



Parish Reports 2024-2025

Annual Parochial Church Meeting
27 April 2025

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The Archives of St Mary's

The cabinets in the north gallery now contain most of the 19th and 20th century documents, while the Tower safe is a secure and stable location for some of the older documents. More articles have been added to the history section of the parish website and new records continue to join the archives, including documents relating to St Mary's Schools from Paul Kershaw. Further offers of memorabilia are always very welcome to add to the archives.

Enquiries are often received about family history research, such as a Twining family descendant locating two tombs in the Holly Road graveyard and memorials on the church walls. Another enquirer asked about her 5x great-grandfather Dr Charles Morton, principal Librarian of the British Museum in the 18th century, whose family tomb is also in Holly Road. A New Yorker is planning her visit in June to see family graves in Holly Road, Hampton Cemetery and Twickenham Cemetery which I have helped her to locate. Several people have needed proof of their baptism at St Mary's before being confirmed or married.

Visits have included teachers and students from the International School in The Hague, and two classes of Year 4 pupils (8-year-olds) from Twickenham Primary Academy who enjoyed the new picture bingo sheets, matching pictures and captions of objects around the church interior.

Liaison with Twickenham Museum and the Borough of Twickenham Local History Society has proved a useful two-way link on local history matters. The Museum House Manager and two BoTLHS historians were fascinated to see our 1846 and 1907 Tithe maps which measure 4 x 2 metres. We hope to have them professionally scanned when the Museum's maps are done so that we can make them more widely known.

When **St Mary's School** celebrated the 380th anniversary of the earliest known church school founded in 1645, the archives were able to supply some help with the history of the education of boys and "maids" in the riverside area near the church, School Alley, Bell Lane, etc.

The framed Roll of Honour for those killed in 1939-1945 in whose memory the entrance gates and lamp were installed in 1953 was stored safely during Lockdown and re-ordering work and the named men, including Mandy Hunter's uncle, are being researched currently.

St George's Chapel, Windsor, has some historical documents in its archives relating to the appointment of Vicars, plans for church alterations, etc. as St George's has been the Patron of St Mary's since 1562. The church's patronage is an interesting historical issue worthy of further investigation.

Thanks are due to Roger Hutchins, Rev'd Ed Hanson and others for their help and advice.

Diana Wells
Hon. Archivist

Bellringers

Over the past 12 months, we've been able to ring for nearly every Sunday service and Wednesday evening practice - even through the summer months. Our band has remained active throughout the year, ringing for occasional weddings and welcoming visiting ringers to St Mary's. A highlight was in July, when we marked Donna's arrival in the parish with a quarter peal on all eight bells.

At Christmas, we were pleased to be asked to ring for two carol concerts in addition to our own Advent and Carol Services. Our link with the charity Off the Record continues, and in October we donated a bell-ringing experience as a quiz night prize - ringing for a special occasion of the winner's choice.

To welcome 2025, a cheerful band of ringers gathered just before midnight to ring in the New Year - competing with the fireworks outside!

We're really keen to introduce more people - young or old(er) - to the art of bellringing. This year, we're hoping to develop a course as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. With some initial training sessions at weekends, and support from All Hallows', Twickenham, we aim to grow our team of ringers here at St Mary's.

A big thank you to everyone who makes our ringing possible - especially for their dedication on Sunday mornings! If you've ever wanted to give bellringing a try, please do get in touch. I'd be delighted to *show you the ropes!*

Liz Sephton
Tower Captain

Buildings Group

The Buildings Group reports to the PCC on the care of the church fabric and on the maintenance of the hall. We work closely with the Church Wardens and our Buildings Manager, Katie Kean. We have had another busy year.

The Group met five times in 2024 and members took responsibility for individual projects to support the upkeep of the Church and the hall. We welcomed Ian Malcolm to the group in August and in October I took over from Geoff Noble as Chair.

Following the break-in to the church in September 2023 we have completed the remedial works, including new doors to the vestry and the cellar. Happily, most of the costs have been met with our insurers.

We were not so fortunate with the bill for repairing the decayed render cornices over the north and south doors. This challenging project was completed successfully in the autumn, but cost more and took longer than planned because of unexpected additional work to the lead gutters. We expect that further high-level works will be needed over the next few years, so we are commissioning a comprehensive inspection to assist us with a phased programme of conservation.

The last of the bell tower louvres was installed in the spring, by our specialist craftsman Jim Harper. Each of the oak louvres has been made by hand, and they are all of slightly different dimensions to ensure a good fit with the medieval stonework. We are confident that they will last for many years.

Our insurance company Ecclesiastical inspected the church in the summer and have made recommendations for improvements to safety and security. We expect to implement these in the coming months.

In the hall, the first-floor rooms, landing and stairs have had durable wood flooring installed. We have continued our meetings with Richmond Council who lease part of the building from the parish. The aim has been to exchange information so we can better coordinate our shared maintenance responsibilities. This includes a review of energy use as our gas boilers approach the end of their lives. We have benefitted greatly from the expertise of Hugo Clark, chartered surveyor and member of the congregation, who has sifted through the complexities of leases and licences to see where particular responsibilities lie.

In the Memorial Garden, we remain hopeful that we can install a ramp to enable wheelchair access. We have received several generous donations but we have not succeeded in attracting grants for the work, so it has been put on hold for the time being.

My thanks to all members of the Group, the Wardens and others in the congregation who have again contributed so generously of their time and skills. We always welcome more helpers so if you would like to join us, do get in touch.

Stephen Tetley
Chair, Buildings Group

Charitable Giving

Charitable Giving is an important part of how we see ourselves as the People of God at St Mary's.

Since the last A.P.C.M. we have hosted speakers Joseph Vambe from Christian Aid, Anita Coppola from Small Steps and Frank Greaves who spoke about Toilet Twinning, representing some of the charities supported by St Mary's in the previous year.

In 2024, Christian Aid Week raised £472 and the Ecumenical Group's collections for St Mengo's raised £516.10. We also supported other local charities through offering 'Off the Record' the use of the Parish Room at peppercorn rent, free use of the hall for the Guides and Brownies and offering charities discounted rates for church and hall hire.

In May 2024, the PCC reviewed and adopted a new Charitable Giving Policy. St Mary's will continue to offer financial gifts to chosen charities to support their work, and:

- To limit those to
 - a. local charities serving the people of the borough of Richmond upon Thames, or
 - b. international charities that are Christian in foundation.
- To invite members of the congregation to propose those charities.
- To limit the number of charities each member of the congregation can propose to one.
- To limit the number of charities supported at a time to 2-3 local and 2-3 international.
- To involve the congregation in the selection of the charities supported.
- To support the chosen charities for a period of 3 years.
- To carry out the nomination and selection process every 3 years.

The charity nomination process was carried out in February and March 2025, to allow time for the charity giving pot to top up in lieu of a summer fayre in 2024. The PCC will select the charities in a meeting later this year.

Warm thanks go to all those who contribute to our charitable giving and especially to members of the Ecumenical Group.

Clarinda Chan

Children and Young People

Our Church Vision is to seek to nurture our children and young people with a sense of God's love for them and purpose for their lives. We want them to develop their spiritual being, opening themselves to God's love, and be welcomed, loved and involved within our church community. Numbers of families and children are still well below pre-Covid, but we are gradually widening our range of activities to welcome newcomers and welcome back old friends.

New Assistant Priest

Against this background, the arrival in July of our wonderful new Assistant Priest, Rev'd Donna MacDowell, who is also St Mary's School Chaplain, was so welcome. She has strengthened us through her leading, teaching, counsel, her warmth and amazing ability to remember peopleand their names! It is so lovely having her in our church family.

Sunday school

During school term time, Sunday School has offered the children and young people worship, Bible stories and readings, discussions and activities appropriate to their age and understanding, which they join in enthusiastically, before returning to the church to worship with the rest of the congregation as our church family.

Smaller numbers mean that all children and young people over 9 years are meeting as one group, with the challenge of engaging a wide age range's needs, but there are a core of some 6-8 happy regular attendees. We are open to involving them in further activities outside Sunday school and the 9.30 service, including through Diocesan events. Our younger children continue to meet in two groups - one for 3 to 6 years, and one for 6 to 9 years. We are hoping and praying that the restarting of other activities (see below) which welcome the youngest children and their families, together with our close relationship with the school, will continue to grow our church family. Rev'd Donna regularly joins in Sunday school assembly and groups on the second and fourth Sundays.

The parish Nativity play, as ever in our 9.30 Eucharist, was a joyous occasion, celebrating and strengthening the Christmas message. Many thanks to Julie Hall and her team for all the organising, rehearsing and meeting the challenge of fewer players! The children also made lovely Christmas cards for posting to those less able to attend our services. This has now become an annual activity helping to pull the church family together.

We are very grateful, as ever, to Julie for managing all the planning and administration for the Sunday School and leading worship for the younger two groups. She is supported by those who volunteer as leaders who put real thought and preparation into each session, and they in turn could not manage without those who turn up on the day to help. We still need more volunteers. Please think whether you could contribute in a leading or helping capacity. You don't have to be young or have any children to get involved!

Confirmation

On March 2nd the Bishop of Kensington confirmed 12 members of the St Mary's community, five of whom are current young people and a further two who used to be Sunday School members. In preparation the young people met with Donna over a number of weeks, including once as a whole group where pizza and ice cream were on offer! Further sessions were conducted in smaller groups and included time reflecting on faith journeys, the importance of scripture, prayer, and community to those journeys, and thinking through the structure and symbolism of the Eucharist. There are several other young people who are either hoping to or are considering confirmation next year. If you know someone who might be interested please have a chat with Donna about next steps.

Minnows and Little Fish

St Mary's Minnows is our group for parents and carers with children aged 0 - 4 years on Monday mornings in term time, which Sarah Waller took the initiative to restart in Autumn '23. It provides a safe place to meet and is also a lovely, gentle introduction to the church for young families, offering a friendly welcome and relaxed time to chat with refreshments, playtime and singing. It is proving popular with growing attendees as word spreads (approx 12 children a week, from

approx 20 regular families), but we are greatly in need of more helpers to serve refreshments and chat to the families as next term's rota is rather bare! If you would be available once or twice a term on a Monday morning to assist Sarah by providing a warm welcome, please contact minnows@stmarytwick.org.uk (or phone number available from the Parish Office) so that we can continue offering this outreach. Thank you, Sarah and those who help you!

Sarah has also reintroduced Little Fish, which welcomes under 3s and their parents/carers to a short session during the 9.30 Eucharist. It simply operates 'on demand' at present, but we hope it will grow as young families with babes find they are growing into active toddlers!

Messy Church

We were very pleased to hold our third Messy Church since Covid in March. After the popularity of the November event, when over 120 children attended with accompanying adults, and which was focused on Advent, we introduced online booking to manage capacity - take up was very enthusiastic, with tickets selling out in advance and even a waiting list! We welcomed over 100 children and their adults for fun Easter themed craft activities and refreshments. Thank you to everyone who helped make sandwiches, rearrange the church furniture, serve refreshments and assist with the activities. We are planning to hold Messy Church once a term, dependent on volunteers - please speak to Donna, Katie Kean or Sarah Waller if you'd like to get involved as a one-off or more regularly.

In Church

We aspire for the children and young people to be an integral part of our worship and community, and their engagement in the Eucharist is a vital part of this. We offer a children's table in the church during the service, where the youngest children attending can feel welcome with books and colouring materials, themed to the church year.

The children and young people have enthusiastically helped lead several 3rd Sunday services during the year, although our lower numbers are constraining this a little, with Donna and Jeff filling gaps.

The family Celebration Sunday service in the Memorial garden was led for the second year by St Mary's school, and we hope to welcome them back this June. It was lovely to have Angela Abrahams, the head of the school and a school choir, which helped swell the sound of our worship in this outdoor service. with many school families attending.

We had a fun and uplifting Christingle service in church, with the Scouts as ever attending and helping with the service and offering mulled wine and refreshments in the hall afterwards. St Mary's Families - both parents and children - had great fun assembling the Christingles to distribute in the service. There were many families attending who do not regularly come to church, and we raised over £400 for The Children's Society!

On Christmas Eve we welcomed families into church for our two very well attended Crib services, with Fr Jeff as ever providing an interactive and joyful child-friendly story of Christmas.

Our St Mary's school

Please see Donna's separate School Chaplain's report.

St Mary's Families

St Mary's Families have kept in touch on church events and other news through their Whatsapp group, and through emails on key events when needed. It would be lovely to find a coordinator for this to help with our comms.

Thank you to all who have participated in our Children and Young People's work at St Mary's to enrich their lives through the love of Christ - children and young people themselves, leaders and helpers and - of course - Fr Jeff and Rev'd Donna.

Judy Britton

Cleaning Team

The St. Mary's scrubbers are still in dire need for more volunteers. Over the last year we have lost three members, owing to illness or old age! However, a very new member of the congregation has joined us, and I thank God for her as does the group she has joined.

We would be so grateful if more people offered to give up a one hour every five weeks to help out. Every six weeks if more joined!

I am deeply grateful to those who continue to help. I think we have been cleaning for about twenty years.

Am really looking forward to the offers pouring in.

Jenny Kelly

Communications

St Mary's uses the worldwide web, email and social media to communicate St Mary's news, events and church community activities with audiences near and far. Content creation and administration is almost entirely dependent on a few individual volunteers.

The following is a summary of activity on the principal online channels we use over the past year.

Website [www.stmarytwick.org.uk]

- St Mary's own official website received around 8720 unique visitors in the year ending mid-April 2025, an increase of 23% over the previous annual period. Some 94% of visitors were 'new' to the site, rather than 'returning', with notable spikes in visits in November and December - underlining the importance of sharing details of our Christmas services and events in good time.
- The home page is the most visited - as shown in the table below for the year ending mid-April 2025, underlining the importance of signposting the information that people need directly on our front page. The next most viewed pages are as below. Notably, compared with the previous year, both the 'What's On' and 'Room Hire' pages attracted significantly increased viewing (up 20% and 48% respectively), illustrating the growing utility of these pages in drawing people into our buildings.

Page	Page views
Home page	8,993
/whatson	4,060
/services	2,213
/roomhire	1,697
/prayers	1,689
/contact-us	1,649

Weekly Emails

Our weekly email which sends a message from the Vicar and links to the parish newsletter and list of Intercessions now has 258 subscribers, with typically around 72% of them opening the email each week. Of these, some 16-19% 'click through' to the newsletter and/or Intercessions, both of which are also posted on St Mary's website so that non-subscribers can read and share them.

A Church Near You - St Mary's webpages [www.achurchnearyou.com/church/15505/]

The CofE's official website hosts pages dedicated to St Mary's, covering Services and our other events in church, as well as offering an online copy of the weekly parish newsletter and details of church facilities. The use of this site to find out about St Mary's is showing a markedly upward trend.

- in the rolling year to mid-April 2025 we received 19,360 page views; in the month to mid-April 2025, we received nearly 1,850 page views. These are significant increases over the figures reported to last year's APCM (12,000 yearly and 1,250 monthly page views).
- This very welcome trend is replicated across the CofE's site: more people than ever searched for services and events on AChurchNearYou.com in 2024, with some 198.5 million page views from the public, a 55% increase from 2023's total.

Facebook [www.facebook.com/StMarysTwickenham]

- Posts on our page had a total 'reach' of some 7,400 in the year to end March 2025; a decrease of some 31% on the previous year.
- We have 304 'signed up' followers, a slight increase on the previous year; 72% are female and 28% male, with 91% located across the UK - unsurprisingly predominantly in the vicinity of TW; some 4% are in the USA.
- Our three most popular posts covered the Middlesex Bellringers Striking Competition (posted Apr 2024, reach 615), the new louvres in the church tower (posted Jun 2024, reach 374) and the news that the Reverend Donna McDowell would join us as our Assistant Priest and Chaplain at St Mary's School (posted May 2024, reach 280).

Chris Williams

The Eco Group

Since its start 15 years ago the Eco Group has supported the use of fair-trade tea and coffee for the Sunday refreshments in the Hall and at meetings and events. Green Tips on a variety of environmental topics have been included in the weekly Sunday newsheet. The whole community of St Mary's has met the Eco Church criteria based on our care for God's creation, exemplified in Worship and Teaching, Buildings, Land, Community and Global Engagement and Lifestyles, at Bronze and Silver levels as validated by Christian charity A Rocha.

In the Oak Lane cemetery (OLC) 2024 saw the one-year trial of a 3-person subgroup of the Eco Group which met quarterly to monitor the church's responsibilities laid out in the Management Plan drawn up with Richmond Council. With its designated budget we were able to fund the optimum number of maintenance visits to balance OLC looking cared for whilst allowing it to remain a natural habitat for wildlife. A sympathetic local firm, Cutters of Twickenham, has managed the grass areas, and our longstanding relationship with The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) maintained the undergrowth and shrubs with 4 sessions, plus an additional free session from one of their "corporate days" i.e. employees from a company dedicating a day of their time to a charity. A successful grant application to Richmond Council has allowed us to continue with the desired level of maintenance for 2025 and beyond.

A community day held in September, funded by a Richmond Council Micro Grant and in partnership with Habitats and Heritage, attracted 22 visitors who enjoyed a guided tour of the cemetery. The November Quiz was very well attended and made twice the takings of the year before. New bulbs were donated by Taylors, some of which have flowered this spring.

Due to two unexpected tree falls over the winter, plus a third dead tree taken down, a health and safety survey has been brought forward to ensure the safety of visitors to OLC. With the Plan now established, with good relationships with the Council and the contractors, and with sufficient ongoing funding, the future maintenance and monitoring can now be managed by one member of the Eco Group.

Thanks are also due to the gardening group for tidying, weeding and pruning the roses and shrubs in the Garden of Remembrance throughout the year.

Diana Wells (fair trade), Liz Webborn (Eco Church),
Anne Hutchins (Oak Lane cemetery), Trudi Morgan (gardening group)

Ecumenical Group

It is our role to reach out to those of other denominations, of other faiths and to those in need throughout the world.

It was under the banner of Churches Together in Twickenham that over a hundred local residents with allegiances to many different Christian denominations walked on Good Friday 2024 from Twickenham Green to the Jubilee Gardens, where a short service was held, led by the Venerable Richard Frank Archdeacon of Middlesex. By the time this article appears we should have completed the Walk of Witness for 2025, to be led this year by Bishop Emma of Kensington.

The following month, in advance of Christian Aid week, Joseph Vambe addressed the 9.30 congregation on the work of this charity, giving us the example of a woman in Burundi whom Christian Aid had helped out of destitution to be the owner of a successful grocery business. Pastries were served in the Church Hall after the service and a collection made for the work of Christian Aid raising a total of over £472.

In June we joined with Hounslow Friends of Faith on their annual Walk of Peace and Friendship visiting places of worship associated with different religions, on this occasion the Laxmi Narayan Hindu Temple, the Ismaili West London Jamatkhana, the Quaker Meeting House in Isleworth and the Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Bridget, also in Isleworth.

The August Bank Holiday weekend saw a return of the joyful and popular Hymns and Pimms celebration instituted and led by our Vicar Jeff, when we were joined by friends from the Baptists, Roman Catholic, United Reformed and other churches in the singing of hymns chosen by lot from those suggested by members of the congregation and accompanied on the organ by Adrian Mumford. This was followed by refreshments.

Throughout the year meetings of the Interfaith Knitting Group have continued to be held monthly in the Church Hall and members of the committee have made monthly collections in aid of Mengo Hospital Uganda, founded by the missionary Albert Cook in the nineteenth century as the first hospital in the country and proudly maintaining its Christian ethos today with a routine of daily prayers.

Without the enthusiastic participation of committee members this programme of activities could not have taken place and they are owed an immense debt of gratitude.

Sophy Fisher

Flower Team

The flower team has worked hard with enjoyment to decorate the church with fresh flowers for the weekly services, festivals of Christmas, Easter, harvest and weddings. For Christmas we used white flowers, gold decorations with natural pinecones, berries and other materials. Easter, again was mainly white, with hints of yellow and harvest a riot of autumnal colour.

As there was not a summer fair, we joined forces with the Silent Auction to have a cake sale, served coffee and cake during the auction and a sale of dried flower Christmas decorations. Members of the team came together to make the decorations convivially and creatively over two mornings. We raised very nearly £1,000 for the church. Thank you very much to Betty Miller for co-ordinating our efforts and organising the publicity and the church space.

After Christmas the whole team met to have an enjoyable supper in the darkest depths of January. Tasty food, drink, chat and an inspirational demonstration by Joy Lee made a happy evening.

Unfortunately, some of our members have had debilitating accidents and illnesses. We wish them a speedy and successful recovery. We would welcome and value any new people who would like to join our friendly, supportive group. Experience in flower arranging is not necessary as there are plenty of us to guide and advise.

Celia Goodman Amanda Boardman

Hampton Deanery Synod

The Hampton Deanery Synod, covering 15 parishes, gives the PCC an important link between the parish and the wider structure of the church. A deanery synod consists of all licensed clergy and elected lay representatives from each parish in the deanery. St Mary's this year has had three lay members; Judy Britton, Jacqui Knowles and Roger Hutchins. Donna MacDowell was welcomed as a licensed member of the synod at the November 2025 meeting. Hampton Deanery Synod meets three times a year, hosted by each of the churches in turn. Meetings are convened by the Area Dean, currently the Reverend Ben Lovell, Vicar of St Mary's, Hampton. After welcoming refreshments and time to meet and chat, the meetings open with collective worship, followed by local deanery news and the main speaker.

The May 22, 2024, meeting was held at St Augustine of Canterbury where the Rev'd Canon John Kafwanka led the worship. The talk focussed on the Compassionate Communities aim of the London Diocese 2030 Vision for every Londoner to encounter the love of God in Christ, being given by Alison Tsang who headed the Diocesan team supporting parishes responding to this element of the Vision. She asked attendees should local churches be involved in the work of caring for the community and responding to its needs and how - a deep and challenging subject, suggesting that churches could learn from good examples of others and also work in partnership, as well as seek advice from the team. The many examples included refugee hosting and Eco church. There was a monthly newsletter. She asked each church present to list relevant current activities taking place within their parish.

The November 7, 2024, meeting was overseen by Rev'd Ben Lovell and chaired by Tony Dixon (Lay Chair). Opening worship was led by Rev'd David Cloake, vicar of St Mary with St Alban, Teddington. The main item was a talk by Rev'd Mary Hawes of St Mary and St Alban who had been part of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York's Commission on Families and Households. This talk was both inspiring and challenging. The Commission sat for two years (2021-2023), travelled the country talking with people of all ages, all ethnicities, all faiths and none, and all diversities, exploring issues which both challenged and promoted family life. A deliberate decision was made not to seek to define what was meant by 'family life', but to leave this open to what those they were speaking with meant by it. A report, 'Love Matters', has been produced for use by all parish churches.

The February 11, 2025, meeting was held at St Mary's Twickenham with opening worship led by Father Jeff. Kevin Rogers, Diocesan Director of Parish Property and Fundraising, was the main speaker on the subject of 'Using our Buildings for Mission'. He gave an in-depth insight into his work and the work of his team. Emphasis was placed on the help they can give to parishes seeking to re-order their church buildings in order to be more effective in their mission to the local community. It was noted that this talk was given in the context of a parish church that had already successfully undergone such a re-ordering!

Judy Britton and Roger Hutchins

Lent Groups

This year's Lent course grew out of a desire expressed by many to look more closely at key sections of the Bible. The material was prepared by Rev'd Donna and Roger Hutchins, and covered the following topics, tracing a link from the founding Fathers of Genesis to the teachings of St Paul about being a Christian:

- The Patriarchs of the Old Testament, namely Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, and God's covenant with them
- The Psalms: what they are, how they speak to us and how might we use them in our prayer
- The Prophets of the Old Testament speaking on God's behalf and holding the people accountable to the God of Israel
- The person of Jesus as expressed through the four Gospels
- The writings of the Apostle Paul and how we might understand them

In each case the groups considered how the session's theme was relevant to their faith and to their lives today. The groups engaged in some stimulating discussion.

As in previous years, each session began with an address to introduce the week's theme. Those present then split into small groups for some discussion around the key points. The evenings concluded with refreshments and Compline. An afternoon group was also held for those who preferred it.

Charlotte West

Music at St. Mary's

The choir continues taking its valued and customary role in leading the musical component of worship. The choir aims to provide music that contributes to and enhances the liturgy by performing anthems during the communion from the gallery and leading the congregation in both hymns and service music in the chancel, feeling better connected there during the service.

Rehearsals are held in the vestry on Sunday mornings, ready to start singing by 8.55 a.m. I am enormously indebted to those members of the choir who regularly sing on Sundays and rehearse on a weekly basis; and to several guest singers who are able to augment the regular choir for special events. ***But we are always in need of new singers.*** Attendance every week is not required: you will be welcome even if you can make only occasional services with the rehearsal on Sunday. Please do give this serious thought and help to ensure that the choir can continue to take a leading role on Sundays.

I am especially grateful to Chris Britton who takes rehearsals, conducts the choir on Sundays and hosted the Summer Party last year!

Organ Scholar Patrick Tate, now 17 years old, has been with us for three years and is both highly personable and, playing with increasing confidence, is a very safe pair of hands to deputise when I am away. He is learning both organ and piano, taking a piano performance diploma in the summer which he will also give as a concert.

Concerts

With wonderfully warmed acoustics after the reordering, the church has never been more popular for concerts with such groups as Richmond Concert Society and the Richmond Light Orchestra as regulars. In 2024 our own Sunday Evening Concert Series was terrifically successful including regular appearances from the Marble Hill Singers, two stupendous piano recitals - David Goode returns this - and the popular 'Hymns and Pimms' welcoming congregations from other local churches. A full series of monthly concerts are arranged for 2025 to include three piano recitals, choral music and a concert from Christopher Herrick: please do come and support them.

Adrian Mumford
Director of Music

PCC and Standing Committee

Since the last APCM in April 2024, the PCC has met five times. As well as discussing regular business items including policies, finance, and the use and maintenance of our buildings, the PCC welcomed updates and reports from Vision Groups, and extends its thanks to all those who contribute to the many aspects of St Mary's Church's vibrant life and work.

Liz Sledge as safeguarding officer kept the PCC informed of steps we can take as a church to ensure the protection of our children and adults at risk and to ensure that we comply with all canonical requirements in relation to safeguarding (in particular section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, in relation to having due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and adults at risk).

The Standing Committee consists of the Parish Priest, Wardens, PCC Secretary, Treasurer, a representative nominated by each Warden and a representative elected by the PCC. The Committee met five times during the year to conduct the business of the PCC between PCC meetings.

On behalf of everyone at St Mary's, the PCC expresses its gratitude to Fr Jeff and Rev'd Donna for their ministry and leadership.

The Committee would also like to thank Cath Nortje and Katie Kean for their efficient running of the Parish Office and being great ambassadors for St Mary's.

Clarinda Chan
PCC Secretary

Safeguarding

Consistent with all parishes in the Diocese we record and monitor our progress in meeting Church of England and diocesan guidance on Safeguarding using a dedicated parish dashboard. This covers the five standards of Culture, Leadership, Prevention (including DBS checks and safer recruitment), Recognising and Managing Risk, Victims and Survivors and Learning. Safeguarding practice and guidance do not stand still but rather are continually developing. We are well supported by the diocese in this through monthly drop-in sessions where any queries can be raised,

the Diocesan Advisor for the Kensington area, Caryn Weber and the safeguarding team. Safeguarding is included in all meetings of the PCC and progress reported to the PCC twice a year and once a year to the diocese.

Within St Mary's all PCC members, Sunday school volunteers and others in key roles undertake DBS checks and attend training, about 45 volunteers in total. We now try to complete all safeguarding checks and training online - thank you to all those who have or are in the process of completing this, in addition to the work you do for the Church.

Thanks also to our Adults' Champion Sue Pawsey and Children's Champions Judy Britton and Julie Hall who both foster the Christian development of our children and young people and support our Sunday School teachers.

Liz Sledge
Safeguarding Officer

School Chaplain's Report

Donna started on July 1st 2024 which allowed her to embed herself into the school community before the summer holidays. Since then she has been delivering in person Collective Worship at each of the three sites each week. The themes have been based on the school values and the liturgical calendar. Agape feasts were celebrated with each year group from Years 2-6, and on Ash Wednesday a short service was held for each year group with over 250 children choosing to be ashed along with 16 members of staff.

Donna has offered a reflection and a blessing at the INSET at the beginning of the academic year and has led prayers/blessings at the end of term whole school assemblies. Each half term she works with the Assistant Head responsible for Spirituality to plan the following half term's sequence of Collective Worship, helping create an overview for the whole school, as well as co-creating resources for use in class assemblies, and supports the Year leads responsible for various church services.

She has led a whole staff INSET on Biblical text analysis and has taught each of the 21 classes each term as part of the RE curriculum. She works with the RE lead each term to timetable and plan the lessons in order to support non-specialist teachers with the teaching of Christianity. Each term she also visits each class to facilitate sessions on spirituality and philosophical thinking, encouraging the children to think about prayer, creation, and social justice in new ways, and encouraging them to ask Big Questions.

She has been working with the Senior Leadership Team to think through the School Improvement Plan in terms of ethos and spirituality, including meeting with and being observed by a SIAMS inspector. She serves on the Governing body who are extremely grateful to those from the church community who offer their support to the school as Governors and as Trustees. She has attended an LDBS conference with the Head and Chair of Governors, and is part of the Kensington Area Chaplains' Group.

St Mary's School continues to hold regular services and other events in our church. These include the Leavers' Service, the Harvest Service, Christmas Carol Service, the Bible Service, and the Easter service. This year we also held a celebration of the 380th anniversary of St Mary's school with the whole school able to perform in the round. For each of these services Donna has worked with the Worship Ambassadors to create and lead prayers. She has also provided a blessing at the Remembrance Day service on the Junior Site.

Visibility and familiarity is a key part of the role so Donna regularly arrives at school for the morning drop off, participates in the Mystery Reader for Reception, took part in the Masked Reader event for World Book day and the School Christmas Panto (playing the lion from the Wizard of Oz), accompanies classes to Willow Wood, participated in an interfaith panel for Year 6, went with

Year 6 on their residential to Bude, visited Reception to talk about living in Japan, and attends social events such as the Curry and Quiz nights held by FOSM.

The role of school chaplain is helping to solidify connections between the school and the church, and is helpful for promoting school events directed at children such as Messy Church. Senior Leadership Team is currently seeking pupil and staff feedback on the role, its benefits, and the ways in which it is enriching the school community, and this will be communicated to the trustees when responses are collated.

Rev'd Donna McDowell

Social Events and Fundraising

It had been a while since the church had held any social events for us all to get to know each other better and to welcome relative newcomers. The arrival of Rev'd Donna in July was the perfect opportunity to launch a programme of social events as well as the chance to meet and chat with our new Assistant Priest over a bring-and-share lunch on her first Sunday at St Mary's. People generously brought dishes and plates of food for a buffet lunch set up down the central aisle of the church.

The social theme continued on a Saturday morning in November with a fundraising coffee morning, cake sale and silent auction organised by Betty Miller and Chris and Liz Webborn. With homemade cakes and copious supplies of hot drinks on a chilly autumn morning the church buzzed with conversation and conviviality. The auction closed on the day with many people getting in their final bids, and, together with the coffee morning, raised £6,300 which went towards the external building works that were ongoing at the time and costing more than expected.

St David's Day on 1 March saw the church transformed once again, this time for a barn dance and cooked supper. Nearly 80 people got to their feet to the tunes of professional band, Cajun Boogaloo, along with their caller directing the dancers up and down the sets, how to twirl their partners, promenade around the circle and even spin the ladies off the floor in the four-person basket hold. The evening was great fun for both dancers and spectators and, although principally a social event, raised very nearly £1,400 for further works to the exterior of the church.

Charlotte West

St Mary's Group

Following our A.G.M. in May, chaired by Fr. Jeff, in June members embarked upon a delightful river trip from Hampton Court to Kingston on a sunny afternoon, concluding with tea in the Parish Church there. We have decided to repeat this event in the current year, possibly venturing a little further afield. The year ended with the customary party in Sophy's garden in July.

Our new year began with a brief talk about the Freemasons by Heather Gibbs, who had attended a Masonic school, and it was well that it did so for this was the last event which Heather was able to attend, as she entered a care home in Hampton soon after. She had been a vital member of the group and the committee for a number of years and her presence is greatly missed.

In October our Assistant Priest, the Rev'd Donna McDowell, enthralled us with an illustrated talk on icons. This was in the new setting of the vestry and at the new time of 2.30 on a Thursday afternoon, replacing the Monday evening meetings.

In November Paul Leonard spoke about the Christian charity Tools with a Mission, for which he has been collecting unwanted sewing machines and tools from members of the congregation to be

refurbished and exported to African countries, where their recipients can use them to earn a livelihood for themselves and their families.

Sadly in December some of us were at the funeral of a committed past member of the Group, Jane Waterston, whom we shall remember enjoying the visit to the Walled Garden at Sunbury, the summer parties and many other events.

The programme of performances for our nearby Mary Wallace Theatre was so attractive that we visited twice this winter to watch a dramatization of Agatha Christie's "The Unexpected Guest" in December and Alan Ayckbourn's "Table Manners" in January, both of them excellent productions.

In February a few of us braved the cold to play Monopoly and in March we held an interesting afternoon hearing book recommendations from members, some of them accompanied by extracts read from the books, and in April we plan a fish and chip lunch at the Pier 1 restaurant in Richmond. Visitors are always welcome to come and join us.

Especial thanks go to members of the committee and to all involved in serving refreshments so cheerfully and efficiently once a month after the 9.30 service.

Sophy Fisher

Tea @2.30 - a social group for everyone



This group has been going for nearly 3 years now and we welcome everyone - young to old and even those with waggy tails! We meet on the **first** and **third** Wednesdays of every month at 2.30pm. If you want companionship, a chatter and lots of laughter do join us for a fun afternoon. Hot drinks are provided and sometimes there's cake! We usually meet up in the church or vestry but we have arranged a couple of outings to people's houses too!



Do come along and bring a friend. All are welcome from the wider community, not just St Mary's, and we have 'refreshed' several visitors over the year!

Julie & Julia

The Twickenham Almshouses

These almshouses are named after William Candler (1826 - 1907), a master grocer from Twickenham, who's legacy resulted in their construction on Amyand Park Road in 1936. Since 2008 the management and everyday upkeep of this property has become the responsibility of the Richmond Charities.

This move to the Richmond Charities has been financially transformative, allowing an ongoing plan of improvement across the whole estate, including Candler Almshouses. A major ongoing project is a five-year plan to install photovoltaic (solar) panels and storage batteries on as many of our almshouse estates as possible, in order that residents will benefit directly from the electricity generated which, in turn, will reduce their energy bills.

Candler Almshouses was part of Phase One and 100 panels were installed on the roof, on a rear canopy and on a newly constructed car port, which optimised the number of panels on the estate. At the same time, the whole roof was renewed as the existing one dated back to when the property was first built.

As Candler Almshouses is a building of townscape merit, the panels on the roof had to be situated in such a way as to not be visible from the road. They also could only be fitted on roofs which slope south or west, in order to maximise the exposure to sun and light.

With the work now complete, residents have been able to benefit, directly, from 21st century technology that provides energy that is not subject to market fluctuations. The charity continues to support the residents to make sure they're on the optimum tariff and through their supplier they are able to get paid for selling back excess energy to the National Grid.

An air of normality has returned to the estate, with work ongoing to further landscape outside areas. There has also been a schedule of work to upgrade and modernise almshouses as and when they become vacant.

As a slightly more seasoned trustee of Richmond Charities, I'm hugely impressed by how the staff and residents work together to provide an environment where all are supported and everyone is given the opportunity to feel and be part of a vibrant independent living community.

Our almshouse estate is expanding, with a new project on Queen's Road completing in 2025, but the need to house older people, in this borough, continues to grow.

Lastly, if you or your friends wish to know more about our almshouse community then please visit our stall at the Richmond May Fair on Saturday 10th May.

Robert Hall, Trustee appointed by the Vicar of St. Mary's Twickenham

Trustees of the Twickenham Parochial Schools Trust



The trust was originally established in 1861 for the purpose of building a school and providing an education to children living in the Parish of Twickenham. More specifically, and according to the trust's governing document, the role of the trust is to assist St Mary's School with the "provision of educational, recreational and other charitable facilities not required to be provided by the local authority". It is because of funding from the trust that the school is able to take on mental health support for the children, a full-time teaching assistant for the more vulnerable children at the school and a music teacher for hymn practice and hymns of praise worship. The trustees have traditionally donated Bibles to each child in year 6 as they prepare to leave the school for their secondary schools. The trust made possible the appointment of Rev'd Donna as School Chaplain, for which the children, their families and the staff at the school are hugely grateful.

The trust is independent of the church and the school, although the Vicar and Church Wardens are ex officio members of the board along with three or four other trustees chosen for their particular skills. Much of the ongoing work of the board is in managing the properties in its portfolio to maximise income for the benefit of the school.

Maurice Austin and Charlotte West

Walsingham - Annual Parish Pilgrimage from St Mary's Twickenham



In the Autumn of 2024, Betty Miller and I went on a Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in North Norfolk. We had both been on similar Pilgrimages before but with larger Priest-led groups.

On this occasion, we attended all the Services held in the Shrine church for all the Pilgrims visiting for that long weekend. Also, we walked round the Stations of the Cross together, reading out loud the appointed words which are so powerful, and we said the words of the First and Last Visits to the Holy House as well.

As ever at Walsingham, I was made more vividly aware of the many layers of input that we receive in our lives without necessarily being conscious of them - whether in the unique colour of each human voice, the depth of feeling expressed in art or music, however basic it may be, the huge importance of the spiritual or one's simple delight at the sight of a beautiful garden.

Barbara Williams

Betty Miller has kindly written:

The first time I visited Walsingham was in September 2015 with a group from St Mary's. My husband, Kenneth, had died on 5th April 2015 and I was in sore need of comfort and reassurance.

Sitting in the beautiful gardens at Walsingham in the sunshine, particularly in the Quiet Garden where the Stations of the Cross begin, I found the peace and tranquillity completely enveloped me and reinforced the sacred words I had heard in the Shrine Church.

Each year since 2015 I've looked forward to making the Pilgrimage to Walsingham. I always found the services we had in the Barn Chapel with Jeff helpful and uplifting. As St Mary's wasn't able to go as a group last year, I was delighted when Barbara Williams, who was making a personal visit there last October, offered to take me and, as always, Walsingham did not fail to bring me that peace, that balm to my soul.

As well as the spiritual side of Walsingham there is, of course, the enjoyment of camaraderie, meeting pilgrims from all parts of the country, not forgetting that we are well fed at Walsingham, too.

My only regret is that Kenneth and I never went there together.

Update from The Diocese of London

The Diocese of London is the largest and most diverse in the Church of England. We have over 500 churches and 750 licensed clergy. We are able to have a church in almost every community, supporting the vision for every Londoner to encounter the love of God in Christ. In 2024, 50 new deacons were ordained and early draft statistics indicate that Average Weekly Attendance in London grew by 7.5% to over 60,000.

During 2024, we have continued working towards our priorities of becoming a younger, safer and more racially just Church. For example:

- 19 London Youth Apprentices engaged 715 young people weekly and funding was granted to enable the launch of five youth ministers in Hackney and Islington.
- In a challenging year for safeguarding, referrals to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team increased substantially, indicating more trust and confidence in the safeguarding service. 789 people were given safeguarding leadership training, and 3,808 DBS checks were carried out.
- Churches across the Diocese engaged with Race Equality Week, Racial Justice Sunday, and Black History Month last year, reflecting on racial justice and committing to action.

The breadth of parishes and Bishop's Mission Orders in London nurtured confident disciples, compassionate communities and creative growth in an amazing variety of ways. They also contributed over £23m in Common Fund, an increase of almost £1m. Alongside £13.2m income raised by the London Diocesan Fund (LDF) and £3.6m from LDF reserves, this paid to provide ministry and support parishes across the Diocese.

Oliver Homes, General Secretary of the Diocese of London

PCC Membership 2024-25

Chair	
Rev'd Jeff Hopkin Williams	
Clergy	
Rev'd Donna McDowell	From July 2024
PCC Lay Members	Elected/re-elected (for 3 years, max 2 terms)
Geoff Noble	Re-elected 2022
Elizabeth Sledge	Re-elected 2022
Clarinda Chan	Re-elected 2023
Rosemary Fulljames	Re-elected 2023
Sophy Fisher	Elected 2023
Jane Norris	Elected 2023
Helena Tarrant	Elected 2023
Sarah Waller	Elected 2024
Mark Wilson	Elected 2024
Charlotte West	Elected 2024
	vacant
	vacant
Deanery Synod	Elected for 3 years from 2023 to 2026
Judy Britton	Elected 2023
Jacqui Knowles	Elected 2024
Roger Hutchins	Elected 2024
	vacant
Co-opted Members	Co-opted for a year at a time
Adrian Mumford	Director of Music
Paul Smart	Treasurer
Church Wardens	Elected for a year at a time
Margaret Mence	First Elected 2022
Stephen Tetley	First Elected 2024