

# APCM REPORTS

14<sup>th</sup> April 2024



**‘Faith, Hope and Love in the heart of  
Streatham’**

## RECTOR'S REPORT

Dear Friends,

Another happy year has flown by at St Leonard's. As I write I am mindful that this is my seventh APCM and yet I continue to feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude for this community and a sense of anticipation about all that lies ahead in the year to come.

At the back of this booklet is a copy of our Mission Action Plan, which sets out our priorities as a church and the progress we have made in each of these areas during 2023. It is a particular joy to me that we have appointed a Youth Work Apprentice this year to support and develop our work with young people at St Leonard's. When I arrived, there was no youth group at St Leonard's; as I write there are 35 young people on the books at Pulse, along with 22 Choristers, 28 children registered with Children's Church and 30+ attending Toddler Church. This is a remarkable achievement, and my heartfelt thanks go to all those who enable our work with children and young people to flourish.

Having said that, this booklet reflects the huge amount of energy, commitment and generosity that is shown by so many of you in so many different ways. Thank you to every single person who has contributed in any way.

For several years we have been working towards the return of our Church Hall to our care. In September we took back the upper floors and have had an outstanding contractor working on the refurbishment since September. There will be a lovely three-bedroom flat ready for tenants later this year, and we already have a superb Upper Hall facility now in use. On 18<sup>th</sup> April our lease with The Spires ends and the Main Hall becomes ours once again. The Spires will continue to use the Main Hall two mornings a week and we have a range of community groups and classes ready to start once we have redecorated. We are preparing a number of funding bids to help with the refurbishment of the Hall in the months to come, not least to improve the toilet facilities and make the Hall more sustainable. This development comes at a perfect time for St Leonard's as it will enable us to develop and deepen our community outreach, strengthen our current work, and generate much needed income. It's a game changer!

This year Eileen, our Parish Administrator, took maternity leave (we welcomed Ada into the world in November) and Barbara Booth stepped into her role, as well as starting as our PCC secretary. Barbara has done an extraordinary job of keeping the administration of the Parish afloat and we are so thankful for all she continues to do for St Leonard's.

I would like to thank the PCC for their incredible support this year: it is a wonderful team who have brought wisdom and courage to the decision-making table. This year we are losing several members who have served their term, and we look forward to welcoming newcomers and the insights they will bring.

I am indebted to Sien Yin, our Treasurer, who brings a level of efficiency and expertise that has transformed our finances and has made it possible to not only 'keep the show on the road' but also plan for future challenges.

Grateful thanks also go to Moyra and Nick, the very best of Churchwardens, without whose support I simply couldn't survive!

Worship remains at the very heart of what we exist for, and I am enormously grateful to Calum and his team for blessing us week by week with a quality of music that brings joy and strength to our faith.

We are also richly blessed by the assisting Clergy and Lay ministers who lead us in worship and prayer, open the scriptures to us and help us to grow together in Faith, Hope and Love.

Thank you all; it continues to be the greatest privilege of my life to serve as your Rector.

With my love and prayers,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna', written in a cursive style.

## **CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT**

How is it that each year passes faster than the one before? At the last APCM we said a fond farewell (and huge thank you) to Sue Kearton for her 2-year tenure as churchwarden. Sue is replaced by Nick Turner.

Fareed Fetto has now taken on the role of sidesperson coordinator with the assistance of Liz Urben. Together they have organised a robust rota and streamlined the activities of the wonderful sidespeople, without all of whom our main services would not run so smoothly – thank you everyone.

The live streaming and sound team is expanding as Nick spearheads the training of some of the younger members of our congregation in this important role – thank you to everyone involved.

Open Church continues on Monday and Wednesday, with church watchers being John Brown and friends and Rob Edmondson and Andrew Johnson respectively. And, as part of this, they are the ‘keepers of the bins’ – out on Monday back on Wednesday – thank you gentlemen. Volunteers for Open Church on other days would be most welcome – let us know if you are interested.

The church buildings and churchyard continue to exercise us, especially the church hall where work has begun preparing the upstairs space, recently vacated by Spires, into a meeting room and flat. Our new architect is Tim Gough and Caroline Leveaux continues as our mistress of faculties and grant applications!

Church Hall maintenance issues continue – a new heating system was installed and we await Spires vacating in April 2024, when more extensive work will start (although Spires will then become one of our main rental tenants of the hall).

The church itself has been less of a maintenance issue this year and the Maintenance Group have been busy with gutter clearance and minor works. Work on fixing the damp patch on the wall near to the piano on the south wall is also underway.

The churchyard is looking lovely with more bulbs being planted. A working party spent a fun Saturday morning clearing the overgrowth and the sea scouts painted the railings. Steff Bradley continues to successfully liaise with Lambeth Landscapes (the Council) for us.

The organ is getting regular tuning/voicing and our manual piano has been replaced by a digital instrument, which has made life easier for playing music for funerals/special services and for moving it safely.

