

THE PARISH OF STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

HOLY TRINITY • ALL SAINTS' LUDDINGTON • ST. HELEN'S CLIFFORD CHAMBERS



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Lives changed through God's love

THE ANNUAL REPORT

Vicar's Introduction

I'm sure I'm not the only one suffering from a loss of ability to remember exactly what happened, and when, during the pandemic. There has been so much change that it's quite a challenge to look back and answer the question, "what significant things happened in the year 2021?" However, what I can say is that after all the challenges, stress and trauma of the last two years, I am incredibly proud of this parish, our three churches, clergy, staff and congregations and of all that everyone has done to pull through and support one another during what has been the most challenging period in church life I think any of us can remember. As you will see in this report, many of our groups and organisations have now started operating again, so much of life has returned to something similar to what we knew before. But in all the return to busy activity again, we should not forget all that we have been through together. Let us also give thanks that we now seem to be coming through to the other side.

As a result of the various lock downs and restrictions, we had a rare opportunity to ask ourselves, what are the most important things about being the Church of Jesus Christ in this place, at this time? After much reflection and discussion, the PCC have come up with six "focus areas" that we believe are the important building blocks of our churches. There are the things we need to be doing in order to fulfil our calling to build the Kingdom of God in this parish, and to see our vision of "lives changed through God's Love" fulfilled. The six focus areas are:

Worshipping God
Making Disciples
Outreach and Engagement
Welcome and Care
Buildings and Environment
Financial Sustainability

These areas help us to keep our attention on reaching out to new people, as well as supporting our existing church communities. They are already starting to shape our life as a parish (for example, the agenda at Standing Committee and PCC meetings now follow the same headings) and they keep our focus on the things that enable our churches to grow and be sustainable.

Although his actual departure was in 2022, I must pay tribute to Andy Winter, our previous Parish Operations Manager in this report. Andy's work to move us onto an online way of organising ourselves proved invaluable when we were plunged into lockdown, and his technical skill and willingness to roll up his sleeves enabled us to get going with things like live streaming much more quickly than we might have done otherwise. We were delighted to welcome our new Operations Manager, Lola Spetsioti, in April and look forward to continuing to work with her.

It has been a joy to return in recent months to some of the things we have missed since the pandemic began (such as a full church with the congregation singing). There is still work to be done as we settle into some new ways of doing things in our post-pandemic world. As the prophet wrote, "see, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you

not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19). May we see and understand the new things God is doing amongst us, and be ready to join in.

My thanks to all those who have worked hard to put this report booklet together, and for all that everyone in this parish does for the sake of the Kingdom.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Patrick Taylor

Vicar of Holy Trinity Stratford-upon-Avon
with All Saints' Luddington
and St Helen's Clifford Chambers

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CLERGY AND STAFF

Clergy Team

The Revd. Patrick Taylor	Vicar
The Revd. Steve Jarvis	Associate Vicar
The Revd. Kay Dyer	Associate Priest
Mr Philip Harper	Children and Families' Minister

Ministry Team

The Revd Canon Andrew Dow	Asst. Minister (Honorary) (until January 2021)
The Revd. John Hall-Matthews	Asst. Minister (Honorary)
The Revd. Diane Patterson	Asst. Minister (Honorary)
The Revd. Jenny Rowland	Asst. Minister (Honorary)
The Ven. Brian Russell	Asst. Minister (Honorary)
The Revd. Graham Wilcox	Asst. Minister (Honorary)

Music

Mr Douglas Keilitz	Director of Music
Mrs Rebecca Mills	Assistant Director of Music
Mr Stephen Dodsworth	Organist Emeritus

Parish Office

Mr Andrew Winter	Operations Manager (until March 2022)
Miss Lola Spetsioti	Operations Manager (from April 2022)
Miss Sarah Cushing	Parish Administrator

Verger

Mr David White	Honorary Head Verger
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ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 9th May 2021 Page 7
4. Matters arising
5. Election of Churchwardens
6. Parish Charities

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 9th May 2021 Page 7
3. Matters arising
4. Vicar's Report (delivered as the sermon at the 10am Parish Eucharist)
5. Consideration of
 - a) Electoral Roll
 - b) Proceedings of Parochial Church Council
(Please see report for Charity Commission)
 - c) Church Accounts & finance update Page 17
 - d) Stewardship Page 17
 - e) Appointment of Auditors
 - f) Clerk of Works Report Page 18
 - g) Deanery Synod Report Page 18
6. Elections
PCC 4 vacancies for 3 years
7. Any other business of parochial or general church interest

Liz Roome
Honorary Secretary

MINUTES OF THE 2021 ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

The Annual Meeting of Parishioners was held on Sunday 9th May 2021 on Zoom commencing at 11.30 am. The Vicar, the Revd. Patrick Taylor, took the chair. There were 56 people present.

- 1 The Vicar welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 2 Apologies for absence were received from Rebecca Mills and Chris Kennedy
- 3 Minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 12 October 2020 were accepted.
- 4 There were no matters arising from the above Minutes.
- 5 Election of four churchwardens: There were four nominations for four vacancies: Helen Warrillow, Paul Lageu, Sherron Guise and Tim Raistrick, who were duly elected. The Vicar expressed his appreciation and thanks to the churchwardens for their commitment and dedication during the past year, thanking Gill Price and Rhod Mitchell, who were standing down, and welcomed Sherron Guise and Tim Raistrick to the team.
- 6 Parish Charities: Referring to Parish Accounts on line (pages 28/29), Mike Warrillow reported on these. Acceptance of this report was proposed by Mike Warrillow and seconded by Mark Sayers. This was carried by the meeting.

MINUTES OF THE 2021 ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting took place on Sunday 9th May 2021 on Zoom, commencing at 11.50 a.m. chaired by the Revd. Patrick Taylor, Vicar. There were 56 people present.

- 1 **Apologies** were received from Rebecca Mills and Chris Kennedy
- 2 **Minutes** of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 12th October 2020 were accepted.
- 3 **Matters arising**
Patrick acknowledged the change of PCC secretary. He expressed his gratitude to Miriam Dow, who, with her husband the Rev. Andrew Dow, has moved away from Stratford-upon-Avon. He thanked Liz Roome for stepping in and taking over the role.
- 4 **Vicar's Address (given as the sermon at the 10am Service)**
I've stood here on many occasions to give the Vicar's address for the annual meeting, and I always include a review of the past year. But as we look back on 2020, well, I really don't know where to start. What a year! Perhaps the best

place to start is to thank God that the church is still here, still gathered around God's word and sacrament.

Thanks be to God that God's Church has proved herself able to adapt so swiftly to the challenges of the pandemic, in this parish and worldwide. I'm most grateful to all those of you who stepped up so willingly to make sure we keep in touch with everyone, offer worship - whether online or in person- and also, when we've been allowed, open up this building each day for visitors or private prayer.

As we begin now to regroup, we're discovering once more something we used to take for granted: the value of coming together as a community, worshipping God and supporting one another in our journey of faith and our desire to serve the people of this parish and beyond.

So, what else have we learnt? Well, I think we've rediscovered what it means to be a Parish Church, run by the people of the parish, for the parish. The sudden loss of visitors and income (we will look at the actual figures in our meeting later on) meant all the paid roles here in Holy Trinity and some of the admin roles in the Parish Office had to become redundant and we lost many of our wonderful staff was employees. We had already begun, before the pandemic, to try to move to more of a volunteer culture, with paid staff supporting in the background. The past year has radically accelerated that shift, but it means that we now look much more like the parish church that I think we're meant to be. This was no more true than when we had our walk-through services at Christmas and Easter this year, made possible by a huge team of stewards, led by the Churchwardens, and with a very significant contribution from our choir.

As our church opens up again and visitors return in just over a week's time, this new culture of us all mucking in is going to be more important than ever. We can only open if there are enough volunteers present to steward. At the moment there are some days

when we may have to have to keep the church doors closed because of lack of volunteers signed up. So we face the prospect of hundreds of people walking down the path on a busy day in the summer holidays, only to find the doors bolted shut. Not only is that a tragedy as we won't be sharing our beautiful, active parish church with them - and of course the heritage we are stewards of - but it also means no income from their donations. We've been reminded this past year just how much we had come to rely on that income to keep the basic functioning of the parish going. We're very grateful for all that those of you who are part of this church give as your Stewardship, an expression of your Christian discipleship. But the reality is that without the extra income from our visitors, we are going to carry on losing money every month, and we can't go on like that.

