

ST PAUL'S CHURCH



REVIEW OF THE YEAR

2020

THE VICAR'S REPORT

Dear friends,

What have we achieved over the past year?

What a year it has been, a year of lockdowns and of struggle, of restrictions and of isolation. But thanks be to God, it is beginning to feel as if the end is in sight.

But for those of us in St Paul's it has been a strange year.

Firstly, let me acknowledge that what has been done over the past year has, of course, been imperfect. I guess we have all struggled in various ways and that has been reflected in the activities run by the church. So, I do apologise for some shaky videos, for some dodgy sound, and for those who have not been phoned.

However, there have been some real successes, I think. In particular:

- The online services: These have been appreciated by many and have reached beyond our normal congregation. I thank God for the technology that has made this possible. But I am also thankful that this has been a real expression of the fact that we are still the people of God here in Hook.
- The Bible Reading Notes: These were circulated for around six months of 'lockdown' and I know that they were appreciated by many. If you miss them, perhaps you should do what I have done and order some Bible reading notes. I've just ordered mine from Scripture Union.
- The Buddy Groups: Obviously, these are imperfect but 72 people are currently in 'Buddy Groups'. If you are in a group, please take this as a prompt to ring your fellow group members. Jesus said that we should 'Love one another' (John 13 v34); it is a joint communal responsibility.
- The Church Office & Notices: The office has remained open and Joanne has continued to produce our weekly notices, a key link uniting us together and keeping us informed.

- Church opening for Private Prayer: This has been much valued by a number of people and helps us to remember that we are a community.

Hope for the future

Having not fully celebrated Easter last year, I am delighted that this year the church will be open for worship and for the celebration of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, on Good Friday, the Church will be open from 12 noon until 3pm. Allowing for the time difference between us and Jerusalem this is, of course, the three hours that Jesus spent on the Cross (from 9am until 12 noon). You can come and go at any time in the three hours.

On Easter Day, we will celebrate the resurrection in Church (but also on Zoom for those who can't attend) with a 10am Easter Celebration and Eucharist. Jesus is the giver of new life and new hope, and he points us to a blessed future.

So, thank you for your patience and persistence over the past year. As we approach Easter together may we receive his love and hope, and of course share it with others.

With love in Christ.

Luke



FROM THE TEAM RECTOR:

THIS Team Matters

*Trusting in the Father, Honouring the Son,
Serving in the Spirit*

When I started out writing this review, I wrote 'As with most submissions, for our churches' Annual Reports I am guessing that what we are able to say is severely limited by all that was 2020. But having looked back over the year I realise that is just not accurate!

Fuel – our group for young people across the Team goes from strength to strength both under the great leadership of Jen Houghton and Simon Rowe and as a result of the young people's fantastic enthusiasm and energy and the growing sense of friendship and commitment within the group. It has been meeting on Zoom over most of 2020 and to get a flavour, here are a few comments from the parents' WhatsApp group:

*[] just said it was good, which at the moment is very high praise'.
'My son [] loved it'
'Thank you [] really enjoyed it'*

At such a difficult time for young people anything which builds them up is great and Fuel certainly is living up to its name!

On 02.02.2020 we shared our annual Team Service at St Paul's on the theme of 'All-Age Church - everyone's important ' as we also celebrated Candlemas. We had other joint services too: Ash Wednesday at St George's and then online for Ascension Day. This service kick started our THIS Team response to 'Thy Kingdom Come' for 2020 which involved nightly Zoom Calls and the welcome involvement of a number of different people from across the Team leading those sessions.

While our churches were in lockdown initially, the different churches responded in different ways in order to support congregation members. From April we pooled efforts so the clergy began to produce printed daily Bible Study Notes and at the beginning of August we joined together to offer pre-

recorded Daily Worship across the week on our newly established THiS Team YouTube Channel.

However, my personal THiS Team highlight has been our regular team clergy Zoom calls. Originally weekly but now fortnightly, we have shared the many up and downs of ministry in 2020 and found in one another a constant source of friendship, support, love, humour, acceptance and faithfulness to our callings and the gospel.

Life in ministry would have been much harder without each other.



