



# **Annual Reports 2025**

**Annual Parochial  
Church Meeting  
Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

# Index

Rector's Report .....	2
Report on the Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council ...	5
Fabric Report .....	8
Estate Committee Report .....	11
Mission Committee .....	12
Junior Church .....	15
Churches Together in Finchley .....	16
Book Group .....	17
Bible Reading Group .....	17
Lectio Divina & Contemplative Prayer .....	17
Seeking God .....	18
Pastoral Group .....	19
Give me shelter! Church & Churchyard Project .....	19
Night Shelter .....	22
Stewardship .....	23
Finance Committee .....	23
Social Committee .....	24
Music .....	25
Deanery Synod .....	28
St Mary's Walking Group .....	29
St Mary's Primary School .....	31
Acorns .....	32
Safeguarding .....	35
Green and Fair Annual Report .....	36
The Flower Team .....	37
The Chapter House Set .....	38
The Bell's of St Mary's .....	39

# Rector's Report

2025 was without doubt the year of the roof. It will go down in the annals of St Mary's alongside the re-roofing of 1813! Hopefully we won't need to do anything major to the roof for another two hundred years.

Scaffolding went up around Easter and after a few weeks delay the roof work got going being largely finished by December with a few bits to finish off in the first part of January 2026. We were fortunate to be able to worship in the church throughout this time. The biggest loss was daylight. Hoardings blocked the lower windows, and the south clerestory was overshadowed by a temporary roof. Despite all this, and a churchyard with many monuments under protective covers, we kept going which is no small achievement.

One surprising event in our project was the appearance of our sundial in an episode of Antiques Roadshow!

School continued to visit church for Collective Worship and for other activities. Our outdoor carol service was converted into an indoor carol singalong. We kept everyone standing, sang carols and finished with hot chocolate as if we had been outside! Our Community Carol Service with friends from Barnet Mencap and Year 2 from St Mary's Primary School was particularly well attended this year.

Maybe because it was good to get out of church, we enjoyed a number of trips: the annual St Alban's Pilgrimage, a pilgrimage to Winchester combining the Cathedral with the Christmas Market, and trips to Walton-on-the-Naze & Frinton and Kew Gardens.

The scaffolding had been removed just before we held our second Silent Movie evening, this time Safety Last by Harold Lloyd, though the organ waited one more week before its protective polythene sheeting was removed.

It has been a great joy to welcome The Revd Rowena Gliddon as our curate, being licensed by Bishop Anderson in St Mary's on 25th January 2026

I would like to record my heartfelt thanks to Helen Bevan for her herculean efforts keeping our roof work on track whilst also planning the churchyard phase of the project.

Thank you to my excellent Churchwardens Smita and Nick who have ensured the smooth running of church life and provided me with much support.

Teamwork is really important and we are blessed to have Rowena, our curate, and Nigel, Deji and Claire our Licensed Lay Ministers sharing the task of ministry at St Mary's.

Thank you to Alison for her invaluable work as our director of music enhancing our worship and the life of the church. Alison has also been training our organ scholars and it has been a joy to have the talents of Guillem Leon and Macie Sutherland.

Behind the scenes Ana keeps our administration in order, including management of our halls, thank you!

St Mary's only manages to run because of so many volunteers. We have created a database of all the volunteering roles and it is extensive. Thank you to everyone who makes this church such a wonderful community.

You can read much more about the life of the church over this last year in the individual reports below.

## The Rector Fr Philip Davison



# Report on the Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council

This year we welcomed Akosua Asantewa Nkansah and Julie Dunbar to the PCC. At the Annual Meeting this year Julian Trevelyan will complete his six years on PCC

During the **Tuesday 27th May 2025** meeting, the Parochial Church Council (PCC) welcomed new and returning members. There were elections to the various PCC roles in including a new Secretary, Akosua Asantewa-Nkansah, and new Electoral Roll Officer, Lee Taaffe. The council decided to support **Barnet Mencap** through a collection at the Patronal Festival to avoid additional pressure on annual mission allocations. The "**Give Me Shelter!**" project roof work had commenced, and renovations were underway at 28 Hendon Lane to prepare the property for tenants by July, The PCC also established the membership of its various committees for the year. There was a wider discussion about children and families and a need to focus on "growing younger".

At an **Extraordinary PCC Meeting on Sunday 27th June 2025**, the council focused specifically on the rental of the Curate's house. The PCC unanimously resolved to let **28 Hendon Lane** starting on 12th July 2025. The initial term was set for 12 months, with the possibility of extension if the house is not required for a curate in 2026.

The **Tuesday 22nd July 2025** meeting focused heavily on financial and safeguarding responsibilities. The PCC agreed to contribute **£99,980 to the Common Fund** for 2026 and adopted the **House of Bishops' safeguarding policy statement**. The Safeguarding Dashboard was reviewed. Members discussed disbanding the current Fundraising Committee in September 2025, with a plan to review

the fundraising structure again in early 2026. Additionally, the council confirmed immediate support for **Barnet Mencap's Autism Hub** through "Disability Sunday" and reviewed progress on the church roof.

During the **Monday 8th September 2025** meeting, the council received updates on the "Give Me Shelter!" project, noting that while roof contractors aimed to finish by October it might be Christmas. Planning permission for the churchyard work has been submitted. Although it should only take four weeks Christmas was more realistic for this, too. The PCC expressed gratitude to the **Fundraising Committee** as it reached the end of its term, and it was noted that **28 Hendon Lane was successfully let** and generating rental income,. Discussions also touched on the challenge of maintaining church cleanliness during building works and the upcoming Safeguarding Sunday scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> November.

At the **Monday 3rd November 2025** meeting, the council unanimously approved **£9,500 in mission allocations** to be distributed among ten charities. A formal **Financial Controls Policy** was adopted to codify authority levels and accountability, and the **Health & Safety Policy** was approved subject to minor corrections. The Mission Committee reported on strengthening interfaith links with **local synagogues** and approved a submission for **Single Friendly Church accreditation**,. The meeting also addressed a critical volunteer shortfall for the Night Shelter and the launch of a new stewardship campaign to replenish reserves following significant capital expenditure,.

The meeting held on **Tuesday 13th January 2026** at the Rectory was primarily focused on the **restoration of the Large (Leahy) Hall floor**. The PCC unanimously passed a resolution to instruct Indigo

Flooring to carry out the work starting on 16th February at a total cost of **£8,561.80**.

The last meeting of this year was held on **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026** and was informed of the **Practical Completion** of the roof works on 23<sup>rd</sup> January. PCC discussed the possibility of a Children and Families Worker shared with Golders green Parish Church. Hall income has been good in 2025 enabling **£37000** to be contributed to church running costs. Further repairs to the halls will be required in 2026. The **accounts for 2025** were discussed and approved. It was agreed that our work encouraging volunteers should continue. There will be elections to Deanery Synod this year and those Deanery Synod members become the electors for General Synod later this year. -PCC



# Fabric Report

The Fabric Report only covers the Church building. Other parts of the estate will be covered in the Estate Committee report.

Overall, the Church remains in a good and stable state of repair. However, on the advice of the Estate Committee, the PCC has committed itself to a major programme of roof renovation and landscaping work in the churchyard:

- The roof renovation works commenced on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, and were substantially complete at the end of 2025. During this time there was scaffolding around the church.
- The roof works have included provision of insulation for the roof. This is expected to reduce church heating costs.
- Sufficient funds have now been raised for the overall project, including a significant further grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. With the completion of the roof works, the focus in 2026 will turn to the churchyard works.
- Fund raising continues for the internal decoration of the church, which had been taken out of the scope of the main project.

Other activity/works during 2025:

- The Estate Committee continues to monitor several cracks in the North and West walls. Some of the external cracks have been filled with lime mortar.

- Various roof leaks have been monitored, the roof continued to leak whilst the roof works were taking place. The dry rot arising from a leak the North Aisle adjacent to the pulpit was fully investigated whilst the roof works were taking place, it was established that no further action is required for this.
- A particularly severe influx of water took place in the chapel during heavy rainfall during a storm, this caused significant damage to the ceiling, furniture and floor of the chapel. An insurance claim has been made for the damages, which have now been addressed.
- During the roof works, abseilers installed anti pigeon netting over the bell tower louvres, and some other small openings. The abseilers also brushed loose stone from the tower, and carried out lime mortar pointing.
- Works arising from the five yearly electrical inspection of the church have been carried out.
- The Estate Committee is looking into some connection issues with the church wi-fi.
- The foul drain for the vestry toilet has been inspected and cleared of tree roots. It has been established that to avoid blockages, this drain needs to be re-routed. It is planned to undertake this work during the landscaping works.
- St Mary's continues to work with the London Borough of Barnet to renew the churchyard lease.

Smita Bora, Nick Upton  
Church Wardens



# Estate Committee Report

The Estate Committee have met four times this year with a further meeting arranged for April.

At each meeting Helen Bevan has given a report on the Church and Churchyard Project.

There have been problems with the roof above the Committee room and kitchen and we are awaiting quotes for the repair of this and the investigation of the condition of the timbers below the roof.

Earlier this year Helen Bevan supervised the renovation of 28 Hendon Lane prior to this being let.

The main hall floor was sanded and resealed in February 2026.

The Church boiler, Hall heating system and gas heaters in the Small Hall and Committee room were all serviced by Christopher Dunphy Ecclesiastical in December.

As to the heating in the small hall , we have been told that the two gas heaters are reaching the end of their lives. We therefore will be replacing them with either new gas heaters or electric radiators or a heat pump system. We have obtained quotes for the costs for gas heaters and electric radiators and will be obtaining quotes in relation to the heat pump. We will be asking the advice of a Heating Consultant

We will also be looking into the cost of replacing the heating system in the main hall.

The Committee Room fire doors are being replaced and we are awaiting a quote for wooden doors from the contractor.

In addition to the above we are carrying out the requisite Asbestos inspections and a specialist company is being selected to carry out a fire risk assessment.

We still have a vacancy for a Fire Safety Officer

Various other minor works have been carried out throughout the year as required

**Peter Boustred**

**Chair of Estate Committee**

## **Mission Committee**

The Committee consisted of: Nigel Wildish (Chair), the Revd Philip Davison, The Revd Francesco Aresco (for the first meeting), Deji Makanjuola, Smita Bora, Nick Upton, Patience Pelham-Hazeley, John Bier, Christina Beaumont (for the first meeting), Emmanuel Hammond and Ana Mejia.

Our business during the year covered a number of important topics, which enabled the church to continue its active mission, whilst at the same time working on the Church and Churchyard Project. We kept our eye on the Mission Action Plan which was in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year,

A new project was the launch of an audit into whether we were 'single friendly'. We took that phrase to include those who came to church on their own, whether or not they were married or widowed, as we were aware that so many churches emphasise how 'family friendly' they are. The audit was completed, some recommendations to make us more friendly (not just to single people) were implemented, and we are now a Single Friendly Church. Efforts continue to ensure we

are as welcoming as possible, with the regular use of lanyards for welcomers and the appointment of volunteers to be 'buddies' for newcomers.

We discussed the possibility of taking over Communications as an issue to be within our terms of reference, as a Communications group did not see itself as an ongoing committee. This was agreed by the PCC, and it led to some work being done on communications issues. At separate meetings, we considered our website and a strategy for its use and amendment, so that it would be up to date. We also considered our strategies for communication, especially those relating to emails and social media. We decided that our social media advertisements should contain one of some selected statements to the effect that we are a church which is welcoming.

Once again, we addressed our continuing need for more volunteers. We designated 15 February as Volunteering Sunday and issued a call for people who do not currently volunteer to offer themselves.

We considered the state of technology in use for the church. We decided that our WiFi needed to be upgraded and that we ought to acquire a laptop and mobile phone for in-church use. The WiFi and laptop issues were passed to the Estates Committee, and a mobile phone was subsequently donated. Thanks were given to Patience Pelham Hazeley for the donation of a projector for use in the church and the church hall.

Mindful of our commitment to be an inclusive church, we renewed contact with the organisation called Inclusive Church, which we have been financially supporting for many years, and we hope to host someone from them in 2026.

In furtherance of our commitment to be compassionate to the community, we opened a discussion with two synagogues, Finchley



Reform and Finchley Progressive. We invited representatives of both to our annual Holocaust Memorial Service in January 2026. We had done this in January 2025, when the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz Concentration Camp was marked. A successful service was held, at which a guest speaker told us of her mother's Holocaust experiences. The gathering was attended by Sarah Sackman, our MP and the Mayor of Barnet, amongst others. The discussion with Finchley Reform Synagogue will result in 2026 in a visit by us to a Saturday morning service and a return visit by them to our Sunday morning service.

The interest we showed in supporting the Water Well Project in Namasoli Medical Centre in Butere was followed up. We raised over £2000 for our contribution towards the total needed for the success of Phase 1 of that Project. It was duly finished when the Well was dug

and the water flow was pronounced appropriate for a solar powered well to serve the hospital and the local community.

Finally, we made decisions on the allocation of funds for Lent, for Christmas and for the total of £9500 which the PCC decided should be given to missions and charities. Our Lent giving was offered to the parish of St Francis in the Engine Room, our Good Gifts were for Noah's Ark Children's Hospice and our Christmas collections were jointly for the Church and Churchyard Project and Noah's Ark Children's Hospice, In accordance with our long-held policy, we gave money to the following Christian and local charities: USPG, North London Hospice, Barnet Mencap, New Citizen Gateway (Barnet Refugees), Homeless Action in Barnet's work for the Winter Shelter, Limapela, Toilet Twinning, St Mary's East Finchley Food Bank and Five Talents for Butere.

**Nigel Wildish**

## **Junior Church**

Junior Church meets at 10am every Sunday in term time in the small hall. Sessions are mostly led by Amanda Hughes, assisted by Anthony Raynor and Penny Davison, with Colin Platt helping occasionally. We have also been grateful to those parents who have helped out. Sixteen children have attended Junior Church in the last 12 months, ranging in age from 2 to 11. Activities are based on the pattern of the Church's year and the children really enjoy getting involved with the fantastic craft activities Amanda comes up with each week. The Junior Church has also created one-off artworks for special events e.g. Holocaust Memorial Day. The nativity play, written by Colin Platt, was once again a success and in a new first, all

children were given a small gift at Christmas in recognition of their participation. This is in addition to the certificates and prizes handed out each July. Members of Junior Church regularly write the intercessions for all-age services and then read them out in the service. Sometimes their words are used verbatim and sometimes their ideas simply used to inspire the intercessions. To make them more easy to identify, the Junior Church leaders have started wearing lanyards - anyone interested in attending or helping can speak to any of the Junior Church volunteers to find out more. New children and new helpers are always welcome.

## **Churches Together in Finchley**

Churches Together in Finchley gathers regularly to pray together.

The Lent Study Group this year looked at the Healing Ministry of the Church.

Ecumenical services were held on Good Friday (at Ballards Lane Methodists) and Pentecost (at Christ Church North Finchley).

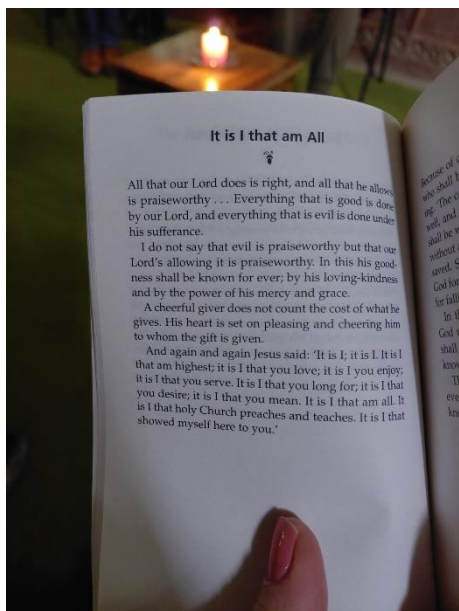
The Warm Spaces initiative has been run again this year starting in mid October, hosted by St Margaret's. It provides a warm space physically and also a warm welcome and social space. The annual Holocaust Memorial Service was held at St Mary's and was again very well attended.

**The Rector Fr Philip Davison**

# Book Group

We continue to meet on Zoom as it makes it easy for us all to gather for a pleasant hour discussing a range of books. This year we have read: James by Percival Everett, William Golding's *The Spire*, *Last Orders* by Graham Swift, *The Glassmaker* by Tracy Chevalier, *The Wolf Border* by Sarah Hall and Mishal Husain's book *Broken Threads*. We continue to read a wide range of books and will try anything that is suggested. New members are always welcome to join.

## The Rector Fr Philip Davison



## Bible Reading Group

This group meets fortnightly on a Tuesday afternoon at Claire Disbrey's house. We read widely in both the Old and the New Testaments. We are currently reading the Acts of the Apostles.

## The Rector Fr Philip

# Lectio Divina and Contemplative Prayer

These are two separate groups but they both meet at 10am on Monday mornings on alternate weeks. Some people come to one or other and some come to both. Lectio and Contemplative Prayer

meetings last for an hour which includes time for a sociable conversation too! In Lectio we read a short passage of scripture prayerfully several times giving an opportunity for us to share the words or phrases that speak to us as we listen. It is a prayerful activity rather than Bible study. In Contemplative Prayer we prepare ourselves and sit in silence for an agreed length of time. Both groups are open to anyone. Dates are fixed in advance and people can come when they are able to come.

**The Rector Fr Philip Davison**

## **Seeking God**

Seeking God is a discussion group which met 7 times over the year in the house of one of us. About 12 people attend on each occasion when we discuss a different topic. This enables individuals to join us at any time without feeling that they have missed important earlier parts of our conversations.

Over 2025, we discussed The Nicene Creed, How we can resist Evil, The Lord's Prayer, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Icons, Post Truth in society and St Francis of Assisi.

We continue to meet about every 6 weeks, excluding the period of Lent. We are very grateful to Friedgard Scrimgeour for her wonderful hospitality.

**Nigel Wildish**

# Pastoral Group

It's been a year of growth with the implementation of a monthly prayer meeting by popular demand alongside the quarterly business meetings. The group has also grown with additional two members. The list of supported congregants remains primarily stable with variability of an average of three. It is noted that status of those on the list seems either stable or improving but none has worsened . Those called up by the lord according to his will did so peacefully. Ours is a service to our creator and all glory to the almighty for finding us worthy to serve him. We aim to work more closely with the Healing Ministry. We have him. We reached our optimum number of members but anyone called to serve is welcome.

**Deji Makanjuola**

# Give me shelter! Church & Churchyard Project

**Church** - Universal Stone Ltd were appointed as the building contractor. They began work on the roof in April 2025 and after some delays, achieved Practical Completion in mid-January 2026. The roof is now fully insulated, and rainwater goods have been repaired and upgraded to current standards, anticipating more intense storm events.

Interior repair and conservation – the project architect will write the specification for replastering and painting during 2026 and apply for a faculty for the work. The work can only be done once the interior walls are fully dry. The main glass doors of the church will be fitted

with an auto opening mechanism to make it easier for everyone to enter the church.



**Churchyard** – A planning application to LB Barnet was made for the new courtyard garden at the front of the church in September 2025 but has not yet been decided. The landscape work will commence as soon as possible in 2026. Faculties for the churchyard and for conservation of listed memorials and the Georgian sundial base have been granted.

## Heritage Engagement Activities

1. St Mary's team members are working with **Barnet Mencap** staff and clients on: an Easy read guide to the history of the church (in advanced draft form), an audio guide with music; workshops on planting in the new garden (understanding maps; and Barnet Mencap will use the garden for their children and adult social group meetings and for horticulture training for their young adult group.
2. The historic 5-mile **footpath route** is being developed, with volunteer guides leading groups during National Lottery Open Days (March) London Festival of Architect (June) and Heritage Week (September) during 2025. A number of LB councillors participated and promised to help publicise the route. Getting local schools to engage with the route, has been more challenging than anticipated.
3. The **burials digitisation project** involves several components: laser survey of the churchyard and digital map by Atlantic Geomatics (completed Spring 2024), indexing and linking St Mary's burial records (completed December 2025), photographic record of monuments (partly complete); digitisation of all memorial inscriptions (complete). Training sessions for burial records volunteers are booked for March and April 2026. This will give them the skills to load more information and photos onto the digital map and database.
4. A **book on church history**, people and lives of men on the WWI and WWII memorials is being published. The text is written and being edited and images are being selected. Publication is likely to be late 2026 or early 2027.

**Project Evaluation** is being conducted to provide information to the National Lottery Heritage Fund about how people are engaging with our project and the heritage of St Mary's and whether they are learning new skills and most importantly, are they enjoying being involved!

### **Project Cost and Fundraising**

The project sum was revised to £1,170,739 in February 2025 and fundraising for this figure was achieved. This included a grant increase from the National Heritage Lottery Fund for an additional £250,000 (total of £500,000 or 42.7% of the project costs). A project time extension to 30 June 2027 was also approved.

Internal works to the church (replastering and painting) have been excluded from the National Heritage Lottery Fund project but will be done as CCYP Stage 2. Fundraising for Stage 2 has raised £58,728 (by 16.02.26) of the £160,000 target. Three additional grant applications have been made, awaiting decisions.

**Helen Bevan**

## **Night Shelter 2025**

From November onwards, St Mary-at-Finchley opened its doors every Sunday evening and Monday morning, providing a sanctuary for those in need. Thanks to our incredible volunteers, up to 17 men and women experiencing homelessness were welcomed with open arms. They received not only a hot evening meal, a safe place to sleep, and breakfast but also moments of connection over countless cups of tea and coffee.

A heartfelt thank you to every volunteer who selflessly gave their time.

**Latifa Latif, Akosua Asantewa-Nkansah and Smita Bora**  
**Winter Shelter Co-ordinators**

## **Stewardship**

Following the Stewardship campaign at the end of 2025 donors have been reviewing their giving.

Many who donate via the Parish Giving scheme have signed up to the annual inflation increase option. Some still prefer to credit the Church Fund account direct. A couple still prefer to give their donations in cash.

Whilst use of the Parish Giving scheme is encouraged all options are acceptable.

**Patricia Bagster**

## **Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee met four times during 2025, to review Church and Halls finances (accounts, budgets and forecasts), St Mary's church investments, Stewardship at St Mary's, and to advise the PCC on the management of finances of St Mary's.

In February the committee reviewed accounts for 2024 and a budget for 2025, recommending the accounts and budget for approval by the PCC.

In May the committee reviewed expenditure for the works on 28 Hendon Lane, which were being carried out prior to letting the property out whilst there is no curate at St Mary's.

The electricity and gas contracts came to an end in September, a review of the market was conducted, and new contracts are now in place.

A working party met to prepare for Stewardship Sunday, which took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> November.

The committee continued with the development of a Financial Controls Policy for St Mary's Church. The policy was approved by the PCC in November 2025, and a small working group is progressing the implementation of the policy.

## Social Committee

The Social Committee runs the Church Events held each year to celebrate various Church Festivals, plus other Special Services. Since the AGM last year: July 2025, Summer BBQ held in the Rectory Garden. September 2025, The Patronal Festival, Lunch held in the Small Hall this year 2025. October 2025, Harvest Festival, a Bring & Share Lunch, held in the Large Hall. December 2025, Carols by



Candlelight, after which we served Mulled Wine & Mince Pies. January 2026, The Holocaust Memorial Service, a very moving event after which we served Tea, Coffee and Cake. April 2026, The Easter Breakfast. A really joyful event at which we served Bacon Rolls, Croissant.

A BIG Thank you to everyone who volunteers and makes each of the events so special, a great team. Should anyone wish to join us in volunteering for any of the events, even for a short time, please do contact me. - **Julie Dunbar**

## **The year 2025 in Music at St Mary-at-Finchley**

Music in 2025, like much of the church's activities, was affected by the leaking roof and repair work. The organ console was covered by an IKEA gazebo plus a huge blue tarpaulin to make sure it didn't get wet. When the repairs began, the organ pipes were swathed in plastic sheeting to protect them from dust shaken down by the roof repair work. Nonetheless the organ continued to be an important part of our music-making. We are grateful for our excellent organists Tim Hooper and Damon Ying for their skill and kindness, and support of our music at St Mary-at-Finchley. In 2025 we had 2 organ scholars. Guillem Leon completed his year in the summer, and played some wonderful voluntaries on the piano as part of his preparation for his final recital at the Royal Academy of Music. Member of the choir also attended his lunchtime concert at the Wigmore Hall.

Macie Sutherland had a busy and very productive 2<sup>nd</sup> year as organ scholar, during which she achieved a Grade 8 organ distinction (tutored by Tim Hooper), auditioned for a Cambridge university

Organ Scholarship and got an conditional offer. We wish you the best of luck with your A Level exams, Macie!

Two other young organists joined the regular practice routine - Max (9) and Andy Jin (15), together with Natalie Young, who also became a tenor in the choir.



Alison started the year with a broken ankle, very grateful for the many offers of help and lifts to and from church, hospital appointments etc. In January the choir said goodbye to Felix and Takatoshi, leaving Daniel as our sole tenor until we welcomed Natalie later in the year. In February we went to Francesco's installation in Monken Hadley which was a wonderful occasion. The choir continued to lead the singing at Sunday Parish Eucharist, and also sang Choral Evensong a couple of times. Our weekly psalm

(between the Old and New Testament readings) is sung by a solo cantor. We're most grateful to all our cantors, and to Clare Fletcher for coordinating the roster of cantors. We learned some new music in 2025 including some Scottish folk tunes to sing at the funeral of Iain Lyall. We also enjoyed singing some new pieces by our resident composer, Margaret Poston whose mass setting retains its freshness and is a real parish favourite.

The Youth Choir continue to flourish with a good number of members. We follow the Voice for Life training and had 7 choristers taking exams in Nov 2025, 4 Bronze and 3 silver, all passed! This was a big achievement and brings a higher level of skill and understanding to the choristers involved. Thank you to Penny and Margaret for their constant support and wisdom in leadership of the Youth Choir, and to Penny and Philip for their excellent input for the Choir in Context part of the Voice for Life syllabus. We are also very grateful to Jane Lee for her help with safeguarding and to Clare Fletcher (wardrobe mistress).

In October the choir visited St Mary's school for a harvest festival service at the end of a school day, which was lovely. Our Christmas services were many and joyous, and Carol singing at the Elephant pub in north Finchley was very successful. Many thanks to Lindsay for organizing this.

2025 was a very busy year for fund-raising with several concerts for NHS thank you alongside 13 concerts/events and a private function for the established Church and Churchyard Appeal. These raised a total of £10,083.24 for the Church and Churchyard Appeal, and included our first ever Silent Movie night, with expert organ improviser Darius Battiwalla at the console while we watched Hitchcock's 'Blackmail'. This was chosen for its excellent storyline and wonderful shots of London 100 years ago. Concert highlights

Included Stephen Farr playing J.S. Bach Goldberg Variations on the harpsichord – what a treat! We are truly fortunate to be able to offer local music and other events and are very grateful to our sponsors who make this possible.

If you'd like to know more about the music please email [alisonsmartfisher@gmail.com](mailto:alisonsmartfisher@gmail.com)

**Alison Smart Fisher**

## **Deanery Synod**

Our Deanery Synod is a gathering of representatives from all the Church of England churches in the borough of Barnet. It is chaired by our Area Dean, the Revd Dr Julie Gittoes (vicar at St Mary's Hendon) and the Lay Chair, Catherine Okrafo Smart (an LLM at All Saints, Child Hill). Our representatives are Revd Philip Davison, our curate at the time, Deji Makanjuola, Patricia Bagster and Nick Upton. Nigel Wildish also attends as an ex-officio member, due to his membership of the London Diocesan Synod.

There were three meetings of our Deanery Synod in 2025. We always start with an act of worship in whatever church we are meeting. The first was on 10<sup>th</sup> March at St Paul's Mill Hill, when we considered in small groups what the hopes and priorities of each parish were for the current year. We heard about initiatives which gave hope and also about the challenges of smaller congregations and the difficulty of attracting children and young people. In addition, we conducted our usual business, which consists of reviewing any vacancies amongst Governors in our church schools and also vacancies in representatives on the London Diocesan Synod.

At the second meeting at St Mary Hendon on 25 June, the main item was a presentation from the CEO of Barnet Age UK, a local charity which works for a large number of aged people in the borough. It was clear from the presenter, herself a member of one of our churches, that there is great need and a lot of good work is being done. We were made well aware of the offerings which we could pass around within our churches. Then the usual business took place, and we consider our respective hopes and priorities within our separate parishes.

The third meeting took place at St Paul's Mill Hill again on 24 November. The main item at this meeting was a consideration of Climate Justice and Eco-Church. Presenters spoke from a global, a diocesan and a parish perspective. Information as to what we all thought were the priorities and what we were doing in our different church was exchanged.

**Nigel Wildish**

## **St Mary's Walking Group**

The St Mary's Church walking group met for several walks in 2025.

We made good progress with our project to walk the Thames Path, through London and beyond. There were all day Saturday walks from Woolwich to Greenwich in March, from Greenwich to Vauxhall Bridge in May, from Vauxhall Bridge to Putney Bridge in July, from Putney Bridge to Richmond in September, and from Richmond to Hampton Court in November.

In March there was a Sunday afternoon circular walk through Golders Hill Park and Hampstead Heath, and in October there was a

Sunday afternoon walk following the London Loop from Barnet to Cockfosters, through Monken Hadley and Hadley Wood.

In June there was an evening walk from St Mary's Church to Whetstone, via Mill Hill and Darlands, followed by a meal.

There were three circular guided walks of the St Mary-at-Finchley's Guided Heritage Walk in 2025, in June, July and November.

Sunday walks take place after the 10am service, and are usually about five miles in length, the all day Saturday walks are a few miles longer.

Dates have been planned for walks in 2026 - if you are interested in taking part, please contact Nick Upton or the Rector for further details. - **Nick Upton**



# St Mary's Primary School

St Mary's Church of England Primary School is linked to both Finchley parish Churches of St Mary's and St Paul's. The School is a diverse and inclusive, two-form entry school with a nursery, situated in Finchley Central. The school has a strong Christian ethos, underpinned by the specific Christian values of Compassion, Endurance, Reverence, Hope, Service and Thankfulness. The school bases its vision on Luke 2:52: **Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and all people**'.

## MANAGEMENT



Stefan Roos is the Executive Head Teacher responsible for the management of both St Mary's school and Holy Trinity school in East Finchley. The partnership has been operating for over 3 years and provides significant benefits including continuing professional development for staff, developing the curriculum, sharing resources and importantly financial benefits.

## ACADEMIC RESULTS

The academic outcomes are measured with Year 6 tests in May (SATs). The 2025 SATs were some of the highest seen at St Mary's and continue to be above Barnet and National averages. A great testimony to all the hard work put in by pupils and staff. However, staff monitor performance of all children aiming to ensure all pupils achieve their best outcomes during their time at the school.

## **LINKS WITH ST MARY'S CHURCH**

St Mary's Church continues to maintain strong links with the school, and members of our congregation are parents, governors, volunteers and teachers at the school. The clergy of St Mary and St Paul's regularly visit the school and take morning assembly. The school carol service continues to be a splendid occasion, and the Church was completely full, happily most of the leaks in the roof had been dealt with in time!

## **SCHOOL PLACES**

Currently there are some limited vacancies for children to join St Mary's so please do enquire if your child is looking for a wonderful school to attend. Also, there are vacant governor posts if you would like to be more actively involved with the school.

**Julian Trevelyan**

## **Acorns**

St Mary's Acorns is a well-established group for children 0 to 4 years old that meets Monday mornings 9:30 to 11:15 during term time in Leahy Hall at St Mary's.

St Mary's Acorns has welcomed many generations of families over the years. It is wonderful seeing extended families and siblings at our sessions. The group can accommodate 40 children. Many children go on from Acorns to attend St Mary's nursery and school.



Our aim is to provide a safe, healthy friendly and welcoming environment for all for our community. We are very mindful of health and safety and are constantly aware of the church's responsibility for the environment we prepare for our visitors. We are subject to regular health & safety inspections which we must pass to allow us to operate. Our risk assessments are up to date and get

updated whenever new issues are identified.

We meet with other play group leaders from the community to share ideas and experiences. Our aim is to continuously improve with the help and cooperation of the other groups and church users to achieve higher standards of health and safety obligations as well as a healthy and stimulating environment.

Every week we change our activities to keep the group stimulating, educational and fresh. We provide activities for physical, sensory and fine motor development. We have full advantage of our fabulous space and use it to good effect. Messy play and craft, our popular ball pit and sand are always available and very popular.

On special occasions we are visited by our Rector Philip who delivers stories from The Bible and talks to our parents and carers. We also are fortunate to have new curates come and visit and introduce themselves and their faith to our young visitors through activities.

Toward the end of our session, we have story time to develop listening skills and language. Then we sing favourite action number

songs and rhymes. It's lovely to see and hear our little ones learning throughout the year.

We recently had the pleasure of meeting our new curate Rowena who has visited twice already. We look forward to networking together moving forward.

Our team are wonderful to work with. They are dedicated and work hard to keep our environment safe, friendly and fun. They are the glue that keeps us going and we owe them great gratitude.

We remember all those who have volunteered and extend our thanks and appreciation to all. Without this kindness and goodwill Acorns could not thrive.

May all your Acorns days be happy days!



**Jacqueline & the Acorns team**  
**Acorns Playgroup at St Mary at Finchley**

# Safeguarding

St-Mary-at-Finchley is committed to ensuring that our church remains a safe, welcoming and nurturing environment for all, particularly for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

As the new Archbishop of Canterbury recently reminded us: *"Safeguarding is not simply a policy—it is the living out of our calling to love, protect, and honour every person as made in the image of God."*

Safeguarding remains a standing item on the agendas of both the PCC Meetings and the Children and Young People Committee.

All members of the PCC as well as key members of the church community such as those who work with the Junior Church, young choir members and vulnerable groups undertake regular checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service. As a church we also follow safer recruitment practices which ensures that all those appointed to key roles undergo thorough background checks.

St-Mary-at-Finchley is at Level 2 (of 3) on the diocese's online dashboard which supports parishes to stay up to date with good safeguarding practices.

This year we once again marked Safeguarding Sunday, reminding all that safeguarding is not a separate activity, but a golden thread that should run through all aspects of Church life. It also served as a powerful reminder that "it could happen here," urging every member of every parish, including all of us at St Marys-at-Finchley, to remain vigilant.

If you are ever worried about a vulnerable person, being it a child, young person or adult, please contact either Father Philip or myself. Contact details are found on posters in the church and halls. If and

when issues are raised, appropriate actions and measures will be put in place to ensure everyone can feel safe.

Safeguarding is a shared ministry. We remain committed to vigilance, compassion and transparency in matters relating to the safety and wellbeing of those at St-Mary-at-Finchley.

**Karyn Ray**

## **Green and Fair Annual Report**

The committee has met to discuss our progress towards achieving the Eco Church Bronze Award. To that end an action plane has been drawn up. There were churchyard clear-ups in November and March.



# The Flower Team

Our three dedicated and talented flower teams have continued to produce wonderful arrangements throughout the year (the exception being Lent and Advent when traditionally flowers are not used in church). We are especially grateful to Paul Simpson and Emmanuel Hammond whose tireless support at all times is highly appreciated.

A bouquet of thanks to all who regularly fulfil these duties. We learn from our parish administrator, Ana, how random visitors to our church during the week comment on the floral displays. All team members genuinely love their work so it is particularly rewarding when the arrangements are widely enjoyed.

If anyone requires an arrangement for a family funeral or special event, we would be happy to oblige. A small cost would be involved.

Also, we are always happy to welcome new members on to our very friendly teams! - **Lynn Radnedge**



# The Chapter House Set

The Chapter House is a non religious meeting place in a large Church or Monastery, so it's a good name for our nonreligious social group,



which started just after Easter 2023 with the Wednesday Coffee Mornings 10am to 1:30pm. Our Coffee Mornings, in the Blue Beetle, wrap around the 11am Wednesday Communion Service, welcoming all people.

Since the AGM last year, in addition to the Coffee Morning, we ran: 4 coach trips :June 2025, Trip to the St Albans Festival Pilgrimage. July 2025, Trip to the Seaside, The Naze Tower & Frinton-on-Sea. November 2025, Trip to Winchester

Cathedral and Christmas Market. March 2026, Trip to Kew Gardens Orchid Festival.

We assisted with the refreshments (Wine & soft drinks (plus cheese and Biscuits at a couple of occasions)), at the CCYP Fund raising Concerts and the Silent Movie Night (Ran by Alison Fisher)plus the NHS Thank you Concerts (Ran by Manny Hammond).

Other events & outings will be arranged, so watch out for details. A BIG Thank you to everyone who volunteers and makes each of the events so special, a great team. Should anyone wish to join us in

volunteering for future events, even for a short time, please do contact me.

**Julie Dunbar**

## **The Bell's of St Mary's**

We have a core band of six ringers and ring regularly on Sunday mornings before the 10am Eucharist and practise on Friday evenings from 7.30–9pm, when we are often joined by ringers from Hampstead, Hendon and Highgate. If you are interested in learning to ring or want to know more about the bells, please let me know.

At the end of May the pigeon mesh was again compromised and a pigeon got into the tower, which I was thankfully able to shoo out of the skylight before securing the sound control to prevent further access. This meant our bells were no longer as audible on Sunday mornings.

In August, some of our ringers joined the Hendon ringers' tower outing to ring at churches in Knebworth, Codicote, Kimpton, Wheathampstead, and Sandridge.

We were unfortunately unable to ring from mid-September to mid-January due to the roof work, which meant we couldn't ring half-muffled for All Souls or Remembrance Sunday, but the upside was that the roof project was able to include stripping out the breeze blocks behind the louvres, clearing out the pigeon mess from the tower windows, and fitting new pigeon proofing measures, so we can once again ring out on Sundays with the sound control open.

In March we welcomed a visiting band of experienced peal ringers to ring a full peal on our bells for the first time since August 2019, and they successfully rang 5152 changes of Pudsey Surprise Major in 2 hours and 43 minutes.

**Daniel Griffith**



...and one of the stars of St Mary's Church



