



**CHRIST  
CHURCH  
BEDFORD** Annual  
Report

for

**MEETING OF PARISHIONERS**

and

**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

**8pm**

**Christ Church**

**Bedford**

*[www.ccbedford.org](http://www.ccbedford.org)*



## **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 8 pm**

In accordance with the Notices fixed to the Notice Boards, the Meeting of Parishioners for the purpose of appointing Churchwardens, and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held in Christ Church, Bedford, on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 8 pm.

### **Meeting of Parishioners**

#### **A G E N D A**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Appointment of Churchwardens
3. Appointment of Assistant Churchwardens

### **Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

#### **A G E N D A**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of:           a/ Last Meeting of Parishioners  
                                  b/ Last Annual Parochial Church Meeting
3. Election of 2 lay representatives to the Deanery Synod for 2 years
4. Election of 4 lay representatives to the Parochial Church Council for 3 years
5. To receive a report on changes to the Electoral Roll
6. To consider:           a/ the Annual Report on the proceedings of the parochial church council and the activities of the parish generally;  
                                  b/ To consider the financial statements of the council for the year ending on the 31<sup>st</sup> December preceding the meeting
7. Appointment of an Independent Examiner for the current financial year
8. Notification of appointment of Reader to the Parochial Church Council
9. To consider:           a/ the annual report under section 50 of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018  
                                  b/ a report of the proceedings of the Deanery Synod  
                                  c/ reports of various Committees and Activities of the Church.
10. Vicar's Report
11. Consideration of any other business of parochial or general church interest
12. Results of elections to the Deanery Synod and Parochial Church Council
13. Closing Statements

**DAVID THOMAS**  
Vicar

**CHRIST CHURCH BEDFORD**  
**Minutes of the MEETING OF PARISHIONERS and of the**  
**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**  
held on Wednesday 3 May 2023 at 8pm  
Chairman: David Thomas

**Meeting of Parishioners**

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Pat Allison, Ken and Pauline Barber, Rachel Bennett, Melvin and Germain Brookes, Michael and Wilma Bishop, Ian and Penny Cooper, Pat Davies, Jane Day, Daniel Gicharu, Nesta Major, Mary Shaw, Ken and Dorothy Summerfield, Paul and Sue Templeman, Vikki Thomas and Simon and Jo Wigg.

**2. Appointment of Churchwardens**

Two nominations have been received: Kay Berrington and Andrew Russell. There being no other nominations they were declared duly elected for the forthcoming year. The wardens were applauded and David thanked them for their continued willingness to stand and serve this community.

**3. Appointment of Assistant Churchwardens**

On behalf of the wardens Kay Berrington thanked all the assistant wardens as named below for their support and ongoing commitment to making sure our services run smoothly; we would certainly notice if they weren't there. Their contribution to the life of Christ Church is really valued.

The following have served as assistant wardens during the year:

Pauline Barber	Margaret Baron	Rachel Bennett	Simon Berrington
Fiona Betteley	Rachel Day	Daniel Gicharu	Cheryl Grint
Berty Jacob	Christine James	Sue Marshall	Pat Mathias
June Pedzeni	Keith Priddin	Mary Shaw	Dorothy Summerfield
Geoff Topham	Andrew Turpie	Steve Welsh	

Particular thanks to Christine James who stepped down during the year on moving away from the area.

The service of our assistant wardens, sidespeople, welcomers and stewards is very much an unseen service but it is such an important ministry here at Christ Church: thank you to all those who serve.

Thank you to Margaret Haywood and Margaret Ryan for agreeing to join the team that serve on Wednesdays for our midweek service.

Kay Berrington proposed that all 20 be appointed; Wendy Pegg seconded the proposal, and the list was approved unanimously.

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Pat Allison, Ken and Pauline Barber, Rachel Bennett, Melvin and Germain Brookes, Michael and Wilma Bishop, Ian and Penny Cooper, Pat Davies, Jane Day, Daniel Gicharu, Nesta Major, Mary Shaw, Ken and Dorothy Summerfield, Paul and Sue Templeman, Vikki Thomas and Simon and Jo Wigg.

**2. Minutes of last Annual Parochial Church Meeting and Meeting of Parishioners**

The minutes of the meeting of parishioners and of the APCM held on 30 April 2022 and to be found on pages iii-vi of the APCM booklet were approved and signed by the Chairman as an accurate record.

**3. Election of 4 representatives on Bedford Deanery Synod for 3 years**

Only two nominations have been received: Rachel Bennett and Margaret Cottenden. There being no

other nominations Rachel and Margaret were declared duly elected to the PCC as our Deanery Synod representatives.

**4. Election of 4 lay representatives to the Parochial Church Council for 3 years**

Eight nominations had been received necessitating an election. Each candidate was invited to stand as their name was read out. They were: Chris Brown, Jon Day, Steve Gardner, David Gundry, Jen McAdam, Sidney Miller, Wendy Pegg and Kathy Priddin. A ballot then took place.

**5. To receive a copy of the revised Electoral Roll**

On behalf of the Electoral Roll Officer Ellie Johnson-Ryan, David Thomas explained that the Electoral Roll revision took place between 5<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023. The number on the Electoral Roll now stands at 293, an increase of 6 from 2022, of whom 23% live in the parish. 11 names have been removed (mostly due to people moving away) and 17 added. The revised Electoral Roll was received by the meeting. There is a copy of the roll in the porch.

**6. To consider the Trustees 2022 Report and Accounts of the Parochial Church Council**

The chair invited Chris Stevens, the Honorary Treasurer, to explain the accounts. The Trustees Report and accounts are to be found on pages 3-27 of the APCM booklet. Chris explained that we had begun 2022 believing that we were facing a shortfall of £12k, but by year end we ended up with a surplus of £28k which has helped to bolster our reserves. We had predicted that there would be about £186k of regular giving as there had been a drop off in giving at the end of 2021, however Richard Hibbert challenged us about our giving shortly before he left and giving recovered.

Chris thanked everyone who gives regularly and generously. We have approximately 150 regular givers but there are 293 on the Electoral Roll; we would encourage people to become regular givers. Even small amounts add up over the course of the year to an amount that we can do something useful with. Donations went up and hall lettings recovered very well after Covid. Dawn Hire managed to run the hall bookings excellently all year and we received £12k more than we had budgeted. We also had £13k in legacies. This isn't something that we can predict, but thank you to people who leave us legacies, and those who are thinking of giving us legacies in the future.

With regards to expenditure, we increased our giving to Mission (allocated by the Mission Impact Group) when we realised that we had more income than anticipated. Our Parish Share was reduced, slightly, during the vacancy and our electricity and gas costs did not go up by as much as we thought they might. We saved on employment costs because we had vacant posts during the year.

What's happening this year? We can compare the first three months of the year. Overall our giving is holding firm and the halls are doing well; they are a real earner for us. The parish share has gone back up again and gas and electricity costs have gone up massively. We currently don't have any unfilled posts, so employment costs are higher. Overall we are in a better position after three months than predicted and it is looking hopeful that we won't have the budgeted deficit of £13k at year end.

In response to a question Chris replied that he didn't know the split between gas and electricity spending offhand, but that he can find out. Our solar panels income was down a bit. The income used to cover our total electricity costs for the year, but it doesn't any more.

Chris was also asked if it was our intention to keep missionary giving at 14%? He is hopeful that the percentage will be stable or even increased if the finances allow.

Thanks were expressed to Chris for all that he does for us.

**7. Election of an Independent Examiner for the current financial year**

Suzanne Goodson of Wright Connections Ltd has been our independent examiner for a number of years. The Resourcing Impact Group proposed that we continue to work with her. The meeting

approved the election of Suzy Goodson as our independent examiner for the 2023 accounts via a show of hands.

## **8. Notification of appointment of Reader to the Parochial Church Council**

At present we have one reader, Michael Bishop. He has indicated that he is willing, if approved, to continue to serve as an ex-officio member of the PCC, and this was approved by the meeting.

## **9. To consider Reports of:**

### **9.1 The Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church**

This report was produced by the Buildings Impact Group (BIG) on behalf of the wardens, and it is to be found on pages 28-29 of the APCM Report. BIG looks after them for us. We are very blessed here with our wonderful church and halls. There are a significant number of people who look after and run this place for us. Sincere thanks were expressed to them all, especially to our cleaners who keep us looking presentable in the eyes of the outside world.

### **9.2 Deanery Synod**

This report is to be found on page 7 of the APCM booklet. It is very important for Christ Church to play its part working alongside the other churches that make up Bedford Deanery. We do not do the mission of Christ by ourselves.

### **9.3 Various Committees and Activities of the Church**

These reports are to be found on pages 30-46 of the APCM report. There are lots of things happening and the reports give a flavour of these. Thank you for your commitment and engagement with the church and the community, sharing the love of Christ to Bedford.

## **10. Vicar's Report**

2022 was a strange year: Christ Church saw Richard Hibbert leaving after 22 years. For David it was leaving his hometown of London, having spent the first 5-months praying: Lord where are we going? He arrived at the Vicarage on 30 June which was the date that David had to leave the Diocese of London; God was trustworthy even though things went right to the wire. Thank you for the wonderful welcome the whole family received.

How Christ Church functioned throughout 2022 has been inspiring. Firstly, in how the interregnum went and how the PCC, the leadership team, the staff, the wardens and everybody else came together to keep Christ Church going, to keep serving one another and the community. This was one of the things that made Christ Church an attractive proposition. From the first Sunday here, David felt so comfortable and at home. For the latter part of 2022 David has been working alongside the staff team, the PCC and the wardens to look at what are we doing and how things work as we came out of Covid lockdowns and figuring out what it might be God is calling us as a community to.

We have done a lot of work thinking about what is the vision of the church. This led to the presentation of the new vision statement at the Church Weekend Away. *"We are a people being transformed by the unconditional love of God; seeking to bless our community, and longing for all to experience the hope we have in Jesus."* In summary we are *Transformed by love, Seeking to serve and Experiencing hope.*

We are on a journey building on what has gone before and in the coming months we will be exploring more about what this means. The intention now is to create a new Mission Action Plan over the summer and into the autumn term.

## **11. Consideration of any other business of parochial or general church interest**

Sidney Miller asked 'The bishops have tasked individual churches with deciding our view as to whether same sex unions should be blessed, or not, in church. How and when are we going to decide this for this church?'

David Thomas thanked Sidney for the question and explained that there are various things to consider.

1/ At present we do not have the full details of the proposals and we are not expecting to receive those until the summer. We need to wait and see what exactly is being proposed, until then it is not right to draw a conclusion.

2/ The proposal sits under 'worship', therefore regarding decision making, it is the vicar's decision as to whether or not these things take place, according to Canon Law. It is at the vicar's discretion in the same way that the marriage of a divorcee in church is. This doesn't mean that he is going to take a unilateral decision regarding this.

We have begun discussing it in various forums to see what people's opinions are and where things are going. There was a meeting back in March, we have discussed it at PCC and will continue to do so. The PCC will be involved in considering what the pathway, moving forwards, looks like.

David Gundry said that he rejoiced to hear that we are at least aiming towards giving 14% of our general income to mission. This has been a wonderful blessing to the people we seek to serve. May I reflect on the amount of time that is allocated to mission within church services: it is not 14%. Prayer for mission as part of our intercessions seems to have dropped away. David Gundry would love to see more occasions when missionaries are invited to take part in our services to keep people informed as to where our money is going and inspires mission.

## **12. Results of elections to the Parochial Church Council**

David Thomas thanked all those who had put themselves up for election and commented that he was sorry that they couldn't all be elected. He then published the results of the election to the PCC: -

Elected for three years: Chris Brown; Jon Day; Steve Gardner and Jen McAdam.

## **13. Closing Statements**

Andrew Russell on behalf of both the wardens thanked everyone for their support during the vacancy period. People prayed, they stepped forward to help, they encouraged the wardens, supported each other and kept the show on the road. Thank you to the staff team. They are an amazing group keeping things going, we do a lot for the community; we have amazing halls and children's work and youth work. The staff team work over and above what they are actually paid to do to make sure things happen. Thank you particularly to Pauline who is really the nerve centre of the whole church. It was due to her professionalism, along with the rest of the staff team. that we were able to keep the church running so efficiently during the vacancy and beyond.

He then thanked David for answering the call to come to Bedford. The selection process was remarkably easy, and it was a unanimous decision: our prayer was answered during the selection process. We believe that David is God's appointed person to take us forward as a church family; it is exciting to think about the future that we will have together. David has fitted in so well here and has worked hard, for example, at Christmas when there were so many services. Andrew then thanked Vikki, as she enables David to function effectively.

David then recorded his thanks to John Bell for all that he did as Curate at Christ Church and in particular all that he did to make David's transition to being Vicar of Christ Church Bedford as smooth and straightforward as it could be. He was a real blessing to David. Thank you also to the Diocese of St Albans for supporting him as he sought his next role.

In closing David referred back to the verse that he shared on 1 January 2023, Isaiah 54:2 '*Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.*' It is an encouragement to see how God was at work in 2022 and it is encouraging to see what he is continuing to do in 2023 and where it is that we are going. We do this together, we are friends, we are family, we do not do this in isolation, we do it together.

