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Mark's

# OUR PARISH PROFILE

MORAY ROAD, FINSBURY PARK, LONDON, N4 3LD,





Placing Jesus at the very centre of everything we believe and do, as revealed in Biblical truth.

## LOVE JESUS

“We love because he first loved us” 1 John 4:19

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength and all your mind. What better place to start our journey of faith.

## SERVE JESUS

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you also did for me” Matthew 25:40

By serving others, we serve Jesus. We aspire to be an outward-reaching church, ministering practically and spiritually to our community in Tollington.

## FOLLOW JESUS

“Follow me and I will make you fishers of men” Matthew 4:19

Jesus gives us the perfect example of how to live in the world but not be of the world. We pray that the Holy Spirit will lead us to go and make disciples of all the nations that come to Finsbury Park.



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**The 2023 Tollington Parish Annual Reports & Financial Statement  
accompany this Parish Profile as a separate document**

**The St Mark's Statistics and Finance Dashboards  
accompany this Parish Profile as separate documents**

This Profile has been discussed and agreed by the PCC

The PCC formally elected two Parish Representatives on 12//11/24, Funmi Sulaiman  
and Andy Down, our two churchwardens



## **Introduction and Welcome to Applicants**

We're excited to share our Parish Profile with you! It's wonderful that you're interested in learning more about our parish and the role of New Priest in Charge at St Mark's Tollington Park. We truly hope that the information in this Profile inspires and encourages you.

We wholeheartedly pray that God leads us to the right person who can help us grow and thrive in this exciting new phase of our mission and ministry. We'd love for you to feel the same enthusiasm we do about the amazing journey ahead!

St Mark's is a vibrant, evangelical, and diverse inner-city church that beautifully mirrors the rich social and economic tapestry of our local community. We celebrate the wonderful variety of our members' ethnicities, cultures, ages, and backgrounds, which deepens our understanding of ourselves and our connection to God.

While we cherish our inner-city church experience, we also recognize the unique challenges that church ministry can present in an inner London Parish. Our church officers and the congregation are fully aware of this and are dedicated to ensuring sustainable ministry along with the well-being and growth of our staff and volunteers.

### **What Are We Like at St. Mark's?**

We cherish a rich evangelical tradition that focuses on biblical teaching and preaching. Over the years, this tradition has grown to embrace a vibrant commitment to being a more charismatic church. We take pride in being a parish that deeply values and actively practices prayer and pastoral care, extending support to our members and everyone we connect with. Here's how we would love to describe ourselves:

1. A community church, with most members drawn from the local area. The members reflect the diversity of the local community in terms of age, ethnicity, culture, background, education, socioeconomic status, and disability.
2. A church with a great mix of people who are new, transient, returning members, and members who have been active at St Mark's for decades.
3. A worshipping community who desires to understand the Word of God better, be more prayerful, be better at discipleship, and live out



our faith more practically, all in the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. A friendly, loving community of people of all ages, learning to love and serve Christ, one another and the wider community.
5. An outward-facing church that values mission, social action, and evangelism, and looks for effective ways of reaching out.
6. A church with a passion and a great track record of working with children, young people and families in the church, school and wider community.
7. A church with an increasingly active and committed laity.
8. A church with a desire to increase our effectiveness in growing God's Kingdom, with tremendous potential and a hunger to be on fire for God.
9. A church with a membership reflecting a range of viewpoints.
10. A church that holds to orthodox theological values and supports the current Church of England's position on marriage as defined by Canon B30. A church that supports the Evangelical Alliance's position on marriage and sexuality.







## Diocese's Wider 2030 Vision

Further details on the Diocese's Wider 2030 Vision can be found at:

<https://www.london.anglican.org/about-us/our-vision/>

As you will see, it has been structured around: Confident Disciples, Compassionate Communities and Creative Growth. It also has three priority areas: Growing Younger, Safer Churches and being More Radically Just.

It is a great vision, and as you can see, our St Mark's Vision aligns very closely with those areas and is set out below.

## St Mark's Aligned Vision

Our overall vision as a church is to know Christ and see His Kingdom extended in this diverse area of London.

We aim to do this through our worship and presence here, through evangelism, acts of service and the witness of Christian lives lived out with integrity in families, schools, the local neighbourhood and the workplace.

'Love, Serve, Follow' has been a constant theme for our ministry. We also want to develop and use the gifts of the Spirit in all of this, expecting the unexpected.





## **Vision Statement for St Mark's Church, Tollington Park**

### **Placing Jesus at the Centre – Love, Serve, Follow**

We aim to transform Tollington through our love for God and one another by serving the community in which God has placed us and by following Jesus and calling others to follow Him. By engaging in worship, outreach, and discipleship, we hope to cultivate a Christ-centred community that beautifully reflects God's Kingdom right here in Finsbury Park.



Below is our draft detailed vision statement! It's a work in progress, and we're keen to collaborate with our future Priest in Charge to enhance and refine it together. We hope it will be a helpful guide for all of us in the discernment process

## **Targets and Ambitions (aligned to the Diocese's 2030 Vision)**

The PCC has started to consider a draft mission action plan which they hope to develop with the new Priest in Charge, including consultation with the wider congregation; on how to develop in the following 3 areas.

### **Confident Disciples**

### **Compassionate Communities**

### **Church Growth**

Please see Draft Mission Action plan under appendix 1 at the end of this document



## **Priorities**

### **Growing Ministry with Children, Youth, and Young Adults**

- Expand children's ministry staff and resources to support Sunday School and JAM.
- Launch a youth leadership programme encouraging service and discipleship.
- Develop partnerships with local schools for mentoring and outreach.

### **Safer Churches**

- Implement regular safeguarding training and audits.
- Develop pastoral support teams to provide safe spaces for vulnerable groups.
- Strengthen safeguarding practices in youth ministries.



## **Racial Equality and Justice**

- Host annual diversity celebrations and cultural awareness events.
- Partner with community organisations to promote racial equality.
- Develop resources and sermons focused on racial equality and reconciliation.

This vision builds upon St Mark's tradition of biblical teaching, pastoral care, and community engagement. We hope to continue to grow as a beacon of hope in Finsbury Park.



## What Are We Looking for In a New Priest in Charge ?

We are looking for a Priest in Charge who is guided by Biblical values, driven by mission and fuelled by purpose. For this section, we again invited feedback from the PCC, staff team and church congregation, who identified the following priorities and desirable characteristics.

We are praying they will continue to build on:

- our tradition of loving ministry and service to a diverse congregation and neighbourhood;
- our passion for mission and evangelism, ever praying for ways to reach out to others;
- our life as a worshipping community with a desire to pray more and live out our faith in practical ways;
- our long and successful tradition of working with young people in the church and community.

Parish life has many wonderful aspects. Yet, our Parish, similar to many in London and throughout the country, currently grapples with issues like poverty, rough sleeping, and drug and knife crime.

We aspire to collaborate with other churches and organisations in the area to enhance support for individuals facing these difficulties. We pray that a new Priest in Charge will guide us toward a clear vision of peace and restoration in the Parish.

### Person Specification - New Priest in Charge, St Mark's Parish

The ideal candidate for this post will work with the congregation to build on:

- our tradition of **loving ministry and service** to a diverse congregation and neighbourhood,
- our passion for **mission and evangelism**, ever praying for effective ways to reach out to others
- our life as a **worshipping community** with a desire to be helped to learn and pray more and live out our faith in practical ways
- our long and successful tradition of **working with children and young people** in the church and community

**We welcome applications from women and men.**



AREA OF EXPERIENCE	KEY SKILLS, EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE
Personal Faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person whose own life, spiritual maturity, prayer life, worship and authentic contagious faith bring energy, passion and drive</li> </ul>
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strategic and intuitive leader who can develop, hold and impart a compelling clear short, medium and long-term vision and effective programme with the congregation</li> <li>• A humble approachable proven leader and manager of people who is a good listener that has empathy for a broad range of views and creates a healthy positive culture to build a diverse church community which is sustainable</li> </ul>
Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is passionate for the place and people of this local parish with a clear understanding of parish ministry.</li> <li>• Mission-minded, helping St Mark's church look outwards, and to learn and develop effective ways of sharing God's love</li> <li>• An energetic networker who values, maintains and develops the church's great relations with the local community and local organisations, schools and other faiths</li> </ul>
Church Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An experienced, inspirational and effective communicator, preacher and pastor, who through Bible-centred orthodox teaching and preaching, and with the Holy Spirit's anointing, draws us closer to Christ and active service</li> <li>• An affirmer, encourager, enabler and empowerer, who helps identify people's gifts and develops them in service, ministry and calling. Able to mentor, delegate and grow volunteers</li> <li>• Someone with a proven track record of sustainably rebuilding, leading, developing and managing effectively the Church's staff team collaboratively alongside the Laity and PCC.</li> <li>• A clear desire and commitment to growing the practice of discipleship, prayer, prayer ministry and the use of spiritual gifts in our church</li> </ul>

Children & Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A heart for work with children (including St Mark's Primary School) and young people and to encourage more church members to serve in this work</li> </ul>
Stewardship and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a strong understanding and experience of church governance – showing a clear understanding of the role and responsibilities of the PCC, awareness of church law, and an ability to manage finance and buildings well.</li> <li>• Will provide wise and diligent stewardship of all the parish's assets and resources.</li> </ul>
Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes safeguarding; is trained, skilled, and committed to good safeguarding practice and compliance, and the development of a healthy safeguarding culture.</li> </ul>
Community Focus and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committed to the inclusion of all people, actively fostering unity in diversity.</li> <li>• Demonstrates a commitment to racial justice and leading the church in a way that includes people from diverse backgrounds.</li> </ul>

## How will we support our Priest in Charge?

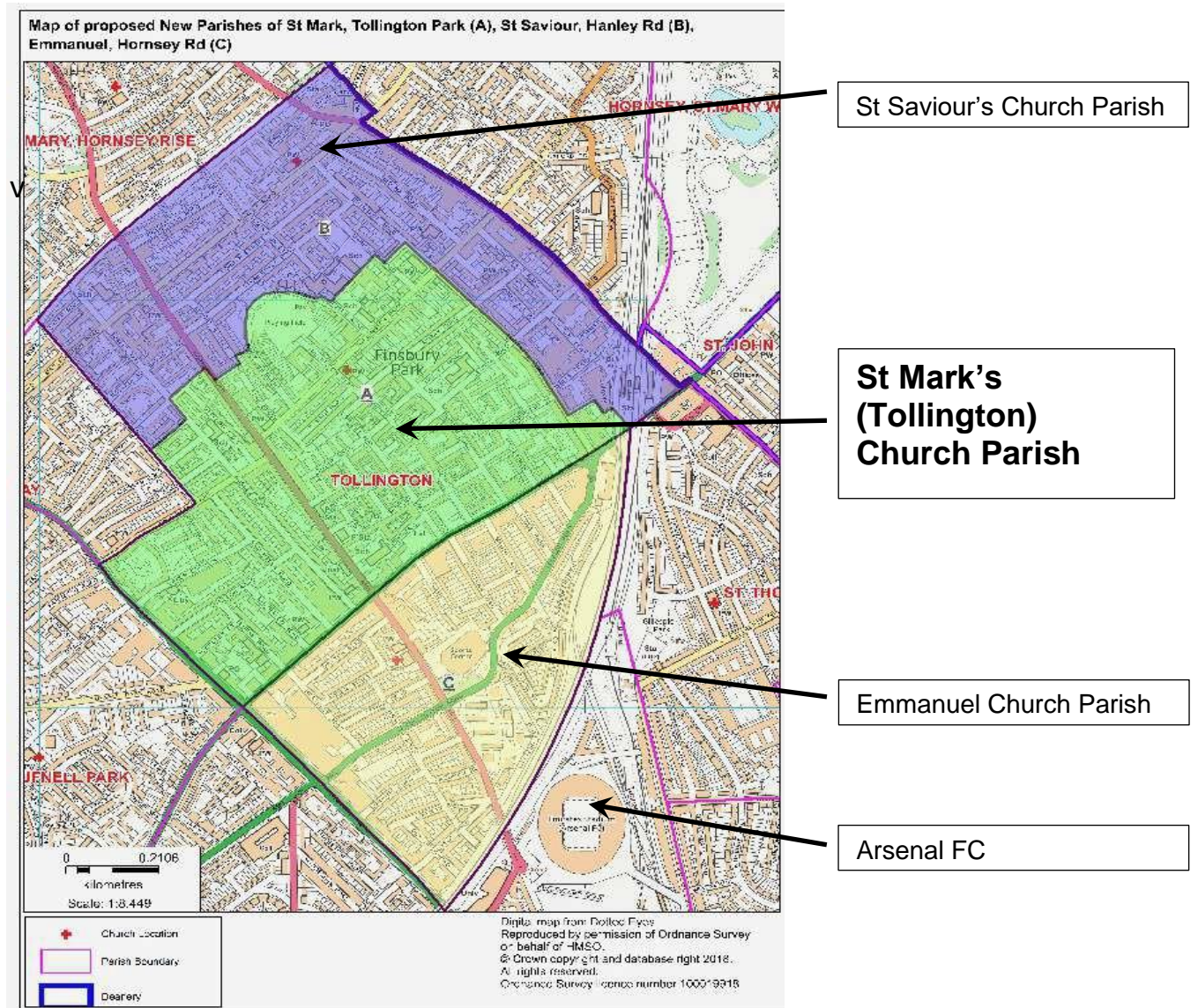
At our church, we take pride in being deeply rooted in prayer and fostering a warm support network for our new vicar. Our dedicated and experienced churchwardens, along with a passionate PCC and our wonderful connections with the Diocese staff, work tirelessly to ensure a welcoming environment. Plus, we're fortunate to have talented architects on the PCC to handle building matters and accountants ready to offer their financial expertise. Together, we create a nurturing community!

## Our Parish

St Mark's Parish is nestled in the vibrant area of Finsbury Park, right in the heart of North London within the Borough of Islington. This parish is a part of the Islington Deanery, which belongs to the Stepney Area of the Diocese of London.

Take a look at the map below! You'll find St Mark's Parish highlighted in green, conveniently located near St Saviour's to the North and East, and Emmanuel to the South.







The parish population as of 2021 is 12,813, spread across 5,333 households. In terms of religion, 33% identify as Christian, 35% as having no religion, and 21% as Muslim.

This vibrant community showcases a wonderful variety of ages and socio-economic backgrounds, even though the Parish ranks among the 10% most deprived in the country. A significant amount of social housing can be found here, with our church situated close to two large housing estates—the Andover Estate and the Six Acres Estate—and two smaller ones, Haden Court and Clifton Court.

Thanks to excellent transport links and proximity to London Metropolitan University, this area has become a popular spot for students and young professionals, creating a delightful tapestry of social and cultural backgrounds.

Many of our church members live in the housing estates or nearby private housing, fostering a strong connection with the area and its residents. Most of our congregation is local, and they truly know the community and its people well!



## **Group Ministry**

The three churches (St Mark's, St Saviour's and Emmanuel) were incorporated into a Team Ministry in 1992, but following a major collaborative consultation in the parish during 2017-18, the three churches amicably proposed a scheme to the diocese to become three separate parishes. A Group Scheme was launched in September 2019. This resulted in three separate parishes working independently of each other but allowing for a light touch collaboration within a Group Ministry.

A group ministry is a legal grouping of benefices whereby the clergy (incumbents or priests-in-charge) of two or more separate benefices are under a duty to assist each other to make the best possible provision for the cure of souls in the area as a whole.

From the formation of the new parishes St Saviours Church, within the Group, is in partnership with King's Cross Church (KXC). As part of this consultation and discussion, the boundaries of the three parishes were adjusted to provide for a more even population spread between the three parishes.

## **Staff And Lay Involvement**

St. Mark's is a wonderful place for training, with a rich history of internships that bring rewarding experiences for everyone involved. Recently, our youth and children's worker, administrator, and worship pastor have transitioned to new roles in other churches, leaving us with a temporary gap in paid staff.

However, we're incredibly grateful for the vibrant and enthusiastic support of our many volunteers who help make our church activities come alive, and we always welcome more helping hands!

We're lucky to have two licensed lay ministers: Lawrie Pattinson, a long-time member of our congregation, and Marlon Dixon, who joined us from St Saviour's in 2019.

At St. Mark's, around 12 lay individuals passionately lead and preach, and our lay members play important roles in our Sunday services, including worship, managing the PA/sound desk, projection, cameras, readings, intercessions, communion administration, prayer ministry, and welcoming everyone with warmth and hospitality. They also oversee groups for our children and young people.

Our volunteers shine in organizing and leading various ministry areas, such as the Alpha and Marriage Courses, weekly Life Groups, prayer



gatherings, care home services, the Ark (our under-5's weekly play and stay group), and exciting outreach events like Soul in the City. During this transition, it's been heartwarming to see more of our congregation stepping forward to serve the church and our wider community.

## **PCC**

The PCC plays a vital role in supporting the New Priest in Charge and uplifting our church's mission. Members approach their responsibilities with a deep sense of commitment, recognizing that their work within the PCC is an essential part of their service and ministry.

Our PCC is made up of 11 elected members, along with 2 Deanery Synod members and 2 churchwardens. We're proud that our membership has consistently mirrored the diverse social and ethnic makeup of our congregation, and we're hopeful that this will continue in the future.

We gather every two months to share ideas and collaborate, while our Standing Committee meets in between to tackle any pressing issues and prepare agendas for the PCC meetings.

## **Congregation Consultation**

The recent consultation exercise highlighted what the congregation loves about St Mark's Church, summarised as follows:

1. **Sense of Community and Welcoming Atmosphere:** Many responses reflect the warmth, friendliness, and inclusive environment at St Mark's, making people feel welcomed and part of a family.
2. **Diversity and Cultural Representation:** St Mark's is appreciated for its multicultural congregation, which includes people of various backgrounds and ages and is united in worship and faith.
3. **Worship and Spiritual Connection:** Members value the worship experience, describing it as soul-enriching and a significant part of their connection to God. This includes worship, music, and preaching.
4. **Youth and Children's Ministries:** The church highly values its focus on youth and children's programmes, including Sunday School, which provides young members with a space to learn and grow in faith.
5. **Support and Compassion:** St Mark's is a strong support network. Members help each other and offer prayers and encouragement during life's challenges.

6. **Active Community Involvement:** Members appreciate the church's involvement in local initiatives, such as food banks and events like Soul in the City (SITC), which makes it a central part of the community.
7. **Faith and Fellowship:** The congregation values fellowship, togetherness, and shared faith within the church. They feel that St Mark's reflects God's love in a safe, joyful environment.

In summary, St Mark's is cherished for its welcoming and diverse community, strong worship experience, commitment to youth, supportive atmosphere, and meaningful community involvement.

The consultation exercise also highlighted areas where the St Mark's congregation feels there is room for improvement, summarised as follows:

1. **Increased Involvement and Events:** Members desire more events and affordable activities that engage with the local community, such as afternoon teas, fellowship gatherings, and family-friendly events.
2. **Enhanced Youth and Young Adult Engagement:** There is a call for more youth services, outreach to young adults, and events that appeal to the younger generation, including more soul-driven worship music.
3. **Stronger Community Connections:** Suggestions include creating more opportunities for people to connect, such as life groups, Zoom life groups, and activities to foster better integration and reduce isolation within the congregation.
4. **Creative Worship and Prayer:** The congregation expressed a desire for more varied worship experiences, including worship days with flags waving, prayer meetings, and creative ways to deepen spiritual connections.
5. **Building Utilisation and Income Generation:** Some members suggested using the church building more actively for community purposes and exploring ways to generate income to support church activities.
6. **Focus on Discipleship and Biblical Learning:** Members would like more opportunities for discipleship, leadership development, Bible studies, and deeper Biblical teaching beyond Sunday services.
7. **Practical Improvements:** There were also practical suggestions, such as having optional chair cushions for comfort.

The feedback reflects a desire for greater community involvement, targeted outreach to younger groups, enhanced worship experiences, more spiritual growth opportunities, and practical changes to support comfort and connection at St Mark's.

## Services

At St Mark's, we aim to create a warm, informal, and contemporary experience that everyone can enjoy! Our Worship Leaders, along with a talented band or even solo musician, guides us through uplifting songs and hymns . Each service is filled with heartfelt prayers, charismatic sung worship, and a Bible-based sermon that typically lasts about 20 minutes. We often hear inspiring testimonies which help newcomers feel at home.



We gather for one Sunday Service at 11am, welcoming around 60 adults and around 25 young people and children ,who participate in our vibrant Sunday groups. On special services at Easter and Christmas the congregation may swell to over 120.

Additionally, we hold Communion Services twice a month, and our Young People or Children sometimes lead special services during the term.

Our Sunday gatherings become extra special typically once a term, when



we enjoy our bring-and-share lunches! Congregation members lovingly prepare and bring a variety of delicious dishes from all around the globe. There's always plenty of food for everyone,

Our congregation is a delightful mix of longtime local members and new faces, making our community lively and welcoming. Like many London churches, we see plenty of people coming and going due to jobs and family changes, but this also means we're always welcoming new friends into our St Mark's family. This vibrant blend really highlights our welcoming spirit, helping our community flourish and grow together.

**Baptisms: 11**

**Thanksgivings/Dedications: 2**

**Weddings/Dedications: 0 (though we usually host a few per year)**

**Funerals: 12**



## Area/Deanery/Diocese

As part of the Islington Deanery, one of three Deaneries in the Stepney Episcopal Area of the Diocese of London, representatives attend Deanery Synod meetings, and church members often participate in special Area and Diocesan services. Our previous Vicar was a committed member of the Islington Clergy Chapter, and St Mark's has occasionally hosted Chapter meetings.

## Collaboration with Local Churches

St Mark's has enjoyed close relationships both with St Saviour's and Emmanuel, and many longstanding friendships thrive between our two parishes. We have also appreciated coming together for exciting events like Soul In The City (SITC)!

In addition to this, St Mark's is excited to be participating in the North London Youth Minister, in early stages of formation. We are also thrilled to be an official partner of Spear Islington. The award-winning Spear Programme is dedicated to helping young people navigate the challenges they face while building essential skills and confidence for their careers. It's all about preparing them for the workplace and supporting their journey towards long-term employment! <https://www.spearislington.org/>





## HTB Links

Since 2008, St Mark's has been a member of the HTB family of churches, with many of our dedicated clergy, staff, and wonderful members actively participating in Leadership Conferences and training sessions.

In recent years, we've witnessed more and more from St Mark's (55 in 2024, with over half being under 18!) diving into the incredible fellowship and uplifting teaching at the annual **HTB Focus** camp. It's truly heartwarming to see our seasoned campers helping newcomers to join in on the fun, all while we gather together to cook and share delicious meals!





## Prayer

Prayer and worship are increasingly cherished in our church community. Our members frequently come together for prayer walks through the local estates and streets, and it's heartwarming to see so many people uplift each other in prayer within their homes.

At St Mark's, we hold our prayer time every Sunday before the service, which we extend on the first Sunday of the month! Our Wednesday gatherings from 7:00 to 8:00am are also a wonderful way to start the day. Plus, we have recently recommenced monthly evening prayer meeting and a Saturday morning prayer walk. All are encouraged to join!



## Musical Worship

Our Worship Pastor, who became part of our community in 2021, has recently embarked on a new journey at another church. We're grateful for the time and dedication he'd shared with us. Our vibrant music team currently boasts over 15 members, including those managing the production aspects like sound, projection, and cameras, along with our talented musicians and singers. Currently we are looking to build a team of worship leaders who will commit to a once a month worship leadership role, to promote a diversity of worship; rather than looking to appoint a salaried staff worship leader.

Our Worship Pastor has been instrumental in encouraging and welcoming new members into the fold. The music features a diverse selection of worship songs and, from time to time, some classic hymns. Each piece is thoughtfully chosen to reflect and enhance the themes of our services.





## Ministries

### Small Groups: Life Groups

We understand the importance of strengthening our ability to disciple each and every one of our members, whether they're new or long-standing. Whilst this is an area of the life of St Mark's that has dwindled over recent years, right now, we have three wonderful Life Groups that create a great space for our congregation to connect in smaller gatherings of 5 to 20 each week.

Our hope is to nurture more of these Life Groups in the months ahead, inviting all members to join in and find their place within one of these supportive communities. These groups are special spaces where individuals can uncover their unique gifts, deepen their understanding of God's love, and enjoy prayer, encouragement, and growth in their discipleship journey.

### The Ark (Under 4's)

Our Stay and Play for under-4s on Tuesdays is still a big hit! It's been exciting to see so many little ones joining us, and we're delighted to share that we've been rated among the best Stay-and-Plays in the area by the Hoop App for Kids activities.





## Children's Ministry (Age 2 - 11 Years)

St Mark's boasts a vibrant children's ministry. While we recently bid farewell to our cherished children's worker, we are eager to fill this position soon.

We hope to revitalize our after-school club, JAM (Jesus and Me). Special events, such as our Halloween 'Light Party' and the under-5s' Christmas experience, also attract many newcomers and enjoy great success.



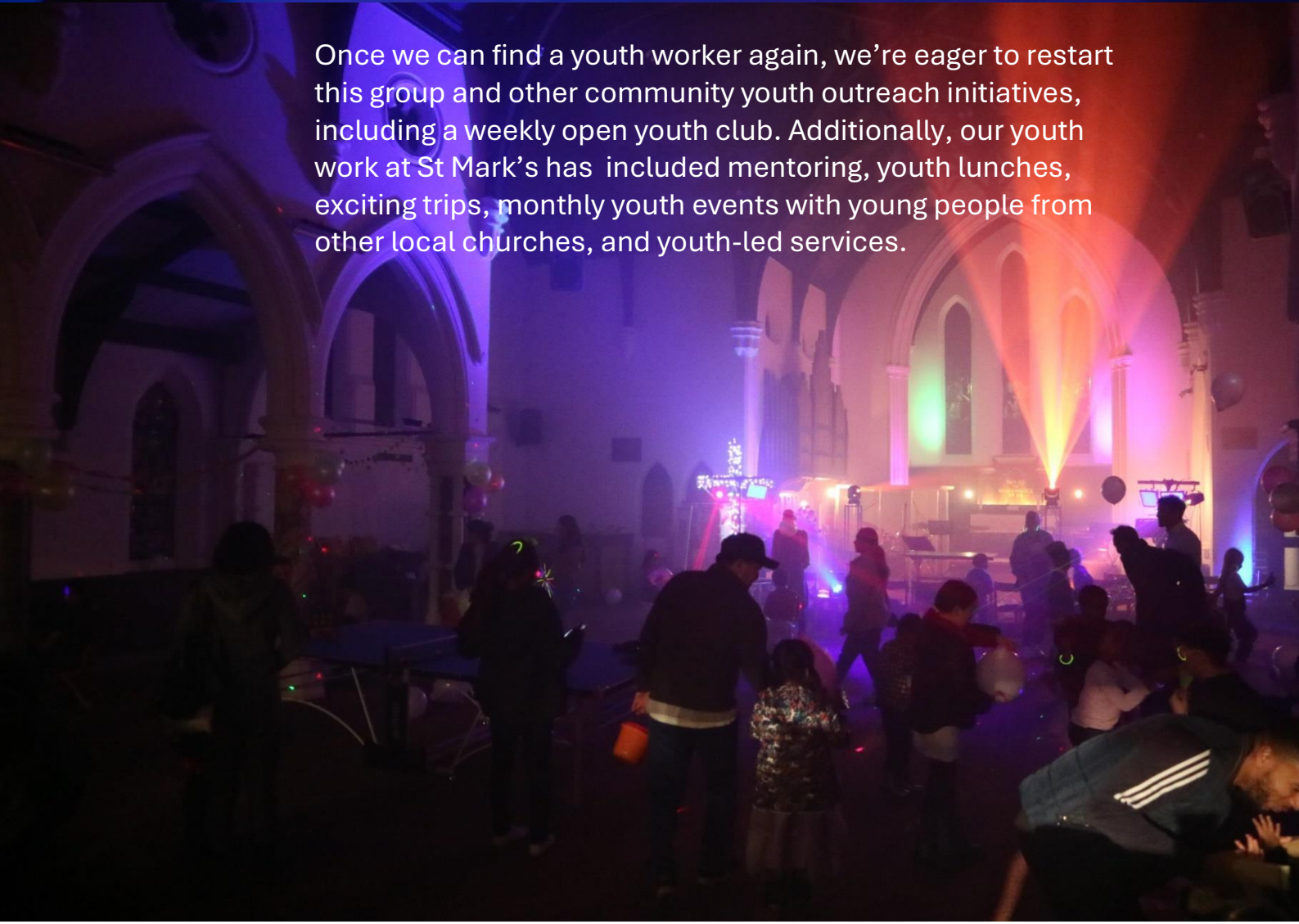




## Youth Ministry (Age 11 - 18 Years)

For many years, the youth ministry at St Mark's has been a top priority, nurturing our young people as they grow in their faith and build meaningful friendships. We have a Sunday program for students in years 7-10 that includes a weekly session during the morning service, and we're excited to soon bring back our Sunday early evening sessions for our older youth! Last summer, we also enjoyed running an evening Youth Alpha program.

We truly care about the youth in our local community. Earlier this year, our youth worker played a vital role in leading a weekly youth group at the Andover Community Centre. In the past we have organized trips and fun community activities that have brought young people from both the church and the wider community together.



Once we can find a youth worker again, we're eager to restart this group and other community youth outreach initiatives, including a weekly open youth club. Additionally, our youth work at St Mark's has included mentoring, youth lunches, exciting trips, monthly youth events with young people from other local churches, and youth-led services.

For the past two years, we've taken many of our young people and children, along with others from the congregation, to the annual HTB festival, Focus. It's been wonderful to see all ages deepen their connection to God and to one another during these cherished moments.

Before the Covid Pandemic, our dedicated leaders and volunteers held an annual Falcon Camp for 30-40 young people, including many from our local community who don't attend church. This camp included 3-5 days filled with discipleship, worship, engaging activities, and a lot of fun! We hope to offer similar opportunities for our young people in the future.

Don't miss out—check out our 3-minute Falcon 2018 video here:

<http://bit.ly/stmarksfalcon>

### **St Mark's CofE Primary School**

St Mark's Church shares a wonderful and vibrant relationship with St Mark's (CofE) Primary School. For many years, the Vicars of St Mark's Church have felt warmly welcomed and have become a cherished part of the school community. The Vicar serves as one of the Governors, and we currently have one church member as a Foundation Governor, with plans to appoint another once a position opens up.

The Vicar and Children's Worker led weekly assemblies, visited lessons, and engaged in classroom activities. Recently, we've had a lunchtime club and prayer space called G4G (Going 4 God), which was hugely popular, with children queuing to participate and seek prayers.

The Church also enjoys hosting special services for the school children at St Mark's Church for occasions like Ash Wednesday, Easter, Ascension Day, Advent, and Christmas. Our connection with the school holds great significance for the Church, School and the wider community, and we truly hope to see this continue. Many parents from the church remain actively involved with the school, and have supported its initiatives as Foundation Governors and in other meaningful ways.

### **Other Local Schools**

In the past, we have built relationships with other local Primary and Secondary schools, with our Youth and Children's leaders visiting to offer lessons, prayer and support. While we currently don't have the capacity to expand this work, we genuinely look forward to revisiting this possibility when the opportunity arises.



## **HTB Alpha Course**

We love hosting our regular Alpha courses at church and in our homes. Over the past year, we've had the pleasure of conducting three courses, one of which was especially for our youth. We're excited to announce that we're planning to offer even more Alpha courses in early 2025!

## **HTB Marriage Course**

In the summer of 2023, we had the joy of running a popular Marriage Course, where seventeen couples came together to learn and grow. Their fantastic feedback was humbling, and we're excited about the possibility of offering more courses down the line, including some focusing on parenting!

## **Wider Community Ministries / Activities**

At St Mark's, we cherish our strong connections to the local community. We're excited to offer mission opportunities to our parish community, focusing on building friendships with residents and organizations in the area, especially the wonderful folks at the Andover Estate.

Our previous Vicars collaborated closely with the Finsbury Park Community Hub, supporting its growth and making a meaningful impact. Both the local community and Islington Council appreciated his dedication to the work on the Andover Estate. He made it a point to regularly meet with members of the Finsbury Park Muslim community members, which greatly helped foster a sense of community cohesion.

We proudly continue our partnership with the Hub and the local council each year, working together on the wonderful Soul in the City event (see section below). Our positive influence on the estate continues through the caring people living there and our ongoing engagement with the local council as we develop projects on the estate.

## **Soul In The City (SITC)**

For the past 16 years, the Parish as the primary partner with Islington Council, has brought to life the vibrant Soul in the City community festival right in the heart of the Andover Estate. In this we jointly work with about 20 other agencies and organisations. In recent years, it has morphed into

this fun-filled day.

Church members provide a BBQ for all, while the Tollington Gospel Choir provides fantastic entertainment. The celebration also includes activities for children, creative crafts, and a wonderful variety of stalls. Over 1,000 local residents of all ages, along with councillors and the mayor, come together to join the fun. This event has grown increasingly popular, and local community groups appreciate the church's leadership and dedicated service.



## **Craft Circle**

Craft Circle invites anyone with free time on Thursday mornings from 10pm. to 12 p.m. to join Currently, we have about 12 regular members, mostly retirees, but there are a few younger folks too! A handful of friendly men drop in occasionally as well. Our group is warm, supportive, and truly welcoming. While not everyone is a church member, they all live locally and share a lovely bond.

It's a lively gathering as we come together around the table to sew, knit, and enjoy delightful conversations, all while gentle Christian worship music plays in the background. We've explored a variety of crafts and have had wonderful guests demonstrate paper crafts, flower arrangements, and card making.

## **Care Home Services**

A group of volunteers regularly visit two Care Homes in the Parish. In one

Care Home, St Anne's, we provide a short monthly service of songs, hymns, prayer and a brief homily before staying to chat and pray with residents and staff attending the service. In the other, Lennox House, a small team, provides bedside visits and prayer for residents with mobility issues twice a term. We have a WhatsApp group who also pray for the work. Our vicars in the past have taken communion to residents once a term.

## **Local Information**

### **Transport**

Finsbury Park boasts excellent transport links. It is the most significant transport hub outside Central London, connecting the Victoria and Piccadilly Tube lines, which run North-East to South-West across the city. Overground trains operate North on the Great Northern train line and South on the Thameslink line. Buses from the station also offer links to Central, East, and North London. Finsbury Park station has recently undergone redevelopment to include a shopping mall, a cinema, and numerous apartments available for private rent or purchase.



### **Parks and Leisure Space**

Green space in inner London is limited, but there is a small park (Wray Crescent Open Space) and a playground within a 5-minute walk from St Mark's Church, where we have held open-air gatherings and sporting activities for the church.



Arsenal's Emirates Stadium, the Sobell Sports Centre and numerous gyms are also within walking distance, as are the vast open spaces of Finsbury Park and the Parkland Walk, just beyond the parish boundaries. There is easy access to many other parks and open spaces across North London. A professional theatre, the Park Theatre, is also located next to Finsbury Park Station.



## Schools

As mentioned before, St Mark's Church is actively engaged with St Mark's C of E Primary School in the parish. The most recent Ofsted Report from 2015 rated the school as 'Good across all areas'. Ofsted assessed the Extended School provision as Outstanding in 2017. The Good rating was maintained after a short inspection in 2019, and a full inspection is scheduled in 2025. St Mark's is currently ranked among the top 3 of 47

## **Islington Primary Schools.**

There are also several other children's centres and Primary schools in the parish:

- North Islington Nursery School, Tollington Park (Children's Centre)
- Hornsey Road Children's Centre
- Poole's Park School, Lennox Road (Primary)
- Christ the King Catholic School, Tollington Park (Primary)
- Montem Primary School, Hornsey Road (Primary)
- Grafton Primary, Eburne Road (Primary)
- Samuel Rhodes School, Primary Department, Hornsey Road (Part of a group of schools working with Children with Special Needs)

There is one Secondary School, The Arts and Media School Islington, Turleway Close, which was last rated 'Good' in its Ofsted Inspection in 2023.

## **Local Businesses**

Lately, we've seen a wonderful surge in vibrant cafés and restaurants that showcase an amazing variety of delicious dishes. In addition to the more well-known supermarkets, our Parish boasts many charming small businesses and a delightful mix of late-opening food shops offering an enticing selection of ethnic cuisine. Plus, the collection of fashion clothing shops on Fonthill Road has gained a fantastic reputation across London and even shares its stylish offerings with customers around the globe.

## **St Mark's Church Buildings**

### **Main Church Buildings**

Opened in 1854, our lovely church is built from the charming Kentish ragstone, just like many other beautiful churches in London. The main area is spacious enough to welcome around 300 people, and if needing a bit more room, the gallery comfortably seats another 80. We also have a sufficiently sized vestibule and a kitchenette where everyone enjoys



Inside, there's a baptistery for total immersion baptisms and a font for those who prefer the traditional way. Although our pipe organ is currently not in use, we're considering its removal to create some extra space for a new room.

We have two attached halls that host youth and children's groups as well as various parish functions and meetings. The upper hall features a recently refurbished large kitchen that's great for events, while the lower hall has a small kitchenette for convenience. You'll find toilets next to the lower hall, and there's a lift that connects to the upper hall. Plus, the lower hall opens right into a lovely garden space, perfect for children and church groups to enjoy.





The parish office is small but conveniently connected to the upper hall, and we're excited about plans for additional office space within the church once we can find a good home for our redundant organ!

## LOWER HALL



## **Quinquennial Reviews**

Following our quinquennial inspections in 2021, St Mark's is undertaking a significant amount of stonework, some minor roof work, and general maintenance. The majority of this work is funded by a grant from Cloudesley. We also have grant money to introduce glazed internal access doors to the church hall, aiming to enhance visibility and access. The PCC is currently considering proposals to utilize the church halls during the week as a nursery to create an additional income stream.

## **Cloudesley Charity**

The Islington Churches are fortunate to have the Cloudesley Charity , providing generous twice-yearly grants for church repairs and enhancements. These grants can cover the work needed to maintain the church, with funding available up to a maximum of £65,000. Cloudesley's support brings countless projects to life, and we at St Mark's have developed a fantastic partnership with the Charity.

## **Clergy and Staff Housing.**

The vicarage on Moray Road is much loved by the parish and has provided a spacious home to previous incumbents and their families as well as a separate 3 bedroom flat on the top floor (rented from the diocese by the PCC for ministry staff). This arrangement is currently under review. The diocesan policy on housing is to: right-size large properties and to increase carbon efficiency across the portfolio of housing. Moray Road vicarage is around 3500sq ft (including the top floor flat) and there is a need for some extensive work to improve carbon efficiency and affordability of energy. The PCC and diocesan housing team are currently working with the Archdeacon of Hackney to agree a way forward. It is likely that the priest appointed to the role will initially be housed elsewhere in the parish whilst adaptations to the current property are being made. We appreciate that this is not an ideal scenario for applicants and want to reassure anyone interested in the role that they will be consulted and well housed for any interim period that is necessary, please speak to the Archdeacon of Hackney Peter Farley-Moore if you'd like to discuss further.

## **Vicarage [this arrangement is under review]**

The St. Mark's Vicarage, traditionally home to the Vicar, is a spacious Victorian house right beside the church and halls. It offers four large bedrooms along with a bathroom on the first floor. On the ground floor, you'll find a vicar's study, sitting room, kitchen, dining room, pantry, utility room, and WC. There's also off-road gated parking and mature garden.



## **Church Flat [this arrangement is under review]**

There's a three-bedroom flat above the vicarage that provides subsidised accommodation for our church workers and congregation members who are actively engaged in ministry.

## **Porters Trust Flat [this arrangement is under review]**

For the past eight years, we've had the pleasure of having a lovely three-bedroom flat funded by the Porters Trust. Nestled in the Andover Estate on Besant Walk, it offers good accommodation for church workers. We truly cherish this connection within the estate, as it wonderfully links our ministry to the lives of our neighbours there.



## Safeguarding

At St Mark's, we take safeguarding very seriously and are fully committed to the safety and well-being of children, young people, victims of domestic abuse, and vulnerable adults. The PCC has adopted the Church of England's safeguarding policies and best practices, which are available on the Church of England's website:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/safeguarding>

Our Parish Safeguarding Officer is Rachel D'Souza (PCC Member), who can be contacted at the church or via email at [cso@stmarksn4.com](mailto:cso@stmarksn4.com).

In line with our policy, we are working towards all of our PCC members, staff, and volunteers involved in active ministry undergoing the necessary safeguarding training and, where appropriate, having an Enhanced DBS check.



## Finance

	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
Common Fund	60,000	45,250	75,000	64,000	42,600
Pledge					
<b>Total reserves</b>	N/A	<b>109,004</b>	<b>110,568</b>	<b>169,946</b>	<b>195,501</b>
Less: unrestricted fixed assets	N/A	(12,382)	(12,382)	(17,905)	(15,443)
Less: restricted funds	N/A	(17,650)	(21,203)	(32,438)	(53,498)
<b>Free reserves</b>	N/A	<b>78,972</b>	<b>76,983</b>	<b>119,603</b>	<b>126,560</b>

## Income from 2023

### (Most recent year we have accounts available)

The PCC's voluntary income comes from the Give As You Earn scheme, regular donations and collections at church services, and associated Gift Aid. The total receipts for unrestricted funds were £186,987, of which £138,595 were unrestricted voluntary donations and £24,190 were Gift Aid.

Restricted donations and grants of £65,227 were also received, including for children's and youth work and church repairs. Grantors included Islington Borough Council, the Richard Cloudesley Charity, and the Porters Trust.

Income derived from the flats at Besant Walk (owned by the Porters Trust) and 1a Moray Road (owned by the Diocese) amounted to £22,682. Other small items contributed to the remainder of the PCC's income, which included Renting out the church facilities to the local community and interest income.

## Expense from 2023

A total of £75,000 was contributed toward the Diocesan Common Fund share, which provides the clergy with stipends and housing. The PCC aims to give 10% of its unrestricted donations based on the total from the previous year (excluding grants and donations intended for particular projects). This annual giving supports missionary endeavours in the UK and abroad and a discretionary fund for the Vicar, which helps people in need. Other missionary societies regularly supported include Interserve and The Caleb Initiative.

The remainder of the expenditure covered everything from the utility bills to salaries for the church staff, building maintenance, consumables, and necessary administration expenses. The total expenditure was £ 297,647.

A deficit of £ (59,378) was generated during 2023.

## **Reserves**

As of 31 December 2023, the PCC held unrestricted reserves of £89,365 plus restricted reserves of £ 21,203. Most of this is held within the PCC's main account in the CAF bank account.

## **Background**

With significantly more income than expenditure in 2021, and from a liberal and generous heart, St Mark's increased spending in 2022 and 2023 to be commensurate with the high level of income seen in 2021.

For example:

St Mark's increased common fund contributions from £42,600 (2021), to £64,000 (2022), and to £75,000 (2023)

Ministry and Mission Outreach costs increased from £1,552 (2021), to £3,644 (2022), to £13,301 (2023).

Sadly, income decreased in 2022 and 2023, and continues to decrease in 2024, to the extent that St Mark's once healthy finances of over £100,000 (in combined restricted and unrestricted cash funds) were projected to be depleted before the end of 2024.

The drop in income is mainly attributable to minimal grant payments received in 2024 and a slight decrease in regular giving.

## **St Mark's current period of financial realignment**

A change in the treasury team in mid-2024 prompted a request to reduce common fund payments, which was accepted. A reduction in staff costs due to several staff exits in August 2024 has also slowed the rate of spending.

St Mark's has submitted a 2025 Common Fund contribution of £60,000, which is 60% of the Area Common Fund Cost of £99,980.



In 2024 (January to July), approximately 40 givers regularly gave at St Mark's, averaging a total giving each month of £7,500, equating to £90,000 pa.

One-off monthly giving ranges between £500 and £2,000.

Gift aid on top of regular and one-off giving amounts to about £1,700 per month.

The hope is that as we continue to carefully control expenditure and maintain a healthy culture of giving, we will also increase income (whether from grant payments or new revenue streams)—ultimately considering an increase in our Common Fund contributions and the ability to hire new church staff.

## **Outlook**

It has become harder to obtain grants, and expenses have increased in line with inflation, putting pressure on our finances. The PCC has taken measures to encourage generous giving from the church congregation and reviewed our expenditures to reduce the current deficit.

However, we are confident of the generosity and commitment of St Mark's congregation, as we have seen a healthy response to giving many times before. This excitement about the future and our expectation of building a solid financial base for St Mark's leave us eager to build a solid financial base.

END

# APPENDIX 1

## DRAFT MISSION ACTION PLAN

This is our initial thoughts about the future which we'd like to discuss with our new vicar and work together on when they start

### 1-Year Goals

#### **Confident Disciples**

- Launch a discipleship pathway, expanding our Life Groups
- Set up mentoring opportunities for our young people.
- Offer two Alpha Courses.
- Train 5 new Life Group leaders to support small group growth.

#### **Compassionate Communities**

- Organise monthly prayer walks and quarterly estate-focused outreach events.
- Support the Craft Circle in becoming a welcoming space for retirees and vulnerable adults.
- Support the foodbank partnership to serve the local residents.
- Partner with Spear Islington to expand mentoring and employment programmes.

#### **Church Growth**

- We have a relationship with the Porters Trust who grant us use of a 3 bed flat in Besant Walk which we would like to extend to accommodate staff.
- Secure Porters Trust funding towards employing part-time staff.
- Recruit and train 5 volunteers for children's and youth ministries.
- Develop a stronger social media presence to enhance outreach and engagement.
- Increase Sunday attendance by 15%, focusing on families, young adults and professionals.
- Increase congregational giving by 25% through strengthening our stewardship campaign.
- Begin additional fundraising efforts to support staff salaries and ministry growth.
- Relaunch School assemblies, JAM after-school club and youth evening sessions on a trial basis.
- Collaborate with the North London Youth Minister to strengthen youth engagement and outreach.
- Host an annual missional event, such as Soul in the City, focusing on serving our community and growing the congregation.
- Investigate better use of our church buildings to help raise income to support activities within the church, such as a full time nursery.

## **3-Year Goals**

### **Confident Disciples**

- Introduce semi-annual discipleship Saturdays/weekends, combining worship, teaching, and outreach.
- Increase involvement in Life Groups to 50% of regular attendees.
- Offer a leadership training programme to develop lay leaders and volunteers.
- Offer one Alpha Course, and either one Marriage Course or one Parenting Course pa.
- Recruit a Diocesan Intern or Ordinand to support ministry growth.

### **Compassionate Communities**

- Partner with local organisations to support homelessness and food insecurity.
- Establish a mentoring programme for young people in collaboration with local schools.
- Offer clubs for children during the school holidays.
- Expand care home ministry to include regular bedside visits.
- Provide additional affordable activities for families, such as afternoon gatherings and community events.
- Build stronger connections with local community groups to reduce isolation.
- Strengthen ties with Spear Islington and local churches for community support initiatives.
- Develop the youth work further by hosting regular youth retreats and events.
- Help lead a residential for the Youth Minister programme, providing young people with leadership development and spiritual growth opportunities.

### **Church Growth**

- Achieve 25% growth in attendance through targeted evangelism and community outreach.
- Increase congregational giving by 40% through a continued stewardship campaign.
- Create a mid-week contemporary worship service to reach young professionals.
- Grow School assemblies, JAM after-school club and youth evening sessions.
- Offer workplace ministry training in partnership with LICC.
- Host annual missional events, including Soul in the City, focusing on serving our community and growing the congregation.
- Secure sustainable funding sources through grant applications and donor partnerships.



## **5-Year Goals**

### **Confident Disciples**

- Build a network of 10 active Life Groups focused on discipleship and pastoral care.
- Train 10 leaders for ministry roles within the church.
- Provide deeper theological learning opportunities through regular Bible studies.
- Offer one Alpha Course, one Marriage Course and one Parenting Course pa.

### **Compassionate Communities**

- Form a pastoral care team offering counselling and prayer ministry.
- Build partnerships with health organisations to support wellbeing initiatives.

### **Church Growth**

- Increase regular attendance by 50%, establishing St Mark's as a welcoming, multi-generational community.
- Increase congregational giving by 80% through a continued stewardship campaign.
- Enhance building facilities to better support events and ministries.
- Develop closer ties with neighbouring churches for collaborative ministry.
- Expand part-time roles into full-time staff positions where appropriate as funding stabilises.
- Launch a second weekly service to accommodate growth and diverse worship styles.
- Recruit a curate to support pastoral and ministry growth.
- Pay the full Common Fund, ensuring sustainable ministry.

## **10-Year Goals**

### **Confident Disciples**

- Establish St Mark's as a resource church offering training and mentoring for other churches.
- Develop a mission partnership programme focused on outreach.
- Train 15 lay leaders and 3 ordinands for sustained growth.

### **Compassionate Communities**

- Develop a community hub offering support services, including counselling and financial advice.
- Explore long-term partnerships to address housing and social needs.
- Become recognised as a leader in promoting racial equality and inclusion.

### **Church Growth**

- Double the congregation size, creating a diverse and inclusive community.
- Create a worship team training programme to support music ministry.
- Pay 150% of Common Fund, ensuring sustainable ministry.
- Launch a church plant.