

ST MARK'S CHURCH BROOMHILL & BROOMHALL

Annual Report 2023-24
April 2024



www.stmarkssheffield.co.uk

Broomfield Road, Broomhill, Sheffield, S10 2SE

The Diocese of Sheffield

Charity No. 011287558



St Mark's Church

Living Thinking Loving Faith

Vicar's Report

Sue Hammersley

2023 marked our Diamond Jubilee year, sixty years since the church was rebuilt after it was destroyed in the war. During this year several members of the congregation organised events to raise much-needed funds but also to gather the church community together to celebrate each other's company. We billed the fund-raising "Inside Out" as we had to raise money for a lot of work which is needed inside in order for us to continue to focus on how we serve the wider community. We were moderately successful in our fund raising but we did very well spending time together, swimming, dancing, eating puddings, sharing musical events and drama, and bidding to share each other's talents. Thank you to everyone who participated in any way during the year.



2023 was also the time when I took a sabbatical, an opportunity to reflect on my own ministry and what I believed was in the best interests of St Mark's as we look forward to the next sixty years. In stepping back I became clearer that St Mark's was in a really strong position for me to hand over to someone else. Just look at the growth in families over the last ten years. On a Sunday morning the range of ages is so encouraging, a truly intergenerational group of people sharing time together and benefitting from each other's company. This is only one part of our church life but the separation we all experienced during the pandemic has made me increasingly proud of the vibrant community of St Mark's which supports each other through life's ups and downs.

So, 2023 was the year when I announced that I had decided it was time for me to leave. Of course the news was received with mixed feelings; many of you were surprised and sad to hear this but you were so generous in trusting my decision that this was the right time, not just for me but also for the church. We've looked back and celebrated sixty years, now is the time to look forward to the next sixty!

The church is in very capable hands. It has a strong and supportive PCC with utterly committed Churchwardens, Treasurer, PCC Secretary and Safeguarding Team which means that stepping down now won't place too heavy a burden on any one set of shoulders. The staff team is thriving with Beth able to pick up more responsibility now that she is full time and Shan very capably managing our pastoral care, despite living in Somerset! David keeps our music vibrant and our musicians in tune whilst Hannah creatively serves our families. Tim and John make sure that the building is ready for Sunday worship and midweek activities and Zoë ensures that everything is held together efficiently and runs smoothly.

I know that being without a Vicar is a challenging time for a church but it can also be a time of creativity and growth and, if any church can thrive without a Vicar, it is St Mark's.

As 2023 moved into 2024 we all knew that we were entering a season of goodbyes. Thank you so much for the generosity of your support, the many beautiful words spoken and written which have held me through these weeks of transition and for the many different gifts which will sustain me in the next stage of my ministry. I really can't thank you enough for how much you have given me these last



13 years. I arrived in 2010 really quite unsure of myself, convinced that I'd be "found out" as a fraud and sent packing. Instead you believed in me, shared your own insecurities and faith with me and together we shaped a living, thinking, loving church which can accept us just as we are and help each of us to grow in faith. I look forward to seeing how St Mark's thrives in the coming months and years!

With love, Sue x

Churchwarden's report

Dilys Noble

Last year I wrote about planning for Sue's Sabbatical and what was needed to allow her to have an anxiety free break. So now what wardens do in a Vacancy other than usual Sunday meeting, greeting and setting up for the services? Bottom line is we are responsible for the parish and its continued functioning. The legal responsibility which lies with the vicar is now jointly with the Area Dean Matthew, and the Wardens, James and myself. We are appointed as 'sequestrators'.

- Firstly, we have to maintain the smooth continuation of the church services and pastoral care. We are fortunate in having Shan and Beth who are ahead of the game here and have filled the service rota as far ahead as May. No doubt ensuring that all clergy and Readers invited to take services hold the bishop's licence or permission to officiate in this diocese and to see that they claim and are paid their fees. Thank you, Shan and Beth.
- Keep the numbers game with the service registers up to date.
- Take care of the vicarage, maintaining the garden (offers of help greatly appreciated) and visiting the house inside and out TWICE weekly to check for damage, leaks, squatters ?.....
- Responsibility for confidential documents and archiving the same
- In the absence of the vicar the churchwarden chairs PCC meetings Thank you James for this.
- Extra PCC meetings, both alone and with St Mary's, meetings with the Area Dean -Matthew; the Archdeacon -Malcolm and our Patrons.
- **Preparing the parish profile** The Profile has two main purposes:
 1. The first is to say what we the parish are looking for in the person to be appointed. This is our opportunity to describe to the Bishop and Patrons the needs and traditions of the parish and our aims and plans for the future.
 2. Secondly, the Profile acts as an advertising brochure describing the parish. It presents an overall picture of our parish, our surrounding area, and summarizes our church life, both our Sunday services and weekday life. It gives detailed information on the parish, other clergy and lay leaders, the forms of services and weekday activities, attendance, the number of baptisms, weddings and funerals, the schools in the parish, annual highlights, our parish financial situation (briefly) and the vicarage. We have had a great response to our consultation and Kate Ibberson has put together an inspiring, attractive document for potential applicants. Thank you all

AND hopefully meeting potential candidates and being part of an appointments team in the NEAR future.

James Oliver

As I look back on 2023, I am sad that we have said goodbye to Sue but also glad to have experienced her love, service, and devotion she has given at St Marks. We now have the opportunity of working more closely as a community to help each other during the period of Vacancy.

I wish to write about some of the highlights taken from an interesting year that clearly demonstrate how St Marks does show God's love to each other and the wider community beyond the confines of our walls and boundaries.

- Celebrations – Throughout 2023 we enjoyed monthly activities and parties held throughout 2023 and arranged by a variety of enthusiastic individuals to celebrate the 60th year since the rebuilding of St Marks helping us to enjoy one another's company. I thoroughly enjoyed joining in with the play and interested to find out how it included changes made for the better since the 50th year of celebration.
- Worship – During Sue's sabbatical we were fortunate to be led by St Marks ordained and lay preachers whilst also able to enjoy visiting and returning clergy that provided a varied and interesting pattern of worship. I am thankful to all these people who have skilfully led us in worship and to those that organise these resources.

- Music making – David has a great ability to encourage singers and musicians to take part and enjoy themselves whilst skilfully directing them to produce a high quality of music on a weekly basis and making all feel welcome. The congregation enjoys listening to and joining in with this great sound.
- Welcoming – It's a good sign that so many families with young children are attracted to St Mark's and we are thankful to Hannah and team for their judgement and leadership. I also enjoyed seeing people from the wider community feeling comfortable and able to enjoy a variety of services held at St Marks during December 2023



PCC

PCC

Bekah Hampson, PCC secretary

I joined St Mark's in 2022 and in summer 2023 became part of the PCC and then the PCC secretary. Whilst I have been on a PCC before, the role of PCC secretary is new to me, so has involved a lot of learning and getting up to speed. I am still adjusting! I love reading (both with my little one, listening to my husband with his chucklesome character voices and on my own), painting (again both with my little one, with variable levels of mess and mayhem, and on my own with some mess and less mayhem) and playing cribbage - do get in contact if you would like a game sometime.

The churchwardens, clergy and the PCC members are a wonderful bunch of people. Together we do the serious team job of being responsible for the overall wellbeing (practical and spiritual) of our

church, our church members, and our church buildings. I have also experienced it as a space of great care and often laughter - who knew!

Since I joined, some key things PCC has worked together on include Beth being given a contract extension (both in terms of hours and length of contract), financial matters, regular safeguarding updates, reviewing successes of our Advent services (especially Big Queer Carols which was utterly joyous), and consultation around Prayers of Love and Faith.

Caretaking & Cleaning

Tim Moore

Tim and John continue to clean the church every week, working around the scheduled events to try and make sure the building is tidy and sanitised. In October, Tim reduced his hours to spend more time with his daughter, and John was offered some of those hours, along with some extra tasks. The building is therefore no longer open on Tuesday afternoons.

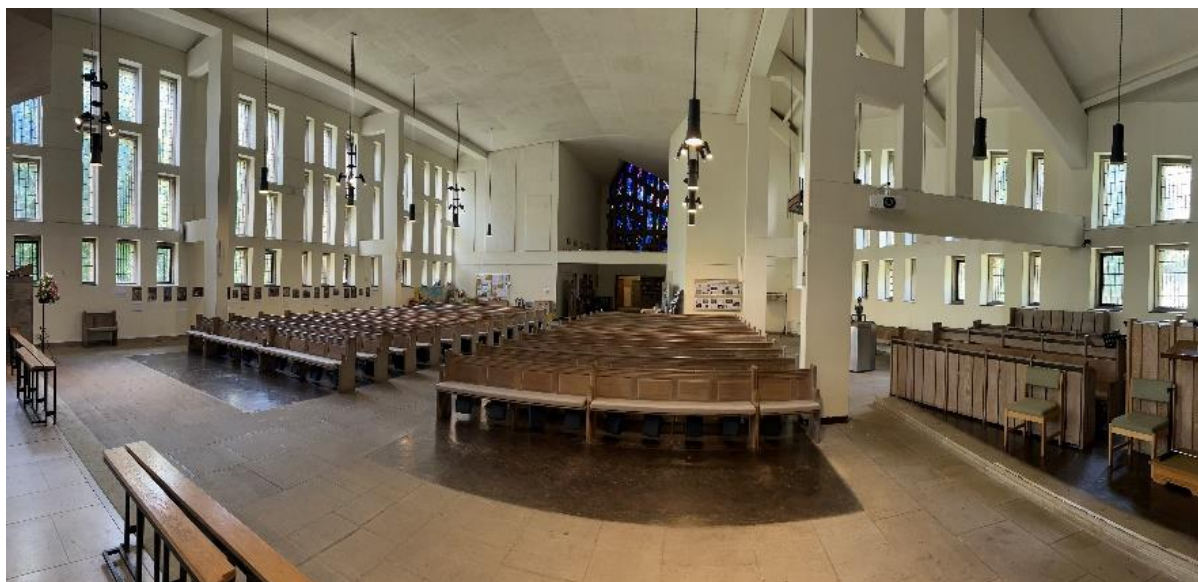
Tim spent several weeks last year writing the Terrier (a church inventory) and filing it in a new, more updateable, digital format.

There are some new signs up around the outside of the building to advertise services, events and room hire. The same type of frame is also being used in the carpark for our weekday parkers.

Over the summer St Mark's was awarded the Eco Church Gold Award, which relied in part on the work of Tim and John switching to greener cleaning products. Tim was also involved in the work done for the installation of double glazed units into the lower tier of windows around the worship area, and the consultation around a new heating system in the upper room.

Last summer Tim created a new history display, which has hung on the back wall of the church ever since. During the week, St Marks often gets visited by people who are interested in the story of the building. The display hopefully answers many of their questions in an interesting and tangible way.

If there is any sort of problem with the building, please email caretaker@stmarkssheffield.co.uk



Church Office

Zoë Varcoe

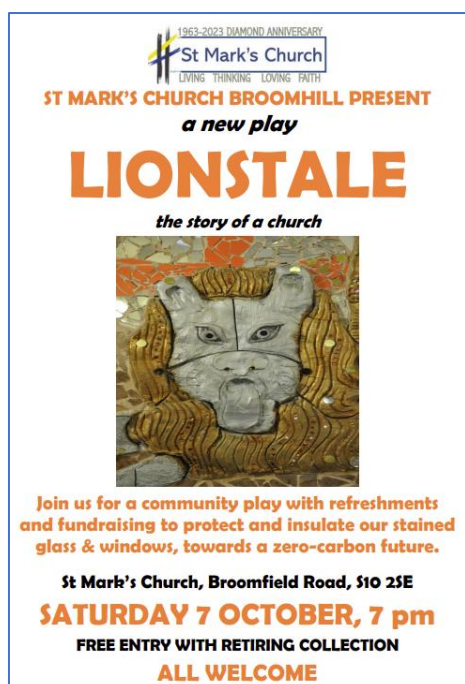
Looking back on the previous year, St Mark's Church emerges with a sense of achievement and community spirit. Our diamond celebrations were a resounding success, from swims and auctions to concerts and parties, the range of events showcased the diversity of St Mark's interests. Thanks to your collective efforts, whether organising, volunteering, or participating, your involvement helped us raise £6,559.

Another big project this year was our new and very much improved website. We refreshed how we share information and migrated to a new hosting company, the move not only reduced costs but also enhanced usability and support, making updates easier. More information below.

Additionally, our steady stream of bookings: concerts, choir rehearsals, celebrations, and meetings, continue to consume ample office hours to coordinate yet provides a healthy income for the church year-round.


Finally I extend heartfelt gratitude to all volunteers who contribute their time to ensure the smooth running of St Mark's. Your dedication is invaluable in sustaining our mission. As we embark on a time of transition with the departure of Sue and the search for a new vicar, the meaningful involvement from so many during our 60th year celebrations reassure us, the bonds within the community remain strong.

Some of the events from the diamond anniversary celebrations:



1963-2023 DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY
St Mark's Church
LIVING THINKING LOVING FAITH

ST MARK'S CHURCH BROOMHILL PRESENT
a new play
LIONSTALE
the story of a church



Join us for a community play with refreshments and fundraising to protect and insulate our stained glass & windows, towards a zero-carbon future.

St Mark's Church, Broomfield Road, S10 2SE
SATURDAY 7 OCTOBER, 7 pm
FREE ENTRY WITH RETIRING COLLECTION
ALL WELCOME



ST MARK'S PRESENTS
DIAMOND DECADES
with the FOMENTUM QUARTET

Join us for a night of live music, cocktails & fundraising to protect & insulate our stained glass & windows, towards a zero-carbon future!

FREE ENTRY 21.10.23 7.30 PM
with retiring collection
www.stmarkssheffield.co.uk
St Mark's Church, Broomfield Road, S10 2SE
This is an accessible venue see website for more



STEEL CITY CHORISTERS

Come & Sing Evensong!
at St Mark's Church Broomhill, Sheffield
Sunday 19th November
Rehearsal at 2.00pm, Evensong at 4.00pm followed by tea and cakes



Music includes: Brewer in D and Balfour Gardiner's Evening Hymn. Scores will be provided on the day. Open to adults and children of all ages. **Book your place by emailing enquiries@steelcitychoristers.org.uk** with your name, voice part, and height if you would like to wear a robe.

The event is free but donations towards the work of the choir will be gratefully received. We are a registered charity: 1195909
For more information about the choir see: steelcitychoristers.org.uk

1963-2023 DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY
St Mark's Church
LIVING THINKING LOVING FAITH

Mission Area

Shan Rush

When St John's, St Mary's and St Mark's initially started working together, we were known as The Southwest Hallam Mission Area. Recently we agreed on the name The Three Spires Mission Area as the spire is a feature of each of the physical buildings we worship in that we have in common. We are working on developing a shared vision whilst recognising each church has its own unique identity.

Areas we have agreed to focus on together include:

- worshipping together and upholding one another in prayer - at the daily offices which we join on Zoom for on two days a week, at our individual acts of worship as well as each church hosting a shared act of worship at least once a year.
- strengthening the bonds we have in common including our commitment to Inclusive Church and Eco Church
- serving one another and alongside one another in the community including exploring how we offer worship within our care homes
- sharing knowledge and resources such as our administrators working more closely together to share parish news and events, trialling a WhatsApp group where we can ask or share information about issues and lay and ordained licenced readers and clergy showing a willingness to minister across the mission area rather than just in their own parishes.

The vacancy has prompted each parish to look afresh at how we work together sharing our expertise for the benefit of God's Kingdom across the 3 parishes.



St Mark's Sheffield

Mission Partners St John's, Ranmoor and St Mary's Walkley

Parish Safeguarding

Duncan Lennox, Parish Safeguarding Officer

My main responsibilities are to liaise with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team 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 was the clergy lead on safeguarding. Currently Beth Keith is the effective lead. Sarah Jenkins has stepped down as the Safeguarding Administrator dealing with DBS and keeping training records. Hannah Jones has now taken on this role and deals with safeguarding issues relating to children. Cath Williamson leads on issues relating to vulnerable adults, including the Lunch Club. Jane Padget has stepped down as the Domestic Abuse Officer. The position is currently vacant. Many thanks to Sarah and Jane for their efforts.

A meeting in November 2023 reviewed safeguarding policies and procedures. I had various meetings with Sue to look at our procedures. We also had discussions to ensure a proper handover of information before she left.

We compile our own records showing DBS and training status. The latter is necessary to ensure that people have done training as we have limited ability to access CofE records.

Every year the CofE seems to increase its safeguarding requirements and expects churches to comply more with standardised procedures. Procedures are important though I have concerns that increased procedures do not get to the heart of safeguarding.

However it is important that we comply with the requirements to make it clear that we see safeguarding as important. This requires people to cooperate with doing training and DBS. Repeated chasing of people is a waste of time and resources. So please do help with this if you are one of the lucky ones!

Happily, I have not had to pass on any safeguarding concerns to the DSA in the past year. Some issues have arisen which I feel we have dealt with appropriately. The church has a team with a strong commitment to safeguarding

Children, Young People and Students

CHYPS

CHYPS is the acronym for Children and Young people here at St Marks. We have a great team of leaders – Alice Deasy, Sarah Armstrong, Anna Ryder, Lynn Pocock and Hannah Jones who each take a lead on one aspect of this provision. We meet regularly as a team to discuss provision and make future plans.

Creche - Anna Ryder



Creche (offered twice a month alongside Godly Play) continues to flourish, with between six and twelve **0-5 year olds** attending each session, often but not always with a parent. As a result, it can be busy and lots of hands and eyes are needed! We have a regular team of leaders – each session requires two adults - and some of our young people have recently started supporting creche sessions, which is a great help.

In creche our priority is for children and their parents to feel safe, happy and welcome. We do lots of play, and creche is often a good place to meet new families and touch base with people who we haven't seen for a while. We are also aware of our privilege in being part of children's early spiritual development and over the last year we have started to bring in some structure (stories, song, craft activities) and gently introduce themes such as love, community and valuing difference.

Godly Play - Sarah Armstrong

Twice a month, when the children leave the 10am service for their own activities, those aged **4 to 11** are invited upstairs to their own sacred space in the Godly Play room. Here, they join the circle, we share a story and wonder about it together, followed by "responding time", which they can use for creative play or a craft activity of their choice. We usually fit in a drink and biscuit, too! It is a great privilege (and also great fun) to introduce our children to the Bible and to key parts of our liturgy through this medium, to hear what they have to tell us – which is often profound – and to spend time with them as they develop and grow. This academic year we have been regularly seeing larger numbers of children than ever before; and as I write we have just broken that record with a group of 18.



I take the role of Storyteller for every session, and am assisted by one of a small group of volunteers who acts as Doorkeeper. From the children's point of view this has the advantage of continuity, but it does mean that if I am unavailable then Godly Play may not happen, though Hannah has stepped in when required. New helpers are always welcome; but whether you would like to consider volunteering or not, if you are unfamiliar with Godly Play, please feel free to come upstairs before or immediately after the service on the first or third Sunday of the month, and we can show you around.

Gathering on the Green - Alice Deasy



This venture, usually on the second Sunday of the month, has continued to be an important part of the calendar for families worshipping at St Marks. We have really enjoyed the outside space and made good use of the tree stump circle as a base for our service. Services are developed around different themes, involve a reading, chat, an activity, snack and music, before joining the larger congregation in church. Examples of themes we have explored over the last twelve months include- in May thinking about the importance of growing peas in Malawi during Christian Aid week

with a Scavenger hunt; celebrating the Eco Gold award by building a bug hotel in June; making a welcome tree in September, inspired by Jesus' welcome in Matthew 25, and in January, exploring ideas about hope through Genesis 8 -making our own wooden rainbows.

A wonderful challenge has been the expansion of numbers with as many as 23 children plus parents gathering on one Sunday this year. Those of us who are involved in planning are enjoying the challenge of thinking of how to involve and engage children across the age range. One of the new additions has been 'Teddy on the Green' a Fischy Music teddy known as Star who has joined us from Greenbelt and now makes an appearance each time.

Celebrating with Music and Storytelling - Hannah Jones

On the remaining Sundays we offer a range of provision from All-Age worship to Family Sessions (which often prepare for All-Age worship) so that the children can be active participants – supporting the music through signing, confident singing and instrumental accompaniment and/or exploring connected ideas, often creating resources which will then be used during the service. During these opportunities we also explore the meaning behind musical settings and other aspects of the services.



Lions - Lynn Pocock

Young people moving **through year 6, or already in year 7** or above, are welcome to join with the Lions. We meet in the Den on the first Sunday of the month during Godly Play time to become more familiar with the Bible and to use these stories to explore issues in our daily lives. Sometimes we participate in a project such as writing letters for the Amnesty send-a-letter campaign at Christmas.

Once a month (alongside Gathering on the Green) we invite our older teens to meet in the lounge. Mostly this is an expression of hospitality and chance to play board games together but also offers the opportunity to explore faith and other issues if and when they are raised!



We have also been having afternoon meetings, hosted by Maria Oliver, Miriam David and me. Our intention is that these should be once a half term, though perhaps when we met to learn macrame from Miriam, we should have planned for a whole day! We most recently had a great afternoon making pancakes and Lenten "joy" jars (every day in Lent you are to record a joy you experience and put it in your jar)

With our growing numbers of young people, plans are afoot to widen participation with regular late afternoon gatherings in the narthex as we hope to get the table tennis tables out of storage and see where that takes us.

Social Events - Hannah Jones

Sometimes Sunday morning provision is minimal – inviting families to use the lounge as a space to help themselves to creche toys and access worship on zoom or chat to one another. This is to provide social events, at least termly, often on a Sunday afternoon. In the past year these have included a barbecue and bouncy castle on the green, time spent at an enclosed adventure playground hired out just for our community, and Epiphany and Pancake Parties! Key to this is creating space for the families to get know each other and keep in touch as it is a large group these days with over 30 families registered. However, we are an inclusive community and always enjoy it when members of the wider church family join us!



Young Adults & Students

Bethany Leake

The young adults group continues to be an important community for students and young adults at St Mark's, meeting fortnightly during the university terms.

During the Autumn term, our sessions explored different styles of prayer from traditional liturgy, to the examen, to the rosary (and even made our own anglican rosaries!). During one session, we built 40 origami boats on which we wrote prayers of peace and inclusion, as part of a national campaign by the Student Christian Movement. Boats made by student groups across the country (including ours) were then sent to the foreign secretary to protest the government's 'stop the boats' policy.

We ran a Q&A session with Sue before she left at the end of January, giving us an opportunity to quiz her on everything from the church liturgical colours to the stained glass windows. We celebrated Student Sunday in February and the contribution of students at St Marks. During the spring semester our sessions are exploring the historical context and formation of the bible, as well as different approaches to scripture and theology. We look forward to continuing to grow as a group over the next year.



Communications

Website

Zoë Varcoe

The communication team at St. Mark's, comprising of myself, Katherine Tattersall, David Armstrong, and Beth Keith, has dedicated significant effort this year towards overhauling our website. This project entailed selecting a suitable hosting company and carefully assessing our existing content to create an improved site that enhances communication and information sharing.

We started by considering the diverse users of the site: those acquainted with St. Mark's seeking information, prospective visitors unfamiliar with the church, and users requiring room booking services for example. Our primary goal was to design a user-friendly interface that caters to these varied needs.

Next we formulated a new site map, highlighting essential information and integrating the former CRC website. We're delighted to report that the updated website is now fully operational, and we've recently introduced recorded sermons alongside written texts, providing an additional avenue for engagement. A huge thank you to Marks Greengrass for his invaluable weekly contributions in uploading these sermons.

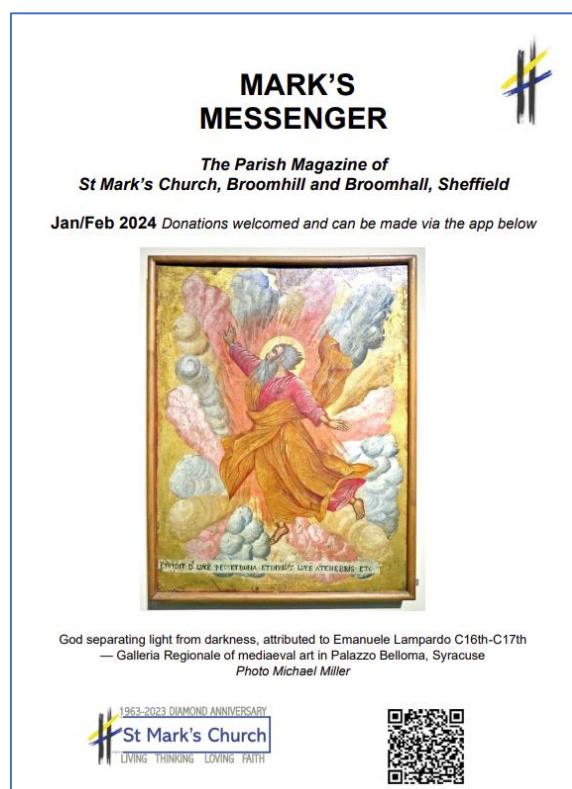
If you're interested in becoming more involved with St. Mark's, we invite you to join our communications group. Or, if you are willing to contribute some hours towards website maintenance we can provide full training.



Mark's Messenger

Shan Rush

Mark's Messenger continues to be a valued part of St Mark's mission and ministry. Four editions a year are produced by volunteers, and it offers articles on a variety of topics predominantly written by members of our own community rather than sourced from other publications. In it you can expect to find something from the clergy, articles advertising and reviewing activities of local interest, book reviews and topical articles. At present Mark's Messenger is predominantly a resource for the congregation. Of the 100 people who receive it by e-mail or post, 90% are congregational members. Additional copies are printed and left at the back of church for those not on the mailing list to pick up and it is available via our website. Online copies can be browsed freely although we suggest a donation of £5 a year, and £10 a year for printed copies to cover costs. Additional donations are always welcomed. This year saw Rob stand down as editor and Michael Miller join the team, bringing new ideas and a fresh perspective to the January edition. We warmly welcome contributions of pictures, photographs, and written articles from all ages and in a variety of styles. Do contact Frances Gray, Michael Miller or Shan Rush who will be editing editions over the next year. Joe Forde is also editing a special library edition. Thanks to Dez Martin and Margot Fox for their ongoing commitment to editing the magazine and to Zoë for managing the printing and distribution.



Fabric and Finance

Fabric matters

James Oliver

Members of the fabric and finance committee meet several times a year to discuss, agree and action building and financial items following agreement with the PCC.

Please find below some of the items that have been carried out by this committee during the last year to ensure St Marks remains in a good condition and available for all to use.

Finance

- Prepare annual and management accounts to regularly monitor income and expenditure.
- Support the Stewardship campaign.
- Research and prepare grant applications.
- Agree a revised Home from Home house rental agreement with Roundabout.
- Agree the church room hire and car park charges.



Fabric works completed

- Low-level double-glazed units and monitor performance to enable further works to be carried out.
- Repair external steps facing the green.
- Tree management and survey work.
- General maintenance (e.g. lighting, lift and safety inspections of fabric and equipment)
- Replacement external noticeboards (see picture)

Fabric works in progress

- Replacement heating system to the first floor lounge and office.
- Insulation to the sloping roof to the north and south sides of the Nave.
- Attend Major Churches meeting.

Legacies

David Ryder

Update from the Legacies 'Home from Home Group ('HFHG') on St Mark's owned flat used by Roundabout

In 2018 the PCC made a decision to purchase a two bedroomed flat in Woodhouse as a social investment using legacy money to be leased to Roundabout, a local youth housing charity providing shelter, support and life skills to young people aged 16-25 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The initial five year lease was due to expire mid January 2024 and in November 2023 the HFHG convened to consider whether or not it should be renewed. To comply with Charities regulations, a qualified surveyor was appointed to visit and report on the state of the flat for this purpose. It was concluded that whilst there has been physical deterioration to the external and common parts managed by Sheffield City Council, the flat itself was deemed to be in a reasonably good state and provided an increased rental was obtained it would be appropriate for the PCC to renew the lease for another seven years. This has now been done with Roundabout agreeing to a higher rent to be annually reviewed according to the Consumer Price index and also to instigate a mechanism for recording and reporting back to us at least annually on the physical state of the property.

Roundabout advise that typically a single 'resident' would be housed in our flat for 9 - 12 months and therefore in the last five years, St Mark's has, through its social investment, indirectly supported up to six homeless young people.

Faith and Justice

Home Donations

Chris Ware

This year we have added two new members, Naomi Wassall and Helen Cottrell, to the committee which includes Dez Martin, David Price, Rosie Hunt, Donna Bawden and myself (Chris Ware). We aim to promote social justice and well-being and to tackle need, particularly in Sheffield. We agreed that we wanted to focus on housing need and support for those who are most disenfranchised, recognising that racial disparities accentuate need, as highlighted by the race equality commission in Sheffield. We also continue, as part of our gold eco award, to focus some of our giving on climate

change. After a process of research, networking and reaching out to different charities we agreed upon this proposed list.

- £2000 Bens Centre - <https://www.benscentre.org/> Ben's Centre is a charity that aims to provide a safe space and an open hand to those who suffer through substance misuse and its associated barriers. The Bens centre is in our parish and offers a day centre as well as outreach to the parish.
- £2000 South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice - <https://www.syrjlj.org.uk/> SYRLJ provide free immigration advice and representation to those seeking sanctuary in South Yorkshire. This seems to be a bottle neck for getting destitute asylum seekers financial support and secure status.
- £1400 Citizens Advice Sheffield - <https://citizensadvice.org.uk/sheffield/> Sheffield's leading provider of advice and advocacy services. They are the first port of call for many in Sheffield and will prevent many getting into housing vulnerability.
- £1000 Fir Vale Hub - <https://firvalecommunityhub.org.uk/> An organisation committed to improving social equalities and inclusion for communities experiencing disenfranchisement and marginalisation. They offer a wide range of services to the fir vale community from advice and training through to community cohesion work.
- £1000 UWA - <https://unitedwomenaffiliation.net/> UWA's general purpose is to empower women, young mothers, single fathers and young people, particularly within underprivileged communities in Sheffield. They work with many isolated women for whom English is not their first language.
- £1000 mums in need - <https://www.mumsinneed.com/> Mums in need is support service for mothers suffering ongoing coercive control after separation from an abusive partner.
- £500 Hope for the future - <https://www.hfff.org.uk/> Is a charity started by Michael Bayley that equips campaigners across the UK with the tools they need to have effective and impactful conversations with their local politicians on climate change. In the run up to, and following an election, it is particularly effective to lobby on climate change.
- £1000 Broomhall girls group – has strong links to St Mark's and our parish. The plan is for the money to be used to take the girls on a trip away from Broomhall.
- £500 Broomhall centre – provides facilities to support services to the parish
- £500 Inclusive Church - <https://www.inclusive-church.org/> Inclusive Church is a network of churches, groups and individuals uniting together around a shared vision. We believe in inclusive church – a church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate.
- £75 Eco Church & £25 church action on poverty (subscription)

International Donations

Dilys Noble

We are a group that is made up of internationally focussed people; Michael Bayley, John Hall, Sarah Duggan and family, Jennie and Dez Martin, Manuchehr, Al Tolson, Shan Rush, Helen Hillman and myself. We do our best to direct St Mark's generous 10% of income designated for overseas projects wisely, to charities with good governance and respect for St Mark's ethos of inclusivity.

- Reach Bwindi is a UK charity supporting the lives and work of the communities of Bwindi, Uganda, with the aim of relieving or preventing poverty. Their main beneficiary is Bwindi Community Hospital. Ceri Alamsetti spent 2 years working there.
- Phaseworldwide a charity I am a trustee and medical mentor for, delivering health, education and livelihood opportunities to remote communities in Nepal that suffer from climate change induced landslides and earthquakes.
- SUCCOL educates street children in Colombia (Dez and Jennie Martin and Robin Saunders)
- Practical Action recently fitted street lights in the many refugee camps in Rwanda to make them safer places. In Nepal they fitted stoves and chimneys in mountain villages improving

health through less smoke inhalation and more efficient cooking requiring less wood and deforestation.

- Literacy for Life supports a small school in Ghana, a charity founded by Rosie Hunt after spending a year working there.
- Global Justice Now is a democratic social justice organisation working as part of a global movement to challenge the powerful and create a more just and equal world. They mobilise people in the UK for change and act in solidarity with those fighting injustice, particularly in the global south.
- USPG works mainly to increase capacity in established churches throughout the world with some projects designed to alleviate poverty and improve health. Our link is Michael Bayley who has sourced a speaker/preacher for us this year .
- Care4Calais supports refugees stranded at Calais. Manuch has organised collections of clothes and other necessities to deliver there.
- MEWAO Defending and protecting women from violence in the home and in the wider community. A charity used here in UK for Middle Eastern Asylum seekers.
- Christian Aid a UK charity helping people all over the globe, regardless of race or religion

In addition , as a group we fund raise through the sale of cards, preserves, Nepalese goods, Christian Aid week activities, church lunches and Christmas carol singing. We are always looking for new faces to join us and to bring their ideas.

Environment group

Margaret Ainger

Well we did it! Got the Gold Eco Church award in the summer, presented to us by Bishop Pete and endorsed by the Bishop of Norwich, Lead Bishop for the Environment.

What comes next? We are commissioned to support other churches on their journey as best we can and have so far visited St Mary's, Beighton and St Luke's, Lodge Moor to hear about their challenges and what they want to achieve. We are working with the Diocesan Environment Officer and with A Rocha as part of the support they offer more widely and will see how that evolves as Eco Church takes off across the country (3,000 churches now have awards).



Back at St Mark's, the buildings team are cracking on with more carbon friendly ideas for heat retention and clean energy use. We are hosting occasional Nature Recovery mornings on the Green to enhance the biodiversity of our land and show our commitment to the Nature Recovery Sheffield partnership. Look out for a short survey on what you would like us to focus on going forward.

Plans for the year include a church picnic to mark Great Big Green Week in June. September sees our annual climate service - but note how care for the Earth, love of nature and lament for the damage we are causing have become an intrinsic part of our worship throughout the year. A general election is coming and we are supporting the Better Buses campaign on both environmental and social justice grounds. We are also supporting the Electoral Commission's effort to ensure all eligible adults are properly registered to vote – 8 million of us are not!

Thank you to all for your commitment to Eco Church in so many ways and for your support to the group. Join us if you can!

Pastoral Care & Hospitality

Pastoral Care

Shan Rush

Delivery of Pastoral Care both within the congregation and the community continues to evolve and develop. Since Covid, there seems to be an increased number of people without a specific religious affiliation seeking to engage with both lay and ordained members of the congregation. In our engagement with new enquirers, unless the individual is specifically seeking to engage with issues of faith, we are not seeking to impose our world view on them but to accompany them with whatever issue they are presenting to us. Many contacts are connected to impaired physical or mental health, issues of human sexuality, relationship concerns or bereavement with people looking for someone to listen to their story and support to explore ways they can find meaning in what they are experiencing. In our care homes, the regular presence of the teams has helped build relationships and led to them being contacted to say prayers at end of life and some subsequent requests for St Mark's clergy to undertake funerals. A new initiative for St Mark's is that an Intergenerational connection is being forged between parents with toddlers and a local care home. Members of the craft group continue to meet monthly for refreshments, conversation and crafts and have knitted prayer shawls or blankets and distributed them to members of the congregation or to the care homes. Sending cards, offering welcome and hospitality at home and in the building, all continue thanks to the generous gifts of time and skills by the congregation.

Lunch & Friendship Club

Briony Tayler and Jean Baxter

Lunch and Friendship Club continues to provide a warm, friendly 'social' environment for members who may be largely housebound. Our team of Lounge helpers support and encourage members to make friends and enjoy both lunch and subsequent activity – possibly a talk, a collage, quizzes/games, videos, music, singing or, this year's highlights, a 100th birthday celebration and a summer Coronation Lunch outing.

The Club is extremely grateful to Rosalind who retired in June after 20 years invaluable work as organiser; to Kathryn and Renate who have taken on much of the admin; to Sheffield City Council for continued grant support; to David for auditing our accounts (and technical support) and to Transport 17 who bring our less mobile members to St Mark's, with patience and a smile.

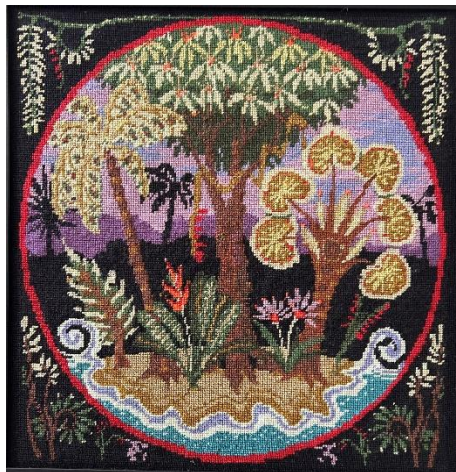
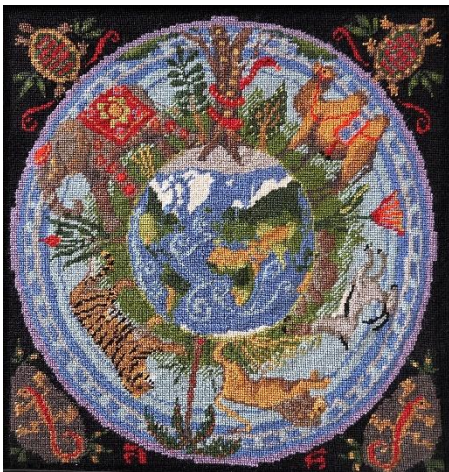
We continue to serve between 20 and 30 meals on around 40 weeks of the year, with three cooks taking turns, with occasional help from others. We have some new recruits to the long-serving team of kitchen helpers and are always glad to hear from others who are interested in the possibility of joining us.

We offer a varied menu of freshly-cooked and mostly traditional dishes, many of which are requested by the members, as well as juice beforehand and tea or coffee afterwards. To date we have continued to do this without needing to increase the very modest price.

We were happy to be awarded a 5 star rating again, after a recent inspection by an environmental health officer.

Craft Group *Jennie Martin*

The group has continued to meet on the first Saturday morning of the month in the Lounge. During the year, we have made blankets and shawls both for care homes and for use in church on colder days. We have made and distributed prayer shawls both knitted in one piece or made from multi-coloured 6 inch squares. Some have knitted their own projects. It was a pleasure to work alongside the environment group (and with over 25 people involved) and jointly made 6 tapestries depicting the days of Creation which are now displayed at the back of church (pictured below). In November, we took a table at the table-top sale, selling our own products and a range of crafting materials and raised £100. We would love to welcome new people to make items needed by local and other charities or just to join us for refreshments and conversation.



Study and Learning

Study and Learning Group *Beth Keith and Amanda Pilkington*

Over this past year the Study and Learning Group has taken on various projects to support theological learning both at St Mark's and further afield.

Faithful Living: In 2023 we developed this project seeking to produce short pieces about an open and questioning approach Christian basics and ethics. We applied for funding from the Diocese and are now exploring with the Diocese how these could be made into some short films.

Lent Course: our 2023 Lent course went well, with 10 groups meeting, face to face and on zoom in the Mission Area and with Manor Parish. In 2024 we chose to use material from Miranda Threlfall-Holmes, exploring nourishing ways to read the Bible. Miranda came to St Mark's to run an introductory session which was attended by over 60 people in the building and on zoom. This year the course is being run at St Mark's and St Mary's with over 60 people across the 6 groups, on zoom and face to face. Thanks to the leaders who have hosted these groups. Some of the groups have are thinking about whether to continue meeting and talking about how to do this.

CRC Online: The grant money for the CRC Online project ran out in June 2023. The Management Group of CRC worked with St Mark's Communications Group on the transfer of resources onto the new St Mark's website. This was a time-consuming piece of work but has enhanced St Mark's digital presence and we are now reaching a wider audience with online resources and seminars. We now

send out a termly newsletter outlining new online resources and publicising theological events and seminars.

Seminars and Events: During the past year we have hosted the following events, with more seminar plans coming together for later this year.

Dr Marika Rose, Theology for the End of the World, 26 November 2023

Revd Dr Miranda Thelfall-Holmes, How to Eat Bread, 5 Feb 2024

Love Lead Us, a conference on LGBTQ+ inclusion and safeguarding, 17 Feb 2024

Members: we have struggled over the past year with group membership, as group members have moved on to ordination training, to 'retire' from roles, moving on to other aspects of ministry in the church, or due to changing circumstances. We are looking to build up the membership of the group during the next year.



Library

Joe & Carol Forde

Carole (my wife) and I, became Church Librarians at the turn of the year. We are part of a library group that handles issues relating to the library. Since we became Church Librarians, over 60 new books have been added to the library. They cover a variety of topic areas and perspectives, and we hope that you will enjoy them. Many of them have been gifts to the library, and we are always grateful to receive them, although, owing to limited shelf space, not all of them have been able to be included. Books that haven't been included have been given to Oxfam.

In the coming months, we hope to organise a few library evenings, when authors will be invited to come and speak about books that they have published. There will also be a special 'library' edition of Mark's Messenger; one devoted to exploring books and related aspects. There is also, of course, a section of the Church's website that has a library focus, and is well worth visiting. We are always pleased to see our library books being reviewed for Mark's Messenger, so, if you feel inclined, don't hesitate to review one or two, and submit them to the editorial board.

If you are unsure of how to take out books from the library, don't hesitate to get in touch. Likewise, if you have any suggestions for how you think the library could be further improved, don't hesitate to raise them with us.

Logos

Beth Keith

LOGOS is our monthly online Bible Study. We try to take a scholarly approach to the bible and, by drawing on academic research, seek a deeper understanding of the meaning of the text and a broader appreciation of the context to which it bears witness. Alongside investigating the significance of the text within the context it was written, we seek to explore its relevance for Christian faith today. In seeking a deeper understanding we're not afraid to ask questions or to disagree.

In 2023 we completed an exploration of Jeremiah and the Old Testament minor prophets, meeting on-line on the 2nd Tuesday of the month from 7:30 to 9pm. Beth Keith led most of the sessions, and we were pleased to learn about Micah with Professor Matthew Coomber. LOGOS took a break at the start of 2024 to give space for Lent Groups, and plans to start again in May.



Revd Sue Hammersley blesses the 60th anniversary celebration cake in the shape of our stained glass window at the diamond service on October 8 2023

Worship

Sunday Worship

Beth Keith

Our Sunday worship numbers are growing. Our average usual Sunday attendance grew over 2023 from 157 to 165, and we saw combined attendance at our Christmas services increase to 378, from 331 in the previous year. Our worshipping community is remaining relatively steady, with increases in the numbers of children and students.

8am Communion, Book of Common Prayer

We meet for two services each month, on the second and fourth Sundays. Although this is a small congregation it is a faithful group who gather regularly for a quiet Communion with traditional, poetic language. The service is supported by some dedicated BCP wardens who set up the chapel and support visiting clergy. During the sabbatical and vacancy, we have been supported by clergy from around the Diocese, to lead the service once a month, alternating with Shan and Beth. It is a surprisingly peaceful space for worship. Do come along and you can see for yourself.



Parish Eucharist

Our weekly 10am Service on Sundays draws an average of 135 people of all ages, with growing numbers of children, and students/young adults. We use liturgy which reflects the church's season and is both traditional in form and contemporary in language. We try to reflect a variety of musical sources and have been actively trying to incorporate the learning from the music review into our planning. We are sensitive to the language we use in our liturgy and hymns, reflecting our diverse congregations and our inclusive theology.

Over the past year we have developed our All Age Services which are now happening twice a term. These give us the opportunity to worship together with all ages present and contributing. It is also a chance for us to experiment with simpler forms of worship, storytelling, and song. The feedback has been very positive, and we're encouraged that this approach is being appreciated by people of all ages.

We are fortunate to have several preachers, both Clergy and Readers, as well as people exploring a vocation to ordination, or those with particular theological expertise to share, which makes for a variety of voices and approaches. Our team of readers and intercessors is growing and if you would like to get involved, please email Zoë in the office.

We are actively looking for volunteers to help with the Welcome Teams, sound desk and Zoom support, and Flower Arranging, so you can see there are plenty of opportunities for you to get involved. Do please let us know if you would like to get involved in any way.



Night Service

I'd like to begin with a big thank you to everyone who has supported and been part of Night Service this year. The Night Service continues to be a place for prayer, community, contemplation, and healing. There are usually between 8-25 people who attend. There is a small number of committed volunteers who help to lead the services, but we are always keen for more people to get involved.

Our monthly pattern starts with a communion on the first Sunday of the month.

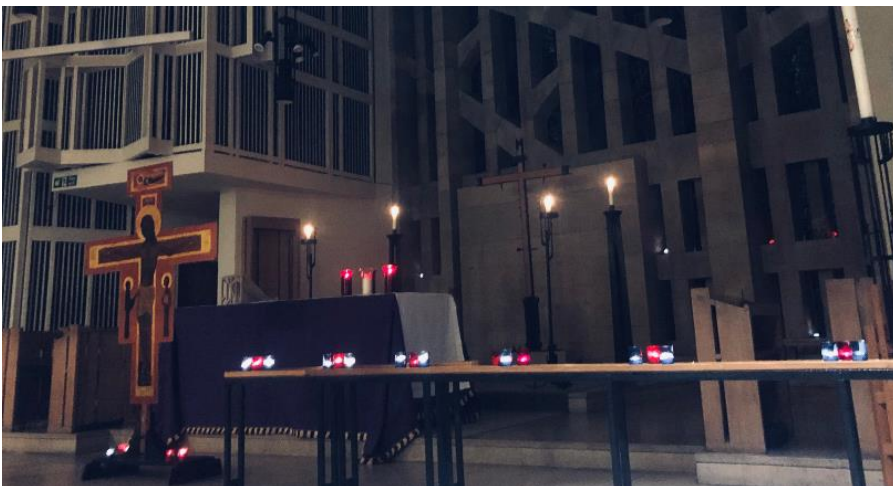
The second Sunday focusses on discussion over food followed by prayer and meditation, often using Celtic liturgies and silence.

On the third Sunday there is a well-established Taizé Service, that attracts both St Mark's members and those from further afield. It is led by a committed team of volunteers.

During the past year the team has developed and is now being supported by David Willington and other members of the music team. We hosted a workshop in February and are encouraging more volunteers to get involved. This year we have also been able to support St Mary's to host some Taize Services.

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 service on the theme of healing and wholeness which is organised by Revd Dr Louise Castle, the bishop's advisor on healing.



Open Communion

On the second Sunday of each month we proudly host a gathering for the LGBTQI+ community. Starting with refreshments and conversation we then share in a simple Eucharist led by different clergy from across the diocese. We never know who will come and we love meeting new people and enjoying time together so do pass on the word. At a time when some members of the LGBTQI+ community are feeling particularly threatened by attitudes within the wider church we are glad to be able to hold an unequivocally supportive worship space.



Weekday Worship

Shan Rush

Worship does not take place solely on a Sunday. Since lockdown, a small but committed group of people gather at 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday for the Daily Offices on Zoom. At 9am we use Common Worship Contemporary Morning Prayer. Twice a week, in the morning, we unite with our Mission Area Partners with St John's leading on Tuesday and St Mark's leading on Thursdays. In the evenings we usually follow the Northumbrian Community's Daily Prayer. On Thursdays at mid-day, we gather on Zoom for a Celebration of the Eucharist in the Celtic Tradition. St Mark's is registered with the Julian Meetings and our group shares a weekly meditation resource of readings and poems via e-mail which those receiving it can use at a time that suits them. There are other groups of people who gather to pray for one another within their homes. Between Palm Sunday and Easter Day there are opportunities to share Christ's journey through Holy Week on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday at St Mark's and to join with other churches in our Mission Area on Holy Saturday. There are opportunities to celebrate Ash Wednesday, Ascension Day and of course Christmas – sometimes at St Mark's and other times within our Mission Area.

Music & Choir

David Willington

Music at St Mark's is in fine fettle. We've continued to grow the team in the last 12 months. James, our senior organ scholar, has been joined by Eleanor Jarvis as junior organ scholar and Amelia Awan as composer in residence. All 3 have developed their skills and contributed regularly to worship at St Mark's. Amelia has composed several pieces, including an anthem, hymn arrangements and solo items and is working on a mass setting. James and Eleanor have both developed as organists. We've also welcomed new instrumentalists to play for services and hope to find more in the coming months. If there are instrumentalists out there who'd like to play in services, please come and say hello.

The choir is in good health although we were sorry to say goodbye to Hazel Elliott-Kemp whose health meant she was no longer able to sing with us. In addition to the regular Sunday morning services the choir and others joined a come-and-sing evensong with the Steel City Choristers (directed by Eleanor; she's also director of the Steel City Choristers), sang for an



excellent carol service and held our annual Burns Night celebration where we said goodbye to Sue. We've been joined by several guest singers over the year, and we're always open to new singers.

Other musical highlights included concerts for the 60th anniversary celebrations as well as the second Big Queer Carol Service, at which the church was filled. We hope this will become a regular fixture.

St Mark's Church
presents...

Big Queer Carols
with **OUT ALOUD**

6pm
10 December
Join us for drinks afterwards!

With launch of "Queer COVID" book: LGBTQIA+ people of faith's experiences of the pandemic. And stalls from:

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL **JUNG BOOKS** **SAYiT**
Transforming the lives of LGBTQIA+ young people since 1999

www.stmarkssheffield.co.uk