



**Annual Report and Financial Statements
of the
Parochial Church Council
For the Year Ended 31st December 2024**

Annual Report to the Charity Commission of the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of All Saints', Croxley Green in the Diocese of St Albans for 2024

Registered Charity No. 1165115

The principal address of All Saints' Parish is The Parish Office, All Saints' Church, The Green, Croxley Green, Hertfordshire WD3 3HJ

Tel. 01923 772109

Website www.croxleygreenallsaints.org

Aims and Purposes

To promote the whole mission of the Church of England, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

Objectives and Activities

The objectives of the PCC are to co-operate with the Vicar and parish clergy in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church.

Public Benefit

All Saints' activities included:

- regular public worship open to all free of charge
- Church open for private worship and contemplation
- pastoral work, including visiting the sick, the housebound and the bereaved
- teaching Christianity through sermons, courses and small groups
- promoting Christianity through staging events and meetings, including activities for senior citizens and young people
- supporting other charities, local, national and international.

Achievements and Performance

2024 saw the following achievements at All Saints; namely:

- Maintaining a full range of services throughout the year and extending intergenerational participation in our regular Sunday worship, with increases in average attendance at regular Sunday services by seven adult worshippers and six new children and substantially larger attendance at services held on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
- Developing a new course for parents of newborns and reintroduction of a summer holiday café for parents of young children
- Actioning improvements to the Church Hall and planning further improvements, financing and completion of the Church Hall refurbishment
- Achieving a financial surplus for the year and thereby increasing parish financial reserves
- Undertaking and making financial provision for repairs to the Church organ.

Electoral Roll

Following an annual revision the year ended with 99 names on the Roll, an increase of 7 on 2023.

Worship and Study

All Saints' held a weekly communion service at 9.45am, with monthly Book of Common Prayer communions at 8am on the first Sunday of each month and Family Services at noon on the first Sunday of each month. Morning prayers were said in Church with a communion service on Thursdays and livestream reflections were published on the Facebook page on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Special services were held during Advent, on Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week and on the patronal feast of All Saints', a remembrance service for All Souls' and a Civic Service on Remembrance Sunday. Our Advent services included very popular Christingle and Crib services and we hosted five Carol Services for local schools. We have continued to run Quiet Church, offering a quiet, contemplative space where people can just meet with God as they are,

with 45 minutes of quiet and peace in Church followed by a simple service of Compline. Led by our Pastoral and Evangelism Group, we continued to build on its existing ethos of intergenerational worship, encouraging children to grow in faith, understanding and engagement with worship by serving, reading some lessons, carrying the cross and taking up collections. Two sermons per month were made interactive, aimed at all ages. These services will be continued in 2025.



Harvest Service Talk Participation

Alongside the usual planning and review of services, during 2024 the Pastoral and Evangelism Group explored a new course called Nurturing Newborns. From discussion with mums who attended the August Drop In Café for children under 3 years, we found that many new parents feel isolated and lonely in the early months of a baby's life. This five-week course for parents of children aged 6 months and under, will provide a place of welcome and nurture for adults and babies alongside interactive activities that will support and further develop the bond between parent and baby. Detailed planning is under way to identify what the sessions will look like and the plan is to start the course in June/July 2025.

We gained seven new adult worshippers during the year and an average of 10 children attended Sunday morning services.

Courses

During Lent, we joined with the other local churches in Croxley in a course entitled 'A Christian Look at the Environment'. In May, we spent a wonderful afternoon exploring the Labyrinth Prayers with several ways of exploring prayer by interacting, including a walked labyrinth, finger labyrinths, labyrinths made from wool and a great variety of activities.

Safeguarding

The PCC continued to comply with its duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have due regard to safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops. It has 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. We have a Parish Safeguarding Officer/Lead Recruiter and an Assistant Safeguarding Officer. We are committed to safeguarding all within our Church and those who use our Church Hall, whether as Church members, visitors or regular users of the Church Hall.

The following Safeguarding policies were presented to the PCC for review and adoption during 2024:

- The Annual Review of the Parish's Safeguarding Policy
- Formal statement of adoption of the House of Bishops 'Promoting a Safer Church: safeguarding policy statement for children, young people and adults'
- Reinstatement of the Charter on Domestic Abuse which was put on display.
- Reporting of Serious Incidents (SIR) to the Charity Commission

In addition:

- The list of Church Affiliated Activities was agreed
- The list of Non-affiliated Hall Groups was recognised

- The Safeguarding Team ended the year by informing the PCC that Safeguarding cases had arisen during the year and advice had been sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.

The Stockport tragedy in July 2024 caused us to review the safety of our Hall users, particularly where young children are involved. In the event, we made changes to increase the safety of all groups:

- a) Letters were sent to regular Hall users that provide activities for children, with advice regarding door security and safe collection of children. Reassurance was given that no Church member would gain entry to the Hall when an activity involving children was taking place;
- b) Letters were sent to adult groups laying out the procedure whereby Church members would only access hall facilities with advance permission; and
- c) Permission forms were handed out to Church families in relation to the Policy for the Safe Use of Images;

The Safeguarding Officers used the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard to guide them towards meeting their targets and produce our Safeguarding Action Plan. This was presented to the PCC for discussion and approval in July, ensuring that All Saints' was keeping up to date with its Safeguarding requirements. The PCC noted that all Church members had a responsibility for ensuring that All Saints' was a safe place for children and vulnerable adults. During 2024, All Saints' Church made good progress in fulfilling the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard requirements for Level Three.

Anyone experiencing any safeguarding anxieties or concerns is asked to report it immediately to Anne Oke the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Sam Jones the Assistant Safeguarding Officer or the Vicar, Revd. Miriam Mugan, or via the secure email address

safeguarding@croxleygreenallsaints.org

Finance

The financial outcome showed that, against a projected deficit of £3,720, the end-year outcome was a surplus of £6,022.

Reserves Policy

The PCC's policy is to maintain a level of reserves equivalent to three months' cash flow, equating in 2024 to £33,921. The actual end-year level of reserves was £53,418.

Buildings

The Buildings Committee deals with general maintenance and improvements to the Church and Hall. The Quinquennial Inspection and Report in 2022 identified a number of matters of maintenance and repair requiring attention. During 2024 the PCC took the following decisions:

Quinquennial Inspection items actioned by the Buildings Committee

- Replacement of missing Church roof ridge tile and repointing of the brick-built chimney stack to the boiler room. Although a quote for the work has been agreed, unfortunately this work was not completed during the year due to issues with the contractor.
- Repair work to eradicate corrosion to the Church window ferramenta which had resulted in stonework breaking down. Quotations for redecorating the ferramenta and localised repairs to the stonework were received and agreed, to enable the work to progress in 2025.

General Maintenance items actioned by the Committee

- Church Heating. Two valves added in Choir Vestry heating pipes in order to have better circulation through Vestry radiators.

- Church Sanctuary Carpet. New red carpet laid, financed by a generous donation from a member of the congregation.
- A wall mounted post-box for the Parish Office was installed.
- Quotations were received and agreed for the following works to be carried out in 2025:
 - (a) Treatment of Trees. A number of trees around the grounds of the Hall had ash die-back or needed to be removed.
 - (b) Repairs to a damaged baffle on the Hall roof 'spire'.
 - (c) Repairs to the pigeon netting to one of the windows on the west side of the Church.

The Hall

The Church Hall continued to be a hub of activity for the local community. It was used for several Church activities each week like the Monday Toddlers, the Friday Cafés, the Youth Group and for Church meetings. We hosted quizzes and music gigs as well as charity fundraisers. The Hall was also used by many outside agencies; for NHS Blood Donor sessions, Three Rivers District Council exercise sessions, as a Polling Station and by The Welcome Club social and dance group for older people. Keep fit sessions, Jazzercise exercise classes, badminton, martial arts sessions, dance and drama sessions for young children were held. The Hall was also hired for special events such as family celebrations, parties and by other faith groups. In general, it facilitated a number of activities for local people.



Hall Stage

In 2024, the Committee worked with an external supplier to secure improvements to the condition of the new Hall floor and prepared proposals for the refurbishment of the male toilets which were adopted by the PCC for implementation during 2025. It redecorated the lobby, kitchen and Committee Room. It also reviewed Hall hire fees and produced new terms and conditions for hirers to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and to conform to Government anti-terrorism guidance.

Social and Fundraising Committee

During 2024, the Social and Fundraising Committee organised a number of successful fundraising events, including the annual Christmas Market and its associated Grand Prize Draw, a Quiz Night and a parish stall at the annual Croxley Revels held on the Green. Committee members also provided refreshments for a number of services and social events, including two orchestral concerts, the Advent, Christingle and Carol Services and a 'Hymns and Pimms' evening. Members also staffed a mulled wine stall at the All Saints' Christmas Market and another at the Croxley Green Parish Council Christmas Market. In September, the Committee also organised a combined Harvest Festival and Parish Barbecue.

In addition to earning a considerable amount of income, these events served to welcome newcomers and visitors to All Saints', to publicise Church services and activities and to provide enjoyable social activities for parishioners. Committee members also assisted at the Beer Festival in November. Financial outcomes of fundraising activities are set out in the Annual Accounts.

Parish Activities and Outreach

Activities included the Monday Toddlers Group, Friday Drop-In Cafés, two afternoon Community Teas and a Youth Group for children aged 8-11.

Other Church groups continued to contribute actively to parish life, notably the Church Choir, accompanied by visiting organists Simon Dunn and David Heath and the Flower Group, whose work added greatly to the worship at services and to the beauty of the Church.

Monday Toddlers Group

The Toddlers Group, run by volunteers, attracted 30-plus youngsters for each session, with their parents, grandparents and carers for two hours of play, multi-sensory activities and a snack. It provided opportunities for carers to chat and it was very popular, with a waiting list to join.

Friday Drop-In Cafés

The Cafés took place weekly from 10.30am to 12 noon in the Church Hall. Coffee, tea, soft drinks and home-baked cakes were provided free of charge, although voluntary donations could be made. Volunteers baked cakes, set up and cleared the Hall and run the kitchen. The Cafés attracted a regular clientele every week with between 40 and 60 people attending. It was also a place where, from time to time, those attending could speak to local Police Community Support Officers and our Parish Nurse. We are even popular with dogs and their owners after a healthy walk.! The donations received contributed to the cost of heating the Hall, the refreshments and the purchase of new serving flasks and tablecloths. Donations received have also funded financial support to charities, including The Macular Society (supporting those with visual impairment), Christian Aid, the RNLI, the Macmillan Cancer Support and the Royal British Legion. Most attendees were not members of our Church, which indicates that the Cafés are valued within the Croxley Green community.

Thursday Pop-up Cafés

During the school holidays in August, we re-introduced our weekly Pop-Up Café on Thursday mornings for parents with children aged 3 years and under. This proved very popular with 15-20 children attending weekly. From discussion with parents and carers we found out that August was a difficult month for those with very young children as all the toddler and baby group activities were closed for the summer and there was nowhere that mums and carers could go with their very young children. This meant that many felt isolated and lonely at this time. More holiday sessions will be arranged in 2025 providing enough support volunteers are available.



Pop-Up Café in the Hall

Afternoon Community Teas

The two Community Teas were very popular, each catering for more than 60 people. Carols were sung at the December Tea, with music provided by our visiting organist David Heath. Food was prepared in the Hall kitchen by Church volunteers.



Christmas Afternoon Tea

The Youth Group

Run by two enthusiastic and committed Church members, another year of fun was had in 2024 with our monthly Youth Group. We continued to grow, with an average attendance of 8 to 12 youngsters aged 8 years-plus for each session. Friendships among the youngsters were developing as they got to know and interact with each other through games, activities and conversations. The PCC provided a new table tennis table during 2024. Youth Group members helped to run a children's games room during the All Saints' parish Christmas Market in November.

The All Saints' Beer Festival

On 11th – 13th October, All Saints' Church and The Anchor, Tap and Bottle joined together to put on the third "Beer Festival in the Church". Once again, publican Scott McGarvie and his team at the Anchor, Tap and Bottle provided and served a wide selection of real ale, craft beers, wine, spirits and soft drinks. While the team at All Saints' converted the Church into an atmospheric venue to come and meet friends. Games were available for the younger visitors and a number of family groups attended. Volunteers from the congregation helped behind the bar



over the weekend as well as providing a range of delicious food to sell. On the Friday and Saturday evenings the Church was packed and it was very busy throughout the weekend. Publican Scott gave a generous donation to parish funds and the sale of food and sales of parish Prize Draw tickets added to Church income.

The Christmas Market

This major annual fundraising event held in November is a staple part of social life in Croxley Green. It was attended by hundreds of local people with stalls, tombolas and a Prize Draw, with provision of food and mulled wine. It raised £7,400 for parish funds. The Market, like a number of other social events, was organised by the Social and Fundraising Committee.

Deanery Synod

Two members of clergy and two elected lay representatives were members of the Rickmansworth Deanery Synod. During the summer, the Synod said goodbye to the Rural Dean, Fr Simon Cutmore, who took up an appointment at Hertford, and welcomed the new Dean, Revd. Charles Burch of St Laurence, Bovingdon. Highlights of the year were two guest speakers, Canon Paula Gooder, who spoke of the significance in our spiritual life of doing 'ordinary' things and Revd. Mark Rodel, Diocesan Deputy Director of Mission and Ministry, who spoke of parishes, even without a minister, which were still able to provide Christian mission and outreach to their communities.

Ecumenical Relationships

All Saints' continued to be an active partner in Churches Together in Croxley Green, via both the Ecumenical events organised and the meetings held for the Lay members and the Clergy. All were well attended. The Civic Service at All Saints' on Remembrance Sunday, followed by its observance at the War Memorial, has become particularly popular with an ever increasing attendance. The very successful Lent Course was repeated this year and will be run again in 2025. Churches Together also introduced an additional Walk of Witness at Christmas. Another new venture was at the local music festival 'Croxfest', where a "Quiet Space" was provided for those attending this very busy day. The Parish Nurse project, run by Churches in Croxley Green CIO, continued to play a major role within the community, dealing with long-term health conditions,

mental health, social isolation and loneliness. There was a concentration on Dementia and Cancer support in 2024 which was very well received by those participating. Fund raising for the Parish Nurse facility remains a vital role for its successful continuance. Its work is carried out alongside other community services including debt agencies, drug, alcohol and domestic abuse services. Further information can be seen at <https://croxleyparishnurse.org>

Charitable Giving

The PCC nominates a number of local, national and international charities chosen each year for the following year, to be funded from donations. In 2024, the chosen charities were UNICEF, ECO Hedgehogs, Alzheimer's UK and the Christian Blind Mission. Additional grants were made to the Mothers' Union, Crisis UK, the Children's Society, Action for Children and Dementia UK. These grants were funded by donations given at Church services, post-service refreshments and the Friday Drop-In Cafés. The total amount of charitable grants given during 2024 was £3,760.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. It operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure 1956 and is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees who qualify as baptised members of the Church of England aged over 16 years are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and they may stand for election to the PCC.

The Annual Meeting of Parishioners to elect the Churchwardens was held on 28th April 2024, followed by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting which conducted elections to the Parochial Church Council, appointed the External Examiner and received the Annual Report and Accounts with a report on the Accounts by a qualified Independent Examiner.

Membership of the PCC

Membership during 2024 is shown below.

Ex officio: Revd. Miriam Mugan, Vicar and Chair of the PCC (appointed November 2007), Revd. Paul Palmer, Assistant Priest. and Revd. Tolu George, Curate (from 4 December 2024),

Anne Oke and Lyndon Palmer (Churchwardens);

Deanery Synod Representatives: Fran Bennett and Andrew Nobbs until 2026.

Lay Members

Jane Bates

Gillian Main, Assistant Churchwarden

Sam Beard

Andrew Nobbs

Chris Fagan

Ann Palmer, Assistant Churchwarden and lay Vice-Chair

John Galloway

Wendy Shafe

Sam Jones

Janet Martin

Meetings during 2024

The PCC held seven ordinary meetings and no extraordinary meetings during 2024, with an average attendance at the ordinary meetings of 86%.

Advisers

Bankers Barclays Bank PLC

Independent Examiner Mrs Dorothy Reynolds.

Organisation and Structure

The principal committees and groups are set out below, with memberships appointed by the PCC on 1st May 2024. Most committees included a mixture of PCC and non-PCC members. Chairs of the Committees were either appointed by the PCC or elected at the first meeting of those Committees after the APCM.

The Finance and Standing Committee meets in alternate months between scheduled PCC meetings with delegated financial powers and exercises oversight of the management of the Parish. Members: Revd. Miriam (Chair), Anne Oke and Lyndon Palmer (Churchwardens), Gillian Main and Ann Palmer (Assistant Wardens), Andrew Nobbs (Treasurer), Janet Martin (Planned Giving Officer), Sam Beard (lay PCC member) and Chris Fagan (Secretary). The Committee did not meet during 2024.

The Buildings Committee acts as stewards of the Church, the Hall and the grounds and is concerned with their maintenance and appropriate improvements. Members: Lyndon Palmer (Chair), Anne Oke, (Secretary), Revd. Miriam, Chris Oke and Ann Palmer.

The Pastoral and Evangelism Group is focussed on ensuring that All Saints' has sufficient arrangements in place to meet the pastoral and spiritual needs of the Church members and to enhance the spiritual life and numerical growth of the Church. Members: Revd. Miriam (Chair), Revd. Paul Palmer, Revd. Anne Shaw, Jane Bates (Secretary), Sam Beard, Fran Bennett, Sister Mary Bittles, Sam Jones, Andrew Nobbs, Anne Oke and Ann Palmer.

The Hall Committee exercises oversight of the use, maintenance and improvement of the Church Hall and Kitchen, which are used both by Church groups and a large number of community groups and external leisure activity operators. It recommends levels of lettings fees. Members: Wendy Shafe (Chair and Secretary), Jane Bates, Judith Man, Janet Martin, Anne Oke and Peter Rennoldson.



The Music Maintenance and Development Committee advises on the musical content of services and other matters relating to the Choir and Church music. Members: Revd. Miriam (Chair), Revd. Paul Palmer, David Heath (Visiting Organist), Sam Beard, Chris Fagan (Secretary), John Galloway, Anne Oke and Ann Palmer.

The Communications Team oversees All Saints' social media platforms on the website, Facebook, Twitter and other forms of internal and external communication. Members: Lyndon Palmer (Chair), Sam Jones, Revd. Miriam and Revd. Paul Palmer.

The Magazine Team produces and organises distribution of the monthly parish magazine which is an important means of communication within the Church community. Members: Wendy Shafe (spokesperson) and Fran Bennett with assistance from Shelagh and Tony Booth. It was a very important means of keeping all parishioners in touch with All Saints'.

The Garden Team maintains the Church Garden and the Garden of Remembrance with help from other congregation members. Members: Janet Martin and Andrew Nobbs

The Eco Church Group established in 2021 continued its projects to increase recycling and to qualify for a bronze award from the A Rocha Church Eco Charity. Members: Janet Martin, Jane Manning and Revd. Miriam.

Parish Charities

Following the merger in 2023 of two registered parish charities, the George Gurney Charity for the Sick Poor and the Croxley Green Annuity Fund, in 2024 All Saints' had two charities registered with the Charity Commission. Both were managed by the same Trustees, namely the Vicar and the Churchwardens and operated independently of the PCC. Their registered charity numbers are stated. The Vicar and the Churchwardens are Trustees ex-officio.

1. The Reverend David Kenneth Williams Trust (803706). The objects of the Charity are to support such Christian religious and charitable purposes either within or outside the Parish as the Trustees consider proper. The Clerk to the Trustees has been appointed by the Trustees as an additional Trustee of this Charity. Most of the financial assets are invested for capital growth. In recent years the Trust has relieved individual cases of hardship and has also granted funding to the PCC towards the refurbishment and modernisation of the Church Hall, which is used by Church groups and by a number of community and commercial leisure and exercise organisations, who hire it for their activities. This is a vital part of the church's outreach to the community.
2. The George Gurney Charity for the Sick Poor (212964). The object of the Charity, established in 1923 following a bequest, was to provide a qualified trained nurse for the benefit of the poor inhabitants of Croxley Green. Following the launch of the NHS in 1948 this object was amended by discussion with the Charity Commission to:

"The use of the money from the trust to help individual cases of hardship as a result of illness, and to provide amenities such as invalid chairs for the use of people in the parishes of All Saints' and St Oswald's. The income from the bequest remains to provide help for special deserving cases as well as enabling Christmas gifts to be given to some elderly and sick persons."

