



ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

APCM 2025

SUNDAY 6th APRIL



Agenda

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

PART I

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Rector

PART 2 : THE ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

All who live in the parish or who are on the Church Electoral Roll are eligible to vote for Churchwardens.

3. To confirm Minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2024
4. To elect two churchwardens.

PART 3 : ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

All who are on the Church Electoral Roll are eligible to vote for the PCC. In their report the Churchwardens have referred to the fabric of the church and any matters they wish to bring to your attention as they are formally required to do. Before you come to the meeting please read the reports below about different facets of our church life.

5. To confirm Minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2024
6. Matters arising from last year's meeting
7. To receive the reports
8. Finance
 - i To thank the PCC Finance Advisory Committee for their overview and advice
 - ii To receive the Treasurer's presentation of the examined accounts
 - iii To formally adopt the accounts
 - iv To appoint an Independent Examiner
9. Elections to the PCC (conducted by the Churchwardens)
10. Election to Deanery Synod (conducted by the Churchwardens)
10. To receive the names of Sides-people (names to be read out by a Churchwarden)
11. Any other business
12. The date proposed for next year's Annual Meeting is 22nd March 2026.

Parochial Church Council

Members of the PCC are elected for a three-year term of office. The two churchwardens are elected at the APCM annually. Deanery Synod members are elected every three years and are ex-officio members of the PCC. All PCC officers are elected at the first PCC meeting after the APCM.

The Rector is chair of the PCC. A deputy chair is elected at the first meeting after the APCM and is usually one of the Churchwardens. The Parish Administrator also plays a large part in the management of our church life, carrying out many of the requests and decisions of the PCC.

CREW undertake any work between PCC meetings, as directed by them and to maintain the diary, consider the work of the Pastoral Support Group and the operational activities of the church. CREW consists of the Rector, the Curate, Occasional Preacher, Wardens, Deputy Warden, a member of the PCC and the Administrator who clerks the meeting.

Events March 2024 to April 2025

During the past year, the PCC has met on 6 occasions. The following topics comprised the main business of the PCC meetings:

- The work of the Mission Action Planning and Stewardship Groups
- The work of the Mission Enabler
- Projects including reordering of the chancel, lighting the tower and a welcome desk
- Finances
- School including governors for St Nicolas' School
- Purchase of the Makin organ
- Safeguarding, particularly training
- Review of PCC policies and regular update of Electoral Roll.
- Regular updates from Deanery Synod.
- Support of projects and good causes.

Rector's report

I often quote my old friend from College, now Bishop of Lagos mainland, Nigeria, that 'it takes a village to raise a child and that the child helps teach the village'. This community approach to learning and leading is precisely the model to follow. At St Nicolas I believe that we come close to those virtues and that vision of learning together, for we are, as part of the Body of Christ - the mystical reality of the Church - the children of God and brother and sister to one another. As brothers and sisters we look out for each other - we see the good, render to no one evil for evil, we build up rather than look to tear strips off one another - in short, we live as the body of Christ. That takes, as Blessed Paul reminds us in scripture, a collaborative approach and that collaboration, that dedication, is what I see day in, day out, in the live streaming of our services, Tuesday Group, Cafe Play, Toastie Tuesdays, Messy Church, the visiting group, Good Grief club, Friday lunches, Beer and Banter, Fizz and Friends, Junior Church, Walsingham Cell, Curry and Qs., Beavers - the list goes on. All of these things require the goodwill, time and talents of a core group of people and the larger group of volunteers and I thank God for you all in willing to offer so much of yourselves to this community. It is a vision of the Kingdom of God and as Saints in that kingdom we should not be bashful in celebrating our very nature. Special thanks must go, of course, to my Wardens, Deputy Warden and Warden Emeritus and to Cath whose ownership of the Tardis can be the only explanation for all the things she finds time to fit into her days and nights.

