

St Mary's Church, Selly Oak
Annual Parochial Church Meeting 21 May 2023

Item 4. Annual Reports for 2022

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1. Vicar's Report - 2022

2022 finally saw the end of all Covid restrictions, and on Easter Day we shared the common cup at the Eucharist for the first time since March 2020, reinstating it for every Eucharistic service at Pentecost, although some have chosen to continue to receive communion in one kind only.

2022 also saw changes to our ministry team. In June we welcomed Father Jacob as our Curate, following his ordination as Deacon in Birmingham Cathedral. Jacob spent time getting to know the parish and meeting people and has become a valued member of the team. Sadly, we then said farewell to Laura Hart as she and Geoff moved to Devon to be nearer to family. We also saw less of Revd David, who was regularly covering services at St Faith and St Laurence Harborne during their vacancy.

During the year the PCC continued to discuss our vision and our priorities for mission and ministry here in Selly Oak, identifying what we should focus on for the year. For our priority '**creating inclusive community**', it was decided that we should reinvigorate our programme of events, including both old and new activities. The social committee met, and a full and varied programme of events and activities was organised for the year. Where appropriate I publicised events in schools, sending details to head teachers for circulation via email to parents. Some events were also publicised in the community eg: Bridgewater Court, Sellywood House, and Touchbase. A Christmas flier was produced professionally and delivered to all the homes in the parish, including the new housing estates. It is great to have social events and activities very much up and running again, well done to all involved.

Our second area of focus for mission and ministry is '**exploring spirituality**'. The PCC agreed that it would be good to experiment with new forms of service, particularly using the occasional 'fifth Sunday' for different forms of evening worship. An evening Service for Candlemas on the 5th Sunday evening in January was very well received, and Taizé worship on the 5th Sunday evening in May was also well supported. On the 5th Sunday evening in July there was a service with prayers for wholeness and healing which was very much appreciated, with requests for this to be more regular. As a result, prayers for wholeness and healing were offered during the 10am Eucharist on the day we celebrated St Luke in October. As this seems to be meeting a need, the plan is to continue to offer this on the first Sunday of each month. The 5th Sunday evening in October was the Annual Service of Remembering at 4.30pm, where people were invited to come and remember loved ones who had died during the year. A special evening service was held on Advent Sunday. 'The Well', a monthly Sunday evening service at the University Chaplaincy, continues to be appreciated by a small group of folk from St Mary's and by others from the university and other churches. In addition to the above, we have also been able to livestream Evensong, which helps to include those not able to attend worship in person, and since doing this we have stopped the monthly Evening Prayer on Zoom.

There were a number of study groups during the year. During Lent 2022 we joined in groups with the Methodist and United Reformed Churches, and the Quakers, to discuss 'Following in the footsteps of the Saints, guided by the story of St Winefride'. During the summer a group met on Tuesday mornings for discussions based on the book 'Twenty Questions Jesus Asked' by John Pritchard. There were also discussion groups on the book 'Women of Holy Week' by Paula Gooder during Lent, and 'The Gift of Years', by Joan Chittister, during Advent. Two groups joined 'Science & Faith in the 2nd City' via livestream/video, discussing mental health, and identity. An Advent Quiet morning was led by Father Jacob at Polesworth Abbey, where we enjoyed the hospitality of the community there.

Our third area of focus for mission and ministry is **outreach, particularly to children and young people**. During this year it was agreed by the PCC that we should listen to the needs of our children and families, to discover what it is that they value about St Mary's, and whether there are things we could or should be doing with them that we are not currently doing. I have visited some families, but it is an ongoing exercise. In the meantime, there were many baptisms during the year, and we felt that following up these families was an important opportunity for outreach, so invitations to our crib service at Christmas were sent to all our Baptism families. Junior church has continued to flourish, thanks to Revd Jayne and Father Jacob's leadership, and also the Junior church parents who take a turn on the rota to lead. It has been a great joy to have Junior church participating in the liturgy in All Age Eucharists. St Mary's Junior club has also continued to welcome a good number of primary school aged children on Wednesday evenings; many thanks to Gerald Fage and his team for running this. Our Activity mornings for children at Easter and Christmas in 2022 were very well supported; many thanks to Kate Cheyney for organising these.

Finally in our outreach to children and young people, our links with schools have grown and developed during 2022. We continued to lead collective worship regularly at St Mary's CofE primary school, and at Easter 2022 it was a great joy to welcome the children and a good number of parents to church for their Easter services, the first time we were able to have school services in church since February 2020. Since then we have resumed the pattern of welcoming St Mary's CofE primary into church at the end of every half term. I have also visited Watermill primary each term to lead Collective Worship, and Father Jacob has hosted groups of students from both Watermill and the University School to visit St Mary's. Cherry Oak School also came to visit St Mary's during the year.

My roles in the wider Diocese continued during 2022, but with some changes. I was invited to become Bishop's Adviser for Spirituality for the Diocese which, amongst other things, includes 'matching' clergy and readers seeking a spiritual director with someone appropriate who can offer this ministry. I very much enjoy this work, but only agreed to take it on if I could drop some of my other roles. So I am no longer a vocation's adviser, and have also paused my work as a Bishop's adviser for the national ordination discernment process. Currently I still contribute to the training programme for Curates, in addition to supervising our own Curate.

In the wider community, I again led prayers at the outdoor carol service in Selly Oak Park in December, and along with Jacob have continued to take regular services in Sellywood House, a care home in our parish. We have also taken part in the monthly communion service at Bournville Gardens for those who live there and are members of St Mary's and St Francis Bournville. I meet regularly with the other ministers of St Gabriel's Weoley Castle, St Michael and All Angels' Bartley Green, St Peter's Harborne, and David representing St Faith and St Laurence Harborne, as we explore what it might look like for our churches to work together in a Diocesan 'People and Places' oversight area. From time to time I also connect with the ministers of the other churches in Selly Oak.

A significant event during the year was the death of Queen Elizabeth II. I am grateful to those who volunteered to enable us to church open at that time so that members of the community could come in to remember her, light a candle, and sign a book of condolence.

As a church community, we have much to be thankful for. We finally have heating! (more of that in the fabric report) But more importantly, we have sound finances, and a growing church community able to welcome all people, from a mix of cultures, backgrounds, and ages. Thank you to all who contribute in so many different ways to our church life together.

Revd Hazel White, May 2023

2. Altar Servers, Lesson Readers, Intercessors, Eucharistic Assistants, Lay Deacon and TWS Summaries

Altar Servers: There were ten church members who acted as servers during the year, an increase of three. We were very pleased to welcome Joe Scally, Wisdom Udo and Isabella Wong as new servers in September. Until September servers were only acting as crucifers at the 10:00 communion service on Sunday mornings and at the 6:30 choral evensong on the 3rd Sunday. However since September we have been able to include an acolyte as well as the crucifer at the 10:00 service.

Lesson Readers: During 2022 there were six members of the congregation who read the first and second lessons at the 8:00 communion service and a further sixteen who read the lessons at the 10:00 communion service on Sunday mornings.

Intercessors: There were seven members of the congregation, plus the clergy, who led the intercessions at the 10:00 communion service, which is a reduction of one from the previous year after Laura Hart moved from Birmingham to the West Country.

Eucharistic Assistants: With the lifting of the restrictions imposed during the pandemic, the congregation have been able to take the chalice since August. There were seven church members licensed to assist with the administration of Holy Communion at the beginning of August. One of those members is currently authorised by the vicar to support the clergy by taking home communion to the sick and housebound.

Lay Deacon: One member of the church has assisted the clergy by acting as the deacon at the 10:00 service on Sunday mornings, which is a reduction of one from the previous year after Laura Hart moved from Birmingham to the West Country. The role included leading the prayers of preparation and the reading of the gospel.

Summary of Readings for TWS: In addition to the clergy, there were six church members who provided the weekly summary of the readings for inclusion in the TWS sheet.

Richard Edmonds

3. Baptisms Report

In contrast to 2021 (when there were only 6 baptisms) 2023 saw 27! Most were children baptised at 12 noon on the second Sunday of each month, but it was a great joy to baptise Pearl Cutler during our 10am Parish Communion in September, and Lucy Brannon and Thomas Marshall during our 10am Parish Communion in October.

The clergy are very grateful to the baptism team who help to prepare the church and welcome guests for baptisms. Thanks also to Kate Cheyney who has taken over organising the rota for this from Angela Lidgbird.

Revd Hazel White

4. Bell Tower Report

Following the return to ringing after the covid risk assessment restrictions, the tower was open to small numbers of ringers. CO2 Levels in the Tower were monitored and recorded to establish if the windows provided sufficient ventilation. The results established that ringing all eight bells could safely be rung with a provision that if any ringers presented symptoms they must not ring.

The bands confidence grew month on month following the re-introduction of ringing. A Peal of seven/eight bells were rung for most Sunday services, ringing included call changes, Plain Hunt, Plain Bob Doubles, and Grandsire Doubles. The band rang collaboratively with ringers from Selly Oak, Kings Norton, Moseley, and Northfield.

We welcomed Kirsty & Alex from the University of Birmingham during 2022. Kirsty an experienced ringer and Alex a new ringer who has been regularly attending the St Martins Guild school of ringing. They have been a welcome addition and have strengthened the band bringing expertise and growth.

The band were able to ring in celebration for all Weddings where bells had been requested.

We were delighted to ring in celebration for the Carol Service, Christmas Morning, Easter Morning, and for the Queens platinum Jubilee where we invited Northfield ringers to join us on 03rd June 2022.

Holly Pyke and Kirsty Gifford rang at St Phillips Cathedral for Jacob Pallett's Ordination as Deacon on 25th June 2022.

Dr George Harrison and Holly Pyke Tolded the 6th Bell after the announcement of HRH Queen Elizabeth II death on Friday 09th September 2022. The Band rang for 1 hr prior to the Queens state Funeral on the 19th of September 2022.

The venue for the annual dinner was at the Peacock Inn Kings Norton, we were pleased to have the company of Rev'd Hazel White, Kate Cheyney, and Jackie Sorby, all had a pleasant night.

The Selly oak band of ringers were invited to join Moseley and Northfield on their annual outings. Thank you goes to David Ingram and Graeme Lanfear for organising, we appreciated and enjoyed the opportunity to ring with a wealth of experienced ringers at towers with a range of 6 –12 bell rings.

On recommendation from the annual service report, the ropes needed replacement. New Ropes have been purchased and will be delivered in the new year.

We said Goodbye to Will Routledge on Sunday 27th November 2022 who has relocated to Manchester we wish him and his wife Jenni the absolute best for the future.

My personal thanks go to the St Mary's band Russell, Gill, George, Paul, Alex, Holly, Ann, Robyn, Kirsty, and Alex, also to those who supported weekly Will, Trish, Catherine, and David, for their service to the church and weekly commitment to ringing.

We thank the clergy Hazel, Jayne, David, and the congregation for their support. We look forward to serving the community of Selly Oak in 2023 with the selfless commitment from the band and the ringing community.

Joanne Goodall (Tower Representative)

5. Book Group

It took us a couple of months to get off the ground in 2022, due to lack of a warm space to meet and an excess of Covid! But from March we were very pleased to be able to meet at Bridgewater Court and we now meet there approximately once a month and are happily settled into our new venue. We are also very pleased that Sheila is able to join us there for meetings, as well as Jojo, the house manager and one or two other residents. We usually have between 8 and 12 people in the group, but it is very flexible and we understand that not everyone can make it every month (or has time to read the book!) Different people put forward suggestions for books to read each month, leading to a really mixed selection, and it is fair to say that we have had equally mixed responses to just about every book! But conversation is always lively and interesting, if sometimes a little off-piste!

Books read in 2022

March 2022 – *Hamnet* – Maggie O'Farrell

April 2022 – *Women of Holy Week* – Paula Gooder

May 2022 – *Diary of a Nobody* – George and Weedon Grossmith

June 2022 – *Killing Floor* – Lee Child

August 2022 – *Murder Before Evensong* – Richard Coles

September 2022 – *Sea Change* – Alix Nathan

October 2022 – *Gaudy Night* – Dorothy L Sayers

November 2022 – *Small Things Like These* – Claire Keegan

December 2022 – *Last Bus to Woodstock* – Colin Dexter

We always welcome new members and everyone is encouraged to invite friends along to join us. Refreshments are provided.

Kate Cheyney

6. Choir and Organ

2022 was the year when we thought Covid would fade, but as I personally found out it was still about, and several of our choristers succumbed to the infection. For much of the year, the church had no proper heating, and I thank choir members for turning up regularly for services and rehearsals. Thankfully, through the efforts of all concerned, the heating was restored by December. The support and encouragement from Vicar Hazel and all the clergy team has been a great help.

Our numbers in the choir have remained steady, and although we were sad to lose the regular attendance of Josie Brannon, she has continued to support us by coming over from Hinckley to sing at our Choral Evensong services. Of course, we were thrilled by the birth of their daughter Lucy, and offer our congratulations Josie and David. Likewise, the birth of a son, Thomas to Sarah and Richard. From our local student population, Ed continues to sing with the basses. We did have a few enquiries from other students about joining the choir, but none of these came to fruition. As to why, I think we need to ponder this; are service and/or choir practice times difficult, or are there other factors? Students have in pre-covid years made valuable contributions to the music at St Mary's. Generally, we would be happy to welcome any singers, but especially sopranos. We are also very grateful to Chris Stormont who comes to play the organ for Choral Evensong with such professionalism, playing closing voluntaries from top class repertoire.

Kate Cheyney deserves a special mention for the support and encouragement she's given to me and the choir. This was especially appreciated when I went down with covid immediately before the Carol Service, and she and Sarah took over conducting and playing at very short notice.

The Organ is still in the care of Paul Daly, Pipe Organ Maintenance and Tuning Services, who continue to ensure that the organ is maintained in excellent condition. With the lack of any heating, and with the resulting varying humidity levels, there were a number of tuning problems. Now that these problems have mostly been resolved, the organ's internal humidifier will need to be re-located and connected. We received a most generous donation to the Organ Fund at the start of 2022, specifically to address long-standing dissatisfaction with two of the ranks of pipes inside the organ which, through lack of suitable finance, we have not previously been able to address. We are most indebted to the donor. I continue to be encouraged that St Mary's PCC judges the upkeep of the organ to be important in its many other priorities.

John Stormont, Organist & Choirmaster

7. Church Flowers

We have been pleased to welcome two new members to The Flower Team over the past year; Alwina Evenson and Isabella Wong, and are now a team of five.

We continue to arrange flowers on a fortnightly basis, with additional decorations being provided at special festivals and some weddings.

We have not used Oasis for over 2 years and in view of St Mary's Eco Church status, visiting florists for weddings are now requested not to use Oasis in their arrangements.

