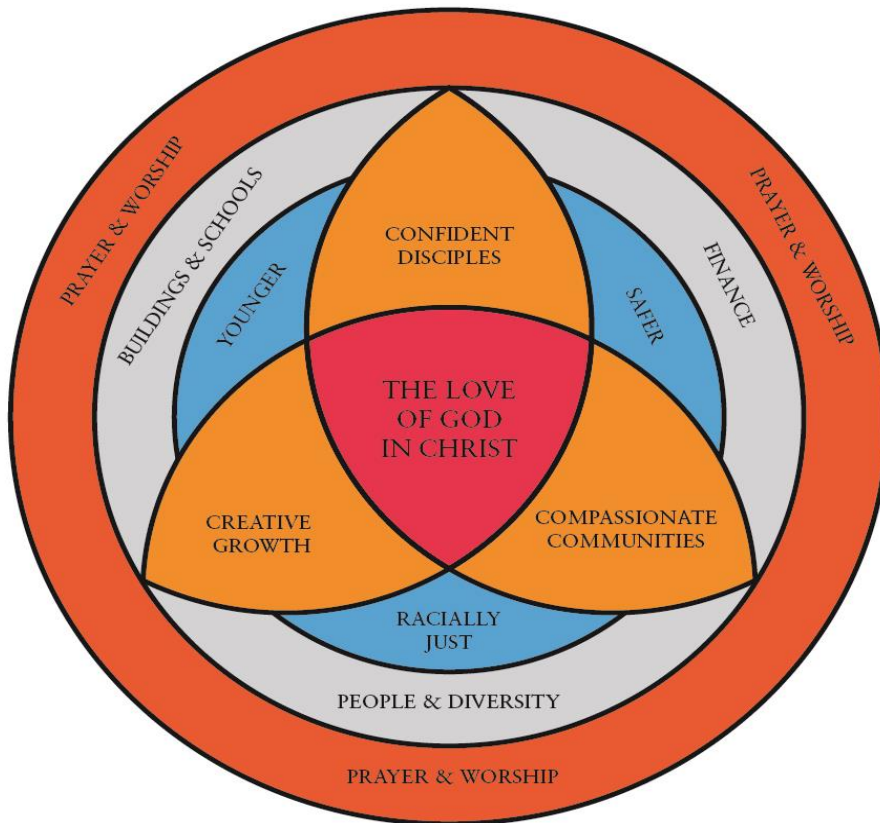


THREE IN ONE



A Vision for the third decade of the third Christian Millennium



Annual Report 2023

“

Batter my heart, three-personed God, for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.

”

- John Donne, Sonnet 14

THREE IN ONE

A vision for the third decade of the third Christian millennium

At the heart of our vision lies the Holy Trinity – three in one and one in three – expressing the conviction that at the heart of God lies relationship. Human beings, created in the image of God, are therefore built for relationships. The diagram on the cover expresses this in terms of interdependence, all centred on the love of God in Christ which our interdependent relationships demonstrate.

We developed this diagram as a result of a Zoom consultation with ecumenical partners as it expressed this central theological truth in a better way for us. The diagram which accompanied the Diocesan vision, though it had similar content, was in the form of a pyramid. Many felt that the pyramid has resonances of the old, medieval hierarchical Church which does not work for the 21st Century. The IICSA (Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse) report on the Church of England identified the culture of deference as a significant problem for the Church. We offer this model as a 21st-century liberation and one which is rooted in Scripture, Tradition & Reason.

The strapline of the Diocesan vision is “for every Londoner to experience the love of God in Christ”. This laudable vision has no reference to ecumenical partners who are doing the same work and gives the impression that there are no other Churches in London. It would help if this were spelled out. London is also home to many who have fled persecution because of their faith. We hope that in due time this can also be spelled out.

We offer these reports in a spirit of joy and thankfulness as we look back over 2023.

William Taylor

SERVICES AT ST JOHN'S

THE CHURCH IS OPEN DAILY FROM 8.30AM UNTIL 5.15PM

Monday-Friday

8.45am Morning Prayer

5.00pm Evening Prayer

SUNDAY

8.00am Holy Communion

10.30am Sung Eucharist

(Once a month, an All-Age format is used)

12.30pm Tagalog Mass

5.30pm Evening Prayer

6.30pm Choral Evensong - Once a month

Wednesday

12.00pm Holy Communion

Healing Service

A healing service, with anointing with oil and the laying on of hands, is held monthly, generally at Evening Prayer, and twice a year as part of the Parish Eucharist.

Vicar's Foreword

The Rev'd Canon Dr William Taylor: 2023 was a year of particular challenge for us at St John's as two team members died from cancer – Mykhaylo Ibelgauptas and Lydia Armanda. Mykhaylo (Misha) was our Parish Maintenance Manager and Lydia ran the probation service unpaid work programme. We thank God for the huge contribution to the good order of St John's over many years and mourn their loss. I had my own health issues in 2023, including a time being hospitalised with Covid just before Christmas, which forced me to miss the Christmas Carol service.

The staff team changed as we welcomed Fr Alan Trigle as a priest on the team, bringing his experience of parish ministry in West London and his working life as a translator of legal documents. Amanda Feeney completed her term as Parish Manager and we appointed Johannes Dreyer to that position. Both Amanda and Johannes bring particular gifts and skills to the role and we are indebted to them both. What we tried to create through this period of change and flux was the strong sense that the ministry of St John's is changing all the time in its form, but unchanging in what we offer, both in our principal purpose (Christian worship and teaching) and in what we offer to the community in which we are set.

Being an intercultural church, world events may seem far away to a small offshore island, but in this church, we are fully connected and on the frontline. Asylum seekers, refugees and trafficked people are not statistics for us, they are our friends in this church. Ukraine is not an unknown country as we have Ukrainians worshipping here every weekend, and the Embassy of Ukraine and the Ukrainian House are both in this parish. Similarly, the Filipino community has been an integral part of this church and borough for decades. Persecuted Christians continue to be a major aspect of prayers and work at St John's.

Ecumenical Work



I have continued to carry out two ecumenical functions in 2023 – one for the Kensington Episcopal Area, and one for the Church of England. In March, I accompanied the Archbishop of Canterbury to Constantinople/Istanbul and in October represented the Church of England in the meeting of the Anglican Oriental Orthodox International Commission in Jordan.



Ecumenical Adviser to the Kensington Episcopal Area

My work as Ecumenical Adviser for the Kensington Episcopal Area involves facilitating contacts and work between Christians of different traditions on behalf of the Bishop of Kensington.



Anglican and Eastern Churches Association

As Chairman of the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association (AECA), my work involves a national responsibility for the Church of England in furthering contacts with the Orthodox Churches. The AECA is the oldest ecumenical association of the Church of England, founded in 1864, and I am proud in this role to be following in the footsteps of my esteemed predecessor as the last Vicar of the “stand-alone” Parish of St John Notting Hill, Austen Oakley. Anyone with eyes to see inside the Church of St John will see physical evidence of its long and fruitful cooperation with Orthodoxy.

Work in the Community

Christians in the Middle East & Persecuted Christians

Throughout 2023, I also continued my work as a Director of JMECA, looking after the interests of the three Anglican Dioceses of the Church of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, and the new Anglican Province of Alexandria. I continued as a Patron of Iraqi Christians in Need (<http://icin.org.uk/>)-

The Parish as a whole developed its particular charism of caring for Christians who are persecuted for their faith. The parish recently sponsored a motion at the Deanery Synod for the Church of England to hold a National Ecumenical Day of Prayer and Action for Persecuted Christians. This motion was also approved by the Diocesan Synod. We continue to lobby for this to come to the General Synod.



Mathieson Music School

I was fortunate and blessed to visit the school in Kolkata in April and to experience the inspirational work going on there, including the new building work for the St John’s International School. The partnership between St John’s and the school goes back to its foundation 30 years ago, and we remain

proud of it. During that visit, I preached in Kolkata Cathedral, at the invitation of the Bishop, and was able to spend the day in a Buddhist monastery in Sikkim.



Standing Committee & Churchwardens

I am grateful to the Churchwardens for the solid support and wise counsel they always offer me, especially to Gerard Hargreaves and Rosemary Warcup.

At St John's we have a slightly larger Standing Committee than is required. This is another manifestation of how we like to work in the Parish - by inclusion, consensus, and sharing the load. At those meetings, the papers and agenda for each PCC meeting are agreed, so that each meeting is properly prepared and briefed - with a PCC ready, when necessary, to make the informed decisions it needs to make.

The Parish Church in the Community

We continued to develop and grow in our role as the Parish Church, by being open throughout the year. We are here and remain open for the whole community. It is important for me that The Church of England appoints Vicars of Parishes not chaplains to congregations.

Shared Ministry

Everything I have written about represents a ministry which is active and shared. St John's is indeed fortunate to be blessed with its historic resources (buildings, grounds, and location) and its contemporary dynamism. This dynamism can only come from people, connecting in real time and real space with each other.

Thanks

So, enjoy reading these reports, and the commitment each report represents. I thank each and every person who works with us in this ministry and gives of their time and energies in a selfless, giving way. I see this all the time and thank God for it.

Laus Deo.

William

Confident Disciples

Servers

Amanda Feeney: The St John's Servers are a small core team of dedicated people who serve with good humour and diligence. Grace Zikpi, Annalie Servidad, Tony Maxwell, Nemr Elias, Julius Cruz, Kyle, Von & Lyle Galon, Hannah Reeves, Saied Bisheban, Tommy-Barnham Hyatt, Faeze Safari & Alex Randolph have all been long-term faithful servers and are much appreciated. Tina Iacono & Elnaz Arghavan are new servers and have taken on their roles with positive attitudes and skills.

As part of our ongoing review of safeguarding, all the adult serving team have completed or are in the process of completing their safeguarding training.

We are always looking for new servers, to allow for the existing ones to not be overworked. Ire Sosanya is our faithful child server, we always welcome more children to start this important, fun and fulfilling duty.

The Filipino chaplaincy has as always provided constant support and is a key part of our serving team. The Farsi chaplaincy has been serving faithfully too, thank you to Saied Bisheban for his guidance and leadership with this.

Eucharistic Ministers

Nemr Elias: The Holy Communion is an essential part of our church liturgy, demonstrating that we are all involved in the celebration of the Eucharist, and not something carried out by the clergy alone, it makes us feel like a big family helping each other by sharing the body and the blood of Jesus Christ our saviour. For that reason, we need four ministers each Sunday, we work on a monthly rota, so quite a high number are needed, especially with the extra services at Christmas, Holy Week and Easter. We are always in need of new EM's to help us and make it comfortable for others.

As always, big thanks to Rev'd William for his usual and unlimited support and we will raise our prayers to God for him to have good health.

I would like to thank everyone for giving a high degree of commitment and support, especially to the ones who always go forward to help in the absence of any member, that shows that we are one family in Christ our Lord.

Reader Ministry

Serena Lancaster: Having updated my Safeguarding Training, I was re-licensed for another four years at a splendid service for Local Licensed Ministers at St Paul's. Having embarked on Reader Ministry aged fifty and now having 'Permission to Officiate', experience will hopefully go some way to make up for depleted energy. I still preach and take the occasional funeral. I attended the 'Day of Loving Disagreement' for Readers. Formerly a representative for St John's on 'Churches Together in Notting Hill', I am now on their executive board and so attended an Interfaith Meeting in the Town Hall.

Pastoral Care

William Taylor: Pastoral Care is practised in the Parish in formal & informal ways. The formal ways are what are called the Pastoral Offices – Baptisms, Weddings & Funerals. The clergy conduct baptisms and weddings and licensed ministers and/or clergy officiate at funerals. We also host memorial services. All of these offices require detailed planning, and with weddings and funerals this generally also involves musicians. Pastoral care is also carried out in the care of asylum seekers and refugees, often involving appearances in immigration tribunals. Fr Larry does dedicated work with the Filipino community in many different ways. Informal pastoral care is through the individual links which people have with fellow worshippers in our 3 worshipping communities. A prayer list is also sent out by email, which has helped inform pastoral needs. During the year, we took Communion to people in their homes and residential care homes.

Study Courses

Serena Lancaster: Lent 2003 - ‘Churches Together in Notting Hill’ followed a topical course from ‘Embrace the Middle East. I led the session in the Methodist Church built on the exchange, across religious and gender divides, between Jesus and a Samaritan woman. We learned how today’s Christians have enabled women from Jewish and Muslim communities in Palestine to come together in friendship on neutral ground. In the eventual aftermath of the Gaza war, peace-makers will be more important than ever.

Alan Trigle: The Book of Common Prayer tells us to pray that we may read, mark, learn and inwardly digest all Holy Scripture. We explicitly do the first of these activities in the form of our readings in our daily cycle of morning and evening prayer and Sunday services, and implicitly through the many parts of the liturgy that consist of passages from scripture. Marking, learning and inwardly digesting are lifelong processes which we aim to encourage with occasional courses.

In 2023 we again participated in the Lent course organised by Churches Together in Kensington, which gives the advantage of larger numbers and perspectives from a range of denominations; each church takes turns to lead a session. It also gives us an opportunity to visit the different churches in the area and compare hospitality! The book we used was a resource entitled *The Kingdom of God is Justice and Peace*, based on the observance of Lent by the Coptic church of Egypt – a part of the world where prayers for justice and peace have a special urgency.

