

ST MARY WITH ST LEONARD, BROOMFIELD ANNUAL REVIEW 2024

The Vestry Meeting (for the election of Wardens) and The Annual Parochial Church Meeting are scheduled to take place on Sunday 16th March 2025 and will follow the 9.30am service.

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Whereas every effort has been made to include all the activities in the life of St. Mary's Church within this Annual Review, there may be some omissions. We apologise for these and they are in no way deliberate. However, we hope that you will agree that this review gives a flavour of the many diverse groups that are active within the parish and events which are made open to all to promote our worship of God and to proclaim the Good News in the wider community.

Alun Powell
(On behalf of the PCC)

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Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council
for the year ended 31st December 2024

1. Administrative Information

St. Mary with St. Leonard is a parish church within the Chelmsford Deanery, one of the twenty-three deaneries which make up the Diocese of Chelmsford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is The Vicarage, 10 Butlers Close, Chelmsford, CM1 7BE. St. Mary with St. Leonard was for some years part of the North Chelmsford Mission and Ministry Partnership (NCMMP) but this body has been wound down. More about this is contained in the NCMMP Report included later in this Annual Review.

As from 23rd May 2017 St. Mary's PCC became a charity in its own right under the title "The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. Mary with St. Leonard, Broomfield" with the charity number of 1173143.

PCC members who have served from 1st January 2024 are:

<i>Incumbent:</i>	Rev'd. Carolyn Tibbott	(Chair)
<i>Curate:</i>	Rev'd. Dawn Butcher	<i>(Left April 2024 to become Vicar of Christ Church, Warley and St Mary the Virgin, Great Warley)</i>
<i>Ordinand:</i>	Andrew Mussell	
<i>Permission to Officiate:</i>	Canon John Brown	
<i>Wardens:</i>	Susan Garwood	<i>(Re-elected April 2024)</i>
	Margaret Powell	<i>(Re-elected April 2024)</i>
<i>Representatives on the Deanery Synod:</i>	Ros Mercer	
	Christine Bailey	
	Jill Readings	(Lay Co-Chair of Deanery Synod)
<i>Other PCC members:</i>	Virginia Buckley	<i>(Elected April 2024)</i>
	Rachel Butterworth	
	Sarah Clark	(Press Officer)
	Carlotte Dodsworth	<i>(Resigned April 2024)</i>
	Lis Hardy	(Parish Safeguarding Officer and NCMMP Representative <i>re-elected April 2024</i>)
	Carol Knott	<i>(Hon. Secretary resigned April 2024)</i>
	Karen Paxton	(Electoral Roll Officer)
	Alun Powell	(Hon. Treasurer)
	Kathy Rouse	<i>(Resigned April 2024)</i>
	Trudy Stevens	(Minutes Secretary <i>re-elected April 2024</i>)
	Jim Tibbott	
	Deborah Williams	

2. Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure.

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 may stand for election to the PCC. As St. Mary with St. Leonard's Church has Charity status, all PCC members become Trustees.

The PCC generally meets bi-monthly and members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish, including deciding how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. The PCC has a Standing Committee to progress decisions agreed by the PCC.

The PCC met six times during 2024 including a short meeting following the APCM on 21st April to elect officers. The Standing Committee met on four occasions.

3. Aims and purposes

St. Mary with St. Leonard's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Rev'd. Carolyn Tibbott, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of St. Mary's Church, St. Leonard's Hall attached to the Church and Broomfield Churchyard.

4. Objectives and activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at St. Mary's. The PCC maintains an overview of worship and contributes to discussions on how our services, groups and activities can involve and meet the needs of the diverse groups of people that live within our parish. We are always looking for new opportunities to worship God and build fellowship in this Church.

In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- worship and prayer, learning about the gospel, developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus;
- provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish; and
- missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the church of St. Mary's and its associated buildings and land. Over the last few years, a significant amount of effort has been put into this maintenance including renovation of the church organ, Project Rutherford (see page 22) and renovation of the lychgate.

During the year we continued to seek ways to continue offering worship, prayer, pastoral support and to maintain our church fellowship. The following reports demonstrate what was achieved.

5. Achievements and performance

Worship and prayer

We offer a range of services, both on Sundays and during the week. A calendar of all services and other events is made available in the Round Tower parish magazine, on St. Mary's website and advertised on our Facebook page. We also have a presence on Instagram.

Our normal pattern of services was disrupted in the second half of 2024 because of the ongoing ill health of our incumbent, Rev'd. Carolyn Tibbott, but with the support of many of the congregation and a huge input from Canon John Brown that disruption was kept to a minimum.

Our regular Sunday worship consists of a 9.30am service in church. This service is usually a Parish Eucharist except on the third Sunday of the month when it takes the form of a Family Service. Our grateful thanks to Canon Brown who has led most of the Eucharist services and to Jill Readings, Jill Parkin, Andy Mussell and Christine Bailey who have shared the lead for the Family Services. We also thank all those local clergy who supported St. Mary's in Rev'd. Carolyn's absence during the latter half of 2024 including Rev'd. Rose Braisby, Rev'd. Mike Aston, Rev'd. Simon Pearce, Rev'd. July Hardy, Rev'd. Dawn Butcher and Rev'd, Dan Pierce.

On the Family Service Sunday communion is offered through an 8am BCP Holy Communion service in church. Again, many thanks to Canon Brown for enabling us to keep this Service going. A 5.30pm sung Evening Prayer Service is offered on the First Sunday of the month and our thanks once again to Canon Brown for officiating at this service and to Trudy Stevens who stepped in when Canon John was unavailable.

Our normal weekday pattern of worship includes a 9am Morning Prayer in church from Monday to Friday. Our thanks to the small group of people who have agreed a rota to take the lead on this service. Once a month, a 10.30am Wednesday mid-week Eucharist is offered in church. The weekly 9.30am Thursday morning Thanksgiving Eucharist was suspended in the second half of the year.

We usually have two bible classes weekly, both on Wednesdays. One, entitled 'Baffled by the Bible', is at Chris Bailey's home and the other at Ros Mercer's. Our Friends with Faith group, a bible study group catering for parents and carers of children of all ages, was suspended in September. Reports on these groups are included later on in the Review.

St Mary's offers Festival and other special services at various times through the year including Holy Week, Easter, Harvest Festival, at Christmas and Christingle. We take opportunities to share worship with other organisations, including the local Primary School, and partner with the uniformed organisations on Remembrance Sunday.

Ecumenical relationships

St. Mary's has a Covenant with Broomfield Methodist Church, although there were no covenant meetings or joint worship services during the year.

Mission and evangelism

Our aim as a Christian Church in this community is to make Christ's love known to everyone. We enable this through teaching, worship, bible study and discipleship groups; through baptisms; services and groups for parents with babies and young children; and through groups that give opportunities for fellowship for young and older people alike.

St. Mary's Ladies Group; the Film Club; and the Beetle Drive group are all held once a month. Our Churchyard Working Party meets every Tuesday morning. All the meetings are listed in the Round Tower parish magazine and on the church website. You will find reports from all these groups within this review. Other organisations which used St. Leonard's Hall in 2023 were: Friends of Broomfield Hospital; the Chelmsford & District club of Soroptimists International; the Essex Organist Association, and Brumfelda.

As part of the parishes' outreach work, the church building is open on Tuesday and Thursday mornings between 10.30am and 12.30pm. Not only does this allow people to sit and pray and to explore our Project Rutherford exhibition area, it does, on occasion, lead to visitors coming to worship at our normal services.

Our Friends with Faith group which caters for parents and carers of children of all ages and normally meets every other Monday was suspended in September. It is hoped that this suspension will prove temporary and that normal service will be resumed. The Little Lambs support group for

parents/grandparents/carers with pre-school aged children which meets weekly on Thursday mornings in St. Leonard's Hall is now run by Virginia Buckley. You will find reports from both these groups later in this review. There is a Family Service on the third Sunday of the month and our ministry team have been looking at the way children are being educated in school to understand how we might best capture their imaginations. Lego Church, 'Building church brick by brick', was introduced in October 2023 and is run by Heidi and Amber Mussell in the Hall during the service, as a way of engaging children and their families. At each Family service there is a Fairtrade stall.

The Light Group, a group for children of school years 6-9, is held on the first Tuesday of the month at 5.30pm in St. Leonard's Hall. Liaison with local schools was revitalised during 2024. Details on all these ventures can be found later in the Review.

St. Mary's is involved with community group meetings organised by Donna Hance, the Events and Fundraising Manager at Broomfield Parish Council. This group consists of representatives from Ayletts Care Home, Madelayne Court Care Home, John Keene Memorial Homes, the Methodist Church, Broomfield Football Club, Broomfield Cricket Club, the British Legion etc. The aim is to share dates of events and ideas and start to build relationships between the different groups so they can work together as a community. Dates of events will be advertised in the Broomfield Times. Towards the end of 2024, St. Mary's participated in the Village Hall Christmas Tree Festival.

Review of the year

With the resignation of Carol Knott as secretary in April and the absence of a volunteer to take her place, the PCC was without a secretary for the remainder of the year.

St Mary's Safeguarding Policy Statement was reviewed and unanimously adopted at the PCC meeting of 22nd January.

During 2024 much of PCC time was spent discussing and making decisions on: worship; finances; repairs and maintenance of the church building and grounds; Eco church; Deanery Synod reports; safeguarding and Church and Community. Fuller reports on each of these can be found later in this review.

Alun Powell
On behalf of the PCC

Financial Report

Summary

Overall, the church accounts were in deficit in 2024 by £14,121, a deficit in the general (unrestricted) fund of £19,079 more than offsetting a surplus in the restricted funds of £4,958. This compares with general fund deficits of £7,491 in 2023, £5,081 in 2022 and £11,266 in 2021, a run of deficits which is eating away at our financial reserves. Money raising and fee income can only do so much to close the gap and the only significant way to do so is for us, the congregation, to increase our giving.

Once again, our grateful thanks to all those planned givers, donors and supporters of church events. However, it needs to be emphasised that this is the fourth year in a row that the general fund has been in deficit. Income has been improving post covid but not sufficiently fast enough to cover our increase in expenditure. I would ask each and every member of our congregation to assess his/her financial support of our church. We need more members of the congregation to commit to joining the planned giving scheme and it is also important that current members look at their giving on a regular basis and, if able to do so, increase their contribution.

Unrestricted funds

Income

Underlying general or unrestricted income fell back in 2024 to £89,804 compared with £99,345 in 2023. **Planned giving** via the standing order and envelope schemes weakened further to £35,534 compared with £37,813 in 2023 and a peak of £43,975 in 2014. Planned giving is now around £8,500 below its level 10 years ago.

Loose collections improved further to £5,787 compared with £5,083 in 2023. **Money raising**, totalling £6,115, was on a par with the £6,132 raised in 2023. Donations to general funds totalled £17,220 double the £8,618 given in 2023. There were no bequests in 2024 whereas a major boost to income in 2023 came in the form of legacies which totalled £12,878.

Expenditure

The state of the finances in 2024, with the possibility that the general fund would be in deficit by over £30,000 if the Share were to be paid in full, led the PCC to reassess its Parish Funds payments. A compromise was reached and for 2024 the equivalent of ten months' payments was made. Even so the general fund was still in deficit by £19,079. This was not a decision that was taken lightly. The PCC is aware of the need to pay the Parish Share in full. If we are not to re-visit this situation in the future we must increase our income.

Elsewhere, the cost of utilities rose slightly to £6,054 compared with £5,901 in 2023. Energy costs remain high and the church building and hall continue to be well used. Nevertheless, with some thought I am sure we can reduce our bills. and I would ask all church and hall users to think about the use of energy in the church. Do I need to **fill** the kettle to make **one** cup of coffee? Do I need **all** the lights on when I'm only using **a part** of the building? Should I keep the doors **closed** when the heating is on? Please treat the church's energy bills as you would your own. As an Eco church these are questions we should be asking anyway but the high cost of our energy bills brings the problem closer to home.

General expenses and normal building maintenance costs added up to £15,885 up from £10,521 in 2023. Spending on the churchyard amounted to £10,319 well up on the £1,775 spent in 2023. Of the total. £7,800 was spent on tree work. The cost of printing the Round Tower was £1,410 which was more than covered by sales and advertising fees totalling £1,712.

In total, expenditure out of the general fund amounted to £108,883, leaving a deficit of £19,079.

Restricted funds

Spire Fund

At the beginning of 2024, the spire fund was in deficit by £6,010. Claims against the National Lottery Fund Heritage Fund, VAT refunds from the Listed Places of Worship scheme, fund raising and donations totalled £41,180 during the year. Final expenditures on the Rutherford Project amounted to £14,890 leaving the Spire Fund in a healthy situation.

Lychgate Fund

At the beginning of 2024 the lychgate fund stood at £20,000. A grant of £2,000 from the Essex Heritage Trust was received boosting the fund to £22,000. In addition a grant of £5,000 initially allocated to the Spire Fund was transferred the Lychgate Fund. The grantors had given us permission to use it for whatever project we wished. After paying Bakers for the work on the lychgate, some of the surplus was transferred to the general fund leaving a small amount to pay the retention amount which will become due in 2025.

Organ Fund

There was a further small donation to the organ fund of £8.40. With the work on the organ now complete, the fund was closed and the surplus transferred to the general fund.

Other Funds

There was no movement in the stained-glass window fund; the cremated remains area fund; and the sound system fund.

Reserves Policy

At the PCC meeting on May 10th 2021, the PCC agreed to the following Reserves Policy.

It is PCC policy to try to maintain unrestricted funds at a level sufficient to cover one year's unrestricted (general fund) expenditure. This should not only be sufficient to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow but also allow the Parish to meet emergencies, to offset any shocks to the parish's income such as the Covid pandemic and to maintain our Parish Share commitments.

It is customary for parishes to have a much lower target than this with the aim of, say, having sufficient reserves to cover just three months of general expenditure. There are several reasons, however, to have a much more conservative approach including:

- (1) the fact that St. Mary's general income over the last few years has relied heavily on bequests and one-off large donations. By their very nature, however, we cannot assume that these will be repeated every year and we therefore need to hold sufficient funds for those years when such generosity is not apparent.
- (2) The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that one off shocks to income can be extremely damaging. In 2020 general income (excluding bequests) amounted to £64,000 compared with nearly £90,000 in 2019, a drop of £26,000 equivalent to around three months expenditure.

At end 2024 unrestricted assets stood at £84,065, compared with an average level of expenditure over the past three years of around £100,000, meaning that reserves policy was not met last year.

Expenditure Approvals Policy

The expenditure approvals policy (agreed at the PCC meeting on May 10th 2021) remains in place. Expenditure of up to £100 can be approved by the Vicar; expenditure of between £100 and £500 can be approved by the Vicar acting in conjunction with the two church wardens and/or the Treasurer; with expenditure above £500 needing to be approved by the PCC.

Outlook

A return to money raising, healthier fee income and collections is happening and we are very grateful, especially to those who run our May and Christmas Fayres, but there is a limit to what these sources of income can achieve. Our planned giving saw some improvement towards the end of 2024 but not nearly enough. It remains frustratingly flat. It is crucial that each and every one of us looks at our level of giving so that we do not have to revisit the decision which the PCC had to make in 2024 regarding the full payment of our Parish Share.

