



**Annual Report
and
Financial Statements
of the
Parochial Church Council
St Lawrence Church, Biddulph
for the year ended 31 December 2023**

Registered Charity: St. Lawrence Church charity no: 1127353

Incumbent:
Will Drain

Bank:
National Westminster

Independent Examiner:
Mr. K.R. Salt
BK Plus Limited
2-6 Adventure Place
Hanley
Stoke on Trent
ST1 3AF

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Finance Report for 2023 Accounts

General Comment on the Accounts

The method used to prepare the accounts is on the Payment and Receipt system. The software used for keeping the accounts is called "MyFundAccounting.Online" which is produced by a company called Data Developments. The Lichfield Diocese decided they would encourage churches in the Diocese to use this software and pay the monthly fee for its use. Lichfield Diocese are also encouraging churches to use "MyGiving.Online" (also produced by Data Developments) to maintain Gift Aid records and make claims directly with HMRC rather than through the Diocese. These claims are made monthly and during the year the church have received £22,818. There is an outstanding amount owed by HMRC of £1562 for the month of December which will arrive in the church account mid-January.

An overview of the accounts shows that our cash balances across all funds has decreased by £6,529 and the value of investments increased by £981.

All invoices have been paid, with none outstanding.

The expenditure was £14,000 more than what was included in the budget. The income was £34,000 greater than what was include in the budget! This meant that the expected deficit of £53,600 was greatly reduced. This deficit was reduced even further by a legacy of £19,000 received early December which was not included in the budget figures as at that time we didn't know about it. As stated above the deficit for the year was £6,529.

A Gift Day took place in March which was a major factor in the income received. The Gift Day also prompted many people to increase their regular monthly/weekly donations. Increased giving helped greatly in reducing the deficit for which we praise God.

Individual Fund comments for 2023:

There have been several major costs throughout the year:

Church Hall Kitchen £38,000

Church Hall Velux Windows £1,020

Church Roof and Building Work £7,500

IT equipment was also needed for the Church Office and Youth Worker, but these were covered by donations specifically given for that purpose.

Thankfully the increased energy costs (Gas and Electric) were considerably less than what was expected.

We have maintained our giving to charities; people have been very generous at various times throughout the year and combined with the money agreed by the PCC from the general fund the total given to a variety of charities was £11,893.

Outlook for 2024

We start 2024 in a reasonable financial position. However, the budget agreed by the PCC for 2024 shows a deficit of approximately £13,000. This budget does not include any major work to be carried out on the Church or Church Hall as there are currently not sufficient funds available for such work. Please consider this as you review your giving to the work of God at St. Lawrence's during this coming year.

Finally, please may I say thank you to the many people who are involved in the various different aspects of the Church finances: Funeral and Wedding Fees, Gift Aid, Collection Counters, members of the Finance Committee, those who bank the cash offerings and donations, Church Hall Fees; all jobs that are so important to the smooth running of the Church finances.

Paul Roebuck

January 2024

Independent Examiner's report to the trustee of St Lawrence Church, Biddulph

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of St Lawrence Church (Biddulph) for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out on pages 5 to 8.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements at the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act")

I report in respect of my examination of the Trustees accounts carried out under s.145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under s145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

- (1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by s.130 of the Act; or
- (2) the accounts do not accord with those records

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



K.R. Salt

27th February 2024

BK Plus Limited
Chartered Certified Accountants
2-6 Adventure Place
Hanley
Stoke on Trent
ST1 3AF

St. Lawrence Church, Biddulph

Financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2023

Receipts and Payments Account

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Receipts					
Donations and legacies					
0101 - Gift Aid - Bank	67,740	-	10,651	78,391	66,174
0110 - Gift Aid - Envelopes	5,566	-	-	5,566	5,849
0201 - Other planned giving	6,627	-	1,560	8,187	9,160
0301 - Loose plate collections	7,740	-	-	7,740	8,102
0401 - Mission/Charities	104	-	2,240	2,345	3,084
0550 - Donations appeals etc	6,512	-	-	6,512	5,752
0601 - Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	19,930	-	2,889	22,819	30,709
0701 - Legacies	19,229	-	-	19,229	-
0801 - Recurring grants	54	-	-	54	54
Donations and legacies Totals	133,502	-	17,341	150,843	128,888
Income from charitable activities					
0902 - Youth Work Income from Subscriptions	1,817	-	-	1,817	1,432
1101 - Fees for weddings and funerals	16,850	-	-	16,850	12,699
1210 - Church Events	655	-	-	655	-
1230 - Church and Hall lettings	11,109	-	-	11,109	7,519
Income from charitable activities Totals	30,431	-	-	30,431	21,650
Other trading activities					
1240 - Church hall Renewable Energy	697	-	-	697	920
1260 - Magazine Sales and Photocopy use	156	-	-	156	11
Other trading activities Totals	853	-	-	853	931
Investments					
1001 - Dividends	1,538	-	-	1,538	968
1020 - Bank and building society interest	999	-	-	999	252
1030 - Rent from lands or buildings	7,500	-	-	7,500	6,125
Investments Totals	10,037	-	-	10,037	7,346
Other income					
1310 - Insurance claims	2,886	-	-	2,886	-
1330 - Refunds	4,741	-	-	4,741	4,931
Other income Totals	7,627	-	-	7,627	4,931
Total Receipts	182,450	-	17,340	199,791	163,747

St. Lawrence Church, Biddulph

Financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2023

Receipts and Payments Account

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Payments					
Expenditure on charitable activities					
1720 - Outreach Costs	2,129	-	-	2,129	835
1801 - Giving to missionary societies	4,062	-	120	4,182	3,816
1830 - Giving - Christian Organisations	2,909	-	1314	4,222	4,087
1850 - Home mission	1,512	-	149	1,661	1,693
1870 - General charities	953	-	875	1,828	4,681
1910 - Ministry Common Fund	60,586	-	-	60,586	62,139
2002 - Youthwork Salary Costs	-	-	22,742	22,742	12,260
2003 - Youthwork Pension Costs	-	-	1,721	1,721	894
2004 - Youthwork Training Costs	-	-	330	330	340
2005 - Youthwork Expenses	3,644	-	-	3,644	2,802
2050 - Salary of parish administrator	10,830	-	-	10,830	10,035
2101 - Working expenses of incumbent	946	-	-	946	-
2130 - Parsonage house expenses	-	-	-	-	2,415
2160 - Bank Charges	482	-	-	482	472
2201 - Parish training and mission	395	-	-	395	-
2301 - Church running - insurance	4,272	-	-	4,272	3,831
2310 - Church office/Administration	6,775	-	-	6,775	4,890
2330 - Church maintenance	2,094	-	-	2,094	1,060
2331 - Church running - Cleaning	3,737	-	-	3,737	3,451
2340 - Upkeep of services	2,761	-	-	2,761	4,162
2370 - Visiting speakers/locums/Candidates	-	-	-	-	791
2401 - Church running - electric	1,710	-	-	1,710	2,062
2410 - Church running - gas	5,917	-	-	5,917	4,333
2420 - Church Yard - water	416	-	-	416	46
2501 - Photocopy and Printing	2,833	-	-	2,833	4,169
2510 - School House running - gas	660	-	-	660	375
2511 - School House running - electricity	380	-	-	380	321
2512 - School House running - water	277	-	-	277	49
2513 - School House running - Council tax	451	-	-	451	450
2520 - Hall running - cleaning	2,964	-	-	2,964	2,362
2530 - Hall running - electricity	1,024	-	-	1,024	688
2540 - Hall running - gas	2,915	-	-	2,915	2,308
2550 - Hall running - insurance	2,830	-	-	2,830	2,646
2560 - Hall running - maintenance	1,541	-	-	1,541	1,554
2580 - Hall running -Water	203	-	-	203	356
2590 - Hall running - WiFi Network	547	-	-	547	547
2601 - Governance costs examination/audit fee	720	-	-	720	720
2701 - Church Major Work/Repairs	8,113	-	-	8,113	23,579
2801 - Hall Major Work/Repairs	37,481	-	-	37,481	6,489
Total Payments	179,069	-	27,251	206,320	177,725
Excess of Receipts over Payments	3,381	-	(9,911)	(6,529)	(13,978)

St. Lawrence Church, Biddulph

Financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2023

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Current Asset - Investments					
6511: M and G Investments	32,107	-	7,629	39,736	38,755
Current Asset - Cash At Bank And In Hand					
6501: General Bank current account	3,444	-	4,400	7,844	6,371
6502: Youth Worker Bank account	-	-	-	-	-
6505: Reserve Bank deposit account	11,464	-	23,957	35,420	44,013
6510: CCLA (CBF) deposit account	13,462	-	-	13,462	12,872
Total	28,370	-	28,357	56,727	63,256
Amount owing to the church					
Income Tax Recoverable	1,336	-	226	1,562	1,557
Liabilities - Amounts owed by the church					
Payments to Charities not yet presented	-	-	-	-	-

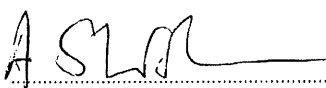
The balances of restricted funds at the year end are as follows:

	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Restricted Funds		
Restricted - Charity Funds	-	-
Restricted - Youth Worker	35,986	45,897
	<u>35,986</u>	<u>45,897</u>

Approved by the PCC on 22nd January 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

Will Drain
(Vicar)

Andrew Shufflebotham
(Churchwarden)

St. Lawrence Church, Biddulph

Financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2023

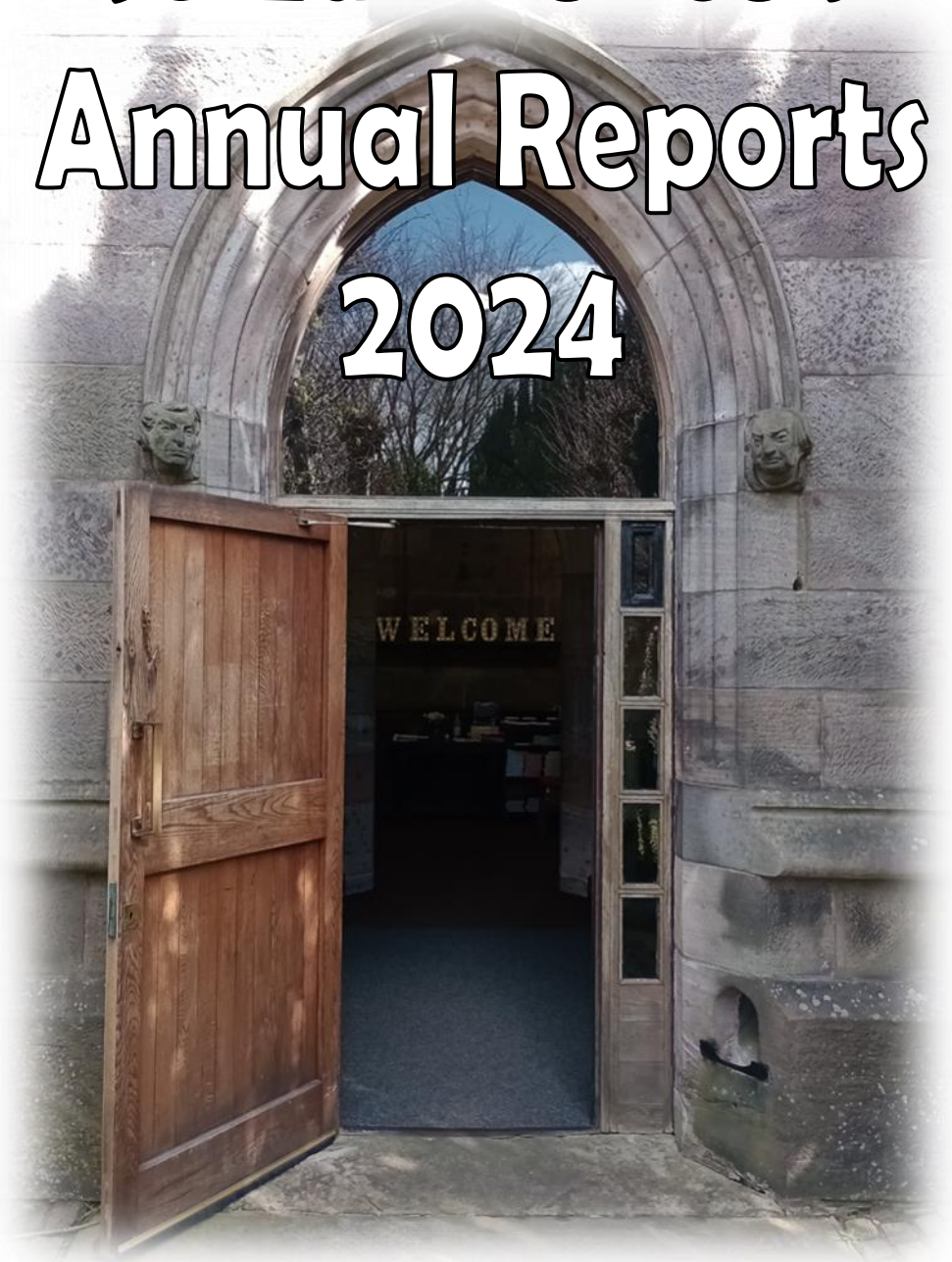
Statement of Assets and Liabilities

Notes to the accounts

1. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP guidance using the Receipt and Payments basis.
2. **South View Property.** The property at South View is vested in the Lichfield Diocesan Trust (LDT) lodged under trust number 81 on behalf of the Vicar and Churchwardens of Biddulph St Lawrence. The church receives income from this property.
3. **St Lawrence School House.** The School House is held in trust by the Churchwarden's for use by the church.
4. For use by the charity and belonging to the General Purposes Fund:

Movable church fittings held by the Vicar and Churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal are inalienable property, listed in the Church's inventory, which can be inspected (at any reasonable time).

St Lawrence's Annual Reports 2024



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APCM Vicars Report 2024

The run up to the APCM is always a great time to reflect upon the past year and I hope and pray, as you read this report, you will be as encouraged as I am.

There has been so much that has happened that we can give thanks to God for.

Vision

In the last year I launched our vision for the Church:

TOGETHER in...

Worship (UP)

Discipleship (IN)

Mission (OUT)



Everything we do is shaped in these 3 goals but all grounded in doing it together based in the fellowship of the early believers in Acts 2:42-47 with the shared purpose in Jesus. As you read the reports be encouraged as we see where we have worshipped together, grown more in discipleship together, and reached out to our town and beyond in mission together. Our prayer is that as we engage with this vision together we may go ever deeper in our relationship with God, with each other, and see daily those that are being saved added to our number.

Preaching Series

We have had 3 preaching series over the last year. In the Summer Term 2023 we looked at The Creeds as statements of what we believe. We then went deeper into our vision statement exploring what it means to engage in worship, discipleship, and outreach both as a church and in our own lives. In the Spring Term we studied Paul's letter to the Philippians. And more recently we have started our new preaching series focusing on The Sermon on the Mount. I am incredibly grateful to all those that lead and preach in our services, for those that do our Bible readings and those that lead us in intercessions. We are truly blessed by the gifting of each person. It has been wonderful to engage with the Scriptures and in this significant year of global elections I am excited to engaged with Jesus' manifesto in the Sermon on the Mount to study what he says we should be and what we should do.

Small Groups

In the Autumn we launched our new small group structure and invited the whole church to join a small group. I was greatly encouraged as we now have over 80 people attending a weekly small group. We will be reviewing the groups in the summer and providing the opportunity for more groups to be created and the chance for people to move around groups if they wish. If you aren't in a group, then please do strongly consider joining one – the benefit of being in one is tremendous and very much part of our

vision of being together in discipleship.

Events

We have run several extra events throughout the year. During the Biddulph festival we had our special REV's summer special, we had the songs of praise, and it was wonderful to see the church full when we had a comedy night with Andy Kind. Andy is booked again for this summer so look out for who you could invite this year! In September as part of the National Heritage Open Days weekend, we ran a big open fun day. We had food, crafts, bouncy castles, tours in church...the list goes on. We have estimated around 400 people came to that fun day and we have had people join our church from that event, with our Back to Church Sunday the next day. In Autumn we also ran The Tearfund Big Quiz which was a great fun night in church and a good opportunity to raise money for Tearfund. On Easter Saturday we had another fun day in the afternoon and again saw a good couple of hundred people come with again people then coming to Easter Sunday as a result. I would love for us to continue with more events over the coming year, but these aren't possible without all the volunteers that make them run. I am so grateful to every person that has been involved – you have been an incredible blessing thank you!

Alpha

In the Autumn term we ran an Alpha course with 5 attending. We have also run the Alpha Course in small groups. My hope and prayer is that this is something that will continue to grow as we look to run it again this Autumn Term – do be thinking and praying already about who you could invite.

Newcomers

It has been wonderful to have so many new people join us this year and on behalf of the whole church we welcome you and are so thankful that we get to journey with you in that sense of belonging together. The electoral roll has increased this year to above 200 which is wonderful. As we celebrate the church growing, we give all the praise to God for everything that He is doing.

Whilst we have celebrated people that have joined us, we are mindful of those that have felt it right to move on. We continue to pray for them that God may bless them in the places to which they have been called. I encourage everyone to continually look out for the empty seats of those that you may not have seen for a while and to get in touch with them to encourage them.

We are also sad at the loss of a significant brother in Christ and member of our church family, John Gibson. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with Alison, Clair, and James and all the family. He is dearly missed by us all.

Christmas & Easter

We had a wonderful time both at Christmas and Easter this year. We had significantly more people attending each service than the previous year. I was blown away on Easter Sunday when we gathered to worship our risen King and the church was so full it was standing room only. I am already excited about the things that lie ahead for us

this coming Christmas and next Easter!

It was also wonderful to have a full immersion baptism/reaffirmation/confirmation service as we celebrated with those that were baptised, wished to reaffirm their faith and be confirmed.

If you have stayed with this report up to this point, then you've done well! I've tried to keep it as brief as I could but there is so much more that could be said and so many people to thank. I am deeply grateful to every member of the Church, for the gifts you give, for the talents you share, for the encouragement you provide, and for the unswerving faith and determination to follow Jesus and His call on our lives and Church. May God bless you all in the coming year and may God continue to pour upon us the riches of His grace.

Blessings

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and a stylized "ill" following it.

Assistant Minister's Report (2024)

I continue to be involved in many of the services both in preaching and leading. I have enjoyed engaging with the teaching series. I'm sure we have had some new insights, as well as God speaking to us as individuals, through them. We have started new home groups and have got back to basics with the Alpha course.

I continue to take funerals as well as the occasional baptism. I am continuing to look at our pastoral care.

This is taking time. Keith has now taken on the responsibility for people taking communion to those who are unable to get to church. Cathy and I are in conversation on how we can best support the bereaved. Visiting continues to take place. We are going to put in place a safeguarding policy in this area. I hope that our homegroups not only care for one another but reach out to others who are not able to come to a group and share what they are studying as well as supporting them.

Another area that I continue to be involved with is Kangas and Roos. There is a report elsewhere, that speaks of this important ministry. It has changed over the years and now we get many grandparents and very young babies. I would like to step back from this so if there is anyone who would like to help in this area please speak to Annie or myself.

It is so heartening to see many new people coming along so I want to say may we continue to grow as a church in numbers and knowledge and caring. Let's enter this new term in our church with eagerness to see what God is going to do.

Lindsay

AV & Sound Desk

Many thanks to all who help with the AV & Sound Desk on Sundays and on other occasions. Special thanks to Andrew, Frank, George, Pete and Paul. Live-streaming of services continues with excellent video and sound quality. We currently live-stream both morning services and they are available live and later on our YouTube Channel www.youtube.com/@biddulphchurch We have also live-streamed some funeral services to enable relatives and friends, who are unable to attend, to participate.

Numbers vary, but between 30 and 60 people dip in to our Sunday services online each week, including a number of people in Kenya! Spread the word.

More help would be appreciated. Thanks to those who've already offered - we'll be in touch. Operating the system is not difficult and, sometime soon, we hope to be doing some AV/PA training.

Andrew Shuff



Chatter and Craft

Chatter and craft is a small group meeting in the parish room. We enjoy a wide range of crafts with plenty of experience to share and would love for more people to join us.

We are particularly good at the chattering but form close friendships at the same time. Its exciting to see new crafts emerging and seeing the progress over the weeks. Along with the usual crafts of knitting, crocheting, sewing etc. we have recently started making small lavender bags. These are put in a basket at church for anyone to take and enjoy. They have also been put in the Easter cards, which we send to those unable to attend services, and given out at some funerals, to mourners and been very well received. (We have quite a production line going on at times 😊)

We meet on the first and third Thursday of the month 1.00pm-4.00pm in the Parish room and anyone and everyone is more than welcome to join us for as long as you want. You can drop in for a cuppa or stay for the whole session. Looking forward to welcoming you to our group.



Cathy White

Youth & Children's Leader Report

No report on our work with children and young people would be complete without Vibes (our holiday club for children in First and Middle schools)... so let's start there.

Vibes 2023 focused on the theme of Restoration Station and explored how Jesus restores us to wholeness through the stories of Jesus' healings. We may not think that we need healing, but having our relationship with God restored through Jesus' is at the heart of our ministry with children and young people.

A few key highlights from the week:

- ✓ Online booking for the first year making it much easier to book in.
- ✓ 58 children hearing a message of how we can follow Jesus.
- ✓ 30 adults giving their time and energy to teach and care for children for a whole week in the Summer.
- ✓ 4 young volunteers getting involved in making Vibes happen and being role models to the younger children.
- ✓ Friday 'community day' where we invited whole families to engage in activities and have some fun and a picnic together.
- ✓ 5 children joining NRG after enjoying Vibes so much.

We received some lovely feedback from parents, and it's good to see the connections growing after the enforced break because of the pandemic.

