



**Agenda
and
Reports
for the
Annual Parochial Church Meeting**



St Stephen at his trial. Window in Chancel

Held in the Church and online via Zoom
Sunday 24 April 2022 at 11.45 a.m.

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Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2022

Agenda

- 1 Prayers
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of meeting held on 30 May 2021
- 4 Election of Churchwardens
- 5 Election of PCC
- 6 Approval of Sidespersons and Senior Sidespersons
- 7 Discussion and approval of the following reports:
 - a The Electoral Roll
 - b The Activities of the PCC, its Committees and related Parochial Operations
 - c The Churchwardens' Report
 - d The Activities of the Deanery Synod
- 8 The Financial Statements for 2021
- 9 Appointment of the Independent Examiner of the Accounts
- 10 Questions and Announcements
- 11 Closing Remarks

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Sunday 30 May 2021

The meeting commenced at 10.45 a.m. in the Church after the morning service, having been moved from the normal time because of the Corona-19 virus pandemic. The Rev'd Kevin Maddy and 19 parishioners were present in the church, with 7 joining online.

PRAYERS were led by the Rev'd Kevin Maddy.

APOLOGIES were received from Mrs Jean Baker, Mr Derek Butler, and Mrs Christiane Crabtree.

THE MINUTES of the meeting on 4 October 2020 had been published online. Mrs Sally Waters and Miss Shirley Hagger seconded, that they be signed as a correct record, and this was agreed unanimously.

VESTRY MEETING. Mr Stephen Barker and Miss Shirley Hagger had been duly proposed and seconded; no other names were put forward, and they were unanimously accepted to continue in their role as the churchwardens.

REPRESENTATIVES ON DEANERY SYNOD. Mrs Christiane Crabtree and Dr Philip Knight remained the church's representatives, having been elected the previous year.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL 2021–2022:

Peter Toon and Sally Waters as our Readers were *ex officio* members of the PCC, as were the churchwardens, and Christiane Crabtree and Philip Knight as Deanery Synod representatives. Eight other people had been duly nominated and seconded before the meeting to serve on the council. No other names were put forward, and these eight were unanimously voted into office:

Mrs Jean Baker	Mr Peter Brown	Miss Enid Dixon
Mrs Angela Doe	Mrs Barbara Jackson	Miss Alex Knight
Mr Robert Mathews	Mr James Taylor	

SIDESPERSONS. All who had helped last year were willing to continue—

(Senior Sidespersons marked with an asterisk):

* Peter Brown	* Christiane Crabtree	* Brian Kennett
* Libby Nichols		
Rosie & Jeremy Barford	Angela Doe	Rhiannon Evans
Graham Jackson	Rita Kennett	Alex Knight
Rita Lockwood	Robert Mathews	

These were approved unanimously.

ELECTORAL ROLL. This was stated by Enid Dixon's report to be 86; this was unanimously approved.

REPORTS ON THE WORK OF THE PCC AND OTHER GROUPS.

These had been distributed beforehand, and were accepted by the meeting unanimously and without comments or questions.

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT.

This was also received and approved by the meeting with no questions.

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT.

This was also received and approved by the meeting with no questions.

FINANCE. The Treasurer, Miss Alexandra Knight, had also prepared and circulated her report for the previous year, 2020, which she summarised as unusual, not to be compared with any other.

There was a deficit of £25,000, and planned giving had reduced. She was grateful for people who had switched to Standing Order payments, and was keen to encourage more, though some had not, and appeared to have ceased contributing. There was now a button on the website for giving via the CAF Bank.

Not surprisingly, Unrestricted Income was almost back to 2019 levels. Income from the hall and the coffee, which forms an important part of our income, was much reduced (by over £7,000); although overhead costs had also reduced, there remained a small deficit. Also income from weddings had dropped markedly, and few funerals were now being held in church.

The hall cleaner was being paid 80% through the government Furlough scheme, which would be finishing at the end of the month.

The pulpit had been repaired and been made more stable, and those parts of the stonework which had deteriorated had been repaired. We had purchased a new projector and screen, which were a great asset, and a major element of the church worship now was the services recorded and put online by Steve, which had proved to be high quality and successful, and for which she thanked him very much.

The parish share had risen by 1.7% in 2020, but this represented 109% of all unrestricted income. This made it very difficult to predict what the future would hold. Our cash reserves had run out at the end of 2020, so that the church was now existing hand-to-mouth. Two payments on the share had been made to date, and we were three months behind. Probably we should eventually pay about half of the parish share.

Regular giving was therefore vital, and Alex urged people to review their giving. A recent appeal to repair the clock had met with a generous response, and such appeals may become more frequent. New schemes were needed to raise money. With a thousand years of history on this site, we needed to do all we could to ensure the church's continuance.

There were no questions; the Rector thanked Alex on behalf of the church, and the meeting expressed their appreciation with applause.

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER.

The Independent Examiner of the accounts, Peter Barton, FCA, was said to be happy to continue, and he was unanimously reappointed by the meeting.

NOTICES:

Kevin said that requests for baptisms were starting to come in, and he stressed the need to keep people involved, including younger families. It was hoped to have the Acorn Café, the Wednesday Holy Communion and the Meditation functioning again as soon as possible—the building must get used to the maximum extent.

The Toddler Group (under the Mothers' Union) had requested confirmation as to whether it was covered by the church's insurance policy. Alex confirmed that as it was run under the aegis of the PCC it was covered, and the meeting was happy to accept this.

There was to be a meeting with the DAC next week about the question of toilets in the church.

QUESTIONS:

There were no questions from the meeting, but Enid Dixon announced that there were several inquiries coming in for hall bookings.

Angela Doe presented Steve Barker with a gift on the church's behalf, and expressed everyone's gratitude for the immense amount of work he had put in, not only with the music but also with the online streaming of services, in addition to a very demanding full-time job. The meeting showed its appreciation with applause, and Steve said that people logged in to the online services not only on Sundays but also during the week.

The Rector expressed his thanks as well to Peter Brown, as Chairman of the Property Committee, to Enid Dixon as Hall Secretary and Electoral Roll Officer, and to Robert Mathews as PCC Secretary.

The Meeting was closed at 12.25 p.m. with the Grace.

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THE ELECTORAL ROLL FOR THE YEAR 2021

We have now slipped to 80 persons enlisted on the Electoral Roll.

We remember the following:

Ken Beere, Brian Cogger, Christiane Crabtree and Sally Martin. May they rest in Peace and Rise in Glory.

We have also said goodbye to Aileen and Martin Gardham who have moved to Australia. We wish them well in their new life down under.

A PLEA: We are gradually diminishing in numbers and 'boots on the ground' are becoming limited due to age or infirmity. I am not permitted to approach individuals personally and 'tout for business' but should any current members of the Congregation—new or old—wish to consider joining the Church Electoral Roll and have not already done so, would they please make themselves known to me?

If enrolled on the Church Electoral Roll, members have voting rights at the APCM and if enrolled on the Electoral Roll for 6 months may be voted onto the 'inner circle' of the PCC. At the time of writing, we are two down in numbers for this.

Please think about this for the coming year and maybe the numbers for the Electoral Roll may increase and new faces will appear on the PCC.

Enid Dixon, Electoral Roll Officer



ANNUAL REPORTS

Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council

The challenges of last year pursue us still: financing the work of our church, the provision of toilets, and keeping our buildings in a good state. These are well covered by the reports below and the presentation of the financial position.

We have been saddened by the death of Christiane Crabtree, a faithful member of our church with her husband Derek for many years, and a valued member of the PCC since 2012. Her contribution will be much missed. The oration given at her funeral mentioned the alarming dangers and difficulties she had experienced in her young days at the end of the War in Germany, which make the many and varied achievements of her later years only more impressive. Her death leaves a gap as our representative on Christians Together in Canterbury.

Dr Peter Toon has laid down his ministry as Reader in the church, and thus leaves his *ex officio* membership of our PCC. He has contributed much: not only with medical advice during the pandemic, but in his inspiration behind our membership of Inclusive Church and Eco Church. His love of the Quiet Garden movement has found an extension in his very committed and detailed work in beautifying and tidying up our churchyard, and especially the memorial areas at the west end.

In October the PCC was joined by Canon Barney de Berry from St Mary Bredin who was able to put his viewpoint on *Living in Love and Faith*, a book published by the Church of England on issues of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. It led to a lively discussion which showed up some contrasting views on the message of Jesus, the position of the text of the Bible in our thinking, and the essence of Christianity in today's world.

An important consideration for the PCC has been the retirement of our Rector next year. The future arrangements for St Stephen's are still being considered by the Deanery, but the privilege of having a Rector to ourselves will not be able to continue, and some sort of working together with our neighbours at Blean and others across the Canterbury Deanery seems likely. We are trying to explore ways of getting to know each other better in the coming months.

Robert Mathews, PCC Secretary

Acorn Community Café

We restarted the Wednesday morning café at the end of August. It was rather a slow start as everyone was finding it strange to take up the old habits again. But things slowly progressed and numbers are rising and people feel more relaxed. We have wanted to encourage more contact with the community around

us and with this in mind we are trying to link in with various local charities and organisation. Once a month we offer them tables to sell goods and they advertise the morning through their members. The following mornings have proved successful and we hope to run many more in the coming year

- 22/9 Baked goods and paperbacks: £200.
- 20/10 Food bank event was very successful: £183.45 plus food donations.
- 26/1 Unwanted gifts table.
- 23/2 WI stall raising money for the Pilgrims Hospice.
- 23/3 Sale of books and jigsaw puzzles—we raised money towards a loop system in the hall, which has been requested by various hall users.

We also advertise through the residents' associations and the WI. Slowly this does seem to be working and it is lovely to have new faces and also people who have moved into the area. Numbers don't seem to be going up much but hopefully this will change in the future.

Jenny and Libby



A detail from a window in the porch

Bellringing

We were finally allowed to start ringing again after lockdown at the end of May 2021 but for several reasons, we did not, and still do not have, a band for Sunday service ringing. Therefore, with St Dunstan's only having services on the 1st and 3rd Sundays, I have been helping them and they in return are helping us. To ensure we have a band to ring, we have been organising quarter peals which means we ring for approx. 40 minutes continuously. Since Sunday 13 June 2021 we have attempted 26 Quarter Peals and achieved 23, which is a very good result. We normally try to get the bells rung at least once each Sunday, either for morning or evening service.

Monday evening practices were initially low on numbers but since this January we normally have about a dozen people, which means we can ring a good range of methods. One of the reasons we have so many people on Monday evenings is that we are a good teaching tower for learners within the Canterbury District.

We did have one learner start in August, but they were learning to ring for their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award. They passed this, and did say they wished to continue, but we have not seen them since February which is a real shame.

If you would like to continue to hear the bells, we need some more ringers. Anyone interested in learning to ring should contact me for more information. Anyone from the age of 10 is able to learn to ring. You could even make it a family activity!

My thanks go to Len Huckstep, Captain of St Dunstan's, who has been a great help to boost our number so that you hear the bells as you walk to church on a Sunday.

Jane Huxley (Tower Captain)



Children's Work

St Stephen's Seekers are enjoying being back in person, but equally coped well with meeting online when this was needed in the last year. We run most Sundays, as long as there are children to join in the activities and have a steady group of around 6–8 children, with ages ranging from babies to teens. Activities that take place across in the hall have included candles, cards, scavenger hunts, sashes to wear and bookmarks. One of the most exciting crafts was making a Platinum Jubilee card for Her Majesty the Queen and we keep our fingers crossed for a royal reply as in previous years. They are really enjoying sharing what they have learnt with the rest of the congregation and their contributions are often thoughtful as well as entertaining. Lots of the students know both the Seekers' prayer and The Lord's

Prayer off by heart and enjoy taking part in our service. Please think about if there is anyone else you could encourage to join us as newcomers or visitors who might explore taking part in Sunday school. Finally we continue to run festival events such as Good Friday and Christmas Eve family services. We appreciate your continued support and prayers for our children and young people's work at St Stephen's.

Sophie Barker

Church Hall

Sadly, due to the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic some groups have not returned to the Hall: the Classroom (which has now gone completely online); Hackington Horticultural Society; the Over 60s (all now much older than when they started and numbers had diminished) and Crossroads for Internationals. Duncan McIver's little group of Home Tutored Children on a Saturday morning has also folded as Duncan has moved to Ireland to a University post there. We briefly had a science group for young children called the Eureka Seekers, but they were so good at what they did that Barham School and another school took them 'in house'. The Canterbury Musicians, with whom we also had a brief flirtation as restrictions eased, have returned to the King's School Music Room, their original home, when it became available again—the Grand Piano being the draw for a number of their members.

However, the following have returned: the Women's Institute; Rainbows; Brownies; Nutkins; Clare Hopper's Violin Class group; Kent Humanists and the City Church Youth Group. The City Church has, however, taken a financial hit and is not using the hall on a Sunday evening as before, only on Fridays in term time.

We have gained the following: Blean Guides (originally based at Harbledown Church Hall, but the church there decided not to reopen for their regular hirers); JHG Academy of Arts and Theatre; a Tai Chi class and the Star Dance Class who teach Ballroom dancing—their shoes are protected, so hopefully there will be no damage to the hall floor!

We had gained a Yoga morning class aimed at the retired and an evening class aimed at those working and at students, but both classes have been disbanded because the teacher has found a permanent job elsewhere. This is a great shame as I understand the morning class at least was of great benefit to the local community.

We are also booking in children's parties. Whilst we have had several of these booked, there now seems to be a slow-down as cases of Covid-19 are increasing and the cost of living is rising.

I am grateful for the forbearance of the Church groups who also use the hall and have been manoeuvred around rather by my efforts to get in bookings and thus earn an income enabling the Hall to pay for a cleaner and the utilities.

Enid Dixon, Church Hall Bookings Secretary

Friends of St Stephen's

No events or committee meetings were held in 2021 due to the pandemic. In October, Christine Venner announced that she wished to resign from the committee after 22 faithful years of service. Her enthusiasm and organisational skills will be greatly missed but we wish her and her husband, Martin (a stalwart behind the scenes), good health and every happiness for the future. We hope that they will join us at future events when they begin again later in 2022. We would also welcome new members to the committee in the coming year.

Angela Doe

Mothers' Union

Well, what can I say?—it's been another difficult year with the pandemic continuing throughout the year in the most part. However, it has been good that we have managed to keep in touch and meet most months, albeit via Zoom sometimes.

We began with a Zoom meeting and a quiz which was fun (well for most of us!). This was followed by our Annual Meeting—via Zoom but at least we could settle our yearly accounts and reports. Our March meeting was held a week later, it being our Wave of Prayer slot. In April we had a joint meeting with Blean MU Fellowship with the discussion being around becoming a joint group. This was just to start the



Manwood Chapel window

ball rolling in the discussions. In May, as our 'outing' we met in the churchyard at lunchtime where a number of members of the Blean group joined us and then our members did some work on the grave of Constance Halward as well as tidying up a number of other graves and agreeing to look after two further graves near the new Garden of Remembrance. In June, as Ann Oakley, who was coming to talk to us about the Huguenots in Canterbury, felt unable to join us, we met in the church for a summer quiz and discussion. In July, by kind invitation from Rosie and Jeremy Barford, we had our Summer Supper in their garden, keeping socially distanced! August came round and as usual the weather interfered with our being able to go and sit on the slopes at Tankerton to enjoy our annual Fish and Chip Supper, so the fish and chips were collected and we ate them in the church hall! In September as Kevin was unable to be with us for our annual Membership Renewal Service because of other commitments, we convened at our house for tea, cake and a chat and the Renewal Service took place during the service on the following Sunday. At our meeting in October we were fortunate enough to have Bishop Rose come along to talk to us about her early life in Montego Bay through to her journey into the ministry culminating in her position as Bishop of Dover. November saw Rita Pengelly, our Archdeaconry

President, coming along to talk about her sponsored walk along the coastal path to London. Our year finished with a number of us making Christingles in the church hall and I read out the history behind these and then we moved into the church where Kevin led us in a short Christingle service which was followed by tea and mince pies and shortbread in the church hall. We hope 2022 is a better year and we can return to some form of normality. We may be small in numbers but we are mighty in our belief in the Mothers' Union and what it stands for.

Margaret Horwood

Music

2021 continued to throw up its challenges for music in the parish. Further lockdowns meant that we did have to return to pre-recorded music for a while, and restrictions meant that we weren't able to meet to rehearse for the first half of the year. However, despite all of this, the choir were outstanding in their resilience, and continued to provide music of a very high quality.

During the year, we were invited to sing at both Canterbury and Rochester cathedrals. At Canterbury, restrictions meant that one Evensong was limited to a group of six sopranos but despite this, they sang with confidence and filled the Cathedral nave with their music. We returned to Rochester as their first visiting choir since the beginning of the pandemic, and this was also rather poetic, as we were the last choir to sing there in February 2020.

Many church choirs have struggled through the past couple of years, but I'm very pleased to be able to say that we have come out of the pandemic stronger, with several new members having joined us—some who have moved to the area, and others who were attracted to join us because of the wide variety of repertoire that we sing, and the standard that we're able to sing at. We have also been able to restart a small group of trebles who have been meeting together on a Wednesday evening. They're not quite ready to sing a full Sunday service yet, but they will be part of the Good Friday All Ages Service and be given other opportunities to be part of the musical life of our parish over the coming months. Some of them you'll recognise from families that come to our Sunday School, but others have come to St Stephen's for the first time, looking for an opportunity to sing. It's really important for us all to remember that the choir is part of the congregation too, and I am constantly grateful for what they contribute to our worship week by week.

Occasionally I hear that a certain anthem or the choir's contribution feels more like a concert, and it's easy to understand why this might be the initial thought when the choir works so hard to contribute music to such a high standard and produce something that you may not think twice about buying a ticket



to hear. However, what makes our church choir different is the extra layer of meaning that is brought through the words, an understanding of the text that enables them to pray the words at the same time as singing them. And the choir are not just praying the words for themselves, but for you too; using the composer's God-given gifts in the carefully crafted music to take us to a higher place. It was St Augustine who said that 'He who sings, prays twice'; and hopefully our music carries the prayers of the choir, the prayers of the composer, and the prayers of those of you who listen to it. Next time you're in church and the choir are singing the anthem, listen to the words (which will have been carefully chosen to relate to the season or the theme of the readings) and pray them with us.

I'd like to finish this report by thanking Kevin for his constant support for the musical life of our church, and to every member of our choir; they really are an amazingly resilient group of musicians and I can't thank them enough for the things they've achieved in a challenging year, and everything that they do to lift me with their wonderful singing.

Stephen Barker, Organist and Choirmaster

Nutkins Toddler Group

The Nutkins Toddler Group reopened in September 2021 after being closed from the middle of March 2020! We rebranded when we reopened in that we are now not under the auspices of the Diocesan Mothers' Union but under the umbrella of St Stephen's Branch of the Mothers' Union and thus part of the activities covered by the PCC of St Stephen's which is a good move. We have run most weeks since September and have adhered to the regulations regarding ventilation, sanitisation, and keeping everyone as safe as possible. We advertised that we were opening by holding Fun Morning in August where we had a lot of interest shown, and through that we have a good number of people coming along.

Numbers fluctuate but we have a good core number who attend each week. We hope to continue to go from strength to strength and perhaps try and get some young people, perhaps students from either of the universities who are studying to work with children to come along and help with the setting up and clearing away as well as helping with the sessions. We would like to thank the hall committee for allowing us to take over the large cupboard in the entrance hall thus freeing up the cupboard at the end of the hall for other users.

Margaret Horwood (Overseer)

Pastoral Group

Group Members: Margaret Horwood (convener); Mary Brown, Aileen Gardham, Libby Nichols, Enid Dixon, Dr Peter Toon, Sally Waters, Shirley Hagger and the Rev'd Kevin Maddy.

During this last year we have only had one physical meeting and two Zoom meetings, where we discussed events over the last year and we all managed to keep in touch with the majority of parishioners who the members felt might be isolated and need help.

We have since lost two of our members, Aileen Gardham who now resides in Australia and Peter Toon who is retiring from parish duties from Easter.

We'll Meet Again Club. This has now become '**Tea @ 3**' after an initial meeting to see if there was a need for something for the older community. It was felt this was necessary and '**Tea @ 3**' was formed. We have met twice, with one meeting in December cancelled due to a funeral. We have a quiz each month set by Sally Waters and tea and cake is served at 3.00 p.m. We have done Christmas decorations and had games and puzzles for people to do. The numbers vary from 25 down to 12 but it is a wonderful mixture of people with varying interests and we hope to continue with this in 2022.

The **Prayer Chain** has been updated and continues to provide emergency and much needed prayer for those in need. We have now lost three members from our group.

Margaret Horwood oversees its work along with Libby Nichols and anyone who would like prayers offered either for themselves or on behalf of someone else should contact either one. If anyone would like to be part of this important ministry, please speak to either Margaret or Libby.

The Community Lunches. We have had one Community Lunch in 2021 which was a Christmas Lunch which was, of course, curtailed due to the virus still being prevalent. Those who attended thoroughly enjoyed their time in the school and it is hoped that the new cook will be providing an 'Afternoon Tea' for the community in commemoration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Anniversary Cards have continued to be sent to those who have been baptised in our church as well as cards for other occasions for which we are extremely grateful to a member doing this on behalf of the parish.

Members continue to either visit or telephone parishioners who are unwell or housebound to make sure they are kept in touch with the parish life and the numbers have increased quite a lot over the last year.

Margaret Horwood (Convener)

Property

VANDALISED WINDOW IN NORTH TRANSEPT. The repair to the vandalised window in the North Transept was completed in July 2021.

CHURCH LIGHTING. The remainder of the high-level lighting in the nave, chancel and Manwood Chapel was replaced with low energy LED lighting units in January 2022.

CHANCEL. When the Diocesan Advisory Committee last visited the Church a proposal to remove the choir benches in the chancel was discussed, which, at the time, was supported by the Archdeacon. The removal of the benches is considered necessary, not only because they are in a dilapidated state but also because they are fitted around the heating pipework and thus limit the heat output to the chancel. The proposal also included removing the heating pipework and installing electric heaters so the chancel could be used as a separate space, independently heated for use by church and other groups. Both the Archdeacon and DAC Secretary have now moved on so discussions will start again when the DAC has a full complement of members.

TOILETS. The PCC could not come to an agreement with the DAC on the siting of toilets in the church, so it was decided to consider a toilet building positioned on the north side of the church, adjacent to the boiler house. For this project the PCC would need planning permission but before starting what is a detailed and costly process, a Pre-Planning Meeting was arranged with the Planning Department, when the outline of the scheme was discussed to consider if taking it further would result in a successful planning application. Planning approval would be agreed if it was decided to proceed with the scheme.

CHURCHYARD. A faculty has been submitted for an extension to the Garden of Remembrance and for a Quiet Garden in an area just below the east window and the DAC will consider this in May. A further faculty will be submitted for bike racks and an Information Board when all the relevant information has been gathered. Seventeen yew trees and a number of holly trees were reduced in height to approximately 1m from the ground during October 2021 and a churchyard working party organised by Angela Doe meets on the first Monday of the month to carry out general gardening tasks to the churchyard and graves.

ROOF TILES. Following a recent storm the church lost a number of ridge tiles and roof tiles from the east roof of the porch but thanks to a very generous donation from a member of the congregation the repair work will be done without claiming from the church insurers, saving the payment of the insurance excess.

EVERYDAY MAINTENANCE. The main boilers have been serviced regularly and a new contract has been agreed with SSE for the supply of gas. This is more expensive than our existing contract so the heating will have to be reduced this coming winter

The fire extinguishers were serviced, and the electrical portable equipment is due for testing.

CHURCH HALL. The gas heaters were serviced during October and the fire extinguishers inspected.

The hall roof also suffered from the storm and lost a number of tiles on the path side of the roof, caused by a broken branch from the adjacent plane tree. KCC Highways have been contacted and hopefully they will deal with the repair, but there has been no response so far!

Peter Brown



Theology Group

The Theology Group continues to thrive. We now have 53 people on our mailing list including some outside both our parish and the UK. This year's hidden theme has been biography with talks on Julian of Norwich, Charles Causley, Charles II, and the historical Jesus. We have also had a talk on the history of St Stephen's from the Cathedral archives and looked forward to the possibility of recovery in religious language and another talk on avoiding the trap of 'the plain meaning of scripture'. To complete our season we have talks on two women who met briefly in the dire circumstances of the Nazi concentration camps: Edith Stein and Etty Hillesum. A full programme of talks has been planned for 2022–3 as we continue to meet on zoom in the winter months. For this to continue into 2024 the church may need to consider purchasing its own Zoom.

Dr Philip Knight



Churchwardens' Report

The past year has continued to be dominated by Covid, and during 2021 there have been times when we were sometimes restricted to worshipping from home again, sometimes restricted to whom we could socialise with when attending services, times when masks have been compulsory, times when we have all been able to sing together, times when only six members of the choir have been allowed to sing, and a few times when there has been a little more freedom. The PCC and Churchwardens have tried to take a pragmatic approach to restrictions at St Stephen's, offering guidance to keep us safe, whilst showing an understanding that we must move on and be prepared to live with Covid over the coming months and years. We hope that you have felt that we have got a reasonable balance in our approach.

Throughout the past year, we have continued to live-stream our services, and this has become a much appreciated offering for those who are unable to get to St Stephen's, not just because of Covid restrictions this past year, but also because there are some who find it more difficult to get to church, whether because of ill health or being away from Canterbury.

During such a mixed year, there have been many people who work behind the scenes at St Stephen's to make our worship and other events run smoothly: those who read and lead the intercessions, choristers, flower arrangers, Sophie who has led Seekers both via Zoom and in the church hall, members of PCC and sub-committees—especially Peter Brown who chairs the Property Committee ensuring that the St Stephen's buildings are kept in good repair. Our churchyard continues to improve as an oasis within the local community and as a haven for wildlife. There were some issues with the council mowing plan, but we hope that this is now finally sorted out.

One of the legal responsibilities of the Church Wardens is to ensure that the inventory is checked, and we can confirm that everything is duly accounted for.

At the very beginning of 2021, Rev. Kevin Maddy was inducted as Rector of St Stephen's, having been Priest in Charge of St Stephen's up until this point. We give thanks for his ministry amongst us, and for the ministry of Sally and Peter, our licensed Readers, all of whom have lead our worship, carefully preparing sermons and the liturgy. We also thank our retired clergy who assist in the parish, especially Rev. Dr David Vannerley who joined us during the year. Despite this being a report for 2021, it would be remiss for us not to give a special note of thanks to Peter Toon as he retires from being a Reader after many years' loyal service to St Stephen's, through thoughtful preaching, and through leading on ecumenical and environmental issues, including focusing the development of our churchyard. Thank you, Peter, for your ministry to St Stephen's.

Stephen Barker and Shirley Hagger, Churchwardens



A detail from a window in the porch

RECTOR'S REPORT

After the very difficult year leading up to last year's APCM we have been blessed with a better year this past year. Our Church Services and the activities of our various organisations are almost back to normal, and we have been able to plan ahead with much greater certainty. This has been my first full year as Rector, rather than priest in charge, but the privilege of serving this parish has not changed. I am so grateful to those who have supported me in my ministry here, and particularly thankful that I have worked alongside some lovely colleagues. Steve and Shirley continue to do a sterling job as churchwardens, and Steve's skills as our resident techno-wizard, as well as organist and choir master, have made a great difference to our life in the mixed media world after the Covid restrictions. It looks like this mixed world of in-person and online offerings is set to be with us well into the future and that means that we, together with the rest of the church, will have to think about making proper arrangements for the broadcasting of our Services and events, and not just rely on the *ad hoc* arrangements we currently have in place. I have also been supported by two faithful Readers, Sally and Peter, and over the last year have been blessed by the priestly ministry of Fr David Vannerley. Sally is now an Anna Chaplain, exercising a ministry to the elderly of the parish. Peter, after many years of faithful ministry to St Stephen's, has decided to step back from his Reader ministry and I would like to express my grateful thanks for all he has done for the parish, which in recent times has included organising the annual Loretta Conference, chairing the Churchyard group, setting up our Christian Aid Week arrangements, as well as working tirelessly to make us a more inclusive church. Peter's ministry will be sorely missed, and we wish him all the best as he moves on to the next stage of life.

There are so many people I need to thank—choir, servers, sidespersons, holy dusters, PCC members, bellringers, flower arrangers, Mothers' Union, Theology Group, intercessors, and readers—that I am bound to leave someone out. I thank you all for your hard work and support for this parish, for everyone in some way plays their part in keeping us going, most of all by your prayers and your generous giving. We are all aware that the Church is going to go through some very difficult times in coming years and we need to be prepared for change. Our finances are such that we cannot sustain things as they have been, and we will need to work hard with our deanery partners to envisage a sustainable life and ministry for the future. By the summer we will have a new Archdeacon of Canterbury and we will be able to start planning for what happens beyond my retirement later next year. Together with the whole Church, we will have to find new ways, and perhaps even a new language, to speak to those who are not familiar with the Christian faith. As I discover in school all the time, most young people now know nothing about the faith or the Church, and we need to find a way to connect with them if the future of the Church is to be secured. This means that the relationship with our schools and young families will have to depend on much more than my chaplaincy role, and one of my next steps as school chaplain will be to try and establish a better relationship between the school and the parish and deanery.

Thank you all for the prayerful support of my ministry with you, and I pray that God will bless us all as we serve this parish during the next year.

With every blessing,

Kevin

Rector of St Stephen's Canterbury & Chaplain to The Archbishop's School



Canterbury Deanery Synod 2020–2021

Despite the restrictions there has been much positive planning and activity in the Deanery.

Following a Zoom meeting in **June 2021**, a Newsletter in **November 2021** and a Synod at St Dunstan's in **February 2022**, the main highlights are:

Personnel

We said **goodbye** to Archdeacon Jo as she went to be Dean of St Albans, to Peter Cornish on his retirement from Sturry, and to Hannah Thomson as she moved on from her curacy at St Martin and St Paul to Worcester Park and Cheam in the Diocese of Southwark.

We **welcomed** Rev Nick White as Diocesan Estates Enabler and Priest in Charge at Thanington, Rev Stacey Rand to Blean, curate Rev Jenny Walpole to St Dunstan, St Mildred and St Peter and Megan Johnson as Youth Pastor at SMB.

Over the course of the year there have been **elections** to both General and Diocesan Synod. Our Synod members are:

General Synod: Archdeacon Darren, Revs Rachel Webbley and Canon Barney de Berry
Holly Adams, David Kemp, Neil Logan Green.

Diocesan Synod: Revs Stephen Carter, Phil Grieg (Assistant Area Dean), Peter Harnden, Stephen Laird, Kevin Maddy, Charmaine Muir, Emma Pennington, Jo Richards
Harry Macdonald, John Morrison, Liz Morrison, Chris Robinson.

Mark, our Area Dean and Janet Bentley, Joint Lay Co-Chair, also attend Diocesan Synod on our behalf.

Activity in the Deanery

Following on from the Deanery Mission Plan, centred on:

Strategy, (Mission, Ministry and Partnerships);

Pastoral (Communication and Working Together);

Governance (Deanery Structure)

some exciting initiatives have been in place including:

Deanery Lent Groups discussing *Living in Love and Faith*;

A Deanery pulpit swap;

Deanery Eco News with parish reps sharing initiatives, resources and events such as the Ecofayre;

Community action through Connecting Canterbury, the Community Larder, Community Wardrobe and Community Shoebox;

A very positive input to the February Synod by Ben Hatfield, Children and Young People's Ministry Adviser highlighting the challenges and opportunities of connecting with contemporary youth culture.

Open Synods with speakers for the first half of the meeting have helped to raise the profile and opportunities afforded by working together. Thanks to John, our Treasurer, Harry, our Administrator, and Phil, Assistant Area Dean, as we all support Mark, Janet and Liz in their leadership of the Deanery.

