

All Saints

CHURCH, RISELEY

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



Annual Church Report
2022

“TO KNOW CHRIST AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN”

Contents

| | | | |
|--|-----|--|-----|
| Rector's Report..... | 3 | Junior Jivers..... | 222 |
| Agendas and Minutes..... | 5 | Roots and Shoots..... | 22 |
| Agenda for Meeting of Parishioners..... | 5 | Youth Club..... | 23 |
| Parish of All Saints Riseley..... | 5 | Souls 11-14s Bible Study..... | 23 |
| Agenda for Annual Parochial Church Meeting..... | 5 | CYFA..... | 23 |
| Parish of All Saints Riseley..... | 5 | AWOL (Absent with our love) 18-25s..... | 24 |
| Minutes of Annual Meeting of Parishioners..... | 6 | Fellowship..... | 25 |
| Parish of All Saints Riseley..... | 6 | Prayer Meeting..... | 25 |
| Minutes of Annual Parochial Church Meeting..... | 7 | Homegroups (Home Groups and Housegroups!)..... | 25 |
| Parish of All Saints Riseley..... | 7 | Coffee Morning Services..... | 26 |
| Churchwarden's report..... | 8 | Music..... | 26 |
| Parochial Church Council (PCC) Report 2021/22..... | 9 | Bell Ringing..... | 27 |
| Building and Fabric report..... | 10 | Men's Group..... | 27 |
| Churchyard..... | 11 | Serving one another..... | 28 |
| Financial Review..... | 12 | Refreshments..... | 28 |
| All Saints Church Riseley Accounts 2021..... | 13 | Cleaning..... | 28 |
| Electoral Roll..... | 16 | Recent snapshots of Church Fellowship..... | 29 |
| Administrative Information..... | 17 | Training and Development..... | 30 |
| Church information..... | 17 | 3 Counties Christian Ministry/The East Anglia Mission (TEAM)..... | 30 |
| Key personnel..... | 17 | Riseley Primary School..... | 31 |
| PCC members..... | 17 | Mission Support..... | 32 |
| Sharnbrook Deanery Synod..... | 18 | Milsons – Valencia, Spain..... | 32 |
| Safeguarding..... | 20 | Asha and Sangster – Bangalore, India..... | 33 |
| Church as a Refuge..... | 21 | Festive..... | 33 |
| Young People..... | 222 | The Stables Christian Centre..... | 34 |

Rector's Report

April 2022



Isaacs family

Dear Friends,

As I sit down to write my report this year, shortly after our Easter celebrations, I am struck once again, by **how much we have to be thankful to God for.**

It is easy for us to get caught up in the pain and struggles of daily life, as we encounter the brutal effects of living in a fallen world. And, oh how brutal they can be! The situation in Ukraine continuing to dominate the news is beyond comprehension. Witnessing the turmoil and horrors being experienced by so many is truly dreadful. Watching on as a democratic civilization is decimated before our very eyes is heartbreaking. And the fear of where and how this conflict might escalate, for many, is terrifying.

Closer to home there can also be situations which leave us feeling the pain of life in a broken world. Personal trauma; unemployment; health problems; the rising cost of living; dysfunctional relationships; local conflict; family struggles; bereavement; mental health issues; to name but a few.

And naturally, these can leave us crying out to the Lord and asking searching questions of his goodness and his love. Where is God amongst the mess? Is he here? Does he even care?

But when we turn back to the cross, we are reminded that the answer to all these questions, is emphatically YES in Jesus! For at Easter we remember how God stepped into the mess to bring healing and hope to a hurting and hopeless world. At Easter we remember how God not only experienced the brutality for himself as he was humiliated, tortured and nailed to the cross, but how in doing so he brought us peace. The prophet Isaiah puts it like this:

“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.” Isaiah 53:5

Easter reminds us, that ultimately, evil, sin and death will not triumph for on the cross Christ has defeated them. **Easter reminds us** that our own sin has been forgiven. **Easter reminds us** that his victory is one that has brought us peace with our Maker and that our relationship with him has been restored. **Easter reminds us** that whilst we may face difficulties and hardships in this life, we never face them alone, for even in the darkness we are accompanied by our risen and reigning Saviour! **Easter reminds us** that we have a glorious future to look forward too, whatever our present circumstances. **Easter reminds us** that for Christians, the worst thing is never the last thing. **Easter reminds us** of how much we have to be thankful to God for!

And of course, we have so much to be thankful to God to in the life of our church too. The past couple of years have been disorientating for us all, especially when it has come to meeting together. Online services; Zoom meetings; social distancing; mandatory facemasks; no singing allowed; restricted numbers in the building; yet as we enter the Summer of 2022, it feels these things, although necessary at the time, are now (God willing) consigned to history.

It has been such a joy to not only meet in person again, but to sing God's praises together; to pray with one another; to share the joys and trials of the week over a cup of coffee; to grow in our knowledge and love of God as we delve deeper into his word alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ. Of course, we continue to take the risk of COVID seriously and we look to keep one another safe, understanding and supporting each other in our difference personal circumstances, but at the same time it feels as if life is finally beginning to look a little more familiar.

I trust that like me you will be greatly encouraged in reading so many of the ministry reports included in this year's profile as many of our regular midweek church groups have got off the ground again, whilst some new ones have begun. Looking further ahead, isn't it thrilling to be able to run a church holiday club this Summer again! It

Rector's Report

has been wonderful to see how people are involved in serving the gospel, both inside and out of our parish boundaries, as we look to be disciples who Know Christ and Make Him Known in so many different contexts and settings. I praise God for all that is going on!

I am also so grateful for the generosity of the church family who have once again sustained our mission and ministry costs over this past year. At a time when so many have faced financial difficulty, we cannot take this for granted, and so I thank God for such sacrificial giving by so many. As you will see from the Finance Report, we anticipate challenges ahead, but we face them trusting in the kindness of our generous God. (And we hope to think more about how we might respond to these challenges in our services and sermons later this year).

I want to finish, by thanking everybody for our ongoing partnership in the gospel. A church is never about any one individual or a small group of people. The Apostle Paul writes that the church "is a body made up of many parts". And there are so many "parts" that come together to make our church all that it is. At risk of missing some out (and please forgive me if I do), let me have a go at highlighting some of them: children's group leaders; musicians; the cleaning team; those who lead intercessions; the refreshments team; homegroup members; safeguarding officer; homegroup leaders; bellringers; flower arrangers; those who preach; those who maintain the building; those who maintain the churchyard; those who pray; those who give; Church as a Refuge; those who pick up the phone and encourage each other; mission partners; Junior Jivers Team; Youth Club leaders; our children and young people themselves; Church Wardens; SOUL leaders; PCC members; those who help with administration; those who visit the housebound and sick; those who offer lifts and run errands; coffee morning service team; preparing the bread for Holy Communion; school governors; children and families worker; holiday club team; those who read the Bible during services; deanery synod reps; treasurer; PCC secretary; those who oversee health and safety and risk assessments; AWOL; Readers; all age service team; encouragers; first aiders; inviters; welcomers; website maintenance; and the list could undoubtedly go on!



The Vicar taking Christingle a little too seriously

And so let me say a huge thank you to everybody for all that you do, both seen and unseen in the life of our church! Without you and your hard labour for the gospel, church life would be unquestionably poorer, but with your ongoing partnership, as we look to the year ahead, isn't it exciting to see how God may choose to work through us as we look to Know Christ and Make Him Known.

