

STMARY'S

the church at Islington's heart



Parish Profile



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Thank you for reading our Parish Profile. We are excited about discovering who God is calling to be our new vicar and discerning together the next stage of our communal life in Christ. We hope that you enjoy learning about our church and parish and we pray that as you read about us God will guide your thoughts.

We think of St Mary's as 'the Church at Islington's heart'. This is true historically - the settlement of Islington had its beginnings around the site of the church. It is also true geographically - the boundaries of the London Borough of Islington are

“St Mary’s church is the heart of Islington. It is not only a church but an evolving community”

basically the boundaries of the original parish of St Mary's, established sometime after the foundation of the Diocese of London in 604 AD. It is also true that St Mary's is at the heart of Islington in practical terms, the Town Hall is a stone's throw from the Church and the main council offices nearby. If Islington was a city in its own right (and the Borough's population exceeds that of other cities such as

“A place of encounter with God, with friends”

York, Norwich and Oxford), then the 'city centre' would be Islington Green, the city's high street would be Upper Street (both being in the parish), and the city's big central church would be St Mary's.

As we have prayerfully sought to hear God through this vacancy, we have been encouraged to focus on the potential we see in the 'Church at Islington's Heart' and the opportunity for growth in a number of ways - how we can be more engaged with our faith and how we put that faith into action so that we are more fully and deeply devoted to extending His kingdom. We would like our new vicar to share the long-term vision of the Area and Diocese, and to lead us in developing a strategic vision for St Mary's within this.

If what you read here resonates with you and you feel God calling you to lead us on the next stage of this journey, we would love to hear from you!



Causes for celebration

There are many aspects of our church life to celebrate that are highly valued both by the congregation and the wider community of Islington. We are confident in our faith and are committed to an open, inclusive and challenging evangelicalism that goes back almost three centuries. We celebrate the historic figures that have contributed to our church life, for example Charles Wesley, who was a curate here, and Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the first black African bishop, who was educated at St Mary's School and ordained here. In each generation we have sought to meet the changing needs of our local community and today we celebrate the beautiful diversity of Islington - our doors are open to all, both literally and metaphorically and we value the contributions of all God's children. We believe in being a welcoming church, with a warm atmosphere and a place where many people make lifelong friendships. We enthusiastically live

out our faith, for example through the work of our partner charity Mary's and our Soul in the City Festival. We respond empathetically to the challenges of inner-city life, for example, by providing a space for our local community to mourn those lost to knife crime and then providing a faith context for the national debates on these challenges, for example hosting a BBC Radio 4 discussion on knife crime.

“There is something special about St Mary's. It is such an accepting place, no matter who you are, where you are from or what you enjoy”

Opportunities and challenges

Islington is a dynamic place. We have an equally dynamic history, changing as Islington has changed to meet the needs of a growing and diverse inner-city population. For example, in recent years we have reached out through our Soul in the City festival, we have held vigils for families affected by knife crime, we have hosted election hustings and national broadcast radio programmes, we have become an Eco Church, we have tried different forms of worship and liturgy and we have engaged with different prayer traditions - we love to live out our faith in a relevant and contemporary way. However, we feel that we could challenge ourselves more in a number of areas and push ourselves out of our comfort zone. We have grown and developed as a worshipping community and now we are ready to take a new step forward with someone who will help us craft our vision, focus our energies, identify fresh opportunities and call us to action here and now. How can we do more to reach out to the many people in Islington who do not encounter



“Open church throughout the week offers a haven from busy Upper Street”

God’s word in an increasingly secular and ‘post Christian’ world and bring the Gospel to all?

Being at the heart of an urban inner-city area means that we have a transitory population. While we do have church members who have been an active part of the St Mary’s family for up to nine decades, many in our congregation stay in the area for a couple of years and then move on either for work or family reasons and this is reflected in our electoral roll, with joiners and leavers in total being between 15% and 25% annually. This could be seen as one of the challenges of an urban parish, but we see it as an opportunity - a constant stream of new people looking for spiritual sustenance who we can support





and nurture on their personal journeys of faith and discipleship, even if they are only with us for a short while.

Although we have new people joining our congregation all the time, the number of younger adults engaged in the church is lower than we would like. Yet we have good links with local schools and a range of other organisations in the community on which we can build. We have seen encouraging growth in attendance at some of our Christmas services, as we have provided greater variety and opportunities to worship, but this has not yet translated into greater regular Sunday morning participation. We feel we are welcoming and that we reach out - events like Soul in the City are well attended - but we wonder if we could do more to build relationships with the hundreds of people who use our crypt and Neighbourhood Centre every week and the wider circle of our local community. We see the opportunity to draw new people into faith and into our church.

For people who are already part of our congregation, there is thirst and an openness to find ways to deepen their faith, for example, through new chances to learn, more occasions to share fellowship outside Sunday mornings or through different forms of worship. We also feel that there is a need to reinvigorate how we do mission, to help us discern what God is calling us to as a church and build the platforms to realize this. The opportunities are both to think



creatively about how to enable a diverse church family to grow in faith and provide new ways for us to live out that faith and extend God's kingdom.

Our vision for St Mary's is of a church that is fully embedded in the local community, responding to its diverse 21st Century needs in an inclusive way that connects more people with God more deeply. We are seeking the spiritual and practical leadership to work with us to refine this vision and release our potential to grow.

The vicar we are seeking

We are looking for an inspiring leader with a heart for ministry in the inner-city who embraces challenges as opportunities and who can help us realise the potential we have to grow - in numbers and in faith - and extend God's kingdom.



You will be:

- Keen to seek the will of God and to shape our minds and hearts to serve God in mission;
- Possessed of a deep, prayerful Christian spirituality and creative intelligence;
- Clear thinking, wise and collaborative in your approach to leadership;
- Inclusive in approach, reaching out to all and valuing the contributions of all God's children;
- A thoughtful preacher and teacher who will help us understand the Scriptures better and help us translate our faith into a vision for our community;
- A good communicator with the ability to relate to the diverse range of people who live in Islington and a desire to provide leadership within our wider local community;
- A great team leader who can guide and encourage both lay and ordained staff and volunteers;
- Pastoral in outlook - listening deeply, comforting and nurturing relationships in Christ.

How we would like to support you

We are committed to:

- Praying for you often and supporting you so you can fulfil your calling to St Mary's;
- Working with you with energy and enthusiasm – we have an engaged PCC, eager for growth and change;
- Providing an enthusiastic team of staff and volunteers who will use their gifts to support you and your ministry;
- Supporting you in your development with time for learning, reflection and retreat;
- Sustaining your wellbeing so that you have time for both work and relaxation.

“St Mary’s has an amazing history of inspiring the people of Islington to love God and love our neighbour over many centuries. The new vicar has a wonderful opportunity to continue and renew this vision”

4. Our team



We currently have a full-time curate and two very experienced Licensed Lay Ministers. There are also three other experienced members of the Church who preach regularly. Our paid Music Worship leader is responsible for the music on Sundays, leading both the choir and band, as well as playing the organ. Our children's and youth work is well established and we currently have an interim, experienced Children's and Youth Minister. The office is supported by a part time administrator who

works four morning a week and a member of the PCC who works three days a week on a voluntary basis managing and overseeing the Heart of Islington Project. We also have a great team of volunteers who help make Sunday services happen – each Sunday about 20 people are involved in being communion assistants, sides people, reading scripture, leading prayers, playing music, offering prayer ministry, providing tea and coffee and supporting children's groups.



5. Our parish - our patch of God's earth



“When I first walked into St Mary’s God spoke to me and said ‘here’s the place’. I love the light through the windows”.



©John Salmon

The Parish of St Mary’s is geographically very small (less than a square mile in area), extending from just north of the Angel about a mile to Highbury Corner and being made up of Upper Street and the streets either side of it. The Parish’s population is also quite small, at just over 6000, but is highly diverse in ethnicity, religion, language and culture. Because of high house prices, relatively few can afford to buy here, so many rent for a period before moving elsewhere. Like much of London, the parish has a higher than average proportion of young people, 42% in the 19-35 age range, and a relatively transient, ever-changing population as well.



Although the boutiques and restaurants of Upper Street suggest prosperity, the parish is actually one of the most deprived in the country, with a high proportion on social housing. According to the Church Urban Fund, the parish ranks in the top 15% by measures of overall deprivation and the top 10% on measures such as child and pensioner poverty. House prices tell the same story; across the road from the church, the new Islington Square development offers studio flats at £0.7m and penthouses at £5m plus, whilst adjacent to the churchyard is the St Mary’s Path social housing estate – two worlds, side by side. Our parish is a cultural centre, with two famous theatres (Almeida, Kings Head), a world-renowned puppet theatre (Little Angel) and an historic cinema (Screen on the Green). There is also the Business Design Centre exhibition venue with adjacent hotel.



6. Our Church



Our location

The Church lies within the Upper Street North Conservation Area and the Islington Business Improvement District. Hundreds of buses stop outside the Church every day (the voice on each bus tells you the next stop is St Mary's Church), so we are highly accessible. As the Church is open every day, it is visited by passers-by, local workers and residents as well as tourists and the occasional person making some sort of pilgrimage or tracing their own family history. We offer a haven of peace, tranquillity and light in the midst of the bustling city.

