

ANNUAL REVIEW 2017-18

We hope you will enjoy reading about the life of St Paul's & St George's Church (Ps & Gs) for the year 2017-18. This annual report brings together the work of the different teams serving across the breadth of church life. The contribution of each team is celebrated as we continue to work to realise our vision to be whole-life disciples, sharing the whole of the gospel, with the whole of society through churches of grace.

Overview of Ps & Gs year

The past year, as ever, has seen many highs and lows in the life of P's and G's. The final payment for Project 21 was made – paying off a £1.1 million loan 11 years early and making the total cost of £7 million. The generous response over so many years has been a great story of God's faithfulness and the church's generosity. A church ceilidh was a fitting way to sign off on Project 21 and celebrate 10 years since we returned to the refurbished building. Likewise, the response to the Micah Fund Gift Day was beyond our hopes and expectations.

August and September brought two sad deaths as we mourned the passing of Rachel Strang and Ray Dunn. Both had been at the centre of our life as a church – Rachel grew up through the Children's and Youth work and was on staff as an intern; Ray was part of the furniture as we were privileged to see the change God brought about in his life, and his service in response to God's grace and love. Both were hard deaths to take and we miss them both.

During the past year, we have continued to fulfil our strategy objectives. However, very quickly, we realised that much to our surprise we had fulfilled many of our goals two years ahead of schedule. So, we began a strategic review which will be complete by December 2018.

On the Vestry, we say farewell to Jake Thomas, James Rogers and Neil Stewart. Each has brought so much to our life as a Vestry – Jake has been Chair of the Staffing Group and undertaken an incredible work behind the scenes in our search for suitable clergy housing; James has brought a keen eye to risk management, financial stewardship as well as wisdom beyond his years; Neil has been our Lay Rep for 6 years – attending Diocesan and General Synods on our behalf, as well as serving on the Diocesan Standing Committee. Each will be missed for what they have given.

Worship

In worship, we seek God to identify who He says we are. We continue to seek Him to unveil more of who He makes us, as we see more of who He is. Every week, we look to live out our vision and values, as we do that we catch moments God encourages and surprises us.

We enjoyed being part of events across Scotland including Wilderness 18, Reboot 18, Worship Training Day, Powerpoint and The Filling Station. Our Kingdom Come evenings continue to open up fresh ways of prayer, worship and encountering God. We have developed Ps & Gs Music with training, blogging, team visits to other churches and our social platforms. We launched the 3 track alt.carols EP in November 2017 and we look forward to touring our music in December 2018. It has been great to see our team grow with new team nights and a number of new people who have enlivened our lives and worship.

We are deeply thankful for every person who serves. From the production desk to the platform, every role enables people to hear and experience the Lord. In particular, we thank Rachel Mudie and Lucy Harley-Mason who served as Ministry Assistant/Intern respectively this year and our Production leaders, Mark Brett, Alison Dines, Stuart Nairn and Paul Deponio. We are especially grateful for all Paul has given as he passes on leadership of the sound team. We also thank Fraser Cheyne for his faithful admin support to the worship ministry.

There have been challenges over the year and we are grateful for the courage in our team as they led us in worship in moments of deep sadness and grief and prayed for fresh direction for the future of Ps & Gs.

We pray for more courage and more moments of God creating who we truly are, as we worship and pray.

Welcoming

Providing a warm and welcoming community is very important to who we are at Ps & Gs. A lot of this happens naturally through relationships and being a church of people who genuinely love each other. It is also done more deliberately through the welcome events which have changed this year to being after the 11am and 7pm services with lunch or cheese and wine. Newcomers to church can hear about the church and ask questions in a small group and learn how to get connected at Ps&Gs.

We have strong welcome teams led by David Simpson and we were sad to lose Pamela Kennedy from leading the evening teams having served on welcome teams since we moved back into the building.

We have recently had a full welcome review and changes will be unveiled in 2019, with the hope that new initiatives can help people get integrated in church more quickly.

Interns

The internship year at Ps & Gs is a year of formation and service in the church: a third of their time is spent learning and serving in one ministry area; a third having wider church ministry experience, and then a third of their time is spent laying good spiritual and personal foundations for the rest of their lives. We are presently undertaking a review of our programme, and may make some changes depending on outcomes.

During 2017/18 we only took on one intern, Sarah Whittaker who focussed on children's ministry. Sarah's special areas of interest led her to develop a training session for churches around provision for children with additional needs in a children's ministry setting. Around 80 people from Ps and Gs and churches around Edinburgh and the Lothians have benefited from the training.

Both Jess Polson and Rachel Mudie stayed on for 2017/18 following their internships (2016/17) as Ministry Assistants. Jess focussed on a broad range of ministry areas, and Rachel (p/t) in helping Mark run projects in Worship Ministry.

In Sept 2018 we welcomed Lucy Harley- Mason and Flo McMahon as interns. Flo focussing on Social Transformation and Lucy on Worship. They have already made great impacts in their specific areas and we look forward to having them with us for the rest of the year.

Connect Groups

Connect Groups, our mid week expression of church, are vital to the health and growth of Ps and Gs. They have a deliberate 'up, in and out' focus. 'Up' being a focus on worship and Bible study and growing in faith. 'In' because connect groups are places where relationships are built and life is shared which is crucial in a large church, and 'Out' as each group has some sort of missional, community or evangelistic element.

This year each group did a full health check against the vision for connect groups and as a result some groups have changed focus or made changes to how they operate and one group decided to stop entirely which ended up birthing 2 new groups! In Autumn 2017 we began 2 new groups focussed on young adults, and these have proved to be both well attended and hugely valuable for all those involved. Connect groups continue to be dynamic; some stopping, others starting and a few planting new groups.

We presently have around 42% of Ps&Gs regulars in 20 connect groups around the city, but would like to see another 4-6 groups starting in the next year, in order to provide a place for belonging, growth and missional impact for more people. It has been great to see 2 of our Connect Groups hosting the Alpha Course this Autumn.

We have run training and support evenings through the year for leaders of the groups and are always keen to hear from members of the church who have the vision to start a new group.

Prayer

As a church we value prayer very highly – holding regular Kingdom Come evenings where we gather to listen, to worship and to pray. A week of Prayer was integral to the strategic review and we continue to offer Prayer Ministry in all our Sunday services. We were delighted to host an evening of prayer for Thy Kingdom Come on Pentecost Sunday when we were joined by others from Central, King's and other Edinburgh churches.

Youth

In a year of transition, the youth team stepped up. David Shanks and Rachel Mudie took on administration of the youth programme. Beki Cansdale oversaw Wee Connect, and Kirsty Haxton organized the S3-S6 group in the main space. Luke and Poppy Dyer, Jonathan Simpson, Imogen Morris, Lucy Mein, Flo McMahan, Kirsty Moore and Matthew Hogan carried the ball week-to-week on Friday nights and Sunday mornings. Huge thanks go to them for our support.

Over the Summer, the young people enjoyed various socials, but the highlight was Soul Survivor. Libby and John Talbot led a team including Beki Cansdale, Scott Forsyth and Eilidh Matheson and brought over 30 young people to Lendrick Muir. The young people connected with God, deepened friendships and had fun. In the summer, Nate Johnson also came on staff as the new youth director.

In the Autumn, the S3-S6 group continues to meet on Friday and Sunday evenings. The S1-S2 group on Sunday has expanded to include S3-S4s. Several Bible study groups have started, as has an S1-S4 social called "Sunday Funday". Youth have been encouraged to serve on worship teams, at Soul Food, with children, etc. It is a joy and privilege to see young people loving God, loving others and growing in their gifts.

Children's

We have had another great year in children's ministry. One of our highlights is always getting to know the children and families that attend our groups and events. This has been particularly true in Energise (our monthly Saturday night event for P5-7 children) where new children have started to come along and have quickly become part of the already established group. Babies and Toddlers, Bounce and Jump continue to gather people from our community and we have seen many come along to Easter and Christmas events.

Sunday morning teams have been growing which is essential as we continue to have groups that run to capacity with the children. Our primary children have been exploring ways they can be whole life disciples. In September they all wrote letters to parliament which Emily delivered at the Mass Lobby on Climate Change. A week later Daniel Johnson MSP replied to each child individually.

Christmas and Easter are central to our programme where we invite over 400 families to the events we put on. Especially our Rollin, Rollin event on Easter Saturday and The Big Christmas Birthday Bash.

Manifesto

Our ministry for men has met for a quiz and curry and the high point of the year remains Beer and Carols where 150 men enjoy a hog roast, sing some carols, and deliver a very raucous rendition of the Twelve Days of Christmas. It is always a much anticipated event with people enquiring months in advance. There was also an open event in June organised by the Manifesto team to watch the football world cup on the big screen which was enjoyed by many.

Students

It has been a privilege leading the students on their discipleship journey. There have been some changes from last year: we have dropped Huddles from our programme and have begun testing new outward facing initiatives. Students now are a part of Connect Groups for their small group input. This is proving to be an excellent change as the students are feeling more connected with the wider church family. We have run more Gatherings than normal to help this change transition.

We held a weekend away in Feb, a student Alpha, Freshers Week events such as "Hangover Brunches", Socials (including this December's big Christmas Party), student lunches, and we've had the privilege of seeing a couple of our students get baptised or affirm their faith. We have set up a new strategy group to help craft outward facing initiatives like: study spaces, and mental health support evenings. We hope to launch these next term. Students are stepping up to speak, lead, lead worship, and serve in many other ways which has been wonderful to encourage and develop.

International Students

Another good year for International Student ministry at Ps & Gs. We met 107 people from 18 different countries, providing meals for 115. The programme comprised one trip, 2 events held in No 40; lunch before the Easter Play and the Taste of Scotland event, perhaps the highlight of the year, where, sustained by a feast of Scottish delicacies, guests were entertained by our own ceilidh band comprising Neil on accordion, Marjory V and Hongsuk on guitars and Judy from Hong Kong singing traditional Scottish songs. Also popular were the BBQ, Christmas Tea and Carol Service and the At Home. Away from family and friends, students especially appreciate being welcomed into a local home and they keep in touch after they have returned home. Some come back to visit years after they have left Edinburgh.

Courses

The Marriage Preparation course ran in the traditional format of 5 evenings in spring 2018 with 12 couples. The course ran again in the Autumn of this year over two Saturdays to accommodate couples who plan to marry by the Spring or who live in different cities/work shifts. The Saturday course had 5 couples. The course aims to help engaged couples or those considering marriage develop strong foundations for a lifetime together. Couples enjoy a candle-lit dinner (or lunch on the Saturday course), opportunities to chat together, talks on the skills of marriage, and interesting insights into the married lives of a different couple each week! Feedback is always very positive – such as “great food”, “interesting listening to the interview couples”. The course will run again in spring 2019.

The Network Course helps people identify how to serve the church and guides them in the discovery of their Spiritual Gifts. 10 people did the course in June this year.

During 2017/18, we ran 4 courses as part of the **School of Theology**. We started a new term in Sept 2018 with around 20 people taking two tracks: Apologetics and Bible Track both on a Saturday morning. Those that attend, continue to find the input and the discussion hugely valuable for their growth in understanding and faith.

This year we ran one **Transforming Work Course** over an 8 month period. The group meetings were enjoyable with good, real and focussed discussion based on the Transforming Work Resources. As well as growing together as groups, we learned that seeing our everyday work, whatever that might be, as a way of serving God and His Kingdom purposes resulted in greater true meaning and fulfilment in our work, increased effectiveness and deeper peace and joy.

This year we ran 3 events for Parents. We had an evening on helping your child cope with Anxiety and Worry facilitated brilliantly by Cathy Richards and Gillian Flynn and another on Building faith in the Home run by Gill Lythe from Care for the Family. Each evening was attended by around 25 people. In November 2018 we

hosted the Care for the Family event ‘Left to their own devices’ with Catherine Hill and welcomed around 250 parents from all over Edinburgh.

Our programme of **Core Leadership Training** mornings, aimed at those in Leadership in their workplaces and church ministry areas, has continued this year. In February, we looked at Calling and Witness in Leadership with Christian Selvaratnam, who was UK Director of Alpha and then in September we explored Risk, Courage and Failure in Leadership led by Libby and Dave with input from Kitty Gordon and Robert Gordon. Around 80 people attended each and it was a valuable time.

Soul Food

We have served a hot meal to our guests each week in 2018. A meal of sausages and mash would involve 450 sausages, 25kg of potatoes, 10kg each of carrots and peas, followed by jam sponge and 16 pints of custard. In addition, guests and helpers drink at least 300 cups of tea and coffee. None of this would happen without the help of our amazing team of volunteers and we need at least 30 each week to make Soul Food happen

We have been delighted to welcome Paul Sawrey as he joined the staff team to oversee Social Transformation and indebted to the Soul Food Leadership Team for the diligence and commitment – Anne Burnett, Duncan Maclean, James White, Richard Hattersley-Smith and David James.

In the next year we look forward to working with and supporting Soul Food Edinburgh as it develops and looking how we can develop Soul Food at Ps & Gs as we implement our new strategy.

It is joy and sometimes a challenge to engage with our guests and hear their life stories. We long to see God’s transforming grace at work in their lives.

Alpha

We ran a large Alpha at the start of the year as a result of the Christmas marketing plan. This was an excellent idea and it led to roughly 20 guests going all the way through to church integration. An “After Alpha” Connect Group was set up led by a couple of church members which went very well helping Alpha guests integrate into church after the course had finished. We have since run another course for Soul Food guests in church over the summer, and one in people’s homes in the Autumn term. Our plans going forward is to use Christmas as a big marketing opportunity for our Jan-April course. We expect it to be a big one as we have done a lot of work with the church encouraging a culture of invitation however we are continuing to ask the question of how we can build on this. We will also host a big “Alpha Alumni Party” to cast vision and enrol the passions of those who have first-hand experience of the effectiveness of Alpha.

Micah

As in previous years The Micah Fund’s purpose continues to be to raise funds for projects that are aligned with our church strategy. We aim to aggregate our small gifts to make a significant impact for the successful applications. In addition to the selected recipients we continue to give grants for those going on short-term mission from Ps & GS, support ordinands in training and provide financial assistance to appeals from the Disasters & Emergency Committee.

Recipients of funding this year included; Mission Initiative Newcastle East, Inverness Cathedral’s holiday hunger club, the CAP course at Holy Trinity Wester Hailes, the Sunflower project run by Crossreach and ‘The Care Van’ via Edinburgh City Mission. We have also been able to support the DEC appeal this year for the victims of the Tsunami in Indonesia with a gift of £6K.

The committee is immensely grateful to the church family who gave well beyond the £35K

target set for the gift day. This meant we were able to support all of the projects and more beside. Details about this year’s progress and projects for 2019 will be published in the New Year.

Counselling

Our dedicated volunteer counsellors, week by week listen with compassion as clients unfold the stories of their lives. They empathically enable their clients to express their worries, fears and uncertainties, taking time to hear the challenges they face. Counsellors listen respectfully and with unconditional acceptance, whilst clients decide what they want to talk about and how they want their lives to be. Counsellors are well resourced with a variety of creative techniques and cognitive tools to aid the process of understanding. For some clients, insight comes as a gentle whisper as they really begin to hear the deeper longings of their lives – others have flashes of clarity and understanding which enable change to happen.

We offer counselling to the church family, the wider church family and to those in the community. The majority of whom want to be understood in their Christian faith. This year we provided 1698 appointments. We also had considerable change in the volunteer counselling team with some moving on to paid positions and others taking breaks from practice due to the demands of health and life situations. We were also very sad to lose Bill Staig who was a long-time volunteer and who died during the year.

Global Focus

In February 2018 Judy Hughes stepped down as Chair and Julie Taylor took on the role, made possible when Julie ceased to be supported as a financial mission partner of Ps&Gs in January 2018. As a church, we provide financial and prayer support for a wide range of global mission projects serving the regions of Japan, Middle East, Peru, South Africa, Ireland and Scotland. In 2018, we began a partnership with World Vision's projects in Angola, Sudan, Somalia and Haiti, and renewed our partnerships with IJM (Bangalore) and Tearfund (Uganda). All are impacting both local and global platforms, from Capitol Hill to impoverished rural villages, whilst seeking transformations in the areas of injustice, livelihood training, honouring God's creation, community self-empowerment, and growing the church worldwide. It is a privilege and inspiration to see how God is using each of them in fruitful ministries.

This year we have focussed on actively promoting the work of our partners within Ps&Gs. Based on your feedback to our Global Focus survey in May, we now mail out a quarterly prayer update for all our Mission Partners; we feature them on weekly service slides; we have regular service interviews with visiting partners; and we have hosted a number of excellent training workshops on Sunday afternoons in the church hall, as well as mission events in the main space. Other plans are hatching!

At this AGM we are very sorry to say farewell to Roderick MacKenzie who has served on this team for over six years. We will greatly miss his wisdom and caring heart.

Facilities

Our building is open seven days a week and is busy with external and internal events. This year we celebrated the ten year anniversary of moving back into the building following the Project 21 Refurbishment. Much of what happens in the building every week reflects the reasons and motivations behind Project 21 with events for our local community at our Soul Food meal and children's programme, worship services and conferences. We continue to offer our Partner Organisations a free event every year.

The Property and Infrastructure group chaired by Lynda Ross helps us manage our buildings and thanks go to the group members for their diligence in this. This year we have been carrying out urgent stonework to the exterior and these works will continue into 2019.

Environment

In July our mission partner Rachel Mash spoke to us about responding to climate change as Christians. During this meeting and the following service, there was a clear desire to be more proactive in creation care.

In response, we launched monthly ethical living challenges to develop a rhythm of more environmentally friendly lifestyles. We invited Tearfund's Charlie Bevan to speak about environmental activism and contacting our MSPs about the latest Climate Change bill. A Rocha's Barbara Mearns spoke about 'Environmental action as mission'.

We look forward to continuing this conversation about how we respond to the environmental crisis as Christians.

Staffing

It's been another busy year in the life of Ps & Gs staff team. A year of celebration too as we recognised Gemma Stoddart ten years' working with us as Children's Director and overseeing the development of our children's programme.

We started the year with two vacancies. We were delighted to welcome Nate Johnson as Youth Director in June and Paul Sawrey as Associate Rector in August and are excited for all they bring and will bring to us! Nate joins us as a highly experienced youth leader and Paul joins us from St Paul's Auckland to be part of the clergy team with a particular interest in Social Transformation. Particular thanks go to Rachel Mudie who in addition to her ministry assistant role in worship, stepped in to lead our youth ministry in the interim. We sadly said good bye to Beth Allnutt our Facilities Co-ordinator in July. Beth worked with us for three years and was so brilliant at setting up systems to run our buildings better, not to mention her very colourful lists! In September Jamie Woods increased his hours to full time to cover aspects of Beth's facilities' role.

We are glad to have Josh Gilbert with us as Students and Alpha Co-ordinator again this year. Interns and Ministry assistants Sarah Whittaker, Jess Polson and Rachel Mudie left the staff team in June and we are grateful to them for their unfailing commitment and excellent practical jokes. Lucy Harley-Mason and Flo McMahon joined us as Interns in August. Flo has Social Transformation as a ministry focus and Lucy is will spend her ministry specific time working with Mark Cameron on worship.

Our staff team away day in September was at St Anne's Dunbar (where our good friend Diana Hall is Rector). We spent time looking together at our wellbeing as members of staff and the boundaries we hold. These sessions were led by Will van der Hart from HTB in London and were thought provoking and impactful. Staffing Group chaired by Jake Thomas continues to review pay and conditions to ensure that we are caring for our staff well and this year have increased our non-clergy staff pension contributions.

Finance

We are so thankful to all who give so generously to Ps & Gs. This year we are absolutely delighted to announce that we have been able to fully repay the term loan taken out at the end of Project 21. We have managed our costs carefully in the General Fund and finish the year with a small surplus before transfers to other funds. We have continued our support of Mustard Seed Edinburgh this year, giving a further £36K and are pleased to see Mustard Seed develop and grow and launch a Soul Food meal on Thursdays. We held our second Micah Fund Gift Day in March and church members gave £46K to support projects in the UK in line with the four key areas of our strategy (Discipleship, Theological Education, Social Transformation and Church Planting). Further information on our finances can be found in the Annual Accounts.

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