

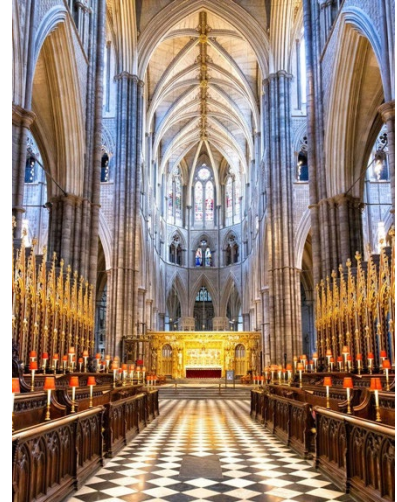


## St James the Less Street Project Friends' Newsletter – Spring 2026

### Westminster Abbey Visit – January 2026

The fundraising tour of Westminster Abbey in January was a great success, raising c. £3,500 (including Gift Aid). About 30 guests attended Evensong in the Abbey, enjoying the choral music. We were then treated to the rare privilege of a tour led by the Dean himself, the Very Reverend David Hoyle. Dean Hoyle is an enthusiastic historian and he explained key features of the Abbey and its 3,000+ monuments, supported by entertaining anecdotes.

We saw where King Charles was crowned and we passed through the screen to the innermost shrine and ancient tomb of Edward the Confessor. Many of our Medieval English monarchs are buried or memorialised in the Abbey, as well as a range of important historical figures – including G.E. Street and Bishop Monk - which made the visit a fascinating glimpse into our history.



(Top Tip: If you live locally, you can apply for the Victoria BID card, which allows entrance to the Abbey for a lot less than the usual visitor fee).

### Watts Gallery visit

Later in January, we were very pleased to host a visit from staff of the Watts Gallery in Surrey. They were excited to see the pastel sketch by George Frederick Watts, his original design for the mural over the chancel arch, eventually replaced by the Salviati mosaic. They confirmed that both the mosaic and the sketch constitute an important artwork by one of the most famous artists of the period. We'll explore how we might restore them as a discrete element of the Street Project.

### Progress

Meanwhile, Caroline, the project Fundraiser, has written a scoping report and listed the most urgent tasks to help focus on the priorities for next steps. They are all major pieces of work, including the Outside Envelope of the building; the Heating and Floor; and the front Railings and Courtyard.

We are now preparing for a Survey of the External Envelope, which will act as the foundation document for the External Works, from which we can start working towards funding for each element of the project.

A bid was submitted in March to the Westminster County Council Greening Fund, which will help with a Feasibility Study for Eco/Energy improvements, and we hope to hear the outcome in June.

The Measured Survey of the church, reported in the last newsletter, will form the basic template for Johnny Cox to build up his 3-D graphics, which will help support future fundraising campaigns. The Committee has started work on itemising a list of potential elements for fundraising, with donations ranging from a few pounds to clean a single brick or tile, to larger sums for more complicated tasks.

**Ways to support** - Please contact Samantha at [churchadmin@sjtl.org](mailto:churchadmin@sjtl.org)

**Join the Committee – Help us with Social Media – Encourage a local group to visit (£5pp)**

## Community Activities

While St James the Less is an important building architecturally and historically, the church is also at the heart of the community, offering activities that reach well beyond the regular congregation, to support families, schools, young people and the homeless community.

The church family celebrated Easter starting with a traditional Maundy Thursday Service culminating in a traditional Passover meal - reflecting Jesus' last supper - which was very well attended. This was followed on Good Friday with a walk of



witness starting at 10am at St Gabriel's church, for a brief reflection and stopping at other churches on the way, before ending at St James the Less to share hot cross buns and refreshments. The morning continued with an hour-at-the-cross service from midday. On Easter Sunday itself we held our 6am dawn service with Revd Lis lighting the Easter candle. The day continued with an Easter family celebration service at 10.30am followed by lunch, and ended with the Easter communion service at 6pm.



### Staff News

The church recently held the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), at which two church wardens were duly elected: Dorothea Gopaul was unanimously re-elected and we welcomed Sarah Sparrowhawk.

In April, Revd. Lis started a three-month sabbatical which will give her time to study and reflect and come back refreshed. Meanwhile we have a strong team in place to oversee church business.

**Community Events – see website for more details and for Zoom links: [www.sjtl.org](http://www.sjtl.org)**

**Mondays (term time only) 4pm – 5pm:** Pause for parents/carers with children under 7 years old

**1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month 2.30pm:** Memory Café for people with early-stage memory loss

**Every second and fourth Friday 7-9 pm:** Open Door Meal for homeless and vulnerably housed people

**Last Sunday of each month - 2.00pm:** Silver Screen, followed by Cream Tea for people over 50

**22 June 5 – 7pm:** Messy Church with The Pimlico Foundation.

**Plus:** other activities for young people, please contact: [isaac@pimlicofoundation.co.uk](mailto:isaac@pimlicofoundation.co.uk)

**Please remember 'Easy Fundraising', <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/>**

Church Centre with full catering facilities - available for events, conferences, rehearsals, classes etc.

For information on Services and all other activities, see our website at: [www.sjtl.org](http://www.sjtl.org)

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