Huge thanks to Sue and Phil Heeley who are stepping back from their roles of arranging visits by various firms to check rodents, the mobile phone aerial etc etc as Eileen in the office has taken on this responsibility. However, Eileen is currently on maternity leave and so we have the wonderful Barbara Booth who, as well as being PCC secretary, volunteers in the office and has taken over until Eileen returns after baby Ada!

The 'Curate's House' in Aldrington Road has been rented out to a family since early 2023 and Aidan Schulkes continues to oversee this arrangement.

We must not forget the many many other people who help quietly behind the scenes to enable our worship. We thank them sincerely.

Finally, as ever our heartfelt thanks go to Canon Anna who is inspirational as our indefatigable Rector.

*Moyra Heggie and Nick Turner, Churchwardens*

### **The following reports will appear in alphabetical order**

#### **ADULT LEARNING**

We are expanding our opportunities for study and fellowship!

In Lent 2023 two groups met at different times on Wednesdays: face-to-face in the daytime and via Zoom in the evening. Both studied six sessions from a Pilgrim Course on the Beatitudes.

The daytime group, 'The Wednesday Lunch Club', has also studied passages from the Psalms, the shorter epistles and the Letter of James. Starting in September it began a lengthy study of the Creed, spread over three terms - so not due for completion until Pentecost 2024 - but interspersed with some parables and, during Advent, some of the 'hard' sayings of Jesus.

A new venture in Advent 2023 was to experiment with two special evenings in church. The first 'Cloth for the Cradle' was a time of informal prayer and reflection. 'Longing and Waiting' was the theme and, as well as worshipping together, we circulated around prayer stations and experimented with some new ideas. The second evening was totally different. We enjoyed delicious snacks

round a table and played a card game which encouraged us to talk about Christmas at a greater depth than we might normally do.

Currently in Lent 2024 we have no less than three different opportunities to dig into Dave Tomlinson's book 'How to be a Bad Christian'. First the Wednesday lunchtime group; second the Wednesday night Zoom which benefits from Dave's presence every week! In addition a new Monday evening face-to-face group alternates between the two leaders' homes. This is becoming quite a squash but is a great opportunity to get to know each other and we plan to finish with a meal together in Holy Week.

So we have a 'mixed economy' - with seasonal variations. All groups have a number of 'regulars' but many people pop in and out and you are always welcome. The seasonal Zoom courses are advertised in the church notices and the Wednesday group meets most weeks of the year at 1pm after a quick snack (bring your own) with the option of also attending the 12 noon Eucharist first. The new home group has been a success so who knows whether it might continue in some form or other! Why not try out something new this coming year - or suggest what kind of group you would like to belong to!

*Eileen Turner and Marion Gray*

## **BIKE PROJECT**

St Leonard's works in partnership with national charity, The Bike Project, whose mission is to receive unwanted bicycles donated by the general public, repair them, and then donate them to refugees and asylum seekers; so providing them with an easy and cheap form of transport.

Bikes donated via St Leonard's are stored down in the crypt, and every few weeks a huge van comes along and takes them all away for checking at a workshop in Deptford. Approximately 1,700 bikes are handed out by this most brilliant charity every year, of which about 100 come from St Leonard's.

If you have a bicycle, adult or child-sized, that you would like to donate just click on the Bike Project website to register it and follow the simple instructions, or speak to Robert Owen, the St Leonard's Co-ordinator. Bikes are usually received at 9.45 am each Sunday morning.

*Robert Owen*

## **CHILDREN'S CHURCH REPORT**

St Leonard's Children's Church has had a busy and productive year supporting the children in their worship through stories, discussion and craft activities. We currently have 28 children on our registers and run two groups for primary age children during term time.

Children come up to be blessed and collect their children's crosses during the Gloria before heading off to their groups. Our younger age group (Reception to Year 2) go the Chapel of Unity at the back of the church whilst years 3 to 6 go upstairs to the Clergy Vestry. Both groups use Roots learning and worship resources which are based on the weekly gospel used in the main service. After their sessions have finished, the children head back to the front where they are welcomed by the Clergy and invited to help say the Peace.

We are so lucky to have a wonderful team of dedicated leaders and helpers who offer their time to prepare teaching materials and work with the two groups. We are especially thankful that we have a number of young Pulse members who come in to help.

We would like to say a huge thank you to the whole Children's Church team and we look forward to continuing our work with the wonderful children of St Leonard's.

*Julia Dare and Rachel Turner*

## **CHILDREN'S SOCIETY**

Since Covid, and the now constant drive towards a cashless society, donations via the Children's Society boxes have drastically reduced. Fewer and fewer people use cash or carry change. This appears to have naturally transferred into a mere trickle of boxes requiring emptying and those that are brought to be emptied are generally only modestly filled. We have taken approximately £60 in the last year.

*Poppy Giles*

## **CHRISTIAN AID REPORT**

We were thrilled to organise a spectacular quiz night to celebrate Christian Aid week and were delighted to welcome a guest from Christian Aid. Over 100 people attended, and it was wonderful to see our whole community enjoying each other's company. We raised over £1,000 in donations, with money raised on the

night as well as online. This was a fantastic achievement and another record-breaking fundraiser for our Church!

We continue to participate in Christian Aid activity outside of Christian Aid week, such as the Middle East Crisis Appeal.