We have tried to reduce the amount of flowers we buy due to cost and ecological reasons and use garden flowers and foliage as much as possible. The Kids Club generously allocated us one of the raised beds at the Hall and we experimented with growing dahlias, specifically for Harvest, but in fact they supplemented the flowers for a few weeks. The children helped to plant the tubers and care for them. Hopefully this can be a regular joint venture.

Kids Club has also worked alongside us in decorating the Church at Christmas and Easter.

We have received several generous donations to the Flower Fund throughout the year for which we have been extremely grateful.

Kirstie Simms

8. Church Hall

At the start of the year, we had to deal with the failure of the church boiler, so for the first months of the year the Church Hall, with the permission of the Bishop, became the venue for church services, as it was able to maintain some warmth even with doors open for ventilation. It was also possible to use it for various committee meetings including the PCC.

During the year it has been possible to maintain the pre-school group, breakfast club and after-school groups, as well as outside groups who are using the Hall in the evening, and other ad hoc hirers of the Hall for activities over the weekend. This has helped us to be more self-sufficient financially.

The Hall continued to be managed on a day-to-day basis, and essential maintenance work continued. With the increased use of the Hall by the Church, the wheelchair access was found to be not as user friendly as it could be so new ramps have been fitted.

The Management Committee considered their priorities for the year, which started with health and safety. Firstly, there were potholes in the drive, which were initially filled with pea gravel to effect a temporary repair. However it was agreed that the drive between the lych gate and the Hall, as well as the Hall car park should be resurfaced. Quotations were obtained from different companies, and it became apparent that this was more than the Hall Committee were able to afford. Therefore this was taken to the PCC and initially a loan was requested to cover part of the costs, but the Hall Committee is most grateful to the PCC for agreeing to cover the cost in full.

An evaluation by the Fire Service was undertaken in January. Although there was no risk to the public, we were advised that a formal risk assessment should be obtained. This indicated that some changes were necessary, some of which were able to be managed very quickly, such as removal of flammable liquids, arranging staff training and improving signage. Others will be managed over a longer period of time, including replacement of the fire alarm system, and the replacement of all doors in the building with fire doors.

As a result of the costs involved to undertake these activities, it was considered that the refurbishment programme should be put on hold with regards to starting further work, but it was agreed to finish the work on the sports Hall ceiling, which has been replaced with an overlay, which enabled the asbestos in the old ceiling to be boxed in. The ladies toilets were also finished, with the breeze blocks covered over to give a better aesthetic appearance, and new toilets, vanity units and washbasins.

As a result of the work, and the fitting of locks to isolate the toilet area, it is now possible for the toilets to be accessed through the side door and this has improved the toilet facilities for the church as a whole.

I remain grateful to Gerald Fage for his services as Hall Manager and continuing supervision of contractors working on the site and to the whole Committee (Pat Finney, Kirsty Simms and John Surtees) for their continuing contribution to the running and maintenance of the Hall.

George Harrison

9. Fabric Committee

The Fabric Committee has been continuing to look after the fabric of the church during the year, ensuring that there has been regular internal and external maintenance of the fabric and grounds. Internal work included contracted church cleaning, organ tuning, photocopier and alarm system service. Volunteers have continued to maintain flowers, floor polishing, silverware, altar dressing and kitchen equipment.

Externally there was cleaning of the gutters (which included the high level gutters this year) and insertion of gutter guards, replacement of failing lights, and tidying up the churchyard, although the main work on the churchyard is undertaken by the City Council as they have responsibility for this, and they have kept the hedges trimmed, the weeds kept down, and trees removed when damaged or dead.

However, although the graveyard is the responsibility of the City Council, the long drive to the Bristol Road remains the responsibility of the PCC and this requires regular cleaning to deal with the annual leaf-fall. In the past this has been managed by working parties. However, over the last year the average number of people turning up is about five, and in view of this it was considered appropriate to employ a gardener to assist with this work, as well as looking after the grounds to the south of the church, and this has helped to keep the grounds and drive tidy.

Furthermore, this year the PCC was approached by the Probation Service looking for projects to give work to those on community service pay-back. As a result, for the last three months of the year a team was present four days a week which enabled the graveyard to be tidied up, with ivy cut away, graves cleared and the paths and drive to be kept clear of leaves and litter.

The main problem which has been the primary focus of the committee was that of the church heating. This was covered at length in the previous year's fabric report. This year the application for Faculty was successful, planning permission from Birmingham City Council was obtained, tenders sought, and Loxstone builders were contracted to start work in September this year, and by December a shell had

been erected which enabled Dunphy Ecclesiastical to insert the replacement boilers and heat exchanger in the new boiler house and we had heat for Christmas. The difficulty in obtaining stone meant that finishing off the project had to be deferred to the following year.

During the year there was also a failure of the church clock chiming mechanism due to fair wear and tear over several decades, and a quote was obtained from Smith of Derby, clockmakers, and Faculty was sought for the replacement.

