

Chair Report for Jan to December 2017 by Fr Ian Mobsby, Priest-in-Charge, APCM St Luke's

2017 has proved to be a challenging year yet one that we at St Luke's have made a number steps forward as we seek to develop the Parish Church and reconnecting it to North Peckham through increased mission and ministry.

The Church Buildings & Site

This year has been a particular challenge concerning unexpected problems arising from issues that we previously unknown to the PCC and Archdeaconry.

1. Illegally missing trees protected by planning law

Unbeknown to anyone, there were 6 missing trees which have been either blown down or removed by the developers when building the new Church Hall and Car park. To avoid a very large fine that would have taken all of the financial reserves of the Church, we reached a settlement with Southwark Council to plant two prescribed trees to the West of the Church, and two to the North of the Church. These have all now been planted successfully with a contract to ensure they are looked after to not die, and the Council have now confirmed that the process to fine the Church the large sum of money has now been ended and the matter is now closed.

2. Non-completion of Land Registry for Land Swap of Church Hall and Carpark

Again, unbeknown to the Church, when the original Church Hall and land was swapped with the Council to allow for the creation of Chandler Way, I am sorry to say that my predecessor failed to complete the required paperwork to ensure that the land that now contains the new Church Hall and Carpark are still registered to Southwark Council and not to the Church. After a collaborative investigation completed with our Archdeacon, it is clear that legal documents that were submitted for signing to the previous Incumbent had not been signed. Archdeacon Jane has been very supportive, and the cost to instruct ecclesiastical lawyers to get these legal documents signed correctly, are now being acted upon, where the cost is being picked up by the Diocese which could have fallen upon this Parish to pay. We are very lucky to have such an understanding Archdeacon!

3. Blocked Drains, Gutters & Pigeons

I want to say a very big thanks to the Church Wardens and Robert Day the contractor for their very hard work to reduce the damage caused by pigeons on the church and hall roofs, and who have prevented further water damage in the Lady Chapel Wall by ensuring that we keep the gutters clear throughout the year. Many windows damaged by a pellet gun in the Church Hall and Church have now been replaced.

4. Gas & Electricity Failure in December

Following what was a very difficult time, I am pleased to report that the new mains delivery systems for Gas and Electricity that caused such disruption in December, have been working reliably, so I express my thanks to the Church congregations for their endurance and patience at that time.

5. New Church Signage

In the autumn of 2017, and after a lengthy planning application with the Diocese and Southwark Council, the PCC obtained permission to erect new signage at the Church entrances of Chandler Way and Pentridge Street. These I think have made it very clear that St Luke's is far from closed which is a comment we often heard because due to the lack of good signage. This was a sizeable investment, but an important one making clear that St Luke's is here for the long-term!

Non-payment of Fairer Shares

When I first came to St Luke's Church I was informed after starting that the Church had a moral debt for the non-payment of 5 years' worth of promised Fairer-Shares contributions – our contribution to the costs of the Diocese and the national Church institutions. I am very grateful to the PCC, Lendell Morrison our Treasurer and Catherine Menka our Parish Finance Officer, that we have started to pay these outstanding monies to the Diocese as part of the stewardship campaign we conducted last year. This I know has created a greater confidence in St Luke's with the Archdeaconry and Diocese and is one of the reasons we now have an expanded clergy team. When we take seriously our responsibilities for the Diocese and the national church institutions, the Diocese will take us seriously.

The new Clergy Team

I cannot under-estimate how transformative it has been to our ministry at St Luke's to have Mtr Sandra and Fr Collins in our new clergy team. Mtr Sandra has picked up a lot of pastoral and parish ministry, and I am excited to see a revitalised home visiting service with Yemi our SPA, and many new initiatives as we seek to develop our work with younger people in and outside the Church. Both Fr Collins and Mtr Sandra have sustained our Sunday

Morning liturgical life in a time of my absence, for which I am most grateful, and that they have acted as chaplains to the Mothers Union and Men's Forum.

Lay Leaders Team

In late 2016 we commissioned a new lay leaders team, to help head up various aspects of the Church, and I want to express my grateful thanks to Joy, Seki, Maria, Miranda, Ian, Mtr Sandra, Yemisi, Cecilia and Chinyere for their diligent hard work which has led to the formation of our Mission Action Plan as a Parish and currently a review of Sunday Morning Worship Services. This group will continue to meet and help plan and lead developments.

Sub-Committees

In 2017 the PCC Commissioned two Sub-Committees to be set up and running with immediate effect, the first on Youth, critical if we are going to develop what we do for those in and outside the church to be chaired by Mtr Sandra and the second on reviewing the Hall by Sunny Lambe, the latter being extremely important as we have seen a dramatic decrease in the hiring of the hall for events and services funded by local authority funding. We do need a rethink about a plan for the Hall looking forward. In 2018 we will be commissioning a Finance Sub Committee to develop standards that will build on the data we have been collecting for the last 3 years to help us set a financial budget year on year and create better financial reporting to the PCC to assist in the task of financial oversight of the parishes resources.

