



**St Matthias', St Mark and Holy Trinity  
Church Reports  
for the  
Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
8 May 2022**

During the later end of 2021, we began to form 'Action Groups' as a new way of shaping, leading and sharing what is going on at St. Matthias. These groups will work in conjunction with the PCC and the Staff Team. The Action Group Leaders will meet with clergy and wardens, (at a minimum) on alternate months to the PCC with the purpose of sharing what is happening within their group, highlighting areas where they would value the co-operation of another group and sharing new ideas of ministry which they would like to be involved in but might need to go to the PCC for a decision.

The following is a list of Action Groups which have either been set up or are in the process of being set up.

Services Ministry  
Maintenance Action Group  
Finance Action Group  
Stepping Stones Ministry (i.e. helping people take steps forward in their discipleship)  
Prayer  
Mission & Outreach  
SCYP (Schools, Children & Young People)  
Eco Action Group  
Pre-School & Childcare Centre  
Pastoral Care  
COMMS (Communication)

You will find one or two reports from some of these Action Groups within this booklet. Next year we hope to be in a position to report more fully from all of these groups. **John and Sylvia**

## 1. St Matthias Pre-School and Child Care Centre (*Action Group*)

2021 continued to be a challenging year coping with the coronavirus in a Pre-School setting, but we are very grateful that only a few children went down with the virus. Although some staff have been affected, we always had sufficient staff to continue.

In September, 2021, 33 children were on roll (10 more than the



previous year); 10 of these children were 2 year olds (6 more than the previous year). Currently in the Spring term 2022 we have 47 children. This is the highest number we have had for several years and we believe this is due to having the

outside 'forest' school area available for play together with the efforts of our dedicated staff team who genuinely seem to have so much fun with the children!



During 2021, the **statutory framework** for the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) was updated which inevitably meant studying sessions for the staff in order to implement the changes within Pre-School. The main changes involved the learning and development sections of the curriculum and revised early learning goals. Promoting oral health was also included. The EYFS did not prescribe a

particular teaching approach, but as a team the staff discussed the settings ethos, values, pedagogy and curriculum and produced their own document of intent in conjunction with the Ofsted criteria. We have certainly missed holding our **end of term services in the church** due to covid, but are pleased to say that at the end of the current term



we were able to meet with families in the church again and listen as Liz told the Easter story. We are grateful to all church members who gave towards the Real



Easter Eggs together with booklets teaching the Easter story and each child was given one along with a beautifully knitted cross that the St. Matts Knits group made for them. It was good to have the Clergy Team present and to be able to mingle with the families.

**Thanks go to all our staff.** Training for them is on-going and we are particularly pleased that Alice has completed her Apprenticeship Course and is currently studying for a Forest School qualification at South Devon College. Our thanks go to Liz, Kate, Demi and Amanda as well as Jaimee who helps out when needed.

Thank you for reading our report – we value your prayers for staff and every child who we have the privilege to teach.

*Sylvia, Liz, Andrea, Tony and Stephanie*

**(Pre-School Management Committee)**

## **2. Schools, Children, Young People and Families Ministry (*Action Group*)**

The SCYP (Schools, Children and Young People) management team met up regularly throughout 2021. Our purpose is to enable team work across our ministry to our families, babies, children and young people. It has been a challenging year with school disruption due to the Covid pandemic and as we had not been able to appoint a youth worker, Rev Pete Norris took over the role on a temporary, limited basis and has built up a new small but dedicated team of helpers on a Friday evening. Despite advertising twice during the year we were still unable to appoint anyone. However, there have been some very encouraging highlights which the team leaders have summarised below:

### **Children and Families** *Lena Fearnley*

During the months of lockdown as the year started, we continued to keep in touch with all families, delivering teaching and fun to our children. Once restrictions relaxed, we recommenced Sunday teaching in Church together with our usual range of events. We also continued sending emails to families each weekend with that Sunday's teaching materials and news of what is coming up. We have around 40 Church families and have seen virtually everyone during the year on either Sundays or at our activities. Particular highlights of the year's work are:

**Messy Church** Starting at Easter, we have held 8 events filled with worship, teaching, crafts, fun and supper and have seen an average attendance of 48 children and their families. In the summer we were outside in the Forest School area, only moving indoors from November. Each month we are welcoming new families into our church activities. We have a fantastic group of helpers who make this event possible each month.

**Ilsham School** From October, on Mondays, Lena has been teaching both Reception and year 1 classes in Church. She is strongly supporting The Torbay Agreed Syllabus curriculum teaching RE through both stories and crafts. Pre-School children enjoy a similar session each Thursday.

**Begin Well** Three antenatal courses were run by our trained team of Tessa, Jan, Liz, Kate and Lena, each over 5 sessions, filling the gap now that the NHS no longer provide such education for free. In total 22 sets of parents-to-be have attended and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. We therefore see this as a great gift to our community.

**Mummy and Me** This group started in June and meets in Church every Friday during term time. It provides a safe place for new mums (babies 0-12 months) to come together for support, post-natal education and to make new friends. It is proving very popular with an average of around 20 mums present each week - some having previously attended Begin Well, and it is hoped that our Toddlers group will be their next stop! Moving into 2022, we are seeing some families from this group coming forward for baptisms.

Other events have included a great Jollyween party on 31st October and the Crib Service on Christmas Eve, when we welcomed 96 children and their families to hear the story of 'The Impossible Promise' - a fantastic celebration!

### **Church/School Links** *Monica Rook*

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 appearances on line to present bible stories and prayers directly to classes of children in Warberry and Ilsham Academies. 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 until we can meet them all in person.

Reverend John and myself have been working closely with Ilsham and Warberry helping them to reshape their school Christian values. This has involved consultation with pupils, staff and parents. Godly Play has been led by Lena

Fearnley with younger pupils from Ilsham. This has taken place in the church and has been warmly received by staff and children. In November a group of children came to the church to talk to us about what The Trinity means.

Alongside this contact Reverend John, Sue Davis, Jane Risness and myself are members of the Local Ethos and Governance Committee. We have taken a 'Learning Walk' at Warberry to look at their RE provision. Sue takes the lead in safeguarding and special educational needs and disabilities and I am chair of this committee with particular interest in pupil premium funding and 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.

### **Youth Work** *Pete Norris*

2021 has been a significant time of transition for our work with young people. We said goodbye to a number of older young people as they went on to new adventures like university. We also said goodbye to Jack who had been leading the youth group on a volunteer basis. He showed endless amounts of grit and resilience by providing youth work throughout the different lockdowns and restrictions.

In September we welcomed a new cohort of young people in year 6. Many of these young people already have relationships with St Matthias thanks to Lena's work with Messy Church. We re-launched our Friday night youth work with two alternating clubs 'The Loft' and 'TGIF'. The Loft is a social night with different games and activities like Bake Offs and indoor olympics. TGIF has sought to offer the young people relevant and engaging ways to interact with faith. Since September the youth group has grown and we regularly have between 8-10 young people each week which is really exciting. We're looking forward to how we can attract more year 6 pupils from the primary schools that we are connected with and seeing Friday nights grow.

### **Open House Toddler Group** *Judi Stannard, Diane Francis, Elaine Biden*

Like all other Toddler groups we were not allowed to meet for the first 3 months of last year but kept in touch with our families and delivered an Easter pack to them with a bible story book, craft and chocolate for the children and a small gift for mums. In April we decided to meet on a Tuesday morning in the local playpark to keep within the Covid regulations. Everyone was really pleased to

meet up again – it had been a very difficult 12 months for all of them and a couple of the children had not played with another child during that time. In September we moved into the church building – the extra space makes it easier to avoid the spread of Covid and it is a great way of introducing families to the church. The group is small but suits parents and children who like a quieter environment. It has been lovely to welcome new families and see shyer children start to relax and enjoy the morning. We have introduced a new structure to the session and usually have a bible story and refreshments in the middle of the morning, often followed by craft, but still finish with singing, greatly enjoyed by everyone! Please keep praying for the group and for us as we build relationships and share God’s love with all who come.

### 3. Matt’s Knits

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 in the hall and welcome new members to join us at any time.



We were unable to meet early in 2021 but we were still knitting, and received an unusual request for a visual aid for the new ante natal course starting online.



We then continued in a more conventional pattern and knitted hot water bottle covers, matinee jackets and scarves to send out to Nicci Maxwell for Potters Village in Uganda.



Several members of the group knitted blankets and hats which were sent out to Moldova. We then concentrated on projects nearer home knitting stars tree decorations for our preschool and Ruby knitted a Christmas Angel for the preschool nativity tableau.



