

St Margaret of Antioch Church Crick

~ Sharing Jesus ~



ANNUAL REPORTS 2023~2024

“There is one body, but it has many parts...”

1 Corinthians 12:12

Rector: Reverend Graeme Anderson

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St Margaret of Antioch Church

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting Wednesday 6th April 2023
at 7.30pm**

Opening Prayer

Agenda

VESTRY MEETING

To elect two Churchwardens for the coming year

APCM

Apologies for absence

Minutes of 2023 APCM

Notification of any questions

Electoral roll update

Appointment of Electoral Roll Officer

Annual reports

Financial review

Presentation of the Audited Accounts for the parish for the year
ended 31st December 2023

Appointment of independent examiner of accounts

Adoption of Reports

Election of Parochial Church Council

PCC MEETING

Election/confirmation of Secretary and Treasurer

Election of Deanery Synod Representatives

To elect a Vice-Chair

Chairman's closing remarks

**All members of the Parish are welcome to attend these meetings but only those on
the Church Electoral Roll may vote at the Annual Church Meeting**

**Record of Minutes from
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

Wednesday 26th April 2023, at 7:30pm

Attendance: Rev Graeme Anderson, Rev Kris Seward, Rev Jo Ognjanovic, John Rogers, Kent Polley, Lyn Johnson, Dave Milne, Sue Milne, Jacqueline Smith, Carole Smith, Ray Smith, Judy Anderson, Andrew Hutley, Hazel Gault, Bryan Gault, Chrissie Turner, David Turner, Barbara Brazier, Zona Dipple

Opening Prayer: led by Rev. Graeme

Vestry Meeting: Election of two Church Wardens

There were 2 nominations for John Rogers and Kent Polley. They were the previous wardens and were unanimously re-elected.

APCM:

Apologies:

None

Minutes of 2022:

KP proposed they were accepted AH seconded that they are a true and accurate reflection of the meeting and the minutes were duly signed.

Notification of any questions:

None

Electoral Roll update:

We have currently 54 on the electoral roll. It entitles us to an additional member on Deanery Synod.

Appointment of Electoral Roll Officer:

Dave Milne agreed to continue in this role

Annual reports:

Vicar's Report:

GA highlighted what a privilege it has been to lead in this parish and attributed that success to the workings of God.

He was very appreciative of the support of the CWs and Rev Kris, and Rev Jo. He quoted from 1 Corinthians : 13 'If I speak in the tongues[a] of men or of angels, but do not have

love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,[b] but do not have love, I gain nothing..”

GA said that love is growing among us and is continuing to grow. Love must be at the leading edge of all our ministry and kindness needs to be at the centre of our continuing work for God.

CWs report: GA complimented them on their fulsome report. JR commented on the attendance numbers and the rules that we have to follow. Our numbers currently do not include Shine attendance because it is regarded as a ‘Fresh Expression’ of worship. In 2019 attendance averaged 21, in 2022 it was 32, but if Shine was included, the numbers doubled. Attendance does not include Wednesday worship which has also increased.

However, once Shine numbers are included our parish share will increase because an increase in congregation assumes an increase in giving!!

Q: Has the giving increased for Shine worship?

A: Giving is predominantly by regular givers

Q: When is Shine no longer a fresh Expression?

A: We need to wait for the new instructions

Our congregation has more or less doubled, despite falling numbers in the C of E nationally of 40%.

Deanery Synod:

There is a vacancy for another representative on this committee

Diocesan Synod:

The synod is a strategic group looking at the wider national imperatives of the C. of E. which are disseminated back to the parishes.

Safeguarding:

ZD has been an excellent officer and has been diligent in ensuring we are all appropriately DBS checked and trained. She is now stepping down. Rev G thanked her for her hard work and diligence. He has enjoyed working with her.

General comments:

Comment: Are we getting towards the time where people can kneel at the altar rail?

Answer: Yes, certainly and the host will be served to them there. CWs can arrange this.

Rev J: Thanked Rev G for his love of God and us.

Rev K: Thanked him for his leadership and appreciated being 'a sheep in his flock'.

CS: Thanked Andrew Hutley , Nigel Howard and the choir for their hard work and the excellent music

CT: Thanked all the PCC for all their commitment and contributions to the church. It is not an easy job and the working atmosphere is a good one.

JA: Thanked the CWs for their support of Rev G

ZD: Thanked Barbara for all her support with teas, LS and her general background help.

HG: commented about the Welton Baby Project and how others have noticed what a good team we have at St M's

Development of Worship:

Rev G commented particularly on the growth of Shine and the outstanding leadership of Rev Kris. God in his kindness has supported this.

Prayers and Puddings is excellent and recommended. He compared it to the team 'in the boiler room of a steam ship shovelling coal'. No matter how impressive the ship is, it does not go anywhere without those who shovel coal into the boiler.

Rev G is now praying about the next developments in our church. The process of change takes time, and he assured the meeting that a good and timely process will ensue.

Children's Report:

Rev Kris said it was a joy to be serving in this community and the congregation have responded so very well. The Shine team is working well together and are stepping up into leadership roles and contributions. It had its first baptism last service.

CT: commented on the 'true gift' that Rev Kris has to work with children and families. This was endorsed by all the meeting. He responded by saying that God was truly moving in this place.

JR noted that by 'changing the conversation' and asking families when it would be convenient for them to come to church and responding to that transformed their attendance and the children enjoy coming!

Little Saints:

Fabulous. A steady group of families and regular numbers of 7. ZD thanked the team. It was noted how attractive her displays and creative activities are and the impact they have.

Choir:

Potential new member. It is currently preparing for the Ascension Sunday choral evensong.

Music In Church:

AH noted it was a joy to work with the team who are always enthusiastic about the next event.

Rev Kris. Thanked AH for his work here and across the benefice.

Voices:

Continues to be successful because of the unfailing support and creativity of the contributors and LJ thanked them. LJ was also thanked.

Online communication:

JR noted this has impact. Communication is essential and the different ways we promote services enables a wider range of people to connect with us.

Scarecrow festival and afternoon teas:

Raised over £3000 this year!

Foodbank:

Thank you to BB and SB for their continued support. The food poverty situation nationally is serious and we need to collect as much as possible. BB asked that we promote the food bank more in church.

Confirmation and Baptism.

We will have had 17 confirmations from this benefice by the end of the summer, 11 of which come from this parish. This is an outstanding number.

Assemblies:

RS thanked the school team and DT is now joining them. GA noted that these are our largest evangelistic events.

Welton Baby Project:

HG is still collecting baby clothes for struggling families.

Asylum Seekers:

JA expressed the learning curve we have experienced working with and supporting the asylum seekers. The Iranians particularly have felt welcomed and loved in our church. Speak English has had a developmental impact for the men as they gain more confidence in our language. Cheryl Stonehouse has provided the teaching resources without which the classes would have struggled. DT commented on how the men have become 'friends' and some have become Christians in our church.

FOSM:

It is an excellent team continuing to raise funds for the church building.

Crick Old School:

The transformation is amazing. It is a well-used community space.

GA mentioned 5 key people who been instrumental in its transformation and thanked them. These are Rev'd Jo and her husband Rade, John Rogers, Brian Hughes, and Janet Emery.

Flowers, Floodlights and Welcome Pack:

Should we charge more for the use of floodlights now that the energy prices are so high?
£20 per night.

Financial review:

Because our parish share has increased our finances this year will be tight. We still have a good energy contract which runs for another 18 months, but in 2024 things could be much more difficult if high energy prices continue.

GA explained that prior to 2021, although Crick's portion of the parish share was 37% and we were underpaying by £6000! Yelvertoft was supporting the benefice shortfall. In 2021 we paid our 37% parish share in full. In 2022 our share went up to 42% and we paid it in full. We are now at 47% share and are on track to pay this in full, but it may be tight. However, our share is becoming more proportionate.

GA is impressed with the sense of 'benefice' rather than individual churches which has helped everyone.

JS commented on the benefice joining together for the All Souls service and its impact.

Rev K noted the value of the CWs joint meetings and the difference this has made.

JR noted the impact consistency of presentation has had which has been driven by JS, her eye for detail and her promotional background.

Presentation of Audited Accounts:

The PCC thanked the auditor, David Holmes. He has agreed to continue next year.

JS proposed to accept the financial accounts and it was seconded by RS and unanimously agreed.

Adoption of reports:

Proposer JS Seconded RS. Unanimously agreed

Election of Parochial Church Council: 9 positions were available and there were 5 nominations so all were appointed. Hazel Gault, Jacqueline Smith, Zona Dipple, Dave Milne, Ian Jones.

PCC Meeting:

Election/confirmation of Secretary and Treasurer.

Dave Milne is happy to continue as treasurer and Lyn Johnson will continue as secretary.

To elect a vice chairman:

JR was unanimously elected.

Chairman's closing remarks:

When we invest so much of our time and energy into church, we can mistakenly see the church as something we own "our church". We must always remember this is God's church, and we are delighted and thankful to be part of it and serve within it.

Closing prayer was given by Rev G.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

St Margaret of Antioch Church Crick

Perspectives on 2023

Leading in this Benefice:

Once again, our APCM has come round so fast, and I wonder why. For me it is because so much has happened. I am tempted to list everything that I can remember but will refrain. It is better to write in a more general way regarding this past year.

This year we have seen people growing in God, and that is wonderful. I have been so delighted to see the folk in Crick benefitting from the varied ministries of Rev Kris and Rev Jo. Even though they are/were training, I am sure that you will agree that our Lord has been doing things through them that we are benefitting from so much. We wish every blessing to Rev Kris in his new role, and are so very grateful – not only for what Rev Jo does, but also who she is. Also, let's not forget all of the people who are involved with the SHINE service. They are really stepping up since Rev Kris's departure. May I encourage us all to pray especially for them.

My mind goes back to the various the various things that have gone on in the past year, not least of which is the Scarecrow festival. Then there have been the musical evenings, the school assemblies, the actual services themselves, the Mothering Saturday tea, Voices, Little Saints, Foodbank, Asylum Seekers help etc. etc. The list really does go on, and do not be offended if I do not mention you specifically.

It thrills my heart to see the church full of children, and that has happened a few times this year. There was Remembrance, and then the school services. Wonderful. It is also thrilling that we continue to have people wanting to be confirmed. This is such a positive step forwards.

We must remember and be deeply thankful to our PCC members. They give up evenings (not to mention other times) in serving the church and addressing the nitty gritty of how church works. I am so very aware that these are all volunteers, and special thanks needs to go to our Churchwardens John and Kent. We need to remember that it is not only the time that they put in, but also the portion of their brains that is often taken up with church related things. Well done them!

Then there are people who make their contributions so consistently that it is easy to take them for granted, and we must not. For example Lyn does the Voices publication so faithfully every week, and is also a brilliant PCC Secretary. Then don't forget the vergers of the services, the people who lay on refreshments at the end of services.

Talking of Fabric, this last year has seen the formation of the Fabric subcommittee. This is new territory for our church, and we are very grateful for their contribution. Kent is leading this committee well, and Glen has put more time and effort than I can remember. We are also challenged with part of the ceiling falling down. The efforts of John to get this resolved is remarkable.

Financially we are keeping our heads above water, and that is in no small part due to the generosity of people who give money to the church. Please continue to give generously, as we really need it and it is most appreciated. I can assure you that the money is spent well. We are so grateful for the efforts of the Friends of St Margaret group, and it was due to them that the chancel ceiling repairs were paid for. We do need to set up a church fundraising group. For Christians, our money is really God's money in bank accounts with our name on it!

Haven't Andrew and Ann been great over the past year. Andrew in particular has brought an extraordinary level of expertise to the technical side of things. If you have not seen any of the videos that he has done, then let me recommend them to you. They are up-lifting. This year has seen Ray become our Safeguarding Officer. Firstly we thank Zona so much for her stint at this vital role. Ray has now finished all of his training, and made a very significant contribution at one of our PCC meetings.

As to the deanery itself, as Rural Dean, I have had to direct some of my energy towards the other forty parishes in our deanery. The diocese has also asked me to contribute towards a couple of other things, which has been helpful to the whole diocese. Although this is a negative in one way, it is for the benefit of the Kingdom of God in a wider way. Our diocese has been supportive, and the ministry of our Rev Jo and Rev Kris has been part of God making up for a bit less of me. As an aside, in the past I have had a Curate that needed a totally massive amount of my energy and gave very little to my previous church! Rev Kris and Rev Jo are not like that!

I see this next year as having two main focuses. One of these is to grow in our relationship with our Lord ourselves. A new home group has started, and it is really good. I hope that this will be a platform for further spiritual growth. The other focus is for us to grow in confidence in drawing people towards our Lord Jesus ourselves. Let's explore that together. Last of all, I want us to spend a few moments focusing on Dave Milne (I hope that you don't mind Dave). He is so much part of the church, and I don't know how many hours he has put in, but I think it safe to say that we would all run out of fingers and toes trying to calculate that! He is going through a process of stepping down from most of his responsibilities, and that is a huge thing. When someone has been serving for so long, their very identity is wrapped up in their responsibility. So this is a huge change, and we need to pray for Dave, and have a deep and respectful heart of thanks towards him.

Always with love and respect,

Rev. Graeme.

Structure, Governance and Management.

Churchwarden's Report 2023

Churchwarden's Report 2024

Background:

St Margaret's Parochial Church Council is a group of people who work together with the Rector to run the church. The PCC met 6 times in 2023. Minutes of PCC meetings are available in the church porch and on our website.

The PCC is a charity exempted from registration with the charity commission.

Membership:

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected at the APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

At the 2023 APCM the following were elected as PCC members Hazel Gault, Jacqueline Smith, Zona Dipple, Ian Jones, Dave Milne (Treasurer), Andrew Hutley (Assistant Churchwarden). Ex-officio members were Rev Graeme Anderson (Rector and Chair), Rev Kris Seward (Curate), Kent Polley (Churchwarden), John Rogers (Churchwarden and Vice Chair), Lyn Johnson (Diocesan Synod Representative and PCC Secretary).

Groups and individuals that support St Margaret's

Our grateful thanks to the support and help that has been provided by many individuals and groups that sustain St Margaret's. These include: the independent charity, Friends of St Margaret's (FOSM) that raises funds for the fabric of the church; Little Saints on Monday pre-school group; Bright Ideas fundraising committee, English Speaking classes volunteers, organists and choir; worship group; readers and intercessors; lay preachers; vergers; 'meeters and greeters'; church keyholders, AV operators; sacristan; coordinators for baptisms, weddings and funerals; church flowers; Rugby Foodbank collection point; school assembly volunteers; tea/coffee/refreshments volunteers; welcome pack coordinator, floodlighting, bellringers; and our Helping Hands/church cleaning group.

Throughout 2023, church members from St Margaret's ran the English-Speaking classes for the Ibis residents. These were very well attended and appreciated. The Ibis ceased being an accommodation point for asylum seekers in November 2023 and the residents were rehoused in other hotels. Sadly, this change also meant that we had to say farewell to a wonderful group of men who had become an important part of our community. We continue to hold them in our prayers.

Church attendance:

The Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) for 2023 was 28. For comparison purposes, the ASAs for 2022 and 2019 were 32 and 21 respectively. Comparison data for 2020 and 2021 has not been calculated because of the effect of the pandemic.

Notes on ASA calculation based on current Diocesan policy:

- Everyone aged 16 and over including visitors and choir
- Excludes the President/Priest
- Excludes the six highest attended services (accounts for special occasions)
- Excludes the six lowest attended services (accounts for holidays)
- Excludes all fresh expressions, e.g., Shine services are not included

Note 1: Our Shine service started in October 2022. During 2023, the average monthly attendance at Shine service was 24 adults and 16 children.

Note 2: Total Sunday attendances for all services including Shine:

2019 – 1274, 2022 – 1858, 2023 - 1853

Services Rota (approved by our Bishop).

There were no changes to our service pattern in 2023.

Service	Service type
1st Sunday 9.45	Informal Morning Praise
2nd Sunday 9.45	Holy Communion
3rd Sunday 3pm	Shine
4th Sunday 9.45	Songs of Praise
5th Sunday 11.15	United Benefice Service
Wednesday 10.30	Holy Communion

Occasional offices and special services

In 2023 there were 6 baptisms, 0 weddings, 1 wedding blessings/renewal of wedding vows, 4 funerals.

We also held special services to mark the followings events:

- Crick Primary School Leavers' Service 20th July
- Annual Service of Remembrance 12th November

- Crick Primary School Christingle 19th December

Christmas

The Christmas special services were very well attended and received:

- 10th December, 3.30pm – Family carols
- 17th December, 6pm – 7 lessons and carols
- 24th December, 4pm – Crib service
- 24th December, 7pm – Midnight Holy Communion

A video of our traditional carol service was produced by Andrew and, at the date of this report, had received 45 views.

All households in the village were leafleted with details of our Christmas services.

Review of the year:

Fundraising and events

The challenges of our Grade 1 listed church building and the need to meet our annual parish share and other running costs means that fundraising is an activity that needs constant attention. However, an important principle is that it's focus should be about mission not masonry. Over the past couple of years, we have begun to produce a calendar of thoughtful touch points that are linked to the seasons of the church's year and which enables us to extend a warm welcome and encourage relationship-building in everything we do.

In 2023, we introduced two new food-based fundraisers: firstly the 'Sparkling Afternoon Teas' held on 18th March as part of the Mothering Sunday celebrations raised £600 and, secondly, the Harvest Supper on 23rd September raised £350. Both events were very successful and will be repeated. We ran a BBQ and teas at the King's Coronation Street Party, which raised £650. We enjoyed offering the ever-popular tearoom and BBQ at the annual Crick Scarecrow and Music Festival and raised £3,000; we participated in the annual Ride and Stride supporting the work of Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust; and the a cappella group, Ocho, gave concerts in the Summer and at Christmas, for which St Margaret's received £525.

On 17th June, we introduced a pilgrimage walk around the benefice the highlight of which was an outdoor Holy Communion at All Saints, Lilbourne. We are planning to run the walk again on 15th June 2024.

Rectors' Board

The Rectors' Board was renewed and was dedicated by Rev Graeme at the Songs of Praise service on 25th February 2024. Our grateful thanks to John Winn for his generous donation for making this possible; it has been dedicated to the memory of Loraine.

Communication

We continued to promote St Margaret's online via our website and group page on Facebook. We have also continued to produce Voices, our weekly newsletter, which has been distributed by email and paper copies to all those on our pastoral list.

Benefice Churchwardens' meetings

The benefice churchwardens met every 6/8 weeks throughout the year over a meal in a local pub. These events have enabled stronger relationships and collaboration between the 3 parishes.

Fabric of the building:

Fabric Sub-Committee – a Fabric sub-committee was established and met for the first time on 13th September. Its initial members being: Rev Graeme, Kent Polley (chair), Ian Jones, Glen Smith, John Winn, Andrew Hutley, and FOSM rep, Sue Milne.

Quinquennial - The Fabric Committee worked through our December 2022 Quinquennial Inspection Report. A spreadsheet was created to breakdown the report into the A, B and C priorities for action.

The most urgent priority was to repair an area of unstable plaster ceiling in the chancel. This work was completed in December at a cost of £16,000 with the generous support of FOSM who provided 100% of the funds. The scaffolding was removed in the early part of 2024.

Elliot organ - Our historic organ continues to function with no major issues. A minor adjustment was made just before Christmas to the action relating to one note but apart from this instance the tuner has reported no other observations needing attention.

Vandalism

During the 4th quarter of 2023 we experienced a number of minor acts of vandalism inside the church building when children's toys in the Little Saints area were broken and some of the oil-filled candles on the pew sconces were damaged. The builder also reported unauthorised access to the scaffolding in the chancel and tampering with the lifting equipment. All of these incidents were reported to the Police. To protect the building, the PCC took the unwelcome decision to keep the church locked when unattended. The church porch has been used from time-to-time as an informal

gathering point for local young people and, periodically, litter and broken glass has been left as well as tampering with foodbank donations. All instances were reported to the Police. A proposal to install CCTV has been approved by the PCC. This will go ahead once we have received a faculty.

Parish Share

The Diocesan Parish Share is much like a tax that's paid to the diocese to contribute to the costs of supporting a full-time Rector and associated costs for housing and pensions. As a benefice our Parish Share in 2023 was unchanged at £68,595 of which St Margaret's was responsible for £32,240 - 47% of the benefice total. (All Saints' Yelvertoft £28,810 - 42% and All Saints' Lilbourne £7,545 - 11%).

St Margaret's paid it's Parish Share in full as did the other two parishes.

Planned Giving and card reader

Planned giving by direct debit increased throughout the year and at the year-end amounted to £3,058/month/£36,696/year inclusive of Gift Aid. We have 34 members on the Parish Giving Scheme and 3 people who pay by standing order direct to St Margaret's. The Gift Aid on the latter is claimed annually. 14 members on the Parish Giving Scheme have agreed to annual inflation increases. 3 members who don't accept inflation increases have reviewed and increased their giving.

Our card reader for contactless giving has been live since the beginning of September 2021. It is an invaluable means of collecting offerings at services and at fund raising events.

Financial statements

These are prepared for the PCC in accordance with the church accounting regulations using the 'receipts and payments basis' by Dave Milne and were independently examined by David Holmes in March 2024. The PCC had no financial liabilities other than the diocese as of 31st December 2023. A copy of the balance sheet is attached to this report.

The Old School, Crick

Rev Graeme, Kent Polley and John Rogers are trustees of The Old School working alongside 2 representatives from Crick Parish Council. A great deal of progress has been made to improve the building and increase bookings. Our thanks to our volunteers who help run the twice-weekly community hub, to Ian Jones and his team from Acre Contracting for improvements to the electrics, lighting and ceiling panels in the main hall, to Rev Jo who manages the bookings and to Dee Frankling who keeps the building clean and tidy. *Kent Polley and John Rogers, Churchwardens*

Deanery Synod:

This all seems a bit strange, as I (Rev Graeme) am the Rural Dean. Firstly, I would like to let you all know that Chris Banks, our lay chair of Deanery Synod is such a wonderful asset to the deanery. You need to know that. His engagement, energy, and collaborative attitude is totally great.

Deanery Synods are funny old things! In some ways they are really helpful and necessary, and in other ways they can be frustrating. I am just being very straight with you!

Chris and I are trying to make Deanery Synods a good experience for those who attend. We want to let people know that we do understand what Rural ministry is like, and to offer relevant talks and topics. We also want to make sure that there is some spiritual nourishment in the Synods, so there is now a short biblical reflection at each one.

Why not consider being a Deanery Synod representative? You can go along to one or two synods before making a decision about it should you wish.

Always with love and respect,

Rev. Graeme.

Diocese Synod:

This strategic group meets bi-annually. It is attended by a mixture of Clergy and Laity and this year has been chaired by Bishop John Merrick, who was acting in an interim role, and then the Right Reverend Debbie Sellin who was installed in March as the new Bishop of Peterborough. Its purpose is to bring some of the decisions of the diocese to the representatives for ratification, support and/or information.

Some of the topics discussed this year were:

- The Diocese financial position
- The Gen 2 team raised awareness of working with children and families
- The Diocese presented its Net Zero Carbon Action Plan

Lyn Johnson

Safeguarding:

Thankfully we have had no recent reported concern or allegations at St. Margaret's. A updated Safeguarding report is discussed at every PCC meeting. Currently we are at level 3 on the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard, which is the highest level.

All the PCC members and children's workers are DBS checked. The relevant safeguarding contacts are displayed on the Church and website and the Church notice board.

Ray Smith

Achievements and Performance

Worship

Church services:

Reverend Graeme will be expanding on the development of worship at the APCM, 26th April.

Children and Youth Work Report 2023:

We are continuing to be blessed with our 'Shine' services on the 3rd Sunday of each month. This is our inter-generational service with something for everyone. Although we aim the main reflection at the children it is still widely enjoyed by the families and adults in the congregation. We are grateful to our church family for their support and prayers for this service. We have a team in place for preparation of this service which continues to work well together after Reverend Kris moved to his own benefice. Kris left a firm foundation for the service to continue to grow and we are thankful that he helped us when he was our curate. We miss his support and mentoring. We regularly rotate the roles in the service so that there is a varied content each time but with a familiar order. We have regular songs but add new ones to reflect the theme. They vary from being on screen or live music from John. All of the songs are interactive and fun.

We have Katie, our young leader who regularly leads our shine service with the support of the team. She is growing in confidence and is a blessing to us. Other members of the team are continuing to grow in their ministry through courses and attending hub meetings. They are growing in confidence and trying varying roles. This will be a blessing to the continued growth in services.

We are also looking at other ways to engage with the children and youths in our community. We are in the process of planning a summer activity session and exploring ways to add to our youth ministry.

We are grateful for the support we receive and ask that people continue to pray for our children's and youth ministry. We pray that we can engage and encourage as many in our community as we can.

Barbara Brazier

Little Saints:

Little Saints continues in its wonderful way!

We have up to 20 children registered with us, with an average of 6/7 children attending per week. At the moment the ages range from a few weeks old up to 3.5 years. Our format has stayed the same, with a craft at the beginning and then on to our weekly story. In the main we now have one story per week, but on occasion we may break it down over a few weeks. For example, Creation and Noah can be told over three weeks.

We then say our Little Saints prayer, sing our hymns and we share The Peace with the teddies and have a lovely noisy (!) dance around the church before snack time. The children's birthdays are always celebrated with a Bible/prayer based book, plus we give Easter, Christmas and leaving gifts too.

We still place great importance on an atmosphere that is always friendly and relaxed. It's lovely seeing the children grow in confidence as the months and years go by.

Zona Dipple

Music and Worship:

Apologies from Nigel and Andrew who cannot be present this evening as they are involved in the final rehearsal for Choral Evensong at All Saints Lilbourne on Sunday evening at 6pm.

Over the last year we have lost one regular lady choir member thus our numbers fell to three sopranos (Sue, Corrine and Anne) and two altos (Ann and Nanette). We have gained a regular bass (Michael) and it is fantastic to have John Winn singing with us again. As always, we are looking out for more members to join the choir and sing at the two formal services and any UB services.

During the winter months we have met for monthly rehearsals at Ann and Andrew's house which is a lot warmer than being in Church!

Members of All Saints Yelvertoft and the Crick Festival Choir have joined with our choir for various UB services. At the Maundy Thursday service there were enough singers to perform an anthem – John Stainer's God So Loved the World - and it was a real treat to hear this anthem during Holy Week.

Likewise, at Yelvertoft, members of our choir have joined their choir to sing at All Souls and Ash Wednesday services plus other regular services during the year.

A few of our choir members also joined with the Lilbourne Occasional Choir for their Harvest Festival and Traditional Carol Service. It is expected that this will happen again this year.

The collaboration across the Benefice is one that we would like to continue to build upon. A number of weddings scheduled for 2024 will benefit from this approach.

A Choral Evensong for Ascension Sunday was held in 2023 performed by the Festival Choir and was very well received. A recording of the Evensong can be found on the Church Website. Plans are underway for another Choral Evensong on Sunday 16th June 2024.

At Christmas, the Festival Choir sang at another successful Traditional Carol Service conducted by Christopher Biddle who also arranged a number of the carols. Attendance numbers in both choir and congregation were sadly down on last year. A recording of the service can be found on the Church Website along with other recordings going back to 2020.

The Family Carol Service was also a huge success accompanied by the organ and John Rogers on the accordion.

A couple of funerals have requested the presence of a choir and during the day this does present difficulties for some singers. We have been very pleased to welcome a number of Crickets members to swell the ranks and have opted to sing from the gallery so as not to detract from the focus of the funeral itself.

The organ appears to be working reliably which is always good news and it has been tuned twice this year. One minor adjustment was made to one note in the action before Christmas.

Andrew and Nigel accompany the 2nd & 4th Sundays on the organ. Music for these services is chosen three times a year with reference to the RSCM guidance we receive according to the Lectionary. If anyone has any requests, please let one of the music team know.

Two things to note are that Ann and Andrew have also been regularly supporting Sunday services at All Saints Lilbourne and All Saints Yelvertoft which means that they are often absent or in a hurry to move between venues for following services.

John and the Worship Group comprising of Judy, Dee and Tobi have regularly led music at the 1st Sunday informal service and John and the Shine Team arrange the music for the 3rd Sunday.

Many thanks to our Clergy team in the past year of Rev Graeme, Rev Kris and Rev Jo for their enthusiastic response to the suggestions for our many services and also for their guidance. Working with them has been a pleasure.

Thank you to Team St Margaret's as a whole for their enthusiasm for events like the Evensong where support, organisation, publicity and hospitality have been provided.

Sue, Nigel & Andrew.

Outreach

Wider communication:

St Margaret's Voices:

Our weekly newsletter still continues dropping into people's email box on a Monday or is hand delivered to our more elderly congregation who are not on email. It provides the same range of input and ensures the weekly services are published, complementing the website information. The talented team of contributors never fails to impress with their gentle wisdom and wit and their ability to dig deep into human frailty and our love of God. Voices only continues to exist because of their generous contributions and I cannot thank them enough.

Lyn Johnson

Fund Raising Events:

Fund raising is essential and the Scarecrow weekend is always well received especially if tea and cake is served. This made an enjoyable weekend for everyone.

Afternoon Teas, sandwiches, an assortment of cakes scones (jam or cream first?) and the hum of people chatting and laughing as they enjoyed themselves with friends and loved ones made this another success.

We introduced a Harvest Supper event in October, which was equally well supported and between the 3 events we raised nearly £4,000. Thank you to everyone who supported us.

Clare Polley

Mission and Evangelism

Foodbank:

We continue to be a collection point for Rugby food bank. The collection box is inside for security reasons but the key holders are working together to store the food. The old school continues to provide a cupboard for storage. We couldn't collect the amount we do if we didn't have storage.

We continue to have big collections at Christmas, Easter and harvest time.

The local community are finding new ways to support us. Crick and West Haddon scouts used their Santa visits to collect food and Crick village market has started collecting on market days. People are also swapping items on Crick Swap Shop for donations. These are just a few new ideas.

The Trussell Trust is still reporting an increase in need but a reduction in donations because people are struggling. Bills and costs are continuing to rise putting people into financial difficulties. We are very grateful to be able to support them.

Thank you to all who continue to provide donations.

Barbara Brazier

Confirmation and Baptism:

We have welcomed two children into our church family this past year, who continue to come to our services, plus four of our refugees who were resident at the Ibis hotel in the village, were also baptised. We continue to encourage families and to have their children baptised through our monthly Shine service, and the weekly Little Saints toddler group.

Zona Dipple

Crick School Assemblies:

We are extremely privileged and thankful, to be able to continue to have the opportunity to share in the school community week by week. The children are attentive, and responsive, often willing to feedback in the Assembly. Both the Head Teacher and staff are helpful and supportive to us, as we seek to share the Christian faith with the young people.

The assemblies take place on Wednesday mornings from 9.10 for twenty minutes. In addition to covering the main Christian festivals, we also cover a variety of different topics, through which we seek to present the Christian message, in a relevant way, to

the young people.. All themes are presented in the context of the school's values, which are: - Curiosity, Resilience, Ambition, Kindness, Equality and Respect

We normally have two short planning sessions each academic year. Here we review and look at the subjects/topics, and members agree to be responsible for a particular week.

Please pray for us each Wednesday morning. Currently we are a small team and we would like to increase our group numbers. If you would like to know more please contact me.

To the current team who faithfully give their time, a huge thank you from me.

Ray Smith.

Welton Baby Project:

We have supported the Welton baby Project for over two years now. This group supports families in need in the Northamptonshire area particularly those with new babies. Keen knitters donate clothing and baby blankets for new borns to 1 year olds. This organisation also provides a baby bath filled with toiletry items for baby and mother. They also receive good condition clothes and shoes for 1-12 month olds. Donations of clothes and blankets for babies and toiletries for mother and baby can be left safely in the appropriate box inside St Margaret's Church. When I have collected sufficient I pass them on to Gilly Beardmore in Braunston who, in turn, delivers them to the collection point.

Hazel Gault

Friends of St Margaret's:

As most of you will know, the Friends of St. Margaret's (FOSM) was set up in 2006 as an independent charity to raise money to restore our Grade 1-listed church. At the time of our foundation St. Margaret's fabric was in such a bad state that the tower had been fenced off for 4 years and there was a real likelihood that the building would have to close for safety reasons. It is now approaching 18 years since our inception and we have achieved a huge amount since then. This has been my second year as Chairman.

The latest Quinquennial Report identified that a significant amount of work needs to be done. Although we are in discussion with the PCC over assisting them with some

funding, our money pot is not bottomless and we can only advise them on applying for grants from other sources.

Meanwhile, we continue with our usual activities such as our membership scheme, the Hundred Club and A Light for a Loved One. and last November introduced a wreath-making workshop which was so successful that we will be holding another before Christmas. Our Curry and Casserole Nights, held over 5 months in the Winter, are as popular as ever. The latter involve a great deal of effort and would not be possible without the help of sympathetic volunteers and I thank them sincerely. I also thank Sue Cleaver, the daughter of the late Margaret Dorman-Frost, who fulfilled her mother's promise to sponsor one last concert by Bilton Silver Band in May.

I also wish to thank all those who have served on the committee for their unstinting work, as well as others who contribute in any way. Without them, the church would not be in its present state and our organisation would not be so well-regarded in the village. We like to think that everyone in the village and beyond can appreciate the peace and solace St. Margaret's has provided over 800 years.

FOSM's AGM has been fixed for Monday, June 3rd in the church at 8pm. New members would be particularly welcome.

Sue Milne (Chair)

Crick Old School:

Flowers:

Thanks to a group of stalwart volunteers, we are able to continue decorating the Church windows for special occasions and maintain a rota for regular flowers by the main altar and the lady chapel. The rota for the two pedestals currently means that each person on it does the flowers approximately twice a year.

We have added a couple of volunteers to the rota but could do with some more interested parties to join us. We are a friendly team- all amateurs but slowly dwindling in numbers.

Ann Ward. Ph. 823314.

Floodlights:

There are a few people who regularly ask for the Church tower to be floodlit. Usually in

memory of family members they have lost and sometimes in celebration of a special occasion. The cost of the lights is £20 per night.

Anyone can book these lights and have a message put in the notice board on the gate. We have updated the ground floodlights to LEDs but they still need funds to replace and maintain!

Ann Ward. Ph. 823314.

Welcome Packs:

These packs welcoming new residents to Crick continue to be popular. Although Church based they provide newcomers with a broad idea of what is available in and around the village eg: Dr's surgeries, education, Churches, vets, walks and other activities.

I am constantly updating them, and sometimes newcomers see the advert in Crick News and ring requesting a pack. Feedback is appreciated and has been positive. Please keep an eye open for new neighbours or if you are new to Crick please ask me for a Welcome Pack. They can also be obtained from Chris at the Post Office.

It came to my attention the other week that someone thought that we no longer give out welcome packs. PLEASE KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR NEWCOMERS AS I AM SURE THERE MUST BE A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE MOVED TO CRICK THAT I AM UNAWARE OF!

Ann Ward. Ph. 823314.

Financial Review

A copy of the audited accounts for 2023 is attached.

The chancel ceiling was a very expensive job costing £16253.10 net of VAT which was beyond our reserves. Fortunately, the Friends of St. Margaret's made a very generous grant of £12,875 which has allowed the work to be completed.

We met our allotted portion of the Parish share in full and are hopeful doing the same in 2024 provided that there are no more surprises from the building.

General reserves are very low and fundraising will need to continue and new sources sought if the church is to be further restored.

Dave Milne Treasurer.

St Margaret's Church, Crick

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
Income and Expenditure Account		
<i>Income</i>		
Plate	2,197.13	3,207.92
Planned Giving	31,321.30	28,641.58
Easy Fundraising	0.00	21.45
Reg donations	2,082.50	2,314.00
Donations	1,809.01	2,202.21
Weddings/Funerals	2,954.57	6,506.09
Plate -Gift Aid Env	197.00	401.20
Donation Box	230.33	241.61
Fees	0.00	0.00
Fund Raising	5,853.81	3,039.79
Bell Ringing & Floodlights	144.30	0.00
Misc	0.00	16.00
Interest	145.42	30.03
Gift Aid refund	2,311.16	1,920.90
Land Rent	600.60	600.60
Goodbox	1,284.82	1,652.68
Book of Remembrance	70.00	80.00
Grant from Friends of St Margarets	6,120.00	0.00
	<u>57,321.95</u>	<u>50,876.06</u>
<i>Expenditure</i>		
Parish Share	32,240.00	28,810.00
Rector's Exps	2,232.52	1,274.90
Ministry Exps	120.10	281.90
Maint	8,350.73	6,049.38
Sacristy	79.04	166.45
Reg Serv costs	1,341.41	893.96
Light & Heat	1,916.29	1,774.99
Stationery Etc	86.07	111.60
Misc	154.00	19.00
Flowers ()	35.06	134.14
Fund Raising	640.67	857.46
Licences etc	420.85	670.34
Insurance	2,768.61	3,581.79
Charitable giving	0.00	300.00
PDBF Fees (Weddings, Funerals)	821.00	1,277.00
Weddings, Funerals Disbursements	601.78	2,223.00
Goodbox	144.00	175.27
	<u>51,952.13</u>	<u>48,601.18</u>
<i>Surplus/Deficit</i>	<u>5,369.82</u>	<u>2,274.88</u>
 Balance Sheet		
opening balance	10,232.26	7957.38
Rector's Disbursement	679.59	1617.63
Ibis Migrant Fund	652.73	0.00
Surplus/Deficit	5,369.82	2274.88
	<u>16,934.40</u>	<u>11849.89</u>
closing balance	<u>16,934.40</u>	<u>11849.89</u>
represented by		
current account (Santander)	18,135.26	8176.75
less unrepresented cheques	-3,053.00	-3060.00
Current account (CAF)	250.00	0.00
deposit account (CCLA)	728.56	6583.14
Deposit account (CAF)	250.00	0.00
cash in hand	623.58	150.00
	<u>16,934.40</u>	<u>11849.89</u>

Notes 1) Due to changes in accounting policies at CCLA interest for quarter to 31.12.23 will be accounted for in 2024

Consolidated Balance Sheet

Annual Accounts	opening balance	10232.26
	Surplus/deficit	5369.82
Flower Fund	Opening Balance	646.59
	Surplus/deficit	20.73
Organ Fund	Opening Balance	11807.57
	Surplus/deficit	-336.17
Organ Lessons Fund	Opening Balance	4464.77
	Surplus/deficit	143.09
Rector's Di:	opening balance	1617.63
	Surplus/deficit	-938.04
Ibis Migrant Fund		
	opening balance	0.00
	Surplus/deficit	652.73
Total		<u><u>33680.98</u></u>
Represented by		
Cash in Hand		623.58
* Current account		14249.94
Deposit account		728.56
Deposit account(flower)		667.32
Deposit account(Organ)		11471.40
Deposit account(Organ Lessons)		4607.86
* Rector's Di:		679.59
* Ibis Migrant Fund		652.73
		<u><u>33680.98</u></u>
* These amounts equal the total in the current account		