



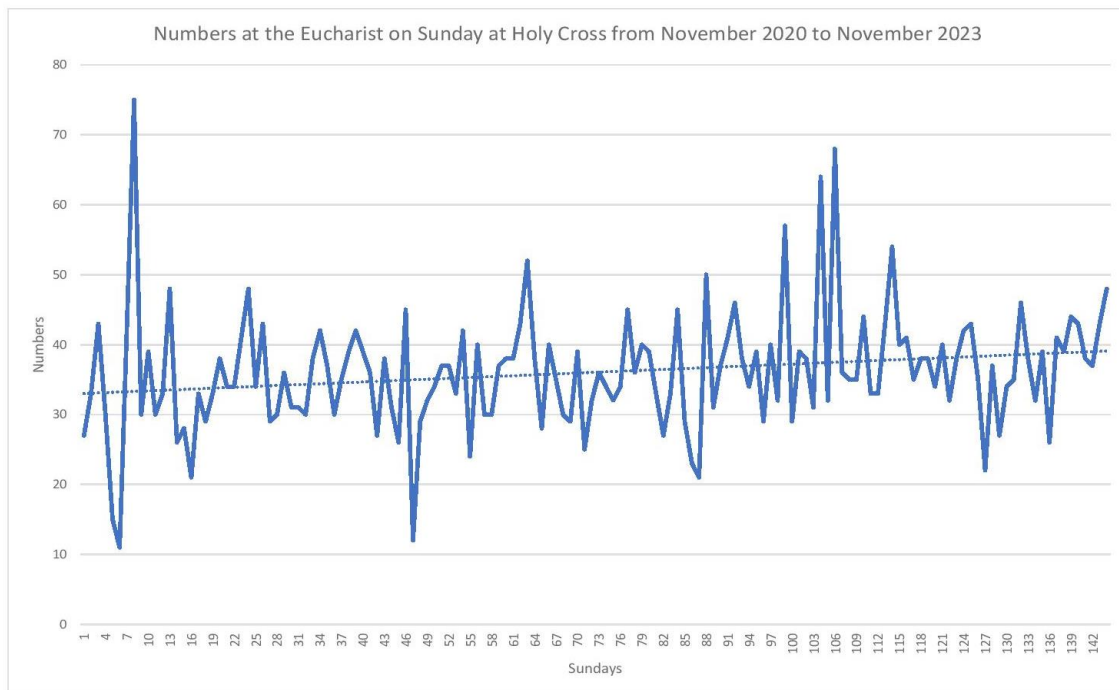
HOLY CROSS ANNUAL MEETING 2023

RECTOR'S REPORT

It has been another busy year at Holy Cross and our congregation continues to develop and reach out beyond its boundaries. **Our vision is that of Jesus:** love God and love your neighbour as yourself (*cf. Matthew 23.34-40*). The link with St Salvador's is a year old and has developed well, Holy Cross supports their food initiative, we have shared some services and over 600 people attended Holy Week and Easter services at our two churches. The model of our link has been adopted by two churches in the city of Aberdeen. Our curate, the Revd Dr Ross Jesmont, was ordained priest in September and our Assistant priest, Brother Joseph Emmanuel SSF, has left to found a Friary in nearby Pilton with which we will build links. Partnership with churches in deprived areas is a priority for us.

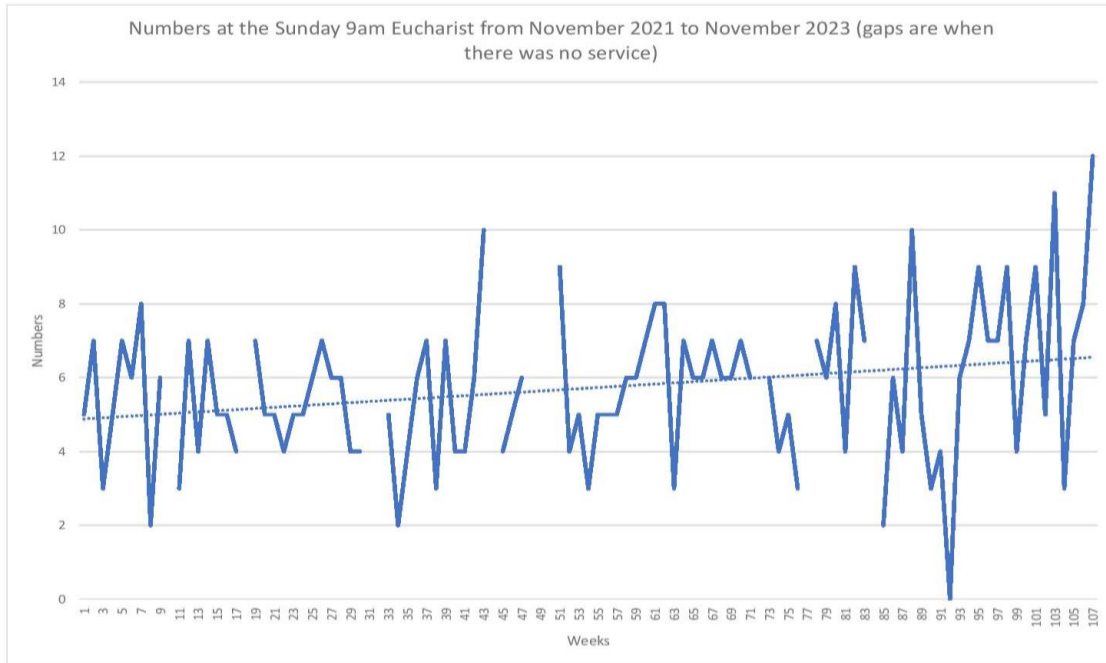
Death and Resurrection are the heart of our faith and in the past year I have led the funerals of Esmé Randall, Jenny Sale, Mike Humphries, Elizabeth Voge, Elizabeth Douglas and Jessie Greening. They and all our departed loved ones were remembered and prayed for at a quiet and moving Requiem on All Souls Day. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Holy Cross has continued to grow during the past year, with twelve new members and attendance increasing at all services. Average attendance at the Eucharist on Sundays this year was 39 compared to 36 last year. The chart below shows the growth over the last three years (this does not include attendance at non-eucharistic services):

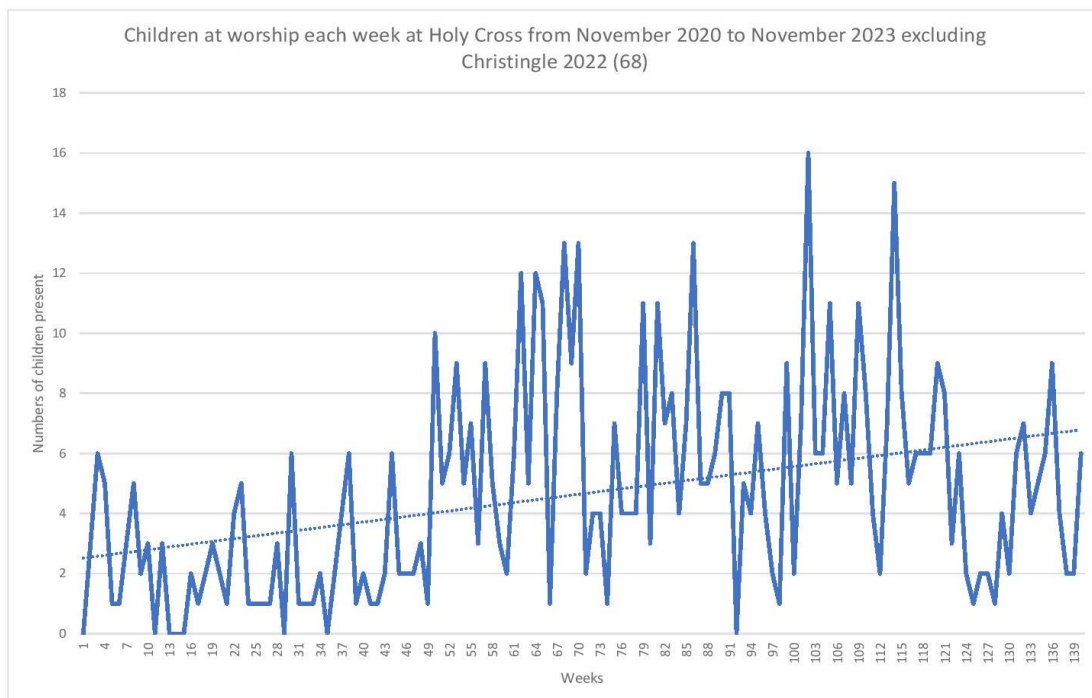


About 100 people attended the services for our patronal feast in September, when we welcomed our last two Rectors, Bishop Bob Halliday and Canon Douglas Kornahrens, and said farewell to Br Joe. In February we rejoiced in the baptism of Mabel Rose Humphries, the granddaughter of Mike and Denise. Our experimental services have now become regular features of our life and each has continued to develop a distinctive new congregation

and bring new members to Holy Cross: 9am Sunday Eucharist with the 1970 Scottish Liturgy; Healing Eucharist on the first Friday in the month; and Toddler Church on Fridays. The following chart below shows how attendance at the 9am Eucharist on Sundays has grown since it began:



Our **children’s ministry**, led by Izzy Holmes, has continued to develop and grow (see her report). A grant from the diocese has assisted this work which has borne fruit in a significant growth in the number of children at our worship:



In **worship**, thanks to our tireless sacristy team of Jean Williams and Neville Long who ensure all runs smoothly and to our servers, readers, welcomers and all others who take part. Thanks also to Sarah Millée, Yvonne Boughton and others who make our church beautiful by cleaning and arranging flowers – there have been some beautiful displays this year. Our worship has been enhanced by two gifts in the church: two vigil lamps by our Russian icons of Christ and Mary, given in memory of Sylvia Vass, and a fine silver sanctuary lamp to mark the presence of Christ in the Eucharist reserved in the Aumbry, funded by the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. We now share our building with two Indian congregations of the Syriac Orthodox Church, as the Jacobites have returned from Dalkeith, and we enjoyed their colourful celebration of Our Lady's Birthday in September.

Music remains important for us in worship, children's ministry, outreach and as a witness to the Beauty of God. Continuing our partnership with the charity 'Live Music Now Scotland', we had a new series of Children's Concerts, which had an average attendance of 49 compared with 26 last year, and a special concert to celebrate European Folk Day and raise funds for our hall. Thanks to David Townhill, our organist, and to the other members of the music team, Alexey, Izzy and Vaughan, together with our occasional choir, the *Cantores Sanctae Crucis* directed by David Coney.

It is important for us in **our life as a congregation** to communicate with each other and the world outside and I would like to thank our webmaster, Angela Gardner, Izzy Holmes who looks after our Facebook presence and Margaret Deas who continues to producing our magazine each month. It is also important to socialise together and so thanks to the coffee teams and to Sarah, Janette, Alan and Brian and others who organise meals and social events such as the annual barbeque.

Many people give of their time and skills to Holy Cross and I would like first of all to thank Colin Mair for keeping our finances in order as Treasurer and for running the letting of the hall. Thanks also to all who serve on Vestry including Nicole Elvin, the Vestry Secretary, and our two Churchwardens, Alan and Sally. I would particularly like to thank three members of Vestry who retire this year, Bruce Lowe, Andrew Vass and Brian Wright.

Care of our **buildings** is a prime responsibility of Vestry and much has again been done in the past year including the completion of our rewiring and a continuation (but not completion) of the work on the Rectory stonework. Vestry has now appointed a fundraiser and project manager to re-start the renewal of our community hall. We regret the closure of the Reindeer Playgroup and the withdrawal of Oscars After-School Club, which is noted in other reports. Colin Mair does great work running the hall bookings but we still need a hall manager and a property convener.

Thanks to all who keep our **grounds** in good condition, especially Ian, Anne, Catherine and Claire. Claire Stewart is our new Sexton (grave-digger) and Catherine Douglas has taken on some of the grounds management after the retirement of Ian Elvin, who has done sterling work over the years keeping our lawns in trim. Special thanks to Ian for all he has contributed and we are glad he will continue on the garden team. We also thank the Davidson's Mains Christmas Lights Committee who do great work on our grounds before the Christmas Fayre and all who have joined us for our Garden Days.

Holy Cross continues to reconnect with **the local and wider community**. Our Community Carol Service again involved many community groups, and, with other local churches, we revived the Carols in the Pub at Ye Olde Inn (with the enthusiastic support of the management) and ran an outdoors Pentecost service on Silverknowes promenade. Over 400 people visited our Church when we hosted the Davidson's Mains Christmas Market last year and we also had a presence at the local Gala. Thanks to Izzy for serving as the Holy Cross rep on the Lights Committee. It is important that the Church has a presence in these community events and that we dispel the image of Christianity and the Church as toxic and irrelevant. We have also supported a Ukrainian refugee family and our Curate, Ross, and I visited Ukraine in a convoy with the charity Jeeps for Peace. The other charities we have supported are recorded in the Annual Report. Our Community Hall continues to be used by many local groups.

It is expected that a Scottish Episcopal priest contributes, according to their ability, to the wider Church. I teach at the Scottish Episcopal Institute, which trains our clergy, sit on the General Synod and the diocesan Finance and Management Committee and am Scottish Chaplain to the Royal Martyr Church Union. All these help my work at Holy Cross.

As we look to a new year in a troubled world and an increasingly secular Britain, with the closure of many Presbyterian churches in Scotland, we can give thanks for many good things at Holy Cross. It is great to see so many new faces in our Church, Sunday by Sunday, and to see our congregation develop and become more diverse. God became man as a vulnerable baby and, though we can rejoice in growth, we can also embrace fragility in our life as a community as we face financial challenges in this dangerous world. Your generosity, both financial and with your time, and your prayers will keep us faithful to our mission. Christ is among us!

God bless,

Stephen