

THE VIRGER

The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers

Summer 2025 | Issue 327



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The Ven Dr David Jenkins, National Chaplain writes...

Dear Sisters and Brothers

I am writing this in the Octave of Easter. As a Bishop's staff we have been reflecting on a wonderful Holy Week and Easter across the diocese here. Our churches were well-attended, and the weather was great! There is much to give thanks for. I preached on Easter Sunday in a small Suffolk country church to over 80 people of all ages. I am happy to say the sermon appears to have been well-received!

That said the first Christian sermon ever preached was not well received. Indeed, it was not even believed. As per divine instruction, the women told what they had seen (and had not seen) at the tomb and they shared the message of the angels, "He is risen! Remember what he told you?" But the male congregation who heard this message most certainly did not remember. They thought the women were making it all up, were full of nonsense, were telling idle tales, were delirious. So that first Easter morning, no one greeted the news that God had raised Jesus from the grave and defeated death and evil, with shouts of "Hallelujah, Praise God, Christ is Risen, Shout Hosanna." Absolutely no one, upon hearing the news that death itself could not hold the Lord of Glory captive, said, "I knew it, this is just like he told us it would be!" The women were perplexed and terrified and the men thought the women were nuts.

Easter is perplexing, and believing in the resurrection is challenging, isn't it? We have never seen or experienced anything like it. We have always been told that there are two things you can be sure of in life: death and taxes. We know taxes and we know death – it is all around us. We have

watched plants, animals and people die. But if the dead don't stay dead, what can you count on? So, who can blame the disciples? There were good reasons for the women to be cautious, perplexed, and even frightened. There were good reasons for the men to be unbelieving. Resurrection breaks all the rules, and while most of us will admit that the rules aren't perfect at least we know what they are. They are predictable and scientific, a known quantity, and in that sense, comforting.

Resurrection upsets all of that. Resurrection throws us off the balance, rocks the boat, upsets the apple cart, and generally turns our neat and orderly lives totally upside down. So, if you don't find resurrection at least a little hard to believe, you probably aren't taking it very seriously! Resurrection faith came slowly to most of the disciples. But when it came, it changed everything.

And of course we do remember. The church remembers every time a priest presides at the eucharist (often accompanied by their trusty verger!). The church remembers every year through its Easter mysteries. Each of us testifies to that moment of existential revelation by our lives of faith and service. Every lesson, every sermon, every hymn, every prayer begins by remembering, remembering what God has done through Christ Jesus.

Many of you (all of you?) will have been part of this remembering this Easter. You will have borne the heat of the day...and the evening and the night! You will have given of your time, energy, and love. You will have verged, served, cleaned, polished and scrubbed. You will have moved furniture, then moved it again, and then put it back where it came from in the first place. You will have borne the brunt of others' anxiety and stress. You will have supported and comforted your clergy. You will have stood at the foot of the cross. You may even have wept.

For all this I thank you in the name of the church and may the joy of the resurrected Jesus touch each and every one of you. Hopefully I will see many of you at the conference in West Malvern in August. Until then every blessing.

Yours in Christ

Venerable Dr David Jenkins

National Chaplain to the Guild of Vergers

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From the desk of the Chairman

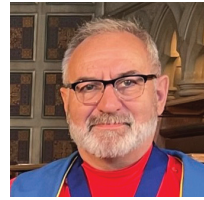
As we reflect on this season of renewal and hope, Easter reminds us of the triumph of life over death, light over darkness. This year, however, our celebrations are tinged with sorrow as we mourn the passing of Pope Francis. His leadership and unwavering commitment to compassion and justice have left an indelible mark on the world. As we journey through the Forty Days leading to Ascension Day, we are reminded of the promise of faith and the enduring legacy of those who dedicate their lives to service.

As Eastertide gives way to Pentecost, we find ourselves in a season of renewal, hope, and celebration. It is a time to reflect on the profound joy of the Resurrection and the gifts bestowed upon us by the Holy Spirit, guiding us in faith and fellowship.

This year has also brought a significant change within the worldwide Church, with the sad loss of Pope Francis. As I write this letter, the date has just been announced for the start of Conclave, the process that is carried out for the appointment of a new Pope. We offer our prayers for the new Pope, his ministry, wisdom, and leadership, trusting that he will steer the Roman Catholic Church with grace and humility in the years ahead.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all Guild officers for their unwavering dedication and hard work. Your efforts are the backbone of our community, ensuring that our shared mission thrives and that the voices of the faithful are uplifted.

