



**The Parochial Church Council  
Of  
St Philip & St James  
Hucclecote**

**Annual Report and Accounts  
Year ended 31st December 2023**



## VACANCY REPORT 2023

At the end of 2023 it is a good time to look back and reflect on everything that we have achieved together for the kingdom but also to look ahead to 2024 with hope and excitement for what lies in wait for us.

2023 has again been a year of challenges. We are still recovering both in terms of numbers and energy from COVID. We have not fully recovered but there are signs of encouragement throughout what we do. Many of our ministries are blossoming and are seeing real signs of growth. Furthermore, there has been a real passion to see God known throughout the community evident through many of our prayer days and community events.

We have faced many changes this year. We welcomed our new administrator, Louisa, who has done a brilliant job settling in and keeping us all organised. And of course, Mark, moving on in the summer. This was a tremendous loss for us as a church but a significant blessing for the community in Exeter School where he now serves.

Despite the challenges and changes I truly believe that we are growing and moving as a people who love God, love one another and want to see him known in this place. It has not been easy leading through this time of vacancy but it has been a blessing and I hope that through the journey we have all been able to see more of where God is leading us.

One of the key parts of the year has been finding the balance between not starting new things in a vacancy whilst at the same time not standing still. We continue to hold this balance and continue to seek God's face in all that we do, so that we might grow and flourish together.

I do not know what 2024 has in store for us. We continue to navigate the vacancy process and pray that the right person can be appointed later in the year. But through it all God still calls us, walks with us and is at work within us as we take these next steps into the unknown. This process continues to be challenging but also continues to be a beacon of hope, hope of what is here and hope for what is to come in this community.

Rev Duncan Hutchison

## CHURCHWARDENS REPORT

We were sad to see our priest in charge, Mark, leave us in August after six years to take up a new role as chaplain to Exeter School. This was a double blow as we also said goodbye to Amy, Archie and Mabel, who were such an active part of our church life. Thankfully we have been blessed to have Duncan, Miriam and Jane lead our church services through the vacancy period to date. Huge thanks are due to them for their commitment, dedication and leadership, especially with Duncan continuing to work full time in education.

Our readers Allan, Tim and Ruth Holman stood down after long service to our church, and our church administrator Liz also moved on after many years. Huge thanks to Margaret Edwards and others who filled in until we were able to recruit Louisa as our new administrator. Louisa has settled in well and quickly got up to speed with the many varied aspects of the role.

We would like to thank the many people who contribute to the life of our church, and make this such a special place - our music groups, flower team, coffee makers, pastoral care coordinator, junior church leaders, home group leaders, and of course our church treasurer Lee, church secretary Margaret, our PCC, social committee and grounds and buildings committee. Thanks to Rhianydd and Peggy who stood down as churchwardens during the year, for all they have done, much of which goes unseen.

Grateful thanks to those who are involved in our outreach to the children and families in our community through Messy Church, Coffee Pot, Teddy Bears and Open the Book. We have also welcomed Hillview School to services in church including Harvest Festival and Christingle, as part of our reaching the 95% Scripture Union project. Thanks also to those supporting the community through our Foodbank Hub.

The advice from Bishop Rachel was for us not to be vacant during the vacancy, and it has been very encouraging that we as a church family have continued with our regular activities and more during this period. Huge thanks to the parish profile working group which has been making great progress on our profile for the forthcoming recruitment. Thanks also to Brian who has taken over leadership of the CORE youth group, and Jane who has taken over Christmas Make It. A communications team was formed and has been doing a great job keeping us informed through the weekly notice sheets. Lunch Club restarted in September with a five-star hygiene rating, it was a joy to see the members enjoying their meals and fellowship again; thank you to Margaret Wenham and the team of cooks and helpers.

Churchwardens - Kevin Hobbs and Chris Brookes

# TRUSTEES REPORT

## Administrative Information

St Philip & St James is situated in Larkhay Road, Hucclecote, Gloucester. It is part of the Diocese of Gloucester within the Church of England.

The correspondence address is:

Church Office  
Stone Building  
18 Larkhay Road  
Hucclecote  
Gloucester  
GL3 3 NS

Telephone: 01452 372177

Website: [www.hucclecotechurch.org](http://www.hucclecotechurch.org) & [www.achurchnearyou.com/church/14161/](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/14161/)

Social, Media: Facebook: "St Philip and St James Church Hucclecote"  
Instagram: "Stpandstj"

E mail: [stpandstj.hucc@mail.com](mailto:stpandstj.hucc@mail.com)

Bankers: National Westminster Bank  
21 Eastgate Street  
Gloucester GL1 1NY

Independent Examiner: Janet Wilce

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity registered with the Charity Commission.

PCC members who have served from 1st January 2023 until 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024, when this report was approved, are on page 6.

## STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

### PCC 2023- 2024 (after APCM on March 29<sup>th</sup> 2023)

#### STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

##### PCC 2023-2024 (after APCM on March 29<sup>th</sup> 2023)

Incumbent	In Vacancy from August 2023	
Ex Officio	Revd Duncan Hutchison	Associate Priest from June 2023
	Revd Miriam Davis	Ordained Local Minister (OLM) from
	June 2021	

Churchwardens	Mr Kevin Hobbs	elected APCM 2023
	Mr Chris Brookes	elected APCM 2023

Deanery Synod	Canon (Mrs) Margaret Edwards elected 2023	
	* PCC Secretary & Safeguarding Officer	
	Mrs Doreen McLellan	elected 2023
	One vacancy	

Elected Members of the PCC (up to 12 in number)

Mr Tom Brown	elected 2023
Mrs Marion Cook	re-elected 2023
<del>Mrs Josephine Cumberbatch</del>	elected 2022. Resigned March 2024
Mrs Pat Dabbs	elected 2022
Mr John Grime	re-elected 2022
<del>Mrs Joy Noah</del>	*Electoral Roll Officer until September 2023
Mr Alan Preece	elected 2023
Mrs Jane Stock	elected 2023 *Electoral Roll Officer since Sept 2023
Mrs Jean Thomas	elected 2023
Mr Lee Thornton	re-elected 2023. * Treasurer

Co-opted member Dr Alison Dight from July 2022

1 Vacancy on Deanery Synod  
4 Vacancies on PCC

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church attendees are encouraged to register on the electoral roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC is supported in its work by sub-teams whose views and recommendations are considered by the PCC when making decisions.

## OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

St Philip & St James PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting the parish, the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has the maintenance responsibilities for St Philip & St James Church and associated property. The PCC is registered with the Charity Commissioners and all members of PCC are Trustees of the Charity; as such Hucclecote PCC must adhere to Charity Commission rules and regulations. The PCC meets in January, March, May, July, September and November; on the alternate months the Standing Committee meets to discuss matters needing attention in the interim before the next PCC. Extra PCC meetings have been required since Mark's departure, which have all been related to the Vacancy process. These extra meetings will continue until the appointment of a new Incumbent.

### 2023

The normal pattern of Sunday services on Sunday has continued during 2023, with 8.30am Holy Communion every week and Morning Worship for most Sundays with a Communion on the 2nd Sunday of the month. Baptisms, if booked, take place on a first Sunday of the month at 10.30am when the service is an All-Age format with no Junior Church on that day. The Sunday evening service of Worship and the Word was suspended.

#### Additional services in 2023

6<sup>th</sup> April - Maundy Thursday

7<sup>th</sup> April - Good Friday

5<sup>th</sup> November - Memorial service

#### Christmas Activities

Messy Christmas – 9<sup>th</sup> December. A very packed church once again and the tree was decorated

Christmas Make It - 24<sup>th</sup> November. An evening of Christmas crafts.

Nativity on a Lorry - we hosted the refreshments on 14<sup>th</sup> December

Carols at the Pub - The Wagon & Horses had invited church members to sing, on 15<sup>th</sup> December

Carol Service - Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December

Christingle service for Hillview School – 21<sup>st</sup> December

Christmas Eve (Sunday) - 8.30am Holy Communion

10.30am Morning Worship

4.00pm – Crib service

11.30pm – Midnight Communion with Bishop Rachel

Christmas Day - 10.30am Holy Communion service

#### Achievements and performance

Sunday attendance figures have remained fairly steady through the year and we have seen some new members at both of the congregations, some returning to church after many years. The leaders of our church activities continue to take as many opportunities as possible to share our faith with those attending the groups, following the decision in 2022 to make all our activities more God-centred.

Margaret Edwards

## PCC MEETINGS

It is usual for the PCC to meet bi-monthly and the Standing Committee (Vicar, Associate Priest, OLM, Lay Chair, Treasurer, Churchwardens, PCC Secretary and Administrator) meet on the alternate months; the latter group discuss the general running of the church and the financial status together with any areas of concern and then makes recommendations to the PCC for further discussion.

PCC Agenda items always include a financial report, Safeguarding issues and updates as well as reports from the Standing Committee, the Mission team and Deanery Synod and the Grounds and Building team.

At the APCM on March 29<sup>th</sup> 2023, Kevin Hobbs and Chris Brookes were elected to stand as Churchwardens for the year 2023-2024 and the PCC elections were as follows: Marion Cook, and Lee Thornton were re-elected for a further 3 years; and newly elected were: Tom Brown, Alan Preece and Jean Thomas. The two remaining vacancies and the vacancy on Deanery Synod were not filled.

The Electoral Roll was 103.

The Statutory and essential reports had been accepted and adopted by the PCC at the meeting on March 8<sup>th</sup> 2023 in readiness for the APCM.

During 2023, the setting of the heating clocks has been done Kevin Hobbs, who has taken over from Tom Brown to whom we owe huge thanks for doing this task for many years.

The secretary would like to thank PCC members for their commitment to their duties and attendance at meetings. Also, huge thanks must go to all those who volunteer for our church services and the many regular activities taking place on the church site or the ones off-site but under the church umbrella. The giving of time and talents by so many volunteers, means that we can honour God in all we do as a worshipping community.

Margaret Edwards



# STATUTORY REPORTS

## FINANCIAL REVIEW 2023

This is the second full year that the church's usual services, activities and events were not directly disrupted by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Total receipts in 2023 were £143,925 and total payments were £138,040 giving and overall surplus across unrestricted, restricted and designated funds of £5,885, compared to a deficit in 2022 of £3,323. The 2023 surplus was driven largely by grants and one-off donations to restricted funds.

The unrestricted (general) fund on an income & expense basis had a small deficit of £609, however when taking into account transfers to the designated maintenance fund, the overall movement in the unrestricted general fund is a reduction of £3,109

### Receipts

The largest amount of the church's incomes continues to be from planned giving and other donations. For the Unrestricted (General fund), voluntary income (*Ex grants*) had a small decline from £95,740 in 2022 to £93,882 in 2023. We received a couple of one-off donations totaling £8,250 for use on specific purposes in the church (e.g. improvements to audio-visual, internal decorations)

The amounts generated from hall lettings increased from £10,587 in 2022 to £13,219 in 2023 and we envisage this to increase further in the coming year

A grant was received in 2023 to help with the energy costs in the church for £1,850.

The Community Garden has continued its work of self-funding through donations and grants and this year sourced grants totaling £8,575 for specific projects

### Expenditure

The largest item of expenditure in 2023 was the Parish Share at £68,519 which is paid to the Diocese; this was an increase from 2022 of £3,263

Church running costs have increased significantly, from £17,735 in 2022 to £21,999 in 2023 (*excluding the investment in audio/visual changes*), with over £3,300 of the difference being attributed to higher energy costs.

Salary and wages costs were lower during the year due to the time gap with the changeover of administrators and hours of work reduced

A total of £9,025 was donated as part of our tithe, in line with the budget to: OMF International, Gloucester City Mission, Gloucester Foodbank, Scripture Union, a partner church (Mwilanvya in the Diocese of Western Tanganyika, Tanzania) and all to support four students at Lake Tanganyika Theological College. In addition, a further £250 was donated to Gloucester City Mission from the Jazz concert.

Minor repairs and routine maintenance across the site totaled £3,693 which was slightly less than the prior year.

### Reserves

It is the policy of the PCC to maintain a balance of Unrestricted Funds that equates to a minimum of two months' operating costs, and this is comfortably met. Following the PCC decision in 2019, £3,000 was transferred to the designated essential maintenance fund from the unrestricted general fund.

Treasurer

Approved by the PCC on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Parochial Church Council of Hucclecote

Statement of asset and liability balances as at 31st December 2023

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Designated Funds	31.12.23	31.12.22 £
<b>Charitable Funds</b>					
<b>Restricted Funds</b>					
Ann Smith Bequest	0	4,352	0	4,352	4,352
Boiler Fund	0	770	0	770	20
Building Fund	0	61,613	0	61,613	59,720
Childrens Worker	0	4,268	0	4,268	4,264
Churchyard Fund	0	11	0	11	11
Community Garden Restricted	0	5,563	0	5,563	4,763
Coopers Edge Mission	0	-282	0	-282	-282
Local Mission	0	1,438	0	1,438	1,643
Music and Worship Fund	0	891	0	891	891
Olive Withycombe bequest	0	304	0	304	304
PCC Fund	0	9,089	0	9,089	6,947
Restricted Fund	0	-1,815	0	-1,815	-1,815
Tanzania Fund	0	1,934	0	1,934	1,669
Wardens Discretionary Fund	0	4,175	0	4,175	500
<b>Designated Funds</b>					
Coffee Pot	0	0	549	549	349
Community Garden Designated	0	0	942	942	0
Computer Fund	0	0	1,346	1,346	1,785
DChurch Centre	0	0	120,000	120,000	120,000
Depreciation Fund	0	0	1,682	1,682	2,221
Essential Maintenance	0	0	13,786	13,786	13,654
Lunch Club	0	0	170	170	0
Messy Church	0	0	384	384	610
Social Fund	0	0	1,641	1,641	1,477
Teddy Bears	0	0	2,083	2,083	2,419
Treasurers Discretionary Fund			4,525	4,525	4,525
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b> General Fund	32,450	0	0	32,450	35,960
	<b>32,450</b>	<b>92,311</b>	<b>147,108</b>	<b>271,869</b>	<b>265,987</b>
<b>Represented By</b>					
Bank Term Deposit Accounts	0	0	0	0	0
Bank Current Accounts	32,450	92,311	27,108	151,869	145,984
Petty Cash	0	0	0	0	0
Total Bank and Cash	<b>32,450</b>	<b>92,311</b>	<b>27,108</b>	<b>151,869</b>	<b>145,984</b>
<b>Liabilities</b> Creditors	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<b>32,450</b>	<b>92,311</b>	<b>27,108</b>	<b>151,869</b>	<b>145,984</b>
<b>Fixed Assets retained by the charity</b>					
Land and Buildings at historic cost	0	0	120,000	120,000	120,000
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>32,450</b>	<b>92,311</b>	<b>147,108</b>	<b>271,869</b>	<b>265,984</b>

Parochial Church Council of Hucclecote

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ending 31st December 2023

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	2023 Total £	2022 total £
<b>Receipts</b>					
<b>Voluntary Income</b>					
Tax efficient planned giving	69,425	0	0	69,425	71,255
Other planned giving	6,060	600	0	6,660	6,665
Other giving and donations - non-recurring	2,277	7,487	1,104	10,868	2,011
Other giving and donations - recurring	0	0	0	0	0
Special appeals	0	0	0	0	0
All tax recovered through Gift Aid	16,120	1,657	250	18,027	16,789
Legacies received	0	0	0	0	0
Non-recurring grants	1,981	8,575	0	10,556	8,000
<b>Activities for Generating Funds</b>					
Fund raising events	620	0	415	1,035	206
Hall lettings	13,219	0	0	13,219	10,587
Income from other church activities	1,459	0	2,300	3,759	1,843
<b>Investment Income</b>					
Dividends and interest	796	2,185	205	3,186	919
<b>Income from Charitable Activities</b>					
Total Parochial Fees income	0	6,854	0	6,854	7,800
Service fee reimbursement	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Other Incoming Resources</b>					
Insurance claims	250	0	0	250	0
Other income	67	0	19	86	894
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>112,274</b>	<b>27,358</b>	<b>4,293</b>	<b>143,925</b>	<b>126,969</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
<b>Charitable Activities</b>					
Fundraising costs	0	0	0	0	0
Donations/grants to charities & mission givi	9,025	335	250	9,610	9,687
Local mission & evangelism projects	1,224	8,775	1,668	11,667	7,457
Parish share	68,519	0	0	68,519	65,256
Clergy expenses	859	0	0	859	1,082
Church running costs	17,882	4,224	3,717	25,823	17,735
Churchyard maintenance	2,350	0	0	2,350	2,712
Children/youth work costs	30	0	1,254	1,284	1,294
Parochial fees	0	4,496	0	4,496	4,642
<b>Management and Administration</b>					
Salaries and wages	6,596	0	0	6,596	11,480
Support costs	0	0	0	0	0
Administration costs	1,896	0	438	2,334	2,163
Insurance costs	3,838	0	0	3,838	3,740
Sundry expenses	664	0	0	664	3,044
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>112,883</b>	<b>17,830</b>	<b>7,327</b>	<b>138,040</b>	<b>130,292</b>
<b>Receipts over Expenditure</b>	<b>-609</b>	<b>9,528</b>	<b>-3,034</b>	<b>5,885</b>	<b>-3,323</b>
<b>Funds Opening Balance 1.1.2023</b>	<b>35,960</b>	<b>82,984</b>	<b>147,040</b>	<b>265,984</b>	<b>269,319</b>
<b>Net movement between fund categories</b>	<b>-2900</b>	<b>-205</b>	<b>3105</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Funds Closing Balance 31.12.2023</b>	<b>32,451</b>	<b>92,307</b>	<b>147,111</b>	<b>271,869</b>	<b>265,996</b>



**CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

**Independent examiner's  
report on the accounts**

**Section A**

**Independent Examiner's Report**

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

The Parochial Church Council of St Philip & St James Church, Hucclecote,  
Gloucester

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

31-December-2023

**Charity no  
(if any)**

1133978

**Set out on pages**

*(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)*

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above  
charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/12/2023**

**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 of the Charities Act  
2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out  
under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I  
have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission  
under section 145(5)(b) of the 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 which gives me  
cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of  
the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

*\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

**Signed:** J Wilce

**Date:** 14/02/2024

**Name:** Janet Wilce

**Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):**

**Address:**

## DEANERY SYNOD

The Deanery Synod representatives are Margaret Edwards and Doreen Mclellan. Jean Thomas completed her term of office during 2023.

At the February meeting we had a presentation from Rev. Dr. Canon Sandra Miler, who spoke about using our baptisms, weddings and funerals as stepping stones to growing faith. These life events provide opportunities to engage and create relationships.

The May meeting began with a Eucharist, followed by a short business meeting.

At the July meeting Rev. Jo Pestell, Area Dean, and Andy Wilson, Church Army officer, led a discussion looking at different ways we are being church across our Deanery, including joint mission events we engage in with other worshipping communities (within the Church of England and ecumenically). At this meeting Mary Gould and Andy Wilson were re-elected as Lay Chair and Deputy Lay Chair respectively. Justine Sullivan was appointed as secretary and Dr. Jane Orr was re-appointed as treasurer.

At the November meeting we had a presentation from Jodie Calcutt from Stroud, who spoke about collaboration across Stroud in life events, hall hire and administration. This was followed by questions and discussion.

The Diocesan Strategic Plan was discussed at each meeting and quarterly updates were issued. A prayer cycle to pray for each parish in the Deanery was set up and Hucclecote offered to be the first parish in the cycle.

Doreen Mclellan

# **CHURCH FABRIC STATUTORY REPORT 2023**

## **Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measures 1991 St Philip and St James Church, Hucclecote**

The most visible area of concern in the church is the black mould and flaking paint on the internal walls. Earlier in 2023 a budget was agreed for the architect to advise on the redecoration of the walls. The architect visited in August and took samples for testing. Subsequently David Arnold, our surveyor, invited a representative from Keim Mineral Paints Ltd to visit our church in October to see if their paint system would meet our needs. Their recommendation is to remove all mould residue and loose paint, apply a fixative solution to the sound paint to bond the paint layers to each other and to the underlying plaster. When this has cured a top coating of permeable paint can be applied. A church redecoration proposal has been approved by PCC. In 2024 we plan to prepare a technical specification for approval by the diocese, then start fundraising and seeking grants.

The under-sink storage water heater in the kitchenette was replaced as it was faulty. The annual gas safety inspection on the boiler was carried out, as well as the annual electrical earth safety check. The fire extinguishers have also been inspected.

Our video projector was proving to be unreliable, so the projector and screen were removed and replaced with a wall mounted HD computer monitor, connected by HDMI cable to the computer. A connection box on the wall below the monitor enables laptops to be connected at the front of church. In the process of installing the new monitor it was found that our hearing loop did not meet current regulations, so a new compliant hearing loop was installed at ground level. These changes have resulted in significant improvements to the visual and sound quality for our church family. In both cases, List B applications were made and approved by the diocese.

The following urgent tasks listed in the 2021 Quinquennial Report have not been carried out during 2023: removal of moss and debris from gutters (carried out since), check loose/displaced stonework on Chancel East Gable, check stability of ceiling plaster in South Porch. The following overdue tasks are outstanding: minor repairs to roof tiling and cover flashings, investigate condition of West Porch timber roof deck, re-roofing of West Porch roof, urgent repairs to rainwater goods, Chancel East Gable stonework repairs, repairs to Vicar's vestry lath and plaster ceiling, minor repairs to surface water drainage, point up movement cracks in South Porch. We will endeavour to carry out as many of these tasks as possible in 2024 subject to availability of funds.

Churchwardens - Kevin Hobbs and Chris Brookes

# NON-STATUTORY REPORTS

## 1. MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP

### MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP

A huge thank you to everyone who has contributed to leadership and ministry in our church over the last year. My thanks need to go to Kevin and Chris for their leadership as Church Wardens this year. Their calm, pragmatic and faithful approach to their roles have been a real source of blessing. They have been a great support to me and ensured that the church has continued to move forward during this time of vacancy.

A huge thank you to Miriam who has been a great source of support and encouragement over this year. It has been wonderful to see her many gifts on display and has really added to the depth of preaching and leading not just on a Sunday. Thank you too, to Jane for her involvement in Sunday ministry as well as funerals and being part of the Messy Church team. Messy Church has been something that has continued to go from strength to strength and I am really grateful to Judy, Dianne and the whole of the Messy Church team for their continued efforts and the blessing that they are on our families. We have also been blessed by Lee, Cecilia and their music groups. This aspect of our worship is a real strength and continues to be a blessing to our congregation week by week.

One of the many positive aspects of our church, at the moment, is the number of ministries that continue to speak hope and love into the lives of a wide section of our community. Thank you to everyone who is involved in an aspect of ministry in church. Whether it be Lunch Club, Community Garden, CAMEO, Flowers, Teddy Bears, Coffee Pot or any other aspect of church ministry life I want to thank you all for your hard work, commitment and desire to see Jesus made known.

We have worked hard this year to increase our presence of prayer and it has been wonderful to see the number of times members of the congregation gathered for prayer increase. The monthly prayer days have been a real source of encouragement to all.

Another new aspect of our ministry this year has been our increased focus on children and young people. We have continued the wonderful work started by Amy with our youth work in Core but have also returned to having children's groups in the 10:30 service. Although there are only a small number of children and young people, I feel that this has begun to ensure that our children and young people can encounter Jesus at a level appropriate to them. Thank you to all those who volunteer to work with our young people. This will continue to be a big part of our focus as we move forward into 2024 and beyond.

One big change this year was stopping the monthly Sunday evening service. We will wait to see how things may change again when a new incumbent arrives.

Rev Duncan Hutchison

## 2. PRAYER AND WORSHIP

### PRAYER AND WORSHIP

A huge thank you to all those who have contributed to the leadership and ministry of the church in 2023 especially as the church went into vacancy at the end of August. Duncan finished his curacy and became Associate Priest in June 2023 in time to take on many extra responsibilities in leading worship and preaching along with Miriam and Jane from August when we bid farewell to Mark to his new post as chaplain at Exeter school. Archdeacon Hilary took two services for us in October. Bishop Rachel took a service in June to celebrate the community garden and led and preached at our Midnight Communion on Christmas Eve. Christmas services were much better attended in 2023 than we had seen since pre-pandemic. Part of this may have been due to publicising through social media and local Facebook community groups as well as more active use of our website on A Church near You.

Most Sundays at 8:30 our hymns were accompanied on the organ. Our two able and committed worship groups led by Lee and Cecilia lifted our hearts in worship at 10:30 services while Duncan stepped in on the guitar or keyboard when neither Lee or Cecilia were available.

Many other volunteers helped our services happen and we are very thankful for each one who serves on a rota. We tried to spread the load by approaching new people to take on different roles and are grateful to several who agreed to step up. There is still a need particularly for intercessors at 8:30, and PA and computer operators at 10:30.

Without prayer our work for the Lord is in vain, so we continued in our efforts to increase the level of corporate prayer happening in and around our church community. The meetings initiated in autumn 2022 – a weekly half hour prayer on a Monday morning at 9am and ¾ hour on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm – have continued with encouraging response. The Saturday morning prayer group takes place on Zoom on the first, fourth and fifth Saturdays of the month and in church the others.

New prayer initiatives in 2023 were as follows:

- 40 attended our first Church Prayer Breakfast in January where we prayed for each church activity and its leadership and volunteers.
- In addition to the Saturday morning prayer in church on Messy Church days (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday), we trialled a monthly drop-in to church for prayer from 9am-11am on the third Saturday of the month. It was encouraging to see a number come in although towards the end of the year there were fewer, perhaps understandably considering weather and the busyness of the season.
- In September the 2-hour 9-11am time slot was extended to mid-afternoon with the theme of 'Praying for fruit that will last,' and a variety of optional activities such as prayer walking planned. One hour in the morning saw a good number of church members join to pray particularly for the vacancy process. The morning was more popular than the afternoon.

Our Monday, Wednesday and Saturday prayer times are open to all. There is no agenda. We generally read either a psalm or a selection of the reading from the previous Sunday and pray as led with the focus on church life and activities. There is no compulsion to pray aloud. If you have never attended any of these groups, why not give it a go in 2024? It is so good to bring issues to the Lord together in prayer and when the disciples prayed together in Acts 4, the whole place shook! May the Lord himself fuel our prayers and use them for his glory.

Miriam Davis



### 3. YOUTH & CHILDREN

#### **JUNIOR CHURCH (SUNDAYS)**

Apart from an All-Age service at 10.30am when there is a Baptism, the children attending church leave to have their own time of teaching and activity in the Stone Building. They return at the end of the service in time for the last hymn, or Holy Communion on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday. Mark, Amy and Duncan used to take charge of this but obviously alternatives were needed after the departure of Mark and Amy, and Duncan being occupied leading the church service. The Standing Committee felt we needed to keep this going, because although we only have a small number of children and young people, they are valued and important. A team of volunteers work in pairs to help out with Junior Church and we, as a church, are very grateful for their preparation time and commitment to this ministry. The age range of possible attenders on a Sunday morning is from 13 years to 2 years so the preparation, planning and delivery of the subject is very challenging, but we are building good relationships with them and we continue to pray that more children and young people will join us.

Margaret Edwards + team (Pat Dabbs, Tina Knight, Judith Manns, Doreen McLellan, Chris Scourfield. Judy Preece)

#### **COFFEE POT**

Coffee Pot is based in the Church Centre and runs from 10:00am until 11:30am on a Tuesday morning in term time. We try to show the love of God to all who attend through our care and consideration for them regardless of who they are or what their circumstances.

The number of families fluctuates from week to week but the atmosphere is always welcoming and friendly. This past year it has been a blessing to see the children change, almost week by week, as they grow in confidence, and to watch friendships develop amongst the little ones and those who bring them. There is plenty of time for play, to participate in craft activities, share snacks, listen to stories and sing. Over the year we will hear a mixture of stories around a termly theme, some of which will be from the Bible. Three times a year we have a short service – at Harvest, Christmas and Easter – led by one of the clergy team.

On a personal level, I would like to say a huge thank you to my team - Rhianydd Warren, Linda Weedon, Susan Taylor, Pat Peachey and Josie Cumberbatch - who selflessly give of their time week in and week out to ensure that all who attend are supported, encouraged and helped where necessary.

Peggy Brown

#### **P & J TEDDY BEARS TODDLER GROUP**

2023 was another busy and successful year for our group meeting at Pineholt Village Hall. We usually have 15 families attending on a Friday morning, with many of those families having more than one child including two sets of twins. If all 22 of our registered families came on the same day, we would be seriously overcrowded but God provides the right number of families and the correct ratio of volunteers, each week.

The children enjoy a themed craft activity, Playdough, lots of toys and puzzles, a story (with lots of actions and characterisations) followed by a short reflection and prayer, then a snack time. We end the session with singing which now includes a selection of Christian songs with actions.

Most of our families attend the monthly Messy Church sessions and some attend other social events put on at Church. Having introduced a box for Prayer requests we now find that the adults just ask us to pray for their particular needs, rather than using the box. They know and trust us and we feel they are moving, albeit slowly, in their faith journey. We have built up very close relationships with the families, as they have with each other and many of them meet up regularly during school holiday times, to support one another.

Huge thanks as ever, go to the team of regular and committed helpers – Kay Galling, Chris Scourfield, Susan Taylor, Jean Thomas, Wendy Vickers, Rhianydd Warren.

Margaret Edwards

## **MESSY CHURCH**

Another year has slipped by and 10 Messy Churches have taken place. To be clear, not every activity is actually messy but we do try to have crafts and games to suit children of all ages and abilities.

We started the year with a glorious variety of flying birds, insects and animal masks for Creation. Then arks, doves, rain makers and rainbows followed with edible sausage arks with cheese slice sails. Easter came along and crosses were created using nails, gems and stained 'glass'. Little cakes to celebrate the church's birthday were eaten at Pentecost and the church was afire with flames of paper, paint and tissues. Our ingenuity was tested for creating galaxies to illustrate God's promise to Abraham, but they came to life in bottles, painted pictures and biscuits. A large collage picture of Joseph's coat for our next story was created with ribbons and his brothers came to life with thumbprints. We also tested their 'wine' tasting talents with a selection of fruit drinks. Basket making with paper strips brought us to the first part of the Moses story but making an edible toffee crisp basket containing a jelly baby was extremely popular. For the Exodus part of the story, we had the children enjoying the plagues by sampling some dubious smells, painting boils and making Origami frogs. When the Joshua story came around the children had great fun building the walls of Jericho with cardboard boxes and knocking them down with great gusto. They were also encouraged to make a lot of noise with the handmade instruments as they marched around.

None of this would be possible without the amazing team of faithful, enthusiastic and dedicated helpers. They have welcomed lots of families during the year to join in the fun and share the fellowship. The parents feedback has shown that they appreciate the hospitality (especially the hot drinks in lidded cups) and that we are doing something special for them. Saturday afternoons have become a happy meeting place. We pass on one child's comment, "I wish it could be Messy Church every week!"

Judy Preece

## **OPEN THE BOOK 2023**

In January 2023 Open the Book restarted in Hillview Primary School. The team of six storytellers: Philip Wenham, Jean Thomas, Judy Preece, Jane Twitty, Chris and Dianne Brookes, set out to tell 'A Tale of Two Houses' with some trepidation.

Although Open the Book had been taking assemblies in the school for many years, Covid and lockdowns had caused a break for almost 3 years. Consequently, we were aware that the current Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 had no experience of Open the Book and didn't know what to expect. With sensitive support from the headteacher, Mrs Helena Armstrong, the children quickly got used to the format of an introduction, a story, a quiet reflection and a simple closing prayer. The children helped with telling the story by being the walls of the houses and creating the sound of the rain. As we left, Helena set a challenge, "I look forward to seeing what the children will do next." Over the next 23 stories we met that challenge ensuring that even the littlest Reception child got to take part.

The team has been challenged, too – many times. We have been shipwrecked from a cardboard boat, thrown into jail (bars made of a painted stair gate), cast into a furnace (a cardboard circle of painted flames), thrown down a well (complete with dangling spiders) and beaten by robbers (not very ferocious Year 2 boys).

Sometimes the stories have many more characters than the six of us can cover. Quick costume changes enabled Jane to appear from 3 different doors to refuse invitations to 'The Big Party' and for Philip to nimbly cross the 'stage' to portray not only the priest and the Levite but the Good Samaritan too.

We do all we can to bring these key Bible stories alive for the children. We have fun doing it but we believe that engaging with the stories will enable the children to remember them. They may not be able to come to church so we are happy to take church to them.

Dianne Brookes

## 4. MISSION

### OUTREACH

Outreach takes place both formally and informally through many activities hosted by our church. In 2023 the Foodbank Hub continued to provide an ever-growing need and was supplemented by the provision of a Warm Space during the winter months in the church centre kitchen next door. Numbers making use of this were low possibly due to poor advertising, something that hopefully will be more effective in future. Thank you, Philip and Doreen McLellan, for your hard work in running this.

Lunch club moved to a new footing as a church ministry in 2023 and was able to restart its provision of delicious hot meals in September after going through a lot of hoops to ensure compliance with the ever-increasing rules and regulations regarding health and safety.

Relationships with Abbeymead Under 5s were strengthened and it was a delight to welcome them and many parents into church for their Nativity in December. Key stage 2 children from Hillview primary school plus many parents also came to church for Harvest and Christingle services. The latter was literally standing room only! Miriam took two assemblies in the autumn and a brief service with Year 5 at the War Memorial.

Many other outreach activities such as Coffee Pot and Teddy Bears, Open the Book, the community garden, Tuesday at Two and Cameo are reported on elsewhere in these pages. Each has an important part to play in connecting with the community.

Miriam Davis

### THE HUB

St Philip & St James Church, Hillview Evangelical Church and Hucclecote Methodist Church have worked together for many years to further Christian ministry across Hucclecote. The Covid pandemic brought many challenges and it is only in the past year that the churches have been able to co-ordinate more activities. There are currently two main on-going areas of co-operation.

As before we organised NOAL in December (Nativity on a Lorry) where a group of hardy souls dressed up as characters from the Christmas story to bring the good news of Christ's birth (and chocolates) to folks living in Hucclecote. In advance we had produced a newsletter which was delivered to every home in Hucclecote detailing Christmas church services and other Christmas activities. A choir (from the three churches) visited a local pub to sing carols.

The other main area of working together is the Gloucester Foodbank hub which operates every Wednesday morning at our church hall. It is staffed by volunteers from all three churches. It was initially very quiet but is now much busier. A decision was made in Spring 2023 that we would deliver food and toiletries as well as helping people who come to the hub. We now normally help up to 30 adults and children each week. Many of these live in Brockworth, Churchdown and Coopers Edge.

Thanks to all the people from the three churches who have worked together over the past year to further spiritual and practical ministry in Hucclecote. Special thanks must go to Mike Webber from Hillview Evangelical Church who has co-ordinated our work together.

Phil Mclellan

## MISSION TEAM

In 2023 we continued to support our five mission links from the church tithe – The Diocese of Western Tanganyika (four theological students, Lake Tanganyika Theological College in Kasulu and our link parish, Mwilanvya); OMF International and the Pawsons in Japan; Scripture Union UK and the Reaching the 95% of children and young people not in church project; Gloucester City Mission and Gloucester Foodbank.

2023 spring saw David and Manuela Pawson with Esther, Gideon and Daniel move into their fourth year in Japan with OMF International and their second year as part of the OMF church planting team in the largely un-churched city of Hanamaki in a rural area of N.E Honshu, Japan's main island. Despite some dips in energy levels for David during the year, he preached several times in Japanese and the family made many friends with neighbours and kindergarten mothers. They sent video updates and prayer letters faithfully throughout the year.

A very successful 'A glimpse of Japan' event was held in church in January 2023 with a number of Japanese families from Worcester, as well as the help of Wendy Vickers who introduced many people to haiku poetry writing, and Revd Oliver Strange, from the Evenlode Vale Benefice, who hosted a table about 'anime'. This event drew in around 60 people and fulfilled its purpose of deepening our understanding of the culture in which our mission partners, the Pawson family are working. Another purpose was providing an opportunity to connect with many in the community who would not usually come to church. The value of this was demonstrated, for example, when two local ladies commented 'We've only been to this church for funerals before. How do we find out about other fun things like this!'

Gloucester City Mission: Margaret Edwards organised an October Sleepout in church to raise funds for GCM and the Stolen Chocolates jazz concert hosted by the Thorntons was also very successful, both as an event attracting non church goers, and in raising contributions for GCM.

Tanzania: It was a delight to welcome Bishop Emmanuel to our 10:30 service in November during his visit to Gloucester Diocese following the Lambeth conference for new bishops. Alison Dight hosted him for several days and both she and Judith Manns continued to be very active as part of the team that promotes the link with DWT on behalf of Gloucester Diocese.

Scripture Union: Hannah Legge, Cheltenham based Mission Enabler for the SU Central England Team, inspired many of us at both Sunday services on May 21<sup>st</sup> 2023 and challenged us about the vital need to reach young people. Subsequently Chris Brookes gathered a number of interested people together

on two occasions for discussion on 'Reaching the 95%' (i.e. The children and young people who have no contact with church.) A number of great ideas were put forward though during the vacancy we do not have the resources to implement many. One step forward is being made in the effort to be more intentional in following up baptism families by, for example, sending baptism anniversary cards. Some were encouraged to be more intentional also with Messy Church and toddler group contacts.

We continued with a monthly mission slot in services on the third Sunday of each month. A big thank you to the mission team members and all who volunteered their time to help host events and to all who gave generously.

Miriam Davis, Mission Team Chair

## 5. DISCIPLESHIP & PASTORAL CARE

### DISCIPLESHIP

It has been wonderful to see signs of God at work in lives of people within the church. Home groups continue to be a big aspect of our discipleship programme and they are going from strength to strength. Through the help of Brian Trott and Chris Scourfield our young people continue to be discipled in their faith and are developing in their love of Jesus. It has been wonderful to see the baptism by full immersion of a member of own congregation and to witness the journey she has been on with her own faith.

Although they are often unseen, we cannot forget the depth of conversations that happen in Lunch Club, Messy Church, Teddy Bears and Coffee Pot. These may not always be seen traditionally as people being discipled, we know that a huge part of people's Christian journey is about belonging and acceptance. It is in the belonging of these groups that discipleship takes its early roots and although we pray for more opportunities to help people to grow and nurture their faith, I am truly grateful for these examples of the beginnings of a faith journey.

As we move through 2024, we continue to look a number of discipleship courses that we may use in order to support the development of faith. We hope that this will be a blessing to a many more people in our wider community, including those we have made contact with through baptism.

Rev Duncan Hutchison

### HOME GROUPS

Four home groups for bible study and fellowship met regularly throughout 2023. Three groups meet in the evening – two on Thursdays and one on Tuesday. One Thursday group and the Tuesday group meet on zoom with an occasional in-person social. The Wednesday afternoon group meets at 2:30 in the Church Centre Kitchen.

The Wednesday group was the largest with numbers of up to 12 gathering. However, ill health, other commitments and a move out of the area for one couple meant that numbers dropped to around 6-7 at the end of the year. The group had a tea-time social in the summer inviting others and in December visited Pam Henning (the former leader of the group) to sing carols. Various people led studies from 100 Stand Alone Bible studies up to the summer, then in autumn the group started to read through John's gospel.

The Tuesday evening group went from 8 members to 6 when Mike and Joy Noah moved in December. Study topics included: Learning from the life of Jesus, 100 Stand Alone Bible Studies; Lent, 100 Stand Alone Bible Studies; themes from the four gospels, 100 Stand Alone Bible Studies; How to hear God, Pete Greig. Highlights for this group were

learning through Pete Greig's book about the different ways we can hear from God; using Lectio 365 app for daily prayers and social evenings.

The in-person Thursday group consists of eight members, one of whom joined during 2023 while another is currently housebound. Themes included 'Real Prayer', Church Feast Days and Romans.

The Thursday Zoom group is a small group of 6, not all of whom are able to meet every week. They have been studying the book of Isaiah.

A big thanks to all our group leaders. All groups are open to newcomers and is a great way of supporting one another and deepening our faith. Please speak to Miriam if you are interested in joining a group. We add regularly to the Bible study resources for home groups (also great for individual use) on the shelves in the outer office of the Stone Building, and anyone is welcome to borrow these for personal or group use.

Miriam Davis

## **PASTORAL CARE**

The Pastoral Care Team has been in existence for two years and although it is a small team, it is a very caring and dedicated group. There are several groups and activities happening within the Church life and the leaders of those groups are responsible for the care of their members.

The team aims to keep people feeling connected with church life when members are not able to attend either through illness, frailty or general circumstances either temporarily or permanently. Several church members have had spells in hospital this last year and visits have been made to different hospitals across the county. Holy Communion can be taken to members who request it, at home or in hospital.

We have knitted some small "prayer squares", embossed with a cross, that we give to our members that we visit, together with a note reminding them of God's love and our prayers.

Everyone in the Church has a role to play in pastoral care and can care/phone/visit people who have not been to church or are in need. Please let Pat know if you are doing this.

We also contact bereaved families after a funeral service has taken place in the parish and on the first anniversary of the death. We attend the annual memorial service, being available to pray with anyone and giving the prayer squares. Pastoral care is a privilege and a great joy getting to know members of our fellowship in greater depth, hearing the wonderful stories of their childhoods and youth. The team is dedicated and committed. Please pray that God will lead our actions/visits/words/prayers, that we may be sensitive to the needs of the people being visited and their partners and that we may have the gift of love and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Pat Dabbs - Coordinator

## 6. FACILITIES & BUILDINGS

### GROUND AND BUILDINGS

#### Stone Building, Church Centre, Youth Centre, Gordon Rooms & Site.

**Church Centre Site.** Overall, the site is in an acceptable state and is generally clear of rubbish. A cracked drain cover in the car park requires replacing; a replacement is available in the garage. The garden areas have been maintained and the grass cut regularly. The Larkhay Rd boundary fence needs repainting. Weeds have been kept under control with weed killer but it isn't as effective as it used to be. The growth coming over the fence on the east side of the car park was cut back and weeds on the boundary in front of the Youth Centre cleared.

**Heating and Fire Extinguishers.** All of the heating systems had their annual safety checks in August and were satisfactory. The boiler in the Youth Centre was installed some 30 years ago and will undoubtedly need replacing at some point. It is living on borrowed time. Some of the fire extinguishers were due to be tested in August 2023 but it was considered more cost effective to replace them. The remainder were inspected and all found to be satisfactory.

**Stone Building.** The building is considered to be in a reasonable condition. The entrance door has been repainted blue and this has enhanced the look of the building. Further windows were redecorated leaving 3 to be done. Some re-pointing of the stonework is required, especially on the east wall and some of the coping stones on the south east corner will need replacing at some time in the future. There are some slipped tiles but there isn't any water ingress as there is roofing felt under the tiles. Inside the building there are some areas where paint and plaster are coming off the walls. There are also skirting boards that have been affected by wet rot and need replacing. The lighting in the office area has been upgraded to LED panels and a broken wall mounted mains socket replaced. The failed outside light on the east wall has been replaced.

**Church Centre.** The chimney breast and ceiling in the northwest corner of the hall requires redecorating. The exterior woodwork requires repainting. The roof has loose ridge tiles and broken tiles that need attention. The external walls around the ladies and gents' toilets need rebuilding and the toilets require refurbishing. The kitchen would benefit from re-modelling to bring it up to date in line with current standards and use. Basically, the whole building is in need of refurbishment and modernising. All of the curtains in the hall need replacing along with the curtain rails. Remedial electrical work increased the size of the mains tails on the 100 amp fuses to 25 mm and the old office circuit had an RCBO fitted as it wasn't protected with a residual current device. The failed outside light on the east side of the building was replaced. A hand operated fire alarm and fire action notices were put in place.

**Youth Centre & Gordon Rooms.** In both buildings the uprights on some of the reinforced concrete portals supporting the roof need repairing. This can only be carried out by specialist repairers. The corrugated asbestos cement roof panels on both buildings are deteriorating and need attention as they are starting to develop holes. In the Gordon Rooms remedial electrical work included the replacement of a bulkhead light fitting and securing loose wiring. Other minor repairs were carried out. There needs to be a decision about the future of these two buildings.

**The Garage.** The garage continues to be serviceable but has a temporary repair on the roof at the main door end. There are broken concrete panels in the wall, but the garage is still secure.

**Planning for The Future.** A long-term plan is required for the Church Centre, the Youth Centre and Gordon Rooms so that money spent on repairs isn't wasted by future changes.

Tom Brown  
G&B Chair

## 7. ADMINISTRATION

### STAFFING

Our priest in charge, Mark Close, left in August after six years to take up a new role as school chaplain to Exeter School. Mark will be much missed for his challenging evangelical sermons and humorous banter with his son Archie in our Sunday family services. We wish him every blessing in his new job. Huge thanks also to Mark's wife Amy who led our CORE youth group and organised the very popular Christmas Make-It event.

Duncan and Miriam have been doing a great job leading us through the time of vacancy. In addition to our Sunday services which they have shared with Jane, Duncan has also led on baptisms and Miriam on funerals as well as school services. It has been a great blessing to have three such experienced clergy during this time. Huge thanks are due to all three for their commitment and enthusiasm, especially with Duncan continuing to work full time in education.

Our administrator Liz left us at the end of 2022. We greatly appreciate the huge amount of work that Liz did running our church office and dealing with the many requests for weddings, baptisms, funerals and church centre bookings. Thanks to Margaret and others who filled in until we were able to recruit Louisa as our new administrator. Louisa has settled in well and quickly got up to speed with the many varied aspects of the role.

Huge thanks to Lee, continuing in his role as Treasurer, and to Margaret as our PCC Secretary, to Rhianydd and Peggy who stood down as churchwardens earlier in the year, for all they have done, much of which goes unseen. Grateful thanks also to our readers Allan, Tim and Ruth who retired after long service to our church.

Churchwardens - Kevin Hobbs and Chris Brookes

### SAFEGUARDING

At St Philip & St James Church, the PCC take seriously their legal duties to promote a safe environment for all, working closely with the Safeguarding Department at the Diocese of Gloucester. In our responsibility for the protection of Vulnerable Adults and Children & Young People (Under 18s), we follow the advice given to PCCs and the necessary legal documents are on display in church and in our church buildings where our activities occur. Safeguarding Training to at least Basic level is mandatory for all PCC members and to Foundation level for those who volunteer with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding Training is available and encouraged for any of our church members who would like to know more.

We have a legal duty to have the statutory documents (as listed below) on display after approval and adoption by the PCC on their meeting on March 13th 2024.

The full versions of the documents are available in the Church Office or available electronically on request by contacting the church office or the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

2024 Safeguarding Policy.

Promoting a Safer Church - Parish Safeguarding Handbook (Oct 2018 version)

Types of Abuse (including signs and symptoms)

Poster with details of Safeguarding Officer

Canon Margaret Edwards  
Parish Safeguarding Officer



## 8. SOCIAL & FELLOWSHIP

### COMMUNICATION

Following the PCC meeting last May it was agreed that a Communications team should be formed, to explore how best to communicate internally to our church members, and externally to the wider community, also via social media and the church website. A meeting was subsequently arranged for 3<sup>rd</sup> July and following this meeting, we have been working hard to raise our profile via social media and improve all aspects of our communication.

We have added to our church profile on A Church Near You (ACNY); an online church finder tool run by the Church of England which offers free websites for churches. This enables members of the public to more easily find information about our church when searching for churches in this area. The long-term plan is for this website on ACNY to supersede our current website, which will save us money by not needing to pay the yearly subscription fee for the current church website domain.

Following consultation with church members, the weekly notice sheet has been resurrected. This includes the readings for the forthcoming service, a prayer list, weekly calendar of events and details of regular groups. This notice sheet is emailed to the church distribution list as well as posted online via the church website and the church profile on ACNY. Miriam Davis has worked hard to improve and widen our reach via social media, with regular updates being posted on both Facebook and Instagram and short news items about church activities on ANCY.

We have a team account on the website Canva which enables us to create eye-catching posters for events which take place here.

We are making more use of our public noticeboards and event notices around the church site. We have also purchased a Christmas banner which along with banners for Messy Church and Saturday Open for prayer Days are displayed on the hedge at the corner of Larkhay Road and the main Hucclecote Road, in order to attract interest from passers-by. We are planning to install a new administration system which will improve and professionalise internal communications from the church office.

Work will continue into the next year. The team are open to any other ideas and suggestions which will assist in continuing to ensure that our church is well publicised and that all communication is of a high standard and meets the church and church members' needs.

Louisa Scrivener

### HUCCLECOTE COMMUNITY GARDEN

It has been another successful year in the Community Garden; our third since the start of the project in 2021. During 2023 we built thirty raised beds, refurbished a garage into a fully equipped potting shed, made a start on converting another garage into a workshop, and began the rebuilding of a derelict unit into The Cottage where we will be able to make cups of tea and shelter from the weather when needed. The garden also has a vegetable plot, herb garden, fruit trees and bushes, and several benches and seats.

We were thrilled to have two visits from Bishop Rachel (who planted a tree) and from Bishop Emmanuel of the Diocese of Western Tanganyika as part of his visit to the church in November. We also held two very successful Open Days in May and August when we welcomed new faces, provided tea and cake, and sold some of our produce, helping to raise funds for our ongoing costs. We successfully applied for several grants towards the building of the garden.

It is a joy to see church members and those of the local community working together on this project. Some value the garden for companionship and social interaction; some are finding it is increasing their confidence and skills after illness,

job loss, or while seeking asylum from religious persecution in their homeland; others like to feel that they're contributing positively to their neighbourhood. All ages and abilities have found something that they can do; such as gardening, painting, or being a friendly ear to those who call by for a chat. We do not aim to be overtly evangelical, but we can show that the church cares about the parish; and we are open to those who ask for prayer or are exploring faith.

The garden is open twice a week (Tuesday morning and Thursday afternoon), while access is available at any time for those who have one of the raised beds to grow their own flowers, fruit and vegetables.

Alison Dight, Alan Preece

## **MOTHERS' UNION**

Although the members who attend the monthly meetings are small in number, they are committed and faithful. During 2023, we have enjoyed sessions led by our members and other members of our church family. Birthday cards are distributed to members and those who are ill are visited. Joy Noah had been responsible for this visiting until she and Mike moved away, at the end of the year. Although the move was good for them, we shall miss Joy so much, not only for this role but also as one of our regular attenders at meetings.

We have also celebrated the MU Wave of Prayer in early September and host a Summer of Hope Coffee Morning to raise funds for Mothers' Union Worldwide. On Mothering Sunday, flowers are distributed to the congregation at both services, together with a Mothers' Union bookmark. Our Christmas social was a visit to the restaurant at Prinknash Abbey and the group have met for coffee and cake at Coffee 43, to support local business. Three of our members attended the Annual Gathering in York in September.

Jean Thomas, Branch Leader

## **SOCIAL EVENTS TEAM**

The social committee was reinstated in February 2023 with the aim of organising social events outside of mission planned events. Any proposed events together with details are presented to either PCC or Standing Committee for their agreement before progressing.

A coffee morning was held in May in aid of Christian Aid. In October a Jazz Concert was held in church featuring The Stolen Chocolates, money was raised for the Church and Gloucester City Mission. With cost in mind, a 'bring and share' lunch was held after the 10.30 service to celebrate Harvest. The final event for 2023 was a coffee morning/market which was held at the beginning of December which raised money for the Church and Food Bank.

Thank you to all the social committee for their help and support over 2023.

Rhianydd Warren

## **LUNCH CLUB 2023**

2023 has been a year of highs and lows for Lunch Club. The year began well in January, with guests and volunteers returning after the Christmas break. At this time, we began looking at what measures needed to be put in place in order that Lunch Club could be officially recognised as being a part of St. Philip & St. James outreach ministry to the elderly and lonely in our community. We envisaged this was going to be a gradual process of addressing what would be required, step by step, whilst Lunch Club continued. It was a shock to the team and guests in February to be informed that Lunch Club was to cease cooking and serving meals with immediate effect.

As our guests put great value upon the fellowship which they enjoy, sharing a meal together, we were able to arrange to continue meeting regularly either at the Wagon and Horses, or having a picnic in the church centre over the summer. Our thanks to all who encouraged us, and prayed that Lunch Club would be able to restart. Special thanks must be given to Marilyn Sharland, Alison Dight and Wendy Vickers for all their support, and to Chris Brookes for his diligence in guiding us through all the necessary forms and paperwork.

September 21<sup>st</sup>. was a day of joy and celebration as. twenty guests once again sat down to a cooked meal and we were awarded a Five Star Food Hygiene rating!

Lunch Club is now a recognised church outreach ministry, meeting fortnightly, serving delicious meals, enabling guests to enjoy fellowship, chatting together and developing new friendships The atmosphere in the church centre is so warm and happy.

The now smaller team of helpers together with guests sat down to a traditional Christmas dinner (thank you cooks!) and were entertained once again with a visit from Hillview School choir, leading carol singing.

Margaret Wenham on behalf of the Lunch Club team

## **TUESDAY @ TWO**

Twice monthly, on a Tuesday afternoon a regular group of keen games players have continued to meet in the centre kitchen to enjoy an afternoon of fellowship whilst being a bit competitive. There are two or three tables busy concentrating on playing Canasta which is popular and quite easy to pick up, even if you haven't played it before. Another group prefers to play word and board games like Scrabble, Lexicon, Up-words. There is quite an assortment of games available.

The afternoon always ends with everyone seated together, chatting with a well-earned cup of tea, and sampling a slice of delicious homemade cake. Victoria sponge, Coffee & Walnut, Carrot, Marmalade cakes are firm favourites.

All are welcome to come and join us.

Margaret & Philip Wenham

## **CHURCH FLOWERS**

It's a pleasure to meet on Friday mornings when we arrange flowers for the services. We were happy to recruit a new member to the team this last year – Andrea Reynolds – who has fitted in wonderfully and is responsible for the lovely table arrangements in church. We only had one Wedding requesting flowers this year which we enjoyed arranging but as it was during Lent they had to be removed afterwards. The couple were very fortunate to be able to have the arrangements/flowers to give to their guests!

We made 70 Mothers' Day posies on behalf of Mothers' Union. Easter Flowers were beautiful. Harvest was special with some of the produce displayed coming from the Community Garden. We so enjoyed doing the Christmas arrangements and this year Bishop Rachel even commented on how beautiful the Church looked – praise indeed – but we do it to glorify God's house.

Thanks to the dedicated team who come each week and those who help, with the festivals. Thanks to all who make donations or comment on our arrangements – it means a lot.

Jenny Barton

## **C.A.M.E.O (COME AND MEET EACH OTHER)**

We had a good year starting with an Eco-Friendly evening, followed by a craft evening where we all made a birthday card and gift box. It was lovely to see Anne Thomas with her book *A Citadel of Ice* and how she came to write it. The Cobalt team came to tell us all about their new scanners (and what our Penny Pots go towards). The Gloucester Film Company showed us places around the city which no longer exist and Kath Perks brought her Jewellery to show us and how she makes it and we were able to buy. We had many other speakers too.

Our summer outing was to Trioscape, where we were treated to a wonderful afternoon tea and after we were able to look around the Garden Centre.

Our number have been steadily increasing over the year and we have a good and varied programme for 2024. We would welcome new members – why not give Cameo a try.

Jenny Barton

## **9. CHARITABLE SUPPORT**

### **CHRISTIAN AID 2023**

Christian Aid has been active in working with some of the world's most vulnerable communities in 29 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Working on topics as diverse as emergency response, accountability, peace-building, health, land rights, tax justice and helping communities adapt to climate change.

When Storm Daniel hit Libya in September and two dams burst with more than 11,300 people known to have died as a result, Christian Aid responded, working with Dan Church Aid, its Act Alliance partner, long established in Libya, in sending emergency supplies, including medical assistance, supplies and pharmaceuticals, emergency shelter, sanitation and hygiene kits and food.

As if responding to the catastrophic aftermath of natural disasters isn't enough in the world today, the invasion by Russian forces in Ukraine entering a second year has meant that millions of Ukrainians are living in damaged homes or in buildings which do not provide sufficient protection. Christian Aid is working with partners to provide hope and to ensure people survive and rebuild.

Christian Aid partners in Gaza are responding as best they can. Working under intense pressure and where it's extremely dangerous to move around, and supplies of essentials are running perilously low, seeking to bring medical relief and community-led initiatives such as food, shelter, sanitation and cash. This includes building mobile bathrooms in four shelters to working with local farmers to get fresh vegetables for families that have left their homes to escape airstrikes. Christian Aid is also working with Zochrot, an Israeli civil society organisation based in Tel Aviv, to provide trauma based psychological assistance to Israelis who have been affected by this violent conflict.

Thank you to all who contributed to Christian Aid Week 2023., via either the online envelope account, red envelopes, Christian Aid bucket collection. The total raised was £246-60. The Christian Aid coffee morning/ mini-market and sale of preserves over the year resulted in a further £802-55, making a grand total of £1049-15.

Please support Christian Aid Week 2024, May 12<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup>.

Philip Wenham Christian Aid representative