**ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2020-2021**

**CHURCHWARDENS REPORT**

2020-2021 year for St. Paul’s Anglican Church has not been easy as compared to previous years and the Covid pandemic continues to make life, and the life of the Church, difficult.

Whilst we remain hopeful for better days to come, we also remain grateful for the chance to meet virtually online as a result of technology. Online Zoom Services have become the new normal for our members, along with Bible Study, Night Prayer and Evensong. During the Festive Season a virtual background of the Christmas Tree and Manger was a brilliant idea and many thanks to those who made it possible. Also due to Covid restrictions allowing only a greatly reduced number of people inside the church building, the installation of all-weather friendly speakers around the sitting areas is a new feature in our Church garden – and last but not least has been the long-awaited removal of the graffiti on the walls bordering the Church.

As always, we remain thankful to Father Leonard and the entire team that keeps St Paul’s Anglican Church going with much needed income by generating activities such as Raffles, Table Top Sales and the fund raising Christmas Tree on Facebook.

In 2020 Lynn Stavrou became our Church Warden - she already holds the position of Safe Guarding Officer and we thank her for all her work in her new role. We also welcomed a new Treasurer - Nelly Paraskevopoulou, and thank her, too, for the wonderful job that she is doing.

We look forward to a better year in 2021.

***Churchwardens Trevor Kamuzonde and Lynn Stavrou***

**COUNCIL SECRETARY’S REPORT**

Following the postponement of the Annual Meeting planned for 29th March, Council has met four times, plus the Annual Meeting, in person or via Zoom, and the following records the topics discussed:

June 20th 2020 via Zoom

*Council membership*: Co-opted members encouraged to stand for full membership at the end of their 1-year tenure; those considering ministry training should receive non-voting ‘observer’ status to introduce them to the running of the Church.

*Finances*: A heavy reduction in income due to the pandemic was likely to continue. Social events, concerts and the Spring Bazaar had been cancelled. Good news was that an alternative insurer with decreased costs had been found.

*Services, Ministry, Vocational Conference and Altar Area*: With limited or no church services, live Zooming would be considered; on her retirement Council thanked Reader Sherry Angelis for her long and faithful ministry; Nellie Paraskevopoulou was congratulated on her acceptance to train for Reader ministry and anyone interested in the possibility of ordained ministry should be encouraged to attend the January Vocation Conference in London.

September 12th at St. Paul’s, 2020

*Services and Ministry*: Alice Karanja had been accepted for initial consideration for ordination training; Angelos Palioudakis and Meg McIver were interested in attending the 2021 Vocations Conference in London; Council agreed that the nave altar be removed and the High Altar used once again.

*Finances*: Provisional plans would be made for the Christmas Bazaar, a wine-tasting and the Harvest Festival and 10th October would be ‘Gift Day’. Nelly Paraskevopoulou was unanimously appointed as Church Treasurer and Sue Stephos was thanked for her many years of hard work in this position; the Fundraising Committee had made provisional plans for the Harvest Festival, Quiz evenings and a wine-tasting, plus outreach for support via internet appeals and approaches to organisations; Deacon Chris was looking for another venue for Kifissia Community Connect.

*Refugees & Migrants*: Deacon Chris reported on the visit of Kirrilee Reid, Chaplain in the Calais refugee camp; a new Salvation Army representative would be contacting St. Paul’s; Hestia Hellas refugee centre was not operating and needed new premises; the Church in the Street continued, with packed meals only.

Sunday 20th September - Annual Meeting convened at St. Paul’s

Trevor Kamuzonde and Lynn Stavrou were elected Churchwardens; Matilda Amartey, Banji Ipinsokan, Sue Stephos and Noelle Barkshire were elected to the Church Council; Matilda Amartey, Anne Dedes, Rosemary Hunt, Trevor Kamuzonde, Cecilia Europa and Nelly Paraskevopoulos were appointed Sidespersons; there were 104 names on the Electoral Roll, an increase of 7; the audited accounts for 2018-2019 were accepted and Ms. Magda Kakathimi and Mr. Philip Poulakis were thanked for their service and agreed to continue as Auditor and Accountant. Annual Reports were distributed and Father Leonard closed by referring to the difficult financial situation, efforts to find other sources of income and the success of Zoom services. He thanked all those in attendance.

November 14th via Zoom – 1st meeting after the Annual Meeting

*Appointments*: Churchwarden Trevo- Vice Chairperson, Jean Mertzanakis – Hon. Secretary, Nelly Paraskevopoulou – Treasurer, Alice Karanja and Angelos Palioudakis – co-optees for one year.