At the heart of St Nicolas is our worship - it defines us and reflects our priorities and love of God. My thanks to Donald for taking the role of Head Server and to the serving team who seem to be growing in number by the week. To our Organist, Rick, and the Foundation Singers as well as our growing group of congregational singers. It is a joy to see both music groups now having a role in leading worship. As a reflection of the time and priority we

give to our church building, I am grateful too, to the Mission and Stewardship groups who have worked as subcommittees of the PCC over the year to produce some thoughts and who have also actioned some plans to refresh how best to use the space we are given and the money and offerings to make that possible. I am particularly indebted to David Greenwood and to Jill Sandham who have worked tirelessly in the past three months in particular, but also to the rest of the group who have spent time on the reports.

Of course the church beyond the walls is where we are sent and should be our dual focus - not just Sundays! At the end of each Eucharist we are minded to go 'to love and serve the Lord' and so I am grateful for all the work that happens in the week here and beyond the walls and much of which is down to Nicky, our Mission Enabler. Her tireless enthusiasm and creativity is a real blessing - and to all the leaders who work alongside her as well as running the growing number of groups listed above.

Our school continues to evolve and our new Headteacher, Stina, really enjoyed seeing what we mean by School in Church as we walked our children from their classrooms to their church and here we celebrated Candlemass. We processed around the church, led by candles, singing 'Ave, Ave, Ave Maria' as we processed to Our Lady. It brought a few tears to some leaders' eyes! Most recently, I 'ashed' the children for the beginning of Lent and watching their expressions as I said the words, 'Remember that you are a child of God and loved'. It is perhaps, one of the most poignant days in the school year. We recently had our SIAMS inspection and the outcomes were very good indeed. Both the Director of Education and I were very pleased with the final report. Our School will make its way into Enlighten Learning Trust this year, please God, and the Board of Governors will cease to be as they are now, and replaced within the larger family of Christian schools, with the local board.

Our Romanian congregation continues to be with us and having lost our dear Fr Adrian who now rests in his native soil, we await the appointment of the next priest.

We continue to welcome Ordinands on placement - Luke, Jan, Janet and Ivan this year.

Fr Alistair has one more year with us and will start looking for his first appointment from November and to move by summer 2026 - tempus fugit!

In my Annual Reports for 2023 and 2024 I stated that our financial position remains somewhat complex. That remains the case. I laid the ground for focussing our attention on giving and began conversations about particular contributions. I called it a soft take-off. Following this, Phil, as Deputy Warden has taken responsibility for the Planned Giving work and together with David Greenwood and Patrick as Treasurer, we have started to focus upon our financial giving. Early indications are that this is going to be a marathon rather than a sprint! We need to ensure that we keep on keeping on in this regard if we are to maintain the work that has begun. It is a shared endeavour and a shared responsibility and as we have learnt during our Lent course, it is the vocation we all share as the priesthood of all believers. We will, I am sure, in the next year, be able to see any changes to giving and it is then, most likely at the next APCM, that we shall have to cut our cloth as things cannot be the same next year, I am afraid. I am, as ever, grateful to Iain Ferguson, David Coom, Patrick and Darrol who make up the Finance Committee together with Peter our Warden Emeritus on the DGT who all give freely of their expertise and time in not only ensuring we are financially stable but are savvy with money which sits in the common purse. There is much to be excited by in terms of our numerical growth and the depth of commitment which makes St Nicolas a special place, a jewel of great price and in the end, it is in God's hands of course, but the answer to our prayers he has already given and it's in our pockets.

The national picture of the CofE this year has been somewhat turbulent with the unprecedented resignation of an Archbishop of Canterbury. Whatever the details - and none of us can pretend to master them all - the issue of Safeguarding was and remains central. Our own Diocesan and most particularly, parish safeguarding staff and procedures are excellent. This is in no small part to the experience and professional approach of Jo and Jill. Their wisdom and record keeping, their ensuring that all of our provision is holy and safe is a real blessing to us all and I want to thank them here, for the record. As the year rolls by we shall, no doubt, hear much about General Synod's debates in regard to Human Sexuality, prayers for same sex couples and the small matter of the next Archbishop. At various meetings as Area Dean I am often asked how the mood of the deanery is. I always say the same thing:

the CofE is the local church and if we can gather anything from recent turbulence it is that the parish is the heart of the established church and that means you and me. We are the face of Christ to our neighbours - we are the village and it is up to you and to me to wear that lightly - to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God. If our local picture is anything to go by, the future is very much in God's hands and our pockets.

Fr Neil

Churchwardens' report

Fabric report

JANUARY	Lightning Conductor Test Replacement socket fitted in Hall
FEBRUARY	PTZ camera fixed - circuit breaker tripped Push/Pull handles fitted to Centre doors Centre automatic door repaired Kitchen shutters repaired Radiator valve repaired in St George's Chapel Quire Altar resited and Altar Rails removed Adjustments made to Sound desk to improve sound output
MARCH	Tubes replaced in Parish Centre New portable Altar and priests chairs delivered PAT Testing carried out
APRIL	Quinquennial inspection carried out
MAY	Hoppers and Gutters cleared
JUNE	Shelves erected for new organ speakers Church piano tuned
JULY	Selected spotlights upgraded to LED
AUGUST	Silver birch tree on Millmead pruned Centre windows cleaned Section of raised floor tiles in Centre repaired
SEPTEMBER	Emergency lighting installed in tower and disabled toilet Boilers serviced Makin Digital organ installed Hall piano tuned
OCTOBER	New organ "voiced" New electrical sockets fitted in chancel Church boiler 2 repaired Hall floor cleaned and sealed
NOVEMBER	Church piano tuned 2nd phase of spot lamp upgrade to LED Burco boiler in kitchen repaired
DECEMBER	Fire extinguishers & blankets serviced Underfloor heating in Atrium investigated for fault

I always start this report by reading the log book records to remind myself what has been undertaken in the church and centre over the past year. As you can see it is mainly routine repairs and maintenance, however, you will note there are also some significant milestones.

In February the quire altar was resited after approximately 65 years dominating the chancel. We are pleased that after much discussion and deliberation we were able to retain the altar in the church and rename it the Altar of the Holy Cross. In case you hadn't noticed, it is now at the west end of the Lady chapel aisle and is used by our Romanian friends as a permanent corner for their use when they are not using the main church.

The chancel rails were also removed and these two actions have made a significant difference to the way in which the church and particularly the chancel can be used. This has been remarked upon by a number of our visiting choirs and groups, which together with the new chairs, great acoustics and beauty of the church makes us an attractive venue for both amateur and small professional groups.

We still need to address the tiled floor in the chancel and this will be progressed with new designs in conjunction with our architect in the course of this year.

The new altar and priest chairs give Fr Neil the flexibility to use the church space flexibly and imaginatively when appropriate whilst being very easy to reset to a standard layout. Indeed there have been a number of occasions when we have had our service in a curved or completely round configuration only for it to be reset in a matter of 15 minutes for the Romanians to have their service in their preferred setting.

The quinquennial inspection was carried out in April. This was the last piece of work that Michael Staff ARB AABC, our architect for the last 25 or so years, completed for us before his retirement. I am pleased to report that there are no major issues to be addressed, mainly routine maintenance to be carried out in specific areas over the next 3 to 5 years.

In February this year the PCC approved the appointment of a new architect from the same practise, Nye Saunders, His name is Adam Hieke. Adam is a highly respected architect and has extensive experience in church architecture and maintenance; we look forward to working with him in the future.

In July you will note that some of our lighting in the church was upgraded to LED lighting and fittings replaced where necessary. This is the first stage of our plan to upgrade all of the lighting in the church and parish centre to LED. This not only will significantly reduce our carbon footprint but will also save us a significant amount of money through reduced electricity bills. We are in the process of seeking a grant from SCC to complete this process.

In September our new Makin digital organ was delivered and installed. Whilst there are still some teething problems that Rick is addressing with the manufacturer, it has been great to be able to have a reliable and impressive instrument to accompany our worship.

Our focus for this year is to tidy up the Narthex and progress plans for improving facilities in the church for visitors and all the many groups from the church and community that use our facilities.

Our centre is used extensively through the week and we have a number of regular hirers with a diverse range of activities; Flamenco dancing, Historical Society, Salsa dancing, Life drawing and Guildford Theatre Group to name just a few, whilst the number of choirs etc that are using the church is also growing.

Andy Anderson, Patrick Andrew and I ran the Cards for Good Causes pop up shop again this year and we would like to thank you all for purchasing cards and gifts. Whilst our sales were down by 8% in total, this was a better result than we expected in what is a challenging commercial environment and a declining market. We are lucky to have a solid base of regular customers who come from all over the borough to shop with us. This also contributes to church funds through a small licensing fee that the CFGC organisation pay us to cover our costs. We are indebted to the 30 dedicated volunteers who help us each year.

We added Lloyd Dunkley to the streaming team this last year. Lloyd has been a great addition to the team and I would like to thank him and of course Andy Anderson for their continued dedication to providing this important mission activity for those who cannot worship in person.

I would like to thank my fellow Churchwarden Hilary, who is a joy to work with and Phil Thomas as Deputy Churchwarden, along with Peter Oldroyd who covers some of my duties whilst Jo and I are away.

Fr Neil has mentioned Cath and her extraordinary capacity to get things done and I would like to add the thanks of the church wardens and all of the congregation for the superb work she does on our behalf.

Finally Hilary and I would like to thank everyone who gets involved, whether a little or a lot, this is essential to making St Nicolas a welcome and supportive community.

Darrol Radley

Mission Enabler Report

Junior Church

Our children's group that runs alongside the 10am service is run by Cath and myself on alternating weeks, supported by parent helpers. The children engage well with the crafts, story and games on offer and we have built lovely relationships with these families. The church has seen an increase in families with younger children recently as we have quite a few babies and toddlers in our services for whom Junior Church is not particularly suitable, so I am interested in starting a creche in the near future.

Toastie Tuesdays

In January we started our monthly Junior youth group, Toastie Tuesdays for school years 3-6. The children come and play all sorts of games, such as board games, computer games, parachute games and even hide and seek! We also have table tennis, table football and a craft table. The tuck shop is very popular and the church always smells like delicious toasties afterwards! The group grew steadily over the year with up to 25 children attending each month. We have a wonderful team, Fr Alistair, Jo, Lloyd, Pauline, Jana, Holly and Mia who have embraced the chaos beautifully, a huge thank you to all of you. We would also like to say a huge thank you to those who supported us financially in getting the group started so that we could have our Nintendo Switch. This group has been a great way for children to relax in a safe space, gain a little independence and grow in confidence, make new friends and explore our beautiful church.

Cafe Play

Our Wednesday morning baby and toddler group regularly entertains around 12-15 children and their grownups each week. The children enjoy a good selection of toys, healthy snacks during story time and singing to finish, whilst parents/carers are able to relax, catch up and enjoy the refreshments. We have a lovely team of volunteers who help support this group, a particular thanks to Carrie, Laura and Jana who do an amazing job at Cafe Play. I often receive positive feedback from parents about how welcoming and friendly this group is and there is a wonderful, supportive community of parents who attend.

Messy Church

Messy Church continues to be a joint event between St Nics and GURC (Guildford United Reformed Church), alternating location between the 2 churches. The numbers of attendees have continued to increase and we regularly see up to 100 adults and children in attendance each month. I would like to thank our Messy Church team, which is made up of volunteers from St Nics and GURC, especially Pauline, Jo, Cath and Lloyd from St Nics. I am hoping to plan a Messy Church session soon to focus on the way we worship at St Nicolas, and one for how we worship at GURC. If anyone would like to help me plan and deliver the St Nicolas session I would be very keen to hear from you.

Holiday Club

The annual summer holiday club at the end of July, held at GURC, saw over 70 children in attendance. The event was fully booked early on and we had to create more spaces to make room for those on our waiting list, even then we still had more people wishing to book! The theme this year was video games, although there wasn't a single actual games console in sight! Holiday Club requires an enormous team of volunteers and we are so grateful to all of them for their hard work and enthusiasm to make this event work.

Pizzas@8

Our youth group for young people aged 11-17, meets monthly at GURC. The group has grown in the past 12 months and the young people are keen to meet more regularly. We hope to create a youth bible study group to start in September in order to cater for more of our young people and to allow them to meet more regularly.

