



**St Matthias', St Mark and Holy Trinity  
Church Reports  
for the  
Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
23 May 2021**

**1. St Matthias Pre-School and Day Care Centre**

During what has been the most challenging year for many groups in the church, the Pre-School has been in the privileged position of continuing to meet throughout the various coronavirus lockdowns, apart from a few weeks between March and the end of May. As we went into 2020 our numbers of children attending had decreased noticeably due to various factors, including a decline in the UK birth rate that affected most settings, but during the year, our numbers have steadily increased, largely due to accepting children from the age of 2 years instead of 2.5 years, many of whom would previously have started at other settings, and the Pre-School has enjoyed a fulfilling year.



Of course, the staff have had to be mindful of the restrictions surrounding coronavirus, and parents have been advised not to congregate in the car park, children have been taught how to correctly and thoroughly wash their hands and equipment has been regularly

sanitised etc., all of which has been part of the ongoing daily schedule. Children attending our After School Club, when allowed to operate, were mainly kept in 'bubbles' to lessen the spread of the virus and we are pleased to say that, during the pandemic, we have not had a known case of the virus either among the children or the staff.



*Learning about Remembrance Sunday 2020*



The outside play areas have been greatly used this year and the children have enjoyed various activities such as cooking, using tools, learning about different wildlife and plants, as well as good, old fashioned play in an area of the grounds ideally suited to this.

The Management Committee has continued to meet on zoom to support the Pre-School staff and our Treasurer reports that financially, although 2020 has been a challenging year, due to help from the government in the form of the Furlough Grant scheme, we have been able to retain all our staff and to supplement the 80% grant received with money from our own funds in order to continue paying their full salaries.

We are grateful to Liz, our manager and all our staff for their commitment and dedication to the children.

We have been sorry to say 'goodbye' to Victoria as she has become more involved in the work she and Stephen are doing in Brixham, but we are glad to have Lena Fearnley, who has volunteered to come in and get more engaged with Early Years and she has been running regular Godly Play sessions and teaching the children Bible stories.

**Sylvia Barratt**

**Chair, Pre-School Management Committee**

## 2. Schools, Children, Young People and Families Ministry

### SCYP Report 2021

This year the SCYP Steering Group (Schools, Children, Young People and Families) was formed to:

- Drive the process of recruiting a new worker to oversee our ministry to children, schools and families and to lead our young people.
- Keep good communication going between the different areas of ministry.
- Start developing strategic ideas for the future.
- Be a structure already in place with people working cohesively as a group when prospective candidates enquire about the new role of SCYP worker.

Lena Fearnley was appointed as our Children's and Family's worker on a voluntary, part-time basis.

With the Covid pandemic, the year did not pan out as any of us could have expected but amazingly despite very limited opportunities to meet in person, some areas actually managed to grow and every area of the ministry has learnt something and adapted

accordingly. Here are some reports from the various children's, young people, schools and family ministries.

### **Report on Church/School Links**

Due to the pandemic our collective worship team has not been able to go into schools to carry out the usual Open the Book assemblies. However we have made a series of videos presenting the bible stories and prayers from our homes, outside and from church. Outside locations have included, our gardens, the coastline and Dartmoor. These have set a real context for the stories told. The videos are collated on the St Matthias Drop Box site and accessible to our three schools, Ilsham, Warberry and Ellacombe. We have received very positive responses to our contributions and will continue with this way of linking children and staff to the word of God.

Alongside this contact Reverend John, Sue Davis and myself are members of the Local Ethos and Governance Committee. Sue takes the lead in safeguarding and special educational needs and disabilities and I am chair of this committee with particular interest in curriculum matters. We have met on line every term and have been kept in touch with how our schools have coped during these unstable times. We hope to be back working in schools as soon as we are allowed.

#### ***Monica Rook***

In addition to our outreach into our local primary schools, we are involved with the chaplaincy team at St Cuthbert Mayne secondary school under the leadership of Rev Nathan Kiyaga. This involves meeting with pupils in groups, as well as 1:1 work and assisting in acts of worship. There was a very successful trip to Buckfast Abbey for the years 7 and 8 with many children showing a real desire to explore spiritual issues and be involved with prayer. Just prior to the first lockdown there was training on bereavement by Rainbows Bereavement Support. During the first lockdown we were able to assist with making up food parcels for those in receipt of free school meals.

