



**ALL SAINTS**  
**METHODIST CHURCH**  
**ANNUAL REPORT FOR**  
**2023-2024**

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## **Introduction**

Our Annual General Meeting this year will be held in the church on Sunday 28th April.

This report contains accounts from a variety of groups and organisations that have met throughout the year but unfortunately some groups have now ceased to meet due to various circumstances.

Hopefully reading this report will remind us of our 'church family.' We have enjoyed a variety of church services this year including our covenant service in January, our Holy week services through March, parade services, Harvest festival, our Church Anniversary, Advent and Christmas worship. Our worshipping numbers on a Sunday have varied especially when we have welcomed members from Trinity to a combined service.

May the reading of this report bring us joy. All Saints is a busy, mission minded church despite us all growing that little bit older and becoming that little bit slower. We have been grateful that Margaret Ellwood joined our two serving stewards, Dawn and Sue, and this small group have continued to meet monthly. They have diligently prepared a safe and stimulating worship environment along with the help of our band of Welcome stewards who support them on a Sunday morning. We are grateful always for the blessings of those who lead our church and we pray that others may feel called to join them in finding the right direction for All Saints in 2024/25 and beyond to change and new ventures like the Lent coffee mornings where coffee was taken with cake and conversation.

***Sue Russell***

## **1. Minister's Letter**

Dear Friends,

'Time flies when you're having fun' or so the saying goes. I can hardly believe that this is the last annual report that I have the pleasure of introducing. Where has the time gone?

Perhaps it serves as a reminder that time does indeed go quickly and that there is an urgency to the mission of the church, just as St Paul and others in the New Testament and Early Church felt there was an urgency in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. Yet so often, the demands of good governance take up the time, and whilst important and keep us busy, it is all too easy for the balance to shift too much in this direction.

This Annual Report shows that we take all the governance seriously and do it well. But more importantly it shows the activities to which we are committed to, and how we serve God in what may have become for us, the ordinary and the routine. It is often said of Methodist ministers, that they come and go, but the church remains. This is of course true, so we must not forget to give thanks to God for the everyday nature of our discipleship and all that continues week in, week out.

Much of the ministry to which we are all called is small, quiet and done with no fanfare or fuss. Yet it is often this ministry that has the more profound impact upon people. During the time I've been here, I have heard many stories of this. The lives that are touched by those of us who carry the Christ-light for others is so often not recognised by us, the light bearers. But still it is true. It is in hearing these stories, in knowing that these encounters between people of faith and those with little or no faith that continues to encourage and inspire. Our challenge remains to bring these encounters to a deeper knowledge and love of God and into the community of His church. In this report, let us celebrate the life of All Saints and look forward to all that the next chapter will bring.

Every blessing



I T Griffiths

## **2. In Memoriam**

We record the names of those members of this church who have passed on in the last year with grateful thanks to God for their lives and service.

Philip Enoch

Brenda Jillard

Betty Oliver

*Sue Butler*

## **3. Church Stewards**

Our stewarding team would like to start this report with a massive thank you to our dedicated team of Worship stewards who continue to ensure the services at Church run smoothly Sunday by Sunday. You keep our Church open!

### **Ongoing work has included;**

**AV system** – Having had this on hold due to our conversations with Trinity, Derek Pooley has, once again, worked tirelessly on this and at present is comparing quotes from 3 companies and looking at desk requirements to ensure that when we upgrade, the system will meet our current needs and take us into the future. We cannot thank him enough for all the work he has done on this and on the ongoing saga of the provision of an internet connection for the church.

**GDPR** – this has again been updated to current requirements.

**First Aid boxes** - are now updated and in place in various strategic points around the building.

**Visibility** – during this year we have begun to look at various ways to make our Church more visible to the outside community. You will have noticed posters for each month's services and the replacement of one of the outside notice boards and we are also looking at banners and the main church notice board.

**Other work** – at present we continue to have an overview of property and other necessary work as it arises.

**Bookings** – our team would like to take this opportunity to highlight the work of our amazing and very thorough booking secretary, Chris Caddy. Much of his work is unseen and we are very aware of all the work he puts in to this role. Our grateful thanks Chris.

### **Services**

Thank you to our ministers who led our lovely, well attended and thought provoking services over the Christmas and Easter periods and to Rev. Ian Griffiths for our Covenant service.

### **Local Arrangements**

Thank you to all who have been involved in a variety of roles in these very successful services and we look forward with grateful thanks to those who will again be fulfilling this very necessary role again this year.

*Dawn Tyrrell*

#### **4. Our Circuit**

The work of the Circuit Leadership Team is carried out by the Circuit Staff – Rev Keith Underhill (Superintendent), Rev Ian Griffiths, Rev Bruce Thompson, Deacon Selina Nisbett and the Circuit Stewards – Anne Matthews, Geoffrey Maunder, Carolyn Roche, Mary Hancock (Property) and Gordon Skidmore (Treasurer). Both Geoffrey and Carolyn retire this year and we owe a major debt of thanks to them for their work for the circuit over the past years. As a result we need to look for new people to become Circuit Stewards. It is an interesting and rewarding role. If you wish to find out more then please speak to one of us.

The Circuit has had a very busy year with stationing. In April 2023, we held a farewell service for Rev Jocelyn Bennett who then had her Sabbatical prior to moving in August. In October 2022 we were matched with Rev Bruce Thompson, the ex-Chair of the Lincolnshire District. He and his wife Karen have now moved into the Didcot manse. This required decorating and updating. The Circuit Stewards would like to thank all those who came to help, especially with the work in the garden. It was good to worship with Bruce, Karen and their family at the Welcome Service held at Didcot on 2nd September 2023. Bruce is working particularly with the Didcot, Milton and Wallingford churches.

Rev Ian Griffiths will be leaving the Circuit at the end of the connexional year in August 2024. We wish him and Tabitha well in his new appointment and thank him for the work he has done in Abingdon. Rev Georgina Bondzi-Simpson will be stationed to our Circuit, subject to Conference, in September 2024. A significant amount of work will be needed to the manse she will live in.

Rev Bruce Thompson's 2-year appointment to the Circuit ends in August 2025.

