

The Parish of St Thomas and St Edmund Salisbury

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF THE PARISH 2020



St Thomas's Church

St Thomas's Square

Salisbury

SP1 1BA

www.stthomassalisbury.co.uk

The Rector writes:

The coronavirus global pandemic struck in 2020 causing disruption and suffering on a vast scale in every part of the world.

This report is necessarily parochial; it is about St Thomas's and its ministry in the parish in Salisbury city centre. Although we had challenges of our own in this terrible year, our focus was on praying for the city and the world, for the suffering, and for the key workers.

The year was already an unusual one for us, beginning with the planned closure of the church from New Year's Day until the grand re-opening on 9 February. In those 40 days the congregation was welcomed to worship alongside our friends at the Methodist and the United Reformed Churches, at the Cathedral and at St Lawrence Stratford-sub-Castle where the choir sang Evensong. Some people took the opportunity to explore other traditions.

The January closure was to allow extensive works to proceed. The Victorian pews were cleared from the nave as was the red-carpeted dais. The floor of the nave was sanded and a new heating trench was installed at the west end. The columns were cleaned and new lighting and power points were installed. Finally, a flexible stage area was introduced, together with new seating (benches by Luke Hughes and Howe chairs) and the centrepiece: the especially commissioned nave altar by Matthew Burt.



The effort of very many to bring this most complicated part of the project to fruition was extraordinary. The team leaders were and are as follows: Redevelopment Project John Foster, Fabric Nick Beard and Peter Heier, Fundraising John Bruce-Ball. They were in turn supported by many others. This was a huge effort by the whole congregation. There are photographs of the January works and an entertaining time-lapse film at www.stthomassalisbury.co.uk/whats-on/nave-refurbishment.

Using newly purchased *Ancient and Modern* hymn books, we reopened with great celebration on 9 February and the results were very warmly welcomed by the congregation and many others. At that service I said this:

My hope and prayer – and now conviction – is that every single thing we have done has been to further God's Mission in this place... we have carried out work not just for ourselves and our needs but for those

of generations to come. Our aim has been to ensure the quality and the flexibility of the changes transforms the space and allows not just the activities we anticipate, but others we cannot know.

During February, we welcomed civic representatives to St Thomas's for Charter Sunday and our Methodist and United Reformed Church friends for combined morning worship. This month of celebration culminated in a concert on 29 February in aid of the Quest 2020 Appeal and the National Orchestra for All. It featured more than 50 musicians and singers, professional and amateur, adults and children, performing a wide range of music. The church was transformed into an informal 'jazz cafe' layout to provide the perfect setting for a memorable occasion.

There were other good events as March began: the visit of Godolphin girls for a Sunday service, the Sarum College awards ceremony, the launch of the Business Awards for 2020, and the celebration of Canon David Yerburgh's 60 years distinguished ministry as a priest.

Then, abruptly, everything stopped. On 17 March, in response to the global pandemic, the first national lockdown began. This meant for St Thomas's the immediate cessation of all services in church. Baptisms and weddings ceased as did Lenten activities and discussion



groups and groups for older people and toddlers. The bells were silenced. The market day activities in St Thomas's on Tuesdays and Saturdays stopped and were not able to start again during 2020. Concerts were cancelled together with plans to mark the (roughly) 800 years of St Thomas's witness in the city centre. St Thomas's House was closed.

For the next fifteen Sundays there were no regular services in church. It reopened on 5 July and from then until 1 November, services on Sundays were held at 8am and 4pm. The main mid-morning service was not held as it was felt that too many people would attend to be able to do so safely in an age of 'social-distancing'. Services between the lockdowns were conducted under nationally-agreed restrictions that changed from time to time: 'social-distancing', no congregational singing and the compulsory wearing of masks.

The second lockdown stopped all services on the four Sundays beginning with Remembrance Sunday on 8 November. Services then resumed for a month. As the year ended, it was clear that a third lockdown would begin early in 2021.



The consequence of all this disruption has been deeply damaging for the life of St Thomas's. We are a relational church – we come together as a fellowship to welcome, to pray and to transform. We gather to worship, to break bread together, to learn, to live out our Christian calling and to enjoy each other's company. The months of lockdown have been horrible for us as a church as for so many in the wider community.

Even with so much disruption to our normal activities, there were remarkable efforts to keep things going. From the very start of the first lockdown, St Thomas's developed an online presence of audio reflections and Sunday morning services. These enabled most members of the congregation, and many others beyond the parish, to be a part of our worshipping community in the safety of their own homes. For all they did for St Thomas's in 2020, we are grateful to:

- * the experts in IT and social media – Richard Laughton, Steve Hoffman and John Coupe, together with Meryl Browning in the Parish Office. They worked tirelessly on 40 Sunday morning services, together with the reflections, and website and Facebook support – all beautifully put together, edited, sound-adjusted, subtitled, illustrated, advertised and published through YouTube or the website;

- * our organist (formally appointed to the role during the year) Ute Schwarting. She learned the technical skills to maintain our musical tradition online with members of the choir singing their parts at home, which she then put together with her musical accompaniment, while encouraging others in their instrumental skills. John Dempster's magnificent choir rose to this challenge and under his leadership was able to lead the worship in church under testing limitations;

- * the stewards led by the churchwardens, who ensured that St Thomas's was a safe place for visitors and worshippers. St Thomas's is highly valued for being open during daylight hours. This was not possible during the pandemic and its opening hours were restricted between lockdowns to just two hours in the morning. Our assessment of risk meant the introduction of stewards at all times of opening, as well

as one-way systems, sanitisers, and frequent washing down of seats and surfaces. This was a huge task and was efficiently and carefully done;

* the assistant clergy in the parish for providing a continuing ministry of depth and variety since March – Ali Alexander, Tom Clammer, Wendy Cooper, Selina Deacon, Joanna Percival and Robert Prance. They contributed generously to online worship, online reflections and to worship in challenging conditions in the church. Their work has done much to bring encouragement and hope to many over these months.



It was good to welcome the Bishop of Ramsbury and the Archdeacon of Sarum who both recorded sermons in St Thomas's for online services. Remembrance Sunday was observed in partnership with the City Council and the Royal British Legion through a deliberately modest ceremony at the war memorial. This ceremony aimed to mark the day appropriately without drawing the large crowds normally seen. There was no service in church that day.

In a year when so much was cancelled, it was a joy to host two concerts: from the baritone Sam Poppleton in October and Messiah Highlights by Celebrate Voice in December.

December is usually the busiest month at St Thomas's. Although services were allowed, we exercised great caution to avoid crowding. The Christmas Tree Festival was held online – a wise decision by the committee. John Cox and Di Emsley led a highly successful event in difficult circumstances. The seating in the nave was rearranged choir-style and at the centre a life-size crib scene was built by a team of experts assembled at short notice by Robert Lewis. Brightly lit and a focus for worship and a strong witness to those passing by, the crib had a great impact on the many who saw it. In the absence of all the normal carol services and concerts, the choir sang at nine shorter carol services. These were beautiful occasions and successfully thinned the numbers attending to safe levels.

Ali Alexander's long journey to ordained ministry saw her curacy begin at St Thomas's in the midst of a global pandemic.

Along with others of her year group, she was licensed online as a lay minister on Sunday 28 June and was then ordained deacon by the bishop on 26 September. She brings many gifts to her ministry in the parish. In spite of everything, she has been tireless in her efforts to get to know people and to get them talking about their faith.



Parish governance was disrupted somewhat and in particular the annual church meeting was deferred, with permission, from 26 April to 13 September. This meant that some officeholders, and in particular the outgoing churchwarden Fi Green, held their responsibilities for some extra months. Most PCC and other meetings were held online through a computer programme called Zoom.

As the year ended, the people of St Thomas's looked forward to a new year with trepidation but also with hope. Much of our shared life has been greatly missed, with activities and opportunities for fellowship suspended. But the people of the parish have held together, have supported each other in acts of kindness, and in many cases have practiced the grace of receiving acts of kindness. And in their lives and their faith, their resilience and their goodness, they have continued to witness strongly to the hope that is in them.

A voice cries out:

'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' -

Isaiah 40.3-5

Safeguarding Report

Despite the pandemic and church activities having been curtailed or cancelled for most of 2020, safeguarding has continued in the background.