Alun Powell
Honorary Treasurer

Parochial Church Council of St. Mary with St. Leonard, Broomfield

Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 December 2024

Table 1: Receipts and Payments Account

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
RECEIPTS					
Voluntary receipts					
Planned giving		35,534.00		35,534.00	37,812.60
Collections at services		5,786.63		5,786.63	5,082.62
All other voluntary giving	4a	23,443.92	38,491.30	61,935.22	144,074.08
Gift Aid recovered		12,410.30		12,410.30	11,702.27
Activities for generating funds	4b	6,115.43	3,472.61	9,588.04	11,465.49
Investment income	4c	2,567.51		2,567.51	2,678.17
Church activities	4d	3,946.51		3,946.51	14,441.19
Charitable income			1,385.50	1,385.50	1,009.68
Total receipts		89,804.30	43,349.41	133,153.71	228,266.10
PAYMENTS					
Church activities					
Diocesan parish contribution		68,120.87		68,120.87	80,236.02
Clergy and staffing costs		904.38		904.38	1,700.74
Church running expenses	4e	39,724.77	37,006.35	76,731.12	168,571.20
Charitable giving	4f		1,385.50	1,385.50	1,009.68
Costs of generating funds		133.22		133.22	665.29
Total payments		108,883.24	38,391.85	147,275.09	252,182.93
Excess of receipts over payments		-19,078.94	4,957.56	-14,121.38	-23,916.83
Cash at bank and in hand at 1 January		102,981.11	29,017.34	131,998.45	155,915.28
Cash at bank and in hand at 31 December		83,902.17	33,974.90	117,877.07	131,998.45

Table 2: Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
	£	£	£	£
Cash funds				
Bank current account	63,089.21		63,089.21	81,909.47
CCLA deposits	15,856.89	33,974.90	49,831.79	47,320.12
Other cash and deposits	4,956.07		4,956.07	2,768.86
	83,902.17	33,974.90	117,877.07	131,998.45
Investment assets				
Tithe Chancel Fund		11,196.58	11,196.58	10,654.78
J Gyne Foundation		2,057.92	2,057.92	2,011.87
		13,254.50	13,254.50	12,666.65
Total monetary assets	83,902.17	47,229.40	131,131.57	144,665.10

Notes:

- (1) The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the receipts and payments basis.
- (2) The income from the J Gyne Foundation is for ordinary church purposes. Income from the Tithe Chancel Fund is undistributed and is added to the capital sum.
- (3) The movements in restricted funds during the year were:

Table 3: Restricted Funds

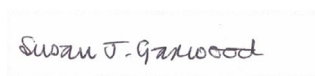
	Balance b/fwd	Receipts	Transfer	Payments	Balance c/fwd
Organ Fund	2,331.76	8.40	2,340.16		
Spire Fund	-6,010.43	41,179.74		14,890.42	20,278.89
Lychgate Fund	20,000.00	7,000.00	3,884.07	22,115.93	1,000.00
Stained Glass Window Fund	12,500.00				12,500.00
Cremated Remains Area Fund	24.74				24.74
Sound System Fund	58.37				58.37
Charity Fund	50.98	1,385.50		1,385.50	50.98
North Chelmsford MMP	61.92				61.92
	29,017.34	49,573.64	6,224.23	38,391.85	33,974.90

Table 4: Further Analysis of Receipt and Payments Accounts

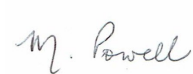
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
Receipts	£	£	£	£
a) All other voluntary giving				
Donations general	17,219.69		17,219.69	8,618.10
Donations organ fund		8.40	8.40	41.56
Donations Project Rutherford		449.00	449.00	2,395.60
Donations Lychgate fund				
Grants (organ)				
Grants (Project Rutherford)		37,258.13	37,258.13	110,141.12
Grants (Lychgate)		7,000.00	7,000.00	10,000.00
Transfer	6,224.23	-6,224.23		12,877.7
	<u>23,443.92</u>	<u>38,491.30</u>	<u>61,935.22</u>	<u>144,074.08</u>
b) Activities for generating funds				
Parish Magazine - advertising	825.00		825.00	525.00
May Fair	1,892.35		1,892.35	1,867.54
Christmas	1,596.12		1,596.12	1,124.06
Other	1,801.96	3,472.61	5,274.57	7,948.89
	<u>6,115.43</u>	<u>3,472.61</u>	<u>9,588.04</u>	<u>11,465.49</u>
c) Investment income				
Interest	2,567.51		2,567.51	2,678.17
	<u>2,567.51</u>		<u>2,567.51</u>	<u>2,678.17</u>
d) Church activities				
Fees for weddings, funerals etc	3,734.28		3,734.28	12,997.49
Parish Magazine - sales	886.53		886.53	953.00
Other	-674.30		-674.30	490.70
	<u>3,946.51</u>		<u>3,946.51</u>	<u>14,441.19</u>
Payments				
e) Church running expenses				
Music	1,925.00		1,925.00	1,964.80
Cost of services (utilities)	6,053.59		6,053.59	5,900.82
Cost of services (insurance)	3,595.66		3,595.66	3,260.81
General expenses	9,232.33		9,232.33	7,737.72
Church building running expenses	6,652.97		6,652.97	2,783.58
Parish Magazine - printing costs	1,409.76		1,409.76	1,436.30
Church repairs & maintenance				
Spire		14,890.42	14,890.42	143,672.65
Lychgate		22,115.93	22,115.93	
Churchyard	10,319.46		10,319.46	1,774.52
Other	535.99		535.99	40.00
	<u>39,724.77</u>	<u>37,006.35</u>	<u>76,731.12</u>	<u>168,571.20</u>
f) Charitable giving				
Children's Society		114.50	114.50	410.05
Ukraine (IRC)				285.00
Christian Aid		940.00	940.00	
RBL Poppy Appeal		331.00	331.00	314.63
		<u>1,385.50</u>	<u>1,385.50</u>	<u>1,009.68</u>

Approved by the PCC on 10th February 2025.

Signed

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Susan J. Garwood".

Susan Garwood
Churchwarden

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "M. Powell".

Margaret Powell
Churchwarden

***Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of the Parochial Church Council
of St. Mary with St. Leonard, Broomfield***

I report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out on pages 12 to 18.

Respective Responsibilities of the Trustees and Examiner

The Church's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The church's trustees consider that an audit is not required for the 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:

- Examine the accounts (under section 145 of the 2011 Act);
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- To 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 you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

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

(Signed)



Roger Hardy

22nd February 2025

VICAR'S REPORT

Fortunately, all the ongoing repairs to the fabric of the church were completed satisfactorily at the beginning of 2024 and, as you will see, as you read through this report, with an amazing team of Church Wardens, active PCC members and a team dedicated to leading ministry in Broomfield worship and discipleship continues to inspire and encourage people to love God and to follow Jesus.

Of course, our Curate Rev'd. Dawn Butcher had completed her curate training by the end of 2023 and was licenced as a Vicar in April 2024. A large group of us were able to attend her Licensing and I hear that Dawn is having a wonderful time in her new parishes. Dawn and her family moved out of the Curate's house in School Lane in August once the Vicarage in Brentwood was ready.

The Life Events in 2024, which the Ministry Team were privileged to preside at are as follows:

- three infant baptisms
- two child baptism
- one wedding

There were 14 funerals of which 10 were held in church, all the others were conducted at the Crematorium. We also conducted three interment of ashes services in the churchyard.

From a personal perspective, as your Vicar, the year will not go down as a good one. I began the year suffering from post-Covid symptoms and after many months of struggling with ill health and an increasing ministry work-load I was finally signed off sick for a month's rest in July. However, that was just the beginning of a raft of exploratory health tests, medical appointments and counselling which I was to undertake for the remainder of the year. At last year's APCM I had joked that I had only rung the church bell 13 times at my installation which, tradition has it, indicates how long an incumbent will remain in the parish. As that was my 14th APCM perhaps my time here was done! I did not, however, believe that God was bringing my ministry to a close in Broomfield any time soon and certainly not through poor health and overwork!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have written reports for this Annual Review, which I have read with a heavy heart knowing that I have missed so many opportunities to spend time with my Church family, so many celebrations where I have not been available to offer encouragement or thanks. It is a strange thing indeed to be an Incumbent who is not worshipping with her people. What does warm my heart is the fact that the Mission and Outreach of the Church continues, people have stepped up to roles with enthusiasm and devotion. A very big and heartfelt thank you to every one of you.

Particular thanks need to be made to my devoted Church Warden's, Susan and Margaret, who have taken on so much extra responsibility throughout the year and have been such a support to me. I also want to take this opportunity to thank Canon John for serving you all so faithfully in my absence. I would also like to thank Andy Mussell, our Ordinand for his ministry both in the church and out in the village. And, of course, to the Family Service Team – Jill Readings, Jill Parkin, Chris Bailey and Andy, I hear very good things about how enjoyable and engaging these services are. I always knew you had the ability and confidence to lead these services with joy. I must also thank my ordained colleagues from across the NCMMP who stepped in often when cover was required, especially in the summer months, when cover was required at such short notice.

