



St Martha & St Mary's

ANGLICAN CHURCH LEUVEN

Annual General Meeting Sunday May 8, 2022

Our Mission Statement (English):

St Martha and St Mary's Anglican Church, Leuven lives Christ's mission to spiritually enrich the lives of every person in our wider university and city community. M&Ms is an inclusive Anglican parish, with broad ecumenical participation, known for rich liturgy, engaging preaching, and friendly community. We aim to explore Christ's mission in pastoral care, spiritual formation, openness to questioning, vocational training, and warm hospitality. We pray that practical outreach will lead to increased visibility as a generous university and city parish, as we grow in the life and service of God the Holy Trinity.

Onze Missie Verklaring (Nederlands):

De Anglicaanse Kerk Sint Martha & Sint Maria in Leuven leeft de missie van Christus uit om iedereen in onze bredere universiteits- en stadsgemeenschap geestelijk te verrijken. M&M's is een inclusieve Anglicaanse parochie met een brede oecumenische betrokkenheid en staat bekend om haar rijke liturgie, innemende prediking en warme gemeenschap. We willen Christus' missie uitdragen in en door pastorale zorg, spirituele vorming, het openstaan voor vragen, beroepstraining en warme gastvrijheid. We bidden dat onze praktische zending zal leiden tot grotere zichtbaarheid als een vrijgeveige universiteits- en stadsparochie en dat we mogen groeien in het leven met en de dienstbaarheid tot de Heilige drie-ene God.

Agenda

1. Opening Prayer
2. Approval of Agenda (including notification of other business items)
3. Apologies for Absence
4. Approval of Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of St Martha & St Mary's, May 2021
5. Reports:
6. Annual report of the Church warden
7. Finance report including motion to pass the Budget for 2022
8. Other reports (congregation is referred to the printed reports for the Chaplain and the Curate's reports)
9. Two churchwardens
10. Treasurer

11. Secretary
12. Three representatives to Chaplaincy Council
13. Representative to Archdeaconry Synod

Names of those standing for election:

Shelley Hall
Nathan Shepura
Filipe Francisco
Tatiana Ntompridou
Lydia Patmore
Sarah Jones
Rebecca Breek

14. Annual Meeting of the KerkFabriek

Election of one new member of KerkFabriek

15. Chaplain's observations
16. Other business & questions from the congregation
17. Closing Prayer

Reports

Churchwarden's Report

May 2021 - May 2022

Introduction

In preparing for this report, it was helpful for me to begin tracing the year that has passed in the life of St. Martha and St. Mary's from the Vision Day that we had last May 2021. It was both a landmark moment for the church as well as a good 'blueprint' of our dreams and hopes for the church. With this in mind, I would like to point out major milestones in the past year which we have started to envision during that spring day in May. Then, I will conclude with some brief remarks for the future.

1. Sunday services: the new along with the old

a. Locations and schedule for worship

Ever since we started to have in-person services again last year, we have been graciously hosted by three churches for our Sunday services. We have been at the crypt of St. Damian's Church from Palm Sunday last year until church took a break for the summer in July. We also had an outside service in the Kallow's garden before church services were gone for the summer. Then, when the new academic year started to pick up in late August, we started to once again hold our Sunday evening services at the Justus Lipsius College chapel.

More importantly, we realized one of the plans we identified during the Vision Day — the Sunday morning service — at the American College chapel on the 1st Sunday of the month. This has proven to be a wonderful fruit of the discerning spirit and hard work of the church council and a gift to the whole congregation. We have participated in this morning service and witnessed creative and lively liturgies, intergenerational participation of adults and children. It has also underlined the importance of children's ministry.

As of the moment, the current church council is still in the process of discernment as to the desire to find a more stable or permanent space where we can hold both Sunday morning and evening services and if and when there will be additional morning services and other prayer moments.

b. Fresh blood and inspiration

The past year saw the infusion of 'new' people in the church community. Our chaplain was officially installed by Bishop Robert in a lovely Eucharistic celebration and we gratefully responded to the gift of a dynamic, charismatic and dedicated chaplain and her lovely family. On top of that, we have also been gifted with Sarah-Jane King as our new curate since she was ordained in summer last year. Some M&M members were there to witness her ordination and welcomed her with open arms to our congregation. Her passion for the Gospel, dedication to service, kind spirit and creative energies have fueled the life of the church in many ways. Of course, we want to recognize this alongside the presence and service of her family to the church.

In addition, the church community has been growing not only in number in terms of attendance in the Sunday services through the welcome and participation of families, children, new adult congregants and 'returning' members, but also in terms of how people at M&Ms have generously shared their gifts and talents in the various ministries — in worship and liturgy, in socio-pastoral activities, in welcoming each other, etc. Whether for a short time or long, it is through generous spirits and 'living and breathing' bodies that M&Ms have been a life-giving presence also

in different networks and collaborative actions in the city of Leuven such as those with the KU Lifescape Network, Serve the City-Leuven, and the KUL University parish.

42. Non-Sunday church activities / Weeknight activities

In terms its vision to serve and become a living Christian witness as a church in the city, the non-Sunday church activities become good opportunities for members of M&Ms to engage with social justice activities and issues through moments of discussion, prayer, and pastoral activities.

The Church needs to talk about series on the climate crisis has been replete with a number of brilliant speakers and interesting conversations. Along with the ecologically-themed prayer service and prayer cards, the engagement with the climate crisis put front and center the urgency for action and prayer as the world continues to grapple with the crisis.

The social justice and pastoral actions of the church have been faithfully exercised in volunteer work at Poverello, the charitable collections during the Advent and Lenten appeals, the generous contributions to the Ukrainian crisis, the active participation of the church in the demonstrations against the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the call for peace, and not the least, the regular Taize prayers which have been on-going every month at the Leo XIII chapel.

As for more internally-directed activities, we also engaged with the Living in Love and Faith (LLF) series, Lenten reflections on the climate crisis and spiritual practices in Lent during the weekly Homegroup discussions. The P-cafe discussions picked up interesting themes and discussions and have been resilient in adjusting to different venues and circumstances.

Finally, it is worth noting that the regular meetings of the PCC, the weekly church newsletter, the improved website, the Newcomers' welcome events, social media groups and other communication-information instruments have greatly facilitated the smooth organization of the church and the exposure/reach of the church activities and the ministry of the church in general. This 'ordinary' work should not be taken for granted.

Conclusion: Looking forward to the future with hope

In a time wherein the whole world is still in the throes of a pandemic but also finding itself slowly transitioning into a so-called new normal, it is an understatement that we find ourselves somehow learning to be church once again and to understand once more what is our identity and calling at this point in time. However, if the past year would be an indication, M&Ms is more than equipped and gifted to continue on the path it has set for itself. More importantly, the past year has shown that there is so much potentiality and possibility in a faithful community that continues to listen, learn and grow, like Sts. Martha and Mary, at the feet of its Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. With the grace of the Spirit, we can look forward to the future with hope and courage. May it be so.

Karen Papellero
May 7, 2022

Treasurer's Report

2022 has seen our financial position grow far more secure as people in the congregation both current and the recent past have been incredibly generous with their giving. We have received a far greater amount being donated via online banking than in the past.

M and Ms is on a much more secure footing financially. A full and detailed budget has been prepared to take into account the charitable giving ministry expenses insurances the growing children's ministry and the fact that we are now paying rent in three locations here in the JLC where we hold our evening Sunday services the American College where we hold our morning Sunday services and the ESL offices where we have been able to hold a coffee after services PCC meetings and I am living in love and faith training event. We were also holding services in the Pater Damiaan Crypt in St Antony's church during the pandemic and paying rent there too.

Three considerable charitable donations have been made this year one to the bishop's Advent fund, one to the bishop's Lenten fund as well as to Cebu in the Philippines, to help with rebuilding after the destruction of the village.

For the first time in recent M and Ms history we have been able to pay our full parish share, our full diocesan, archdeaconry contributions due to a changed financial set up where none of the money given by Stad Leuven will leave the country of Belgium.

Quite a lot of money is taken up by less glamorous and exciting things such as bank fees, insurance, licences for music, software, websites etc. These things are essential though.

We have given the speakers at our recent social justice and climate change talks as a way of saying thanking you.

A proportion of money has been put aside for the new initiative of the M and Ms lending library of books and we are grateful as a parish for the diocese who have provided us with a grant towards Sarah-Jane as our curate.

We have put aside some finances to allow us to support Ilse and her impending ordination training and we hope one day in the future to be able to support a ministry experience scheme intern. Our hospitality giving has increased we are now attending Sunday morning coffee after services and have formed a connection with Noir who very kindly put out our jugs of coffee and hot chocolate for us and we have also had an Easter service at which there were plentiful snacks and drinks for all of our congregation and we have increased the amount of resources for our Sunday school and M and Ms kids club.

Although it appears that we have a lot of money in our bank account we are building our funds and hoping for the future where we may have the opportunity to take on a building of our own which may need some new resources and some potential adaptations to make it suitable for our services and our needs so this increase in funds is in preparation and hope for that.

The PCC have worked carefully and thoughtfully together to look at the budget and to apportion different sections of our money. It is always difficult to predict how much money will come in but should we continue in our current state then we anticipate being able to make further and greater charitable contributions financially on top of the giving of items to the Ukrainian refugees and we look for the opportunity to grow our ministry here in Leuven.

We are grateful to all who contribute to M and Ms financially and hope that you see the benefits of that giving to the people of the congregation and in a wider sense through charitable giving.

Sarah Jones, May 2022

Curate's report

Looking back, I can't believe how fast the past 9 months have gone since we joined M&Ms. We are so thankful to all of you for how warmly you have welcomed us!

After lockdown in 2020-21, it was a real blessing that we were able to start with services in person – first in the Pater Damiaan crypt, in Simon and Rachel's garden, in the JLC and then also in the American College. It has been wonderful to learn about worship in a traditional liturgical setting, and the different aspects of deaconing. I am very grateful to Catriona for her teaching and her patience! I have enjoyed reflecting on deaconing as “setting the table for what God is going to do”, and thinking about how this applies more broadly to ministry and mission.

Some other things I give thanks for this year:

- Getting to know you lovely people one-to-one, going for walks and meeting up for coffee, praying for you and with you; and enjoying fellowship together in Café Noir after the morning service on a Sunday;
- Offering activities for children and young people – during the main service, such as at the Christingle and on Easter Day, and through starting up “M&Ms Kidz” on the first Sunday of the month, when we have our morning service in the American College. We have been making friends and having fun together worshipping Jesus in song, learning about God's Word through Bible story cartoons, praying together, and making crafts that help us learn about the God who reveals Godself in Jesus Christ, and his amazing love for us.
- Writing and doing a Lent course kindly hosted by Paul at his place at ETF – this was so good and gentle and life-giving. We had open and deep discussions about what Lent means to us, and how spiritual disciplines can help us in our walk with God, especially when we think about the climate crisis and about our digital lives too.
- Our joint services with the JLC Roman Catholic community on Ash Wednesday and the Easter Triduum were really very special. Fr. Reimund taught me at KUL for Greek and for the letters of Paul, and he is very supportive of women's ministry. It was awesome to be able to celebrate together as Anglicans and Catholics. I love ecumenical work that is not just talking about ministry, but actually doing ministry together!

Some things I am looking forward to for the coming year, and for which I would ask for your prayers, are:

- Being priested – woo hoo! I am very excited to be able soon to preside at the celebration of the Eucharist, declare God's forgiveness and blessing, baptise new believers and marry people! These are areas where we see God powerfully at work in particular kinds of ways, through the gifts of our good God's creation. It is going to be a joy and a privilege to be offering these aspects of ministry in future. It is a great pleasure to invite all of you to the ordination service at the St Elisabethkerk in Ghent, on Saturday 2 July at 11am. As far as we know there are no restrictions, so you are all welcome! It would be really lovely to have you there to support and to pray.

- Building community – as we continue to emerge from COVID-19 restrictions, it's my hope that we'll be able to do things like lunches after church, a Big Day Out or maybe even a weekend away together as a church community. It's really good to get to know each other better, have fun together, and be there for one another in our journey of faith.
- New Wine – this is a Christian festival in the UK that takes place every year, but which was cancelled for the past 2 years. Rutger, Bram, Max and I are really looking forward to going. The worship, teaching and children's work are great, and we go there expectant because we always come back refreshed and renewed by God's Spirit. It is from Friday 29 July to Wednesday 3 August. If you are interested, look at <https://www.new-wine.org/events/united22/> to find out more, and let me know if you would like to come along, as there are still some tickets available.

