



**ACCOUNTS & REPORTS
FOR THE
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF
HOLY SAVIOUR CHURCH, HITCHIN
1ST JANUARY – 31ST DECEMBER 2024**

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AIM AND PURPOSES

Holy Saviour Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Ian Todd, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical.

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 Holy Saviour. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit, and particularly the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. 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; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.

Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.

Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of Holy Saviour Church and Church Hall.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

GOVERNANCE

Holy Saviour is a parish within the Benefice of Hitchin and St Paul's Walden with Preston. The parish is registered as a charity (No 1205456), the trustees being the members of the Holy Saviour PCC.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

The church offers a range of services which vary in their liturgical style from the traditional 9.45am Common Worship Eucharist with music led by an excellent choir, through to the very informal Children's Praise which seeks to reach out to younger children and their parents by way of bible stories accompanied by lively modern songs. We seek to bring the whole church family together at least once a month through our All-Age Family Communion as well as joining together in the great festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest.

A Church of England School in the parish has a well-established close relationship with Holy Saviour Church and at least six times a year, the whole school gathers in the church for worship. The vicar is an ex officio governor at the school and has responsibility for oversight of provision of worship in the school.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. Through baptism we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and to commend the person into God's keeping.

ELECTORAL ROLL

The number on the electoral roll after the total renewal published in April 2025 is 48.

STATISTICS FOR MISSION

The Vicar reports the annual mission statistics to the diocese.: Usual Sunday attendance has been 42 adults and 13 children & young people for regular Sunday services. 2 new adults and 2 Children joined the church in 2024.

Total attendance at Christmas 2024 was 168

Total attendance at the Easter Day service was 66

Church at home services (all services offered remotely) was 14

The worshipping community numbers reported at the end of 2024:

Children	(0-10 years)	18
Children	(11-17 years)	1
Adults (18 to 29 years)	1
Adults	(30 -49)	20
Adults	(50-69)	20
Adults	(70+)	29
	Total:	89

There was 1 baptism for a child under 1 year old, and 1 confirmation for an adult. There were 6 funerals, 4 of which were held in church, 1 conducted by the Vicar at the crematorium or cemetery and 1 of which was committal or burial of ashes only.

DEANERY AND DIOCESAN SYNODS

The Vicar, a Lay Reader and one other sit on the Deanery Synod and the Vicar is also an elected member of the Diocesan Synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church.

PASTORAL CARE

Some members of our parish are unable to attend church due to sickness or age. The Vicar and Lay Readers visit church members who request it and where appropriate celebrate communion with them either in their homes or in hospital.

MISSION AND EVANGELISM

Holy Saviour Church tries to encourage an outlook on mission which is focussed both globally and locally. For many years it maintained a strong connection with United Society Partners in the Gospel and with their work in Zimbabwe in particular. It was also one of the first churches in Hitchin to be awarded an Eco Congregation award by the Christian environmental charity A Rocha.

In the difficult years since the Covid 19 pandemic we have focussed our energies on trying to reach out to our local community, especially through our weekly Welcome Space initiative which offers hot homemade soup and fresh bread rolls and a friendly listening ear as well free comprehensive IT support and advice to any who may need it.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS

The church is a member of Churches Together in Hitchin. In this context it hosted a Lent Bible Study course and alongside the churches of other denominations tries to share the good news of the Gospel of Christ across the whole of the town, not least through outdoor worship in Hitchin's Market Square at Christmas and Easter.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Holy Saviour Church is situated in Radcliffe Road, Hitchin. It is part of the Diocese of St Albans within the Church of England. The correspondence address is Holy Saviour Vicarage, St Annes Road, Hitchin. The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2011) and a charity registered with the Charity Commission under No 1205456. PCC members who have served at any time from 1st January 2024 until 31st December 2024 are:

Ex Officio members:

Incumbent: The Reverend Ian Todd (Chairman)
Readers: Martin Allen; Jean Boothby; Mike Kershaw
Wardens: David Parsons; Brian Caswell

Elected members:

- Pam Thomas; Gwen Allen; Gill Chidgey; David Bunyan; Kirsty Martindale; Leigh Dooley, Dan Morris

Co-opted members:

- Liana Beckford

STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At Holy Saviour the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our vicar), churchwardens, the readers, and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services as members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC, particularly younger members of the congregation. The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

Leigh Dooley is Safeguarding Officer for Holy Saviour Church.

The Parish is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and to supporting those who have been victims of abuse, as well as those who may present a risk to others. The PCC has complied with the duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults). The PCC have adopted all the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policies and Practice Guidance, as well as "Promoting a Safer Church" (child protection and vulnerable adults policy) and the Domestic Abuse statement. At the time of this report, the office of choir master was vacant and there was no Sunday School or Baby and Toddler Group running at Holy Saviour that would require other members of the church to have DBS certification and safeguarding training.

