

St. John's Church Stratford London E15

ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 2008



A bird's eye view of the Sunday morning Service on 6th July 2008, taken from the scaffolding erected to allow repairs to the West Wall of St. John's. (Photo by Adrian Clarke)

**Incorporating the
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PCC
For the Parish of St. John with Christ Church and St. James Stratford
for the year ended 31st December 2008**

VICAR'S REPORT

2008 was another year of growth in St. John's. Growth is good news, but does bring challenges. I spent part of my time working out strategies to help us function efficiently as a large church, and, in the process I have had to change some of the ways I manage my time. I have had 2 main priorities:

- **To be available as your priest and pastor.** I want to know as many of you, personally, as possible; (an increasing challenge in a growing church). During 2008 I aimed to focus on meeting newcomers and nurturing those who seek Baptism and Confirmation. I am aware that pastoral care needs to be shared with others, and I have been reflecting on how we can use the various networks that already exist within the church to improve our pastoral care. Despite my chronic "busyness", my invitation is always the same - if you want to talk with me, I am always pleased to talk - just contact me.
- **To ensure that time spent in any church service, Sunday or midweek, is time well-spent.** I am more convinced than ever that the function of our services is to teach, encourage, guide, inspire, empower us as Christians - to lead people closer to Jesus, and to send us out to serve him in the world. I spend a lot of time working on our teaching, worship and fellowship times, to ensure that it does the job of building us up.

I am indebted to all who work with me, in so many different ways, to share ministry and mission. I was particularly glad that **Dennis** was commissioned as our Parish Evangelist in 2008. Part of his role is to encourage and train the rest of us to use the opportunities we have to tell others about Jesus, and to help us make the most of our amazing location. I am also pleased that more people have shared in leading worship. During 2008 we were fortunate to have a strong ministry team who use their gifts so generously. In 2009 we will say farewell to **Cornelius and Christy**, who will both be ordained in the summer. I am pleased that **Cheryl** has begun training for Reader Ministry.

I was sad to say farewell to **Rev. Desmond Gritten**, who died, aged 91, in December. Desmond's example of lifelong, faithful, ministry is an inspiration to us all, and his teaching and pastoral care will long be remembered in St. John's.

During 2008 the **PCC** spent a considerable amount of time working on a programme to help us find the Lord's way forward for our ministry and mission. This programme, called **LOOK AHEAD**, has helped us to think about the future of Stratford and plan effectively for mission in a changing community. We spent time reflecting on our journey so far, on finding out what Stratford will look like post 2012, and trying to break down the challenges of ministry at St. John's into manageable chunks. This process continues into 2009.

I have continued to be part of the **Inspire** Group, looking at ways of offering ministry to the new Stratford City Development. We hope that the way forward will become clearer in 2009.

I have also been part of a local Churches Group to think about the **challenge of the Olympics**. We meet every 2 months or so to catch up with the latest developments, plan for Mission during the Games time and try to plan for the Legacy. It has been good to offer hospitality to Canon Duncan Green, the Church of England Olympics Co-ordinator, who spends so much time around Stratford.

During 2008, we began to explore plans for our own **Mission** to the Games period, in partnership with Through Faith Missions. St. John's premises will be a key place for outreach to the thousands of visitors. We hope to have a "practice" mission in 2010, preferably together with other local churches, ready for the big one in 2012.

David Richards

The Annual Review is, again, in two parts. The first part contains reports, reflecting all that happens at St. John's, written by a variety of people and edited by the Vicar. Sincere thanks to all who have contributed to this section. The second part is the official report of the Parochial Church Council, approved by the PCC and conforming, we trust, to the legal standards required by the Charity Commissioners. Thanks to those who have helped draft this report, and to all involved in compiling our accounts. Thanks, also, to all who have typed, printed, collated and stapled this document. *David Richards*

2008 AT A GLANCE – Extracts from the Newsletters

There are pictures of some of these events on the website (www.stjohnse15.co.uk)

- The new year started with a **Good News Course** – New Life for the New Year.
- The Women’s Group went to the **Pantomime** “Cinderella” at the Theatre Royal.
- Throughout the year there were lots of consultation events on the planning applications for the **Olympic site and Stratford City**.
- As in previous years school visits were popular, with classes from Tollgate, Maryland, Carpenters, Rosetta, Ranelagh, Grange, Britannia Village, Gainsborough, Ronald Openshaw and Curwen.
- During the year there were **26 weddings and 6 funerals**.
- During Lent people were encouraged to **reduce their carbon footprint** - a carbon “fast” rather than a chocolate “fast” – using a booklet supplied by Tearfund.
- Darren’s old Youth Group from Easton in Bristol visited us for the weekend in February.
- We started a special scheme to **recycle the plastic cups**.
- **East London Clarinet Choir** performed several concerts at St. John’s.
- We gave away **1200 daffodils** on Mothering Sunday.
- The **Easter Eggs** that were given to children after the Easter Services were Fairtrade.
- A new prayer and letter-writing group for the **persecuted church** started in March.
- **Artistic lighting** came to Stratford - the spire of St. John’s and trees in the churchyard were lit up.
- **The Olympic Torch** passed through Stratford on its way to Beijing.
- The monthly **Lakeside Bible Study Group** started in May.
- Sunday Club celebrated its **18th Birthday** at the end of April.
- Thursday 1st May was **Election Day** for the Mayor of London & London Assembly. Christians were encouraged to be good citizens and make their vote count.
- **Lunchtime music** featured on Wednesdays throughout the Summer.
- Dennis Pritchard invited people to eat **hot potatoes** and discuss issues such as “stress and what Jesus had to say about it” and “Why does God allow suffering?”.
- A number of Church members went to the **Global Day of Prayer** at Millwall Football Stadium.
- Uniformed Community Fire Safety Officers organised a special **fire safety event** after the morning service in May.
- The Church Council decided to buy some more **chairs** for the north aisle and for open-air services.
- Work to repair the **large crack in the west wall** started in June and continued throughout the Summer. We have some interesting photographs taken from the scaffolding.
- Pippa Pritchard was appointed as our **Environmental Officer** in June and kept us informed about all matters “green”.
- In June we celebrated the **10th Anniversary of the Church Extension**.
- **“Jump for Justice”** was an event at the end of June in conjunction with Amnesty, Christian Solidarity Worldwide and Open Doors. There was live music, Chinese Cultural performers, sports, face-painting and Chinese themed refreshments. The event in the Churchyard was followed by live music at the Kind Edward VII pub in the Broadway.
- Rev. Ken Fuller from Christian Aid was the preacher at the **Annual Friends’ Service** in July.

- Dennis Pritchard completed his training and was licensed as **Parish Evangelist** in July.
- Priscilla Julie, a former member of St. John's, visited in July on her way to the **Lambeth Conference**. Priscilla is Worldwide Co-ordinator of the International Anglican Women's Network.
- The **St. John's Men's Group** re-launched at the end of July.
- Lots of YPF members went to Barnstaple in Devon for the **CYFA Camp** at the end of July.
- David Aubrey went to **Mozambique** for the Summer, to work with James & Katie Maddern.
- Clacton was the destination for the **coach trip** in August.
- We planned a special Open-air Service with a picnic lunch and sports for the children to mark the closing ceremony of the **Beijing Olympic Games** and the handover to London, but it rained so we couldn't go outside. We did have a special focus on the **Paralympic Games** with information provided by Elizabeth Hudson, our flute player, who is a sports journalist.
- Geoff Hobbs restarted the **Stratford Saturday School** in September.
- **Church on Wednesday** celebrated its 5th Birthday in September.
- Cheryl Ramballi was selected for **Reader Ministry** and started her training in September.
- Several local Churches joined in the **Olympic Prayer Walk** in September, walking from St. John's in Stratford to St. Mary of Eton in Hackney Wick.
- We had a **display of flags** of the different countries of our Church members – there were 47 flags in total. The flags were part of the amazing **One World Celebration** in October.
- This year, Grace Adelakun and Ezinne Asinugo were raising money for their **Fulcrum Challenge**. Grace held Bric-a-Brac stalls in the Churchyard and Ezinne did a sponsored walk from Romford to Stratford in a chicken suit and organised a Talent Show.
- There was a population explosion in the Autumn, with **new babies** being welcomed almost every week.
- The Ash trees in the churchyard developed a tree fungus that attacked the roots and made them unsafe – in total 4 trees had to be cut down. We will plant different trees to replace them.
- Saturday 8th November was St. John's "**Prayer Around the Clock**" - all 15-minute time-slots were filled from 8am to 8pm.
- At the **Confirmation Service** in November, 17 people were confirmed by the Bishop of Barking. The Bishop's sermon illustration was a full-sized sailing dinghy!
- **World AIDS Day** was marked by a special event at St. John's. There was also a campaign – "It's better to know", to encourage people to be tested for HIV.
- The **Women's Group** went for a Christmas meal at the O2.
- The 20s & 30s Group went **Carol Singing** around the streets in the Three Mills area.
- Sadly, in the last days of the year, **Rev Desmond Gritten died**. St. John's Choir sang at the funeral at the start of January.
- The **Watchnight Service** on 31st December was attended by 425 people who prayed at the end of 2008 and at the beginning of 2009.

SUNDAY SERVICES are an important part of our Mission and Ministry. Attendance at Sunday services continues to increase. Our aim on Sundays is to offer worship, teaching and prayer to ... "build up and strengthen the Body of Christ in faith and Knowledge of the Son of God", (Ephesians 4:12-13), and send people out to live for Jesus, wherever they are, during the week.

THE MORNING SERVICE St John's Morning service has continued to grow and thrive. Congregation numbers averaged 306 with our largest service being 481 on Easter Sunday. Though we only managed two Sundays outside, the outdoor services again remain a high-point of the year. The innovation of a new format for the sermon on the Second Sunday – fondly called 'Dave and Darren's Chat show slot' by one of the congregation – has been well received by both the Young People, and with many of the congregation alike.

Report by Darren McIndoe

THE EVENING SERVICE is much quieter than the morning, with smaller numbers and a bit more space for silence and reflection. Some people attend for this reason, others because they find the time easier than the morning. Overall, the average attendance was 51. The largest services were the Confirmation Service, in November, and the Christmas Carol Service, but there were a number of other "specials" with smaller attendances.

During 2008, the evening service band expanded with the addition of some extra musicians. Denise, Frances, Richard and Christine also shared in leading the Prayer and Praise at this service.

Report by David Richards

PRAYER MINISTRY operates at both Sunday Services. There is a team of 34 people. Ministers work in pairs and listen with empathy to the prayer requests of individuals and then pray with them for God's help. Team members are committed carers, always ready to help when necessary, as shown by the smooth operation of the prayer chapel, reflecting God's love. The team seeks new members in 2009, especially for evening services.

Report by Sheva Williams, Prayer Ministry Team Leader

THE CHOIR AND MUSIC GROUP lead music and introduce new music from time to time; a notable feature recently has been the world premier performances of settings by John Chapple. There are 15-20 singers and up to 6 instrumentalists on Sunday morning and 8-10 people in all on Sunday evening. The choir showed the benefit of their training by being able, at short notice, to lead the singing and perform an anthem, at Desmond Gritten's funeral. This contribution was commented on, very

appreciatively, by many.

Report by Frances Aubrey, Director of Music

THE ARK

At the end of 2008 there were 41 children aged 1-3½ on the Ark Register. Weekly attendance is usually about 10 children, but it is sometimes more. In April we moved into the Christchurch Room to share the larger space with the Sparklers Group, with a screen across the middle of the room. There were a few "teething problems" but it soon started to work well. There are 10 adults who take it in turns to lead the group. Each session includes a story from the Bible and a special activity.

SUNDAY CLUB

There are 4 Sunday Club groups covering the ages from 3½ -13. At the end of 2008 the number of children registered was:

- Sparklers (age 3½ – 5) 18
- Kingdom Kids (age 6 – 7) 17
- The 'J' Team (age 8 – 10) 31
- Teen LIVE! (age 11 – 13) 17

There are 28 adults leading and assisting with the various Sunday Club groups.

We use the Scripture Union "Light" syllabus. During the year the children covered the following topics: Daniel, Queen Esther, Nehemiah, Jesus' love and compassion, Sayings of Jesus, Creator God, Power in the Spirit, Jesus in Command, the Church grows (Acts), How should we pray?, God's call and promise to Abraham, the First Christmas.

At the end of April Sunday Club celebrated its 18th Birthday.

On Easter Sunday the children were given fair-trade Easter Eggs. All the children who attended over the Christmas season were given a Christmas present.

In June 38 people attended Child Protection training provided by the Diocese of Chelmsford.

Reports by Carol Richards

Please pray for all the children in our Church, and for those who lead the various groups on Sundays.

YPF meets on Sunday mornings in the Genesis Room three or four times a month, where we have bible teaching, activities, games and lively discussions! Numbers involved are 20, or so

Once again the summer venture was a big success with 14 members and 3 leaders having a brilliant week of fun and fellowship in Barnstaple, North Devon. We hope to return again in July 09.

Report by Elis and Sheila Matthews

Carol Richards is St. John's designated child protection officer

CHURCHWARDENS AND WELCOMERS

Our Welcomers Team operates before and after both Sunday services. This group of around 40 volunteers are the first faces seen at St John's for existing members and new visitors – and so a welcoming, supportive, friendly, informative and Christian team is essential to set the scene for our excellent church and faith.

As numbers of visitors have increased year on year, (terrific isn't it), the role of the Welcomers has become more demanding, more satisfying and more valuable. It works best when the whole team is on-site well before the first visitors arrive and certainly before the service commences.

Report by Chris Aubrey

The unsung heroes of our Sunday Services are... **THE TEA MAKERS!** Anything that members of St John are willing to put their time and effort into is a Ministry. This particular Ministry, serving refreshments after Service, helps to build relationships with those who have attended the Service, as they relax to chat in the cafe. We have about 20-25 enthusiastic people who volunteer on rota basis on Sunday morning and evening.

I am very grateful for all those willing volunteers who make it easier to serve the Lord in this Ministry.

Report by Patricia Larocque

MIDWEEK SERVICES AND MEETINGS

St. John's ministry and mission continues throughout the week. There are daily prayers at 9am and 5pm Monday-Friday, mid-week services, homegroups, and our Healing Cafe. The church is also open for prayer almost every day

THE TUESDAY LUNCHTIME SERVICE

begins at 1.10pm and ends at 1.30pm. 20-25 attend. The services in 2008 have included a hymn, prayer, reading and a short talk covering themes of Parable of the Kingdom, Take up your Cross, events in the Life of Peter, Christian Hope, Lessons from the beginning (Genesis 1-3), Signs of the Kingdom and preparing for the Coming King.

It has been encouraging to see the attendance increasing, drawing in local workers and shoppers as well as the regulars from the Church.

Report by Margaret Hurley

THE HEALING CAFÉ meets on Tuesdays from 11am to 2.30pm. 4 trained Prayer Ministers are available to pray with visitors. The Cafe befriends all who come along, offering light refreshments and an opportunity to chat, listen and mentor. Some visitors return to say thanks for prayer answered, some join in church worship and some become members.

We are looking for new ways in 2009 - any suggestions?

Report by Sheva Williams

THE THURSDAY LUNCHTIME SERVICE

is a short, quiet Holy Communion Service, with a brief sermon. The congregation includes people who have missed a Sunday Service, those who prefer a quiet mid-week service and people who enjoy this special midweek time. The service has

grown slightly during the year, with 12-15 people attending. Canon Peter Kolawole and David Richards share leadership of this service.

Report by David Richards

CHURCH ON WEDNESDAY meets every Wednesday in the café at 8pm, with an average attendance of 15. Each week there is fellowship, prayer, worship and Bible study. It is always a lively, yet reflective debate. The group do not have a specific target for 2009. However they aim to choose Bible studies, which we can unfold over a period of weeks.

Report by Maxine Webster

St. John's members also meet during the week in HOMEGROUPS.....

The TUESDAY DAYTIME BIBLE STUDY GROUP has 8 members, who meet every Tuesday between 10.00am and 12.30pm often beginning with lively discussion about current news items before moving on to more structured study of scripture. They always enjoy a time of praise, especially singing the 'golden oldies' and during the past year have focused on 'The Revelation' as well as the subject of prayer. We have good fun and our relationships have deepened as our faith in Jesus and knowledge of God's word has grown.

During 2009 they hope to be able to extend our fellowship socially possibly by visiting places like Kew Gardens and some museums and exhibitions together and maybe even some matinee shows and films.

Report by Gill Carter

The WEDNESDAY Group meets at 8pm for prayer and Bible study. During 2009, they looked at the Minor Prophets, and the book of Revelation. They would like to see the group grow; more men would be a blessing

Report by Dennis Pritchard

THE 20s AND 30s GROUP meets on Wednesday evenings. This group has about 15 members, The group has a mixture of worship, Bible study and social events. They aim to contribute to St. John's mission and ministry by continuing to support each other and the wider church.

Report by Rafe Smallman

St John's now has 3 "geographical homegroups", the A12 group, the A13 group and the new LAKESIDE GROUP, which began in May 2008.

THE A12 HOME GROUP meets once a month and has an attendance of around 12+. During 2008 the group worked their way through the rest of the book of Job. Discussions were practical and members left each meeting feeling spiritually recharged and refreshed.

In the New Year the group are going into the letter of Paul to the Galatians – this should be useful to help us grow in our faith as Christians.

Report by Wunmi Babarinsa

THE A13 GROUP is a very interactive bible study. They have lively and enthusiastic discussions and try hard to finish on time.

