

**holy|trinity|richmond**  
together with Jesus



# BOOK OF REPORTS

Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
Sunday 11 May 2025  
10am

April 2025

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## Meeting Agenda

### Election of Churchwardens by Parishioners

1. Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting concerning the election of Churchwardens
2. Election of Churchwardens \*

### Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting
3. Report on the Electoral Roll
4. To receive the Treasurer's Report, including
  - the independently examined accounts for the year ending 31 December 2024
  - the budget for 2025
  - appointing an Independent Examiner
5. To elect three PCC representatives to serve for three years \*
6. To elect one Deanery Synod representative to serve for one year \*
7. Any Other Business \*\*

This year we are, once again, weaving our Annual Meeting into our Sunday Morning Service, so it takes place in the context of prayer, worship, testimony, teaching and encouragement.

Please return completed nomination forms to Keith Nurse

\* Nomination forms are available from the Church Office

\*\* Items to be given to Eils Osgood in writing by Friday 9 May

## Vicar's Report

The past year has been one marked by change and transition in the life of HTR, and yet amidst change we can see the incredible faithfulness of our God in every season, and as a church our commitment to love Jesus and to serve his purposes hopefully remains the same!



The fundamental building blocks of our church life together have definitely *not* changed - our gathering together Sunday by Sunday (or Wednesday by Wednesday for our midweek congregation), to worship together; our meeting together during the week in life groups, youth groups, or at men's and women's events, to grow deeper in our relationships with God and with one

another; our seeking to make his love known in our wider community, through Alpha, and a wide variety of youth, children's and other outward-focussed events and activities. It is such a joy to be part of a church where so many people give so much time and energy to ensuring that all these different ministries are able to flourish.

One highlight of the summer is always our annual trip to [Focus](#), where we join together with other churches across the Holy Trinity Brompton network to enjoy great worship, teaching and time together as a church family. Last summer we more than doubled the number of us who had gone the previous year and we had a wonderful time - there is something about camping together than deepens friendships like nothing else can! At the end of the summer holidays we ran another wonderful Holiday Club where we welcomed a great number of children from the wider community in for a mad week of singing, dancing, story-telling, crafting, messy-gaming, praying, fun, and learning about Jesus and all he has done for us.

In the Autumn, we hosted a wonderful Service of Baptism and Confirmation. The Bishop of Kingston, the Rt Rev'd Martin Gainsborough, presided over the Service and it was incredibly moving to hear testimonies of God's transforming work in people's lives and to be able to celebrate all that he is doing among us.



The Autumn term also brought the news that following much prayer and discernment, Dan Wells, our previous Vicar, sensed that God was calling him and Louise to move on from ministry at Holy Trinity. At the same time, the Churchwardens had begun

conversations with John Kiddle, our Archdeacon, about what would happen at the end of my three-year term as Associate Vicar, which was due to finish in August 2025. Following discussions with the PCC, it was agreed that I would be appointed as Interim Incumbent, for a fixed period until August 2027, with the hope that this would provide continuity of ministry

following Dan's departure, and enable us as a church to build for the future. This meant that Dan and I were able to spend a good amount of time in the run up to Christmas focussing on handover and enabling a smooth transition of leadership.



Christmas brought a wonderful array of events and Services, celebrating the wonder of Jesus, born as Emmanuel, God with us. It was a huge joy to see significant numbers from our local community coming to worship with us over the season and hear the message of great joy that a Saviour was born for us.

The new year was certainly a time of change and transition. Firstly, we welcomed a new headteacher to Holy Trinity School. After four long rounds of advertising and interviews, we were delighted to appoint Mr Andy George to be our new Head. Andy is an experienced Head who has hit the ground running at HT and is making a hugely positive impact. Our relationship as a church with HT School is incredibly precious and it is a joy to see it continuing to flourish as we develop our partnership together.

Even more significantly for us as a church, we said farewell to Dan and Louise on 12 January with a special Thanksgiving Service and lunch. As a church we expressed how grateful we have been for Dan's ministry at Holy Trinity, for his preaching gifts, for his leading us through a challenging time following Trevor Patterson's death, and for holding us together as a church through the pandemic.

As we settled into the new year, we spent time as a church looking at the book of Nehemiah and thinking about the wonderful lessons it offers us as we consider building for the future: the importance of prayer, vision, giving generously, working together, looking outwards, persevering through disappointment and celebrating all that God does among us. And it has indeed been a huge encouragement through these past months to see our Sunday morning congregation growing in number, people coming to Alpha, joining life groups, stepping into new areas of ministry and strengthening links with some of our mission partners.

It was an extraordinary privilege to have a special Service here on 9 March, when I was formally instituted and inducted as Incumbent by the Bishop of Kingston. Matt and I feel incredibly privileged that we get to stay at HTR for at least a few more years - we love being here and being able to serve this church and this wider community, and we are excited for what God is going to do in and through this church in the years ahead. Like Nehemiah, we want to be rooted in prayer and to seek God's calling for us as we commit to serving him together. Over the past months, I have been working with the Staff



Team and PCC to clarify our vision and strategy and look forward to sharing at the APCM where we feel God is taking us in the season ahead.

Finally, I do want to express my heartfelt thanks to all those who give so much to the life of the church - to our Churchwardens, Lay Readers, PCC, Staff Team, and all those who serve in so many ways to enable the ministry and mission of the church to flourish. It is such a joy to be in this together.

As Paul reminds us in Ephesians 3:20-21:

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

**Eils Osgood**

## Churchwardens' Report

Our role as Churchwardens involves us working alongside our clergy, staff team and other church leaders to care for and maintain the church building, to give them support and advice, and to make sure necessary safeguarding and administrative duties are carried out. It's a practical, spiritual, pastoral and missional role, and we have been privileged to serve in this way for a further year in such a wonderful church community.

### Leadership change

In January 2025, Dan Wells stood down as Vicar after serving so faithfully in the role since September 2018. While it's impossible to capture the full impact of his ministry, two particular things stood out for us.



First was Dan's gentleness of spirit, which we saw in so many ways. He joined our church when we were still coming to terms with the sadness of Trevor Patterson's death, and he very sensitively helped us to continue to grieve, while gently helping us to look to the future. And then along came Covid, a strange time when he did so much to hold us together as a church in the most unusual of circumstances. And after that, his leadership helped us to gradually rebuild and look to the future with hope. Along the way he had to cope with his own health challenges, but he

continued to lead with a selflessness and grace that was such an example to us all.

The second thing that stood out for us was Dan's preaching, and his ability to open up scripture and bring it to life, even when we may have reflected on a passage many times before. He both encouraged us and challenged us, spurring us on to live for Jesus with the same commitment and passion he showed.

We would also like to recognise Louise Wells' significant contribution to our church and fully recognise that her life and faith had a big impact on many people. She prayed so faithfully for individuals and our church, drew alongside people with real care and compassion and supported Dan in his ministry in ways we didn't necessarily see, but know how hugely valuable they were. We miss both Dan and Louise, and continue to pray for them as they explore God's plan for the next chapter of their lives and ministry.



With Dan moving on, we spent much time exploring future leadership of our church with the Diocese of Southwark, the [Church Pastoral Aid Society](#) (our Patron) and our Church Council. We were delighted that the outcome of this was the appointment of Eils Osgood as Interim Incumbent until summer 2027. Eils is well settled into ministry with us and her appointment provides continuity of ministry following Dan's departure. We are excited about the next chapter of HTR's life under her

leadership, as she both builds on what we already do and explores new opportunities.

## Church life

So many good things have happened in our church life over the past year, for which we are hugely grateful to God. Alongside particular highlights, like our celebrations of Christmas and Easter, the Summer Holiday Club and Light Party, we're very encouraged by the regular and faithful ministry that goes on week by week, which you can read more about throughout this Book of Reports. As we see people joining our church community, finding a living faith in Jesus, growing as disciples and taking on leadership roles, God is so clearly at work in the lives of many people.

We realise that so many people contribute in so many ways to making HTR such a welcoming and outward-looking community, and our role as Wardens is made much easier by what so many others do to make things happen. We are especially grateful for such a capable and servant-hearted Staff Team, whose leadership alongside Eils is the inspiration behind much of what goes on. The heart that Ese Ntefon and Sue Jackson have for children and





young people, and their deep desire for them to meet and grow with Jesus, sees their work having a huge impact in and beyond our church. Our Church Office Team of Liz Morris, Rebecca Reynolds and Ella Baxter carry out a vast range of tasks and responsibilities (some more exciting than others!) that support the smooth running of our church and its activities. Much of what they do is unseen, but is so important in ensuring our church is welcoming and kept safe and, as a charity, has good governance in place. While Matt Osgood's creative and engaging worship leading is clear,

he's also involved in so many other significant ways, both practical and spiritual, that help our church community to flourish.

We're very grateful to David Ewart for his support to us in his role as Deputy Warden. He continues to set us all a wonderful example as he also serves our church so faithfully as our Treasurer and in many other ways. We also really appreciate the work that Graham Bamping and Anke Marais carry out as our Parish Safeguarding Officers. Their wisdom, expertise and timely action, necessarily behind the scenes, plays a huge part in ensuring our church is a safe and secure environment for everyone.

But we're also conscious that so many others serve in a wide variety of ways, sometimes obvious but often quietly and faithfully behind the scenes, without whom HTR wouldn't be the welcoming and growing community it is. On a Sunday morning alone, a large team of people contribute to both our worship and our youth and children's groups, but a wide range of groups, activities and events take place throughout the week that simply wouldn't be possible without those who've stepped forward with their time and gifts to serve, which encourages us hugely. But as we clarify our church's vision over the coming months and seek to bring it to life, we'd love to see more people step forward to lead and serve. In an uncertain and unpredictable world, we have a message of hope that our friends and local community desperately need to hear, and all of us have a part to play in making this happen.



## Buildings

While, as Wardens, we have a responsibility to look after our building, in practice the work is done by others. Our Church Office Team arranges visits for routine maintenance and minor repairs, supported by the Building Committee and Church Council on more major repairs. We're particularly grateful to Martin Phillips for not only chairing the Building Committee but also the Building Project Group. In autumn 2024 we had a particular period where we seemed to face a new building-related issue almost every week, but thanks especially to the wisdom and perseverance of Martin and others, a variety of repairs and replacements have helped to keep our site safe and welcoming.



## Looking ahead



Over the past year, we have once again been blessed by being able to play our small part in the life and growth of our church. When Dan announced last autumn that he was standing down as Vicar, completely independently two people felt drawn to Psalm 32:8:

*I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you*

As we see community coming to life through people meeting Jesus, growing in faith, experiencing healing, finding support in challenging times and reaching out to others with a message of genuine hope, we are excited about what God has in store for us as a church in the coming months and years, and look forward to working with you all to discern and discover what it is.

**James Thornton and Keith Nurse**

## Safeguarding



### Safeguarding

Anke Marais and Graham Bamping have continued as joint Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) over the past twelve months. Graham recently completed the Southwark Diocese PSO Induction training course, which Anke completed last year and which was not available when Graham became a PSO in 2019. The Safeguarding Committee (SC) continued to meet on at least a termly basis. With Eils Osgood now being our Incumbent, the Committee consists of Eils, Liz Morris and the PSOs. Rebecca Reynolds acts as Secretary.

SC reports to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) after its meetings, and the link between the two bodies remains strong, with Anke also being a member of PCC. Our Parish Safeguarding Handbook (PSH) remains key to our Safeguarding practice. This brings together as much of our safeguarding documentation as possible in one place, as a single point of reference specific to our parish, and is available to members of our church community [on the church website](#). The PSH is approved annually by the SC and PCC, and is then sent to all leaders and volunteers involved with groups and activities for our children, young people and vulnerable adults, with a requirement that they should read relevant sections over the summer period before groups restart for the new academic year. This year, we have also enhanced the way in which any Safeguarding Cause for Concern can be reported to the PSOs. In addition to the former paper-based approach, the Cause for Concern reporting form is now available [digitally via the website](#) and notifications are automatically sent to the PSOs in the event that a concern is logged by this means.

Work with children, young people and vulnerable adults remains a crucial part of our activity at Holy Trinity, and is a significant way in which we express God's love for all. The PSOs continue to work closely with leaders to consider proposals for new activities and to develop appropriate risk assessments so that those that proceed can be run safely for all concerned.

We have continued to work on ensuring that all staff and volunteers have completed suitable training and DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks. The enhanced Safer Recruitment processes introduced last year, which implemented more rigorous Staff and Volunteer checklists, have bedded in well.

We also continued with an annual Safeguarding training session, given by the PSOs, for all our volunteers, including those who only volunteer in the context of the Summer Holiday Club. We believe that these sessions provide an excellent opportunity to update volunteers on Safeguarding practice and, particularly, to bring this to life by engaging the group in a couple of case studies, which help remind us that good safeguarding practice is not just about having appropriate policies in place. Indeed, safeguarding is the responsibility of all members of our community and, to this end, we have tried to ensure that it is a topic we include in Services, through references in sermons and intercessions when appropriate and relevant. This year, for the first time, we introduced a Safeguarding Sunday, with the intention of bringing consideration of what safeguarding means in our parish to the centre of our Sunday morning Service. In the coming year, we intend to participate in the Church of England's national Safeguarding Sunday initiative. Watch this space!



We have recently completed a Self Audit document, which the Diocese sent to all parishes. This is the first time in some years that the Diocese has undertaken such an exercise, the intention of which was not to trip parishes up but to give them the opportunity to assess where they are in terms of Safeguarding practice. We approached the process in that light and, as a result, have a short list of actions we will be working on over the next few months to continue to enhance our practice.

Should you ever have a safeguarding concern, [Anke](#) and [Graham](#) are your key points of contact, and a form for reporting any such concern is available from the Church Office and [on the church website](#).

**Anke Marais and Graham Bamping** (Joint Parish Safeguarding Officers)

## Finance

The full set of accounts for 2024 and the budget for 2025 will be presented to the APCM and posted on the Church website. This report is a short summary of the Church finances for 2024 and budget for 2025.

As can be seen from the table below, over 77% of the Church's income last year was given by Church members. Without this generous level of giving, much of the other work outlined in this Book of Reports would not be possible and it is something we are extremely grateful for. Church Centre rents and interest make up most of the rest of our income.

Expenditure is dominated by the cost of running the Church, primarily though the cost of our staff team and our contribution to the wider church, through the Parish Support Fund, which covers the cost of the Vicar and their housing. Including our annual Gift Day, the Church also gives over £50,000 to a number of Christian charities such as Riverbank Trust, Kick and the Vineyard Community Centre.

A summary of our finances is set out below:

	2024 Outturn (£'000)	2025 Budget (£'000)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>467</b>
Regular and one off giving (including tax reclaimed and legacies)	384	345
Gift Day	46	30
Church Centre rentals	33	35
Interest	62	51
Grants	20	0
Other income	8	6
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>498</b>
Parish Support Fund	131	138
Staffing costs	187	194
Church ministries	26	13
Regular giving beyond our parish	22	24
Gift Day	46	30
Running costs of the Church	78	71
Other expenditure	41	30

Some figures do not total exactly due to rounding

We started 2024 with a projected deficit but, thanks to the wonderful generosity of Church members, our planned giving slightly outperformed the budget (although £27,000 below the 2023 level) and one-off giving was £25,000 above budget and 2023 levels. We also received a £10,000 legacy. With interest rates remaining above forecast, we approached the end of the year expecting to break even. However, after receiving a grant of over £20,000 very late in the year from Richmond Church Charity Estates, towards the cost of some significant building repair costs (including the replacement heating system in the Trinity Room area), we ended the year with a surplus of about £22,000.



2025 again looks to be a challenging year, with the Church again projecting a deficit. However, thanks to the generosity of Church members in their response to Giving Sunday, this is already looking much more promising. It is still not too late to respond in financial or other ways!

I am grateful for all the support of the Finance Team; Keith Nurse, who works tirelessly on giving, tax reclaims and payroll, Thelma Prichard, who acts as our bookkeeper, as well as Liz Morris and Rebecca Reynolds for all they do.

**David Ewart**, PCC Treasurer

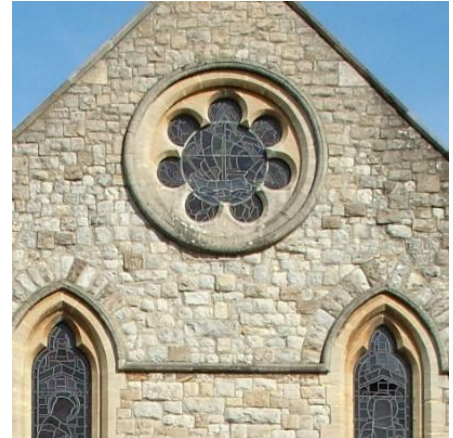
## Building Committee and Building Project Group



During the year to May 2025, the Building Committee and Building Project Group combined as the Building Project was temporarily on hold to allow a review of the long-term Church vision and strategy. Instead, the focus has been on some interim work required to keep the Church building in a safe condition and allow the continuation of our work. It is recognised that the benefits of this building work would be short term in nature and only essential work should proceed. Plans for the Building Project will be resumed in due course to align with the Church's renewed vision and will build on all previous work that has been carried out over the years.

During the year, on top of the usual work of maintaining the burglar and fire alarm systems, servicing the Worship Area heating system, PAT testing the electrical appliances, and servicing the boilers, a number of urgent works were carried out. The more significant works are as follows:

- Repairing the roof over the main entrance and Riverbank Office to deal with leaks
- Repairing the floor in the entrance foyer where the ply wood covering a pipe trench had rotted, replacing it with a metal cover
- Repairing and rehangng the main doors; this temporary solution was adopted in view of the very high costs of replacing the doors
- Dealing with a pest infestation problem
- Repeatedly dealing with problems concerning the drains from the kitchen, and later the toilets, which turned out to be mainly down to wet wipes being disposed of incorrectly. This has finally dealt with the unpleasant smell in the offices
- Replacement of all toilets and cisterns in the men's and ladies washrooms
- A repaint and refresh of the Vicar's Office
- Replacing single phase/three phase electric circuits throughout the Church with a DB4 system, so all circuits are RCD protected
- Installation of a 24v 3.0A power supply for the fire alarm, with a battery backup
- Replacing light fittings and reinstating lighting in the car park, including nine new lights.



However, the largest project undertaken in 2024 was the replacement of the boiler providing heating and hot water to the Halls, offices, kitchen and Trinity/Christ Church Rooms following the old boiler being condemned during a service visit because of high levels of carbon monoxide. As part of this work, new radiators and a new pump were installed which allowed us to move to a closed system.



This level of work is costly and would have required the PCC to draw on its reserves had we not been able to secure a very generous grant of about £20,400 from the Richmond Church Charity Estates.

The Building Committee is currently focused on some essential roof repairs that should stop all leaks, and deal with the hole in the north side of the Chancel roof. The Car Park has also undergone a repaint to clearly mark out parking spaces and assist with efficient parking. It is hoped the main focus will then move on to the planning of the building project.

**David Ewart**

## Mission Group

If it wasn't for the sacrificial giving of members of Holy Trinity we, the Mission Group, would have nothing to do. So, it's with heartfelt thanks that we are so grateful to members of the

church who give so generously, thus enabling us in turn to support mission at home and abroad.

Currently we are able to support the following:

- Sarah Casson - Sarah has been linked to [Wycliffe Bible Translators](#) for a number of years. She is currently writing handbooks for translators and has been closely linked with the Omi translation team
- [Karis Kids](#) - for some years now, several members, either as individuals or in teams, have been supporting 'link families,' in both supporting children orphaned by Aids and helping children and families to get out of poverty in Uganda. Last year some members of Holy Trinity were able to go to Kampala to help with their Summer Camp
- [Open Doors](#) - this is a mission that's devoted to supporting Christians worldwide who suffer severe persecution
- [KICK](#) - KICK, with its mission to transform young people's lives, with God's love, through sport and support, has grown phenomenally since it was started in 2003 by Tom Rutter, a member of Holy Trinity. It's now working in over 110 schools in the north, east, south and south west of England reaching over 27,000 young people
- [LVA Trust](#) - started by a member of Holy Trinity, LVA delivers high quality, inclusive relationship, sex and health education, based on their model of each person being Loved, Valued and Able, via fun and interactive classroom workshops, assemblies and small groups. They too have grown, working now with 17 schools in 4 London boroughs
- [Riverbank Trust](#) - started in 2010 by Ellie Hughes, a member of Holy Trinity, with a vision to 'see vulnerable single mothers and their families transformed by the love of Jesus through hope and long-term community.' This too is growing, developing links to various churches within the Borough of Richmond
- [Insight](#) - This year we will be adding Insight, who work with local schools, to the missions we support.



Out of our Discretionary Response Fund, we sent £250 to each of the following:

- [Prison Fellowship](#), towards the Angel Christmas Tree gifts
- [Tearfund](#), DEC Appeal
- [Riverbank Trust](#), towards the calendars they were giving to the mums.

As a result of the incredibly generous response to our Gift Day appeal, we were able to make donations of £15,000 to each of the following:

- [Karis Kids](#) - towards the Summer Camp
- [Open Doors](#)
- [Riverbank Trust](#).



We're grateful to God for His provision and, mindful of the responsibility of distributing the church's outreach giving, we pray that we will make wise decisions and act with Godly wisdom and discernment.

**Karin Boyton, Mandie Lambert, Eils Osgood, Gerry Stride, Catherin Tidmarsh**

## Creation Care Group



At the Townshend Road entrance to our Church there is a Creation Care Garden! It is available for anyone to use. There are flowers planted in the small garden bed by the gate, flowers in pots, and flowers and herbs in a large planter. There are bird feeders in the shrubs along the path to the right. At the end of the path there is a secluded area with a seat and with plants all around, with a bug hotel and with wonderful verses from the Bible written on slates. And resting there is the Eagle which once stood inside the Church to encourage the congregation as they heard the Bible being read.

The Creation Care Group has been caring for this area for four years, to encourage insects and birds, and to remember that God cares for his creation and wants us to care for it too. We are a small, friendly group, who keep in touch by WhatsApp and who try to meet up from time to time to keep the garden looking good. Please let me know if you would like to join us. No great gardening knowledge required!



**Rosalind Ambrose**

## Pastoral Care Team



The Pastoral Care Team (PCT) was initially formed early in 2024 as a temporary measure while Dan Wells was on sabbatical, but proved to be a really helpful group and so it has remained in place. Pastoral Care across the church is, in practice, shared by many different people in various roles, including life group leaders and ministry team leaders, but we recognise that there can be gaps regarding those who are sick, housebound or facing other particular challenges, and so the PCT endeavours to effectively coordinate pastoral care for those individuals especially.

Currently, the PCT consists of myself, our Lay Readers and a couple of other individuals who have particular pastoral gifts and experience. We meet roughly once a month, and do our best to ensure that those in need of home Communion, home or hospital visits, regular phone calls or simply a listening ear during a difficult time are being cared for. We also appreciate being able to offer mutual support and encouragement to each other as we go. It has been a real privilege for us to be more intentional about this over the past year, and we have seen some real answers to prayer.

If you are aware of anyone in the congregation who is in need of particular support, please do make us aware so that we can do our best to respond accordingly.

**Eils Osgood**

## Life Groups

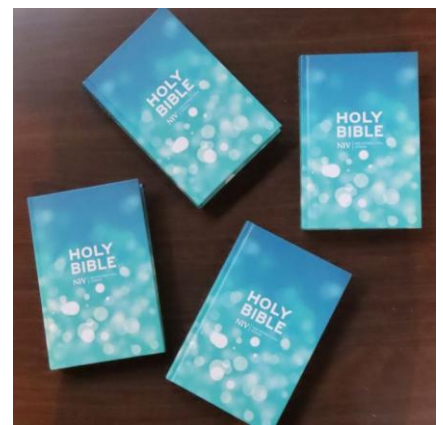
Life groups are at the heart of who we are as a church as we be a community of people who are centred around Jesus, growing in our relationships with him and each other, and knowing him at work in us and through us. Louise McFerran recently preached a sermon as part of our Lent series on 'Drawing near to God: in community' and collected some wonderful quotes and comments about all that people value about being in a life group. She summarised that:

**Life Group is a loving, supportive, and faith centred community where people of all life stages come together to grow in their relationship with Jesus, study the Bible, pray, share life's joys and struggles, and build deep, authentic friendships in a safe and encouraging space**

That seems like an excellent description to me!

Most of our groups meet fortnightly in person on Wednesday evenings, but other evenings are available, and we also have three daytime groups and one online group.

Our life group leaders have remained consistent this year and we met together on a couple of occasions through the year to share encouragements, ideas, resources and so on. We continue to consider how we can make life groups more visible and accessible to as wide a range of people as possible, so that everyone who wants to be in a group can hopefully find something that will work for them. We have also continued to think together about how we can identify and nurture new leaders within our groups, so that we will have the capacity to grow as new people join us. I want to express my huge thanks to all of our life group leaders who pour so much





energy into choosing resources, preparing bible studies and discussions, and both spiritually and practically caring for those in their groups day by day.

We would encourage everyone who would call themselves a member of HTR to consider being in a life group. If you are not in a group and would like to join one, please [get in touch](#) or find me after church one Sunday, and we will do everything we can to find you a home. If you look at the groups currently on offer and think there is nothing there that quite works for your particular circumstances, then please do let us know about that too ... it may well be you are not the only one, and if we can, we'd love to see if we could set something up that would work for you!

**Eils Osgood**

## Alpha Course



[Alpha](#) is consistently like a box of chocolates - you never know what you're going to get! We welcomed several guests back in January 2025, who came from very different situations and with a wide range of questions. Over the eight weeks we met together, people shared honestly about their lives and grew in their

understanding of the Christian faith, and while we can't claim to have solved every theological or philosophical mystery in the universe by the end, the sense of journeying together while exploring some of the biggest questions of life was really precious.

Thanks so much to all those who helped with logistics, leading discussions and with the catering - special mention to Dot Stride for feeding us all on multiple occasions! We're hoping to launch another Alpha course just after the APCM. If you've never done Alpha (or even if you have) and would value a relaxed, honest, welcoming space to explore faith, you'd be very welcome to join us.

**Matt Osgood**

## Oasis and Women's Ministry

### Oasis

Oasis provides precious time to meet and pray with other women living in faith, a place of acceptance, and a refuge, an oasis of calm in a busy week. All are welcome, no matter where

you are on your walk with God or your age. We gather at 9.30 on a Friday morning, to drink coffee and eat cakes and fruit before studying the bible together.



We have been thinking about the “Questions Jesus asks” in passages in the Gospels and then also learning more about the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We have shared Communion together and been wonderfully fed by the Holy Spirit. We love to pray for each other and it’s been so encouraging to hear some wonderful answers to our prayers. God is always faithful and has been so good to us all.

*“Oasis is a very special space. We go through the highs and lows of life together, we pray, and we see God at work. This year I’ve really learnt and seen how God is for us, and how kind He is as He loves us through life.”*

Not only do we eat cake; we also spent a morning quietly contemplating whilst colouring and being creative. We always enjoy our annual much-loved trip to the Isabella Plantation in Richmond Park and we have met at Pembroke Lodge for a walk and coffee together.

## Women’s ministry

We said a sad farewell to Louise Wells in January as she and Dan are setting out on new adventures with Jesus. We are so grateful for all your support, Louise, over the last few years; thank you so much.

It continues to be a joy to be part of this ministry, to see our lovely women enjoying each other’s company and developing their faith together. There is always a buzz after the Service on a Sunday when conversations are had, and I know that so many meet up at other times when they can to support and encourage each other.

We had a delightful evening in July enjoying Pimms and strawberries, even if the weather was disappointing. Karin Boyton masterminded our Christmas craft evening, which is always great fun, with chatting, eating and a little drinking, and lots of amazing decorations were made. Another great Curry night was enjoyed in March.

In January Emma Worrell from [Open Doors](#), spoke at our breakfast. She was speaking about “Perusing God in the midst of uncertainty”, sharing news and testimonies from around the world to encourage us to persevere, no matter what our circumstances. I found it encouraging, humbling and challenging to hear what our brothers and sisters are facing in hostile areas.



Thank you to everyone who has helped with these events; they couldn't run without you. There is always room for you if you would like to help out in any way. We are looking forward to our next breakfast on 17 May and social on 11 July.

## THE ORCHARD

A group of us went to The Orchard Conference at St Paul's Hammersmith in October last year and this is some of the feedback about the experience, it's so encouraging:

*"The Orchard Conference was a wonderful and helpful experience, particularly being there with my HTR friends. The worship and talks were nourishing, and so much of what I heard and experienced has stuck with me."*

*"I was in two minds about going to the Orchard Conference, but I decided to go with no expectations, just seek to meet with God and hear from Him. After the second talk they invited people to come for prayer and something they said really resonated with me and I felt I should go forward. The lady who prayed for me had a word and God met with me powerfully and healed me from a long past hurt that, to be honest, I thought would never be OK this side of heaven. I'm so glad I went and so grateful to Him for His love and kindness."*

The Orchard Conference will be something to sign up for on 18 October; this time it's at Holy Trinity Brompton. [Here is the link](#) for tickets, but don't dither as they are selling fast and last year a few ladies were unable to come. Speak to the [Church Office](#) if the price is putting you off!

**Catherin Tidmarsh**

## Youth Work

At Impact Youth, we have been overjoyed to have spent another year growing deeper in relationship with Jesus and with each other via our ethos of Christ, Confidence and Community. To be a youth group that shares life's joys and wins, losses and disappointments, and everything in between is a wonderful thing to witness and be a part of!

## Sunday Impact

From the Sermon on the Mount, to looking at Halloween from a Biblical perspective, we have explored a wide range of topics over the past year at Sunday Impact. This has been in an attempt to get the young people to apply what they have learnt from the Bible to real life situations and social dilemmas. We hope that these have equipped them for a lifelong journey with God.

Special thanks to the team who Sunday Impact couldn't run without - Craig Brown, Mandie Lambert, Katy Johnston (who has since stepped down from the team after an amazing 8+ years of faithful serving), Steve Patterson and Rob Wilson.

## Midweek Impact



Midweek Impact remains a group that caters for all in the community, and it's been so wonderful to witness friendships being formed, solidified and strengthened. Humorously named "the fun group" by one of our young people, it fills me and the team with so much joy when we see primary school friends being reunited over games, long-term friends giggling over something silly, or leaders connecting with the young people over a shared interest/hobby. Midweek Impact is a space that thrives on community, good food, a tuck shop, and the bow on the top which is a Bible Talk - and we wouldn't have it any other way! The team that made Midweek Impact the great space that it is over the past year are - Frixos Kimonis, Craig Brown, Hugh Dunlop, Naomi Ramsbuhag, Louis Meakin and Tom Toledo-Hardy (who has been thoroughly missed by the young people since his enrolment into the army as a musician).

## Deeper Impact

While writing this report, I had a look back to the short introduction we gave to why we (Steve Patterson, Rob Wilson, Craig Brown and I) began Deeper Impact, our youth Bible Study/Life Group:

*"We have also recognised the need for the young people to be disciplined in a deeper way, with some of the older youth requesting something 'more', and so we have proposed to soon begin a Bible Study Group called Deeper Impact. We believe that this will be a time in which questions can be answered and faith can be discovered/grown so that those that attend are ready to face the world more confident in their faith!"*

I am thankful to God that Deeper Impact has been this and so much more! It has truly been a space where the Bible has been explored, questions asked and more raised from the answers at times, but for us, that's been a sign of healthy discourse and growing in spiritual stature. We have stuck to our 'family', Alpha-esque atmosphere, with a meal and time to chat before stepping into time in the Bible, a pressing topic (like the importance of the Holy Spirit to the Christian life), or a prayer session - and it works! We have been blessed to not have had attendance wane, but instead grow, with up to 10 attendees. To see such growth and faithfulness from a venture that we weren't sure if the young



people would enjoy has been phenomenal, and a sign that God is stirring young hearts to be serious about following Him!

Many thanks to our volunteers who have faithfully served at Deeper Impact over the past year - Craig Brown, Rob Wilson, Naomi Ramsubhag, Louis Meakin and Tom Toledo-Hardy. Another mention goes to the wonderful Steph Patterson who cooked a very tasty meal for one of our sessions!

## Youth Worship Evening

On the topic of young hearts being serious about following Jesus, would you believe me if I told you that many young people would eagerly use a Saturday evening to spend time worshipping God? And would you believe me if I said that we would see Holy Trinity packed with 70+ young people and adults doing just that on such a highly contested-for day?

That has been the Revival Youth Worship Evening in a nutshell!



Born out of a “vision” I saw of young people gathered in worship and adoration of Jesus, and the confirmation from two of our young people that saw similar at completely unrelated times, Revival YWE (RYWE) has been a youth-led and youth-focused venture from its conception. We have gathered twice so far - on Saturday 23 November 2024 and Saturday 15 March this year. We look forward to, God willing, making these a termly addition to Youth at HTR.

Perhaps one of the most exciting things about RYWE is that it has been a place of connection with other churches, bringing the gathering-at-Summer-camp vibe local. Life Church, Richmond caught this vision, and their youth leader, Josh Lee, has taken on a collaborative role in putting the evenings together, contacting other churches, co-planning and leading with me. It has truly been a great joy to see “a small idea” bloom. We’re praying and daring that we truly see a *Revival* in Gen Z and Gen Alpha!

The Youth Worship Evening has been powered by the help of the wonderful Matt Osgood, our Worship Pastor, who truly has been a gift. We also were thrilled to have the help of Jacob Baldock, an intern at St Stephen's Twickenham at November's RYWE. I have also been eternally grateful for the support of a huge, phenomenal, servant-hearted team, and will forever be grateful to God that HTR is a place where people are so willing to use their time and talents to bless the next generation!

## Youth Trips (YWA, Visit to Flip Out)

The desire to weave trips back into the fabric of Impact Youth Group was based on the importance of “going out” for fostering deeper relationships. The first **Youth Weekend Away** (YWA) since 2019 took place last year in April, and we are still seeing the fruit of that trip to this day, with many of the young people fondly looking back to their time at Malshanger. We

also love that parents chipped in to make this trip special, and we will continue the trend of having parents prepare a meal for the first night this year! This year, the YWA is in June, and though there is a change of location, the modus operandi remains; Christ, Confidence, Community ... and lots of outdoor fun!

In July 2024, we also took a fun trip to [Flip Out Hounslow](#) prior to the end of the term, and it was a fabulous experience playing crazy golf as a group!

Our annual **Youth Christmas Trip** to [Franco Manca](#) is a fun time where young people and the youth team gather and eat good pizza! This year, we spent hours in laughter and loudness, at some point even sharing our Christmas crackers with other guests! We also surprised one of our young people with a birthday cake, and overall, it was a successful night. I truly love that we get to wrap up the year in this way that makes the young people and our servant-hearted team feel as special as they are.

All these trips and ventures could not have been possible without a faithful and beloved team of volunteers - Val Smith, Claire Arthur, Rebecca Jenner, Naomi Ramsubhag, Mandie Lambert, Steph Patterson, Hugh Dunlop, Craig Brown, Frixos Kimonis, Rob Wilson and Tom Toledo-Hardy.

## Christ's School

It has been a joy to see the Christian work at Christ's School flourish under the new Chaplain, Ada Rugg, who has been a wonderful addition to the school. Under Ada, the Christian Union begun under the former Chaplain Clare Banner has been formulated into two splits - Year 7-9 and Year 10-13. It's been great to have been part of the latter group since November last year, and this has allowed me to foster deeper connections with some teachers and students. Following these connections, some of the students have attended the Revival Youth Worship Evenings, continuously asking "when is the next one?!" I know that this connection with Christ's will continue to bear much fruit.

## Other notable mentions

**Youth for Christ Collaboration** - I spent October-December going out into Richmond High Street with a Youth for Christ Unreached Youth Facilitator. These trips were utilised (alongside some handmade tasty hot chocolate) to engage young people with a short pamphlet called "Why You Matter" which pointed them to the fact that God made them, and that they are valued. These were helpful in building connections with youth after school and many adults from the community also engaged with these too (mostly the free hot chocolate, though)!

**Youth Serving Sundays (YSS)** - A new venture which made its debut in March, YSS is a time where the young people serve in every area in the church on a Sunday morning. This was created to encourage the young people into a servant-hearted lifestyle, and help them understand that they can and should use their talents to serve God and their church community. The young people blew their first YSS out of the water and HTR could not be more blessed to have such wonderful young people!

Through a busy year, the Lord has, once again, seen through the Youth Ministry at Holy Trinity Church. I am constantly reminded that Impact Youth are His, and I'm therefore mindful, that the verse mentioned in 2023 still stands:

***Unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain*** (Psalm 127:1)

Through that lens, for the rest of this term, I fix my eyes on Jesus and allow Him to lead us.

**Eseabasi Ntefon** (Youth and Children's Pastor)

## Children's Work

This continues to be a passage that I return to frequently:

***Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates*** (Deuteronomy 11:18-20)

I have also been drawn to when Jesus feeds five thousand. John 6:9 (NLT) says, "There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish". A YOUNG BOY. To me it's clear that children were drawn to Jesus (at what would have been a multi-generational Service of its time) too, and still are.



Catherin Tidmarsh (Explorers) says:

*"They were amazing! We were studying Isaiah 53, "What God's servant did for us" and Luke 9:22 and Luke 18:32. I had printed the verses from the CEV version and they then highlighted particular parts and used the questions in the booklet to see what was being said about what the saviour would look like and why he was coming. Really tricky stuff but they totally got it and loved doing it.*

*I was totally blown away by their response and insight into the passages and what Jesus has done for them. They even related it to the Last Supper, without me mentioning it. It was an amazing morning; they are such a special group. I just love them so much."*

Elizabeth Lek (All Together) says:

*"What do I love about serving on Sundays in children ministry? When Sue asked me to write a few sentences, the first thing that came to mind was joy. Just as God has blessed me, I have been given the privilege and pleasure to serve the children with joy. The honesty, love and beauty shown by each and every child God has put with us on Sunday reminds me of*

*how much He loves and cares for me too. As I serve alongside Sue and the whole team, may God continue to use all of us to show how much He loves the children and each one of us".*

Romans 10:14 says "How can they hear, unless someone tells them?" With the help of God, let's keep passing on our faith to our children, so they too can grow in their own faith, in Jesus' name. None of what we do would happen without the steadfast, faithful volunteers who inspire and encourage. In addition, my prayer is that every volunteer would encounter Jesus while serving, yes even in the 'energetic' moments.

## Sunday Groups and Clubs - Volunteers



I continue to be eternally thankful to God for each one of our inspirational leaders and helpers faithfully serving in Sunday Group and Clubs - Catherin Tidmarsh, Cathy Hewett, William Edwards, Karin Boyton, Val Smith, Lucia Woods, Helen Sadler, Rosalind Ambrose, Anke Marais, Elizabeth Lek, Nima Shrestha, Louise McFerran, Steph Patterson, Robyn Porter, Maciel Tavares, Ewelina Gozdzik-Duru, Rebecca Reynolds, Barnaby and Kate Chapman, Catherine Whillans, Yega Haghgoo, Yvonne Simmonds and Evelyn Thompson.

I want to thank our volunteers who serve during the additional summer groups, Light Party and Good Friday Activity Morning, or hear my request for help so we can increase the numbers that attend groups/clubs again. We can't do it without you. I would like to thank especially Judy Anderson, Gerry Stride and Dot Stride.

Our thank you also goes to Ian and Jenny Trought and Judy Mathieson, who faithfully served for many years, and John Hutchison who, although not currently in groups, continues to prepare and plan craft activities throughout the year. I'm deeply grateful.

## Sunday Children's Groups

- Fledglings - 0 to 3 years - Meet in the Christ Church Room
- All Together - 3 to 7 years - Meet in the Main Hall
- Explorers - 8 to 10 years - Meet in the Small Hall

For the teaching in the two older groups, we have moved to 'Click' resources as a launchpad for our teaching. Our sessions start with free play and then we gather for prayer, the Bible story of the day and craft activities follow. Particular thank you to David Ewart, who prepares the rooms each week for Sunday groups and always makes sure that we have help to clear away.

Fledglings, led by Anke and Ewelina, follow a Bible-based story and singing session that's replicated at Refresh on Monday morning.



## Refresh - a mums-only space, Monday 1000 to 1130



Refresh runs in collaboration with Riverbank Trust (with Catherine Whillans as Riverbank lead) and is open to the community, but particularly offers a safe space for single mums. We have places for up to 20 mums and their children. We start the morning with free play for the children and a brunch aiming for us to all sit together. As before, we run an optional Bible Story and singing session during the morning. This has become a community event that the mums look forward to each week. It has been exciting to have a Riverbank mum who now volunteers each week.

Mums have commented on how welcome and included they feel. We have increased our advertising of Refresh to Holy Trinity School and have seen a few mums coming along because of that.

## Bible Club @ Holy Trinity School - Monday 1530 to 1630

Our Bible Club continues to be a place where children can learn more about the Collective Worship Bible passage for the day. The hour starts with prayer, reading the Bible, Biblical-themed craft activities and colouring, as well as adding to a 'memory' book each week. It is a privilege to hear their questions about faith and what Jesus means to them. Run by Ese Ntefon and myself, there is space for 12 children (this is the maximum, to comply with Safeguarding adult to children ratios) and we most recently had a waiting list of five children.

## Glow! - Friday 1900 to 2030, monthly

Our Children's Club Glow remains a highlight of the month, and the best place to be on a Friday night, so I've heard! To many children's disappointment, Glow continues to meet monthly; they would like it to be every week! The children start the evening by choosing an assortment of games and craft activities, including Table Tennis, Air Hockey, Pool Table, Xbox and 'Cooking' activity (most of the time something to do with chocolate.) At about 2000 there is a talk on the Bible; we have been looking at the Jackie Pullinger Story and how she heard

from God at the age of eight. There are moments when you can hear a pin drop when they hear how God rescues and saves. The evening finishes with the opening of our timeless tuckshop, now offering healthy options as well as the popular sweets. The children go home with a Memory Verse for the day and I have heard the children 'put them on their mirrors and stick them up by their beds ...' It is also encouraging and wonderful to see our young people volunteering to help at Glow.

We have had 60 children recently. Praise God.

## Light Party



We ran a successful Light Party, where we remembered that Jesus is the Light of the World. We had many people arriving at the door on the evening (approximately 25% more than were registered), so made a note to 'over cater' next year. There were various crafts available, including decorating a mini pumpkin competition to take home to cook, friendly faces only! Geoff of course was in attendance and he included some legendary jokes!

There was a buffet of delicious food, all organised by the wonderful Pete Boyton and Siobhan Burn. All of this was made possible by our inspirational team of volunteers who faithfully are the hands and feet of Jesus. Everyone went home with a party bag, including the message of the Good

News and invitations to our Christmas Services.

**Sue Jackson** (Children's Pastor)

## Holiday Club



Sticky buns! Amazing crafts! Geoff the puppet's terrible jokes! Aerobics! Drama! Games! Songs! The infamous gunge tank! And, course, learning more about Jesus through all of it ... it can only be (at least we think so) the best week of the year - Holiday Club 2024: Deep Sea Divers!

Over the course of four action-packed days, we went looking for the treasures we find in Jesus' life story, from his birth to the cross and beyond, which we followed up with a wonderful Holiday Club Service and BBQ on the Sunday. Around sixty children joined us for the week, most of whom wouldn't normally come to HTR, which was the most amazing opportunity to share his good news. As always, we were so grateful for the incredible team of around 40 volunteers who got stuck in with leading small groups, acting out drama, putting on refreshments, providing all the admin support and so much more.



Thank you so much to everyone who helped in any way to make Holiday Club a reality - it was a wonderful, joy-filled time, and we're really looking forward to doing it all again this

coming August! Come and get involved if you're around - there's something for everyone to do, no matter what gifts and skills you bring, and it is a hugely fun and rewarding week.

**Matt and Eils Osgood**

## Prayer



J. Edwin Orr, a Professor in World Missions at Fuller Seminary, said: "History is silent about revivals that did not begin with prayer", and following our Vision and Giving Sundays in January, we were encouraged as a church to turn again to prayer as we move into a new season as a church. There are many ways in which we can get more involved in prayer, both individually and collectively, and I would love to encourage every member of HTR to consider how they might go deeper in prayer in this next year. Our monthly Praise and Prayer gatherings on Sunday evenings have been really special times with God, and will be continuing through the summer - please do join us if you possibly can. There is also a small group who gather every Tuesday morning on Zoom to pray - if you'd like to join in with that group, please just email the [Church Office](#) for the link. Life groups are also a vital space where we can pray together, both for each other as individuals, as well as for the church and the wider world. We are always keen to explore new ways of encouraging prayer, so if you have any ideas or suggestions, please do get in touch!

Another way we can bless each other in prayer is through prayer ministry, and we aim to have a team available to pray with anyone, about anything, at every Sunday morning Service. This is a wonderful way in which we can care for and support each other, and I do encourage you to receive prayer when you can - you don't need to be in a crisis, just to simply want to see God more at work in your life. Prayer ministry is also a great way to serve the wider church community, and we'd love for others to join the team (especially men) - if you'd be interested in finding out more about what's involved, please [drop me a line](#).

**Matt Osgood**

## Worship

This has been a year of significant change in the life of HTR, but our faithful God has remained constant throughout, and is always worthy of praise. I am so grateful for all the

volunteers who contribute their musical and technical skills in helping us as a church to worship God together - with particular thanks to Kate Thornton and Nico Marais for the huge amount of help they give.



This year has also seen a number of young people get involved with the music and tech teams, and it has been a joy to benefit from their gifts and passion for worship. The two youth worship nights, organised by Ese Ntefon in conjunction with Life Church Richmond, have been a particular highlight of this year, and I look forward to those continuing and hopefully growing next year as well.



Other highlights of this year include our community choir once again reforming for a wonderful Carols by Candlelight, a glorious Baptism and Confirmation Service with Bishop Martin, All Age Worship Services, and all the poignant reflection and exuberant joy of Holy Week. We are always open to new people joining our music and tech teams, so if you have any talents or interest in those areas, please do come and have a chat!

**Matt Osgood**

## All Age Services



I continue to be grateful for the truly multi-generational community that we have at HTR. While our different needs and preferences mean that separate activities are often useful for our various age groups week by week, it is nevertheless such a joy to gather all ages together, 3-4 times a term, worshipping and learning together as the big family of God.

Huge thanks go to the endlessly creative team who have made our All Age Services happen throughout the year - Louise McFerran, William Edwards, Sue Jackson, Ese Ntefon, Matt and Eils Osgood - and of course Geoff the puppet! Thank you also to Paul and Val Smith, and Mark and Katy Johnston, who have contributed to and enriched our All Age Services with their acting talents! It has been a joy to work



together over the past year, planning various Services and events around Christmas and Easter, as well as other occasional one-off Services.

Our hope is always that we are not simply delivering a Service for all ages, but that all ages are enabled to contribute and serve, equipped to play their part in the life of our church community, and that we will see the fruit of a truly inter-generational church.

**Anke Marais**

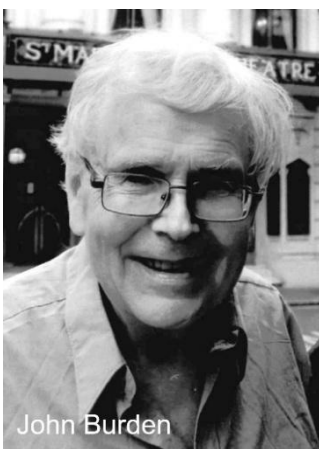
## Wednesday Church

Those of us who attend Wednesday Church are blessed in several ways. First and foremost, we share a short church Service together, meeting with God and his people. Several people take it in turns to lead the Service and/or preach. We select a Bible passage from the Church of England recommended readings for the week.

The seasons of the church year are celebrated, including Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost. Twice a month we partake in Holy Communion, led by priests Eils Osgood or Jemima Prasadam. Worship is aided by Matt Osgood playing the wonderful piano which was paid for from a legacy of one of our own, Kay Davidson. Our Service is for anyone who is free at this time of the week. Several younger adults attend, together with retirees.



The fellowship continues over lunch, organised by Ella Baxter and catered for by one of several volunteers. We're so grateful to those who have served in this way over the past year. We're also thankful for those who wait on tables, serve and wash up! Our Christmas Service was well attended by church members and visitors. Holy Trinity School choir sang Christian Christmas songs during the delicious lunch.



John Burden

During the year, several of our more senior members faced health challenges, including periods of hospitalisation. We thank God for healing and restoring them to our congregation. One of our dear friends was called home to Glory late in the year, John Burden. Many of us joined his wife Maria and members of his Sunday church, Halford House, in giving thanks for his life and faith at his funeral.

We were delighted to celebrate David Ewart's 70th Birthday. David serves this congregation in a variety of ways, often unobserved. May God continue to bless you, and bless us through your Godly service, David. May he continue to bless us all through his Word, his Spirit and through the service of faithful people.

**Cathy Hewett**

## Focus



Our presence at [Focus](#) was further increased in 2024 with a larger group of us attending. With the greater numbers came a bigger site and we were fortunate to be located much closer to the centre this time around.

As in 2023, some of the party volunteered in various roles around the site and in the groups, while others met up with friends

from other churches and enjoyed some of the meetings and activities around the site.

No good camping weekend is without small mishaps like missing kit (and in some cases tent poles), but everyone enjoyed camping and hanging out together on our church's community pitch (especially for a bit of hammock time!)

The communal worship and teaching in the Big Top was awesome and this year they put on an overflow area with a big screen which several of us attended in our camping chairs.

It really is a great opportunity to get to know each other better, have fun and be encouraged by as many or as few meetings and sessions as you would like to attend. We had several first timers again and everyone had a great time.

We are going again in 2025. Please do consider joining us or nearer the time you can also purchase day tickets if camping really isn't your thing! Speak to the [Church Office](#) for more details.



**Sean Morris**

## Deanery Synod

Deaneries are small geographical divisions of the Diocese (in our case, the Diocese of Southwark), within which parishes are grouped under the care of an Area Dean. Each Deanery has a Deanery Synod, which provides an opportunity to consider issues of common interest and to build a sense of community among churches in the same local area.



Chaired by Rev Alex Barrow, Area Dean, we have lay church members from each parish, plus the vicars and some parish members when they are the host. Any church member is welcome to attend to listen to the talks, three times a year. We begin with worship and Holy Communion and cover our meetings with prayer. Your Deanery Synod members are Cathy Hewett and me. Consequently, we are on PCC.

It's been a year of team change, with grateful thanks for long, much-valued and committed service. We said farewell to Sue Reed as one of your representatives; we will miss you, Sue. Our Lay Chair, Secretary and Communicator stepped down from those key roles and I believe are yet to be replaced. I have stepped up as treasurer, but the former treasurer will helpfully maintain some involvement until she can fully hand over. This year our own Eils Osgood has stepped up as Assistant Area Dean.

The [Deanery website](#) provides details of past and future events locally. Many will also be advertised in our church's Weekly Update.

Recent updates on wider Church of England matters have included:

- Nominations were encouraged from parishes in June 2024 for members of Diocesan Synod, and Alex emphasized its importance
- We were asked to remind our parishes about the July 2024 deadline for the annual [Energy Footprint Audit](#)
- The September 2024 deadline for [Parish Support Fund](#) pledges was highlighted
- Parishes were encouraged to consider the place of legacies in stewardship
- On knife crime, Deanery Synod made a donation this year to [Operation Forgiveness](#) and commended this charity as worthy of consideration by parishes.

On Eco-deanery matters:

- Eco-champion, Suzy O'Brien, provides comprehensive round ups of local and national updates, events and resources on Climate Crisis, Net Zero and [Eco Church](#). I can forward these to anyone who is interested
- A local Christian speaker proposed endorsement of a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Faith letter.
- St Luke's Church, Kew runs regular climate events
- Any church member can join the Deanery Creation Care WhatsApp group.

Talks by guest speakers included:

- Kew Theology and Gardening (KTG), a spiritual and ecological venture out of St Anne's Kew, with links to Kew Gardens, from the director and then Associate Priest at St Anne's, Nick Jepson-Biddle

- “What does Southwark Vision mean for my Church” from Deputy Diocesan Secretary, Jackie Pontin. A talk with Q&A on how the 10-year Christ Centred, Outward Focussed action plan to grow the church fits with our individual churches’ mission plans.

**Susan Armstrong**

## Fair Trade Stall



Problems with trade have become a major issue for us all recently, and this is especially true in the areas of the world where making a living from trade of any kind is already very difficult. Recently [Transform Trade](#), the charity originally called Traidcraft Exchange, sent information that on average just 6% of the value of a bar of chocolate ends up in the cocoa farmer’s hands, as traders and middlemen give them low prices unless they are working within a business dedicated to Fair Trade.

Although Traidcraft had to cease trading in January 2023, other organisations have continued their work. We can buy Fairly traded goods from [Ethical Superstore](#), [The Meaningful Chocolate Company](#), [We are Fair Trade](#), [Fair2All](#) and True Origin, and we regularly receive information from Transform Trade.

We have greetings cards which can be used for many occasions at the low price of £1 each, plus special cards at Christmas and Easter. We also sell coffee and tea, and can order a wide range of foods. There are also crafts, which increase when Christmas draws near.

In the past year we have ordered goods worth £1,101 and the stall has received payments of £1,056. As Easter is late this year, I hope that we will still be able to sell more of the Real Easter Eggs with their booklet which tells the Easter Story, and the payments will be increased.

Thank you to everyone who has used the stall, whether to buy or just to browse. Please let me know if you would like to order something.

**Rosalind Ambrose**

## Riverbank Trust

[Riverbank](#) supports and equips vulnerable single Mums through long term emotional and practical support in partnership with the church community. This year Riverbank saw an increase in referrals from the NHS social prescribing team, self-referrals and schools.





Following its first ever expansion in 2022 (Ham), Riverbank has grown geographically into Whitton and Hampton Wick, with the support of Holy Trinity Church. This has increased Riverbank's capacity to support families struggling across the Borough of Richmond and beyond. 80% of Riverbank families live in poverty, with

many experiencing homelessness and domestic abuse. Riverbank has seen a rise in these issues and has looked to offer relational practical support to those families.

Over the last year HTR support and encouragement has enabled the charity to continue growing. Riverbank has been able to host Christmas and Easter gatherings at Holy Trinity Church with volunteers to show and tell of the love of Jesus. Consequently, we have seen even more of our families start to attend Services and groups at HTR. Riverbank children are growing up to see HTR as a second home and frequently ask to come back to church as it is a safe and stable place for them to be.



HTR is an important church for vulnerable families in the community. It is known as a welcoming church for all those in need. We are grateful for the support and prayer for Riverbank and the families we serve. We know they are also grateful for the support the church gives through Riverbank and see that Jesus is different to anything the world offers. Next year we look forward to further

deepening our impact with families and, God willing, expanding again into the Hounslow area.

Thank you for all the support you give Riverbank and our precious families. We value God's leading, the church leadership's vision, and the church members' love and relationships. Please just [email](#) if you'd like to know more. Thank you again!

**Laura Lowther** (CEO, Riverbank Trust)

## Kick



Thank you for your faithful prayers and please continue to ask God to lead and bless us. At [KICK](#), our mission remains to transform young people's lives, with God's love, through sport and support. We do this through values-driven physical education, street dance, mentoring, chaplaincy in schools and church-based KICK Academies to impact young people. We

are committed to seeing young people experience a hope for the future and joy in the present.

Kick has grown nationally rapidly, engaging over 28,000 young people a week across over 100 schools and 30 KICK Academies around the UK. In particular, we provide chaplaincy and coaching to Holy Trinity Richmond Primary School, where we have worked for over 20 years.

This year we published KICK's Story, a book about a number of the testimonies of God's kindness to the organisation over the years. KICK was founded by HTR and we are delighted to continue to operate from the church as our office base.



Thank you for being on mission with us at KICK. May God bless you.

**Joe Lowther** (CEO, KICK)

## LVA Trust



loved · valued · able

rooted in our founding scripture, 'We love because he first loved us.'

Since May 2024, [LVA Trust](#) has significantly expanded its impact, working with children, young people and families. Our emotional well-being groups have supported 128 young people in managing stress and building resilience. We've also enhanced our RSHE (Relationships, Sex and Health Education) programme in schools, reaching 1,740 students at Christ's School, Richmond Park Academy, and Holy Trinity Primary, and nearly 10,000 students overall across multiple boroughs, all

Since last year, our Parent Village Course has become a firm fixture in partnership with Riverbank Trust. We've walked alongside parents and carers through tailored workshops and peer-led discussions, helping to strengthen families and create safe, nurturing home environments. As a Riverbank alumna, it has been such a God moment to be able to come back as a funding CEO who has created a group for parents with whom I have shared struggles and overcame them with the power of God's redeeming love, grace and mercy. A true testimony that 'He restores the years the locusts have taken.'

Since we last updated you, Mandy Turner has moved on from LVA but remains a firm friend! We have also welcomed Kendall Ramsey to our education team. Looking forward, we aim to continue to focus on expanding our parent engagement, expanding into more primary schools and working on digitising our RSHE delivery to enable us to work with more young people in small groups.

Your partnership continues to make a vital difference. One young person we are currently mentoring has not left the house in over a month; the only time they leave the house is with their mentor once a week. Just one story of the hundreds we could tell.

We are currently mentoring young people who have committed gender-based assaults, through to young people who just want to be seen and heard. Our boys' groups are seeing young men come in with warped ideas of what it is to 'be a man' and leaving with a completely changed mindset and tools to grow into the best men they can be!

With your prayers, support and encouragement, we are building something lasting - offering hope, truth and practical help to those who need it most. Thank you for standing with us.

**Kayleigh Butler** (CEO, LVA Trust)

## Karis Kids



Founded in 2007, [Karis Kids](#) is an initiative between the Church of Uganda and a group of UK churches (including ourselves) with the vision of bringing family and a future to vulnerable children in the slums of Kampala by supporting them within a family context. Holy Trinity is linked to St Peter's, Wandegeya, and our link families live in the Wandegeya slums.

Holy Trinity is currently supporting 26 families in Kampala involving around 50 current or past HTR families. Over the past year, Karin Boyton has completely updated our sponsors list, and we are very grateful to her for the time she has given to do this. We have filled most of our vacancies and Holy Trinity School have taken on the sponsorship of a brand-new family. There is always room to expand, however, and if you are interested in being part of this mission and supporting a family, please speak to me at church or [email me](#).

In August last year, we sent a team to participate in Summer Camp. We travelled to Kampala as part of a team of nine. We spent a few days prior to Camp in Kampala, staying at the Namirembe Guest House. During this time, we were privileged to be able to meet with all our linked families, and deliver your gifts and messages to them in person. They are so grateful for the love and support that you give. We visited the slums and saw first-hand the conditions that our families live in. We attended church on Sunday - participating in all three Services. We were made so very welcome by Reverend Moses and his team.



Attending Summer Camp was a real privilege. We worked with children from Wandegeya as well as the other slum areas supported by Karis. We helped with the crafts and the sports, and some of us demonstrated our dancing prowess! The worship was, as always, incredible. We made some new friends, renewed some old

acquaintances and promised to return next year. On our return, we held a feedback session at HTR, and a review video is available from the [Church Office](#) on request.

We continue to be supported in our work with Karis this year by Will Law, who is always on hand to advise. Wendy Allyss has stepped down as co-ordinator, and Julie and Nick Winning have taken over this role until a permanent replacement can be found.

Our next steps will be to continue to support our link families, both at HTR and at St Peter's. We will keep in close touch with the team in Winchester and in Kampala as we seek to do this. And we will be starting to plan to take a team out to Kampala for Summer Camp in 2026. Watch this space!



**Mandie Lambert**

## Holy Trinity School



We are so privileged to have a wonderful relationship with [Holy Trinity School](#), where both the church and school can benefit hugely from our partnership together. Our school vision is that children are nurtured to love learning, love one another and love God, and we rejoice in the many opportunities we have as a church to be part of the realisation of that vision, from our participation in school governance, to weekly involvement in collective worship, after-school Bible

Club, end of term Services at church, school fairs, prayer weeks and so much more. I have continued to serve as co-chair of governors alongside Francis Neal, a longstanding Holy Trinity School parent and foundation governor who worships at St Mary's, Mortlake. My thanks also go to Dave Petrie, who is a long-standing foundation governor, and Nico Marais, who has recently joined the governing body too, to Sue Jackson, Ese Ntefon and Matt Osgood who all help to lead collective worship, and to the many volunteers who assist with school fairs and other events. It is a joy to see the cross-over between church and school communities, particularly at events such as Holiday Club and our key festivals.

This year has seen plenty of change at HT. We said a fond farewell to Alison Bateman last Easter, as she retired after five years with us as Headteacher. Having initially struggled to recruit a successor, we worked closely with AfC (Achieving for Children, Children's Services for Richmond and Kingston Boroughs) and the SDBE (Southwark Diocesan Board of Education) to appoint Emily Evans as an Interim Executive Head, who joined us for half of the week alongside her leadership at St Paul's CofE school in Chessington. Emily was a real gift to our school over her two terms with us, and



brought great energy and enthusiasm alongside extensive experience as a Head, which enabled us to continue thriving as a school community, even amidst the uncertainty about our longer-term leadership.

After four long rounds of advertising and interviewing, we were delighted to finally appoint Andy George as our new permanent Head. Andy began with us in January this year and has thrown himself into the role. He has had an incredibly busy term, not least due to a visit from Ofsted during the last week of the Spring term! We are currently awaiting our published results, but in the meantime we give thanks for our amazing teaching staff who pour so much into their work and we celebrate the diverse and inclusive school community that we are, where children have the opportunity to flourish, academically, socially and spiritually.

**Eils Osgood**

## Christ's School

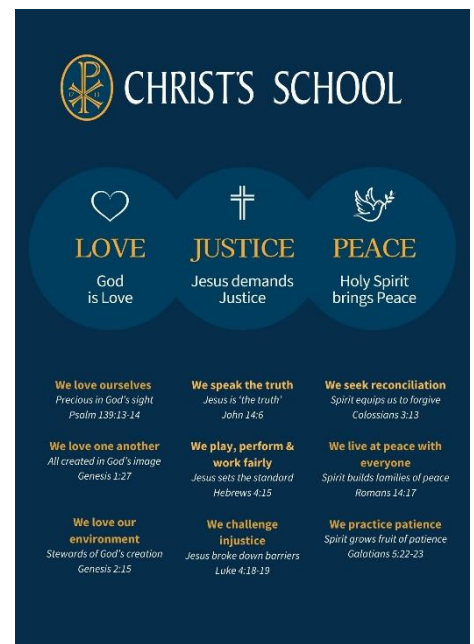


[Christ's School](#) is our local Church of England secondary school. Under the excellent leadership of headteacher Helen Dixon, the School continues to flourish and serve its community to the highest standard. The School

continues to be oversubscribed. However, there is a fall in pupil numbers going through local primary schools, which will impact future applications to Christ's in the not too distant future. Additionally, two further secondary schools are planned in the area, and although these continue to be in planning stages, they are still expected to happen at some point.

Like many schools in the borough, Christ's is under significant financial pressure. It's not currently an academy, and one potential solution to the financial situation is to join forces with other schools in the Diocese and form a Multi Academy Trust. The leadership team and governors continue to keep abreast of developments in government policy and the Diocese of Southwark's academisation strategy, as this will very surely be a matter for consideration at a future date. Academisation does bring benefits, such as sharing of resources and expertise across schools, but requires much diligence in making decisions that are right for the school and its community. Christ's will be due its next Ofsted inspection in the coming year.

Staff leadership is supported by the governing body - we are very fortunate to be led by a knowledgeable, reflective and thorough Chair of Governors, and are thankful that God has led so many willing and capable local people, including



foundation governors from local churches, to participate in the many meetings, discussions and training days required as a school governor.

The Results days in Summer 2024 were very positive for both GCSE and A Levels, reflecting the hard work of the whole staff team - and of course the students. Importantly, a great many of Christ's students move on to destinations or career paths that will enable them to continue to thrive and meet their potential as they enter adult life.

There are also many extra-curricular achievements to celebrate - for example, a recent school performance of Sister Act, which was hugely enjoyable, and the success of the Christ's School basketball team, which recently won the U16 National Schools Basketball Championship.

Christ's School also visits our church at regular points during the year. The annual Carol Concert is always a very special occasion, featuring talented musicians and singers.

We have a new Chaplain from September, Ada Rugg, who has embraced life at Christ's, building strong relationships, and the Chapel is a lively and friendly place, where students can find spiritual refreshment and just simply belong and be loved. Ada is already running a number of groups and seems to fully embody the spirit of servant leadership.

One great joy of being a governor is visiting the School and meeting the students - they are a wonderful cohort who enjoy their school life, are committed to their studies and are proud to be students of Christ's. Of course, for some, school can be difficult for a number of reasons; as governors, we hear of the dedicated staff who work to support these students and meet their needs on a daily basis. We do feel that Christ's is a school whose care and vigilance for every young person goes above and beyond.

**Katy Johnson and Sean Morris**

## Easter Experience

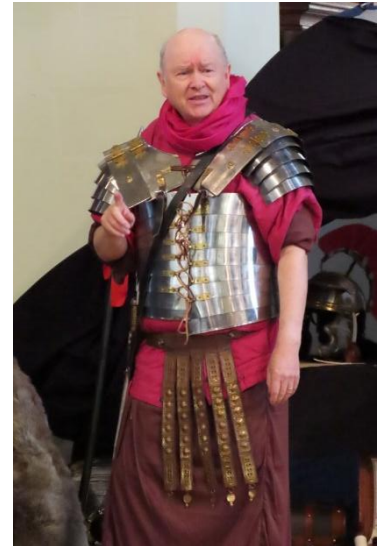


The Easter Experience is a wonderful interactive telling of the Easter story, run in conjunction with [Insight](#), our local Christian schools' work trust who operate across Kingston and Richmond Boroughs, and are supported by local churches, including HTR. It is aimed at year 5 pupils from local primary schools, and intentionally designed to sit well alongside the RE curriculum. We hosted the Easter Experience for the first time in 2024, and were delighted to more than double the number of schools and pupils who attended in 2025. In the end, around 250 pupils from five different schools (East Sheen, Sheen Mount, Darrell, St. Richard's Ham, and our own Holy Trinity) came and heard the Easter story as told by a servant at the Last Supper, Peter the disciple, the Centurion who oversaw Jesus' execution, and Mary at the tomb, who overflowed with excitement as she reported that "Jesus is alive!"

In addition to the dramatic retelling of events, the children also engaged with a wide variety of activities about the Christian faith, and had the opportunity to ask some extraordinarily deep and probing questions about God, the universe, Jesus' life and death, and what it means to be a Christian.

The feedback from staff and other adult helpers was universally positive:

- "... the activities were brilliant. The children were really engaged during the drama..."
- "A very thorough and well organised Easter celebration session for the children"
- "Thank you so much. The children had been learning about forgiveness in our lessons this half term and the theme was like a golden thread throughout the eyewitness performances."



We're so pleased that the Easter Experience was so well received and are hopeful that this will help us in future in continuing to build positive relationships, both with the visiting schools and with the wider work of Insight. Our huge thanks go to Hywel Ling-Davies, the Insight worker for Richmond Borough, who helped us to set up and run the event, to Val and Paul Smith for their amazing dramatic efforts, to everyone who contributed props, pot plants, and time and effort in setting up the various sets, and also those who supported us in prayer over the week.

**Matt and Eils Osgood**

WONDER Zone  
Scripture Union  
Discovering God's wonderful world

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Holy Trinity's Summer Holiday Club is happening on: Tues 26th - Fri 29th Aug 2025**

For primary-age children  
More details to follow soon

WONDER Zone

## Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) held on 12 May 2024

The 2024 APCM took place within the 10.00 Morning Service on Sunday 12 May 2024. The Service included worship, prayer, a reading and talk as usual and the business items necessary as part of an APCM. In addition, some members were invited to share how God has been at work in various ministry areas of church life over the last year.

Dan Wells (DW) explained that the APCM is two separate meetings, the first concerning the election of Churchwardens and the second the Annual Meeting itself. Voting on the appointment of Wardens involves not only those on our Electoral Roll but also anyone who lives in the parish, emphasising that Wardens serve the whole of our parish and not just those who are part of our church family. DW encouraged everyone to read the Book of Reports which reflects lots of what God has been doing amongst us over the past year and thanked Keith Nurse (KN) for putting the book together.

### Election of Churchwardens by parishioners

William Edwards (Explorers), Steph Patterson (Glow) and Mandie Lambert (Impact) shared how God has been at work in parts of the Children's and Young People's ministry. They gave an overview of what each area provides, underlined the importance of what they do and shared encouraging feedback from some of those who attend.

1. **Minutes of the 2023 meeting** - Approval was proposed by Nicholas Smith, seconded by Helen Grocott and agreed by the meeting with one abstention.
2. **Election of Churchwardens** - Two nominations had been received for the role of Warden for the coming year. James Thornton (JT), proposed by David Ewart and seconded by Sue Jackson, and Keith Nurse (KN), proposed by Graham Bamping and seconded by Liz Morris. Dan expressed his thanks to both Wardens for their support to him personally as well as for all they do for the church. David Ewart (DE) who carries out a variety of supportive tasks, some as part of an informal Deputy Churchwarden role, was willing to be re-elected to this role for another year. DW expressed his gratitude to him for all that he does and a round of applause was given for all.

DW invited KN and Holly Morris (HM) to share from the perspective of a Warden and a PCC member. KN shared his broad perspective through what he observes in church life. He noted how so many give themselves wholeheartedly, both paid and voluntarily, with their time, talents and money to build God's Kingdom at HTR. He acknowledged this vital and huge commitment, most of which goes on behind the scenes, quietly, faithfully and effectively, and he highlighted that this is having an increasing impact on our community at a time when hope is really needed.

HM shared that whilst PCC can be mundane business in nature, she enjoys rising to the challenge of seeing God move in this part of church life. She encouraged others to consider



taking up the role to ensure a variety of perspectives, backgrounds and skills are maintained. She acknowledged that the PCC sometimes has to navigate through controversial and complicated circumstances, however, she admires the grace with which this is carried out compared to the council meetings she sits on in her day job. She read from Proverbs 25:2 and shared her conviction that God is leading the PCC in the tasks set before them.

DW prayed for the PCC and Wardens and the roles God has placed them into. He thanked God for them and their care and concern for the church and for their desire to see the church grow.

KN read from Luke 10:38-42 and DW invited Sean Morris (SM) to come and share about Life groups. SM encouraged others to join a Life group if they are not in one and to take the opportunity in smaller groups to study the word together in more detail, wrestle with parts of scripture together and apply them to our lives and to support one another in prayer.

## Annual Parochial Church Meeting

This part of the meeting was chaired by Dan Wells.

1. **Apologies for absence** - Apologies were received from Karin Boyton, Catherin Tidmarsh, Eils Osgood and Hugh Dunlop.
2. **Minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting** - Approval was proposed by Mark Lambert, seconded by James Thornton and agreed by the meeting.
3. **Electoral Roll** - Dan explained that the Roll reflects the number of adults actively involved in our church, but that it is not the most important or the only measure of health. He explained it is the closest thing we have to church membership and it is revised each year. People can leave or join it at any time. Our previous Roll had 127 members, and this year's also has 127 members (although some have left, and others have joined), 33 of whom are residents in the parish while 94 live outside it. Dan encouraged people to consider joining the Roll if they have been baptised, and if they either live in the Parish or have been worshipping here for six months or more.
4. **Treasurer's Report** - David Ewart shared that he is active in the role of Treasurer and that there are many others contributing to the work involved with our finances. He thanked Thelma Pritchard for her Bookkeeping, Keith Nurse (KN) for managing donations including obtaining the tax reclaim and operating payroll, and Liz Morris and the office team for supporting him in a variety of ways.

He acknowledged that there is a large amount of giving from this church and thanked everyone for their generosity. He thanked God that despite the cost of living crisis, we are continuing to be financially blessed.

David showed a series of slides as follows:

- A graph displaying the annual giving (including legacies) since 2008 to 2023. In 2023 we received £420,000 through giving which is still less than pre-Covid giving in 2019

- A chart that displayed that approximately 82% of the church's income came from giving last year. DE highlighted that the remaining income comes from Church Centre rentals and various other sources including interest payments from our reserves
- A chart which summarised our expenditure into approximately one-third to staff salaries, just under one-third to the diocese (which goes towards the costs of stipends and housing for our Vicar and Associate Vicar) and the remaining amount of just over one-third for outreach giving (including Gift Day), the building and a few other costs. DE noted a larger amount was spent on the building last year to pay for some deep surveys of the building to guide what needs to be done
- A table summarising 2023 income and expenditure with attention drawn to £49,000 that we received last year in reclaimed tax through Gift Aid. DE urged anyone who is giving and eligible to sign up to Gift Aid to speak to KN. He noted that we finished the year with a total net income of £10,000 in our account and the Discretionary Fund
- A table representing the balance sheet with an explanation that the Tangible Fixed Assets amount to £35,000 representing the piano and projector purchases. He noted that we have £1,288,000 invested in reserves which will be a starting point for meaningful work required on the building
- A table representing the budget for 2024 and DE noted that this year's budget contains a deficit of £25,000.

David noted an inaccuracy in the meeting Agenda in the Book of Reports which listed 'audited' instead of 'independently examined' accounts. He invited anyone who would like to inspect the accounts in more detail to view them either on the church website or to ask the Church Office team for a copy. He invited anyone with questions to approach himself, KN or LM after the meeting.

- Approval of the 2023 Accounts was proposed by Tristan Blood, seconded by Mark Lambert and agreed upon by the meeting
- Adoption of the 2024 Budget was proposed by Graham Bamping, seconded by Craig Brown and agreed upon by the meeting.
- Appointment of John Helm as our Independent Examiner was proposed by Mark Lambert, seconded by Nicholas Smith and agreed upon by the meeting.

Dan thanked David and the finance team for their hard work. He thanked God for the financial health and generosity of this church. He prayed that God would help us to be good stewards and that God would give us wisdom.

DW invited Gerry Stride (GS) to share about Prayer Ministry within the church. GS shared that prayer is the fuel that drives the (car) Church and encouraged people to pray, to come and receive prayer and to join the rota to pray for others. She compared praying to tapping into God's power like the power in a cable on a train track. She reminded us of the song 'What a friend we have in Jesus' with the line 'O what peace we often forfeit, because we do not take it to the Lord in prayer'. She reminded us that God can do the impossible and read Exodus 15:11 - 'Who is like you O Lord...'

5. **Election of PCC members** - Dan explained that the trustees of the church are usually elected to serve on the PCC for a three-year term. Dan thanked Barnaby Chapman, Gerry Stride and David Ewart as they end their term of office on the PCC. He explained that this

year we need to elect five representatives, three to serve for three years, one for two years and one for one year. There had been five nominations in advance and Dan invited anyone else who would like to stand to make it known. No one responded. The nominations were:

- Karin Boyton (proposed by Philip Jones and seconded by Keith Nurse)
- Elizabeth Lek (proposed by Liz Morris and seconded by John Hutchison)
- David Ewart (proposed by Cathy Hewett and seconded by Hazel Dunlop)
- Laura Duckwith (proposed by Louise McFerran and seconded by Keith Nurse)
- Joy Toledo-Hardy (proposed by Louise McFerran and seconded by Tristan Blood)

As there were five vacancies and five nominees, they were duly elected.

6. **Any other business** - There was no other business.

**Talk** - Dan Wells

Leading the APCM today is a little strange, since we are giving thanks for the past year and I haven't been here for a quarter of it! If you don't know, from mid-January until mid-April I have been on sabbatical, and I have been back around again for about a month. Sabbaticals are designed to do a number of different things: they are to give a chance for an extended rest, to give space for spiritual refreshment, and to allow the time to learn new things. Often those new things are not directly related to the task of leading a church, but are greatly beneficial nonetheless. For me, I learnt how to use gold leaf to produce illuminated lettering. And I did a course on patisserie techniques which has done nothing at all for my waistline! I am very grateful to you all for giving me the time to enjoy all these things. But I haven't just been painting and baking, and I wanted to take a few moments this morning to share two important spiritual lessons I have been learning over recent months.

One of the other things I have been doing during my sabbatical is taking part in an Emotionally Healthy Leadership course. The lessons I have been reminded of connect very well with what we talked about on Vision Sunday back in January. Then, reflecting on the passage we had read earlier about Mary and her sister Martha, we set a goal for ourselves to be "more Mary, less Martha." Let's look at two ways we can do that:

1. Slow down

A sabbatical forces you to slow down, at least in part. The usual pattern of meetings, discussions and deadlines aren't there for a chunk of time. And that can be quite a shock to the system! Life can be overwhelmingly busy a lot of the time. There are innumerable things to do, and the list never seems to get any smaller. Which is why Martha is such a relatable character in this story. We have these two contrasting women, Mary and Martha, and the way Luke writes it invites us to think about which one we connect with the most. And I don't know about you, but it's always Martha!

Just look at how Luke describes Martha in verse 40: "But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made." And Jesus' assessment of her in verse 41: "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things"

Busy and distracted, worried and upset. These are exactly the things we experience day by day. Martha is a twenty-first century girl living in a first-century world. Like Martha, we need to slow down. If that is true for us as individuals, it is also true for us as a church. We are a busy church with lots going on. It's one of the first things people notice when they visit us. We wear that busyness as a badge of honour. But did Jesus call us to be busy, or call us to be his disciples? Busyness can be good, and the things we are busy with are good things. It's one of the reasons why it can be difficult to slow down as a church. There are so many good things we could be doing. Martha knew that well. She was busy and distracted by the things that had to be done. But Jesus reminds her that there is really only one thing that truly has to be done. And that leads us to the second lesson: to choose better.

## 2. Choose better

The heart of this Bible passage is the contrast between Mary and Martha. Jesus tells us the fundamental difference between them: Mary chose what is better. That is, Mary chose Jesus.

Martha, on the other hand, is someone who is in the presence of Jesus but chooses something other than Jesus. She chooses busyness, preparations, her to do list above the living God in her living room.

Don't you find that extraordinary? Jesus is right before her, but Jesus is not her priority. I don't think I'm reading too much into the story, because we see it in her responses. "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself?" Telling God what to do is a sure sign that something probably isn't quite right! She is angry and frustrated that Mary has chosen Jesus over her and over the work that needs to be done. Perhaps there were preparations that needed to be made, otherwise people would have nothing to eat and nowhere to sleep. But if Martha has chosen Jesus, she would have been glad to allow her sister time with the Lord, even if she served him in practical preparations. Martha chose busyness over Jesus. But I can't be too hard on poor Martha, because to be honest I do the same.

As someone involved in church work, a sabbatical forces you to stop. No more pastoral conversations, no more mission planning, no more sermon writing. Which is lovely in lots of ways. But it also forces you to ask: who am I when I stop all of these things? Is my identity firmly rooted in Jesus, or is it defined by what I do? If I can no longer do things for God, am I content simply to be with God? Our challenge as a church is not to do more things, but to ensure we are doing the best things. To avoid the trap of busyness that actually distracts us from Jesus himself. To, frankly, be more Mary and less Martha!

This is not an overnight, quick fix programme to implement or course to run. That would be to fall into the trap of busyness again. But is a long-term commitment to set our eyes on Jesus and choose him, knowing him, walking with him, growing deeper with him. Will we commit to that, not just for the next year, but for all the years God gives to us?

Dan closed the meeting by leading the congregation through a prayer of dedication from the screen.



Holy Trinity Church Centre  
Sheen Park  
Richmond  
TW9 1UP

[www.htrichmond.org.uk](http://www.htrichmond.org.uk)  
[office@htrichmond.org.uk](mailto:office@htrichmond.org.uk)

020 8404 1112  
Registered Charity 1129640