



APCM ANNUAL REPORT 2020

St John's Church & Hall

St John the Evangelist, Grove Lane, Kingston upon Thames



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VICAR'S REPORT



2020 has been an historic year to say the least, a year that started well, but by March launched us into a period of unprecedented change. The Church, like so many other institutions, companies, and individuals, started 2020 with a plan of things we would have liked to have achieved, new initiatives, social events and developments. However, as the covid pandemic took hold, these plans needed to be shelved, modified, or consigned to the “this will not be possible for a long time to come” file to allow us to focus on managing day to day.

That said, 2020 has still been a busy year for us as a Church and we have remained proactive in ensuring that whilst the Church building has been closed, the Church has remained accessible and available.

- We have offered almost daily worship opportunities online.
- We have introduced 2 new services (in addition to making morning prayer accessible).
- We have moved Diddy Disciples onto zoom.
- Where possible we have provided socially distanced physical services.
- We have used the email list to have regular contact with our local community.
- The pastoral team have made regular phone calls to members of the congregation.
- We have provided online collective worship to school and also children being home educated.
- We have supported our community through the foodbank, food4 kids and Acts435.
- We have been actively involved in Christian Aid and fund raising for other charities.
- We have supported our refugee community and made referrals to other agencies.
- We have continued to maintain contact with the community resulting in new growth.
- As a congregation we have welcomed new families and people both online and in face-to-face private prayer and worship.
- Physically we have completed the work on the Church, updated and upgraded our AV capacity.

All of this would not have been possible without a lot of hard work from a lot of people, so thank you to all who have donated, filmed, played, sung, printed, distributed, emailed, phoned others, attended meetings, read and re-read risk assessments, kept an eye on our finances, cleaned the church after services, positioned cameras and microphones, taught us how to use the broadcast equipment, zoomed, preached, led home groups, led children’s groups and done all the other jobs needed to keep the Church alive and active throughout lockdowns, tiers and the glimpses of what has been described as the “new normal”.

VICAR'S REPORT CONTINUED



The worship life of the Church in the past year has changed beyond anything we could have imagined. We have stopped singing together, the peace has become a wave and smile from behind a mask, hand sanitiser has become the first part of our gathering, communion in one kind and no tea and coffee after the service. However, we can take some comfort in that during lockdown we have continued to offer almost daily worship through our Facebook page and website. Whenever possible we have met, and we have offered a sacred space where people could sit and reflect in silent prayer.

The candle of hope has been lit most nights and the Church bell rung to remind people that even when the doors are locked, the Church is still praying for them. Thank you to all who have helped keep the Church open and available to those who want to pray.

I want to thank the PCC and Standing Committee for all the work they have done in steering the Church through this tricky time. The Church of England, the Diocese and the Government have all been issuing regular updates regarding what can and can't be done, all of which need to be read, and then transposed into our situation, turned into risk assessments and then used to create patterns of worship.

I am sure that many parents and children have really appreciated and benefitted from Diddy Disciples continuing throughout lockdown using Zoom. I would like to thank Jen, Emma, and Mimi for all their hard work and dedication to Diddy Disciples through 2020. We can't wait to see the children and families back in Church in 2021.

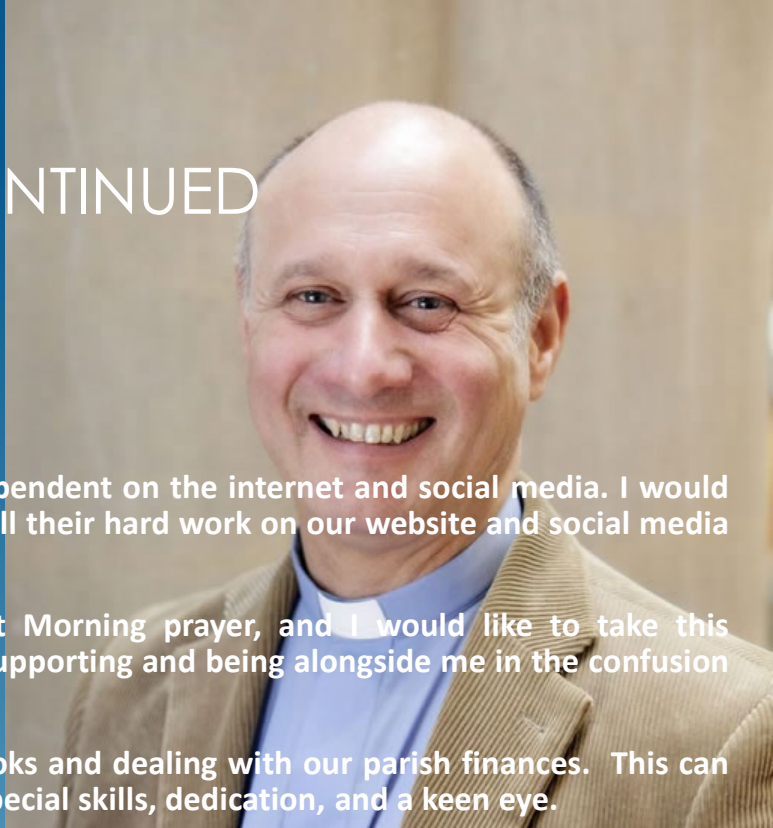
The 1st Monday club met at the start of the year and were very creative in thinking of ways they could meet and maintain social distancing and the "rule of 6". Unfortunately, as lockdown deepened the club was no longer able to meet physically but has remained a source of support and friendship. Thank you for this valuable activity and contribution to the life of our Church, and again we look forward to a time when the club will once again be able to meet in Church.

