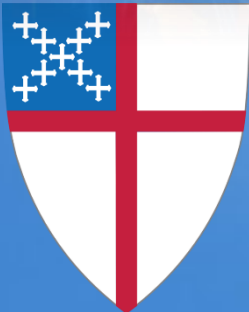


Spring 2024

# IKON

The Ascension Messenger



Church  
of the  
Ascension  
Munich

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# Points to Note

## Worship

We worship every Sunday at midday in the Emmauskirche, Laurinplatz, 81545 München, Germany. For up-to-date news and details of services, check our website at: [www.ascension-munich.org](http://www.ascension-munich.org)

Do also take a look at our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/ascensionmunich](http://www.facebook.com/ascensionmunich) and our YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/channel/UC4802rHFcPLNCJxnSGeZ3FA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4802rHFcPLNCJxnSGeZ3FA)

## Clergy

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## Pastoral Care

In a pastoral emergency, contact **Fr. Dan** on his mobile: 0151 5330 8266  
or **Joan Case**: home: 08024 49945 mobile: 0172 825 6425

## Senior Warden

For information about the Vestry, or to provide feedback to the Church Leadership, please contact the Senior Warden, **David Case**, under:  
[seniorwarden@ascension-munich.com](mailto:seniorwarden@ascension-munich.com)

## Financial Support

Our church receives no funds from any government body; we are entirely supported by the contributions of our members.

Donations and pledges can be made by bank transfer to:  
The Church of the Ascension, Deutsche Bank  
IBAN: DE49 7007 0024 0459 8702 00

2 Corinthians 9:7 *“Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”*

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# Editorial

Dear Readers,

Our much-loved editor Sue Morris sadly died in March of this year.

We have lost not only a dear friend, but also a gifted **lkon** Editor, whose personality permeated each one of the seventeen issues produced under her editorship. On page 7 we honour her memory and pay tribute to her many contributions to church life.

The remaining **lkon** team members thought long and hard about whether or not to continue without the leadership Sue had given us.

Encouraged by the Vestry, we decided that we should produce this issue, which Sue had already begun planning. Most of the contents were commissioned or written by Sue and we have done our best to fulfil her vision. Her husband Mike kindly agreed not only to extract Sue's preparatory material from her PC but also to continue as a valued member of the **lkon** team.

The saint on the cover is St Vincent of Spain, who was persecuted by the Romans and martyred for his faith. Besides other attributes, he is the patron saint of roofers, so we may hope for his assistance given the situation described on page 26.

This issue contains such regular features as An Interview with... , My Favourite Hymn, Behind the Scenes, News from the Vestry and the Ascension Recipe.

We also have reports on church activities and a number of articles on various subjects ranging from the restoration of a statue to the life of the English mystic Julian of Norwich.

We do hope you enjoy reading this issue of the **lkon** and we hope for your support in the production of future issues.

*Amanda Höschler  
Roger Houghton*

*(Joint Editors)*

The “cross of threads” with which Sue used to sign off her Editorials was a symbol very closely associated with Sue personally, and the team felt that we should therefore not continue to use it (see page 10).



## Letter from Fr. Dan

### Count Your Blessings

When I was growing up one of my favorite hymns, and one that was sung quite often at my church, was Count Your Blessings. Maybe you've heard it. It has a cheerful tune that builds to a crescendo in the chorus as you sing:

Count your blessings,  
name them one by one;  
Count your blessings,  
see what God hath done;  
Count your blessings,  
name them one by one;  
Count your many blessings,  
see what God hath done.

As I begin this article, I just want to say how grateful I am for the life and witness of Sue Morris. I count it a blessing to have known her and loved her. This **Ikön** is a way to note just how blessed we were to have her among our number.

This edition, the last that she worked on, now includes memorials to her and to her faithful witness among us. She was on the Search Committee that brought me here, she served on the Vestry, organized our rota for readers and intercessors. She faithfully supported the work of the church in so many ways, she was a beloved member of our community and I will miss her greatly.

I know that now she enjoys closer fellowship with Christ and the Saints in light. May we all be strengthened in faith following her example of service and count it a blessing.



I think that by the time this edition of the **Ikön** comes out we will have had our Annual General Meeting, our bishop's Visitation and two Sundays of baptisms in May. Thinking of all of these events brings my heart so much joy.

It is evident that God is working powerfully among us, and I count many blessings. And this is what I want to ask of you. I've asked the same of our Vestry this year. I would ask for you to continually look for ways that God is at work in your life and in the life of the church...name them one by one.

Once you've discerned where God is at work, celebrate God's goodness. Give thanks to God for all that God is doing, has done and will do.



Just to name a few:

Our church is growing in grace and in number.

Our children's Sunday School is thriving.

Our choir blesses us each week with beautiful music.

Our Vestry works hard and with joy.

People are joining our church through confirmation and reception.

Babies are being baptized.

Although we haven't overcome our deficit, we have more pledged than we've had in over a decade.

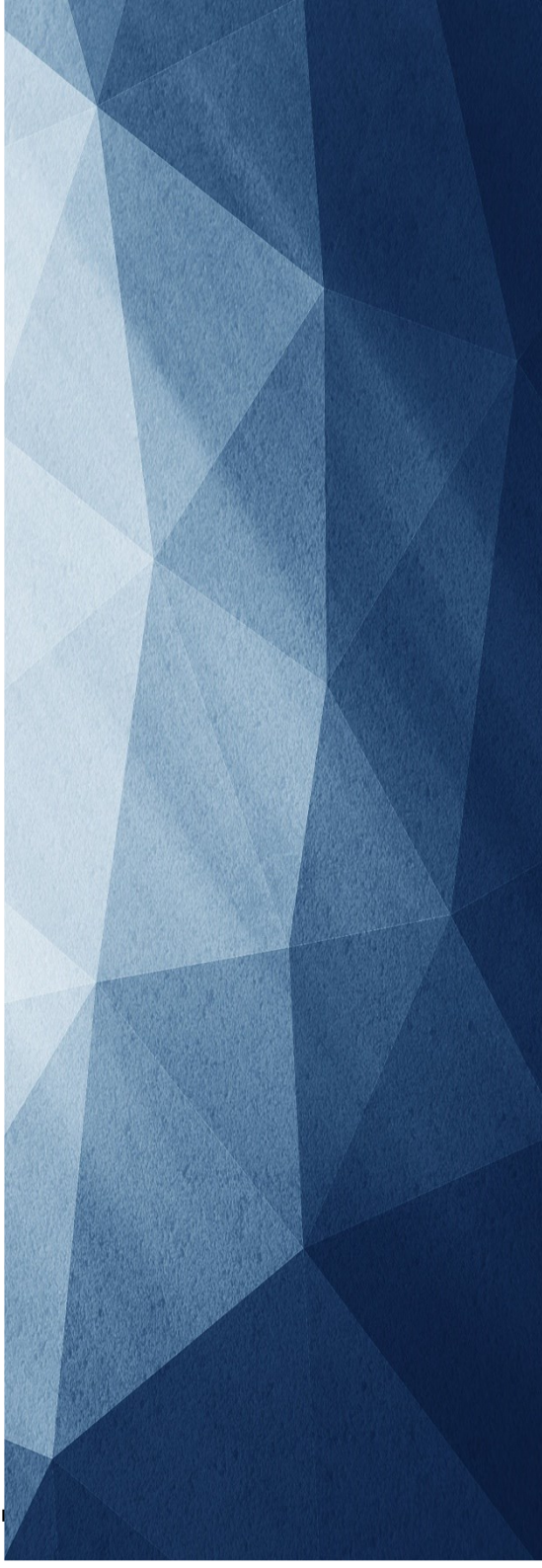
God is at work among us.

Count your blessings, name them one by one. Count your many blessings, see what God has done.

I'm grateful to be your priest, grateful for the Wardens and the Vestry and the staff. I'm grateful for you all. You are among the blessings that I count.

In gratitude,

Dan

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan' with a stylized flourish at the end.

## Remembering Sue Morris

Sue, who died in March this year, was not only the editor of the **Ikon** but also played a major role in other aspects of the Church of the Ascension. In addition, she was a teacher and a teacher trainer.

We therefore asked two people who knew her particularly well, Kristi Nowak and Jo Westcombe, to give us their memories of Sue.

### In loving memory of Sue Morris

For me, Sue was a beloved and cherished friend, a "Lichtgestalt". She radiated beauty, love, loyalty and compassion. She was always ready to listen and to share, even when things were not going well for her. There were so many things that we were able to share and will be no longer - for example, our love of books; also, apart from the Women's Book Discussion Group, of which we were both members, our fondness for Venice, where Bob and I searched successfully for a replacement of one of Sue's lost Venetian earrings and had dinner in a wonderful restaurant that she and Mike had found. We shared our pleasure in having lunch together and the joy of being in the garden that she and Mike cultivated for so many years. From there came delicious jams and other treats, which she seemed to prepare with little effort. Her teas with scones, cream and jam and fairy cakes were absolutely delicious! Sue was an enthusiastic photographer and created beautiful pictures, not only of the garden, but also of the many lovely things that her perceptive eyes could see.



Sue and I became close friends while singing as altos in the Church choir. For a long time, I was in charge of taking care of the choir music and she was a great help to me there. We spent many busy hours sorting and putting scores into order, often after having had a nice lunch and a bit of wine in a nearby restaurant.

But far more than that, Sue had a deep and abiding faith and was a pillar of the church. She was the editor of the **Ikon**, she organized the rota of Readers and Intercessors, also taking an active part in this ministry, she was a four-year member of the Vestry. Sue participated in Taizé, Bible Study, Golden Girls and the Women's Retreat and the Racial Justice Course. For many years, she was actively involved in the leadership of the English Speaking Prisoners' Support Group. For her, regular attendance at Sunday services was an essential part of her life. Indeed, our Rector Emeritus Tom Pellaton said in a recent telephone conversation with me that Sue was the sort of person every priest loved having as part of the congregation – as I indicated before, a real and devoted pillar of the church.

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Sue had many health problems in the past years, but faced these with courage and discipline. She was one of the bravest people I have ever met, and she never let adversity stop her from having time to listen and to care when things became difficult for me or for others. In our last WhatsApp exchange, two days before she went into hospital, Sue asked about books that she had borrowed from me, offering to sell them for me, in addition to telling me that she felt very unwell. Sue always had words of comfort and wisdom to offer, even in the worst of times. For her, a deep faith and the Church of the Ascension sustained her – and, through her, many of the rest of us.

To paraphrase a famous and beloved Norwegian folk song "the memories – of Sue – flow over me so that I can hardly breathe". And yet they are good and joyous memories, which I will always treasure. Sue would have enjoyed the ballad, as among her many talents, she also spoke some Swedish. Another description of her came to me recently in a lovely card "Wherever a beautiful soul has been, there is a trail of beautiful memories."

In George Santayana's poem, *In Memoriam*, he wrote "With you a part of me hath passed away...." and so it is with me as I think of Sue, as it is undoubtedly for so many of us. I can only be extremely grateful for having had the privilege of knowing her and of being able to find comfort in the fact that we will rest together in eternity under our hornbeam tree in a beautiful and peaceful Friedwald in the Fränkische Schweiz.

*Kristi Nowak*

## **Sue's other Life**

As we honour Sue Morris' many contributions to the Church of the Ascension, I'd like to remember Sue's other life of service, as a teacher. Her teaching life intersected with mine in various ways, so I hope I can give a few insights into this other world, and the difference she made within it.

As we heard at her memorial service, Sue had been exposed to other languages and cultures from an early age, and her future path began to be forged with a degree in Modern Languages at Cardiff University. One thing that Sue, being Sue, did not talk about much were all the other letters after her name. Before she left the UK to teach abroad, she had acquired a post-graduate qualification to teach in state schools in the UK, as well as a pretty solid EFL (English as a Foreign Language) certificate. With the paperwork already looking impressive, classroom doors opened for her in North Germany and in a school in Malaysia.

On Sue's arrival in Munich in 1987, she taught at the *Eurosprachschule* in central Munich, where she first met her life-long friend Gill Woodman. I imagine that the Head of English at the Neubiberg VHS (*Volkshochschule*), Ann Schmid, couldn't believe her luck when presented at around the same time with Sue's already "wide and deep" qualifications and experience. Ann offered Sue her first courses there.

As a freelance English teacher, Sue thrived on and grew in a range of environments, including at the British Council and later, two Bavarian ministries. She taught general and



business English to groups and one-to-one students from puberty to pension, on courses extensive and intensive, beginner and advanced, morning and evening, on the shop floor and the top floor. She taught at BMW for many years, even though, as she once confided, “a car is pretty much a box on wheels as far as I am concerned” and she felt privileged to help members of their Human Relations department during the BMW / Rover cooperation.

For Sue, teaching was never just a job. She had a strong belief in professional communities and development, and was a career-long member of MELTA, the Munich English Language Teachers Association, our local, grassroots professional organization with many international friends, including the writer and Sue’s hero Michael Swan, whose poem you can read on page 23.

Along with other roles, Sue was MELTA Chair from 1999-2001, as the association celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and co-led an international Business English conference. At the same time, we were coping with much uncertainty and division around pension contributions for freelancers, and the spectre of *Scheinselbstständigkeit*. Much later, in the year of upheavals that was 2016, Sue’s dogged A-Z trawl through the membership was central to getting her beloved MELTA back on its feet after a major “constitutional” crisis.

Equally, Sue’s commitment to EFL as a profession must have been a driver for her most significant – if I may call it that – ministry, which was teacher training. This started with the British Council and the *Akademie für Lehrerfortbildung* in Dillingen, but Sue really found her calling as a trainer on the one-month essential boot camp towards the internationally-recognized CELTA certificate, which she was invited to join by Briony Beaven of the Munich VHS in 1998. Sue tutored on CELTA with great commitment for seventeen years. Latterly, she was invited to work on the advanced Diploma (DELTA) course, again proving her great worth as a tutor.

In these roles, Sue combined her years of experience and expertise (also now underpinned by a Masters qualification) with the modesty, patience, diligence and warmth we would all recognize. As their tutor and mentor on a sometimes life-changing journey, Sue is and will be remembered with gratitude by hundreds of teacher trainees, for her no-nonsense feedback, but also for the many times she sat and listened during crises of confidence or catastrophic photocopier malfunction.

We never taught together, and I wasn’t one of her tutees, but at the teacher-training workshops Sue regularly ran for MELTA, I got glimpses of what Sue’s students and trainees must have experienced in her classroom: plenty of carefully prepared and expertly taught nuts and bolts grammar and vocabulary, in a genuinely learner-centred, safe space. There were pictures and smells, dice, soft balls, colourful wooden rods (and evidently the odd water pistol), and there was music and conversation and laughter. And there was Sue.

Sue was loved and respected by those she worked with, she was grateful for her students and for everything they taught her, and she built a working life that was in the service of something she truly believed in – a life that was full, rewarding and meaningful. And mightn’t there be a lesson in that for all of us?

*Jo Westcombe*

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## **Ikon Revival**

Way back in the summer of 2019 the Church of the Ascension was not where it should have been. There had been many problems, and there were many different, and strongly held, opinions. It was clear that some “community building” was called for.

Dee Pattee – who was somehow the “elder stateswoman” – had an idea. (Dee was always full of ideas!) The parish magazine, the **ikon**, should be revived. Dee started “pestering” the then Interim Rector Allan Sandlin. Roger Houghton raised the matter in the Vestry. Allan was all in favour, but what was needed was a dynamic, industrious and talented editor. Dee? No – she was not available. Allan? No - he was too busy. How about Sue Morris? (She is always very bad at saying “No”!)

And so it came to pass that Sue became **ikon** Editor. She had never edited a magazine before, but she learned very quickly. The first “Sue **ikon**” came out in Autumn 2019, and that was the first of seventeen **ikon**s with Sue as Editor. We can almost say eighteen, because her influence on this issue is tangible.

She always put a lot of thought into her Editorials, and the final words of her first Editorial are worth repeating:

**May this cross be a symbol of the future binding together of our congregation with God’s help.**

**Blessings.**

**Sue**

This “cross of threads” somehow came to symbolise Sue the Editor and was an integral part of each of her Editorials.

We reproduce it here for the last time, as a fitting symbol of a talented, and now sadly deceased, Editor.



*Amanda, Mike and Roger*

## Art and Faith in Lent

### From Canvas to Conversation

Over Lent, Fr. Dan organized a special series of visits to local museums. The Art and Faith programme included visits to the Alte Pinakothek, Pinakothek der Moderne, and the Diocesan Museum Freising. Each visit featured a deep dive into one or two art pieces, followed by a trip to a café or restaurant to continue the conversation. As Fr. Dan explained, the idea behind this programme was to use art as a vehicle for theological reflection.

I participated in one of the visits to the Alte Pinakothek, together with Barbara Norman, Allison Felmy, Elizabeth Corcos and Anja Weissbrodt. Fr. Dan facilitated a conversation around two pieces by the Nürnberger Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer: Self-Portrait (1500) and The Four Apostles (1526).



The group looks at Self Portrait

I particularly enjoyed the conversation around Self-Portrait. First, because Fr. Dan introduced the painting by saying that Self-Portrait was the cover of his first art history textbook in college.

That fun fact made me reflect on how privileged we are, living in a city like Munich, where we can interact live with classic pieces that most people will only ever see in books or online!

Self-Portrait is famously similar to representations of Christ from that time, and the way in which Dürer's hands are positioned in the painting resembles the act of blessing. Dürer looks straight out at the viewer from the painting, and we wondered how he had managed to paint himself so accurately. Did he use a mirror and constantly switch his gaze between his mirror image and the canvas? Or did he just have a really clear image of himself in his mind's eye?

These kinds of questions are why I love Art and Faith events. Taking the time to really consider the details of a painting, to put yourselves in the artist's shoes, and to do so in a group, reveals all sorts of additional layers you might not have appreciated immediately – or without others' questions and observations.



Fr. Dan and Barbara Norman discuss The Four Apostles

Following another discussion around The Four Apostles, which was a similar mix of reflections on faith and artistic technique, we went for a cosy dinner at the nearby Brasserie Tresznjewski. As always, I enjoyed getting to know other members of the Ascension Community better over a delicious dinner.

This wasn't my first Art and Faith event, and it definitely won't be my last. If you haven't participated in one yet, I hope these impressions have sparked your curiosity enough to consider joining in future.

*Mhabeni (Beni) Bona*

## The Crucifixion in Early Christian Art

Early Christian art favoured scenes which depicted deliverance stories (Jonah and the whale), miracle stories (Lazarus being raised from the dead), depictions of Jesus as a teacher, a philosopher and the good shepherd, the coming of the Magi and the Ascension: all these themes gave early Christians a sense of hope and joyful anticipation of the life to come.

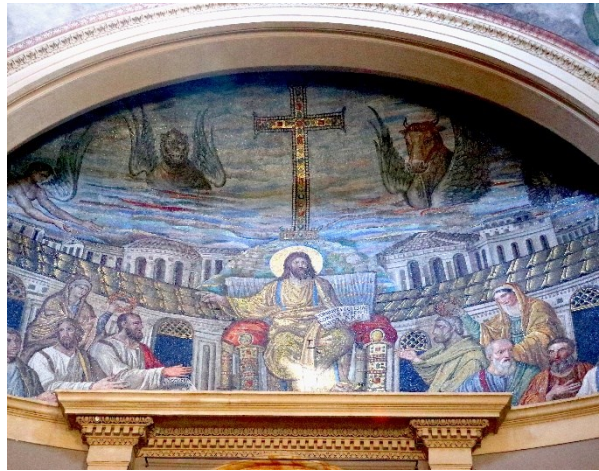
The crucifixion itself was barbaric, tortuous, shameful and offered no comfort. It is within this context that the first attempts at depicting the crucifixion are to be found.

A very early example on the so-called Domitilla sarcophagus in the Museo Pio Cristiano in Rome dated around 350 CE is typically symbolic rather than representational.

A chi-rho (Christ) on top of the cross is encircled by a laurel wreath (victory), which in turn is held by an eagle (authority) and is supported by two birds, most probably doves (peace). The sun and moon (power) decorate the top two corners while two soldiers guard the scene. We see here a popular depiction of the cross representing victory over death and hope of the resurrection, but this is not explicitly a crucifixion scene.

The apse mosaic in Santa Pudenziana in Rome dated around 410-417 CE follows on in this tradition.

It shows the risen Christ with a golden nimbus in his role as teacher (the right hand is raised while the left hand holds a text); he is seated on a throne and surrounded by his apostles. The two female figures, probably the two Marys, each holding a laurel wreath, again represent triumph over death. A *crux gemmata* (jewelled cross) erected on a mound (Golgotha), probably refers to the cross erected by Theodosius II at about this time. In this scene the cross has transformed from an instrument denoting a cruel and humiliating death to an object of veneration. The reference to the crucifixion is unmistakable, but again this is not a crucifixion scene.







An ivory casket with four panels, now in the British Museum, and dated around 420-430 CE marks a turning point.

One of the four panels shows on the left Judas hanging from a tree, an open bag of coins (thirty pieces of silver) at his feet. To the right we see one of the earliest depictions of the crucifixion in Christian art. Jesus is wearing a loincloth and is nailed to a cross bearing the inscription "REX IUD" (King of the Jews). An engraved nimbus around Jesus' head refers to his divine nature. On the right a soldier seems to be mocking or berating Jesus. Two figures, presumably Mary and John, are standing to the left. Here we are getting closer to the crucifixion story as we know it.

A manuscript illustration from the Syriac Rabulla Gospels (completed in 586 CE) found at the Monastery of St John of Zagba and now in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence, shows the crucifixion with details that we are familiar with today, making this one of the earliest visual renderings of the gospel narratives.



Jesus is flanked by two other crucified figures. At the foot of the cross soldiers are casting lots for his clothes. The two figures standing on the left are probably Mary and John; other figures are standing on the right. One figure pierces Jesus' side with a spear; another offers him a sponge of vinegar or sour wine on a stick.

The sky shows both the sun and the moon, denoting darkness at daytime. Jesus is clothed and not wearing a loincloth, possibly to show modesty, which was typical of depictions originating from the East or to emphasise his role as priest. Again the golden nimbus refers to his divine nature.

The crucifixion scene is counterbalanced below by a further scene which shows the resurrection. On the left the angel in front of the empty tomb reassures Mary Magdalene and the other Mary; on the right the risen Christ appears to both Marys.



This manuscript illustration is an important document as many subsequent depictions of the crucifixion follow this iconography, in which the pain of the crucifixion is offset by the joy of the resurrection.

In the Middle Ages depictions of the crucifixion became more literal and more realistic. In Renaissance art there was no holding back; the floodgates were wide open to more graphic interpretations, such as emotional depictions of Mary Magdalene weeping at the foot of the cross.

Today some churches display a simple cross. Others prefer a crucifix, on which the body of Christ is depicted in dramatic lines, offset with colour and vividness, and emotion designed to evoke pathos. In our worship space at Ascension we have a very minimalistic crucifix: the body of Christ is static, is worked into the confines of the cross itself and is fashioned in the same material.

Finally, they are all merely different renderings of the same scene.

*Angela Schneider*

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## Auf Wiedersehen Ali

In the Spring 2020 **Ikön**, right at the start of the pandemic, I expressed the opinion that my husband Peter and I would probably be leaving Munich within five years, and so it has turned out. He has a new position, teaching for one year at King George V school in Hong Kong, so we will have a rapid turn-around, returning to our family home in Great Malvern, UK at the end of June, and leaving for Hong Kong at the beginning of August.

We leave with great sadness and wonderful memories, having had a very interesting and rich time amongst you.

I have made some good friends, and am grateful to you all, particularly past and

present Vestry members, Wardens and the Sunday School leadership for their patient support. I have learned much and greatly valued working alongside the different priests, Clair Ullman, Allan Sandlin, Ken Dimmick, and now Fr Dan.

Celebrations to commemorate our leaving will take place on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June, I will still be present on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June but several key people will then be at the General Convention in Louisville, USA.

My ministry here has been very varied, from taking a moving funeral service during Covid with just three people present, to the gloriously colourful, joyful and busy ecumenical celebrations in the Frauenkirche last January. From leading Sunday School with our youngest congregation members, to visits to Dee Pattee towards the end of her life. I have served in all sorts of places, celebrating a marriage in a beer garden, a baptism in the upper room, communion on top of the Kampenwand mountain, complete with Alpenhorn, and online (the Way of Life group, the Sanctuary Mental Health courses, Morning Coffee and Tuesday Morning Prayer).

Since joining CoA I have made several significant transitions; learning German, training as a spiritual director, finally relinquishing my medical license and reaching a happy and healthy sixty. Last year was particularly busy as I took over as the Chair of the Commission on the Ministry of the Baptized (COMB), became an Episcopalian, and was commissioned as the Convocation Canon for Spiritual Development at a wonderful service in the American Cathedral in Paris in November last year.



I shall miss you all, old friends and new, and I shall miss the sights and opportunities of Munich, the beauty of the Starnberger See and most of all walking in the Alps; but this is 'Auf Wiedersehen' rather than goodbye.

We intend to visit CoA regularly, and I will continue with my work at the Convocation level. I will be back from Hong Kong for the Convocation Convention in October in Florence, and again in May to help run the spirituality retreat also in Florence (May 16<sup>th</sup> – May 18<sup>th</sup> 2025 - save the date).

May you all know God's blessings as the Church of the Ascension continues to grow and flourish.

Auf Wiedersehen

*Ali*

## **Thanksgiving for the Rev. Canon Ali Gray**

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Rev. Canon Ali Gray for her faithful service to Christ here at Church of the Ascension.

Ali is such a faithful priest. She is a trusted confidant, a wise counsel, a prayerful leader, a selfless servant and friend. She served here with grace and with joy. I will miss her greatly.

Ali, please know that you will always be a part of this community. Your faithful service is a jewel in your crown and I know that it pleases our Lord and Savior.

Please join me in June as we celebrate Ali with a farewell party on the 16<sup>th</sup>. This will be a potluck and we will give thanks for her and Peter.

Her final Sunday will be June the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Many blessings,

Dan+



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# My Favourite Hymn

I think my all-time favourite hymn, over the last sixty years, is still “Immortal, invisible, God only wise”. It seems to deal perfectly with the “science versus religion” argument, and to those who talk of the “God of the gaps” I would say that however much science advances, there will always be gaps, and new ones will continue to emerge. There is only one problem, which I became aware of about ten years ago, and that is with the phrase “naught changes Thee”: this is apparently a Neoplatonic idea, and at odds with the God of the Hebrew bible, who is constantly affected by the misdoings of His people. I’ll leave that for others to argue about.

However, I was asked by Sue Morris to write about what I call “the hymn that brought me to Germany”: I’ve told this story to many people over the years, so here it is for the rest of you. Thirty-one years ago I had lost my job near London, as my employer had lost its way and had to reduce its staff worldwide from 3,000 to 600 in four years: they finally got me in the fourth round of redundancies. My work was very specialist, and I only had one job offer, and no other prospects in sight. But this job, though in English, would require me to move to Munich. I’d never had any intention of or wish to work abroad, would have to learn German for daily life, would be leaving ageing parents behind in the UK, and so on. Should I really?

I had a friend who was a priest in Birmingham, and he was moving from one parish to another, so there would be an installation service, and he had invited me. As I was out of work, it was easy enough to drive there on a weekday afternoon for the service. Looking briefly at the bulletin as the service was starting, I saw that there were two hymns that I had never sung before. One was “Shine, Jesus, shine”, which I had at least seen on the television programme “Songs of Praise”, and already did not like (I have to admit here that our new Choir Director Hyunjin Cho changed my opinion last year when she pointed out that it is actually about the Transfiguration).

The other was “I, the Lord of sea and sky”. I did not have time to read it through before the service started, so when we came to that point, I was singing it “at sight”, and all was well until we got to the middle of the chorus. “I will go, Lord, if you lead me”!

At this point, I burst into tears (hoping that nobody around me was noticing), and thought: well, if You put those words into my mouth in this way, how can I not go? And here I still am, thirty-one years later.

*George Battrick*

## An Interview with...

Those of you who have been members of the Church of the Ascension for a while will know today's interviewee, **Joachim Zeller**.

The newer members of the congregation have probably seen him too, even if you couldn't put a name to a face. This very modest and unassuming gentleman, and I use the term advisedly, is an usher, he reads the lesson in German on many occasions, is a member of the Vestry, is the treasurer of the Outreach Committee and has recently joined the Bible Study group. He is German but speaks impeccable English that he learnt in the ten years that he spent in Albuquerque, New Mexico.



**Sue:** So why New Mexico?

**Joachim:** I wanted to do part of my studies abroad and from my university in Würzburg they had a student exchange programme with, I think, four universities in the US and one of them was Albuquerque. Not the most prestigious but the most interesting for me. I wanted adventure. I had done a lot of travelling, including to Israel, I liked the desert and so I was drawn to the similar sunny dry climate in New Mexico.

**Sue:** Was the language Spanish as well as English? Is this another language that you speak?

**Joachim:** It was all English at the university of course, but 40-50 percent of the population spoke Spanish. You hear Spanish regularly and many radio stations broadcast in Spanish. I regret that I didn't take the opportunity to learn this language.

**Sue:** But you perfected your English!

**Joachim:** Well, after ten years in an English-speaking country you do pick up the language! It started out as one year as an exchange student, but I went on to do my Master's degree in physics and then, having scored quite well, I was lucky enough to be offered a place on the doctoral programme that I accepted and wrote my dissertation on time-resolved laser spectroscopy of a class of semiconductors. One of the advantages of this physics department was that it had a dedicated programme for the study of optics, a very wide field that gave me the opportunity to develop many skills. It took rather longer than expected and then I had a post-doctoral post for a year.

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**Sue:** You mentioned adventure. Are there any particular adventures in the US in general and New Mexico in particular that you can tell us about?

**Joachim:** Trips are adventure! The adventurous and most memorable trips are those badly planned and which are started with a good portion of naiveté about what to expect. Trips within New Mexico and the US were very enjoyable, but rather predictable. The real adventurous ones led me to and through Mexico. One was a road trip in a 25-year-old and beat-up VW Beetle to the very tip of Baja California and back with two friends, camping in the wild and swimming in the Pacific on New Year's Eve. Another one was a trip with friends in a 16-year-old Toyota from Albuquerque all the way through Mexico to Guatemala, where we visited my friend's friend and stayed in a house without running water and electricity and helped with the corn and bean harvest, cutting corn cobs with machetes. Apart from trips, discovering the Native American culture of New Mexico was intriguing.

**Sue:** So after ten years you came back to Germany. Did you stay in academia?

**Joachim:** At first yes. I took a post-doctoral position at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT as opposed to MIT!). However after eighteen months I was very disillusioned by the reality of academic life.

**Sue:** So was it very competitive?

**Joachim:** Not particularly. Academia is, of course, competitive, but the practice of giving limited-time contracts meant prospects for getting a permanent job were uncertain. The post involved a certain teaching commitment and I was a lousy teacher and I didn't enjoy it so I took a job in Stuttgart with an American company. There was not the pressure that was associated with doing research, so I enjoyed it much more.

**Sue:** So where are you working now?

**Joachim:** I work for OHB, a company in the space industry. When I joined the company it was based in Munich but it has now moved to Oberpfaffenhofen.

**Sue:** So do you commute? Not as easy as it used to be!

**Joachim:** No! S-Bahns are very unpredictable at the moment. I live in Munich and I travel to Oberpfaffenhofen every day, but I'm lucky in that an express bus takes me door to door in 50 minutes. This company is Number Three in the European space industry and in a way I feel that the circle has been completed. I have always been interested in astronomy and when I was a boy I wanted to be an astronomer and now I am paid to develop optical instruments for space applications. A perfect situation.



**Sue:** Does the company also satisfy your love of travel. I think it has subsidiaries throughout Europe.

**Joachim:** Yes it does. The headquarters are in Bremen and we do have some cooperation there, but most of the subsidiaries, in the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, Italy, the Czech Republic, Sweden, Greece, operate independently. I travel for holidays. I am off to Portugal soon. I have been there several times.

**Sue:** Any other countries you enjoy visiting and why?

**Joachim:** I'm an aficionado of Eastern Europe and have travelled to many countries off the beaten track, like Romania, Ukraine and Armenia. These are societies in transition, which makes them exciting and interesting, and sometimes I can practice my Russian.

The UK, and London in particular, also attract me - culturally very rich. Listening to Evensong in one of the beautiful Cathedrals is quite an experience.

**Sue:** You talked about your job and your interests coinciding and you are now where you want to be. I think you said this is the same for you and the Episcopal Church.

**Joachim:** Yes indeed. In Albuquerque I shopped around looking for a church and the one near the campus, a student ministry, developed into a parish and was an Episcopal Church. So it was really by chance that I went one day and stayed. I loved the combination of Protestant progressive theology and beautiful liturgy.

After my return to Germany I went to the local Evangelische Kirche but it was not a very welcoming place. I went once, twice and no-one spoke to me. It seemed to me it was a closed community. I missed the warm welcome you get in an Episcopal church, so when I moved to Stuttgart, I attended the Anglican Church there and met Fr. Ken Dimmick.

**Sue:** THE Ken Dimmick who was an interim priest here?

**Joachim:** Yes indeed. I joined the church a few months after Ken started his ministry and I was amazed to see how it grew from a Sunday attendance of 10-20 people to at least 100.

**Sue:** Were you as involved in the life of the church there as much as you are here?

**Joachim:** I increasingly became involved on several levels: serving on the parish council, lector, infrequently writing for the church magazine.

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**Sue:** I listed at the beginning of this article all the activities you are involved in. We haven't yet talked about the Outreach Committee - I believe you are the treasurer\* ?

**Joachim:** Well yes, I am just the person who looks after the money side of things. I find the more time you invest in the community, the more active and not just passive you are, the more rewarding time spent on outreach activities can be. That is not the initial reason for attending the Tafel on a Saturday for example, but everyone involved gets a lot back and it is not just about distributing material goods, but it is showing that the people who come to the Tafel are worthy of respect and of receiving gifts.

**Sue:** Now for the activities of the Vestry. I think you will be coming to the end of your four-year term soon. What have you found most challenging/rewarding in this work?

**Joachim:** I found the most rewarding and at the same time challenging was the selection process for the new Priest in Charge: Challenging because of the significant amount of time we invested in interviews and deliberations, and because I find it difficult to compare and rate very unique and individual candidates. Rewarding because I met very inspiring individuals with very different, but interesting, biographies and because it forced me to reflect on what makes a good priest, what the decisive qualities are, and what criteria should be applied in the selection process.

**Sue:** Is there anything else you would like to say?

**Joachim:** I would just encourage everyone to get involved with YOUR church, if you not already are.

**Sue:** Thank you for giving up your time after church and that welcoming coffee hour!

*Joachim was speaking with Sue Morris*

\*Since this interview was conducted Joachim has become the Chair of the Outreach Committee.



Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Matthew 6:34

## Presents

Sue Morris was a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) teacher and had a very favourite TEFL guru, the writer – and poet – Michael Swan, who was also very fond of her. He feels honoured to be able to make a “small personal tribute to Sue” and has given permission for us to publish one of his poems. He is particularly glad that Sue’s husband Mike has chosen this one.

### **Presents**

Pasts  
Are a mixed bunch,  
sitting there on the mantelpiece,  
gathering dust,  
staring quizzically  
out of their tarnished frames.  
They make me uneasy.

Futures  
are lovely,  
fluttering around,  
but all out of focus,  
and I can’t tell  
where they are  
or how many.

Presents  
are the thing.  
Unwrap one each day,  
fold the paper carefully,  
tidy away the string,  
say  
“Just what I wanted,  
you really shouldn’t have”,  
and mean it.

Michael Swan, Presents, first published in “Orbis”, issue 189, 2017

Published here with permission of the author.

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# The 2024 Easter Services

The sombre and moving Good Friday service was held in the intimate atmosphere of the Gemeindesaal. The story of the passion was told by a narrator (Janet Day-Strehlow) with members of the congregation speaking the various parts. The choir, all dressed in black, excelled themselves with beautiful and precise renditions of the four anthems.

The Easter Sunday service was held in the Pfarrkirche Heilige Familie – fortunately so, because there were over 135 in the congregation. It was a joyful occasion; there were many children present who, after the service, hunted down the dozens of donated Easter eggs hidden in the church grounds. The choir up in the high gallery were again wonderful, and sent us off into the sunshine with a glorious performance of Handel’s Hallelujah Chorus.

*Roger Houghton*



Martin Shedd as Jesus on Good Friday



Hyunjin Cho conducts the choir



Easter Sunday at Heilige Familie

## Sunday School

### What is a sacred space?

A sacred space can be any space we come to for the purpose of encountering God. There are many sacred spaces, starting at the thresholds of the doors of our church, and there can be sacred spaces within our sacred spaces. Wherever children are gathered to learn about the triune God and the abundant love showered upon them through Jesus, that "wherever" is one of the most sacred of all. And when this gathering takes place on a Sunday morning (or early afternoon), we call it "Sunday School"! Yay!

Sunday School attendance had waxed and waned over the decades depending on how many of our often very mobile congregants had children within the target ages. Soon after Ali was licensed to work at the Church of the Ascension Covid struck and the children's work largely stalled. As we came out of Covid it was clear that Sunday School was in need of its own renewal, so Ali took on the responsibility as interim coordinator for children's work (a LONG interim!)

The reviving Sunday School found its first "sacred space" in front of the altar. Ali would invite all the children from aged three to ten, and the parents of the younger ones, to join her at the altar, where she and her mostly very young pupils would sit on the floor. Often there was something interesting to bring out of a bag; Yogurt pots and bits of string made an appearance. We found "Roots" on the web which provides lesson plans as well as a colouring and puzzle sheet based on the lectionary reading for the kids. Once the group had use of the Sitzungszimmer as its "sacred space," this developed into "Pop-Up Sunday School." Ali tapped me to assist her along with the parents, so I completed the Safeguarding Course required by the Convocation of anyone working with kids.

Pop-Up Sunday school continued about once every two months, but we were still not ready to offer Sunday School on a more frequent basis, so Ali made two more appeals. After the second I opened my E-Mail to see that her latest Sunday School mail had NINE NAMES in the distribution list. Oh, no! My opportunities to teach were DILUTED!

Lloyd Denton organised Stay and Play, for the children to go to a play area after church in the warmer months, and Sunday School grew to every two weeks, instead of every two months as it had once been. The children are growing, and the number of children is growing as well. And I've discovered that a third teacher in the room can be very useful.

We are working towards meeting more frequently as leaders and assistants are available, as well as formalising our structure. At the AGM Ali will be gratefully handing over the leadership to Laura Baird, Laura Smith and Maya Hladek, with Lena Petri continuing as the rota organiser.

As for sacred space, um, it's been shrinking a bit, and about to shift as well, due to repair work on – well – whatever. But wherever we are before we can return to our home at the Emmauskirche, we will be in a sacred place, a place to encounter the triune God.

*Barbara Pines*

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# The Sanctuary Roof

At midday on November 6<sup>th</sup> 2023 the roof of the Protestant St. Elisabeth church in Kassel collapsed completely. By great good fortune there were no casualties. The cause was reported to be the failure of glued rafters. The roof of our host church, the Emmauskirche, was also built in the 1960s and has a similar construction, so an inspection was rapidly put in hand. It was found to have significant weaknesses and so - as a precautionary measure - the sanctuary was closed for services. Since then, both Emmaus and Ascension have been holding their services either in the parish hall or in neighbouring churches.

It is (at the time of writing) still unclear for how long this situation will continue. There are several possible ways ahead ranging from supporting the roof (either temporarily or permanently) with internal pillars to a complete rebuilding of the roof. Our host church is in the process of evaluating the costs and benefits of all these various possibilities. They will then have to raise the money to actually carry out the preferred solution. The process of applying for money from their Landeskirche could take some time and in fact the current estimate is that the church will remain closed until at least Autumn 2025.

We shall therefore have to make the best of things and pray that a solution will be found as soon as possible. In the meantime, some members of the congregation have said that they enjoy the more intimate feel of the parish hall, and especially experiencing the choir at such close quarters!

*Roger Houghton*



## Bible Quiz

1. Who is the oldest person in the Bible?
2. Who was the mother of Jacob?
3. Who were Miriam's brothers?
4. How many plagues were there?
5. What is the shortest book of the Bible?

*Malcolm Phillips*

Answers on page 43



## Behind the Scenes: The Treasurer

It is a long way from two teenagers meeting, and falling in love, “down on the bay” in Melbourne, Australia and being financially responsible for an organisation with a €200,000 turnover in Munich, but that is the journey that **Kaye O’Connell** has made. (How about that for a wedding photo!)

Moving fast-forward from that fortuitous meeting “down on the bay” we find that Terry, who is a consultant engineer, is offered, in 1986, a two-year contract with a major car-manufacturing company in Bavaria. Sometime later Kaye found there was a small Episcopal Church (Holy Trinity) in Ingolstadt, and was soon involved. Holy Trinity was a “mission church” supported by the Church of the Ascension in Munich.

After a short time it was pointed out to Kaye that Holy Trinity needed a Treasurer – which basically meant somebody to count and bank the collection money after the service.

Kaye had worked in the insurance business and had even done “accountancy” as one of her subjects at school – she was obviously the right person!

Moving on a few more years and in 2006 Holy Trinity sadly closed, and therefore Kaye and Terry started attending the Church of the Ascension. Again, moving forward a few more years and Chris and Heidi Easthill were ready to move on so that Chris could attend Seminary for the priesthood. Everybody at the Church of the Ascension obviously wished them well, but Heidi was the Treasurer and would leave a great gap. “Well Kaye, you have already been Treasurer in Ingolstadt, so you are the obvious candidate!” Counting the collection in Ingolstadt is not quite the same as financially controlling the Church of the Ascension, but Kaye agreed to “shadow” Heidi for several months until Heidi and Chris moved to Washington, and then, in 2011, Kaye officially became our Treasurer.



Kaye and Terry at their wedding in 1972

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## ***So what does being Treasurer involve?***

Well, there are regular tasks such as paying the wages, or paying the rent for the Parish House (the CoA office) and preparing reports for the monthly meetings of the Vestry. CoA is an “eingetragener Verein” (e.V.) which means that we must comply with all the German regulations relating to a non-profit organisation. Sometimes this gets tricky because we must also comply with the Canons of the Episcopal Church as well as the German regulations. As an e.V, we do not receive any financial assistance from the German authorities such as Church Tax and rely on voluntary donations from our members.

One of the major tasks, of course, is preparing for the AGM. This year it will be held at the end of April, and for the first time since 2019 will be held in person.

My preparations started back in November after completion of the Financial Commitment Campaign.

## ***The job of Treasurer is often considered to be rather “dry”. What gives you a “buzz”; What makes you smile?***

One thing which makes me smile is the range of things we find in the Collection. We have had tokens for supermarket trollies, and on several occasions beer-tokens from the Oktoberfest and similar events.

What gives me a real buzz is the generosity of the Ascension community, the way so many people make financial donations to support their church. Sometimes it is quite large amounts, sometimes it is quite small. But on all occasions it is money given voluntarily, and the amount is what that person can afford.

## ***Anything else would you like to say?***

Yes, I would like to thank you, Mike, for taking on this work of Sue’s, supporting Roger and Amanda.

The **lkon** is a very important part of the CoA, and under Sue’s editorship it has become an entertaining and professional magazine.

It is good to know that despite Sue’s departure it is in good hands, and I feel grateful to have had a small part in this edition.

*Kaye was talking to Mike Morris.*



Kaye at her Confirmation with Terry and daughter Jessina

## Women's World Day of Prayer

Back in 1993 Barbara Catlow introduced us women (and men and children) to Palestine in preparation for the chosen theme for the Women's World Day of Prayer 1994 (the first one in which the CoA participated). And now this year the service was again prepared (beginning in 2017!) by Palestinian Christian women. Barbara had remarked several times how the designated countries seemed to come up in the news when it was their turn.

Although most of the hymns were familiar ('Make Me a Channel of Your Peace' and 'Won't you let me be your servant', a traditional Palestinian song called us to especially pray for peace:

Yarabba ssalami amter alayna ssalam.

Yarabba ssalami imla' qulubana ssalam. (*Arabic*)

God of peace, come among us, rain down your peace on the world.

Make a path for your goodness, fill e'vry heart with your peace.

Witnessing to the power of 'bearing together in love', the personal stories of three Palestinian Christian women spoke of resilience, truth-telling and working for justice. Of the three, Lina's story resonated most with me because Lina's aunt was the journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, killed in Jenin on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

"For twenty-five years my Aunt Shireen dedicated her life to telling the stories of Palestinian experience and to being a voice of truth ... Many people did not know that my aunt was a Palestinian Christian. Shireen's faith led her to bear with all in love despite differences in faith traditions. She stood with all who were being harmed ..."

We have heard many reflections over the years and the speaker for the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada service (which I watched) did not disappoint. Confessing to having 'knots in my stomach' with things seeming to be 'unravelling' when she listened to the news, she offered what she hoped might help us appreciate what we might be able to do.

She likened Palestinian and Israeli relations – and perhaps our own relationships – to an 'all tangled up' ball of wool. Instead of giving up, frustrated, we could 'patiently work' to find 'and release a knot at a time', 'easing around the knots prayerfully and patiently undoing the tangles'...



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That assuredly meagre image is certainly more inspired than being resigned to despair and inertia.

Such a lovely, meaningful service – with many prayers and scripture readings and hymns which are heard, prayed and sung in over 170 countries – from the initial rising of the sun to its final setting.

Next year's country is the Cook Islands with the theme: 'I Made You Wonderful'.

*Carol Adeney*

P.S. While showcasing the country's artists, the posters for each year also serve as a focus for the theme. Since the artwork of both of these is under copyright restrictions, a description of their beauty will have to suffice.

The 4<sup>th</sup> March 1994 'Go, See, Act' artwork is in muted blue/green tones and shows a village of women gazing at and reaching up to an oversized blue moon/sun intricately decorated with and outlined in gold filigree. A white dove with an olive branch in its beak is floating past the moon/sun. The women are **going** out of their homes, **seeing** the dove of peace and not only longing for, but **acting** in their pursuit of peace.

The 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024 'I beg you, bear with one another in love' poster has been painted in vibrant colours of red, white, green and brown. Three women kneel under an ancient olive tree whose roots extend beneath them into the soil. The abundant black olives and green leaves form a sort of shelter above them. The women wear green thobes with red and gold embroidery, and red poppies form a natural tiara at the front of the white scarves flowing down their backs. The woman facing us has her hands folded in prayer. Her two companions are facing each other. One can almost hear them praying for and exhorting one another – as well as us and the world – to bear with each other in love (Colossians 3:13).



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**“A strong woman knows she has the strength for the journey, but a woman of strength knows it is in the journey where she will become strong.”**

**Anon.**

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## Beloved Community Officer

### **Church of the Ascension appoints Beloved Community Officer**

You may well have heard or read this announcement last autumn, and wondered what it means. To be honest, the details are still under development, but I will share some background information.

You will know that, for some years, we have had a Safeguarding Officer (Joachim Zeller) to look after any matters concerning the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and those who look after them in church activities. Following the setting up of this, it was considered that we ought also to have a Diversity Officer, to ensure that we have equal treatment and opportunities for people of different backgrounds, in all respects.

This concept has also been introduced into corporate offices, and in the course of time in the corporate world, it was realised that recognising diversity is only the first step; it is necessary to be pro-active in handling it. So the specification expanded to Diversity and Inclusion, to which is added an E for either Equality or Equity (I think this is a UK/US thing). There seems to be no agreement as to whether the acronym should be EDI or DEI or some other sequence, and most options already stand for something else anyway.

The American philosopher Josiah Royce (1855-1916) conceptualized the Beloved Community as “a spiritual or divine community capable of achieving the highest good as well as the common good.” Dr Martin Luther King Jr. developed the idea as a vision for how we could all live in harmony.

Following the killing of George Floyd, and the subsequent international surge of interest in the “Black Lives Matter” movement, there has been a renewed focus on the concept of “Beloved Community”. It has also been referred to – and this trick only works in the English language – as “the Kin-dom of God”.

While we probably still need check-lists in the background, this concept gives a more forward- and outward-looking perspective. So instead of a Diversity and Inclusion Officer, we have a Beloved Community Officer. Here are the first three paragraphs of the job description, agreed by the Vestry:

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1. As part of its commitment to being an open, welcoming, inclusive Beloved Community of Christians, the Church of the Ascension pays particular attention to diversity and seeks to ensure that people of all backgrounds (social, educational or economic), ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender, find a respectful, loving, caring, community in which they feel they belong and in which they can develop and grow as they follow the path of Jesus.
  2. The Beloved Community Officer (BCO) is someone who acts as a local focal point on all matters relating to diversity, racial justice and beloved community. The role includes the relaying of information, listening sensitively to what is going on, observing the activities and actions of the community, calling out acts of omission or commission which may adversely affect the collective stance on diversity and beloved community, while prompting and supporting the leadership and people of the community. They will act as an ambassador promoting activity on racial justice and building beloved community in a structured manner, operate as a member of a Convocation-wide Beloved Community Network (BCN) and engage and interact with the Convocation's Beloved Community Missioner (BCM).
  3. While being a conduit to the Priest and Wardens for concerns or complaints about matters concerning perceptions of exclusion or prejudiced behaviour, including racism or homophobia, the BCO's principal role is to stimulate and facilitate church members to take intentional action to address matters falling under the broad headings of beloved community and diversity.

It is worth mentioning the Convocation's Beloved Community Missioner referred to above. Her appointment was announced at the 2023 Convocation Convention, and it is the Rev. Mpho Tutu van Furth. She is the daughter of the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and is one of the clergy at the Convocation's newest mission church, All Saints Amsterdam. We look forward to working with her.

So, the Beloved Community Officer position is quite a challenge, but it is new to all of us. I hope we will be able to work together to make sure that we are a beloved community in which all feel welcome and are able to achieve their potential. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me, or chat during coffee hour, about any of this ([gwb@muc.de](mailto:gwb@muc.de)).

*George Battrick (Church of the Ascension Beloved Community Officer)*

## News from the Vestry

Building on the outcome of the Mutual Ministry Review (MMR) the Vestry has taken a number of steps to help us live into the Gather – Transform – Send model of congregational development that we have been exploring since this Vestry formed in May 2023. We have placed a particular focus on Pastoral Care, Communications, and Finances. Groups in our community have now formed into three task forces to examine these areas in some detail.

No doubt there will be news of developments in future editions of the **Ikon**. As a direct follow up to the MMR, having prayed about it and voted on it, we extended an invitation to Dan to become our permanent Rector. Thankfully Dan has gracefully accepted and we have communicated our wish to Bishop Mark. We are now in the process of finalizing the details leading to Dan's formal installation by the bishop later in the year; an important and very special stage in our life as a community.

Spring has sprung and in addition to dealing with exploding water boilers and making arrangements to decamp to other churches for some of our services, we find ourselves (at the time of writing) rapidly approaching the 2024 AGM. This means that, sadly, there will be some departures from the current Vestry but at the same time, thankfully, there will be a number of new members. We are excited that those who are able to have put themselves forward for re-election, and a good number of people have offered their candidacy, many of whom have not served on the Vestry before.

In addition to the elections, the AGM this year will consider changes to our constitution and by-laws proposed by the Vestry. These are aimed at fully embracing the opportunities available for conducting business electronically and providing flexibility so that we can tailor how we do things in the best manner possible. So, in addition to supporting our many wonderful ministries, this administrative/organizational activity that seems mundane and unexciting but which is nonetheless important, is some of what we as the church Vestry (the Gemeinderat of Ascension as an eingetragener Verein) have to do.

Having observed Holy Week and celebrated Easter in glorious fashion we now look forward to bringing resurrection life to our worship, ministries and activities. This will include, in the month of May, a number of baptisms, confirmations and people being received into the Episcopal Church, some of this being carried out when we celebrate the Eucharist with Bishop Mark during his formal annual Visitation.

Under the shared governance of our church, the Vestry – elected lay people – work with our Priest Dan to discern the call of God and conduct the business of the church. We operate through acts of prayer, listening, and sharing, responding to the revelations we are granted. We serve the Ascension community. In so doing, we remember that the mission of the church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. As a Vestry and as a church we have been blessed abundantly in many ways. Let us remember to count our blessings – they are many!

Please keep us in your prayers.

*David Case, Senior Warden*



# Saint Barbara Restored

This lovely figure of Saint Barbara, which measures 46 cm in height, was discovered locally at the Wertstoffhof a few days before Christmas 2023. She stood, looking sad but still beautiful, behind other objects which were to be disposed of.

During my absence from Munich over the Christmas holiday, my thoughts drifted back to her and, on my return home, I went to see if she was still there. She was and I bought her for €2.- .

She was in a bad state, but with professional advice I restored her. Missing pieces of her crown and back were repaired with plaster of Paris - and her gown and other parts touched up with water colours.

The chalice which she held in her right hand and the sword for the other hand were both missing. The former I replaced with a small inverted bell, the inside of which I had removed. The sword is still missing.

She is lovely and now stands here in my dining room.

They say that there are no coincidences in life – and she appeared just in time for Barbara Catlow's birthday.

Praise be to God.

*Janet Eck von Schanzenbach*

This is the beautiful card made by Helen Riegert from the photo Janet Eck took of her rescued statue of St Barbara (above) It was signed by ladies of the church who remember Barbara Catlow - and sent to the UK for her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2024.

*Carol Adeney*

(See article on page 37.)



## Who was Saint Barbara ?

In real life (or legend) though, St Barbara was not rescued by a discerning woman but martyred by her own father. Her life started out in an idyllic way. She was born in the mid-third century in what is now Lebanon to a wealthy pagan and his wife.

Tragically, Barbara's mother died when she was small and Barbara's father became overly possessive of his only daughter. He locked her in a tower when he was away from home.

Nevertheless, her father's physical constraints on her couldn't control her mind and spirit which seemed to relish the beauty of creation outside her prison and the mysteries of her own soul – all of which made her ponder the meaning of life.

Over time, she found in the teachings of Jesus (as told her privately by Christian believers) a faith which was robust enough to stand up to physical abuse, torture and ultimately death.

Saint Barbara is sometimes depicted with a chalice and a cannon (for the fire that consumed her executioner) or a sword (the instrument of her martyrdom). Often she stands near the depicted tower of her imprisonment with its three windows (indicating the Trinity).

(Gleaned, substantially abridged and retold from the website *Who was St. Barbara the Great Martyr?* [<https://www.findasaint.com/saints/st-barbara-the-great-martyr/biography>])

*Carol Adeney*



**“Keep a clear eye toward life’s end. Do not forget your purpose and destiny as God’s creature. What you are in his sight is what you are and nothing more. Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take nothing that you have received...but only what you have given; a full heart enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice, and courage.”**

*St. Francis of Assisi*

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# Lenten Soup

## Soup Satisfying Sundays at Ascension

When I stood in the Gemeindesaal and looked out over the crowds of people slurping down their soups I felt that spirit of our unique Ascension Community.

There was lots of diversity of nationalities, of louder and quieter conversations, laughter and some seriousness, children running between the tables with parents right behind them.

Tickets were being sold for the most delicious and delightful of Easter Baskets. It felt almost chaotic but it wasn't, it was just the deep-felt need for people to be with each other, to communicate and to be a part of the big family, which is Ascension.

For six weeks, we were so blessed to be able to have this get-together. Friendly volunteers served up the soup with a bit of banter and laughter. The selection of soups offered over the six weeks was something to be in awe of - look out you fancy restaurants!! Maybe even a cook-book may come from this? Who knows?

Of course, none of this would have happened if it weren't for the hard work and devotion of Joan Case, Angela Schneider and other volunteers. This is EXACTLY what makes Ascension so unique. It's the genuine feeling that Ascension is family and it is always worth the effort to bring us together.

A total of €1,024.40 was raised by these events. Thank you!

*Jane Scheiring*



Sue Knowles and Joan Case in the kitchen



Happy soup-eaters

## Barbara Catlow

As many of you already know, Barbara celebrated her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday recently, and what an inspiration she is to us all.

Sunday School in the 1990's was a very special time for all involved, both young and old, and Barbara was very much a part of that 'specialness' – sitting at the piano, she was an integral part of our Sunday School services, and her support of children in need was such a great way of teaching our children the importance of helping those less fortunate than ourselves.

So it came as a bit of a shock when Barbara decided to return to her roots in the UK. We were very much involved in helping Barbara clear out her flat and prepare for her move, including enrolling our husbands to decorate it, and all of this made her departure more real and final to us.

One consolation for us was that Barbara was returning to a town just north of Blackpool, so Penny did feel close to her on her many visits back home, even though we very rarely actually managed to meet up.

Once back in Lancaster, it didn't take Barbara long to get involved in and support different groups and organisations, including the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, a charity which is very special to us both.

To this day Barbara has managed to write (beautifully handwritten) the most interesting newsletters, with all sorts of fascinating information. One of my favourites is her account of a visit to Oberndorf, the home of the carol Silent Night. Barbara describes it beautifully and it is very much a reflection of something that has remained unfaltering in all her 95 years - her strong faith and devotion to God.

*Penny Dite and Wendy Mountford*



“Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you”

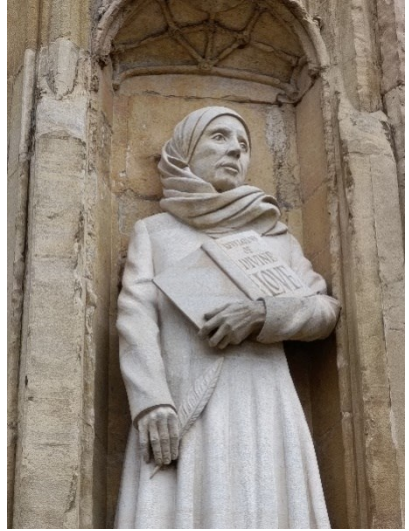
*Isaiah 46:4*

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## Julian of Norwich

The “Lent Madness” event in which 32 “worthies” are whittled down to 16, then 8, then 4, then 2 and finally to One is certainly not the theological highlight of the church year but does provide many people with some entertainment and also with the opportunity to study the achievements of the thirty-two before repeatedly casting their votes. The 2024 Lent Madness was previewed in the Winter 2023 **Ikona** (see page 31). The winner of the Golden Halo, and thus this year’s overall winner, is **Julian of Norwich**.

Julian of Norwich is a very significant figure in English theology. She died about 1420 CE (aged over 70 which was very unusual at the time) and is the author of the oldest known English-language book by a woman. She was also an anchoress, a term which I will try to explain below.



Norwich was, in the fifteenth century, the second most important city in England, and probably the most Christian. There was a cathedral, numerous priories and monasteries, and a vast number of churches. One of these, St Julian’s, was well-known for its anchorite (male) and anchoress (female) cells. An anchorite (anchoress) was somebody who renounces normal life and chooses to be walled-up in a cell for the rest of their life. Before the cell wall is closed for ever a ceremony similar to “last rites” is performed, signifying that their normal life is approaching its end. The anchorite then spends the rest of their life praising God and contemplating. Some of these anchorites earned a reputation as wise religious counsellors, and were held in great regard by the general population.

There is firm documentary evidence which shows that Julian of Norwich was a well-known anchoress in 1396 and in 1416, and slightly less firm evidence of her in 1429. However we do not know when she was born, nor do we know her name. Julian was a fairly common female name at the time, but it is probable that her name comes from the church where her cell was. We do know that in 1373 she had a series of religious visions, and that she almost immediately wrote a text about these. Several years later she produced a longer version, which eventually became known as *Revelations of Divine Love*.

In 2000 a statue of Julian of Norwich was erected outside Norwich Cathedral. This shows her looking serene and holding a copy of her book. This is obviously symbolic, in that it is, by definition, impossible to know what an anchoress looks like (since they can never leave their cell) and because the title *Revelations of Divine Love* was first used about 250 years after her death. However this does not detract from the quality of the statue or from the significance of this influential English lady.

*Mike Morris*



## Pancake Supper

On 13<sup>th</sup> February we had a wonderful time of fun and fellowship at our pancake supper. No matter whether you liked your pancake thick or thin, large or small, with lemon and sugar or maple syrup - there was a pancake for you! And even chocolate hazelnut spread with strawberries for the adventurous among us. As it was also "Faschingsdienstag" in Bavaria, where it is the tradition to wear fancy dress, there was a special activity table for the younger visitors and the young at heart to make masks for Fasching, including lambs, cats, dinosaurs and aliens. Big thanks go to Jane Scheiring for the inspirational organisation, to all who brought pancake batter or helped in the kitchen, setting up or clearing away, and those who helped with the children's activities.

*Laura Smith*



Mary Wulf and Ellen Sullivan



Martin Shedd and Maja Hladek



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# Ascension Recipe: Onion and Feta Quiche

## Ingredients

- Puff Pastry (Blätterteig)
- 1 Onion
- 80 gr Feta Cheese
- 2 Eggs
- 100 ml Cream
- Pepper
- Rosemary - fresh or dried
- Cherry Tomatoes

## Method

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C.

Finely chop the onion (I like to use either red or spring onion), gently fry until soft and lightly browned and then leave to cool.

Cut the puff-pastry to fit 12 muffin tins.

Break-up the feta, mix with the onion, and spoon into the muffin tins.

Mix together the cream, eggs, rosemary and a few twists of pepper. (I often use a lighter cream alternative.)

Pour the cream/egg mixture over the onion/feta mixture in the muffin tins.

Decorate each muffin with half a cherry tomato.

Bake for 20-25 minutes.

*Mary Wulf*



## Outreach

### The Committee

Angela Schneider has stepped down as chair of the Outreach Committee, having served on the committee for many years, most recently as chair. Thank you Angela for your dedicated ministry and your commitment to helping people less fortunate in life than us. The new chair of the Outreach Committee is Joachim Zeller. You will find an interview with Joachim, conducted by Sue Morris, on page 19 of this issue. Thank you for taking on this important task, Joachim.

Alicia Tsui  
Jill Thomas  
Joachim Zeller                      Chair  
Maria Ramadori  
Mhabeni Bona (Beni).

### Soup Kitchen

Faschingskrapfen were delivered to the Soup Kitchen, and distributed just before the start of Lent. The Sisters and guests were delighted with the flavours!

*Mhabeni Bona (Beni)*

### Christophorus School

On Tuesday of Easter week chocolate bunnies were provided to both the Christophorus Schools in Riem and Trudering. On the last day of term before Easter holidays, each of the sixty children received an organic chocolate bunny.

*Jill Thomas*

### The Soup Kitchen

On Easter Day tradition in the Soup Kitchen is to have a Holy Mass followed by a festive lunch; this year was no exception and to add an extra highlight Karen Buck gave a mini solo concert, walking amongst the guests and singing popular songs with familiar texts so the guests could sing-along too. I was unable to join them but when speaking to Sister Clare on the telephone was told how it gave a mood of happiness throughout the big hall, people clapping and joining in where they could. I also spoke two weeks later to a member of the Busy Bee knitting group who started telling me enthusiastically how much she had enjoyed singing and listening to the concert on Easter Sunday. I can only say thank you Karen for giving up your time and giving so much pleasure to many Soup Kitchen guests on this special day.

*Liz Wink*

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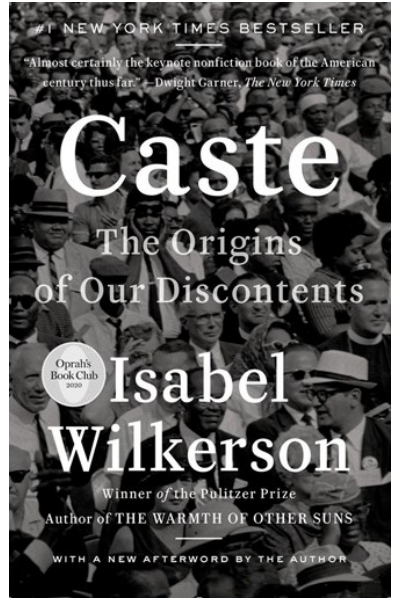
# Racial Justice Book Group

On the 13<sup>th</sup> January this year the Racial Justice Book Group (RJBG) discussed *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson. The following review is by David Case, a member of the group.

A banned\* book but a great book. In fact, this is one that should be required reading!

Wilkerson has produced a masterpiece that is well worth reading. More than that, it is a book that should be read by as many people as possible and then discussed. In seeking to understand the origins and evolution of the hierarchies that persist in which one group of people is elevated above another – the subordinated group – she examines the parallels, overlaps and contrasts of the world’s most recognized caste system in India, with that imposed in Nazi Germany, and the system in the United States.

There is a strong academic base and it is possible to feel tied up with some of the analysis and language, yet the message is crystal clear.



“A caste system is an artificial construction, a fixed and embedded ranking of human value that sets the presumed supremacy of one group against the presumed inferiority of other groups.” It is “the powerful infrastructure that holds each group in place. Caste is fixed and rigid. Race is fluid and superficial, subject to periodic redefinition to meet the needs of the dominant caste.” Caste is about structural power and institutionalized inequality that provides the context in which dehumanizing treatment is accepted and ignored.

Our Racial Justice Book Group discussion was extensive and collectively we viewed the book very positively. We found many things that were familiar, well known to us, but also much that was new and insightful. Perhaps one major benefit of the book comes from the way in which the author pulls together many strands so that they can be considered alongside each other and that a large number of stories are used to explain particular aspects of the caste system.

These bring the subject to life and make the theory much more approachable.

Acknowledging that a lot of the history and current manifestations of caste are bleak, we asked ourselves “where is there hope?” We concluded that there is hope! The fact that Isabel Wilkerson took the time and effort to produce a remarkable book that has been published, has been widely well-received, and is out there being discussed as we have done in the RJBG, is hopeful.

As the author states in the Afterword (written in Berlin) “If we truly want to end caste, each of us, every single one of us, needs to search our souls for the ways in which we may be complicit in upholding caste and stereotype and hierarchy, as our society has so cleverly trained us to do, and to consciously work against this programming in our everyday lives if we are ever to overcome it. ... I pray that, for the sake of succeeding generations, we will find the collective will to repair and rebuild this old house that we ourselves did not build but for which we alive today are responsible as the current stewards and occupants.”

Get the book. Read it. Discuss it. And act upon it!

*David Case*

\* Editor’s note: In areas of the USA many books dealing with sensitive matters are banned in schools - typically because they “may cause discomfort, guilt, anguish, or other forms of psychological distress” !



## Answers to the Bible Quiz

1. Methuselah
2. Rebecca
3. Moses & Aaron
4. Ten
5. 2 John (13 verses)

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## Young People of CoA

The Young Adults group of Church of the Ascension was reinstated last year after a break due to Covid. Since then, we have been trying to meet every month, usually on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after church, to have a potluck lunch and to enjoy each other's company. We are a diverse group of people from all around the world: parents, students, couples, newcomers and long-time members... everyone is welcome to join!

During the past couple of months, we have also organized some social outings, like a Karaoke evening at Kennedy's, and we will probably go to a Biergarten in the nearer future.

Adding to our usual potluck and time of fellowship, we have decided to include a worship session in our lunches, so that we can sing and praise our God together. So if you play an instrument and love worship music, please reach out to us!

And most importantly, if you feel called to become a part of our group, talk to me or send an E-Mail to [charlotterieger@t-online.de](mailto:charlotterieger@t-online.de)

We would be happy to meet you for our next lunch!

*Charlotte Rieger*



The Karaoke stage at Kennedy's Irish Pub

## Women on the Go

...from Baierbrunn to Pullach

On a lovely autumn day last 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2023, fifteen women from the Church of Ascension came together to walk a stretch of the Isarhochufer, beginning in Buchenhain and ending in Pullach, where we all had lunch at a nice restaurant called Rabenwirt.

It was the perfect day to be out there and enjoy not only the sun's warm rays but also the beautiful colours of fall. Angela Schneider led us through this hiking path, which actually showed us the treetops since the path was way above the ground level. We had glimpses of pretty houses, some sculptures and lots of trees and blue skies.



One need not travel so far away to appreciate our version of the "Indian Summer" and be smack in the middle of all that beauty. I took some pictures to hold some of the moments forever and keep the interesting things we saw. But more than that, it was being together as "sistahs" and spending some time to get to know each other more and better. It is what this activity is all about after all....as women of the church we are the backbone and we need to keep strong and always on the go.

Thank you, Angela, for guiding us through the path!.

*Joy Schindel*





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# Congratulations

- To those who have had birthdays since the Winter 2023 edition.

## February

6 <sup>th</sup>	Tonda Kemmerling
11 <sup>th</sup>	Sue Knowles
19 <sup>th</sup>	Kristi Nowak

## March

7 <sup>th</sup>	Michael Beer
8 <sup>th</sup>	Lois Stuckenbruck
8 <sup>th</sup>	Yann Savard
8 <sup>th</sup>	Peter Dalen
9 <sup>th</sup>	Jes Villa
12 <sup>th</sup>	Barbara Catlow

## April

4 <sup>th</sup>	Wendy Mountford
7 <sup>th</sup>	Loren Stuckenbruck
10 <sup>th</sup>	Carol Adeney
17 <sup>th</sup>	Deirdre Tincker
26 <sup>th</sup>	Yvonne Cockcroft

- To all other children who have had birthdays recently.  
We don't yet have a good list!
- To those who have had Wedding Anniversaries since the Winter edition

13 <sup>th</sup> February	Mike and Sue Morris
7 <sup>th</sup> March	Clair and Rainer Ullmann
25 <sup>th</sup> April	Steve and Sue Knowles

Many congratulations to Chrissie Grant and her husband Salek Talangi, who welcomed their beautiful and healthy twin boys into the world on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

The boys are called Alasdair and Hector Grant-Talangi. We look forward to getting to know you, Alasdair (Ali) and Hector!  
The boys visited the CoA on Easter Sunday – aged 54 days! Is this a record?



## Worship in Augsburg

### **Services at St Boniface, Augsburg**

Every Sunday at 16.30 in the Ev. Luth. Auferstehungskirche

Located in Garmischer Str. 2a, 86163 Augsburg-Hohenzoll.

Our vicar Rev. Lutz Ackermann can be reached via mobile 0157883006272

All services take place on site and also via Zoom (ID 92937226600) - no password required.

All welcome, no exceptions.

<https://www.facebook.com/ChurchOfStBonifaceAugsburgEv>

## Worship in Nürnberg

### **Services at St James the Less in Nürnberg**

At St. James the Less we normally meet every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday for worship at 16.00 in the Jakobskirche in downtown Nürnberg with Rev. Scott Moore.

Jakobskirche – Church of St. James the Less, Jakobsplatz 1, 90402 Nürnberg

No matter who you are, or where you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome.

Please check out our Facebook page before you come, as the situation is not always certain

<https://www.facebook.com/stjamesnuremberg>



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# Coming Events

Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup> May	Women's Book Discussion Group	14.00 – 16.00
Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> May	Sunday School	12.00 – 13.15
Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	Meeting of the Vestry	19.30 – 21.30
24 <sup>th</sup> thru 26 <sup>th</sup> May	Academy for Parish Leadership	
1 <sup>st</sup> thru 2 <sup>nd</sup> June	Corso Leopold Street Festival CoA have a booth for the first time!	
Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> June	Sunday School	12.00 – 13.15
10 <sup>th</sup> thru 13 <sup>th</sup> June	Clergy Retreat	
13 <sup>th</sup> thru 15 <sup>th</sup> June	Heads of Ministry Meeting	
23 <sup>rd</sup> thru 28 <sup>th</sup> June	General Convention	
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> June	Meeting of the Vestry	19.30 – 21.30
Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> July	Racial Justice Book Group	10.00 – 11.30
Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup> July	Women's Book Discussion Group	14.00 – 16.00
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> July	Meeting of the Vestry	19.30 – 21.30

## Regular Events

Sundays 12.00-13.15                      Service with Holy Eucharist.

It sometimes starts at 12.15 so please see the church calendar for up to date information.

Coffee hour in the Gemeindesaal follows the midday service on Sundays. Come and join us!

Tuesdays 08.30 – 09.30                      Morning Prayer online.

Thursdays 19.45 – 20.30                      Compline online.

Choir Rehearsal is on Sundays at 10.30. Normally the choir sings on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month, but there are some exceptions, depending on the church schedule.

Look at the Calendar on the church website <https://www.ascension-munich.org/> to find out about other events.

## Emmauskirche

This is the second in a series of articles about the church building in which we are privileged to worship every Sunday.

How many of you recognise this artwork and can confidently identify its location?

If you can, well done, as a "poll" conducted among a few long-term members of the parish, myself included, produced answers such as "Hmm, I can't quite place it", "No idea, never seen it before" etc..

The mural is in fact on the wall of the narthex opposite the main door.

It is called simply the "Emmausbild" (The Emmaus Picture). Created in 1983 by artist Hubert Distler, famous for his abstract depictions of Biblical themes, it shows the sun and the moon, mountains, bread, thorns, and an altar.

These symbols point to the deeper meaning of the disciples' encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus.

In the centre is the bread, the body of Christ, which draws together the surrounding images of darkness and light, of the death and resurrection of Jesus, and of earthly and cosmic existence.

Hubert Distler, who worked extensively with leading German church architects including Franz Lichtblau, the architect of the Emmauskirche, was awarded the Bundesverdienstkreuz in 1998 for his life's work.

So now that we all know the mural is there, take a closer look when you have an opportunity. As of writing, the narthex is accessible.



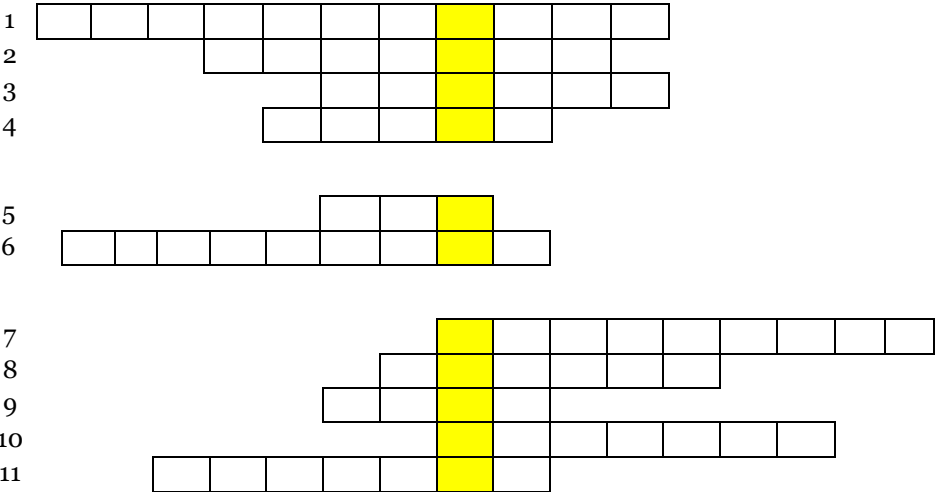
*Amanda Höschler*

# Closing Words

We do hope you have enjoyed reading this edition of the **lkon**.

As Sue Morris was so fond of word games, her husband Mike has put together the following puzzle. Enter the answers (which can all be found in this **lkon**) into the frame and discover the message that the **lkon** team are sending to Sue.

1. Which US university did Joachim attend ?
2. Who is the Patron Saint of roofers ?
3. In which German city did a church roof collapse in 2023 ?
4. Which book did the Racial Justice Book Group read in January ?
5. Who is saying "Auf Wiedersehen" ?
6. In which city was our treasurer born ?
7. In which land was the Women's World Day of Prayer 2024 set ?
8. What will Fr. Dan's new title be ?
9. What is the surname of the man who wrote the poem "Presents" ?
10. At which university did Sue Morris study Modern Languages ?
11. What was the surname of the artist who did the mural in the narthex ?



Have a lovely Summer!

*Amanda, Mike and Roger*

## Imprint / Impressum

This is issue number 18 of the present **Ikon** series.

**Joint Editors:** Amanda Höschler and Roger Houghton

**Proofreader:** Mike Morris

**Layouter:** Roger Houghton

**Layout Assistant:** Matthew Eeda

Please help us to fill the magazine with the life of the church and send any ideas and suggestions for the next issue of the **Ikon** to the Joint Editor for consideration: [a.hoeschler@gmx.de](mailto:a.hoeschler@gmx.de)

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## Back Numbers

You can find all the previous issues of the **Ikon** on our website at:

<https://www.ascension-munich.org/parish-magazine>



The Church of the Ascension is an Anglican/Episcopal Church in the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

We extend a warm welcome to all!

### **Our Purpose and Mission**

We offer worship in English, serving Greater Munich and the surrounding area. We welcome people of all nationalities to join our community and share in our journey towards a deeper knowledge of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

### **We seek to:**

- Proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ by word and deed
- Celebrate God through beautiful and meaningful worship
- Minister to one another through worship, fellowship, Christian education and pastoral care
- Care for people in the wider community through outreach projects, both alone and together with others.