

Vicar's Report 2018/19

2018/19 has been a year of real growth at St. Andrew's Church, across many areas of our family life. It would be impossible to comment on all that has happened in one report, but I am thankful to God for all that has happened here. We have so much for which to be thankful...

In this report, I will mention a few highlights of our year and then make some comments about our priorities for the future.

Mission Action Plan and Mission Statement

It was good to develop a new Mission Action Plan – 'Towards 2030'. This is a brave and visionary document. It will underpin all that we strive to become, as a church, over the next decade or so. There is a lot of detail, especially in the supporting document on the website, and we have a very clear sense of what we need to do in the coming few years.

It was good to develop our Mission Statement too: "Building community together on the values of Jesus". This is a good touchstone for us to assess our activity base. All that we do should, in some way, chime with that Mission Statement. It will help us to stay focused over the coming years, as well as provide a short statement to the wider community about who we are and what we are trying to achieve.

Ridley London

The launch of Ridley London was a major development for us – and will undoubtedly become more important to us as the years unfold. It was no small achievement to get this initiative off the ground. For St. Andrew's Church to be validated by Durham University as a recognized academic institution is a real privilege. To work in partnership with Ridley Hall Theological College and the Cambridge Theological Federation to teach Durham Courses is an exciting opportunity for us. This academic year, we have had 20 students and we anticipate two year groups when we start the new academic year in September.

Particular thanks go to Jo Griffiths and Rob Barward Symmons for their hard work in getting this initiative off the ground. We could not have done it without their expertise and passion for the project.

The Haven

Throughout the year, the Haven ministry has grown – and is having a very positive impact on the local community. Many young people are coming in for chat and prayer during school lunchtimes. Many adults have come in as well, and it is really well utilized. We hope to see the ministry develop this year.

Thanks go to Nana Otchere, Nicola Pounds Hill and Toni Ferelli for their dedication to this project. It is not an easy ministry at all, especially with the current spate of violent attacks and criminality in the churchyard. So we are grateful for their perseverance and enthusiasm.

Youth Church

We were thrilled to launch the new C:Say Youth Church a few weeks back. This congregation will meet on each Thursday during term-time. We have only had two sessions – but each one attracted 30+ young people. This is a very creative and free-flowing form of worship, and we hope that the young people themselves will develop it according to their own needs. Please do pray for this important new Fresh Expression of Church at St. Andrew's.

Thanks go especially to Jo Griffiths and Nana Otchere for their hard work in establishing this – and to Ruth, Simone and Vicki who have volunteered to help. We would like more volunteers for this, please, so speak to me if you are interested.

Fabric and Maintenance

You will see from the Fabric Report that an enormous amount of time, effort and money has been spent on the fabric of Church and Parish Centre in the last year. I will not repeat the detail of that report here.

However, I would like to extend particular thanks to Rob and Allison Paing for their hard work and availability to support us, both in ongoing works and emergencies.

Social Media

Since Christmas, we have driven forward with improving our online presence as a church. It is crucial that we put more time and resources into this, because we live in an age where social media is the heartbeat of our culture. Any church that does not respond appropriately risks failing to reach new people with the Gospel in an effective and efficient manner.

We have updated our website considerably. Please do check this out. Our Facebook community continues to grow, with 350+ members. We have launched fortnightly podcasts that are being listened to all around the world, notably in the UK, the US, Samoa and Australia. We continue to Tweet regularly and have a considerable number of followers (although we still have more room to extend our ministry on that platform). We have updated our 'Church Near You' site.

We are not yet maximizing our use of Instagram – and that needs to be something we think about over the coming year.

Attendances

Church attendances have held steady in the last 12 months, averaging 216 congregants per week (the previous year averaged 217). However, it is noticeable that there is a decline of about 8% in attendances at 10.00am Sunday worship but an increase in midweek attendances. I have spoken often enough over the last 5 years about the time coming when Sunday is no longer always the best day for people to attend church, and our need to develop Fresh Expressions of church midweek to accommodate the needs and desires of Christians in our community. We have, of course, made some steps towards addressing this. But much more thought will need to be given to this as we unfold our MAP between now and 2030.

Priorities for 2019/20

As we look to the next year, there are a number of things that we will be prioritizing:

a. The establishment of Fresh Expressions of worship:

The Youth Church will need considerable energy to develop this ministry. In addition, we will be experimenting from 19 May with a new form of worship at the Sunday 10.00am Eucharistic Services (details on the pewsheets). We may introduce one further Fresh Expression later in the year, if resources allow.

b. Finances:

The Finance Advisory Group has worked with me over the last 5 years to bring stability to the finances. That has now been achieved.

However, we need to note clearly that, whilst our finances are now stable, the current situation is unsustainable. There is absolutely no way in which we can survive, let alone thrive, as a church with the current level of income and expenditure. For that reason, we will need to think very, very creatively in the coming few months about developing a new financial model at St. Andrew's.

This will involve making some tough, but creative, decisions. Please remember that, at this stage of our journey as a church, we need to keep our eye fixed on God's mission for the Enfield community and our part within that. We will need to make changes that may be

difficult for us in the short-term, but which will bring returns to us in the medium- to long-term. I would ask that you are supportive of the PCC, Wardens and myself as we consider this issue. Please pray for us that we will clearly discern the movement of God's Spirit in this regard and that we will have the boldness to follow where he leads.

c. The church Restoration Project

As outlined in the Mission Action Plan, we want to reorder and restore St. Andrew's Church in such a way that it can become a truly community building – 'Church at the heart of Enfield' – in a way that supports the mission of God for decades to come. In essence, we want a building that can:

- Be a social and work hub for the community, open 7 days per week
- Be a major concert venue for North London, with weekly concerts and performances
- Host Art Exhibitions and other creative activities
- Provide a flexible space for new and innovative forms of worship as well as holding fast to traditional worship
- Be a History Centre for the local community and beyond

Of course, this type of development will cost millions of pounds. It is far from easy to raise that sort of money! We also need to hold our fundraising ambitions in tension with the ongoing day-to-day running costs of the church, and the ongoing costs of the MABS Project. However, the PCC and I believe that a restored church building is at the heart of God's vision for St. Andrew's, and that the unfolding of our MAP is in no small part dependent on this. That being the case, we believe that God will lead us in the right direction when it comes to securing funds for this.

The restoration of the church building will be a phased project over a number of years – which means that we will all have to be patient as the building changes around us. And, of course, not everyone will be happy with everything; but again, I ask that we keep our eyes fixed on the 'bigger picture' of what we are trying to achieve as a church. So please be prayerful and encouraging of your PCC, Wardens and Vicar. Thank you.

Thanks

It is always dangerous to thank people in a report such as this, for fear of forgetting to include someone! However, there are some thanks I really do need to make...

First, I am grateful to Jo Griffiths, Nana Otchere, Ruth Mackay, Chris Whetstone, Toni Ferelli and Nicola Pounds Hill – and all the MABS volunteers – who do so much for the young people in our community. We have an exceptional youth and children's team – ***please do not take them for granted!***

Second, we are fortunate to have real skills and expertise in support of our finances: Simone Berndes, David Wiggins and Debbie McGill, in particular, have worked very hard to bring stability to our financial situation. Thanks to them all.

Third, I have been blessed with a wonderful team of Churchwardens, without whose support, encouragement and protection I would have struggled in recent years. Patience, Paul and Vicki – thank you all so very much. I will miss Vicki's input desperately. She is a deep loss to me personally as she steps out of role after 7 years. But thank you, Vicki, for all you have done.

Finally, I want to extend my personal thanks to Jo. Only she knows how much weight I have carried in this role over the last year, and the number of hours I have worked each week. Jo has sacrificed having her husband around as much as he should have been. I could not undertake this ministry without her forbearance, encouragement, wisdom, and patience. She

is a blessing to me – and the whole parish benefits from the way in which she supports me, in addition to what she brings in her own professional capacity at St. Andrew's.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Griffiths', written over a faint, illegible background.

Rev Dr Steve Griffiths

April 2019