Looking ahead, we are preparing for our Annual Training Conference and Retreat. I look forward to welcoming as many of you as possible this year. Booking forms are still available and also if you require a bursary, please contact our National Chaplain. This year we are thrilled to welcome speakers who are focusing on the Ministry of Music, including the esteemed



Sir John Rutter. His contributions to sacred and choral music have inspired generations, and we are honoured to have him share his insights with us.

None of this would be possible without the tireless efforts of those who work behind the scenes, in their own time, to ensure the success of our gathering. To each of you, thank you. Your dedication and generosity make all the difference, especially as you all have full time commitments in our busy churches and cathedrals.

Let us continue to journey together in faith, united in service and love, as we uphold the traditions and values that define us as Vergers. May the season ahead bring blessings and joy to each of you.

John Kirby Shearer

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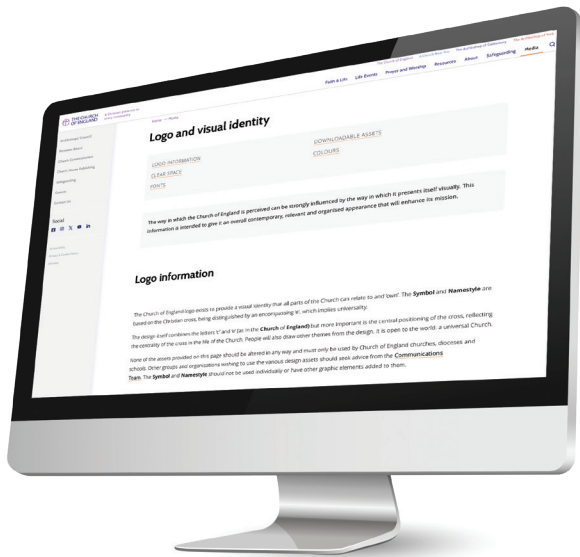
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Executive Committee Round-Up

The Executive Committee met in March at the Southwark Diocesan Offices, London



During this meeting we reviewed our Safeguarding Policy, Expenses Policy and our Data Protection Policy, all of these were approved and are now available on the Guild Website.

We reported that we have now introduced, as was approved at the last Executive Meeting, that each member of the Guild now receives as part of their Membership Fees the Guild Magazine, we have made concessions where there are more than one member per household. We are passionate about the production of the Virger Magazine and believe that this should be our mouth piece of the Guild – but to do this we need your input, we need articles about what you get up to as a Verger, some ideas of what you do as a Branch or Group, how you deal with those ‘accidents’ that always crop up in our ministry. As we have said before we want the Magazine to be forward facing not always retrospective. The Magazine is sent out to all members, all Diocesan Bishops and all Church of England Training Houses.

Changes to Branch make ups were discussed at the meeting where we noted that so far about three Branches have changed to become a Group.

A question was raised at one of the Way Ahead Group Meetings as to the use of the Church of England’s Logo and if we were able to use it. We were pleased to report that the Digital Team of the CofE have confirmed that we can use it in line with their published usage (<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/logo-and-visual-identity>)

We are beginning to look at the Guild Archives, as a lot of material has been kept from the start of the Guild, some of it useful and informative, some not so. We are looking at what we should keep and how we do this.

“The Magazine is sent out to all members, all Diocesan Bishops and all Church of England Training Houses”



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Cantuar Festival Lite 2025



Following the very successful Cantuar Festivals in 2024 at Sheffield and St Georges Windsor. I feel it very disappointing that we haven't had any offers for a Spring venue for 2025 as yet. As Midland Regional Representative I was talking to the Lichfield team at Windsor, two longstanding members and two new vergers who are not yet admitted to the guild are very interested in the activities of the Guild and are hopping to attend Malvern in August. Katherine Sargent has recently been appointed Head Verger and is also very keen that her team are actively involved in the Guilds events, and recently visited Leicester Cathedral for a day out it was at this occasion I mentioned about the Festival lite held twice a year and that this year we were struggling to get venues.

Katherine then came back to me offering Lichfield as a venue but said they needed help in organising it and as I have already organised a festival at Leicester a few years back I offered to organise it with her.

