

St Peter's Review

Spring Edition 2022



Ex Tempore Rise - Jazz and Beyond
Max Rush performs a piano recital on 27th February. The recital raised £549 towards Church Funds. Our thanks to Max for the recital and his promotion of the event.

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Isaiah - The Prophet and the Book

by Fr Steffan



For five weeks this new year, I have once a week been teaching one of my passions: the Old Testament. Over Zoom, I've been meeting with a group of trainee priests, exploring the Prophet Isaiah and the book of the Old Testament that takes his name. Since going into ministry, it's been hard to keep up with Old Testament study. This course has been a good refresher for me, and has given me lots of ideas for preaching!

Isaiah is one of the most important books of the Old Testament for Christians. All you have to do its look week by week at where our Old Testament readings come from at Mass, and about one in three weeks it will be Isaiah. In Advent and Christmas, they are almost all from Isaiah, and in Holy Week it's similar. Yet in these passages we often only get snippets from the 66 chapters.

Isaiah is a complicated book, with a long history. Where we might know certain bits very well: at Christmas, passages such as 'and a woman shall bear a son, and he shall be called Immanuel', or 'his name shall be Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace';

or in Lent 'But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed'. But the book of Isaiah itself contains a lot more.

There are a few different reasons Isaiah – and other prophets – can be hard to understand. The first is that they tend to speak in poetry – and poetry is always a bit harder to follow than a straight-talking news article!

The second is that while we tend to think of prophets, a bit like mystic meg, looking into the future: but the main role of a prophet is really interpreting where God is

and what God is saying in what's happening in the world at the time. So, with Isaiah, you need some of the history of the people of Israel, but also what's happening on the global scene, threats of foreign invasions, and major events. The third, and simplest, is that sometimes they are trying to make people think, which sometimes means being vague about

and his name shall be called
Wonderful,
Counsellor,
The mighty God,
The everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace.

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what they are really saying – think about some of Jesus's parables!

Most scholars would agree that there was a prophet called Isaiah, son of Amoz, who lived about 750 years before Jesus's birth; however, they would also say that not all of the book of Isaiah was written by him, but instead some parts were written by his followers, using his thinking, his ideas, and his style. This might seem strange to us; we might think it sounds like riding on the back of someone else's work. But in the ancient world it was quite normal, and in fact a sign of respect to carry on what someone had started. The biggest reason we have for thinking this is that some parts talk about Isaiah in the first person ('I, Isaiah, did this...') and some in the third person ('then Isaiah went here'). But some parts also seem to take place a while after he is thought to have died.

What we do have, through the book, is a series of themes shared by Isaiah and his followers. The first theme is that God wants to speak to his people, and does so through his prophets. So, for example, Isa 50:4 says 'The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word.' Here is a sense of God using prophets to carry out his message to his people.

The second is that God is holy, upright, and merciful. We might think of the people of ancient Israel as only believing in one God, but this wasn't always obvious to them. For a start, the bible is full of stories of how they started going after other gods! Isaiah is really important here – he is full of passionate speeches telling the people that their God is in charge of the whole of creation, that he is the only God worth their time. For example, in Isa 45:6-7, Isaiah says of

God: 'so that they may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is no one besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness; I make weal and create woe; I the Lord do all these things.'



Third, is the importance of the people of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. Isaiah paints a picture of Israel as the child of God, the people God delights and loves, but also a people who God expects the best of. And at the centre of the people, Isaiah sees the city, Jerusalem, which he often calls the 'Holy City'. Jerusalem (sometimes called Zion) is to be a light to the nations. Here is a picture of a God who is in a deep relationship with his people – not a faraway God on a cloud.

Fourth, Isaiah tries to make sense of disasters that befall the people through an idea of a 'remnant' – that while armies may invade, while there may be difficult times, God will always rebuild through what is left. There is an idea here of not losing hope: that God can do amazing things through small things.

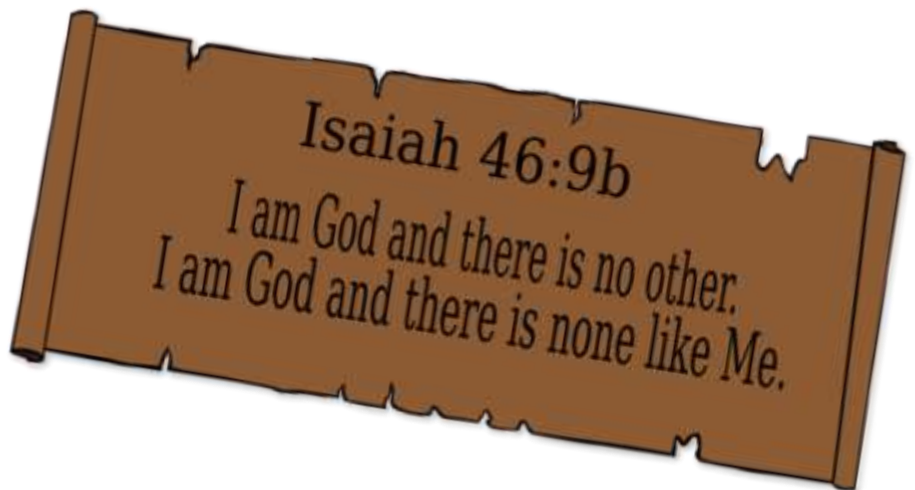
*"while armies
may invade,
while there
may be
difficult
times, God
will always
rebuild
through what
is left."*

Fifth, Isaiah sees the God of Israel as in control of all the nations and empires of the world. This was a radical idea in the ancient world. Most people thought their gods were just for their people, and other peoples had other gods. Isaiah saw the God of Israel as the God of all people. Here God is in command of all the world, and expects right behaviour of all the world. And here Isaiah speaks of, in time, all people coming to worship the one God of Israel.

The sixth big theme in Isaiah is that while God is in control, he expects a response from his people. It is not good enough to sit back and expect God to make everything alright: people are to respond and act. So, for example, Isaiah is full of moments of God saying 'I don't care about your worship, your sacrifices, your offerings, if you neglect justice, if you ignore the widow, the orphan, the oppressed.' Again, this might sound obvious to us, but to Isaiah's listeners it was quite radical.

Lastly, Isaiah's big theme was the future. Isaiah paints a picture of a world God wants to create, of peace and justice. It is often painted like a utopia, where even the lion and the lamb will lie down together in peace. And Isaiah speaks of a figure to come who will bring this world into being, which Christians understand as speaking of Jesus.

All these things might seem obvious to us in retrospect. They seem part of normal Jewish and Christian teaching.



But what Isaiah was doing was radical. God gave him a particular task of changing the way his people saw God; and Isaiah was radical in lots of other ways: God gives him images to describe God that were feminine: midwife, mother, hen. Isaiah's influence on Christianity cannot be overstated. Our idea of the Church is influenced by Isaiah's idea of the holy city Jerusalem, which will shine like a light for the nations of the world. It is through his messages that we have a sense of one God, who is good and holy, in charge of all creation, who calls all the people of the world to respond to him. Through him we have an image of a future of justice and peace, of a new Jerusalem, that God will bring about and that we are to build. Through Isaiah more than anywhere else in the Old Testament we get an image of a Messiah to come, who will change human history.

It's no wonder we hear from him so much in church!





The Anglican Church in Madeira

by Fr Neil Dawson

Before I retired in 2014, I was chaplain to the Anglican Church on the Island of Madeira, Holy Trinity. It's part of the Anglican Diocese of Gibraltar in Europe, which was founded in 1842 and now has nearly 300 congregations in 40 countries. Madeira is one of the world's really beautiful places with an almost perfect subtropical climate.

When Holy Trinity was built, strict rules were laid down by the Portuguese Authorities. It was to be built on a private plot, (it's surrounded by a garden with high stone walls). There was to be no cross on the front, or bells, no processions on the streets, and it was not to look like a Portuguese Church. Up the street from the church is a Protestant Cemetery, older by fifty years than the church and very beautiful.

The Diocese of Europe is the largest Diocese in the Anglican Communion and includes, as well as the continent of Europe, Morocco, Turkey, Mongolia and the territories of the former Soviet Union. There are churches as far north as Tromsø in Norway, and Reykjavik in Iceland, as far west as Madeira (500 kilometres west of Portugal), as far east as Vladivostok in Russia and as far south as Casablanca and the Canary Islands. As John Betjeman wrote,

"His Kingdom stretch from sea to sea, 'till all the world is CofE".

They are there to serve English speaking communities wherever they are, and because they're likely to be the only English-speaking church in the area, congregations are usually made up of several different denominations. In our congregation on Madeira the electoral roll included Methodists, Catholics, American Episcopalians, and a Swedish and a German Lutheran as well as Anglicans.

During the winter months when the congregation was swelled by tourists and people who returned each year to escape the English winter, (snow birds), in a congregation of 200 to 250 people there could be ten different nationalities. At the Christmas Carol Service which was very popular, the service booklet was especially bulky because the readings were translated into Portuguese, German, and Swedish as well as English. The Catholic Bishop of Funchal (the capital of the Island) usually gave the blessing. As the Suffragan Bishop of Europe said to me, ecumenism – Churches of different denominations working together - is a way of life in the Diocese. If there was a visiting minister in the congregation, I always invited them to concelebrate, where two priests celebrate the mass

Holy Trinity Church, Funchal, Madeira



together. We had a collection of Bibles in different languages, and if there was a group of Christians from a different country, we tried to have at least one of the readings in their language. Because I could speak Portuguese (more or less), I was invited to concelebrate or preach at several Catholic masses, unimaginable in the UK.

Many of the churches predate the foundation of the Diocese, and were built to serve communities of English merchants which had existed for centuries. St George's in Lisbon was founded in 1656, St. James Porto in 1670 and Madeira in 1820. Together with Algarve, the four chaplaincies of Portugal had a joint pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady at Fatima every year. Two of the oldest Chaplaincies are in Hamburg and Amsterdam both

of which were established in the early 17th Century, and the first was built in Venice before the Reformation. Before Holy Trinity was completed in 1822, services on Madeira had taken place in the house of the British Consul. Henry Vietch, who was Consul when the church was built (he was also its architect) got into trouble with the British Foreign Office because he addressed Napoleon, who was on his way to exile on St. Helena, as Your Majesty and presented him with a pipe (barrel) of Madeira wine.

Most of the churches now serve British retirement communities in the coastal resorts of Spain, Portugal, France and Greece. If you've visited Nice on the Cote d'Azur you'll know that the main road which sweeps

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around the Bay is called the Boulevard des Anglais. The people of the English church in Nice were so concerned by the number of unemployed young fishermen that they paid them to build a path around the beach which in time came to be the road we see now.

After I retired, I was on the rota to serve as Locum in European churches temporarily without a Chaplain. This was usually for one or two months, and was a great pleasure and privilege. In this way I visited, and got to know people in the churches in Ankara in Turkey, Tangier in Morocco; Taormina on Sicily, and Genoa in northern Italy; Pau and

Biarritz in south west France; Luxembourg; Heidelberg in Germany; and Porto and Algarve in Portugal.

It confirmed me as a convinced and dedicated Europhile. I think of Europe as Christendom and rejoice that the uniting of Europe, begun with the Coal and Steel Treaty of Paris in 1951, and the Common Market in The Treaty of Rome in 1956, was inspired and led by Christians, Robert Schumann, Charles Monet, and Conrad Adenauer, who wanted never again to see Europe devastated by war. My opinion of Johnson and his fellow brexiteers is unrepeatable in a Christian publication!



Church Lighting Update

by David Chapman

Work on the church lighting will begin in May. We are installing new LED lighting units to replace the nearly 30 year-old system which is failing fast.

The new lights will save considerable CO2 emissions. This is estimated at 3083 kg CO2e per year – equivalent to about £2100 cost saving per year.

The installation will take place in three phases:

PHASE 1 - May 2022

A test of the lighting units.

PHASE 2 - June/July 2022

If this is satisfactory then we will install the new lights in the South and North Aisles.

PHASE 3 - September/October 2022

Installation of the lights in the high altar, nave and choir areas. For this there will be a considerable amount of scaffolding. We will do what we can to minimise the impact on services.

During the erection and dismantling of scaffolding there will be some days when the church will not be accessible for safety reasons. We will keep you informed of this nearer the time.





All Church Away Day

by David Chapman



Some of the attendees at the All Church Away Day

On the 5th March, a “St Peter’s All Church Away Day” was held. The purpose of the day was to look at our life together over the next five years, and what we might want to start work on to develop our mission at St Peter’s and perhaps things we wanted to do less of.

In preparation for this, church members had anonymously completed a survey to understand what we felt about and expected from our life at St Peter’s.

The event was hosted at St Thomas’s Telford Avenue and we were led expertly by Catherine von Schubert.

We explored the concept of Mission and workshopped what mission would mean for St Peter’s. Looking at what we felt was important for us in what we do today - identified as “the fruits

of our apple tree.”

We enjoyed a lunch prepared by Fr Steffan and members of the Away Day team and then returned to the task of crystallising some areas of priority for us to develop.

There will be an opportunity to see more of the output from the day in the coming weeks. The three main areas identified for development were:

- ⇒ Children, Youth and Families
- ⇒ Research on Parish Needs
- ⇒ Communication and our Physical Church Welcome (getting into church and the experience of arriving).

It was a great day. There was a huge sense of working together and support for each other in our discussions and prayer during the day.

Holy Week & Easter 2022

Palm Sunday
10 April

Mass of Palm Sunday
10.15am - meeting outside Church

Mon, Tues, Wed
11, 12, 13 April

Said Mass
7pm. Followed by supper in the crypt,
and Compline (night prayer) at 9pm

Maundy Thursday
14 April

Mass & Vigil
7.45pm

Good Friday
15 April

Kids' Workshop
10.30am

Kids' Stations of the Cross
12pm

Liturgy of Good Friday
3pm

Holy Saturday
16 April

Journeying the Cross
with Mary
12.30pm

Easter Vigil Mass
8pm

Easter Day
17 April

Family Mass of Easter Day
10.30am



A Christian against all the odds

by Madalyn Morgan

A former member of our congregation, Vladimir Czesnok, was the subject of this article written for and published in the St Peter's Review in 2007. It tells a story of former times of repression in Ukraine and the impact of WWII on the life of the young Vladimir. Vladimir now lives in a care home in Croydon.



Vladimir after mass at Saint Peter's - September, 2007

It is against all the odds that Vladimir Czesnok, a former member of our congregation, was able to worship with us at Saint Peter's.

Vladimir's childhood and school years were no different to any other young person born in Ukraine in the early part of the 20th Century. That his parents and grandparents were Christians was different, and dangerous.

Vladimir's grandfather was a priest. He didn't have a church or a congregation. He wasn't allowed to baptise or confirm, marry, or bury his

parishioners. In fact he had to hide his calling as did all members of the clergy in Ukraine after the Russian Revolution of 1917. Being a priest was against the law, punishable by arrest and execution; or by being sent to a concentration camp or to the Gulag. The Gulag was an establishment for re-education - brain-washing.

When the Red Army marched into their home town of Poltava, Vladimir's grandparents fled and, as refugees, they followed the White Army to The Caucasus Front. At the foot of the Caucasus Mountains Vladimir's grandfather contracted typhus. When he recovered he took his family home. He was arrested and died in prison.

Being a Christian was how you behaved towards other people

While English school children in the 1930s were being taught to love and honour their mothers and fathers, Ukrainian children were taught to denounce their parents if they overheard them talking about subjects that were deemed unsuitable; if they criticised the Communist Party, or if they had Christian beliefs. The Communist statement was, 'Religion is opium for the masses' which is why Vladimir wasn't told that his grandfather was a priest. Children

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informed on their parents, not out of malice, but out of an indoctrinated loyalty to the Party. They didn't know any better.

At Vladimir's school the programme of study consisted of, languages (Russian & German) mathematics, geography, science, sports and history - complicated by whichever political party was in power at the time – and military training. At the age of ten Vladimir was taught how to use a hand-grenade, assemble and shoot a rifle, and attach and use a bayonet.

Like all Ukrainian school children Vladimir had to join a political club. The first, with the youngest recruits aged seven, was called Oktiabriata (October Youth Group) named after the October Revolution of 1917. Then came the Pioneers (like Hitler-youth). Later there was the Comsomol, the Communist Youth Organisation, and finally The Communist Party proper. As with Hitler's regime in Germany, the Ukrainian people had no choice or control over their lives. They were brain-washed and dictated to in such a way that many people were convinced into accepting the party set-up.

Vladimir said, "I had to join the Pioneer club, I wasn't given a choice, but I didn't think about it because everyone of my age was a member. When I became member of the Comsomol, I had to write the biography of my parents, grandparents, and all my ancestors – almost back to the cave. I was lucky - because I didn't know my family history - I couldn't denounce them.

