

ST PAUL'S CHURCH



REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2022

THE VICAR'S REPORT



What is the Church? Well, there are different answers to this question, but it seems to me that the Church can be best understood by reflecting upon our main purposes. The Church is the people of God in a local area (normally) who gather together to worship, to learn, to grow, to celebrate and to witness to the local community.

Let's reflect on the last year and look at each of these in turn.

Worship.

Over the past year we have held 121 different services in our Church, plus interred the ashes of five people, held two funerals, 3 weddings and 4 baptism services. So we have certainly, as a community, worshipped God over the last year. May we do so all the more. God is certainly worthy of our worship and my prayer is that we might truly give glory to him when we meet together and, increasingly, honour him in our lives.

To Learn.

During those 121 services over the past year there have been, of course, 121 sermons, 89 of them preached by me. We also have two Bible study groups running (with thanks to Sue Russell and Ann Fernihough). I have also initiated daily Bible readings, available on Facebook or by email. It is vital that we learn as Christians. Jesus was often called 'Teacher' (for example John 1v38) and, of course, a key part of his ministry was teaching. Jesus told something like 30 parables and in addition gave the sermon on the mount and numerous other sermons during his three-year teaching ministry.

Furthermore, the meaning of the word disciple is to be a learner and a follower. So let us be 'disciples' of Jesus, dedicated to learning more about God, about ourselves, and about our salvation.

To Grow.

Many of Jesus' parables are about growth. The parable of the sower (Matthew 13v1-23) most famously makes it clear that the word of God can be sown, but if it does not grow and bear fruit in our lives it has no real value. So, as Christians, we commit ourselves to growing. That's why our two Bible study groups are important, and it's also why I produce the daily Bible notes. I also try to help us to grow through the preaching. I am of course, very grateful to Ian, Neil, Carolyn and to all others who have preached God's word over the past year.

But, of course, it is significantly up to each one of us how much we grow as Christians. Do we listen to the sermons? Do we allow God's word to take root in our lives and to bear fruit in our lives? Indeed, one of the great Anglican collects, written by Thomas Cranmer, prays as follows:

God of inspiration, you caused all holy scriptures to be written for our instruction, grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast to the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. Amen.

I am struck by the challenge here to 'read, mark learn and inwardly digest' the scriptures. When I first came here, I used to get told off if I preached for over five minutes. Thankfully we have moved on from there. Dear friends, we should love our sermons. They are opportunities to learn and to grow. Let us be hungry to take those opportunities.



Whilst I am on the subject of teaching and learning I must mention the work done at our School. During the past year I have led 43 acts of collective worship and five seasonal school services. The school staff have also led numerous acts of collective worship

and do a wonderful job there.

The aim of all this is to help the young people in our community to worship, to learn, and to grow in faith. And there have been some great encouragements for us. The school choir have begun joining us for worship at some of our key services, increasing the links between Church and school. Furthermore, the Year 6 Faith-Group reps at school are full of faith, and of their own initiative they have started daily prayer every day at the beginning of the afternoon teaching. This is a great example of how faithful teaching to these children is bearing fruit in their lives.

To celebrate:

Of course, at the vast majority of our services we celebrate Holy Communion, and that phrase is appropriate. God has truly blessed us in so many ways, but most importantly in our salvation, won by the broken body and the shed blood of Christ. So, whenever we share Holy Communion, we are indeed celebrating what God has done for us.

Of course, I would love it if the spirit of celebration were more evident in our worship. We are not great singers and, sadly, we have few musicians. I am immensely grateful to John Deacon, but I pray that God might lead more musicians to us. I am reminded that David danced and sang as the Ark was brought into Jerusalem. May we better celebrate all that God has done for us.

To witness to the local community.

Our witness to the community is partly our personal witness, but it is also communal.

Our communal witness includes all of our services but is most significant in the services that we offer to our wider community. These include the Christmas services, Remembrance, the Memorial and thanksgiving services. But also our funerals, baptisms, and the interring of ashes. One of the unique strengths of the Anglican Church is that we are not just here for the 'gathered Christian community', but we also seek to serve the wider community.

We also ran the 'Love won another' course. The aim of this was to better equip ourselves to share our faith with our families, friends and neighbours. This must be a personal priority for all of us as Christians. Indeed, I am always reminded that Jesus said that he came 'to seek and to save the lost' (Luke 19v10). Since this was Jesus' priority, it must be ours as well.

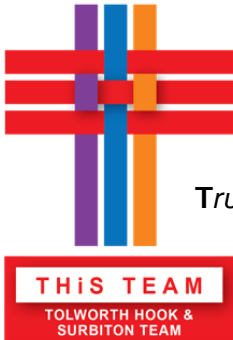
So, dear friends, as I reflect on the past year I see much to celebrate. But I am also aware that we still have a way to go. God's vision is for his Church to be a worshipping community that shines the light of Christ, drawing others into God's Kingdom. So, as God's community here in Hook, let us commit ourselves to fulfilling God's mission and to building his Church.

Thank you to all of you for your partnership in this gospel work.

With love in Him.



Rev Luke Wickings: Vicar



FROM THE TEAM RECTOR:

THiS Team Matters

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

THiS Team Matters

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

As I write this we have just enjoyed our 2023 THiS Team weekend but of course I have to save that until this time next year! So what happened in 2022?

The THiS Team highlight was the Confirmation Service at the end of January when Bishop Richard came and confirmed 19 candidates. Five of these were from elsewhere in the Deanery but from within our own Team we had 8 young people and 6 adults. They had all attended preparation classes which (due to the high numbers) we were able to run as two separate classes one for adults and one for young people. This is part of the prayer which the Bishop said over the candidates:

Let your Holy Spirit rest upon them:

the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; the Spirit of counsel and inward strength;

the Spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and let their delight be in the fear of the Lord.

Whilst we might find it easier if we substitute the word 'awe' or 'reverence' for 'fear' it's a prayer which bears repeating for each one of us.

In February our three PCCs joined together to consider our work with Children and Young People and the possible appointment of a paid worker across the Team. The session was well facilitated by Keli Bolton from the Diocese as we considered how we might resource any

work we wanted to do either as individual churches or together as Team. The discussions were helpful and it was good to hear from each other. After further discussions in the year it was decided that there was not a sufficient identity of focus and priority for the churches to move on this together but it was still a good exercise in building relationships across the Team.

Since we couldn't do an All Together Team Service with everyone crowding into one church (for obvious reasons) instead we did two pulpit swaps over the year in February and October. We have also

teamed up on some festivals like Ash Wednesday.

Even if the churches haven't been able to meet together that regularly, the clergy are, and I think I speak for all of us when I say that that is a great blessing of friendship and support. We were all there to celebrate Nicholas' priesting at All Saints' Kingston in July and that mutual support continued while Helen was on Sabbatical over the



autumn.

The ongoing success story of the Team is Fuel which sadly bid farewell to Jen Houghton as she moved on to start her curacy. Jen started Fuel along with Simon Rowe and together they have shaped the group. So it was a great loss for Fuel to have to wish her farewell. But Simon is continuing to lead, now with Becky Whiting from St George's and we are so grateful to all three leaders past and present for the way in which they are seeking to keep our young people engaged in church with fun and relevant input each month.

The year also saw the last of the Team Walks organised by Dave and Jackie Farris. Offering the opportunity for fresh air, exercise and companionship across the Team several times a year the group met for the last time in November. Hopefully others will be able to think of and organise other ways in which we can come together as THiS Team across the year – all ideas to Helen, Luke, Carolyn or Nicholas please!

Churchwarden's report

2022 got off to a dramatic start when the cherry tree in the churchyard near the main entrance collapsed in the February gales, initially blocking the entrance and damaging the porch structure. A request for help on Facebook brought a tremendous response from both the congregation and Hook residents, including a local tree surgeon. The result was that the tree was cleared in a matter of hours. Damage to the porch included some broken stained glass as well as structural damage, but was usable. Our preferred contractors weren't able to carry out the repairs until Autumn, but the result has been excellent and the cost covered by the Ecclesiastical Insurance Company.



As an addition to the new audio visual system an extra screen has been added in the chancel, facing the altar, for the use of the presiding minister, servers and others in the chancel area.

You are all aware that one of the pillars at the lych gate was damaged by vandals a few years ago. That has now been repaired thanks to Ed He (a congregation member), using recycled bricks, and now looks very smart again.

The overall condition of the church buildings is fairly good, as confirmed in the 2021 Quinquennial Inspection, but we have ongoing concerns with the roof of the St. Paul's Centre, which over the years has had a number of leaks. Repairs have regularly been carried out, but there are currently two suspected leaks which will require attention.

As part of our plans to reduce our carbon footprint and move to a more sustainable system of running the church, an Eco Committee has been set up under the leadership of Graham and Mary Robini. They will be

producing recommendations for the P.C.C., particularly in relation to future power generation and heating systems, but also smaller ways in which we can reduce our damage to the planet.

Finally, having been the sole Churchwarden for the past year, I would like to thank all who have helped me. Hopefully someone will have stood for election as my fellow Churchwarden for the coming year, but if not I would hope that members of the congregation will not be slow to volunteer to step up when help is needed.

Laurel Devadasan.

Servers/Sacristan

Our small team of servers have been busy this past year with services returning to normal, making sure things run smoothly for our regular services as well as the extra services that St Paul's has held. We have also welcomed and supported our visiting clergy.

We are so glad to welcome Graham back as a server, increasing our team to three. There is always room for extra servers, so if you feel you would like to serve God in this way please do come and talk to Jane, Graham or myself and we will be happy to explain a servers duties.

Can I again say a BIG thank you to Jane for covering most of the Thursday services as well as her Sunday services rota. We all feel it is a real privilege to serve God in this role.

Susan Hodgson, Jane Greenfield and Graham Robini- Sacristan and Servers.

Treasurers Report

2022 has been a slightly easier year. We are still sitting partly socially distanced, even though we don't really need to and there is very little hand shaking or hugging in The Peace which is rather sad. At least we are not all wearing masks which made it difficult sometimes to recognise others and severely restricted our welcoming of visitors and new worshippers.

Thanks to many of you, we had a very successful winter fair which raised over £1,300 and donations in our Christmas card box totalled over £200. Both of these helped to augment very necessary funds.

Throughout the year, another welcome source of income is the table with jam, chutney and marmalade in the Mary Wise Room. Do have a look.

I am very pleased to say that our gift aid claims are up to date and dealt with promptly by our new Gift Aid Officer. This has improved our regular income and I am very grateful to those of you who give regularly by whatever method. The card machine at the back of the church has brought in a steady income from those who no longer carry cash. I know that with the cost of living rising; food prices, water rates, energy bills and council tax increasing, we all have to think about how much we pay out but 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 giving to St Paul's by 25% at no extra cost to you. All donations and contributions are completely confidential.



There are a great many familiar faces who, for whatever reason, have not visited our church recently, *please* come back. We need you and this is a very serious problem for St Paul's. Please help us to keep our much loved church open and running in these difficult times.

Jane Greenfield, PCC Treasurer

Baptisms

The baptism families come to be introduced to the congregation on the first Sunday of the month and then again on the third Sunday of the following month to be formally welcomed into the family of the Church and presented with 'My First Bible' and certificates for their baptism and for each of their Godparents.



During 2022 we welcomed the following children to baptism: Nigel Llewelyn-Price, Elle Thompson, Charlie Davies, Benjamin Rennison Hockley, Olivia Guadagno & Halle Brown

Parish Office

The St Paul's Parish Office is open Monday to Thursday 9.30am to 1pm, during term time and is a wonderful role to fill.

The most important element of the job is being a smiling face/friendly voice to all who contact the church as the office deals with all enquiries for the day-to-day running of the church and parish halls together with all the necessary work for services.

Having taken over from Joanne Griffiths earlier this year, it has been a very tough act to follow and I am grateful to Joanne and everyone at Church for making me feel so warmly welcomed and guiding me through the church year.

Kate Shrimpton, Parish Administrator



The Children's Society

The Children's Society This year's Box Opening Day was held on Saturday 22nd October 2022 at St Paul's Centre. The large amount of small change from the boxes was counted and totalled £1937.91, a slight decrease of £21.76 on last year's total. Christmas cards were on sale and there was also a raffle, lunch and refreshments to enjoy. A further £249.72 was sent to The Children's Society from this. If anyone else would like to help us raise funds for The Children's Society, please speak to Graham or Jill Cocks and they will let you have a box to start collecting in. Our support will help change the lives of extremely vulnerable children across the country and shows our love and care for all.

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

Churchyard and Gardens

Unlike the wet summer of 2021, last year's summer was very hot and dry, not good for the plants. At least the grass cutters did not have to cut the grass so often. But the roses carried on putting on a good show.

Down at the far end of the churchyard we had 8 interments in the new Jubilee memorial garden.

There is now a seat overlooking the site, kindly donated by Mr & Mrs Chris Mould in remembrance of their daughter, Rachel.

Thank you to all who helped on the workday and the grass cutters.

David Freeman

Electoral Roll

“The Electoral Roll is the official membership list of the Church of England. Being on the Roll is a statement of intent, to be a fully participating member of St Paul’s, through regular Sunday worship and through your support across the range of Church and Parish life.”

Anyone baptised and over the age of sixteen is entitled to be included if they live in the parish and/or attend the church regularly. Being on the Roll gives the right to vote at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting where elections take place for the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and for the parish’s representatives on the Deanery Synod.

This year there are four additions to the roll and we are delighted to welcome:

Mr William Barker, Mr Peter Hyatt, Mrs Abir Moaso and Miss Michelle Smithers

There are eleven deletions this year for various reasons, some people no longer attend or have moved from the area.

Sadly, Betty Thompson and Joan Boucher have passed away recently.

Betty and Joan had been much loved members of our church family for many years and we are thankful for all they did to enrich our lives at St Paul’s. We shall miss them, but always remember them with love.

The Roll this year contains 110 names and produced 4 additions and 11 deletions.

I wanted to mention Kate Shrimpton the Parish Administrator. This is Kate’s first year dealing with the Parish Review and I wanted to give her my special thanks for her help in preparation of this Electoral Roll.

Marlene Whitlock Church Electoral Roll officer

Jams and Pickles Basket

The produce is displayed on a table in the Mary Wise Room, with an honesty pot for donations.

Any help to make marmalade, jams, chutneys would be most welcome. I am also happy to receive 'spare produce' as the summer and autumn crops arrive.

Thank you to the 'pickled onion' team and others who made produce for the stall at the Winter Fair. Jars of Pickled Onions are still available.

Sue Russell

Sunday Refreshments

It has been lovely to be able to enjoy the benefits of the relaxation of Covid restrictions over the past year. It is good to see a growing number of people feeling able to stay after the 10am service on Sundays to partake of the refreshments in the Mary Wise Room. We feel that it is a stress-free time where individuals can catch up with friends and meet with visitors and new arrivals alike.

We are, as always, grateful to the stalwarts who are an invaluable part of the team. The refreshments they provide are amazing, tasty, home baked (and shop bought) and are a fitting accompaniment to our 'proper' coffee with its often commented on delightful aroma. Tea and cold drinks are also on offer.

We thank those who are prepared to step in and help when we are short staffed. We could not manage without you.

As ever, we are happy to welcome new members to join our merry band if you wish to know more you will find us in the kitchen (or at the table) on Sunday mornings.

Ian and Jane Jarman, Maggie Dowd and Pam Ingram.

Catering Team

We held a wonderful Harvest Festival Lunch in the church with hot food being produced in the vicarage and we were able to be very sociable.

At the All-Soul's Service in November, we had very light refreshments, people were pleased to be made so welcome.

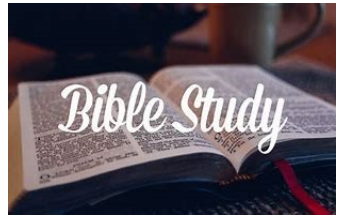
Throughout the year, we were able to hold Thursday morning refreshments for the Thursday morning service which is always very welcome. Thank you to everyone who helps on the rota, and those who donate to our raffle each week.

Diane Tink, Verger

Reading the Bible Together

Monday Mornings 10.30am to 12 noon
January to December 2022

These sessions have continued to be held at Ann's home, 36a Hunter's Road, Hook.



Having started our plan to read through the Old Testament before Christmas, we continued throughout 2022 looking at each book in turn to remind ourselves of some well known stories and passages but also some less familiar parts. By December we came to the Psalms. Excluding the most well known such as 23rd and 121st psalms, each member of the group was asked to choose a psalm for the next meeting. Psalms 8 and 139 were the most popular choice. This led to much discussion and realisation that the psalms could enrich our worship and prayer life.

We plan to continue our study the rest of the Old Testament. If you would like to join this group please contact Ann. (020 8397 5954)
Ann Fernihough

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, 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.

With the relaxing of the COVID19 restrictions, this year we have started to return to pre-pandemic normality. Nearly all our users have returned & the hall is well hired in the week.

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 & reduce expenditure to be more in line with the income. Works still progress on the Annexe albeit at a slower pace with the intention to complete this by Spring 2023. Most of the work here has been done by volunteers at no or low cost.

We have a programme of improvements lined up for future years, subject to funds, which include:

- Kitchen cooker & dishwasher to allow for larger hall functions
- new front doors
- Improved access for wheelchair / disabled people
- 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.

Kevin Connelly has become the Parish Hall 'handyman' & you may see him around the hall a few hours a week assisting with the general maintenance of the hall. This has proved to be a positive step with lots of small jobs being completed promptly as required. As we hire out to external users this is an important requirement. If you see him around the hall, please say 'hello'. That said, we are still planning to hold a summer maintenance day.....date to be advised but if you can assist even for only an hour this will help..... 'Many hands make light work'.

In 2022 Izzy Burton resigned from the committee after 13 years of service. We all thank her for her lengthy contribution to the Parish Hall. Joanne Griffiths has taken on the role of hall Treasurer and Paula Thompson has joined the committee bringing a wealth of experience from 1st Hook Scout Group

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, Paula Thompson, Sue Russell, Joanne or Steve Griffiths.

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



St Paul's Hook Mothers Union

St Paul's Hook Mothers Union meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month from 10.30 to 12noon in the Mary Wise Room at the church with coffee served from 10am.

Our meetings open with prayers. We have had some very interesting speakers during the course of the year and an enjoyable garden tea in August with a bring and buy stall and raffle that raised money for various Mother Union charities

We also have two evening meetings booked this year with speakers.

The knit and natter group meet every Monday afternoon in the Mary Wise room from 2pm to 4pm, making blankets and little jackets for the born too soon unit at Kingston Hospital and stitched of Hope project for Christian Hope International.

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 at our meetings. Contact Branch leader – Carol Noakes 020 8397 1558
Carol Noakes

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.

All PCC members, Creche Helpers and Home Visitors are required to have DBS clearance and also to undertake online Safeguarding training, appropriate to their role.

Sue Russell

Prayer Chain

The Prayer Chain is a group of church members who undertake to pray for anyone who requests it. Please contact Mary Reid

(mary@maryreid.org.uk,

07855 042 638) if you have a prayer request or would like to join the group.

Mary Reid

Technology



Following on from last year, all the equipment including the sound desk has now been fully installed. We found we needed an extra screen in the chancel and that has now been added.

Just before Christmas, we had a problem with the screens. Thankfully, the installation company were able to replace the faulty component very quickly. We have also needed to replace the old church laptop which developed a motherboard fault.

We're very grateful to the people who operate the equipment week by week. Agur, the youngest person on the team joined a few weeks ago and is doing brilliantly. If creating the PowerPoint files and / or operating the equipment is something you'd like to know more about, please do speak to one of the people at the desk on a Sunday morning. Or if you want to sit with us to see what goes on, you'd be most welcome.

Brian Dale

Website and Social Media

St Paul's makes good use of its online presence. Some services are livestreamed on our YouTube channel

(www.youtube.com/@stpaulschurchhook),

whilst you can find daily prayers and other notices on our Facebook group

(www.facebook.com/stpaulschurchhook). Our website

(stpaulschurchhook.co.uk/)

provides essential information for members and visitors about our activities, including notices and rotas (click on "For members").

We also have a mailing list for anyone who wants to receive the weekly notice sheets and other information.

Umoja Boys.

The Umoja Boys rescue centre in Kenya works to rescue street boys from poverty, danger and abuse, and to provide them with a secure and hope-filled future.

Our work involves three strands: rescue, rehabilitation and restoration.



Rescue:

We continue to rescue young boys from the streets of Nairobi whenever space and funding allow. Such boys are living in a dangerous situation. The streets are a place of violence, poverty, hunger and abuse, and the younger boys are particularly vulnerable. Our workers regularly visit the streets of central Nairobi and meet with the boys, forming relationships. We then carefully select those boys who want to change and offer them a place of safety and refuge at the rescue centre.

Costs involved: travel; staff costs; buying bread and milk for the street boys; accommodating the staff while they are in Nairobi.

Rehabilitation:

Street boys have learnt to be street smart, which sounds fairly innocent, but it means that they are used to violence, rudeness, theft, aggression, drug-use and dishonesty. Unlearning these behaviours takes time, love and consistency. It is a credit to the staff that so many boys are transformed by their time at the centre. Whenever I visit the centre I find a group of loving and caring boys who are thriving in school. Indeed, it is amazing how well they do in school since many of them have missed large chunks of education while they are living on the street. Nevertheless, the love of the staff and the faithful and steadfast discipline and care help to transform these boys. It really is amazing.

It is worth remembering that the cost of living crisis that we face in the UK is, in fact, a worldwide phenomenon, and this has impacted the

Umoja Boys rescue centre. Utilities, food costs and school fees have increased dramatically and these are an ongoing challenge for us as we seek to run the centre.

Costs involved: rent for the centre, utilities, food, clothes, school fees, staff salaries, maintenance of the centre, travel costs.

Sponsorship: One of the most effective ways for individuals to support Umoja is to sponsor one of the boys. This currently costs £30 per month, but will shortly rise to £35 to reflect the increase in the cost of food and utilities in Kenya. We are so grateful to all of our sponsors and other supporters. Your support is transforming the lives of these precious children. Thank you.

Restoration:

The restoration of the boys happens in a number of ways.

- A few of our boys can be restored to their immediate family and, whenever this is possible, we work to achieve this. This requires staff to visit the families and check that they are a safe place and then, subsequently, to travel with the boys back to their home. These could be long journeys to all corners of Kenya. We then continue to support and visit the boys to ensure that things are going well.
- More commonly, because of poverty or other issues at home, the boys remain either at school or at the Umoja centre but, sometimes we can reunite them with a member of their extended family who they can visit occasionally, perhaps during school holidays. This familial link is important in helping the boys to feel normal, to have a family support network, and to feel less rejected.
- For others there can be no restoration to the family due to abuse, or the death of parents. But such boys are restored to society and restored to God through the loving care and support of Umoja.

Costs involved: staff time, travel costs, accommodation for the staff when they are visiting.

Overall I hope you can see what a wonderful job Umoja Boys do, and the importance of your support. St Paul's Church have given money to Umoja Boys each year (voted for by the PCC) and we at Umoja Boys are immensely grateful for this. Similarly we thank God for all of you who give individually or who sponsor boys. Without your support this vital work would be impossible.

Thank you.

Luke

Luke Wickings: Chair of Trustees -Umoja Boys.

PCC Report

I am immensely grateful to those who sit on our Church Council (The PCC). St Paul's PCC are an effective and hardworking group who work together to serve God and the Church.

PCC members for 2022-23 were:

Luke Wickings (Vicar and Chair), Laurel Devadasan (Church Warden), Graham Cocks and Jonathan Rudd (co-opted), Sue Russell, Ian Reid and Prue MacPherson (Deanery Synod reps), Jane Jarman (PCC Secretary), Jane Greenfield (Treasurer), Diane Tink (Verger), Pam Ingram, Paula Thompson, John Deacon, Madeline Child, Simon Mettrick, Angie Mettrick, Alison Forrester, Natalie Loible and Alison Stevenson.

Much has been achieved over the past year and I have summarised below some of the key discussions and achievements of the PCC during the year.

My sincere thanks to all who serve on the PCC. Their work is of great value.

Luke: Chair of the PCC.

St Paul's Primary School.

One of the great achievements of St Paul's school over the past year has been our SIAMS inspection and the report that followed it.

SIAMS inspection focuses on the impact of the Church school's Christian vision on pupils and adults.

This involves looking at the school's Christian vision, the provision the school makes because of this vision and how effective this provision is in enabling all pupils to flourish.

The Evaluation Schedule has one inspection question:

how effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

This is explored through seven strands:

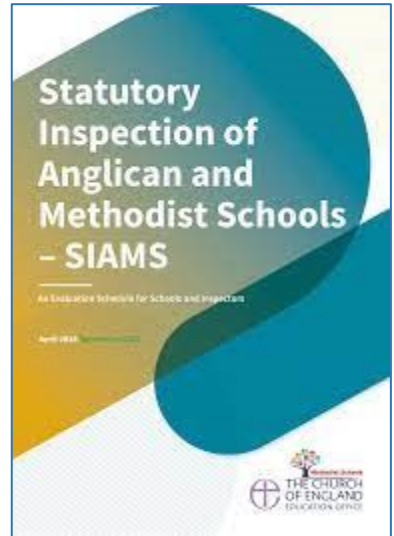
- Vision and Leadership
- Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills
- Character Development: Hope, Aspiration and Courageous Advocacy
- Community and Living Well Together
- Dignity and Respect
- The impact of collective worship
- The effectiveness of religious education



I am delighted to confirm that following our SIAMS inspection, St Paul's has been judged to be an 'Excellent' school!

Some stand out phrases from the report are:

- *"Leaders are courageous, passionate and inspirational in driving the school's vision."*
- *"Pupils and adults (including parents) flourish because they are at the heart of all decisions that leaders make."*
- *"Extra-curricular and enrichment activities support the taught curriculum to enable pupils to flourish further."*
- *"Prayer and reflection are central to the life of the school."*
- *"Pupils think freely, develop their own views and take risks in their learning."*
- *"High expectations, insatiable curiosity, independent learning and unfailing care are the 'routinely normal' yet distinctive features of this transformational learning environment."*
- *"Leaders at all levels, including pupils, are empowered by the vision."*
- *"Prayer is a spontaneous yet inclusive, intentional and invitational discipline at the school; it fuels a rich culture of deep reflection for pupils and adults."*
- *"The school's relationship with the church is exceptionally strong. The parish church from which the school takes its name serves the school with goodness and generosity."*



- *"The school's central belief that all pupils should feel safe and cared for is powerfully lived out. Pupils are treasured as gifts to be nurtured, respected and appreciated."*
- *"The way in which the school partners with parents, supports the holistic wellbeing of families and enables them to flourish is exceptional."*
- *"St Paul's is a community where participation from parents is dynamic but unforced. The school listens and responds to the voice of parents."*
- *"The school prides itself on being 'comfortable in the uncomfortable' and will do whatever it takes to ensure all pupil groups are represented and celebrated."*
- *"Pupils flourish across all curriculum areas and are trained to become highly independent learners."*

On your behalf I congratulate the school leadership, the staff, the governors and the pupils on the fantastic achievement.

Other comments:

Beyond SIAMS the school continues to thrive under high quality leadership. Behaviour and attendance are excellent, a feat many school have struggled to match post-COVID.

Meanwhile the recent SIP (School Improvement Partner) report commended the school for its' attendance and behaviour, and for good progress in maths, particularly among girls.

The links with the Church remain strong. I am the Chair of Governors and work closely with the school leadership. I also lead collective worship in school every Wednesday, and serve of the Faith Group.

Luke

Rev Luke Wickings: Chair of Governors.



Fuel Youth group

Fuel has continued to meet every month in 2022. Sessions are a mix of games, activities, discussion and prayer. The young people have a say on discussion topics and we reflect on being a Christian might mean for all of us as we grow and learn together. We usually have between 10 - 15 young people join us each month from across our three Team Churches.

In June 2022 we said a fond farewell to Fuel leader Jen Houghton and welcomed Becky Whiting - lay reader at St George's. We'd love to take the opportunity to say a huge thank you to Jen for her fabulous leadership over several years.

September 2022 saw a new intake of year 6 youngsters many of whom have become enthusiastic regulars. In December we had a Christmas pizza and games night in the hall at St George's.

If you are in years 6-9, we'd love to welcome you along to Fuel.

Becky Whiting and Simon Rowe

St Paul's Hook – Our achievements and progress over the year 2022-23

1. Feb-March 2022 -We discussed possible Family Worker (as THS team) and concluded not possible.
2. Feb 2022 -tree cleared after falling in the storm
3. Feb 2022 -Margaret & Richard Thompson sadly left us, and we celebrated all that they have given to us.
4. March 22 -Luke travelled to Kenya and ran a one-week 'Children's holiday club' for Umoja boys.
5. March 22 – We added an extra screen and completed the audio-visual set-up in Church
6. April 22 -Ann F took over leadership of the Church Pastoral / visiting team.

7. May 22 -We held the 'Thy Kingdom Come' (Joint THS prayer meetings).
8. June 22 -Joanne moved on and, after a pause, we appointed Kate as our new Church administrator.
9. June 22 -Brian and Neil ran the 'Difference' course
10. June 22 -We re-ran the chalice-training for communion assistants.
11. June 22 -Jubilee party in the vicarage garden
12. July 22 -Nicholas Lebey was priested and joined THS Team.
13. July 22 -The school choir began participating in seasonal Church services.
14. Aug 22 -The MU held a Garden party in the vicarage garden.
15. Sept 22 -Southborough school held a service to commemorate the death of the Queen.
16. Sept 22 -Churchyard work day and skip.
17. Sept-Oct 22 -We ran the 'Love Won Another' course, aiming to be better at sharing our faith.
18. Oct 22 - Knit and Natter produced the wonderful poppy cascade for our remembrance services.
19. Oct 22 -Children's Society Box Opening and lunch
20. Nov 22 -St Paul's School got 'excellent' in its SIAMS report (The SIAMS inspection focuses on the impact of the Church school's Christian vision and values on pupils and adults.)
21. Nov 22 -We had a School governors' social at the vicarage.
22. Nov 22 -Winter Fair
23. Nov 22 -The School year 6 pupils initiated daily prayer each afternoon (a sign of spiritual growth in the school community).
24. Advent soup and a roll.
25. Dec 22 -St Paul's school choir sang at Trafalgar square.

26. Jan 23 -Luke began his daily Bible-reading notes.
27. Feb 23 -We shared a united THS Team service at St Matthew's.
28. Feb 23 -In response to the financial challenges we face, the Church congregation successfully raised over £7,700 and increasing giving by over £400 pcm.
29. March/April 23 -We shared the THS united 'Spiritual Disciplines' Lent sermon series and Bible notes across all 3 THS Churches.
30. We also completed Repairs to the Church porch, and to the damaged pillar in the wall.

PCC Review of the Year

A review of the business done by the PCC In 2022-23

May 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We reviewed the APCM and appointed significant Church offices• Finance report (including gift-aid update)• We initiated a system of 'deputy wardens' to support Laurel as our only Church warden• We reviewed the service pattern and our post-COVID restrictions
June 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We discussed and initiated live-streaming of Sunday services• We reviewed our Mission Action Plan• Buildings report• Jubilee party review
July 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We discussed the Church's eco-stance and possible eco-group• Jonathan Rudd appointed as gift-aid officer• Review of services• Finance report
Sept 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First Eco-Church report• Report from Finance Committee• We discussed the Church response to the national financial crisis
Oct 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eco report• Review of cleaners pay
Nov 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Soup and a roll for advent• Deanery Synod report• Eco group report• Finance report (we noted the large prospective deficit)• Buildings report

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We discussed the Church energy providers • We authorised purchase of a new laptop for the Church • We agreed plans for a Coronation tea
Jan 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eco report • APCM planning • We reiterated our need for a second Church warden • We discussed and approved next years' budget • We reviewed the administrator's pay • We discussed evangelism and how to move forward • We discussed Church heating costs
Feb 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We discussed and agreed THS Team Lent plans • We agreed to the forthcoming Hope Explored course • We agreed the 'Thy Kingdom Come' meetings for 2023 • We authorised the Parish Hall Committee to investigate solar panels • Eco report • Finance report
March 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the year • Possible new 'chancel' altar to increase accessibility for the elderly and disabled. • Parish hall report and EPC certificates