Outcome

Cantuar Festival Lite 2025

Thursday 2nd October 2025

At Lichfield Cathedral Staffordshire

As advertised in The Verger issue 326 Spring 2025 Save the Date

Lichfield's history shines through its mediaeval Cathedral and the pilgrimage site of St Chad's shrine. It is the birthplace of Samuel Johnson creator of the pioneering English dictionary. The Cathedral close, its cobbled streets, Georgian architecture and a lively market, create Lichfield a Picturesque English Gem to explore.

Transport Access

Easy access from North and South Provinces

RAIL to Birmingham New Street to Trent Vally change for Lichfield City 15mins walk to Cathedral

ROAD Birmingham M6 Junction 14 A38 Lichfield.

PARKING at Long Stay Sandford Street SW13 6TU

Proposed Programme Timetable,

Arrival

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 10—10.30 | The Old Stable Rooms (our base for the day) Refreshments available on arrival Tea, Coffee and Biscuits. |
| 10.45 | Welcome from Cathedral Clergy and Head Verger. |
| 11.00 | Tour 1 Tour of Cathedral with Guide two groups Tour 2 Tower and Roof with Guide. |
| 12.30 | Lunchtime Eucharist at the Shrine of St Chad, |
| 13.15 | Lunchtime Option of lunch in Old Stable Room @£12.00 or Find own in Town. |
| 14.00—15.00 | Free time to discover Lichfield. |
| 15.00 | Exhibition's in the Chapter House and Behind the Scenes Sacristy and Treasury. |
| 16.00 | Tea & Cakes, gathering around The Table of the Nation 13m Bog Oak Table |
| 17.00 | Guild Photo |
| 17.30 | Choral Evensong vergers not robed |
| 18.30 | End of an enjoyable day together. |

Lichfield have offered to host the cost of the day to include Drinks and Cakes along with Guided tours

The Cathedral Catering Co are willing to offer Lunch in the Old Stable Rooms at a cost of £12 per person for a hot Meal on the lines of a Tray bake pasta dish with suitable accompaniments with a Vegan/ Vegetarian alternative. We are awaiting a suggested menu.

Alternatively there are a great range of places around to find own lunch in Town.

Accommodation

Near by Hotels

The Cathedral Lodge Hotel (no connection with the Cathedral) but have arranged a special discounted room rate. It is close to the Cathedral but a 15 min walk to the Town Centre.

The George (Best Western) in town centre a 15 min walk to Cathedral

Premier Lodge Hotel is also 15mins to Cathedral

All Hotels have Parking.

In a conversation with John we propose the following costs for the Day

| | |
|----------|---------|
| Photo | £ 5.00 |
| Meal | £ 12.00 |
| Donation | £ 8.00 |
| ----- | |
| | £25.00 |

I will have a full page in the Summer Verger giving full details of the Lichfield Festival Lite and a separate booking form. At Conference I will have a display board giving all the details.

Les Mitchelmore
Midlands Regional Rep.

Forthcoming Elections

The following elections are to be held at the Guild's AGM at 10.30am on Monday 4 August 2025. All Full members of the Guild are welcome to vote, whereas Associate members are welcome to attend and have a voice but are not entitled to vote. Should you wish to cast an absentee vote, this can be done only in writing stipulating the following:

- Position you are voting for
- Your name – your details will be redacted but this information is requisite to ensure a fair voting system
- Your Branch/Group
- That you are a Full member
- And your Vote – either for a nominated person or for RON – RON stands for Re-Open Nomination

These must be received by Monday 21 July 2025 with the General Secretary – please contact the General Secretary **CEGVGenSec@gmail.com** (details on the back page) for a postal address.

The positions for election are:

- Welfare Officer. This is a three-year term of office, open to all members.
- National Membership Officer. This is a three-year term of office, open to all members.
- Training Officer. This is a three-year term of office, open to all Full members.
- Conference Secretary. This is a three-year term of office, open to all members.

The following role, which is an appointment, is due for renewal or new appointment.

- Guild Chronicler. This is a three-year appointment open to all members.

Completed and correct nominations have been received from:

For Welfare Officer

Dee Caulton-Ball



I have been an active member of the Guild since joining in 1998 when a volunteer verger in Birmingham Cathedral. I have been privileged to have served the Guild in a number of roles including Branch Chair, and for 8 years Area Leader, for Birmingham Lichfield and Coventry and later Branch Chair of Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester. I also served for 6 years as the National Liaison Officer during which I was able to establish the Guild as a regular exhibitor at General Synod meetings in both London and York.

My interest has always been primarily in pastoral care. Before becoming a verger I trained as a nurse working in hospitals, domiciliary care and a dental practice. Later on I moved from Birmingham to become a paid verger in Oxford where I experienced at first hand the importance of the role of the Guild Welfare Officer. As the victim of a continued bullying campaign, I was only sustained by the advice and support of the then Welfare Officer, Michael Golby. From Oxford I moved to life as a religious, becoming a novice in the Convent of the Holy Name and serving as a regular member of the pastoral team in Derby Cathedral nearby. For family reasons I had to leave the Convent and was fortunate to become a full-time verger in a city centre church in the Jewellery Quarter of Birmingham where part of the role was providing pastoral care to the surrounding industrial area.

I then undertook full time study for a theology diploma, combining it with a voluntary role as Beadle in the local parish church and continuing as a Visitors Chaplain at Birmingham Cathedral. As part of the course I had a placement in the

chaplaincy of a hospice which I found immensely rewarding and reinforced my commitment to pastoral care. I am also a practising Spiritual Director and so very aware of the need for absolute discretion. In my current, very rural, parish where, as churchwarden, I do all the duties the verger would do if we had one, I founded a carers' group which met regularly to provide pastoral care to the carers themselves who are often forgotten. I also serve as a Day Chaplain at Hereford Cathedral (one day a month) looking after both staff and visitors.

On a more personal note I am married (to Andrew Page a former National Treasurer of the Guild) and we live in the depths of rural Herefordshire. I have a passion for ecclesiastical embroidery, reading and music.

I know from my own experience that the Welfare Officer can be a very present help in time of trouble and, if elected, I would aim to be that for every member of the Guild who needed help or just a sympathetic ear.



Ben Elliott-Hill

Having been a verger for over a decade (just under two years at St. Edmundsbury Cathedral, and 11 years at Sheffield Cathedral), and a Guild member for a similar amount of time (Ipswich Branch, as was, and York Branch) I have experienced what would cause a fellow professional to seek pastoral care, prayer, support and welfare.

When I am not working I like to travel around the country and, if I visit another cathedral, or a church where there is one, I make a point of engaging with the vergers (as long as they aren't too busy) and experiencing what it is like for them, not just to see how their workplace compares to where I work, but also to help me to understand the pressures they face, and any support and advice they might need. I also speak to others over Messenger if they wish to offload.

Praying for others is another important factor in my life, and it's something I try and do daily, including praying for those on the Guild's Intercession list, both at a Branch, and National level (as listed in the magazine). The worship of the Church is, for me, the most important aspect of my role as a verger (I was given the unique position of Liturgical Verger back in June 2021) and I am part of the worshipping community not only at Sheffield Cathedral, where I work, but in a number of other churches in the diocese and beyond, so I am used to praying for people who I do not know, as well as those I do.

All in all I feel that these aspects that I have mentioned can be best summed up in the following objectives of the Guild:

- Promoting the spiritual nature of the Vergers' Vocation through Christian fellowship and spiritual guidance for all its members.
- Providing support and encouragement to the membership in all aspects of their duties whatever they may be and wherever performed.
- Advising, upon request, and making recommendations as to terms of employment and welfare of any Member.
- Recording the gamut of work undertaken by Vergers; and taking account of each Member's training, experience and qualifications.

For Conference Secretary

Denise Mead



I have been a member of the Guild of Vergers since 1996. At first, I wasn't a stalwart of attending the Guild's Annual Training Conference & Retreat, nor the one-day festivals, if truth be told. I am a bit of a work-a-holic however, through my great friendship with the late Stephen Haude & Irene Money (we were known as the three musketeers), I attended my first conference in 2008 and haven't looked back since. I also now try to attend as many festivals as working full time permits.

I have also been a regular supporter of the VGEC Conference since 2013 until coronavirus hit, and now, what with prohibitive costs and no conference hotel, Irene and I have not attended recently and sadly cannot see ourselves returning in the very near future either.

For my sins, I am Secretary of the London, Southwark & Chelmsford Branch and a previous Chair.

In the past I have held the role of National Liaison Officer & Headquarters Membership Officer and I have been the National Conference Secretary since 2022. If it's your first conference you will be greeted by me on arrival at the conference centre in Malvern and be shown to your room.