David Thomas closed the meeting in prayer at 9.05pm.



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**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023  
FOR**

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE  
ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF  
CHRIST CHURCH BEDFORD (“Christ Church”)**

**REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1134785**

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## Report of Trustees

The trustees present their report and the audited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS 102) in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in notes to the accounts and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice, applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland published in October 2019.

## COVID-19 and Beyond

COVID-19 continued to have an impact upon the life of the church and the community in 2023, at various times throughout the year people within the congregation have had Covid and chosen to self-isolate, including the vicar during the summer. On top of this there are several families and individuals who for various reasons are unable to attend in person. We continue to stream our Sunday 10.30am service on YouTube, and significant other services (for example, our midweek Lent Course) so that as many people as possible can participate.

2023 has also been a year where the continued cost-of-living crisis greatly impacted the country and our community here in Bedford. We have seen numbers attending Foodbank increase, as well as people struggling to pay bills and put food on the table. At the beginning of the year, we helped several people with Winter Fuel payments.

## Aims and purposes

The primary responsibility of Christ Church Parochial Church Council (PCC) is the promotion of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England. The PCC has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, Reverend David Thomas, in promoting, in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

The following mission statement, core values and headline priorities rolled over into 2023. Alongside this was a key action to begin reviewing the main priorities and organisational structure for Christ Church.

The mission statement of our Church is *'To enable everyone to become maturing followers of Christ, who experience and live out God's love daily in every part of their lives'*.

The Core Values of our Church are: -

<b>G</b> enerous	in faith
<b>R</b> eal	about ourselves
<b>A</b> ccepting	of all
<b>C</b> ompassionate	to our community
<b>E</b> ncouraging	all who come

The headline priorities of our Church for 2023 continued:

1. Making new disciples
2. Deepening our faith
3. Transforming our community
4. Visible social media



REPORT OF TRUSTEES

## Objectives and activities

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Charities Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living within and outside of the parish.
- Mission and outreach work.

To facilitate all this, we maintain the fabric of the Church and complex at 140 Dudley Street. The PCC also had responsibility for the upkeep of 161 Dudley Street.

The main Priorities and Objectives of our Church for 2023 were: -

### Priorities and Objectives

Following a review of the Mission Action Plan (MAP) in September 2022, it was decided that additional key priorities for 2023 were to review the church's Vision Statement, and the organisational structure of Impact Groups working on behalf of the PCC. Therefore, the MAP remained the same (as seen below) and once the Vision and re-organisation had taken place, the MAP would be reviewed.

#### 1. Making new disciples

- a. Offer enquirers courses (e.g. Alpha, Grow, Parenting etc) 3 times per year so that at least 10 people come to faith in each year
- b. Members intentionally praying for 5 friends/relatives to come to faith
- c. Intentionally offer invitations to friends/relatives to enquiry course or Sunday worship

#### 2. Deepening our faith

- a. Promote active membership of weekly Home Groups, who create their own goal for next 12 months for a ministry area
- b. Ministries (Men, Women, Seniors, Children and Youth etc) to create clear goal to fulfil the priority 'Going deeper into God'
- c. At least fortnightly, promote personal testimony stories to encourage maturing followers of Christ (whole life discipleship)

#### 3. Transforming our community

- a. Increase involvement and presence at Castle Newnham School (e.g. minimum 1 x Governor, provide Open the Book, support and nurture CU, offer lunch clubs, etc)
- b. Start Christians Against Poverty Debt Counselling service
- c. Establish and promote annually a new sustainability initiative across Devon Park and Castle Road

#### 4. Creating a greater and more visible social media presence

- a. Train 2-3 church members in the next 12 months in delivery of Social Media posts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc)
- b. Ensure regularly weekly flow of news and events via Social Media
- c. Change over the next 12 months physical outdoor signage

In order to achieve these objectives and respond to realised needs: -

- The new Vicar continued to meet regularly with church leaders of different denominations in Bedford, as well as playing a role in the Bedford Deanery (joining the Standing Committee for Deanery Synod).
- The Standing Committee (subset of PCC, including the Church Wardens), worked to create a new Vision Statement, and reviewed the existing Impact Group Structure.

## REPORT OF TRUSTEES

- The Church Wardens worked closely with the Vicar and Staff Team to ensure that the day to day running of the church continued as smoothly as possible.
- The Impact Groups continued to look after different areas of the life of the church and ensure that the church continued to be active in the community.
- Areas of the church which needed new volunteers were identified.

## Achievements and performance

2023 was Rev David Thomas' first full year as vicar of Christ Church. Sunday attendance throughout 2023 remained steady, and Christmas saw an increase.

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but gives a flavour of some of the significant things which took place in 2023:

- A Church Weekend Away took place in March, where a new Vision Statement for the church was presented. The weekend away broke even in terms of cost.
- A Midweek Lent Course. This regularly saw 50+ people attend in person and online.
- Involvement with the HOPE Bedfordshire Good Friday Walk of Witness.
- Two weddings took place in April.
- A new Sound Desk was installed, leading to an improvement in quality of sound.
- Continued to have some longer services focused on worship and prayer throughout the year.
- Introduction of a new prayer meeting on Sunday mornings before the 10.30am service.
- Continued to have members of the congregation explore different callings to ministry. This included one person completing Foundations for Ministry training, one person become a Lay Leader of Worship. And two more people beginning Foundations for Ministry training.
- We were asked to host Readers in Training for two short-term placements in 2023.
- Application for a curate in 2024 accepted by the diocese.
- Growing number of young families attended our Sunday 10.30am family service.
- Reorganisation of the 10.30am family service in September which now sees the main service and all the groups (children & youth) looking at the same material.
- Introduction of new musicians at both the 10.30am and 7pm services.
- Restructuring the Impact Groups to better align to the new vision of the church (closing of Fellowship & Outreach IGs, replaced with Pastoral Care & Engagement IGs).

The new vision statement of Christ Church adopted in March 2023 is:

*We are a people being transformed by the unconditional love of God; seeking to bless our community, and longing for all to experience the hope we have in Jesus.*

## Staff Team

There have been a number of changes to the staff team over 2023.

- Ellie Ryan-Johnson stepped down as part-time Trainee Youth Minister in January due to personal reasons.
- Laura Jewell and Vikki Thomas were appointed as 18-30s Pioneer and Vicar's PA respectively (part time roles).
- Pauline Grimley, Vandon Grimley, and Dawn Hire continued to be a steady and invaluable presence looking after the Office, Buildings and Hall Hirers.
- Ruth Hulme continued in post as our imaginative and hard working Children's Minister,
- AJ Wade covered our Youth Work and Social Media presence for 6 months before moving to Birmingham to continue his training towards ordination.
- Vikki Thomas as a volunteer took over organising our Youth Work after AJ Wade left while we look to employ someone in this role.

## REPORT OF TRUSTEES

- The PCC agreed that moving forward the church should look to employ a full-time Youth & Student Minister. The extra funding required for this came from a generous donation from a member of the congregation, and a successful grant application from the Diocesan Growing Younger and more Diverse fund. The first round of advertising in November did not yield any applicants who met the PCC's criteria of qualifications/experience. The post has been readvertised in February 2024.

### Role of Volunteers

Without volunteers most activities which Christ Church puts on would cease to operate. We are extremely grateful to everyone who gives up their time and energy to serve both the church and the community.

We see this especially in areas such as our musical worship, our children's and youth work, and our engagement with older members of the community. Without the many volunteers our Children's Minister (Ruth Hulme) would be unable to do all she does. Without volunteers, such as Vikki Thomas, our Friday Night Youth would have stopped. We are also extremely grateful for all that Rachel Bennett does, whether that be organising holidays, Go4Gold or the Sunday afternoon walks to name a few.

Christ Church continues to be one of several distribution centres for Bedford Foodbank. Many of the volunteers helping on Tuesday afternoons are from Christ Church. 2023 continued to see large numbers of people attending.

### Children and Youth Ministry

2023 saw lots of activities in person for our Children's Ministry:

Sunday ministry was reorganised in September:

- Imagine (0 to pre-school): 10 children weekly
- Wonder (reception to year 3): 5 children weekly
- Marvel (years 4 to 6): 6 children weekly
- Wild Church: 10 families 11 children, monthly 3-5 families attending
- Pop up breakfasts: 5-10 families quarterly

Midweek ministry:

- Forge: 9 children weekly
- Morning Out: 35-45 children weekly
- Little Fishes: 2-5 babies weekly

One Off Events:

- Summer holiday club ran across 5 mornings - 58 children in total
- Easter Faith Trail : 7 families attended to explore activity stations about the Easter Story
- 20 Holy Week boxes given to families
- Church weekend away: 15 children
- May - Bedford Treasure Trail: 5 families
- October Light Party - 20 children
- Christmas - It's a boy - 100 adults and 100 children attended to hear the nativity story through pantomime
- Celebrating Christmas Around the World:
  - African Drumming Workshop – 16 families
  - Christmas Decoration making – 5 families
  - Christmas Praise Party – 19 children

## REPORT OF TRUSTEES

Since AJ Wade left in August J-team and Friday Night Youth have kept going thanks to the teams of dedicated volunteers. Since September, the teaching in J-team has been following the sermon series in line with all of the children's and youth Sunday groups. The average attendance is 5-8 young people.

Friday Night Youth has followed the same pattern as previously, the evening starts with a relaxed time of games before some discussion time. The young people decided what topics they wanted to discuss. The group has definitely bonded together as a whole since some new faces moved up to the group in September. The average attendance is 8-10 young people each week. Highlights in 2023 included the now annual trip to the Hamilton's back garden for Fireworks Night.

It is impossible to quantify in financial terms the contribution made by these and many other volunteers, but it is considerable, without which the PCC would not be able to fulfil its charitable objectives.

We thank all the many volunteers, who work so hard to make this church the lively and vibrant community that it is. In particular, we thank the Churchwardens, Kay Berrington and Andrew Russell who have continued to work so tirelessly on our behalf during 2023.

### Worship and Prayer

Worship and prayer continue to be central to the life of Christ Church. We are extremely grateful to all who have been involved whether playing and singing, projecting words onto screens, operating the sound desk and live streaming our services.

Some highlights in the year include:

- The Carols by Candlelight service which saw 243 people attend, a near 50% increase from 2022.
- The Carols on the Lawn service which saw so many people attend that people at the back couldn't hear what was going on!
- Introduction of Music Stand app at the 7pm service, for the musicians to reduce the amount of paper copies of music.

Average attendance at 9am has been 17 people, at 10.30am 160 people, and at 7pm 40 people. We continue to livestream our 10.30am service but as the community gets used to being able to worship together in person, we have seen less people joining us online. However, this continues to be a valuable part of the worshipping life of the community for those who are unable to attend for a variety of reasons, including ill health, home and work commitments.

At present, there are 290 names on the Church Electoral Roll, 69 of whom are resident within the parish. 10 names were added during the year and 13 were removed either through death, or because they moved away from the parish or to another church.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at life's milestones: 4 baptisms, 1 thanksgiving for the gift of a child, 2 weddings, and a total of 2 funerals and services of thanksgiving.

### Deanery Synod

We had 4 Deanery Synod elected representatives (reduced to 2 from 1 July) and 2 Diocesan Synod representatives, offering an important link between our parish and the wider Church of England. At each Deanery Synod meeting, there is a primary focus of discussion, and the opportunity to hear of the work of the wider church: General Synod, Diocesan Synod, Diocesan Board of Finance and Deanery Standing Committee. There were 4 Deanery Synod meetings in 2023:

## REPORT OF TRUSTEES

March – Anne Barker, chaplain at HMP Bedford, spoke about the joys and challenges of her role and Gillian Kern, chaplain at HMP The Mount, spoke about the Welcome Directory, which aims to help faith communities become places where people who leave prison find acceptance.

May - Sam Cappleman, Area Dean, spoke on Diocesan finances and the opportunity to apply for funds for the 'Growing Younger and More Diverse' initiative. Malcolm Grant from the Beds & Herts Historic Churches trust explained that the trust gives grants to churches in the St Albans Diocese to help them with the maintenance and repair of the church fabric. The fund is supported by donations (such as the Wixamtree Trust) and legacies, together with church and individual membership and fundraising activities.

June – Robert Hargrave (Diocesan Director of Communications) and Dave Pickett (Creative and Digital Communications Partner) spoke on communicating well and the different ways that this can be done in the modern world. David Thomas reviewed what is happening at Christ Church.

October - Young people from the Church of The Transfiguration, Kempston gave a presentation on Carbon Footprint matters. They reminded the attendees that the environment and God's creation are critical elements of our stewardship, mission, ministry and of our broader engagement with those of all ages in our communities.

### **Pastoral care**

Pastoral care continues to be an important area for the life of the church. So much so that in the review of the Impact Groups a new Pastoral Care Impact Group was created at the end of the year. Home Groups continue to be the centre of pastoral care and we are particularly grateful to Pauline Barber (a volunteer) for all she does in overseeing this area of ministry. Over 50% of electoral roll members are a part of a Home Group. Each week at the Staff Team meeting, pastoral concerns are discussed and church members not seen for a while are attempted to be contacted by someone, often the vicar or church warden(s).

Activities such as Ladies Elevenses and Men's Breakfast continue to be key areas of pastoral care and time. The vicar continues to take home communion to people who need it, whether on a regular basis or one offs due to illness and the like.

Our parish magazine is published bi-monthly and continues to create a pastoral, spiritual and informative link amongst church members, hall users and our local community.

### **Mission and Evangelism**

Helping others is a demonstration of our faith, whether practical, emotional or spiritual.

The Mission Impact Group channels support and news between our Mission Partners, scattered across Africa, the Middle East and Europe, and encourages prayer for them.

Mission Direct, a small UK Based charity, whose Executive Officer attends Christ Church, was the Bishop of St Alban's Harvest Appeal charity for 2023. Christ Church raised money for them both at the Harvest Appeal and as a part of the Christmas giving.

A Youth Alpha Course was run after Easter on Friday Nights.

A new Impact Group looking at Engagement was created at the end of 2023 with a view to see what the needs of the community are, and how Christ Church can better engage and meet those needs.

A number of volunteers from Christ Church helped the King's Arms Project winter night shelter, whether making meals or spending time with rough sleepers.

Rev David Thomas took communion once a month to Dame Alice Court care home.

## REPORT OF TRUSTEES

### Ecumenical Relationships

We continue to be blessed by our ecumenical links to other local churches across Bedford and benefit from HOPE Bedfordshire. We actively supported the town-centre open-air Good Friday Witness, attended by over 1000 people and a number of our congregation attended various Hope Bedford activities throughout the year.

Rev David Thomas took communion once a month at St John's Church Bedford during their vacancy.

## Financial review

Total receipts on unrestricted funds were £356,172, with £189,033 from standing orders and £43,933 was from Gift Aid. Restricted donations totalled £31,471 of which £4,504 was from gift aid. Further details are shown in the annual financial statements.

£361,109 was spent from unrestricted funds to provide the Christian ministry from Christ Church, including the contribution to the diocesan parish share of £147,512 which largely provides the stipends and housing for the clergy.

Net movement in funds was an increase of £24,771 during the year, and the total reserves increased to £236,145.

The principal source of donations are the church members. The PCC takes its environmental, social and ethical duties seriously and consideration of these undergird the ministry decisions of the church.

### Reserves policy

It is PCC policy to try to maintain sufficient funds, being between 3 and 6 months of expenditure to ensure the smooth financial running of the church, and ensure that unexpected expenditure can be met as and when required. Total funds held at the year end amounted to £236,145.

The balance on the general reserves at the year end was £146,167 which is considered adequate since it represents approximately 5 months of expenditure, and is therefore within the PCC policy. Total unrestricted funds (including the general fund) amounted to £200,488 with £34,321 representing amounts raised in respect of a previous house purchase.

The purpose of any restricted fund is noted in the financial statements. Restricted funds are in respect of specific projects and or schemes.

### Financial risks

Total restricted funds amounted to £35,657. The cash reserves of the church, excluding restricted funds, totalled £148,103 as at 31 December 2023. The budget for 2024 was approved by the PCC showing a deficit of £17,000. Most of the income generated by the church is from regular standing orders. The level of standing orders has remained consistent during the year and this, together with careful management of resources, has not had a significant impact on the financial risks of the church. The PCC therefore considers it has sufficient resources to sustain its purposes and activities during 2024.

## Plans for future periods

At the beginning of 2023, the PCC agreed to look at selling the existing curate's house (161 Dudley Street), which is will complete in April 2024, and to purchase a new property on the Devon Park Estate which completed in March 2024.

## **REPORT OF TRUSTEES**

Advertising for a new Student & Youth Minister in February 2024.

Creation of a new Mission Action Plan to replace the existing one.

In summer 2024 a stipendiary curate will be joining Christ Church.

### **Risk management**

The PCC is aware of its risk management duties and in 2023 the Lone Working policy, and Safeguarding Policy, were reviewed and signed off by the PCC. All PCC trustees, youth and children's paid and voluntary leaders, and volunteers in contact with vulnerable adults are DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked.

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline measure 2016. We continue to take seriously the need to look after children and vulnerable adults. The PCC have adopted all the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policies and Practice Guidance, as well as "Promoting a Safer Church" (child protection and vulnerable adults policy) and the Domestic Abuse statement.

Safeguarding information is displayed in the Church Porch, on the halls noticeboard and on the church website. In addition there is a child friendly version on the halls noticeboard. Contact details for those wishing to obtain advice, raise any concerns or make referrals to the statutory authorities are included on the posters and in our Safeguarding Policy, which is issued to everyone who applies for a DBS check and Worker's Pocket Guides produced by 31:8 are included in the staff and volunteer ID lanyard pockets.

We have a Parish Safeguarding Officer who is also Lead Recruiter, a Deputy Parish Safeguarding Officer and an Assistant Recruiter. Those who work with vulnerable groups in the Parish are recruited in accordance with the Practice Guidance Safer Recruitment July 2021. We work to ensure that DBS checks are renewed every three years and that all those who have been safely recruited and all members of the PCC, have undertaken the appropriate safeguarding training within the last 3 years. The team meets regularly and we use the Parish Dashboard system for record keeping and to monitor our compliance with the various policies and the practice guidance of the Church of England.

We continue to ensure that there is adequate insurance cover for all activities involving children or adults undertaken in the name of the Parish. There have been 4 issues of safeguarding concern reported during 2023. These matters were dealt with according to the relevant safeguarding policies and guidance, by the Parish Safeguarding Officer, the Vicar and the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Safeguarding is a standing item on the PCC agenda and safeguarding matters have been raised with the congregation. The latter included raising awareness of the Mike Pilavachi and Soul Survivor investigation, undertaken by the Diocese of St Albans and the National Safeguarding Team and giving an opportunity for anyone affected to discuss any concerns. The congregation was also given an update as to how safeguarding works in services on 26 November 2023.

From a financial perspective, the PCC has delegated a level of responsibility to the Resource Impact Group along with the Treasurer to look after the accounting and budgets. The Treasurer regularly reports back to the PCC how things look compared to budget.

### **Structure, governance and management**

Christ Church is a corporate body established by the Church of England, and it is part of the deanery of Bedford and the Diocese of St Albans.

The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a Registered Charity.

## REPORT OF TRUSTEES

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules (CRR). At Christ Church the membership of the PCC consists of the licensed clergy, churchwardens, one of the Readers, members of Diocesan and Deanery Synods 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 so if they fulfil the criteria (as per CRR) they can stand for election to the PCC.

New PCC members/trustees were offered a copy of *The PCC Member's Essential Guide*, and a copy of the PCC Notes of Guidance.

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 PCC met 6 times during 2023 with an average attendance of 72%.

Given its wide responsibilities the PCC has a number of impact groups, each one dealing with a particular aspect of parish life. These groups, which include communications, mission, buildings, outreach, resourcing, fellowship, and young people, are all responsible to the PCC and report back to it regularly with reports of their meetings, decisions and recommendations being received by the PCC and discussed as necessary.

*Standing Committee:* This committee is required by law. It has power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council.

*Buildings Impact Group:* This group is responsible for the management and development of Christ Church PCC's buildings and infrastructure.

*Communications Impact Group:* This group is responsible for oversight of both external and internal communications, including our physical and online presence.

*Fellowship Impact Group:* This group is responsible for the planning, resourcing and delivery of events focused on the development of fellowship within Christ Church.

*Mission Impact Group:* This group is responsible for caring, praying and practically supporting our Mission Partners and Organisations and encouraging vocations and support to mission at home and overseas.

*Outreach Impact Group:* This group is responsible for the planning, resourcing, coordination and delivery of all pre-evangelistic, evangelistic and early discipleship support at Christ Church.

*Resourcing Impact Group:* This group is responsible for the financing of Christ Church and the prudent management of its financial resources.

*Worship Impact Group:* This group is responsible for the planning, resourcing, coordination and delivery of all corporate worship at Christ Church.

*Young People's Impact Group:* The Young People's Impact Group is responsible for supporting the Youth Minister and the Children's Minister in developing and implementing a strategy for young people's and family work at Christ Church, which directly contributes to the achievement of Christ Church's mission.

In 2023 the Fellowship and Outreach Impact Groups stopped operating. They are to be replaced with a Pastoral Care Impact Group and an Engagement Impact Group. This followed a review by the Standing Committee with an aim that the structure of Impact Groups (IGs) needed to better reflect the new vision and meet the everchanging demands of church life following the global pandemic and change of vicar. The other change was bringing in the Home Groups into the IGs structure, so that there could better communication and joined up working between IGs and Home Groups.



REPORT OF TRUSTEES

**Administrative information**

Christ Church is situated at 140 Dudley Street, Bedford. It is part of the Diocese of St Albans within the Church of England. The correspondence address is 140 Dudley Street Bedford MK40 3SX. Registered charity number 1134785 under the name the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Christ Church Bedford. It is also known as Christ Church Bedford, PCC or Christ Church.

PCC members who have served at any time from 1 January 2023 until the date of this report was approved are:

**Ex-Officio Members:**

Incumbent	The Revd David Thomas	Chairman
Wardens	Mrs Kay Berrington Dr Andrew Russell	
Reader	Mr Michael Bishop	
Diocesan Synod	Mr Daniel Gicharu Mr Christopher Stevens	Treasurer
Deanery Synod	Ms Rachel Bennett Mrs Margaret Cottenden Miss Helen Ryan Mr Paul Templeman Mr Anderson (AJ) Hutchinson-Wade	(from 3 May 2023) (until 30 June 2023) (until 30 June 2023) (until 30 June 2023)
Elected Members:	Mr Simon Berrington Mr Christopher Brown Mr Tony Daniels Dr Jonathan Day Ms Rachel Day Mr Stephen Gardner Mr Martin Hamilton Ms Amy Hutchinson-Wade Ms Susan Marshall Mrs Jennie McAdam Mrs Kathryn Priddin Mr Thomas Rees Miss Eleanor Ryan-Johnson Ms Christine Somervell Mrs Cynthia (Sue) Templeman	Lay Chair of the PCC  (from 3 May 2023)  (from 3 May 2023)  (until 3 May 2023)  (from 3 May 2023) (until 3 May 2023)  (until 3 May 2023)
(PCC Secretary)	Mrs Pauline Grimley	(not a PCC member)

**REPORT OF TRUSTEES**

**Bank:**

CAF Bank Ltd  
25 Kings Hill Avenue,  
Kings Hill  
West Malling  
Kent  
ME19 4JQ

**Independent Examiner:**

Suzanne Goodson BSc FCA  
Wright Connections Limited  
Registered Auditors  
Bedford I-Lab  
Priory Business Park  
Stannard Way  
Bedford  
MK44 3RZ

Day-to-day management of the charity is delegated to the incumbent:

**Incumbent:**

**The Revd David Thomas**

Christ Church Vicarage  
115 Denmark Street  
Bedford  
MK40 3TJ

Approved by the PCC on 9 April 2024 and signed on their behalf:

*David J Thomas*

Revd David Thomas (PCC Chair)

## **Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Parochial Church Council of The Ecclesiastical Parish of Christ Church Bedford**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023 which are set out on pages 14 to 27.

### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

*Suzanne Goodson*

Suzanne Goodson BSc FCA  
Institute of Chartered Accountants England & Wales  
Wright Connections Limited  
Bedford I-Lab  
Stannard Way  
Bedford  
MK44 3RZ

09/04/2024

Date: .....

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (Including Income and Expenditure account)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 December 2023

	<i>Note</i>	<b>Unrestricted Funds £</b>	<b>Restricted Funds £</b>	<b>Total Funds 31-Dec-23 £</b>	<b>Total Funds 31-Dec-22 £</b>
<b>INCOME FROM</b>					
Donations and Legacies	4	256,499	31,471	287,970	278,108
Charitable activities	5	93,506	0	93,506	70,491
Other trading activities		5,723	0	5,723	5,560
Investments	6	444	0	444	212
<b>TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES</b>		<b>356,172</b>	<b>31,471</b>	<b>387,643</b>	<b>354,371</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>					
Charitable activities	7	361,109	1,763	362,872	326,079
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>361,109</b>	<b>1,763</b>	<b>362,872</b>	<b>326,079</b>
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)</b>		<b>(4,937)</b>	<b>29,708</b>	<b>24,771</b>	<b>28,292</b>
<b>Transfers between funds</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>		<b>(4,937)</b>	<b>29,708</b>	<b>24,771</b>	<b>28,292</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	18	205,425	5,949	211,374	183,082
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD at 31 December 2023</b>	18	<b>200,488</b>	<b>35,657</b>	<b>236,145</b>	<b>211,374</b>

All income and expenditure is derived from continuing activities

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 December 2023

	<u>Note</u>	31-Dec-23		31-Dec-22	
		£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible fixed assets	12		<b>101,416</b>		104,716
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	13		<b>17,758</b>		17,363
Cash at bank and in hand			<b>236,508</b>		216,871
			<u><b>254,266</b></u>		<u>234,233</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Creditors due within one year	15		<u><b>-119,537</b></u>		<u>-71,896</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS			<u><b>134,730</b></u>		<u>162,337</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			<b>236,145</b>		267,053
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR	16		<b>0</b>		-55,679
NET ASSETS			<u><u><b>236,145</b></u></u>		<u><u>211,374</u></u>
FUNDS	18				
Unrestricted funds			<b>200,488</b>		205,425
Restricted funds			<b>35,657</b>		5,949
TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS			<u><u><b>236,145</b></u></u>		<u><u>211,374</u></u>

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 9th April 2024  
and signed on its behalf by:

*David J Thomas*

Revd David Thomas

Chairman

**Christopher Paul Stevens**

Mr Christopher Stevens

Hon. Treasurer

The notes on pages 17 to 27 form part of these accounts

Charity registration number 1134785

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 December 2023

	Note	31-Dec-23	31-Dec-22
<b>Cash flow from operating activities</b>			
Cash generated from activities	3	26,044	45,053
<b>Cash flow from investing activities</b>			
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets		(1,768)	(17,630)
Interest received		444	212
		<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<b>Net cash flow from investing activities</b>		<b><u>(1,324)</u></b>	<b><u>(17,418)</u></b>
<b>Cash flow from financing activities</b>			
Interest paid		(5,083)	(4,928)
<b>Net cash flow from financing activities</b>		<b><u>(5,083)</u></b>	<b><u>(4,928)</u></b>
<b>Net increase/decrease in cash and cash equivalents</b>		<b>19,637</b>	<b>22,707</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at 1.1.23</b>		<b>216,871</b>	<b>194,164</b>
		<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at 31.12.23</b>		<b><u>236,508</u></b>	<b><u>216,871</u></b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents consists of</b>			
<b>Cash at bank and in hand</b>		<b><u>236,508</u></b>	<b><u>216,871</u></b>
		<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period not available for charitable purposes as held as agent		984	189
		<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

## **1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

### **a) General information**

Christ Church, a registered charity in the United Kingdom is a corporate body established by the Church of England, and it is part of the deanery of Bedford and the Diocese of St Albans. Its trustees are all members of the Parochial Church Council and they operate under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a Registered Charity. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity. The address of the registered office is given in the charity administrative information on page 11 of these financial statements. The nature of the charity's operations and principal activities are shown on pages 3 to 10 of these financial statements.

### **b) Basis of preparing the financial statements**

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued in October 2019 and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The financial statements have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention. The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years prescribed.

### **c) Income recognition**

#### **Voluntary income and capital sources**

All incoming resources, including government grants are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

Collections are recognised when made. For donations to be recognised the charity will have been notified of the amounts and the settlement date in writing. Pledged amounts are only recognised on receipt of the funds.

Income tax recoverable on gift aid scheme donations is recognised in the period the income is received. Grants and legacies to the PCC are accounted for as soon as the PCC is notified of the entitlement and the likely amount due.

Donated facilities and donated professional services are recognised in income at their fair value when their economic benefit is probable, it can be measured reliably and the charity has control over the item. Fair value is determined on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity. For example, the amount the charity would be willing to pay in the open market for such facilities and services. A corresponding amount is recognised in expenditure.

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31st December 2023**

No amount is included in the financial statements for volunteer time in line with the SORP (FRS 102). Further detail is given in the Trustee' Annual Report.

Where practicable, gifts in kind donated for distribution to the beneficiaries of the charity are included in stock and donations in the financial statements upon receipt. If it is impracticable to assess the fair value at receipt or if the costs to undertake such a valuation outweigh any benefits, then the fair value is recognised as a component of donations when it is distributed, and an equivalent amount recognised as charitable expenditure.

**Legacies**

For legacies, entitlement is the earlier of the charity being notified of an impending distribution or the legacy being received. At this point income is recognised. On occasion legacies will be notified to the charity however it is not possible to measure the amount expected to be distributed. On these occasions, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset and disclosed.

**Other trading activities**

Other trading activities represent feed in tariffs from solar panels and are recognised on entitlement.

**Other ordinary income**

Rental income from the letting of church premises is accounted for when earned. Fees due to the PCC for weddings, funerals, etc. are accounted for on an event by event basis.

**d) Expenditure recognition**

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

**Costs directly related to the work of the church**

The Diocesan parish share is accounted for when payable and any amount unpaid at 31st December is included as a creditor in the Balance Sheet. Grants and donations are accounted for at the earlier of payment or formal approval by the PCC. Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year-end date are noted as a commitment but not accrued as expenditure.

**e) Tangible fixed assets**

**Consecrated land and buildings and moveable church property**

Consecrated and beneficial property is excluded from the financial statements by s. 10(2) of the Charities Act 2011.

No value is placed on moveable church furnishings held by the churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal since the PCC considers these to be inalienable property.

All expenditure on consecrated and beneficial property and moveable church furnishings, whether maintenance or improvement, is written off in the year incurred. This includes all expenditure incurred to date in respect of the Hall Redevelopment Project, including the build costs, since the build is occurring on consecrated ground, and as such cannot be capitalised.

**Other land and buildings**

Other land and buildings held on behalf of the PCC for its own purposes are valued at cost. No depreciation is charged on such properties since it is considered that the estimated residual value of the properties is in excess of the purchase price. Any expenditure on maintenance or improvement is written off in the year incurred.



**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31st December 2023**

**Other fixtures, fittings and office equipment**

Equipment purchased within the accounting period is capitalised on the balance sheet. Individual items of equipment with a purchase price of £1,000 or less are written off in the year in which the asset is acquired.

**Depreciation**

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost, less estimated residual value, of each asset in a systematic basis over its expected useful life. Depreciation rates used are as follows: -

Furniture and solar panels – 10% per annum (estimated useful life 10 years), Equipment – 33.33% (estimated useful life 3 years)

**f) Taxation**

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

**g) Fund accounting**

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

The purpose of any restricted fund is noted in the financial statements. Restricted funds include amounts raised for the Hall Redevelopment Project (HRP).

The financial statements include transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC can be held responsible. They do not include the accounts of church groups that owe an affiliation to another body nor those that are informal gatherings of church members.

**h) Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits**

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

**i) Bank and Cash**

Bank and Cash include short-term deposits which include cash held on deposit at CAF Bank.

**j) Loans**

Loans and borrowings are initially recognised at the transaction price including transaction costs. Subsequently, they are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method, less impairment. If an arrangement constitutes a finance transaction it is measured at present value.

**k) Debtors and creditors receivable/payable within 1 year**

Amounts owing to the PCC at 31st December in respect of fees, rents or other income are included as debtors at transactional values less any provision for amounts that may prove to be uncollectible. Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

**l) Judgements**

No judgements (apart from those involving estimates) have been made in the process of applying the above accounting policies.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 December 2023

2 YEAR ENDED 31 December 2022 Comparatives

	<i>Note</i>	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 31-Dec-22 £
<b>INCOME FROM</b>				
Donations and Legacies		268,576	9,532	278,108
Charitable activities		68,625	1,866	70,491
Other trading activities		5,560	0	5,560
Investments		212	0	212
<b>TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES</b>		<u>342,973</u>	<u>11,398</u>	<u>354,371</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>				
Charitable activities		317,098	8,981	326,079
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<u>317,098</u>	<u>8,981</u>	<u>326,079</u>
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)</b>		25,875	2,417	28,292
<b>Transfers between funds</b>		9,671	(9,671)	0
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>		35,546	(7,254)	28,292
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>				
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>		169,879	13,203	183,082
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD at 31 December 2022</b>		<u>205,425</u>	<u>5,949</u>	<u>211,374</u>

All income and expenditure is derived from continuing activities

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31 December 2023**

**3 Reconciliation of net expenditure for year to net cash flow from operating activities**

	31-Dec-23	31-Dec-22
	£	£
<b>Net expenditure for year</b>	24,771	28,292
Interest receivable	(444)	(212)
Interest payable	5,083	4,928
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	5,068	6,804
Decrease (increase) in debtors	(396)	(4,875)
Increase (decrease) in creditors	<u>(8,038)</u>	<u>10,115</u>
<b>Net cash flow from operating activities</b>	<b><u>26,044</u></b>	<b><u>45,053</u></b>

**4 Income from Donations and Legacies**

	31-Dec-23	31-Dec-22
	£	£
Gifts	237,470	241,225
Legacies	1,000	13,617
Other Donations	49,500	23,267
	<u>287,970</u>	<u>278,108</u>

**5 Income from charitable activities**

	31-Dec-23	31-Dec-22
	£	£
Rental income	44,325	39,366
Grants	0	250
Events and activities	48,261	29,275
Fees	920	1,600
	<u>93,506</u>	<u>70,491</u>

**6 Income from investments**

	31-Dec-23	31-Dec-22
	£	£
Deposit interest	<u>444</u>	<u>212</u>

**7 Charitable Activities Costs**

	Direct costs	Donations	Total
	£	£	£
Church Activities	<u>336,836</u>	<u>26,036</u>	<u>362,872</u>

See note 21 for further details

**8 Support/ Governance costs**

	31-Dec-23	31-Dec-22
	£	£
Independent examiner's remuneration	<u>1,620</u>	<u>1,620</u>

**9 Net income for the period is stated after charging**

	31-Dec-23	31-Dec-22
	£	£
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	<u>5,068</u>	<u>6,804</u>

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31 December 2023**

**10 Trustees and key management personnel remuneration and expenses**

Two trustees (E Ryan-Johnson £835, AJ Wade £8,812) received £9,647 for church work during the year (2022 - Three - W Pegg. E Ryan-Johnson, AJ Wade £5,426)  
 None of their remuneration related to their role as a trustee

In 2023 and 2022 the incumbent and in 2022 the curate were remunerated by way of a stipend by a related party, being the Diocese of St Albans who are responsible for setting the level of remuneration. As is standard practice in the Church of England the clergy were provided with housing by the Diocese (incumbent) and PCC (curate).

Two trustees, including incumbent, were reimbursed £373 during the year (2022, Four trustees - £1,343). This was for travel, hospitality, books and expenditure on behalf of the church.

**11 Staff Costs**

	31-Dec-23	31-Dec-22
	£	£
Wages and salaries	76,485	64,117
Social security costs	0	0
Defined contribution pension costs	3,372	2,670
	<u>79,857</u>	<u>66,787</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2023	2022
Youth Minister and Children's Minister	2	2
Other	7	6
	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>

No employees received remuneration in excess of £60,000

**12 Fixed Assets**

	Freehold		
	Property	Equipment	Total
	£	£	£
<b>COST</b>			
At 1 January 2023	90,000	108,009	198,009
Additions	0	1,768	1,768
Disposals	0	(23,628)	(23,628)
At 31 December 2023	<u>90,000</u>	<u>86,149</u>	<u>176,149</u>
<b>DEPRECIATION</b>			
At 1 January 2023	0	93,293	93,293
Charge for the year	0	5,068	5,068
Disposals	0	(23,628)	(23,628)
At 31 December 2023	<u>0</u>	<u>74,733</u>	<u>74,733</u>
<b>NET BOOK VALUE</b>			
At 31 December 2023	<u>90,000</u>	<u>11,416</u>	<u>101,416</u>
At 31 December 2022	<u>90,000</u>	<u>14,716</u>	<u>104,716</u>

*Note:*

*The property held at 31 December 2023 consists of 161 Dudley Street, Bedford, which is subject to an equity sharing loan from the Church Commissioners (see loan note for further details).*

**13 Debtors: amounts falling due within 1 year**

	31-Dec-23	31-Dec-22
	£	£
Other debtors	17,758	17,363
	<u>17,758</u>	<u>17,363</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31 December 2023

**14 Monies raised for others**

During the year the following monies were collected for external organisations

	31-Dec-23 £	31-Dec-22 £
Staff leaving gifts	435	4,420
Christmas Appeal 2022	543	208
Bedford foodbank	90	0
Bishop's Harvest appeal	634	0
Tearfund	239	0
Ordinand training	0	66
Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust	0	385
Other	583	219
	<u>2,524</u>	<u>5,298</u>

A total of £984 was held as at 31 December 2023 (£189 31 December 2022)  
These are included in other creditors in note 15.

**15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year**

	31-Dec-23 £	31-Dec-22 £
Hall Redevelopment	57,252	57,252
Other creditors	6,606	14,644
Loan to purchase curate's house (see note 16)	55,679	0
	<u>119,537</u>	<u>71,896</u>

**16 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year**

	31-Dec-23 £	31-Dec-22 £
Loan to purchase curate's house	0	55,679
	<u>0</u>	<u>55,679</u>

The PCC has a loan of £55,679 from the Church Commissioners which was taken out to assist with the purchase of 161 Dudley Street (the Curate's House) This is an interest only value linked loan representing 62% of the original value of the property. It is repayable on sale of the property together with a 62% share in any increase in value since acquisition. See note 19.

**17 Related parties**

The Diocese of St Albans is a related party by way of the constitution  
Details of receipts from related parties are found in note 21  
Details of payments to related parties are found in notes 22 and 23

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31 December 2023**

**18 Fund reconciliation - 2023**

**Unrestricted funds**

	Balance at 01-Jan-23 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31-Dec-23 £
General fund	151,104	356,172	(361,109)		146,167
Designated funds - repairs to church	20,000				20,000
Unrestricted house reserve - 161 Dudley Street	34,321				34,321
	<u>205,425</u>	<u>356,172</u>	<u>(361,109)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>200,488</u>

**Restricted funds**

	Balance at 01-Jan-23 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance at 31-Dec-23 £
Vicar's discretionary fund & restricted mission	4,366	1,756	(1,703)		4,419
Youth and Student Minister	0	12,500			12,500
New Curate's house	0	17,215			17,215
Halls Redevelopment funds	273	0	0		273
Holiday at Home	1,310	0	(60)		1,250
Total restricted	<u>5,949</u>	<u>31,471</u>	<u>(1,763)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>35,657</u>

	Unrestricted funds 31-Dec-23 £	Restricted funds 31-Dec-23 £	Total 31-Dec-23 £
Fixed assets	101,416		101,416
Cash and current investments	148,103	88,405	236,508
Other current assets	13,254	4,504	17,758
Creditors: amounts due in less than one year	-62,285	-57,252	-119,537
Creditors: amounts due in more than one year	0		0
	<u>200,488</u>	<u>35,657</u>	<u>236,145</u>

**19 Post Balance Sheet events**

The PCC has approved plans to sell 161 Dudley Street in 2023 and a sale was agreed in February 2024 subject to contract for a total of £365,000 (gross) and £357,400 (net of costs). £221,100 of the net proceeds will be used to repay the value linked loan. We will receive the remainder of the proceeds of £136,300. Completion is set for 12 April 2024

We have acquired 18 Hartland Avenue on 1 March 2024 for £330,000. This has been partially funded from a short term loan from the diocese with the remainder funded from a gift day (approx £115,000) plus our own resources. The loan from the diocese is expected to be fully repaid after the sale of 161 Dudley Street completes.

**20 Contingent Asset for grant to employ a Youth and Student Worker**

A total of £60,000 has been awarded by The Diocese of St Albans to be paid in equal annual instalments over a three year period to cover the term of the employment contract. This is conditional on the successful appointment of a suitable candidate, the process for which is not deemed to be in the full control of the PCC. To date the vacant position has been advertised and applicants were interviewed however no appointment was made. Income from the grant will be recognised once the PCC is confident that an appointment can be made.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31 December 2023

**21 INCOME**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 31-Dec-23 £	Total Funds 31-Dec-22 £
<b>Income from Donations and Legacies</b>				
Standing orders & Envelope Scheme	189,033		189,033	194,614
Legacies	1,000		1,000	13,617
Basket Collections	0		0	121
Income tax reclaimed	43,933	4,504	48,437	46,489
New curate's house		15,211	15,211	0
Other donations	22,533	11,756	34,289	23,267
	<u>256,499</u>	<u>31,471</u>	<u>287,970</u>	<u>278,108</u>

Note - included above are the following amounts given by trustees

Unrestricted			30,380	27,347
Total			<u>30,380</u>	<u>27,347</u>

**Income from charitable activities**

Rental income	44,325		44,325	39,366
Social & Youth Events	43,540		43,540	20,333
Grants	0		0	250
Morning Out receipts	2,406		2,406	2,273
Lunch Club Receipts	1,423		1,423	1,766
Holiday at Home		0	0	1,866
Fees	920		920	1,600
Sundry receipts	891		891	3,037
	<u>93,506</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>93,506</u>	<u>70,491</u>

**Income from other trading activities**

Income from solar panels	5,723		5,723	5,560
	<u>5,723</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5,723</u>	<u>5,560</u>

**Income from investment**

Deposit interest	444	0	444	212
	<u>444</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>444</u>	<u>212</u>

<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<u>356,172</u>	<u>31,471</u>	<u>387,643</u>	<u>354,371</u>
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PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31 December 2023

22 Resources spent		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 31-Dec-23	Total Funds 31-Dec-22
	<i>Notes</i>	£	£	£	£
<b>Grants</b>					
Mission and charitable giving		24,333	885	25,218	28,604
Other donations		0	818	818	6,112
		<u>24,333</u>	<u>1,703</u>	<u>26,036</u>	<u>34,716</u>
<b>Directly relating to Church Ministry</b>					
Parish share - payment Diocese		147,512		147,512	140,094
Clergy & staff expenses		1,291		1,291	1,721
Housing costs		2,296		2,296	332
Services including music		4,723		4,723	5,320
Telephones		1,468		1,468	2,301
Books		243		243	91
Explorers, Holiday Club & Youth Work		4,553		4,553	3,296
Training		0		0	978
Morning Out		1,583		1,583	951
Lunch Club		503		503	507
Holiday at Home			60	60	1,841
Outreach (including social events)		41,570		41,570	20,603
Sundries		3,861		3,861	5,831
Interest payable		5,083		5,083	4,928
		<u>214,686</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>214,746</u>	<u>188,794</u>
<b>Church management and administration</b>					
Heat and light		15,194		15,194	8,065
Insurance		2,596		2,596	2,427
Cleaning Materials		4,380		4,380	4,163
Church and property maintenance		9,470	0	9,470	8,097
Equipment - not capitalised		0		0	272
Hall Redevelopment		0		0	0
Salaries and wages		79,857		79,857	66,787
Printing, postage and stationery		1,948		1,948	2,542
Other		1,956		1,956	1,792
Depreciation		5,068		5,068	6,804
		<u>120,470</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>120,470</u>	<u>100,949</u>
Support/Governance Costs		<u>1,620</u>		<u>1,620</u>	<u>1,620</u>
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES SPENT</b>		<u><u>361,109</u></u>	<u><u>1,763</u></u>	<u><u>362,872</u></u>	<u><u>326,079</u></u>



PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH, BEDFORD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 31 December 2023

23 DETAILS OF MISSION AND CHARITABLE GIVING

	General	Restricted	Total	Total
	£	£	31-Dec-23	31-Dec-22
	£	£	£	£
<b>OVERSEAS</b>				
SIM (supporting the Deneufchâtel's)	2,730	0	<b>2,730</b>	2,900
Gayet (work in Belgium)	6,300	0	<b>6,300</b>	6,500
Barnabas fund	0	0	<b>0</b>	500
Diocese of Gulf and Cyprus	0	0	<b>0</b>	1,058
Open Doors	500	0	<b>500</b>	0
Egypt EDA	500	0	<b>500</b>	0
Frontiers (supporting Bradleys)	4,925	0	<b>4,925</b>	6,500
Samuti - interfaith helpers	175	0	<b>175</b>	100
Friends of Johannesburg Bible College	1,100	0	<b>1,100</b>	1,050
Neno Macadamia fund	500	0	<b>500</b>	500
Malawi Orphan fund	1,050	0	<b>1,050</b>	1,650
Tearfund	500	0	<b>500</b>	0
	<b>18,280</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18,280</b>	<b>20,758</b>
<b>HOME</b>				
Bedford Area Schools Christian Support Trust	5,403	0	<b>5,403</b>	5,500
King's Arms Project - Bedford	0	0	<b>0</b>	500
Bedford Street Angels	50	0	<b>50</b>	50
Bedford Foodbank	500	0	<b>500</b>	500
Friends for Life	0	0	<b>0</b>	554
Hope Bedfordshire	100	0	<b>100</b>	100
Christians Against Poverty	0	0	<b>0</b>	500
Other specific giving	0	885	<b>885</b>	142
	<b>6,053</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>6,938</b>	<b>7,846</b>
Total Mission	<b>24,333</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>25,218</b>	<b>28,604</b>
<b>OTHER</b>				
Other donations	0	818	<b>818</b>	6,112
	<b>0</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>6,112</b>
<b>TOTAL MISSION GIVING</b>	<b>24,333</b>	<b>1,703</b>	<b>26,036</b>	<b>34,716</b>

Note: Mission giving was set at 10% of General Gifts in 2023 (2022: 14%)

## VICAR'S REPORT

As I reflect upon 2023, I am struck by the faithfulness of God to both myself as an individual but also to the wider church. It is an absolute honour to be the vicar of Christ Church, something I do not take lightly, and as we are exhorted in 1 Corinthians 10:31, whatever it is we do, I try and do it all for the glory of God.

At the start of the year we thought about the verse from Isaiah 54:2 -

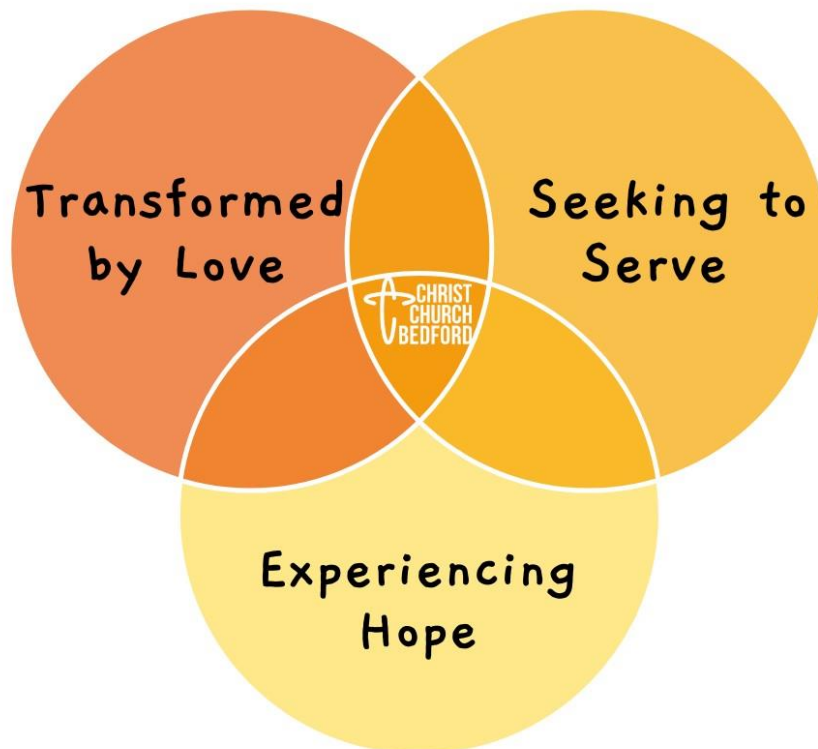
*Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back;  
lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.*

Which led us to thinking about dreaming big, making space for God and being welcoming.

The moments which stand out for me in 2023 are the baptisms/dedications, weddings and funerals. Acts of worship at significant moments in people's lives. It was truly an honour to take my first wedding at Christ Church, Amy and AJ having that peculiar pleasure, and I will remember it always. Having the privilege of holding a young child and dedicating them to God, and sharing in the joy and sorrow as we thank God for a life well lived and say farewell. These moments in the life of this church are significant. They punctuate the year. They stop us from just going through the motions. They remind us that God is with us in every stage of life. They are also significant for they are times where we welcome many visitors into our church.

Two significant parts of 2023 for me was the introduction of the new vision at the Church Weekend Away, and the restructuring of the Impact Groups. This was a time where we made space for God, and began to dream big. That new vision:

## VISION STATEMENT



**We are a people being transformed by the unconditional love of God; seeking to bless our community, and longing for all to experience the hope we have in Jesus.**

As we embed this vision into the life of the church, it helped us as we sort to make sure that the behind the scenes parts of the church were fit for purpose. This led to a restructuring of Impact Groups. There is always the temptation to just keep adding things to stuff, but we took the decision that just adding more Impact Groups would not be helpful in the long run. We have created two new ones, Pastoral Care and Engagement, and closed down two existing ones, Fellowship and Outreach.

*“Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.” Isaiah 54:2*



We are a people being transformed by the unconditional love of God; seeking to bless our community, and longing for all to experience the hope we have in Jesus.

 **CHRIST CHURCH BEDFORD**

My prayer as we enter into 2024 is that the good work that happened in 2023 would continue, that we would build upon the past and grow into the future that Christ is calling us his church to.

*Rev David Thomas, Vicar*

## THE ANNUAL REPORT UNDER SECTION 50 OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION AND CARE OF CHURCHES MEASURE 2018 (previously churchwarden's report on the fabric, goods, and ornaments of Christ Church Bedford) AND BUILDINGS IMPACT GROUP REPORT

**Membership:** Rachel Bennett, Pat Davies, Vandon Grimley (Site Manager), Martin Hamilton (Sec), James Roe (QI co-ordinator), Andrew Russell (Church Warden), Helen Ryan (Priorities Programme co-ordinator), and David Thomas (Vicar and Chair).

### **Routine Activities:**

- BIG's responsibility is to carry out routine maintenance, statutory building and grounds related tasks. There are a diverse set of tasks, from organ tuning, electrical and boiler inspections, plumbing, lightning conductor checks through to ensuring we are adhering to Health and Safety legislation.
- We have a Priorities Planning document which helps us identify/price the short/long term tasks.

### **Archdeacon's Inspection:**

Our annual inspection was carried out by Roy Lambert, Warden at All Saints Queens Park on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Roy had not visited Christ Church since the Halls' completion and was most impressed by the Eco and architectural structure of the building. He was keen to learn how it is currently being used and our plans for the future. He thought our Weekend Away was an excellent way to share our New Vision for Christ Church and grow together as a church with a common purpose.

Roy was pleased to learn that our new incumbent had settled well into CCB and that there had been a significant growth in the number of young families attending.



Once again, we were commended for the work of our Children's Minister and in particular for Morning Out and 'Wild Church'. He appreciated the difficulties we have experienced in securing a new Youth Minister; it would seem that this is a whole diocese and national issue. Roy was also impressed by the number of Home Groups that we currently have.

Roy agreed that as our Quinquennial Inspection was due shortly it was sensible to wait until we had received our 2023 report before tackling any major works. He noted that although the Vicarage boiler is old, inefficient and unreliable, the diocese is reluctant to replace it.

Our paper work and the necessary certificates were all in order for which our Church Administrator were commended. He felt our church was managed well and flourishing.

### **Quinquennial Inspection (QI)**

The Quinquennial Inspection was carried out by MDP Architects on 10 November 2023, with the report being received in February 2024. The report covers the main church buildings, the halls and grounds.

- Required and recommended actions from the inspection are part of BIGs Annual Maintenance Programme and BIG seeks to ensure tasks are carried out, subject to resources, within the recommended time span.
- The remaining work to be completed on the church will be more substantial and will require us to set up a working group to include members of the Buildings and the Resourcing Groups to look at the report and identify how to carry out the work required in a cost effective and timely manner.

**Insurance:** Trinitas. BIG/RIG work to ensure that all aspects, within our insurance policy, are in good order.

### **Policies:**

BIG ensures the following policies /inspections are kept up to date:

1. Health and Safety: Our Health and Safety Policy has been updated and approved by the PCC.
2. Fire/Emergency Evacuation: where/when necessary, we continue to refine this. The plan is on display around the church and hall site.
3. Food Environmental Health - use of kitchens.
4. Electrical safety and PAT testing
5. Lettings Policy

### **Additional BIG matters:**

- **Site Manager:** Vandon Grimley is in post and BIG works closely with him. Thank you.
- **Cleaners:** Richard Heathfield and Wendy Pegg ensure the site is kept clean. Thank you.
- **Gardens:** Various church members assist with caring for the north and west side gardens. Adrian Thompson, a Dudley Street neighbour, continues to care for our east gardens. Our thanks go to all helpers.
- **Kitchens:** Gillian Lindley is our BIG co-ordinator for kitchens and the pantry. She ensures all food spaces are kept clean, orderly and healthy. Bedford Borough Council inspected the kitchen in November under the Food Safety Act and once again we achieved a '5' very good rating. Thank you.
- **Hall Redevelopment:** Significant progress was made in moving forward to being able to sign off on the completion of the Hall Redevelopment Project. The outstanding issue, problems with tiles coming away from the walls, was resolved in December.
- **Curate's Housing:** The PCC agreed that we should look to sell 161 and purchase a new property on the Devon Park Estate. Three key factors were economic, mission and the unsuitability of the existing house for the new curate's family. This sale and purchase has been agreed in consultation with the diocese. A suitable property was identified in the autumn of 2023 and this has progressed quickly.



### **In conclusion:**

We praise God for how our buildings are being used, by so many different groups of people both the local community as well as our church family members. We are grateful to many of the church family who give of their time, energy and skills to help maintain the halls and church site. God willing, we look forward to our buildings being used even more fully. Our prayer is that our buildings continue to be used for the extension of the Lord's kingdom.

*Kay Berrington and Andrew Russell, Churchwardens; David Thomas, Chair of Buildings Impact Group*

## **SAFEGUARDING REPORT**

The Safeguarding team for CCB is comprised of Pauline Carter (PSO), Helen Ryan (Deputy and Safeguarding training Administrator), Pauline Grimley (Office Manager), Vikki Thomas (Vicar's PA and DBS Administrator), Ruth Hulme (Children's minister), vacancy (Youth Minister). We meet and communicate regularly throughout the year to ensure compliance of the church membership for DBS checks, training and to discuss concerns or incidents.

We submit all DBS and identity checks using the 'ebulk at thirtyone:eight' system. which is easy to navigate, and the staff are helpful if there are any queries. The team has worked to ensure that all persons working



in recognised roles with both vulnerable adults and children, have the required DBS checks in place. All PCC members are charity trustees and, because Christ Church runs children's and youth work and sometimes works with adults with care and support needs, all of

our trustees are DBS checked.

The training requirements for church posts will vary according to role. People that have taken on a new role within the church since this framework has been implemented will be advised and contacted by someone from the safeguarding team if there are online modules which will need to be completed. These requirements often change with role and so you may need guidance on what level of training is required. This can be viewed on [www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org).

We maintain the Church Safeguarding dashboard in order to monitor compliance in all areas of the church. We have now reached Level 3 on the Dashboard Standard, and the role of maintaining this dashboard is now a shared team responsibility. During 2023 we have begun using the Safeguarding Hub. This helps us to meet the national mandatory safeguarding requirements by:

- Keeping track of DBS renewals
- Keeping track of safeguarding training
- Sending reminders to the team when the above are due

We also respond to reports of incidents appropriately and communicate with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser as necessary.

*Pauline Carter, Parish Safeguarding Lead*

### MISSION IMPACT GROUP REPORT

Current membership: Steve Gardner (Chair), Sidney Miller, Gillian Lindley, Rosemary Phillips and Jon Day. Paul Templeman and Mary Shaw served during the year.

2023 was a sad year in that two devoted Mission Impact Group (MIG) members, Paul Templeman and Mary Shaw, passed. We gave thanks for their passion and energy for supporting mission; they will be greatly missed.

World Mission is an important part of our life at Christ Church and MIG works to support our Mission Partners, Projects, and Christian Charities worldwide. We commit to regular prayer for our Mission Partners, most of whom are drawn from our congregation or known to us prior to them taking up work in the mission field, home or abroad. We also seek to provide practical and financial support. Christ Church has a monthly mission slot within its morning service ten months a year, when we invite our partners and other mission/ charity organisations to share details of their work, in person or via video.

YP and Jude continue to serve the youth of Nivelles, Belgium and the surrounding area, bringing young people to faith. (photo)



It is important that everyone feels safe. There are people at church who can help you if you are feeling worried about anything.

If you want to talk to someone

Pauline Helen or David



are here to help.



Hilary is now based in France having worked for ten years in Benin helping translate the Old Testament into the Monkole language. She is now in the process of completing her training with SIM (Serving in Mission) to become a Bible Translation consultant, building on her experiences gained in Benin.



John & Jenny live in South Africa and John works for the Johannesburg Bible College training African Christians on how to use and understand the Bible. Christ Church gives financially to provide a bursary to support poorer students.

We help support the Home of Hope, a children's home in Mchinji, Malawi, which provides shelter, food, medical care, education, vocational training and love to over 750 orphaned children. A number of Christ Church members visited the Home of Hope in the summer of 2023 and helped with many practical projects. (photo)

In the UK Christ Church supports IMPACT, a small Bedford based Christian charity which offers educational, pastoral & relational support to schools. It focuses on supporting schools in learning and experiencing more about the Christian faith. Whilst only employing 3 staff, it draws on up to 60 volunteers each year to participate in Christmas and Easter Experiences, where upwards of 400 children, visiting in small groups over a week, witness reenactments of the Christmas and Easter stories. A number of Christ Church members contribute to the volunteer pool.

We supported Beth and Jordan, who worked in North Africa, during the year, but sadly they had to leave for unexpected reasons. They, and we, still believe they responded to God's calling to mission, and we hope they return to it in the future.

*Steve Gardner, Chair of Mission Impact Group*

### **YOUNG PEOPLE'S IMPACT GROUP REPORT**

Members: Ruth Hulme, Martin Sweet, Martin Hamilton, Megan Oliver, Tom Rees, Vikki Thomas.

Chair - Rev David Thomas.

2023 was a busy year, with lots of things happening in our ministry to young people. A key focus evolved being, what is the role of YPIG and how can it support our children's and youth ministries? This has led to a review of the Terms of Reference to better reflect the purpose of this group.

Ruth Hulme (Children's Minister) and Vikki Thomas acting as an interim youth work co-ordinator have kept the group updated on what has been happening. And YPIG sought to be a sounding board and a place of support for this work. We were very grateful for AJ Hutchinson-Wade for his hard work in the first half of the year keeping the youth work going and setting things in place for Vikki to oversee.

*David Thomas, Chair of Young People's Impact Group*

### **CHILDREN'S MINISTRY REPORT**

One of the main highlights this year (2023) was the children's stream at The Church Weekend Away. We had 15 children join us at the CWA and the children's sessions were planned as a time for families to refresh themselves and we wanted to encourage them to go home with a desire to continue exploring faith together at home. We did this by running a Bible Buddy Adoption station which encouraged children to read the Bible with their adopted bears at home. This was popular and every family went away with a Bible

buddy. We themed our weekend away sessions on connecting with God - one group was called Konnect HQ and the other group was called Brave as a way of showing that through connecting as a church we can become braver and stronger as we learn more about praying and worshipping God. By the end of the weekend, the children could see how they were all important to the church as a whole and that each child is gifted in their own way.



There have been many exciting moments of change in the children's ministry over the last year, the most notable being the restructuring of the children's groups on Sunday mornings as a response to accommodate for the new church vision that was brought about at the church weekend away. We have found that this has enabled volunteers to take on new roles within the ministry, has created space for numerical growth within the children's groups, and has enabled us to create more tailored groups for the children who worship with us on Sunday mornings. The three groups have been named to encourage children to connect with God in their own spaces through encouraging them to **imagine** the Bible stories, know a sense of awe and **wonder** and also **marvel** at the stories in the Bible. We are establishing a children's ministry that allows children to know God for themselves and encourages them to ask questions and which will in turn strengthen their

understanding of who God is and develop their faith with other children in their age bracket. Our children's church groups are following the pattern of worship which is gathering, storytelling, wondering and responding. This pattern is accessible for children across the ages to engage with in worship and each group explores the Sunday theme in their own creative ways. We are focussing on trying to make space for play, laughter and friendship building, alongside exploring the Bible and praying together.



Over the past year we have had some amazing outreach events to give back to our community and welcome and reach families who do not worship with us. At Christmas we booked LolBear Theatre company to come to perform a pantomime retelling of the nativity story which followed the Nativity story from the Bible but made it fun and appealing for families with young children. We had 100 adults and 100 children's spaces booked and Lavender Day nursery visited as a trip together. It was wonderful to see the church full of children and families. At Christmas we used Wycliffe Bible Translators resources to put out online and in person activities that revolved around Christmas Around the World. The highlight of this fortnight of activities was The African Drumming Workshop which was led by a local African Drumming workshop leader called Martin Hanson from the drumming company Osagyefo. The families with toddlers that we normally see at Morning Out had a special event in summer called Little City, which was the chance to bring their children to explore a mini city that had been built in Christ Church halls! This was fully booked and we saw over 50 families that morning. In May 2023 we organised a treasure trail that took us exploring the whole of Bedford town with a small group of families that we had not met before. At the end of the treasure trail we were able to hand them CCB Kids booklets and explain about what happens for children at our church. Doing events and trails like this in the community makes a difference to overall numbers in our groups as word of mouth spreads.



Our weekly groups have also seen a large amount of development and new children and babies have joined Forge, Morning Out and Little Fishes. The number of families on our Morning Out (names of adults who have attended in the last 2 years) register has increased to over 300 which means we are weekly seeing around 40 families. We know our parent toddler group is distinctive in our community as a group that shares the gospel message in a way that is accessible to those who are unchurched. Myself and the engagement impact group have gathered a bank of positive feedback from parents and carers describing their experience of the love and care shown by those who volunteer on the team. Each week we do a mini story and craft with a theme about God, a story of Jesus or an Old Testament Bible story in a short and snappy way with which the children can engage and they can jump and dance singing songs about Jesus and God's great love. It is a time of joy and friendship for the children as well as a place that parents and carers can come for support and encouragement. We are always hoping and praying for more volunteers so we can continue to reach those in our local community.



In the last year we have welcomed families from Little Fishes and Morning Out to our Sunday children's church group Imagine so we want to continue to bridge the gap between those who attend the outreach groups and those who worship with us on Sundays. In 2023 we developed a family breakfast before the all age service which is a place for families who are new to our church community to meet and spend time with other families in an informal space. It is our hope to see more families making CCB their home, and experience the love and presence of God together as we worship.



Our work with IMPACT this year has made a difference to the amount of children that we have been able to share the story of God's love in schools and through IMPACT's support in volunteering at Forge and in volunteering at our summer holiday club we have been able to include special sessions of prayer spaces and reflection times. I was blessed to be a part of both the Easter Experience and The Live Nativity (dramatic retellings of both stories) for school children from across Bedfordshire which included the opportunity to visit Queens Park Academy to answer questions as the characters in the nativity story. The most moving part of our work with IMPACT this year has

been the Values club that we have been running with Year 2s at Castle Newnham School. We have met a group of 10-12 children each week from February 2023 through to this present month which has given us the opportunity to talk about how the Bible relates to their values of Community, Opportunity, Respect and Excellence. Consistently meeting the same group has allowed time for the children to understand that the Bible is still relevant and exciting in the here and now.

In the next year in the children's ministry we will be looking at establishing foundations to make the Children's church groups more sustainable and self running. There will be a key focus on equipping volunteers with the practical skills and knowledge they need to work with children and plan sessions that allow space for children to listen to the Holy Spirit and respond to the Bible, as well as a desire to raise up new leaders and helpers. We hope to open our church to new children at the Summer holiday club and plan the chance for our church families to go on a trip away together. We will be looking forward to

making our church more inclusive to those who would not normally come to church and will be considering how the children's ministry can give generously to those whose need is greater than ours (Luke 6:38).

*Ruth Hulme, Children's Minister*

### **YOUTH MINISTRY REPORT**

Since AJ Hutchinson-Wade left in August (photo), J-team and Friday Night Youth have kept going thanks to the teams of dedicated volunteers. Since September, the teaching in J-team has been following the sermon series in line with all of the children's and youth Sunday groups. The average attendance is 5-8 young people.

Friday Night Youth has followed the same pattern as previously, the evening starts with a relaxed time of games before some discussion time. The young people decided what topics they wanted to discuss. The group has definitely bonded together as a whole since some new faces moved up to the group in September. The average attendance is 8-10 young people each week. Highlights in 2023 included the now annual trip to the Hamilton's back garden for Fireworks Night.



*Vikki Thomas*

### **18-30s MINISTRY REPORT**

It has been great to see the 18-30s ministry grow slowly over the course of the last year. We've been able to meet socially on a monthly or bi-monthly basis and have enjoyed events such as Games Nights, walks around the river and meals out. These have provided an opportunity for people to build relationships with others who are a similar age or at a similar stage of life. The socials have been an opportunity for support and encouragement for those in the group, on both a spiritual and personal level. We have also continued to have monthly meals with members of our church family which has been greatly enjoyed by all. It's been a great way to build new relationships, not only within the 18-30s group, but also with the wider church family. I would like to extend a huge thank you to those that have hosted the lunches as they have been really enjoyed and appreciated by those who have attended.

More recently, I have run an Alpha course with the group which was well attended and enjoyed by all those who came along to explore faith together. We enjoyed a meal together and had time to get to know each other a bit more before looking at the course material each week. All who were involved, regardless of what stage they were in their faith, got something out of the Alpha course and as a group we agreed we felt more empowered to share the gospel and live out our lives as Christians. One of the highlights of Alpha was the Holy Spirit day. It was a really exciting day where we focused on who the Holy Spirit is how He works in our lives. There was the opportunity to pray with each other and receive the Holy Spirit, and during this time people received and shared words of encouragement and pictures. There was speaking in tongues, and even interpretation of tongues where two different people had the same interpretation of the tongues being spoken. I would like to express my gratitude to Andrew and Helen Russell who helped to facilitate the course and to Heliotrope Home Group for being faithful in prayer during the course.



Following on from Alpha, there was an interest to continue meeting weekly, so we have now formed a Home group and will continue to meet weekly to study God's word. We will continue meeting as a group for social events and also sharing meals together with other members of the church family.

If you are not yet involved with the group and would like to be, then please email me for more information

on [18-30s@ccbedford.org](mailto:18-30s@ccbedford.org). If you would like to serve by supporting this ministry, there are a few ways to get involved:

- Prayer: This is still a growing ministry, and so prayer would be appreciated, particularly for continued spiritual growth and opportunity to share the gospel with others.
- Hosting a meal
- Providing/cooking food for a social event.

For more information or to discuss this further, please get in touch.

*Laura Jewell 20s-30s Pioneer*

## **WORSHIP IMPACT GROUP**

WIG Members: are Ruth Rawes, Matt Jewell, Dominic Carter, David Currie, Simon Platt, Carolyn Barnes and Rev David Thomas.



*Photo: Using the old sound desk for the final time at the midweek communion service on the 7<sup>th</sup> June.*

In June we saw the long anticipated installation of the new digital sound desk. This saw an immediate improvement in the quality of sound. Huge thanks to Simon Platt and Noise Boys for all their hard work.

Another joy of this year has been seeing new musicians join the team. Especially great has been seeing some young people play instruments and sing with us. What a joy it is for the family of God to worship together.

Carolyn Barnes, after many years of faithful service took the decision to step down as chair of WIG. We cannot underestimate the impact that she has had on the worshipping life of the church. Her gentle pastoral approach, her encouragements to pray, her desire to see Jesus glorified, are an inspiration (and a difficult act to follow!). Her final gift to us was the organising of the Carols by Candlelight Service with Vikki Thomas. Along with Matt Jewell, the music created was amazing. Thank you Carolyn for all you have done. We look forward to worshipping Jesus alongside you on Sundays in 2024.

Big thanks to all those who have served on AV, Sound and Live Streaming. Oftentimes the forgotten members, and yet without them not a lot can happen!

It would be remiss of me not to mention one of my guilty pleasures. At various points in the year, David Currie provides me with a spreadsheet of all the songs we have been singing, with the number of times! It is very geeky, but also very interesting to see the wide range of songs used in our worship. From those amazing hymns (Thine Be The Glory and How Great Thou Art) to our favourite modern worship songs (Goodness of God and What Gift of Grace) to new songs (Real Thing and The Blessing).

*David Thomas, Chair of Worship Impact Group*

## **COMMUNICATIONS IMPACT GROUP REPORT**

Current members: - Rachel Day and Simon Berrington (chair).

During the last year there were many changes to the Group. Paul, AJ and Hannah have been faithful stewards of our Website, Social Media and Magazine. We are most grateful for their hard work and all they achieved. If you have an interest in any of these areas of communication and would like to join our team

we would love to hear from you.



A big thank you to Pauline for her work on the website, magazine and other areas related to communications during the year.

*Simon Berrington, Chair of Communications Impact Group*

### FELLOWSHIP IMPACT GROUP REPORT

**Members:** Rachel Bennett (Acting Chair), Susan Fearon, Jill Leggat, Nesta Major, June Pedzeni, Wendy Pegg, Kirsty Pirrie.

We were sorry that Hannah decided to step down from FIG. We would like to thank her for all her hard work as Secretary and her input over the last few years, especially with the Zoom calls over Covid.

Members of FIG supported the Welcome Tea that was held in spring 2023. It had been a while since one had been held so we were pleased to welcome over 30 new members.

We are please to report that the fortnightly Sunday Walks continue to be popular often with 10 -20 enjoying a walk, then tea and cake. These walks will continue and anyone is welcome to come along. In August we were happy to organise another coach trip to Hunstanton. The coach was full and there are more details of the enjoyable day out elsewhere in this report.

FIG again supported the Big Tear Fund Quiz, which was held in Oct last year. It was well attended and raised money for Tear Fund.

The quiz turned out to be the last event that was organised by FIG because of the restructuring of the Impact Groups but individual members continue to offer support to other events being run. In particular 'It's a Boy!' which Ruth Hulme ran again for the children just before Christmas.

We hope we have lived up to our name of being the Fellowship Impact Group. We have enjoyed overseeing the different events during many years and hope that the membership of the church have enjoyed fellowship together.

*Nesta Major and Susan Fearon*



## RESOURCING IMPACT GROUP REPORT

Current Members: Ian Brown, Ewan Mcadam Keith Priddin, Chris Stevens, David Thomas and Richard Lindley

RIG's remit is to consider how to resource the work of the church. The work covers the finances of the church, but RIG also seeks to ensure best value for contracts with suppliers, and other areas where resources can be better used. RIG also seeks to encourage the members of the Church to think about giving (time, talents and treasure), and to be responsible stewards of all that God has given us, both as individuals and corporately.

Chris Stevens has acted as Treasurer for the whole of 2023. The role has probably been even more demanding over the past 12 months than prior years given the activities that have been going on, and is a substantial weekly commitment. We are not a small organisation! The church should be under no illusion as to how much work this entails.

The main additional focus over the past year has been the purchase of 18 Hartland Avenue which completed in early March 2024, and the sale of 161 Dudley Street, which as I write on 9<sup>th</sup> April we have now exchanged to sell with a completion date set for this Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April.

RIG has a substantial number of routine monthly and annual tasks - examples being reviewing accounts and setting budgets but also ensuring that we also undertake regular reviews of costs to ensure that they are minimised. We have continued to explore whether it is possible to access the congregation's resources – more to come shortly.

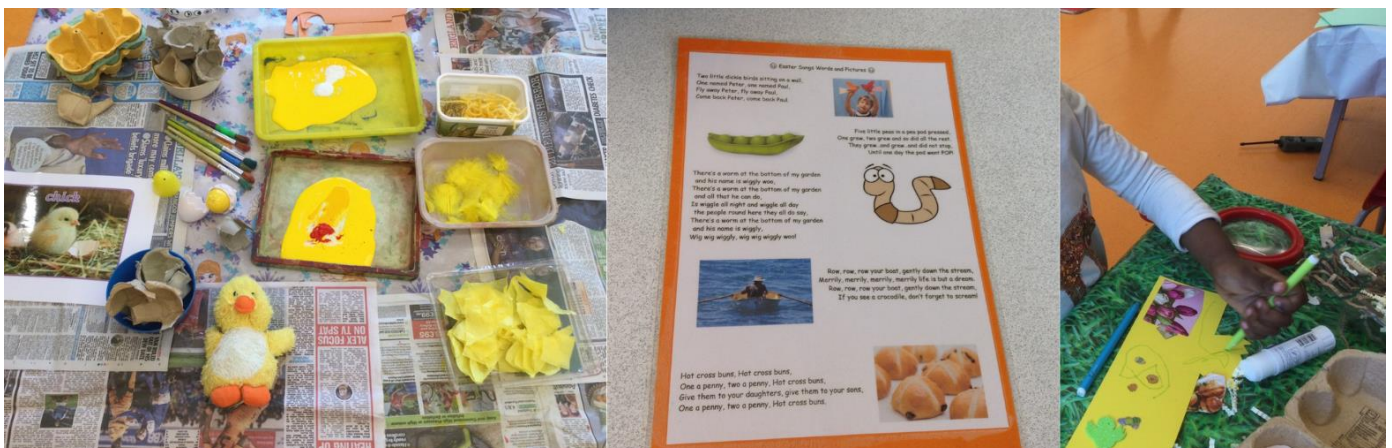
Above all we want to support the Church in using our resources for God's glory.

*Richard Lindley, Chair Resourcing Impact Group*

## CHRIST CHURCH PRESCHOOL REPORT

We recently had our OFSTED inspection and we were delighted to be judged 'Good' in all areas with so many strengths highlighted. We received amazing feedback from many of our parents and the following statement from our Committee Chair Helen Ryan "Paula and her wonderful team do an amazing job, day in and day out, to provide a great early education for your children and I am privileged to be associated with Christ Church Pre-School."

We continue to receive enquiries for places, often from recommendations which confirms how well our team are doing under the guidance of Paula, our Preschool Leader. She has an amazing relationship with the families and has been a huge support to our new parents. The new funding availability has seen an increase in 2-year-old applications and we are nearly at capacity for most sessions. We are in the process of hiring a new practitioner to accommodate this.



The children took part in a Christmas Nativity which they thoroughly enjoyed. The parents were invited to stay for coffee and a mince pie and also took part in a raffle. We managed to raise nearly £300 and hope to hold another Fundraising event for Easter involving the children and parents.

We have lots of lovely planned topics, and of course Spring and Easter will be a lovely time to celebrate the world around us with planting activities, Easter hats and spring on the farm. This Spring term the children have been learning and discovering the world around them, weather, and changes in the environment. Alongside celebrating traditions with lots of lovely arts and crafts.

Our accounts are looking healthy and we have been able to transfer money over to the Reserve account.

We thank all at Christ Church for their continued support of the Preschool.

*Kat Tuck, Preschool Administrator*

## **CHRIST CHURCH HALLS REPORT**

### **Commercial and Charitable Organisations and Individuals Hiring the Halls:**

It was encouraging at the start of 2023 to see hall booking enquiries continue to come in steadily.

The range of groups and organisations who use the rooms is very diverse.

Those who hired on a regular basis included Preschool, Brownies, a children's theatre group, a tuition provider, family contact centre, Pilates, 3 organisations who provide counselling services, juggling club, community choir, a self-help support group and a boxing training company.



As well as the regular hall users there are many companies, groups, organisations and individuals who hire the rooms on an irregular basis either for a block booking or for a one-off event. Rooms were hired for meetings, workshops, fundraising or for training events in things such as CPR, first aid etc. A weekly cooking skills course for autistic adults was run from our kitchen over 6 weeks.

The local jazz trio and a dance group found the space ideal for rehearsals. Music and dance performances and concerts also took place both in the halls and the church.

Over the Summer the halls remained busy with one of the regular hirers using the downstairs halls to run a 2-week holiday club.

Over 30 one off celebration events including birthday parties and wedding receptions were held here. A local lady celebrated her 90th birthday in the halls. As you will see from the photo the space was almost unrecognisable as the family imaginatively transformed the room for this very special occasion.

It is wonderful to see how so well used and very much appreciated the halls are, with many people making repeat bookings and recommending us to others.

*Dawn Hire, Centre Bookings Administrator*

## BEDFORD FOOD BANK [BFB] / CHRIST CHURCH [CC] DISTRIBUTION CENTRE REPORT

CC continues to be open every Tuesday, for clients, from 1p.m. – 3p.m. We have a fantastic team of volunteers, made up of mainly CC members, but there are other volunteers who are loyal to the team.



We continue to have a member of the Citizen Advice Bureau Team [CAB] with us every week – and this has enabled the volunteers and clients to be given up to date support and advice; issued with vouchers etc. The CAB advisors work closely with the clients, and will sign-post them to other organisations as appropriate and necessary – e.g. social services, GPs, FACES [Family and Children’s Early-help Services] etc.

As in previous years, client numbers continue to increase, and on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 99 people were fed at CC. This is a record number for us, and was a combination of 2/3 large families, smaller families with children, single parents, working people, and single folk.

People come from all social backgrounds and situations – some living in their own homes, hotels, with relatives, homeless, sofa surfing, HMO [Homes of Multiple Occupancy] – but we had sufficient food to help them all.

The Stats for January - December 23: 1474 vouchers were fulfilled with 1929 Adults and 1024 Children fed. That’s a total of 2953 (in 2022 CC fed 2,054) Donations from Christ Church – 1,368.96 kgs. Almost 25,000 people were fed via all the Bedford Foodbank Distribution centres in 2023 and 215,913kg of stock was given out.

### Developments:

**BFB:** moved to much larger and more appropriate and useful premises in autumn 2023, still in Murdock Road. A sad reflection of the need for the FB services, but also housing equipment for FACES, office accommodation etc. and with good parking for the staff, and vans etc.

**CC Team:** 17 volunteers; 9/10 volunteers every week - thank you to a great bunch of dedicated people.

I would also wish to extend the team’s grateful thankyou’s to CC office and site managers – Pauline and Vandon – without whom our preparations would more painful!!

**CC and BFB:** are continually grateful for everyone’s financial support, and for all the donations we receive on a weekly basis – e.g. food, nappies, cereals to name but a few. [Please do ask for further information if needed].

*Penny Cooper, Christ Church Foodbank Co-ordinator*



## PRAYER MINISTRY REPORT

Prayer is of course a central part of our life, whether on our own or when we gather for services, home group meetings and the like. However, we also have weekly Zoom (Saturday, 9:30) and live (Sunday, 10:05 and 18:00) meetings before our services, specifically to pray for the church and beyond. In addition, we offer prayer ministry for individuals in person (primarily after our services) and as requested via

[prayer@ccbedford.org](mailto:prayer@ccbedford.org), and appreciate the work of a great team of pray-ers who are ready to pray with / for those wanting to share needs, questions and thanks. It has been good to welcome several new pray-ers to the team during the last year and to enjoy together the sense that we are about the Lord's business in bringing our praises, thanks and requests to him. We are grateful for seeing many answers to our prayers during the year.

Alan Cottenden

## LADIES' MINISTRY REPORT

### Ladies Elevenses Time (LETs) / Come Together

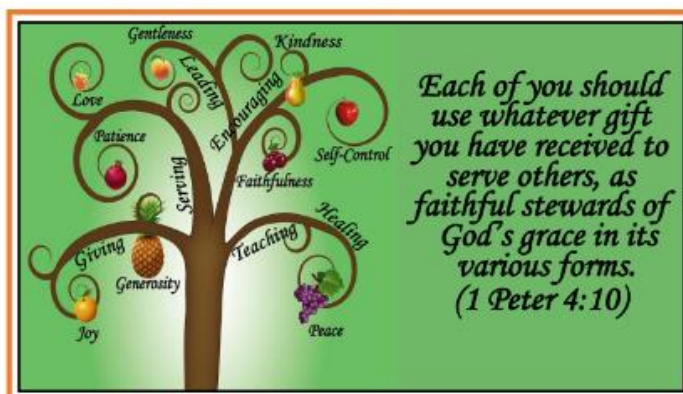
**Planning Team:** Rachel Bennett, Sue Templeman, Sandra Gardner, Julia Lawrence, Lesley Greenslade



The past year has been a joyful time of meeting together once a month on a Saturday morning. About 50/60 ladies from Christ Church, together with other friends, have enjoyed the opportunity to chat and make new friends over a cup of coffee/tea and a delicious spread of fruit, croissants and much more!

We have listened to inspiring talks from a variety of speakers from Christ Church as well as from outside. In the autumn it was a joy to welcome Rev Min-Min Peaker and Rev Diana Stretton and to learn of their experiences as new curates and at Christmas, we were treated to a special drama from the "Wise women from the East"!

We end each morning with a song and a prayer and a special Bible verse to reflect on during the coming month.



Ruth Janes has brought her Malawi stall of gifts and crafts, and Ruth and Gillian Lindley told us about the work of the 'Home of Hope'. We have joined up twice, this year, with the Men's Breakfast group for "Come Together" and have enjoyed talks from Andrew & Helen Russell (Music & Walking with Jesus) and Bernice & Peter Chiswell (the Challenges of the Christian Life).

A huge thank you to all who help make our monthly gatherings such a blessing - in the kitchen, serving coffee/tea, setting up/down and on Welcome.

Lesley Greenslade on behalf of the Ladies Ministry Team

## MEN'S MINISTRIES REPORT

Men's breakfast runs each month from 9:00 to 10:30am, normally on the fourth Saturday of the month. The pattern for the morning is to have breakfast and chat up to approximately 10:00am and then break away for a discussion about a topic relevant to men in Christ Church – this is led by different members of



the group. We meet at Christ Church and numerous breakfast options are available with the most popular being the egg and/or bacon and/or sausage bap plus tea/coffee. Also available are cereal, toast, croissants, jam and orange juice. Veggie options available on request. If a favourite item is not listed please let us know so we can source it for the breakfasts.

A joint meeting with Ladies Elevenses is held twice a year (photo) with the next one planned for 13th July 2024. This is well attended and enjoyed by all and yes bacon butties are still available. Men's breakfast is a valuable time to build up friendships and develop support networks. Men's socials have been organised in the past with visits to the rugby, pub nights and also curry nights. We hope to see football at MK Dons in the next season. The socials in particular are excellent opportunities to invite friends to come along. Suggestions for new social evenings/days are always welcome as are topics to include in the discussion section of the breakfast. We would love to see more men join this group. Please do come along. See John Betteley for further information.

*John Betteley*



### **WALKING GROUP REPORT**



The church walks are on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of the month. We meet in the Hub at church at 2.30pm and then go on a local walk round the Embankment area and come back to the Hub for drinks and cake, or we car share to go further afield. Over the last few months, we have been to Priory Park, and Moggerhanger for the snowdrops. On both these trips we went to the café afterwards.

On Easter Monday a dozen went from Christ Church to join the diocesan Pilgrimage to St Albans. We started our Pilgrimage at CC by having a Psalm and prayer together before driving to St Albans where we met up in the Cathedral Vintry Garden and shared another Psalm and prayer. Most of us walked down the hill to the river Ver and the lake in Verulamium Park. It is such a splendid area to walk and we were blessed with sunshine! Our picnic lunch on deckchairs that we had taken with us was just splendid as we sat outside the Cathedral, on the hill with beautiful views overlooking the park below. At 2.30pm we joined the parade that went into the Cathedral for the 3pm service.



We are doing a bluebell walk on 21<sup>st</sup> April. We usually split into two groups: the striders and the strollers. Everyone is welcome to come on the walks; they're fun and friendly.

*Wendy Pegg.*

### **RAPID RESPONSE FREEZER REPORT**

The rapid response freezer is intended to provide a meal for a friend or neighbour, whether a church member or not, that is in need of a meal to help in a situation. Such situations include, but are not limited to, moving house, a new baby and sickness of the person, their carer, or relative involved in visiting. The meals are on the bottom 3 shelves of the freezer in the kitchen, labelled with cooking instructions, and can be accessed by anyone wishing to provide help as a sign of our love and care for the recipient. Special diets are catered for. There is a folder to the right of the freezer which is filled in when meals are put in the

freezer and should be completed when a meal is removed. If you aren't sure what to do ask Fiona Betteley to show you. We have a wonderful small group of cooks who provide the meals, and if you feel you could contribute in this way we would love to have you join us. Recipes are available as new laws now mean we need to list all ingredients in the meals. Again contact Fiona Betteley about this.

*Fiona Betteley*

### **LUNCH CLUB REPORT**

Our Lunch Club which began in the late 70s has been enjoyed by thousands of people, not just for the lovely meals provided by the cooks but also for the fellowship and the opportunity to meet together. Sadly, over the last 18 months 7 of our cooks and 3 of our helpers have needed to step back from volunteering for health reasons. Finding replacement people has been difficult with many working well into retirement or looking after grandchildren.

We have consulted with David, our Vicar, and the PCC who have agreed that with such a depleted team, continuing to offer Lunch Club is not viable at the moment. It is therefore with heavy hearts that we have informed guests that unfortunately there will no Lunch Club in the summer term.

The Team and the Church Leadership are currently assessing the needs of both the congregation and the community. They will then consider what could possibly be offered in the autumn which could well be in quite a different format or even on a different day.



We wish to sincerely thank everyone who has been involved with Lunch Club: - the cooks and helpers who have provided the lovely meals over so many years, the gavellers and speakers who have given us much food for thought, plus all those behind the scenes who have made things run smoothly.

*The Lunch Club Team*

### **GO4GOLD REPORT**



Go4Gold meet on Friday afternoons from 2- 3.15pm with a programme of socials on two Fridays a month and Christian films or a speaker on other Fridays. Drinks and cake are provided, and we enjoy each other's company.

In September we reminisced and shared about the holidays we had been on. In December John Hartup led our Christmas celebrations with music and a quiz. Last June we were able to go to the garden in Biddenham of Peta and Edwin Martin where we all enjoyed a lovely tea in beautiful setting (photo).

In January this year we welcomed Claire and Steve Welsh to tell us about their accessible holiday business with a lot of information. We have listened to Will Rawes concerning Carbon Footprint Matters to bring us

up to date. We have also heard from Andrew Emmott and his work with macadamia nuts in Malawi. This March we went as a group to join others at the World Day of Prayer at Priory Methodist church. Recently church member Angharad Hughes provided us with a very physical action session to keep us going (photo).



*Pat Mathias*

### ACTIVITY/CRAFT DAY

The idea of an activity day started in the summer of 2023. They have been well attended with approx. 35 people attending for the day including lunch. Various arts and crafts activities were available in the morning. Board games followed by a quiz being available in the afternoon. Our very own Alex Mnatzaganian helped with carols at the Christmas 2023 event. Many thanks to our cooks and helpers that provided food and drink during the day. We finish the day with yet more cakes. For more information contact Nadine Mnatzaganian or John & Fiona Betteley.



*John and Fiona Betteley*

### COACH HOLIDAY REPORT

Great Yarmouth July 2023

We boarded our coach looking forward to our holiday and after a prayer for a safe journey, we departed from Bedford. Our first stop was a Norwich and an interesting guided tour of the splendid Cathedral. After lunch we made our way to the Carlton Hotel, situated across the road from the sea front. The staff made us welcome, allocating us our rooms for our four night stay. Each evening we met for a drink before enjoying a three course meal.

The hotel made provision for us to have a meeting room to socialise, take part in a quiz, sing a long and an interesting talk by Terry Baxter, a retired prison Chaplain to Norwich prison. Each evening we closed with night prayer (Compline).

On the Tuesday, after breakfast, we boarded our coach and had a Thought for the Day and prayer. A ride on the Burr Valley narrow gauge railway was followed by a wonderful boat ride on the Norfolk Broads.



Wednesday saw us off to Southwold and a guided tour of the church then free time to relax in the town.

Our last full day was free time to go into the town of Great Yarmouth and some of us visited the circus, great fun! Saying our goodbyes on Friday, to GY, we returned to Bedford by way of Bury St Edmunds and had a guided tour of the Cathedral.

The holiday was very enjoyable and well organised, thanks to Rachel Bennett.

*Geoff Topham*

### **SUMMER DAY TRIP TO HUNSTANTON 2023!**



What a lovely, relaxing day in a superb seaside town! Some of us took an energising walk along the cliff top to the arch of St Edmund's Chapel and Lighthouse. Old Hunstanton has a beautiful sandy beach overlooked by the fascinating cliffs which are a geological conservation site.

Having worked up an appetite many of us enjoyed a delicious fish and chip meal at Senior Citizens' prices, courtesy of Henry's restaurant!



A warm, sunny day encouraged us to join others who had established themselves on the beach where we indulged in an ice cream. This was followed by a drink at a bar overlooking the sea before sadly it was time to say goodbye to a place of very fond memories for us all.

Can't wait for the 2024 trip!

*Margaret Haywood*

### **BOXING DAY FUN - 26th December 2023**

37 people gathered together in the halls at church for fun on Boxing Day. A wonderful time for all who came, with ages ranging from 8 to 80+. We enjoyed a picnic lunch which everyone brought with them - such varied menus of Christmas Day left overs!!



Much fun was had with jigsaws, board games, Pool, Table Tennis, Quiz, Pass the Parcel, watching a movie with ice creams and pop corn, Sing a Long and of course, great chats, getting to know each other more and sharing the love of the Christmas story through fellowship and friendship.

The various activities were enjoyed by all, who had a wonderful time judging by their feedback. The afternoon closed with a scrumptious cream tea, rounded off with a volley of party poppers!

A splendid day was had by one and all!

*Collette Denley-Currie*