



allsaintsworcester

ANNUAL REVIEW 2023

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Easter Baptisms 2023 - Front cover photo by Matt Wilcox

VICAR'S REPORT

The last ministry year has been a year marked by change and transition. It began with the news that after a patient search we had successfully identified a new Associate Vicar to come and join the team and we were thrilled to welcome James, Emma, Elodie and Bertie in the summer term of 2023. The team then grew further with the arrival of Jamie Klair as our newest curate and welcome him, Zoe, Florence and Caleb too. They have all been a gift to us and we thank God for them.

All Saints then prepared for Kath and I to step back from leadership of the church for three months for our sabbatical, which you kindly facilitated and gave generously to. We returned in late February to a church that had, wonderfully, grown and developed and with a shared sense of us all now being in a new season following such change and transition.

We look forward to seeing the launch of our second church revitalisation in September as we send the Oates family to Redditch and our little family of churches grows to three - with St Peter's Bengeworth growing and developing in wonderful ways.

This time of transition and change was further evident in my role evolving to a twin role of both Vicar of All Saints and National Leader of New Wine England, and I am thankful for all of you for releasing me to do this.

Finally, we give thanks for two extraordinary people who have given above and beyond for many years and who are stepping down from significant roles - first, Grahame Lucas who has served as Treasurer on the PCC for 15+ years and who has helped us navigate times of growth and famine financially, and to Philippa Barton who has been a phenomenal Executive Assistant to me over nearly 10 years, and deserves all kinds of honours for her patience, grace and endurance.

As we seek God for all that lies ahead, let me encourage each of us to continue to pray, trust, serve, give and laugh!

Rich Johnson, Vicar

1. GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

PCC

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) met nine times in 2023-24. The standing committee met four times to work on agendas, help prepare good reports and order the work of the PCC.

2023 saw the launch of the fundraising campaign, Making Room for More aiming to increase regular giving to resource the ministry of the church, complete the the St Helen's re-ordering project and address urgent repairs at All Saints. This culminated in a Gift week in November which saw a £40k increase in income. The PCC has been so encouraged at and thankful for the response of the congregation and has committed to regular updates on church finances and what this enables us to do so that we can work together in mission.

The PCC has also worked hard to:

- ensure we continue to comply with all safeguarding, health and safety and environmental health, and data protection (GDPR) regulations.
- oversee robust systems for financial giving and monitoring
- ensure excellent HR practices are in place, and complete the annual salary and pensions contribution review
- ensure the staff team are properly managed and supported
- oversee the good running of Worcester Foodbank

This APCM will be the last for Grahame Lucas in the role as our church Treasurer. Grahame has worked diligently and faithfully as our treasurer for the last 16 years and provided financial direction for the church over a period where not only the church has grown in size, but also in complexity. We are so thankful for all his hard work on the finances of the church and the incredible job he has done.

Philippa Barton, PCC Secretary

ELECTORAL ROLL

At the APCM 2022 the electoral roll stood at 187. The annual electoral roll revision took place in March and April 2024. Over the course of the 12 months since the last APCM 17 names have been added and 22 names have been removed. The new roll stands at 182.

Philippa Barton, Electoral Roll Officer

SAFEGUARDING

“Safeguarding is at the heart of God’s will for everyone and while it is sometimes challenging to incorporate its requirements into the life of the congregation, its foundations assure us that God’s love requires us to place the most vulnerable at the heart of what we do and who we are. This ensures that in the Body of Christ, we encourage everyone to live fully, radically and in God’s love and safekeeping.”
(Church of Scotland)

Safeguarding is becoming more embedded within our culture as time progresses. However, there are key members of our community with special responsibility for safeguarding:

- Rich Johnson, as incumbent has the overall responsibility to create an environment which enables safeguarding concerns to be raised and responded to openly, promptly and consistently.
- Mark Carrington who is responsible for all posts in church being safely recruited and maintaining those records, as well as risk assessments in regard to safeguarding, and updating the Parish safeguarding dashboard.
- Ministry Leaders who ensure that appropriate safeguarding practices happen within their ministry area and receive any safeguarding concerns from their teams and handle them appropriately.
- Grahame Lucas has responsibility for all safer recruitment and safeguarding concerns in relation to Foodbank.
- Sue Price as Parish safeguarding Officer who is responsible for implementing the safeguarding policy by working closely with the above people to advise, support and, where necessary, logging safeguarding concerns, as well as determining appropriate levels of DBS checks.

Practical Safeguarding Measures:

All Saints follows the CofE Safer Recruitment policy. This is a formal application-based process for appointing people to specific roles. The reason for safer recruitment is primarily one of visibility and consistency.

Where a role requires a DBS, we use an on-line application system - much easier and quicker for volunteers. It is the expectation of the diocese that all DBS checks are renewed every 3 years.

Operational Safeguarding group (Chaired by Sue) meets every 4- 6 weeks to review the processes involved in safer recruitment and safeguarding. The administration has moved from a paper based system to completely electronic with files securely stored in shared files accessible to relevant team members. Rachel Gurney is responsible for implementing safer recruitment, as well as some aspects of safeguarding.

New systems have been set up in ChurchSuite this year to track both DBS renewals and Safeguarding training. The tracking of training was highlighted both at Diocesan Safeguarding meetings, as well as at a National Church of England review of safeguarding seminar. It is hoped that a smoother, more easily tracked system may be implemented at Diocesan and National level.

Strategic Safeguarding group (Chaired by Rich) meeting takes place bi-annually. The team discuss specific safeguarding concerns and appropriate mitigating actions which may be taken to protect all members of the community at All Saints. Work in regard to supporting pastoral/prayer ministry training relating to gender issues has been undertaken this year. It is hoped that there will be support and training of host leaders to welcome all members of society, especially those often marginalised who present particular challenges to our church community. We want to offer a Christlike welcome to everyone irrespective of their background.

Foodbank Safeguarding group A complete evaluation of safeguarding practise has been undertaken since January 2024 to coincide with a change of personnel. New training has been offered, via the Trussell Trust to all volunteers, as well as new reporting process, new Designated Safeguarding Leads which has raised the profile of Safeguarding in Foodbank. These systems will be reviewed every 6 months and it is hoped a bi-annual meeting will be set up between the safeguarding leads at Foodbank, PCC member responsible for Foodbank and Parish Safeguarding Officer to discuss it's implementation and future development.

Key headlines:

- 40 DBS applications have been processed – of which 4 were using the update service. No referrals to DSA were required.
- 40 volunteers were safely recruited to a variety of church ministry teams this year.
- There have been 5 safeguarding incidents in the past year in which resulted in no harm to any member of our community. Advice was sought from the DSA and action taken in all incidents to reduce the chance of the incidents occurring again.
- There have been 3 safeguarding incidents at Foodbank this year where appropriate action was taken to ensure safety of users and volunteers.
- There have been no serious incident reports made to the Charity Commission during this year.
- 7 people have completed Basic awareness (C0) safeguarding training
- 30 people have completed Foundation (C1) safeguarding training
- 1 person has completed Leadership (C2) safeguarding training
- 2 people have completed Domestic Abuse training
- 1 person has completed Safer recruitment training

Safeguarding training continues to take place online and I urge anyone who is overdue in completing this to do so as soon as possible. This goes hand in hand with our voluntary service – an expectation to keep all members of our community safe.

- Basic Awareness is a one hour basic course – appropriate for all volunteers; and a prerequisite for C1/2
- Foundation is a two hour extension course, for all DBS posts and a prerequisite for C2
- Leadership is the face-to-face course which is now delivered via Zoom- for anyone who has leadership responsibilities within the church, a church officer, or is leading activities in their church role with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.
- Safeguarding training must be undertaken every 3 years.