We truly do have so much to be thankful to God for. And so let us continue to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus - who suffered, was crucified and died before after three days rising again - as we look to continue as his disciples in the midst of a hurting world.

Your brother in Christ,

James

P.S. As ever, let me say a very big thank you to everybody who has contributed to this year's profile, and a special mention of thanks to Karen Houck for putting it all together!

James Isaacs

Agendas and Minutes

Agenda for Meeting of Parishioners

Parish of All Saints Riseley

Following the service at All Saints Church, Riseley on Sunday 15th May 2022

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 at All Saints Church, Riseley on Sunday 15th May 2022.

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 2021
 - (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 21st April 2021 following the Annual Meeting of Parishioners

Present: Revd James Isaacs (Chair), Diane Sollars (Secretary), Graham Sollars, Richard Carter, Sam Toseland, Jill Shaw, Hugh and Kathryn Staniforth, Trevor Staniforth, Lynda Simister, Brian Simister, Dianne Jones, Martin Hargreaves, Jonathan and Jo Nicholls, Katie Nicholls, Loreen Tarbard, Roger Gray, Penny Gray, Phillip and Margaret Nicholls, Verena Pentlow, Keith Williams, Sue Williams, Jemma Sollars, Jackie Gardner, Jane Rhodes, Robin Rhodes, David Sheffield, John and Sue Walker, Catherine Veitch, Judy Green, Zoe Sheffield, Rachel White, Mark and Sally Eddon, Cliff Turner, Alison Blanchard.

Apologies for Absence: Pieter Carroll, Dudley and Jan Ferdinando, Monica Isaacs, Katy Carter, Emily Hermon, Rob Toseland, Roline Hargreaves and Karen Houck.

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. Everyone present read Psalm 136 together. James signposted those present to the Agenda on page 5 of the Parish Profile.

Minutes from the Previous Meeting: 13/10/2020

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved and signed by James Isaacs. There were no matters arising. James thanked Diane Sollars for her work in preparing the minutes.

Election of Church Wardens

Mark Eddon and Richard Carter both agreed that they would be willing to stand again as Church Wardens. Nominations for Churchwardens had been made prior to the meeting. The nomination of Richard Carter was proposed by Susan Hargreaves and seconded by Hugh Staniforth, the appointment was unanimously agreed by everyone present. The nomination of Mark Eddon was proposed by Roline Hargreaves and seconded by Graham Sollars, the appointment was unanimously agreed by everyone present. There were no votes against either appointment and no abstentions.

James thanked Mark and Richard for their support over a challenging year with the COVID rules to deal with.

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 21st April 2021 following the Annual Meeting of Parishioners

Minutes from the Previous Meeting: 13/10/2020

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved and signed by James Isaacs. There were no matters arising. James thanked Diane Sollars for her work in preparing the minutes.

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

Nominations for the PCC had been made in advance of the meeting. There were 2 nominations to stand on the PCC. Jonathan Nicholls had come to the end of his 3 year term and was willing to stand again and Loreen Tarbard had agreed to stand. James explained that although Loreen had only recently been added to the electoral roll, because of the COVID situation there was flexibility in the rules because of the exceptional circumstances. The nomination of Jonathan Nicholls was proposed by Karen Houck and seconded by Kathryn Staniforth. The nomination of Loreen Tarbard was proposed by Emily Hermon and seconded by Keith Williams. Both nominations were unanimously approved by everyone present with no objections or abstentions.

James welcomed Loreen to the PCC and thanked everyone on the PCC, for their service and input given during a difficult year.

Appointment of the Independent Examiner

Brian Simister, on behalf of the PCC confirmed that Malcolm (Bill) Rowland has agreed to continue as the Independent Examiner for the accounts. This appointment was unanimously agreed with no objections or abstentions.

PCC Reports

James signposted everyone to the reports in the Parish Profile for the Electoral Roll, PCC, Building, Finance and Deanery Synod reports. James thanked Brian Simister for undertaking the role of managing church finances and thanked the church family for their generosity in financial giving during the last year. James said he had been encouraged by the opportunities that have been provided during the past year via different forms of technology and then opened up the meeting for questions.

Prayer – a time of prayer focussed on thanks for the past year and praying for opportunities in the year ahead.

James thanked everyone who had attended the meeting and closed with the words of the grace.

Churchwarden's report

I'm writing this article on the afternoon of Easter Day. How God has blessed us over the Easter weekend as we celebrate the death and victorious resurrection of our Saviour Jesus. Large numbers have attended all the Easter services as we heard again of the Good News. Each service has been followed with glorious weather for our chatting together over coffee outside.... and indeed the infamous Good Friday crafts and activities which saw over 30 children fully immersed (I'm still smarting from losing heavily at the Sheffield family's 'ball in the buckets' competition – more practice before next year!)

We all know that we've been rather starved of our true church fellowship in recent years due to the dreaded pandemic, but God has sustained us and I hope and pray that looking forward our hunger for church fellowship will be rooted in our hunger for Jesus.

Looking back over the last 12 months, as normal the year seems to have passed in a blur. Amongst other things we've become accustomed to a new and spread-out seating plan, a mix and match of mask wearing, and paper cups for communion! Thanks to you all for putting up with some of the tricky decisions that have had to be made around general service procedures and indeed for instance a different set of services for Christmas. Thanks in particular to the PCC who have as always been unstinting in their support of leading the church. The PCC read a book together called '100% Christianity – How the Gospel Changes Everything' which certainly challenged us over our individual and collective devotion to Jesus, whilst many of the church read another book 'Gentle and Lowly' which really revealed so much more of God that I for one had never really appreciated.

Richard and I as rather 'impractical' church wardens(!) can never thank enough those who keep our church clean and maintained. Thanks as always to those who volunteer to clean our church regularly, to those who organise flowers, to Dudley as he continually and tirelessly works to keep the church fabric in working order, to Graham and his sister who keep our churchyard looking great and to so many of you who contribute efforts big and small, heralded and unheralded – thanks.

Exactly 12 years ago, I can remember Martin Bailey asking if he could pop round for a chat. Naturally I assumed that he perhaps wanted to discuss a weighty theological point or maybe seek some sage advice? However, it turned out his visit was a carefully choreographed pincer movement planned along with Keith Williams to persuade me that I really wanted to become a church warden! Well, despite my early attempts to ward off the approach by listing my non-DIY skills etc..... I succumbed! That said I can honestly say that it's been a great privilege to serve God at All Saints trying to be a vaguely useful warden. The 'Bailey era' was great (if occasionally disorganised!), the togetherness of the church family during the interregnum was unbelievable and the arrival of James and his family has been refreshing and so encouraging.

Let's keep seeking to stay close to Jesus, supporting each other in the All Saints family and reaching out to others with the Good News of Easter.

Mark Eddon

Parochial Church Council (PCC) Report 2021/22

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, Graham Sollars and Loreen Tarbard. Sam Toseland also attends the meetings as Children and Families Worker.

The PCC meet every other month and in September 2021 we were able to begin meeting together in the church building following the easing of pandemic restrictions. It has been very encouraging to meet in person and to be able to stop Zoom meetings.

During the last 6 months, the PCC have been reading a book entitled 100% Christianity by Jago Wynne and followed up with discussions during meetings. As the title of the book suggests, the focus is on how we can live for Christ and serve Him in a wholehearted way.

One of the main points of discussion at PCC meetings is the mission of our church at home and with our mission partners. This year has been another challenging year with COVID restrictions limiting the ways that people have been able to meet. The PCC have regularly discussed how church services and other meetings can be opened up whilst still protecting the more vulnerable members of the church and wider community.

More recently, the PCC have been looking at our gospel partnership – what we do well in Riseley, where we could make improvements and how we can encourage others to serve in practical ways in the life of the church.

Please pray for the PCC as a group, that they would make decisions based on Biblical principles in order to further the gospel in this community.

Diane Sollars

Building and Fabric report



Accessing the heating system

Over the past year it is so nice to see the church building coming to life again both on a Sunday morning and throughout the week with Junior Jivers, Youth Club, Prayer Meetings and Morning Coffee Services. It's not so nice to see damage and mess occurring in and around the porch, more of that later!

I would again very much like to thank those who spend a significant amount of time and effort keeping both the inside and the outside of the church looking so spick and span. Lesley, Graham and the Gell brothers have kept the churchyard looking exceptional and the willing volunteers responsible for the cleaning and flower arranging make the inside so welcoming and clean. Your endeavours are much appreciated.

Over the last year we have had no major fabric repairs in the building. The heating was serviced last year which is always quite expensive as scaffolding and specialist engineers are needed to access the burners in the roof space. The heating system is now quite antiquated with obsolete parts so we do need to plan for a major refurb of the heating in the near future. Heating an old draughty church building is incredibly expensive and with the significant increase in fuel costs we all need to wrap up warmly each winter in the church building rather than just wasting expense on heating the air with large amounts of gas. I guess it is all about finding the right balance to keep people comfortable. Hopefully next winter we won't need to keep the doors and windows open for COVID compliance!

The roof alarm system which we had to have installed to ensure that we were covered for insurance is also proving to be a little troublesome and expensive. I think we have just been unlucky and apart from annual servicing there shouldn't be ongoing expenses.

The architect that we have used for the past six years is no longer able to work with us so we have been through the process of seeking a new architect. We have found a local architect who supports several local churches, comes recommended and seems to be sympathetic to our church vision so he will be appointed after seeking PCC approval.

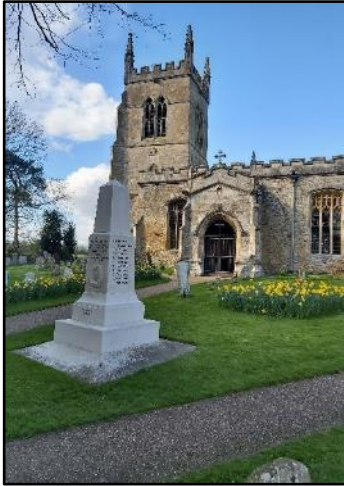
Sadly over the past few years there have been many incidences of antisocial behaviour, littering and minor vandalism in the church porch. The police are aware and do patrol at intervals and many of us speak regularly to the suspects but of course they deny causing the damage. Recently the external doors have been significantly damaged and have currently been taken off for repair. They will be refitted with an external lock which means they can be locked for the evenings or when we choose to do so.

My final thoughts are the same as in previous years - we 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 that are coming ahead. This is particularly important at a time when we are all going to be stretched financially. If anybody feels they have the skills and energy to drive this, please let James know!

I pray that we, as the current custodians of this beautiful place of worship will find a way to hand it on in good repair to those coming behind us. I thank God that he richly blesses us with gifted and willing people to keep the building attractive and welcoming to people around us and I pray that he will be working in the lives of those who are sitting in the porch causing petty damage. Let's keep them engaged in conversation and pray that God would draw them inside the building.

Dudley Ferdinando

Churchyard



Our Churchyard

For those of you who come to church regularly I hope that you cannot fail to see how wonderful the Churchyard looks. If you're not a regular visitor to the church or you don't walk through the churchyard then maybe make some time to see this wonderfully kept tranquil place. If you're lucky you will hear the Woodpeckers or Cuckoos (spring time) or see the Kites and Buzzards flying over head. You might just see a Fox or if at night the hedgehogs. Very occasionally, a Muntjac deer will walk through in the evening. So you see it seems everything likes to visit the churchyard, why not you?

I want to say a big thank you to all those who now tend their loved ones graves, it is so good to see them being cared for. Maybe it was the lockdowns and the thoughts of families now left and those we could not see that led more people to come and look after them. Perhaps it was all the work that has gone into making the churchyard such a beautiful place. No report of the

Churchyard would be complete without a huge thank you to those who come and help to keep it looking so good. Often during the week you will see one person in particular to which we all owe a huge thank you. Lesley Deathe continues to work tirelessly every week, making it all look truly beautiful. Stop and chat to her if you see there.

We try and keep the churchyard as "Green" as possible, so please we do encourage people to avoid any plastic on the graves, as these items get damaged sometimes and end up scattered in the Yard and endanger wildlife and of course it does not biodegrade. Going forward we will take part in "No Mow May" so apologies if the grass does not look quite as neat. (The council will continue to cut the grass in the wider church yard). This is to encourage the flowers that provide nectar for bees and other insects.

Please continue to enjoy the Churchyard but always be respectful of the reason it is there.



Spring sunshine

Graham Sollars

Financial Review

As can be seen from the accounts, there was a slight overspend of £1,025 in 2021 on the main PCC account, and an overspend of £700 on the funds which are restricted, and can only be used to fund the work carried out by Sam, as the children's and families worker. Given the financial problems suffered by many churches over the past couple of years, our financial position has survived reasonably well, and thanks are due to the whole congregation, as well as, obviously, to God.

Over the past three years income has been just sufficient for the amount of spending needed to keep our heads above water, but there has been no surplus cash to fund special, and even some normal, projects. (We have had minimal building maintenance over the past few years, although we know stonework and electrical work needs to be done in the near future.)

Looking at the short-term situation, we can continue, for a very limited period, as we are, but looking at the mid-term, long-term position, we need to take action to improve our regular income. (Expenditure is considered to be as low as can be sustained, and there is no real scope to improve our finances by trying to reduce expenditure, without materially affecting our ability to try to spread God's word locally, and to some extent, nationally and internationally.) Sam Toseland's work for families has been funded to date by some very generous anonymous donations totalling £25,000, and that will not continue long-term, so it is essential that the PCC's overall income from regular giving increases by about £9,000 a year, to enable that work to continue. In addition to that, as you are aware, there have been, or are expected to be, cost increases in just about all items of expenditure, and we need to be up with, or, even better, ahead of that.

It is three years since we last had a concerted effort to increase our monthly income, and since then monthly giving has effectively been static, with only two or three families increasing their level of giving. After due consideration, it is felt that, in order to provide a sound financial base going forward, an increase in overall monthly giving of about 10% is needed, which, in addition to the £9,000 for families' work, would mean an overall increase in monthly giving of the order of £15,000 a year, or about £1,250 a month. About 40 families provide regular funding for the church, and, as can be seen from the accounts, total yearly costs (including the families worker) are approaching £80,000, and these figures give a broad picture of the overall situation regarding finances for Riseley. Obviously different households have different income and different spending patterns, and it would clearly be impossible for each contributing household to fund the PCC at the same level, but it is important that everyone contributes at a level which is appropriate for them, and also at a level which they feel is as much as they are sensibly able to afford. There is not now much acceptance that a tithe (ie 10% of income) is an appropriate level for everyone: for some it is too high a level to be giving, and for others it is too low.