Contact details for those wishing to obtain advice, raise any concerns or make referrals to the statutory authorities are in the weekly notice sheet and on the Holy Saviour website. Safeguarding information is displayed in the Church and on the Holy Saviour website. There is adequate insurance cover for all activities involving children or adults undertaken in the name of the Parish. There have been no issues of safeguarding concern reported during 2024. All such matters arising will be dealt with according to the relevant safeguarding policies and guidance by the Parish Safeguarding Officer, the Vicar and the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

MINUTES OF THE APCM 14TH APRIL 2024

Apologies

Apologies were received from Sam Stalkartt-Yarwood, Dan Morris, and Martin Pascale.

Minutes of APCM 2023

The minutes of the APCM held on the 30th of April 2023 were unanimously approved and were duly signed by the Chairman of the APCM Father Ian Todd.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the 2023 APCM.

Electoral Roll Report

Since the APCM in 2023, the final number for the electoral roll is 64. This is a net increase of 1 from last year.

Annual Reports

The annual report for the church, the Treasurer's report on the church finances, the unaudited accounts, the Churchwardens' reports on the fabric of the church, the report from the Deanery Synod and reports from church groups and associated groups were circulated to members of the church in advance of the APCM. No questions were raised about the contents of any of these reports. The attendees at the APCM unanimously approved all these reports. However, the church accounts for 2023 had not been received back from the auditor at the time of the meeting, therefore approval of these will be sought at an extraordinary APCM to be held as soon as possible after the receipt of the audited accounts.

Elections and Appointments

Appointment of an Independent Examiner of the PCC

Mr. Jim Weist, Treasurer of St Mark's Church, Hitchin has agreed to act as Independent Examiner for the 2023 Holy Saviour accounts.

Election of lay representatives to the PCC

The following nominations were received.

Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
Pam Thomas	Gwen Allen	Frances Williams
David Bunyan	Martin Allen	Frances Williams
Gwen Allen	Pam Thomas	Frances Williams
Gillian Chidgey	Pam Thomas	David Bunyan
Leigh Dooley	Ann Parsons	Kirsty Martindale
Kirsty Martindale	Gillian Chidgey	Brian Caswell
Dan Morris	Mike Kershaw	Leigh Dooley

The seven nominees were elected by the meeting.

Deanery Synod Representatives

Mike Kershaw remains in place as Deanery Synod Representative for a three-year term. One nomination for an additional representative was received, see below.

Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
Mark Massie	Mike Kershaw	Gwen Allen

The nominee was elected by the meeting.

Churches Together in Hitchin Representatives

Rachel Thomson and Mike Kershaw were elected as the representatives of Holy Saviour to Churches Together in Hitchin.

Agreements and Acknowledgements on PCC Representation

The meeting agreed to the annual election of PCC members

The meeting agreed to the inclusion of deacons and readers on the PCC

The meeting acknowledged that the team vicar, churchwardens and Deanery Synod representative sit on the PCC. A question was raised about whether the vicar of Holy Saviour Hitchin is still a team vicar following the division of the Hitchin Parish. The vicar believed that this term is still correct, and this has been confirmed since the meeting.

Vicar's Comments

We tried to encourage new people to feel welcome at Holy Saviour as a family worshipping God. We need to meet the needs of the whole community by offering a variety of modes of worship. It is vital for the next generation, for the church belongs to them. A heartwarming exchange between two small children was overheard at a recent Children's Praise service, as one child said to the other, "this is *my* church". This is precisely the sentiment we wish to nurture, and we are lucky that Mike Kershaw has agreed to take on the role of Children's Minister, leading the family services at Holy Saviour. We have revised our Mission Action Plan to reflect our aims in this area. It is important that the church serves the whole community, and we continue to join other Hitchin churches in providing a warm welcome space. Ann Parsons provides delicious food and there is also IT help provided by Gavin Budge.

We held many successful events which brought the community together, thanks to the enormous efforts of Friends of Holy Saviour, the recently revived Social Committee and the Christmas Tree Festival, which brings the town together.

We are still a part of the benefice, and we come together through Churches Together in Hitchin, chaired by me, and we participate in the very successful Lent Groups.

The vicar recorded his thanks to:

- David Parsons and Brian Caswell for undertaking the immense role of Churchwardens. Your work and friendship are deeply valued.
- Three ministerial colleagues: Mike Kershaw, Jean Boothby, and Martin Allen
- David Bunyan for taking on the role of Assistant Treasurer. We are blessed to have Kirsty Martindale stepping into the role of Treasurer.
- Liana Beckford for her work on the weekly notice sheet and as PCC Secretary
- All PCC members for their support
- Trevor Hughes and Ken Bradbury and the choir for the beautiful music

- Gill Chidgey for her hard work organizing events for Friends of Holy Saviour and the Christmas Tree Festival
- Ann Parsons for her sacristy, management of Warm Welcome Space, and the Christmas Tree Festival Café meals, catering with warmth, love and kindness.
- Gavin Budge and Claire Nellis for their work on the newly revived Social Committee
- Claire Fleck, who wears many hats, but especially for her management of the Hall
- Pauline Caswell and Diane Bunyan for making such a difference to the church with their beautiful flower arrangements
- Chris Thomson and the team of servers
- Franie and all the cleaners
- Sheila Daw and her team of gardeners
- David Daw for his maintenance of the church hall
- Gwen Allen for her hard work as Vicar's Secretary
- Thank you to everyone that makes us a church family and create a place of welcome and nurture.

Any Other Business

Ruth Bird offered her thanks and appreciation to Fr Ian for his leadership.

David Daw thanked the 17 people who helped him renovate the kitchen floor and decorate the hall.

The wooden floor will need resurfacing soon which will ensure another 25 years of use. David has received several quotes from local experts. The work is likely to take 4 days to complete and cost about £2,500. He noted that the cooker and dishwasher will need to be replaced soon.

Martin Allen informed the meeting of his work as Chaplain for the Lister Hospital as a positive outreach for Holy Saviour, bringing our church into the hospital. He attends three times a week.

Frances Williams expressed her concern about the structural integrity of vestry, which she believes is dangerous, and therefore difficult to clean. It should be checked to comply with health safety regulations and redecorated.

EXTRAORDINARY APCM 4TH AUGUST 2024

Appointment of Mr Jim Weist as Independent Examiner for 2024

The meeting appointed Mr Jim Weist to audit the 2024 accounts, and Father Ian expressed his thanks for Mr Weist's work on the previous year's accounts.

TREASURER'S REPORT PRESENTED BY KIRSTY MARTINDALE

This year represents our first full year as our own charity, with no consolidation into a wider Hitchin parish.

The full year has seen a surplus of £9,445 in the accounts, this is after paying our full Parish Share to the Diocese of £56,850.

Our biggest financial challenge for the year was fundraising for an upgrade to the Church sound system, this was achieved thanks to donations from the congregation, Friends of Holy Saviour and a grant from the Benefact Trust.

Pledges and donations from individuals are down on the previous year, it is hoped that the introduction of the Parish Giving Scheme will enable us to boost regular income going forward.

We have had an increase of income from hall bookings, this has been from new regular users and ad hoc bookings. During the year, Claire Fleck and myself introduced the [MyHallWizard](#) system for administering the hall bookings, this has allowed an automated approach to availability and invoicing users.

The Christmas Tree Festival continues to be a great fundraiser for us. This made a profit of £13,166 this year, which was similar to 2023.

This year has seen an increase in activities organised by the Social Committee which has brought in additional funds to the Church through a number of thoroughly enjoyable, and profitable, events.

We have had notable contributions from the Friends of Holy Saviour group and thank them for their kind donations towards the new broadband connection, the refurbishment of the hall floor and the sound system upgrade.

There have been significant increases to our costs in the year due to the economic environment and we endeavour to source the most cost-effective providers for our services during the year. Our support of other local organisations continues including our £1,000 donation to the Phase School Worker's Project.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank David Bunyan for his continued support in this role. The report should be read in conjunction with the financial statements for the full year to 31st December 2024.

HOLY SAVIOUR PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL CHURCH BALANCE SHEET

HOLY SAVIOUR PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL					
CHURCH BALANCE SHEET					
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024					
				2024 Closing 31/12/2024	2023 Closing 31/12/2023
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors and prepayments			-	-	
Bank current accounts (Hall + Steward)			12,440	7,268	
Bank deposit accounts			23,996	27,896	
C.B.F. deposit accounts			89,960	85,426	
			126,396		120,590
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
PAYABLE WITHIN ONE YEAR					
Creditors			-	-	
Accruals			-	-	
			-		-
NET CURRENT ASSETS			126,396		120,590
FUNDS					
Restricted funds (CBF)			53,916	53,916	
Unrestricted funds (CBF)			22,000	22,000	
General fund			39,367	34,115	
Hall Fund (restricted)			11,113	10,559	
			126,396		120,590
Fixed assets are held under trust by the churchwardens on behalf of the District Church Council of Holy Saviour and have not been valued according to provisions of the Charities Act 1993. An inventory of the fixed assets is maintained by the churchwardens and is available for inspection on request.					
Signed K Martindale, Treasurer					

HOLY SAVIOUR PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL CHURCH INCOME STATEMENT

HOLY SAVIOUR PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL					
CHURCH INCOME STATEMENT					
1/1/24 - 31/12/24					
					2023 FY
	General fund	Hall Fund	Total		Total
INCOME					
Pledges/Donations	50,747	1,114	51,861		53,857
Collections	2,547		2,547		2,811
Tax Refund	10,320		10,320		9,952
Fundraising Events and Appeals	21,017		21,017		15,577
Hall Rent		9,022	9,022		5,718
Fees Receivable	1,772		1,772		2,086
Interest Receivable	4,902		4,902		2,968
Other Income	250		250		845
Appeals	15,570		15,570		
TOTAL INCOME	107,124	10,136	117,259		93,815
			-		
EXPENDITURE			-		
Parish share	56,850		56,850		55,905
Charitable Giving	1,600		1,600		1,000
Maintenance of services	2,974		2,974		1,502
Organist, choir and organ	5,830		5,830		2,351
Maintenance of buildings	3,202	4,845	8,047		7,681
Insurance	3,916		3,916		3,732
Light and heat, Internet	7,702	511	8,212		5,637
Cleaning and waste disposal		3,946	3,946		2,868
Office Expenses/Small Items	1,779	280	2,059		1,490
Fundraising and publicity	3,893		3,893		2,204
Sound System Appeal	14,126		14,126		
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	101,872	9,582	111,454		84,370
NET INCOME	5,252	554	5,806		9,445

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Holy Saviour Church Hitchin

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31st December 2024.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

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 section 130 of the Charities Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities 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.

Name: JAMES WEIST TREASURER ST. MARK'S CHURCH HITCHIN

Address: 17, BEARTON AVENUE, HITCHIN, SG5 1N2

Date: 1/4/25

Signed:



CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

As churchwardens, our responsibilities are to represent the laity; to co-operate with the incumbent to ensure the smooth running of the church; and to safeguard the building and its contents.

Our financial year coincides with the calendar year, and 2024 was the first complete year since the reorganisation of the former parish of Hitchin, and the restoration of Holy Saviour as a separate parish and charity. Holy Saviour now has its own Parochial Church Council; the PCC members are the trustees of the charity; the parishioners elect rather than nominate the churchwardens; and the trustees are required to file the annual report and accounts with the Charity Commission.

Our care for the fabric of the church is guided by the results of the Quinquennial Inspection by the church architect, the latest of which was completed in February 2023. In general, considering its age, the building is in reasonable shape, but weathering in the external brickwork and pointing continues to be monitored and repairs effected where most urgent.

The church roofs continue to be a concern because of the age of the slates. We have four main roofs: nave, chancel, north aisle, south aisle. Following the roofer's inspection and the drone survey carried out in 2023, our conclusion that for their age the roofs were in fair condition and were not in need of any emergency work still appears valid. We do expect however that in the medium-term complete reroofing will be required, a major undertaking both practically and financially.

Our main project in 2024 was to update our elderly sound system, which was no longer consistently reliable. The trustees decided to replace the "front end" of the system, but to retain the speakers for the time being these could be updated as a separate project at a later date. After a successful appeal for funds (supported by a generous donation from the Benefact Trust), the work was carried out in September.

During the year, broadband provision for the church and the hall was installed. The cost was met by the Friends of Holy Saviour Church.

As well as meeting church use, the hall is a valuable asset for community outreach and continues to be well-used by community groups. During the year, appropriate maintenance was carried out where necessary.

Routine maintenance of the church buildings also continued throughout the year, and general servicing of boilers, kitchen equipment, lighting and fire extinguishers was carried out. The annual fire protection inspection took place in November. We continue our attempts to keep on top of the accumulation of unwanted clutter.

We would like to thank most sincerely all those who work tirelessly behind the scenes to maintain our beautiful church, hall and grounds.

David Parsons & Brian Caswell

CHURCH GARDEN

Spring 2024 started off well with the usual display of flowering bulbs. This year we have trimmed back the laurel bushes and other fast-growing shrubs. The lilac tree on the north side is almost removed which will improve the daylight for the neighbour. Next to remove are the bushes in front of the mortuary. This will give us more space for church outdoor activities.

During the year North Herts. Council kindly removed many of the overhanging plants from the land beyond our East wall. Due to the wet summer, a lot of time was spent weeding. Not an easy task as some of us are getting older!

I am grateful for the help of Pam Thomas, David and Jonathan Renney and David Daw. More helpers would be very welcome.

Sheila Daw

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Rural Dean: Revd Bill Britt; Deputy Rural Dean: Revd Christopher Bunce; Lay Chair: Neil Greatorex;

Treasurer: Alison Collis; Deanery Synod Secretary: Vacant from November 2023 to September 2024. Elizabeth Cranfield (from September 2024).

Elections for deanery representatives at the Diocesan Synod for the 2024/2027 triennium took place during the year. The following were elected:

Six Clergy representatives:

Rev Christopher Bunce

Rev Mary Fane De Salis

Rev Jessica McLaren

Rev Katherine Little

Rev Patricia Reed

Rev Jennifer McQuaid

Six Laity representatives:

Alison Collis

Elizabeth Cranfield

Kavita Dowsett

Neil Greatorex

Michael Kershaw

Bethanie Tranter

Following Diocesan Synod elections, Elizabeth Cranfield and Kavita Dowsett are members of Bishop's Council

There were five Deanery Synod meetings in 2024.

6th Feb 2024 at St Faith's, Hitchin: Suzanne Clarkson, Diocesan Advisory Service, gave an insight into the workings and services that the DAS has to offer within the Diocese.

17th April 2024 at St George's, Norton: Maggie Dodd the St Albans Anna Chaplaincy Lead, and Peter Curtis, the Anna Chaplain at St Peter's Church in St Albans, gave an insight into the work of the Anna Chaplaincy, a national network of chaplain. It is an ecumenical, community-based chaplaincy promoting the spiritual welfare of older people.

27th June 2024 at St Mary's, Stotfold: The Synod members present formed into small groups and produced a list of topics for future Deanery Synod meetings.

24th September 2024, St Thomas of Canterbury, Wilbury: Richard Jackson, St Albans Diocese Local Church Income Support Officer gave a variety of suggestions on ways of raising money through different uses of church assets.

November 2024, St Mary's, Willian: Jenny Ryder-O'Regan, Senior HR Business Partner at HR Redway, provided an overview of the services that HR Redway can provide to parish churches, in particular the free HR audits for which the diocese pays.

Dates for Deanery Synod meetings in 2025:

6th February 2025, St Mary's, Hitchin

28th April 2025, St George's, Norton

1st July 2025, St Hippolytus, St Ippolyts

24th September 2025, Holy Saviour, Hitchin

4th December 2025, St Mark's, Hitchin

Elizabeth Cranfield

Deanery Synod Secretary

SACRISTAN'S REPORT

Prices of large candles for Nave Altar and High Altar are rising considerably, now cost £21 each, so you may have noticed candles are not changed as often as they have been in the past.

Some of our linen items have seen better days, but I think we can manage for now.

My thanks go to Grahame, who pays for the paschal candle, to Gwen and Martin who work tirelessly and are always on hand to answer my queries. And of course, Fr. Ian, who makes all efforts worthwhile.

Thank you,

Ann Parsons

ST ANDREW'S SCHOOL REPORT PRESENTED BY HEAD TEACHER MRS LAURA MURPHY

This has been another busy year at the school.

In Summer 2024, the school had a positive (ungraded) Ofsted inspection which celebrated the children's conduct, the school's values in action and the pupils' relationships with one another. The inspection report also celebrated the school's clear and ambitious curriculum as well as the extra-curricular opportunities for the children.

This year, we have been actively recruiting for some roles within the school, both support staff and teachers, and engaging in a busy recruitment drive. Some valued members of our team are moving into semi-retirement or seeking alternative career paths, and we wish them well.

Our team are engaging in a range of professional development into the NPQ for SENCOS and the NPQ for senior leaders. We have also engaged in training from HFL to review and develop our EYFS provision led by our newly appointed EYFS Lead.

Our dedicated team continues to work hard to provide excellent education for our pupils and to further develop our curriculum to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of our school community.

Quality of worship throughout the school

In 2024-2025, we have engaged with considerable CPD around collective worship to develop our provision, including looking at different spiritual styles. We have collated pupil voice to inform our worship planning and are planning our collective worship to ensure that all pupils feel able to access their spirituality through our worship.

Pupil voice around collective worship is very positive, and children were able to discuss the impact of what they have learnt during worship.

We have another enthusiastic group of Worship Acolytes from across the school supporting the team to lead worship.

RE provision

This year we had an RE week on Sikhism during which the children explored Sikhism, looking into key themes and questions and developing their understanding of the religion. In 2024-2025, we are reviewing our RE curriculum with support from the diocese ready to launch a new curriculum in 2025. This will include a greater emphasis on a worldviews approach.

Where next?

- Reviewing the RE curriculum
- Continuing to develop our worship and create a shared understanding of what spirituality means to the school community
- Embedding our reviewed assessment and feedback procedures in the school

GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES REPORTS

HOLY SAVIOUR MUSIC

In the continued absence of a permanent Organist / Director of Music we have been indebted to Trevor Hughes and Ken Bradbury for directing the choir and playing for services on alternate weeks.

The routine “administration” of choir matters and music selection has been carried out by a small sub-committee, working alongside the Vicar.

By these means, music has been maintained throughout the year, for our regular weekly services and Festivals and at the Christmas Tree Festival.

The Children’s Praise Band, directed by Trevor (who also arranges the music to suit the various instruments in the group) has provided the music that makes such a vital contribution to the monthly Children’s Praise services.

In March the church was filled with singers from Hitchin & beyond, for a Choral Workshop featuring the church music of Philip Stopford, led by the composer. Our thanks go to Claire Nellis for initiating and coordinating a most interesting & enjoyable day.

In April several members of the choir joined with the choir of St Mary’s Ashwell, to sing for Choral Evensong in Ashwell.

We have been pleased to host concerts given in March by the Orpheus Choir of N.Herts and in October by the Herts Police Choir, both of whom donated the proceeds to church funds.

Clare Fleck, Tory Kitchiner & Geoff Kirby

FRIENDS OF HOLY SAVIOUR

A full year of Talks and Teas, with several very high-quality talks: those from Christian Wolmar and Christian Parkinson being outstanding. The Ely visit took place on a chilly and breezy day, but we had an excellent guide in the Museum’s curator and fed neatly into Christopher Parkinson’s talk in September.

The Queen Victoria’s Consort – a musical event in two parts, one aimed at children and the other at adults - sadly clashed with a similar event elsewhere in the town. We’ve asked the Initiative to ensure that such clashes are flagged up – or are posted in such a way that event organisers can make alternative arrangements. The Consort event was excellent, but poorly attended.

The talk from the Community Police Officers was useful, providing guidance on practical steps to take to avoid unpleasant incidents in the home or in the street.

January 21st:	Cathedrals of Steam, with Christian Wolmar.
February 25th	Nic Wilson - Nature in your area
March 3rd	Town Band Concert
April 25th	Ely visit
May 26th	Letchworth Garden City and Town Planning, Talk & Tea with David Wood.
June 30th	Queen Victoria's Consort.
July 7th	Chris Hilton, Benjamin Britten & the Red House.
September 22nd	Stained Glass in Hitchin Churches with Christopher Parkinson
October 15th	AGM with talk from a Community Police Officer.

The Friends funded the installation of the internet in the hall and the church, and good use is being made of it.

The coming year is shaping up nicely, though a couple of speakers have dropped out for various reasons.

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

The festival took place from Friday 13th – Sunday 15th December 2024, and was enjoyed by 1,710 paying adults, many children and teenagers of all ages. The festival began with a dedicated Quiet Session for those who prefer a calmer environment in which to enjoy the tree exhibition.

There were 43 tree exhibitors from local schools, businesses, residential homes, charities and individuals. Alongside the trees, we exhibited a beautiful nativity scene knitted by the late Patience Pascale, with a photograph and information about her and the many fabulous trees she exhibited over the years.

Members of Holy Saviour baked 1,106 cakes, biscuits and mince pies which were sold in the Café. Generating £4,500 funds for our church!

11th Hitchin Holy Saviour Guides and Rangers joined us as stewards and café helpers throughout the event.

Talented soprano Joana Gil led another successful children's singalong session on Friday, which was enjoyed by children and adults alike. There was fabulous music from local school choirs, musicians and performances by the Trevor Hughes and Holy Saviour Choir.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered their time, this event is whole church effort, and it simply wouldn't be possible without you. Please volunteer next year!

Winners of the Popular Vote and Judges' Choice:

Popular Vote

1. Clare Fleck – tree no. 7 – Merry Christmice (pictured)
2. Foxholes Care Home – tree no. 27 – Memory Tree
3. In joint third place:
Highover School – tree no.14 – Tree-mend-us
Elmside Care Home – tree no. 35 – The Nutcracker
4. Hertfordshire Music Service – tree no. 16 – Do Re Tree



Judges' Choice

1. Foxholes Care Home – tree no. 27 – Memory Tree
2. Clare Fleck – tree no. 7 – Merry Christmice
3. Hertfordshire Music Service – tree no. 16 – Do Re Tree

If you would like to exhibit a tree at the 2025 festival, please email Gemma at the address below or speak to Liana in church. We appreciate your feedback on all aspects of the festival – please do email hitchinchristmastreefestival@gmail.com
Gemma and Liana

KNIT, STITCH AND SEW

The Knit, Stitch and Sew group met every Wednesday at 10 a.m. throughout 2024. Usually, we met in the Vicar's room opposite the church but over the summer, when the weather permitted, Bob and Franie kindly hosted us in their garden, and we extend our thanks to them for their generosity. Members of the group worked on a variety of craft projects over the year, and we have celebrated the completion of many of them.

Special mention should be given to Martin who has used his time at the group to mend church kneelers and make a new one during the year. Thank you, Martin!

All are welcome to join us at any of the sessions where we work on our craft projects and enjoy lively conversations over coffee, tea and biscuits.

Pam Thomas



11TH HITCHIN HOLY SAVIOUR GUIDES AND RANGERS

We started 2024 with a trip to the panto ~ always a fun night & enjoyed by all who attended. Guides celebrated Burns night making fudge & shortbread & learnt a little bit of the traditions too. A slightly messy evening making bird feeders to help our feathered friends through the winter. Some Brownies were invited to join us to celebrate Shrove Tuesday ~ everyone enjoyed their pancakes & we are

delighted that several of the Brownies have decided to move up & join us at Guides. It was so lovely to have Brownies, Guides & Rangers all working together & having fun. As always both Guides & Rangers completed some Guiding unit meeting & skills builder activities. One of the older Guides joined the Rangers & we had a great day taking part in Hertfordshire Scouts Monopoly challenge ~ it's a long & tiring day but great fun & the team did really well in their section too, coming 6th out of 24 teams. We held two weekend residentials one for Guides with a time travel theme & one for 14 + Guides & Rangers for the Great Ranger bake off. During the second weekend Jo worked towards gaining her Ranger going away module so is now qualified to take the Rangers away for the future. Our Great Patrol Hunt team enjoyed taking part in round two of this year's competition & are looking forward to the final camping round later in the summer term. Our Guide term ended with a themed wide game evening marking St Patricks Day & then some community service to clear The Dell as part of Hitchin Forum's Spring litter pick. Sadly, there was lots of litter but after a fun morning it looked much better.

Although we had to change our plans as the weather put paid to our plans at the start of the summer term including cancelling the annual St George's day parade we soon recovered & carried on with our original plans. We invited 7th Hitchin Brownies to join us for an evening & enjoyed an evening of wide games, food & ended with a campfire ~ we look forward to welcoming all those Brownies moving up over the next few terms. We created a craft for Father's Day, did some unit meeting activities & said goodbye to the hall for pretty much the rest of the term.

We had a fantastic weekend aboard Lancelot for a Guide narrowboat weekend ~ all the Guides took turns to steer the boat, work the locks, cook & do crafts & all have asked to go again for a longer time ~ we are looking into that & are also looking forward to our trip on Lancelot's sister boat Guinevere with the older Guides & Rangers at the beginning of September.

A lady from the Hertfordshire Guiding Walking Team came & introduced us to Geocaching which led us around Ickleford looking for these mini treasures. We enjoyed a few weeks at Hitchin Youth allotment project, planting, watering & eating some of the produce.

A fantastic evening of Kayaking & SUPs was held at ESSA ~ despite the traffic trying to make the journey harder ~ the Guides & Rangers that came had a brilliant evening with a few Guides making their promises out on the water during the evening too.

Our GPH team ~ Octopii enjoyed the last camp round of this year's Great Patrol hunt competition ~ well done for taking part & we hope you all enjoyed yourselves.

We usually run a town event every summer & this year did an alphabet scavenger hunt.

The Rangers worked around GCSEs through the term to organise our Guide end of year party. They ran their take on the Olympics & two of the leaders oversaw running a Parisienne Creperie ~ the Guides had a great night & the pancakes were a success ~ thanks to the Rangers for their hard work planning & running the evening.

We ran a week's summer camp & in a change to the weather last year had a week of sunshine. We had the theme of pirates & Guides & Rangers took part in a wide range of activities to test their pirate skills both onsite adventurous activities & others we had arranged ourselves. We had a great time off site too with an inflatable water course & mountain biking in the New Forest.

Catering skills were demonstrated with a cooking competition through the week & every patrol cooked a fab two course meal within the budget set. There were crafts, campfires & everyone looked after their mascot parrots too. A great week all in all & a wonderful way to round off our term & Guiding year although sadly we have wished farewell to Kirsty as she is off to university in September. We hope she will be back for events in the future & wish her well with her paramedic science degree.

After recovering from our unit summer camp, the Autumn term started with another residential weekend ~ this time for older Guides & Rangers on a lovely Narrowboat Guinevere. We had a brilliant weekend, going up & down locks, through tunnels, we did sadly get well & truly stuck in the mud too though ~ a tree had fallen overnight so we were forced over to the shallower part of the canal & we'd obviously eaten too much birthday cake as we celebrated one of our Ranger's birthdays over the weekend as we had stuck fast. A massive effort later including some very helpful passersby & one ranger who was driving being told to 'floor it' as we budged slightly & we were off again. The weekend finished with our newest Ranger making her promise a lovely end to a memorable weekend.

