



St Paul & St Stephen

Stroud Road, Gloucester

***Annual Report for the
Parochial Church Meeting***

11.30am Sunday 14th April 2019

Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow



Our Church

Our vision is to be God's family, here in this part of Gloucester, faithful, loving and open to God, to one another and to the world.

As part of the Diocese of Gloucester, we also share the diocesan vision statement, and we are constantly seeking ways to put this into practice.

We are called in the power and grace of the Holy Spirit:

to proclaim and live the gospel of Jesus Christ, transforming lives and communities, advancing the Kingdom of God.

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Vicars Report

As a church we try to enable all people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing our knowledge and trust in Jesus.

Provision of pastoral care for all people living in the parish and for those members of our congregation who live outside of the parish.

Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of the St Paul and St Stephen's Church. Our Diocesan Vision Document, launched in November 2016, sets out the following areas as being priorities for the Diocese and each parish church.

Life

The vision for the Diocese of Gloucester over the next five years.
"I have come that they may have LIFE and have it to the full."
(John 10:10)

Leadership

Committed to transformation

Developing diverse lay and ordained leaders from the communities we serve.

Piloting liberating models of leadership and ministry, especially in multi-parish benefices.

Creating learning networks for lay and ordained leaders.

imagination

Opening new paths to faith

Investing in our engagement with baptism families to spark an amazing adventure with Jesus Christ.

Placing schools at the heart of our mission with creative connections between churches and schools.

Encouraging new and courageous ways of worshipping, in different places, which connect with more people.

Approaching the use, upkeep and future of our church buildings in bold and creative ways.

faith

Living as adventurous
followers of Jesus Christ

Enabling people to discover new depths to prayer and spiritual growth, individually and together.

Nurturing confident disciples to live out their faith seven days a week.

Sharing our stories in new and different ways, including through digital media.

engagement

Living out Christ's
love and hope

Being advocates for human flourishing, through initiatives which combat injustice, environmental destruction, exclusion and isolation.

Using sport, music and art to build relationships and share the Christian faith.

Connecting with new housing developments in innovative ways.

Investing in people and programme's which excite young people to explore and grow in faith.

During the past year we have tried to build upon our connections in the community to bring the Gospel and the love, light and hope of Christ into the following areas:

Developing diverse lay and ordained leaders from the communities we serve.

Investing in our engagement with baptism families to spark an amazing adventure with Jesus Christ.

Nurturing confident disciples to live out their faith seven days a week.

Placing schools at the heart of our mission with creative connections between churches and schools.

Approaching the use, upkeep and future of our church buildings in bold and creative ways.

Using sport, music and art to build relationships and share the Christian faith.

Enabling people to discover new depths to prayer and spiritual growth, individually and together.

Being advocates for human flourishing, through initiatives which combat injustice, environmental destruction, exclusion and isolation.

During 2018 we welcomed a number of new people into our congregation and several of them have gone onto take lay leadership roles in a variety of areas of ministry in our church - from the music group to house groups, administration to

prayer ministry. We have been blessed by God in a growing number of people finding their way to our door and bringing a variety of gifts with them that have contributed in so many ways to the whole body of Christ in this place.

A huge 'thank you' to those who have faithfully continued to fill gaps and lead when others are not there as well as to those who have come and so willingly offered their gifts and talents. There are so many of you it would be out of place to name you in case I miss someone out. However, the sign of a healthy church is having a good mix of people who are able to step into leadership roles and to drive areas of ministry forward without necessarily having the clergy at everything.

As a church we have also welcomed those exploring vocation to ordained ministry on placement and I would like to say 'thank you' to everyone for taking an interest in their journey and welcoming them into our family here with such warmth. We continue to support and nourish those within our own congregation who are also exploring ordained and lay ministry.

We became an 'Inclusive' Church in 2018 and whilst one would hope there wasn't the need for this label - that every church everywhere might be inclusive - unfortunately it is still needed to enable people to know that we aspire to give welcome and make provision for all people. Inclusive Church seeks to address issues concerning poverty, disability, gender, sexuality, mental health and age. Of course being an Inclusive Church does not mean we have all of these groups covered and sorted in what we do but it does indicate to people searching for a safe place, a non-judgmental place, a place where they will be welcome whatever is going on in their lives that they will find people who are understanding and welcoming. Thank you again to all of you who make up the body of Christ in this place for providing this for people who do come.

During Lent in 2018 we gathered together to reflect on Law and Grace using excerpts from the film *Les Misérables* and we had an average of 25 people attending each week. On Good Friday we showed the whole film and had a fish and chip supper. We were blessed with at least 35 people on that evening and whilst it might have seemed strange to show a film on Good Friday of all days it was absolutely fitting and proper to reflect on law and grace, sacrifice and forgiveness and the hope that love brings into all of our lives.

During September and October we marked CreationTide with a series of services which would help us reflect upon our place within the whole of creation and in which we could give thanks for the harvest. We have recently decided, as a PCC, to work towards gaining an award from Eco Church and have registered our intent. This award means looking closely at our teaching and preaching around environmental issues as well as how we order and sustain our building and grounds.



We also undertook another discipleship course, Puzzling Questions, which helped us to reflect upon some of the big questions of life and faith such as, why does God allow suffering in the world? Who is God? What happens after death? Once again the attendance was good and whilst we didn't always necessarily find answers but maybe only more questions we did at least talk to one another about our lives, our faith, our worries and our hopes. We built relationship and I like to think, a little corner of the Kingdom in those sessions. Thank you to those who attended and who shared so honestly. No discipleship course can be of value if the participants do not participate!

During 2018 it was also confirmed that we will welcome a Curate into our midst in July 2019. Heather de Gruhyer will be ordained Deacon, God willing, at Gloucester Cathedral on Sunday 30th June at 10.15am and will join us from 1st July for up to four years as she finishes her training with us. Quite a few of you will have met Heather already as she did a placement with us at the end of her Reader Training in 2016. She was also part of our visioning evening in February 2019. Heather is married to John and has two children, Evie who is 14 and Samuel who is 9. Initially they will remain living in Quedgeley until 2, King Edwards Avenue becomes vacant when the current Curate for St Barnabas moves to her next post. Once the house is vacant, at some point during Heather's first year, the family will move to live there. There will be a bring and share lunch after Heather's first service with us on Sunday 7th July - please do come and make her and the family feel welcome.

After a short time off from doing Open the Book the small team are now back in St Paul's C of E school every other week with myself taking collective worship on the alternate weeks and heading up the OtB team so as to lend consistency and help the

children participate. I continue to serve as Vice-Chair on the Governing Body for St Paul's and hold the portfolio for Safeguarding, Early Years, Inclusion, Ethos and SIAMS as well. I continue to develop links between the church and Linden School taking Collective worship there each Monday afternoon. Both schools value the input of the church and also the links that have developed. Both schools as well as Tredworth have used the church for services, concerts and play performances throughout the year. It is my hope that we may be able to develop our work with the schools, particularly with Tredworth but I cannot do this by myself. If anyone would like to work with myself and Heather from September 2019 in developing these links please do speak to me.

At the time of writing this report there is still no news on the outcome about the use of St Stephen's Church from the Diocese. In September 2018, alongside other organisation's in the community, we submitted a business plan to see the development of St Stephen's for the community. We held community sessions in March 2018 to ascertain from those who live in the Linden area what and how they would like the space to be utilised. Ideas ranged from tea dances to live music and theatre events all set around a cafe/bar space. We wait to hear from the Diocese whether this is something they might support or whether the building might be sold instead for re-development of the land.

Once we have a decision about St Stephen's I would like to see us go ahead with our own plans to create a community space here in our own church of St Paul and St Stephen's. We are blessed with flexible space and the desire to engage with the community is something that seems to be a common thread coming through the visioning session. Having a space that was specifically designed to be more open and flexible would also allow us to use art and music in a greater way to share our faith and build relationships.

I am glad to say that our church has a reputation in the area for being a church that will help feed the hungry, minister to the sick, lonely, anxious and afraid, reach out to the outsider, support those who need advocacy and seek to include all. We can always do more though and whilst I know many of us do things in our own individual lives it would be good to see some joined up thinking during this coming year and on the back of our visioning exercise develop a collective response that combats injustice, develops further environmental concern and action and responds even more to those who are isolated and excluded. There are new opportunities for partnerships with other organisations such as our partnership with The Independence Trust that will enable us to grow and develop our mission and ministry in the coming year.

Essentially then - thank you for all that you contribute to our family in Christ here in this place and at this time. It is exciting to be with you all as we journey together - God is leading us into new places and giving us strength and skills to equip us for

the journey together. I look forward to seeing where we go as we follow the will of God.

What are the focal points for St Paul and St Stephen's in this coming year?

Placing schools at the heart of our mission with creative connections between churches and schools

Investing in our engagement with baptism families to spark an amazing adventure with Jesus Christ.

Approaching the use, upkeep and future of our church buildings in bold and creative ways.

Being advocates for human flourishing, through initiatives which combat injustice, environmental destruction, exclusion and isolation

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

There were 42 baptisms in the parish during 2018, 6 weddings, 1 Thanksgiving for Marriage and 32 funerals held either at the church or at the crematorium.

Average Attendance at Sunday Services

During 2017 the average attendance at the main usual Sunday service is 51 adults and 9 children. Obviously, there are some services where this figure is more and some where this figure is less.

Number of People on Our Church Electoral Roll

We currently have 88 people on our roll.

Expenses Payments

Other than the reimbursement of expenses and purchases made on the church's behalf, no payments have been made to members of the PCC.

Reverend Ruth Fitter

Vicar and Chair of PCC, St Paul & St Stephen Parish Church

Children's Ministry

Messy Church

Messy Church meets monthly for 2 hours on a Saturday morning, usually the 3rd Saturday of the month. Month by month we welcome new families as well as those who have been with us for a long time. We love to welcome new people to Messy Church; it's open to people of all ages, alone or in families. All we ask is that children bring an adult with them. Do feel free to come and experience it for yourself.



We have a small willing group of helpers with Helen Scott and Ruth Parsons usually leading alternate sessions. Sadly, Andy Winter has left our team but has been ably replaced by Lorraine & Andy P.

We base each session on a Bible story and through games, crafts, food and worship we explore more about God who loves us and welcomes us as his children. We have a closed Facebook group, 'Messy Church at St Pauls and St Stephens', which you can ask to join.

Messy Church BRF is currently the national charity being supported by St Paul and St Stephen's. It is the central organisation of messy church and is a part of Bible Reading Fellowship.

Recently a study by the Church Army research unit has reported about the impact of Messy Church in a report entitled 'Playfully Serious'. You can read about it for yourself, it's very exciting! It confirms that although Messy Church is a very small organisation employing only 4 or 5 people it is growing new disciples and having a big impact nationally and internationally.

I'm delighted that we can play our part in growing God's church in this way. Please pray for us that we may continue to play our part in God's work at Messy Church.

Ruth Parsons

Little Angels

Little Angels takes place in the church hall each Tuesday between 1pm and 2.30pm during school term time. It is a group for pre-school children (small babies to 4-year olds) and their carers who meet each week to enjoy play, story, singing, craft and eating together. The activities and stories are from the Bible and follow the church's year. Most weeks we get about 6-8 children with their adults.

Marian Ivens has led the group since Sept 2017 aided by Ruth Parsons while other volunteers help with the food and supervise the kitchen. We try to not only offer activities but also friendship to both carers and children.

For a second year we joined with Messy Church on Gloucester carnival day in July, dressed up and had great fun.

Ruth Parsons

Sunday Morning Children's Group

The children meet on Sunday mornings during the 10 o'clock service except for the first Sunday of the month when we join together for all-age worship. We meet in the church hall and we start by lighting a candle to remind us that Jesus the light of the world is with us wherever and whatever we are doing.

Next, we share news whether it is good or sad and the children have a chance to talk before we pray. We used to separate into groups at this point but due to a lack of leaders and a very variable number of children we now all stay together for our Bible story, discussion, questions etc. We follow this with a craft to further help us learn from the story before re-joining the adult congregation at the peace.

Sarah M. had to give up leading our monthly music session in September and we have recently lost Andy W. as a leader so we are very keen to recruit more adults to help us, either in leading sessions or as an extra pair of hands to help with craft and wriggly children!

Thank you to all the current leaders and helpers who enable our children to grow in their knowledge and faith.

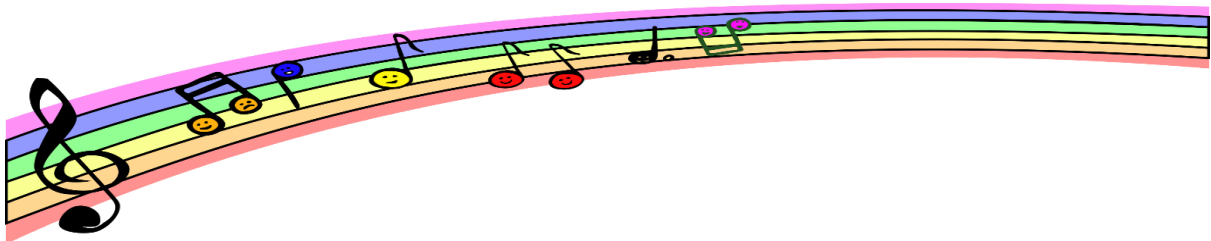
Ruth Parsons

Open the Book

The Open the Book team had a 6 month break from March-Sept 2018 and then we re-started our fortnightly visits to St Paul's C of E primary school. The children tell us they enjoy our Wednesday afternoon assemblies and we enjoy acting out a Bible story and leading a prayer. Sadly, our team is currently too small and we actively looking for new storytellers to join us.

Ruth Parsons

Music Ministry



The music group has played regularly over the last year on the 1st, 3rd (and 5th) Sundays of the month at the 10am service and has been delighted to welcome several new members. We sing a broad repertoire of songs from beautiful ancient hymns to 21st century Rend Collective via Graham Kendrick. We are now at a stage where we have introduced a rota so there will be variety in who is leading the group from Sunday to Sunday.