Samaritan Fund

In 2017 and with the combination of Government cuts in welfare and changes with universal credit we rightly set up a specialist fund (funded by special donations mostly by outside of St Luke's donors) which we used to support the many coming to the Clergy House and to the Parish Office seeking assistance as they had no money for food, gas and electricity. For those who were desperate and not in connection with the Pecan Centre, we used the fund to assist 34 people in the year. The Bishop of Southwark has commended this innovation and drawing on our statistics raised the issue in the House of Lords as part of a concerted effort of the Bishops of the Church of England to hold the government accountable for the sufferings of people on Universal Credit and those who have received benefits sanctions. We are now working very closely with the Pecan Centre to refer such people to the food bank and the wonderful services of the Pecan Centre.

Food bank Offerings

In 2017 we set up collections of food and non-perishables to support Southwark Foodbanks and in particular the one operated by the Pecan Centre. Thanks to all those who have contributed and continue to contribute to this important mission of mercy and compassion.

Big thanks to Sr Joy Russell

My particular thanks go to Sr Joy who has served you as a Church for a long time now as a Church Warden, who has been a very important support to me since I became your Priest in Charge. Sr Joy stands down after a long stint as one of your Church Wardens this year, and so I want to express my appreciation for all Sr Joy has brought in support to the Church and me personally. Sr Joy will continue as an Assistant Church Warden, helping us sustain our activities around worship, mission and community and the maintenance of the Church buildings.

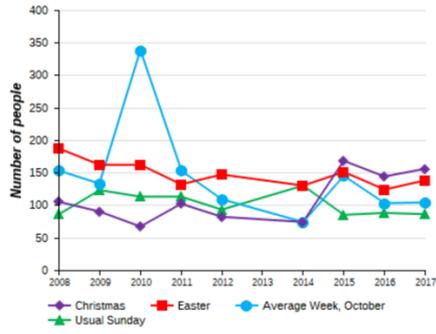
Sunday Evening Service & Weekly Prayer

You will see the first time, that there is a written report for the Sunday Evening Congregation and for the New Monastic Wellspring Community. I am very grateful to this new and growing part of St Luke's for their willingness not only to help facilitate Sunday evening contemplative services and their commitment to financial stewardship of the church, but also for the rota of those willing to lead Morning and Evening Prayer Monday to Thursday every week.

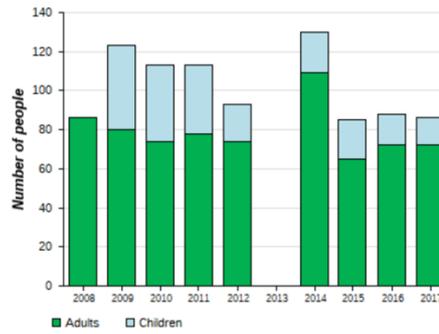
Sunday Morning Service

You will see from the statistics below that on average the number of people attending worship services has roughly stayed the same in recent years. There has however been a dramatic increase in the number of baptisms, and slow increase in weddings and funerals. I hope that as we continue to review and develop services we will in time begin to see numerical growth as we seek increasing maturity in discipleship and hospitality/welcome. The challenge remains to reverse the downward trend of Church and the involvement and participation of young people. It is my sincere hope that as we develop Sunday School and ideas around a Youth Church on Sunday Mornings, we will see more families and youth attend St Luke's.

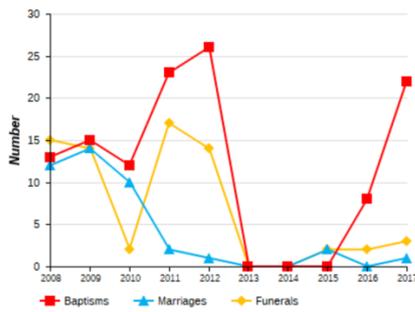
1. Attendance Summary, (2008-2017)



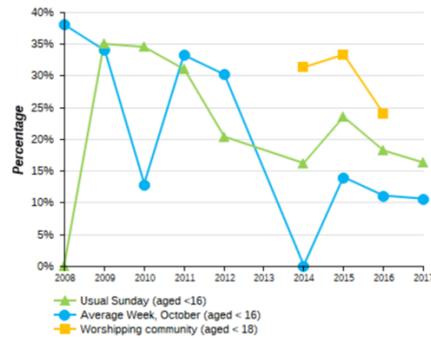
3. Usual Sunday Attendance, (2008-2017)



6. Baptisms, marriages and funerals, (2008-2017)



5. Percentage Children, (2008-2017)



Finally I want to express my thanks to the Core Team, Standing Committee and Church Wardens, without whom St Luke’s Church would not function. Thanks for your support and collaboration in the Gospel.

Revd Ian J Mobsby, Priest in Charge.