I am very fortunate in that I am supported in both my church work and my Guild membership by my wonderful husband, Melvyn and, that my church is fully supportive of my roles within the Guild, except, of course, when it comes to paying for me.

I have a married daughter, two married step-children, four boisterous grandchildren and numerous God-children, all, who keep me grounded.

I am retiring from my full-time role as Verger & Parish Administrator at Christmas 2025 but need to find somewhere to live before then – watch this space.

This Year's Annual Training Conference and Retreat

THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC

Monday 4 – Thursday 7 August

Monday 4 — Session I

Sir Dr John Rutter – Composer, musician

John Rutter was born in London and studied music at Clare College, Cambridge. He first came to notice as a composer during his student years; much of his early work consisted of church music and other choral pieces including Christmas carols. From 1975–79 he was Director of Music at his *alma mater*, Clare College, and directed the college chapel choir in various recordings and broadcasts. Since 1979 he has divided his time between composition and conducting. Today his compositions, including such concert-length works as *Requiem*, *Magnificat*, *Mass of the Children*, *The Gift of Life*, and *Visions* are performed around the world. His music has featured in a number of British royal occasions, including the two most recent royal weddings. He edits the Oxford Choral Classics series, and, with Sir David Willcocks, co-edited four volumes of *Carols for Choirs*. In 1983 he formed his own choir the Cambridge Singers, with whom he has made numerous recordings, and he appears regularly in several countries as guest conductor and choral ambassador. He holds a Lambeth Doctorate in Music, and in 2007 was awarded a CBE for services to music. In September 2023, he received the Ivors Academy Fellowship, joining a prestigious list of 24 Fellows including John Adams, Pierre Boulez CBE, Kate Bush CBE and Sir Elton John.

In 1988 he became a fellow of the Guild of Church Musicians. In 1996 the Archbishop of Canterbury conferred a Lambeth Doctorate of Music upon him in recognition of his contribution to church music. In 2008 he also became an honorary Bencher of the Middle Temple while playing a significant role in the 2008 Temple Festival. John Rutter was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2007 New Year Honours and knighted in the 2024 Birthday Honours, both for services to music.



Tuesday 5 — Session II

David Waters – Series Producer, BBC Songs of Praise

David is an experienced programme maker with over 20 years' experience in television both within the BBC and in the independent sector, working on a diverse range of programmes for BBC 1, 2, 4, CBBC and Cbeebies. Outside of his day job he is an experienced public speaker, Local Preacher, regular radio broadcaster and creative writer... and most importantly is the proud husband of Elizabeth and Dad to 4 boys!

David is currently Producer/Director on the long running BBC1 programme *Songs of Praise* in the production team within Avanti and NineLives. He continues to enjoy putting good news stories and top quality inspirational music on TV and it's fabulous to work with a great team and great talent on screen including Katherine Jenkins, Aled Jones, Sean Fletcher and The Rev'd Kate Bottley. As a leader with infectious enthusiasm and as a creative programme-maker, he is proud of the impact he has made on all the teams he has worked in.



Tuesday 5 — Session III

The Rev'd Canon Philip Banks – Precentor, St Paul's Cathedral

Philip is Chair of the National Precentors' Network and joins St Paul's from St Edmundsbury Cathedral in Suffolk where he has been Residentiary Canon and Precentor for over 12 years.

During his time at the Cathedral, he has led and overseen the establishment of girl choristers, a graduate and post-graduate organ scholar programme and the Cathedral's 'Singing in Schools' initiative. Coupled with this, he has helped arrange a weekly all-ages service, which brings in young children all the way through to octogenarians.



Prior to this role, Philip served as Bishop's Chaplain and Press Officer in Essex. He has been ordained for 30 years, serving in a variety of parochial roles and as Area Dean. Before ordination Philip had a career as a Chartered Surveyor.

The Revd Canon Philip Banks commented: 'Cathedrals are extraordinary places of encounter, speaking of God's transcendent presence in stone, wood and glass. They are also communities of living stones, journeying together to the Kingdom. It is my privilege to be appointed to serve as a Residentiary Canon at St Paul's, unique amongst Cathedrals, and to have a hand in shaping the worship of the Cathedral as it seeks to serve the Diocese, city and nation, and its role as an international icon of Christ's inclusive heart of love.'

'Having established girl choristers in St Edmundsbury Cathedral, I am delighted that on Sunday St Paul's welcomed girls' voices into their Cathedral Choir for the first time. I look forward to seeing them flourish and supporting further work like this at the Cathedral.'

Wednesday 6 — Session IV

Stuart Freed – Chairman, Elgar Society

Stuart Freed is a retired Technology teacher, who spent some thirty years in the classroom. He has been a member of the Elgar Society for some 35 years during which time he has served a Chairman of the Southern Branch, Society Council member, Vice-Chairman and, since 2021, Chairman of the Society.



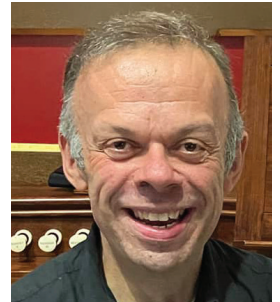
He is an experienced speaker on the life and music of Edward Elgar, giving talks on various facets of his life and music to a variety of audiences both within the Society and to outside groups such as PROBUS, the WI and other bodies. He also speaks locally on Jazz.

Stuart lives in Worcester with his wife Jan and a grumpy cat.

Wednesday 6 — Session V

Andrew Kirk – Organist

Andrew is a freelance organist, accompanist, choral director and composer working mainly in the Bristol and North Somerset area. He is an occasional accompanist for various choral societies, community and church choirs. He is Director of Henbury Singers, a chamber choir of 20 singers. For five months in 2024, he held the position as Interim Director of Music at Cirencester Parish Church. In Autumn 2024 Andrew was appointed Director of Good Afternoon Choirs in North Somerset and Chepstow.



From 2003-2023, he held the position of Director of Music and Organist at St Mary Redcliffe Church, Bristol, where he had responsibility for directing several choirs at the church and regularly gave concerts on the famous 1912 Harrison and Harrison organ. In the past year, his organ concerts have included St David's Cathedral, St Chad's Cathedral, Tewkesbury Abbey, Christchurch Priory, Albert Hall Nottingham and Brangwyn Hall Swansea.

From 1994-2003 he was Director of Music at St John's Church, Ranmoor, Sheffield. He also taught class music at three secondary schools, including Lady Manners School, Bakewell. He has been an external consultant for the appointment of Directors of Music in some of the larger churches in the UK.

Born and educated in Leicester, he won an Organ Scholarship to Pembroke College, Oxford where he studied organ with David Sanger. He spent two years in Western Australia as Assistant Organist at St George's Anglican Cathedral in Perth. He holds the FRCO Diploma, gaining the Turpin and Durrant prizes for organ playing.

Do not miss out on this fantastic line up, Book now.

The booking form is enclosed with this magazine and is also available on the Guild Website. For further details, please contact the Conference Secretary,
CEGVConference@gmail.com

Welcome to our Summer Edition!

As I finish editing this issue, just before it is sent off for design, our brothers in Christ in the Roman Catholic Church are preparing for a period, both solemn and momentous: the Conclave—the election of a new Bishop of Rome, Vicar of Christ, and, until the 19th century, the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.

Meanwhile, within the Church of England, we, too, are discerning the appointment of our next spiritual leader—the Archbishop of Canterbury. This selection, undertaken through prayer, consultation, and thoughtful listening to the Church's communicants, may lead—perhaps for the first time—to a woman being appointed to the role. Yet, as in any such appointment, there will be differing opinions: some will see the choice as inspired, others may not.

Why speak of leadership selection at all? Well, I was once a pupil at a Roman Catholic school. When Pope John Paul II died, I visited my old friend Father Brendon, a wise priest nearing retirement. We sat together over coffee in the local Roman Catholic church, reflecting on the challenges the next pope might face and the qualities we hoped to see in his successor.

As we considered the questions stirring the Vatican then—and still relevant now—I realised how significant and spiritually weighty such moments are. The Church of England had recently gone through a similar process. The selection of a pope is unlike any other; although modern conclaves are shorter than the longest in history (which lasted an astonishing 1005 days), they remain closed, deeply prayerful affairs—free from external influence or coercion.

That evening, we knelt together at the communion rail of St Mary's Roman Catholic Church and prayed—prayed for the Spirit of Christ to guide a world mourning a monumental figure, a pope who had stood firmly against communism. On the first day of the conclave in 2005, I returned, and again we knelt and prayed. Father Brendon expressed his hope that the cardinals would choose someone strong, just, and faithful—not only to serve the Roman Catholic Church but to act as a moral beacon for all of Christianity and indeed, all faiths. In Pope Benedict XVI, I believe, that prayer was answered.

This year, as both the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church seek new leaders, we must pray again—fervently—for strength, wisdom, and courage in those who are chosen. Leaders who will bind up the wounds of the broken-hearted, speak truth in a divided world, and carry forward the message of Christ with unwavering faith.

Jason Stevenson
Media Officer

The cover photograph captures a moment of deep symbolism and hope: Pope Francis opening the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica on Christmas Eve 2024. Surrounded by sacred imagery and the rich heritage of the Church, this act marks the beginning of a new chapter in the life of the Church—an invitation to enter into renewal, mercy, and spiritual rebirth.



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How should you do this....Submissions for all editions of The Virger should reach me before the set deadline. If they miss this date, they may be held over to the next edition. All articles should be sent in MS Word files only and photographs in JPEG format. Please attach text and image files separately in one email.



A Prayer for Church Leadership

Lord of all wisdom,
Guide your Church in this time of discernment.
Raise up leaders of faith and compassion,
Who will serve with courage, humility, and love.
May their path be lit by your Spirit,
Their hearts open to your call,
And their hands ready to heal and unite.
May we walk into a season of grace and renewal.
In Christ's name,
Amen.



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East Anglia Branch

Members of the branch met for our AGM at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, where we were delighted to induct five new members to the guild at Choral Evensong. Three members from St Edmundsbury Cathedral and two from Ipswich Minster. A drinks reception followed which was a great experience mingling with new and current members. We're in a strong position as a branch, with twenty-nine members on board. We now look forward to our annual branch BBQ which will take place in July, put on by our Branch Chaplains.



James Stark,
East Anglia Branch Secretary

London, Southwark & Chelmsford AGM

We met for our AGM on Tuesday 25th March at Chelsea Old Church. After much phoning and emailing to other local churches, I successfully managed to find clergy cover in the form of Fr Matthew Catterick, the Vicar of St Saviour's Pimlico who kindly celebrated the Holy Communion for us. Fr Max, the Vicar of Chelsea Old Church, being unable to be present gave his blessing to us the church.

Following the service, the AGM took place in the Lawrence Chapel and Irene Money, our Chair, Denise Mead, our Secretary, Chris Watson, our Treasurer and myself were all re-elected for a further year.

Thanks go to Fr Matthew for presiding and Penny Pocock from Chelsea Old



Church for unlocking the church and giving us access to the vestry and silverware and for returning to lock up afterwards.

By the way, I am writing this report at Heathrow Airport as I am just on my way to Switzerland for a family skiing holiday.

I look forward to seeing you in August for the Annual Training Conference & Retreat in the Malvern Hills.

Oliver Marcus,
Branch Correspondent

PRAYER REQUESTS

If you know of someone for whom prayers would be of benefit, or someone who has been prayed for and has recovered shown improvement, please inform the

National Chaplain or the
National Welfare Officer.

Blackburn, Chester and Manchester
Freda Murphy, Anne Woodward

Oxford
Michael Golby, Audrey Ashby,
Heather Ringrose, Thelma French, Molly Payne

Chichester, Guildford and Portsmouth
Sue Ansell

St Albans
Jackie Rudom

HQ Member
Marek Barden, Chris Eynon, Roger Lawrence,
Barbara Taylor

London, Southwark and Chelmsford
Gordon Leonard, Arnel and Ian Solarno

York Branch
Alan Gardner

For those who have died

Ivor Peacock- Lincoln and Southwell branch

**And all people facing hardship and difficulties
and who are facing uncertainties.**

**And everyone not specifically mentioned who needs
the love, counsel and grace of
our Lord.**



Holy Name Embroidery

New Commissions, Restoration,

Conservation,

Repairs etc... Undertaken

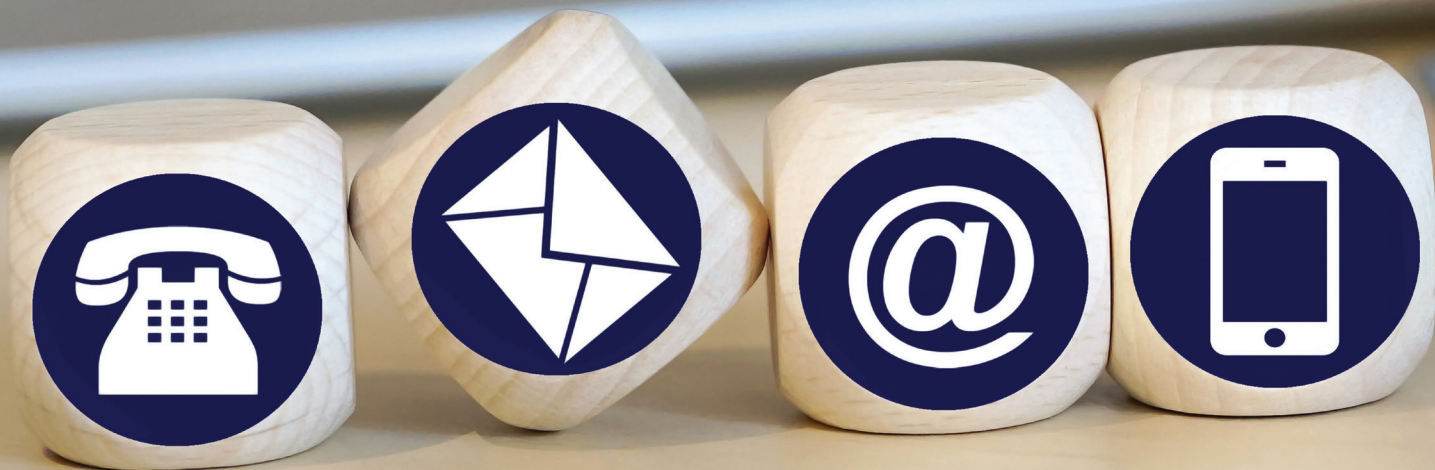
Welsh Marches Based

Dee Caulton-Ball

Ecclesiastical Embroiderer

Tel: 01547 540206 or 07890 514888

E-Mail: deecb@hotmail.com



NATIONAL CONTACTS

National Chairman

Mr John Kirby-Shearer,
MA, Dip GV (Honoris), FCEGV
Mobile: 07891 168133
email: CEGVNatChair@gmail.com

General Secretary

Mr Stephen Stokes,
Dip GV (Hons), FCEGV
Mobile: 07968 111240
email: CEGVGenSec@gmail.com

National Treasurer

Mr Robert Beattie, MA
Tel: 01905 619429
Mobile: 07968 290319
email: CEGVNatTreas@gmail.com

National Chaplain

The Ven. Dr David Jenkins
FRHistS
Mobile: 07900 990073
email: CEGVNatChap@gmail.com

Training Officer

VACANT
Mobile: 07891 168133
email: CEGVTrainOff@gmail.com

Conference Secretary

Mrs Denise Mead
Mobile: 07957 149005
Tel: 020 8688 8104 (Work)
email: CEGVConference@gmail.com

Training Administrator

Mrs Susan Ansell, Dip GV
Tel: 01483 548980
email: CEGVTrainReg@gmail.com

Media Officer

Mr Jason Stevenson
Mobile: 07702 564910
email: CEGVMedia@gmail.com

Welfare Officer

Mrs Irene Money, MBE, Dip GV, FCEGV
Tel: 020 8807 0232
email: CEGVWelfare@gmail.com

Overseas Membership Officer

Mr Charles Maggs, Dip GV
email: CEGVOverseas@gmail.com

National Membership Officer

Mr Andrew Wynn-Mackenzie, Dip GV
email: CEGVMembership@gmail.com

Shop Manager

Mr Geoff Izzard
Mobile: 07789 644000
email: CEGVGuildShop@gmail.com

Mailing Address

Mr Stephen Stokes, Dip GV (Hons), FCEGV
General Secretary
The Church of England Guild of Vergers
124 City Road
London
EC1V 2NX

The Guild Prayer

Almighty Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named,
who has called us into the fellowship of your Church,
grant, we pray, that in all our churches we may fulfil the duties
and enjoy the privileges of our spiritual home.
And on those who offer themselves for service as vergers in the house of God
bestow the fullness of your grace,
that, united in love to you and to one another,
we may show forth your glory and hasten the coming of your kingdom.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



www.cofegv.org.uk



Find us on

<http://bit.ly/CofEGV>