

SEP-OCT
2026

Somerset & Mowbray Roads, New Barnet, Herts., EN5 1RH

The Burning Bush

No doubt we are all desperate not to see any more images of burning vegetation and trees following a summer of intense heat and wildfires which ravaged huge swathes of Europe.

This burning bush however is different. It comes in the story of Moses in the Bible: '...the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed.' Moses says, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' Exodus 3: 2-3. This incident happened while Moses was tending his flock of sheep, he having become a shepherd after fleeing Egypt forty years earlier.



Photo by Mahyar Motebassem on Unsplash

It may be unsurprising to discover a bush alight in hot and dusty terrain such as that of the Holy Land, but the strange thing is that the bush is not being consumed by the flames — a phenomenon that anyone would be eager to investigate. 🐏

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Trusting God by:

Walking the way of Jesus
Putting faith into practice
Valuing all people equally

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But what is God's purpose in all this? Almost certainly to get Moses' attention — and get his attention he most certainly does. This is the moment when God tells Moses that he is the one destined to bring his people out of Egypt. But not alone! God says, 'I will be with you.'



A photographer captures nature's version of the biblical Burning Bush. The picture was captured at Kalmthoutse Heide Nature Reserve, a cross-border reserve on the Belgian-Dutch border, by Dutch photographer, Teus Renes.

CREDIT: Teus Renes / Caters News

Have you ever thought that God was trying to get your attention through something that has happened in your life?

One of the former Archbishops of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, has famously said that the role of the Church is a simple one: *to see what God is up to and join in*. To do that, however, we need to find time to pray and listen. Are we so busy getting on with our daily lives and the demands the local church makes on us that we fail to notice the presence and actions of God, or pause long enough to pay attention?

Moses stopped long enough to encounter God and to become part of his purposes. May we too stop and pay attention to what God is doing, and then *join in*.

Editors

TONY ALDERMAN

It is with huge sadness that we report the death of our friend, elder and former Church Secretary, Tony Alderman. He died in Barnet Hospital on Friday 14th August after such a long battle with a variety of health issues. Known all over the area for his preaching, and his involvement in local charities, he has continued to amaze and inspire us, determinedly attending worship until just a couple of weeks before he died, taking no less interest in church affairs and sharing a joke as always! We mourn his loss with heavy hearts but rejoice to know that, for him, the limitations of illness and pain are over and eternity has begun. Alison reminded us to reflect on our memories with gratitude, and to remember his wife Myra and all the family in our prayers. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

A Service of Thanksgiving for his life will take place on Thursday 10th September at 2pm.

A full obituary will appear in the next Church Record.

Editors

Thank you, Lesley ...

On Sunday 9th August we said goodbye to a dear friend when we wished Lesley Calder every blessing as she and Tom move to Norfolk. Lesley has been a member for forty years (and we hope to still see her from time to time, on Zoom, as she settles into her new home!)

Her roles and responsibilities during that time took Alison some time to describe; she has been an elder, a door steward, and a member of the Finance and Management Team. She played a key role in obtaining the new manse and assisted with the implementation of the new Hirers' Agreement. Alison reflected on Lesley's involvement in the Toddler Group, in leading worship, in pastoral care, in flower arranging (with flowers from her allotment) and on the Sunday coffee rota.

Through her commitment to the Justice and Peace Group she worked with Homeless Action in Barnet and the Together in Barnet Night Shelter, not only as Coordinator for twelve years (no mean feat according to Andrew Summers, who stood in for her the year she took a break!) but also as one who would always fill in a gap, even when it meant hosting the evening session, doing the night shift and cooking the breakfast. She has also promoted the Foodbank, Barnet Refugees ("New Citizen's Gateway", to whom our Christmas gifts are donated) and the white poppies for Remembrance Sunday.



We are delighted that Lesley is off on a new adventure but we will miss her so much. A card was presented to her at the service, as a token of our love and appreciation of much faithful service.

Editors

FILM NIGHT JULY 2026

Thank you to all those who came along to see *Bank of Dave* on Wednesday 29th July. The film is a feel-good comedy-drama, based on a true story, about a man's determination to take on the big banks in order to be able to provide ethical finance within his community. The real Dave received an OBE this year, for services to finance, business and charity. About forty people had a lovely evening together, watching the film and enjoying cold drinks and cinema snacks, and £849.05 was raised for the Good Samaritan School for the Deaf, Uganda. Thanks also to those who donated even though they were unable to attend, and to those who enabled the event to take place, especially Paul Elsdon who tracked down the DVD from a considerable distance!

Feedback is welcome: if you have ideas for future film nights, do pass them on!

Editors

Cultivating Community: A Volunteer's Perspective

Community gardening is part of a global movement towards sustainable cities, food resilience and social connection, but it is not new. It has its roots in the common land of mediaeval times. There was a resurgence of interest during the world wars and then, more recently, in the Covid pandemic, when the need for local, fresh food became acute, and people looked out for each other. My first encounter with community gardens was three years ago when a friend took me to the vicarage garden at St James, New Barnet: a huge space at the back of an Edwardian villa, where you could imagine troops of bygone vicars' children roaming wild.

Over the following two years, we grew potatoes, brassicas, tomatoes, garlic, onions, rhubarb, strawberries, carrots, spinach, beans and peas, sweetcorn, courgettes and squashes, salads and herbs, as well as sunflowers and fruit bushes. Apple and cherry plum trees were already there, yielding fruit in the autumn, and blackberries from the brambles left around the edges.

The produce was brought to St James's Church on Wednesday mornings during an open café and Citizens' Advice session, and people happily helped themselves.



Early last year, everything changed. The incumbent vicar moved and the house was rented out, prior to the whole site being sold for housing development.

Then came a new opportunity. The vicarage garden backs on to East Barnet Victoria Park and the Bowls Club within it. Following negotiations between the Council, which owns the site, the Bowls Club and ourselves, it was agreed that it would be mutually beneficial if we developed the neglected Bowls Club garden into a community garden.

It was easy to transport fruit bushes, strawberry plants, rhubarb, herbs and geraniums from the old garden to the new one last autumn. Our new location, by contrast, has continuous 'passing trade', with people of all ages heading for the leisure centre, or out dog-walking.

We have already planted butternut squash, peas and herbs along one side.

The space is gaining character, with established flowers and shrubs providing colour and attracting bees and butterflies, as we sow and plant food crops around and between. The bowls club members have welcomed us.

Another community garden, where I volunteer on alternate Saturday mornings is Incredible Edible, attached to St John's Church in Mowbray Road, New Barnet.

Incredible Edible is a food-focused guerilla gardening movement, founded in the north of England in 2008 and now a world-wide non-profit franchise. The model revolves around three 'spinning plates': community, referring to growing food on public spaces for anyone to take from; business, meaning supporting local food firms; and learning, which incorporates the first two 'plates' by educating and passing on skills.



The garden in Mowbray Road was started almost ten years ago, beginning where the church faces the street and spreading along two more sides of the building, in a luxuriant mix of little ponds and bug hotels, flowers, shrubs, small trees and food plants. A large notice invites people to help themselves.

Easily the smallest of the gardens where I volunteer is The Courtyard Garden – just five metres by six – tucked away in the corner of Barnet Park Café playground. We also call it the Robin Garden, though foxes visit too. We meet fortnightly on Saturdays.

If children see us there, they will sometimes come over and ask questions. A group of them helped me plant some sunflowers the first spring we were there. I didn't see the children again, but I hope they saw the sunflowers growing big and tall.

The garden is only in its second year and already a little eco-haven with a tumble of fruit bushes, flowers, herbs, food crops and weeds, plus a newly planted grape vine. It is too small to grow anything in bulk but visitors are offered whatever is ready to harvest.

I've always known that gardening brings joy. Then I discovered that community adds joy. And what conversations we have. Not only about gardening!

Janet Smith

Taken from an article for the Barnet Parish magazine

(We also have another community garden just around the corner from St. John's, Trinity Patch at Holy Trinity.)

SEASON OF CREATION

On Sunday 20th September we will be celebrating the Season of Creation. As in previous years we will be uniting with other churches in the area for the service and this year it will take place at Holy Trinity, Lyonsdown - just down the road from us. This service will take place at 4pm in the afternoon, which is Holy Trinity's normal service time. Please note that there will be no service at St John's at 11am in the morning on that Sunday.

The Season of Creation is world wide across all denominations and runs from 1st September to 4th October. This year's theme, "Living Water," comes from Ezekiel 47:9 and 12—a biblical vision of hope and ecological restoration.



Some indigenous communities of the Papuan lowlands live on Lake Sentani and depend on traditional food production. As well as fishing they practice collective harvesting of sago trees to extract starch concentrate for making papeda, the primary staple food of the area. Papeda is a high-calory gelatinous, glue-like paste. The pith of the sago palm tree stem is shredded or grated first to allow the starch to be washed out, to make a flour that is later boiled with water to make papeda.

In Ezekiel 47, water flows from God's sanctuary, healing and renewing land, waters, and human responsibility toward creation. The prophet's vision unfolds amid exile and loss. Water flows from the temple—at first a tiny stream that deepens, bringing life to dead areas and restoring ecosystems. To receive this new life, we must step into the waters ourselves—becoming part of God's river, joining creation's healing.

Ezekiel's message emerged during Babylonian exile after Jerusalem's destruction. Yet his prophecy doesn't end in judgment. The river in Ezekiel 47 shows renewal: when the Lord dwells with his people, the land restores itself.

This restoration extends beyond human salvation—it heals land, water, and ecosystems. The trees' leaves bring "healing," providing both sustenance and flourishing for humanity and creation alike. Ezekiel 47 carries distinct environmental meaning: global restoration of life, ecological healing, the interdependence of humanity and the natural world. It brings hope for both humanity and creation.



Living Water
Season of Creation 2026

Reproduced from the
World Council of Churches Website

Community Garden News

“Walking through the past in Barnet Vale”

ON AN EVENING in July, Dave McCormick (of the Incredible Edible Community Garden, some readers may remember his mother, Monica, a member of St John's) led a sociable, gently guided walk around three publicly accessible gardens in Barnet Vale – the Community Garden at St John's, Highlands Gardens and Greenhill Gardens. He was able to share the history behind these gardens and the group had an interesting and enjoyable evening. This link takes you to Dave's article in Barnet Post [‘Walking through the past in Barnet Vale’](#); if you'd like further background information, Heather has detailed notes of the talk given.



COOL BEAN COMMUNITY GARDEN EVENT

4-6pm Saturday 10th October

Join us to celebrate the brilliance of *beans*!

Come and share, taste bean recipes and ideas.

There's more to life than baked beans!

Mini meadow project

WE ARE GOING to be taking part in this community initiative which aims to help residents across Barnet plant 600 mini-meadows in 60 days during September and October 2026 — in gardens, pots, schools and community spaces. Together, these mini-meadows will create a connected network of pollinator-friendly habitats across the borough, while also helping more people experience the joy of connecting with nature. If you would like to plant a meadow and live in Barnet, please join as a participant here: <https://join.minimeadowmovement.org/>

The project will support Barnet residents, schools and community groups by providing free wildflower seeds, simple sowing guidance, and friendly support through email and WhatsApp.

The initiative was successfully piloted in Finchley last year, where participants especially loved the strong community spirit and the opportunity to do something positive for biodiversity locally.

Heather Elsdon



***Let's plant 600
mini meadows in 60 days!***



A letter from Rosemary in Uganda

Dear Elders and members of St John's Church,

We have closed for another three weeks school break. We will return on 14th September to finish off the academic year 2026.

The past seven months have been different from the previous years. As we have been in high spirits for celebrating thirty years of our school's existence and impact, climate change has taken toll of the normal weather patterns and changed the seasons. Our efforts to grow food have been unsuccessful. Our crops dried up the moment they sprouted out from the ground. The rainy season of March to May was short lived hence we had to seek help of funds donations to buy food stuffs at the already higher prices at the market.

Nevertheless, we managed to have a celebratory prayer service at school led by Fr Simon Peter from Narozari Parish. Over fifty old students joined us. Pupils of Nobel Junior School sang their beautiful voices out loud in a choir during the mass. Other schools from the community including Modern Primary School, Hill view Primary School joined us. We had a lunch with everyone and had some entertainment from current students. Old students brought gifts to Mr Nsamba Edward and Mrs Scovia Nsamba – the founders of the school.



Students cutting cake with Mrs Nsamba after the anniversary mass

However, many of the ideas we had to celebrate our anniversary were unsuccessful, including a walk and marathon run, cake baking and sale, themed birthday celebrations and meetings all aimed at raising £30,000. These funds would support the establishment of sustainable development projects for the school - for example purchasing a school bus for transportation, expanding farming activities, among others. All of which are to improve and create a conducive learning and teaching environment for the generation to come in thirty years. The year is yet to end and we are still in the celebrating spirit. Therefore, we kindly ask that if you feel so moved to support, kindly reach out.

As we were still thinking of the hot sunshine and the anniversary celebrations, our country got hit by the 'Bundibugyo Ebola virus', brought in by our dear neighbours from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Up to twenty cases were reported in Uganda, but none at our school! The government ministry of health rushed in to set up measures to combat the spread and it worked. Only two deaths and eighteen recoveries were recorded. Schools and the general public adopted the standard operating systems and, in July, the ministry declared that Ebola was over in the country.

It was not all sad news. We registered one new student at the beginning of the year who is eight years old, is hard-of-hearing, and has never been to school. He has since adjusted in quite well and he has now learned some alphabet, his sign name and has made friends.

And, as in 2023, we received four female students from the [HAN University of Applied Sciences](#). They stayed with us for three months and



Hood, the new student

worked with us on solutions for challenges that the school and community faces. This fulfilled their school requirement for a Minor in Global Awareness course for the award of a Bachelor's degree. We are very thankful for their presence as it helped greatly with the mental health, general wellbeing of children and academic performance. As a token of appreciation for allowing them to do their minor with us they donated four picnic tables made from plastics by [Eco Brixx](#) – a local company clearing plastics from the community and producing eco-friendly items. They also employ about thirty deaf old students of Good Samaritan School for the Deaf in their different departments. We also managed to make a school tour to the factory, and the current students got to see our old students and learn of the work they do.



Students having their first meal seated at the dining picnic tables

Around May, we received a £2,500 grant from [Kitchen Table Charities Trust, UK](#) to expand our children's play area with all necessary games. These funds came in at a critical time when we wanted to get more play items for our children. We were able to get more outside and indoor games that has helped out a lot to enhance the children's play time. We are very thankful to Mr. Donaldson, the chairman of the Board and his Personal Assistant, Ms Nicole Rasoa who has kept in touch with us since the beginning.

Of the many development projects we have on the list, one is yet to be put off! An anonymous friend in United Kingdom donated some funds to help us fence part of the school premises with a chain link, barbed wire and we are now waiting for the rainy season so we can plant flowers alongside it. The fencing has stretched from the boy's dormitory towards the classroom block edge and down to the gate entrance. Approximately £1,450 has been spent on this project. A similar amount is needed to fence the other lower part from the plantain garden, to the washroom, to the girls' dormitory, up to the Kitchen edge and up to the gate entrance. An extra approximately £500 will be needed to install a gate to fully put control on the people entering and leaving the school premises. Later on, we will hire a security guard to man the gate and support our security measures put in place. With this development we are pleased and look forward to receiving more support to fence off the lower part.

With the year 2026 still having four months we are still optimistic for our anniversary celebration fundraisers and targets. I kindly invite you all to pray with us and support us in all ways you can. Any and all kinds of support is needed and wholeheartedly appreciated.

God Bless you always.

On behalf of everyone at Good Samaritan School for the Deaf,
Rosemary Nakasiita (School Director)



L to R. Some old students posing; Rosemary with the solar light; Primary six and seven students trying out the lights.

Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 6	11:00am	Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Sarah Beaumont
Tuesday 8	10:00am 7:30pm	Finance and Managers meeting Elder's meeting
Thursday 10	9:30am 2:00pm	Mainly Music Thanksgiving Service for Tony Alderman
Saturday 12	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 13	11:00am	Worship led by Roz Douglas followed by a Church Meeting
Thursday 17	9:00am	Mainly Music
Sunday 20	4:00pm	Creation Sunday: Service at Holy Trinity Church, Lyonsdown (<i>Please note time!</i>)
Thursday 24	9:00am	Mainly Music
Saturday 26	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 27	11:00am	Worship led by Helen Snider
Monday 28	11:00am	Ladies Coffee Group. Venue tbc

OCTOBER

Thursday 1	9:30am	Mainly Music
Sunday 4	11:00am	Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Andrew & Valerie Mills
Thursday 8	9:30am	Mainly Music
Saturday 10	4-6pm	'Cool Bean' community garden event
Sunday 11	11:00am	Harvest: Worship led by Alison Bond
Tuesday 13	7:30pm	Elders' meeting
Thursday 15	9:30am	Mainly Music
Sunday 18	11:00am	Worship led by Revd Malcolm Drummond
Tuesday 20	7:00pm	Men & Women's Group at <i>The Railway Bell, New Barnet</i>
Saturday 24	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 25	11:00am	Worship led by Paul Elsdon
Tuesday 27	11:00am	Ladies Coffee Group. Venue tbc

NOVEMBER

Sunday 1	11:00am	Memorial Sunday: Worship with the Lord's Supper led by Revd James Fields
Thursday 5	9:30am	Mainly Music
Saturday 7	10:00am	Community Garden
Sunday 8	10:45am	Remembrance Sunday: Worship led by David Paul & Richard Harvey