

Becket News

Issue 83/December 2023

**The Anglican Church of
St Thomas à Becket**

**Zeughausmarkt 22, 20459 Hamburg
www.anglican-church-hamburg.de**

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Cover photo: Jo Dawes

**Our church receives no income from Kirchensteuer (church tax) and is entirely dependent on donations.
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From the Chaplain

‘The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.’

Light in the darkness. It’s one of the abiding and ever-present themes of the Advent and Christmas seasons. Candles burning and flickering in our windows, and on the tree (at least if you’re a native German!) and taking their traditional place in our Advent wreaths; fairy lights festooning the myriad Christmas markets and shopping centres; candles coupled with movement in the wonderful, rotating carousels of the Weihnachtspyramide. Light is always a sign of hope and encouragement, and a central plank of our celebrations. We bring light into the darkness, at this darkest time of the year.

In our services in church, we use light and the metaphor of light all the time. But the root of its meaning is especially prominent during this fourth quarter of the calendar year, when we think about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ—THE light of the world. This is what the line quoted at the head of my greeting this year refers to: *‘The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.’* The fifth verse of the first Chapter of the

Gospel according to John, part of the ‘Prologue’, which reading we always hear at Christmas. The light, God’s Son Jesus Christ, comes to us on earth, to shine into our darkness, eternally.

Light in the darkness. When we switch on the light, of course, we receive not only its cosmetic value. Light also illuminates everything that falls within its range—the dirt in the corners of the room, the wrinkles on our faces and so on—things we know are there, but maybe sometimes might prefer not to look at. For all waxing lyrical about the light, there are times when we all choose to remain in the darkness.

That is, rather the looking at the suffering and inhuman behaviour perpetrated in our war zones, the neglect of those on our streets, and the many other sadnesses around us, for example. These things are part of the truth, though, aren’t they? And precisely because we do care about such things, ignoring them, shutting them out wilfully from our consciousness, and our conscience, can only ever be a short-term strategy. *cont. overleaf*

Which is why we so need the light of Christ. Let me repeat, the joy of the coming of our Saviour is that His light shines into the darkness, and is NOT overcome by it. Rather, it illuminates the entirety of what we find around us, and our experience, and still triumphs; comes through, brandishing hope eternal and girded about with the strength to rejoice, even in the light of the Truth. That is the Truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Nothing hidden, no-one forgotten.

Light into the darkness. Seize it in true rejoicing. In the full light of the Truth.

And should you have Zeit und Lust, we'd love to see you at one of our special services on Christmas Eve—the 'Crib and Christingle' starts at 16.00 and 'Midnight Mass' at 23.30. You and yours are very welcome, and if you do come I can assure you that candles, and the True Light that they represent, will abound!

Revd Jules A. Barnes

Photo: Christian Nweze



Bishop David Hamid was in Hamburg on 10 September to confirm five members of our congregation who had been preparing together since Easter. It was also a chance for us to say thank you and goodbye to Bishop David, who will be retiring next February.

Introducing Jan, our new organist

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Psalm 98 says in verses 4–6: ‘⁴Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. ⁵Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. ⁶With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.’

Music moves people in many different ways: it triggers emotions, awakens energy, motivates and brings people together. Music can bring back memories and relieve pain.

I took up the position of organist at STB on the first Sunday in October. Who am I? My name is Jan Menno Gebhardt—just call me Jan. I was born and grew up in Ostfriesland (East Frisia), near the Dutch border. I have been playing the organ since I was eight years old and studied church music in Bremen after school.

I then did a traineeship at an online car magazine and have been working as a journalist specialising in mobility ever since.

After eight years in Munich, where I also worked as organist for the Anglican Church, my husband and I returned north to Hamburg.

We live here with our dog Anton, a German Shorthaired Pointer, who will occasionally come with us to church.

During a summer evening walk I said, ‘I would like to have a position as an organist again, here in Hamburg. I’ll see in the next few days whether the Reformed Church or the Anglican Church is looking for an organist.’ And as luck would have it, I found ‘Looking for an organist’ on the STB website. So I got in touch and here I am now.

As your new organist, I hope to get to know everyone in the congregation soon. Those I have met so far have welcomed me very warmly—a big compliment: that’s what makes a great church.

I want to come back to Psalm 98. Did you notice that the psalm talks about ‘all the earth’? That means everyone is included. God loves to hear you sing (even if you think you have a terrible voice). He loves any kind of music played in His honour.

So, if you play an instrument and would like to enrich the service, please feel free to talk to me at any time after the service over a cup of tea. I’m open to (almost) everything.

And if you like singing, the choir is happy to welcome any new singer.

cont. overleaf



Above all, a few more men would be great. Don't be so shy, boys!

Especially in these dark times, with all the suffering that is happening on earth right now, I am confi-

dent and full of hope that music will bring us all a little closer together.

I wish you and your loved ones all the best. Your new organist,

Jan

'God's Kaleidoscope' in Freiburg

The Racial Justice Working Group of the Diocese in Europe organised the international and ecumenical racial justice conference in Freiburg from 8—11 November 2023 with the title 'God's Kaleidoscope'. There were speakers from Australia to Zimba-

bwe and 99 participants from all over Europe, including five from our chaplaincy of St Thomas à Becket in Hamburg. Several Anglican bishops were present as well as ministers from the Lutheran Church and members of the Jewish and Muslim faiths.

Our Dr Christian Nweze gave an enlightened and stimulating presentation on human perception and its limitations. The topic was 'breathing life' based on the creation story and the cruel killing of George Floyd in 2019 by a police officer.

Each day of the conference focused on a separate theme:



1) Grieving the past, 2) Challenging the present and 3) Envisioning the future.

The days began with Morning Prayer and Bible study and ended with Evening Prayer and cultural activities such as attending a memorial service on 9 November at the destroyed synagogue. The speakers were selected specialists from the United Nations, European Court of Human Rights and USPG, specialist lawyers and academics as well as many theologians.

The Anglican Parish of Freiburg hosted the event, including organising the worship, the delicious food, the meeting rooms and the publicity/photos.

Attending a conference is obviously enriching for the individual participants, but how does it move a church forward towards more

inclusivity? It was actually quite painful to look at the mistakes and wounds Christians have inflicted not only in the past, but also ongoing with repressive attitudes and policies based on race, gender, sexual orientation and the unequal distribution of power and opportunity. Yet the conference did not get stuck in regretting the past, but concentrated on strategies to build a just and more inclusive church as intended by the creator. This hope and dynamism can now be used in the home parishes as fresh yeast, which will gradually evolve into new bread.

Thank you to our church for sponsoring two of the delegates, which should generate more change than sending just one individual.

Irene Windsor

▪ **We dream that the daring dreams of our generation will be the reality of our children.**

▪ **We admit that our previous admissions of guilt have rarely been followed by atonement and reparation.**

▪ **We are aware that we must turn our awareness of injustice into practice of justice.**

The full conference statement and newsletters can be found on the racial justice page of the diocesan website <https://www.europe.anglican.org/racial-justice>

News from CAECG and Deanery meetings

Joshua Ezika and Madeleine Herring are our chaplaincy representatives for the meetings of the CAECG (held in Frankfurt in September) and German Deanery (Bonn/Köln in October).

The CAECG incorporates the Anglican and Episcopal churches in Germany. The theme for this meeting was Defending Democracy: the role of the churches in the democratic process. The first speaker's perspective focused on Germany; the second presentation concentrated on the EU; the third presentation on a more international viewpoint.

The first presentation was in the German language by Dekan Ulf-Martin Schmidt, Pfarrer of the Old Catholic parish in Berlin, and chaplain in the Bundestag. Schmidt emphasised the importance of effective communication between denominations, urging a re-evaluation of existing communication. Germany is becoming increasingly secular. Despite this, Schmidt believes the church still has a role to play and there is currently good cooperation between politicians and the churches. Schmidt emphasised the church's responsibility to maintain the idea that religion is a fundamental right and should be

politically protected, especially in the case of minorities. He believes one of the mega-tasks for our political culture is the tolerance of ambiguity—helping to endure and even bring together supposedly incompatible views.

The second session, by Canon Prof. Jack McDonald, centred on the history of the Anglican Church in Europe and its relationship with the European Union. After a detailed description of EU institutions, he talked about the regular dialogue between national churches and the EU. The dialogue aims to ensure transparency, respect for European values, and the inclusion of diverse perspectives in the European integration process. Issues



Photo: Madeleine Herring

recently discussed include the war in Ukraine, migration, refugees and asylum, Covid-19, poverty, expansion of the EU, democracy and human rights. The last part of Fr Jack's presentation started with a history of Anglicanism, focusing on the situation in Europe. Currently, many of the congregants in our churches are not from the UK and US, increasingly from the African continent, from India or European converts. The Diocese in Europe is having problems recruiting staff from the UK due to post-Brexit regulations, including visa and language requirements. This means that parishes are increasingly led by non-British clergy/lay members. Both Madeleine and Joshua addressed questions to Fr Jack at the end of his presentation.

Revd Dr Mark Barwick initiated the second day, focusing on modern democracy from a world perspective. He stated that we need to be advocates for the poor and powerless, when in fact the church has often sided with the powerful. In his opinion, democracy is fragile. He pointed out that politics can hurt AND help people. He had some very simple ideas that he encouraged us to take away and implement at local level:

- Cultivate a culture for advocacy in our churches

- Ensure our church structures are democratic
- Understand the social and political context in which we are working
- Do not be intimidated. You do not have to be a policy expert to have an impact
- Gather allies, network, work with others

Fr Mark's final thought: Where are you going and who will you go with?

The Deanery meeting in Bonn/Cologne was far more familiar, as we were German Anglicans, and also in the company of Bishop David, Archdeacon Leslie, and our Chaplain, Jules. Further, we were all staying in the same accommodation, which meant fellowship could extend into mealtimes and beyond. Given there were many new Deanery reps, this fostered a real sense of community.

The Deanery meeting was divided into a business meeting, with election of office bearers and some sharing of parish news. Joshua and I spoke specifically of our lovely music, our youth ministry and diverse congregation. The theme of the next day was 'Called to be peacemakers', which was inspiring kick-started by a Bible Study

cont. on p.12



A huge thank you to Eric and Wendy our organisers, and to all stall holders, purchasers, donors and everyone else who helped to





make this year's bazaar such a joyous day. The smiles tell their own story. The event raised over €12,500 (similar to pre-Covid levels).



Photos: Penny Loehrig and Wendy Sprock



continuation from p.9

led by Fr Victor. We were left with a fantastic quote from this:

‘Conflict is a friend of peace, because it tells us there is injustice.’

Archdeacon Leslie enticed us with the proposed agenda for the Racial Justice Conference planned for November in Freiburg (see page 6). Many of the Deanery participants were also going to be there.

Madeleine Herring

Prayers of Love and Faith introduced

Readings and prayers of thanksgiving, dedication and asking for God’s blessing for same-sex couples may now be used in Church of England services for the first time following approval by the House of Bishops in the General Synod. The Prayers of Love and Faith may be used from 17 December 2023 in regular scheduled services or private prayer at the discretion of the minister, in our case the Chaplain.

The prayers were developed as part of the outcome of a seven-year period of listening, learning and discernment known as Living in Love and Faith. Some in our congregation took part in the Living in Love and Faith course led by Reverend Jules during spring 2022, and it was encouraging that participants could express their range of

personal opinions, within the culture of mutual respect and love that we are fortunate to enjoy at STB. Views on issues around human sexuality clearly differ within our own community, just as they do within our diocese and within the wider and global Church. For those who wish to explore these issues further, there is a lot of information on how we as Christians respond to questions about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage on the Living in Love and Faith section of the Church of England website: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/living-love-and-faith>

The pastoral guidance issued with the Prayers of Love and Faith emphasises that the Church’s understanding of marriage remains as a lifelong, faithful and exclusive

covenant between one man and one woman. Yet it acknowledges that some may wish to recognise the commitment same-sex couples make to each other and publicly pray for God's blessing on them.

As yet there is no provision for standalone services for same-sex couples, but the bishops are continuing to discuss proposals for such services to be formally authorised under canon law. In November, General Synod agreed a motion calling on the bishops to consider whether standalone services for same-sex couples could be made available for use, possibly on a trial basis.

Authorisation would mean that a service becomes an integral part

of the official liturgical resources of the Church of England. As there is currently no majority in General Synod in favour of standalone services, it is uncertain whether they will be introduced. (The most important decisions require a two-thirds majority in each of Synod's three houses, the House of Bishops, the House of Clergy and the House of Laity.)

The Prayers of Love and Faith and associated pastoral guidance can be found on the CofE website: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/prayers-love-and-faith>

Jo Dawes

STB Heating Project update

Work is continuing on sorting out our heating. Following on from their initial study, we asked our technical consultants IBNB to calculate and clarify further options. There has been a few months' delay in delivery of their report due to workload, but we are expecting to receive it before Christmas.

In the meantime, we have turned our attention towards identifying people who can assist with fundraising. We are getting to the stage where we need the financial

resources to pay for professional assistance in order to move forward. As previously reported, more needs to be done to the building than just replacing the heating. As soon as we have any developments, further information will be provided.

Meanwhile, thanks to Churchwarden Christian and Treasurer Heiner, four gas heaters are providing some warmth during services, and they seem to be having a noticeable effect.

Monica Schofield

Australia: a post-referendum look

The five members of the Healing Racism and Celebrating Diversity group met in person on 28 October after a long period of frequent digital communication. The theme had been decided long before: Australia's unpleasant history. However, the timing of our gathering was to coincide with Australia's referendum on The Voice, held on 7 October. The referendum was an opportunity for the First Nation People of Australia to be formally given an advisory role to government about laws and policies that affect indigenous Australians.

The topic required time and emotional endurance. We started with some brunch at 11 a.m. and then watched the first film *Long Walk Home* (also known as *Rabbit-Proof Fence*). This film is a true story of three Aboriginal girls, who were taken from their mothers to be 'educated' in a Christian mission. The girls escaped, and evaded the authorities and police by walking hundreds of kilometres along a fence that ran the length of the state of Western Australia. It is a tale of endurance and courage, but clearly gives a backdrop to the injustice faced by indigenous people. This practice of forcibly taking Aboriginal children from their families to

be brought up in white families or institutions was still in operation until the 1960s in Australia; the children became known as 'the stolen generation'.

The group debriefed about the film and the wider context over lunch. We then had a more factual session on the history of Australia, from an indigenous perspective. We looked at Aboriginal art, dreamtime fables, and tried to play the musical instrument (a didgeridoo).



Photo: Madeleine Herring

The second part of the event saw us leap forward in time to the current situation in Australia, providing us with the context of the referendum. Australia's struggle with racism was explained in a documentary film entitled *The Australian Dream*. It is about a talented indigenous Australian Rules Football player who was driven out of professional sport due to racism.

The group was astounded at the current situation and how much these issues remain largely unknown outside Australia. There was acknowledgement of the damage done to a beautiful culture that

had lived on the Australian land mass for approximately 60,000 years (yes, that figure is correct) in peace and in perfect harmony with nature. There was therefore sadness at the failure of the referendum, which might have been an opportunity to begin to rectify the outrageous injustices the indigenous people of Australia have endured.

In response to our feelings at the end of the day, we decided to change our WhatsApp group to: Racism Ends With Us. If anyone would like to join our group, please talk to Jonas, Tina, Valerie or me.

Madeleine Herring

Becket Mix round-up of 2023

The Becket Mix Youth Group has had another busy year and saw several members of the group moving on to new challenges, with new members of the group arriving.

In March the group met up for our annual pizza and planning meeting. We realised that our plans for the first half of the year would be limited, as many in the group had important exams to prepare for.

We next met up to read the Passion Play on Palm Sunday. In June we arranged to meet for a picnic in Planten un Blomen, but sadly the weather did not allow it. So we all went for a hot drink and a catch up.

In September four members of the group were blessed in church during the service, as they were heading off to Uni, travelling and starting new jobs. After that, and to see them all off as a group, we ate a quick lunch together and headed off for an afternoon playing pool.

Later on in September, after the Sunday service, the group prepared toasted sandwiches as part of the 'bring and share' parish lunch. We raised €54 which we donated to 'Arztmobil Hamburg', a charity that provides mobile medical care for those living on the streets.

In November, for the second

year, we took over the running of the café at the Church Bazaar. A big thank you to Astrid for allowing us to use the kitchen. Another big thank you to Blessing who was an unexpected additional helper for the day and to all the lovely people who brought us cakes.

The youth group also helped Junior Church on 10 December by narrating the nativity play.

We have this year welcomed two new Becket Mixers to the group. If you, or anyone else you know, might be interested in joining the group, please do not hesitate to contact us for further information. Our basic requirements are that members are aged 13 and/or confirmed.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas!

Emma and Madeleine H

Money matters

Grateful thanks are due to all who support STB financially as well as with practical support for our many activities. STB is entirely self-funding. The budget passed by the Council for 2023 foresaw a deficit of €10,000. As of writing, it appears we may do better, but this depends on the income in December.

We rely on regular donations to be able to guarantee the stipend that enables us to employ our chaplain. Income from activities such as the bazaar, Benefizkonzert, and sales of Christmas cards supplements this. These involve a generous commitment of time from many people from near and far, which is very much appreciated and needed. Thank you to all who have contributed in 2023.

Yet we have to face the fact we are struggling to meet our running costs.

Income from regular donations has been in decline for some years. We have managed to balance the books in the past few years thanks to windfalls. Thought is being given to an appeal campaign to recruit a wider base of donors. We know there are many beyond the STB worshipping community who would miss the church if it no longer existed.

If you are reading this and do not yet donate to the church, please consider doing so. Every contribution helps, but particularly helpful are regular donations by standing order which can be made to the church account given on page 2. We also would appreciate support for fundraising activities, but ideally we need leaders for these, not just ideas for what 'we' could do.

Monica Schofield

Treasury Liaison Officer

Who was Charles Gustav Cook?

*On the east wall of the church, next to the pulpit, is a plaque:
TO THE GLORY OF GOD*

In ever devoted memory of our darling only child CHARLES GUSTAV COOK Assistant Clerk, HMS Good Hope, who lost his life in the Battle of Coronel, on All Saints Day, 1914, aged 17 years and 8 months, this Pulpit is given by his sorrowing Mother.

Charles Gustav Cook was born on 18 March 1897 in Stoke Damerel, Plymouth, England, the only child of Charles Cook and his German wife Emma Albertina Clothilde Cook, née Geritzlehner.

The connection to the English Church and Hamburg was through Emma, who was born here in 1860. Her father, Carl Albert Martin Geritzlehner (born 1823), had a pub in the lane Durchschnitt in the Grindel quarter and the family—Carl, his wife Johanna Catharina, née Heinzen, and at least five children—lived in a small flat on nearby Grindelweg. Carl Geritzlehner died in 1878. Johanna, who was born in 1820, died in 1903. In 1895 Johanna had organised a family grave for

herself and five other members of the family at Ohlsdorf Cemetery, to be cared for until 1973,.

When Emma was 25 years old, she emigrated to the USA, sailing for New York on the SS *Eider* in 1885. In 1886 she was working as a domestic in San Francisco, but she returned to Europe—to England—in about 1890. And it was here, presumably in Plymouth, that she met her future husband, Charles Cook. Charles was born in September 1855 in Love, Norfolk (in the district of Walsingham). His father, William, was a farmer.

Emma and Charles were married in Stoke Damerel on 12 September 1893. Charles was a warrant officer in the Royal Navy at the time and



Photo: Madeleine Resühr

rose to the rank of Lieutenant before he retired. At the tender age of 17, their son joined the Royal Navy as a clerk and was assigned to the *HMS Good Hope* at the beginning of WWI, only to die tragically just a few months later when the ship came under fire from the German squadron off the Chilean coast.

On a visit to Hamburg after WWI, Emma Cook donated a pulpit to the English Church in memory of her son, but it was sadly lost in the fires caused when incendiary bombs fell on the church in 1944. After the war, the badly damaged church was rebuilt and restored by Royal Engineers and Hamburg tradesmen, and a new pulpit, still in use today and featuring the same design as the pews, altar, Chaplain's and Bishop's chairs, replaced the one Emma

Below: the old pulpit



Cook had donated. Emma died in Plymouth on 19 June 1953 in her 94th year.

Historical background

The *HMS Good Hope* (named after the then British colony of the Cape of Good Hope) was launched on 21.2.1901 and became the flagship of the 1st Cruiser Squadron, Atlantic Fleet in 1906. She transferred to Halifax, Nova Scotia, at the beginning of WWI, coming under the command of Rear-Admiral Sir Christopher Craddock. The *HMS Good Hope* was soon sent to South American waters to hunt for German ships that had been attacking British merchant vessels. On the evening of 1 November 1914, the British ships under Craddock and the German East Asia Squadron, which included the armoured cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, under Vice-Admiral Graf Maximilian von Spee, engaged in the brief but devastating Battle of Coronel off the coast of Chile. Von Spee ordered his ships to concentrate fire on the *HMS Good Hope*, as she was the flagship. The *Good Hope* caught fire almost immediately, her forward magazine exploded and the ship sank with all hands, 926 officers and ratings.

(With grateful thanks to the Geritzlehner family of Geesthacht)

Madeleine Resühr

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For other ministries please see following page

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For clergy and council members please see previous page

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For details of services and events, please see our website or Facebook page

Website: www.anglican-church-hamburg.de

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stbhamburg/>

Please email communications@anglican-church-hamburg.de if you would like to receive *Becket News* and further news updates from the church

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