Deacon Selina Nesbitt's appointment also ends in August 2025

This May they will enter the stationing/re-invitation process.

Keith will be sitting down (retiring) in August 2025 and the Circuit will then be served by two presbyters.

As well as meetings dealing with the usual business of the Circuit, the CLT has been holding meetings concentrating on the future sustainability of the Circuit. We are aware that in 2025, when Keith retires, we will be a two presbyter circuit. The Methodist Connexion is already having great difficulty in finding presbyters to fill all the appointments and as noted last year the Circuit is currently supporting churches with the assessment but this is not sustainable in the long term. Matt Forsyth, the District Mission Enabler, has been part of our conversations and joined us at our special Circuit meetings last year. The Circuit Plus 1 meeting in March looked at the questions 'How could worship be organised?' and 'What should our presbyters be doing?'. The Circuit Plus 2 meeting in October then looked at the questions 'What steps should your own chapel take towards considering merger or closure, in order to assist in the creation of few chapels/ worship centres?' and 'What suggestions do you have for providing meaningful and viable alternatives for your particular chapel

when there are Local Arrangements on the Preaching Plan?'. A Circuit Plus 3 meeting is planned for 18th May to focus on what Presbyters should be doing. The CLT are also meeting with the Oxford Circuit who are currently having to deal with a reduction in presbyterial staff. Discussions will look at how we can work together to the benefit both circuits.

Libby Hawkness-Smith continues as the lead chaplain. Her chaplaincy work takes place at Great Western Park and at Wantage and Grove with the assistance of her canine chaplains. Libby's recognition service as a Local Preacher was on 18th February at 3.00 at Wantage. We thank her for all the work that she does and congratulate her on completing her local preacher studies.

Wendy Moorin continues her work as an Anna chaplain and her dog Tilly as a canine chaplain. We are very grateful for all the work that they do.

*Gordon Skidmore, Circuit Steward*

## **5. Church in Abingdon – review of 2023**

Task groups and associated projects:

### **Task groups**

- The Christian Aid group in Abingdon held several fundraising activities as well as Christian Aid Week.
- The Christian Forum column continues to appear in the Abingdon Round & About monthly magazine under the direction of the CiA Administrator Debra Mcknight.
- Several exchange visits of the Church Twinning group have taken place – one to Abingdon, one to Sint Niklaus and one to Argentan.
- The work of Desire continues in a slightly different format having been limited by a lack of youth workers and leader.
- An Alpha launch night took place at Christ Church to which other churches were invited and several churches ran both in-person and online Alpha courses.
- The work of Prayer Spaces in Abingdon schools is recovering after Covid.

### **Associated projects**

- 35 Ock Street, a hospitality centre for the community offering a café and a listening ear, and meeting rooms for local groups and agencies.
- The Abingdon Bridge, which has continued to reach out to the youth of Abingdon, providing support, advice and guidance to an increasing number of vulnerable young people in the community.
- Abingdon Street Pastors who are out on the streets of Abingdon on Saturday nights
- Experience Easter returned live to Trinity Church although the popular online version continued to be on offer.

## **United activities 2023**

### ***January***

During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the usual events took place: the Inter-church quiz, which took place at Peachcroft Christian Centre, was won by the Long Furlong team, and raised £177.40 for Tearfund's Hunger Crisis appeal.

### ***February***

The CiA AGM took place, at which the need for a debt advice centre in Abingdon hosted by the CiA was carefully explored. However, it was later concluded we didn't have the resources in place at this point in time.

### ***March***

The World Day of Prayer service took place at St Michael's organised by the CiA Administrator and volunteers from the previous WDP committee. The service for 2023 was prepared by the women of Taiwan with the theme 'I have heard about your faith'. Revd Charles Mashedor led the service. £315 was raised for WDP.

TrinityLearning's Easter Experience returned live to Trinity Church; the popular online version was also available.

Many churches ceased their 'warm spaces' scheme, except St Edmund's, which continues to run as 'Open Door'.

### ***April***

The procession of witness took place on Good Friday stopping in the Market Place for a short outdoor service led by Revd Paul Smith.

Church Twinning arranged a visit to Sint Niklaus in Belgium.

A CONNECT event took place at Christ Church.

### ***May***

The Christian Aid week activities took place with adaptations.

### ***June***

### ***July***

The South Abingdon Play & Activity Day event took place in Southern Town Park with Abingdon Vineyard and Abingdon Baptist Church taking part.

### ***August***

Reports to the 2024 Annual Meeting of St Nicolas Church 19

### ***September***

A CONNECT event took place at Christ Church.

Christ Church held an Alpha launch night, which was open to other churches. Several churches ran Alpha courses both in person and online.

### ***October***

The Michaelmas fair service took place with Deacon Selina Nisbett leading.

To celebrate 20 years of Church Twinning, Argentan, our Normandy twin town, invited 15 people from Abingdon to commemorate this link.



## **November**

The Annual Bereavement Service took place at Christ Church in collaboration with their Footprints Bereavement group.

Church Twinning ran a local long weekend event in Abingdon with people invited from all its twin towns.

## **December**

People from all the churches gathered in the Market Square to sing carols and give out leaflets detailing all the Christmas services taking place across Abingdon. Children's crafts, festive nibbles and a nativity scene were also on offer this year.

## **Finance**

The grants paid in 2023 were:

The Abingdon Bridge £2500 for their work with disadvantaged young people

DESIRE youth network £1000 to help run schools weeks and larger events

DESIRE prayer spaces £150 to provide prayer spaces in schools

Abingdon Street Pastors £1000 to fund their ongoing help for people out at night

Experience Easter £750 to help school children and their teachers explore the Easter story

Salvation Army Drop-in Centre £100 drop-in centre for the homeless and needy

Passion Play 2024 £1000

*Debra McKnight CiA Administrator*

A full report is available on the CiA website at

<http://www.church-in-abingdon.org.uk>

## **5.1 The Church in Abingdon Church Twinning Group**

In summer 2023 a visit was made to Sint Niklaas and also to Ghent where a number of churches were visited all full of interest

Sint Niklaas had intended to produce a passion play in the open air but covid prevented this so it was filmed and the group from Abingdon attended the premiere.

In October another group from Abingdon were hosted by friends in Argentan for a week end on the theme of Peace. Ironically, the start of the week end coincided with start of war in Gaza.

However, we visited war memorials and battlefield sites learning much about heroism but also about Christian acts of kindness and concern.

At the time of writing we are anticipating a visit from six ladies from Schongau who have not been to Abingdon before. We will show them the town and its churches, tell them some of its history and give them hospitality in people's homes. We will also take them to Oxford to view this ancient and important city.

*Maurice Tubb*

## **6 Church Committees and Action Groups**

### **6.1 Church Family Committee**

Members: Anne Matthews (Chair), Becky Batey (Secretary), Kate Jones, Helen Appleyard, Judith Penrose Brown, Maurice Tubb, Rona Quigley, Mike Quigley, Ian Griffiths, Selina Nisbett



The Church Family Committee continues to meet three times a year to oversee the social life of the church and receive reports from the many and varied groups that make up the friendships and fellowship at All Saints:

Tubb House Group  
Just Women  
Men's Group      Youth Forum  
Junior Church      Sunday Music Group  
Crèche      Quest

Outlined below are events the Family Committee have been involved in since the last AGM in 2023. We appreciate it is not always easy for people to attend some social events, especially evening ones.

We have held a few coffee mornings over the year, and also served the refreshments after the World Day of Prayer service which was held at All Saints in March.

We are delighted to have two families regularly attending junior church and crèche. At the end of February we invited them and the junior church and crèche leaders to a buffet breakfast in the church hall before the morning service. This was a great success and a good chance for the parents, children and leaders to get to know each other better.

At the end of April there will be a bring and share lunch in the church hall after the morning service and AGM and we hope this will be well attended, being a daytime event.

On 13th July we will be saying our farewells to Ian and Tabitha and will be arranging a special coffee morning at All Saints. A farewell service circuit service will be held at Trinity on 21st July followed by refreshments.

The Family Committee continues to try and arrange events to include everyone in the All Saints family, to allow for times of companionship and fellowship and more often than not to share food and drink together. If anyone has any ideas for future social events, please speak to one of the committee.

*Becky Batey*

*On behalf of Church Family Committee*

## **6.2 Finance Committee - Charity Registration number 1184115**

I must start this report by thanking the church for its continued generosity in supporting the life of All Saints both financially and in so many other ways.

The finance committee has continued to meet throughout the year and the committee works hard to enable the financial aspects of the church to run smoothly.

As a registered charity, there is much paperwork to complete both at the financial year end and throughout the year.

### **ACCOUNTS FOR 22/23**

The accounts have been independently examined and the financial year has resulted in a surplus of £8,991 with the previous financial year showing a more modest surplus of £1,529.

What is clear, however, is that this current financial year is highly likely to show a deficit of £8000 or possibly slightly more. The main reason for this is the decision of preschool to move permanently to premises at Rush Common school as from the end of December 2023. This has obvious advantages for purposes of using the church premises ourselves but the loss of rental income whilst mitigated in part has always been an important income stream to enable the church both to manage its outgoings and moreover make generous provision for charitable concerns both within the Methodist Church and beyond.

It is right to add that the premises are used extensively for exercise groups and this is welcome and the availability of the church hall on a Friday for example has enabled a coffee morning to commence for the church and friends. In addition the monthly cleaning bill has reduced as result of the departure of preschool who used the premises Monday to Friday during term time.

### **JOHN DENNIS BEQUEST.**

The church has received a generous bequest of £5000 which has been transferred to a deposit account held with the Central Finance Board. We are very grateful for this support in memory of John.

The Church Council and the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes have agreed that such funds can be held locally. The Church Council will I am sure give careful consideration as to how the bequest can be used to enhance the life of All Saints, the funds being available as the council may direct.

### **CHRISTMAS 2023.**

It was a delight to have the Christmas tree Festival at the church in December 2023 which involved a lot of hard work and enabled funds to be raised to support Future Pillars and the Nasio Trust. For the record the figures amounted to £189.90 for Shelter, Future Pillars £188, Nasio Trust £63, Christian Aid (Carol service) £131.25 and Action for Children £250(Christmas Day)

### **PROJECTS THIS FINANCIAL YEAR.**

The church council has resolved to arrange for professional decorating of the hall and storeroom during the summer holiday period. An estimate has been obtained for £4000 and this represents a project that will need to be financed initially at least from capital. A second and equally important project is contemplated in respect of the church audio system and Derek Pooley is involved in obtaining quotations and reporting back to the Church Council but a possible figure of £15,000 has been suggested to update our system. Again, such project will need to be financed from capital subject to any further observations and recommendations of the council for example as to a gift day to help replenish the capital resources.

### **EFFECTS OF INFLATION.**

The committee are well aware of the impact of inflationary pressures but to assist when preparing a budget, the committee has had to take into account the increased costs of the circuit assessment paid quarterly, electricity and gas bills which notwithstanding a possible reduction from April 2024 are significant, administrators costs and the costs of annual insurance.

If any members are able to review their giving that would be very welcome but it is understood that inflationary pressures affect us all.

Attached (Appendix 2) is a copy of the examined receipts and payments accounts for 22/23

*Richard Matthews,*

*Chairman of All Saints Finance Committee and Acting Treasurer.*

*8th April 2024*

## **6.3 Pastoral Committee**

The Pastoral Committee at All Saints comprises a dedicated team of fifteen pastoral visitors. The committee meets twice a year and at these meetings any concerns pastoral visitors may have about anyone on their list is reported and possible ways of helping discussed. The meetings are also a way in which pastoral visitors can support each other and voice their own concerns.

The pastoral list is updated regularly and sadly in 2023 Phil Enoch, Betty Oliver and Brenda Jillard passed away. Funeral services were held at All Saints for Phil and Brenda.

Diane Livesley and Judith Penrose Brown have stood down as pastoral visitors and grateful thanks go to them for the time and commitment they devoted to the role.

