

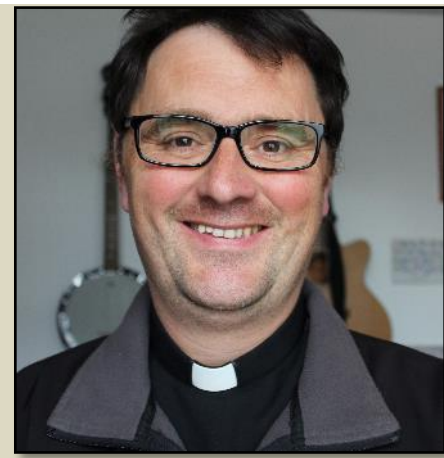


**St Mildred's Church
APCM 2026**

St Mildred's APCM Report 2026

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Welcome from the Vicar

Welcome to our 2026 APCM Report

We give thanks to God our Father for His faithfulness in guiding us through a significant year in the life of St Mildred's which has seen the commencement of work on our buildings. After years of prayer and planning, we signed the building contract with Coleman & James in November 2025 and officially broke ground in January 2026. It was particularly moving to celebrate a Bible and time capsules being placed into the foundations of the new hall, symbolically grounding our future in God's Word. While the construction has brought challenges—including the loss of space and heating in the church—we are grateful to God for the resilience he has given us.

We congratulate our curate, Anna Mills, who was ordained as a priest in summer last year, and also our assistant minister, Daphne Clifton, who was appointed Assistant Area Dean during the year.

We continue to value service as a key priority of our church; from our homegroups and youth work to our "Refresh" coffee mornings and the dedicated teams managing the development project, we thank God for the gifts of his people.

In February 2026, the PCC held an Away Day to think about transitioning from delivering the project to managing the responsibility and opportunities the new hall will bring. Remembering our vision "to know Jesus and make him known" we considered various ways our new building will serve as a community hub and fulfil our mission.

This new season will call us to being willing to take risks as we launch new projects and ministries. We have big dreams for the new hall and want it to be a place that serves lots of different people in our church and community. We are also committed to environmental stewardship, utilising the solar panels recently installed on the roof (after the strengthening work done last year) and Air Source Heat Pumps to reduce our carbon footprint.

Christmas 2025 was a highlight, with our Shoe Box ministry collecting a record 571 boxes and many people joining us for services. Easter 2026 likewise was a special time. The Fun Day saw lower attendance than usual but enabled us to have deeper conversations with people in a slightly more peaceful environment.

Our Lent Course in March looked at various pairs of people the Bible mentions (like Cain and Abel and Martha and Mary) in order to learn from both positive and negative examples.

Over the last year we had the pleasure of marrying Anderson and Louise, hosting a renewal of wedding vows for Derek and Janette, baptising Mei and Aeryn and having a reaffirmation of baptismal vows for John. Besides services held only at the crematorium, we had two funeral services in church during the year: for Joyce and Adebowale for whom we give thanks to God. Our Electoral Roll stands at 105 people (aged 16 and above) and 32 children.

Financially, we ended 2025 with a small deficit of around £3,200. The generosity of our congregation remains astounding.

As you read this report, I invite you to ask if God is calling you to serve him in new ways. We have a faithful God; let's continue to trust and serve Him boldly in this courageous new season.

Rev Tom Lake



APCM Minutes 2025

**THE PARISH OF ST MILDRED'S, LEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF PARISHIONERS FOR THE PURPOSE OF
ELECTING CHURCHWARDENS AND THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH
MEETING HELD IN CHURCH
ON SUNDAY 18th MAY 2025 AT 12.00 NOON.**

Election of church wardens: Both Jan and Shimona were happy to stand again for the year.

Election of PCC members: Katie Doores and Andrew Beck were re-elected as members of the PCC.

Tom explained that due to the new hall being considered an asset, we will need to have our accounts audited each year by a registered accountant. Tom

thanked Chinedu for being our independent examiner over the last few years for free. Tom presented him with a gift as a sign of our appreciation.

Motion: To appoint Field Sullivan, of 9 Hare & Billet Road, Blackheath as auditors, at a fee of £4920 to include preparation and audit of our 2025 accounts.

Proposed: Trevor Gill, Seconded: Hannah Cook, passed unanimously.

Report on the electoral roll: Attendance since the pandemic has gone down. Tom showed how the electoral roll numbers had changed over the last few years. When the electoral roll was cleared previously (in 2013 and 2019), the drop was not as large as this time. Previous roll in 2024 was 131 but it now stands at 104. This may reflect the consequences of the Pandemic, but it should also be noted that this is a trend that has been observed across the Church of England for a long period of time. This is not the universal picture for all CofE churches or other Christian denominations, however, Tom is excited by the prospect of new season after the church hall is built.

2024 Accounts: There was a surplus of £11K at the end of 2024 which is an improvement on the year before where there was a £25K deficit. Unfortunately, we have lost the blood donors who were providing around 10% of our income which will be a challenge moving forward. Trevor thanked everyone for giving regularly and those who had switched to the Parish Giving Scheme. Trevor thanked Paul for preparing this year's accounts.

Looking ahead: Tom reminded us that at last year's APCM we were looking at the 16 'blocks' representative of the remaining funds we needed for the building project and how we used the Bible passage from 2 Samuel 5 and knowing the right time to march. Tom is encouraged by the progress made with the project over the last year.

Building project update: Tom reminded us that the point of the building is "putting the church at the heart of the community". Since last year the predicted costs is now down to £3.7 million with a budget of £3 million. There are still 7 'blocks' remaining. The estimate was reduced through design development and informal engagement with contractors to get a more accurate predicted cost. The £3 million budget is based upon assumed funds from grant funding, but this has not been met yet. PCC have also agreed to apply for a loan of up to £500K with very favourable terms. It is planned that electric vehicle chargers, installed as part of the project, will raise money in future to cover the loan repayments. We should also consider that good management of the hall will also provide income for the church in the future. The cost projections include a 10% contingency on the building work to cover unforeseen costs, but this may not be

needed. Trevor shared that there has been £125K of additional gifts given for the building project this year.

The contract has been put out to tender, and the potential building contractors price quotations are due in early July. These will then be studied to determine which is most suitable for our project and this is not just about using the cheapest contractor (evaluation will be based on 40% cost and 60% quality). Contractors will be interviewed and points to consider will include things like: how they will work with us and the community; source of materials; references. Please pray that these tenders come back favourably and lower than expected (this could bring the shortfall down to 4 “blocks” only). All contractors will be visiting the site on Wednesday and please pray for this meeting. Tom asked us to pray: giving thanks for how far God has brought us already; for His guidance in making the right choices moving forward; and for His ongoing provision for us.

Remaining challenges:

Other challenges include the Faculty (permission from the Diocese of Southwark). A 28-day notice was displayed and the time has now elapsed, so we are now awaiting the DAC recommendation. Things are moving forward positively at the moment.

Thames water: We will need to build over one of Thames Water’s drain, but the drain is also broken. There are meetings in progress.

Lewisham council: An amendment to planning permission from Lewisham council was required due to the cost saving design changes. This has been submitted and we are awaiting the outcome.

Funding challenges: The original grant funding target has now been reduced from £600K to £350K since last year due to the current economic market reducing the amount of money grant funders are giving away. We have been awarded grant funding of £50K at the present time. We are currently waiting to hear back from some application and have plans for future ones.

Purpose of the new building: “Putting the church at the heart of the community”. Tom reminded us that the church is not ultimately about bricks/mortar but having a space for us to run activities for the church and community and to be a blessing to our community. This will enable us to make connections with people in our area. Things have moved on a long way since last year and contractors could be starting work in the autumn 2025. This is really amazing, and we give thanks to God.

Tom closed in prayer.

Tom due
10/06/25



East Lewisham Deanery Synod

24 June 2025, (St Mary's, Lewisham)

Main item: Deanery Synod – why are we here?

Revd Michael Bailey (St Stephen and also Area Dean) introduced this as a time of reflection on what we do as Deanery Synod, and an opportunity to thank us all for our commitment and service. He then introduced Henry Metcalfe, to speak about Diocesan governance generally. Henry explained his role mostly working with the Diocesan Secretary, Nicola Thomas, but amongst many other things he also deals with governance queries from parishes.

6 November 2025 (St Margaret's Church, Lee Terrace, Blackheath)

Main item: RACIAL JUSTICE - by Weisi Dennis (Racial Justice Development Officer) Diocese of Southwark

Diocese of Southwark's Anti-Racism Charter (ARC) adopted by Diocesan Synod in March 2021. ARC Parish Study Resource was introduced. This was reviewed and discussed by synod members.

12 February 2026, (St Andrew's Catford)

Main item: Panel discussion on mission and outreach, especially with young people

Revd Daphne Clifton acting as chair introduced those speaking on the panel:

Imani McEwen (Diocesan Children & Youth Team), the Revd Bec Wilkinson (St Andrew), Fr David Adamson-Hill (St Mary), and Cat Clay (St Margaret).

Administration:-

It was also reported that no-one has yet volunteered or otherwise been identified yet to succeed Clare Dowding as Deanery Synod Secretary. Parishes were encouraged to ask people to consider this service to the Deanery Synod. Details are available from Chris Coutts.

Chris Coutts on behalf of Deanery Synod Reps.



Churchwardens' Report

(including Fabric, Goods and Ornaments)

This year has been particularly eventful for fabrics, goods, and ornaments*.

In fact, we have all seen our goods and ornaments more closely and more frequently than we would have ordinarily wanted, as they have been spread about the interior of the church, as our vestry and upper room have closed to assist the work on the new building. Groups who already had to accommodate each other patiently after the old hall closed have had to be even more creative and patient with how they use space, and Shimona and I have been particularly grateful at how generous you have all been; from parent and toddlers watching their stores move around the church to Pauline's prayer ministry team praying in a safe building site (although, who prays more fervently than a man or woman in the shadow of the scaffold?). Numerous items were put into the upper room, where they will be sealed away until the building work has been completed. Whilst engaged in this, we also saw the planned selling of the red bus, that was being used by the Sunday School, so that the contractors could spread into car park.

The sale of the bus, along with the upheaval and inconvenience inside the main church body, have been the result of the start of the building works that we have been earnestly waiting for, praying for, and saving for, for many years, so in that respect, they are quite welcome.

Our Quinquennial Inspection was carried out in September last year, with recommendations and instructions for repairs and works given in seven categories of urgency or need. All issues noted in the 'urgent works requiring immediate attention' and 'work to be carried out during the next twelve months' categories are currently being addressed. The Quinquennial Report is actually very interesting (on top of being important) and should you wish to see a copy, please speak to Shimona, Victoria, or me.

This year, Shimona and I have been pressed into service by the new treasurer as co-signatories for expenses and payments. This gives Mr Trevor Gill some cover as he transfers large sums in the direction of the building project, usually at the request of Mrs Gill. More of this in the treasurers report I'm sure but we have been happy relieve him from this anxiety.

Finally, both Shimona and I would like to once again thank the people that make our job possible for two working people; previous wardens who keep an eye out

for issues and bring them to our attention, those people who help by giving their time and skills to maintain the contents of the church (you know who you are), and Victoria, who always goes above and beyond to support the team.

Jan and Shimona, Churchwardens



Treasurer's Report

Once again, a very big thank you to those who have contributed with regular giving to both General and Development funds, as the vast majority of our income is from personal gifts. During the year many people switched to giving by Direct Debit via the Parish Giving Scheme. If you'd prefer to give by Standing Order, the new software we are using to manage our accounts now makes this just as easy for us to process, so if you are not yet giving regularly and would like to start to do so, please choose whichever way you prefer. There are leaflets in church explaining the Parish Giving Scheme and details of our bank accounts are on the Church Website under "Giving". If you are a taxpayer and giving by Standing Order, don't forget to fill in a Gift Aid declaration and give it to Trevor Gill or email Treasurer@stmildreds.org.uk. If your giving is irregular rather than a fixed monthly sum, it's better to use bank transfer as PGS makes a small charge for processing one-off gifts.

Total receipts in the General Fund during the year were £156,443. This is a little higher than the previous year's figure of £153,860 despite the loss of hire income from NHS for blood donation sessions. The loss of NHS income was partially balanced by a substantial refund on our past energy bills. SSE had ceased to be our energy supplier in September 2024 but a long running dispute about VAT was finally resolved in 2025. During 2025 we moved some of our General Fund into the interest-bearing account at CCLA which holds our Development Fund reserves, resulting in a useful £1,751 of interest.

Total expenditure amounted to £144,454, again slightly higher than last year's figure of £142,751. We have been fortunate in requiring no major unexpected expenditure this year. However, after a substantial decrease in our pledge to the Diocesan Parish Support Fund in 2024 following the substantial deficit in our 2023

accounts, we began to increase it again in 2025 by £5k. We are still paying less to the Diocese than we receive back in the form of support for our Vicar's salary and housing and have increased our pledge again for 2026.

Because of our increased income in the building fund this year, we have exceeded that statutory threshold requiring our accounts to be subject to a full audit rather than the simpler Independent Examination. We have been fortunate in the past to have been able to have our accounts examined at zero cost. Our 2025 accounts include the cost of the audit at nearly £5k. A return to more normal income levels on completion of the building project and increased thresholds recently announced by the Charity Commission mean that we will return to Independent Examination in 2026. Although we are likely to have to pay for examination in future, it will be substantially cheaper than an audit.

It is our policy to give 10% of our income to mission outside the church. During the year we made payments as usual to our mission partners of £15,385 but these do not appear in the 2025 accounts as they were already provided for as a debt in the 2024 accounts. This year we have changed our accounting policy so that our tithe (10% set-aside) is not treated as a debt but put in a new designated fund. This year we set aside £15,548 of which £180 was spent during the year in monthly contributions to Christians Against Poverty, leaving £15,368 in the new General Tithe Fund for distribution to our main mission partners during 2026.

Deducting the total unrestricted expenditure for the year from the unrestricted income results in a surplus for the year of £11,989, but this is a little misleading as £15,368 is set aside in the new General Tithe fund to pay to our mission partners. The net change in the General Fund is thus a modest loss of £3,379. This compares to a surplus of £11,109 in 2024 and a deficit of £25,501 in 2023. The balance of the General Fund remains healthy at £112,933.

The Development Fund contains money set aside for our building project. Total receipts into the Development Fund in the year amounted to £1,125,814, of which £114,829 was bank interest. As with the General Fund, the method of accounting for the tithe from the Development Fund has changed. This results in a negative expenditure of £254,221 where the debt representing the tithe set aside in previous year was written off and moved into the new Development Tithe Fund. Expenditure of £58,160 in maintenance costs was mostly on the refurbishment of the South Aisle Roof to allow the installation of solar panels as part of the energy supply for the new building. Other expenditure of £216,991 was capitalised as work contributing to the building of the new hall, mostly in the form of professional services. At the end of the year, the balance of the Development Fund stood at £3,431,023 of which £2,847,978 represents net current assets and £583,045 fixed assets, the vast majority of which is the capitalised value of work towards the

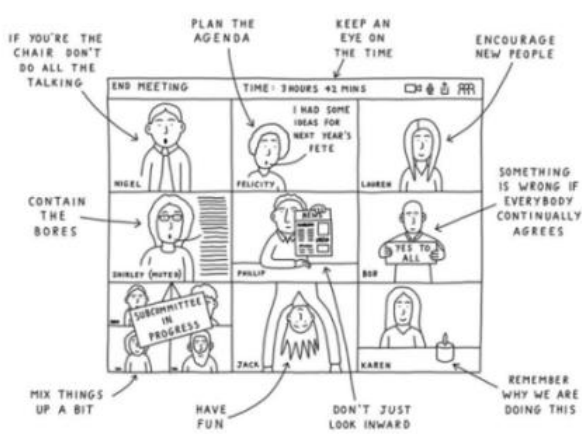
building of the new hall. We are very encouraged by the money raised to date and give thanks to God for his wonderful provision.

In September, the PCC took the decision to place a building contract with Coleman & James (Services) Ltd for construction of a new church hall. The decision was based on a detailed budget including the quoted cost, a provision for cost over-run, the funds in hand and promised, the offer of a loan of £450k from Methodist Chapel Aid Ltd and likely additional income to the fund over the coming year. The PCC assured themselves that there were provisions in place to ensure that even if none of the expected additional income at all were to materialise, the fund would not go into deficit, although aspects of the building might not be completed. A cashflow forecast for 15 years was prepared as part of the application process for the loan, to ensure an adequate degree of confidence that the loan can be repaid. Some interest-free loans have been offered by members of the congregation, of which one has so far been drawn upon.

Because some degree of over-run in cost is inevitable in any building project, it's impossible to say exactly how much money we still need to raise to complete and fully fit-out the new building. Our current estimate is that we could still need another c£300k on top of the £450k loan which we will have to repay over 15 years. Ideally the project costs will not rise, we will raise more grant funding, and need to borrow less than the full loan offer, which will reduce ongoing costs.

2026 will be a challenging year as we complete the construction of our new hall. The PCC has agreed a budget which leads to a potential deficit for the year in the General Fund of £10,000, recognising that much will change in 2027 as our new hall brings increased running costs but scope for multiple new sources of income, which we will need to raise to cover the costs and repay the loan. We thank the Lord for his provision which always meets our needs.

Trevor Gill (Treasurer)



Proceedings of the PCC

Members of the PCC who served during 2025 and up to the date of the APCM were as follows:

CLERGY

Vicar

Rev. Tom Lake (Chair)

Assistant Minister

Rev. Daphne Clifton

Curate

Anna Mills

CHURCHWARDENS

Shimona Gayle

Jan Wiszniewski

DEANERY SYNOD

Chris Coutts

David Nicholls

Trevor Gill

Rob Sutton (until August 2025)

ELECTED MEMBERS

Pauline Leslie

Andrew Beck

Stella Gill

Edna Petzen (until May 2025)

Serena Atkins-Bibow (until May 2025)

Katie Doores

Margaret Brooks

Matthew Shimwell

Hannah Cook

Elizabeth Harris

Lee-Ann de Villiers

Shiela Samuels (from July 2025)

TREASURER

Trevor Gill

SECRETARY TO PCC

Katie Doores

The purpose of the PCC is defined in law which states that “It shall be the duty of the minister and the parochial church council to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish”. Its functions also include “co-operation with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical”.

The full PCC met in person 9 times during the year with an average level of attendance of 74%. Subgroups meet to discuss mission support and the Development Project and report back to the PCC with recommendations.

The Standing Committee is a sub-set of the PCC appointed by the PCC and consisting of 8 members including the Clergy, Churchwardens, Secretary, and Treasurer. It has powers to transact the PCC's business between meetings. The standing committee met online 4 times during the year.

A report on the proceedings of the PCC is a legal requirement on the agenda of the APCM, here is a summary of the topics we have addressed during 2025:

- Safeguarding – ensuring we are taking all appropriate measures including training for those involved in church ministries, to ensure the safeguarding of everyone involved in any way with the church.
- Church finances, including updating account signatories, using an online accounting system.
- Decisions on progress of the Development Project, including approving initiation of the tender process, appointing a building contractor, loan application to cover remaining budget shortfall, approaching church members for loans.
- Approving a stained-glass window in memory of Jenny Phillips.
- Special services and events at Christmas and Easter, including ministry Christmas trees, and the Easter fun day.
- Support and funding of our mission partners.
- Agreement and updating of a range of policies including; (i) grievance procedure, ii) disciplinary procedure, iii) whistleblowing policy, iv) finance policy, v) bullying and harassment; vi) campaign and political activity; vii) church risk register; viii) legacy Policy; and ix) conflict of interest.
- Maintenance and updating of our church fabric, including chapel stonework, chapel underpinning, coping stones. The quinquennial inspection was conducted in September 2025.
- Developments in children's and youthwork.
- Monthly pattern for holy-communion services
- Renewal of music licences used by the worship team
- Our pledge to the "Parish Support Fund". This is our payment to the Diocese which funds central functions as well as Tom's salary & housing.
- Supporting Operation Christmas child by acting as a collection point.

Katie Doores (PCC Secretary)



Development Project

At the point of last year's AGM, we were encouraged about the prospect of moving the building project forward, but still facing uncertainty, particularly as to:

- costs
- selection of a contractor
- issue of Faculty consent by the Church of England
- discharge of planning conditions.

2025 turned out to be an amazing year of answered prayer!

We prayed that the south aisle roof refurbishment would be carried out safely:

During April and May a team from DBR, a specialist roofing contractor, refurbished and re-covered the whole of the church south aisle roof ready for the later installation of 100m² of solar cells as part of the main building project. DBR were extremely easy to deal with and – post 2025 note! – the solar panels were installed at the end of April 2026.

We prayed that the “Faculty” (formal consent from the Church of England) would be issued promptly: After some initial delays, things moved quickly and the Faculty was granted in plenty of time before construction work was due to start.

We prayed that all of our planning conditions would be discharged on time and without any difficulty: We took the slightly risky route of dealing with all of the remaining conditions in one combined application and we experienced some delays in the process – but we were assisted by a very helpful Conservation Officer and the conditions were discharged well before work needed to start.

Facing delays in securing consent from TfL and Lewisham Council to amend traffic priorities at the junction of Helder Road and St Mildred's Road, we prayed that the necessary consent would come through quickly. We stood outside on the junction and asked God to intervene: So he did! The necessary form was issued the following day, and the required work was then progressed quickly.

We prayed for a loan application to be accepted: The application involved a lot of work but we learned a lot in the process. The lenders (Methodist Chapel Aid)

were easy to deal with, we received a very helpful reference from the Diocese and the loan was agreed promptly.

We prayed that costs would be manageable, and for guidance in the selection of a contractor: A building contract tender process involving three contractors over the spring and early summer of 2025 produced prices in excess of our cost plan. This was initially discouraging, but our preferred contractors, Coleman & James, worked with us to secure cost savings over the following months.

We prayed over the summer for further funding, to enable us to move forward and commit to a building contract: With 80% of the required funding in place, plus agreed loan arrangements, the PCC took a step of faith and signed a building contract in November, at a contract sum of £3,147,438 + VAT. By early December, our contractors had carried out preparatory stabilisation works in the chapel, ready to begin construction outside at the beginning of January 2026.

So with many generous answers to prayer in 2025, we are now (at the 2026 AGM) several months into the process of building our new hall. We pray for the safety of all those working on the site, and for wisdom in all of the decisions that need to be taken as the project progresses. We continue to give grateful thanks to our faithful Heavenly Father, trusting him to provide the further resources needed to complete the project, for his glory and for the extension of his kingdom here in Lee.

Stella Gill



Young people at St Mildred's – Kool Kidz



God always has a plan!

This last year has had many changes for Koolkidz: we updated our teaching material, sold our red bus, moved our leaky green bus to another spot in the carpark as construction work started, transplanted our oldest Streams class into the foyer and reshuffled quite a few teachers and helpers. Through it all though, we were (and are) constantly reminded that the 11 to 12 children we teach each week are precious to God. He has a plan and we are co-workers with Him!

For as long as I have been teaching Sunday School in St Mildred's, we have used the Click series. But from January this year, following a recommendation by the Diocese, Koolkidz moved to Energize.net. Not only is all the material accessible online and each lesson can be customised based on the class, but there are also videos and resources which are specific to the church calendar. In addition, older groups can access articles and podcasts which are contemporary and related to world events.

It wasn't an easy switch from our well-worn Click books but five months in and we are all getting more used to the new materials. Please continue to pray for our teachers, especially as more advanced planning is necessary when putting lessons together.

Another big change for us was an adjustment of the age banding for each of the three groups, Bubbles, Splash and Streams, partially in response to the new material but also the range of children who attend each week. Focusing on a common theme each term across all groups also mean that we are able to combine some activities, especially when attendance is low.

As we navigated teachers and helpers being called to other ministries, God always provided back-up! We are so grateful to everyone who volunteered to step in, especially after Easter when a few of our young helpers took a break for exams.

The bible says in Psalms 127 that children are a gift (v3 '*Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from Him*'). They are our heritage as a church family, and we are to teach them His word and His ways (Deuteronomy 6):

'⁴ Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.'

So, it doesn't matter if 50 or 5 show up. Each one is precious and He has a plan for them.

In a Splash lesson earlier this year, we were discussing the love of God and how He is able to forgive all our sins. Moving from the thief on the cross, one of the children asked how they could be expected to forgive war criminals who have done horrible things? We concluded that we couldn't. Not without help. Our human natures are such. But as vessels of God's love, it's Him who forgives and all we need to do is be obedient and allow His work to be done through us.

Last but not least, we would also like to remember God's providence to us during our Christmas party: it didn't rain and we had a wonderful time! Lee-Ann was wrapped up like a colourful present, children herded cotton wool sheep with a paper fan, coloured rubber ducks were sorted into their different hometowns and very beautiful craft was made. The children really enjoyed it and a lot of planning and work go into making them successful.

Please continue to lift Koolkidz up in prayer and help us to remember that we need to hear His voice and be led by our great teacher! God always has the best plan for us and I can't wait to see what He will do through us this next year, especially in our new hall!

Sarah Lee



Young people at St Mildred's – Sunday@six



Sunday@six is St Mildreds current provision for young people. We meet at 6pm every Sunday during term time and our group is for any young person in school years 6 to 13 (ages 12 years to 18ish).

The aims of Sunday@six are:

- To encourage and help our young people develop a deep, relevant, lifelong faith;
- To encourage and enable strong peer relationships that will support that faith;
- To encourage and enable strong intergenerational relationships (and sense of community) that will support that faith;

- To encourage and enable our young people to become fruitful members of our church family.

Whilst absolutely anyone is welcome at Sunday@six, you will notice that this is not an outreach ministry. Very sadly we do not have the capacity, at present, to run youth outreach. The majority of young people who attend Sunday@six are also part of our Sunday morning church family. However, we have a significant number who do not attend St Mildreds but do attend Sunday@six regularly. Usually, we have around 15 young people attending each week and 25 regular members.

Most of our weekly sessions will involve an 'all-together' activity, followed by a Bible study, for which we split into two (age defined) groups. Currently both groups are studying The Ten Commandments. Our 'all-together' stuff is varied! Being mindful of meeting our group aims (above), we try to think of different things to do together each week. Popular options are cooking, big messy games, drama, team competitions, craft... (any brilliant and new ideas would be extremely welcome!).

Aside from Bible-study sessions we also have guest speakers / organisations visit us and Q&A evenings, where our young people are encouraged to be asked for a Biblical perspective on absolutely any issue. These are very popular and very challenging.

We often leave the church to do other things together (bowling etc) and we are particularly fond of being invited to church family homes for food (no pressure!!) We have also joined up with other local church youth events, which has been encouraging. These are organised several times a year on a Saturday evening.

We have recently created the role of 'Junior Leader' at Sunday@six. This is for young adults (over 18), already currently involved in Church family life, who want to develop their Christian leadership gifts. Following on from this, we are planning to start a Young Adults group soon. Please pray for us as we try to get these new ideas right!

Our youth team are amazing! We have an exceedingly strong team of volunteers who are always ready to try new ideas and who are hugely committed to our young people. Speaking as a parent, I am enormously grateful for the impact these wise, kind, funny and faithful people have had on my own children.

As a team we do have the capacity to manage a bigger youth group. However, this would need someone to oversee / organise youth outreach. At present, none of us feel able to take on this further commitment. If you are reading this and have any ideas, please come and speak to me.

Another way you could help with St Mildreds Youth work, would be to kindly and proactively involve our young people in any area of church life that you are part of. We cannot hope for our youth to be fruitful Christian adults, if they have not been given opportunities to practice their gifts in a supportive church family. If you would like to talk about what this might look like in practice, please speak to me.

Lastly, please pray for our youth work at St Mildreds. Please thank Jesus that we do have youth. Please pray that our young people would grow increasingly in their faith. And please pray for our tremendous and wonderful volunteer team; pray that Jesus would lead us and we would be listening and faithful.

Helen Lake



Refreshments Team

Our refreshments are available after the service on Sundays. Tea, coffee, herbal tea and soft drinks as well as biscuits, also sometimes cake and other snacks. Everyone is welcome to enjoy the refreshments, enjoy having a chat and sharing God's word. Of course, we would love to get to know each other better and support each other as God's family.

We have a great Refreshments team. It is great opportunity, and an amazing way to serve our God. If you wish to help and to serve God in our way, you are very welcome to join our lovely team.

Ayee McCormack



Parent and Toddlers

We give thanks to God for another wonderful, successful year of our Parent and Toddler group. Although having said that, we also have child minders attending, as well as grandparents, and sometimes other relatives, so there is a real community feel to the group. There is no age limit for adults, and all are welcome. It is also great to see how the children develop and begin to join in more; our youngest attendee was 2 weeks old. It is a relaxing, safe space for the adults too, providing support, friendship and prayer, as well as a very welcome cup of tea or coffee. It always seems to taste better when someone else makes it and our attendees are very appreciative. We are particularly grateful for our helpers in the kitchen, who so faithfully prepare and serve the drinks and fruit.

We run two sessions per day on Tuesdays during term time, and we take care to provide age appropriate, good quality, clean toys, as well as a craft table if older children wish to make a craft which is linked to the Bible story of that session. We have helpers at the entrance and safety gate, which is another way of keeping people safe, as well as providing a friendly greeting, and checking that people have everything when they leave.

God has continued to answer our prayers and has provided enough helpers each week. Special thanks go to Kay for organising this and sometimes having to change plans at short notice. We make time to read the Bible and pray before we open in the morning, as we are here to serve God and the people of our community. Attendees are welcome to join in with the songs and listen to the Bible story, which is acted out in front of them at the end of the session. Particular thanks go to Kay, Kelly and Barbara for this. Jesus' parable of the Lost Sheep is still a firm favourite and there is great rejoicing and excitement when the large cuddly sheep is eventually found!

We were very sad that Joyce passed away last Summer and her quiet faith and gentleness were greatly appreciated. She was also so artistic and creative, and she was a great help with the craft activities; we remember her many years of service with great fondness.

Over the year, the average attendance was 36 adults and 55 children in the morning, and 15 adults and 17 children in the afternoon. There is always a larger attendance at the end of each term, and our Christmas puppet nativity show and party had 68 children in the morning and 25 children in the afternoon.

Last June more people than ever enjoyed the Summer outing to Swanley Park, particularly the splash park, and the fun train rides driven by Chris, for which we thank him.

Once again, the November cake sale raised much needed money for Covenant Home Trust in Kenya (£251), and people enjoyed seeing the photos and information that they sent to us. We are particularly grateful to everyone who provided cakes for the sale.

We are very appreciative of all the many people who help this group in a variety of ways, not just on Tuesdays, especially those who move chairs and prepare the church with our resources. We are so grateful for all those who have worked so hard and communicated with us about the various building contractors, deliveries, furniture needing to be moved, visitors and so on, as we work towards getting a new church hall. A huge thank you for the commitment, care and good humour of everyone, whilst we are dealing with changes. God has answered prayer in so many ways and his timing and provision have been amazing.

We are very glad that so many people provide help for this group on Tuesdays; whether it is weekly or not, it is invaluable, as we work together to provide this service for our community, and to share the good news of Jesus. We pray that God will continue to do amazing things through all of us and our attendees.

Maggie Brooks and the team



Home groups

Homegroups provide a safe place where friendships can flourish with mutual support and prayer. We pray for each other, the Church, and the wider world. Most meetings include bible readings to help us apply biblical principles to our complex lives and messy world we all live in. They are a great way to get to know others and to build deep friendships. Most groups also have occasional parties or celebrations.

Most groups meet every other week (following the second and third Sundays of each month). Memberships of homegroups is stable with five homegroups. Between them they have a membership of about fifty. One group meets in the daytime, usually at Church, and there are four evening groups, meeting on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Most evening groups meet in-person at the home of one of the group members. Some groups have a blended approach, and members join online or occasionally the whole group meets online for convenience.

For the Bible studies, most groups follow materials provided by the Church, but some groups work independently. In the autumn of 2025, we followed the stories about Elijah and Elisha. These coordinated with the sermons in Church and the discussion starters were provided by our very own Paul Nicholson. We started 2026 by studying a group bible reading plan called "*Real Change*" by Andrew Nicholls and Helen Thorne. After Easter, we are again following the topics of the sermons using Paul's brilliant discussion starters.

If you would like to know more about homegroups, or to join one, please speak to either myself or Tom Lake.

Alison Coutts



Warm Welcome Space, as part of our Community Outreach

Having started in 2022, and with the building project about to be well underway in 2026, the vision of Warm Space as a bridge from the church into the new building has very much been coming alive, as the building project emerges. We are still mapped on the national Warm Welcome website, as well as Lewisham Local and we are now a Lewisham Foodbank voucher referrer. We have issued several vouchers across the year and from experience, we know it takes a while for new ventures to become familiar in any locality. Please continue to pray for our growth and to reach those who are working from home and appreciate a change of scenery.

The weekly pattern for WWS in 2025 developed into a more recognisable routine, with Refresh, Holy Communion and crafts on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Wednesdays of the month respectively, with the Scrabble board out most weeks. The 5th Wednesdays, when they occur are for Table Talk. Our first Table Talk, by Isobel Elliott of Judge & Priestly, was well received as we learned about



Wills, Probate and Powers of Attorney. There were a lot of financial questions that arose, so in April Catriona Bryden from Ginkgo Financial in Blackheath, answered questions about pensions and inheritance tax. Later in the year, Daniel Mercier, our local Funeral Director came to answer all our questions about funerals and planning.

Across the summer months, while the south aisle roof was being insulated, we hosted the roofing contractors, who looked forward to the Wednesday catering each week – including ice creams on the very hot days! This proved good practice for the Refresh team, who also catered for numerous building project meetings as we chose a contractor and as ever, the Warm Space guests and team make everyone new to the building welcome; also decorating the Christmas trees in December.

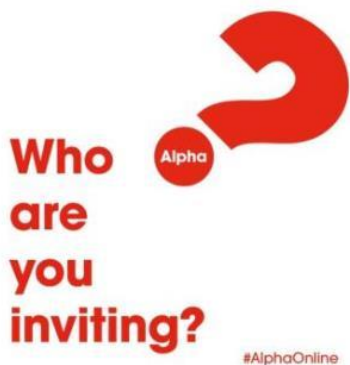


We now have 160 followers on our public St. Mildred's Face Book page – please do follow us and join in or tag us when you see an appropriate post; the more

the merrier. Our workspaces are regularly filled and it's good to be able to meet the needs of those who are self-employed and like somewhere sociable to work.

Please pray this will continue to be a joyful, useful space, particularly as we envisage using it for our building project meetings across 2026 and for wider outreach thereafter. Huge thanks are due to the large team who faithfully come along to listen, chat, talk and make tea.

Daphne Clifton



Alpha Course

As this report goes to print, we (Pauline and Sheila) will be half way through leading our fifth Alpha course @ St Mildred's - this is for us an absolute privilege! Each year support from various members of the church family have helped enrich the overall experience for Alpha participants.

In 2025 we decided to run an afternoon course which was held weekly in Church. There were seven participants in total. Each group is made up of people from diverse backgrounds, with different levels of understanding and opinions about faith. What brings each group together is a shared desire to explore Christianity. God is at work through courses like Alpha, drawing people to himself. For us it is a joy to serve in this ministry and watch as participants grow in understanding and faith, individually and as a group. Following Alpha there have been a couple of baptisms and many testimonies. Here is a sample of quotes from feedback received:

'Alpha was such a special group, it still seems strange to read those questions from our first session, and realize just how far we'd come over the weeks.'

'The whole course has been an absolute revelation to me, and I really do feel now that the Holy Spirit is alive and dwelling inside me'

'a really significant turning point in my life'

The aim of the Alpha course is to provide a friendly environment where people can feel safe to explore the Christian faith together within a confidential setting, on a range of topics, such as:

Who is Jesus? Why did Jesus die?
How does God guide us?
Why and how should I read the bible?

There is no pressure and no such thing as a silly question. Alpha provides space for interesting informative talks, open conversations and cake!
Each course runs for approximately eight weeks and includes an all-important extended session which provides an opportunity for participants to learn about the Spirit of God.

Looking forward

Our vision for the future is to expand Alpha @ St Mildred's, with the new hall enabling us to accommodate a greater number of participants.

If you know someone who may be interested in attending Alpha, lift them up in prayer and maybe consider inviting them to the next course!

If you'd like to learn more, come and have a chat
More details at stmildreds.org.uk/alpha
or email alpha@stmildreds.org.uk

Pauline Leslie and Sheila Samuels



Missionary Giving

General Fund Tithe

Each year, our church sets aside 10% of our 'general giving' income to fund missions in the UK and abroad. In 2025, St Mildred's continued its support for our five mission partners both financially and through prayer. The total donation for 2025 amounted to £15,385. This is a short summary of the wonderful work our Mission partners do:



Arab World Ministry-Pioneers: Arab World Ministries (AWM) is an evangelical Christian mission agency dedicated to sharing the gospel with Muslim peoples in the Arab world, with a long history dating back to 1881. It now operates as part of Pioneers UK & Ireland, focusing on church planting, discipleship, and supporting believers in North Africa, the Middle East, and beyond.

Covenant Home Trust

For many years, St Mildred's has supported Covenant Homes in Kisumu, Kenya, East Africa. Many of the children, once under the care of Pat Botwright, are now adults, finishing their education or with families of their own. Some have even taken in orphans or abandoned children themselves, so our mission continues to a new generation. Operations are overseen by Pat's daughter, Sharon Thorndyke from here in the UK. The trust currently supports children and young people, focusing primarily on helping them complete their college education.



The Nehemiah Project provides safe housing and support for men who want to recover from addiction helping them build stability, purpose, and hope. They believe that anyone can change, given the right support and opportunity, through:

Housing: A safe and stable place to live is the foundation for change. Supported housing gives men security, structure and a sense of belonging while they rebuild their lives.

Recovery: The abstinence-based programme combines counselling, peer support and personal development to help men face the root causes of addiction and move forward with confidence.

Opportunity: The project helps residents prepare for independent living through training and volunteering, building the skills and purpose needed for lasting recovery.



Tearfund is a Christian charity which partners with churches in more than 50 of the world's poorest countries. They tackle poverty and injustice through sustainable development, by responding to disasters and challenging injustice. We stand with Tearfund in the belief that an end to extreme poverty is possible. Thousands of people needlessly suffer and die every day because of poverty. But that's not God's plan for the world. We continue to support Tearfund to reach out to people in greatest need, by joining with local churches and organisations who have a crucial role to play in the places worst affected by poverty.



Every day, millions of Christians risk their lives to follow Jesus. In more than 70 countries, Open Doors supports them by supplying Bibles, providing emergency relief and helping persecuted believers stand strong for the long-term.

In the UK and Ireland, Open Doors helps the church to pray, give and speak out for those who share our faith but not our freedom. Open Doors continues its vital work supporting persecuted Christians worldwide.

Despite the increasing challenges in many regions, Open Doors remains dedicated to strengthening the church in dangerous places through emergency relief, discipleship training, community development, advocacy, and trauma care.

The Missions Partner Group is made up of: Kay Nicholls, Maggie Brooks, Edna Petzen and Lee-Ann de Villiers. If you have any questions regarding our support for these organisations, please speak to any of us.

Thank you, as you continue to hold our partners up in prayer and for your regular giving, both make a significant difference.

Lee-Ann de Villiers

Promoting

a safer church

The care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of everyone who participates in the life of the Church

House of Bishops
Safeguarding Policy
for children, young
people & adults

Safeguarding

Over the last year, Annika & Laura have been:

- Working with Tom to input into church policies e.g. Managing Volunteers.
- Working with Tom to plan changes as to how current policies are implemented e.g. Serious Incident Reviews.
- Working with Tom to complete the new Parish Dashboard for Safeguarding.
- Working with Tom to plan and deliver information to the congregation on Safeguarding Sunday (16th November 2025).
- Meeting with Tom to discuss safeguarding matters and review live cases.
- Liaising with Church Wardens to put the Safeguarding Information / helpline numbers in each of the toilets into smart new frames.
- Attending PCC meetings to ensure that safeguarding remains a priority on the PCC's agenda.
- Visible and available to all church members for discussion, advice and support.
- Working with our Church Administrator (to ensure that volunteers and staff are up to date with their mandatory training) and DBS officer (to ensure that these checks are processed for members of the congregation who are new to serving, becoming Junior Leaders or who are due for their checks to be renewed).

"A Safe Church" is the recommended reading for those involved in any capacity with our children, young people or vulnerable adults. Please follow this link for further details: [Diocesan policies and procedures - The Diocese of Southwark](#) or see the copy which is kept in church.

Please also note that all levels of diocesan training are currently available to access online.

We welcome anyone to contact us to discuss any concerns you may have, big or small. Please see the safeguarding page on the church website for more information (www.stmildreds.org.uk/safeguarding). This includes the contact

email for ourselves - safeguarding@stmildreds.org.uk as well as key contact details for the safeguarding team at the Diocese.

The PCC has complied with the duty to have 'due regard' to the House of Bishops' guidance in relation to safeguarding.

Laura Tewkesbury & Annika Okoro