*Finances*: Council agreed that financial reserves be made available for use, if necessary; the Gift Day, monthly raffles, jam sales and donations had gone well; an online ‘Christmas Tree’ would be posted on Website and Facebook to receive gifts; outside speakers would be installed in the garden.

*Safeguarding Compliance*: Lynn Stavrou reported on training - all council members and sidespersons should take Level 1 and those with greater responsibility also Level 2.

January 23, 2021 via Zoom

*Covid Restrictions*: Father Leonard continued to follow legal advice.

*Ministry*: Christmas Zoom services had been well attended and Assistant Chaplain Deacon Chris Saccali was holding Saturday morning services on her Facebook page.

*Finances*: Despite fundraising events the situation was bleak and Council agreed, based on up-to-date market information, to the transfer of some of our UK funds; good news was that our annual contribution to the Diocesan Common Fund would remain the same and an anonymous donor would fund a supply of coffee mugs printed with pictures of St. Paul’s, to be sold for €10.

*Diocesan Synod Report “Breathing Life” - an Invitation to Share in Belonging Together through Racial Justice*: This Diocese in Europe working group intended to look into Diocesan policies and strategies as a matter of urgency - in Bishop Robert’s words “there remains far more to do to encourage minority ethnic ministry and representation’ within the Church of England. Father Leonard noted that St. Paul’s congregation is ethnically mixed but being Anglican can lead to thinking “in an English way”. Racist comments should be challenged and more serious incidences of racial discrimination reported to himself or Safeguarding Officer, Lynn, with a report on progress to be submitted to the Diocese within three years.

*Safeguarding*: Level 2 training would be arranged with Father Bruce on Crete; the IICSA (Independent Investigation into Child Sexual Abuse in the Church of England) was now available online and should be read.

*Council Members’ Responsibilities*: Father Leonard submitted a paper stating that current responsibilities fell on few shoulders and team work was imperative, with Council members as team leaders. There would be further discussion after the 2021 General Meeting.

*Worship*: Council agreed that Father Leonard should request permission from Bishop Robert for Anglican congregations to celebrate Easter 2021 along with the Orthodox Church to take advantage of any lessening of restrictions the government may offer. Nelly reported that the World Day of Prayer would be on March 5th, based in Vanu Atu, and she would provide details of a YouTube video.

*Pastoral Care*: Assistant Chaplain, Deacon Chris Saccali, stressed the need for contact and continuing care during lockdown and this was being done in various ways; Zoom coffee mornings would be held by Father Leonard and anyone else who offered to host one.

*Swedish Church*: Based on the excellent relationship we had with the Swedish Church Council agreed that Father Bjorn could hold a Sunday service at 12 noon.

March 6th 2021 via Zoom

Pastoral care continues through delivery of books and other items, phone calls and home communion when permission is given; the creation of closer ties with the Swedish Lutheran Church continues, in the spirit of the Porvoo Communion of 1992, establishing full communion between Anglican and Lutheran churches; our 2021 contribution to the Diocesan Common Fund (for support of the Diocese in Europe) will not be increased this year and this is a two-way arrangement - we often receive financial help from the Diocese; a report submitted by Environmental Officer Linda Paparsenos, concerning decreasing plastics use, was discussed at length, as were other ways in which we could become an Eco-friendly church within an Eco-friendly Diocese.

Thanks are due, as always, to Father Leonard and all our Council Officers and members for their help and input in so many ways.

***Jean Mertzanakis (Hon. Secretary)***

**ASSISTANT CHAPLAIN’S REPORT**

*Aei Ferein/Dilesi Parenting Classes*: After an 18-month break with occasional get-togethers these sessions are now held fortnightly, online, for approximately two hours. 21 parents are enrolled with around 15 usually attending. The meetings are conducted by Katia Papaconstantinou and myself. We offer a safe space for discussion, reflecting and sharing with an emphasis on endurance, resilience and mindfulness to enable members to support themselves and their loved ones during the Covid crisis – it should be noted that the prefecture of Beiotia has been a red zone since mid-January. Our joint initative in this area is greatly appreciated, close bonds have been formed and practical and spiritual support is offered through life-long learning.

