



**ST PETER'S**  
ST ALBANS

# Yearbook 2021

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## ST PETER'S CHURCH ST ALBANS

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### Our values

- Everyone is included
- Loving and generous service is celebrated
- Faith is nurtured and developed
- Everyone is inspired to reach their God-given potential.



# Trustees' Annual Report

## For year ending 31 December 2021

### Background

During 2021 we were still affected by Covid throughout the year. At various times we were unable to offer in person services and events due to lockdowns, or we offered reduced activities with measures including masks and social distancing. The situation improved during the summer and we were able to restart some of our regular activities for example our Wednesday lunchtime concerts. Cases of Covid increased in the run up to Christmas which meant we had to limit the number of people attending our services to allow for social distancing, Messy Church moved outside and some external events were cancelled.

The Mission Action Plan (MAP) was adopted by the PCC in February 2019 and outlines future plans and priorities for developing activities that express our Vision for Mission and Ministry strategy. Following all the changes we have experienced over the last two years the PCC have started a review and update of the MAP and will be consulting with our congregations about the future direction of St Peter's. We continued to implement many of our strategic tasks during 2021 and these are recorded in our annual review of church life, this 2021 Yearbook. The Mission Action Plan annual update was presented at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 18 April 2021.

A summary of key achievements and news follows.

### Ministry and Worship

Our worship during 2021 was a mix of online and in person services. By asking people to sign up to attend services we were able to ensure that social distancing was possible in all our services. Some larger services were held outside i.e 10am on Easter Sunday and over the summer we tried to hold our 10am service outside whenever the weather allowed. During the summer we were able to start offering coffee after our 10am service which allowed people to socialise after our worship again. Morning prayer has continued every weekday morning on Zoom and provides companionship as well as worship. By holding it on line more people have been able to regularly attend and we plan to continue with this.

In the weeks leading up to Christmas Covid rates increased significantly in our area and the schools who had booked carol services decided to cancel these. We asked people to sign up for our busier Christmas services and moved our pews to enable social distancing. On 18<sup>th</sup> December we ran a Live Nativity Trail in conjunction with the Cathedral and other local churches. This was very well attended and we are planning to repeat it for Christmas 2022.

In October Liz Guest joined our ministry team as Associate Priest with responsibility for children, families and youth work. This has enabled us to restart many of our family activities including our popular baby and toddler time groups, Messy church and Junior Church. Our monthly Family Time services on Sunday afternoons have also continued.

High quality music in our worship is part of St Peter's tradition and we have continued to offer musical input in our services thanks to the support of our musicians, choir and also members of the congregation. Choir practices restarted twice a week and evensong took place in church again from the summer.

Our pastoral team have created a support network led by the ministry team to ensure that members of our community were looked after and did not become isolated during lockdowns. As well as pastoral support, practical tasks like delivering food and medicines are offered.

Many weddings and baptisms were postponed during 2021 however we conducted 13 Baptisms, celebrated 7 weddings and had pastoral contact with a further 17 families through conducting funerals or burials of ashes.

## **St Peter's Community**

The Friends of St Peter's held two fairs during the year. A Summer Fair in July and a Choral Winter Fair in December. Both were well attended and provided enjoyable community events. Tea on Tuesday restarted in July and ran for the rest of the year including a special Treats on Tuesday in December. Our Wednesday lunchtime concerts restarted in June and from September we were able to also offer refreshments in the Octagon after the concerts.

We have tried to keep the church open as much as possible when we have staff cover to allow people to visit for private prayer, reflection or to talk to a member of staff or the ministry team.

## **Wider church links**

St Peter's maintains its civic links with the city and the District Council. We continue our ecumenical partnerships with the 6 city centre churches group – St Peter's, Marlborough Road Methodist, Dagnall Street Baptist, the Salvation Army, Trinity United Reform and SS Alban and Stephen Roman Catholic. During 2021 we have continued our close relationship with Marlborough Road Methodist Church and have shared worship and resources. We also support several local good causes, both financially and through members of our congregation volunteering, including Open Door, The Living Room, Youth Talk, The Winter Beds Project, Rennie Gove Hospice Care, the Food and Hygiene Banks and the Children's Society. As well as international charities such as Christian Aid, and Stop the Traffik.

## **Financial results**

The principal sources of income and expenditure are set out in the financial statements for the year. Despite a reduction in income during 2021, as a result of Covid restrictions and the direct impact this had on our various income streams, the general financial position of the church remains secure. Our reserves are adequate, our investments continued to perform well and despite a decrease in overall income generated we received sufficient to cover our annual expenditure including our Parish Share contribution. Our approach to expenditure remains cautious in general and we continue to maintain appropriate levels of reserves. The financial support of the SPRING building project will continue to be a financial priority in the year(s) ahead.

## Next Phase for St Peter's

Work to refurbish the vestries and create a mezzanine floor was completed at the start of the year. This has increased our storage and also given us the facilities to serve coffee in church after Sunday services. We purchased some new Trinity chairs to replace the old ones in the chancel. These are light and stackable and therefore easy to move and store.

During August the project to extend our kitchen and refit it as well as refurbishing the Octagon was completed. The increased space in the kitchen and addition of more storage, a larger fridge and a dishwasher has made this space more useable for St Peter's events and also for external hire. We held a Garden Party in September to officially open the Octagon which was attended by over 100 people. The Building Committee are working with our architects on plans for the next stage of SPRING (St Peter's reworked: inspiring new growth). This will include replacing the concrete floor in the nave with a stone floor and this work is planned to commence in 2023. The recent and future improvements will ensure that we can better serve our church family as well as the local community and city of St Albans. 2021 has been another unusual year and I am very grateful for the prayer and work that many people have put in to develop the life, ministry and mission of St Peter's. The learnings and experiences we have gained will help take us forward in 2022 as we review our MAP and plan for the future. Thank you.



**Revd Mark Dearnley**  
**Vicar of St Peter's**

## Ministry and Worship

As we continued to organise ourselves around Covid our ability to adapt and change became easier. The many services we ran outside were a highlight and helped to keep us safer and attract new people too.

As the year progressed we were pleased to be more regularly back in the building. My thanks to all those who made it possible for regular worship to continue, including the tech team and the ever adaptable choir and musicians led by Nick.

The encouragement for all of us is that the congregation has grown over this time, and we are pleased to have welcomed new people throughout a year of varied activity.

It was also a real encouragement to me to welcome Liz Guest as the new associate priest with responsibility for children and family ministry. Liz quickly settled in and is clearly at ease in aspects of ministry here.

My thanks also to all those who have enabled others aspects of our church life and ministry to grow over this year. It is such a privilege to serve amongst a supportive and caring ministry team, and to witness the work many are doing to support and develop our church life together.

Thank you!

Mark

## **Pastoral Ministry**

2021 started in lockdown so, once again, the Pastoral Team was busy keeping in touch with people on their list; again all members gave sterling service in this respect. From the beginning of March, some services resumed in church but communication, especially with those not yet able to return to the services, was very valuable. The work of the Bereavement Team was much appreciated, too.

During the summer, it proved possible to keep in touch with those living in Beaumonts and Davis Court by joining them in the garden or a well-ventilated lounge. Gradually a more 'normal' pattern of services has evolved, with Holy Communion services held regularly in both venues from October and in Strathmore from early November. We were also able to add a new venue – Eleanor House, where regular services are now taken by Rosemary from Marlborough Road Methodist Church or myself. I had a particularly enjoyable morning there in December: nearly an hour of carol singing, which many residents joined, followed by Holy Communion.

We held a small but pleasant Tea on Tuesday in July. From September, greater numbers have been attending and all seem to enjoy the afternoon tea and chat. Help given regularly by Pam Hayes and Lynn Cherrill-Teesdale has been very valuable; even so, more helpers would be welcome. Some of the St. Peter's congregations were able to help at or participate in Holiday at Home, organised by the Methodist Churches.

*Margaret Tinsley*

## **Homegroups**

Having stopped meeting in person in the first 2020 lockdown, one of our home groups resumed face to face meetings in 2021, although two others continued to meet remotely throughout 2021. As reported last year, the Lent Groups held in 2020 morphed into a new remote home group and that group has continued to meet fortnightly by Zoom ever since. Each group adopts an approach which suits its members. Some groups like to use a resource around which a season of meetings can be based. Another usually prefers to look closely at the Gospel reading for the following Sunday. All of our groups recognise that fellowship is a fundamental part of home groups and they include a lively period of general chat and a closing period of prayer. Membership of a home group goes alongside Sunday by Sunday communal worship and adds opportunities for fellowship, mutual support and learning in faith. If you would like to talk about joining a group, please contact

*Richard Butler*

## **Music**

Music as part of Worship has steadily found its way back to a sense of relative normality over the course of the past year. Despite a rapidly changing mixture of hope and false dawns along the way, a routine of weekly contributions to a morning and an evening service has been established once again.

With a healthy mixture of personnel to call upon including both children and adults, female and male, the early steps out of the various lockdowns and their related circumstances saw a basic programme emerge, satisfying the call for the use of varied styles, both new and old.

The morning service has settled into a renewed pattern, with a once per month contemporary service taking its place, complete with leadership from the excellent band.

The evening service continues to follow the pattern of a traditional Book of Common Prayer Evensong, with much new repertoire having been absorbed and to be continued along the way.

Special services at relevant seasonal times have continued to take place, as has a traditional service of Matins from time to time.

As musicians, we are all most grateful for the support of Mark and the clergy, support which enables us to be challenged and to express ourselves appropriately and freely.

The Wednesday lunchtime concerts are back in action and appear to be well-supported once again – sometimes one can find some home-grown performances amongst the termly schedule – and thank you to all the relevant people - but in general we enjoy welcoming performers from further afield and are fortunate so many excellent contributors are happy to entertain us so readily.

I am thankful to have such a skilful and committed team supporting the music, without which we would be much the poorer. My thanks, especially, go to Alex and Tim for their time, energy, understanding and commitment during what has been another taxing year for everyone.

The final word goes to two of our younger musicians. Congratulations to Jessica Folwell who earned a place at Clare College, Cambridge to read Medicine in conjunction with a Choral Scholarship – no mean feat and a rare combination indeed. Jessica began her studies last October.

Congratulations too to our marvellous Organ Scholar, Gus Cox, who has been awarded the Organ Scholarship at Trinity College, Cambridge. We wish Gus all the very best of luck with his summer exams which will be the final hurdle for him to jump in order to get there. Gus will be taking a gap year and will head to Worcester Cathedral in September to spend a year there as their Organ Scholar.

*Nick Robinson*

## **Children and Youth**

### **Children's activities**

During 2021 we arranged a mix of in person and online or remote activities for children and stayed in touch with families even when we couldn't meet. Family time for families with young children continued monthly with stories, music and games. We've looked at growth and God's creation by exploring the vegetable patch and wild areas of the churchyard, told the story of the farmer who stored up crops in his barn by building barns (and tearing them down) and Mark used his artistic and theological skills to explain the Ascension. At Easter we arranged a messy Easter at home with activities delivered to families round St Albans and there was a family friendly Good Friday trail in the churchyard. In the summer when services were outside we were able to have a children's corner again (with great joy) with toys to play with and activities during the service and we welcomed several new families to the church. Since October junior church has met twice a month during the

service. We've dressed up and re-enacted the Transfiguration, made decorations for older people in care homes. We have decorated rocks and thought about Jesus having to make choices and how much God loves us.

At Christmas in person messy church took place in the churchyard next to the sheep and shepherds of the live nativity. Biscuits were iced and Christingles made for a short service outside. Over the year we have welcomed families to join in our seasonal celebrations - bonfire night, Christmas tree decorating and pancake day.

Thank you to all those who have helped with playing music, leading or joining in our activities with children. We are very pleased that Liz Guest joined us in October as associate priest for children and young people and look forward to developing our welcome and activities for children further over the coming year.

*Margaret Blake*

I was licensed at St Peter's the beginning of October 2021 as an Associate Priest. One of the first things that happened was restarting the Baby and toddler groups on a Wednesday and Thursday Morning. The baby group has an average of 5 parents and babies, whereas the Toddler group has grown in number week after week. We had a Christmas party for them although the numbers were half of what they could have been due to the Covid Omicron variant and families wanting to safeguard their Christmas. I have a small rota of people that help on a Thursday morning with setting up and making tea and coffee and am always looking for people willing to do this for a few hours on a morning. On Christmas Eve we held two Crib services to ensure social distancing which were well attended given the circumstances.

Joining the church in the run up to Christmas was hard work, and hopefully the next year will allow some space to see where we go next with the children, youth and families work.

*Liz Guest*

## **Youth activities**

Over the past year the youth group has met via Zoom and in person, mainly in the Vicarage Garden. The members of the group have continued to support each other in good times and in bad.

We said 'goodbye' to some members as they went off to university but at the same time had the joy of past members joining us for meetings and letting us know how they are getting on.

It was good to see members of the group taking on wider responsibilities in St Peter's e.g. helping to record Sunday services.

The group took part in the planning of the Nativity Play for 2021 and in the performance.

I am grateful for the team of youth leaders that work alongside me and who support in so many different ways. It is a real gift to have grown the leadership over the year and spread the load.

And finally, we are grateful to the young people themselves.

Although it is my role to lead the group, the young people give to us leaders as much as we to them. We have been together over the past year, laughing together, being honest about our struggles and reminding each other of our hopes and dreams and God's love for us in the midst of the journey.

*Ruth*

# Church Building

The re-ordering project is a long-term one for St Peter's, possibly up to 20 years from initiation in 2018. In 2018 we saw the nave and chancel lighting upgraded. Next the boiler was replaced and in 2019 the toilets were upgraded following sustained complaints to the PCC about the existing toilets. We then began a new phase of improvements termed Phase 1. The first element of this Phase (i.e. Phase 1a) involved the complete refurbishment of the South-side vestries including the introduction of a mezzanine floor and staircase. At the same time we replaced the blue interlocking chairs, mainly but not only in the chancel, with award-winning, Trinity Theo stackable chairs. This is the first part of a plan to replace the remaining pews with similar chairs in order to make the church's space far more flexible. At this point, because users of the existing, tiny kitchen often complained about lack of space and facilities, we decided to bring forward Phase 1d which involved the enlargement of the kitchen and related modifications to the Octagon. Phase 1b will eventually involve improving the car park and South entrance to the church, but although we are pursuing planning permission to do so, we are not prioritising most of this work until it can be afforded.

In last year's report I mentioned that in the process of submitting Faculty Applications to the Diocese we learned of new requirements brought forward by the Church Buildings Council (CBC) which is part of the Church of England. The CBC has designated St Peter's as a 'Major Church' and proposals to re-order such a church now require a Conservation Management Plan to guarantee success. During 2021, and with the help of Peter Court, a Conservation Management Plan was drafted, subject to both internal and external consultations, and was subsequently adopted by the Parochial Church Council.

Our current priority remains improving the interior of the church through implementing Phase 1c. This is the largest and most disruptive phase envisaged so far and is designed to address the progressive serious damage at the bases of the 15<sup>th</sup> century nave columns by the existing unsuitable concrete floor laid by lord Grimthorpe in the 1890s. Detailed proposals have been submitted for approval to the Diocese and have received a positive initial response following on-site consultation meetings involving most of our external stakeholders (e.g. Historic England). Unfortunately, the completion of the faculty application process has been delayed somewhat because several external stakeholders either took longer than the 42 days normally allowed to respond or have still not yet responded. The proposals involve replacing the concrete floor with breathable York stone while, at the same time, installing underfloor heating. Several smaller related improvements are also part of this proposal including improving drains, installing a small kitchenette at the West end of the nave and glazing the upper part of the inner South door.

Unfortunately, the pandemic significantly slowed the building works and has led to significant cost increases putting the initial proposals for Phase 1c beyond our reach in terms of cost. Delays in the external consultation process also threaten to increase our costs. These proposals are currently being reworked by our architects to bring them within the budget advised by the Treasurer. Even so it may be necessary to delay some elements of Phase 1c until sufficient funding is available. The costs of re-



ordering so far and the expected costs of completing Phases 1b and 1c are available by contacting me either directly, Peter Court or via Carolyn Alexander.

It is important to take a holistic view of re-ordering at St Peter's. With this in mind our architects have also completed some imaginative forward-thinking about a Phase 2 which involves converting the existing North extension (Octagon, corridor, kitchen, parish rooms, toilets, choir vestry and associated space) into a really inspiring two-storey building designed to provide the kind of facilities that we need now and into the future but for which, currently, we can only dream about.

*Den Parker*

## **St Peter's Community**

### **Communications**

Following the successful launch of our new website at the end of 2020 we continued to keep this up to date and informative ensuring it is an effective way of sharing news, events and information with our community. Our new logo and branding have been implemented and our signage, paperwork and online presence have been updated to include these. Due to Covid we invested in resources to enable us to live stream services. This has been very successful and allowed us to reach more people who have not been able to attend church. We have continued to live stream our main 10am service which is also available through our website for people to watch during the following weeks. We upgraded our Wi-Fi throughout the building to facilitate live streaming and other online events and meetings.

Our move to Office 365 allowed staff to work remotely which was essential during lockdowns and has led to increased productivity. We have made good use of social media channels to communicate services and events and will continue to build on this. Our followers on Facebook have increased and we use this to communicate what is happening at St Peter's and other local events. If you are not already following us please do so on [www.facebook.com/StPeters.StAlbans](http://www.facebook.com/StPeters.StAlbans)

We also increased our usage of email marketing with regular twice weekly communications as well as additional emails about specific events and activities. This is supplemented with a weekly printed notice sheet for anyone who is not able to access our weekly emails.

For the second Christmas we lit up the church with Christmas lights along the south side roof line and top of the tower as well as some of the trees lining the south path. The lights could be seen by people walking up St Peter's street and we received some very positive feedback. The lights also help to connect St Peter's with the high street and the Christmas lights there.

Communication plans are created for key periods in the church calendar including Easter and Christmas. An additional plan will be agreed to inform our stakeholders about our SPRING plans and fundraising targets.

Looking forwards our focus will be on developing clear consistent messaging using a variety of different channels to effectively reach our congregations, other church groups and the wider community.

*Carolyn Alexander*

## **Events**

The return of theatre trips in early November was welcomed and, before the end of the year, groups of us enjoyed *The Mirror and the Light*, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* and *The Comedy of Errors*. Our much postponed tickets for *La Belle Sauvage* were, however, delayed further, until early in 2022.

The first meeting of 2021 of the Book Group took place in May and, since then we have continued to meet every other month and have read and discussed *The Second Sleep*, *Transcription* and *The Light Between Oceans*. Our thanks go to Sheila Green, who has hosted most of the meetings.

Wednesday concerts resumed in June, although the usual refreshments after the concert began again in September. As well as appreciating performances by individuals, ensembles and school groups, we raised £4472.75 for Rennie Grove Hospice in those months, Enjoyment and a high standard of musicianship are enjoyed by all who attend the concerts, held in church at 1pm every Wednesday in term time.

There were two Themed services when Evensong was online – on Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Julian of Norwich and, once we were back to services in church, a service which celebrated the life and works of Edward Thomas was well-attended.

*Margaret Tinsley*

## **The Friends of St Peter's**

Ongoing restrictions impacted on our ability to organise some established social events though, pleasingly, both Summer and Christmas Fairs went ahead as planned. The Summer Fair in June once again was staged under a wet weather plan though conditions on the day were kind enough to allow both the bouncy castle and BBQ to operate.

The Christmas Fair offered the usual wide selection of stalls and attractions for all ages with the benefit of 5 choirs performing live and a number of 'guest' charities in attendance.

Funds raised over the 2 events amounted to almost £3,500 as we reached out to the community, hopefully showing St Peter's at its best.

The small organising group rely increasingly on help from church members which was invaluable (and much appreciated) in supporting last years efforts.

*Robin Farrar*

## Mission and Outreach

We have continued to give to mainly local charities in our mission giving to others, following embedded guidelines build up over several years. Though the time and effort given by members of the congregation in supporting these charities and indeed St Peters in general, is unquantifiable.

In 2021 we gave a total of £11200 to: Youth Talk, Christian Aid, Hygiene Bank, The Living Room, Stop the Traffik, Winter Beds via Open Door, Bishops Harvest Appeal and Anna Chaplains. Within the total was money raised at Wednesday Concerts for Grove House. Specific totals are available on request. Additionally, the local food bank was supported in various ways.

The total raised in 2021 was still much reduced by the effect of the pandemic reducing the ability to hold functions and for charities that we support to interact with the congregation.

For 2022 a budget of £6500 has been set with fundraising activities set at £9000 to give £15500 for the year.

If you would like to champion a local worthy charity, or indeed help the small mission giving team then please contact Peter Court, Gill Taylor or Rev Mark.

Our thanks to Margaret Blake for leading us in recent years.

*Peter Court*

## PCC Secretary's Report

The Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 states that:

“It shall be the duty of the Minister and the Parochial Church Council to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish.”

The PCC met via Zoom in 2021 but, because of the coronavirus pandemic. This meant the Parochial Church Council (PCC) was able to continue it's work for St Peter's. The use of technology also meant that the PCC sub-committees were able to continue to meet. However ascertaining the views of the wider congregation remained a problem.

The (PCC) held six meetings in 2021. At meetings the PCC received updates on work at St Peter's including, when relevant, children and youth work, finance, re-ordering and safeguarding.

The PCC continued to look at the way we work and to think about what St Peter's will be like/look like once the pandemic is over.

The PCC plays a vital role in developing the vision and mission for St Peter's. There were vacancies for PCC lay members in 2021 that were not filled.

The work of the PCC is supported by the Church Office and the administrative team. Without them we would not be as effective as we are and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

*Lynn Cherrill-Teesdale*