

SHIRLEY PARISH ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT - APRIL 2023

Following the publication of the statutory notices of the revision of last year's electoral roll the revision has now taken place which shows an amended total of 178 for the whole parish. A detailed analysis between our three churches is given below:

	MAY 2022	Additions	Deletions	APRIL 2023
Christ the King	15			15
St. James the Great	138	10	3	145
St. John's	18			18
Total	171			178

Report from the Vicar

I always begin writing my annual report by looking back at what I said last year, and it's always interesting and encouraging to see where we are now in comparison with then.

Last year we were finally emerging from two years of Covid restrictions, and were talking about starting things up again. Thankfully, this year we are in a very different place. Across the Parish there are many, many signs of encouragement – but also some challenges!

In no particular order this year all this has happened:

- Wendy Martin has joined us as Associate Priest
- We enjoyed having Lou Beasley and Sarah Down with us as placement students
- Our links with St James School are growing closer once more
- We had a wonderful celebration for the Queen's Jubilee in June
- and we said a fond goodbye to her when she died in September
- Church House has been refurbished
- We have been awarded the Eco Church Silver award
- Richard Haynes has agreed to join us as Curate and we look forward to welcoming him and Ruth as they move to the Parish in June
- We walked the Parish boundary once again, praying as we went
- Funeral ministry is still really important and, once again, our annual memorial service was well attended
- Wi-fi was installed in St James Church to make our livestreaming more reliable
- Use of the screen and projector in St James has added to our worship during the year
- We ran a START and a Moving On course, following which 4 people were confirmed at a joyous service in St James in January
- The Friends of St James organised a number of successful fundraising lunches and coffee mornings through the year
- A defibrillator was installed outside Church House and we ran a well attended training course on how to use it

- The Welcome Café goes from strength to strength and is now officially a ‘Place of Welcome’; the craft club too is thriving
- Plans for the kitchen and toilet in St James have been finalised and submitted to the Diocese for approval
- A weekly “journeying on together” group has been established, plus a monthly evening study group for those who cannot make the daytime
- Our Lent Groups – looking at the Church of England Dust and Glory material were very well attended
- Organ music in St James continues to be a challenge. Elli McGlone has moved on, but we have been privileged to have Matthew Foster and Stephen Crookes from the Conservatoire playing the organ for us
- We held what must be the world’s first ever ‘Jigfast’ and raised a tidy sum for the Church House garden fund
- The Christmas Tree Festival was once again a great success with many people coming to visit through the week and money raised for two worthwhile charities – Building4Hope and Practical Action
- We were overjoyed to be able to hold a Carol Service and the ‘Angels at the Crib’ service at Christmas for the first time since 2019
- Messy Church has grown in numbers and we had our first Messy baptism this year
- Jimmy Tots continues to be very popular – on several occasions it has sadly been necessary to put a ‘full’ sign outside Church House
- Although church weddings seem to be very few, baptisms remain in demand – over the summer we had baptisms almost every week
- A very popular monthly Sunday Lunch club has been set up
- We continue to work with other churches in Shirley – Christmas carol singing and the Good Friday Walk of Witness were arranged
- An afternoon tea was held in the Summer at St John’s, and the monthly coffee mornings have restarted.
- The Ploughman’s Lunch organised by Christ the King Church continues to be enjoyed on a fortnightly basis
- We regularly have prayers for healing at our Thursday morning communion service
- A Quiet Day was held at St John’s to mark the beginning of Holy Week
- The Book Club meets most months and this year raised money by a sponsored read to help children from Ukraine
- The Nordic walking group provides a great opportunity for people to take gentle exercise in good company
- Ministry to the elderly in care homes and assisted living complexes has recommenced – Swallows Meadow, Elizabeth House, Portershill Drive, Pegasus House have all started again; we visit Solihull Village as part of an ecumenical group; a first visit was made to Tanworth Court in April.
- The St James Churchyard care team have worked tirelessly in keeping the churchyard both tidy and eco-friendly.
- Work with schools continues – Open the Book, assemblies, Bible Art and of course the Journey to the Stable and the Easter Journey
- We are pleased to welcome Lucy Bridgens – a student on a childrens and families mission course – to be with us on a part time placement basis for a few months assisting with our mission to children and families
- And we say thanks and farewell to Hannah and Ellie in the office as they move on to new things after 6 years job sharing the administrator role

We have so much to thank God and praise God for! Thank you to everyone who has made these things possible – and apologies for anything I have left out!

And as last year, I would like to spend a few moments at the Annual Meeting itself thinking ahead What are the challenges we face? Where should we best put our energies? How can we be faithful to God as we seek to live and witness to him in Shirley? Please make the meeting after church in St James on 7th May a priority.

Paul Day, April 2023

Christ the King Deputy Warden's report

We are still having 3 services a month from the 2nd Sunday in the month.

We are making sure as best we can to do our bit for Eco Church like using fair trade coffee and tea. The ploughman lunches are still going and are well attended, so our thanks go out to Pat Powell and her regular team of helpers Shirley, Carol and Linda.

We hosted a bingo session after Tuesday café which was great fun. We play for a line in which you win a small bar of chocolate like a bounty then a full house for a box of Matchmakers or Hero's. This was started over Zoom during lock down and as people missed it decided to see who would attend if we held it in church house. It was a success so hope to repeat it soon.

A lot of the congregation of CtK took part in the journey to the stable at Christmas and more recently the Easter journey too.

We have enjoyed our Eucharist services with Paul, Wendy Carter, Theresa Jones and also Wendy Martin.

We had a Taize service on Good Friday and a lovely Easter Sunday service too.

Thank you to all those who continue to help set up and serve coffee after, Jan Gardener, Anne Clayton, Pat Powell.

Also our thanks go to Sarah Penfold, Kate Day, Gill Gough and I include myself in that, also for the morning worship challenges of Cd's that refuse to play the right track or just decide 6 verses are too much and we finish at 5.

Denise Smith deputy warden for Christ the King and Reader

St James's Deputy Wardens' report for APCM May 2023

This has been a busy year for the Deputy Wardens, managing the day-to-day maintenance of our buildings and land and meeting some one-off challenges. We are very grateful to our contractors and to those organisations, which have helped us with funding.

St James's Church

The routine maintenance of gutters, electrics, boilers, the lightning conductor and the fire extinguishers has been carried out as usual. We have had the required 5 yearly safety inspection of the wiring and our PAT testing of appliances is in date.

Repairs

We have had a couple of minor roof leaks, which have been promptly repaired by Mr Jelley. The hearing aid loop has been repaired.

Last Autumn, a car or van drove through the churchyard wall opposite to the exit from the library car park. Our insurer is trying to arrange repair but there has been a lot of concern from the diocese

about the exact mix of mortar to be used and the matching of bricks. We await permission from the Diocese to proceed when these questions are resolved.

We are grateful to Jason Rainey for a variety of small repairs, which he carries out promptly and skillfully.

Utilities Costs

These have soared, in spite of being in the Parish Buying energy purchasing basket for gas and Church Energy Purchasing Group (energisave) for electricity. We hope that costs will come down this year, but we need to reduce our energy use as much as possible.

Projects

Brickwork repairs

With a Foundation grant from the National Churches Trust (50% of cost) we have re-lined broken drain gullies, repaired the pointing on the South Transept wall and renewed rendering around the south nave windows and the tower. This work was carried out by Mr Jelley and prevents damp developing at these sites.

Tech project

Using grants from the Solihull CIL Fund, The Allchurches Trust (now the Benefact trust) and income from donations and legacies we have installed a projector, screens, and livestreaming equipment in Church and this has given new opportunities for worship and outreach. As part of the project, we ran three computer skills courses, expertly led by Bob Ireland, who runs our local U3A course in Computing.

The Tower Clock

With a grant from the Solihull CIL fund and donations from the Friends and individual parishioners, we have been able to repair the Tower clock, which dates from 1948 and is of historical interest with some rare features. The restoration was carried out by the Cumbria Clock Company. As part of the Faculty process, we were advised by the Diocese to look at ways of making access to the clock shelf safer. Our architect has suggested a plan and we are looking for a contractor.

Looking ahead

Toilet and kitchen pod

Our original proposal to site these much-needed facilities at the back of the nave did not prove viable because the structure would have been very close to the font, dominating the back of the church. Our architect has revised the plans, placing the pods in the south transept. If the Diocesan Advisory Committee approves this, we will need to get quotes and a funding plan before applying for a Faculty.

Boiler replacement

Our boilers are around 40 years old and becoming unreliable. It is very difficult to source spare parts and because they are inefficient, our carbon footprint is in the top 20% for the diocese. We have been asked to look at this and make an action plan. Ian Simpson, who is the Diocesan expert on this came to look at the church in February and we await his report.

Quinquennial Inspection

We received our Quinquennial report last Autumn. The Architect's view is that the church is well maintained, and we have already actioned some of his recommendations but there are a number of matters to be addressed over the next 4 years as funding becomes available.

The Churchyard

Our group of volunteers has worked throughout the year (except in the depths of winter) to maintain the churchyard and promote biodiversity. We are very grateful for their skill and commitment and also for the help we receive from the Shirley Sea Cadets, who twice yearly spend a morning tending our war graves and helping to keep the churchyard tidy.

During the year, we carried out a nature count and took part in a project studying the soil. Does churchyard soil capture carbon better than the soil in gardens and parks? The findings will be sent to us and all the other participating churches by the research team at Bangor University.

We have planted some small trees (from the Woodland Trust) and these seem to have survived last summer's drought and the winter cold and are coming into leaf.

A major concern has been the condition of the lime trees which surround the churchyard. They are healthy but overgrown with a lot of dead wood and need major pruning to keep them healthy and safe. This work is due to start before Easter on the west side of the churchyard then along the Church Road border.

Church House

Routine Maintenance

Gutter cleaning

Repairs

We have had several bad roof leaks which have been costly to repair but we have opted for full repair rather than patching. Mr Jelley describes the roof generally as 'tired but sound' and the main weakness seems to be where the flat roofed extension (1980 ish) meets the original 1912 pitched roof.

With help from the Friends, we have repaired and deep cleaned the cookers which are very high quality but were in need of some TLC.

Refurbishment

This year has seen extensive work carried out on Church House, paid for by Veolia Environmental Trust and The Lottery Community Fund with contributions from The Friends of St James, PCC and some private donations. We have updated our electrics, changed to LED lighting, replaced the emergency lighting, installed infrared panel ceiling heaters, insulated the loft and the East wall of the hall, and decorated much of the building. We have been greatly helped by Graham Darnley, who did much of the work and always 'went the extra mile' for us just as when he built the garden. Since the upgrade, the hall has been used more but there is scope for more lettings to contribute to the upkeep of the building and office.

Defibrillator

A defibrillator has been installed outside Church House with funds raised by Jane Cook and Hazel Reed and donations made at the Queen's Jubilee celebrations. A training course was held in November.

Looking ahead

The guttering and dormer window sills at the front of the building are in poor repair. It would be good to improve the toilets and complete the decoration and we will look for funding for this later in the year.

Garden

The Church House Garden has been a great success. We have strengthened the fencing to discourage burrowing and Linda has raised further funds for maintenance and the felling of a tree which is undermining the garage.

Many thanks to everyone who helps, encourages and supports us in the day-to-day work of caring for our buildings, especially the parish wardens, Margaret and Gill, the office staff and Samantha Bell, our hard-working cleaner.

Linda and Kate

Report to the 2023 APCM from St John the Divine, Tidbury Green

Attendances at our 9am services have remained constant during the year, and we also welcome those attending the Reflective Worship services on the first Sunday of the month and Forest Church when there is a fifth Sunday.

Our garden is also used for the Easter Sunday sunrise service.

We are very grateful to Reverend Paul and the ministry team for all that they do, and it was also lovely to have Louise Beasley and Sarah Down preaching and leading intercessions during their summer placements.

Tidbury Green Private Nursery have been into church quarterly for seasonal activities.

A drama group are now using the church for rehearsals again, which gives a boost to our income.

In July 2022, family and friends gathered for a service at St John's to celebrate the life of Barbara Edwards who passed away in December 2021. Many tributes were shared, and the service ended with prayers around the tree planted in the garden in memory of Barbara. Fortunately, during the dry spells there was enough water in our butt to keep it watered! In February 2023 we gathered at St James Church to bid farewell to another member of our congregation, Joyce Ferris. A big 'thank you' to the Ploughman's team for the lovely lunch afterwards in her honour.

Unfortunately, we lost the use of the car park at the former Italian restaurant during the year. A planning application has been submitted to Solihull council by property developers to demolish the bungalow next to the church (number 174) and the former Italian restaurant and to build three detached houses in their place. The site is currently fenced off including a gate between the fence and the side of the church. We submitted a letter detailing our concerns, particularly regarding the pond, to the council. The application is currently showing as 'withdrawn' on the council's website.

Members of the congregation who are able to, walk to services or park at Whitlocks End Station, but the main challenge is for any midweek events when the nursery staff are using the car park. The

nursery is closed on Mondays leaving the car park free, so we restarted our monthly coffee mornings in March. This was a great success with 25 attendees. We hosted a successful afternoon tea in September 2022, which was enjoyed by people from across the Parish.

The required checks on electrical equipment and fire extinguishers etc. have been carried out during the year. The paving slabs on our path are becoming increasingly uneven and therefore hazardous so we are currently obtaining quotes to have them replaced/re-laid and to improve access to the church. Fortnightly grass mowing has recently recommenced. Our Quinquennial Inspection Report is due this year.

We extend our thanks to all our volunteers for everything that they do.

Linda Alford – Deputy Warden – April 2023

Parish Warden's report for the 2023 APCM

We have met regularly with Reverend Paul during the year and provide support to him and the ministry team wherever we can. Together we review what is happening in the Parish and discuss any issues including the people needing pastoral support. We also contribute to the Parish's committees. The signs of growth and increasing fellowship in the Parish are very encouraging.

We have also been invited to Wider Deanery Chapter Zoom meetings, discussing the proposed Oversight Areas.

It was lovely having Louise Beasley and Sarah Down with us for their summer placements. Reverend Wendy Martin is a welcome addition to the team, and we look forward to Richard Haynes joining us as curate in the summer.

The Parish celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee went well and showed our commitment to reaching out to the local community. Many thanks to all involved.

On 1st July we joined other Church Wardens at Bishops Croft for light refreshments during Marquee Week and we met some of them again when we were formally admitted to the office by Archdeacon Jenny at a service at Holy Cross Church in Billesley Common on 10th July. Area Dean Phelim visited the Parish on behalf of Jenny on 15th August and has signed all of our service registers. The Articles of Enquiry have been submitted online as required.

We were able to celebrate Advent and Christmas in ways that we have not been able to for the last two years due to Covid. Attendances at services were good and the Christmas Tree Festival was enjoyed by all those who were involved and those who visited.

It was interesting to hear from the charities that we supported at the Festival and present the money raised at the Parish service on 5th February.

We are sorry that Hannah and Ellie have left the Parish Office and wish them all the best for the future.

We wish to thank our ministry team, all our volunteers and particularly our deputy wardens for all their hard work and commitment during the year.

Margaret Foreshew and Gill Hanton – April 2023

Safeguarding

There have been no reports of any safeguarding incidents in the period since the previous report in May 2022.

The number of volunteers requiring training and / or DBS checks has increased from 43 to 57 in the last year.

Training

In person Awareness and Foundation training was resumed during 2022 and the Parish hosted a Deanery training session in September which many of our parishioners attended. However, since the beginning of 2023 in person training courses have not been available from the Diocese due to cuts in personnel. The Safeguarding Team are currently working towards offering a hybrid approach to delivery of courses, using videos supplied by the Diocese with the Team acting as facilitators, which will take place in Church House.

A similar approach was used to deliver the Domestic Abuse course in June 2022. Four members of the PCC attended.

Leadership training continues to be provided by the Diocese through Zoom meetings.

Current Parish Safeguarding Training Position by Level

Level	Identified	Current	Outstanding
Awareness	55	52	3
Foundation	44	44	0
Domestic Abuse	14	11	3
Leadership	7	6	1

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

All those required to have a DBS check, a population of sixteen volunteers, have current certificates.

Parish Safeguarding Dashboards

The Parish’s Dashboard Report is now at 93% of Level 3, an improvement from Level 2 on the previous year. This increment has added two additional sections to the report. Currently six of the nine sections meet the required standard.

The current and previous status of compliance can be seen in the table below. Green brings reassurance that all is well; amber means that action is needed, and red means it is urgent.

	Policies and Action Plan	Safeguarding Procedures	Safeguarding Roles	Train. for Key Roles	Learning and Devel.	Display. Info.	Reviews and Reports	Church Activities	Non-Church Activities
April 2022	✓	✓	✓	n/a	●	✓	✓	●	n/a
April 2023	✓	●	✓	✓	●	✓	●	✓	✓

The sections at amber are Safeguarding Procedures, Learning and Development and Reviews and Reports. The following table shows the item, in each section, which is outstanding and what action will be taken to complete these requirements.

Section	Item	Action
Safeguarding Procedures	A review of Social Media procedures	Presenting to the next PCC meeting, June 2023
Learning and Development	Outstanding training for seven volunteers, across all courses	Monthly review by Safeguarding Team
Reviews and Reports	A list of Church Activities	Presenting to the next PCC meeting, June 2023

The dashboard report does however indicate the PCC has complied with its duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure (2016) to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Prepared by Susan Harries and Judith Chivers

Ecochurch Report for APCM May 2023

'The future of our fragile, beautiful planet home is in our hands. As God's family, we are stewards of God's creation. We can be wantonly irresponsible, or we can be caring and compassionate. God says, "I have set before you life and death... Choose life."' [Desmond Tutu](#)

The Ecochurch focus group met on an ad hoc basis through 2022, then became an official subgroup of the PCC in January 2023 with 4 meetings annually, timed to be able to report to the PCC.

Jill Abbey has retired from the committee, and we are very grateful for all she has done and her continuing interest and support of our work.

Committee members are Kate Day, Chris Terry, Chris Speakman, Rev Wendy Martin, Rev Wendy Carter, Rev Nick Ball, Pam Owen and Kate Crocker. New members are always welcome!

All three churches have worked together towards the Ecochurch award and we were delighted to receive silver status in January 2023. This reflects our approach to worship, management of land and buildings, community outreach and individual lifestyle, making care for creation a key part of our parish life.

We have held special events: a Creation-tide service, a Green Fair and a coffee morning in support of the Fairtrade Foundation as well as the on-going projects making shopping bags from recycled materials, selling used books and bric-a-brac, increasing biodiversity on our land and promoting fairly traded goods. We had a tree at the Christmas festival and the information board in St James's Church is kept bright and interesting by Pam Owen, Chris Speakman and others. We regularly write articles for the Parish Magazine, giving information and tips.

Chris Terry has agreed to be our Fairtrade Champion, ensuring that we meet our aim to serve fairly traded tea, coffee and other products at all our events.

There is a lot more that we can do, and everyone can help. It can feel daunting, but small changes add up if many people join in.

We have had a lot of encouragement and resources through the Deanery and are very grateful for this support

Ecochurch Sub- Committee

Mothers' Union

I would like to say how lovely it is to be meeting in our newly decorated Church House and thank you to all who have made this possible, I know Linda and Kate Crocker have spent many hours here, but I am sure there are more people who have also been working hard and our grateful thanks to all of them.

A very big welcome to Margery Baldwyn and Gina Atkinson who were enrolled at the Advent Service and a welcome to Linda Reynolds as a re-admitted member. I would like us to remember Janet Hill and Diane Burton who died during 2022, both were a big support to our group and we will miss them.

We hope you enjoyed the programme during the past year, we are always looking for new ideas so if you hear of anything interesting, please let us know. Our only evening meeting in August - Desert Island Discs - was a huge success with more of our clergy surprising and delighting us with their choice. This is being repeated again this year, hosted by Ray Speakman.

Our thanks to Jan Dalton for the Craft Afternoon in November when we all made a Christmas Cracker, a small gift bag and a table decoration, surprising what we can do when shown how!

There are two Diocesan Council Meetings each year, which anyone can attend, that's usually Linda and myself! At our last one in Northfield Rowena Nicholls spoke about Baby boxes and we were so impressed that we have invited Rowena to come and speak to us in March and tell us about this initiative. This is something we are going to start in our group/church this year, but it will be best if Rowena does the talking!

I'm going to finish with asking as many of you as possible to support the JIGFAST on Saturday at 10.0 am to raise funds for the up keep of the back garden here so that we can enjoy it as much as possible. It really has made a huge difference to Church House and all of the groups that use this place. Who doesn't like a Jigsaw and a breakfast!

Liz Yates

Friends of St. James, Shirley

Report for the Annual Parochial Meeting 2023

At last, some sort of normality – even though it has taken a while for people to get out and about again!

Since this time last year our public facing activities have resumed further, with two coffee morning & bric a brac events, three lunches and numerous cake sales along with involvement in other Church events like the jubilee celebrations and the Christmas tree festival.

Of the non-contact activities, the 100 Club continues to provide regular income, (although we can always do with a few new members), and the sale of books has been very rewarding.

Our funds have been boosted by various donations this year, mainly those made in memory of church members who have died. For all these we are most grateful.

Only two items have been paid out, the largest being the 10% required to secure the grant from Veolia Environmental Trust for the refurbishment of Church House, and the second was a contribution towards the repair of the church clock.

We hope to continue the activities of the past, and ask for the support of Church members and of the people of Shirley to maintain their Parish Church properties.

As ever, I thank my fellow 'Friends' for the time they give and for their ongoing commitment to the various fund raising activities.

Gordon Bragg

06.04.23

Events Committee report for the 2023 APCM

The Committee was formerly known as the Social Committee - it was renamed during the year with the agreement of the PCC.

The aim of the Committee is to oversee and coordinate all the events across the Parish for both church members and for the wider community. We work with the appropriate people/groups across the Parish to ensure that events have the help, support, and resources that they need as well as being directly involved in some of them.

The members of the Committee are –

Linda Alford, Shirley Beedon, Anne Clayton, Jan Dalton, Reverend Paul Day, Glenys Golightly (on behalf of the Friends of St James), Gill Gough, Gill Hanton (Chair), Barbara Neale, Belinda Piasecki, Linda Pitt, Pat Powell, Denise Smith and Liz Yates.

The most significant events during the year were our Platinum Jubilee celebrations – the history and flower displays in St James Church, the Street Party and the Songs of Praise service and our Christmas Tree Festival.

Good feedback was received for these events from both our regular congregations and members of the local community. The signs of growth and increasing fellowship in the Parish are very encouraging.

The current regular activities in the Parish are -

Every Tuesday – Welcome Café (now an official ‘Place of Welcome’)

Alternate Tuesdays – Craft Club

Every Wednesday – Churchyard Working Party

Wednesdays – Journeying on Together

Alternate Wednesdays – Ploughman’s Lunch

Fridays in termtime – Jimmy Tots

Second Sunday of the month – ‘Friends’ Walking Club

Every Saturday morning – Parish Prayers

Weekly – Open the Book

First Sunday – ‘Friends’ Cake Sale

Planning is underway for our Coronation celebrations. The calendar for the rest of the year is currently as follows –

May	Monday 1st	Parish Boundary Walk	Church House
	Wednesday 3rd	MU – Anthea Tinline, Her parent’s early years in Newfoundland/Labrador	Church House
	Saturday 6th	Watching the Coronation and Cream Teas	St James Church & Church House
	Sunday 7th	Songs of Praise service followed by our APCM	St James Church
	Monday 8th	‘Big Help Out’ - https://thebighelpout.org.uk	TBC
	Saturday 13th	Bible Workshop	Church House
June	Monday 15th	Coffee Morning	St John’s Church
	Sunday 21st	Sunday Lunch Club	Church House
	Wednesday 7th	MU – Shirley Police Neighbourhood Team	Church House
	Sunday 18th	Sunday Lunch Club	Church House
	Saturday 24th	Richard Haynes’ Ordination	Birmingham Cathedral
	Sunday 25th	Bring & Share/Buffer lunch	Church House
July	Wednesday 5th	MU – Reverend Denise Jones, working as a Hospital Chaplain	Church House
	Saturday 8th	Shirley Carnival	Shirley Park
	Sunday 16th	‘Friends’ BBQ	Church House
	Saturday 29th	Cream Teas	St John’s Church
August	Thursday 17th	MU Desert Island Discs	Church House
	Sunday 20th	Sunday Lunch Club	Church House
September	Wednesday 6th	MU – Ray Study, the Rise & Fall of Whitley Court	Church House
	Sunday 17th	Sunday Lunch Club	Church House
	Tuesday 26th	Macmillan Coffee Morning at the Welcome Café	Church House
	Saturday 30th	Harvest Supper	Church House
October	Sunday 1st	Harvest Festival	St James Church
	Wednesday 4th	MU – Pam & David Humphries, A Ride around the famous Outer Circle	Church House
	Saturday 7th	‘Friends’ Coffee Morning	Church House
November	Sunday 15th	Sunday Lunch Club	Church House
	Wednesday 1st	MU – Jan Dalton, Craft Session	Church House
	Saturday 4th	MU Coffee Morning	237 Bills Lane
	Sunday 12th	Remembrance Sunday	Church House
	Sunday 26th	‘Friends’ Sunday lunch	St James Church
w/c Monday 27th	Journey to the Stable	St James Church	
December	Wednesday 6th	MU – Advent Service CTF set up	St James Church

	Thursday 7th to Sunday 10th Saturday 9th Sunday 17th	Christmas Tree Festival CTF Activities and refreshments Sunday Lunch Club	St James Church Church House Church House
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Gill Hanton – April 2023

Work with Children and Families

Activities with schools

Throughout the year we have been running Open the Book – a Bible story telling project - with year 3 at Widney Junior and the early years and foundation children at Kingswood schools.

We have continued the Bible art lunchtime activity (started last year with help from the Children’s and Families worker at Tanworth in Arden) with the year 1 to 6 children at Tudor Grange Primary Academy St James. In this the children relate their current school values to the Bible and their own lives, and do some associated artwork. The school are pleased that we have been able to display some of the results in St James Church recently.

During the year we have been able to run both the Journey to the Stable, for year 1 children, and the Easter Journey, for year 5 children. We invite the relevant year groups from all the schools within the parish and these events are designed to tell the Christmas and Easter stories in a way as close to the Gospel as possible, and to let the children think about some of the realities of those stories.

During the year a number of schools have held services in St James Church, both with and without a ministry team presence, and Rev Paul has taken a number of school assemblies.

Children from Tidbury Green nursery have visited St Johns Church for activities each term

Church run activities

The Jimmy Tots toddler group has met on Fridays during term time and continues to attract good numbers each week. It is encouraging that a number of babies are coming which hopefully will give us longer to get to know those families. The Jimmy Tots come into St James Church for a brief service at the end of each term.

Our monthly Saturday morning Messy Church continues to be popular particularly for families with children aged 8 and younger. They enjoy a variety of mainly craft based activities (with drinks and toast) then we all come together in celebration. This year we have been able to welcome to the team two of our older children to take on a role as young leaders. As our regular attenders grow older we are looking at ways to include things which are more suitable for the 8plus age range. In October we had a first – a baptism during Messy Church – perhaps the first of many!

On Christmas Eve we replaced our more traditional crib service with ‘Angels at the crib’ giving all the children the opportunity to come dressed as angels, or to bring one. Two rather silly larger angels were confused about what they should be doing but at the end we all managed to meet the baby Jesus. Carols were sung and refreshments included a Christmas cake made by the Messy Church children.

Sunday mornings – we recognise that our Sunday morning services are not particularly child friendly – although we always seek to welcome children and try to involve them where possible. However, we

are seeking to make the 4th Sunday of the month at St James an occasion where all ages and generations are particularly welcomed and included in what we do. This will, of course, mean that these services will be likely to be less formal than others. We are also looking at creating better resources for children for the other Sundays.

How do we manage this?

Despite all Paul's efforts we have not been able to secure funding for a paid children's worker but we have a student on placement who we hope will help in the next phase of our developing children's work.

All the things you have read about above would not be possible without a significant number of volunteers who undertake safeguarding training in order to organise, act, lead, cut out, make tea, and toast, move chairs, vacuum up and keep smiling. Thank you all.

Sarah Penfold and Rev Paul Day

Shirley Churches Together Report

This year we said farewell to Paul Champion who retired from his position as Senior Pastor at Shirley Baptist Church and welcomed Mat Wilson who came to replace him in the Summer. We also welcomed Mike Darbandi as minister in charge of the Gas Street South Church which currently meets in Tudor Grange Academy.

Churches Together arranged carol singing outside ASDA and the 'Babs of Bethlehem' drama in Our Lady of the Wayside a couple of weeks before Christmas as well as the Good Friday Walk of Witness. To mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we had a unity service in the Baptist Church followed by a social in the Lion Pub – this was very well received. The World Day of Prayer service took place in St James this year in March. Weekly services take place in Solihull Village led by a rota of church leaders from the churches in Shirley. Ministers continue to meet regularly every fortnight for prayer and support.

Plans for the year ahead include taking part in the Shirley Carnival in July.

Reverend Paul Day

Report from Deanery Synod Representatives for APCM May 2023

Our Deanery covers Kings Norton, Moseley and Shirley and the Synod meets three times yearly at different churches in the Deanery.

We are represented by Rev Paul, Gill Gough, Margaret Foreshew and Kate Crocker. Kate is also the Parish Environmental Contact for the Deanery. Representatives are elected to the Deanery Synod by the PCC every three years.

The Synod is a supportive and friendly forum for discussion, information sharing and learning. Meetings begin with prayer and include an update of news at Deanery, Diocesan and national level.

A topic is then explored in depth with a presentation and discussion in small groups. Subjects explored this year included,

Getting to net zero

This is an active concern for us, especially since last year, St James's Church was (just) in the top 20% of carbon emissions- reflecting our old, inefficient boilers and dependence on gas for heating. The Deanery offers resources, education and support on environmental matters facilitated by two Champions, Heather Holmes and Caroline Egan.

Oversight ministry

Because we already have three congregations and serve a large population, we are not involved in this process. We have already encountered the opportunities and challenges of working as a group and they are very similar to those reported by the parishes just starting to form clusters.

Youth work.

There is a great deal of work being done at national and diocesan level to develop resources, training and support to help the Church grow younger. This is of particular interest for our team working in schools and as our first Messy Church children turn into young people.

The Deanery produces a very informative online newsletter, sharing ideas, events, advertisements (as for our Parish Operations Manager) and reflections on current issues both locally and in the wider church. I think we need to be more aware of this and use it more often to celebrate all that is happening in Shirley Parish.

Kate Crocker

Growing in Faith

At the end of John's gospel we hear the story of the breakfast on the beach. After they have eaten, Jesus takes Peter to one side. Peter is forgiven and reinstated as the leader of what we know as 'the church'. He then looks around and sees one of the other disciples, and asks Jesus, "And what about him?" Gently as always, Jesus sets him straight. "Don't worry about him. You – follow me!"

We are all individuals. All very different individuals. One size does not fit all. And yet, Jesus is very clear. If we consider ourselves to be part of his church, one of his followers, then – well - we need to follow him. Our 'following' will not necessarily look the same as someone else's, but the expectation is there that it will happen.

So, how have we helped and supported people to follow Jesus over the past 12 months?

Once again we ran the START and Moving On courses over the summer months. A small group of us met at the Vicarage to eat, and then explore and talk over the course materials. In START we thought about "Does God exist?" "What about the mess in the world?" "Who is Jesus?" "What's Good Friday and Easter about?" and then in Moving On, we thought about prayer and the Bible, and what it means to be part of Church. It was a very special time, in which the Holy Spirit was very evidently at work. Later in the year we ran a 'bespoke' version for one of our families, which again was full of the Spirit. It is a joy to see all the course members continuing to flourish in their faith as the weeks pass.

The previous year's START and Moving On participants were invited to continue in their journey as part of the Journeying On Together (JoT) group. The group meets on Wednesday afternoons and followed the Pilgrim course on The Lord's Prayer during the Spring and Summer months. Since the autumn, an expanded group has been considering the Creeds.

In each meeting we chat about the topic for that day, look at a Bible passage, consider a reflection, and then have a go at working out what it means for each of us in our daily lives. We've quickly learned that we all have something we can bring to the discussion and that there is always something new to ponder on!

Also in the autumn we began a monthly evening group aimed primarily at those 'of working age'. It's a pretty big group, but we haven't yet (quite) run out of chairs, so there is always room for more! Again, we read the Bible, reflect, pray and try to put things into practice. Plus we're getting to know each other better. Both this group and the JoT group morphed into weekly groups during Lent, with an extended membership.

Following the interest in the Lent booklets in 2022 we ordered 200 of the C of E Christmas booklets "Follow the Star", ran out within a few days and had to order some more. What an encouragement! Even more so, was hearing people talk about what they had read, and what it meant to them.

There was similar enthusiasm for the Lent booklet, Dust + Glory. Quite a few people chose to use the app, and we still had to order more booklets! This one was more challenging, but despite (or maybe because of!) this, the Lent Groups were really well attended, with lots of discussion and encouragement. We reckon that 40 different people attended at least one of the sessions, many of whom attended pretty much every week, which was fantastic.

The Quiet Day which Wendy M led at St John's was a very special time for those who attended, and we look forward to further opportunities to encounter God in this way in the coming year.

Thank you so much to everyone who has contributed to making all these opportunities happen – you know who you are!

Of course, small groups aren't the only way we learn to follow Jesus. We have continued to have some excellent sermons in our worship services, and the Wow! moments in our main Sunday worship services enable us to begin to recognise where God is present in our everyday lives. Plus, of course, so many of us learn by doing – by taking on something new or different, maybe something challenging - and then finding that God is there with us, enabling and inspiring us. It's great to see so much of that happening too.

So over the next months, however we do it, may we continue to actively deepen our faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Kate Day
11.04.23