

# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

May 2021

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*Due to the limits on activity during the pandemic there are no other reports this year, though any relevant matters are covered in the above reports.*

*A financial report will be presented separately with the accounts.*



The Diocese of  
Southwark

1 of 8



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

### Vicar's Report

The seven months since my last report have been mostly in the second lock-down, but with occasions of re-opening and special moments such as Christmas and Easter. Back in October when we held our last APCM we were hopeful that the pandemic was easing – we had been holding in-person worship for several weeks, had successfully trialled 'Cafe Church' and I was in the process of booking preachers for the new year to help guide our Mission Action Planning. But shortly after we were back in lock-down and wondering when it would all end.

The lock-down has forced us to do so many things differently and we've often had to improvise! But there have been some highlights – our Carol Service in the church yard was enjoyed by many as we were able to sing, accompanied by a brass ensemble and gathered around the decorated tree that many people had added baubles to (thanks to Jane for the tree). Attendance at the carol service and also Midnight Mass and Christmas Morning services was better than might have been expected, though other services around Christmas were much less well attended. Having learned from the Carol Service, we also held some out-door services in Holy Week & Easter. Good Friday Stations of the Cross, held around the outside of the building, had far more people turn up than I was expecting and prepared for but worked well. Easter morning saw us gather once again in the church yard in joyful celebration of the Resurrection; we even sang some hymns! Several people have said how effective the service was and noted that a number of passers-by stopped to watch, listen or join in. Thank you to everyone who helped with music, fires, readings and making sure everything went smoothly at all these services.

The Holy Week & Easter services also saw us joining with our friends at St Philip's. We had hoped to process between the two churches on Palm Sunday, but this was not permitted at the time. However we did still start the day's worship at St Phillips with the commemoration of the Lord's entry to Jerusalem and ended it with a reading of the Passion at St Bartholomew's, both parts again held outside. This worked well and we were able to join together again throughout the week and at our Easter morning service. Sharing in fellowship with fellow Christians is always a good thing and I look forward to future opportunities for our churches to work together.

While we were not able to meet on Sundays we have tried to offer some resources for prayer and worship and to keep everyone informed of what was happening. Several people have expressed their appreciation for the letters we have sent out with their

various accompaniments and must note that these have been very much a team effort; while I have produced much of the printed material, Jo has then folded, stapled and collated it all, Lesley has produced the lovely cards and Gill has sorted out the various gifts and addressed, stuffed and posted all the envelopes – thank you to them all!

Between the letters, on-line services and phone-in prayers I hope that there has been at least something to help everyone stay connected with St Bartholomew's and able to find ways to pray and worship during the lock-downs.

Having the building open for a couple of hours each day has been another way we have tried to resource people over the past year. It can go quite a few days without anyone coming in, but then someone will and it turns out that the church was open and available to them at just the time they needed it. I have had a number of such conversations as well as a good few people saying that they had lived in the area for ages but not ever been into St Bart's. Ash Wednesday saw an especially high number of visitors and I spend most of the day in conversation with different people, about half of whom didn't even know it was Ash Wednesday and had just come in because the building was open. This certainly highlighted the value of having the doors open. Thank you to Anne and Coleen who have both been regular companions when the building has been open on Monday and Tuesday mornings.

In my report last October I noted four key pointers for our life and mission that I had picked up from the Parish Profile and Mission Action Plan. I believe these still hold, despite the pandemic, and I remain committed to them as a broad guide for the next few years. Indeed our work and activities over the past few months, despite the restrictions, were still very much in keeping with at least some of these:

- *Engaging more fully with the whole community*
- *Working better with children, families and young people*
- *Developing a more varied pattern of worship*
- *Further development of the buildings*

Last October's report has more detail of what all these might mean – there isn't space to reproduce that here, but do have a look if you can. The last year has forced plans to change and certainly the timescales have increased! But we pray that the current hopeful signs will continue and that new life will come soon.