Thanks to an anonymous benefactor, the nave pews have been provided with seat covers.

A hot water supply was installed in the disabled toilet, and the toilet was redecorated by the community payback team.

There were problems with the trumpet stop on the organ, due to the ingress of dust and larger particles into the pipes themselves. Archdeacon's List B approval was sought for revoicing and modification of the pipes, but because of questions raised by the DAC organ advisor a full assessment was made by an independent organ consultant, which was then forwarded to the DAC. Approval was granted in December with the work to commence in the new year.

2022 marked the year in which the quinquennial inspection of the church was due, and the year when the church architect, Mike Potter, retired. We have been grateful to him for his wise counsel over the years but needed to find a new architect to undertake the inspection. A selection process was set up to find a new architect, and after interviews, Stephen Oliver was appointed. The report was produced, and the urgent issues have already been dealt with, and the committee will be looking at dealing with the other matters in the coming years.

Finally, I would like to give my thanks to all the members of the Fabric Committee who have given freely of their time and knowledge to enable this work to be done.

George Harrison, Chair of Fabric Committee

10. Funeral Ministry and Bereavement Group April 2022 – May 2023

St Mary's Church Funeral ministry continues to reach out and minister to people living in the parish and to those who have had connections to Church in previous years.

St Mary's Clergy, Hazel, Jacob and Jayne, officiate at services held in church and in the Chapels at Lodge Hill Crematorium, Robin Hood Crematorium, Yardley Crematorium, Perry Barr Crematorium and the new Crematorium at Wasley Hills. We also officiate at burials in the cemeteries at Lodge Hill, Robin Hood, Wasley Hills and Handworth. We are occasionally requested to inter or scatter ashes in St Mary's Graveyard or those cemeteries named above.

We are called upon by most local funeral directors to take private funeral services and by the funeral directors who care for an individual referred to them by Birmingham Social Services.

Families and friends who are bereaved are telephoned by one of our Bereavement Team, a few weeks after the funeral service. Our team can offer further help and support by signposting someone on, and also be a listening ear for someone who might be lonely, struggling with their grief and wanting someone to talk with.

A memorial service held in church for All Souls 2022 was well attended. Families and friends who have experienced the death of a loved one during the previous 2 years, and where we have conducted the funeral, these families and friends are invited to the memorial service. The names of the deceased are read out, families are invited to light a candle in their memory, during a gentle service of hymns, readings and quiet time for reflection and thanksgiving. We also include a book of names which is carried to the altar during the service. These names are special for members of St Mary's Church congregation and are held in love in memory too. Anyone is welcome to attend this service to reflect and remember, and many people attend over many years.

Our thanks are extended to everyone involved in this ministry; all who serve during funerals held in church, those who phone bereaved families and friends and help to plan and lead our memorial service. Thank you all for your ministry.

Revd. Jayne Adams

11. Health and Safety

Accidents reported:

- One minor trip – accident reported in book. Subsequent decision made to repaint white lines on edge of raised wooden floor in north and south aisles (white lines still exist in main aisle)

Work regularly carried out to prevent accidents includes:

- Gritting/clearing of paths during icy conditions
- Checking on loose masonry after storms
- Regular fire extinguisher checks; extinguishers fitted correctly in new places
- Loose tiles checked and re-mortared where required
- CCTV cameras checked periodically
- Walk around church at least once (ideally twice) annually by church warden and health and safety officer performing overall H and S audit of premises

Other improvements/maintenance:

- Further holes/uneven parts in church path and hall driveway filled in
- Where necessary, Covid Health and Safety risk assessments have continued to take place
- Upper room, as well as other areas of church, tidied for safety as well as appearance

Future improvements/tasks:

- Further lighting to be considered for pathway round to toilet
- Risk assessments to be written for regular events in church (not weekly services) e.g. school visits, school services, concerts etc. *KC in conjunction with MS/GH*
- Regular PAT testing of electrical appliances
- Modifying and rehousing PA system to prevent exposed wires

Safeguarding:

- This comes under a separate heading, with new guidelines issued by the C of E and diocese. Safeguarding is a regular item on PCC agenda. DBS status of PCC members is currently being updated. Serious incidents, if any occurred, would be reported separately from this report.

Kate Cheyney

12. Internet and P.A. study group

A summary of reports made to the standing committee by the Internet and P.A. study group.

The work of the group continued through lockdown via email and telephone communication.

Internet:

During the year all members researched internet worship as it is streamed at other churches through their own contacts.

Collating all the data highlights these key findings:

1. Some standard cable internet connections were found to be inadequate for reliable image quality.
2. Most users had problems achieving satisfactory sound quality.
3. Dedicated high performance private cable connections cost £200.00 per month or more.
4. Permanent installations for easy use by anyone involves capital expenditure of £2000-£5000.
5. Wedding and funeral directors require the church to provide internet streaming as an option for their clients.

It was concluded that the best option for us to try was to locate an internet router in the bell tower to link to the 4G wireless service and relay the signal into the church via cable. Two providers were identified as willing to loan us equipment for trial.

In late summer 2022, a new 5G service came on line from the tower in Chapel Lane providing a much better signal at ground level. We are grateful to Jacob for arranging loan of a suitable router for us to test using the iPhone donated to the church by Laura Hart.

Several Choral Evensong services have been streamed successfully with the equipment temporarily arranged and viewing figures monitored mean that the facility will be developed for regular use.

The next task is to install a cable link between the church and the vicarage so that the best location for a wireless router can be determined. It will also allow the Vicar to link a computer in the vicarage to the church photocopier/printer.

P.A. System:

To optimise performance the system requires technical upgrade in these stages:

Housing the existing electronics located by the South entrance into a new enclosure or into the bookcase cupboards.

Install eight further loudspeakers to improve sound distribution throughout the church.

Install further amplification units to balance the different sound levels required in the building's acoustic zones.

Reconfiguring the microphone mixers to allow simultaneous use of 4 lapel microphones, 1 handheld microphone, 3 wired microphones already in use, three further wired microphones and the CD player.

The result of these steps will be a further reduction in the reverberation content of the sound in the building and a system that is easier for sidesmen and vergers to adjust when necessary.

Further work:

The study group will be asked to suggest ideas that should be considered to enable developments in worship, meetings and courses in church.

Finally the group will be asked to submit thoughts relating to the siting of permanently installed camera(s) for a "switch on and use" internet streaming facility.

Stephen Constable

13. Junior Church April 2022 – May 2023

This year in Junior Church has been one of some growth and changes.

We welcomed Fr Jacob to St Mary's Church as our Curate in June 2022, and he has joined us in Junior Church leading a session every month. Fr. Jacob has readily shared his talents with us as he wrote a script for our Nativity Service in Church and helped with casting and rehearsals, also using his technology skills making a series of sound effects to accompany the story. The children and young people were excellent, the congregation giving them a huge round of applause.

Members of Junior Church regularly share with the adults in church, what has been happening in their session, showing the art and craft work they have prepared and now leading the adult congregation in a prayer to complete their learning from the day.

We are actively encouraging Junior church members to participate in our Church Services of All Age Worship, especially sharing in reading the Passion Narrative on Palm Sunday and leading prayers. We are always pleased and encouraged when we see our children and young people participating in worship alongside adults in church.

Junior church members have stood in the Sanctuary close to the Altar to observe more closely the preparation of the Eucharist and to participate in the Eucharistic Prayer. We are unsure who enjoys this most, our children and young people or the Clergy celebrating the Communion? The children appear attentive, participate fully, and display respect and awe. As Clergy, we have found this a powerful experience, and look forward to continuing when we can.

The growth in their confidence, understanding and abilities are gifts; nurturing their faith with hope, joy and love is a privilege and we are planning to enable our Junior church members to participate more in Church worship, when appropriate.

The number of children and young people attending Junior church varies according to term times and holidays, with more families and children being available and able to attend during school times.

Jayne now oversees Junior Church, preparing a new rota every quarter and ensuring each session has a leader, we are appreciative when parents will lead a session for our Junior Church. We use "ROOTS" as a resource for Junior Church as this provides plenty of ideas and guidance for sessions. Roots also links into the readings for each Sunday, which is perfect as children and young people learn that we have all learned about the same Gospel reading both in Church and Junior Church.

We welcome new members to Junior Church and parents who would like to lead their worship for a session. Growth and Change can bring fresh hope and new ideas, which we enjoy for Junior Church. Our prayers are for these to continue for Junior Church members; our children and young people are precious and exciting to be alongside on their journey in faith.

Revd. Jayne Adams

14. Kids' Club and Preschool

Things are going quite well; some of our older children have started moving on getting ready for senior school. We think some of it is the cost of living and still some parents are working from home. We have had a few inquiries for September intake, so that's good for us. We have seen another good year of planting and growing and sharing the produce with parents and the church group on Wednesday mornings. It was nice that Kirsty was growing flowers for church and our children were able to help her.

The pre-School had a very slow start but now seems to be picking up well with some siblings starting in September. We are hoping to do even more growing this year so watch this space. We would once again like to thank the church for their support again over the last year - it is much appreciated.

Gerald Fage

15. PCC Secretary

During 2022 in-person meetings resumed and were held in January, March, May, July, September and November. During the year two PCC members (Laura Hart and Margaret Charlwood) left because of relocation or other commitments and one member (Angel Lidgbird) left at the APCM having completed the maximum permitted continuous length of service. We welcomed one new member (Richard Lambert) elected at the APCM.

The PCC dealt with regular items of parish business: Finance, including the budget, Stewardship, the church Fabric, including heating, the Church Hall, the groups for young people, including Junior Church, Safeguarding and Health and Safety. Each meeting received a report from the Ministry Team, and from Diocese and Deanery meetings, and in September we welcomed the Head Teacher of St Mary's Primary School who gave the annual update. In addition, the PCC discussed the provision of wifi in the church and management of the end of Covid restrictions.

Two further items of importance during the year were: Vision and Priorities for Mission and Ministry, where the PCC agreed and reviewed objectives under a different heading each month (see Vicar's report); and People and Places, responding to the diocesan initiative for grouping parishes in Oversight Areas.

Susan Hunston

16. Safeguarding

The Parochial Church Council continues to comply with its duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in terms of training and its adoption of national and diocesan policy. Our Parish Identify Verifier, Suzanne Johnston, continues to ensure that all members of the PCC (and others required) have up to date checks and certificates from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). An urgent priority outlined in the report for the APCM last year was to ensure that all members of ministry and lay leadership were up to date with required diocesan safeguarding training especially following the disruption of the Covid pandemic over recent years. I am extremely grateful to all involved in this for responding to this requirement and giving up their time to attend the relevant training either online or at face to face events. We will continue to ensure that training and knowledge in this area remains current and relevant members complete any new or further training e.g. newly elected members of the PCC and new training modules about the impact of domestic violence.

Our Safeguarding Policy, Domestic Abuse Policy, Promoting a Safer Church Policy Statement, Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy Statement, Safeguarding Complaints Procedure and Safeguarding Action Plan were reviewed and adopted at the PCC Meeting on 21st March 2023. Annual reviews and revisions (where necessary) of these documents will take place to ensure we are in compliance with legislation, guidance and best practice. The most recent documents will be published on the church website and copies displayed at the back of church.

We continue to use the online Parish Safeguarding Dashboard to help us keep track of safeguarding at St. Mary's, keep us up to date with local and national changes in safeguarding guidance and ensure we are fully compliant with church and legal requirements. This was scrutinised by the Area Dean at our annual Archdeacon's Visitation on 26th November 2022 and our compliance and engagement in this important area was acknowledged.

I would like to put on record my thanks and appreciation to all those in our Ministry Team and the wider congregation (with or without particular lay responsibility) who have taken the time to support and reach out to those who are vulnerable, and whose vulnerability may have increased over the last year. We still face incredible challenges, in particular with the implications of the increasing costs of living. But I know that all of us at St. Mary's will endeavour to support and safeguard all those who may be vulnerable at this time.

Martin Sorby, Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator

17. Social Committee

2022 at last proved to be the year when we could return to some sort of normality after Covid restrictions (despite the fact that many parishioners succumbed to the virus at the start of the year!)

In March the newly reformed Social Committee (comprising Jayne, Gerald, Miriam, Angela, Susan, Kate plus Hazel – and Jacob post June) met to talk about events for the coming months. Events then took place as follows:-

March: Quiz Night in the hall organised by Ben

May: Ramble in Clent followed by lunch at The Vine (very well attended)

June: Car Boot Sale

July: Summer fete, afternoon tea and violin concert

September: Car Boot Sale

October: Ramble in Hanbury followed by lunch at The Eagle and Sun (well attended and thankfully DRY!); Choir and Friends concert in church

In addition to the above, several mini social events have also taken place, including the inevitable occasions for cake and prosecco after 10am services e.g. Father Jacob's first service with us, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee etc. Also, children's activity mornings took place at Easter and Christmas, with very pleasing attendance and a definite feeling of outreach.

We were invited to take part in the Selly Oak Festival in June, but decided we were unable to organise and staff this adequately. However, we plan to take up the offer in 2023. Mary and I have also written our next pantomime – *Peter Pan* – and this is now scheduled to take place in November 2023.

St Mary's continues to be a very sociable church, aided considerably by our penchant for cake and – whenever possible – prosecco. Our monthly choral evensongs, followed by wine and nibbles, as well as being musically enriching events are always convivial and provide a good opportunity to catch up with members of the church who do not attend regularly on Sunday mornings. Similarly, coffee and toast after the 10am service on Wednesdays enable regular socialising and fellowship for those who attend – and numbers continue to increase. Monthly coffee mornings and the Knit and Natter Group also provide further valuable opportunities for chat and friendship. We hope that now we really do have a "warm space" in church, the diocesan Warm Space initiative might take off next year. Going forward, our plan is to reach out more widely to the community and bring more people into the family of St Mary's.

Kate Cheyney

18. Stewardship

At the end of 2022 the number of planned givers was 54 (54 at start).

Of these:

- 37 give through the Parish Giving Scheme (35)
- 17 give through standing order (18)
- No envelope givers (1).

At 31/12/22 our monthly income through planned giving was:

- Parish Giving Scheme £3,200.33 plus £725.94 gift aid
- Standing order £998 plus £249.50 gift aid.

John Surtees

19. St Mary's Junior Club

The club continues to run each Wednesday. We have lost a couple of children that have unfortunately moved away. We have done a few activities for church and hope to expand on that this year. As with the kids' club the church support and especially Hazel's and Jacob's input to junior club has been invaluable. The craft and games seem to be popular so we will continue to do the best we can. Thank you, St Mary's, for giving us the opportunity.

Gerald Fage

20. The Way Group

The Way Group is a spirituality group which meets on the second Monday of each month except August, currently in the church hall. It starts at 7.30 and runs till 9. It is open to all.

