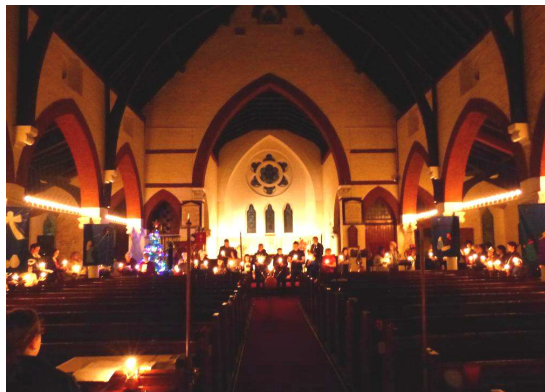


The United Benefice of St James and St Anne's Bermondsey



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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Table of Contents:

1.0	Parish Groups & Activities during 2022	page	3
1.1	Vicar's Report - Gary Jenkins		3
1.2	Urban Missioner's Report - Paul Warren		4
1.3	Reader's Report - Penny Molyneux		4
1.4	Children's Groups: St James - Pat O'Connor		5
	St Anne's - Summer Sunday Club - Suzanne Adofo		5
1.5	St James 11+ Sunday Group - Becky Hilton		6
1.6	Monday Prayer Meeting at St Anne's - Suzanne Adofo		6
1.7	Ladies' Bible Study Group - Mandy Warren		7
1.8	Ready Steady Grow: St Anne's - Paul Warren		7
	St James - Pat O'Connor & Mavis Shute		8
1.9	Wednesday Night Church - Paul Warren		8
1.10	Bermondsey Brew - Marian Greenwood		8
2.0	Formal Reports		
2.1	Electoral Roll Reports: St Anne's - Mandy Warren		9
	St James - Claire Mayne-Constantinou		9
2.2	PCC Proceedings: St Anne's Ruth Reid, PCC Secretary		9
	St James Ruth Reid, PCC Secretary		10
2.3	Treasurers' Reports: St Anne's - Graham Russell		10
	St James - Claire Mayne-Constantinou		11
2.4	Fabric Reports: St Anne's - Suzanne Adofo & Yvonne Lubwama		12
	St James - Pat O'Connor		12
2.5	Deanery Synod Proceedings - Ruth Reid, Deanery Lay Chair		13
3.0	Additional Reports		
3.1	Proceedings of General and Diocesan Synods - Adrian Greenwood		13
3.2	Safeguarding Officer's Report - Patricia O'Connor		14
3.3	St James CoE Primary School - Gary Jenkins, Chair of Governors		15
3.4	Friends of St James Churchyard - Pat O'Connor		15
3.5	Salmon Youth Centre - Jamie Anglesea, Assistant Director		16
4.0	APPENDICES		
4.1	St Anne's Financial Statements		
4.2	St James Financial Statements		

1.1 Vicar's Report 2022

2022 was a year of farewells, first to Jacob Mercer, then to Her Majesty the Queen, and then finally to me. On 1st May we said farewell to Jacob, Rebecca and the family as they prepared to move to Northern Ireland where Jacob was to become priest-in-charge of St Brigid's, Mallusk.

In September, not long after the Platinum Jubilee celebrations, marked here in Bermondsey and all across the Commonwealth, we heard of concerns for Her Majesty's health followed swiftly by the news that she had died peacefully at Balmoral at the age of 96, having served as our Sovereign for seventy years.

At our thanksgiving service for her life held in St James's Church I said:

"How blessed we have been to have had such a Sovereign for so long: a lady of dignity, grace, faithfulness, reliability, humility and faith who has led our nation and represented it to the world, a constitutional monarch, above politics, the servant of her people." And then at the conclusion of the sermon, this: "At the present time our beloved late Sovereign rests in the peace of Christ but at the last day she, with the whole company of God's people, will be raised to life. This is our hope. This is God's promise."

After that service Paul and I went down to the river to chat with the thousands of people passing through our parish, patiently queuing to visit the Queen's Lying in State in Westminster Hall. We met people from Barnsley, Dorset, Glasgow, Newark, Nottingham, Manchester, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Wight, Chicago, Brazil and Barcelona. Everyone was smiling, happy, making new friends in the crowd and over and over again we heard people say the same thing 'I just had to be there.' That impulse caused five young Americans to jump on a plane in Chicago, it did the same for a couple from Barcelona, and it was pretty much the same story from people from every corner of the UK who we met. They had roughly another 12 hours to go but they were in good spirits as they moved slowly towards their goal. It was a memorable time for Bermondsey as our community hosted this great queue that snaked along the riverbank from Southwark Park to Westminster, a silent and moving tribute to our late Queen and the affection in which she was held.

In September it was announced that I was to leave St James and St Anne's after ten years to take up a new role as the first Dean of Estates Ministry in the Diocese of Southwark, with a brief to support and encourage the church's ministry on local authority estates and other areas of social housing throughout the diocese.

After our last Sunday, 4th December, I wrote: "What a great team to work with and what a great send off they gave us today, our last Sunday at St James & St Anne, Bermondsey. I've been deluged with gifts and kind words and the church bells rang for us all afternoon. How we shall miss them and what a privilege it has been to be a shepherd of this particular flock. In my last sermon I took a World Cup theme ('God Brings On a Substitute') returning to the passage from Isaiah 53 that was shared with me the night I became a Christian, which was for me like entering another world, my wardrobe into Narnia. If just a few people in Bermondsey have discovered a little more of the 'unsearchable riches of Christ' it has all been worthwhile. May God be praised."

It has been a great honour, joy and privilege to be vicar in Bermondsey for the last ten years. Ruth and I have so appreciated the kindness and warmth of our two congregations of St James and Anne's.

We will miss you. You will always remain in our hearts and our prayers.

"And now I commend you to the care of God and to the message of his grace, which is able to build you up and give you the blessings God has for all his people." (Acts 20.32)

Canon Gary Jenkins

1.2 Urban Missioner's Report

2022 has been a year of being back to normal after the turbulent years of Covid. The virus was still out there and so care and caution have had to be taken in the groups that we run.

Bermondsey Weekly Message and Sunday Catch-up continued for most of the year but were dropped nearer the end. They had been good ways of reaching people however were no longer needed when things got back to normal.

Wednesday Night Church has been fairly steady with the numbers of people attending, some folk have dropped off but some new ones have joined.

Bermondsey Brew continues to successfully attract people and a number of those that come now attend on Wednesday nights as well.

Church attendance on a Sunday has taken a hit because of the Covid pandemic with a number of people having stopped coming. Some for good reasons like having moved away or remaining fearful of their safety while others have just got out of the habit of coming. This has been felt on a national basis so we are not alone. The challenge is finding ways to grow back to where we were and beyond.

In May we said goodbye to Jacob. As with all curates they have to move on however he brought so much to our churches and his moving leaves a big gap.

It was a surprise to us all when Gary was appointed by the diocese to the role of Dean of Estate Ministry. Although a great job for him it left us with having to say farewell to him at the beginning of December. His last service and lunch were a great opportunity to say goodbye but also to celebrate his 10 years as the vicar of the parishes.

As we look to the next episode in the life of our churches we do so with excitement as to what God is doing and who he is calling to lead us forward. Please do pray for the small group of people who have been working on the parish profile and for the appointment of Gary's replacement.

A special thank you to all those who have worked so hard in the various groups and have served the churches in other ways. What a great team. We couldn't do it without you.

Paul Warren

1.3 Reader's Report

The early part of 2022 seemed to be dominated by invitations to get involved in various Planning Groups for events in the wider Church. As the Woolwich Area Warden of Readers I helped plan the five-yearly meeting and service when Readers from all over the Diocese gathered together in the Cathedral, instead of having an Annual Meeting in their respective Areas. Then the planning began for the first ever Diocesan Conference to include lay people, including Readers. It was held at Bacon's College (in our Deanery) and I was on a small group that brain-stormed ideas for the various workshops many months in advance. The Conference was in early September, and I volunteered all three days to be a steward as well as attending all the worship and teaching. It was great - and I could cycle there!

Within St James I enjoyed working with the Eco-Church group launched at a special family service with a focus on Caring for God's Creation. Both our churches had candidates confirmed at the lovely Deanery Service at St Philip's, Avondale Square.

My brain and emotions were stretched by "Leadership" Safeguarding training - such a vital part of ensuring that our churches fulfill our responsibilities to care for and protect all young and vulnerable people in every possible way.

I have continued to enjoy my role as Governor at St James School, including sharing in leading Assemblies and Services in church. And of course, leading worship in our own services, with somewhat increased frequency as the ministry team lost first Jacob and then Gary. Those departures also mean that I sometimes now lead the discussion at Wednesday Night Church, as well as taking the chair in PCC meetings. It's such a joy to be working closely with you all in both St Anne's and St James as we continue to seek God's will and to serve both him and our neighbours here in Bermondsey.

Penny Molyneux

1.4 (a) St James Sunday Group Report 2022

The Sunday groups ran during morning services three weeks per month with Ruth and I leading and Jill and Innocente assisting. We had a really good number of children, some weeks over 20. We were finding it a bit difficult sometimes as we thought the older children were missing out although they were a great help to the younger ones. We followed Friends and Heroes material where the children watch a short bible story followed by a craft session.

We are really grateful to Becky who decided to run a youth group and has taken on our older children and a few that stopped coming have returned. We thank God for her work.

Sadly, Ruth left in December to move on with Gary. I have taken a step back due to other commitments but will continue to do rotas and send out material each week.

We have taken on one new leader Ronke, and Innocente has become a leader after being an assistant for a long period. Lilian, another volunteer, is working alongside her to develop her skills to lead. Jill is still an assistant and we are very grateful for the whole team. The group is now smaller due to the Youth group and that has made it easier for the younger ones. We are still using Friends and Heroes material at the moment, but are also looking into other ideas to make it more fun.

It is going well and we praise God it may continue.

Pat O'Connor & Sunday group Team

1.4 (b) St Anne's Sunday Club 2022

We were encouraged by the steps that St. James were taking to meet the needs of its children and young people and prayerfully considered what we could do at St. Anne's to address the negative impact of the Covid pandemic and the earlier start of our service has had on the families attending church. There was a strong sense that we should be looking at what we could practically do to reintroduce ourselves to the families who surrounded the church and taking into account our limitations in numbers we were struck by the gifts and experience we have at St. Anne's in working with children, in particular, and young people and felt that we should organise a summer programme to kick-start a relationship with our neighbours. We quickly put together a proposal to make connections with the children of Thorburn Square in our church garden in the midst of the square, every Sunday after service during the month of August and to follow that up with a presentation for those who attended during our church service on 4th September.



A total of 20 children between the ages of three and thirteen joined us over the 4 Sundays, attendance was sporadic but thanks to the input from 8 adults over the duration of the programme a good time was had by all involved. We designed a full and fun packed programme. There were memory verses to be learnt, 2 theme songs, games, stories, crafts, games and even a scavenger hunt. Our themes for the Sunday Clubs were to make known who God is, what God made, what God promised and how Jesus came to fulfill it.

We are grateful to the whole team who made the Sunday Club a success. We would also like to thank our members who supported the programme and contributed £70 for the work; the Salmon Youth Centre for donating 2 canvases for our use (which are now proudly placed in our creche; Nathan Adofo for designing our flyers and Rachel Reid for leading the children's artwork.

Suzanne Adofo

1.5 St James' 11+ Sunday Group:

After committing the vision of the group to God in prayer, we held our first session in June 2022.

In the first few sessions before summer we explored the man Jesus and who he is to us. It was great to establish the group before the long summer holidays as it enabled us to have a solid start in the autumn. Since then, we have explored the theme of prayer: how, where and when we can pray, the benefits of prayer, the origins of prayer and the wonderful effects of prayer. The young people decided that they wanted to study various biblical characters and chose such greats as Esther and Moses. Through these characters we have been able to see just how much God can use flawed and limited humans for His purposes and glory.

There has been a core of very committed members who regularly attend the group and it has been fantastic to see relationships forming and the group becoming more at ease with each other. I have been staggered by their maturity, faith and wisdom and hugely encouraged by their willingness to contribute and get involved.

A group of us have attended the R1 events at the Salmon centre- a super time to meet and socialise with other young disciples. This is a community link that I pray will grow stronger. We are going bowling as a group during Easter. Creating opportunities for the group to come together in different contexts is something I am keen to develop.

Praise God for all he has done to bring this group into being and for all he is growing the group to be- hallelujah!

Becky Hilton

1.6 Monday Prayer Meeting @ St. Anne's

Psalm 133 ¹⁻³ How wonderful, how beautiful, when brothers and sisters get along!
It's like costly anointing oil flowing down head and beard,
Flowing down Aaron's beard, flowing down the collar of his priestly robes.
It's like the dew on Mount Hermon flowing down the slopes of Zion.
Yes, that's where God commands the blessing, ordains eternal life.

The evening prayer meeting is held every Monday at St. Anne's starting at 7:30pm. All are welcome and we come as we are, open to the leading of the Holy Spirit who brings His variety and vitality to our gathering. We pray, sing, ponder on scripture, reflect and encourage and

we share our concerns in various degrees at various times. Every week is different. We have been out on a prayer walk and worked our way through particular texts but always make space to hear good reports from what God is doing in our lives collectively or individually; to share a concern and to offer words of comfort.

We seek Him together and are blessed.

Suzanne Adofo

1.7 Ladies Bible Study Group

The Ladies Bible Study Group continues to meet at 10am in the South Lounge at St James every Tuesday during term time, exceptions being the odd occasion when St James is being used for something else, so we relocate.

We continue to enjoy meeting together to study God's word. We've so far taken a deep dive into the books of Ruth, Jonah, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and found out lots of things we didn't know before. The Bible is definitely not boring! We have also, between studies, looked at a Psalm. We have also introduced singing a hymn or two at the beginning of the meeting and on occasion begun a session with Morning Prayer. We continue to pray for each other at the end of the study and to encourage each other, especially to live in the light of God's word. We have a consistent core of very friendly ladies attending on a Tuesday morning, who are very enthusiastic about God's word and would welcome any newcomers with open arms.

I have the privilege of leading the Bible Studies but I would like to thank Suzanne Adofo for the times she has stepped in when I haven't been able to. I absolutely love preparing for Tuesday mornings and learn a lot in the process. I think that I can say on behalf of the group that we continue to be amazed by God and will ever be thankful to Him.... How great the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

Blessings, Mandy Warren

1.8 (a) Ready Steady Grow at St Anne's

Ready Steady Grow continues to meet on a Wednesday morning at St. Anne's Church Hall from 9am till 11am. We meet during term time and not in the school holidays. The structure of our morning is on the whole pretty much the same as last year: free play, story, thank you prayer, craft and singing. At the end of the Christmas and summer terms we have a party. The children are brought by a mixture of parents, grandparents and childminders. We are delighted they enjoy bringing their children to RSG and that they are recommending us to their friends. We have built up some good relationships and are grateful to God that we have this wonderful opportunity to not only serve our community and meet new people; but also to share the love of God through stories, songs and relationships.

We have seen our numbers steadily increase and we are finding that we are having more people attending more regularly. As our numbers have increased we have introduced a first come first served rule so that the hall does not become over-crowded. Although it is a shame not to be able to welcome everyone that would like to come, we have to be mindful of our need to keep people safe when they are with us.

We continue to value your prayers for Ready Steady Grow.

Paul Warren

1.8 (b) St James Ready, Steady, Grow

Ready Steady Grow is a group for parents, grandparents, child-minders and their children/grandchildren. It takes place in the South Lounge from 9.30 -11am on Thursdays. Mavis and I took over from Jacob and Rebecca in 2022. We have now got more local families and have over 15 adults with their children on the books. There are toys for the children as well as a Bible story, crafts, prayer and song time. Our aim is to be friendly and as welcoming as possible so we have lots of soft seating, tea, coffee and biscuits. The children sit together at the end of the session to enjoy healthy snacks and a goodbye song as they leave. We also have a WhatsApp group where we share can views and ideas.

Pat O'Connor & Mavis Shute

1.9 Wednesday Night Church Report 2022

It's been another good year for Wednesday Night Church and it has been encouraging to see that it has developed into a proper congregation for some of the people that come.

The format remains the same with a 2-course meal at 7pm followed by a Bible passage and discussion then concluding with some sung worship and prayer.

We have tended to look at the passages from the Bible that have been preached on the previous Sunday. But for various reason we sometimes change that and look at something from somewhere else in the Bible

Numbers have been fairly steady; some folk have stopped coming for good reason but we have attracted some new people as well.

The cooking and serving had always been done by the staff team but with the moving on of Gary and Jacob others have stepped up to fill the gaps they left.

Again, we had a lovely Christmas dinner with all the trimmings that was attended by a large number including the new Archdeacon. After the meal and fellowship, we shared together in reading the Christmas story, singing carols and thanking Ruth Jenkins for her quiet tidying in the kitchen over the years.

If you have wondered about coming, why not give it a try? It's a great way to get to know others in an informal way, grow in your faith and worship the Lord for all he has done. New people are always welcome to come on their own, in a group or for you to invite a non-Christian friend.

Paul Warren

1.10 Bermondsey Brew - Report for AGM 2023

Bermondsey Brew continues to run from 2-4.30pm on most Monday afternoons, apart from Bank Holiday Mondays and occasional other holiday periods. There are a number of people who turn up to help and some of the people who come – our guests – are also very helpful about setting out the tables and chairs and clearing things away at the end.

Numbers seem to have been lower than before the pandemic: there are at least 25 regular adult attenders although they don't necessarily come every week. Then usually at least 5 families arrive after school, (St James, St Joseph's, Boutcher, Riverside and Harris), a larger number dropping in from time to time. Several of our regular adult attenders suffer from mental health issues and their behaviour can be quite alarming on occasions, but thankfully we have been protected so far. Some of the children also exhibit challenging behaviour and it is understandable that parents and carers find the larger space offered by the church building a welcome space rather than having to go straight home after nursery or school. It would be

good to be able to offer more such opportunities for families living in confined spaces and to be able to use the whole of the area currently taken up by the fixed pews for hospitality and other activities. Since the end of the pandemic, we haven't kept a register of those who attend - this wouldn't be done in any other café after all – but maybe a contact card would be useful, so that people could be kept informed of other events taking place in the building. There are occasional opportunities to talk with our guests about why the café exists – it is run as an opportunity to share the building with the local community, to show God's love and to share our faith with others. For a number of people it is definitely important as a place where they feel they belong and can relax in the company of others. Several of those who attend Wednesday Night Church first made their way into the building and community of St James because of Bermondsey Brew.

I have been running Bermondsey Brew since its beginning in February 2017 and have loved doing it, but if anyone feels called to take it on, please do talk to me.

Thank you so much to all the team who help regularly or occasionally, without whom it would be impossible; Adrian, Barbara, Debbie, Lydia, Joan, Manuela, Mavis, Pat, Paul

Marian Greenwood - March 2023

2.0 FORMAL REPORTS

2.1 Electoral Roll Reports - April 2023

2.1 (a) St Anne's

The Electoral Roll for the year currently stands at 41 which is the same number as last year.

Of these, 16 are resident in the parish and 25 are non-resident.

Although there have been new people join the church over the last year they have decided not to be on the electoral roll at this time.

Mandy Warren, Electoral Roll Officer

2.1 (b) St James

There are 123 people on the St James' Church Electoral Roll as at 11 April 2023.

1 person has been removed during the year:

6 persons have been added: of these, 60 are resident in the parish and 63 are non-resident.

Claire Mayne-Constantinou, Electoral Roll Officer

2.2 PCC Proceedings

2.2(a) Report of the St Anne, Bermondsey PCC meetings by the PCC Secretary Ruth Reid

The PCC of St Anne, Bermondsey met five times in 2022. There were three joint meetings with St James, Bermondsey PCC and two PCC meetings. We also had a joint PCC day and one joint informal meeting.

The following items were discussed: A new safeguarding officer; the Charity Valuation Report for the building scheme and the fee; future church events; Holy Communion in two kinds; the reimbursement of finances from our PCC to St James, Bermondsey PCC; the approval of the 2021 accounts; a United Benefice Safeguarding officer; the approval of the 2022 annual report; Rev. Jacob Mercer's farewell; the allocation of our mission giving for 2021; the increase of the church administrator's wages; the parish support fund for 2023; the anti-racism charter; new signatories on the St Anne's bank account; Canon Gary Jenkins new appointment; Patronage consultation and the arrangement for the interregnum; rent review for church and hall hire; the parish profile, the parish profile group and the proposed person specification.

2.2(b) Report of the St James, Bermondsey PCC meetings by the PCC Secretary Ruth Reid

The PCC of St James, Bermondsey met five times in 2022. There were three joint meetings with St Anne, Bermondsey PCC and two PCC meetings. We also had a joint PCC day and one joint informal meeting.

The following items were discussed: the new audio equipment; a faculty application for new portico lamps; safeguarding; administration of Holy Communion in two kinds; the recovery from Covid-19 measures; new hire charges for 2022; the reimbursement of St James, Bermondsey PCC from St Anne's, Bermondsey PCC; the approval of the St James PCC account 2021; a new organist; a united benefice safeguarding officer; the approval of the annual report 2022; Mission giving for 2022; St James Building fund; Jacob Mercer's farewell; the increase of the church administrator's wages; the co-opting of new PCC members; the anti-racism charter; a new bank; the role and responsibility of the PCC new signatories on bank account; pest proofing the crypt with ventilated meshes and pest control; safeguarding cards; the parish support fund for 2023; Patronage consultation, the arrangement for the interregnum and the parish profile; Canon Gary Jenkins' new appointment; the office security; the closing of the organ fund; frequent leafletting in the parish; the parish profile group; appointment of a foundation governor for St James' school; Christmas events and church events for 2023; the proposed person specification.

2.3 Treasurers' Reports

2.3 (a) St Anne

Although 2022 was similar to 2021 with regard to income and expenditure, there were a few highlights to be noted. On a positive note, the rental income for the hall and church went up by around £4K in 2022 with many new one-off hirers as well as more regular ones, and so the team should be thanked for that; especially Ruth and her drive to keep all the hirers 'in-check' and paying.

It was great to see the Christmas fair back again last year with a total of over £1,100 made during the afternoon. Maybe we should think about bringing back the summer fairs again to the church yard to help the coffers a bit more.

'Ready, Steady, Grow' also brings in a small amount each week which surprisingly adds up at the end of the year into a good sum.

In 2022 we borrowed a further £5,000 from the diocese, making a total loan of £10,800 for our building project's surveys and legal costs etc. We've paid back well over half of that initial loan and so that's a positive thing. We look forward to seeing the project come to fruition, albeit over a long period and with probably more obstacles in way; but we keep faith in it.

From an all-time low of £7,600 as our Diocesan contributions in 2021, we increase that to £12,000 for 2023 to help with all the great work the Diocese of Southwark does. It's worth noting that we benefit more financially from the diocese than we give in return.

Like at home, St Anne's has struggled with the rising costs of energy and it's worth noting that we received a grant of £1,400 to help with our fuel bills from the diocese.

Graham Russell, St Anne's Treasurer

2.3 (b) St James Treasurer's Report - 2022

2022 was another difficult year financially due to the second year of the Covid epidemic, UK Government and War in the Ukraine and vastly increased Gas & Electricity pricing – coupled with inflation in excess of 10% which drove up our costs.

As in 2021 and 2020 this meant restrictions on the opening of the church, and less plate and contactless collections at services as many members of the congregation felt unable to return to face-to-face services, plus we had less organisations wanting to rent out the hall than in the pre-Covid times. A reduction in Weddings and Funerals also brought our income down.

Pressures on our tenants who were unable to trade fully also led to a slight reduction in that income stream although the trend is upwards as we let out more of the Crypt following the improvement works. Both our main tenant in the Crypt, and the German Nursery sought and received a reduction in rent for 2021 and 2022 although full rent will become due from January 2023 onwards.

We continued to invest in repairs to the fabric of the building. Whilst it might be a natural tendency in these difficult times to avoid investment, it is often a case that £1 spent now avoids spending £2 in future years when the fabric deteriorates beyond easy repair. I have therefore continued to encourage the Building Committee to “invest to save” as we must take a longer-term view. As a result, the financial outcome for the year was -£ 17,716 (-£ 3,084 in 2021).

The year, like the last, was therefore a bad year financially, only helped by the continuing generosity of our regular donors. As can be seen on the Balances charts at Appendix B, we finished 2022 (£75k) significantly behind 2021's £92,000 of funds.

We have good tenants in the North Aisle, Crypt and the German Kindergarten, and this income helped sustain us, although we needed to agree a slight reduction to some rents. Resumption of full rents, increased use of the Crypt and hall, plus recharging fuel costs to Crypt users, should help bring income back up in 2023.

We were able to increase raise our Parish Support Fund contribution to the Diocese in 2022 from £35,000 to £36,000. We maintained our annual Mission Giving of £7,849 to three Mission Giving organisations in the UK and overseas.

We have made progress with systems and processes and have moved to an online accounting system – and I wish to particularly thank our administrator Ruth Reid for her continued work taking on additional responsibilities in this regard.

We will be approaching all regular donors to ask them to review their contributions and to put in place a more efficient form of Standing Order which is administered by the national Church in order to achieve efficiencies and to remove administration from individual parishes.

We also need to reinstate the option of contactless card giving at services as receipts have dropped significantly due to people not carrying cash.

In the context of large increases in running costs a continued increase in the Diocesan Parish Support Fund is not sustainable, and all Reserves are needed in support of the ongoing activity of St James.

Claire Mayne-Constantinou, St James Honorary Treasurer

2.4 Church Fabric Reports

2.4 (a) St Anne's

The church wardens are pleased to report that the fabric of St Anne's church continues to remain in a good state of repair.

Thanks to everyone who helped and gave their time and support in the upkeep and running of the church as we continued to come out of Covid. Special thanks to the Assistant Warden, Matthew Gullick, for his assistance throughout the last year and to our former wardens Graham Russell and Mavis Shute for their continuing support of the church.

We are happy to report that the building has remained in a stable state in the last year. The plans for our building redevelopment are ongoing and in prudence we will hold on commissioning the quinquennial inspection to assess what work the church needs doing both in the long term and short term as we are now making good progress on the viability of the building project. The PCC have agreed the convening of a building committee to see the church through this stage of our plans.

We have checked through all the items listed on the inventory and can assure the PCC that all items of value are where they should be and in good condition.

The gardens are being tended by the council and look beautiful.

New electric meters were installed.

Suzanne Adofo and Yvonne Lubwama, Churchwardens

2.4 (b) St James

Crypt: Mesh coverings have been installed to all the circular windows and at the east end of the church to restrict vermin entry. Some vermin entry remains and is being investigated. One Faculty has been granted to permit part use of the Crypt for the roasting of coffee. There are currently two tenants occupying approximately a quarter of the Crypt from whom rent is received. Further intensification of activity will involve further extension of the fire detection installation. There has also been a request for a doorbell to alert occupants of deliveries/visitors. Quotations are being sought. Water ingress is still taking place into the Crypt. The organisation of mortar repairs is in hand.

Main Entrance and Portico: A Faculty has been received for the fitting of two copper lanterns to be placed on the lampstands either side of the main steps. The lanterns require energy saving lamps and switchgear to be fitted before mounting can take place. The soiling of the main steps by pigeons remains a challenge. Quotations are being sought for alternative solutions.

North Aisle: The lead tenant is changing, and a new License and Faculty is required for the new lead person. A rent increase has been agreed. The maintaining of safe routes of escape in the event of a fire requires some attention.

Annual Inspections/Fire Detection: The annual Lightning Conductor Test has taken place. Fire Detection and Fire Fighting Equipment have been tested. The Building Committee is discussing the practicality of training for church members. The Building Committee is also exploring the practicality and cost of 'Redcare' 24-hour remote monitoring of the church's Fire Detection installation in the light of the Vicarage being unoccupied.

Maintenance Schedule: A Maintenance Plan in excel format is being developed to enable priority, frequency and cost to be managed. Its reference is based on the last 5 year

Inspection by the Church's Architect. The Plan is based on Diocesan recommended guidelines and will include regular tasks such as gutter clearance and guano removal.

Electricity Usage: The cost of Electricity has been significantly higher than in previous years. Research is in hand as to alternative suppliers and tariffs.

Eco Church Working Group: This last year the Group has not met and no further progress has been made. The need to reduce our carbon footprint cannot be understated.

JC Bishop Organ: It may have been noticed, with thanks to Takuya Yorita, that we are trying to use more often our historic organ.

Nursery (German Kindergarten): The Nursery lease is due for renewal/review this coming year. Consultation with the current tenant is commencing.

Accessibility from the Churchyard into the Building: There has been no further progress on the development of a replacement ramp at the southwest corner of the church. Previous investigations included estimates for a lift.

Master Plan: There has been no further progress on the re-ordering of the church building to enable potential wider community use.

Pat O'Connor, Churchwarden 2022-2023

2.5 Deanery Synod Report

The deanery synod of Bermondsey and Rotherhithe met three times in the year.

The first meeting took place in February. We elected a new lay chair and discussed Bacon's college; the impact of Covid-19 on the church and parish life-what have we learned from God and what are our congregation plans for extending God's kingdom. We reported on the Living in Faith and Love course; and the preparation for 'Thy Kingdom Come' 2022.

The second meeting took place in June. We discussed the Diocesan Conference (that was held at Bacon's College); the confirmation service at St Philips held on the 20th March 2022. We shared news from each parish church. We discussed a Season for Lay ministries 19th June to 10th July initiated by Bishop Christopher; the Southwark Anti-Racism Charter and how this should be on the PCC of every parish church; the wish for foundation governors nominated to Church of England schools by the SBDE to be practicing members of the Church of England or members of churches in the communion with the Church of England; we had feedback on the Diocesan synod.

The third meeting took place in November with our guest Bishop Karowei. He spoke about the late Queen Elizabeth; his recent sabbatical; his studies on the first Bishop of Liverpool and his reflections on the Lambeth Conference. We shared parish church news; discussed the appointment of the new Area Dean and the appointment of the Area Dean Canon Gary Jenkins and his new role in the Diocese as Urban Estate Missioner. Bishop Karowei thanked Gary for all his work.

Ruth Reid, Lay Chair

3.0 Additional Reports

3.1 REPORT of PROCEEDINGS of SOUTHWARK DIOCESAN SYNOD and GENERAL SYNOD 2022

1. I was first elected as a representative of Bermondsey Deanery Synod, now Bermondsey & Rotherhithe, to Southwark Diocesan Synod in 1994. In the year 2000, I was elected as a Lay Representative for Southwark Diocese to General Synod. I have served *ex officio* on Southwark Diocesan Synod, Deanery Synod and St. James PCC ever since. In 2006, I was elected by the House of Laity of Diocesan Synod to be its Chair and have since been re-elected 5 times. Diocesan Synod usually meets 3 times a year.

2. My time on Diocesan Synod has seen a huge amount of change within the Diocese, especially under Bishop Christopher's leadership. This has included the new **Parish Support Fund**, which has helped to bring the Diocesan finances back into sustainability; the new governance structure

known as the **Diocesan Council of Trustees** (DCT), a greatly expanded focus on **Safeguarding** and the new **Southwark Vision for Growth**. I have been a member of the DCT since its inauguration in 2015 and I also serve on its Policy & Finance Committee. Between 2012 and 2018, I chaired a Working Group on 'breathing new life into deaneries' - a key priority for + Christopher.

3. More recently Synod has approved an **Action Plan for achieving Carbon Net Zero** by 2035, adopted the **Anti- Racism Charter**, approved a new **Deployment Strategy** and developed plans for widening the range of **lay ministries** in the Diocese. I am the deputy chair of the newly established Lay Council which has overseen the **2nd Season for Lay Ministries**.

4. Outwith the Diocese, I have acted as the Convenor for the national Forum for all Diocesan Lay Chairs (DLCs) since 2013, organising an annual conference.

5. General Synod tends to meet twice a year, in February and July, for between 3 and 5 days at a time. Much of the work involves the detailed scrutiny of legislative reform and/or new legislation, but Synod also involves itself with wider policy issues including, in recent years, the '**Setting God's People Free**' programme and, following from that, the development of a new **national Vision & Strategy, with its 3 Strategic Priorities and 6 Bold Outcomes**.

6. From 2017 – 2020 I served on Archbishops Council, the national Trustee body charged with implementing the various decisions of the Bishops and the Synod. I still serve on 3 national bodies – Ministry Council, the Legislative Reform Committee and the Lay Ministries Advisory Group, plus an informal Reference Group looking the reform of governance structures.

7. I am now one of the most experienced members of both Synods and particularly enjoy helping the many new members to understand the procedures and to become effective members.

8. I am equally very happy to share with members of the 3 churches in the Bermondsey Group Ministry the detailed workings and decisions of both Diocesan & General Synods, including the most recent General Synod in February 2023. Just contact me.

ADRIAN GREENWOOD

March 2023

3.2 Safeguarding Report March 2023

We continue to follow the policies provided by the Diocese and the new revised 'Safe Church' is in the Vestry and is a very useful guide.

Safeguarding is now a regular item on every PCC agenda.

In March 2019 the PCC agreed that the new arrangement for serious safeguarding incidents will be reported to the Charity commission.

Since I completed my *Leadership in Safeguarding*, all the ministry team have completed theirs. Safeguarding training should be completed at a three yearly interval to keep knowledge and skills up to date. Refresher training should be undertaken at the highest required level. For example, a leader of youth work activities who would have been initially required to complete Basic Awareness (CO), Foundation (C1) and then Leadership (C2) training, should refresh only the Leadership module (C2) every three years.

Safeguarding Training is at the moment only being accessed on line. It is very important to have the training so please ask for details and complete the form.

All leaders of Sunday groups and youth groups have completed DBS checks and have been given a copy of our safeguarding policy and risk assessment forms.

DBS checks are different this year - more information is needed on the application form.

What is a DBS disclosure? A DBS disclosure is a check of criminal records for spent and unspent convictions. An enhanced check includes any additional information held by local police and an enhanced check with barred list disclosure also checks the lists of persons

barred from working with children and adults at risk. No one should be appointed to work with children or adults at risk without having a satisfactory enhanced disclosure. Some regulated roles require enhanced disclosure with a check of the DBS barred list (described below as enhanced with barred list check). It is a criminal offence for an individual who is barred from working with vulnerable people to apply for a regulated activity role, and it is a criminal offence for an organisation to appoint a barred person to a regulated activity role.

How long do criminal record checks last in the Church context? The House of Bishops has decided that within the Church of England, criminal record checks must be renewed every five years. (Should there ever be a delay in obtaining the criminal record check, the person is not approved by the Church to act and must stand down pending completion of the process.)

All information regarding Safeguarding can be found on the church website and inside on the notice board of the church, which will be updated as and when necessary.

Patricia O'Connor, Safeguarding Officer
Victoria Thorpe, Deputy Safeguarding Officer

3.3 St James CE Primary School

At the end of the year there were 431 children on the roll. 64% of the children were eligible for free school meals, which is significantly above the national average (22.5%).

39% of the children had as their first language a language other than English and in all 44 languages are spoken by children at the school.

It is a noteworthy achievement that the SATS results for both Key Stage One (infant children) and Key Stage Two (junior children) exceeded the national targets in reading, writing and maths.

During the year the church staff have continued to take Acts of Collective Worship at both Alexis Street and Old Jamaica Road every Tuesday and the whole school has come to church at the beginning and end of every term, and also to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Harvest, Remembrance Day. In addition, I led special prayers for all the children at both sites on the death of Her Majesty the Queen.

The Faith Group of the governor body continues to monitor collective worship, religious education, and the distinctive Christian character of the school.

We continue to give thanks to God for our school, for all who work and learn there, and all that it contributes to our community.

On a personal note, with the agreement of Bishop Christopher, I shall remain as chair of Governors until a new incumbent is in post in the united benefice of St James and St Anne's

Canon Gary Jenkins, Chair of Governors

3.4 Friends of St James Churchyard Report

We have only had one meeting this year, which Jonathan Sedgewick (Archdeacon) attended alongside Gary Jenkins, Dominick Leary (LBS parks department) Pat O'Connor (Churchwarden) and Manuella Pillay (local resident).

The Garden of Remembrance has become rather ugly with all the individual memorials, and plastic floral tributes. After a visit to the Garden of Remembrance we considered two issues (1) anti-social or inappropriate behaviour by a small group of individuals in the garden and (2) the growing number of individual memorials, and plastic floral tributes. We are looking into this and Southwark Parks has offered to help us with a notice.

The anti-social behaviour in the 'wilderness area' has been ongoing and Southwark has worked hard to support us and has cut back all the bushes so it's less open. In the case of drug taking and other illegal activities we were encouraged to log the concern with the police.

We are looking for new members on this committee so please feel free to offer your help and advice and join us.

Patricia O'Connor, Friends of the Churchyard

3.5 The Salmon Youth Centre

"Addressing young people's and their family's health and wellbeing, so they can achieve in education and work and contribute positively in their community."

Overview: We delivered **665 youth work sessions**, reaching **1,847 individual young people** with an average of 500 young people a week attending our Centre. Our activities support young people in the 6-11, 11-16, 14-19 and 19-25 age groups, including disabled young people, young leaders and apprentices. Our average attendance was 70 young people per session. We have 7 full time staff, 6 part time staff, 5 sessional staff and just over 50 volunteers supporting the work.

Our 4pm to 7pm After School Club: We have seen a growth in attendance at Salmon since introducing our new After School Club which runs between 4pm and 7pm on Mondays to Fridays and provides a nutritious hot meal. This new club gives young people a safe space to socialize directly after school and enables them to develop new skills and experiences. Research by the Mayor of London shows that 4pm to 7pm is the period when most violent crime involving young people takes place. It is the most dangerous time for young people to be out on the streets and it is when they are most at risk of becoming involved in knife crime. Grooming by gangs also takes place outside fast-food shops at this time, as young people are hungry leaving school and are drawn to these establishments.

We have provided more than **15,000 free healthy meals** to young people in the year. The provision of hot meals not only provides an incentive for young people to come directly to our Centre after school, therefore avoiding getting into trouble on the streets, but also enables young people aged 14+ to remain at our Centre and continue their participation in club activities up to 10pm. ,

Poor mental health: We have funding in place for a pilot programme to integrate two qualified counsellors, with backgrounds in delivering community-based psychotherapy to young people, into our service. One is focused on supporting young people aged 6 to 13 years, and the other is working with older young people aged 14+. This is in response to our identifying increasing numbers of young people attending our Centre who are experiencing four or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). We are seeking to find ways to support them in developing coping mechanisms and techniques to manage some of the trauma that they carry with them.

Mentoring: We provided mentoring to **199 individual young people**. We hope to increase this provision to provide more intensive support for our most at-risk young people. Mentoring helps children and young people develop the tools to learn, grow and evolve in the face of adversity and stress. We take a gendered approach to mentoring, recognising girls' and young women's needs are often different to those of boys and young men.

Work with disabled young people: Our weekly Centre-based activities for disabled young people include adventure activities, trampoline, bouncy castle, a clay oven project, craft, art, music, cooking, sports (basketball, badminton, tag, catch) and dance. These activities are offered in a semi-structured way – enabling young people to feel safe to use their own

initiative and make friends in a way that is natural to them. Young people taking part in these activities form strong friendships and bonds. Parents tell us that the progress their children make as a result of our provisions is evident and report increased social skills and independence.

Apprenticeships: Our apprenticeship scheme has been effective in developing 15 young people's personal, social, leadership and employability skills and in enhancing their wellbeing. It has made a significant contribution to them making tangible and permanent steps from being NEET to becoming EET. External evaluation of this programme has shown that this is down to us successfully implementing a policy of 'sticking with young people' – by building long-term relationships and providing tailored support every step of the way.

Young leaders: Young Leaders are young people at Salmon aged between 14 and 18 who receive training and support to develop and lead their own activities and projects for other young people in the community. In the year, a group of nine young leaders from Salmon hosted a Community Day for 30 young refugees who are based in South London. The Young Leaders planned and delivered the event – delivering fun activities such as rock climbing, trampolining and a football tournament. They provided the young refugees with a meal and gave each one a hamper to take home that included beauty products, schooling equipment and toiletries.

Other activities that the young leaders have taken part in included attending Career Days hosted by our corporate partners, Gallup and Third Way, which resulted in them learning many new employability skills, practising public speaking and subsequently taking part in work experience placements.

R1: A small group of youth leaders (St Mary's C of E, City Hope Church, Haddon Hall Baptists and Salmon Youth Centre) in the Bermondsey and Rotherhithe area thought it would be great to pull our youth groups together for regular youth events. Some churches have a small number of young people and we wanted to give them a chance to connect with other Christian young people around the area. It is important for them to know they are not on their own but there are other young people around them also exploring faith, asking questions and getting to know God. Even though they are in separate churches they are also part of the wider community of Faith. In fact they R1. The name, R1, came out of exploring the idea of a united youth, one church, regardless of denomination. Each event has a mixture of food, ice breakers, worship (youth band from amongst the different churches), teaching, performance, testimony or interview and some sort of response. The R1 youth events are 6 times a year on Friday nights with 80-100 young people attending.

CONCLUSION: The core funding provided by many funders and donors for our work with young people at Salmon has helped us to support the most vulnerable young people across a diverse range of activities, offering support where it is most needed and helping young people through whatever challenges they may be facing in their lives. Our programmes continue to go from strength to strength.

To all our funders, donors and local churches who play such an important role in making a positive difference to the lives of so many young people, we should like to convey our heartfelt gratitude for your support.

Jamie Anglesea, Assistant Director