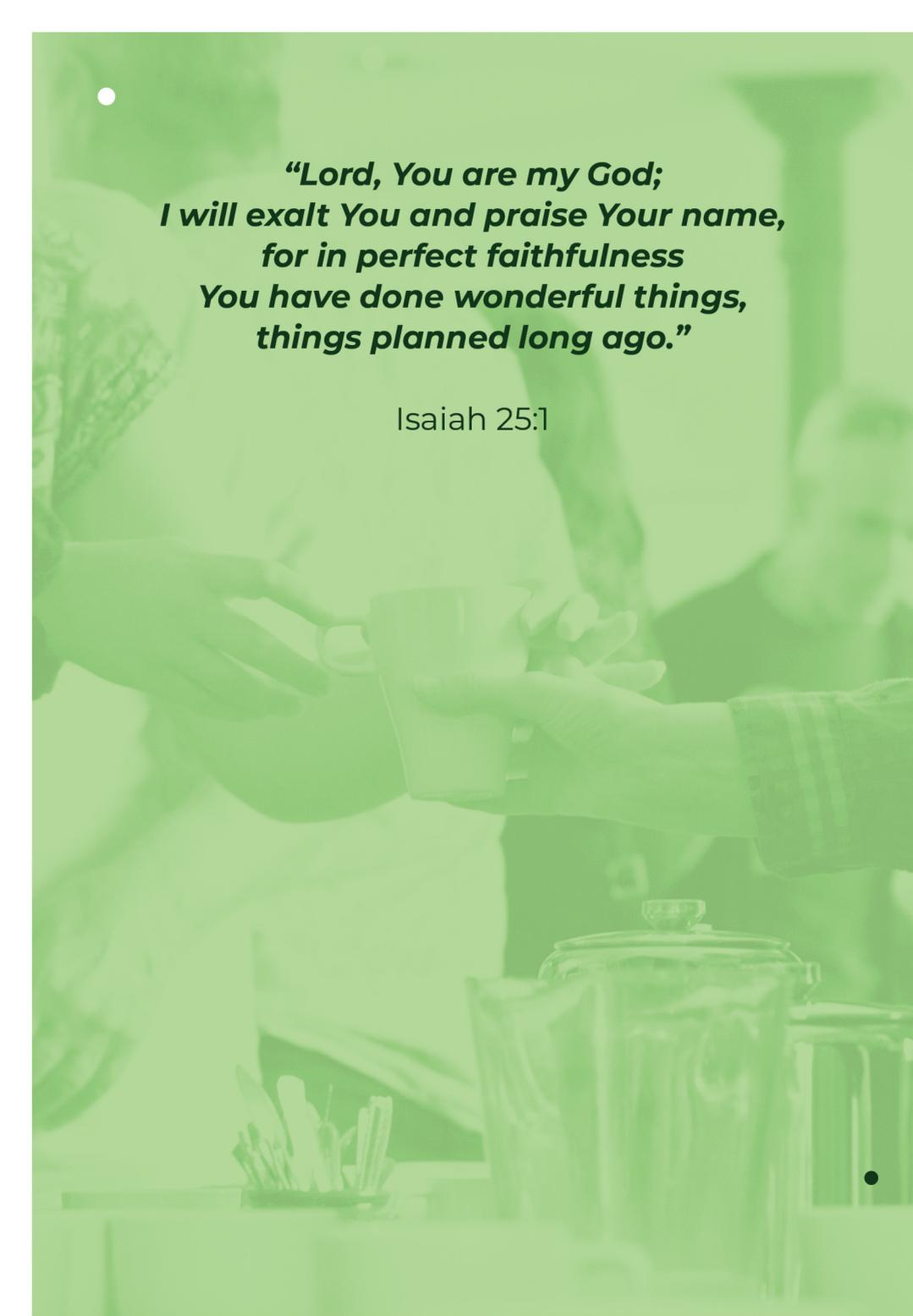


St.
Swithin's
Walcot



Annual Report **2018/19**



***“Lord, You are my God;
I will exalt You and praise Your name,
for in perfect faithfulness
You have done wonderful things,
things planned long ago.”***

Isaiah 25:1

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Tim Gleghorn

RECTOR'S REPORT

Dear St Swithin's friends

One of the truths of life is that each of us have good and bad days and many in-between. As Christians one of the challenges that gives us, is that we often project our own experiences on to who we think God is, so subconsciously we believe that God has good and bad days, sometimes God loves us sometimes God doesn't, sometimes he forgives us sometimes he doesn't.

One of the ways Christians have described God over the centuries is that God is the same yesterday, today and forever - that his character and nature is unchanging, trustworthy and true, that's the picture the Bible paints for us. Thus, irrespective of which generation we live in or our personal circumstances, that God is eternally loving, faithful, true, good, merciful, compassionate, kind, holy, just and gracious.

There is something so utterly attractive and compelling about discovering that type of character in a person, particularly in the light of all the brokenness and messiness in our world. Christians attest that Jesus Christ is that person and more than that, that one of the chief aims of human beings is to become more Christ-like themselves. For that to happen means we need to be prepared for a life of change and transformation that is for our good. Helpfully, one of the primary works of the Holy Spirit is to produce the character of Jesus in us. So when we grow in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control... the Spirit of God is at work in us personally and also as a church.

One of my previous vicars used to constantly say, when asked what his plan or strategy was, was that the church was to be more like Jesus this year than last year. Being transformed into the likeness of Christ. This year we are spending the year looking at the person of Jesus Christ from the gospel of Luke, who Jesus was, what he was like, what he did, how he did it and as we do so my prayer is that we will grow to be more like Jesus this year.

I'm excited about setting sail with fresh vision this year, centred around 4 words, Connect, Discover, Celebrate and Serve and developing missional plans around our 6 areas of mission (Café, Snow Hill, St Andrews, Walcot and the City, Events and Mission Partnerships) all with the purpose of sharing the light of Christ to the World, Walcot and Bath. We are all called to play our part in being good news people in 2019.

We have so much to be grateful for. Thank you for playing your part in the life of St Swithins, may we continue to give, to spur each other on, to lift others up, may we take inspiration from some of the dear saints, now departed, who chose to live their lives for Christ and his glory.

With every blessing in Christ
Tim



CONNECT
DISCOVER
CELEBRATE
SERVE

CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT

Paul Brewster

There have been a number of significant events in the practical life of the church during the past year. A solution was found after a number of years of searching for the future of the Gateway Centre in Snow Hill. The building has been transferred to The Genesis Trust (Bath). It will now provide a much-needed base for its LifeLine operations, and there are plans for a full-scale redevelopment of the site in years to come. Genesis has entered into a Collaboration Agreement with St. Swithin's which will ensure that the church can continue to make use of the property for ministry purposes in the years ahead, without having to cover the costs and responsibilities of ownership.

This has been the year of the Quinquennial Report on the buildings. This objective report by the church architect is produced every 5 years and helps us to keep on top of the inevitable maintenance issues that such a lovely building brings with it. The good news is that there are very few urgent issues. We have budgeted to address all of the recommendations within the suggested timeframe.

Looking ahead it is very much my prayer that God will bring forward people to serve in key positions. We still need a PCC Secretary, and Treasurer and a Safeguarding Officer. Please pray: can you help?

After several years of service as the church's Youth and Community Worker, Dominica Oatley moved on this year to pursue full-time fostering. Domi's work has been a wonderful addition to the church's ministry, especially in the Snow Hill area, and we thank God for her. Yein Pang joined the staff team to replace Domi and we look forward to seeing his ministry flower under God in the years ahead.

Keith Stuffins steps down this year as Church Warden. He has been the most supportive and helpful mentor for me; his unstinting commitment to St. Swithin's has been a blessing to us all. I am very grateful to him.



Nicola Stuffins

FINANCIAL REPORT

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace... in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” 1 Peter 4: 10-11

I have continued to “hold the fort” for the finances through the last 12 months. It has been a challenging year balancing the finance activities with my theology studies and work. I am enormously grateful to Marion Rogers for volunteering to support the accounts administration and she has done a fantastic job keeping the accounting system updated. Sandy and Janet contribute to the team keeping on top of the banking, payments, and payroll. It is great to work as part of a team and we would welcome anyone else who would like to join us.

The PCC General fund was in deficit in 2018 by £23,643. In addition, we have used £12,528 of Restricted Funds in

2018. We received a further grant of £7,642 from the St Johns Foundation to fund community activities and part of the Community Worker role at The Gateway. The total PCC funds have reduced from £160,918 at the start of 2018 to £124,747 at the end of 2018.

We presented the draft 2019 budget as part of “Belonging” in February and to date we have received £12,717 of gifts of which £6,480 is new regular monthly giving. I will provide a fuller overview of the 2018 accounts at the APCM and copies of the Charity Commission format accounts will be available at the back of the Church. The table below summarises the income and expenditure in the year by the type of funds.

Please continue to pray for the Finance team as we seek a new Treasurer and may we continue to be good stewards of all that God gives us in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

	Bal b/fwd 1/1/18	Receipts	Payments	Bal c/fwd 31/12/18
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted				
PCC general Fund	75,650	207,175	(215,818)	67,007
Community worker designated fund	-	-	-	-
Buildings maintenance designated fund	19,000	-	-	19,000
Worship Pastor designated fund	15,000	-	(15,000)	-
	109,650	207,175	(230,818)	86,007
Restricted				
Worship Pastor	33,892	-	(9,758)	24,134
St Johns Foundation - Gateway	5,589	7,642	(9,116)	4,115
St Swithin’s Building Fund	2,736	3,774	(5,071)	1,439
	42,217	11,416	(23,945)	29,689
Endowment				
Monument Fund	9,051	-	-	9,051
Total Funds	160,918	218,591	(254,762)	124,747



Tim Gleghorn

PCC REPORT

PCC Members during the year

Ex-officio: Rev Tim Gleghorn (Chair), Keith Stuffins (Churchwarden); Paul Brewster (Churchwarden); Sue East (Lay Reader until December 2018); **Elected:** Des Brown, David Kingston, Sarah Prentice, Stephen Bird, Rebecca Armstrong; **Co-opted:** Daniel Barker, Melanie Wortham, Kirsty Sutton.

The PCC considers the full range of church matters in providing leadership for the whole church. This includes vision, purpose, mission, culture, key decisions, expenditure plans, buildings maintenance and insurance to ensure the Church, Charity and Legal responsibilities are fulfilled, including compliance with new GDPR practices. Time has been spent carefully and prayerfully considering the future of the Gateway Centre and partnership with Genesis, our future vision, our Small Groups and also time is spent on reviewing 'how we are doing?', for example reviewing how key Church festivals have been celebrated.

All meetings are opened with devotions and prayer, as we seek God's presence among us and His guidance in our deliberations. Meetings are held most months, with additional time taken to consider key decisions and key areas. Minutes of PCC meetings are stored in the church office and a summary of each meeting is distributed as 'PCC Jottings'. The key posts of PCC Secretary and Treasurer are currently vacant. It is important we find those who feel they could fill those roles.

Governance: The PCC considers Health and Safety issues, Safeguarding Issues and General Data Protection issues at its meetings. A substantive Safeguarding Officer is needed in 2019.

Finance: Nicola Stuffins has continued to stand in as Treasurer until we find a permanent replacement and she has ensured the 2018 accounts were passed and also prepared a provisional budget for 2019.



Sandy Gooding

ELECTORAL ROLL

Once every six years the preparation of new church electoral rolls takes place, which means that everyone has to come off the roll and re-apply. This has happened in 2019.

At the last APCM on 22nd April 2018 there were 136 people on the Electoral Roll. During the year five people have died, eight people have moved away and thirteen people have left the church. This year fifteen new applicants have applied to join the Electoral Roll and it now stands at 125 people.





OPERATION & STEWARDSHIP MPT

Keith Stuffins

Chandeliers: We have considered the functioning and safe use of the chandeliers this year.

Health and Safety: Health and Safety is uppermost. Great thanks go to Henry Brown who is invaluable in advising us on Health and Safety matters.

Rain water ingress: How does the rain get in? The church architect has produced the next quinquennial report, after inspecting earlier this year. We are now working on highlighted priorities.

IT: We have changed supplier and made WiFi available across building. David Kingston has put in an enormous amount of work, when it comes to IT, for which we thank him hugely.

Stained glass: Minor repairs were carried out on windows at the north side of the church.

Top stone: Emery's the builders were detailed to cut and fix a new top stone to the end of the boundary wall in the south garden.

These are just some of the matters that our MPT addressed this year. We don't want to lose sight of Christ. It is important to remain good stewards, and oversee operations, so that St. Swithin's can remain a place where Christ is worshipped for many years to come. Operations and Stewardship MPT would fall apart without Janet. A massive thanks goes to calm and capable Janet for using her gifts and playing such a key role.

Colossians 1:16b-17

"All things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."



PASTORAL CARE

Jo Gleghorn

As part of the St Swithin's Church family we all have a vital part to play in the pastoral care and support of one another. We are very thankful for all those who spend time caring and supporting others in numerous ways.

There is a small Pastoral Care Team in the church and we recently met to discuss ways in which we could more effectively communicate how Pastoral Care can be accessed by church members. It was felt that it would be helpful to have one person as the initial contact who would then link them with a suitable team member and follow up with a visit or pastoral conversation. I am the link person and will seek to point people in the direction of most appropriate care. If you are interested in supporting this ministry please do let me know.

Tim and a small number of lay volunteers are available to visit people in their homes or in hospital at times of particular need. Again, if you feel that this is something God is prompting you to do, please get in touch.

During the year Tim and Mary Godfrey ran two specific training events to help further equip us for Pastoral Care. The first was some training on Prayer Ministry for those involved in this area of service and the second was a course to encourage us to think about how we can be more effective carers.

In the coming year we hope to find further opportunities to engage with training and equipping us in Pastoral Care.



Des Brown

MISSION

We have maintained our links with our Mission Partners - to differing degrees. **The basic mantra is Pray, Give, Go.** The **'Go'** usually involves an individual response. The last group from here was to The Warehouse in Capetown in 2016 but many mission agencies (including the ones we support) have long and short term opportunities for singles and/or couples. The **'Give'** response is covered in three ways : **1.** the Standing Orders which transfer money monthly to our ten Mission Partners from the budget allocated to the Mission MPT from the General Account : **2.** occasional one-off fundraisers/collections to e.g. recently Send a Cow, Bangladesh Disaster Appeal, Genesis Trust: **3.** payments by individuals to societies/causes of their choice. This is completely separate from the finances of the church. The **'Pray'** response is the one most coveted by those whom we support and is covered in a variety of ways: daily prayers in church, the midweek mid-day prayer meeting, Sunday intercessions, 'small group' meetings

and the different ways in which individuals commit themselves to prayer.

Each of our mission partners has a 'rep' within the congregation who receives prayer letters and circulates where appropriate to known supporters. There is scope for more of us to be involved as reps. and for more dedicated pray-ers. One way to forge strong links is through visits from our partners whenever they are in UK. In the latter part of 2018 Rev. Duncan McLea visited from South Africa and Hazel Maunsell from Ethiopia was in the Parish for a week. Recently we received the Rocks family and still in the pipeline are expected visits from a representative of CHIT, the Gatehouse family and the Guinness family.

The members of the MPT are Des and Maureen Brown, Jean Ashelby, Brenda Carter, Rosemary Bird and Nicola Stuffins. Please feel free to share your comments and your dreams with any or all of these.

Banen Link, supporting Wycliffe Bible Translators to bring the New Testament to the Banen people of Cameroon in their first language (Tunen).

Gatehouse Family, strengthening churches in East Asia but currently in UK

Genesis Trust : Bath-based Trust offering help and hope through a variety of programmes to those in various kinds of need in Bath

Guinness Family : Paul and Alison and their two children, supporting church growth in Burundi, Central Africa

Christian Homes in India Trust (CHIT), seeking to provide a safe and stable environment for young people to develop life and employment skills

Church's Ministry among Jewish people (CMJ) everywhere

Hazel Maunsell, working with Crosslinks in Ethiopia through academic and devotional literature and teaching (in Amharic) to renew the Orthodox Church.

Rocks Family : Jimmy and Katia, working in Florianopolis, Brazil under the auspices of CMS and Vineyard, Brazil to plant churches

TearFund, brings relief to victims of natural disasters, aims to lift needy communities out of poverty, acts as an advocate for justice, compassion and care for people and the environment

The Warehouse, Capetown, South Africa – the ministry of a consortium of local churches to bring hope, healing and help to struggling communities



Yein Pang

SNOW HILL ACTIVITIES

During the last four months, since joining the church family at St Swithin's, our ministry at Snow Hill has continued to go through a period of transition and change. This is due to our collaboration with Genesis Trust Bath, who will be moving several of their projects to the Gateway Centre in the beginning of April.

Although this process of transition has been a challenging one, particularly for the Gateway community, it has nevertheless been exciting, acting as a catalyst, and providing us an opportunity to rethink how to go about the ministry at Snow Hill over the coming season. I believe that God is doing something new, and it is important for us to keep in step with His Spirit as He goes before us.

Before the building was closed for refurbishment in January, we were able to hold a Christmas Dinner, a New Year's Party, as well as a holiday programme for the community over the Christmas period.

It has been fantastic to see many members of the community continue to be involved in the planning and running of activities, especially when it has not been an easy time for them.

Following the closure of the building, several projects that have been taking place at the Gateway, such as Bee's Café, have stopped. The Youth Club has been temporarily relocated to the Church Crypt and it has been encouraging to see a group of young people consistently turn up. We have already gone on several trips, and it is my hope and prayer that through the Youth Club, that we would not only be providing a weekly programme for the kids, but that we can also build strong relationships, and that by engaging with them in Youth Club and around the estate, that we can demonstrate and share God's love with them.

With regards to the TOAST café style church, Sean and Kirsty have done an amazing job to keep it going since I first arrived, and we have also had the

privilege of Keith and Judy joining the team. Over the past few months, we have decided to put TOAST on hold, and have been praying for a fresh vision for the Christian ministry in Snow Hill. Currently we are planning for the reopening of the centre, followed by an Alpha course, which we believe will allow members of the community to engage with and explore faith on a deeper level. This will be the primary ministry through which we seek to share the gospel at Snow Hill and it will be done alongside other activities that will be held at the Gateway. It is likely that the café church will resume after the Alpha course. The temporary closure of the Gateway has given the TOAST team the opportunity to take a break from serving and a chance to be more intentional in growing and journeying together as a team. This has been done with the conviction that if we want to be used to turn a place, it must first begin with us turning to God.

Prayer requests

- Please pray for the reopening of the Gateway, and the planning and running of the Alpha Course – may this be something that the community engages with.
- For more volunteers to join the team for Youth Club and for TOAST.
- Please speak to me if you are interested or would like to find out more!
- That the relationship between St Swithin's and the Gateway community would continue to develop and grow.
- That God would give us wisdom as we continue to seek His will with regards to the future of the ministry at Snow Hill and that what we do would make much of Him!



Howard Mathers

SNOW HILL GATEWAY TRUSTEES

On 4 March we advised the Charity Commission that we have dissolved the trust. A year ago it was rapidly becoming unsustainable to operate the Gateway Centre in a fit and safe condition with the income we could depend on. We were getting behind on the list of maintenance jobs recommended by the church architect. And we had just received another reminder in the form of a massive water bill on account of a leak attributable directly to our inability to fund proper care and maintenance.

We had made attempts to find a solution. The first was a grand project to collaborate with B&NES and others which collapsed at the end of 2014. The second was to explore a minimalist project on our own. This turned out to need a minimum of around £500,000, which we could not see our way to raising. In the early summer an opportunity began to appear to work with Genesis, who were looking for a new location for their Lifeline Centre and, as things unfolded, other offices and services too. As we talked, it seemed that we may literally have a marriage made in heaven.

That in His good time the Lord had a solution for both of us.

The nub of the proposal was that Genesis would take over the building on the basis of a collaboration agreement with the Church to provide space and time to continue a range of outreach and community activities. Genesis had the funds to make the building fit and safe again for the foreseeable future, so although the range of our activities would be reduced, those that we do will be sustainable because the building is again sustainable. Beyond this, it was clear that Genesis shared our vision for a better facility in due course, and with access to an established support base, they had a much better prospect of realising the money needed than we. It was, however, unrealistic to expect Genesis to raise money to develop someone else's property, and so this tipped the argument in favour of transferring the Centre to them.

We had four strands of work to develop. The first was to develop the collaboration agreement with Genesis to establish the ongoing working relationship for use of the building. Because in the longer term the collaboration was with the church, this was led by the Churchwardens and signed in December. The second was to register the property so that we could transfer it, which we also achieved in December. The third was to validate our trust document, which had been questioned by our lawyers advising on registration. Resolution took 4 months of engagement with the Charity Commission.

The fourth was to open up a consultation on the proposals. This is always a challenge, because on the one hand people want to know what you intend, so you have to develop the thinking a long way: on the other hand they want a say in what is going to happen, so the more you develop your thinking, the more it appears all decided and the consultation an afterthought.

The consultation unsurprisingly revealed concerns in the Snow Hill community that the range of activities there would reduce and the Genesis Lifeline Centre would bring unwelcome change to that part of the estate. We recognised these concerns, but we had no third way: either the activities reduced under a collaborative approach and the Genesis additional services took shape, or we stopped them altogether and shut the building down. We could see no early revival of the building whose dereliction would itself be damaging for the estate. We heard no-one favouring shutting it down, and we were encouraged that Genesis began their own consultation with the residents.

With the transfer complete on 21 January and the Trust dissolved, on 10 March we took the opportunity to give thanks for all the ministry that had taken place over the previous 100 years, almost to the day."



Janet Cornish

EVENTS REPORT

As I reflect over the past year, I'm conscious that amongst the many challenges of my role here at St Swithin's, achieving the right balance between the 'business' and the 'ministry' side of the lettings and events features highly. Providing a much needed income stream has of course always been a feature but so too has the desire to build relationships. 2018 saw a slight dip in the total income for the year, largely due to the fact we were not used as a venue for the Bath Festival in 2018 (we're back in 2019 though!)

However, I have become more aware of the depth of feeling more people are expressing about being part of the St Swithin's wider Community. This was most succinctly put by two St Andrew's teachers who, following Sue East's funeral service in Bath Abbey, said to me "As we walked up Walcot Street and reached the doors of St Swithin's, we felt as though we'd arrived home".

I have been on the receiving end of many other comments too from regular hirers who express their sense of feeling 'at home' with us. I strongly believe that that these foundation stones of a strong sense of welcome, acceptance and service are the bedrock to our ministry of hospitality and hope and pray that they will deepen as we seek to build God's Kingdom.

A particularly encouraging response to the deepening of our relationships is the fact that the leader of one of our regular choirs has joined with the Space team here at St Swithin's to enable the Taize services to take place over the past few years. Through this link several people have come to this act of worship who are not regular members of our (or indeed any) church. We rejoice in this and are always on the look out for other such opportunities.

The challenges of this area of ministry are most acutely felt in balancing the use of the building for outside (and therefore mostly 'paid') events and ensuring the building is not so extensively used that it's not available for church based activities. We are regularly used on Monday and Wednesday evenings and Tuesday mornings by local choirs. Music for Miniatures concerts take place approximately twice a month and many other choirs and orchestras, plus local groups use us on a regular basis.

The other constraint is the personnel to support this ministry. I am as always extremely grateful to those who share with me the responsibilities in ensuring these events run smoothly and with the sense of support hirers now expect and welcome from us. We are always on the look out for others to join our small team! I know many of you faithfully use the weekly news sheet as a prayer aide in support of this ministry. Thank you, I'm very grateful. If any of you would like to pray either corporately or privately on a more intentional basis for this ministry, I would love to hear from you.





MEN BEHAVING DADLY

Alex Wolstenholme

Men Behaving Dadly is held every 3rd Saturday morning of the month in the crypt. We are building community with a wide range of families both members of the Church and non-members alike.

Please pray for the families who participate in this club: for the partners having a little time to themselves and for the dads and preschoolers who come. We pray that they meet God in this space and learn his love for them. We also pray that some feel compelled to come on Sunday and join us for worship.



ST ANDREW'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Jane Brown & Pete Rogers

It's impossible to write a report on 2018 at St Andrew's without thinking first about our much loved Headteacher, Sue East, who died on 19 December. For 10 years Sue guided, inspired and encouraged her team as she led the school from a struggling and unhappy place into the lively, inclusive and joy-filled community it is today. We were truly blessed to have her at the helm. In the midst of all the sadness there was much to be thankful for.

Sue's funeral service at the Abbey, followed by refreshments at St Swithin's, was a fitting celebration of her life and her legacy. The school was overwhelmed by messages and offers of support, and is very grateful to Tim and the whole St Swithin's family for all the love and prayers which continue to support us as we move into a new phase in the life of St Andrew's.

The school became part of the Diocese of Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust in March 2018. There was an enormous amount of work involved to make the transition and adapt to the MAT ways of working. However the benefits of being part of a larger body with a clear Christian ethos have also been evident, particularly during the difficult months of December and January.

Isaiah 43:18-19 was read at Sue's funeral. This passage seems to be particularly appropriate as we seek to discern God's will for the future of the school and to find the streams which will carry us out of the wasteland of grief. Please continue to pray for all members of the school community.



SUNDAY CHILDREN'S GROUPS

Emily May

There is a group for 2-4 (Bubbles) 4-7 (Splash) and then 7-18 (Youth).

Ideally we would like to have another group called Lightsharers that would be aged 7-11.

The groups follow The Scripture Union themes (Lightlive) and they are run by volunteers and parents often serving on one Sunday a month.

It has been lovely to see a lot of younger children joining the groups and staying with us and becoming regular members of the church.

If this is something that you think you might like to help with then please ask Tim about this.



THE CAFE

Mike McAllister

The Cafe seems to continue to be a very vital part of St Swithin's Church, although this year has had its challenges. Isaiah 61 is still the scripture we hold on to, because the Lord has called us to those who need his love and grace in their lives.

We continue to see both new and regular customers who always comment how much they enjoy coming. Every month we have a group of ladies learning to speak Italian together and they are always joyful when we produce a macchiato coffee (small espresso coffee with foam). Apparently we are the best! Some Saturdays can be quite busy with Music for Miniatures, Men Behaving Dadly or different choirs practicing in the main church. These events make us very busy and sometimes we wonder how we made it through the day. The Cafe held the annual clergy meal in May last year, which was well received as well as private parties and funerals. Comments like "What a great venue to hold our party" and

"the food was very good" are often made.

We do strive to do and give our best to all, although it would be good to be able to have some volunteers we could call on to help ease the busyness, as we would still like to maintain the high level of quality and service we are known for.

Could you give a couple of hours to help out in the Cafe? You may feel inadequate but we will give you the support and training you need. We are a great bunch to work with and enjoy working together. We need help to continue to serve and love the people who come to the Cafe. They may be searching for something other than the food and drink we offer.

Thank you to all those who continue to come and support the Cafe. We do value your time with us. We continue to pray that the joy of the Lord will continue to be our strength.



PRAYER

Brenda Carter & Pete Rogers

There are so many ways we can pray. Some of us enjoy praying out loud in groups; others would rather spend time alone, in silence. Some look for inspiration (verses, poems or prayer stations) to go deeper; others just close their eyes and the adventure begins!

There's no right or wrong way to do it. God LOVES it when we spend time with Him and it's important that the rhythm of our church life includes a wide variety of prayer disciplines.

Many of our prayer meetings last for an hour. However one of our 2018 prayer events lasted for 4 days. From the 25th-29th March there was continuous 24hr prayer at St Swithin's as we marked Holy Week.

Participants reserved an hour to come and pray in church. Some took the same hour-slot each day! The main worship area was divided into 5 installations – 3 looking at those first Easter events through the eyes of

Peter, Simon of Cyrene and the fickle crowd. There was also an enormous (5m high) cross to sit beneath, constructed from organ pipes and a "geodesic" tomb to climb inside. It was an ambitious undertaking, and required endurance in the small hours, but many people were blessed by the opportunity to prepare busy hearts and minds for a meaningful Easter weekend.

Let's keep praying – however we choose to do it – to build and strengthen God's kingdom here in Bath!



*Just one or two,
So the bible says,
Our prayers,
Our pleas
Our silent entreats,
Heal the broken,
Hold the lame
Love the unlovable,
All in your name.*

Weds 12 Noon: Intercessory Prayers

Come and join this small group, dedicated to praying for restitution of our glorious world and all the treasures it contains. With approximately 500 years of prayers and wisdom between them you can expect a warm and gracious welcome. With The Holy Spirit leading, hearts open, we venture into the world broken by conflict, hunger, persecution and injustice – and intercede.

Holy Communion takes place first Wednesday of the month at 12 noon.

Prayers for our mission partners are integral to the intercessions as St Swithin's support them personally and are kept aware of their well-being and the work they are called to do.

The fruits of intercession are sprinkled like stardust over the earth. Healing, transformation, the sting taken from conflict by negotiation. Threats remain words, not actions. Green shoots of hope appear in an otherwise arid earth. With a thousand years of prayer emanating from this site a small weekly meeting praying for the world seems a very blessed place to be.

OASIS (WOMEN) WATERHOLE (MEN)

Waterhole and Oasis are groups that have experienced considerable changes over the last few years.

Currently, both groups are without regular leaders. Alex and Karyn Wolstenholme have generously given their time and energy to co-ordinate some fun social activities, including quiz and fish and chip supper evenings, a pottery painting afternoon and film evenings.

This has meant both groups continue to enrich the life of the church for which we are very grateful.

Please let us know if you have any thoughts or ideas about how these groups could flourish and develop. We'd love to hear from you.

FUN CLUB

The Fun Club has continued to meet on the first Monday of the month, mainly in the Crypt.

Attendance has been faithful, with a varied programme resulting from shared ideas at the AGM in February. In March we met James Collie, in April we had a cream tea, in May Des talked about the effects of The Reformation, in June we had a Games afternoon, in July we had tea at Lowdon Garden centre, in August we listened to Desert Island Choices, in September we had a Harvest Lunch, in October Jane Harris came from Songways and got us to sing, in November we had a Fish and Chip lunch in the Crypt, while in December our Christmas Lunch became an Advent Tea and in January we held our usual Epiphany Party. Not everything happened as per the programme but we demonstrated our ability to be flexible!

Des and Maureen Brown

The chief downside has been the final farewell to Peter Bazire and the loss of the company of Isobel, Sylvia Little, Kay Spiers, Eric Scott and David Seddon.

This year's programme is now in print and we look forward again to fun, food and fellowship, with great thankfulness all to those who continue to put themselves out for the common good.





Des Brown

CEMETERY REPORT

B&NES has continued its unending programme of routine maintenance but the highlight has been the inter-departmental co-operation that has allowed the splendid work of the volunteer team of Cotswold Wardens to come to a successful conclusion leaving a 225 metre stretch of the boundary wall on the west side of the cemetery fully rebuilt, repaired and capped.

The cemetery has not yet felt the full impact of so many human neighbours (on the Ensleigh site opposite) but continues to be a place of special interest to those pursuing local and social history and a cherished place of remembrance and the quiet contemplation of the eternal : all in contrast to the man who, seeing a sign offering burial plots for sale, rushed home to ask his wife if they should get one, to be told, 'Don't be silly. That's the last thing we need!'



Jo Gleghorn

TODDLER GROUP

Our baby and toddler group meets downstairs every Thursday morning in term time with coffee, snacks, toys, friendship and singing. Our numbers vary, there is definitely room to grow, but it is a real privilege to spend time building relationships with parents, grandparents and carers, the majority of whom are not part of the Sunday morning Church family.

If you are interested in getting involved please do let us know.

Please would you pray

- For our team of helpers: Jeanette, Claudia, Helen, Hannah and Jo
- For building of good relationships week by week and for growth
- That our group would be a place of welcome, acceptance and joy; a haven from the busyness of life with little people and a place where they can encounter God's presence and love.
- For opportunities to care and support people and that people would be open to us praying for them when opportunities arise.
- That our group would be an initial stepping stone to faith.





Sarah Prentice

ALPHA

Exploring questions about faith, telling our stories, a sense of belonging and sharing delicious meals, were all part of the Alpha course which took place during October–November 2018. For those who helped facilitate the course it was a joy and a privilege to be alongside our guests.

One of our guests commented that they really enjoyed eating together, and it was evident that God was building trust and friendship over shared food, ahead of listening to an Alpha talk and engaging in discussion.

Throughout the course there was a tangible sense of God’s peace and presence, thank you to all those who faithfully prayed for us, and to Mike for the amazing meals!

Those who helped with the course were encouraged each week as we met, stepped out in faith and allowed the Holy Spirit to lead us. Some of our guests were unable to attend every session – we trust and pray that all they heard will become part of their own story of faith.



SMALL GROUPS

Paul Brewster

St. Swithin’s currently has 6 small groups that meet on a weekly basis in term time. Group membership averages at around seven, although attendance is generally lower. The work of small groups is highly valued by those taking part, with an emphasis on fellowship, bible study, prayer and discussion.

In September I began a process of reviewing our systems. This started with joining the groups for their meetings and also meeting a number of church members not in groups. A written report for the congregation will be ready in April, from the small group leaders. This will contain a number of suggestions for strengthening our current arrangements for consideration.





Henry Brown

SPACE

Valerie Winning Hart

Silence Prayer And Contemplative Encounter

March: Palm Sunday retreat afternoon. A creative encounter with different stories from Easter leading into 24hr prayer and Holy week.

May: Portable prayer stations around the parish helping people to engage with prayer for, and in, the parish. Part of Thy kingdom Come, the Archbishop of Canterbury's call to prayer.

June: Space Team retreat day at The Old Bakery, Freshford. A time of sharing together and going deeper with God on the theme of rivers.

October: Whole retreat day led by Janet and Mary on letting go.

December: Peace. The Space team led the main service for Advent Sunday. This provided an opportunity for time and space to engage with Advent and our theme of Peace as we journeyed towards Christmas.

February: Taizé – The Light Has Dawned. Another beautiful evening of words, silence and songs led by Jane Harris of Songways choir, celebrating Candlemas and the presentation of Jesus in the temple.

This season we have said goodbye to Sarah Prentice and hello to James Collie. Thanks to the wonderful creative team of Simon Bradley, Ruth Norman, Pete Rogers, Mary Rogers, Janet Cornish, Nicola Stuffins and Tim Gleghorn. If you would like to be involved in anyway do get in touch.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

It's been a largely uneventful year, though it started with Tim going to hospital after an argument with the east chandelier. We're planning a review of the safe use of candles (and the chandeliers!) in the church.

Advice has been tendered on a handful of health & safety issues.

The public access defibrillator installed just across London Street from the church was stolen in January. A Sunday morning appeal raised the amazing sum of £470 towards the cost of a replacement device.

We'll be holding an Emergency First Aid at Work course in June 2019, and places are still available for anyone who'd like to join us.

"Safety first or hospital next"



SAFEGUARDING

“Safeguarding refers to the range of plans and activities that are put in place to protect children and adults who may be vulnerable to abuse and neglect from being exploited or harmed. Safeguarding in the church community – making our churches safe for children, young people and vulnerable adults – is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone involved in church life should know what to do in situations where a child, young person or vulnerable adult may have been harmed.” (Bath & Wells Diocesan website)

We are unashamedly starting this report with the same quotations as last year simply because these truths remain part of the backbone of what safeguarding is about and in this particular context, our responsibility here at St Swithin’s Church.

We continue to be in a place of transition as we seek God’s way forward with how to manage the vitally important area of Safeguarding.

On an interim basis, Janet (in the office) is managing the practicalities of providing those requiring DBS checks to be given the correct details as this now has to be done online. Paul is the named person who anyone with safeguarding concerns should speak to in the first instance.

This is an area of ministry that can and should be developed further and with the right person/s in place has the potential for supporting and blessing the church across all areas of ministry.

Having said all that, despite the fact we need named people to oversee this area of ministry, the responsibility for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults in our church community (and indeed in the wider community) remains not just with one or two people but with every single one of us.

Paul Brewster
& Janet Cornish

CHURCH FLOWERS

Jane Brown

During this last year, five members of staff (including church wardens) have attended Diocesan led Safeguarding Training courses and there have been no concerns raised within the church community of any safeguarding issues.

Have you ever wondered whose job it is to ensure that there are fresh flowers in the church every Sunday (except during Lent)? The small flower team would welcome more members, either to join the weekly rota or to help with the special displays for Christmas, Easter and Harvest. No special expertise needed – just a love of flowers! The flowers are paid for by donations from the congregation, often given in memory of a loved one. The flower team is always happy to respond to requests of this kind.

Please have a word with Jane Brown if you would like to contribute to this small element of our worship.





James Collie

WORSHIP

Eugene Petersen describes worship as a daily attendance to God’s presence; a whole-life response to who He is and what He has done. That all our day-to-day living and those beautiful acts of service are “in view of God’s mercy” (Romans 12:1).

Everyone contributes to our gathered worship in some way. We want to be a creative, diverse community, learning from one another and building each other up. We are passionate about giving voice to every generation and tongue. I want to say a huge thank you to those who have poured their everything into our gathered worship. It is simply impossible to name all that has been offered throughout the year from the hours spent engineering the PEACE letters, to the late-night setlist planning, to the software upgrades, to the beautiful flower arranging, to the care and thought put into times of contemplation led by the Space team.

Whilst we could still do with more help, the growth of our worship and

tech team this last year has been hugely encouraging. The team have such a heart for worship and the local church, and bring the likeness of Christ and a huge amount of gifts and time. In the coming months it might be worthwhile to spend some time together building relationships and dreaming about the way ahead. I believe we could be a bit more courageous in practicing the prophetic and allowing the Spirit to lead us. Our fortnightly Jam Nights continue. They are simply a drop-in opportunity to have fun worshipping through music.

Our informal evening service started in the Autumn. In the coming months I would love to see the sense of friendship, community and hospitality grow in this new congregation; that it becomes a place of home, support, sharing, and flourishing for many and where we are not simply tipping up to church for ourselves, but are there with eyes open to how God might use us to bless and disciple others.



James Collie

PIONEERING/STUDENTS/YOUNG ADULTS

It has been encouraging to see our community of young adults and students grow this year. We are spending time together developing friendships and imagining how things could grow going forwards.

One of the encouraging developments of the last year has been engaging with students where they are... on their campuses. Just last month I was with students sharing the gospel on campus and we saw a huge amount of openness to the good news. As part of the Bath Spa University Chaplaincy Team, I have been enjoying the privilege of serving food, offering a listening ear and praying for staff and students. During the summer exam period there’s a opportunity to help facilitate a festival-esque event up at Newton Park to bless students and be there for them in a time of immense stress. In the Autumn we will be creating a labyrinth on campus so that students can explore their sense of identity and hopefully engage with what God might have to say about it.

Bath Spa University’s Sion Hill campus is made up of a wonderful community of art and design students and staff. It sits in our parish and so there is a sense in which we could be doing more to bless and support those who belong there. Right now, that looks like a weekly drop-in creative space which is helping to develop a culture of encouragement, foster good mental health, allow for sharing of ideas and meet new people. If you are excited by the prospect of serving students on their campuses, I would love to chat about it! Equally, I would love us to grow in our commitment to pray for universities and students.

One of other developments of the last year has been the new church website. There is still plenty to learn when it comes to our online communications. Thoughts, ideas and willing hands are always welcome. We are in a season of discerning God’s vision for St Swithin’s and that will give shape to the look and feel of our designs going forward.



Keith Stuffins

OUR NEAR NEIGHBOURS

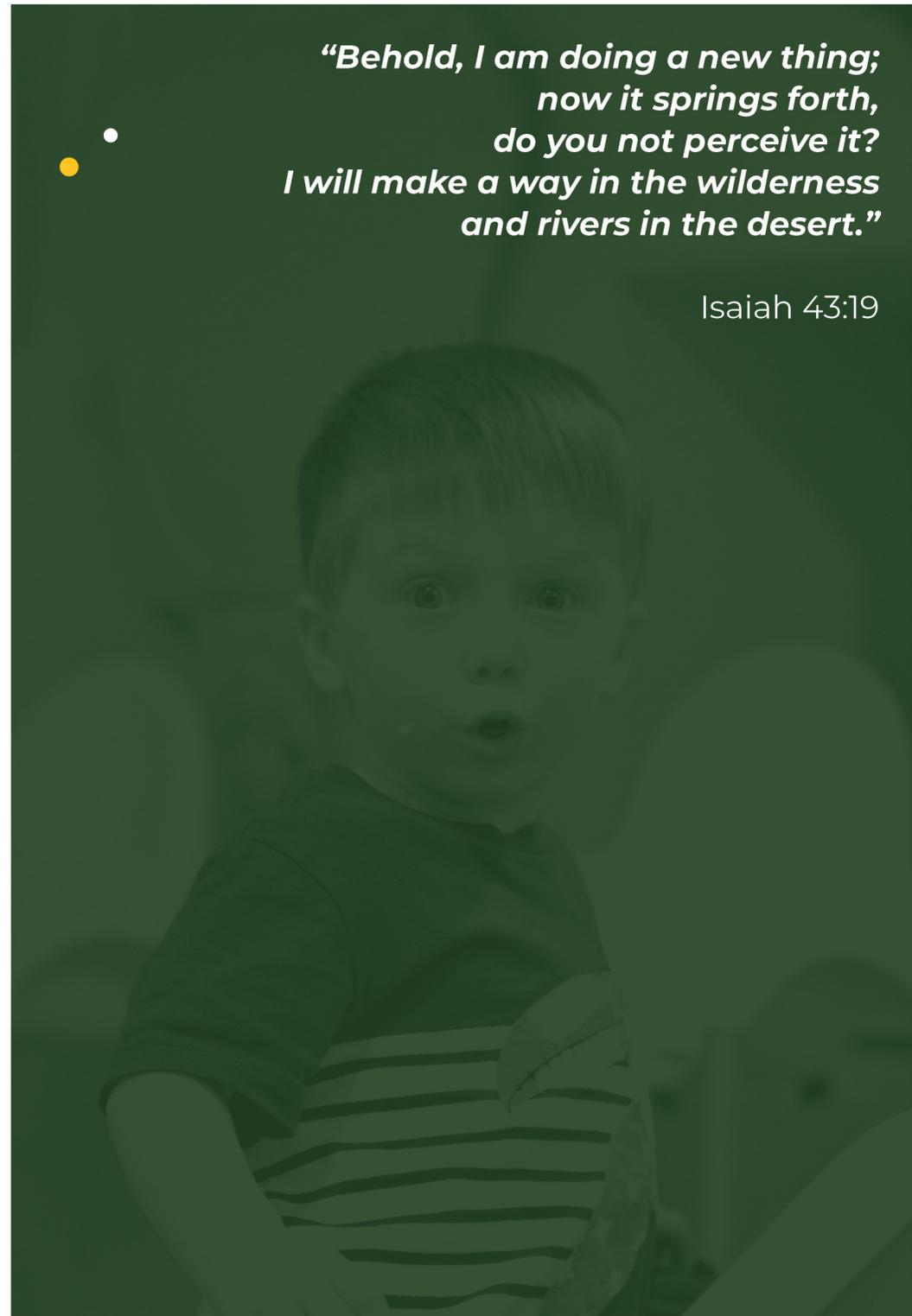
I don't live in the parish. The majority of the church family don't live in the parish. However it would be folly to ignore our near neighbours, the people we should be in relationship with, right on our doorstep. When I think of our near neighbours, I think of the people who live very close by and the various residents associations; the people who work locally; the Walcot Street Traders Association; local community groups; the Festival Fringe who have their office behind The Bell; the Friends of Hedgemoor Park; Vegmead; Wild Walcot; not forgetting the life that is breathed into the local area by our pubs and restaurants. I see great value in joining in with what is happening locally. In July last year I helped organise a picnic which was run by the Friends of Hedgemoor Park. There were 50 people, mainly local residents; a great opportunity to cement new friendships. We joined in with the street Christmas Tree scheme, and I helped put up the festoon lights, funded by the Walcot Street Traders Association.

This all added to a festive looking street, for the Festival Fringe organised Lantern Procession, in Walcot Street on the 9th December. It was good to see plenty of members of church joining in, as well as St. Andrew's School with the lanterns they had constructed. This year's "Nutcracker" theme made it a real spectacle.

If you feel that reaching out to our near neighbours is something you want to get more involved with, please do have a word with me. I know that these are not our only neighbours, but let's love our near neighbours. Looking ahead, St. Swithin's will be contributing in a small way to the Wild Walcot Project, which aims to enhance the green spaces along the street and link up a green corridor. A date for the diary is Sunday July 21st, which is the 130th anniversary of the opening of Hedgemoor Park. The Friends of Hedgemoor Park (who hold their meetings in St. Swithin's café) are planning a fete on this Sunday afternoon for the whole community, us included.

*“Behold, I am doing a new thing;
now it springs forth,
do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.”*

Isaiah 43:19



AGENDAS FOR THE VESTRY AND ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETINGS,

St Swithin's, Walcot on 14th April 2019

Vestry Meeting

1. Minutes of the 2018 Meeting
2. Elections of Churchwardens

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of the 2018 Meeting
2. Matters arising
3. Elections to the Parochial Parish Council
4. Churchwarden's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Rector's Report
7. Questions
8. Closing Prayer

MINUTES OF THE VESTRY MEETING,

Held at St Swithin's, Walcot on 22nd April 2018 at 12:00pm

Tim Gleghorn opened the meeting in prayer. He referred to the Annual Report booklet, that includes the agendas for this meeting and the APCM, thanking contributors for their efforts and encouraging everyone to read it fully and be encouraged by it.

1. Minutes of 2017 Vestry Meeting

The minutes of the 2017 meeting were agreed as an accurate record (proposed A Gibson, seconded A Byron).

2. Election of Churchwardens

Tim thanked Alice Byron and Keith Stuffins for their service as Churchwardens. Alice, who is stepping down from the role, was thanked for her faithful work, particularly during the interregnum and at the start of Tim's incumbency. In tribute to her, Tim mentioned the high regard in which she is held generally. In response, Alice expressed gratitude for the opportunity to grow that resulted from taking on this role, and for the partnership and friendship with Keith. She had learned how much 'invisible' work goes on behind the scenes by Church staff and members, and she was thankful for God's faithfulness.

Paul Brewster was proposed by David Kingston as a new Churchwarden, seconded by Sarah Cooke. Paul introduced himself and referenced the recent sermon series on Nehemiah as having resonance for him in this role: the importance of building the walls of the Church but also being mindful of what happens within the walls.

Paul Brewster and Keith Stuffins were elected as Churchwardens by unanimous vote.

Alice Byron offered prayers for Paul and Keith.
The Vestry Meeting was closed.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Held at St Swithin's, Walcot on 22nd April 2018 at 12:15pm

Apologies were received from Geraldine Dunlop and Des & Maureen Brown.

1. Minutes of the 2017 meeting

The minutes of the 2017 APCM were agreed as an accurate record.

2. Matters Arising

Item 8: Henry Brown thanked everyone for their compliance with his request for a more reverent atmosphere during Holy Communion.

3. Elections to the PCC

Tim Gleghorn, Rector, reported that three current PCC members were stepping down – Karyn Wolstenholme, John Myers and Paul Grant - as was the PCC secretary, Rebecca Goulding.

Melanie Wortham was proposed as a co-opted member of the PCC by Sarah Prentice, seconded by Rebecca Armstrong, Kirsty Sutton proposed as a co-opted member by Keith Stuffins, seconded Sarah Cooke.

Tim invited any member of the Church interested in becoming more involved in the life of the Church to approach him or one of the Churchwardens.

4. Treasurer's Report

Nicola Stuffins has been acting Treasurer since September and gave the Treasurer's Report, showing a Management Accounts version on the screen (the full version of the accounts was available to view at the back of the church). Main points to note:

- i. A large percentage of costs went on 'people', with 36% spent on the Parish Share (that pays, amongst other things, for the salary and housing of the rector) and 26% on staff.
- ii. 48% of income comes from planned giving.
- iii. Income from lettings remains stable but income from the café is down so it ran at a loss. The PCC has an action plan in place to address this situation in 2018.
- iv. Income has risen but so has expenditure; nevertheless there was a net surplus over the year.
- v. £16,000 of unrestricted reserves have been spent but a healthy balance remains in restricted reserves.

The challenge remains to maintain planned giving. Nicola thanked all who worked on the finances and financial administration over the year and assured the meeting of the careful stewardship of the Church's money. She quoted 2 Cor. 9:8 'And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work', encouraging all present not to feel constrained by finances in any future plans for the Church.

Nicola proposed keeping Burton Sweet as the independent examiner of our accounts, seconded by Alastair Gibson and passed unanimously.

The meeting was invited to pose any questions on finances to Nicola. Alastair Gibson thanked her for her clearly understandable presentation of the finances, acknowledging her gift for this task.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Held at St Swithin's, Walcot on 22nd April 2018 at 12:15pm

5. Safeguarding Policy

Tim Gleghorn thanked Sandy for her work over the years as Safeguarding Officer, as she now stands down from the role. He reported that a new Safeguarding policy will be brought to the PCC and Church in due course.

6. Rector's Report

Tim referred the meeting to his written report and reiterated:

- i. His gratitude to all for their service to the Church, however great or small, since he sees it all as of equal importance when one uses the gifts one is given.
- ii. His passion to see the whole Body represented here, being welcome and hospitable to all.
- iii. His search to determine what Church is all about in the eyes of its members. To this end, a group exercise was undertaken to establish how members view Church, with instructions to select two of six organisations that compare most closely to the Church. In the feedback, it appeared that most groups chose a social club and a hospital.
- iv. A sheet was handed out, formulated by the PCC, itemising how the PCC aims to conduct itself.
- v. The Gateway Centre and Snow Hill present a challenge to St Swithin's and Tim sees three options:
 1. Sell the building
 2. Raise money to refurbish it
 3. Partner with other organisations

This latter option has been given some consideration, and although the subject has not recently been discussed in detail at PCC, time has been set aside on Tuesday to pray as a Church. Private prayer on the matter is also encouraged.

Les Cooper, having declared a lifelong knowledge and love of Snow Hill, stated his view that the question of how to proceed with our work there is not down to the PCC but rather a matter for the Snow Hill Gateway Trustees. Tim disagreed, saying it's for the whole Church to decide and he himself is committed to it.

The rector ended his report by giving his view that the APCM is primarily a forum for celebrating the past year in the Church's life and reflected on the various ways that exist to discuss important issues other than in this meeting: privately to him, or in writing, or in a 'planned way' on a Sunday. He invited feedback from anyone struggling with any aspect of Church life, insisting it will be taken seriously, but requested three encouragements for every complaint. Slips of paper were handed out to the assembled for them to fill in accordingly.



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