Praise God that we have had no serious safeguarding issues this year and we have kept our community safe! We must however, raise the profile of safeguarding in our community by bringing any concerns into the light so we can address them and seek God as to how to deal with them and support those survivors of abuse in its many forms.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all of us within the community at All Saints and I would like to thank everyone for their efforts throughout this year, whether seen or unseen, to keep our children, young people and adults safe this year.

Sue Price, Parish Safeguarding Officer

OPERATIONAL UPDATE

From an operational perspective, the period of 2023 to 2024 has continued to see many changes and challenges. There are many different elements of church systems and processes in place that facilitate us to function effectively as a church. Some of these are more obvious and visible, but others are more 'behind the scenes', so this report gives the church community a broader window on the operational running of the church.

HR and Staff Updates

The period of 2023 saw continual changes to the shape of our staff team:

- July 2023: James Ellin joined us with his family to fill the role of Associate Vicar.
- July 2023: Jamie Klair joined us with his family in the position of Curate.
- July 2023: Claudia Catterall finished her internship working alongside our (then) Curate Jess Fellows to develop and grow our student and young adult ministry.
- September 2023 Jo Oates retrospectively transitioned her role from Youth Worker to the resourcing church role of Youth Missioner in recognition of her engagement in youth activities across the city through ways such as the LightBox project, in addition to leading the discipleship and growth of the All Saints youth community.
- December 2024 we increased the hours of Ruth Allsopp, Operations Coordinator at Worcester Foodbank, in recognition of the need for increased capacity in her role.

- December 2024 we increased the hours of Teresa Green, Administrative Assistant at Worcester Foodbank, in recognition of the need for increased capacity in her role.
- January 2024 Jan Mitchell changed position from Finance Assistant to Finance Officer, along with an increase of her hours to reflect the increased demand on her capacity in an expanding role in working alongside our church treasurer Grahame Lucas. Jan has also been accepted to take a level 4 accounting course to support her personal and professional development.
- January 2024 Ruth Allsopp left her position of Operations Coordinator at Worcester Foodbank, and we are currently in the recruitment process for her replacement.
- January 2024 Jess Fellows was licensed as Associate Vicar with a Diocesan remit for students and young adults, working alongside the University of Worcester as volunteer Associate Chaplain.

Upcoming:

- April 2024 Grahame Lucas will be standing down from the position of Church Treasurer after 16 years of faithful service in the voluntary role.
- May 2024 Philippa Barton will be stepping down as Executive Assistant to Rich, as well as her role as PCC secretary.
- We are actively advertising the part-time role of Youth Worker.
- We will be saying goodbye to Jo and Fraser Oates over the Summer as they head to St Stephen's, Redditch where Fraser will take on the role of Vicar there.

Admin and Buildings Upkeep

Plug - If you would like to assist with the general nuts and bolts operations of the church, then there are various ways that you could lend a hand. We are always on the look-out for admin volunteers to assist in the church office, or if you feel more practically inclined, there is a gardening and a practical support team to assist with projects and DIY tasks around the churches and grounds. Email me directly to find out more.

mark@allsaintsworcester.org.uk

Parking at All Saints

The parking at All Saints continues to require management now that the cameras at the college are a permanent feature. The HOW college generously allows us to park in the car parks closest to All Saints building on Sundays during the times of worship, however people continue to be charged in error. If anyone receives a parking charge notice for using the car park during these times, then they should contact myself with a photo of the charge letter, and I'll pass it on to the college with a request to have it cancelled.

There is a 'white-list' of vehicle registrations exempt from parking charges for these agreed times, so do make sure you give me your vehicle registration to add to this list. This is passed to the college and car parking monitoring company.

It is important to note that if someone gets a charge from parking there on other days, we will not be able to have it cancelled.

Buildings Update

There have been a number of building related items to note this year:

St Helen's

The headline achievement of the past year period has been the completion of the St Helen's church reordering project in the summer of 2023, with it being open for general use from the September when we moved all of our ministries and groups back over from All Saints. The church has been completely reimagined, with newly quarried stone flooring throughout, underfloor heating, servery and kitchen moved to the base of the tower, new toilet extension, and inbuilt accessibility ramps to make the church as welcoming as possible. Since it's reopening in September, along with it's general community and church activities, it has hosted a Christmas concert, parties, New Wine Reset conference, local History day, wedding reception, hosted Worcester light festival, which saw 6000 attendees over two evenings.

In addition to the main reordering project at St Helen's, the following repairs and maintenance were carried out on the church over the period.

- The reredos (altar area) repair was completed. We successfully won grant funding for this repair work.
- The porch of St Helen's had various works carried out, including re-oiling and treating the main doors, general wood repairs and tile replacements. The downpipes of the porch and along the length of the church were also treated and repainted.
- The lighting in St Helen's had some remedial repairs carried out. This was partially covered in the main reordering project, but expanded beyond it's brief. Due to financial constraints, there is still some remedial work needed on the lighting.
- There were several roof repairs carried out at St Helen's in an attempt to stop several leaks coming through in bad weather. This was mostly successful, but due to the nature and age of the roof, and location of leaks, it was not completely so, and needs monitoring.
- Some concrete area in the car park of St Helen's has sustained damage during the commencement of a recent repair work to a neighbouring building. It is currently undergoing repair.

- Bird deterrent spikes have been installed in strategic areas of St Helen's and the church office to deter gulls from roosting and nesting there. The latest works were carried out at the council's expense who we are working with on this issue.
- The boiler at the church office in St Helen's Church House, next to the church experienced a breakdown in March and again in April 2024. The combi boiler is of an age where we can expect more components starting to fail and a replacement on the horizon.

All Saints

- The All Saints boiler has continued to cause issues and be temperamental. Due to the nature of being in an external basement, the high level of humidity and damp has caused the boiler to regularly trip out. A large repair took place in December 2023 that has improved the situation, but it is still going to have issues periodically due to its age and installed location. The heating system is installed with a Hive thermostat, which means that we can remotely see when there is an issue with the heating. However, the nature of it is that it normally fails overnight, with myself needing to come in and reset it to get it running again; normally for Sunday worship.
- In December 2023 All Saints had its periodic electrical inspection, which had an unsatisfactory result. We have since carried out some remedial repairs, however, the vast majority of the unsatisfactory testing came from the circuitry feeding the church lighting. Initial project meetings have already taken place to establish what is required in the upcoming works, but it will mean a general upgrade of the electrics of the church, as well as new lighting throughout. This will be a major project that will be brought to the church community in due course, and will require a combination of grant funding and community fundraising to achieve.
- We had some minor projects take place around grounds of All Saints with thanks to a small team of volunteers in the operational Practical Support team.

Gardening and grounds upkeep

The gardens and grounds at All Saints are currently being kept by Pete Barton and a couple of faithful supporters. They do a fantastic job of keeping the garden looking nice, however it would be fantastic for these guys to have more support in this area as it is a generally unthanked area of ministry, and so important in providing a good welcome to the church.

Contact myself if you want to help, or speak to Pete on a Sunday.

The grounds at St Helen's is generally low maintenance, but there are visions of turning the area into an urban garden. This is being spearheaded by the Eco-Church group and is at the early stages of planning and fund raising. If you are interested in getting involved in it's creation, or ongoing upkeep, then you would be most welcome to help. Sarah leads the group and is contactable at ecochurch@allsaintsworcester.org.uk.

General practical support

I have a email list of people who have put their name forward to helping practically from time to time. This could be moving things about, a gardening party, general support when I need more pairs of hands, and minor DIY projects and repairs. Let me know if you'd be interested in joining this team. It's low effort and not on a rota. There is no commitment to help in every case, just when you think that you'll be able to assist on a particular occasion.

IT and network infrastructure

In 2024 I have unified the church internet network with the help of internal members of our tech team. We have moved from two internet lines into our churches to one, which covers all St Helen's, the church office, and All Saints. This has had an upfront cost, but will make a saving in the long run due to no longer paying for a second broadband line. Along with this upgrade, we have a guest wifi now set up for the general community to use, as well as being able to offer more functionality when we hold conferences, workshops and hold private functions in the spaces.

Alongside the St Helen's reopening, I have updated the St Helen's website. It was originally created to primarily focus on reordering and repair work as a criteria of grant and external funding. However now it's need has moved on. I have reworked it to not only show the ongoing building projects, but also to focus on it as a community space, general activities taking place, and it's availability as a place to hire. <https://sthelensworcester.org.uk>

Safeguarding, Safer recruitment and volunteering

The main safeguarding report by our Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) Sue Price will be available separately, however it's implications on operations require some brief mentions.

The umbrella of policies and processes that we adhere to is laid out for us by the Church of England, with the principles of best practice and thoroughness as a way to effectively safeguard church communities and protect both the teams and public that they serve.

Given that All Saints is more complex in comparison to some other churches, the structure of Safeguarding at All Saints has been setup to best manage the day to day rhythms and uphold good principles, along with having good practices in place for dealing with potential incidents and reporting.

There are two teams that work in parallel with each other: the Operational Group is responsible for safer recruitment and volunteer management, DBS checks, training, policy updates upholding good practices. It is made up of Sue Price (PSO), the Operations Manager Mark Carrington, the Ministry Coordinator Rachel Gurney, and Associate Vicar Jess Fellows, as a PCC link.

The Strategic group is in place primarily to engage with people; for incident reporting and the management of cases of safeguarding concern, and real-time handling of situations including escalating to the relevant authorities and organisations. In addition, it has implications for the pastoral care of the community. The group is made up of the Incumbent Vicar, Rich Johnson, PSO Sue Price, Associate Vicar James Ellin and Associate Vicar Jess Fellows.

Given that the church is a place of welcome for vulnerable people, as well as a community with a blessed number of children under 18, we need to ensure that our processes are robust, and that we have transparency and accountability with how we operate. The most frequent and normal interactions that the church community has with the safeguarding teams is through the safer recruitment process of volunteers, DBS checks and renewals, and safeguarding training. The Operational team have been able to refine these processes and streamline them to a certain degree, however by it's nature it can take some time to complete, with delays coming from unavoidable steps such as reference gathering. For roles that require a DBS, this process has extra additional dimensions.

In previous years we have moved to a completely digital process, removing the need for paper forms that comes with issues such as paper handling, delays in posting and returning completed documents etc. Most recently in 2024, we have moved our DBS recording and safeguarding training processes onto our Churchsuite system in order to more effectively manage and schedule renewals for active volunteers.

We are always on the look out for new volunteers across the many ministries and groups, including to provide assistance in the church office. Serving on a team is an excellent way to meet new people and get stuck in and find a place to serve in the community. If you would like to find out more about joining a team, or where there is particular need, then chat to myself or any of the group/ ministry leaders, and they will point you in the right direction.

Please feel free to get in contact with me if you would like to find out more about any issues or items detailed, and if you would like to find other ways to get involved and help out with more practical and operational elements of church life. I am always on the look out for more people to help with practical work such as DIY and gardening.

Mark Carrington, Church Operations Manager, mark@allsaintsworcester.org.uk

BUILDINGS UPDATE

St Helen's church

Funding received from the Strategic Development Unit (SDU) of the Church of England, in our role as Resourcing Church for the Diocese has enabled us to carry out significant reordering works at St Helen's making the space fit for the purpose of mission within our community. These works are now complete and hopefully you will have had the opportunity to see for yourself this beautiful space being used for one of the many services, groups or events that have already taken place. St Helen's now hosts the 6pm Gathering and Adventurers and is the base of all our mid-week groups.



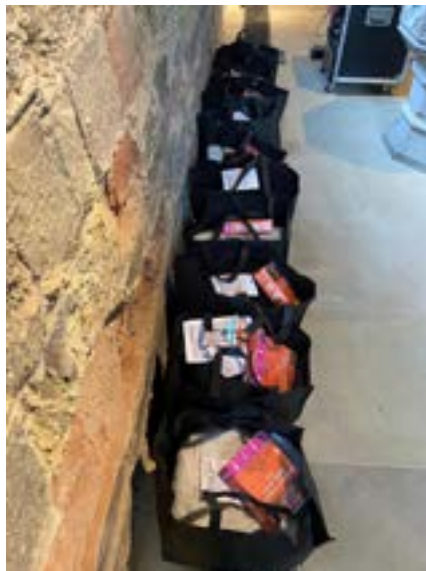
Separate from the SDU funded works we have also been able to carry out repair work to the Victorian reredos (altar area). Thanks to the generosity of local funders and several small conservation grants, this has now been rebuilt and fully restored.

There are several Quinquennial Inspection (QI) flagged priority repairs including stonework – in particular to the base of the tower, roof and window repairs that continue to require attention and are included in a Buildings Maintenance Framework. This framework underpins the Cyclical Maintenance budget and will allow the PCC to make an informed judgement to assess the priority of repair works and steer efforts to seek funding for items beyond the scope of this budget.

As part of our vision for St Helen's to be a community space, and our continued commitment made to funders that there is a designated time for St Helen's to be open to the public, our Friday open sessions have restarted. Running alongside Artspace, these sessions offer an opportunity for visitors from far and wide to come in and see the space and for us to engage with the local community.

In December 2023 we were awarded a £10,000 National Grid Community Matters grant to help those experiencing fuel poverty. The grant allowed us to provide a warm space and practical support (in the form of Warm Packs) to those experiencing fuel poverty.

The funding has meant that we have been able to offset the costs of heating St Helen's on a Friday from mid-December through to end of March and has strengthened our relationship with Foodbank and other local organisations as we worked together to distribute over 30 Warm Packs to our local community and beyond. Thank you to everyone who has been involved and enabled us to deliver this project really well!



Photos of St Helen's open as a Warm Space and of the Warm Packs ready to be distributed.

Issue regarding 97 High Street

In line with advice from our Structural Engineer we continued to monitor the small area of potentially active movement on the north wall. You may recall that Savills (the company that manage 97 High Street on behalf of St Johns College, Oxford) contacted us last year making assertions that St Helen's church is causing structural damage to their building. A detailed structural survey of both St Helen's and 97 High Street concluded that the claims made by Savills are largely erroneous but there is one small, localised area of potentially active movement which could correspond to damage at the neighbouring property and so it is this area that we are monitoring.

All Saints church

The SDU funded reordering works replacing the pews with flexible seating and installing a new servery kitchen have enabled us to take the first step in meeting our vision to create a multi-functional space. However there remains some way to go for the building to be fit for purpose for greater use by the All Saints and wider community with several urgent Quinquennial Inspection flagged repair items – the most pressing of these being the electrics and lighting and discussions are currently underway with the PCC on how we tackle these repairs.

Along with several other churches in the Diocese, All Saints church will be put forward by the Diocesan Church Buildings Team to be included on the Historic England's 'Heritage At Risk' register. We hope that this will assist us in our efforts to secure grant funding to deal with the necessary fabric repairs.

Other news

Now that the SDU funded building works are complete, I will be seconded for some of my working hours to St Stephen's, Redditch where I will be supporting Fraser and the team with the re-ordering project.

Stella Power, Buildings Project Manager

2. PRAYER, WORSHIP AND TEACHING

PRAYER

Over the last year we have sought to increase the depth and intentionality of our corporate prayer life as a church, consolidating our regular rhythms of prayer - monthly Hungry evenings with a focus on prophetic prayer and intercession (a particular focus of Marg & Phil Bristow), termly 24/3 prayer weekends (led by Luke & Hannah Boxall) and regular weekly prayer gatherings on Zoom or in-person (overseen by Liz Marshall). There has been an encouraging increase in engagement with this and a growing hunger for more. Special thanks go to the team for leading different aspects of this, as noted above, and a particular mention also for Pete & Chris Barton who faithfully lead a weekly prayer meeting for peace for Ukraine, and to the Bristows who oversaw all of this while I was on sabbatical.

Going forward we would love to see more people engaging and for new prayer groups to start!

Kath Johnson

WORSHIP, TECH & CREATIVITY

It has been another great year for worship, tech and creativity at All Saints. We have seen growth in many different aspects of these ministries and it has been very encouraging to see those within each team step out and step up into different leadership roles. As we continue to enjoy the intimacy of God through musical worship, here are a few things we are celebrating as a team:

- Firstly, our team continues to grow we have seen the addition of 8 new team members between the worship and tech team. 6 of which are under 18, it has been a joy to observe our team diversifying and expanding and I have been so encouraged by the maturity and zeal that our young people have demonstrated in their various roles.
- Secondly we continue to upgrade the technology in both of our buildings to bring a better experience for those in the room and watching online. A new tech system has been installed in St Helens, including a sound desk and computer as well as a hearing loop and new speech microphones to increase the intelligibility of the preaching and accessibility of the space. As our 6pm community continues to grow we now feel ready and equipped to meet the increasing usage of the beautiful St Helens space.

We continue to see a vibrant community growing through our online ministry on YouTube and Facebook. We average around 30 viewers a week (or “a midsized church” per the statistics for mission 2021 report). I would like to say a special thank you to Rich Corral, Luke Boxall and Paul Kippax for faithfully serving on our streaming team and providing an experience for those who cannot access the building. We do need volunteers to help them out ensuring as we move forward everyone can be included in our gatherings.

- Our 2023 Christmas season was a success. We saw the return of the fantastic strings group and choir led by the brilliant Rob Marshall and Ben Dunnett (and accompanied by the equally brilliant Tim Dean!). As well as the addition of several new services including an NHS carols service and a Beer and Carols gathering. Our team worked hard to make these events happen and we have been encouraged by hearing all the feedback from our church community.
- We have also been continuing our work resourcing other churches in the diocese, I have personally been travelling to St Peter’s Inkberrow once a month to lead worship there as they see their church@11 community grow. They have started to see the beginnings of a worship team forming and have an exciting journey ahead of them. We’ve also been involved with technical support at Hallow Church and St Barnabas.
- Behind the scenes our team have also helped to facilitate several conferences, weddings and funerals including the Prisca Preaching Conference and RESET the New Wine women’s conference.
- Lastly I must mention the growth we are seeing in creativity here at All Saints. As well as introducing several ‘home grown’ songs to our repertoire. We have explored worship outside of music through art. Most recently The Wilderness Project saw 40 different submissions from creatives within our community on the theme of Matthew 4 for lent and culminated in an exhibition in St Helens which was very well received. We also saw Paul Alty’s “Blackhole End of Time” installation as part of Worcester Light Night come to St Helens which brought an estimated 6000 people through the doors over 3 days.

There is so much more I could say to celebrate our achievements as a team over the last year. However, more importantly we have had a front row seat to see a church passionate about Jesus worship Him and give him glory. As we move into 2024/5 let’s contend together to see His kingdom come and His will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. We can’t wait to see what He has in store for us next!

Phil Wade, Worship Director



THE WILDERNESS PROJECT



GATHERINGS

Our gatherings continue to be central to our life and they continue to be vibrant, welcoming, and enriching. As has always been the case, our 10am gatherings are a beautiful collision of all ages and stages which we love. Our 6pm gatherings are a more open and informal time with space given to hearing from God and praying over one another. They are the GATHERING points in our week, open and welcoming to anyone and everyone, where we are taken deeper into the life of God and our calling to be followers of Jesus through worship, prayer, teaching, and Holy Communion.

It has been remarkable to observe, in a way we have not really seen before, people finding their way to our gatherings because they have been encountering God in the ordinariness of their lives and routines. The Spirit is absolutely at work in people, and perhaps most noticeably in young people and young adults. People are seeking God out, walking through our doors, and experiencing the transformational presence of God for themselves.

We must keep praying for God to bring people into our midst. But we cannot stop there. We must pray for the hunger and energy to nurture, baptise, teach, and disciple people of all ages, intentionally and dynamically. We must also pray for courage to be the sent and scattered people of God who carry the good news of Jesus into our communities, families, and workplaces. It is also on our hearts as a leadership team (post-pandemic) that we get to a point where more people can become actively involved in making our gatherings happen, through serving, leading, reading, praying, and welcoming people. The nature of the church means that we are all participants in the life and mission of God's people, so we must pray for courage, creativity, and collaboration in our gathered spaces.

Revd Fraser Oates, Curate

3. LOOKING OUTWARDS

MISSION PARTNER SUPPORT

The mission partner support group works to see God's Kingdom advance within us and beyond through the prayer and financial giving of our congregation at All Saints. Our giving to mission societies and home mission totalled £18,218, slightly below our intended 10%.

We are grateful for all that has been achieved by our mission partners. Here are a few highlights. At the local level, we delighted that this Christmas, Maggs Day Centre fed 27 homeless people who would otherwise have spent it alone. At the international level, we celebrate the new dental clinic opening in Liberia, under Simon Stretton-Downes' leadership. We also welcomed Jonathan and Carita McCririe from LIV Village to All Saints at the start of October, and Rich Johnson was able to visit them in December as part of his sabbatical.

We have aimed to improve communication about our mission partners by featuring one per month from Sept-July, during the Sunday gathering and in Hungry (with Chapel House founder, Paul Wilcox, joining us at Hungry in October). In addition, eNews extra has been a place to provide church-wide updates from the partners directly.

The mission partner support group is now comprised of Andrew Jackman, Clive Langmead and Jamie Klair. We are going to be seeking a few new members in the coming year.

Jamie Klair, Curate, Mission Partner Support Group

WORCESTER FOODBANK

Worcester Foodbank is a project of All Saints and operates under a franchise with the national foodbank charity the Trussell Trust. We first opened on 21st June 2012, and have now provided emergency food parcels to feed 90,036 people; enough to provide for over 1.25 million meals and with over 1,046 tonnes of food.

Foodbank is practicing the way of Jesus in our community, a key element of our vision for the work of All Saints within the city. We are inspired by St Matthew's gospel Ch 25:35 "for I was hungry, and you gave me food..."

Our food parcels are nutritionally balanced, and we also add in fresh fruit and Veg, freshly baked bread, spread, cheese and eggs. In addition, we also offer a cooking parcel and a recipe book to help improve the way that the food parcels can be used. Toiletries,

household cleaning products, and pet food can be provided and baby essentials such as nappies. We also bless clients with seasonal items including Christmas hampers, Easter Eggs, Mothering Sunday, and Fathers day gifts. We provide art packs for children which have been donated by a group of artists.

We seek to signpost clients to help ensure they are receiving all the help they need to resolve their crisis. During 2023 we established two dedicated support posts within the Citizen's Advice (CA), one funded by the Trussell Trust; under their programme to enhance Financial Inclusion, and one funded by ourselves to help process the significant increase in client numbers being seen by the CA.

A prayer group prays for us and our work each Monday morning, and we help them to pray for the difficult circumstances of particular clients (anonymised).

Our team are amazing, and they help us to turn frowns upside down by greeting clients with a warm welcome and listening ear. The stories we hear would break your heart. The people we see are in crisis, by far the majority do not fall into the category of scroungers. We work hard with our partners, the 100 plus referral agencies, to ensure that all the clients they refer to us are genuinely in crisis and in need of our help.

Foodbank is now open four days a week in response to the rising levels of demand (30% increase over the last twelve months), and we now operate with 120 volunteers. We have eight duty managers (two per day) and a warehouse manager, who are responsible for the daily operation of the warehouse, and several volunteers who take on specific responsibilities to help us manage our foodbank. We also employ two paid members of staff (Operations Coordinator and Admin' Assistant) who support the manager and the duty managers.

The Trussell Trust have recently conducted a Governance Health Check. We had only three "requirements" and it concluded that this is a testament to our hard work, passion, and dedication of the team to maintain a legal, safe, and dignified space to support our community. They said that we help them to inspire other foodbanks.

During 2023 we experienced a record year in which we fed over 17,600 people providing over 250,000 meals. In December alone (our busiest month ever) we fed 2,605 people who turned to us in crisis. Many people tell us that we are a life saver, we prevent them from turning to crime in order to feed themselves and their families. And we contribute to helping them send their children to school having had breakfast.

The rising trend in demand due to the impact of the cost of living crisis and the poor state of the economy leads us to fear that we have not yet reached a plateau in demand let alone a sign of reduction. We are campaigning for an end to food poverty and hunger. We are joining with the Trussell Trust in demanding the government to address this urgently and ensure that everyone has enough money to pay for household essentials (the Essentials Guarantee). We see this as requiring everyone to have a living household income. During 2024 we will be inviting all parliamentary candidates to see the work of

Foodbank for themselves and challenging them to tell us what difference they will make if elected to represent Worcester in government.

So, looking to the future, our finances are healthy, but in 2023 we spent over £400,000 (over £250,000 on food alone). Thanks to the amazing generosity of Worcester people, churches, and organisations, this was fully covered by financial donations. We predict that our reserves will ensure we can survive the heavy demand and increases in costs (such as rent) for the next two years. We pray that generosity will ensure that this can continue beyond 2026, as we navigate the move to new premises which is currently under discussion with our landlord.

Grahame Lucas, Worcester Foodbank Manager

ECO GROUP

Over the last year the All Saints Eco Group has continued to make All Saints and St Helens more environmentally friendly, focusing on what we can do with outdoor space and pooling resources to make them more readily available to the All Saints community.

The group has been working towards the Bronze Eco Church Award (A Rocha UK). Many small changes have been made over the last year which means we are currently very close to achieving the award, with only a few more areas needing some improvement which will be addressed this year.

In October 2023 we held a Clothes Swap event to encourage and offer a more sustainable approach to clothing, as well as raise money for IJM and All Saints. The event was a great success and raised a total £263. As a group we'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who volunteered to help run the event and to everyone who came. These clothes swap events are becoming a regular part of the All Saints calendar.

The two main projects the group has been planning and undertaking is the Eco section for the church website and the Urban Garden Project at St Helens. For the church website, the group has been putting together information and resources about living a more environmentally friendly lifestyle, what is available in the local area etc, which will be easily accessible from one place online. The page will also give updates on upcoming Eco Group events and projects to get involved with.

The Urban Garden Project is a new project which is still in the planning stages, with the aim of making the outdoor space at St Helens more accessible and inviting for both people and wildlife. So please do be praying for us as we endeavour to create this multipurpose space which can be used by different areas of ministry and groups, that offers a welcoming space to connect with God through His creation.

Sarah Croft

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

The Worcester Area Deanery Synod has been established for three years. In the year 2023 there were three formal meetings of the Deanery Synod and one gathering of members for the Ascension Day Service (18th May). The first meeting was held at the parish church of St Philip and St James in Hallow in March, the outgoing Archdeacon, Robert Jones to lead the attendees in worship. Revd Kalantha Brewis the Vicar at Hallow gave an overview of the four churches that make up the West Worcester Beacon Group of churches with Hallow being the largest, but also including Grimley, Holt, and Lower Broadheath. The (then) Lay Chair, Robert Pearce, gave an update on vacancies – particularly the Saltway Team which is to be provided with an extra 50% diocesan post to make it up to a full-time post – and the position of retired, Revd David Sherwin's position to be filled as a 'House for Duty'. Feedback was also given from the Diocesan Synod and a copy of that summary later circulated for PCC members and Parish Secretaries.

A question was posed from the floor of the meeting as to why we did not 'as a Deanery' discuss the 'Living in Love and Faith'. Revd. Diane Cooksey explained that it had not been a matter for Synods except General Synod although people were encouraged to engage with the Living in Love and Faith (LLF) process. She said that there had been extensive advertising of Diocesan LLF Courses and also as a Deanery we too had provided an online course too so that people could discuss the issues. It had not been well attended. Other topics discussed were - 'Kingdom People' and priorities, Diane Cooksey spoke about the vision for doubling the number of children and young people attending, and the intention to fund 'at least' two children/youth workers per Deanery. With regard to 'New Housing Communities' we were told that money may be available for new building development. Mention was also made of 'Faith at Work'.

New and returning Synod Members attended the 1st Session of the 2nd Worcester Area Deanery Synod at Broadwas Village Hall in July. The Area Dean reminded the meeting that our Deanery currently has 42 church buildings not including the Cathedral; 12 Benefices; 31 Parishes; 14 stipendiary Clergy; 6 stipendiary Curates; an unknown amount of PTO's (as some live within or without the Deanery); 2 self-supporting Curates; 13 LLM's (and some in training); 27 ALM's of differing vocations. Synod Representatives were asked to consider what: 1) Joys; 2) Challenges; that we thought our individual Parishes represented. Diane explained that following the retirement of Revd David Sherwin 18 months ago, it had been agreed that the Northwest parishes of Clifton, The Shelsleys and Harpley will be transferred to the Kidderminster and Stourport Deanery where they will form part of what will be a 'Rural Mission Area' with three priests sharing a responsibility for them all. It was hoped that the Rev'd Julia Curtis will be licensed to these parishes in the Autumn.

Other topics discussed were - Mainly Music; 'Forest Church'; 'Sunday Stars', money is available (up to £1000 initially) to 'kickstart' a project from the Kingdom People fund. Diane declared Sue Rowlands – Lay Chair; Paul Fulbrook – Secretary; Robert Pearce – Treasurer. Diane appointed Revd's Paul Wilcox and Anne Potter to the Deanery

Leadership Team. Prayer cards obtained from The Diocese relating to 'Vision' and 'Growth' were distributed for members to take back to their PCC's.

The final meeting of 2023 took place on Tuesday 14th November 2023 in St Helen's. Sue Rowlands, the Lay Chair, introduced the three priorities that should be the focus over the next 3 years of this current synod. They are: Praying for one another, communicating more effectively, working more collaboratively where appropriate.

There has been one meeting so far in 2024 on 12th March at St Martin's, Worcester. Archdeacon Mark Badger gave a presentation about how new housing is part of his remit, also the goal of doubling the number of children and young people in our churches. New strategic aims are about reaching out to new people, he suggested that we should look for new ways to engage with new people and see how God enters into it. Areas of new housing often don't have a community, thus there is an opportunity for churches to help develop a community. There were round table discussions relating to new people and new housing in the deanery, and strategies to welcome and inform those new people already being deployed. There will be a Deanery Ascension Day service in Claines in May, and a Deanery prayer event in September.

Paul Fulbrook, Deanery Synod Secretary

Gill Lucas, ASW Deanery Synod Representative

4. COMMUNITY AND GROWING DISCIPLES

GROUPS

Life groups continue to be a significant part of how we have intentional places of community and discipleship beyond our gatherings.

We currently have 11 life groups scattered around Worcester that meet in homes on different weekday evenings to study the bible, pray, support one another, and share life together.

Last October, Fraser Oates handed over to me and it's been a real joy to see and hear some of the stories of deep community at work. There are inevitably ongoing areas of work that need to be attended to, and one of these is when a group grows, how does it multiply well? Having change in leadership or even groups cease altogether has made clear the need for a 'pipeline' of identifying, training, releasing, and supporting new leaders.

The Life Groups tend to make use of a variety of different resources, including notes produced by the preaching team or books that provide good ground for conversation and deepening discipleship, two big hits over the past year have been John McGinley's 'The Church of Tomorrow' and John Mark Comer's 'Practicing the Way'.

Another highlight was that the North Worcester Cluster of Life Groups organised and held a successful 'retreat day' at House of Bread, it was enjoyed by those who attended and they are repeating it this year!

Groups

We also have several other groups that meet during the week, these being Artspace, Commune, Dive Deeper, Eco Group, Men Together, and Revive.

All these groups provide different activities and spaces to get to know other people and to enrich the life of faith.

Please continue to pray for all these groups in All Saints: for their leaders, for their members, and pray that we discover together how we can help each other follow Jesus in all of life well.

Revd James Ellin, Associate Vicar

COMMUNE

We have continued to meet on the first and third Thursday mornings of the month during the past year. We have been small in number but have been pleased to be a safe haven as a group for those who appreciate a quiet, reflective Holy Communion service followed by fellowship and cake. After Christmas we made the transition from meeting in All Saints building to St. Helen's at 10.30am.

Our vision has always been to provide a quieter, reflective space for those who either find it difficult to connect on a Sundays for various reasons or who would appreciate a quieter time to connect with God in the week. We use written words for the communion service and traditional hymns. There is a Bible reading and a short talk. We have been encouraged that, with the developing sense of fellowship amongst us we have developed open prayer times for both each other and what God is doing in the church. We have found that God is often at work in the things "behind" the structures we use: in our growing sense of fellowship, our prayers for each other and our contact with each other in between our worship times – and also as the mole says in *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse* – in the cake!

Clive and Jenny Garrett

REVIVE

Our aim at Revive, which meets during term time on Wednesday mornings at St. Helen's, is to develop close and supportive friendships as we seek to deepen our lives as followers of Jesus.

Attendance varies between 15 and 24 with numbers usually around 20. 4 new women have joined during the past year and others have attended more consistently. There is a varied programme which includes testimonies, visiting speakers, creative writing and craft mornings, quiet reflective mornings, Alpha, Bible study talks and the occasional shared meal. We are passionate about social justice and this past year have welcomed speakers from Tools with a Mission and St. Paul's Hostel.

There is such an element of trust that women are very open to sharing their personal needs for prayer each week. The meetings always conclude with a time of shared prayer with reminder emails circulated for ongoing prayer. It has been so special seeing God at work and people sharing answers to prayer as well as seeing friendships deepen. One member has described Revive as a powerhouse of prayer.

We ask for prayer for those who don't yet know Jesus to come into a relationship with Him and that time for praying for one another in the power of the Holy Spirit will remain a key element.

Di Levins, Co-Leader of Revive

MEN TOGETHER

2023 has been a reset year for Men Together after the restrictions of Covid and adjusting to life after the pandemic.

We initially met as usual having a monthly drop in session once a month with a speaker and nibbles (a must for every group!). We heard about Tools for Africa, had a tour of St Helen's refurbishment and heard from Jess about her student and 20s mission work plans.

We enjoyed breakfast out at Bonnies and a BBQ at the Nunn's (although weather stopped a dip in the pool)

The drop-in had steadily declined in numbers, which had been a lifeline for many during Covid. We decided to stop these and to have two get-togethers per term to continue the opportunity for the guys to connect together.

The hubs still meet regularly - 28 guys meeting together to connect, share life and pray together. It's a very precious time. Please pray for the relationships and support of the hubs as we support each other through life.

If you are new to All Saints and would like to get to know some of the other guys please do drop me an email on dave_christmas1950@hotmail.co.uk.

Dave Christmas

ARTSPACE

The biggest change for Artspace in the last twelve months has seen us return to our roots...moving back into St.Helen's.

I had been concerned about the quality of the light in the building. However, a preliminary visit allayed my fears because of the way the building had been reconfigured internally. Moving the toilets and the kitchen has given us access to more light especially in the southern aisle, and the light stone floor also helped.

Over the last twelve months there has been a steady growth in the Artspace community...not just numerically but also personally in terms of individuals being prepared to take risks, moving out of their comfort zone with the materials and techniques they use...and this includes me.

Members of Artspace regularly take part in local exhibitions and so engage with the wider community. We also take every opportunity to celebrate together...sometimes at the end of term, often a birthday in the group.



Alison Griffin

Making art has become important to me; through it I find personal space, perspective and challenge. A significant part of the enjoyment is in the sharing; particularly in exploring ideas and creating with others. The creative process encourages looking at the world from alternative viewpoints, broadening our understanding. Exploration means the themes and mediums of my work changes. I started my studies at Malvern College of Arts before moving onto Hereford College of Art.

www.alisonjanegriffin.com

instagram: alisonjanegriffin

When I paint I give my heart.
When I paint I give a part of me buried deep inside.
When I paint sometimes it hurts.
But when I paint time disappears.
And when I paint I feel free.

Joan Collier



'Isle of Skye (Alina Clark)

We have continued to look at the work of other artists (on video) and these have always been interesting times with the discussions which followed. My thanks to Dave and Heather Christmas who represented Artspace by invitation to the 'Mayor's Sunday', a civic service held in the Cathedral last year.

It was in April 2023 that we received an invitation to take part in the Autumn 'Open' exhibition from Number 8 Community Arts in Pershore and Artspace was once again represented. We have a longstanding association with this gallery space, having held a number of exhibitions there over recent years. Members of the group are now working on their own submissions for our next group exhibition at Number 8 this summer, 'Generative'.



In August 2023, Artspace held another summer workshop at Bevere Gallery. This proved to be remarkably popular and we were at capacity for the day..

Read the full article here...

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:EU:a7782cbf-fe02-4880-992e-a9f718f4dcfd>

Artspace also featured in the summer edition of the 'Severn Arts Summer Newsletter'.

Artspace at Bevere Gallery : August 2023



We booked our day at the gallery several months ago and so its almost impossible to predict what the weather is going to do given the vagaries of the British climate. When I got up this morning to load the car with all the things I'd need for our day together at Bevere, you can imagine how disappointed I was to find how wet it was outside.

We had more people sign up for the Bevere Gallery Workshop this year than we have ever had...this was our third summer workshop at the gallery. Its always hard to predict how things will work out until people actually arrive when it comes to seeing who will sit where and how much space we will need. Thankfully we were able to use the pods at the gallery which were originally installed to address proximity issues during Covid.



Most of the group were easily accommodated under the community pergola but having the additional 'spill over space' made all the difference. In addition to those who are regular members of Artspace we were delighted today to welcome Jane, Joy and Sue to join us for this summer workshop.

Over the last few months, several members of the group have been busily engaged on producing work for 'the Wilderness Project' led by Phil Wade and Jamie Klair. Some of the group will also feature in an active capacity at the exhibition.



Bluebell Woods, Solva, S.Wales : Paul Long



Flowers in a teapot : Joan Collier



Mixed media painting : Ivanna Giles



You might say that Artspace provides a safe space where everyone feels valued for who they are. They can all be themselves in the knowledge that no one is judging them in any capacity. In fact quite the opposite. Caring for one another just 'happens' as people engage in conversation about important matters in a very natural way because of the trust they have developed in relationship. And it doesn't stop when people leave the building...as WhatsApp allows us all to keep in touch and to encourage one another.

Paul Long, artspace@allsaintsworcester.org.uk

ALPHA

Alpha ran from mid-January to mid-March in the newly-opened St Helens. Aply supported by a host of proficient team, we had four tables with 27 guests (and about 10 team) for the first few weeks, before guest numbers settled in the high-teens in the second half. Highlights included the away day held in Malvern, where a few people heard from God or sensed his love for the first time, and the last evening as we said farewell, where a few people also had moments of breakthrough.

We enjoyed the testimonies from various members of the community and particularly were moved by the jazz music and story of finding faith on the launch night from visiting musician and Christian, Sam.

We relied on the kindness of our community to provide dinners and desserts on various evenings. We are keen to find ways to integrate these alpha guests who have made big steps further in/towards faith into the life of our community - both in Sundays and beyond.

Jamie Klair, Curate

CHILDREN'S CHURCH & MAINLY MUSIC

It has been an amazing year in our Children's Church - Adventurers and Mainly Music. Many of you may have read the threefold vision I put together for Adventurers when I first started in the role. Let me unpack how we are getting on in each area.

1. Community and Outreach.

It continues to be a joy getting to know our All Saints families and collaborate with them in discipling the children of All Saints. We are also so thankful to have welcomed new families over the last year and to have seen our children's church grow. We hope and pray that this continues.

We continue to explore different ways in which we can engage the whole church family in worship, throughout our whole church celebrations, once a term. We have received great feedback on each of these gatherings and I want to thank the wider church family for participating and enabling our children and young people to engage with church.

We have been running Adventurers parent socials throughout the year, where parents can socialise and build a parent community of support and encouragement. Numbers have been small but there have been precious times where parents have been so grateful to

get out the house without their children, maybe for the first time in years and have a great time getting to know others.

Easter and Christmas are always wonderful times of the year where we are able to reach more people who may not usually attend church, for example interactive family prayer stations (Easter 2023); children's crafts alongside the Wilderness project exhibition in St Helen's (Easter 2024); Christingle and 4 Front Theatre production of Jilly Rogers Christmas Adventure (Christmas 2024). This performance was a highlight, with many families attending, including a lot of our Mainly Music families.

Our Children's Church, called Adventurers, participated in the fundraising campaign, 'Making room for more'. Parents and children brought homemade cakes and then the children decorated cakes during their Adventurers session, which were then sold after the Sunday morning main gathering. We were able to raise £225.93! I was very grateful for the Adventurers team, parents and children involved who worked so hard to make it happen.

The Sunday Sports Day last July was a brilliant morning, where all the Adventurers, youth and their families gathered together on Diglis playing fields to compete in sports day type activities and get to know one another better. We usually end the morning by presenting a Bible and praying for those who are moving up to youth, but unfortunately, none of them could attend, so they were presented with Bibles and prayed for when they started in Youth in the September. We then finished the morning with a lovely picnic all together. Such a brilliant time of fun and community.

A real highlight was the 'Centre Stage Holiday Club', held in All Saints, last summer. We explored Jesus being centre stage in our lives and learned a memory verse, 1 Peter 1:9 with the children. Just over 40 children attended and we saw 7 children choose to put Jesus as the centre of their lives. On Easter day this year, one of those 7 children got baptised, which was such a joyful and beautiful moment. We had lots of fun over the four days, with games, competitions, worship, prayer, craft, talks, discussions and lots more. I am very grateful to those who came on team and made it all happen. We are very excited for our next holiday club this summer called 'I Am More', where we will be looking at I am more because of Jesus. Please pray for a brilliant team to be built, all the plans and preparations to go well and for more and more children to attend and hear about Jesus.

We held a Light Party last October, as a Halloween alternative. We celebrated Jesus being the light of the world. We had a disco, games, craft, a costume competition, face painting, short talk, hot dogs and lots more! It was a brilliant time of celebrations and fun and we are looking forward to running one again this year.

Mainly Music is a thriving community, a safe, welcoming space for parents with children under 5. We provide a time of singing, a story, free play, and refreshments. I am very grateful and thankful for a wonderful, faithful, prayerful, hardworking team, who do their utmost to serve and care for those who attend Mainly Music. Mainly Music has a strong

culture of hospitality and gift-giving for events, such as Mother's Day. Those who regularly attend Mainly Music are a mixture of those who attend church, whether that be All Saints or elsewhere and those who don't. We have the privilege of inviting those who attend Mainly Music to various outreach events, such as Light Party, Christingle, Christmas Panto, Holiday Club, where we have seen many attend. We have been hosting termly Children Toy and Clothes Swaps, which have been hugely popular. We ask for donations and have raised money for various charities, such as Macmillan Cancer Research and 'Making room for more', All Saints Fundraising campaign. We then donate whatever is left to Grow Baby in Worcester. We also hold our last Mainly Music of the school year at Top Barn farm. We have a big end of year celebration and we present bibles and pray for those leaving us and going to school in september. We are so thankful to Mike and Joanna Harper, who allow us each year to come and put on this event and who provide a tractor ride for the Mainly Music parents and children. Please do keep Mainly Music in your prayers.

2. Resourcing and Discipleship.

We continue to provide termly teaching series' for each Adventurers Groups: Scramblers (9 months- 2 years old), Explorers 3-5 years old (Preschool and Reception), Discovers 5-7 years old (Year 1 & 2), Trailblazers: 7-10 years old (Year 3, 4 & 5). The children spend the first 15 minutes or so in church, to engage in worship and be with the wider church family and then during the Adventurers sessions, the Children go straight to their specific age groups zones in St Helen's or in the Cabin for Scramblers. We provide each age group with age-appropriate activities/curriculum, including activities, craft, worship songs, teaching, discussion, a story, prayer, and lots of fun! We would appreciate pray for our children as they come and learn about Jesus each week, please pray that they form a deep relationship with Jesus and pray for the leaders as we disciple the children in their journey of faith.

It has been so special to see many dedications over the past year and a baptism of one of our children at Easter. How wonderful it is to see our All Saints family welcome, celebrate and pray over the children in our church alongside their family.

Last July we held a Yr 5's Transition Day, where the year 5's were invited to experience a morning in youth, so that they could meet the youth team, the youth themselves, get a feel for what a morning youth session will be like and start forming friendships. After the morning in youth the year 5's were invited alongside the year 6's to head to Nando's for Lunch with the team, to provide an opportunity for them to make friends and talk about what it is like in youth. We hope that this gave them confidence and excitement about moving to Youth. We are excited to provide this opportunity again this year to our current year 5's.

I have had some brilliant opportunities to attend a variety of Conferences this year, for example, the Parenting for Faith Conference, where I was able to learn more of how to serve the parents and children of All Saints and to network with other Children's Workers. I also went along to the Elim Belong conference, an additional needs conference, with

Claudia Catterall, our church intern until summer 2023. This was a brilliant opportunity to build knowledge and a bank of resources for children with additional needs and to provide support for their families. This is an area which I am very passionate about and hoping to build on within the children's church this year.

3. Environment and Experience.

I can't express how grateful and thankful I am to all the Adventurers volunteers! They are so hardworking serving our All Saints Children and just going above and beyond. It has been great to meet termly with the team and share vision, hear their thoughts, input training, and receive incredible support.

Recruitment continues to be a high priority. As our children's church has grown and continues to grow, the demand is more than ever for volunteers to join the Adventurers team. We really need volunteers to join and invest in discipling our All Saints Children. It feels like a critical time for recruitment as we are seeing large numbers of children attending on a Sunday morning and the children are frequently expressing their excitement to be at Adventurers. I feel that it is vital that we continue to be able to provide this precious space for our children to learn about Jesus and grow in their faith within their age appropriate groups. Please could you pray for a big rise in recruitment. If you are reading this and feel a sense that God is asking you to input into the next generation, then please get in touch with me and I would love to chat with you more about this.

We were very excited for Adventurers to move back to St Helen's last September. We have split the space into age group zones, which is working really well. The children were very excited to be back in St Helen's and feel really comfortable there. We are very grateful to Stella, Mark and all those who were involved in creating such a brilliant, usable space.

There are so many ideas and plans that have not been realised yet for our children's church. We are so thankful for what God has done over the last year and expectant for what God will do over the next year. So, please continue to pray for our Children's Ministry. Please specifically and most importantly pray that our All Saints children will come to know Jesus for themselves or will deepen their existing faith in Him.

Annabel Wade, Children's Worker

Sports Day 2023



Holiday Club



Christmas Panto



YOUTH

I have to say I think working with young people (aged between 10 and 18) is the most rewarding, fun, creative and challenging job I have ever done. If you are currently working out whether to step into youth work, do let me know and I would love to chat to you!

I am always blown away by God's kindness and faithfulness as we put in our little and He gives His all. The youth ministry at All Saints seems to be thriving at a time when we are told numbers of youth and children in churches is on the decline. As a team we host and create spaces for the young people of All Saints in multiple ways.

These include:

- Sunday Morning sessions - this last month we have been inviting different people from across the congregation to come and share something of their journey with Jesus. Our mornings are always relaxed, a chance to catch up with friends but also to dive deeper into our faith and what it looks like to follow Jesus.
- Food and Bible (FAB) - Twice a month we eat and we read the Bible together! It's so simple but we have seen numbers grow week on week. Last Friday there were 18 young people sat around the Autys' table!
- Socials - Once a month we get creative as a team and create a space for the young people to invite friends to, we usually play games, eat snacks and catch up and often there is opportunity to hear from one of the team about what God is up to! We would love to see this space grow with young people who don't yet know the life and light Jesus brings so they may be introduced in an easy and accessible way to Him.
- The 6pm - We are seeing more young people coming along to the 6pm Gathering each Sunday evening, more getting involved in serving through sung worship, tech and hosting. It is always a joy to see young people responding in worship and prayer and being moved by the Spirit.

In the different spaces we are facilitating, we are seeing over 40 young people across each month connecting in to the life of All Saints and being disciplined in some way. Of course, it's not about numbers. The most beautiful part of youth work is seeing the young people grasp hold of their saviour Jesus and to build their lives on the one who sees, knows and loves them in abundance!

LIGHTBOX

You may have heard of Lightbox over the last year but let me tell you more! Lightbox is a collaborative project run by churches across Worcester to create spaces for young people in and around the city. We do this through drop-ins, pop-ups and events, in schools, colleges, public spaces and churches. The vision expanded in 2022 as we acknowledged the growing need for young people to have places to belong, people to connect to and ways to build community.

We are praying for God to continue to expand our reach by building team ecumenically

and helping us to make connections with schools and organisations aiming to care for and provide a service for young people in Worcester. We recognise that if we are going to do this well, we must do it together.

At the moment we have two Lightbox Drop-Ins - one at St Peter's baptist and one in St Helen's on the High Street. We currently go into Worcester Sixth Form College and have plans to go into Christopher Whiteheads in the Summer term. We also had our first Lightbox Pop-Up in Cathedral Square on the 7th March which will continue once a month until Summer. In 2023, alongside Perdiswell Young People's Leisure Club, Lightbox ran the first ever One Community Youth Day, seeing 500 young people in one space, 30 Lightbox volunteers and 12 different youth supporting organisations. And we hope to do the same again this Summer. It was incredible to see so many working together to say, pretty loudly, that the young people of Worcester matter.

Jo Oates, Youth Worker

STUDENTS

Can I tell you a story about Meg?

Meg is a first-year student that came to University in September. Meg knew and loved Jesus before, but her faith came alive at Uni. She found a home at All Saints and quickly got stuck in and became part of our student group. She encountered the Holy Spirit in new ways and her faith has grown so much this year. So much so, that her housemates spotted something different about her and began asking questions. Meg described a deep love for Jesus and decided to get baptised at the 6pm gathering. One of the housemates she invited along was Tallie.



Can I tell you a story about Tallie?

Tallie came to University in September. The University of Worcester was actually her second choice, but she felt like this was the place she needed to be. Tallie moves in to the same flat as Meg and they become great friends. The closer the two of them get, the more Meg shares her faith. One Sunday afternoon, Meg invites Tallie to come to church with her. She agrees to go along, and little did she know everything would change for her. Tallie encountered Jesus. She kept coming to the 6pm gathering and began praying and reading the bible with Meg at home. She describes feeling a peace she had never encountered before. The following week she is filled with the Holy Spirit for the first time and her life is totally changed! She said "I can't believe how good Jesus is. Why didn't someone tell me this before?"

These stories make me so excited for what God wants to do in this generation. We are seeing a longing and a hunger in Gen Z that we haven't seen before. Students are more spiritually open and wanting to ask questions about life, faith and Jesus.



Our student community has been full of a whole mix of people this year. Some exploring faith for the first time and lots of students continuing to grow in their faith. Claudia & Bethan have done a brilliant job of leading the student & young adult life group that meets on Thursday evenings. We weekly have about 10-15 students come along. In total we now have about 25 students regularly attending church. Many bring their friends along to try church.

In January 2024 I was licensed as Associate Vicar: Student & 20's missionary. I am so excited about this new role and making student mission more of a priority. I will continue as Assistant Chaplain at the University.



I would love your continued prayer within this area and for more doors to open, particularly at the University. Please pray for an awakening in this generation! I believe now more than ever that God is going to move powerfully through them!

Jess Fellows, Associate Vicar, Students and 20's Missioner

PASTORAL CARE

We continue to be served in this area by a dedicated "Pastoral Care Team" (PCT) who give oversight to the spiritual, emotional and relational wellbeing of the church, ensuring that everyone is cared for as they need. The primary place of belonging and therefore care is always in our smaller midweek communities, and the PCT is there to augment what is offered here.

This year Pete Barton and Jenny Garrett joined the team over the year and although we are currently small in number, we are looking to increase the team and have been working on what Pastoral Care is and the structure that can be most effective and put in to action. Please pray for this and consider whether you might be part of this crucial expression of Christ's love and care amongst us and to each other.

Revd James Ellin, Associate Vicar
