brunswick news

June 2024

BRUNSWICK PARISH CHURCH
www.brunswickchurch.org.uk

WE ARE 50!

Looking back with gratitude, looking ahead with hope

On 8th June 1974 the brand new Brunswick Parish Church building opened, with the vision of being a place that would serve the community and help people to meet God.

Brunswick was a new parish, formed in a union of St. Saviour's (see the old graveyard on Plymouth Grove!), St Luke's and St Paul's.Under the leadership of Rev Martin Gooder, Brunswick provided not just a place to worship, but somewhere the whole community could come to celebrate baptisms and marriages, and mourn together at funerals.

But Brunswick was never just about a church building. From the start, taking good news to the community was one of our main aims. Whether that was in running a 'Friends of the Flats' scheme to help people avoid loneliness, cleaning up the local area, or running events like the Brunswick Carnival (1981) and week-long Brunswick Roadshow (1983), the church always remembered that it was here to serve the whole parish, not just those who came on a Sunday. So along with the more 'traditional' church activities, over the years we've hosted pantomimes, live music, stand-up comedy, karaoke, a day-time Drop-In, lots (and lots) of youth work and many delicious community meals!

Martin left in January 1992, and his replacement was the fresh-faced Rev Simon Gatenby, who joined in September 1993. He clearly liked it, as he's still here! During his time with Brunswick the church has continued to be involved in the community, whether through the many youth groups such as '7-Up', special holiday clubs, providing a base for community services, or offering warm meals and cups of tea and activities during the week through our community hub, 'Positive Steps' run by Mo and her amazing team.

Brunswick Church Positive Steps with you every step of the way

In recent years the church has begun a major refurbishment, including (so far) a total refit of the Sports Hall and lounge to modernise them, allowing us to host more groups and offer more activities during each weekday.

Refurb

Over the years our community has received a visit from (the then) Prince Charles in 1995, and more recently the Archbishop of Canterbury visited our church. While it's nice to be recognised by people like this, the most important people have always been our community and congregation. We want to make everyone who comes through our doors feel welcome and to share the love of God with them. As we celebrate 50 years of Brunswick Church and think about the future, it's also good to look back at our history with thanks for all who've been part of our story.

We look forward to continuing to do this over the next fifty years! Come and join in the celebrations on June 29, 30.

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Simon says...

Addressing our church annual meeting over 28 years ago in May 1996 I said:

"In this my third annual report, I recognise that in one sense I am entering into uncharted territory. Up to now whenever I've come up to spending three years in a place, be at university, theological college, a parish or whatever, it has been time to round up, wind down and move on. Not so in this place however, which is just as well as in so many ways I feel that I and ourselves have only just started..."

Little did I know then, that 28 years later I would still find myself in this wonderful place and parish called Brunswick, where I am still enthused with new and existing projects which again seem to have only just started. There have been many changes, both in the life of this diverse community, and in the lives that inhabit it. When I first moved here, I experienced 7 attempted break-ins in 18 months! All these years later, the experience is more akin to living in a gated community with more immediate greenery than I ever could have imagined. Brunswick has been the setting where I have met and married my wife, brought up and nurtured our children. It has been the place where I have loved supporting, in a small way, the amazing work carried out by our local primary school. Most importantly of all, it has been and remains, a community that in

'Gratitude for the past, hope for the future'

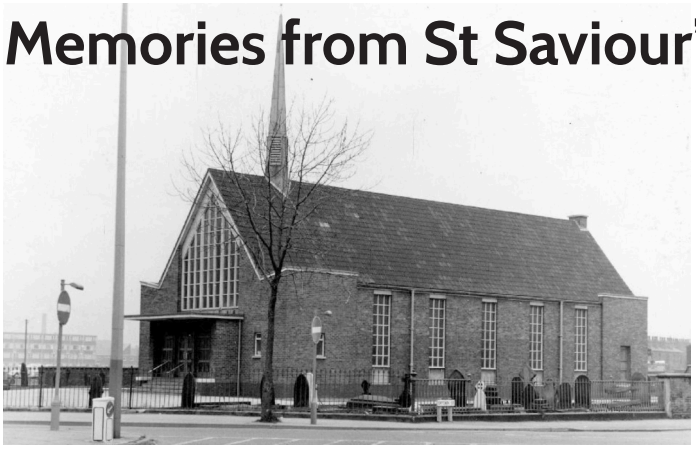
good times and bad has been blessed and deeply cared for by God. One of the banners outside our building used to proclaim: "our community, your church!" and the doors are indeed open to all represented within and beyond the parish of Brunswick.

It has been the privilege of this church to demonstrate & share the practical love of Jesus with all within and beyond this community for 50 years, responding to the challenges and opportunities that this ever-changing parish presents. There has been much to express thanks for; our gratitude to God, as we have experienced the amazing resourcing earthly and heavenly, that has made a real difference in the lives of so many. It has been and remains my privilege to share in quite a bit of the journey too. As we look forward to the future, whilst uncertain as to what further changes lie in store for the community of Brunswick, we look forward with hope trusting in the certainty of God's love for all. If you are a person of prayer, please pray for us, and if you are curious as to what this could mean for you, do join us on the journey.

Simon by Alannah (4), 1994

God Bless.
Simon

Memories from St Saviour's to Brunswick



Our family of four – Mum, Dad, Kevin and myself – moved into this area on Saturday March 2nd, 1968 thanks to so-called slum clearances by Manchester City Council. Next day we joined the fellowship of St Saviour's. It felt strange at first but we stuck it out and soon began to settle. I joined the choir as an 11½ year old and also attended Sunday School and joined the Boys Brigade and then Pathfinders.

Then after a few years the church leaders received the bombshell that our beautiful 7 year old modern church was to be compulsory purchased by MCC because of a proposed extension to the Mancunian Way which would maroon our building on a large roundabout. So as a fellowship we prayed for guidance as to the way forward. Our two neighbouring churches, St Pauls with St Lukes were already worshipping together, St Lukes having been demolished to make way for the newly built Mancunian Way, and we became a united benefice of Christ Church Brunswick. St Pauls was demolished to make way for the new church which we worship in today.

Delays in the rebuilding such as a builders strike and stolen materials put back the opening of the new building from March to June 8th 1974.

Our motto at the time was Psalm 118 v 23 "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes." I'm not sure what the builders must have thought of it but to us it was a fresh start with a beautiful multi-purpose building. One of the builders on the day of the opening as my mum and I were trying to clean, began to sing "Oh what fun it is for Jesus" instead of "What a friend we have in Jesus", much to our amusement!

The opening ceremony and dedication was a great occasion and a great time of rejoicing!

When I look back over the last fifty years and think of all the Saints who have gone before and seen many lives changed and touched in this place and the many answers to prayer, I look forward seeing what the Lord has planned for us in the future.

David Donnelly.

Four Brunswick Stories

A steadfast support system

As we celebrate 50 years of Brunswick Parish Church, we are proud to be part of this congregation. We first came to Brunswick Church 11 years ago on an AGM day and were warmly welcomed by Anne Flear.

Since then, we have been an active part of this church community. The congregation has been a steadfast support system, standing by us through thick and thin, offering prayers and companionship. A defining characteristic is unwavering dedication to the community and the environment. We have participated in numerous church activities, from refurbishment projects to Houseparties, Sunday church activities, and the maintenance team. Our church has something for everyone, fostering a strong sense of belonging and unity.

As a family, we are deeply grateful to this church for nurturing us spiritually. The anticipation for the upcoming two days of jubilee celebration is palpable. We eagerly look forward to reconnecting with the people who were part of the Brunswick Parish before us, sharing stories, and celebrating the rich history of our church. Let us unite in worship, prayer, and gratitude, acknowledging the countless ways our Lord has blessed us.

Dilu, Anna, Daniella and Danett Varughese

Home is where your heart is.

Home is feeling comfortable, being part of the family, do a little bit or nothing. Being able or not you are always welcomed with a lot or a bit or nothing. This is Brunswick Church, Brunswick Community, friends, family and where I chose to be and would not be anywhere else no matter what happens. People do things, people get disappointed but God's love for us is above and beyond our limitations, abilities and capabilities. Throughout these 17 years and many more to come, I hope, it has been a wonderful journey full of joy, great and not so great moments, but that's what makes life meaningful. Each Sunday when I cross the entrance of this building, I know God has great things prepared for me and my family and I embrace it with Faith, Hope and Perseverance. Thank you to all of you, who makes every challenge feel like an adventure.

O Senhor e o meu Pastor e nada me faltara "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want" May God continue to pour out his blessing upon all today and forever.

Lila Tome

Our Brunswick Journey

Nearly 14 years ago we started two new relationships. One with each other and the other with Brunswick Church. We'd previously been members of the 'Explore' group at Manchester Cathedral led by Rhiannon Jones, a curate there. She was to complete her curacy at Brunswick and she felt a bit unsure about it as she'd gotten used to the more formal Cathedral. We decided to cheer her up with our familiar faces and we attended a Sunday service at Brunswick. We've stayed ever since!

In 2015 we were married here and we couldn't think of a better place to have had our ceremony.

The community at Brunswick kept us going through the lockdown via Zoom and this is still handy for the times when we can't be in the building but still want to be part of the services. After all, church isn't just the building - it's the people inside the building that make it happen.

Here's to many, many more joyous times with all of our friends at Brunswick and may God continue to pour out his blessings on this wonderful place.

Lee and Alex Ellis

Applying Brunswick Principles

Manchester in 1974 meant for 19 year old me study, independence and trying to work out what being a follower of Jesus meant.

I wanted to be part of a local church, tried a few and eventually made my way to Brunswick, where I felt 'at home'. Like most homes, it wasn't without it's challenges. Martin Gooder made it clear Brunswick did not need students coming along on Sundays, who were not prepared to serve the church and community the rest of the week. We must use our time and talents to 'grow the kingdom' in this part of Manchester. So, my sense of what church, community and discipleship is, was formed then.

Martin and curate Pete Hobson came up with the idea of church community worker, and persuaded Manchester City Mission to fund it. When I finished my course – I got that job!

There had been a voluntary student scheme running in the parish called 'Friends of the Flats' which linked students with isolated and vulnerable older residents on the Brunswick Estate, to build relationships through regular visiting. One of my roles was to consolidate and expand the scheme. I also helped with the youth group, and music and drama in worship and was resident in Barnabas House - an initiative to create a community of young people committed to the area.

Since Manchester, I have lived a fair few places, but have always tried to apply Brunswick Principles.

Jan Harding

"This is your church too"

An invitation and a prayer from our curate Kathreen

As we are celebrating our Church's 50th Anniversary. We would love to celebrate with you all and love to work together with everyone as this is your church too.

It's a blessing of God's love, to see the past with thankful heart and realised how fast time has gone and how things have always been progressed in our lives in so many ways.

I remembered the day I came to visit this church with my family. After meeting with Simon and visiting the Church, I questioned myself: Is this the right church for me? God indeed knew and always knows everything, and time did prove that, yes, it was the right Church not only for me but also for my family.

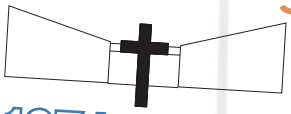
God not only loves us but also loves our loved ones as well. It was a pleasantly incredible journey with many ups and downs, but God always moves us out of our comfort zone when we feel settled and felt comfort. (I don't know why God does that?) Only one thing I know, He is always in control. When we look back in our Church's history, lots of things have happened in the past and are still happening, and of course will happen in future too. I have seen God's hand and His provision on this church.

The church is so blessed with many committed people of all age groups, and they are always ready to go to extra miles in help and care. We as a church try to meet people where they are and try to give them comfort in body mind and spirit through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thanking God with gratitude and looking ahead with more hopes and promises of God, let us pray:

God of justice and mercy, as we open our hearts to You now, comfort us where we are unsettled, and unsettle us where we are comfortable. Challenge us and change us, disturb, and rearrange us, not for our own sake but for the sake of those who are hurting and helpless, ostracised, and oppressed. Amen.

Come and join our Jubilee Weekend of Celebration

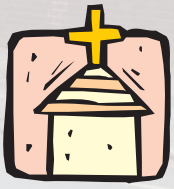


1974 - 2024

WE ARE 50!

June 29 & 30

Brunswick Church building was opened in June 1974. In 2024 we are celebrating 50 years of God at work in this place with a special weekend of events and activities, inviting the local community and our ex-members to be a part of the celebrations.



Saturday 29th June

- 10:45am: Guided Walk around the Parish looking at changes in and around the area, featuring eco-themed improvements, and (for those who do) prayers.
- 12:15pm: Soup Lunch with time to chat and look at the Past-Present-Future display and around the building, particularly the parts that have benefitted from our Refurb project (and parts that still need work!)
- 2pm: Fun, Arts and Games, indoors and outdoors in the car park and church Community Garden.
- 5pm Teatime Service.
- 6:15-9:45pm : Food, music, karaoke and one of our legendary quizzes.

Sunday 30th June

- 10:45am. Morning Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration. Followed by a Bring and Share picnic in our Community Garden.

Looking back with gratitude, looking ahead with hope