

St Swithin's Walcot



Annual Report **2023**



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Dear St Swithin's church family

2022/23 has been a challenging but rewarding year. As people have continued to properly emerge from Covid, so we've begun to see new spiritual life begin to bud. Our vision is:

St Swithin's is here to build a thriving church in Walcot for the display of God's Splendour.

- Isaiah 61:3.

This is expressed as we:

- **Connect** with God, with one another, and with those around us
- **Discover** the good news of Jesus and His Kingdom
- **Celebrate** how this has and is changing lives
- **Serve** the people of Walcot, Bath and the world

There is so much to be grateful to God for, and to celebrate as a church. Seeing Individuals taking steps of faith has been a constant delight. We have sought to fan into flame the life of the Spirit this year in making the vision a reality, taking forward areas of children and youth, evangelism, estate strategy and justice, whilst continuing to do 'the basics' well.

Our Sundays all-year have been focussed on 'Walking by the Spirit'. Discovering more of the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and New, the importance of the 5-fold ministry in Ephesians 4, the wonder of the fruit and gifts of spirit, and the Spirit as 'God's Empowering Presence' in Paul's letters and in the Autumn the centrality of living forgiveness, it's been a rich year.

We're delighted that both Bryony Waterman and Suzi Darwin have joined the team as Ops Manager and Youth and Families worker, from within our church Community, and Nicola Stuffins and Jenny Griffiths continue to work voluntarily on the staff team. A few specific highlights have been the youth and families weekend away on the Gower, a week at Lee Abbey discovering the richness of 'Blessing' and the new life that the whole church Alpha has brought to the church.

Thank you so much for playing your part in the life of St Swithin's. As we journey through the book of Acts together in 2023, so I pray that God by His Spirit would draw us deeper into the glorious riches of his life and purposes, as we move forwards together in faith.

With every blessing in Christ
Tim



Church Wardens' Report

Becs Armstrong & Alastair Gibson

As you'll read in the rest of this report, there's so much to celebrate over the past year – we're excited to be working together and in partnership with other Christians from across Bath in a variety of ways. The Operations Committee has also been recently established, to help us manage the practical aspects of the church facilities and finances.

We're really grateful to everyone who helps in so many ways to support our ministry activities as well as our Sunday services, helping us to learn, worship and pray together week by week. Also to all those who help keep the church safe, clean and welcoming – from stewarding, operating the AV and live-streaming to clock-winding, cleaning and gardening – and everything in between! You are all so very much appreciated.

Looking forward, we're focusing on some necessary practical refurbishments of the church building, including the windows, Crypt flooring, AV system and heating system. As we set out in our recent Vision Sunday letter, a small group led by Alastair is also working with the Church Architect to identify options for developing the building and external spaces further, to best equip our future ministry. Please do continue to prayerfully consider how you could support these next phases of our church life – whether financially, with your time or other resources.

Our prayer for the coming year is that God would continue to unite and excite us all about what He has in store for us as a church family. We pray that the many gifts He has blessed us with – individually and collectively – would be released through the power of His Spirit, so that as a community we would flourish and grow together for His service and glory, inviting others to join us on the journey too.





Bubbles: 2 years old to Reception

The decision was made to temporarily pause Bubbles due to a lack of children in this age group. If this changes and the numbers increase, Bubbles will be restarted.

Splash: Reception to Year 2

Splash has been working through a series looking at the main bible characters over the past few months.

It has been great to see the children really engaging in these sessions and they have grown in their knowledge of key bible characters. This knowledge will give them a foundational understanding of the bible, which they can continue to develop and build on.

The children of Splash really enjoy their time together in these sessions and are building lovely relationships which I hope will help sustain and strengthen their faith in years to come.

Lightsharers: Year 3 to 6

On Sunday mornings Lightsharers have been working through a series called 'Christian Commitments'. Worship times have been developing and children are becoming more expressive singing as a group, we have learnt some new songs that the children have been enjoying.

Quieter children are growing in confidence and contributing in discussions. More children are comfortable praying aloud in the group.

Ignite: Year 7 to 11

Ignite meet on Sunday mornings, once a month on a Friday evening at St Swithin's and once a month attend a city wide youth night called A2.

On Sunday mornings, Ignite are working through a series called 'Christian Commitments' looking at how to practically live as a Christian in the day to day. This has created opportunities for interesting discussion, challenges and for the youth to grow deeper in their personal walk with God.

Friday nights have been a brilliant time of fellowship and fun, providing a space for the youth to open up and build trust with their peers and leaders.

Prayer Requests:

Please continue to pray for the children at St Swithin's that they would enjoy their time and have open hearts towards what God is wanting to teach them. Please pray for wisdom for all of our leaders to help communicate God's message in an engaging and age appropriate way.

Please also pray for more volunteers for all the teams, so that they can have input from a range of adults who are passionate about children's ministry.



Students and Young Adults

James Collie

Worship

James Collie

One of our young adults recently spoke of the “love without pretence” they have experienced at St Swithin’s. I can personally testify to the huge amount of prayer, support and encouragement I have felt at here during the ups and downs of my late 20s. I would not be who I am today without it. I can also see the impact that same genuine love is having on our student and young adult community. It’s helps young adults find their first home-away-from-home, get through the grind and stress of a degree, step into work, grow in their identity and build lasting, healthy relationships.

Things like Life Group, 1-2-1s, socials, prayer stations, chaplaincy, supporting the CUs and this generation serving in church has all been hugely encouraging this academic year, but God is also clearly at work in the incidental stuff beyond all the programmes and plans.

I was so moved recently when one of our students shared a word of knowledge at the front of church, because of the discernment and

courage it took. Not unlike another moment recently, away from the spotlight, where I witnessed one of our students met with God in a beautiful way. These guys are so hungry for God and will tip up rain or shine. And those who have been with us for a while have grown so much! Even a student I know through chaplaincy said 3 years ago that they hated God, but now is reading the Bible.

I am moved when I see church members who are generations apart, but still walk across the room to welcome and pray for each other. I loved hearing how a church-member gave some encouragement that helped lead to a long awaited job offer.

Let’s not underestimate how far small gestures of love and big prayers for this generation can go. Thank you for all who have given prayer and time to our students and young adults. Please do join in. There’s plenty more God has in store.

One of the encouragements is seeing the worshipping life of St Andrew’s School flourish. There’s a real sense of joy and peace in the assembly hall as we reflect on the Bible story, as we celebrate values like love and courage play out in the classroom, and as we hear 200+ children sing to God. A huge amount of thanks has to go to the staff, governors, and assembly team for helping the school thrive as a worshipping community.

Equally, I am hugely grateful for the worship and tech team I belong to here at St Swithin’s. As we all know, worshipping together is a wonderful privilege, and worship has so many beautiful facets. So there’s always more we can learn and grow in.

When we’re part of a whole, diverse church family, it can be easy to expend our energy on trying to hold all the expectations when it comes to worship. But our main concern is and always should be living for the display of His splendour. He is our Cornerstone. Everything else finds it’s place, strength and rest on Him.

We recently held a city-wide worship night at St Swithin’s where people were clearly meeting with God. Yet, the thing I loved the most were the passers-by, who stumbled across our building and saw something of Jesus that night that took them by surprise. Jesus’ splendour was on display.

And we get to display His splendour together. We are a royal priesthood. Everyone has a part to play. Our worship does not hinge on the right selection, or arrangement of songs. It’s not solely down to the leaders at the front. We lead each other in worship “from the pews”.

How it moves me to worship when I look around the room and consider the faithfulness and devoted lives. Since Christmas we’ve spent time worshipping in homes around the city on some Sunday nights. Those humble worship nights have reminded me how uncomplicated and wonderful a privilege worshipping together is, where anyone can bring a song, a word, a prayer or a testimony that brings God praise and helps to build one another up.



We continue to support our 9 Mission Partners prayerfully, financially and by developing our relationship with them.

- Hilary Long from Genesis Trust joined us for church lunch in April. She gave us a very helpful oversight of their various projects including Lifeline, the Food Bank and the Furniture Project. She also encouraged us to engage with their work in Bath.
- In July we had the pleasure of hosting Paul Guinness who gave us a superb picture of family life and the work he and Alison do in Burundi. He introduced the various agencies they partner with including Great Lakes, iNet, All Nations and The Burundi Mission Alliance.
- Hilary McLea from The Warehouse spoke at the church lunch in August. She introduced us to one of their latest resources, Contextual Bible Study, developed to aid understanding of the bible in our time and environment. She also updated us on Respond: a project developed to meet disasters such as fire and floods, which, sadly, are common in South Africa. Supporting and equipping local churches remains central to their work.

The Saturday Coffee Morning we held in June we hope to repeat. We aim to have a speaker to open the morning followed by mission updates and prayer for our partners. April, July and October are planned, details to follow nearer the time.

We endeavour to bring their valuable work to the attention of the whole congregation in every way possible. Events this year have included:

- Howard and Marianne Mathers kindly came last October. They not only gave us an update and overview of CHIT but also led the children's Sunday groups with a zoom call to the children in India. A tremendous success..
- We were delighted to welcome Katia, Joanna and Davi Rocks in January. Katia is developing her ministry following the departure of Jimmy. She returned to Brazil in March and will be focusing on CMS mission to reach out to 'those on the edges' including women's prison ministry.

If you're interested in joining our team, please speak to Nicola Stuffins or Brenda Carter.



Men's Breakfast Report

Roger Godfrey

It has always been great to attend the Men's Breakfast when twenty or so men from the church (and some with no church connection) come together. A full breakfast is served at 8am on a Saturday morning and as well as eating, noisy conversation ensues. While some are still eating, the speaker is introduced.

The speaker will choose their own subject such as their job, hobby, life experience etc. But will always speak of their faith in Jesus Christ. If there is time for questions we will offer these. The breakfast aims to finish around 9am.

We only held one breakfast in 2022 as I had to give up the organising, but, praise God, interest has been shown in someone taking over the leadership.

Come to the Table

Fay Ollis

A small group, roughly 10 persons, have been sharing this time together. It is a beautiful 'oasis' experience in the middle of a busy world.

Afterwards, we share a hearty soup and cookie lunch in the crypt, provided by Janet, and served by Jenny G (senior).

Our thanks go to all who help to make these times so uplifting...

the leaders, musicians, cook and servers. We are blessed indeed!! Please do join us if you are free. harvest

Prayer Tree Report

During Lent our Life Group have been looking at The Prayers of Jesus. We read of Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane and the disciples falling asleep.

Many times our eyes become heavy and, like the disciples, we let Jesus down. But we have the Spirit and Christ living within; we can send a quick text message and within minutes a group of people can ask for help and strength and courage to bring our needs to our Father.

The Prayer Tree was originally known as the Prayer Chain which could be broken at the weakest link. Now we have a tree, so the message goes out to all the branches at once. Where ever the 'prayer' is, work, home or travelling a quick 'Arrow' prayer can be given or more in depth if possible. Do please consider whether you could be a branch in our tree.

Text me, the trunk, with your needs or most of all if you are able to be a branch, on [07974387782](tel:07974387782).



PCC Report

Catherine Harrison Smith

PCC Membership 2022/2023

Ex Officio members:

Tim Gleghorn (Rector), Rebecca Armstrong (Churchwarden), Alastair Gibson (Churchwarden)

The PCC had an Away Morning in March to pray together and discuss the Church's Vision for the coming years – this was a wonderful chance to celebrate fellowship and discuss the plans we are hoping to implement, that are exciting for our mission. It includes a review of the Church Estate, and what we can do with our facilities. Prayer for this new work would be greatly appreciated!

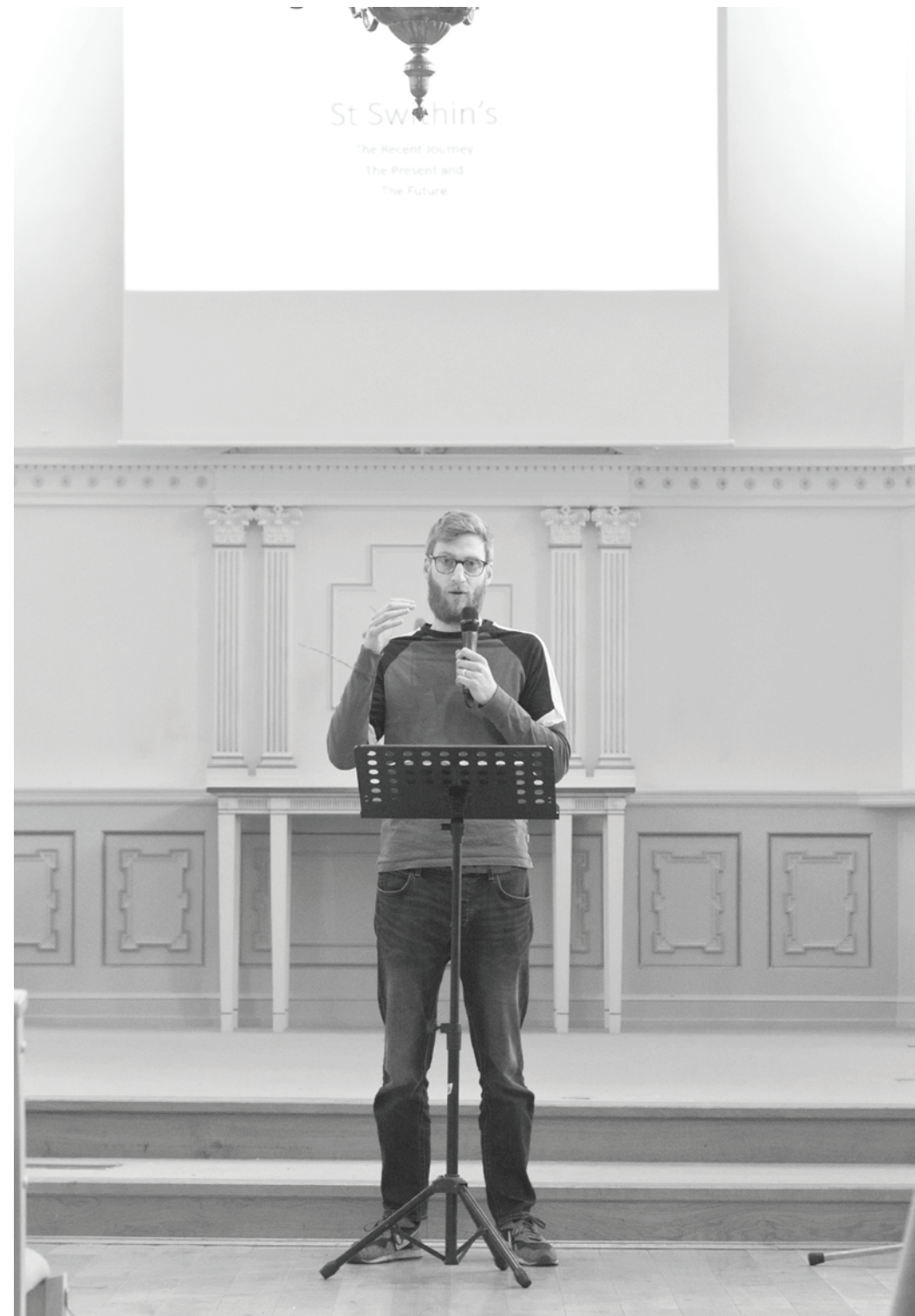
The PCC have received regular Financial reports from Nicola Stuffins (Acting Treasurer), Safeguarding updates from Wendy Judd (Safeguarding Officer) and Operations Updates from the Operations Committee. We are grateful to all of them for their hard work and clear information.

Elected members:

Amanda Aston, Brenda Carter, David Chambers, Dan Darwin, Catherine Harrison-Smith (Secretary)

The PCC were involved in organising the Church BBQ in July (led by Amanda) – this was a wonderful opportunity for the church family to come together and was very much appreciated. The PCC have also developed a sense of St Swithin's as a part of the city-wide family of churches in Bath – the Bath Deanery have been communicating their 5-year plan, and Waffles with Walcot has been set up with partners in other churches in Bath. We can't wait to see what God will do with St Swithin's next!

We thank those who are stepping down from the PCC this April for their service. Prayer would be welcomed for any new members elected at the APCM and for the year ahead that we can continue the good work of St Swithin's.





"Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you." - Luke 6:38

As church activities have returned to pre-pandemic levels, we have seen a corresponding increase in income and expenditure. Income is up by £20,531 largely due to increases in regular and one-off gifts from Church members (£7,109), letting of Church building (£6,262) and a legacy (£8,673). Expenditure was also up by £23,256 compared to 2021. Staff costs were down by £6,179 due to staff vacancies and timing of new starters. This saving was offset by increases in the Diocesan Parish Share, gas and electricity costs, and £16,392 of one-off building related costs including; an Estates Strategy report, boiler replacement, disabled toilet replacement, and roof and lighting repairs.

The net impact on Unrestricted funds is a deficit of £13,779 in the year which increases to £19,940 due to unrealised losses on shares held for investment. At the end of the year the unrestricted funds

totalled £241,459 of which; £222,459 are ordinary unrestricted funds and £19,000 designated as a Building Maintenance Fund by the PCC. At 31 December 2022 the unrestricted funds are made up of £109,139 of bank and short-term deposits, tangible fixed assets of £3,649, debtors largely Gift Aid recoverable of £98,041, CBF Investment Shares valued at £43,181, net of short-term creditors of £12,551.

The 2022 Charity Commission format accounts will be on the Church website and a few printed copies will be available at the back of Church. The table at the end of this report summarises the income and expenditure in the year by the type of funds.

It has been lovely to have support and help from others, in particular from Sheila Andrews who has faithfully served throughout the year and has been a great encourager. I have been

caretaking the Church Finances over a number of years and have been very aware that we needed to move forward with new technology, software and processes. David Chambers and Bryony Waterman have already made good progress with setting up new payment and income

software and enabling on-line banking. As I hand over to David, we can be confident that we will have more robust and simpler finance processes that will ensure that we continue to be good stewards of all that God has provided.

	Bal b/fwd 1/1/22 £	Income & Gains £	Expenditure & Losses £	Transfer £	Bal c/fwd 31/12/22 £
Unrestricted					
PCC General Fund	238,329	195,176	(211,046)	-	222,459
Buildings Maintenance Designated Fund	19,000	-	-	-	19,000
	257,329	195,176	(211,046)	-	241,459
Restricted					
Overseas Mission	13,881	-	-	-	13,881
St Swithin's Building Fund	3,670	4,647	(8,317)	-	-
	17,551	4,647	(8,317)	-	13,881
Endowment					
Monument Fund	9,051	-	-	-	9,051
Total Funds	283,931	199,823	(219,363)	-	264,391