*Sue Butler*

## **6.4 Property Report**

The members of the property team at All Saints are Emma Standhaft, Martin Wilson, Alistair Batey, Chris Caddy, Maurice Tubb, David Gray and John and Marian Orchard. The team has responsibility for administration, interior and exterior maintenance, lettings and key control, the gardens and outside space, cleaning, heating, energy

efficiency and electrical matters so the work they carry out is absolutely essential to the smooth running of the property.

Regular maintenance of the building, garden, car park and the area around the Church has taken place during the past year. The car park has been cleared of weeds and rubbish, the shrubs have been cut back and arrangements have been made for the large waste bins in the car park that were used by the Pre-School to be removed. In August the Quinquennial Inspection took place and everything was found to be satisfactory.

Richard Matthews has been in contact Mr White, the owner of 103 Appleford Drive, about the strip of land at the back of his property which is along the edge of the Church car park and Mr White has offered to look after this area and to plant flowers in it. This will be an informal arrangement and subject to reasonable notice by Mr White or the Church.

David Gray reported that after the Pre-School moved out of the All Saints premises the garden shed they used was badly damaged in the winds so it was decided to take it and the old mower shed down. A skip was hired to take everything off site and the contents of the sand pit were also put in the skip.

As the hall is no longer used by the Pre-School Alistair Batey obtained three estimates for the hall to be redecorated and an external contractor has been commissioned to redecorate both the hall and the Pre-School store room. This work will be carried out during the summer holidays to minimise disruption to the regular hall users, user groups who have a 'named cupboard' in the hall may be asked to empty it for the duration of the work and notice boards will also need to be cleared. Since the Pre-School moved out the Church has not had an internet connection but Derek Pooley is working to get this restored. Derek is also looking into making major improvements to the AV system.

*Sue Butler*

## **6.5 Safeguarding**

We continue to follow good practice in our Church life with safeguarding and follow Safer Recruitment Practice for those taking on certain responsibilities with the church.

The church Safeguarding policy and various contact telephone numbers are up to date and are displayed on the Safeguarding noticeboard in the foyer.

Safeguarding training (Creating Safer Spaces) for those in various roles across the church family is up to date.

Several of our Junior Church and Creche leaders have been required to update their DBS certificates in March and April. (These must be updated every five years.) This is well underway, and everyone should have received their new certificate by the date of this meeting.

*Helen Appleyard, April 2024*

## **6.6 Youth Forum**

There have been three services for the Uniformed Organisations in the past year: Harvest led by Tabitha; a Christingle Service led by Deacon Selina, and a service on St Patrick's Day led by Rev Ian, with help from Tabitha. The latter was extremely well attended, unlike the other two. Youth Forum, comprising of Leaders from the Uniformed Organisations, always meets before a parade service to discuss the theme and how children and young people can contribute to the service. This means that, although attendance at the service is often low, there is, nevertheless, input from the Rainbows, Beavers, Brownies, Cubs and Scouts. Prior to the service, Leaders will have discussed the theme with their members, thus making a link with the church. There are plans to discuss these links with Georgina when she is the minister at All Saints. We are grateful for all the connections Ian and Tabitha have made with the Uniformed Organisations over the past 10 years while here in Abingdon.

*Judith Penrose Brown, Chair Youth Forum*

## **7. Church Groups & Activities**

### **7.1 Card Sales**

Sales of assorted cards remains steady. Joanne looks after the stock as Beryl Fudge has moved away from Abingdon. The style of cards is limited by the supplier but the prices are very good. Profit for All Saints charities for 2023 was £70.

Thank you for your continued support.

*Joanne Phipps*

### **7.2 Flower Group**

Many thanks to Pauline Sykes for organising the flower rota until the end of last year. I am now responsible for the flower rota and am rather feeling my way. We have a good 'bunch' (!! ) of ladies who ensure the church is decorated with flowers each Sunday. Many thanks to them all and especially to those who willingly volunteer extra help on special occasions such as Easter just past.

The group is shrinking due to age so if anyone would be interested in joining us to ensure the church is looking attractive each Sunday and so enhancing our Sunday Services please let me know. You do not need to be an expert flower arranger. Our displays vary from professional looking arrangements to a bunch of flowers arranged attractively in a vase. Normally it works out as one person being responsible for the flower display once every 3-4 months.

*Rona Quigley*

### **7.3 Junior Church and Creche**

We are fortunate to have children in our Church family on Sunday mornings and Junior Church sessions are prepared to cover a wide age range with Crèche facilities available for the youngest children. We meet mainly during term times except for

Family Services and the Covenant Sunday. Our Junior Church leaders are Anne, Mike, Menna and Sue and the Crèche leaders are Becky, Helen, Beryl, Kate, Rona and Caroline.

On February 25th the Family Committee organised a Junior Church breakfast to which the children, their families, the Junior Church leaders and Crèche leaders were invited. This was very successful and much appreciated.

*Becky Bates*

## **7.4 Just Women**

We have continued throughout the year with a mixture of speakers and focussed chat evenings. There was also a meal out in the summer and a Christmas Party that involved food and Secret Santa. Highlights include New Age Kurling; an open evening from Mercy Ships which raised £418 for the charity; and a talk about Abingdon Child Contact Centre. Recently about 20 of us (women + men) visited Abingdon Foodbank, which gave us an insight to its work. We are keen to find speakers and would welcome any offers. We meet on the second and fourth Wednesdays each month in the Perry Room and all women are welcome to join us.

*Judith Penrose Brown, on behalf of Just Women*

## **7.5 Music**

Over the past year we've continued to have a variety of live music for our Sunday services

Thank you so much to our pianists Chris Caddy and Jenny Pooley for their lovely accompaniments to our hymns, and I'd like to thank our organists Louise Johnson and Dr Iain Russell, as the organ is always a joy to hear. I'm pleased that the band is able to play once a month as well and am very grateful to all the members for their beautiful playing (and putting up with some ambitious arrangements!)



All Saints is very fortunate to have a varied and dedicated group of musicians and hearing their performances enhances our services every time. Thank you to everybody for your contribution, and we look forward to another great year of music coming up.

*Gareth Hawkes*

## **7.6 Tubb House Group**

During the past months the Group has studied the Archbishop's Lent book entitled "Failure" which looks at ways of dealing with the failures which occur in our lives and the possibility of learning from these experiences.



We then looked at the Book of Revelation with its puzzling and rather frightening images and learned more of the background of the book.

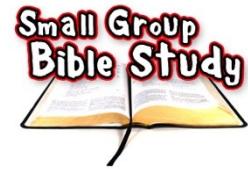
Perhaps oversimplifying its message the writer tells us that God is in control and this is what comes through from what can be a very difficult book of the Bible..

Currently we are looking at Leslie Newton's book "Revive us Again" which looks at the reasons for Methodism's early success and suggests what we might learn from this for the Church today.

*Maurice Tubb*

## **7.7 Quest**

Quest meets on the first Wednesday evening of the month. Our aim is to encourage each other in our faith journey and to be open to fresh thinking through our reflection and discussion.



Recently we have been using a studies series prepared by the Methodist church in Birmingham entitled, Holy Habits, which includes reflections on Fellowship, Worship, Bible Study, Prayer, Gladness and Generosity.

We conclude our sessions in June with a Summer Evening social gathering.

*Alan and Valerie Grist.*

## **7.8 Uniformed Organisations**

### **8th Abingdon Rainbows**



8th Abingdon (All Saints) Rainbows currently have 13 girls on our register.

In the past year we have completed the badges Network, Explore, First Aid and Influence as a unit and the girls have completed 27 interest badges between them.

Four girls have achieved their Bronze Award and one girl achieved her Rainbow Gold Award (highest award in Rainbows).

We've also been out on some local walks, decorated a tree for the Christmas tree festival, made pizzas and attended a big Divisional celebration of Thinking Day.

*Jackie Walker, Leader, 8th Abingdon (All Saints) Rainbow Guide Unit*

### **8th Abingdon (All Saints) Brownies**

This year we celebrated our 64th year of 8th Abingdon in March.

We cooked a lovely meal for the girls and played old fashioned party games. We have taken the girls on holiday to PGL in Swindon where the girls took part in outdoor activities.



Abseiling, canoeing and many other activities. We have had more girls achieve their gold awards. We went to the world thinking day event at Dry Sandford scout hall.

We held a bring and buy sale to help raise funds for brownies to subsidise next year's pack holiday. We celebrated Chinese New Year and Diwali.

*Nicola Wheatcroft Brownie Leader*



## 11th Abingdon (All Saints) Scouts



2023-24 has been a busy and exciting year for the 60 or so Beavers, Cubs and Scouts who meet each week at All Saints, supported by the small dedicated team of volunteer leaders.

The Young People have enjoyed camps locally in/around Abingdon and further afield to Banbury and the New Forest. There have been trips to the Pitt Rivers museum in Oxford, hikes locally and on The Ridgeway, opportunities to demonstrate their talents and they have investigated global issues. In February, 5 young people and 1 leader from the group appeared on stage for the Oxfordshire Gangshow and did a fantastic job. Others from the group supported them backstage. Workshops/Auditions for the 2025 show will be happening this summer - and we will be encouraging them all again.

A big change, and challenge, this year has been with the group leadership. We now have a team of 3 leaders in the Lead Volunteer Team replacing the single Group Scout Leader. The Group Executive Committee is also transforming to be the Trustee Board with a change of roles and responsibilities. This is a new way of working for all of us and will take some time to fully bed in. We're indebted to the support offered by Judith Penrose-Brown on the Trustee Board.

We are very thankful for the support offered by All Saints and we hope that we'll be able to continue making a positive impact on the Church community.

*Phil Cole, Jack Davies, Eve Garrett-Allen*

*Group Lead Volunteers, 11th Abingdon Scout Group*

### **7.9 Bold Walks**

The Bold walks restarted again nearly two years ago now after the Covid closures. The group has widened out into being very ecumenical with people from Trinity, the Baptist Church, St Helen's and St Nicolas as well as some still from All Saints and the Circuit, plus one or two with no church affiliation. We still meet on the last Wednesday of the month, excepting December. We don't walk as far as we did thirty years ago. We now do a morning walk of about 5 miles and often there is the option of a shorter three mile walk. We then have a pub lunch before returning home. New walkers or those just wishing to come for lunch will be welcome.

*Margaret Ellwood*

## **8. Other Church Activities**

### **8.1 Future Pillars, Zambia**

First of all, thank you, All Saints, for your continuing support. We cannot carry out our work without people like you.

Our Christian based charity supports vulnerable children and young people in

Kabwe, Central Province, Zambia - through an empowerment programme of



**Future  
Pillars  
Zambia**

feeding, education, and skills training. The past year has been another busy one, with the feeding programme continuing to provide a cooked meal for up to 1000 pupils each day. Rising food costs have put a strain on the budgets of both the families of these children and the charity itself.

A new Safeguarding Policy has been introduced – unheard of in Zambia - and is working well. Pastoral care has increased, and while historically the site was open on all sides – including the main road - there is now a single entry point through a gatehouse where a guard details all visitors in a logbook. There are regular meetings with the learners concerning help with awareness of physical, sexual, abusive, pastoral and other concerns, many of which our vulnerable children must cope with. The Upper Secondary project of the last few years now facilitates the accommodation of pupils from grade 10 to 12 removing the need for students to transfer to other schools to complete their secondary education. In November 2023, for the first time, the school entered students in the national grade 12 exams and achieved some respectable results, thanks to the quality of the teaching provided by the dedicated staff. Therefore, we can now feed, educate and provide skills training for vulnerable children from very poor shanty compounds from pre-school to adulthood, enabling them to hold their heads high, with qualifications to provide a better life for themselves and their families.

Four of the trustees visited Kabwe last year, and real progress has been seen in closer relationships between the UK and Kabwe, and in local engagement. The new Governing Body - Family Care and Orphans Board (FCOB) oversees activities on the site and liaises with UK trustees. FCOB are pursuing registration as a Zambian charity, which will give them the ability to apply for local funding.

Fundraising in the UK remains essential to the continuation of the projects in Kabwe. An annual sponsored walk forms the main event in the calendar. In May 50 walkers congregated at Bridport URC/Methodist church for the fourth Future Pillars sponsored walk, completing 23 miles in 9 hours. On the same day about 150 young people from Kabwe had their own fundraising walk through the town, accompanied by UK Chair Barry - and the Boys' Brigade brass band – instruments originally donated from Wareham BB where our son, Christopher, played bugle, and John was the Minister. This year The Trustees Tackle The Ridgeway, part 2. We want our supporters to know that the Trustees are also fundraisers. I will be providing support, as usual, watering/feeding/first aid ... Again, Barry will be in Zambia walking with Grades 8 – 12 through Kabwe town, jangling buckets.

I am pleased to say that Chanda, who AS supports, achieved As and Bs in all 11 subjects of Diploma of General Agriculture – Year 2. He says, 'thank you, God bless my sponsors.'

I ask you to pray for Magret, sponsored by a member of All Saints, who, after 3 years training to be a nurse has developed a life-threatening illness. She awaits surgery. Please also pray for our whole project – empowering vulnerable children to make a difference to themselves, their families and their country.

Please visit our website [www.futurepillarszambia.org.uk](http://www.futurepillarszambia.org.uk) for more information and to donate to our children.

On behalf of the children, their families and our dedicated staff –

Thank you.

*Rosemary Stanbury, Trustee Future Pillars, Zambia.*

## 8.2 The Nasio Trust



Earlier this year I was lucky enough to be able to show three of my older grandchildren why I am so passionate about the ongoing work of the NASIO TRUST which works tirelessly with the most vulnerable children and families within their community. Much had changed from my previous visit pre

COVID in 2019 and we were lucky enough to be involved with many of the new projects like the soap making small business, the Porridge Kitchen, the mother & baby clinics as well as a house renovation, football coaching by Isla for the girls at Musanda Primary, preparation and serving of various meals at St Irene's, working in the classroom and home visits, with a taste of 'a day in the life of' - sweeping and water collecting and carrying.

In 2023 our medical centre treated over 28,521 patients, with 1822 vaccinations delivered. We have treated 19 houses for jiggers and 250 people attended jiggers clinics. While we were visiting, we had 81 people at our jiggers clinic.

Over 458 babies delivered in our maternity room – we saw 6 births in the 10 days we were there and were lucky enough to be able to hand out newborn clothes parcels. We thank all our knitters for the continued supply of 'fish & chip' tops and bonnets to add to our Mummy bags that each new mother receives. We are fundraising to expand the clinic to include purpose built male and female wards, a physiotherapy unit and a radiography room for scans. Alvin, one of our exceptional students scored an A- in his Form 4 national tests and wishes to train as a Doctor.

Through 2023 Nasio has linked up with 8 new partnerships. There were 45 volunteer visitors and 16 Kilimanjaro fundraising climbers. We continue to support 336 children through various stages of their education right up to university. We have made 808 home visits and reached over 4000 young people and women's groups with our Peer Education programme and Self-Help groups. 40 women are now involved with the soap making project. We have assisted over 1,100 farmers and been able to distribute 36 goats. Through the Alternative Gift website we have donated 517 gift items from teen packs, family food parcels, mosquito nets, D-lights to birthday treats as well as handing out over 1400 re-useable sanitary wear: all the girls participating in Isla's football coaching received a teen pack that also included 2 pairs of pants and a bra.

Divya Godbole leads the UK staff in Nancy's long absences in the role of Programme Manager. Oliver Johnson, the Assistant Programme & Administration Manager responsible for child sponsorship is now training his successor as he will be leaving

to study his Masters in September. Keith Butler our finance manager is hoping to retire and Elizabeth Bolongaro is taking on more hours. The office shares the BRF premises at 13 The Chambers, Vineyard, Abingdon, OXON, OX14 3FE. Nasio is the biggest employer in the Musanda area in Kenya. We have 3 full time teachers, 4 part time staff and a volunteer. There are 74 members of staff spread over the various departments, 9 consultants and 24 volunteers – mostly those from 4 students waiting to be allocated a university placement.

Nasio is always grateful for the support that is given by All Saints church and by individual members for the ongoing work of this small charity. Your donations go a long way to supporting our education and feeding programmes and improving the lives of our students, their families and the wider community. THANK YOU

I've included Morgan's thoughts when asked

- What was your first impressions?
- What was your favourite bit?
- What did you least enjoy?

### **Morgan's thoughts:**

My initial impression of Kenya was definitely how lovely and friendly all the people were and I was genuinely impressed by everyone's English fluency. Even the small children at St Irene's who were 3-5years old. The wildlife was friendly too and we didn't see a snake! The staff were very welcoming and our mud hut was so comfortable.

The best bit of my trip was refurbishing the house, especially when David accidentally splashed us with mud. It was also fun running down Bukyah Hill when it started to rain heavily after Eunice told us that because the rainbow was seen to our right it wouldn't rain – we missed the sunset over Uganda that evening! All the activities were fun and it was interesting to talk to the nutritionist at the porridge kitchen. Evan's mandazi and chips were good as was the fresh fruits.

The worst bit of the trip was the waiting around. Always waiting. Kenyan timing!

I learnt that no matter how hard something is or how sad it is there is always someone there to comfort and help you. I've also learnt a lot about different cultures. I would encourage everyone to go and experience it. I have lots of memories that will stay with me for the rest of my life. *Morgan – aged 14*

*Sue Russell, Nasio Trustee*





*PHOTOS- fetching water, house renovation, porridge kitchen, football coaching, serving lunch, learning about spirulina, making soap, home visit to Jack’s sponsored child, planting a tree in memory of Phil and a jiggers clinic.*

### 8.3 TrinityLearning - highlights of supporting local schools in 2023



It has been another busy year for TrinityLearning with more face-to-face projects expanding and returning following Covid, as well as the development of some new projects such as Deacon Selina’s wonderful Sensory Christmas Service for the pupils of Kingfisher School. We were excited to hear that our core funding from the URC Wessex Trust and

Wantage and Abingdon Methodist Circuit has been extended for a further 2 years allowing us to plan for projects until the end of 2025.

**Experience Easter 2023** - we were delighted that we were able to return ‘live’ to Trinity Church in March 2023 after two years of Experience Easter being fully online. Due to changes in volunteer availability and circumstances we completely reevaluated Experience Easter and considered new ways to present and share the workshops.

We used a mixture of live storytelling with volunteers and videos from the online Experience Easter to ensure that, even with a lower number of volunteers, children still benefited from hearing the story from a range of voices.

Overall, 445 children from approximately 15 classes and eight different schools took part in Experience Easter either live or online. Adults supporting school groups expressed their appreciation for the peaceful atmosphere and all the children who attended engaged with the activities.

**Kingfisher Singing Group** - the Kingfisher Singing Group continued to go from strength to strength this year. The Group meets weekly to sing nursery rhymes and action songs with children with a range of impairments and health conditions. Kingfisher School really



appreciates the connections built with the singing group and this year these were expanded to include visits to school open days and events as well as inclusion in other TrinityLearning projects such as the specially adapted Experience Easter workshop supported by the Kingfisher Singing Group and the amazing Christmas Service devised by Deacon Selina which we helped to deliver to most of Kingfisher School over five sessions in December 2023.

**Thinking Books** – this is our mentoring scheme for primary schools. Volunteer mentors go into schools regularly to meet children one-to-one or in small groups. They share reading of carefully selected books which start conversations about feelings and relationships.

The school year 2022 – 2023 was our first full year of Thinking Books and was very successful with nine volunteers delivering ten sessions each to over 40 children.

“Thinking Books has been very useful for a child in my class who struggles to access a wide range of books. He does not have much confidence with reading but...he enjoys the quality 1-1 time and being able to read for a long stretch of time without being interrupted. Throughout the week he sometimes asks how many days until he can read with his Thinking Books adult again and reminds me of the details of the story. It has definitely been a worthwhile and useful tool for him.” *Feedback from class teacher at an Abingdon Primary School.*

**Toolkit for Happiness** – in July 2023 we welcomed 6th Form volunteers from Larkmead School as part of their Make a Difference event. A total of twelve 6th form students volunteered for our Toolkit for Happiness project - a series of five workshops designed to enable children to learn about different strategies they can use to boost their own happiness, such as getting out into nature, doing exercise, helping others or feeling thankful.

Each student gave between two and five days of their time to deliver wellbeing workshops to around 180 year 7 pupils. The students’ enthusiasm and commitment to the project was extremely impressive.

“We would like to say a massive thank you to TrinityLearning for giving us a great experience that we can take the skills we learnt with us and apply it to other aspects of our lives.” *Year 12 volunteer*

**Volunteer Celebration** - around 20 TrinityLearning volunteers joined us in June 2023



as we hosted a special Volunteer Celebration to say thank you for the fantastic work our volunteers do to support our TrinityLearning projects and events.

Trustees provided a lovely buffet, and display boards highlighted all the many ways volunteers support us – from working one to one with children in school, to in-school singing, to preparing Experience Easter

resources and making soft toys for some our packs.

It was great to be able to recognise and celebrate our volunteers as well as hear how much enjoyment they find in volunteering with us and working together in a strong, friendly volunteer community.

“The highlight of volunteering for me is shared purpose and camaraderie; being part of something valuable and valued.” *Volunteer feedback.*

**Knitted bunnies** – thanks to the fantastic and talented volunteers of All Saints Church we now have enough knitted bunnies to ensure each child taking part in our Thinking Books project has access to one during the project. They are a very welcome addition and we are so impressed with all the care that goes into making each one.



Keep up to date with our work - Our Facebook page is updated regularly so is a great place to keep up to date with our news – you can find us at [www.facebook.com/TrinityLearning-108933674177652](http://www.facebook.com/TrinityLearning-108933674177652)

Thinking of calling into the office? TrinityLearning staff and volunteers are now working a mix of both home and office-based hours so please do email before popping in to see us.

*Nicola Williams, Education Development Officer*

#### **8.4 Abingdon Foodbank**

All Saints has continued to support the foodbank very generously and our friends at Christ Church are most appreciative of all the gifts throughout the year, but especially after the Harvest Service and at Christmas. A full-time manager was appointed last summer, and she came to the Harvest Service to speak about the work of the foodbank, and in February welcomed about 20 people to the foodbank on a visit arranged by Just Women for anyone from All Saints. This was a very successful visit and gave many of us an insight into just how needed the foodbank is, even in a town as affluent as Abingdon. We have recently been given a Certificate of Recognition which states that All Saints is a Proud Supporter of Abingdon Foodbank and is displayed on the notice board in the foyer.

There is now an Abingdon Foodbank app for mobile phones which lists urgent needs and can be used by anyone; but I shall continue to list what is needed in the notices each week. The foodbank basket is in the foyer, please leave your donations there or take them to Christ Church on Tuesday or Friday between 9am and 1pm.

Our friends at Christ Church are very grateful for all the support and express their thanks to all those who have contributed either money, food or non-food items.

*Judith Penrose Brown*

## **APPENDIX A: MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND GROUPS**

Information as at the date of this report

### **Church Stewards**

Sue Butler  
Margaret Ellwood  
Dawn Tyrrell

### **Communion Stewards**

Margaret Hoskins    Colin Bartlett    Marian Orchard    Larissa Richards

### **Church Council**

<b>Minister</b>	Rev. Ian Griffiths
<b>Deacon</b>	Deacon Selina Nisbett
<b>Acting Treasurer</b>	Richard Matthews
<b>Stewards</b>	Sue Butler Dawn Tyrrell Margaret Ellwood
<b>Secretary</b>	Sue Russell
<b>Family Committee / Youth Forum</b>	Judith Penrose Brown
<b>Pastoral Committee Secretary</b>	Sue Butler
<b>Circuit Steward</b>	Anne Matthews
<b>Church in Abingdon</b>	Helen Appleyard
<b>Junior Church</b>	
<b>Property Action</b>	
<b>Finance Committee</b>	Richard Matthews
<b>Mission Action</b>	Paul Williams
<b>Safeguarding</b>	Helen Appleyard
<b>Communion Steward</b>	Margaret Hoskins

### **Annual Church Meeting Representatives (6 to 15 allowed)**

Alistair Batey	Jenny Pooley
Margaret Ellwood	Joanne Phipps
Paul Williams	Derek Pooley
Gareth Hawkes	

### **Representatives to Circuit Meeting**

Sue Butler  
Paul Williams



## **Church Family Committee**

<b>Chair</b>	Anne Matthews
<b>Secretary &amp; Crèche Organiser</b>	Becky Batey
<b>Steward Rep</b>	
<b>Members:</b>	
Maurice Tubb	Rev. Ian Griffiths
Kate Jones	Helen Appleyard
Mike Quigley	Judith Penrose Brown
Rona Quigley	Dcn. Selina Nisbett

## **Finance Committee**

<b>Chair</b>	Richard Matthews
<b>Acting Treasurer</b>	Richard Matthews
<b>Secretary</b>	Gillian Griffiths
<b>Steward</b>	
<b>Members</b>	
Pam Guthrie	Larissa Richards
David Gray	Margaret Ellwood
Mike Brown	

## **Mission Action**

<b>Chair</b>	Dcn. Selina Nisbett
<b>Secretary</b>	Paul Williams
<b>Steward</b>	
<b>Members</b>	
Rev Ian Griffiths	Martin Appleyard
Rosemary Stanbury	Sue Russell
Joanne Phipps – Finance Grp Rep	

## **Pastoral Committee**

**Chair** Rev. Ian Griffiths  
**Secretary** Sue Butler  
**Steward** All stewards  
Deacon Selina Nisbett

## **Visitors**

Trisha Evans	John & Marian Orchard
Maurice Tubb	Pauline Sykes
Kate Jones	Anne and Richard Matthews
Helen & Martin Appleyard	Joanne Phipps
Jenny Pooley	Beryl Manners

## **Property Action**

### **Chair & Steward**

**Secretary** Emma Standhaft

### **Steward Rep.**

### **Members**

David Gray	Martin Wilson
Chris Caddy	Maurice Tubb
Alistair Batey	John & Marian Orchard

## **Junior Church Council**

### **Co-ordinator**

**Secretary** Sue Butler

### **Leaders**

Anne Matthews	Mike Pearl
Menna Hull	

### **Crèche**

Helen Appleyard	Beryl Manners
Becky Batey	Kate Jones
Rona Quigley	Caroline Hartley

## APPENDIX B: FINANCE

### ALL SAINTS METHODIST CHURCH ABINGDON

Charity Commission Number 1184115

#### Receipts and Payments for the year ended 31st August, 2023

	2022 /2023	2021/ 2022
	£	£
<b>RECEIPTS</b>		
<b>Unrestricted</b>		
Collections	59,103.21	55,282.00
Tax recoveries	13,250.36	13,455.47
	<u>72,353.57</u>	<u>68,737.47</u>
Lettings	18,408.41	14,125.72
Interest	807.66	104.46
Other income	683.19	305.28
<b>Unrestricted income</b>	<u>92,252.83</u>	<u>83,272.93</u>
<b>Restricted</b>		
Memorable donation (incl. tax refund and interest)	437.07	52.38
Special events and appeals	1,875.41	1,969.29
Men's Group - member donations	-	45.50
Just Women - member donations, events and gift aid	531.74	143.15
Friendship - interest	-	0.10
<b>Restricted income</b>	<u>2,844.22</u>	<u>2,210.42</u>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<u>95,097.05</u>	<u>85,483.35</u>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>		
<b>Unrestricted</b>		
Circuit assessment	47,155.00	43,831.00
Donations to Methodist Funds	5,136.59	6,999.60
Other donations	3,536.35	6,737.00
All Saints costs -		
Operational costs	7,849.06	7,875.41
Property costs	20,094.41	16,430.95
<b>Expenditure out of unrestricted income</b>	<u>83,771.41</u>	<u>81,873.96</u>
<b>Restricted</b>		
Special events and appeals	1,848.81	1,891.23
Just Women - donations and other payments	489.50	114.68
Friendship	-	-
<b>Expenditure out of restricted income</b>	<u>2,338.31</u>	<u>2,005.91</u>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<u>86,109.72</u>	<u>83,879.87</u>
<b>SURPLUS or NET DEFICIT for the year</b>	<b>8,987.33</b>	<b>1,603.48</b>

## Represented by

### Unrestricted funds -

General fund	57,301.00	55,832.73
Richard Cox bequest (Trust 21871)	8,594.67	8,578.86
Memorable donations	1,005.57	1,005.57
Coffee fund	294.33	379.44
	<u>67,195.57</u>	<u>65,796.60</u>

### Restricted funds -

Memorable donation	12,577.72	12,525.34
Appeals fund	312.77	234.71
Thursday Friendship	24.79	24.69
Men's Group	45.50	
Just Women	28.47	
	<u>12,989.25</u>	<u>12,784.74</u>

	<u>80,184.82</u>	<u>78,581.34</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS at 31st August 2023</b>	<u>89,172.15</u>	<u>80,184.82</u>

### Summary of assets & liabilities as at 31st August 2023

	2022/ 2023	2021/ 2022
	£	£
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>		
General fund including property fund	65,283.88	57,301.00
Richard Cox bequest (Trust 21871)	8,846.06	8,594.67
Memorable donations	1,318.07	1,005.57
Coffee fund	228.98	294.33
	<u>75,676.99</u>	<u>67,195.57</u>
<b>Restricted funds</b>		
Memorable donation	13,014.79	12,577.72
Appeals fund	339.37	312.77
Thursday Friendship	24.79	24.79
Men's Group	45.50	45.50
Just Women	70.71	28.47
	<u>141.00</u>	<u>12,989.25</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>89,172.15</u>	<u>80,184.82</u>

### Represented by:

Cash (Men's Group)	-	45.50
Cash (Just Women)	70.71	28.47
Current bank account (Nat West)	51,405.60	43,635.25
Central Finance Board Deposit Fund	28,849.78	27,880.93
Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes	8,846.06	8,594.67
	<u>89,172.15</u>	<u>80,184.82</u>

The accounts were approved by Church Council on 18 January 2024.