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# St John the Evangelist, Old Coulsdon

*Annual Report*  
*January to December 2022*



# Annual report for 2022

## Introduction

The mission statement of St John's is 'Helping people to meet Jesus'. We believe that Jesus came to bring life in all its fullness, and that this is to the benefit of all people. As a church we can help people experience that life through our gathered worship, our friendship and our loving service. To guide us in planning our mission we use the framework of the Five Marks of Mission:

### 1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

- a. This is achieved through our gathered worship, evangelism and other forms of communication.

#### *Achievements*

During 2022 the full range of church activities resumed, following the coronavirus pandemic. The service of holy communion on Thursdays saw the biggest percentage growth of any of our services, averaging attendance of 12 to 15. Because of the covid restrictions there was a large backlog of requests for baptism: 41 baptisms took place, 6 weddings, and 13 funerals either in church or at a crematorium.

Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee was marked at the beginning of June, and during the same weekend Pentecost was marked with an outdoor service jointly with Churches Together in Coulsdon.

Plans had been made during 2021 to take a stall at the Old Coulsdon Village Fair in July and give away knitted fish as a symbol of Jesus feeding the 5000. Because of covid restrictions the Fair was cancelled that year, but took place again in July 2022 with large numbers attending.



The church livestreamed the funeral of the late Queen Elizabeth on 19<sup>th</sup> September.

Several people from the community joined us to watch and take part.

After a break of two years because of covid we welcomed three local schools – Keston, Coulsdon C of E, and Oasis Academy – to the church for their pre-Christmas carol services.

### 2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers.

- a. This is achieved through regular teaching at times of worship and in small groups; through preparation for baptism and marriage; through our children's ministry and through occasional courses such as the Alpha Course, and other teaching courses.

### *Achievements*

A dedicated team of 8 volunteers runs our Sunday morning children's group, with simple activities based on the readings for the day. It has sometimes been challenging preparing sessions only to find that no children have turned up, but we are very grateful for the commitment our team have made to this important work.

Baptism and marriage preparation sessions continued. Five young people were prepared to take communion, and two of them were further prepared for confirmation which took place on November 6<sup>th</sup>.



After Easter a group of 15 attended Spring Harvest at Butlins, Minehead.

After three rounds of advertising, the governors of Coulsdon C of E School were pleased to appoint a new head teacher, Paul Garratty, in December. The previous head, Annie Mitchell, had retired in July. The Rector, Paul Roberts, announced in January that he was planning to retire at

the end of August 2023.

### **House Group and Life Group Report 2022**

House Groups & Life Group are flourishing, some even growing as they have bounced back from the challenge of the pandemic. The Groups feel that the courses they have studied have been thought provoking and helpful in understanding God working in their lives, and the lives of Christians around the world. One group studied the Psalms, sharing feelings, and faith, which is one of the strengths of the House Group, opening up a little bit about personal belief and being supportive of each other. One person said: 'I think house groups are valuable as a place where we hold conversations and discussions at a deeper level than usual and a really safe place to share concerns of all kinds.' Another group has been studying 'Evangelism: A Way of Life'. A 'Bring and Share Supper' was a great way to relax together, to pray, and offer support to family and friends, along with situations in the world.

Life Group have been inspired by John McGinley's book, 'Mission Shaped Living: Being Witnesses for Jesus in Our Everyday Lives', with ideas for outreach and evangelism to families, children, and

everyone. All Groups continue to support their chosen charities including, MAP (Mission Aviation Fellowship), Leprosy Mission, Bible Society, and Open Doors UK.

Anthea Fox's group has now concluded after 39 years. At the *House Group and Life Group Leaders' Meeting* we heard about the great age of this group. One lady was 93 and another 101 years old! It has been a lovely group, passionate about the Bible, studying and supporting each other, whilst hearing first hand prayer and action from Anthea's godson who works at the Mission Aviation Fellowship. As Anthea left the meeting we prayed for her, giving thanks for her ministry, and for each person in her group.

*Reverend Sue Thomas*

### 3. To respond to human need by loving service

- a. This is achieved through our regular pastoral care and visiting of those who are sick, frail or housebound, and by our support of local and international charities.

#### *Achievements*

As usual gifts were collected at our Harvest Festival service at the end of September and donated to Croydon Nightwatch and Purley Food Hub.

Other charities and agencies that were supported with donations from our charity fund included:

- Noticeboard for St Peter's Church, St Helier Estate - £726
- Armed Forces Christian Union (Collection on Remembrance Sunday) - £230
- Children's Society (Christingle) £55.50

#### **2022 Report on Pastoral Care and Home Communions.**

In the community of Old Coulsdon, many people are involved informally contacting and caring for members of the church family and other friends, but there is also a more formal ministry as a small group of us take communion to the homes of various parishioners who are no longer able to attend church, often through a lack of mobility.

Gill Gregson visits some elderly ex-church members giving home communion to them.

Sandra Meadowcroft, and myself take communion to others in the parish or in their residential homes. It encourages the sense of still being part of the body of Christ and is greatly valued as a source of comfort and strength to those we visit. During 2022, 61 Home communion services were conducted.

It is such a privilege to share this quiet and worshipful service with people at a time when their health and mobility is reduced, but they are still so rich in faith and full of life's experiences.

*Christine McCutcheon*

#### **2022 Report for the Bereavement Visitors' group**

Our team consists of 6 visitors. We support each other in the service we offer to people who have lost a loved one.

Over several years the number of funerals at St John's has fallen as more people choose a funeral celebrant. During 2022 there were only 6 referrals for relatives living in the parish, to offer them follow up visits by a member of our group. Not all wish to have a visitor. We will also visit anyone in the parish who has lost a loved one, not just the families of those for whom the ministry team have taken funerals.

On the nearest Sunday to All Saints' Day each year we hold a service to remember those who have died. The service is valuable time together, helping to ease the sense of isolation so often present for those who are grieving.

In 2022 The Chaplain at Croydon University Hospital, Rev Andy Dovey, came to spend the morning with us. It was both interesting, and encouraging as we listened and discussed aspects of home visiting. It resulted in us getting lanyards with our names printed so that we looked more official even though we already have leaflets describing our service.



We would welcome anyone who is interested to contact myself or Sheila Bird, to find out more about the group. It is such a privilege and blessing to be alongside people at a time of processing and adjustment.

*Christine McCutcheon*

#### 4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation.

- a. This is achieved through our support of Fairtrade and Tradecraft, and our support of mission agencies such as Open Doors that provide support for persecuted Christians.

##### *Achievements*

Our Assistant Minister, Rev. Sue Thomas, organized a 'Party on the Path' on Pentecost Sunday. A number of activity stations were set up on the church path which helped raise awareness of the persecuted church. This proved very popular with both adults and children.



Monthly prayer meetings were started in the autumn, at which prayers for the persecuted church were a regular feature.

##### **Mothers' Union Report**

Our monthly MU Corporate Communion service continued, reminding us that we share our Christian faith with MU members both here and around the world in prayer and fellowship. Pray, Knit & Chat has continued meeting in the Old Church welcoming new and regular members. Knitted items were donated to the Croydon Refugee Centre.

We continued our support of baptism families, giving flowers and cards at the services, and sending anniversary cards to remind previous families of those special events at St John's. Providing Christian children's books and activity bags in church continued - popular with children at all services.

We hosted a Platinum Jubilee Cream Tea in June, in aid of the MU Summer of Hope Appeal, raising nearly £400 – divided equally between St John's and MU.



For the MU Southwark Diocese Annual Festival Service at Southwark Cathedral in October our Rector, Paul, was invited to lead the MU Choir.

The Café Concert in October attracted a record attendance (80+) and raised £775, again divided between St John's and MU. As a result of our

fundraising this year we were able to donate £500 to the Southwark MU fund 'Away From It All' (AFIA) which provides and organises holidays for families in most need.

We supported St John's Christmas Fair with our Christmas Cake Raffle thanks to Elaine Caines culinary skills.

Our Christmas Tea saw the church filled to capacity with 90 guests and members, enjoying a sumptuous tea and entertained by the choir of Coulsdon C of E School, before Paul led a time of carol singing. It was also a good opportunity offer to present several long service certificates to seven of our members and offer our congratulations  
*Nicy Roberts - Branch Leader*

## 5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

- a. This is achieved through encouragement and teaching about care of the environment, and our participation in the Eco-Church Award programme.

### *Achievements*

The PCC continued to monitor progress towards the Eco-Church Silver Award.

## Statistics

### Baptisms

- Under 1 year: 10
- 1 – 4 years: 25
- 5 – 10 years: 6

### Marriages: 6

### Funerals

- In church: 9
- At crematorium: 4
- Interments: 5

## Fundraising and Social Events

The catering and fundraising committee organized the following events during the church year:

- Quiz Night 26<sup>th</sup> March
- Utopians Unlimited Concert 18<sup>th</sup> June
- Cream Teas at the Village Fair 2<sup>nd</sup> July
- Shuffleboard Evening planned for September was cancelled following the death of HM Queen Elizabeth
- Christmas Fair 12<sup>th</sup> November
- Quiz Night 9<sup>th</sup> December



## Fabric Report

The year under review had moved out of covid restrictions, however, parishioners were still wary of returning to regular Church attendance, preferring to join the services using the live-stream link.

### Church:

Within the Church, the roof alarm system underwent its annual servicing, the annual Gas Safety check was done together with the checking and servicing of the fire extinguishers in addition to the 5 yearly electrical inspection. The testing of the lightning protection system was carried out, this is on a 15 month regular cycle.

New emergency lights have been fitted in the Church.

We recruited a new Church cleaner who has also taken over cleaning the Parish Hall.

Two severe winter storms caused many shingles to fall off the Spire. On further inspection and discussion with our Architect, it appears that repairs are required within the Bell chamber before the Spire can be rebuilt and re-shingled. A Building Restoration group has been set up to facilitate fund-raising for these repairs.

We await the result of the Faculty for the repairs to the spire which was submitted earlier this year.

On Saturday 11 March we held an Open Day which was attended by many parishioners, friends who had moved away and many people interested to see what we are proposing for the works to the spire and what we do! The Rector gave two tours of the church which were both very well attended and appreciated. Many children enjoyed the activities that we had organized. We were fortunate with good weather. It started to rain just as we were locking up.

The soak-away drains require constant attention. Every year the gutters, gullies and downpipes are cleared.

In the Churchyard itself, a small team meet regularly on the first Saturday of the month to carry out any maintenance; grass cutting, strimming around the headstones, edging the paths and just for fun—keeping the soak-away along the west side of the Church clear from debris!!! A good opportunity for socializing plus exercising those muscles.

This year, the box-moth paid us a visit which left the Church gardens looking very bare. The hedges have recovered and we await their next visit.

### Parish Hall

Work at the Parish Hall was primarily of a basic maintenance nature with gas and electrical safety checks, fire extinguisher testing and gutter clearance. The trees on the MOD side of the Hall were cut back as there was considerable overhang onto the Hall roof.

Various splits in the wooden floor were repaired.

### Summary

The PCC attempts to keep on top of all maintenance issues but are hampered by lack of funds. We are grateful for the work of volunteers and especially for the help given to us by a number of trusted local contractors. Together, and with God's help, we continue to keep our buildings safe and looking good.

Gill Thaxter  
Ralph Goodwin  
Churchwardens.

## PCC Report

The PCC met four times during 2022. The main items for discussion were as follows:

### **20<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

- The Safeguarding officers completed the leadership safeguarding training and highly recommend it.
- Mission Action Plan was reviewed to include a new Alpha course, Children's and families' minister, and the launching of Open Doors UK's World Watch list in 2022.
- Eco-Church Silver Award requirements were discussed.
- Finance Update. The deficit was not as much as expected due to a reduction in the Parish Pledge for 2021. The Pledge for 2022 was modestly increased.
- Buildings Report on various maintenance issues. The Quinquennial inspection had taken place; and funds were agreed to refix and secure the memorial stone in the churchyard.
- The rector updated on latest C of E covid regulations. People to continue to wear masks in church.

### **22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022**

- The audited Financial Accounts were approved and signed off.
- Following the storms, further damage to the spire was reported. Specifications of works to be drafted to go out to tender. Fund raising campaigns were discussed to include private and government orgs.



- Giving to Mission - A transfer of £1,500 from the General fund to the Mission and Charities fund was approved. A donation of £726 was made to St Peter's church to replace their dilapidated noticeboard.
- There had been no response to the advertisement for a Young person/children's minister.  
The Rector is reviewing the service times and the transition between the two Sunday services so as to bring the two services together, in order to encourage more children to attend Sunday School.
- The list of bank account signatories was updated. Gill Thaxter was added.
- Restoration of the Communion Cup at Holy Communion was discussed following Covid restrictions.

### **29<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

- Appointment of the following officers: Gill Thaxter as Vice Chair; Roxanne Moore as Secretary; Lynn Howell as Treasurer, and Jo Udell as Electoral Roll Officer
- Appointment of Foundation Governors to Coulsdon C of E Primary School  
Adrian Deller was re-appointed. Richard Shakespeare and Rachel Williams were newly appointed.
- It was decided not to appoint a Youth Minister for now and divert related funds to the General Fund.
- Finance Report – Funds for the spire project could be made available from the Fabric Reserve Fund (20K) and Rent Fund (20K) and a further £38,512 from the Restricted Fabric Reserve Fund.
- Building Report – A structural engineer was engaged to carry out an inspection of the Spire's internal timbers with a view to erect scaffolding for the spire repairs.
- A leaflet with a QR code to allow donations for the Spire repairs to be available at the village fair.

### **15<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

- Appointments – Jeff Locke was appointed as the elected member of the Standing Committee.
- The Parish Safeguarding Officer Report was presented. A new Safeguarding Policy promoting a safer Church was agreed and signed by the Rector.
- The Financial Report was presented. The Reserves policy was discussed and it was recommended that a balance of £10K should be kept. Policy to be reviewed after energy costs are known.
- It was agreed to increase the Parish Support Fund by 2%
- Mission and Charity Fund recipients suggested were: The children's Society and Open Doors UK.
- Church hall hire charges to be increased from January 2023
- The Building Report was presented. Quotes for the Spire works had been received from the Quantity Surveyor. The average cost is approximately £235,000

## PCC Membership for 2022

Rev Paul Roberts	Rector/ Chair
Rev Sue Thomas	Assistant Priest
Lynn Howell	Treasurer
Gill Thaxter	Churchwarden/Vice Chair
Ralph Goodwin	Churchwarden
Christine McCutcheon	Reader/Deanery Synod Rep
Trevor Meadowcroft	Deanery Synod Rep
Roxanne Moore	Secretary
Trudy Baker	Lay member
Sue Christian	Lay member
Charlotte Best	Lay member
Jeff Locke	Lay member

## Croydon South Deanery Synod 2022-23

As is my usual practice, for completeness this report covers the first Synod meeting in 2023, as well as all the meetings in 2022.

After two years of disruption, we were able to hold all of our 2022 meetings on a “face-to-face” basis.

The main theme of our 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022 meeting, at Christ Church was “How We Can Find Strength in Difficult Times” This was led by Rev Paul Roberts (Area Dean) and featured group discussions; reflections by Rev Doug McHardie; Prayer Stations devised by Rev Justine Middlemiss; a session on Praying in Solitudes led by Rev Lisa Fairman-Brown; and private prayer opportunities.

On 8<sup>th</sup> June at St Andrew’s, we welcomed Rev Dr Tim Astin, Episcopal Area Environmental Adviser. Tim Talked about Care for Creation (one of the Five Marks of Mission) and how churches could pursue that, in the context of the Church of England’s general aim of being carbon neutral by 2030. The focus was on the practical – what we could actually do to promote Care for Creation, which might often involve taking small steps first and building up to bigger issues.

The 11<sup>th</sup> October meeting was held at St Mark’s, Woodcote. The key theme was Inclusive Church – How to Make Church Worship and Activities Accessible. Rev Fiona Weaver and members of the St Mark’s and St Swithun’s teams gave us fascinating examples of how they were making church accessible, focusing on the Dementia Café at St Mark’s and St Swithun’s work with Carlen House, a care home for adults with a variety of special needs. A lot of practical examples and material was made available.

Synod also elected Mr Gerry Daley (St Andrew's) to the Deanery Leadership Team, in place of Mr Peter Burton (also St Andrew's) who had been compelled to resign for health reasons. We are very grateful to Peter for his years of service, and to Gerry for taking on the role.

The first meeting of 2023, and the last of the 2020-23 triennium, was held at All Saints', Kenley on 9<sup>th</sup> February. Jack Swan, Community Organizer for Croydon Citizens, and Alex Enaharo (St Luke's, Woodside) gave us a very challenging and thought-provoking presentation on moving on from the "charity of mercy" (ie dealing with the symptoms of problems) to the "charity of justice" (tackling their root causes). This is the distinctive theme of Citizens UK, of which Croydon Citizens is the local association. Examples were given of work in Croydon North Deanery and in mental health. We need to give deep consideration to the implications for the southern part of the Borough of Croydon.

Also in February we marked Rev Paul Roberts' last Synod as Area Dean, with a reception kindly organized by Rev Justine Middlemiss and the All Saints' team. Paul is standing down as Area Dean at Easter, prior to retirement from full-time ministry in September. Our lay Chair, Indrani Balachandran, is also standing down at the end of the triennium but, sadly, was unable to be with us at the Synod meeting. We are very grateful to Paul and Indrani for their leadership, particularly in the last few, very difficult, years.

This year's APCMs are due to elect members of Synod's House of Laity for the 2023-26 triennium. We do hope people will be minded to stand for election, particularly as we ended the 2020-23 triennium with a significant number of vacancies. The diocese has published a leaflet giving information about Synod membership – featuring a photograph of one of our sessions and a quotation from Indrani – which is available in all churches.

*Chris Babbs*  
*Secretary, Croydon South Deanery Synod*