In the autumn, as part of our observance of Creationtide culminating in the harvest festival, we held two study sessions looking at what we can learn about creation from the Wisdom literature in the Bible. The aim was to explore how the psalms and books such as Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes have as much if not more to say about it than the opening chapters of Genesis. We also noted that Wisdom is represented as a female figure and that the greatest church in the Byzantine Empire was dedicated to her: Saint Sophia.

Junior Church

Amy Buckley: St John's Junior Church holds term-time sessions for the children in the congregation. Each term’s Junior Church schedule is posted on the church noticeboard, and the weekly newsletter highlights the Junior Church schedule for the current and following Sundays. There are no Junior Church sessions during All Age services or school holidays.

Junior Church uses Roots teaching materials. Roots materials are written by experienced ordained and lay practitioners from all denominations and traditions and are flexible and easily adapted to suit a wide range of patterns and styles of worship and learning.

We continue to run our sessions with a dedicated pool of volunteer teachers. The volunteers are grouped into "leaders" and "helpers" to assist with preparation and continuity for the teachers and children. Typical lessons include a reading or story from the Bible, a short discussion and a project or game.

The Junior Church team welcomes volunteers to assist in the preparation and delivery of lessons. No experience is required, and it does not need to involve a large time commitment. Donations of arts and crafts materials are also most welcome at any time. Please contact Amy Buckley for more details.

Music

James Speakman: Each year brings changes in personnel within the music department at St John's, and this year we have said goodbye to three of our wonderful Choral Scholars. Since the disruption of Covid, the standards of music have increased very pleasingly, and I have put much effort into advertising the Choral Scholarship posts widely to secure the best possible musicians. I have felt very lucky to work with such pleasant and talented singers as Anna Cooper, Daisy Widdicombe and Antonio Sa-Dantas, and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavours. Anna and Antonio leave us to take up Choral Scholarships at St James's Church Piccadilly, and Daisy moves to Bradford to take up a role in the city's excellent Cathedral Music department.

There was a good deal of interest in the soprano and alto choral vacancies this year, and I interviewed around 20 candidates for the three available positions. Linh Ton (soprano) has joined us following her study at Birmingham Conservatoire and is pursuing teaching, in addition to her work as a language and voice coach, Ruby Skilbeck (soprano) is studying voice at the Royal Academy of Music, and Amalia Young has just completed a Masters at Goldsmith's University of London and is now a freelance violinist. Our three new scholars have quickly found their feet with us, and I am delighted that they are the strongest team I have known in my time so far. Crucial to securing the best singers is of course competitiveness in our fees, and I am grateful that this year we have been able to increase the value of the scholarships a little. Another review will be crucial in the coming year to maintain the attractiveness of the post and where possible retain scholars from year to year.

We also bade a fond farewell to organ scholar Jake Scicinski who was with us for two years, during which his solo and choral accompaniment playing has developed hugely and he shared so much of his talents and good humour with us. His experience at St John's enabled him to gain a place on the competitive Royal College of Music undergraduate organ programme and to gain his own Director of Music position at St Luke's RC Church in Pinner where he is now building up a choral tradition. Organ Scholarships such as ours are crucial to give young organists valuable experience of the Anglican Choral tradition, and a leg up into the church music world.

Junior Church Music continues to gain ground after the pandemic. The proportion of children in church is gradually increasing little by little, and a drip-feeding of call-and-response singing and rhythm games seems to be a good way to engage children (and hopefully for adults too!) when they are with us for All-Age services. Multi-talented Hannah Reeves is also a great support at these sessions.

There were some real highlights to our services this year, not least a thrilling Easter Day Mass (Mozart Spatzenmesse, and Hallelujah Chorus) with a full orchestra from the Cat's Cradle Collective (Musician's in Residence) as well as Brass quintet for Christmas carols. I am delighted that the Imperial College Chamber Choir were keen to join us once again for Remembrance Sunday, along with Orpheus Ensemble, harp, horn and trumpet. These ensembles really do help to bring the big Parish occasions to life.

Music fundraising will be increasingly on the agenda this year, as we discuss the possibility of purchasing the Revised English Hymnal for the church. This is a much-anticipated update to the New English Hymnal we currently use and would suit our worship very well. I am working on some strategies to enable us to cover the considerable cost of purchasing full-music, melody and words-only editions.

In other ongoing fundraising, following its success in 2022 we continued to hold 'Music after Mass' recitals in the summer term, and it was great to hear the many and varied talents of our choral scholars and others, including a lovely concert by all the choral scholars of music on a theme of 'flowers' and 'May' which we were able to take on tour to Lisbon.

It was a treat to welcome back Theatre Organist Donald Mackenzie for more virtuoso improvisations to two Silent Films on the Hallowe'en weekend, and the event was well-supported, but we are yet to gain the huge following it enjoyed before the pandemic and when the event was coordinated by Jamie Singleton. With a sudden rise in inflation, all expenses were greater this year, and perhaps ticket prices just needed to be higher in order to cover costs.

The active musical life of our church is only possible thanks to donations given so generously by patrons, and I am always keen to hear from individuals who might be willing to offer a gift to support it. I am happy to discuss this at any time, and can also be contacted on directorofmusic@stjohnsnottinghill.com

Lisbon Tour – with St John's Choir 18th – 20th August 2023.

Antonio Sa Dantas: This summer the St. John's Notting Hill Choral Scholars went on their first international tour. For a couple of days, they got to experience the wonderful city of Lisbon in Portugal and sing in some of its most beautiful churches.



The tour started, as it should in a country like Portugal, with a good meal and a cold drink, in one of the most traditional and unique restaurants/café's of Lisbon: Galeto. All the choral scholars met after arriving and connected.

The first concert was in the church of Sta Catarina (St. Catherine) in Calçada do Combro. In one of the steep streets of Lisbon, this open-door concert in a gorgeous baroque church, was punctuated by the sounds of passing trams and people on a fine summer evening. On this first concert, the choral scholars sang a programme tailored by our own director of music James Speakman, centred around the Blessed Virgin Mary. The music included works by Praetorius, Hassler, Bruckner, Grieg, Rachmaninov, Duruflé, Howells, and Vilette and arrangements by James himself. Charmingly presented by Speakman, and translated into Portuguese by António Sá-Dantas, one of the choral scholars, the audience enjoyed this variety of music with much applause. The audience grew during the concert, with people from the street spontaneously joining in, following the sounds from within.

The second concert was in the more secluded, but not less beautiful church of Mercês. In this concert, the choral scholars presented the programme they had first sung in May, at St. John's, in a concert at the time entitled "Flowering May". This programme, created in joint collaboration at the time, included multiple works about flowers by Brahms, Poston, and Holst but also compositions by some of the choral

scholars themselves, namely Daisy Widdicombe, Gilbert Jackson and António Sá-Dantas. A wonderful opportunity to get other people listening in for this more intimate setting.

In between the concerts, there was, of course, the discovery of the city itself, with its many hills, beautiful views, historic places and wonderful cuisine.

Finally, the tour ended with a service in St. George's Anglican church. In a lovely service accompanied by the church's very own organist David Cranmer, the scholars sang Lusitano and Byrd to a full church. Thus ended this packed and eventful tour, with an English service in the middle of Lisbon, after a lovely Portuguese experience.

Welcomers

Caroline Sterling: There is a regular team of helpers who are Welcomers at services and who also prepare the service sheets etc. and tidy up after the service. I am delighted and most grateful that we have several members of the Filipino and Farsi speaking Communities joining our teams. This is a wonderful way for worshippers to unite.

It is a pleasurable duty to welcome those arriving at the service and make sure that everyone is aware of the facilities we offer for children etc. It also enables us to get to know members of the congregation, regular or newcomers! If you would like to join us, please ask any Welcomer, even if you feel you can only welcome on an irregular basis! Thank you to all Welcomers for being so flexible and adaptable.

There is also a variety of leaflets available which we can offer to visitors to help answer their questions, for example regarding the history of the church, the organ and our mission to the wider world and facilities we offer to children. There is also a leaflet for children to help them enjoy and explore St. John's. Prayer cards are also available.

Stewardship

The Parish offers its heartfelt thanks to all worshippers who give generously and sacrificially. As usual, we make an appeal for unrestricted giving by monthly standing order which enables the parish to plan financially across all our financial commitments.

Flowers

Patricia Soper: I continued organising the flower rota at St John's developing it in two new ways- faux flowers have come a long way since the days of plastic flowers and are now almost indistinguishable from fresh flowers. We have four seasons' worth of flowers which can be recycled and therefore are more eco-friendly.

Anyone wishing to turn a hand to this activity need not be afraid of the basic cost involved, which the church is prepared to refund; all that is needed is creativity, enthusiasm, and time.

If you would like to try your hand, please contact the Parish Office for further details.

Intercessors

William Taylor: We have a dedicated team of intercessors, who lead intercessions with care and skill. The booklet of guidelines continues to be a sound basis for this ministry and is particularly valued by new intercessors. We always welcome further volunteers, and training is always given. Caroline Sterling assists with the administration of the intercessors' list and encourages new membership of the team. There is also the possibility to read set intercessions for those who wish to lead intercessions but do not feel able to write them themselves. New resource materials have been obtained – both books and internet links. We also continue to experiment with “dialogue” forms of intercessions between the president and intercession leader, as well as intercessions which use music.

Visitors are invited to use the request for an intercessions book located by the side chapel.

We also have a Prayer Circle which prays for those in need at a particular time in their lives. Anybody can join, please speak to Caroline Sterling if you would like to join this group.

Readers

Frances Pepys: We are lucky enough to have members of the congregation and choir who read the Old and New Testament lessons. Many thanks to them all.

If you would like to read please do come and talk to me. I can email the text to you beforehand and can give you pointers about reading if required.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

William Taylor: In 2023 we prepared 12 adults for confirmation, all of whom were confirmed at St



John's at the Easter Vigil by Bishop Emma, the Bishop of Kensington. We used the RCIA material again this year in the Anglican version prepared by Jeffery John, *this is our Faith*. It is a privilege to accompany adults on their journey of faith in this way.

First Communion

William Taylor: The Clergy and Pastoral team, together with Junior Church leaders and children's parents are responsible for preparing children for First Communion around the age of seven. Two children were admitted to Communion at the Easter Vigil.

Baptisms

Hannah Reeves: 2023 has been another busy year for baptisms at St John's, with a total of twenty-two baptisms between Candlemas on 5th February and the Feast of Christ the King on 26th November. Thirteen were infant or child baptisms carried out during a Parish Eucharist on various Sundays throughout the year, with November's Christ the King service feeling particularly busy where three baptisms made for a full church and an energetic end to the liturgical year before we entered into the reflective season of Advent. Two child Filipino Chaplaincy baptisms took place during Tagalog Mass, and one child baptism was carried out at a Saturday wedding in May. In addition, six adult baptisms were carried out by Bishop Emma during the jubilant Easter Vigil on the evening of 8th April, all six going on to be confirmed by Bishop Emma that evening.

Witnessing children and adults beginning their new lives in Christ at St John's is always a wonderful experience and a powerful reminder of our own baptisms. The lit baptismal candle given to the newly baptised is an outward sign of this new life and a reminder that the light of Christ is for everyone. This year, the St John's pastoral team began sending out baptism anniversary cards to those baptised within the last three years, which is a lovely way to stay connected with the newly baptised and their families, and which might encourage some return visits to St John's!



Compassionate Communities

St John's 2023 Financial Report

Olakunle Babarinde: As the cost-of-living crisis continues to affect many households, St. John's finances could not avoid the effect on its balance sheet. Costs for energy and utilities, office and upkeep were well above our budgeted amounts, despite our efforts to control outgoings as best we could.

In response to this, we were blessed to record a large increase in our giving, which corresponded almost entirely to the shortfalls in expenditure. We therefore ended the year within about £4,300 of balancing the budget, which, given that we were £53,000 above our projected spending, was very welcome.

Note that these numbers are not yet finalised at the time of this report being finalised, however, our Common Fund expenditure was £83,950, which was equivalent to what we committed. And our combined regular giving, collections and legacy once-off donations reached **£150,000**, which is the largest that I have seen in my time in the PCC, therefore we feel extremely blessed and grateful to everybody who contributed, as it is a testament to recognition by parishioners of the difficult times that we are all going through.

The Governing Body - PCC

Paula Lawton: The Parochial Church Council met 7 times during 2023, each preceded by a meeting of the Standing Committee in the previous week. Paula Lawton was elected Secretary of the Council in July. Among the topics discussed at the PCC have been plans for fundraising for maintenance and repair of the church, for which we appreciated the attendance of Architect Alex Veal to present the survey and structural report, and staff matters and we look forward to welcoming Charlotte Bannister-Parker to our clergy team, Safeguarding and completed questionnaires were received and the church is proceeding to Level 2 of the Safeguarding Action Plan and on keep us informed of the ongoing process and maintenance of St John's electoral rolls.

Restoration Fund

The Restoration Fund was largely dormant in 2023 as preparations were laid for a major relaunch in 2024.

Garden and Grounds – Project F.A.I.T.H. & Wildflower Meadow



Nelson Rowe & Bradley Stainton: In 2023, further work was done in extending and deepening the wildflower beds. This led to a formal opening in the Summer with the Deputy Mayor of RBKC.

We relocated the vegetable beds to the South side of the Church in order to allow the vegetables a greater chance of success. It is our intention to have a more structured plan for the beds to allow for proper execution and to maximise the growing potential. It would also be beneficial if we were to

introduce herbs and flowers around that area, that will be of use in the kitchen, attract pollinators and repel pests, as well as heighten the beauty of the area



Also in the Summer, we had a visit from Professor Cleo Cervancia of the University of the Philippines, an acknowledged world expert on bees, especially stingless ones.



Safeguarding

Danielle Anaba: Safeguarding means protecting people’s health, well-being, and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect. It means protecting, looking after, and maintaining the well-being of children and vulnerable people. At St John’s, we are committed to creating an environment in which children and adults are safe. We are dedicated to creating a welcoming, safe, and stimulating environment where children and vulnerable people grow in confidence.

To provide this environment, we must ensure that the people volunteering at St John’s, complete the relevant safeguarding training, depending on the role they perform. Some roles will also require a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. This checking process is undertaken by the Parish Office. If you are interested in working at St John’s (as a paid employee or volunteer) it will be necessary for you to complete the necessary training and potentially undertake a DBS check. A DBS check would require you to complete a form and provide supporting information (evidence of name, address, and DOB). If you have any queries regarding DBS or Safeguarding, please do contact the Parish Office.

Visits to the Housebound and Residential Homes

Fr Larry Galon: These resumed in person in 2023, and as we approach the end of the year, we began to formulate new patterns of pastoral care which will be developed in 2024.

Electoral Rolls

Johannes Dreyer: At the end of 2023, St John's Notting Hill had 226 members on the roll, the Filipino Chaplaincy had 201 members and the Farsi electoral grew from 43 to 65. We have also updated all our databases in the office, providing us with a new and effective database for much of our work, in line with the GDPR.

Churchwardens' Fabric Report

Rosemary Warcup and Gerard Hargreaves 2023 saw continued work on the recommendations contained in the 2021 Quinquennial Inspection Report written by St John's Church Architect, Dr Alex Veal.

During 2023, we have been working to deliver projects recommended by Dr Veal and focusing on investigative projects and urgent repair works.

The work to the west elevation of the church has continued. Following the survey work completed in 2022 more work was undertaken in July 2023.

Further stonework repairs and structural consolidation are required on the west end in the future. This will be a major project estimated to cost in the region of £120k.

Work on the west elevation is essential to ensure the safety of adjacent external areas in the Nursery Garden, and to reduce the risk of water ingress to the west end of the building.

A Structural Review and Drainage Survey was completed in October. The drawings provide an excellent basis for the development of all future projects at the Church and for general maintenance and management of the building. The report includes a review of the structural condition of key parts of the building, including the West End; the junction of the Tower with the Nave Aisles; the Tower; and other areas. It also includes recommendations for further investigation and monitoring.

Additional surveys and maintenance work have been identified to ensure that we maintain and protect our beautiful church for future generations.

All this work has been shared with the PCC. Clearly, this work comes at a high price, and we are working with external funding consultants to identify sources of potential funding.

The masonry cracking in various parts of the church continues to be monitored by a structural engineer regularly and this will continue and inform any recommended remedial works in the future.

Pines and Needles, who use the church grounds for sales of Christmas trees, had another record year. This will produce an income of £6,750 for St John's. We look forward to the arrangement continuing in 2024.

The PCC working group on the feasibility of installing solar panels on the sections of the church roof continued to explore options and will make recommendations to PCC in due course as part of a plan for future heating and lighting of the church.

It takes an incredible amount of effort to keep St John's up and running. Most of the work is done behind the scenes by Fr William and the office team. We thank Amanda for her work during the year. We were pleased to welcome Johannes Dreyer in September as the Parish and Facilities Manager. The Churchwardens are very grateful for all their hard work, patience, and flexibility.

Architect's Reports

Alex Veal, St John, Notting Hill Quinquennial Inspector: During 2023, some good progress has been made to carry out necessary repair works and further investigations at St John's. These followed the main recommendations of our building Strategy document, which was updated at the start of the year.

Notable among these projects was the commissioning of a fully measured survey of the complete Church. This provides an excellent basis for the development of all building-related projects, internally and externally; it is also an excellent resource for the Parish to efficiently manage the building now and in the future; and it forms an important record of the present structure.

We also received an informative report from the Structural Engineer, which provides an overview of the structural condition of key parts of the building, with recommendations for further investigation and monitoring in some areas.

Perhaps most importantly, an urgent project of external remediation work was undertaken over the summer by Vertex Access Ltd. This involved the removal of loose and redundant pargett plates to the buttresses at the west end; defrassing the masonry to remove loose stone fragments; a close-hand inspection of the complete elevation; and a detailed report on the condition of the stonework.

We are now in the process of developing this information into a full project of masonry repair and structural consolidation to the west elevation. We will submit this for approval over the coming weeks, with the aim of tendering and commissioning the works on behalf of the Parish later in 2024. This is an important project to ensure that this part of the building is returned to good condition.

As well as this live project, we hope to continue to develop strategic proposals for interior refurbishment; to consider options for more efficient, sustainable building services; and to carry out other repairs to the building fabric as necessary.

We look forward to continuing our work with the Parish on these projects, and in support of the broader Mission and Vision of St John's.

Churches Together in Notting Hill

Serena Lancaster: An orchestra depends on different types of instruments to make magnificent music. This rationale lies behind 'Churches Together in Notting Hill', which brings local Christian Communities together, the better to realise that building on interdependence strengthens their witness to Christ. I have found it both rewarding and enjoyable to meet fellow Christians at the monthly bring-your-own Prayer Lunches, which follow a short act of worship in a different church or centre. When Methodist, Catholic, United Reform, Anglican, Salvation Army and Orthodox people meet together in fellowship over time, they discover that more unites than divides them. Many then also follow a joint course in Lent. As always, the more the merrier! So do join us at one of our monthly lunches.

LLM Training

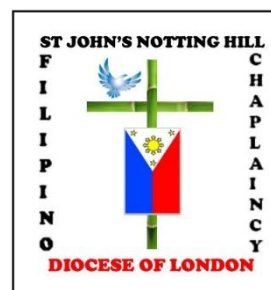
Hannah Reeves: I have had a busy year at St Mellitus College, Kensington, where I am training for licensed lay ministry (currently enjoying my second of three years). Since January 2023 I have attended many fascinating and informative lectures on a variety of topics including Christian worship, the Old and New Testaments and Christian Doctrine, and have completed several assignments which further

deepened my learning. At the time of writing, I have just finished an intense week of teaching at St Mellitus where I spent a few wonderful days engaging in helpful discussions with fellow ministers-in-training on practical aspects of ministry including preaching, pastoral care and interfaith engagement.

Training for ministry at St Mellitus is a tremendous privilege and I am hugely grateful to Fr. William and the St John's community for their continued support and encouragement. This year at St John's I have preached three sermons, led several all-age presentations and served regularly as a liturgical deacon, and I am very thankful for all these opportunities to serve the St John's community while developing my skills in my journey towards licenced ministry.

Filipino Chaplaincy

The Rev'd Canon Larry Galon: The continuing presence and ministry to the Filipino Community in the diocese of London is the expression to preserve Christian culture and traditions through the celebration of the Eucharist as the centre of faith. Sunday worship is solidified by gestures of laughter and "KUMUSTAHAN" or exchange of greetings and fellowship meal, ensuring that no one gets hungry



in the house of the Lord as all six groups routinely contribute to it. I am always grateful to all leaders and members of St's. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul and the Holy Child for their unwavering support. Formal and informal consultations of both pastoral and legal matters are the priority of the chaplain, no matter how serious and urgent it could be. Ensuring that there is always help available for all members of the community when they needed the most.

Everybody tried their best to support all fundraiser activities, ensuring to delivery of the projected forecast budget for the year, yet with the price hike of basic commodities, housing and increasing demand from families here and abroad, somehow members of the community recognised the demand to work harder and contribute more for the life of the church that we are all part of and serving. The fundraisers in 2023 were - Valentine's Party, Woman of the Year, Mayflower Festival, Glamping trip, Notting Hill Carnival, Halloween Party and Christmas Party, raising approximately £20,000.



The Filipino chaplaincy at St. John's celebrates its success by extending God's hands to the members of the community who need support financially and spiritually. In addition to fundraisers, the Filipino community gives generously week by week at the Sunday Mass - roughly £10,000 in 2023.

This enables us to extend support to villages, schools, churches and theological institutions in the Philippines in need of help.

We built 12 boats and gave them to the fisher folks in my village who lost their means of livelihood by typhoon and flooding. We continually support schools, specifically the Holy Rosary Kindergarten School Incorporated in Aklan. We bought a computer and laptop for the school teachers to use. We



provided school materials, such as bags, notepads, pencils and many more for poor children at the school. We sent theological and reference books to widen the knowledge of the young seminarians at

Saint Paul's Theological Seminary by spending time reading. We painted the façade of the seminary building and extended support to the members of the faculty who needed immediate help. The Filipino chaplaincy also prioritises and supports the reconstruction of chapels and churches devastated by different calamities. In all of this, the community contributes gracefully and faithfully gives thanks to God for all the goodness provided for us. This I am happy to report.

Persian Anglican Community of London

The community continued to grow, and several were baptised and confirmed by Bishop Emma at the Easter Vigil 2023.



Ukrainian Saturday Group



Andrey Lushchevsky: Another blessed year at St John's.

More and more Ukrainian refugees joined us in 2023, here they found peace and quiet life.

Furthermore, we received various requests for help from Ukraine and we did our best to fulfil all of it because we believe this is our Mission. Rebuilding

burnt houses, preparing Christmas gifts for disadvantaged children, helping to recover from injuries - all this, unfortunately, is part of our Ukrainian Community life and pain in our hearts.

Cooperation with St John's

At the end of June we were happy to attend the opening of the wildflower meadow at St John's led by Rev William and the local Councillor.

We were also delighted to take part in the Christmas Carol Concert at St John's with our Choir singing "Silent Night" in Ukrainian. Unfortunately, Father William was not present as he was in hospital, he was missed very much.

This would be incomplete without thanking everyone at St John's for their continuous support and cooperation: Father William, Father Larry, Johannes and all involved.

Blessings as always and looking forward to one more fruitful year!

Hospitality

Peter Hodges: We aim to provide hospitality using Fairtrade tea & coffee, plus whenever possible, biscuits, while on special occasions such as birthdays, we offer a glass of wine as well.

We are grateful for the newcomers from diverse backgrounds who responded positively, and we would welcome any new volunteers to join our small but committed team.

Since the Fairtrade stall no longer exists, we still manage to source Fairtrade products from alternative suppliers.

Art Exhibition – Icons on Ammunition Boxes

Charlotte Bannister-Parker: On Tuesday, 21st February 2023, St John's, Notting Hill, hosted the opening of an exhibition called "Icons on Ammunition Boxes" by Ukrainian artists Sofiia Atlantova and Oleksandr Klymenko.

The project began in 2014 when conflict broke out in the east of Ukraine and Crimea, and the painters used ammunition boxes from the war as a platform for traditional icon painting. Funds raised on the night and from the sale of the icons went towards a new mobile ambulance to be named "Apostle Lukas". The event at St John's involved a viewing of the icons, followed by a screening of two short films: one on the work of Atlantova and Klymenko and the other an interview with a young Ukrainian soldier before his death on the frontline. The evening also included a Q&A compered by the Revd Canon Dr Charlotte Bannister-Parker with the co-founder of British Ukrainian Aid, Dr



Dr Tetyana Vovyanko; the Vicar of St John's, the Revd Canon Dr William Taylor, who also chairs the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association and the chair of Rotary Club Kyiv Capital, Yana Bobrova.

The project in Oxford and Notting Hill raised approximately £30,000 which bought a field ambulance for Ukraine.

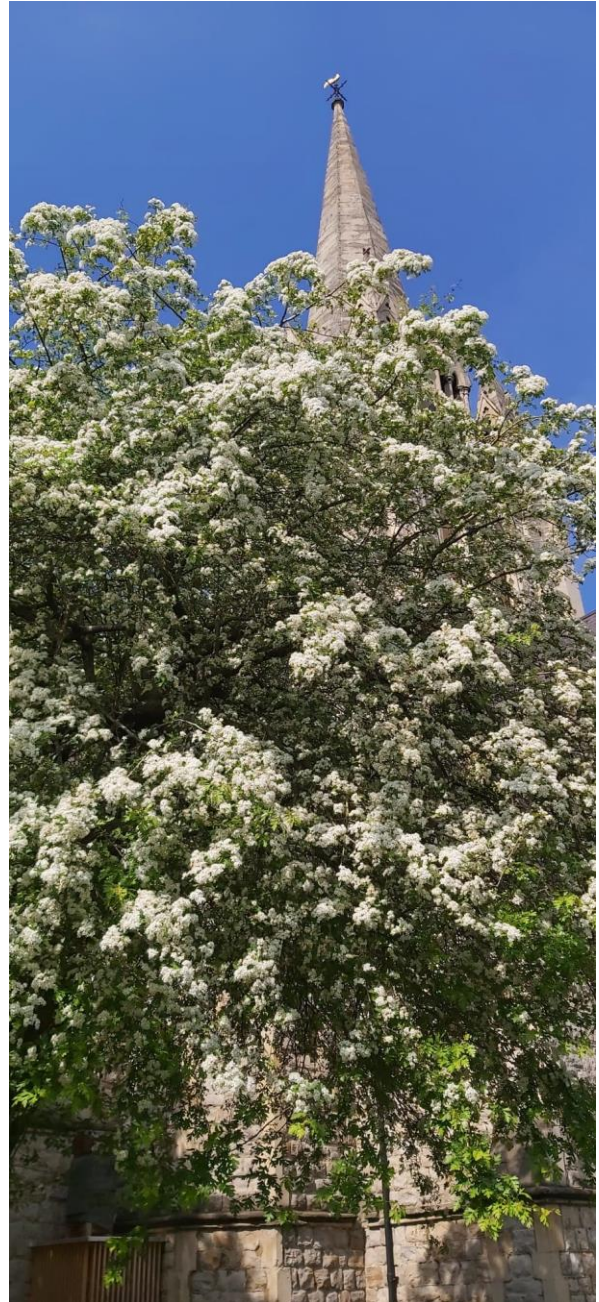
Creative Growth

Energy and Environment Group

Richard Burnett-Hall: Unfortunately, we have been unable to make significant progress with any of our energy and environmental objectives this year. This has been due to there being no money available either to commission the preliminary reports essential to deciding on the details of the work needed both to improve our environmental footprint, and also to minimise the costs of heating and powering the church generally, or then to pay for such works as the reports recommend. To raise the necessary funding we need to coordinate the works we have in mind – in essence, replacing the gas boiler with a new heating system, and installing solar panels on the church roof – with other significant projects, so we can appeal for a substantial sum that will cover more than just our specific improvements.

Our current gas-fired boiler is old and appreciably less efficient than a modern one would be. However, it is of course one of our objectives to reduce substantially, and if possible, to eliminate, our consumption of fossil fuels. This suggests we should consider replacing our boiler not with a modern gas-fired one, but with an air-source heat pump. However, it has been widely reported that these are appreciably less effective in large buildings, such as churches than in domestic settings. Moreover, before taking any decision on that issue, we need in any event to undertake a full assessment of the most appropriate available means of keeping those in the church sufficiently warm and to minimise all heat losses from the church in economically viable ways. Evidence that we have done this will in any event be essential to getting a faculty for any of the works we wish to carry out.

Although we have already obtained a quote for installing solar panels on the church's three most suitable roof areas, which indicates that having panels on all of these would give us a well worthwhile return, in practice we have to obtain three quotes before selecting a preferred installer. Moreover, the installation costs would be appreciably less if the panels are installed at the same time as we have scaffolding at roof level for separate maintenance work on the church fabric. Further, as we will have to raise the money needed to make the various improvements referred to here by an appeal for donors, we must first be able to spell out fairly precisely the work we envisage carrying out with the appeal proceeds, and its total cost.



Near the end of 2022, our architect Alex Veal delivered to the PCC a comprehensive “Preliminary Strategic Report” on maintenance work that needs to be carried out on the fabric of St John’s, broken down into matters that need immediate attention, others that are desirable but less urgent, which are given one of three different priority levels, and matters that only need to be kept under supervision for any signs of further deterioration.

Included in the desirable but less urgent category are the commissioning of a Building Services Engineer’s report on (a) what options are available to us as replacements for our old gas boiler, and (b) the technical aspects of installing solar panels, coupled with specific recommendations as appropriate. Carrying out several aspects of the wider maintenance work must proceed relatively soon, and as the costs entailed will inevitably need to be funded through an appeal, that will be the time to seek the money needed to proceed with our projects. We will be doing all we can to make constructive progress in 2024.

Communication

Johannes Dreyer: Thank you to Alex Randolph, who is still managing the St John’s website as a volunteer. The room booking system is working well, making it easier to book a space by sending us an email directly from the St John’s website. This has continued to be useful as we continue to accept many bookings, which are essential revenue for St John’s. James Speakman is in charge of our Facebook account, sharing key information about our exciting music. We still post upcoming events through the Nextdoor and A Church Near You websites, and St John’s are registered on a film hub website which lets location managers know that we may be used for film sets.

Our weekly Newsletter goes out on Thursdays with words of encouragement from William and Serena and currently has 343 subscribers.

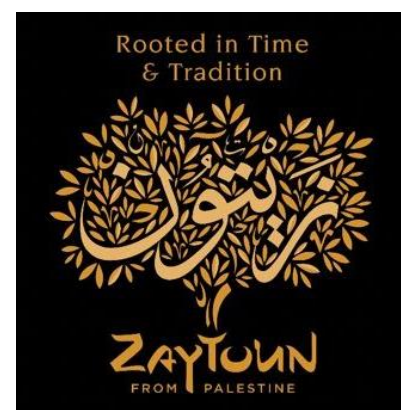
Follow us on X (formerly known as Twitter) and Facebook.

Mission and Outward Giving

Frances Pepys: The financial situation has not improved in any of our lives and in 2023 we have all had to consider our charitable giving. St. John's is no exception but has again provided a venue for charitable events together with arranging special collections at specific times of emergency. As a result of our Parish Lunch, we were able to send a financial donation to the Upper Room at Harvest as well as the food gifts provided by the congregation.

Palestinian Fair-Trade Goods

Caroline Sterling: As part of our mission outreach at St John’s, we sell fair-traded Palestinian goods (imported through Hadeel (www.hadeel.org/), a member of the British Association for Fair Trade, and Zaytoun (www.zaytoun.org/) a member of the World Fair Trade Organisation), a Bedouin Women's Co-operative based in Aizaria (Bethany) just outside East Jerusalem on the first Sunday of every month after the 10.30 a.m. Eucharist, and after other services when it seems appropriate, especially before Advent. They were also sold after the King’s College, London, Advent Carol Services.



As this is written the situation in Gaza and the West Bank is desperate, the increase in sales is one way of showing our support to those struggling. During 2023 we sold over £2,500 worth of goods. The money received from these sales supports' Palestinian families in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and a refugee camp in Lebanon. Sadly, some people were born in Palestinian refugee camps over 40 years ago and continue to live, work, and bring up their families in the camps. The money received from the sale of the craftwork is vital for each family's well-being. The need is great. Embroidery is done by women either in refugee camps or poor, isolated villages, then brought to their own cooperative or other social enterprise for finishing and marketing. Most of the wood carving and jewellery comes from Bethlehem. Oasis, an organisation based in Beit Sahour (near Bethlehem), helps adults with special needs to make cards from recycled paper and candles; other cards are sold in aid of the deaf society in Atfaluna (Gaza) where they also produce pottery (they recently lost their warehouse destroyed). The Lutheran Church has established a centre in Bethlehem to create artefacts out of glass found on the streets, a wonderfully creative use of broken glass. Silver jewellery, made using casts of individual olive leaves so each silver leaf is unique, is also made at this centre. The L'Arche Community located in Bethlehem works with those suffering from intellectual difficulties. They produce felt crafts from natural sheep wool (purchased from local shepherds in the Bethlehem area), small purses, felt cribs, figures and sheep – very popular and camels, all of which we sell. We also have magnets which reproduce some of these figures. A selection from several workshops is on sale on the stall. Olive oil, olive oil soap, za'atar and dates (produced in Palestine and supplied through Zaytoun) are also sold. A wider selection of the goods available can be seen on both the Zaytoun and Hadeel websites as shown above.

Many of the organisations that produce the goods are themselves supporting those less fortunate: the visually impaired, the deaf, and many forms of handicap – physical and mental.

I am most grateful to everyone who has shown support to the Palestinians by continuing to purchase the goods, allowing the Palestinian organizations in turn to support families and communities in need. There are leaflets available for anyone interested in obtaining further information about the various workshops.

Thank you to friends at St John's who have assisted me over the year with setting up, selling and putting away the produce. If anybody would like to join me in this activity regularly I would be delighted to speak to you!

For further details see the St. John's website, under "Fair Trade".

Traidcraft

Jon Burden: After over twenty-five years of supporting developing world producers and campaigning for a more equitable trading system, Traidcraft went into administration in January 2023. Sad as that is in some ways, it also represents a victory: fairly traded products have gone mainstream and are now widely available on the high street. You can continue to support fair-trade products whenever you shop, and not just on the first Sunday of the month.



Jon Burden, Joe Tatton-Brown and Oliver St John thank the congregation for their support over the years. The sale of all our remaining stock raised over £1000. Half of this sum was given to the Mathieson Music Trust for their work in India. The remainder was given to a charity to support research into Parkinson's Disease.

Musicians in Residence

Orpheus Leander Papafilippou: Orpheus Leander Papafilippou - Violin & Orpheus String Quartet & Ensemble, Musicians in Residence

In 2023 we had the great pleasure of performing as a string quartet, piano quintet and also violin, voice and piano ensemble in recitals and concerts at St John's Church Notting Hill.

We saw a return of well-attended concerts with vibrant and positive audiences. St John's is our musical home, sharing this space and its open-hearted approach is a continuing inspiration to us. We hope by bringing people to our concerts we help introduce new people to St John's Church Notting Hill.

Highlights for us were our 3rd March 2023 - Concert in Memory of our late Patron the wonderful Dr Patrick Noronha, it was well attended and we had the chance to perform music Patrick loved and we had performed with him before at St John's including works by Skalkottas - 5 Greek Dances, Dvorak 'American' String Quartet and Elgar Salut D'Amour. Patrick Noronha was for years a major part of our performing life at St John's and so it was fitting to celebrate his life and love of music there.

We were part of a performance of Faure's Requiem on Remembrance Sunday Mass in November, collaborating with the Imperial College Chamber Choir and James Speakman which is always a great joy.

On 15th December our Recital and Christmas Soirée at St John's Notting Hill was a special night and very well attended. There was a palpable feeling of festivity and St John's beautiful acoustics helped the music ring forth.

Going into 2024 it is a great joy to play for Mass at St John's Church Notting Hill and hopefully through our concerts and community work engage more of the local community and those who come from further away and thus bring joy, entertainment and a sense of community to audiences and parishioners at St John's.



Community Payback

William Taylor: The Community Payback Unpaid Work scheme continued in 2023. The contribution of the unpaid offenders to the good order and cleanliness of the church and grounds is immense. The Vicar continued in his role as supervisor of individuals on community payback, on days when there were no supervised programmes. In addition to providing worthwhile work for the participants, the programme makes significant savings for the church's maintenance and cleaning bills, which shows clearly in the accounts for 2023. Often, participants in the programme present useable skills, such as decorating and plumbing.

More importantly, offenders often find it to be a turning point for the better in their lives, through the culture of respect and worthwhile work for which this project has been nationally noted. We sadly report the death of Lidija Armanda in the year.



Health & Safety

At St John's our aim is to provide and maintain a safe environment which allows people to be involved in God's work and celebrate their beliefs without being harmed.

Parish Manager

Johannes Dreyer: I took over the role of Parish Manager from Amanda Feeny in the last quarter of 2023.

The role requires one to multi-task daily, balancing liturgical, pastoral, administrative and financial tasks on the one side, and on the other side, dealing face-to-face with the clergy, parishioners, hirers and the public. Last but not least, ensuring the building itself is given the love and attention it deserves.

To make this possible, we are very reliant on our lettings. The total income from lettings in 2023 was £142,720. This amount comprised of Undercroft lettings (£84,160) and Sacred Gallery, Nave and meeting rooms lettings (£58,560).

The regular lettings for 2023 were:

- The Acorn Nursery School (Undercroft)
- Kensington Ballet (Sacred Space Gallery)
- Chelsea Young Writers- Creative Writing group for children (Undercroft and Salomon Room)
- Al-Anon (Undercroft)
- Caterpillar Music (Sacred Space Gallery)
- Teddy's Playhouse (Sacred Space Gallery)
- Monkey Music (Sacred Space Gallery)
- Ukrainian Saturday Group (The Nave)

The occasional lettings for 2023 were:

- Saturdays we rent the Undercroft out for birthday parties
- Various concerts and events hosted in The Nave.
- Ladbroke Square Gardens - monthly committee meeting (Spalding Room)
- Pines & Needles (in the grounds)

My main aim for 2024 ahead is to increase income through lettings and to reduce our spending.

The Café at St John's

The Café at St John's came under new management in 2023. Craig McAlpine serves the local community with high quality food made daily from scratch with fresh ingredients. The menu is designed to accommodate a variety of dietary preferences. The café reports increasing use since opening a year ago. The café is committed to zero food waste and follows appropriate sustainability protocol in all its practices where possible. The café is open Monday - Friday 9.15am-4.15pm to accommodate morning and evening prayer.



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