

Annual Reports

2023



St. Cuthbert's
Scottish Episcopal Church
Colinton

Rector's Report

**Revd Nicki McNelly will give her report at the AGM on
Sunday 26 November 2023**

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Badminton Club

St Cuthbert's Badminton Club gives a friendly welcome and encouragement to players of all abilities and ages and meets for 2 hours on a Monday evening in the church hall from late September until the week before Easter. The 2022/2023 season saw the welcome return to post pandemic normal good hygiene practices.

There are usually eight to thirteen players on any evening, and we are rotated by the nominated game organiser to play doubles throughout the evening enjoying friendly conversation between games and a mid-evening tea and biscuit. Members find a listening and caring ear should they want it, and the atmosphere is one of acceptance and support.

From September 2022, we welcomed three new regular players from the community, either as a response to advertising in a local magazine or introduced as an acquaintance of a church member.

The club continues with a core of players from the church congregation who help to run the club, with much of the work being done currently and in past years by Archie Clark. From September 2022 Julia Roberts agreed to take over the Treasurer's role. Anyone from the congregation wanting some gentle exercise and to give badminton a go would be welcomed, but increasingly new members are from the local community, and we will continue to advertise the club in the

local press with the aim of maintaining a healthy number of players.

Julia Roberts

Choir

The past year has been the first “normal” year for the choir since Covid first hit, although, unavoidably, attendance has been hit by Covid from time to time.

The choir has continued to lead the singing and contribute an anthem at all of our services, including the “summer season” Evensongs, and playing a particularly important part in Advent, at Christmas, Holy Week and Easter, Harvest, and at other significant times. Unfortunately, it has also had to play a part in quite a number of funerals, including that of Rosemary Yeoman, a faithful and committed choir member, who will be greatly missed from our ranks.

One of the difficulties of maintaining what is now a smaller choir is the restriction that it places on repertoire, which has to be chosen extremely carefully to suit the resources available, whilst providing music that our members will enjoy singing. We are therefore very grateful for the donation of a set of new anthem books and some additional carol books in memory of Gwen Sidebotham, which have provided some new and attractive music for us to learn.

One of the very significant events of 2023 was the arrival of the new digital organ, which is a vast improvement on its predecessor. It took a little while for the choir members to

get used to the organist being back amongst them, as in the days of the old pipe organ, but it now feels absolutely normal. The other benefit has been the creation of a room for storing the choir's music library where the old pipes were sited under the tower, thereby creating space in the choir vestry for other uses. The acquisition of the new instrument has certainly set the church up for many years to come and is a pleasure to play.

As ever, the small numbers in the choir continue to give cause for concern, and additional support from those in the congregation who can help on special occasions is both much needed and appreciated. Sincere thanks go to all members of the choir for their faithful attendance week by week, and to Andrew Matheson and Xuan Wang, who have deputized for me at the organ.

Philip Rossiter

Christian Aid

There were two main fund-raising events this year: the Quiz Night and the week-long Christian Aid House-to-House Collection.

After two years of quizzing by Zoom we were able to meet once again in person. We were delighted to host 55 people in 7 teams under the aegis of Graham, our stalwart Quiz Master. £720 was raised for our Community Partnership in Bangladesh, which is match-funded 5:1 by the EU.

During Christian Aid Week we delivered 750 envelopes which, when filled, could be dropped off at a nearby address, and we also supplied a way of giving online. Only 107 envelopes were returned. 22 people used the JustGiving website. Small numbers, but great generosity - £3,153, much of which was Gift Aided.

The Colinton Christian Aid Committee is made up of volunteers from two churches, the Parish Church and our own, but there have been a number of retirements in the last 5 years. As I have been on the Committee since 1994, I think it is now time for me to join that group and I will be resigning at the end of March next year.

On behalf of the Committee and of Christian Aid I would like thank the congregation for their generosity, interest and help over the last couple of decades.

Patricia Brignall

Eco Congregation: Engaging with Nature for the future

In the early spring it was lovely to see the bulbs that we planted in Sunday school coming out around the newly planted tree to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, reminding us that the cycle of the seasons is ever turning . When we planted the bulbs last October we thought about the element of earth. It is at the very heart of all our natural world.

We had an 'Eco Sunday school' on 5 February when we went into the garden in winter, and identified the plants we could see and looked for birds in the bare trees. Perception –

Patience – Purpose came to mind as guides: observing nature and what can be seen at any time of the year; waiting for signs of awakening growth and hibernating animals as we look forward to spring; trying to learn more about God's wonderful Creation – looking to Lent and thinking how we can take actions to look after the planet in each of our lives. Themes which can apply to us all, not just the children.

It is all about the future. We thought too about the love which came to us at Christmas: our sign was making hearts to put in the window, a sign of our thankfulness for nature and our caring for it and each other.

We now no longer have the Sunday School where Caroline incorporated many activities on Creation, nature activities, and awareness of eco-friendly practices. We do have the church garden, expertly looked after by the garden group, which includes a wildlife meadow area, a constant reminder of the importance of nature around us.

Recently in the Season of Creation in September our services in church had a green order of service and liturgy focusing on care for creation.

In the wider context, there are many opportunities in Edinburgh to network with church groups through the Eco congregation in terms of meetings and workshops. Recently there has been a consultation as part of the Scottish Government's Just Transition Plan to gather views in three sectors – Land use and agriculture; Built environment and construction; Transport. This relates to the Eco-Congregation's 'supporting action that is fair and just to

tackle the climate emergency without impacting most on those facing most disadvantage’.

Kay Dalley

Events & Fundraising

This group was formed, initially with some Vestry members, to begin to take some positive steps to focus on fund raising both within the church and reaching out to the wider community. It soon became clear that this indeed meant hosting and staging events so church social events now come within the remit of the group. Since April 2022 the group has worked on seven events, Brew & Bingo, the Christmas Fayre, the Daffodil Tea, the Coronation Picnic, Armed Forces Day, the 130th Anniversary Party and the party for Harvest and Lesley’s farewell. We also tried to revive the second hand book sales but decided that this was considerable work for little reward and we donated all the remaining books to the Christian Aid Sale in May. Although the sums are not always great every event has made money for St Cuthbert’s and there is now a dedicated part of the accounts to record fund raising. We are busy preparing for the Christmas Fayre to be held in the hall on Saturday 25th November from 2-5pm and we have a date booked for another springtime tea on 13th April 2024. We are looking at other possible opportunities both to gather together and to raise money. We aim to try and organise 3 or 4 events each year. If anyone has a suggestion for an event please speak to a member of the group. All ideas are welcome.

We would like to say a very special thank you to Margaret Holmes who has stepped down from the group. Margaret was for many years responsible for all special events and catering at St Cuthbert's. Her wonderful enthusiasm, great ideas, efficiency and attention to detail gave us Burns Suppers, Harvest lunches, Christmas teas, picnics and much more. She also ensured that there were always supplies of anything that might be needed for catering from cups to cling film. Thank you Margaret for everything you have done.

**Joan Smith, Judith Mackintosh, Philip Rossiter,
Bev Henderson, George Bungay**

Flowers

I am sure that we all enjoy seeing the church decorated with flowers and we are very fortunate at St Cuthbert's to have such a talented Court of Flower Fairies who work their magic almost every week of the year.

But I am especially grateful to Diana and Christine who plan, design and go to the flower market to purchase flowers for their pedestal arrangements, not only for festivals, but for weddings and special occasions.

If you would like the opportunity to release your hidden talents in floral artistry, to emulate Constance Spry or Sarah Horn and to join this happy throng, please let me know, you would be made most welcome.

Our next gathering will be on the morning of Christmas Eve when the church will be a hive of activity.

Alternatively, if you would like to do an arrangement on a date which is particularly significant to you, just add your name to the rota at the back of the church.

Margaret Holmes

Foodbanks

Holy Trinity Foodbank:

Members of our congregation have supported this Foodbank, in Wester Hailes, for over 11 years. Initially with food donations, then cash & food and latterly with cash. The steep increase in the price of food and fuel has seen many more people turning to foodbanks for help and the foodbanks find it more and more challenging as their costs are rising too. Patricia and I continue to collect cash from any members of St.Cuthbert's who would like to donate in this way. However the cash we collect has gone down over the years as many church members are now paying this foodbank directly so that gift aid can be collected. As far as I can gather, in the financial year ending 5th April 2023, over £6,000 was donated by members of St.Cuthbert's. Our continued support of this foodbank is very much appreciated by them.

Susan Clark

St Salvador's Community Food Initiative:

The Community Food Initiative at St Salvador's Episcopal Church in Stenhouse, Edinburgh is open to anyone in the

local area who is experiencing financial difficulties. An important aspect of the initiative is that no referral is needed. It relies entirely on donations and volunteers and is open every Wednesday between 12 noon and 1.30pm. Numbers attending the initiative have grown steadily (and indeed significantly) since Revd Andrew Bain became priest in charge. He stepped down last year and Revd Dr Stephen Holmes took over with assistance from Revd Dr Ross Jesmont, who has taken much responsibility for the running of the initiative and acquisition of food. Today (Wednesday 24th October, 2023), for instance, there were 110 food parcels distributed which, though high, was not untypical of the volume of help given. There is usually a supply of fresh food which may include fruit, vegetables and other perishable items. Many of those seeking help are young people and families mostly from the local area, though in a few cases coming from the other side (or even outside) of Edinburgh. There is a dedicated team of volunteers some of whom have been recruited from those attending the initiative and tea, coffee and biscuits are served during and after the distribution of parcels. The initiative is wonderfully blessed by a communion service prior to the distribution of food, attended by both volunteers as well as some seeking support. This is so much more than a 'food bank' and richly deserves our support. At present there is a particular need for tinned fish and toiletries.

Michael Pearson

Forget Me Notes

We were pleased to receive a grant from The Tor Christian Foundation to fund Forget-me-Notes in our hall twice a month. Two of their singers / musicians lead singing, usually old familiar songs, for the first hour and then we have refreshments supplied by our own volunteers.

People from within the local community, along with our own congregation attend and it is enjoyed by all – and you don't have to be able to sing to attend.

With thanks to all the volunteers who help.

Revd Nicki McNelly

Garden Team

Every second and fourth Monday of the month from March to October up to 9 volunteers help to keep the church grounds looking attractive. I hope you agree that the standard continues to improve, and that you appreciate their efforts.

This year's story is largely about water. In spring the south border was completely flooded by a hole in the main church water pipe. While repairing this, the plumber dug such a deep hole that we have been able to eradicate the ground elder which had been annoying us for some time. We then went through a long period of drought, and then in the autumn we had large amounts of precipitation again.

As with any long standing garden some plants sicken with age and it looks as if we are losing a long standing witch elm.

Bryan Dale

Lay Representative

In his address to the Diocesan Synod held earlier this year, the bishop reflected on optimism and hopefulness. He suggested that although they were close allies, they were not the same. Even when we are at our most pessimistic, “Our hope is built on Christ”. We are, he said, “to be a hopeful community, not a delusional community”. This hope, he said, “compelled us to build partnerships with others and to reach outwards beyond the bounds of church, nation and even species, to include all living things.”

I write this, only days ago having attended the Autumn Diocesan Synod, where the agenda focussed on Administration, Finance and Management and towards the end, Investing in the Future. The latter is a new initiative to develop the Church through investment in supporting particular charges and developing new mission initiatives. It is a major mission development. that involves a commitment to draw down up to £750,000 from investments over a five-year period and using this to support existing charges with significant development prospects. Charges which, although struggling, have within them the ‘spark’ of regeneration, for example, in areas of new housing development and population growth. In addition the need to sustain charges in areas of special social need is equally important.

Projects are already underway in St Peter's Galashiels and St John's Selkirk, St John's Jedburgh and St Cuthbert's Hawick, St Matthew's Roslin, St David's Pilton and Priory Church South Queensferry. The previous A7 Partnership covering St Peter's Galashiels, St John's Selkirk and St Cuthbert's Hawick ended in the summer of 2002. Several people spoke passionately about their churches, and what the opportunity to be involved in this development means to them. An agreement between the Society of St Francis and the vestry of St David's Pilton has resulted in three Franciscan Brothers being welcomed back into St David's, and into the local community where previously they were very much a part.