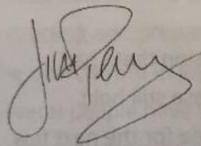


As we do begin to worship together again I must note the 'gaps' in our congregations. Over the past year we have said final farewells to Robert Kio, John Ryall and Evelyn & Dennis Harrington. We rejoice that they rest in God's eternal care but acknowledge the pain and grief of their absence in our midst. In the months ahead we will have appropriate opportunity for memorial services to remember them and the many others we loved and lost during the pandemic.

A different kind of gap is left by Molly who has moved to be closer to her son. I am very aware that Molly has been a significant part of the life of St Bartholomew's for many years; she has been very helpful indeed in my first year here and a great source of knowledge about the church. There will be opportunity to thank Molly and say farewell properly in a month or so's time.

Lastly, my thanks to our new Church Wardens, Roland and Lesley. It's certainly an odd time to be taking up such posts in the life of the church, they have risen to the challenge and I am grateful for all they do.

All praise to God the most Holy and blessed Trinity to whom we give our thanks for all that has been possible and place our faith and hope for all the future holds.



**Rev'd Jim**

Trinity Sunday 2021

## CHURCH REPORT ON THE GOODS, FABRIC AND ORNAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

We took up our positions as Wardens at the last APCM, which was delayed until October due to the pandemic. We have therefore only been in post for a short time and during a rather unusual period, where many church activities have been temporarily curtailed, so we have yet to experience the full remit of our roles. However, we are feeling our way and are very grateful to our predecessors, Nick and Paddy, for their continued assistance in knocking us into shape. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank them for their long and faithful service as Wardens and for all the work they continue to do for St. Bartholomew's.

The maintenance of the church building and interior is an ongoing task, and there have been several issues to deal with during the last year. We received the 2020 Quinquennial Review, which benefitted from all the excellent work achieved by Gill and the SABRE team to the clock and tower, amongst other areas. The recommendations of the Review will be considered at the next BIG meeting, to be organised shortly.

We were made aware of a leak in the hall roof in the latter part of the year and this had caused water ingress to the hall, causing the timbers beneath the floor to get wet and part of the floor to rise up. Repairs/replacement to the lead flashing and mortar work were carried out in January and we are waiting for the sub-floor timbers to fully dry out and the floor to settle as much as it is going to before assessing what further work might be necessary to the floor.

While we are on the subject of water, we were also advised by Thames Water that there was a leak in our water supply. This was investigated by a specialist appointed by our insurers and he confirmed a leak in the pipe running through the graves to the crypt. There were alternative solutions which involved capping the supply or rerouting and it was decided to consult the church architect for advice. We are currently awaiting this advice and hope to deal with the issue soon.

We are currently awaiting finalisation of electrical certification renewal, which has been affected by staff sickness at the company doing the circuit testing. Most of the work has been carried out, but we await recommendations of any remedial work necessary and the final certification. They are also investigating some issues with the external lighting.

As you are aware, the clock was beautifully restored last year, and it has been wonderful travelling down Lawrie Park Avenue and seeing its glowing blue and gold face. We were only permitted to do works which conserved the original, and this involved retaining the original parts, which are some 150 years old. The clock stopped working recently, and it was found that a bolt had sheared off the mechanism, due to suspected metal fatigue. Cumbrian Clocks were able to restart the clock movement but had to take several parts away for repair. Due to the small number of specialists in the field, this is taking a little while, but we hope to have the repaired parts reinstalled soon, at which point Cumbrian Clocks will also carry out a service.

This work will need to be done before we can progress with the planned reinstatement of the chimes, which we hope to have chiming on the hour in daylight hours, but conservation work will also need to be done to the bell. Again, there are very few bell specialists which are approved by the Diocese and their workload is great, made more so by the pandemic, so we are currently waiting for a date on which they are able to make a start.

The notice boards outside the church need updating with current information and we are giving them a facelift. A new design has been approved which will be blue and golden yellow, to reflect the colours of the church clock and the order has now been placed.

We remain exceedingly grateful to Nigel Rushton for his fastidious attention to the maintenance of the building, which is an ongoing challenge. Nigel is contracted to provide 8 maintenance days per year but always goes the extra mile due to his love of the building. Works undertaken by him in the recent year have included repairs to the main roof; decoration of the hall and window masonry; removal of tree branches, ivy and other foliage causing issues to the building; repair of the organ door; plumbing works including repairs to basin piping and replacement of taps and ongoing and continual work to clear downspouts, traps and gullies. We also have frequent fly tipping on the church grounds and Nigel heroically disposes of the rubbish for us. Again, we are grateful for his continued support.

We are delighted that services with an actual congregation in church have recommenced and we look forward to welcoming even more of our regular community back as regulations slowly ease. We plan to have lots of activities to bring people back into the church over the coming months and we really hope that everyone will be back taking part in some capacity - we also look forward to being able to have a good old catch up!



We are pleased that we have seen one or two new faces online or at recent services and it will be wonderful if they decide to become a regular part of our community. Of course, we cannot close off without remembering and making mention of the much-loved members of our congregation whom we have lost in the last year. We are very sad that we will not be seeing them again as we come out of the pandemic, but we hope that there will be some memorial services later in future months so that we can celebrate their lives and their part in the St Bart's family.

A couple of final mentions must go to a) Molly Wickert, who recently left SE London to move to Kent, and who will be sadly missed, both as a friend and as a very valuable member of the team, who capably undertook so many roles at the church, and b) Father Jim, who has managed to settle in so well despite only managing a few short months before we went into total lockdown! We hope you are feeling at home, Jim.

Lesley Khatibi & Roland Bates

May 2021

### **Electoral Roll Report**

There have been no additions to the Electoral Roll.

4 people have been removed from the Electoral Roll having died.

Following the above changes, there are now 136 names on the Electoral Roll



**Report by the Independent Examiner on the accounts for St Bartholomew Church, Sydenham, 2020.**

The accounts have been prepared on an accruals basis. An understanding of the PCC's organisation, accounting records, activities and nature of its assets, liabilities, income and expenditure was gained from a survey of the accounting records and discussions with the treasurer.

No major failures were identified in the accounting records. An analytical review of the financial statements was carried out to look for inconsistencies and unusual events in the year, and compared to previous years. No unexpected fluctuations were discovered in the financial statements.

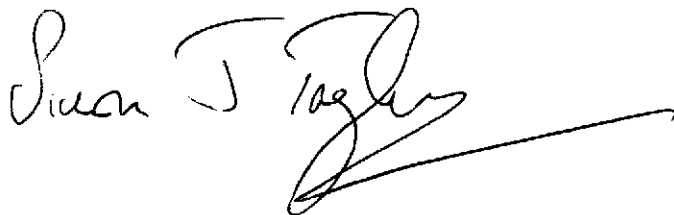
No unexpected events were discovered in the financial statements beyond those due to the COVID19 pandemic and related lockdowns. Enquiries did not reveal any post balance sheet events, which would have significant impact on the financial statements for the year.

In addition to the General Fund, there are three Reserved Funds, one being for the Building Fund to meet ongoing maintenance; the SABRE fund, to progress the major restoration of the church building and roof; and the Special Purposes Fund used for the organ fund and charitable appeals.

Despite the pandemic, the General Fund actually improved by £7.5k which is a very good result in the circumstances. Although lettings income and service collections fell sharply, but this was more than offset by a year's rental income from the curates flat, donations, a legacy and reduction in expenditure. Routing maintenance from the Building Fund was covered by transfer from the General Fund.

The SABRE appeal to restore and improve the church continued with the completion of work to the tower and the clock as part of the "Taking Back Time" project. There is now £79,000 in the fund for continuing repairs, restoration and improvements to the building.

Overall the financial position of St Bartholomew's is stable, which is promising given the continuing challenges arising from the continuing impacts of the COVID19 pandemic.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Taylor', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Simon Taylor  
Treasurer, St George and St Michael & All Angels  
4 April 2021