The time of meeting is 7.30pm, usually once a month at different locations near the A13. There are usually 7 adults. The group say:
"We have grown as a group in our relationship with

God, understanding his WORD and with each other. We will continue to meet through 2009".

Report by Michaela Pattison

ST. JOHN'S WOMEN'S GROUP meets on the first Friday of every month, 7.30pm, for fellowship with each other combining bible study, as well as, discussion on preparation, coordination and support of Church functions and women's issues.

The group has grown in confidence in terms of the dedication and support they give readily to St Johns, when able, and continued fellowship to each other. Increased membership, (now 18), has improved the group's diversity for the better.

Report by Sharon Cumberbatch

ST. JOHN'S MEN'S GROUP meets on the last Thursday of the month for fellowship, prayer and Bible study. The group is fairly new and hopes to become more established during the next year

At the moment they are looking at "Christians in the workplace". They plan some away days, mainly for our own personal reflection and fellowship. Please pray that this group will not just grow in numbers, but it will grow spiritually. Also, pray that this group will get to know each other in a deeper way.

Report by Dennis Pritchard

During 2008 we continued our **TELEPHONE PRAYER HOTLINE**. Urgent prayer requests can be phoned through to the Church Office and quickly circulated around a group of people who will pray these requests immediately. The hotline has 10 members and is co-ordinated by Jean Scott.

St John's continues to host some **workplace prayer groups** for those who work in Stratford.

MISSION, OUTREACH and SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

St. John's Church aims to be, "Local, Outward-Looking and Participating", (Faith in the City Report). We want to relate to the local community and reflect the love of Jesus for those around us.

EVANGELISM AT ST. JOHN'S is overseen directly by PCC. This ensures that Evangelism is at the heart of all PCC decisions.

We continue to work at making the most of the Mission opportunities, provided by our location, Sunday Services and open doors. We have continued with a number of regular Mission events and initiatives during the year:

- **Prayer Walks** have continued, led by Gill. These provide an opportunity to pray for a small area and invite prayer requests from residents.
- **The Healing Cafe** continued every Tuesday with Sheva in charge.
- The outdoor **Christmas Nativity Scene and Easter Garden**, were a powerful visual witness to passers-by. Thanks to Chris Aubrey for all his work on these.

- Gill Carter again organised the **Flower Cross** at the front of the church for Holy Week and Easter. We used the same cross on Remembrance Sunday, with prayer requests written on poppies.
- We again sent out **Easter cards**, incorporating a message and an advert for our Easter services. We distributed 3000 of these, and had very positive feedback.
- The usual **Open-air morning Services** in the summer enabled us to take our prayer and praise out into the community.
- Bev, John and team organised an excellent **Quiz Night** in March.
- **Christmas** provided major mission opportunities with carol singing in the Shopping centre, our annual Lunchtime carol Service and a host of other special services. The 20s & 30s Group sang Carols at the Three Mills estate. We continued to deliver Christmas cards to all accessible homes and workplaces.

Report by David Richards

In July, Dennis Pritchard completed training and was commissioned as PARISH EVANGELIST. He writes:

"Over the last 4-5 years (maybe more) we have knocked on all the doors in our parish, but this could only be done on a Saturday morning and I found it a very long task, but we did achieve this in the end. I would like to thank all those that were involved in this quest. For Dave sorting out the roads and for Carol ordering all the handouts. We are now going to take a break from this form of outreach and look at other avenues to explore. We have now purchased a "Gazebo" which we are going to use on Saturday mornings in the church grounds, as a focal point to more outreach. This way we can go among the people out shopping in Stratford. We can invite them back to the tent where we can offer tea and coffee and biscuits to those who want to talk, have prayer or even answer the questionnaire. Also there will be tracts to be given away.

I would like to see some of our younger Team Leaders to come on-board in this venture, so that they can come alongside the younger people of Stratford. (If anyone is interested in this could you please get in touch with me).

I would also like to have some banners made for the gazebo to be put up so that people can see what we are about. (Again if interested please come and see me)".

Dennis Pritchard

JUMP FOR JUSTICE was our main Mission event in 2008. It was a community event held in the churchyard on 30th June in partnership with the Tower Hamlets and City Amnesty Group, CSW and Open Doors.

The main purpose of the event was to raise

awareness of human rights issues in China in the run up to the Beijing Olympics as well as to have some fun and entertainment. Amnesty, CSW and Open Doors all had campaigning stalls highlighting China and other countries where human rights abuses occur, which attracted much interest.

A Chinese harpist and four-piece band provided the entertainment, along with local performers from the King Eddie pub, and our own Denise and Richard. The Women's Group organised a great tea party and the bouncy castle, face painting and table tennis proved popular, as well the craft stalls and Traidcraft.

The sun shone, lots of volunteers from St John's helped things run smoothly and our visitors enjoy their stay.

Report by Pippa Pritchard

ST JOHN'S WEBSITE www.stjohnse15.co.uk continued to make a significant contribution to our mission with an average of 218 visitors per week. New developments for 2008 were an environmental page, compiled by Pippa, (Treading Lightly On The Earth), and an Online Library containing Annual Reviews, Policies, Maps, History Booklets, and a history of Christ Church Stratford.

The Photo Gallery, History and Fabric pages were all updated.

The website continues to offer the most up to date information on St. John's mission, ministry and special events.

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT. Work began on environmental issues at St John's at the end of 2007, with the formation of an Environmental Working Group. At the beginning of 2008, this group worked on an environmental audit of the church and its activities, a resulting action plan highlighting area of good practice and areas for development, an Environmental Policy for the church and a job description for an Environmental Officer. These documents were approved by the PCC in May 2008 and Pippa Pritchard was appointed Environmental Officer was June.

Some of the areas of development in 2008, in conjunction with other church members, included: recycling bins for plastic cups, paper, plastic bottles etc; Fair trade Easter eggs, provision of environmentally themed Bible study resources environmentally friendly cleaning products and possible application for an Eco-congregation award.

The Environmental Officer also attended Diocesan workshops on environmental issues and Eco-congregation, and hopes that the work so far will continue to develop over the coming year.

Report by Pippa Pritchard

ACHOLI LONDON CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP continued to meet at St. John's during 2008.

In 2008 they were able to:

- Share financial support with some needy people in their community,
- Celebrated Janani Luwum Mission day,
- Organise Acholi Bible Conference in August,
- Donate a small amount of money to support the clergy of Kitgum Diocese.
- Support a fund raising event for refurbishing Archbishop Janani Luwum Theological College in Northern Uganda Diocese.
- Donate a small amount of money for the visit of the Archbishop of Uganda to Northern Uganda Diocese.

The vision for 2009 is from Isaiah 55 v11.

"So is my word that goes out of my mouth: It will not turn to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

Report by Modicum Okello

MISSION/CHARITY GIVING comprises 10% of the Church's budgeted giving. Giving is organised by St John's Mission Giving Committee. In 2008, £6,700 was allocated between 13 different organisations, and a further £1698 was divided between 5 emergency appeals. In addition to this, around 25 shoeboxes were filled for Operation Christmas Child, Harvest Offerings were donated to The Refugee, Asylum Seeker and Migrant Project, (RAMP), and collections over Christmas (from Carol Singing in the Mall, the Lunchtime Carol Service and Midnight Communion Service), were given to Turnaround.

During 2008 Pippa Pritchard and David Aubrey stepped down after many fruitful years of work on the Committee, and were replaced by Dorothy Hylton, who joins us alongside Rafe Smallman and Jean Scott. Darren continues as convenor.

2008 also saw a number of changes in our links. We are supported the Cibangus, C.O.M.E. and the Madderns for the last time. The Cibangus have regrettably had to cut short their time in Japan because of the Autism of their daughter. C.O.M.E. has faced administrative difficulties in being allowed to build on the land they allocated to the complex they hoped to build in Gulu province Uganda. James, Katie and Zac Maddern are returning to the UK in March 2009 to look for parish work in Oxford Diocese. Please pray for these three links as they face different challenges in 2009.

Our activities in 2008 included a speaker from Leprosy Mission in February, a joint summer event with Amnesty International, CSW and Open Doors

to address the question of justice in China, and a talk from Ken Fuller of Christian Aid, who was our Friends Service speaker in July.

St John's Minishop has continued its work with the Newham Fairtrade Network, with Darren helping coordinate the stall in The Mall during Fairtrade Fortnight, and a number of other local Fairtrade retailers joined us for an evening of 'Fairtrade Christmas Shopping' at St John's.

A list of organisations we supported in 2008 follows, but, for the latest information, watch the Mission Giving Noticeboard with its Monthly focus on a different organisation. If you have any questions about Mission Giving, or would like to suggest an organisation we should consider, speak to a member of the MGC.

ALLOCATION OF MISSION GIVING in 2008

£500 Christian Solidarity Worldwide -

Advocates for human rights/religious persecution

£400 C.O.M.E - providing support for the Gulu Resource centre in Northern Uganda for community development

£500 NAPAC - UK's only provider offering support, counselling and helping adults rebuild their lives after suffering child abuse

£300 Leprosy Mission - responding to medication needs and the eradication of poverty

£1500 OMF (Overseas Mission Fund)

-supporting Benoit and Andrea Cibangu in mission work in Japan

£300 CBM (Christian Blind Mission) - providing eye care in more than 100 countries

£500 Spitalfields Crypt - A Christian-run hostel for single men based at St. Leonard's, Shoreditch

£500 St. Joseph's Hospice - A hospice in Hackney run by the Roman Catholic Church providing care for terminally ill patients

£500 Through Faith Missions - A mission organisation working with local churches to organise evangelistic missions

£500 Medicines for Muheza - providing support for a Christian run hospital in Muheza, Tanzania

£300 Lifewords - Providing evangelistic tracts in every language

£500 XLP - providing Christian support for assemblies, RE lessons and activities in Newham secondary schools

£510 James and Katie Maddern - Mafora Christian Mission, Mozambique - (£400 allocation subsequently topped up by other donations)

£6810 TOTAL

EMERGENCY FUND DONATIONS:

£400 for the British Red Cross MYANMAR APPEAL

£300 for the British Red Cross CARIBBEAN HURRICANE APPEAL

£300 for the Christian Aid HAITI STORMS APPEAL

£400 for the Tearfund DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO DISASTER FUND

£298 for the Tearfund "ALIVE" HIV Project.

£1698 TOTAL

OTHER DONATIONS:

- **£1146.98** for Turnaround (Newham Nightshelter) collected at Christmas Services.
- **£249.69** (collection at the Confirmation Service) was donated to the Church Urban Fund
- **£93.85** was collected for the Poppy Appeal
- **£103.80** was donated to the Nigerian Blind Mission from a special collection
- **£255** was collected for the Christian Aid HAITI STORMS APPEAL at the One World event
- **£36** (from a Quiz night) was donated to Richard House

Report by Darren McIndoe

MUSIC AT ST JOHN'S.

During 2008, we continued to host some significant concerts by Newham Music Academy and the East London Clarinet Choir, (who now regard us as their resident space). Ezinne Asinugo's Talent Contest also featured a lot of music, including some excellent Christian rappers. The Jump for Justice Event also gave us the opportunity to host some very varied outdoor music.

LUNCHTIME CONCERTS started again in 2008, providing an opportunity for the local community to experience a range of good quality performances mid-week and to give amateur musicians and rising young professionals a platform on which to try out their programmes. They ran from May – September on Wednesdays at 1pm. In all there were 17 concerts. Average audience was 15, and the largest was 50.

The renewed season of concerts was very successful. Audiences were most appreciative and all performers indicated that they would welcome the opportunity to perform again. The target for 2009 is to expand the season from 17 to 22 recitals.

Reports by Frances Aubrey and David Richards

THE MINI-SHOP has continued to share in the promotion of Fairtrade in Newham. During the year our fair-trade sales were good, but our aim has to be to make fair-trade goods so widely available that people are able to make purchases when they do their ordinary shopping and our stall is no longer needed.

For Christian Books we have a special arrangement with "Books for Life" in Bethnal Green. "Books for Life" also supplies the Scripture Union leaflets used by the children's groups.

Thanks to Richard Aubrey, Margaret Hurley, Keziah Jimoh, and Scilla Morgan, who have taken charge of the Mini-shop during the year. The Accounts for the year appear elsewhere in the Annual Report.

Report by Carol Richards

COMMUNITY MEETING FACILITIES

St. John's aims to be open all week to serve the community. The requests for use of the Church facilities are increasing year on year.

Our priorities are to meet the perceived needs of the local community. We particularly seek to provide space and encouragement for:

- Community arts
- Children and young people
- Community meetings and events
- Education and training
- A subsidiary aim is to allow the church to be open for a large part of every day as a place of peace and quiet in a busy part of London, and as a venue for displays and exhibitions.

During 2008 a large number of organisations used our facilities.

The London Borough of Newham held several of their meetings in the Church space, including meetings for LBN Social Services, LBN Leisure Services, LBN Environmental Health, Older People's Rep Group, LBN Education Department, and Learning Disabilities Group. Stratford And Newton Ward Councillors hold their weekly surgery at the Church.

Other Public Sector users included: Newham Primary Care Trust, Newham Centre For Mental Health, Newham House, East Living, East Thames Housing, Olympic Delivery Authority, LB Tower Hamlets, Substance Misuse Group, Service User Council, Stratford Town Centre Forum, Community Health Team, Stratford Community Forum, Inland Revenue

Voluntary Organisations included: Landmark Training, Newham Asian Women's Project, Newham Writers Group, Newham Bookshop, Cemvo, Newham Age Concern, Newham Voluntary Sector Consortium, Newham Unison, Newham Refuge and Urban Development.

Music and Arts users included: Newham Music Academy, Stratford Circus, East London Clarinet Choir, Lunchtime Concerts.

Education/Training: Apple Pie Enterprises, Stratford Saturday School, Chelmsford Diocesan Youth training, Birkbeck College, NewTec

Community Groups included Epilepsy Action, LookAhead Housing, East Thames, Anger Management, Black & Ethnic Minority Care Forum, Community Empowerment Network, Health Checks, Fairtrade Groups, The Heights Residents and Leaseholders Group.

Counselling – Mental Health Groups, Hearing Voices Group.

Children's Development /Training: Theatre Royal (Youth Theatre), Scouts and Para Active Summer School.

Other Users included: Welcare, Local Space, Weight Watchers, Waltham Forest Unison, Mary Kay Cosmetics, Roma Support Group, Newham Writers Group, Somalia Women Advice Network, Drug and Alcohol Service For London, Mind, Diocesan Regeneration Forum, Market Research, Expert Patients Programme, Street Cred.

It is good that each year fresh groups are coming to use our facilities. Groups always comment how lovely the rooms are, and it is always nice when they phone back after a meeting and thank us for our help. This could not happen without the hard work of our team - it is good that we can all work together. Once again I would like to thank all our staff who help to keep St John's Church going during the year. Our new facilities downstairs are working out well, and we hope to create some more space downstairs in the coming year. 2009 will bring fresh challenges for us all, so let's praise God for all the good work he is doing and remember we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

With God's Blessing Always:

Report by Kay Garib

STAFF AT ST. JOHN'S DURING 2008:

** Denotes volunteer worker.*

- VICAR: Rev. David Richards
- CURATE: Rev. Darren McIndoe
- ASSISTANT MINISTER (Children and Young People) Carol Richards*
- ASSISTANT MINISTER (Administration) Kay Garib
- ASSOCIATE MINISTER: Canon Peter Kolawole*
- READERS: Maureen Gowrie*, Rosemond Isiodu*, Sheva Williams*
- VERGER: Fitzroy Williams,
- VERGER/BUILDING SERVICES SUPERVISOR: Motie Ramballi
- DIRECTOR OF MUSIC: Frances Aubrey*
- CONCERT TEAM: Frances Aubrey*, John Chapple*, Jacqui Mwaniki*
- EVENING SITE SUPERVISORS: John Grey, Sheva Williams
- OFFICE HELPERS: Pat Cordrey* Jacqui Mwaniki
- CASHIERS: Gill Carter*, Shirley Lacey*
- HEALING CAFE CO-ORDINATOR: Sheva Williams*
- RECEPTIONISTS: Roma Allen*, Chris Aubrey*, Yvonne Bailey*, Rosemarie Drummond*, Anita Hallcup*, Margaret Hurley*, Evadney Mapp*, Christine Morris*, Connie Ogden*, Violet Ogunleye*, Jean Scott*, Bev Slingo*.

RECEPTIONISTS' REPORT

St John's Volunteer Receptionists are a vital part of our team. They allow the church to be open during the week for people to come into the Church for prayers, to talk to them, or for a meeting. They write:

"We always greet our visitors with a smile and direct them to various locations within the building. We all enjoy our work and fill in when necessary. We try to be very welcoming for everyone, We hope to carry on our good work in 2009 and to be as successful as 2008".

Report by Anita Hallcup

SCHOOLS WORK continued during 2008, with a record number of school groups visiting St. John's. Some of these visits were linked to the Newham "Visit a Place of Worship" week, but many were arranged independently by the schools. A typical visit lasts 45-60 minutes and includes a guided tour, with an explanation of the different things which happen in the church building, a high-speed guide to the main message of Christianity and a hands-on experience of organ-playing, drumming or preaching for the pupils.

St John's Ministers have continued to lead assemblies at Carpenters and Maryland schools.

For 2009, Darren plans a new schools initiative - local schools will be invited to send groups to join in a half-day "Easter Experience" at St. John's with lots of inter-active learning on Easter themes.

13th NEWHAM (ST. JOHN'S) SCOUT GROUP

During 2008 the group gained 5 new members, and a former Scout returned to train as a young leader. In the summer they held a camp, had a day out at the seaside and went to an animal park. Two of the scouts gained the Jack Petchy achievement award.

To finish the year Darren, who had worked very hard, helped the children gain the "My Faith" badge.

Report by Christine Grey

Parish of St. John with Christ Church and St. James Stratford

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL FOR THE
YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2008.**

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Vicar in promoting the whole mission of the church pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical, in the ecclesiastical parish of St. John with Christ Church and St. James, Stratford

The PCC is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

**THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED AS MEMBERS OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL DURING THE YEAR ENDED
31st DECEMBER 2008.**

ST. JOHN'S

MINISTERS

Rev. David Richards *Vicar*

Rev. Darren McIndoe *Curate*

Rev. Canon Peter Kolawole *Associate Minister*

Carol Richards *Assistant Minister, Children and Young People, Child Protection Officer for St. John's, Deanery Synod representative*

Rosemond Isiodu *Reader*

Sheva Williams *Reader*

Kay Garib *Assistant Minister, Administration*

CHURCH WARDENS

Chris Aubrey *(Deanery Synod representative from April 2008)*

Tolu Babarinsa

Gill Carter *(PCC Vice Chair)*

Patricia Larocque

Richard Aubrey

Yvonne Bailey *Deanery Synod representative*

Jane Ajayi

Adrian Clarke *(from April 2008)*

Eleanor Humphrey *(Deanery Synod representative from April 2008)*

Manny Ibiayo *(Treasurer)*

Glyn Morgan *(Deanery Synod representative to April 2008)*

Pippa Pritchard

Cheryl Ramballi

Alfred Talabi

Ministers in Training *(invited as observers)*

Christiana Asinugo

Cornelius Henry

ST. JAMES'

MINISTER

Rev. Jeanette Meadway *Minister-in-Charge, Child Protection Officer for St. James'*

CHURCH WARDENS

Janet Williams *Deanery Synod representative*

Barbara Tomlinson

John Meadway *(Treasurer) Deanery Synod representative*

Robert Brown *(from April 2008)*

Sandra Walden *(PCC Secretary)*

Rene Gudgeon

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and all members of the Roll are eligible to stand for election to the PCC.

There are 2 church buildings within the parish, St. John's, the Broadway, London E15 1NG and St. James, 98 St. James' Road, London E15 1RN.

Day to day responsibility for the mission, ministry and maintenance of St. James Church is delegated to the St. James Church Committee, which meets regularly and is chaired by the Minister in Charge of St. James'. This Committee reports regularly to the PCC.

The PCC met on 10 occasions during 2008. Meetings were held at St John's Church on Monday evenings during all months except August & December.

In order to discharge their responsibilities the following items were discussed by the PCC:

- Regular features on our agenda such as church finances, building maintenance and the planning of our special services at Easter, Christmas and confirmation.
- The planning of special events such as 'Jump for Justice', the opportunities at the Olympic handover in August, when the media turned its attention to Stratford and the 'One World' event in October held at St John's and the Black History Event and Carol-oke held at St James'.
- PCC agreed an Environmental Policy for St John's
- Two of our church members who are currently training for full-time ministry gave presentations of their projects which were very interesting.
- Both St Johns & St James continue to be challenged in our efforts for outreach and evangelism and what will work in an area like Stratford that has an ever-changing population.
- We supported Dennis Pritchard, our newly commissioned evangelist, with his new initiative called the 'Hot Potato' evenings when church members could bring friends and neighbours to discuss some hot topics and what scripture has to say about them.
- The PCC oversaw the work of St. James Committee, including the planning and grant application for St. James' holiday at Lambourne End in August, and other items in its programme such as the July "St James Day" celebration and the Christmas "Carol-oke". In the autumn St. James launched KFC, "Kids For Christ", a Sunday afternoon event for junior and secondary age groups with fun, teaching and worship.

During 2009 we will continue to be challenged given the current economic climate as to how to use our buildings and resources to best effect in our efforts to take the Good News of Jesus beyond our church walls.

The PCC has responsibility for the maintenance of St. John's Church, the Broadway, London E15 and St. James Church, St. James' Road, London E15. During 2008 the following building issues were addressed:

At St. John's:

- Following the issue of faculty, repairs were made to cracks in the West wall at a cost of £15000, with a grant of £5000 from the Friends of Essex Churches. Broken window panes were also repaired while the scaffolding was in place.
- A new store room and a room for use by the Vergers was established in the Crypt
- 4 ash trees were felled by the London Borough of Newham following urgent advice from the tree officer. PCC applied for a retrospective Faculty.
- We began to remove a raised flower-bed in the Churchyard which had become a dumping-ground for knives and stolen property.
- Minor tarmac repairs were carried out to the car parking area.
- We carried out a Health and Safety inspection, which was received by PCC.
- We carried out a Fire Risk Assessment, which was received by PCC. Emergency Evacuation procedures were reviewed, signage was improved, and a Fire Drill was held.

At St. James':

- The more accessible areas to the front and side of the Church were resurfaced, and the gate realigned and adjusted.
- No substantial work on the building itself took place in the year; consequently there was some growth in reserves in the Fabric Fund.

In addition to the St. James Committee, the PCC also has the following committees, which meet and report, as necessary, to full PCC meetings.

- ◇ **Standing Committee** for the whole PCC, which transacts emergency business between PCC meetings and occasionally meets to consider business referred to it by PCC.
- ◇ **Parish Housing Committee** for the whole PCC, which manages the 2 assistant clergy houses owned by the PCC.

- ◇ **Building Committee** for St. John's, which is responsible for the maintenance of St. John's church building.
- ◇ **Personnel Committee** for St. John's, which oversees lay workers, both voluntary and paid, at St. John's
- ◇ **Mission and Charity Giving Committee** for St. John's, which is responsible for giving away 10% of St. John's collections to missions and charities.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

- On the day of the 2008 Annual Meeting the Parish Electoral Roll numbered 339 . (St. John's: 285, St. James': 54)
- During 2008, average Sunday attendances at St. John's were 306 morning and 59 evening.
- During 2008, average Sunday attendances at St. James' were 35 morning and 10 evening.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

During 2008 PCC income from direct giving exceeded budget. Family Purse payments to the Diocese were met in full by St. John's and St. James'. The Family purse payment is assessed by Newham Deanery, according to an agreed formula. Actual figures showed an increase over 2007 and will continue to increase for some years because of increased congregations at both churches. This payment goes towards the cost of clergy stipends throughout the Diocese of Chelmsford

The freehold house at 2 St. James' Road continued to be let, temporarily. This letting produced a small surplus to the Parish Houses Fund, offsetting the small deficit in 2007.

Both churches are committed to giving away 10% of budgeted annual Giving income to missions and charities identified as organisations we aim to support.

During 2008 St John's gave away a total of £10393.32. £8398 was assigned to the Charities Fund, and donated to 16 organisations in line with our Mission and Charity donations policy.

OTHER DONATIONS:

- **£1146.98** for Turnaround (Newham Nightshelter) was collected at Christmas Services.
- **£249.69** (collection at the Confirmation Service) was donated to the Church Urban Fund
- **£93.85** was collected for the Poppy Appeal
- **£103.80** was donated to the Nigerian Blind Mission from a special collection
- **£255** was collected for the Christian Aid HAITI STORMS APPEAL at the One World event
- **£36** (from a Quiz night) was donated to Richard House
- **£110** was collected for James Maddern in Mozambique

More details of Mission and Charity Giving are included in the St. John's Annual Review.

During 2008 St. James donated a total of £1,055 to 5 organisations.

The net result for the year, in general funds, was an excess of receipts over payments of £8,522 for St. John's and a deficit of £700 for St. James. Transfers of funds are shown in the full accounts.

RESERVES POLICY:

St. John's policy is to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds, (if possible), which equates to approximately six months unrestricted payments. This policy is based on the following factors:

- Church membership is constantly changing within a community with a very transient population. Members' giving is therefore subject to fluctuation.
- Rents received for use of space in St John's church building are also subject to fluctuation because most users are community groups or Local Government departments, and are dependent on funding decisions for continued bookings
- St. John's has significant liabilities for staff salaries, and the possibility of heavy repair bills to the building in the future.

The balance in the general fund at the year-end was £77,294, which slightly exceeds this target. PCC expect to use some of the surplus to undertake building work in the Crypt during 2009.

St. John's also has a designated Capital Asset Fund to meet some expected costs for fabric and equipment replacement. At the year-end this stood at £43,512.

St. James' policy is to maintain a balance on general funds (if possible), which equates to approximately six months general payments. This policy is based on the following factors:

- Church membership is constantly changing within a community with a very transient population. Members' giving is therefore subject to fluctuation.
- St. James has fewer regular bookings, which are also subject to change.
- St. James building is liable to require expensive repairs in the future.

The balance in the general fund at the year-end was £6,844, which almost matches this target.

More detailed financial information may be obtained from the audited accounts, printed on the following pages.

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE NEWHAM DEANERY SYNOD

The Deanery Synod brings together the Anglican clergy of Newham and elected lay representatives of their churches. Lay representatives elected to the Deanery Synod for three year terms at the 2008 annual meeting for St John's are Chris Aubrey, Eleanor Humphrey and Carol Richards. Yvonne Bailey is a member while she is on the Diocesan Synod. From St James there are Janet Williams, and John Meadway, who is Deanery Treasurer. Under church law Deanery Synod may consider and express opinions on matters referred to it by the General or Diocesan Synod, and consider resolutions passed to it by PCCs to go on to higher levels. Its lay members are in their personal capacities the electors to the Diocesan and General Synods. Typically it has evening meeting four times a year at churches around Newham, with attendances of 30-40. These are reported regularly to PCC meetings.

In March 2008 the last meeting of the Synod elected in 2005 had a presentation on Fair-trade activities led by Darren McIndoe from St John's, who reported on how Churches can be involved in Fairtrade. In June the new synod elected its officers and committee, and there was a demonstration of the type of work undertaken by Conflict and Change. In September a meeting in 'Prayer ' led By Brother Philip Bartholomew SSF was very well received, and the final meeting of the year in November heard Archdeacon Elwin's reflections on his first year in his new role.

An important activity of the Deanery Synod each year is to decide the size of each parish's share of Newham Deanery's part of the overall diocesan family purse bill. The family purse pays for clergy stipends and housing and most of the rest of the diocese's expenditure. This outcome is largely unchanged from last year, as we attach importance to having as much stability as possible in the financial environment for parishes. The Deanery continues to allocate the family purse bill by the size of congregation, as far as possible, and this was the policy for 2009 allocations, with a phasing-in to avoid excessive increases for those churches that have shown relatively large growth in their numbers. At the end of the year there were signs that the details of this policy are beginning to have some undesirable effects, and it may need to be re-visited in the coming year.

Report by John Meadway

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Incumbent: Rev. David Richards, St. John's Church, Stratford Broadway, London E15 1NG

PCC Vice-Chair: Gill Carter, St. John's Church, Stratford Broadway, London E15 1NG

PCC Secretary: Sandra Walden, St. John's Church, Stratford Broadway, London E15 1NG

PCC Treasurer: Manny Ibiayo, St. John's Church, Stratford Broadway, London E15 1NG

St John's Bank: Natwest Bank, 1-11 The Broadway, Stratford, London E15 4DX

St James' Bank: Natwest Bank, 309 Romford Road, London E7 9SH

Independent Examiner: Mr. Peter Morley FCMA

Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2008 are on the following pages.

David Richards, Vicar Gill Carter, PCC Vice Chair 16th March 2009

A SEPARATE REVIEW of the work of St. John's Church in 2008, published by the Vicar, is bound with this report. The material in that review is collected and edited by the Vicar, has not been presented to the PCC for approval and does not form part of this report. St. James' has produced a separate Annual Review of the work of St. James Church in 2008.