

COVER STORY:
FROM FEAR TO FAITH
SONYA DAVIS (34) WANTS
TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
THROUGH HER
CLEANING COMPANY



Issue 05 October/November 2014

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**NEWS &
UPCOMING EVENTS**

**IN THE SPOTLIGHT:
CATHERINE BERRY**

**ASK THE VICAR:
ON THE BRUTALITY
OF 'IS'**

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Would you like to contribute to the magazine? You could either feature in one of the articles or help with writing, design, photography and proof reading. Please get in touch with Mirjam.

Please be aware, the deadline for contributions to the next issue of the magazine, our Christmas Special, is Sun 9th November!

SPECIAL EVENTS IN OCTOBER

VOCATIONS CONFERENCE

Rochester Diocese is organising an event on Saturday 11th October, titled "All are Called". This is a day for anyone wanting to explore vocations.

It is an opportunity to look at the gifts that God has given us, at what the bible says about vocations, and to pray with others about it. There will be a number of vocations advisers available to chat to and help you on the journey to discovering what God has in store for you. If you need an extra incentive, come and hear Lusa, our vicar, who will be leading one of the two workshops.

The event takes place at Christ Church Orpington from 10.30-15.30.

AMAZE CONFERENCE - WOMEN ONLY

On Saturday 11th October, CPC (City Praise Church) organises the Amaze Conference, which is a gathering of women of all ages and background, who come together once a year to celebrate and share God's Word. Mirjam Ngoy, our vicar's wife, is one of the speakers at this event.

The event takes place at the Woodville Halls at Windmill Street in Gravesend from 11.00-17.00. Tickets cost £15 and are available at the door or on 01474 356773.

EDITORIAL



CHURCH HIGHLIGHTS



27th July - Confirmation

30th July - Visit Bishop Samuel

21st September - Baptism of 3 children and 1 adult

CONTRIBUTORS

We have been able to put together and distribute this magazine thanks to the help of the following people:

- Mrs Mavis Prater
- Mr Michael Welch
- Mrs Mirjam Ngoy
- Rev Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy
- Mrs Valerie Weekes



LET'S PASS IT ON

While August was a relatively quiet month at St Aidan's, September has come and as I am writing this the preparations for our community day at the end of the month are in full swing! I can't wait to see some of you having a go at the climbing wall and bouncy castle!

The highlight for me these last two months has certainly been the two baptism services, when seven children and one adult were added to our church family! On both occasions the church was packed with lots of families and children who came to support the newly baptised and their families.

It is so nice to see children at our church, as everything we do and believe only has a future if we pass it on to the younger ones around us.

I was also excited to interview one of our younger mums Sonya, who comes to church with her son Tyrese and mum Elsa. I hope her story and her openness will inspire you in the same way it inspired me! Enjoy your read!

Mirjam Ngoy - Editor

FROM FEAR TO FAITH

SONYA DAVIS (34) WANTS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE THROUGH HER CLEANING COMPANY



34-year-old Sonya Davis, her six-year-old son Tyrese and mum Elsa have been part of our church family for a long time. Even so, not many of you might know the story behind this friendly mum. In this issue of the Pilot, she shares her brave story of moving on from a relationship breakdown and struggles with a social phobia. Now she wants to make a difference to her surroundings through an environmental friendly cleaning company.

"I was born in Northfleet and lived in and around Gravesend most of my life. I grew up with my older brother and both my parents. Our house backed onto a park. We used to play outdoors all the time. I enjoyed going to St Mark's Church in Rosherville, where I went to Sunday School and helped out as a server. I was a happy child!"

"After school, I went to Dartford College to study Art and Design. Three months before I finished my degree in illustration at the Kent Institute Of Art and Design in Maidstone, I went to the Caribbean to get married with a friend I knew since I was ten-years-old. We gradually got to know each other better and our relationship developed from there. Going over there was quite an impulsive decision. I was 25-years-old at the time."

"A few months later, we moved back to England and bought a house in Chatham. I had my son Tyrese when I was 27. Soon after this, the marriage broke down and I became a single mother. Around the same time, I was also diagnosed with a social phobia. This was a really difficult time in my life. I felt I failed. I tried so hard, but my husband and I were so different and had grown apart. It was as if I was pouring water in a bottle with a hole in it."

