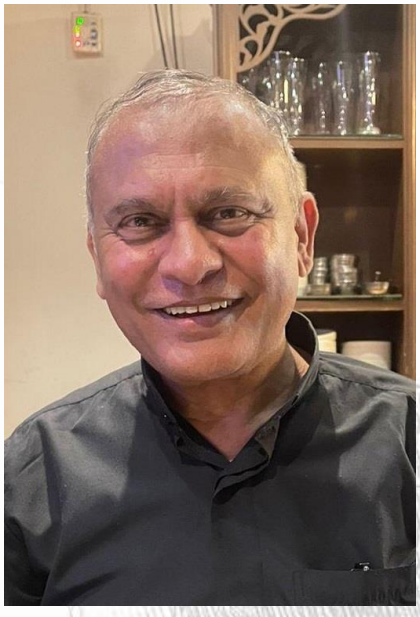
St. Andrew's Anglican Church Moscow
Spring-Summer Newsletter 2026

An exhortation to the congregation from the Chaplain:



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am delighted to be your chaplain. It is privilege to work with such a committed Anglican congregation in Moscow. You are a great example in the Diocese as laity running the church worship services, with a large team of Worship Leaders in the absence of a residential chaplain, due to the unexpected disruption caused by a handful people. This has tested our faith and help us to grow in Christian discipleship as an Anglican Congregation in Moscow.

Ephraim, our Chairperson-elect, offered a profound homily at the Sunday service on 21st June 2026. He started his homily with the wonderful, well-known phrase *"GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME – ALL THE TIME GOD IS GOOD".*

Amazingly, in the same service, Ephraim shared his powerful testimony, saying "as student of Jesus we are not immune to trials and challenges. The journey we're on requires courage and faith. I must confess, that in all my Christian journey, I have never felt closer to God than I feel right now."

Throughout the abuse we have endured, including the misuse of our Church building, written threats and false propaganda, court cases and the refusal to accept the authority of the Church of England by the present Religious Organization, you have stood firm in affirming your affiliation to the Anglican Church under the leadership of your Bishop, Archdeacon and Chaplain. Our Archdeacon is proactive in pursuing our aims by keeping us connected with the Russian Orthodox Church.

We are dealing with an illegitimate RO and are defending the court case registered against us, challenging the appointment of Ephraim as a Chair of RO. I have seen the circular, a concocted version claiming to be the verdict from the Judge. We know that Judge has still not written her judgment. We will soon come to know it and share with you, possibly as early as next week. We are aware that on some procedural grounds the judgement has not been in our favour.

In the meantime, I would like us to continue to worship our living Lord. The more we are crushed, the more we bounce back with even greater compassion and the love of Jesus. In our DNA one will find only LOVE, even for those who hate us and abuse us.

Please go through this Newsletter. We thank God for our members and our Lay Worship leaders, our choir and readers, our wardens and treasurer and the whole congregation, so deeply involved in sustaining our presence and engagement as the Anglican Congregation in Moscow.

Let me share my prayers for you all:
MAY YOU WITH CHRIST-LIKE COURAGE GO,
WHERE SIN AND DANGER LURK
HUMBLY STAND FOR WHAT IS RIGHT,
AND DO YOUR MASTER'S WORK. AMEN

Rev. Canon Dr. Arun John

Safeguarding update:



Liz Bearman
Safeguarding Officer

In mid-June I attended an online meeting for Safeguarding Officers in the Diocese of Europe. There have been some interesting new developments: The first is that there will soon be a Safeguarding Hub, which will store data on people's training and police record check status, and send out reminders when these documents need to be renewed. Although it will make a lot of work for me to begin with, as I will need to input all the data, in the end it should make life a lot easier, and allow for greater efficiency.

Secondly, a redress scheme is being introduced for victims of abuse in the CofE; and thirdly, the organisation 31:8, who work with the CofE to provide training and materials (such as those for our Safeguarding Services) are going to offer a Listening Service which will also be available online, so that people can talk to a sympathetic listener about abuse that they have suffered.

