

ST MARK'S CHURCH BROOMHILL & BROOMHALL

Annual Report 2022



www.stmarkssheffield.co.uk

Broomfield Road, Broomhill, Sheffield, S10 2SE

The Diocese of Sheffield

Charity No. 011287558

 St Mark's Broomhill and Broomhall living thinking loving faith

Vicar's Report

Sue Hammersley

Life at St Mark's is beginning to open up again. Looking around the congregation it is wonderful to see so many new faces although it is also sad to realise how many of our older members are now unable to attend services in the building.

Over the last year people have asked when we will be returning to "normal" and I keep reflecting that we won't be going "back" to the way things used to be, we will be moving forward, maintaining all those things which are valuable to this community but allowing ourselves to drop some things which we can no longer support or sustain.

During 2021 we spent a lot of time assessing the safety of services in the building and learning how to offer hybrid services so that those who are at home can be fully involved in our worship. This continues to be challenging but it is something we are committed to continuing because it is of such importance to those who find it difficult or impossible to come to the building, either temporarily or permanently. I am proud of the way that we listened to the needs of different groups within the church, older people, families, those who were shielding and those who were desperate to return to worship in the building. At times those needs clashed but I believe that we have shown that we are open to trying things out and responding to feedback.

Over the course of 2021 a small working group met several times, with a consultant, to consider our priorities as a church. This proved to be a difficult exercise but I want to share with you what emerged. We tried to consider our aims and objectives but found ourselves going round in circles. We came back to our existing strapline: "Living, Thinking, Loving Faith" and decided that this was a clear expression of our vision. We expanded upon it in this way:

St Mark's embodies a LIVING - THINKING - LOVING - FAITH

A LIVING FAITH which is inclusive, vibrant & engaged

**A THINKING FAITH which engages with scripture,
tradition, reason & experience**

A LOVING FAITH which serves our communities by following Jesus

We looked at how it might be applied to the role of each of our PCC working groups.

- CHYPS – Children, Young People and Students
- Communications
- Fabric & Finance
- Hospitality & Pastoral Care
- *(Social Justice – this group is being reviewed)*
- Study & Learning
- Worship & Prayer

Each group needs to consider their own Aims and Objectives and how their work enables the church to fulfil our vision. This Annual Report offers an opportunity for the groups to share what they are doing. There is work to do in 2022 to make this even clearer but you can be assured that the people who are involved in these groups on your behalf are committed to an outward-looking church where our faith and service continue to grow.

Our priorities for 2022 are to strengthen these seven working groups, to find ways of developing our partnership with the mission area, to clarify the roles which lay people play in this church and involve as many of you as possible in the life of the church, to speak up for the values which are at the heart of our faith and to grow in confidence and deepen our faith. Each and every one of us has a part to play here so please talk to a member of the PCC if you have any questions or want to get more involved.

I am proud of the way that we are modelling church as a community where every member is valued and would like to thank you for being a part of this vibrant church.

Churchwarden's reports

James Oliver

At long last we returned to regular services in Church during 2021 whilst still providing Zoom services demonstrating people's ability and ingenuity to carry on and overcome. This blended offering represents in part St Mark's welcoming and inclusive approach to our worship.

This year has been my first time of doing live Churchwarden duties that has included opening windows to improve ventilation and letting in cold winter air – please accept my apologies. As a result of being able to get out and about I have attended more services at a variety of times, attended training led by the Archdeacons of Sheffield and Doncaster and as a result spoken to different groups of interesting people.

St Mark's has also returned to being an excellent venue for live music that is welcomed by performers, audience and members of the PCC who are responsible for our financial stability. We should continue to encourage more groups to enjoy and get to know this facility.

As Churchwarden, I appreciate the part played by many volunteers in the church and we are thankful for the faithful work of those who have given their time and efforts in the past and continue to do so.

We continue to work with St Mary's and St John's in the Mission area with one example being Dementia Friendly Churches and have recently benefitted from training. A Mission Area Songs of Praise will be held at St Mark's in May.

In a period of confusing change and disruption, St Mark's church and its community are a wonderful refuge.

Dilys Noble

I found St Mark's church as a student in the sixties, I was married here, had four children baptised here, was involved with mostly youth activities and latterly was an assistant warden. I thought this prepared me for being a proper warden! My year has been a steep learning curve, not just in my new role but with the community emerging from lockdown to a new "normal", with a whole spectrum of ideas as to how to live with Covid. A national major challenge leaves us craving to return to church as before but knowing we cannot go back. Roles are rewritten and sometimes combined as not everyone feels safe to return.

According to the warden manual the role is Management, Maintenance and Mission, support of the clergy, guardians of the fabric and property and welcoming to all comers. We have a duty to represent the congregation, coordinate with the vicar, set a good example to the parishioners, encourage unity and maintain order and peace in the church. I am unlikely to need to intervene in physical fisticuffs but St Mark's congregation is made up of highly intelligent thinking caring people with diverse views, from whom I am learning every day.

We have a duty to the clergy to ensure appropriate time off and that holidays are taken - they are an endangered species. This hit me at the Church Wardens' conference in November when every warden who chose to speak was from a church without an incumbent and there were so many. We are indeed fortunate to have truly wonderful clergy and care for them.

It has been a pleasure to try to fulfil this role and serve St Mark's community.

PCC

PCC

Dilys Noble, churchwarden

- St Mark's emerged from Covid lockdown; new on the PCC were Nana, Emma and myself. Zoom services continued, a small congregation returned to the building with all the constraints and tensions involved, booking, masks, hand sanitising, social distancing.
- The consultation document underlined the vast range of opinion and feeling among the congregation recovering from Covid. PCC task to make the church accessible to all; new zoom cameras installed for those not ready to return to the building; a families only service; slow introduction of the reduced choir, no congregation singing at first and gradually emerging to cautious coffee and a shared lunch by harvest.
- The Strategy group identified what makes St Mark's, our priorities and realistic goals. Post Covid - doing the same is not an option!
- Recruitment for a Liberal Theologian and an Operations Coordinator, new titles and remits.
- Our families and children's worker post made permanent, and Sarah Rose welcomed as Hannah's maternity cover.
- Goodbye to Caitlin our Curate and Sarah Rousseau our office manager and hello to Beth Keith our Liberal Theologian and Zoe Varcoe Operations coordinator
- David Willington recruited a composer in residence Wilf Dingle and organ scholar James Caroe
- The summer saw a limited return of the Broomhill Festival event on the green. St Mark's funded the Green Top Circus which was a huge success.
- We declared a climate emergency.

PCCs big headache - money: Covid has seen losses and gains in the congregation, and heating remains a headache. An optimistic deficit budget set, the 'Collectin' instituted in lieu of the customary collection plate. The most appropriate use of our legacies was considered, identifying a fund for training both clergy and laity. PCC sanctioned necessary repairs and upgrades highlighted in the Quinquennial report on the building, we had praise for looking after St Mark's well! Mindful of money saving strategies, the parish weekend away is reduced to a parish weekend at home with church sleepover. We continue to pay our employees a living wage, honour our parish share and donate 10% of church income to charities at home and abroad. St Mark's watch this space!

Church Office

Zoë Varcoe

By the time you're reading this I will have been in post as operations coordinator for 6 months. It has flown by; I'm enjoying the challenges of the role and working with the team to ensure the smooth running of the day to day. Thanks to everyone who has supported me in my learning.

As well as administrative tasks, this newly created position also has me looking at how we can streamline processes in the church. So far this is going well, there is a one stop page for notices on the website, we are working on communication so that we can get the right information to the right audiences and to eliminate the duplication of work. Our current ongoing project is updating and collating congregational contacts and storing them in line with current guidelines, so do expect to hear from me soon regarding this.

Another important part of the role is securing room bookings. Since Covid restrictions have been eased we are getting more regular bookings. Unfortunately, due to ill health the Hallamshire Hearties who have been meeting weekly in the upper room since the 90s stopped coming, however we have a new monthly booking for a clarinet ensemble and hopefully weekly amateur radio group. This project is ongoing, and we hope it continues to be a much needed, steady and reliable income stream for the church.

Caretaking

Tim Moore

Over the past year, John and I have continued to clean and maintain the building through the shifting guidelines of the UK government's response to the pandemic. As that advice has lurched towards being more open, we have had to change how we manage the transition while preserving the safety of all who use the building.

Last summer the architect toured the church for the Quinquennial Inspection, noting everything that needed attention. The list of works carried out since the last inspection was produced by the caretaker and ran for several pages in the final report.

Much of the usual projects continued through the year, such as the work on the railings, which was boosted by the introduction of an angle grinder with a wire cup brush. There were also various upgrades and relocations of the audio-visual technology in the meeting rooms, which will hopefully make the building more attractive to hire. The batteries for all the radio microphones will be replaced by rechargeables, with a testing system designed by David Taylor. Leaks were repaired in the flat roof and parapet of the upper room. Wiring for the external flood lights was replaced as recommended by the last electrical inspection.

For the year ahead, we will hopefully be welcoming more groups to use the building and managing their needs with the requirements of the worship community, while also still maintaining the safe practice of our own response to the pandemic.

Mission Area

Sue Hammersley

During 2021 our partnership between St Mark's, St John's Ranmoor and St Mary's Walkley strengthened. Sue and Matthew were licensed to St Mary's as priest-in-charge and associate priest respectively and have established a pattern of worship at St Mary's which maintains their distinctiveness whilst supporting their eucharistic vocation.



St Mark's and St Mary's have shared Lent Groups, Living in Love and Faith and worship during periods of lockdown.

In the autumn of 2021 Lizzie Ilsley went on placement to St Mary's Walkley as part of her ordination training.

In 2022 St Mary's is aiming to appoint an administrator which will help to resource the partnership between the three churches and look for ways to share resources more effectively.

Churches together in Broomhill and Broomhall

Sue Hammersley

During 2021 the Executive Committee continued to bring the official workings of CTBB to a close, ending the work of Claire Brookes, the Worker with Older People and holding its final AGM. The arrangement with the Church of England Pension Scheme has now officially ended and the assets of the organisation are being distributed between The Broomhall Girls' Group and Ben's Centre which works with the same clientele as the Broomhall Breakfast.

Broomhall Girls Group

Sara Ahmed

This past year has been about building the girl's self-esteem and confidence in a space to express themselves. The aim was to create a space within the sessions that looked at how they could express their opinions, build confidence in their ability to make positive decisions and have realistic expectations to avoid being overcritical of themselves and each other.

The girls created 'Girl-Talk'. We sit and talk, and they can express themselves without judging each other. Most of the girls are currently in year 11, so I spent some sessions coming up with tailored made study sessions for the girls and marking past papers. The girls are still involved in the club book and have managed to meet to discuss books such as Clap when You Land in person and create new friendships with other girls.

An issue that became apparent to me was that the girls were hungry and often said there wouldn't be food for them when they got home. Food is vital of the session girls usually pick out meals and look at the nutritional benefits.

The trustees trust me to come up with a session and see what is essential. Their support gives me confidence in seeing what is needed for the girls and ensure I am constantly creating sessions with the girls at the forefront.

Parish Safeguarding

Duncan Lennox

As I understand it, my main responsibilities are to liaise with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and pass on any safeguarding concerns and to provide advice on safeguarding issues to the PCC and clergy, as appropriate. I am not therefore 'in charge' of all safeguarding issues in the church

Sue Hammersley is now the clergy lead on safeguarding. Sarah Jenkins is Safeguarding Administrator dealing with DBS and keeping training records. In the absence of Hannah Jones, Sarah Rose dealt with safeguarding issues as Children and Families Worker. Cath Williamson has become involved in issues relating to vulnerable adults and has updated the Lunch Club safeguarding policy. Jane Padget remains the Domestic Abuse Officer.

A meeting in September 2021 reviewed safeguarding policies and considered safeguarding issues for the various groups.

DBS checking is a slow and onerous process.

We are trying to compile our own records showing DBS and training status. The latter is necessary to ensure that people have done training as we have no ability to access CofE records. So this relies on people feeding back to Sarah Jenkins. We rely greatly on people doing their training promptly and giving feedback. It would be good to have a more efficient system

Happily, I have not had to pass on any safeguarding concerns to the DSA in the past year nor have there been any safeguarding concerns which I needed to raise with the PCC

Children, Young People and Students

CHYPS

Lynn Pocock

By April 2021 we had arranged a timetable which seemed to suit families as covid restrictions eased marginally. Online “check-in” times for families preceded the main online worship. Gatherings on the Green continued on the second Sunday and our 4pm T-Time service on the 4th Sunday also remained outdoors.

From August – February we welcomed Sarah Rose as temporary cover while Hannah was on maternity leave.



A word from Sarah Rose:

From August 2021 to February 2022, I covered the role of Children and Families Worker for Hannah Jones. During this time, a new pattern was established for Sunday mornings. This included two Sundays for children's groups, or Sunday for gathering on the green, and one Sunday for a 4pm intergenerational service. This mix aimed to provide for those people who were keen to return to pre-covid worship, but also offered opportunities for those who wanted to stick with outdoor worship. The return to holding creche/Godly Play/lions was very well-received.

This period also saw the re-starting of b-tots on Thursday afternoons, and numbers have been steadily increasing since September. It also saw many members of the wider congregation take part in the annual Posada during Advent.



From September we began to re-establish Sunday groups in church while continuing with Gathering on the Green and outdoors 4pm intergenerational T-time. The mix was intended to enable families to avail themselves of indoor services if they so wished but also catered for those who did not. The Christingle Service, at the beginning of December was held indoors but we kept the Christmas Eve Nativity outdoors on the Green as it had been such a success in an outdoor setting. The Posada was again done online with even more families choosing to take part.

Sarah also resumed Thursday afternoon B-tots and numbers have been steadily increasing.

Recently year 5, 6 and 7 children were invited to bake cookies at the Olivers' home for Mothers' Day. At this successful venture it was decided we would try to meet with this group of young people every half term on a Sunday afternoon.

At the end of April the young people in year 8 and above have been invited to join with young people at St John's Ranmoor for four Sunday afternoon sessions called “The Big Question”. This will be led by Matt Wood who is the curate at St John's. For those who wish it can lead to Confirmation.

At a recent CHYPS meeting it was decided to take a pause with the T-time Service while we consider how best to move forward with this provision. In terms of volunteers, we have managed to recruit new leaders and helpers for the Creche but are still hoping for volunteers to assist on the door with Godly Play, or even eventually take a lead.

Thank you to Izzi Graves for starting up “Coffee After Coffee” a fortnightly group for Young Adults

Communications

Communications, Website and Social Media

Zoë Varcoe

Covid 19 has pushed us to do increasing amounts online, and this has also been true of St Mark's. Since the pandemic we have moved to a digital notice sheet and have created the Friday email with over 300 subscribers, both of which mean that current information is more easily accessible.

I am also working to make sure that the website itself is easy to use, as it holds a lot of information, meaning that sometimes specific details can become lost. I would like to improve its usability ensuring there is a clear pathway for people who already come to St Mark's and for those who may be thinking about attending, wondering what we stand for, or wanting to get involved.

A communication working group has also been established to work on our comms strategy. We have been looking at exactly who our audience is, what information needs to be shared with them and how they can receive that. This has been important to the vision of the website, and we also hope to improve our social media presence. One way that we are aiming to do this is to update our Facebook page to include more faces and stories of St Mark's and the people involved, rather than just containing information. It is hoped that this will help us engage more with the wider community and will encourage participation.

Mark's Messenger

Dez Martin

Last year's Messenger report began by saying we were proud that despite the disruption caused by Covid the Messenger hadn't missed a single edition – and, one year on, that continues to be the case. Indeed, producing copies in electronic form has on occasion allowed us to produce longer editions than usual.

Sadly, at the beginning of 2022, we said goodbye to two members of our editorial team, Rob Wilks and Joe Forde, both of whom have produced some excellent editions since joining the team. We thank them wholeheartedly for their hard work and the massive contributions they have made to the magazine. We hope they will submit occasional articles to future editions.

Their departure has inevitably left the team (Margot Fox, Frances Gray, Dez Martin and Shan Rush) somewhat depleted. Thanks to Shan Rush for stepping into the breach temporarily. We would welcome input from members of the congregation, whether to join the editorial team long-term or just to edit a single edition or contribute an occasional article. The more editors we have, the lighter the load falling on individual team members' shoulders.

The changes to the editorial team and the gradual return to some sort of normality perhaps make this a good moment to reflect on the content of the magazine. We would love to receive suggestions about how we can improve the offering, what you would like to see in the magazine and whether you prefer to read paper or electronic copies.



*One of my favourite photos from last year's Messenger
(See the Dec. 2021 edition)*

Fabric and Finance

Fabric matters

Briony Tayler

Last year I mentioned the Quinquennial Inspection, which took place last May. Architect Richard Brook produced a thorough and well-illustrated report, the recommendations in which we are working through. They include commissioning a professional survey of the asbestos in the building, which was reassuring in some measure and is a useful source of reference. The next task is to replace slipped and broken slates, which will happen shortly.

The double - glazing project came to a standstill when our proposal was returned for further consideration. However, following a visit by members of the Diocesan Advisory Committee we can pursue our plans, with additional reference to bodies who oversee new work in old churches.

In the grounds two trees will soon be removed – one with fungal damage and the other broken during recent storms. They have already been replaced.

I must highlight the work of Shelagh Marston, who keeps the Memorial Garden looking lovely. During the pandemic, many have spent their time relaxing in the grounds.

The building is beginning to show its age, so repairs and improvements are constantly required. These have included repairs to the lift – not yet complete—and to the flat roof and the roof lights upstairs which were letting in water.

Recently several windows near the choir stalls were broken but were quickly repaired at moderate cost.

We think a lot about the sustainability and efficiency of the building. Tim Moore and David Tayler recently installed insulation above the ceiling of the Den and we hope to add some above the Upper Room.

I must record my grateful thanks to all members of the F and F group – Sue H, James Oliver, David Armstrong, Robin Saunders, David Ryder, Sandra Newton, Peter Ryder and Martin Godley. They bring a wealth of experience to our decisions, and as a non-expert their contributions are invaluable. I must pay particular tribute to Sandra, who is stepping down after a number of years on the Group, and who has brought an eye for detail and an incisive mind to our meetings.

Tim Moore's caretaking skills have been much in evidence – he is quick to identify problems and saves us time and money by his ability to repair or replace. He and John also do a fine job keeping the building and grounds clean and tidy for all to enjoy.

Legacies

David Ryder

St Mark's has been fortunate and blessed in recent years to receive several generous legacies from departed church members totaling approximately £420,000. Nearly all were unconditional enabling the PCC to decide how best to utilise them. The Legacies Sub-Group of the Finance and Fabric Committee was set up in 2017 to assist with this.

Over the years, the Group has met periodically as needed and recommended several projects utilising legacy monies including the existing social house investment, provision of new AV equipment, partly funding the family worker and music outreach costs and several fabric and Eco related projects. In the last twelve months the Group has made recommendations to F&F and the PCC as noted below.

The Mainland / Stamper Bursary funds were set up some years ago to support young persons development and lay and clergy training respectively. The funds have been under-utilised in recent years and increased in value to around £60,000. Consequently, to assist church's current financial

needs, it was decided to place £50,000 on investment with the income therefrom supporting the General Fund and the balance retained for Bursary use which will be reviewed annually.

Approximately £100,000 had previously been allocated to purchase a second social investment property. However, factors such as the Pandemic and lack of suitable properties caused this to be postponed and therefore, for the time being, the funds have also been invested to assist the current needs of the General Fund.

Approximately £25,000 of legacy monies remained unallocated at the end of last year although likely to be earmarked towards various planned fabric projects.



Faith and Justice

Social Justice

Sue Hammersley

Although we do not have an active Social Justice Group at the moment, in 2021 the St Mark's Environment Group grew in confidence and started working on our Gold Eco Church award;

International and Home Donations Groups discussed the organisations they would like to support and arranged fund-raising events for Christian Aid and PHASE; our Vicar, Sue, continued to support the community at St Cuthbert's Fir Vale which hugely appreciates the way in which St Mark's has come alongside them at this time.

We know that there are members of St Mark's active within several organisations, Church Action on Poverty, SYMAAG, ASSIST and Amnesty International to name just a few, and we look forward to a time when we can become more actively involved in community projects which tackle the causes of poverty, inequality and injustice.

Home Donations

Chris Ware

The Home Donations Group met once in December. Judy Robinson, our former Chair, resigned owing to other pressures and the PCC asked me to take over. We send our thanks and best wishes to Judy. We followed principles agreed in her time.

We aim to promote social justice and well-being and to tackle need, particularly in Sheffield. This year we had £11,220 to allocate, compared with £8,000 last year.

As in 2020, we gave some priority to projects within our parish. Among our new projects were Sheffield Mind, which supports those with mental health issues, the Young Women's Housing Project, which supports young women affected by sexual abuse, Sheffield Churches Council for Community Care who focus on care for those of us who are older, and the Open Kitchen Social Club, which provides lunch for asylum seekers and others every Monday at St Andrews.

We allocated the £11,220 as follows:

Broomhall Girls Youth Group	£1,000
ASSIST (destitute asylum seekers)	£1,000
Citizens Advice Sheffield	£1,000
Sheffield Mind	£695
Archer Project	£1,000
Ben's Centre	£1,000
Broomhall Centre	£500
S6 Food Bank	£500
S2 Food Bank	£500
Carers Centre Hardship Fund	£1,000
Sheffield Churches Council for Community Care	£1,000
Open Kitchen Social Club	£1,000
Young Women's Housing Project	£1,000
Church Action on Poverty (subscription)	£25

St Mark's International donations

Dilys Noble

A huge thank you to St Mark's for maintaining its generosity and donating £11220.00 to overseas charities. As in previous years we have divided this equally between 10 charities with which St Mark's has a personal link.

We continue to support:

SUCCOL education in Colombia (Dez and Jennie Martin and Robin Saunders)

Reach Bwindi Ceri Alamsetti supports a hospital in Uganda

Phaseworldwide a charity I am a trustee and medical mentor for, delivering health, education and livelihood opportunities to remote communities in Nepal.

Omid a charity supporting women in Iran that Manuch is in touch with

Practical Action An international charity that started as Intermediate Technology but now works in development in resource poor countries including India and Nepal. I have seen their road building programme in Nepal and houses in whole villages fitted with chimneys.

Literacy for Life supports a small school in Ghana a charity founded by Rosie Hunt after spending a year working there.

Global justice now works to challenge the powerful and create a more just world. During the pandemic it has campaigned relentlessly for drug companies to suspend vaccine patents to allow the world to be equably vaccinated. A Charity much valued by the late Roy Barry.

USPG Works mainly through established churches throughout the world to alleviate poverty and strongly supported by Michael Bayley.

Care4Calais supports refugees stranded at Calais. Manuch has organised collections of clothes and other necessities and delivery to the refugees there.



Christian Aid- Everyone!

In addition to the £1122.00 from the church income we raised £1312.00 through "deliver only envelopes" in the parish during Christian Aid Week, thanks to our envelope deliverers and house receivers. Ceri's brainwave of a virtual Lands End to John O'Groats raised £2270.00 from the congregation and friends; Virtual Busk Aid city wide raised £900.00 with 2 items from St. Marks. Unfortunately, we have no way of knowing how much St Mark's own E -envelope raised. We sent a small amount raised at the Harvest lunch to Christian Aid.

On Sundays during Advent we sold £700.00 worth of charity Christmas Cards in church and encouraged the congregation to Write for Rights to Amnesty's political prisoners.

Now our thoughts are concentrating on Ukraine with a weekly bucket collection after church and how to support a refugee family. We welcome everyone to join us with this venture.

Environment group

Margaret Ainger

The focus for the first part of the year was to campaign for COP26 to be given the utmost priority nationally. We wrote a letter of support to Alok Sharma in his role as COP26 president thanking him for the efforts he was making and telling him he was supported in our prayers. We challenged Rishi Sunak as Chancellor to publish the Treasury funding plan for the Net Zero Strategy ahead of COP, to give weight to the UK commitment – and received a reply that this would be done. We contacted other eco-churches and urged them to do likewise. We rang the church bell for COP, alongside many other churches and cathedrals in the UK and overseas. And we displayed a banner to show our support to the community.



Post COP, we are looking to renew our local focus, maintain the profile of caring for God's Earth and find ways to encourage each other and share the good things we are all trying to do to live in a more sustainable way. We hope you have enjoyed our Messenger articles and found our Eco-tips helpful? Our recent congregation survey will help us involve you more in the things that are important to you at the moment and we hope you will be happy to share successes (and perhaps failures) with others. We will do all this within the framework of Eco-church and hope to obtain the Gold award within the year. Look out for Earth Shot Broomhill, as our festival theme – coming up soon.

Pastoral Care & Hospitality

Pastoral Care

Shan Rush

Pastoral Care continues to be both a challenge and a joy. It's impossible for our clergy team to maintain contact with everyone and so we are extremely grateful for the informal networks and friendships which continue to develop and evolve. Thank you.

Every one of us has a responsibility to care for others – it's part of being the Body of Christ. The majority of the work is hidden, happens in informal and unplanned ways and is greatly appreciated. These committed relationships reflect the love of God and embrace a wide range of activity in support of one another both within the church and more widely in our local communities.

Some of you are called to provide pastoral care in more focussed ways – being part of the welcome team in the building or on Zoom, the card group, home Communion, hospitality after services or to people in their home, offering lifts, crafting blankets and shawls, ministry in our local care homes which has resumed in two homes, the Julian Prayer group.

A few are called and gifted to resource, lead or co-ordinate the work of pastoral care in planned, structured and formalised way such as the working party established to co-ordinate our response to the refugee crisis following the war in Ukraine, lunch club, facilitating small groups. Pastoral care is happening, but who are we inadvertently missing? Could you help facilitate the support we are able to offer so we can reach more people with this vital ministry?

Whatever you are able to offer, Thank you.

Lunch & Friendship Club

Rosalind Rogerson

The year has divided itself into two distinct parts – before and after our return to active Wednesdays. Lockdown was clearly defined in terms of what we could not do. Our regular pandemic newsletter *Let's Connect* continued to keep members and helpers in touch. Telephone calls were frequent and appreciated.

“Back to normal” is turning out to be much more “wooly”, with many questions. We received advice and a generous grant from the Voluntary Sector Liaison Team at the Town Hall. Treading with the utmost caution, Lunch Club began to meet again on 7 July. This was far from “Back to normal”. Those who returned numbered about half of our pre-pandemic membership. Several members have died, some have moved into residential care and others have become too frail to return. With distancing guidelines observed, we have not yet begun to build up our numbers; we offer shawls and knee rugs to combat open windows and doors! But there is a renewed enthusiasm for being together again.

Let's Connect reached its final issue, number 20, in September, with a special *Two Whole Years* edition appearing recently. With the disbanding of Churches Together in Broomhill and Broomhall, we said goodbye to Community Worker, Claire Brooks, a good friend to the club for several years. We are grateful to Transport 17 once more and wish to thank David Ryder who audits our accounts. We remember with affection and respect those who have died during the year: Mary Tattersall, a cook for twenty years, and members Pamela Hall, Joyce Burgess, Peggy Faulkner and Sandra Bower.

Craft, Coffee and Cake group

Jennie Martin

Having met on zoom since the early days of the pandemic, we were delighted to relaunch the knitting group as a craft group where we have coffee and cake in October 2021, meeting as before 10.30 to 12 noon on the first Saturday in the month. This is great for those able to meet in person, but missed some who were unable or unwilling to venture out. So we have tried to have a hybrid event, but it has only been marginally successful.

We have made more prayer shawls and recently, lap blankets for the knees of people coming to the Lunch Club! During last autumn, we made sea creatures (fish, crabs, and starfish) which we attached to banners and sent for display in Glasgow at COP26.

We have been very grateful for donations of wool and yarn – some really beautiful examples we weave into our work.

Please call in and join us. You don't need to knit, sew or crochet – just drop in for a chat!



Parish Weekend

Shan Rush

In September 2021 we were due to go away to Swannick for our Parish Weekend. With Coronavirus still uppermost in many minds and anxiety about whether the weekend would go ahead, we decided instead to have a Parish Day at home. With the theme of “Reconnecting with self, others and God” it was an event to welcome people back to church with the morning being held indoors and the afternoon on the green.



Opportunities to chat, be creative, sing and pray together interspersed with refreshments provided by our Persian Community proved to be a great success. A new altar frontal was produced using the leaves people painted. It became a bridge to an event this year which will be a full Parish weekend at home and will be held from September 16th – 18th. Save the date and watch out for publicity and the chance to get your booking in early. If last years was anything to go by, you won't regret it!

Study and Learning

Study and Learning Group

John Schofield

Apart from our usual activity of keeping an encouraging eye on all that is going on at St Mark's in the whole area of study and learning, we have been involved in three major activities

- In the autumn four groups met across the Mission Area to look at the *Living in Love and Faith* Course, three in person and one online. A variety of feedback has been given to the central group responsible for the process.
- Arising out of this, the group has convened itself separately to look at how we as a church can respond to some of the issues raised by the course. We are beginning with a look at what an appropriate Christian sexual ethic looks like for the twenty first century. We aim to produce short pamphlets (both on paper and online) addressing this and other questions with a rigorous, open and questioning basis (theologically, biblically, philosophically and ethically). This work has only just started and will be ongoing.
- Promoting the Lent Course *Singing the Lord's song in a strange land*. Study groups looking at this have been drawn from St Mark's, St Mary's and the Manor Parish. We have been delighted to welcome Beth Keith as a member of the group and look forward to working with her in developing and mounting a series of seminars on various topics. If anyone else would like to join the group, please have a conversation with me.

Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land



By the waters of Babylon – Evelyn De Morgan

By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down
and there we wept when we remembered ...
How could we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

Lent 2022

Library

Maureen Bownas

I am very happy to report that the library is now open for lending. I have already started checking on books that were borrowed pre covid, which means back in 2019 and early 2020. It is too early to know if there are any books which are 'missing' from our shelves. It will take quite a lot of hours to chase outstanding books and then do a stock-check. But I have started work and the congregation have been asked to return any outstanding books as soon as possible.

Our usual Sunday morning congregation are already familiar with the borrowing procedures in place and it is just the Sunday evenings and other groups who are encouraged to borrow books, at the same time to enter all details in the Yellow Folder on the library table, where lapses in security may arise. I am very keen to allow access to the library at all times. I do think that books should be in the hands of a reader and not on our shelves, but it is important, that we have a tracking system in place. I have already bought five second hand books for the library. All recommended and reviewed in The Messenger.

There has been an enthusiastic response from our 9 volunteers to re-open the library and I am very grateful to them all. Without such a dedicated team, it would be impossible to run the library as we do.

Worship

Book of Common Prayer Communion

Shan Rush

The 8am service took the greatest “hit” during the pandemic with services reducing down from weekly to once a month on Zoom. Gradually it has started to rebuild and services are now being held in the building on the second and fourth Sundays in the month. A review of attendance on Zoom showed dwindling numbers once the service was back in the building so following consultation with those who attend, the agreement is that we will only offer Zoom for major festivals or celebrations such as Easter and Christmas. The community is a small but committed one who really value the beauty of its language, the traditional form of prayer and the familiar passages of scripture and who miss the focal point of a weekly service. Our aim is to continue to build up the frequency of services once we can resource it in a sustainable way. The congregation are playing their part in this, organising wardens and readers, many of whom are becoming involved for the first time. We all look forward to the time when we can once again commit to a weekly service.

Parish Eucharist

Sue Hammersley

During the pandemic we have had to adapt our morning worship to ever-changing circumstances and now we have adopted a new way of being church which is recognisable from what we did before but not exactly the same. We are fortunate to have a large and airy space in which to meet and our churchwarden are keeping us safe within that space. We now rely on the screen rather than printed booklets so that we can worship in the building and online together. Although we occasionally experience glitches, it is wonderful that there are people willing to operate the PowerPoint from home to help us worship together.

Over the last couple of years we have all struggled with the way that the congregation seemed to split into different groups – some of us only felt comfortable outside, others would only come to smaller services and some have chosen not to come back to the building yet. We continue to share the Eucharist with dipped wafers and sanitised hands and, for now, that feels safe enough.

Thank you to everyone who is involved in the Parish Eucharist, up front and behind the scenes, especially the Welcome Teams and wardens, flower arrangers, those operating the sound desk or Zoom, our readers and intercessors and my colleagues on the ministry team. It is a real team effort, thank you!



Night Service

Beth Keith

I'd like to begin with a big thank you to everyone who has supported Night Service this year. When I began at St Mark's in October 2021 Night Service attendance had dwindled to half a dozen meeting on zoom. In the last six months we have started meeting in the church building weekly, with some services also on zoom. We have grown in numbers attending, including new people joining the church, and usually there are between 10-30 people who attend.

Our monthly pattern starts with a communion on the first Sunday of the month. The second Sunday focusses on prayer and meditation, often using Celtic liturgies and silence. On the third Sunday there is a well established Taize Service, that attracts both St Mark's members and those from further afield. Night Services on the fourth Sunday are set around different themes and tend to be a space for creativity. When there is a fifth Sunday, we offer a quiet service on the theme of healing.

This year we have had special services on hope, healthcare/healing, meditation and wellbeing. Next term we are planning services on poetry, spiritual journaling, and exploring apophatic spirituality. There is now a growing group of people who help to lead the service and volunteer with refreshments and sound/AV. Over the next year we hope to continue to grow, establishing teams of volunteers and leaders, and a deeper sense of community.



Thursday mid-day Communion

Shan Rush

The Thursday mid-day Communion is one of our success stories from the pandemic. Pre pandemic, there were frequently only 2 or 3 people attending in the building. The move to Zoom brought new members who have formed a welcoming and supportive community of up to 9 people including a former member of St Mark's who maintains her connection from Ireland. We continue to use the liturgy based on the Celtic Tradition and to overcome the effects of time lag as a result of us being so dispersed, we have 3 main roles – President, reader and leader of the responses, rotating the reader and leader of responses each week so everyone is involved. We continue to focus on issues around climate change on the first Thursday in the month. Prayers are offered for any person or situation we have been asked to pray for as well as for anything troubling us on that day. After the service we often continue to chat for up to half an hour, enjoying one another's company and putting the world to rights! All are welcome.

Morning and Evening Prayer

Shan Rush

As clergy, we commit to praying morning and evening prayer. It was an area I personally struggled with until the pandemic, when we instigated Morning Prayer at 9 am and Evening Prayer at 5 pm, Monday to Friday, on Zoom. Having the structure in place, I have found it much easier to commit to joining a small number of people who gather to pray together and it offered me a starting point and ending point for the day. In the mornings we use the Common Worship Morning Prayer which gives us a sense of uniting our prayer with the perpetual prayer of others within the Anglican Communion. In the evening we adopt the gentler and more meditative Evening Prayer from the Northumbrian Community. An important part of these times is the few minutes we spend in silence, praying for members of our congregation and those on our weekly prayer list. For some who live alone, it's become a space to check in, to know that someone will be there. There's something comforting about knowing that whether we pray alone or with others, we keep one another in mind and can reach out to one another.

The Sacristy

Lu Skerratt-Love

The St Mark's Sacristan is a bit of a behind the scenes job, quite literally, this role means I spend much of the time *behind the action* – in the vestry. You'd be forgiven in thinking sacristy means linen and candles (because a lot of it is!) but really, it's about keeping the tangible aspect of our liturgical and collective worship going, silently and without fuss.

These are the kind of things I get up to:

- changing the altar frontals for each shift in the liturgical year
- ordering all the different kinds of 'stuff' we might need to keep services going – you want special candles, stones, rope, ribbons? You name it, I can find it!
- Washing, ironing and keeping an eye on the linen
- lots of tidying up!
- keeping an eye on what appears in the vestry!
- polishing the silver and brassware
- replacing candles (there are a LOT in the church!)
- setting up before and tidying up after the Eucharist

If this list sounds like something you'd like to get involved in, please do get in touch – I'm looking for an assistant sacristan who can commit to a few hours a week!



Music

David Willington

It's been great to get back to more-or-less normal music making. As restrictions have relaxed nationally, we've expanded what we've done musically from a few singers and no congregational singing, to a full choir with congregational singing. We've also increased the amount of music we sing from 3 hymns with no more than 3 verses to 4 hymns with all the verses, settings, anthems, introits and more.

We've welcomed a lot of new members to the choir since coming back to worship in the church building. Several people have joined the choir, either as long-time members of the congregation who fancy doing more singing or as people new to St Mark's. It's meant we've been able to tackle more music and more ambitious music. We're a non-auditioning choir and anyone that would like to join is welcome to.

We've appointed James Caroe as organ scholar until summer 2023. James is a talented and enthusiastic musician who's developing his skills as an organist, singer and conductor at St Mark's. He comes from a musical family, and his family often sings or plays at St Mark's.

Night service continues to provide a more reflective experience and the organisers often look for musical support. If anyone would like to play for night service (7pm Sunday evening) please get in touch.

Julian Prayer

Shan Rush

St Mark's Julian Prayer group has grown, both with people willing to facilitate and those wanting to receive the readings by e-mail. 21 people currently spend time in silence with God sharing in this form of Christian meditation and contemplative prayer. Prayer reaches across all boundaries and we welcome people from outside our geographical area. We link with a wider community of contemplative people in the Christian tradition through The Julian Meetings (<http://www.thejulianmeetings.net>) paying an annual subscription of £12. A copy of their magazine which is issued 3 times a year can usually be found by the library

We begin by reading a bible passage or words that reflect our Christian tradition, then spend up to 30 minutes silence "resting in God", or "waiting upon God" sharing a time of silence in which we try to put down thoughts and distractions, focusing instead on the rhythm of our breathing, an image, a repetitive phrase or the flickering candle. As we do this, we offer our hearts and minds to God, put aside our need to be in control, and become present and open for God to connect with us and reveal new possibilities, gifts and insights that enable us to continue to serve God's kingdom here on earth. We then offer intercessions for individuals, our communities and issues within the world before closing with the words of the Grace or a blessing. Many of us find it an encouraging and strengthening practice in busy daily life.

Vocations

Sue Hammersley

Within a congregation people often find themselves wanting to respond to a sense of vocation. This might be to lay or ordained ministry or sometimes an understanding of ministry in secular employment.

Here at St Mark's we encourage people to share in the ministry of the church by reading or leading prayers, by helping lead Night Service, by getting involved with music or serving on the tech teams. Sometimes people come on placement who have not experienced the formality of a robed role within the sanctuary, whether that is as a server or deacon and sometimes we offer these roles to members of the congregation whose discernment is leading them towards a more public role. Occasionally it

helps to give someone the opportunity to preach, or we might invite someone to use the sermon slot to explore a theological issue. Whatever role someone takes at St Mark's they are supported by members of the ministry team.

At the moment one member of our congregation is training for ordination; Lizzie Ilsley is studying at St Hild's College. She was on placement at St Mary's Walkley between Advent 2021 and Easter 2022.

The diocese is no longer training people for Reader ministry but there are many courses offered through St Peter's College and some lay roles are accredited by the diocese. We have a long history of lay administration of the chalice and home communion and those who take these roles are affirmed by the first meeting of the PCC each year. We recently held two very successful training sessions for everyone who reads, leads the prayers or preaches as well as those who operate the sound desk – we learned a lot together!

It is a joy to know that people are discerning their call here and, if you feel this might be something you would like to explore further, please contact one of the clergy or Readers.

