

Group Reports for 2024 AGM

Music Liturgy JR

St Peter's choir supports the singing at the 9.30am mass each week. We lead the main hymns, a variety of individuals (or the whole choir) sing the psalm and alleluia, and we sometimes 'perform' a piece at communion. Janet (with help from Chris and suggestions from others) selects the hymns each week, concentrating on appropriateness for the liturgical calendar, the parts of the mass, the liturgy itself and any special events. We have a WhatsApp group, where we share the hymn numbers, information, recordings of hymns, etc... We practice for special celebrations, and especially for Easter and Christmas. This year, the music liturgy has been enhanced with other choirs and singers. At the International Weekend, everyone enjoyed the lively Nigerian choir, the lovely harmonies of the Filipino choir and the Malayalam singers. Next weekend, the Filipino choir are going to lead us in singing for Fathers' Day. All are welcome to sing at mass with the choir or in their own group or choir. We are very blessed to have such wonderful talent in the parish.

Altar Servers Fr Alvan

There has been some improvements since last year. We had 3 new members joining last year and expecting more this year. We now have a register for Altar servers where they have to put down their names and time they arrived at every Sunday Mass. This is to encourage punctuality. We now have meetings every first Saturday of the month to make sure the Children are up to date. We also now have a WhatsApp group where information is passed on to the members. We hope to be having a day out together and retreats at least once every year.

Ministry of Greeters PW

We have a team of 8 parishioners, who take it in turns every Sunday, to be in the Church Porch before Mass, greeting parishioners as they arrive for Mass. They give out Mass and Hymn books, plus the weekly newsletter with love and a smile. There is also an opportunity to notice newcomers to the parish and let Fr Alvan know. Plus, in summer to give a warm welcome to holiday makers – a Great witness of love. I would like to invite anyone interested in this ministry to contact Fr Alvan or myself (PW). At some time in the near future we will have a training day. Thank you.

Ministry of Readers PW

Over the past year we have had training sessions for our readers. Fr Alvan made an appeal for anyone interested in this ministry to see him. We were very blessed at how many came forward, especially how many young men and women desired to be part of this ministry. All new readers have now been trained and are on the Ministry Rota.

Extraordinary Ministers of Communion MS

Ministry to the Housebound:

Presently we have 3 Extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers taking Holy Communion to 8 housebound parishioners. Communication is also via phone, a vital link to our ministry.

This year, Father Alvan has offered masses for the housebound during Advent and Lent in their homes, thus lifting their spirits. He hopes to say these masses during the summer too, in addition to being on call responding to their needs throughout the year.

Invitation is to all Extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers desiring to minister to the housebound. A warm welcome awaits you.

Sunday Extraordinary Eucharistic Ministry:

Thanks to Jose Mathew who organizes the rota for the 11 Extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers. 4 others were commissioned at Easter and will join our team after our yearly retreat.

Flower Group JB

The flower group has five ladies, who every Friday arrange the flowers. Since the advert in the newsletter, we have had several memorial arrangements requested, plus funeral arrangements and we have been given donations for each, as since prices of flowers have risen, this helps parish funds.

We miss our sister, Rona, who for many years, sorted the flowers and did lovely arrangements.

We are a happy group who enjoy decorating the house of the Lord. If anyone is interested in joining us, they would be most welcome.

Children's Liturgy JS

We meet in the parish hall committee room during mass each Sunday during term time. The number of children attending is variable, anything from 8-24 children may be present. The children are primary school age from reception to year six.

There is a team of four leaders and six – eight helpers. We follow our own child friendly version of what is happening in church, covering the same gospel as is being heard in church, followed by a discussion that helps the children understand the gospel. They also do an activity based on what we have just covered.

We then try to return to church quietly, fingers crossed we usually manage that.

Parish Counters DB

Each week, St Peter's collections and other income are counted by two members of the Parish Counting Team and recorded on the Parish and Diocesan Record sheets. Our team members are few in number and we would welcome further volunteers. Full training and support will be given to anyone interested in joining us.

First Holy Communion Group JR

In June 2023, 13 children made their First Holy Communion. This year on Sunday 23rd June, 8 children will make it. Another child, who has taken part in the catechesis with this group, will make his FHC in India later in the year.

Catechists are Janet and Judy who kindly took over again as catechist when we lost lovely Veronica RIP.

This year, as last year, we celebrated several masses within the course. We also celebrated the children's First Reconciliation in March giving them the occasion to celebrate it again officially, this week, just before their First Communion. This has worked very well.

We had a retreat day in March, with the candidates from St Mary's Parish and their catechists, Rosemary and Chrissy, in St Peter's Hall, which was enjoyed by all.

All but one of our first Communion children were able to come on the Children's Pilgrimage to Walsingham.

Thank you to the fantastic children, their very supportive parents, Fr Alvan, and all the parishioners who helped make this year a great success.

Confirmation MS JT

Confirmation lesson preparations started in September 2023. 29 candidates age 14-18 (25 from St Mary's, 4 from St Peter's) completed the course. 2 others over 18 years were instructed by Fr Desmond at a later date. So 31 candidates from our 2 parishes presented themselves before Bishop Peter to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation on May 24th at 7pm at St Mary's. 4 priests and 1 deacon concelebrated.

This special celebration concluded with a banquet of food with thanks to the parents.

We continue to keep all our confirmed youth in our prayers in the expectation that the gifts of the Holy Spirit received, will set them on fire in building up the church and strengthen deeply their faith.

RCIA Programme PW

This year we had 2 candidates for the RCIA programme, Elliot and Precious. Fr Alvan and myself, took the sessions. This Easter both candidates were received into full Communion with the Catholic Church. After which we had a little reception in hall for parishioners to welcome them.

Faith Club (3 Fs) IJ

Faith Club which Fr Alvan began 5 years ago, celebrated its 5th Anniversary in February 2024. It started in Feb 2019 and has been going from strength to strength. We have children from our two parishes: St Peter's and St Mary's. We continue to meet twice monthly, usually on the 2nd and 4th Fridays at 5pm in St Peter's hall. The children learn about their Catholic Faith and enjoy playing games (mainly board games) and through these activities they have gained confidence in making new friendships. Of course, our sessions end with our 3rd F – food, when they enjoy snacks and a drink. Lately they have gained and shown more confidence in writing and saying their own prayers. This was most noticeable to everyone when we had our 5th Anniversary Mass Celebrations in St Peter's and St Mary's. Their readings and singing were outstanding, especially considering it is quite new to many of them. The children's parents are always welcome to stay and their help and support at each session is very much appreciated, so a Big 'Thank you' to them. Many from the Faith Club attended the children's Pilgrimage to Walsingham led by Bishop Peter in May 2024. They had to face adverse weather conditions as they were battered by the wind and rain. What a challenge! Last year's outing to Thetford was very successful. The group were made very welcome and our children's contribution to the daily mass was much appreciated. Exploring the town and park were great fun. This year's outing in August has yet to be decided. A special thank you to our Guiding Shepherd, who has nurtured our families, parents and children alike, and for this we are sincerely grateful. Thank you Fr Alvan. We are always glad to see new members, so if you or someone you know would like their child/children to join, you will be very welcome.

Gardening Team MS

Our team of 4 ladies look forward to younger persons joining us. Thank you to the parishioners (husbands, friends and Fr Alvan) who have given generously of their time in their busy schedule of life to assist us when they can with their various skills. The front and extensive back garden with its borders, hedges, plants, trees, as well as the driveways require year round maintenance. The antiquated garden machinery and tools stored in the garden shed require sorting out, so any offer of transport to the tip will be of great help. We usually meet on Wednesdays after mass, but offers of help on any day/time will be most welcome. Do come and join us.

Hall / Bar JM

Tea and Coffee after mass at St Peter's JR

Volunteers provide refreshments after the 9.30am mass in the hall. This is enjoyed by many people. There is a 8 week rotation system involving approx. 20 parishioners. Voluntary contributions pay for the expenses, though the workers often just give generously with regards to milk, cakes and biscuits. The additional money goes to parish funds. The resources can be used for other parish based events. More volunteers are always welcome. Many thanks to everyone who gives their time and contributions to this important weekly social event.

Bingo JD

We meet once a month and raise money both for the Parish and other charities.

The charities we help are selected randomly and recent ones have included: The Surgical Robot Appeal at the James Paget Hospital, Great Yarmouth Interfaith and a contribution towards shipping school uniforms to Nigeria.

The bingo sessions are fun and we keep the cost of attending affordable to be as inclusive as possible. Most of the people attending are not parishioners and we hope that if this is their only experience of a church setting, that it is a happy one.

St Vincent de Paul Society DB

Over the last year, we have visited the elderly and housebound. At Christmas time, we have distributed grants to those in need, at our local Catholic Primary school and within our parish. In addition, some lovely food hampers received by the SVP from two kind parishioners, were given out.

Due to illness within our membership, we have not been as active as we had hoped. As a result, we are looking forward to holding a recruitment drive, where we will be seeking new members to join us in our work with those in need.

Bible Study Deacon Stephen BC

Event Planning Committee CW

The events committee is a new committee. It was initially launched last year and the first event organised was the International evening. This committee has at least 6-7 members representing different communities in the Parish such as the English, Filipino, Nigerian and Indian, under Fr. Alvhan's close monitoring and supervision.

Our goal is to bring people together, celebrate diversity and inclusion, create good fellowship and connect with one another as people of faith through events.

Together, we brainstorm ideas, create plans, including desired outcomes and theme of the event, implement and evaluate. We also look for funding resources around the area that we could tap and partner with. Although, we're still pretty much taking baby steps as a newbie, I can confirm that so far we've organised and implemented the following major activities this year such as:

1. St. George's night - Quiz and chips night
2. Mothering Sunday – A Filipino led event where you had the chance to listen to Filipino worship songs and a taste of Philippine cuisine
3. International weekend – This paved the way for the birth of our new amazing choirs like the Nigerian, Indian and Filipino, thanks to the inspiration from our professional English choir.
4. We did not organise Caritas Festival but our committee helped with refreshments in the hall.

Upcoming events include Father's Day on June 16, another Filipino led event, where you will get to travel to the Philippines once again through our unique food and worship songs, Parish Feast summer BBQ, picnic at the beach and many others.

Thanks to Great Yarmouth Borough Council's Cultural Connections – We have managed to secure a funding for our International weekend and Parish Feast Day. For your information, Cultural Connections is a new, inclusive volunteering project running across Great Yarmouth and East Suffolk. It is focused on creating volunteering opportunities for people like you and me who want to make a difference, especially in the areas of arts, culture and heritage.

This is just the beginning for this exciting committee. We encourage all communities to have a representative. We are also open for suggestions from the general community.

Finally, we hope to create more fun, exciting and inclusive social and spiritual events for all of us that will encourage us to grow in faith, hope and love not just as individuals, who attend church on Sunday, each bringing our own isolated portion of faith, but as a community, ultimately making us a vibrant church that walk by faith together.

Thank you.

Social Media Groups JR

St Peter's makes a great use of social media and the communication and advertising it provides.

There is the parish website: www.stpetersrc.org.uk This has a lot of information on it, including the weekly newsletter. It also needs further updating. Thanks to Shiju for all he does for that.

We have a parish WhatsApp group with 69 members. This is used to advertise parish and diocesan events, share news, ask for prayers for people in need, send birthday wishes, etc....

Admins are Janet, Fr Alvan, Jose and Owen.

It is a very active group.

Anyone in the parish is welcome to join the group, and need only to provide Janet with your mobile number to be included.

There are also a number of other WhatsApp groups within the parish:

St Peter's Choir 18 members Admin: Janet and Chris W.

St Peter's First Communion Group 2024 12 members Admin: Janet and Fr Alvan

St Peter's Events Committee 9 members Admin: Janet and Fr Alvan

St Peter's Flower Group 6 members Admin: Judy and Janet

St Peter's and St Mary's First Communion Catechists 4 members Admin: Janet and Chrissie

St Peter's Altar Servers Group 20 members Admin: Jose

St Peter's and St Mary's Faith Club 23 members Admin: Matthew E

St Peter's Gardening Group 14 members Admin: Joseph Madathil

Facebook Group

We have a closed St Peter's Facebook group with 138 members. This is used to advertise parish and diocesan events and share news.

We pay careful attention to safeguarding rules for content and photos on all the social media.

Laity Council JG

I attended the Council of laity Meeting on Saturday 8 June at Father Alvan's request. It was well-attended and most of the 52 parishes was represented.

Maureen Costello chaired the meeting and Fr. Peter, the Bishop's secretary, took the minutes. We have been promised these within a few days this time (we have still not received the minutes from the November 2023 meeting which Bishop Peter accepts was down to him not having got round to approving them).

We will have the minutes shortly and so I will be brief:

Bishop Peter welcomed us all and led and closed the meeting with a prayer.

He took various questions from representatives of the parishes. These will be dealt with in the minutes.

The main topic of the meeting was about the declining number of priests we have. He said there are 5 new priests in the pipeline but more than that number due to retire. Some priests are still working after their retirement age of 75. He has taken support from his Bishop's Council, senior priests, which is now a smaller and tighter group. The members inform him and offer advice to help him make decisions. The time line for concrete plans is 2026, coinciding with the Diocesan Jubilee.

We were provided with some stark information in the form of graphs and statistics. I have a copy of these to share if you would like to see them. The salient message from these is that:

- i) 8 of the 52 parishes serve half of the diocesan faithful.
- ii) Half of the parishes serve only 1% or less of them.
- iii) Some parishes were quite close in distance to other parishes (e.g. Gorleston and Great Yarmouth).

Bishop Peter said he had previously believed he could implement changes over a 3 - 5 year period but the situation had now reached crisis point. There were too many places to sustain and parishioners would have to accept that they would need to travel more to get to Mass. He said we tended to be attached to our parishes, which is understandable, but we all belong to a wider Diocesan community whose identity is crucial. Those who have issues with travelling can be helped by others. This is the reality. Our mission is to equip ourselves to be more effective disciples.

Bishop Peter recognised that some churches were overflowing with people and there was no simple conclusion. He was not imposing anything personally but the statistics speak for themselves.

Referring to our non-Diocesan priests, Bishop Peter said we could not assume that they will stay (they may not want to and one priest has had to return to South Africa due to visa issues) and we can't just go to third world countries and get more priests. It all takes time.

Bishop Peter said it was not an indefinite consultation. He is having to take action now.

Bishop Peter addressed other issues but I have concentrated on the main topic as we will have the full minutes soon.

Syro-Malabar Community AT

St. Francis Syro Malabar Catholic Community – Great Yarmouth – 2023 – 2024

Introduction Firstly, we would like to thank Fr. Anthony, Fr. Alvan and the parish council for inviting us to present in this AGM. St Francis Syro Malabar Catholic Community in Gorleston is a vibrant community active in the St. Peter's Catholic Church for almost 20 years. Our community has been growing exponentially and consists of 125 families in Gorleston. We also have members coming from Great Yarmouth (15), Lowestoft (25) and Bungay(25). St. Francis Syro Malabar catholic community provide Catechism to approximately 105 children and is fully administered and guided by the Catechism Commission of Syro Malabar Eparchy of Great Britain.

Appointments During the year 2023, the Bishop of Syro Malabar Eparchy of Great Britain, Mar Joseph Srampickal has appointed Fr. Jinu Mundunadackal as the Syro Malabar Priest in charge for the Norwich & Great Yarmouth. Fr. Thomas Parakandathil who was in the role before continue to serve the Syro Malabar Communities in Ipswich & other areas of Suffolk. The community has given a good farewell to Fr. Thomas and also welcomed Fr. Jinu to the community. Fr. Jinu took charge in August 2023. 2023 – 2024

Activities St. Francis Syro Malabar Catholic Community currently join together to celebrate 2 masses in the Syro Malabar rites which takes place on first Sunday and third Saturdays. Normal schedule for the day is Catechism classes for children followed by Holy Mass and the tea/coffee in the parish hall.

Other celebrations conducted in Syro Malabar rites during the 2023 are as below:

The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary – September 8th 2023 (Holy Mass followed by Rosary)

Rosary Month End Celebration – 31st October 2023 (Holy Mass followed by Rosary and Refreshments at the parish hall)

Christmas Vigil Mass – 24th December 2023

Lenten Season Start - Ash Monday – 12th February 2024

Stations of Cross on Friday's

Lenten Retreat in Syro Malabar Rites – 13th – 15th March 2024 (Children's retreat talks held separately in the Parish Hall)

Palm Sunday – 24th March 2024

Good Friday – 29th March 2024

Easter Vigil – 30th March 2024

Other activities in the St. Peter's Catholic Church, Gorleston

Syro Malabar community was actively present in the international weekend Celebration at the St. Peter's Parish – 18th & 19th May 2024

The community also actively participated in the Caritas Festival and celebrated the holy mass with Bishop Peter Collins on Saturday & Sunday, 25th & 26th May 2024.

Few of our Members have attended in the Children's Pilgrimage to Walshingham on Tuesday 28th May 2024

Meeting with Bishop Peter Collins, Fr. Anthony, Fr. Alven & Parish Council Members – 25th May 2024 @ 7:00pm at Parish Hall.

We thank Fr. Anthony & Fr. Alven for organising this meeting with Bishop to discuss the Syro Malabar Community's request for 2 more holy mass every month. The Bishop has kindly listened to the request and enquired about the activities of the community. It was very healthy discussions and we thank the Bishop, Fathers and Parish Council Member for contributing to the meeting. But unfortunately, Bishop Peter has told the Syro Malabar Community representatives that the request for 2 more masses could not be granted at this point although Bishop has indicated that he is open for this discussion to be kept live and will further communicate to Mar Joseph Srampickal (Bishop of Syro Malabar Eparchy of Great Britain) and Fr. Jinu. The outcome of the meeting is slightly disappointing for the whole community. We still stand on our requirement for 4 holy mass every month as we feel this is the only opportunity we get to practice our own liturgy as the Syro Malabar Church is one of the 24 independent Eastern Churches and our Expression of Theology, Mode of Spirituality, Discipline, Culture and Canon Law are all significantly different from the Western Churches. Therefore, we are looking at other options to see if we can celebrate the requested 2 additional masses at an outside venue.