We all love music, believe that it speaks to both heart and mind and love variety and breadth of musical styles. Over the next year, we intend to introduce a couple more Gloria's, drawing upon global music. We also plan to have a regular (probably once every 3 months) time of informal praise over a Sunday lunchtime where everyone is welcome to join us as we familiarise ourselves with some of the newer songs.

Fundraising

Summer Fayre

The original purpose of the Summer Fayre was to support the church fundraising efforts. As the planning came into fruition, we realised that it would also be an amazing way to bring the community together. We therefore named it: Community Summer Fayre. At the fayre we had a free bouncy castle and ice-creams. As well as a BBQ, tombola, raffle and so on. The weather was fairly good to us, which meant we had a really good turnout. The event was really well supported by members of the congregation and beyond. We had lots of positive feedback about the event and raised much needed funds for the church.

This all taken into consideration means that there is now going to be a Community Summer Fayre 2019! Good news.

On Saturday 25th November the Church was transformed into the setting for this year's Winter Fayre, creating a magical event for the whole community. Inside the church we had stalls selling a range of goods including Christmas decorations, pickles, Cakes, jewellery and knitted items. At this time of year, no event would be complete without Father Christmas, who stopped by to meet the children in a specially-designed grotto.

The Winter Fayre raised over £800 for the roof fund. Equally importantly, it was an opportunity for the people of local community to come together and enjoy a fun, festive event in a very special location. I would like to say a big thank-you to everyone who gave time, goods and energy to support the event.

Unfortunately, our lovely building and grounds will always require funds for maintenance and upkeep. The church is happy to support fundraising events so if you would like to organise an event speak with Rev Ruth and we will do all we can to support you.

Julie Holder, Sue Matthews & Graham

Parochial Church Council

The prime role of the PCC is co-operation with the vicar in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, social and ecumenical.

PCC membership 2017 – 2018:

Ex Officio: Rev Ruth Fitter [chair], Rev Royse Murphey, Rev Pauline Godfrey, Sr Cynthia Kerr, Pam Wells [churchwarden and vice chair] Dim Couston [churchwarden]. Chris Smith [Treasurer] Jackie Trigg [secretary]

2015 to 2018:

Abi Oblana, Helen Scott, David Jacques

2016 to 2019:

David Jacques (stood for one-year 2017 to 2018), Richard Pollard, Sylvia Brown [resigned], Susan Matthews

2017 to 2020:

Hannah Allen, Andy Winter [resigned]

2018 to 2021:

Graham Brooks, Tommy Johnston

Deanery Synod Representatives: 2017 – 2020

Sylvia Brown, Andy Winter and Maria Wells.

The PCC meets 7 times during the year.

June 2018 – The new PCC met and welcomed the new PCC members and members were reminded of the purpose of the PCC. Finance update was given. The away day was deemed a success. Royse gave a report on issues raised from the QI report including the East End, pigeon issue, war memorial and Triptych. The community fayre plans were discussed. Ruth disclosed her diagnosis of her health condition

July 2018 – Finance report was given, and a new Parish Share scheme was

announced. Safeguarding was delayed until the next meeting, who needs DBS checks were discussed. The cross had to be brought down due to being rotted at the base. Purchase of the chest freezer was approved.

Sept 2018 – There was not enough PCC members present to hold a full meeting, but items discussed were; St Stephen's closure and business plan. Puzzling Questions update. The Linden Singers maybe permanently closed. Admin position and Curate. Wi-Fi for the church and engaging the children more. Summer Fayre a huge success.

Sept 2018 (extraordinary meeting) – Finance Update including Parish Share and dwindling funds were discussed. Safeguarding policies were approved. WIFI and administrator position were updated. The mounting of the Triptych and faculty were also discussed. A smaller version of the Christmas newsletter was approved.

Nov 2018 - The cross on the War Memorial update was given. The St Stephens business plan has been submitted and security of the building was discussed. Finance update given, including uncertainty of the amount of Parish Share we will need to pay. The principal of having an advice drop in, in liaison with the Independence Trust was approved

Jan 2019 – The cross on the War Memorial situation and the Triptych was updated. Funding for the Administrator position, volunteer found to take this position. Plans for the summer fayre were discussed and Christmas services.

March 2019 – Finance update was given and accounts all up to date. New bible update, new safeguarding programme announced. Vision Evening went well, interesting questions were discussed. Lent group update, and St Stephen organ update were given. Eco Church group proposed.

for the war memorial. A discussion was had about the LIFE initiative brought in by the Diocese.

In addition, we received reports at all meetings from our action groups and the Deanery Synod.

We reviewed safeguarding regularly and complied with our duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, having due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

PCC minutes are available in a folder in church, once agreed, so available for everyone to read.

Jackie Trigg
PCC Secretary

Deanery Synod

The word “synod” comes from a Greek word meaning “assembly” or “meeting” the Deanery Synod makes decisions at a deanery level. It acts as an intermediary between the parochial church council of each parish in the deanery and the synod of the diocese as a whole. It is chaired by the Area Dean and a lay chair; it consists of all clergy licensed to a benefice within the deanery, plus elected lay members.

The meetings take place in different churches around the deanery. There were three meetings during 2018, meetings included visiting speakers, reports from Diocesan and General Synods, sharing new developments and good practice and financial matters including Parish Share. Visiting speakers in 2018 were Rev Noel Sharp, from Christian Aid, Canon Judith Knight, on Safeguarding and the new Data Protection Regulations and Nicola Simpson, Urban Wildlife Manager, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, and Reverend Cate Williams, Diocesan Mission and Evangelism Officer gave a presentation entitled “Wild Towns and Eco Church”. Maria Wells lay representative for St Paul and St Stephen.

Maria Wells

Deanery Synod Representative

Giving & Community Support

Charities

Over a term of three years we, as a PCC and church choose to support financially three charities, a local charity, a national charity and an overseas charity. Between 2017 and 2020 we have been supporting and will continue to support:

- Messy Church.
- Gloucester City Mission.
- Kodad Day Care Centre.

Messy Church - information concerning our support for Messy Church is shown in other parts of this report. Also, more information is available on our website.

Gloucester City Mission - is a registered charity working with the homeless and other marginalised groups within the City of Gloucester and the local area. Their hard-working volunteers come from a range of different Christian backgrounds, and together aim to take Jesus to the streets as providing hot food, drinks and friendship to our street friends.

We are proud to continue support the work the Mission does. For more information, or If you would like to volunteer, please go to their website:

www.gloscitymission.org.uk

Kodad Day Care Centre – the Centre is in our partner Diocese of Karnataka, South India. It looks after the children of very poor labourers and is partly a day nursery for pre-school children and partly a pre- and after- school club for those at school. Lunch is served for the nursery children every day and some basic education provided. The state of the actual building is basic but seems to be in fairly good condition. This Centre can give both boys and girls a start in education and allows parents to earn their own living. The money we send enables this to continue and pays for the food needed for their families.

We are proud to continue to support the Centre and the longstanding partnership between Gloucester and Dornakal Diocese which was established in 2001.

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital - during 2018 we have maintained close links with GRH. The wards are very grateful for the magazines our church family collect for them – thank you so much. Please keep collecting.

If you know of anyone from church or the parish who is in hospital and would like a pastoral visit please let me know.

Jan Wood

Our Beautiful Church

Churchwarden's Report

The Terrier and property inventory have been completed and is an accurate record of articles belonging to the church. The church log book records details of work carried out in the church or on the land. The annual Mission Statistics have been completed and submitted to the Diocese. The church is asked to give information on the average number of people attending services, the number of baptisms, weddings and funerals. This gives the diocese a picture of emerging mission issues and helps them plan for such things as clergy deployment.

Our next Quinquennial Inspection will take place during 2022.

During the past year urgent repairs identified were completed or are currently being organised. Full details of future repairs will be recorded in the church log book.

Other Activities:

- Employers Liability Insurance has been renewed.
- Music Licence has been renewed.
- 'Spring' cleaning morning took place throughout the year.
- We have a rota of volunteers who clean and tidy the church and hall each week.
- Church risk assessments have been completed as per insurance company requirements.

A small number of people work hard to ensure the church is kept in good order and their efforts are greatly appreciated. However, these numbers are decreasing. This is **YOUR** church so please give us some of your time as many hands make light work.

The Maintenance Action Group is a very small group of church members who meet to tackle those small repair jobs not requiring a specialist or faculty. Anyone can come along to our maintenance mornings and you would be most welcome, you might even enjoy it! You do not need any experience!

We would like to give a really big thank you to the regular volunteers for their help and support. **You keep the church, church hall and garden looking fabulous.**



Environmental Policy

As a church we aim to practically and spiritually care for our immediate and wider environment. We believe that:

- We have been created by God as part of one great, interdependent living system.
- We recognise a special responsibility to care for the earth and to seek the best possible harmony with other creatures of the earth.
- We are inspired by the Biblical vision of peace which includes the fulfilment of our individual potential, a just social order and a concern for the well-being of creation.
- We are empowered by Christ, who through his death and resurrection, reconciled all things to himself, so making peace.

We continue to take environmental concerns fully into account in everything we do. We aim to recycle materials where possible and to use Fairtrade and Eco-friendly products. Our full environmental policy is available on our website.

Church Garden

'A garden is a thing of beauty and a job forever'.

The main change for 2018 involved planting runner beans instead of giant sunflowers. Messy Church sowed the seeds and spaced out the young plants. The plants flowered well but did not enjoy the dry summer weather and were rather reluctant to set. However, bundles of beans were available for collection in the church porch during July and August. They were joined by marrows, courgettes and cucumbers that the pupils of Linden school grew in their raised bed.



Daffodils, wallflowers, polyanthus, wild flowers and chrysanthemums all flowered during their seasons. The lawn went brown in the dry summer and took some time to recover. The weeds seemed to grow on regardless. The felling or pruning of several trees let considerable light in. The Garden of Remembrance was kept colourful by shrubs and by family flowers, left in memory of loved ones. Blackbirds and robins continued to supervise cultivations closely and the pigeons, no longer able to fly into the church loft, viewed events from a distance, on top of the roof.

'A weed is a plant that is not only in the wrong place but intends to stay there'.

George Marchant

Church Flower Report

Many ask why people put flowers in Church. Firstly, flowers in Church or indeed outside, are there to remind us of "Creation", creation of all things living, and that brings us to the "Resurrection" which in itself is actually re-creation, or made alive. If our Church is based on the belief of Resurrection then flowers should be used as often as possible as a reminder that we were all created beautiful in God's eyes and so we should make our Church an example of that beauty. A mixture of fresh and artificial flower arrangements are used to decorate the Altar area and windowsills in church. No-one has requested that we make wedding pedestals in the last few years, but we have matched flower colour on occasion if we are informed by the wedding party.

The church flowers are arranged via a rota that is kept in the church hall. Anyone can volunteer and we have a depleting group of ladies who by themselves or with a friend come and arrange a pedestal in the church and/or the church porch area. We have a supply of artificial flowers and equipment that are kept in the Quiet room which can be used to make displays. The cost of fresh flowers can be refunded. There is an abundance of greenery in the gardens that can be used

We have a Flower Fund which helps to maintain the tradition of fresh flower arrangements in Church. Anyone can contribute and we welcome individual donations to celebrate anniversaries of birthdays, weddings and special events, as well as marking anniversaries of the deaths of loved ones.

We have some pre-made pedestals using artificial flowers which we use so that the church does not look bare as during some periods of the last year we have had no volunteers.

We are a very small group of volunteers, some experienced and others with nothing but enthusiasm and we would welcome, encourage, assist and help anyone who would like to 'have a go'! So come on, what are you waiting for!

Julie Holder

Hospitality Group

Hospitality group meets every 3 months to plan hospitality and catering for forthcoming church events. We also keep the kitchen supplied with essentials like tea and coffee and cleaning materials using Fairtrade goods and Eco products whenever we can.

Please could we remind all kitchen users of two things:

1. If you serve food please record it in the notebook provided, including its source [the shop name] and the fridge temperature if stored in the fridge.
2. If you use the dishwasher please remember that you are also responsible for emptying it.

We are grateful to all those who help to keep the church and particularly the kitchen clean.

Our next event will be the Easter breakfast which we hope you will all support.

Ruth Parsons

Groups & Activities

Thursday Afternoon House Group

Around ten of us continue to meet on alternate weeks at Willy Beart's home on the picturesque slopes of Robinswood Hill. We welcome Sylvia's dog, Poppy, who is an excellent model of good behaviour. We also welcome the influence of local rabbits and other wildlife who inhabit the garden, although the number of rabbits seems to have sadly decreased in recent weeks. Our meetings begin with chat and excellent refreshments and we then settle to Bible study.

We have spent the past year going back to the beginning and have looked at key passages from Genesis and Exodus. We have followed with interest events in the Garden of Eden and the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Then came Moses, the escape from Egypt and the Ten Commandments. We search for connections between the Old Testament world, the world of Jesus and the world today. We are grateful to Ted Steele and his CD player for enabling us to listen to David Suchet reading the Biblical passages.

Our Bible studies have made us think about our own Christian experiences and helped us to draw closer together and support one another. We warmly thank Willy for her generous hospitality and we warmly recommend house groups as a way of becoming more familiar with the Bible and enjoying the fellowship of a smaller gathering.

George Marchant

Seymour Road House Group

The membership of this group has increased during the year due to new people attending our church. We have been meeting at Kiri and Steve's house but due to our increase in numbers, we may be moving to a new location.

The Group meets approximately every two weeks on a Tuesday night when we discuss topics including the Bible readings from the previous Sunday service. This has helped us to get a better understanding of the readings by going into more depth.

Many thanks to Ruth Parsons who has led us and to Kiri and Steve for their hospitality.

Art & Soul

Art and Soul is a fresh expression of church in that it is a way of doing 'church' that is outside the box of what people think when they hear the word 'church'. In 2018 we met monthly apart from the summer months of July and August; since September we have been exploring the 'I am' sayings of Jesus.

We always start with worship and then go into the activities. There are usually about four art/craft activities for folk to try and have included: printing, sewing,

knitting, marbling, bead craft, weaving and clay work. Coffee and conversation flow all morning and yet it could be described as a 'thin place' (a Celtic Christian term for those rare locales where the distance between Heaven and Earth collapses). We end each session by sharing a simple meal of bread and soup.

Maria Wells

Thursday Morning Coffee & Company

The group has met at 10.45am each week after Thursday Communion during the year. Approximately ten people attend when tea, coffee and biscuits help to support good conversation (and a little gossip).

Thanks go out to Willie for setting up each week and keeping the refreshments flowing. Everyone is welcome at the group so please drop in on any Thursday.

Bereavement Tea

On the second Sunday of alternate months we meet at 3pm for the Bereavement Tea. We are usually a small number and have all lost loved ones, either recently or a long time ago. We have a cuppa and a slice of cake (courtesy of Meg) chat, listen and share memories in confidence together with some fellowship and ending with prayer.

Everyone is welcome. If you would like to join us or would like to know more, please see Rev Ruth or Jan Wood. Dates for the coming year are:

- Sunday 12th May 2019
- Sunday 14th July 2019
- Sunday 8th September 2019
- Sunday 3 November 2019 which is also our All Souls service

Jan Brown

Brownies

The church is proud to host to the local Brownie group which meets on Monday evenings. The group works with local girls aged 7+ undertaking a range of activities aimed at preparing them for later life.



Young at Heart

Our group has continued to meet throughout the year on a Friday afternoon. As well as good company, we enjoy refreshments, conversation and games.

Gloucester Child Contact Centre

The Contact Centre provides provision each week for children and parents who have been separated by relationship breakdown to meet and play together. It enables relationships that are key in a child's life to be maintained whilst the parents try to sort out their own issues and allows children to be cared for in a safe and secure environment.

The contact centre is wholly staffed by volunteers with the exception of a part-time co-ordinator. There is no Government funding even though the work they do is ordered by the Family Courts and so raising funds, as with the church, is always a consideration.

They run out of the church each week on either a morning or afternoon and take families that have been ordered by the courts to attend whilst other reports are considered. The hope is always that the contact centre is a stepping stone to helping families move to a more 'normal' way of living their lives. A huge thank you to Tammy, the co-ordinator and all the volunteers who enable this vital and important work to continue.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the term used to describe the responsibility we all have as a community of people to work for the flourishing of others around us and to make sure everyone lives life in a safe and secure way which offers them wellbeing in every aspect of their lives. Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone, not just a few people.

However, within our church there are some people who have a greater responsibility for this aspect of our life together. Rev Ruth, as the Vicar has ultimate responsibility but she carries this responsibility alongside the rest of the clergy team, the PCC and particularly the nominated persons who are Sister Cynthia Kerr and Susan Matthews. These are the people to whom you can talk about any concerns you have about anyone in the congregation or even outside of it if you would like some advice. Rev Ruth's contact details are on the newsletter each week and Cynthia and Sue's contact details are on the poster in the porch.

Each parish is also supported by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. If you have a concern about either a child or an adult and their wellbeing please talk in the first instance to Rev Ruth but if you think the concerns relate to Rev Ruth's treatment of someone please talk to Cynthia, Sue or someone on the PCC. You are always at liberty to call the Diocesan Team on **07801 750664**. The team holds an out of hours mobile telephone so if there are any concerns at any time they can be contacted. To contact social care services in Gloucester you can call them on **01452 426565**.

This year Rev Ruth has brought to the attention of the Diocesan Team 15 children she has had concerns about (this does not include safeguarding incidents relating to children at school where she has the responsibility of being Governor for Safeguarding) and 1 adult where the case has needed to be escalated through the Diocesan Policy.

Communications

Online Presence

Over the last year we have maintained our online presence through our website (paulstephenglos.org.uk), Facebook account (facebook.com/stpaulandststephen) and Twitter account (twitter.com/stpaulstepheng). It's hard to assess the numbers of visitors to the website, but we have 140 Twitter followers (including local residents, local businesses / organisations and church members). Our Facebook page is followed by 66 people and is kept up to date by Tania Collier. Both accounts have been great platforms for conversations with people who may not pass through our doors and will continue to be too.

In January this year, work started on a new church website which will be easier to maintain, easier to navigate and cheaper for the church. As part of this update, the address of the website will change to be stpaulstephenglos.org.uk to make it clearer from the address that we are a church. Over the next year we are keen to share with visitors write-ups and photos of events that we hold as a church, as well as stories from individual church members about how you came to faith and why you believe what you believe. If you'd like to be involved, please contact Steve - webmaster@stpaulstephenglos.org.uk

Weekly Newsletter

We publish a weekly newsletter which includes the events for the coming week, information about weeks services and any notices which are to be shared with church members. During the year Andy Winter and Sarah Morris have done sterling work ensuring that the important communication is produced weekly and on time – a big thank you to both of you.

General Data Protection Regulations

As a church we are required adhere to GDPR requirements. We asking permission to use personal information in certain circumstances so that people's rights are protected. In order to comply with GDPR we have and will continue to ensure that the information we hold is:

- Collected lawfully and for specific purposes.
- That information is adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are used.
- That data is accurate and kept up to date.
- That data is kept securely and kept for no longer than is necessary.

Tomorrow

In 2018 we celebrated Ruth's 4th year as our vicar. To mark this and to find ways of building on the good work of our church, the congregation were invited to attend a meeting to discuss the **Next Steps** of Ruth's ministry. The session was well attended and arising out of meeting the congregation were asked to think about over the Lent period how God may be asking us to act in respect of the following:

- Worship.
- Community engagement.
- Discipleship and sharing our faith.
- Schools links.
- Children & teenagers.
- Use of our building as a community hub.
- Recognising our gifts & talents.
- Being an inclusive presence in the wider community.
- Creating a safe space

- Connectivity and relationships.

With the above in mind, starting at this APCM parishioners will be asked to start to think about:

- What things we could or should be doing as a community church.
- Are there better or additional ways for us to use our church hall.
- What we as individuals can do to help and support our community.
- How we can make our church a focal point for the community.
- Are there things to we can do to improve our ministry and better serve God.

The next objective will be to start to act on issues which we feel are important to us as a church community. Next year we hope to report great things.

Parish Finance Return

The form below is produced by the Archbishops' Council's Statistics division, and should be submitted using their webportal at: <https://parishreturns.churchofengland.org/>



Return of Parish Finance

January to December 2018

		Parish code	616125	If the form is NOT completed on behalf of the entire parish, please list below the churches included:		Diocese:	Gloucester City
		Parish name	Gloucester St Paul & St Stephens			Diocese:	Gloucester
		UNRESTRICTED (nearest £)	RESTRICTED (nearest £)	RESOURCES EXPENDED		UNRESTRICTED (nearest £)	RESTRICTED (nearest £)
INCOMING RESOURCES							
1	Voluntary income/ receipts	£	18,472	£	-	£	-
2	Tax efficient planned giving	£	11,038	£	-	£	-
3	Other planned giving	£	3,303	£	-	£	1,360
4	Collections at services	£	2,002	£	-	£	31,853
5	All other giving and voluntary receipts, including Special Appeals (recurring and one-off)	£	4,629	£	-	£	-
6	Gift Aid recovered	£	-	£	-	£	-
7	Legacies received (capital value)	£	1,000	£	-	£	1,430
8	Grants (include recurring and one-off)	£	40,444	£	-	£	-
TOTAL Voluntary income:		£	837	£	-	£	-
Activities for generating funds		£	837	£	-	£	-
9	Gross income from fundraising activities	£	837	£	-	£	-
Income from investments		£	10	£	165	£	-
10	Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	£	10	£	165	£	-
Church activities		£	4,474	£	-	£	-
11	Statutory fees retained by the PCC (weddings, funerals etc)	£	4,474	£	-	£	-
12	Gross income from trading (e.g. hall lettings, magazine, bookstall, RCOT fundraising)	£	2,040	£	-	£	-
Other incoming resources		£	1,351	£	-	£	-
13	Any other income/ receipts not already listed	£	1,351	£	-	£	-
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES (FROM FINANCIAL STATEMENTS)		£	49,156	£	-	£	-
A	Unrestricted	£	165	£	-	£	53,325
B	Restricted	£	40,321	£	-	£	-
C	TOTAL	£	40,321	£	-	£	53,325
PLANNED GIVERS AND LEGACIES		£	40,321	£	-	£	-
14	Number of tax efficient planned givers						
15	Number of other planned givers						
16	Number of new legacies received						
Cash and Investment Balances		£	5,992	£	1,784	£	1,784
31	Cash and deposit balance as at 31 Dec 2018	£	5,992	£	1,784	£	1,784
32	Investments as at 31 Dec 2018	£	10	£	165	£	165
SUB-TOTAL for Church activities & expenses		£	51,590	£	-	£	-
Other outgoing resources/ payments		£	1,735	£	-	£	-
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED (FROM FINANCIAL STATEMENTS)		£	1,735	£	-	£	-
D	Unrestricted	£	53,325	£	-	£	-
E	Restricted	£	-	£	-	£	-
F	TOTAL	£	53,325	£	-	£	-

Weekly Average Planned Giving per Planned Giver
 This section needs to be completed manually as the figures are not recorded within the Cashbook

Account basis: on which basis are your accounts prepared (indicate ONE)
 Receipts and payments [X]

Accounts

*Produced using the Cashbook v9

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Please refer to the notes on the following pages to help clarify what is included in each section. The item numbers refer to RPI notes, consistent with the guidance provided in PCC Accountability, 2013.	Date
	Name
	Position
	Telephone or email