Our tradition

St Mary's is rooted in the Open Evangelical tradition, proclaiming the message of 'Loving God and loving our neighbour'. For us, this means being welcoming and accepting of all, inviting everyone who 'loves the Lord a little and wants to love Him more' to be fully part of our worshipping family. We accept all as Christ accepted all. In the words of the hymn 'Let us Build a House', we affirm 'all are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.'



Sunday services

There are two services each Sunday at 11:00am and 6:00pm. There is also a BCP Holy Communion service at 9:00am on the first Sunday of each month. Holy Communion and Service of the Word alternate each Sunday between the morning and evening services. Our worship is liturgical and we use a series of service books that reflect the church year and seasons.

The 11:00am service is our main service, attended by 100 – 160 adults and children each week. On the second Sunday of each month the 11:00am service is ‘all age’ i.e. the children remain throughout. When there is a fifth Sunday in the month, a healing service is held. The music uses the best of traditional and contemporary styles. Two Sundays a month we focus on contemporary worship music, led by our band, and two Sundays a month we have more traditional music, led by the choir.

However, both hymns and songs are included in all morning services. Children go to groups in the Crypt, part way through this service (except at the monthly ‘all age’ service) and there is a soundproof creche in the Prayer Chapel at the back of the church where the service can be heard by parents/ carers. Two members of the ten strong prayer team offer prayer ministry during the distribution of Holy Communion and at the end of morning services.

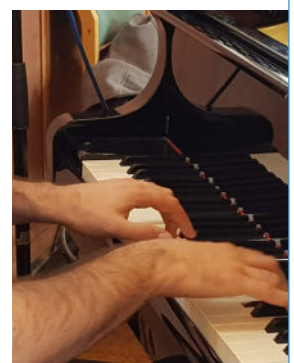
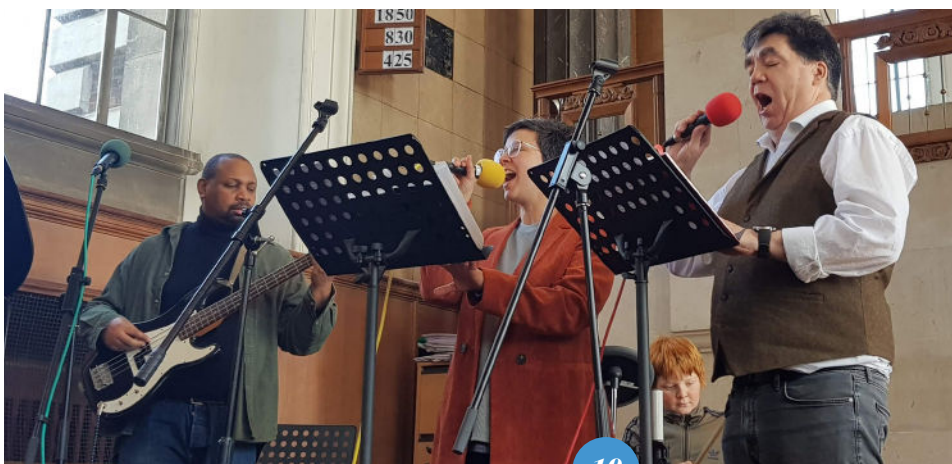
The evening service is a said service without live music on three Sundays a month. It is quieter and more contemplative, an opportunity to rest in God before the start of a new week. On one Sunday a month we hold a Taizé service. This is a new initiative for us and has brought more people into the evening service. We are keen to build on this and explore how other forms of worship can help us reach out and meet the spiritual needs of our diverse local community.

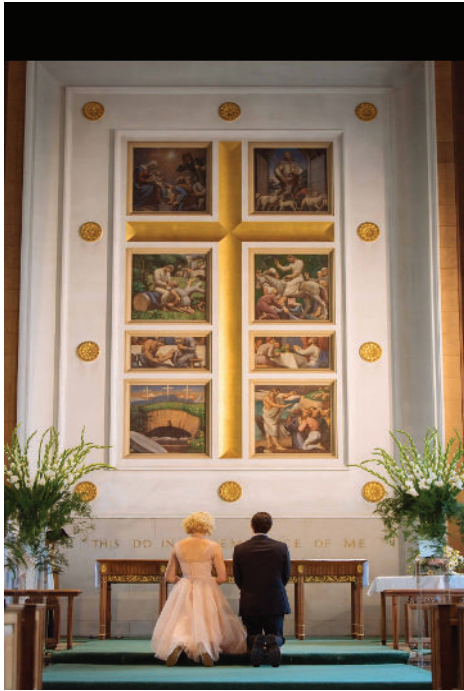
The average total weekly attendance for 2018 was 169:

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|---------|-----|
| 9.00am | 15 |
| 11.00am | 139 |
| 6.00pm | 26 |

The annual average over the last three years for these services were:

| | |
|-----------|----|
| Baptisms: | 12 |
| Weddings: | 4 |
| Funerals: | 7 |





Mid-week and other special services

Morning Prayer is said on Monday to Saturday at 9.30am in the Prayer Chapel. Baptism and marriage preparations take place by arrangement, normally over three sessions. Funeral, bereavement, hospital and other visits takes place through the week as needed.

On average, three members of the church are confirmed each year.

Holy Communion is delivered at home when required by arrangement.

At Christmas we hold a range of services including a lunch-time carol service for local workers, a crib service and a Christingle service with carols. The Christingle and Crib services are very well attended, with many more families with younger children than would normally attend on Sunday mornings. The evening candlelit Carol Service is the best attended service of the year – come early or you have



“The Healing Service is good and makes a change in my day after the service.”



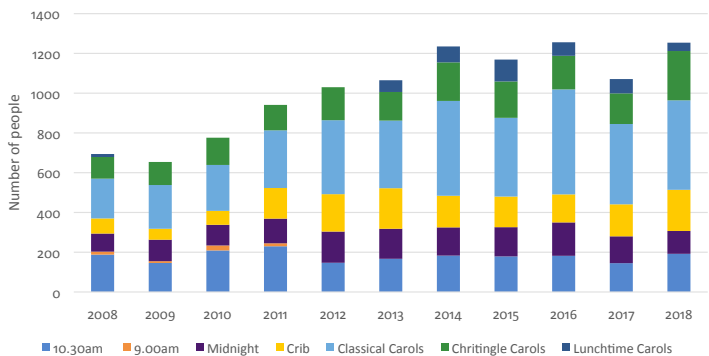


to stand! Other seasonal services and events occur throughout the year. In recent years these have included a service of remembering in November and an ecumenical service of witness on Good Friday, which includes two hours of meditation.



We have also hosted a number of special services in recent years as part of our role within the wider community. These have included a service attended by Her Majesty The Queen to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Scripture Union, which was originally established in Islington, a service to welcome Joanne, the new Bishop of Stepney, and services acting as focal points for our local Islington community, for example the recent vigil to honour lives lost to knife crime. Other occasional services include Pre-School and Church School end of term services.

Attendance at Christmas Services





Children and youth

Children and young people's groups run concurrently with morning services every Sunday (except on the second Sunday). Starter Church is for ages 4-6, Kids Church 7-11 and Youth Church 11-14.

Until recently, we also ran a youth club (SMS) for 11-17-year olds on Sundays from 5.30-7.30pm. Until 2019 our teenagers also had the opportunity to attend two residential breaks each year – a weekend together at Carrot Wood activity centre at Easter and joining the Lee Abbey Youth Camp for an amazing week of creative fun, fellowship and worship in the summer. These were well attended and highly valued by our young people. A priority for the permanent Children's and Youth Minister will be re-establishing our programme for older teenagers.

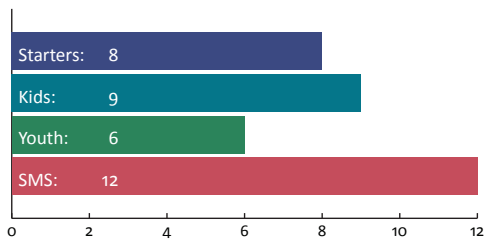


“Lee Abbey is the most amazing place in the world!”





Average attendance for Sunday groups in 2018 was:



Pastoral care

A significant number of St Mary's members look out for those in need and a pastoral team consisting of clergy and LLMs meet every week to consider and follow up on pastoral needs. In addition, there are currently four home groups with a total membership of about 50 adults that meet to pray and support each other in their faith journeys, providing practical and emotional support. Group studies and courses on specific topics are held periodically. Recent examples include courses on 'callings in retirement' and 'reading the Bible'. In autumn 2019 we ran a very well attended 6-week course called encountering 'God Through Prayer', during which people from St Mary and neighbouring parishes explored a range of different prayer traditions. A variety of social activities run during the week, including (but

not limited to) welcome lunches, bring and share lunches, families' lunch, 'Young at Heart' lunches, 20s and 30s group, organised walks and 'Chat and Cuppa' sessions, as well as the annual Christmas Fair.



"My home group – a place for sharing problems and moments of joy; praying together and receiving the wisdom of others, a place where my faith has been strengthened and deepened."

Regular communications

ST MARY'S
the church at Islington's heart

HEART OF ISLINGTON · SUNDAYS · NEWS · WHAT WE DO · ASK US

St Mary's is one of the Church of England's most historic parishes. Today we're a church of different people, a community of all ages, living out our calling to follow Jesus and to serve God in the heart of Islington.

Worship with us

Featured

Morning Worship
Apr 7, 2019 · 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

A service of Holy Communion on Palm Sunday
Apr 14, 2019 · 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

A quiet service of Evening Worship
Apr 14, 2019 · 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

St Mary's has a website and sends a weekly email newsletter to opted-in church members, both of which are managed by the Church Administrator and contain all information for the upcoming week and any notices of forthcoming events. We are active on social media, with well-used Twitter and Facebook accounts and we are an enthusiastic member of the Islington-based community of tweeters. We also have a less well used Instagram account which we would like to launch properly in the near future.

We also have a less well used Instagram account which we would like to launch properly as the portico work progresses.

“A place where love of God and love of neighbours is palpable.”

EcoChurch

We have achieved our EcoChurch bronze award in the scheme run by A Rocha UK and are working towards a silver award. In the last few years we have updated our heating systems, installed energy efficient lighting throughout the church building, and provided the Neighbourhood Centre with both double glazing and a new, well-insulated, roof. We have one of the largest installations of solar panels on any church in London, which generates up to 20kW.

The fifth mark of mission of the Anglican church requires us all to care for and safeguard God's creation and to sustain the life of the Earth. It will be the basis of our efforts to achieve a silver award. In particular, we have a garden group working with the local council to improve parts of the churchyard both for humans and for wildlife. We shall also extend our efforts, to help members of our congregation to be eco-friendly with small carbon footprints, to others in our local community. It would help us greatly if the new Vicar understands the seriousness of the climate and environmental emergencies.

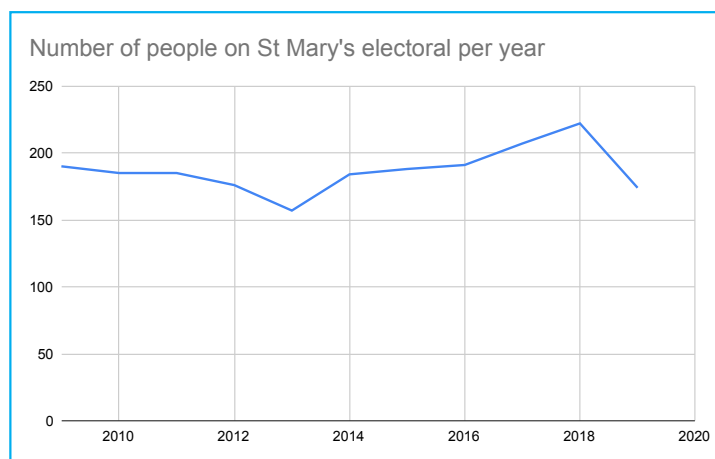
www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk



Electoral roll

The number of individuals on the electoral roll is 174.

The turnover of individuals on the electoral roll is high, reflecting the ever-changing nature of the population in inner London. This represents both a challenge (the 'core' of long-term members of the Church is a relatively small proportion of the total numbers on the electoral roll) and also an opportunity – there are new people coming into St Mary's all the time, an average of one person per week, those both familiar and unfamiliar with faith and church.





Finance

In considering the Church's finances we have excluded the income and expenditure relating to the Heart of Islington project (covered elsewhere in this profile). Over the period 2016 to 2019 the 'ongoing' state of the Church's finances was broadly stable. Income over the four years was 'flat' at an average of £275,000 whilst expenditure has been on a modest upward trend from £246,000 in 2016 to £281,000 in 2019 (2019 figures are yet to be audited). In 2018 we had a small surplus; in 2019 a very small deficit.

Within the total income figure for 2019 of £278,000, £146,000 came from regular giving, collections and donations for the general purposes of running the Church. In addition to income from voluntary giving, the Church received £50,000 from rent on two properties and £75,000 from rent on the Neighbourhood Centre paid by our partner charity, Mary's. Until 2018, this rent was matched in full by a grant from the Church to Mary's; in 2019, the grant was set at £20,000 less than the rent.

The major items of expenditure are the Common Fund (£90,000 in 2019), staff costs (£55,000 if a full time Children's and Youth Minister is in place) and gifts to other mission partners (£75,000, of which £55,000 went to Mary's in 2019 and £20,000 Mission Giving to third parties).

The major capital asset of the Church is the Neighbourhood Centre building (including the first-floor flat which is let to tenants), valued at £2.4m. There are no other major assets nor any meaningful long-term liabilities.

We undertake 'planned giving' campaigns from time to time, roughly every two years. In 2016 we ran a special campaign to support the Heart of Islington project, which raised c£180,000 to be spent on the Church interior (see separate section).

We are grateful for the financial support of Cloudesley, an independent charitable trust founded in 1517 under the Will of Richard Cloudesley, an Islington resident whose grave lies near the south west corner of St Mary's church. The charity has given generously to St Mary's over the years, including to the Heart of Islington project. It contributed to the repair of the steeple in 2016 and the roof in 2017 and is now giving substantial support to the portico project



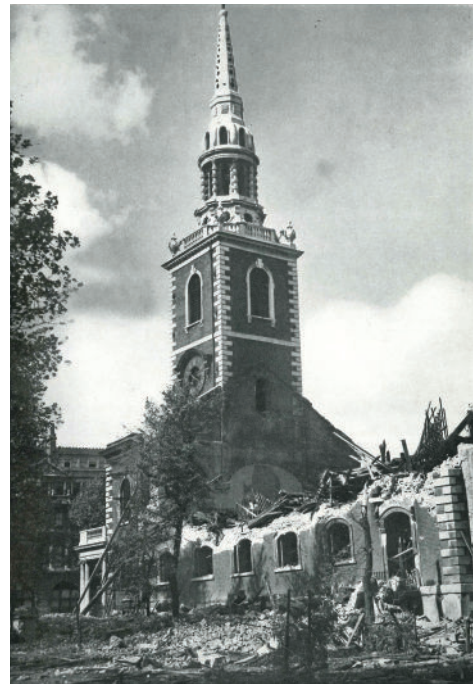


The site and church buildings

The Church building (Grade II listed) is located on Upper Street, set in the Church gardens. As you sit in the building, the clear glass of the tall windows allow light to flood in. There is an openness and a generosity of space that links you with the surrounding community and with God's Kingdom.

The first recorded church building on the site was erected in the twelfth century, although it was completely reconstructed in 1483 and then again in 1754. Between 1902 and 1904 more changes were made, including extending the chancel. The main visible legacy of this period is the neo-classical portico, built in Portland stone and designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield.

The church was bombed in September 1940 and everything except the steeple and portico was rebuilt in 1954-6 on the 18th century plan in an adapted Georgian style. The 'Access for All' project in 2007, funded by the congregation and the Big Lottery, provided a lift to all floors, refurbished the crypt to provide first class community rooms and refurbished parts of the Neighbourhood Centre.





The Neighbourhood Centre was built in the 1970s. It is a large, mainly single-story building of blockwork construction, containing a sports hall, gym, computer room, youth club rooms, pre-school, large meeting room, offices, kitchen, toilets and shower.

The Vicarage is a substantial Victorian property in a prominent position on Upper Street adjacent to the Church. The property is over three floors with the ground floor incorporating the Parish Offices (self-contained with a separate entrance) and premises for a high-class florist. The upper two floors, with its own entrance, include five double bedrooms, two large reception rooms and a grand hall and staircase. It has a separate private rear garden. Parking space is available. Visit our website to view further details.

The Church's most recent quinquennial inspection was in May 2015 by Kelley Christ of A&RMÉ, an accredited building conservation architect. Her report contained 77 recommendations for action of which 40 have now been completed and 21 more are either under way or have been part-completed. The Heart of Islington Project has enabled us to move forward with these works and substantially improve our church buildings.





Heart of Islington project

The Heart of Islington project is so named because, not only is our church located at the very heart and the historic centre of Islington, but because Islington holds St Mary's close to its heart. Our vision is to open up our buildings and spaces to make them more accessible, welcoming, and useful for the congregation, our neighbours and the wider community so we are truly at the beating heart of our community. Our new vicar will play a key role in bringing this vision to fruition, supported by an enthusiastic team in place to oversee the building works and the day-to-day management of a complex project.

The project began in 2015 when three things came together: we had a long list of things to be done from the quinquennial inspection report, we also had the prospect of a very substantial Section 106 grant from Islington Council and a churchwarden who had recently retired had the time to give to managing the project!

The Heart of Islington is a £1.9m project for which over £1.6m has already been secured, thanks to substantial grants from Islington Council, the Cloudesley charity and other funds, and very generous donations from church members and individuals in the wider community. The project has three areas of focus: the 1970s Neighbourhood Centre, the

Church itself and the north gardens located between the two buildings.

Work to the Neighbourhood Centre is now complete. It has been re-roofed, insulated and double-glazed, and the reception and youth club areas have been revamped. The main repairs needed to the exterior of the church have also been completed: the steeple, roof and rainwater goods have all been repaired and over the last year the portico (designated as Heritage at Risk by Historic England) has been taken apart and rebuilt by specialists. Work to the church interior has included a new sound system, a new servery and facilities for flower arranging. However, there is considerably more work to be done to restore the interior of the church to the glory for which it was conceived. Whilst this final phase of work has not yet been fully costed, it is possible we may need to raise a further £250k if we are to realise all our ambitions. In the meantime, work is due to start in Spring 2020 to re-order and open up the north gardens, with interpretation of the historical significance of the site inlaid in the design. When this has been done the space between our two buildings will not only be more welcoming, it will also be much more readily useable for open-air services and other events.



7. Our church and our community



Our role in the area

We play an active part in our wider community and the civic life of the Borough. The Vicar has attended the St Mary's Ward Partnership Steering Group meetings and in the recent past has chaired the St Mary's Ward Safer Neighbourhoods Panel. Participation in these groups has helped to build up good relationships with local residents' groups, the business community, the local council and the Police. We would like our new Vicar to build on these relationships and deepen our community links even further. St Mary's makes a huge commitment to the local community through the work of our partner charity, Mary's (see separate section).

At the request of the Police, the church has been made available as a place of refuge for local residents in times of emergency, for example when there was a gas leak on a housing estate in nearby Essex Road. We have also reacted to the needs of our local community for a place of solace and connection. For example, the residents of St Mary's Path estate, who are facing an uncertain future, have turned to the church as a place to meet and, as knife crime has become increasingly present in our community, we have held vigils and memorial services. The church has also hosted hustings for local and general elections, with over 200 people attending, and hosted a BBC Radio 4 panel discussion on knife crime in the UK in April 2019.





Soul in the City

Since 2011, St Mary's has run the Soul in the City Festival, which brings together the people of Islington in friendship, companionship and community and demonstrates how inclusive and beautifully diverse Islington is. Reaching across boundaries, faith, race, class and social divides, it has become our main community outreach activity of the year. The festival is supported by Islington Council and dozens of enthusiastic volunteers from the Church – the feedback from participants highlights how much Soul in the City is valued by our community. It is an entirely free festival (no-one is allowed to pay for anything) lasting for four days, with everyone invited! Each year about 2,500 people have taken part enjoying quiz nights, evenings of music, opera and poetry, plus a family activity day with an open-air café. This has been followed, on the Sunday, by an outdoor contemporary worship service on the steps of the church. Local businesses promote the Festival and donate food and drink. Local charities working with children, refugees and those in need in London or overseas take part in the family day, including Amnesty International, Islington Refugees Centre and others. July 2020 will see us celebrating the 10th anniversary of Soul in the City and we will go back to its roots and address the 'Bridge Building' and 'We are one in Christ' themes afresh by extending our ecumenical and interdisciplinary outreach in Islington. We will join forces with local churches, across all dominations,

and other groups from other religions, for example Jewish and Islamic groups, to show how much we have in common and how little in fact divides us.





Local schools

The parish primary school is St Mary's Church of England primary school. It has a wonderful atmosphere that is matched by great results. The school is rated as 'Good' by Ofsted and in 2018 was in the top 1% of schools nationally for both 'Attainment' and 'Progress' (making it the top school in the whole of Islington). There is a close relationship between the school and the Church. The vicar is an ex officio Governor and the clergy from St Mary's lead assemblies on a regular basis, as has the Youth & Children's minister.

Our music worship leader also goes into the school to lead music and choir sessions. In December 2017, the school choir sang at a special service at St Mary's celebrating the 150th anniversary of Scripture Union (founded nearby) in front of SU's Patron HM The Queen. This was broadcast on Songs of Praise in January 2018.

www.stmarys.islington.sch.uk



A Church of England secondary school, St Mary Magdalene Academy, has been established relatively recently and already has a Good Ofsted rating. Although not in St Mary's parish, it is only a 15-minute walk away. We have built links with the school through our previous Children's and Youth Ministers, who have run, for example, 'youth Alpha' courses.

www.smmacademy.org



Other local churches



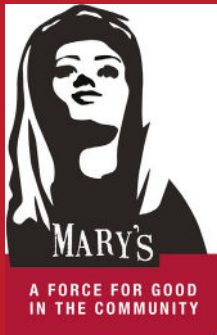
St Mary's is in the Stepney Episcopal Area and the Islington Deanery. Our Vicar is normally an active member of the Deanery Synod and Chapter and we have two active lay members of Deanery Synod. We have hosted a number of Deanery services including the service to welcome our new Bishop mentioned earlier and the Deanery School Leavers' service.

There are three other Christian Churches in the Parish; Cross Street Baptist Church, Union Chapel, Congregational and Redeemed Church of God. With the first two the relations are friendly and the last church rents space on the St Mary's neighbourhood centre. The vicar of St Mary's is also the patron of Hope Church, Holloway Road; and St Stephen's, Canonbury.



The multi-faith context

The Islington Faith Forum has membership from Christian (Roman Catholic and Anglican), Muslim, Jewish and other faith gatherings. It gives opportunity simply to gather together in friendship in the same room and around the same table. We have drawn on this fellowship to respond and support each other visibly and publicly at times of conflict, as following the attack against the Finsbury Park Mosque. The Finsbury Muslim Welfare House is supported by – amongst others – Anglican churches.



Mary's

Mary's is an independent charity set up by St Mary's in 2008 with the mission to secure and grow the children, youth and community work previously managed by volunteer committees and governed by St Mary's PCC.



Mary's is well-established and integrated into the local community and works through partnerships with local schools, voluntary and professional organisations and businesses. Over the past 10 years Mary's has built up a strong track record of helping children, young people and their families as well as supporting the community activities of hundreds of local residents through a wide range of groups using the spaces in St Mary's Neighbourhood Centre and Crypt. Their services are a response to some of the pressing



needs of Islington and neighbouring areas, such as child poverty which affects 40% of Islington children, among the highest levels in the country. Currently, Mary's runs a pre-school, Play Scheme, Youth Club and rents out the meeting and other rooms in the crypt and Neighbourhood Centre.

Since its establishment, Mary's has had two Chairs of Trustees, both of whom have been long-term members of St Mary's Church and, currently, a majority of Trustees are Church members. Church volunteers have also initiated and run projects in partnership with Mary's, for example, running a welcome cafe on Thursday nights that serves refreshments to the many participants of the anonymous groups, clients of the free legal advice service and other users.

In the last couple of years, the relationship between Mary's trustees and St Mary's PCC has developed some stresses and strains. With the aim of overcoming these tensions, both parties entered into a mediation process facilitated by Bridge Builders Ministries. At the time of writing this mediation process has been suspended, pending the appointment of a new incumbent. The current agreement between Mary's and the PCC is in the form of a 10-year lease (for the Neighbourhood Centre) and a licence (for the Crypt) which run until 2023. Discussions and agreement as to what longer term arrangements will be put in place will take place between now and 2023. The new Vicar will play a vital role in fostering constructive relationships between the two organisations and in guiding our discernment for the renegotiation of the church's relationship with Mary's when the current lease and licence end.

www.marys.org.uk



Keith Waddell on a recent visit to St Mary's

Mission giving

We are proud of St Mary's missionary tradition – both home and overseas. Currently, in the UK, we support the Islington Food Bank, the CARIS bereavement service, the Homeless Winter shelter, the Children's Society and the Refugee Centre in Islington. Overseas, we support two mission partners working in Pakistan and Uganda. An example of our longer term mission partners is Keith Waddell, who went from St Mary's in 1966 to work in Uganda with Africa Inland Mission. He has specialised in Ophthalmology, and has set up primary treatment centres throughout the country, as well as carrying out extensive training and research. He has instigated treatment programmes for children with retinoblastoma - and sees more patients with RB per year than any other surgeon in the world! We also support three children through Compassion, Hospice Care Kenya and a medical project in Gaza. The latter is the response to the Mission of the Year, the project selected by the congregation each year.

Partners:





*“St Mary’s
is an
anchor to
life at times
of stress.”*

Further information about us

We hope you have enjoyed reading about us. This Parish Profile was created by a team of five people, after prayerful discussion in the PCC and after gaining the views of the wider congregation via a questionnaire. The quotations used through out this profile are taken from the questionnaire.

If you would like to find out more about our church and parish, please follow the links below:

Our website is: www.stmaryislington.org

Our Facebook page is: www.facebook.com/stmaryislington

Our Twitter feed is: twitter.com/stmaryislington

You can read more about our history here: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5669abd069a91ad6eca13648/t/599b2e1d1e5b6c1cfaaa2323/1503342154358/2004+History+of+St+Mary+Islington+-+S+Allen+Chambers.pdf>

More information about Mary’s can be found on their website:
www.marys.org.uk

More information about St Mary’s primary school can be found on their website: www.stmarys.islington.sch.uk

More information about St Mary Magdalene Academy can be found on their website: www.smmacademy.org