Following the merger in 2023 of the George Gurney Charity with another parish charity the trustees intend, during 2025, to combine the merged charity with two other separate charitable bank accounts, to change the name of the George Gurney Charity to the All Saints' Croxley Green Parish Church Charity and to amend its current charitable purposes to the relief of poverty and the advancement of health.

Anyone resident in or having links to Croxley Green who has financial or health needs is welcome to apply in confidence to Christopher Fagan, Clerk to the Charity Trustees, for assistance.

Revd. Canon Miriam Mugan, Vicar of All Saints' Parish

Christopher Fagan, PCC Secretary

2. ELECTORAL ROLL 2024

All Saints', like all other Anglican parishes, maintains an Electoral Roll, which is revised annually. Inclusion on the Electoral Roll is voluntary, but inclusion is a sign of commitment. It entitles those on the Roll to attend the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, to vote in elections of lay members to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and the Deanery Synod and to stand for election to these bodies and to the Diocesan Synod. To qualify for inclusion on the Roll you must be:

- aged 16 or over
- a member of the Church of England and a resident of All Saints' Parish, or
- a non-resident of the Parish who has habitually attended worship at All Saints' during the last six months or
- a member in good standing of another church which believes in the Holy Trinity who declares her/himself a member of the Church of England and who has habitually attended worship at All Saints' during the last six months before enrolment.

Those on the Electoral Roll can ordinarily be expected to attend services and participate in activities of the church, including giving financial support to defray its costs of operation. Numbers on the Electoral Roll are used as one factor in determining the amount of the annual Parish Share which the parish is expected to contribute towards the expenses of the Diocese.

The revision undertaken in 2024 resulted in the numbers enrolled rising from 92 to 99.

We remembered Derek Wakefield who died in December 2024 and we welcomed to the Roll Chima and Winston Agha, Gillian Barrett, Lisa Coughlan, Rosemary Daines, Geordee George, Cecily Naliyath and Bob Sheminant.

Every six years a full new Roll is produced and this will be the case in 2025. Everyone who wishes to be on the new Roll will need to complete an application. Forms will be available from February and the new Roll will be published in April 2025. I would ask anyone who qualifies to seriously consider enrolment on the Electoral Roll. Please speak to me or to Revd. Miriam if you wish to obtain further information or an application form.

Christopher Fagan ,Electoral Roll Officer

3. CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT ON THE FABRIC OF THE CHURCH AND BUILDINGS

Church Fabric

We had a Quinquennial Inspection conducted in June 2022. The Quinquennial inspection report gives an overview of the condition of the Church, what needs doing and what is most important. These five-yearly snapshots show how much, and in what way, a building has changed over time. Quinquennial inspection reports give a solid, professional basis for making decisions about maintenance, repairs and managing the building. Above all, they are intended to help parishes look after their churches and churchyards. The findings of the report are handed to the Buildings Committee who look at the items from the report and prioritise any work that is required to be carried out.



The Fabric of the Church is in good condition, and it was not necessary to undertake any major repairs during 2024. Routine maintenance continued to be carried out inside and outside the Church during 2024 which includes the roof gutters and valleys.

Church Organ

John Galloway presented a report, which included an assessment by organ tuner and builder Tarquin Wiggins, on the measures required to achieve a permanently satisfactory playing condition for the organ. Work was carried out during 2024 to improve the organ's current performance in the short term and to provide a costed improvement programme for the longer term.

Church Inventory

No items were removed but a new set of red vestments consisting of pulpit, lectern, legilium and, nave altar falls, High and Side Altar Frontals, Stoles and Chasubles were added.

Faculties

One faculty has been applied for and granted during the year:

- Upgrade of the installed EE telecommunications infrastructure in the Bell Tower.

Statutory Compliance

The safety checks for fire extinguishers, electrical/gas appliances, fire alarm system and the lightning conductor were conducted during 2024. Fire extinguishers condemned due to age were replaced and defects to the lightning conductor were rectified.

Thanks

A big thank you to all who helped to keep All Saints' Church in such good condition, be it inside or outside. There are so many different jobs undertaken by a very small number of dedicated volunteers such as gardening and all kinds of maintenance around the Church and Hall. In Church, welcoming people on Sunday mornings, reading the lesson, leading intercessions, serving, helping prepare activities for the children, arranging flowers, working the projector, helping with refreshments, baking cakes and helping at the Friday Café.

On behalf of everyone at All Saints', we would like to record our thanks for the excellent and very dedicated Pastoral Team we have at All Saints' – Miriam, Paul and Anne, who left All Saints' in November to begin a new life chapter in Cornwall.

Lyndon Palmer and Anne Oke, Churchwardens



New Frontals and Chasuble

4. ARCHDEACON'S ANNUAL INSPECTION

The 2024 Archdeacon's Annual Inspection took place on 12th September and this year we were visited by Revd. Canon Charles Burch, Vicar of St Lawrence Bovington and Rural Dean of Rickmansworth.

This year, the focus was primarily on registers, inventories and Safeguarding. There were some other issues briefly addressed, and we were given the opportunity to raise issues of concern or discuss new ideas or initiatives that we are working on.

The topics and matters that were discussed during the inspection, with comments added, were as follows:

Mission Action Plan (MAP)

How is the Church doing with its Mission Action Plan? - *Progress has been made against all four priorities. e.g. A monthly youth group has been set up; the Friday Cafe is a great success.*

Has the parish renewed or redone its MAP in the last 2 years? - Yes

What date was the MAP renewed or redone? - *January 2022*

Any further comments about their MAP? - *They intend to continue the work of the current MAP and focus on spiritual health and growth.*

Fire Risk Assessment

What date did the parish last complete a Fire Risk Assessment for the Church? - *April 2022*

Would the parish like help on their fire risk assessment from our Diocesan Team? - *No*

Any further comments about their fire risk assessment? - *The Fire Brigade also visited and gave advice.*

Safeguarding

Is the Safeguarding blue poster displayed in the Church? – Yes

Do you have any concerns about the management or practice of safeguarding? - *Yes, difficulty of getting volunteers to undertake training and DBS clearance*

Employment

Is the current Employers Liability Insurance Certificate displayed? - Yes

Who is the Church's insurer? – *EIO*

Do all members of staff employed by the PCC, have contracts of employment? – Yes

Church Property Inventory - Plate

Were you able to view all the Church plate? - Yes

Are photographs recorded for each item? - Yes

Are weights recorded for each item? - Yes

Are measurements recorded for each item? – Yes

Are engravings recorded for each item? - Yes

How is this information stored? - *Electronic Church Property Inventory (formerly 'Terrier')*

Has the Church disposed of any Church plate in the last 5 years? - No

Any further comments about inventory? - *Well documented.*

Small Groups

Which enquirers course has the Church held within the last 2 years? - *None*

Which regular prayer and/or study groups does the Church hold? - *Advent Group, Fellowship Groups, Lent Group, Quiet Day*

Any further comments about small groups? - *There is an online reflection 3x a week and regular Lectio Bible readings.*

Other Matters

How are things generally? - *Church life is good. Attendance still fluctuates post Covid. New people are being attracted via the Friday Cafe and Monday Toddlers; they would like to see more families with children attending. There is financial uncertainty as the phone mast contracts, which bring in an income of over £20,000pa, are due for renewal in January 2025. The Vicar is due to retire within the next two years and the Wardens would like to talk to the Diocese about what might happen at that point.*

Time was made available for us to raise any matters of concern about the life of the Parish, Deanery or Diocese.

Lyndon Palmer and Anne Oke, Churchwardens

5. TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2024

It is pleasing to be able to report that, for the year ending 31st December 2024, the Church made a surplus of £6,022 against day-to-day income and expenditure. Receipts into the general fund in 2024 were £131,703 with expenditure of £125,682.

The accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis and have been independently examined.

Income

After Covid, Hall booking income struggled. The recent investment in the refurbishment of the Hall has resulted in increased Hall bookings and consequently, in 2024, booking income was some £8,000 ahead of budget. 2024 was also an excellent year for fundraising. The Christmas Market produced another excellent result and along with the amazing Beer Festival and highly successful Quiz Night brought in an additional £7,500.

Due to their one-off nature, income from donations is always hard to predict, but at the end of 2024 they were £2,700 ahead of budget. With interest rates not falling as fast as some had predicted, this generated additional revenue of £870.

Church giving was some £1,200 ahead of forecast thanks to the generosity of our congregation and visitors who support the work of our Church.

Expenditure

Restricted and Designated Funds

The Church holds a number of funds where money has either been given for a specific purpose or else the PCC has decided to set money aside for a particular project.

As in previous years, the PCC set aside £2,500 towards the on-going refurbishment of the Hall. £1,500 was also set aside against the Church Redecoration Fund to facilitate the redecoration of the Church interior in the future.

In 2024, the red Sanctuary carpet was replaced using a very generous donation given the previous year that was held in the Vestment and Sanctuary Fund. Funds in the restricted Hall Fund and the designated Hall Refurbishment Fund were used to pay for the redecoration of the hallway and Committee Room.

The legacies of the late Brian Squire and Margaret Hobbs, held in the Legacy Fund, along with donations in memory of the late Martin Harris, were used to pay for the new red frontals and vestments.

Employees

In 2024, the Church employed two members of staff. A pension scheme is available to employees through the NEST Pension Scheme. Contributions are paid by the Church on behalf of one employee.

Reserves

At the end of 2024, the reserves in the general fund rose by £6,022 to £53,418.

It is incumbent on the PCC, as Trustees of the charity, to maintain a reserves policy and it is the policy of All Saints' to retain three months cash in reserve.

The budget, set by the PCC for 2025, forecasts a deficit of £9,110 to be funded from the reserves.

The contract for the telecommunications phone mast, located in the Bell Turret, is due to expire in 2026. Until a new proposal is received, it is not clear how this will compare to the current contract that provides £22,000 of rental income per annum. It is therefore important to hold our reserves until the picture becomes clearer.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude for the work done by Janet Martin each week, in counting and banking the offertory income, and for maintaining the records. I would also thank Judith Man for her management of the Hall bookings.

Andrew Nobbs, Treasurer

6. DEANERY SYNOD

We had two excellent speakers at our meetings this year. Paula Gooder, who is Canon Chancellor at St Paul's Cathedral, gave us a very uplifting talk about embracing ordinariness. 'Ordinary' is often used to describe something or a situation which doesn't hold much excitement or a great deal of interest but Paula's talk gave us a very different viewpoint and through some Bible readings, poetry and personal experiences she gave us much to think about. She said that being ordinary and doing ordinary things gives us much time to reflect on who we are, to listen for God to guide us and to find our own rhythm in life. She gave us an example; if we find it easier to pray while gardening or dusting or washing up we should embrace it. God doesn't mind where we are or what we are doing when we speak to Him.

Later in the year Revd. Mark Rodel, who is the newly appointed Deputy Director of Mission and Ministry in St Albans Diocese, told us about the work he has been carrying out on how Christian life develops in parishes. He'd noticed how people, especially in parishes without an incumbent, often feel very down and are exhausted. They felt that the language of mission and outreach wasn't present in their parish but, in fact, he could see that it really was embedded in their village life. He encouraged us all to look at what mission is going on in a parish and encourage and stimulate that rather than focus looking for gaps in our ministry.

Father Simon Cutmore, from St Peter's Mill End, took up a new position at All Saints', Hertford over the summer. At our July Deanery meeting we joined together to thank him for his committed work as Rural Dean over the last few years and his leading role in establishing the Trinity Project that has helped many children feel more secure in their surroundings, create friendships and have time to talk about their worries and concerns. He will be greatly missed, especially by his congregation at St Peter's, and we wished him well in his new post.

We warmly welcomed our new Rural Dean, Revd. Canon Charles Burch from St Lawrence, Bovingdon, at our meeting later in the year.

Fran Bennett, Parish Lay Representative

7. SAFEGUARDING

This year has seen some tragic events unfold across the country, and has also caused the Church of England's standard of safeguarding to be placed under severe scrutiny. The Stockport tragedy in July 2024 caused us to review the safety of our hall users, particularly where young children are involved. In the event, we made changes to increase the safety of all groups.

Safeguarding Actions

- d) Letters were sent to regular Hall Users that provide activities for children with advice regarding door security and safe collection of children. Reassurance was given that no church member would gain entry to the hall when an activity involving children was taking place.

- e) Letters were sent to adult groups laying out the procedure whereby church members would only access hall facilities with advance permission.
- f) Permission Forms were handed out to church families in relation to the Policy for the Safe Use of Images.

The following policies were presented to the PCC for review and adoption:

- The Annual Review of the Parish's Safeguarding Policy
- Formal statement of adoption of the House of Bishops 'Promoting a Safer Church: safeguarding policy statement for children, young people and adults'
- Reinstatement of the Charter on Domestic Abuse and to be put on display.
- Reporting of Serious Incidents (SIR) to the Charity Commission

In addition:

- The list of Church Affiliated Activities was agreed
- The list of Non-affiliated Hall Groups was recognised
- The Safeguarding team ended the year informing the PCC that Safeguarding cases had arisen this year and advice was sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.

The Safeguarding Officers have oversight of all those required to have Safeguarding training (at the relevant level), Domestic Abuse training and DBS checks repeated every three years. Training updates of our PCC members and those with specific roles involving children, young people and vulnerable adults ensures that we are kept abreast of real and potential safeguarding matters.

The Safeguarding Officers use the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard to guide them towards meeting their targets and produces our Safeguarding Action Plan. This was presented to the PCC for discussion and approval in July, ensuring that All Saints' was keeping up to date with its Safeguarding requirements.

On the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury in November 2024, following the publication of the Makin Review, comments were made on the need for 'a change of culture' at senior leadership level. However, it was pointed out by Dr Ian Paul that on a local church level, *'on the ground' the Church of England churches are a safe place.*

It is up to each one of us at All Saints' Church to ensure that this is the case and continues to be the case.

If at any time you have any safeguarding anxiety or concern, please report it immediately. Contact the Safeguarding Team – Anne Oke, Sam Jones or the Vicar, Miriam Mugan, in person or via the secure email address safeguarding@croxleygreenallsaints.org.

Anne Oke and Sam Jones, Safeguarding Officer and Assistant Safeguarding Officer

8. BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

The work of the Buildings Committee is guided by the five-yearly Quinquennial Inspection report which was carried out in 2022. The Committee also ensures general maintenance and improvements to the Church building and the surrounding areas are carried out.

The Quinquennial Inspection report is a detailed assessment of the condition of the Church building. In the context of church buildings, this inspection is crucial for ensuring proper maintenance and repair of the building.

Quinquennial Inspection items actioned by the Committee:

- Missing Church roof ridge tile and repointing of brick-built chimney stack to the boiler room. Although a quote for the work has been agreed, unfortunately this work has not been completed during the year due to issues with the agreed contractor.
- Corrosion to the Church window ferramenta which has resulted in stonework breaking down. Quotes for the work of redecorating the ferramenta and localised repairs to the stonework have been received and agreed so that the work can progress in 2025.

General Maintenance items actioned by the Committee:

- Church Heating. Two valves added in Choir Vestry heating pipes in order to have better circulation through Vestry radiators.
- Church Sanctuary Carpet. New red carpet laid. Thanks to a generous member of the congregation for their donation.
- Wall Post-box for Parish Office.
- Treatment of Trees. A number of trees around the grounds of the Hall have ash die-back or need to be removed. Quotes received and agreed for repair to be carried out in 2025.
- Damaged baffle on the Hall roof 'spire'. Quotes received and agreed for repair to be carried out in 2025.
- Repairs to the pigeon netting to one of the windows on the west side of the Church. Quotes received and agreed for repair to be carried out in 2025.



New Sanctuary Carpet

We only have five members of the Committee, so if you think you would like to get involved in the valuable work that is carried out by the Buildings Committee please contact me, Anne Oke or Revd Miriam.

Lyndon Palmer, Buildings Committee Chair

9. HALL COMMITTEE

After all the work that was carried out in the main Hall during 2023, the Hall Committee decided to continue the programme of work to refurbish other areas. We wanted the entrance Hall to be a bright, warm, welcoming space so work was carried out in January to replace the radiator with a more efficient one, the area was redecorated to match the Hall and new lights, and a new notice board completed the job. New



Laying new stage carpet

radiators were also fitted in the Ladies' Toilet and the Accessible Toilet. A new stage carpet was generously donated and fitted by Steve Penney to make the stage a safe place to use.

Later in the year, the Committee Room and Lobby area outside the kitchen were redecorated to match the Entrance and main Hall and new radiators were fitted in the Committee Room.

In the kitchen, we had the dishwasher repaired so that it can be used for larger functions and the cooker was cleaned professionally. All the cupboards and drawers were cleared out, cleaned and organised to make the space more efficient. Thank you to Marjorie Stevenson and Rosemary Daines who carried out this work.

Our Hall has a lot of available storage space, but a lot of unwanted things were being stored so we set about disposing of the items we did not want and reorganising the storage areas to better fit our needs. Most of this work has been completed but there is still more to do and it's an ongoing process.

On the administration front, we updated our Terms and Conditions for Hall Users. We also produced a promotional pamphlet to advertise the Hall. More bookings resulted from our advertising and Hall improvements. The Hall letting fees had remained the same for some time. Now that the refurbishment of the Hall had been completed, we reviewed and increased the charges.

The new Hall floor that was laid in 2023 caused a lot of concern in the first half of the year as it was showing premature signs of wear. We consulted with the company who had fitted it and had many meetings to inspect and assess what was happening to the floor. It was eventually resolved with a deep clean and the application of two layers of lacquer to seal and protect the wood. To protect it further, new mats were purchased for the front and back doors and an outdoor rubber mat at the back door to stop small stones being carried in on people's shoes.

At the end of the year, the Committee proposed that we refurbish the Gents' toilets. A lot of the research has been done for this and the PCC voted for this work to go ahead next year.

Our Church Hall continues to be a hub of activity for the local community. It is used for a variety of Church activities each week such as Toddlers, Friday Café, Youth Group and for Church meetings. We also host quizzes and music gigs and concerts as well as charity fundraisers. It is also used by many outside agencies; NHS Blood Donor sessions, Three Rivers District Council exercise sessions, as a Polling Station and by The Welcome Club. You can keep fit on a daily basis with Jazzercise, badminton, Tai Chi sessions, Scottish dancing and Balance and Strength development. The Parish Nurse holds a Cancer Support meeting in the Hall too. There are also dance and drama sessions and Brownie meetings for younger members of the community. The Hall is hired for special events such as family celebrations, parties and group meetings as well as by faith groups who meet for prayers and to celebrate different festivals.

To achieve all this takes a lot of time and energy and I would like to thank all those on the Hall Committee (Jane Bates, Judith Man, Janet Martin, Anne Oke and Peter Rennoldson) for their commitment and hard work over the past year.

Wendy Shafe, Hall Committee Chair

10. PASTORAL AND EVANGELISM (P&E) GROUP

The purpose of the P&E Group is to plan and review all aspects of worship, explore opportunities for running Courses, Retreats etc and generally looking at how we as a church can support individuals in their journey of faith. The group met 6 times during 2024.

Alongside the usual planning and review of services, during 2024, the P&E Group explored a new course called Nurturing Newborns. From discussion that we have had with mums who attend the August Drop In Café for children under 3, we found that many new parents feel isolated and lonely in the early months of a baby's life. This 5 week course for parents of children 6 months and under, will provide a place of welcome and nurture for adults and babies alongside interactive activities that will support and further develop the bond between parent and baby. Detailed planning is underway to identify what the sessions will look like and the plan is to start the course in June/July 2025.

Following on from the successful installation of angels during Advent and Christmas 2023, the P&E Group supported a plan to decorate the church with white doves, each with a prayer written by members of the congregation for Pentecost. This was very well received and the church looked amazing for Pentecost Sunday.

In August, we re-introduced our Pop Up Café on Thursday mornings for parents and carers of children aged 3 years and under. This proved to be very popular and greatly appreciated. Again, it was from discussion with parents and carers that we found out that August is such a difficult month for those with very young children as all the Toddler and Baby group activities closed for the summer and there was nowhere that mums and carers could go with their very young children and again it meant that many felt isolated and lonely at this time. The feedback from those who came was so positive. Comments like, 'this has been a lifesaver for me', 'I can't tell to how much we appreciate this group', 'please can you do this during every school holiday,' reassured us of the importance and value of running this café. We had hoped to run a café during half term in October but were unable to do so due to a lack of volunteers. If you can help in any way in the kitchen, setting up and clearing away or just being someone who welcomes people when they arrive please speak to Reverend Miriam. It would be great if we could run these Cafés during halt term breaks as well.



Holy Week Meal

Another big area that we have been pondering about is our multigenerational worship at our Sunday 9.45am services. Over the last year we have tried various ways of involving the children more actively in our worship to support their growth in faith, understanding and engagement with worship. These include encouraging the children to sing with the choir, serve, carry the cross, take up the collection etc. We also aim to have two sermons per month which are suitable for all ages and are interactive. One of the things that we have come to realise is that in many ways, we are trailblazers in relation to developing a model of multigenerational worship within our regular Sunday morning Holy Communion service. When looking at other models, intergenerational worship is either something a church does once or twice a month in the main service or is separate from the main service. It has therefore been really difficult to look at other models of multigenerational worship in contexts similar to ours and get ideas of how it can work well. Having said that, we do think that the model we are developing is working well albeit there is still some work to do. We are very grateful to the adult members of our congregation for their support and understanding as we journey along this path.

Revd. Miriam, Group Chair

11. WORSHIP AT ALL SAINTS'

During 2024 we have continued to have a broad range of services including a monthly 8am Book of Common Prayer Service of Holy Communion and Quiet Church with the church lit by dozens of candles spread around the church.

Our pattern of regular services continues to be as follows:

Sunday mornings:

8am service from the Book of Comon Prayer on the 2nd Sunday of the month

9.45am Parish Communion Service

11.30am 1st Sunday Service on the 1st Sunday of the month

Thursday morning

8am Morning Prayer in church

9.30am Said Service of Holy Communion

Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Livestream Daily Reflection available on our Facebook page from 8am

In addition to these services we have also held the following

Holy Week Services

Sung Evensong at Harvest and All Saints' Day

Service for All Souls' to remember loved ones who have died

Civic Service on Remembrance Sunday

Blessing of Animals service

Advent Service

Carol Service

Christingle

Crib Service

School Carol Services x5.

Four very special services marking key points in the lives of some of our clergy were also celebrated.

On 21st April we celebrated with Reverend Anne Shaw the 30th anniversary of her ordination to the priesthood. Revd. Anne celebrated at our 9.45am service and her dear friend and the first incumbent that she was placed with after her training as a Deaconess (because at this time women were not allowed to be priests) Canon Hugh Wybrow was our guest preacher. It was such a joyous occasion and a reminder of the struggle and challenges that the women had 30+years ago as they waited, prayed and lobbied for their voice to be heard, their vocation to the priesthood to be recognised and their ministry affirmed.



Revd. Anne Shaw 30th

Reverend Anne and her husband Don moved to Cornwall in November and she celebrated at our Sunday Holy Communion service for the last time on 17th November. This was a bitter sweet service as we celebrated and gave thanks for Revd. Anne's wonderful, caring and gentle ministry with us for over 10 years and sadly had to say goodbye as she moved on.



Revd. Paul Licensing

On Pentecost Sunday, 19th May we welcomed Bishop Jane to our church to license our Assistant Curate Revd. Paul to be our Associate Priest having finished his curacy training. It was another service of joy, thanksgiving and affirmation for Revd Paul's ministry with us at All Saints'.

We welcomed Revd. Tolu George as our new full time Assistant Curate on Sunday 24th November when Bishop Jane came to licence her at a special 9am service. It was lovely to welcome Revd. Tolu and her family at this service and into our church community.

Lent

During Lent we joined with the other churches in Croxley Green for a Lent Course based on The Environment. It was good to join with fellow Christians from across Croxley as we explored the changes we face regarding climate change and what action we as individuals and as church communities we can put in place to minimise the impact of global warming in our own small ways.

Holy Week

For Holy Week, we gave out Holy Week Bags to the children and young people. The bags contained 6 plastic eggs each with an item relating to the trial and crucifixion of Jesus, one to be opened each day. A reflection booklet helped to guide their thinking and prayers as they opened each egg. The feedback from the children, young people and their families was very positive.

We also introduced two additional services during Holy Week. On the Monday evening we introduced a service of Reconciliation, and on the Wednesday evening we introduced a service of Anointing. Both services were very intimate and were valued by those who attended we plan to do these services again into 2025.

Other Holy Week services followed the usual pattern. For the Reflection on Good Friday we used readings from Archbishop Stephen Cottrell's book *The Nail*. These readings, which were read dramatically, focussed on people who had been involved in the crucifixion, each giving a compelling reason as to why the crucifixion of Jesus was not their fault. It was a moving and thought provoking time of worship.



Easter Garden

Easter

As always, our service on Easter Day was full of joy as we celebrated the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Service for All Souls' to remember loved ones who have died.

This service continues to be very important for those whose loved ones have died. It is always so well attended and so greatly appreciated. Journeying alongside those who grieve is a privilege. Whether their loved one has died recently or in years past, the opportunity to come into church to remember them, place a flower and light a candle in their memory and share precious memories over tea and home-made cake, is such an important part of their journey with grief.

Civic Service on Remembrance Sunday

Our Civic Service on Remembrance Sunday which is organised by Croxley Green Parish Council and hosted by us at All Saints' in conjunction with the other churches in Croxley, is an important event for our community. The number of people who attend the service and also on The Green continues to grow which is really encouraging in terms of people's ongoing commitment to honour, remember and give thanks to all those who have given their life in the world wars and more recent conflicts. *'They shall not grow old as we who are left grow old. Age shall not weary them or the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and at its rising, we will remember them.'*

Advent and Christmas

It was a joy as always, to welcome five local schools to our church for their Carol Service. It is wonderful to have good links with the schools and to be able to host these services.

Our Christingle Crafts and Carols was very popular. The children (and some adults!) enjoyed the various Christmas crafts which included making a paper lantern which Kelly Buckle had designed and cut out various silhouettes to stick on.

Alongside these activities the children made a Christingle for use in our service which followed in church.

Carol Service

A mixture of bible readings, poems and traditional carols was enjoyed by all who attended our carol service. This year we had twice as many people attending (230) compared to last year. It was wonderful to welcome so many people to this service.

Crib Service

Always a popular service, once again the church was full to overflowing with adults and children all enjoying both traditional and modern Christmas carols and listening to the story of the first Christmas.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

The celebration of the birth of Jesus at midnight and on Christmas morning is always such a wonderful service and both services had good attendances.



Crib Service

Family Service / 1st Sunday Service

Since Covid the number of baptisms have significantly reduced which has had an impact on the attendance at the Family Service. There are a small group of about 5 families who still attend, one on a regular basis the others more infrequent. When we chatted to the parents it seems that Sunday morning sports activities take priority over church and new groups have started on Sunday mornings too for toddler aged children too. The Family Service team are committed to continuing a service once a month to reach out to these families that are on the fringes of our church. During the year we trialled moving the start time to 12 mid-day to enable families to come when the morning sports activities had finished. However, this didn't bring about an increase in numbers attending and meant that leaders were often not getting home until 2pm so it was decided to revert back to an 11.30am start. In addition to this, we moved the service to the first Sunday of the month (in the hope that it would be easier for parents to remember) and we changed the name of the service from Family Service to 1st Sunday Service. We continue to send a text out to families on our data base a few days before the service to remind them it is happening as well as promoting it on Facebook. We will continue to keep this service under review.

Holy Communion 8am Book of Common Prayer

This service happens once a month on the first Sunday of the month. In the light of the decisions regarding the 1st Sunday service we moved this service to the second Sunday of the month. This change does not seem to have caused any issues for those who attend.

Annual Statistics

Each year we are required to submit a series of statistics to the Church of England to enable a national monitoring of the health of the church. These statistics include numbers of communicants at Christmas Eve/Day, Easter Eve/Day services and attendances, average church attendance over the year, numbers of baptisms, weddings and funerals along with various other bits of information.

Information that you might find interesting from these returns are:

Average number of adults attending a Sunday morning service is 50 (45 in 2023).

Average number of children attending a Sunday morning service is 10 (8 in 2023.)

Number of people receiving communion on Easter Day = 71 (84 in 2023)

Number of people receiving communion on Christmas Eve/Day = 114 (80 in 2023)

Number of people attending worship on Easter Eve and Easter Day = 95 (123 in 2023)

Number of people attending worship on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day = 435 (337 in 2023)

Number of people attending special services held for the congregation and local community during Advent = 436 (253 in 2023)

Number of people attending special services held specifically for schools = 1,817 (1710 in 2023)

Number of adults who have joined the church during 2024 = 7

Number of children who have joined the church during 2024 = 6

Number of people baptised during 2024 = 11 (9 in 2023)

Number of Weddings during 2024 = 1 (0 in 2023)

Number of funerals held in church during 2024 = 7 (4 in 2023)

Number of funerals conducted by our clergy at a Crematorium = 4 (6 in 2023)

You will see from the figures above that in many areas we are seeing growth which is very exciting. Please continue to pray for the work, mission and ministry of our church as we seek to grow spiritually and numerically.

Revd. Miriam

12. FIRST SUNDAY SERVICE

Our First Sunday Service is a very informal service for everyone. It's packed full of singing, dancing, craft activities, listening to stories and sharing our thoughts and ideas... not forgetting the refreshments. It usually lasts about half an hour but is sometimes a bit longer when we get engrossed in the activities or discussing what we have been doing.

One of the parts that I really enjoy is when we share our prayers and this year we made prayer cards that were cut out into a shapes related to the themes of our services. We've written our prayers on rockets, birds, butterflies, Easter egg shapes, Christmas trees and many more. We have a special place in Church where the children hang their prayers for everyone to read and we also include them as part of our intercessions at our Thursday morning service. We also made a lovely sunshine collage that we hung up in Church for everyone to see. The sun's rays had our ideas of how we would 'let our lights shine' written on them and many of the adults from the congregation followed our idea and wrote some as well. In July, we had our service outside in the Church garden and we followed a bug trail and thought about how ants work together. They can carry 10 – 50 times their body weight and they work together and achieve so much to keep their colony working.

Wouldn't it be great if the world could work together like ants, think what we might achieve!

Fran Bennett

13. COURSES AND LEARNING

2024 has been relatively quiet but saw a range of learning opportunities with activities that were aimed to widen our spiritual experience being available.

During Lent, we participated in an ecumenical Lent Course alongside other churches in Croxley entitled 'A Christian Look at the Environment'. These took place on Wednesdays in the afternoon, with the session repeated in the evening. The course allowed us to appreciate the marvel of God's creation and our commission to look after it and called on us to be active in advocating for the environment. There were some interesting round-table Bible studies and discussions and some good practical takeaways from each session.



Labyrinth Afternoon

In May, we spent a wonderful afternoon exploring the Labyrinth Prayers with several ways of exploring prayer by interacting, including a walked labyrinth, finger labyrinths, labyrinths made from wool and a great variety of activities, all put together by Sam Jones. Thank you Sam!

Our online reflections on our Facebook page each Monday, Wednesday and Friday have continued throughout the year. If you haven't discovered these yet, you can view previous reflections up to a month after they are posted. It would be lovely if you could join us.

We have continued to run Quiet Church through the year, offering a quiet, contemplative space where people can just meet with God as they are, with 45 minutes of quiet and peace in Church followed by a simple service of Compline. We have been encouraged by those who have come and would love to welcome more people to come along and spend a quiet hour with God in the beautiful, peaceful surroundings of our Church building.

We would love to hear what kind of learning or courses you would like to take part in during the coming year and if you have any ideas on other events we could run, please contact Revd. Miriam, Revd. Paul or Revd. Tolu.

Revd. Paul Palmer

14. MUSIC MAINTENANCE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Committee comprising of representatives from the clergy, the choir, the organists and the congregation, met twice in 2024 – in August and November - to reflect on past services and music, to discuss forthcoming services and church music.

The terms of reference were recently updated and adopted by the PCC:

"To provide a forum for planning and discussion concerning the contribution of music for services."

The Choir has generally held 2 practices each month during the term time and is extremely grateful to David Heath for his accompanying skills, guidance and good humour. We have been pleased to welcome additional members from the congregation joining us this year for our occasional but special evening services on Palm Sunday, Advent Sunday and the Christmas Carol service and we look forward to this continuing.

The overall feedback has been that the current mix of traditional and modern hymns and anthems sung in our regular services is appreciated by both the congregation and the choir.



Christmas Carol Service

The choir was very pleased to have an older child join the choir and the appropriate safeguarding forms were completed by their parents. As regular junior choir practices on Sundays or weekday had not been viable for younger children, it was agreed that youngsters should be encouraged to take an interest in singing with the choir on Sunday mornings when they wished. However, all the children would be specifically invited to participate in special services, and it was lovely to have 5 children sing on their own and as part of the full choir at the Christmas Carol Service.

Over the years, the church organ has gained an increasing number of faults, major and minor, which make the playing of it quite challenging. Dr. John Galloway, who was part of the Organ Restoration Steering Group in 2015, has been reviewing the current state of the organ with our organists, David Heath and Simon Dunn.

John was fortunate in finding an organ tuner and restorer, Tarquin Wiggins, who has made some recent repairs and improvements, but it is clear that a lot more work is needed. The Committee received a written report from John Galloway, together with a paper containing the thoughts of our organist Simon Dunn.

Five possible options were presented:

Option 1: Do nothing more; which would over in time render the organ unplayable;

Option 2: Employ Tarquin Wiggins to carry out further improvements to enhance the organ's capabilities at an approximate cost of £1,200, to be carried out in October, which would provide a breathing space for longer term planning if desired;

Option 3: Replace the present electro-pneumatic action by a digital multi-media 'solid state' action as part of a rebuilt console;

Option 4: Revisit the recommendation made by the Organ Restoration Steering Group in 2015, involving obtaining quotes for new keyboards, pedal board and stops with upgrading or replacement of the console. This option had been recommended by the Diocesan Organ Adviser, Andrew Lucas;

Option 5: Replace the organ with an electronic organ while keeping the present pipework which is a key feature of the church's architectural heritage. This option would require both a new organ and external speakers.

The PCC approved the Committee's suggestion that Tarquin Wiggins be authorised to undertake the further improvements to the organ referred to in Option 2, in consultation with David Heath and Simon Dunn. Unfortunately, Mr. Wiggins has been indisposed and it is now anticipated that the work will be carried out in February 2025.

Anne Oke, Committee Member

15. THE FLOWER GROUP



Harvest Flowers

We have had a very interesting and sometimes challenging year this year in sourcing flowers for our displays. We try and keep our budget to a minimum and up until about four or five years ago we found a good choice at a good price in the local supermarkets. However, gradually, over time, the choice of variety of flowers and colours has become less and less and this year has been particularly tricky.

Wendy and I usually put some thoughts and ideas together, over a cup of coffee, about the colours and types of flowers we would need to buy for the arrangements that we would like to do. The need for flexibility has been essential as time has gone on.

During the week before Christmas, I visited all the supermarkets and noted down what would be the best flowers for us to use. When we went to shop for them the next week

the shops were displaying completely different options but we have enjoyed the challenge of just going along with what we could get and planning on the day. Flexibility has been our plan and has worked pretty well.

We are a merry little band of flower arrangers and would always welcome others to come and join us when they can. Thank you to Gill, Rae and Alice for their help and ideas and to everyone who has given us donations so that we can help to keep our Church looking festive and bright.

Fran Bennett

16. GARDEN REPORT

This year has been another busy one keeping the area around the Church buildings tidy and colourful. It is a never-ending job with different seasonal jobs to do and an enormous thank you goes to all those who have helped with this: Alick Burge for cutting the grass and keeping it looking lovely; Margaret Paddick and Marjorie Stevenson who have looked after the bed by the Choir Vestry; the Parish Council Ranger for trimming the hedges a couple of times, Alice Tims for looking after the birds – filling their water containers and the bird feeders and to Andrew who works for hours tidying the edges, looking after the back garden and clearing the wildlife area so that we can further develop it to encourage a wider selection of birds and creatures. He has also cut the hedge all the way round the Church perimeter, reducing the height and width so that the public footpaths are safer, a massive task!

We tried a new environmental initiative this year with No-mow May. During May, we didn't cut the grass in the back garden in a bid to encourage wild flowers, grasses and insects. Some pathways were strimmed but, other than that, the area was left to grow and it was beautiful. There were lots of grasses and flowers, and it was so nice to sit there and enjoy it. We will hopefully continue this next year.

The flower beds in the back garden have seen a bit of a change in planting this year as we fight against changes in weather. This area is traditionally very dry so it is hard to grow much due to the type of soil and because much of the water is taken up by the big trees, so we are looking at how to manage this in the future.

Please continue to enjoy the areas around the Church; sitting on a bench in the sun in the back garden is a great way to spend a bit of quiet time.

If you would like to help with the garden do contact any of us, we would love to have some more helpers.

Janet Martin

17. COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

The Communications Team continues to oversee the main social media platforms used by All Saints': the website and Facebook. The team also looks after other forms of communication within and outside the Church.

Our Facebook page continues to be a helpful social media tool for the Church. Our following has grown to over 570 followers. This is a useful way for us to advertise events, courses and services and share beyond the Church congregation.



You can catch the live streaming of Morning Prayer on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 8am on Facebook.

A Diary of services and events is maintained by the team throughout the year and is used to identify what is taking place at All Saints'. It helps us to plan the various means of communication to promote the Church, services and events to the congregation and the wider public. These can take the form of a bi-monthly calendar, event posters, information leaflets and information emails. We also create displays at the back of the Church, at Croxley Revels and the Beer Festival.

You can follow what is happening at All Saints' via our Website and Facebook page using the links below:

Website - <http://www.croxleygreenallsaints.org/>

Facebook - <http://www.facebook.com/croxleyallsaintschurch>

Lyndon Palmer

18. SOCIAL AND FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

2024 has been yet another successful year for fundraising and social events at All Saints'.

We started the year with a new event, Carols and Cocktails, to round off the Christmas season. This was very well received by all who attended: those who came had the opportunity to sing their favourite Christmas Carols and partake of some Christmas themed cocktails after the singing.

In April we held a highly successful Quiz Night which Ben Guest very kindly organised for us.

Also, in April, we catered for a very special lunch to celebrate Reverend Anne's 30th anniversary of her Ordination as a priest which also coincided with her 60th Wedding Anniversary to her husband Don.

We had another special lunch in May to celebrate with Reverend Paul as he was licensed as our Assistant Priest by Bishop Jane.

June saw the return of Croxley Revels which, as always, was a lovely community event and gave us the opportunity to chat to old friends and make new ones.



Quiz Night

In September we had our Harvest Parish BBQ. The weather was kinder to us this year and we all enjoyed a lovely sunny afternoon in the Church garden with plenty of food to eat.

In November we held our most successful Christmas Market yet by raising over £7400 for Church funds. The following weekend we again hosted a Christmas concert by the Watford Community Orchestra.

December, as always, was a very busy month with events taking place every weekend up to Christmas. We provided refreshments for the Advent, Christingle and Carol services. We had our usual stall selling mulled wine at the Parish Council Christmas Market and organised the Parish Christmas Post Box.



Parish BBQ in the Church Garden

Thank you, as always to the committee for all their hard work over the year. We have now become a very small group, which is kept very busy over the course of the year. We would dearly love to have some new members to help us to continue to hold a variety of events. So, if you think you might like to join us (or even find out a bit more about what we do) please do speak to either me or Miriam.

We would love to have you on board

Ann Palmer (Chair, Social and Fundraising Committee)

19. CHURCH MAGAZINE

During 2024, the number of Magazines printed and distributed each month was increased. The Magazine continues to be free of charge as part of our Outreach Programme and is available in Church and at Friday Coffee. It is also delivered by hand locally and by post to those who have moved away but still want to keep in touch with what is happening at All Saints'. Thank you to Fran Bennett who organises the distribution and to all those who help by delivering. The Magazine is also available on our website.

The magazine contains a mixture of articles: Miriam's letter, advertisements of upcoming events organised by our Church and other local groups, reports on Church life, poems, prayers, the Prayer Diary, a children's page and puzzles, Gospel readings for each month, entries for the Parish Record, amusing anecdotes, and a variety of other interesting information. This year, Fran and Alice have been writing articles to draw our attention to nature and how we can look after it. Photographs and illustrations bring the Magazine to life and I would like to thank the people who have been our 'roving reporters' and have sent photos and articles in for the Magazine. We are always keen for members of the congregation to send in their contributions to be included in our publication so please put pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, and send in your articles. We continue to have positive feedback about the magazine, so thank you to everyone who has contributed to make it interesting and enjoyable to read.

Thank you also to Shelagh and Tony Booth, our proof-readers, who provide a very valuable service by checking the Magazine before it is printed. This is greatly appreciated.

Wendy Shafe, Editor

20. CHURCHES TOGETHER IN CROXLEY GREEN

All Saints' has always been, and continues to be, an active partner in both the Ecumenical events organised and the meetings held for both the Lay members and the Clergy. As ever, there were many events throughout the year, and all were well attended. The Civil Service at All Saints' on Remembrance Sunday, followed by its observance at the War Memorial, has become particularly popular with an ever increasing attendance. The very successful Lent Course was repeated this year and will be repeated next year. We also introduced an additional Walk of Witness at Christmas which will be repeated. Yet another new venture was our attendance at Croxfest where we provided a "Quiet Space" for those attending this very busy day.



Our participation in the Croxley Green Food Bank continues, both by way of Church donations and active involvement in the running of the weekly drop in. The receipt of donations and the issue of food and hygiene items for those in need continues to be a much-needed facility in our present economic climate. More information regarding donations and the work undertaken can be found at <https://Rickmansworth.foodbank.org.uk>

The Parish Nurse project continues to play a major role within the community, dealing with long-term health conditions, mental health, social isolation and loneliness. There has been concentration on Dementia and Cancer support this year which has been very well received by those participating. Fundraising for this facility remains a vital role for its successful continuation. Work is carried out alongside other community services including debt agencies, drug, alcohol and domestic abuse services. Further information can be found at <https://croxleyparishnurse.org>

Nik Bennett

21. FRIDAY DROP-IN CAFÉ

Now in its fourth year, the Drop-in Café is ‘the place to go’ on a Friday where you can have a hot drink, from ‘excellent coffee!’, a range of teas and hot chocolate, and choose from a selection of home-cooked cakes or a toasted tea cake. But that is not its only purpose. Our light and airy Church Hall provides the space for Croxley Green locals, and beyond, to meet up with old friends and make new ones; to enjoy quality time to relax, chat and put the world to rights! It is also a place where, from time to time, we can speak to our Police Community Support Officers or our Parish Nurse. And we are even popular with dogs and their owners after a healthy walk.



PCSO's visit Friday Cafe

So popular is the Friday Café that we have increased the number of tables we set up!

The donations received this year have contributed to the cost of heating the Hall, the refreshments, the purchase of new serving flasks and the cheerful tablecloths. However, we have also been delighted to give financial support to charities, some of which have been chosen by our regulars, including The Macular Society (supporting those with visual impairment), Christian Aid, RNLI, the Macmillan Cancer Support and the British Legion.

A huge vote of thanks goes to our super team of people who make the time to bake varied and delicious cakes and cookies (out of the generosity of their hearts), those who run the kitchen and those who set up and clear the Hall.

Thank you all for supporting this Church and Community venture.

Anne Oke

22. MONDAY TODDLER GROUP



The Monday Toddler Group continues to be very popular. Those on the waiting list recognise the need for a limit on numbers for enjoyment and safety. We welcome members through the door from 9.15am; some arrive early from school drop off and the children quickly move to the different activities provided for them. The multi-sensory activities are popular as they can be messy and the parents and carers feel happy that the mess is in the Hall rather than at home! There is always a painting activity, shaving foam or cooked spaghetti to explore plus farm and zoo, construction, dolls house and the gross motor activities including bikes, push-along, rockers and slide.

Snack time at 10.30am is a routine now and the children find their way to the mats, without prompting, for drinks and snacks. The Hall becomes quiet and the sight of the children gathered together is a joy to see. There is a short time to play before ‘tidy up time’ with which everyone helps. Finally, we share singing with puppets, stretchy bands and the parachute.

The whole morning gives the helpers time to chat and support the parents and carers. We want them to feel loved, cared for and supported, giving them the opportunity to join our Church community. We have a brilliant group of helpers who assist with setting up, supervising, washing up and clearing away. Thank you to everyone.

Jane Bates, Organiser

23. YOUTH GROUP

Another year of fun was had in 2024 with our monthly Youth Group. We are continuing to grow, with an average of 8 to 12 members aged 8+ joining us each session. Our friendships are developing and we are all getting to know each other through games, activities and conversations. We have continued to have fun through badminton, table tennis, table football and arcade basketball which are always set out each session. We have played various games such as ladders, dodge ball, rock, paper and scissors, team race and team active connect 4. We enjoyed activities such as cake decorating, Bingo games, welly wanging, a water fight, mocktail designing, pancake making, our annual snowball fight and the best toilet paper mummy competition!

In August, we had a rounders match for all the families at Youth Group and we invited the congregation to join us at Barton Way playing fields. We all cheered our sides along and our competitive streaks came out; it was a lot of fun.

For a second year, we organised games and craft in the Committee Room for the young to entertain themselves at the Christmas Market. Members of the Youth Club helped run the games as a positive way to promote the Youth Group.

Sam Beard and Kelly Buckle, Organisers



Members of the Youth Group enjoying games

24. ALL SAINTS' BEER FESTIVAL

On 11th – 13th October, All Saints Church and The Anchor Tap and Bottle joined to put on the third Beer Festival in the Church. Once again, Scott McGarvie and his team at the Anchor, Tap and Bottle provided



and served a wide selection of real ale, craft beers, wine, spirits and soft drinks. While the team at All Saints converted the church into an atmospheric venue to come and meet friends, volunteers from the congregation helped behind the bar over the weekend as well as providing a range of delicious food to sell. The event opened on the Friday night and was instantly packed. Locals and beer

enthusiasts from further afield came to enjoy a drink in the historic church with everyone commenting on how wonderful the event was and how beautiful the church was as a venue. The Saturday continued to be really busy with live music from two groups in the evening, ensuring a lively atmosphere. Sunday continued to be popular with the majority of the beer finished and fun had by all.

Sam Beard, Member of the Festival Committee

25. ALL SAINTS' CHARITIES – ANNUAL REPORTS 2024

THE REVEREND DAVID KENNETH WILLIAMS TRUST

Registered Charity No. 803706

The Reverend David Kenneth Williams Trust was established in 1989 in accordance with the wishes of Reverend David Kenneth Williams as expressed in his will dated 4 February 1989. The income from the sale of his house at 36 Winton Crescent, Croxley Green provided the capital, which was invested. The objects of the charity are such Christian religious and charitable purposes whether parochial or outside the Parish of All Saints Croxley Green as in all respects the Trustees shall from time to time consider proper.

The focus of the Trust has been to use its assets to support the mission and outreach of All Saints' Parish.

In past years the capital assets of the Trust were used to purchase equipment for church services and youth work, employment of youth workers, support for the church choir, construction of the Parish Office and Youth Room, installation of CCTV and part-funding of an administrative post, now the Parish Administrator, and the purchase and operating costs of a new computer software system to hold relevant data and enable members of the congregation and others with links to All Saints' to be contacted with information about church services and other activities. In addition to other benefits, this has facilitated the computerisation of the Church Hall bookings and fee collection, which has increased church income.

This spending substantially reduced the capital of the Trust and its income, which consisted of interest on a bank account. Following the recession of 2008 and subsequent years the amount of bank interest paid annually shrank to very little and eventually the Trust was not able to make any financial contribution to parish income. To seek to increase the capital of the Trust, in 2017 the trustees invested most of the remaining capital in Accumulation shares of the Church of England Central Board of Finance (CBF) Investment Fund, with the aim of growing the capital over time. This investment has been maintained and will continue in 2025. In recent years the Trust has made grants to the Parochial Church Council towards the cost of new double-glazed windows for the hall, the hall refurbishment programme and the purchase of new stackable chairs for the hall, to replace old and deteriorating chairs. These grants were made because the hall is used by many local organisations and is part of the Parish's outreach to the community. As the Trust's financial year runs from April to April, the year-end accounts for 2024/25 will be prepared in April 2025.

The Vicar and Churchwardens of the Parish of All Saints, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth, Herts. are the ex officio Trustees and have the right to nominate and appoint all new Trustees of the Trust. They appoint the Clerk to the Trustees, who they have also appointed as a Trustee of this Charity. During 2024 the Churchwardens were Anne Oke and Lyndon Palmer. The current Clerk to the Trustees is Christopher Fagan of 75 Windmill Drive, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth, Herts WD3 3FB.

Chris Fagan, Clerk to the Trustees

PARISH CHARITIES

THE GEORGE GURNEY CHARITY FOR THE SICK POOR, Registered Charity No. 212964 (previously registered as The George Gurney Bequest)

ALL SAINTS CROXLEY GREEN CHARITIES ACCOUNTS (current and deposit bank accounts)

**All Saints Parish Church, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth, Herts,
Year Ending 31 December 2024**

The George Gurney Charity for the Sick Poor was established using a bequest in 1923 following the sale of "The Hawthorns", in order to provide a qualified trained nurse for the benefit of the poor inhabitants of Croxley Green. Following the establishment in 1948 of the National Health Service the Charity Commission approved a change of object to relieving individual cases of hardship resulting from illness and providing amenities such as invalid chairs to elderly and poor people in All Saints' and St Oswald's Parishes, with Christmas gifts for elderly and sick people.

The Croxley Green Annuity Fund was established in 1920 by the Misses Cameron to provide pensions to three poor and aged residents of Croxley Green or Rickmansworth Parishes. This fund was established in memory of the late Thomas Woods of Durrants.

All Saints' Croxley Green Charities Bank Accounts were established in 1990 using later legacies and donations. There are now two accounts, a current account and a deposit (interest earning) account.

The two registered Charities operated in conjunction with the All Saints Croxley Green Charities Accounts to provide additional financial support to less affluent parishioners on a one-off or regular basis, and to provide a financial supplement at Christmas. Starting in 2018 the Trustees have also approved grants to the Charitable Incorporated Organisation set up by Churches Together in Croxley Green to run the Parish Nurse Scheme and the Croxley Food Bank.

In 2023 the Croxley Green Annuity Fund was merged with the George Gurney Charity with the consent of the Charity Commission. The Trustees are in contact with the Commission to change the name of the George Gurney Charity to the All Saints' Croxley Green Parish Church Charity, to change its existing charitable purposes to relief of poverty and support for health services in Croxley Green and to enable the Parochial Church Council to appoint additional trustees, with a new scheme of governance. Some of these changes will require the Charity Commission's consent. Following this, the two bank accounts of the All Saints Croxley Green Charities will be transferred to the single parish charity.

Anyone living in Croxley Green or who has a past or current connection who needs financial help is welcome to contact (in confidence) any of the trustees, who will consider any application for assistance. Details can be obtained from Chris Fagan, Clerk to the Trustees, tel. 01923 720319, Email: bardwell29@virginmedia.com.

Trustees of the Charities are the Vicar and Churchwardens of: All Saints' Church, the current Churchwardens are Lyndon Palmer and Anne Oke. The Charities are administered on behalf of the trustees by Christopher Fagan, Clerk to the Trustees, 75 Windmill Drive, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth, Herts. WD3 3FB.

Chris Fagan, Clerk to the Trustees

26. VICAR'S REPORT 2024

Once again, our Annual Report is full of positivity, action, activity, and life ensuring that the essence, mission and liveliness of All Saints' Church is captured and shared. God is truly continuing to bless our hard work and endeavours as we seek to ensure that his presence and love is known and experienced by all who

engage in any acts of worship or social activity. I am overwhelmed by the hard work and dedication of everyone who have given, and continue to give so generously of their time, gifts, goodwill and energy.

All Saints' is a dynamic, welcoming, community focussed church that provides a place of acceptance, safety and hope to everyone who come through the doors and that is thanks to all of you. The part that you play, be it big or small, is so important to the life, mission and growth of our church and I am so grateful to you for your willingness to engage, to help our church grow, to enable it to be a beacon of God's light, love and presence in and to our community. THANKYOU SO MUCH to all of you, I am so deeply grateful for all that you do and all that you give to All Saints' Church. It is a delight and a privilege to serve alongside you as your vicar, and I thank you for your love and support.



Archdeacon Charles Visits

Anchor, Tap and Bottle. Another great event which again brought many people into our church building was our Annual Christmas Market. With external stall holders being made to feel so welcome and supported that they left eager to re-book a place for 2025 and musical entertainment by Night Train and the children from Centre Stars there was a great feeling of camaraderie amongst everyone. Thank you to Ann and Lyndon Palmer, the SoFun Committee and all who helped in any way.

We have been able to share in some very special and moving events amongst our clergy during 2024. In April we celebrated with Revd. Dr Anne Shaw her 30th anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood. We remembered the pioneering work that so many women (like Anne) did and the challenges they faced in trying to fulfil their vocation and ministry before General Synod voted to allow women to be ordained as priests. To hear Revd. Anne's story and share this milestone with her was an absolute delight. We also celebrated with her and Don their 60th wedding anniversary.



Revd. Dr Anne Shaw 30th anniversary



Revd. Dr Anne Shaw Goodbye

In November we had to say our goodbye to Revd. Anne and her husband Don as she led our Sunday morning service for the last time on 17th November before relocating to live in Cornwall. We have been very blessed to have had Anne ministering among us for the last 12 years. Her compassionate pastoral care and spiritual wisdom have touched so many of us and she is greatly missed.

In May we were delighted to celebrate with Revd. Paul as he was licensed by Bishop Jane as our Associate Priest following his three year curacy with us.

Then, on Sunday 24th November we were delighted to welcome Revd. Tolu George as our new full time Assistant Curate along with her family.

I am hugely thankful to our ministry staff team for their varied gifts which enrich our ministry to others both within and outside the church. Their support and encouragement is such a help to me in my role as vicar. It is a delight to journey with Sam Jones as she continues to train for ordination and also is a valued member

on the ministry team. Watching her grow in confidence and develop various skills such as preaching is a joy. I am also hugely grateful for the ministry of Revd. Ron Hibbert, his sermons and shared life experiences are so well received and thought provoking. We are very fortunate to have such a varied group of people with different spiritual gifts leading our worship and preaching.

Whilst I cannot do justice in thanking every single person who has a role or who have helped in the work and life of the church during 2024 in this report, I do need to mention a few by name. Please be assured that I value and appreciate everyone's hard work and commitment to All Saints', it is because of you that the church is the loving, vibrant, lively, welcoming place that it is and words cannot express how important you are or how grateful I am, so please accept my thanks and appreciation, they come from the depths of my heart.



Revd. Paul licensing

Our Churchwardens, Lyndon Palmer and Anne Oke, along with their assistants Ann Palmer and Gill Main, do an amazing job in looking after the church and hall buildings, liaising with the diocese on all sorts of matters, overseeing the smooth turning of the church and many other tasks. We are so fortunate to have such dedicated, proactive and hardworking people in these roles. I am so very grateful for the work they do and especially for the love, guidance, encouragement and support they give to me.

Andrew our Treasurer lives up to his title in every way! Thank you Andrew for once again managing the church accounts, providing wise financial counsel, detailed but easy to read and understand finance reports and proving challenge when necessary. You have steered us well as is demonstrated in the end of year accounts which are so healthy. I have to mention and thank you for also being a treasure in the work you have done in the garden around the church and the hall especially over the last year. I cannot tell you the number of people who have commented positively on the way you have cleared the edges of the footpaths on the stretch of road just outside the church. You have tirelessly tackled some of the most difficult areas of the garden, pruning, clearing and tidying so that we have a garden to be proud of. Thank you so much, all your work is so appreciated.

Chris Fagan as our PCC secretary continues to keep us all in order and ensures that we meet the requirements of the Diocese. It is a job that so often goes unseen but is essential for the smooth running of PCC meetings and fulfilling the various legal requirements set out by the Church of England. Thank you so much Chris.



Palm Sunday

Jude Man has played a huge part in promoting our church hall as a venue for all sorts of events ensuring that we maximise the possibilities of income generation. Through her hard work the hall income is well above expectation and hall use is back to and slightly above what it was pre Covid. Thank you Jude!

We are so blessed to have the music support and expertise of David Heath and Simon Dunn who between them provide accompaniment for our Sunday morning services most weeks. However their role extends far beyond this as they have both worked alongside John Galloway in assessing and recommending works that need to be undertaken to maintain the working function of the church organ. David Heath makes himself available for choir practices on a regular basis enabling the choir to flourish and grow. We are so very fortunate to have them with us when they are available and I am very grateful for their support and commitment to our church worship.

2024 was a very challenging year for the Church of England with the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury in November over alleged failures to report incidents of sexual abuse that happened 40 years ago as detailed in the Makin report. There were, and continue to be, calls for other bishops and clergy also implicated in this report to also resign. This, along with other issues has been hugely unsettling for those of us who minister and worshippers within the Church of England. This has led to further criticisms of the Safeguarding model that the Church of England uses, and discussions continue at General Synod about how this can be improved. We, at All Saints', are so fortunate to have two excellent Safeguarding leads in Anne Oke and Sam Jones. They spend many hours, and work incredibly hard, to ensure that we meet all the Safeguarding requirements for training, policy development and best practice. I cannot overestimate the time and commitment that they put into this role as there are constant changes coming out from the Church of England to which parishes have to keep on top of and comply with. Under their management and guidance, we can be confident that All Saints' church is a safe place to be for children and adults, especially vulnerable adults. Thank you so much Anne and Sam, we really do appreciate all that you are doing for us and with us as we ensure All Saints' continues to be a place where people can feel safe.

Looking Ahead

During 2024 we have spent time exploring with God his vision and plans for our church as we look to the future. His blessing has been clearly on our mission to reach out to the local community as evidenced in the success of the Beer Festival, Christmas Market, Friday Café, attendance at our Christmas Carol Service and Christingle. We have also seen a growth in the numbers of people attending Sunday worship.

An area that I feel God is calling us to explore more is in relation to Christian teaching and courses which will enable us to grow spiritually and to be more confident in our mission and outreach to others. The development of small homegroups would foster a greater sense of belonging as well as helping us to develop more confidence in discussing aspects of faith and sharing our own faith journey.



Christingle

We have a residential retreat planned to take place in July at Pleshey Retreat House. Having time away with each other under the guidance of an experienced retreat leader (we are very fortunate to have Revd. Canon Susann Gunner, a very experienced Retreat leader and Pastor) provides such a great opportunity to exploring aspects of our faith a little deeper.

We are still developing our model of Multigenerational Worship. It is very much learning as we go and being open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We have seen a growth in the number of children and young people attending each Sunday morning and it is important that we ensure that we meet their faith formation needs as they mature. It is also important that there is a good balance that enables the adults in the congregation to also grow in faith, understanding and depth of worship.

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children." (Matthew 19 v14) in the light of this I have to say that I am very grateful for the support, openness and welcome of the congregation to the children in our midst. I know that it is not always easy to combine different generations but I do believe as adults we have so much to share with the children and they have so much to share with us. We will continue to work and pray that the right balance will be found and that our worship inspires, welcomes, challenges and opens our eyes to see the joyful, loving and all-embracing presence of God in the midst of all of us.

I am always very pleased to hear your thoughts and views, both positive and negative, about our church life, mission and ministry. It is only through sharing our views and listening to each other that we can really begin to hear the voice of God guiding us forward. Growing the church is not about what the vicar or staff team want, it is about what we all need to enable us to grow in faith and love for God and one another and so we

need to hear your voice and your views. Please continue to pray for God to guide us all as we seek to be open to his plan for the future of our church witness, ministry and outreach.

Thank you for all that you do, you are all precious and valued in God's eyes and integral parts of the future of All Saints'. I am excited to see where God will lead us in 2025. I hope that you will actively engage in our Mission Action Planning Day on 17th May 2025, we need to hear your voice!

'I know the plans I have for you,' says the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' Jeremiah 29 v11

Reverend Canon Miriam Mugan

March 2025