

APCM REPORTS

23rd April 2023



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

RECTOR'S REPORT

Dear Friends,

Another happy year has passed at St Leonard's and this booklet is a worthy reflection of it. Every year it reminds me of the vast number of wonderful people who serve in so many ways to enable St Leonard's to be the community of 'Faith, Hope and Love' that it is.

The appendix to this report contains a copy of the Mission Action Plan (MAP) that we set for ourselves in the Summer of 2018. It brings me such joy to see how this report reflects the vision we had then and continue to uphold today. I believe that it is as we gather around the things that really matter to us; our worship of God, our compassion toward the vulnerable, our commitment to children and young people and the care of creation, we discover a unity of purpose which binds us together and enables us to be an effect witness to God's inclusive love in Streatham and beyond. Thank you for being a part of that vision and for all you do in making St Leonard's the fabulous church that it is.

I do not need to add to what is written here, other than to celebrate with you the news that our attendance figures and our ministry among children and young people especially are at their highest in a decade. Our beloved church building is finally watertight and fit for purpose and our finances are stable once again. Thanks be to God.

Looking ahead our Church Hall is the next challenge and opportunity on the horizon; watch this space...

As I write we are about to say our farewells to Revd Hayley Argles – Grant, our much-loved Curate. Hayley has served the Parish faithfully for 3.5 years and it has been a personal delight to be Hayley's training Incumbent. She is now ready to take up a permanent full time post as Incumbent of the Falkland Islands. Please hold Hayley in your prayers as she embarks on this life and ministry adventure!

At this APCM we are also bidding farewell to Liz Ridout who has served four-year term as our PCC secretary. Liz has operated with efficiency and humour during her term of office! Liz is succeeded by Barbara Booth, who is also our office volunteer and is well known and loved at St Leonards. Thank you, Barbara, for stepping into Liz's (sizable) shoes.

We are also saying farewell to Sue Kearton who, for health reasons, is stepping down as Church Warden. Sue has brought a wonderful pastoral touch to her role over the past two years and hopes to continue to pay visits to housebound members of the community and will certainly be active at St Leonard's in the days ahead. Moyra has valiantly offered to stay on for a further two years as our new Church Warden finds their feet.

I would like to pay tribute especially to members of the PCC, to Moyra and Sue and our Treasurer Sien Yin who have all been an incredible source of wisdom and encouragement this year.

I would also like to thank our staff and clergy team who between them are the most magnificent and talented people that this Rector could ask for as both colleagues and friends.

Finally, and most importantly thanks be to God for the way in which, through the Holy Spirit at work among us, St Leonard's is flourishing!

It is a joy to serve as your Rector.

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'.

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

As ever it has been a busy year, but joyful without the covid restrictions. The sides person teams seem to have enjoyed their meet and greet roles as well as guiding and helping people during services. We could not manage without them, especially for special services. So, thank you one and all. A very special thank you goes to Fareed Fetto who has stood in to meet and greet and organise sides people for Sue during her amazing trip home to New Zealand with a few stops along the way! Fareed has been a real stalwart every Sunday and the additional services at Christmas – our sincere gratitude goes to him.

John Brown and his band of friends keep the churchyard spic and span and often put the world to rights on a Monday while the church is open for private prayer or Mindful Movement. Rob Edmondson and Andrew Johnson are church watchers on a Wednesday after the midday eucharist. Rob replaces our dear friend Ian Pratt who sadly passed away. He left a big hole in our lives, the Greek class that he took over from Charles Gibson and the coordination of the tellers who count the collections twice a month, contactless contributions have become increasingly popular.

The church buildings and churchyard continue to exercise us and sadly our architect, Roderick Maclennan also died in September. Caroline Leaveaux continues as our mistress of faculties that include success for new handrail for the steps at the side of the chancel, now installed, and the interior doors.

Nick and his team continue to live stream (many thanks everyone); although most have returned to in person worship it remains an asset for us if we are away or unable to attend church.

The church has been less of an issue this year, but we had to replace the dishwasher and have had a water butt installed by the entrance on the south side of the church; a rainwater pipe has been rerouted to successfully stop ingress into the crypt. The gutters were cleared after the large oak tree on the north side was cut back; we may need to water this tree in the summer to prevent further cracking that appeared in and near "Mimi's room", which we are reassured is not a problem. We are waiting for the investigation of a damp patch on the wall near to the piano on the south wall.

The churchyard is looking better with lovely shows from adopted planters and loads of bulbs and shrubs. Ali's hard work with Eco Church finished with a flourish, and thanks to Robert Owen's audit resulted in a silver award from A Rocha and Gold award from London in Bloom – well done. One dead tree has been removed and some of the railings repainted. Steff Bradley has taken on responsibility for liaising with Lambeth Landscapes for us.

The Church Hall continues to be used by Spires under the new lease while they are still looking for new premises. They have a new CEO, Matt. Quite a number of maintenance issues have arisen with leaks, floods and plumbing blockages, heating and electrical faults identified as well as some plasterboard falling from the

ceiling and roof damage following a storm. We are reluctant to spend serious money on the hall until we know the future but an eco audit has been completed and no doubt our new architect will soon get involved once Spires gives notice.

The organ is getting regular tuning/voicing and our manual piano was sent away for repair but sadly was beyond help. As an interim measure a digital piano has been rented until a decision is made on our future piano.

Our gratitude to Sue and Phil Heeley who have managed the not insignificant task of arranging for all the visits by various personnel to ensure our public building conforms to Health and Safety and other regulations required. Another thank you to Phil for helping keep the churchyard neat and tidy after the Monday crew have done the honours.

You may have noticed people appearing with bicycles then disappearing without them - the “bike project” has been spearheaded by Robert Owen. St Leonard’s crypt holds the redundant bikes until about 20 are stored before being collected. They are then refurbished and given to refugees, asylum seekers and others to enable them to travel to job interviews, work or other meetings and saving on fares.

Eileen, back from maternity leave, has taken over a number of activities the wonderful Heeley family have been doing to ensure our inspections are up to date. With the help of volunteer Barbara Booth, they produce the weekly service sheets, organize the church diary and support Anna in many ways.

The ‘Curate’s House’ in Aldrington Road required some attention – new oven and washing machine early in the year. In October the family moved out and the whole house was decorated, radiators moved or installed, and carpet refitted over new underlay as well as a window and fridge freezer replaced. It will be put up for rent again in early 2023 and instead of the estate agent the church will manage the letting with the able assistance of Aiden Schulkes.

The 40+ IKEA bags put together from the congregation’s generous donations of store cupboard basics and hygiene products were taken to the refurbished hostel accommodation and were gratefully received by the families when they moved into their temporary accommodation.

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

Finally, we end this report with our profound thanks to Canon Anna whose energy and ideas are endless – we are as ever very lucky to have such a rector to lead our amazing clergy team.

Moyra Heggie and Sue Kearton. Churchwardens

The following reports will appear in alphabetic order.

ADULT LEARNING

Two opportunities to study and share fellowship together have continued throughout the year.

In spring 2022 the Zoom discussion group spent the six weeks of Lent following a Pilgrim Course on The Lord's Prayer. In Advent we tried to encourage each other to step aside from the busyness of the season and reflect on three 'Calls from God'. This was loosely based on a book 'The Meaning of Waiting' by Paula Gooder and each 'call' involved a character from the season's readings - Abraham, John the Baptist and Mary. Currently in Lent 2023 we are exploring The Beatitudes using another Pilgrim Booklet.

The Wednesday Lunch Club has also followed the same material during Lent and Advent. In addition we have looked at Old Testament themes of Shalom, Sabbath and Justice, and had an in-depth study of the Holy Spirit. We also studied the Letter to the Colossians and during the autumn some themes in the writings of St Paul. Subjects for the future include the Psalms, some of the shorter epistles, and Jesus' parables.

This 'mixed economy' seems to have become established as a permanent fixture. Both groups have quite a number of 'regulars' but many people pop in and out for unavoidable reasons and you are always welcome. The seasonal Zoom courses are advertised in the church notices and the Wednesday group meets most weeks at

1pm after a quick snack (bring your own) for those who also attend the 12noon Eucharist.

Why not try us out? Or suggest what kind of group you would like to belong to?

Eileen Turner and Marion Gray

CHILDREN'S CHURCH REPORT

Children's Church continues to go from strength to strength and we currently have around 30 children on our registers. We run two groups for primary age children: 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. Children leave during the Gloria and come back into Church for the Peace. Both groups use Roots learning and worship resources which are based on the weekly gospel used in the main service.

We have a brilliant team of leaders and helpers, and would particularly like to welcome our new leaders Bethia, Beauty, Angie and Jo. We are also delighted that we have four of our young Pulse members volunteering as helpers.

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 delightful children of St Leonard's.

Julia Dare and Rachel Turner

CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

At the start of 2022, I was attempting to update the list of those who had boxes, and we also had a drive to recruit more savers. Some people had died and others no longer wanted a box, but there were approximately ten new takers. Few of the latter have collected enough money for their boxes to require emptying; conversely, however, a couple of boxes have come in that have not been emptied since 2020! In the past year, since February 2022, £328.77 has been raised.

Poppy Giles

CHRISTIAN AID REPORT

We were delighted to resume in person fund raising this year with a spectacular quiz night to celebrate Christian Aid week. Over 100 people attended and it was wonderful to see our whole community enjoying each other's company. We raised over £1,306 in donations, with further donations made online as well! This was a fantastic achievement and over what we had raised the year before.

We anticipate that this year, all being well, we will organise fundraising events linked to Christian Aid week itself.

Liz Stephenson, Christian Aid coordinator

CHURCH WATCH REPORT

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 and it is pleasing to report that a small number of people take advantage of this opportunity for quiet prayer and reflection.

Sadly, a long-standing member of the team, Ian Pratt, passed away this year. Ian was a staunch supporter of the work of St Leonard's and, with Andrew Johnson, was a welcoming face to Wednesday visitors. A gentle-man in the true sense of the word, Ian is greatly missed. We are grateful to Rob Edmondson who has joined the Wednesday Church Watch Team in Ian's place and also to Andrew and Allen and John Brown who are on duty on Mondays.

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.

Now that the pandemic has passed, it would be nice if we could extend the opening of the church to other days of the week as was the custom before Covid restrictions were introduced.

John Brown

COFFEE TEAM

My thanks to the very consistent and reliable coffee team who have served us all so well this year. Thank you also to members of Pulse who have occasionally taken over the hatch to hand out tea and coffee after the service.

I know the congregation very much appreciate the hot drinks always at the ready after the last hymn.

The team is now on a WhatsApp group which makes any changes needed so much easier.

Susan Gibson

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Due to two unexpected cancellations due to illness and calendar clashes with parish activities, Synod only met formally once in 2022.

We met at Emmanuel Church, West Dulwich, in November to discuss issues of mental health and parish ministry. The Revd Cathy Wiles, who had served as a mental health chaplain in the NHS, and The Revd Andrew Wilson, a retired mental health nurse and Chair of the Croydon mental health charity APCMH, addressed Synod on some of their experience of supporting those with challenging mental health situations in parish ministry. There was a particular theme of building safe communities where individuals could be heard and where there was an openness to sharing issues around mental health, as well as a recognition that all of us are likely to experience some form of challenging mental health in our lives.

We held our annual deanery Ascension Day service at All Saints West Dulwich. The combined choirs of All Saints, St Peter's and St Leonard's led the musical worship and our speakers were from L'Arche London, with a sermon from two members of the L'Arche London community with whom All Saints has very close connections.

Synod met for its final meeting of the triennium, with an evening visit to the West Norwood Cemetery, in the Crematorium Chapel with a focus on death and dying. Kim Hart of Lambeth Amenity Team set out the history of the cemetery, including a short video of the unique Gothic Catacombs. The Revd Jonathan Crouch, Area Dean, then used the Church for England's new Gravetalk material to open up a conversation on how we manage discussion of dying in church.

Caroline Leveaux and Jonathan Croucher

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, which until recently included our very own worshipper, Sammy.

Marion Gray and David Lock visit the home in Stanthorpe Road once a month and meet the residents who live in a shared community as well as the amazingly dedicated staff who support them. At our monthly service, we offer home communion and prayers for healing and we regularly have attendance of between ten and fifteen people. It is clear they enjoy our visits and make us feel very welcome. This year, a new resident in the form of Rocky, the mischievous kitten, has moved in and is truly loved by everyone who lives and works there (even when he destroyed the Christmas tree).

During the summer, Marion and David were invited to join the sports day which was held on Streatham Common. There was a fantastic barbecue and [soft drink] bar but sadly, although we both competed in the egg and spoon race, we were defeated.

Again, some members of the choir sang some their favourite Christmas carols at the home and joined in tea and mince pies and this time, the service was live streamed to the care home's head office for the staff there to enjoy too. The staff and residents this year presented a beautiful box of (posh) biscuits to St. Leonard's church and also a very generous food hamper for us to donate to the food bank.

Kerry Carter, the manager at Deepdene, moved on to pastures new at the New Year. We wished her well and bought her flowers and a card from all at St Leonard's by way of a "thank you" for her amazing support for our mission. We look forward to working with the new manager and to further building and enhancing our relationship with this group of parishioners.

David Lock and Marion Gray

ECO CHURCH REPORT

Ali Angus continued to serve as our Eco Church lead until August when the funding for her post came to an end and Ali left us for pastures new. The work of the Eco Church gardening club is evident all around and we now have a wonderful new shed to house the gardening tools. We have a composting bin and a Water Butt as new additions to the church yard.

Most importantly the PCC adopted an Eco Policy this year in order to shape our thinking and our practice in terms of sustainability and responsibility. It can be downloaded from the Eco Church page of the website. Our special thanks go to Robert Owen for his consultation! Further thanks go to Robert for coordinating the Bike Project. We have been receiving, storing, and dispensing second hand unwanted bikes for Asylum seekers and Refugees to use to get around the city in partnership with The Brixton Bike Project. So far over 100 bikes have come through our hands to this most brilliant project.

The Rector

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

7 names have been added to the Electoral Roll in the past year and 5 removed, bringing the total to 237.

Tony Nunn

FINANCE REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

We have just completed another challenging and uncertain year and I am pleased to report that we have been able to show a surplus of income thanks to the receipt of three legacies and the immense generosity of our parishioners. This generosity has been manifested in all areas of giving, be it by standing order, gift aid envelopes during the service collection or via the card readers situated in the Narthex. As a result of this generosity, we have also been able to claim over £22,000 from HMRC relating to gift aid. This has enabled St Leonard's Church to continue providing a whole host of activities to both the young and the not so young members of our community.

As mentioned above, during the year we were blessed with three legacies and these have been earmarked for expenditure during 2023.

Although our tenants in Aldrington Road vacated our property in early October 2022 which of course meant that we were short on the budgeted rental income, we were able to carry out some necessary repairs to the property in order to be able to put it back on the market for letting. And I can report that we have new tenants in situ from 11th February 2023.

The church hall continues to be a cash drain on our resources due to many years of neglect. This has been reflected in the expenditure this year being more than twice the expenditure in 2022.

Although, the uncertainties will remain during 2023, especially due to the massive increase in our energy bills, I am able to report that Cellnex Telecommunications has agreed to reimburse us for their use of electricity at the same rate that we are paying our supplier.

I am therefore able to look forward to the future with renewed confidence in our ability to maintain our commitments.

Sien Yin Cheng, Treasurer

FLOWER ARRANGING REPORT

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

My thanks to the great team of flower arrangers who give so generously of their time as well as members of the congregation who supply foliage. Every Saturday morning with the exception of Lent and Advent we arrange flowers.

During those two periods the Church is very bare, by their absence helping to reflect the solemn tone of those periods.

Mary Treacy

FREEDOM CLUB WITH STREATHAM SENIOR CONNECTIONS REPORT

It feels as if the Freedom Club is about back to normal: after a time of BYO lunch we returned to bring and share. The committee has been a bit depleted by members being unwell and we especially missed our secretary and fount of good ideas girl, Ann Morisy, following her terrible accident in May. Luckily Cheryl Gordon has stepped into the secretarial breach and helped by daughter Jen produce the minutes and newsletters. Some are sent electronically but about 60 are folded and sent in stamped addressed envelopes by Vin Turkson - so special thanks to you ladies.

Meetings included singing in the New Year with Julie and Frances, Tony Emerson and friends reading from his latest book "Unlikely Alliances", a chat by Ethline Jarrett on youthful experiences in Sierra Leone, Growing Old Disgracefully by Ann Morisy, cancelled because of storm Eunice, was replaced by a general discussion of ageing. The late Queen's Platinum Jubilee was a great excuse for a party with various activities and eating. coronation chicken and the trifle!

We visited Vera Lynn museum at Ditchling and Guildford Cathedral suggested by Liz Urben to view Threads of Creation by Jacqui Parkinson and tour the cathedral as well.

We had our usual Christmas lunch with fewer attendees this time: the weather wasn't helpful, but we were entertained by the chamber choir of Streatham and Clapham High: singing along to popular Christmas songs always puts us in the mood for the festive season.

The Freedom Club also works closely with Streatham Senior Connections, drawn from various churches in Streatham working together on behalf of older people. Under this umbrella we have made numerous blankets from knitted /crocheted squares and covers for hot water bottles to the Foodbank this year, a joint session with Pulse where the young people were introduced to a Beetle Drive, Singing in the decades and we attend quizzes at The Vale a seniors' complex in Knolly's Road. Rectory Thursdays happened at the start of the year, but have yet to be reactivated for "senior seniors".

Mindful Movement hosted by Oona and Diana goes from strength to strength and is a main fixture of many people's calendar and we continue showing The Crown.

We resumed Holiday at Home in September with around 25 attending daily. One day German and another Austrian themed with associated food and drink, flower arranging, flag making and jigsaws were available; we heard about life as an army brat in Germany, holidays in Austria and were serenaded by St Leonard's Choral scholars Andrea and Mark with German repertoire and by Zoie (of Singing Mamas) and Des with a Sound of Music singalong. A trip to the Wesley Museum and church was deferred due to transport issues, but 20 of us had a nice sandwich lunch and a good chat. The trip was successfully rescheduled. On the final day we had a celebration tea at St Peter's church and more singing. We were really grateful for the help of all the volunteers who made the event so pleasant and memorable.

We would really love a few more of our congregation and their friends who may be eligible by age to come and join us in our activities.

Moyra Heggie

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%, so each £5.00 given turns into £6.25

This has given us an extra £21,700 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
- the card readers
- donations through the website
<https://www.totalgiving.co.uk/mypage/stleonardsstreatham>
- gifts & 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 a 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 the 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).

If you are new to St Leonards, 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 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

This is our first report since the 2019 Report because shortly after that, COVID seemed to change the world. We will cover 2020 and 2021 briefly.

Our last event before Lockdown was the Church Parade for Mothering Sunday in 2020, a few days later we had to cancel the Fork Supper and a Murder Mystery Evening - lockdown had begun. Instead of regular meetings, we used Zoom to run on-line weekly meetings, even during the holidays, delivering activity packs to Guide Houses as part of our allowed exercise. The results were significant, whereas most Guide & Scout Units shrunk, we increased our membership to around 30 Guides.

As lockdown softened, we made full use of the still limited freedom; a discovery adventure (in families or small groups) finding all the history, parks and wild places in the Streatham area; a camp fire (no flames alas) in the dark in Streatham Common Woods; a walk in the country that the Guides had planned on Zoom and eventually in August 21 we were one of the first Units in the country to go on a camp again.

Our use of the Church Hall is still partly restricted as we have not used the kitchen or the back hall since Covid began. (This is a bit of a problem with 30 guides.) However, Spires generously offered a solution to our storage problem which is a great improvement.

There have been inevitable changes to the Leadership Team; we lost Hattie and then Becky (after over 6 years), both of whom moved away but we've gained Alex who had been a Guide with us 10 years ago. Kaye, Millie and Jim provided the continuity and our Young Leaders were ex-Guides Kayleigh for 2 years, and now Sarah who is doing it as "service" for her DoE.

We have done very well with Jack Petchey Awards over the 3 years with 6 Guide Awards (Emma, Lucy, Rhiana, Kayleigh, Bea I & Sarah) and Millie getting the 2022 Leader Award. Millie, Kayleigh, Bea I and Sarah had their Awards presented by the Lady Mayor of Lambeth at a County Event at Lambeth Town Hall just a few weeks ago, with Kayleigh providing all the excellent entertainment to a packed audience.

Main highlights of the 2022 Programme: -

January - Murder Mystery W/E

March - District STEM Day

June - Cookout Evening, Quidditch on the common

July - District Thames Challenge & Women's Euro's Football

August - Kent International Jamboree - Camp with North Lambeth Guides

September - District Camp

October - Harry Potter World

November - Matilda

December - Christmas Party & Ice Skating

Murder Mystery W/E

One of the Guides favourite events; 2 nights in a warm and comfortable building near Dorking. Over 25 of us, each playing a character from a Hollywood Awards Party, all trying to find the murderer and solve dozens of other challenges.

STEM Day

Our Unit joined over 100 Guides & Brownies at Goldfinch Primary School for a day of chemicals, rockets, electricity & science.

District Thames Challenge

Teams from all Streatham's Guide Units competed in a day of discovery along London's River. We had three teams starting at different London piers; day-passes on the Clipper allowed them to go up and the Thames solving riddles and clues before all meeting together at London Bridge for results and presentations at the end of the day.

Quidditch

A fun evening playing the famous Harry Potter Game, complete with broomsticks, hooped goals, and bludgers. It's a real game; there are leagues in the US, and the girls love it

Women's Euros Football

A unique opportunity to safely take the girls to see a real, full-house football match at Brentford's magnificent new stadium, all at a very low price.

Summer Camps

We managed to find the girls 3 opportunities to camp during the summer and some took all three. Lambeth Guides were looking for some more numbers and invited us to join. The District had a week's camp at the Kent International Jamboree with thousands of other. And finally, a District Weekend Camp in the Scout Campsite at Dulwich Woods.

Harry Potter World

Even if you're not a Harry Potter fan, this is a great day out enjoyed by over 20 Guides and thanks to Bea I's Jack P Award and Group Bookings at a very reasonable price.

Matilda

Girls from our Unit joined thousands of Rainbows, Brownies, Guides & Rangers to watch a dedicated viewing of the new Matilda film at Odeon Cinemas nationwide.

Christmas

December was typically busy with a Christmas Party and other activities, so our Ice Skating at Somerset House (part sponsored by Sarah's Jack P Award) slipped into January.

One final note is that, unfortunately, COVID prevented us celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the formation of our Guide Unit in December 2020 but it did not prevent a special Award Ceremony in a London Hotel, in January 2023, to mark Kaye's 50 years of Guide Leadership at St Leonard's.

Kaye Farmer, Millie, Alex & Jim, Leadership Team

MUSIC REPORT

General Music

It has been another eventful and successful musical year at St Leonard's, with both the choir and congregation improving their singing at the two services each week. Numbers in the congregation at Choral Evensong have further improved, which is fantastic. Highlights from the year have been the Platinum Jubilee Festal Evensong in June and the particularly poignant Evening Vigil for Her Late Majesty in September.

Our three senior choral scholars performed a fantastic recital in May, followed by Mary Fraser and Travis Baker in July. Both recitals raised significant funds for the ongoing scholarship programme at St Leonard's.

Travis informs me that, "despite a few coughs and wheezes, the organ continues to accompany weekly services. A public thank you to Moyra for organising regular tuning & maintenance; the organ is certainly in better condition now than when I arrived. The Walker organ is a versatile instrument, with a very good mechanical action; wonderful for learning & teaching, and ideal for weekly services. In its current condition the organ could continue for some-time, years perhaps, but we ought to look at a refurbishment now, so that we're prepared for the future."

In that vein, sadly our piano of around 100 years came to the end of its life in August. Since then, the PCC has decided to replace it permanently with a digital alternative.

Adult Choir

Numbers in the adult choir have once again increased. I believe that this has helped to improve the sound of the choir, 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 have had Mark Bautista and Andrea Manuel continue with us in scholarship roles this year, alongside Emmylou and Anna once again before they head off to university. I remain grateful to these four excellent singers who have contributed so much to musical life at St Leonard's over the last year.

Congratulations must go to Mark, who leaves us at Easter to take up a place in the Glyndebourne Opera 2023 Festival. We will be sorry to lose him but wish him all the best for his future career.

Choristers

The numbers in our chorister section have remained consistent, and I am pleased that we have welcomed six new choristers in Year 3 into our choir throughout the year. Over the course of the year, eight choristers were awarded their surplices and eight senior choristers were awarded 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 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.

We continue to offer a 'Changing Voices' section for our choristers, which is ably led by our senior choral scholar, Mark. There are currently two boys being supported in singing through the voice change, and I am sure they will be in the vanguard of male chorister vocal development at St Leonard's over the coming years. Sadly, when Mark leaves us at Easter, we will not be able to continue

offering this section, but all boys with changing voices, and some of our senior girls, will be invited to sing with the adult choir in a phased capacity.

As ever, my thanks go to Travis for his playing and to Mary for her assistance with our choristers.

Calum Fraser, Director of Music

OPEN THE BOOK REPORT

Open the Book continues to flourish. Our stories this year include Joseph – the Dreamer, Joseph – the Ruler, the Baby in the Bulrushes, and the dramatic opening of the Red Sea, enabling the Hebrews to escape Pharaoh’s cruel regime. Last week was of Moses leading the Hebrews through the wilderness to the Promised Land. Next time, it will be the Easter Story.

In an effort to link our stories into the RE curriculum, we have had a lot of support from the RE Co-ordinator. This is a new development for us and one we appreciate. We were invited to the school and the church for their Christmas performances and they “borrowed” our Donkey for their production. Our stories are always received with much enthusiasm by our young (4-7years) audience. They love dressing up and being “on stage”. And by increasing the opportunities for the whole group to participate makes for the involvement of many more.

I was gratified recently when an 11 year old boy recognised me as an OTB player. After the Children’s church session ended we had an interesting conversation where he showed he remembered a great deal of what had taken place, in his younger days. Our hope is that our stories will make a difference to many of these children.

Pat Aggarwal

PRAYER REQUEST REPORT

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

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

Pulse has had a great year! We have 26 young people aged between 10 and 17 on our register, and the majority of them come each time. We meet every Friday evening during term time for games, fun, food and learning about our faith.

We have 4 young people who have been Pulse members for a few years, and are now in the 6th form at school. We have given these young people the role of 'Junior Leaders' and they sometimes take on tasks such as planning games for the whole group, and are very helpful with setting up and packing down.

We had a great joint social event with Freedom Club last summer when we all joined together for a Beetle Drive. Much fun was had by all ages!

We had a wonderful weekend away again last July when we returned to Hoppers. We plan to repeat this again this year.

Pulse took over the running of the 10am All Age Service at the beginning of March. We had 20 young people involved in all aspects of running the service – sides duty, coffee, sermon, deacon, reading and prayers!

We have 3 young people currently volunteering at Pulse as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award.

We are so grateful for the fantastic team of leaders who make Pulse happen week after week.

Nick & Rachel Turner

RINGERS' REPORT

During the past year we have continued to ring five or six bells most Sunday mornings but seldom have the resources to ring all eight.

In June there was ringing for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, including a quarter peal of Plain Bob Major by ringers from St Leonard's and other towers affiliated to the Surrey Association of Church Bell Ringers and variations on "the Queen's Change" by the local band.

Sadly, the bells were ringing again three months later for Her Majesty's funeral – a rare opportunity to hear the bells fully muffled (bells are rung half-muffled for other funerals and for Remembrance Sunday but fully muffled only for the death of the Sovereign). And St Leonard's bells, like those of Westminster Abbey and over 1000 other churches and Cathedrals, were fitted with "Big Wilf's Bell Muffles" made here in Streatham.

You may have heard of "Ring for the King", a campaign to recruit new ringers to ring for the Coronation. The response locally has been encouraging – three applicants have been sent to us and Mitcham parish church have more than they can cope with. We are always happy to welcome new recruits – and especially lapsed ringers. If you would like to learn (although by the time you read this it may be a little late for the Coronation) 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

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The work of St Leonard's safeguarding officers, Sue Heeley and Marion Gray quietly continues through the year. Appointed by the PCC and working closely with the Rector we try to ensure the safety of all, whatever their age or vulnerability, who access our church and participate in the many activities throughout the year.

Each Diocese of the C of E has been independently audited in respect of safeguarding and indeed, at parish levels we have been required to conduct our own self-audits and anticipate this to continue. There are also various committees constantly updating safeguarding policies and guidelines which will continue long into the future so it is a constantly changing picture

The Diocesan Policies are to be found in the various Church of England documents and in particular 'A Safe Church' which encompasses same and has been adopted by the PCC. This sets out in detail the policies to ensure the safety of all and during the past couple of years has and continues to be updated. . Recently this has involved a substantial change to the records and forms we keep to come in line with current best practice for Data Protection To assist Bishop Christopher, the Diocese has a small but very effective Safeguarding Advisory Team.

During the past year numbers of young people actively involved in the life of our church has continued to grow, through their contributions to toddler church, crèche, children's church, youth group, junior choir, as servers, Taize Service and much more. Their safety is of the highest priority and all adults responsible for leading or supervising are recruited following our safeguarding policy and procedures.

Having covered young people, many others are involved in the life of our church are vulnerable and Marion has focused on ensuring we are aware of these adults and afford to them, the same protection we give to our younger members. Those visiting the housebound or involved in the leadership of groups and events for older people are subject to safeguarding procedures and guidelines as contained in the Diocesan policies.

In order to maintain and enhance our safeguarding procedure we have developed our data base (similar to the single central register in schools), which has allowed

to establish a rolling programme of regular DBS checks for all members of the church family who undertake specific roles with regard to young people or vulnerable adults. This means that several established groups have been rechecked.

We feel sure St. Leonard's is a safe church and that it will continue to remain so but, that can only be achieved with the assistance of all members of the church family being actively aware of safeguarding and if concerns arise, speaking with Anna, Sue or Marion.

Lastly, we would like to remind everyone that all safeguarding policies can be easily accessed through the church web-site together with contact details for Sue or Marion and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers. We end by expressing grateful thanks for the help given by many to each of us throughout the past year.

Sue Heeley and Marion Gray

SERVERS REPORT

My thanks again go to all the team for their continued commitment to this activity at St Leonard's. We have recently welcomed Dominic and Teo into the fold, thus the team is currently very adequately staffed. We are very much aware that there is a busy period ahead, and I express my gratitude for everybody's dedication as these times.

My thanks also go to those who work so assiduously behind the chancel scenes (the "unsung heroes"): to Monica for laundering the linen, to Patricia for polishing the brass, to Sue and Mary for carrying out any necessary repairs to Altar frontals and to our robes, and to Caroline who has recently taken on the onus of laundering our robes for festival services, following Ann Morisy's sad and tragic accident last year.

Gill Tomlinson

SPACE TO BE

Space to Be finished running its one hour gatherings, both online and at St Leonards, in December. Many thanks to everyone who joined with me at Space to Be over the past three years.

I always felt very privileged to be entrusted with the key to the Church. I cannot adequately express my thanks to St Leonards for supporting this exploration of contemplative prayer and inner stillness.

Peter Johnson

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:

- Georgene F Jergensen of Florida in the USA concerning the baptism and burial of members of the Stockly family of Streatham in the early 1600s.
- Rory OGrady, who was married in St Leonard's Church in 1956 and died in a plane crash in Italy in 1958.
- Sarah Harber concerning the possible marriage of her grandparents at St Leonard's Church in 1947.
- John Tasker from Australia concerning his great grandfather, Revd. William Tasker, who was curate of St Leonard's Church from March 1888 to 1904.
- Charles Bovill in connection with John and William Bovill who lived in Balham and Upper Tooting in the parish of Streatham in the 18th and 19th centuries and whose family have a vault in the crypt of St. Leonard's church.
- Pam Bigelow of the USA concerning her distant relative, John Howland, who was related to the Howlands of Streatham, who were Lords of the Manor of Streatham and Tooting Bec between 1599-1695, and whose great nephew is remembered in the magnificent monument on the north wall of the tower of our church.
- Alan Vale concerning the burial in our graveyard of Martha Botley, aged 55, on 10th December 1815.
- Richard Edgcombe, former curator of jewellery at the V&A Museum, concerning Crown Jeweller Joseph Kitching, who was buried in our churchyard in 1861. Joseph's father, William Kitching, was the publican of the Horse and Groom in Streatham. Joseph, a partner in the firm of Kitching and Abud, made Queen Victoria's sapphire and diamond coronet in 1840-1842 referred to by the Queen as 'my beautiful sapphires'. Two well-known portraits of Queen Victoria, one by Franz Xaver Winterhalter in 1842 and the other by Henry Richard Graves in 1874, show the Queen wearing the coronet. Also interred in our churchyard is Robert Garrard, who was also

Crown Jeweller to Queen Victoria. I would think it unique that our graveyard is the final resting place of two Crown Jewellers as well as the Queen's confidant and friend, Sir Arthur Helps, who was clerk to the Privy Council and was asked by the Queen to revise Prince Albert's speeches for publication, He also edited the Queen's Highland Journal which was published in 1868.

- Brenda Van Keeken of Holland in connection with the marriage of her grandparents, Elsie Tomlinson and Christiaan Kieft at St Leonard's Church in 1922. Elsie's father, Thomas, represented Christiaan's father in the UK operating a Dutch Bulb business from his home at 110 Sunnyhill Road and a large bulb warehouse at 12 Shrubbery Road subsequently developed with housing as Nicholls Mews, named after a former Rector of Streatham. At the height of Tomlinson's operations in Streatham he was processing orders for over 20 million bulbs a year. The firm subsequently moved to larger premises in Norwich in 1973.
- Keith Bartlett concerning the marriage of his great, great, grandparents, William and Jane Bartlett, at St Leonard's church in 1855.
- Joe Hart concerning the family of James and Rebecca Hart who resided in Streatham in the late 18th and early 19th century, eight members of which were buried in our churchyard.

On behalf of the Streatham Society, a tour of the church, crypt and bell tower was undertaken as part of the Wandsworth Heritage Festival held in June 2022.

Tours of the crypt were also given to the St Leonard's Church Wednesday Luncheon Club and members of the Streatham Women's Institute in June 2022.

On behalf of the Streatham Society, a tour of the church, crypt and bell tower was undertaken as part of the Lambeth Heritage Festival held in September 2021.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Victor McGill for his litter picking duties each Monday and for all he does to help keep the churchyard tidy and free from litter. I am also grateful to the many others who have toiled in the churchyard together with members of the Eco church group who have made such a magnificent contribution in enhancing the graveyard with plantings and nature friendly developments. 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, Church Archivist

ST LEONARD'S CHURCHYARD CARE

We're very grateful to Ali Angus for all the effort she put into her Eco Church post. Its results can already be seen all round the churchyard. After Ali's post came to an end, Stephanie took over part of her role as the link to Lambeth Parks, who are responsible for looking after the churchyard, although we still own it. We heard from them in November about Bulbs for London, an annual scheme where the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association together with Taylors Bulbs of Holbeach offer a lucky dip - first come, first served - of about 400 mixed spring bulbs for planting in public parks, gardens etc. across the London boroughs. We applied straightaway and were one of the lucky ones, but the timing was challenging. We were supposed to get them all planted before Christmas, but when they arrived at the end of November we were in the grip of a long spell of severe weather with hard frosts. But with the help of half a dozen heroic volunteers we managed to plant them all in time - mostly near the paths and gates, so that as many people as possible will be able to enjoy seeing them.

We continue to enjoy gardening / working party days throughout the year and this year our special thanks go to those who have 'sponsored a planter' to help bring some extra color and joy to the church yard.

Arthur Norman-Walker and Stephanie Bradley

ST LEONARD'S SCHOOL GOVERNORS

I succeeded Jason Aspell as Chair of Governors just in time to witness the school retain its 'outstanding' Ofsted rating. This was a wholly merited and timely affirmation of the continuing excellence of the educational experience provided by the Head Teacher and staff. The governors also received a welcome Ofsted nod for their commitment and knowledge of the school.

While the core of the governing body remains in place, we have welcomed two new appointees in Heidi Malaure and Laurence Fletcher and are hoping to fill the two remaining vacancies shortly. Sadly, we lost Susie Stubbs who moved to another part of the country. The Board remains a very strong body, with impressive experience and knowledge at its disposal. Apart from the myriad challenges facing any school in this environment, we are particularly focused this year on the issue of Inclusion & Diversity.

On behalf of the governors, I would like to thank Simon Jackson and his staff for their sterling work at St Leonard's and for their forbearance in accommodating their new Chair.

David Herbert (Chair of Governors)

TAIZÉ REPORT

The monthly Taizé services have continued over the last year. The services are on the second Sunday of each month (except August) at 6.30pm and are a quiet and contemplative hour, following the format of chants and silence from the Taizé community in France. The planning group continues to be in regular contact to set up and clear the space on the service evenings. There is less need for regular planning now as we are gifted with having the large bank of services that we have created over the last ten years. Usually, we use a reading of the day as the central inspiration for the liturgy. Our Taizé congregation is now in person only as we made the decision to cease the live-stream last summer since very few people needed this format.

We are blessed to have the skillful playing of several musicians including a cellist, flautist, clarinetists and a young man on the new digital piano. 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 people, we are also delighted to see new faces every month, many who have found out about the service through friends, local churches and social media contacts. For a second year running, the Taize service was transferred to Palm Sunday in the last week of Lent and we created an impromptu Stations of the Cross in the centre of the church for meditation.

Julie McCann and the Taizé Team

TODDLER CHURCH REPORT

St Leonard's continues to echo to the sounds of around 25-30 (plus) enthusiastic toddlers and babies every term-time Monday from 10.30 to about 11.45, with at least one carer each – mums, dads, grandparents, childminders, aunts, and neighbours. The children rush into the building and are mostly enthusiastic and noisy participants in the fast-moving pattern of the hour. Toddler Church continues to grow in both numbers and noise!

We have the same pattern of service every week, beginning with the joy of the Wiggle song, quietening down in awe for the lighting of the candle, our welcome songs and then the story, still using the cardboard figures and paper backdrops developed during Covid and now used 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 mic to suggest things to pray for (chocolate cake! mummies! spiders! and the inevitable unicorn or two). 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 clearing up the resulting toy soup at the end. There is a real sense of a growing community amongst the adults attending and support for each other when there are occasions for joy and finding solace in those Monday friendships when there are challenges in the day.

The team runs all this like a well-oiled machine: 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, me telling the story and the whole thing led by Anna and Hayley, both of whose enthusiasm and positivity remains undimmed. And it is a delight that we have been joined by one of the mums, Claire, who brings equal energy (and fabulous singing) to our time at Toddler Church. Hayley will miss us when she’s gone, and we will miss her too.

Elizabeth Ridout.

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.

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.

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

4. Care of Creation

We want to be active in responding to the cause's effects of Climate change.

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