



## Churchwardens report April 2021– April 2022

### Church life

April 2021 saw St John's enter the year in interregnum. Nonetheless, the absence of a vicar, whilst clearly creating challenges, also offered opportunities to show what the people of St John's are capable of delivering.

We saw the interregnum as a chance to take stock of where we were, reflect and then commence with a debate about the type of church we want to be. A questionnaire, produced by our newly formed Communications Team, elicited a tremendous response within the congregation and also with the wider neighbouring community. The responses informed further debate which, combined with the review of the church plan prepared in 2019, reinforced our view that we are an **inclusive church** with an Anglo-Catholic tradition. Our new church plan also agreed that we should continue to focus on the following three areas:

1. **Growing and widening the worshipping community:** in our catholic tradition and by developing different forms of worship and ministry, particularly for children, young people and families.
2. **Deepening our discipleship:** deepening the faith of existing members so that we are confident in sharing our faith with those who are enquiring and new to Christ.
3. **Serving the community:** using our resources to welcome groups, organisations and families for all kinds of events, thereby creating a stronger network through which we can invite seekers to take a step towards faith

To facilitate the delivery of these objectives, the PCC agreed that we needed to organize our activities differently to get the most out of our volunteers. We have therefore created a team based organizational structure to help undertake the tasks required to run St John's. In addition to the aforementioned Communications Team, we now also have a Warden Team and a Treasury Team to support the existing Ministry Team and Community Team. This enables more people to offer their talent and enthusiasm, irrespective of how much time they can devote and has helped us to recruit a number of new members to help run St John's. Nonetheless, we are always on the look out for more volunteers!

At the core of our being as a church is spiritual nurturing. The responsibility for the spiritual health of St John's, in this period of interregnum, has been carried by our Ministry Team. Throughout a covid affected year, St John's has still been able to provide regular Sunday services as the mainstay of our church activities and the numbers of attendees has been steadily increasing over the year. The team also successfully restarted the community café which has been enthusiastically attended.



The Ministry Team has also made great progress in developing the first of our objectives, namely growing and widening the worshipping community. During the year, we held the first of our Community Eucharists as part of the objective of offering different forms of worship. The Community Eucharist has proved to be a popular addition to the services we offer whilst remaining true to the Anglo-Catholic tradition of St John's.

Another Ministry Team initiative that has proved to be equally successful is the Living in Love and Faith course that has been run in the last few weeks. The course addressed questions about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage and how these fit within the bigger picture of the gospel. This initiative and the opportunity it created to have open, searching and honest conversations, reflects the kind of inclusive church we want to be.

Many thanks then to the Ministry Team of David Jones, Susi Artis, Denis Tully, Muriel Smith, John Coggins and Brenda Blades for their efforts over the last year. It would not have been possible to achieve what we have without you.

Not to be outdone, the Community Team was also busy during the last year and have done a tremendous job in reinforcing our ties with the local community. We held the first of the monthly Farmers' Markets in August last year and these have gone from strength to strength, regularly attracting large numbers of attendees from the community in all weathers. The goodwill of the community was also harnessed in a fund raising campaign for the new gate on Church Drive, with the full amount being raised in a matter of weeks.

The Community Team was also instrumental in resurrecting the Toddler Group which is now run by members of the community. The Thursday sessions are so popular we will soon need to find more space to accommodate all the families, which is all very encouraging. The Community Team even managed to secure some grant funding from Boots to support the group!

Many thanks go to Cynthia Hoggett, Susi Artis, Dorothy Dexter, Helen Lewis, Robin Stalvies and Peter Green for their work with the Community Team.

Providing support to the various activities and initiatives has been our Communications Team who have been Tweeting, YouTubing, FaceBooking and running our website. As we go forwards, our social media presence will be more and more important as we seek to reach out to and engage with our community. Our Communications Team then, has a huge role to play in our growth and we are tremendously grateful to Ray Hotson, Esther Turner, Will Daniel, John Coggin and Tony Hipkins for their efforts over the past year.

The year also saw us say goodbye to our Parish Assistant Karen Randell, as her career as a Registrar took off. As we said thank you for all her help during the difficult covid period, we were pleased to also say welcome to our new Parish Assistant, Sam Foulkes. Sam has settled in very quickly and is proving to be a real asset to St John's.



## **Fabrics and fittings**

The upkeep of the building has continued in this period and we are grateful for all the work Peter Artis and our amazing caretaker, Pete Chilvers have carried out in this period.

Progress was also made with regard to the upkeep of the grounds. In addition to installing a new gate, the Community Team also contacted HM Prisons and Probation Service to offer the chance for probationers to undertake voluntary work in the grounds. We had our first cohort of probationers undertake grounds maintenance work in March 2022 and we plan for this arrangement to continue. It is another great example of how we are demonstrating our relevance to the wider community and providing help for those who need it.

The Community Team has also been liaising with the Local Council for support in upgrading the grounds. We are fortunate to have such wonderful facilities, a fact that has been recognised by the Local Council through the success of the Farmers' Market and also the sanctuary it provided to many local residents during the difficult covid lockdowns.

## **Interregnum**

We are now in a period of interregnum and we have the task of finding a new Vicar. The development of the new church plan was essential in determining the kind of individual we need to help us achieve our objectives and grow as a community. The new church plan informed the Parish Profile, which is the key document in outlining to any prospective candidates for the role of the kind of church we are and the kind of vicar we need to join us on our journey.

We have worked hard with the Diocese to reach the point where we have now advertised the post and it is a testimony to the strong relationship we have developed with the Diocese and work of the many people involved with developing the church plan and Parish Profile, that we were successful in the getting approval of our Bishops for a full time Vicar, albeit on a time limited basis for now.

By the time of the 2022 APCM, we hope to have positive news to share regarding the advert. We are confident that St John's Carrington, with all the opportunity it has to grow and chance to work with the fantastic people we have, will prove to be an irresistible draw and the right person will find us.

All that remains to be said then is that the last year has been a challenge, but that proved to be no obstacle in our growth. We have achieved a tremendous amount in the last year as this report testifies and what the interregnum has done is showcase the very best in the people of St John's. That can only bode well for the forthcoming year.



Asela Premachandra and Jane Harwood  
Churchwardens  
April 2022