




Pearl of Great Price

2016 30th Anniversary arrangements
are 'in progress'.

A bronze sculpture of a person, possibly a woman, sitting on a stool. The person is holding a large, glowing pearl in their hands. The sculpture is dark and textured, with the pearl being a bright, smooth white sphere. The person's face is not defined, and their body is rounded and abstract. The stool is simple, with three legs and a circular top.

Our
Pearl is
growing
See p14

Being Alongside / APCMH

the quarterly magazine of *Being Alongside / APCMH*
a charity supporting those living with mental ill health

In This Issue

Annual General Meeting	3
Front Page: <i>Jamie's Bon Voyage</i>	4
Poem: <i>Scars</i>	6
Peter Gilbert Memorial Lecture	7
<i>The Good Life: Tips on Combating Fear</i>	8
<i>Meditation and ...</i>	11
Prayer: <i>In Times of Depression</i>	14
Fancy a Drop In?	16
Need Funding?	17
Help is at Hand	17
Join? Subscribe?	18
The Who and What of <i>Being Alongside / APCMH</i>	19
The Open Door Cafe	20

Thank You, Contributors.

We love your poems. We love your events news. We love your snippets of humour. And especially we love your letters, tips, hints and wrinkles on how to, not just survive mental illness, but thrive within it, or maybe even because of it. So if you can recommend a strategy, relationship, ritual, tv / radio programme, sport, diet, pet, colour etc. that helps you, you might be able to help others. That's what *Being Alongside / APCMH* can mean. Thanks in anticipation.

Editor

Everyone is most welcome to *attend the
Annual General Meeting
of
Being Alongside / APCMH
on
Sat 9 May, 2015 2pm - 4pm.
at
St Andrew's
United Reformed Church
Frognal Lane, Hampstead, NW3 7DY

* please note only Members are allowed to vote.

Travel:

139 bus from Waterloo - get off at end of line ie. West Hampstead - walk up hill to West End Lane.

328 or C11 buses

West Hampstead on the Jubilee Line, then make for West End Lane Thameslink.

Map on p5.

Google map: <https://www.google.com/maps/@51.553176,-0.188648,17z>



Front Page

Bon Voyage

We included a piece from Jean Vanier, the founder of the L'Arche communities, in our Autumn 2014 Newsletter which is available on-line if you have lost your copy.

Over a weekend in mid-January I took the ferry from Newhaven to Dieppe and joined a group from Southwark Cathedral celebrating a new accord with their 'twin' Cathedral at Rouen. A rare example of Anglicans mingling with their Catholic counterparts in a demonstration of unity. On the Monday - on a whim - I drove to Trosly-Breuil near Compiègne where Jean Vanier lives, not far from the original L'Arche. A few inches on the map turned out to be a 150 kms trek cross-country on minor roads.

I had written to Jean in my best Franglais warning him of my impending visit but on arrival it turned out that he was in London being fêted in the House of Lords and speaking on the *Today* programme! I had missed the great man by a day but the staff and people there were most welcoming and kind to this itinerant Englishman.

Indeed I was treated to lunch in the main house, shown round the two chapels, the library and Père Philippe's grave in the garden meeting guests and volunteers from all over the world.

I was able to write Jean a card and left my copy of his (and John Swinton's) recent book *'Mental Health, The Inclusive Church Resource'* which he has graciously returned signed with the inscription ... "*to Jamie, peace and love to you, Jean*". This becomes a prized possession alongside my copy of *'the Broken Body'* which he signed for me back in 1995.

As ever I droned on to all and sundry about my disparate life and occasional bouts of work in the field of mental health. What I really want to share with you though, are the words expressed by Alana (pictured above with Jamie), who was the 'Person Responsible' that day at L'Arche in Jean's absence. As I left to head back to the ferry in my 15 year old Mercedes roadster, (pictured overleaf outside La Ferme de Trosly) she said to me, but inferring all of us at **BA** / APCMH:



"God bless you for working with people who others fear".

"Love and fear; that's all there is", I replied, "but love is greater".

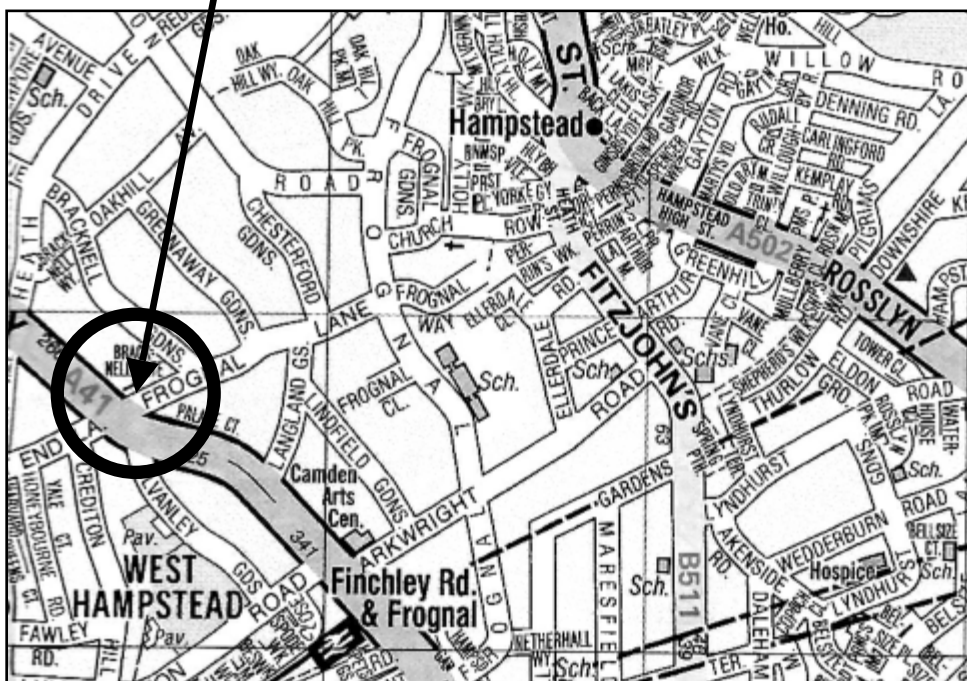
Jamie Summers

Chair

A.G.M.

on Sat 9 May, 2015, 2pm - 4pm.

**St Andrew's United Reformed Church,
Frognal Lane, Hampstead, NW3 7DY.**



Poem: 'Scars'

*A crack - torn and blistered- stared out of the gap;
little slabs of ointment gingerly touched the surface.
Drops of water glistened unnoticeable.*

*The wound had torn down within - unmerciful.
Anger screeched out of her, pulling the crack wider
She felt helpless, a void -
a black hole impenetrable.*

*Suddenly, sunlight beamed through her window
protruding, beckoning -
a glimpse of heaven 's purity,
Unbelievable.*

*Past hurt wedges wiped clean by the sunlight
"Forgive them they know not what they do "*

*Could this really be true?
Divine warmth, His promise - was healing possible?
Her crack snapped back tight, winding slowly together again.*

*The sun shown brighter and purer
She felt healed:
Forgiveness is still attainable.*

Claire Stone
2006



SpiritualityForum
THE NATIONAL SPIRITUALITY AND MENTAL HEALTH FORUM

The Professor Peter Gilbert Memorial Lecture

A Compassionate Approach to Spiritual and Mental Well-being

Prof Paul Gilbert OBE

This lecture will be in two parts. The first will be an overview of an evolutionary approach to compassion and the implications for spiritual thinking. The second part will offer participants opportunities to practice breathing and exercises focused on the development of the compassionate self.

Prof Peter Gilbert was a pioneer in bringing spirituality and spiritual needs into the field of mental health. He was also a lovely man and embodied a gentle and loving spirituality. Peter and I co-presented on several occasions and had many enjoyable discussions, even though I was quite a hard-line evolutionist. One of the challenges to spirituality is the fact that we are evolved biological beings. As such we come into the world for a relatively short time to flourish, reproduce, decay and die, sometime slowly and painfully. We exist in a world full of disease processes that can devastate populations, and we are susceptible to injury. The way the human brain has evolved means it is capable of committing the most horrendous cruelties as well as being vulnerable to a range of mental health problems.

The challenge for humanity is to understand and come to terms with the complex and contradictory evolutionary realities of having both body and brain. I will address some of these issues and how we can utilise systems within ourselves to find a source of compassion in spite of the fact that life can be filled with suffering. This is a view that is particularly represented in the Buddhist spiritual traditions but increasingly in others too. Our ability to feel compassion for self and others is linked to how we work with our own minds and in particular find places of peace and inner calmness. I will take participants through a series of breathing and focusing exercises that will help stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system and provide a grounding for compassion. We will then look at some of the practices for building a compassionate identity. There will be time for questions at the end.

Biography

Paul Gilbert BPSs PhD, OBE is Professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Derby and Consultant Clinical Psychologist at the Derbyshire Health Care Foundation Trust. He has researched evolutionary approaches to psychopathology for over 35 years focusing on the treatment of shame-based difficulties - for which compassion focused therapy was developed. In 2003 he was president of the BABCP and a member of the first NICE committee on depression. He has written/edited 20 books and over 150 papers. In 2006 he established the Compassionate Mind Foundation charity with the mission statement "To promote wellbeing through the scientific understanding and application of compassion" (www.compassionatemind.co.uk). He was awarded an OBE in March 2011.

Thursday 21st May 2015 @ 1.45pm to 4.45pm

MAHATMA GANDHI HALL

Indian YMCA, 41 Fitzroy Street, London, W1T 6AQ

There is a small charge of £26.50 (or £6.50 for the unwaged) which includes tea/coffee/biscuits

To immediately book (a small fee applies) and reserve your place, follow the link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-compassionate-approach-to-spirituality-and-mental-well-being-tickets-15197031731>

Further information: www.spiritualitymentalhealth.org.uk

or by email to: brian.bingham@spiritualitymentalhealth.org.uk

Some practical help for the fearful from the web. It's promoting an online meditation course, but this 'taster' might be helpful to readers.

The Good Life Issue 119

Putting on a brave front often hides inner fears that block you from knowing who you really are and realizing your potential more fully.

It's OK to be afraid... it's actually a valuable emotion! Fear alerts you not only to physical danger - thank goodness for that! - but to any inner limitations that you might have.

If you think you're not good enough, for example, you will fear approaching your boss for a raise. If you believe you're not that talented, you will fear putting your work out into the marketplace.

So it's good to feel fear. Emotional fear is just as powerful as physical (survival) fear, and the response is the same: fight, flight or freeze. The trick is, of course, not giving in to emotional fear, and taking action anyway.

You don't need to put on a brave front that masks your fear. While it's true that faking it does help you feel more brave, it does not eliminate the fear (which may pop up again later). **It's better to acknowledge your fear and spend a little effort in analyzing and eliminating it.**

Here's how:

This breathing exercise helps you avoid that automatic primal response and gives you a chance to take positive action. If you do this often enough, it will eliminate many of the emotional fears you have.

When fear starts your knees knocking and your teeth chattering, find a quiet place and breathe. Give yourself a few deep, long breaths, focusing on the EXHALE. Fear makes your body tense up and it's difficult to breathe deeply, so by focusing on the exhale, you relax your muscles. The body will take care of the inhale.

Then, acknowledge that you are feeling afraid. But instead of saying "I am afraid," say "I feel afraid." You ARE not fear. You don't want to embody fear. You are simply feeling that emotion, so say that. "I feel afraid." Feelings, as you know, come and go - which means, your fear will come and go as well.

Now, on the exhale, breathe that fear out. Let that feeling go.

When you feel a bit calmer, think about WHY you may be feeling that particular fear.

Ask yourself, is that fear founded in reality, or just something you've been hanging on to like an old security blanket? Is it a childhood fear based on you just not knowing how to navigate the world... or worse, a hand-me-down fear from your parents?

Most importantly, does that fear SERVE you? Does it help you? Is it even relevant to your life right now? Do you AGREE with it? Do you have to feel afraid of this thing?

Now, on the inhale, take in a more positive outcome. Just turn your mind to an equally imagined, but POSITIVE potential outcome. What can go right?

Inhale that positivity. Let yourself luxuriate in that positive mental image.

Exhale the fear.

Inhale and mentally rehearse what can go right. Think to yourself, "Yes. I can do this!"

Exhale what can go wrong.

Inhale and mentally rehearse a great outcome. Again - "Yes! I can do this!"

Exhale negativity.

Keep going like this, mentally rehearsing the outcome you want and AFFIRMING it with an emphatic "Yes! I can do this!" This may take a few minutes before you feel the courage to take action, or a few months if the fear is deeply ingrained. Either way, this WORKS if you give it the time and effort necessary.

Michael Mackenzie

P.S. Here's how one of our valued members turned fear into happiness...

My fear of death and therefore rejection of being alive had made me depressed, constantly anxious, a heavy drinker, resentful, angry, lost, confused, helpless with no social confidence etc for as long as I can remember but now I am actually happy!

All it takes is that bit of space that comes from being so totally relaxed.

Life makes sense now, and is truly enjoyable for the first time.

To read more please see the following link...

<http://www.project-meditation.org/community/project-meditation-success-stories/2095-actually-happy.html#post11027>

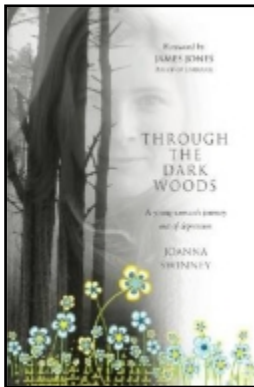
Help from the Web

Do have a look at Katharine Welby-Roberts's Word Press Blog
www.katharinewelby.com

As the Archbishop of Canterbury's daughter, she is brave indeed to 'put her head above the parapet'.

Also, try Jo Swinney's at www.joswinney.com a writer, speaker, commentator etc. *Through the Dark Woods* is her latest book and the Amazon write-up is:

This book is based on the author's own experience of wrestling with depression, and her story carries the book along.



Using this structure she discusses the stigma associated with depression. She talks of the importance of correct diagnosis, and the challenges of day to day survival.

She takes an honest look at the temptation to suicide, and how depression affects one's prayer life and relationship to God.

Where are the sources of comfort and healing? Jo Swinney considers biblical characters subject to depression, and argues for the importance of sharing stories.

Finally she asks, what does her depression teach her?

(Ed: can our readers offer any tips?)

Jamie, our Chair, has been updating our Introductory Leaflet. It is now available as hard copy and downloadable from our website:
www.beingalongside.org.uk.

Also available on the website is a Codicil for your existing Will, should you wish to make a bequest to BA / APCMH.

You are most welcome to join us for our A.G.M on Saturday 9 May, 2-4pm, St Andrews URC, Frogmore Lane, NW3. See p 5.

The following is another excerpt from Jim Green's booklet

Mercy, Not Sacrifice

published under the *Meditation and Mental Health* series by Meditation:
isbn 978-0-9571040-3-7. Tel: 0207 278 2070. The previous excerpt
appeared in Autumn 2014 edition, p4.

Meditation and Your Body

Many would describe all forms of stress - from anxiety to psychosis to addiction - as the lack of fit between our minds and our bodies. Most of us choose - without realising it - to live at one remove from the fullness of our bodily reality. For many people the experience of really being in their bodies is just too uncomfortable to risk. The choice is then made, nearly always at an unconscious level, to cut off. Again, many props are at hand to help us with this: alcohol, food, TM drugs, nicotine, the virtual reality of the digital world... An unhealthy relationship with any of these can aid us in our flight from our bodies.

