



## **Report to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2020**



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## Church Management

### Our Vision

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.



**Our Congregation**

### Vicar's Report March 2020:

At the heart of St Paul and St Stephen, as a church, is a desire for inclusiveness. Our deepest desire is to gather all people around the table of the Lord to share bread and wine together and in the broken bread and wine outpoured to be strengthened and to strengthen one another for the journey ahead. Our passion here is to live out the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, in every area of our lives, individually and collectively.

We do not achieve this or come near to this on any given day but we are a body of people who believe in the saving grace of a God who loves and asks us to love in return. We do not ask the cost of such love and we give what we can.

Some of us have much to give and others have less.

Some of us have deep faith and some of us cling on by our finger tips.

We are all broken and recognise our need of Christ.

We live in the light of this revelation and seek to do God's will in this place.

We are not 'whizzy' but we are faithful, heart-filled people who want to serve God and our neighbour with all that we do have.

We seek to live out our faith in the many and diverse places we might find ourselves during the week.

We seek to support the vision of the Diocese of Gloucester which is as follows:

*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

developments in innovative ways

- Investing in people and programmes which excite young people to explore and grow in faith

- 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

We began 2019 by looking afresh at the LIFE vision and really trying to envision what we would, as a church, like to focus upon. Cate Williams, from the Mission and Ministry department led us in our first session as we thought about what we already did well, what we might like to build upon and what we would like to develop further as well as what we might release. We then took the headline thoughts and prayed about them through Lent. Below is a summary of what came out of those discussions and the prayer over Lent.

## 1. Background

Our first **Next Steps** meeting took place in February 2019 with the aim of considering our church priorities for the next few years. The meeting was in part inspired by the Gloucester Diocese Life Vision programme for its church's which had the objectives as being:

- Leadership – committed to transformation.
- Imagination – opening new paths for faith.
- Faith – living as adventurous followers of Jesus Christ.
- Engagement – living out Christ's love and hope.

These objectives are reflected in our own 4 **Focal Points for the Coming Year** (in our APCM report for 2018)

The meeting was well attended and the outcome was that a number of issues bubbled to the surface. Following the meeting we were asked to use prayer cards over Lent to consider how God might be asking us to act on:

- Worship.
- Community engagement.

- Discipleship and sharing our faith.
- Schools links.
- Children and teenagers.
- Use of our building (community hub).
- Recognising gifts and talents.
- Being an inclusive presence in the wider church and the community.
- Creating a safe space.
- Being an inclusive presence in the wider church and the community.

## 2. Our Next Steps

As a church we have now had the opportunity to start to consider our **Next Steps** and at this meeting we will hopefully firm up our priorities for the coming few years. For discussion are the things which we currently do and things that we would like to do.

To help us to do this and as a starter, listed below are our **Focal Points for the Coming Year** which we can use as headings to group our actions.

### Focal Points for the Coming Year

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

Possible priorities:

- a) Hold Christmas and Easter experiences, inviting local schools
- b) Promote the Brownie group which holds its regular meetings in the church hall.
- c) Hold a schools carol service.

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

Possible priorities:

- a) Extend our support for families whose children are to be baptised by introducing a church support member to be involved during and after the baptism process (including anniversary cards and follow-up).
- b) Offering or providing baptism teas.
- c) As well as the baptism candle and certificate, giving first bibles to the baptised child.

d) Make parents of children being baptised aware of the services offered by the church. For example, Little Angels, Messy Church.

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

Possible priorities:

- a) Continuing to provide the hall to existing groups and to help them promote attendance. For example, Art & Soul, Messy Church.
- b) To promote the use of the hall for life event celebrations.
- c) Hold regular church/community events. For example, a monthly film.
- d) Approach individuals/organisations who may want to provide services in our area. For example, Tumble Tots, toddler singing group.
- e) Can we make better use of our grounds? We need to address grounds and church maintenance issues. Can we develop a register of church helpers and skills?
- f) Look at our meet & greet processes. Celebrate the life events of parishioners and look at catering. For example, should we offer coffee so there is a better link between our Sunday 8am & 10am services.

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

Possible priorities:

- a) Continue with current activities. For example, Tuesday Drop-In sessions.
- b) Continue our support for the Gloucester Foodbank and aim to become a member of their 200 Club.
- c) Through our Eco-Warrior Group, promote recycling and use of eco-friendly projects. Is there anything we could do with our grounds?
- d) Could we visit vulnerable local people through a neighbouring scheme?
- e) Could we hold a regular community tea to help local families?
- f) Work with local organisations. For example, Samaritans, Gloucester Outdoor Church.

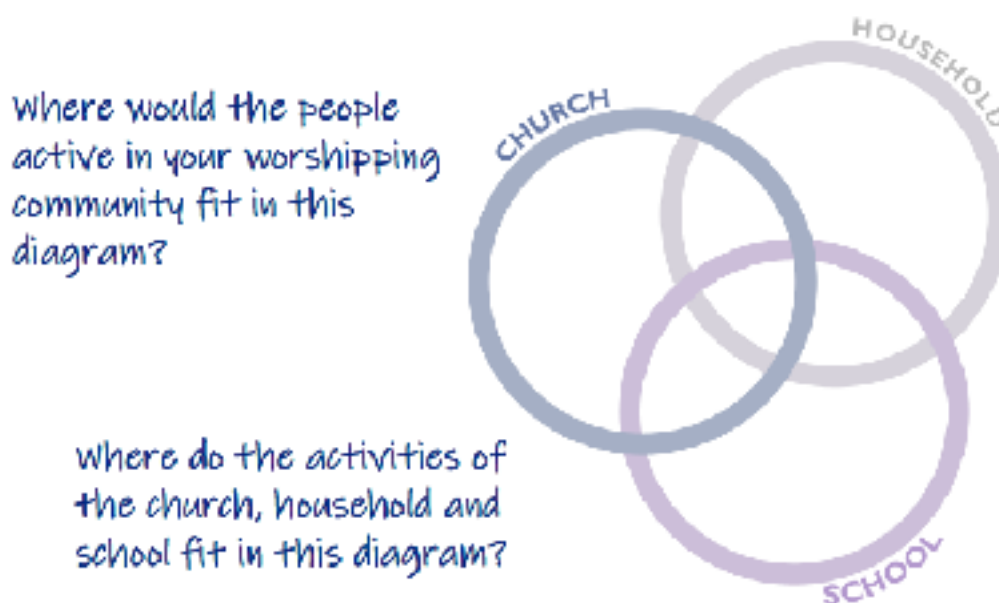
When considering our priorities we should keep in mind:

- Preparation time and resources required?
- Any on-off and on-going costs and any income we may recover?
- How many volunteers would we need to run an event?
- How many people and what community groups would we reach?
- Do we need to make any Improvements to our facilities or services?



We continued to work on implementing some of these visionary aspects during 2019 but a lack of volunteers hampered what we were able to achieve and our focus towards the Autumn of 2019 became the connection between church, school and household. We were invited to join with a few other churches to be part of the Growing Faith initiative and therefore part of the 'trailblazer' Diocesan pilot. Growing Faith realised that children and their families were experiencing faith in school, in church and in the home but these stood alone and were not linked. The remit of Growing Faith was to link the three areas of life and we had begun to work with both St Paul's school and Linden School to develop our provision for children and families at church and then in the household towards the end of 2019 and into 2020 and began to focus on being more intentionally intergenerational in our worship. Small steps were beginning to be taken at the start of 2020 and whilst there was pain in the changes there was also much hope and joy that something different which would bring us together as a family was being birthed. Unfortunately, the landscape looks slightly different now due to Covid-19 and whilst there are challenges I would still like this to be a focus for our church.

Growing Faith looks like the following:



We would ideally like to hit the intersection of all three sections.



Our Lent course during 2019 was 'Shapes of Living' which sought to pick up on the theme of living out our faith, not just on Sundays and in worship, but wherever we happened to be during week. We

looked at where our own 'frontline' of ministry might be so that all of us began to understand we have a place to proclaim the Gospel wherever we find ourselves - whether in the office or in the playground.



We celebrated Easter with all the usual services and rejoicing and the children from St Paul's School joined us for their end of term service. We celebrated Easter with Linden School in a special collective worship. A huge thanks must always go to the Hospitality Group who provide us with the most amazing breakfast on Easter morning - including coloured boiled eggs.



During May we began to collate some of our thinking that had taken place during Lent and over Easter to look at the priorities we wanted to focus on as a church. Kiri Roberts used her talent as a graphic designer to begin

the task of redesigning our logo so as to encompass some of these thoughts. Christian Aid Week took place and whilst we no longer undertake a house to house collection we raised over £200 for their important work in supporting some of the most vulnerable people in the world.



Our community fair was held on 1st June and opened by Rev Richard Atkins from BBC Radio Gloucestershire. A chance to bounce on the bouncy castle - whatever your age and to soak the vicar. All good fun and much laughter was had.



On June 30th 2019 our Curate, Rev Heather de Gruyther, was ordained Deacon and several of us attended the service. Heather became our stipendiary curate from 1st July and we welcomed her and her family - husband, John and children, Evie and Samuel into our church family. A curate is never just a pair of extra hands but is instead someone who deserves the best training and opportunities. All of this takes time but it has been the utmost privilege and delight to be Heather's training incumbent and to have her amongst us. She has given everything of herself to us and is greatly loved.

Her preaching has especially stood out as a gem and a treasure to behold. Heather will remain with us, once she is priested, for at least another two years and maybe three.

In July, after 25 years of ministry amongst us Rev Dr Royse Murphy retired. His ministry was one of quiet service and we wish him and his wife Viv the rich blessings of God in their new chapter of life.

During the summer months we ran our play and stay sessions for families in the community and these were very successful. A big thank you to all who contributed to



the running of this facility - from donating food, cooking in the kitchen, setting up and playing with the children or talking with the parents. We also started our film nights with a programme put together by Mike Parsons which alternated between a family film night and something with more of an adult theme.



September arrived quickly and Creationtide was celebrated finishing with a harvest bring and share lunch on Sunday 6th October. We collected produce for the Foodbank again and partnered with the school so that the Foodbank received a considerable donation which could be used for our local community. We continue to collect for and support the Foodbank each week. Willy Beart and her friends ran the Macmillan Coffee Morning (something of an annual event now) and a significant sum was also raised for this important cause.

October and November brought All Souls, All Saints, Remembrance and Christ the King as well as iSingPop with the school children. It was wonderful to see the church packed full of parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts and siblings all enjoying the amazing singing and actions of the children.



The year moved swiftly towards Advent.

On Advent Sunday we launched the new logo.



St Paul &  
St Stephen  
Gloucester

Kiri wrote a go with it

and also began to re-design all of our orders of service with the new logo and with new illustrations on the front cover. Thank you, Kiri.

rationale to (see below)

*As with any logo, this one was designed to look good, catch your eye and help create a visual identity for us as a church, but behind its basic appearance*

*there's more to be said than meets the eye. Let's break it down into three parts:*

**MAP**

- *The shape and angle of the main cross that runs through the centre of the logo is directly taken from a map of the crossroads on Stroud Road where our church building stands.*
- *To make it look more like a map, the location of our church is represented by a circle with a cross on top, which is the official Ordnance Survey symbol for a church.*
- *There are three lines down each of the four stretches of road, these add to the map illustration, and also hint that the God we worship is three in one, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

**COMMUNITY**

- *The main cross shape shows that Jesus is at the centre of our church and community.*
- *In a lighter shade of green, four arrows point towards the centre, these symbolise inclusivity and welcome, inviting people from all walks of life to join us as we look to the cross of Christ.*
- *Add in the four circles and these arrows become people with their arms raised in praise. This shows that we are a church community who meet together to worship God, and that we openly welcome others to join us.*

**TRANSFORMATION**

- *The colour green represents growth, renewal and new life. As a church, we want to encourage all people to come in their brokenness and be made new through Jesus Christ.*
- *Green is also the colour used to represent 'ordinary time' within the church year. We are a church that invites people of all types, in their ordinary, everyday lives to meet here with us, so that we can share and grow together*



During Advent we were led in reflections each Sunday evening around the four words of this season - love, hope, joy and peace. In our house groups we also studied Joyce Hugger's Watching and Waiting. The Advent Shed made a welcome return with its prayers, chocolates, colouring and decoration. Many families on their way to and from school stopped off at the Advent Shed and it has become something of a local tradition now. Admittedly the chocolates go down faster than the prayer cards but we are about sowing seeds and waiting for the growth to come. The Christmas Fair drew in people from the local community too and much fun was had by all. Thank you to Julie Holder and her team for organising, setting up and putting away. The children from St Paul's school also joined us for Experience Christmas in the first week of

December. Thank you to all those who volunteered and spent so much time and

energy setting up the stations and talking with the children. Once again we were joined by the children for their end of term service and welcomed children and families from the wider community for our crib service.



The Christmas services were all attended very well and it was a joy to feel so much part of the wider community as people joined us.

### Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

There were 17 baptisms in the parish during 2019, 6 weddings and 26 funerals held either at the church or at the crematorium.

### **Average Attendance at Sunday Services**

During 2019 the average attendance across the main Sunday services is 72 adults and 6 children. Obviously there are some services where this figure is more and some where this figure is less.

### **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.

Rev Ruth Fitter  
Vicar and chair of PCC

### **Electoral Roll:**

During February and March 2019 the electoral roll needed to be completely revised in line with the Church of England regulations. At this point we had 106 on the electoral roll but having revised it the new number now stands at 88 with two further additions for February/March 2020 which will take the total to 90.

### **Report of PCC meetings:**

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. It is also to safeguard and hold to account the clergy and the vision of the church in all matters. The PCC are the trustees of the charity and as such are responsible for the running of the church alongside the Incumbent.

### **PCC membership**

As we currently have 88 members on the electoral role for the church and because this is under 100 members, we are required to have 9 people on the PCC.

The PCC members are as follows: (please note the terms of office for those due to step down were originally until April 2020 but due to the Covid-19 crisis this was extended until the APCM could take place in October 2020).

David Jaques whose term ends in April 2020 (Oct 2020).

Pam Wells and Dim Couston both of whom step down as Churchwardens and PCC members.

Sue Matthews whose term ends in April 2020 (Oct 2020).

Maria Wells whose term ends in April 2020 (Oct 2020).

Graham Brooks whose term of office will end in April 2021.

Ruth Parsons, Steve Roberts, and Rachael Hawkins whose term of office will end in April 2022.

Ex-officado members of the PCC are Rev Canon Pauline Godfrey, Rev Ruth Fitter and Sister Cynthia Kerr.

Rev Heather de Gruyther is a member of the PCC as she is a clerk in holy orders but she does not retain any voting rights.

Hannah Allen resigned in July 2020 as she and her family moved to begin ordination training.

### **Deanery Synod Representatives**

Maria Wells and Graham Brooks both of whose terms of service has ended in April 2020 (Oct 2020).

Therefore, this year we have vacancies for the following:

2 Churchwardens

5 PCC Members

2 Deanery Synod Representatives.

The PCC met 7 times during the year. The minutes of these minutes can be found in the pink folder in the hall and can also now be found on our website.

### **Curate's Report by Heather de Gruyther**

Firstly, a huge thank you for making us so welcome. At the time of writing I have been here for about eight months and am starting to find my way around and have enjoyed getting to know you all and working through the pattern of services and seasons together.

During this time, I have been continuing my curacy training 'behind the scenes' with training days and a portfolio to compile, alongside my more visible presence at services and meetings. I have also been involved in planning for the Bishops' Mission Weekend (which is why I can't be with you at the APCM), through which it is hoped that the gifts of the worshipping community will be encouraged and released and connections made with the wider community which can be built upon in the future.



Looking towards the summer, I am involved in planning the diocesan International Youth Forum which will welcome small groups of young people from across our partner dioceses, helping them to realise their place within the worldwide communion of churches. And then there is, as there is for Ruth, all the other 'behind the scenes' time spent in preparation, prayer and ongoing study that makes the rest of our role possible. So far, we have continued to live in Quedgeley but will hopefully be moving into the parish over the summer, which we are looking forward to.

### **Churchwarden's Report**

The Terrier and property inventory have been completed and is an accurate record of articles belonging to the church. The church logbook records details of work carried out in the church or on the land. This is required to complete annual mission statistics to the Diocese. The statistics 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.

We have a rota of volunteers who clean the church and hall each week. In addition, during 2019, periodic 'spring' cleaning mornings have taken place. We would like to thank everyone who helps with these but would welcome anyone who could provide support.

Maintenance undertaken in the past year has included work on the main East window and the stonework surrounding it; work enabling the pigeons to become less of a problem in the roof space; the toilet refitted as it had become loose and the tap changed in the kitchen as it was leaking and hard to turn on and off.



**In December a car hit our church wall but the good news is the driver was insured and the work is now complete.**

## **Deanery Synod**

The word “synod” comes from a Greek word meaning “assembly” or “meeting”. The Deanery Synod makes decisions at a deanery level and acts as an intermediary between the Parochial Church Council of each parish in the deanery and the synod of the diocese. In the last year Maria Wells and Graham Brooks have been our representatives on the Synod. Their terms of office have now come to an end and across the Deanery new representatives are needed for the next three years. The Gloucester City Deanery is diverse in its makeup stretching from St Swithun’s Church in Hempsted out to Holy Trinity in Longlevens, along to Hucclecote and Upton St Leonards, taking in part of Cooper’s Edge, Matson and down to Quedgeley, Hardwicke, Longney and Elmore and well as encompassing all of the churches like our own that sit within the City. It also includes the Cathedral and St Mary de Crypt. Rev Ruth is now Area Dean and has oversight of the clergy and the parishes of the deanery as well as this parish. This is a demanding but rewarding role.

During the summer of 2019 the Bishops asked us to focus on Deanery Strategy Planning to enable a new shape of working to emerge that may not look exactly as it has done in the past. This planning has been on hold due to the pandemic but we are now actively looking at the plan for the future. The scary but exciting thing is that we need to lose two stipendiary posts from the Deanery but that one post will be re-envisioned to enable the church to be a more flexible and missional instrument at work in our communities. Watch this space for developments.

During 2019 the Deanery Synod looked at the following issues:

**February 2019** - Rev’d. Pauline Godfrey, Head of Discipleship and Vocations for the Diocese, gave a presentation entitled “Setting God’s people free: developing confident disciples”.

**April 2019** - the synod visited St Mary de Crypt to see the renovations and experience the space. Rev’d. Steve Morris gave a presentation on his work as Chaplain among deaf and hard of hearing people.

**June 2019** - the last synod of the year always begins with a Eucharist and we also welcomed Rev’d. T. Hastie-Smith who gave a presentation on the Wellsprings Sports Ministry Project, now known as OneLife.

**October 2019** - Rev’d. Canon Dr. Andrew Braddock, Director of the Department of Mission and Ministry gave a presentation on the Deanery Strategic LIFE Plan and set out the timetable for those discussions and planning.

The Deanery Synod also always looks at issues such as parish share, pastoral reorganisation and other general issues of governance at each meeting.

## **General Data Protection Regulations**

As a church we are required adhere to GDPR requirements. We ask 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.

### **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.

At St Paul & St Stephen's 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 and on the noticeboard on the left as you enter the church.

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 the following numbers or by email:

**Team:** 01452 835516

**Direct Dial:** 07401 197280

**Out of Hours:** 07944 680320

**Shared Inbox:** [safeguarding@glosdioc.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@glosdioc.org.uk)

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 6 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 2 adults where the case has needed to be escalated through the Diocesan Policy.

## **2. Children's Ministry**

### **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 8 -10 children with their adults. We try to not only offer activities but also friendship and advice to both carers and children. A massive "thank you" to all our helpers this year. We cannot see how Little Angels can begin again at this time but we keep in touch with our families and we hope that things may change next year.

### **Messy Church by Ruth Parsons**



Messy Church meets monthly for 2 hours on a Saturday morning, usually the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month. We have been meeting for 10 years now and continue to welcome new families as well as those who have been with us for a long time. Usually we have 50-60 at messy church, half of them adults and half children.

We have a small willing group of helpers with Helen Scott and Ruth Parsons usually leading alternate sessions. There is a closed Facebook group, 'Messy Church at St Pauls and St Stephens', which you can ask to join. Please pray for us that we may continue to play our part in God's work at Messy Church.

### **Open the Book by Ruth Parsons**

The Open the Book team has been boosted by the addition of Rev Heather to our small core of members and we continue to go to St Paul's School every 2-3 weeks to lead Collective Worship.

The children always give us a warm welcome and particularly enjoy taking part when we act out Bible stories for them.

### **Sunday Morning Children's Group by Ruth Parsons**

During 2019 the children met on Sunday mornings during the 10 o'clock service except for the first Sunday of the month when we joined together for all-age worship.

We met as one group with children ranging in age from 3 to 12 as there were too few leaders to run extra groups. This was challenging and at the end of the year the PCC and clergy team started to look at how to better help our children to grow in faith. There are ongoing discussions around inter-generational worship and the role of separate children's groups.

Thank you to all the current leaders who have given their time and energy to this work.

## **3. Groups & Activities**

### **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'. During 2019 we met monthly apart from the summer months of July and August.

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 we end each session by sharing a simple meal of bread and soup. Many thanks to Maria and Geoff Wells who brilliantly organise this event.

### **Bereavement Tea by Jan Wood**

We meet bi-monthly to chat, share and reminisce about our loved ones who are no longer with us. Everyone is welcome whether you have been bereaved recently or a while ago. We enjoy a quiet, informal and confidential time with a cuppa and cake (kindly made by Meg – thank you) and end with a prayer.

2019 was our ninth year and we look forward to welcoming anyone in the future who would like to join us. Our dates for meeting in 2020 are 15 March, 10 May, 12 July, 13 September, All Souls Service - 1 November

### **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. In 2020 the group will be celebrating 65 years of running a group at our church.

## Church Flowers

Flowers in Church or indeed outside, are there to remind us of "Creation", the creation of all things living. They are a reminder that we were all created beautiful in God's eyes and so we should make our church an example of that beauty. We use a mixture of fresh and artificial flower arrangements to decorate the Altar and windowsills in church.

We are lucky to have a small but dedicated group who arrange the church flowers. They are led by Julie Holder and work on a rota keeping our church looking beautiful. Anyone can volunteer to join our depleting group of people.

We have a small flower fund which helps to maintain the tradition of fresh flower arrangements in Church. However, individual donations are always welcome, and we will put any monies received to good use.

## Church Grounds

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

During 2019 our grounds were again maintained to a high standard mainly due to the hard work and dedication of George Marchant – George, please accept a massive "thank you" for your efforts over recent years.

In spite of a drier than usual summer and autumn, daffodils, wallflowers, polyanthus, poppies, chrysanthemums and the odd wildflower all flourished during their seasons. The grass continued to grow, and a small group of volunteers was gathered to help with the mowing of our lawns. The weeds seemed to grow on regardless watched by our own church pigeons and masonry bees



During the year George decided to hang up his trowel (well that's not quite right, George is still helping out on a regular basis). In the later part of the year we assembled small "hit squads" to weed and prune but we are still seeking someone to fill George's substantial welly boots.

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

### **Communications Group by Steve Roberts**

Our aim as the communications group is to reach the right people with the information they need, whilst presenting it in an attractive and accessible format, both in physical form and online. This has included maintaining the noticeboards both inside and outside the church to help to promote our activities and give news about our work. We are also developing a portfolio of publications which are designed to provide information to parishioners about the work of our church. In the past year flyers and posters were produced and delivered to houses in the parish to advertise our services and events over the Advent & Christmas period.

There have also been changes, most visibly the design of a new church logo, and the re-design of the service booklets and weekly newsletter. We have maintained our healthy social media presence on Facebook and Twitter and have added the option for people to listen to the sermons from the 10am service on the website, or via popular podcast platforms, reaching those who are unable to come to church as well as those who wish to listen again to the preaching. In October our church signed up to the Church of England Social Media Charter.

In the next year we plan to unify the look and feel of all of all of our communication material and to continue and build upon open, honest communication, endeavouring to provide our church family and wider community (local and international) a variety of means to access our information

### **Community Link – Gloucestershire Royal Hospital by Jan Wood**

As always it has been a busy year at GRH. Being a Chaplaincy Volunteer is an absolute privilege. We are involved with all the aspects of the wards we serve and become close to the staff who work so hard all across the hospitals.

At the annual NHS Awards the Chaplaincy Team won the Support Services Ambassadors Award. A true honour. Some of the Chaplaincy Volunteers took part in a static bike ride in the Atrium at GRH last May and raised nearly £900 towards the new CT scanners for the two hospitals. This year we are “riding” again to raise funds toward portable scanners for the wards to use if patients are too ill to be moved. Donations would be very welcome.

If anyone from the congregation or from our parish is in hospital, please let me know if they would like a pastoral visit from one of the team. You can contact me on 01452 616137 or the direct line to the Chaplaincy Office 0300 422 6200.

### **Environment and Eco-Church**

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.

During the year we started to work towards becoming an “Eco Church”. This requires us to meet a set of laid down criteria. Some meetings were held but unfortunately, we have currently lost our momentum. Also, during the year an informal co-op for bulk buying of ecologically friend products was set-up.

In addition to following the local council’s recycling requirements and have a few initiatives which aim to re-use or re-cycle certain items. These include selling secondhand items donated by members of the congregation and donating certain plastics to a guide dogs’ charity. We also re-cycle ink cartridges which raises a small amount of money for the church.

### **Hospitality Group by Ruth Parsons**

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

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

### **Music Group by Steve Roberts**

This year the music group has welcomed new faces (and voices) and changed the way that we're organised. We've established a rota for leading the group and choosing the songs, which has maintained our diversity of song choices, ranging from Wesley to Hillsong, via some creative world music.

Thank you for your feedback that you would like the first and last songs we sing to be well-known; our role isn't to perform, but to facilitate sung worship, so we always appreciate constructive feedback. Through Advent the evening reflections were "unplugged" and there's hopefully more acoustic music to come in this next year. We joined with Steve on organ for the carol service and formed a scratch 3-part choir for some of the carols; can we make it 4-part for 2020?

### **Thursday Morning Coffee & Company**



The group meets at 10.45am each week after Thursday Communion. Approximately ten people attend when tea, coffee and biscuits lubricate good conversation.

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

### **Young at Heart**

Due to lack of support, this group unfortunately stopped running during the year.

## **4. House Groups**

### **Monday by George Marchant**

This began 2019 as two groups, one meeting on alternate Mondays, the other on alternate Tuesdays. There were around fifteen people, some from St Paul & St Stephen, some from St Barnabas. Later in the year, we contracted to one group, meeting on alternate Mondays. Each meeting began with much appreciated refreshments and then settled to Bible Study, working through the Book of Acts. Dorothy brought the events to life by showing many maps, books and illustrations.

Sadly, Dorothy went into hospital in late 2019 and since then has been unable to continue the group. We have valued Dorothy's leadership and understanding over many past years and pray that God will support and sustain her in the future

### **Wednesday by Steve Roberts**

The Wednesday home group is the most recently formed group and it's probably fair to say we're still finding our feet and working out what we want the focus of our meetings to be. We spent some time getting to know each other in the Autumn, before joining in with the Advent material that other home groups have used. We've loosely followed the text but allowed space to explore topical tangents (as well as a few slightly more random pathways). Due to parental commitments, we alternate between meeting at Faith + Ben's house and Kiri + Steve's house.

### **Thursday by George Marchant**

Around ten humans and one dog continue to meet on alternate weeks at Willy Beart's home on the picturesque slopes of Robinswood Hill. During 2019, we met on Thursday afternoons, but for 2020 have changed to Tuesday mornings. Our meetings begin with chat and excellent refreshments and we then settle to Bible study. We are glad to have Ted Steele back with us after his stay in hospital.

We completed our look at the key parts of Exodus by following Moses' journey through the wilderness to the Promised Land. We have now begun looking at New Testament passages that are relevant to the readings we hear on Sunday mornings and the season of the church's year.

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 Beart for her generous hospitality and we warmly recommend house groups as a

way to become more familiar with the Bible and to enjoy the fellowship and discussions of a smaller group.

### **Moveable by Ruth Parsons**

During 2019 the membership of the group had increased to the point where it was too big for a normal sitting room and after a discussion in the summer two groups emerged.

The moveable house group now continues to meet fortnightly at different houses, as was the pattern from past years, with some existing and some newer members. We continue to study the Bible together and share the joys and stresses of our lives through chat and prayer.

### **Vicarage by Ruth Fitter**

During 2019 our house group welcomed a couple of new members taking it to an average of 6 or 7 every other week. We meet on Tuesday nights at the Vicarage and we have spent time looking at the psalms, women from the Bible and their stories as well as the Gospel of Mark. I really value this time to think more deeply and to be challenged about my faith. Often I am left pondering some of the questions that are raised for many days afterwards or other people's comments and thoughts find their way into my sermons. Thank you to all who come and contribute. It is a privilege to journey with you all.

### **Tea & Theology by Ben Newton**

This is a small group of about five people who meet every 6-8 weeks to discuss a theology or spirituality book. In setting up a group I sought to create a safe space where people are welcome to discuss their reflections on a specific book and think through the topics that arise. To date we have read two books:

- The Idolatry of God by Pete Rollins
- The Collage of God by Mark Oakley

We have discussed wide-ranging issues such as how we approach Scripture, how we deal with uncertainty and think through issues around the Christian faith, the implications for mission, climate change and approaching diversity and 'otherness'. We choose the books as a group and we are very open to other people attending the group regularly or as a one-off for discussing a specific group.

## 5. Fundraising & Accounts

### Parish Finance Return

#### St Paul and St Stephen Church Accounts

#### End of Year 2019.

Incoming Resources	Unrestricted	Restricted	2019	2018
Tax efficient planned giving	20,415	0	20,415	18,472
Other planned giving	13,160	0	13,160	11,038
Collections at services	7,077	0	7,077	3,303
All other giving and voluntary receipts, including Special Appeals (recurring and one-off).	4,887	0	4,887	2,002
Gift Aid recovered	5,150	0	5,150	4,629
Legacies Received (capital value)	0	0	0	0
Grants (include recurring and one-off)	750	0	750	1,000
<b>TOTAL Voluntary Income</b>	<b>51,439</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>51,439</b>	<b>40,444</b>
<b>Activities for Generating Funds</b>				
Gross income from fundraising activities	0	0	0	837
<b>Income from investments</b>				
Dividends, interest, income from property etc	160	54	214	175
<b>Church Activities</b>				

<b>Incoming Resources</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
Statutory Fees retained by the PCC (weddings, funerals etc)	3,044	0	3,044	4,474
Gross income from trading (eg hall lettings, magazine, bookstall) NOT fundraising.	1500	0	1500	2,040
<b>Other incoming resources</b>				
Any other income/ receipts not already listed	545	0	545	1,351

<b>TOTAL Incoming Resources (from financial statements)</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
Unrestricted	56,688	49,156
Restricted	54	165
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>56,742</b>	<b>49,321</b>

<b>Resources Expended</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Costs of generating income</b>				
Fund raising activities (costs and payments)	0	0	0	0
Mission Giving and Donations	0	0	0	1,360
Diocesan Parish Share contribution	32,856	0	32,856	31,853

<b>Resources Expended</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
Salaries, wages and honoraria	0	0	0	0
Clergy and staff expenses	1,483	0	1,483	1,430
<b>Church Expenses</b>				
Church expenses: Mission and Evangelism costs	0	0	0	0
Church running expenses	9,316	0	9,316	11,109
Church utility bills	3,202	0	3,202	3,128
Cost of trading	0	0	0	0
<b>Major capital expenditure</b>				
Major repairs to the church building	0	0	0	2,710
Major repairs to the church hall or other PCC property, including redecoration	0	0	0	0
New building work to the church, church hall, clergy housing or other PCC property	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBTOTAL for church activities and expenses</b>	<b>46,857</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>46,857</b>	<b>51,590</b>
Other outgoing resources/payments	425	0	425	1,735

<b>TOTAL Resources expended (from financial statements)</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
Unrestricted	<b>47,282</b>	<b>53,325</b>
Restricted	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47,282</b>	<b>53,325</b>

Cash and Investment Balances	Unrestricted	Restricted
Cash and deposit balance as at 31 Dec 2018	5,992	1,784
Investments as at 31 Dec 2018	(General Fund) 2,051.69	(Fabric Fund) 11,816.96

Cash and Investment Balances	Unrestricted	Restricted
Cash and deposit balance as at 31 Dec 2019	11,636	0
Investments as at 31 Dec 2019	(General Fund) 2,067.11	(Fabric Fund) 12, 015.37

## **Notes to go with Church Accounts 2019**

### **Incoming Resources**

1. Following a stewardship campaign in June 2019 planned giving and loose collections at services increased significantly. Thank you to all who have given more.
2. We did raise £750 from the summer fayre on 1st June 2019 but this was not recorded by the treasurer in the correct place. Instead this went into general giving amount and was classed as 'all other giving.'
3. Statutory fees were less in 2019 than in 2018 simply because there were less funerals during the year.
4. Gross income from trading was down on 2018 due to the fact that the Contact Centre were struggling for finances and were given a six month break from paying rent. This has now been rectified. Also there are generally less people hiring the hall.
5. Any other income comes from things such as the council paying for the church to be a polling station and one off donations by people outside of services or planned giving.

### **Resources Expended**

1. Due to the generosity of those involved the nil cost of fundraising is because people give rather than claim. Thank you again.

2. Mission giving and donations were actually £900 but has been entered elsewhere. Due to the bank balance being significantly low when we were making the decision to give we decided to give £300 to our three chosen charities.
3. Mission and evangelism costs are also nil due to the generosity of people and costs being born from donations at Messy Church and Little Angels in particular. Other costs for mission and evangelism are reflected in the clergy expenses figures or in the general church running expenses.

### Donations

- **Gloucester Foodbank** – during the year the congregation donated a massive 480kgs of food and toiletries to this local charity. The Foodbank offers an essential lifeline to Gloucester families and we are proud to have a long-standing relationship with them.
- **Stamps** – we collect used stamps which Margaret sends on to the United Society Partners in Gospel – thanks Margaret.



**Thanks to a donation from Mo at St Paul's Residential Home our cross on the War Memorial was replaced.**

- **Christian Aid** – this year we had an interesting presentation on the work of Christian Aid in Haiti and we raised funds with a coffee morning.
- **Family Film Nights** - during the year film highlights included the Greatest Showman and Toy Story 4. We are looking forward to more events in 2020.
- **NSPCC** – in 2019 we started to collect “small change for small people”.
- **Macmillan Coffee Morning** – thank you to Willy Beart for organising this well anticipated annual event.



### Gift Day

29<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Each year we have to pay parish share to the Diocese so as to cover the costs of ministry across the Deanery and the Diocese. The figure that is worked out by the Finance Team at church house takes into account the particular context of a parish as well as the number of people on the electoral roll and some other whizzy bits of formula. Each year parish share increases exponentially although we have been blessed in the last couple of years to receive a significant amount from the Diocesan Stipends Fund which can only be used to offset our parish share request. However, as with everything in the world prices are rising and as part of the criteria for being able to receive money to offset the parish share we are required to undertake a stewardship campaign each year so as to reflect upon our freewill giving. During June 2019 we undertook such a campaign and Mike Smith came to talk to us about giving and we also looked at not only financial giving but giving in terms of time, gifts and talents. On 29th June we held a gift day for people to donate to the upkeep of the church building and the further ministry of the church and we were blessed by the generosity of people - thank you so much. We were further blessed as people took to heart what we had spoken about during June and added what they could to their collections each week. Consequently, even by adding a £1 to what was already being given our income each month rose by about £200 per month. This may not sound a lot but it makes all the difference and I would like to thank every one of you for whom this extra giving might not have been the easiest thing to do and for your whole hearted generosity in supporting the church in this manner.