



St Mark's Church Pensnett Annual Reports 2023

Vicars Report

Dear Brothers and Sisters

Following prayer, waiting and then conversations with Bishop John and Bishop Martin, on the 3rd April 2023 at Worcester Cathedral I agreed with the archdeacon to be part-time, interim minister for St Marks Pensnett. The licence is for a period of 3 years. Two days a week and 3 Sundays per month. I did not visit the building or meet the congregation before saying 'yes', because Erin and I were praying for a new invitation from God, and we were at peace that this was the invitation intended for me. My appointment came from the bishop, and the congregation did not have any say in the appointment, an unusual process. Also unusual was the time between myself, and the previous incumbent - 2 months. Usually, long interregnums are the Anglican norm. However, it seems that God, and the bishop wanted St Marks to discover a new flourishing as a church without a long interregnum.

It is no secret that what I came to, was the aftermath of a serious storm within the congregation. The building and people who seemed very isolated from the local community and diocese.

In Matthew 8, we find Jesus and the disciples in the middle of a storm. What we needed to do at St Marks is to rediscover the Jesus who calms the storm and brings peace. Then as we find the peace and healing, we needed discern what new possibilities God wants for St Marks. That discernment is an ongoing process that will reach throughout the year. For out of our chaos God brings new life and order like in the Genesis 1 story. I have endeavoured to explore my role here through my presence, my teaching, and at the Eucharistic table, whilst also building relationships within, and outside of St Mark's.

This new sense of order and possibility has also come through the refurbished church office. The diocese has now sold the vicarage which meant that we needed a new base in which to organise ourselves as a parish church and to facilitate our mission to our people. This has been and continues to be facilitated by Erins work in the parish office.

One of the privileges of a parish priest is to meet people who say yes to the kingdom of God, even if we are unsure of the outcome. I want to thank those who have said 'Yes', and encourage others here at St Mark's to say yes to exploring new ways in which the kingdom of God could, and will come to this parish and church.

Reverend Nigel Traynor, Vicar, April 2024

Electoral Roll

It has been a little complicated in identifying a correct Electoral Roll this year. The last list as of the AGM of 2023 consisted of 49 names. During the year 2 of those have died, and 2 have moved away.

However, when looking at the Roll, there were many regular attenders who were not named, and these have now completed forms, and there have been 14 new names added.

Therefore, making a total of 63.

Mrs Erin Traynor, Acting ER Officer, April 2024

Safeguarding Report

Sarah Stratten and Matthew Marsh have been appointed as Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSO) for St Marks Church.

Over the next couple of weeks, you will see a safeguarding board appear at the back of the church. This board will include a church roles ladder to indicate who does what in the church and identify who people should see/contact for different issues. The board will also include safeguarding posters and contact details.

As part of safeguarding, it has been advised that all PCC members should be DBS checked and the process of this is already started.

In the summer months the Worcester diocese is to undergo a safeguarding audit. The auditors will be visiting at least 3 churches in the diocese. We are not sure currently if this will affect St Marks church. As part of this we would like to conduct a safeguard questionnaire to find out how much the congregation know about safeguarding in the church and identify the areas the church is successful in and areas the church need to develop.

Sarah Stratten & Matthew Marsh, PSO, April 2024
Secretary to PCC report

During the last year we held some six PCC meeting and similar Standing Committee meetings.

These considered the usual financial considerations of the Church including fundraising and social events. The fabric of the Church and its upkeep were given considerable attention.

Safeguarding was a regular topic.

The early part of the year also included the and appointment of our new Vicar 'Nigel'.

Mr David Greenaway, PCC Secretary, April 2024

Deanery Synod Report

There were four Deanery Synod meetings at which the Church was represented.

Mr David Greenaway, Deanery Synod Rep, April 2024

Vergers Report

Since accepting the role of Verger six months ago, I have enjoyed learning more about the role, working alongside the wardens, and being able to welcome people into church for Sunday services, and funerals.

Mr Arthur McCarroll, Verger, April 2024

Wardens Report

2023 was a time of great change for the parish. Reverend Ness left for pastures new in April, and fortunately we were only in interregnum for a few months.

It has been a privilege and pleasure to welcome Reverend Nigel Traynor to St Mark's church on Sunday 16th July as our new part-time, Interim Vicar. Also, his wife Erin who has supported by giving time and energy in sorting our church governance. She is now our church administrator and what a difference she has made to the running of the church office.

Nigel is very much a people's vicar, a good listener, (and also makes a good cuppa, and washes up!) He is leading us into a new phase of worship and mission here in the parish, and what a joy it is.

Links with St Marks school have been strengthened through the year. Rev Nigel regularly meets with the headmaster, Mr Keith Rondeu, taking part in assemblies and services, both at the school and in church. The school choir sang at our Christmas Carol Service in church, and have shown interest in doing more.

Tree Tops Nursery (Russells Hall Hospital), used the church on three occasions, to hold their Christmas plays, which were lovely and well attended.

Church events included a plant sale, organised By Sue McCarroll, supported by Arthur. Instead of a Christmas Fayre, Sue was also responsible for organising a November Table Top sale which was well supported. Thanks to all who helped to make these events happen.

A children's lunch party was held at Christmas after the Christingle service, when food and games were enjoyed by all in attendance. This was organised by Chris While, assisted by other congregation members.

We would like to thank everyone who take care of refreshments after Sunday morning services, for tea and coffee, and also everyone who bakes the cakes that we all enjoy.

We are happy to report that our congregation is steadily growing, as we have had a number of new families join us, which is wonderful. We still hold monthly baptisms, when asked to do so. There have been no weddings but we hope that more couples will choose St Marks in the future.

Thank you also to the PCC for their time and commitment through this past year. God Bless.

Mrs Chris While and Mrs Marion Ovenall, Church wardens, April 2024

On a personal note...

I would like to thank Chris who is standing down as warden this year to enable her to fully concentrate on her new role as ALM here at St Mark's. We have worked well together for the past few years.

Thank you, Chris!

Mrs Marion Ovenall

Treasurers Report 2023

Losses for 2023 are less than in 2022. This being due to an increase in the value of our share; weekly plate giving; donations; interest and dividends. We also received a generous inheritance from our good friend Mr. Barry Cartwright of £2000.

Due to uncertainties in the year with our bank “Metro” we were advised by the Diocese to move monies from our general funds into the Geary Trust. The Geary is unrestricted therefore we can draw from the fund if we need to.

Utility bills have risen by £7107.11, more than double from 2022. Insurance costs have also increased along with many other expenses. Computer costs have also increased due to the requestion of a more friendly printer/copier and the broadband being updated. The copier we lease has found to be complicated and more costly than we thought.

A new boiler has been installed to comply with regulation. The church underwent a deep clean with the removal of years of dust and cobwebs, from places we are unable to reach. The gutters were cleaned out at a cost of £500.

Mrs Chris While, April 2024

Fabric Report

The church office has been cleared and reorganised to facilitate its use as the Parish Office, now that the Vicarage is sold. The telephone line and broadband connections were upgraded. The existing computer was refurbished and a small desktop printer was purchased. Other office furniture purchased included lockable filing cabinets and chairs (all upcycled).

There has been a lot of de-cluttering out of the old vestry, and the church building, which has improved the worship space.

The heating system was serviced, and the hot water tank was replaced in December.

A company was employed to do high level vacuum cleaning of internal walls, window ledges, lights and inner glass doors and windows. The same company also cleaned the blocked gutters and drains (which had been requested by the most recent quinquennial inspection).

There are some issues which will need attention during the next year, including the paint deterioration in the Morris chapel.

The next Quinquennial is due in 2024.

Mrs Maz Ovenall & Mrs Chris While, Wardens, April 2024

Mothers Union

After Covid 2022, St Mark's Mothers Union slowly started back up again. It was strange to be meeting again with everyone. Bob, our branch leader, had died, and it was also the year when we had a cream tea and planted a rose for the Queens Jubilee; both sad and happy times.

As a group we started 2023 with our Christmas lunch at the Lodge. Our next meeting in February had no speaker, and we discussed what we should do for the rest of the year. Sandra Shepherd took on the role of finding interesting speakers for us.

Our members meet on the second Tuesday in the month at 2pm. There is a short service of hymns and prayers, followed by a speaker, then a chat and refreshments.

We have projects that we are all involved with, including knitting hats and matinée coats for premature babies for the local hospitals in Worcester (the Diocese we belong to). We have also made teddies for prisons, and prayer shawls for those who are sick or just need our prayers and love. Other branches have other projects. We raise funds to send families in need of breaks for holidays or trips out.

These past few years our main project has been our Lenten collection of items that are needed for the Women's Refuge. On this topic, we also put on displays such as highlighting Modern Day Slavery, abuse and many more. We made knitted chains to hang around the church.

The highlight of 2023 was being asked to hold the Diocesan festival here at St Mark's, when other branches came together to celebrate. President Judith, Vice-President Jen and Deanery Leader Liz were welcome, and Mother Victoria led a very uplifting service, ending with the banners being

carried from the church. The service was followed by refreshments and fellowship with friends and members, new and old.

I am looking forward to 2024, to see what the future brings.

Mrs Hazel Hickman, Branch Leader, April 2024

St Mark's Bellringers

There are 8 bells in the tower ranging in weight from around 50 kilograms up to 460 kilograms. The bells are over 100 years old being cast by Carr's of Smethwick, who were not a renowned maker of bells but it does make them different from the majority of bells in the area. They have been in situ since 1926 only being taken out in 2005/2006 when they were taken to Loughborough by Taylors bell foundry to be retuned and subsequently rehung which greatly improved the tone and handling of the bells.

In the 98 years that the bells have been in the tower there have been 49 peals (change methods) rung, with the first peal of Stedman Triples being rung on Saturday 12th June 1926, and the last, Yorkshire Surprise Major, on Saturday 3rd May 2008.

The bells are rung most Sunday mornings and on special occasions e.g. the Kings coronation, by a dedicated band of 5 or 6 ringers both male and female but new comers, of all ages, are always welcome. Technique is far more important than strength and most people can learn to ring.

Mr Tony Hickman, Captain of the Tower, April 2024

Knit & Natter

The Knit & Natter club was started after Easter 2023. It was for anyone that could knit, or who wanted to learn a skill. Meeting on Wednesday at 1.30 and finishing around 3.30, we enjoy a hot drink, biscuits and cake, alongside a time to chat and learn new skills. Nine people came and there were a few who could not knit, and were taught, starting with the basics. We began by knitting baby hats and cardigans for the premature baby unit at Russells Hall Hospital. This was followed by knitting items for the Mothers Union, which are given to those in need, and still carries on. The group did not meet during the winter months, because of the cold, but has now started again. All are welcome.

Mrs Sue McCarroll, Knit & Natter, April 2024

St. Marks Pensnett		Profit & Loss Account year ending 31st December 2023			
Income		2023		2022	
Interest Received		2,532.00		886.47	
Dividends Received		3,123.61		3,379.70	
Open Plate		7,360.95		2,312.42	
Gift Aid		1,320.00		5,659.15	
Non Gift Aid		95.00		2,386.20	
Candles		246.48		223.63	
Church Hire		265.00		155.00	
Donations		2,986.34		2,632.68	
Funeral/Baptism Fees		4,207.05		2,195.67	
War Graves		13.50		13.50	
HMRC		0.00		0.00	
Inheritance B Cartwright		2,000.00		1,000.00	
Use of Photocopier		100.00			
Stone Mason		35.00			
Shares Revaluation		9,210.73		-18,090.05	
Parking Action Heart		480.00		480.00	
Prize Donations		0.00		0.00	
Smartie Tubes				13.50	
Wedding Fees		209.00		1,562.40	
Xmas Raffle				2,490.90	
Xmas Panto				294.21	
Xmas Fayre				1,387.12	
Table Top Sale		635.36			
Plant Sale		80.00			
Harvest		60.00			
Carol Concert		23.62			
Knit & Natter		77.50			
Kingdom People		22.17			
Childrens Society		15.40			
Youth Club				695.15	
Total Income		35,098.71		9,677.65	
Expenditure					
Parish Share		10,000.00		20,790.00	
Assigned Fees		1,292.00		1,986.00	
Vicar X's		32.45		123.64	
Electricity/Gas		12,190.03		5,082.92	
Insurance		6,997.47		6,493.07	
Phone		809.68		851.47	
Water rates		134.31		127.15	
Rubbish bins		490.69		463.10	
Hygiene/Cleaning		727.34		719.36	
Organ Fees/Repairs		140.00		1,180.00	
Candles		238.20		72.70	
Wafers/Wine		153.42			
Choir/Bell Ringers				478.00	
Vicar/Vergers		555.59		175.00	
Funeral/Wedding X's				264.00	
Flowers				253.95	
Repairs General		865.80		354.26	
Repairs Heating		1,973.58		571.20	
Photocopier		3,598.97		2,145.60	
Service X's Link		288.62		318.92	
Sunday School X's		225.40			
Postage/Stationery		185.93		549.98	
Kitchen Costs		89.54			
Event costs				-15.81	
Palm Crosses		76.38			
Sundry X's		0.00			
Bank Charges		35.00		60.00	
Bibles/ Books etc		633.93		298.95	
Liturgical Supplies etc				194.63	
Donations Poppies		40.00		40.00	
Computer Costs		635.96		68.97	
New Computer/Printer		778.00			
Office Furniture		262.00			
New Lighting				-166.28	
Advertising Costs				57.97	
Fund Raising Costs				142.80	
Xmas Gifts/Food		189.94			
Gutter Clean		500.00			
Discretion Fund		50.00			
Licences		395.30		373.89	
Total Expenditure		44,585.53		44,055.44	
Total Excess Income		-9,486.82		-34,377.79	