*Refugees and Outreach*: Contact, maintained with current partners, volunteers, NGOs and donors and pastoral care, with an emphasis on listening, is offered to staff. We continue to collect personal hygiene items and clothing but have limited access to sites such as Ritsona due to Covid restrictions and the travel ban, resulting in fewer volunteers, while the number of residents remains the same. At the same time we monitor the situation on the mainland and the islands via UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees) and continue to publicise the situation within Europe and the UK and our own Diocese in Europe. This includes raising awareness of conditions and providing a balanced view of changes and also of events such as the Moria fire, that received international coverage.

*Mothers in Prayer (MIP)*: This small group of 5 women of different nationalities continues to meet in person or online. Our global aim is to pray for families, particularly their children and grandchildren their children and grandchildren, and for education and educators and the challenges posed by the pandemic here in Greece.

*Facebook Reflections*: I offered weekly reflections based on the Church Year readings, from March to July and then from November through to 2021. People can watch live or later on from anywhere in the world and my aim is to be accessible to both Church members and non-Churchgoers.

***Assistant Chaplain Deacon Christine Saccali***

**2020 ARCHDEACONRY SYNOD**

This report will be submitted and published at a later date.

**THE SAFEGUARDING OF MINORS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

The Diocese of Europe follows UK law, and therefore as a Chaplaincy within the Diocese of Europe we comply fully with the requirements of the Diocesan Safeguarding policy. The Safeguarding Officer is responsible for the overall coordination of safeguarding in the Chaplaincy.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team has now set up Leadership Safeguarding Training sessions (level 2) on ‘’Zoom’’. Anyone needing to take level 2 may do so by applying for a place on one of these sessions through the Diocesan Website. All who have any kind of responsibility in our church community are required to do the level 1 course - this is taken by oneself and on-line via the Website (as is Level 0). Completion of the course is automatically registered at the Diocesan office and a certificate is issued on your PC. The Level 2 course is an expansion on the material covered in Level 1 and goes into greater depth – it is for those who hold roles of a greater responsibility in our church. All persons who participated in level 2 in February 2017 will now be required to re-take this level in 2021 (if they haven’t already done so in 2020). Safeguarding Training is an important part of ensuring the safety of all church members. We are now fortunate in having Rev. Canon D. Bruce Bryant-Scott, assistant Chaplain serving at St. Thomas, Kefalas Crete, who is now one of the trainers for level 2. This means that we will be able to arrange a suitable date, possibly in June, for all our level 2 candidates.

When the pandemic lifts, in-person meetings at Chaplaincies will be another possible option, but for now it will be done by distance learning. We look forward to returning to some form of normality soon at St. Paul’s.

***Lynn Stavrou (Safeguarding Officer)***

**ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT**

Our Diocesan Bishops Robert and David recently wrote to all Chaplaincy Councils about the Diocesan aim of becoming an Eco-Diocese comprised of Eco-churches and stating the aim of the December 2020 Diocesan Synod was to achieve a Carbon Net Zero Target by 2030. They stressed that we all belong to this one planet Earth, which is our home in the universe and the place chosen by God for the birth of his Son, Jesus Christ. Care of our shared home is essential for the welfare of future generations. The Diocesan Environmental Working Group suggests three easy things for a chaplaincy to consider: including ‘eco-church’ in the agenda of chaplaincies and meetings; to better understand the impact we have on the environment by exploring our carbon footprint; to distribute to Chaplaincies the ‘First Steps’ documents – a set of useful practical ideas for churches as they aim to become Eco-churches.

Our Local Environmental Officer (LEO), Linda Paparsenos, reports as follows:

Elizabeth Bussmann, Environment Officer for the Diocese in Europe, points out that care of environmental concerns is not a task for just one person. LEOs need council support and the creation of an Environment Task Force from congregation members. Anyone interested in any aspect of the environment may join the LEO team. This will be almost completely electronically done and needs persons willing to help with ideas and dedicate some time – an hour, day, week or month - to help develop resources at St Paul’s, e.g. carry out research, provide information sheets or create possible projects, in order to help conquer this scourge. Contact me by email [foreignwife@hotmail.com](mailto:foreignwife@hotmail.com) or in person when I am in church. One focus will be for a plastic-free church. Plastic waste is not only that great blob travelling the Pacific Ocean. It exists in every water way in the world - lakes, ponds, streams, rivers and oceans. What you decide as an individual, what your neighbors decide as a community, what we do as a congregation will and must reduce this horrible blight - it gets into our drinking water, affects the life of water creatures and enters the food chain leading to us and it seeps into the water used for agriculture, both surface and ground, thereby affecting the crops we and our livestock eat. Plastic is toxic. Think before you buy or use and try to influence others around you, including shop-owners, to use available alternatives.

Please contact me (Subject: Environment), giving your name, address or area where you live. Once I have a few names an information sheet will be sent out detailing what is needed. We hope to have an in-person meeting at some time in the future but, of course, must wait until the lock-down has been rescinded.

***Linda Paparsenos (Local Environmental Officer/LEO)***

**REPORTS FROM CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

**Community Connect – Athens**

In 2019 the Community Connect Athens coffee mornings did very well. We averaged an attendance of 40 to 50 people and the amount raised was 1529.02 Euros, up on 2018 by 98.69 Euros. We usually sell a selection of good quality second-hand clothing, books, preserves and handmade greeting cards for all occasions - all at affordable prices. Each month we also have either a Mini raffle or a Mini Bingo. Winners receive a small gift, which has been donated and we also we have a Lucky Chair - whoever is sitting on it gets a little gift.

2020 started off well but unfortunately our numbers were right down in March due to the Corona virus scare and only 17 people attended. Following this, and due to restrictions, our coffee mornings were cancelled. In July and September 2020, when the restrictions eased a little, we were able to hold 2 coffee mornings in the church grounds, which were a great success. New restrictions came into force at the end of September and we had to cancel all again. Since then there have been on Community Connect coffee mornings and the total raised for 2020 was 420.19 Euros.

I would like to thank my team members - Lesley & Lynne on coffee, Janet on books, Anne Edmondson on clothing, Sue Lazaridou who helps me on the greeting cards while I am running the raffle or bingo and also my other helper Jane and our new strong man Samuel. Without their help our coffee mornings would not run. I also want to say thank you to all who havecome along each month and supported us, joining in an enjoyable morning having coffee, cake, and a chat and meeting or making new friends.

Hopefully if all things go well we will be able to hold our Community Connect coffee mornings once again in the near future.

***Anne Dedes (Organiser)***

**Community Connect – Kifissia**

Due to the Covid outbreak no meetings have been held since February 2020, although we have been able to deliver reading material and preserves personally and to pick up donations and collect money. Regular contact has been maintained with our venue, the Loida Home for the Elderly, with prayers for the residents and staff, who are all safe and have been vaccinated. Regular members met in small groups for coffee during the summer, when lockdown was eased, and contact has been kept up through Pastoral Letters, email and phone calls. Members have also been encouraged to keep in touch via social media and the Church Website. I’m sad to report that we lost two members to illness – bereavement support was offered and a cremation service was take.

***Assistant Chaplain, Deacon Chris Saccali (Organiser)***

**Quiz Evenings**

Since my 2020 report the situation has not changed and no Quiz Evenings have been held due to the restrictions of total lockdown or of no more than 9 people attending a gathering. I surveyed our regular members and all agreed that a quiz with such limited numbers, wearing masks and with social distancing, just wasn’t workable or enjoyable – neither was a Zoom event based on a number of online teams because our quiz-goers enjoy the opportunity to get together for a relaxing evening of fun and games, meeting friends and catching up with news. When we can meet again, and in order to make up for the shortfall in fundraising, we shall do so on a more regular basis, something for which there have been requests in the past. This comes with very best wishes to all our quizzical friends and helpers and I look forward to some happy and successful evenings in the, hopefully, not too distant future.

***Jean Mertzanakis (Organiser)***

**Friends of St. Paul’s**

As with all other aspects of the chaplaincy this year, the Friends of St Paul's was unable to carry out the usual fundraising activities. However, the sum of 556.14 euros was raised through direct donations made by regular donors.

***Jane Mandalios***

**The Organ, the Choir and Events/Concerts**

*Τhe Hill organ*: The church organ was repaired on October 2019. Τhere was a tuning appointment with the organ builder on March 2020. Unfortunately it was cancelled due to the travel restrictions. The organ CD which had started to be recorded in November 2020 (Christina Antoniadou, organ and Nikos Spanatis, countertenor) using the Hill organ, has been postponed. During 2020, the instrument was used for only seven months for liturgies or organ practice, which is not good for its maintenance. Currently the organ is used by two students and three organists (when the church is open).

*The choir*: There have been no choir rehearsals since March 2020. The number of choir members has dropped to seven.

*Events*: From January 2020 until 9th March 2020, the church hosted 21 cultural events (theatrical performances and concerts). The total amount received was 5.200 euros. The rest of the scheduled events for 2020 were cancelled due to the covid-19 restrictions. Currently there are no bookings and no interest.