Training

All face-to-face safeguarding courses were cancelled in March, and the Church of England stated that "*safeguarding training should continue on-line during the current coronavirus situation*". Hence any new volunteers - and those who required their 3-yearly training update - have been contacted, and most have now done their **Basic Awareness** course (previously C0) or **Foundation** course (previously C1) on-line via the Church of England safeguarding training portal. These courses were updated with new information and examples, and have been very well received: the Basic Awareness lasts one hour and the Foundation lasts two hours - and it's possible to stop for a break anytime by clicking on the coffee cup icon! One parishioner commented: "*I thought it was an extremely good course; very well thought through; excellent content and a very good woman with just the right tone of voice. I also thought it was very good that it was so bible-based.*"

There remain a few volunteers who have been unable to do an on-line safeguarding course, and they will need to attend a face-to-face course at the appropriate level as soon as restrictions ease. Those in Leadership roles within the church have been offered a **Leadership** course (previously C2) consisting of two separate sessions on Zoom - again these have been well received. As I write this report, there are now some face-to-face Leadership modules available on the diocesan website.

New Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers

There has been a change of personnel in the diocesan safeguarding office: Heather Bland has retired after almost seven years as Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. During her tenure, she oversaw a complete change in the way we approach the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults in this Diocese. She was always very helpful and supportive to the Safeguarding Officers, answering queries constructively and realistically - usually within minutes! Her place has been filled by Jem Carter and Suzy Fatcher, who can be contacted on safeguarding@salisbury.anglican.org

Constant vigilance

As always, it is vital that we all look out for each other - more so now, than at any other time.

If you have any concerns or queries, please contact one of the following:

- **Rosie Norman** or **Michael Humphreys** on 01722 322537 (Parish Office)
- or the Rector **Kelvin Inglis** on 01722 239463
- or email safeguarding@sttomassalisbury.co.uk

(your email will only be seen by a member of the Safeguarding Team).

Rosie Norman Michael Humphreys

Parish Safeguarding Officer Deputy Parish Safeguarding Officer

Adult Education Team:

2020 started well, with two courses running in January. Pat Inglis led a series of four afternoon meetings on the theme of 'Faith Alive: Coming to our Senses', which considered how our senses may connect us to God and faith. A further three evenings on 'Exploring the Eucharist' included a talk by the Rector, a session on 'Exploring the Eucharist through Art' led by Wendy Pugh, and a silent Eucharist in the church around our then very new altar. Just one of our monthly Saturday Discussion Cafes was able to be held before lockdown, when Helen Harvey Humphreys led a discussion on the question 'How does living in our modern digital world impact our faith?'

We began Lent 2020 with a 'Preparing for Lent' session led by the Rector, and then had a talk from Tom Clammer entitled 'I believe in the Devil...?' Wendy Pugh delivered the first of what was intended to be a series of three talks on 'Exploring John's Gospel through Art', and Wendy Cooper began a weekly Lent group discussing the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent book for 2020, 'Saying Yes to Life' by Ruth Valerio. We also planned our usual series of six Tuesday Lent lunch talks, again inviting members of the congregation to talk about their life and work, but only two of these were able to take place; John Cox talking about his life in education, and Clare Gough on being a charity trustee. Two of the remaining talks were delivered online; John Coupe talking about his work with Samaritans, and Selina Deacon on God's guidance in her life.

The remainder of our Lent programme came to an abrupt halt, but we look forward to being able to pick up some of these threads again when we are able. Since Covid restrictions came in we have adapted our offerings, including by supporting Ali Alexander the curate in running an Alpha course using Zoom. Advent provided a further opportunity for the church family to engage in reflection either on their own at home or as a group using Zoom or WhatsApp as they explored John Sentamu's book 'Wake up to Advent'.

Fiona Hulbert

The Bellingers:

2020 started normally with our ringing in the New Year. The church was closed for most of January and into February for reordering works but, as requested, we continued to ring at Sunday service times and for practices to continue to register the church's presence and life in the city. We rang a quarter peal to celebrate the reopening of the church. However, it was evident that both our numbers and capabilities were continuing to decline despite a lot of time invested in teaching.

We rang for both the usual Sunday services on 8th March and were then silenced under Covid restrictions.

"Proper" bellringing requires a sequence of adjacent bells (6 or 8 of them in our tower) to be rung in changing patterns of called changes or what we call methods. The easing of the Covid restrictions required a 2m social distance between ringers

(unless of one family), wearing of masks and a maximum of 15 minutes ringing. As our bellropes (as in most towers) are less than 2m apart, this prevented proper ringing but, starting on 9th August, we rang 3 or 4 bells for services on 10 occasions for Evensong only as the usual 10.15 service was streamed. One bell was tolled for Remembrance Sunday. A special government dispensation allowed 6 bells to be rung on Christmas Day but unfortunately one of the ringers was unable to get to the tower.

Since then, the further lockdown has prevented all ringing.

During the period of restricted ringing, not surprisingly several of our ringers did not feel like incurring an additional risk of infection and did not like the idea of ringing in a mask so they have not rung since March 2020. At the time of writing there might soon be a resumption of restricted ringing but “proper” ringing cannot resume until social distancing is no longer required and it appears this might be no earlier than 21st June by which time we shall all be well out of physical and mental practice and some band members may not return. We are still waiting for guidelines from the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, but there is a strong possibility that even if we can resume proper ringing for services, if we are still restricted to 15 minutes ringing we will still not be able to hold weekly practices.

Nigel Orchard - Tower Captain

Margaret Romano - Deputy Tower Captain

Contemplative Community:

The group is a support and a challenge nearly every time we meet, and in the trackless wastes of lockdown it has been a great help to have Wednesdays anchored to the spot.

We have continued to meet weekly, initially by WhatsApp then by Zoom, although we miss seeing each other in person the meetings have been very beneficial with in depth sharing, we have got to know one another at a deeper level. For silent prayer we close our video and microphone and come back after our 20 mins. It has been a great support to journey through the ups and downs of lockdown together. We have been able to support each other further by meeting outside when allowed and going for walks in twos. We have been able to support 3 members through surgery and post op recovery. The value of the community has been immense.

Christian Aid

As Christian Aid Week 2020 approached it was obvious that the house-to-house collection and coffee mornings would be called off due to COVID 19. However, Kelvin put together a great Christian Aid Week online service on the theme of ‘Love never fails’, and this encouraged many people to contribute generously. We also managed to run a Zoom quiz which raised £600 in May. Over the whole of Salisbury our giving total was a little down on previous years, but not a lot. We have also managed to hold a Zoom quiz in February 2021, raising £1000; it was very popular and I had to turn away a few teams.

The move to electronic giving -- such as by bank transfer, the 'e-envelope', 'tap simple', JustGiving – had started before COVID, necessitated by the fact that people often don't carry cash on them when they are approached for a donation. COVID has made this trend even more urgent, however, as door-to-door exchanges were shut down. I hope that most St Thomas's donors will be comfortable with one of these new methods in 2021. For those who prefer a physical envelope, however, we are also expecting to deliver envelopes, but with the requirement that donors take their offerings to a central drop-off point. Like many charities, Christian Aid is affected by public donations diminished by COVID, by swingeing cuts to government funding following the absorption of DFID within in the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office, and by the need to support public health programmes dealing with COVID in the global South. Please pray for their staff and for their partners around the world. This November our government will be hosting the United Nations talks on climate change, COP26, in Glasgow, postponed from last year. A large part of Christian Aid's work is to pressurize the government to set an example and make good its commitment to building a green economy. Will you write to John Glen MP and ask him to work to combat climate change?

Clare Tawney

Church Charities:

Two charitable funds are distributed under the auspices of the parish: (a) the St. Thomas & St. Edmunds Charity and (b) the parish's share of the Fricker Charity. The Trustees of the St. Thomas & St. Edmunds Charity are: The Rector, Sally Vaughan (Secretary), Nigel Orchard (Treasurer), Bobbie Chettleburgh and Martin Inglis. The Rector of St. Thomas's is the designated recipient and distributor of the parish's share of the Fricker Charity funds; he uses the St. Thomas's Charity trustees to advise him on distribution of the Fricker funds.

The St. Thomas & St. Edmund income comes from a Charities' Commission ethical fund (COIF) into which were consolidated the investments from 11 old charities. The St. Thomas & St. Edmunds Charity funds are restricted to the parish and to Bemerton Heath.

The income from the Fricker Charity (arising from the rental of a shop in Salisbury and distributed according to the terms of a will made in 1696) is passed equally to the rectors of St. Thomas's and St. Martin's and the trustees of The Trinity Hospital, Salisbury. The Fricker distribution area covers the entire city, Laverstock and Harnham.

Grants may be made to needy individuals or organisations serving the needy in the area of the two charities. The contact email is: StTCharities@btinternet.com or phone the parish office in the first instance.

In 2020, the St. Thomas & St. Edmunds Charity had an investment income of £3,964 and granted a total of £3,688. Covid restrictions and the need for maintenance of the shop meant that there was no Fricker Charity income received

in the year. £2,739 was disbursed from accrued income. No expenses are incurred in the administration of these funds by the parish. Copies of the accounts are available on request. Covid restrictions also meant that only one meeting of the trustees was possible; grant considerations were carried out as usual by email.

Nigel Orchard - Treasurer

Cleaning Teams:

With the closure of the church from March 2020 for so many months, the Cleaning Teams were unable to carry out their usual work. It was possible to resume the rota in October with the revised risk assessment and Covid-19 compliant requirements, until the second lockdown began. I would like to thank all the members of the teams who have been so willing to work when it has been possible. Many thanks are also due to Robert Lewis who has been able to access the church, especially over the Christmas period.

Rosemary Cox

Coffee Mornings - Tuesday:

We started the year serving coffee and cakes in St Thomas's House as the church was closed for refurbishment. At the beginning of February, we moved back into the church. Everyone was delighted to see how bright and light the church was. We had lots of favourable comments from our customers.

Sadly, on 16th March the Rector rang me to say that the church was to be closed because of the Covid pandemic.

Since then, all of us who help keep in touch by phone and look forward to the day when we are able to open the coffee shop again.

Jill Bushnell

Coffee Mornings - Saturday:

Looking forward, when these events are resumed Brenda Whitehead has, very kindly, offered to be in charge of the rota. Her phone number is: 01722 328902. Jennie Hoare.

St Thomas's Online Christmas Tree Festival:

The 16th Christmas Tree Festival was unlike any of its predecessors because of Covid restrictions. It was therefore online to continue as much as possible the spirit and tradition of this major event in Salisbury.

The three-page website opened from December 1st to 15th with a seven-minute video with a slide for each of the entries showing their main photo, title and theme, as well as an alphabetically-ordered 'Find a Tree' gallery of thumbnail photos so visitors could view any particular entry with extra photos.

There were 52 entries of trees and nativity scenes, once again showing people's care and creativity. They also seized the chances to photograph entries from different angles and in interesting locations.

The website also featured seasonal music in audio and video recordings from seventeen local musical groups and soloists. While we hugely missed the live event people visiting the church and engaging in fellowship and refreshments, we were pleased there were over 2,500 visits, not only by people in Salisbury but from further afield and overseas. There was much appreciation expressed by visitors to the site.

Thanks to the generosity of visitors accessing the donate page, this year's charities were each received £856, with a similar sum going to St Thomas's. Representatives of the Jo Benson Day Centre for Disabled Adults and the Salisbury Child Contact Centre expressed their gratitude on receiving cheques at the Carols at the Crib service on 22nd December.

The Online Festival was very much a team effort, and St Thomas's is blessed to have such hardworking experts. We would like to give everyone a big 'thank you'.

John Cox and Diane Emsley, Festival Organisers

Fabric Committee:

The previous year to this one saw a hectic amount of work for the Fabric Committee with the culmination of the re-ordering and restoration projects. This year has been a complete contrast with no significant projects undertaken, due to the effects of the lockdowns not only on the church and the Committee but also on contracting firms and bodies that we need to consult with, as well as tight funding. We received the results of the Quinquennial Survey in December which have given us a good roadmap of what is needed over the next five years to maintain the church, to which has been added a couple of priorities from the PCC. From this a workplan has been developed which concentrates on safety matters and the highest priority directions. To this must be added the urgent unknown unknowns that crop up, which have included the failure of one of the church boilers and the St Thomas's House boiler, urgent work from the statutory electrical inspection and severe problems with the fire alarm system. Apart from this firefighting, the projects being developed in the planning stages are: rectifying the west end glass lobby structure and doors, repairing masonry at the top of the bell tower, investigating the drains at the east end of the church to see if there is scope for developing a scheme to provide much needed additional WCs in the north chapel and assessing the north churchyard area. The vergier has undertaken a considerable amount of tidying up of installations and objects both in the church and the churchyards and on his own initiative developed a lighting scheme to illuminate the Eyre monuments and the east end of the Lady Chapel that has become a prototype that would be applicable to illumination of the remainder of the Lady Chapel at little or no cost.

Nick Beard – Chair

Lay Pastoral Assistants

To all our LPAs, on behalf of all at St Thomas's and all that have been supported through them this last year, thank you. Whether through regular phone calls, outreach through the Listening Place and the Samaritans, gathering people together across distance through weekly prayer, being on the hospital lay chaplaincy team (and although not able to undertake normal visiting, prayers have continued), ensuring safeguarding is maintained, and just keeping going despite your own personal pressures and work commitments, we just want you to know how much we appreciate you and your ministries. It is hard to quantify this year just how much has been done. And perhaps that is right. The value of being part of making life at least a little better than it might otherwise have been for many, is hard to quantify too. And I know that for all that we do know, there will be many more seemingly small and 'not worth mentioning' acts of kindness and concern that have added to the well-being of many. Thank you for being part of St Thomas's, thank you for being part of the LPA team. Thank you for all you are continuing to do – even while the time to renew licences has been understandably delayed, along with your day of being celebrated within the Diocese. At the end of this very challenging year, and as we begin to look to the way ahead, thank you.

Revd Wendy Cooper

The Olive Branch:

The Olive Branch were able to meet three times before we went into lockdown.

In January we met in the afternoon for tea and chat; in February we had the pleasure of Clive Topping's company talking to us about his life and time spent doing his amazing artwork; in March Netia Coupe gave a very interesting talk about her bee keeping and all it entails. We also enjoyed the fruits of her labours! Sadly, the programme then came to an end.

However, it has been decided to stop Olive Branch as we know it and instead still meet on the second Thursday of the month, but in the afternoon from 2 pm to 4 pm. for Tea and Chat. It will be open to any ladies in the congregation who would like to drop into St Thomas's House during that time. The plan was to start on the 8th April but this, of course, depends on the situation at the time.

We have enjoyed many speakers over the years and at the same time have supported a good number of charities. It is hoped that by meeting in the afternoon, more ladies will be able to come, rather than an evening, and look forward to getting together again just as soon as we can!

Jan Winterman

Organ Refurbishment Project:

When I reported last year, the revised completion date for this much delayed project was August 2020. Despite almost unlimited access to the church for the contractors during the Covid restrictions, that date was not achieved and then, on October 8th, Stephen Cooke was tragically killed in a motorcycle accident whilst returning from a meeting with us in church.

His son, Ed, continued the work but a contract voicer had to be employed. Ed declared the work complete in late January. Since then, Covid restrictions have prevented the contract Technical Adviser from attending to carry out detailed acceptance tests but less detailed testing has shown the work to have been very successful and the new Trombone stop to be a very useful addition.

As the long-planned concert to celebrate the completion of the organ is not currently possible, it was brought back into regular use at a special streamed service on 28th February.

Nigel Orchard - Project Manager

Praying Together:

There is no doubt that this report will be unlike any Report that I have ever written. 2020 will be a year that will remain in our hearts and minds for a long time.

The pandemic presented many challenges for everyone.

The pandemic however must not be the only aspect to colour our thoughts this year. We have many blessings to be thankful for.

Our Praying Together ministry team started the year as any other normal year, meeting in St. Michael's Room in St. Thomas's Church from 10-10.30am with a small group of dedicated members. However, in March 2020 unable to meet in church following the lock-down, and further ongoing lockdowns, necessitating the closure of our church, I decided to continue with the rhythm of prayer ministry connecting together to pray every Tuesday in our own homes. I prepare the prayers and email them out to 8 other dedicated members. Although not connecting personally, we are connecting in faith in God's presence, and this is a great strength.

We keep in touch with one another either by telephone or email, just to have a chat, which is an added blessing.

With the ongoing lockdowns I felt there was no better time for the power of prayer and connection in our community of Thomas's. We are committed to praying for each other, the work of the church and those in our community. All prayer requests are confidential and if you would like to ask for prayer for yourself or others, email requests can be forwarded to me via the Parish Office, before Tuesday mornings

If you would like to join us and receive the emailed prayers, please contact me via the Parish email.

Can I take this opportunity of thanking everyone for their support and encouragement in keeping us all connected and uplifted.

I do so hope and pray that we can all meet together in church in the not too far distant future to pray and worship together.

“Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.” – Romans 12:12

Stay strong, stay safe, and stay faithful.

Pat Inglis (on behalf of Praying Together)

Quest 2020 Appeal Committee

We have been fortunate to have had income from a spectacular concert which took place just before the first lockdown, a magnificent contribution from our 200 Club, a number of grants, and a steady flow from Standing Orders. We have also had a generous response to our Benches and Chairs Appeal. Here is the financial position at the end of 2020, which covers the two years that we have been raising funds for Quest 2020.

SOURCES OF INCOME	£
Church funds	200,000
Congregation	154,293
Donations	20,184
Grants/Trusts	52,275
Events	110,480
EXPENDITURE	
Doom painting restoration <i>(includes cleaning stonework and ceilings)</i>	85,200
Re-ordering <i>(Benches and chairs, altar, dais, book trolleys)</i>	310,000
Heating and lighting, floor cleaning	17,010
Other expenses <i>(includes architect, consultancy, project management)</i>	80,045
Credit balance at bank	44,977

John Bruce-Ball (Chairman, Quest 2020)

Redevelopment Project Team:

I will probably be one of just a few people saying that 2020 was a good year! Two events made it good - one was the significant work done in the nave of the church at the beginning of the year, and the other the completion of the faculty application for the final stage of the redevelopment.

The church was closed at the very beginning of January and did not reopen until 9th February for our first service back. During those weeks of closure, the main nave underwent a significant change. All the pews were removed to reveal a huge space ready for transformation which marked the beginning of weeks of frantic work to meet the deadline we had set ourselves. Cleaning the floor was a major undertaking which took place in parallel with woodblocks being removed and channels dug to lay electric cables for power points. Most of the wood flooring was in good condition but an area around the book of remembrance needed to be replaced. A great deal of work was done on electrical cabling to bring things up to date, some new radiators were put in and a heating channel dug below ground at the west end.

In the days before we reopened the furniture was brought in. This comprised the new benches from Luke Hughes, more chairs, an enlarged dais area for the new altar from CPS Staging and the altar itself by Matthew Burt. Sadly, we were only able to worship for a few weeks before 'lockdown' but in the times when we could be partly open during the year the flexibility of the seating made everything possible.

Since then, we have turned our attention to drawing up the plans for the last part of the redevelopment and managed to submit the faculty application before the deadline at the end of the year. As I write this, we are awaiting the outcome of the DAC meeting at which our plans were to be discussed. We have submitted plans for a new font, designed by Matthew Burt, in the centre aisle to complement the altar. This means the removal of the existing font in the south west corner and the conversion of that area into cupboards to house all the chairs and other items.

The work in January and February was a collaborative effort with the Fabric Committee and I would like to record my thanks to Peter Heier and Nick Beard for their cooperation in that work. The congregation owes a huge debt to Nigel Orchard for his meticulous and dedicated work on the faculty applications. Finally, I want to record my thanks to the other project team members for their dedicated work (Martin Marriott, Di Durnford, Ute Schwarting, Rev Kelvin Inglis, Nigel Orchard, Antony Feltham-King and John Bruce Ball). Most of us are now into our 8th year of planning together so hope to bring it all together by the end of 2021.

John Foster