During lockdown we were able to work on the Church grounds, which has been brilliant. Both access ramps are now finished, helping us to be more inclusive. The gardening team have maintained the Church gardens for keeping weeds at bay, roses trimmed and the garden creating an inviting space, which many young families have appreciated during the pandemic. Many thanks to all who came and helped to paint the Church railings.

Thank you to all who maintain the inside of the Church for the cleaning, the tidying and of course the wonderful floral displays.

I would like to thank the worship team. Special thanks to Wendy and Eleanor for the music and singing during our services and special thanks to Emma and Lucy for filming the services too. Many thanks to Colin and Dave for all the hard work and generosity in designing, providing, and maintaining our Audio-Visual system.

VICAR'S REPORT CONTINUED



During 2020 we became much more dependent on the internet and social media. I would like to thank Emma, Dave and Tony for all their hard work on our website and social media offerings.

Isobel has been a constant support at Morning prayer, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for listening, supporting and being alongside me in the confusion and frustration of lockdown.

Thank you to Tony for balancing the books and dealing with our parish finances. This can be a thankless task and one that takes special skills, dedication, and a keen eye.

The Church Hall continues to be a valuable community resource. The hall has remained open for childcare through lockdown, thank you to the Hall management group for all your hard work in reading and preparing risk assessments and ensuring that the hall remained a Covid secure community resource.

I am proud to say that despite the pandemic, as a Church, we have continued to be outward looking. We have supported local charities through special collections, services, and ongoing relationships. Special thanks to Isobel and the Charities team. We have supported those on the margins through Acts435, Food4kids, the foodbank and referrals to other charities and support networks.

The links between us and our local schools remain strong. We have provided weekly collective worship and online worship activities when the school was closed. The school decorated the Church for us for Remembrance Day and managed to get to Church to film their Christmas worship in a socially distanced manner; I remain on the board of governors of the school and have really appreciated and admired the dedication of all our school staff in providing for the children during lockdown.

As part of the pandemic response, I have been working 2 days a week as part of the hospital Chaplaincy team. This has been both deeply satisfying, at times upsetting, but mostly a wonderful opportunity to be beside people during a challenging time in their lives. I would like to thank those of you who have been praying for our hospital.

Thank you one and all, this year has been one of loss, of change but also of hope, and I hope that as we enter into our new socially distanced, mixed mode world we can continue to explore new and vibrant ways of celebrating God's presence with us and proclaiming this to a waiting world.

Mark Stafford



CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT

Church Life

2020 was a year like no other in our memory. It began with our All Age service for Epiphany and our usual pattern of services followed until Ash Wednesday.

We were aware of the Covid 19 virus but when on March 16th the country was put on lockdown our church life as we knew it changed dramatically. The Church of England declared all church buildings closed even to clergy so our Sunday and weekday church services were broadcast on Facebook from Mark's home. Sadly we were still closed during the Easter period. But it did not pass uncelebrated.

A large wooden cross was erected by the main door at the beginning of Easter week and was covered with coloured ribbons on Easter Sunday. This stayed in place until after Whitsunday. The children were invited to colour an easter egg picture to put in their windows around the parish. Isobel prepared the little Easter Garden at the entrance to the church, the Magnolia tree blossom was as beautiful as ever and the daffodils bloomed to bring some joy to passers by. Diddy Disciples ran weekly on Zoom from June right through the year. This was organized and run by Emma, Mimi and Jen.

Our Community Café, Little Groovers and the First Monday Club could not continue and planned events including a parish weekend at Wychcroft had to be cancelled. But before the lock down we were able to host four Banquet Records concerts which were thoroughly enjoyed by the large audiences. Thank you to those who planned and helped during the concerts. Unfortunately others that had been booked for future months had to be cancelled.

In June we were invited to decorate or paint stones (Spring Grove Rocks) to reflect our thoughts and feelings at the time which were blessed and placed along the fence in the church rose bed.

To enable the church to be ready to open for public worship again, the building was deep cleaned, a risk assessment was put in place and the chairs in the church had been arranged to comply with distancing regulations; in June the church began to be opened at certain times on a Sunday and Thursday for private prayer. We were pleased that from 5th July, with the wearing of masks, distancing and sanitizing, those who were able could attend services again. The services continued to be live streamed.

In October we were able to hold our Harvest Festival with the young families joining us. The gifts were as usual donated to the Food Bank. Later that month the children enjoyed a Halloween pumpkin search around the parish followed by hot chocolate.

We were locked down again in November and although our service for Remembrance Day with the Act of Remembrance could only be broadcast, our church looked beautiful, decorated with pictures of poppies by children from St John's School and handmade poppies from members of the congregation. We were very pleased a grant for which we had applied from All Churches Trust was approved to allow us to buy four good user-friendly cameras. These with new microphones that were already in place greatly improved the quality of the live streaming; and the church bell began to be rung before services as a reminder that prayers were being said.

CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT CONTINUED

The Black Lives Matter Movement prompted the PCC to increase its awareness of issues of diversity and inclusion; thankfully no worrying monuments were found in St John's. We were not able to hold our usual Christmas Spectacular on which we rely to provide a healthy sum to subsidize our regular income to pay our bills. But an on-line auction was held in November. Thank you Tony and Jo Campbell for organizing this and to everyone who contributed in any way to make the auction such a success.

We were able to have an All Age Christingle service early in December when everyone was able to safely make a Christingle to take home and light. The young families joined us again. Sadly because of a new lockdown we were not able to have the children's Christmas Crib service but the Midnight Mass and Christmas Day services were able to be held and were live streamed. Sarah our Parish Administrator was about to leave early in the new year to be the Administrator at St John's School. Sarah had done so much for us during her three years and she cheerfully coped with the disruption and extra work the pandemic caused her when she was not able to work in the church. We were sorry to be losing her.

There was one Baptism in January and we were able to hold a Wedding Ceremony in October which proved to be a very happy occasion. During the year we welcomed Jonathan Wilkes, Sandy Cragg, Andrea Campanale, Heather Palmer for African Vision Malawi to preach and Catherine Duce from St Martin in the Fields, London to tell us about how we might benefit from becoming more closely connected with HeartEdge (churches working at the heart of culture, community and commerce). As part of the church's care for others, through the year items of food were collected for the food bank, Acts 435 a crowd funding giving site for those in need was in action and free meals offered to children in need during the school Christmas closure.

The church only runs smoothly because a dedicated group of people give their time so generously. Thank you Isobel for all you do and for your sermons during the year. Thank you Assistant Wardens for your support during this difficult year. Thank you members of our PCC for your contributions in making decisions to keep our church "open for business" and our congregation safe. Thank you Servers and Sidespeople; you have had to be very flexible and have helped the services we were able to hold run smoothly. Thank you Wendy for playing the organ every Sunday and at other special services and to Eleanor for beautifully singing the hymns for us. Thank you to those who read the lessons and led our prayers. Thank you Emma P, your helpers and Lucy for

ably operating the cameras. Thank you Mimi and team for the beautiful flower arrangements and making displays for special services. Thank you Emma, Mimi and Jen for your dedication to our young children. Thank you to our Charities Team for keeping our thoughts on other's needs. Thank you Tony for your hard work and good stewardship of our resources and Jo and Alec for your involvement with church giving. Thank you Sarah, our PCC Secretary, for having managed the difficult task of taking the Minutes of our zoomed Standing Committee and Parochial Church Council meetings and keeping us organized. Thank you to Colin and Dave Meeghan for your help with the microphones, and for all your advice and work enabling us to improve the live streaming of our services. Thank you to the helpers at the Community Café and those who supplied the Sunday refreshments before the lock down – which are sadly missed. Thank you members of our church for humping chairs and tables around when needed. Thank you Karoline, Emma and Alice for your work and care of our church garden.

And thank you Mark for your guidance, untiring support, hard work and commitment to our parish in a year which was so different to what we had planned and hoped for.

Church Fabric

By January work on the new kitchen and toilets was completed. The very old well worn red carpet was removed and replaced with grey tiles to match those at the west end of the church which was a great improvement. A new notice board was put in the entrance lobby. The church bell was overhauled and found to be safe. In the summer two outside access ramps were built. New microphones and the purchase of four new cameras improved the quality of the live screening of our services. A project to paint the railings around the church, initiated by Bill Price, was very successful with many local residents joining members of our congregation completing most of the panels. The front south side will be completed when possible. The grass has been cut regularly and the garden team have kept the garden looking tidy and attractive.

FRANCES HAZELGROVE

TREASURER'S REPORT

Church funds fell by £40k to £82,881 in the 12 months ending December 2020 as the remaining Phase 2 regeneration works were completed. Despite several months which saw losses averaging £2,500 a month, we actually ended the year with a small surplus in our Unrestricted funds - those which reflect our ordinary income and expenditure. It is the policy of the PCC to keep a minimum £30k in liquid reserves to cover unforeseen emergencies or loss of regular income. You could say we have experienced just that since March 2020! In practice, we can only achieve this level of reserve by including the Restricted legacy money in with our Unrestricted fund.

Over the year we spent £81k on regeneration works to finish Phase 2 but against this had income of £40k from final grants draw downs, VAT reclaimed under the Listed Buildings scheme and donations. This leaves us just under £45k towards future building work; a useful sum, though not sufficient to contemplate a Phase 3 just yet!

Total income for the year was £121k, of which Unrestricted income was £81k. Giving, which totalled over £31k, was almost 16% up on 2019, despite the periods the church was closed and collections were not possible. The core of this sum is from those who give via monthly standing orders or envelopes and we also benefited from some generous extra gifts beyond this and the introduction of the QR code as a contactless payment method. We received a further £12k in income tax recovered on Gift Aid payments. Together with this tax recovery, the £16k University rent continues to be very critical to our finances. Despite the pandemic, church hire income was 14% up year on year thanks to the Banquet concerts in Jan/Feb and commercial training hire. The online Silent Auction raised £2,592 and the bars run at the four Banquet Records' shows contributed £2,351. This meant that general fundraising was only a little down on last year despite no Christmas event.

Total expenses were £161k. Of these, Unrestricted costs accounted for £79,485 – 5% lower than last year. We again pledged and delivered £47k as our Parish Support contribution to the Diocese which supports the ministry here and at churches throughout Southwark, some of whom are far poorer than ourselves. Remaining costs were generally lower than last year, reflecting the strange year we've had and much frugality.

In summary, we closed 2020 with reserves of £82,881 made up of £44,951 held in the restricted Regeneration Fund towards future works, £20,596 representing the balance of legacies, £3,234 Refugee Action grant and £14,100 in unrestricted funds.

I would like to thank Mark and Lucy, Frances and Julie, Isobel, Mimi and Sarah P plus all the PCC members for their great support over the year. Special thanks also go to Jo Need, our Gift Aid Secretary, to Alec and Emma, Sarah GD and Emma P for their valuable work on stewardship, church admin and our website/social media.

Tony Hardy

ADMINISTRATOR'S & PCC SECRETARY'S REPORT

PARISH ADMIN

Due to the pandemic most of the Church events and hires, including many Banquet Records' gigs the Christmas Bazaar and Little Groovers were sadly postponed during 2020 but we were happy to facilitate Jack and Caitlin's wedding, the School Halloween Trail and various socially distanced hires that we were able to allow under the changing regulations; including the Orpheus Choir, Sing it Back and the Morris Dancers.

Sarah Grant Duff has worked as the Church Administrator since 2018 and sadly left the post in 2021. However we are pleased to know that she won't be too far away as she is now working as the St John's School administrator.

I took over from Sarah as church administrator in 2021 and I would like to express our thanks to Sarah for all of her work in undertaking the role of Church Administrator for the past 3 years.

Following the easing of restrictions we are now receiving an increasing amount of requests for hires, including weddings, gigs, training facilities and Polling station use and we look forward to further hire and event activity in 2021, including the long awaited return of Little Groovers. Watch this space for further exciting news...

Emma Lloyd-Williams



PCC SECRETARYS REPORT

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is the 'governing body' of the church and is chaired by the Vicar. It is responsible for the overall practical and spiritual wellbeing of the church, its building and its people. St John's PCC meets on alternate months throughout the year. There is also a smaller, Standing Committee of the PCC, which meets on those months when there is not a full PCC meeting (with the exception of December, when there are no meetings at all). From March 2020 all these meetings were held online rather than in person, due to the pandemic.

In addition to the Vicar, the PCC includes other members of the clergy team, the churchwardens, treasurer, secretary and up to nine members of the congregation who are elected at the APCM to serve for three years.

We delayed the 2020 APCM originally scheduled for April, although production of the Annual Report continued and it was published in July, thanks to the efforts of Emma Peries. The meeting then took place on 6 September during a socially distanced Sunday service. At it we welcomed two new elected members, Colin Bowes and Wendy Malseed, while Julie Bishop finished her term of office as Church Warden, having performed sterling work on the church regeneration.

The PCC represents the congregation and welcomes all thoughts, questions and observations about the church. Since September 2020 we have found it helpful to structure the meeting topics under the 4Cs of church life set out in the HeartEdge model: Congregational, Commercial, Compassion and Culture. There are several vacancies on the committee: anyone who is on the electoral roll is encouraged to offer themselves for election. For more information please contact the Vicar or Churchwardens.

Sarah Price

CHARITIES

Early in 2020, we were raising funds for African Vision Malawi and Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness in our usual way by selling cakes and refreshments at the Community Café; but after that everything changed and we had to find new ways to reach out to those who need our help, both in Kingston and further afield. Many thanks to all who contributed in any way to help our church community remain outward looking at this difficult time.

Because of the increased pressure on KCAH we decided to continue our support for this wonderful local charity after our Lent Appeal for them had ended, and we continued to raise money (mostly from the sale of face masks) and collect donations in kind, including new underwear, toiletries and, during the heatwave, sunscreen. Collecting for the Foodbank also continued through the year, with donations being dropped off at Mark's house and taken by him to the depot in Tolworth.

In another initiative to help those in our local community who have been struggling financially, St John's signed up to the Acts 435 scheme, which enables small-scale online crowd-funding for emergency needs; and Mark as our nominated Advocate was able to respond to several requests for help.

Christian Aid Week proved amazingly successful and Kingston CA Committee as a whole managed to raise £18,527 + £1792 Gift Aid through its 'Walk for a Whole World' campaign and Just Giving page, which turned out to be by far the best total for any area in the country. St John's played a very active part in this: Mark was one of six local clergy who undertook to walk 300,000 steps each during May, and our loyal house-to-house collectors used a combination of envelopes and social networking (no knocking on doors this year) to raise £980.

The Link to Hope Shoebox appeal in the Autumn also met with a generous response, and we managed to send off 55 filled and wrapped boxes just in time before the second lock-down on 5 November. This was warmly welcomed by the charity as so many of the usual contributors had not felt able to do boxes at all.

On our first Sunday back in church in December we were able to hold a Christingle service, with socially distanced families making their christingles from previously assembled 'kits': a lovely occasion, and £105 was raised for the Children's Society. In addition, 45 Children's Society collecting boxes are held at home by individuals and families, and we appreciate their continuing support for the charity.