***Christina Antoniadou BMUS, MMUS, LRAM, ARAM ( Organist, Choir Director and Events Coordinator at St Paul's Anglican Church)***

**Website Report**

2020 was the year that the Website really came into its own. Due to Covid 19 restrictions, the life of the Church was severely restricted and for the most part the Church was closed. People were missing their weekly worship and the social interaction that came with it. The website was the only way people could keep in touch with the Church. Fr Leonard took the decision to stream the services live on Zoom which, after a few teething troubles, has proved to be a great success. The ‘Link’ to the Zoom service is published on the Home page of the Website and each week the Service Sheet is published under the “Blog” section. Fr Leonard’s Sermons, both written and recorded, are also published either on the Sunday or couple of days later. Links to other Zoom meetings, Weekly Evensong, Bible Studies etc also appear on the Front Page. Two successful Virtual Coffee Mornings also took place and were promoted widely on the Website and Facebook. These three snippets of news are short items designed to impart current information quickly and are often linked to larger more informative articles elsewhere in the site. Due to the restrictions in size these items are frequently replaced when more recent announcements have to be made. It should also be remembered that all articles published under the “Blog” or “Events” appear in date order with the latest one appearing at the top, pushing earlier items further down the screen. Additionally, there is information regarding our Bank Account for Donations and a link to PayPal which is used worldwide as a quick and safe means of payment. Despite our ongoing negotiations with PayPal regarding our charitable status and reduction in their fees, it is still a very useful tool to assist with donations. This was proved last year when Fr Leonard issued an Appeal for Funds which was published on the Website, and also the hugely successful Christmas Tree Fundraiser, by Noelle Berkshire, which was published both on the website and Facebook. Links to various Zoom meetings can also be found in the Calendar Section of the Website. I should like to thank Fr Leonard for starting the Zoom services and making sure that the service sheets and sermons are sent out in good time prior to the Sunday Worship. Thanks also to Christina for making sure the Church Calendar is kept up to date and for forwarding it to me each month.

***Caroline Daniels***

***Website Editor***

**Facebook Report**

Despite being a very sparse year for “News” Facebook has remained a way of keeping St Paul’s in touch with its congregation and friends Locally, Nationally and Internationally. We continue to attract new Followers and in the last year our numbers have gone up from 1842 to 1955 since last April. Most followers reside in Greece but we have a substantial following in the USA and the UK as well as elsewhere all over the World. We have been able to publicise our two ‘virtual’ Coffee Mornings which were very successful and last Christmas we launched an appeal to decorate a bare Christmas Tree with Gifts, one gift for each donation. This was hugely successful, and Noelle Berkshire must be congratulated for organising the graphics for this appeal. We are hoping to run another appeal with Easter Eggs both on Facebook and on the Website shortly.

Due to the cancellation of our Spring Bazaar and our Christmas Bazaar, both of which are major fundraisers for the Church, in December we set up St Paul’s Online Bazaar Facebook Page with Free Webstore. This is a website that has been used by many smaller organisations as a means of raising funds. Anne Dedes sent pictures of all her lovely Christmas Decorations and Lynne Doolan sent pictures of the boxes and bags of fudge that she had made. We also uploaded pictures of knitted toys which had been donated. Despite being widely publicised on Facebook and our Website, we achieved no sales and discussions are being held to try and set up a bespoke online store. More information will be announced when details have been finalized.

Thanks to everyone who continue to “like” the posts or comment in some way.

***Caroline Daniels***

***Facebook Editor***

**Twitter Report - @anglicanathens**

I started posting on Twitter in July 2019, after Father James returned to the UK and at that time we had about 20 followers – we now have 161 and 142 Twitter accounts are being followed – these include the Church of England, The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Diocese in Europe, Bishops Robert and David, USPG, Lighthouse Relief, UK In Greece, Rowan Williams, The Anglican Church of St. Petersburg, Pope Francis, ICS, Church of Scotland, Orthodoxia news Agency and MKO Apostoli. Most of the retweets are made from here but we are also followed by several Anglican Churches in Europe, friends of ours and others.

Tweets include daily prayers from the Church of England and Scotland (who publish prayers every day), daily information about the Saint of the day from St. Petersburg, anything published by Bishops Rober and David and updates from Lighthouse Relief. Of particular interest is the account ‘Friendless Churches’, who care for almost 60 redundant but beautiful places of worship in England & Wales.

During the coronavirus pandemic, resources were published for prayer and worship at home and links for virtual Eucharist in various parts of the world. Events and news regarding St. Paul’s are also published of course and also links to services. Twitter has a limit of 142 characters per tweet, so an event is usually published first on Facebook and/or Website and then linked from there.

***Nellie Paraskevopoulou***

**SENIOR CHAPLAIN’S REPORT**

2020 was an extraordinary year, and we have begun 2021 still in exceptional circumstances. Our church life for a year now has been more ‘online’ than meeting in person. Although the online worship has been good, we all know it is not the same as meeting for the Holy Liturgy, and sharing time and coffee together afterwards.

The Annual Meeting in 2020, which should normally have been held before the last day of April, did not happen until September. Bishop Robert prepared a special legal ‘Instrument’ that permitted all the chaplaincies of his diocese to postpone the Annual Meeting until such times as the meeting could be held in person. This was a quick and helpful response by him. As we have become more prepared for dealing with the pandemic, more and more Church of England legislation is being passed, so the 2021 Annual Meeting can legally be held online.

As well as the loss of meeting together, the pandemic has prevented us from having the normal annual round of fund-raising events, small, medium sized and large events. We have missed these for their social impact, but also financially. Our finances are very ‘stressed’. Concerts, one of our principal streams of external income, have all been cancelled since February 2020.

Thanks to individual generosity and in large measure thanks to a small group of people who pressed ahead with online fund-raising initiatives, we had a very good last quarter income of 2020. Our finance team have been working hard also in this time, and Philip, our accountant, has been in touch several times with the Diocesan Office in London to make arrangements for the movement of investments, to supplement our losses in regular income streams. 2021 will be no less demanding for us financially and I foresee the financial stress extending into 2023/4 in different ways.

Zoom has come to our assistance with mid-week and Sunday worship. We have also been able to keep going a more vigorous programme of Bible studies, book studies, and a couple of coffee mornings – all online.

Sunday gatherings have achieved some good attendances, with sermons (printed and recorded) distributed as widely as possible and Deacon Christine has been offering a weekly Saturday morning meditation on Facebook. It is understood entirely that many people either dislike or are unable to use online platforms, so we cannot reach everyone on a regular basis and we depend on everyone to play their part in keeping contact with friends and fellow church members.

We managed to offer some Christmas worship activities and, for 9 people present, it was lovely to be able to offer a Liturgy on Christmas Day. With Bishop Robert’s consent we will align our Easter this year with that of the Orthodox, in the hope that conditions will be more favourable to have ‘in person’ worship at St. Paul’s for Holy week and Easter.

Many projects have been put on hold for the time being – it is just not possible to progress everything in these challenging days, but we have been able to make two improvements at St. Paul’s that we hope will be of longer advantage – we have upgraded the internet to allow for better Zoom live-streaming (it will never be perfect!) and we have added four outside speakers in the church garden, so that we can live-broadcast into the garden as and when we are allowed to gather again.

We should note that there was no 2020 Christmas Bazaar - you will all know that this has been running annually for almost 6 decades – and who knows what its future shape will be under new circumstances. It should be noted that the Aegli, where we have held our Bazaar for several years, now looks both closed and completely deserted – stripped of every fitting! It looks rather sad.

Thanks are due, of course, to Church Council Officers who have continued to work their responsibilities through this year - Wardens, Secretary, Treasurer and Safeguarding Officer, with Safeguarding training now provided online by the Diocese. Music has still been provided Sunday by Sunday for our Zoom worship and the church and garden has continued to be looked after, even though we are parted from it. We owe thanks also to our lawyer, Mrs. Papatsori, and to our Payroll Accountants (TMF Group), as well as to Philip Poulakis, who is our own accountant and supports our Treasurer team.

One of the joys of these ‘online days’ is that people who have had connections with St. Paul’s in the past have been able to take part in Zoom worship and bible studies – and it has been lovely to keep contact with what seems like ‘the rest of the world’. We have also had contact on Sundays and at Christmas with St. Paul’s Anglican Church in Tehran, Iran.

As we emerge from the pandemic (in whatever form) we will apply ourselves to new challenges and opportunities. We cannot be stuck in the past wistfully lamenting what used to be, but is no more. If the pandemic has shown anything, it is that we must have faith and trust in God, and that if we have this He will renew us, and lead us to new ways of faithful witnessing. Such new ways may not always be comfortable, but if they are authentic we will receiving blessing.

Thank you – all of you – for your faithfulness over this last year, and for your understanding when it has not been easy to hold things together, or when information was changing on a weekly basis. One thing I hope we can all say is that we did our best.

***Leonard Doolan 3rd March 2021***