Brian Simister

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

| INCOME | 2021 | | 2020 | |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| | UNRESTRICTED | DESIGNATED | UNRESTRICTED | DESIGNATED |
| GIVING | 53,819 | 5,000 | 54,240 | 5,000 |
| GRANTS | - | | 2,200 | |
| FEES | 2,621 | | 4,028 | |
| TAX RECLAIM | 11,515 | 2,500 | 12,319 | |
| INTEREST ETC | - | | 22 | |
| TOTAL INCOME | 67,955 | 7,500 | 72,809 | 5,000 |
| EXPENDITURE | | | | |
| PARISH SHARE | 51,348 | | 52,478 | |
| VICARS EXP | 1,009 | | 1,210 | |
| INSUR/UTILITIES | 2,953 | | 3,067 | |
| CYPECS | 216 | | 34 | |
| OUTREACH | 1,335 | | 1,476 | |
| DONATIONS | 6,662 | 8,200 | 9,151 | 9,200 |
| BUILDING MAINT | 3,971 | | 2,375 | |
| MUSIC | 725 | | 664 | |
| SECRETARIAL | 190 | | 231 | |
| MISC | 571 | | (18) | |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 68,980 | 8,200 | 70,668 | 9,200 |
| SURPLUS FOR YEAR | (1,025) | (700) | 2,141 | (4,200) |

Financial Review

ALL SAINTS CHURCH RISELEY

| | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Surplus for the period (unrestricted funds) | (1,025) | 2,141 |
| Surplus for the period (designated funds) | (700) | (4,200) |
| Balance brought forward (unrestricted) | 12,737 | 10,596 |
| Balance brought forward (designated) | 9,900 | 14,100 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| PCC Funds 31 Dec | 20,912 | 22,637 |

BALANCE SHEET 31 DECEMBER 2019

| ASSETS/LIABILITIES | 2021 | 2020 |
|----------------------|--------|--------|
| ASSETS | | |
| CASH AT NATWEST BANK | 20,806 | 22,578 |
| CASH IN HAND | 106 | 59 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| TOTAL ASSETS | 20,912 | 22,637 |

Unrestricted Funds are £11,712.

Designated Funds are £9,200 and can be used only to fund children's and families work, currently through North Beds Christian Youth Trust.

ALL SAINTS CHURCH RISELEY

Notes to the accounts

- 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 £2,058.03 being 88 shares in Diocese Deposit Fund and a further £1,346.54 in a bank deposit account.

- 3) Unrestricted donations totalling £6,662 shown in the accounts was made up as follows

| | |
|----------------------|-------|
| Crosslinks | 2,267 |
| CPAS | 600 |
| Children's Society | 200 |
| Festive | 1,500 |
| Church Society | 200 |
| Stables | 500 |
| Asha/Sangster | 800 |
| Food Bank | 300 |
| Beds & Herts Trust | 40 |
| Rector's Disc Fund | 165 |
| Evangelical Alliance | 90 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 6,662 |

- 4) A donation of £8,200 was paid to North Bedfordshire Christian Youth Trust from our Designated Funds.

Agreed by PCC on date

Rector of All Saints Church

James Isaacs

Honorary Treasurer

Brian Simister

Honorary Examiner

Malcolm Rowland

Electoral Roll

Electoral Roll

The number on the Electoral Roll for the 2022 Annual Parochial Church Meeting is 85. The latest revision includes 1 deletion and 1 addition.

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

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Dave Sheffield | 2019 - 2022 |
| Martin Hargreaves | 2019 - 2022 |
| Dudley Ferdinando | 2020 - 2023 |
| Verena Pentlow | 2020 - 2023 |
| Graham Sollars | 2020 – 2023 |
| Jonathan Nicholls | 2021 – 2024 |
| Loreen Tabard | 2021 – 2024 |

Sharnbrook Deanery Synod



Sharnbrook Deanery consists of 30 parish churches in North Bedfordshire, which has a total 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 3 year term. During 2021 the lay representatives of All Saints Church were Lynda and Brian Simister, and also Keith Williams as 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.

Work on 'Re-imagining the Deanery' continued this year, despite the restrictions and difficulties imposed on parishes by COVID. By February, a Purpose; Mission statement was agreed drawn from common themes emerging from 33 exploratory conversations with clergy and lay people deanery-wide. From this, four key workstreams were agreed – Digital Enablement, Listening to YP (Children & Families), a parish-by-parish Resources Log, and a review of issues facing Smaller Churches. By the end of May 60% of PCCs responded further, indicating what 3 things each saw as priority. Taken together, results showed these as:

- a desire to work together more as a deanery, across parish boundaries, to maximise resources, share best practice and support one another
- to do more in our churches to demonstrate God's love and grace in the local community, by supporting, serving and building good relationships
- to grow our ministry to children, YP and families, and provide worship relevant to them.

Other priorities included pastoral care, rebuilding congregations, discipleship and spiritual growth, prayer and bible-study.

Listening to YP – a residential weekend at Chellington was well attended and monthly 'Our Voice' meetings continued once restrictions were lifted. A workshop in October brought together 28 people from across the Deanery to discuss and feed into a 'Vision to Action' paper. Grant funding from the Diocese is enabling a parish-by-parish survey by the 'Resources Cupboard' reporting back on our needs and priorities by March 2022.

Smaller Churches review showed low morale amongst clergy and church officers after a difficult year of maintaining regular worship in ever-changing circumstances, with additional risk assessments, extra cleaning and restrictions on gathering together. On the plus side, people were more willing to link up with other parishes on Zoom or by travelling to a neighbouring parish for a live service, strengthening fellowship between them. There is concern over the decreasing number of churchwardens – over a third of our parishes do not have one, and PCCs are being encouraged to share the workload more widely. Work continues on exploring how we can work together more effectively.



Deanery Youth Strategy meeting

Parish Share – the Diocese has been encouraged that in a challenging year, 90% of parish share has been sustained. Around a third have been able to pay stipend and mission costs in full, on a monthly basis which greatly helps accounting, and a remaining third have made a mixed contribution, covering stipendiary and part of the mission costs. However, there are concerns that around a third of parishes in our deanery have not been able to cover basic stipendiary costs. Parish share contributions for 2023 are currently under review.

Guest speakers – David Wells from Rural Mission Solutions (RMS) came to our November meeting. RMS is a small organisation helping rural churches to plan for growth, involving lay people in planning and mission. David is currently exploring opportunities in some of our churches. Because of COVID restrictions, and also the time and

Sharnbrook Deanery Synod

resource focused on the Re-imagining programme there were no guest speakers at our meetings in February, June and September.

Points for prayer:

- Give thanks that we have been able to move forward with the Re-imagining the Deanery programme, despite COVID; the Our Voice group for young people is meeting monthly again; and their residential weekend at Chellington was successful
- Pray for discernment and wisdom as we seek God's will as we all make decisions about future direction

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 as a Refuge



Church as a Refuge Conference

‘Church as a Refuge’ was originally the title of a one-day conference to help Christians understand abuse of power, how to make churches and Christian organisations safer places for everyone, and care for survivors. It started when Jacqui Wright invited Dr Diane Langberg to speak at a conference which was to be held at All Souls Church, London, in May 2020. This was stopped due to the COVID pandemic. Dr Langberg is an experienced Christian psychologist working with abuse and trauma victims in faith-based settings. See www.dianelangberg.com

The original conference became a two-day online event in June 2021, featuring not only Dr Langberg, but also six other expert speakers on related topics. The conference has reached about 700 people in 40 countries, across six continents. The ‘Church as a Refuge Conference’ is still available online to the end of 2022. You can buy catch-up tickets from www.churchasarefuge.com/event

In March 2022, Jacqui and Cliff were invited to speak at a one-day conference organised by All Souls at the ‘Gospel and Abuse conference’. They spoke about ‘Survivors’ perspectives and a call to action’. You can access the presentation here <https://youtu.be/OYzIklI5XNY>



Gospel and Abuse Conference

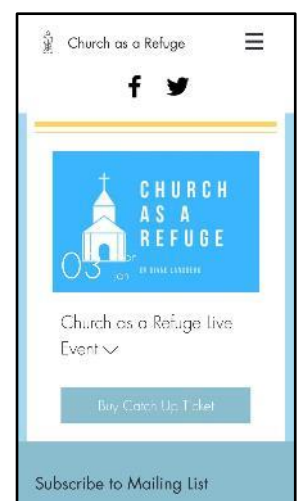
Church as a Refuge current activities include:

1. Regular ‘think tanks’ for Bible colleges and church leaders on raising awareness of the abuse of power in churches and Christian organisations, including abuse in Christian families. So far, the ‘think tank’ has produced a training session designed to be delivered within three hours. You can read the materials, but please give us feedback so that we can improve them. Please email info@churchasarefuge.com
2. Developing some questions based on Prof Scott McKnight’s work on ‘A Church called Tov’. (‘Tov’ is the Hebrew word for ‘good’). The questions are conversation starters to evaluate how ‘Tov’ (or how good) a church is. If you want to use the questions just email us, but please give us feedback on them.
3. Regular ‘think tanks’ for counsellors and pastoral care workers to understand trauma from abuse and to help bring healing to survivors. We also have joint ‘think tanks’ where both church leaders and counsellors can share perspectives whilst working on current projects.
4. Facilitating trauma training to help counsellors become trauma informed.
5. Listening to survivors of abuse in their search for safety and healing.
6. Establishing a new network of people who are involved in this type of work for mutual support and sharing. This is about training whole churches in the prevention of abuse and neglect, and to become trauma informed.
7. Starting a monthly Monday evening online prayer meeting to pray about these issues in the church and our projects.

Churches need to learn how to be a refuge for traumatised people. This includes Christians who have been abused within churches, Christian organisations, Christian families, and on mission. Also, the marginalised, refugees, and those who come into church who are hurting.

‘Trauma is perhaps the greatest mission field of the 21st century.’ Dr Diane Langberg

Please let us know if you are interested in volunteering to help us in any way, join the monthly prayer meeting, or if you need support.



Jacqui Wright & Cliff Turner

Young People

Junior Jivers

It's hard to believe that All Saints Junior Jivers (ASJJ) has just celebrated its first birthday!

The format of Junior Jivers is designed to encourage each child in their physical, mental, social and spiritual development. Each Thursday, we focus on a particular theme (themes this year have included 'Weather' and 'God made me special') and include songs, sensory activities, a Bible story, a related craft, a game and of course plenty of jiving! Parents and carers are encouraged to interact with and assist their child(ren) during the sessions.

Each session ends with refreshments (thank you to all who have provided delicious cookies, cakes and bacon rolls) and a 'stay and play' session (although COVID restrictions have meant that this hasn't always been possible).

Over the year, we have welcomed approximately fifteen adults (including some dads!) and 18 children to ASJJ. We have been really encouraged for a core group of 'regulars' and give thanks for relationships being made and practical and emotional support given as we seek to share the Gospel.

Our values:

- To have fun
- To learn to love the Bible
- To be individually treasured
- To meet with the living God
- To be safe

Our prayer:

Dear Lord, as we seek to nurture, develop and encourage all of our ASJJ families, would you challenge us with your love, deepen us with your grace and teach us with your wisdom, so that through us your kingdom comes and your will be done. Amen

If you would like to join the ASJJ Team, please speak to Sam, Monica or Sally.

***Sally Eddon on behalf of the ASJJ Team:
Sam, Monica & Sally, Jan, Val, Lynda, Jane, Alison B, Gaye Capper & Mary Laws***

Roots and Shoots



Roots and Shoots in the Vicarage garden

We decided to change the name of our Sunday School groups post-pandemic as we re-shaped the groups. Meeting on Zoom when necessary as one whole group, then from September last year we decided on two groups, Roots 0-2years and Shoots 3-11years. During the summer months we continued to meet as one whole group in person in the vicarage garden looking at Gods amazing character and plan from Genesis. The children had fun being back together socially and the sessions were light with lots of games, activities, singing, memory verses and interactive stories from the Bible all to point to how God has plans for all of us, and how the stories of Jacob and Joseph look forward to God's ultimate rescue of all people. The very young stayed with their parents and much fun was had being together! We give thanks for those willing to be part of that group as we emerged from the pandemic.

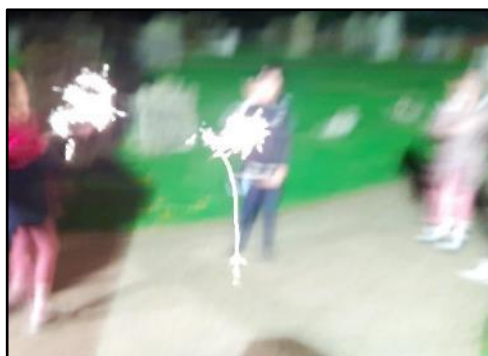
This was a wonderful beginning to the groups Shoots and Roots which began in September 2021. We thank God for new children and the bond they have together as brothers and sisters in Christ. We are also very thankful for the new team that grew from May and was established in September. Please give God great thanks for those

who are willing to serve in preparing lessons and be in group contact as the pandemic loiters. Shoots continues to meet at the vicarage using the extension and the garden, and Roots meets in the Church Room. We would love your prayers for the children to keep on learning and remembering Gods goodness and sovereignty for them, especially when they are at school living out their faith. Shoots are being taught by Mustard Seeds material and have looked at Exodus and the Gospels this academic year. The material is full of games, challenges, crafts, stories all pointing to Gods rich truths from His Word.

Please pray for spiritual growth for our children too, and for parents as we daily help them to see that the best way to live is following Jesus.

Sam Toseland

Youth Club



Fun with sparklers

After a break for the pandemic, Youth Club is back, running every other Friday during term time from 6.45 to 8pm in the church. We welcome anyone in school years 4 to 8.

During the bible talks we have been looking at some of the people whose lives were transformed when they met Jesus. From Nicodemus, an important Jewish leader to the woman at the well who was an unimportant foreigner. Zaccheus and the thief on the cross.

Some of the activities have been games, arts, singing, circus, quizzes etc.

Give thanks for the young people who come regularly and the team who give up their Friday evenings to run it.

Please pray that we build up the numbers of young people coming and faithfully and relevantly share the gospel.

Dave Sheffield

SOUL 11-14s Bible Study

SOUL is a new group which has started this year for those aged 11-14. It is an opportunity for All Saints young people and their friends to hang out, have fun, play games and explore the Bible together. Meeting at Jamie and Wendy Wyatt's house on Sunday evenings each week, this year we've worked our way through the Youth Version of the Christianity Explored Course, as well as think about a number of big questions that people have when it comes to life, Jesus, church and hearing what the Bible has to say.

We always start the evening with some delicious food which Wendy and Jamie are amazingly good at cooking, before playing some silly games together. Then we enjoy a short Bible study as we look to help each other understand what God's word has to say to us. It's a group that is open for anybody aged 11-14, please get in touch if you'd like to find out any more information.

Points for prayer: Give thanks for this group for 11s-14s getting off the ground this year. Pray for some of these young people preparing for baptism and/or confirmation.

James Isaacs on behalf of SOUL leaders

CYFA

During our CYFA sessions this year we have been studying the book of 1 John. We have focused on what John is warning us about, whilst navigating how we can be reassured when we go through times of uncertainty, knowing that God is with us and that 'God is light, in him there is no darkness at all'.

Katie Nicholls

AWOL (Absent with our love) 18-25s

This is a group of 18-25 year olds, most of whom are away, at university, on gap year travel or work adventures, but who congregate in Riseley and the surrounding villages during the holidays. As we have all grown up and moved all over Europe, All Saints Riseley has still brought us together and we have evolved into AWOL (Absent With Our Love but also gone AWOL- you decide). We are all at very different stages; university, postgraduates, working and even PhDs. We have grown as a group with Bethany joining us when we studied Revelation during coronavirus and still remain in contact despite the trials of COVID.

We stay in touch mainly through Facebook, WhatsApp or email and meet up for socials during the breaks. During the various lockdowns we met up regularly for Bible studies via Zoom and this was a huge encouragement. Here's a brief update on what many of us are now up to:

Amelia has spent a term in Valencia on her year abroad and is now in Germany. Amelia has had the chance to catch up with our mission partners too - Nicky, Julian, Jemima, Theo and Koda.

Imogen is doing her PhD at Manchester University in "Hydrodynamical simulations of cosmic structure formation".

Edward in the first year of his DPhil at Oxford University.

Bethany is still very much enjoying life at Kimbolton and is looking forward to starting teacher training in September. For her, this means a move to London and a new start at UCL (University College London). After two years of meeting amazing people and places she's sad to go, but excited to see what God has in store for her.

Jess is on her year abroad as well. She was in Granada in Spain last semester and is now in Lisbon until end of June.

Zak is still working in Norwich in the obstetrics and gynaecology department, he will be finishing his foundation programme in August and be formally unemployed from then. He intends to take some time out from work and be available to the Lord, be it here or abroad. Some prayer for direction and guidance would be great.

Nicki, with thanks to God as she has started doing an online postgraduate in library and information studies which has been an answer to prayer regarding work purpose. Pray that it continues to go well.

And a final word from **Sarah-Louise**...I'm nearing the end of my teacher training course and will be starting my two ECT years in September. Prayer for interviews and where I will be from September - what I think is best for me vs what God thinks is best for me.

Sarah-Louise Cakebread

Fellowship

Prayer Meeting



The prayer meetings are perhaps the most important meetings of the month in the life of our church. The psalmist tells us that unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain (*Psalm 127*). It is a reminder that we cannot achieve anything in our own strength but that the Lord can perform great things through us in our weakness - we need to be people of prayer!

Our church prayer meetings have been such an encouragement to so many over the past couple of years. Zoom allowed us to continue to meet as a church to pray throughout the height of COVID lockdowns, before we were allowed to meet to pray again in person in the church building. We now have two prayer meetings which take place every month: an evening prayer meeting on the second Wednesday of the month at 8.00pm and a daytime prayer meeting on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 11.00am.

It has been wonderful to hear the buzz of prayer going on during these meetings as we spur one another on in dependence on the Lord, and if you have not yet been to a prayer meeting, why not come along and try it out? You don't have to pray out loud if you don't want to, but in just being there, you will hopefully be encouraged and spurred on as we commit the needs of our church, our communities and our world to our powerful, mighty and loving God.

James Isaacs

Homegroups (Home Groups and Housegroups!)

Despite COVID, and because we value our meeting together to study God's word, we have continued to meet - on Zoom, in the garden, in a well-ventilated lounge in the summer, in the church room in the winter and now back in our home. Meeting on Zoom was a challenge but it was better than not meeting at all! The material we study can be challenging but I suspect something would be wrong if we weren't challenged by God's word to us and about how what we have learnt should impact our lives. It is good to be able to raise questions in an informal setting that might be more tricky in a larger group. The study is followed by a short time of prayer (this does not have to be out loud!) and then by a drink and biscuits. It is also a great way to get to know one another better and to support each other. If you have not joined a Home Group, we thoroughly recommend you give it a try.

Our prayer would be that we can continue to meet in person over the next year.

Hugh and Kathryn Staniforth

Housegroups, are made up of likeminded people who want to know more about Jesus, Gods teachings and the Bible. We meet outside of church and normally get together as the title suggest in people's homes. However, in 2020/2021 and early 2022, that was not so easy with "Lockdown" measures in place it meant that meetings were held over "Zoom" calls.

While it was always good to see people and keep in touch it was not the same as being together in a room. None the less the meetings continued and for many were an important part of "Church life" where people could still meet and talk and learn more about being a Christian. Now with the situation beginning to turn more to a "normal" way of life meetings can again be in person either in people's homes (if everyone is comfortable with that) or in the church room.

Often, it's hard to go out and meet after work, especially when it's been a hard day, but now the evenings are lighter (and warmer) going out is a much nicer experience altogether. The Housegroups study a guide that focuses on one aspect of Gods teaching and Gospel living and will often compliment the sermons on Sunday. Also, if you went to the Sunday service and were not sure about something, it's a great way to ask questions with

your friends and church family. Often the same question comes up from other members so it's so good to explore the answers together.

Learning more about God is never going to be a waste of time and the help in building your Christian life is always important. There are groups in the evening and day time so all should find one to suit. It is rewarding and encouraging, and helps bring people together.

Graham Sollars

After so much disruption caused by COVID, it was good to be able to start meeting in church and in our various homegroups again. Zooming YouTube had been a blessing, but was not always available to the more mature members of our Church family. However, the telephone has remained our means of staying in touch and supporting each other.

I have enjoyed being a member of several homegroups since moving to Riseley nearly 37 years ago. Now I love hosting a group in my own home, led in our studies by James. We have felt quite challenged by the themes in the study guides at times and maybe James finds us a challenge as well!!

We've found the latest book on Genesis quite difficult. I sometimes wonder if using a book is too prescriptive. This is a thought that perhaps we could all prayerfully consider.

Judy Green

Coffee Morning Services

Before COVID and the National lockdowns to help stop its spread, All Saints used to have a morning service at 11am on the second Thursday of the month followed by a lunch, and a short afternoon service at 3pm on the fourth Thursday followed by tea and cake.

Following the lockdowns it was felt that it would be unwise for people to sit in close proximity as before. Following some discussion it was decided that a midweek service was still needed for the older members of the church some of whom are unable to attend the Sunday service, and so a short morning service was organised for 10.30 am on the second Wednesday of the month followed by tea or coffee and cake with people sitting spread out in the main body of the church and not close together in the chancel as before. This has proved successful and we now also welcome some members from St. Marys Bletsoe. We are very grateful to Sally Eddon for playing the keyboard for us.

We thank our loving Heavenly Father for bringing us through this difficult time and that we are able once again to sing his praises, bring our prayers to him and hear him speak to us through his word.

Phillip and Margaret Nicholls

Music



Christmas 2021

*Shout for joy to the LORD, all the Earth.
Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before Him with joyful songs.
Know that the LORD is God. It is He who made us, and we are His;
we are His people, the sheep of His pasture.*

*Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise;
give thanks to Him and praise His name.
For the LORD is good and His love endures forever;
His faithfulness continues through all generations.*

Psalm 100:1-5

It has been a strange and challenging time for the music group at All Saints but we are thankful that technology enabled us to be part of the online services each week during the period when we couldn't meet together at church. Recording was a time consuming and complex task and special thanks must go to Jo Nicholls for all her expert music editing skills during those lock-down weeks - thank you Jo!

We as a 'team' are passionate about Helping our church family to connect with the purpose for which we were all created-to glorify the living God! Through worship we pray that we might point peoples' hearts towards our Lord Jesus Christ, who is greater than our trials and kinder than we could ever imagine. We watch in amazement as the Spirit of God transforms lives and gives people a fresh encounter with God's faithfulness, love, and power as we worship Him together.

This year we give particular thanks for Katie and Martha Nicholls who have become regular members of the 'Band' each Sunday - isn't it great to hear our God being praised on the trumpet..... and so many people have been captivated and drawn in to an atmosphere of worship by Katie's fabulous signing. As for the rest of us, we are grateful that Katie and Martha have lowered the average age of the Music Group significantly!

Thank you to you, our Church family for your love, prayers, encouragement and support - it means a great deal to all of us. As songwriter Bob Kauflin beautifully sums up how we feel - *"Worship is about what we love. What we live for. It's about who we are before God."*



Now That's What I Call Christmas 2021

Sally Eddon, on behalf of the Band

Bell Ringing



*Come a visit the bell tower
Open afternoon 11 June*

The bell ringers are still in the tower most Tuesday evening practicing and then on the first and third Sundays making a joyful noise to encourage all to attend Sunday services.

We are always looking for new people to come and learn the art of bell ringing and we are willing to teach you. All that is required is reasonable fitness and hand eye co-ordination.

On 11 June we are having an open afternoon 2 to 4 pm for people to visit the tower and see how we ring the bells and have a try at ringing under full supervision, some will be able to visit the bell chamber and see the bells in all their glory.

We hope to repeat the afternoon again in September.

David Shaw, Tower Captain

Men's Group

The Men's Group was set up to seek to build genuine friendships between men in the village both inside and outside of All Saints Church. The group is a great forum for people to get to know each other in a caring and authentic way and I know has been very valued by many in the group over many years.

Sadly, over the past couple of years it has been very difficult to meet face to face as a group due to COVID. We have been able during the lighter months to do some external walks and village support activities such as the Riseley Litter Pick, All Saints DIY days etc. This practical



Men's Group

outreach of the group with a variety of skills and gifts is something that hopefully will continue to grow as we come out of the pandemic and with the Jubilee celebrations coming up soon. We are starting a programme of activities again which includes walks, cycling and pub meals.

In 2022 we would continue to ask for prayer to continue to run a programme that is attractive to men and provides clear opportunities and encouragement for people to ask questions about living lives following Christ. Some of the men in the group have done the Christianity Explored course with James and we pray that more will be encouraged to do so. We also pray that those in the group who have become anxious about meeting socially will soon feel more comfortable meeting up again.

Dudley Ferdinando

Serving one another

Refreshments



Refreshments 'al fresco'

Since being able to meet once again following the COVID lockdown, we have been able to enjoy tea and coffee after the weekly service, served outside, enabling us to talk with one another in a relaxed atmosphere.

We have been fortunate enough to have only missed two occasions due to wet weather.

Our rota now comprises of seven groups of people that provide weekly tea, coffee and biscuits. Our thanks to everyone for their support. New volunteers are always welcome.

Robin & Jane Rhodes

Cleaning



Willing hands

We have a small team of volunteer cleaners and since lockdown we have been cleaning the church on alternate weekends which works out at a session every two months for each pair of cleaners. We do a basic sweep, polish and dusting job and make sure the bathroom is sparkling and hygienic! We try to keep on top of cobwebs that are reachable but the church is home to its own wildlife community so we can't reach them all!

There is a church deeper cleaning session every so often which really makes a difference as jobs like cleaning windows and those requiring ladders and extra polishing are tackled. Recently new shelves and hooks in the cleaning cupboard have helped to keep it tidy. They are greatly appreciated.

Thank you to all who help with the cleaning. We are always seeking more people to join the rota so do get in touch with me or James if you can spare a couple of hours every few weeks.

We thank God for our volunteers and for this unseen but important work.

Alison Blanchard

Recent snapshots of Church Fellowship



Maundy Thursday Supper



Good Friday Carrying the Cross



Easter crafts



Lynda leading us at an All Age service to understand the 'SHUN' words

Training and Development

4 Counties Christian Ministry/Training for East Anglia Ministry (TEAM)

About this time last year, I was a few months into my “semi-retirement” thinking through what did I want to do, but more important, what did God want me to do. You may be like me, but my Bible Study isn’t that great at times, and I remember Keith Williams talking about a course run by the 4 counties Christian Ministry which is connected to TEAM, which helped him get a greater understanding of the Bible, so decided to “have a go”.

Well.... for the last 2 terms now, I have gone to Cambridge (there weren’t enough people from the Bedford area to meet in Bedford) to meet with a group of around 24 people (different ages, backgrounds, etc..) to study the Bible.

It’s been great! I have learned so much (that I should have already learned I expect), been challenged both by God’s word and the people on the course, been encouraged that His word is all sufficient and the Bible is a fantastic love story between a creator God and a lost humanity that He so desperately wants to bring back to Himself.

It’s not just about the studying, interwoven there have been some great sessions on looking at Children’s work, International students, Bible talks for all ages, Christian counselling and much more and has challenged me to come back to our church and have some discussion with James and others as to how our mission (To Know Christ and Make Him Known) can be supported.

If you are interested in any way, please let’s have a chat (and with James too). I do thoroughly recommend and I should have done this 40 years ago!! The great news is (and this keeps being repeated through the Bible) God can and does use anyone – old and young.

Richard Carter

Riseley Primary School



This year has been an exciting one for our school with Leigh Pointon our Executive Headteacher starting with us in September and our partnership with Wilden Primary School commencing then. We are very thankful for all the work Leigh has done since joining us in moving the school forward in many areas including the curriculum and developing the partnership. This is particularly the case after over a year of interim Headteachers. All the staff have

worked extremely hard over the last year dealing with many challenges including those presented by COVID which continues to have an impact including pupil and staff absences and we are very grateful to them.

I am also grateful to Richard Carter for agreeing to join me as Co-Chair of Governors this academic year - it has made a huge difference being able to share this responsibility. We are so fortunate to have, as a Church, a significant presence on the Governing Body and we are grateful to those who give up their time in this way. Although COVID presented issues in this area weekly assemblies continue to be run by members of our congregation and the lunchtime Aslan Club continues.

Please pray for a lessening of COVID disruption. Please also remember in your prayers Leigh, the staff and governors.



Outdoor Assembly

Catherine Veitch, Co-Chair of Governors

Mission Support

Milsons – Valencia, Spain



Nicky, Jemima, Julian and Theo Milson

Julian and Nicky Milson are missionaries in Valencia, Spain, along with Jemima (16) and Theo (14) their children. They have now been in Valencia for four 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.

There is a family of Australian CMS Missionaries who are part of the church family and Julian shares an office space with them and a local Spanish Christian journalist. Shortly another Missionary couple with Crosslinks (the Redfearns) will be joining us and Chris will take on a kind of Curacy role with Julian.

The past year has obviously been challenging in many ways and the pandemic has once again meant that plans have had to be adapted or put on hold. Despite being able to meet regularly in person throughout the year, we have lost touch with some members of the church family and our numbers on a Sunday have reduced significantly. In October last year we said a sad farewell to an Australian Missionary family who helped enormously with the children's work at church and worked with Youth Groups across the city. They had to return to Australia for family reasons.

However, God has been so faithful and 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. There have been several serious illnesses and medical problems amongst the church family in the past year and it has been a joy to see the church family caring for each other in very practical ways.

Last Summer we installed an audio-visual system in church to make it easier for people to join us online and to improve the sound quality in the building. We were heartened to see many members of the church giving sacrificially so that we could raise some of the required finances for the project.

In October we started a new, monthly All-Age service which has been a great success. It has been useful to be able to offer something a little more informal alongside our usual, more liturgical services. It also gives the Sunday School leaders a break once a month.

Last month (February) we started a new Youth Group and since then we have seen a dozen or more teenagers meeting fortnightly to have fun studying the Bible and playing games together. We've been particularly encouraged that some members have been inviting friends along.

Nicky continues to Home Educate Jemima full time and support her everyday living. She is also continuing to learn the Spanish in her spare time. She helps lead the music each week at church by playing the piano. Jemima and Theo both study hard and they enjoy learning in their own ways. Their level of Spanish acquisition is quite different but both seem to enjoy living in Spain and they have adapted well to life in a different culture.

Please pray:

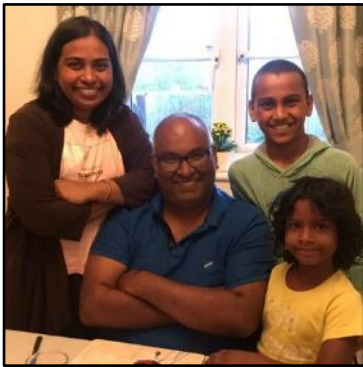
- For plans to visit the UK this Summer, including a visit to All Saints.
- Our families in the UK, that they would know and follow Jesus as their Saviour.
- For our church family; that we would each grow deeper in our faith and that everyone would take up the challenge of evangelism.
- That the Youth Group will continue to flourish and that the young people will be equipped to serve Christ faithfully every day.

- That our Gospel witness would produce fruit.
- Give thanks that our children finally have been granted Residency status and that Jemima’s disabilities have been officially recognised here.
- Give thanks that the church family love Jesus and love each other.

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 Valencia.

Julian and Nicky Milson

Asha and Sangster – Bangalore, India



Asha, Sangster, Timothy and Ruth

It's been such a privilege for All Saints Riseley to partner with Asha and Sangster in gospel work over the past twenty years ever since Asha first arrived in Riseley as a CareForce Worker. It's been so encouraging to see how God has used them in witnessing to his grace and glory to so many people over the years, most recently in Bangalore, India.

The past couple of years have been a challenging time for so many people across the world with various good works and initiatives struggling to continue and many having to reinvent or reorientate themselves. This has been the case for Asha and Sangster too with the Cafe having to close and their goat farm struggling. As a result they have asked us to suspend our financial support of them for the time being as they step back from full time gospel ministry and reassess and consider what God has planned for them

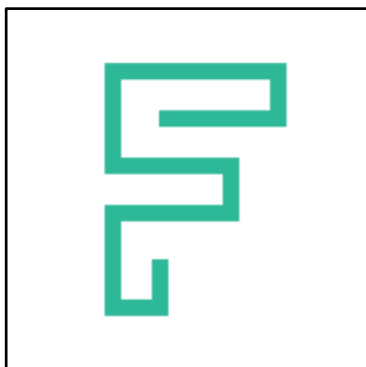
next with various possibilities on the cards looking ahead.

In the meantime, Asha is continuing her work for an organisation providing education to children in the slums of Bangalore. She has developed teaching programmes and training, accreditation and supervision to teachers; Sangster is supporting his parents charity and school in Raichur; and they have been able to let the cafe site which is providing them with a regular income.

Whilst the PCC has agreed to their request, we remain committed to praying for them as a family and enjoying what we hope and pray will continue as not only a wonderful friendship, but ongoing mutual gospel encouragement and service.

Asha, Sangster, Timothy & Ruth

Festive



Festive

Festive works to inspire and support Christians in Further Education Colleges and Sixth Forms to live for Jesus and to equip them as they share their faith through their words and actions. This is done through personalised support, prayer and producing free resources for students, chaplains and Christian Unions. The vision of Festive is to see an ongoing vibrant witness of Jesus in every FE College and Sixth Form in the UK.

We've had a couple of recent staff changes with Karen Jones (who herself has close links with Riseley, having grown up in the All Saints Church Family), and who has been running our social media and comms has taken on the new role of 'Student engagement'. This covers a large amount of the student facing work, including managing our wonderful team of student support workers. She has

also taken on the leadership of our growing 'Scattered' training events. Karen is a gifted youth worker and has done a brilliant job of connecting with students and SSWs in this role since starting it in January. Our hope had been to recruit a new social media worker in February to take on the role Karen vacated. However, after an

unsuccessful recruitment process, Karen has kindly agreed to hold onto the social media role for now alongside her new role. Our plan is to advertise again in the summer and hopefully recruit someone for September.

Another change has seen Rhian from our team who was originally recruited just over 4 years ago as an admin and finance worker take on the role of Operations Manager. This is brilliant for Festive as it will not only enable us to run even more smoothly and effectively but will release our director Pete to focus more on networking, vision and partnership work.

Please pray for Karen and Rhian in their new roles. Pray for Karen as she juggles the responsibility of two roles and pray we would be able to find a suitable candidate for the social media vacancy this summer.

Festive update

The Stables Christian Centre



Hanging the Stables Christmas wreath

The Stables, like many other services were badly affected by the lockdowns. Although fortunate to open in the Summer of 2020 and remain open until Christmas, we were locked-down again after Christmas until the Spring of 2021.

We do provide a vital lifeline to many of our clients and they really appreciated being together again when we opened up. Just before Christmas our clients were able to celebrate in two Christmas get-togethers and everyone had time to finish wreaths to take home. We took a further positive step for both clients and staff, when we dropped all restrictions early this year.

Usual activities have continued in garden, kitchen and craft departments during the year. Unfortunately, our Coffee shop and sales events were drastically curtailed, but a few special on-site sales were well supported, and we have continued to supply our retailers. Our Christmas sale in early December was especially successful and we had much to do in January of this year to replenish our stock. Our clients also made bags for Operation Christmas Child – which

were packed into shoeboxes in the St Neots warehouse where Gill (staff member in the photo) was one of the team.

We are currently preparing and looking forward to seeing old and new faces at our Coffee Shop from May this year.

We do appreciate your support and hope to see you during the coming year at an event, Coffee Shop or just dropping in to the Stables shop. Our Facebook page and website are updated regularly with what is going on, so are good places to look to keep up to date with us.

www.facebook.com/stableschristiancentre
www.stableschristiancentre.co.uk



Bags for Operation Christmas Child

Points for prayer:

- Give thanks for being able to contact our clients through videos, phone calls, facetime etc. throughout the periods of lockdown and for our open site. Also, for the Riseley scout tent which enabled us to have clients back on site so soon.
- Pray for staff and clients who suffered from stress and for their restoration following the lockdowns and the changes forced upon us.
- Pray for future staffing needs and God's guidance for our next steps.

Karen Houck, Finance Manager

TO KNOW CHRIST AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN