

Vicar's Report for APCM 2021

This Report is much shorter than usual due to the fact that we are reflecting back only across the period since the last APCM in October 2020. During that APCM, I noted that my priorities for the following year would be a) developing the digital media presence of St. Andrew's Online b) the Restoration Project and c) establishing Enfield Citizens. These remain my priorities.

Digital Media Presence

On Palm Sunday, we celebrated one year of online worship with our 756th online service! That has been an incredible achievement – and I am deeply indebted to all those who have worked with me to make this happen. In particular I mention: Jo Griffiths, Nick Frend, Rob Barward Symmons (for the Nativity Play), Tom Duce, Adrian Saull and all those who have contributed readings and prayers/Zoom interviews etc. A big 'Thank you' to all of you who have provided other online material; music, film clips of your creative arts at home and so on. This has been a real 'team effort' and I thank everyone who has worked with me on this.

Thanks go to Jo Griffiths for continuing to populate the Instagram account with posts. Alongside the Facebook Group and Twitter, Instagram has been a good way for us to stay connected with the community over the last year.

Thanks also to the emerging Digital Media Group that will work with me to further establish our online ministry. We are excited for what the future will hold in this regard.

St. Andrew's Online will continue unabated into the future. Everything that we currently do will continue – and will be supplemented with new initiatives and new engagement opportunities. Please do pray for this aspect of our Mission Action Plan as it develops.

Restoration Project

I will not repeat all that has been written in the Restoration Project Report. But I can say how pleased I am that the work has begun in earnest for this mammoth project. In the last year, we have raised in excess of £54,000 towards the project. This has enabled us to engage with Architects for RIBA Stage 1, undertake the required Drainage Work, and commission all relevant Surveys and Reports to begin drawing the project plans together. I have been ably supported by the Restoration Project Steering Group in this. I offer them all my thanks, and especially Dinos Kousoulou for his constant engagement and thoughtfulness with regard to this project.

Enfield Citizens

Whilst we are committed to the establishment of Enfield Citizens – indeed, St. Andrew's is the 'founding member' of this organisation – it is proving very slow to get off the ground. In essence, many institutions are supportive of the vision. However, at the current time, few of them feel that they have funds available to associate as members. We will continue to chivy away at this and hope for some development in 2021. I am grateful to Barry Snelgrove for his support and engagement over the last few months.

Parish Centre development

Silverways School is due to open in a few weeks' time. The Parish Centre has been completely transformed. When it is possible to do so, I will arrange for the congregation to have an 'open visit' to the school to see how the Parish Centre has been redesigned.

This new SEN provision will be a very positive offering for the Borough of Enfield. We are privileged to host this. Internally, of course, the income has completely transformed our financial position. Without the income over the last year, we would have been in dire straits indeed. As it is, we look forward to a far more positive financial future.

Christmas 2020

I hope you will agree with me that Christmas 2020 was very special with regards to its worship. I want to extend a huge 'Thank You' to all who made that possible. Most especially, I want to thank Jo, Tom and Adrian for the exceptional quality (and quantity!) of music they produced in such a short time period! Thanks also to Nick, Illy and Rob – and all the actors, of course! – for the amazing Nativity Play and Christingle Service.

Reopening the building for worship

My primary concern in making a recommendation to the PCC for a building-reopening date has been the safety and well-being of the church family. Whilst I am mindful that 60% of the population has now been vaccinated, that means 40% still have not. We have a 'young' congregation and so it is true that the majority of our church family are still awaiting vaccination. Until we cross that threshold, St. Andrew's Church building still has the potential to be a place for spreading the virus.

It will be for the new PCC to decide when we reopen the building for worship. However, if all the national and local data continues to move in the right direction, I will be recommending that we reopen on Sunday 23 May – Pentecost. I hope that, by then, enough people will have been vaccinated to provide a safe environment and that some of the regulations surrounding worship will either have been relaxed or would soon be.

Prior to reopening, there will be quite a lot to do:

- We will give the building a 'deep clean', utilising professional services for that
- We will need to establish a 'Welcome Team' for each service, working closely with the Wardens to make sure that all is ready for worship that day. (N.B. It will NOT be the Wardens role to do all the pre-service preparations when we reopen: we are a big church family, and this should be a shared responsibility)
- We will need to establish a 'Sacristy Team' to prepare the Communion Table and clear away after each act of worship

There will be more information coming out in the next few weeks about this. If you are interested in being involved, please contact me: steve.griffiths@london.anglican.org

Staying focused for the future

One of the good things that has come out of the Lockdown period is that we, as a church family, have become absolutely focused on our purpose as a church – ***a people of worship, growing as disciples of Jesus.*** That is why any church exists. As we begin to move into our new future, ***it will be essential for us to stay absolutely focused on our primary purpose.***

For that reason, we will not be re-establishing every activity that happened prior to Lockdown. Every decision to either re-establish or create will be driven by some key considerations: a) how does this further our Mission Action Plan? b) What is the point of doing this activity? c) Is it an effective use of our time? d) Do we have enough volunteers to sustain this activity? and e) What are the financial implications of this activity?

In addition, when the building reopens for worship, it will take many months to re-establish our buildings-based ministry. We do not know who will return to the building, or who will stay online; we do not know who will have left St. Andrew's; we need to take into account the gap left by those who have either died or moved away from the area; we need to consider the 'shape' of buildings-based activities bearing in mind that we no longer have a Parish Centre.

All in all, please be patient and prayerful. To a large extent, we will be at Ground Zero as a church in the Summer of 2021. So much will have changed. We will need time and patience to

discern the way forward, what God's will is for us as a Mission-Shaped Church. Please be prayerful. Please be more ready to encourage than criticise. Please volunteer. This is your church – and we are a family together.

A personal note

Finally, on a personal note, I would just like to flag up with you all that – as excited, encouraged and enthused as I am about what has happened in the last year and what the future holds – I am feeling tired...

You will know that, over the last twelve months, I have worked long hours, I have tried to develop many new skills, I have tried to walk with you all in your own pain, I have suffered two family bereavements of my own, I have conducted far too many funerals for one year and sat with more than 30 families as they have grieved in these exceptional circumstances. In addition, I have worked with Kedleston to develop the Parish Centre and worked with our amazing Restoration Project Group to take forward that development. I have planned and delivered over 750 online services, and we have marked Harvest, Remembrance, Christingle, Christmas, Lent and Easter.

I have not had a full week's holiday since last July (the weeks when I have not done Morning and Evening Prayer have not been 'holiday weeks', just a change of routine) and I need to rectify that soon.

I do not say this to gain any kind of 'sympathy vote'. I just want to be honest with you all about where I am at. Now that Easter and the APCM are concluded, there are a few months ahead with no major events planned. I intend to continue providing the level of ministry that you have come to expect (and deserve) but I will also be trying to re-establish a level of personal equilibrium in my own life. I know that you will be empathetic towards me in this, and thank you for your understanding.

Finally, I want to say a huge 'Thank you' to Jo for her support and encouragement over the last year. She has put up with a lot (as she always does!) and I could not have undertaken this level of ministry without her by my side.

So, in conclusion, I am so excited for what God has in store for us for the future. He has done amazing things in our midst over the last 12 months. I believe that St. Andrew's Church stands on the brink of a new future, filled with more blessings than we could ever have imagined! I count it a privilege to be your Parish Priest and thank all of you who have supported and encouraged me from the bottom of my heart.

Here's to 2021 and beyond!



Rev Dr Steve

April 2021