

All Saints

CHURCH, RISELEY

Church Lane, Riseley, Bedford, MK44 1ER
www.allsaintsriseley.com



Cross of Glory

Annual Church Report
2021

Contents

Rector's Report	3
Agendas and Minutes	5
Agenda for Meeting of Parishioners	5
Parish of All Saints Riseley.....	5
Agenda for Annual Parochial Church Meeting	5
Parish of All Saints Riseley.....	5
Minutes of Annual Meeting of Parishioners	6
Parish of All Saints Riseley	6
Minutes of Annual Parochial Church Meeting.....	7
Parish of All Saints Riseley	7
Churchwarden's report.....	9
Parochial Church Council (PCC) Report 2020/21	10
Building and Fabric report	11
Financial Review.....	12
All Saints Church Riseley Accounts 2020	13
Electoral Roll	16
Administrative Information	17
Church information.....	17
Key personnel	17
PCC members.....	17
Sharnbrook Deanery Synod Report	18
Safeguarding	20
Children and families report	21
Riseley Primary School - School Profile.....	22
Mission Support	23
Milsons – Valencia, Spain.....	23
Asha and Sangster – Bangalore, India.....	24
Festive	25
The Stables Christian Centre	25
Personal Reflections of the Past Year	27
Star of Hope	28

Rector's Report



Winter at All Saints

Dear Friends,

In *1 Chronicles 12:23-37*, the writer of this book gives us the details of all the people who came to help David defeat Saul at Hebron. Amongst this list in verse 32, are included *“the men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do.”*

I wonder how many amongst us can claim to understand the times right now? What a strange year this has been! Lockdowns; face-masks; hand sanitiser; social distancing; Coronavirus. It really has been an incredibly challenging time, which has maybe left us feeling uprooted and confused as we have had to adjust to

a new way of doing things. Freedoms and opportunities that we took for granted suddenly look different, and this has undoubtedly impacted us all to varying degrees. This past year has been one of cancelled plans, isolation, anxiety, fear, sadness, disappointment, financial trouble, personal loss and concern for many, and I know that lots of people are just generally feeling quite tired and worn out.

The situation has been compounded by the fact that our church meetings have been caught up in this disruption too, resulting in them predominantly taking place online through our weekly pre-recorded YouTube services, supplemented with regular ZOOM meetings. As has been the case with our immediate families, the physical separation from our church family has been incredibly painful and no doubt costly. However there appears to be some light at the end of the tunnel with the roll-out of the vaccination programme and what are currently (when writing this) falling infection rates. As soon as we are safely able to, we intend to re-open our buildings for church services and meetings once again, although anticipate that this may potentially be a long journey of small steps, before everything is fully ‘back to normal’.

One of the challenges of navigating this tricky road, has been remaining united in love. As with many other important issues of recent times, the country has been widely divided on what our approach to responding to the COVID pandemic should look like. This debate has understandably been part of the conversation in the discussions surrounding church life too. Something I have been greatly encouraged by this year, is that although there may have been personal disagreements with decisions that have been undertaken, as to which route we take, we have been a community that has been incredibly gracious and patient, bearing with one another with Christ-like love.

This love has also been borne out in our care and service to one another. From the first days of lockdown, we have had a willing list of volunteers who have sought to care for and support others across our community. The home groups have taken the lead in coordinating pastoral care to the vulnerable amongst our church family, to ensure that nobody has gone without or been forgotten. I pray that this love and practical service will continue to play a full part in the life of our church going forward and that our good deeds may be visible for all to see resulting in God's glory (*1 Peter 2:12*).

Despite the challenges, we continue to have much to be thankful for. The lockdowns have prompted us to engage with technology in new ways, which has allowed us to reach more people with the gospel than before. Whilst we do not know the full story behind the viewing figures of our online services, the numbers suggest that many others have been joining us online across this past year. In fact, a number of people unbeknown to me before lockdown have let me know how they have enjoyed accessing our services - an encouraging sign of how God is at work.

But of course, church is not about numbers, even though news of new people joining us is encouraging. Church is about us as the body of Christ, growing in our love for Jesus and one another. Again, this is something that our online services have hopefully encouraged us to do, as we have enjoyed getting to know Jesus better through listening to his word, singing his praises and praying to him together each week. Whilst,

Rector's Report

we have not been able to do these things together in person, technology (and paper!) has enabled us to continue our togetherness in the Spirit as we have sung the same songs, prayed the same prayers, listened to the same passages of the Bible being read and reflected on the same sermons each week. The invention of ZOOM has meant we have been able to see and talk to one another for prayer meetings and communion services, for homegroup studies and for Christianity Explored Courses, whilst not been allowed to meet in person. Praise God for technology!



Young people meeting on Zoom

Whilst many of our usual ministries have sadly not been able to take place (children's groups; youth group; midweek lunch and tea time services; Brook house visits; Aslan club; and bell-ringing amongst others), there have continued to be a number of attempts at reaching out to our community with the love of Christ. The star of hope on top of the church tower inspired many people to decorate and display their own stars of hope in their homes (see final page of this church profile); whilst the Cross of glory (to which the star of hope ultimately leads) shone brightly whilst Palm Crosses and Easter cards were delivered to every home in the parish inviting everyone to join us for our Easter services. We've

held two collections of produce for the local women's refuge, which have been really well supported and gratefully received, whilst a number of people have had other involvement in many notable and really important causes.

Another great encouragement has been the generosity of so many which has seen us able to cover the costs of church life for the first time in a few years, despite the challenges presented by COVID. A huge thank you to everybody who has contributed financially to the life and ministry of All Saints across this past year – I thank God for his provision through the generosity of so many.

Yet of course there have been moments of profound sadness too. Many of us will know of people who have died during the pandemic with the inability to grieve alongside others making it all so much harder. I have conducted 12 funerals during this time, each person made in the image of God and precious to him. We all lost a dear brother and sister in the LORD shortly before Christmas, when David Foster and Mabel Bately fell asleep in Jesus.

All these departures bring in to focus the urgency of the gospel we profess, that Jesus has come to rescue us from the darkness of death and to bring us into his glorious kingdom of light. He brought himself through death and he promises the same to all who believe in him. This is the good news of the Saviour who came down to rescue us as he suffered and died upon the cross. This is why we can be confident about the future.

And so, as I draw to a close, I for one do not pretend to fully understand these times. Yet one thing I do know: God is both good and faithful and he is working in all things for the good of those who love him (*Romans 8:28*). God is powerful and in control of all things, he loves us dearly as his own children, so much so that he laid down his life for us, and so whatever this coming year may hold, may we all keep looking to and trusting in Jesus – the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls (*1 Peter 2:25*). Continue to stand firm dear brothers and sisters and let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain (*1 Corinthians 15:58*).

With much love in our risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

James Isaacs

P.S. A very big thank you to everybody who has been involved in contributing to this report, and especially to Karen Houck for compiling it.

Agendas and Minutes

Agenda for Meeting of Parishioners

Parish of All Saints Riseley

Wednesday 21st April 2021 at 8.00pm via ZOOM

A joint meeting of:

- (a) The persons whose names are entered on the Church Electoral Roll of the Parish; and
- (b) The persons resident in the Parish whose names are entered on a Register of Local Government Electors by reason of such residence:

For the election of Church Wardens.

Agenda for Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Parish of All Saints Riseley

Immediately following the Meeting of Parishioners in All Saints Church on **Wednesday 21st April 2021**.

1. For the election of parochial representatives of the laity to the Parochial Church Council
2. For the appointment of the Independent Examiner
3. For the consideration of:
 - (a) A report on changes in the roll since the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting;
 - (b) An annual report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council;
 - (c) The financial statements of the Council for the year ending 31st December 2020;
 - (d) A report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the Church of the Parish;
 - (e) A report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod; and
 - (f) Reports on other matters of parochial or general church interest.

Notes:

1. All persons whose names are entered upon the Church Electoral Roll of the Parish (and such persons only) are entitled to vote at the election of parochial representatives of the laity.
2. Subject to the provisions of rule 14(3)(c), a person is qualified to be elected a parochial representative of the laity if:
 - (a) Their name is entered on the Church Electoral Roll of the Parish;
 - (b) They are an actual communicant which means that they have received communion according to the use of the Church of England or of a Church in communion with the Church of England at least three times during the twelve months preceding the date of the election; and
 - (c) They are of eighteen years or upwards (for election to the Deanery Synod) or of sixteen years or upwards (for election to the Parochial Church Council).

Minutes of Annual Meeting of Parishioners

Parish of All Saints Riseley

Held via Zoom on 13th October 2020

Present: Revd James Isaacs (Chair), Diane Sollars (Secretary), Graham Sollars, David and Jill Shaw, Robin and Jane Rhodes, Judy Green, John and Sue Walker, Sue and Keith Williams, Jackie Gardner, Rachel White, Verena Pentlow, Martin Hargreaves, Dudley and Jan Ferdinando, Katy and Richard Carter, Roger and Penny Gray, Heather Shelton, Dianne Jones, Catherine Veitch, Phillip and Margaret Nicholls, Sam and, Rob Toseland, Jo and Jon Nicholls, Katie Nicholls, Jemma Sollars, Pieter Carroll, Mark Eddon, Sally Eddon, and Dave Sheffield.

Apologies for Absence: Karen Houck, Catherine Smith, Kathryn Staniforth, Hugh Staniforth, Trevor Staniforth, Roline Hargreaves, Jacqui and Cliff Turner, Monica Isaacs, Lynda and Brian Simister, Alison Blanchard, Nicki Carter and Caroline Carter.

James Isaacs welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that this would be a pared down APCM and explained how everyone could vote by using the signs on their tablets/computers. James read from *Acts 2*, looking at the life of the early church in verses 42-47 and the picture this portrays of what the churches priorities should be and then opened the meeting with prayer.

Minutes from the Previous Meeting: 07/04/2019

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved and signed by James Isaacs. There were no matters arising.

Election of Church Wardens

Mark Eddon and Richard Carter both agreed that they would be willing to stand again as Church Wardens. The nomination of Richard Carter was proposed by Graham Sollars and seconded by Verena Pentlow; the appointment was unanimously agreed everyone present. The nomination of Mark Eddon was proposed by Jackie Gardner and seconded by Robin Gardner; the appointment was unanimously agreed by everyone present.

James thanked Mark and Richard for their work throughout the past year.

The Meeting of the Parishioners was closed and followed by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

Minutes of Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Parish of All Saints Riseley

Held via Zoom on 13th October 2020 following the Annual Meeting of Parishioners

Election of parochial representatives of the laity to the Deanery Synod

James thanked Keith Williams for his work as Lay Chair for the Deanery Synod and also Lynda and Brian Simister for their work, they had all expressed a willingness to stand again. The appointment of Keith Williams as Lay Chair was proposed by Jemma Sollars and seconded by Mark Eddon and unanimously agreed by everyone present. The appointment of Lynda Simister was proposed by Rob Toseland and seconded by Sam Toseland and unanimously agreed by everyone present. The appointment of Brian Simister was proposed by Sally Eddon and seconded by Julia Pullin and unanimously agreed by everyone present.

James Isaacs thanks all 3 for their work during the past year, especially for the work carried out by Keith as Lay Chair, to make the Synod as effective for the gospel as possible and for his vision. James advised that the Deanery meetings are open and encouraged anyone interested to go along in the future.

Election of parochial representatives of the laity to the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

Graham Sollars, Verena Pentlow and Dudley Ferdinando have come to the end of their three-year term on the PCC, they had all agreed to stand for another three-year term. James asked if there were anyone else who would like to nominate themselves, there were no further nominations. James encouraged people to consider standing on the PCC when there is another APCM in the spring of 2021.

The appointment of Graham Sollars was proposed by Alison Blanchard and seconded by Rachel White and agreed unanimously by everyone present. The appointment of Verena Pentlow was proposed by Keith Williams and seconded by Sue Williams and agreed unanimously by everyone present. The appointment of Dudley Ferdinando was proposed by Jill Shaw and seconded by David Shaw and agreed unanimously by everyone present.

James thanked everyone who served on the PCC.

Appointment of the Independent Examiner

Brian Simister, on behalf of the PCC confirmed that Malcolm Rowland has agreed to continue as the Independent Examiner for the accounts. This appointment was unanimously agreed by everyone present.

Electoral Roll

Hugh Staniforth has undertaken the role of Electoral Roll Officer again this year and has compiled the electoral roll twice during the year as the initial APCM had been postponed due to the pandemic. Hugh confirmed that there had been 6 deletions and 1 addition since the 2019 APCM.

Finance Report

The finance report was included as part of the church profile. Brian Simister gave a short summary and said that there had been an increase of £8000 per annum in giving since 2019 but he was still concerned about the future situation especially giving the impact of the pandemic, as a result he is still predicting a deficit of £5000 this year.

James Isaacs asked if there were any questions about the finance report. A question was raised about whether the funds for the Children and Families Worker was a designated fund and this was confirmed by Brian. Also, a query about the parish share and how this compared to 2019, Brian confirmed this had gone down slightly.

James encouraged everyone to keep praying about our financial situation and to strive to be good stewards of the resources we have. Sally Eddon said a thank you for the gift of a digital piano to replace the broken one.

Minutes of Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Any Other Business

Church Website - James Isaacs thanked the team involved in setting up the website, especially Karen Houck who had given time doing additional work to get the site up and running.

The meeting closed with prayer – giving thanks for the church family, the Christianity Explored course and continued for personal growth.



APCM 2020

Churchwarden's report

Well, what a strange year this has been! Most of our sessions together (the Wardens and the Vicar) have included a discussion on our physical response to COVID, and we have taken into consideration the thoughts of the Bishop, local medical advice and drawing on our own knowledge and prayers. It was great to see some of you in the summer when we were able to have some short services and spend a limited amount of time in each other's company. However, since those few short weeks, we have thought it best not to meet but rather continue the on-line services which James, the musicians, those leading us in prayer, the readers and some of our folk that are gifted in preaching have been great at putting together. Thanks to all of them. It isn't the same, but we trust that you feel it has kept us together and connected and as we reach and listen to God's word together, we are reminded that we have a faithful Father who really does love and care for us in the best of times and the worst of times.

We long (and as we write this it may only be a few weeks away) for us as a congregation to meet together properly and share in our common worship of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Dudley Fernando does a great job behind the scenes making sure that the various jobs required for the ongoing maintenance of the building are taken care of. Following our recent Quinquennial inspection, we will need to spend some money in the forthcoming year particularly on maintenance for our heating system and on various stonework related projects in order to keep our church building safe and sound.

As we enter the next phase of the governments opening up after the national lockdown, we hope that we can make some steps towards getting back together.

Mark Eddon and Richard Carter

Parochial Church Council (PCC) Report 2020/21

The structure of the PCC has remained unchanged during the last 12 months but the PCC year has been very different with meetings held via Zoom throughout the year. The PCC consists of James Isaacs as Chair, Mark Eddon and Richard Carter as Church Wardens. Keith Williams, Lynda Simister and Brian Simister have been serving as representatives at the Deanery Synod, Brian continues to have responsibility for finance and Lynda has responsibility for church safeguarding. Dudley Ferdinando continues to look after the church building and I serve as PCC Secretary. The other members of the PCC are Dave Sheffield, Jonathan Nicholls, Martin Hargreaves, Verena Pentlow and Graham Sollars. Sam Toseland also attends the meetings as Children and Families Worker.

This year we have had the challenge of thinking of creative ways of 'meeting' together whilst not being able to be in the church building for most of the last 12 months and to focus on ways of continuing to spread the gospel in these difficult times. As you can imagine a lot of the discussions throughout the year have centred around the current Government COVID-19 guidance and what is permissible for church services, weddings and funerals but as well as that we have had to consider major church celebrations of Christmas and Easter and how we can best celebrate these festivals whilst staying safe.

Being a part of the PCC is a very practical way in which you can serve God in your local church family, if this is something that you would like to consider, I would encourage you to speak to any of the PCC members or James, who would be happy to give more information on what is involved.

Prayer

Please pray for the PCC that our work would stay focused on Biblical principles in order to spread the gospel throughout our village and through that work that we would glorify God.

Diane Sollars

Building and Fabric report



Remembrance

It has been very sad to see how little our lovely church building has been used during the past year, not just on a Sunday but also with all that normally goes on during the week. Hopefully by the time this report goes out usage of the building will be on the increase. Thinking back, I can't imagine any period of time in the history of the building when people wouldn't have been coming in to worship together for such a long period of time!

The end of 2020 saw us having our 5 yearly (Quinquennial) report on our building and churchyard by our architect Michael Dales. Although the building has not been used as much as normal, he did make this comment:

'I visited the church the day after Remembrance whilst the building was in the second pandemic lockdown. Notwithstanding the current difficulties, the care for the building was clearly evident inside and out and all who maintain it and seek to keep it purposeful are to be thanked for their endeavours'.

I would very much like to thank those inside and outside of our church family to do spend a significant amount of time and effort pruning trees and hedges, weeding french drains, oiling benches, edging paths, maintaining notice boards and hoovering, tidying and cleaning inside of the church building. Without you (and you know who you are) our church would look a sorry state. And let us say a special thank you to Lesley Deathe for the many hours she lovingly has dedicated to maintaining the churchyard over this past year – it really is looking terrific. We haven't been able to hold our communal spring clean days during the pandemic but hopefully these will also return later this year.

As for the Quinquennial report, it did identify plenty of significant repair jobs that do need attention. These are prioritised in time and urgency order and the immediate attention is on a bit of an overhaul of our ageing radiant heating system and some urgently needed stonework repairs. Costs for simply maintaining our building and keeping it watertight and functional are significant. I pray that we, as the current custodians of this amazing place of worship will find a way to hand it on in good repair to those coming behind us.

My final comment is exactly the same as in the report last year - We really do need to explore whether there might be opportunities for accessing a wider base of financial support for the church building from across the village and to seek potential grants that help to offset the considerable costs needed. If anybody feels they have the skills and energy to drive this, please let James know!

Dudley Ferdinando

Financial Review

As can be seen from the accounts there was a surplus on the main PCC accounts of £2,141 compared with a deficit in 2019 of £7,487. There were a number of reasons for this turnaround--one being that in 2019 we installed a roof alarm. In 2020 we received a £2,000 grant from Bedford Borough Council, a grant of £200 from the Diocese, and a number of generous donations from church members towards the end of the year. Monthly giving held up well, although obviously there was no cash offertory for over 6 months of the year.

As well as the general PCC account, part of our funds are designated to be spent for the children and families worker, currently employed by North Bedfordshire Christian Youth Trust. At the end of 2020 there was £9,900 in that fund, in line with expectations.

Overall, despite the problems caused by COVID, it can be said that 2020 was a good year financially, and we should give thanks to God for that.

Brian Simister

All Saints Church Riseley Accounts 2020

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

INCOME	2020		2019	
	UNRESTRICTED	DESIGNATED	UNRESTRICTED	DESIGNATED
GIVING	54,240	5,000	53,263	15,000
GRANTS	2,200			
FEES	4,028		3,186	
TAX RECLAIM	12,319		10,983	2,500
INTEREST ETC	22		46	
TOTAL INCOME	72,809	5,000	67,478	17,500
EXPENDITURE				
PARISH SHARE	52,478		52,248	
VICARS EXP	1,210		1,957	
INSUR/UTILITIES	3,067		3,160	
CYPECS	34		101	
OUTREACH	1,476		1,241	
DONATIONS	9,151	9,200	7,613	3,400
BUILDING MAINT	2,375		5,908	
MUSIC	664		995	
SECRETARIAL	231		396	
MISC	(18)		859	
EQUIPMENT			487	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	70,668	9,200	74,965	3,400
SURPLUS FOR YEAR	2,141	(4,200)	(7,487)	14,100

Financial Review

ALL SAINTS CHURCH RISELEY

	2020	2019
Surplus for the period (unrestricted funds)	2,141	(7,487)
Surplus for the period (designated funds)	(4,200)	14,100
Balance brought forward (unrestricted)	10,596	18,083
Balance brought forward (designated funds)	14,100	
	<hr/>	
PCC Funds 31 Dec	22,637	24,696

BALANCE SHEET 31 DECEMBER 2019

ASSETS/LIABILITIES	2020	2019
ASSETS		
CASH AT NATWEST BANK	22,578	24,696
CASH IN HAND	59	
	<hr/>	
TOTAL ASSETS	22,637	24,696

Unrestricted funds are £12,737

Designated Funds are £9,900 and can be used only to fund children's and families work, currently through North Beds Christian Youth Trust.

Agreed by PCC on 18/01/2021

Rector of All Saints Church

James Isaacs

Honorary Treasurer

Brian Simister

Honorary Examiner

Malcolm Rowland

ALL SAINTS CHURCH RISELEY

Notes

- 1) These accounts have been produced on a cash basis
- 2) In addition to the assets shown in the balance sheet, the Diocese held assets on behalf of the PCC to the value of £1,799.31 being 88 shares in Diocese Deposit Fund and a further £1,293.58 in a bank deposit account.
- 3) Donations totalling £9,151 shown in the accounts was made up as follows

Crosslinks	£2,004	
CPAS	£600	
Children's Society	£200	
Festive	£1,500	
Church Society	£200	
Stables	£500	
Asha/Sangster	£3,225	Includes one off £1,725 for COVID appeal
Food Bank	£300	
Open Doors	£327	
Beds & Herts Trust	£40	
Rector's Disc Fund	£165	
Evangelical Alliance	£90	
	<hr/>	
	£9,151	

A donation of £9,200 was paid to North Beds Christian Youth Trust from our Designated Funds.

Electoral Roll

Electoral Roll

The number on the Electoral Roll for the 2021 Annual Parochial Church Meeting is 85. The latest revision includes 2 deletions and 2 additions.

Hugh Staniforth is the Electoral Roll Officer and an application for membership can be made at any time.

Hugh Staniforth

Administrative Information

This section provides the administrative information for All Saints Church, Riseley which together with St Mary's Church, Bletsoe form the Benefice of Riseley with Bletsoe.

Church information

Church address	All Saints Church Riseley Church Lane Riseley Bedford MK44 1ER
Correspondence address	16 Church Lane Riseley Bedford MK44 1ER Tel: 01234 708234 email: allsaintsriseley@gmail.com
Website	https://allsaintsriseley.org/

Key personnel

Vicar	Revd James Isaacs
Readers:	Lynda Simister
Church Wardens:	Mark Eddon elected 2010 Richard Carter elected 2018
Treasurer:	Brian Simister
PCC Secretary:	Diane Sollars elected 2018
Children and Families Worker	Sam Toseland
Deanery Synod	Keith Williams (Lay Chair) Brian Simister elected 2019 Lynda Simister elected 2019
Honorary Examiner	Malcolm Rowland
Banker	National Westminster Bank plc

PCC members

Jonathan Nicholls	2018 - 2021
Martin Hargreaves	2019 - 2022
Dave Sheffield	2019 - 2022
Dudley Ferdinando	2020 - 2023
Verena Pentlow	2020 - 2023
Graham Sollars	2020 - 2023

Sharnbrook Deanery Synod Report



Sharnbrook Deanery consists of 30 parish churches in North Bedfordshire with a population of around 30,000 people. The Deanery Synod normally meets 4 times a year and consists of all members of the clergy and lay representatives from the 30 parishes in the Deanery, elected for a three-year term. During 2020 the lay representatives of All Saints Church were Lynda and Brian Simister, and Keith Williams, who is also Lay Co-chair of the Deanery. Most of the meetings are open, so everyone is welcome

to attend, although only members are able to vote on resolutions.

The February meeting was held in Bletsoe Village Hall as normal and the main items were:

Lay Ministry training - Revd Phil Bryson, Diocesan Lay Ministry Officer, and Mark Dunwoody, from the Reaching New People team, shared opportunities within the Diocese. The Diocese wants to expand Lay Ministry training and make it more accessible and more focused on people's gifts. They outlined courses which would be available in September – Lay Leaders of Worship; a new one-year Foundations course with 3 strands (Teaching the Faith, Pastoral and Community Care, and Mission and Evangelism) linked to the Diocese Living God's Love initiative; a new one-year Pioneer Enabler course run with CMS; and an accredited two-year Reader/Pioneer Reader course available to those who have completed either the Foundations or Pioneer Enabler course. [For more details see the St Albans Diocese website]

Feedback from Rural Deans and Lay Chairs conference (Feb 2020) – the conference had been positive, engaging and inspiring. Bishop Alan reflected on John 15:16 and the challenge from Canon Stephen Liley (Rural Dean) to all of us after the conference was 'why am I here?'

Talent Spotting – Keith Williams (Lay Co-chair) outlined the challenges we face as a Deanery and encouraged members of the Body of Christ to consider participation in Deanery Synod and its' planned initiatives

Listening to Young People – the monthly 'Our Voice' meetings for young people were being held at Clapham Fellowship Centre and an Easter Celebration and residential at the Chellington Centre were planned (although both had to be cancelled due to COVID)

Parish Share update 2019 – Keith reported back on his analysis of Parish Shares across the Diocese and concluded that compared with other Deaneries we are being asked to contribute our fair share. In 2019 we paid 91% of the total requested, a shortfall of £45,000

Due to the COVID pandemic only two further meetings were held in 2020, in June and November, on Zoom. Despite being on Zoom the meetings were very well attended and covered:

Life under lockdown – highlights were the strong sense of support for one another in our communities; high viewing figures for on-line services on Zoom or YouTube; and well attended on-line prayer meetings and Bible study groups – with the realisation that this was happening without use of the buildings

Re-imagining the Deanery – work started to re-imagine what our churches could be like in the future to become healthy, growing and viable with a focus on mission. This process will be driven by prayer to discern God's will for His church, and wide consultation through Deanery Synod members and the PCCs. This has resulted in production of a statement of the Purpose and Mission of the church and also consolidated summaries of exploratory discussions with all clergy incumbents in the Deanery and 23 lay people from across the benefices/parishes. These covered their views on the current situation – encouragements and challenges – and ideas for the future. PCCs are now being asked to review these and identify the areas that need to be prioritised in the next stage of the review, in which individuals will have the opportunity to participate in workshops that will be held on major themes (for further information please talk to the Deanery Synod reps or members of the PCC). A workshop on Digital Enablement has already been scheduled

Schools – Canon David Bevan outlined the work of the Diocesan Board of Education, working with local schools to provide regular communications, focused training, pastoral and prayer support. Parishes were asked to consider relationships with their local schools and identify who would be interested in being part of a Deanery network to share ideas and resources

Metal theft – David Bevan outlined grants available from the Diocese for roof alarms and Smartwater protection

Parish Share update 2020 – despite the pandemic the Deanery still managed to contribute over £500,000 towards ministry and mission costs in 2020, which was 91% of the total requested. 22 of the 30 parish churches, including All Saints Riseley, managed to pay the Parish share in full, demonstrating generosity and sacrificial giving – THANK YOU.

There are opportunities for individuals to participate in Deanery initiatives - please pray about putting yourself forward to utilise your God-given talents

Keith Williams

Safeguarding

Promoting a Safer Church at All Saints, Riseley

The Parochial Church Council has adopted the House of Bishops Safeguarding Policy for children, young people and adults. This states that our commitments are to:

- Promote a safer environment and culture
- Safely recruit and support all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults
- To respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- Care pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse or other affected persons
- Care pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns/ allegations of abuse and other affected persons
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk

Please be clear that the care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in Church activities here at All Saints, Riseley is the responsibility of us **ALL**. If **YOU** have any concerns whatsoever, whether someone is at risk of or being abused, or someone presents a risk to others, then you **MUST** let someone know as soon as possible as follows:

Parish Safeguarding Officer: Lynda Simister 01234 708341 / lynda.simister@gmail.com

Rector: James Isaacs 01234 708234 / jisaacs11@gmail.com

Diocesan Safeguarding Officer: Jeremy Hirst 01727 818107/ 07867 350886 / childprotection@stalbans.anglican.org

Bedford Borough Council 01234 267422

If there is immediate risk or danger, please contact the Police on 999.

We pray that All Saints will be a safe place for everyone. Whilst we haven't had any Safeguarding issues to report over the last 12 months, Safeguarding continues to be a standing item on the PCC agenda and we are in no way complacent over the potential risks. Please let's all remain vigilant.

Lynda Simister, Safeguarding Officer, Church Wardens & Rector

Children and families report

Children and families report

There's been plenty to thank God for over the last year although it has been difficult to keep up relationships with children and their families during the pandemic. Zoom is difficult for young children especially (not to mention adults too!), but it has been encouraging to meet up with families on a Sunday morning to watch the service together and have a little time to chat.



This year we also begun a 15-minute Sunday School Zoom with Sharnbrook Evangelical children as well as All Saints. It has been fun and interactive, and because of its shortness engagement is easier, thank you to all who come and help me lead this. It's been a joy to share the Good News of Jesus life on earth and celebrate all He has done for us!



Making videos has been a learning curve but really helped me to sharpen my skills, and we pray that weekly talks, assemblies, Light Party, Christmas, and Easter recordings have borne fruit for God's Kingdom. Feedback from craft/goodie packs has been great and helped us to keep in touch with families. I'm incredibly grateful for the team of leaders we have at Riseley who have been praying and getting involved where they can, particularly this Easter, when we ran an Easter Trail and gave out lots of exciting things to our children and beyond.



Please do be praying for us as we think and plan for what ministry to children and families will look like for the next year. Please pray for wisdom in planning for our Sunday children's groups and for a parent/carer and babies, toddler, and pre-schooler group. Please also pray for younger children especially as we integrate back into 'normal' Church life, that they would know Jesus' deep love for them and want to walk in His ways.



Sam Toseland

Riseley Primary School - School Profile



Well, this year has certainly been very different for our school! From changes in the senior leadership, to COVID-19, to building work and to flooding the year has certainly provided us with many challenges! Each of these would have been hard on their own however through all these challenges I know that God has been with us providing us with strength, wisdom and with people who have the skills to help and support us.

There have been so many things to give thanks to God for throughout the year We are thankful for the whole school community. As you will be aware COVID, that has affected us all in so many ways, has provided many challenges in teaching such as teachers having to quickly learn new skills as they provide remote learning for children at home while teaching those in school and we are thankful for their dedication. Home learning has also provided many challenges for parents as they have tried to balance this with work. The children have returned to school after each lockdown with great enthusiasm. We are thankful for our beautiful new building and are looking forward to using it, particularly the hall, fully once some of the COVID restrictions are relaxed. We are thankful for the service David Dyson provided to the school over a number of years and for the help and support we have had from our two interim headteachers.

We were sad to see some of our Foundation Governors leave the Governing body after many years service. David Foster who continued to work enthusiastically on planning the building work through his ill health and almost until he left us to be with our Father in heaven. Lynda Simister has served the school tirelessly for many years and we will miss her experience and wisdom. Roline Hargreaves' huge contribution over the years will also be missed.

We thank God for our two new Foundation Governors- Dudley Ferdinando and Richard Carter who are already making a huge contribution along with our other Foundation Governors -Heather Shelton and Sam Toseland and all our other governors.

As I write this, we are currently in the process of recruiting an Executive Headteacher having agreed to enter into a collaborative arrangement with Wilden Church of England Primary School. Please pray for the successful candidate to provide strong leadership to ensure both schools flourish and sustain and develop them in the best interests of the children at the schools. Pray also for the collaborative arrangement and also for wisdom for the governors as we enter an exciting new stage in the life of the school.

Catherine Veitch

Mission Support

Milsons – Valencia, Spain



Julian, Jemima, Theo and Nicky

Julian and Nicky Milson are missionaries in Valencia, Spain, along with Jemima (15) and Theo (13) their children. They have now been in Valencia for three years.

Julian is the Rector of the Anglican Church in Valencia which is part of the Reformed Episcopal Church of Spain. There's one Bishop (who is technically under the Archbishop of Canterbury) in Madrid and there are approximately 30 small congregations across the country. The Diocese of Spain works alongside the Church of England's Diocese in Europe and has recently taken on

oversight of a number of very small congregations.

There are a handful of Australian CMS Missionaries who work with us at the church and Julian shares an office space with them, an American ECM Missionary and a local Spanish Christian journalist.

The past year had obviously been challenging for ministry and the pandemic has meant that plans have had to be adapted or put on hold. For example, we had planned to begin a weekly after-school children's club starting straight after the Easter Holiday Club but this had to be cancelled. Midweek Bible Study groups have largely met online (apart from a brief respite in September when we could meet in person). However, this has been challenging because many of our church family lack the resources to be able to afford data or devices to join in.

The pandemic has also meant that we have sadly lost touch with a few members of the church family. We also had to say an abrupt goodbye to a very committed group of British students who had joined us for the year just as the virus hit. There were plans to host a couple of Crosslinks gap-year students to work with us this academic year, but again, COVID put paid to that.

Nevertheless, God has been so good in so many ways. Our church family has worked hard to support one another and we have seen a spirit of kindness and care motivated by the Gospel. It certainly feels as though this past year has knitted us together even more as a family of believers.

We have tried to be creative with technology, as resources allow. For example, we encouraged our church family members to share testimonies to be posted online of God's goodness during the lockdown. We've also had great fun sharing videos via WhatsApp of our attempts to learn various Bible verses in different styles and costumes!

Nicky continues to learn Spanish and she teaches Jemima at home full-time. She plays the piano for our church services and was supporting the students until they had to leave. Both Jemima and Theo are now taller than Nicky - we think it has something to do with Spanish sun! Jemima and Theo are both doing well with their studies and both enjoy learning. The days are quite long for Theo especially when he has Spanish tuition in the evenings (his school day is from 8:45 - 5pm with no half-term breaks).

Prayer

For wisdom about when we can return to the UK to visit family and friends (including All Saints)

Our families in the UK feeling our absence even more than usual.

For the residency status for the children which is still unresolved and has been complicated by Brexit. They currently have no basic healthcare cover because of this.

For our church family feeling exhausted by the effects of the pandemic.

That plans we have had to put on hold will soon come to fruition.

That our gospel witness would produce fruit even when opportunities are severely limited.

Mission Support

Give thanks for the contacts we have had with people who are 'fringey' or who are not directly linked to church.

Give thanks that the pandemic has afforded us the opportunity to join in virtually with all our partner churches back in the UK.

May we take this opportunity to thank you all for your prayerful support - it is a joy to partner with you in the gospel work here in Spain.

Julian & Nicky Milson

Asha and Sangster – Bangalore, India



Asha, Sangster, Rebecca and Timothy

In the early 2020, the Stars Cafe was renovated because of the mosquito problem in the evenings. But once COVID-19 broke out, all our plans came crashing. The cafe shut, the doors to our UK trip shut. So did all the plans we had. The same echoed everywhere else. *Proverbs 16:9 "A man's heart plans his way, but the LORD determines his steps..."* During these difficult times we had the opportunities to serve God's people in the city of Bangalore.

We partnered with other churches in Bangalore to help the migrant workers during complete lockdown. A movement began to help these migrants reach their homes by supplying food, money, accommodation and travel facilities. Throughout this year we have been working with migrant families helping them rebuild their

homes and providing simple job opportunities, food provision and clothes collected from friends. COVID truly exposed the vulnerability in our neighbourhood and gave us a great network of believers to partner with in times of injustice. But as we see in the book of Exodus, God remains faithful to the people who cry unto him. One day there will be an exodus. We eagerly wait for Jesus's arrival.

We connected with the Cafe students online and began to interact with them through their struggles. Providing some help and guiding them through the tough times. Cafe is closed till now. This year we are planning to reopen the cafe and begin bible studies with students. The college is not yet fully functional. It might take another few months for it to begin. We are looking for a youth worker to join our team.

We were involved in Neerekshe Trust Raichur village in helping restart online learning which was new to a village school. The education gap between rich and poor was so evident with lack of smartphone and computers. Volunteer teachers from Bangalore began to do classes for high school and help the school keep going in this COVID season. The Goat farm suffered huge loss due to theft and sickness, recovering through tragedy has been a huge miracle.

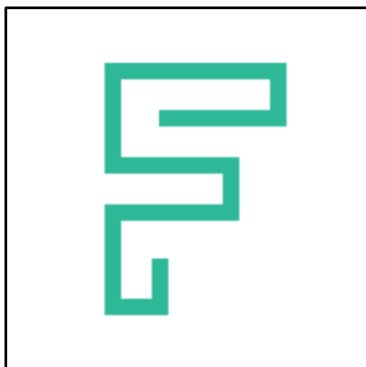
During these times looking into our family, we found much brokenness. Conflicts were constantly on the rise. But by expressing our vulnerable state we realised there were many other friends too with their brokenness. God began to use us as a catalyst in helping them and in turn helping ourselves and encouraging with the word. Reading books together with others is a joy and help during lockdown. Timothy and Ruth are doing well, the whole neighbourhood kids come home to play with them in the evenings. Our library has lots of board games, books, art supply and two bicycles. It is a huge attraction for kids in our neighbourhood and it's always a noisy corner. We are indebted to God's marvellous grace and every day is a gift and God continues to remain faithful as he always is.

Thank you all once again for your partnership in the Gospel.

With love

Sangster, Asha, Timothy and Ruth

Festive



Festive

The work of Festive has carried on this year despite the many challenges the pandemic has created. For many years now we have been encouraging young people to train in evangelism despite being spread thinly and widely across the country. God has answered our prayers as we have gained increased confidence and competence in video calling. We now have an online event called “Scattered”; an online training conference. We have run this twice so far and are looking to repeat it this year, alongside a partner event, “Scattered Together “(giving young people more time to meet and share ideas).

As we have been unable to meet new young people at the yearly summer youth events this has created new challenges for us. Last year, we redirected funding to social media campaigns and we are looking to do so again this year to help us make contact with students online.

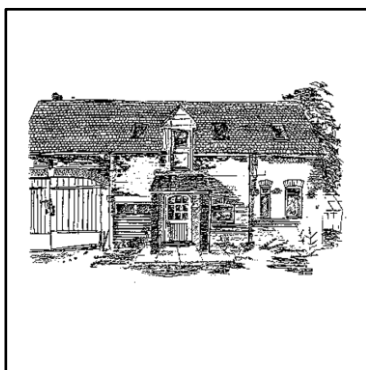
Prayer

We thank God for answered prayer providing the Scattered event and for a successful social media campaign last year linking us to many new students needing our support.

Please pray for the continued success of Scattered and in particular for plans for a future event that will encourage Year 11 students to start year 12 with a vision for sharing their faith with friends. And for the success of this year’s summer social media campaign, that we would find new students looking to live for Jesus at college.

Karen Jones (Festive)

The Stables Christian Centre



The Stables Christian Centre

The Stables Christian Centre at Bolnhurst has also had a very challenging year. It has been the first time in over thirty years that the doors have been shut to clients and visitors for a significant part of the last year. The Stables is a local Christian charity that we at All Saints support financially and with staff, volunteers and trustees. The charity offers practical working experience to adults on the margins of society, particularly those with learning disability, mental health problems, and ex-offenders. During the pandemic the staff have been amazing and creative, keeping in regular contact with clients by regular calls, emails, zoom and the slick production of monthly videos on Youtube to keep everybody in touch.

Many of the clients, particularly some of those with learning disabilities have found the pandemic extremely tough and the stopping of their weekly visit to the Stables has been hard to deal with. Most of the staff have also been furloughed for much of the past year. The pandemic has also resulted in none of the popular monthly 'Coffee Shop' sessions on a Saturday afternoon have taken place.

Over the summer and autumn last year the centre was partially opened to clients under carefully planned COVID secure guidelines and this did mean some preserves, crafts and gifts were made and these have been sold through two produce sales, shop sales and collections in person.

At the time of writing this, the staff and most clients have had one or two vaccinations and the centre is gradually opening up again to more clients on a weekly basis and some new clients are potentially joining.

Mission Support

Prayer

Please give thanks for the financial support The Stables has received in the past year from individuals, local churches including All Saints and the local council during the lockdown period.

Please pray for Ali Wood, the team of staff, volunteers, trustees and the clients who make up the Stables Christian Organisation and that they will be sustained and kept safe so that their amazing work of promoting and witnessing to the Christian faith and way of life through practical help and friendship can continue to those who struggle in society.

Dudley Ferdinando (Trustee for The Stables Christian Centre)

Personal Reflections of the Past Year

God's Blessing throughout Lockdown, Technology, Diversity & Time:

I hope that I will never cease to be amazed by the way we have been able to stay connected by the use of Technology during the last year. The telephone, radio, T.V & internet, have been one of God's many blessings. I personally discovered that my favourite 'toy' gave me access to a selection of Bible study groups, prayer meetings & various worship opportunities, located on Email, Facebook, Radio & TV.

As well as our online services, when we can join our Church families at All Saints & Saint Mary's, I have spare time in abundance, and have indulged in this diverse way of listening to God's word. Please don't be shocked, but I even have the pope's online daily posts!! A sincere & thoughtful Christian man, with his own take on life and a psalm.

*I have been sure of God's love & saving grace for a long time, and now find that I am even more certain that there is nothing that could separate me from the love of God. **Judy Green***

Our housegroup meeting, led by Lynda, is held every Monday morning and we have been meeting throughout lockdown. Heather makes sure we are all ready to zoom in and Lynda leads us through the study. We have been looking at how to gain wisdom through the book of Proverbs.

*There are four of us in the group, and we have all found our meetings very beneficial. We have been able to support and encourage each other through these challenging times. **Verena, Heather, Jane and Lynda***

*The past year has been a difficult one for us all and we don't really need to be reminded of that but has it changed you in anyway? Well, I am sure God has been at work in me to change my attitude to what I believed he wanted me to do. I have always been a busy person with lots of things that I felt I had to do as a Christian, suddenly I couldn't do most of those things partly because I was ill and because of lockdown. So, what was I to do? Feel sorry for myself or take up doing jigsaws? The first was easy the second impossible my spatial awareness is appalling! God had a far better idea of course. Prayer, many years ago someone had said that if as a Christian you became housebound you can become one of God's prayer warriors. Well I did pray - I have a fantastic prayer partner who has been a, great encouragement in my prayer life but my daily prayer times hadn't been great. However, with God's guidance, over the past few months, my daily prayer time has improved and I hope I am becoming one of his 'prayer warrior's'. **Lynda Simister***

One year on from the beginning of a national lockdown the 23rd March 2021 was designated a national day of reflection on the large loss of life across the United Kingdom. We are sure we are not alone in finding the last year extraordinarily different and challenging, the situation has certainly led to much reflection and soul searching. Many of us have reassessed our priorities and come to realise how we take for granted all the God given blessings we have in life. In our Christian faith we found this has led us to have a closer relationship with our King Jesus and to really appreciate Him as our anchor and rock in this life through deeper study and prayer times due to less worldly calls on our time. One of the benefits of lockdown and one we do not want to lose as the world opens up again.

*A thing we found invaluable in lockdown has been the government's 'regulation' daily walks helping us to appreciate God's amazing creation without the constant noise of air and road traffic. This has enabled us to focus on birdsong, buzzing of insects and the ever changing colours of seasonal flowers. We have made our walks into pilgrimages of the area which have nourished our souls, brought a sense of perspective and peace to a troubled world. **John and Sue Walker***

Star of Hope

Star of Hope

All Saints celebrated a lockdown Christmas by displaying the “Star of Hope” around the village



“TO KNOW CHRIST AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN”