**REPORTS FOR THE PRECEDING YEAR SUBMITTED TO THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (APCM) HELD AT ST. PAUL’S ON SUNDAY 3RD APRIL 2022**

**SENIOR CHAPLAIN’S REPORT**

Since our APCM in 2021, which we had to hold on Zoom because of Covid restrictions, we have experienced varied situations. We took a calculated risk to request permission from Bishop Robert to keep the Orthodox date for **Pascha** as we knew that if the Government relaxed regulations it would be in line with Greek dates, and there was a month difference between our two Easters in 2021.

We made this request along with the clergy and Church Councils of Corfu and Crete. Bishop Robert granted his consent (an exceptional decision for one year only). The request paid off, and we were allowed to be open for congregations (with very limited numbers) and with an allowance of additional attendance outside in the garden. This means that a second decision we took back in 2019 paid off – namely to install outside speakers in the garden to allow wider participation in our worship. The cost of this was paid from a special donation.

Since the late Summer of 2021 we gradually increased the re-introduction of various elements of our normal liturgy, and now the format is back to its pre-pandemic contents, though I appreciate it is difficult for the congregation to sing wearing masks.

During these two years we have been forbidden from administering the chalice, so only bread was received at the Holy Communion. At the beginning of February I sought the consent of Council members to begin administering both bread and wine in the form of ‘intinction’ – I dip the breads individually into the chalice. This seems to have worked well, but there has been more recent guidance from our bishops, which will be discussed at a future Council meeting.

Zoom continued through 2021 to assist us in ‘gathering’ people together virtually for worship, for bible studies, and for book studies. Some Council meetings had to be held on Zoom also. In some churches it is now the practice to meet in person and to provide ‘livestream’ for those who still wish to join virtually. Our current Zoom provision does not work well for this, and to improve it we would have to spend money to upgrade the system. If anyone has the skills to offer our worship on You Tube or any other platform, I am very open to the discussion, but I cannot myself operate this.

Since we have been open to allowing more people in our congregation it has been necessary to check the Covid certificates or Rapid Test results before admitting an individual into worship. We are all grateful to Churchwarden Trevor for supervising this week by week. There are various degrees of co-operation that he has to deal with from time to time, but I am very content that so many people seek to be compliant and pleasant.

Over two years of the pandemic our finances have been seriously affected. This was particularly bad at the end of 2020, but the financial accounts (available in this booklet) show that we have been able to pick ourselves up a **bit** in 2021 – but there are still ‘warnings’ attached. Our thanks to Philip Poulakis again for handling our accounts so ably and competently, and to Nelly Paraskevopoulou for her weekly oversight of income and expenditure. They work well together. In 2021 we were able to have a Christmas Bazaar – our thanks to Lynn Stavrou for galvanizing everyone – and we have had several Quiz Nights – our thank to Jean Mertzanakis for these – but we will gradually have to build up our social and fund-raising events over this year and into 2023 in the hope that by then the familiar annual pattern will be re-established.

Another area where our income has all but disappeared is the hire of St. Paul’s for a concert venue. Concerts have not been permitted for two years, but Christina Antoniadou is beginning now to receive requests for ‘recording sessions’ in St. Paul’s where there is no general public admitted. Some people might query why concerts and cinemas, and now even sports events, can now be back to normal numbers (so long as everyone can show vaccination or negative Rapid Test), but St. Paul’s can’t have concerts. This is because all Government restrictions apply to venues depending on how they are **licensed.** St. Paul’s is licensed as a place of worship, not a concert venue, so we have to comply with ‘Places of Worship’ restrictions. To understand why these restrictions are still in place for Places of Worship you have to understand the normal ‘behaviours’ of those who attend Greek Orthodox churches, where there is no attempt to regulate those who enter. Some may think that we could try the ‘special pleading’ approach – as happened last year when the Jewish Community asked for understanding regarding the Passover date and failed – but the Ministry applies its restrictions ‘horizontally’, as they say, so exceptions are not made.