In our second reading today from the Gospel of John, Jesus says, "I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends". In the past we relied on our paid servants - our staff - and could afford to pay them from our visitor income. But we're in a very different place now. And perhaps that's a place closer to the one Jesus intends for us, because he want us not to be servants, but friends. A servant

turns up because they have to and because they want to get paid. A friend turns up for the benefit of their friend, even if there's nothing in it for themselves. After all, "someone will lay down their life for their friend," as Jesus points out. A church made up of people who are friends of Jesus, rather than servants who turn up because they're going to get something from it, is the sort of church I believe we're called to be. As Bishop John Stroyan has put it, "the Christian life can never truly be lived with the attitude of "God on my terms" but only "God on God's terms".

There is an ancient icon which you may have seen before. It's called 'Christ and His Friend'. It's the oldest known Coptic icon, from the 8th century in Egypt, and depicts Christ, who is on the right holding the book of the gospels, and a 3rd Century Abbot called Mena. It's usually called "Christ and his Friend" because the figure on the left could represent any one of us, as a disciple of Jesus. After all, as our first reading reminded us, "the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles." We are all invited to take up the offer of being Christ's friend - this is not just for the special, holy people. There's something reassuring about this image: Jesus has his arm around the friend's shoulder, an expression of love, support and protection. The looks on both faces are confident, expectant and hopeful. The pandemic has reminded us as a church of our important role in offering hope to our community. "Love one another as I have loved you" says Jesus. Jesus has one eye on the friend and another looking out. Likewise, the friend looks out to us with one eye, and to Jesus with the other. This is not a cosy "me and my Jesus" embrace. The Friend is looking out, ready to bless and to serve others in Jesus name. With so much need post-pandemic in our communities, we will need to look again to see how we can serve our parish. For example, to consider how we can offer the Parish Centre as a community resource. But the Friend also keeps one eye on Jesus. Our efforts to do good will not bring about the Kingdom of God unless we keep looking to Christ, unless we abide in Christ, to use the language of the Gospel reading.

Something I've certainly learnt in the past year, is that it's better to do just a few things well, rather than running around being a "busy fool". We're applying that approach to our Sunday morning worship. We used to have multiple services, and the clergy would race around trying to keep all the plates spinning. On some Sundays there used to be five services all happening at once: in Holy Trinity, the Parish Centre, the two villages and at the Rosebird Centre. We're taking this opportunity to pool our resources and, here at Holy Trinity, to focus on one service at 10am on a Sunday Morning, with the intention of this being intergenerational, bringing everyone together, whatever our age, and combining a variety of styles. If this really is a parish church run by the people for the people, then our worship is included in that, so we are setting up some lay worship teams to work with the clergy and Director of Music to plan and help lead this 10am service. If we are friends and not servants, then we can't see church as something laid on for us by someone else. As Tim Hughes, Vicar Gas Street Church, Birmingham said recently, "the Church is not a show that we come to consume, it's a place we come to belong."

Notice in the icon how the friend has feet shown, but Jesus doesn't? I'm reminded of the words of St. Teresa of Avila: "Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours." Our parish vision is Lives Changed through God's love. Yes, it's God's love, God's grace that does the changing, the transforming of people's hearts; but we have been chosen and sent by the Father, and it's up to us to draw people to Christ so that they might know for themselves God's transforming love.

So it's our feet on the ground, caring for the vulnerable, feeding the hungry; it's our hands showing support to the bereaved, kindness to the those whose spirits are broken. There is so much work to be done to grow our churches, that it's difficult to know where to start. We need to have a focus for our time and resources, which is why each church in this parish will be considering in the coming months a new Five Year Plan.

"I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father." As I finish, I just want to draw your attention to one other detail about this beautiful icon: notice how the figure of Jesus on the right is slightly larger and taller than the friend. He has a cross in his halo and the word "Saviour" written beside it. In all our activities and busyness as a church or in any part of our lives, we must never allow ourselves to eclipse Jesus. What we have to offer this broken and hurting world is not ourselves but Christ, and we must never get in the way of Jesus for others.

It's been a year of loss, frustration, pain and sorrow, and Jesus has been with us in all of that. As we begin to look to a time of recovery and then renewal, we're invited by Jesus to take our place alongside him as his beloved friend. Then Jesus' joy will be in us, and our joy will be complete. Amen.

5 Consideration of:

a) Electoral Roll

Mr T Raistrick reported that the number on the Electoral Roll stands at a total of 351, up from 340, as calculated at the official cut-off date.

The number is broken down as follows:

Holy Trinity 312 (2020: 300) - 14 added and 2 removed, net gain 12 (4% increase)

All Saints 17 1 down from 2020

St. Helen's 22 unchanged from 2020

Of the total 351, 27.4% are non-residents (i.e. live outside the official parish boundary)

The split by gender is 66.4% women and 33.6% men.

Tim Raistrick was thanked for his work on the Roll.

b) Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council

These are contained within the Financial Statements of the PCC as required by the Charity Commission. The full PCC had met 8 times during the year, with an average attendance of 76%. Mike Warrillow proposed that we accept the

Report, seconded by Anthony Woollard, and carried, all in favour. John Cohen, and Teresa Kristunas were standing down from PCC and were duly thanked.

c) Church Accounts

Using a Power Point presentation, Mike Warrillow outlined the current financial situation:

In 2019, the Parish had a surplus of £122,221; In 2020 the parish had a deficit of £102,532. The parish was therefore £225,000 worse off by the end of 2020. The breakdown of the above figures shows that, compared to 2019, in 2020, Holy Trinity was £246,000 worse off, All Saints was £3000 better off, and St Helen's was £18,000 better off.

The cause of the big drop for Holy Trinity was the loss of Visitor Donations because of the Pandemic. Visitor Income was £312,000 less in 2020 than in 2019.

Without ongoing income, Holy Trinity has only 11 months' expenses available in Unrestricted Reserve Funds; All Saints has 10 years in Unrestricted Reserve Funds; St Helen's has 4 years in Unrestricted Reserve funds.

It is therefore imperative that all parishioners regularly review their own levels of stewardship, and that as many people as possible make themselves available for volunteering opportunities, so as to limit the need for paid staff.

Mike Warrillow proposed, seconded by Anthony Woollard, that the accounts be accepted. All were in favour.

The Vicar then expressed a huge thank you to Mike for his work as Treasurer.

d) Stewardship & Gift Aid

Because Chris Kennedy, the Stewardship Officer, was unable to attend the meeting, Mike reported that Stewardship has held up over the pandemic; in fact, it has gone up by 3%. 80% of givers are now giving by means of Standing Order. About 200 people now give regularly. Chris Kennedy will be continuing as Stewardship Officer. The Vicar thanked Chris for his work, and all those who were part of the regular giving scheme.

e) Appointment of Auditors

Mike Warrillow proposed that Mazaar's Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors, of Dudley, West Midlands be retained as Independent Examiners of the accounts for 2020/21. This was seconded by Teresa Kristunas. All were in favour.

f) Fabric, Goods, and Ornaments

Rhod Mitchell, as Churchwarden with responsibility for buildings, reported that the Terrier and Inventory had been completed. He reported that:

1. A temporary roof has been put onto the Bier House to prevent further deterioration.
2. The insulation and carpeting of the Bell Tower have been done.
3. The development of the North Transept is progressing. We are awaiting DAC permission in order to proceed with the exterior work, and are looking into what to do with the interior.
4. The conservation work on the King James Bible is ongoing, as is the construction of a suitable case to house it in.

5. Work on the Rood Screen in the North Transept in in hand, as is the finalization and erection of the Rohan memorial bench.
 6. Fund-raising will be needed to fund the purchase of new chairs. Visitor income is especially important in this respect.
Rhod drew our attention to possible future works:
 7. The sound and lighting system needs renewal.
 8. Grills to protect the windows on the outside.
 9. The south side aisle roof needs repair.
 10. The west side of the tower needs repair.
- Moving forward, it has been decided to split the roles of churchwarden and clerk of works. Mark Sayers has been appointed the new Clerk of Works.
Rhod thanked everyone who had helped in the past year.
The Vicar thanked Rhod for his leadership of the team, and thanked Mark for taking on the role of Clerk of Works.

g) Deanery Synod Report

As Joint Acting Area Dean, the Vicar reported that:

1. The Deanery Synod had not met since our previous APCM.
2. A new Deanery Plan is being drawn up, but it is not likely to affect clergy deployment in this parish significantly.

6 Elections

a) Parochial Church Council

There were 4 vacancies for 3 years. 4 nominations had been received: George Reah, Liz Roome, Sam Bridges, Sam Jupe. There being no other nominations, these four were duly elected.

b) Deanery Synod

Peter Rowland has stood down because of health issues. Teresa Kristunas was elected to replace him.

The Vicar thanked Peter for his years of service to our church in this capacity.

7 Matters of Parochial and General Church Interest

1. The Vicar thanked all who contributed to the smooth running of the parish during the difficult Covid times of the past year:
 - a) the Clergy Team and the Director of Music, Douglas Keilitz;
 - b) the other members of staff: Andy & Sarah, who were currently part-furloughed, and Rebecca who was on full furlough;
 - c) the Pastoral Contact Team leaders, and Jenny Rowland and Diane Patterson who oversee them
2. Chris Cottrell reported that the Social Team is planning a picnic on July 18th in the Vicarage garden. She stressed that the team needs extra members.
3. Anthony Woollard, on behalf of the Eco-Church team, emphasised that the impact on the environment should always be considered in the planning of future projects.
4. Hilary Newman thanked all members of the flower team for their hard work and support during the past year.
5. Jo Walker reported that plans were afoot to restart Soundbites concerts soon.

6. Paul Lageu thanked the Vicar for his leadership throughout the past difficult year.

The Vicar led us in The Grace, and the meeting closed at 12.50 p.m.

THE VILLAGES

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, LUDDINGTON

In May we will be celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the consecration of All Saints'. It was good to be able to resume weekly services at the beginning of the year and despite losing a few of our congregation for various reasons during the pandemic, we have a reasonable number attending every week including several new members. In May we will be celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the consecration of All Saints'. With the help of Revd. Steve Jarvis we have formulated a 5 Year Plan which includes planning for a new piece of wall at the entrance to the church drive, replacing the cross on the roof of the church and hopefully providing toilet facilities which should make the building more useable.

The church building is fairly sound and whilst we still have a few minor maintenance issues to carry out resulting from the Quinquennial, there have been no major problems during the year.

The churchyard is looking tidy thanks to a great deal of help from people in the village who do not actually attend services. The lime trees have been pollarded, trees trimmed and grass cut.

Social events are still not back to normal. Given the average age of the congregation most are still nervous of large gatherings. However, the Village Hall has started weekly coffee mornings which are well attended and a good chance to get to know people in the village. We have also combined All Saints' Pub Evenings with their events which have been very successful both for family events and a Ludflicks film evening.

As usual we are very grateful for the help given by retired clergy, the flower team, cleaners, readers and all who help with the services and maintenance of All Saints'.

Jane Beeley

ST HELEN'S CHURCH, CLIFFORD CHAMBERS

Throughout 2021, St Helen's Church offered services twice a month on the 1st and 3rd Sundays, during which time attendances were lower than usual as a result of Covid. At Christmas our Carol, Christingle and Christmas Day services had congregations down by half on pre-covid years. In addition to Covid fears, we acknowledge that changing the start times may have contributed to lower numbers. This will be reviewed ahead of next Christmas.

In March 2022 we resumed our four services a month pattern, but are concerned that our regular congregation numbers are currently lower than pre-Covid. We have long been aware that the majority of people attending our church are elderly – and indeed know that at least 4 people can no longer attend due to ill health. We are hoping to try to encourage new people to come to our church by updating our 2nd Sunday service to a more modern format.

St Helen's management team in partnership with the Village Hall committee set up the 'Soupreme Kitchen' Community Venture. This took place in the Village hall from

November to March and offered free soup and roll every Friday lunchtime time from 12 – 2.00 p.m. This proved successful, having around 15 people coming through the doors each week.

In May the church had an automatic clock winder fitted so that no-one had to climb up into the tower each week to physically wind the clock – an issue that had presented Health and Safety concerns. However, there were initially several teething problems with the clock stopping after power cuts. These were hopefully finally resolved in February 2022.

Woodworm infestation was discovered in the choir vestry and this was dealt with in November.

In November the 'Clifford Chimers' at last started to learn how to ring the church bells after an enforced postponement of almost 18 months. Of the 14 people who originally expressed an interest, 7 have been having one-to-one lessons at Holy Trinity using the training bell. The villagers have been very patient with their initial attempts at ringing the bells for Sunday Services!

Pat Woolvin

FRIENDS OF ST HELEN'S CHURCH

The Friends of St Helen's Church was formed in 2017. The church is the most ancient building in the village and is listed Grade II*. There is a constant need for large sums of money to be spent on its upkeep and maintenance. By 2017 funds were severely depleted; in 2010 £150,000 had been spent restoring the tower. In common with many country churches, the congregation was small and the burden of upkeep was falling on fewer and fewer people. However, the church is a **significant building, valued by many people in the village** who do not necessarily attend church services who would not wish to see the building fall into disrepair.

The **constitution** of Friends of St Helen's (FOSH) states the purpose of the Friends is "to advance the restoration, preservation, repair and maintenance, improvement and beautification of St Helen's Church and of the monuments, fittings, stained glass furniture, ornaments and chattels in the church and churchyard also to include the War Memorial". To this end the Friends may raise funds through any lawful means.

Substantial **repairs** have been carried out since 2017, including a major repair to the porch roof, repair and refurbishment of iron guttering, internal redecoration, woodworm treatment of roof timbers and cleaning and renovation of the **War Memorial**. Funds have been raised by an auction of promises, concerts and village sales all of which has been **fun** as well as fruitful. Most importantly a list of **Supporters** has been recruited.

Our current Trustees are:

Revd. Patrick Taylor, Vicar
Revd. Kay Dyer
Angela Wylam
Winston North
Jo Eaton Johnson

and a vacancy exists for a further trustee. Please come forward if you could help in this way.

To those of you who are established supporters; THANK YOU. We truly appreciate what you enable us to do for the fabric of St. Helen's. To anyone who is reading this we would like to express our gratitude; since 2017 every individual in Clifford Chambers

has displayed their support in one way or another; by donating time, skills or by attending or purchasing something at one of our events, and we really want you to know how much this helped.

If you feel you could become a Supporter, the various annual subscriptions are as follows:

Platinum Supporter	£100.00
Gold Supporter	£50.00
Silver Supporter	£25.00

Whether becoming an annual Supporter or just making a donation you can pay directly into our bank account, or by cheque or standing order:

Bank:	HSBC
Account Name:	Friends of St. Helens Church
Sort Code:	40 43 19
Account Number:	42245043

You can also drop in a donation to any of the trustees or post a cheque to:

The Friends of St. Helen's Church
Holy Trinity Church Parish Office, Old Town, Stratford upon Avon, CV37 6BG

If you want to discuss becoming a **Supporter** or making a donation, please contact our Secretary, Angela Wylam: telephone (01789) 268156 email: awylam@btinternet.com

As a Registered Charity, (Registration Number 1173391), "The Friends" can claim an additional 25p for every £1 donated through **Gift Aid**.

If you shop online, please consider signing up to the online fundraising scheme www.easyfundraising.org.uk and selecting us as your chosen charity. This will not cost you a penny more than your usual online shop and is completely secure. The online retailers donate a small percentage of your total expenditure to us. If you need help setting this up do get in touch.

Future Plans: The plans the St Helen's Team had to install a kitchen and toilet which would have cost £50,000plus had to be put on hold during the pandemic. There is still the likelihood that the 35-year-old heating system will have to be replaced, certainly before next winter. Small jobs have been undertaken: woodworm in the vestry has been successfully cleared and treated. Obstructive trees in the churchyard have been removed and grass seed with a wildflower mixture has been sown. Names missing from the War Memorial are to be included in a suitable way and the Friends look forward to helping with this.

Obviously as a charity, **fundraising for the fabric of St. Helen's** is our key objective, but aside from donating money there are other things you can do to **offer your support**. What we desperately need now are people skills; if you believe you could spare some time in helping to organise events or fundraising activities, please let us know.

Angela Wylam (On behalf of the Trustees)

PARISH REPORTS

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Throughout the last year the work with children and families has continued with a hybrid model between some things in person and others online. I have been involved in working with the worship planning teams in helping to establish them and working with the teams in the delivery of the services. I'm currently in the process of re-designing the children's corner in church, so it is filled with items that will help children engage in the service, the new area will be launching soon. I've also continued working with Claire Grimes, the children's minister at St James' Alveston, on the *Bible Adventure Box Service*. This is an online service and we provide for children a free box for each service which contains everything they need, including items for a craft.

I have continued the links with our local Primary Schools. Providing either a recording of an assembly, or delivering it on Zoom and more recently in person at some schools. I've also been into some schools to do teaching on specific topics about the church. The Reception children from Holy Trinity Primary School came for a lesson in the church following my visit to them. Two groups from our local Cub Scouts also came a visit to the church and to discover more about Christianity.

I'm in the process of re-starting our two Toddler groups, the Tuesday morning group at Ken Kennett Centre and the Thursday afternoon group at Holy Trinity. There is an element of starting from scratch with these groups, as a large number of the children are now at school. I'm very grateful to the returning volunteers and those who have recently volunteered to help.

In the build up to Christmas we began welcoming more schools back for their Christmas services. However, with increasing Covid numbers at the time and the new variant, there was a lot of negotiation and changes on how to do them. But with the use of the audio-visual equipment in church and some creative thinking we managed for a majority of the schools to have some form of service to take part in. It was also great to have the team who helped to make the wonderful figures for the walk-through Nativity on Christmas Eve, which was appreciated by many people.

I've continued to support those bringing their children to be Christened at church. This is something else which has continued to evolve and change throughout the different stages of the pandemic, but it is encouraging the number coming forward for Christenings.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank anyone who has supported the work with children and families over the last year. There have been times when the situation the church has been in has meant I've had to take on duties not under my area of responsibilities, but as a family we need to work together and support each other in any way we can. As things are getting back to a form of normality, it will provide more opportunities for growth in our work with children & families.

Phil Harper (Children & Families' Minister)

FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship scheme and Gift Aid report 2021

2021 brought another wonderful response from our stewardship members with donations increasing by almost 10%, ensuring our income continues to increase. Covid restrictions meant we did not see a number of people and there were others who left the area, so that by the end of the year, we had lost donations from 22 members. We welcome 5 people joining our scheme, leaving us with 183 regular donors. As covid restrictions are now being lifted, we hope our regular congregation will get back to more normal levels and we will see members returning.

However, the response from people moving to donating by standing order continued to increase and we now have over 140 members are now giving in this way. A number of members continue to use the weekly envelopes making 183 members in total. The table shows that with more people giving by standing order, our weekly average has increased by 21%.

Stewardship Scheme donations since 2019:

Year	2019	2020	2021
Donations	£111,075	£113,443	£125,741
Members	202	200	183
Weekly average	£10.57	£10.91	£13.21
Tax reclaimed	£26,101	£26,122	£30,986
Total	£137,176	£139,565	£156,727

The total amount processed through our Stewardship account was £133,345 with Gift Aid of £32,881 but that includes a total of £7,604 donated for special purposes. This included a very generous gift of £2,536 to pay for the glazed Memorial Screens in the entrance door to the choir vestry from Geoffrey Lees' family together with £1,450 given to charity from the Christmas card amnesty; and £1,310 given towards the audio-visual equipment. Also included are the donations from visitors to the church who gave £2,308, using the white donation envelopes; which because of closures this year, remained similar to the total last year. The table shows the amount of donations from our members that is available for church funds.

We would welcome new members to the Stewardship Scheme, especially those who are on Holy Trinity's electoral roll or attend church services but do not currently participate. The certainty brought by regular giving is of great benefit to the church as it is more able to plan its ministry. Any donation, large or small, is greatly valued, and giving through the Gift Aid scheme – which is open to all UK taxpayers – is a simple way of boosting Holy Trinity's revenue, as well as enlarging the charitable donations that the church itself makes on special occasions. Although tax cannot be reclaimed on their donations, many non-taxpayers also participate in the Stewardship Scheme and their membership is no less valued. Another way to donate is to consider a legacy donation. Please consider joining the scheme if you are not yet a member. If you would like details of how to join, please contact me through the parish office or direct on 01789 299785.

Chris Kennedy (Stewardship Officer)

CLERK OF WORKS REPORT

Like all buildings the following is a list and description of activity in the last 12 months:

Holy Trinity Church

1. The major external works of the North Transept which is now complete, with only small snagging items of replacement glass (should be finished by 12 May) and some stone pointing.
2. Return of the St James Bible and installation of the new display cabinet
3. New Silk Screen glazing of the North Transept internal Screen
4. Repairs to legs and arms of pew's undertaken by our volunteers David Neale, Dr John Reef and Ian Johnson. They have over the year completed all repairs to a very high standard. How fortunate we are to have such a great working team.
5. On the internal South/west corner the installation of the Medieval roof Bosses that were originally on the North Transept Screen.
6. All external floodlights to the tower and steeple changed to a warm white LED installation.
7. Door cleaning and coating to the Priest's Door, south double motorised door and single door external lobby.
8. High level tower works requiring cleaning, pointing and flashing, to stop water ingress into belfry/internal walls.

Parish Centre

1. Decorating and Door replacement by our 3-man Volunteers (David's Team again)
2. Some gutter repairs to ensure a watertight building, although long term all fascias and gutters could do with replacing

St John's Close

Fully refurbished, with a major thank you To Helen and Mike Warrillow for managing the project to completion

No 3 Coopers Close

Fully refurbished by August 21, so giving ourselves an income for the next two years.

All maintenance contracts and general repairs continue as and when required.

It's been a Year of Learning all about Holy Trinity Church, but I'm sure I still have a lot to learn, so thanks to Mike Warrillow for holding my hand on many occasions.

Mark W. Sayers (Volunteer Clerk of Works)

FOSSE DEANERY SYNOD

Deanery Synod, which normally meets three times a year, has been greatly disrupted by the pandemic, with only a few Zoom meetings possible, but resumed face-to-face meeting in the autumn of 2021.

We have seen some key changes of people. Orion Johnson of St Andrew's Shottery, known to many of us, came to the end of her term as Lay Chair during the summer, and has been replaced by Margaret Howard of Wellesbourne. Pauline Newbury (now under her married name McIntosh), again well known to many of us, has taken over as Synod secretary, a post unfilled for some time. And the Joint Area Dean, Barry Jackson of

Edgehill (Kineton) benefice, stood down from that post leaving Patrick as sole Area Dean.

Barry however continues to be in the lead on the evolving Deanery Plan for the future pattern of ministry in our area. Faced with many challenges, particularly financial with the impact of the pandemic, we have recognised that we may no longer be able to afford nine full-time paid clergy for the Deanery, and that one post in the very rural eastern part of the Deanery must go. All this was the subject of an online consultation of Synod members last summer, but the implications for the parishes concerned are still being worked out.

I myself, with clergy support from Andy Larkin of Barford, remain the “finance person”, trying to calculate fair and affordable Parish Shares so that we can offer an appropriate contribution to the Diocese towards clergy costs. At the height of the pandemic, many parishes including Stratford were in a pretty impossible financial situation, and some clergy costs had to be met from Diocesan reserves. There are now some signs of recovery, but the case for a reduction in (paid) clergy numbers is all too strong. We are of course blessed with many clergy, either retired or dependent on other jobs, who continue to keep ministry alive, but much thought is going on into the future of that ministry.

At a time of so much change in Church and society, mutual understanding and support between parishes – large and small, urban and rural, and of different traditions – is increasingly valuable, and Deanery Synod does all it can to strengthen this fellowship and mutual learning.

Anthony Woollard (PCC Rep on the Deanery Synod)

OTHER TEAM REPORTS

BELL-RINGERS

The condition of the bells and fittings remain goods and we are grateful to John Taylor bell foundry who have taken over responsibility for the annual maintenance.

The ringing team continues to make steady progress and the bells are rung each Sunday morning, for weddings and on other occasions by request. We are currently gearing up for some special sessions to mark the Platinum Jubilee of the Queen at the beginning of June, and will ring for the special community service being planned for Sunday at 5 June at 5pm.

Mark Sayers continues to make good use of the dumb bell whilst training the new ringers at Clifford Chambers. The Bells are now being rung at St Helen’s on a regular basis which is very encouraging, and much appreciated in the village.

During the pandemic, we kept in touch via Zoom. Although not the same as meeting face to face, it was none the less a good way of keeping in touch. We managed to ring safely on a very limited number of bells from time to time, but generally we used the Ellacombe Apparatus to ring tunes for some weddings and services.

We are fortunate to have such a committed local band, and I look forward to continuing to ring with them all during the coming year.

Charles Wilson (Tower Captain)

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT TEAM

We continued to contact all bereaved families whose loved ones' funerals were taken by one of the clergy at Holy Trinity right through the pandemic. All bereaved families were telephoned and listened to. Sadly, we were not able to visit anyone due to the restrictions. In June we started up the Bereavement Support Group again and we were getting 10 to 12 people at each meeting. This number has reduced with families being able to see each other again. We meet once a month on the 4th Wednesday at 2.30 p.m. All who have lost a loved one are welcome; they do not need to make an appointment - just come along to the Parish Centre at 2.30 p.m. Also, we are now able to visit the bereaved if they wish us to and feel comfortable about us going to their homes.

Gina Lodge (Bereavement Support Co-ordinator.)

CHOIR

Holy Trinity Church is fortunate in that, with the exception of the first and second lockdown periods, we have always been able to maintain a choir. Many churches throughout the country were unable to do so, and we have our unique building to thank. The size and flexibility of our worship space permitted various placement arrangements for rehearsals and service...some better or worse than others. But the fact that we were able to come back together in October 2020 and, with a brief hiccup, pretty much carry on continuously is definitely something to be proud of. During this time there have been numerous worship services and other events for which the Choir provided choral music, and none of this could have occurred without each member adhering to risk-assessment protocols and procedures. Indeed, all Choir member placed the welfare of their fellow singers in the forefront of their own behaviour.

What has the Choir done in all that time? I think the greatest thing is that the Choir has met the musical demands and challenges of the constantly-shifting 10.00 service admirably, sometimes at extremely short notice. Without complaint, they have led and supported the congregation in song, and for quite a while was the congregation's sole voice. As afternoon services were reintroduced, the Choir was there to lead evensongs and eucharistic services. When walk-through Christmas services were scheduled in 2020 and 2021, it was the Choir which stood for several hours in a chilly nave and sang Christmas carols continuously. When walk-through Good Friday services occurred, it was the Choir which sang from St Peter's Chapel as worshippers and visitors walked past. It was the Choir that sang Harvest Festival services at the village churches, and it was the Choir that sang Lessons & Carols at Holy Trinity, All Saints', St Helen's, and the Guild Chapel. And it was the Choir that premiered two newly-commissioned Shakespeare anthems. Although social events have been few due to the pandemic, the Choir did enjoy a bowling party. The choristers received their various end-of-season awards and recognition, and an upcoming barbecue is planned. It is easy to overlook specific Choir events because there are so many of them each year, but one must not

forget the all-important Friday evening rehearsals without which none of the preceding could occur. As with all choirs throughout the country because of the pandemic, fresh recruitment will be necessary. However, we've had a great start with Trinity Voices, and they will be an excellent training choir feeding into the main choir. I anticipate more new singers when we begin the fall term.

Yes, the Choir, the ultimate inter-generational group where young and older work together and learn from each other, is an ensemble to cherish. They give much of themselves throughout the year, and I am grateful for their service. And I am especially grateful to Rebecca Mills, my Assistant Director of Music and comrade-in-arms as we've worked together through the pandemic. She is the ultimate professional in being supportive, creative, and willing to go the extra two miles for liturgical and choral music at Holy Trinity.

A brief word of thanks from myself to all who have supported and encouraged the Choir through the past two-years. It has been a challenging period for all, but challenges always strengthen bonds. I see nothing but a bright future for the choir programme at Holy Trinity.

Douglas Keilitz (Director of Music)

CHURCHYARD MAINTENANCE VOLUNTEERS

We are a team of volunteers who meet regularly to keep the churchyard tidy. Our aim is to make the churchyard a pleasant place for everyone who walks through or comes to visit the church. Being there also provides opportunities to talk with visitors and to represent the church community.

Members of the team during 2021 were: Philip Cheshire, Richard Hartley, Hester Hawkes, Liz Johnson, Lindsay MacDonald, Marion Mitchell, Bridget Sorel-Cameron and Valerie Thompson. We had a two-hour session on Monday afternoon every other week, with a total of 23 sessions between February and November. The average attendance was 6 volunteers per session, and the total time contributed over the year was 276 person-hours. The team was notable for a great spirit of cooperation and camaraderie, and for its "can do" approach. Awards for best attendance went to Valerie and Bridget, who tied for first place, both being present for 22 out of the 23 sessions. Bridget also provided the most marvellous home-made cakes and muffins for tea.

Tasks accomplished during the year included:

- Kept the main avenue and pathways free of litter;
- Picked up fallen twigs and sticks under trees throughout churchyard;
- Removed grass along the edges of paths and around perimeter of building;
- Removed weeds from base of wall on Mill Lane (outside on road);
- Cut suckers from lime trees up to a height of 5 metres;
- Maintained the shrubs in bed alongside the southern path;
- Assisted with the clean-up of the garden at No. 3 Coopers Close;
- Planted snowdrops in clumps on either side of main avenue;
- Planted 500 daffodil bulbs between lime trees along western wall;
- Took over maintenance of the garden behind the Parish Centre.

The experience of volunteering continues to be very positive and we have worked well together as a team. The appearance of the churchyard has been maintained at a high standard, and we have received many compliments from both visitors and members of the congregation.

We welcome anyone who would like to join us, even occasionally, to assist with this satisfying activity in such a glorious situation.

Lindsay MacDonald (Team Leader)

CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER GROUP

Like everyone else we have struggled to keep going during the pandemic, but managed to arrange that the small group that normally meets to pray together did just that on our meeting days, but in our own homes. No Zoom was necessary (or desirable) for our monthly half-hours of silent prayer, but we all used the same Scripture passage to pray with, and felt supported by each other.

We are delighted to feel we can now meet in person again, and did so in May. For an experimental period of six months, we are meeting in St Peter's Chapel in Church at 7.30 on the first Tuesday of each month, now without refreshments. We are accompanied, but not disturbed, by practising bells (as we were when meeting in the Parish Centre). The meetings finish by 8.45pm and new members would be very welcome to turn up and join us.

We are sad that Jenny Rowland, who has co-led the group since it started in 2017, is no longer able to join us physically, but by praying at home at the same time, is still very much part of us. If others would like to do the same, please let us know.

John and Tricia Hall-Matthews (Co-ordinators)

ECO CHURCH TEAM

The Eco Church team – consisting primarily of myself, Mike Warrillow, Samuel Jupe, Lindsay MacDonald and Tricia Hall-Matthews but with contributions also from such as Amelia Parkin, Kevin Bond and Tony Guy – has tried during the year to keep before the Council and the congregation the extreme importance to our mission of the stewardship of Creation in response to the climate emergency.

The PCC has made some progress in fulfilling that stewardship. We pledged two years ago to aim for “net zero carbon emissions” by 2030, and we have already got a long way towards that in buying our electricity and even (so far as possible at present) our gas from renewable sources rather than using fossil fuels. We are working to improve insulation in the Parish Centre, and to experiment with new and more efficient approaches to heating in church. Projects are afoot to make the churchyard more friendly to wildlife, and we hope that some of these – and other projects as well – can be developed in conjunction with Holy Trinity School. Not just Holy Trinity but our village churches have contributions to make in such areas too.

In terms of educating ourselves and the wider public, initiatives range from the “eco tips” in our weekly bulletin to the monthly ecumenical Eco Chat sessions, to which some of our members have contributed significantly. We look forward to other opportunities to share the issues with the wider congregation, and particularly to a joint service with the Methodists on 26 June.

Anthony Woollard (Co-ordinator)

FLOWER TEAM

Once the pandemic abated, the flower teams started providing floral arrangements in church once more. The group comprises four teams, with two or three ladies in each, and each team provides the floral arrangements on a rolling four-weekly rota. In general, the flowers are changed every Friday morning. There are usually three or four main arrangements in church in “normal” weeks, and, because of financial restrictions within the church, the budget for each week is currently £40, a relatively small amount for large arrangements including pedestals. At Christmas, Easter and Harvest Festival all the team members come together to decorate the church for these special occasions and the budget for flowers is increased considerably.

If there is a wedding in church, the bridal party may choose to pay for extra flowers. The amount charged for flowers for a wedding was £125 in 2021 and has been increased to £250 in 2022. This increase reflects what is generally charged and the number of pedestals and arrangements that the flower team on duty can provide. The flower teams try to liaise with the bride for any special requests, such as specific colours, but if there are two weddings, the teams will use only white and cream flowers. This year appears to be a bumper post-pandemic year with almost twenty-five weddings booked.

All flower arrangers were saddened to lose Hilary Newman as leader, when she moved up north, as Hilary had encouraged the group through difficult times with great cheerfulness, flair and imagination.

Judith Dorricott (Co-ordinator)

HOLY TRINITY IN THE COMMUNITY

Holy Trinity in the Community (HTiC) with the main stay being its small grants programme, and administration of the Mission & Outreach Fund.

With a reduced contribution from the share commercial proceeds for a second year, it has been fortunate that we have no demand for small grants. Therefore, the main focus of our activities were the Christmas collections. These were distributed to the following three charities:

Lifespace is a local Stratford-upon-Avon based charity providing mentoring for children and young people to reduce distress, build resilience and enable them to achieve more (£500).

Church Mission Society supporting the work of our CMS link partners Tom & Verity Clare in their work in Africa (£1000).

St Philip’s School Project, Kapsabet, a project set up by one of our church members, Richard Hartley, following his exchange visit on behalf of the Diocese of Coventry with the diocesan link with the Diocese of Kapsabet in Kenya. This project was to help improve sanitation and build a toilet block at the school (£500).

Understandably, we were not then yet at a point where we were able to match our pre-COVID levels of donations. However, we were able to donate £2000 to our nominated charities.

Where we were able to, we continued to organise the Mothering Sunday toiletries collection, Harvest Foodbank donations, and Christmas appeals. For 2021, largely due to the on/off COVID restrictions in place at the time, we chose not to organise our own

shoebox appeal. Instead, we encouraged individuals to support a shoebox scheme run by Stratford Baptist Church.

Though it has continued to be a difficult second year in light of the COVID pandemic, we extend our grateful thanks for the generosity of our congregation and others.

The Revd. Steve Jarvis

HOME GROUPS & COURSES

During the lockdown, meeting in person was not encouraged. However, courses and homegroup provision have been run intermittently via Zoom.

During 2021 I ran via Zoom, module tasters from the Bible Society's "Lyfe" course. These were delivered in a six-week block, with as many participants as possible placed with other members of their existing homegroups within the breakout rooms. Those more recent members new to the church, or those not already in a homegroup were also placed together. This has now led to one new homegroup being formed facilitated by Paul and Lynn Suter. This adds to those groups already in existence. However, there is still plenty of opportunity to grow further groups.

For anyone wishing to explore more whether they may be called to host or facilitate a homegroup, please speak with me.

The Revd. Steve Jarvis

THE KEN KENNETT CENTRE

Since its re-opening following the various lockdowns, the Parish has continued its commitment to renting use of the Ken Kennett centre for outreach purposes every Tuesday morning.

The Revd Diane Patterson, with support from Jane Armitage, restarted the Coffee Stop once the centre re-opened late summer, and when assessed as safe to do so. Coffee-Stop is a regular coffee morning for those in the local area. It has been particularly appreciated by those more elderly members of the community who experienced considerable social isolation during the pandemic. From this outreach, we are still continuing to see new people accessing Sunday worship, seasonal services, and Trinity Ladies.

There has been no Stay & Play restart for the present time. However, this will be restarted in 2022.

The leadership team extend their thank to Revd Diane Patterson, Jane Armitage and the church volunteers for their time and commitment to this valuable outreach in the north of the parish.

The Revd. Steve Jarvis

LAY CHAPLAINCY

Our main role is to be a listening ear and to offer comfort and prayer in a non-judgemental way and by doing this act as an ambassador for the church and the Christian faith. This could be to an existing member of the congregation, a local person or a visitor from the UK or from overseas. It is impossible to know this until one

engages with the visitor in conversation. We also get a few foreign visitors who are studying in the UK.

The visitors come to Holy Trinity Church for various reasons: some to pray for a lost love one or to find spiritual solace, some because they love visiting churches and most come as part of the Shakespeare experience. When we are on duty, we engage with the visitors, answer their questions and attempt to improve their experience of Holy Trinity Church. We may offer them comfort or prayer and give them a blessing. Sometimes after we have said lectern prayers, an opportunity may open up to talk about faith issues.

Since the initial lockdown in March 2020, we were not required to be on duty in the church until requested last April following the Duke of Edinburgh's death. Since then, we have managed to provide chaplaincy most mornings Monday to Fridays. Currently, we only have five Lay Chaplains and two part time Lay Chaplains who may cover absences. It has only been possible to provide this ministry since April because of the commitment and flexibility of the chaplaincy group and I would like to honour them for their sacrificial service. Because of the nature of the church opening using volunteers, sometimes the Lay Chaplains have needed to help out with dealing with the flow of visitors.

I believe that all of the Lay Chaplains were called by God to perform this vital service in our church and all are individuals and relate to the visitors in different ways. However, after most duties I can honestly say that we as Lay Chaplains feel enriched to have met people who love to talk to us and even feel envious of our lives here in Stratford. We sometimes even get a mention in Trip Advisor!

Each year as a group we affect the lives of thousands of our visitors, is there anyone reading this who feels that they would like to join us? Phone Keith on 266242 for an informal chat!

Keith Payne (Co-ordinator)

MUNICIPAL CHARITIES

The charity over the last 2 years has seen changes due to Covid risk infection and adjustment to our normal daily service to our residents.

We continue with our main business to serve the residents, in the 5 different arms houses in Stratford.

We also continue with distribution of grants and goods to the needy in our local area.

The upgrading and maintenance of each of our 46 apartments, with all now having WiFi and Modern shower rooms instead of baths.

We have recently taken back into our ownership 11 Guild Street and after minor building works is now available for commercial office Letting/lease for the next 10 years, so giving the charity a greater income for distribution to future needs.

Our current financial base remains healthy, so allowing the charity to operate in the current increasing cost of living.

As a trustee over the last 14 Months, I have worked on the following committees

1. Financial and Risk
2. Maintenance of arms houses and welfare of residents
3. Property development

Along with AGM and many other Zoom meetings.

Mark W Sayers (Trustee on behalf of Holy Trinity)

NOVEL THEOLOGY

The Novel Theology group has continued to meet, usually monthly, with a membership of 6-8. Inevitably, for most of the year, the meetings have been on Zoom.

An exceptionally varied year, even by our group's standards, included the all too topical *Journal of the Plague Year* by Daniel Defoe, and, perhaps at the other more escapist extreme, Richard Osman's *The Thursday Murder Club*. Whilst as usual we focused on novels rather than anything explicitly religious or theological, our list included two books in the latter category: *Dear England* by the Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell, and the influential book on Bible reading *How to Eat Bread* by Miranda Threlfall-Holmes. However, a number of the novels themselves, perhaps particularly *Light Perpetual* by Francis Spufford, generated plenty of discussion on matters of faith and its application to the diversity of human situations.

We are in no way a learned theological book group – just a reading group which happens to consist of church members – and no prior theological knowledge is required. We simply offer a relaxing opportunity, so necessary in a busy town and a busy church, to engage honestly with literature, with faith, and with each other, in ways which may enable us to grow. New members, and new ideas for books to read, are always welcome; please contact me on 01789 204923 or at awoollard@joyousgard.org.uk.

Anthony Woollard

PASTORAL CONTACT TEAM

This team of thirty-two people has been a real God send during the worst days of the Covid pandemic, as in their role as Pastoral Contact Leaders, they have each kept in contact with a group of between six and sixteen people each. This may have been by email or telephone but has meant that when we were limited in our permission to visit other people, we could at least find out if they were ok.

As restrictions have lifted many of the team would see members of their group out and about in the natural course of their daily lives, but some group members have still been shielding until very recently. You may not be aware, but there are 707 people who have given consent to receive emails from the church and at one point Andy said we had one thousand people in contact, one way or another.

The hard work of this team has been much appreciated, as it would have been almost impossible for clergy and the Parish Office staff to keep a track of how everyone was getting on without the regular updates from the team leaders. Sadly, we have said goodbye to some team leaders who moved out of the area but have been incredibly grateful to those who took on additional members, so that communication and care across the church and community could continue uninterrupted.

Revd. Kay Dyer

PRAYER MINISTRY

For many years there has been a tradition in Holy Trinity of providing Prayer Ministry during the Sunday Morning Eucharist. The Healing Team under Rev Margaret Sweet used to operate on the third Sunday of every month. Several years ago, this ministry

was expanded to happen most Sundays by using some of the Lay Chaplains. Anyone can go for prayer during communion and one doesn't have to give a reason just ask for a blessing. Any prayer requests are confidential and can be for a family member or friend or for a difficulty in work or in the family. Because of the nature and physical closeness of this ministry, it did not restart until August 2021 after the lockdowns. From time to time all of us feel the need for prayer whether it's for ourselves or for friends and family who may be ill or in difficulty or anxious. This ministry happens either in St Peter's Chapel or in the Beckett Chapel depending on the service arrangements. The prayer can only be short during this service, but if more prayer is required this can be arranged. If nobody comes for prayer, the prayer team will pray for people who they know need prayer/pray through the list on the Pew Sheet.

At this time, we have seven prayer team members, but if anyone would like to be involved in this ministry, please contact Keith on 266242 for an informal chat and the training requirements.

"The Lord is near to all who call on Him" Psalm 145:18

Keith Payne (Co-ordinator)

SOCIAL TEAM

Following a plea, at the APCM last year, for more help in planning and organising events, we were delighted to welcome Faith Piper, Fiona Wilkinson, Sheila Wolstenholme and Beckey Barton onto the Social Team. Each took on a different area of responsibility which has enabled us to offer a fuller programme of events.

As some of the lockdown restrictions were eased in the summer of 2021, it was possible to hold a picnic in July in the vicarage garden. This was a true celebration of the church family being able to spend time together again.

September saw 30 outdoor enthusiasts visit Clifford Chambers on a Saturday morning to explore the village and its surroundings on foot. We were very well catered for by the St Helen's Team.

Harvest was celebrated in October with a Bring and Share lunch, when musical items were played on arrival and in between courses. Richard Hartley organised a successful evening Ten Pin Bowling in Leamington in November which brought together a cross generational group. At Epiphany, a fish and chip supper with bingo was held and Shrove Tuesday provided more opportunities for all ages to have fun together at the Pancake Party.

The organisation of these events has been made much simpler by using an online booking system. We are greatly indebted to Andy Winter who has set this up for us prior to each event. We are now able to reach the wider church population thanks to the e weekly bulletin and a social events survey on Church desk. The results of this survey will help the team to plan a programme of events for 2023.

Chris Cottrell (Leader)

STRATFORD CHURCHES TOGETHER

The various ministers from Stratford churches continued to meet on zoom during the worst of the Covid pandemic and then more recently once every two months in person.

This has been a great support to new ministers, especially, if like Mandy, the Baptist minister, they arrived in a new post during the pandemic.

When permitted we have held a 24/7 prayer day and have been able to recommence the Annual Good Friday Walk of Witness, using the previous 2019 method of gathering at the URC, Methodist and Roman Catholic churches to begin the Passion Story. Then processing in silence carrying crosses to the Bridge Street roundabout by the Banks to say the Lord's Prayer together, finally moving to the Baptist Church car park for the Crucifixion narrative. Followed by Hot Cross Buns in their church hall.

Roger Matthews from the Quakers continues to be our main contact for the "Welcome Here" project, through which Stratford Churches Together members and others have helped Syrian Refugees settle into work and schools in the area. This project is now welcoming Ukrainian Refugees.

Revd. Kay Dyer

STREET PASTORS

I am very pleased with the last year's progress, thanks to the support (and allowances for errors, as I am new to this role!) given by our SPs and PPs. We emerged from the worst of the pandemic relatively unscathed: we have a cohort of 12 SPs and 5 PPs which, although a small group in national terms, has been very loyal and committed to the SP movement, for which I am very grateful! Speaking to other coordinators on several occasions, I have been struck by how much they have been struggling, even considering closing down! They have much larger groups to manage, but I think that a small group may well show more cohesion and willingness to "step up" if the need arises.

A few statistics for you: in the past year we have sent out 47 patrols, which involved 551 hours walking the streets, met with some 2500 people, (some 103 of whom we classed as 'vulnerable' i.e. rough sleepers), given out 52 bottles of water, 35 safety blankets, 6 pairs of flip flops, picked up 218 bottles and 295 cans, and – handed out 1650 lollipops! We have spoken to many people curious about what we do, and received expressions of support and praise from over 270 members of the public. In addition, it is good to know that the Police are also grateful for our input into the night-time economy, as I have been told in meetings with Inspector Ben (who sadly has been moved elsewhere)

And incidentally – I was invited to represent SOA SPs at a reception given by Lady Willoughby de Broke, High Sheriff of Warwickshire, yesterday evening. Representatives from several charities were in attendance, and during the evening we were asked to sit down and listen to Min as she described her year in office. She explained that she had taken up the role sooner than expected, with the result that she hadn't had time to research for one 'worthy' charity to adopt for the year. So, she had decided to spread her pot of money more thinly but further – hence the 100 or so attendees at the reception. She had a long (alphabetical!) list, but eventually, to my surprise, my name was called to accept the award on behalf of SOA SPs, and a donation of £500!

The Management Team has seen some changes too, and we are very grateful to those who continue to serve in this way. Peter has effectively been the Leader for the last year, Fiona has been looking after the PPs, and Becks has been working hard on Social

Media platforms. We have been joined by Carole as Treasurer and I was grateful to hand over to Ian as Minutes Secretary. They all work hard on behalf of SPs and I thank them for their input.

This doesn't mean that we can be complacent about our teams – I ask you all to be on the lookout for possible volunteers to join us. We are all ambassadors for Street Pastors (and of course PPs) and as such, should help to spread the message (and the load!)

We are planning a recruitment drive in May – Street Pastor Sundays, hopefully, will take place on May 8th/15th (or other convenient dates). It is important that we have members from as many churches being involved, to ensure our ecumenical approach.

All in all, I think we are in good shape, and with God's help, we can go forward with confidence that we are making a difference to many people's lives in Stratford.

Linda Horrocks (Coordinator, Stratford upon Avon Street Pastors)

SUNDAY MORNING COFFEE

After a break of 18 months or so due to the Covid pandemic, Diane and Tina were delighted to be able to start serving coffee in Church again after the 10 am Eucharist on Sunday mornings.

With fewer restrictions, more members of the congregation are staying for coffee which is wonderful. Unfortunately, although the price of coffee, tea, etc has risen, donations are down!

We have an excellent but small group of willing parishioners to help serve refreshments, but if anyone would like to join us in this worthwhile ministry on a rota basis, usually in a group of three people, it would be very much appreciated! Just see Diane or Tina after the Service on Sundays.

Tina Hillyard & Diane Edwards

TRINITY LADIES GROUP

As with all groups in the Church it has not been easy for Trinity Ladies, we tried to keep in touch with as many members as possible by either phoning them or sending Christmas and Easter cards. Last August when Covid was easing a little we decided to hold a tea party just to get to know our members again. It was a very pleasant afternoon and the members who were able to attend enjoyed being together again and catching up with each other. In September we commenced our regular meetings again starting with Maureen Beckett telling us about the many different Alms Houses in Stratford and how they came into being. In October we had an interesting talk from Nick Birch on Marie Corelli; we all found this fascinating. Both of these talks were very much appreciated by members. In November we held our AGM and appointed a new committee as follows: Gina Lodge (Chair), Rev Diane Patterson (Secretary), Diane Edwards (Treasurer), Tina Allen (Speakers Secretary), Frances Walker (Almoner) and Margaret Wilcox, Anne Blaire, Sian Wade, Barbara Bartos, plus other members, when necessary, as our refreshments team. Joan Forbes and Eithne Mulryne look after our

Raffle. I am very grateful to all these members for their support. Our Carol Service was taken by Rev Diane Patterson and very much enjoyed by all who attended. Our membership has increased despite those members who cannot join us anymore; we have several new members and look forward to providing an interesting programme for the New Year.

Gina Lodge (Chairperson)

TRINITY PLAYERS

After a year when we only met on Zoom each month, Trinity Players were surprisingly busy in 2021.

In the Spring we recorded *Words of Comfort*, individually on our phones and, along with appropriate pictures, James Willetts created a YouTube video.

Then, finally, in July, we were able to stage *Murder in the Cathedral*, postponed four times but a Play very special to all of us who were involved. Sadly, owing to the need for spacing, we had to turn away some who wanted to see it.

As a complete contrast in the Autumn, we offered an afternoon and evening of Entertainment, *Pastime with Good Company*, highlighting pieces written by the Players themselves.

We ended the Year with *The Holy Trinity Play of St George*, in Bell Court during the Victorian Christmas Market, drawing an appreciative crowd which included a child with an infectious laugh.

Already this year we have raised £1000 for the restoration of the statue of Shakespeare on the Town Hall, with our reading of *The Winter's Tale*, £300 for UNICEF Ukraine and £200 for Stratford Town Centre Chaplaincy with our Easter Play, '*The Message of the Cross*, and celebrated the Bard's Birthday with, *Coffee, Cake and Shakespeare*.

We are very grateful to our core audience from Holy Trinity who have stayed with us in these difficult times.

Ursula Russell

TRINITY TIMES

Despite the dramatic impact of the pandemic, Trinity Times has continued to chronicle our common life, and perhaps been more important than ever in keeping communication flowing. We have once again recorded, in words and images, all the main events in the life of our parish, with particularly valuable features written by Judith Dorricott on both events and people, and we have been given much to think about through the contributions of our leadership team (one of whom writes each month's editorial) and a number of others.

It has not, however, been possible to continue maintaining the magazine in printed form for the majority of readers. Church closures during lockdown made the former distribution system impossible to maintain, and most of our readers now rely on the (free) online version which is widely accessed in Stratford and beyond. One bonus of this is that a larger number of colour photos (a very popular and enriching feature) can be accommodated and the size of the magazine can be more flexible. Enough money was in hand, and enough volunteer distributors were found, to maintain free copies, printed in-house, for the 40 or thereabouts for whom online reading was not an option. However, towards the end of 2021, a decision was taken to encourage some expansion

of that printed provision, at a slightly increased price. So far, take-up has been limited and it has not been worth returning to out-of-house commercial printing. This will be kept under review.

Contributions are always welcome, and each edition gives the cut-off date for contributions to the following one. We often approach the deadline wondering how we will fill some spaces, but we always do fill them – exactly! Please keep your material coming in.

Anthony Woollard

WELCOME TEAM

Helen Warrilow handed over the team to me towards the end of last year and since then I have been working with a team of 6 to form a Welcome Team for all new worshippers to Holy Trinity.

We now have a focal point at the back of church for the Welcome Board. Currently it is situated by the North door, and this allows us not only to welcome anyone that is new to Holy Trinity but also to welcome all worshippers that use this door on Sunday at 1000 each week. We feel that it is important to greet everyone that come to the 10 o'clock service and help them with any questions or concerns they may have and pass them over to the right departments if we are unable to assist. Anne Blaire also keeps an eye at the 5pm service on Sunday.

The team has also introduced a Welcome Mingle ever few months at the Parish Centre after the 1000 service. It allows all new worshippers to relax and get to know each other, the Clergy and Wardens, in an informal way over a glass of wine and a slice of cake or two. We have had two "mingles" since this started and have invited over 34 new worshippers. Most are new to the area, and this has meant that we are also giving them an opportunity to make friends and contacts, especially when they have children etc.

Eve Archer (Co-ordinator)

THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE TEAM

As a result of William Shakespeare and members of his family being buried inside Holy Trinity church, the church welcomes many thousands of visitors every year. The church is dependent on the income generated from visitors, which has significantly reduced as a result of the Covid pandemic. Pre-Covid, the church was kept open to visitors using paid staff, although a strategic decision had been made to move towards a more volunteer centric model. The drop in income as a result of Covid has underlined this need for a change in direction. We are now totally dependent on volunteers to be able to open the church to visitors. The Visitor Experience Team has been set up as an operational group, whose objective is to identify and implement ways of increasing visitor income and recruiting and retaining Visitor and Shop Volunteers, to enable the church to open to visitors more often and for longer hours. The team comprises the Vicar, a Churchwarden, the Treasurer, the Operations Manager and representatives of the church volunteers.

Paul Lageu (Churchwarden)

FRIENDS OF SHAKESPEARE'S CHURCH

2021 Projects Update

The Friends funded three projects in 2021 contributing substantially to the conservation and presentation of Shakespeare's Church.

The Friends funded a £150,000 restoration of the North Transept, the oldest part of the Church, which stabilised the outer walls, replaced crumbling stones and ensured there is now no risk of collapse. Many Friends took up the opportunity to view the skilled work of the stonemasons close up in November 2021 and heard from Master Mason, Louis James, about the complexity of the work involved.

As part of the project two new carvings were commissioned by the Friends of William and Anne Shakespeare which were installed beside a window on the North Transept. The maquettes for these carvings can be seen in the Church.

Shakespeare's Church has a number of medieval doors dating from the 15th century and a generous donation of £2,000 from our Friends has enabled urgent conservation of these doors to be carried out. The ancient wood will be carefully cleaned and treated to protect them for future generations.

Finally, the 1613 King James Bible has undergone expert paper conservation and is now beautifully displayed in a new case. The Friends donated £15,000 towards the conservation work and the museum-standard case which will provide a stable environment for the Bible and ensure its long-term conservation.

Future projects

The Friends have committed to restore the church to its natural cruciform, a project costing over £1million as a whole. Part of this will enable the north transept to be open to the public, creating a display area for the many exhibitions held in the church together with a dedicated area for the choir and theatrical and concert performers.

Mike Warrillow

FRIENDS OF THE MUSIC

Our Wednesday lunchtime Soundbites concerts, which re-started in the autumn, have produced some remarkable performers: from solo pianists to a local orchestra, from youngsters who are still at school to mature professionals who have been performing for years. Three A-level students from KES came at absolutely the last moment to replace a Covid-struck performer: they had a poise and competence which was outstanding. An American Youth Choir from Atlanta were delightful, and we were staggered by the presentation of the Tenby duo – cello and saxophone is an unusual combination ! But all our concerts have been wonderful, and our loyal and generous audiences have welcomed them most enthusiastically. And why not ? A sandwich and a cup of tea, followed by a half-hour concert: what's not to like ?

Other musical events hosted by the Friends have been a Stratford Chamber Music concert needing a last-minute venue; a memorial concert for Patricia Butt with music provided by her family; and a New York based choir, Tenet, introduced by our Director of Music, Douglas Keilitz.

Music for the Christmas and Easter services was sung by the Holy Trinity Choir in all sorts of different areas of the church, sometimes for services and other times for 'walk throughs'. Rebecca Mills is training up enthusiastic new youngsters in the Trinity Voices group and we hope to welcome some of them into the main choir soon.

We have another full evening concert ahead: Antonio Oyarzabal will present a programme of piano music by female composers on Saturday 14th May. I hope we shall have another enthusiastic audience !

Josephine Walker (Chair)