We asked people to tell us the three best things, and this sums it up from one



response, “the activities, the helpers, being in the Church”.

As we look forward to Vibes 2024 (Deep Sea Divers) we’re praying that lots of the children come back, and that they loved it so much they bring a friend.

NRG and NRG+ runs weekly during term time and follows a Bible-focused curriculum with games and activities.



It’s been a pleasure this year to chat to parents as they drop-off and collect their children, deepening our relationships with them and giving us opportunities to invite them to other things that are happening. We’ve got some clear distinct groups of friends and we’re working at building community within the groups, including some social trips out.

It was with great sadness we said ‘goodbye’ to some of our long-standing members in the summer as they grow older, but most of them are now attending the Youth Games sessions on a Sunday evening and are interested in volunteering at Vibes.

Youth Games has also developed in the last year, moving from the Vicarage to the Church Hall so we can accommodate more people. It’s open to young people in school years 8-13 and meets monthly at the moment. We regularly see 9 young people and are blessed to have parents making food for us so we can spend time playing games and getting to know each other well. We’re currently limited to how often we can meet by the availability of the leaders so more people on the team might give us some more options to grow and develop this group.

Another area where we’ve seen growth in numbers of children is in our group that meets on **Sunday morning**. We may not see the same children every week, but there are 10 children and young people on the register in addition to a few children who are too young or choose to stay in church during the 11am service. We follow the whole church teaching themes and enjoy playing games, exploring the Bible and making something together most weeks. A particular encouragement has come from parent’s saying that their child loves coming to church because of the group and we pray that will continue. One of our biggest challenges is the wide age-range of the group and the numbers of leaders that make it difficult to split into more age-appropriate groups.

As much as we invest in the children and young people in our church, we also have a huge heart for those in our community. One of the ways we’re being a positive Christian influence is through the **schools**. In the past year the Open the Book team have been invited into Knypersley First School in addition to their long-standing presence in Oxhey and Kingsfield. This is a key part of our ministry that the schools value and the children love, which also allows us to give each child a book at Christmas including an invitation to the Christmas Services. Local schools have also joined us for Harvest and Christmas, and I’ve been able to join Oxhey and Kingsfield to support the RE Cur-



riculum. We're still praying for Woodhouse and we trust that God will open the right doors to enable us to grow relationships there.

One of the newer things we've started, that will help us get to know the families in our community, are Fun Days. The first one in September was brilliantly attended and lots of people had fun and experienced Christian hospitality alongside an invitation to come be part of St. Lawrence's. This is something that we're seeing fruit from and that will develop into regular events as part of our focus on reaching out to those in our community.

If you've read this far, well done. If you're just after the highlights (we'll call them prayer points), I've got your back:

- Give thanks for the amazing people involved in the ministry with children and young people throughout the year (there are far too many to name, but they're all super stars).
- Pray for opportunities to share God's Good News throughout the year ahead in schools.
- Pray for suitable adults to join the teams for groups that meet on Sunday.

Chrissi Thompson

Churchwardens' report

Last spring, Shuff took on the role of Churchwarden as Alison Gibson stepped down. He brought his life experience of being part of the St Lawrence's Church family in many guises, not least, from having done this before. It has also been good to have Andrew Nesom as an assistant warden.

There have been many opportunities to serve God, our Church and our Community. We are so grateful to everyone who volunteers in any way. We'd like especially to thank our vergers Frank and the teams of sidespeople who serve faithfully at each of our services.

We also appreciate the gifts of those who help maintain the fabric of the church and church hall, keep our grounds tidy, and look after our finances.

The body of the Church is made of many parts which rely on each other to build it up. Every bit, large and small, is vital to becoming a witness to the greatness of God. I would encourage each one of us to play an active part in our church, from practical and physical help to prayerful support of all that goes on.

We have welcomed several new members in each congregation, and we give thanks to God for each of them. It is encouraging to see all that we are able to offer to our community as well as encouraging each other, and to experience worship in larger numbers.

Finally, thanks to our vicar, Will (and his family) – for his inspiring preaching, for his enthusiasm for Jesus, and for his vision for the future of St. Lawrence's.

Jill & Shuff



Community Café

Although the Cafe was disrupted for the kitchen refurbishment we had an enjoyable time together again in 2023. During the year we provided a Coronation Lunch and a Christmas Lunch and also raised over £600 for local, national and international charities.

A massive thanks once again to our cake bakers, helpers and customers.

It would be very helpful if you could contact me (07443016883) if you could make a cake sometimes or could be called on to help when our regular helpers are unable to be there. At the end of the Cafe we try to send cake to housebound members of the congregation, sick neighbours or someone you just feel needs cheering up at no charge. Please ask for a gift labelled container to take to someone you would like to visit. Thanks Alison Gibson



Alison Gibson

Leek Deanery Synod report

Meetings over the last year have included presentations by:

Rachel Ortiz about the *Creation Sings! workshop for year 4/5/6 pupils*

Simon Foster from the Diocesan Mission Team on four new initiatives by the Diocese which are: Parish Vocations, Pioneering Parishes, Growing Faith and Gospel Readings.

Lindsay Stockton about the work of Leek Foodbank

Recent news from the deanery includes:

We still await the final decision by the Church Commissioners on the Shaping for Mission proposals.

Rev'd Henry James Hope, has been appointed to serve as the new Team Vicar of All Saints, Leek and Curate-in-Charge of St Edward the Confessor, Cheddleton.

The Diocese will be holding a Day of Prayer on Wednesday 1st and Thursday 2nd May. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88678466955?pwd=Q0REeXFKZk5uUkcvbUSVEpYazRzdz09> which will take you to the virtual Prayer Room.