*Liz Stevenson, Christian Aid coordinator*

## **CHURCH WATCH REPORT**

Throughout the past year the St Leonard's Church Watch Team have continued to welcome visitors to our church on Mondays and Wednesdays between 12 noon and 2 pm when the church is open so that members of the public can find a safe, quiet place in which to pray, meditate or just sit quietly and reflect on life or admire the fascinating history and heritage of our ancient parish church.

We are grateful to Allen and John Brown and their many friends in the Streatham Society for undertaking Church Watch duties on a Monday and to Andrew Johnson and Rob Edmondson for being present on Wednesdays. We would be delighted to hear from anyone interested in joining this small, yet select group. The duties are not onerous and mainly comprise of welcoming people to the church and making the occasional cup of tea for those visitors who want a chat and a bit of company to help them through the day.

*John W Brown, St Leonard's Church Watch Team*

## **COFFEE TEAM**

Having to serve coffee in the Church is the greatest part of the church that I enjoy. You get to meet new people and get to know them. I feel that serving coffee in the Church and seeing everyone gather around has created a sense of inclusivity. I feel like serving coffee is a great way to make people feel welcome and provide a sense of community especially for those who are new to the Church.

*Beauty Okpanefe*

## **DEANERY SYNOD REPORT**

Our Deanery Synod representatives continue to be Caroline Leveaux and Nici Yarlett. The Archdeacon, Jonathan Croucher, departed for the Diocese of Chelmsford this year and has been replaced by Kit Gunasekera and Assistant Area Dean, Sarah Simpson. There have been a number of meetings covering a range of



topics including lay ministry, the Southwark Vision and a presentation on housing issues in the Borough of Lambeth.

*Caroline Leveaux*

## **DEEPDENE HOME REPORT**

Deepdene Home is a mental healthcare provider offering residential care to people with severe, complex and enduring mental health needs. The Home provides care for twenty people with specialised nursing and long-term needs. It is run by Deepdene Care Limited and has been rated as good by the Care Quality Commission.

Rob Edmondson and I visit once a month to share communion with some of the residents, who very much appreciate receiving not just the bread and wine of communion but also the oil of healing and prayer. Usually about 10–12 residents attend the brief service and then we spend some time chatting with them and getting to know them. We are always made very welcome and it is clear that there is a strong ethos of loving care shown by the staff.

Unfortunately, Rocky the cat, who enlivened the home with much aplomb last Christmas, was deemed to be not such a good thing in a care home environment, and was removed to the home of one of the staff members for everyone's safety, and his!

*Marion Gray and Rob Edmondson*

## **ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT**

6 names have been added to the Electoral Roll in the past year and 5 removed, bringing the total to 238.

*Tony Nunn*

## **FINANCE REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

This past year has been very active indeed! We have been able to maintain our budgeted income from the parishioners' donations and thanks to the Stewardship appeal, I hope this will continue into 2024. And I am very grateful for their continued support and generosity towards St Leonard's Church. We have also received a couple of legacies and specific grants which we are planning to put to good use during 2024.

Whilst the bank accounts look healthy at the end of 2023, I have to stress that we have some rather large expenditure during 2024. As you may have heard, Spires, who have occupied our church hall for a few decades, will be moving to alternative premises in April 2024. We have already spent over £40,000 on the church hall during 2023 on the installation of a new heating system and some repairs to the upper floors. Prior to being able to provide this lovely venue for the community of Streatham, we need to carry out further repairs to the building to enable it to be used as a suitable venue. The final cost of this project will easily run into six figures!

Further details can be found in the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 which I hope will answer many questions the congregation may have.

Best wishes for a smooth 2024.

*Sien Yin Cheng, Treasurer*

## **FLOWER ARRANGING REPORT**

Flowers in Church help to remind us of the beauty of nature. They greatly contribute to the atmosphere of the building and the wellbeing of the congregation.

Many thanks to the team of flower arrangers who give so generously of their time on Saturday mornings to decorate the Church. I also want to thank the people who supply us with greenery.

During Lent and Advent there are no flowers in Church which makes it very bare, by their absence helping to reflect the solemn tone of those periods.

*Mary Treacy*

## **FREEDOM CLUB AND STREATHAM SENIORS REPORT**

The Freedom Club continues to meet most months with a core attendance of around 15–20 members, increased for speakers or trips out and especially our Christmas lunch. The committee meets regularly with secretary Cheryl who with Jen's help produces our newsletters. Keith Riggs-Long has joined us which is great. Some are sent electronically but about 70 are folded and sent in stamped addressed envelopes by Vin Turkson - so special thanks to you ladies.

Our activities included a fascinating talk by Rev Les Isaac about community health initiatives and was followed up later in the year by a team of his colleagues offering health advice to passers-by and blood pressure checks in church, Songs on wheels, a coronation evensong and tea, Jamie from Barclays Bank talked about scams, Canon Anna told us about her trip to the Holy Land with wonderful photos, we visited Dobbies Garden Centre, had a talk by John Brown on the “Dead Centre of Streatham” where we discovered we have not one but two crown jewellers in our churchyard, crafting, jigsaws, general chat, watching DVDs, a talk by SERCO about recycling, all with a bring and share lunch.

The Crown has been shown separately, only the last series to go and Mindful Movement continues strongly with Diana taking over from Oona until the end of 2023.

We had our usual Christmas lunch for around 40 people attending this time. The Streatham and Clapham High School Chamber Choir joined us, sadly it was Mrs May’s last visit as she is moving schools, but her successor has been primed for Christmas 2024.

The Freedom Club still works closely with Streatham Senior Connections. Holiday at Home with a nautical theme was held in September with around 35 attending daily. A trip to Greenwich via the River Thames, two days of talks and activities and a celebration tea at St Peter’s Church concluded the four days.

Please encourage your friends to join us – eligibility is a Freedom Pass.

*Moyra Heggie, Chair*

## **GIFT AID REPORT - 2023-2024**

If you earn over £12,500 per year you will be paying income tax. The government allows charities to reclaim the basic rate income tax on donations: this is called gift aid and is worth an extra 25% so each £5.00 given turns into £6.25 at no extra cost to you. This has given us an extra £21,000 this year.

We can claim gift aid from either:

- regular donations using standing orders
- collection plate giving using yellow envelopes or loose cash
- the card readers

- the website <https://www.totalgiving.co.uk/mypage/stleonardsstreatham>
- gifts and legacies.

The easiest and most cost-effective way of giving is through using a regular standing order which puts you in control of when and how much is given to St Leonard's. With a gift aid declaration this gives us an extra 25%, and an extra bonus is that we don't have to handle the cash.

Using yellow envelopes is the next best way to give money with an address and signature in the box. We do have to count it and transport it safely to the bank. The loose cash, we can claim some gift aid on through a different scheme but only up to a certain amount per year.

The card reader is a good modern way of giving to church, especially now when people don't necessarily carry cash. However, there is a small charge (so £5.00 donated actually gives us £4.88). It is however totally anonymous, so to claim gift aid I need the completed white slips.

If you are new to St Leonard's, I might not have a signed gift aid declaration form.

If your circumstances have changed and you no longer pay income tax or you have moved house, then please let me know so I don't get jailed.

If you are a higher rate taxpayer, you can claim the difference between higher and basic rate donations on your annual tax return. Contact me if you need any details.

Finally, a huge thank you to the volunteers who carefully count and bank the collections.

*Jim Yarlett*

## **GUIDES REPORT**

Our membership remains strong but at the end of the year the wave of girls who joined during Covid all reached 14 and needed to move on: Amelie, Erin, Tao Zen, Charlotte and Bea have moved to Rangers whilst Immie and Amy are concentrating on their school sports of gymnastics and hockey. In the last 3 months 8 new girls have joined to replace them; keeping the Unit (6 over strength) at 30 Guides.

Again changes to the Leadership Team but this time nothing but improvements in that we have gained Abi and more recently Saraniya. Our Young Leaders were ex-Guides Sarah and once she finished, Cecilia, who were both doing it as “service” for their DoE. Alex is progressing with her Leadership Qualification and Abi and Saraniya are “talking” about it.

The back hall is now used by Spires as office space, and the main hall also has a work desk, but although we have a bit more work to do before the Guides turn up, we do know we are incredibly lucky to still have use of the hall.

After losing our indoor storage in the summer, Jim and I spent lots of time and effort restoring one of the outside sheds which we now share with Spires. It was definitely in need of repair: we evicted literally hundreds of woodlice and lots of various-sized slugs; sealed up all the gaps; re-did the roof etc. It was great when we first started using it, but it’s not so good on cold dark and wet evenings. However we do have the use of a small cupboard in the ‘Small Hall’ which has really been brilliant for storing the essentials.

The girls won more Jack Petchey Awards over the year with Charlotte and Erin both gaining Awards. Erin also became the first Guide in the District (and we think the County) to achieve her Gold Award!

Main highlights of the 2023 Programme:

January	Ice Skating at Somerset House
February	Murder Mystery W/E
March	Mothering Sunday Church Parade Jack Petchey Awards at Lambeth Town Hall
April	County Night Hike Competition
May	Fork Supper
June	Girlguiding Screening of “The Little Mermaid” at the Odeon Liquid Leisure Survival Week-End
July	Clip ’n Climb
August	Climb the O2
September	Summer Camp
October	Harvest Festival PGL W/E with 1st Streatham Guides

November	Box Hill Hike
December	Girlguiding Screening of “Wish” at Streatham Odeon London Walk and Ice Skating at Battersea Power Station

*Kaye Farmer, Millie, Alex, Abi, Saraniya and Jim, Leadership Team*

## **MUSIC REPORT**

### **General Music**

It has been another enjoyable musical year at St Leonard’s, with both the choir and congregation improving their singing at the services each week. Highlights from the year have been our Coronation Festal Evensong and St Leonard’s hosting the Deanery Ascension Day Eucharist, both in May, as well as our first-rate Advent Carol Service.

In January, a change was made to the musical offering on the fourth Sunday of each month, meaning that the choir is no longer needed for Choral Evensong that week, with an alternative form of worship now being offered.

As last year, the organ will soon need some work done to it and this is under constant watch.

### **Adult Choir**

Numbers in the adult choir have remained strong, though I am still keen to increase numbers over the coming years. I am hugely grateful to our excellent volunteers for their unfailing commitment to rehearsals and services. Music at St Leonard’s would be nowhere without this group, and we are all indebted to them.

We said goodbye to Mark Bautista, Andrea Manuel, Anna Rush and Emmylou Lloyd-Tucker as choral scholars during the course of the year. They are much missed, and all brought a huge amount to music at the church over the last few years. We are, however, delighted to have welcomed Thomas Smith as our senior tenor Choral Scholar in September, as well as Lydia and Maddy, our junior scholars who are currently at secondary school. All three have settled in well and have already contributed a huge amount to the ensemble.

We have recently welcomed former chorister Laura into the adult choir, where she is going from strength to strength. This has been my most recent target; to see genuine progression from our chorister section into the adult choir on a regular basis and I am delighted that this has now come to pass.

## **Choristers**

The numbers in our chorister section have also remained consistent, and I am pleased that we welcomed new Year 3 and Year 4 choristers into our choir throughout the year. Over the course of the year, many more choristers were awarded their surplices and light blue medals, as they had sufficiently progressed through the RSCM 'Voice for Life' programme.

All our choristers are progressing both vocally and musically and continue to work hard on Thursday evenings in term time. We are now, once again, actively recruiting new choristers in school years 3 and 4, so if you have a child at that age who is a keen singer, please do get in touch.

From September, our junior choristers have been taught wonderfully by Miriam Miskovska, who has joined us as Associate Chorister Director for, initially, the period of one academic year. We are delighted to have Miriam's talents and enthusiasm leading our choristers at such a crucial stage of their development.

As ever, my thanks go to Travis for his playing at all of the services. I would also like to pay thanks to the Rector, Churchwardens and PCC for their continuing support of music at St Leonard's. Finally, a special thanks to Barbara Booth for all her personal and professional support.

*Calum Fraser, Director of Music*

## **OPEN THE BOOK REPORT**

Our work with Open The Book this year has flowed along evenly. We are so well used to the stories now that everything seems much easier and more familiar.

We had a recruitment drive recently which was successful and we welcome two new members to our little group. Anyone else interested, please approach us for more information.

We were asked to take part in the school's Ofsted inspection this year. Our examiner was interested in our work and said it made a valuable contribution to the school's RE curriculum.

We are considering a new venture, which we will examine during the coming summer months. This is to take our stories to the residents of the British Home at Crown Point. Ann Morisy, a resident, made the request and is encouraging us to participate.

All in all, it has been a productive and satisfying year for the group.

*Pat Aggarwal*

## **PRAYER REQUEST REPORT**

Your prayers are a source of comfort and strength for those who have asked for them. Thank you.

We pray and keep praying because God wants us to and because God wants to be in a loving relationship with us. At different times in our lives we can suffer in mind, body or spirit and we reach out to our worshipping community for their prayerful support. Suffering is hard, painful and challenging. We pray that God may use this time to bring about something good. This may be healing, acceptance and a strengthening of our relationship with God.

With Anna's support we stay in contact with those who have asked us to pray for them, to say we continue to pray for their healing and enquire about their journey towards healing or death.

Loving God comfort and sustain all who suffer. Give us the reassurance of your presence and enduring peace. Amen.

*Oona Emerson*

## **PULSE (YOUTH CLUB) REPORT**

We have had another great year at Pulse. We currently have 34 young people aged between 10 and 18 on our books. We regularly get between 25 and 30 attending each week. We meet every Friday evening during term time for games, fun, food and learning about our faith.



We now have 7 of our young people who are in years 12 and 13 and have stayed on at Pulse as our Junior Leaders. They help with set up and pack down as well as sometimes leading games.

We had a wonderful weekend away again last summer when we returned to Hoppers for the third time, taking 24 of our young people. We are busily planning for our next weekend at Hoppers this coming July.

Many of our Pulse members take part in helping on Sundays across various teams. We have Pulse members serving, doing sides duty, helping at children's church and helping with the sound and live stream. We love to see our young people contributing to the wider church community and feeling a real sense of belonging. It was great to have some members of Pulse leading the prayers at the recent service on Mothering Sunday.

This year, the appointment of Ela Yalcin as Youth Work Apprentice has been a great boost to the Pulse team, with Ela being able to contribute further to the running of our Friday meetings, as well as support and come alongside our young people at other times. We are so grateful for our wonderful team of volunteers who bring so much energy, enthusiasm and love to our young people through running games, teaching, food and much more.

*Nick and Rachel Turner*

## **RINGERS' REPORT**

The bells have been rung nearly every Sunday throughout the year and there was special ringing for the Coronation and to bid farewell to Rev'd Hayley when she left to take up her new post as Rector of the Falklands. We were pleased to welcome Aaron, who joined us through the "Ring for the King" campaign, and Ed, who learnt to handle a bell in Suffolk years ago and was inspired by the sound of our bells to start ringing again.