"Going through this break-up has been a long and painful process. I am still quite heartbroken. Sometimes you look at other families who are still together and you blame yourself. But my son is my drive; he pushed me to go on. It wasn't always for me that I went on, it was for him!"

"Recently, I had a bit of a breakdown. I struggled to even get out of the house. Having a social phobia has

"IT WAS AS IF I WAS POURING WATER IN A BOTTLE WITH A HOLE IN IT..."

stopped me from doing a lot of things. Sometimes I just want to hide. But looking back, it got me to the point where I told myself: 'Come on Sonya, you are getting older, you should stop hiding. You are capable of so many things!'"

"Faith has helped me a lot. Of course, at times you wonder: where is God. Especially as a teenager I couldn't understand why He didn't show himself more. When I went through all the difficult stuff, I was so blind. I was locked in my own pain. I was searching so hard for God, but couldn't find him."

"What has helped me is meeting other people going through struggles themselves and sharing our stories. I attended a development group in Chatham, where I learnt how to develop myself spiritually and do away with the negative stuff. Now I realise I was looking for something so grand, but God is in the simplest things. In nature, in other people..."

“LIKE A BUTTERFLY, I AM SLOWLY OPENING UP...”

"I think I see God better now, but I still have a hell of a lot to learn. It is coming slowly, but I am quite happy that way. I know there is so much more!"

"I am sick of looking back at the past. It doesn't mean anything to me anymore. I've got myself together again and want to move forward, be my own person. Like a butterfly, I am slowly opening up. I am able to meet people. Of course, my phobia will always be there, but I now want to share my story and help others who struggle with similar issues."

"What I like about St Aidan's Church is that it is very real and open. I don't want to go to church and just smile and pretend everything is ok when it is not."



I want to be real. I feel I can be myself at St Aidan's. Every time I listen to somebody speak, it touches me. You can relate it to your own life. I like the different styles of the services and that it is not too structured."

"Now I feel more positive in myself, I want to make a difference to the world around me. That is why I have decided to start up my own environmental friendly cleaning company. I am offering a cleaning service that uses the power of steam, minerals and plant extracts rather than chemicals. I will clean people's houses and small businesses, without using products that leave a huge footprint."

"One day, I started looking at cleaning products, and realised a lot of them are not very good for us. I've burnt my fingers once, because I used a product without gloves. Or sometimes I would accidentally inhale products and wonder what damage I have done. I started doing some research and realised there are many natural products we can use that are as good."

"My dream for this company is to make people more aware of the products we use and what it does to our environment. I want to show alternative ways of cleaning. I want to be an advocate of using environmental friendly products. What inspired me? I was just looking at this beautiful bird in my mum's garden and realised that we should look after our planet. Even this little bird was worth making a difference for..."

For information about the services Sonya provides, feel free to browse her website, email a question or alternatively give her a call.

Gravesend Ecological Steam Cleaners

Website: www.ecologicalcleanersgravesend.co.uk

Phone: 077130 16987

Email: envirosteamclean@outlook.com

Services start from £10.50 an hour.

By Mirjam Ngoy

NEWS FROM THE PARISH

CONFIRMATION - NIFFY AND JAMAL

'God has called you by name and made you his own. Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit.' These are the words that Bishop James pronounced as he laid his hands on those who were being confirmed on Sunday 27th July 2014 at Holy Family Church.

18 candidates from the East Gravesend group of churches and St George's gathered with friends, families and parishioners to mark that important stage in their Christian journey. Niffy and Jamal, both from St Aidan's, were of that number. We rejoice with them and their family for this important decision they have both taken.

All candidates went through a confirmation class. The group was dynamic and diverse in age, experience and background. Sessions looked at a variety of topics from the Bible to Jesus and prayer to stewardship. They were a way of getting every participant to think



A group picture of the confirmation candidates

further about what it means to be a Christian, how that relates to a variety of aspects of our lives.

There is an annual service of confirmation in our part of the Deanery. If you are interested in exploring this further, do get in touch with our Vicar or someone from our ministry team. Please remember Jamal and Niffy as they continue to explore what it means to be a Christian.

PATRONAL FESTIVAL

A special service was held in the evening of 31st August to mark St Aidan's day.

We were delighted to welcome Revd. Julie Conalty, the vicar of Christ Church, Erith, as our speaker, and also the Mayor and Mayoress of Gravesham and members of other churches.

Refreshments were available afterwards – it was good to renew old acquaintances and to make new ones.

CAMEO'S FIRST GET TOGETHER

Ten of us enjoyed a chat, some laughs and cups of tea and cake at CAMEO's first meeting on 28th August.

It is a good opportunity for those who are at a loose end on the last Thursday afternoon each month to get together – nothing organised – just a very informal couple of hours. Why not come and join us on 30th October and 27th November at 14.00 in the Powerhouse – all welcome.

QUIZ EVENING

We were pleased to welcome nine teams to our annual quiz on 13th September.

'University of the 3rd Age' were the winners and £268 was raised for Church funds. Thank you to all who organised the evening and those who came and brought such a delicious selection of "bring & share" food which was enjoyed during the interval.

BISHOP SAMUEL'S VISIT

It was good to welcome Bishop Samuel with Revd Peter and Angela Rich back to our parish on 30th July.

Bishop Samuel was visiting this country from Tamil Nadu for only a short while, so we were grateful that he found time to come and update us on all the extraordinary things that are happening at the Rhema Garden complex and the missionary work.



Bishop Samuel addresses the congregation

Angela had prepared a very helpful power-point presentation and Bishop Samuel spoke very eloquently and powerfully about the medical care, the Bible College, the missionary pastors and the work being done with educating young people as a result of overseas funding.

Many people at St Aidan's and the Riverview Baptist Fellowship sponsor young people and Bishop Samuel reiterated his thanks for their commitment.

It is impossible, when listening to Bishop Samuel not to be struck by his passion, compassion and vision for the poor of South India, and indeed it is a privilege to be part of God's plans to transform the lives of so many.

Peter is at present writing a book about the life of Bishop Samuel and doubtless he will let us know when it is available. It will challenge us all as we read what it is like to be a Christian who is prepared to stand against persecution, senseless poverty and spiritual darkness in that part of the world.

WELCOME MILAO NGOY

On 1st August at 14.55, Mirjam and Lusa became the proud parents of Milao Lusa Ngoy. His name means 'Promises of Grace' in Kiluba, one of the main languages spoken in DR Congo.

Maisha is delighted to play big sister and is slowly learning that real babies behave differently than dolls. Grand parents, aunts and uncles all descended on the Vicarage to welcome the latest addition to the family. Let's hope that he'll soon get used to all the languages and cultural diversity of the Ngoy and Verhage families.

Maisha, Mirjam and Lusa would like to say a big thank you to all of you for the many cards and generous presents. Milao is definitely a blessed little one.



UPCOMING EVENTS

EVENTS AT ST AIDAN'S

OCTOBER

WED 01/10/2014, 10.15

COFFEE MORNING

Coffee morning with cake stall in the Powerhouse.

SAT 04/10/2014, 19.00

HARVEST SUPPER

The Harvest Supper will be held in the Church & Community Hall. The three course meal will consist of homemade soup, salad with meat and cheese, a selection of desserts, plus tea and coffee. Our "after supper entertainment" will be given by Gary Cordice (West End singer and actor). Tickets priced £5 for adults or £3 for children are available by ringing Mavis on 812330 by Wednesday 1st October. All are welcome.

SUN 05/10/2014, 10.30

HARVEST THANKSGIVING SERVICE

The choir from Riverview Junior School will sing.

WED 08/10/2014, 14:00

AIDAN LADIES

Join us for a quiz afternoon.

WED 15/10/2014, 14:00

CRAFT CLUB

We will be creating Christmas decorations.

SAT 18/10/2014, 10.00-13.00

BOOTFAIR

For further information, please contact Jenny (01474 352253).

THU 30/10/2014, 14.00-16.00

CAMEO (COME AND MEET OTHERS)

Are you at a "loose end" on the last Thursday afternoon of the month? If so, why not COME AND MEET OTHERS for a cup of tea, a piece of cake and a chat at St Aidan's "Powerhouse" between 14.00-16.00. Suggested donation of 50p.

ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

Every Wed during term-time at the Church Hall:
After School Club: 15.30-17.00

COMMUNITY CAFE WITH BREAKFAST

Every Friday in the Powerhouse from 9.00-12.00.

NOVEMBER

SUN 02/11/2014, 16.00

SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING & REMEMBRANCE

The speaker of this annual service will be Mrs. Karen Senior. Karen is the Warden to Lay Ministry in this Diocese of Rochester. All are welcome to attend this service, when the names of those whose funeral services have been conducted by St Aidan's ministry team during the past couple of years will be read. Other names can be added to this list on request.

WED 05/11/2014, 10.15

COFFEE MORNING

Coffee morning with cake stall in the Powerhouse.

WED 12/11/2014, 12.00

AIDAN LADIES

Join us for our bring and share Christmas meal.

WED 19/11/2014, 14:00

CRAFT CLUB

Join us at the Powerhouse.

THU 27/11/2014, 14.00-16.00

CAMEO (COME AND MEET OTHERS)

Join us for a chat and drink at St Aidan's "Powerhouse" between 14.00-16.00. Suggested donation of 50p.

OTHER EVENTS

GRAVESEND

SAT 11/10

Amaze Women's Conference,
Woodville Halls, 11.00-17.00

SUN 30/11

East Gravesend Group Advent
Carol Service, St Andrew's Art
Centre, 16.00

ROCHESTER DIOCESE

SAT 11/10

'It's your calling' day, Christ
Church, Orpington, 10.30-15.30

THU 16/10

Rochester Archdeaconry Day,
St Barnabas, Istead Rise, 9.30-15.30

SAT 15/11

'It's your calling' day, St John's
Centre, Meopham, 9.15-15.45

LIFE EVENTS

BAPTISMS, FUNERALS & WEDDINGS

Baptisms:

17th August 2014

Max Everist
Jessica Evans
Annalise O’Kane
Elisa Morgan

Max Dix
Zachary Spellar

21st September 2014

Georgina Dix
Aimee Dix

Funerals:

1st September 2014

17th September 2014

George Ansell (94)
Rose Louisa Rolls (88)

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

MEET CATHERINE BERRY (45)

For those of you who don't know Catherine Berry, here are a few facts about her life: She was born in Kent but moved to Sussex when she was four years old. She has one sister and two brothers. She met her husband Richard when they both started new jobs for the same employer.



What inspires you in life and why?

The natural world. I love gardening and I still get a thrill from seeing a seed germinate or a plant I have nurtured begin to grow and flower. I also love amazing landscapes and never cease to be inspired by seeing a stormy sea, hills and mountains, rivers and streams or

walking through a forest or woodland.

What's your favourite day of the week and why?

Friday as I know the weekend is not far away!

Eating in or eating out and why?

Both - depending on how I am feeling and how busy my week has been.

What's your favourite season of the year and why?

Spring – I love signs of new growth in the natural world and the days slowly becoming lighter.

What do you do when you cannot sleep?

I read a few pages of a good book and usually fall back to sleep after a while.

Who do you talk to on the phone most often?

My Mum.

What would you change if you were Prime Minister for one day?

I'm not sure where to start!

If you could create anything, what would it be?

A bigger garden.

What does it mean for you to be a Christian?

My faith has helped me deal with a lot of difficulties and challenges in my life. That is not to say I don't have constant questions and dilemmas concerning aspects of faith and life.

I've loved music all my life and I can't imagine not being able to sing - not as a performer but just as something that I need to do that makes me feel 'me'. I thank God for the gift of being able to sing and to make music as it is so important to me. I often find myself singing worship songs and hymns as I am driving to work and going about my everyday life. Singing for me is a way of getting closer to God and a way of praying.

I love my church because...

It is at St. Aidan's that I have been able to learn more about my faith and learn to fully put my trust and hope in God whatever life throws at me.

This has been equally through the teaching by the ministry teams over the years but also by many members of the congregation whose strong faith has inspired and encouraged me.

ASK THE VICAR

HOW DO WE RESPOND TO 'IS'?

Email your question to info@staidangravesend.org



Dear Lusa,

I've been disturbed by some of the news headlines this Summer, especially the brutality of IS in Syria and Iraq. As a Christian, I've obviously been praying for the protection of innocent civilians. How should we as Christians respond to groups such as IS and the horrors they unleash on others? (James, 27)

Dear James,

Like you, I have been saddened and disturbed by news of atrocities committed in Syria and Iraq. Not a day passes when I'm not haunted by images of harassed and helpless civilians fleeing their homes. Like most, I often feel overwhelmed by a sense of powerlessness and wish I could retreat from the brutality that saturates our media outlets.

Is there a Christian response to IS? The first thing I would like to suggest is that there isn't just one Christian response to this or any other difficult question. Responses will vary according to who answers the question. So, my attempt to provide an answer is Christian only because it is routed in my personal experience of faith. I certainly can not claim that it is in any way universally Christian.

This year, we are commemorating the centenary of World War 1, 'the war to end all wars'. When Britain and her allies declared war on Germany in August 1914, there was an exuberant conviction that modern civilization would do away with war. The reality is that one hundred years on, soldiers are still present. Young women and young men continue to die for countless causes. As I write this, there are over fifty conflicts being fought around the world, including in my country of birth, the D.R. Congo. The war to end all wars seems to have engendered innumerable conflicts.

War and the violence that comes with it make me uncomfortable. It disturbs me to the core of my being. But, however much it does, we cannot be indifferent to the suffering of those caught up in its claws. We just cannot ignore them or wish them away. To me, the first step of Christian response to IS or

any other similar group is a call to 'mourn with those who are mourning.' It is about identifying ourselves with those suffering, whether they are Christians or Muslims, Yazidis or Kurds. We have to acknowledge that when their humanity is broken, something of our own suffers too.

As Christians, we are called to become agents of reconciliation. As such, we have to engage in peace making activities that range from advocacy to militant activism, charitable giving or just getting our national leaders to use their influence to give peace a greater chance.

The challenge to me is how do I contribute to bring peace. Many would argue that the only valid response to a problem like IS should be a military one. Although I understand the reasoning behind this argument, it seems to me that it only provides a short-term solution. Recent and past history in the Middle East seems to confirm that. War tends to generate more wars. Violence often gives way to more violence. Perhaps, as Christians we need to rediscover what it means to love our enemies and bless those who persecute us. That takes courage and a deep commitment to engage in acts of radical hospitality.

Finally (and perhaps I should have started there), prayer is certainly not to be neglected. When I pray about these situations, I tend to use prayer not so much as an attempt to change the heart of God, but I pray so that I may be changed. I pray that my life may be lived in such a way that I may not cause harm to others. I pray that all that I do may contribute to bring peace and wholeness to our world.

Peace and love, Lusa

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SHOW LOVE

IN A COMMAND FOUND IN
NO OTHER RELIGION,
JESUS BIDS US SHOW LOVE
NOT ONLY TO STRANGERS
AND SINNERS
BUT ALSO TO OUR OUTRIGHT ADVERSARIES.

Philip Yancey, Vanishing Grace





OUR MISSION

To share God's love in the community.

OUR VISION

As a church we want to develop relationships that demonstrate the love of God.

We aim to be a multi-ethnic, multi-generational, mission-shaped church that loves God completely, ourselves correctly and the neighbour compassionately.



St Aidan's Way
Gravesend
Kent, DA12 4AG

www.staidangravesend.org
info@staidangravesend.org

Registered Charity No 1130169

OUR SUNDAY SERVICES

1st	10.30	All Age Communion Service
2nd	9.30	Communion Service & Sunday School
3rd	9.30	Communion Service & Sunday School
	18.30	Joint Service with Riverview Baptists at the Christopher Centre
4th	9.30	Communion Service & Sunday School
5th	9.30	Communion Service with Prayer for Healing & Sunday School

God's Love Ignites - God's Love Unites