

PINNER, MIDDLESEX (LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW)

DIOCESE OF LONDON (Episcopal Area of Willesden)



(Artwork by kind permission of Peter Green)

St John the Baptist: Parish Profile

www.pinnerparishchurch.org.uk

Pinner Parish Church exists to promote the Kingdom of God by worship, witness and service.

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Introduction

We seek to be both a warmly welcoming church where people can meet God and to be a thriving, loving focus in our local community. *There is much to enjoy and draw from in our fellowship.* Our parish strategy *Believing and belonging; living the Christian faith in the 21st century.* (www.pinnerparishchurch.org.uk) informs and underpins all we do.

During our present incumbent's 5 year ministry there has been an increase in the number of young families joining us; significant development in work with children and young people; a greater emphasis on being outward facing both to the local community and to the wider world and a focus on building the spiritual dimension of our lives, sharing and learning through teaching, prayer groups, retreats and similar opportunities for personal spiritual growth. These developments built on the work of our previous incumbent during his 17 year ministry.

Our Electoral Roll, renewed this year, stands at 325. This year, one of our congregation has become a deacon, another has been priested.

Our mission statement is: *To promote the Kingdom of God by worship, witness and service*

1. The Parish



The parish of Pinner is in the London Borough of Harrow in North-West London. It is on the Metropolitan Line and is therefore ideal commuter belt country. The parish is largely professional and of working age, but there is a large retired population who have lived in Pinner and have stayed here. There is a “village” feel to Pinner; it represents part of the culture of “old Middlesex”. Part of this village feel is the ancient High Street with the Church at the top of the hill.

Shopping in Pinner is relatively easy, and as well as exclusive shops there are the usual High Street brands. The village is well served by the Pinner Association, probably the largest amenity group in the country.

Housing stock in Pinner is always highly sought after. It is expensive and the top of the High Street is a conservation area. There is also a large council estate in the Parish (The Grove Estate). The Parish is well served with good local schools. The local authority still has the system of first, middle and high schools incorporating A Level studies. There are also some good local private schools.



With such a community there is demand for residential and nursing homes. The parish is well served with these. They are of a good quality and welcome the Church's occasional ministrations. The Pinner Association of Churches (PAC- see below) provides some day amenities by way of lunches and weekly meeting places. Pinner is blessed by having a large village hall that serves the needs of all the community.

2. Other Churches and faiths

2.1 The Pinner Association of Churches (PAC)

There is a strong Ecumenical Christian link in the Pinner Association of Churches, including Roman Catholic, Methodist, United Reformed and United Free as well as Anglican traditions. The Covenant between the churches was re-signed after the second review in 2003. There is commitment to a policy of not doing separately those things that can be done better together. The clergy meet in fraternal once a month and are ex-officio on the PAC Executive which meets once a quarter.

The PAC undertakes much good work including a weekly coffee shop, an annual fun day, and the Good Friday Walk of Witness. There are now some 30 events each year giving opportunities to worship, pray and study together, as well as many activities involving the wider community.

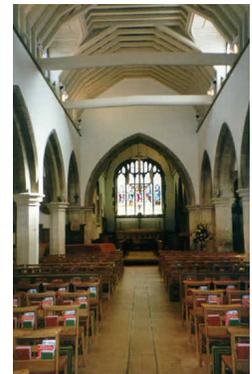
2.2 Other faiths

As well as ensuring that there is a strong bond between the Christian churches in Pinner, the PAC reaches out to other faiths, e.g. through Jewish/Christian/Muslim Dialogue. In the last few years St. John's has accepted two invitations to the Harrow Mosque to witness prayers join in discussion and receive their very warm hospitality. Our ecumenical and inter-faith dimensions are very important in our parish life.

3. The Parish Church and premises

3.1 The Church

The Parish Church is a 14th Century Grade II* listed building. Quinquennial inspection in 2006 indicated major work is due on the roof and nave arcades over the next five years, for which funds are available. The general standard of maintenance of buildings and other plant is high. The Friends of Pinner Parish Church, an independent charity, raise money for maintenance and development work on the church building.



Views of the church

3.2 The Church Hall

The Church Hall is a modern building immediately adjacent to the church, and a wonderful asset to the community. It provides flexible space for different purposes and is heavily used by the community, including two nursery schools, and the church. The Church office is housed in the hall.



Views of the church hall

3.3 The Vicarage

The Vicarage is virtually adjacent to the church and was built in the late 1930s. There is a large kitchen, a dining room and lounge, a study, five bedrooms and a large garden.

3.4. Church properties

The Church owns accommodation for a Deputy Organist, a Youth Worker and a Curate's house, some of which are presently let.

4. Worship

4.1 Services

The Eucharist is at the heart of parish life. The Church is within the liberal catholic tradition, recognising the central role of the Eucharist, taking an interpretative view of the Bible and being open to the wider world. The three Sunday Communion Services include an 8 am said service in traditional language (about 30 communicants), a 9 am Parish Eucharist which appeals to families (about 80 communicants), and an 11am Sung Eucharist with full ceremonial, including incense (about 80 communicants). Attendance is around 300 at the three morning services. Average communicants rose last year. In 2006, we had 345 communicants on Easter Sunday and 476 on Christmas Day.



The wide variety of services meet the different needs of our many parishioners. Common Worship is used for all Sunday Eucharists. BCP Matins is said by a lay assistant at 10.30 each Sunday to a small congregation. There is BCP Sung Evensong most Sundays.

There is full lay participation, including reading the gospel, serving as deacon and preparing and reading the intercessions. This has been built up over the last 20 years. In all, about 100 lay people actively support the liturgy in some form.

We are also embracing different forms of worship: the 9 am Eucharist is replaced six times a year by an interactive all-age service (see under Section 6 below). Occasional ecumenical services are held on Sunday evenings and there have been Taizë style and Celtic services.

We have occasional visiting speakers on topics of major interest following Evening Prayer. Healing services are held regularly with laying on of hands and anointing. We are developing a team of people who offer prayer ministry at these services.

Holy Week and Easter are of great importance to us. We observe the Holy Triduum in full, including a dawn vigil and Eucharist on Easter Day. A full range of Christmas services includes a very popular Christingle Service, our most successful outreach service of the year.

The Eucharist is also celebrated on 3 weekdays, with around 20-25 attending on Wednesday mornings. Morning and Evening office are said daily in church. Major feasts are celebrated with a Sung Eucharist in the evening and sometimes a said Eucharist in the morning. Baptisms average around 15-20 a year. In 2006 there were 7 weddings with one blessing and 35 funerals, 12 of which included a church service.

4.2 Music

Music is an area of considerable strength, and underpins worship, seeking to work in synergy with the stillness, the awe and wonder which worship needs to engender to nurture the spiritual within us all.



There is a flourishing 4 part choir, of a good standard and of a wide age range, which maintains a “top part” (Soprano/Treble) of approximately 20, ranging in age from 7-18, trained by the Director and Assistant Director of Music. This in turn helps to bring in new families to the Church.

Spiritually there are a considerable range of services on offer. 9am parish Eucharist is cantor led. On major festivals a small orchestra is formed from the congregations to play at 9.00am service. At 11.00am there is a sung Eucharist, using in a homogenous unit, incense, ceremonial and music in a dignified well prepared manner. (Congregational numbers have been rising at this service.) At 6.30pm there is BCP evensong with full choir and anthem, supplemented about 4 times a year with a full choral evensong. Occasionally there is some variation on this with Taizé style. Seasons like Advent and Christmas have their own carol service when the church is full.

The church is renowned in the area for its annual week long Music Festival, in June, with the emphasis on using both professional and amateur musicians, young and established, local and international. In addition there is an annual Autumn/Winter series of Jazz concerts with many international artists, organised by one of our NSMs (recently retired but still continuing in this role) and the church is used for many other concerts and recitals.

5. Staff

Our curate is Rev'd Elizabeth Birch. A member of our congregation is an occasional deacon: he is licensed at another parish which has no services on a Sunday. Both of them are NSMs. There are also two priests who have permission to officiate; Rev'd Ian Murray and Rev'd Stuart Natrass. As well as the clergy there are three Readers, Susan Cooper, Ann Fuller, Nick Ridge and Youth Workers, James and MariaTrafford (see below). These form the core staff of the Church. Women's priestly ministry is strongly supported by the congregation.

There are other paid members of the team: The Parish Administrator, the Business Manager, the Director of Music, the Deputy Director of Music and the Caretaker all of whom work part time. Twenty-two further lay assistants and twenty-seven servers assist with the distribution of the sacrament in church and with some other tasks in the taking of services.

The sacristans and the head server are key members of the team and are voluntary and there is a whole army of other active volunteers covering everything from sound operation to welcoming, gardening etc. We have a team of bellringers, whose aim it is to ring every Sunday.

In addition, we have a team of bereavement visitors, a wedding preparation team, a group that keep in touch with the older members of the congregation or other residents in the parish and people who take communion to the housebound.

6. Youth and Children's Work

The model of church expressed in our children's and youth work is of a dynamic web of relationships with a focus on; vibrant spirituality, belonging, open communities, life-centred faith, a holistic system of nurture. For the last ten years our work with children and young people has been led by a full time Youth Worker who works closely with a dedicated group of adult and teenage volunteers.



Kidz Klub is run for our 3-11's and meets on a Sunday morning at 9am for a vibrant, energetic time of worship, play, imagination, creativity, and holistic learning. We have about 40 members. Within Kidz Klub, there is the chance for children over the age of seven to receive first communion - the preparation for this is built in to the normal system of discipleship.

There is a junior church at 11am which is fed mainly from the choir, *about 15 of whom* leave prior to the first reading and return in time for the Eucharistic prayer, and who are similarly offered the opportunity to receive first communion. Children are now expected to come forward for confirmation around the age of 11-13, allowing them to develop their faith in more depth at a time when they are able to explore it for themselves.

There is a Summer holiday club which attracts around 100 children from the church and wider community, and is well supported by volunteers across the congregation. The club takes place every morning for a week, followed by a special non-Eucharistic service at 9am the following Sunday.



Photos from recent holiday clubs

There are “Space” family services twice a term which act as a hub for children, families, and the wider congregation to come together and celebrate Jesus in a mixture of traditional and innovative ways. These services are orientated towards an informal, yet respectful, church family, in which we all have our place and voice as equally as anyone else. The services are generally non-Eucharistic so that non-church families are welcomed, and there is space to express worship outside of the liturgy.

SNIP (Sunday Night in Pinner) is our youth club for 12-16’s which meets on a Sunday evening with a total membership of 30. We also run a group for about 10 16-18’s called SNIP Extra directly after SNIP, and maintain relationships with members now at University. SNIP Recharge is a bible study / discussion group for SNIP members meeting every two weeks.

We have excellent links within the wider community. Our schools work is strong; we work closely with four primary schools and three secondary schools in the area. We also work with other churches in the area, Re:generation - Harrow schools link, Romance Academy - involved in PSHCE, the local council youth worker, and the local police.

7. Finance and Administration

The Church is strongly supported, financially, by its congregation. It mostly operates annually at a small surplus, has significant reserves, and does not anticipate a building appeal.

For the year ended 31 December 2006 total incoming resources were £306.6k Within that sum, planned giving was £175.3k and other income included sums from renting out the church hall, rent from parish owned houses and interest on deposits. Total resources used were £289.9k. This included £90.1k of **Common Fund** where we fund in excess of our costs, and many other diverse costs including paid organists, parish administrator, youth worker and treasury/financial services. We donate 10% of certain income to missions and charities in addition to specific charitable collections and events.

At 31 December 2006 net assets totaled £988.9k which included £606.5k for 3 houses which have not been recently re-valued and short term deposits and cash of £384.9k. Clergy expenses are paid in full.

Strategic work is the province of the Hon Treasurer who is supported by a paid part time Business Manager whose role is dealing with day to day operational finance especially bookkeeping. The Parish Administrator works 20 hours per week, increasing up to 24 when necessary. She is able to provide strong support to the incumbent. The parish office is situated within the hall complex and uses well developed IT systems with electronic links to the vicarage. This is augmented both by paid and voluntary help as necessary.

8. Communication

8.1 Web site

The Church web site is currently being revamped and is due to be re-launched before the end of 2007. The web site administration and management is being moved to the Church Office.

8.2 Publications

A weekly bulletin is produced and distributed at all Sunday services. A parish magazine, Pinner Parish Review, is published in-house with ten issues a year and the incumbent is expected to contribute to this.

8.3 Coming Together

On Sundays, breakfast in the Hall and refreshments follow the 9.00 am and 11.00 am services respectively. On festivals we have opportunities to share “brown bag” lunches etc.

9. Spiritual nurture

The parish is a very busy place, but within this busyness there are opportunities for quiet reflection and peace. These are as follows:

- House Groups
- Gossiping the Gospel (Adult Nurture Programme, 12 Saturday mornings per year)
- Lent and Advent talks together with the PAC.
- 4 Quiet Days a year to S. Mary at the Cross, Edgware.
- Christianity for Life (Adult Confirmation and Nurture Programme, 15 week course)
- Yearly Parish retreat to Alton Abbey
- Annual pilgrimage to the National Pilgrimage at Walsingham, for a small group.
- Conversations at the Cliff’s Edge, occasional discussions with visiting speakers after Evensong.

We also have access to The Grail, a lay Roman Catholic Community, in Pinner.

10. Key Issues

- 10.1 The development and strengthening of links with the community and especially with those on the fringes of the church is central to our work and mission. We operate an open policy on baptisms, weddings and funerals. There is a substantial lay involvement in this ministry. The church is open every day. There is a church watch coordinator and many members of the congregation spend an hour in church each week for both security reasons and to welcome numerous visitors. Our church hall facilities are used widely by community groups as well as for church activities. Our clergy and choir play a major part in the service at the war memorial on Remembrance Sunday, along with representatives of the other churches in the PAC and the synagogue.

- 10.2 *The nurture of families and young people.* We value links with local schools very greatly and are asked on a fairly regular basis to take assemblies. School parties frequently come to the Church for guided visits and we have an established routine for this. Schools regularly come to the church for services at Christmas and Harvest. Our youth team pastorally supports young families and aim to visit each family regularly.
- 10.3 We are enthusiastic to help people to develop an authentic theology for themselves and especially to help a little in encouraging our congregation to build links between the world of work (where many carry heavy responsibility) and the world of faith. We are trying to create structures that help the development of personal prayer, eg. Faith through House Groups and other means.
- 10.4 We have developed our support networks for the sick and housebound with lay members of the church taking them the reserved sacrament. and we have also had a regular ministry of healing for a number of years. We have bereavement visiting, baptism and marriage preparation schemes.
- 10.5 We are active in Stewardship through which people can pledge both money and talents. Through our Missions & Charities PCC Committee, we give ten per cent of our assured income to missions and charities, which are graded into four monetary bands. There is strong support within the Church for the continuation of this tradition. In addition, there are separate fund-raising appeals, the major ones being at Christmas, in Lent (alternating each year between overseas and home charities) and at the Music and Patronal Festivals in June.
- 10.6 We struggle with issues of Mission and Evangelism and how to live responsibly and authentically as a prosperous parish in a poor world; we have a significant links with the Church in Africa, where we are twinned with Benguela parish in the diocese of Angola. We have close links with USPG for whom we have provided the last two Chairmen.
- 10.7 We have a strong musical tradition and a thriving junior choir many without previous church connections. The youngsters are trained to high standards (Dean's or Bishop's Award won in most years). The adult section includes some teenagers, before going off to University.
- 10.8 *Links with the wider church.* We have a tradition of strong involvement in the life of the Harrow Deanery and beyond. For many years a member of our congregation was Deanery lay chair. Currently one of our readers, Susan Cooper, is a member of General Synod.

