

ST MARK'S CHURCH BROOMHILL & BROOMHALL

Annual Report 2024
April 2025



Broomfield Road, Broomhill, Sheffield, S10 2SE

The Diocese of Sheffield

Charity No. 011287558



Vicar's Report

Beth Keith

For much of 2024, St Mark's found itself in a time of vacancy. The term "vacancy" can sometimes suggest emptiness or absence, but I think we would all agree that this has been anything but an empty year. Instead, it has been a time of great activity, deep commitment, and unwavering faithfulness from so many in our community. Vacancies always bring additional challenges, but St Mark's has met them with resilience and strength. We have been blessed with a dedicated and supportive PCC, utterly committed Churchwardens, a diligent Treasurer and PCC Secretary, and a safeguarding team that ensures we continue to be a safe and welcoming place for all. The hard work of our staff team has also been invaluable in keeping the life of the church running smoothly and joyfully.

During this time, it became necessary for me to move to full-time ministry, allowing me to take on the additional responsibilities required throughout the vacancy. I am particularly grateful to our Churchwardens, who have shouldered so much over the past year. A special thank you to James, who is stepping down after six years of dedicated service, and to Dilys, who is continuing for a little while longer to help with the transition to new wardens. Your contributions have been invaluable, and we are deeply grateful.



Our staff team has been a great source of strength throughout the year. Shan continues to offer excellent pastoral care, even from Somerset! David keeps our music vibrant and our musicians in tune, while Hannah leads our work with children and families with creativity and warmth. Tim and John ensure that our building is ready and welcoming for worship and activities

throughout the week. And Zoë holds everything together with quiet efficiency, ensuring that all the moving parts of church life run smoothly.

We are also deeply thankful for all our volunteers, whose generosity of time and talent makes St Mark's the community that it is. Whether you have been welcoming at the door, baking for the lunch club, arranging flowers, serving on the PCC, leading our children's work, operating the sound desk, turning slides, managing the Zoom welcome, leading prayers, reading in services, lighting candles, pouring wine, singing joyfully, moving pianos, planting flowers, encouraging stewardship, mowing the lawn, counting bugs, clearing drains, keeping an eye on our electricity use, fixing the WiFi, recycling, making coffee, or lending books – you are all part of what makes this church flourish. Thank you.

This next year is one of new beginnings. What a privilege it is to have been appointed as vicar of St Mark's! It was a unique experience to be covering the vacancy without knowing how things would unfold, but it has been a joy to take up this role and to begin looking to the future together. This also marks a change in the shape of ministry at St Mark's. While Sue had already taken on the role of Priest-in-Charge of St Mary's Walkley, this is the first time the Vicar of St Mark's has also been the incumbent of St Mary's by design.



This is a significant shift, and I am still exploring how this will shape my ministry across both churches. Meanwhile, the PCC at St Mark's is actively considering how we can strengthen our ministry team later this year to ensure we continue to flourish as a community. Thanks to everyone who responded to our stewardship campaign in the autumn, it had been enormously helpful as we draw together the plans for the next season of ministry at St Mark's.

As we reflect on the past year, there is so much to be thankful for. St Mark's is a place of faith, service, welcome and community, made possible by the dedication of so many. As we move forward, may we continue to be open to where God is leading us, embracing both the challenges and the joys ahead.

With love, Beth

Churchwarden's report

Dilys Noble

This has been an unusually busy year with many tasks not imagined when I accepted the role. Did we envisage an interregnum? Probably not, but perhaps it was not totally unexpected given Sue's long service and sabbatical. There were unexpected blessings during the interregnum period; getting to know our counterparts at St Mary's during meetings to work out our combined and yet separate parish profiles and advertising for our new vicar; beating the pigeons to harvesting the Vicarage blackcurrants and turning them into sorbet; climbing the wall with Jools to pick the apples (we missed the plums); plundering the garden for posies for lunch club tables (shame to waste!); meeting the, as then, faceless diocesan clergy and trying to understand some of the crazy Church of England law. The interview day was memorable, recognising the amazing qualities of the interviewees and the positive feeling that we have made the right choice.

The more boring side of the interregnum was looking after the vicarage, reading the meters, hanging around to let builders in, collecting the mail, responding to spurious fire alarms, hours on the floor sorting the archives and then depositing them in the Sheffield Archive. It was interesting to relive events from years ago and find photos of our younger selves.

At St Mark's we are so fortunate to have Shan who, from a distance conjures up willing clergy to take services and we also benefit from retired clergy in our midst. Neither James or I have had to do a last minute service, something I was not initially aware could fall to us. Thank you to all who worked to keep the church running smoothly and to Beth for accepting the post. Let us make sure we look after Beth and her family, as vicar of St Mark's and Priest in Charge of St Mary's is an extensive role.

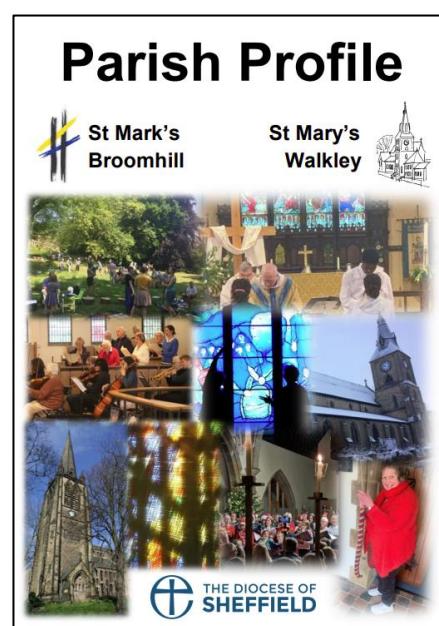
The hardest part of wardening for me this year has been being part of St Mark's safeguarding team and reading the Makin report . It is uncomfortable to realise that all our time consuming documentation, checks and training will not necessarily make St Mark's a safe place. We have to acknowledge that safeguarding is everyone's job and everyone has to do it with courage.

James Oliver

The year has been a busy one and a steep learning curve for both Dilys and me due to Sue leaving in February 2024 starting a period of Vacancy whilst continuing with the "normal" Church Warden tasks. The process of choosing a new Vicar has involved getting to know a lot of new people, processes and associated language.

The appointment system is designed to be supported by three different groups comprising the PCC, the Diocese and the Patron (St Mark's is the Sheffield Church Burgesses Trust). In this instance we were recruiting for a Vicar for the Three Spires Mission Area and therefore included two PCC's and four Parish Representatives. We thoroughly enjoyed getting to know some of the people at St Mary's Walkley and working together which has been a very positive experience.

St Marks and St Marys PCCs had to authorise the contribution to a joint parish profile document (there was many revisions to this document before reaching an agreement) and attend a Section 11



meeting agreeing to the Person specification, Role description and leading to advertising the role.

There was certainly some bumps and surprises along the road, but the team of people involved remained focused on the job in hand and we were all very happy when Beth accepted the position.

We are very fortunate to have Beth as our Vicar and know that her experience and ability will enable St Mark's, St Mary's, St John's and the wider community to thrive. We trust that Beth and her family know of our support and prayers for them as they set off on this venture.

I want to thank everyone that has supported me during this last year and in particular Dilys and Maria. Also, I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone that leads us in worship with skill and dedication and our paid staff members that are all of a very high standard and finally a huge thank you to all the volunteers that give freely of their time and skills in support of St Mark's church.

PCC

PCC

Bekah Hampson, PCC secretary

The churchwardens, clergy and the PCC members are a wonderful bunch of people. Together we do the serious team job of being responsible for the overall wellbeing (practical and spiritual) of our church, our church members, and our church buildings. I have also experienced it as a space of great care and often laughter - who knew!

In the past year, some key things PCC has worked together on include successfully recruiting and welcoming Beth as the vicar, encouraging the start of St Mark's wonderful new children's choir, facilitating the grand piano's grand appearance, financial matters, regular safeguarding updates and reviewing successes of our Advent services (especially Big Queer Carols which was utterly joyous).

As in other years, Dilys and James, as the church wardens, have done a lot of work behind the scenes and especially in the time of vacancy and the recruitment process. I would like to take the chance to recognise their dedication and diligence and to say thank you to the wardens!

Caretaking & Cleaning

Tim Moore

Since April last year we have continued to spend around 15 hours a week cleaning the church. John has cleared a lot of the stuff left in the upstairs kitchen, much of which was left over from before Covid.

There have been a few more bookings this past year, with several youth music groups using the church on a weekly basis. This has led to a tightening up of safeguarding procedures, especially around children, and an extensive survey of our fire safety provision, with a written record now being kept, evacuation plans printed, and more detectors and sounders to be fitted in the coming months.

Towards the end of last year, an old man and his son came in looking for information about his grandfather, John Arthur Rodgers, who they thought was once an organist somewhere in the west of Sheffield. With the 50th anniversary history book, we found that not only did Mr Rodgers play the organ in the old St Marks, but there was a brass plaque dedicated to him on his death in 1920, which I was able to show to his grandson and great-grandson.

A TV was donated for the lounge, and while we waited for the faculty to go through (and still are), I decided that a temporary frame would work with the existing projector screen. It seems to have been successful and has been used for meetings and presentations. Hopefully when the faculty comes through it can be replaced with something more attractive.



An early morning aerial view of the church, captured by drone

Church Office

Zoë Varcoe

This year has been busier than usual as the team pulled together to focused on carefully navigating the interregnum period. With everyone's effort, we handled the vacancy well, ensuring a smooth transition as we welcomed Beth as our new vicar and started this next chapter for the church.






In the office, I've been continuing to promote our community rooms and hire facilities, with booking income steadily growing. We're pleased to welcome the Sheffield Youth Orchestra, which now calls St Mark's home. Managing the church calendar and supporting hirers remains a big part of my role. Concert bookings are strong, but we'd love to host even more, so please spread the word about our venue.

I helped plan and promote Big Queer Carols, our growing annual service for and by LGBTQIA+ people. This year, we welcomed families, creating a diverse gathering. We look forward to continuing this tradition.

I'm also keeping up with our communications, maintaining the website, notices, and social media to ensure messaging is clear and information is easy to access. Our online resources are growing as we now record sermons at our 10am service. Night Service has settled into its new pattern, and we're actively promoting it each week.

Finally, it is a pleasure to work with the many groups that make up St Mark's. Thank you for your ongoing support.



	16 February 2025 - Whistleblowing.mp3 Beth Keith On this third Sunday before Lent, Beth Keith invites us to think of prophets as 'whistleblowers'. They say: 'This is what is happening. It is wrong. This is how it should be'... Listen Download MP3 Audio 10.0MB (15:04)
	2 February 2025 - Racial Justice Sunday Anesia Nascimento De Jesus Cook Anesia Cook is the vocations advisor for the diocese of Sheffield, and vicar of St Peter and St Oswald's Church. In her sermon, she reminds us that God delights in our human diversity. Isaiah tells the people of their rebellion against God and invites them to change their ways. She invites us to join in the dance, and continue fighting for justice. Listen Download MP3 Audio 9.1MB (12:43)
	19 January 2025 - O Taste and See! Jonathan Williamson In this service, the choir sang Ralph Vaughan Williams' setting for the coronation service of Queen Elizabeth II, 'O Taste and See'. Jonathan Williamson invites us to do the same as he explores the miracle of the Wedding at Cana. Listen Download MP3 Audio 7.2MB (09:45)
	Sunday 5 January 2025 - Epiphany and Baptism Michael Bayley Epiphany is the festival observed on 6 January in the church calendar in commemoration of the coming of the Magi, presented as the first manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles in the Western Christian tradition. This Sunday, the day before Epiphany, we were also to celebrate a baptism, but a heavy downfall of snow prevented it from taking place in the service itself. Michael Bayley preached his sermon 'virtually' from home, linking the first reading to the twin themes of epiphany and baptism. Read Download PDF Document 150.7KB
	Sunday 29 December 2024 - Why? Boyd Morgan Why? The question that children always ask. Boyd Morgan takes that as his starting point in reflecting on how we learn from, and nurture, one another. Listen Download MP3 Audio 7.0MB (09:47)

This photo highlights our weekly recorded sermons, available on our website for everyone to listen to and reflect on.

Mission Area

Shan Rush

'The Three Spires' Mission Area' is made up of St John's Ranmoor, St Mary's Walkley and ourselves. All 3 churches are inclusive, seek to serve their communities and keep issues of faith and justice high on the agenda. Last year we successfully held our first Mission Area weekend with representation from all 3 churches involved with planning, delivery and attendance. Feedback was positive, and we plan to hold another Mission Area weekend in 2026.

Although described as a Mission Area, we are 3 individual benefices with Beth now licensed as our Vicar, as Priest in Charge of St Mary's and as Associate Priest of St John's, and Matthew as Vicar of St John's and Associate Priest of St Mark's and St Mary's.