*Elaine Biden*

#### 4. Girls Allowed

Girls Allowed met several times over the year in different ways, depending on the regulations in force. Who knew that Pictionary on Zoom could be so much fun? Tessa told us something of her life's journey, we found treasure at Cockington, met in gardens and the pub and in church for mutual support and a chat about what we do (or don't do) for Lent. It's always good to welcome new people, so please do come if you are able: it's not a club, just a way to deepen friendships with the people we see at church.

*Judi, Marjorie, Sue and Ruth*

#### 5. Missions Action Group

Each year, St Matthias donates one-tenth of its voluntary income to a range of Christian charities, in accordance with the biblical principle of tithing. In 2021, our giving amounted to £14,200. Our tithe supports Christian mission work under four broad headings: Local Mission, World Mission, Poverty Relief, and Supporting Churches.

The members of the Missions Action Group (MAG) meet several times a year to discuss which charities to recommend to the PCC for support. We pray for the work being undertaken by these charities and for the people they help.

St Matthias supports six main charities, giving each a substantial and equal donation annually. These six are: Church Army, Church Mission Society (for Dr Nicci Maxwell), Church Pastoral Aid Society, Linx Christian Youth Trust, Mission to Seafarers and Tear Fund.

In addition, a range of other Christian charities are chosen each year to receive smaller donations of varying amounts. In 2021, the other charities receiving support from the mission tithe were: Christian Response to Eastern Europe, Compass Braille, Mercy Ships, Open Doors, Scripture Union, Torbay Street Pastors and WorldShare.

We hold £1,000 of the tithe in reserve till the end of each year, for any disaster/emergency that may arise. In 2021, this was sent to the DEC for their Afghanistan Appeal.

Over the years, we have regularly invited representatives of the charities we support to visit St Matthias and share news of their work. The pandemic has however affected this, although it has been good to have video contact with charities when in-person visits were not possible. We were delighted to welcome Dr Nicci Maxwell on 11 April 2022, when she came for a Q&A session about her work at Potters Village in Uganda that inspired all who heard it.

Warm thanks go to everyone at St Matthias for their generous giving, enabling a wide range of Christian charities – large and small – to be supported in their important and life-changing work.

If anyone wishes to become a member of the Missions Action Group, they are very welcome to join us.

*Joanna Wilkinson Chair, Missions Action Group*

## 6. Friends of St Matthias

*“advancing the Christian religion, in particular by maintaining altering and improving the buildings and grounds of St Matthias Church and its Church Centre”*



Following our well attended AGM in October, the Friends have worked hard to resume where we had to leave off in early 2020.



The completion of Wellspring has reduced, but not ended, the need to maintain and improve the church building and grounds. We are currently discussing with the maintenance group a number of small projects highlighted in the Quinquennial inspection, as well as plans to help make the church greener.

The demand for social events is, happily, still with us; the Christmas Market, the Christmas Lunch and the Italian Meal were successful and will be repeated. We try to cater for all tastes. Events are featured on the weekly notices sheet, on our notice board in the hall and in our pages on the church website; this year by popular demand they include the organ recital, the theatre trip and the Open Mic evening.

We are delighted to welcome Marjorie Broadhead, Liz Sampson and Rob Dickinson as new Trustees. I am grateful to them as well as to our continuing Trustees; Christine Tibbetts, Joanna Wilkinson, Maggi Waugh and Cecil Johnston, and our PCC representative Tessa Barton. Grateful thanks also to Peter Burcher, who has now stood down after seven years as a Trustee.

We are grateful too to all our members and supporters for making it all possible. We are looking forward to another busy year – our thirtieth. If you would like to know more, please speak to any of the Trustees.

***Rob Newman Chairman of the Friends of St Matthias***

## **7. Pastoral Care (Action Group)**

Unfortunately, 2021 proved to be another difficult year as we were still unable to visit any Care Homes or Nursing Homes and most of our contact had to be through phone calls. As restrictions slowly lifted we were able to cautiously resume visits. If you or someone you know has a pastoral care need please get in touch with one of us.

Sadly during 2021 we lost Robert Barbour, Len Barden, Charlotte Hewitt, Rosemary Johnson, Peter Fox, Sheila Stanley and Jill Matthews.

We have a team who make visits and keep in touch with people who are unwell or unable to attend church.

If anyone would like to know more about joining the pastoral care team, please speak to the clergy or either Maureen 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 and Maureen Purdy Pastoral Care Coordinators*

## 8. Church Flowers

It has been another very quiet year for the Flower Group. Due to the ongoing pandemic, and the various restrictions, we have been unable to keep fresh flowers in church on a regular basis. We have compromised by having a changing artificial arrangement on top of the font. We were pleased to be able to provide some decoration at Christmas and are planning to decorate the whole church at Easter. We are looking forward to returning to service as normal soon!



We welcomed Ann Thomas as a new member of the group at the beginning of the year. We are a small but friendly group and would love any budding flower arrangers in the church to think about joining us. You would be warmly welcomed.

*Sue Newman*

## 9. Home/Study Group

home groups at  st matthias

The need, the benefit and the means of staying in contact with people are lessons we have all learnt over the past two years and our Home Groups have shown how important and possible this is even when you cannot meet in person.

Most groups are now coming back together and benefitting from meeting in homes, the church, or the church centre, as well as joining together in the recent Lent Course.

We have lost a couple of groups, a couple have moved venue and two have merged. As the church begins to grow again we anticipate the need for new groups and for existing groups to grow. Far from stopping the groups' activities, the last two years have underlined the need for small groups to meet in a

variety of ways and we look forward to this continuously growing way of worshipping, studying and sharing our faith journey.

**Norman and Lindsay Doidge, Home Group Coordinators**

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List of current groups (April 2022)

Group	Leader/Coordinators	Time	Venue
Woodend Group	Mike & Susie Higgins	Tue 7:30pm	Woodend Road
The 2018 Group	Paul & Tessa Barton	Tue 7:30pm	Church Centre
Ladies Group	Marilyn Smee	Wed 10:00am	Church Centre
Livermead Group	Ian & Jenny Lane	Wed 7:30pm	Livermead
Watcombe Heights Group	Rob & Sue Day	Thu 11.00am	Watcombe Heights Road
Wellswood Avenue Group	Paul & Judi Stannard	Thu 4:30pm	Wellswood Avenue
Watcombe Park Group	Brian & Norma Gerry	Thu 4:30pm	Zoom / Watcombe Park
Bankside Group	Monica Rook	Thu 7:30pm	Lincombe Drive
Chelston Group	Miles/Yelland	Thu 7:30pm	Chelston

**10. Maintenance Group (Action Group)**

The Wellspring project ‘snagging’ was completed and all was signed off. Additional linked pieces of work undertaken were the placing of a handrail in the West Porch and the planter at the bottom of the steps to the Piazza. The only significant work on the church centre was to complete the sealing of the leaking guttering which was started the previous year so as to avoid any further damage to the walls of the Hall.

The major event for the church was the Quinquennial (5-yearly) surveyor’s report. Fortunately no major problems were identified and most of the work required was related to the normal weathering effects on a complex building of its age. The urgent work has all been done and that recommended for the first year commissioned.

All Church of England churches have been asked to achieve net carbon zero by 2030. To start working towards this we have started to change all Centre

lighting to LED devices, with motion sensitive switching in the appropriate areas. Other work to attain this goal (and reduce energy bills) is being explored.

**Paul Stannard** *Chair of Maintenance group*

## **11. Comms Committee (Action Group)**

The Communications Group is now into its third year, 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 – a longer term project 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 and exploring other social media options
- welcome booklet – producing content, updating and reviewing both online and printed edition for newcomers to the church
- noticeboards, centre publicity and material for press releases and other publicity/ communications

The group meets as required – currently via zoom – and comprises Suzy Wright, Sylvia Barratt, Julie Bouskill, Cecil Johnston and Pere Snow with occasional input from others including Pete Norris.

**Suzy Wright**

## **12. Sound & Video**

By the start of 2021 we were in a second lockdown and again reliant on our streaming facilities. On Easter Day we were able to meet together to worship but could only sing out of doors. Thankfully we have a separate sound system that could be set up in the West Porch and our singers and musicians were again able to lead us in worship. This was also a great opportunity to witness to our local community. Whilst we were not able to sing indoors, we continued in this way and were even able to stream from the porch.

Thankfully, as the restrictions were eased, singing was allowed in church and we continue to stream live worship each week. At this stage others stepped forward to support the A/V operations. We have improved connectivity with a dedicated broadband line to the desk and have been able to stream or record weddings, baptisms and funerals and special events. This Easter the first part of our 11.00 am service was outside on the piazza.

The preparation of PowerPoints falls mainly on the clergy; could you help with this? Similarly could you support the small A/V team by helping out on an occasional but regular basis? Full training and support are offered. Finally, thank you to all who play a part in making our worship accessible. Feedback, but not the 'screeching' kind, is always welcome.

**David and Joanna Wilkinson**

### **13. St Matts Gospel Singers**

St Matts Gospel Singers, part of GGCC (Gospel Generation Community Choirs), are back! Choir practices are held fortnightly on Wednesdays in the church. We enjoy singing traditional gospel songs and spirituals from our well-established repertoire as well as learning modern Christian and new gospel songs. We always look to improve and learn new vocal techniques and experiment with our voices and harmonies. This year we are planning to participate in singing events and recording sessions with other GGCC choirs. We are currently looking for a piano accompanist. New singers are welcome!

**Anya Jones**

### **14. Eco Action Group (Action Group)**

We are a very new group and started very ad hoc. We have now crystallised our general purposes and intentions as recently approved by the PCC.

#### ***Overall Objective from the Strategic Plan***

*"To challenge the whole church and us as individuals by promoting the Anglican's 5<sup>th</sup> point of 'The Five Marks of Mission' – 'To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth', - this includes awareness of the climate change and other ecological anxieties facing us in Torbay and the world."*

It could be said we are looking in several directions; towards the congregation, the profile and standing of our church itself, working within the local church community and serving our area.

In respect of our congregation, we were significantly active in encouraging prayers and awareness of the Glasgow climate conference in early November to which there was a really admirable response across the congregations. Subsequently we have provided information on possible eco-awareness for Lent. We are very keen appropriately and proportionately to do more within the congregation on the so-called lifestyle challenges. It is a longer-term project but key to our role. We suspect there is a far greater willingness than might be appreciated. It will also have its challenges with the increases in the cost of energy.

As far as the church itself is concerned, at the January PCC meeting there was hugely encouraging support for accreditation with A Rocha, as a badge of increased awareness of eco-issues but also as a good discipline and framework for the church on an objective basis. Following the meeting, Judi Stannard look on this responsibility working with Paul. We have registered and we are making very good progress in respect of the bronze level, the entry point. It is hoped that more news will be available in the next few weeks which in turn would be a source of justifiable satisfaction and encouragement to do more.

From the outset we were conscious we did not want to do this alone. However this has been quite frustrating. We have been in touch as far as possible with other churches in Torbay including an invitation letter in the quarterly Churches Together newsletter in Torquay. We are holding a meeting on 25 April 2022 with invitations to the churches with which we are in touch but specifically a general invitation to any other churches who attend. Details have been given to the Diocesan Ecology Officer, Lydia Perrin, who has offered to publicise. We will report on the outcome. We want to share and learn and find out what can be done. We still have in mind the possibility of a series of seminars, talks or presentations in the autumn on aspects which affect us including the seas, fishery, the soil, agriculture, the weather, tourism and climate change, poverty and health.

Obviously as a church serving our area we want to be outgoing. We want to work with existing green groups. We want to be able to tell our neighbours how we are translating God's love for his planet into local action. At the moment this will follow some of the other initiatives.

I am very happy to answer questions and receive any thoughts and ideas. Thank you for your encouragement.

*David Hodson*

## **15. The Church Centre**

2021 continued to be a year with Coronavirus restrictions and so life in the Church Centre was adapted as necessary. As we were allowed, we started to hire out the rooms again to our regular and one-off hirers. As I write this in April 2022 most of our regular hirers have returned to the centre and we have also welcomed some new groups including a poetry group and conservative club. (A few groups felt they weren't able to return.) We currently have 29 regular groups attending the Centre ranging from the Arts Society of Torbay (a series of lectures) to the Big Noise Choir, Spanish lessons, Brownies, 5 regular exercise classes and 6 different Women's Institute (WI) groups. We have 23 other groups or individuals who use the rooms now and again and range from Tea Dances to management meetings (local blocks of flats), antiques and autumn fairs to parties. The Centre really is a community centre serving the people of Torquay and the local area. Why not see what is on and join in!

### *Open Church Ministry*

We continued to open the church to visitors for private prayer when we could and on 7<sup>th</sup> February this year (2022) we started opening every day from 12-2pm. Do come and visit if you would like to. We have a small team of stewards to whom I am grateful for their help and support.

### *Office*

I continued to work at home for much of last year but returned full time in September when restrictions were lifted and the centre has been getting back to normal and full capacity ever since.

*Pere Snow, Church Centre Manager*

