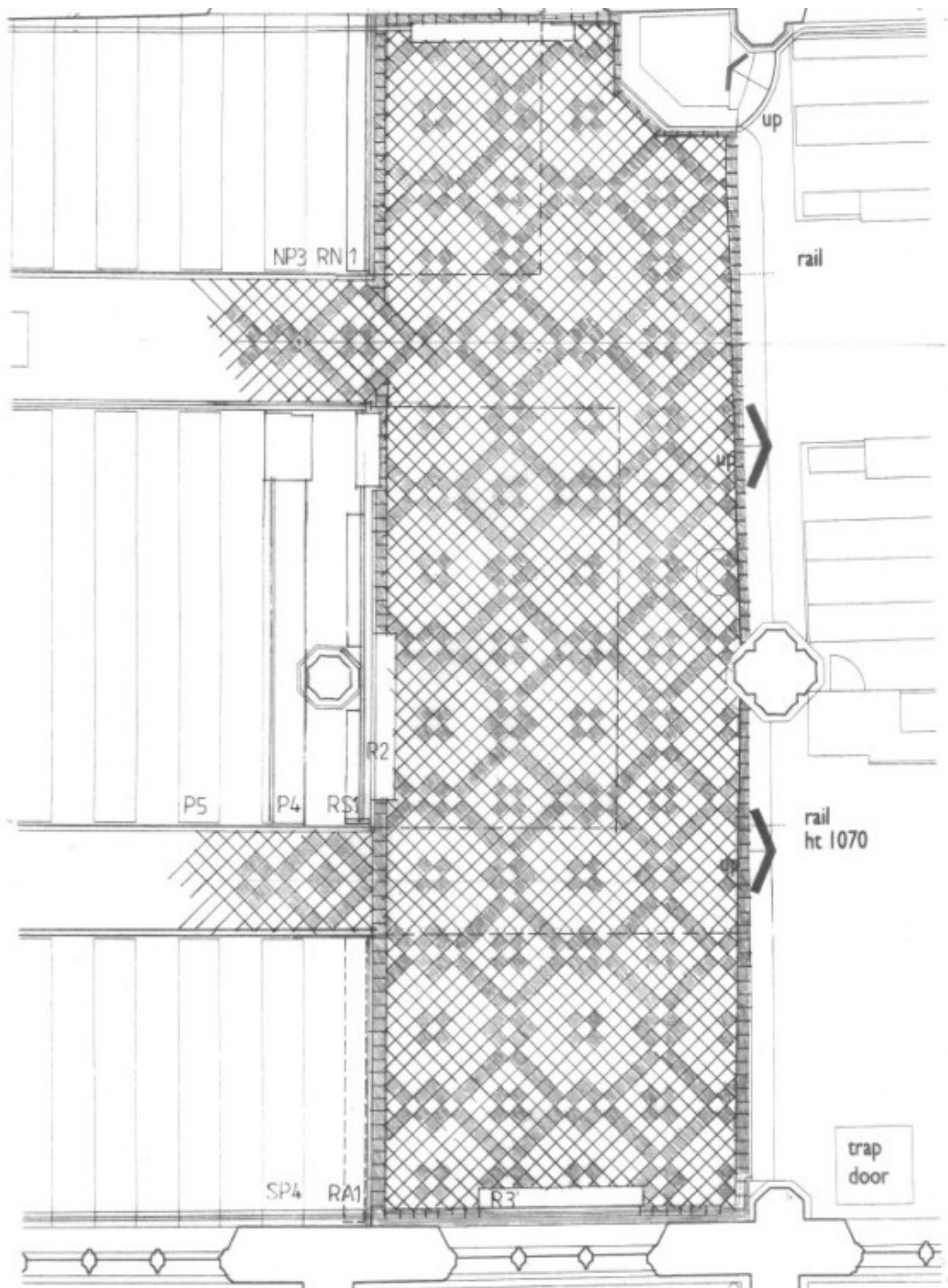


St Mary's Prittlewell



Annual Report 2022





Welcome to our Annual Reports for 2022

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture:

*"See, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious;
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."
To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe,
"The stone that the builders rejected
has become the very head of the corner",
and
"A stone that makes them stumble,
and a rock that makes them fall."*

1 Peter 2:4-8a

Dear Reader

2022 will for a long time, I feel, be the year, perhaps in people's minds, when both our church and church halls were undergoing re-ordering (of course other local, national and international important events have also happened!). The re-ordering of our church in the 1870s was far more extensive. However, we began the process of considering re-ordering the east end of our church back in 2018 and following delays, partly administrative, partly COVID, partly financial, I finally submitted the application for a faculty for the works to be approved by the Diocese, English Heritage and the Victorian Society in the Spring of this year.

The PCC, in 2021 decided that we should consider, when the 6 pews were removed, that the floor would be levelled and retiled. Having put the specification out to tender, the quotations received were substantial and I remember at this point having something of a crisis of conscience, reflecting on how the costs could be used within other areas of our ministry or community. But, after some prayer, consideration and

reflection on God's word, notably 1 Peter, as above, I reminded myself (perhaps there was something of God in the midst of this) that the works to be undertaken were not a "short term vanity project" but a "long term", possibly 100 to 200 years change that will enable our church building to be used by both ourselves and the wider community for many types of services and functions in a much more accessible way.

Our church of St Mary's is without doubt a spiritual house/home and during the excavation works the number of archaeological finds and evidence of hundreds of years of worship, drew me back to the fact that whilst we are custodians, in some senses of the past, we also have the huge privilege and task of enabling generations to come in their own priestly ministry, and that Christ will forever be our cornerstone.

The works began in earnest in our church in September when the wooden platform to the south aisle was removed and for a short time when we had wooden fencing separating that part of the church, a number of people remarked how it looked like a platform at a railway station! It was only after our final wedding for the year in October that the contractors moved in and began excavations in earnest, whilst we moved out and began using the west end of St Mary's Hall for our regular Sunday services. The plan was that we would be able to return to the church early to mid-December so that some of the Christmas services would take place in the church itself, however this was not to be the case as the works were delayed first of all following the finding of some asbestos and then secondly, a Victorian vault. This meant that the church would have to remain closed over the Christmas period whilst our Architect consulted with a Structural Engineer and the Diocesan Archaeologist. And, so, we ended the year unable to return to the church building and hoping that this would not take us too far into 2023.

I have said on a number of occasions during 2022 "why have one major project on the go, when you could have two?" and so, if you recall from my report in 2021 the east end of St Mary's Hall came back into our possession and in the Spring of 2022, we began planning the refurbishment of this part of our building. Works then began in May and we were finally able to take possession from our contractors in late

October-mid-November (see separate item regarding “St Mary’s Church Centre”).

All in all it has been an “interesting and exciting” year! However, there have of course been some sad and difficult times. During the late summer we lost our dear brother in Christ, Ray Mason, following his struggle with cancer. I also had the privilege of conducting a number of funerals which involved tragic circumstances. In September we held our first Heritage Open Day weekend, joining in with this national event. This however coincided sadly with the death of our late Queen and on the Saturday, we held an impromptu service attended by civic dignitaries, this was understandably a very moving time for us all, and I am thankful to the wonderful ministry team that we have here at St Mary’s who supported me during this time.

For the year 2021/22 I had the privilege of being the Mayoral Chaplain, and with the duties this has entailed, and the relationships built, we continued to build our connections with Southend City Council (City Status granted by HM the Queen announced but coming into effect in 2022) endorsing, once again, St Mary’s as the “Civic Church”.

My involvement in my other chaplaincy roles has been varied. I am delighted to continue in my role as Sin Bosun (Padre) for the RNA Southend Branch, however my Police Chaplaincy role has come to an end and the local Scouting Chaplaincy seems to have “faded away”! but I continue to be involved with our own Scouting group.

In June of this year, it was wonderful to host a Confirmation Service at which 8 of our own folk, young and not so young, affirmed their faith and were confirmed by the Bishop of Bradwell. A true delight! The life of prayer continues to be hugely important within our church community and a small group of us continue to pray daily via Zoom and during Lent, a number of us studied and read through the book “At Home in Lent”, and for the first-time during Advent we also shared in studying “The One True Light” based on the Gospel of John.

As you read through the rest of our reflections / reports for 2022 I am sure you will see that the life of St Mary’s is rarely dull and as we look

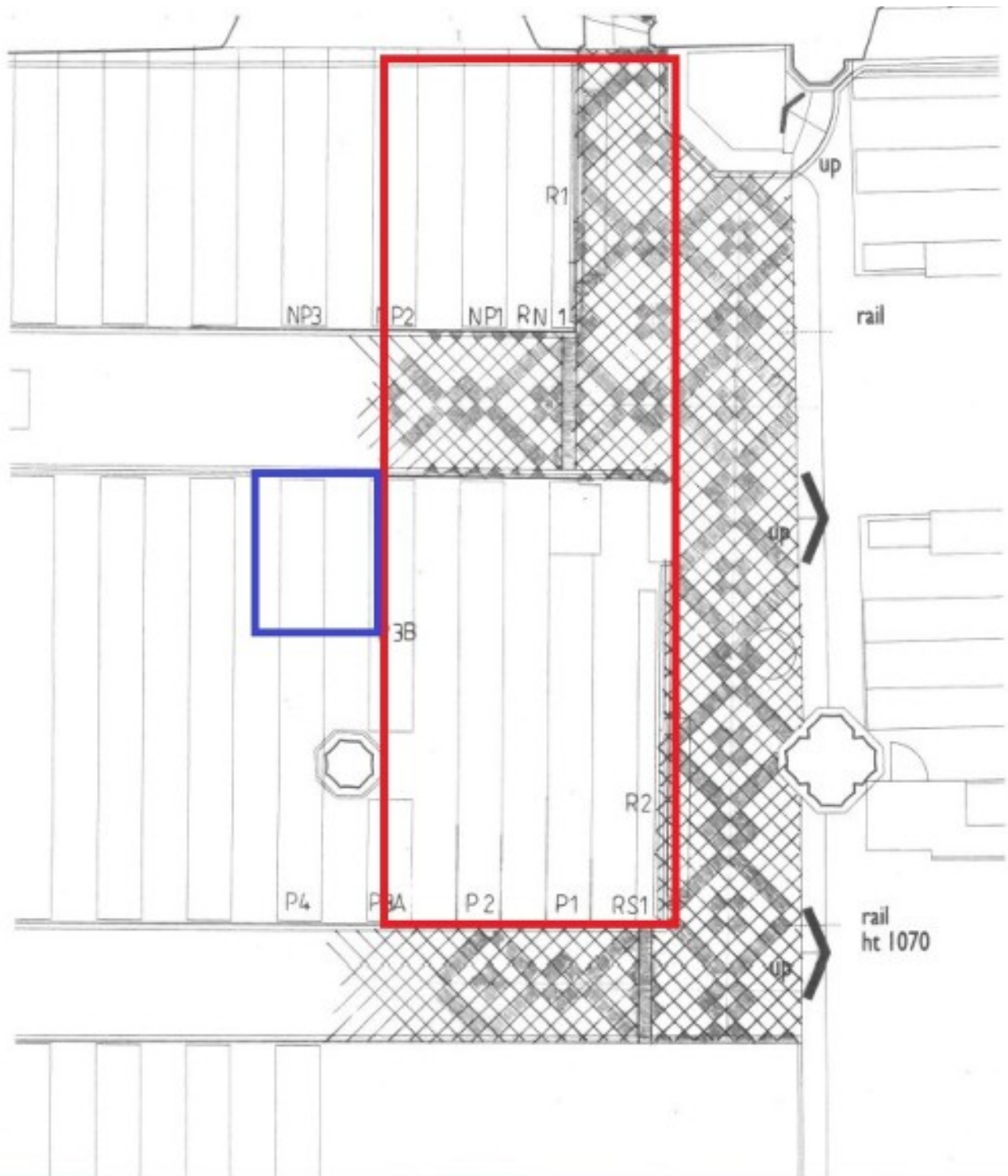
to 2023 there will, without doubt be, exciting times ahead as we share in God's ministry together.

