



Parochial Church Council Meeting Monday 25 July 2022 (congregational life) Congregational Report

As the congregation may know, since the advent of St James's Senior Management Team, we have restructured the governance cycle at SJP with the Senior Management Team meeting formally every month and informally every week while the Standing Committee (which we must retain in accordance with the Church Representation Rules) is now there for specific tasking by the PCC. The PCC meetings themselves consist in the year of four quarterly business meetings which examine in detail the financial and operational side of the church plus two Congregational Life meetings at which congregational matters are discussed. Monday's meeting was the first one of the latter.

It was very good to welcome the new Associate Rector the Revd Dr Ayla Lepine as a member of the PCC and a trustee of the charity. It was also an opportunity to go through the slides for the Induction programme for new PCC members.

The following discussion centred around three themes: Godly Play by David Wang the current Children's Champion, secondly Congregational Giving and, thirdly, Congregational Objectives for the 2023-26 strategy for the church.

David Wang, as the Children's Champion, has offered to run Godly Play once a month. The usual age group for this activity is noted as 3-12. Although the programme works for children of all ages, those under the age range would need to be accompanied by a parent. In discussion it was acknowledged that for a long time at St James's, the number of children has been below 8-10 children at any one time, and some members acknowledged that St James's has not traditionally been known as a child-friendly church. The PCC wanted to see this change. The proposed programme was agreed and David Wang was thanked for this initiative.

Our Honorary Treasurer Ben Mariam spoke of the Congregation portion of the overall Church budget for 2022. There are a number of income streams that fund this section of the budget, including planned giving and congregational donations/giving. At the moment there is a forecast deficit of £28k in the 2022 numbers. In discussion, the following points were made; ideally, all giving donations should be channelled through the Churchsuite programme, as Gift Aid can be collected much more easily, and reports produced much more simply. Now that the recruitment process for the Development Team has produced a positive result, it makes sense for the back-office functions, ie the running of ChurchSuite, to move to a paid member of the Development Team. A first task, therefore, will be carefully to help migrate as many donors as possible from their standing orders on the Planned Giving scheme to a monthly giving scheme on Churchsuite so that they receive regular thanks and can be communicated with clearly. Lucy Winkett had a planned meeting with the Giving Team being arranged at which all this would be talked through.

There was still a great need for congregation members who convene and galvanise conversations about giving in all its forms in the congregation. This work was outlined in the PCC paper 'Building Community, Deepening Congregational Life' paper which was a modified form of the previous 'Welcoming and Volunteering Strategy'.

For consideration of the Congregational objectives for 2023-26 strategy there were group discussions which built on the work of the former Mission Action Plan. These will be included in the strategy paper by the SMT for the next PCC meeting on 29 September.

Keith Best 01/08/2022