The term then got under way with our normal mix of Unit meeting & Skills builder activities for both Guide & Ranger units. Guides & Rangers did some cooking nights, Guides learning how to make & use a simple sauce for a variety of things & Rangers starting to practice & make dishes for a useful cookbook for them all to take when they go off to university. We did a supermarket comparison evening seeing if more expensive items were worth the extra money, unanimously orange juice was a yes but crisps, biscuits & lemonade many preferred the cheaper versions ~ it did make us all think about what we eat & question brand loyalties. Guides did some fire lighting & making S'mores ~ the Rangers were very quick to dive outside to join the fun, showing the Guides exactly how a marshmallow should be toasted ~ there are certain standards to this that must be maintained 😊. Rangers got involved with testing a new badge for Girlguiding & gave very thorough feedback to headquarters, they took up the tag line Guiding had previously had of 'giving girls a voice'.

We entered a team into round one of Hertfordshire Girlguiding county's Great Patrol hunt & our team had a good day solving problems & taking part in the fun activities planned.

Both sections came & took part in helping to clear The Dell of rubbish as part of our twice-yearly participation in Hitchin Forum's Big Tidy up. Rubbish was generally a little down which can only be a good thing although we still had plenty to clear & had a fun morning making this little bit of Hitchin a little cleaner again. Guides & Rangers then represented both our unit & Hitchin Guiding at the town Remembrance Parade & Service ~ such an honour to be part of such an important event.

We are delighted that two of our Rangers attended international selection events this term & have been chosen to attend trips to The Azores & to Sangam ~ The Guide World Centre in India. We look forward to helping them raise some of the funds for their trips ~ keep your eyes peeled.

Crafts featured nearer the end of term with decorations for our tree festival entry being made & the Rangers printed some bags using different printing techniques. We had a great end of term outing with everyone joining in a bowling night at Hollywood bowl in Stevenage.

Our last residential & sixth of the year was our always popular Christmas weekend, we run this every few years. We welcomed a new leader & were glad to have Charlotte come back to help us for the weekend too. We had a mix of Guides & Rangers attend with some slightly different activities for each section to take part in over the weekend. We made cakes, biscuits, brownies, truffles, fudge, several decorations & did a few other craft bits. Saturday evening, we all enjoyed a full Christmas dinner followed by some fun & games. Two of our new Rangers & one Guide made their promises with us on Sunday morning whilst we also enjoyed birthday cake ~ December isn't just about Christmas & if you are going to celebrate your birthday at a Guide camp or holiday then there must be cake. A wonderful end to the year & very much the start of Christmas for us all.

Our last event of the year was decorating our Christmas Tree for the annual Holy Saviour Christmas Tree Festival & our decorating team did a great job. We then had a number of Guides & Rangers helping again this year as both waitresses and in the Church itself as stewards & all had a lovely day supporting such a lovely community event.

As always, our leader team evolves as people move on, Keziah left us earlier in the year & then over the summer our Young Leader Kirsten & Leader Kirsty also said a sad farewell after camp. We wish them both well & Kirsty hopes she will be back to help when she can whilst she is at university & beyond. We welcomed a New Young leader in September & Ruby is now fully settled as part of our leader team, having been a Guide & Ranger with us it's great that she's moved into

this role. We welcomed a new leader Lucie who has joined us to help on odd occasions & some of our leaders stay in the background ready to come back if they can which we are always so pleased & grateful for.

Thanks to all our current leaders, Amelia, Gwynne, Andy & Ruby for everything they have done to help prepare & run our activities this year. We are all volunteers & do all this alongside work, families, school & study. We couldn't run this unit without being a great team & I really couldn't wish for a better one.

Thank you to all of you at Holy Saviour for your support of our Guide & now Ranger unit & all your lovely comments through the year as you see us on our adventures. As ever we want to thank our fantastic Guides & Rangers, these are their units & it's because of them that we are lucky enough to be leaders. You make our efforts worthwhile so thank you, without you we wouldn't have the units & your smiles & achievements make it all worth it. We hope that both Guides & Rangers will continue to grow.

As always, this report is the highlights of what we have got up to despite its length, sorry & thanks for reading.

Jo Clinch
Unit Leader
11th Hitchin (Holy Saviour) Guides & Rangers

**Approved by the PCC on 1st April 2025 and signed on their behalf by the Chairman
Reverend Ian Todd**

Signed....*Reverend Ian Todd*.....Dated 1st April 2025.