I have taken this report as an opportunity to thank all those of you who have stepped up to roles within the church while I have been incapacitated. Most of all though, I want to thank all of you for your love and prayers. There have been many times when this is all I have had to sustain me, that and the love of Jim and our family. I have had a lot of time to reflect on what 'Church' is, especially as I often took myself off on a Sunday morning to worship and receive the sustenance of the Holy Sacrament elsewhere. I can honestly say that all my ponderings have led me to a deeper understanding that it is in our fellowship as we receive communion together, as we worship as a family, as we sing together and pray for one another that we are most fully the body of Christ.

What will happen in 2025? I cannot say at the moment but I am continuing to work hard to recover and pray that I will be able to worship with you again very soon. A verse which has sustained me as I have travelled through this time is this from 1 Corinthians 10 v13 "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it". I hope it brings you some comfort too. Please be assured, my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, that I pray for you all, the church and our community every day, and I trust that God will sustain us and lead us where He will.

May God bless you all richly

Rev'd. Carolyn Tibbott, Vicar of Broomfield

THE CHURCHWARDENS' FABRIC REPORT

Buildings:

Internal:

The processional cross where the metal had sprung apart was repaired early in the year by a retired silversmith, Mr. John Bishop, using metal glue and four silver rivets. There was no cost. A letter of thanks and a token gift were given to Mr. Bishop.

The annual check of the fire extinguishers took place on 6th March. No problems were identified but two of the extinguishers needed replacing. The cost was £303.98. In August there was a leaking pipe in the small cloakroom. A plumber was called in to repair the pipe work at a cost of £180. The piano in St. Leonard's Hall was tuned to "concert pitch" in October by Kevin Rowley at a cost of £70. The boiler in the kitchen was serviced in December by Dengie Heating at a cost of £90.

External:

The renovation of the lychgate was begun on 3rd January and completed in February.

Four quotes were sought for the removal of the moss from the roof of St. Leonard's Hall, the repair of any broken tiles and to replace concrete on the ridge tiles. The four quotes were received from Cater Roofing, Cousins Roofing, Ian Willsher and Perfect Ideas. At the PCC meeting on 11th June Cousins was chosen to carry out the work. That was completed in September at a cost of £4,536. Four quotes were also obtained for the decoration of the hall windows and doors, the hall beam ends and the vestry door and side windows. The quotes were from Hollands Painting and decorating, Phil Pettit, Jim's Décor

and Perfect Ideas (a joint quote for the roof work and the decorating). At the same PCC meeting Jim's Décor was chosen to carry out the work which remains to be done.

In September the architect and a representative of Bakers of Danbury inspected the tower and spire to check if there were any problems with the re-pointing and re-shingling. The new shakes were in good order and there was no evidence of woodpecker damage. Two holes were noted on the exterior of the tower and these were refilled when Bakers of Danbury returned on 27th September to remove the temporary guttering.

Towards the end of the year, it was noted that a rat or rats had dug under the wall of St. Leonard's Hall near the gas meter. The Exterminator company was called in and baited boxes laid down. At the time of writing this report, the problem seems to have been solved. A bill has not yet been received.

Margaret Powell and Lis Hardy attended a diocesan day on church maintenance during the year but this was not found to be generally very helpful, mainly because the sound system was not used properly! One useful suggestion, however, was for a biannual inspection of the exterior and interior to identify upkeep issues.

At its 11th June meeting the PCC unanimously agreed to apply for a faculty for a new Altar Covering for the Lady Chapel. The Covering will be funded by the Ladies Group. The faculty was subsequently approved.

Grounds:

The Tuesday Churchyard Working Party under the direction of David Marcus continue to work hard to keep the churchyard looking good. Thank you to all those involved. The contractors continue to carry out grass cutting in the churchyard extension.

Much work was carried out on the trees in the churchyard during the year. In January work previously scheduled for the end of 2023 was completed. JCM Services were the contractors. Eleven trees were included in this phase, seven common limes, one common beech a Swedish whitebeam, a deodar cedar and a tree of heaven. The work largely consisted of removing major deadwood, reducing crowns where necessary and some general tidying. The wood chippings were used to mulch the hedgerow around the churchyard extension. The cost of this work came to £4,680. In May further tree works were carried out, again using JCM Services as the contractor. The trees involved were two common junipers, a cypress, a western red, a cedar, a mountain ash and a dawn redwood. The cost of this phase was £1,560. On 27th August JCM Services were contracted to prune back the yew tree near the north east corner of St. Leonard's Hall to one metre from the building as it was encouraging moss growth on the roof as well as denying access for repairs and cleaning. At the same time a white beam was felled and a tree of heaven had dead branches removed. The cost of this work was a further £1,560. Overall care of the trees in our churchyard cost £7,800 in 2024 with more work likely to be needed in 2025. Deborah Devonshire, the wife of the 11th Duke of Devonshire wrote in her memoirs: "Forestry is deemed to be an asset. In all the years I have lived near trees they have been a constant drain on estate resources." The Duke has estates in Yorkshire and Ireland as well as Chatsworth in Derbyshire so we're not quite on the same scale. But even on our much smaller scale they are an expensive luxury.

Margaret Powell & Susan Garwood

SAFEGUARDING

The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church. Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in promoting a Safer Church for all.

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding policy our Church is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a risk to others.
- The names and contact details of the Safeguarding team members are displayed in the church and St. Leonards Hall, the church website and the Round Tower magazine.

In order to meet these commitments, the clergy and PCC undertake to:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Safely recruit volunteers and support all those with responsibility for children and vulnerable people and ensure they have the knowledge, confidence and skills to recognise and respond appropriately to abuse or concerns.
- A review and implementation of the Safeguarding Policy is undertaken annually at the PCC meeting held in February.
- The Safeguarding training is available to all members of the congregation; if you are interested in undertaking this, please contact me.

Lisbeth Hardy
(Parish Safeguarding Officer)

ELECTORAL ROLL

I have taken on the job of Electoral Roll Officer at a time when parishes are required to revise the Electoral Roll. Every six years all names are removed from the roll and new forms are filled in by all members who wish to reapply. The deadline for this is the 26th of February 2025, the recommended time frame (15 days minimum) before our Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 16th March 2025. Sadly, our numbers have fallen due to death, moving away from the area, moving into care homes and we now have 91 members listed presently.

Perhaps 2025 will be the year that some of our Rutherford visitors and those that visit on Tuesday and Thursday mornings will feel welcomed and decide to visit us on Sundays also.

Karen Paxton
(Electoral Roll Officer)

NCMMP

A decision was taken a couple of years ago that Mission and Ministry Partnerships would be wound down as the responsibilities for finance and ministry provision was reverting to the diocese. The North Chelmsford Partnership committee of the clergy and lay representatives from each parish decided to continue to meet periodically to offer support and sharing of ideas and knowledge. However, over the last year due to restraints on clergy availability and time it is now only the clergy who meet.

Lisbeth Hardy

DEANERY SYNOD

The Deanery Synod started the year with Deanery Day, where all people from the deanery were invited to worship and pray together, to share good news from churches and to build networks. Nearly 100 people attended the day, which had Archdeacon Jonathan and Bishop Adam in attendance. Broomfield members Trudy Stevens, Ros Mercer, Lis Hardy gave presentations and lead workshops during the day and it was good to be able to share some of the learning from the Rutherford project with other churches.

Synod met in June, October and December and the theme has been focussing on empowerment of Lay people to support clergy.

In December we had a very powerful presentation from the diocesan president of the Mothers' Union showcasing their work around domestic abuse. We also said goodbye to our beloved Area Dean, Rev'd. Canon Tim Ball who retired on 5th January 2025. He will be replaced.

Deanery Synod Reps are:

Jill Readings, the Lay Chair of the Synod

Ros Mercer

Chris Bailey

Rev Carolyn Tibbott

Jill Readings

WORSHIP & MINISTRY

ORDINAND'S REPORT

Once again, I find myself wondering where the time has gone as I sit to draft this report. The last year has certainly seen some challenges and changes, we continue to hold Carolyn and her family in our prayers. My heartfelt thanks go to Canon John who has guided us through these challenges and maintained our pattern of worship so diligently.

It has been a great pleasure to be involved in the family services, this has become a real team effort that is a joy to be involved with. I think it is an important part of the ministry of this church, I certainly feel that God's love is apparent in the making of these services but also in their delivery. I love to hear laughter in the church and the feeling of unity and belonging that results, we are a church that offers ministry in such a wide variety of ways and I pray that we may all realise the importance of our own part in the community of worship.

I have been pleased to see that the church has begun to forge an active presence within the community in a variety of ways, I have been working on various evangelistic activities that seek to take Christ to the people. We had a good attendance at Remembrance and Armistice services and I continue to meet with the groups involved in this service. I realise the importance of the church meeting people in their situation, as Jesus himself did. I will endeavour to continue this work into 2025.

Over the Christmas period I have spent much time pondering and prayerfully reflecting on the image of a lone candle in the darkness, the themes of our services reflected the analogy and for me this focused my vision on the importance of hope and faith in the midst of such a torn world.

Study wise I am currently in my second year and as I write I am preparing for the first residential weekend of the year in Derbyshire. It is at times daunting to realise that I will be meeting with the Bishop next year to discuss my future ministry and preparation for ordination. In ministry we often focus on formation and God does this in all our lives as we are formed to his image in our thoughts and actions.

I look forward to being with you all for another year and I am excited to see what we can achieve together with God's grace. As always I am available to anyone who would like prayer or support in any way. I will finish with a verse that Carolyn gave to me as I began the process of discernment to ministry; Brother, Sister let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you, and pray that I might have the grace to let you be my servant too.

Yours in Christ,

Andy Mussell

CANON JOHN REFLECTS

2024 was a year of the expected and unexpected. The expected was the Reverend Dawn Butcher's departure to an incumbency, although none of us were quite sure when; the unexpected was the Reverend Carolyn's absence due to ill-health problems, and then my totally undesired incarceration for 6 days in a French hospital, and the consequent investigation as to whether the source of the infection had been located and dealt with.

But the unexpected has also been expressed through my greater involvement in the worship in St Mary's with St Leonard's, rather than being a peripatetic priest, in one church one Sunday and another the next, and then another! So a big thank you from me for giving me the opportunity of sharing with you almost Sunday by Sunday, and sometimes on week days, and of course the opportunity month by month of contributing my 'Pondering' to the Round Tower. The stimulus which I experience through the need to regularly prepare is the envy of many a retired priest. Thank you.

Canon John Brown

SERVERS

This year has been a challenging year for servers for a variety of issues. People, however, have kindly stepped in and helped whenever there has been a time when we have been short of servers. We have been very grateful to both Lis Hardy and Trudy Stevens who have helped at the 9.30am service, when both a server, and an assistant to help with the Chalice, are needed.

We have been approached by two people, who have had serving experience, and are offering to help us at either 8am or 9.30 am services. If anyone else would like to join the server's team please do approach the Clergy team or Church Wardens.

It has been a privilege and a learning experience to serve and support visiting Clergy.

Chris Bailey, Margaret Clarke, Kathy Rouse, Lis Hardy, Trudy Stevens.

THE PASTORAL CARE AND VISITING TEAM

Members of the team meet regularly to try and identify any church members who can no longer join us in church physically and offer them visits and also for those who have lost loved ones and feel they would like some support following their bereavement.

We thank Cannon John for sharing Holy Communion with those who wish to take it at Ayletts Residential Home every month and Andy Mussell for the very moving Bereavement service he took last November. Please let one of the team know if there is someone who you are aware of who would appreciate a visit from one of the team.

*Chris Bailey, Margaret Clarke, Margaret Ginn, Kathy Rouse, Karen Paxton,
Trudy Stevens, Lis Hardy*

RUTHERFORD PROJECT

It was a joy to be able to write in the January 2024 Round Tower that the final work stage of Project Rutherford had been completed, and to summarise all that had been achieved. However, the end of the report highlighted that this was just the beginning, and that the outreach work for our church continues. So it is appropriate to consider here just what we have been doing throughout 2024 – and it has continued a busy year!

Now the building phase of the project is over, at a time when we are seeking to address the serious deficit in St Mary's General Funds, it is important to acknowledge that ALL the work we have recently undertaken - on the organ, the church building, exhibition, and Lychgate, ensuring their preservation for future generations - has been paid for by the generosity of individuals giving their time and expertise, and donations from various grant-giving bodies and individuals. Our very sincere thanks are extended to them all.

Evaluation: One of the requirements for the NLHF grant was that an external evaluator for the project be appointed. We were extremely lucky to identify Dr. Alan Cody who not only undertook this important role, but who supported us throughout the project, attending all the relevant meetings and guiding us with the collection of data required for his report. To ensure as wide a perspective as possible be gained, Dr. Cody requested his survey be completed by project volunteers, church members and visitors; over 70 responses were received, making this a useful contribution. His evaluation proved extremely positive and genuinely reflected all that we had achieved. It remains available on the church website.

Thanksgiving: So it was on Palm Sunday, 24th March, nearly two years after the initial launch, we were able to hold a Thanksgiving Service, with over 60 participants. This was our opportunity to publicly recognise and show appreciation to: those whose financial support enabled us to repair our ancient place of worship; to all whose advice, guidance and support empowered the teams; to the many volunteers who freely gave of their time and energy; and to the church family who supported the disruptions with prayer and patience. Most importantly we were able to give thanks to God whose guiding hand led us safely through what proved an exciting and, at times, unexpected journey.

In his address, Bishop Adam focused on our fresco using the poetry of the hymn, *Eternal Father Strong to Save*, to reiterate the power of Christ over the destructive forces of a tempest, the physical storm being seen as a metaphor for the insecurities of life. His words gave us new insights into the compelling message of the fresco. Archdeacon Jonathan then conducted a short but potent commissioning as we looked to the future outreach work that has developed from the project.

The celebratory part of the afternoon continued in the hall where our reputation for refreshment excellence was further enhanced by cake and prosecco.

Open Church: The church continues to be open from 10.30-12.30 on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and we are extremely grateful to the stewards who welcome visitors, offering guidance around the building and refreshments where appropriate.

Two hundred and eighty nine (289) adults and children (plus a few dogs) were logged for the year, many coming from quite a distance, returning to a place they knew previously or to view the exhibition. A significant number of visitors either seek to fill in some time having dropped someone off at the hospital, which is in our parish, or have a loved one as an inpatient, and are looking for some quiet. Many others appear to be local people who never appreciated where the church was or what it contained.

Sitting peacefully in the quiet of our ancient church for a couple of hours is not an onerous task, even a welcomed respite from a busy week. Greeting visitors to such a place proves a joy as they generally express delight in the unexpected beauty of the building. Please do consider joining the rota.

Outreach events

One of the important aims of Project Rutherford was to develop our outreach side of mission. We have been delighted both to welcome groups into our church and to hold talks about Rosemary Rutherford elsewhere to other interested groups.

In September the Essex Heritage Trust held their AGM in our hall and this proved a gathering of the great and the good of Essex, with numerous gold and silver chains gleaming in the evening light. It was a delight to be able to show so many individuals around St Mary's, many of whom although in senior positions, did not know we even existed!

We learnt about the Chelmsford Heritage Open Days too late to be included in their published programme but in time for inclusion on their website. So on Sunday 15th September we kept the church open after the service and offered talks on the Life and Works of Rosemary Rutherford and guided tours of the monuments inside and the building stones outside, with refreshments included. 28 individuals attended.

In October a number of people from the South Woodham Ferrers U3A History Group came for presentations on the church and Rutherford, followed by a guided tour and refreshments. Then in November, Maldon U3A Art Appreciation Group visited the church having previously been given a talk on the Life and Works of Rosemary Rutherford at their meeting in Maldon.

We are particularly grateful to Ros and Ian Mercer who conducted the talks and tours about and around St Mary's. These are always well received and the donations generated are welcomed. We are also extremely grateful to Cathy Pearson who has given two talks this year; firstly a presentation at ARU talking about Rosemary Rutherford in celebration of International Women's Day and then later, in November, to the Chelmsford National Trust Supporters Group at Trinity Methodist Church when she presented on Rosemary's stained glass windows. Such talks really help spread the word and encourage visitors to the church.

During February, a large presentation about the project was displayed in Broomfield Village Library, and also exhibited at the Village Summer Fayre in July, when a number of children delighted in colouring in 'stained glass' images.

The project helped to reinforce the church links with the schools in our area and this has continued and strengthened throughout the year. *see specific Schools Report.*

People and Stone Events

These talks originated as fund raising events where we could learn about our ancient church, both the building and the people that constituted it, hence the name. The events proved so popular they have been continued and the focus extended to include aspects of the wider community of Broomfield. During 2024, seven such events have been held, attracting a wide ranging audience. As our hall is only insured for 50 individuals, these have been held in the church to facilitate a larger participation.

The year's programme started in February with an extremely popular and fascinating presentation by Nick Wickenden, past Curator of Chelmsford museum, talking about *Roman Broomfield*. Attracting an audience of 80 individuals, this raised over £600.

The following month, Matthew Hodges, Manager of Benton End House and Gardens Trust, helped us understand more about a specific period of Rosemary's artistic life when he addressed *Rosemary Rutherford at Benton End*; this raised approximately £400.

In June we were delighted to welcome *Gaudeamus*, a chamber choir from Leigh-on-Sea who, in focusing on *Church Music through the Ages*, gave us an appreciation of the evolution of the music played in our church through the centuries. This raised £280.

Recognising we are not the only occupants of our church, and considering it useful to gain an understanding of the other users, we were extremely grateful to Ella Barnett, from Essex Bat Group, who gave a wide ranging and informative talk to 35 participants about *Bats in the Belfry*. This proved so fascinating we were delighted when Ella returned one evening in September to guide 44 participants, including 11 youngsters, in a *Bat Walk*. As she used this opportunity to train 11 volunteer bat surveyors, we all appreciated expert input into the identification of our bats as they flew around the churchyard.

At the beginning of November we considered *Rosemary Rutherford's Religious Art* and it was a great pleasure to hear Kathy Rouse's insightful exploration of many of Rosemary's sketches and paintings. This work was then put into the context of other religious artists of the time by Jonathan Evens, the Area Dean of Basildon. Our audience comprised 40 participants, raising £266.

November is an important time for remembrance so it was highly appropriate when Alun Powell addressed in *The Pity of War: Broomfield's Great War Roll of Honour*, the local lives lost, names we recognised but knew little about. This attracted 30 participants, raising over £200.

These talks will continue in 2025 as, not only do they generate vital funds for the church, but they help stimulate us in unexpected and unknown areas. All of the speakers have freely given their time and we are extremely grateful to them for their generosity. We do hope you will continue to support and enjoy the programme scheduled for the coming year.

Publications: where appropriate we have managed to capture the research undertaken for some of the presentations and publish the information in a series of booklets made available for sale in the church. During 2024, the sixth publication was produced, entitled *Stained Glass and Rosemary Rutherford* written by Ros Mercer with the assistance of Christopher Parkinson and designed and set by Neil Wiffen. Work is now underway to produce a book of all Rosemary Rutherford's Stained Glass works, based on the catalogue compiled by Anne Haward (2011). This is seen as a fitting culmination to the Project. After initial drafting work is completed, a publisher will be sought.

Pew Plaques: One of the off shoots from the project has been the shaping and sanding of redundant pieces of wood from the pews which were removed for the exhibition. These have been fashioned into beautiful plaques which can be used inside or outside for a variety of purposes e.g. for a text of your choice, house name or number, or plaque for ornaments etc. They are available in small or larger size, rectangular or oval in shape and priced accordingly. We have already raised over £100 with orders taken.

Sharing lessons learnt: Undertaking this project has been a learning time for us all so it is helpful if the lessons we learnt are shared with others in similar situations. This has been facilitated by individual contact with members of churches likewise employed, and through the excellent Deanery Day held in February, attended by representatives from a number of different churches. Various presentations about church activities were given, and Ros Mercer, Trudy Stevens and Lis Hardy were able to share their experiences at this event.

Although we no longer face the trials and tribulations encountered with the various building works undertaken on the church, the important outreach work continues and increasing numbers of visitors are welcomed to this ancient place of worship. Grateful thanks are extended to everyone who has helped, and those who continue to work with this project, and to all who support it with prayer.

Trudy Stevens and Ros Mercer



SCHOOL LIAISON

Liaison with local schools continued during 2024 with our Activities Team, which was formed during Project Rutherford to help to connect our Church with the wider community.

A Chelmsford Deanery Day was held in February and we were asked to give a presentation on our Schools Project within the Children, Families and Youth workshop. We gave an outline on how we had developed our working relationship with our local schools and the lessons and activities we had been involved with. It was an interesting exchange of ideas from different churches in our area.

In May, Year 1 from Broomfield Primary School explored our Churchyard and enjoyed looking at the different trees with the help of I-Spy Trees sheets. This fun activity helped the pupils to learn more about trees and how to recognise them.

During the Autumn term when Year 4 pupils were learning about Christianity we were invited to talk to the students about Christianity, What it means to us and Why am I a Christian.

On the last day of the Autumn term two Christmas services were held at St. Mary's Church for Years 3-4 and Years 5-6 of Broomfield Primary School. The children had prepared two separate programmes of singing, reading, prayers, enacting the Christmas story and solo and group instrumental performances. The team contributed the welcome, a talk and closing prayer. It was a joy to listen to and participate in.

Valerie Pattenden

ECO CHURCH

Eco Church is a project that has been set up by A Rocha UK a Christian Charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world. The aim of this project is to equip Christians and churches in the UK to care for the Environment. At St Mary's this work has been ongoing since April 2021.

Eco Church focusses on five key areas: worship and teaching; management of church buildings; management of church land; community and global engagement; and lifestyle. We currently have the

Bronze award status and have been working this year to gain our silver award which we hope we will achieve in 2025. Although we are currently Bronze status, overall the individual breakdown of each category shows that we are already at Gold standard for worship and teaching; Silver standard for both the management of buildings and land; and bronze for both community and global engagement and lifestyle.

We have continued to work this year to promote better environmental action amongst our congregation. This is done through regular environmental worship and teachings; Eco Church sections of our church magazine and website; and incorporating our Eco Church values into other events that the church runs. We continue to be a Fairtrade Church with a Fairtrade stall at our services once a month and at our main fundraising events throughout the year. As part of our Eco church activity, we are also committed to praying regularly for a different environmental charity each month.

As we work towards our silver award, we are concentrating more on moving our environmental efforts beyond our congregation by also thinking about our wider community and global reach. These are areas which we are excited to develop more throughout 2025.

Rachel Butterworth

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY GROUP

We meet at my home where members are greeted with a cup of coffee or tea. We are continuing to share the leading of each session, with the aid of various study guides. We are finding this stimulating and not so daunting as we first thought. During the past year we have used various study guides including '16 Bible Studies for your small group', a thematic assortment referring mainly to instruction and guidance in the Epistles. During Lent we used the BRF resource, 'Holy Habits, Following Jesus' and then we looked at few aspects of Isaiah, but found the whole study rather challenging, beyond the familiar verses that crop up in the Church Lectionary. In the autumn we commenced a study of John's gospel, which we are finding helpful and stimulating.

We know we are amongst friends and we all support each other. This is one of the strengths of the group. At the start we pray for each other and our friends and acquaintances, as well as wisdom as we study God's word in the scriptures and try to connect it with our lives in the 21st century.

Ros Mercer

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY GROUP (2) – 'BAFFLED BY THE BIBLE'

We continue to meet at my home, have a coffee and begin and end with prayer. We support each other to share and explore the gift of God's word to us in scripture and to consider its relevance in our daily lives.

Using '16 Bible studies for small groups by Ryan Lokkesmore we considered the following themes. Fellowship with God; Fellowship with each other; Keep gathering; and Build each other up.

We then looked at the miracles of Jesus, each choosing a favourite one to discuss. We considered 'Praying like Jesus' discovering the different times and ways Jesus prayed and how this could be reflected in our own prayer life.

Before Christmas, we looked at the messages of Hope, Peace and Love which could be found in the Scriptures of Advent.

All are welcome to join us as we continue to explore together the richness of God's Word to us.

Christine Bailey

LITTLE LAMBS

This year has seen a change in leadership of Little Lambs as in July 2024 we said a sad, but fond farewell to Margaret Deacon, who had led the group since 2011. We were pleased to put together a scrap book of memories, photos and best wishes for Margaret from Little Lamb attendees both past and present. She is greatly missed and mums often ask after her. I was happy to take on the leadership role, working alongside Rosie, who continues to be a very helpful pair of hands. She has taken on the mantle of advertising our group on social media platforms, which has resulted in many new faces. I am also pleased to say that Karen Travis took up the call for an extra helper and is proving to be a very musical addition to the team.

We started the year with a group of regulars, with an average of 17 children and 15 adults per week. We pride ourselves on always being there, whatever the weather and however many attendees we will have each week. This can vary from as low as 8 children to the record for the year being 21 children and 19 adults!

Our newest recruit is Ava, who joined us just a couple of weeks old, when she came with her older brother Kit, and mum and dad. We love seeing the babies and watching their development from lying, sitting, crawling, toddling and eventually coming to the hatch to ask of a biscuit. It is not long then before they move on to their next challenge of pre-school.

Virginia Buckley

FRIENDS WITH FAITH

This group meets every alternate Monday during term time from 9.30am for an hour and is run by the Rev'd Carolyn Tibbott. It is a group for parents and carers of children of all ages to meet for mutual Christian support and discussion. If parents and carers have pre-school children, they are able to play whilst we chat. We continue to enjoy open and relaxed spiritual discussions. It is a group valued by its members providing shared support, a great opportunity to talk about issues beyond day-to-day childcare and also explore member's Christianity. Discussions are mostly based around scripture. Additionally, we are able to give support to each other through open chat both face to face and via our What's App group. All discussions have enabled us to deepen our Christian understanding and faith and find the support we all need from each other. We have not met since September 24th due to the Vicar being on sick leave but we look forward to starting back when she is well enough to do so. We are a regular group now of 5 people. All new members will be warmly welcomed, especially those with little ones who are not at school and can play while we chat.

Rachel Butterworth

THE LIGHT GROUP

The light group meets once a month for an hour and provides time for young people to play games, learn about Christianity through Bible stories and to eat pizza together. There are 5 young people who come each month, they are aged between 12 and 15 and you may have seen some of them helping with our family services.

In 2024 we began with a look at some of the parables of Jesus and in September we started looking at some of the big names from the Old Testament.

Joan Vine has led several memorable sessions including one on dirty water which amazed us all!

Thanks go to Jill Readings, Steve Readings and Joan Vine for leadership of the group and to Rachel, Sarah, Julie and Caroline who cook the pizzas and seem to have as much fun in the kitchen as the young people do in the hall!

In 2025 we plan to take the young people away for a weekend at Fellowship Afloat.

Jill Readings, Steve Readings, Joan Vine

SUPPORTING WORSHIP

CHURCH MUSIC

Another year and it is time again to write another report! Where does the time go to?

2024 has had its challenges for us all and I am very grateful to our wonderful choir for being a constant throughout these difficult times.

Music, as I often say, has the power to lift our spirits and this has been particularly evident this year as we have continued to bring you old and new hymns, beautiful singing during communion services, sung Eucharist settings and, most importantly kept the music in our services going.

Heartfelt thanks to you, the congregation, for regularly taking the time to thank us for the music during the service. I'm not sure if you all realise, but the hymns and anthems we sing during communion are not just random pieces. They are chosen because they link with the readings of the day or to the specific Sunday within the Christian year. Hence, the continuity throughout each service is maintained. As I plan the hymns about two months in advance I sometimes forget just how well-linked they are!

The choir continues to meet every week and we have such lovely, fun rehearsals which contain lots of laughter. We particularly loved the preparation for singing our Christmas Anthem for the carol service this year. It was such a delight to welcome Kerry Bassil to accompany us with her beautiful flute playing. Also at this service, it was a joy to welcome readers from all walks of Broomfield life and to see so many people from the village.

Finally, a word about our Family services. The team who put these services together is myself, Jill Readings, Chris Bailey and Andy Mussell. A lot of thought and preparation goes into these services and although aimed at children, we sincerely hope that you gain pleasure in attending and that you too are uplifted when the service is over.

Jill Parkin

ST. MARY'S BELL RINGERS

Another year has elapsed with the bells of St Mary's continuing to ring out. This year has seen another newcomer take up ringing with their training going well. We have rung for several weddings throughout the year in addition to regular Sunday Services. We hosted a District Practice with ringers from different towers within Essex attending to ring with us at Broomfield.

Members of our local band also regularly support other towers, ringing at Great Waltham, Little Waltham and Boreham. This is why we have to run off on Sunday morning as the service begins as we have another church to support.

We are a community that supports each other and if you are interested in being a part of this and learning to ring please contact the Tower Captain Chris Marcus for more information.

Chris Marcus

BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP (BRF)

The issues come in the form of three booklets per year, and provide daily readings from the Bible with comments by professional Christian authors.

There are three booklets to choose from: New Daylight, which is the most popular at present, Upper Room, which has comments from readers across the world and Guide Lines which provide a deeper Bible study. New Daylight can also be obtained with a larger print.

Further information can be found online at BRF.org.uk.

Past copies are to be found on the bier in church, for anyone who is interested, and would like to see what they contain.

Margaret Ginn

THE WIDER CHURCH

TUESDAY CHURCHYARD WORKING PARTY

We meet every Tuesday morning, usually from 9.00am to about 12.30 - 1pm. to look after the Churchyard and the car park. There are 18 of us and our tasks include cutting the grass, trimming the hedges and shrubs, clearing leaves, tidying the graves and the cremated remains areas, attending to the flower beds, sweeping the paths around the Church and clearing the surface water channels and drains. We also carry out routine maintenance of the trees.

Following on from a survey by a professional arboriculturist, permissions were gained from the Diocese and City Council for work to be carried out on certain trees. This work was divided into 3 phases to spread the cost. The work scheduled for late 2023 was delayed and eventually all the work was carried out during 2024 at a total cost of £7,800. 6 trees have been removed due to disease and 11 were crown lifted and/or cut back to reduce loading. The Yew adjacent to the north-east corner of the Church Hall was cut back to give clearance to the building. The Working Party has removed the dead Liquid Amber tree in the south-east of the Churchyard but unfortunately there are another 2 Atlas Cedar trees to be removed in due course.

We continue to maintain the hedge planted 3 years ago around the Churchyard extension meadow area. The hedge saplings have been mulched with collected leaves in the autumn and chippings from the felled trees and this has helped them to grow and flourish. Several saplings have been selected to grow into hedgerow trees whilst the remainder will be kept at an appropriate height. In spite of the very dry summers in their early days the majority of the hedge saplings appear to have survived and we have replaced where possible those that suffered.

The grass of the extension area on both sides of the path is managed by contractors and therefore is not within the Working Party's remit although we do cut alongside the hedge mentioned above.

The work on the graves includes levelling and filling where they have sunk. We purchase topsoil and grass seed for this purpose. We are also removing edging and chippings where possible and appropriate. These make it difficult to mow between the graves and risk damage to the mowers. All of the work on the graves is sensitively carried out.

The PCC have given us authority to ensure that the Churchyard is maintained in accordance with the rules and we remove items from graves that are deemed in contravention of those rules. This includes grave surrounds, plastic and artificial flowers, photographs, cards, balloons, wind-chimes, soft toys, ornaments, candles and personal belongings or memorabilia etc. We also remove any dead flowers and shrubs together with empty vases, particularly glass, which may break if blown over.

Expenses are kept to a minimum as much as possible and apart from the trees our major expense is usually petrol for the mowers and strimmers, together with parts for these.

It is estimated that around 1500 man hours of work go into the maintenance of the Churchyard and car park every year. This is a very significant voluntary commitment by the members of the Working Party for the benefit of our Church.

Our very welcome practice of a refreshment break during the morning with sausage rolls has continued and, weather permitting, we usually partake of this outside in the Churchyard or the Courtyard. There is a rota and each member has the important responsibility to buy the sausage rolls and milk when it is their turn. We are very grateful to Diane who warms the sausage rolls and makes the drinks every Tuesday. Also we enjoy group lunches from time to time at a local hostelry.

We continue to look after the Churchyard in a manner so that there is a balance between the need to make it attractive to local people and visitors whilst also encouraging wild flowers, insects, birds and bats by leaving areas of grass uncut and log piles. Areas of our Churchyard are at least as old as the Church Building, if not older, and have been a refuge for plants and animals for generations. An important part of our role is a presence in the Churchyard on Tuesday mornings when we are available to talk to visitors. We have many regulars with whom we enjoy a chat.

We are a very sociable group and anybody who enjoys a chat would be very welcome to call in and see us on a Tuesday morning anytime between 9.00 and 12.30. If you time your visit to coincide with our break between 10.30 and 11.00 you would even be offered a sausage roll, coffee or tea. Maybe you will enjoy our company so much you might want to join us!

I close by giving my grateful thanks to all our volunteers who turn out, sometimes in inclement weather, to keep our Churchyard looking splendid. Many of our visitors comment on its state and this is a testament to the hard work of our volunteers, most of whom are from the wider local community.

David Marcus

FILM CLUB

A great variety of films were watched during this past year, and I thank our regulars for their continued support in attending every month and their commitment to the group.

We watched some cracking films last year including ... 'Chocolat', 'The Journey Home', 'Miss Potter', 'The Money Pitt', 'The Greatest Showman' and lots more. We also had a run of Dame Maggie Smith films including 'The Lady in the Van' and 'Gosford Park' in honour of her passing, celebrating her sheer brilliance in acting and humour!

We finished the year 2024 with 'The Polar Express' starring Tom Hanks, which was lovely and heart-warming and got us all in the spirit of Christmas!! We also donated this film in our FILM CLUB RAFFLE HAMPER for the Church Christmas Fayre. This was a great hamper made up of items donated by our regulars in Film Club, so was thoughtfully put together and very well received by the lucky winner.

The Film Club meet on the second Monday of each month at 12.30pm, other than during school holidays. The film goers bring their lunch and we provide tea or coffee, along with some treats that I throw in for good measure!!! We have seasonal treats too for Easter, Summer and Christmas.

Some of the films lined up for 2025 are: 'Waking Ned', 'Fisherman's Friends' along with some seasonal movies that we will watch for the Easter Special, VE 80 Years celebration in May, Summer Special and again at Christmas. I will also have some comedies and romcoms 'in the bag' too – so WATCH THIS SPACE!

Any new members are always very welcome. We had a couple of new members join in 2024 so 'Let's keep em coming'!

Details of the planned films can be found in the monthly parish magazine, 'The Round Tower'. Lastly to summarise for Year 2024, I can proudly say that it has been a pleasure hosting the film club for the second year running and how nice it is to see all those that come along...enjoy, laugh, cry, and immerse themselves in the film. It's a lovely environment and everyone feels relaxed and at ease because of how friendly we all are.

We are a lovely bunch!!

Hope to see Film and Lunch Club thrive and continue for many years to come.

Sarah Clark Film Club Host

BEETLE DRIVE

The Beetle Drive started, I believe, in the 1990s as a fund raiser for the building of St. Leonard's Hall which was completed in 1997. We started in the old Church Hall on Main Road and then moved to the luxurious St. Leonard's Hall. We've had a large number of people through our doors over the years and have managed to keep going. Indeed, some three decades later we are still attracting a good number of people to play the game. Our loyal band of players means that we had a very good attendance in 2024. We had our largest number in November when there were twelve of us.

We have become very versatile in adapting to the variable number of players. Multiples of four are obviously the best but we have learned to cope with any number. We sometimes have three people instead of the usual four on a table, for example, so it does keep us alert. The most difficult part of the proceedings is deciding the direction of movement after each game though it does give some cause for much hilarity.

We meet in St. Leonard's Hall from 2pm to about 4.30 pm on the third Thursday in the month. We don't meet in August and December. We finish with a hot drink, a cake and a chat and all for £1. If you fancy a go, please come and join us. We'd be delighted to see you.

Margaret Powell

ST. MARY'S LADIES GROUP

The Ladies Group has had another very successful year with a current membership of 35 ladies. The topics in our monthly meetings have been wide ranging with speakers from local, national, and international charities. In addition, other afternoons have been member-led and have included social events.

We have donated £390 this year to our chosen charities which include:

- Hope and Aid Direct.
- The Markshall Estate.
- The Smile Train.
- Essex and Herts Air Ambulance.
- Fairtrade Chocolate.
- Support-4-Sight.

In March and at Christmas we donated vast amounts of much needed food aid to the local Hope and Aid Direct charity which were delivered to Ukraine.

Our meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month in St. Leonards Hall at 2pm. They are also advertised in the Round Tower and on the church website. Any ladies who would like to join us will receive a very warm welcome.

Sue Cole

THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

17 members of St Mary's congregation have a Children's Society box where they deposit their loose change throughout the year. These were brought to church to be blessed at St. Mary's Annual Christingle Service. A total of £530 was raised by our box holders with potentially another £100 in Gift Aid. The Christingle Service itself also has a collection to raise funds for the Society.

The Children's Society believes that every child deserves a good childhood, to grow up safe, happy and hopeful. But over the last decade children's wellbeing has been suffering and the challenges of recent years have made life more difficult than ever before for young people and their families.

I would like to thank all those who continue to support the Children's Society. The kindness and compassion shown by box holders makes it possible for young people and their families to access help as soon as they are struggling. Young people are protected from abuse and harm and have the resources they need to thrive and enjoy the healthy and happy childhood they deserve.

Sue Cole

CHRISTIAN AID

St Mary's continues to support Christian Aid, this important Church of England Charity that undertakes vital work with those less fortunate throughout the world. As the energies we have had to spend on ourselves, through Project Rutherford, have diminished, so it has been heartening that we have been able to focus more on those in need elsewhere.

Our initial, and very successful, contribution to Christian Aid started with the Lenten Lunches, a soup-based meal that followed Canon John's Lent course of *Journeying through the Psalms* on a Monday morning. This proved to be an extremely nourishing time, theologically, physically and socially, and as we were able to send in £520, it was deemed a very successful fund raiser. Hopefully we can repeat the success in 2025 and attract even more hungry souls. Grateful thanks are extended to all who contributed the delicious soups and to those who participated.

Once again, our collection for Christian Aid Week in May made a modest £270, plus any on-line donations what we cannot account for. Without the door-to-door collection, which usually netted well over £2,000, this is a considerable loss of funds for the charity. However, most volunteers are grateful to avoid the snapping letterboxes and occasional rebuff, so it is unlikely we will recommence this way of collecting.

In recognition of the horrors occurring in the Middle East, we responded to Christian Aid's request for a special collection for Gaza by holding this throughout the month of October, raising £150.

In promoting self-sufficiency rather than dependency, this is a worthwhile charity that deserves our backing, both financial and in our prayers. Thank you for your continuing support.

Trudy Stevens

FLOWER ARRANGERS

The highlight for the year was the Flower Festival, entitled 'In Celebration of Nature' held on 22nd and 23rd of June when 27 displays were staged by church groups and village organisations. The year otherwise has been quiet with 100 posies made and presented for Mothering Sunday. There was a shortage of weddings with no requests for wedding flowers. The loyal flower team of 9 ladies brightened the church for Easter, Harvest and Christmas. Poppies were much in evidence for Remembrance service, thanks to Roger and Sue Cole, with poppies remaining and the names of all local men who lost their lives in service during the first world war commemorated in the porch for Alun Powell's talk on their lives, held later in November. As usual flowers were provided for the sanctuary on a weekly basis, except for Lent and Advent, with a foliage Advent ring. My thanks as always to the willing team of helpers for their support and lovely arrangements.

Margaret Pinkerton

THE ROUND TOWER MAGAZINE

Our readership continues to drift downwards but we still distribute around 150 a month as well as selling a small number over the counter. Many thanks to all our distributors who deliver direct to people's doors. One day, maybe it will be online only but hopefully that is some way off and for the moment hard copies rule!

I still seek out new ideas when visiting other churches and looking at their magazines. Most often there isn't one which is disappointing but, even when they exist, I learn very little new. The strength of our Round Tower lies in the number of people from the congregation who supply the material for it and the variety of items contained in it, religious (it is a church magazine after all), historical, jokes, puzzles, information about what's happening in church and so on. These are things I rarely find replicated elsewhere.

From January 2025 we have had to put our price up to cover our costs – 60p per issue, £7 for a year's subscription – but I think that is still excellent value for a 44-page magazine. One thing that does help subsidise the Round Tower is our advertisement section. If you are a local business looking for custom in the Broomfield Area please get in touch. At just £30 a year for a quarter page, £60 for a half page and a £120 for a full page you will not require much new business to cover the outlay.

Thank you and well done to our writers, our distributors and our editorial panel. Without you we would be another magazine-less parish.

Alun Powell