



St Mary's through the decades 1890s-2020s

In 2020 the congregation is celebrating the 125th anniversary of the opening and consecration in 1895 of the initial portion of the present St Mary's Church building. The building replaced a temporary Iron Church where services had begun in 1867, once development had begun as a result of the opening of the railway station at Worcester Park in 1859. The Iron Church had been the first church built in Cuddington since the medieval St Mary's Church; with the village it served, had been swept away by Henry VIII to make way for Nonsuch Palace, over 300 years earlier.

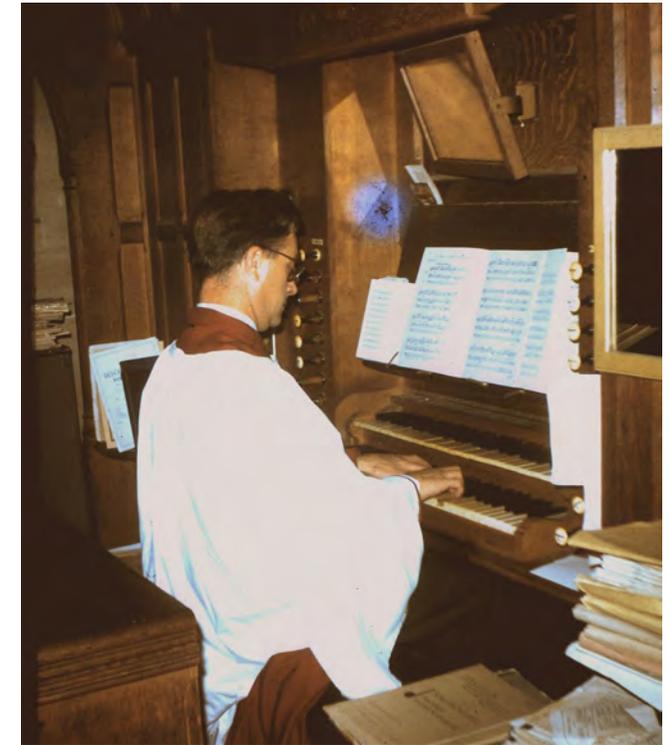
Our plans to celebrate the anniversary have had to become flexible, because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdown. We still hope to carry out, a little later than planned, our original idea of producing an exhibition featuring each of the 125 years since the church was opened. Meanwhile, we are launching this smaller display featuring a few points about each decade.

We don't claim this is a complete history of the church: after all, whenever church members meet to share the bread and wine at Holy Communion, or a child or adult is christened, or someone hears the good news of Jesus, or members of the congregation act as Christ's hands and feet by helping others, or sharing in good times and bad with them, in the parish and beyond, the church is playing its part in the parish and the wider world – but most of these actions will never feature in an exhibition.

Do you have links with St Mary's? Perhaps you were christened or married in the church, attended Sunday School, sang in the choir, belonged to the Young Wives or Mothers' Union, or have been involved in a local organisation meeting in the church halls? If you have photographs, documents or memories relating to your connection with St Mary's that you would be willing to share with us for use in a larger exhibition, please contact David Rymill on 01962 868976 or at rymilldavid@outlook.com.



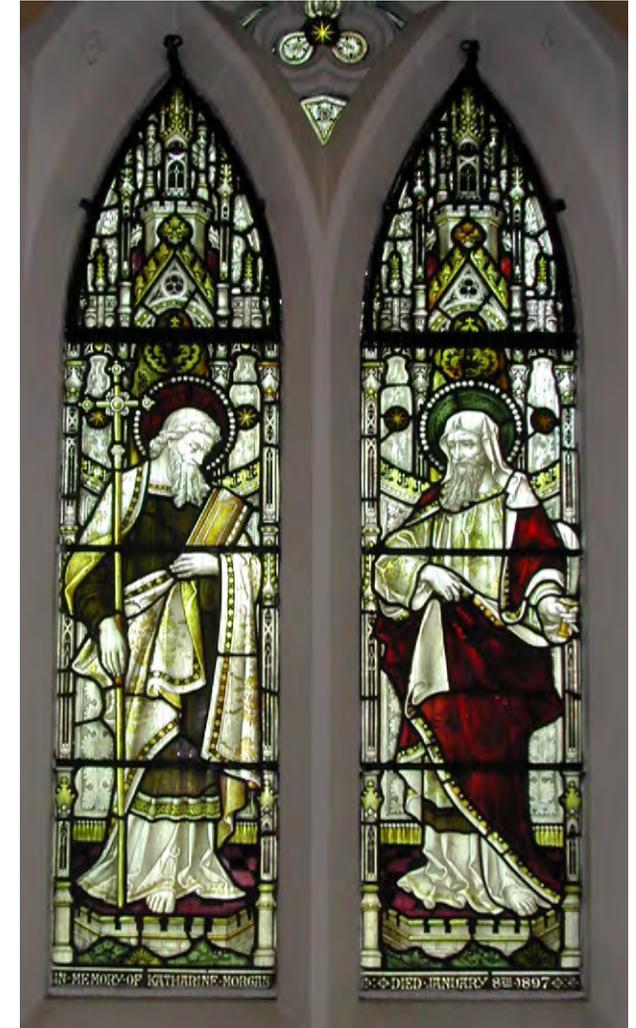
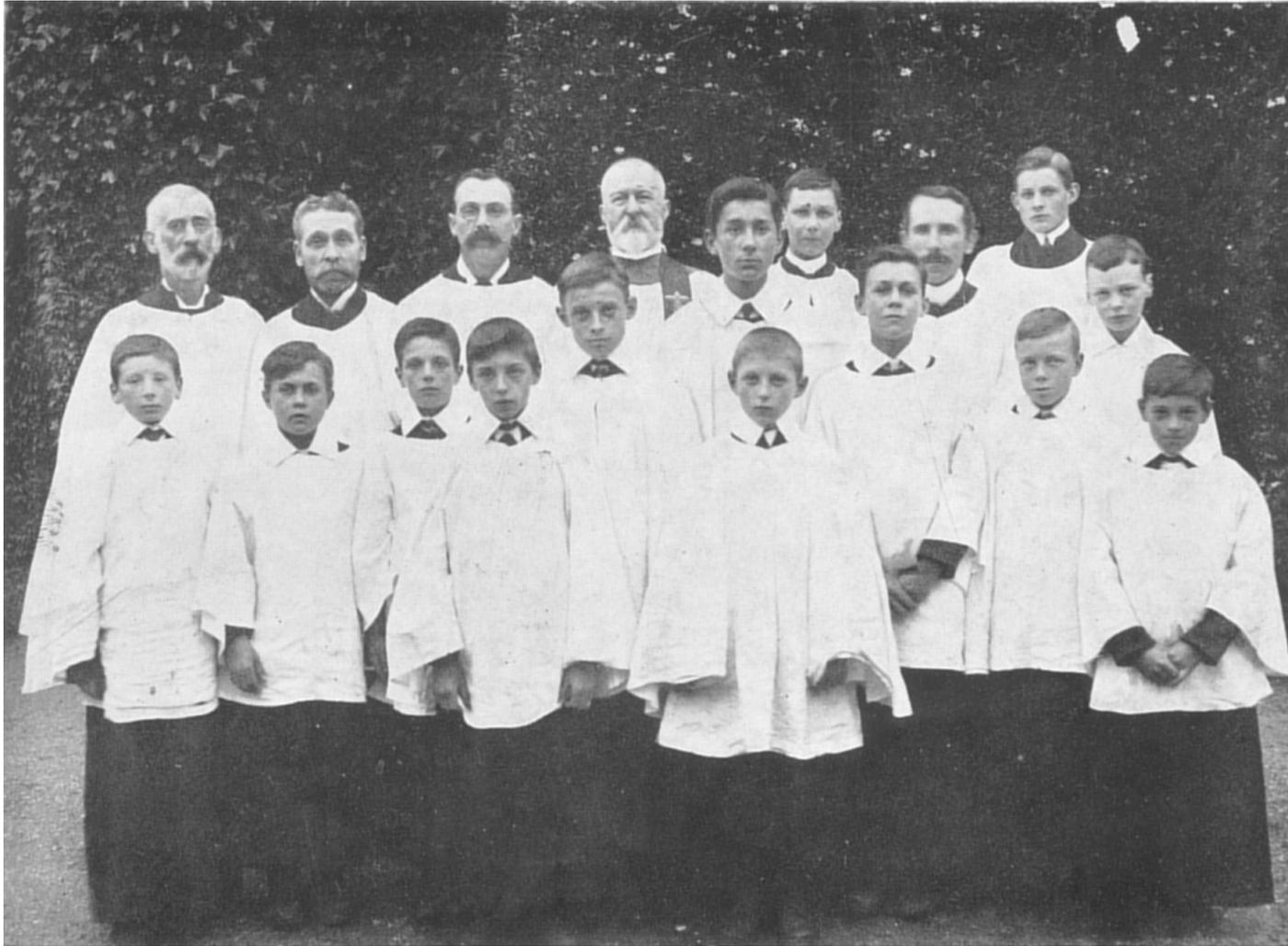
This watercolour of the east end of the church, and the view of the church from the south-west on the previous page, are both by the Revd John Richardson, Assistant Priest at St Mary's.



1890s

Above left: the first services were held in the new church on 21st July 1895, and the building was consecrated by Bishop Randall Davidson (later Archbishop of Canterbury) on 20th November that year. As the population of Cuddington was still very small, the church originally had only three of the planned five bays of the nave (the main seating area for the congregation), and there was a temporary west wall and small porch. As this postcard shows, the clock in the bell-tower was not added until later (in 1933).

Above right: the organ, by Henry Willis and Sons, also dates from the 1890s. This photograph shows the console in its original position in the chancel, with Victor Hoad, Organist from 1967 to 1971, shortly before the organ was enlarged, and the console moved to the nave, in 1974.



1900s

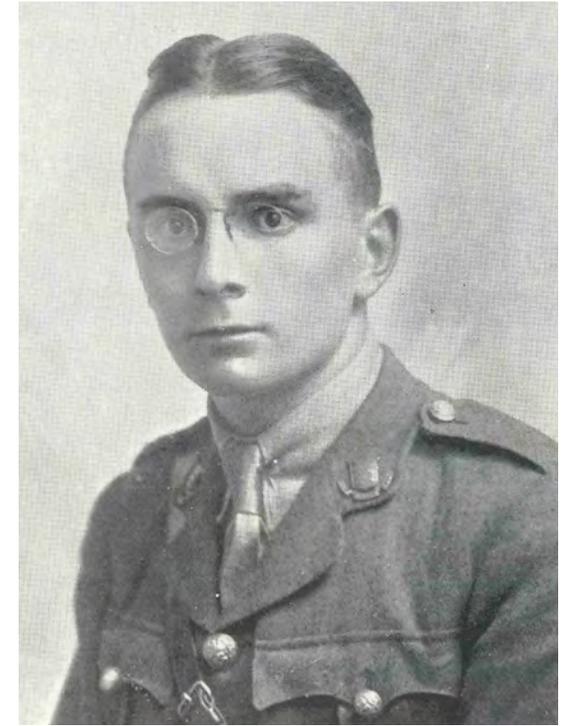
Above left: St Mary's had a robed choir by the time of the laying of the foundation stone of the new church in August 1894. This photograph shows the choir with the first Vicar, the Revd William Layton, who was appointed in 1895, and served for much of the 1900s.

Above right: during this decade stained glass was installed in several windows in the nave. This window, dating from 1901, shows St Philip and St Bartholomew.

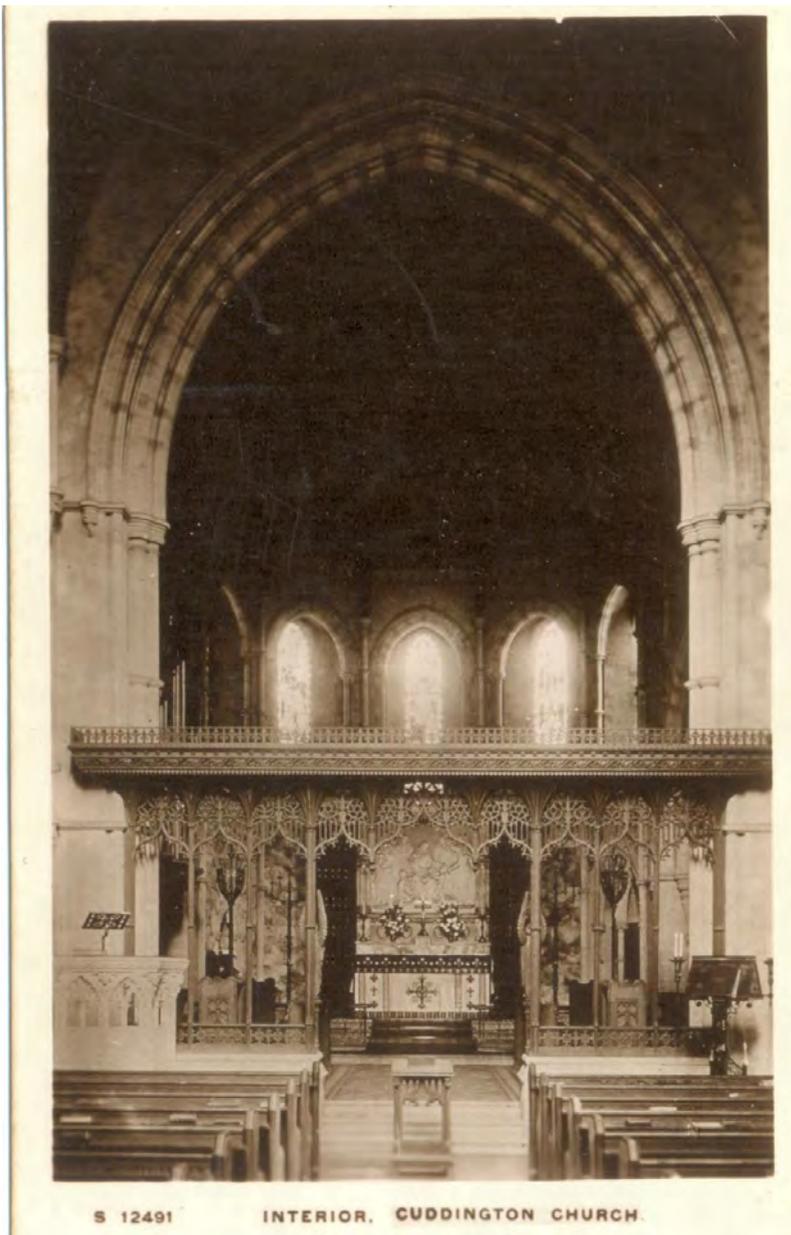


Left: the Revd Edwin Harding Eland served as Vicar from 1907 to 1929. He wrote several books, including *Life's Pilgrimage*, an anthology published in the same year that he arrived in Cuddington.

The First World War was a dominant feature of this decade, and the young men of the parish commemorated on the war memorial in the church include S/Lt F Bernard Wearne (*above right*) who was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross. The centenary of his death in 1917 was marked by the unveiling of a plaque at the Fulham Borough war memorial, as he had been born in that borough.



1910s



1920s



Left: this photograph of the interior of the church probably dates from about 1920. Subsequent changes in the appearance of the church include the decoration of the chancel and sanctuary roof, and the addition of a dais in front of the chancel screen, both in the 1970s. Electric lighting was installed in 1925.

Above: Bernard Hollaway was appointed Organist in 1927, and served until shortly before his death in 1949, apart from a time in the Second World War when the school where he taught was evacuated to Wales (he had continued to travel to Cuddington on Sundays when the school was initially evacuated to Sussex). The processional cross was bought in his memory.



Above: during the 1930s the population of the parish increased dramatically. In c1934 the Small Hall, on part of the present car park, was built, so that a wider range of activities could be organised.

Photograph by Rod Clarke, 1994.

Top right: although intended as a temporary building, the Small Hall was used for about 60 years by church groups such as the Young Wives (seen here in c1970), and local organisations.



1930s

Above right: during this decade, new churches, St John's and St Francis's, were opened in the Stoneleigh and Ruxley Lane parts of the parish, to meet the needs of the growing population. They became separate Conventional Districts in this decade, but remained formally part of the parish until 1948. This photograph shows the laying of the foundation stone of St John's Church.

Courtesy of Roger Blake.



Above: in 1947 the Vicar, the Revd A Robert Winnett, suggested that a new church hall was the most urgent building need, and offered part of the Vicarage garden for it; this would come to fruition in the next decade with the opening of the Large Hall in 1955.

Photograph by Jack Wysehall

1940s

1st Cuddington Guides and 2nd Cuddington Scouts were both formed in the 1940s (1st Cuddington Scouts were founded in 1931). St Mary's continues to have close links with young people's uniformed organisations.



1950s

Above left: the new Large Hall on the corner of The Avenue and Royal Avenue was opened in 1955, and was used by a variety of church and community groups. The Drama Section of the Cuddington Players had been formed in 1953, and in 1958 an Operatic Section was added. This photograph shows some of the ladies' chorus with the Major-General in *The Pirates of Penzance* in 1959.

Above right: the church was extended in 1959. This photograph shows work in progress on the additional two bays and (in the foreground) a new choir vestry; the old temporary west wall and small porch, which are still visible here, were later removed.

The May designed and produced by J. M. WYSEHALL.

The Cast

THOMAS BECKET	
Archbishop of Canterbury	Denys Doxat-Pratt
PRIESTS	
The first	Frank Nash
The second	George Goddard
The third	Wyndham Rees
A MESSENGER	Kath Murphy
TEMPTERS	
The first	Kathleen Cove
The second	Richard Allen
The third	Charles Brown
The fourth	Stanley Brown
KNIGHTS	
Reginald FitzUrse	Garth Gibson
Hugh de Morville	Ronald Barrett
William de Traci	Richard Bacon
Richard Brito	Stanley Brown
WOMEN OF CANTERBURY	Doris Brown
	Rosemary Goddard
	Jane Hicks
	Christine Lee
	Gina Lewis
	Shirley Luke
	Kathleen Murphy
	Vera Nash
	Janet Smith
ATTENDANTS	Alan Holliday
	George Lewis
	Kath Murphy



Above: productions by the Cuddington Players included *HMS Pinafore* (1966).

Above left: in 1967 the Players performed T S Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*.
Courtesy of Margaret Trickett.



Above right: 55 Thorndon Gardens, Stoneleigh, was bought as a Curate's house in 1960 (it was sold in 1992); this photograph shows the Revd Arthur Parsons, Curate from 1975 to 1978, and his wife Margaret, outside the house on 28th September 1975, the date on which Arthur was ordained deacon in Guildford Cathedral.

Courtesy of Margaret Parsons.

1960s

Also in the 1960s, St Mary's held its first Stewardship campaign; a Kneeler Group was formed to make tapestry kneelers for the church; the first known ordination of clergy in St Mary's took place; and a Badminton Club began in the Large Hall.



Left: in 1971, two stained glass windows by Lawrence Lee, including this one, were given in memory of Beatrice Greenfield. Lee also designed the west window in 1955, and is perhaps best known for the windows he produced for Coventry Cathedral.

Above: from 1976 annual Fundays, a development of the traditional summer fete, were held in the Paddock of Shadbolt Park, with stallholders dressing in accordance with the year's chosen theme. This photograph shows the Vicar, the Revd Harvey Pentreath and his wife Dorothy on a produce stall at a 'Wild West'-themed Funday.

Photograph by Don Newton.

Above right: this photograph shows a youth meeting hosted by Yvonne and David Daoud in 1978.

Photograph courtesy of Margaret Parsons.

1970s



Above left: this group photograph includes the Revd Barry Preece, Vicar, 1981-8 (left), and the Revd Anne Donaldson, appointed Deaconess for Cuddington and Stoneleigh in 1986 and one of the first women ordained Deacon in Guildford Cathedral in 1987 (8th from left). Sue Ayling (3rd from left) was ordained in 1998 and returned to Cuddington as non-stipendiary Curate in 2002

Courtesy of Anne Donaldson.

Above right: the Large Hall was refurbished in the 1980s.

Right: in the 1980s the congregation developed a link with the Friends Anonymous community project in Hackney, run by the Revd Gualter de Mello (right, with Barry Preece); St Mary's funded a 'Cuddington Room' in 1987.

Photograph by Rod Clarke.

