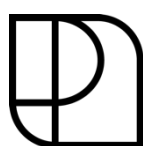


The Parish Church of St Peter's, Bengeworth Annual Report and Accounts 2023

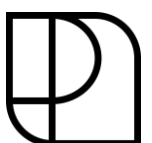


St Peter's
Bengeworth

www.stpetersbengeworth.org

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Incumbent's Report

In the third chapter of the book of Ecclesiastes, the author describes the sheer breadth of human experience, from the most beautiful through to the most tragic. He puts it like this:

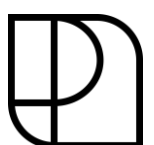
*'There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance'*

When the Renewal Project began in 2021 there was anticipation, nervousness, and excitement...lots of change, adaptation, expectation, and a kind of energy as the whole church looked toward a new kind of future. Throughout 2021 and 2022 there was a lot of behind-the-scenes work happening, improving structures, and making changes to provide a 'springboard' into something new.

This year however, in my spirit, **I've really felt both the deep joy and immense challenge of what is required for us to grow our church family** in health, joy, hope, maturity and number. If you speak to seasoned church-planters about their experiences, an almost universal pattern that emerges is that for a year or two, there's a kind of natural energy and enthusiasm that comes with doing something new and different, that carries the community along. I can certainly recognise this at St Peter's, and this I would say, was a particular outpouring of God grace, giving his people a renewed passion as we began a 'new thing' for his name's sake.

However, we all know that learning and growth is not a neat, linear phenomenon, but something which is more fluid and complex. I think back to when I was around 9 years old and began to have trumpet lessons - at first it was so exciting as I went from not being able to make a sound, to being able to play a simple (though pretty muffled and unimpressive!) tune within a matter of weeks. My enthusiasm naturally grew as I continued to see steady improvements in my playing over the next few months, and with relatively minimal practice, I seemed to be able to make significant progress. However, after a while, I realised that 30 minutes of practice per week would only get me so far, and I hit the first of many plateaus. There were just certain phases of my playing where I would be practicing the way I'd always been practicing, but I just really struggled to make any kind of progress, and worse than this, as my progress seemed to slow, my efforts dipped, and there were seasons where for a time, my playing seemed to get worse.

I share this metaphor in this season and at this time, not because I think we've plateaued, but because I believe that 2023 was, and now 2024 is, a more complex season for our community and I believe God is using this to grow and shape us together in a new way.



All churches experience seasons of effort and seasons of ease, seasons of tragedy and seasons of joy, seasons of pruning and seasons of harvest - and sometimes we'll experience all of these things running in parallel! In this last year, we've seen people leave our church family and people join, good friends and loved ones have battled with illness and some have sadly died, and we've also seen new lives being born among us. My perception is that lots of people in our community have struggled with fatigue and illness this year, but we've also seen the joy of people coming to faith through Alpha and being baptised as followers of the way of Jesus.



'a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance'.

My days as a trumpet player are now well behind me, but as I reflect on my experience of practice, plateau, improvement, challenge, and growth, I remember with real joy and gratitude those seasons of ease, but if anything I'm more grateful for the times when it was tough because I can see now that **it's the seasons of struggle that really grow our character**. In the easier times, I experienced joy and gratitude, but in the plateaus, I learned patience, perseverance, resilience, and dedication and the discipline of 'digging in' when the going got tough. As St Paul put it in Romans 5:3-5:

'...we glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.'

This year, we've got so much to be excited about!...

- The Abaana New Life Choir visit
- Making our church a more flexible, welcoming, and versatile space for outreach by having new carpets being laid
- The arrival of our new Curate Mike and his family in the Summer
- (God willing!) The recruitment of a fantastic, full-time Youth and Children's worker
- Revisiting establishing 'The Point' Community drop-in Café (sadly postponed due to the unexpected death of our friend and brother John Darby)
- The launch of the 'Acts of Radical Kindness' (ARK) project (details to follow shortly!)

All of these things should give us reason to be greatly encouraged, and my prayer for us is that as we journey together, we'd all experience times and seasons of ease and joy, but that we'd also embrace and recognise what God is going in and among us during the struggle. God wants not only a joyful church, but a mature and committed one. Let's strive to be all he is calling us to be!

Andy (Curate in Charge)



Parish of St Peter, Bengeworth Annual Parochial Church Meeting Minutes

Sunday, 2nd April 2023 at 2.00pm in St Peter's Church, Bengeworth.

Attendance: was 36 plus Revd. Andy Smith in the chair.

Opening:

- o Andy welcomed those attending to the meeting.
- o Apologies were received from Phil and Tina Cooper, Fred Beaumont, Julie Westlake, Chris and Emma Pettifer, Margaret Wade.
- o Those attending the APCM joined together in prayer, giving thanks for what God has done through St Peter's and its community in the last year.
- o Rev Andy Smith advised those attending of the roles that will be voted on during this APCM and gave an overview of the responsibilities for each position: Church wardens, Deanery Synod Reps, and PCC Members.
- o Approval of the minutes were proposed by Dave Cockram and seconded by Peter Moore. All voted in favour with three abstentions.

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

Thanksgiving:

o Andy expressed thanks to the church wardens for their helpful, wise, and diligent work over the last year, assisting the wider church and Andy personally.

Elections:

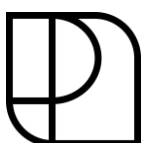
- o There were 2 nominations for Churchwarden.
- o Tim Clack is stepping down as church warden.
- o David Cockram (re-standing) & Steve Bramley were duly confirmed in office as churchwardens for St Peter's Church.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Approval of the minutes dated 15th May 2022 were proposed by Sandra Cockram, seconded by Mike Freer and agreed unanimously. There were two abstentions. There were no matters arising.

Electoral Roll:

o Kimberley Gunn, electoral roll officer, confirmed the numbers on roll as 96 (an increase of six people since the previous year), with 63 residents in the parish and 33 non-residents.



Treasurer's Report:

- o Mike Freer, Treasurer, advised the attendees to read the full finance report issued for further details.
- o Mike advised that the parish share for St Peter's has been paid this year for the first time in approx. 14-15 years. Mike thanked those present for their financial contributions to the church.
- o The Parish Giving Scheme has now been introduced and has allowed for easier regular giving from parishioners and more accurate financial forecasting.
- o There has been a large increase in utility bills over the past year due to rising fees from providers. However, the church can fund these increases comfortably.
- o Rev Andy Smith also thanked everyone for their kind donations to St Peter's. Funds are not only being spent on maintaining the current infrastructure and services, but also on growing the church, facilities, and outreach work. Andy also thanked Mike for his valuable work as Church Treasurer.
- o Mike Freer is retiring from his role as Treasurer. Tim Clack will be taking over the role with approval from the PCC.

Elections:

- o Elections for Deanery Synod Representatives: Dave Cockram (re-standing) and Kryssia Bateman were nominated, seconded, and elected. Andy thanked Heather Uncles (stepping down) for her work in the role over the previous years.
- o There are 3 full places and 2 casual vacancies for lay representatives to serve on the PCC. Julie Westlake, Peter Moore and Mike Freer are stepping down from the PCC and were thanked for their diligent and wise service. Steve Bramley had stepped down from his role to stand for Church Warden and Jenny Law has also left.
- o Three people are standing for election to the PCC: Tim Clack, Simon Cooper, and Magrerat Wade. They were nominated, seconded, and elected as full PCC members.
- o Tim Clack was nominated for the Treasurer role. Tim has stepped down as Church Warden do be able to fulfil this position. Appointment will be discussed and voted on at the next PCC meeting.

Appointment of the Independent Examiners for the Church Accounts:

- o Boyds Accountants are the existing account examiners for St Peter's Church. It was proposed they continue in this role: Mike Freer proposed, seconded by Steve Bramley and all voted in favour.

Questions:

Rev Andy Smith invited questions from the floor. These concerned:

- o PCC Meeting Minutes: to be added to the church website and copies available on the church notice board.



o Church House: the church house committee needs new members to ensure smooth running and sustainability of the building going forwards. Andy invited meeting attendees to get in touch with him if they'd like to consider volunteering on the committee. Mike Freer will continue managing the accounts for Church House until Tim Clack can take this on.

Vicar's report:

o Rev Andy Smith gave thanks to everyone who attends church services at St Peter's as these have undergone format changes.

o Weekly Prayer Meetings: New weekly prayer meetings are being held at church on Tuesday evenings. Thanks were given to Tim Clack, Pete, and everyone involved with the implementation of these meetings.

o The MST: (Ministry Support Team) was introduced in the last year. This is a volunteer team designed to deal with the daily running, activities, and minutiae of the church, freeing up the PCC to focus on the larger decisions.

o The Administrative Coordinator at St Peter's Church, Kimberley Gunn, has had her hours increased from 15 hours to 20 hours per week.

o Baptism Policy: A new church policy has been introduced at St Peter's to include baptisms as part of the 11am church service (rather than private services). New Thanksgiving services are also offered as an alternative for those not ready for full baptism.

o Life Groups: have launched at St Peter's. These are small groups meeting to connect, pray together, read the bible, grow in faith and friendship.

o Alpha: A successful trial of the Alpha course ran last year at St Peter's and is proceeding this year.

Reflection:

o The meeting closed with reflection on how the community of St Peter's Church has grown and changed in the past year towards 'making Christ visible in Bengeworth'. Prayers were given for the future.



Annual Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Sunday 28th April 3.30pm at Church House

Agenda

Welcome, Introduction, Apologies and Worship

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

- 1). Approval of the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners (formerly the Vestry Meeting) from 2nd April 2023

- 2). Election of Church Warden(s)

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

- 1). Approval of the minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting from 2nd April 2023

- 2). Matters arising from the minutes

- 3). Receipt of the Annual Report and Accounts 2023 and the Ministry Review
 - a) Electoral Role Report

 - b) Treasurer's Report

- 4). Election of lay representatives to the PCC
 - a) Election of PCC representatives

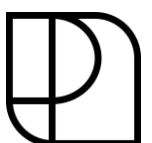
 - b) Election of Deanery Synod Representatives

- 5). Appointment of independent examiners for the year to December 2023

- 6). Questions?

- 7). Incumbent's Report

Closing Prayer



Administrative information

Curate In Charge

Revd Andy Smith, 1 Broadway Road, Evesham. WR11 3NB.

Bankers

Barclays Bank PLC, 50 High Street, Evesham. WR11 4LX.

Independent Examiner

Boyd's Chartered Accountants, 20 Sansome Walk, Worcester. WR1 1LR.

Architect

Stephen Sedwell Esq. Stephen Sedwell Architect Ltd. Grove Hill House, 30 St Anne's Rd, Malvern, WR14 4RG.

PCC Membership 2023-2024

Wardens (one year term)

Steve Bramley (elected 2023)

David Cockram (elected 2023)

Deanery Synod Representatives (three year term)

David Cockram (elected 2020)

PCC Members (three year term)

Sandra Cockram (elected 2021)

Jane Richards (elected 2021)

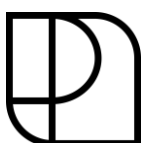
Revd Andy Smith, (Incumbent and chair from 19th September 2021)

Simon Cooper (Elected 2023)

Simon Browning (co-opted then Elected 2023)

PCC Secretary

Kimberley Gunn



Objectives and Purposes

Our primary objective and purpose is laid out in our vision statement:

‘Making Christ Visible in Bengeworth’

Colossians 1:15 describes Jesus as *‘the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation’*. In other words, when people see Jesus, they see God. It is therefore incumbent upon the Church to point people to Jesus in order that they might ‘see’ God and enter into a loving relationship with him. Whilst this is the mission of the Church globally, our expression is local, primarily to the people of our parish, and for this reason Bengeworth is the main focus of our mission to the world.

Achievements and Performance

Details of our achievements and performance for the year 23/24 can be read about in the Ministry Review.

Structure, Governance and Management

Parochial Church Council (PCC)

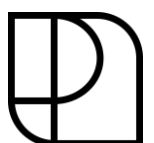
The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. It operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. PCC members are appointed in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. All committed members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and consider standing for election to the PCC. The Parish of St Peter, Bengeworth is a parish in the Pershore and Evesham Deanery within the Diocese of Worcester.

The PCC is responsible for health and safety, safeguarding, child protection, and prevention of discrimination. The PCC is responsible for supporting the clergy in promoting the whole mission of the Church; pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical in the parish. The PCC also has responsibility for the upkeep of both the church building itself and of Church House on Broadway Road.

The PCC delegates some business to other groups:

Standing Committee

Comprised of Church Wardens, Treasurer, stipendiary clergy, and two PCC members (nominated by the PCC). It is responsible for making certain decisions on behalf of the wider PCC, particularly decisions that are required urgently but have been agreed in principle by the PCC and who have duly authorized the Standing Committee to make a final decision.



Ministry Support Team (MST)

The MST was created out of a desire to have a dedicated team made up of a diverse group of people that would enable and empower the church in ministry and mission whilst freeing up the PCC to focus on broader strategic activities more typical of a board of trustees. The team is responsible to the PCC and was established with unanimous backing from the PCC early in 2022.

The MST has responsibilities including but not limited to:

1. The planning and delivery of seasonal service programmes, drawing in and working with other people across all congregations to do this.
2. Planning and organising one-off events.
3. Working with the Parish Safeguarding Officer and Ministries Coordinator to ensure the day-to day safe recruitment and training of volunteers.
4. Planning and organising social events such as quiz nights, pancake parties, Youth and Children's activities etc.
5. Co-ordinating pastoral support for members of the congregation in times of need.
6. Developing and implementing structures and programmes for enriching discipleship, learning and community (i.e. small groups, marriage courses, parenting courses, Freedom in Christ etc.)
7. The planning and delivery of evangelistic courses such as Alpha, Pilgrim and Christianity explored and other mission and outreach activities.
8. Communication, including keeping the website and all social media platforms up-to date, the production of regular printed communications including the pew sheet and church magazine and the design and printing of banners, posters, postcards etc. for events and seasonal services.

MST membership

The membership of the MST was appointed by the incumbent with approval from PCC. People were selected based on their character, role(s), gifts, and experience and their ability to carry out the activities required. The team is large enough for a diverse range of skills and knowledge to be present in the room, but small enough to be dynamic in its ability to make decisions. The MST at St Peter's is currently:

Andy Smith – Incumbent Dave Cockram – Warden Tim Clack – Treasurer David Casey – LLM, Worship	Simon Hill – Youth and Children Jane Richards – ALM, Worship Kim Gunn – Ministry Support Peter Rowell – Prayer Lead
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Ministry Review

An Initial 'Thank You!'...

I say this every year but it's hugely important so...

- Thank you to everyone who cleans, hovers, dusts and tidies...without you, our wonderful church would be a dirty, messy, health and safety hazard, but because of you, it's a wonderful space where people can come and meet with Jesus, safely and with joy. Well done good and faithful servants!
- Thank you to those who care for our grounds and gardens and look after the amazing outside space we have. It is beautiful and you all keep it that way. You are amazing and so appreciated.
- Thank you to anyone involved in putting together beautiful flower displays, setting up Easter gardens and nativity scenes. The seasons just wouldn't be the same without you.
- Thank you to anyone that's ever served a cup of tea or coffee or biscuits or cakes. We all know that the church is fuelled by prayer, but it also runs on coffee...lots and lots of coffee (praise God for his bountiful provision!)
- Thank you for anyone who's ever guided one of our children in how to read the Bible, led a youth activity, sung a song, strummed a guitar, set up sound equipment, attended a prayer meeting, played an organ, preached a sermon, joined in enthusiastically and positively with a meeting...(oh, so many meetings Lord!), or just managed to make it to church on a Sunday and join in with something when they're tired, anxious or depressed and struggling.

Church just wouldn't be the same without you.

Andy Smith

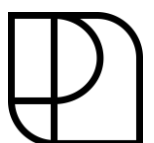
Safeguarding Statement

The PCC of St Peters Church, Bengeworth, is aware of its duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. In 2023 the PCC used the "Safeguarding Dashboard" provided by the Diocese as a way of self-assessment to seek to ensure it fulfils that duty.

Safeguarding

It has been a busy year this year as Church activities have increased and new volunteers have come forward to help support the work of St Peter's. We hosted a Safeguarding Training evening in March of last year which was very well attended by both our members and some folks from neighbouring churches who needed Training updates. The Training was run by the Diocese Safeguarding Team. The Team at Worcester are very supportive and helpful. Please don't hesitate to contact them if I am not available. Lots of you have done Training online as well. PLEASE could you let me know if you have completed or updated your training so that I can keep our records up to date. The training is open to anyone who would like to increase their knowledge of Safeguarding issues, and you can look at the Worcester Diocese website for more information.

Some work has been done to help raise the profile of safeguarding at St Peter's including making the link on our website more prominent. There are also contact details for the Worcester Team and myself on the weekly church email and the pew sheet, and a



poster at the back on church with this information. Safeguarding those that are vulnerable is everyone's responsibility.

The Church of England are carrying out a Safeguarding Audit during 2024. Worcester Diocese will be visited in July. They will visit some parishes but we don't know which ones yet. They will be keen to chat to all members of the church about their knowledge, understanding and any worries about Safeguarding that you may have. There will be a questionnaire that they would like people to complete. When this is available, we will send out information.

Thank you all for your help in maintaining our church as a Safe place to worship.

Julie Rowell (Parish Safeguarding Officer)

St Peter's Electoral Roll Report

The electoral roll currently has ninety-one people listed. Since the previous revision of the electoral roll there has been a small decrease of five people (down from 96 in 2023).

This is mainly due to:

- The sad passing of church members,
- A low uptake of church newcomers joining the roll,
- Some newcomers not yet being eligible to join the electoral roll due to not meeting the current criteria (e.g. the length of time worshipping at St Peter's/location).

The proportion of non-resident members has also slightly increased, with thirty-four now listed. The number of parish residents currently stands at fifty-seven.

Prayer

In 1 Thessalonians 5 v 16-18 we read:

'Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.'

Our St Peter's Church family as part of the wider Body of Christ in Evesham is called to pray. St Peter's prayer group has consistently met over the past year with a regular faithful number (8-10), occasionally more, gathering each Tuesday evening @ 7:30pm for an hour. It is almost unknown for us to finish by 8:30 and more often than not it is closer to 9:00. We've been able to welcome 2 or 3 new regular participants which has been a real encouragement. We often start our gathering with a shared portion of scripture which one of us has felt significant for the group or church family. There have been occasions when we have simply started with a chat and gone straight into prayer waiting for the Holy Spirit's leading.

We continue to pray for St Peter's to be totally reliant of the leading of the Holy Spirit and to stand firm on God's Word (the Bible) for the way forward. It is imperative that we fully recognise that this is the Lord's Church and the fellowship will only be blessed if we follow His lead. The group has been really excited as we have seen prayers, including healing and restoration answered. It has been our privilege to join with Evesham Prayer Compass quarterly prayer celebrations over the last year. It is so encouraging to join with so many others from the wider Evesham church fellowship to pray together, putting aside our denominational differences.



The well known Baptist preacher from the 19th century, Charles Spurgeon once said:

“How could we ever look for a Pentecost if we never met with one accord, in one place, to wait upon the Lord? Brethren, we shall never see much change for the better in our churches in general till the prayer meeting occupies a higher place in the esteem of Christians”

Please do consider joining us to be part of this important aspect of St Peter’s family life.

Tim Clack and Pete Rowell

Worship @ 8am

The 8.00am service on Sundays is a very quiet one using the language of The Book of Common Prayer. It is very reflective time and calm time. It lasts about half an hour and is supported by about eight to ten people every Sunday. They are a very friendly group and support each fully.

Julian Bomyer

Worship at 9.15am and Choir

The pattern of services at 9.15am on a Sunday at St.Peter’s is a Eucharist on the first, third, fourth and, when it occurs, fifth Sunday and a Service of the Word on each second Sunday.

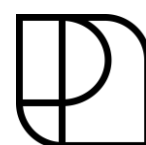
This is a service which can be taken by someone trained in lay ministry. After Julie Westlake qualified as a Licensed Lay Minister (Reader) and took up her ministry at All Saints, this left me as the only lay minister.



I really appreciate the privilege of conducting worship, but it is even better when it is shared, so I was delighted when David Casey, a Reader of long-standing, joined me. The style of the service being rather more informal than others I hope it still offers meaningful praise and prayer as well as some thought-provoking talks.

I experience a great feeling of joint fellowship in these services and would like to thank everyone for their support.

After the retirement of Keith Biggin as St.Peter’s Organist, the choir decided that they would continue to meet for practice and sing from the choir stalls during worship until a new organist was found.



We did not always find it easy to lead the singing using Spotify and my choices of hymn may not have always been inspired, but we persisted!



When Ken Pawson, an accomplished pianist, agreed to play the organ for us, things definitely looked up! We are very grateful to Ken for all his contributions to our worship and hope to see him at the organ again.

In October 2023 the choir were delighted to welcome our new organist, Jayne Llewellyn who has made a wonderful impression and enriched Sundays hugely. Jayne brings with her a wealth of experience and has encouraged the choir hugely, introducing them, and the congregation to a diverse new repertoire of hymns and (occasionally African!) songs!

Jane Richards and Andy Smith

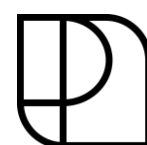
Worship @ 11am

Worship at 11am is about encountering God through sung worship, hearing from God's word, prayer, and breaking bread together as family. The current pattern of worship is that the young people are in their groups on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of each month meaning the young people get to have a great time with their leaders and there's time for more in-depth teaching in church. On the 2nd and 4th Sundays, everyone is in together with communion being celebrated on the 2nd Sunday.



It has been a significant challenge to grow the youth and children's team but recently a few more people have stepped up to support which is wonderful. This is still however a significant area of need and as this ministry grows so will our need to have people willing to lead and support the work.

2023 saw the introduction of prayer ministry with a group of people trained in providing confidential prayer at the end of our tie together. This is a wonderful addition to our gatherings, as through it, we can represent Jesus to one another by both serving and being served.



In March of 2024 we also saw what may have been first at St Peter's – Full immersion baptisms! Wonderfully, we were able to celebrate this great step of faith with two people who came to faith through Alpha and two young people. Hopefully these will be the first of many more to come!

Andy Smith



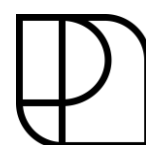
Midweek Communion Services

Our little weekly gathering for the Eucharist continues to be a quiet and supportive spiritual bolthole for those who come. Most are regulars, while some like to come when they've been unable to attend worship on the preceding Sunday.

The main 'news' this year is that the midweek service has moved from Wednesdays (back) to Tuesdays. This was mainly to create a space for the open church café which we were planning to establish from last October/November. The change also means that – perhaps helpfully – there is a 10am midweek Communion service somewhere in Evesham on Tuesdays, Wednesdays (Hampton) and Thursdays (All Saints).

If you haven't tried a midweek service, you might find it a refreshing addition or alternative focal point of nourishment on your faith journey. It is usually between 35 and 50 minutes, a 'said' service with a short talk and a (very occasional) hymn. You'd be most welcome to join us any Tuesday!

Nick Wright



Children and Youth

Over the last year it has been a delight to have the Bostock room refurbished so that our Sunday morning group can meet in this lovely space. We continue to meet during the 11am worship service on the first and third Sundays of the month for a time of games, craft, Bible reflection and prayer. Typically, there are between 8 and 12 children aged from 4 to 15 years and our recent sessions have looked at Jesus' parables. A huge thank you to our team of volunteers which has included Hillary Earnshaw, Claire Hill, and Debbie Smith. Recently we're delighted that Sandra Thomas and Geraldine Pickett have joined the team.

In September we were thrilled to launch the 'YouNite' youth group for 11-18 year olds (school year 6 and above) in partnership with our friends at Evesham Baptist Church and the Vale of Evesham Christian Centre. A huge thank you to Rev Andy for working so hard to bring churches together and get this group off the ground.

The group meets on Friday evenings during term time from 7 - 8:30pm at the Vale centre in town (next to Waitrose). Rev Andy and Debbie Smith plus myself, have joined a leadership team of 8 to host a fun evening of games, discussion and prayer with a whole host of different activities from week to week. To begin, the young people submitted their faith questions and we have used these to explore aspects of Christian faith through testimony and discussion. There is a real openness and honesty amongst the group, and we appreciate your prayers for many of these young people to discover a real and lasting faith in Jesus.



Young people enjoying YouNite youth group on Friday evenings at The Vale Christian Centre

The group usually attracts between 18 and 25 young people, and it is amazing to see new friendships forming among the young people connected to local churches. We've had a couple of trips across the year; one to 'Glow Golf' at the Valley in January and more recently to participate in the 'Relentless' youth worship event at the Barn in Bidford,



where our group joined with over 80 young people from other local churches for a wonderful celebration.

Looking ahead, it is really exciting to be able to advertise for an employed youth and children's worker to join the team at St Peter's. This role is possible thanks to a successful funding application to the diocesan 'Healthier Churches Fund', which enables a full-time, 5-year post based at the church. Please pray that we are able to appoint the right person who feels called to join alongside us here in Bengeworth, to further invest in growing our young disciples and reach out to many more children, young people and families in the town.

Simon Hill

Administration

During the past year it has been a pleasure to continue developing the administrative services at St Peter's. There has been a focus on implementing 'greener' processes, including the reduction of paper waste and enhancing digital archives e.g. digitising burial records, baptism, and wedding documentation.

There are several projects currently underway, including production of a 'welcome pack' aimed at providing answers to FAQs and clarity for church newbies.

Improvements to the church website are continuing, with recent updates focused on simplifying site navigation for a more user-friendly and accessible experience. The homepage is updated with seasonal events and many pages have been overhauled with new text, layouts, and photography, e.g. PCC, baptism, and safeguarding.

In the past year we've continued to implement printed media for church events, including seasonal posters, postcards, and new literature on church policy guidance.

I greatly enjoyed assisting in the renovation of the Bostock Room and am very pleased this is providing a pleasant, multi-purpose space within the church.

The St Peter's Instagram account is also regularly updated with notable events and important notices. There have been some ongoing difficulties with setting up a new Facebook page for St Peter's (as the account was repeatedly flagged as spam and closed), however this should be rectified soon and provide further opportunities for local engagement.

The weekly church e-newsletter has recently undergone improvements aimed at providing concise and accessible information, including an overview of the weekly church diary. It was recognised that some people without internet access in the church may be missing out on notices. A more spacious pew sheet design is now in production to rectify this and ensure no one is missing out! St Peter's is now utilising ChurchSuite to encourage participation through quick and easy online event sign-ups. The church Youtube channel has been updated several times, however there is much greater scope for development going forwards.



During 2023/4 there has been a notable increase in wedding enquiries/bookings and baptism/thanksgiving services at the church. I have greatly enjoyed supporting people in their first interaction with St Peter's through provision of a positive and welcoming service.

Finally, I'd like to sincerely thank everyone from St Peter's and beyond who have been so supportive and friendly!

Kimberley Gunn (Ministry Coordinator)

Church House

2023 has been a hugely challenging year for Church House with almost the entire committee stepping down and losing our cleaner. Mike Freer stepped down as Church Treasurer but kindly continued to manage Church House accounts till the end of the year. Dave Cockram has been unable to attend due to ongoing health challenges and Chris Green, Carol Thompson, and Janet Osbourne all stepped down having all served faithfully on the committee for many years. I'd like to thank all of the above-mentioned people for everything they've done to help keep this a viable and thriving venue for our community for so many years.

At this point however, there were serious conversations at PCC about whether Church House was going to be viable going forward, but there was a collective sense that Church House would play an important role in the mission of the church in years to come, especially with a growing youth and children's ministry. At this time, Heather Uncles the Booking Secretary was last committee member standing (thank you Heather!) and Steve Bramley stepped in where Dave had previously brought his warden-expertise (thank you Steve!). In the absence of an elected chair, it was decided that I would chair the committee at least while we were looking to recruit other members and thankfully, Hannah Piff took on the role of Church House Treasurer. Mandy Taylor has also now joined the committee with experience in grant funding bid writing, so the future is looking much brighter!

The hall itself continues to be well used with a steady stream of inquiries and occasional bookings coming in along with a few new regular users. Our attention is now turning to how we can update and improve the hall for the next generation and to improve the image and increase the profile of the hall in the town in the hope that it can better serve our community.

Church House is a wonderful asset for us as a church and presents many opportunities to make connections with, and serve our neighbours, and to share the good news of Jesus.

Andy Smith (Acting Chair)

Care Home Ministry

After the distressing time of COVID, we have now able to return to the care homes in Evesham to take acts of worship to residents on regular intervals throughout the year. We are aware that we must take special care as winter infections can appear at any time and so lead to cancellations of some events.

We are very good friends with residents and staff at Cavendish Park and our time of



worship there has become monthly. This included an outdoor Songs of Praise in the garden, in the August sunshine. We follow the Church calendar for our theme throughout the year with hymns, prayers, a talk and sometimes acting. Occasionally we use 'Open the Book' as used in schools and is very familiar with some of the helpers. Carers and residents like to join in and all follow the services. After our service of prayer and praise we join together in Holy Communion in one of the small ante-rooms, which is very important for people who have always been able to go to church to worship and can no longer attend a church. About thirty people are able to join in with the Act of Worship and then about six to ten people will come into the ante-room for Holy Communion.

We have over the last few months begun visiting 'The Hawthorns' care home where we are hoping to become established in a regular way with a time of Worship. Jane Richards is leading services at the Hawthorns which again we hope will be on a monthly basis. We have had a mixed response at the moment for numbers as two of our meetings were well attended and the third seemed to have been forgotten, so better communication needed with staff. Many of the residents at the Hawthorns find it hard to understand and need special care and help, so that they can get some meaning out of the service. May the Lord guide us as we move forward.

We have only been to Austen Court Care Home once recently for a Christmas Songs of Praise and we were welcomed with enthusiasm by residents and staff, where some joined in the singing with great energy. At the moment no further dates have been fixed.

A big thank you to the Reverend Nick Wright for all he does, with all helpers, care home staff and residents who join together in worship in love and enthusiasm as we feel the presence of the Lord amongst us.

Sally Ashton

Schools Ministry

Jesus said, 'let the little children come to me' and 'the Kingdom of Heaven is for such as these'. To Jesus it's clear that, there is something about the humility, curiosity, and innocence of young children, that demonstrates to those around them what the Kingdom of Heaven is really like. To Jesus, children were a priority... so for us, nurturing children, caring for them and investing in them should be a priority too!

This year we've continued to have great links with Bengeworth Academy and St Richards first schools with Bengeworth coming around 20 times last year for rehearsals, assemblies, and worship services and St Richards visiting us around 3 times.

Throughout the year there have been other opportunities to connect with young people through acts of collective worship and RE lessons.

The schools have both also has good Ofsted inspections this year and have been supported by governors from St Peters so well done to those of you who have provided this important support through what can be a very stressful time for staff!



Once our new Youth and Children's Worker is appointed a significant part of their role will be building upon this good foundation to make the most of the great relationships we have with these great schools!

Andy Smith

Life Groups

We currently have three Life Groups including two evening groups and one daytime group. The groups regularly spend time eating together, worshipping together, and building relationships.

The groups use this structure to give their gatherings some shape:

- Welcome – Each time groups meet they eat together - this can be something simple and small or grand and fancy...whatever you like, and everyone can share in preparing something!
- Worship – This can be done through a song, psalms, poem or something else.
- Word – Life Groups regularly spend time digging into God's word and learning and sharing together.
- Witness – This is about how to apply Jesus' teachings for the week ahead.
- Wellbeing – Simply listening to one another and praying for each other through life's challenges!

This year Emma Pettifer stepped down after doing a great job establishing Life Groups and it's hoped that Mike our new curate will take on the leadership of these groups in a few months' time!

It's been so great to hear snippets of how these groups are developing and especially the way they're functioning to support people through particularly challenging seasons of life! If you'd be interested in joining a Life Group or think God might be calling you to help lead one, please do get in touch!

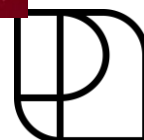
Andy Smith

Wardens' Report

This year, David our senior Warden has been absent from the fold for several months due to ill health, his experience and talents have been sadly missed and we continue to pray for his swift recovery.

2023 has been a busy year from a churchwarden's perspective with not only the demands of general church-related duties but also with the oversight of buildings and fabric. We have seen considerable

improvements to the extension and Bostock room and repairs made to the main church



roof although some residual work is still ongoing. We have been pleased to host services for many organizations including Street Pastors, Prayer Compass, and the British Legion. We are also pleased to continue to open our doors for the schools to enjoy their services and rehearsals for award ceremonies.

On the health and safety front, with the roof having been repaired there is no longer any danger from falling slates and our fire extinguishers have been checked and passed. Some persistent dog-fouling incidents now appear to have ceased following the addition of 'No Dog Fouling' notices being applied to the church gates!

As we look forward to the next twelve months and there will undoubtedly be further challenges which, with God's help, we will meet and overcome.

Steve Bramley

Buildings and Fabric

Bostock room/ extension: Since the last APCM the roof of the Bostock room has required further attention with the roofing company responsible for the original work returning on two occasions to carry out residual repairs, this work seems to have eventually fixed the areas affected however some cosmetic work on the interior will still be required. We have a further issue with water ingress in one further spot which we will be addressing very shortly having identified the root cause.



The redecoration and renovation of the toilets and Bostock room along with recarpeting much of the area and the addition of soft furnishings have made it a comfortable and useable space. The kitchen area has also benefited from a replacement water heater and upgraded lighting.

Spire: Since the last report the spire has been surveyed by drone, and a new quinquennial architect has been appointed to the diocese who has some experience to bring to the table. The previous idea of netting the spire has been abandoned, this being considered to be both far too expensive and a temporary fix. The expenditure saved at this point being better employed to offset the cost of a full structural repair.

This project will gain a higher profile as time goes by and we shall be looking to appoint a spire repair committee and be looking into the various areas of fund raising as the costs will obviously be considerable.

Clock: The saga of the church clock continues as we await the various companies involved in maintenance and pest control to do what is required so we can have them net the bell tower and prevent further health risks from pigeon droppings. Once this is done, we will be able to have the clock repaired.

Main church: There are many challenges when dealing with a building in excess of 150 years of age, not the least of these being the roof which has been prone to minor damage due to prevailing weather conditions and some age-related problems. The good news is that the roof has had some necessary repairs with gutters and hoppers being cleared out. This now enables us to re-carpet the entirety of the main church without fear of water damage. This work has been scheduled for May of this year and will enable us to have much more flexibility as to how we and other community groups can use the space - an improvement keenly anticipated.

Steve Bramley