*Could you help Mervyn?*

Mervyn is the second† of our eight bells at St Leonard's. Unfortunately, she\* doesn't get rung very often. When we have only five or six ringers, we ring the bigger bells because it sounds better. If we meet seven, we use the treble bell John (the one which is also chimed using the extension rope in the narthex), but poor old Mervyn is left out unless we have eight ringers present. There are currently nine in the band but it's not often we're all there at once. We could do

with one or two more, so if you feel you might like to help Mervyn or are just curious to see what goes on in the tower, please come along any Tuesday evening between 7.30 and 9.00.

*Tony Nunn, Tower Captain*

† Note for musicians – bells are numbered down the scale, so the second is the leading note.

\* Bells, like ships, are traditionally referred to as female even if they have masculine names. Mervyn is named after the former Bishop of Southwark, Rt Rev'd Mervyn Stockwood, who dedicated the bells shortly before his retirement in 1980.

## **SAFEGUARDING REPORT**

We must begin by paying tribute to the work done by Sue Heeley in her role as Parish Safeguarding Officer for St Leonard's over a number of years. She has been responsible for ensuring that everyone is aware of the issues surrounding safeguarding, as well as establishing the procedures needed to make sure DBS checks are carried out for everyone who needs them. And a host of other tasks as well. So thank you, Sue, and thanks for your support as I have tried to get to grips with things as you step aside. And welcome to Ernest who is joining me in this endeavour.

The PCC has adopted the policies recommended by the Diocese as set out in *A Safe Church*, and will continue to update local commitments to safeguarding in line with changes recommended by the national church. We are supported in this by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory team.

The Diocese has recently advised that DBS checks should be carried out every three years, whereas previously we worked on a five-year cycle. This inevitably means more work for everyone and it has been a time-consuming task (mainly for Sue) to ensure that all the people affected have been through the renewal process. In theory now that everything is done online, apart from the visual check of ID documents, it should all be much quicker and easier. Certainly once the application has been completed and submitted the certificate usually arrives within a few days, which is a lot quicker than it used to be.

It is vital that all the procedures and record-keeping are supplemented by people being aware of the issues surrounding safeguarding and that any concerns are raised promptly. To this end, Canon Anna, Ernest and Marion are available to give support if necessary. Our contact details are on the church website safeguarding page. The contact details for the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor are also shown on there and there is also a link to the safeguarding policies.

The safety of our children and young people, elderly and vulnerable adults is a matter of great importance to us all, and we all need to play our part in ensuring the safety of those who look to us for care.

*Marion Gray and Ernest Obumselu*

## **SERVERS REPORT**

My thanks again go to all the team for their continued commitment to this activity at St Leonard's. It is lovely to have so many youngsters on the team who, of course, bring their youthful energy and perspective into the venture.

My thanks also go to those who work so assiduously behind the scenes, but who are vital in keeping the chancel functioning (the "unsung heroes"): to Monica for laundering the linen, to Patricia for polishing the brass, to Sue and Mary for undertaking repairs, and to Caroline who has become our regular "Mrs Tiggywinkle".

And perhaps I'll spare an extra thank you to Bradley - for his deep and philosophical take on life!

*Gill Tomlinson*

## **ST LEONARD'S CHURCH ARCHIVIST REPORT**

I continue to receive numerous enquiries concerning the history of St Leonard's church and the parish of Streatham and during the past year information and assistance has been provided to:

- Angela Brodkorb of Vancouver, Canada, concerning her grandfather, Charles Keeping of 82 Sunnyhill Road, who died in his 101<sup>st</sup> year and whose funeral service took place in St. Leonard's Church.
- Roland Reid of Edinburgh concerning the famous Victorian artist William Dyce who was a churchwarden at St Leonard's, designed the chancel extension to the building and was buried in our graveyard in 1864.

- Jules Castenskiold concerning the baptism of her mother in a Streatham church on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1938 by Revd Charter Piggot, who was the Minister at the Streatham Congregational Church, now the United Reformed Church, at Streatham Common.
- Sandra Mitchell concerning the burial of Alexander Edward Murray, the 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dunmore, in our graveyard on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1845 and the subsequent removal of the Earl's corpse which it is now presumed to rest under a memorial in the former churchyard at Dunmore following a faculty for its removal from Streatham being issued on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1850.
- Aidan Kiernander concerning Bob Emberson, a past member of the St Leonard's Church Watch team and a former churchwarden of St Margaret's at Streatham Hill and a prominent and long-standing member of that church's Badminton Team.

Unfortunately, the planned tour of the church as part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival scheduled to be held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May had to be cancelled due to me unexpectedly having to attend hospital on that day.

On 24<sup>th</sup> May I conducted a tour of the churchyard for the St Leonard's Church Freedom Group.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023 I conducted a tour of the church, crypt and bell tower as part of the Lambeth Heritage Festival.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> October I conducted a tour of the church, crypt and bell tower as part of the Streatham Festival.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Tony Nunn on his excellent book on the history of the bells and bellringing at St Leonard's and Immanuel churches which was published this year and makes a most valuable, informative and interesting addition to our archives.

I would also like to take this opportunity of thanking Victor McGill for his litter picking duties each Monday and for all he and others do to help keep the churchyard tidy and free from litter. I am also grateful to the many volunteers who have made such a magnificent contribution in enhancing the graveyard with plantings and looking after and replenishing the flower tubs which are situated around the graveyard. The churchyard is one of Streatham's ancient historic sites

and as a result of these labours it is enjoyed by thousands of people who walk through it each year and find it such a pleasant place to visit.

*John W Brown, St Leonard's Church Archivist*

## **ST LEONARD'S CHURCHYARD CARE**

Most of the bulbs given to us by Bulbs for London in 2022, and hastily planted in a wet December, are flowering freely now, and we have, as requested, sent them photos to prove it. The crocuses planted many years ago near the west door are steadily advancing towards the High Road, making a lovelier show each year. We were pleasantly surprised in the autumn when Lambeth Parks (who are now responsible for maintaining the churchyard, including its careful mowing) also gave us some spring bulbs to plant.

We are grateful to John Brown and the rest of the Monday team for the thankless but necessary task of tidying up and looking after the bins, and in particular to Victor McGill for his tireless litter picking.

We have had a few unwelcome visitors this year. In October a rough sleeper set up camp in the churchyard outside the north door, and was there for a month before Lambeth, with the help of the police, were able to move him on. More recently a cross was toppled over, planters disturbed and flower heads torn off in an act of vandalism that fortunately is a rare occurrence these days. We are in contact with Lambeth about the possibility of repairing or, if not, dismantling the badly vandalised tomb near the High Road.

You might think that choosing two new trees to replace the lime and hornbeam that had to be felled recently would be a straightforward task, but far from it. Lambeth Parks, Lambeth Planning and the Diocese have yet to agree on the replacements which will best preserve the character of the churchyard. But we live in hope.

We have completed 2 churchyard clean-up days this year, both of which were very well attended and we got loads done! It has to be said that the trail-blazer for these events was Richard Malaure, whose industrial strimmer made light work of the substantial growth of unwanted vegetation around the churchyard borders; the rest of us followed in his wake, clearing away felled foliage! 2 good days, rounded off with lunching together in the Narthex. The churchyard is looking

good, but Spring is in the air, and the sap is rising, so we will need to get at it again in the near future, to keep on top of things! In addition, we have also benefitted from the input of the Sea Scouts this year, who did a brilliant job painting the railings around the churchyard boundary.

*Arthur Norman-Walker and Stephanie Bradley*

## **ST LEONARD'S SCHOOL GOVERNORS**

In an increasingly challenging environment, St Leonard's has continued to deliver an excellent educational experience to its pupils. Following on from its 'outstanding' Ofsted rating in 2022, the school received a highly positive report from its Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) in January of this year. According to the inspection report (which can be viewed on the school's website), 'St Leonards brims with the "Fruit of the Spirit"'. Indeed it does.

A challenge faced by the school during the past year was the serious illness of the Head, Simon Jackson. This necessitated him being off-site for extended periods. It is a tribute to the quality of his leadership and particularly that of the Deputy Head, Laura Akhtar, and the Senior Leadership Team that the school continued to operate smoothly throughout. Thankfully, Simon has responded well to treatment and will be back full-time after Easter.

The governing body is now up to full strength and is working well. We were joined by Joanna Maciejewska (Foundation) in March 2023, by Gabriella Heaney (Staff) and most recently by Laura Lane (Parent). Heidi Malaure succeeded Katherine Driver as Chair of the Resource Committee who was re-appointed a Foundation Governor in December. And, after many months without a clerk, we now have an excellent one in Laura Marchese.

Amidst the strong economic headwinds and the deleterious after-effects of the pandemic, the school's key challenge remains to continue delivering quality education within a viable financial framework.

*David Herbert, Chair of Governors*

## **TAIZÉ REPORT**

The Taizé services take place on the second Sunday of each month (except August) at 6.30pm and are a quiet and contemplative 45 mins, following the format of chants and silence from the Taizé community in France. The 'Taizé Team', which consists of members of St Leonard's congregation and others from around

south London, continues to set up and clear the space on the service evenings. Thank you for your seamless dedication to this practical task. Now that we have the large bank of services going back almost ten years, we can rely on gentle editing and the addition of contemporary intercessions rather than writing liturgies from a blank slate. Usually, we use a reading of the day as the central inspiration for the liturgy and then choose chants and prayers to complement that theme. The long silence in the centre of the service is a valued moment in the month to pause and contemplate in the presence of others.

We are blessed to have the skilful playing of several musicians including a cellist, flautists, clarinettists, pianists and recorder players. All are very committed to the services and share generously of their talents. Thank you!

The service continues to be advertised through the 'Taizé In London' and 'St Leonard's Church' Facebook pages. Whilst there is a regular group of about 20-25 people, we are also delighted to see new faces every month, many of whom have found out about the service through friends, local churches and social media contacts. An additional Taizé service took place in March for Palm Sunday when we created a Stations of the Cross in the centre aisle of the church. Thank you to the 14 readers who each brought an everyday object to reflect their understanding of their reading and shared their story with the whole congregation.

*Julie McCann and the Taizé Team*

## **TODDLER CHURCH REPORT**

St Leonard's is hectic with around 25-30 enthusiastic toddlers and babies every term-time Monday from 10.30 to about 11.45 am, with at least one carer each – mums, dads, grandparents, childminders, aunts and neighbours. The children are enthusiastic and noisy participants in the fast-moving pattern of the hour. The older ones know the routine and join in well; the younger ones are no less enthusiastic but a little less expert and a little more keen on escaping for a run around.

We have the same 20 minute pattern of service every week, beginning with the joy of the Wiggle song then quietening down in awe for the lighting of the candle. We sing our welcome songs to each other and then have the story, often the same as the reading in church the previous day. We still use the slightly unsteady cardboard figures and paper backdrops in our purpose-built wooden theatre. The

prayers for those we love, for the food in our tummies and for our world come next with the children enjoying using the microphone to suggest things to pray for. The songs, accompanied by a cacophony of drum-bashing and tambourine-rattling, follow, before happy birthdays and a quieter end to the session with “God’s Love is Like a Circle”. Then it’s juice, biscuits and playing with the toys, tearing round the church on scooters and trikes before tidy-up time.

There is a real sense of a growing community amongst the adults attending and support for each other; there are occasions for joy and finding solace in those Monday friendships.

The team runs all this very efficiently; Temi on the IT side of things, Rachel providing much-needed coffee and sustenance for the grown-ups, Barbara welcoming and registering all the children as they come through the door and with Stephanie and Lisca ably assisting with all of it. I tell the story and the whole thing is led by Anna, whose enthusiasm and positivity remain undimmed.

*Liz Ridout*



Appendix I:

## Mission Action Plan

### St Leonard's Church Streatham



**'Faith, Hope and Love in the heart of Streatham'**



**Our four priorities are:**

#### **I. Our Worship.**

**We want to express our gratitude to God by offering the best of who we are and the gifts we have in our worship.**

**We want our worship to be accessible, welcoming, and inclusive of all.**

**We want to hear what God is saying to us and be open and responsive.**

#### **2023 / 2025 Actions and Achievements:**

- *Replace inner main doors to church to reflect the open and transparent welcome we offer. (March 2023).*
- *Develop and retain our older Choristers and invest in recruitment of younger Chorister. (Recruited Assistant Chorister Leader September 2023).*
- *Encourage a diversity of people to serve at services. (New servers / deacons recruited)*

- *Actively express our welcome of LGBTQI+ people.*
- *Recruit a Youth Work Apprentice. (November 2023).*
- *Encourage generosity in giving. (Stewardship Sunday – September 2023).*
- *Include young people in leading worship and serving at services. (Youth Service – March 2023 and Assisted September 2023)*

## **2. Those who are especially vulnerable.**

**We want the vulnerable in our community to experience God’s love through us.**

**We want to ensure that those who are vulnerable among us, both close at hand and in the wider world, are noticed and supported.**

### **2023 / 2025 Actions and Achievements:**

- *Ensure that Safeguarding training is made available to all those involved in leadership or work with the vulnerable or young. (Foundations online course offered to PCC and Children / Youth volunteers – October 2023).*
- *Host and support ‘Holiday at Home’ annually, open to all local seniors. (Successfully run – September 2023).*
- *Raise funds to support victims of conflict / poverty through Christian Aid. (Gaza donations – November 2023) .*
- *Identify and provide support and training for people called to pastoral work.*
- *Nehemiah House volunteers recruitment / support. (January 2023 / November 2023).*

## **3. Future generations.**

**We want to ensure that local children and young people receive from us the nurture and care they need to grow in faith, hope and love.**

**We want to share the story of God’s love with the children in our community and beyond.**

**We want to strengthen our relationship with our church school and other schools in our neighbourhood.**

## **2023/ 25 Actions and Achievements:**

- *Strengthen our Toddler Church team with new members. (Four new volunteers started Autumn 2023).*
- *Open the Book Team in school regularly / growing team.*
- *Recruit new Children's Church Leaders / helpers. (Two new Leaders recruited 2023).*
- *Include Pulse in All Age worship. (Pulse led a Youth Service in March 2023 / helped September 2023).*
- *Support St Leonard's School through SIAMS.*
- *Recruit a Youth Work Apprentice, offer support and encouragement. (Achieved – November 2023).*
- *Provide safeguarding training. (Offered online – October 2023).*

## **4. Care of Creation.**

**We want to be active in responding to the causes and effects of Climate change.**

**We want to become better stewards of God's creation.**

## **2023 / 2025 Actions and Achievements:**

- *Eco Church gardening days. (X 2 in 2023, bulbs planted in addition).*
- *Work with Sustainability UK with Hall redevelopment. (Eco Audit completed and report received – November 2023).*
- *Adopted an Environmental Policy. (March 2023)*
- *Bike recycling – The Bike Project. (75+ bikes sent in 2023).*
- *Work towards Eco Church 'Gold' standard.*

**ANW End of year 2023.**