

St Paul's, Marylebone



ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

ST PAUL'S, MARYLEBONE

ANNUAL MEETING

2021-22



3rd April 2022



Ash Wednesday - 2nd March 2022

Rector's Notes

I am reminded of the words of St Paul in the first letter to the Thessalonians, 'the One who calls is faithful' (1 Thessalonians 5.24). As followers of 'the One who calls' we are called to be faithful disciples in all seasons – in times of sorrow as well as in times of joy; in times of weakness as well as in times of strength; through doubt, fear and uncertainty, as well as hope, light and peace. Over the past year, as we have begun to emerge from the worst months of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have been challenged to imagine anew what our life together as a Christian community looks like in this parish and city. Being faithful disciples is one thing I sense we have come to understand more deeply over the past two years. What it means to remain faithful when life's familiar patterns are thrown into confusion; what it means to remain faithful when we are faced with our own mortality, illness, unsettled situations in our world, and the crisis of climate change; what it is to remain faithful even as we ask that deepest question, 'Where is God in all this?' I have been overwhelmed by your faithfulness and commitment to walking in the Way of Jesus through all these questions and in all the upheaval we have experienced in our individual lives and in our life together as a community and church. St Paul writes of the promise of Jesus to be 'faithful', and he urges his friends to remain 'steadfast under all the persecutions and troubles you endure' (2 Thess. 3-4). We have much to celebrate and give thanks for over the past year and we remember with great fondness many in our community who are no longer with us here on earth; we hold them, and one another, and all in our parish, in continued prayer as we give thanks for God's unchanging faithfulness to us in all seasons and throughout all ages.

Over the past year it has been such a joy to see our worshipping community return to a more regular pattern of worship and communal life, and to welcome a good number of new members to the church community. During the pandemic the increased levels of pastoral care and bereavement ministry, as well as the heightened presence and awareness of the church in the local community, had the positive knock-on effect of bringing a number of new people to the church, both those on the fringes of our church community and those new to attending church. We look forward to welcoming more and more people as we grow in ministry, mission, discipleship and hospitality in our parish.

Rector's Notes contd.

It has been a real joy to welcome back groups and community activities to St Paul's as Covid-19 restrictions lifted and churches and community venues began to reopen. It has been wonderful to see so many of our long-term community groups come back to the church, as well as a number of new groups joining us. This has been beneficial to our finances and we have seen increased income from rental and personal giving within the church.

I am very grateful to those who have shared in ministry and leadership in our church community. **Eurita Edwards and Paul Roadnight** have shown great commitment and energy in their service as Churchwardens over the past year. It has not been an easy year to take on this responsibility as Covid-19 restrictions and health and safety restrictions have changed and adapted regularly, but Eurita and Paul have taken this in their stride and helped build up and draw together our church community during this time of transition and growth.

Thank you to all who serve on our Parochial Church Council (PCC) and in various forms of leadership in safeguarding, working with our children and young people, in showing hospitality, in leading prayers or reading the scriptures, in washing linens or helping set up or clear away our church space, in preparing meals and cleaning our church, in administration and pastoral care – we really couldn't do all that we do without the presence, energy and enthusiasm of each and every one of you!

Our ministry team has changed over the past year. **Reverend Alison Mulroy** ended her curacy at St Paul's in June 2021, taking on a new role as Associate Priest at St Peter's Bethnal Green. On 3rd July 2021 The **Reverend Donna McDowell** was ordained Deacon at St Paul's Cathedral and began her curacy at St Paul's. It has been wonderful to welcome Donna to St Paul's. Over the past nine months Donna has settled into ministry in the parish, establishing good relationships in the church and local community, and has already become a wonderful presence in our life together.

Rector's Notes contd.

In October 2021, **Simon Boulter** joined our team as Church & Community Administrator working across two churches, St Paul's and St Cyprian's. This joint collaboration with St Cyprian's Church is a new venture for us and is part of our ongoing conversation to share more closely in ministry. Over the next year **Martin Carr** will also increase his hours to offer financial assistance to St Cyprian's, alongside his work with St Paul's. We will also continue conversations with the Churchwardens and PCCs at St Cyprian's and St Paul's to consider models of collaborative ministry over the next few years.

One highlight of this year has been the way in which the church community responded with love and hospitality to those newly arriving in our parish. On 4th September 2021 we responded, with only 12 hours' notice, to the arrival of over 600 refugees from **Afghanistan** at a local hotel on Edgware Road. As a church community we welcomed families to the hotel, assisting in distributing supplies, helping find rooms and essential items, and offering a warm welcome to the area. Over the coming weeks, members of the church continued to support families, volunteered at the hotel in distributing clothes, and offering one-to-one support. In November 2021, Donna started up an **Afghan Women's Sewing Group** on Tuesday afternoons at the church. We received gifts of material and sewing equipment, as well as a considerable grant from **All Churches Trust** to purchase sewing machines for the group. The group continued to meet until mid-March 2022 when the families were moved to alternative accommodation, and a couple of families to flats within the local area.

As we listen to God's call over the coming year and reimagine and reshape our life together, I pray that we will remain faithful to that call to follow the One who is always faithful to us and to grow in faith, hope and love as we walk in the Way of Jesus.

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour everyone; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us always.

Agenda

Meeting of Parishioners

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Annual Meeting 2022

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Election of Auditors

Date of next Meeting

Any Other Business (to be referred to the Church Wardens).

Minutes of Parishioner's Meeting - 23rd May 2021

Present: Rev Clare Dowding; Rev Alison Mulroy; Fiona McCreedy and Paul Roadnight (Church Wardens) and 23 parishioners.

Apologies: Martin Carr, Len and Eileen Dry.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 27th September 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.

Election of Church Wardens

Paul Roadnight; proposed by Fiona McCreedy and Susan Davies.
Eurita Edwards; proposed by Pam Dawson and seconded by Hyacinth Norton
Both were elected

Paul and Fiona, the retiring church warden, were thanked for their previous years work especially when adapting to the demands of the Covid-19 regulations and restrictions.

There being no further business the meeting was closed.



Minutes of the Annual Church Meeting - 23rd May 2021

Present & apologies: as for the parishioners meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 27th September 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.

Parochial Church Council - No change except for the retirement of Fiona as former Church Warden and the addition of Eurita as newly elected Church Warden.

Deanery Synod Representatives - Sue Davies and John Kitchen.

Electoral Roll - Kim McAuliffe reported 70 people on the roll.

Annual Report & Finances - These were proposed and accepted. Martin Carr the Operations and Finance Manager was thanked for these. Finances were discussed in relation to the fall in income due to legislated closure during lockdown (Covid-19) and the knock on effect on our rental income.

It was noted that we received a Covid-19 grant through Westminster Council amounting to £10,000, as well as support for those furloughed during the pandemic.

We also received generous grants and gifts from individuals to support the work of the church during the pandemic.

Members of the congregation were asked to consider an increase in giving to St Paul's to support the life of the church during these challenging times.

Fabric Report - The Churchwardens Paul Roadnight & Fiona McCreedy presented the Fabric Report for 2021.

Minutes of the Annual Church Meeting - 23rd May 2021 contd.

Closing Words

The Reverend Clare Dowding, presented the Annual Report and thanked all those who had supported the life of the church during this challenging year as the nation faced lockdowns due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and as churches continued to navigate the way forward in light of reduced income, health and safety procedures and increased pastoral care and adapted models of ministry. Members of the ministry team, PCC and congregation were thanked for their commitment and service over the past year and gifts were presented to those holding key roles in the church.

There being no further business the meeting closed.



The Parochial Church Council - Members as at 2nd April 2022

Reverend Clare Dowding - Rector
Reverend Michelle Lee - Assistant Minister
Reverend Donna McDowell - Curate
Paul Roadnight - Church Warden
Eurita Edwards - Church Warden
John Kitchen- Deanery Synod Rep
Sue Davies - Deanery Synod Rep
Martin Carr - Ex-officio, Treasurer
Kirsty Kirby - Secretary
Kim McAuliffe - Electoral Roll Officer
Julie Southgate
Susan O'Reilly
Angela Molloy - Safeguarding Officer

The **PCC** co-manages the church with the rector. There up to 10 members of the laity on the PCC - partners living together cannot both be on the PCC. Each year at least 2 members are meant to retire. Please let us know if you wish to serve.

Sidespersons welcome people as they arrive at church services. Please see Sandra Kitchen if you wish to join the team.

Electoral Roll

Kim reported 66 members.



Secretary's Report 2021-22

Kirsty Kirby

This has been a difficult year disrupted by covid-19 limitations. However as restrictions were gradually lifted so the various activities returned to normal. Indeed most are thriving like never before.

We were sad to see Ali leave after a great send off but have welcomed the new curate Donna who has settled in remarkably well. In particular she enjoys looking after us all at the Barnabas Group.

I understand that the finances are not too bad and that plate giving has noticeably increased though we are still being encouraged to give more.

The interior of the church still looks very good and the new roof and solar panels continue to serve us well.

I have served on the PCC for 9 years now and produced 9 annual reports. So the time has come for me to step down. I wish my successor well.



Deanery Synod Report 2021-22

Representatives - Sue Davies and John Kitchen

12 May on zoom

The meeting was held online enabling members to join from home as infection rates for Covid-19 were still high. Jason Roach joined the meeting to discuss the diocesan engagement with questions of racial justice and the response to Black Lives Matter movement. Jason led a presentation followed by the time of questions and conversation, and an opportunity for churches to share how their own communities were addressing racial equality within their own communities. We also heard from Fr Jack Noble as he shared some of the ways St Marylebone School have engaged with the question of Contested Heritage, particularly with regard to memorials in church and school.

The meeting concluded with business matters and nomination of school governors, as well as a reminder to those hoping to stand for General Synod.

12 July - St John's Wood Church

A short business meeting was held followed by the annual garden party. Unfortunately, due to torrential rain quite a number of members were unable to join the party (including our own ministry team and representatives). However, the smaller party went ahead in the church hall and was enjoyed by those who attended.

4 October - All Souls Langham Place

The meeting began with refreshments and an opportunity for members of synod to meet one another in person. Revd Charlie Skrine, Rector of All Souls, was introduced and shared the story of his own Christian faith and ministry. The main topic for the evening was 'Vision and Strategy for London Diocesan Board of Schools' led by the new Executive Chair LDBS, Penny Roberts. Penny led an interesting presentation about church schools in the diocese and deanery, including time for discussion and questions. We also discussed the ongoing response to Afghan Refugees in the deanery and the question of how the churches might reach out and support those being housed locally. Revd Clare highlighted some of the ways in which St Paul's was supporting Afghan families in the parish and suggested ways in which other churches might engage in this ministry. The meeting ended with business items & introducing those standing for General Synod.

Deanery Synod Report continued

Area Dean - Clare Dowding

24 March - All Saints Margaret Street

The meeting followed their daily Mass at 6.15pm. There was good attendance for this meeting and we were grateful to them for their hospitality as people gathered. The main topic of the evening was a presentation by Ven Rosemary Lain-Priestley on Living in Love and Faith (LLF), a discussion series on life, faith, identity, sexuality and gender within the Church of England. Rosemary led a discussion and highlighted the next steps in the process in responding to LLF, and we took time to discuss the material and our responses in small groups. We then moved on to discuss our response as churches to the crisis in Ukraine and the opportunities to host refugees within our churches and communities. The meeting concluded with a number of business items including a nomination to governing body and election of candidates to Diocesan Synod.

The next meeting will be held on 28th June 2022, when Bishop Sarah will join us for a Deanery Day and the Annual Garden Party at St John's Wood Church.



Church Warden's Fabric Report - 2021-22

Paul Roadnight and Eurita Edwards

2021 started as another year with Covid and various restrictions in place for the country. Churches were spared this time and allowed to stay open for worship with social distancing and mask wearing in place.

This meant our building was being used again not only by church but by the groups who hire our facility - good news for us on the revenue front.

All our usual servicing - gas, PAT testing, fire extinguishers, etc. - has been carried out.

The Quinquennial report was completed by Daniel Benson and generally the building is in good order. Recommendations have been made, and these findings will be attended to accordingly.

St Paul's has already obtained silver Ecochurch status; we will be working very hard this new year to achieve gold.

We would like to extend a big thank you to our clergy Clare and Donna who have worked tirelessly to keep services going throughout this time. Their hard work and dedication is so appreciated.

Also a big thank you to church staff for all their hard work with the day to day running of St Paul's.

Last but not least, a big thank you to the parishioners for your help in making St Paul's church a welcoming place of worship for all.

Finance Report - 2021

Martin Carr

Another tumultuous year of lockdowns and disruption ended on a positive note for St Paul's finances, and as we sail into hopefully more tranquil waters in 2022 there are reasons for optimism.

We remain well supported by income from Homestart and Freshstart who continue to occupy our gallery space. By the end of 2021 hall lettings had recovered to pre-pandemic levels, and these cover most running costs.

Our developing administrative partnership with St Cyprian's should bring savings in due course, and a planned rental increase after Easter should mitigate rising energy costs.

Congregational giving remains low as a proportion of income and I encourage St Paul's members to give regularly and generously through Parish Giving where possible.

Our Foodcycle project has been well-funded in 2021, and we are seeking to set-up a separate account for that money in 2022.

All of St Paul's funds and investments are kept with ethical banks, in keeping with our priorities.

Financial Statements 2021

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2021

Receipts and Payments Accounts

	Note	Unrestricted Fund £	Unrestricted Designated Fund £	Restricted Fund £	Endowment Fund £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Receipts							
Voluntary Receipts:							
Planned Giving		£ 3,700.06				£ 3,700.06	£ 3,327.06
Collections at services		£ 3,279.32				£ 3,279.32	£ 1,920.23
All other giving/voluntary receipts		£ 2,476.56				£ 2,476.56	£ 1,787.84
Legacies		£ -				£ -	£ -
Gift Aid recovered		£ 3,020.15				£ 3,020.15	£ 649.24
Foodcycle donations				£ 1,776.92		£ 1,776.92	£ 145.00
TOTAL		£ 12,476.09	£ -	£ 1,776.92	£ -	£ 14,253.01	£ 7,829.37
Activities for generating funds							
Investment Income	4a	£ 16,088.20		£ 26,840.00		£ 42,928.20	£ 42,158.06
Church Activities	4b	£ 3,117.28		£ 362.75		£ 3,480.03	£ 13,859.00
Total Receipts	4c	£ 69,612.79		£ 28,979.67	£ -	£ 130,274.03	£128,290.89
Payments							
Church Activities:							
Parish Share		£ 28,000.00				£ 28,000.00	£ 28,000.00
Clergy and staffing costs	4d	£ 31,468.45				£ 31,468.45	£ 27,381.49
Church running costs	4e	£ 32,644.87				£ 32,644.87	£ 55,000.02
Mission giving	4f	£ 601.60		£ 362.75		£ 964.35	£ 943.48
Mission expenses, hospitality		£ 984.01				£ 984.01	£ 204.98
Foodcycle expenses				£ 13,764.24		£ 13,764.24	£ 10,019.35
TOTAL		£ 93,698.93		£ 14,126.99		£ 107,825.92	£121,549.32
Cost of generating funds		£ 597.86				£ 597.86	£ 614.26
Bank charges		£ 103.00				£ 103.00	£ 55.00
Total payments		£ 94,399.79	£ -	£ 14,126.99	£ -	£ 108,526.78	£122,218.58
Excess of receipts over payments		£ 6,894.57	£ -	£ 14,852.68	£ -	£ 21,747.25	£ 6,072.31
Transfers between funds		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -

	Current Acc	Savings Acc	Investment account	Total
Cash at bank 01/01/21	£ 13,185.52	£ 18,933.73	£ 1,594.15	£ 33,713.40
Cash at bank 31/12/21	£ 22,254.62	£ 30,936.57	£ 2,269.46	£ 55,460.65

£ (21,747.25)

Movement of Funds

Financial Statements 2021

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Designated Funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Total 2021 (£)	Total 2020 (£)
Cash Funds						
Bank Current Account		£ 22,254.62			£ 22,254.62	£ 13,185.52
Bank Gold (Savings) Account		£ 1,696.60		£ 29,239.97	£ 30,936.57	£ 18,933.73
		£ 23,951.22	£ -	£ 29,239.97	£ 53,191.19	£ 32,119.25
Investment Assets						
Investment deposit	2A	£ 2,269.46			£ 2,269.46	£ 1,594.15
Investment Fund Shares at market value	2B		£ 99,675.00		£ 99,675.00	£ 87,763.00
		£ 2,269.46	£ 99,675.00	£ -	£ 101,944.46	£ 89,357.15

Notes

1 The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts & Payments basis.

2A CCLA investment deposit account 012794001D. £2,000 was transferred to the current account

2B CCLA investment 012794001S - 4500 shares at estimated value £22.17 (remnant of St Matthew's hall fund)

3 The movements in restricted and designated funds during 2021 were:

		Bal B/fwd	Receipts	Payments	Bal C/fwd
RESTRICTED					
A Mothersdale (Vestments)	4	£ 1,800.00	£ -	£ 1,800.00	£ -
Dr. Jim Youth Fund	5	£ 594.00	£ -	£ 594.00	£ -
Boxing Day Lunch		£ 1,278.40	£ -	£ -	£ 1,278.40
Foodcycle	6	£ 19,387.29	£ 28,616.92	£ 18,764.24	£ 29,239.97
TOTAL		£ 23,059.69	£ 28,616.92	£ 21,158.24	£ 30,518.37
DESIGNATED					
Music fund		£ 731.52	£ -	£ 731.52	£ -
TOTAL		£ 731.52	£ -	£ 731.52	£ -

4. Moved to unrestricted funds to pay for new altar cloths by PCC resolution of 22/11/21

5. Moved to unrestricted funds to pay for church hall hire for youthwork by PCC resolution of 22/11/21

6. (£5,000 expenditure is hall hire)

Financial Statements 2021

4 Further Analysis of Receipts and Payments

	Unrestricted General Fund	Restricted Fund	Total 2021	Total 2020
	£	£	£	£
Receipts				
a) Activities for generating funds:				
Coffee mornings / church fayres	£ 29.20		£ 29.20	£ 82.40
Fundraising for external charities	£ -		£ -	£ 53.00
Fabric grants and projects	£ -		£ -	£ 6,124.75
Foodcycle grants		£ 26,840.00	£ 26,840.00	£ 20,650.00
JRS grants	£ 5,559.00		£ 5,559.00	£ 4,047.91
Other (Covid recovery, wellbeing grants)	£ 10,500.00		£ 10,500.00	£ 11,200.00
	£ 16,088.20	£ 26,840.00	£ 42,928.20	£ 42,158.06
b) Investment Income:				
Dividends on CCLA Investment Funds (Mould)	£ -	£ 362.75	£ 362.75	£ 355.68
FIT payments	£ 439.13		£ 439.13	£ 745.09
Bank & Investment account interest	£ 3.80		£ 3.80	£ 6.78
Investment income (account 012764001D)	£ 2,674.35			
Sale of 500 CCLA Investment Funds Shares	£ -		£ -	£ 12,751.45
	£ 3,117.28	£ 362.75	£ 805.68	£ 13,859.00
c) Church Activities:				
Fees for weddings and funerals	£ 2,677.00	£ -	£ 2,677.00	£ 870.00
Fairtrade stall income	£ 1,284.30	£ -	£ 1,284.30	£ 950.00
Church Centre lettings	£ 62,574.65	£ -	£ 62,574.65	£ 62,614.46
Sundry Refunds	£ 3,076.84	£ -	£ 3,076.84	£ 10.00
Other	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
	£ 69,612.79	£ -	£ 69,612.79	£ 64,444.46
Payments				
d) Clergy and staffing costs				
Salaries	£ 23,532.31		£ 23,532.31	£ 20,895.34
Tax and NI and pensions	£ 2,526.72		£ 2,526.72	£ 1,216.34
Staff expenses/costs	£ 2,156.10		£ 2,156.10	£ 2,307.40
Parish flat costs	£ 3,253.32		£ 3,253.32	£ 2,962.41
	£ 31,468.45	£ -	£ 31,468.45	£ 27,381.49
e) Church running expenses:				
Organ and piano inspection/maintenance	£ 499.73		£ 499.73	£ 469.70
Costs of services	£ 2,461.67		£ 2,461.67	£ 2,279.23
Office costs	£ 5,428.58		£ 5,428.58	£ 3,810.09
Church building running expenses and insurance	£ 8,618.32		£ 8,618.32	£ 9,033.04
Church refurbishment, repairs & maintenance	£ 12,449.21		£ 12,449.21	£ 37,369.48
Professional fees	£ 1,215.25		£ 1,215.25	£ 1,173.48
Assigned fees to LDF	£ 1,825.00		£ 1,825.00	£ 775.00
Sundries (including refunds)	£ 147.11		£ 147.11	£ 90.00
	£ 32,644.87	£ -	£ 32,644.87	£ 55,000.02
f) Mission giving and donations:				
A Rocha UK	£ 240.00		£ 240.00	£ 240.00
Climate Stewards	£ 261.60		£ 261.60	£ 294.80
Children's Society	£ -		£ -	£ -
Mould Trust		£ 362.75	£ 362.75	£ 355.68
Big Brew	£ 100.00		£ 100.00	£ 53.00
	£ 601.60	£ 362.75	£ 964.35	£ 943.48

Financial Statements 2021

CURRENT ACCOUNT BANK RECONCILIATION

Opening Balance 1/1/21		13185.52
Income as per Spreadsheet	£ 131,595.88	
		£ 131,595.88
Expenses as per spreadsheet	-£ 122,526.78	
		-£ 122,526.78
Balance 31/12/21		<u>£ 22,254.62</u>

Community Report

Martin Carr

The St Paul's community was in good heart as 2021 ended, with almost all groups returning to use our space.

We are grateful for our ongoing partnership with Homestart and Freshstart, and after a pandemic-caused delay, are renewing our licence with the latter.

Of groups using the hall, sadly Friday AA and the Tuesday Tai Chi group didn't survive the disruption, but another aikido group has joined us on Friday evenings, and Family Lives Westminster are using the hall on Tuesdays.

Our youth project, led by Justin, is doing great work on Monday evenings, and other groups, too many to list separately, cover a whole range of ages and activities. Foodcycle in particular has social and environmental benefits typical of St Paul's ethos.

Working in partnership with St Cyprian's, it is my hope we can grow the community between the two churches, and enable each other to reach a larger number of local people.



Eco Church Report

Martin Carr

As I write this report, we have submitted our application for an Ecochurch gold award, the highest accolade.

This is testimony to the efforts of the whole community in embracing creation care at a time of climate crisis which threatens us all.

In the past year we have re-established food recycling on-site, renewed our programme of prayer and teaching on environmental issues, continued to offset that carbon we currently emit, started publishing weekly tips to help our members live more sustainably, and are making new links within and without the Church to promote our work in this field.

St Paul's is a beacon of sustainability in the local area, and nothing symbolises this better than Foodcyle, using unwanted food to cook a delicious vegetarian meal weekly, with nothing wasted.

Achieving a gold award isn't the end of our journey, but another step towards being carbon neutral and supporting the move towards harmony with God's creation.



Junior Church 2021-22

Our Junior Church continues to flourish even after the restriction, with the children learning from reading, colouring, cutting and sticking, questioning and praying. The wide age range of from 2 to early teens creates a huge challenge to provide inclusive activities. The Roots magazine with its weekly liturgical readings helps.

The children regularly assist with Sunday worship with readings, prayers and the lighting of candles often showing their artwork from Junior Church with brief explanations.

We featured prominently in the nativity play and harvest. In lent we followed the journey of Jesus adding each week to their lenten frieze. We are enthusiastic members of the Palm Sunday procession around the parish.

The spiritual growth and development of our children at St. Paul's is an Important part of our ministry. Please pray for the children and their leaders as we continue to grow in faith together.



Ali Mulroy's Farewell Sunday - 30th May 2021



Ali is now the associate priest at Bethnal Green St Peter. We wish her well there.

Harvest Festival - Sunday 19th September 2021



Charlie's 90th Birthday - Sunday 19th September 2021



Creation Sunday - 24th October 2021



Music for All Souls - The Nordic Choir - 7th November

After an absence of a year we welcomed back the Nordic Choir with a full turn out.

Most of the choir come from London and they perform in a variety of places in the country. They use our church space for rehearsals on occasions.



Advent Celebrations - 2021



Christingle, Church Street - 5th December



Lighting an advent candle - 12th Decemeber

Carols on the Move - 20th December 2021

Nativity Play - 24th December 2021



Carols on the Move with the South Westminster Community Choir and Brass Band. We started at St Paul's and ended up at the Penfold Hub via the Lisson Green Estate and Church Street.



Mothering Sunday - 27th March 2022



Daffodils donated by R P Sherry Funeral Directors and lovingly prepared by members of the congregation.

The cutting of the Simnel Cake lovingly baked by Fiona.



Poetry Readings and Guest Preachers - 2021-22

Celebrating Different Voices

In our worship at St Paul's Church, we listen to and celebrate different voices as we reflect on the Scriptures and our life as a church.

On the last Sunday before Advent 2021, coinciding with the Jewish celebration of Mitzvah Day, we were delighted to welcome Rabbi Gershon Silins from West London Synagogue. Rabbi Gershon, an experienced cantor, sang Psalm 31 and shared reflections on the theme of 'Mitzvah' and celebrated our joint partnership with FoodCycle Marylebone.

Tice Cin shares her poem 'The place mothers call home'.



Poetry Readings and Guest Preachers - 2021-22 contd.

Celebrating Different Voices

In Advent 2021 we listened to different voices reflecting on the Advent readings through the writing and performance of four young London poets, Antosh Wojcik 'Doorway', Jeremiah Brown 'The Town of David', Sarah Lasoye, 'Unmuted Word' and Kareem Perkins-Brown 'Wings and Tings'. At Epiphany we welcomed Tice Cin to share her poem 'The Place Mothers Call Home', as we reflected on the story of the Flight to Egypt, and the experience of many people in our world fleeing violence and war today, especially those we have met from Afghanistan.

During Lent 2022 we welcomed a number of guest speakers to reflect on the theme of 'Hope in the Wilderness'. Jenny Gallagher, LLM at All Souls' Langham Place, preached for us on the story of the Transfiguration; Matthew Freeman, a Methodist preacher and consultant from Virginia USA working in diversity, equity and inclusion, shared reflections on the story of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness; David Gee, writer and campaigner living in Oxford, shared reflections from his recent writing, 'Hope's Work' as we reflected on Psalm 27 and Jesus' prayer for Jerusalem; and Revd Katherine Sonderegger, preist-theologian and chair of Systematic Theology at Virginia Theological Seminary, preached for us on Lent 3 reflecting on the encounter between Pilate and Jesus. (She is shown on the front page.)

It is always a delight to welcome guest speakers and preachers, and we look forward to welcoming more voices as we worship together over the coming year.

Fair Trade Stall

Fiona McCreedy



Giving farmers a fair price

As part of our life as an Eco church we are committed to supporting fair-trade and encouraging good stewardship and care of the earth's resources. We are a fairtrade church; and the Diocese is also fairtrade. The church uses fairtrade communion wine, tea, coffee, sugar, some biscuits and eco cleaning products.

On Stir up Sunday we made Christmas puddings in junior church using fairtrade sugar and dried fruit with lemons and oranges from City Harvest. All the congregation had a stir and a wish at refreshment time.

It was good to be able to hold coffee mornings again. These are held on the first Wednesday of the month. I am a fairtrader for Traidcraft plc and have a stall at coffee mornings and after the service on a Sunday. The stall raises funds for both the Church and the Traidcraft Exchange which is the charity arm of Traidcraft plc and does amazing work. During fairtrade fortnight the coffee morning holds a "Big Brew" event. In 2022 we raised £133.05 for the Traidcraft Exchange.

Do look for the fairtrade logo whenever you go shopping and please support the stall on Sundays where you will find tea, coffee, chocolate, homemade jam, marmalade (made with fair trade sugar) and much more. I do have Traidcraft catalogues for browsing. If you find just what you want for yourself or to give as a gift I can order it. A fairtrade gift gives pleasure to the recipient as well as helping those who have grown or made it.

I am hoping that there is somebody who would be interested in becoming the Fairtrader at St. Paul's in the future. If you are interested please get in touch with Fiona.

Coffee Morning - First Wednesday each month

Kirsty Kirby

This event restarted in February after pausing to comply with Covid-19 restrictions. It was great to see some old friends once more and enjoy some ground Fair Trade coffee and cakes as well as catching up on our news. We are very grateful to David Hogarth, who provides transport through Neighbourhood Care for housebound members. Fiona is on hand with her Fair Trade stall and there may be a sing song and music as well.



Barnabas Group - Mondays 4 to 5pm

Kirsty Kirby

Another group that suffered from the Covid-19 restrictions but is flourishing once more. Recently we welcomed our new curate Donna to the group. She is now very much part of the scene helping to serve us coffees and teas as well as an array of cakes and biscuits and encouraging lively conversation.

Hussein one of our regulars usually brings in some of the cakes or biscuits.

In the past we have enjoyed a wide range of games including table tennis, dominoes and scrabble. Maybe soon we will continue this tradition.

Afterwards some of us join in evening prayers at 5pm.



Reverend Donna McDowell

Food Cycle Evening Meal - From 6pm each Wednesday

Cathie

The disruptions caused by Covid-19 rules are now behind us and after a cautious start numbers are back up to about 40 to 50 a night. I am very grateful for our team of volunteers who help prepare and serve the three course meals. The food ingredients are sourced from donations given by local shops and supermarkets. Once we have these, a menu is devised, partially cooked at the Greenhouse Sports Centre in Bell Street and served from our kitchen. Any items left over are distributed amongst the guests most of whom are local but others come from farther afield. Some guests give their surplus items to friends or neighbours.

The Christmas party and Ash Wednesday event were especially well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Our Food and Well-being Project manager, Bill Miller is currently recovering from an illness but hopes to with us again next month or June.

Below the Christmas party.



Food Cycle - Ash Wednesday Party



Above right the Trio and below Pina's Philipino line dancers



Boxing Day Lunch Party - 2021

Kirsty Kirby

After missing a year this event took place once more, though thanks to various restrictions it was not quite the same as before.

The Landmark Hotel however did provide some food and we made up the rest. Numbers understandably were well down on 2019.

Chris Dowding, Clare's brother and Nathan entertained us with their trumpet and trombone, while we made some effort to sing along.



Afghan Women's Sewing Group - November to March

Led by Donna McDowell at St Paul's Church

It is 3pm on Tuesday 15th March and the church is quiet. I am sitting with a couple of volunteers drinking tea and resting. An hour ago the church had been buzzing as 16 women and 6 children from Afghanistan chatted while eating traditional food from their homeland. It is likely to be the last time that we will see most of them, and we may never know where in the UK they eventually settle and make home.

More than 5 months ago members of our church community had been amongst the first people they met when they arrived at a local hotel having spent a week in quarantine. They came with lots of children and few possessions, and the stories we heard about their flight from Afghanistan were distressing. Over time, as we have gotten to know the women, they have shown us photographs of their friends and family members who still live there; smiling babies and colourful wedding dresses, parties and family gatherings. It is hard not to feel a pang of sadness for them, knowing how much they must miss their loved ones.



Since helping at the arrival we have been involved with the team at the hotel, collecting and delivering toys for the playroom, sourcing children's clothes and school supplies, and eventually setting up a female-only sewing group in response to a request from the women. We applied for and received generous funding from the All Churches Trust that allowed us to purchase new sewing machines, and we put a call out for donations of fabric, wool and supplies to local churches and contacts. Over 5 months approximately 45 women have taken part with between 9 - 12 women and 4-6 young children or babies coming every week. They have altered some clothing but have mostly made new pieces using the donated fabric, and their skill has been phenomenal to watch. We have loved seeing the pieces of material be transformed into tops and dresses and shalwar kameez.

Afghan Women's Sewing Group - November to March contd.

Led by Donna McDowell at St Paul's Church

We, and all the volunteers (who come from various church communities around London), have especially enjoyed getting to know the women and children. On one memorable afternoon one woman, who two weeks previously had struggled to accept that she couldn't take all the fabric and ribbon home with her and had left frustrated with us, lifted up her black outer dress to show us the beautifully embroidered and jewelled green and pink dress that she was wearing underneath. Through the translator she told us that she had been able to bring only 5 outfits with her so she chose her finest dresses. It was a joyful and profound moment as we realised that she trusted us enough to be vulnerable and let us see what only her close friends and family usually saw. We were, as she kept telling us, her sisters.

Our hope is that for a few hours each week we were able to create a sanctuary away from the hotel, outside of the confines of the small room they lived in with their husbands and children, and that in making beautiful clothes for themselves and their children they were empowered and able to claim for themselves an identity other than that of refugee.

We have been changed by getting to know them and walking along side them for this short time. We have felt frustration at not being able to do more, and have been humbled by their gratitude. And as we told them on our last day together, we will continue to pray for them and their loved ones.



**Afghan Women's Sewing Group - November to March contd.
Led by Donna McDowell at St Paul's Church**



Art and Culture Group - Alternate Friday Mornings

Kirsty Kirby

The group was originally run by social workers based at St Mary's Terrace, Paddington . However when it was decided that the group should be run by users or volunteers I was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

That was back in 2010 or thereabouts and of the group I originally led only myself and Hartmut are left, though Vernon could rejoin us.

At Vernon's suggestion I asked others to join but only Paul, Sue and Angela have survived, though Sue's brother Will joins us occasionally.

We have seen a most remarkable series of exhibitions one of which included works by Ali Mulroy. Without the group I would not have seen anything like the number art works, films and videos. A truly great while experience, well worth all the arranging and sometimes an advance look ahead of the meeting.

If you wish to join us if only occasionally please let myself, Paul, Sue or Angela know.



Items at the London Glass Blowing Centre, Bermondsey Street

Over fifties Drop In and Newpin at 10 Church Street **Amanda and Carol - mid week term time**

The premises cater for a pre-school nursery for 2-3 year olds in the basement Monday to Friday while the ground floor hosts a drop in and play sessions for parents and carers with children under 5, Monday to Wednesday. The drop in for over fifties is on Thursday (11 to 3pm) and Friday (10 to 3pm).

We provide the over fifties with meals (usually jacket potatoes on Thursday and soup on Fridays) with a sweet and drinks. These are lively sessions, sometimes with a quiz and assistance where feasible for people with urgent problems. We had 2 great Christmas parties including a singer and a celebration for St Patrick's Day as well as a day trip to Brighton.



Community Support - Second Shot Cafe, Church Street

Kirsty Kirby

One of favourite haunts, usually mid-week is the Second Shot cafe who provide a wonderful range of non-alcoholic drinks, pastries, cakes and simple meals.

An unusual feature of the cafe is that patrons may denote their loyalty points towards a drink or simple meal for those with homelessness issues.

4 points provides a hot drink and 8 points the meal.





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**See Martin Carr for more details
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