During our vacancy, we benefitted from members of St John's clergy team assisting us by presiding and preaching at 8am and 10am and we have reciprocated with Jonathan preaching at St John's. Matthew is having a 3 month sabbatical from May so we are pleased to be able to help them occasionally. We continue to work with the lay leadership team at St Mary's to ensure that between their retired clergy with permission to officiate, St John's and our clergy team, each church can sustain a pattern of worship that includes a Eucharistic service on a Sunday.

We look forward to continuing to develop the connections being forged between the 3 churches.





These images showcase some of the creations from our Mission Area weekend.

Parish Safeguarding

Duncan Lennox, Parish Safeguarding Officer

My main responsibilities are to liaise with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and pass on any safeguarding concerns and to provide advice on safeguarding issues to the PCC and clergy, as appropriate. I am not 'in charge' of safeguarding issues in the church.

Beth Keith is the clergy lead on safeguarding. Hannah Jones is the Safeguarding Administrator dealing with DBS and training records. This also involves reviewing the Safeguarding Dashboard to ensure that all requirements are being met or actioned. Hannah Jones is also the lead on safeguarding relating to under 18s. Cath Williamson leads on issues relating to vulnerable adults, including the Lunch Club. She is also now the Domestic Abuse Officer.

Meetings have reviewed safeguarding policies and procedures. Recently we reviewed the newer areas where we are involved with under 18s to ensure that appropriate practices are being followed. I have had regular contact with Beth both in person and by email.

We compile our own records showing DBS and training status. This is necessary to ensure that people have done training. The C of E now allows us to access training records with consent. So it is easier to monitor training

Every year the CofE seems to increase its safeguarding requirements and expects churches to comply more with standardised procedures. Good procedures are important though I have concerns that increased procedures do not get to the heart of safeguarding.

However it is important that we comply with requirements to show that we see safeguarding as important. Cooperation here is greatly appreciated.

Happily, I have not had to pass on any safeguarding concerns to the Diocese in the past year. Some issues have arisen which I feel we have dealt with appropriately. With thanks to the church team for their a strong commitment to safeguarding.


Children, Young People and Students

CHYPS

Hannah Jones and Lynn Pocock

This year the Children and Young People's Provision has continued to flourish. We continue to offer a wide range of opportunities for worship on Sunday mornings, including fortnightly age-specific groups alternating with cross-generational opportunities such as Gathering on the Green, Family Sessions and All-Age Services. All of these draw on storytelling, craft, music and responding through play, and/or discussion. Through each aspect we aim to create a welcoming and safe space to explore faith and spirituality. Using 'Out of the Box' to explore the parables during the Lent Studies has enabled us to include children and young people in this time of reflection, often working with the same material, which feels very positive.

We have a growing number of emerging young people, which is a wonderful opportunity that challenges us how best to use our time and resources. We are developing a more routine approach to offering Lions (Y6+ children) a bi-monthly gathering on Sunday afternoons to socialise and explore ideas while enjoying crumpets and tea cakes! For the last couple of years, we held a monthly board game group for older teenagers which, due to capacity, has stopped for the time being. Thank you to the leaders who gave time to that valuable space.



During the interregnum, it felt very important to listen to the children and young people about how they see church and we have done this in variety of ways including consultation sessions, an exhibition of the children's photography demonstrating what they love about St Mark's and an A-Z word cloud of St Mark's, largely generated by the children and families' with a little help from the wider community for the tricky letters!





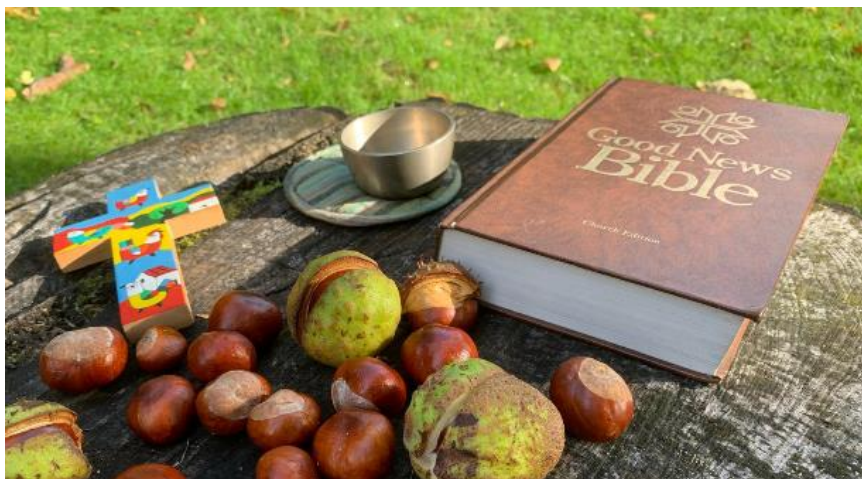
It was heartening to hear and see the value they placed on the physical place of St Mark's both on the Green and throughout the building, as well as the expression of spirituality and community experienced through music, ritual and festivals, nature and activism. A key message was the importance of food and hospitality; space to socialise and belong. With that in mind we have continued to build on previous social opportunities including the annual summer party, October's Swimathon raising money for Children's Society and the Pancake Party. We are now looking forward to our first full camping weekend away

together in May and have also created the new Children's Choir in response to the growing numbers of families, and need to create more regular opportunities to gather, socialise and enjoy music together. This is held weekly during term-time and has already developed a group of friends who sang at the Christingle Service in December. Some of these children attend on Sundays and some are new to the community.

Alongside our Sunday provision there has been a growing variety of activity, offering various opportunities to our worshipping families as well as engaging with the wider community of Broomhill. In particular, this has included the development of Oaks and Acorns at Moorend Care Home, a monthly intergenerational toddler group and the previously mentioned children's choir. We regularly support B-Tots toddler group at Broomhill Methodist Centre and Baby Time at Broomhill Library. We have also enjoyed more visits from Broomhill Infants School again, something that has taken time to recover post covid. We had a lovely afternoon with the Year 2 children, who created stained glass window biscuits and explored the church and green for Heritage Open Days; and the school's choir is beginning to build relationships with the lunch club by performing and sharing musical activities together.

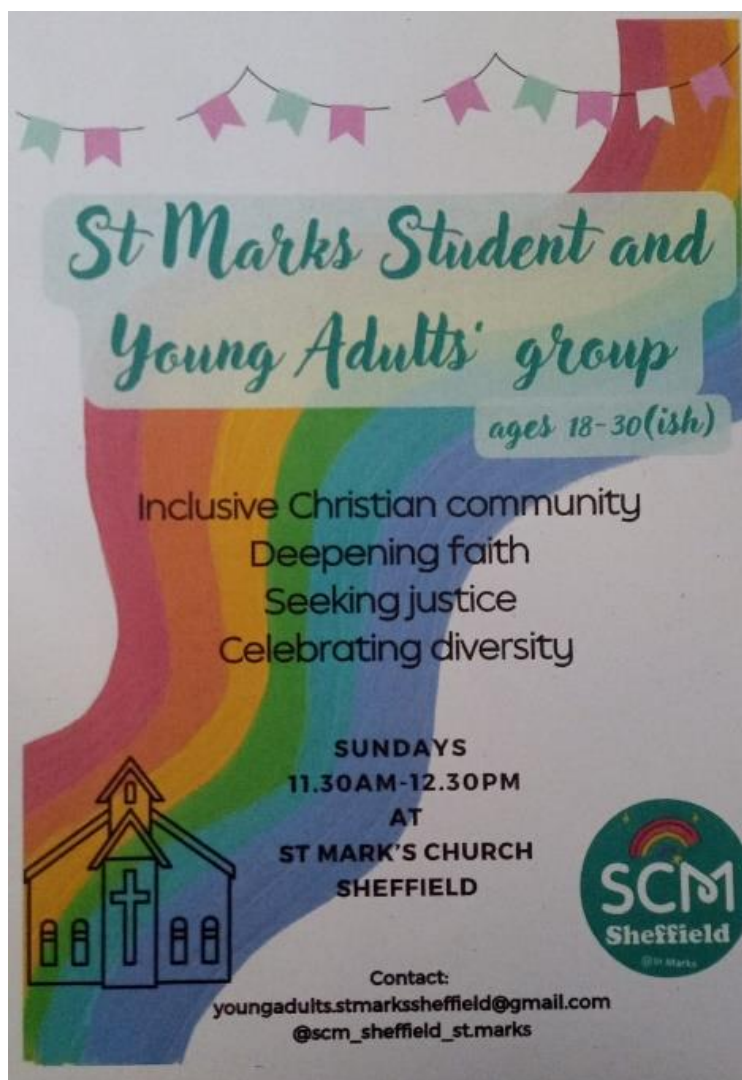


All this work is made possible by our CHYPS Team of dedicated volunteers, led by Sarah Armstrong, Rachel Heginbotham, Alice Newitt, Anna Ryder, Joy Straits and chaired by Lynn Pocock. This group regularly meet to discuss the range of provision and review how the different elements complement each other and connect into our framework for St Mark's ministry with children which we have recently developed and is now available on the Families' Noticeboard of the website.



Young Adults & Students

The students and young adults group continue to meet regularly after the 10am service for their group called 'coffee and coffee', staying connected through a WhatsApp group and occasional social gatherings outside of church. This year, they have explored (re)discovering prayer and had their own Lent group. Thank you to everyone who facilitated and participated in this group.



Communications

Mark's Messenger

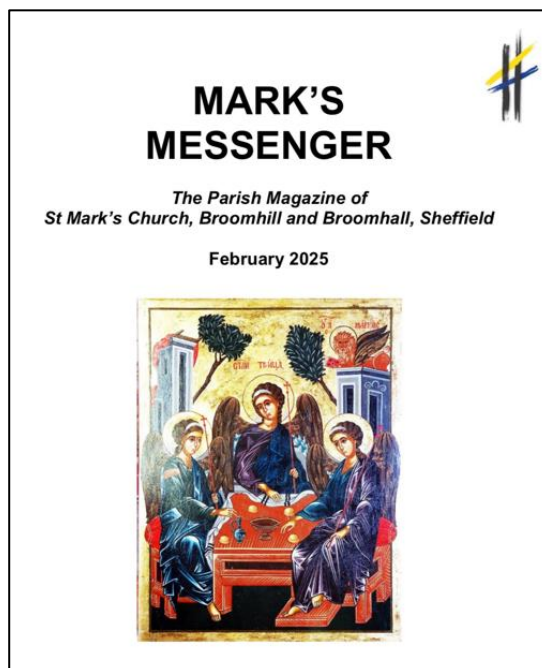
Shan Rush

Editors, (Frances Gray, Michael Miller and Shan Rush) supported by Dez Martin, Margot Fox and Zoë Varcoe continue to produce 4 editions of The Messenger per year in February, June, September and December. Its success is dependent on the teamwork of the above people and people of all ages who submit news, articles and book reviews covering a variety of subjects. These include but are not restricted to articles and images that help us learn more about God and Biblical scholarship, reflect our personal experiences of daily life, inform us of changes within the local and national church and what is happening in the community and world around us. We hope these offer an expression of St

Mark's presence and contribution in the world, reflect the shared life of our faith community, our diverse and inclusive beliefs and values and are an inspiration and encouragement to others.

Our current readers are predominantly members of St Mark's but a few copies are sent to friends or members of the wider local community. Most people receive the magazine via e-mail but printed copies are also available at the back of church including large print version for those who would like them. Contact Shan or Zoë to request this. Production costs are funded from church income and supported by donations by those who receive it.

If you have ideas or thoughts about the content of future editions, please do get in touch with us. We want to know what you really think and produce a magazine that interests you!



Fabric and Finance

Fabric matters

James Oliver

Members of the fabric and finance committee meet several times a year to discuss, agree and action building fabric and financial items following agreement with the PCC.

Please find below some of the items that have been carried out by this committee during the last year to ensure St Marks remains in a good condition and available for all to use.

Finance

- Prepare annual and management accounts to regularly monitor income and expenditure.
- Support the Stewardship campaign.
- Review and support staff resourcing to support the Children's choir.
- Agree the church room hire and car park charges.

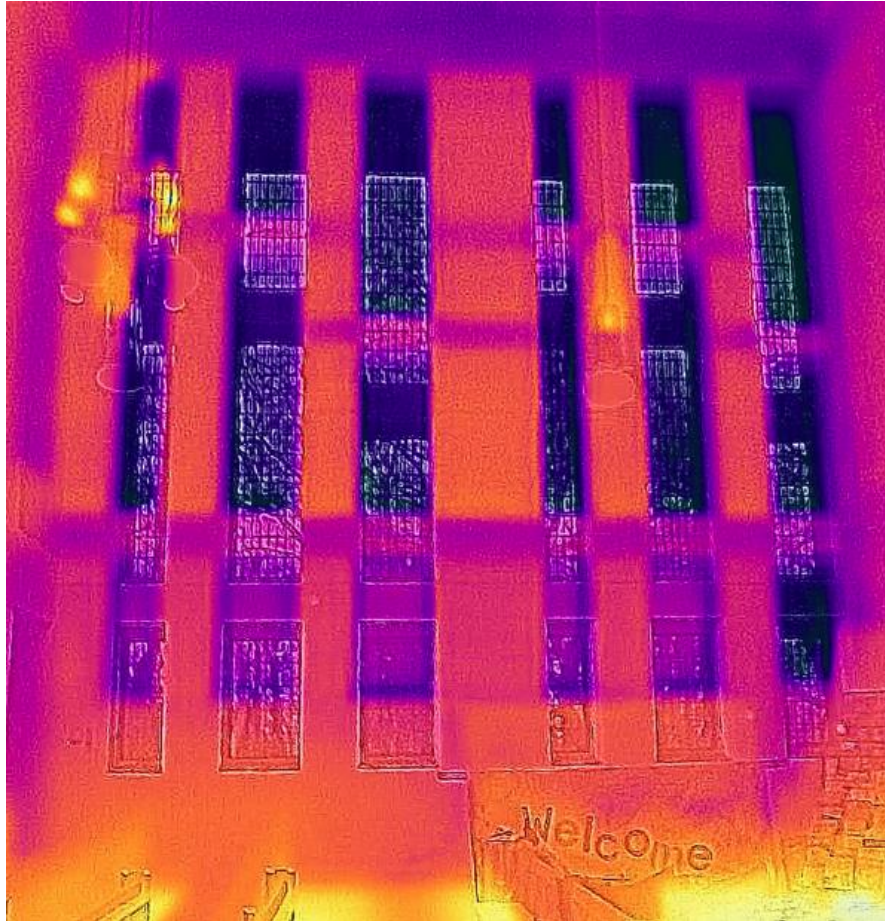
Fabric works completed.

- Low-level double-glazed units in the church – continue to monitor performance to enable further works to be carried out and obtain the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) following a 12-month installation period.
- Trial the use of heated pew cushions for some members of the choir.
- Tree management and survey work.
- General maintenance (e.g. lighting and safety inspections of fabric and equipment)
- Appointment of James Boon Associates as St Marks Architect.
- Monitor St Marks building fabric thermal performance using a drone camera to assist making decisions on key areas of heat loss and to improve the levels of insulation.

Fabric works in progress.

- Large sycamore tree affecting the stability of the green boundary wall.
- Replacement heating system to the first-floor lounge and office (DAC has approved the proposal and we now await the Chancellor's final decision)

- Maintenance of the Memorial Garden.
- Attend Major Churches meeting.
- Reviewing the use of glazed internal doors to the Narthex and Chapel to improve the visibility of the entrances and assist with closing the doors to retain heat.
- Complete the double glazing to the remainder of clear glazed windows in the church.



*This thermal image shows the impact of our triple glazing on the windows.
The bottom row, where it has been installed, clearly demonstrates its effectiveness in retaining heat*

Legacies

David Ryder

Update from the Legacies 'Home from Home Group ('HFHG') on St Mark's owned flat used by Roundabout. In 2018 the PCC made a decision to purchase a two bedroomed flat in Woodhouse as a social investment using legacy money to be leased to Roundabout, a local youth housing charity providing shelter, support and life skills to young people aged 16-25 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The initial five year lease expired mid January 2024 at which time Roundabout agreed to enter into a new lease for another seven years at a higher rent than previously to be annually reviewed according to the Consumer Price Index. Consequently, on the recent anniversary of the lease, the current rent has been agreed and set for 2025 using this mechanism.

Roundabout has recently provided us with an annual report on the physical state and use of the property and have confirmed it is in a good state of repair. The young person currently in residence has been there since May 2023 but is now actively bidding for alternative accommodation and

expected to move out by Spring/early Summer. This will give an opportunity to review whether any refurbishment work is required before a new resident is installed by Roundabout.

From information previously provided by Roundabout regarding the turnover of residents placed in the property, St Mark's has, through its social investment, indirectly supported up to six homeless young people since the project started in 2018.

Faith and Justice

Home Donations

Chris Ware

In 2024, the committee had £9,100 to allocate for home donations, a £1,900 reduction from the previous year. Amidst government changes and increasing vulnerability in society, charities report growing demand for support. In response to recent hate crimes, the committee decided to focus on charities that address hate and support vulnerable communities.

Stop Hate UK, which works against hate and discrimination, is a key recipient, alongside charities like the Broomhall Centre, supporting diverse local services, and the Broomhall Girls Group, assisting Somali girls in the parish. South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice helps rejected asylum seekers, while Nomad provides accommodation for homeless individuals, including successful asylum seekers. Our donation to Vida supports its peer support for women and girls who've suffered abuse and trauma, and the Foundry Primary Care Network seeks a crisis fund to support patients in need.

The Bens Centre, a wet day centre for those using substances, will receive funding for double glazing, with a council match fund increasing its impact. St Aidan's Church, which provides a community space, needs funding for a new boiler, with corporate donations potentially matching our contribution tenfold. Regular donations include £25 to Church Action on Poverty, £500 to Inclusive Church, and £75 to Eco Church.

Donations list:

- £1,000 each to Stop Hate UK, Broomhall Girls Group, South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice, Nomad, Vida, Foundry Crisis Fund, Bens Centre, St Aidan's church boiler.
- £500 each to Inclusive Church and the Broomhall Centre.
- £75 to Eco Church.
- £25 to Church Action on Poverty.

International Donations

Dilys Noble

St Mark's is a generous congregation, despite our funding difficulties we still give 10% of our income to charitable causes. Our donations support charities and projects that reflect our inclusive values and have some connection with members of the congregation. As before we have split the £9100 equally between 10 charities. This year we have a new charity suggested by Richard Hide a member of the congregation who works in Africa and South America promoting small FairTrade coffee growers. Through his work he suggested Congriagri a small charity in Goma DRC where he has been working recently. This involves young people planting much needed trees. We will watch this carefully as of course we have heard recently of the Rwandan invasion of Goma.

Our charities are:

- Christian Aid which we also support throughout the year through Christian Aid week, occasional church lunches, carol singing in the city and Christmas collections.
- Phaseworldwide: St Mark's hosted another baroque concert for its work in Nepal that raised £2500 on top of St Mark's donation. I am still a trustee but have not been able to

- travel to Nepal as a medical mentor myself this year. Any GPs out there who would like to become involved in the medical mentoring programme please contact me. It is the most rewarding and enlightening experience .
- Literacy for Life and Reach Bwindi are 2 small charities working in Africa in schools and hospitals, founded and supported by Rosie Hunt and Ceri Almsasetti.
- Care 4 Calais supports asylum seekers in Northern France. Manucherm has visited the project several times.
- SUCCOL a charity St Mark's has supported for over 20 years in Columbia enabling education for the children of poor families. Founded through Pedraza family who worshipped here .
- Practical Action is a much larger international Charity starting projects in resource poor countries and handing them to local enterprises to continue. I have seen their terrific work in Nepal, suppling chimneys for smoke filled houses and the progression of roads into the mountains.
- USPG is a long established Charity and I hope some of the congregation learned about its recent work from Anesia when she preached recently.
- We continue to support Global Justice Now for its tireless work against global poverty, pollution, climate change, Big Pharma and its endeavour to educate our young people .

Environment group

Margaret Ainger

In 2024, the Environment Group conducted a survey asking our congregation to reflect on climate action. Explore the results and see how the group has been putting these ideas into action:

Your ideas put into action



Pastoral Care & Hospitality

Pastoral Care *Shan Rush*

Pastoral Care at St Mark's is based on welcome, helping people to feel valued and safe, and the ongoing provision of support and encouragement as we journey through the good and challenging times we encounter in everyday life.

From the moment someone walks onto our grounds, we want people to feel welcome. Signage has been improved both outside and within the church and whenever we have services scheduled, there are teams of volunteers who greet people, can answer questions and offer hospitality, welcoming without being overwhelming.

Safeguarding has been in the spotlight this year and we have worked hard to raise awareness of its importance within our context and that it is everyone's responsibility. Pastoral care is not only about preventing abuse, but of promoting welfare – whether that be for people who are lonely, have physical, mental or spiritual health challenges or are no longer able to get to church.

Developing quality relationships is key and can be a challenge in the context of worship with the differing expectations of people especially when you consider characteristics such as age, disability, gender, race, beliefs, sexual orientation ... Respect, trust and a willingness to listen to and learn from others without judgement can help everyone feel they belong and are afforded the dignity they deserve.

We continue to work together to make use of the power of community and collaboration to send cards, offer Home Communion and Services in the care homes, sharing meals, offering lifts... all these and much more reaffirming the value and dignity of every human being we encounter, whatever their circumstances.



*Welcoming visitors while keeping the warmth in.
Our new banner helps guide everyone to the right place while we conserve heat in the main church.*

Lunch & Friendship Club

Briony Tayler and Jean Baxter

Lunch and Friendship Club continues to offer a welcoming space for older people to enjoy a hot lunch with friendly company and varied activities. During 2024 we enjoyed uplifting musical sessions, quiz-times, chairobic stretching, favourite poems and prose, watching interesting holiday adventures, visits from the clergy (offering Communion on request) and local schools to sing, chat or craft together. Lunch at Whitbys for fish and chips was a summer highlight!

We are especially grateful to Rosalind for transportation companionship, to Kathryn and Renate for much-needed administrative work and to David for overseeing the accounts. Thanks also to Transport 17 and Community Transport for invaluable commitment transporting less mobile members and to the Council for underpinning financial support. We would welcome new members and volunteers.

From the kitchen: The Lounge kitchen gets busier as a Wednesday morning progresses, with first the cook, then helpers arriving, followed by all helpers enjoying coffee and brief chat before welcoming the members. Usually we serve 20 – 25 freshly-cooked meals, including for the kitchen and lounge teams, and we are rewarded by smiles and compliments and constructive comments! A hot 2 course meal is preceded by juice and followed with tea or coffee, with sherry or fizz to mark special occasions.

We said farewell to Antje Barker, who has left Sheffield, and to Fleur, who stepped down after long and faithful service. Jules and Kate Wood are valuable recruits – but we would welcome others – a couple of hours every 3rd or 4th week.

Craft Group

Jennie Martin

The group has continued to meet on the first Saturday morning of the month in the Lounge, although sadly we have lost a couple of regular people this year. We have made more lap blankets and shawls both for care homes and for use in church on colder days. We have also made and given out prayer shawls both knitted in one piece or made from multi-coloured 6 inch squares. Recently we have made some small blankets (the size of a pillowcase) for Baby Basics. We would like to hear of any other charities that might like our contributions. Some have brought along their own projects to work on. We would love to welcome new people to make items needed by various charities. Or teach people to knit if they would like to learn (yarn and needles are available). Or just to join us for refreshments and conversation.

Study and Learning

Study and Learning

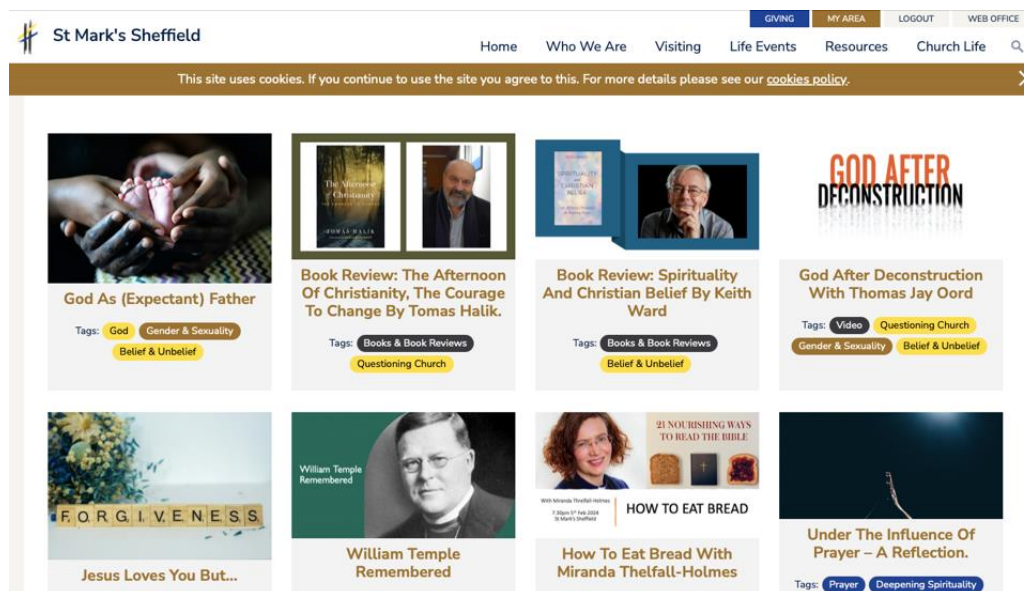
Beth Keith

Over this past year the membership of the Study and Learning group dwindled, and the ministry of study and learning has been covered by different groups which are supporting theological learning both at St Mark's and further afield.

Lent Course: our 2024 Lent course went well, with 6 groups meeting, face to face, at St Mark's, at St Mary's and on zoom. We chose to use material from Miranda Threlfall-Holmes, exploring nourishing ways to read the Bible. Miranda came to St Mark's to run an introductory session which was attended by over 60 people in the building and on zoom. Thanks to Janet Morley who worked on the booklets for the groups and to the leaders who hosted and led these groups.

We began work on the 2025 Lent Course and following feedback chose the theme of Parables. Following a generous donation, we were able purchase Paula Gooder's book on parables for each of the groups, and Hannah Jones has been developing video and story resources for use the groups.

Online Library: Our online resources (developed from CRC online in 2023/4) continue to grow. There is a termly email which has growing interest, especially from those further afield who appreciate the connection to St Mark's through the online articles and online seminars. If you would like to be added to the mailout list please contact Beth or the office.



Seminars and Events: During the past year we have hosted the following events, which have been well attended by people from St Mark's and from across the South Yorkshire.

Revd Dr Miranda Thelfall-Holmes, How to Eat Bread, 5 Feb 2024

Love Lead Us, a conference on LGBTQ+ inclusion and safeguarding, 17 Feb 2024

Dr Thomas Jay Oord, God After Deconstruction, 13 August 2024

Sheffield Meeting of Together for the Church of England, 4 November 2024.

Thinking Faith: In September we started a new monthly panel discussion. This happens at 7pm on the second Sunday of the month. There is a small planning group, led by Canon Jane Brooke, that plan the topics and liaise with speakers. In September we looked at Climate Concerns and in October faith deconstruction. In November we looked at the Cry for Hope of Palestinian Christians, and in January 2025 we held a join conversation with member of the Jewish Reformed Synagogue. In December 2024 we look at theological issues about the virgin birth and the incarnation. We have had lots of positive feedback about these sessions. Attendance has ranged between 30-70 people depending on topic.



Vocations: We continue to be a church which fosters vocations to ministry. In July 2024 it was a delight to celebrate with Lizzie Illsley as she was ordained deacon at Sheffield Cathedral and Lu Skerratt-Love as they were ordained at Liverpool Cathedral. We have also been able to support ordinands on placement, and actively support those from the congregations who would like to explore ministry, whether that be lay leadership, reader ministry, or ordained ministry.



Library

Joe & Carol Forde

In 2024/25 the library project has been progressed on several fronts. Around 140 new books have been added to our library catalogue. Borrowing rates have increased. We have moved to a more 'open' display style for the books, and this has helped to cultivate a 'library hub' feel to the shelf area. We have also had published a Library Special edition of Mark's Messenger, and have improved the systems for recording borrowing and return activity.

In addition, we have established a way of displaying and selling books that have been donated but not added to the library, by placing them on the window sills in the Church lounge, and this had proved to be popular. However, we have not made progress on developing the online theology library facility, and so this will be a priority for the Library Group in the coming year. In this regard, we have recently secured the go-ahead for launching, on an ad hoc basis, a new, internal publication, called St Mark's Library Gazette. It will feature articles that can be considered for possible inclusion in the online theology library. It will also enable the Library Group to keep the congregation informed of new developments in the library, new acquisitions, and so forth.

The Library Group has also offered suggestions for the Thinking Faith Sunday evening sessions, and will act as an ongoing resource in support of such initiatives as we move forwards. The Library Group would like to thank all members of the congregation who have helped further this project work over the last twelve months.

Worship

Sunday Worship

Beth Keith

8am Communion, Book of Common Prayer

We meet for two services each month, on the second and fourth Sundays. Although this is a small congregation it is a faithful group who gather regularly for a quiet Communion with traditional, poetic language. The service is supported by some dedicated BCP wardens who set up the chapel and support visiting clergy. During the vacancy, we have been supported by clergy from around the Diocese, to lead the service once a month, alternating with Shan and Beth. It is a surprisingly peaceful space for worship. Do come along and you can see for yourself.



Parish Eucharist

Our weekly 10am Service on Sundays draws people of all ages, with growing numbers of children. We use liturgy which reflects the season and is both traditional in form and contemporary in language. We are sensitive to the language we use in our liturgy and hymns, reflecting our diverse congregations and our inclusive theology. It has been encouraging to see the growth of the choir over the last twelve months. There is provision (in the lounges, or on the Green) for children on most Sundays during term-time. We have been actively trying to support the needs of all ages so that everyone can engage with worship on Sunday mornings.

Our All Age Services, which happen twice a term, give us the opportunity to worship together with all ages present and contributing. It is also a chance for us to experiment with simpler forms of worship, storytelling, and song. The feedback has been positive, and we're encouraged that this approach is being appreciated by people of all ages.

We are fortunate to have several preachers, both Clergy and Readers, as well as people exploring a vocation to ordination, or those with particular theological expertise to share, which makes for a variety of voices and approaches. Our team of readers and intercessors is growing and if you would like to get involved, please email Zoë in the office.

We are actively looking for volunteers to help with the Welcome Teams, sound desk and Zoom support, and Flower Arranging, so you can see there are plenty of opportunities for you to get involved. Do please let us know if you would like to get involved in any way.

Night Service

In September our monthly pattern for Night Service changed. Our contemplative communion on the first Sunday and Taizé on the third Sunday continue as before.

We introduced two new services, Thinking Faith on the second Sunday and Contemporary Worship on the fourth Sunday. Thinking Faith is a panel discussion with a different topic (more information about this comes under Study and Learning).

Contemporary Worship is an informal service with an open and inclusive style, modern liturgy, and contemporary songs. When there is a fifth Sunday, we offer a service on the theme of healing and wholeness. It has been encouraging to see these two new services develop and grow. They have attracted people who come to other services at St Mark's and those who are new to St Mark's.



ST MARK'S BROOMHILL NIGHT SERVICE 7PM





1ST SUNDAY CONTEMPLATIVE COMMUNION

A simple and contemplative service, with the focus on remembering Jesus in sharing bread and wine.

2ND SUNDAY THINKING FAITH

Each month we tackle a different topic, with a panel discussion, and lots of time for questions and responses from guest speakers.





3RD SUNDAY TAIZÉ PRAYER

A service of singing, prayer, and silence, using the pattern and style of worship practised at the Taizé Community.

4TH SUNDAY CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP

An informal service with an open and inclusive style, modern liturgy, and contemporary worship.





5TH SUNDAY HEALING & WHOLENESS

An informal service of readings, music, and time for reflection. There is the opportunity to receive anointing and prayer, and stillness and space to reflect.

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Open Communion

On the second Sunday of each month we host a gathering for the LGBTQI+ community. Starting with refreshments and conversation we then share in a simple Eucharist led by different clergy from across the diocese. Over the past couple of years this group has grown in number and in its sense of community. There is now a committed group of people who lead and support this service, along with Boyd Morgan who acts as host and warden.

Big Queer Carols was a high point again this year. A team from Open Communion hosted this inclusive carol service at St Mark's and the church was again full, with extra chairs needing to be put out.

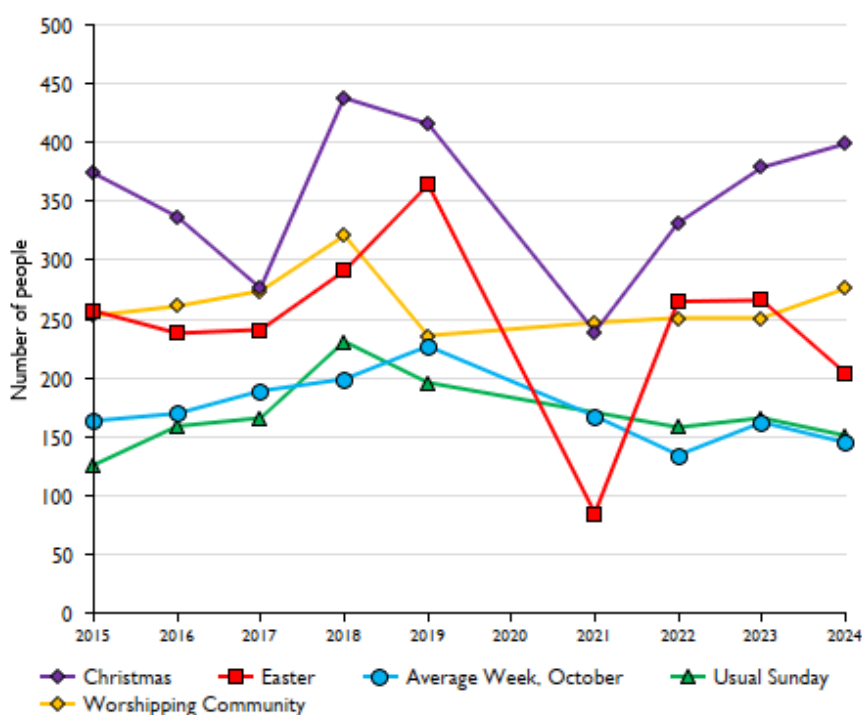
At a time when some members of the LGBTQI+ community are feeling particularly threatened by attitudes within the wider church we are glad to be able to hold an unequivocally supportive worship space.



Attendance Figures

Our Sunday worship numbers have held steady overall during 2024, with some services and age groups growing. Below is a graph showing attendance figures for 2024. As you can see the size of our worshipping community grew overall and our Christmas attendance figures were markedly up. This was due to considerably larger congregations for the Christingle, the Nativity, and Christmas Eve Midnight Mass.

Statistics for usual Sunday and weekly attendance it taken in the month of October. Our figures were down compared to 2023, although we suspect this is in part due to our 60th celebration services in October 2023 inflating the 2023 figures. Attendance at Easter was down and we're not sure why, but we are making an increased effort with our publicity for Holy Week and Easter in 2025. The Night Service, with the two new services of contemporary worship and Thinking Faith have made a sharp difference in the attendance in the evening.



Weekday Worship

Shan Rush

St Mark's continues to offer a variety of opportunities for worship during the week, predominantly on Zoom.

Monday to Friday we have morning and evening prayer. On Tuesday and Thursday mornings, St John's and St Mark's unite, with St John's leading on a Tuesday and St Mark's on a Thursday.

The Thursday mid-day celebration of the Eucharist in the Celtic tradition has a small but faithful congregation which values the opportunity to pause in the day, to gather on Zoom and for everyone to contribute to the worship, whether that is by being present, leading the congregational response or the Gospel, offering an insight at the homily, suggesting people or situations for prayers, sharing the peace or introducing the blessing. All are made welcome whether attending regularly or on an occasional basis.

Julian Prayer has seen the most significant change this year with a move from only sending out a weekly e-mail to additionally offering the opportunity to meet twice a month to pray and reflect in silence. The second Monday this is on zoom and the fourth Monday is in the Chapel at St Mark's.

Meeting with at least 2 or 3 other people has helped and encouraged those who join to practice contemplative prayer and meditation in their lives and even when there have only been a few of us, the prayerful silence has felt more positive and less isolating.

Thank you to everyone who helps facilitate or joins weekday worship.



Music & Choir

David Willington

Music at St Mark's continues to go from strength to strength. We said goodbye to Amelia (last year's composer-in-residence) who is now reading music at Durham university. We've welcomed 4 new music scholars: who among them make up 3 singers, 2 organists, a flautist, a conductor and a string quartet. They're adding hugely to what we can do musically as well as developing their own skills as musicians.

We've also welcomed Sheffield Youth Orchestra who now rehearse weekly at St Mark's and will have their concerts and community days here. Storing their equipment has meant some changes in how we do things, but having their percussion in the church and available to other groups makes us more attractive as a venue. This is in addition to all the other groups who regularly meet at St Mark's.

We were very lucky to be given a Steinway Model D grand piano by Kate Dugdale. It was built in 1968 and has been very well maintained. As well as being used regularly for worship, it is attracting musicians to the church and we hope that in time that this is going to lead to more bookings.

We'll say goodbye to James Caroe, our senior organ scholar, in the summer. He's moving to Hereford cathedral to be bass choral scholar there for his gap year. He's made (and continues to make) a huge contribution to the music at St Mark's, and we'll miss him.



Our new Steinway grand piano