



St Luke's Church – Hedge End
Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Incorporating the
Annual Meeting of the Parishioners
Sunday 12 May 2024

**THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL (ALSO KNOWN AS TRUSTEES) OF THE
PARISH OF HEDGE END, ST LUKE**

Charity Registration No: 1142990

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Annual Report for Year Ending 31 December 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rev Ben Jones' (Vicar) Introductory Remarks

Well, I'm writing this in March and most of you will be reading this in May so 2023 probably already feels quite a long time ago! But it's good to look back and reflect on what was another fantastic year at St. Luke's.

My over-riding emotion in my role as vicar here is one of thankfulness. I genuinely thank God every day for you all, for our wonderful church community. I am well aware of how lucky I am to have been called to St. Luke's and I hope that, as you look around at the extraordinary community we are part of here, that you share in this feeling.

We've seen plenty of growth as a church, in our diversity, our home groups, our numbers, our finances, our environmental awareness, our staff team, our generosity to other organisations and mission agencies and in our closeness as a community. Above all, my hope is that we have grown in the depth of understanding of God's great love for us and, in response, in our love for Him and for our world.

Do read on through the rest of this report to find out more of what's been happening, but here are a few things which I think are worth mentioning here:

- We ran two Alpha courses in 2023, both of which were a great success.
- We launched two new home groups, one following on from Alpha and one specifically for the 20s and 30s age group.
- We employed Maddie, our wonderful new Youth Ministry Co-ordinator, and have seen new events started and new young people joining in.
- Clive was ordained as a priest and has continued to be an extraordinary blessing to us as he shares in the leadership of the church.
- Jeanette, our brilliant parish administrator, continued to provide high quality (but often unseen) support for the church's ministry.
- We launched our new online churchwide prayer meeting and have now met several times.
- We had a glorious baptism service on Easter Day and a lovely variety of superb Christmas services.
- We installed a new sound system which should last us for many years to come.
- We installed a new oven in the church kitchen, which has already been used to cook hundreds of pizzas for youth café, dozens of meals for church lunches and much, much more.

There is so much more to celebrate, and the rest of this report details those things. Please keep praying for all the fantastic ministries, groups and events that take place at St. Luke's.

I'd like to conclude these opening remarks with a bible verse that has been resonating with me recently. May it be true for us as a church as we continue to go forward together in God's love.

'The Lord is my strength and my shield. In him my heart trusts and I am helped. My heart exults and with my song I give thanks to Him.' Psalm 28:7

Rev Ben Jones

1.2 Administrative Information

This Annual Report was approved by PCC (Trustees) on 18 March 2024. The Parish of Hedge End, St Luke, is part of the Diocese of Winchester within the Church of England and is in the Eastleigh Deanery.

Bank: Co-operative Bank, Kings Valley, Yew Street, Stockport.

Independent Auditor: Russell Lee

1.3 Income and Reserves

St Luke's has the Charity Registration Number 1142990. As anticipated in the last annual report, income has now returned to a level that requires Charity Commission Registration.

It is the policy of this Church to hold in reserve £10,000. This figure is deemed to be appropriate considering (a) the size of St Luke's church and (b) the considerations stipulated by the Charity Commission which include forecasting for levels of income and expenditure in the current and future years, analysis of future needs, opportunities, commitments and risks and an assessment on the likelihood of a shortfall arising.

1.4 Structure, Governance and Management

The method of appointment of Parochial Church Council 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 PCC. Guidelines on the role and responsibilities of PCC and Deanery Synod Representatives are available from the Vicar and Churchwardens.

1.5 Membership of PCC (also known as Trustees)

During the year, the following served as members of the PCC:

Ex-officio:

Revd Ben Jones	Vicar
Revd Clive Beard	Curate
Rosie Adams	Churchwarden
Michael Crutchley (Lay Vice Chair)	Churchwarden
Martin Phillips	Licensed Lay Minister
Revd Liz Williams	Curate (for part of year)

Elected Members of PCC:

Emma Blamey
Mandy Dean, Deanery Synod Representative
Alastair Dobson
Janet Compton
Gary Holcombe, Deanery Synod Representative
Sam Mathew
Sandra Plaw
Nibu Thomas

Co-opted Members of PCC: None

In attendance: The following staff members attend PCC meetings but hold no voting rights.

Maddie Thorp, Youth Ministry Co-ordinator attends PCC meetings as an observer.
Jeanette Harrison, Parish Administrator, has served as Secretary to PCC.

Notes

- Those noted as ex-officio are members by virtue of their position in the Church including all licensed clergy in the parish, LLM's, Churchwardens and Lay Deanery Synod Representatives.
- Co-opted – PCC can co-opt people. Co-opted members have the same voting rights as elected and ex-officio members.

