



A Year in the Life of St Christopher's Church (2022)

2022 Report and Accounts for the Parochial Church Council
of St Christopher's Church, Allesley Park and Whoberley



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Introduction from our Vicar

Welcome to our first “Annual Report”, which brings together a summary of the life of St Christopher’s Church, Allesley Park and Whoberley. In these next few pages we try to summarise and celebrate the different activities that make up the life of our church community, although we are aware that we will only be scratching the surface; much of what makes us who we occurs outside of any formal activities - those conversations where we support and pray for each other, our private prayers and acts of kindness that only God knows about. I hope nevertheless that you will find it an encouraging, inspiring and potentially challenging read.

Please pray for the people and activities described, and as you do so, ask yourself, is there something God is calling you to support, join in with, or even begin - in our children’s and youth ministry, intercessions, worship band, or PCC, for example? Is there a way God is calling you to help our church experience and share the love of Jesus with our community?

On a personal note, in September 2022 I celebrated 10 years as vicar of this church and was moved by the gifts I received on that occasion - the picture of Coventry Cathedral hangs in pride of place in my study! I’m profoundly grateful that God called me here and for all we’ve shared together in this past decade, for all of you who work so hard to make this church community so special – for our brilliant curates Carolyne and Andy, and the host of people who are mentioned in this report. Thank you!

Thank you, above all to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, the source of our hope, in whose hands we are eternally secure.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'y'.

Rev Andy March

Vicar of St Christopher’s Church, Allesley Park and Whoberley

Aims and Purposes

St Christopher's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Andy March, promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the church building of St Christopher's, Allesley Park and Whoberley, with its integral church hall, kitchen, and meeting room complex.

Objectives and Activities



St Christopher's Church is situated at the very heart of our community, in Allesley Park and Whoberley, next to a community school, opposite shops and businesses and we want this to be reflected in the way we are as a church; we aim to provide a warm welcome for everyone in our community, from the very oldest to the youngest, so that everyone may be able to become part of this church family.

The PCC maintains an overview of the worshipping life of our church. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and taking communion together.

In planning and reviewing our activities we are guided by our vision statement: **"God's family; loving like Jesus."**



We are called to be a growing family that seeks to build God's kingdom in Allesley Park and Whoberley by ...

Growing in God

- **Walking** with God together - *We are people on a journey to be more like Jesus.*
- **Worshipping** with our whole lives - *Our worship enables us to meet with God and equips us to follow Jesus every day.*

Loving each other

- **Welcoming, accepting** and **caring** for one another - *We are a loving and caring family where everyone can belong.*

Serving our community

- **Working** with others to build God's kingdom - *We establish partnerships with others in the community to bring God's blessing.*

Sharing good news

- **Witnessing** in word and action - *We reach out to our community with God's love and are confident to share our faith.*

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the church building and grounds of St. Christopher's, for the sake of the church as well as the wider community, for which the building is an essential asset.

Achievements and Performance

Growing in God

- **Walking** with God together - *We are people on a journey to be more like Jesus.*
- **Worshipping** with our whole lives - *Our worship enables us to meet with God and equips us to follow Jesus every day.*

Worship and Prayer



2022 was a year of “post-Covid” recovery as our worship moved further towards the reality of what our worshipping life might look like as we’ve come out of the pandemic.

The PCC is keen to offer a range of services during the week and over the course of the year that our community

find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling.

Our main **Sunday morning 10am service** is informal in its style of worship, attracts a wide range of ages, with children and families being an integral part of this.



We have **All Age Worship** on the first Sunday of the month; the other Sundays are Morning Celebration (twice a month) and Holy Communion (once a month). We have a creche and children’s groups for all services, apart from All Age Worship.

We have also enjoyed returning to our occasional **Cafe Church** services for special occasions, such as Advent Sunday and Mothering Sunday.



In February 2023 we were delighted to welcome John Stroyan, Bishop of Warwick, who confirmed three candidates - Daniel Coupe, Amey Hanesworth and Ross Kirby.



We're hugely blessed by a large number of people who help sustain our Sunday morning gatherings, through being part of the sung worship team; delivering Bible readings and prayers of intercession; supporting the livestream or overseeing the sound; offering prayer ministry; leading or helping our children's and youth ministry; serving refreshments after the service; organising rotas, and lots more!

If you would like to join any of these teams, then please let us know - it's so rewarding!

Thank you to ...

- *Warden/Set-up Team* - Tom Borrás and Stuart Hart.
- *Sung Worship/Sound Team* - Emma Beasley, James Bowman-Powell, Jon and Hannah Lidbetter, Kace Chiu, Lisa Borrás, Susan Borrás, Amey Hanesworth, Anthony Randall, Andy, Alicia, Isabelle March, David Summers, Cara and Laura Greenway, Stuart Hart, Veerabhadra Rao.
- *Preaching/Service Leading and planning team* - Nic Thorpe, Matt Wood, Hannah Lidbetter, Katy and Daniel Coupe, Louise Hicks, Katy Coupe, Rosemary Lavens, Martin Ellis, Mary Abamwa.
- *Readers* - Sandra Aldridge, Heather Beasley, Barbara Bell, Veera Bhadra, Pauline Blunt, Lisa Borrás, Irene Foxwell, Diane Harrison, Ginny Heath, Louise Hicks, Andy Houston, Kace Chiu, Rosemary Lavens, Antonia Richards, David Summers, Nic Thorpe, Matt Wood.
- *Intercessors* - Barbara Bell, Pauline Blunt, Tom Borrás, Diane Harrison, Ginny Heath, Louise Hicks, Andy Houston, Rosemary Lavens, Jim Patrick, Doreen Tew, Nic Thorpe.
- *Coffee & Tea Team* - Tina Veasey, Dianne Harrison, Ginny Heath, Margaret Knipe, Amey Hanesworth, Daniel Coupe, Isabelle March, Ian and Rosemary Lavens, Heather Beasley.