In meditation we have the opportunity to reclaim our birthright, to feel at ease with our bodies, with other bodies, and to have a much less anguished relationship with the entire physical world of which we are an inseparable part. The Christian revelation is above all one of Incarnation. At the heart of the Christian vision, and of our experience, is this truth: *the Word became flesh*. There is no separation between Spirit and Matter. The visible is utterly penetrated by the invisible. God is fully human.

Meditation then becomes an incarnational practice. Our simple, but demanding, task is to become fully bodily present. To start with, this will mean sitting, noticing and witnessing the tensions, aches and pains that we carry in our bodies. If we are able to stay with this, then gradually that disabling gap between mind and body will diminish. We are on our way towards becoming more fully human.

It may not be possible though, or even advisable, to continue with the practice of sitting meditation while certain states of mind persist. Meditation practice can itself become a way of dissociating from the here and now, the kind of 'holy floating' that Father John Main warns against. Faithful persistence can take you through this phase. There are also other embodied forms of prayer which will ground you and connect you with your body and the rest of the physical world which, at times like this, is one of your greatest teachers.

Yoga, Tai Chi, Qi Gong, gardening, dancing, chanting, swimming, running - exercise of all kinds, singing, drawing, painting, walking - and walking meditation - are all physical activities. It's impossible to do them without connecting with your body. With the right motivation and increasing mindfulness all these activities become more like playful work, and so more prayerful. They remind us that everything in our lives - not just our meditation - can become a prayer.

Meditation and Sanity

The practice of meditation leads us towards the first level of sanity - the lessening of symptoms and the recovery of our physical, mental and emotional Wellbeing. Beyond this, more doors open towards the greater sanity which is in truth our starting point and our source - an experience of unity in a simple and silent relationship of Love.

This does not mean that once our practice of meditation is well established we shall forever be without symptoms or periods of anxiety, depression, even despair. Along the way we will have times of self-doubt:

*I claim to believe in Jesus Christ and the healing love of God.
I meditate twice a day. But I still feel so lost and depressed. I must be
really sick, I must be really bad, not worthy of love and happiness.*

Often when we deliver such harsh verdicts on ourselves and our prospects we are unconsciously echoing negative messages that we have been given earlier in our lives. If we have not felt accepted, it is all too easy to end up believing that we are simply not good enough, and that we must strive all the time to be better, to be worthy. Unfortunately this is also the kind of relationship that many people have been led to develop with the church, with religion and so - devastatingly - with God.

It is just such relationships of judgement and guilt, both imagined and real, that are at the root of much of our mental anguish. Harsh religion, like all harsh institutions and harsh relationships, has much to answer for, Jesus makes it plain that this is not how it is in his dispensation, in the Kingdom which we all share with him. He comes explicitly to overturn the evil of harsh judgement and self-hatred. He tells the Pharisees who, like our own internal critics, are all too ready to condemn:

*I tell you, there is something greater than the temple here, If you had
known what that text means, "I require mercy, not sacrifice", you
would not have condemned the innocent.*

Matthew 12: 5-7

Only a few verses before this Jesus spells out that our birthright, in relationship with him, is an experience where guilt, shame and lonely, thankless struggle are known, met and transformed. It stands as a clear picture of true sanity and an invitation to willingly join in his prayer:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Matthew 11: 28-30

We can hear this as our invitation to start, or restart, our meditation practice. In this practice We learn to celebrate our faith and our lives as expressions not of obligation but of joy, not of power but of friendship, not of judgement but of Love. Here we encounter the ultimate sanity, which John Main has expressed with great simplicity:

God is; God is Love; and his Love dwells in our hearts.

This, however, is not the nature of the practice, and it is not where the practice leads us. The solitude of meditation is quite different from the isolation of mental anguish. When we meditate, none of us is individually ‘achieving’ anything and none of us is individually ‘getting’ anything. What we are doing is simply making ourselves available to the flow of Love which at every moment creates and sustains all Being. This is what Jesus gives us, at the very point that he seems to be leaving us alone:

Peace is my parting gift to you, my own peace such as the world Cannot give. Set your troubled hearts at rest and banish your fears.

John 14:27

In meditation we are acknowledging this Peace - no matter how anxious or depressed we may feel at this very moment - as our true identity and, as such, that we are all members of one another, one body, united in Christ.

The meditation community, with thousands of groups meeting regularly across the world, offers us opportunity to discover this within the very fabric of our everyday lives. Whether meditating alone or with others, the deep sanity of this practice invites us to experience the real meaning of solitude:

The more we are alone with God, the more we are united with one another

Thomas Merton

This is the solitude that brings us true friendship.

Prayer in Times of Depression

*Oh God, am I falling into your hands
- or out of them?*

Show me a way of knowing - show me.

Am I to stay in this death

Or be brought to Life?

Show me a way of knowing - show me.

You know me

- that I do not command from power,

- that I do not beg from servility,

- that I do not whine for sympathy;

I ask you from the centre

Where the pain is,

Where the child is,

Where the love is.

I know you will not leave me alone

Without a way.

Helen Greeves

For your Diaries:

***Being Alongside / APCMH 30th (Pearl) Anniversary
Wholeness and Healing Service at Southwark Cathedral
Sunday 15th May, 2016.***

***We will be welcomed by Revd. Canon Gilly Myers,
the Cathedral's Precentor.***

Fancy A Drop In?

This is a brief summary of a leaflet doing the rounds in Westminster. If you know and can recommend other facilities where people are *Being Alongside*, do let the Editor know.

Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church

235 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EP

Bus: 134; Tube: Tottenham Court Road

020 7240 0544 / church@bloomsbury.org.uk

www.bloomsbury.org.uk

Weekday drop-in for tea, coffee and biscuits Mon-Fri 10am-4pm.

Sunday lunch Sunday lunch from 1pm - 2.30pm at the Friendship Centre.

Tickets are available on a first come, first served basis from 10.15am on Sunday.

On the 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month they host a mental health group between 11am and 2.30pm

Methodist Central Hall Westminster

Emmanuel Room, (Entrance) Methodist Central Hall,
Matthew Parker Street, Westminster.

Buses: 11, 24, 148, 211

Tube: St James's Park, Westminster

In conjunction with the Mental Health Chaplain of the Westminster Diocese, for the last year the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster has been offering a "Drop-In" on the **2nd and 4th Fridays in the month 2.30pm-4pm.**

In consultation with professionals, users and volunteers it was decided to provide a safe space for people who were mentally unwell to meet. It is an informal drop in, with lots of tea, coffee and biscuits, and we just let the conversation flow. We are happy to provide the service even if only one person comes and we do not really want a large number as this would change the dynamics. We are blessed with the Chaplain's commitment to come, volunteers from the church and a comfy room to meet in.

The Drop-In continues to meet on the 2nd and 4th Fridays in the month and whilst numbers fluctuate there is a good atmosphere and many come. Looked after by Daphne or Beryl and Roy, tea and coffee and biscuits are

provided and the group talks and shares in a very informal way. Rev'd Neil Bunker makes the time to come and it is a good place to be for an hour and a half (2.30pm-4pm).

Sister Denise

For further information please contact Sister Denise on
02076 543871 / denise.creed@mchw.org.uk;

Saint Marylebone Church

17 Marylebone Rd, NW1 5LT

Buses: 18, 27, 30, 205, 453

Tube: Baker St, Regents Park

020 7935 5066 / healing@stmarylebone.org

Meeting with Coffee

on the 1st and 3rd Fridays in the month, 11 - 12.30.

Emmanuel Church

389E Harrow Road, London, W9 3NA (opposite *Iceland*)

Buses: 18, 28, 288; Tube: Westbourne Park

020 8960 4195

Coffee Most Wednesdays 10.30 - 12.30

Need Funding? Try:

Being Alongside / APCMH's Treasurer:

02033 972497, then select option 1.

And / Or

The Dominic Beer Memorial Trust:

56 Marmora Road, London SE22 0RY

Email: contact@dominicbeermemorialtrust.com

Web: <http://www.dominicbeermemorialtrust.com>

Help is at Hand

Sane: (6 -11pm each night) **08457 678000**

Rethink Advisory Service: **08454 560455**

Young Minds Parents' Helpline: **08088 025544**
for help for young people up to 25. 9.30 - 4 weekdays, free calls

Pastoral Care for Carers (Margaret): **01642 865668**

Pastoral Care for Sufferers (Catherine): **01642 877936**

MIND: (Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm) pastoral help: **0300 123 3393**
legal help: **0300 466 6463**

Maytree: (24 / 7 + answerphone) **020 7263 7070**

If you have found a help resource, please advise so we can share.

The Barnabas Drop - In Sessions

*'Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas
(which means Son of Encouragement)' ...Acts 4:36*

St. Paul's Community Project is affiliated to *Being Alongside / APCMH*

Mondays 3pm - 5pm

Plus various activities: Table tennis, dominoes, scrabble, art / craft,
poetry reading, tea / sandwiches / cakes and chat.

Wednesday 10.30am - 12noon

A more reflective discussion time with tea and biscuits, an opportunity to all
to share concerns or to receive one-to-one support (by appointment).

Free. All Welcome.

Venue: St Paul's Church Centre, 5 Rossmore Rd, NW1 6NJ
(5 mins walk from Marylebone Station; buses 139 & 189 stop outside)

call: 020 7724 8517

*When he arrived & saw the wonderful things God was doing, he was filled with excitement & joy,
and encouraged the believers to stay close to The Lord whatever the cost. Barnabas was a kindly
person, full of the Holy Spirit & strong in faith. As a result large numbers of people were added to
the Lord.*

(Acts 11:19-24)

Being Alongside / APCMH

Registered E & W charity: 1081642 UK limited liability company: 3957730

Membership / Subscription Form

Please complete this form and return to:

**B.A. / APCMH Treasurer / Membership Secretary ,
St Paul's Church Centre, 5 Rossmore Road, NW1 6NJ**

Title & Name:

Address:.....

..... Postcode:.....

Tel: Day: Eve: Mobile:

I enclose fee for the year of: please write year in:

Please Tick the Membership category you'd like:

(one) Standard £12

(one) Concession £5

(one) Group (5 copies) £25

Donation to funds - please write amount in:

Total (please make cheques out to 'APCMH')

Gift Aid Declaration (for Tax Payers):

I am a tax payer and would like BA / APCMH to treat this, & all future payments, as a Gift Aid Donation. (In any tax year you must pay an amount of income or capital gains tax of at least equal to the amount of tax that we reclaim on your payment which is currently 25p for every £1 you give.)

Please Sign & Date:

The Who & What of B. A. / APCMH

Patrons:

Professor Andrew Sims.
The Revd. Canon Roger Royle

To contact us, call 02033 972 497 plus one of 3 options:

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ajpsummers@ntlworld.com

Co-ordinator:

Pam Freeman: 02086 473 678

Or write to: B.A. / APCMH Treasurer / Secretary,
c/o St Paul's Church Centre,
5 Rossmore Road, London NW1 6NJ

'Being Alongside' is the working name for the 'Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health', a Christian based, voluntary association of individual members and affiliated groups who recognise the importance of spiritual values and support in mental health. It has a network of supporters throughout the UK It welcomes and encourages people whatever their faith or belief system. Governed by its National Committee, BA / APCMH is primarily concerned to promote and encourage "being alongside" people experiencing mental or emotional distress.

E&W Registered Charity: 1081642 UK Registered Company: 3957730

All submissions welcomed by the Editor: e-mail: editor@pastoral.org.uk
post: 58 Phillip Road, Folkestone, Kent. CT19 4PZ

Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the organisation.

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**St Marylebone Parish Church
welcomes you**

The Open Door Café



**Meeting at St Marylebone Parish Church,
for afternoon tea, short talks, fellowship and conversation.
Complementary refreshments and free to attend.
All are welcome.**

**Next meetings; Tuesdays 10th and 24th March, 14th and 28th April
2.30-4pm**

For information, contact Fr Edward Thornley, chaplain@stmarylebone.org, 020 7935 7315