

Canary Wharf  
Multifaith Chaplaincy



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# In conversation with the Chaplaincy

VOLUME 8 • ISSUE 1



## WELCOME

from this issue's editor:

Mark Ball  
Retail Chaplain

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every Monday

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In this edition we take a look behind the microphone and showcase the Chaplaincy's long-running, weekly podcast published every Monday!

**CHAT WITH A CHAPLAIN - 020 7 477 1073**

We are always available, face-to-face, by phone or online



*Editorial*

## The Podcast Edition

Every week a member of the Canary Wharf Multifaith Chaplaincy team prepares a short podcast episode that is published every Monday.

Primarily designed to engage, support, and challenge those working on the Wharf, the podcasts offer a brief reflective comment on a topic or theme of the chaplain's choosing. They tend to fall into one of three categories: faith and festivals, life and work; and chaplaincy business engagement.

The series has been running for five years now, and we wanted to use this Newsletter to raise awareness of the offering - and encourage new listeners to subscribe!

To give you a flavour of what is on offer, we are showcasing here a selection of edited texts - with links to the original archived episodes, hoping that they whet your appetite for more!

Listeners are notified of each new episode by subscribing to our email notification or following our posts on LinkedIn. Why not join them via the links below?

Happy listening!

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*Faith and festivals*

## Purim – a call to action

*Celebrating the recent feast of [Purim](#), guest podcaster **Rabbi Stanley Coten** opens up its meaning as a call for us all to consider.*

We live in an uncertain world, a chaotic world. Whether it is geopolitics, questions of national concern, or issues in our own neighbourhoods, the way forward does not always seem clear.

The story of Purim, found in the Book of Esther, is one of survival, resilience, and hidden miracles. Beyond its historical and religious significance, it carries a universal message that resonates across ages, cultures and beliefs.

The dramatic tale of courage, strategy, and the triumph of justice over oppression unfolds in ancient Persia, where an unexpected turn of events makes Esther queen, as the villain Haman rises to power, plotting the destruction of the Jewish people. (*The Hamantaschen cookies pictured above are a traditional reminder of his eventual comeuppance – Ed.*)

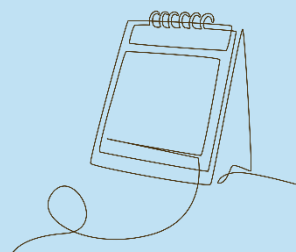
What makes Purim particularly profound is that it is one of only a few biblical stories where the divine is never explicitly mentioned. It is human action - Esther's bravery, Mordechai's wisdom, and the people's unity - that leads to salvation. The responsibility for creating change rests in human hands. We may not always witness clear signs of divine intervention, but we are still called to act with courage and conviction.

Purim reminds us that even in a world where the divine may feel hidden and the path forward unclear, miracles can be found in the choices we make and in the courage we summon. Purim, then, is more than a Jewish holiday; it is a call to action for all people to confront oppression.

### Celebrating faith in the Wharf

For the 2025 Faith Festivals Calendar [follow the link](#).

Activities in the Canary Wharf Multifaith Prayer Room [check here](#).





Osama Madlom on Unsplash

*Life and work***Art on the Wharf**

Here is the opening of **Revd Mark Ball's** reflection on Crossrail Place's video installation [Transitions](#), featuring Nelson's Column.

It was in this week in 1843 that Nelson was hoisted to the top of his famous 51m Column. The week before, fourteen workers, sponsors, and dignitaries had ascended before him to celebrate the £5 million equivalent project nearing completion with a steak and champagne dinner. Another thing I didn't know, is that the victorious Admiral has a chip on his shoulder – after being struck by lightning in 1896. And that was unfortunately his good left shoulder!

*Faith and festivals***Lent**

**Deacon Wayne O'Reilly** shared his thoughts on [Lenten](#) preparations for Easter.

Lent offers an opportunity to deepen my faith, engage more fully with the teachings of Jesus, and prepare myself for the celebration of Easter.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts for forty days, leading up to Easter Sunday. This period mirrors Jesus' forty days of fasting in the desert and serves as a time for self-examination and spiritual discipline. Personally, Lent invites me to look inward and assess my relationship with God. It encourages me to consider my actions, intentions, and spiritual health. This contemplation fosters a sense of humility, reminding me that I am called to grow closer to God, to seek forgiveness for my shortcomings, and to strive for personal holiness.

Lent serves as a preparation for the celebration of Easter, the most significant event in the Christian calendar. As I journey through Lent, I can look forward to the joy of Easter, celebrating the promise of new life.



Tim Gouw on Unsplash

*Life and work***World Book Day**

Lead Chaplain **Revd Alanna Harris** podcast for [World Book Day](#) this year, connecting the books we read and the lives we lead.

Reading has many benefits, not least the way that books can shape and form us. From childhood classics to the more complex writing we might read as adults, a good book can invite us see life from a different perspective. It can inform us, challenge us, guide us and help us understand our place in the world.

So, in the spirit of World Book Day this week, I want to ask: What stories shape your life? What are the texts, the books, the narratives that guide you, that give you wisdom, and challenge you to grow?

For those of us in the business community, the books we read often help us navigate strategy, leadership, and personal development. But the stories we tell ourselves — those often come from deeper places. And for many of us, those stories find their roots in sacred texts.

Sacred texts, can offer us a roadmap — not just for belief, but for how to live in a complex world. These texts shape how we think about life, relationships, and even the purpose of our work, guiding our actions, ethics, and decisions in ways that are as relevant in the boardroom as they are in our prayer life.

This idea of power of stories isn't limited to one tradition or belief system. In fact, here in the Canary Wharf Multifaith Chaplaincy, we've been engaging recently in Scriptural Reasoning, which is a practice where people from different faith traditions come together to explore and reflect on sacred texts. Through listening and sharing, we discover new depths in our own scriptures whilst also respecting and appreciating the wisdom of others. It's a powerful way stories from different traditions can coexist and be in dialogue with each other. As a multifaith team, we've valued learning from each other across our different traditions, and we're delighted to support forums and teams across the Wharf in doing the same.

Every story we encounter — whether from a book, sacred text, or conversation — has the potential to shape us, to reveal our humanity, and to build connection.





### *Life and work*

## Work-Life Balance

Last summer, **Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra** shared some practical wisdom on [work-life](#) balance.

Work-life balance is about creating a lifestyle that allows us to be productive at work and have the time and energy to enjoy our personal lives. This balance is essential for our mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual wellbeing. Failure to find it can lead to burnout, decreased productivity, and strained relationships.

Technology has blurred the lines between work and personal life, making it possible, and sometimes expected, to be available 24/7. This can create a constant sense of urgency and stress. Societal expectations and peer pressure often compel people to excel in their careers while also being perfect parents, partners, and friends. Failure to meet unrealistic standards can lead to an overwhelming sense of guilt.

Practical things like setting clear boundaries between work and personal time can help, setting specific hours for work or designating work-free spaces in our homes. We can identify our most important tasks and focus on them – and not be afraid to delegate. We can unplug from technology regularly and not check work emails after a certain time. We can make time for activities that help us feel good and rejuvenate us. For those of a religious faith, maintaining a strong spiritual connection with God helps them find solace and maintain a sense of purpose.

Achieving work-life balance is a continuous process that requires attention and effort. Making deliberate choices that prioritise both wellbeing and productivity, we can all take practical steps to create a more harmonious and fulfilling life.



### *Business engagement*

## Retail Chaplaincy

Lead Retail Chaplain **Revd Mark Ball** podcast about the work of the [retail](#) team, in the run-up to Christmas last year.

We are a small team of retail chaplains here on the Wharf. I am here three days a week – and our four volunteers Angela, Vincent, Jan, and Naima (*pictured l to r*) come in and give freely of their time, energy, and attention for three or four hours a week. A Buddhist, a Muslim, and Christians from three different traditions, we work together to support the wellbeing of all retail staff working here on the Estate in around four hundred shops, cafes, restaurants, bars, and leisure amenities - around 10,000 people!

Every week we focus on one area of the Estate, and each spend time visiting some of the retail outlets in that area. We are careful never to get in the way of staff serving customers and always step away if a customer approaches someone we are engaging with. We introduce ourselves and our confidential listening ear service and see where the conversation takes us.

People meeting us for the first time are often surprised to discover we exist, and a little disorientated by us asking them how they are, rather than wanting to buy anything from them! Conversations vary a great deal, from the superficially friendly to the opening up of deep personal questions and concerns. As chaplains we primarily listen, rather than talk. Being well listened to is a precious and a surprisingly rare thing in our world today. It always makes a difference in someone's day - and sometimes in someone's life.

Of course, many businesses have excellent, caring managers and effective employee support schemes. We offer a complimentary service, coming from an open faith perspective, attuned to the spiritual dimension of life beyond the physical and psychological, and with a good understanding of life on the Wharf, the pressures of retail, and the questions that play on people's minds and trouble people's hearts. There alongside someone as soon as it feels helpful to talk, we are listeners not counsellors but can and do signpost people to other services and accompany them through the process. We consistently make ourselves available, and over time build up meaningful pastoral relationships of openness and trust.



*Faith and festivals*  
**Remembrance**

Lead Chaplain **Revd Alanna Harris** ended her podcast on [Remembrance](#) Sunday last November with these words.

As we remember the sacrifices of those who fought for our freedom, we also reflect on the story of our nation. Each poppy worn is a symbol not just of loss, but of unity and resilience. It is a reminder that we are part of a larger tapestry, woven together by shared experiences and collective memories. By recalling the courage of those who came before us, we strengthen our own resolve to move forward together, united in purpose and understanding.

So let us commit to the act of remembering, reflecting on the stories of sacrifice and bravery that have shaped our world. Let us remember not just to honour the past, but to learn from it, ensuring the lessons of history guide our steps into the future. And may we find strength in our shared memory, inspiring us to work together for a better world.

If you would like to receive our newsletters, or read past editions, please click [here](#).

Wharf retailers are welcome to reach out to the team for any support [here](#).

Our Christian Chaplains offer a weekly Biblical Reflection – subscribe [here](#).



*Faith and festivals*  
**Ramadan**

**Shaykha Saleha Islam Bukhari** recorded a podcast earlier this year to share her reflections on the start of the blessed month of [Ramadan](#), its purpose, practices, and profound impact on the lives of Muslims worldwide.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. Throughout this month, Muslims greet each other with Ramadan Mubarak meaning Blessed Ramadan or Ramadan Karim, meaning Generous Ramadan, greetings that reflect the spirit of the month, which is worship, discipline, and charity.

Fasting in Ramadan is an obligation for all Muslims who have reached puberty, except for those who are ill, traveling, or face any form of difficulty. From dawn to sunset, Muslims abstain from food, all types of drinks (even water), and intimate relations. Each day begins with suhur, a pre-dawn meal shared with family, and ends with iftar, the breaking of the fast, often with dates and water.

But fasting is more than just avoiding food, it's about self-restraint, spiritual purification, and strengthening one's connection with God. In addition to the five daily prayers, Muslims observe Tarawih, a special night prayer offered throughout Ramadan, with particular emphasis on the last ten nights. Many Muslims dedicate extra time to reciting and reflecting on the Quran, to praying, and to seeking God's forgiveness. They also try to minimise distractions and increase acts of kindness and charity. Ramadan teaches us to purify our bodies, minds and hearts.

**Why not listen to our weekly podcast?**  
 We have a new five-minute podcast every Monday – [bookmark](#) us for a regular listen!

**Fancy a chat?**

All it takes is a quick message. A Chaplain will respond and try to meet with you the same day, or as soon as is mutually convenient. We can meet face-to-face, chat online, message, or email. Whatever works for you. [Contact a chaplain!](#)