It is acknowledged that there is a need to invigorate all Area Councils to bring co-ordinated proposals forward in this process. I found this so heartening as I have always felt that the role of Area Councils is important. They offer the opportunity for the sharing of ideas of innovative ways of being Church in different locations, where a sharing of local priorities and knowledge can take place. It is refreshing. Since the pandemic, however it has been difficult to gather people together face to face in the way that it was once possible, or so it seems in our Area Council (South Edinburgh Area Council). At our Spring gathering only two lay representatives came along, in addition to me and the Chair, Robin Quinn, who is the Lay representative from Christ Church. The meeting did, however, provide a rich sharing of thoughts and ideas. The meeting immediately prior to the Autumn Diocesan Synod was better attended and I hope this is a sign of regeneration after the disruptive period of the pandemic. I am now stepping down as Lay representative at

St Cuthbert's. It is an exhilarating time for someone else to be taking over this role, equally a good time for me to be stepping down.

Margaret Temple

Leprosy Mission Scotland

We have continued our support of the work of TLMS throughout the year.

I have sent cheques, from the accumulated contributions from the Blue Tubs and generous donations, amounting to £660 in 2023.

The ongoing work of the Leprosy Mission will continue until this disease is finally eradicated.

Thank you to everyone who has supported this very worthy cause. Hopefully you will continue to do so in the coming year.

Barbara Tatlock

Pastoral Visitors

During 2023, as part of her curacy training, Revd Dr. Lesley Penny took over the role of supervision of the Pastoral Care Team and she also assisted me in taking Home Communion to the sick and housebound.

We currently have 14 Pastoral Visitors supporting 32 members of our congregation, 13 of those being residents in care homes.

This is a valuable and important ministry, and my thanks go to all those who are willing to give their time to others in our congregation.

Revd Nicki McNelly

People's Warden

I would like to start my report by thanking the members of the Congregation, and my fellow Vestry members, for all their support during the year.

We have had a number of successful and well attended events this year:

The Daffodil Tea, a Picnic to Celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III, the Armed Forces Day BBQ, Harvest Evensong and Farewell Party for Lesley Penny, and not forgetting the Celebration marking the 130th Anniversary of St Cuthbert's.

Our annual Christmas Fayre is being held on Saturday 25th November, and I look forward to seeing many of you there.

The Events Committee deserve a vote of thanks, for all the work that goes into the preparation of this, and the other Events that have been held throughout the year. We are very grateful for all their efforts. We intend to hold 3-4 events next year - please refer to The Sign and Pew Notes for details.

A huge thanks also goes to the Catering Crew for their splendid work. Especially Margaret (Holmes), who has

decided to step down from overseeing the catering after many years. She will be sadly missed - we are all very much aware that catering is definitely your forte Margaret.

I must mention Marie Neil, and thank her for all her help and assistance in producing notifications of all the events, sometimes at very short notice.

Special thanks go to the Rev Dr Margaret McCrindle (Dineley) and to Rev Dr Lesley Penny for all their support. Lesley has gone to pastures new - taken up an incumbent in Galashiels & Selkirk and our Best Wishes go with you for the future. Thanks are due to June for her help, patience, and for reminding me to read my e mails.

It was my privilege, on your behalf, to present a cheque from St Cuthbert's charity donations, to the Rev Philip Paterson and fundraiser Dan Rous, of the Veterans Chaplaincy Scotland-National.

During the year, I attended 3 Edinburgh Diocese Vestry Days, which I found to be most helpful and informative.

Finally, my special thanks go to our Rector, the Rev Nicki McNelly, for her continued support, guidance, and prayers.

I look forward to serving you as People's Warden throughout the coming year and "My door is always open" should you need me. Thanks, and God's Blessings.

George Bungay

Phoenix Group

Our group has had a very good year since the last AGM with a lot of interest in all of our events. All our gatherings may be attended on an occasional basis and it has been good to welcome new people.

We had two very enjoyable events at Kingsknowe Golf Club :- a delightful and delicious Christmas Lunch last year and a very jolly and well attended Afternoon Tea in April this year. It was a very pleasant and convenient venue and the food was very good too. We thank Audrey Naden, a member there, for liaising with the club.

We also thank Caroline Seville for organising and setting questions for two very successful and fun quizzes, open to all, in the church hall in February and September. They were most enjoyable and were a lovely and convivial way of spending time with others. We look forward to these being regular diary dates.

In August, a group of sixteen of us very much enjoyed a two and half hour round trip on the canal from Ratho on two separate boats, thanks to the excellent service provided by the Seagull Trust. Rosemary Procter is a volunteer there and we are grateful to her for suggesting it. The whole afternoon was just a delight from start to finish and we hope to repeat it.

Please look out for details of our Christmas Lunch this year.

We welcome ideas for future events and gatherings. Please pass any suggestions on to Jean Myers, Margaret Temple or me.

Margaret Kieran

Property Group

Property group comprises: Revd Nicki McNelly & Ross Addison. Both Martin Fairley and Iain McNelly stood down during 2023 for personal reasons.

Thanks are due to Ross for everything he does throughout the church grounds and to Marie for organising and overseeing the annual inspections.

Due to the projected deficit in the accounts, work was kept to essential works only, apart from Sanctuary Project works.

The organ was replaced and moved into the place of the old organ.

The bottom of the tower was renovated.

The two toilets next to the kitchen were replaced.

All locks were replaced throughout the church buildings.

A flood occurred in the office. Work is still underway and will be covered by insurance apart from the excess.

There was also a burst pipe in the main water supply to the church which was repaired. Fortunately the burst pipe occurred in the church grounds.

Tod and Taylor have been instructed to carry out the next Quinquennial Survey of the church property.

All the regular testing and maintenance of equipment has been carried out.

Property Committee

R&R

**"In returning and rest you shall be saved;
In quietness and in trust shall be your strength."**

Taking its name from Isaiah 30:15, R&R continues to meet weekly online, and once a month face to face in St Cuthbert's Church.

This contemplative group, set in the context of silence, prayer and reflection encourages spiritual growth and a deepening relationship with God. We are now facilitated by a group of four, from different Christian backgrounds and denominations, but all guided by Ignatian ways of praying.

We begin with a quiet time of 'stilling' to put aside the busyness of the day and simply 'be' and rest in God. This is followed by a prayerful review of the day, a led reflection and quiet time. Our membership of 19 consists not only of local family at St Cuthbert's, but more recently others from around the UK and even abroad have been given a warm

welcome. We normally have between 6-10 at each gathering. Our first meeting after the summer break, in September, was a time of giving thanks and remembering Rosemary Yeoman, one of our most faithful members, who joined us week by week, over the years since R&R was formed.

Wendy Pearson

Rector's Warden

After my second year of acting as rector's warden, I hope I have provided support for her in her many duties. I know how Nicki has to balance her time between her duties at St Cuthberts and the necessary attendance at charitable and ecclesiastical occasions elsewhere, and I commend Nicki's diligence to you all.

Two examples of this are:

1. The Sanctuary Project has taken a big step forward recently, by the installation of the new organ and new comfort facilities.
2. The departure of Lesley who received the benefit of Nicki's advice and support.

Judith Mackintosh

Sacristans

The job of sacristan goes on behind the scenes each week with little change. We have settled into a post covid routine and as always it is a privilege to carry out this quiet but necessary activity for St Cuthbert's.

As well as weekly laundry and preparation the sacristan is responsible for ensuring there are sufficient altar supplies and while it is of course possible to buy online we are fortunate to have the helpful and friendly Cornerstone Bookshop where we can stock up on wafers and candles.

This year however has seen a new development which has certainly eased some of the work that needs to be done. All the forward altar frontals are now housed in the new room in the tower. What a difference to have space to hang them and deal with the heavy fabrics. It is also good to have all the frontals stored safely and securely close to where they are needed.

As ever my thanks to Bev Henderson for stepping in to help when I cannot be there.

Joan Smith

Safeguarding

We now have a new Diocesan Head of Safeguarding John Wyllie, who has succeeded Donald Urquhart upon his retirement. John will be organising training for PVG co-ordinators later in the year which I shall attend.

All safeguarding information together with posters and relevant telephone numbers are displayed on the noticeboards in the hall and church porch.

Christine Nimmo

St Cuthbert's Playgroup

The Toddler Group is run by the church as an outreach into our local community. It operates every Monday morning in term time in the church hall from 10-11.30am. In September I took over the running of it in a voluntary capacity and have a rota of willing helpers (Christine Sanderson, Patricia Brignall, Margaret Temple, Jean Wood and Julia Roberts). We arrive at 9.20am to get the toys out, set up the seasonal craft activity (see the notice board for the example of the week's activity) and set out refreshments both for the adults and children. During the course of the session we talk to the carers and serve refreshments. I sit with the craft activity which is a great way to get to know the families. In the last 15 minutes I lead singing of nursery and action rhymes. After the families leave we put all the toys away (they are very good at tidying up & placing them near the door for us) and wash up, finishing our duty around 12 noon. We have 17 families registered and on average 12 families come each week. There is a lovely atmosphere of companionship and support. The parents and carers really value the sessions and are appreciative of our hard work.

Megan Emmerson

St Raphael's Prayer Group

We meet on the first Wednesday of every month in church. We are a small group, who pray for the sick and the needy, and flowers and cards are sent out where appropriate. Everything that is discussed is completely confidential.

In an ageing congregation, I know that this service is a very necessary part of our church's life.

Our numbers are slightly depleted. If anyone feels they would like to join us, please contact myself or Nicki.

Judith Mackintosh

Thursday Afternoon Service

These services, held at 2.30pm every first Thursday afternoon of the month throughout the year, comprise reflections, readings, prayers and hymns. Each month has a different theme, chosen by a member of the team, myself, Joan Smith and Caroline Seville. We work very much as a team, with regular meetings at my house and constant correspondence via email, supporting, encouraging and assisting each other in our preparations. At key times of the year, such as Easter and Advent, we have a joint service, each one of us contributing a section of our chosen and appropriate theme.

The services, which we have opened up to our neighbouring Episcopal Church, St. Fillan's in Buckstone, with which we had established close links during their recent vacancy, are well attended, the numbers never falling below 20.

Donald Mackintosh very kindly provides us with our musical accompaniment, with guest appearances from Philip or Andrew Matheson if Donald is unable to be present, and his son, David, is an admirable welcomer and supporter on the day.

No service would be complete without the hospitality so clearly established in his ministry on earth by Jesus himself, so we retire to the hall for refreshments and fellowship to complete the afternoon, the refreshments organised by a rota of our helpful members. There is always room for more people to attend, so everyone is warmly invited to join us to experience a different style of worship here in St. Cuthbert's, a style of worship originated pre-Covid but carried on in a different way since 2021.

Rev. Dr. Margaret McCrindle

'The Sign' (St Cuthbert's Church Magazine)

'The Sign' magazine, produced each month (double issues in December/January and July/August) continues to inform us of forthcoming services in church, duties, 'events', and any other information to keep the St Cuthbert's community connected.

Thank you for your contributions and continued support.

Marie Neil

Website (and Live-Streaming)

The St Cuthbert's website continues to provide updated information on church services, events and contact details.

www.stcuthbertscolinton.org.uk

St Cuthbert's also has accounts with these social media accounts below, reaching further than the website page:



(Facebook, Instagram and Twitter)

Services are now live-streamed when volunteers are available – please see website for further details. These services can be watched live on the day, or at a later date via our YouTube Channel.

Marie Neil

www.stcuthbertscolinton.org.uk

Facebook: @stcuthbertscolinton

Instagram: stcuthbertscolinton

Twitter: @stcuthbertsSEC

YouTube: St Cuthbert's Scottish Episcopal Church

Scottish Charity Number: SC007578