

St Mary's News

October 2023



Includes

A Clear Vision for St Mary's
Climate Day at St Mary's
Food, Footprints and Faith

... and much more!

A Clear Vision for St Mary's



Many of you will recall that wonderful evening in June 2019 when past and present members of St. Mary's came together for a service of rededication following the refurbishment of our church. It was a real time of joy and celebration and a sense of accomplishment. It had been quite a journey. Getting there hadn't always been easy, we had certainly known a few setbacks along the way, but we kept going knowing what was needed, knowing where we were heading. I think we were greatly helped by our Mission Action Plan (MAP), which gave us the vision we needed to proceed with the refurbishment of the church, and which helped us discern how we might make good use of the new facilities. The two other priorities of our MAP were to develop a leadership in the church which was more representative of our congregation and the development of our home groups.

We wrote that MAP in 2014 and I think it served us well, but it certainly didn't include everything we achieved in that period. We continued to offer good preaching and worship, pastoral care, children's and youth work and various other activities. These were not included in the MAP but were considered core activities that would always be at the centre of our church life. The function of the MAP was to give us a navigational tool to shape the future of our church and its effectiveness by helping us prioritise the three key areas mentioned above and ensuring we focussed the necessary time and attention to see each successfully implemented.

Without doubt the refurbishment was an unqualified success and even today it brings great joy and satisfaction. The development of leaders has also been a blessing not only to us but to the wider church. We have produced a number of vocations

including seven people who have gone or are going forward for ordination. Whilst the home groups haven't been quite as successful, certainly more people do participate and benefit from being part of a small group where they can study the bible, pray and generally enjoying mutual support and fellowship. All of this has shaped the church we are today. It is now time to look forward to continuing our journey with the aid of a new MAP.

When a ship leaves port it will follow bearings with the intention this will avoid rocks and other obstructions and eventually guide the ship to a safe harbour. The direction of travel is essential and any variation of even the slightest angle can take the ship many miles off course. Out to sea, with no land references to go by, the compass bearing is essential in order to navigate safely. It is also important that the ship's journey is accurately logged and plotted on a chart. Of course, there are other navigational aids, such as lighthouses, buoys, radar, as well as the sextant and its modern-day equivalent, GPS. The main instrument though, remains the compass to ensure the ship stays on course.

Alongside physical journeys we also make spiritual journeys. Indeed, each one of us is on our own unique journey. Every journey is different and will depend on different circumstances and the choices and opportunities life throws our way. It could be compared to a single thread weaving its way through this world. When these threads are woven together, they can make a beautiful pattern. In a sense that is one way to look at the Church. Different people, different lives, all woven together with a common desire to follow Jesus.



The Church itself is on a journey in an ever-changing world. Each individual church has its own unique journey to make influenced by its context - in other words, where the church is

placed and the wider community it is called to serve. Its journey is dependent on the people who belong to the church and the skills and experiences they bring.

The spiritual journey of a church could be compared with a sailing ship – at times, with a fair wind in its sails, it will make good progress, but at other times it could find itself blown off course or even becalmed. But we need to remember that just because the ship is running at speed, it does not necessarily mean it is headed in the right direction. Equally, spending time in becalmed seas could give the opportunity to take stock, to rest, to refill for a new journey ahead – or may even be God’s intervention to bring us where He wants us to be. Remember the story of St. Paul shipwrecked off the coast of Malta – it might not have been the place Paul wanted to be and he was impatient to complete his journey, but God used him so powerfully to teach the Gospel that to this day Malta remains a deeply Christian country.



So how do we discern the right direction of travel? Firstly, we hope that we do so in the company of Jesus, who is our companion and guide. Walking with Jesus involves a life of prayer, but it is also about looking and listening and reflecting on what is going on all around us.

And it is also about reviewing what has gone on in the past and asking what others can teach us about the community we are called to serve. It is only through praying, listening and observing together that we can come to a clear vision and sense of purpose.

On 7th October, the PCC will meet to use the MAP process to discern the compass bearing for St. Mary’s - to discern what new priorities we need to set to fulfil the vision God has for St. Mary’s and so that it can continue to be a vibrant church in the heart of Watford. These priorities need to be consistent with what Scripture teaches us, with the Diocese’s Living God’s Love (Going Deeper with God, Transforming Communities and Making New Disciples)

and with our understanding of mission (the Five Marks of Mission being: Tell, Teach, Tend, Treasure and Transform - Tell others of the Good News of Jesus, Teach the faith, Tend to the needs of others, Treasure creation, and Transform our communities).

Please do pray for the PCC as it meets for a discernment day on 7th October and if you have strong views or want to be part of the process then please let me know - it would be lovely to have your input. As we come together, let us pray that God will give us a clear vision of what he wants for St. Mary's.

The Revd Tony Rindl



St Mary's Swap Shop

Sharing and swapping fruit and veg has been a great success throughout the summer so we would like to continue reusing any unwanted goods. Swap an item or take an item that you could make use of. Anything left at the end of each month will be donated to local charity shops. Please NO electrical items.



Parochial Church Council

The following report summarises some of the matters considered at the Council's meeting of 25th September.

Finance: Members of the congregation have volunteered to assist with our finances and the Vicar will be consulting with them about their precise roles. The Council expressed its thanks to them.

Safeguarding: Although some need to complete their training and provide references, we are otherwise fully compliant with Diocesan safeguarding standards thanks to the work of Lesley Gray and Jenny Whittick.

Buildings: Following the Council's decision in July to look into the feasibility of a digital display board on the north wall of the church, we are in consultation with the Diocesan Advisory Council. The tenants at the Brightwell Road property have given notice that they are leaving and the Council will need to make a decision about its future.

Creationtide Services: The two Creationtide services on 24th September had been insightful and informative as well as inspirational, and the lunch with Dean Russell MP had proved fruitful. Aga Dychton, the Deputy Mayor, who had presented the Wardens and Vicar with the Silver ECO Church award in the morning service, was delighted that we were leading the Watford churches in action on climate change. She said she had thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the service and celebrating our awards.

The Council noted the problems with the sound system during the morning service and will arrange to contact the company that installed it to ensure these are resolved.

The Council expressed its gratitude to Andy Roby and all involved in the Climate Change Action Group for organising the day and was keen to pursue a Gold ECO award.

Mission Action Plan (MAP): The Council will meet on Saturday 7th October to discuss and review the MAP.

Winter shelter: New Hope has advised that they have made alternative arrangements and do not now require the Church Centre as a shelter for rough sleepers this winter. However, St Mary's will remain on standby given the significant increase in rough sleeping in Watford.

Once approved, full minutes are normally available on the St Mary's website: <https://www.stmaryswatford.org/pcc>

If you wish to send correspondence to the PCC please send it to the PCC Secretary, Marcus Jones (email: ttekc@aol.com).

**Marcus Jones,
PCC Secretary**



Climate Day at St Mary's – Partnership in Action in the fight against climate change



When St Mary's Climate Group asked Tony if we could organise a Climate Day during Creationtide in September none of us could have hoped for more. But our God does amazing things when we trust him and he is in charge, and so it was we prayed and set to, as a group, and came up with a plan.

This plan started to take shape through Norman Fry, who had started following renowned Christian Scientist Dr Martin Hodson on Twitter (now X) because of the bible study course Martin and his wife Rev Margot Hodson had produced. (A great course if you want a solid grounding in the science and theology of climate change – available on-line or in hard copies from me, the Hodson's new distributor in Watford - ☺).

So, Norman asked for help and Martin and Margot said YES immediately so a small group of us (Marcus, Norman, Roger, Leah and me) had a series of amazing Zoom calls with them six months ago and the day took shape. And we prayed.



We wanted three things; firstly, that the whole church to get behind this work and celebrate the Bronze and Silver Ecochurch awards, secondly to improve our relationship with our local politicians and thirdly to generate some interest in the broader Christian community.

And so, we set up this Climate Day Triple Header consisting of:

- A) A morning service led by Marcus featuring a whole church climate emergency declaration powerfully called out by Adam Greenstreet (aged 22), some amazing bunting and posters created by Sunday School, and Bronze and Silver Ecochurch awards presented by Deputy Mayor Aga Dychton and Rachel Johnstone, our Diocesan Environment Officer.
- B) A lunch meeting at Pizza Express with our MP Dean Russell to discuss what we can do together to tackle the climate emergency and
- C) An evening Encounter service with 65 Christians from twelve churches in Watford featuring a panel of our guest speakers: Martin, Margot and Rachel, plus MP Dean Russell, local councillor Jennifer Pattinson and Friends of the Earth coordinator Anna Addinson.



Job done, by God's grace.

Highlights for me were:

- a) Rev Margot's sermon in the morning; how Old Testament prophets like Amos and Isaiah spoke then of the same underlying causes of today's climate crisis – greed, injustice, corruption, falsehood, lack of concern for others.
- b) Deputy Mayor Aga's brilliant off-the-cuff speech that morning on the importance of doing all this work in partnership with others, and for the poor, and for the next generation as she responded to the wonderful posters and bunting produced by our children.



- c) Dean Russell's genuine empathy for those in need, coupled with his kind offer to convene our next meeting in Westminster.
- d) Martin's short but compelling presentation in the Encounter Service on how the most climate impacted parts of the planet will be the poorest, in Africa and Asia, with dire consequences for their livelihoods and for migration.
- e) Rachel's message that the whole Church of England is taking climate change very seriously, making progress and there is real support and encouragement.
- f) A brilliant panel, if clumsily chaired by yours truly, of inspiring, articulate and knowledgeable speakers, each offering St Mary's and the eleven other Churches present not just challenge and hope, but also resources and ideas and the hand of partnership.
- g) The open invitation to work with other partners on augmenting nature in the "Green Heart of Watford" – the open space around our church.
- h) A group of thirty Christians in Watford willing to join an email group, in the first instance, and meet again in January 2024 to plan and then act together.



What's next for the Climate Group? Well, we are **GOING FOR GOLD** of course – the next level in the Ecochurch award scheme! This is going to be tough but with the church behind us, and God in front of us, we will do it.



If you are interested in any or all of this why not join the climate group and get involved? If working with other Christians in Watford interests you why not sign up to the brand new Watford Green Christian network? In either case do contact me for a chat and more details on andyroby2001@yahoo.com or 07414 832983.

*Andy Roby
Climate Group Coordinator*



Food, Footprints and Faith



As we end the season of Creationtide we can look back at the special services at St. Mary's and reflect on the significance of our church achieving the silver award level of the A Rocha Eco-Church initiative. **It's also a time to look forward** – the Church of England has committed to be a net zero carbon

organisation by 2030 and each of us has the opportunity to act positively to reduce our own “carbon footprint”. This may include our choices of transport, domestic energy use and food.

The following food suggestions come from the Church of England's Environment and Climate Change online resource:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/church-england-environment-programme>

The food you eat

At harvest time, Christians often remember with thanks those who labour to produce the food on which we depend. But we often don't go on to think about the way in which the food we eat impacts on the lives of humans, animals, and the earth.

What impact does the food I eat have?

Food production, packaging, and transportation consumes energy and results in carbon emissions which threaten to raise the average global surface temperature. It has been suggested that our food is responsible for 20% of the UK's entire carbon footprint.

You can reduce your carbon footprint by:

- Eating seasonally.
- Eating locally.

- Limiting the amount of meat in your diet.
- Calculate the impact of the food you eat.

Could you think about growing some of your own food, whether as an individual or part as a community project? Find out how. And if you're buying food which has been exported, look for sustainable forms of export agriculture which contribute to the economic and social development of producers. Fairtrade, for example, exports products around the world. But they require their producers to make environmental protection part of farm management.



Animal welfare

Farming is becoming more intensive. Choosing animal products from higher welfare systems is an important recognition of their status as fellow creatures of God. Find out more about the different labels used to indicate standards of animal welfare here (<https://www.ciwf.org.uk/your-food/know-your-labels/>)

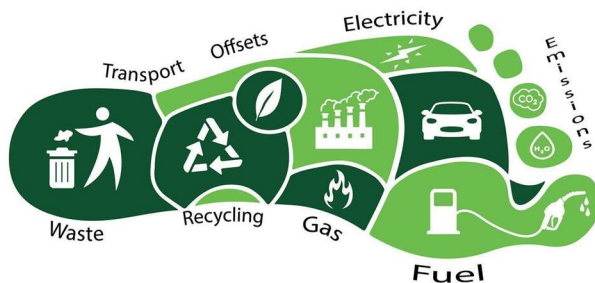
Food waste

Did you know that the UK throws away 7.2 million tonnes of food each year, most of which could have been eaten? Food that goes to landfill rots, producing methane (a greenhouse gas). There are many ways to reduce what is left and make sure spare food is put to good use: Get some tips from **Love Food Hate Waste** (www.lovefoodhatewaste.com)



Your Carbon Footprint

This time of the year also gives each of us a prompt to review our own overall carbon footprint. The Eco Church scheme asks members of church congregations to complete an annual checkup using an online carbon calculator. This may encourage each of us to change one or two lifestyle habits in order to reduce our environmental impact. **We encourage you to complete a survey.** The Church of England recommends two carbon calculators: footprint.wwf.org.uk/ and www.climatestewards.org/offset/ You may like to share any changes you intend to make or success stories of changes you have made in the past – simple, small ideas are most welcome. Please e-mail grahamjhall17@outlook.com by 23rd October if you want to contribute a few words for next month's St. Mary's News – let me know if you want your contribution to be published anonymously.



A theological perspective on net zero carbon:

Reflections from Rev Canon Dr Mark Powley, in his role as Principal of St Hild Theological College:

In the wonder of our climate, we see the glory of God and in all the complex processes that support it we glimpse God's wisdom. To learn about this, and to be moved to care about it, is part of our worship – an overflow of thanks and praise. Responding to the climate crisis is also an act of mission. It demonstrates the relevance of Christianity when the church's actions so far have fallen short. It

models responsible discipleship. It responds to human need. Quite simply, addressing climate change is something the Good Samaritan would do in our day, and other “Good Samaritans” around the world are already showing us how to do likewise. It is a response to injustice: it is our economy, and our churches, that have benefited most from fossil fuel use, but it is the poorest societies who face the most tragic costs: drought, famine, fires, extreme weather events, resource insecurity and mass migration. Because of all this, and simply because the earth is the Lord’s, achieving net zero is an act of mission.

Graham Hall
St Mary's Climate Action Group


St Mary's, Watford

Entry to the concerts is free but we will be very grateful for donations towards the running expenses so we'd like to encourage you to give as generously as you can ...

October

5th Veera Piilo (*pianist*)
12th Purcell School
19th Nina Cook (*singer*)
26th Wind in the Bellows
(accordion & flute)

**Thursday
Lunchtime
Concerts**
St Mary's Church
off the High Street, Watford
12.30pm

A snapshot of **Christchurch**

brought to you by Churches Together in Watford



Christchurch has had a turbulent year or two, without any clergy or readers and a small congregation and budget, but we have held strong and are hoping for a bright new future for our parish.

We give thanks that we have continued to have twice-weekly services with Sunday School most Sundays, and a weekly online prayer and compline evening service.

Our Lift Off! Youth Project (with St Mark's and St Andrew's) has continued to welcome parents and families to two Toddler sessions a week, Messy Breakfast Toddler sessions two Saturdays a month, and 'Ignite!' Children's Club every week. Holiday clubs (at each school break), have been well attended, enjoyed and have an overtly Christian message. We pray for further funding to continue this work in our community.

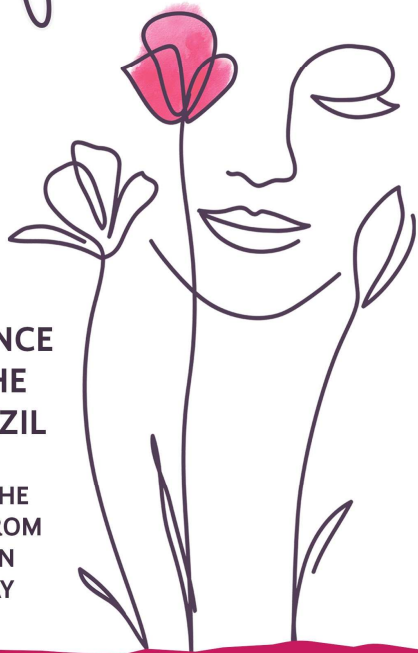
Adults have enjoyed monthly day and evening social groups and a monthly coffee morning, as well as a monthly early morning breakfast service restarting.

Food Bank continues to be well used and our FairTrade stall encourages and provides.

We would welcome prayers for a successful applicant to be appointed as our next vicar, as soon as possible, to give us spiritual leadership, guidance, vision and joy, in our worship and care for our community - which is now growing as the flats opposite continue to rise!

 **meninadança** PRESENTS

stones & flowers



**A DANCE PERFORMANCE
BY THE GIRLS OF THE
PINK HOUSES IN BRAZIL**

**WITH TESTIMONY FROM THE
WOMEN RESCUING GIRLS FROM
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ON
BRAZIL'S BR-116 HIGHWAY**

**ST MARY'S CHURCH, WATFORD
SUNDAY 15TH OCTOBER, 10.30AM**

Services

The Church is usually open each week

Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 3.00pm
and on Saturday between 12.00noon and 2.00pm

Sunday

9.00am Holy Communion (said) in church
every Sunday

10.30am Morning Service in church and via Zoom
every Sunday

5.30pm Encounter in church
on 4th Sunday of month only
(preceded at 5.00pm with refreshments)

Wednesday

12.30pm Holy Communion in church

(for Zoom links please contact the Church Office)

Thought for the Week

on our website - based on a bible verse or passage,
it is a short reflection by one of the leadership team
for you to think about during the week.

It can be downloaded and listened to whenever and wherever.

Please keep up to date with what is on offer
via our Facebook page, Instagram
or the website www.stmaryswatford.org

Who's Who at St Mary's

Vicar

The Revd Tony Rindl
01923 225189 / 07792 505480
tony.rindl@gmail.com

Churchwardens

Peter Dean
07876 154387
peter.dean@stmaryswatford.org
Eileen Roby
07479 846544
eileen.robby@stmaryswatford.org

Facilities Manager

stmarysfacilitiesmanager@gmail.com

Church Office

office@stmaryswatford.org
St Mary's Church, Church Street,
Watford WD18 0EG
01923 225189

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Lesley Gray
stmaryssafeguarding10@gmail.com

www.stmaryswatford.org

ROB HALLIGAN

2023 tour

Sunday 22nd October

WATFORD

St Mary's Church

Church Street - WD18 0EG

Doors 7:00pm - Free Entry

Suggested Donation £10

Info - office.stmaryswatford@gmail.com

"Amazing" ... Jeremy Vine, Radio 2

"songwriting gold" ... Maverick Magazine

"Magnificent - beautifully crafted songs" ... Crossrhythms

Between The Songs

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