



The Team Parish of
St Luke in the City
Liverpool

Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council

For the year ended 31st December 2022



Clergy Report

Welcome to our Parish report which covers the year January to December 2022.

This year saw us readjusting to routine after years of pandemic disruption and change. Further, we maintained worship and Parish life while our Rector took a well-earned sabbatical in the summer (separate report included below).

We enjoyed a full programme of worship and activities this year with our Lenten period beginning with a Glitter Ash service followed by two courses; Open Table read Jared Robinson-Brown's book together and the Parish offered a creative, online, original lent course devised by our own team and based on the prayer of St Francis of Assisi. Palm Sunday was a memorable joint service where we joined forces with our Roman Catholic friends at St Vincent de Paul and paraded from there to St Michael's singing and waving palms together. Holy week saw some challenging and thought provoking worship with a meal, foot washing and moving vigil in the garden of St Michael's. Good Friday saw the return of our previous curate Gill Reeve who performed a dramatic reenactment of the crucifixion with music and props.

In the summer we celebrated the Queen's Jubilee at St Michael's working with Faiths4Change we opened up the church, gardens and hall to offer the public refreshments market stalls, home grown tea and craft activities for children. We marked Open Table's 14th birthday with a joyous service followed by cake! In July a number of church members attended the Pride March and then Open Table joined forces with Liverpool Cathedral for a special service. In August a group of us travelled down South to Greenbelt festival and were inspired by the alternative worship there. Later in the year as a Parish we offered funeral families and all those who mourn a Service of Remembering. This was once again a moving and peaceful service hosted at St Dunstan's and drew well over 50 people who were invited to light candles for loved ones and add their prayers to a tree. This year we also offered refreshments which led to important pastoral conversations making us wonder about the possibility of a grief course to run next year.

Our Advent celebrations this year began early with a carol service on Saturday 27th November from the Amos Trust, who work for peace in Palestine. We were delighted that they brought guest poets and musicians from Palestine to speak with us as a stop on their national tour. This was followed immediately by the launch of our Christmas Tree Festival at St Bride's on the 28th. Our opening event was a roaring success with both the grounds and church teeming with people. We featured two community choirs, a prize giving, mulled wine and mince pies as well as three large nativity boards which you could pop your head through...

At St Michael's we along with Faiths4Change held a Christmas fair - where many turned their hands to wreath-making. We were overjoyed that Open Table's carol service returned to St Bride's once more with Liverpool Rainbow choir and over 150 in attendance. Overall we have experienced lower than usual numbers at services this year as we continue to build back up after the disruptions that Covid made to so many peoples lives. Some long established members of our congregations have experienced dwindling health or have moved out of the area over this time, but by the same token we have welcomed many new people to our communities, so that by the end of the year it felt that we were well on the way to recovery.

Financially, we ended the year in good health. Our five year plan to balance the budget has borne fruit, and we are now in the black as a parish meaning that we were not only able to pay our Parish Share but we were able to make a one off goodwill contribution to help other churches in the Deanery which were struggling to do so. Our rentals have built again this year but with the cost of living - and especially heating - rising we, like many organisations, had to increase our fees. We have also agreed a new fee structure to ensure equality and transparency when it comes to hiring our spaces. We hope to continue developing this in the coming year with plans for our websites to contain information and booking forms to speed up and simplify hiring our spaces. We are hugely grateful for all those of you whose faithful giving to the church ensures that we have a stable base of support with which to carry out our ministry. This enables us to continue making the church spaces available at no

charge for the Foodbank and homeless meals project, for some of the community garden activities and for the Lauda project.

This year has been challenging, particularly in terms of our leadership. Although its beyond the date span of this report, we must mention the sad death in February 2023 of Alan Fitzgerald, Warden of over 35 years at St Dunstan's. We continue to pray for and support Jackie Fitzgerald and her family in this sad time. We have also seen some leaders moving on to new spheres of ministry; Lilly Nelson our Student Chaplain went to train for ordination in Durham and Steven Shakespeare has been called to serve at Liverpool Parish Church - we are very grateful to them for all they have contributed to our Parish over the years. Miranda took a Sabbatical in summer 2022 and in early 2023 she has been seconded as Archdeacon of Liverpool for three days a week until August. In February Charlotte our Tsedaqah intern returned to the USA after 12 months with us and Louis our Curate will sadly be leaving us for Lancaster Diocese in May 2023. We have also seen some exciting new developments in lay leadership with one church member attending the Directions course and considering becoming a Lay Reader. Further to this we have a new member standing for the PCC and assistant Warden at St Dunstan's.

The challenge for the coming year is for us to rebuild a deeper sense of community in our churches through pastoral care and discipleship. We look forward to our vision and planning day in May where we will take stock of the last few years, dream together and plan for the future. We pray that we may more fully embody our vision to be people "living life in full colour from the still centre of God."

*Miranda Threlfall-Holmes
Laura Ferguson
Team Clergy*

Reference and Administrative Information

The Parochial Church Council of the Team Parish of St Luke in the City is a registered charity, and its registered number is 1152031. Details of PCC members, who are the charity trustees, have to be provided to the Charity Commission.

The parish includes three churches: St Bride & St Saviour, located on Percy Street; St Dunstan on Earle Road, and St Michael in the City on Upper Pitt Street. The parish is part of the Diocese of Liverpool and its official correspondence address is:

St Luke in the City Parish Office, St Bride's Church, Percy Street, Liverpool L8 7LT.

The following people served as members of the Parochial Church Council:

Team Rector	Rev. Dr. Miranda Threlfall-Holmes	
Team Vicar	Rev. Laura Ferguson	
Curate	Rev. Louis Johnson	
SSM Priest	Rev. Sara Doyle	
Reader	Dr. Chris Bartley	
Churchwardens	Chris Bartley (as above) James Fleming	
Deanery Synod representatives	Kieran Bohan (stepped down in April 2022)	
	Alan Fitzgerald	
	Chris Bartley	
	James Fleming	
Elected members	Gwyneth Evans	
	Rose Green	
	Sharon Ginley	

	Lilly Nelson	
	Karen McCaldon	
	Kath Pace	
	Sue Say	
	Helen Stocker	
	Mari-Anne Valkass	
	Emma Watson	
Treasurer	Raymond Bissex	
Electoral Roll Officer	Jackie Corcoran	
PCC Secretary	Rose Green	
Safeguarding Officers	Rose Green	
	Sue Say	
Recruitment Lead	Laura Ferguson	

The licensed clergy and Reader are each ex-officio members of the PCC. The Team Rector is ex-officio Chair of the PCC.

Bankers:	The Cooperative Bank PLC 1 Balloon Street, Manchester, M60 4EP
	Central Board of Finance of the Church of England 80 Cheapside London EC2V 6DZ
Independent Examiner	Mr. I Wright B.A. F.C.A. 15 Stretton Drive, Southport PR9 7DR
Legal Advisors:	Mr. H. Dellar 1, The Sanctuary, Westminster, Liverpool SW1P 3JT
	Hill Dickinson LLP 1 St Paul's Square, Liverpool L3 9SJ
Estate Management:	PKPM Chartered Surveyors Suite 7, Church House, 1 Hanover Street, Liverpool, L1 3DN

Structure, Management and Governance

The St Luke in the City PCC is a body corporate and operates under the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 and the Church Representation Rules.

The PCC business has a sub-committee, the Building Sub- Committee.

The function of the PCC is to enable and support mission, to foster communication and collaboration between the individual churches as appropriate and to provide a framework of accountability to the Diocese, Charity Commission and other legal bodies.

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

Objectives and Activities

The general functions of the PCC are stated within section 2 of the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956.

Our specific objectives in 2022 were to

1. Achieve a balanced budget and if possible end the year in profit
2. Deepen our links with and mission in our local communities
3. Develop our discipleship and pastoral care in order to rebuild and grow our congregations

Over the course of the year we have made some progress with these objectives, as outlined in the Clergy Report at the start of this document. Our finances have stabilised and we have increased our numbers of hirers across all our sites enabling us to move into the black and thus be in a much better position to pursue our mission. Our Parish links continue to develop, particularly at St Dunstan's where Lauda, our outreach to the Romanian Roma community has lead to a flurry of activity there. We have begun a monthly discipleship course that has been very well-attended.

The Electoral Roll

There are 92 people on the Electoral Roll of the parish:

54 - St Bride's
16 - St Dunstan's
22 - St Michael in the City

Public Worship

We have mostly returned to our pre-pandemic pattern for Sunday services with the exception of Open Table continuing with one monthly online service and one in person service.

At St Dunstan's we offered Eucharistic services on Sunday at 10am but also a new midweek service at midday.

St Bride's Sunday morning 10am service numbers have fluctuated and although the main worship space has enabled the St Bride's tradition of discussion around tables, for the colder months we have moved from the main worship space into the Narthex. Open Table continues to meet once a month on zoom only and then in person

for the 3rd Sunday at 6.30pm. The in person services have been well attended and there have been a number of highlights including Open Table's 14th Birthday and a Baptism in February.

St Michael's continues to meet at 11.15am with a regular pattern of alternating services of the word with Holy Communion. On the second Sunday each month St Michael's has a Godly Play service which is geared towards interactive worship and play. This service makes use of the new TV and sound system which gives the service a contemporary feel. It has attracted new families and in the coming year we plan to grow a leadership team for this service. We have enjoyed teaming up with Faiths for Change for our joint services at St Michael's which always have an eco theme. Our Easter watch was held in the garden and two services have included prayer stations and planting sessions in the garden too.

Our mid week worship pattern has varied due to low attendance and other factors. Daily morning prayer online at 9.15 Monday-Friday ceased in November 2022 but returned for two mornings (Tuesday and Thursday) in February 2023 due to demand. In person Morning Prayer at St Bride's continued until Lent 2023 where increasingly low attendance and lack of lay leadership, coupled with a move to online midweek prayer and the increased activity at St Dunstan's on Wednesdays has led to a pause and reassessment period.

As for our occasional offices, we have had two weddings this year, 11 baptisms and 12 funerals. We also expedited some unexpected events including the death of Queen Elizabeth. We opened our churches for prayer and offered opportunity for the public to write in the books of condolence. In the summer a group of about 20 of us travelled down to Kettering for Greenbelt Festival. We enjoyed four days of great talks, alternative worship, playing outside, hot days and cold nights and lots of late night camp chats.

Pastoral care and service to our community

St Bride's is home to a number of local charities and organisations including: Refugee Women Connect, Narcotics Anonymous, Roger Smalley's Homeless Meals Project, the British Red Cross, two community choirs, Jackie Corcoran's community music group and our social justice anchor project, Micah Foodbank.

At St Michael's we are home to the Chinese Well-being group, Liverpool Rainbow Choir and Faith Clinic church. Our social justice anchor project Roots in the City continues to offer green space, therapeutic gardening and horticultural training for all. Further, Faiths4 Change are assisting St Michael's in our Eco Silver award which we hope to achieve in 2023. See the full report below.

St Dunstan's is home to Kumon language school, Pastor Shelley's church and Garden of Hope as well as the social justice anchor project Lauda. This outreach to the Roma community in the Parish has continued to grow with secondary and primary schools requesting Lauda run projects with them. We now run the after school club in St Hugh's primary school weekly in term time - children love 'Lauda Bible Club' so much there is a waiting list. Wednesday's at St Dunstan's have become a community hub with the Roma women taking part in a language class and a clothes stall and communion service all in tandem with Micah's new weekly Food Pantry there. Volunteers kindly offer tea and toast and local folk stop in for a chat.

Our work with Lauda has enabled us to strengthen relationships with Toxteth's Kuumba Imani centre and the Granby and Toxteth Development Trust who invited us to have a stall at the Celebrate L8 event along with St Francis of Assisi school and also with support in our Roma schools work in St Hugh's primary school.

Pastoral care conversations are beginning to emerge as a result of the regular Safeguarding reps and clergy meetings. Although there is progress to be made here plans to create a trained, safely recruited pastoral care team have been drawn up with a view to the team beginning in summer 2023.

Our Church Buildings

The new building committee had made significant progress on building works identified by the Quinquennial Reports and routine maintenance but there continue to be challenges. With members moving on and our Church resigning progress has slowed.

At St Dunstan's, the organ sale was agreed, and a faculty application submitted seeking permission for this to go ahead. This was agreed but there has been a hold up with buyer and we continue to wait. We have been blessed by a new member of St Dunstan's who has helped considerably with the overall appearance of the church, repairing broken items and cleaning unreachable areas as well as sending a drone into the roof space to investigate internal issues. St. Dunstan's is now due a quinquennial report and this will be completed imminently.

St Bride's continues to need roofing work as well as some external and internal repainting. Both of which we plan to address in the coming year once we re-establish the buildings committee and confirm the appointment of new architects. Trees in the grounds have caused problems with neighbouring residential buildings and Jackie finally found a contractor willing to do the work, they began in early in 2023 and the work continues.

Two new cleaners have been recruited at St Bride's and St. Dunstan's and this is having a significant positive impact on church members as well as hirers.

Although preliminary investigations were carried out into the drains issue at St Michael's, progress has been slowed by United Utilities responding to us. The PCC approved up to £30,000 to replace the fencing around St Michael's but this process has also slowed due to contractors being too busy to come out and quote for us. The car park next to the church is now rented to NCP with a flexible rolling contract. The St Michael's flat continues to be rented privately.

Deanery, Diocese and the wider church and mission

This year we received grants from the Deanery Mission and Growth Fund for Lauda and a new audio visual system at St Bride's. Miranda Threlfall-Holmes and Phil Bishop continue as Trustees of Micah Liverpool. Miranda is also a trustee of Mission in the Economy and represents the diocese on the Council of Governors of the Women's Hospital, where curate Louis Johnson and reader Chris Bartley are on the chaplaincy on call team.

In 2021 our Parish hosted the Living in Love and Faith course which was also attended by some members of other churches in the Deanery. The feedback from that course fed into conversations at February 2023's General Synod discussion around the blessing prayers of same-sex relationships published by the House of Bishops. Our rector Miranda Threlfall-Holmes is a member of General Synod and was able to speak in those debates.

Much of this year's clergy Chapter meetings have been focussed on Fit for Mission. In March 2023 at a Chapter away day it was decided that we would move forward with the initial exploratory conversations to be the next cohort to enter Fit for Mission as a Deanery with a view to saving time and energy by pooling some of our governance and administrative activities across a much wider team, and this will continue to be a focus of discussion throughout 2023-4.

We have also been thinking more about our activities and mission within the Parish. In January we began Living the Questions monthly course which has had over 20 folk attending and has been a great opportunity to develop relationships and deepen faith. In March a survey was sent to all our newsletter subscribers asking for their opinions on church life. The results of which will feed into a scheduled Vision and Planning away day at the end of May. We hope that this will inform our activities as churches and enable us to grow in number, offer more consistency with our mission activities and develop discipleship.

Ecumenical and Inter-faith relationships

We have continued to work closely with St Vincent de Paul Roman Catholic Parish. This year during the week of prayer for Christian Unity Miranda was visiting preacher there and Father Terry Madden preached and led discussion at St. Bride's church. We have also become involved with a local community organisation called Kuumba Imani who have invited local faith groups to host a meal a few times a year and share in Scriptural Reasoning. More than 5 members of our congregation have been involved in these gatherings and we were delighted to host one at St. Michael's in November.

FINANCE OVERVIEW

(see full report below)

The Performance of Investments

The PCC's funds are held in Current and Deposit Accounts with Co-operative Bank and in deposit funds with the Church of England's Central Board of Finance Deposit Fund and the Church of England investment and property funds. Investments saw a net loss of £56,576 this year but as we are not planning to sell them this currently does not affect Parish life and may well change again next year.

Reserves Policy

The trustees have established the level of operating reserves (that is those funds that are freely available) that the charity ought to have, which is roughly equal to six months general expenditure, £100,000. Reserves are needed to even out any short term funding gaps between spending and related income. We have also continued to invest the capital released from the sale of St Stephen's for income, holding this as an additional expendable reserve but with the aim of it providing a long term income stream. The PCC are content with the current level of reserves.

Income from lettings

Lettings income this year was a total of £61,191 which is a healthy increase compared on the £45,143 in 2021.

Giving to the church

Our second largest source of income is giving by the congregation. Planned giving in 2022 was £24,920 (down slightly from 2021 which was £25,667), with an additional £8,529 given as donations, in collections and other. These gifts allowed us to reclaim £6,966 tax from HMRC making the total giving-related income £40,425. In addition we received £25,750 from grants from external bodies.

Financial Risk

The Standing Committee closely monitored the evolving financial situation. Having finally turned around years of deficit budgets and now finding ourselves in profit. The PCC is committed to sustaining balanced budgets in 2023 and beyond. These years have shown that our income is very dependent on lettings and in 2022 a focus has been diversifying the mix of lettings income that we receive to increase our financial resilience. We will continue to promote the Parish Giving Scheme as it too will be an important part of our managing financial risk. All assets are insured and levels will be reviewed by our insurer Ecclesiastical.

Employees

The parish employed three part time staff: Jackie Corcoran as parish administrator, Vicky Clarke, cleaner at St Michael's and Lilly Nelson (whose contract ended in May 2022) as Student Chaplain. Leah Daly was employed by Liverpool Parish Church in 2021 to run Lauda our ecumenical project to connect with Roma people and continues to be supervised and supported by our Parish. In 2023 we will increase the number of cleaners employed and appoint one for St Bride's and for St Dunstan's. Our payroll is managed by LCVS.

Risk Assessments

The PCC regularly monitors risk. Risk assessments are undertaken for all new or extraordinary undertakings.

Compliance with Law and Regulation

Our procedures are reviewed regularly and formally reported to the PCC.

Safeguarding

Sue Say and Rose Green continue as Safeguarding Officers with Laura Ferguson remaining as Lead Recruiter. Safeguarding is a standing item on the PCC agenda. The Team Parish of St Luke in the City takes its duty and obligation to protect all extremely seriously. We have adopted the national Church of England's procedures and guidelines. You can find out more about the national policies and procedures at www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding

If you have any safeguarding concerns or issues on a safeguarding matter then you can find useful contact information at www.liverpool.anglican.org/safeguarding

Looking forward: Objectives and Activities

The general functions of the PCC are stated within section 2 of the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956. As a parish we aim to be 'Living Life in Full Colour from the Still Centre of God'.

Our three priorities continue to be:

- Sustainability: developing our financial resilience and developing as Eco-Churches
- Locality: deepening our roots in our local parish communities
- Growth: in numbers in our churches, in spiritual depth, and in service to our communities

In addition, we aim to contribute to the Deanery Priorities which are

- Developing Discipleship
- Strengthening Churches
- Developing Lay Leaders

ADDITIONAL REPORTS

OPEN TABLE NETWORK report

Kieran Bohan, Coordinator, Open Table Network

In 2022, as the Open Table Liverpool community celebrated its 14th birthday, we also celebrated seven years since Open Table communities began to multiply, and become a network. In June we celebrated with a national gathering hosted by one of the newest Open Table communities in Leyland, Lancashire. In October we also marked two years since I began working full-time to support the growing network of Open Table communities. In March we held our first AGM since the Open Table Network (OTN) became a charity in 2021, with St Bride's as its registered office. It was also our busiest year yet – we supported 21 communities, including the relaunch of two communities unable to meet since before the Covid pandemic, and launched 10 new communities, bringing the total to 31, hosted by churches from five traditions: Church of England (CofE), Church in Wales, Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Church (URC).

We also supported 33 other churches to explore whether to host an Open Table community, and hosted consultations with eight of these as they prepare to take the next steps towards hosting an Open Table community.

In 2023 we have already confirmed the launch of four new communities, and scheduled a consultation with one church seeking to host an Open Table community.

The number of people OTN engages with is also growing. In 2022, the average number of monthly contacts across 31 communities (including Liverpool), plus consultations with churches and other events, was 655 (a 56% increase on 2021). If we also add contacts through online outreach and other activities, the monthly average is 50,853 (a 15% decrease on 2021 due to a shift in focus to in-person engagement).



This substantial growth is not yet matched by the resources to sustain it for the longer term. OTN has worked hard to grow contributions from individuals, the communities OTN supports, and a more diverse range of funders. The impact of this is beginning to show in 2023 – This March the URC Legacy Fund awarded OTN a grant of £50,000 over three years. This will mainly support the Open Table communities hosted by the URC (currently five) and support more to develop across the UK. So we are still seeking funding to support the other communities, particularly in the CofE, which make up three quarters of the current network.

As part of OTN's increasing support from the URC, in May 2023 we will move the charity's registered office to the headquarters of the URC's Mersey Synod office in Wavertree, and OTN will become completely independent from St Bride's, while still supporting the Open Table Liverpool community as the first among equals in the network.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the PCC of the Team Parish of St Luke in the City, and in particular the community at St Bride's, for their generous hospitality and commitment to inclusion which has made this phenomenal journey possible. This would not have happened without our allies, like you, who have welcomed, included, affirmed and empowered us to make it happen, with God's help.

To find out more about the Open Table Network, and to find out how you can help, please visit: www.opentable.lgbt

OPEN TABLE LIVERPOOL report

Warren Hartley, Open Table Liverpool Ministry Facilitator

2022 was the first full year since 2019 when the Open Table Liverpool community was able to host communion services in the church, on the third Sunday of each month. Monthly attendance has begun to return to the level in 2019, with an average of 30 people in church, and 5 on Zoom each month. We have continued to invite people to join the communion service on Zoom as, though the numbers attending are fewer now, for some it remains an important way to stay connected to the Open Table community, and it enables those from elsewhere in the country who are considering this ministry to get a flavour of what we do.

Highlights included:

- our 14th birthday celebration in June led by our Rector Miranda and Kieran Bohan, Coordinator of the Open Table Network, which attracted 45 people (42 in church, 3 on Zoom), our highest attendance for a communion service
- a National Coming Out Day celebration in October led by Revd Dr Ash Barker, a pioneering urban activist, leadership developer, writer and URC minister from Birmingham
- a moving Trans Day of Remembrance commemoration led by Revd Bingo Allison and Bethany Austin from our neighbouring parish, St Margaret of Antioch.

On the first Sunday of each month we hosted a simple evening prayer service on Zoom, which has included time for people to share testimonies of their life and faith. These have proved popular, with an average attendance of 14 each month. We are planning to return to gathering in person in 2023, for a bring and share agape meal as we did pre-Covid, with a time for sharing with folk online too if possible.

In addition we helped to host four other events, which were in-person only:

- A Glitter Ash Wednesday service in March, attended by 23 people from Open Table and the wider parish community.
- A Taizé Service at Liverpool Cathedral during Pride weekend in July, attended by around 60 people, organised in partnership with Liverpool Cathedral, the Open Table Network, St Bride's and St Margaret's Churches.
- This followed a strong presence of around 45 people in the march as Christians At Pride, and more than 140 engaging with the Open Table community stall at the Pier Head the day before.
- A lecture by Ash Barker in October, attended by 17 people.
- The carol service in December, attended by 147 people from Open Table, across the parish and the wider local community.

All of this is made possible by a wonderful and growing team of volunteers who do so much with welcome, hospitality, setting up and packing away as well as the musicians who enrich our worship so deeply. Thank you to St Luke in the City for all the support and encouragement which helps make this ministry thrive.

LAUDA Report

Leah Daly, Lauda Co-ordinator

2022 was a fantastic year for the Lauda Project! After just kicking things off in October of 2021, by January 2022 we were well connected with many Roma families. Our kids club on Thursdays became a well established and very popular weekly event with as many as 40 children with their mum's in attendance. We started a weekly literacy class for some of the mums teaching them English as well as reading and writing in Romanian as many of the mums never had the opportunity to attend school growing up. Micah Liverpool started their community market at St. Dunstan's Parish Church to run alongside our literacy group and from there a real community hub came to life. Alexandra Bahor, a Roma lady herself and Roma inclusion advocate, partnered with us to host a celebration of International Roma Day in April and through that event we connected with and started meeting regularly with other schools and organizations looking to partner together to support the Roma community in the Toxteth/Wavertree area.

In May, 6th Form students from Arch Bishop Blanche came on placement with us, supporting our Lauda Kids Club and learning about different relevant subjects for working within the community such as food poverty, life as an immigrant, etc. We continued on through to the end of the school year with these activities and celebrated Roma culture and The Lauda Project by participating in a community event called Celebrate L8. We ended the school year with a huge Lauda Kids Club celebration with party food and sharing certificates and little medals for each child who participated in our program.

After a short break for the summer holidays we started up our activities at St. Dunstan's while looking to the future and how to develop further. We started doing home visits, taking time to meet the families in their homes, helping with practical needs and getting to know them better in their own environment. Through continued networking and partnerships, we were able to start offering clothes and household items to families coming to the Wednesday community hub. We were also joined on Wednesdays by Mersey Care Life Rooms staff and Granby Toxteth Development Trust staff who have continued to work with us to support the community coming every week. In late autumn, Leah, our Lauda Project coordinator started volunteering with one-to-one reading support at St. Hugh's Primary School where 75% of the children in attendance come from Roma families. Before Christmas we partnered with St. Bartholomew's Roby church in Huyton to gather winter clothes for the families and were able to deliver Christmas bags packed with warm clothes to the families we have gotten to know over the year. And finally we celebrated Christmas together with 60 children and their mums with a lovely party celebrating Jesus's birth, singing songs, doing crafts and eating lovely snacks! Such a wonderful year for Lauda!



ROOTS IN THE CITY Report

Kath Pace, Growing Support & Communication Worker of Faiths4Change

The Roots in the City garden at St Michael's continues to go from strength to strength. We've continued to support the Micah Liverpool food bank at St Brides. Micah pay a small regular amount towards our costs of year-round growing of organic vegetables, fruit and herbs for the foodbank which is mainly used by people seeking asylum and refuge. Faiths4Change fundraises to pay for the full costs of the food growing for the foodbank and has been supported regularly by SAS via Churches Together in the Merseyside Region and several project funds from charitable trusts for wages, volunteer expenses, infrastructure, soil & seeds. In 2022, we donated a total of 323kg of fresh vegetables, fruit and herbs (along with a few posies of flowers) to the Micah Foodbank.

We're running five groups at the garden at the moment; a Grow Well Together group funded by the Green Recovery Fund that supports participants to improve their wellbeing through gardening; a young people's group funded by Linda McCartney Foods, which gives participants aged 18-30 who do not have access to growing space of their own a chance to grow food and take it home; and three City & Guilds Horticulture courses provided by Myerscough.

In the spring of 2022 we received funding from the Innovation In Communities fund to develop an area of the garden and provide workshops inviting the local community to help build benches and planters. We planted edible herbs in the planters that can be harvested to make tea. The project finished with a summer tea party in June for the Platinum Jubilee that raised just over £120 in donations for F4C (funded projects paid for staff time).

In the winter of 2023 Faiths4Change received some funding to feed people and contribute towards heating bills at St Michael's. This has allowed us to provide hot drinks and a cooked meal to anyone who visits on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

We ended the year with a Christmas Fayre, featuring handmade eco gifts, wreath making, a coat swap, hot soup and delicious home-made cakes, along with carol singing from Liverpool Rainbow Chorus. We had some great feedback on the event, with people who said they were not creative at all really enjoying making their own wreaths. The event raised just over £200 for F4C (one member of staff volunteered their time and funded projects paid for the rest)

The congregation at St Michaels and the Faiths4Change team have been working hard on our Eco Church credentials this year. We've committed to only buying eco cleaning products and recycled loo roll/paper towels and we've been working on encouraging the groups that hire the church to recycle their waste. We hosted an open day in September 2022 as part of Great Big Green Week and invited other churches to come along and see what we've been doing as an Eco Church. St Michael's is currently a Bronze Eco Church but we're looking to achieve Silver by the end of 2023. St Bride's has also joined the programme in January 2023 but have not achieved an award yet, we're aiming to achieve our Bronze award by the end of 2023.

180 people supported through funded projects
2 events attended by a total of 90 people
44 Myerscough students
29 people fed weekly
646 food bank users received 500g of fresh vegetables and herbs
20 winter coats donated or swapped through the coat swap



MICAH COMMUNITY MARKET at St Dunstan's Report

Phil Bishop, Micah Volunteer

The CM is a branch of the Micah charity. Visitors pay £1.50 and select 15 items to take home. We also provide tea/coffee and toast and a place to meet others and talk. Sometimes there is a second hand clothes rack. Guests, mainly women from the local Roma community make up over half of the clientele. There is an opportunity for them to join an English language programme and consult with a NHS health worker. About 30 people each week access the service. There is a lovely atmosphere and the morning ends with a Eucharist in the Lady Chapel. The project has been running for about a year and has been a considerable success in supporting the local community.



TAIZE SERVICE Report

James Fleming, Taize Service Planner

Taizé-style musical contemplative worship has been a feature of worship at St. Bride's for some years, and I was delighted to be asked to look at restarting it in 2022. We now meet for a community shared meal and evening prayer service on the fourth Sunday of the month at 6.00 p.m. As an ecumenical initiative we partner with our friends at St. Vincent de Paul's RC church in Chinatown to offer monthly services alternating between St. Bride's and St. Vincent's.

It has been a great joy to explore and learn more beautiful Taizé songs to add to the repertoire and to offer prayer through music and singing. It has also been a great joy to work with the community music group in preparing and delivering the Taizé services. We have held services covering a wide number of themes and occasions, including praying for peace, praying for healing, thinking about the care of creation and environmental issues, along with special services for Advent, Lent and Good Friday. The most exciting aspect, though, has been

the opportunity to welcome new people into our churches who may not attend our morning services. We have had people coming from as far afield as Widnes, plus a couple from London who were in Liverpool for the weekend. There does seem to be a great love for Taizé-style worship.

Our first Taizé service in May 2022 welcomed 10 people; now we tend to welcome in excess of 20 or even 25 people to our services. In our busy world, people do seem to value the opportunity to come to a calm, tranquil space to pray, meditate and contemplate; and to experience the Lord's love and the Spirit's presence through the beauty of music.



ST BRIDE'S COMMUNITY MUSIC Report

Jackie Corcoran ARCT, St Bride's Community Music Co-Ordinator

St Bride's Community Music runs on Thursday evenings between 7pm and 9pm.

We are an inclusive group, welcoming folk who are returning to music practice and performance and music folk who are experienced. In 2022, musicians from our community music group who are also part of Team Parish of St Luke in the City are listed below. We all sing too!

Jackie Corcoran - Piano, Guitar, Treble Recorder and Tenor Recorder

Amy Crane - Soprano Sax, Tenor Sax, Clarinet, Piano and Percussion

James Fleming - Vocals, occasional, schedule permitting

Sophie Gunter - Piano, Violin, Soprano Recorder

Chris Lennie - Piano, Tenor and Bass Recorder

Vincent Needham - Violin and Piano

Beth Powell - Electric Guitar and Bass Guitar

We are intergenerational and we have a friendly vibe going on. We explore different genres of music, classical, jazz, folk and pop, hymns too! ... wherever the musical path takes us and we invite you to bring along the music that you are interested in or just come along and join in. We are beginning to build a repertoire of music that we perform as an ensemble. Our music carries out onto the portico where Roger's Meals Program shares out the Thursday evening hot meal and we hear back that they are happy to be entertained by us.

We enjoy joining in with the monthly Taize services and joining in with musicians from St Vincent's and the wider community. We usually practice our Taize music on the Thursday Evening before the Sunday Taize service. We take time during sessions to perform solo music that we are working on. We have experienced piano accompanists in our group who are happy to accompany singers or solo instruments at our sessions. Some in our group also write music so it is a chance for them to hear their work performed by musicians at the sessions.

If you are interested in joining in with our group, just show up at St Bride's Church on a Thursday evening. It is a good night out.

PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN NETWORK (PCN) Report

Lynn McAllister

This group meets on a monthly basis at St Brides, usually the last Wednesday of each month (except for August & December). The meetings last for 1 1/2 hours & begin at 12.15 pm. Over this year, taking a few chapters at a time, we have read & discussed 'Stories we tell ourselves' by Richard Holloway & 'Do I stay Christian?' by Brian McLaren. Around 10 people attend each month, some from St Brides & some from other churches/denominations. We try & vary the books & authors we read, & look for ones which we think will challenge & stimulate our thinking about our faith & practice. Anybody is welcome to come along & if you are interested in coming along or would like more information I can be contacted at lynnmc@uwclub.net

SABEEL-KAIROS Report

Lynn McAllister

For those who might not be familiar with Sabeel-Kairos, their mission statement is as follows:

1. We are a campaigning Christian charity who work for human rights, justice and equality for Palestinians in partnership/solidarity with the Christian community in the Holy Land.
2. We support, advocate and promote the work of Sabeel Jerusalem and Kairos Palestine, bringing Palestinian voices to the UK Churches to inform, challenge, develop understanding and bring about changes to minds and attitudes.
3. We are a campaigning and theological resource for the UK Churches and the Christian community worldwide.

In support of the above St Brides held an Advent Service in conjunction with Amos Trust. We heard about the experience of Palestinians both through video & in person from young people who live in Gaza. Thanks to Jack- ie, James & Vincent for their musical contributions & the scratch choir that was put together on the night. The evening was much enjoyed by everyone who attended.

On behalf of Sabeel-Kairos, I also asked for the following motion, which has been passed by Carlisle diocese, to be endorsed:

The Carlisle Diocesan Synod invites the General Synod to debate a motion in the following form:

1. Endorses the “Cry for Hope” expressed by Palestinian Christians and the ‘Global Kairos for Justice’ coalition
2. Requests that the Faith and Order Commission produce a report which analyses and refutes any theological justifications, for example, those promoted by some Christian Zionists, for the oppression of Palestinians
3. Instructs the Ethical Investment Advisory Group to provide guidance to the National Investing Bodies (NIBs) and Dioceses that will enable them to screen their investments and profit from the occupation.”

St Lukes in the City's PCC endorsed this unanimously & it was then passed to deanery synod, at which I gave a presentation. There was some strong resistance to endorsing the motion & the vote on the endorsement was postponed.

TSEDAQAH INTERN Report

Rev'd Laura Ferguson

In 2022 Charlotte Steffensen joined our team as an intern from Tsedaqah House. She originally hailed from the USA and arrived on Palm Sunday. She soon became a member of the family (not least because she and Rev'd Laura looked quite similar)! Charlotte attended worship across our three churches and contributed to the worship there. She led services, preached on various topics including her area of particular interest, disability and became a dedicated leader at St Michael's monthly Godly Play service. Charlotte was open and willing to serve as either adult discussion leader or children's craft table leader both of which she accomplished well.

Charlotte volunteered with Micah's Community Market at St Dunstan's; packing food bags and getting to know the regular clients. She had a good rapport with clients and volunteers alike. Further to this Charlotte was a member of our Lauda working with Roma women teaching basic English language and sharing British life skills. Lauda also offered Charlotte the opportunity to share her experience working in US children's summer camps with us. At Lauda after school club Charlotte led creative and exciting games and activities with Roma primary school children. Charlotte contributed significantly to the shape of the after school club sessions and we continue to deliver the sessions in the format Charlotte suggested.

Charlotte also shared her love of hospitality, in particular cooking with us, most memorably baking delicious breads for our Maundy Thursday service and American treats for our Pumpkin Carving Party. During the summer Charlotte came with the Parish to Greenbelt Festival and mucked in with camp life - sharing equipment, entertaining children, sharing food and generally helping fellow campers. At Christmas Charlotte was involved in the annual Christmas Tree Festival by delivering flyers door to door and by decorating a tree on behalf of Tsedaqah House. Charlotte has also been a member of our students/20's-30's group attending meet-ups, getting involved in the planning and sharing in the theological conversations. We have enjoyed getting to know Charlotte over the last year and she will be missed by many.

SABBATICAL Report

Rev'd Miranda Threlfall-Holmes

I'd like to thank you all for supporting me in the amazing opportunity I had this year to have a sabbatical, including a life-changing study pilgrimage to Jerusalem in September. I'd never had the chance to go before, and I'm left with so many memories, questions and things to ponder. One of the reasons I particularly wanted to go was to understand more deeply our connection at St Bride's with the Sabeel Kairos movement for peace in the Holy Land, and it was amazing to welcome the Amos trust for their carol service at the beginning of Advent having experienced something of the places and situations that they were sharing with us. Going through the separation wall to visit Bethlehem - with no passport problems at all, since we were a western tour group on our air-conditioned bus - and then having lunch with a group of third and fourth generation refugees at Aida refugee camp and hearing their stories of exclusion made for an extremely uncomfortable contrast, and the trip was full of moments like that.

I'd been unsure how satisfying I would find the religious sites, as I was full of questions about authenticity, historicity, and so on. But our pilgrimage leader was so helpful in putting all those 'did this really happen, and if so did it really happen here, and does it matter' questions to one side. Instead, he encouraged us to focus on the fact that these sites - or places nearby - had been focuses of Christian pilgrimage for many centuries, and to reflect on the pilgrimage experience itself and what it represented for us. With that focus, I was then particularly forcefully struck by the sites that we visited that were almost certainly the exact places named in the Bible, because they were places marked by the presence of water - either a spring, or well - and so couldn't easily be moved or forgotten. Jacob's Well, which we visited after worshipping with a small Anglican congregation on the West Bank, and the Pools of Bethesda, were two places that will particularly stay with me. And of course, we



visited the Sea of Galilee, where I got the the chance to celebrate communion for our pilgrimage group – and on another occasion, we visited – and floated in – the Dead Sea (no pics of that, I'm afraid, but what a weird sensation!).

Over the past four years I've undertaken the 30 day Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, which encourage you to imagine yourself into many of the Biblical stories and places and imagine meeting Jesus and many of the other characters in the stories, and I found myself returning again and again to some of those prayer experiences as I visited the places I'd imagined. It was a time of very deep refreshment and 're-

sourcing', at a time when I was finding myself quite burnt out after all the stress of the pandemic, and I'm so very grateful to have had that time and opportunity.

It was lovely to be welcomed back in October at our joint service by so many of you, and to share with you in small groups something of what I've learned and experienced. And from the the sublime to the ridiculouswe're encouraged, on sabbatical, to do something creative as well as something 'serious'. So the other main project I had was to write the first draft of a novel, with the help of an online novel writing course. It's a crime novel set in a retreat house. The retreat is being filmed for a reality TV show, when all of sudden the archdeacon is found murdered... there's a long way to go with it yet, but it was a great experience to at least get a first draft completed. And I learned a lot about myself in doing so.

A huge thank you to everyone who supported the parish in my absence, especially to our wardens and ministry team.



END OF CURACY REPORT

Revd Dr Louis James Johnson

How time flies...it's hard to believe that I'm now entering the last few weeks of my curacy with the Team Parish of St Luke in the City – in fact, three years in, it kind of feels like I'm just getting going – one of the many things I've learned during my time with you is that parish ministry is a long game, requiring commitment and a willingness to journey together from everyone involved, through good times and bad, whether relaxing in the comfort zone, or moving forward into uncertainty – the key thing is relationship, with God, and with one another – and it is developing and deepening these two key, and integrally-linked relationships that is the constant in our otherwise transient world – and whilst I think that parish ministry calls for long-term commitment to people and place, curacy is, necessarily, a transient and temporary part of parish ministry, and like those before me, and those who will follow, it is time for us all to move on – like all ministry, and, ultimately, like life, curacy is seasonal – and 'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven' (Ecclesiastes 3.1)

Of course, my curacy began in a season of acute uncertainty in June 2020, roughly six months into the covid-19 pandemic here in the UK, and during the first lockdown. In fact, all of the 2020 cohort of curates began our min-

istries as licensed lay workers as the planned Petertide ordinations couldn't be held – and so our licensing service with the then Bishop of Liverpool was held on zoom, as was the pre-ordination retreat before our rearranged small-scale, but beautiful and intimate deaconing services at Michaelmas in September 2020. And people in those early days, usually other clergy, would often say to me “it must be such a strange way to do a curacy” – but, as I would always reply “well, I've never done one before, so I don't have anything to compare it to!” And as the Bishop of Warrington said to us, we were called by God to serve in a time such as this, so that was what we had to do – and I think there is real wisdom and truth in that. And, to be honest, I cannot imagine it being any other way, and, in a funny way, nor would I want it to be – because I have loved my experience during curacy, from getting to know the community on zoom, and leading morning prayer on facebook, to experiences of doing streamed worship that could be both profound and hilarious – to being blessed to have a freedom of movement and action that was not available to so many, enabling social and emotional contact with people at a time of separation and isolation, such as being part of the Micah Liverpool foodbank team on Thursdays, and undertaking funeral ministry – this, and the slow one-step-forward-and-two-steps-back movement into the new reality of a world learning to cope with the pandemic and its effects meant that I was able to gain experience and steadily form relationships.

And, as things moved on, I entered what feels like a time of real flourishing, experiencing all the stuff of curacy training – preaching, teaching, baptizing, helping curate and lead worship in loads of different styles and contexts, and, once priested at Petertide in June 2021, celebrating the Eucharist, taking weddings, undertaking different chaplaincy ministries, helping set up our thriving *Lauda* project, working with the Romanian Roma community, being involved in helping the parish join the Community of the Cross of Nails, and in Micah Liverpool restarting their community market programme, sharing in worship with Open Table, working and collaborating with partners from across the deanery and diocese, from different Christian denominations, and from secular and multi-faith community organisations, and just generally getting to know people better, and finding out more about myself in the process – and through all this, being part of the most amazing, supportive, wise, friendly, loving team of colleagues I could have ever wished for – and I'm not going to name names here because, in truth, it would be a long roll-call, and I've been told to keep this report to one page – but I want to thank you all, as I'm incredibly grateful, more grateful than I can say.

This has been a truly fantastic training parish, enabling me to experience and learn so much, and I hope and pray that others that will follow and share in this formative experience – because I feel that through it, I have been empowered and equipped to take the next steps in ministry, to embark on the next chapter and move into whatever it is that God has in store – but, as I have said to many people already, my experience here has been so wonderful that it is a wrench to let go, and it feels painful to leave – and as with the beginning of my curacy, there is a sense of uncertainty in this, as there is uncertainty for all of us, as individuals, and as a parish, deanery, and diocesan community – but please know that you will always be in my thoughts and prayers – and I ask that you keep me and Christine in yours – and although this season is ending for all of us, and we will be parted for a little while, a new season is beginning – and our stories will be forever entwined, we will always part of each other – because we have shared in life together – and because we share in love together – the love of God that unites us and all creation for eternity.



Above: Here's one of our favourite pictures of Louis – wielding a sledgehammer when we were putting up trees for our 1st Christmas Tree Festival

Below: Louis leading morning prayer from St Bride's shortly before his regular stint at the Foodbank.



Louis preaching at our Maundy Thursday meal



Louis wearing his ordination cloak!

Here are Louis and Kieran showing off our new CCN cross!



Left:
Louis at
Liverpool
Pride '22



Above: Louis, aka 'Father Louise' entertaining kids at Lauda aka Crocodile!



Louis and the clergy team...