

APCM REPORTS

Year of 2025



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



RECTOR'S REPORT

It always feels a little strange writing a report in March for the previous year, but in a very good way it always drives me back to my diary to look back and recall all that happened in our life together last year. I am never disappointed. This report will be my ninth and each year I am overwhelmed by the way in which St Leonard's keeps moving forward. New things are happening all the time, new people arriving at our doors and being welcomed into the church family, new projects, fresh volunteers, development of our facilities and investment in the things we hold dear.

The 2025 highlights for me include the arrival of our Curate Wa'el Qasim, the establishment of the children's garden at St Leonard's School, the launch of our choral scholarship scheme and the church hall redevelopment project.

We mustn't underestimate the wider impact that our hall refurbishment project is already having on all our mission and ministry. In 2025 work was completed on a beautiful 3 bedroomed flat on the top floor of the hall (a huge thank you the 'Mr Edward' for his hard work here). This meant we could welcome a stipendiary curate in July and Fr. Wa'el's ministry among us is already making a valuable impact. We are providing a home for The Streatham Lunch club, which is offering a valuable service to the community, as well as rescuing food that would otherwise be wasted. We are building relationships with a wide group of hall users from every corner of the community as well as generating much needed income to support the work we are doing. None of this would be possible without the financial acumen of Sien Yin Cheng our Treasurer, who's management of our finances is second to none and Eileen McLoughlin, our Parish Administrator who keeps both the church and the hall admin under control with exceptional efficiency, warmth and good humour.

One of the areas we have seen exponential growth in recent years has been our work with children and young people. We regularly see around 100 children and young people coming through our doors each week and whilst this is wonderful, the workload now far exceeds our volunteer capacity to nurture and develop. The PCC has therefore taken the decision to appoint a Children's and Young Peoples Lead, from Sept 2026 to ensure that this critical work continues to flourish and our wonderful CYP volunteers are properly resourced and supported.

That said, this booklet contains the story of faithful parish ministry being shared among the people of God in a huge variety of ways. We have around 80 people serving in voluntary roles at St Leonard's; a remarkable achievement and each person's contribution is of enormous value to the whole. As I break the bread at Communion and say, '*we break this bread to share in the body of Christ*' it is always a joy to hear the people of St Leonard's church respond, '*though we are many we are one body because we all share in one bread*'. It is true; we are the body of Christ, feeding from the same source of life and giving our lives in the service of others. This is 'Church' at it's very best!

At his enthronement the then Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams said this:

'The one great purpose of the Church's existence is to share that bread of life; to hold open in its words and actions a place where we can be with Jesus and to be channels of his free, unanxious, utterly demanding grown-up love'

This is what I see as I read these reports, and I thank God for each and every person who is a part of the stories they tell.

I hope that you are as inspired as I am as you read on.....

With my love and prayers,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna". The script is cursive and fluid, with a large initial 'A'.

CURATE REPORT

It was a joy to join the St Leonard's community at the very end of June 2025. I remember that at that first service representatives from a cross-section of our church presented me with a few useful tools of the trade: my stole, the book of gospels, a set of keys, a prayer book, and, of course, the branded hoodie and fleece. Though it was the height of summer, I knew that these autumn and winter layers were a sign of the year-round warm embrace of this community.

Often I am asked what the curate's week looks like, and I am pleased to reply that it looks a lot like joining in with the wide and varied ministry carried out by an enthusiastic team of faithful and dedicated ministers in this parish. Those ministers are mostly ordinary Christians living out their faith, and very few of them happen to be licensed or ordained by the bishop. It really is the whole people of God that make this parish. Whether it is Toddler Church on Monday morning, visiting our school for worship on Tuesday, seeing the lunch club on Wednesday, chorister rehearsals on Thursday, being with Pulse on Friday, or experiencing the huge amount of work that goes into making Sunday so welcoming to those seeking God, those who've found him here for a long time, and those just passing through, both younger and older, the first six months of curacy were a journey of learning from the whole people of God at St Leonard's.

I have been pleased too that we saw the first seeds of a couple of fresh initiatives in the latter half of 2025. Our two Advent study evenings trialled a new shape for focussed learning and discussion to complement our Adult Learning initiatives, and we hope to see in 2026 how this two evening model can be used throughout the year. We have also begun the first seeds of a fellowship group among younger adults, and look forward to seeing where it arises out of.

Six months is no time at all. Certainly, in my own life, the latter six months of 2025 looked very different to the former. How exciting it is to look back as God helps us notice what great works he has been doing among us.

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

One of the main duties of a churchwarden is the care of church buildings and this has been a bumper year of budget spreadsheets and inspections.

In January, we were visited by a diocesan architectural expert for our quinquennial inspection: the five-yearly review to make sure our building is in good repair. As you'd expect from a structure with some parts almost 700 years old, we were given a list of things to either attend to or keep an eye on.

Canon Anna has quickly, and very efficiently, drawn up an action plan to guide the PCC in what needs doing within the next year and beyond. This covers tasks including health and safety considerations, such as making sure our balcony area is safe to use, and various masonry and rain pipe repairs. We'll work meticulously with the PCC over the next five years to make sure all the works are delivered.

Taking full ownership of our church hall continues to prove to have been an excellent decision as we are packed with bookings for regular clubs and activities, as well as weddings and parties.

Last year we were extremely fortunate to receive £90k in eco-grants (from the City Bridge Foundation) to make environmental improvements to the hall, which meant we could install LED lighting and roof, door and window insulation. At the same time, thanks to a separate donation (from Garfield Weston Foundation) and church funds, we have taken the opportunity to provide much-needed improvements to the toilets and replace the flooring throughout. The works have been completed during the quieter winter months, and we are reopening for bookings in March.

We are indebted to the wisdom and expertise of Sien Yin (our brilliant treasurer), the ingenuity and persistence of Caroline and Hannah (our fabulous fundraising team) and the guidance and diligence of the PCC.

And none of this would be possible without Eileen, who has taken on a huge extra role of hall bookings and management on top of running the church office so skilfully (with invaluable help from Stephanie). And Keith is never far away to ensure everything runs smoothly, whether it's setting up chairs for a party, showing prospective bookers around, or locking up at the end of the day.

On Sundays, the sensational sides team perform their duties impeccably and it's thanks to the fabulously unflappable Fareed that our large congregation and new visitors feel so welcome. Another team makes sure the collection is counted and banked – thanks to Chris for making this all happen so seamlessly.

There is of course a massive team of volunteers making every part of church life run smoothly and we are incredibly grateful to each and every one of you. Do forgive us if we have not mentioned everyone here by name (we were given a maximum word count!)

We continue to work closely with Canon Anna to make sure our church continues to be safe and inclusive. We've tightened up our safeguarding processes and made sure we're up to date with the latest regulations, thanks to our conscientious safeguarding leads Marion and Ernest. Finally, we have been delighted to welcome Father Wa'el this year and appreciate the calm and thoughtful energy he has brought to St Leonards. We are very proud to support such an exceptional clergy team and to play our roles in serving our church family.

*Nick Turner and Claire Wills
Church Warden*

The following reports will appear in alphabetical order

ADULT LEARNING

There have been various opportunities throughout the year for people to gather and study the bible or other aspects of our faith.

In Lent 2025 there were no official evening groups scheduled, but instead the whole church was encouraged to read a recommended Lent Book 'Wild Bright Hope' (SPCK) billed as 'The Big Church Read'! As it happened a small group did convene itself and met in members' homes for four evenings during late March and early April. The book contained a series of essays from a range of (mostly young) people, described as 'up and coming new writers'. Each was involved in practical Christianity and passionate about what gives them hope often in difficult and complicated situations. Some parts were more helpful than others but, as always happens when people meet together to share their faith, it stimulated lots of interesting and helpful discussion and strengthened friendships in the group.

The Wednesday Lunch Club started in the autumn of 2021 so we are now into our fifth year. We began the year with some very imaginative work on the women in the Bible. We then had short courses on Proverbs, the minor prophets and a brief look at Islam. For Lent we looked at some portraits of Christ interspersed with the poetry of George Herbert. During the autumn term we studied 1 and 2 Kings, followed in Advent by the Advent Antiphons. A varied programme which hopefully helps people see that the Old Testament has as much to say about life today as does the New Testament.

In Advent, Fr Wa'el hosted two evenings focussing on the subject of the four last things – death, judgement, heaven and hell. These were well attended and engendered some lively discussion.

Eileen Turner, Marion Gray, Fr Wa'el

BRUNCH CLUB

The Brunch Club takes place after the 10am service on the fourth Sunday of the month. We go to a local restaurant for good food and company. The staff at the restaurant make us very welcome and cope remarkably well with our individual variations on the menu. Numbers have grown again in the past year and we always welcome anyone to join us when you can.

Liz Urban

THE 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 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 van comes along and takes them all away for sorting and checking at their workshop in Deptford. 1,732 bikes were handed out by this most brilliant charity in 2025, 130 women learnt to cycle through their Pedal Power programme, and 107 refugees were matched with a volunteer Bike Buddy.

Last year 103 bikes were donated via St Leonard's, of which.

- 55 were refurbished and immediately donated to refugees and people seeking asylum, providing a vital means of transportation to help them re-build an independent life here in the UK.
- 13 were sold through the Bike Project shop, to generate revenue. This money was used to refurbish and donate even more bikes, teach more refugee women to cycle for the first time, and on other programmes to help lessen the impacts of transport poverty, isolation, and restricted access to local services.
- 35 were recycled for their parts - saving these bikes from landfill, and the charity vital sums of money otherwise spent on brand new stock, and promoting a more sustainable approach to bicycle refurbishment.

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 another busy and productive year supporting the children in their worship through stories, discussion and fun craft activities. We currently have around 30 children across both registers and we run two groups for primary age children during term time.

Children come up during the Gloria to be blessed and collect their children's crosses before heading off to their groups. The younger age group (Reception to Year 2) go to 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 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 say the Peace with the congregation.

We would like to say a huge thank you to our brilliant team of dedicated leaders and helpers who offer their time to prepare teaching materials and work with the two groups. We would also like to thank all of the parents and carers that continue to support our work with their wonderful children.

Julia Dare and Rachel Turner

CHRISTIAN AID REPORT

It has become something of a tradition at St Leonard's to support Christian Aid each year through our annual Quiz Night. In 2025 we had a splendid evening of fun in the church hall led by our Quiz master extraordinaire – Duncan Steer. It is always a great way to get to know one another better, unleash the spirit of competition and raise some much-needed funds for the work of Christian Aid. In 2025 we raised a fabulous total of : £952 before Gift Aid, which meant we exceeded our target of £1,000! Not bad for an evening's work...

The Rector

CHURCH HALL

2025 was a successful year for the hall but also one of great learning... the hard way! The aim for the Upper Hall was building a strong core group of regular hirers as the year began with only a few occupying the space. However, by the end of the year we had regular hirers in the upper hall every single weekday.

The Main Halls challenges were surrounding the management of party bookings. A lot of this was achieved through 'learning on job' and now, as a team, we are building really good systems to ensure our hirers get the best possible experience.

This year we spent a lot time on the fire alarm systems, which unfortunately had to wait till the renovations to be rectified. We had some furry friends that needed expelling back to the wild and The Rector along with a great team worked tirelessly getting ready for the big renovations. We finished off the year on 30th December with a final party booking then closed up ready for the renovations that began in January 2026.

Managing the hall can, at times, be extremely testing of ones good nature, but having such a wonderful team of people supporting me with it all makes every bit of difference. So, this report really needs to thank Keith (Site Manager), Colin (Assistant Site Manager), Patricia (Cleaner) and of course Canon Anna!

Eileen McLoughlin

CHURCH WATCH REPORT

Throughout the past year the St. Leonard's Church watch team have continued to welcome visitors to our church on Mondays between 12 noon and 2pm 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, Freda Graham, and their many friends in the Streatham Society for undertaking church watch duties on a Monday.

Our appreciation must also be recorded to Ray Meerabeau, a friend of the Monday Church Watch group, who journeys to St. Leonards from New Malden most Mondays to change the toilet rolls which he kindly donates to the church in addition to undertaking numerous maintenance tasks to the building.

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

CHURCH YARD CARE

It is always a joy to see the early daffodils in January followed by hundreds of crocuses spreading near the main path through the churchyard. This year has also seen our usual crop of rough sleepers, with an unusual proliferation of bedding and clothing. Since late November we have been fortunate to have the services of a Community Payback team every Tuesday. They have been doing an amazing job and have really transformed the whole churchyard. For example, they have been digging "Andrews Corner" every week to discourage or root out the

weeds, cutting back ivy and intruding branches, tidying around graves, and removing litter. But they have also dug out soakaways, removed debris that had fallen into the crypt from ill-fitting grilles, and begun work on the Glebe.

Unfortunately, Lambeth will not collect from our green bins, and need repeated reminders to collect the piles of green waste at all. At the time of writing we have still not arrived at a long-term agreement on where best to leave it for collection. But it is a good problem to have, as the churchyard is looking so much better, and we very much hope our partnership with Community Payback will continue.

In addition, a small select group are carrying out a comprehensive gutters, down-pipes and drains clearing morning on Saturday 28th February, (followed by a burger and a pint in the pub!). We will also organise another gardening day in the early Spring (date tbc).

Stephanie Bradley & Arthur Norman-Walker

COFFEE TEAM

The 'Coffee Crew' have had a good year keeping the spirit of hospitality and welcome alive through the hatch Sunday by Sunday. We run a 'once a month' rota which works well and when stuck there are always 'reserves' ready to jump in at short notice.

Thanks to The Rector, Lisca and Eileen for keeping supplies in stock and to the angels who empty the dishwasher after the services... you know who you are!

If you would like to join the team – just let The Rector know!

Arthur Norman-Walker

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Deanery Synod is your chance to learn more about how the Church of England works and to contribute to discussions in the Diocese. There have been three meetings this year:

Wednesday 14th May - St James, Park Hill. The topic was Serious Youth Violence and Natalie Walters, Head of JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation) and Jason O'Shea, Delivery Officer – Serious Youth Violence, both from our Diocese, spoke about their role in working with Young Offenders and prevention of people being drawn into gangs. This is often through providing illegal drugs or blackmail around threats to release information which the young person wishes to hide – and so they are drawn in.

Tuesday 15th July – St Leonards. Archdeacon Simon Gates lead us in a discussion about Safeguarding, our role and what the Diocese provides. The feeling in the room was the Southwark Safeguarding training is effective – better than the national offer. There was discussion about the implications of the Makin report into abuse by John Smyth. Smyth was not ordained into the Church of England – although he wanted to be – but the report of course led to the resignation of Archbishop Justin Welby.

Tuesday 30th September – none of your reps were available to hear Bishop Martin who was coming to each deanery synod for a chat.

Caroline Leveaux and Nici Yarlett

DEEPDENE HOME REPORT

Deepdene House is a care home in Stanthorpe Road, housing twenty residents with a mixture of vulnerabilities, mainly dementia related. The staff and residents very much appreciate our visits when we share communion with them and also offer the oil of healing.

We usually have about 10 residents and occasionally a member of staff in attendance. Most of them are able to join in with the Lord's Prayer and most opt to receive communion. Not everyone receives communion – our most regular attender is a Moslem man, always ready and first to be seated. Some also receive the oil of healing, which I think they value because it involves human touch.

Visiting and caring for the residents at Deepdene is an aspect of our ministry which is valued by those of us who take part. I'm grateful to Fr Wa'el and Ronnie Barker for their continued support.

Marion Gray

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

Since last year six names have been added to the Electoral Roll and three removed, leaving a current total of 204.

Tony Nunn

FINANCE REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st December

Another year has flown by and I am pleased to say that we are still in a good place. By the grace of our good Lord, through the generosity of our congregation and the receipt of several grants and donations, we have been able to continue not only to support all the various activities provided by our church, but also, some of the community in Streatham.

For more details on the actual numbers, these can be found in the year end accounts which are available separately.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our independent examiner, Andrew Thurburn, with whom I have had the pleasure and privilege to work with during the last eight years. Andrew has decided to retire from practice and is also closing his office at the end of March 2026. He will be sorely missed and this year's accounts will be his last one that he will be reporting upon.

Sien Yin Cheng, Treasurer

FLOWER ARRANGING REPORT

It seems unbelievable that a year has already passed since the team began looking after the floral arrangements. We are pleased to say that with practice, the learning curve has smoothed out, the routine of arranging the flowers has kicked in making it a much easier task than when we first started.

Unsurprisingly, tea and coffee help the tasks along. Who'd have thought we would complete the summer season in July with a shared Saturday lunch in the Narthex? Fish, flowers and chips!

The kind feedback of church members has indicated your appreciation, particularly of the Christmas arrangement, especially clothing the columns with ivy. These were very satisfying to put together as a result of Felicity Stonehill's generosity in giving both extra floral materials as well as her skills and talents. A lovely team effort.

Looking forward this year we are planning more full and varied seasonal arrangements due to our links with St Leonard's Primary School. Paul Angeli thoughtfully suggested that the flowers grown by the children might be used in the church. We planned seeds, bulbs and corms to plant and hope it will be fun for the children and beautiful for the church. Let's hope we have some sunshine too.

We are always keen to welcome new helpers who can spare about two hours once a month on a Saturday morning, no experience necessary. So if you've ever thought you'd like to try your hand at flower arranging here's a date for your diary. Saturday 11 April at 10.30 in the church. We are planning a floral workshop. Mary will be demonstrating a Spring arrangement and showing how it's done. Even if you are just looking, you'd be very welcome.

Finally a word of thanks to our committed team of helpers. It's always a great pleasure to enjoy the quiet purposeful atmosphere with you on a Saturday, whether the sun is pouring through the church windows or rain is pouring down outside. Always a blessing.

*Julia Dare, Ruth De Grey, Roseline Emerson-Baker, Lisca Yee.
Flower Arranging Leaders*

FREEDOM CLUB AND STREATHAM SENIORS REPORT

2025 has been a fairly busy year for the Freedom Club with a variety of events, speakers and outings starting with Nick Turner telling us about the Burundi project St Leonard's has now embraced, February brought an interesting visit to Smugglers Wharf to explore the recycling of our waste – quite an eye opener! In March we heard from Rev Sue Clarke about her life of faith, April was a talk about Streatham BiD with Meghna and Alex. In May to celebrate VE day we planned a war film, but got let down by the DVD player, so had to chat instead – we really enjoyed that too! In June we had a trip to Brighton, on a glorious sunny day and a jolly time was had with Songs on Wheels in early July. August is our month off and September brings Holiday at Home with Streatham Senior Connections. In October we went to Polhill, despite it being half term if was not too busy and they had all their Christmas decorations on display, a lunch at

the nearby Toby carvery finished off our third outing of the year. In November we had a craft day with jars being decorated for table decorations in December, jigsaws and card making. Each of our meetings begins with a bring and share lunch which with 1 exception results in a wonderful feast, the exception was when multiple donations of sausage rolls appeared!!!.

Finally, in December we had our Christmas lunch catered by the wonderful Keith, Colin and Carol, assisted by Chris. We normally have 20 – 30 attend usual meetings but at this free lunch we welcomed about 60 and almost covered our costs through generous donations and a well-stocked raffle, Unfortunately we couldn't arrange a suitable date for the lunch and the chamber choir from Streatham and Clapham High School, better luck for 2026.

Our committee meets several times a year and values all the suggestions that we are given to decide on our programme, unfortunately Keith Riggs-Long had to resign due to too many other commitments but Carol Elliot appeared and stepped into the breach – thanks you Keith and welcome carol.

We have also revised our contact list, in an attempt to reduce any wasteful postage, a number of members receive the news letters via email and the wonderful Vin does all the envelopes for the postal requirements. We have reduced postage from around 70 to 25, so if someone didn't inform us they wished to remain on the list let us know and we can reinstate them.

Streatham Senior Connections continues to coordinate the Mindful Movement sessions with Kathryn during most weeks in term time, it is generally quite well attended with around 20 participants, unfortunately we can no longer liaise with the Thursday Lunch Club in the church hall as there is a huge demand and food cannot be saved until our session finishes. An Art Therapy party was held and Holiday at Home in September and VE day as the theme with ID cards issued, fish and chips for one lunch and bangers and mash for the second day at ST Leonard's. There was a visit to the Imperial War Museum and the ever-popular celebratory tea party at St Peters on the Saturday afternoon. It was great to welcome around 40 guests to most days and we valued the help of a number of volunteers during the event.

Moyra Heggie, Chair

GIFT AID REPORT

If you earn over £12,500 per year you will be paying income tax. The government have allowed us to reclaim the basic rate income tax on donations, this is called gift-aid is worth an extra 25%, effectively turning £5.00 into £6.25. This costs you the donor absolutely nothing!

This has given us over £20,000 this year.

We get income and can claim gift-aid from either:-

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

- donations through the website
<https://www.totalgiving.co.uk/mypage/stleonardsstreatham>
- gifts & legacies.
- the card-readers and the QR codes.

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 Leonards. 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 to donate cash is the next best way to give money with a signature in the box. We do have to count it and transport it safely to the bank.

Now that the NatWest bank branch has closed, paying in has become more of a pain! For the anonymous loose cash in the collection, we can claim some gift-aid on GASDS but only up to £8000 per year, after any gift-aid is unclaimable.

The card-reader and the QR codes are 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). However... They are anonymous so I cannot claim giftaid unless I have a white slip with name, address and amount.

If you are new to St Leonards, or even if you have been here for ages, I might not have a signed gift-aid declaration form, I would like to update my records.

If you are a higher rate tax payer, you can claim the difference between higher and basic rate donations on your annual tax-return.

Finally, a huge thank you to the volunteers who carefully count and bank the cash from the collections. I couldn't do this without you.

Jim Yarlett

GUIDES REPORT

The 6th Streatham Guides had another good and active year. In September, our Leader Millie gave birth to Astrid and has since been on maternity leave; with Alex and Abi stepping up run the Unit. We have also strengthened the Leadership Team with the addition of Canadian Audrey and Alex's mum Jacqui.

The post-Covid bulge in membership has finally worked it's way through and we have been able to drop back to our planned membership of around 25 Guides.

The girls were delighted to welcome members of the Church community to our traditional Fork Supper event, raising money for Christian Aid. They chose the theme Under the Sea and provided excellent entertainment alongside the decorations around the hall.

The Guides also enjoyed attending the Mothering Sunday and Harvest Festival services at St Leonard's – we are always grateful for the warm welcome.

It was an active year; we had girls at the rehearsal for the Trooping the Colour as well as being part of the parade at the Lord Mayor's Show. We hiked part of the local Green Chain Walk finishing at the Girlguiding Maze in Crystal Palace Park. We had two teams in the County Night Hike Competition, finishing a very creditable 5th and 8th. We attended the District Camp at the Fort in Dulwich and survived a very wet few days for our own Summer Camp at Frylands Wood. Some of the older girls joined the Rangers for a week at the Kent International Jamboree. We participated in a District Cookout, a great District Day and, with over 5000 girls, enjoyed the the Region Mayhem Event at the South of England Showground.

We again had Jack Petchey Award Winners; Margo used her Award to part-sponsor a trip to Chessington World of Adventures, whilst Livi used hers towards a trip to Coral Reef WaterWorld in Bracknell.

There was still room in the calendar for a pantomime, a swim and picnic at the Lido, Christmas celebrations and to join Guides across the country for a special Girlguiding screening of Zootropolis 2.

Millie, Alex, Abi, Audrey & Jacqui & Jim: Leadership Team

INFORMAL WORSHIP REPORT

Informal Worship continues to meet on the 4th Sunday of the month and it has been encouraging to see the service continue to grow and settle into its own identity over the past year.

One of the most noticeable developments has been the growth of our team of musicians. We are incredibly grateful for the generosity of those who give their time and gifts to lead us in worship each month. The service has a relaxed and creative feel, with space for prayer, reflection and participation, and we have continued to explore more interactive ways of engaging with the sermon or talk.

We have also been blessed by a wonderfully diverse mix of speakers over the year, each bringing their own perspective and experience to help us reflect on faith and discipleship together.

It has been especially encouraging to see a committed and developing congregation form around Informal Worship. The service has a genuinely intergenerational feel and it is a joy to see faces from across the life of the church, as well as people we do not often see at other

services. In this sense, it continues to be a valuable space for outreach and connection within our community.

On a personal note, Informal Worship has become very precious to me. As I continue my work as a Youth Work Apprentice, it has been a wonderful space in which to grow and develop my own sense of ministry and for that, I'm really very grateful.

Looking ahead, we are excited to continue building on this foundation. One of our hopes for the coming year is to explore further ways of connecting with younger people, while continuing to nurture the welcoming, creative and reflective space that Informal Worship has become.

Thank you to everyone who gives their time, energy and prayer to make it possible.

Ela Yalcin

MUSIC REPORT

General Music

It has been yet another busy musical year at St Leonard's, with the choir working hard to further improve the musical offering that is enjoyed by many on a weekly basis. There have been many highlights, including the recent Christmas services, Advent, All Souls', and the Evensong at Southwark Cathedral in January, at which the adult choir was joined by senior choristers.

In September, we held the inaugural Choral Scholarship Fundraising Concert, which featured our choristers and adult choir, as well as solos from our scholars. We were blown away by the support from so many in the congregation and, thanks to many generous donations, the choral scholarship programme will continue well into the future.

As last year, the organ will need some work done to it at some point and this is under constant watch. Whilst the organ is still working relatively well, I am keen to initiate an organ recital series at St Leonard's to further help fund the ongoing scholarship programme.

Adult Choir

Numbers in the adult choir have again increased, as we welcomed four new members, two of whom made the jump from the congregation. This could be a possibility for any of you, so please do get in touch if you are interested. At the time of writing, we have 24 people singing with the adult choir, including current choristers, choral scholars, and volunteers. I am hugely grateful to these volunteers for sharing their talents to enhance the music at St Leonard's. We said farewell to Andrew Johnson in January, who has retired from the choir, but who will still be at St Leonard's on a regular basis. Andrew has given as much as anyone to enhance the music at St Leonard's for over 50 years and he will be much missed.

Multiple young people are still benefiting from our choral scholarship programme and we have had five scholars singing with the choir over the course of the year, with another senior

chorister now singing regularly with the adult choir. Going forward, further success will be more young people starting to contribute to high-quality liturgy through music at the age of seven or eight, moving through to the adult choir throughout their school years, before returning whenever they return to Streatham. I hope that many of these young people's lives continue to be enriched by choral music.

Choristers

The numbers in our chorister section have increased again this year, and we currently have 26 regular choristers singing with us. As ever, more choristers were awarded their surplices and medals over the course of the year, as they had sufficiently progressed through the RSCM 'Voice for Life' programme. It is clear that these choristers are not only learning musical discipline and theory but making new friends and broadening their horizons.

All our choristers are progressing both vocally and musically, continuing to work hard on Thursday evenings in term-time. We are now, once again, actively recruiting new choristers in school years 2 and 3, so if you have a child at that age who is a keen singer, please do get in touch.

As ever, the growth of the music at St Leonard's would not be possible without the support of many people, notably the Rector and the Church Wardens, so huge thanks must go to them.

Calum Fraser, Director of Music

LAY MINISTERS

Lay ministry happens in a whole variety of ways at St Leonard's, and every moment of volunteering makes our church what it is – a wonderful body working together for the strengthening of God's purposes in Streatham! Some of these vital ministries are exercised by people who have been trained and licensed to the work they do, and at St Leonard's we are richly blessed by the ministry of our two Licensed Lay Readers (Marion Gray and Daniel Glackin – McColgan) and our Lay Pastoral Assistant, Oona Emerson. Marion preaches at evensong monthly, visits a local care home with Communion and leads our Wednesday lunchtime Bible study, as well as supporting 'Open the Book'. Daniel preaches at a range of services and serves as a lay Deacon at our 10am Eucharist on Sundays. Oona has a vital pastoral role making home visits for prayer or Home Communion and managing our prayers for the sick and keeping up with those who are supporting them. If you sense that God might be calling you to licensed lay Ministry please speak to Daniel, Marion or Oona and I am sure they would be delighted to tell you more.

Rev Canon Anna Norman-Walker

MAINTENANCE CREW

The St Leonard's Maintenance Crew continues to prove indispensable, turning their skills to an impressive range of tasks that kept the buildings safe, tidy and fully functioning. Their work spanned the practical, the preventative and the occasionally unexpected. Gutter cleaning featured prominently, including the removal of a slate that had found its way into the guttering. Health & Safety improvements were made to the steps, and a series of running repairs kept the external door hinges, hinging.

Inside, the team fitted curtain ties, replaced a basin tap, and dealt with a dishwasher flood. Four new window blinds were installed in the upper hall, chair seat backs were repaired (a never ending task it seems), and attention was given to the church hall kitchen ceiling. Brush guards were added to the bottoms of doors to minimise visits from our furry ancestors, and a loose front door handle was secured. Small but important fixes that prevent bigger issues later on.

The crew including John, El, Arthur, Keith, Richard and Edward (and if I have missed anyone – apologises), bring together a blend of practical know-how and a willingness to step in whenever needed. These efforts keep the church and its buildings looking cared for, fully functional as well as saving a significant sum each year. *Reficere, vero possumus.*

Richard Malure

NEW GENERATION – STREET ACTION

This year we have seen our partnership with New Generation, a charity that works with street-connected young people in Burundi, continue to develop.

Burundi is one of the poorest countries in the world, and continues to face huge economic, political and military turmoil, not least due to an influx of refugees from the neighbouring DRC. But New Generation, a charity founded by Dieudonne Nahimana, a former street child himself, is a story of hope from within the country.

They believe that young people, as future leaders and citizens, are the key to bringing peace and transformation to their country. And all of their work revolves around that premise – whether it be feeding young children on the streets, providing access to education (neither universal, nor free in Burundi), or giving training and loans to young women to set up their own small businesses.

Last year we raised £2,231 for New Generation through our Lent Suppers (including one held by the Guides) and our enormously fun Barn Dance evening.

We look forward to developing this partnership further this year and, as we continue this journey of friendship with Burundi, please do get in touch to ask anything you would like about the work of New Generation.

Nick Turner

(with my Street Action hat on, the UK charity that supports New Generation in Burundi)

OPEN THE BOOK REPORT

The Open the Book Team comprises about ten 'regulars', with a few others willing to join in when they are able. Although we were sad to say goodbye to Veronica Marshall recently, as she moves away from London, we were particularly pleased receive some help from a couple of younger enthusiasts, Ela and Laura. We are all very different, bringing a whole range of skills: practical, theological and theatrical! New members are always very welcome and we can always use more men!

Our main activity continues to be taking dramatic versions of Bible stories to St Leonard's School on Thursday afternoons, after a rehearsal the previous week. This happens about four times a term and is usually performed for the younger classes. We continue to involve groups of children in our performances – different every time - and have become more ambitious about this in recent months. We also encourage lots of informal audience participation. It is very encouraging when we bump into older children who have good memories of our visits, and recently some of them were invited in for a special occasion.

Open The Book teams operate all over the UK and in many places overseas. We come under the umbrella of the Bible Society who offer the resources on which we base our scripts. We are now approaching the end of a two-year provisional 'syllabus', containing our adaptations of what we feel is the best of the Bible Society's source material. We have recently included some new stories, which keeps us on our toes, plus lots of old favourites covering both the Old and New Testaments.

Eileen Turner/Robert Owen March 2025

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

This has been a year of much change for Pulse as several of our older young people have moved on to university, or other new adventures. And we have also had six younger siblings of Pulse members' join, who have been waiting patiently to be old enough to come to Pulse and are now the right age! We are enjoying the younger demographic at Pulse and it's so encouraging to have new members coming through and joining our community. We currently have 39 young people, aged between 10 and 19, on our books and 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 have three young people who are aged between 16 and 18 who continue to come to Pulse as 'Junior Leaders'. We held a training session for them at the start of the school year, to allow them to shape and input into how they can contribute to the leadership of Pulse. They do a great job befriending and supporting new members as well as helping to set up, pack down, serve food. They also help to plan and run games and talks. Two of our older young people are currently volunteering with the set up and pack down of Pulse as part of working towards their Duke of Edinburgh certificate.

We had a wonderful weekend away again last summer when we returned to Hoppers for the fifth time, taking 26 of our young people. We had the pleasure of Dave and Pat Tomlinson coming with us. Dave helped the young people think about their sense of identity and how this sits alongside their faith. We are busy 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.

The coming few months will see some changes in Pulse. Due to the numbers involved, we have decided that from Easter, we will no longer be providing a hot meal each week. Instead, toast will be available when they arrive (as they often come straight from school and are hungry!) and we will sit down together later in the evening for cake and hot chocolate. We hope that this change will make the running of Pulse a little more manageable and sustainable whilst not losing the value of sitting around tables together to share refreshments. We would like to extend our enormous thanks to Rachel Johnson who has faithfully provided Pulse with delicious hot dinners, on a committed and regular basis, for the past almost seven years. Another change is that several key Pulse volunteers will be stepping back this coming summer. As such, we are currently looking to grow the team, and hope to attract some new volunteers to be a part of the Friday evening fun.

We are grateful for the volunteer team, and for the prayers and support of the wider church.

Pulse Team

RINGERS' REPORT

We continue to ring our bells every Sunday morning, although we seldom manage to ring all eight.

Our youngest member Francis is doing very well and now needs only one or two boxes to stand on instead of three. We appreciate his enthusiasm, especially when he volunteers to raise all the bells on Sunday morning. He also rings with the Surrey Strikers, a group of young (under 18) ringers organised by our local association. And now his dad is learning the ropes. The bells themselves are in good order, although the 7th did lose its stay on Christmas morning, much to the consternation of Elliott who was ringing it at the time. Fortunately, it proved to be nothing more serious than a couple of bolts working loose. John has since carried out an inspection and confirmed all the fittings are sound. (I've had to delegate the maintenance as my arthritis makes clambering around the bell frame difficult these days.) New recruits are always welcome, particularly younger people. The average age of bell ringers nationally is over 60, which is a matter of concern for the future of The Exercise*. Whilst there are groups of very enthusiastic youngsters like the Surrey Strikers, there simply aren't enough young people learning.

If you might be interested in having a go or are just curious to see what goes on in the tower, please send me an email (tony@elderberry.co.uk) or come along any Tuesday evening between 7.15 and 8.45.

Tony Nunn, Tower Captain

** A quaint but still used term for bell ringing as an activity, rather like pigeon racing being called The Fancy. We ringers are an anachronistic lot, composing peals on our smartphones while still organising ourselves along traditional county lines and weighing bells in hundredweights.*

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

We continue to maintain our commitment to ensuring the safety of the children and vulnerable adults in our congregation, by following the policies recommended by the Diocese as set out in *A Safe Church*. All the relevant policies are accessible via our website, under the Safeguarding tab.

If anyone does have a concern, it should be reported at the first possible opportunity. In order to make this easier there are notices on the inside of the toilet doors including contact details for Ernest and myself. These details are also on the noticeboard in the narthex, together with the details of the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. We are, of course, available to speak to in person at Sunday services.

As always, 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. All concerns will be dealt with as soon as possible and will be taken very seriously, but an immediate resolution may not always be possible.

Due to a data breach at the company who were processing our DBS applications, the diocese has appointed a new company, ThirtyOne:Eight in their place. It has taken some time to get us registered with them, but this has now happened and I am hoping we can soon get up-to-date with the outstanding checks that need to be done. There will no doubt be teething trouble at least initially, so I hope people will bear with us.

All volunteers, whatever their role, need to ensure that they keep themselves up-to-date with their training. Most training can now be done on-line – please contact the diocesan safeguarding team for advice or ask Ernest or myself.

Marion Gray and Ernest Obumselu

SIDES PEOPLE REPORT

The love, devotion and fellowship of the SuperSides team speak for themselves; this is evident when one sees them in action at services. So much are we closely knit that every time a member has had to take longish term leave (say, GCSE, university, health pauses and such like), not one has wanted to leave the Sides WhatsApp group! I find that very touching and characteristic of a dedicated number of individuals who sincerely wish to serve as a team and to be the welcoming face of St Leonard's Streatham. I take my hat off to every one of them for succeeding so well in the role; in addition, for the sensitive, caring and discreet way they go about their 'siding' being attentive to the congregation and to each other. The SuperSides team (as I call it) consists of people you can trust because their common denominator is not duty, but heart. On this, the third year of sides coordination, it pleases me greatly to report upon the success of the continuing and loving Christian relationships we, the team, have developed thanks to the contribution of every single person, whether on the team, on standby or on the way in, together with the much appreciated support and encouragement of the Rector and Churchwardens. We are here to welcome and to serve you. We are also here to listen to you should you have any suggestions or comments.

Fareed Fetto

ST LEONARDS ARCHIVIST REPORT

RISEN FROM THE ASHES - 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRE AT ST LEONARD'S IN 1975

To mark the 50th anniversary of the fire that destroyed the church in May 1975 a series of events were organised to mark the occasion which included the mounting of an exhibition detailing the fire and rebuilding of the church; guided tours of the building in association with the Streatham Society; a talk on the fire given at a special commemorative Evensong service held at the church; an illustrated talk given to the Streatham Society and to the Pulse Youth Group.

A special tour of the crypt and bell tower was given to the Tooting Common Walk and Talk group on Saturday July 19th 2025.

On behalf of the Streatham Society, I and Trudy Kuhn, a qualified Lambeth Tour Guide, conducted tours of the graveyard and the crypt and bell tower as part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival held in June 2025 and the Lambeth Heritage Festival held in September 2025.

Trudy Kuhn and I also conducted tours of the graveyard and the crypt for the Antique Beat Group headed by Stephen Coates in October 2025.

In November 2025 I conducted tours of the crypt for members of St. Leonard's Pulse Youth Group.

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 various people including Jane Inglesfield, a descendent of Mrs Hester Salusbury, concerning the Salusbury memorial in St. Leonard's Church and its restoration after the 1975 fire.

The heavy falls of rain experienced in recent months has led to slight flooding in parts of the crypt, which is not an unusual occurrence. However, to minimise the damage caused to items stored in the Treasury it was decided to erect shelving in the crypt so that vulnerable items would no longer have to stand on the floor. The opportunity of doing this work was taken to completely reorganise the Treasury and dispose of old office equipment and material in store that was no longer serviceable or required to increase the storage space available. In addition a spare filing cabinet was added to accommodate part of the church archives.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Victor McGill and Jane Jarvis for their litter picking duties each Monday and for all they and others do to help keep the churchyard and glebe 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 grave yard. 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. LEONARDS CHILDREN'S VEGETABLE GARDEN

The children's vegetable garden at St Leonard's School has been running for the last 6 months. The garden is intended to be a collaboration between the church and school community to develop a learning space for the children. The focus initially was to make sure the garden was ready for planting and so we undertook some clearing and tidying. With help from local parishioners we have now restored the polytunnel, put in new beds and given the space a new lease of life. Over winter we had a display of the different kinds of seeds that children might encounter in a garden. In autumn we helped children to plant daffodils which will be followed in spring by a "Best Daffodil" competition. We also planted a winter garden of vegetables. We now have a team of 7 people drawn from St Leonard's. With children from Reception we are

building a bug hotel. Children have started planting flowers and vegetables and this activity will hopefully increase now that the polytunnel is available. The garden is now well provisioned and has a lot of promise. We are very grateful to all volunteers, teaching staff and children who have contributed to the garden's development. Our hope is that children and teachers will be able to use the space we have created to learn about growing, to help promote a positive and caring approach to the natural environment.

Paul Angeli

ST LEONARD'S SCHOOL GOVERNORS

The big news is that Simon Jackson, St Leonard's long-serving Head Teacher, has decided to step down in August. This was not an unexpected decision and it was timed with typical sensitivity and care. The reality will still however take some getting used to. Simon led the school with extraordinary dedication over many years and oversaw significant changes; including expansion, new buildings, successful inspections, academy conversion and nursery provision extending to full-time places from April this year. He leaves the school in fine fettle, with a singularly strong Senior Leadership Team and staff. His will be a hard act to follow.

Meanwhile, St Leonard's has continued successfully to offer a quality educational experience to its pupils, bucking the local falling rolls trend (for the moment at least), while coping with a high proportion of EAL children and increasing numbers presenting with special needs. Attendance has been a challenge, as it has been for all schools. The fact that the school achieved the national average at the end of the year is a tribute to the great effort put in by the staff. Meanwhile, the MAT has continued to provide valuable support across the board.

The governing body remains strong and committed. We have focused our attention primarily on the school's financial viability, which has been achieved mainly due to some judicious redeployment of staff within the MAT; on attendance; and on ensuring the curriculum, in terms of relevance and values, remains fit to meet the challenges of the modern world.

There are two new members of the governing body; Chris Thompson (Foundation) and Daisy Noble (Parent). And two long-serving governors, Katherine Driver and Anna Jones, will be stepping down at the end of the summer term. They have both contributed immensely to the governance of the school over many years and will be much missed. Great thanks are also due to the church volunteers led by Paul Angeli who have created a simply splendid vegetable garden for the pupils and staff to enjoy and learn from

David Herbert, Chair of Governors

TAIZÉ PRAYER REPORT

Now running into its 10th year in the current format, the monthly Taizé prayer service continues to thrive. With people attending from our parish as well as neighbouring ones and from further afield, the service settles into a quiet prayerfulness allowing for silence and individual prayer in the company of others. Each month there are new faces, with some people finding the service because it is listed on the Taizé website and on the Taizé in London Facebook page.

The chants and other songs are supported by a committed group of musicians and singers who gather to practise an hour before the service and to set up the space. We invite other musicians to join us to expand our 'band'. If you are looking for a place of stillness and companionship, the Taizé prayer could be what God is calling you to. All are very welcome (and we have tea and cake before the service too!).

Julie McCann and the Taizé Team

TODDLER CHURCH REPORT

Don't like Monday mornings? The church runs the antidote to this if you have a toddler – the joyful experience that is Toddler Church! Every Monday of term-time, about 15-25 toddlers and their adults join in the singing, dancing, drum-bashing fun at 10.30 – 11.45 in church. There are quieter moments too; the children sit so beautifully on the mat to listen to the Bible story and see it acted out with cardboard characters (that have an alarming propensity to fall over) and to offer subjects for prayer into the microphone (Thank you God for Mummy! Thank you for granola! For baby unicorns!). Then it's playtime on the mats, whizzing on scooters around the church for the children and a gratefully received coffee for the grown-ups.

It takes eight of us to run it so that it looks effortless. We have new toddlers joining all the time and the older ones leaving for nursery, so if you or a neighbour or friend have a baby or toddler, do come to a session; it is a good place for the children to burn off some energy and for the adults to meet people. And, let's be honest, we could all do with the wiggle song on a Monday morning.

Liz Ridout