At the beginning of the year I announced that I will be taking my Church Commissioners pension from the end of July 2022. I will continue to work until the end of July 2023 (Wednesdays-Sundays) and with no salary. Lynne and I will continue to live in Karneadou 6 for that period. I can then draw on my UK state pension in July 2023, and I will retire then as Chaplain. By not taking the salary for one year, this will have a beneficial impact on the finances of St. Paul’s church.

To help the Church Officers and Council members to prepare for my retirement the agenda of the Council has taken into account areas of church life and how we can share responsibilities with Council members, and more widely with the congregation. (We should have had a second meeting to take this forward on March 26th, but I got COVID, so we have had to delay that). From July 2022-July 2023 I will be happy for the Council to meet with the Archdeacon to make plans for after I retire and how my replacement will be found. It is not for me to be involved in any way with my successor’s appointment, but it seems to me that the two really big challenges to be addressed by my successor will be the rebuilding of the congregation after the trauma of the pandemic, and the firming up of income streams. I believe that implications of the pandemic years will affect St. Paul’s into 2023/24. These are uncertain times, and our normal rhythms of church life and resuming confidence again as a congregation will take time.

There is very good and positive news in the area of ecumenical co-operation. The Board of the Anglican Church in Greece now legally employs Fr. Bjorn, the Swedish Church priest. There was already a healthy relationship between our two churches, but this development is a sure sign of our commitment to each other. Fr. Bjorn and I hope to create ‘opportunities’ for the two congregations to have more interaction.

Jean Mertzanakis has provided you with a report about the Council’s meetings over the year, and we are grateful to her for her efficiency and good humour. The Churchwardens have, of course, guided us through a difficult year, and our thanks go to Lynn and Trevor. Thanks are due to all our Council members, to Christina our organist and Virginia our Supervisor/verger. A whole army of people help to ensure that everything is provided Week by week, and especially Sunday by Sunday.

Deacon Christine and I have tried in these last two years to hold people together, using Zoom, or Facebook, or gradually re-gathering in church. I am grateful to Christine for all that she does. We see increasingly new people involved in worship leadership, and it is good news that Nelly Paraskevopoulou is training to be a Licenced Reader. Angelos Palioudakis is exploring the possibility of ordination.

During this year – as is always the case – some members of our congregation have moved away to other places and countries, and I’m pleased to say several of them continue to keep in touch. Some of our valued members have passed away, among them Sue Dale and Patricia Zerva Byas. May they rest in peace.

As always I am grateful to Lynne for supporting my ministry among you, especially in these challenging years, and to Hektor who gives us a reason to get out for walks several times a day (especially welcome when we have 9.00pm curfews!)

*Leonard Doolan -Chaplain. March 2022.*

**ASSISTANT CHAPLAIN’S REPORT**

*Mothers in Prayer (MIP)*

This small group of five women of different nationalities has continued to meet weekly, either in person when possible or online. The global aim is to pray for families, children and grandchildren, education in Greece and educators, particularly with the challenges faced during the pandemic and countries experiencing war.

*Facebook Reflections*

I offered weekly reflections and prayers up to Pentecost 2021 and during Advent this year and will do so again during Lent. They can be watched live or later on from anywhere in the world and their aim is to make meditation accessible to both Church members and non-Church goers.

*Assistant Chaplain, Deacon Christine Saccali*

**CHURCHWARDENS’ REPORT**

Yet another year of the Covid 19 epidemic has passed - we are still unable to function fully as a church without abiding by restrictions and we continue to follow the advice of our lawyer, Mrs. Papatsori, in their application. However, St. Paul’s is functioning well given the circumstances and we have progressed from nine, through 15 and now 36 congregation members allowed in church for Sunday Services. The outside speakers have proved invaluable to those wishing to sit in the garden, where numbers are not so restricted.

Fundraising events were seriously affected by the restrictions, with no concerts and no Bazaar being held but our website has proved successful in promoting fundraising promotions and continues to do so. Ticket sales at a Summer Raffle contributed to much-needed funds and Nelly, our Treasurer, has expressed our thanks to all congregation members who used the monthly-giving envelopes or bank transfers for their offertories.

We were delighted when the Kokotos family allowed us to once again to hold our much-loved Harvest Festival at their vineyard on October 24th and as a result we felt we were returning to some ‘normality’. Although classed as an ‘outdoor’ event, vaccination or Rapid Test certificates were required for those travelling there on the bus we provided. It was very well attended and we thank Anne and her family for their continued support.

On December 5th, and due to the closure of our previous venue, we held our long-awaited Christmas Bazaar in the Foyer of the War Museum. This proved very successful, the event was well-attended and we shall use this location for our 2022 Bazaar.

The Athens Singers contributed to Christmas celebrations at St. Paul’s by performing Christmas carols at the church, which were posted on YouTube.

John, our gardener, continues to tend the garden on a voluntary basis and we thank him for his help. He has varnished the pews which were removed from church and the seating they provide is a welcome addition to the garden, specially during our Sunday Coffee break after the service. A garden shed will be provided for all gardening tools and this will clear the space at the Crypt entrance.

The Crypt has now been cleared to make way for a permanent library of second-hand books for sale and we are grateful to Oliver Knight, who has offered his services and will be responsible for this.

Contractors have now completed the underground electrical installations for the new meters and Nelly has informed me that we have paid for the new connection and await the finalisation of the project, which should be soon. The Diocesan Hardship Fund has given a grant of 3,100 Euros to cover this expense.

I would like to close by thanking my co-Warden, Trevor Kazumonde, for his commitment to the post during these very challenging and demanding times and for the ‘team’ at St. Paul’s who ensure the smooth running of things week by week.

Thank you,

*Lynn Stavrou (Warden)*

**SECRETARIAL REPORT**

This report covers Council meetings since March 2021. Council meets 4 or 5 times a year on Saturdays at the Swedish Centre, plus the Annual Meeting held at St. Paul’s.

* 373rd meeting – 15th may, 2021

Angelos Palioudakis and Alice Karanja began their 3-year terms as full Council members and Trevor Kamuzonde and Jean Mertzanakis agreed to continue as vice-Chairperson and Secretary. Archdeacon Leslie Nathaniel, visiting from Germany, was welcomed. He was pleased at the continuation of services, meetings and other events via Zoom during the pandemic and recommended that we approach the Diocesan Hardship Fund for financial aid due to loss of fundraising income, a suggested accepted by Council, who also agreed that monies from the Property and Fixed Investment Funds in London be made available if needed. The ‘Bishops’ Guide to a Well-Run Chaplaincy’ was adopted as a basis for running the Athens Chaplaincy. Treasurer Nelly Paraskevopoulou reported the success of two online Easter promotions, installation of digital electricity meters (€2000) would be necessary and there was sufficient money to run the Chaplaincy for a further two months. Local Environmental Officer (LEO) Linda Paparsenos wished to form a small Environmental Committee and would be asked to provide information of what help was needed. The Diocesan Director of Ordinands recommended that training as a Congregational Worship leader would be a good first step for Alice Karanja and anyone else wishing to continue their spiritual development. Council agreed that Angelos Palioudakis be supported in his intention of becoming an ordained Anglican priest. Safeguarding Officer Lynn Stavrou said that Level 2 training was on track for those having direct contact with children, but others could also take this online course.

* 374th Meeting – 3rd July, 2021

Our Treasurer reported continuing loss of income due to Covid restrictions but expenses remained the same and the deficit for May and June was €4,360. An application had been made to the Diocesan Hardship Fund. Negotiations to hand control of the Protestant Cemetery to a Church Committee (Anglican, Greek Evangelical, Swedish and German) were proceeding and St. Paul’s would receive a contribution from monies held by the present controlling body. 100 spaces were available but could not be pre-purchased and an area would be set aside for cremated remains. The Summer Raffle was on track and it was hoped to hold a Christmas Bazaar at the National War Museum. A mail shot would request volunteers for an Environmental Team. From 1st August Father Bjorn Kling of the Swedish Church would be on the payroll of the Board of the Anglican Church in Greece, but be financed from Uppsala, Sweden. An extended and updated version of the Church Guide Book would be produced - private funding of €3,000 was available and copies would cost €10. The Diocesan Social Media Policy had been received, stressing the responsible and polite use of email and the necessity for written agreement from parents/guardians for the publication of photos of children – consent slips would be held in the Church Vestry. Lectern lighting and fees for church bookings related to worship would be looked into. Jason Marmaras was congratulated on his appointment to teach at the University of Vienna and thanked for providing an excellent Anglican Evensong service. Arrangements would be made for the organ to be serviced and the German church asked if they wished to make use of this service.

* 375th Meeting – September 11th, 2021

Council agreed to members continuing to serve for 3 years but stepping down for a year before being eligible to stand for re-election. To ensure continuity and smooth running, Safeguarding Officer, Treasurer and Secretary would remain in place and train someone to take over before leaving. It was agreed that anyone considering Council service but lacking experience should be co-opted (with voting rights) for a year to acquaint themselves with procedures prior to standing for election. Council unanimously adopted the following proposal: “*That St. Paul’s Council should follow Diocesan Guidelines on the 5Cs (Correct, Considerate, Constructive, Collaborative and Concise) in all email communications regarding church business*”. Other matters were: Covid – 15 people allowed in church and 52 in the garden / Finance – the 2020-21 deficit was forecast as €40-43,000 / The summer raffle had raised €1,400 and the War Museum was booked for a Christmas Bazaar on December 5th/ The Harvest Festival would be held at the Kokotos Vineyard on October 24th. To streamline the organisation of services, duties and fundraising events, a Table Top Discussion regarding Assisting the Wardens and the Treasurer, Communications and the Environment was held during this meeting – a further discussion to take place at the next meeting and a final document discussed in the New Year.

* 376th Meeting – October 6th, 2021

Two donations of €1,000 each had been received, an amount of €4.5 million allocated to registered churches by the Greek government (we had applied for a grant), a grant had been received from the Diocesan Hardship Fund to cover the cost of new electricity meters and in addition to our own amount from Protestant cemetery funds the Swedish Church would generously pass theirs on to us. A Point of Sale (POS) machine would be obtained in view of the increasing number of people using bank cards. The Harvest Festival was arranged and preparations for the Christmas Bazaar were in hand. From the €37,000 set aside for emergency relief, €5,000 would be given to the Orthodox ‘Apostoli’ to rebuild lives affected by the catastrophic summer fires. The second Table Top Discussion was held at this meeting and covered Working with Children, Safeguarding and Merchandising. Sue Stephos was thanked on her retirement as a Council member after more than 25 years service. She would continue as Treasurer to the Board of the Anglican Church in Greece until a replacement was found.

* 377th Meeting – 13th November, 2021

October income of €8,338 and expenses of €13,024 meant a deficit of €4,686. Father James’ Greek-themed event in the UK had raised €1,600 and the Harvest Festival €1,610. The first quiz evening fundraiser had been held and these would be more frequent than previously. The Congregation would be asked to collect small coins for the Bishop’s Diocesan Advent Appeal, of which €3,000 would go to fire-damaged schools in Greece. Due to Event Organiser Christina turning down concert requests because they were financially non-viable for organizers due to Covid-limited audiences, it was agreed that hire charges for the church be temporarily reduced - our lawyer would ensure that we were not liable for any breaking of Covid regulations. Christmas services would be limited due to Covid regulations. Due to Safeguarding requirements there would be no Kids Korner at the Christmas Bazaar but there would be face-painting by a certificated volunteer. Following a visit by Father Hokken from Uppsala, and according to the Porvoo Agreement, Father Leonard and Pastor Bjorn could provide services for both congregations in Athens. Council agreed that Melissa Dixon and Oliver Knight be approached about possible co-option to the Church Council for one year.

Council met in February this year but those Minutes have not yet been approved by Council and so cannot be included here. Once the Minutes of a meeting have been agreed on and signed as correct at the following one, some weeks later, a report is posted on our Website. I hope that today’s report gives a good idea of the number and variety of items we deal with and the decisions we are authorized to take on your behalf.

*Jean Mertzanakis (Hon. Secretary)*

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

Losses have decreased from EUR 39,023.55 in 2020 to EUR 13,714.08 in 2021 which of course is very positive news. However, in order to be able to compare with 2020 the following things should be mentioned:

* In 2021 the Anglican church received 3 grants (2 from the Diocese and 1 from the Greek state) an amount of €8,211.97 in total, whilst the respective figure for 2020 was €333. In 2021 the Christmas bazaar took place and generated net income of €8,182.19, whereas there was no Christmas bazaar in 2020.
* In 2021 €20,000 of investments were sold to meet cash flow needs.  Despite this, UK Investments (especially the property fund) performed very well in 2021 generating valuation profits of €12,402.74 vs profits of €4,424.92 in 2020.
* In 2021 there was no income from concerts whereas in 2020 the income was €5,132.

*Philip Poulakis ( Accountant)*

**SAFEGUARDING REPORT- The Safeguarding of Minors and Vulnerable Adults**

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

In 2020 the Diocesan Safeguarding team set up ‘Leadership Safeguarding Training Sessions (Level 2)’ on Zoom and anyone needing to take this level – those who hold a greater responsibility in our Church – can do so via the Diocesan Website at (<https://europe.anglican.org>) and there are several dates to choose from. All Church Council members are required to do the basic foundation course but Level 2 is mandatory for those holding specific roles on the Church Council and must be refreshed every three years. I can report that Council Members have now completed their particular level of training and have received their certificates, copies of which are held by me, as Safeguarding Officer.

Knowing and understanding how the Church’s mission and theology should promote a safe and healthy Christian culture and align with safeguarding principles and practice is of the utmost importance and promoting good, preventive safeguarding practice is what we shall continue to aim for at St. Pauls as we gradually return to normality following the pandemic.

A Risk Assessment, which is a careful and systematic assessment of any potential dangers that may be encountered as a result of planned activities, should be carried out by the Safeguarding Officer and Wardens when necessary. This assessment identifies potential dangers in order to reduce or eliminate risk and we should all bear in mind that there is no such thing as a ‘risk-free’ environment! Steps, stairs and uneven floors, unsafe electrical equipment and blocked fire exits are all examples of potential hazards.

As we begin to return to normality at St. Paul’s, with increased numbers attending services and more visitors during the summer months, a new risk assessment will be carried out next month, duly recorded and any necessary action taken.

Thank you,

*Lynn Stavrou (Safeguarding Officer)*

**CHILDREN’S WORK**

Despite not being allowed to have Sunday School over the last year, children’s work has continued each week. Colouring or craft activities have been available in the ‘fun bags’ kept in St. Paul’s. These have been used on Wednesdays and Sundays and have proved to be successful. Deacon Christine kindly paid for five children’s Mass Books which are now in use. It is important that children have this resource for when they are able to participate in the worship. The books are colourful and guide the child through the liturgy.

It is hope over the next year to fund the purchase of some children’s bibles so that all children in church have access to bible stories at an age-appropriate level.

As restrictions change it is hoped that more families return to church and enrich our church life.

*Lynne Doolan (Organiser)*

**ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT**

The letter distributed in August 2021 with the aim of forming a small support team unfortunately had only one response.  I then contacted people outside the congregation whom I thought might be interested but was again disappointed when the first person abruptly said “I want nothing to do with this”.  Understandably, I think, I was quite taken aback and began to lose any hope of success.  However, after some thought, I decided that I would relaunch with a new letter and a new agenda.  This is, loosely, my 4 point plan:

1. As stated in the introductory remarks, I would like to send out another letter as soon as possible to try to get parishioners interested.  It should emphasize that we are looking for IDEAS.  People need not feel committed but they should be given a way of addressing any problems that are noticed or contributing ideas of how to make the church more ‘green’.  In other words, a clear way of communicating with the LEO should be available and made known.
2. An urban garden, as described in the Diocesan magazine (Online), can be planned – this is not only a call to have greenery but to landscape and involve plants and trees, bushes and flowers that are indigenous to the area.  This might be an enterprise to pursue in coordination with Athens University.
3. We must lead the way with a 0% use of plastic.  I have found a bottle that is entirely plastic free, including the cap.  Right now it is used by the food services of Cosmote and I will attempt to find the manufacturer and ask if it can be obtained.   It’s a small thing to do but could set an example. *A side note: the Easter breakfast when last held, thanks to Jane Mandalios was almost 100% plastic free, as are our quiz evenings and Sunday coffee mornings after the service.*
4. Elizabeth Busman, our Diocesan Eco Officer, advocates using an organization called “A Rocha”.   In my opinion, this is not for parish use because it strives for an Eco Church (with a capital C) but I think that’s a global look.  While it has its use, I think we need a more parish based or, at the most, Diocesan outlook.  Much can be learned from our fellow LEOs across the Diocese as I discovered when attending a ZOOM meeting with several other LEOs.  I have subscribed to another site:  Rachel Mash @ ACEN (Anglican Communion Environmental Network).  It would be a good site to visit for all those interested in environmental issues but especially anyone interested in St. Paul’s and/or the Athens environment.  And of course, using one site would not mean excluding the other.

Hopefully we can get some interest started. Also, In line with this, and because I should (but have yet to) send reports to Elizabeth Busman as to what we are doing to become more ‘green’, I would request that the Wardens send a Memo to the LEO regarding any environmental work that is done.

*Linda Paparsenos (Local Environmental Officer – LEO)*

**WEBSITE REPORT**

Our website continues to be the focal point of information for the congregation and followers of St Paul’s.

The Service Sheet for the Sunday Liturgy is published each week and there is a quick link from the Front ‘News’ Page. However, all service sheets can be found under the Blog section of the website. Any items of particular importance are published on the Front Page, often with a link to more details in the Blog and all other items of news, appeals, Council meeting reports etc. are also found in the Blog section. Timings and events are published in the Calendar section, for future planning, Father Leonard’s Sermons are published each week in written and Audio form and Deacon Chris Saccali’s Sermons are published whenever she preaches.

We have had three Appeals on the website this year, Easter Lilies, Christmas Stars and Easter Candles, with personal acknowledgement to every donor appearing alongside the picture unless otherwise requested. We have found this to be a very effective method of raising funds.

My thanks go to Father Leonard, Nelly Paraskevopoulou and Jean Mertzanakis for continuing to send me items for publishing in a timely manner.

*Caroline Daniels (Website Organiser)*

**FACEBOOK REPORT**

Due to the continuing Coronavirus restrictions there have been only a few Social Activities to report on Facebook during the past year. Nevertheless, we continue to post details of services, special prayer courses and appeals which keep our followers, and those who have ‘Liked’ our page, in touch with what’s happening at St Paul’s.

In the past year we have increased our number of ‘Likes’ by 100 to 1,934 and we now also have over 2,000 Followers. Most of them are based in Greece with a healthy minority also based in the UK and the USA and the rest of Europe, and a few in Nigeria.

We have posted details of our various Easter and Christmas appeals, with the names of the donors mentioned each time a Lily, Star or Candle is purchased and these have proven to be a popular way of raising funds.

Facebook continues to be a popular form of Social Media and is a more immediate way of reporting events and happenings at St Paul’s. Hopefully in the coming year restrictions will be lifted further and we will be able to advertise concerts and other fund-raising activities that will take place at St Paul’s.

I would ask everyone to ‘Share’ various appeals on their own Facebook Pages and to invite friends and relations to Like and Follow our page so that our presence continues to reach a wider audience.

*Caroline Daniels (Facebook Organiser)*

**TWITTER REPORT**

Since last year our followers have increased from 104 to 209 and the accounts followed are now 174. Regular tweets are, of course, our Sunday service and sermon and daily prayers from the Church of England and the Church of Scotland. The Anglican Church in St. Petersburg often tweets information about the saint of the day, with works of art which are also re-tweeted. ‘Friendless Churches’ is another favorite with their wonderful work on old, forgotten churches in the UK. Some examples of accounts followed are: The Archbishop of Canterbury, Diocese in Europe, Bishops Robert and David, USPG, Lighthouse Relief, the British Ambassador ( who also writes tweets in excellent Greek), UK In Greece, Rowan Williams, Pope Francis, ICS, Orthodoxia News Agency, MKO Apostoli and many others.

During the war in Ukraine, Twitter, along with Facebook and other social media, provides live updates on events and also pleas for help and online prayers.

*Nelly Paraskevopoulou (Twitter Organiser)*

**SYNOD REPORT**

**The Eastern Archdeaconry Synod met in person on the weekend of 14-17 October 2021 in Greece, on the** normally sun-drenched Ionian island of Corfu – except for at least three of the days we had torrential rain storms that struck the whole of the country. Some Synod members joined by Zoom. The Synod planning team from Holy Trinity Corfu were magnificent in their organization and both the ‘home team’ meals and the tavernas served up Greek food at its best. Just far too much of it, as we all discovered after a few days of eating!

Greece is notorious for its warmth of welcome – ‘*philoxenia*’ – which was evident with our hosts and also our engagement with ecumenical guests. Archimandrite Ignatios Soteriadis, Secretary to the Inter-Church Relations department of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, was with us throughout. Alongside clergy from the Greek Chaplaincies, Ignatios was part of a panel, along with clergy from the Greek chaplaincies.

We were warmly welcomed by Fr. Themistocles, General Vicar to Metropolitan Nektarios of Corfu, followed by introductions from the local team about the history of Corfu and the presence of Anglicanism on the island. We noted that in the Constitutional settlement in Corfu, the Orthodox, Catholic and Anglican churches are legally allowed to have a bishop! On behalf of the Greek Evangelical Church we were welcomed by Miltiades Pantelios and his wife Vita from ‘Lighthouse’, which Bishop Robert had been able to visit in February 2020 before all the lockdowns began.

We were graciously allowed to use St. Francis Catholic Church for our worship, and the Orthodox Centre for Spirituality for the other items of our programme – both examples of how well the churches co-operate on the island.

Apart from our normal business meetings with reports from the Chaplaincies, we had two Bible studies, one delivered by Clare Amos by Zoom - Singing the Lord’s song with a stranger in our midst. Despite storms challenging the technology, Clare unwrapped the interesting dialectic of Ezra and Nehemiah versus Ruth and Jonah as strangers. Ruth is the counter-narrative of a grotesque story of abusive hospitality in the book of Judges and we were reminded of the ways in which God deals directly with her and makes his ways known through Ruth the stranger.

Canon Smitha Prasadam’s study "How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a Strange Land" invited reflection on Psalm 137 with truth telling imperatives spoken to God amid lament and loss. We gave thanks for lyrics that push us past reason, melodies that locate us home and futures beyond present despair. We even began by singing the ‘Boney M’ version of the Psalm! Clare also introduced the first module of the Lay Discipleship Course, focusing on the Lord’s Prayer (and with a slightly better Zoom connection).

This theme was picked up by Bishop Robert and Helen who joined us for most of Synod. “The God of heaven is the one who will give success and we are going to start building” (Neh 2.20) gave shape to his talk about how we walk together in faith as a diocese. Bishop Robert shared with Synod his recent experience of visiting Yerevan where he had attended a conference on religious freedom and world peace and an animated discussion followed about the justice issues of the war between Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. His second talk centred on internal Diocesan issues and the current strategic and financial situation which the Diocesan Secretary and Chief Operating Officer, Andrew Caspari, also outlined in his Zoom presentation.

Our final Synod meal ended with a similar expression of Greek philoxenia, involving the Catholic Archbishop and other key ‘partnership’ guests. It may have rained for most of this Synod but we still came away warmed by much of what we had experienced, and with genuine thanks to the ‘host team’ of Corfu. By the way, Holy Trinity Church has an apartment that can be rented out.

*The Ven. Dr. Leslie Nathaniel, Archdeacon of the East within the Diocese of Europe*

**CHURCH ORGANISATIONS**

* *Community Connect Athens*

Due to Covid restrictions on the number of people who can safely get together it hasn't been possible to hold this event for more than a year. However, I look forward to the time when we can once again meet with old friends and greet new ones at our monthly coffee mornings in the Swedish Centre in Plaka but, before then and as the weather gets warmer, we shall be starting our coffee mornings in St.Paul`s church grounds, where we will have books, clothing and handmade greeting cards for sale as well as coffee & cake. We look forward to beginning again and welcoming everyone back. Thank you for all your support in the past and your patience.

*Anne Dedes (Organiser)*

* *Community Connect Kifissia*

No meetings have been held since February 2020 but there has been outside personal delivery of reading material and preserves and Sunday offertory money and donations have been collected. Contact with regular members has been maintained via pastoral letters, email and phone calls and with the Loida Home for the Elderly along with prayers for residents and staff. Members are also encouraged to keep in touch via social media and the church website. We have a presence at the Newcomers meetings that have taken place at Domotel four times since October 2021. There are no table top sales but it is hoped that we can meet outside during the better weather. We are looking for a new venue and a small private garden was offered. It is not an ideal venue but we may begin there with some craft and coffee mornings. Also, a church member has offered her garage for some sales but more help is required if we are to restart properly, maybe with a different venue and format.

*Assistant Chaplain Deacon Christine Saccali (Organiser)*

* ***Quiz Evenings***

Dating from 2011, our quiz evenings were greatly missed when Covid regulations meant that the one held in February 2020 was our last but it’s good to report that now anyone providing a valid triple vaccination certificate or rapid test can attend, numbers permitting. Teams of 4 or less are the norm and we have four rounds of 20 questions, including general knowledge, multiple choice, picture rounds, anagrams or whatever springs to mind between one quiz and the next. The entrance fee remains 4 Euros, questions begin at 7.30 and we usually close before 10.

Our first evening after a gap of 18 months was in November 2021, followed by a ‘Christmas Quiz’ in December and a third one in early February, when Father Leonard cut our Vassilopitta, and one in March. Delicious refreshments are provided by Mary Pelidis and Lynne Doolan, assisted by Shirley Poulakis, and Emmanuel Carpenter helps to set up and is in charge of drinks. A huge thank you to them for their support and to others who help by keeping an eye on the door, collecting the entrance fee, organising the raffle, donating prizes and clearing up. It has been a great pleasure to welcome back old friends and meet new ones and we hope to make future quiz-goers of young Arthur and little Emmeline, who bring their parents along. Please let me know if you’d like to join us for a relaxing and enjoyable evening.

*Jean Mertzanakis (Organiser)*

* ***Friends of St. Paul’s***

Donations to The Friends of St Paul's for 2021 amounted to €1250.72.  This constitutes  donations of €1190 made into the UK account plus €60.72 from donations made in Greece.

*Jane Mandalios (Organiser)*

***Organ, Choir and Events***

* *The Hill Organ*

The church organ was repaired in October 2019 and although tuning by Michael Latham, from the company that built the organ, was scheduled for March 2020 this unfortunately was cancelled due to Covid travel restrictions. Michael contacted us recently and informed us that our collaboration has come to an end due to his age and difficulties in climbing to the organ loft for both tuning and repairs. I have asked him to give us some other contacts and in the meantime am in touch with other churches here in Athens who need organ maintenance (the German church, the Evangelical church etc.) to find out whether we can cooperate in order to find an organ builder who will visit Athens annually to repair all organs, with costs shared between us. Since May 2021 the organ has been used again for liturgies or organ practice and is currently used by three students and three organists, with a monthly charge for this.

* *The Choir*

There were no rehearsals during 2021 but since January 2022 they have started again and two new members joined in March 2022. The number of choir members is now seven.

* *Events*

From January 2021 to 14th March 2022 the church booked only one event (a video production), with a total amount of 400 Euros received. Since September 2021 there has been interest in booking the church and this continues but the Covid restriction of a maximum of 36 people indoors affects the final booking.

*Christina Antoniadou BMUS, MMUS, LRAM, ARAM, DipGRST, Organist, Sound therapist and Choir Director / Events Coordinator at St Paul's Anglican Church*