Finally, for now it is of course "traditional" in these introductions to thank folk for their support and encouragement during the year for our ministry here and the life of our church, which is everybody who considers St Mary's to be their spiritual home. But personally, I do wish to thank Revd. Jacky, Keith Turner, Lois Blakey, and John Tipping (the PCC Standing committee), and the PCC as a whole, Christina Turner, (our Administrator), Marie Searles (our cleaner) and the wonderful "crew" who have helped set up "church" on Saturdays and other times in the west hall, from October for our services. And finally, last, and definitely not least, of course, my dear long suffering and wonderful wife who keeps me "on track" Sue!

God Bless you all.

Revd Paul Mackay







All photographs taken and permissions given by Revd Paul Mackay

Churchwardens Report

"In co-operation with the priest in charge, Churchwardens are generally responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the parish. These responsibilities include various aspects of administration, plant operations, and personnel. Their work is not just the maintenance of the church building but helping the smooth running of the church." (Extract taken from www.Churchwardens.com)

I want to begin by saying I could not do this alone, so it is with heartfelt thanks to those who have helped and are supporting me during my time doing this, especially John Tipping, Peter Sloman and Bob Harvey who have gone above and beyond by sharing their expert knowledge and time, by taking on projects which are lengthy and complicated. I'd like

to thank Pat Johnson and the flower arranging team for all their efforts keeping the church and The Centre looking so welcoming, especially as we are experiencing a new worship venue/experience. I also thank the ministry team who have been patient and understanding during the changes that have taken place this year. I also thank the PCC for supporting the proposals and projects.

We had a steep learning curve in 2020 and continued restrictions into 2021 so we were more than able to continue and improve the way we work and worship at St Mary's. We have a good response with volunteers for most jobs, but sadly still no one for Churchwarden although thankfully the deputies from last year are still on hand if required. I am once again the only Churchwarden for the time being, facing the challenges and legal responsibilities of the role. Thanks to my extended church family I am still enjoying this task.

This year started pretty much like the year before with services being organised and planned, Lois preparing Schools and Family activities and ways to worship. Maintenance and servicing pencilled into the diary along with a sense of joy as we go forward. This of course during a massive reordering programme.

Having learnt new health and safety rules and implemented hand sanitisers and face masks, social distancing, from last year we continued in the same way with some changes being made as restrictions were removed towards the end of 2022.

All in all, it's worth noting that worship in some form or other has continued in this church during all the changes. Let us pray that we resume normal activities and that we continue to adapt and overcome making a great quality of worship and fellowship available.

Keith Turner Churchwarden

Fabric Report

Well, here we are in 2022, and not a great deal has happened over the last year as far as the day-to-day fabric work is concerned. However, the much-needed work to the vestry arch has taken place and there are on-going projects such as the church reordering, which is at a standstill at the moment following permissions being granted for the work to take place, the old snooker hall which is a work in progress, but taking shape, and the continuing leaks from downpours which we continue to keep an eye on and make repairs where we can.

Theft of lead from St Mary's church hall is still awaiting a result from the police, who still have our wheelie bin and lead. And we are also waiting on a Crown Prosecution Service decision as to whether a charge will be brought against our neighbour for criminal damage. We are in contact with the police regarding both crimes.

There is still ongoing maintenance of the churchyard and gutters and gullies especially in the wintery weather. We have had a change of tradesman as Smith and Barker have gone into retirement and although we are in a period of adjustment as we get used to each other, results so far are very good indeed.

The sheds now have fire extinguishers fitted and appropriate signage, this has however revealed a few health and safety concerns about how we store and handle chemicals such as weed killer and acids for drain clearing. It has been suggested by Thameside our fire maintenance people we get fire cupboards in the shed for our chemicals and fuel storage, and appropriate protective equipment such as gloves and goggles, we are looking into this to ensure we get the right level of response to this advice.

The snooker hall, as was, has now been renamed to "St Mary's Centre" and has been fitted with a dial out security sensor and appropriate fire extinguishers. See Revd Paul and Lois Blakey's report and photographs on the new centre within this Annual Report.

I think that's all for now, as ever if you have anything else you want to raise, please let me know.

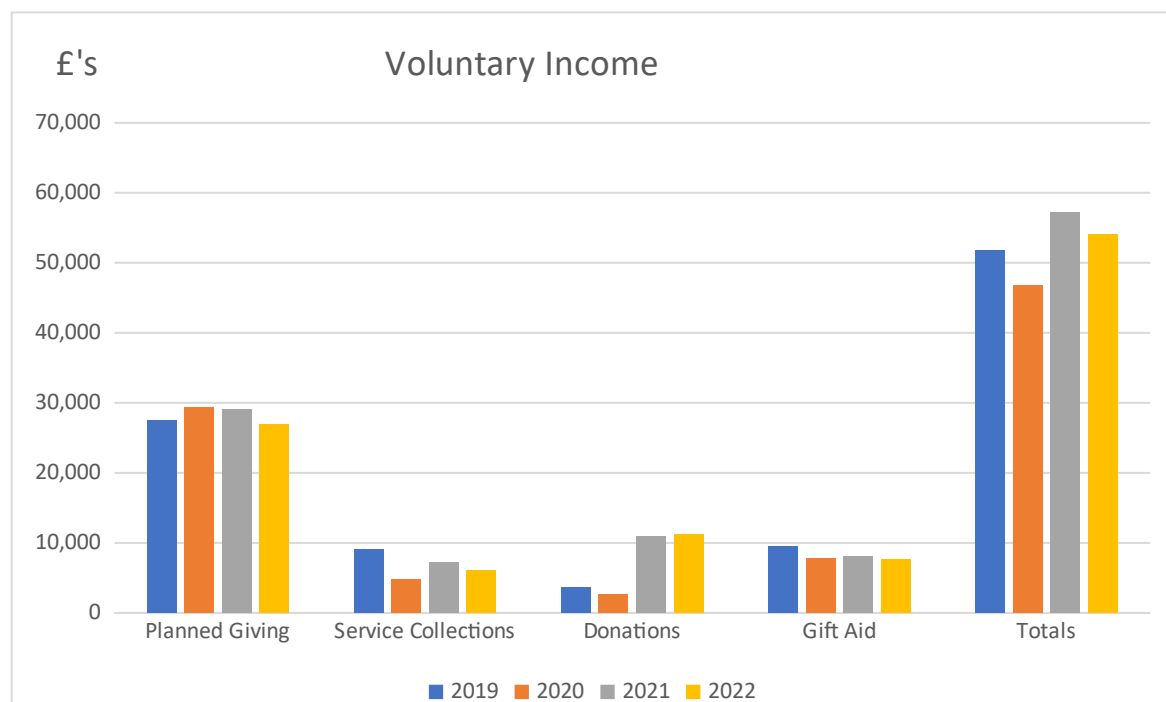
Keith Turner (Fabric Lead)

Finance Report

The major expenditure in 2022 was the refurbishment of the old snooker end of St Mary's Hall into a modern Church community centre not only for Children and Families work but other uses e.g. church meetings, church office etc. We hope in the future as well as being a wonderful community resource it will generate income. The cost of this was £369,521 and has been capitalised on the balance sheet to add value to St Mary's Hall. We are truly grateful for the legacies from Tony Swift and Una Heal plus other generous donations which have funded this work.

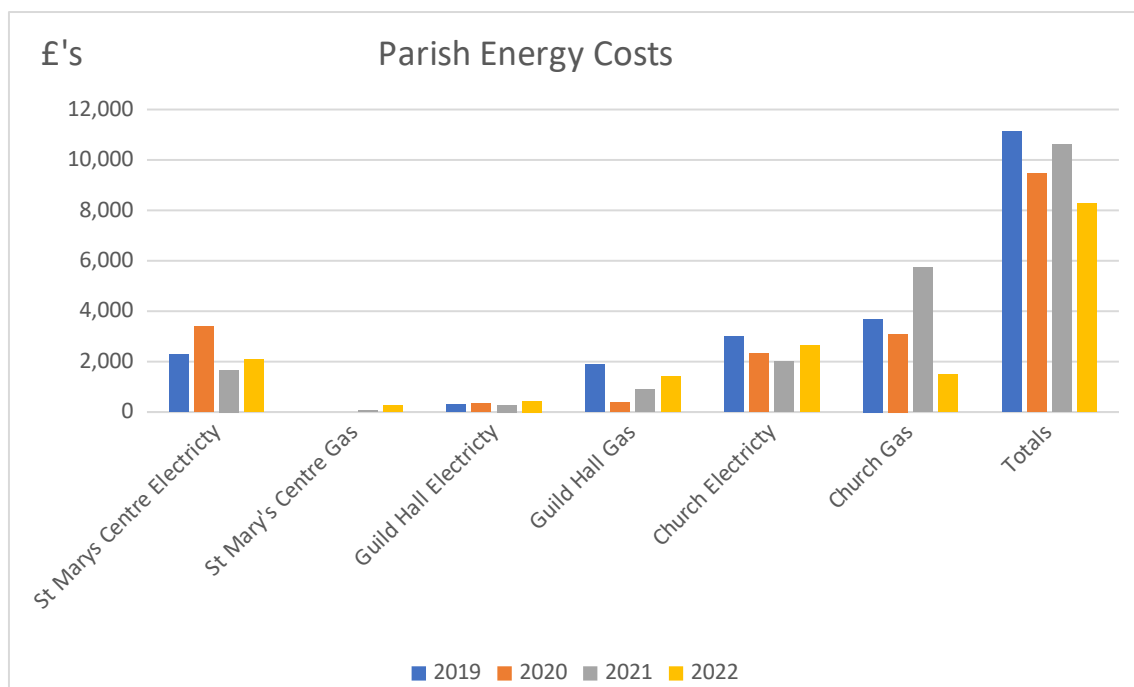
Our General Fund continues to cover the day to day running costs of St Mary's. Our two main sources of income are through the church family's voluntary giving week by week or month by month and from rents relating to the commercial properties owned in Leigh-on-Sea. Unfortunately, last year a tenant at one of these properties defaulted on their payments result in a bad debt charge in the accounts in the sum of £54,630. Every action was taken to try and obtain this rent but reluctantly the PCC has now commenced proceedings in Southend County Court to re-possess the property. The chance of recovering the debt is minimal. Despite that, through prudent management of our funds, our General Fund loss was £23,070 and we still finished the year with a credit balance of £12,518.

The chart on the right details our voluntary income for the past four years.



The level of voluntary income has fallen by just over £3,000 in 2022 compared to 2021. Despite that we have paid in full the Parish Share of £70,639 to the Diocese of Chelmsford. This money goes primarily towards the cost of clergy stipends and it is important that we continue to fulfil our commitment to this important expense. It has been a difficult year for everyone with the cost of living crisis, but alas the church is not immune and we need to raise our voluntary income. Any increase to Standing Orders or giving through envelopes or the plate, however small, would be appreciated in 2023.

We do everything we can to manage our costs. We use an energy broker to scout out the market for the best gas and electricity deals. The following chart shows our energy costs for our buildings over the past four years.



In February 2022 we forward bought a gas contract starting in November 2022 for St Mary's Centre with a four year duration. This was just before the major hike in gas prices. The major areas of energy expenditure are the church electricity and gas and St Mary's Centre electricity which powers the overhead heaters in the west end of the hall. We plan to replace those heaters in 2023 with gas fired radiators as part of the phase 2 redevelopment of the Centre thereby saving substantial costs. Church gas costs have fallen significantly in 2022 because of the church closure for re-ordering work towards the end of the year.

Other examples of costs saving have included when we challenged our security alarm and CCTV company on their proposed rises of a 9% increase price rise and ended up with a 3% price reduction as a result of our negotiation.

Despite all the challenges of 2022 we have met all our routine expenditure and paid our bills.

There is a lot more detail in the PCC's full legal report and accounts for 2022 which runs to 26 pages.

If you are reading this document online, please press Ctrl + click on the following link to see the accounts:

[Annual Report and Accounts 2022](#)

If you are reading a paper copy of this report, please go to the following link, click on "find a charity" and enter 1131704 as the charity number. You will then be able to access the report and accounts for 2022.

<https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk>

In conclusion we continue to be blessed by generous giving and God's love through the Holy Spirit.

If you have any questions on anything, please let me know.

John Tipping Honorary Treasurer



St Mary's PCC and Standing Committee meet on alternating months throughout the year, to discuss important issues and make decisions on behalf of the church.

The role of the Standing Committee is to transact the business of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) between its full meetings. The Committee act as a sounding-board for the incumbent in all matters temporal and spiritual as may be deemed appropriate.

Your current representatives are:

PCC

Revd Paul Mackay
Revd Jacky Lindoe
Richard Anderson
Philip Briant
Teresa Church (Deanery Synod Rep)
Marianne Fowle
Bob Harvey
Pat Johnson
Christiane Korsten
Wendy Perry
Peter Sloman (Deanery Synod Rep)
John Tipping (Deanery Synod Rep/Honorary Treasurer)
Keith Turner (Churchwarden)
Melanie Van Looy
Sue Mackay (as PCC Secretary)

Standing Committee

Revd Paul Mackay
Revd Jacky Lindoe
Keith Turner – Churchwarden
John Tipping – Treasurer
Lois Blakey – Children & Families Worker
Sue Mackay (as PCC Secretary)

Thankfully this year we were able to meet face-to-face, however for those PCC members who were unable to attend in person, we were able to offer participation over Zoom. During our meetings, important decisions are discussed and decided upon. With various refurbishment works being undertaken to the East Hall (St Mary's Centre) and the works taking place in the church building itself, we continued in our task to remain good stewards of the church's finances as well as ensuring the general upkeep of the church was maintained and decisions made for our future work and mission in this place. Pastoral concerns are an important part of our ministry and so we remain mindful of any issues that are known to us.

Once again it was lovely to be able to hold our PCC Away Day in September at St Michael's, Dawes Heath, and I think it's safe to say that everyone appreciated the day and that it was well worth spending a few hours together on a Saturday praying, thinking, and discussing the needs and life of our church and how we might look to the future.

And so, I repeat again from my previous past reports because it continues to be the case,

"St Mary's has a PCC who are very committed to working together, ensuring that the gospel of Christ is proclaimed in thought, word and deed and that all of us, as the body of Christ in this place play our part in ensuring that we remember all that has been done in the past, but looks ahead to the future, so that our church, God's church in Prittlewell, is still here in another 1000 years."

Our meetings are never boring (in fact, at times there is actually "laughter" involved!!!) there is always something interesting to discuss and mull over. As PCC Secretary it has been a privilege once again to sit and work alongside a great team of people, and I look forward to more exciting times ahead. My prayer and I hope yours too, is that as the representatives for St Mary's we will remain unified and focussed on God's work in this place. I'm sure we will.

Sue Mackay - PCC Secretary

Archives Report

WARNING

This report contains material and images that some might find upsetting.

Four plastic boxes of material were sorted and listed for depositing at the Essex Records office. Some of the material was disposed of humanely by shredding and being left to the mercy of Southend Corporation refuse collectors.

However other material was listed and delivered to records office, notably PCC minutes and Standing Committee minutes as well as a collection of parish magazines. The result of all this is that 4 full boxes became 3 folders of paperwork.

I would like to say a big thank you to those people who have taken time and care in collating and listing reports etc; it makes life so much easier for me.

Attached are some photos of the boxes and contents - not for the squeamish! The author of this report states that no innocent piece of paper was injured or traumatised during the making of this item!!!.

Phil Briant



Bellringing Report

Early in the year, ringing began gradually to return to normal and has been maintained throughout the year, with usually at least ten people ringing on each Sunday morning and Monday practice nights have also been well supported. We were pleased to be able to ring for the Christmas services again, although it seemed strange with the church closed for reordering.



Bernard & Jose's Memorial Service and interment of ashes was held on Sunday 24th April. At the same time the bookcase donated by Prittlewell and ex-Prittlewell ringers, and a peal board recording a peal rung in their memory, were blessed. The service was well attended by ringers from all over the country.

We were saddened to hear that one of our former ringers, Sharon Bryan died in August. Sharon and her husband Austin were regular ringers at Prittlewell in the 1970's. Two of us attended her funeral in Nottingham in September.

The bells had a major 10-year maintenance overhaul during the year.

The Saturday ringing school has restarted, first on a fortnightly basis and then on a weekly basis by popular demand. Several new learners have started which is good news.

Our annual August outing was in East and West Sussex ringing at East Grinstead, Hartfield, Bolney, Hurstpierpoint and Burgess Hill. A good time was had by all.

David Sloman



Junior Church

Junior Church had their first year free from lockdown restrictions since the beginning of the pandemic. So, we have been able to meet together every Sunday whether as Junior Church or with the rest of the congregation for our “This Sunday” services.

This year we began by exploring the story of God’s people through the Bible from creation right through to the letters of the early church.

During the year we have excitingly seen Junior Church grow both in numbers and their involvement in serving the church. We now have children and young people who lead readings or prayers at our “This Sunday” services, who have committed to being on the refreshments rota and in recent months since we have been meeting in the hall who have stayed behind to help pack away chairs.

In July we had our first big Junior Church outing where we went to SOLID festival, a Christian event held at an outdoor activity centre. The day included two meetings at the beginning and end of the day, inflatables, sports, laser tag, archery, banana boat rides, mountain boarding and more. We had a fantastic day and great weather and are planning to go again next year.

Picture: Banana Boat Riding at SOLID

School Services

We began the year leading three services a week in the school, one in church for the East Street children and two over at the Boston Avenue site. This was a precaution due to the pandemic. July



saw another year group progress to Secondary School. We held a service for them in church and every child had the opportunity to accept a gift (from the church) of a Bible and book about transitioning from primary to secondary school.

In September the children at Boston Avenue began meeting to worship in one service again, this service includes all the children from year two through to year six.

Make it Mondays

This year we continued with Make it Mondays hosting one in every school holiday this included:

February – Feel the love, which was all about God’s love for us.

Easter – Easter in an Eggbox, where every child got to make up and take home their own set of resurrection eggs (eggs to help them re-tell and remember the events of Easter).

May – We are Royals, joining in jubilee celebrations and focusing on how God says we are a royal and special to him.



Pictures: Make It Mondays – “Joseph” and Pumpkin Carving at our October Make it Monday – “Let your light shine”

Summer – Joseph from Dreamer to Ruler, six Make it Mondays exploring the story of Joseph.

October – Let your Light Shine, reminding us that Jesus is the light of our lives, and we are called to be a light in the darkness.

