

ST Thomas The Apostle Finsbury Park, Annual Report 2018

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VICAR'S REPORT 2018

Quite a few people have been coming up to me and asking when I am going to retire! I'm trying not to take this in the wrong way, but we have undoubtedly reached the pre-retirement stage of my time at St Thomas'.

One of the main consequences of this is that other people must now start to take responsibility for things, especially if they are to be sustained or going to bear fruit after my departure. I'm delighted to report that this has already been happening to an extent. It has always been true of the parish finances, but the feasibility study and the restoration of the organ are now in the capable hands of others. The Sunday school is also largely independent of my energy.

All this is to the good, but I'm very aware that much of this is being borne by a relatively small number of people, some of whom are not, like me, getting any younger.

I really hope that over the next two years those of you who have started to worship at St Thomas' more recently will neither see our common life as something for others to provide, nor assume that anyone will be put out if you offer to participate. Obviously it's also important for those who are already volunteering to enrich our life not to give the impression that such tasks are in any way 'theirs'. That's one reason why over 20 years ago we instituted a system of limiting the terms of office both of churchwardens and members of the Parochial Church Council before the Church of England followed our example.

I am a little bit more concerned than usual about our relationship with some of our children. I was delighted that so many of them wanted to be prepared for communion in November. That should encourage all of us, but some of us really have to resist the temptation to expect our children to behave like young adults. No one is really disrupting worship unless I have to stop the service in order to get the situation under control before I can continue.

I used to be of the view that we were deemed to be in good health if the Church trusted us to get on with our ministry and mission in Finsbury Park. This is becoming more difficult as the demands for accountability have increased considerably. The life of a parish priest has changed since I was made vicar in July 1989. Then it was still possible to understand what it meant to be 'stipendiary'. I wasn't being paid to do a 'job'. It wasn't 'work' as commonly understood. I was given a stipend rather than a wage in order to be here and available, encouraging the congregation to be the Body of Christ more palpably in this parish. I'm starting to feel more like a manager and this creates a tension with my sense of vocation. I know why and how this has happened as it relates to the amount of surveillance required in order to counter those who would rubbish anything about the Church, but it is not desirable to be this reactive, despite the failures of the past.

One of my best and oldest friends died just after Christmas, a real intimation of mortality. He and his wife played a game towards the end. Some people have 'bucket lists' of things they want to do before they die. Instead my friend filled his bucket with things he rejoiced that he would never have to do because he was about to die! Of course this included having to live through Brexit, but one of mine would be not having to become more involved in the e-world of modern technology.

I know it will soon be time to retire because I have no inclination to participate in a world of continuous and instant communication. Some might suggest that this will inhibit my ministry. A young woman at the mosque was disappointed when I told her that I didn't use Twitter. I prefer to spend my time in a world where I can be in the physical presence of others, where I can go to shops where people work, preferably nearby, in which I am entertained by people who are creating something here and now...

Stephen Coles

Secretary's Report

The PCC worked with an architect and steering group on plans for the extended use of our buildings. The plans were presented to the congregation, and to the wider community at a fundraising open day; the steering group is now looking into funding and the PCC has commissioned a Community Consultation Team (consisting of PCC members) to undertake a community audit.

Funds are being raised for the restoration of our organ. Approx £36k (including a Cloudesley grant) has been raised so far, and a grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund is being prepared.

An application is being made for a Sustainable Churches grant, to be used for LED lighting and draught-proofing or perhaps for a glazed screen to the Lady Chapel.

An anniversary grant from Cloudesley has been received, for repairs to our church banner and for a new altar cloth.

A Quinquennial Inspection was made by our quinquennial architect; a grant from Cloudesley will be sought to cover the more urgent works identified.

Stewardship is ongoing. The Parish Giving Scheme is in place. The church aims to continue increasing its Common Fund contributions.

A fire risk assessment has been done, and recommendations are being implemented

A safeguarding self-audit was undertaken; the resulting action plan is being implemented.

Several members of the PCC have undergone training in the most recent Data Protection regulations.

Our ALMA link with a parish in Mozambique has come back to life and St Thomas's is raising money for a tuk-tuk for their parish priest.

A pilgrimage has been organised for July / August to the NE of England.

Anne Williams
3rd March 2018

Treasurer's Report

Accounts for the Year ending 31st December 2017.

I wish to give vote of thanks to Jonathan Shattock who has been treasurer for over 10 years and he will be a hard act to follow.

General Fund:

During 2017, our average regular monthly giving was £5622, an increase of 9%. Gift Aid tax returns will add approximately £16,000 to this figure. However, our average monthly income from other sources £851, mainly from the hiring of the hall showed a slight increase of 4.5%.

From the above figures, it is clear that the stewardship campaign has made a significant effect on our finances. But it must be borne in mind that we are relying on a subsidy from the Diocese of £14,300 but we have reduced this from £19,900. This is a decrease of 28%.

Overall expenditure has increased due to unforeseen expenses in hall floor, and the purchase of new hymnals for example. However, it should be borne in mind that we maybe on track to paying our full contribution to the Common Fund in 2022, if the giving increases at the present rate. We finished the year with a surplus of £9,086.

Building Fund:

During 2017 we repaid £7,500 loan from Diocesan Fund. We have raised funds for the organ restoration through the musical evening in July, 'bucket shake' during an Arsenal matches, and a Church Open Day in October.

Restricted Funds: (Collections for charities etc)

Total amount collected and sent amounted to over £2,050 for charities , including Cold Weather Shelter, UNICEF, (Syria), MAP and the Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants.

Reserves:

Our general fund reserves stand at £45,587 and the building fund reserve £10,260.

Sandra Hall

Annual Accounts

St. Thomas the apostle, Finsbury Park
Income and expenditure account
for the year to 31st December 2017

	General Funds Actual 2017 £	Building Fund Actual 2017 £	Restricted Funds Actual 2017 £	TOTAL 2017 £	General Funds Budget 2017 £	General Funds Forecast 2017 £	General Funds Projection 2018 £
Planned Giving							
Monthly Standing orders	60,373	-	-	60,373	56,000	58,000	60,000
Weekly Envelopes	1,110	-	-	1,110	1,250	1,250	1,000
General Collections (Plate)	4,329	-	-	4,329	4,000	4,000	4,000
Collections for Organ Fund	-	-	9,376	9,376	-	-	-
Collections for Charities	-	-	4,915	4,915	-	-	-
Collections - Other	-	-	1,683	1,683	-	-	-
Other Giving	1,682	1,141	-	2,733	1,500	1,500	1,500
Gift Aid Tax Reclaims	16,000	-	-	16,000	14,000	16,000	16,500
	<u>83,464</u>	<u>1,141</u>	<u>15,944</u>	<u>100,549</u>	<u>76,750</u>	<u>80,750</u>	<u>83,000</u>
Other Income							
Hire of Church	410	-	-	410	-	500	-
Hire of Church Hall	19,176	-	-	19,176	18,000	18,500	18,500
Candles/Fees to PCC etc	1,694	-	-	1,694	1,500	1,750	1,750
	<u>21,270</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>21,270</u>	<u>19,500</u>	<u>20,750</u>	<u>20,250</u>
Grant Income							
Richard Cloudeley Charity	-	14,160	-	14,160	-	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>14,160</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>14,160</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Subsidy							
From other Parishes in our Diocese	14,300	-	-	14,300	20,300	14,300	10,000
	<u>14,300</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>14,300</u>	<u>20,300</u>	<u>14,300</u>	<u>10,000</u>
TOTAL INCOME	<u>119,033</u>	<u>15,301</u>	<u>15,944</u>	<u>150,278</u>	<u>116,550</u>	<u>115,800</u>	<u>113,250</u>
The Ministry							
Clergy Expenses	3,207	-	-	3,207	3,000	3,000	3,000
Mission	313	-	-	313	-	-	-
Voyage Maintenance	-	-	-	-	1,500	1,500	-
	<u>3,520</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,520</u>	<u>4,500</u>	<u>4,500</u>	<u>3,000</u>
The Church							
Gas & Electricity	5,276	-	-	5,276	4,600	5,300	5,500
Facilities (water rates, towels etc)	844	-	-	844	800	800	800
Cleaner	2,900	-	-	2,900	2,750	2,800	2,800
Church Insurance	4,668	-	-	4,668	4,750	4,750	4,750
Minor Repairs	2,528	-	-	2,528	3,500	2,500	2,500
Hall Floor less playgroup contribution	1,734	-	-	1,734	4,000	1,750	-
Building Works	-	14,160	-	14,160	-	-	-
	<u>17,886</u>	<u>14,160</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>32,110</u>	<u>20,400</u>	<u>17,300</u>	<u>16,350</u>
Services							
Vestry, Altar & Candles	2,600	-	-	2,600	2,500	2,250	2,500
Organist, Choir & Music	4,229	-	-	4,229	3,600	4,250	4,000
Purchase of 150 new hymnals	1,505	-	-	1,505	1,400	1,400	-
Weekly Magazine	1,294	-	-	1,294	1,250	1,250	1,500
	<u>9,628</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,628</u>	<u>8,750</u>	<u>9,150</u>	<u>8,000</u>
Other Ordinary Expenditure							
Miscellaneous	300	-	-	300	1,150	2,000	1,500
	<u>300</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>1,150</u>	<u>2,000</u>	<u>1,500</u>
Payments Outside the Parish							
Diocese Fair Shares	78,300	-	-	78,300	78,300	78,300	80,500
National Churches Trust	250	-	-	250	250	250	250
Charities	-	-	7,313	7,313	-	-	-
	<u>78,550</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,313</u>	<u>85,863</u>	<u>78,550</u>	<u>78,550</u>	<u>80,750</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>109,947</u>	<u>14,160</u>	<u>7,313</u>	<u>131,420</u>	<u>113,350</u>	<u>112,100</u>	<u>109,700</u>
Surplus to 31st Dec 17	<u>9,086</u>	<u>1,141</u>	<u>8,631</u>	<u>18,858</u>	<u>3,200</u>	<u>3,700</u>	<u>3,550</u>
Reserves billed @ 1st Jan 17	<u>36,501</u>	<u>9,121</u>	<u>3,748</u>	<u>49,370</u>			
Reserves billed @ 31st Dec 17	<u>45,587</u>	<u>10,262</u>	<u>12,379</u>	<u>68,228</u>			

St. Thomas the apostle, Finsbury Park

Balance Sheet At 31st December 2017	December 2017 £
Cash at bank and in Hand	
Deposit Account	268
Current Account	32,361
London Credit Union Deposit	5,000
Cash in hand	600
Debtors	
Unclaimed Gift Aid	30,000
Total Assets	<u>68,229</u>
Liabilities	
Accrued Expenditure	-
Net Assets	<u><u>68,229</u></u>
Represented by	
General Reserves	45,587
Restricted Reserves:	
: Building Fund	10,262
: Other - see below	12,379
	<u>68,229</u>

Restricted Funds 2017	b/f Jan 17	Inc. 2017	Due 2017	Paid 2017	Adjust	Outstanding
Cold weather shelter	592	506	1,098	1,098		0
Islington Centre for Refugees	583	482	1,065	1,065		0
Christian Aid	251	0	251	251		0
UNICEF	0	357	357	357		0
LDF Fees	96	490	586	624	-38	0
Lent collection	0	490	490	490		0
Cold Weather Shelter	0	506				0
Summer Outing	0	1,163	1,163	1,136	27	0
Discretionary	833	1,610	2,443	2,116		327
Organ Fund	1,394	9,376	10,770			10,770
MAP	0	607	607	176		431
Mozambique	0	852	852			852
Total	3,748	16,438	19,681	7,313	-11	12,379

Independent Examiners Report

ST THOMAS'S CHURCH: INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31 December 2017.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act), and that an independent examination is needed instead.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

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

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Alex Sargent
ACA
March 12, 2018

Electoral Roll Report

The Roll was revised between Sundays 18 February and 11 March.

25 names were removed from the Roll.

20 names were added to the Roll.

The total now on the Roll is 150.

Anne Lambourne
Electoral Roll Officer
18 March 2018

Report on the Deanery Synod

The Deanery Synod met three times during the year since the last Annual Parish Meeting. The meetings were:

Date	Venue	Attendance
6 th June	St James's, Prebend Street	RH, JI, MS
22 nd November	St Andrew's, Thornhill Sq	JI
15 th March	St Mark's, Moray Road	None

The main items discussed over the year were:

Fossil Fuel Disinvestment:

The Synod passed a motion last year calling for National Church Institutions to disinvest from companies that were involved in the extraction of fossil fuels. The June meeting followed up on this with a presentation from Brian Cuthbertson, Head of Environment and Sustainability in the Diocese of London to help us understand the broader context of where our motion sits in relation to other motions in the Church of England and how we can best progress the motion with wisdom and sensitivity.

Following this meeting a revised motion that was more aligned with a motion from the Diocese of Oxford was adopted by the Deanery Synod at the November meeting. This was presented to the London Diocese Synod on 21st February but some strong voices disagree with this option arguing that disinvestment equals retreat from responsibility and they persuaded the Synod to adjourn the debate until after the national investment bodies have reported to general synod in July.

At present the revised Islington motion is still very much alive. The Bishops Council meets on the May 16th to decide whether the adjourned motion should be on the agenda for the London Synod in July or in the autumn.

Progress depends on gaining additional support to take this forward. That it has made this much progress is largely down to the energy of David Allen, who reminded the meeting that caring for God's creation is one of the Five Marks of Mission.

Cloudesley Charity: The November meeting had a presentation on the Richard Cloudesley Charity, both in terms of its general work and a focus on the 500th anniversary commemoration. The benefits to St Thomas's will be covered in other reports but in terms of the wider impact to the Deanery there are £1 million additional grants. These comprise:

- £5,000 to each church, with few strings attached
- Environmental audits for each church following which there are two funding streams:
 - Small, fast track awards of up to £10,000 and
 - Larger awards of £50,000 for the projects with the most environmental impact
 - a series of events across the Diocese and it is also involved in the Stepney Eco Conference on 28th April.

The November meeting also saw the election of the second Deanery Synod representative to the Cloudesley trustees. In contrast to Michael Maunsell's election at the June meeting this was a contested vote and Sam Prabhu Rubandhas was elected.

Mapping Exercise: Bishop Ric Thorpe has been overseeing church planting and growth within the London Diocese and enabling and supporting other dioceses to explore church planting. He spoke of Islington's long history of church planting, and the importance of this is continuing over the next few decades. He explained the continuing efforts to connect with those in our deaneries who we are currently not reaching. There were three groups, each looking at the map of their areas (North, South and Central Islington deanery) and marking out the places where they feel that people are not being reached and the initiatives and groups of people who were in the different areas.

Other Business: June was the last meeting with Jonathan Brewster as Area Dean before he left to become Canon Treasurer at St Paul's Cathedral. The Synod thanked him for his work and prayed for him in his new

ministry. Jonathan was replaced by Jess Swift, who has prioritised collaboration between churches and acknowledged the huge pressure that there is on churches about how we 'do church' and how we grow and develop, but was confident that if we support each other we would be able to face the challenges to come.

The quadrennial elections of the lay officers and to the standing committee were held at the November meetings:

- Gillian Courtnell as Lay Chair
- Jules Soanes as Secretary
- Fola Feleti as the Treasurer and
- Vicki Davies and Heather Wood as standing committee members.
- The clergy separately elected:
 - Jess Swift (Chair and Area Dean)
 - David Allen (Sub-dean)
 - David Bird (Cloudesley and Tollington Parish)
 - Tamsin Merchant (St Mary Hornsey Rise)

Rowan Howard, Marcia Sinclair and John Irwin.

Church Wardens Report.

Firstly, a big thank you to Anne Rose, who completed her term as church warden in 2017. Anne was a much-loved church warden and continues to serve St Thomas' in several capacities. A warm welcome to Heather Pascall who has assumed the role of church warden and has settled into her duties very well.

Another big thank you to Malcom Marjoram and Iain McSeveny for their excellent work in ensuring the smooth running of the church, we appreciate their time and dedication

A key initiative of the past year has been the review of our fire procedures following a risk assessment performed by an external assessor. We continue to work through the findings in a logical fashion, addressing high priority findings first. A specific example, we have been advised to remove the smoke detectors in the hall as a manual system and additional call points is sufficient. We continue to work with fire contractors and have also kept the play group informed.

Engagement with the deanery, we met our fellow church wardens in the Stepney area on several occasions, most recently at a reception hosted by Bishop Adrian during the Christmas season, it was a good opportunity to share experiences.

Fixture and fittings:

- Gifted a painting of Noah's ark which we intent to install in the church hall where the alarm box is currently housed (alarm box to be removed following our fire risk assessment).
- The embroidery outer garment over the priestly robe, early example of machine embroidery, has been repaired by embroiderers at St Paul's Cathedral, who are also going to repair the banner of St Thomas.
- Acquired a black frontal with hangings for Lectern and Pulpit.
- Investigating either repairing or replacing altar frontal for Sacred Heart and Blessed Virgin Mary.

Justice Konneh, Heather Pascall

Feasibility study report

With the benefit of a generous grant from Richard Cloudesley's Charity, we have been undertaking a feasibility study to assess the potential, and costs, of developing our "ancillary spaces" (the hall and the rooms beyond the kitchen, and our porch spaces).

The grant has enabled us to:

- appoint Malcolm Fryer, Architects, to lead the architectural side of the process,
- commission a fully researched history of our Grade 2 listed buildings,
- obtain a full measured survey of our buildings, and
- have the proposals put forward by Malcolm Fryer costed.

A steering group started the study in May 2016, and presented the proposals to the Congregation in October 2017. This was followed by an initial presentation to the local community at an Open Day in November 2017. In addition to the work we have done with the architect, we have also met with the Diocesan fund raising team and other people with experience in this field.

The proposals are a response to our Mission Statement and are very exciting: they could be transformational for the use of our buildings both on Sundays and the rest of the week. The focus has been on the independent use of various parts of the buildings so that we have 3 independent areas: Church, hall and a third space. The proposals could be phased. They include:

- re-configuring the office space at the back of the Church to provide loos and a tea point,
- extending the porch to the hall for more loos and storage,
- knocking the current loos and kitchen into one extended kitchen
- re-developing the area beyond the kitchen to create a covered corridor and new multi-purpose room
- turning the boiler room area into an additional meeting space.

Our next steps are to continue to engage with the local community, carrying out a Community Audit, and to meet with the Playgroup to get feedback on the proposals.

At the moment, a number of the steering group are busy with another project, applying for Cloudesley anniversary sustainability grants, which have a deadline of the end of March. So, for the moment, we have paused the "next steps" for the feasibility study, but these will be picked up again shortly.

Rowan Howard and Kirsten Haggart

March 2018

St. Thomas' Servers Report

Sadly Indigo has had to leave us due to both personal and school commitments, but are grateful for him being replaced by Chris Higgins, Carol Clark and the Ansah family, brothers Jeremiah, Justin and sister Destiny. A number of Servers became Members/ Companions of The Company of Servers, London Chapter. The Chapter met 4 times last year and addressed topics of particular relevance to all those who serve at the altar. The London Chapter is now 7 years old and its parent, The National Company, was established in the spring of 2009. The principal base is located in the London Diocese, St Saviour's Church, Pimlico, which acts as a focus and a 'home' for the membership. Father Matthew Catterick is the Chapter's Chaplain.

Events:

In April, a special joint meeting was organised between the London Chapter and the Southwark Diocese. Both Chapters came together to learn from each other and network creating a new friendship in partnership across the River Thames. In early November the collaboration continued with a joint Chapter event at Southwark Cathedral which involved a full day event with a Servers Quiz, and informative and entertaining tour of the Cathedral.

Anyone over the age of 7 can be a server as long as they have been baptised and are receiving communion. Training is provided. We welcome and encourage new servers.

Sandra Hall

Open Church Report

In the past two years' reports we asked if anyone would be willing to join the rota for opening church, and we were glad to welcome Elaine, who has been helping on Wednesdays.

As it stands at the moment several of us (mostly regular, one or two occasionally) are on our continuing rota to keep the church open for visitors during the week, with various opening hours, which currently are Tuesday mornings, Wednesday afternoons, Thursday afternoons and Saturday mornings – entrance via the front door except on Thursdays, when entrance is via the hall while Tea at St Thomas's is happening for those free during the day.

As stated before, although we enjoy doing this it is also worth noting that we are obliged to have the church open for a number of hours each week because of the grants we get from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other bodies. It is a very worthwhile thing to do anyway, as we feel that the impression an empty church gives out is not one we would like to give. In fact visitors have commented that they were very grateful to find a welcoming presence in the church, who could offer information, point out various things and just generally be a friendly face.

However, seeing that this is an obligation we need to respect, it has now got to the point where we **urgently need** some other volunteers to join the rota. Some of us have been doing this continuously for **9 years**, and it is becoming rather more than a bit of a strain, especially in cold weather, which is having a negative effect on our health, as we are getting older and creakier! Also, because of work and family commitments Elaine is no longer able to help out on Wednesdays, so we do need others to join us, especially in the winter months, as otherwise we shall have to cancel the Wednesday opening.

If we do not get anyone else to join us then it could have serious repercussions on our ability to apply for grants, which in turn will have an impact on resources and our future life together, especially now as we continue with the feasibility study to improve our facilities and buildings for the benefit of ourselves and our local community. We do not want to have to stop opening the church, and if anyone is free for a few hours during the week we do urge you to think about helping out.

The open hours above do not have to be rigidly adhered to, so if you might be interested but cannot do particular days we would still like you to consider it. If you would like to know more please speak to one of us, or to Stephen.

Anne Rose, Malcolm Marjoram, Elaine Christian and Emerald Rabbatts

Monday Night Movies: film night report March 2018

We have continued to have successful film night seasons on Monday evenings at 7pm for 7.30pm in the hall, or occasionally in the church during the summer (because of the lighter evenings). These are open to all, are free of charge (basket for donations available), and we have some - often substantial! - refreshments together to start the evening off.

From a slight decrease in numbers over the winter (which I put down to the cold and wet weather) we are seeing numbers picking up again, and we have had a couple of new people join us, who I hope will become regular moviegoers. As always the evenings are open to everyone.

This past Christmas we enjoyed the comedy *Home Alone*, and during the year we saw a range of films including *Lost Boys* and *The Omen* during the autumn, as well as the 1940s adventure *The Wicked Lady* (featuring Margaret Lockwood and James Mason) and biopic *Florence Foster Jenkins* (featuring Meryl Streep and Hugh Grant) earlier in the year.

By the time you read this we will have had two Hollywood biopics of artists based on novels by Irving Stone, *The Agony & the Ecstasy* (Michelangelo) and *Lust for Life* (Vincent van Gogh). We then had two films for Lent, and now after Easter we are in the middle of a season of two films set in futuristic dystopian worlds. To round off the early summer in May/June we are showing two classic British comedies.

As mentioned above, although movie nights are free of charge we have a basket available for voluntary donations, and I am very pleased to say that at the end of each 'term' I am able to hand over a cheque to Stav to put into the Organ Fund, which averages around £50 each time.

We are always happy to welcome new moviegoers, so please drop in and join us. Posters are put in the hall and on the blue display board at the back of the church advertising the next film, as well as notices in the weekly church bulletin and seasonal circulars. We look forward to seeing you!

Anne Rose

Organ fundraising team report, March 2018

The team have so far managed to raise around £37,000 since last year's APCM. This includes the Cloudesley grant, the rest being raised from a variety of fundraising events so far:

- A midsummer music night concert, showcasing local musicians and singers, and the 2015 finalist of 'Britain's Got Talent', stage magician Jamie Raven who ended the evening. (All the children were on the edge of their seats.)
- A church open day in November, including tours of the organ and back rooms, with homemade produce, vintage clothing and second-hand books, DVDs and bric-a-brac for sale. Children's activities, arts and crafts and face & nail painting were also available.
- Regular church film nights, with all donations from Monday Night Movies going to the fund.
- 'Bucket shaking' outside the church. We have already carried out two bucket shakes to local Arsenal football fans. A further bucket shake is being planned before the end of the football season as well as a pre-Christmas one.

Further fundraising ideas for this year include:

- Sponsoring parts of the organ. A key, a note or a pipe...
- Sponsored walk/community event to involve local community groups and raise awareness of the history of the organ. * Sponsored 'Hymns & Pimms' singalong.

We are on Facebook (St Thomas the Apostle Finsbury Park), which includes a Just Giving page. Work is also being carried out, principally by Briony, to build a new website from scratch. This will include a special page about the organ.

The Richard Cloudesley charity kindly donated £25,000 and we are progressing a number of other grants.

The current team is Anne Rose, Andrew Greer, Rob Smith, Anthony Dass, Briony Murray and Julie Evans.

Sunday School and Youth Report

Sunday school

1. We continue to have a busy Sunday School and creche, for which we are thankful!
2. Our Sunday school is split into two groups and is led by volunteers. We use the "Roots" materials which are based on the Gospel. Activities vary from discussions to crafts to dramas. We currently have 17 volunteers, although some are ready to take a rest! Rowan Howard is the co-ordinator.
3. The children usually have 3 special projects each year, leading up to all age worship. In the past year these have focussed on the story of the Good Samaritan, and who is our neighbour, Harvest (older children followed a Christian Aid story of a farmer from Malawi affected by drought and floods) and in March, we will be learning about our link parish in Mozambique.
4. Numbers and children attending from week to week vary quite a bit which can be a challenge for planning. We have developed an "expectations" poster and strategies document to help when the groups are large.
5. The creche is "self- service", with parents/carers being required to stay with their children. We have an informal parent-led rota (with 10 families involved) for ensuring that the same structure is followed each week: children hear a simple, usually Bible based story, sing, do crafts and play.

Youth: Events are more ad hoc. Recent events or planned events include:

1. **Musical Youth group:** 2 children got this off to a start and they contributed beautifully to the Advent service. Andrew and Marcia are planning to try Sundays rather than Saturdays.
2. **Film night:** Planned for after half term: date tbc
3. **Sport session:** Marcia, Helena and Antony are taking an interest in getting this off the ground. Marcia aims to fix a meeting with Anthony to think about starting this in the summer term.

Rowan Howard and Marcia Sinclair

19th February 2018

The Angola, London and Mozambique Association (ALMA) Annual Report

ALMA representatives: Sandra Hall, Elaine Christian and Christine Cox.

ALMA Parish Link

In relation to our Link we are now in regular communications from our Link Parish Priest Rogerio Simone of Sts Peter and Paul Thlabane in Muputo, Mozambique, thanks to Wesley Arruda, who translates the Portuguese into English and vice versa. It has transpired that the parish would like our support in raising funds for a number of projects: restoration of the house (vicarage), the Well and a Tuk Tuk. It was agreed that we would support them the parish in Lebombo in buying a Tuk Tuk so that Father Rogerio can travel more easily to and around the parish.

Highlights from ALMA meetings in 2017.

- The first ever pilgrimage from a partner diocese to London: 23 pilgrims from Lebombo Diocese with their Bishop Carlos Matsinhe in July
- At the ALMA Sunday Service the pilgrims presented Bishop Rob with the Lebombo cross, which is now on display in London Diocesan House.
- There is a ALMA You Tube Channel which records videos taken during the pilgrimage.
- At our October ALMA meeting Bishop Rob shared his visit to Lebombo and Niassa in April for Bishop Vicente's enthronement in Lichinga .
- The churchwardens from St. James' Piccadilly presented Father Alfredo Nhabetse, priest of Nhamavila parish zone (Lebombo) and Ivan Macie ALMA Link officer in Lebombo with disused vestments. Father Alfredo and Ivan were visiting Father Alfredo's link parish, St Paul's Knightsbridge, London.

Your Representatives

Singing Group

It's been another good year for the Singing Group. We sang at several occasions in church:

- Patronal Festival
- Dedication Festival
- Advent Sundays (x2)
- Epiphany

And, coming up, we are currently rehearsing for Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

At Christmas time we reduced our singing commitments significantly, firstly by not singing at the turning on of the Christmas tree lights at the old Arsenal ground. We hadn't raised much money for the church whilst doing it in previous years so we decided against it. However it was unfortunate that the carol singing at the station didn't come off as we did want to do that!

The Singing Group has been kept busy in other ways though: we led an audience sing-along during the fundraising evening for the organ, singing 'Jerusalem' in almost Proms style; and leading up to Christmas time members helped with getting the new carol booklet typed, proofed and printed.

We have fluctuated in members but have approx. 6-7 members singing weekly. Up until Christmas we did have more men but this has dipped again. A new regular face in the altos has been most welcome (Nina) and another new voice (Kathy) has joined too. Most recently we endured the snow and had a welcome sing in the hall (with the heaters!) as most of us had been snowed in that day.

I am extremely thankful to the core of people who meet every week, as above, come snow or shine. They are integral to the worship in St. Thomas' and make my role much easier on a Sunday morning. As a group they really enjoy learning new hymns and music and challenging themselves. They are very dedicated, and I appreciate it greatly.

The Singing Group continues to meet every Thursday in the church, 7.30 – 9pm. All welcome.

Andrew Greer

Finsbury Park Sisters Report

April 2017 – March 2018

The Finsbury Park Sisters continue to meet, maintaining friendship and increasing understanding among local communities. The new name (we were formerly 'Church and Mosque Sisters') reflects the fact that participation is not restricted by faith. The value of Sisters' events was demonstrated in the aftermath of the attack on Westminster Abbey on 26 March 17. Such attacks not only lead to an increase in abuse against Muslims who have no part in them but also feed the appetite for open hostility in sections of the media. Over the year worries about safety have grown among our Muslim friends. After the Westminster attack we benefited from our visit to Westminster. A group of 26 of us, the majority of whom were Muslims, had previously visited the House of Commons in January where they were wonderful guided tours and a real welcome from the staff. This made our friends from the mosques feel it was *their* House of Commons. When Finsbury Park Mosque held a street Iftar in the wake of the attack on worshippers leaving the Muslim Welfare it was good to see the church sisters joining in confidently.

Events this year included our presence at the 17 June Jo Cox Commemoration hosted by the Muslim Welfare House in which several Islington churches were represented. Sadly, the attack on worshippers leaving the MWH occurred the next day. Having visited the Muslim Welfare House, for many a first visit increased the sense of closeness. The attack caused suffering and stress, but the great demonstration of solidarity in the following weeks, not only from people in the Finsbury Park area but from all over the country, helped raised hope among our Muslim friends. It is up to us not to let that energy slip away now that the incident is out of the news.

Kabbardy and Picnic in Gillespie Park, 3 July 2017

This was a delightful event and the weather smiled on us. Believed to be a 4000-year-old game, Kabbardy was a hoot and yet, when we sat down, the conversation turned to just how many women now felt so unsafe that they did not want to come out.

Afternoon Tea with the Sisters St Thomas's Church 13 October

23 Sisters from St Thomas's, Finsbury Park Mosque, St Mary's Hornsey Rise, St Melitus enjoyed this hospitality and we talked about security concerns addressing 2 questions:

- What makes you feel unsafe?
- What would make you feel safer?

There was discussion and a talk from Katherine Stansfeld about community mapping. The issue is still live. Emily Thornberry came and spoke to a large group of women in Finsbury Park Mosque on 18 February. If it is possible for the Sisters group to contribute to any process, we will.

The Worshipping Year, St Thomas's Church, 15 January 2018

Afternoon Tea and time to share our stories about the events, feasts and fasts of the worshipping year and how we keep and celebrate them. This was strongly attended by sisters from both mosques and local churches.

Afternoon Tea with the Sisters at Finsbury Park Mosque, 27 March 2018

This was well supported and we enjoyed good food and discussion that ranged widely over the impact of technology, how to involve teenagers in inter-generational community activity and future activity for the Sisters. Suggestions included visits to the British Library and British Museum and Kenwood House for the summer picnic.

Elizabeth Chappell, vice chair of the Islington Faiths Forum (IFF) attended, and we were delighted to learn from her that the IFF have been nominated for The Queens Award for Voluntary Service.

Your support matters

The Sisters' meeting draws women from across the many communities represented in the Mosque and Muslim Welfare House and, over the year, sisters from six local churches have participated. Maintaining contacts and making events happen among volunteers in different organisations needs energy and persistence. Every event brings new faces. The commitment of St Thomas's Church and the place of hospitality it provides are critical to its survival.

P. Nashashibi 24.3. 2018

Friday Bible study

We have now been meeting in this format for about five years, having evolved from a Friday morning study group that had been meeting on and off for some years previously.

Our core group is seven, plus occasional visitors. We come from a variety of backgrounds which makes discussions interesting and varied. We also have a good mix of genders.

After a trial using booklets from the 'Scripture Union' series of Bible Studies last year, we have returned to the Tom Wright 'Bible Study Guides' which the group felt were more suited to our study methods. We have spent the first part of the year on '1 Corinthians' and have now moved on to 'James'.

Both books have proved to be fundamental in enabling our discussions to be interesting and lively and at times controversial. We all contribute equally, and we all share in prayer time at the end of each session. Rowan generally organises and facilitates along with Malcolm.

We meet approximately fortnightly with breaks over the holiday periods. We meet in the hall as it is warmer than the office.

We are always happy to welcome new members, either on a casual or more committed basis.

Malcolm Marjoram & Rowan Howard

Tea at St Thomas'

We've been meeting since March 2012. We meet every Thursday from 2pm - 4pm in the parish rooms. We feel it's very important to offer a regular activity so we continue through holiday periods, and we meet in the church on election days when the hall is used as a polling station.

Tea at St Thomas's is not a "club" – we don't expect people to come every week – and no-one has to register or give more than a first name - we are just always there if people feel like coming for some homemade cake and chat. We sit round a table with a cloth, nice plates and mugs. Guests are both men and women. We enjoy talking to each other – at times one to one –at times in a small group across the corner of the table – and sometimes everyone round the whole table joins in. It's a place to come and meet people in a safe and secure environment, where guests can openly express themselves, talk about old memories – often about their families - and share opinions...and, as she was going home, a guest said "See you next week for another laugh"....

We asked guests what they felt about Tea at St Thomas's. One said "I always look forward to Thursday afternoons because of the diverse discussions in a totally informal atmosphere." Another said "It's the most relaxed place I have been to"...and another "It's the loving underbelly of the church".

In the course of a year many different people attend. Some have a direct connection with St Thomas's, the others are our neighbours, mostly from within the very local area. Usually there are 11-15 of us, though occasionally as many as 20. There are regular guests who come frequently and some who pop in occasionally. Sometimes people come back to see us after a longish gap – it's very good to see them again and catch up with their news. We are a mix of ages though mostly near or of retirement age. It is a wonderfully mixed group with different backgrounds and life experiences which means that the conversation is varied and interesting.

Our guests are generous people, often bringing contributions for the Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants and also books for the Oxfam book bank. As a matter of principle, everything is free on Thursday afternoons and no money is accepted, but many guests bring something to share – biscuits, crisps, sweets.... and we are grateful that some guests enjoy helping us set up and tidying away at the end.

We share information about other local activities that people might enjoy (e.g. from North London Cares and AgeUK Islington) and we have enjoyed the company of occasional visitors including: Roxy and Aneka from North London Cares, Tanya from Manor Gardens Wellbeing Project and Elizabeth from Islington Faiths' Forum. We've also enjoyed two lovely visits from local musician, Rachel, and her team. With everyone's permission they made a splendid video of us participating in their interactive performance – there's a great shot of Ray playing his mouth organ!

While we've been enjoying our tea and talk, we've also been useful welcoming people who want to visit the church (which is only open via the hall on Thursdays). We've also been able to welcome the electricians and others maintaining the church.

There are 5 regular hosts and several occasional helpers to ensure that the guests have someone to talk to and that everyone can safely express their opinions. One guest said that he especially enjoys the "heart to heart" chats about health and family, which are "private and in the moment" – so we'd be very glad of more volunteers to share hosting – even on an occasional basis – so that we can offer more.

Dorothy, Pat, Anita, Christine, Rowan, Anne L, Malcolm.