One of the features of our church are the flower arrangements that make the church look so beautiful throughout the year and particularly at Christmas and Easter time. We'd like to thank our talented team, led by Sylvia Cliff: Diane Harrisson, Pauline Blunt and Kay Law. We would appreciate donations towards the cost of these arrangements.

Our weekly **Wednesday morning I am Holy Communion service** provides an important space for more traditional, reflective worship, with the formal liturgy and hymns being a vital part of this and meets the needs of the older members of our church community. We're very grateful to Tom Borrás who sets up for the services, and David Summers who plays the piano or organ for our hymns.

Teaching Themes

We aim for our preaching to equip people to live out their faith in everyday life. With this in mind during 2022 our preaching covered themes such as - *Ephesians - Living the Life; Resurrection People - how Easter makes a difference to our everyday life; The Holy Spirit - The Giver ... of Unity and Truth, Growth, Healing and Peace, Purpose and Mission; With Jesus by the Sea - Jesus calls, calms, captivates, confronts, and caters; Daniel - Courageous living in turbulent times; Practice of Prayer - Keep it simple, Keep it real, Keep it up; and the Characters of Christmas*. In our All-Age Services our focus was on the *7 Signs of the Saviour* in John's Gospel. At the beginning of 2023, our teaching focus was on *The Sermon on the Mount*.

Electoral Roll and Attendance

All are welcome to attend our regular services. At present there are 81 on the Church Electoral Roll, 14 of whom are not resident within the parish. 6 names were added during the year and 1 was removed either through death or because they moved away from the parish. The average weekly attendance, counted during October, was 77 - including 52 adults and 13 children on Sundays plus 12 at our Midweek Holy Communion service. The number of those attending on Sunday mornings has been gradually increasing through the year as we have been recovering from COVID, and our Christmas Eve All Age services were attended by a total of 130 people, which was one of the largest congregations of the year.

In addition to our weekly services, we hold a monthly evening service, Pursuit, which is more informal with a longer time of worship and the opportunity to pray for one another. This was attended by an average of 23 in 2022. Since July we have been joining in a monthly prayer meeting with Allesley Park Evangelical Church (APEC), which has been attended by an average of 12 from our church.

Occasional Offices

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. Through baptism we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and to commend the person into God's keeping. We were delighted to celebrate the baptism of Evelyn Bowman-Powell in our church this year. We took the funerals of seven people in 2022, three of whom were part of our church community - June Millward, who had been part of our Church Fellowship for many years, Ali Grimley, who was part of our preaching team and Charles Bell, one of our church's founding members. Charles had served St Christopher's Church and his Lord so faithfully as a Reader and with Barbara as they shared in many aspects of the life and ministry of our church. The impact of these things will be felt by us and others too for many years to come.

Distribution of Communion

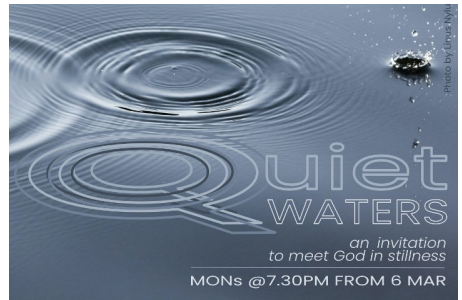
Due to associated risks coming out of the COVID pandemic, at the beginning of the year congregation members were receiving communion by intinction. Aware that this is not in the tradition of our 10am service, we took the decision as a PCC in May to use individual communion cups with gluten free bread, so all could receive communion in both kinds in a hygienic way, which was implemented soon afterwards.

Quiet Waters: An Invitation to meet God in stillness

In March 2023, we launched a new expression of worship - Quiet Waters.

Is your peace disturbed by busyness, stress and anxiety? How can you restore peace and reconnect with God's presence? We invite you to join us to explore God's presence through meditation, contemplation and mindfulness.

We meet in church at 7.30pm on the first and third Mondays of each month. We are so grateful to Andy Houston and Stan Aldridge for developing the vision for and careful steering of this area of our worship, which is attended by around 20 people each time.



Life Groups

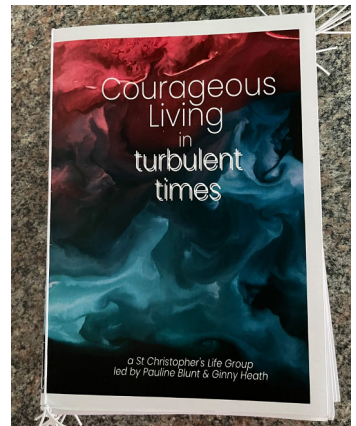
Life Group is the name we give to those small groups that meet during the week, as a regular part of the life of St. Christopher's. We believe that **following Jesus happens best when we're in community**. And, that **community is best fostered in smaller groups**, where people of all ages, stages and walks of life can become friends, have fun and grow. So, for those who want to become more part of the family at St. Christopher's, joining a small group is a great way to do it.

We call small groups at St. Christopher's 'Life Groups' because we want them to be about:

- **sharing life** with one another;
- **finding life in its fulness** (as Jesus spoke about, see John 10.10); and
- **being 'thrust out into the life-stream of the world'** (to quote John V. Taylor), in other words to get involved, together, in the life of the communities we live our lives in.

Life Groups are, therefore, about **welcome, nurture and reaching out** to others. We aim to have three types: groups for those who want to follow a **COURSE** of study together, for those who want to share in an **ACTIVITY** together, and groups for those who just want to be **COMMUNITY** together.

During COVID times Life Groups met online. In the Spring of 2022 groups also began to meet in person. In 2022 we had five groups running and activities included 'open mic' evenings, jigsaw puzzles and groups looking at themes including How to Pray, the 23rd Psalm and the book of Daniel. During the year approximately 40 church members enjoyed meeting in Life Groups. Our thanks to the group leaders: Emma and James Bowman-Powell, Kay Law, Susan Borrás and Stan Aldridge, Andy March and Stuart Hart, Tina Barnett and Chris Dunkley, Pauline Blunt and Ginny Heath.



If you would like to join a Life Group or have an idea for a Life Group that you would like to launch, please chat with Stan Aldridge or Andy Clasper.

Church Weekend



In May 2022 many from our church went away together to the Pioneer Centre near Kidderminster for our delayed Diamond Anniversary Church Weekend that was originally scheduled for June 2020.

It was well worth the wait as we were treated to rich teaching from Jitesh Patel;

excellent worship led and coordinated by James and Emma Bowman-Powell, lots of fun activities including a quiz and scavenger hunt.



A team from Nexus, Steph Pring, our Coventry YFC youth worker, and Liz March ensured that our young people had a wonderful time too. The wonders of modern technology enabled those who were still in Coventry to join together in worship with those who were attending the church weekend in person via livestream.

Thanks to Louise Hicks for coordinating the church weekend and the many others who contributed to make it such a special time together.





Our work with Children & Youth

Children & Youth on Sundays

We want our children and youth to feel a full part of our Church family and so we look to make them central to everything we do. We design our Sunday mornings around helping them to connect to God.

We run three age-specific groups: *Pathfinders*, for those in secondary school, *Explorers* for those in primary, and *Scramblers* for preschoolers. At least once a month we make our main Sunday service an All Age gathering. In Pathfinders a highlight has been doing Youth Alpha together, which has led to some fantastic conversations and a wonderful time of praying for each other as part of the Youth Alpha Holy Spirit Day.

We are so grateful to the amazing team that has made this possible this year: Marie and Martin Ellis, Katy Coupe, Caroline Minnett, Mary Abamwa, Andy Clasper, Andy March, Matt Wood, Liz March, Lucy Lambert, Rosemary Lavens, Laura Greenway, Ginny Heath.

St Chris Youth

St Chris Youth - for young people aged 11-18, meets every Sunday evening during term time, from 7:15-8:45 pm. In our weekly meetings we allow space for chill and chat, pool and table tennis, as well as organised games - hide and seek and sardines in the dark, human battleships and whole room table tennis.

At the end of the session we listen to a talk - themes covered have been Prayer, Grace, and talks about the incredible universe God has created. We have also been for nights out playing bowling, laser quest, McDonald's and an Escape Room!



Youth is attended by 7 young people each week and we'd love to see more young people join us.

Do you know of any young people who you could invite?

Thanks to our team - Steph Pring, Cara Greenway, Andy March, Liz March and Katy Coupe. Would you like to join the team who can lead this fantastic group of young people?

Superhero Party

In October, we invited the children of St. Christopher's, together with local schools and others in the Allesley Park & Whoberley area, to come to a Superhero-themed party. We wanted to provide a safe, family-friendly alternative to Halloween for 7-14 year olds, their family and friends, and we had a great time!



There was fun craft, great food and some riotous games, with everyone dressed as a superhero, either known or invented. As the young people left church many of them asked when the next party was going to be!

To the team who made this possible - you know who you are - thank you!



Loving each other

Welcoming, accepting and caring for one another - *We are a loving and caring family where everyone can belong.*

Our church family is a body made up of many parts. That's the way it's supposed to be. At St. Christopher's we are big fans of what Archbishop Rowan Williams has to say: that the church is God's pilot project for a new humanity. The way we come together, walk together, live together can show the world a redefined family, a new way of life. One part of that is that we look to welcome, accept and care for each other.



Regular expressions of family

We know that there are people in our community who could become lonely and isolated. We want to have a constantly open invitation to them to be part of the sense of family there is at St. Christopher's; and we are delighted about the opportunity to do this through our regular groups: **Together at 11**, the **Puzzling Times** jigsaw puzzle group; and our **Church Fellowship**.

Together at 11

“Together at 11” was started in November 2021 as a community group for those wishing to meet new people and enjoy their company. Coffee, tea and cakes are served at 11.00 a.m. once a fortnight in the Church Hall. We



aim to get to know each other, and also to entertain. We have held quizzes, played Bingo and used Table Talk (where we pick a subject at random and everyone is invited to express their opinion). We have listened to several interesting speakers on a variety of subjects including Old Coventry, the Walled Garden in Allesley Park, Wills and Lasting Power of Attorney, Antiques and God's wonderful world (accompanied by music and pictures). Two of our highlights have

been an outing to Melbick's Garden Centre, where we had lunch, and a "Fish and Chip Lunch" in the Church Hall.

Our membership is growing rather slowly (we average around 15) and we would be delighted to welcome new people, especially from the wider community.

Thanks go to Sylvia Cliff and Nat Patterson, who choose the cakes and make the tea and coffee, Rosemary Lavens , who keeps the Accounts, and Ian Lavens who is an expert washer-upper. Also, Tom Borrás who puts the tables up for us before each meeting. We would find it hard to operate without him.

Report by Pauline Blunt

Church Fellowship

A variety of meetings have been enjoyed over the last year by twenty to thirty members and guests, from talks about a local charity (Inter-arc) and family history to being entertained with songs of the 50's and 60's.

In June an informative and interesting guided walk around Allesley Hall Walled Garden provided a different experience and gave us an appetite to enjoy a traditional strawberries and cream tea.

We have also pitted our wits against one another in 'Pub Quiz' nights and joined together in Church for a Carol Service and a Holy Week Communion.

We have sadly lost some members during the last year, and give thanks for their contribution to our group, particularly June Millward who led the group as our President for a number of years.

Everyone is welcome to come along on the 2nd Monday of the month (not January) for friendship, fellowship and fun.

Membership costs £5 a year, with subs of £1.50 per meeting.

There is usually a raffle prize to be won by one lucky person.

A programme of meetings has been planned for the next year and it would be lovely to have good support for the visiting speakers, especially for those who give their time without charge.

Report by Kay Law

Puzzling Times

Despite jigsaw puzzles traditionally being a 'winter evening pastime', a group of about 14 people have met on most Monday afternoons throughout the year for a couple of hours - including on one of the very hottest days when fortunately the hall was pleasantly cool!!

There are usually four puzzles being worked on each week, sometimes with the puzzle being started and completed in the same session, which is very satisfying.

The sessions have been valued especially by those attendees who live on their own as its an opportunity to have friendship and fellowship and it helps to give our 'little grey cells' a workout. Also, many of the puzzles we've completed have had large pieces, making it easier for not-so-nimble fingers.

We are looking forward to continuing our puzzling throughout the next year.

Report by Kay Law

We also know how isolating parenthood can be. We will say more about our **Christopher Robin** toddlers group in the next section.

Pastoral Care

We aim to be a community that cares for one another. We want to be alongside one another in the tough stuff of life, because we believe our God does the same. We have various informal ways of sharing news of the concerns and needs of our little family and we look to respond as we can.

We believe in a God who is still active in the world and in our lives. And, so, one of our responses is to pray for each other. We have a **St. Christopher's Prayer Chain** group on Facebook as well as a more public prayer list.

We also offer prayer ministry, seeking God's guidance, his strengthening and his healing.

Our prayer ministry team is available to pray with people every Sunday. Praying together, people find comfort, strength, encouragement, hope and God's loving, healing presence. Our thanks to the prayer ministry team, organised so carefully and effectively by Stan Aldridge: Tom Borrás, Ginny Heath, Andy Houston, Hannah Lidbetter, Pauline Blunt, Marie Ellis, Barbara Bell, Sandie Aldridge and Stan himself.

Serving our community

Working with others to build God's kingdom - We establish partnerships with others in the community to bring God's blessing.

Christopher Robin

Having returned to meeting with restrictions in 2021, Christopher Robin continued to serve the wider community weekly throughout 2022, providing a vital space for babies/toddlers and their carers. An average of 17 children attended with their parents/carers. At the heart of this is Tots Church, where we hear Bible stories and sing songs together. We also have the opportunity to pray for the children and their carers. A highlight of the year was the annual Christmas party, when we had a very special visit from Santa! A massive thanks to our team who make Christopher Robin happen - Caroline Minnett, Mark, Louise Nurse, Heather Beasley, Cara Greenway, Tina Veasey, Liz March, Andy March, Tina Barnett, Diane Harrison.



Spring Cafe and Christmas Fair

Following on from the success of the Christmas Cafe in December 2021, we held our first ever Spring Cafe in April 2022, welcoming a number of people to join us for light refreshments and lunches. We were delighted to raise over £600. In November 2022 we held our first proper Christmas Fair in 3 years and were delighted to welcome hundreds of people from our community. We raised over £1750. Thanks to Katy Coupe and Irene Foxwell and their fantastic team who came together to make these events happen. Particular thanks are due to Mat Hicks who worked tirelessly in the kitchen.

Love Christmas

We partnered with the 'Love Christmas' initiative again this year, providing gifts to some of the most vulnerable and struggling people in the parish shortly before Christmas. With the support of volunteers from the local community as well as from St Christopher's Church, we were able to give out 86 bags and hampers to

individuals and families via local schools, and 30 gifts of plants and chocolates to individual elderly people.

A further 40 gifts were also budgeted for, for an afternoon tea the following January. This would be a social event to bring people together, tackling loneliness and making them feel loved. This would be hosted and supported by the Allesley Park Community Centre, who also generously supported the initiative financially.

We have received very encouraging feedback about the positive impact this initiative has had. There are a significant number of families and individuals who have been struggling to afford Christmas this year, and these gifts have been really appreciated. We hope that it will also serve as seeds for future outreach, partnering together and reaching out to a wider unchurched community.

The charity requires a minimum of 200 gifts to be distributed for a grant to be given. This is more than we were planning for, so we made a joint application for a grant with St Laurence's Church in Foleshill.

The total cost of the initiative (St Christopher's only) was £1797. The Community Centre provided donations and covered costs to the total value of £250. A grant of £930 was received from the charity. Consequently, the net cost to St Christopher's was £617, which came from a restricted fund.

Church Hall

We want our church building to be available to our community as much as possible, and for it to be a space where all feel welcome and at home. This was the reason for the extensive refurbishment of the church hall in 2019, and the reason for our plans for an extension to be built as a new entrance foyer to be built along the side of the hall. Currently, 9 community groups regularly use the hall from Drama Tots and Jujitsu, to Jigsaw, Zumba and Tea Dance groups. The church hall was also used for 36 parties in the year, and there were 7 one-off bookings. We expect this number to increase as things return to normal over the post COVID period. There is scope for more regular users, which would be a benefit to the community and to us financially, as Hall Hire provides a much needed income.

Given the above, we took the decision to replace the cooker in the kitchen, spending £2,110, of which £510 was raised through a financial appeal.

The hall floor needs to be properly treated to make it more resilient and easier to clean; this is something that we were hoping could be carried out in 2022, but we

were not able to find a reasonably priced solution. This is something that we will pursue in 2023.

The meeting room carpet has been washed, and the outside door closer replaced (the damper had failed, causing the door to slam shut).

In addition, we hope to address some energy saving initiatives (e.g. LED lighting etc.) to reduce our overall energy usage.

Other than these issues, there have been various minor maintenance issues with the building that have arisen and have been addressed, or will be in 2023.

Thanks to Jo and Garry Cooke for the hard work they put in as caretakers and cleaners of the church hall, and for sorting out access for community users of the hall.

Rental from hall hire brings in a significant income to our church - £15,014 in 2022. This compares to £21,805 in 2018 and £18,380 in 2019 - the last full years not affected by the COVID pandemic. In 2022, groups were not yet returning to normal post-COVID. We would love to see the hall used even more by the wider community and are aware that in order to maximise the revenue we receive from hall rental, it needs to be as attractive a space as possible. We would like to form a small team to address this. Please speak to Andy if you're interested in helping.

The wider community

Schools



As part of his role as Vicar of St Christopher's Church, Andy March serves as an Ex-Officio Foundation Governor at St John's Church of England Academy, our church school. Andy's role has mainly focused on seeking to be a support to the headteacher and staff, meeting monthly with the headteacher, as well as leading worship for the whole school community through assemblies once a month and hosting the school at Harvest, Christmas and Easter.

Andy also welcomes class visits to the church and supports the RE provision, coming in for occasional lessons. In February 2022, Andy was also part of the team that appointed headteacher, Laura Stevenson, and in October we were delighted to welcome a significant number of the school community for her service of welcoming and commissioning, where April Gold, Diocesan Director of Education spoke. Andy Clasper has also supported the school with RE lessons, assemblies and school services. Members of the church attend the school and support it in a number of ways.



ALIVE – June 2023

In June 2023, Coventry DBE, in conjunction with Imagine Ministries and Feed the Hungry, is planning a massive, FREE Praise Party for 12,000 children from its Church of England schools. There will be music, singing, dancing, special guests and a mass picnic. We are excited by the opportunity to join our family of church schools together. The party will take place at the NAEC Stoneleigh on 15th and 16th June 2023. This will be attended by Key Stage 2 children from St John's CofE Academy. Afterwards, we are looking to build on ALIVE 2023 in two ways -

- A six-weekly big event, run by a deanery ("ALIVE Sundays")
- Small groups that could be run in schools to help children go deeper ("ALIVE" Disciples)

If you would like to support this in any way, let Andy know.



Uniformed Groups

We were delighted to be able to welcome back our uniformed groups for Parade Services from Palm Sunday 2022.

These groups are also attended and supported by members of our church community and PCC.

Supporting Good Causes

Another key way we serve our community is through financial giving, either through hosting fundraisers or giving money from the church. In 2022, as well as supporting the **Love Christmas** appeal (see above), we supported **Coventry City Mission** through their Giving Tree campaign, providing unwrapped new gifts for children; held a special offering for the **Syrian Orthodox Christian School** in Bethlehem and gave donations to **Hope Coventry, CORD, Barnabas Fund** and **Christians Against Poverty**. We also sent a small donation to support the hosting of the **Allesley Silas** at the **Belgrade Theatre**.

Sharing good news

Witnessing in word and action - *We reach out to our community with God's love and are confident to share our faith.*

Youth Cafe: An after-school place to call home



In 2022 St. Christopher's partnered with *Coventry Youth for Christ* to launch a Youth Cafe, an after-school drop-in for those from local primary schools who have recently moved to secondary schools.

Launching in September 2022, Youth Cafe is held on each Tuesday

during term-time, from 3:45-5.15pm. We have sought to create a caring, fun and supportive community, that comes together to hang out, enjoy each other's company, and walk together through the normal stuff of life.

During the year we have developed our practice, until we believe we have a format which works. On arrival we will chat together and play table games like Dobble, pool or table tennis. Later in the session, we normally do at least one big game together. Our current favourites are human battleships, benchball and 'room tennis' (ask us and we'll explain the rules).



As the 2023 Summer Term rolls around we are so excited to welcome a second tranche of Year 6 students about to make their own move to secondary school. We look forward to reporting back to you how this expression of the St. Christopher's family develops during the year ahead.

Huge big thanks to the team that has helped to make it happen: Cara and Laura, the irrepressible, unflappable Stuart, and our wonderful YFC friend Steph Pring.

Alpha Course

We intend to run Alpha in Spring 2023.

Financial Review

Total receipts on unrestricted funds were £89,551 of which £48,258 was unrestricted voluntary donations, and a further £8,930 was from Gift Aid. income of £11,445 was also received and is detailed in the Financial Statements. We were blessed by these donations, which were contributions towards the replacement of the cooker, and the purchase of a new digital piano, which has been a tremendous blessing to the church. In addition, we were able to install a new screen in church thanks to a donation that was made in a previous year.

During the Covid lockdown there was an increased use of on-line streaming services. We therefore took the opportunity to further update our audio/visual facilities to improve the congregations experience.

The planned giving through Parish Giving Scheme, envelopes and standing orders increased by 7% and it was good to see the use of Gift Aid envelopes increase. Total income, including tax recovered went up by 14% compared with last year.

£50,000 was spent from unrestricted funds to provide the Christian ministry from St. Christopher's Church, comprising our Parish Share contribution, the same as last year and largely provides the stipends and housing for the clergy. The sum that the churches in the deanery have to find is shared between the churches, and worked out annually by a deanery meeting of clergy and treasurers. It is expected that churches who have a full-time clergy would contribute the full cost of this, which last year was calculated as £62,040. Although our parish share for 2023 has been agreed again as £50,000 we should aim to close the gap between what we're paying and the cost of ministry as much as is possible.

Unfortunately, because our total resources expended last year increased significantly, the net result for the year was an excess of payments over receipts of £5,715 on unrestricted funds.

Adding bank and deposit balances brought forward at the beginning of the year, the balances carried forward at 31st December on unrestricted funds totalled £9,247.

Reserves Policy

It is PCC policy to try to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds equating to between 6 and 8 weeks of unrestricted payments - equivalent to between £9,672 and £12,896. It is held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies. The balance of £9,247 held in unrestricted funds at the year end falls below the range defined by our reserves policy. It is the PCC's hope to increase this over time, as and when income from planned giving and hall income recovers.

Structure, Governance Management & Team

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St. Christopher's Church the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our vicar), churchwardens, our curate, and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services / members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

The full PCC met six times during the year. Given its wide responsibilities the PCC has a number of committees who meet on an ad-hoc basis to deal with a particular aspect of parish life. These committees are all responsible to the PCC and report back to it with notes of their decisions being received by the full PCC and discussed as necessary.

Administrative information

St. Christopher's Church is situated in Allesley Park and Whoberley, Coventry. It is part of the Diocese of Coventry within the Church of England. The correspondence address is 173 Winsford Avenue, Coventry CV5 9NJ. The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and a registered charity with the Charity Commission.

Deanery Synod

St Christopher's Church is part of Coventry South deanery, formed of . Three members of the PCC sit on the deanery synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church. See Appendix One for the deanery synod report, which details the discussions that took place in Deanery Synod meetings since November 2021.

PCC Membership

PCC members who have served at any time from 1st January 2022 until the date this report was approved are:

Ex Officio members:

- Incumbent: The Reverend Andy March (Chairman)
- Curate: The ReverendCarolyn Powell (until December 2022)
- Curate: The Reverend Andy Clasper (from May 2022)
- Church Warden: Mr Stuart Hart

Deanery Synod Representatives:

- Mrs Heather Beasley (also Safeguarding Officer)
- Mrs Louise Hicks (Deanery Synod representative)

Elected members:

- Mr Stan Aldridge (Member of Finance Committee)
- Mrs Barbara Bell (Electoral Roll Officer)
- Mrs Emma Beasley (Sung Worship Coordinator)
- Mr James Bowman-Powell (Sung Worship Coordinator)
- Mrs Katy Coupe
- Mrs Marie Ellis
- Mr Graham Foxwell (Treasurer)
- Mrs Irene Foxwell (Standing Committee member)
- Mr Thomas Hanesworth
- Mrs Margaret Knipe (PCC Secretary, from January 2023, co-opted)
- Mrs Lucy Lambert (PCC Secretary, until January 2023)
- Mrs Rosemary Lavens
- Mrs Tina Veasey (Planned Giving Secretary)

Ministry Leaders & Team

St Paul gave us the vision of a church family as the Body of Christ made up of many parts (1 Corinthians 12), and at St. Christopher's, we are particularly inspired by this, given our calling to be 'Christophers,' literally Christ-bearers in our world. The way we come together, walk together, live together can show the world a new vision for humanity, a new definition of family, a new way of life. It's a big vision, but we try to play out part: supporting and serving each other and giving ourselves one to another.

It has been such a joy this last year to see the St. Christopher's family coming together to be who we are and do the things we do. Facing a catalogue of crises as a society, and tough stuff in the lives of our community, and as individuals, this has been a difficult time for so many of us. Yet, we have not given up meeting together as the writer to the Hebrews urged that we should not (Hebrews 10.25) and through our commitment and our many gifts we have achieved a great deal.

If you would like to get more involved in the life of St. Christopher's in the year ahead then do look at the Team page of our website for inspiration. For now, though, we want to thank the team for all you have done this year to make our little church family the lively and vibrant community it is.

In this report, we have already mentioned a whole host of people who have led and supported all we have done this year. In addition, to this already long list, we really only need add a big mention to our faithful, stalwart churchwarden, Stuart Hart; and the indefatigable Tom Borrás, who have both worked so tirelessly on our behalf this year. And, a big thank you to Graham Foxwell who has helped us all to understand the church's accounts and its finances.

Although, it would also be remiss of us not to also mention Vikki Booth, our excellent, unfussy administrator, who took over the role from Debbie Niblett in May 2022 and our beloved curate, Carolyn Powell, who served us so well during the year gone.

And, of course, you. As the apostle Paul puts it so appropriately: 'You are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.' (1 Cor 12.27)

Report approved by the PCC on 17th April 2023 and signed on their behalf by the Reverend Andy March (PCC chairman)



Appendix One - PCC Report

Parish Church of St Christopher, Allesley Park and Whoberley

There were six meetings of the Parochial Church Council in 2022. For the first time since the pandemic we were able to hold all meetings in-person. The meetings started at 7:45pm with a Bible reading and prayers, and the minutes from the previous meeting were agreed by Andy March.

26th January 2022

- The meeting began with matters arising from the previous meetings.
- Graham shared an update on church finances.
- PCC reviewed the Christmas services, and agreed to discuss further in September.
- PCC discussed plans for 2022 - a bring and share afternoon tea, outdoor church service, picnic in Allesley Hall school grounds, a Spring Fair and a PCC away day.
- It was agreed to have masked and unmasked zones in church and people can sit where they feel safest.
- It was confirmed that life groups will relaunch from March onwards.
- PCC agreed to pay for simultaneous streaming to Facebook and YouTube for a further year.
- PCC agreed the safeguarding action plan.

23rd March 2022

- The meeting began with matters arising from the previous meetings.
- Graham shared an update on finances and PCC approved the annual accounts.
- Graham and Stan were thanked for their work on finances and giving.
- PCC agreed to express interest in having PAIS workers, further conversations are needed with St James and All Saints.
- It was confirmed that the children's corner will return within the next couple of weeks.
- Katy and Irene agreed to join the sidesperson rota, Stuart to pick up linen washing.
- PCC continued planning the Spring Fair and Easter services.

25th May 2022

- The meeting began with matters arising from previous meetings.
- Andy Clasper was welcomed to the meeting, Carlyne has completed her curacy.

- PCC agreed officer appointments – secretary, treasurer, safeguarding representative, standing committee and Deanery Synod representatives.
- Graham shared an update on church finances.
- PCC discussed Communion and decided to use gluten free bread for everyone, individual cups for Sunday services and common cup for Wednesday services.
- Rosemary, Irene, Heather, Marie and Katy expressed interest in being on the sidesperson rota.
- PCC continued planning events for the Queen’s Jubilee weekend.
- Andy March, Andy Clasper and Carlyne agreed to staff Pathfinders until the end of the summer, but it was highlighted that this is not sustainable.

4th July 2022

- The meeting began with matters arising from previous meetings.
- Irene and Graham were thanked for hosting the meeting and social.
- Andy March shared reflections on the past year, and areas for growth next year.
- The meeting was followed by a summer social.

28th September 2022

- The meeting began with matters arising from the previous meetings.
- Graham shared an update on church finances.
- PCC agreed to purchase a new cooker and ask the congregation for contributions.
- It was confirmed that the collection plate will be passed in services again from October.
- PCC agreed not to replace the electronic collection plate as costs are too high.
- It was highlighted that a decision on energy suppliers will be required by early October.
- PCC agreed to hold the Christmas Fair on 26th November between 11am and 2pm.
- Further conversations to take place about using the hardship fund in a joint project with the community centre to provide a warm space for people struggling to heat their homes.
- PCC agreed the ex-offenders and responding to a safeguarding concern or allegation polices, as well as the safeguarding action plan.
- Heather was thanked for all of her hard work on safeguarding.

23rd November 2022

- The meeting began with matters arising from previous meetings.
- It was agreed to promote existing events as warm spaces rather than adding additional due to the strain on volunteers.

- Graham shared an update on church finances, PCC discussed the charitable giving pot and which charities should receive this funding. It was agreed to allocate £1k to charitable giving for next year's budget.
- PCC continued planning the Christmas Fair.
- PCC recommended that the welfare fund should be used to support Love Christmas.
- PCC members to complete basic and foundation safeguarding training.

The original PCC minutes are available from Lucy if required.

Lucy Lambert – PCC Secretary during 2022

Appendix Two - Safeguarding Report

The Diocese of Coventry is committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of everyone within our church community.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

The safeguarding officer has worked through the Safer Recruitment & Peoples Management (SRPM) guidance this year and will be ensuring the church is working to the requirements laid down by the Church Of England. Volunteers that need a DBS check for their role have to have their DBS checked very three years now, rather than the previous requirements of every five years. We will also continue to ensure that the volunteers are up to date with their safeguarding training, which is a requirement to undertaken every three years.

We currently have 21 volunteers' that work across Christopher Robin, Youth group, Youth café, Childrens groups on a Sunday, worship group and Pastoral care. Some volunteers amazingly take on more than one role amongst these groups and we are very grateful that they do. We would not be able to give such a varied number of activities if it were not for this group of willing volunteers, not only preparing for the groups attending but also taking time to complete the necessary requirements as laid down by the Church of England.

Sadly being a Church does not necessarily mean it is a safe place, which is why the Church of England has these essential procedures in place.

If you are interested in gaining a wider understanding of safeguarding and why it is so important or even undertaking the on-line training yourselves, please feel free to go on to the Coventry Diocese website and go to the safeguarding section or come and have a chat with me.

Heather Beasley

Safeguarding officer for St. Christopher's Church 2023

Appendix Three - Deanery Synod Report

There have been a few meetings of the Deanery Synod since the last meeting was reported on (15th September 2021).

Meetings open with prayer and worship and close with prayer.

Tuesday 15th February 2022

- This meeting was only attended by Kenilworth.
- Coventry South instead met via Zoom on **Tuesday 29th March**.
- During this meeting Rev Matt Taylor ran through the Deanery Plan as it stood at that time.
 - **Our values** - we are a missionary, collaborative and generous deanery. Our opportunities include new housing estates North Eastern Green, The Kings Hill development and Westwood Park.
 - **Strategy** - Parish Church/Church Plant, the current provision. Provision for the next 1 - 3 years, thoughts about the future for discussion.
 - There were no questions after Matt's presentation.
- There was a discussion about hubs, things are still being worked out and Deanery Plans will not affect the hubs.
- Rev Anne Peachey will be leaving to go to Hatton in the summer.
- Rev Anne McCormack has now started as Chaplain at the University of Warwick.
- St Barbara's are having a self-supporting part time Curate starting in the summer.
- Rev Abby is leaving St Martin's in early June.

Monday 23rd May 2022 (St Oswalds Church, Jardine Crescent, Tile Hill 19:30 - 21:30).

This meeting was postponed.

Wednesday 29th June 2022 Deanery Synod members were asked to confirm who was responsible in the church for Parish Returns, they were being asked to complete and submit the Energy Footprint Tool. Stuart Hart and Graham Foxwell were working together to complete this document, I was not informed whether or not this was completed.

Wednesday 28th September 2022, this meeting was changed to Thursday 15th September, to be held at St Martins, Finham.

Mission in schools
Introduction to the EquipHib
Eco Champions update

Neither Heather nor I attended this meeting and nobody has been able to provide me with any minutes from this meeting, I am not 100% sure that it took place.

Monday 21st November (All Saints Leek Wootton 19:30 - 21:30), chair of the meeting Mark Lovegrove.

- Opening worship which included the commissioning of Rev David Hammond as Area Dean of Coventry South and Kenilworth and Rev Jim Perryman as Assistant Area Dean of Kenilworth.
- Parish presentation for All Saints.
- Eco champions update - there is no eco champion for Coventry South.
 - Confirmation that St Christopher's (along with 7 other churches in the deanery) have not registered with Eco church, 8 churches have registered, 2 have received a silver award.
 - Every parish has been urged to engage with Eco Church, to complete the Energy Footprint Tool, to identify a key person or group who can be the Parish Eco Champion(s) who can be the one(s) to receive relevant information. I do not believe that St Christopher's have done any of these things.
- Open discussion on how churches can support local communities in the cost of living crisis. Tim Pollard presented a powerpoint including information from Diocesan Synod and also from Hope Coventry.
- Election and appointment of Secretary for Coventry South Deanery - no nominations were received.
- Closing prayer.

Thursday 9th February 2023 (St Oswald's, Jardine Crescent, Tile Hill 19:30 - 21:30), chair of the meeting Rev David Hammond.

- A new structure for Synod meetings will be trialled, this includes a parish presentation from the church we visit, followed by 3 short parish presentations, this is then followed by time to pray for the 4 churches, in this way we hope to cover all churches in the Deanery over the Deanery cycle. We then have a 10 minute slot for business before ending with a main speaker. This new structure will be reviewed over the next year.
- Opening worship was led by Father Ed. Rev Andy March was also commissioned as Assistant Area Dean of Coventry South Deanery.
- Parish presentation for St Oswald's, given by Father Ed.
- Three Parish presentations for prayer:
 - Battle, what is a struggle right now?

- Breakthrough, where can you see green shoots?
- Blessing, what are you enjoying what God is doing?
- Presentations were given by Laura Dawson of St Stephen's in Canley, Ann Peachey of St Luke's in Lowesonford and Patrica from St Mary's in Stoneleigh.
- Prayer for the four parishes that have made presentations.
- Local business
 - Reconstitution of the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committees - now to be called the Deanery Leadership Team.
 - Elections for Deanery Synod lay reps to be held at APCMs this year. Current reps term of office is until 30th June 2023.
- Presentation - Mission Hubs. This was presented by Rev David Hammond, there are 6 mission hubs around the Diocese, all have an associate minister paid for by the Diocese. Further notes about this can be found in the Deanery Synod minutes. Key things are community, prayer, bible interaction and some sort of worship.
- Closing prayer.

Future meeting dates: Wednesday 17th May 2023 and Monday 9th October 2023.

The original Deanery Synod minutes are available from Louise Hicks by request.



St Christopher's Church

Allesley Park and Whoberley

"God's family; loving like Jesus"

GROWING in God	LOVING each other	SERVING our community	SHARING good news
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THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND