to unforeseen circumstances was unable to finish it. Therefore, there is an opportunity to continue the course in November 2020.

With the present situation of social distancing there are two possibilities: either to come together face to face in the church hall at a distance or to meet each other online via Microsoft Teams. This could easily be set up by an online invitation.

The proposed dates and times are Tuesdays from 20.00-21.00 on 3,10 and 17 November 2020. All are welcome to join one or all sessions.

If you are interested, please sign the list on the church notice board and give preference for the church hall or online. For further details, please contact me,

Diana Dammer-Wilson.



Church Stained Glass

The church has some exquisite stained glass windows, and with the refurbishment now in progress, these are looking even more beautiful. When you are next in church do take a moment to find this piece.

In our next *Lifeline* we shall include some little gems of Willem Bogtman, dd 1955, graphic designer and glass mosaic designer and maker (*see last page*).



My holiday in Dresden

by Adam Powell

Back in March I spent four days in Dresden which used to be in East Germany and was the capital of Saxony before Saxony was absorbed into Germany by Bismarck in 1869.

In 2002, my late civil partner, Reginald, and I had intended to visit Dresden, but had been unable to because the River Elbe had burst its banks and flooded the city. This seemed like a tragedy. Dresden was bombed in World War II wiping out the historic city. After the end of the war the city was gradually rebuilt exactly as the original city had been and was completed in 2000. It seemed that the flooding was terribly bad luck.



Reg was very disappointed but we still managed to visit Wernigerode in the Hartz region of Germany which gave him the opportunity to practice his German and have some fun with steam trains. Later he gave me a list of places that he wanted me to visit after his appointment with God. These included Budapest, and I am very pleased to say that I have visited Prague, Paris and Venice, and called in at Dresden on my way to Budapest.

Like many cities within the former Holy Roman Empire, Dresden has at some point been a very important place. It was for over a 1 000 years the capital of Saxony and today has a population of just over 150 000 inhabitants. In the old city there is a mural of the electors of Saxony spanning more than a millenium. Augustus I (Augustus the Strong) is the most remembered. In 1697, as Elector of Saxony, he colonised Poland making himself King of Poland. There is a sizable Polish speaking community in Dresden today and there are services at the Roman Cathedral in both German and Polish.

Augustus started the beautiful Zwinger Palace which was completed in the mid C19th. It houses one of the largest porcelain and glassware collections in the world; the collection originating from China and Japan. The Palace also houses a very important museum of mathematical and scientific instruments including the world's first calculating machine which was invented by Blaise Pascal. The Frauenkirche built around a dome is of iconic importance to Dresden. The original church dates from C18th but was reduced to a shell in the Second World War. The restoration was completed in 2000 and stands in a spirit of reconciliation.

I also visited the transport museum which tells what for me is a rather narrow story. During the Communist era you could own any car as long as it was a Wartburg or a Trabant - unless you were Honnecker. The Citroen CX he used was on display, apparently chosen because he did not want to know about bumps on East German roads. I passed on the option for a tour round Dresden in a Trabant, the cost of the tour being more than the value of the car.

There is a mural in the square in Central Dresden dedicated to the Communist revolution. It does not give a very optimistic view. Although the people depicted are with plenty to eat they are also carrying weapons.

I also visited the Albertinum which is a museum of local art and sculpture. I remember it particularly for an exhibition of photography telling just what life was like under Communism.

I also admired the magnificent 19th Opera House, but seeing an opera was beyond my pocket. However, there is a wonderful restaurant in a neighbouring building looking like a Roman villa, with the most amazing German decor. They serve the most beautiful Saxon food at a reasonable price and there is a similar restaurant I visited in Loschwitz.

So I really recommend a visit to Dresden. It is now recovering confidence once again after having been crushed in spirit by the Third Reich, World War II, Communism and flooding.



Poets Corner

Prayer

*More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and whose who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.*

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1808-1892)

From *The Cure at Troy*

Human beings suffer,
They torture one another,
They get hurt and get hard.
No poem or play or song
Can fully right a wrong
Inflicted and endured

...

History says, don't hope
On this side of the grave.
But then, once in a lifetime
The longed-for tidal wave
Of justice can rise up,
And hope and history rhyme.
So hope for a great sea-change
On the far side of revenge.
Believe that further shore
Is reachable from here.
Believe in miracle
And cures and healing wells.
Call miracle self-healing:
The utter, self-revealing
Double-take of feeling.
If there's fire on the mountain
Or lightning and storm
And a god speaks from the sky
That means someone is hearing
The outcry and the birth-cry
Of new life at its term.

*This poem is by the Irish poet,
playwright and translator
Seamus Heaney (1939 – 2013).
It is set within his poetic drama
The Cure at Troy, a version of a play
by the Greek dramatist Sophocles
(fifth century BCE), and addresses
questions of personal morality,
deceit and political expediency,
suffering and healing.
Heaney's imaginative power relates
the ancient story to universal human
experiences.*

The poem is not explicitly Christian; but to be a Christian one has to be in favour of social justice - in the context of today: Black Lives Matter, for instance. To me this modern poem by Seamus Heaney (Nobel Prize winner and former Poet Laureate) today is saying that at certain points in time there is enough impetus for the tide of history to turn, for there to be a miracle, for all good people (here I would include Christians) to turn the tide of history, to become more aware of their own prejudices and wrong attitudes and to change society for the better. God, who is I believe both transcendent and immanent, can thus work through us mortals, today and every day.

(Christine Bradshaw)



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

All are most welcome to the following services,
which will continue to follow the pattern of a said service
with organ introduction and a recorded anthem.

The services will be conducted complying with government guidelines;
- please give advance notification as indicated on our website

www.anglican-church-haarlem.nl

Sunday 6 September	14.30	Eucharist - Rev. Robert Frede <i>retiring collection for Mission</i>
Sunday 13 September	14.30	Eucharist - Rev. Dr Mattijs Ploeger
Sunday 20 September	14.30	Eucharist - Rev. Joop Albers
Sunday 27 September	14.30	Eucharist (said) - Rev. Robert Frede
Sunday 4 October <i>Harvest Festival</i>	14.30	Eucharist - Rev. Robert Frede <i>retiring collection for Mission</i>
Sunday 11 October	14.30	Eucharist - Rev. Robert Frede
Sunday 18 October	14.30	Eucharist - Rev. Canon Jake Dejonge
Sunday 25 October	14.30	Eucharist - Rev. Dr. Mattijs Ploeger
Sunday 1 November <i>All Saints</i>	14.30	Eucharist - Rev. Robert Frede

Willem Bogtman

*A little appetiser of W.Bogtman's work,
to be found in the back of the Church:*



(photo Anni Kearney)