The easiest way to give a taste of what the Way Group is about is to give a list of some the topics we covered and are planning to our programme for this year.

January was our planning meeting. In February we discussed and played a piece of music we would take to a desert island with us. Our Lent Book was *Pilgrims Progress* which we discussed in March. April topic was contemplation of a word. In May the Reverend Charlotte Gibson- the curate at St Peters - will talk about the icons she paints and bring some of them. June is our favourite hymn. September celebrating people's gifts, October a film that has a special meaning to us, and November our favourite Saint/s. We share a Eucharist at our summer party in July, and bring nibbles and Christmas readings to our December meeting.

We are always happy to welcome new members and you are quite free just to come to evenings that interest you.

If you'd like to in finding out more and/ or joining us, please talk to Mary Cutler or Helen Harrison or Suzanne Johnson.

Mary Cutler

21. Website Report

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Visitors per day	44.0	42.6	38.0	38.8	39.8
TWS downloaded per week	48	44	63	49	42

There is very little to report this year – there is a steady trickle of visitors to the website, with a number of those downloading the This Week Sheet each week. Last year, I was concerned that the number of times the TWS was downloaded each week was decreasing, but this has come to nothing; the trend has not continued and it is downloaded about 40 times a week. Mysteriously, the TWS on 31st July was very popular with 76 downloads, and nothing of any note occurred that week. This might suggest that any statistics I glean from the website should be handled with care!

We now also have a selection of the Sunday sermons available to read.

I am always very open to ideas and suggestions for how to improve the website. Please feel free to let me know what changes should be made (and what spelling mistakes you've found!).

Ben Reeves

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST MARY, SELLY OAK
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

Receipts and Payments Accounts

	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2022	Total 2021
	£	£	£	£	£
Receipts					
Stewardship	49,775			49,775	48,702
Stewardship tax	11,589			11,589	11,420
Cash collections	5,142			5,142	4,348
Donations & Grants	4,148	4,729	23,999	32,876	20,334
Gift Aid tax	2,110		5,075	7,185	3,839
Legacies & Memorials					100
Fundraising	1,958		55	2,013	1,144
Fees	5,755		2,050	7,805	5,264
Use of Church	400			400	
Interest	2,027			2,027	342
Church Hall		19,027		19,027	14,610
Ringers			284	284	98
Total Receipts	£82,904	£23,756	£31,463	£138,123	£110,201
Payments					
Charity donations	3,000			3,000	3,000
Common Fund	49,491			49,491	48,740
Clergy expenses	1,118			1,118	860
Parsonage	273			273	84
Worship	925		1,424	2,349	1,843
Church running	19,796			19,796	15,829
Repairs & Improvements		80,103	3,388	83,491	8,753
Curate's Housing	775		1,250	2,025	
Education & Training	624			624	534
Staff	4,846			4,846	4,462
Church Grounds	847			847	735
Administration	945			945	751
Fundraising					207
Junior Church	158			158	
Church Hall		18,928		18,928	14,548
Ringers			494	494	15
Total Payments	£82,798	£99,031	£6,556	£188,385	£100,361
Excess of Receipts over Payments	106	-75,275	24,907	-50,262	9,840
Transfers between funds					
Funds at 1 January	298,559	225,151	44,300	568,010	558,170
Funds at 31 December	£298,665	£149,876	£69,207	£517,748	£568,010

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31 December 2022

	2022 £	2021 £
Fixed Assets		
Church Hall and contents	267,289	267,289
Current Assets		
HSBC current account	38,244	21,397
CBF deposit account	204,000	273,000
Parsonage redecoration scheme	1,499	1,274
Church Hall account	3,987	3,888
Ringers account	3,667	3,877
Total Assets	<u>518,686</u>	<u>570,725</u>
Less Current Liabilities		
Childrens' Society	0	
Christian Aid	216	
Acorns	0	
Service fees	<u>722</u>	938
		2,715
Total Net Assets	<u><u>£517,748</u></u>	<u><u>£568,010</u></u>
Unrestricted Funds		
General Fund	298,665	298,559
Designated Funds		
Hall	3,987	3,888
Legacies & Memorials	141,160	221,262
Energy	<u>4,729</u>	
	149,876	
Restricted Funds		
Organ	30,301	5,710
Drive	3,689	2,639
Flower	488	878
Fabric	10,579	11,599
Youth	193	193
Bereavement	450	499
Choir	1,415	1,381
Deficit	8,525	8,525
New Boiler	0	1,250
Curate's Housing	0	1,250
Ringers	3,667	3,877
Hall Building	<u>9,900</u>	6,500
	69,207	
Total Funds	<u><u>£517,748</u></u>	<u><u>£568,010</u></u>

£267,289 of the General Fund represents the church hall and contents.

The disposable value of the General Fund is therefore only £31,376.

APPROVED by the Parochial Church Council on 21 March 2023 and signed on its behalf by

Rev'd Hazel White
Vicar

George Harrison
Churchwarden