

St John the Baptist, Catford

Annual Reports for 2021 - 2022

Presented to the AGM 1st May 2022

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Team Rector's Report

Many thanks to you for the welcome given to myself and the family as we began our time at St John's.

I have visited some of you but am aware that there are many folk still to see, and please don't be shy in asking for a visit. It's the best way for me to get to know people (and learn names!), and I hope to have seen everyone by the time I've been here a year.

We're moving towards a return to how church was before lockdown, and God willing, here's hoping we don't have to reintroduce restrictions going forwards so that we can grow and flourish as a congregation once more. As before, we will take our cues as a church council from the medical situation though, as the last thing we want to do is put anyone's health at risk.

Wishing you all God's blessings,

Revd. Peter.

Finance Report and Accounts 2021

This year has been another difficult year from a financial point of view. The hall continued to be closed for much of 2021 resulting in a limited income from lettings. There also continued to be no fund raising events such as Summer and Christmas Fairs.

Receipts

The total received from planned giving, including loose collections and gift aid claims was £45,790 compared to £52,021 the previous year.

Income from hall lettings was only £13,301 compared to £44,439 in 2020 and £69,050 in 2019.

However the curate house (59 Southend Lane) was able to be rented out once again from July 2021 following the departure of the curate. The first three months income was mostly absorbed by the cost of repairs and improvements, but the net income received by the end of the year was £3,899.

Payments

Due to the loss of income from hall lettings and from fund raising, we were unable to maintain the level of our Parish Support contribution to the diocese. Hence in 2021 £14,600 was paid to Parish Support compared to £39,600 in the previous year.

There were no major repairs carried out to the church and the hall during the year.

The overall payments for the year exceeded receipts by £4,621 and hence the bank balances at the end of the year were reduced to £36,311 compared with £40,938 the previous year.

The balance of £36,316 consisted of £17,980 restricted funds and the remaining £18,335 as unrestricted.

Towards the end of the year, income from the hall lettings started to return, and with the additional income from the curate house the financial future looks brighter, and hopefully the Parish Support will be able to be increased to nearer its former level.

David Smith

Treasurer

Sacristan

I am no longer responsible for Serving at Church as I am not too steady on my legs now. Sandy has taken on that role. I had decided after 45 years to retire from Serving at the time of the 2020 AGM, but thanks to the lockdown I wasn't able to officially retire. However, I am happy to continue "setting up" for the Sunday Service and other Services on Special Occasions, and would still be happy to Serve as the thurifer in an emergency. I would like to thank all the Servers we have had at St John's over those 45 years for all the support I received.

Tony Miller

Music Department

Choir:

We are very fortunate to have acquired three new choir members who show continued commitment and dedication to the musical life of St John's.

Lunchtime Recital Series:

The St John's Lunchtime Recital Series is being relaunched beginning with its opening recital in May. The recitals will take place on the last Fridays of each month and publicity and literature will be distributed within the next couple of weeks.

Instruments:

1. Organ

The organ is not in good condition. Stops do not operate fully; electronic contacts have worn away and the pitch is nearly a semitone too high – making it unsuitable to use with other instruments as well as making choral and congregational singing strenuous at written pitches. Aside from tunings the organ has not seen significant maintenance work since it was first installed in St John in 1982 and is now showing clear signs of degradation. I am in the process of obtaining a full report from the organ builders (Bishop & Son) and would like to begin a process of seeking funding.

2. Piano

The action of the piano keys has become increasingly heavy and sloppy. A technician has been booked in to regulate the action and tune the instrument before the return of the lunchtime recitals.

3. Harmonium

The harmonium is in good condition and has proved very useful when used to accompany St John's Choir for an outdoor Evensong at Bromley College.

Other news:

The formation of a new instrumental ensemble bearing the name 'St John's Players' is currently being explored. This will primarily be for the training of undergraduates in preparation for their professional careers, extra income for St John's and more exposure of St John's Church to young people and the Parish.

Jack Stone

Director of Music

Online Missioner's Report 2022

When we reopened the church after the third Lockdown on Palm Sunday 2021, we were adamant live streaming would continue, and the messages of gratitude we get for this prove it was a good decision. Of course, numbers watching services online have dropped hugely as people have returned in person, but we know it is gratefully received by those who cannot. People are able to join us from virtually if they have mobility issues, if they are unwell or convalescing, if they are away from home. This means we continue to reach those who would otherwise be isolated and they are able to connect with the church and worship in a way they could not have two years ago. Streaming services also serves a further mission purpose- it opens a window into the way we worship- people can see what happens in a service and get a feel for it if it is for them before then coming along in person.

I am very grateful to both Sandy and Amos for their help with the livestreaming over the last year- them setting this up means I am free to take photos, videos and even go live on Instagram during the services. We have now set Revd. Peter up to be able to livestream from the church account, albeit with some teething problems.

As social media constantly evolves, I have been keeping abreast of changes on the different platforms- gone are the days when simply sharing a service time and the odd image are enough to keep your account valuable and reaching those we want to reach. For example, Instagram reels (short videos similar to TikTok) have helped grow our online following and provide a deeper insight into what we do in a way which is easy to access and fun.

I have attended some courses to help keep up to date. In June, we were extremely fortunate to be granted a free Instagram account Audit from the social media expert hellosocial.media. This was extremely helpful in giving me tips for tweaks to improve our page (it had knock on positive effects on our Facebook and Twitter accounts too). But also it helped me see all the good in what we share online, to see its value and worth to our 'audience'. Recently I took part in a course on Instagram stories which I have been putting into practice on the St John's account- we have had some really great feedback from this, especially the video of Rev'd Peter's Day in the Life.

Going forward, I would love to see more 'people' on our account and more 'behind the scenes' activity- people would be fascinated in, for example, the filling up of the Thurible, or a tour around the organ with our Director of Music. Please come forward if you are willing to share your own St John's work with our online following.

I also ask that everyone continues to engage with us on social media- every like, comment, share and image you send me to use makes a huge difference. The aim for the Online Missioner role has always been to share openly what goes on inside beyond our doors, so that more may venture in and feel God's presence. This is even more vital today than when it was set up.

Much of the focus of the last year online has been on encouraging people back into church when they are able. Making sure people were aware of the arrival of the Organs, sharing restrictions and changes as they happened. I also post every Saturday evening about the service the following day, featuring the liturgical colour and any feast days or special services. This began after Fr Christopher left to share who was presiding each week, but I have carried it on as it has been useful. For some time, Jack also gave the song sheets for me to upload ahead of the service, which proved popular while more people were joining from home.

I also continue to post content that reaches people who may not engage with the worship aspects: the geese continue to be a big highlight and #BromleyRdGeese is used regularly by members of the wider community, including Phoenix Housing, to share updates about the goslings, traffic warnings and more. #MondayMotivation posts also continue to be popular- pairing an image from church or around the parish with a short piece of biblical/liturgical text. Throughout the last year I have used extracts from the Psalm shared that week and then from The Collect.

Shea Hollis

Online Missioner

Pram Club Report 2022

Pram Club is yet to reopen since closing for Covid 19 in March 2020.

As Pram Club traditionally took place on a Wednesday, we initially thought it would not be able to return due to Foodbank now in church on that day. However, Nadine Reynolds (Pram Club leader) is so keen to restart that she has reshuffled her diary and now has space on other days- ideally Mondays.

We are asked regularly when Pram Club is returning, evidence, if we needed it, that it is a much-treasured, useful community feature. Nadine has been in talks with Sandy Mawford about reopening after Easter, but it now seems September is more realistic. We really hope that all involved agree it is a priority.

Shea Hollis

Pram Club Storytime Leader

Senior Social Club and First Friday Coffee Club

As with other organisations we have been unable to meet during the last year. We have used the time to prepare for our safe reopening hopefully in the early summer.

Letters will be sent to previous members when we are ready to relaunch both clubs.

With the help of generous donations and bequests in 2020 we can ensure that older members of our congregation and community are given a safe venue to meet old friends and make new ones after so many months apart.

Gillian Spencer

Mothers' Union Report

The first meeting of 2021 was our Annual General Meeting in July, starting with an Act of Reflection and Remembrance. During the following months we had a Cream Tea to raise funds for the Summer of Hope Appeal and other fund-raising included putting money in a jar as we counted our blessings and a member being sponsored for a 5k swim. We had a service on Mary Sumner Day in August to celebrate the 145th anniversary of the Mothers' Union and marking the 100th anniversary of the death of its founder, Mary Sumner. At the Wave of Prayer service we prayed for our link dioceses around the world and also had a Harvest service. In November we ran a Craft Stall with items made by members, the proceeds going to the Away From It All project which provides holidays for families in crisis. Many diocesan meetings and services were held on-line, and magazines distributed so members were able to keep in touch with the work of the Mothers' Union here and throughout the world. We have a full programme of events planned for this year so please feel free to attend a meeting if you would like to. We look forward to welcoming you to our 30th Anniversary Service in November.

**Catherine Hall
Branch Leader**

Children's Church Report

At the end of last year's report, I wrote about the possibility of Children's Church returning in September 2021. I contacted all previous members of the Children's Church Team to enquire as whether they were able to return to church so that we could restart as soon as possible. However, for various reasons none was able to return to church at that time; some have moved out of the area and now worship locally, others had family members who were now seriously ill due to COVID complications. I realised that I was the only regular member of the team who had returned. People continued to pray for more workers and the children to return.

In January we restarted Children's Church with Clare Stell and Debbie Nelson stepping forward to become part of the new team. We have continued to pray at the Thursday prayer meeting for the children's work and for volunteers to join the team. We currently hold Children's Church on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. We have recently had two further church members offering to help Gillian Spencer and Shevonne Onamade, also Gloria Cole and Shea Hollis are our 'supply' team who help out when anyone is unexpectedly unable to do their allocated week. Shola Porter also

helps out with resources and did a wonderful job of sharpening all the pencils and organising them into sets. This means that we should be able to offer a 3rd week soon once all DBS checks have been completed (Thanks to Julie Rochefort who is already working on this), and new members have had the opportunity to visit a session to see how things are run.

Although numbers were very small to start with, we now have 8 children attending each week with at least 6 attending regularly, including Caleb and Celine, Olive and Wesley, and Anhira and Amari, Sugarathan who is now 12 still comes with her mother, she has special needs so we are allowing her to continue for the moment. There were around 16 children at church yesterday (Easter Sunday) although some are technically youth.

We continue to use Roots resources which generally follows the Lectionary and Reverend Peter sends me the service rota so that also helps with our planning.

I am hoping to offer Safeguarding Training from the diocese on line in the next month to all the team. Please continue to pray for us as a team and for a more volunteers - if we had 2 more regular team members, we could offer Children's church each week.

There is also a need for Youth work as the upper age limit for Children's Church is 11 – when they start Secondary School, they stop attending however, at the moment there are at least 3 who have volunteered to help rather than stay in the service. I have declined their help but recognise that they may not be receiving what they need from the main service.

Cynthia Harding

Volunteer Children's Church Coordinator