#### ***Tessa Barton***

### **Children and Families**

As soon as we understood what 'lockdown' was going to mean, we focused on ways to maintain contact with our families and deliver teaching and fun to our children. These have included:

- Delivering packs to all our families - 6 in total, starting with Easter 2020 - containing books, crafts, activities and puzzles, and always some chocolate! The feedback to these has been great!
- Emailing each Friday with the story summary and craft for that weekend's Zone and, in recent months, presenting a 5 minute child focused piece during the service.
- Through YouTube, delivering Godly Play stories suitable for children and grown-ups alike! Started with the 'Faces of Easter', then every 2 weeks, a series from the Old Testament through to 'Wondering through Advent', and most recently, 'The Colours of Easter'.

- Whenever rules allowed, getting together. Firstly in the summer holidays with picnics on the Green; at October half term a wild worship Apple Day in the Forest School area; Messy Christmas held over 3 afternoons in order to accommodate everyone - 24 family groups in total, bringing with them 52 children with plans to do something similar for Easter 2021.

- At Christmas, 22 children and youth had tremendous fun practising and brilliantly performing the play 'Prickly Hay'. With the restrictions, of course, they could not perform to an audience!

- Planned and trained for launching Begin Well antenatal classes. Our team of Tessa, Jan, Liz, Kate and myself completed our initial training with the view to launching our first course in January 2021 with the support of one of the founders from the charity. Throughout, the support from parents, and of course, the children has been so great for all we have been able to organise.

***Lena Fearnley***

### **'Open House' - Toddler Group**

We had an encouraging start to 2020 with 8 - 10 families coming on Tuesday mornings. In mid-March, like so many other groups, we said 'goodbye' to our families for what we thought would be a 12 week break during the first lockdown... It has turned out to be much longer and we know that they have missed the group.

The good news is that we have kept in touch with all our families over the past year. They were included in the Easter packs which Lena organised and which they really enjoyed and we have been in contact by email and text. In July we managed to meet on Stoodley Green for a socially distanced coffee and catchup with most of the families and we met again in September. Later in the year we organised a couple of story-times in the church with a Bible story and a take-home story pack; we also delivered a Christmas pack to every family. It has been such a strange and difficult year for many and we would value your prayers for the parents and children - and for us as we plan for the best way to start meeting again later in 2021.

***Elaine and Judi***

### **Young People**

What a year we have had and us as a youth group never quite expected to be on Zoom for so long but we have battled through with this and are so looking forward to the end sight where we can meet together, play games and eat food (mainly pizza and ice cream). Thank you to all of you who contributed to the shoebox appeal! We were blown away by the response. I want to thank Elaine for her support too and a massive thank you to the young people who have stayed with us through this time. Please pray for the young people and the future of the young people that we welcome to our church.

***God Bless***

***Jack***

### 3. Matt's Knits

Matts Knits is a social group who seek to bless others whilst we knit and natter over a cup of tea or coffee, by supporting various projects as well as knitting or crocheting for ourselves, and learning from each other. We meet on Tuesday lunchtime from 12:00-13:30 usually in the lounge and welcome new members to join us at any time. We got off to a good start in 2020 knitting knee blankets and twiddlemuffs for Cheetham Hill ward at Torbay Hospital.



We then joined in with knitting bunting flags for the Guinness World Record attempt for the world's longest knitted bunting organised through the Devon County show sending 100 flags. The record was achieved!

Our next project saw us knitting reading bears for the children at our pre-school.



Sadly restrictions prevented us meeting in person, but they couldn't stop us knitting and a large parcel of matinee jackets, blankets and booties was sent to Nicci Maxwell in Uganda in December. We tried to keep in touch by WhatsApp messages and phone calls, apologies to anyone I have not kept in contact with, we hope to be able to meet again in the not too distant future.

***Elaine Biden***

## 4. Girls Allowed

Girls Allowed is open to any woman with a connection to St Matthias. This year we had some online zoom meetings and, as well as a chance to chat, we discussed such topics as “admirable women” as well as using breakout rooms for a quiz. When lockdown eased in September people enjoyed the chance to meet in gardens too, for a socially-distanced cuppa! It’s been good to support each other during the pandemic and we’re planning more activities for the future. Hope to see you there.

***Ruth Beckett, Marjorie Broadhead, Sue Day and Judi Stannard***

## 5. Missions Action Group

The Missions Action Group is a small group of church members who discuss and pray for a range of Christian charities that we recommend to the PCC for support from our annual mission tithe. St Matthias’ Church is committed to the biblical principle of tithing, according to which we donate 10% of our voluntary income to chosen Christian charities. We give thanks that the PCC were able to hold fast to this commitment last year, despite the impact of the pandemic on St Matthias’ finances. A total of £17,000 was donated in 2020, an increase of £1,250 on the previous year, to charities covering four areas of giving: Local Mission, World Mission, Poverty Relief, and Supporting Churches.

Every year substantial donations are made to six charities: Church Army, Church Mission Society, Church Pastoral Aid Society, Linx, Mission to Seafarers and Tear Fund. In addition, smaller amounts are given to other charities, which vary from year to year. In 2020, the other charities chosen for support were: Christian Response to Eastern Europe, Compass Braille, Mercy Ships, Open Doors, Scripture Union, Torquay Community Larder, WorldShare and Youth Genesis Trust. Each year, the sum of £1,000 is kept in reserve from the tithe to be donated at the end of the year for emergency and disaster relief. Last year’s emergency reserve money was donated to Tearfund’s Yemen Appeal for humanitarian aid.

On several occasions each year, we welcome speakers from the charities we support to our Sunday services, to share news of their work with church members. This continued in 2020, with speakers being invited to participate in our online services, including representatives of Open Doors, WorldShare, Compassion and Mission to Seafarers. Our CMS Mission Partner, Nicci Maxwell, had been due to travel back from Uganda to the UK and visit us in April, but the pandemic prevented this, so she sent a recorded video message instead, about her work at Potters Village child medical centre. She eventually made it back to the UK in the autumn, but Covid restrictions prevented her from joining us in person, so she once again recorded a video message for us.

We are extremely grateful for the generous giving by members of St Matthias, which enables us to send significant amounts to charities near and far who are showing God’s love

in action. We would be very happy to welcome new members – if you are interested, please speak to Joanna.

**Joanna Wilkinson**

## 6. Friends of St Matthias

Report for Annual Parochial Church Meeting May 2021



Our income during the year was affected by the pandemic, but membership numbers were maintained. The Trustees and our PCC representatives continued to meet either face to face - when possible - or by Zoom.

We were able to provide support in various important areas, including fire alarm upgrading, video streaming and recording resources, hedge trimming, and a further Wellspring contribution. Our total contribution to Wellspring over three years has been around £180,000. I shall report in more detail at the Friends' AGM on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

After a busy 2019, plans for an even busier 2020 all fell by the wayside, but we are now planning our 2021/22 events.

Three Trustees stood down during the year; Boyce Stetson, John Hart and Sheila Hart. John and Sheila in particular have played an enormous part in the success of the Friends over many years with their wise advice, attention to detail and sheer hard work. I am grateful to them and to all our Trustees and supporters for their commitment.

**Rob Newman, Chairman**

## 7. Pastoral Care

Needless to say pastoral care has been very different during 2020, many people have been involved with keeping in touch with members of the church family particularly anyone living alone. About forty Church of England booklets of readings were hand delivered over the Christmas period and lots of doorstep chats enjoyed.

Sadly, we lost Douglas Anderson, Derek Brooking, Audrey Cook, Jean Fricker, Mary Langley, Jay Love, Lillian Smith, Pat Pearson and Jeyde Waite during the last twelve months.

If anyone would like to know more about joining the pastoral care team, please speak to the clergy or myself. We know that many of you who are not on the team, do visit people in their own homes as friends especially members of your home groups, thank you.

**Elaine Biden, Pastoral Care Coordinator**

## 8. Home/Study Group



The predictions in the last report of some form of remote contact for Home Group members not only came true but have lasted rather longer than any of us might have imagined.

Several groups have used Zoom for regular contact. (How can something most of us hadn't heard of at the beginning of 2020 become part of the language?) The Watcombe Park group have very much enjoyed studying Mark's Gospel and discovered how much more there is to learn in perhaps one of the Bible's most familiar books.

