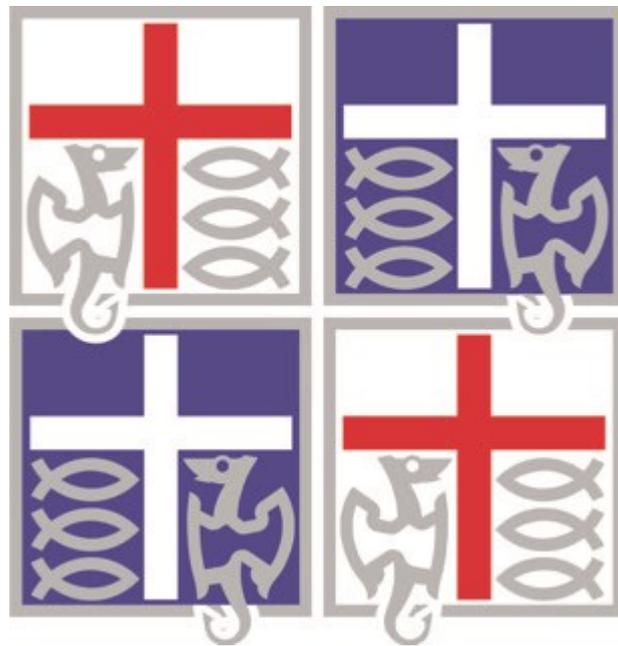


**The Team Ministry**  
of  
**St George's, Forest Hill**  
and  
**St Michael and All Angels,**  
**Lower Sydenham**



**Annual Report 2020-21**

## ST GEORGE'S DCC — JANET KILLEEN

A year unlike any other in our generation, perhaps. The 'best of times and the worst of times': the very best of courage, dedication and compassion; the very worst of anxiety and sorrow for so many. A year that passed with interminable slowness; a year that passed so rapidly that when we look back, we wonder where it went, and what we achieved. That is certainly how it feels, looking back over the minutes and agendas of the DCC and the dates of meetings planned but postponed. But that is not to take away from the steady commitment of members and Ministry Team who have planned and worked so that the life of St George's was maintained and now, thank God, begins to be visible again on Sunday mornings and at face to face (suitably separated) meetings. Planning for the future is possible, hope for the renewal of our life together becomes a reality as the weeks pass.

First of all, thanks. To Richard and the Team who have found ways to communicate with us on Sundays, especially, through YouTube, and who have always given words of life and encouragement and stimulus which have kept us connected. This has been wonderfully supported: technically by Duncan, musically by Graham and administratively by Luiza. On DCC, Simon has kept all our finances under review and ensured that we are in a sound position for when things open up – hopefully in September. Maxine, having been welcomed this year, has immediately taken over the role of Secretary from Pat – thank you! We have also been joined by Molly and as we welcome her and Maxine, we also record our thanks to Denise and to Pat who stepped down from DCC membership. Since February 2020, Lydia and Dot have agreed to take on Bud's role in banking the church collection. Bud's stalwart and faithful presence and service is much missed. Ian has continued to help out in all kinds of practical ways to do with building maintenance and the grounds. Jill, who has been so active in the work at St George's School as Chair of Governors, has steered through the complex process of appointment and transition there and our sincere thanks are due to her.

During the year, the DCC has continued to review (for example) issues of the fabric; maintaining a Covid-free environment; the sound system; charitable giving; plans for services and Advent and Lent Courses; the appointment of a new Headteacher to St George's School, and the bookings of church premises, both at St George's and the Chapel, which keep us financially in good order. At some point in the future, when meetings can be resumed in easier circumstances, the question of the best use of the Chapel will be high on the agenda, as will the ways in which we offer hospitality as a church as the coffee shop and Tuesday lunch club have been closed during the past year.

Gradually, we have been able to open up. On Tuesday mornings for Morning Prayer and the Eucharist and on Sundays, for our 10 a.m. Service. We began on Palm Sunday, in the car park – a chilly and donkey-less celebration, but nonetheless, well attended and with such evident delight in seeing each other again. Since then, around 50 people have been attending regularly and numbers are increasing steadily. It was no small coincidence that our first service inside the church was at Easter. Suitably distanced, masked and careful, but back together as church.

Our joint parish APCM has been deferred to the end of May, but by then we should have clarity about the future of services and meetings and be able to come together to plan and prepare for full re-opening, hopefully after the summer at the latest.

## CHURCHWARDENS — SARA SANBROOK-DAVIES & JUDY DAVIS

Following the APCM in October 2020 we had two Sunday services and an All Souls Service before another complete lockdown which suspended services until December 6th. We were blessed to have the amazing IT knowledge of Duncan who, tirelessly, produced podcasts and video recordings of services to stream to the congregation. This was a wonderful way to keep in touch with everyone.

Both prior to the autumn lockdown and currently now, we can accommodate up to 60 in the congregation.

From December 6th throughout the Christmas period we were open for a number of our services including Midnight Mass and Christmas Day. Everyone was as before masked and distanced.

From January 5th services were suspended. In March our Tuesday morning Eucharist resumed with about a dozen people attending. To begin the Easter period, we were able to have a service outside for Palm Sunday which was a great joy and to see many of the congregation who had not previously attended.

Throughout Holy Week we had two Stations of the Cross in church, a service on Maundy Thursday, a Good Friday meditation a service for Easter Eve and the Easter Sunday Service. It was wonderful to include some of the children in a Good Friday session as has been our tradition. We returned to a more regular Sunday Worship in April and our congregation has risen to almost 50, still masked and distanced. For St Georges day we enjoyed a “bring your own picnic” outside following the service. It has been good to begin to feel a bit normal and hopefully, that will continue.

We hope you have all managed to stay safe and we look forward to seeing those of you who haven't ventured as far as the church yet in the very near future.

## BROWNIES — DOT SPINKS

3<sup>rd</sup> Forest Hill Brownies has continued to meet on Tuesday evenings during the school term times. At the start of lockdown we had a short break but moved to the online platform soon after. Some of our members have enjoyed this regular meeting but others have not been able to take part for differing reasons.

We have been challenged by this change as our members love the chance to meet their friends, play games and to take part in various activities. We have adapted so we still deliver a varied and enjoyable programme.

We are now able to meet again face to face and have in place procedures to stay as covid safe as possible.

## FAITH TEAM — JANET KILLEEN

Faith Team has been unable to meet since January 2020 due to lockdown. As we begin to return to 'normality' by the autumn there may well be a role for Faith Team to play in considering how

the community of the church will discover its new potential for growth and inspiration and bring the strengths that have been gained from a period of reflection and quietness. We had plans for the past year, all of which were described in the Report for 2019 – 20, and nothing will have been lost even if we find that they are either no longer relevant or need to be radically re-thought. Faith – with hope and love – will take us all forward in ways that far exceed agendas and planning!

## MUSIC — GRAHAM LONG

It goes without saying that the past year has been different in so many ways in our lives and this has had an impact on the use of music in church (both in person and online).

When the church was closed, I was conscious that many would be missing the music which usually goes with our services. I decided to submit recordings of hymns and some organ music to help keep in touch and this was emailed out and put on the church's Facebook page.

Initially, the hymns were just recordings with no words sung, although the words were provided. It soon occurred to me that this was not sufficient, so I then began singing the hymns and recording in my study at home on my electric keyboard. When churches could reopen again for private prayer this was better as I was able to go into St George's to make the recordings by singing in church and playing the church organ – a much better acoustic! I hope people found the music to be a source of comfort during lockdown. I have continued to send some hymns and organ music each week as I am aware that there will still be some people who are not able to get to church for the time being.

As time went on, I discovered new skills for myself and have been able to turn the recordings into videos which can be seen via Facebook and through YouTube links.

In January 2021, some of us were able to meet up on Thursday mornings and record the service for the following Sunday. We learnt a lot in doing this and were pleased to be able to offer this to the congregation at home. Initially, the music was just me singing and playing but as some restrictions were eased, we were able to add other performers – many thanks to Naomi and Sara for their contribution in this. I would particularly like to thank Duncan for his expertise in putting this together and feel that we produced very professional videos which have been very much appreciated.

Now that services have once again started at St George's things are, by necessity still following guidance. Previously, in autumn 2020, only one cantor could sing at the outset, so I was singing some hymns and playing organ music. Since Easter 2021, there was a change in the guidance saying that a small group of singers could take part, and this has been a vast improvement even though we are keen to get the whole congregation back to singing as soon as this is permitted.

One of the items on our Mission Action Plan is to introduce some different hymns/songs – I have been able to record several which I hope have been well received; hopefully, when everyone is back to singing, we can use some of these.

I firmly believe that making music within worship is very important for many reasons and that for many of us this is a way of expressing our faith - a vocation and an opportunity to use our talents to work for the greater glory of God. Congregational participation in this is important and we'll be back to this in due course.

I would like to thank all singers and performers for their efforts, especially during the challenging times and to the whole Ministry team for their support, encouragement, and sense of humour.

## ST GEORGE'S SCHOOL — JILL BRAY, CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

This year has been a momentous year in the life of the school – lockdown and a change of school leadership all at once.

Lockdown has presented the school with a raft of issues/problems to tackle. Chief among these has been remote learning. How do you give a child a normal education when that child is at home and the teacher or teaching assistant may be at school or in their own home? By the second lockdown this last winter the school was in a position to run lessons virtually with children from a class in school meeting up with those at home. Teachers and teaching assistants were able to provide individual help to children as needed. Laptops and tablets were provided to some families with no electronic resources, and visits were made to take round paper-based work for those with limited electronic resources. All families were contacted and an especial focus was put on regular phone calls and doorstep visits with those who were more vulnerable. A survey carried out among parents has shown a very positive response to the education offered during lockdown.

In terms of leadership we were not able to run interviews for the new head until October, when we appointed Mr Darren Janes, at that time head of the primary phase at Trinity School in Hither Green. This delay necessitated temporary leadership. We are particularly indebted to Karri MacAlpine, an Assistant Head who took on the role of interim Headteacher in the autumn term. She wished to return to her role as Special Educational Needs Coordinator in January as she felt that the vulnerable children she cares for had not had sufficient attention, and so we were grateful for the support of the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education Multi-Academy Trust in finding us an interim Head for the spring term. Simon Jackson, an experienced Headteacher from Streatham led the school until Easter and now Darren Janes has taken over.

So there are lots of people to thank: Karri MacAlpine for her leadership when pupils returned to the school for much of the autumn term, Simon Jackson, who ably ran the school during the spring term, and the whole of the staff team – teachers, teaching assistants and support staff.

And now we welcome Darren Janes as Headteacher. Already he has made his presence felt to parents and children alike and we look forward soon to being able to welcome him to meet the church community on a Sunday morning.

I personally would like to thank again the governing body who have worked to support the school in this challenging year, particularly Joanna Goodrich, who as Vice Chair has taken on a lot of tasks and Richard Lane, who has regularly taken school assemblies, in person or via Zoom. We are sorry to lose her but wish to express thanks to Lynne Whipps for her sterling work on the governing body. Thanks to go to our other Foundation governors, Patrick Clarke, Viv Okon and Peter Akinbowale.

We are proud to be associated with such a caring and inspiring school.

# MAINTENANCE — IAN COOPER

## Major work

With both buildings being shut down due to the Covid pandemic for a significant part of the year there has been far less wear and tear than usual, and very little major work has been carried out.

## Chapel

The heating was struggling to cope with the cold weather, that has not been resolved. As we had a mild winter this year this has not been a problem but may still crop up in the future. There is also an issue with broken glass in the stained glass window in the worship area which lets in the rain sometime, and will also let in the cold.

A small repair has been carried out to broken slates on the small front roof.

## Church

There has not been any major work required in the church this year.

The tree stump in the apex garden became very rotten and dangerous and has been removed. The area where the stump was needs turf laid over it when the ground has settled down and we have found a way to stop the foxes digging holes in it.

The bin store gate has been repaired and the area tidied up.

The hedge around the remembrance garden died back after a few days of snow this winter but it is just starting to grow back now.

There is a leak in the heating system from the under floor heating manifolds which are situated in the cupboard in the shop. This work is ongoing at the moment and the boiler inspection and gas safety check will be carried out when the leak is repaired.

The church and hall floors have been sealed and polished in the school holidays

Kenny and myself have been carrying weekly minor work such as litter picking the gardens, cutting the grass, trimming the hedges, unblocking loos and checking the drains are clear, changing light bulbs, checking the pressure in the heating system etc.

Due the building being shut down the folding door inspection have not been carried out this year.