For the last four months of the year we had a nominated 'Charity of the Month', which sought to raise awareness of Cancer Macmillan, Water Aid, Help for Heroes and Women and Children First, taking each in turn and giving information about its work and a link for online donations. In the nature of things, we've no way of knowing how much was given online, but cash donations totalling £600 were received and have been passed on to the designated charities.

Isobel Robinson

SAFEGUARDING

The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in church activities is the responsibility of the whole church.

Everyone who participates in the life of a church has a role to play in promoting a safer church for all.

The diocese of Southwark of which St John's is part is committed to establishing an environment where children and young people are nurtured and protected, and where all people, especially those who are vulnerable for any reason, "are able to pursue their faith journey with encouragement and in safety". Our Safeguarding policies and contact details for those with safeguarding roles are displayed on the church notice boards and our Safeguarding manual, A Safe Church, is stored in the parish office and available for anyone to see. I can confirm that the PCC has complied with the duty to have 'due regard' to the House of Bishop's guidance in relation to safeguarding. There have been no reported incidents.



This year with so little opportunity to worship together, our activity for very young children, Diddy Disciples took place on Zoom; a comprehensive Risk Assessment was presented to the PCC as this was a new experience, and in the early stages of Zoom fraught with potential safeguarding concerns; no problems of this nature were encountered.

Other activities including children's church for those aged 6 plus and our toddler group, Little Groovers were suspended during lockdown.

We had hoped to be able to carry out a full safeguarding audit, however the diocese has rolled this over to next year. We have reviewed our policies and checked that all PCC members as well as those working with children have a current enhanced DBS certificate, a requirement of the Charity Commission, and that everyone involved in the church organisation is keeping up to date with Safeguarding Training.

Our targets for next year will be to carry out a full audit under the diocesan framework, to review the agreements with hirers of our church and hall; to ensure risk assessments are conducted prior to recommencing any additional activities with children or adults who are vulnerable, to ensure all training is up to date and to achieve gender balance in leadership groups for children's activities.

Mimi Fagan

Parish Safeguarding Officer

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

A close-up photograph of a wooden cross resting on a sheet of musical notation. The cross is made of dark wood and is positioned diagonally across the page. The musical notation consists of staves with notes and clefs, which are slightly out of focus in the background.

I was appointed as Director of Music at the end of 2019, so have now been at St John's for the last eighteen months.

We all know too well what an unusual time this has been and have had to adapt in so many different ways. Although we have not been able to meet as a community and as a congregation through periods of lockdown, we have nevertheless strived to maintain our links via other means, such as the Internet. So far as has been possible, we have live-streamed Sunday services on Facebook and music has been played on the organ despite the fact that singing has not always been permissible.

One of the highlights of the year was one of the Christmas services that we were able to deliver, both in Church and on Facebook, in which members of the local community sang carols. We are extremely grateful to those who participated in this event, which benefited so many. Although life has not been normal for any of us, there have been other opportunities we have grasped. Our sister church, All Saints, Kingston, has a thriving choir and has been unable to sing as a result of Covid restrictions. We are grateful, therefore, that choir members have offered to sing at St John's. In particular, Eleanor Howard-Williams has sung on a regular basis over the last few months and we are extremely grateful for her contributions. More recently, other members of the choir have volunteered their services and we are grateful also for these.

I look with hope and anticipation to our future.

Wendy Malseed

Director of Music

SACRED SPACE

Sacred Space Kingston is a fresh expression of church for spiritual seekers with a particular emphasis on the arts and creativity. We have built a link with St John's Church over the last few years and have led your Sacred Space services on the third Sunday of each month during 2020. Like the rest of the church, Sacred Space Kingston went online in 2020. We held a service for Easter over Zoom with members of the community contributing readings, prayers and videos as we reflected together on the death and resurrection of Jesus. We have had regular virtual catch ups and shared resources that we've engaged with to keep us spiritually active and encouraged including online retreats, art and poetry classes and yoga sessions.



In the summer we got together, socially distanced in the garden for our own mini Greenbelt Festival with live streamed talks, panels discussions and music. We did an interactive labyrinth on an IT platform called gathertown and have had fun socials playing games such as Pictionary on our smart phones, as well as a Christmas quiz on Zoom. We've also done a Lent course using an app called Sarx focusing on Christianity and animals. Some members of the community have got involved in a new initiative called SpiritSpace which is a once a month virtual gathering for spiritual seekers in the UK and US, although now attracting attendees from France and Australia as well.

We produce meditations that are Christ inspired, but sensitively communicate with people who feel outside or even hostile to the church. There are also discussions and the opportunity for one-to-one encounters in break out rooms for dream interpretation, prayer for healing or Ruach card readings, for example. The latter is what I offer online. The last card in these Christian card readings is a verse of scripture and I use this to pray a blessing for those who are willing, wherever they are located around the world. Through this I have seen how the screen is no barrier to people being encouraged and touched by God.

I am reliably informed Sacred Space has been granted its Bishop's Mission Order and Bishop Christopher wants to formally recognise me as Licensed Lay Pioneer. However, he would like to wait until he can do this in person and have it witnessed by both members of Sacred Space and St John's. This is something to look forward to hopefully later in the year.

Andrea Campanale

FAMILIES & CHILDREN

We started off 2020 welcoming a number of new families to the church which is always lovely. We managed to hold two 'All age' services before the country was plunged into lockdown, the last of which was well received by most of the younger worshippers especially when they got to take home their freshly baked rock cakes.

Sadly due to the restrictions in place for most of the year, we were unable to have many children taking part in the services and could not hold our crib service. We had hoped to hold a Nativity trail around the parish over Christmas but sadly it was not to be. Going into 2021 we look forward to a brighter future and to once again be able to offer a wider range of activities for the children in the parish. We will particularly be looking at our offerings for children aged 6+, our young teenagers, whilst also relaunching Little Groovers. If anyone is interested in getting more involved please speak to either Mark or myself.

Emma Lloyd-Williams



CHILDRENS CHURCH

Children's church met on 8 Sundays in 2020 where the children had a session based around that day's Bible reading with activities. Due to the lockdown restrictions and social distancing it has not been possible for the children's church to meet since March 2020. We hope to get together soon and will be looking at new ways to engage with our children. Sessions can only go ahead with the help of our dedicated team of helpers.

Carolynne Cotton



At the start of 2020 Diddy Disciples was being attended by about 20 families. Its regular pattern of songs, stories and craft were enjoyed by our younger worshippers, little did we know that by March that we would all be in lockdown. By June, we had decided that the probability of us all coming together to worship was small, so after a bit of research, some practice sessions and by slightly rewriting the script, so that it would work online we launched Diddy Disciples at home via "Zoom". This was immediately a big hit and we were regularly being joined by a large number of followers.

We were truly amazed by how well the sessions ran on Zoom and how engaged the children were. Whilst we missed the interaction that you get from 'face to face' sessions, it was great to keep a connection to our families and continue worshipping together. As we move into the next phase of our post pandemic lives, we will look again at how we can adapt the Diddy format to ensure that we can meet and worship safely.

Emma Lloyd-Williams

FIRST MONDAY CLUB



Well what a strange year that was!

We started the new year with Bingo, a pantomime quiz and a planning meeting. In February we made marmalade and in March had a great talk by Jon Cotton, "Archaeology, my life in Ruins" followed by a time test in which we had to put a variety of ancient objects into chronological order - not including members of the FMC!

Then we went into coronavirus lockdown.

Things looked up a bit in August and September but we were only able to meet six at a time and had to bring our own drinks and eat pre-packaged biscuits (thank you Pat Askey) quite unlike our customary cream teas! Because of this limit on numbers we had to postpone a talk by Rosalind Hardy which promised to be well attended and we will look forward to hearing her soon if she can fit us in. We managed two sessions in October to make poppies for display on Remembrance Sunday then,

Back to lockdown. I can't tell you how much we are all looking forward to resuming our meetings and having a FMC reunion party.

Perhaps you will join us.

Jo Need

REGENERATION GROUP

Phase 2 of our Regeneration Project was finally completed with the external ramps to the north and south doors finished and internal snagging done. While a little of this work ran over into 2021 mainly due to ground conditions and delays in getting materials due to Covid, any outstanding costs were included in the year-end provisions. Internally the main body of the church now benefits from a unified floor covering to replace the old carpet. A generous donation was received towards the cost of the new carpeting. I would like to record our sincere thanks to John Borthwick of Edwards Building Services for his and his team's hard work in achieving the improvements to access to the church and its enhanced interior we can now all enjoy. Just under £45K is carried forward at the year-end and reserved towards future building improvements in a Restricted fund.

Tony Hardy
Church Treasurer



ECO GROUP

The Eco Committee has not met during the pandemic. We were waiting until all the building work was completed before reassessing and continuing with working towards the Bronze Eco Church Award.

The Environmental Policy remains the same and will be reviewed in the coming year to take into account our beautiful new church environment, reduced carbon foot print and our more sustainable ethos.

Alice Fowles

SERVERS & SIDESPEOPLE



Servers

Serving in church can be so rewarding.

As servers we assist Mark throughout the service. We currently have 3 servers. We really could do with a couple more. If you think this would be something you would like to be part of, please talk to any of the servers or Mark.

Thank you and bless you.

Neville Hall

Sidespeople

We have 12 friendly volunteers on our sides people rota at St John's. Our duties are to ensure our congregation and any new visitors receive a warm and friendly welcome, to guide them at communion and to take the collection and a note of the number of attendees. We are on hand throughout Sunday services to provide additional support as needed, and to help with extra duties during specific seasonal services e.g. Carols by Candlelight at Christmas when congregational numbers are high.

The only qualification is a warm smile so, if you would like to join our team, please let me or Mark know. We'd be delighted to have you.

David Hamilton



FLOWERS & GARDENING

Flowers in church

Anyone is welcome to arrange a vase of flowers in the church, there is no special skill required! For the major festivals, a team of arrangers is usually pulled together to create designs on a larger scale; it's always a happy and sociable team effort and a way of getting to know people in the church. If you would like to get involved in any way with flowers in church, regularly or occasionally, or if you would like flowers arranged, as a celebration of a special event or in memory of a loved one, have a word with Mark or Frances.