All groups have kept in contact by at least one of Zoom, e-mail, phone or WhatsApp and have found this a support both spiritually and practically.

Early on the church set up a system to ensure everyone was being contacted either by Home Group members or by a member of staff and had good family or neighbour support. During the last year a number of people have moved away so that most groups are now smaller without the natural flow of new members to join them. Some newcomers to our church are keen to join groups but have very reasonably held back until direct face-to-face meetings are possible. We look forward to them joining groups along with others in the church who have not so far enjoyed this aspect of church life.

We are pleased that one new small group has developed in the last year with half a dozen men from the church meeting weekly to discuss a variety of topics and closing with a reading usually from Psalms.

There may be a place for an ongoing Zoom group for those with children and those with transport issues, and activity groups including a walking group and other activities.

The recent Lent course, after an excellent exposition of Nehemiah, built on the lessons of 3000 years ago with some thoughts of the challenges and opportunities coming out of restrictions and how we could refresh our relationships with each other and with God, and build a new relationship outside the church.

Looking to the future, in addition to strengthening existing groups and starting new ones, there are many opportunities to widen the recognition of church groups to include the many groups we have within the church who help us run, from flower arranging to Matts Cats, ToWNS, Social Core, Men's Breakfast and for September 2021 the Torbay Mission in September which is being planned by Through Faith Missions. All these groups increase the sense of belonging which we have realized is so important to our physical, mental and spiritual health. Providing mutual support and publicity would increase their effectiveness and help coordinate their activities.

As the situation rapidly changes, we will keep these ideas fresh and would welcome prayer, ideas and support.

***Norman & Lindsay Doidge (Home Group Coordinators)***



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Group	Coordinators	Usual Time	Current meetings (as of Mid March)
The Rockyroaders	Andrew and Hilary Stilliard	Tue 7:30pm	WhatsApp, Phone and e-mail
Woodend Evening Group	Mike Higgins	Tue 7:30pm	Phone and e-mail
The 2018 Group	Paul and Tessa Barton	Tue 7:30pm	WhatsApp
Ladies Alone	Marilyn Smee	Wed 10:30am	In touch by phone
Ilsham Valley Group	Maureen Purdy	Wed 2:00pm	In touch by phone
Livermead Evening Group	Ian and Jenny Lane	Tue or Wed 7:30pm	Phone and e-mail
2019 Alpha follow on Group	Sharon Hiley	Wed 7:30pm	Phone and e-mail
Shiphay Home Group	Sue and Rob Day	Thu 7:30pm	Regular Contact now Zooming too
Blossom Hill Group	Monica Rook	Thu 7:30pm	Phone and e-mail
Manor Wood Group	Alan Poole	Thu 7:30pm	Regular contact, some are Zooming
Wellswood Avenue Group	Paul and Judi Stannard	Thu 7:30pm	Phone, started Zooming
Watcombe Park Group	Brian and Norma Gerry	Thu 7:30pm	Zoom fortnightly
Sundial Lodge	Songs of Praise style service	Occasional	Paused due to Covid restrictions

## 9. Church Flowers

It has been a very quiet year for the Flower Group. Due to the pandemic and the lockdowns we have been unable to keep fresh flowers in church on a regular basis. We are looking forward to returning to service as normal soon! We welcomed Jill Luntz as a new member at the beginning of the year. Sadly Jean Fricker, a longstanding member of the group, died. She will be greatly missed by us all.

**Sue Newman**



## 10. The Church Centre

Since March 2020 and up until April this year, the Centre has been much quieter than usual! The Pre-School remained open for much of the year (even in the most recent lockdown) but the office and rooms have been closed for much of the time in line with the various government restrictions – tiers, lockdowns etc. When we were allowed to open we did having made all the necessary preparations – sanitiser, covid signs etc, and we had a small number of loyal hirers who came whenever they were allowed. The exercise groups were the keenest – they wanted to continue to keep fit and even though ‘mingling’ wasn’t allowed, they enjoyed exercising together with long standing friends. Last year and this we have had to operate with restricted numbers to allow for social distancing and consequently we only have 2 of our rooms available for hire (the Lounge and Hall).

As I write this in April 2021 we are starting to open up our rooms again for a small number of permitted activities – academic tutoring for children, 11+ mock exams, ballet classes and on 6 May we will be open for the local elections.

On 17 May, a greater number of activities will be allowed to take place and a number of hirers have booked to return - keep fit, pilates, Brownies, property management meetings, ballroom dancing and a local choir (Big Noise Chorus). A slow and safe start to what we hope will be a more normal year and it’s lovely to see people back in the building.

Our Open Church ministry (opening the church to visitors) had to stop for most of the year but when the restrictions allowed, a small team of stewards came together to open the church on Wednesdays for an hour for anyone wanting to come in for a time of private prayer. This is continuing and we hope to extend the opening times.

When the office has been closed to the public, the phone and emails have still been monitored and any church administration has been carried out from home but with regular visits to the office to check on the building, cleaning, post, fire safety etc. I am grateful to Sylvia for her help especially during my time on Furlough and to all others who have helped to keep the show on the road during this last year.

*Pere Snow*

*Church Centre Manager*

## 11. Wellspring Report

Since the last APCM we are pleased to be able to report the successful completion of Wellspring. We were very encouraged at the overwhelming response to the request for a final effort on funding. Already the changes have demonstrated their worth, from the ease with which the seating arrangements can be changed to cope with the varying demands of lockdowns, to the highly successful use of the Piazza for carol singing and Easter services. The variety of settings for the YouTube services has been a revelation as to the ways the

space can be used. Having said that - we are sure that everyone is looking forward to the time when we can use the changes brought about by Wellspring as intended.

We would like to thank everyone for their support and understanding during this very difficult and worrying time.

***Paul Stannard***

## **12. Comms Committee**

The Communications Group has been in existence for over twelve months now, tasked with taking a look at the way St Matthias communicates with both its regular church goers and the wider community. Some of the aims of the group include the following:

- website – reviewing and refreshing the website to ensure it is fit for purpose as it is a vital gateway for people regularly attending online services and those newer to the church
- social media – promoting St Matthias via Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=St%20Matthias%20Church%20Torquay>  
and Instagram @stmattstorquay
- welcome booklet – producing content and a printed edition for newcomers to the church
- and in addition material for press releases and other publicity/ communications

The group meets every few weeks – currently via zoom – and comprises Suzy Wright, Sylvia Gerard, Julie Bouskill, Elaine Wilson, John Gerard and Pere Snow with occasional input from others.

***Suzy Wright***

## **13. Sound & Video**

You'll remember that we moved back into the church for all services in January 2020. Our faithful sound and video team returned, but when the church closed for public worship we quickly moved to online worship. Coffee at 10.30 continued, but now on Zoom. From April, at least one service was recorded each week, by the clergy, and uploaded to our new YouTube channel, with a Godly Play bible story or another suitable resource, from Lena, for children and families (though valuable for all of us). Church members of all ages have contributed to our services, recording and uploading activities, readings and prayers. Once it was possible to record services in church we quickly invested in the technology to record and later live stream an 11.00 service. Our 'congregation' could then watch live or at a later time of their choosing. Until now our Zone services have been pre-recorded and streamed. We have all come to terms with using new technology and now that we are finally able to worship again in church it will be good to see past members of the sound (and video) team returning to support 'hybrid' worship, reaching our in person and at home

worshipping community. Recently we have incorporated singing outside on the piazza at the start and end of livestreamed services. Could you help with this? There are further opportunities to serve for any who are interested, with training provided.

***David and Joanna Wilkinson***

#### **14. St Matts Gospel Singers**

St Matts Gospel Singers (formerly known as St Matts Cats) have met up on Zoom for a few choir practices and social chats in the past year. We are looking forward to return for choir rehearsals in the church as soon as the restrictions are lifted. We are planning to enlarge our repertoire, learn more new songs, and we are looking for a piano accompanist. New singers are welcome to join us. Practices will continue fortnightly on Wednesdays.

#### **15. Other groups**

Other groups who would normally have been very active during the year had to stop (or in some cases meet online) but hopefully will be able to begin again as soon as things get back to normal including Chat @ St Matts, Men's Breakfast, the Social Core group.

