

**STC SHEFFIELD**  
**ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING 2022**  
**MINISTRY REPORTS**  
**(in no particular order...)**

**YOUTH**

Defined Youth have gone from strength to strength throughout the Covid period under the leadership of Liam Brennan. We managed to come off of zoom and numbers have kept strong and are continuing to grow seeing new faces from different backgrounds all come together to have fun and to know more about God. Fulfilling the vision for Defined that God has placed on Liam's heart: Friendship, God and Action. The weekend away in November saw many youth come to know Christ, deepen relationships with Christ and each other and also saw them go to bed before 12pm! Watching the youth connect and develop a community with each other and also seeing the team come together has been a real encouragement and as their new leader I am excited to see what God will do in the team and also in the youth.

**WELCOME & HOSPITALITY**

For Welcome and Hospitality, we re-launched this in September as we started to open back up after Covid-19. This has had to be very flexible as the practises around covid have changed. The dedicated team has grown and has a mixture of those that have served pre-pandemic and continue to serve and those that are new to the team. The main highlights from this have been when we have gathered as whole church family outside for the Crookes Carols event and more recently the Easter Sunday party.

**UNDER FIVES**

Whilst Covid dominated the majority of the year, unlike 2020, our toddler and baby groups were finally able to meet in person again.

In January 2021, during the winter lockdown, the rules allowed us to operate a support group for new parents with babies aged up to 12 months. This ran in the worship area, we cleared the chairs and had socially distanced mats for the parents to sit on. This was a massive blessing to the parents who came, and for a lot of them, it was the first time they had been able to take their babies somewhere that wasn't outside.

In May, we were able to run a socially distanced toddler group: the children could mix, but the parents had to distance. This was a much smaller group than prior to Covid. We started to see some families who we hadn't seen since February 2020 but also new families began to join.

From September, we have been open more fully. On Monday, we run Tumble Time, a toddler group with soft play equipment. This has proved popular. On Friday, we run Toddler Time, a stay and play toddler group. In a separate room we have a baby group. It has been lovely to see some of the babies who came to our lockdown support group returning as toddlers!

It was really great to see some of our toddler group parents come to the new monthly 3.30 family gathering, as well as Crookes Carols and the Nativity.

All the children who came to our groups received an Easter egg with the Easter story and a Nativity storybook. For Mothers Day, the parents coming to the lockdown support group received a chocolate brownie and daffodils.

## **FIR VALE – including EDEN**

Our ministry in Fir Vale went from strength to strength in 2021:

- Eden maths tuition became increasingly popular.
- 2 new Eden groups launched (one for kids and one for youth), both have 15 attendees each week for fun activities and Bible content, and 5 youths regularly stay and go deeper for the optional Bible study at the end.
- Delivering RE lessons in a local primary school has been a real open door for sharing our faith.
- More than 10 new volunteers and our fantastic intern Sarah serving alongside Becky and the Eden team has really helped to make all this growth possible.
- We are excited to see what God will do in 2022, especially as we launch the church plant!

## **STC INTERNS**

At the start of 2021 we had one intern – George Knapp – training with us at the church. James Brown, our student leader had left in December and George stepped up to play a vital role in supporting students through the pandemic. George worked with us, had a part time job and studied a day each week. He did a fantastic job with limited time.

In September we launched STC Interns, the first time we have offered an internship providing training, accommodation and a small allowance. This has enabled 5 young men and women to learn, train and contribute full time to the life of the church. The benefits to youth, students, the Eden team, production and worship have been immense as well as their contributions leading gatherings, prayers and worship, Natter Christmas, Alternative Christmas Carols, Besom projects, Eden youth and kids groups, volunteering at Foodbank, dressing up as Christmas Crackers and puddings... They have worked so hard, contributed so much and we hope, they are learning loads along the way.

## **STUDENTS**

Students at STC has had a great year. In the tail-end of the pandemic, we essentially had to start again with building a student community at church. Thanks be to God, we've established a strong and welcoming place for students to find friends, community, and most importantly, grow in their faith. We've done this through starting 'disco groups', short for discovery bible study groups. These are small groups of students, gathering in homes, sharing food, opening the word and journeying together. In addition to this, we began 'Big Nights'. These are monthly gatherings of the whole student church to worship, pray and share fellowship. At each, multiple students would bring a short word from the Bible, as well as students leading worship and playing in the band. Our prayer is that as students head in to the exam season and summer, their faith and walk with Jesus grows ever stronger, and that they return in September with a desire to reach the city for Him."

## **YOUNG ADULTS**

There were many highlights from when Abby Murphy led Young Adults in 2021. Abby held a welcome evening in the autumn term for all new young adults to the church. There was also young adult hang out points throughout the summer holidays e.g. picnics in the park. Abby left in October and I took on the role. Since then, we had a Christmas Quiz which was a real highlight. I have continued to huddle 5 cluster leaders of 4 different young adult communities. 3 of these clusters have continued to grow and see new young adults join. One has recently stopped meeting, with the young adults that were part of this starting to join other communities.

## **KIDS CHURCH**

Undoubtedly the best thing about Kids Church in 2021 was being able to bring everyone aged 0-11 back to groups on Sunday mornings from September. A lot of work behind the scenes made this happen, but it has been so important for the spiritual growth of our children, and indeed the whole church - as parents could also join Sunday gatherings onsite again too. In the first half of 2021, Jack, Rebecca and Eleanor did an amazing job at re-inventing Kids Church in a variety of different ways - first there was Kids Church online every Sunday afternoon, and this then became socially distanced Kids Church in the building with a fantastic pirate theme. At Easter, every child in Kids Church was gifted an Easter book with a hand written card from their group leader. In July we said goodbye to Jack, and welcomed Emily to Sheffield as the new Kids Church leader. Emily loves dressing up, and no-one will ever forget her being an inflatable orange at the Christingle. It has been great to be able to do social activities with the kids again - we have enjoyed a UV Light trail, a trip to Jump Inc, hot dogs and sparklers, and a Christmas party. We are looking forward to doing even more in 2022 so that our kids can meet with God and also invite their friends to meet Jesus too.

## **WORSHIP**

Over the past two years, worship at STC has seen itself outworking in many different forms. Be it standing in a room alone and worshipping the Lord with a camera pointing in your face, leading a congregation online with 8 people in the room (masks and no singing), or returning to the building and leading hundreds in sung worship again. Over this time, we've seen a transition in terms of those leading and those playing as part of the team. Those who have faithfully served for many years have stepped aside to create space for the next generation to step up and lead. We've seen lots of new people step in to the gifts and abilities that the Lord has given them which has been wonderful to see. We've also pursued song writing. We wrote, recorded and released 'Crucified For Me' during Lent 2022. Our hope is that this creativity may continue in the future and be a blessing to the church and the city."

## **NURSERY**

It is fair to say that Covid continued to dominate much of 2021 for Nursery staff - we learnt that you can wash the hands of 26 children at least 7 times within a 3 hour session and not lose your sanity! However, we did manage to do both Harvest Festival and Nativity, and these were real highlights. The children loved it, and we also got the opportunity to share a Bible message with parents and carers. It is exciting to see Nursery families connecting with church through the new 3.30 gathering, and we pray for more of this in 2022. It has been wonderful to offer children a much greater range of play and learning experiences - sand and water, Lego, pretend food, baking, musical instruments, dressing up and playdough are just a few of the things that we have been able to re-introduce now Covid restrictions are lifted. 2021 also saw a new curriculum for nurseries, and staff are enjoying the fact that more emphasis is placed upon engaging and connecting with children, rather than completing paperwork and data sheets. Finally, 2021 saw Kathryn Sandersfield step down from her position as Senior Early Years Teacher, after 12 years in post and over 20 years as a teacher in Nursery. We are so thankful that Kathryn is staying on as an administrator - her knowledge and skills are invaluable. We are delighted that Catherine Hawley has stepped up to fill this post - she has already worked in our setting for a number of years, and is most definitely the right person for this next season.

## **COMMUNITY CHURCH**

Throughout 2021, our communities continued to adapt really well to all of the changes brought about through Covid. Some of the new people who connected with the church or moved to the city were welcomed and have since found a home in our communities.

Our daytime cluster was particularly hit by Covid. Many of the community were shielding and not everyone was happy or able to meet on zoom. The leaders have done a great job on the phone, staying connected

Many of our Filipino cluster work in the NHS. It has been an incredibly tough time for them but meeting together regularly has been a source of great strength and their faith has really grown. 3 of their members were baptised recently, it was such a great celebration.

Alan and Martin from Safe Harbour cluster have continued to meet in Western Park every Sunday morning through the pandemic. They have had the privilege of praying for loads of people, sharing faith and supporting those in need.

Beckie has started a new group for parents of children with special needs. This has been a passion of hers for many years. It has been great to see this start and begin to grow.

Natter was unable to meet throughout the pandemic but before Christmas the team, old and new, opened the doors again. It was great to see many familiar faces return. Everyone was so happy to be back and a few new faces have started to come along.

Within community church, two distinct groupings have begun to appear: those with a geographical missional focus such as Fir Vale, Stannington and Crookes; and those with a broader, more dispersed reach.

We look forward to playing our part in planting and grafting two churches in 2022 in Fir Vale and Stannington and refining and strengthening the outward aspect of all of our communities.

## **OPERATIONS**

As we started 2021 in lockdown, there was a small team who remained on site to keep the building open for essential activities including Food bank and Nursery. As restrictions eased and the staff returned to site, the Estates team particularly worked hard around the campus to ensure we could provide a covid-safe site. Over the year as church life has expanded again, the operations team (including admin, estates, finance) have been working to put in place the best systems to enable activities to happen safely. It's been great to see the site being used again most days of the week as outside bookings have returned alongside regular church activities.

## **FAMILIES**

The Covid pandemic has been particularly hard for families, as parents juggled their own jobs with another long block of home schooling, and also restrictions which meant it was not possible to bring kids to church on Sundays either. However, despite this, it was really encouraging to spend the first part of the year talking about and praying into individual calling. As a result of this, a new group was formed with a focus on connecting with families in Walkley and we also released another group who will move to the Stannington graft. The Dads football and curry nights resumed as soon as lockdown restrictions allowed, and there have been some really open conversations between the men. One of the highlights of the year has been our growing connections with local schools, particularly Westways. We were also encouraged with how many schools handed out Streets of Light booklets to all their pupils, and many families walked the routes with friends. It has been great to bless all our local schools with Easter Eggs for every staff member and Advent Calendars for every class. For children, one of the best things about 2021 were the new mascots - the STC Chimpanzees - who made their first appearance at the Philadelphia celebrations. Their appearances are incredibly popular, but their identity remains a mystery!