

2024 APCM REPORT

VICAR

As we look back at 2023, I'm aware that we started the year with a few challenges. We had an important deficit budget of £58K and we noticed that even though we have many kids and youth compared to most churches, our demographics for people in their 30s wasn't reflecting our borough. We also had the exciting call to develop and grow our St Barnabas congregation and finalize the details to become one parish.

That's why our verse for the year was Habakkuk 3:2 "Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known". We needed and still do, to depend completely on God to do what only he can do. We worked on our branding, vision and values and on having more regular prayer meetings.

The results have blown our minds! God has been faithful, and we're excited about what he will continue to do with us. During the year, our Sunday attendance across these three weekly services grew from 420 to 516 (23%), our youth and kids Sunday attendance grew from 82 to 126 (54%), and we ended with a surplus of £20K. It's just been amazing to see God at work, people coming to faith, others healed, and others going deeper in their discipleship with Jesus.

It has also been a year of changes, at the heart of what we do are our life groups and we've had some groups stopping like the Fairhurst and Neill, whilst others starting like the Eames and Hansen. In a large church, small groups are essential, so I'd like to say a massive thank you to all our groups: life groups, woman's groups, men's groups, prayer groups, senior's groups, kid's groups, youth groups, young adult groups, serving groups, enquirer's groups and others! So many small groups where we can connect at a deeper level with our church family.

We've also had changes in staff, Sally and Neil Thomas going off to minister in Bristol, Debbie, Chris, Keren and Naomi all moving jobs but still worshipping with us. We're so thankful for their service and it's great to see the legacy of their ministry. We're also delighted to have new staff Hannah (Church Manager), Emma B (Families Outreach worker), Lucy B (CAP Manager), Emma PB (switching to St Barnabas Community Manager), Alicia (switching to Kids and Youth Trainee) and more recently Mike C (Worship Pastor).

Thanks for your heart for God, thanks for showing up, thanks for praying, thanks for giving, thanks for serving, and thanks for being part of this family! It wouldn't be the same without you and we're delighted you're part of it!



What a year 2023 has been, bring on 2024! We want more of God and to extend his Kingdom more and more. That's why together we pray Psalm 63:1 "You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water."

Rev. Nico Ohlsson

CHURCH WARDENS

We are delighted to report that the merger between St Paul's and St Barnabas is proceeding well. There has been much work behind the scenes to merge bank accounts and to move to using consistent policies and processes. We are thankful for all the work undertaken by the Church Office, Finance Team and Safeguarding Team.

We are supported in our work by John Hindmarsh and Clive McIntyre who are the assistant wardens at St Barnabas and by the St Paul's duty wardens. We are indebted to them for their gracious service. We attend services at both locations, and it is great to see the smooth running of our services of worship.

The change in church governance is working well. The old St Paul's Management Team has been replaced by a smaller Leadership Team of senior clergy, church wardens, and the Church Manager. Further the PCC is meeting more frequently which gives them more opportunity to debate and input into strategic decisions. We are encouraged by the increase in financial provision which is aiding the implementation of the vision God has given us as a church. Thank you to all who serve on PCC and to Tracey Ross, our PCC Secretary, who ensures that everything works well.

Mark Goodman and Ian Ayres

ST BARNABAS

As I get ready to move to Colchester, it is wonderful to be able to reflect on the last four years, during which we have become 'one church in two locations with multiple connections'. This is perhaps the single biggest challenge to our parish since St Paul's began its journey over 60 years ago. We now have the opportunity to bring the gospel into a neighbourhood with some social and economic need.

Over this last year, we have laid firm foundations for this work: St Barnabas is now a bright well-resourced church. The new kitchen café areas have provided a basis from where you will be able to build a thriving local church. The work in the community has really taken off including the Advice Café, Barney's Toddlers, and TLG Make Lunch Club.



These activities demonstrate how great the need and opportunity for gospel ministry there is at St Barnabas.

We have seen significant growth in the Sunday congregation, some of which has been through the increased attendance by those who have various mental illnesses and their carers. On many weeks there are also visitors who attend, which demonstrates the potential there is at St Barnabas.

It has been wonderful as well to see how some people from the St Paul's community have begun to serve at St Barnabas, which is absolutely essential in building a vibrant community. It is undoubtedly challenging though being on the front line and the next 12 months or so will be crucial if St Barnabas is going to continue to flourish. Equally, those that have come down to St Barnabas regularly to visit a service make such a difference.

I would like to give special thanks to those on the Leadership committee; the times we have met over food, prayed, and planned together have been a real highlight for me.

So as I conclude, we have done a great work together so far; the foundations are laid ready for the next chapter. Undoubtedly it will require all of you to consider whether you will be willing to be part of the mission of God in the St Barnabas area of our Parish.

It has been a privilege to take the journey this far, I now hand over the baton to you; may you know God's Blessing as you do so.

Rev. Paul Dever

TLG MAKE LUNCH & BARNEYS

Make Lunch & Barneys are two of our community-based initiatives at St Barnabas. We have been so encouraged by what God has been doing.

Make Lunch takes place during school holidays to provide a meal, activities, and community for families that might be struggling for various reasons during school holidays. Make Lunch is led by a Core Team of 5 volunteers: Natalie Johnson-Hyde (co-ordinator), Charis Miles, Shane Higgs, Alec Harris and Paul Johnson-Hyde. Harry and Naomi helped to get the project off the ground but have stepped back from the core team.

We have been so encouraged by support from the church. It was a challenge to get the project to gather momentum initially, but we have now started to build relationships and this Easter have seen an average attendance of around 50 people at each session.

Barneys is our faith-based toddler group that runs at St Barnabas each Tuesday morning in term-time. It has been running for 2 years and has been another encouraging avenue



of ministry. We regularly see up to 90 attendees with a weekly average of around 75. A small number of families have become drawn into the wider church, attending seasonal events and enquiring about baptism. Several members have been drawn away for various reasons lately, so our team currently has just 5 people, making building relationships more challenging. However, attendees often comment about a noticeably welcoming and caring environment.

We continue to pray that God will direct us on how best to use these ministries to impact our local community and draw people into a relationship with Jesus.

Rev. Harry Lamaison

TODDLERS AND YOUNG FAMILIES

It's been really encouraging to have lots of non-church families coming to Toddlers, Barney's and Little Church, with a few core church families as well. While Barney's and Little Church are more overtly Christian in content, we have also introduced faith-based stories to Toddlers fortnightly. I'm exploring whether we do a Bible story every week and follow the same format as Little Church from September, as I would like to share about Jesus as much as possible.

Some Toddlers families have also come to wider church events such as the Big Mix and Mum's Life Group. I want to work on connecting beyond these groups and starting to share faith more. I would also like to equip and encourage my teams to do the same, so I would appreciate input about how I can do this.

Little Fishes celebrations at Christmas and Easter have been great for us to connect with more families, with some of the families coming to Big Mix events. Coffee mornings have been relatively unsuccessful as people can't attend, but WhatsApp has been useful for keeping in touch with Little Fishes families.

Our Mums' Life Group is a core group of around 12 women most weeks. I would love to bring in more church members to share their testimonies as this was successful previously, so any ideas of who we could invite would be valued.

Emma Brand: Families Outreach Worker

KIDS

Our 'Big Mix' events are a great outreach with families from the local community attending (around 200 people at each event). We have linked with Youth who serve on team for the events, building inter-generational relationships.



Milkshake dates are 1-1s, where a leader collects the child from school spending time talking. We have seen the children sharing and asking big questions, giving us opportunities to speak into their lives and building faith.

We host United at Ten quarterly, together with a range of special services, e.g. Crib Service and Good Friday Retold. These are more accessible family services where church members invite friends outside the church community. Around 40 children from 0-11yrs join the various Kidzone groups on Sunday mornings.

In September, St Barnabas launched Kids groups on Sunday mornings, and began inter-generational services. A great team has stepped up and they continue to pray for engagement with local families.

Around 20 children come to our weekly Life Group for 7-11yrs, where we unpack a bible story in small groups. It has been amazing to see the Youth leading these groups grow in confidence sharing their faith. Next term, we focus on how God created us uniquely and our identity is found in Him.

We go into Cuddington School assembly alternate weeks, looking at bible stories, and have the opportunity to pray for the children. We visit Reception classes, joining the children at break time, giving us opportunities to build relationships.

Our year group socials give children the opportunity to invite others and spend time with friends within church. Our upcoming Year 5 and 6 Weekend at Home focuses on becoming a disciple of Jesus through fun time and activities together.

Alicia Eames: Kids and Youth Trainee

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

The last year in Youth has been one of growth and hunger to see God moving. We took 19 youth to Satellites in Summer 2023, a festival run by Youthscape. We camped in the sunshine and in the torrential rain, we went to seminars and gathered with thousands of youth to worship Jesus together. It was very special!

This academic year 2023/24, I felt God wanted to encourage us to 'Come Alive'; drawing from Ezekiel 37:1-14 and the Valley of Dry bones. God's breath is life-giving and when we dwell in His presence we are transformed. We have seen young people grow in their confidence to pray for each other. Over our 2 recent weekend aways, youth have told us they've loved worshipping together and many experienced the Holy Spirit in new ways. New friendships have grown and developed which continues to build into our culture of belonging.

We are part of a pilot program with New Wine, helping to resource other local churches that do not have a paid youth pastor. We have seen some of the youth from these churches join in with our events and socials which has been encouraging for us and our youth. We are excited for all that God has for us as we seek His voice in everything we do in youth.

This year in young adults, we have seen the community within the group begin to change. We split into smaller groups, and relationships within these have become deeper, with people more willing to share, some bringing questions and thoughts that have held them back from God. Our prayer for the year ahead is that everyone would encounter Jesus and His overwhelming, life giving, transformative love. We plan on doing this by continuing to meet in smaller groups, and by hosting socials and worship nights, with the intention of continuing to build lives that put Jesus at the centre of everything.

Amanda Neill: Youth Pastor

SENIORS

The monthly Food for Thought talk and lunch programme has attracted a wide audience of older and younger retirees with its quality speakers on issues of interest. Up to 80 people have attended the talks, with up to 60 people staying for lunch. This is a real invitational opportunity to hear exceptional and well-known speakers.

About 30 seniors enjoy a monthly Midweek Focus afternoon tea. Those who come appreciate the company, but there is little sign of any new members joining. We hope that Midweek Focus members will make use of the Hub Café on a Thursday.

Spartans is a weekly social event in the Club Room, with around 20 seniors meeting for coffee, chat and games. A monthly social outing (e.g. theatre visits, meals) takes place additionally.

There are some informal groups, including Knit and Natter, craft group and a monthly Sunday lunch off site for a group of single seniors.

A Reflective Communion Service takes place on the second Sunday of each month at 11:30am (30 attendees) and on fourth Wednesdays at 11am (15 attendees). These services are appreciated by those who come.

There is an active pastoral team in place at StPB. In addition, there are many unseen pastoral visits made by others to members of the congregation. Life Groups also provide pastoral care for members, many of whom are seniors.

My thanks go to the army of seniors and team members who share their lives with us, encourage us and pray for us.

Rev. Ken Hobbs

ALPHA

Alpha and our post-Alpha courses, have grown markedly over the past year. This reflects growth in the spiritual dynamism of the church and a growing willingness by church members to invite guests to the introductory Alpha dinner and, in many cases, also to accompany guests through the full course.

We have doubled capacity by running two Alpha courses, with supper, each year; one in Spring and one in Autumn. Following each Alpha, people are invited to a Discipleship Explored series, and supported with ongoing ministry.

Catering for Alpha has run particularly well, using food at charity prices from Cook. This has been nobly led by Ruth Sharma each week with 2-3 volunteers from a Life Group under the overall leadership of Lucy Bahiti and then Lucy Smith. We have also been greatly blessed by a congregation member whose ongoing financial gifts enable us to provide wonderful hospitality free of charge to our guests.

We are also extremely grateful to Sam and James Wakefield and Angela and John Woolley for initiating and continuing to lead our growing post-Alpha ministry which uses Christianity Explored, Discipleship Explored, and a Bible overview course, together with ongoing pastoring and support.

Rev. David Senior

CAP DEBT CENTRE

Since finishing my training in December, it has been a privilege to go into people's homes and help them on their journey out of debt and to share Jesus with those people as we pray with them and encourage them.

At Christmas, we were able to bless all our clients with Sainsbury's gift vouchers. A local schoolboy raised funds and then bought and wrapped gifts for the children of all the families on our books. They were gratefully received.

Robin Calcutt (Debt Coach) and I are working with new clients every month and are seeing God moving. Clients are generally very open to being prayed with. Some are happy to come to Make Lunch Club and one client has attended church for the first time!



We attend the Advice Café at Merland Rise fortnightly and at St Barnabas weekly.

I have been building relationships with local agencies such as the Job Centre, Foodbank and Social Prescribers. I have also been attending meetings run by Good Company to work together to tackle poverty and debt in our local area.

God has been opening doors to make great contacts with the local council and community workers and we have enrolled some new befrienders who will accompany us on client visits. It is exciting to see what God wants us to do next.

Lucy Bahiti: CAP Debt Centre Manager Epsom and Ewell

SAFEGUARDING

To quote the Church of England's 'promoting a safer church' policy: "Safeguarding means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. This means we will promote the welfare of children, young people and adults, work to prevent abuse from occurring, seek to protect those that are at risk of being abused and respond well to those that have been abused. We will take care to identify where a person may present a risk to others, and offer support to them whilst taking steps to mitigate such risks."

This underpins all the safeguarding work at St PB and explains the necessity for rigorous training and record-keeping. The safety and welfare of the church family is not just the responsibility of a few leaders but the calling of all. The main focus of the work this year has been consolidating the safeguarding training of St Barnabas' teams, whose outreach into the neighbouring community has rapidly expanded recently.

Throughout the year, several matters have been referred to the safeguarding team at the Diocese, to whom we are most grateful for their experienced support.

Finally, may I express my thanks to Monica for her diligent service as DBS validator over many years.

Angela Woolley: Safeguarding Officer

FINANCE

Robust finances for a challenging future: St PB is in a robust financial position following a transitional year in 2023 with the merger of the two churches. Combining the finances and producing merged annual accounts was a painstaking and detailed job, with special thanks to Jeremy Randall and Helen Bubb for all their hard work.



An annual budget deficit of £(58K) was transformed during 2023 into a surplus of £22K, as the result of significantly increased giving and well-managed costs. This excellent year-end result was supported by general reserves of £186K.

In 2022 we recorded a £(20K) deficit as we emerged from the disruption caused by the Covid pandemic, which makes last year's turnaround especially noteworthy.

It is expected that with increased income from personal giving and other sources 2024 will also end with a surplus. The big challenge will come in 2025 and onwards when the full-year cost of current investment in ministry and mission will need to be covered either by additional income or by the short-term use of reserves.

As I step down as Chair of Finance after nine years, may I thank everyone in the church family who has given sacrificially to enable us to thrive and grow.

John Woolley: Chair of Finance

CHURCH BUILDINGS

Since becoming Church Manager in October, I've had the privilege of helping things run smoothly behind the scenes, as well as being around to meet the many groups and individuals who come through our doors during the week.

We have been working hard to maintain a safe and welcoming space - from heating repairs to blocked drains, there are always plenty of maintenance tasks to keep us busy. In addition, both St Paul's and St Barnabas have had Quinquennial Inspections carried out; we are in the process of mapping out a maintenance plan for the required repairs.

One of the most exciting building developments in the past year has got to be the installation of new screens in the worship spaces at both church sites - I'm sure you'll all agree that they are a huge improvement and mean that videos can finally be watched clearly, even with sunlight streaming through the arena windows! The Diocese of Guildford kindly financed the new visual equipment at St Barnabas, as well as a number of other big projects including sound proofing of the halls and renovations to the Kitchen and Hub area.

Of course, I can't go without giving a huge thanks to Chris White for all his efforts keeping the church operating efficiently over four and a half years in the role. He has passed on the baton having left things in a really strong position - for which I am very grateful!

Hannah Duncan: Church Manager



ECO CHURCH

Over the last year the Eco Team has continued to work towards achieving a 'Bronze Eco Church Award' from A Rocha UK (a Christian charity working with churches to protect and steward the resources God has given us in the world around us). The award is based on a survey, which considers 5 areas of church life: Worship and teaching, Management of church buildings, Management of church land, Community and global engagement, and Lifestyle. For each area there are several questions to answer and are given a score based on how we, as a church community, care for God's world.

We are pleased to announce that the 'Bronze Eco Church Award' was awarded to St Paul's on 29 April 2024.

We are grateful for the contributions made by Sally Thomas, Chris White and Felicity Peatfield over several years. Hannah Duncan has just joined, in her role as Church Manager. We are looking for new members from across the whole parish as we seek to continue to consider how, as a church community, we can make changes and learn how to better care for and steward this part of God's world in Epsom and Cheam.

Mark Turner, Jo Wright and Hannah Duncan: Eco Team