St Marks Pensnett	Year ending 31st December 2022					2023	
Statement of Financial Activities							
		Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	Total	Total	
		Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds	
		2023	2023	2023	2023	2022	
Income Resources							
Voluntary Income		19,333.72			19,333.72	19,315.80	
Fund Raising		898.65			898.65	4,185.73	
Investment Income		49.85	2,482.15	3,123.61	5,655.61	4,266.17	
		20,282.22	2,482.15	3,123.61	25,887.98	27,767.70	
Resources Expended							
Costs of generating							
voluntary income		44,545.53			44,545.53	44,015.44	
Charitable Activities		40.00			40.00	40.00	
		44,585.53	0.00	0.00	44,585.53	44,055.44	
Net Resources less							
expenditure		-24,303.31	2,482.15	3,123.61	-18,697.55	-16,287.74	
Transfers between		1,888.28		-1,888.28	0.00	0.00	
Funds			1,235.33	-1,235.33	0.00	0.00	
Revaluation Gains				9,210.73	9,210.73	-18,090.05	
Net Movement		-22,415.03	3,717.48	9,210.73	-9,486.82	-34,377.79	
Total Funds at							
1st January 2023		261,350.61	95,304.14	139,859.49	496,514.24	452,649.63	
Total Funds at							
31st December 2023		238,935.58	99,021.62	149,070.22	487,027.42	418,271.84	

St Marks Pensnett		Year Ending 31st December 2023		
Balance Sheet				
Unrestricted Funds				
Edna Geary 9004	200,399.01			
Slade 4763	3,777.64			
Main account 5904	12,745.80			
Sunday School 0176	1,613.89			
Youth Club (HSBC)	0.00			
	<u>218,536.34</u>			
Restricted Funds				
Bell Fund 9001D	2,882.08			
Restoration Fund 9002D	23,956.74			
Organ Fund 9003D	14,019.18			
Morris Maint 9006D	27,921.09			
Sunday School 4083	38,684.28			
Sunday School 2840	257.38			
	<u>107,720.75</u>			
Endowment Funds				
Meredith 1508S	64,559.15			
Bryce 1443S	1,989.27			
Gibbons 1442S	1,085.05			
Palmer 1441S	1,446.74			
Morris 9001F	57,312.33			
	<u>126,392.54</u>			
Total Net Worth			<u>452,649.63</u>	
Asset Value as at 31.12.2022			462,136.45	
Net Income for Year 31.12.2023			-9,486.82	
			<u>452,649.63</u>	

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

Independent Examiner's Report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of St. Mark's Pensnett for the year ended 31st December 2023.

Independent examiner's statement

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

- (1) The accounting records were not in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act:
or
- (2) The accounts do not accord with those records: or
- (3) The accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the 'Charities' (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

Signed:

MJB

Dated:

28 March 2024

Michael Bishop (BA)
23 Dorchester Road
Stourbridge
DY6 0XD