Christmas

At Christmas, like last year, our Christmas Eve Christingle services were sold out and we enjoyed a joint service at St Nics with GURC and lots of children dressed up to help tell the story of the nativity. We also tried something new, a joint travelling nativity service from GURC to St Nics with a real donkey and actors. Thank you so much to everyone who got involved, we had wonderful feedback and are looking forward to this year's recreation!

Fizz and Friends

It became apparent to me that there was a need for a space where women could gather and socialise, a bit like Beer and Banter. So we began a termly meet up in the church with an optional craft and this has been well received. The group is for any women over the age of 18.

Nicky Geraghty

Music

Though erroneously attributed to St Augustine, the aphorism “He who sings prays twice” is true. Our choir sings to the glory of God, praising Him vicariously on behalf of the parish, and leading the congregation in the sung portions of our corporate worship. They help to bring a glimpse of heaven to earth, and lift earth up to heaven.

Darrol Radley, Philip Thomas, and Alasdair Terkatz-Cameron, all from the congregation, have sung, with the choir as their personal schedule have permitted: This year Alison Underhay Ward, Ruth Vanni, Sarah Marsh, Kate Lowe, Paula Juden, Stephen Petch, Daniel Mahoney, Nick MacMahon, and Chris Pearce have been professional voices in the Foundation Singers giving a strong and polished nucleus, though rarely all at the same service. We are grateful for the way they use their talents and appreciate their loyalty, dedication, and hard work..

Especially memorable were the Easter Triduum, the Advent and Christmas season services, and various Red Letter days throughout the year, often when strings, brass or woodwinds added additional richness. Installed last autumn, the new digital organ both enables the choir in their work and adds another dimension to our services until such time as the 1876 Fr Willis organ is rebuilt.

Rick Erickson

Stewardship

I took over Planned Giving from David Sharpin on 4 April 2024 and would like to thank David for his work on this important subject.

Planned giving showed a very modest increase compared to last year providing £56,000 to the church funds.

The Stewardship Group (which includes the Planned Giving Officer (PGO)) initiated a scheme to try to increase Planned Giving by 25% year on year for the next 3 years to try to meet our shortfall against Parish Share and so not have to rely on other means (bequests etc.) of meeting the difference. This was an ambitious target by any measure and whilst this percentage has not been achieved we have as a result have a promise of an additional £2000 per year. This is a small but very positive start and we thank all those who have reviewed their commitment and found additional funds to support us.

Not everyone has felt able to increase their giving and this is understandable, however, if this is because you just have not got around to it please do give this some consideration. Whilst 25% sounds like a huge amount, remember that if you are giving £5.00 a week we are suggesting you increase your amount by just £1.25 to £6.25. If you are already giving all you can afford, then that is wonderful and greatly appreciated.

There are a number of ways to give to the church:

1. By giving through the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) (<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/home/>) and paying by Direct Debit which takes your monthly contribution, automatically accrues all donations monthly, and pays it directly into the Church Parish Giving account. This has several benefits, not least is it is automatic, it

reclaims Gift Aid from HMRC and passes it on to us. Donors can choose to allow their donation to increase each year by an inflationary figure based on the Retail Price Index. This scheme also allows one-off gifts which can also be gift aided and all donations can be anonymous to the church if preferred.

2. By Standing Order into the Planned Giving Account at our bank. If you are a tax payer and sign a gift aid form we can then claim Gift Aid from the HMRC which adds an additional 25%.
3. Envelopes. We still have this facility, though few people use it now for regular weekly giving as most people find it easier to use PGS or a standing order. This is a more time consuming process for the church to handle and would like to be able to phase it out in due course.
4. Make a donation using the card reader at the back of church. A quick and simple method of contributing.

The Stewardship Group led by David Greenwood is actively looking at different methods of raising funds and other ways of contributing to the life of St Nicolas.

It is a worrying fact that the contribution per head in our church is half of what the average is across all the other churches in the Diocese and whilst this can be rationalised in some respects it is clearly our individual responsibility to consider whether we can do more for our church community financially.

There is a new leaflet available at the back of the church explaining where the money goes and what you can do to support us.

Thank you to all those of you that do contribute generously.

Philip Thomas, Planned Giving Officer

Safeguarding

Jo Radley has continued in her role as Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) throughout the year and to the present. At the PCC meeting on 16 th July 2024 Jill Sandham was appointed as co-PSO; Jill and Jo work collaboratively and carry joint responsibility for safeguarding children and adults in the parish. Jo has past experience in teaching children with special needs, and for many years as PSO at St Nic's; Jill is a social worker, with past experience as a Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for adults and children, and developing Church of England policies, guidance and training. Cath Anderson as Parish Administrator manages applications for Disclosure and Barring Service disclosures and training records as required.

We have continued to respond promptly to concerns and allegations of abuse raised, following Church of England, Diocesan and Parish policies and guidance, and with the advice and support of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. This year there have been two referrals; in both cases procedures have been followed in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, incidents recorded and victims supported.

We use the Parish Dashboard to monitor and review our adherence to policies, procedures and practices, including policy review, activity risk assessments, safer recruitment and training. All sections are either up to date or work in progress.

The PSOs report to each PCC meeting; both are currently members of the PCC. In addition we have set up a Safeguarding Team comprising the Rector, both Churchwardens and both PSOs, which meets quarterly to ensure good communication and commitment to safeguarding and clarification of boundaries of confidentiality in all we do.

We have set up a new system for recording referrals, which uses a standardised referral form and is stored in a secure platform, with access limited to the two PSOs and the Rector. Both PSOs have St Nic's email addresses, and safeguardingteam@saintnics.com reaches both of them simultaneously.

We have promoted safeguarding as fundamental to our faith, and part of pastoral care for one another, through a notice board in the Narthex and a paragraph in each Pews News.

Jill is a member of the Pastoral Support Group, to ensure attention to safeguarding in pastoral visiting. The Good Grief Club, with its evident meeting of need, has been adopted by the PCC as a St Nic's activity; this embeds and

ensures good practice and protection for its leaders and members alike.

We continue to work towards a safe and healthy culture through making safeguarding everyone's responsibility in how we care for one another.

Jo Radley & Jill Sandham, Parish Safeguarding Officers

Deanery Synod

The Deanery Leadership Team (DLT) changed early last year as we lost the Rev'd. Alex Russell as our Deputy Area Dean and then welcomed her successor, the Rev'd. Timothy Clifford-Hill. Tim is approachable and enthusiastic about the work and role of Deanery Synod and is a very welcome addition to the team. Part of the way through last year St. Nicolas' lost Linda Sharpin as one of our Deanery Synod Representatives and we would like to extend our thanks to her for her service as a member of Synod. This has created a vacancy and if any member of St. Nicolas' is interested in standing for Deanery Synod, please find yourself a proposer and a seconder and sign the form that will be put out prior to the APCM meeting.

Guildford Deanery Synod has met three times since the last APCM meeting.

On 24th April Guildford Deanery Synod welcomed Alastair Etheridge to talk about the Diocese's Youth Catalyst Project, helping "to equip churches, youth ministries and young people to grow a generation of missionary disciples who live out and proclaim the gospel without fear" and we heard from some of the young people taking part about their positive experiences of participating in this important programme.

On 31st July the focus agenda item was the Local Ministry Programme (LMP), led by Matthew Grove from the Diocese's LMP Team.

On 15th January Deanery Synod met again to hear a focus agenda talk about the CofE's NetZero Initiative, led by Alison Moulden, the Diocesan Environmental Officer. At this meeting the Deanery also voted to appoint Jill Sandham as the new Deanery Secretary (our thanks to Jill for taking this on) and adopting the CofE's Model Rules for Standing Orders for a Deanery Synod document as the interim Standing Orders for Guildford Deanery Synod, pending the introduction of revised model rules by Church House London's Legal Team.

Future meetings during 2025 are planned for the 30th April, at which the focus agenda item will be Caleb Stream, led by Bishop Peter Hancock; and for the 10th September, when we will be hearing about Living in Love and Faith from three of our General Synod Representatives.

Andrew Rustell, Deputy Lay Chair

St Nicolas' Infant School

Dear Members of St. Nicolas Church,

We are excited to share with you some of the highlights of our year so far, filled with special events, moments of reflection, learning, and community engagement. Our school continues to thrive through a combination of rich educational experiences and deep spiritual connections that support our children's holistic growth.

Pause Days for Reflection and Spiritual Connection

Throughout the year, we have dedicated several Pause Days, where our children have the opportunity to reflect, deepen their learning, and strengthen their spiritual connection to the world around them. These days are a powerful way to engage the children in meaningful moments of pause and reflection, and we are thrilled to have had the following Pause Days:

Black History Month Pause Day: We explored and celebrated the rich heritage of Black history, helping children understand the importance of diversity, equality, and respect for all cultures.

Anti-Racism Pause Day: This was an important day where we encouraged the children to reflect on the value of kindness, inclusion, and standing up against racism.

Easter Pause Day: Reflecting on the significance of Easter, the children were encouraged to think about renewal,

hope, and compassion.

Harvest Pause Day: Exploring and reflecting on the theme of every good thing comes from God. Linking this with Saint Nicolas as a role model for giving.

Advent Pause Day: During Advent, we paused to reflect on the anticipation of Christmas and the messages of peace and goodwill that come with the season.

Parent Workshops

We continue to hold a variety of workshops throughout the year to support our families in their children's educational journeys. Topics have included reading, writing, and nutrition, providing valuable information and strategies for parents to help nurture their child's development both at home and school. These workshops foster a strong partnership between the school and families, ensuring the best outcomes for every child.

Special Visits and Experiences

To bring learning to life, we've been fortunate to welcome some wonderful guests and experiences to school:

The Fire Service: The children learned about fire safety, how to stay safe, and had the exciting opportunity to meet real firefighters.

Mobile Farm: A fantastic hands-on experience where the children were able to interact with a variety of animals, deepening their understanding of nature and caring for animals.

Musician Visit: A wonderful session where the children explored different instruments, sparking their interest in music and rhythm.

These visits are not only educational but also provide memorable experiences that the children will carry with them.

Special Services at St. Nicolas Church

One of the highlights of our school year has been the special services held at St. Nicolas Church, where we gather as a community to worship and celebrate key moments in the Christian calendar. Our children and parents truly look forward to these events:

Harvest Service: A special time where the children came together to appreciate the beauty of our world and what it provides for us.

Christmas Service: A joyful celebration of the birth of Jesus, filled with music, a wonderful nativity play performed by the children, and the spirit of Christmas.

Candlemas Service: A time to reflect on the light of Christ and the message of hope. The children walked around the church space singing Ave Maria and considered the message from the priest telling Mary that her child was special, the chosen one.

Easter Service: A celebration of resurrection and renewal, where we come together to reflect on the Easter story. The children will be singing a special song focusing on hope, which is our focus value for this term.

These services allow our children and families to come together as one community, reinforcing the importance of faith and connection.

Pupil Progress

It has been truly remarkable to witness the incredible progress that the children have made over the months. We are always amazed by their enthusiasm for learning, their growing independence, and the way they engage with new concepts and challenges. The progress they make is a testament to their hard work and the dedication of our staff in providing a nurturing and inspiring learning environment.

We are grateful for the continued partnership with St. Nicolas Church, and we look forward to continuing to

support the spiritual, academic, and personal growth of our children in the coming year.

With gratitude and blessings.

Stina Witkowski, Executive Headteacher

Tuesday Group

Tuesday Group has enjoyed a year of weekly meetings in the Parish Hall (term-time only), with a varied programme of activities around which the supportive and companionable character of the group is based.

TG also contributed actively to parish life in the course of the past year. The Group took responsibility for the Plant Stall at the Summer Fayre, decorated the Parish Hall at Christmas, and crafted the ornaments for the tree that St Nicolas' Church displayed at the URC Christmas Tree Festival in December.

Numbers attending generally continue to remain encouraging. Efforts to keep the existence and activities of TG to the fore have continued this year, both online and elsewhere. The support from church members in practical ways is very much valued, and guest speakers on special topics are often volunteers from the congregation. Thanks are particularly due to Cath Anderson for publicising the group's weekly programme in Pews News and displaying our hand-made posters at the church and elsewhere.