Make it Christmas – celebrating the story of Christmas through story, games and making.

We now have some regulars who attend Make it Mondays and have established a priority booking list for our regulars, so they don't miss out on booking a place. It has been wonderful getting to know the families who come along and being able to share stories and messages from the Bible with them.

After-School Club – God's Little Green Fingers

From February half-term to the end of the summer term we ran an afterschool club for some of the children in year 1 (five and six year olds). The club explored nature and science with God. This was done through bible stories, nature hunts and experiments. This was a fantastic opportunity to regularly share bits of the gospel message with the children.



Picture: Easter Garden Project – God's Little Green Fingers (After-school Club)

Easter Hunt

This year we hosted an Easter Hunt in the church yard because things were still a little uncertain as we began the year with whispers of another lockdown. Fortunately, there were no further lockdowns, however it seemed responsible to host the Easter Hunt outside again.

The hunt followed the events of Holy Week and Easter. However, the numerical parts of the story, such as how many disciples there were or how many days Jesus' body lay in the tomb saw the children hunting round the church yard for eggs to help them discover the missing information.

Lois Blakey

Children's Society Collection Boxes Report

This year the Children's Society home boxes have raised a total of £884.44 plus £39.36 in Gift Aid.

We currently have 32 registered box holders, the majority being church members but also some are held by members of the local community. Unfortunately, not all the boxes were returned this year, some due to the fact that people are not using cash at the moment and no response was received from a few.

However, on the positive side, given the circumstances, this is again an improvement on last year.

Thank you to those who continue to support this important charity.

Linda Corney

Christingle Report



Our Christingle Service took place in the church hall this year, which saw many families including children from St Mary's school and our uniform groups, come to our church to celebrate the event.

This year, parents were given the option to go online and donate to the Children's Society.

There were also boxes available organised by Linda Corney that people could take away to fill with change throughout the year (see her separate report).

Back in October I attended the Women's Fellowship meeting to discuss the history of the Children's society and how we are involved as a church.

With Covid restrictions fully out of the way, I will be including the Smartie Challenge which will no doubt raise some money and is always popular with the school children of St Mary's and our uniformed groups.

Stephanie Stanley

Churchyard Report

We have three circular flower beds - one mixed flower bed a Lavender bed and a Rose bed. A new wildlife plot, meadow, and a number of borders.

We met once a month to keep the Churchyard weed free and tidy with planting when we can.





This year we started to clear the back border of wild garlic to create a wildlife garden. A bird house and small water dish is now in this area. Some wildlife friendly plants were planted - Hidcote, Euonymus, Vinca, Hebe and Pittosporum. This is a plot in development along with more wildlife friendly planting we are hoping to have a

hedgehog house and bug houses this year.

In the middle of March Lois took over a part of the garden near to East Street School for an Easter Garden which she did with the help of an after-school group "God's Little Green Fingers".



The Summer this year was particularly hot and dry, so we did lose a number of plants due to not being able to keep them watered, so have decided next year to look at drought tolerant planting.

We did put in some geraniums in the Lavender and Rose beds for some ground cover which seem to be doing well.



We are also trying to create a meadow. At the moment we are just seeing what comes up naturally but have put in some Yellow Rattle that is supposed to stunt the growth of the grass to allow more flowers to grow.

Two compost bins were also built.

In November we planted some daffodil bulbs in the Rose bed to match the 300 mixed bulbs we planted last year.

Also, in November Revd Paul & Revd Jacky sourced two bike planters. These were free as long as they were planted up and a photo was sent. This was an incentive to encourage cycling. These planters were planted with Rosemary, Thyme and trailing Ivy, with Cordylines in the middle and some violas. Bulbs were also planted later.



We are open to any suggestions, ideas for the future.

The gardening team is made up of myself – Christina Turner, Revd Jacky, Richard Anderson, Sue Sullivan and Teresa Church.

Christina Turner

Communications Report

We are Revd Paul Mackay, Revd Jacky Lindoe, Lois Blakey, Richard Anderson, John Tipping, Keith Turner, Christina Turner and Sue Mackay and we meet regularly to discuss ways to best keep “in touch” with those connected to St Mary’s and to make St Mary’s known generally. Amongst other things:

- Website
- Facebook
- Weekly News Booklets – printed and sent out by email
- Service sheets
- Banners fixed to the churchyard wall
- Signage

A new event this year proved very successful – the Heritage Open Day in September, and we hope to repeat this in 2023.

Richard Anderson

Deanery Synod Report

The Deanery Synod Standing Committee meets four weeks before each meeting of the Synod to draw up the agendas for the meetings. St Mary's representatives are Teresa Church, John Tipping and Peter Sloman.

The first meeting of the Synod was held on 9 February 2022 at St Michael and All Angels' Westcliff, chaired by Linda Barnard.

Matters discussed:

- 1) The Unite in Light event to be held at the Cliffs Pavilion.
- 2) The licensing of Mike Walker priest-in-charge of St John's and Christchurch and Steve Collier as Associate Minister at Christ Church.
- 3) Visitation service July 14 at St Peter's Westcliff.
- 4) Deanery Jubilee Service on 12 June.
- 5) In five groups, members discussed their Hopes and Thoughts on future plans for the Synod.
- 6) The issue of a new deanery handbook.
- 7) Anglican and Eastern Churches Association pilgrimage to Tur Abin in Turkey in September.

Meeting held on 23 June at St Peter's Westcliff, chaired by Revd. Louise Williams.

Matters discussed:

- 1) A video presentation was shown on the ongoing mission work at St. Peter's, St. Stephen's and St Cedd's
- 2) Deanery Finance. Louise Williams expressed thanks to the parishes in the deanery for their contributions. John Tipping gave a comprehensive presentation on the Parish Share Scheme.

Meeting held on 10 November 2022 at St Mary's Shoeburyness.

Opening prayer was led by the Churchwardens; this being the first meeting here for twenty years.

Matters discussed:

- 1) The area dean reported on the appointment of Bishop John to Bishop of Liverpool, the Ven. Mike Power as Archdeacon of Chelmsford and Southend, the departure of Revd. Reid Humble, welcome to Revd. Dave Willis Vicar of St Augustine's, the retirement of the Revd. Phyllis Owen.
- 2) The Ecclesiastical Insurance training for Church Wardens.
- 3) The prayer evening for the City of Southend at St Johns'
- 4) The suggestion of an away day.
- 5) A report on the proceedings of the Diocesan Synod
- 6) Children, Family and Youth Work were discussed in depth. Lois attended the meeting to talk about her experiences at St Mary's. Other members outlined their own activities in this important area.

Peter Sloman

Fairtrade and Coffee Mornings Report



® The beginning of the year saw the return of our Coffee Mornings until planned works to the church flooring began in September.

With regards to Fairtrade product sales, the decision was made sadly to temporarily wind down the remaining stock and not order any more due to some products no longer being available along with rising costs and I want to thank everyone for their support and understanding.

As I have said before, it is important that wherever and as far as we can, we as a church, support those people who work tirelessly to make a living and are being paid a fair wage for their efforts, ensuring they live a much more comfortable life.

We continue to be a “Fairtrade Church” and with that in mind will use fairly traded products as much as we can.

We look forward to once again in 2023 coming together for our Coffee Mornings, and enjoying some conversation over a cup of tea or coffee.

God Bless

Sue Mackay

Flower Arrangers Report

2022 proved yet another challenging year for us as the flower arranging group. The Covid was still lurking around and therefore we had to proceed with care. At Easter time we were able to decorate the Church with Spring flowers and were hopeful that the year would continue to improve.



September 8th dawned as a late summer's day, and we were busy planning flowers for Heritage Day on September 10th. The news in the late afternoon that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II had passed away at Balmoral left everyone feeling sad but thankful for her long life filled with duty and service.

In her memory, we bought fresh flowers and arranged them on the Memorial Steps.

Harvest Festival was in early October, followed by special flowers for Carolyn Evans's son and his bride.

The week after the church closed ready for the reordering and we arranged two pedestals in St Marys Hall for Sunday services.

In December, the group spent a very pleasant afternoon at Scotts enjoying afternoon tea, an occasion we hope to repeat in the future.

My thanks to Chris for doing the Christmas arrangements when I fell foul of Covid.

Again, the year did not go as we had hoped, and we look forward to 2023. My thanks to all who have contributed during the year.

Patricia Johnson Flower Group Coordinator

Music Report

2022 A new year began, hopefully getting back to a kind of normality after Covid. Well, we made it back into church at least until the Autumn....

Some events through the year...

January, It was good to be back in the church. The "This Sunday" services were re-launched with a more informal style of music and a widening repertoire of contemporary worship songs as well as the familiar favourites!

It turned out to be rather a sad year with several funerals.

My mother died on Good Friday and in May, I was very grateful that the Choir could come to sing at her funeral in Thorpe Bay.

The Easter services went well and it was good to be back in the church for them.

June 12 afternoon, A Confirmation service and the choir sang psalm 119, a setting by Bernard Riley.

July 11 A Civic service for the new Mayor

August 16 We lost Ray Mason, our much loved long standing choir member. He is sadly missed by us all. Ray employed me for a music project at the school many years ago, and it was he who persuaded me to come into the choir. Every time we sing his favourite hymns, we remember him and miss him anew.

September 5 Ray's funeral. A large choir comprising us, past members and guests were able to sing the music Ray loved. A great privilege for us.

8/9 The Queen's death

10/9 Heritage day, and a service for the Queen. The choir were joined by a new bass, Steve, who is now a member of the choir.

18/9 Civic service for the Queen at the church. We were still getting used to singing "God save the King!"

9/10 Harvest, the last service in the church for a while.

15/10 the last big service in church was a wedding.

Moving into the hall, the choir supported the singing from the congregation as the services became more informal. Closer together and with "improved" acoustics, the congregational singing was good with enthusiastic "a capella" singing by all. Sadly, the full singing of anthems by the choir proved impractical at such close quarters.

Remembrance Sunday service and an act of remembrance with singing outside.

Christmas services were held in the hall. The carol service went well although the congregation were outnumbered by choir and handbell ringers! We look forward to next year and will not miss the hellish red glow of the heaters!

Melanie Van Looy

Pastoral Report

I thank God that it was not until 2022 that many members of St Mary's finally succumbed to the COVID virus, had this happened in 2000 or 2021, before our vaccines and boosters, the consequences would I am sure, have been very different. For although for some of us the symptoms were uncomfortable and somewhat inconvenient the virus did not prove to be life threatening.

During the year the waning of the effects of the virus saw care homes and hospitals feel able to open their doors to more visitors, albeit with varying levels of caution and precautions. This meant that thankfully once again Paul, I and lay members of St Mary's have been able to undertake pastoral visits to those of our members who are in a care home or hospital.

During this year health problems, mobility issues and cancer scares have affected quite a number of St. Mary's folk or close members of their families, we have and continue to hold them all in our prayers.

From May, through the Weekly News Booklet, Paul and I again were able to offer home communion to anyone who was house bound or in hospital. Although we have visited or been in contact with those who have been unwell, we have not received any requests for communion. Sadly during 2022 we said goodbye to four of our long-time members, Una Heal, Joyce Canfield, Gwyneth Rose and Ray Mason, we thank

God for their contributions to the life of our church and the friendship they gave to us; may they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Prayer is the first and last thing we can offer in times of sadness, pain and loss and this we do, not just in our own private prayer time but also in our Weekly News Booklet, Sunday services and during the 8:30 Morning Prayer meeting on Zoom each weekday Mondays to Thursdays.

Whatever your Joys and sorrows I encourage you dear friends to reach out for prayer because as the hymn goes

Take it to the Lord in prayer;
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there.

May God bless and keep you and yours.

Revd Jacky Lindoe

St Mary's Centre the project 2022

After some consideration, the idea for how the building might be used to serve the wider church and community began to develop. We had reflected on two questions and came to the following answers:

What do we want to provide?

A safe space, a haven of refuge, a harbour that is also a beacon to the community and provides opportunities for individuals and families to thrive.

How do we want people to feel when using the centre?

A sense of freedom, a feeling of home, to experience love, peace and security.

Our motivation for these answers came from two Bible verses “He is wooing you from the jaws of distress to a spacious place free from restriction”, Job 36:16 [a] and “He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me.” 2 Samuel 22:20 they mention God drawing a person out into a spacious place. One translation of spacious place is from the Hebrew word *ravach*, which means to breathe freely, to revive, to have ample room, to be refreshed.

We want to provide a place where individuals feel able to breathe freely, they are no longer constricted by the pressures of their lives, that they are leaving any distress or stress behind. An environment in which people can be revived and refreshed, they are able to take that time out to care for and share of their selves without fear of judgement and leave equipped and filled with hope. The motivation is to show the community through our provision God delights in them, they are loved, valued and significant.

We have had a small but dedicated team involved throughout the year overseeing the project (Revd Paul, Lois Blakey, Andrew Blakey, Keith Turner, John Tipping, Sue Mackay and Natalie Cashell) and are thrilled with our contractor Mark Roberts who has handed over to us a truly remarkable transformation. During the works to the centre, we were also extremely fortunate to include a complete refurbishment of the kitchen, kitted out in stainless steel with all the necessary equipment (including a long awaited dishwasher!!!!), which will mean that for years to come this will enable us to be able to cater and use the facilities for many events. Whilst the building work has come to a conclusion there is still much to be done!

We are extremely thankful for the legacies, donations and support the project has received so far enabling the St Mary's Centre Project to begin. We do still have a deficit in providing the funds to see the project to completion and are applying for grants and bidding for funding to fill this gap and see our vision for the St Mary's Centre come to fruition. 2023 we are sure will prove to be an equally exciting year and we look forward to experiencing all that God has in store for us!

Lois Blakey and Revd Paul



St Mary's Snooker Hall Club as was...





St Mary's Centre now....





Women's Fellowship Report

With the continuation of Coronavirus restrictions, it was decided to cancel, (by mutual agreement with the Orchestra) our first meeting of 2022 (The Yard Arm Folk Orchestra). Some months later we did make enquiries about rebooking but understood they had not been able to continue at that time as so many musicians had decided not to continue with their Orchestra participation.

Our February 2022 AGM was followed by a shortened version of “Desert Island Discs” and it was most interesting and entertaining to discover our members’ choices of favourite music/song; book and what they would choose to take with them on the Desert Island – that was the item which caused the most concern and ranged from A Grand Piano to a Good Friend! The music choices were interesting and ranged from “Sitting on top of the world looking down on creation” (the Carpenters) to the hymn “In Christ Alone”. The book choice ranged from “Jane Eyre” to Edward Lear’s Nonsensical Poems.

March saw us listening to Linda Cook, a local supporter of the RNLI. Linda had been a school teacher and was most enthusiastic about supporting the local branch, boats, and crew.

In April Revd. Paul talked about, and showed slides of, the Parish Pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2019 (much delayed because of Coronavirus).

Unexpectedly we had a fish and chip or vegetarian lunch on our 60th Birthday Party on 2 May, followed by tea/coffee and a slice of Birthday Cake to celebrate the day. Does any lady remember the first ever meeting?

A very informative and jolly Laura Mansell spoke to us on 6 June about her work with the Fire Service “Fire Safety, especially in the home” , “When did you last empty the crumb tray under your toaster?” “Do you vacuum your smoke alarm once each month?”

On Monday 4 July, we sat awaiting our speaker who didn’t arrive – later discovered the lady had been taken unwell at work and had to go home. Tea and biscuits well used that afternoon!

Dementia Friends’ Lorraine Rahmy did come to speak to us after our Afternoon Tea party on 1 August. A lovely lady who was happy to sit and chat with all the members.

5 September we postponed our Speaker (to 2023) and opened the Guild Hall for anyone who wished to have a tea or coffee and biscuits and

was unable to follow to the Wake after the Funeral Service in church for dear Ray Mason, Mavis's husband.

On 3 October Stephanie Stanley told the ladies about her involvement with the Children's Society and its Christingle Services.

On 7 November a change of plan brought two CPSOs to our "NEW VENUE", the Church Centre – the lady and man were both relaxed and happy to answer questions – and we almost all received our little handbag bell!

What can I say about the Christmas Meal? It was cooked by Revd. Paul, Sue, his wife, and Revd. Jacky - and was delicious – they were testing out the new kitchen and everything seemed to work a treat. As ever John Smith (the late Pat's Son) kindly came to play for us and we had the expected confusion with Pass The Parcels.

That was it for another year, however, there are some things we must never forget:

Poor health caused many ladies to stay away from our meetings in 2022 and a couple of ladies had unexpected housing disasters.

On 17 March the death occurred of Una Heal, a long-standing member of WF; Joyce Canfield died in Suffolk on 29 May; Margaret Luckett's funeral took place on the 20 December; and Mavis's husband, Ray Mason, died on 16 August. May they Rest In Peace.

We have also gained some new members and visitors, and everyone is more than welcome. Women's Fellowship is in its 61st year – quite an achievement!

Thank you to everyone who has helped organise and guide with WF this last year – especially Elizabeth, Mary, Mavis and Wendy. Not forgetting the Christmas Meal team: Revd. Paul, Sue and the Revd. Jacky.

Suzanne Mattingley Chairman

Points of Contact

Parish Office Administrator and Prayer Requests for Weekly News Booklet:

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Tuesday and Wednesday 9am-5pm – Please note the office has moved from the church to the St Mary's Centre - (entrance through the arch and up the steps on Victoria Avenue or via Hill Road, turn left after passing the Guild Hall entrance doors)

Parish Treasurer

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Children and Family Worker:

Contact: Lois Blakey
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Prayer Requests to be included in our Weekly Morning Daily Prayers:
prayer@stmarysprittlewell.org or call a member of the clergy

Weekly News Booklet:

If you have any articles or items to include in our Send to Mrs S Mackay, St Mary's Vicarage, 489 Victoria Avenue, Southend SS2 6NL or by email to suemac58@hotmail.co.uk

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Associate Priest:

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Not available on Thursdays or Fridays





Easter in an Egg Box



You are invited to a
Special Commemoration Service in
Remembrance of Her Late Majesty,
Queen Elizabeth II

Sunday 18th September 2022
at St Mary's Church, Prittwell
**at 5pm, please be seated by
4.45pm**

You may also wish to sign our book of
condolence and light a candle in her
memory –
we hope you can join us...

