

Holy Trinity Annual General Meeting 2021

Group Reports

Intercessors' and Readers' report

Liz Williams reports: "As with so much in 2020 and 2021 the usual rota and means of reading scripture and leading intercessions, at our Sunday morning service at 11.00am, has had to be changed. Once the first lockdown was lifted in mid-2020 we were able to record readers and people leading intercessions, either in church or from their own homes. A huge vote of thanks to all those who were prepared to step out of their comfort zones and be recorded, as well as Pip for his well-presented 'how to video'. This endeavour continued until some further covid restrictions were lifted and a restricted number of people could again attend services held within the church. All went well with the readers and intercessors as they moved into the 'live' readings that were now needed, all responding to extra readings with good will and in terms of the prayers, both resourcefulness and a clarity of focus.

The Christmas Carol service in 2020 was of necessity recorded outside of the church building in various places around the town and then broadcast on the web. Places used included beside a stables in Newstead; youngsters up an apple tree in a Melrose garden and a lone reader alongside the Covid testing hub at BGH. It is hoped that this different approach helped us all to appreciate the strength and 'power' of the birth of Christ. This year, 2021, saw a return to a Nine Lessons and Carols Service in church with full choir: in many ways a reassurance to us all that despite two different Carol Services in successive years, the exercise of our faith remains strong as we are called to speak anew in so many ways to all those able to hear.

A regular group of people continue with both reading scripture and leading the intercessions within a different pattern of services and worship: a pattern recently established in response to our now having congregations both, present within the church building, and our 'church family' members engaged online. We are grateful to all who read or lead, and we welcome a few new faces, in addition to expressing our particular thanks to Carey Coombs, as he has stood down from the rota.

Churchyard workparty

Maintenance of the churchyard and gardens presented some challenges in 2021, even though John and Jane Barley had provided excellent handover information about their previous stewardship of this task.

The coronavirus epidemic constrained outdoor activities in the early part of the season and, when the situation eased, several former members of the team were unable to rejoin. Carey Coombs and John Woods did sterling work throughout the season in keeping the grassed areas under control and we were joined in this work by 2 volunteers who are not members of our congregation - Simon Johnston and John Bunyan. We were very grateful for their industry and expertise.

A number of gardeners continued in their previous roles, working unobtrusively to keep the various planted areas round the church and the Trinity Centre looking attractive and well cared for.

Towards the end of the year, we held a total of 3 "leaf-clearing" sessions, one of which converted itself into a twig and branch clearing exercise to facilitate access to the Church after storm Arwen. John Williams, People's Warden.

Fabric and Finance Committee

The committee met 5 times during 2021, all but the last meeting held virtually *via* Zoom. Discussions have been dominated by consideration of opportunities for a more modern Rectory for our church. Progress has been hampered partly by constraints imposed by the pandemic, but at the year's end, work on this topic has become more focused and a meeting with the chair of the Diocesan Buildings Committee is scheduled for early January.

The financial aspects of the committee's work are covered by the Treasurer's report to the AGM.

At the last meeting of the committee, Vaughan Walker indicated his intention to step back from his role as Fabric Convener and Vestry member. His commitment and expertise will be greatly missed.

John Williams, Chair, F & F committee

People's Warden

Since my appointment after last year's AGM, opportunities for personal contact with members of our physical congregation have been rather restricted and contact with our online congregation virtually impossible. We must all hope for more opportunities to meet socially and fewer constraints on our corporate worship in 2022.

John Williams, People's Warden

Ecocongregation report 2021

The EcoCongregation Team has continued to communicate mainly on line during the year. The Wildlife Garden with its wiggly path is developing well while additional bird nesting boxes have been placed on the Trinity Centre. A suggestion for bringing beehive(s) into the Wildlife Garden is being investigated.

A successful EcoCongregation Scotland AGM/Gathering was held on zoom in April attended by over 120 people. Although in 2020 a zoom Borders Network meeting was arranged by EcoCongregation Scotland with reasonable attendance, attempts to repeat this year had a poor response. Since the summer EcoCongregation Scotland HQ has been largely involved with COP26 but now that this is over the idea will be revived, probably jointly with adjacent Networks (Esk/Tweed and East Lothian).

Greener Borders/Greener Melrose is endeavouring to put together a zoom programme until such time that "live" events can be practicable. The Borders Organic Gardeners' annual Potato Day is planned for April 2022 in Kelso but with limited capacity.

Ian Skinner

Book Group Report 2020-21: The Book Group met six times this year, all of them on Zoom. We discussed six books, four novels, one being the 2020 Booker prize-winner, a memoir-cum-investigation in and about East Germany, and a collection of short stories.

- *An Equal Music* by Vikram Seth
- *As I Lay Dying* by William Faulkner
- *Shuggie Bain* by Douglas Stuart
- *Stasiland* by Anna Funder
- *Old Filth* by Jane Gardam
- *Binocular Vision* by Edith Pearlman

Our next discussion, later in November, will be on "*The Offing*" by Benjamin Myers. It will be "in-person", hooray!

Alasdair Johnston