I see all these as positive steps, and anyone who wishes to know more about them can get in touch with me, in person or by email:

safeguarding@standrewsmoscow.org

Annual General Meeting

In accordance with Church of England practices, our parish Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday, 24th May. The following parish members were elected to church offices:



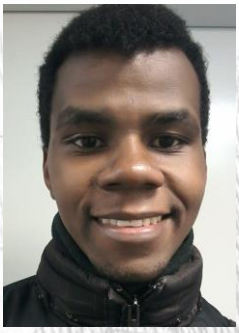
Nicolette Kirk

Churchwardens



Giles Walker

Church Councillors



Ephraim



Don



Camilla



Suresh



Lilly



René



Adam



Louise



Liz



Mike

A message from the churchwardens:

The past few months have not been easy, as we remain excluded from the building of St. Andrew's and have been prevented from even entering the church grounds. However, the remarkable resilience shown by the congregation has continued to be an inspiration to myself and many others, as well as a reflection of Christ's love and patience in the face of adversity. This has not only helped to bind us together as a family, but has also drawn others to us.

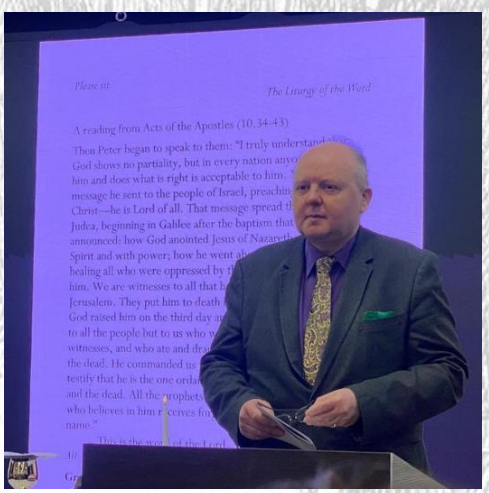


Having spent several months on Zoom, with just a small team meeting together to provide music and technical support, we were able – with the help of our brothers and sisters in the Russian Orthodox Church – to obtain permission from the Ministry of Justice to meet as a congregation in person. The lifting of the constant threat of further intimidation and reprisals from the group occupying St. Andrew's has enabled us to flourish. We were fortunate that permission came through in time for the Easter Triduum, when Fr. Leslie came to officiate. We have now found a new location for services at the Izmailovo Kremlin and while its distance from the centre of Moscow has proved challenging for some, the stability of having a regular venue has enabled us to grow and attract further support. We continue to host all of our services on Zoom, which means that Fr. Arun is able to be with us and that members of the congregation unable to join in person, along with friends and guests from abroad, can also take part.

We are continuing our legal battle to regain control of the Russian entity which allows us to function in this country. This has been complicated by the fact that our opponents' wilful concealment of their actions has meant that the statute of limitations on a number of their misdemeanours has now expired. However, we remain committed to maintaining a true Anglican presence here in Moscow and re-establishing our legal rights in due course.

In the meantime, we rejoice in several new initiatives, such are the Barefoot Pastoral Care course which Fr. Arun will be leading, as well as new candidates coming forward for confirmation and training as lay worship leaders. God's work continues to blossom!

Nicolette Kirk



They say madness is doing the same thing twice, so people will make their own judgment on me becoming warden for a third time. When things are going well, you will hardly notice me, because everyone will feel loved, safe, and trusted to fulfil whatever role they have, without interference. I long to be hardly noticed, in the back row of St Andrew's, on the left.

Giles Walker

News from the choir

I joined the Choir in early 2025 after the call by Father Arun to those who were interested in "swelling the choir numbers" in our beloved St. Andrew's Church. Having a long background in the choir of the Anglican Church of St. Paul's Cathedral, Namirembe, joining the choir was a joy and a pleasure. The choir has continually evolved both in its membership and in its musicianship and liturgy without losing sight of the spirituality of the music and the ministry of the same to the in-person congregation and to the online community.



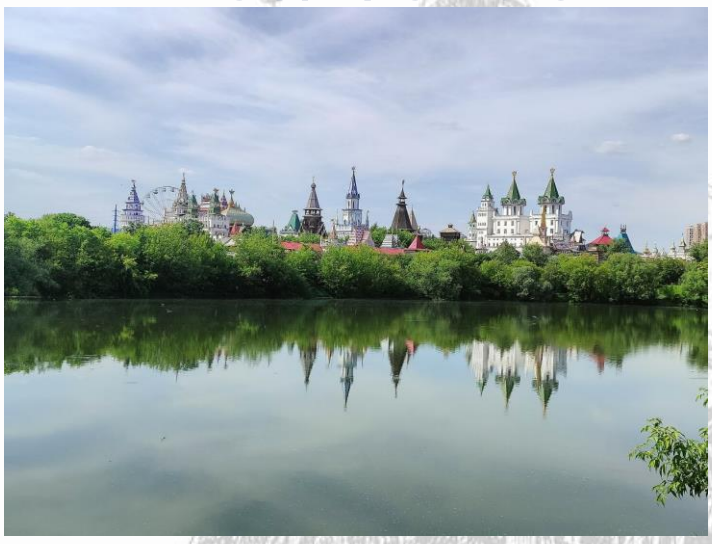
Ezekiel Bunjo – Director of Music

As of today, the choir boasts of a group of committed members, firm in their faith and using music as a platform for showcasing God's many attributes such as in the recently introduced 'Praise & Worship' session at the beginning of each service as well as the greater selection of congregation-friendly hymns during the course of the services. It is an honour to serve the Lord with my voice and talents and I pray that the choir together with the rest of the church, will continue to rise to even greater heights despite the prevailing challenges and may the name of the Lord be praised now and always. AMEN.

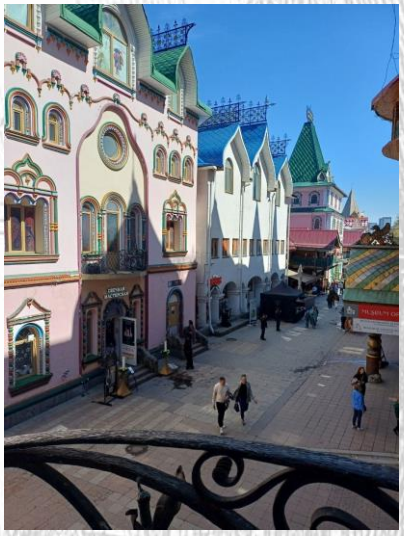
Psalm 150:1-6

1. Praise the Lord!
Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens!
2. Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his excellent greatness!
3. Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
4. Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
5. Praise him with sounding cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
6. Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

New Venue



While nothing will ever replace our true home at St. Andrew's, the experiences of the past months have shown the congregation that the church is so much more than just bricks and mortar. We have been fortunate in finding a home at the Izmailovo Kremlin, which can fit approximately 50 people in person (we managed just over that at our Pentecost service) and has facilities for refreshments and fellowship after the service.



The inner Kremlin

Children's activities





Sunday morning worship



The altar



Fr. Arun and others join on Zoom.

Holy Week and Easter Services



We were very fortunate to have our archdeacon, Ven. Leslie Nathaniel, join us for the Easter Triduum. Fr. Leslie took the services on Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday, which gave many of our congregation their first opportunity to take Communion for several months.







The Easter Sunday service was rendered even more special, as Fr. Leslie was able to baptise Sherman that day.



Foot-washing on Maundy Thursday

During his visit, Fr. Leslie was also able to meet with Metropolitan Anthony of the Russian Orthodox Church and pass on Archbishop Sarah's Easter greeting to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill.

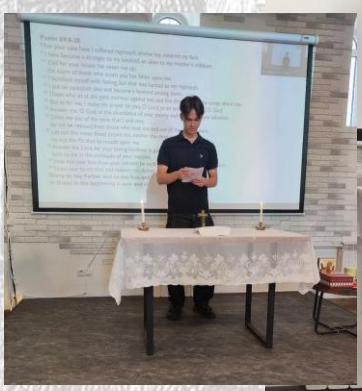


Lay-led services

Sunday worship continues in a variety of formats. Fortunately, Fr. Leslie consecrated a significant number of hosts when he was in Moscow, which we have been able to use as Reserved Sacrament, distributed – with the Bishop's permission - by our long-standing congregation member, crucifer and Coptic deacon, Eskedar.



Services are generally led by two members from the Lay Worship Leader team, with other members of the congregation reading lessons and leading the prayers.





Fr. Arun is always present at our services to give the Absolution and Benediction, as well as to support the congregation with words of welcome and additional notices. Fr. Arun will generally preach twice a month, giving the members of the Lay Worship Leader team the opportunity to share a homily on the other Sundays.



On an average Sunday, we will have something over 40 members present in person with 10-15 joining us on Zoom.

New chalices



We have been blessed by the gift of two new chalices by our brother Nikolai Matvienko, who is a master craftsman and professional gold- and silversmith. These two chalices are to replace the ones he previously donated to St. Andrew's, but which have now been appropriated by the group occupying the church building. The new chalices were first used at the Easter Sunday service, when they were blessed by Fr. Leslie.



Russian-language Bible study







Our Russian-language Gospel reading group has kept meeting, even though our church has been closed and we have been forced out. At present, we are continuing to read the Gospel of Mark slowly and thoughtfully, praying for one another and learning to be Christ's disciples as best we can. Recently, we had the wonderful experience of holding a joint session with the Youth group, and we hope to repeat it in the future.

Camilla Murashova

Youth Fellowship

The Youth Group at St Andrew's continues to be a welcoming place where young people can grow together in faith and friendship.

Every Sunday after the main service, we gather in the church to study the Bible together. Each week, one of the leaders, Lucas or Darian, prepares the session by selecting a Bible passage and guiding the discussion. We explore the main themes of the text, share our reflections, ask questions, and encourage one another as we seek to apply God's Word to our daily lives. We also take time to share prayer requests and pray together, strengthening our sense of community and supporting one another in our Christian journey.





Every third Sunday of the month, the Youth Group also takes an active role in leading the Service of the Word. Young people participate by reading the Scriptures, leading the prayers, welcoming the congregation, and serving in other parts of the service. This is a valuable opportunity for them to grow in serving the Lord, develop their gifts and talents, and take an active part in the life and ministry of the church.

One of the greatest blessings of our Youth Group is its international character. Young people from different countries and cultural backgrounds come together, united by our shared faith in Christ. It is a wonderful opportunity to build meaningful friendships while learning from one another's experiences and perspectives.



With Fr. Leslie at Easter

On 7 June, we held our first Youth Group picnic to welcome in the Moscow summer. It was a joyful afternoon of fellowship, conversation, games, and shared food in a relaxed setting. The picnic gave everyone the opportunity to spend time together outside of our regular Bible study and further strengthen the friendships within our group.

We are grateful to God for the growth of our Youth Group and warmly welcome any young adults who would like to join us after the Sunday service. Whether you are new to the church or have been attending for years, you are always welcome.

Lucas Garcia



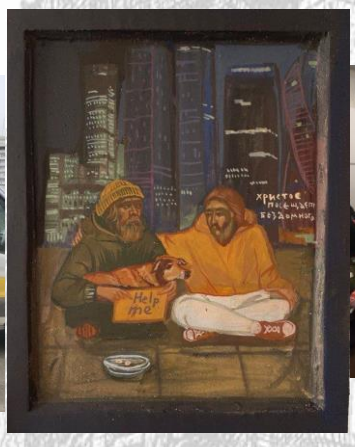


Trinity Sunday picnic

Charitable Outreach

Despite the many obstacles, the congregation has continued to support a number of outreach projects. On Easter Day, we maintained our long-standing tradition of collecting Russian Easter cakes (kulichi), which were shared with the 'Nochlezhka' charity for the homeless.









In April, we also helped our friends at the Noah's House refuge by providing baby formula for their nursing mothers.

Our regular pub quizzes in aid of Mary's Meals have become a firm fixture in the Moscow ex-pat calendar. Our latest event raised enough funds to ensure that more than 18 children receive a nourishing school meal for a whole year.