I wasn't told that I had been christened when I was two years old, until I was fourteen. By then the authorities had closed the churches and stripped them. Crosses, artefacts, statues, gold and silver; everything was ripped out and the buildings were pulled down, or turned into clubs or granary stores. My mother and father had me Christened in secret. They

found a priest willing to take the risk and he came to our house disguised as a worker – his bible and robes hidden in a workman's holdall.

The constitution stated that children were not responsible for their parents, but in reality it was the opposite. A boy I knew denounced his parent for speaking against the Communist Party. You didn't have to say very much to be called an 'enemy of the people'. Everyone was scared of everyone, even of friends and family. A few years later another friend was told to write about his work colleagues. He was told to make the notes as negative as possible, because the Party needed 2000 'enemies of the people' for a labour-force to build a canal from the Baltic to The White Sea.

"We were dictated to and we lived under oppression. We had Fascists on one side and Communists on the other. When Lenin died Stalin took over and it was just as bad. There was the systematic removal of intellectuals, of writers and artists. Moscow feared another revolution so they sent the KGB to execute anyone with enough intelligence to organise a revolution.

In 1932 and 1933 there was mass starvation in Ukraine

Central Moscow made the farmers give up their land. The farmers resisted, so Russia forced them into Collective Farming and sent a special army of party members to go from village to village and collect every bit of grain that had been harvested, even grain that had been kept for replanting. They left the people of Ukraine without food and wouldn't allow them to travel to the towns to work in order to buy food. The consequence was mass starvation. Seven million people died of starvation in 1932 and 1933 and the world didn't know about it.

In 1940 the German Verhmacht came to our town and within a short time they were arresting and shooting people. Then the sixth army came (later, in 1943, they were defeated in



Stalingrad) and they started sending young men to Germany by force. At that time I was too young, so I was sent to the Landwirtschaft Schule, an agriculture school.

Two years later, in February 1942, with the snow three metres high and minus twenty degrees my mother and I, along with thousands of other people from our town, were taken by the Germans to a transit camp in Ukraine's capital, Kiev. From there we were put on a cattle train, seventy people to a wagon, with no windows. We travelled through Walsall, Magdeburg, Berlin and Bremen. Only when we had arrived in Germany were we allowed out of the wagons.

My mother gave me a small religious icon that had belonged to my grandfather and which she had kept hidden for twenty years. She gave it to me on the way to the forced labour camp, in case we became separated. I didn't know who the saint was; his portrait was small and his name was written in ancient Hebrew.

When we arrived at the camp, the Metten Rose in the Rhine Land, we were deloused – men and women old and young, at the same time. Then we were separated and sent to work in mines and factories."

The first Church service that Vladimir ever attended was in a German labour camp at the end of the Second World War, after being liberated by the Polish Army. The year was 1945 and he was twenty years old. The service was taken by a high ranking Polish officer who was also a military priest. His name was Bishop Sawa.

Vladimir said, "It was strange for me because I had never attended a Church service before. I couldn't compare it. There was a mixture of religions; Catholics and Eastern Orthodox. There were people from the Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and Georgia - altogether about four hundred civilians and soldiers.

It was only when I was in a forced

labour camp that I encountered prayer and was allowed to pray. The first prayer I said was The Creed."

"When we first came to England we lived and worked in a Manor House in South Devon. My mother was the cook and I worked on the farm. One day a priest came to see us. He was a Ukrainian who lived in London. It was then, with my mother, that I took my first communion. It was something special, very special."



Eastern worker number 24A

Vladimir's labour camp document with photograph and fingerprints.



The congregation in the Metten Rose labour camp with:

Bishop Sawa—Second row from the back and standing fifth from the left with grey hair and dark beard, wearing a beret.

Vladimir's mother is on the same row, right of centre and on the right of the four ladies.



Life with Iris

by Don Smith



Iris Smith RIP 17th September 1940 - 21st December 2021

To start at the beginning, very importantly, Iris was born on September 17th 1940. Her family lived in Ilford. Not the best address for a small child during the horrors of the blitz. More turmoil followed when her father, Eric Green, disappeared. He never came back. Not surprisingly Iris would never speak about these times.

Fast forward to 1967, having seen the north of Scotland and the backwoods of British Columbia, I wanted to have a look at London. I bought an Evening Standard and got a bedsitter in Stockwell. Guess who was in the bedsit right above mine? No prizes for guessing.... Miss Iris Green.

We fell wonderfully in love and we were married six months later at her church St John the Divine, Kennington. The following year is best not mentioned!

We then settled in Streatham and in 1970 Adam was born followed by Andrew in 1972.

Iris was able to resume one of her great passions: needlework. At St Peter's she set to refurbishing some of the old church banners using real gold thread, she made some vestments for the clergy and even

made a beautiful wedding dress for the fiancée of the then Organist, Mr. John Brierley.

She became treasurer of the PCC at the time that Fr John Hall, Vicar, was altering the internal layout of the church, following a bequest from Beryl Lawley. Fireworks ensued over the costs.

When out lads were in primary school, Iris pinned on a new badge. She became camp-follower, a member of Blackwell's Regiment, re-enacting the battles of the English Civil War. Lost weekends camping on battle sites, often inebriated, somewhere between the beer tent and the big campfire. English history took first place in her academic interests and her knowledge of the Tudor period was encyclopaedic.

I remember the time when Adam was twelve and in need of a secondary school. Iris had put down Bishop Thomas Grant as our first choice. One day soon after Fr Devane knocked on the door and introduced himself as parish priest of St Matthew's (Roman Catholic Church) in West Norwood and Chair of Bishop Thomas Grant trustees. He said that he was sorry but Adam couldn't go to his school as it was for Roman Catholic children only. Iris replied that as his holiness the Pope was due to come and say Mass at Wembley, she hoped that they could make an exception in keeping with

the recent developing ecumenical movement. But rules are rules, he said as he left. A few days later he knocked again with great news. At last night's Governor's meeting he had put Iris's request to the Board and they had agreed. One more thing, he said, would you like to go to Wembley to hear the Holy Father speak? Of course, Iris said yes. Well, actually, I have two tickets here, do you think Fr Woodgate (then Vicar of St Peter's) might like to come as well? So now I have this wonderful mental picture of Iris walking along that approach to Wembley arm-in-arm with her two favourite parish priests.

Cats were her weakness. She couldn't say NO to the occasional stray, so it is not surprising that she

was a founder member and Trustee of the London South East branch of the RSPCA and served as re-homer for many years. In 2015, she rehomed 154 cats, almost singlehandedly bringing a lot of pleasure to a lot of people and the cats too.

If I were to ask her friends to describe Iris in a few words they might choose.... caring, versatile, generous, very beautiful, liked a pint, hardworking, elegant, bloody minded, reliable, warm and clever.

A Requiem Mass was held for Iris at St Peter's on 1st February 2022. Fr Steffan Mathias and Fr Geoffrey Owen (Vicar of Christ Church and St Stephen Battersea) were celebrants.

Following the Requiem Mass, a cremation took place at West Norwood Crematorium.



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Dates for your diary

COMMITTEE DATES

Day	Date	Time	Meeting Group	Venue
Monday	March 28	7.30pm	PCC	Parish Room
Sunday	May 8	11.45am	APCM	Church

SPECIAL SERVICES AND EVENTS FOR HOLY WEEK AND EASTER 2022

Saturday 26th March 7.30 pm

Film Screening at St Peter's: Nosferatu (1922, silent film) + improvised organ accompaniment

Saturday 9th April 7.30pm

Crucifixion by Stainer - performance by our choir and local "Come and Singers"

Sunday 10th April 10.15am

Palm Sunday Procession and Parish Mass

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday in Holy Week

7pm Said Mass followed by supper in the Crypt and Compline (9pm).

Maundy Thursday - 14th April

7.45pm Mass & Vigil

Good Friday - 15th April

10.30am Kid's Workshop

12noon Kid's Stations of the Cross

3pm Liturgy of Good Friday

Holy Saturday - 16th April

12.30pm Journeying the Cross with Mary

8pm Easter Vigil Mass

Easter Day - Sunday 17th April

10.30am Parish Mass

For more info, contact Father Steffan
on 020 8769 2922

or frsteffan@stpeters-streatham.org

Online Services:

For access to the services on Facebook, you don't need a Facebook account - they are public.

The address is: www.facebook.com/StPetersSW16

Copy deadline for the Easter *St Peter's Review*

Sunday 1st May 2022

Pass items to David Chapman