1980s





1990s

Above left: a new complex including a downstairs hall, an upstairs room for smaller events, and new accommodation for the Parish Office, was opened in 1995, replacing the Small and Large halls. This photograph shows work in progress in March 1995, with the side wall of the Small Hall still visible on the right-hand edge.

Photograph by Margaret Rymill.

Above right: by the time this photograph, of guests at a wedding, was taken in July 1995, the building was complete, and landscaping was in progress.

Photograph by Rod Clarke.



2000s

Above: this photograph of the choir and clergy, taken in 2008, includes, in the centre row, the Revd Robin Harvey, Vicar (centre), the Revd Christine White and the Revd Sue Ayling, non-stipendiary clergy (4th and 6th from left), Helen Bisset, Reader (3rd from left) and Karl Nicholas and Rob Macchi, joint Organists (2nd and 7th from left).

Photograph by Peter White.



Above left: in this decade the Revds Andrew Sillis and Andy Cain led the congregation through experiments with changes in service times, and with services to provide an alternative to traditional styles of worship, leading to the introduction of a monthly informal Café Church in the hall on the second Sunday of most months.

Photograph by Rod Clarke.

In 2017 a confirmation was held in St Mary's by Rt Revd Jo Bailey Wells, Bishop of Dorking, the first visit to St Mary's by a female Bishop; Bishop Jo returned a few weeks later (*above right*) to license the Revd Theresa Ricketts, the parish's first female Priest-in-Charge.

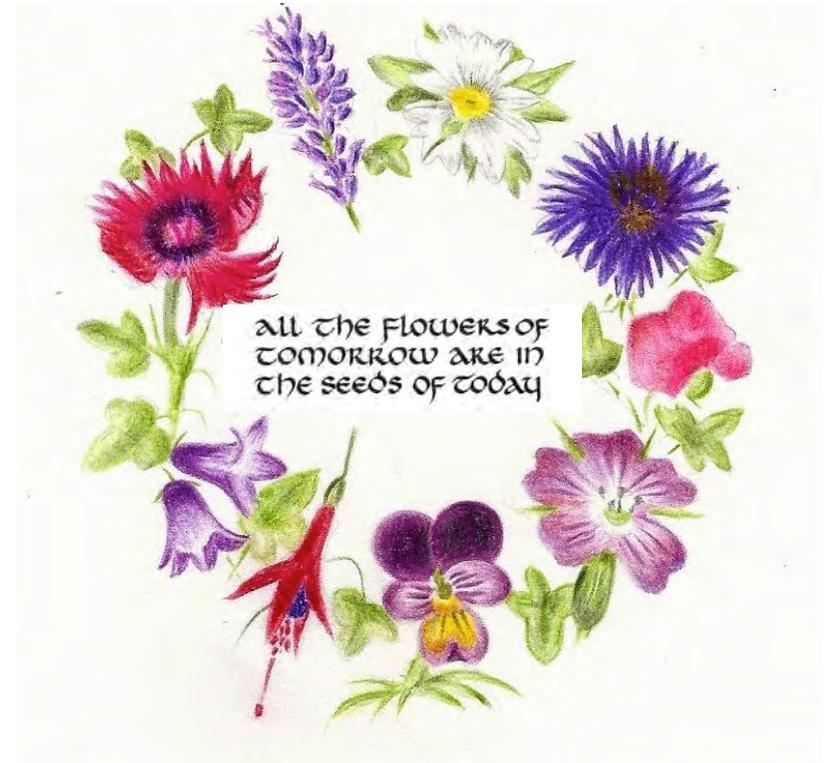
Members of the congregation have continued to be involved in community organisations, including, in this decade, Epsom and Ewell Foodbank and the Epsom Street Pastors.

2010s



The start of this decade has been overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdown.

The Vicar, the Revd Theresa Ricketts, has distributed service sheets and sermons on paper and by email, put video recordings of services, sermons and meditations on YouTube, and hosted services on Zoom.



Other activities such as the Sunday Club, Women's Group and house groups have also continued on Zoom.

Above left members of the congregation were encouraged to light candles at home on Easter Day and send in photographs of them.

Above right: Assistant Priest, the Revd John Richardson, has distributed Sunday messages, illustrated with his botanical art, to the congregation via email.

2020s