Thank you to all of you for your support and for your gentle, loving encouragement. This is a lovely place to be a curate, and a very special community. Inspired by these words from Ephesians, I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. (*Ephesians 1:16-19*)

Sarah-Jane King

Assistant Curate, St Martha and St Mary, Leuven, May 2022

Chaplain's Report

I come to this my third annual meeting as your Chaplain with my heart full of thanksgiving for the ways in which the Lord is using all of us, the people of God, to be part of building God's kingdom in Leuven.

The refrain of one of the hymns from our yellow folder has been in my mind as I write this report

Great is thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see; All I have needed thy hand hath provided - Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

So how is our building project going? I see signs of God's faithfulness and provision in our church life. Sometimes M&Ms has the feel of constantly being a new building project. We have new people arriving all the time and we have to say goodbye to people on a regular basis as well. There is an energy and a freshness in the constant newness, which I want us to notice and celebrate. There is a 'can do' attitude in this community which is a joy to serve. The other side to that coin is a longing to put in place some blocks that will ensure stability and continuity in our life as church.

As I look back to this time last year I give thanks because I see both: energy and greater stability as God has provided for M&Ms this year in so many ways. Some of the building blocks that were laid at our vision day last summer are now firmly in place, blocks that were already part of the building

have been consolidated. Finally, some new bricks have been laid and it will be good to see what comes of them in the coming year.

The vision day led by Revd Stephen Murray last June was informed by our reflection on the saints to whom our church is dedicated of our church - Martha and Mary. Inspired by them we thought about the mission and ministry of our church, the action and the contemplation needed to build God's Kingdom here in Leuven.

One of the key themes of those discussions was a desire to see M&Ms become a church that retained its important connection with the academic institutions from which most of the congregation come (KUL and ETF) whilst seeking to expand beyond the profile of a university chaplaincy to become a church rooted in Leuven, integrated and connected with the life and people of our city and representing a wider demographic amongst its worshipers (families, retired people, young professionals as well as undergraduate and graduate students). Let me highlight a few ways in which we can see how the fruits of those conversations have borne fruit over the course of the past year.

Some new blocks in place

Ministry

A major development to our ministry has been the introduction of the monthly morning service of Holy Communion. This has been well received with average congregation attendance of over 30, reaching the highest numbers at Easter (55) and a recent baptism. One thing we were unsure about was how those who usually attend evening services would feel about the introduction of a morning service. It is fair to say that there is enthusiasm for both the morning and the evening from different parts of our community and that for the time being it seems clear that we should continue to offer a combination of morning and evening services.

A curate! M&Ms has never had a curate before and it was a joy to welcome Sarah-Jane, Rutger, Bram and Max into our community last summer. It will be wonderful to witness Sarah-Jane's priesting in July and we look forward to her continuing ministry amongst us in the coming year.

More clergy! We are fortunate at M&Ms with a number of other Anglican clergy who are licensed to this diocese and contribute to our corporate life. It is a blessing for me and the whole congregation to have clergy colleagues who are so gracious and generous with their contribution to the life of our church.

Children's work: our monthly morning service has seen the introduction of M&Ms Kidz, which has been a wonderful addition to our chaplaincy life. I am especially grateful to the Sarah-Jane for taking a lead on this as well as to those who have supported her in these sessions.

New members: among them retired people and families, have joined this year and I am encouraged to see the demographic of our church diversify a little.

Other highlights in our ministry and worship have been:

A beautiful prayer service that introduced our *Creation in Crisis?* series. Easter Day in the American College Chapel and the Triduum celebrated ecumenically with the Justus Lipsius College Catholic Community were also rich experiences.

Mission

We now have a regular commitment to volunteer at Poverello, the charity based in Leuven that helps people who don't have enough money to afford to eat. And we are exploring with the KUL Lifescape Network ways in which we can support Ukrainian refugees in Leuven.

Creation in Crisis? has revolved around a series of online talks about the church and climate justice. It has also included some other events such as the upcoming interfaith day in Leuven, prayer gatherings with Christian Climate Action Belgium, preaching on the theme of climate justice, and a book group - all of which have helped us look at our call to care for God's creation.

Blocks on top of Blocks

We have also cemented and built on what we do well at M&Ms. This is a chaplaincy which continues to inspire and encourage vocations to various types of ministry. M&Ms member Teus Vermeer will pursue a second year as an MES intern as he continues to explore the different ways in which he might serve the church. Sarah Jones will soon be licensed as a lay reader while others are still discerning God's call in their life and it has been a privilege to walk with them as they do so.

The Taize prayer block has developed this year, led and supported by members of M&Ms in cooperation with the Chapel of Leo XIII and the University Parish. We give thanks for that and look forward to more next year.

Music - it was been wonderful to have more people offer their musical gifts to our worship, thank you to each of you!

Our relationship to KUL and ETF is a crucial part of our kingdom building. Sarah-Jane and I have both had opportunities to lead worship and to preach at ETF in the past year. My hope is that we will be able to further cement those important relationships in the coming year.

Our finances are in a good state, thanks to the generosity of our kingdom builders! The budget for 2022 reflects that and outlines ways in which we plan to use the money we now have at our disposal, whilst being mindful of our need to save responsibly given that it remains very hard for a chaplaincy of our size and demographic to predict our monthly, let alone annual, income.

Future blocks: looking ahead

The year ahead will be a time for consolidating all that is good about our mission and ministry and discerning carefully and prayerfully where it might be developed further. The healthy state of our finances means that we are in a position to be ambitious about the life of the Anglican church in Leuven.

There are two ways in which I hope this will happen, one in the short to medium term, the second in the medium to long term.

The short-term:

I would like to see us put into action our desire for a chaplaincy retreat - something that has been discussed on several occasions but that we've been unable to organise due to the restrictions of the covid pandemic. In connection with this I would like us to find more opportunities for prayer: more services like the one for the *Creation in Crisis?* talks; time allocated for contemplative prayer; prayer in different spaces in Leuven; a pastoral care team who take it upon themselves to pray for our community. There is plenty of scope for more prayer!

The medium term:

It seems clear to the Chaplaincy Council that in order for us to develop what we have started with the morning services, we need to find a location of our own. We currently have the capacity in terms of ministers and, it seems, the desire, for more morning services, but we don't have a space in which to hold them (our current arrangement with the American College cannot increase to 4 or 5 Sundays a month). Soon after the annual meeting I would like us to establish a small search committee to take forward our need for a place in which to hold morning services.

Today we say a heartfelt thank you to some members of Council and the KF who are stepping down. Femke Geusens, Teus Vermeer, Louise Barclay Johnson and Bram Decroos are coming off Council and KF. We will be sad to lose their wisdom and experience, but look forward to the different ways in which they will continue to contribute to the life of our church. And as we look to the year ahead I have been very encouraged by the number of people who have stood for Council and look forward to working with a new team this year.

This report is written against the backdrop of the darkness and tragedy of the bigger picture of our world today. While at the microlevel of our chaplaincy the picture feels quite bright, our hearts ache for God's world. The destruction of the planet continues at breakneck speed. We are all aware that the covid pandemic is still a very real presence in many parts of the world and that its effects will continue to be felt for a long time. Putin's inhumane and senseless war in Ukraine is a daily horror that calls into question a peace that many of us have grown up taking for granted.

It is with all of this on our hearts that we continue to pray for God's creation and to pray for peace between God's people. Through and with our prayers we trust that in the tragedy and loss as well as the joys and victories God is with us and is working through us to do our part in bringing God's love to a broken world.

I am very very grateful to all of you who make up this special community. Each of you is a precious brick in the fabric of our church. It is a joy to serve as your priest and enormously encouraging to see the hand of God at work through you in this place. I look forward to building with you this year as we sing together:

Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Great is thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see; All I have needed thy hand hath provided - Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

Catriona Laing
Chaplain, St Martha & St Mary's Leuven
May 2022