Mimi Fagan



Gardening Team

The gardening team of Emma Lloyd Williams, Karoline Molberg, Trisha Badham and Alice Fowles have continued to look after the grounds during the last year, as restrictions allowed. Karoline's brother propagated some rose plants and these have been used to fill in gaps along the perimeter fence. A rose called "The Lady Gardener" has been planted in memory of Helene Keats, who was so knowledgeable about roses and shared her expertise with the team. New gravel was purchased to replenish along the rose border to help with weed control and to show off the beautiful roses. The gardening sessions really help to keep the church grounds looking neat and tidy, which have been enjoyed by local residents during the lockdown. Many thanks to all the team.

Alice Fowles

SILENT AUCTION

The Legendary Silent Auction has been part of our annual Christmas event for many years and has always been a big fund raiser for us.

The lockdown meant that it was impossible to stage any kind of social event in church so it was decided to run the Auction element online. Using the Jumblebee web platform, a total of 75 lots were kindly donated by church and community members plus local businesses. The Auction went live on 2 December and closed on 12 December.

Bids were received for every lot and a net £2,592 was raised for church funds. A number of the lots were sourced by St John's School PSA and in this case, proceeds were shared 50/50 between the PSA and the church. This contributed a further £411 to PSA funds bringing the net total raised to £3,003.

It is hoped now that the online Auction will be part of our Christmas event for years to come, even when we are able to hold the event in church again. I'd particularly like to thank Jo Campbell for her invaluable help in setting up the Auction and Emma Lloyd-Williams and Agnieszka van Eijnsbergen from the School PSA for their great efforts in securing the many items that benefited both church and school.

Tony Hardy, Church Treasurer



SOCIAL MEDIA

Well, what a year 2020 was for the Church and its congregation.

It was amazing that social media could help keep us together as Coronavirus took its grip and continued for the whole year and more.

When we launched the Facebook and Instagram pages in April 2019, it was just a means for communication and publicising events. Within a year, we were broadcasting services live on Facebook. At the beginning of 2020, the feeds were populated with who was going to be playing in concerts at St Johns and the up-and-coming church cafes but on March 18th the heart wrenching decision to close the church was posted and that weekend saw our first live service on Facebook.

I filmed the services on my mobile, broadcasting live on Facebook and the recordings are saved on the social platform and uploaded to the website. Many thanks to Lucy for her support and always standing in when I couldn't be there. Mark did an amazing job of broadcasting everything on Facebook, morning prayer, Sunday services and Holy Communion. Also posting a daily message to keep up morale.

Despite the Church re-opening for some periods, we decided to keep live streaming on Facebook for those that didn't feel comfortable coming back to Church during the pandemic. Filming on a mobile certainly had its limitations and we often had problems with the sound. Thanks to Colin for hooking us up with a professional mic system, but sometimes we still had issues.

Mark successfully applied for a grant to fit cameras and a new system for broadcasting the services. As the news hit that the Church would have to close for Christmas, we quickly scrambled to ensure the new system was up and running for then.

Not to be in Church for most of the year was strange enough, but we hope broadcasting the services live or watching them pre-recorded was a lifeline for many in this unprecedented year.

Emma Peries

ELECTORAL ROLL

The electoral roll for 2020/21 :

- There are 114 people currently on the roll in 2021
- 0 people have left the roll
- 3 people have joined.

All new members of the church congregation are welcomed to reach out to me and we can get you signed up to the electoral roll as soon as possible to ensure that you are eligible for voting at next year's APCM and that we can also have an accurate picture of the congregation.

Jen Powell



PARISH HALL NEWS

2020 started well. January, February and the first two weeks of March 2020 were very busy with the Kindergarten, Badminton group, Jiu jitsu, Rugbytots, British Theatre Academy, Perform, the Rose Youth Theatre, the Spring Grove Fringe and the ballroom dance group all using the hall as usual. There were several private parties and in early February the Spring Grove Fringe put on their production of Jack and the Beanstalk.

Then from the 16th March all use of the hall stopped.

We were in the first lock down because of the covid virus. No one could use the hall. The Spring Grove Residents' Association Barn dance originally booked for the end of March had been cancelled and occasional bookings could no longer be held for the immediate future.

A weekly professional deep clean was arranged and a risk assessment for the hall was produced. Future hirers were asked to supply their own. We were very pleased that The Kindergarten and some of the teaching groups were able to return in August but we had to close again on 22 November for 2 weeks and again from 20 December.

A large notice board for the front of the hall was purchased and put in place by the front fence and the heating boiler which had broken down was replaced with a new one.

Thanks must be given to Wing, our caretaker, for her support and to the hall Committee for their helpful advice during the year.

It has been a very difficult time for all our groups but they have kept in touch hoping things would improve and looking forward to the time when they can permanently return to our hall.

Frances Hazelgrove



PARISH HALL FINANCE

Finance & Building Report for the year ended 31 December 2020

Despite a considerable reduction in hire income due to Covid closures, Parish Hall funds actually grew from £55,697 at the start of the year to reach £60,727 by the end of 2020. This represented a surplus for the year of £5,030, compared to an £18k profit the previous year.

Income was down by over 50% at £16,729 (£34,718 in 2019). Of this, 99% came from regular hirers with highest usage by the Kindergarten which was able to remain open, Jiu Jitsu and Spring Grove Fringe. Occasional hire for events like children's parties, meetings, music and quiz nights virtually disappeared due to Covid restrictions.

Expenses at £11,699 were 27% below last year, due to lower occupation, wear and tear and energy usage. Maintenance and replacement costs were significantly down on last year, although cleaning had to be maintained at a high level to comply with Covid safety.

After contributing £41k from surplus Hall funds to the main Church Regeneration Fund in recent years, no further transfers were made in 2020. The Hall Committee still has the aim to replace windows and fire doors plus undertake some redecoration in the future. There is a longer-term ambition to improve accessibility and toilet provision but this will require external finance from grants or trusts to match our own reserves. The Hall Committee agreed to keep a minimum £20k in reserve and will review this going forward.

Once again, sincere thanks go to Frances Hazelgrove who manages the Hall bookings and our caretaker and cleaner, Wing Wong, who stepped down in the spring. Weekly cleaning at both the church and Hall is now undertaken by Paragon Green Cleaning who has been an effective and reliable contractor. We also offer thanks to Michael Wraight for looking after maintenance and to Jan Hartley for leading the Hall management committee.

Tony Hardy

Church & Hall Treasurer

TEAM MINISTRY

The Kingston Team

There are times when sheer survival is an enormous achievement, when simply being able to stand firm and stand still in the face of an onslaught represents an immense accomplishment and a great triumph.

I think this last year has been one of those times. Simply to have provided for the spiritual and other needs of friend and stranger, as best we can and in whatever way seemed possible at the time, has been a great feat of ingenuity and stamina. We must thank everyone for the work they have done and the part they have played to make this possible. From clergy and Wardens, doing their best to provide and to hold, right through to deprived congregants, patiently bearing the limitations of what was given, we have weathered the storm thus far. We are still standing, we have survived as local institutions, and thus we are ready and waiting to continue serving our community and sharing the good news of love that Jesus proclaimed.

Our profound thanks to those who have worked so hard to provide services, support neighbours and given so generously so that the financial storms raging around us have had some hope of being weathered. Your generosity and love are deeply appreciated. Thank you to all.

Let us join in hope and expectation for what might lie ahead, and trust in the presence of God from which nothing can separate us.

Jonathan Wilkes
Team Rector

ANNUAL REPORT ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?
Psalm 137

2020 has been a year of exile from so much. Can you believe in January here at St John the Baptist we had a Bollywood night with a hall full of people drumming, curry and dancing. In February we had a special service to dedicate our beautifully restored green Altar frontal. At the end of February we even had a Messy Church with a hall bursting with people the Yollin church supporting the music and great plans for the year ahead. Then came lock down. We could not go to the church building. I continued to go to Springfield hospital each week, training and reaching out in new ways.

We learned to sing the Lord's song in a strange land. I recorded Easter services from my living room and garden. Christina Rene Thomas shared sermons from her car. Joseph Shim sang from his kitchen. All of us shared messages and showed love and care for our neighbours by phoning, by buying one another food, and most importantly by staying home. One of our church magazines was filled with little notes about people finding God, in bird song, and quiet prayer. Other magazines would be filled with messages of thanks for those who had brought comfort and joy through hard times.

In the summer things opened up a little the church was opened for in person worship, but now with hand sanitiser masks and social distancing. In September we invited neighbours to join us for an outside concert all safely distance. At Christmas not only was the church spectacularly decorated by Sue Richardson and her team, but so was garden and even the hall grew wings.

This year we have been exiled from so much which is familiar, we have been kept apart from those we love. Very sadly some in our parish have been bereaved, and all have experienced loss of some kind. Yet we have found new ways of doing things, we have had zoom coffee mornings with Vera Francis in her hundredth year, joining us from the nursing home across the street. We have printed and distributed magazines, cakes and flowers. We improved the wifi in church so services could be livestreamed from church all over the parish and indeed all over the world with people joining us from literally all over the place. We had a zoom AGM at which we thanked Kevin Jenkins and Andrew Bignold for their work over the previous year and appointed Beverly Morley Brown as a new church warden to work with Andrew in caring for the church. Andrew and Beverly alongside all in the church have enabled the church to service in new ways. This year we have been blessed by God. As we have said each Sunday "God is not in a building, God is in my heart and yours, in each act of love and care, longing to meet us in prayer.

2020 was not been how any of us expected, yet God has been with us enabling us to deal with the changes.

Mandy Beck

CONTACTS FOR ST JOHN'S

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Vicar: Rev Mark Stafford vicarstjohnkingston@gmail.com Tel: 020 8546 9542

Church Warden & Hall bookings: Frances Hazelgrove parishhall@stjohnskingston.co.uk

Parish Administrator: Emma Lloyd-Williams stjohnschurch.kingston@gmail.com

Reader & Charities Team leader: Isobel Robinson

Parish Safeguarding Officer: Mimi Fagan mimifagan@gmail.com Tel: 07764 188653

Treasurer: Tony Hardy

PCC Secretary: Sarah Price

Additional PCC Members: Michael Wraight, Alec MacMillan, Grant Vanstone, Jennifer Marshall, Wendy Malseed, Colin Bowles, Ailce Fowles.



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