So, I am indebted to Carolyn, David and Luke over this last year but also to Joanne, Julie and Phil who have worked through the difficulties of working from home and all the complications which we have all faced with characteristic efficiency, generosity of spirit and good humour. I know they and the clergy have also been supported by our churchwardens variously across the year Graham, Jackie, Ken, Mike, Paul, Pauline and Rachel.

Thank you to them and thank you to you and of course . . .

Thanks be to the Lord God Almighty who was and is and is to come. Amen.

Rev Helen Hancock

BAPTISMS 2020



We were able to hold baptism services on just two Sundays during 2020 and welcomed the following to baptism: Andrew, Oscar, Bertie, Imogen and Ayvah.

CATERING TEAM

The Patronal Festival lunch was held in the Parish Hall and was well attended, including some friends from St Mary's, Chiddingfold. It is always a very social occasion, especially for those who are on their own.

I would like to thank the committee who helped organise the event, Carole, Prue, Mary, Gill, Marlene and Alison, and those who helped on the day. Sadly, Val passed away and is greatly missed by us all.

Refreshments are served after the 10am Thursday Communion Service and during the first three months before lockdown, we raised £93.60 from our raffles. Thank you to everyone on the rota and those who donate raffle prizes.

Diane Tink, Verger

THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

**The
Children's
Society**

**No child
should feel
alone**

Due to Covid-19, we needed to change the format of the main fundraising event this year; but we were able to open most boxes on Saturday 24th October 2020 at St Paul's Centre.

The boxes are usually full of small change, but with so many restrictions in place during the year, a far smaller amount of cash was counted. We were, however, pleased to find that our kind supporters had topped up their boxes with notes instead, which made counting a much quicker process this year! The usual refreshments, including lunch, and raffle could not be offered this year, but Sue Craig kindly donated the profits from her sale of Christmas cards in church to the Children's Society.

The Children's Society, along with all charities, have seen a huge fall in donations from fundraising this year. So, we were delighted to be able to send them £1,821.84 collected from the boxes and £145 from the sale of cards and donations, making the total raised a whopping £1,966.84! The box money was up by £243 on last year's total, so a huge thank you to every one of our supporters.

If anyone else would like to help us raise funds for The Children's Society, please speak to Graham and Jill Cocks and they will let you have a box to start collecting in.

Sarah (Earl), Vanessa (Kearns) & Nigel Ling

CHURCHWARDENS

2020 was an extremely testing year. The first Covid-19 lockdown in March meant that the church was closed for both services and private prayer. During this time, we drew up risk assessments and brought in measures to ensure that the church was Covid secure and compliant with Government and Diocese regulations, ready for the time we were able to reopen. We were allowed to open firstly for private prayer only and then were able to provide collective worship again from August, albeit without singing and with restricted capacity. However, we were blessed that this allowed us to hold our Christmas services before the lockdown returned.

The closure of church premises and the curtailment of services has had a severe impact on our finances. This has meant that we have put on hold our plans to replace the audio/visual equipment in the short term. We already have donations for part of the cost and hope to move ahead as soon as normality returns.

During 2020 we have completed the redecoration of the Mary Wise Room and lobby entrance, replaced the external notice boards and have renovated the lychgates, the wooden surround to the Jubilee Memorial Garden, the gates to the old Memorial Garden and all the benches. Sadly, there was a disappointing response to my search for volunteers, so there remains to redecorate the office, to repair the church pew feet and to repair the brick pillar by the lychgates, which will require professional attention.

Later this year we are due our Quinquennial inspection by the Diocesan architect, which will almost certainly produce more work!

I should like to thank all those who have helped and supported me this year in maintaining the church and churchyard and in my other duties.

Finally, the coming year will be my final year as Churchwarden. Normally we should have two Churchwardens. I would encourage you to consider standing at the APCM this year to work alongside me and ensure a smooth handover in 2022.

Graham Cocks, Church Warden

CHURCHYARD & GARDENS

Due to the lockdown last summer causing the church to be closed, the opportunity was taken to do some inside jobs. Brian made good the walls where the old wiring had been removed. The centre/Mary Wise room has been decorated, and the woodwork and doors have been treated by Graham. The rain water ingress into the ceiling of the kitchen has been repaired after some detective work by Graham and myself to find the source on the roof. This was repaired by a roofing contractor.

