



From the Vicar

Welcome to this year's annual report. We hope you will enjoy reading through it and we hope that it gives you a flavour of the wide ranging activities that we are involved in as a Church community as well as where we aspire to do more. St Gabriel's has always been a church that delivers more than you might expect in so many different ways and this year has been no exception. As you will see however, the financial situation has become somewhat more challenging and this will mean a necessary shift in the ways we approach mission and ministry in the year ahead. That said, with all that God is doing amongst us, and with plenty to celebrate, I am confident that St Gabriel's will rise to the challenge being set before us, being inspired by all that we see taking place, and God's fingerprints throughout it all.

One of the encouraging hallmarks of this year has been a return to pre-pandemic levels for service attendance and event participation. We have also seen the electoral roll increase similarly. This is not merely re-engagement or transferred growth but also new people coming to faith and growing in their faith journey. This journey spreads across the range of our ministry from children and young people growing in and developing their faith, to those who have connected with us in our outward focused activities such as Hope Café and English Classes. This was really visualised for me when we were visited by the Bishop in February to have 14 people baptised, confirmed or received into the C of E, across the whole cross-section of our community.



You can view or download this report including the full accounts not present in this document at st-gabriels.org/apcm or by scanning this QR Code.



Other highlights from the past year have included many things we have enjoyed together including the Bible Course, another visit from West End Has Faith and the Artistry of Faith project, leading to a fantastic exhibition of work during our Easter celebrations.



Another area for growth has been the staff team. As Jenny continues for another year and has helped us with initiatives such as the Bible Course, Rebecca has joined the CAP team, we received George as part of the Willesden Area Ministry Experience Scheme, and Catherine started with us as Pioneer Curate. In the last month, we have also been blessed by having Janet join us on a short-term ordination training placement. Whilst this has created a breadth of skill and opportunities, we have also not yet been able to recruit a dedicated Youth Minister or retain effective administrative support following the departure of both Mariam and Sarah. The breadth of all Sarah undertook was such a blessing to us and special thanks should be made to Marcus, Shelley and Catherine in this regard for additional time given towards meeting those needs following Vishani's departure. Catherine is due to be priested in July and that will release new opportunities for us as a church, including the chance to think about what new fresh expressions or church planting opportunities we might pursue together. I will also be taking 12 weeks study leave in 2025 and in the next season will be planning my time to maximise that opportunity.

As we look ahead, there are a few things in particular that I want us to focus on. We are a missional church and as we see growth, we are already thinking about how we replicate ministry, particularly in the area of church planting. We have a growing number of Farsi speaking members and need to think how we can continue to develop our worship patterns to include the richness and diversity of all our cultures. We need to keep prioritising children and young people so that their needs are not neglected, and they get the best start in faith that they can. Importantly, and for all these opportunities to be realised, we need to deploy the right kingdom resources, as God has afforded us, to meet these numerous needs.

Currently, despite numerical growth, we have seen financial decline, and whilst through successful grant funding, the CAP debt centre and Hope Café is fully funded for the next year, the costs for wider church ministries are not currently being adequately met. This has meant we have had to make the difficult decision to suspend recruitment for a Youth Minister and to review our administrative needs until such time as we have reliable finances to responsibly restore them. This does not mean that these ministries have been neglected, but it does mean a cultural shift that will need us to pull together as a community to respond to God's call in these areas particularly. I believe what God is showing us is that whilst in the past we have relied on professional persons, or a central reserve of funds from wealthy givers, we now need to press even more into every member ministry - where each member's contribution of voluntary service and financial donation is crucial to the overall goals being reached. Whilst we still recognise our primary commitment is to serve the whole community and particularly those who have relatively little, we need to highlight the importance of discipleship and developing healthy habits of service and giving at all levels, so that we might all benefit together from investing in God's Kingdom. By investing together, we can also benefit together in the reward of seeing the works of God accomplished and his Kingdom continuing to be established in Cricklewood and beyond. I hope that you will continue to partner with us in seeing this vision realised together.

The Rev'd James Yeates - Vicar

Children and Families

This year has been an exciting year in the children and families department. In Boogie Angels we have seen lots of new families join us for our toddler group and music and movement session. It's fun to get to know the children and their families and a joy to provide a safe space for families to play together and ask faith questions. The Boogie Angels team have been amazing and have worked together on a new registration system. They are all brilliant at chatting and welcoming our community into our building. We have seen a number of the families join us at special services and events which has been great.

This year has seen lots of special events and services including "Fests", where we welcome families to celebrate seasons with us. Light Fest in October, February Family Fun and our Christmas services in December. It was great fun to see the children getting involved in leading the nativity service and to get out the crib set on Christmas Eve for a new service. It's been great to welcome families from both our church and community to these events.

We have made some big changes in Sunday ministry this year with the aim of being more welcoming to families who come and visit to join us. We have made a baby and toddler play area in the main church space and changed around the rooms we use for the older kids. We now have Mini Church for children aged 0-5 and their families and Kids Church for 6- 11 year olds who now meet in the Angels room. We have seen children settle much quicker in both groups now they no longer have to travel to the hall. Families now visit and become regular members. We have also tailor made some curriculum that suits our Mini Church kids and makes life easier for our Mini Church team.

The children are feeling more part of what's going on with adult church and can visit more easily for communion, so the changes are all going well.

As always, this would not be possible if it were not for the amazing teams that lead and support the children and families ministry. They are all brilliant and serve wholeheartedly with the love of Jesus. Our Kids team are fantastic but we are in great need of extra team to be able to serve these precious children God has brought us. Please do come and chat to Susie about getting more involved.

Susie Yeates, Children and Families Minister



Wednesday Fellowship

Wednesday Fellowship have been enjoying meeting weekly. They meet for prayer for themselves, for the church, worship and a bible study. It's been lovely to see lots of different people leading the bible study, especially the series of 'Women from the Bible' finding out about some women who we'd never spent time exploring. We have also been doing the Bible Course alongside the church course this term. Celebrating birthdays and special events with a meal is also a definite and regular highlight.

Susie Yeates



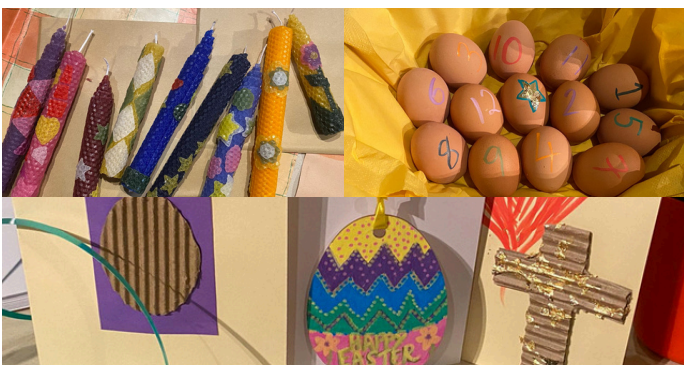
Youth

As your new curate I inherited Youth Ministry after the departure of Mariam Kizza. I'd like to add my thanks to Mariam for her ministry in this area - discipling our young people and enabling them to explore their own talents, notably on Father's Day in June 2023 when the young people led the Sunday morning service, taking on a variety of roles including leading, preaching, intercessions and sung worship. On weeks they don't meet for youth sessions, our young people continue to serve on various rotas, including - live streaming, visuals, sound desk, scripture reading and kids church, and many thanks to Susie for providing journaling materials and other resources on these weeks.

Since September 2023 we have continued with the schedule of alternate weeks for Sunday Youth and Friday Night Youth. On Sundays we walk the short distance to the Hall for our sessions. After gathering as a whole to catch up with each other we break into smaller groups to explore a particular theme and scripture and then each group delivers a short presentation on what they have discerned before the end of the session which finishes with prayer.

On Fridays, our youth meet in St Gabriel's along with youth from Cricklewood Baptist Church to play games and hang out together. We make time each session to gather together for a short reflection and discussion.

Due to my other commitments as your curate there has been less capacity for special events and trips out with our young people. Our plans for a campfire session in October were thwarted by storm Babet, however, as well as hotly contested games around the pool table, we have enjoyed pizza making, Christmas bingo, making our own candles, and creating chocolate treats at Easter.



Many thanks to the small but dedicated team of volunteers who continue to serve alongside me. We are hoping to add to our number and I welcome conversations with anyone who would like to help support our young people. Our hope is that we can have more regular provision for our young people to give them additional opportunities to explore and deepen their own faith journeys.

The Rev'd Catherine Patterson - Curate



Christians Against Poverty

Emma Liberman took over the CAP Debt Centre Manager role in Mar 2023, after Debbie completed her sabbatical and took on the voluntary Community Link Coordinator role for CAP locally whilst employed by CAP as Area Manager for NE London. Rebecca Bincan was recruited as the second Debt Coach in May. She has been sailing through her CAP training, both structured and on-the-job, and should be signed off fully very soon.

We have trained four new Befrienders in recent months and another two have come forward. Completion of their safeguarding training and DBS checks can make it a lengthy process before they can accompany Debt Coaches, but is essential for our vulnerable client base. We are blessed with 12 active Befrienders coming to client visits, when they are available.



Funding for the Debt Centre is secured for the year ahead, thanks to the faithful support of CAP Angels, grants from local trusts and Gift Aid. We were particularly thankful to secure substantial support from a new charity, replacing the giving of another who declined our application in the Autumn. This also covers additional costs for increased staff hours across three part-time staff (two Debt Coaches and the Hope Café Manager), new subscription for Money Coaching and development for Hope Café. New Money Coaching resources and film series were launched, which is already being well-received by course guests. Two new Money Coaches are soon to train, boosting the existing team (4 active; 1 returning).

We cleared £200k of debt for clients Mar 2023-Mar 2024. In the period Jan 2023 to Mar 2024, the Debt Centre has interacted with over 60 households on casework and our intervention is deeply valued by all clients. For more details on our impact, see the CAP Newsletter 2023-24.

Emma Liberman - CAP Debt Centre Manager



Hope Café

Hope Café takes place on Monday afternoons and over the last year we have seen many changes. Firstly, we have seen growth in numbers and now regularly see around 50 people come through the door each week. This led to us reviewing our lunch offer and the way we prepare the food. Food is prepared on the premises and consists of soup, sandwiches, and salad. We have trained members of the food prep team in food safety and implemented strategies to ensure we run the café to a high standard. The volunteer team generously give of their time each week and are invaluable in ensuring the café runs smoothly and that we offer something that hopefully blesses all who walk through the doors.



Friendships are often forged over lunch and both regulars and new guests enjoy friendly, lively conversations. Hope Café has been particularly successful in engaging people who are struggling with loneliness and social engagement, and also with those seeking practical help and relief from cost-of-living pressures, immigration and housing help. We also offer pastoral discussions on worries or anxieties, English conversation practice, assistance with form-filling and administrative tasks, signposting or referral to other services, and host occasional speakers on topics like practical life skills, health and wellbeing.

At celebration points such as Christmas and Easter, we have hosted 'specials', these have been popular. As well as celebratory food being provided we have enjoyed quizzes, and Bingo and a short talk by a member of the team. We have also had a visit from Bishop Lusa, who spoke to guests, volunteers and staff members about the work of Hope Café and CAP.

As already stated, growth has been a defining factor of Hope Café and many guests have also visited church services, some are now serving, not only on the Hope Café Team, but also in other areas of the church like sound production and hospitality. We have seen God bless the work of Hope Café week by week, please pray with us that He continues to work through the café and all we provide.

It has been a privilege to be part of this amazing initiative and the whole team are looking forward to the next year with all the challenges and opportunities it brings.

Shelley Murray, Hope Café Manager

Alpha

Alpha has continued to be a fantastic resource and opportunity for people to find out more about the Christian faith and to explore who Jesus is and ask life's big questions. In the Summer and Autumn terms, many people from diverse backgrounds within the community joined us as we ran the Alpha Course in English and Farsi. It was great to welcome a family whose child went on to be baptised (in a Tikes Cozy Coupe Car) -what a highlight for many! And to see the Holy Spirit work powerfully through the sharing of conversations, life experiences and building of relationships.



As ever, our guests and team enjoyed the hospitality and delicious food prepared by our gifted St Gabriel's cooks. Thank you to all those given up their time and energy to serve and bless our guests!



This Spring, we started The Bible Course for the first time, which I think was a great success! Many homegroups and people from within our church family joined together, to go deeper in their understanding and enjoyment of the Bible. The course consisted of eight sessions, which included videos, discussions and some cheesy jokes or quiz questions, a favourite part for many! However, many benefited from growing in their knowledge of the Bible, coming together with others and learning more about Jesus, the Word made flesh (John 1:14) and living Word (Hebrews 4:12). We will prayerfully consider what next steps to take as we journey together in discipleship.

This term, we have just re-started the Alpha Course. Please do be praying for who you can invite and who God may be calling to Himself, and we ask for His protection over the duration of the course and His guiding of His Holy Spirit. To God be the glory!

Jenny Erber - Ordinand

English Conversation Classes

From September 2023 we increased the number of English classes we now run. On Monday, at the same time as Hope Café, Rachel has a class. Monday evening we now have two classes catering for basic and intermediate learners. These start at the earlier time of 7pm and finish around 9pm, with a break in the middle. And on Wednesday evening we have a class aimed at basic learners. So we now have four classes, and the Monday classes are longer. This is a significant increase in our offering.

Our teachers are Rachel, Caty, Jemma, Sim and Richard with able assistance from Haidar. The Monday evening classes now regularly have about 25 students who come from Iran, Poland, Japan, Brazil and a few other places.



The classes are a thoroughly enjoyable experience from the teachers' perspective, and the students seem to have a good time too, judging by how difficult it is to get them back together after the 'five minute' tea break. Several of them come for the community, which is always good.

We still write our own materials. As always the objective is to increase vocabulary and to build confidence in speaking. We don't really cover 'grammar' except where it is necessary for understanding the passage we are studying. But we are open to new ideas and to suggestions from the students. The purpose of the Monday basic English class is very much to encourage the students to speak in English even if it's not a complete sentence at first. Sometimes this means that they speak in English for the first time and that's thrilling.



We have had several social events. These included a summer barbecue and the Nowruz party which was jointly organised with people from the Church congregation. And we have events at Christmas and when there are birthdays.

Explicitly preaching the Gospel to the students is not part of what we do, but we seek to demonstrate the character of Christ. We are also unapologetic when we do have to talk about matters of faith, and the students are fine with that. For some students to actually come through the door of a church building is a big step in itself. By building friendship and making the classes pleasurable we hope that our students will be able to appreciate different cultures and overcome their fears, especially when they are away from their own countries and families.

Monday lunchtimes has generally been individuals or small numbers of existing students from evening classes who want extra practice, the level and content has varied according to need from complete beginners to those at a higher level where we have worked more on grammar.

Richard Berry - English Class Team Leader

Music and Production

*“Come on and praise the Lord with me
Sing if you love his name
Come on and lift your voice with me
He's worthy of all our praise”*

I am forever grateful for and encouraged by the worshipful hearts of St Gabriel's. In every circumstance we praise God - through songs, as well as in many other ways. In a season of less capacity for anyone to take a strong lead with the team, everyone has pulled together and we continue to worship God with heart, soul and mind.

The biggest area of change has been in the 'team at the back' who make every service happen by operating our sound desk, visuals and cameras. With quite a large change in the staff team and a few other leavers in the last year there has been lots of opportunity for a new team of tech heroes to rise up and get involved. So I would want to say a massive thank you to all of them. As part of that it has been great to get a number of our young people involved in that team. They do a fantastic job and we are most grateful.

Equally, there is a fantastic committed team at the front who have served faithfully week in, week out - often through periods of challenging situations in their own lives. That is real sacrificial worship - so a huge thank you to all of them.

As well as Sundays we have continued to host the occasional Encounter Night - providing a longer period of time to go deeper with God as we sing, wait on God, share words of encouragement and scripture. These are always a highlight.

And as ever, our Advent and Christmas services are a highlight of the church year in terms of sung worship - particularly as we join together - experienced and novices together to form the Carol Service choir. Proof that it is about heart as much as anything else. We always have fun together and believe that God inhabits our praises and can use that moment to reach the many visitors we have at our carol service to draw them closer to God.

We continue to pray that God will grow our faithful team of instrumentalists over time - to be able to grow the depth and richness of the leading of sung worship at every service.

Marcus Liberman - Music and Production Team Leader



Deanery Synod

Anglicans in Brent continue to strive to address the ongoing challenges of the cost-of-living crisis within the local communities.

During the year, Anglicans in Brent have been engaged in a series of meetings, workshops, and presentations.

September 2023 kickstarted the 2030 Vision Deanery Roadshows. Bishop Lusa of Willesden conducted the Roadshow for Brent Deanery (at St Martin, Kensal Rise) focusing on outreach mission and ministry within the local communities.

January 2024, Pauline McCalla, Willesden Area representative of the Mothers' Union), gave a presentation at St Michael's, Tokyngton. Empirical evidence shows a decline in membership.

June 2024, Nadia Khan (Brent Council) will be chairing the council's Faith Climate Action Plan meeting at St Michael's & All Angels Church, Stonebridge. St Gabriel's Cricklewood, winner of the Bronze Eco Church Award, will be the guest speaker in providing tips and advice for the stewardship of God's creation within local communities.

During the year it has been a wonderful opportunity to be part of the Anglicans in Brent's journey in fulfilling the London Diocese 2030 vision.

Colleen Francis - Deanery Synod Rep

PCC

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is made up of people drawn from the membership of St Gabriel's. and they hold legal responsibility as Trustees of the Church. The PCC meet regularly to make decisions about how the church runs. Our Church Council year started with the APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting) in May and then we met at subsequent monthly meetings.

There are many roles that are important to the smooth running of the church and PCC meetings so at our first meeting we agreed our key roles. Harriet Luwum became our secretary and David Vivian agreed to stay in his role as treasurer. The secretary and treasurer, along with James, our Vicar, and Shelley and John as Churchwardens, form the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee also meet monthly and among other tasks, create the agenda for the subsequent PCC meeting. Anita Bowen was appointed as the Electoral Roll Officer.

In July, The Rev'd Catherine Patterson became part of the church after being ordained as curate. She subsequently became part of the PCC and was co-opted to the Standing Committee and has been a great addition as she has voiced many ideas and supported the members of the PCC.



In October the PCC and staff team had a day away at the Niland Centre in Bushey. It was good to spend a longer time together and we focussed on our values and how we are implementing them in the life of the church. As usual we had a bring and share lunch, which in true St Gabriel's style was plentiful and delicious. The sessions were informative and challenging and we came back to Cricklewood with many ideas to ponder on and discuss further.

In March, Susie our children and families minister, visited the PCC and gave an update on what has been happening over the past year including the changes to the Sunday children's work locations in church and the increase to over 180 children recorded at Boogie Angels. In addition we also heard from Catherine and her recent training with Youthscape, provisioned by the diocesan vision objectives. Both Catherine and Susie have keen to highlight the acute need for more volunteers to support these vital ministries. There were also a number of important decisions regarding the maintenance of the hall, flat and church grounds including a significant investment in the church flat.

This year saw some members of the PCC move onto other things. Alison Ingram moved on in September to train as an Ordinand, Khabat Salimi left in January as his commitments meant he no longer had the time to give to the meetings and Shelley Murray stepped down as Churchwarden, also in January and after obtaining permission from the Bishop, to focus more on her role as Hope Café manager. This led to a vacancy for Churchwarden, and it was decided that John Wolffe would carry on as sole churchwarden with Harriet Luwum supporting him.

The Church Council always prioritises time to review our safeguarding arrangements and our financial arrangements. Shelley Murray (our Safeguarding Officer) and David Vivian (our Treasurer) do a huge amount of work on these important topics and ensure the Church Council are equipped with the necessary information to oversee and update policy, ensuring that St Gabriel's is a safe place to worship and complies with Safeguarding guidelines. Also, PCC ensures that wise financial decisions are made throughout the year - particularly in setting the budget for the church.

Membership of the Church Council during 2023-24 was as follows -

Vicar: The Rev'd James Yeates

Curate: The Rev'd Catherine Patterson

Churchwardens: John Wolffe,
Shelley Murray (Resigned Jan 2024)

Treasurer: David Vivian

Secretary: Harriet Aber-Luwum, until January and then Sophia Ajani

Representatives on the Deanery Synod: Colleen Francis, Winsome Spence, Elizabeth Mioduchowski

Other Elected Members:

Patience Asare-Tweneboah, Anita Bowen,
Charmaine Clarke,

Alison Ingram (Resigned Sept 23), Tuong Vi Le
Magowan, Faith Mba, Khabat Salimi (Resigned Jan 24), Rose Streatfeild, Colin Stubbins.

Shelley Murray - Churchwarden until Jan 2024

Safeguarding

We subscribe to and have adopted the Church of England policy on Promoting a Safer Church, and have endeavoured over this year to put in place the recommendations and procedures advised by the policy. In May 2023, the PCC approved our Safeguarding policy for the year.

As recommended by the Church of England we have ensured that DBS checks are carried out on everyone who works or volunteers with children and vulnerable adults. We have also been ensuring that everyone who needs it has Safeguarding training to an appropriate level for the position they hold in church. In addition to this all the leaders of the church are trained at least to leadership level and PCC Members are required to complete training about Domestic Violence.

Safeguarding appears on the PCC agenda every month as it is of extreme importance and needs to be given a high profile. In September we raised awareness of Safeguarding by marking Safeguarding Sunday, As well as highlighting how to recognise abuse, we looked at how to report any concerns by going to our website and following the links to Safeguarding and using our online form.

Last year the Diocese introduced a Parish Safeguarding Dashboard, this helps us to ensure that we are meeting the requirements set out by the Church of England, there are two levels to the dashboard and we recently gained 100% for the things we have in place.

Over the next year we aim to build on what we already have in place, and to take on any further recommendations by the Church of England, to ensure that St Gabriel's is as safe as it can be for all who come here.

We continue to respond to concerns that are logged and deal with them appropriately and effectively. If you have any concerns please log them by going to st-gabriels.org and following the links to Safeguarding and/or speak to either myself or our vicar, James Yeates, or email safeguarding@st-gabriels.org If you think someone is in immediate danger ring the police on 999.

Shelley Murray - Parish Safeguarding Officer



Fabric and Buildings

Much routine maintenance and many minor works take place unnoticed by the congregation, but when significant problems occur, they can have an immediate impact. Such an incident occurred on 8 November 2023 when the heating system developed a leak and had to be shut down. It was subsequently restarted at lower than usual settings to mitigate water seepage. Unfortunately, this fault coincided with the onset of colder weather, meaning that for several weeks the building could not be heated to a normally acceptable temperature. The cause of the leak was a rusted valve, and the replacement part could not be quickly obtained. To ensure that any future such failures can be quickly repaired, we are planning to keep spares in stock, and considering work over the coming summer to replace other valves that are at risk of similar failure in the foreseeable future.

Other developments relating to the grounds and the fabric of the church building include the following:

- Installation of a small handwash basin in the south aisle kitchen area, to comply with food preparation requirements, which are especially important for Hope Café.

- Fire alarm and extinguisher checks took place in December 2023, resulting in the decommissioning and replacement of some extinguishers and fire blankets and the addition of a wet chemical extinguisher adjacent to the kitchen.

- The Hope Café team has cleaned and reorganized the church kitchen to comply with food preparation and health and safety requirements.

- The gutters were cleaned and the roof inspected in November 2023

- There have been some issues with anti-social behaviour in the church grounds, which are being logged. We would like to be able to install security cameras and an entry system (enhancing safety for all, particularly staff working in the building) but we currently lack the requisite funding.

- The office area at the back of church has been expanded to provide additional working space, including a desk for Catherine, our curate, who joined in July 2023.

During summer 2023 extensive work was done on the Church Hall flat to address a backlog of maintenance, including improvements to the heating and electrical systems, and replacement of the windows and front door. The PCC judged this work to be essential to ensure the comfort and safety of the tenants. The cost was covered from reserves and will be recouped from ongoing rental payments.

John Wolffe - Churchwarden

Electoral Roll

Firstly, I want to say many thanks to all members who made the effort to fill in the forms manually or online, to help make this report possible. Your cooperation is much appreciated. My thanks also go to James and Shelley who collated all the figures together for accuracy.

Our current electoral membership (aged between 16 and over), on this year's list up to April, stands at 188. Since our last annual meeting, 5 people have been taken off the Electoral Roll. Three of them have moved out of the area and the other two people sadly died this year. May the souls of the dear departed rest in peace.

Glory be to God, we had 29 people added to our membership this year! Among these new members are some Youths since the joining age is 16. At this point, I urge all parents to draw this to the attention of their children as soon as they turn 16, to register immediately, should they wish to be added to the Electoral Roll Membership list.

The other new members are from either Alpha, CAP, Welcome/Christmas Cards, Hope Café, or continuation after a first visit. This addition of new members is an indication that there is a constant flow of new people attending services at St Gabriel's Church.

I believe this is really true, because on getting people to confirm that they were on the list, there were over 10 people who ascertained that they have been coming to church for about 3-4 months and will fill the form online, when they get to their sixth month, which is the required length of time to become a member of the church. May God's grace be with them.

Anita O Bowen - Electoral Roll Officer

Finance Report and Summary of Accounts for 2023

Introduction

Financial gifts from the congregation enable St Gabriel's to continue in worship, to offer weekly activities to the local community, put on special events, support other churches in London, and support mission partners in this country and internationally. In these uncertain times when the cost of living is increasing, and it's not clear whether all these activities can continue, God finds a way to keep things going through unexpected gifts, legacies and the generosity of the congregation.

The Finance Team during 2023-24 was Debbie Thomas, Colleen Francis, Sarah Broadbent (until August), James Yeates and David Vivian

How we work out our money

In St Gabriel's we look to cover our regular expenses with our regular income. Regular expenses are the running costs for our ministries and activities, on Sundays and during the week, engaging with our local community and showing faith in action, contributing to clergy and wider church costs, paying our other staff, heating and looking after our buildings and grounds, and giving for God's mission locally, in London, nationally and internationally. We set our sights high, and obviously need our income and outgoings to balance, which is a challenge for us. In 2023 we were able to use the Diocesan energy grant we were awarded at the end of 2022 to help offset the significant increase we faced in heating and lighting expenses. We also received a grant to help cover the costs of George's placement with us. We also received generous one-off gifts to help cover the cost of upgrading our heating controls (which should allow us to reduce our heating costs).

How did this work out in 2023?

Other than the grants mentioned above, we didn't receive any outside funds, so all other funds were given by members and friends, together with hiring our Hall, rent from the Hall Flat, rent from the telecoms in the tower, and activities.

Income:

Regular income was lower in 2023 than in 2022 (approximately an 11% decrease). This was primarily due to a number of members moving on from St Gabriel's. We increased the cost of hall lettings at the beginning of 2023, and we have seen a 30% increase in letting income. We also received several generous one-off gifts throughout the year.

Spending:

Spending in 2023 was higher in a number of areas than we originally anticipated. Additionally, the hall flat required major works - replacing windows, and front door and upgrading electrics and radiators. To cover the cost of these major works we used £10,750 from the money given to our "125 - Investing in our future" fund last year and we will repay this from rental income over the next 3 years. The Youth Minister role was not filled after Mariam left which gave a significant cost saving.

Overall:

For 2023 we ran a deficit of approximately £19,000. Although on paper the deficit was significantly lower than anticipated, if adjusted to account for the Youth Minister role not being filled it is where we forecast it would be. To cover the shortfall, we used the remainder of the legacy (£10,420), reduced our general fund from £10,000 to £5,000, and reduced our reserves from £10,000 to £6,100.

We thank God that His provision has enabled us to cover the deficit for another year.

What does this mean for 2024?

So that we can continue to worship God, serve our community and bring others to know Jesus, we need to continue to build up our regular income to allow us to cover our day to day costs and to meet new challenges and unexpected expenses as they arise.

We have been fortunate over the last 4 or 5 years that we have had sufficient reserves to cover significant shortfalls in income. However we have now all but exhausted our reserves, and we need to make significant changes to ensure that over the next 2 or 3 years we can move back to balanced budget.

For 2024 this means that we have taken the difficult decision to not recruit a new Youth Minister, and to significantly reduce the scope of the role of the Operations manager. In the short term both these areas will be covered by other members of staff, but longer term we will either need to cover them with volunteers or see a significant increase in regular giving to allow us to resource these areas through paid roles.

Even with the reduction in staff for 2024 we are still projecting a deficit of £9,600.

Thank you to everyone who gave to St Gabriel's during the year!

As we have exhausted our reserves, to bridge this gap, and keep our buildings and facilities in good order for people to come into and to enjoy, we will need to meet any shortfall from our “125 – Investing in our future” fund.

All this means if we wish to continue doing all we are currently doing at St Gabriel’s beyond the end of the year, rebuild our reserves, and to use our “125 – Investing in our future” fund to invest in our future rather than meeting day-to-day running costs, giving (regular and one-off) will need to increase to close the gap between income and outgoings. Even with the reductions in budget expenditure we have managed for 2024, our current position is not sustainable in the longer term.

Income

	2023	2022
Standing Orders	£81,251	£87,580
Offering basket, text/Just Giving and Thursday Worship	£12,469	£17,410
One-off gifts	£23,309	£9,950
For our Christians Against Poverty Centre	£18,149	£62,150
Tax reclaimed	£27,802	£28,500
Event income	£6,591	£5,100
Flat rent (including water rates)	£16,844	£16,025
Hall lettings (less deposits returned)	£19,544	£14,010
Service fees (for weddings, funerals in church)	£3,937	£2,505
Insurance claims	-	£3,410
VAT reclaimed	£500	£1,660
Interest	£1,234	£250
Tower Telecoms	£14,475	£14,580
St Michael’s Hall – Ground rent	£250	-
ECO Funding	-	£1,045
Church Use	£370	£550
Other (Special Mission Giving, Yuliya’s Refuge, Conference Deposits, ministry gift, Grants)	£4,736	£45,270
125 Investing In Our Future Donations	-	£30,000
Energy Cost Support Grant	-	£2,640
Total Income	£231,461	£342,635



How can we pray?

We can give thanks that our financial needs have again been met in 2023 and for the generosity of all who give. We can pray that for 2024 giving will meet our costs and for wisdom when faced with difficult financial choices.

Please pray, asking and trusting God to meet our needs. We want St Gabriel’s to be all that God wants us to be, for his church and his name to be known in this area, so that more people will come to know him.

Spending – Ministries

	2023	2022
Branding	-	£4,495
Clergy and Area & Diocesan support (called the common fund)	£87,775	£85,200
Clergy expenses (includes house and office costs, training and conferences, travel and hospitality)	£1,297	£1,190
Worship resources	£2,611	£3,220
Youth Minister and expenses	£12,380	£26,930
Youth resources	£601	£1,440
Families and Community Minister And Expenses	£13,643	£12,735
Families and Community Ministry	£1,707	£1,585
Intern Allowance (funded by grant from Diocese)	£1,360	
Events	£2,721	£995
Hope Café (set up costs of £1050 paid from out “125 Investing in our Future” fund)	£2,129	
Hospitality	£1,557	£1,205
Alpha, Welcome	£352	£115
Equipment	£32	£745
Training, consultancy and conferences	£1,348	£3,470
Leaving and other Gifts	£1,313	£1,120
Staff and Clergy Phone, Internet and Sundries	£2,919	£1,340
Staff Team – Entertaining and Gifts	£82	£100
Advertising Events	£183	£50
Total Ministries Costs	£134,007	£145,935

Spending - Church and Grounds

	2023	2022
Operations Manager and expenses	£18,668	£18,265
Light and Heat and water rates (includes £6906 for Tower Telecoms usage not invoiced until 2024)	£28,680	£13,665
Insurance	£8,882	£8,605
Equipment	£1,977	£295
Accounting costs	£1,259	£805
Housekeeping (cleaning and materials)	£3,463	£3,615
Stationary and Postage	£1,421	£1,250
Telephone and broadband	£520	£905
Licenses, Website and ChurchSuite	£2,982	£2,545
Service Fees Payable to the Diocese/Others	£1,963	£845
Insurance claim repairs and items	-	£4,390
ECO Projects (Paid from grant given in 2022)	£420	£800
Maintenance and Works:		
Electrical works (2023 Emergency lighting, security lights)	£546	£3,605
Heating and plumbing (2023: includes repairs for leaking boiler and leaking heating pipework)	£1,503	£920
Gutter cleaning (2022: payment for 2021 gutter cleaning, 2023 payment for both 2022 and 2023 gutter cleaning)	£849	£330
Fire safety, alarm (2023: includes fire stopping works and fire alarm works)	£2,026	£665
Clock (Annual service)	£338	£320
Projector cleaning and service	-	£440
Oven repairs	£175	-
Other maintenance and works	£480	£620
Refuse (From 2023 refuse collections have to be paid for)	£184	-
(Total Maintenance and Works)	-£6,101	-£6,900
Total Church and Grounds Costs	£76,336	£62,885

Spending - Church Hall

	2023	2022
Light and Heat and water rates	£2,239	£1,495
Insurance	£1,515	£1,425
Cleaning, including carpets	£778	£665
Equipment and Wi-Fi	£521	£510
Flat costs (Including £10,750 for major works)	£11,454	£860
Opening and closing for hires	£425	£775
Maintenance and Works:		
Heating, plumbing and electrical repairs (2023: Including installation of emergency lighting)	£2,983	£360
Fire safety, alarm	£471	£220
Other maintenance and repairs	£102	£205
(Total Maintenance and Works)	£3,556	-£785
Total Church Hall Costs	£20,487	£6,515



Mission Giving

Each year we give away at least 10% of the previous year's giving income

	2023	2022
International Mission:		
Stone family	£2,640	£2,640
Open Doors	£540	£540
Tearfund	£13	£460
Tumaini Health Centre, Kenya	£1,200	£1,000
Other (Turkey Earthquake Aid, Yulias Refuge)	£1,681	£41,600
National Mission:		
Church Pastoral Aid Society	£900	£900
New Wine	£430	£430
Evangelical Alliance	£150	£150
Other	-	£160
London and Willesden Area Mission:		
Other Area Churches (through extra Common Fund)	£5,366	£5,110
Church Schools (scheme for collection closed by Diocese)	-	£905
Other	£110	-
Local Mission:		
Christians Against Poverty Centre[*]	£33,598	£27,410
Other Mission Giving:		
Bishop's and Vicar's Discretionary Funds	£1,000	£100
Total Mission Giving	£47,628	£81,405
([*]includes given for CAP centre 2023: £18,159, 2022: £26,900)		

Final Totals

	2023	2022
Total Income	£231,461	£342,637[*]
Total Spend	£278,458[*]	£297,036
[*] 2023 expenditure includes money given in 2022 for CAP		
[**] 2022 figure includes £55,341 given for expenditure in future years/future projects		

Treasurers Closing Remarks

2023 was another year where we had a shortfall between our income and expenditure for our day-to-day expenses. We had anticipated that our shortfall would be approximately £32,000, however because we did not employ a youth worker full time for the whole year as originally planned, the shortfall was lower at around £19,000. This shortfall was met from the legacy (which has now been exhausted), our reserves (reduced from £10,000 to £6,169) and our general fund (reduced from 10,000 to £5,000)

For 2024 we are again expecting a shortfall, but we have taken the difficult decision to not recruit a new Youth Minister, and to look at significantly reducing the scope of the role of the Operations Manager. Even with these reductions in expenditure, this still leaves us with an anticipated shortfall of £9,600. We are hoping that this shortfall can be met through increased giving. Any remaining gap will need to be filled from our "125 - Investing in our future" fund.

David Vivian - Treasurer

Final Thoughts

I hope that by reading through this report you have been inspired as I have by the exciting and lively community of faith that we are at St Gabriel's. Each person that contributes in sharing God's love through kindness, prayer, service or generosity is adding to the story of faith that is building in this wonderful place. I would also like to thank all the people that have been faithfully serving and giving in every team rota or group. Particularly those that give out week in week out that don't have a whole report dedicated to them, in areas such as Hospitality, Welcome, Bible reading, Grounds keeping, Pastoral visiting, Money Counting, Home Group leading, even Preaching and Leading. I hope I've not forgotten anyone, but if I have, please know how grateful I am for all you do and look forward us continuing to work together in facing all the challenges of the year ahead.

The Rev'd James Yeates - Vicar

