

Annual Report 2021

Parish of St Mary the Virgin



Introduction by Christoph Lindner, Rector

Dear Church Member,



What is church all about? One of the shortest possible answers is simply this: "Meet Jesus!!" Without Jesus there would be no church, no Christian, no Christmas, no BC and AD and so much more. It all began with a child in a manger. Prophets and angels foretold that he would be our 'rescuer'. And his life was like no other: Powerful acts of healing, miracles, teachings that cut to the heart, a cruel death and then - so his friends insisted - a miraculous resurrection on the third day after his death. And until today, this is by far the best explanation for what happened next: the Church.

We meet Jesus in this account of Jesus' life. Meet Jesus in the lives of those who (very imperfectly) model their lives on his. Meet Jesus when we come together to worship him in our church services. Meet Jesus when we gather for our Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

Please make our APCM a priority – without you there, a member of the Body of Christ will be missing. As a church family we shared 'lament and laughter' last year, and we have seen God's faithfulness. At the APCM, we will review 2021, thank God for his faithfulness and renew our hope that he will build his church.

The meeting will also give us an opportunity to **share some important updates** – among them the changing shape of our ministry team (including a training curate for Denham Parish Church) and the development of St Mark's Church Hall. We will also elect churchwardens and PCC members.

Please join us on Sunday 8th of May for our Annual Parochial Church Meeting at 10.30am.

For the first time we will integrate the APCM in our Sunday Worship at 10.30am. Please join us at St Mary's if you can. The first part will also be streamed on YouTube. You can join us for the second (business) part on Zoom. All members of the electoral roll will receive an email with the Zoom details. If you would like to take part as a non-voting visitor, please contact our church office for the details.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Christoph', written in a cursive style.

"Remember, there is only one foundation, the one already laid: Jesus Christ."
1 Corinthians 3.11 (The Message)

(Front Cover: Celebrating Jesus, the light of the world, at our Christingle service)

**Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Denham
Annual Meeting of Parishioners and
Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 8th May 2022, 10.30am
St Mary's Church, Denham and Online**

AGENDA

1. Short service of worship

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

2. Vote of thanks to the Churchwardens for the previous year
3. Election of Churchwardens

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

4. Number of parishioners present and apologies for absence
5. Minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 23rd May 2021
6. Matters arising

Reports

7. Presentation of the copy of the church Electoral Roll
8. Annual Report for 2021
9. Financial Report
10. Churchwardens' Report
11. Deanery Synod Report

Elections

12. Election of Deanery Synod Member
13. Election of PCC members.
14. Appointment of Independent Examiner
15. A.O.B.
16. 2022 and beyond: Towards a new mission action plan
17. Closing Hymn and Blessing

APCM (provisional date):, Sunday 7 May 2022, time TBC

The Parish Church of St Mary's the Virgin, Denham
Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners & Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 23rd May 2021

The Rector, Christoph Lindner, was in the chair. The meeting took place at St Mary's and also via Zoom, hosted by Chris MacQueen.

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

2. Vote of thanks to the Churchwardens for the previous year

The Rector thanked Carlene Litchmore and Samantha Carter for all their hard work as churchwardens last year and especially for their commitment during the difficult year.

3. Election of Churchwardens

Carlene Litchmore and Samantha Carter agreed to stand for election as churchwardens for the coming year. Both were duly elected.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

4. Number of Parishioners present and any apologies

34 parishioners were present at St Mary's and 27 on Zoom – a total of 61 attendees. Apologies for absence were received from Robert Ash, Margaret Sargent, Laura Philips and Briony Nevitte.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 11th October 2020.

No corrections were made. Michael Carmody proposed the minutes, Robin Doran seconded. A show of hands was given to adopt the minutes.

6. No matters arising

The Rector gave thanks to all who submitted reports. He also gave thanks to all who were part of the church's life onsite and online, and to Robin Doran and Anne Thomas for proofreading the report.

REPORTS

7. Presentation of a copy of the Church Electoral Roll

The Rector expressed his thanks to Maurice Litchmore, our electoral roll officer. The electoral roll has grown from 144 members to 152, with 11 new first time applicants. The rector welcomed the new people on the electoral roll and mentioned that some members of the previous electoral roll passed away and acknowledged their loss. Others moved away and are serving God in other parts of the world-wide church.

8. Annual Report for 2020 (available in advance).

The Rector commended the printed annual report however he apologised for forgetting to mention the Thursday Holy Communion service in the report.

The church magazine has been reduced from five times to four times per year. The rector encouraged all to continue to pay £5 annual subscription. Thanks were given to Sam Eastwood who is our graphic designer for the magazine and is standing down. The Rector asked if anyone knows of a graphic designer who can take on this role.

Tony Drane, Phil Thompson, Chris Thompson, Robert Ash stood down from the fayre committee. Thanks were given to their commitment over many years. Andrew Simpson has been ringing the bells every Sunday throughout the pandemic and over the course of last year, thanks were given to him.

Thanks to Sam Carter, safeguarding officer. This is an important role within the church. The Rector encouraged all to speak confidentially to Sam if they had any safeguarding concerns.

Thanks were also given to Victoria Lucas (parish secretary) who worked through the pandemic. Her presence and 'listening ear' was so important. She was presented with a gift.

9. Financial report.

The end of year accounts showed a small surplus and a healthy reserve at the end of the year, an increase of £2,175 in the General Fund, reductions of £8,806 in the Fabric Fund and £817 in the Church Growth Fund. Cash balances at the end of the year totalled just over £300,000.

Unfortunately we lost some generous donors over the past year but thanks were given to all donors. As a result Planned Christian Giving was up by £15,000. Gift Aid was down due to a change of regime, however increases in donations and legacies and rental from St Mark's house enabled a total income in the General Fund of £127,604 only slightly down by £5,000 on the previous year.

Costs to the General Fund were either in line with budget or reduced due to the closure of our buildings for large parts of the year.

The Fabric Fund deficit of £8000 was partly due to the loss of income from the Fayre; however, £11,500 was received in donations specifically for the maintenance and upkeep of the church building. Important work was done on the roof and there is a list of repairs which need to be carried out in the not too distant future.

The Church Growth Fund showed a small reduction.

Give and Share is a new fund and was established with generous donations of £8791 and ended the year with a balance of £7721.

The Rector gave thanks to Mike Stewart (treasurer) for all his hard work and expertise. The Rector encouraged all to give in a regular way through the Parish Giving Scheme, no matter how big or small the donation.

Pam Montgomery proposed the financial report, Gerald Miller seconded. All in favour. Duly Approved.

10. Churchwardens' report

The Rector encouraged all to read the report in the booklet.

11. Deanery Synod Report

The Rector encouraged all to read it in the Annual Report and thanked Michael Carmody and Janet Allen who represented Denham Parish at Deanery Synod over the last year.

ELECTIONS

12. Election of Deanery Synod Members.

Brian O'Regan was nominated and appointed to the role (as there was a vacant position). He will continue to serve on the PCC as a Deanery Synod representative. We now have the full complement of three representatives for the first time in a long while.

13. Election of PCC Members

We can elect up to 12 PCC members. The Rector gave thanks to all. Four members had to stand down as their three-year term had come to an end: Robert Ash, Sharon Williams, Michael Stewart and Dexter Brown. Robert Ash stood down after 21 years. Immense thanks were given to Robert Ash for his commitment and his wisdom. He will continue to chair the fabric team. The other three PCC members were nominated for another term.

Four further candidates were nominated: Tim Sole (who has been on PCC before) and Kathleen Anderson, Christopher Macqueen and Dominic Birkby. Christoph encouraged all to read their résumé which was handed out. No further nominations. As the number of candidates did not exceed the number of seats to be filled, all were duly elected.

14. Appointment of Independent Examiner

The Rector gave thanks to David Steel who examined the accounts. He has offered to audit our accounts for another year. David is a qualified accountant, a member of St James Gerrards Cross and Fulmer, and is also their treasurer. Kathy Paine nominated David Steel as independent examiner and Jane Brown seconded. All in favour.

15. A.O.B.

Thanks were given to Edda for giving so much to the work of this parish and also a big thank you to Christoph for everything he has done over the last year. Denham were blessed with having Christoph at the helm. Christoph and Edda reached a 5 year milestone of serving in Denham and a gift was presented.

16. 2021 and beyond: Recovering and Rebuilding (talk given by the Rector).

Our Rector acknowledged that the pandemic has led us into a season of accelerated change, which calls us to prayerfully discern the future of our church's ministry and mission, always firmly rooted in Jesus' unchanging mission and our place in it.

Our vision remains the same, we pray, welcome and share like Jesus. The mission of the church of Jesus remains the same: "Go and make disciples!" But our methods of doing that will have to evolve. The 'new normal' will be a 'new different'. Many will have an urge to return to what we were used to; however, we learn backwards and lead forwards.

The rector encouraged all to read the draft mission action plan from 2020. Rather than simply discarding it, or adopting it without change, we need to ask important questions: What is God saying to us during this crisis? What have we gained that we don't want to lose? The two goals of 'strengthening the core' and 'reaching out' are still the right ones to focus on.

The Rector then presented three tensions we are navigating:

Online and Onsite services and events.

Online became a lifeline for us during the pandemic, not everyone found the change easy. It is exciting to be able to come back onsite and see one another face to face. More people were able to join us online and it was lovely to see White Plains care home tuning in regularly to our online services. Church Coffee Online has allowed us to explore the themes and to get to know different people. The number of people visiting our website was massively up in 2020.

But we have missed some of the aspects of onsite services: Seeing people face to face, receiving holy communion and singing together. Some people are not so confident or mobile anymore, so we need to think how can make a hybrid model of church services work. A basic streaming infrastructure will be put into St Mary's and training of new volunteers will be needed to do this well. To plan this next season well, it is important to hear from church members. The Rector encouraged everyone to complete the survey.

Recovery and reshaping.

We are in the tension of recovery and reshaping. The crisis has left its mark on our lives and our livelihoods. We need space to grieve what has been lost.

Small groups have been essential during this time. Lifegroups, bible book clubs and ministry groups, where we support and pray for one another. Please get in touch if you are not in a small group or have a new idea for a small group.

Later in the year, there will be a service for lament and thanksgiving. Ian Jennings would like to run another bereavement group onsite at St Marks in the autumn.

It is a unique time to renew and change what we have been doing. New groups were started, e.g. Give and Share and Bible Book Clubs. We may have to stop things which have run their course but we won't lose things we value and treasure.

Caring for the church family and Reaching out beyond it.

A crisis can lead to a community pulling up the draw bridge, but that way lies longterm decline. Covid forced the church to leave the building - literally and metaphorically. St Mark's development group have continued to meet and feel St Mark's should become a community hub. They have met with experts and architects to explore ideas of what St Marks can look like. NO decisions have been made. This is a project that won't be rushed. We need to get the pace right and not neglect caring for our own church family. We don't want to do too many things too quickly. Healthy, life-giving habits of the Christian life will sustain us and we will continue to explore them.

Our ministry team (Nnamdi, Carlene, Sam, Louise, Victoria, Edda, Christoph, plus Kathy Paine and Janet Allen) has been taking part in *ChurchNext* - a programme for church teams to evaluate the impact of the pandemic and to begin to make plans for the future. One theme has already emerged: The church must be courageous at a time when it would be so easy to retreat. We propose that we put a *dare* after the *share like Jesus* in our mission action plan.

The meeting ended with a prayer.

Next APCM date 8th May at 10.30 am (provisional).

**Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Denham
Annual Report and Financial Statements
of the Parochial Church Council
for the year ended 31 December 2021**

Incumbent:

Rev'd Christoph Lindner, The Rectory, Ashmead Lane, Denham, UB9 5BB

Bank:

Barclays Bank, 142 High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1JX

Independent Examiner:

David Steel, Danescroft, 37 Kingsway, Chalfont St. Peter, SL9 8NX

Background

The PCC of St Mary's Church Denham has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, Christoph Lindner, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church through regular public worship, pastoral work, teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses, events, small groups and religious assemblies in schools; children's and youth work; working for the common good of the parish in co-operation with other agencies; supporting other charitable work in the UK and overseas; ecumenical co-operation with other churches.

Membership

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. It operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure and in 2011 was registered with the Charity Commission as THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, DENHAM with Charity Registration Number 1144358.

Members of the PCC are either ex officio or elected by the annual parochial church meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

During the year the following served as members of the PCC:

Up to the APCM 2021:

Incumbent: Christoph Lindner, the chairman

The churchwardens: Carlene Litchmore (vice-chair), Samantha Carter.

Elected members of the PCC were Robert Ash, Clive Ashcroft, Dexter Brown, Charles McClelland, Brian O'Regan, Kathy Paine, Mike Stewart, Anne Thomas, Sandy Wickenden, Sharon Williams. Dominic Birkby was in attendance.

The representatives on the Deanery Synod were Michael Carmody and Janet Allen. The treasurer was Mike Stewart. The secretary was Victoria Lucas.

From the APCM 2021:

Elected members of the PCC were Kathleen Andersen, Clive Ashcroft, Dominic Birkby, Dexter Brown, Christopher Macqueen, Charles McClelland, Kathy Paine, Timothy Sole, Mike Stewart, Anne Thomas, Sandy Wickenden, Sharon Williams.

The representatives on the Deanery Synod were Janet Allen, Michael Carmody and Brian O'Regan. The treasurer was Mike Stewart. The secretary was Victoria Lucas.

Committees

The *Cockpit Crew* is the *Standing Committee* of our PCC. It has the power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council. Apart from its statutory members (Rector and Churchwardens) the members were Clive Ashcroft, Kathy Paine and Mike Stewart.

Our *Fabric Team* looks after the fabric of St Mary's Church and the churchyard. The members were Robert Ash (chair), Clive Ashcroft, Dexter Brown, Tony Drane, Philip Hardy, Gerald Miller and Mike Stewart.

St Mark's Committee is a sub-committee of the PCC within the ministry of Denham Parish Church, responsible for the maintenance and running of St Mark's Church Hall. The Committee members were Anne Thomas (chair), Brian O'Regan (treasurer), John Breese, Edda Lindner. The Rector and churchwardens are ex officio members.

St Mark's Development Group continued to meet as a sub-committee of the PCC with the brief to explore how St Mark's Hall can be developed. Its members were Brian O'Regan (chair), Clive Ashcroft, Charlie McClelland, Kathy Paine, Mike Stewart and the Rector.

Give and Share is a ministry of Denham Parish Church which reports to the PCC. It was led by Craig Alexander and Caroline Goodwin. Other members of the leadership team were Janet Allen, Caroline Ashcroft, Clive Ashcroft, Dexter Brown, Alexandra Ellison, Heather O'Regan, Kathy Paine. The Rector is an ex-officio member.

Church Attendance

Please refer to the Electoral Roll Report below for details on the Electoral Roll.

The usual Sunday attendance at St Mary's, counted during October, was 70 adults and 12 children. Due to the pandemic, this number cannot be compared like for like with pre-pandemic figures: We started with two services per Sunday during the month of October (17th), before we only had one service at 10.30. We only

started to record the number of screens taking part 'live' on YouTube in 2022, so those worshippers are not included in the figures above.

Around 300 adults and 50 children came to our Carol and Christmas services at St Mary's in December. Once again, these numbers do not tell the whole story: We kept everyone safe by sticking with the social distancing measures of our risk assessment, thus significantly reducing the capacity at St Mary's. We changed the format of our Crib Service on Christmas Eve at short notice (due to Omicron) and turned it into outdoor Alfresco Carols. We had a good crowd for it, but it is in the nature of it that we couldn't record numbers. The Carols for All Ages on 19 December were streamed live without a congregation at St Mary's. Peak concurrent viewers (watching it live) were 57 screens, which equates roughly to 70-110 viewers. Many of our services at St Mary's were also streamed live on Youtube. Nine Lessons and Carols had space for 70 at St Mary's, but also 47 concurrent screens taking part live, equating to 60-95 viewers. A total of 319 people have watched (parts of) this carol service since then.

In addition we had "Carols at Café Church" at St Mark's, as well as "Carols and Readings for Christmas" at Denham Garden Village.

Occasional Offices

In 2021 we had 16 baptisms, 7 weddings, 29 funerals and 21 burials of ashes.

Safeguarding

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. Please refer to the separate report by Samantha Carter for details.

Electoral Roll Report

St Mary's Denham Church Electoral Roll has been reviewed and amended as required by the Diocesan Synod and is available for viewing at this meeting. The roll will also be displayed on St Mary's, St Francis and St Mark's Notice Boards.

The review for this year has seen the removal of four names and the addition of six new entries. This has resulted in an increase of two on the 2021 roll. The number of names entered upon the Church Electoral Roll for the parish is one hundred and fifty four (154).

Parishioners who are listed on the roll are entitled to vote at this meeting. However in order to qualify for nomination to the PCC they must have been registered on the Electoral Roll for at least six months.

Addresses have been checked and verified by the Churchwardens and are held on the Electoral Roll Database. In accordance with the Data Protection guidelines, addresses of members are not published on copies of the roll that are on display in the churches of the parish.

New applications may be submitted after the closure of this meeting for inclusion on the next roll. Application Forms are available from the Electoral Roll Officer or St Mary's Church Office. They can also be downloaded at www.denhamparish.church/apcm.

Copies of the Church Electoral Roll Certificate will be displayed for a minimum of fourteen days alongside the roll already on display in the parish churches after this meeting. A further copy will be sent to the Secretary of the Deanery.

Maurice W Litchmore, Electoral Roll Officer

PCC REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2021

Aims, Objectives & Activities

Our aims and objectives are summarised by our vision statement, which the PCC adopted in 2018:

We pray like Jesus. Jesus taught his disciples to pray to God as 'Father' and was in constant communication with him. As his followers we want all our life to be grounded in our relationship with him.

We welcome like Jesus. We have experienced God's welcome in Jesus and want to be a welcoming community for everyone.

We share like Jesus. We are called to share life, faith and ministry and to develop a culture of generosity that speaks of our generous God.

From this broad vision statement flows our *Mission Action Plan (MAP)*. Due to the pandemic we did not finalise a medium-term MAP in 2021. However, quite a few objectives from the draft plan (2020) were achieved and other new mission opportunities embraced.

The PCC met eight times in 2021 - six times on Zoom and twice at St Mary's Vestry. Naturally our focus was to steward the life, mission and ministry of our church at this time of crisis, to discern what God is saying to us and to plan and prepare larger church events and seasons such as St Mary's Festival and Christmas.

Our standing committee (Cockpit Crew) met seven times.

Achievements and Performance

Rather than duplicating the excellent reports in this booklet, let me give you a few pointers to help you discover what was achieved as you read them.

UP IN OUT

For a second year, 2021 was shaped by the Covid pandemic. Our helpful model for dealing with a crisis (Response, Recovery, Rebuilding) was never meant to be tidily linear and that is what happened when we entered a renewed lockdown early in the year, which was in some ways a return to "Response". It is difficult to make medium term plans at such a time, but the nature of the mission of Jesus' church does not change. Two-thousand years ago, the Christian church was born in a period of turmoil, hardship and persecution! And its unchanging three dimensions can be summed up with these words: UP (Life with God and transformation from the inside out), IN (Life in community with other Christians) and OUT (Life in the world - sharing the love of Christ).

How are these three dimensions seen in the reports?

A Fallow Season?

In some ways, 2021 was akin to a fallow season - this wasn't a year for big announcements and shiny projects. But fallowness is not inactivity, as the many reports in this booklet show. A fallow field recovers its fruitfulness for the next season. Fallow times create space to deepen our roots. Fallow times give us the space to listen to God and to begin to discern *his* plans. One example of the productive use of a fallow season was *The Wellbeing Journey* in the spring term, which many people found helpful and timely. Our survey in the summer showed that the majority of respondents felt their faith had deepened during the pandemic. *As you read the reports, which positive effects of a fallow season can you see?*

Not shrinking from the task

"A shrinking church must not turn inward".

This quote resonated with me last year. The church in the west is facing many challenges, accelerated by Covid. At the same time we have seen an acceleration of change in response to the pandemic. Three years ago we would not have dreamed of streaming our services from St Mary's or to create small groups, Alpha and Bible Courses that meet online. As we began to return to some sense of normality there could have been a strong urge to 'go back to better times'. But we all know that the next crisis will come and that there is a general trend in our society to relegate church and faith to the private sphere. The reports in this booklet tell a different story: There has been much innovation in how we reach out beyond our own community, how we can 'leave the building', as well as the return of treasured aspects of our church's life that help us turn outwards.

As you read the reports, keep this question in mind: "How did we turn outwards in 2021?" and you will make many discoveries.

Recovering the muscle memory of community

"[The pandemic has] caused us all to lose the muscle memory of how to be together." (Archbishop Justin Welby)

Easter 2021 marked the return to St Mary's Church for a 9.30am service and over the following week we had a (Covid-restricted) 'full house' on many Sundays. Being together in one place, sometimes singing a final hymn outside helped us to recover our muscle memory of being together, even though handshakes and hugs were still off the menu. With the development of a hybrid service from St Mary's we wanted to ensure that online worshippers do not feel as second-class members of our community. The role of an online moderator was created with that goal in mind. Many groups started to meet onsite again - Little Lions, Lifegroups, choir, bellringers and others. We still have much to learn and much to recover.

As you read the reports, you will discover in which ways we have begun to recover our muscle memory of how to be together.

ChurchNEXT

Our leadership team continued to take part in the ChurchNEXT programme during the first half of the year, receiving helpful input and then beginning to discern what we might learn from the pandemic for our own church's culture, leadership, discipleship and mission. The sermon series "Dare like Jesus: Christ-shaped courage" was one fruit of those sessions. As a church we are not rushing into lots of new projects, but want to use this fallow season for prayerful reflection which then flows into a new readiness for God's future plans.



As you read the reports, pray that God would show us his plans for Denham Parish Church. Please share your thoughts with members of our ministry team and PCC.

On behalf of the PCC

Rev'd Christoph Lindner, Rector

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT 2021

Another remarkable year for Denham Parish. Beginning the year with our church buildings closed was not part of the plan. However as we left 2020 behind and entered a new decade the health and safety of our church family was paramount and we took the decision for our buildings to remain closed but our church to remain well and truly 'open'. On 4th January when the government announced Lockdown 3 we were well versed in what to do to provide connectivity and support through online offerings of services and meetings. We even managed church coffee online! Our Denham Parish motto of 'We pray, welcome and share like Jesus' was still the reliable template that would guide our fellowship throughout the year. Jesus was indeed our shining light in times of need.

In February we started the Wellbeing Course in our sermon series and in our small groups. This came at just right the time as many of us felt tired and weary from the previous 12 challenging months. It allowed us time to explore many different sides of ourselves and above all to remember to 'be kind to one another and ourselves'. The Churchwardens used this time to drop in on some of the lifegroups and hear updates from their members.

In March, we celebrated Mothering Sunday online and the Churchwardens made daffodil posies and left them on offer outside St Mary's west door. These were very popular and well appreciated by church members and passers-by alike. We attended a Samaritans course on listening well and heard about their valuable work from two volunteers. Robert arranged and was present for the Quinquennial Inspection of St Mary's. We were pleased to hear the report that the church buildings and contents were in good order. The Fabric report will highlight more detailed maintenance information.

After the beginning of Holy Week with services being offered online, we were thrilled to join the flower team on Easter Saturday to decorate the church ahead of reopening on Easter Sunday with a 9.30am onsite Family Service. We were overjoyed to be able to open our doors again! The online 10.30am service and Zoom Coffee were still on offer too and when we could, we joined in with this, too. We were very sad to hear that HRH Prince Philip died on 9th April and opened St Mary's for private prayer on the Sunday afternoon followed by a YouTube service in memory of him. Many of our church family joined online with their families from overseas. The wonders of technology!

May saw the start of 'The Bible Course' and this was a chance for us to journey through the books of the Bible and learn how they all join up. We also experienced a 'Thy Kingdom Come' Prayer Day and had the opportunity to lead sessions. We were both honoured to be elected for a further year at the Annual Parishioner's meeting. We held this and our Annual Parochial Church Meeting in church and online (on Zoom) at the same time. We both enjoyed presenting Christoph with a gift to commemorate leading our Parish for 5 years and took the chance to thank him for his enormous efforts with online church and the constant challenges that brought. Although we were not able to run the traditional May Fayre we were delighted to have our first wedding of the year in May.

In June we saw a lot more of our familiar offerings back with Little Lions and Sunday Club back in revised formats. The Churchwardens were so happy to experience a PCC away day again and welcome new and existing trustees in person rather than on a screen. We met at Denham Village School and had the opportunity to sit outside in the sun and talk about how we had journeyed through the previous year and planned for the next.

We prepared for our Area Dean's inspection in July and were blessed with beautiful weather and a churchyard resplendent in colourful roses to welcome Revd Peggy Ludlow and Lawrence Tebboth (Lay Chair Deanery Synod). They checked our paperwork and valuables and prayed for our Parish and we told them all that we had been doing in these unprecedented times. An extract from the Area Dean's report - "I was delighted to visit your beautiful site and the roses are at their best. Pleased to hear that the Parish is in a good place even after what has been a difficult 18 months with the virus. I enjoyed visiting St Francis and St Mark's and hearing about your feasibility study. I wish you every blessing in your ministry in Denham."

In August we changed our service time from 9.30am to 10.30am and started to stream it live on YouTube from the church building. September was a busy month all round. Firstly Christoph joined us for the Archdeacon's Visitation in Saint James Gerrards Cross, where we were sworn in as Churchwardens for another year along with others from the Amersham Deanery. The following week we had



our St Mary's Patronal Festival weekend and enjoyed seeing familiar faces and new faces having fun in the church and church grounds. As Covid restrictions lessened slightly we brought back refreshments after the service and could seat a few more people in the pews.

As October started we once again helped ready the church for Harvest and marvelled at the talents of our wonderful flower team. Supermarket vouchers were gratefully received at the service and many given to our Give and Share team to distribute. We launched our 9am onsite Holy Communion Service at St. Mary's at the end of the month and it was well received by those preferring a quiet reflective start to their Sunday.

In November we were honoured to host two events to commemorate those we had lost. First was a time of 'Remembering Loved Ones'. It was a chance for those who had lost a loved one during 2020 and 2021 to sit quietly in church, light a candle, pray and listen to music. Members of the clergy and bereavement team were there to pray, and have a cup of tea and a chat. Denham Parish said goodbye to church family members Doris Booker, Sylvia Gammond, Wendy Hoare, Geoff Newell, Sean Ryde and Jessie Simms in 2021. We are grateful for

their devoted service over many years and the way they touched our lives. Our Remembrance Sunday Service was back in the church building and well received with a full, socially distanced church and many outside. Both events were a testament to some dedicated individuals and such humbling experiences.



With Advent upon us, and memories of 2020's December lockdown we made sure we had a Plan B again. We started the month with our PCC Christmas socially distanced drinks in church and Christoph hosted a music quiz. Our beautiful building was decorated with a fine tree, candles and flowers. The month proceeded with all our traditional services back in church once again but as

Covid cases went up, one of the Carol Services went online and the Christmas Eve Crib Service went alfresco! On Christmas morning we sang Christmas carols in church and all in all we felt very blessed to end the year this way.

The Churchwardens are so grateful for the encouragement, support and prayers they received throughout the year from the ministry team, the PCC, the logistics team (overseeing our Covid Risk Assessments and seating plans), the fabric team, churchyard team, the choir, the bell ringers, the vergers and the cleaners.

An enormous thank you to all our devoted volunteers. We know there are not as many of you now as pre-Covid times and many of you fulfil two or more roles on the same day. With the digital age we have created new roles of camera operator and moderator, hence there are more slots to fill each week. We ask that God may bless each and every one of you for your serving hearts.

(Carlene Litchmore and Samantha Carter)

2021 FINANCIAL REVIEW AND RESULTS

The Annual Accounts, which have been reviewed by David Steel FCA, acting as an Independent Examiner, show an increase of £3,851 in the General Fund and of £5,197 in the Give & Share Fund with reductions of £24,121 in the Fabric Fund and £697 in the Church Growth Fund.

At 31 December 2021 the General Fund stands at £53,0954, the Fabric Fund at £176,575, the Give & Share Fund at £12,918 and the Church Growth Fund at £21,896.

In total there was a reduction in the combined Funds of £15,770 so that the total of all the funds stood at £264,484 at 31 December 2021 compared to £280,254 at 31 December 2020.

Cash balances at 31 December 2021 totalled £297,438 compared with £303,742 at 31 December 2020.

Total Incoming Resources in the Unrestricted General Fund were £146,632 compared to £127,604 the previous year. Planned Christian Giving and Gift Aid at £60,609 and £16,851 respectively were very similar to the totals in the previous year whilst Weekly Collections at £6,314, Donations & Legacies at £13,053 and Weddings & Funerals at £18,667 all showed significant increases as the negative impact of the covid pandemic eased during the second half of the year.

Legacies are an invaluable source of funds to our Church and we thank everybody who has made a commitment in their wills to provide a legacy to support our continuing work in the Parish.

The rental income received from St Mark's Church is shown at £4,800 with the expenditure at £3,571. Members of the church community have undertaken a number of running repairs and essential maintenance at St Mark's Church but it is likely that in future years more substantial maintenance costs will be unavoidable. It should be noted that we received a grant of £3,000 from the Diocese towards the £6,000 costs of investigating a possible development at St Mark's Church.

The rent received for St Mark's House at £18,667 is an important and valued source of income.

Total Costs in the General Fund increased to £142,781 from £125,429 the previous year. Whilst most of the individual cost headings were in line with the previous year or in the case of items like energy were up as we were able to come back to the Church buildings in the winter months.

Donations to Charities have more than doubled to £13,835 this year compared to £6,000 last year. Full details of this expenditure is shown in Note 6.

In most years the Denham Village Fayre and the St Mary's Festival generates the bulk of the income for the Fabric Fund, so the loss of the Fayre, for a second year,

led to income from this source reducing from £17,987 in 2019 to £2,906 this year.

Whilst we were able to reduce the expenditure from the Fabric Fund last year to a rock bottom essential minimum this year, unavoidable expenditure increased to £29,527 as set out in Note 7.

We are expecting this expenditure on the fabric of the buildings to increase significantly in the short and medium term as the church building does have significant problems with damp and other structural issues. Professional advice has indicated the actions that may need to be taken and it is intended to take a step at a time, assess the impact of that remedial work before moving to the next stage. In that way it is hoped that the most expensive remedial work can either be avoided or reduced in scope.

The activities of the Give and Share Fund are covered elsewhere in this report and I will not repeat them here but it is pleasing to be able to say that the Fund remains well positioned to continue its essential charitable work in the Parish as we go forward into what looks like being, for many local people a very difficult and financially challenging new year.

The Church Growth Fund that stands at £21,896 at the year end and is well positioned to support appropriate expenditure as and when required.

With cash balances of £297,438 the Parish remains financially secure but our budgets indicate that 2022 will be a demanding year that may well see significant and increasing deficits in all our Funds that will need to be addressed as we go forward.

It is self-evident that without the faithful commitment of all givers, the work of Denham Parish Church could not continue. Thank you very much for your support in 2021 and through the coming year.

(Mike Stewart, PCC Treasurer)

Correspondence Address for the PCC:

St Mary's Church Office
Village Road, Denham, UB9 5BH

Extracted from the Annual Report of the PCC for the Year Ended 31st December 2021

The Parish of St Mary the Virgin Denham

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 December 2021

	Note	General Fund (Unrestricted)		Fabric Fund (Designated)		Give & Share Fund (Restricted)		Church Growth Fund (Restricted)		Total Funds	
		2021 £	2020 £	2021 £	2020 £	2021 £	2020 £	2021 £	2020 £	2021 £	2020 £
INCOMING RESOURCES											
Weekly collections		6,314	2,839							6,314	2,839
Planned Christian Giving (PCG)		60,609	60,793							60,609	60,793
Gift Aid Tax recovered		16,851	16,363	2,500						19,351	16,363
Donations & Legacies		13,053	10,844		11,500	7,566	8,791	670	584	21,289	31,719
Incoming resources from donors		96,827	90,839	2,500	11,500	7,566	8,791	670	584	107,563	111,714
Vestry Teas & Sunday coffees		-	-							-	-
Miscellaneous		3,750	2,324		53					3,750	2,377
Other voluntary income resources		3,750	2,324	-	53	-	-	-	-	3,750	2,377
Wedding & Funeral Fees		18,181	9,208							18,181	9,208
Denham & Patronal Festival Fairs				2,906	1,221					2,906	1,221
St Marks Church - Rental Income		4,800	1,900							4,800	1,900
Church Houses Rent Received	1	18,667	20,034							18,667	20,034
Diocesan Grant for St Marks Fees		3,000	-							3,000	-
Income from Charitable & Ancillary Trading		44,648	31,142	2,906	1,221	-	-	-	-	47,554	32,363
Income from Investments - interest		1,407	3,299							1,407	3,299
Total Incoming Resources		146,632	127,604	5,406	12,774	7,566	8,791	670	584	160,274	149,753
RESOURCES EXPENDED											
Gas & Electricity		3,939	2,800							3,939	2,800
St Francis House	2	634	1,760							634	1,760
St Francis Church		138	135							138	135
St Marks House	3	727	1,349							727	1,349
St Marks Church	4	3,571	3,581							3,571	3,581
Cleaning		2,890	2,400							2,890	2,400
Secretarial Expenses		13,038	11,973							13,038	11,973
Printing, Post, Books & Stationery		1,567	1,911							1,567	1,911
Clergy Administration & Training		2,623	2,249							2,623	2,249
Telephone		245	694							245	694
Organist		3,964	1,764							3,964	1,764
Parish Share		67,639	67,711							67,639	67,711
Childrens Ministry		509	315							509	315
Parish Hospitality		578	347							578	347
Website & IT		1,748	1,270							1,748	1,270
Associate Ministers	5	14,863	15,336							14,863	15,336
Donations to Charities	6	13,835	6,000							13,835	6,000
Miscellaneous		4,273	3,834							4,273	3,834
St Marks Professional Fees		6,000	-							6,000	-
Fabric Fund Expenditure	7			29,527	21,580					29,527	21,580
Give & Share Fund Expenditure	8					2,369	1,070			2,369	1,070
Church Growth Fund Expenditure	9							1,367	1,401	1,367	1,401
Total Resources Expended		142,781	125,429	29,527	21,580	2,369	1,070	1,367	1,401	176,044	149,480
NET INCOMING / (OUTGOING) RESOURCES		3,851	2,175	(24,121)	(8,806)	5,197	7,721	(697)	(817)	(15,770)	273
Balances brought forward at 1st January		49,244	47,069	200,696	209,502	7,721	-	22,593	23,410	280,254	279,981
BALANCES C/FWD AT 31st DECEMBER 2020		53,095	49,244	176,575	200,696	12,918	7,721	21,896	22,593	264,484	280,254

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination no matter has come to my attention :-

- 1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - a) to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 41 of the Act and
 - b) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the requirement of the Act, as also contained in the Church Accounting Regulations 1997 have not been met.
- 2) to which in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

David Steel FCA

Date :

19/3/22


The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin Denham

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2021

	2021 £	2020 £
Current Assets		
Short term deposits	254,500	254,500
Bank current account	42,938	49,242
	<u>297,438</u>	<u>303,742</u>
Current Liabilities		
Creditors and accruals	(32,954)	(23,488)
	<u>£ 264,484</u>	<u>£ 280,254</u>
Net Assets		
Funds		
General Fund (unrestricted)	53,095	49,244
Fabric Fund (designated)	176,575	200,696
Give & Share (restricted)	12,918	7,721
Church Growth Fund (restricted)	21,896	22,593
	<u>£ 264,484</u>	<u>£ 280,254</u>

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 1 February 2022 and signed on their behalf by
Rev. Christoph Lindner (Rector) and Samantha Carter (Church Warden)


Rev C Lindner


Mrs S Carter

The Notes below form part of these Accounts

Accounting Policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 1997 together with applicable accounting standards and the Charities SORP

Funds

The General Fund represent the funds of the PCC that are not subject to any restrictions regarding their use & are available for application to the general purposes of the PCC. The Fabric Fund

The Fabric Fund is designated for improvements, major repairs, insurance and maintenance of the Church and the Churchyard.

The Give & Share Fund is a Restricted Fund for charitable purposes in and around the Parish.

The Church Growth Fund is a Restricted Fund for the growth of the Christian message in the Parish and beyond as deemed appropriate by the PCC.

Accounting Records

The accounts, include all transactions, assets & liabilities for which the PCC are responsible in Law. They do not include the accounts of Church groups that owe their affiliation to another body nor those that are informal gatherings of church members.

Incoming Resources

Collections, planned giving & donations are recognised when received by or on behalf of the PCC. Income tax recoverable on covenants or gift aid donations is recognised when received. Funds raised by the Village Fayre are accounted for net of associated costs.

Assets

Consecrated & beneficial property is excluded from the accounts by s96(2)a of the Charities Act 1993, and no value is placed on movable church furnishings. All expenditure is written off as incurred.

The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin - Denham

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2021

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>			<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
	£	£			£	£
1 Church House Rents			7 Fabric Fund			
St Marks House - net	18,667	20,034	Churchyard Paths & Drainage		1,032	-
	18,667	20,034	Church Houses		2,009	-
2 St Francis House			Professional Fees		1,595	383
Insurance	535	960	Roof Maintenance		2,502	5,848
Boiler service/ Alarm maintenance	99	800	Tree Felling & Inspection		6,396	-
Miscellaneous	-	-	Computer & Software		560	-
	634	1,760	Electrical Wiring Survey		1,615	850
3 St Marks House			Insurance		4,482	4,344
Insurance	628	1,250	Churchyard		5,495	5,557
Boiler/alarm service	99	99	Maintenance (See Note 10)		3,841	4,598
	727	1,349			29,527	21,580
4 St Marks Church			8 Give & Share Fund			
Utilities	960	671	Computer & Software		-	545
Cleaning & Maintenance	1,765	1,885	Printing		-	105
Insurance	627	900	Packaging & Products		2,069	420
Miscellaneous	219	125	Storage		300	-
	-	-	Urgent Support Payments		260	-
	3,571	3,581			2,369	525
5 Associate Ministers			9 Church Growth Fund			
Rent	9,600	10,600	Internet Streaming Equipment		930	-
Utilities	2,386	2,636	Miscellaneous		437	1,401
Council Tax	2,877	2,100			-	-
	14,863	15,336			1,367	1,401
6 Charitable Donations			10 Maintenance			
Wycliffe Bible Translations	2,670	1,000	Waste Collection		1,659	1,132
Trinity / SHOC	2,000	2,000	Security		768	1,383
Tearfund	1,500	1,000	Fire Extinguishers		496	486
Church Army	1,500	1,000	Clock		266	266
Bible Reading Fellowship	1,500	1,000	Organ Repairs		144	-
LIFT Nigeria	3,100	-	Mowing Equipment Repairs		238	-
British Heart Foundation	700	-	Miscellaneous		270	371
Give & Share Restricted Fund	500	-	Rodent Pest Controls		-	480
Royal British Legion	200	-	Boiler Maintenance		-	480
Childrens Society	165	-			3,841	4,598
	13,835	6,000				

REPORTS FROM OUR GROUPS AND MINISTRIES: FROM A TO Z

ALPHA AND EVANGELISM



In February we started our first ever **Online Alpha on Zoom**. A total of 18 people took part and met in three smaller groups for the discussion part of each session. The online format enabled several people to take part who do not live locally, others were not yet ready to come together in a church building or would have found it difficult to physically come to a meeting; the online format therefore opened Alpha up to a different group of people. While there are obvious drawbacks to an online format, everyone found the course helpful and small groups formed friendship - in fact, one small group has kept meeting on Zoom once a month well beyond the end of the course.

Due to the restrictions of the pandemic, we continued to use the **internet and the churchyard** around St Mary's (prayer trails, worship in the woods, etc.). Offering free resources (our magazine, "Hope in an uncertain world", "Try Praying" and others) is another way to help the wider community explore faith.

Sometimes we spot unexpected opportunities to reach out beyond our church family: One such opportunity was the **launch of Joe Smith's biography "Cushty"** in November. Joe is a member of our church and has an amazing story to tell. Accordingly, St Mary's welcomed a wonderful mix of church members, local residents and some who'd never been in our church before.

Of course our **impact reaches far beyond the local parish**, not least through our mission partners. At the end of 2020 our Christmas Appeal asked for support of the LiFT orphanage in Nigeria. At the beginning of 2021 we were able to give £1,000 towards it. Together with several substantial individual donations during the course of the year, LiFt was able to complete most of the work during 2021. During Lent we invited gifts for Bibles in a local language in Togo.

Our mission partner Samuel Kpagheri (Wycliffe Bible Translators) was part of the translating team. 96 Bibles were distributed later in the year; part of our gift was used to run literacy classes.

We are planning to run Alpha at least once every year. Experience shows that the most effective way is a **personal invitation** by someone who is already part of our church. If you have never been part of Alpha, could you sign up for the next course so you experience it yourself and then can invite your friends with confidence?

ATC (Air Cadets)

For some years Christoph has now been leading “Padre’s Hours” at our local Air Training Corps (Squadron 2370), ably led by Flight Lieutenant Michael Easter RAFAC. In 2021 Christoph was officially appointed as chaplain to the squadron. The air cadets participated again at our Remembrance Service in November.

BAPTISMS

As Covid restrictions gradually lifted, we saw a return of baptisms. The Church of England baptises candidates at the main Sunday service, whenever possible. However, there may be circumstances when a separate service is more appropriate. Due to continued social distancing we had less capacity to accommodate baptisms in our main services, especially as some families wanted to gather a large group after lockdown. In 2021 we baptised 15 children and one adult. Most baptism preparation evenings were still held online - in total we held five preparation evenings.

(Picture: Baptism of Gabriel Hooper)



BELLRINGERS

Ringling as a band has been limited this year as a result of both the pandemic and low numbers. We rang for the Festival weekend, Remembrance Sunday, over Christmas and on New Year's Eve, but have otherwise generally continued to use the Ellacombe chimes including for a number of weddings.

The good news is that we now have 3 learners, which is the reason for the slightly spooky-sounding bells that could be heard in the village on a Wednesday evening over the winter. The bell hammers were muffled with lengths of old bike tyres to avoid our neighbours being disturbed too much by the monotonous tolling of a single bell on practice nights. The learners are progressing well so the muffles are now off and we hope to field a full band again more regularly. We also have an extra volunteer on the chimes to help spread the load.

We have not needed to repair or replace anything significant this year so our finances are still in good shape helped by fees from weddings, with enough in reserve to cover likely expense such as a broken stay (the length of wood which allows the speed of the bell to be varied) or a replacement rope.

We would still welcome new recruits, either as part of the band or on the rota for the chimes. Anyone who thinks they might be interested is welcome to contact me.

(Andrew Simpson, Tower Captain)

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

"Little Lions at St Mark's" by Kathy Paine



In June 2021 we relaunched Little Lions to see how we could thrive within the obstacles that Covid threw at us! We decided to run two shorter sessions each with a maximum of 10 pre-registered families living locally. We offered fewer toys which were easily cleaned, opened the outside area and kept the hall well ventilated.

Within this safe framework our focus was on building relationships and enabling toddlers to catch up on the social skills they had been denied through

lock down. The first session was for older toddlers and during the later one, for those even younger, we introduced Tot Slot - weekly reflections on baby/carer relationships.

So many little ones were introduced to small groups for the first time in their lives and we had some interesting story times until they settled! Each week we saw progress made as mums/carers made connections and children learned the routines, enjoying Bible stories, nursery rhymes, singing, dancing and parachute activities. We ran six sessions leading up to the summer holidays and resumed this pattern from the middle of September right through to December.

During the winter term we were able to relax a little and enjoy getting to know our families better. Our coffee team is now re-established and we are grateful for their support and encouragement. We had one fun session in the vestry when we couldn't use St Mark's, but space was a little limited! The stage is now set to build on what we have established so far and we look forward to seeing what 2022 brings.

"Young people aka Destiny" by Jane Brown



2021 was a challenging year for Destiny. The youth were 'zoomed out' so engaging online became increasingly difficult, and some of our wonderful team were living abroad so we had limited resources based in Denham.

However, we had a productive start to the year with the online Youth Wellbeing Journey - with videos targeted for teenagers, and the youngsters enjoyed the topics and discussions. Most weeks we were able to split them into smaller groups of a similar age for discussions, which enabled each child to engage more.

We had our first in-person session in November - seeing all the youngsters reconnect with each other and with us leaders was very rewarding. We were able

to play interactive games together and started a worship band with all the musical talent our youth provide. Our biblical input was based around COP26 Climate Conference and our stewardship of God's creation, which created lots of discussion. We made candles and had an outdoor fire pit for cooking marshmallows. I think everyone really enjoyed being back together and having fun - it was energising for me to regain momentum and re-engage with all the youth. Sadly Omicron then put a stop to our next 2 meetings.

As a leader, I pray 2022 brings new fun, dynamic, engaging and enriching sessions, so all our youth want to be involved and get to make good church friends and grow closer to Jesus.

“Sunday Club 2021 and ‘Everything Else’” by Edda Lindner



The year started with "Lockdown 3" and children had school from home. It was a strange and sad thought that in March 2021 we marked one year without onsite Sunday Club! We stayed in touch with families through the Sunday Club WhatsApp group. We continued to provide families with some Sunday Club@home bags in the early part of 2021. This culminated in the

distribution of a parents pub meal @ home (a Cook ready-meal for two) to help mark the end of the children's school days at home and to celebrate with families their achievement of getting through this challenging phase. So many of them were juggling demanding jobs, home schooling and keeping everyone safe and sane!! We had 15 families who received this gift.

During the February half-term we offered four 30 minute "**Zoom Sing**" sessions and we marked Pancake Day with a **Zoom Party**. During "Zoom Sing" we learned a song for Mothering Sunday, with families sending in their recordings and Christoph mixing it all together into a virtual choir. It was a charming and much appreciated project.

Once again Easter was different. No Palm Sunday procession through the village with Joe the Donkey, no hour at the cross for children and no Easter Egg Hunt...but we still celebrated the **Easter Weekend**: with a Sunday Club @ home letter, Easter bags for families and the Rectory drive was offered for chalk

drawings and a basket of Easter resources (resurrection eggs, Easter Quiz, Puzzles) was offered to families. We also distributed Easter treats to Sunday Club and Destiny families.

On 22 May we offered a special hour for families to join in with the **"Thy Kingdom Come Prayer Week"**. "Thanks" to the "Cheeky Pandas" it was such an enjoyable and truly "all age" hour. The photo on the previous page tells the story...

On 4 July Sunday Club re-started for a one off session - with the theme of the Wedding to Cana with 11 children present. It was a special moment to engage with Jesus' first miracle as we celebrated being able to gather after such a long time - there was a party atmosphere...

From September we consistently were able to offer weekly Sunday Club and attendance was on average 8 children. However, the team of leaders and helpers has shrunk and will need growing in 2022. Please pray!

Worship in the Woods AKA Forest Church!

Yes, we have started something new! Please read the article in the current DPN for more details. With the expert knowledge and passion of Tim Macqueen, we ran these meaningful all-age outdoor services in July, August, September and October and will continue them in 2022.

Light Party in the Rectory Garden: This was the biggest success in terms of attendance. We had 12 families join us in the Rectory Garden on 31 October. There was a quiz trail, toasted marshmallows, hot dogs, doughnuts, hot chocolate and some other fluorescent lights and games to enjoy. People were glad to have a special event to go to with their children away from the spookiness and commercialism of Halloween. This is something that we would like to develop further. A big thank you for all the help from Jane Brown, Tim and Cathy Macqueen, Kathy Paine, Tim Sole and Julie Laughland.

Christingles: It was a joy to be preparing for Christingles once again. We had a cracking team of 9 people assembling them in the vestry the day before. A huge thank you to everyone who helped make Christingles 2021 such a special moment.

Family Carols was going to have its own children's choir, but we had to cancel at the last minute due to rising cases of Omicron. We moved it online and a couple of children starred as solo singers; photos of all the children were shared. We also were able to film two local teenagers playing their trumpets.

One highlight of the Christmas Season was the **Children's Christmas Treasure Hunt**, designed by Kath Sole. The map of Denham Village was inserted in the middle page of *Denham Parish News* and children needed to find the hidden baubles. Each bauble contained a letter that spelled a Christmas-related word. We had an encouraging uptake and the children from both schools joined in with the competition. Prizes were drawn in several services during the Christmas season.



For the second year running we displayed the **Nativity Stable** outside the church - a welcome space to ponder and re-tell the Christmas story. This was complemented by the Christmas trail. A big thank-you to Ken Moody (*pictured above*), Kath Sole and Cathy Macqueen.

Assemblies

Amidst the many cancellations and changes, we continued with regular school assemblies in both local primary schools. For the first two terms of the year these were prepared as video recordings by Christoph and Edda and then uploaded to YouTube. We had some encouraging feedback from both schools and even from some families directly. In September we went back to visiting both schools fortnightly and started on a fresh round of "Open the Book" assemblies, telling the big story of God from creation to revelation. It was a true highlight for us to meet the children and staff face to face once again. Sadly, the cracking team we had pre-pandemic has not re-grouped in 2021 as everyone needed a bit of time to re-cover and then towards the end of the year things got more complicated with the onset of Omicron.

It's been an unusual year (again!). We have been challenged and at times puzzled, but we are not giving up on the idea that church is for all ages and that we are intentionally welcoming people with children.

On reflection it has been a very busy year which required a lot of responding, flexibility and tenacity from a small band of leaders. This confusing season is inviting us to try fresh, creative approaches in reaching out to families, but above all it revealed how essential the relational aspect of ministry and mission to families in our parish is. We are left with more questions to ask and to pray fervently for God's presence and more workers in the vineyard, people who catch the vision why "meeting Jesus" is the best thing that can happen to a child and their family.

CHOIR

Looking back over 2021 it was a case of adapting to the constantly changing rules and regulations surrounding Covid lockdowns and the need to keep people safe, yet continue to meet together and worship. Thanks to technology we had mastered earlier in the pandemic, we again met weekly to pray, sing and support each other. After many months of serious illness the previous year, Carole finally underwent what thankfully turned out to be a successful operation, and was even able to join us, via Zoom, from the ward.

Early in the year and with great sadness we said farewell to Suzanne and family as they moved to the Isle of Wight, although we continued to keep in touch. Weekly during Feb/March, sharing their areas of expertise, Caroline, Carole, Sandy, Chris, and Ian led us through The Wellbeing Course. On Easter day at the 9.30 service we were able to meet onsite for the first time although with a reduced number of singers.

In May several of us took part in the online prayer day and later in the month sung at the first wedding. In June we resumed choir practices onsite and experimented with a hybrid version, which we continued with for some weeks but ultimately was not entirely successful. Before we broke up for the summer, Sandy very kindly invited us to an evening social in her beautiful garden, which we all thoroughly enjoyed. In September we were all invited to the Memorial Hall to celebrate John's (belated) 80th birthday – a great time was had by all.

In August the organ pedal board was re-felted – hopefully you have noticed the absence of the noisy clattering accompanying the hymns! It was lovely to welcome Cameron Johal (back from Cambridge for the holidays) as he played for a wedding and Sunday worship during the summer. Thankfully we were on site for St Mary's Festival, Harvest Thanksgiving in October and Remembrance Sunday in November.

It was with great shock and sadness that we heard of Carlene's stroke. Along with Samantha they are such treasured, supportive and hardworking churchwardens. We pray for Carlene's ongoing recovery and for her loving family.

In November we purchased a new Clavinova digital piano for St Mary's from a generous donation from Suzanne and Lee Hearnden-Smith. The 'old' (but still very capable) digital piano is now being used at St Mark's Hall.

In December we were grateful that three members of Denham Divas joined us at our Thursday practices in preparation for our Nine Lessons and Carols service. Beverley and Ann led carols along with Christoph at Denham Garden Village and Beverley sung at the St Mark's Café Church service. Amid a hasty partial lockdown, the traditional evening Nine Lessons and Carols went ahead on site, but with limited numbers. Mark Burr (bass) joined us, flying in from Singapore,

Suzanne, Charlotte and Rebecca returned, as did Ben Hunt (organist) back from Oxford for Christmas. The All-Age Carol Service went online with recorded items from the choir and from talented youngsters in the parish and church family.

I would like to thank all our choir members for their dedication, friendship, and support and for all the additional contributions (in addition to singing) they make in the life of our church family and in the community at large. Many thanks also go to Christoph, Edda, Nnamdi, Ian and Victoria for their help and encouragement each week.

(Louise Hardy)

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Amersham Deanery Synod met three times in 2021.

The March Synod included the AGM of Amersham Deanery Trust, and was held online via Zoom. Following the election of the Lay Chair for a further period of three years, a Communion Service was held with sermon by Rev'd Cassa Messervy (Assistant Area Dean) and celebration by Rev'd Tim Harper (Co-Area Dean). As this marked the last attendance of both Cassa and Tim at Synod, the Lay Chair formally thanked them for their leadership in the Deanery.

September saw the first in-person Synod since November 2019. Rev'd Gill Lovell, Parish Development Officer for Bucks Archdeaconry, talked on how various different churches had adapted to restrictions of the pandemic. Rev'd Brian Ludlow, who has a background in Occupational Health Issues, talked on potential mental health issues and recovery. Rev'd Martin Williams chaired the meeting, and as this also marked the ending of his term as Co-Area Dean, Synod thanked him for his leadership over the past few years. The Rev'd Peggy Ludlow was welcomed as new Area Dean.

At the December Synod the Deanery Treasurer reported on the planned allocation of Parish Share for the coming year. This was accepted by Synod. Nominations to Mission and Pastoral Committee had been received prior to the meeting. As nominations matched available positions, no voting was required and all nominated were duly elected. Synod was honoured to have as speakers Steve and Lindsey Poulson who work with street children in Honduras.

(Michael Carmody)

DENHAM PARISH NEWS

Following changes made during the pandemic, Denham Parish News (DPN) is now issued once a quarter (December, March, June, September) as a 36-page printed colour edition, with an online version available on the Church website.

Revenue from regular subscribers and advertisers enables DPN to cover production costs as well as printing additional complimentary copies that can be given away to visitors. Christmas 2021 saw our biggest print run, with a Christmas 'Mini DPN' edition that was distributed via *In and Around Denham*, to all households within the Parish.



We thank our original graphic designer, Sam Eastwood, for all his help in establishing DPN with a very professional look. Sam married Steph in July 2021 (see picture on the left) and stepped down at that point. We are very pleased to have more creative talent amongst us and Peter Wager (*Pen & Ink Graphics*) has now readily taken on the role of graphic designer. Welcome to the team, Peter!

We are very grateful to everyone who contributes to DPN, enabling us to continue to produce quality and thought-provoking articles. The Denham Community History Project shared a fascinating 3-part series 'Walking back in time' based around the lives of people captured through census data in 1901, 1911 and 1939, whilst our roving reporter Brian O'Regan has unearthed the inner workings of the Church Office and the bells of St Mary's, as well as insights into life in The Rectory and at White Plains Care Home. You can catch up on all the articles online at www.denhamparish.church/magazine

A printed copy of each issue is also stored in the church archives.

Producing DPN is very much a team effort. I would particularly like to thank Christoph for his support in ideas and writing/editing articles and to Jenny Browne for taking on the lion's share of helping with the distribution of the magazine.

(Cathy Macqueen, Editor)

DENHAM VILLAGE FAYRE

For the second year there was no May Fayre in 2021 due to the pandemic.

DISCIPLESHIP

In 2021 several of our new Bible Book Clubs continued to meet online. Friendships had been formed (sometimes across continents), which was brought home to me when two people chatted amicably after one of our Carol services. They live several thousand miles apart and one was visiting for Christmas, but had been attending the same online Bible Book Club together! Other Bible Book Clubs disbanded as our regular lifegroups began to meet face-to-face again.

Flexibility is key if we are going to take steps towards becoming a church of small groups rather than just a church *with* small groups. We expect a certain convergence in the vision for both lifegroups and Bible Book Clubs - both aim to grow in faith and friendship. They are the best place to share what's going on in our lives and to pray for one another. Pastoral care is thus a natural part of every small group. It is our dream that every church member can find a small group that helps them to grow in faith and friendship.

Under the leadership of Louise our choir is very much operating as such a small group, too, and they continued to engage with the themes other small groups were discussing over the course of the year.

After the online Alpha course in the spring, we invited people to an online Bible Course and were delighted with the response: Around 45 people took part. In each session we watched a video about one part of the Bible and then had a discussion in small groups. From that course another Bible Book Club was created, who meets on Monday evenings with members both local and further afield.

Small group study materials vary between the groups, while Bible Book Clubs typically read the Bible text given for the following Sunday and then share their thoughts - a light bulb, a question, an application - and pray together. During certain times of the year we are asking all small groups to deepen the engagement with a sermon series so that we can all learn together.

After Edda and I arrived in Denham, the first lifegroup gathered in our home on Monday mornings. Janet Wilson and Lindsey Mackie are members of St James Gerrards Cross and offered to set up this group for women, which very soon became a thriving and caring community. During the first part of the pandemic they continued to meet online. Towards the end of 2021 and after much prayer and thought, Janet and Lindsey felt that the group was coming to a natural end; they made sure that every member has the opportunity to join another group.

Thank you, Janet and Lindsey, for being instrumental in starting the very first lifegroup and for your care for each member. They will continue to meet socially on occasions.

The small group life of a church will always be changing shape. New groups start, others have run their course. The role of lifegroup leaders is central in strengthening the core of our church. To continue the growth of our small group life we know we have to focus more on encouraging and training new leaders.

(Christoph Lindner)

FABRIC REPORT

Church and Churchyard

Introduction

As was the case in 2020, the continued impact of the COVID 19 pandemic, with the associated restrictions of building closure, meant that efforts in addressing matters of fabric for St Mary's Church were directed towards building maintenance. Not that this situation should be regarded with any feeling of despondency. Larger and more visual projects might once again have been sacrificed for more immediate day-to-day requirements; but nevertheless, these in themselves, should still be considered no mean accomplishment in addressing building and churchyard matters during most difficult times.

Quinquennial Inspection report

The Fabric Team has been assisted in bringing a certain focus to procedures by two things: the specific findings and recommendations that have come from the latest Quinquennial Inspection report of March 2021 and the more holistic principles of the Hutton+Rostron report on damp within the church of 2019. Perhaps more than on previous occasions, the Quinquennial report produced by Evans Crawley, has readily been adopted by the Fabric Team as the basis of a 5 year plan of repair, maintenance and preservation; that is exactly how it should be regarded and utilised.

Fabric items undertaken in 2021

- Churchyard Roses – Stage 3 replacement of selected dead/ailing standard roses in the churchyard with ten new standards. Prospective sponsors should contact the church office
- Churchyard Trees and their maintenance – post the condition survey (undertaken by Heritage Trees in June), maintenance works were carried out on the lime trees along the western extent of the Middle Churchyard, on the

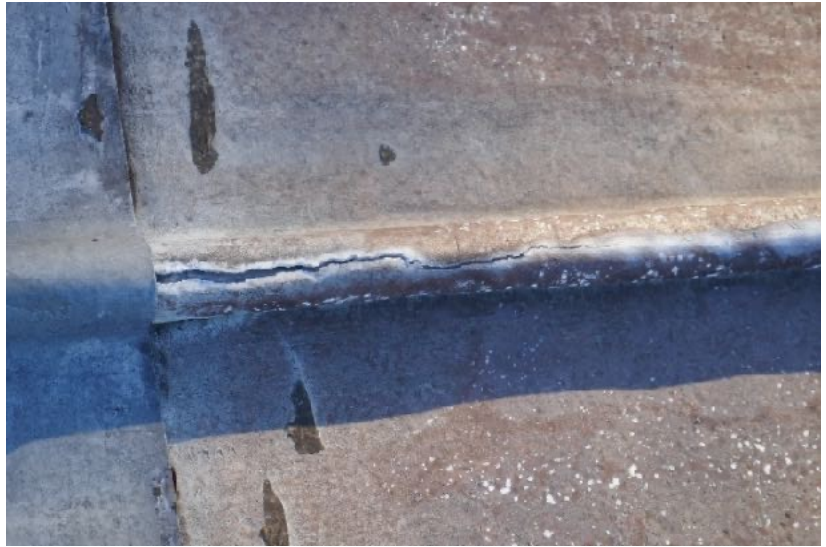
stump remaining from the felled lime tree of 2019 and on the condemned Lawson cypress (T29) in the New Churchyard



- Churchyard paths - re-surfacing at the pedestrian churchyard entrance off Village Road, alleviating the problem of ponding rainwater in the winter months (Conibear Construction)
- Dexter's Churchyard Working Parties - setting about the task of ivy clearance from tombs and headstones.



- Church Electrics and Wi-Fi - electrical remedial works identified in the electrical survey report for the church, November 2020, together with a new extension to the church's Wi-Fi system, facilitating the online streaming of church services (Mark Watson Electrics)
- Church Roof Maintenance Works – replacement of the rainwater downpipe by the vestry tap and church tower roof repairs (Summit Roofing) *[photos next page]*



Fabric projects for consideration in 2022 - in no particular order of priority
(and some projects are already underway at the time of writing)

- Lightning conductor installation
- Addressing the cracked lead rolls of the south Chancel roof
- West and South Doors restoration and their stone arches
- Repairs to structural brickwork around the church
- Damaged Tower beams (death watch) – structural survey and assessment of restoration works
- Chancel lighting
- Stage 4 of standard rose replacement in the churchyard

(Robert Ash on behalf of the St Mary's Fabric Group)

GIVE & SHARE

Give and Share exists to respond to the needs of families and individuals in and around Denham:

- by supporting families who are struggling with the day-to-day cost of living
- by expressing the kindness and care of Jesus through the response of the local church.

2021 was the first full year of Give and Share being a part of Denham Parish Church. Here are some of the activities from the year:

In February sweet-and-savoury boxes were given to residents who were nominated by church members, to encourage especially those who were isolating at home.

In March, 25 Easter hampers were delivered to Denham Green Academy to support families.

Throughout the year, Give and Share supported local families with food parcels and occasional vouchers for fresh food, as well as a one of gift in a particular emergency.



At Christmas, a total of 220 hampers were given to families through schools in and around Denham. Two families received a full Christmas package, including presents for the children.

During 2021 we also organised some fund raising events, such as a Quiz Night in the Higher Denham Social Club in September.

Thank you to the Give and Share team for helping so many people in 2021. A big thank-you to all our donors, including some businesses in Denham. We start 2022 with a healthy bank balance, some of which has been given for particular purposes (e.g. Christmas hampers) for several years in advance.

(Craig Alexander and Caroline Goodwin)

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

The downward trend in the number of weddings was reversed in 2021 with a total of seven weddings. Several couples had to postpone the planned date not once, but twice. It was such a joy to celebrate weddings again at St Mary's and for many families it was an opportunity to have the first larger gathering of families and friends. Others were quite happy to go ahead with their wedding during the part of the year when numbers were still limited and thus to enjoy a more personal, down-sized celebration.

Our marriage preparation helps couples to understand and embrace the vows they are going to make and to build strong foundations for a lifelong marriage. One of the helpful tools we use for this is a couple survey which bride and groom fill in independently. This is then followed up by an invitation to meet with a couple from our church for supper and for an informal conversation about the results (it is not a test and you cannot fail it!). Couples have found this a very helpful process and it has helped us to build stronger relationships with them.



MINISTERS TOGETHER

Our group of local ministers, convened by Charles Whitehead from St Jospeh's Catholic Church, continued to pray together after a pause in 2020. Most of our meetings were on Zoom. From November we met at The Hub, Goldhill Baptist Church's new home in Chalfont St Peter. The vision for this group, which has now been meeting for several decades, is threefold: to practise unity among different churches, to pray for and support one another, and to plan joint events around mission or training. Our first joint event after the pandemic was an evening with Christy Wimber at the beginning of December, which saw people from a range of churches, including our own, attend.

PASTORAL CARE

The pastoral challenges due to Covid continued in 2021. We were able to resume services at the two care homes in our parish, interrupted at times by renewed locked doors due to Covid infections. Christoph provided occasional short video greetings for residents to stay in touch. White Plains continued to take part in some of our streamed Sunday services.

In 2021 we said good-bye to some of our much loved church members - 29 funerals are an indication of that. We are grateful that they were part of our community and we will miss them. For our St Mary's Festival we chose the theme of "Lament and Laughter" and we received many photos from church members of people who passed away, as well as new births, baptisms and weddings.

Our Give&Share team provided "tea in a box" around Easter time to encourage especially older and housebound residents. Thank you to everyone who continued to look out for neighbours, friends and church members. Thank you also to those who help older church members come to our Sunday services by giving them a lift.

One of the themes of this season of recovery is the recovery of face-to-face encounters. We lost so much during the pandemic and a walk or a cup of tea with another person can make a big difference in our wellbeing. Let's be intentional in offering this gift to others, and not only to our close friends.

Our ministry team continued to meet on Thursdays - first weekly and then fortnightly, and - together with churchwardens meetings and clergy meetings - it was an important forum to make sure we were able to respond to pastoral needs.

In March we invited those involved in pastoral care or the leading of small groups to attend a seminar on listening well. Janet Allen, who volunteers for The Samaritans, arranged the evening, run by two members of The Samaritans, and all participants found it very helpful. Do let us know whether you'd like to do some

training in this area as we would be interested in offering another seminar if there is demand.



Also in March was the first anniversary of lockdown - we opened the church for private prayer on the day. For St Mary's Festival we chose the theme of "Lament and Laughter" - the church was available as a space for reflection and prayer, with photos of loved ones, candles to light and a memory tree in our prayer corner.

During October and November, Ian Jennings led a bereavement group again, this time at St Mark's Church Hall. "Learning To Grow Through The Pain Of Bereavement" was welcomed by all participants who formed friendships over these weeks. They are planning to continue to meet and to open the group up to new people.

Lifegroups continue to be the bedrock of our pastoral care for one another. Some started to meet in person again and found it easier to support and pray for one another that way. Others have adapted well to the online format and know the support of their group that way. They are groups where you are known and loved and missed if you don't attend - it is our dream that there is a place in a small group for every member of our church.

Finally, a word of thanks to all who help to run luncheon clubs. The Higher Denham and Madeleine Paton luncheon clubs started to meet again in 2021. They play an important role in the pastoral care for older residents in Denham. Edda and Christoph were delighted to be invited to the Higher Denham Christmas lunch again and to appreciate the people who come and the team who organise it. As a church we are so grateful for the work of Denham luncheon clubs!

PRAYER

Our goal is that prayer becomes a natural part of everything we do at Denham Parish Church. Every work of God is begun in prayer and we encourage all church members to develop a daily rhythm of prayer and for groups to open and close meetings with prayer.

During Holy Week, Ian, Christoph and Nnamdi again offered daily morning prayer on YouTube.

As part of *Thy Kingdom Come* prayer initiative, we held our first *Upper Room* day of prayer on the Saturday before Pentecost. We met on Zoom and different church members led 30 or 60 minutes of prayer with different themes throughout the day.

In 2021 Kath Sole and Cathy Macqueen created several prayer trails around St Mary's again. It's difficult to measure their impact, but they speak of the power of prayer in a public place and give each passer-by an opportunity to pause for a moment and reflect. Many spiritual journeys have started with such a seemingly insignificant impulse! Do look out for these prayer trails and take the time to engage with them.



A candle tree for prayer at St Mary's Festival and "Remembering Loved Ones" in November.

During Advent Christoph offered short reflections on YouTube, based on Jo Swinney's book "The Whole Christmas Story" - highly recommended if you are looking for a devotional book for Advent 2022.

In September we launched *The Well*, a monthly prayer gathering with a focus on worship, intercessory prayer and listening to God. The evenings are focused around the prayer that God would renew us, our church, our communities and the world by his Spirit. Those who have taken part have found it a refreshing and encouraging time – do join us when you can. Find out more at www.denhamparish.church/well

(Christoph Lindner)

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding was a standing agenda item at all our PCC meetings. A written report was sent to the trustees a few days before the meeting so that they could give their input and raise any concerns on the day. Working in line with the Church of England Policy and Practice Guidance, the PCC paid due regard to the House of Bishops guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. I was

the Parish Safeguarding Officer and DBS Recruiter and Verifier and Victoria Lucas was the DBS Administrator and Verifier.

The Parish Safeguarding Policy was reviewed and adopted by the PCC. The policy was displayed in all church buildings and a copy was sent to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team at Oxford to keep on record. The policy was put on our website with a link on the home page. We had a policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders to give new volunteers at the beginning of the recruitment process. We displayed posters entitled 'Promoting a Safer Church' in all our church buildings. These highlighted our safeguarding commitments, the local contact details and diocesan contact details for those with any concerns and national helpline numbers. All volunteers were provided with access to the Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook and pocket guides with useful information and contact numbers.

At the beginning of the year 77% of our volunteers had completed all their required training. The National Safeguarding team then set up a new Learning Development Framework later in the year with new safeguarding pathways to be followed which involved more training requirements. Volunteers that were able to, undertook online Safeguarding Training through the Church of England online portal. Eight modules covering Basic Safeguarding Awareness and Foundation Safeguarding were taken and two members of clergy refreshed their Leadership Training. I attended the annual Parish Safeguarding Officer's meeting on Zoom where I met 21 others carrying out the same role. We had the chance to speak about the challenges and concerns of the role and share good practice. As a Parish we invested over 30 hours on training during the year.

We were introduced to the new Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance issued by the House of Bishops that was due to come into practice in January 2022. Its aim is to help create and maintain a safer positive environment that reinforces the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. Victoria and I attended a workshop to explain the new guidance. The electronic Safeguarding Dashboard portal was introduced to help streamline policies and track progress. We completed and were compliant with foundation level 1 with information on our policies and procedures. In 2022 we aim to complete level 2 on safer activities and 3 on safer practices.

Six new volunteers were safely recruited which included requesting Disclosure and Barring Service criminal record checks. We also renewed checks for three existing volunteers. We continued to use APCS (Access Personal Checking System) as our Umbrella Body and found them competent. We were sad to see two volunteers move away from the Parish and one step down from the PCC after many years of dedicated work. We finished the year with a total of 34

volunteers in a wide range of ministries able to work with children and vulnerable adults in the parish.

The Diocese published independent reviews into 2 cases involving safeguarding and asked that our church leadership reflect on the lessons learnt. This was shared and discussed with the PCC. I had volunteers and staff ask me for general guidance during the year but had no safeguarding concerns referred to me or the Diocesan Safeguarding team.

On 10 October Safeguarding Sunday was highlighted in our 10.30am service and helpful videos, produced by Thirtyone:eight, an independent Christian safeguarding charity, were posted on our Blog.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to our loyal volunteers and our ministry team for supporting and enabling safeguarding in our Parish in a year when so much new guidance was introduced.

(Samantha Carter, Parish Safeguarding Officer)

ST FRANCIS HOUSE

Nnamdi Maduka and his family have continued to live in St Francis House throughout the year. There have been minor costs from routine maintenance that totalled £138 in the year. The cost of insurance is included in the costs of general insurance.

(Mike Stewart)

ST MARK'S HALL

The Committee met four times, making gradual adjustments to Hall regulations as Government restrictions relaxed. Notices regarding Government guidance on managing the risk of Covid are still visible and the strict cleaning regime, brought in over the pandemic, will continue as good practice.

Anne Thomas agreed to be the new Chairperson.

St Mark's is, once more, a hive of activity with all regular hirers having resumed and a few new groups starting.

In addition to their monthly committee meetings, Denham Parish Council are now running two sessions a month, a *Memory Café for Dementia sufferers and their Carers* and another 'Come and Chat' Drop-in Coffee Morning.

Twice a week, Harefield Hospital continue running their Cardiac Rehabilitation programme that includes group exercise and education sessions. Bucks Carers run an Adult Carers' Group every two months. Luncheon Club and Monday Afternoon Tea Club are well attended.

Mums and Toddlers Group, Little Lions, are roaring away every Wednesday in term time. Rainbows and Brownies meet weekly.

Denham 4th Guides used St Mark's Hall for very many years but, as a consequence of the pandemic, were forced to make radical changes. They needed to amalgamate with Gerrards Cross Branch and, sadly for Denham, had to leave and move to their premises. However, it is hoped that they will, one day, return.

Table Tennis continues on certain Wednesday evenings throughout the year. The Indian Catholic Prayer Group continue to meet once a month. Denham Wives continue to meet once a month.

Local elections were held in May and December (Neighbourhood Plan Referendum).

St Mary's has also held Bereavement groups, The Well prayer group and one Café Church.

In December, with a little 'give and take' from some very understanding regular hirers, St Mary's *Give and Share* team were able to have full use of the Hall to store and pack all their parcels for the Christmas delivery in the locality.

The upright piano, which had served St Mark's for as long as anyone can remember, had become non-repairable and has been replaced with the spare Clavinova digital piano from St Mary's.

Various repairs and renovations have been carried out with more in the pipeline. John Breese continues to look after the grounds and is very happy to receive any spare flowering plants or shrubs to fill the gaps.

(Anne Thomas)

ST MARK'S DEVELOPMENT

In 2021 the St Mark's Development group were busy conducting a feasibility study, which was part-funded by the Diocese of Oxford. We had meetings with other church leaders who shared their experience of similar projects. We then sent our development brief to interested architects and selected two to develop initial ideas. The results of those presentations were shared with the PCC at an Away Day in June. In the second part of the year we then evaluated those ideas and the responses from PCC, taking into account the changed landscape due to Covid and other developments. We will present our recommendation at our Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

ST MARK'S HOUSE

St Mark's House has been let to third parties at a commercial rent throughout the year. There were some minor repairs during the year including insurance which totalled £727.

The house remains in good condition and the rental income is taken to the General Fund to help cover regular parish expenditure

(Mike Stewart)

ST MARY'S PATRONAL FESTIVAL

In September we celebrated St Mary's Festival in and around St Mary's Church. Our theme was "Lament and Laughter". On Saturday morning we once again had "Fit and Fun" activities for all ages and abilities, as well as children's activities, a children's sports day and refreshments. Our tower captain offered a taster session to anyone who wanted to chime the church bells - a welcome sound to tell our village that something was happening at church! Little Lions toddler group usually meet at St Mark's, but for the festival they had a party at St Mary's which was very well attended.

Our church was beautifully decorated and many people had sent us photos for the lament and laughter bunting. The church was open and people lit candles, shared memories on a 'memory tree', as well as enjoying cakes and refreshments at Vestry Tea.



On Sunday we had two celebration services to accommodate as many people as possible. The second service was also streamed live. After church we had a barbecue around the church, followed by Afternoon Tea in the White House - many came enjoyed the beautiful gardens. A special thank you to Philip and Irene Courtenay-Luck for their wonderful hospitality and generosity and all those who made it a memorable weekend (*on the left: Cakes at*

the White House, served by a great team). The weekend was enjoyed by church members and local residents alike. The weekend was also a welcome opportunity to raise funds for our fabric fund, especially in the second year without our May Fayre.

WORSHIP

The year started with another lockdown. We continued with our online services, led by Christoph and Edda from the Rectory, with many contributions from our community and Church Coffee Online afterwards. As before, we used the church grounds for displays on special occasions (e.g. Mothering Sunday, a bit Easter Cross with flowers outside the church) as well as the prayer trails in the churchyard (thank you Kath Sole and Cathy Macqueen!).

It is not straightforward to measure the impact of online services, but a detailed survey in the summer, to help us develop our services coming out of the pandemic, showed some encouraging results: 46% of respondents felt more connected with Denham Parish Church than before the pandemic (less: 14%). 74% told us that Covid had a positive effect on their faith (negative: 9%), with 16% wanting to find out more about the Christian faith.

Another snapshot from YouTube gives an idea of the many people who have connected with us online:

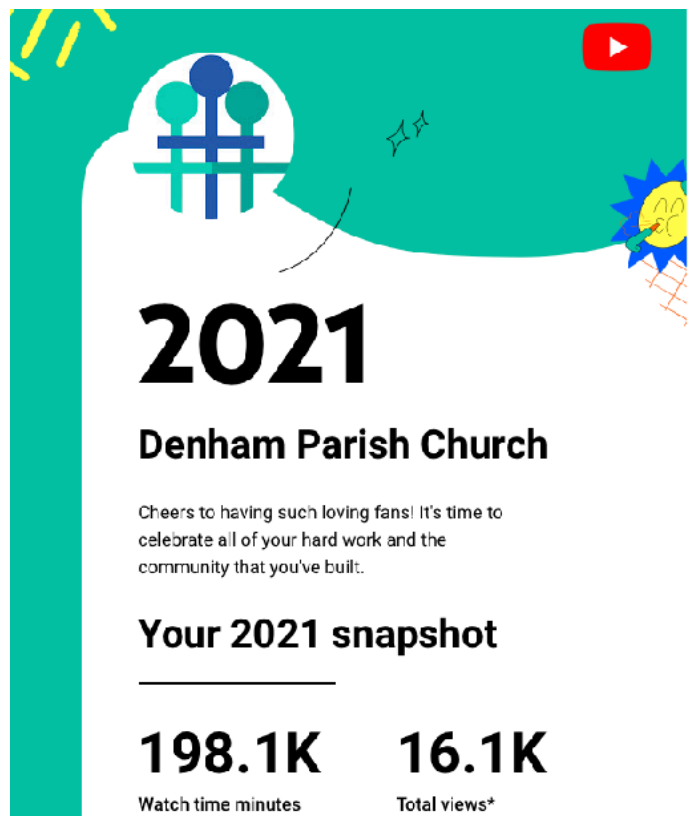
As spring and summer approached we began to plan our return to the church building. In a first phase (starting on Easter Day) we started a new 9.30am service at St Mary's, short enough to be followed by our 10.30am online service from the Rectory. In May, June and July we upgraded our church building for live streaming, bought the necessary equipment and trained a small group

of video operators and service moderators, who connect in the YouTube chat with those who take part online.

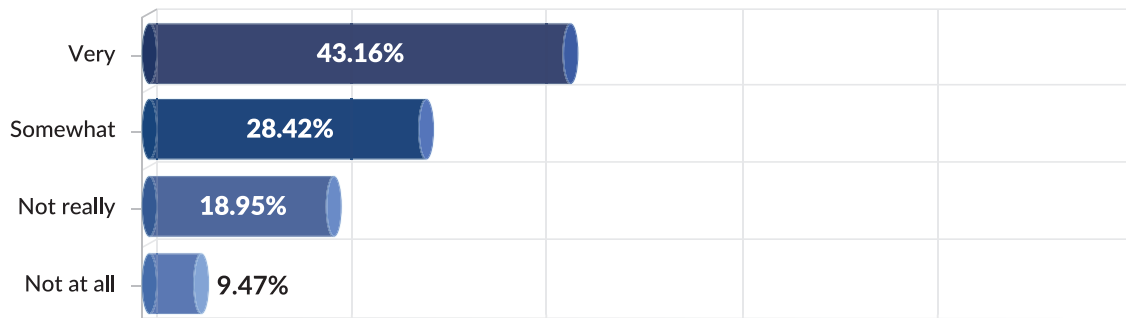
Our first 'hybrid service' (streamed live from St Mary's) was at the beginning of August, which poignantly also was the baptism of Udochukwu Maduka.

In October we then brought back a weekly service of Holy Communion at the later time of 9am (compared with the pre-pandemic time of 8am), still followed by the hybrid service at 10.30am.

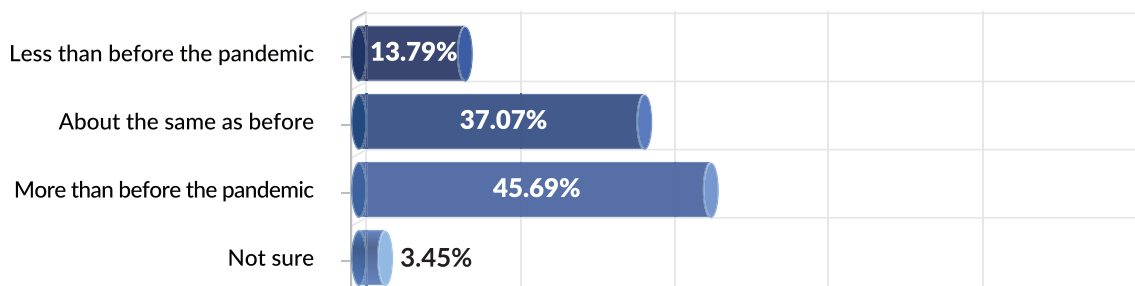
One of the most frequent requests from our online congregation was the ability to see the words of hymns, songs and prayers on the screen. For our Carol and Christmas services we therefore upgraded our technology again. A big thank you



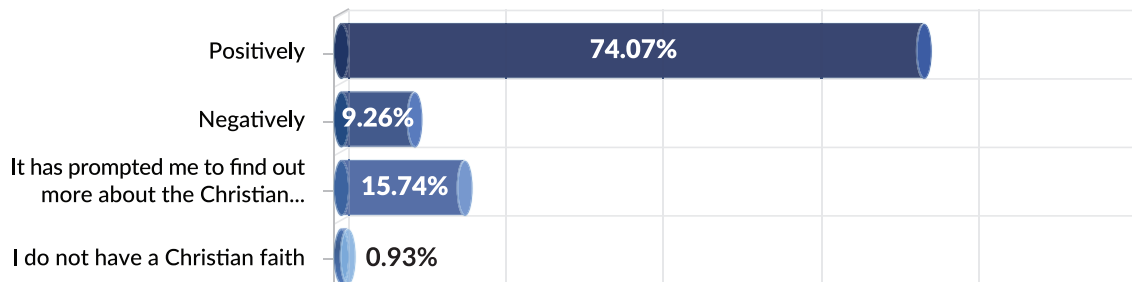
How important has it been to you that the online service is live, rather than pre-recorded?



As this period of lockdown is ending, how much do you feel connected with Denham Parish Church?



How has the Covid crisis affected your faith?



What would you say are your greatest emotional or spiritual needs at the moment?

- “

 - Prayer
 - Overcoming chronic anxiety
 - Stability and normality
 - Loneliness
 - Reconnecting with people socially face to face
 - To be able to welcome people into my home and enjoy a cup of tea and conversation with them
 - To sing 'God's Praise' with others
 - To know where and how God wants me to serve Him

- Strengthening our relationships with the church family and God
 - To be more disciplined with prayer
 - Deeper connection
 - Thirst to grow and develop in discipleship
 - To catch up with members of the congregation, friends and family whom I haven't seen during COVID
 - I feel OK spiritually and emotionally but feel diminished physically
 - To encourage my partner and family to participate

”

to Jo Potter who is leading this area of ministry and was instrumental in getting us ready in time for December.

Monthly services at Denham Garden Village, Denham Manor and White Plains residential care homes returned towards the end of the year. White Plains also took part in many of our online services - something that wasn't possible before the pandemic!

We continued to email and post the service sheet to those who requested it, especially those who do not have internet. Michael Carmody did a wonderful job in delivering a mobile screen-with-DVD-player to some of them after special services such as Mothering Sunday, Easter or St Mary's Festival, so they could also be connected by watching them at home.

Over the course of the year we tend to alternate the regular lectionary readings with specific sermon series to help us develop aspects of our discipleship. In 2021 these were "The Wellbeing Journey", "Be-Attitudes", "Dare Like Jesus: Living with Christ-shaped Courage".

For the first time since 2019 we held our Remembrance Sunday service at St Mary's (and streamed it online), which was very well supported. The Remembrance Service at Denham Garden Village also returned, with our special guest Joe Atkins on trumpet (Joe is a local resident and has played in various world-renowned orchestras).



(Christingle service at St Mary's, see also cover photo)

We were glad that - once again - we planned for both online and onsite services during December. Many were 'hybrid' - held at St Mary's and streamed live on YouTube, but with the rise of Omicron we had to make adjustments: The planned Carols for All Ages from St Mary's were moved online, live from the Rectory. The Crib Service was turned into Alfresco Carols in front of the church, which were received very well and quite possibly reached an even wider audience - the

church had left the building again! We also gathered for Carols in the Streets in Higher Denham, which was supported well by local residents, and at Denham Garden Village we held "Carols and Readings for Christmas again. The Carols on the Village Green (*see photo on inside back cover*) were well supported by local residents and schools and singers from both St Mary's and The Holy Name helped to lead the carols.

2021 was also a year when we reviewed some of our midweek services. Our Thursday morning Holy Communion in the Vestry has not returned - several of the regulars are now less mobile, in a care home or have sadly passed way. Similarly, we have not restarted the monthly service at St Francis Chapel. We are very much exploring how we can gather people in New Denham in a fresh way. Café Church at St Mark's happened only once to sing carols December; we have, however, not given up on this format which found much resonance before the pandemic. Maybe 2022 will see a return of it at St Mark's.

Our services are also a welcome opportunity to catch up, welcome visitors and enjoy a nice cuppa together. Towards the end of the year we brought back church coffee after the 10.30 service before Omicron made that difficult. A big thank you to Jenny Browne who over many years organised the coffee rota. Now that she is passing on that baton we are looking for church members who are happy to serve refreshments as part of a team (typically once a month). If you are interested, please contact our parish secretary Victoria.

Some innovations were forced upon us by our Covid risk assessment: One example is the new format of our 10.30am service sheet, which contains all the words you need to take part in the service. Reusable laminated orders of service, hymn books and Bibles couldn't be used during the pandemic, but we had already thought about reducing the 'library' of leaflets and books we have to handle in one service - a good innovation - especially for visitors who are not familiar with the format of our services - which we will retain.

Another 'Covid-safe' innovation was *Worship in the Woods*, an all-age outdoor service. Please read the report on Children and Families for more details.

(Christoph Lindner)