In the churchyard, the four wooden bench seats have been treated with the appropriate covering by Madeline and her husband David. The lychgate has also been treated by Graham. Down at the far end of the churchyard, the wood around the Jubilee Memorial garden had rotted away, so new wooden sleepers have been put in. The grid reference letters and numbers have been refurbished by myself. The grass in our much-admired churchyard is kept under control by Graham, Ben and Phil. Gary came along with his strimmer and went round the perimeter of the churchyard. The graves have had the attention of Maggie, Sue and myself. There is always plenty to keep me occupied in the garden/borders keeping them tidy, pruning and dead heading over 50 roses.

Thank you to all who have given their time to help keep the church and grounds looking good.

David Freeman

DEANERY SYNOD

There were three meetings of Deanery Synod during 2020 – all ably chaired by the Area Dean, Rev Robert Stanier and the Lay chair, John Dewhurst.

The first meeting in early March was held at St Mark's and included consideration of the new Deanery Mission Action plan, looking in particular on that occasion at one of the priorities highlighted for the plan which was supporting schools in the deanery. Then and since Synod has received updates on the new Kingston Voluntary Aided Secondary School which is now really taking shape.

On 16 June we met on Zoom with homelessness (another MAP priority) being the focus of attention. A report was also received from Christians Against Poverty who asked for prayer for those in debt, volunteers to become befrienders and for financial support for the organisation based locally at St John's New Malden.

A part of the meeting was set aside to mark with gratitude the life and ministry of Rev Peter Holmes who had died from Covid in April. Peter was anticipating retiring from being Vicar of St Paul's Norbiton last August. During his long ministry at St Peter's, he had been foundational in the establishment of the Joel Project. His loss to his family, congregation and the wider community was a great blow and he was remembered by the meeting with thanks and love.

Feeling more at home with the technology, our second Deanery Synod meeting on Zoom took place on 13 October. The main business was to adopt a new constitution for the Synod and the meeting also provided a forum for a catch up on how local Anglican churches were coping in the pandemic and their experiences positive, negative and surprising! There was no shortage of things to discuss!

Since APCMs were delayed until late in October, new Deanery Synod Representatives had not been voted in time for that meeting. However, they will be able to attend their first meeting in early February. Thanks go to our previous reps – Sue Fry, Pam Ingram and Ian Reid for being in service for their full three-year term (and just a little bit over!). Our current reps are Prue

MacPherson, who continues her service, and Sue Russell. We also have two vacancies and if you would like to join, please speak to Luke.

Helen Hancock, Deanery Synod member

ELECTORAL ROLL

"The Church Electoral Roll is the official membership list of the Church of England" and is updated annually.

This year we have been unable to meet in the church building and worship in the usual way because of the coronavirus lockdown restrictions.

There are no additions to the roll this year, but there are two deletions.

Sadly, Peter Roe, who worshipped at St Paul's for many years has passed away. We shall miss him, but remember him with our love.

Bill Dixon, our much-loved Server, has moved to Exeter and we wish him much happiness in his new home.

The Electoral Roll for 2021 contains 121.

(Application forms for new members to join the Roll are available at the back of the church and can be returned to the Parish Office. New names may be added at any time. Thank you)

I present the Church Electoral Roll of St Paul's at Hook with Southborough for 2021.

Marlene Whitlock, Church Electoral Roll Officer

HOOK & SOUTHBOROUGH PARISH HALL



The Parish Hall is located 300 metres up the road from St Paul's Church. It is a large hall that is widely used during the week by many different groups within our community – Hook Pre-School, Pilates, Rainbows, Guides, Kumon, Line Dancing, Women's Institute, Tai Chi, Games Club and St Paul's

Players. At the weekends it is used mainly by families for children's parties and also for fundraising events by both St Paul's Church and other charities. We allow these charities to use the hall for free in our attempt to 'give something back' to the community.....well, this is the usual opening statement but as we know this year has been very different. We started the year as above and all was going well, when COVID19 changed all this. We have abided by government guidance at all times and have managed to keep the hall open for Pre-School, who are the only hirer currently allowed to use the facility. This actually makes compliance with government guidance simpler as we have only one user. We did briefly open to a few users in the summer, when guidance allowed, and cleaning measures were put in place to accommodate this.

With regards to the upkeep of the hall, we re-invest the funds from the hire of the hall back into maintaining and improving the facilities. Works have obviously been quiet this year as we consolidate the accounts and reduce expenditure. That said we have erected a new sign board. In addition, we have been looking at the annexe. This had a new roof a few years ago, and we have taken the opportunity of someone on furlough to strip this out and insulate the walls / roof for potential hiring out. The structure, whilst at least 50 years old, was very sound. There were some areas of rot that we caught just in time so here's looking at the next 50 years...

In addition, during the summer, we carried out some 'housekeeping' maintenance work in the hall that included redecorating – we could not have our workday this year

We have a programme of improvements lined up for future years which include:

- Kitchen cooker & dishwasher to allow for larger hall functions
- new front doors
- replacing windows not already replaced
- Toilet remodels
- new flooring (long term goal)

the list goes on..... If you have any ideas you would like us to consider, please let the Parish Hall Committee know.

The committee gives its time for free and we still urgently require help to spread the workload, so if you would like to come and join the Parish Hall Committee please contact: Ian Reid, Izzy Burton, Sue Russell, Julia Bradley or Steve Griffiths. Thanks to all that help here. We could also do with the help of a handy man / afternoon cleaner to assist with the small jobs that we would pay for – we have someone on furlough doing this now but this is a short-term measure (hopefully !!). As we are hiring out to external users, we have to keep the hall in good working order – can you help here or recommend anyone?

We are unlikely to have a workday this year but when allowed we will look to do this.

If you would like to book the hall, please contact the Parish Office on 020 8391 2362 or email: premises@stpaulschurchhook.org.uk

Steve Griffiths, Parish Hall Committee

LINK PARISH – ST MARY’S CHIDDINGFOLD



St. Mary's Church
Chiddingfold

Luke Wickings

St Mary's Chiddingfold and St Paul's have shared a link of friendship for a number of years, and we are grateful to God for bringing us together.

Obviously, our link with St Mary's has been 'at a distance' over the past year, but we look forward to renewing and refreshing it in the coming year. In the meantime, we keep each other in our prayers.

ST PAUL'S HOOK, MOTHERS' UNION



St Paul's Hook Mothers' Union usually meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month from 10.30am to 12 noon in the

Mary Wise Room at the Church with coffee served from 10am: Our meetings open and close with prayers.

Unfortunately, we only had our first three meetings of 2020 due to the coronavirus lockdown. Despite this, we did manage to arrange three services in Church between the lockdowns while abiding by the rules of safe distancing, wearing masks, etc. These were well attended and enjoyed by all who came.

When the coronavirus lockdown is over and we are told we can all meet together again, we have a list of interesting speakers lined up. We will also start our knit and natter group again. This meets on a Monday afternoon from 2pm-4pm making items for Kingston hospital's 'Born too Soon' unit and an orphanage in Malawi.

Mothers' Union is open to anyone who is a baptised member of the church. It has a worldwide membership of four million working to strengthen family life. All are welcome to our meetings.

For further information, please contact Branch Leader Carole Noakes.
Carole Noakes (Tel No: 020 8397 1558)

PARISH OFFICE

The St Paul's Parish Office is open Monday through to Thursday from 9am to 12.30pm, term time only. Joanne Griffiths is the Parish Administrator.

The office deals with all enquiries, weddings, baptisms, funerals; etc., keeps the congregation informed via the notices and email of what is happening within the Church and provides the necessary service sheets for all the different types of services we have within church.

The Administrator is sometimes the first point of contact for anyone coming to or making enquiries about the church. The office also deals with and looks after all the Parish Hall and Mary Wise Room lettings.

Joanne Griffiths

PASTORAL TEAM

Normally, this group meet roughly every six weeks, however a number of members of this group have moved on and, of course, we have not been able to meet physically for the past year. If you feel that you could pray for people, phone or visit people, and love them, then perhaps you could join this important team. As soon as it is possible to do so we will re-start this team and its vital work.

Luke Wickings

PRAYER CHAIN

The Prayer Chain is compiled through emailing Mary Reid and she passes the messages around to members of the prayer team. She tries to give updates on situations when she can. We have been told by others that the power of prayer has worked and it is a comfort to have others praying for them.

Luke Wickings

SAFEGUARDING

The Parochial Church Council of St Paul's along with the Vicar carries a duty of care for the safety of those who attend or use our church premises. There is a statutory legal duty to pay "due regard to the guidance issued by the House of Bishops on matters relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults."

A hard copy of 'A Safe Church' can be found at the back of the church and via the Southwark Diocesan website:

<https://southwark.anglican.org/safeguarding/diocesan-policies-and-procedures>

A link to this guidance can be found via the Parish website.

Any queries or concerns you may have should be addressed in confidence to Luke Wickings, Vicar or Sue Russell, Parish Safeguarding Officer. Email and telephone numbers can be found on the Safeguarding posters around church, which also carry details of key helplines.

Sue Russell, Safeguarding Officer

SERVERS / SACRISTAN

After our Sacristan, Graham Robini, was married in October 2019, he went on a long sabbatical and we (Susan and Jane) covered his duties. From then until March 2020, Claire, Bill, Susan and Jane served for Eucharist as usual. After lockdown, on the few Sundays the church was allowed to open in 2020, Susan and Jane covered the servers' rota. Even when the church was closed, the altar was dressed for the appropriate liturgical season and the candles filled for Luke to record online services.

Bill Dixon had been a server at St. Paul's for nearly twenty years, and served at nearly every Thursday Morning's Eucharist. He continued to do so until December when he decided to move to Exeter to live nearer to his son. We will really miss Bill and thank him for his loyal service to St Paul's.

Susan Hodgson & Jane Greenfield-Sacristan & Servers

ST PAUL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL



St Paul's School is, of course, our link Primary School and I would ask you please to pray for them.

The leadership team and the staff have done an amazing job over 'lockdown'. They have produced excellent home-learning resources whilst also providing quality learning for those pupils who were still in school.

They have also engaged with the school community with video messages, newsletters, online reading and even a cookery club!

Now, of course, the pupils are all back in school and they are handling the fresh challenges that brings.

We have an excellent school that provide high quality education and more for our local families.

I have now restarted going into school for my weekly Collective Worship which is a joy. We are now working through 1 Corinthians 13 and thinking about what real love means in practice.

St Paul's is officially a 'Good' School as assessed by OFSTED and we can be very proud of all that they offer to our community. The leadership and the staff deserve great credit.

Luke Wickings, Chair of Governors

SATURDAY STALL

This, like most other things, became a victim of the Covid lockdown. However, when church re-opened for private prayer permission was gained to locate a table at the rear of the church.

At the time we had quite a stock of produce so it was displayed and a container put on the table for voluntary contributions, negating the need for anybody to handle money.

Over the months the supply has been replenished with marmalade made by Joyce Parfitt and various jams by Madeline Child.

If you would like to make marmalade, jams, chutneys for the stall it would be most welcome. I am also happy to receive 'spare produce' as the summer and autumn crops arrive.

Currently there are no plans to resume the external stall manned by volunteers but as the Covid situation changes this will be reviewed.

Sue Russell

STUDY GROUPS

Reading the Bible Together: Monday mornings 10.30am to 12 noon

These sessions have usually been at Ann and Christopher's, 36a Hunter's Road, Hook, though on occasions Prue has hosted the group at her house.

We started 2020 meeting as usual, having coffee and chat commence from 10.30am, then starting with prayer at 11am remembering the needs of people we know and asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. At this time, we studied the Epistle to the Ephesians. Then in March came Lockdown until August when we resumed our meetings to study Romans then the Book of Job. Then that changed to having two groups to comply with the rule of six. As things kept changing, we started to think of having meetings on Zoom. We are very grateful to Sue Fry for hosting the Zoom meetings and to Emma for setting things up. Gradually we have all got used to this arrangement. We have read through the books of Ruth and Esther. During Advent we studied passages from Isaiah, then just before Christmas read St Luke Chapters 1 and 2. There have been nine of us, sometimes ten. This arrangement has been good for us but we look forward to the time we can meet together again.

The group decide what they would like to do next. No preparation or previous knowledge required. Everyone is welcome.

Contact Ann Fernihough (020 8397 5954)

E-mail fernihough443@btinternet.com

Ann Fernihough

Wednesday evenings Bible Study at 8.00pm on Zoom!

It has been a real blessing to keep meeting, albeit via Zoom, throughout this lockdown period. We have just finished working our way through the whole book of Acts, which was fascinating and very spiritually rewarding. It even included one special study using the main Church window as our focus.

Our meeting is a time for fellowship, for chat and for Bible study. Then we end by sharing our prayer needs and we pray for each other during the week.

If you would like to join this Bible study group, please contact Luke.

Luke Wickings

TECHNOLOGY

We've had two comprehensive quotes for renewing the church AV equipment and we were just about to obtain a third one when the first lockdown happened. Any work on this has been suspended while we wait to see how our finances pan out.

To help with Covid infection control, we have put everything on the screens rather than use the worship books. We have also been able to use what we have for playing in worship videos. We are grateful to the people who have become involved in helping all this to happen. Luke has also been producing much devotional material single-handedly which he has edited and uploaded to YouTube, Facebook and the church website. This has been a considerable achievement.

Some churches have been able to livestream their services. Our broadband connection presently isn't fast enough to do this. Also, for it to be engaging, we'd need more equipment. We'd also need people to produce material, and operate the equipment. At the time of writing (mid-February), we are experimenting with worship using Zoom. Things are still evolving in this area.

I wouldn't want to see the church rushing back into replicating exactly how we were pre-Covid 19. Whilst there was much that we loved, the world is different and our congregation has changed. We need to put some thought into how we are relevant to our community. Do we need to look at livestreaming our services? Is it a new mission field? People can get an idea of us before coming physically. They can watch at a time that is convenient for them. People who have difficulty getting to the building can watch from home. But of course, there's the challenge of engaging with them on their faith journey. How do we make it easy for them to reach out to us? Many questions!

Brian Dale

TREASURER'S REPORT

2020 was mainly a year of lockdowns, social distancing, small congregations, masks and hand sanitiser. However, in spite of all that we kept our heads above water in a financial sense, thanks to all of those who kept their bank payments going; some of them increased. Most of those who give by weekly envelopes did their best to bring them when we were allowed to open but of course our church service collections were very much smaller than in other years.

The Centre roof and the heating were repaired in time for our Christmas services. Earlier in the year, the work on the memorial garden was completed and it is now looking neat and tidy. We were also able to purchase smart new notice boards, thanks to two generous donations and our church is looking very good indeed with the lovely gardens surrounding it.

Now we need to build up our diminishing resources. Our bank balance is lower than I have ever known it and unfortunately the audio-visual fund cannot be given priority at the moment as we need general funds for the upkeep of the church.

The collection box remains at the back of the church for your envelopes and donations and if you do not already give regularly, please consider doing so this year. If you pay Income Tax and are able to sign a Gift Aid Form, available at the back of the church, this will increase your contribution by 25% at no extra cost to you. All your contributions are completely confidential.

Thank you for your loyalty to St. Paul's in these difficult times.

Jane Greenfield, PCC Treasurer

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook has proved to be an invaluable resource during the pandemic. Throughout most of the year Luke and Carolyn posted daily prayers on our Facebook page (at www.facebook.com/stpaulschurchhook) with longer services on Sundays. The videos were then uploaded to our website (at www.stpaulschurchhook.co.uk). Facebook has also been an important channel to communicate changes in the timing and style of services.

Later in the year St Paul's joined the THiS team on our new YouTube channel (search for THiS Team Ministry on YouTube) and started to produce joint services which were then posted on Facebook.

Online comments have indicated that these services were much appreciated by church members.

Kirsty Watson (kryan85@sky.com) – Facebook

Mary Reid (mary@maryreid.org.uk) – Website