

Heath Street

BAPTIST CHURCH



Maasais in Hampstead

By Marcus Whitaker,
aged 7



The Maasais came to stay with us and they did their first show in Soho. They came very late! They invited me up on stage and then we went home and had dinner.

In the evening, we went over to Heath Street Baptist Church. They were wearing all their gear. It was fun walking down the road! We went into the church and I helped them display all the necklaces. I also handed out leaflets outside the church. A man and woman actually stopped and came in. Lots of people came.

The Maasais did their dance show and they invited me up to jump with them. The best bit was when they were pretending to hunt a lion. They

came because they needed to raise money for the safe house for girls and for a well.

I learned how to talk some African words (Maa) and they gave me one of their spears. They were very jokey and were laughing every five minutes. I didn't understand what they were saying when they spoke to each other.

When I think of them now, I think of them dancing and wearing their colourful costumes.

Now I want to go to Kenya.

Palm Sunday 2025



To mark Palm Sunday in suitably festive style this year, three churches – Heath Street, Emmanuel, and St Cuthbert's – combined to process through West Hampstead and worship together at Emmanuel Church. Led by sousaphone and singing together, a crowd of well over a hundred walked from Hampstead Cemetery to Emmanuel waving our palm branches. We were also joined by a group of Maasai warriors visiting from Kenya who greatly added to the energy and festivity of proceedings with their singing.

Once at Emmanuel our Communion service was greatly augmented by music from the Heath Street band and singers as well as the Emmanuel choir,

and 'Give Me Oil In My Lamp' in particular nearly took the roof off! The combined forces also sang Ave Verum by Byrd for the communion anthem, and it was a real treat to have both sides of the choir stalls filled with singers. Reverend Trin preached about our role in the two crowds of Holy Week – the celebratory masses of Palm Sunday and the angry mob of Good Friday – and invited us to consider how we use those experiences to write our story today.

After the service we joined together for fellowship over coffee, and enjoyed the opportunity to greet one another properly. Our Maasai visitors presented several songs and dances which were absolutely amazing to watch, and it was wonderful to learn about their



culture. We bought handicrafts and donated to their charity project of building a school and new wells in their local area.

It was a truly memorable Palm Sunday and the perfect start to Holy Week. Hosanna! –Sarah Batten

Palm Sunday 2025



Hampstead Climate Cafés

The Covid-19 pandemic saw people everywhere in Britain co-operating to support each other. Hampstead was no exception. Neighbours here gave help where it was needed and shopped and ran errands for those who could not. Community resilience is our collective capacity to handle shock and disruption. In these increasingly difficult times, we need to cultivate it. The Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum and Churches Together in Hampstead have taken this to heart, and last autumn they collaborated to offer a series of 'climate cafés'. They were welcomed and more are scheduled.

The climate we were raised in has changed. The world temperature has risen 1.5C° sooner even than feared. Bird and insect populations have crashed. After decades of peace, war has returned to Europe. The UN warns that hundreds of millions of us will migrate this century. Scholars talk openly of "social collapse".

This is a hard future to think about, let alone speak about. Yet

The climate cafés follow the design of the Climate Psychology Alliance, in turn adapted from the Death Café events, that "aim to help people make the most of their (finite) lives."

anxiety is simmering everywhere and, of course, particularly among the young, who will live their lives amid these changes. Most of us were raised in a world of steadily rising living standards: the future would always be better. That has held true for fewer and fewer over recent decades. What kind of lives shall we live in a future of decline? Who will we be, and what will matter to us? Climate cafés are advice-free spaces in which to share our concerns for ourselves and our families. Taking action is important, but the cafés are not workshops where we devise solutions and make plans. To find our way in a radically changed future we first need to face our grief for what is now being lost, and connect with each other and our sources of joy.

2025 programme

Attendance is free but space is limited: let climatecafe@hampsteadforum.org know if you plan to attend.

Thursday 19 June

7.30-9.30 pm

Community Centre

78 Hampstead High St, London NW3

Sunday 20 July

2-4 pm

Emmanuel Church

Lyncroft Gardens, London NW6

There will be more scheduled for September, October and November.

If you go to one of these, please tell Eleanor Patterson eleanorlaise@gmail.com about it for a future newsletter or ask our Church Secretary Wilf secretary@heathstreet.org to put it on a Church meeting agenda so we can all hear more.



Psalm

*The pebbles are shot through with your Word, O God.
You have made their bellies round and smooth.*

*Abiding in the riverbed, they speak
silent news of a patient hand.*

*To the dead, stone is dead.
To those who hunger for riches, a pebble is nothing.*

*The Wisdom of God pierces thick delusion;
have I built my house on falsehoods?*

*I worked hard to appear to be knowledgeable
wanting to be included among the men who know.*

*Yet this I have heard: those who fear God
wait only on God.*

*Your people plant apple trees, make loud music.
Their bonfire turns death to ash.*

*The darkness is only the absence of light.
The light and her shadows dance over the water.*

*We gather around you, O Spirit of Life,
and our faces are seen and grow warm.*

-Wilf Merttens



Letter from Virginia

I don't often get back to my childhood church, which is in Virginia's Tidewater region, about three hours' drive from my current home. But when I do, I admit that I tend to stroll in confident that the building itself will be just as I remember it. This place isn't like Heath Street, where the walls might be covered by temporary art exhibits and the furniture is constantly rearranged for musical ensembles large and small. In this rural, colonial-era church, the walls are blank white and have always been so, the few pieces of furniture that can be moved never seem to budge an inch, and the slightest change in decor can stir controversy.

When I settled into a pew one Sunday, however, something unusual immediately caught my eye. Behind the altar, there's a reredos dating from the 1860s, inscribed with the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and Matthew 22:37–40, all topped by a golden sunburst design. But at the top of the reredos, in the middle of that sunburst, I noticed something that I didn't remember ever seeing there before: Hebrew letters.

This did not add up. I've been studying this scene since the age of two. As a kid, to pass the time during the sermon, I'd count the panes in the windows on either side of the altar. I'd track the intricate rituals of the acolytes (light the Epistle candle first, then the Gospel candle—never the other way around!) And I'd read the words on the reredos, again and again and again. Never had I noticed any part of it that wasn't in English.

It was inconceivable to think, in this place where tradition rules, that the inscription could have been changed any time in recent history. Had my childhood brain, being completely unfamiliar with Hebrew, assumed those letters were just part of the geometric design? The letters leapt out at me now, seeming to dominate all the other text.

Things got even weirder when the sermon began, and the minister started talking about the conjugation of Hebrew verbs. He was speaking about Moses and the burning bush, when God tells Moses, "I am who I am," and the Tetragrammaton—the

name of God in the Hebrew bible—for of course, that's what was up there at the top of the reredos. But a better translation, the minister said, might be "I will be who I am" or even "I will be what I have been."

The reredos, I later learned, had just been restored, cleaning away more than 150 years of dirt and gilding the letters to make them much brighter than they'd been before. Brighter than in my childhood, brighter than when I'd been married directly beneath them, brighter than when I'd looked up at this familiar scene during the funerals of good friends and neighbours. Yet they'd been there all the time, whether or not I could see or understand them.

I've lived a fairly peripatetic life, mostly at great remove from my hometown, loving nothing better than to study maps and train schedules in some city I've never seen before. But in recent years, as I've learned some darker details of my hometown's history that I never knew before, I've had to ask myself just how much I really understand about places that

once seemed utterly familiar. That Sunday in my childhood church helped me remember that there was also grace and constancy to be discovered and rediscovered.

Thinking back on it now, I remember an experience on the other side of the Atlantic. On a stone bench near Orrest Head at Windermere, I noticed this quotation from John Keble: "Thou who hast given me eyes to see And love this sight so fair Give me a heart to find out Thee And read Thee everywhere."

–E.L.P.

Readings

JUNE 8-14

I KINGS 17.8-16

8th Mysie Johnson
 9th Nathalia Bell
 10th Nesa Thorne
 11th Theresa Thom
 12th Jen Finamore
 13th Beryl Dowsett
 14th Hyun Ju Lee

JUNE 15-21

I KINGS 21.1-21

15th Emad Eisapour
 16th Laura Somers
 17th Leila Ranjbar
 18th Frida King
 19th Isabel Somers
 20th John-Henry Baker
 21st Grace Jiang

JUNE 22-28

I KINGS 19.1-4

22nd Coco Ellenbogen
 23rd Annie Fang
 24th Anselm King
 25th Susan Le Quesne
 26th Phoebe Jiang
 27th HK
 28th Evelyn Baker

JUNE 29-JULY 5

2 KINGS 2.1-14

29th Gabrielle Falardeau
 30th for our community choir
 1st July Monsignor Phelim Rowland
 2nd Ewan King
 3rd Esme Baker
 4th Elisa Ghasempour
 5th Josh Somers

& Prayers

JULY 6-12

2 KINGS 5.1-14

6th Robin Thorne
 7th Joachim King
 8th Thomas Roy
 9th Rhona MacEachen
 10th Ali Ghasempour
 11th Babak Agin
 12th for all who attend Oldtime Nursery

JULY 13-19

AMOS 7.7-17

13th Edward Humphreys
 14th Tom Somers
 15th Kylo Layton
 16th Zahra Safaryazdi
 17th Cole Ellenbogen
 18th Julie Benoit
 19th Andrea MacEachen

JULY 20-26

AMOS 8.1-12

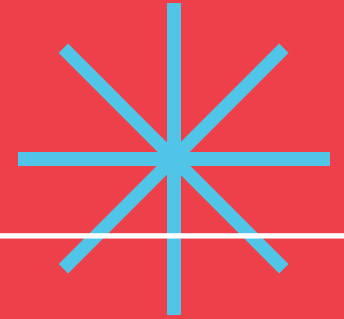
20th Thaddeus King
 21st Maral Agin
 22nd Sarah Harper
 23rd Lydia Baker
 24th Nomsa Ndebele
 25th Gaynor Humphreys
 26th Genna Naccache

JULY 27-AUGUST 2ND

HOSEA 1.2-10

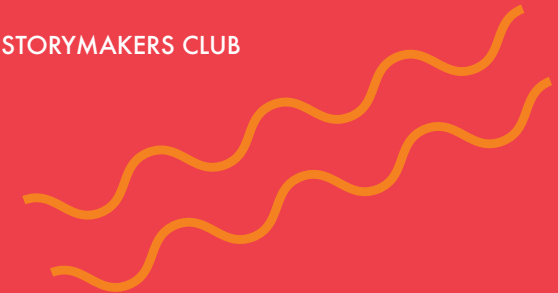
27th Juno Lee
 28th Otilie Johnson
 29th Wilf Merttens
 30th Birgit Leuppert
 31st Dusol Lee
 1st Elya Ghasempour
 2nd Fiona Ranford

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES



Which
three
remain
again?

SUNDAYS	11am	DIVINE WORSHIP Including our Children's Sunday Club stories, crafts, drama and play for all ages Live stream also available on request by e-mailing johnhenry@heathstreet.org at least 24 hours in advance
	6pm 7pm	SUNDAY SUNDOWN CONCERT SERIES CONTACT CLUB
MONDAYS	4:30pm	STORYMAKERS CLUB An after-school club aimed at children between the ages of 7 and 13
TUESDAYS	9:30am	OLDTIME NURSERY Introducing old melodies and traditional stories to a new generation of children
THURSDAYS	10:30am	OLDTIME NURSERY
	7:30pm	HEATH STREET CHOIR REHEARSALS
FRIDAYS	3:30pm	STORYMAKERS CLUB





Please see the church website for updates

www.heathstreet.org

For requests regarding church membership,
Baptism or opportunities for Christian ministry in the church,
please contact the minister.

Copy for the next Newsletter

should reach Eleanor Patterson (eleanorlaise@gmail.com)
not later than Wednesday 16 July.

Church Officers

Gaynor Humphreys (Treasurer)

Wilf Merttens (Church Secretary)

Annie Fang (Deacon)

Minister Ewan King

Heath St Baptist Church

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