

Holy Trinity Headington Quarry
REPORTS ON CHURCH ACTIVITIES
January – December 2020



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Introduction

2020 has been a year marked by the extraordinary challenge of a global pandemic. As we reflect on the year that has past, we do so in a spirit of lament for all that has been lost, but also a spirit of thanksgiving for the ways in which God has been at work during this time. We have responded to the pandemic in a number of ways: a steady stream of online worship has sustained us; prayer and study gatherings have continued virtually; we started a new reflective 'podcast' called Soul Space, which includes 2 episodes about C.S. Lewis; we have started work on our building project and progressed well with fundraising; a Covid partnership group has been formed with other community leaders; our outdoor Forest Church services have been a real joy to be part of. In all these ways and more, the Holy Spirit has been at work in the life of our church, hovering over the chaos of the pandemic to bring creativity and new life.

2020 has not been an easy year for church leaders—navigating our way through the shifting sands of ever-changing government and church guidance. One of the ways I have dealt with the challenges of the year has been to allow the weekly scripture readings to offer something of an anchor point for prayer and reflection, and I hope this has helped others too. I am extremely grateful to Rob Gilbert for his ministry among us, which is a great blessing; to the Churchwardens Dave and Peter—who combine wisdom and humour in equal measure—to Helen for her administrative support, and for the wider support of our newly formed parish planning group. As we emerge from the pandemic, recovery will be the key priority: taking time to process and reflect on our experiences, and looking forwards to the future in a spirit of hope and trust.

Revd Dr Laura Biron-Scott

Overall Governance

PCC

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the year 2020 proved to be a traumatic year for us all, and especially for those whose relatives or friends died or suffered long-term ill-health, and for those faced with unemployment or financial hardship. Our regular patterns of worship and communal gathering were severely disrupted or even suspended altogether for months on end. We are immensely grateful to all who laboured under the guidance, inspiration and leadership of our Vicar Laura to get us through this unprecedented time, and in particular, we thank our Associate Priest, Rob Gilbert and our Wardens, Peter Garside and Dave Smith, for all they did during this extraordinary time.

The PCC met five times in 2020 - in March, May, July, September and November. From May these were held via Zoom due to the pandemic. Instead of a PCC Away Day as in previous years, there was a Parish Vision Day in January which was attended by around 50 members of the church. The day was led by Charles Chadwick, Parish Development Advisor, and a vision for 2024 was discussed.

The PCC was approached by Radio Cherwell in March to record weekly services during the pandemic and this was agreed at the April meeting of the PCC. It was also agreed that the war memorial should be professionally cleaned and in September approval was given for the new lighting to be phased in before the beginning of the building project.

Binswood Avenue: the PCC agreed to grant a new tenancy in July, as recommended by Breckon and Breckon who were also formally appointed as Property Advisor to the PCC. Richard Stoneman has

overseen a number of improvements to the property and is serving as the link person for the PCC.

Due to the pandemic, the APCM was postponed from April until October 21st - and also held via Zoom.

The membership of the PCC underwent some changes and at the APCM: Linda Davies, Margaret Woodcock and Anne Tarassenko all stood down, having served 3 years of office. Philippa Logan was re-elected for a further 3 year term. Joan Jones was elected onto the PCC (taking over from Adrian Wood as Electoral Roll Officer), as was Richard Stoneman (previously a co-opted member). Felicity was elected onto the PCC as PCC Secretary, taking over from Anne Tarassenko. Joan Walding, lay minister, also resigned from the PCC. Flora Alexander, Sheila Allcock and Felicity Wallendszus stood down as deanery reps and were replaced by Janet Foot and Mark Poolman; Margaret Woodcock was elected for a further 3 year term. Our allocation of deanery reps was decreased from 4 to 3 due to a reduced number on the electoral roll.

Andrea Taylor was co-opted onto the PCC in November as the representative for Children and Families.

All those who stood down were warmly thanked for all they had contributed over their tenure.

Felicity Wallendszus
Secretary to the PCC

Church Wardens

2020 was a challenging year with the COVID-19 pandemic but we feel the Lord has been with us throughout this journey. The main duties of wardens are to support the vicar and maintain the fabric of the church and churchyard. We are both in regular communication with Laura via Whatsapp, Zoom and email and we see it as a privilege to support her both in practical terms and with prayer in her ministry with us. We both very much enjoy working with her and look forward to what God has planned for the church in the future.

We have been working hard with Laura and the team managing the church and churchyard in the COVID-19 pandemic. Opening the church for private prayer and then for worship with COVID-19 restrictions was a major challenge as is keeping up to date with Public Health, NHS and Church of England Guidance which changes on a weekly basis. The Parish Planning Group has been meeting to make decisions regarding when it is safe enough to open up for communal worship in line with COVID-19 guidance.

The churchyard was surveyed by tree surgeons and repairs have been carried out.

The War Memorial has been professionally cleaned by Stone Masons and we are all very pleased with the results.

Good progress has been made with the building extension and new lighting and sound systems with WIFI facilities are being installed to enable services and other activities to be live streamed online. Meetings have been via Zoom and discussions have been ongoing concerning how best to progress with communication with our HTHQ church family during the pandemic.

We feel 2021 will be a better year and we all look forward to resuming meeting up together again.

Finally we would like to thank all those who helped us to look after the fabric of the church during this year, particularly Adrian Wood, Derek Taylor, Helen Day and Kevin Masters.

Peter Garside and Dave Smith

Children and youth

Children and Families

The pandemic has been an especially difficult time for children, young people, and families navigating all the challenges of remote working and home schooling. Alongside the Roots 'at home' worksheets we send out regularly, we were delighted to start some outdoor Forest Church gatherings for families in October 2020. We have been so pleased to welcome many families to these services, and we very much hope to continue them into the future. We are very aware of the need to rebuild and reshape our work with children and young people, and it will be an important priority for the future. Please pray for the people and resources we need to enable this important work.

Quarry School

The school continue to use the Vicarage Wood for forest school, which provides another important source of connection between school and church.

Laura Biron-Scott

Pram Service

At the beginning of 2020 the Pram Service for pre-school children and their carers was held every Tuesday morning as usual. We begin with an informal Eucharist in church. The children love lighting the candles (and blowing them out!), passing the peace and exploring the church building. The time in the Coach House afterwards gives a chance for the adults to talk to each other and for new parents to meet others while the children enjoy playing. There was a Bring & Share supper in January which gave another opportunity for parents and carers to meet.

Since the middle of March it has not been possible to hold the Pram Service. Many families have enjoyed the outdoor Forest Church services and hope that they will continue when Covid-19 is behind us. The outdoor Christingle services were also much appreciated. When it was allowed, some parents and carers have been meeting in the Margaret Road playground after dropping off older children at school or nursery but they can't wait until Pram Service starts again.

The clergy are supported by a rota of helpers - Nell Slocock, Jane Hedges, Maureen Cooper and me – with Roy Kerry and Charlotte Drake. We are really looking forward to seeing everyone again.

Elizabeth Knight

Music, worship, spirituality

Music

I'm not sure there has ever been a quieter year for music at Holy Trinity. The organ, choir and musicians remained silent for many months while the country was under various lockdowns and

restrictions. I am very grateful to the singers and instrumentalists who took part when live services resumed and we felt able to accommodate more musical contributions safely – careful measures were put in place to ensure everyone's safety. After a second lockdown in November, it was even more joyful than usual to be able to gather a choir together for the Carol Service, which we recorded (with thanks to Dave Smith) and which I edited into a complete service which we broadcast together on Zoom and uploaded to the parish YouTube channel. Although the majority of the year was bereft of congregational singing, we have been able to sing along in our homes with the online services and look forward to eventually resuming our normal musical life at church.

Rosie Tweddle
Musical Director

Julian Group

As with everything else this has been a strange year for us. We have continued to have our monthly meetings via Zoom. One of the group chooses a passage for meditation as usual and we are silent for half an hour. We then discuss the passage and go on to other conversation as we did in the real world. The only thing that is missing is the coffee and biscuits!

Sheila Allcock

Radio Cherwell collaboration

A particularly positive development during the past year has been the linking up with the Oxford hospitals radio network. A pre-recorded version of Holy Trinity's 10 am Sunday service is broadcast by Radio Cherwell as "The Sunday Service" and it has

become the core of the 54-year-old broadcaster's spiritual output. This has been of mutual benefit to Holy Trinity and Radio Cherwell. Because of the proximity of the church to the hospitals and the number of people in the parish who use and work in the hospitals, there are many links anyway. The potential audience for each service among patients, past patients and staff is considerable and far-flung and feedback shows that these broadcasts have been much valued -- during all the challenges of this past year in particular.

We are delighted that Radio Cherwell has also carried on its airwaves a podcast-style venture called "Soul Space" which Holy Trinity launched on its website last year. As the title indicates, this is a reflective, meditative listen -- a mix of interview, readings, music, observations and prayer intended to be of interest to people of all faiths and none. The first Soul Space considered the impact of the pandemic and ways out of it, the second Compassion and the next two the life, faith and influence of C S Lewis and his connection to Holy Trinity.

Mike Wooldridge

Prayers for Hope and Healing

Prayers For Hope and Healing have been taking place regularly on a fortnightly basis (now weekly) on Thursday evenings during 2020. It occurs at 8.30 pm via Zoom, and the link for it can be found in the weekly notices. We meet for 30 minutes, starting with introductions, then having been led with a thought or a picture, we spend 20 minutes meditating silently on the theme. The final few minutes are spent sharing anything that might have come to mind during the silence. Do consider joining in, it is a very peaceful half hour in the week.

Janet Masters

Communications

Parish Magazine

We published just two magazines in 2020, the January-February and March-April editions. This was due to the pandemic and the sharp drop-off in church activities on which to report.

As the need for some sort of communication became clear, we began to experiment with an occasional newsletter sent out via MailChimp which people could sign up for on the website. The number who did this by December 2020 was 81.

Karl and Felicity Wallendszus attended the Church of England's Digital Labs Conference in October 2020, which was useful in helping us consider the importance and practical aspects of a number of different types of communication. The future of the online newsletter and the Parish Magazine will be discussed further in 2021 as we look at communications at Holy Trinity in general.

Felicity and Karl Wallendszus

The Church Building

Flower arrangers

Sadly from March to July we were unable to have flowers in church as it was closed. When the church did open we placed one arrangement by the statue of Our Lady. This was to reassure people coming into church for private prayer that our Holy Trinity family was thinking about them and also to make the church feel welcoming. When services resumed albeit on a small scale again it

was to provide a reminder of nature's beauty and enhance our worship. Sadly we were again faced with a lockdown but we are now looking forward to welcoming worshippers at Easter with a range of arrangements.

We hope that it won't be too long before we are back to 'normal'
Margaret Woodcock

Caretaker / Verger report/Visitors C S Lewis

2020 started promisingly. I showed five visiting groups around the church in January and the church diary contained a good number of such bookings for the summer months. I entertained a group of students from St Peters University in the USA on March 3rd but could not foresee that this would be the final church visit for 2020. The time that the church building had to be kept locked during the first lockdown was incredibly difficult for me – not being permitted to enter a building that I was usually in every day of the week and which had been such an important part of virtually my whole life. The periods in 2020 when we were permitted to open just for private prayer created challenges to make the building safe and to make particular pews only available for use. Locking up was no longer just a case of locking the door, but also involved a daily cleaning of the pews that had been in use. The community though greatly appreciated Holy Trinity once again being open. I then worked closely with Laura and the wardens in arranging for the restart of public worship. This brought inevitable challenges such as ensuring social distancing was maintained and generally doing everything possible to ensure the safety of all those individuals who once again were able to attend public worship. 2020 ended with the pandemic still rife – the vaccination programme though gives us all genuine hope for better and more settled times ahead.

Adrian Wood

Community and outreach

Pastoral Care Team

Pastoral Care Team members have been forced by the pandemic to change some of the ways we work, but our core activity remains the same: to support those in need of help.

For most of 2020 we have not been able to run our usual events, including Grave Talk; we held one lunch party in February but otherwise we have been restricted to telephone contact, or, when allowed, one-to-one conversations in gardens or during walks. In mid-March, we made a contingency plan for pastoral care to continue, come what may. Focusing on people who live alone and would not be able to shop for food if self-isolating, Laura asked for younger members of the church community, who were already DBS-checked, to come forward. The response was very good and we were able to match these volunteers with people who needed help. We agreed that those of us who were over 70 years of age (quite a few of us!) should concentrate on phone contacts, leaving younger people to help with shopping and collection of medicines.

When the first lockdown began, one of our priorities was to establish a system of contacting everyone who is linked to Holy Trinity, whether they attend church or not so Helen Day has been working hard all year, posting out church material to all those who do not have an email address. In the autumn, we began to plan a care group system, under which our congregation is divided into small groups for mutual support, with each group free to decide for itself how to manage its interactions. The basic principle for assembly of the groups was geographical, but Laura spent an enormous amount of time putting the groups together in a

sensitive and careful way. The groups have now been set up and we hope that this initiative has been helpful to many.

We were very sad to say goodbye to Deirdre Twycross as a pastoral care team member. Deirdre has been involved with pastoral care at Holy Trinity for many, many years, and anyone who knows her will not be surprised to learn that she continues to support a lot of people in the parish.

We have all been enormously impressed by the congregational culture of looking after one another. There were, and are, many examples of people looking out for their friends and neighbours during these most difficult times, and some valuable friendships have been forged. As always, the pastoral care team relies on other people to let us know where help and support is needed, but it is heartening to find how often that support is already being given by someone in our church community.

Anne Tarassenko

Virtual Summer Fete

Each January Howard Pearce (member of fete committee) writes to various organisations to try to acquire raffle prizes for our summer fete. 2020 was no exception so as we already had these prizes, it was felt it would be a shame to waste them. A couple of the fete committee came up with the idea of the Virtual Summer Fete and we put together a package of fete like activities which we sold as a £10 bundle online.

This included:

- a chance to win one of the raffle prize (day trips out)
- £1 game (chance to win £15)
- Fete cake recipe collection (emailed out as a PDF)
- Lockdown garden photo competition (chance to win £5)

- Design your own bunting competition (chance to win £5)
With the help of the clergy (promoting the bundle and drawing the raffle numbers) and the web administrator who arranged the payment method. We managed to raise £800 before gift aid. Substantially down on our usual fete takings (around £1500-2000) but we were pleased with the response. Usually the fete raises funds from the surrounding community as it is a community occasion. This year funds were raised mainly from within the congregation.

The Christmas Event didn't happen in 2020.

Lisa Hill

The Gatehouse

Gatehouse

The Coronavirus has cause the Gatehouse to change the way they support homeless people as they no longer require sandwiches and cakes made in private kitchens. Instead they buy in whatever is needed to add to the generous donations from nearby shops. The organisers keep in touch with us and we continue to support them with regular donations.

Joan Walding

The wider world

Eco Church

APCM: Eco Church Group Report: January-December 2020
The Eco Church Group (ECG) had intended to focus on life-style choices in 2020, this seeming an appropriate focus in the build-up to COP 26 (26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties)

being held in Glasgow in November 2021. Covid restrictions ruled out any such initiative, but the ECG met on six occasions in 2020, being active both within Holy Trinity and in the wider context.

Activity within Holy Trinity:

- Contributed to worship, including 2020 Creationtide and Harvest, and when doing the intercessions generally directed our worship and thoughts towards Creation and our responsibility for it.
- Expressed support for the 2021 Climate Sunday service whether indoors, outside or online, following Church of England and Oxford Diocese's Environmental Programme:
<https://www.climatesunday.org>
- Encouraged mainstreaming of the eco dimension in all HTHQ activities, including Home Groups (eco-themed materials).
- Collaborated with Sunday Club and Forest Church.
- ECG is now represented on the HT Building sub-committee, and has made suggestions about church heating, church temperature control, and overseen the lagging of the boiler room pipes (v.Report on Energy Efficiency Audit received in February 2020, following Audit in December 2019), and has drawn attention to eco choices in tenders for building work.
- The Diocesan Energy Footprint scheme was carried out as part of the Parish Returns. HTHQ data give us a rating in Band G (the worst band) for emissions per m² of floor covering and Band B for emissions per person hour (based on the number of people in church per year). These figures demonstrate that our church space is relatively well used, but give further evidence that our boiler use is inefficient, as was noted by the Energy Efficiency surveyor.
- Explored Parish Buying Scheme (the C of E Purchasing Group) to investigate contracts, costs and providers for energy from

renewable sources. Recommended a new provider for electricity; contract now in place. The same will apply for gas when the current (unbreakable) contract ends.

- Brought to the attention of the Parish Administrator and Treasurer the wide range of products available through our office products contract.
- Compiled chart comprising all data of contracts and contacts for energy supply, solar panel installers, FIT arrangements, VAT exemption, Co-wheels (new car- unleaded Mini in Coach House car park), roofers (Binswood), plumber (church boiler work), Parish Buying Scheme. This is now held in the Parish Office as the central point of contact, so that such information can be accessed easily and updated as appropriate.
- Continued taking readings for gas and electricity consumption and entered them in Pilio to get calculations and comparison with previous years.
- Continued to take solar panel generation readings for Binswood and submit to Good Energy for FIT payments. Relayed our concern about vicarage panels' performance given (lack of green energy for vicarage, loss of revenue to HTHQ), and offered assistance in resolving the problem.
- Conveyed our disquiet about HTHQ receiving donations from smile.amazon.co.uk in view of Amazon's poor track record (unfair and monopolistic practices, tax avoidance, poor employment practices)
- Drafted a record of ECO activities in HTHQ over the years.

Meanwhile, beyond the confines of the parish.....

- One member of ECG was invited to attend the 2020 Environment Focus Event, convened by Bishop Steven.

- ECG was invited to participate in the Oxford Diocese Environmental Task Group, set up to enhance the diocese's response to climate change.
- Two members attended Headington Futures, where discussions focused on environment and traffic.

Hilary Rollin

Parish Charities

Archway

Most of you will be familiar with Archway's work of Serving those Hurt by Loneliness. During the pandemic Archway's workload has increased and has needed to change and adapt because social gatherings aren't possible. However loneliness and the affects of isolation have been huge. So the staff and Trustees have had to work out new priorities in order to maintain connection and provide support to existing and new friends. We've needed to review and where appropriate and possible re-shape the nature and type of service delivery in accordance with the needs of Friends, Government guidance and available resources. This will sound very familiar to our own clergy and PCC! So most of our work has gone into a telephone support service. 187 Friends currently receive regular telephone support. Archway staff are at capacity and all the changes have meant extra stress. 76 volunteers are also providing telephone support including some of us from HTHQ. So please keep on praying for the Friends connected to Archway. Also of course to support financially the work of Archway. It's never been more necessary and needed. Thank you.

Sue Saville

PCDC

This is the 25th year since PCDC started working with needy children and families in and around Bethlehem, and they have been there through many tough and difficult times. The newsletter before Christmas reported as follows:

‘I have to say that even the worst times we remember, when we were there during the fighting of the Intifada in 2001- 2002, we have never known such destitution as we are seeing now. The pandemic has closed so much of normal life in Bethlehem, and the city is closed to all visitors.

The people of Bethlehem rely almost totally on tourists visiting. Since March there have been no tourists. PCDC is not allowed to go there, nor is any outside charity. All tourists are banned, and all the hotels are closed. Most people are therefore unemployed and as a result, people are suffering. Survival is so important, that the need for food just now seems more urgent than the need for education.

As you know, PCDC was begun mainly to help children to go to school, by paying children’s school fees when the parents are too poor to be able to pay them. This year everybody is poor and we have received many requests to help, more than we can cope with. (Though God is good and He has helped us to respond to most of the requests). One school we support has only received 11% of the fees so far, so they cannot pay the teachers.

Sadly PCDC is not in a position to help starving families as we do not have the resources or the manpower to help. This makes us feel really helpless. when you think that many people in Bethlehem have not been paid since March, it makes it so much worse for

them. There are no furloughs there. No benefits, no rescue packages. If there is no work, there is no pay. That's it. The rich are now poor and the poor are now destitute. They have nothing to look forward to, and we cannot help them.

But there is a way. We will always find a way.'

Then in January Malcolm Jones reported that

'I am very pleased to tell you that PCDC's support for the appeal for food aid to Christian families in Bethlehem (mounted by our fellow charity Friends of the Holy Land), has raised over £100,000 to help poor families in the Bethlehem area.'

Nell Sloccock