1.6 PCC's Objectives and Activities

St Luke's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Vicar in promoting, in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC operates through several sub-committees that meet in between PCC meetings. These sub-committees are:

- Senior Leadership Team
- Ministry Leadership Team (MLT)
- Children & Youth
- Buildings
- Eco Church
- Finance

The following Working Groups have been established to effect specific tasks:

- Pastoral
- Home Group Leaders
- Socials
- Communications and Publicity

2. Review of the Year 2023

2.1 Reports

(a) Curate's Report

Time is absolutely flying by! The end of 2023 means that I have now been in post as curate for 18 months already. Can you believe it?

This year in July, I was ordained as a Priest in Winchester Cathedral and was able to undertake further duties as part of my training, key of which have included presiding at holy communion and conducting weddings. The latter was an extra special joy for me as, only a week after I had been at the cathedral, I was conducting my first wedding – that of Mark and Stacy. It is fantastic to be able to take a wedding of people you know, and it was a wonderful day (those of you who didn't hear Bens talk about an "M&S wedding" missed something special).

I remain heavily involved in Eco-church, both here at St Lukes and in a role supporting the wider Diocesan ambition. This is a really important part of our ministry for me, and I am optimistic that our plan over the next 12 months for St Lukes should allow us to apply for a Gold Eco-Church award.

As well as all of the activities I was involved in last year, I have also had the joy to start leading a new home group for 20-30 year olds in the church. I am now, once again, a 20-year old (albeit an honorary one)! I have also had the joy of leading communion services at Snowdrop, parishioners' homes and being able to lead Book of Common Prayer communions at Bishopstoke. I am glad that we have managed to get the church prayer meeting running again, and I pray more will become involved as we move forwards.

For all the activities though, what I really think is at the heart of St Lukes is generous love. Love for God and love for one another. It is a really warm and generous church. In small ways and big ways, in one-off acts of kindness and in patient, long-term service, we are able to share some of God's love with the community around us.

Two final comments; firstly, I knew clergy often wore black and white - but being dressed in a penguin onesie for the Christmas Eve service was not quite what I had envisioned and, secondly, the delight on Ben's face when I was mistaken for his dad by a young boy is something I am unlikely to forget (or be allowed to forget!)

I feel that Ben, Maddie and I along with the wider team work together really well and I am excited for what 2024 will bring.

Rev'd Clive Beard

(b) **Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Ministry Leadership Team (MLT)**

SLT (Senior Leadership Team) met six times and consists of the clergy, the Churchwardens and up to three congregation members (appointed by PCC). We discussed matters such as recruiting and employing our Youth Ministry Co-ordinator, the roof project, developing a set of values that represent St. Luke's and preparing reports and proposals for PCC.

MLT (Ministry Leadership Team) met 3 times in 2023. The role of the group is to review, plan and prepare for services. Over the year, there was an excellent mix of all-ins, morning worship, communion services and more formal services such as Ash Wednesday, Remembrance and Midnight Communion. New people were added to various teams, and it is great that we are seeing a variety and diversity of people involved. Services continue to be well-appreciated and the number of people attending continues to grow. The All-In planning team also met regularly, and we are very grateful for all the imagination, innovation and inspiration which go into producing such fun and engaging services.

Revd Ben Jones

(c) **Pastoral**

Our pastoral ministry continues with our pastoral team, Ben, Clive, Sue and Rosie. We also have prayer@stlukes for prayer requests which are not confidential but are then prayed for by a number of people. Thank you to everyone on the prayer tree for your faithful prayers! The pastoral team on care@stlukes also pray, offer practical support, or a listening ear which is confidential within the pastoral team. The pastoral care of church members and others is also done by the small groups, and all the other ministries that we have in St Luke's. I would like to thank everyone who has taken time to chat, get alongside, WhatsApp and offer support by cooking, giving lifts and befriending another person. A real team effort!

Sue Phillips

(d) **Children and Youth Sub-Committee**

- (i) **Children's Church groups for 0-11 year olds:** This report is for the year 2023 and is about groups offered on a Sunday morning for children aged 0-11 years old, excluding the first Sunday of each month, when there is the All-In service.

We started the year with seven volunteers and continued to offer one group every Sunday, apart from the All-in service, for children spanning the age of 0-11. Due to the large age span, volunteers leading and helping in the group require skills to adapt the activities to be inclusive for all attending. The group consists of two adult volunteers as per safeguarding policy.

At the beginning of the year, we used the Red Compendium Scripture Union Resources. For the Summer and Autumn terms we

looked at characters in the bible who were God's ordinary Superheroes. These resources were either found in the Scripture Union resources or found by Clive and Nicki through other reliable sources. Artwork was displayed on the existing vine which was created last year and climbs the side of the stairs in the foyer of the church. For Mothering Sunday, the children made posies which were given to all the ladies of the church during the service.

For the Spring term we had 97 children attend the group over the 11 weeks, making a mean average of eight children attending per week. During the Summer term the volunteer numbers increased to eight. A total of 62 children attended the group over the 10 weeks of the term, making a mean average of 6 children attending per week. During the Autumn term the volunteer numbers remained at eight. With a total of 92 children attending the group over the 10-week period, making a mean average of nine children attending per week. Last year's report did not indicate the number of children attending the Spring and Summer terms; however, it was documented that there had been an increase in attendance. This year there has been a further increase in the children attending Children's Church, with new families visiting regularly and children wanting to join the group.

The Nativity was held on 10 December and the children were joined by Clive, Maddie and some of our volunteers to showcase some of God's ordinary Superheroes we had explored this year. The Nativity concentrated on telling the story of God's Ultimate Superhero - Jesus. Several kind and positive comments were received from the congregation about the Nativity.

Consent forms are being completed when new children regularly attend the group. These are kept in the register which is locked in a box in the office.

Jeanette sent out hand-made birthday cards to the church's children on their birthday during the year. Consent for this is included on the consent forms. This is a lovely gift, which is appreciated by the children receiving them. As mentioned, resources have been taken from our Scripture Union Compendium and other sources. Children's church artwork has continued to be displayed on the vine in the foyer. The display boards in room 3, upstairs, are still used to display church events and important themes and is updated by Juliette. This room has been used by Children's Church to facilitate J7 accessing the downstairs coffee room. Nicki has been providing Jeanette with insets for the weekly email. These provide the bible passage and a glimpse of what the session will consist of so parents have information prior to the Sunday group.

Looking ahead to 2024:

- Two volunteers are leaving the group, reducing the number of volunteers to six. There have been appeals and notices in the church services and the weekly email asking for more volunteers. There is a real need for more volunteers to run and help in the group.
- The group will continue to run with one group for 0-11 years old, every Sunday apart from the All-In Service.
- Children's Church will now solely run upstairs in room 3. Tables and chairs have been moved into the locked adjoining storage cupboard for easy access.
- Volunteers are going to select small creche toys to be kept and used upstairs for the group. This is to reduce the carrying of large boxes of toys from the coffee room to room 3 upstairs and provide the babies with a few items to play with.
- A meeting has been arranged in January with Ben and all Children's Church volunteers. This will provide an opportunity to celebrate successes and good work of the group and talk through challenges experienced. The plan is to have regular meetings with the ministry team.
- A change of Children's Church Leader is scheduled for end of the Summer term with a new volunteer stepping into the role. The current Children's Church Leader will continue to compile the rota and resources and will support the new leader until this time.
- A change for displaying the children's work in the church will be discussed at the January 2024 meeting with Ben.
- With support from Safeguarding Officer, job roles are being written for the roles within Children's Church.

It can be challenging supporting the vast age range in the group, but all the volunteers work hard to include and fill the weekly sessions with fun, enthusiasm and God's love. They are all thanked wholeheartedly for their continued commitment to the children's work through Children's Church. Thank you!

Nicki Short

(ii) **Youth Ministry**

For the first part of 2023 Junction 7, largely led by Rose, Roger, Tors and Ben, met twice a month on a Sunday evening and had regular trips together, including going bowling and to Ninja Warrior. I (Maddie Thorp) joined St Luke's in September and have had a great time getting to know

the youth and the volunteers and have been really excited seeing God move. We have recruited several new volunteers and are hoping that we may be able to recruit some more as our youth ministry continues to grow.

Since September, Junction 7 have begun to meet on a Sunday morning (bar the all-in services) for games, discussion, teaching, and prayer. Earlier in the year, they looked at science and faith and the beatitudes, and then later in the year we looked at what the Bible is and why it matters. In the run up to Christmas Junction 7 looked at the names of God from Isaiah 9:6 and what these mean to us today. We have used resources from the Bible Project, particularly their videos, as well as some Scripture Union resources.

Junction 7 have continued to meet on a Sunday evening twice a month, and these evenings involve lots of active games and running around with a space for discussion questions. The evening sessions are intended to be a middle ground between the youth café (with no overt Christian teaching) and Sunday mornings where they can bring their questions about faith, the Bible and church and explore these in smaller groups together. This space is also intended to be one we can invite those at youth café to, especially if they are asking questions about faith.

From November, a fortnightly post-16 house group has started up twice a month to dive deeper into the Bible with the college aged students. There have been requests to explore the Old Testament in more depth, so we have been focusing on different Genesis passages, including Creation and the Fall. We usually start with a round of a game called 'Conversations Against Mundanity', that encourages discussion about a range of topics, from best karaoke songs to questions around identity, and is a lot of fun and brings out a whole variety of opinions.

We continue to have regular youth socials – in my first week at St Lukes we went to PlayZone and we all had a great time running around and going down death drop slides. In October we went to Wet Wheels Hamble and the youth went on a speed boat around the Hamble and Solent, getting very wet in the process! We have also been ice skating and had a Christmas Youth Movie Night where we watched Nativity. The movie night was designed to be more of an outreach event where they could invite friends, and we had 13 young people come, with seven of those not being in our regular youth group. I was really encouraged by the number of young people invited by friends and am looking forward to other outreach events in 2024!

During the GCSE mock exams in early November, we ran a two hour drop in each day upstairs in the Lounge. The youth especially enjoyed the colouring, and it was great to have them opening up on how exams were going, as well as other parts of their lives. I really enjoyed being able to

spend time getting to know several of them a bit more and going into 2024 I would like to continue these drop ins during exam seasons for Junction 7 and their friends to come to, as well as for us to invite those at Youth Café to.

We currently have around 10-14 young people regularly coming on a Sunday morning and evening and are in conversation with St James, West End about incorporating their youth into some of the Sunday evening sessions. I also hope to, in conjunction with St John's Church, be an active presence in Wildern and Deer Park Secondary Schools, offering lunch time clubs and prayer spaces. We have had some communication with the Executive Headteacher of the schools and look forward to meeting with staff at the schools after Christmas to discuss how we might support students in school. We are also connected with Scripture Union and Wildfire and will be exploring how we might plug into their events, as well as other local youth worship events such as Encounter at Thornhill Baptist Church.

It has been a real blessing and privilege to have been part of St Lukes for the last few months, and I am excited to already have seen the faith of our young people and where God is at work in their lives. I am looking forward to really engaging with the link between Youth Café and other aspects of our youth ministry going into 2024. My hope for the next year in our youth ministry is that we will continue to see the growth and flourishing of both individual faiths, but also the group as a whole.

Maddie Thorp

(e) **Mission and Outreach**

(i) **Christian Aid:**

Christian Aid works in around 30 countries to transform the lives of those in poverty, working with people of all faiths and none wherever the need is greatest. At St Luke's, we have been continuing our support for Christian Aid in 2023, through both fundraising and campaigning, helping to fight poverty worldwide to give everyone the chance to thrive.

St Luke's continued to support Christian Aid as one of its chosen charities with regular giving of £140 per month to the charity.

For Christian Aid week in May, we welcomed Katie Roberts from Christian Aid to speak at our Sunday service. She spoke about responding to the teaching of Jesus' love and grace. Despite the injustices that remain, some progress against poverty has been achieved, and faithful support has helped enable this. £428 was raised in the collection to help farmers in Malawi to plant better seeds, secure a fairer price for their crops and build happier futures for their children, and we were encouraged to engage with the loss and damage campaign.

We responded with prayer and a collection to 2 emergency appeals in our role as an Emergency church:

- DEC Turkey-Syria Earthquake appeal - February 2023 - £512 raised
- Middle East Crisis appeal - October 2023 - £150 raised

In April, members of St Luke's joined with other Christian Aid supporters to join 'The Big One' climate protest in London, including worshipping at St John's Church, Waterloo in a service led by Christian Aid and other Christian charity groups and participating in a walk of pilgrimage to parliament.

In September, over 40 people from local churches participated in a Christian Aid 'Make Polluters Pay' march from St Luke's to St John's Hedge End, starting and ending with a short service of prayer and worship. The walk was to highlight the need for loss and damage payment to those suffering the effects of climate change, by the biggest polluters, like fossil fuel companies.

In December, we supported the Christmas Appeal to help young women in Bangladesh to start up small businesses in order to escape poverty. We raised £695 in total, which included £185 from the sale of Christmas cakes.

Thanks to the generosity of the congregation, the total raised and donated by St Luke's for 2023 added up to £3465, with some gift aid claimed by Christian Aid in addition to this.

Siân Andrews, St Luke's Christian Aid Representative

(ii) **Hedge End, West End and Botley Churches Together (HEWEB)**

Churches Together for Hedge End, West End and Botley continued to meet bi-monthly, this year, mostly in person, sometimes on Zoom. The aim is to provide a forum to learn about what other churches in the area are doing and to support each other in prayer. It is always encouraging to hear how God is working in different churches in our area. In 2023 we were able to hold a united service during the week of Christian Unity in January, hosted by Hedge End Methodist church. A third Churches Together Children's Holiday Club was successfully held in August. The main outreach of Churches Together has been to visit all the new homes in our area with a gift bag and details of the local churches. Backed up with regular prayer, these visits have proved fruitful, and the visitors have been warmly welcomed.

Rosie Adams

(iii) **Encounter Afternoon Tea**

Encounter Afternoon Tea takes place on a Wednesday afternoon for anyone to gather between 2 – 4 pm to share tea, coffee, and beautiful cakes! We don't charge but have a bowl for donations, and we are blessed that our cakes are donated. Encounter meets in the church, where we have the little tables with tablecloths and flowers and waitress service serving the drinks in beautiful china cups and saucers. Over the year we have continued to have regular people come although not necessarily every week, many of those who come are not from St Luke's. We have also welcomed new people to join us which is a blessing and a real joy as they become part of the fellowship, making new friends. Sonia has continued to bake a cake every week which is amazing, thank you Sonia! I also want to thank Heather and Stacy for their help, and they are amazing at welcoming new and existing people. I would like to thank other helpers - Janet who has joined us and thanks to Mark who has been there when needed. The team are brilliant! I also keep in contact with people who miss Encounter.

Sue Phillips

(iv) **Snowdrop Care Home**

We have continued to go into Snowdrop to provide a Communion service once a month and visiting for a coffee and chat time with the residents. Both are well received and attended. We also visit some residents in their rooms for a chat. We have been working with Gemma at the care home who is both encouraging and supportive. Many thanks to the team including Ann, Brenda and Sandra who have been around for the whole year and Ben and Clive who do communion.

Sue Phillips

(v) **Open the Book**

By now we have established a very warm working relationship with both Berrywood and Wellstead Primary Schools and our assemblies are evidently enjoyed by staff and children alike, not to mention by the Open the Book Team.

Last year we lost two members, Roger and Sue, who were no longer in a position to participate, but we have now gained a new member, Jackie, so we still have a very strong team of 10. I wish to express here my gratitude and admiration to each and every one for their commitment, reliability and willingness to have a go. They are really exceptional.

We continue to visit each school once a month, presenting the month's Bible story twice at Berrywood, first for Key Stage 2 and then for Key Stage 1, and once at Wellstead for the whole school. We work hard on costumes and props to make the story as visually appealing as possible,

and the feedback we get from the schools confirms that this is very much appreciated.

The children listen and watch with rapt attention. Even more, they love to participate, whether by taking a dressing-up rôle or by providing accompanying sounds or actions as part of the whole school. A big highlight was last July, when both Head Teachers agreed to make a surprise appearance as an angel with a fiery sword in the final story of the school year. The children were so excited when they recognised them!

A crucial element of the story is the introduction, ending and prayer, in which a particular thought is drawn out for the children to take away. We are indebted to Ben and Clive for the excellent way they do this.

Since Autumn 2023 we have had some issues getting to grips with the new Open the Book Membership structure, for which we now have to pay an annual fee. Although some of us are happy to pay for our own membership, we are grateful to St. Luke's for covering the initial cost as part of the church's children's ministry.

Diana Snuggs

(vi) **Minnows Playgroup**

Minnows playgroup meets Fridays 10 to 11.30 am for parents, carers and under 5's for free play, and a snack of cheese, fruit, bread, water with coffee/tea for the adults and we also have left over Encounter cake most weeks. We finish with a time of singing where we have introduced a Christian goodbye song. We make a small charge of £1 per family which covers the cost of refreshments and a Christmas present. We have a good number attend each week. However, in January we had so many come on one week we had to close the group when we reached capacity. It has settled since with numbers fluctuating but within safe parameters. We do enjoy building good relationships with the regular members. At Christmas we had a party with a visit from Father Christmas who gave every child a book for a present. We have had such encouraging feedback from those who come which is lovely. The team are Karen, Emma, Rosie, Roger and Sandy. My thanks to the team for their help and support.

Sue Phillips

(vii) **Youth Café**

Our Youth Cafe, which is held every Thursday during term time from 3-4 pm, has an attendance of around 180 children each week. These youngsters come mainly from Wildern School, but we do have a few from Deer Park School too. They eat and chat with some staying for a while. We are getting to know some of them well and building up relationships with them.

We are trying to work out ways in which we can reach out to these children further, so Maddie and Clive projected the QR Code of the church, and we put out laminated codes on the tables each week for the children to use if they wish. At Christmas Ben did a short talk and invited them to our Christmas services. We also invited them to a film night at church. I thank my team of 13 (and an extra lady who helps us out quite regularly) who are so dedicated to our work. It is indeed wonderful to serve these youngsters.

I'd just like to end this report by sharing a short story of encouragement. A while ago, 3 young lads turned up and asked if they could have some Pizza. I could see they weren't from any local school but said they could come in for food. One was called Christian, and he said, 'I know my name is Christian, but I have no idea what a Christian is!' I asked if he wanted to know what a Christian was and he said, 'yes please'. I spent the next 10 minutes or so, explaining the Gospel to these 3 lads! As they left, one of them said 'thanks for telling us about God, we've never heard it explained like that before!' What a privilege it was to chat to these lads, and I pray that seeds were sown in their hearts. Please pray for opportunities to sow seeds in the hearts of all the youngsters that come to the youth cafe. Thanks from Rose and the youth cafe team.

Rose Spink and all the Youth Café team

(viii) **Book Club**

Up to 12 women meet monthly to discuss books chosen from sets provided by Hampshire libraries. The fun part of a book club is reading a book or author that we might have not considered before. We discuss what we liked or didn't like about the book which often leads into wider discussion of issues relating specifically to women or contemporary society. It's great to learn from each other and see things from a different perspective and sometimes question how our faith relates to what we have read. We try to vary the genre of the books we read and during 2023 we looked at murder mysteries, historical fiction and a book which examined what might happen if one always told the truth. We continue to enjoy cakes provided by Dorothy Hare to raise funds for Testwood Lakes Sailability charity.

Rosie Adams

(ix) **St Luke's Walking Group**

The church walking group meets twice a month on the first and third Thursday mornings starting at 10 a.m. We have walked many areas in the region including the New Forest, Meon Valley and around Mottisfont. The walks are about 5-6 miles long. The weather has not always been the best and during the latter part of the year, we had to cancel a couple of the walks due to torrential rain or high wind. The walks are well attended with

an average of about 10+ people plus two dogs. The highlight of the walks is stopping at a local pub for a well-earned lunch at the end of each walk, but it has to be a pub that serves a good pie! A new programme of walks is being put together so if you would like to join us, please do.

Chris Duff and Roger Cooper

(x) **Israeli Dancing**

We have continued to meet monthly to enjoy the fellowship, exercise and worship encompassed by Israeli Dancing. A number of members come from other churches, and some from no church at all, so this is a lovely, wide-ranging friendship group where people enjoy and appreciate being together.

Since we moved to the last Thursday evening of the month, numbers have remained constant between about nine and twelve, and because people have been able to come more regularly it is evident that their familiarity with the dances and therefore their confidence has grown.

We have a repertoire of more than twenty dances, some slower and more gentle, some faster and more energetic, and seek to include some of each every month. We also try to be aware of the origins of the dances - sometimes they are danced at special festival times, sometimes at weddings or Bar Mitzvahs, and often they are danced to settings of words from the Psalms. There is much more to it than just exercise!

Since 7 October, even more than usual, we have made Israeli Dancing a focus for prayer for the land and people of Israel, including the people of Gaza and the whole dreadful and complex political situation. May we soon be able to dance dances of rejoicing in celebration of a lasting and peaceful end to this conflict.

Diana Snuggs

(xi) **Not So Strictly St Luke's**

We started our Not So Strictly dance sessions in January 2023 as a fun way to exercise, learn some dancing and socialize. They are once month on a Sunday afternoon, and it is £3 a person to include refreshments. Anybody can come along, with or without a partner and whether or not they can already dance. They have proved to be very popular with church members and some of their friends and some non-church members too. Any profit made after the cost of refreshments is paid directly back into church. We are enjoying running these afternoons and are very grateful to some of our dancing friends who have come along to support us and encourage and help the beginners.

Anne and Ian Taylor

(xii) **Ladies Group**

We have had an active and interesting year with speakers on many different subjects such as 'Butterflies Bereavement Support Group' and 'My Time as a Magistrate'. We had a walk and meal in the Summer, a Pimms and strawberries evening and a craft evening. Our group numbers are between 15 and 20 people. Another interesting year is planned.

Sandra Plaw

(f) **Buildings Sub-Committee**

Planned preventative maintenance has been completed and is up to date. We have given notice on Churches Fire due to customer service and cost and have moved to a new contractor.

As referred to in the Churchwardens report, the roof repairs are progressing, although not at the speed we would have desired. We now have faculty agreement and agreed a roofing contractor. The delay is with the contractor who has been held up on other works due to weather. The contractor did confirm that there would be no further damage to the main church building with postponement in works. PCC are committed to get the works completed, although we can be assured that the delay will not cost the church more in the long term. There is a risk assessment in place for access to the rear of the church due to the risk of debris falling.

Intelligent thermostatic controls have been installed to the heating system. This has enabled remote control of temperature, improving cost efficiency and environmental impact.

We continue to use contractor cleaners. Green Thumb, garden contractors have been cancelled. Notice was given on BT for internet and phones due to rising costs, Virgin Media are the new provider.

An upgraded PA system was installed to manage the increasing size and output from the worship group. We are thankful for all those who contributed to this specific purchase.

Risk assessments including insurance are all up to date for external hirers.

We give thanks to all who contribute in time, expertise and finances to the safe running of the church building.

Michael Crutchley

(g) **Communications and Publicity Sub-Committee**

We were delighted to welcome Maddie to the publicity team. Her enthusiasm has been matched by her social media skills. She has developed a set of excellent templates and increased the frequency of our Facebook posts. At the same time,

she has also extended our online reach by creating an Instagram account for the church. The posts have generated interest online and have been well received.

Throughout the year the website has been maintained and regularly updated. Although the vast majority of these changes are not visible when viewing the website, they ensure the functionality of the website is maintained, the site remains secure, and the content up to date.

For Christmas, a coordinated effort ensured there was a consistent theme across all material across all platforms (website, social media, and print). A decision was made to overhaul the design this year and opt for a contemporary look. A big thank you to everyone involved in categorising the postcards by roads - including a considerable effort from Martin and Sue Phillips - and to all the members of the congregation who helped deliver them around the parish.

Jacob Blamey on behalf of the Publicity Group

(h) **Eco Church Sub-Committee**

Eco church continued work to maintain our Silver status and start work towards Gold in 2023, through raising awareness of the climate crisis and the importance of care for nature and highlighting and encouraging actions for the congregation to take.

The Eco church team supported Alpha with two meals - vegetarian and plant based.

The building team supported church sustainability by smart controls being put in in February to save on heating/CO2 and strips added to the windows to help keep out drafts.

Fairtrade fortnight was supported in February with Fair Trade biscuits, cookies, chocolate and bananas supplied from Hedge End Co-op for after the services over the course of 3 Sundays and Steph ran her 'closing down sale' of Fairtrade items.

1 member of Eco church attended the protest at Chichester Cathedral in March with Christian Climate Action calling on the CofE to divest from fossil fuels. In June the CofE announced it has 'followed science and faith' to divest from fossil fuels.

In consultation with the eco church team, a new electric cooker was bought to replace the old and ineffective gas cooker.

A group of 11 members and friends of St Luke's took our banner and prayer placards to represent the church at 'The Big One' climate protest in London in April. It was a privilege to join a large and diverse group of Christians from all over the country for a 'No Faith in Fossil Fuels Service' led by Christian Aid and Tearfund and addressed by the former Archbishop of York John Sentamu. We then collectively made a walk of pilgrimage to Westminster, stopping to pray outside the Shell HQ and deliver a letter, before joining other groups in a peaceful and dignified gathering to put pressure on the government to take action to halt climate change,

which is already seriously affecting the poorest people on earth. Our group also gathered respectfully outside the Department for Transport to address the issue of carbon emissions and proposed solutions.

Eco Church led the Pentecost service in May with the theme of Empowerment. We created various 'stations' for people to move between, including a video we created of speeches/examples of people making a difference, a prayer station, reflection tables, an action table and plant-based cooking, all framed by worship.

A representative from the St Luke's Eco church group met with St James' Eco church group and offered advice and guidance, helping the church achieve a Silver Award.

Operation Noah was chosen by the PCC to be a charity we support financially, as a national Christian Environmental charity whose work aligns with St Luke's Eco Church targets.

In September, over 40 people from local churches participated in a Christian Aid 'Make Polluters Pay' march from St Luke's to St John's Hedge End, starting and ending with a short service of prayer and worship. The walk was managed by the Eco church team and highlighted the need for loss and damage payment to those suffering the effects of climate change, by the biggest polluters, like fossil fuel companies. Letters were signed and sent to the MP.

Towards the end of the year, Eco Church wrote a "Plan to move towards Eco Church Gold Award" which set out the intent and associated actions required for St Luke's to achieve an A Rocha Gold Award. A notable difference for this award is the need to systematically and thoroughly document the evidence against each aspect of the Eco Church survey. A framework has been put in place to identify what needs to be logged and how, specific actions have been identified that would enable St Luke's to achieve Gold in each category, and discussions were had about how this work could be managed by the members of the Eco Church group.

Siân Andrews and Jacob Blamey

(j) Finance Sub-Committee

Finance Sub-Committee Members: Ben Jones, Clive Beard, Martin Phillips, Louise Brown (Treasurer)

The committee met regularly to review the accounts against the budget and agree actions that needed to be taken to the PCC. Louise, as Church Treasurer, presented the accounts for review of income and expenditure to the PCC, demonstrating due diligence as Stewards and Trustees of the Churches' finances.

Income

Thank you to all who give financially and support the valuable work at St Luke's. Gift Aid continues to be an important stream of our income.

We received the following restricted donations:

- Updating the Sound System £3621
- New Cooker £1089
- Youth Ministry Coordinator Role £3000
- Youth Cafe £1562

We have opened a Savings account with Kingdom Bank, to enable the money not needed immediately to earn interest.

We have registered for Easy Fundraising and many members of our congregation have signed up to this. We have been paid £96.18 in 2023 with a further £270 pending from donations which are awaiting the Retailer to pay Easy Fundraising.

The card reader continues to be regularly used to receive donations.

Expenditure

Unexpected expenditure was the for updated sound system, new cooker and new bibles.

The charities we supported in 2023 were Christian Aid, Fledge and Simon Says.

We are aware that there will be a substantial bill to pay for the roof repairs, and we have set aside £29,933.12 so far towards this, and our current policy is that our Annual Gift Aid claim is put towards this.

We continue to keep a strict policy on expenditure and ensure we are getting best value for money. We have produced a budget forecast for 2024, which has been agreed by the PCC, and this will continue to be reviewed in 2024.

We continue to be grateful for Ian Taylor's management of the Gift Aid applications.

Louise Brown and Martin Phillips

2.2 Standing Committee

Standing Committee meet on an ad-hoc basis if urgent decisions are needed between PCC meetings. There was no requirement for this during 2023 so Standing Committee did not meet.

Revd Ben Jones

2.3 Churchwardens and Assistant Churchwardens Report

It has been a full and vibrant year for St Luke's. Ben is now firmly established as vicar, bringing leadership and spiritual direction to the church. Clive in his ordinand pathway continues to contribute so much to the life of the church which we hope and pray is supporting his formation. The worship, prayers and teaching is continuing to inspire, challenge and guide the church community as a whole and as individual disciples of Jesus in our community, workplace, family and friendships.

We also said goodbye to Liz who is now associate minister at Sholing. We want to thank her for her many years of ministry at St Luke's and wish her every success as she continues her ministry in a new parish.

The PCC has provided good governance of the church, ensuring the diversity of experiences and views of the church are represented. We want to thank all PCC members who have contributed their time and variety of gifts.

The roof continues to be on the agenda for the church PCC. While there may not be the progress we desire, we are now only waiting for the specialist roofer who has been significantly delayed due to other jobs and the chronic wet weather conditions through the second half of the year. We are confident that there will be progress in the year ahead, getting to a clear understanding of the overall work that is required. We are mindful that access to the rear of the church continues to be limited and as such committed to progress the works as soon as possible.

The church's finances continue to be strengthening in their stability and sustainability. It is a joy to be increasing our contribution to charity, employ a Children and Youth Lead and put aside reserves for the roof. The finance team, continue to give close oversight of the church's finances to ensure that we can thrive in the ministry we feel God is calling us to do.

As already mentioned, Maddie as Children's and Youth Coordinator started in September and it is a pleasure to already see her settle in and be a significant part in shaping the growing children and youth ministry. Youth Café continues to thrive with amazing examples of God touching the lives of the young people who attend.

There has been an increase in community groups hiring the church, further developing our community exposure alongside financial revenue. Jeanette continues to be a key to liaising with hirers and is ensuring that there is safe oversight and assurance on the church's use. We want to thank all members of the congregation who contribute their time, gifts, and finances to the life of the church. There are too many people to mention by name, although we want to acknowledge that each of our contributions, however large or small, enables the mission of the church to bring the good news of Jesus to the lives St Luke's encounters. While we are encouraged by the growth of the church, we never want to be complacent on our mission, for all those in the parish and wider areas to experience God's Kingdom through St Luke's.

*Rosie Adams and Michael Crutchley on behalf of the Churchwardens and
Assistant Churchwardens*

2.4 Eastleigh Deanery Synod Representative's Report

In 2023 the Deanery Synod met three times; in March, June and October. At the meeting in March 23 at St James West End, we had a presentation by Victor Humphrey from the Diocesan Environment Group about Eco church and Net Carbon Zero, and the upcoming challenges we will face. In June 23 we met at St Boniface Chandlers Ford for the first Deanery Synod meeting of the new triennium. We welcomed new members elected to

Synod from the respective benefices and elected the new Deanery Synod Officers for this next term. The guest speaker was Rev James Mosher, the new port chaplain in the Port of Southampton. He spoke about the work of Mission to Seafarers and the assistance and support that the Deanery could provide. Finally in October 23 we met at St Johns Hedge End where the Archdeacon of Winchester – Richard Brand- spoke about issues of clergy welfare. Across these three meetings we also discussed; diocesan and deanery finances, new archdeacon for the Bournemouth Archdeaconry, progress on appointment of a new Diocesan bishop, and appointments within the deanery and diocese.

Revd Clive Beard

2.5 Electoral Roll and Church Attendance

As required, revisions to the electoral roll will be made prior to the APCM on 12 May 2024. As at 31 December 2023, there were 102 people on St Luke's Electoral Roll.

Melvyn Plaw

During October 2023, the average church attendance was 74 adults and 16 children/young people.

2.6 Safeguarding

Catherine Spiers is now doing DBS checks and working as Assistant Safeguarding Officer. All information relating to DBS checks and courses undertaken by church members has been transferred to a central data base. This means an online record is kept which can indicate when renewals are needed. Currently 69 church members have successfully completed a DBS check. All PCC members and group leaders have completed the required course 'Domestic Abuse Awareness' and the majority have completed local leadership courses.

St Luke's is now using the 'Parish Dashboard' as encouraged by the diocese, a useful online tool for recording the status of safeguarding tasks undertaken by the parish.

Safeguarding posters with contact details of the local safeguarding officers and the diocesan contacts are now in place in the privacy of all the toilets as well as on the noticeboard. In addition, there are barcodes stickers signposting help for domestic abuse provided by the Local Neighbourhood Police Team. There is also information on contacting 'Safe Spaces in England and Wales', an independent advocacy service for those who have survived or been affected by church abuse.

Two copies of the Diocesan Safeguarding handbook are available in the vicar's office.

The PCC has adopted the diocesan 'Policy on Social Media' which has essential protocols and protections for those using social media and its supervision within the church setting. A list of social media groups has been compiled. Risk assessments for all groups have been completed and are now held on a central database as well as by the group leader. Templates for youth risk assessments have been devised and can be adapted for each youth group occasion.

It is pleasing to note that a culture of respect for good safeguarding practice has been welcomed and understood by the members of the congregation and this is much appreciated.

Janet Compton, Safeguarding Officer

Ben Jones

**Revd Ben Jones Vicar, Michael Crutchley (Lay Vice Chair, PCC)
On behalf of the PCC (Trustees)**



**Independent Examiner's Report to the members/trustees of St Luke's Church, Hedge End,
Parochial Church Council.**

I report on the accounts for the year 1st January to 31st December 2023 which are attached.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and Independent Examiner

As trustees of the charity, the members of the PCC are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. They consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:-

- (1) Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act:
- (2) Follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners in section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act:
- (3) State whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the management committee concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent Examiners Statement

In connection with my examination, no matters have come to my attention

1. Which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - (a) To keep accounting records in accordance with s.130 of the 2011 Act, and
 - (b) To prepare accounts which accord with the records have not been met, and
2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Russell N Lee, ACIB

46 St James Park, SO52 9BJ