Leek Deanery will be leading the prayers from 7.00pm-7.30pm on Wednesday evening On Friday 3rd at 7.30pm May Manna Theatre Company will be performing their Easter production *Relentless Love at St Edward's Church in Leek*.

There is one vacancy for the remaining 2 years as Deanery Synod representative for which an Election will take place at this year's APCM.

Margaret Hulstone

Electoral Roll

As of April 2024 the Electoral Roll for this year stands at a total of 201 members. 134 of those are Residents of the parish and 67 of those are Non Residents of the parish.

This is 6 more than our total of 128 residents last year and no change to our 67 Non Residents last year.

We endeavour to continue our mission in adding to our Church family also I will try and encourage more people to



The Church Electoral Roll



join the Electoral Roll if they wish to do so. As we continue to grow our family we hope that this will encourage those not on the Electoral Roll to join.

Karl Thomas Pointon
Electoral Roll Officer (E.R.O)

Fabric Report

The major upgrade to our buildings has been the refurbishment of the Church Hall kitchen. After several months of closure in the middle of 2023, the new fully equipped facility was used for the first time in September and already has proved to be an invaluable asset at a number of large scale church events and also with the regular users of the the hall. Thanks to those who made it possible, especially to those who made donations to finance it. We owe much to the Late John Gibson who oversaw the project.

Maintenance work has included a temporary repair to the church roof, the removal of wasps from the church and flies from the church hall, replacement of the mixer taps on the church servery, servicing of boilers, an external water tap at the church hall, repairs to the vestry external door, repairs to roof windows in the church hall, and replacement of some malfunctioning lights.

We are grateful to the Monday Team - Mick, Ken, Steve & John, who keep our grounds tidy and do other minor items of repair work.

Buildings & Grounds Team

Church Gardens & Odd Jobs

Once more the Monday team have kept on top of the general maintenance of the Church garden and surrounding area, such as mowing, hedge cutting, pruning and various outside maintenance tasks.

We had a trench dug out at the side of the coach house to stop damp ingress. The cross for Easter was repainted, the seat dedicated to Alec Wright was rubbed down and repainted - Alec Wright was a former organist for the church.

We also had an outside tap plumbed in, cleaned the drain in bottom corner of the car park which keeps flooding, waiting for the council to do their bit in the road. Power washed the soft play area. Various jobs for Will, Chrissi and other Church members. Helped out at VIBES and other church functions.

John, Ken, Mick and Steve



St. Lawrence's Church Flower Arranging

We are a team of eight ladies who decorate the Church with flowers at Easter & Harvest. We use fresh flowers which are then taken out and delivered to some of our parishioners, who are ill or have been bereaved or need a special touch.

We use artificial flowers for the rest of the year as the cost of living is still rising.

At Christmas we decorate with fresh foliage and artificial flowers.

Stay Safe



Val Belford & The Flower Arranging Team

GiftAid

Turning £10 into £12.50 or

£40 into £50 or

£600 into £750. Yes really!

If you are a taxpayer (that's most of us I guess) this can be done simply to make your weekly, monthly and annual donations go much further, by 25% at no extra cost to yourself.

This is exactly what the UK Giftaid scheme does for charities and churches that includes us at St Lawrence's. It is easy to set up, I'm happy to help you do that and there are no tax forms to fill in! It is done confidentially.

I would like to say a big thank you to all who already use Giftaid for your regular gifts. It is much appreciated.

At this time where the income tax threshold for all of us is remaining the same as last year, more of us will have an increase in our tax payments.

With this in mind can I ask everyone including those on pensions to consider if you are able to join the Giftaid scheme so that more of us at St Lawrence's can use our donations efficiently.

If you are able to join this group there are Giftaid application forms in church or it can be done online via the St Lawrence's website.

If you're not sure or would like further information please contact Rob Beech via the Church Office. Thank you.



Rob Beech, Giftaid Secretary.

Kangas & Roos

We have had another lovely year with the mums, grandparents, and carers, and all the little babies!. Quite a few of our older ones have left for nursery and we're back to having tiny tots once more. We do occasional crafts (babies aren't quite so adept at glueing and colouring.....but the adults are!) and still enjoy a sing song at the end of each session. We have been able to have some more in depth conversations with some of the adults and several families have started attending Church on an ad-hoc basis. We are thinking of doing an Alpha



for mums in the autumn if there is interest. It is such a short time we have to share in the family joy of 'bringing up baby' and for some who come along it is either their first introduction to 'Church', or the only interaction with ' Church' they have during the week, so please do pray for these valuable first few years.

We do really need another person to come on board our team of two, so please do give it some serious thought. We meet every Tuesday during term time from 12.30pm-- 2.30pm, to set up and put away before and after.

Thank you to Lindsay for her commitment each week, and to Chrissie who often pops in to chat with folk.

Annie Roebuck

Kintsugi Hope

As well as seeking to continue supporting those who took part in groups one and two, Jill Gover, Ruth Mitchell and I ran our third Kintsugi Hope Wellbeing Group from April to July 2023 with 6 participants.

Our motivation to keep running these groups comes from God but also from the many amazing people we have come to know at a deeper level in our groups. Feedback shows us that this is a worthwhile ministry.

Our thanks to Amanda Brown who has been our co-leader, greeter and drink maker but stepped down from this role at the end of the third course



Meg Jones

Ladies What Brunch

Ladies what brunch has been going for over a year now and has been a great success! It is a time for sisters in Christ and any other women, to come together in a comfortable and neutral setting to get to know each other on a deeper level.

The second Saturday of each month, we meet at Astbury Gardens Centre cafe, enjoying a coffee and breakfast in a warm and welcoming environment.

Having conversations with different women each time has been so heartfelt and joyful. I pray for the future that we continue to meet as a group under the Lords care and hopefully reach out to more women in our community to offer a safe space, pure friendships and love.

Thank you to all those who have attended this far. God bless.



Leanne Warburton

St. Lawrence's Men's Breakfast

Our monthly Men's Breakfast continues to meet in The Bradley Green (Wetherspoons), situated on Biddulph High Street.

We usually meet at 9.00am on the third Saturday in the month. There is an excellent range of breakfasts from a bacon butty to a large traditional breakfast with added black pudding! This is washed down by limitless tea or coffee.

We average around between 15 and 20 attendees each month, whose ages range from 11 years (children and grandchildren of members) up to 80 years young. We continue to welcome friends from other Churches in Biddulph and Biddulph Moor.

Our aim is to increase in numbers and to continue to welcome men who are on the fringes of our churches.

So....if you haven't been before, why not give us a visit. We can be found in the small raised area to the left of the main entrance. You can be assured of a friendly welcome with good food and fellowship.



Keith Jones



St. Lawrence's Mission Support Group

Our Mission Support Group (MSG) encourages church members to pray for the individuals and organisations that we support.

As a church, we have agreed to pray regularly for:

- ACK St. Paul's Church, Syongila, Kenya (Our Partner Church)
- Alison Talbert and Upendo Orphans Support Project in Kilifi
- Crosslinks
- Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS)
- Tear Fund
- Christian Solidarity Worldwide
- SANCTUS at the YMCA

More information about these can be found on our website.

We also support these organisations financially.

Among other organisations that we support financially to a lesser extent are Kintsugi Hope and the Biddulph Foodbanks.

We are grateful to God that, through his provision, we are able to support such valuable work.

Last year was an exciting time for us at St. Lawrence's when David & Ruth from Syongila came to visit us here in Biddulph. It was fantastic to meet them, hear their news and to find out more about the church in Kenya. Thanks to all those who hosted our guests. 2024 promises to be equally exciting as a group is planning to visit Kenya later in the year.

Supporting our Mission Partners and local and international charities is an important part of life at St. Lawrence's and we are constantly looking for imaginative ways to make our mission links more effective.

Andrew Shuff

Nibble & Natter

Nibble & Natter continued to meet every Monday morning for friendship and a light lunch. There is a core of regular attendees and others who drop in every now and then. Some are from within the church and others outside. We pray that they can continue to find this a welcoming space.

This wouldn't be possible without our team of wonderful volunteers for whom we give thanks.

We pray for deeper relationships and more chances to share Jesus' love into Biddulph on a Monday.



Andrew & Maggie Nesom

Open the Book

Open the Book (OtB) is an exciting storytelling project where Bible stories are shared with children in a way that is fun, interactive and memorable. As invited guests in school, the team use the Open the Book programme to prepare and present a 10–15-minute scripted Bible story to a school assembly, involving the children as much as possible.

Last September St Lawrence's team hosted a training day led by Alex Wolvers, an OTB trainer. This was an opportunity to refresh our skills, learn about the newly published story telling materials, as well as sharing experiences with teams from other churches in the area.



Last Autumn we were delighted to accept a request from Knypersley first school to do storytelling sessions, along with Kingsfield and Oxhey we visit each school twice each half term.

If you are able to commit approximately two hours every fortnight and are willing to dress up and do a little acting (no memorising required) consider joining the team.

For more information please contact Carole Taylor - on behalf of St. Lawrence's Open The Book team.

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Carole Taylor

Parish Assistant

The Office still remains busy and it's so nice to be able to have visitors again.

My duties continue to keep me occupied and are varied and diverse.

Some of my jobs are to deal with Funerals, Weddings and Baptisms as well as bookings for the Church & Church Hall.

I've noticed a massive increase in Baptism requests, so our new way of offering Baptisms outside of the regular 11.00am morning service was a great idea.

Weddings bookings are down, we do seem to be having far fewer these days.

Biddulph Up In Arms Concerts seem to be very popular and have certainly put us on the map with artists asking to play here because of the 'lovely Church.' It is a particular draw for the American artists who play.

I hope you've seen an improvement in the STL's LINK as I have a few extra programmes to play with.

I have very happy with the generous gift of a new computer which has made my job much better and quicker.

I ask that you continue to pray for me in the role I serve, so that I may be a welcoming face and voice of the Church.

Opening Times Tuesday to Friday 9am-12 noon.

Please do note that whilst I'm in the office on Mondays the Office is not open to visitors.



Gez Chell

PCC Secretary's report

The PCC, under Gods guidance, meets every two months as a committee discussing important and relevant issues and matters that arise as a Church, regularly updating on building and grounds maintenance.

A thorough report of finances is presented by the treasurer each time we meet with outlines of where we are and need to be. There are opportunities to ask questions.

The wardens report any notices and up coming events we as, as a Church, are doing. The vicar presents his report at every meeting detailing the past few months events and how he feels they have progressed and shares his vision for the next period.

Each PCC begins and ends with a prayer that the centre focus and activity is Gods purpose.

If you have anything that you'd like the PCC to discuss, please give notice to vicar Will, the church wardens or me, Leanne, well before the date of the next meeting.

Leanne Warburton

Prayer

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

1 Thessalonians:

We have an amazing God who is always with us. He has answered prayer this year in so many ways. We have so much to be thankful for.

We hold a weekly prayer meeting in the Quiet Room in School House at 9.15 am on Wednesdays where all are welcome.

This year we started a series of Prayer Days on certain Saturdays. The church has been open from 8am for anyone to come and pray about aspects of our Church, church family and community. It is a very quiet space to be with God. We hope to be open for 24hours in June.

The response has been wonderful.

Prayer ministry is also offered between the 9.15 and 11am services on Sundays. We hope to develop this further. The Heath Memorial Chapel has some resources for private prayer and is there for everyone.



Prayer is a gift and our way of communicating with our Heavenly Father. It is a two-way process and we have so much to learn in listening to God as well as how we pray. Our relationship with God is intimate and unique and life changing. What opportunities we are given to pray for ourselves and others in our unsettled world.

Jill Gover

Prayer Stations

A Prayer Station is an installation with something to look at or do that inspires prayer and personal reflection.

Prayer Stations at St Lawrence's are set up in church on two occasions during the year, at Advent and on Good Friday, to provide an opportunity for personal prayer and reflection in preparation for the festivals of Christmas and Easter.

The Stations at the beginning of December focussed on Advent as a Season of Hope and looked at some of the symbols of hope found in the Bible

The Prayer Stations for Good Friday followed the theme of the nails which held Jesus on the cross.

This year the large cross was placed at the front of the church, surrounded by some of the things that represent Jesus' betrayal, denial and crucifixion. This was left in place, along with some of the prayer activities for those who visited the church as part of the funday which took place on the Saturday.

Thanks to all who helped in any way and to those who visited the stations.

Margaret Hulstone

REVS Biddulph

Revs Biddulph is a project supported by the Church and is part of a wider Revs community, pioneered by the Rev, Adam Gompertz, to give those loving all things automotive, a chance to meet.

On the last Saturday of the month - between March and October, you'll find a wide range of classic vehicles on the Church hall car-park bringing a community of vehicle enthusiasts of all ages and backgrounds together.

None of this would have been possible without John Gibson who was instrumental in starting Revs Biddulph. Many of you will know that John recently passed away and his knowledge and passion for all things automotive, including restoration, will be greatly missed.

As a group of about 30 members, we are looking to continue John's legacy to provide a space where enthusiasts can share and find support in difficult times of life.

As vehicles need restoration from time to time, the same is true for all of us and Revs Biddulph is an opportunity to take a break, have time out looking under a bonnet, admire a job well done but also find a listening ear and an offer of prayer.



Our first car meet took place on 25th March with around 20 vehicle owners supporting the event. We also held a car show on Sat 29th July as part of the Biddulph Festival with over 100 classic vehicles, lots of visitors helped along by some lovely weather. It may have been a bit colder in December, but our Carols by Carlight event was well attended by both Revs Biddulph group and Church members. None of our events would be possible without our incredible supporters who provide drinks, food, marshalling support and of course a warm smile and friendship.

Our Fuel for Thoughts Leaflets give an opportunity for those attending to take something away to think about with a special emphasis on the restoration of lives. Revs Biddulph is an exciting group to belong to with lots to look forward to in the future, including Revs Biddulph Car Show for the Biddulph Festival which is taking place on Sat 27th July 2024. At this event, we will have table top sales and our group will be raising money for Action for Pulmonary Fibrosis in John's memory and the Church support will be greatly appreciated. We pray for God to guide us as we open our car doors and Church facilities to show the love of Jesus.

Stuart Hackney

St Lawrence's Church Safeguarding Report

This is my third Report as Safeguarding Coordinator for our Church of St. Lawrence, Biddulph, and thanks be to God that I am able to declare that although there have been two matters requiring guidance, there have not been any issues of concern which I need to bring to your attention.

I consider this to be a very positive situation, as our congregation continues to grow and we welcome newcomers into our Church, for which thanks must go to our Vicar Will Drain and his family, and our Youth and Children's Leader, Chrissi Thompson, not forgetting all those wonderful people who so generously give their time to ensure the smooth running of all the many activities that our Church has to offer.

I remain as the first port of call should there be any matters of concern, and my details are on display in the Church and Church Hall, our website, and on the St. Lawrence's Link which gives news on all the forthcoming week's activities.



Eileen Cox
Safeguarding Coordinator

Small Groups

This year has seen a change in the name and the make up of our groups. The Vicar invited and encouraged every church member to sign up to join the newly named '**Small Groups**'. At the same time the old Home Study Groups were disbanded. These new groups meet every week and enable mutual support, encouragement and prayer for one another.

The first programme of study for the new groups has been the **Alpha Course**. Most groups have now completed this course and are now engaging with '**The Lectio Course**'. This is a five week



course on prayer.

PRAISE AND PRAYER

We give thanks for the growth in numbers attending the new groups and pray that many more church members will consider joining a group.

Keith Jones

Worship

Sunday 9.15 Worship Team and the Christmas Choir

We have a small team of dedicated singers and musicians who lead sung worship at our Sunday at 9.15 service. If you'd like to be added to the team, please let me know. You'd be most welcome.

Special thanks go to Janet, Barbara, Maggie, Mike and particularly to our organist, Linda.

We were very sad that John Gibson, who had been a faithful member of the group, passed away earlier this year. John was an enthusiast for hymns and church music in general and was an excellent tenor. We will miss him. Our condolences go to Alison, Clair and James and to John's wider family and friends.

Our two Carols by Candlelight Services took place again on the Sunday evening a week before Christmas Day. There were many very positive comments about the services and there was a full church for both. We were blessed by the traditional Christmas readings and by beautiful singing from our Christmas Choir.



Andrew Shuff



St Lawrence's
Church
BIDDULPH



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND