

## All Hallows by the Tower – year ended 31 December 2016

### **Vicar's Annual Report: Review of Progress and Achievements**

The year 2016 has felt like a time of consolidation at All Hallows. After years of intensive building works on Tower Hill, the Cycle Super Highway was completed, the CitizenM hotel finally opened to the public in the summer, and the Four Seasons Hotel @ 10 Trinity Square opened at the end of the year. While there are residual works continuing, the return to normality in the parish has been welcome. For our church community, it has meant a considerable reduction in congestion around us and new neighbours to get to know. The opportunities of new connections and relationship are what makes the City of London an exciting place in which to worship and minister, but the rapid rate of change and turnover in personnel means that we need to develop these connections quickly and convert them into friends. The same is true of all those who visit our beautiful Grade I listed building, with its rich history as well long standing witness to Christ on this important crossroads. Welcome and hospitality remain the key to our fleeting and centrifugal ministry. It is both dynamic and never-ending, perhaps a metaphor for God in the City.

#### **Parish life**

Our 2016 programme of activities was, as usual, comprehensive, with worship and activities involving our regular congregations, the business and Civic community, our visitors as well as our many other constituencies. We were delighted to welcome our Diocesan Bishop, the Rt Rev'd Richard Chartres, for our patronal festival of All Saints. This was a packed occasion, at which the Bishop dedicated our Audio Visual system and live streaming facility, allowing us to stream our services live over the internet. This was Richard Chartres' last visit to All Hallows before his retirement, and we are grateful for his support over the years. In the year, we were sad to record the death of Fred Barclay, a faithful member of the parish for many years.

Our regular liturgical cycle continued, with our Sunday service and Wednesday evening Taizé service attracting a stable mix of regulars and visitors. Easter and Christmas were, as ever, busy times and our carol season saw the largest attendance for years. The number of occasional offices such as weddings, funerals and memorial services was lower this year. These services provide us with important connection opportunities with the business community around us as well and have helped in the past regenerate our Sunday congregation.

We had our regular feast of pageantry and civic events, including the London Marathon service, Maritime Foundation, Beating the Bounds, Knollys Rose ceremony. We welcomed Friends of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf for their Annual Thanksgiving Day, and the Worshipful companies of Bakers, World Traders, Company of Watermen and Lightermen of the River Thames and the Guild of Entrepreneurs for their livery and carol services.

This wide and demanding range of liturgical and non-liturgical events allows us to enhance our presence locally and further afield through the City, Livery, Maritime and other Communities.

#### **Social Outreach**

Our support of the Tower Hamlets Foodbank through the First Love Foundation – both financial and in donations of food - remains an important element of our social outreach. Our Christmas offering also contributed to the Christian Aid Syria Appeal. We also continued our campaign to increase visibility of Credit Unions in the City, and are exploring involvement with other issues of economic justice in the City including through our involvement with JustShare. We have also been actively involved in the challenge of rough sleeping and homelessness through the Vicar's membership of the Corporation of London Rough Sleeping Strategy Group.

The London Marathon provided another opportunity for fundraising by both the Vicar – who raised £13,000 for Bahrain Cathedral's outreach project and the All Hallows Audio Visual appeal. Licensed Lay Minister Martin Carr ran for Action Aid. A big thank you again to all who supported us.

## Education and Visitor Experience

The link with St Dunstan's College continues to strengthen, and pupils attended and provided choral accompaniment to a number of events at All Hallows. Our Education project with Clio's Company was well received again, with nearly 1,000 children coming through the church to attend two interactive context specific plays: 'Ludenwic', set in Saxon times, and 'Ultima Britannia' set in Roman times. Feedback from schools is always excellent.

During the year, we transferred our self-guiding tour app to the Izi.Travel online platform, providing an opportunity for visitors to enjoy a free commentary of the church on their smartphone when no 'live' guides are available on-site. Encouraging those who visit us is part of our call to hospitality, and our Visitor Experience Officer Adey Grummet continues to monitor displays and interpretation, and update them as appropriate.

## People

Our Associate Priest, the Rev'd Sophia Acland, continues to focus on the weekday ministry and outreach with the business and hotel community around us. Our honorary Priest, the Rev'd Dr Fiona Stewart-Darling, Bishop's Chaplain to Canary Wharf, has provided support on Sundays, and our Licensed Lay Minister Martin Carr has continued to support the Sunday and teaching ministry in a volunteer capacity. We thank them for their contribution to the life of the parish.

We also thank Jonathan Melling, our Director of Music, as well as our occasional All Hallows Singers, for providing musical inspiration during our worship. Also thanks to the lay leadership team of our Taizé group, among them Emlyn Williams, and our many volunteers – church welcomers and City Guides - who help to keep the church open and welcoming during the week. Special thanks to our part time vergers during the year, Sean, Martin and Euan.

A parish church is always greater than the sum of all its members, and we thank specially our wardens, members of the Parochial Church Council and the many who enrich our liturgical life through welcome, reading, intercessions and the provision of refreshments afterwards, and those who encourage them. Thank you too to Angie Poppitt, our Operations Manager, who has the knack of reading the Vicar's mind and keep the finances in order.

## Safeguarding

In line with current legislation, the PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, in relation to having due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The House of Bishops has produced policy statements which can be found at this link: <http://tinyurl.com/mm8qprd>

## Conclusion

As we continue to grow in faith and service in the spirit of the Diocesan Capital 2020 Vision, we can be proud that in an area without residents we remain a church that is confident, creative, and compassionate, welcoming all in the name of Christ, and continuing the vision of St Ethelburga who founded us so many years ago. In the ever changing environment of the City, we pray that God may fill us with renewed vision and use us to his glory.



The Revd Bertrand Olivier (Vicar)

March 2017