



## **ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS, STONEBRIDGE**

**Diocesan Ref No 21/20**  
**Deanery of Brent**  
**APCM 2024**

### **REPORT on the PCC and Parish Activities**

#### **Introduction:**

We have continued with our worship, prayer groups and other activities during this year. One focus in this coming church year will be exploring ways to reach the community and develop our worship.

We are pleased that numbers coming to worship are continuing to rise. One constraint in all of this is the number of volunteers we have and the amount of time given. We are asking everyone prayerfully to consider how they may help as any activity requires setting up, faithful attendees at the service or event, and then closing up afterwards.

#### **Worship:**

Worship has continued in Church with live music at 10am on Sundays with numbers continuing to rise. The Saturday evening service of Praise and Worship with Holy Communion at 5pm is going well. "Church on the Phone" continues every Sunday at 1.30pm. Weekday prayer and zoom services have continued.

We have continued with a pattern of special services to mark the church year, especially Christmas and Holy Week. Our Holy Week pattern is now well established, with: a service of Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday followed by stripping of the altar and a silent candlelit prayer vigil in the Garden of Repose in the Lady Chapel; Three Hours' Devotions on Good Friday including a service of the word with Passion Gospel and hymns; a Stations of the Cross prayer walk around the church, and a telephone service to include those who are less mobile; and on Easter Sunday a dawn service of rededication and blessing, the Easter Vigil, followed by the Parish Eucharist at our usual 10am service on Easter Sunday. This year we have been able to

provide more publicity and our advertising bore fruit as new people were able to find our services.

### **Adult education and formation:**

The Wednesday Prayer Fellowship has continued to meet on Wednesday mornings during term time, including remote members by improved online links. We have discussed Bible topics including an in-depth look at St Paul's Letter to the Romans and its implications for our faith. We also read the Twelve "Minor" Prophets (minor only in terms of length) and verified the many links in their writing with the prophecies of the birth, life and significance of Jesus.

During Lent we took the opportunity to join in with a Diocesan initiative, "Listening Groups." The idea was to meet in a format that enables us to deepen our faith and also get to know one another better. We gather around a Bible reading and also some thought-provoking starter topics; instead of "questions" to be answered we have queries beginning, "I wonder." We practised sharing with one another without cross-talk and discussion and found that people felt deeply listened to.

In future "special seasons" such as Advent and Lent, we expect to return to a format of reading a devotional book. Next time we shall probably draw on the many works of Dr Paula Gooder, whose writing has been inspirational at past groups.

### **Social and other activities:**

We have had two sales so far which have raised just under £400. These are our first attempts to raise funds and make friends in this way since COVID and we are learning a lot about organising sales of donated items, and also catering to café cake sales and lunches.

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered, donated and supported the sale. We will be having more sales this year and would welcome anyone who is able to donate to these and/or purchase from us.

This practice as a community is of great importance to grant-giving bodies among others, as they wish to see organisations engaged in self-help and acting cohesively.

### **Outreach and other groups:**

Our Elders Drop in have met monthly this year with numbers increasing, members include both congregation members and people who do not attend our Church. The group continue to enjoy this group.

### **Junior Church:**

Our children have continued to meet at the back of Church during Sunday service, with trained and checked adult supervision. They enjoy a range of activities and we hope to explain our offering along with increases in numbers of children.

### **Halls:**

During 2023 we have had a slight increase in bookings. We have just taken a short term booking and are hoping if the group has enough uptake this will result in a longer term booking. We do still have evening and weekend availability and would welcome any groups to book who have procedures in place (such as insurance, safeguarding etc).