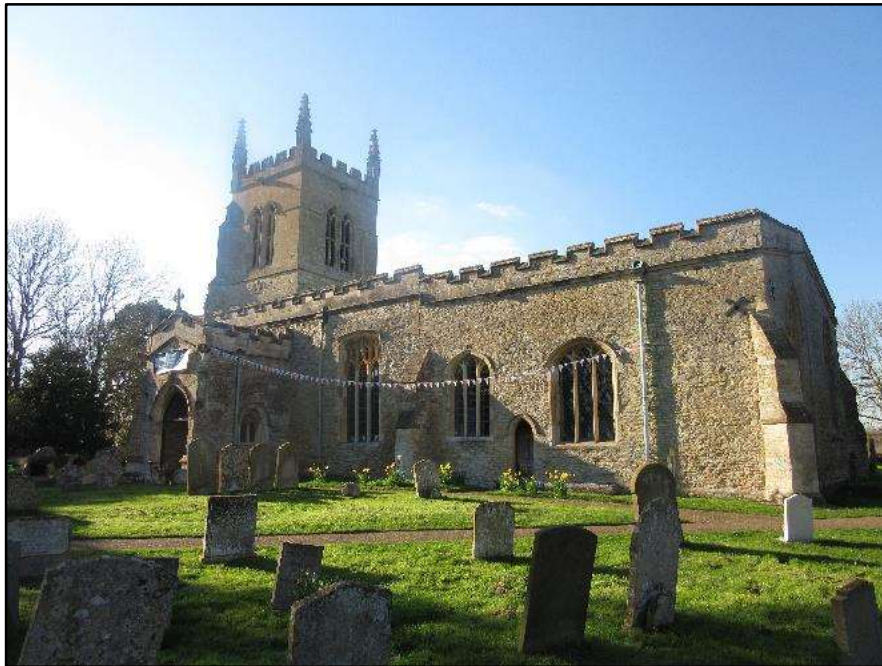


# All Saints

CHURCH, RISELEY

Church Lane, Riseley, Bedford, MK44 1ER  
[www.allsaintsriseley.org](http://www.allsaintsriseley.org)



Annual Church Report  
2023

*"TO KNOW CHRIST AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN"*

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*Isaacs family*

*Dear Friends,*

In our service on Easter Sunday this year, we were encouraged by that moment a distressed Mary Magdalene met with the risen Lord Jesus at side of the empty tomb. It is a beautiful moment which captures the intimacy of their relationship, and reminds us that Jesus isn't some distant uncaring figure but that he is the good shepherd who calls his own sheep by name and they recognise his voice - the good shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep.

I always find it striking that Jesus could have gone straight to his heavenly Father at this point, his saving work complete, but instead he chose to go and comfort Mary in her distress. It's an

incredible moment. The good shepherd who hadn't disappeared forever, but who after three days had risen again and who was there for her – in her despair and anguish. His coming was the banishing of her sadness and fear as she hurried back to the disciples to tell them the good news.

But it wasn't just Mary that Jesus was there for. The whole point of the resurrection is that we too can meet Jesus today through his Spirit and by faith and that because of the resurrection, we can have the same intimate relationship with Jesus as our Saviour.

And the encounter we can have is no less life-changing. In the same way that Mary went from sadness to joy, the gospel still comes to transform, broken, sorrowful and fearful lives with sheer joy and gladness at meeting Jesus, alive with us today. Each one of us has the invitation to meet with him and to respond to him in our hearts with joy, praise and thanks. He has laid down his life for each one of us, and welcomes each one of us to himself now. He longs to transform our lives, to life afresh in light of the resurrection and it is this transformation that is at the heart of the Christian experience.

At our recent Vision Sunday, we reflected on the amazing promise that Jesus gives in John 15:5, where Jesus says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit." It is a promise that calls us as Christians not to strive to do more, but to know Jesus better as we seek to remain in him, and that as we do so, we can expect to bear much fruit for the kingdom. I am excited about seeing this vision further realised at All Saints over the coming years and my hope is that the whole church family will be involved in shaping how in God's strength we seek to achieve this.

Whilst the disruption linked to COVID-19 has all but subsided, we have entered a new period of uncertainty in the wider Church of England. A number of big questions remain with regard to the Bishops' proposals which seek to go against the Bible's teaching on issues related to human sexuality and see a change to the Church's doctrine of marriage, and we will have to navigate them alongside others who seek to uphold the Word of God over the coming months. However, whilst we do this, we must not take our eyes off Jesus or our mission to Know Christ and Make Him Known here in Riseley and beyond.

It is a mission that I know many have enjoyed being a part of over the past 12 months, with so many people serving the gospel in so many ways. Having not held a holiday club for over five years, we have held two in under a year, which a large number of the church family have got behind to make possible. New weekly initiatives such as Roots, Shoots & Fruits and the Bus-Stop Café, have started up as we have looked to help our young people Know Christ and Make Him Known, alongside Junior Jivers, Youth Club and SOUL which this year have all taken a step forward and seen some encouraging growth.

Home-groups offering fellowship and discipleship have continued to meet and the Warm Spaces Initiative in response to the "cost of living crisis" provided a new opportunity for us to reach out with the love of Christ. Kathryn Staniforth has not only taken on the role of Church Warden this past year, but has also agreed to

## Rector's Report

coordinate pastoral care across the church. Please pray for Kathryn and support her in this role, and if you are aware of any needs related to pastoral care, please do not be afraid to speak to her.

The Jubilee celebrations followed by the poignant moment of the death of Queen Elizabeth II provided us opportunity to both celebrate and grieve alongside the wider community, as have the annual fixtures in the church calendar of Harvest, Remembrance Sunday and Christmas. We had a wonderful time in October when Giles and Sarah Walter joined us for our first weekend at home since 2019 and look forward to running the weekend again 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> October 2023 when Hugh Palmer will be with us – please make sure you have the dates in your diary!



*Warm Spaces*

Sunday Morning Services, Midweek Coffee Morning Services, Brook House Services and Prayer Meetings have all helped us in our mission as disciples of Christ, and many hours of service 'behind the scenes' have been put in by so many to enable all these initiatives to take place week by week, month by month, throughout the year. It has been wonderful to see people using the gifts God has given them to bless others and bring him glory.

Whilst we have so much to be thankful to God for, I cannot finish this letter without remembering a number of faithful sisters from among us who went to be with Jesus this past year. Jean Morgan-Jones, Beryl Wallis, Margaret Ward, Mary Skevington and Jill Shaw all themselves Knew Christ and Made Him Known Amongst us, and we thank God for their friendship, their witness and their service over many years at All Saints. Because of the resurrection, we look forward with confidence to the day when we will be reunited with them face to face.

And so, as I draw to a close, let me say that this is just a small snapshot of the life of our church, with so much more going on as evidenced by all that's included in this report. Therefore, I would take this opportunity to thank you all for your ongoing partnership in the gospel. We have a great God and a wonderful mission as we look to Know Christ and Make Him Known in the year ahead.

With much love in Christ,

***James Isaacs***

*PS. And finally, a very big thank you to everybody who has contributed to this year's profile, which I hope you will find as encouraging to read as I have. And a special mention of thanks must be made to Karen Houck for compiling it all together – thank you Karen!*

## Church Vision

Over the past year, the Rector, Wardens and PCC have been prayerfully considering the vision for All Saints Church. Having found our feet again after the turbulence of COVID-19, it seems that now is a good time to consider afresh who we are as a church and how we look to best live out our Church Mission Statement to: “KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN”

The vision was shared with the church family on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2023 as we considered Jesus’ words in John 15, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.” This was a passage that the PCC reflected on during a Vision Day in November 2022 and which really underpins our vision for the church as we seek to joyfully live lives as faithful and obedient disciples of Jesus both now and in the future.

The vision statement itself, rather than being all encompassing, is a tool which seeks to ‘give us some points of reference’ on which to build as we look to remain in Jesus and bear fruit for Him. Our hope is that the whole church family will be involved in further shaping this as we look to further ‘flesh it out’ over the coming months and years. As well as giving thought to this in our Sunday morning meetings and homegroups over the coming months, we are going to hold a whole Church Vision Morning on Saturday 22nd July 2023 where we hope you will be able to join us.

Please pray that God might use this to help us glorify Him.

The graphic features a large, faint white cross in the background. In the top right corner is the logo for All Saints Church, Riseley, with a cross above the word 'Saints'. The main text is centered and reads: 'Our vision for All Saints is that we are Spirit filled Jesus Loving, Jesus Dependent, Jesus Welcoming, Jesus Serving, Jesus Sharing people who come together as a Church Family to play our part in the work of the Kingdom in North Bedfordshire and beyond.' Below this are five columns, each with a heading and a description: 'Jesus Loving' (A Church community where every person is encouraged to grow deeper in their knowledge, love and devotion of Jesus - whatever stage of faith they are at!); 'Jesus Dependent' (A Church community rooted in prayer, where every person is encouraged to enrich their personal and corporate prayer lives - whatever their prayer lives are like!); 'Jesus Welcoming' (A Church community where every person feels safe, loved, valued, cared for and that they belong - whoever they are!); 'Jesus Sharing' (A Church community where every person is actively seeking to share the good news of Jesus with those around us - wherever our frontlines!); and 'Jesus Serving' (A Church community where every person is committed to sacrificial service in his kingdom - whatever their gifts!). At the bottom left is the mission statement 'KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN' and at the bottom right is 'All Saints Church vision statement'.

**All Saints**  
CHURCH, RISELEY

**Our vision for All Saints is that we are Spirit filled Jesus Loving, Jesus Dependent, Jesus Welcoming, Jesus Serving, Jesus Sharing people who come together as a Church Family to play our part in the work of the Kingdom in North Bedfordshire and beyond.**

**Jesus Loving**  
A Church community where every person is encouraged to grow deeper in their knowledge, love and devotion of Jesus - whatever stage of faith they are at!

**Jesus Dependent**  
A Church community rooted in prayer, where every person is encouraged to enrich their personal and corporate prayer lives - whatever their prayer lives are like!

**Jesus Welcoming**  
A Church community where every person feels safe, loved, valued, cared for and that they belong - whoever they are!

**Jesus Sharing**  
A Church community where every person is actively seeking to share the good news of Jesus with those around us - wherever our frontlines!

**Jesus Serving**  
A Church community where every person is committed to sacrificial service in his kingdom - whatever their gifts!

**KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN**

All Saints Church vision statement



## Agendas and Minutes

### Agenda for Meeting of Parishioners

#### Parish of All Saints Riseley

#### **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023 during the 10.30am service at All Saints Church, Riseley**

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 Meeting of Parochial Church Council

#### Parish of All Saints Riseley

#### **Immediately following the Meeting of Parishioners on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023 at All Saints Church, Riseley**

1. For the election of parochial representatives of the laity to the Deanery Synod
2. For the election of parochial representatives of the laity to the Parochial Church Council
3. For the appointment of the Independent Examiner
4. 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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022;
  - (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 3 times during the 12 months preceding the date of the election; and
  - (c) They are of 18 years or upwards (for election to the Deanery Synod) or of 16 years or upwards (for election to the Parochial Church Council).

## Minutes of Annual Meeting of Parishioners

Parish of All Saints Riseley

**15<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

**Present:** Revd James Isaacs (Chair), Diane Sollars (Secretary), Brian Simister (Treasurer), Lynda Simister, Graham Sollars, Richard Carter, Katy Carter, Sam Toseland, Rob Toseland, Jonathan Nicholls, Jo Nicholls, Katie Nicholls, Martin Hargreaves, Roline Hargreaves, Mark Eddon, Sally Eddon, Jemma Carroll, Pieter Carroll, Loreen Shelford, Emily Hermon, Monica Isaacs, Phillip Nicholls, Margaret Nicholls, Jane Rhodes, Robin Rhodes, Christine Dudeney, Catherine Veitch, Heather Shelton, Keith Williams, Sue Williams, Marion Stubbert, Sue Elks , Sarah-Louise Cakebread, David Sheffield, Zoe Sheffield, Jamie Wyatt, Katrina Wignall, Ariel Wignall, Sue Walker, John Walker, Dianne Jones, Jackie Slater, Alison Blanchard, Judy Green and Verena Pentlow.

**Apologies for Absence:** Karen Houck, Hugh Staniforth, Kathryn Staniforth, Trevor Staniforth, Dudley Ferdinando, Jan Ferdinando, Roger Gray, Penny Gray, David Shaw, Jill Shaw and Alison Keating.

James Isaacs welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the purpose of this meeting is to elect Church Wardens.

### **Minutes from the Previous Meeting: 21/04/2021**

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**

James Isaacs advised that Mark Eddon was standing down as Church Warden after many years of service. James thanked Mark for his work in particular through busy times of the church – managing a building project, a period of interregnum and the pandemic.

Richard Carter was willing to stand again as Church Warden. The nomination for election form had been completed prior to the meeting. Richard was nominated by Roline Hargreaves, seconded by Hugh Staniforth and unanimously agreed, there were no abstentions.

Kathryn Staniforth had agreed to stand as Church Warden to fill the vacancy left by Mark Eddon. The nomination for election form had been completed prior to the meeting. Kathryn was nominated by Jemma Carroll, seconded by Graham Sollars and unanimously agreed, there were no objections or abstentions.

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

### 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022

**Present:** Revd James Isaacs (Chair), Diane Sollars (Secretary), Brian Simister (Treasurer), Lynda Simister, Graham Sollars, Richard Carter, Katy Carter, Rob Toseland, Jonathan Nicholls, Jo Nicholls, Katie Nicholls, Martin Hargreaves, Roline Hargreaves, Mark Eddon, Sally Eddon, Jemma Carroll, Pieter Carroll, Loreen Shelford, Emily Hermon, Monica Isaacs, Phillip Nicholls, Margaret Nicholls, Jane Rhodes, Robin Rhodes, Christine Dudeney, Heather Shelton, Keith Williams, Sue Williams, Marion Stubbert, Sue Elks, Sarah-Louise Cakebread, David Sheffield, Zoe Sheffield, Jamie Wyatt, Katrina Wignall, Ariel Wignall, Sue Walker, John Walker, Dianne Jones, Jackie Slater, Alison Blanchard, Judy Green and Verena Pentlow.

**Apologies for Absence:** Karen Houck, Hugh Staniforth, Kathryn Staniforth, Trevor Staniforth, Dudley Ferdinando, Jan Ferdinando, Roger Gray, Penny Gray, David Shaw, Jill Shaw, Alison Keating, Sam Toseland and Catherine Veitch.

James Isaacs explained the purpose of this meeting is to elect PCC members, appoint an Independent Examiner and that there would be an opportunity for questions regarding the Annual Report including the Finance Report.

### **Minutes from the Previous Meeting: 21/04/2021**

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 3 nominations to stand on the PCC. Martin Hargreaves and David Sheffield had come to the end of their 3 year term and were willing to stand again. Also Mark Eddon had agreed to stand for the PCC. The nomination of Martin Hargreaves was proposed by Mark Eddon and seconded by Lynda Simister. The nomination of David Sheffield was proposed by Sally Eddon and seconded by Brian Simister. The nomination of Mark Eddon was proposed by Martin Hargreaves and seconded by Richard Carter. All 3 nominations were unanimously approved by everyone present with no objections or abstentions.

James thanked all 3 for standing for service on the PCC and for everyone else on the PCC for their help in leading the church in Riseley.

### **Appointment of the Independent Examiner**

Brian Simister, confirmed that Malcolm (Bill) Rowland has agreed to continue as the Independent Examiner for the accounts. The appointment of Malcolm was proposed by Brian Simister, seconded by James Isaacs and unanimously agreed with no objections or abstentions.

### **PCC Reports**

James Isaacs signposted everyone to the reports in the Parish Profile for the Electoral Roll, PCC, Building, Finance and Deanery Synod reports and thanked everyone for their partnership in the gospel. He had been encouraged by the reports and thanked everyone for their work as we look to build one another up and then opened up the meeting for questions.

The meeting closed with prayers of thanksgiving for God's provision and praying for the coming year.



## Churchwarden's report

So, the last 12 months have flown by – Kathryn has quickly got herself established as a warden and has also started to coordinate our pastoral care for the congregation and those associated with the - her contact number is 01234 708445. Please do not hesitate to give her a ring in this regard.

As we look back over the year, our overriding reaction is to thank God for how he continues to bless and care for us as a church.

We are blessed with a great ministry from our Rector James (and family) and we have a number of church members who support James from time to time delivering talks or leading services – thanks to Lynda, Martin, Cliff, Graham and others.

We have seen how generously God has provided to us all, as our giving has risen a little against a back drop of the cost-of-living crisis we are all experiencing.

We thank God for the limited level of maintenance our old church building has needed. We do keep an ever-watchful eye our twisting buttress, that does have ground movement under it, and our heating system. We also thank God for Dudley and his helpers that keep such a close watch on all things “fabric”.

The churchyard continues to look good in all seasons and our thanks go to Lesley and Graham for their ongoing work to make it all look so neat a tidy.

And as we have transitioned from a period of many COVID restrictions to much fewer, we have also been encouraged with the numbers attending church on a regular basis.

The year ahead is looking “interesting” as we see how the Church of England debate on “Living in Love and Faith” continues and consider our prayerful response based on the scriptures.

***Richard Carter & Kathryn Staniforth***

## Parochial Church Council (PCC) Report 2022/23

The PCC consists of James Isaacs as Chair and Kathryn Staniforth 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 Shelford. Sam Toseland also attends the meetings as Children and Families Worker.

During the year Keith Williams and Verena Pentlow have resigned from the PCC.

Throughout the year regular items on the agenda have been church mission, finance, safeguarding and the upkeep of the church building.

One of the main points of discussion at PCC meetings is the mission of our church at home and with our mission partners. Sub-committees have been set up for special events such as the Jubilee Weekend and the Weekend at Home.

Discussions have taken place during the last year on our response as a church to the Living in Love and Faith (LLF) consultation. This is ongoing and continues to be a challenge for the PCC of how best to respond as a gospel centred church.

Please give thanks for everyone who has served on the PCC and the different gifts that the group brings to the life of our church. Also pray for the PCC and the decisions we need to make regarding our response to LLF and the consequences that may have on the life of our church in Riseley.

***Diane Sollars, PCC Secretary***

## Building and Fabric report

It has been great to see the building used widely during the past year for so many different activities at different times of the week. There is little to actually report on in terms of structural work or repairs in the church building as not much has happened since this time last year. Firstly I would like to thank Lesley who continues to keep the churchyard and the outside of the church so tidy and immaculate looking right through the year, it really is hugely appreciated. Thank you to the band of folk who keep the inside of the church tidy and clean on a weekly basis. Twice a year we do have tidy up sessions at the church and thank you again to those who help out with this. It is important to have a building that is clean and welcoming and this doesn't happen by itself!

On the negative side, we have had a continued low level of vandalism and antisocial behaviour by a small group of people who hang out inside the porch. Despite reasoning with them and occasional police involvement, this is still an issue. The external porch doors have been repaired and will be replaced soon and they will be locked unless the building is in use.

The ageing gas heating system is still limping on through each winter and just about keeps the building warm enough but heating old draughty church buildings whatever type of heating is installed is becoming dramatically more expensive. Warm coats are essential throughout the winter months!

We are still waiting for the stonemasons to carry out some minor repointing and repairs to the south west buttress which moved again during the dry summer of 2022. Hopefully this will be completed soon.

We have had discussions with our new architect David Llewellyn on further reordering of the space inside the church building and various options will be considered when the time is appropriate.

As stated 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!

In summary, we are blessed with a lovely welcoming and versatile church building that is used by so many groups throughout the week and for worshipping on a Sunday. I hope that in the future we can keep bringing the life changing Gospel message to people of all ages in a building where this has been happening for over 800 years.

***Dudley Ferdinando***

## Churchyard



*Springtime*

which is the strip of gravel all around the base of the church building. This has been thoroughly weeded (by Lesley Deathe) and the gravel has been more evenly distributed. Now that we are on top of this it is hoped the maintenance should be easier.

The gates are always being maintained. Unfortunately the main white gates are constantly battered by the weather and rain splashes from the road making cleaning a never ending story. The single gate on the East side is under renovation and will be back at some point in 2023.



*Visiting wildlife*

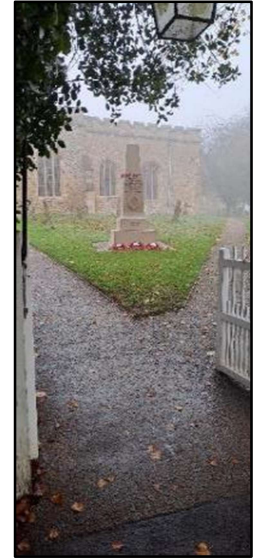
A Key part of the churchyard life these last twelve months has been the work of a small team maintaining the whole thing. However we must as before give a huge thank you to Lesley Deathe for her amazing work and dedication throughout the year making the whole area a place that people want to visit not just to see loved ones they have been parted from, but to be part of a well cared for area of the village.

As always, we welcome people to enjoy in a respectful way this beautiful place and ask that dog owners keep their dogs on a lead and clean up after them. Also the use of rubbish bins and general care and respect will always be appreciated.

Looking ahead to 2024 it is hoped that we will plant more bulbs this autumn. Final decisions on placements are to be made but we will be looking at Snowdrops and Bluebells especially. Other wild flowers for the summer to encourage the bees are to be contemplated as well.

So here we are in spring 2023 and the summer is just around the corner. The last twelve months has seen the continuation of the Churchyard care started a few years ago and with a very warm summer of 2022 it became easy to keep the grass at bay but the weeds did grow!"

One area that received a lot of attention was the "French Drains"



*Remembrance*

Last year I mentioned the amazing amount of wildlife that can be seen and heard in the Churchyard. I am pleased to say that the visitors remain (Foxes, Badgers, Muntjac Deer and Squirrels). We are lucky that very little damage is created by these creatures. However we did have a Whale visit in early spring but it now appears to have found deeper water!

A Key part of the churchyard life these last twelve months has been the work of a small



*A beautiful place to reflect*

**Graham Sollars**

## Financial Review

As can be seen from the accounts, 2022 was a relatively stable year with a small decrease in our overall funding from £20,912 to £20,479. The fact there was such a small overspend was due to very little needing to be spent on maintenance of the building, a number of generous donations, including another anonymous donation of £5,000. (Over the past few years, we have been fortunate to receive a number of donations of £5,000, but the one paid to the PCC in 2022 will be the last one.)

Taking everything into account, including a possible increase in our parish share payment to the diocese and assuming there will shortly be a considerable increase in heating/lighting costs, if there is no increase in overall giving, we will have a 2023 deficit of the order of £10,000, which is approximately half our current funds, and clearly that is not a sustainable position.

Without a material increase in overall giving, it may be necessary to consider reducing the PCC's donations to other charities and/or the parish share payment to the diocese, but we should pray and take action, to ensure that is not needed.

***Brian Simister***

## All Saints Church Riseley Accounts 2022

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

INCOME	2022		2021	
	UNRESTRICTED	DESIGNATED	UNRESTRICTED	DESIGNATED
GIVING	57,551	5,000	53,819	5,000
GRANTS	2,279		-	
FEES	2,989		2,621	
TAX RECLAIM	11,759		11,515	2,500
INTEREST ETC	49		-	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>74,627</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>67,955</b>	<b>7,500</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
PARISH SHARE	51,278		51,348	
VICARS EXP	1,575		1,009	
INSUR/UTILITIES	3,740		2,953	
ROOTS & SHOOTS	157		216	
OUTREACH	2,365		1,335	
DONATIONS	6,884	7,800	6,662	8,200
BUILDING MAINT	2,491		3,971	
MUSIC	765		725	
SECRETARIAL	367		190	
MISC	1,456		571	
EQUIPMENT	1,182		-	
<b>TOTAL SPENDING</b>	<b>72,260</b>	<b>7,800</b>	<b>68,980</b>	<b>8,200</b>
<b>SURPLUS YEAR</b>	<b>2,367</b>	<b>(2,800)</b>	<b>(1,025)</b>	<b>(700)</b>



**ALL SAINTS CHURCH RISELEY**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
Surplus for the period (unrestricted funds)	2,367	(1,025)
Surplus for the period (designated funds)	(2,800)	(700)
Balance brought forward (unrestricted)	11,712	12,737
Balance brought forward (designated)	9,200	9,900
<b>PCC Funds 31 Dec</b>	20,479	20,912

**BALANCE SHEET 31 DECEMBER 2022**

ASSETS/LIABILITIES	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
FUNDS AT NATWEST BANK	20,334	20,806
CASH IN HAND	145	106
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	20,479	20,912

Unrestricted Funds are £14,078.

Designated Funds are £6,400 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 £1,818.20 being 88 shares in Diocese Deposit Fund and a further £1,418.80 in a bank deposit account.
- 3) Unrestricted donations totalling £6,884 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
Faith in Kids	400
Food Bank	300
Beds & Herts Trust	40
Rector's Disc Fund	800
Evangelical Alliance	90
Riseley Community Hub	250
	<hr/>
	6,884

- 4) A donation of £7,800 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 2023 Annual Parochial Church Meeting is 83. The latest revision includes 6 deletions and 4 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: <a href="mailto:allsaintsriseley@gmail.com">allsaintsriseley@gmail.com</a>
Website	<a href="https://allsaintsriseley.org/">https://allsaintsriseley.org/</a>

### Key personnel

Vicar	Revd James Isaacs
Readers:	Lynda Simister
Church Wardens:	Richard Carter elected 2018 Kathryn Staniforth elected 2022
Treasurer:	Brian Simister
PCC Secretary:	Diane Sollars elected 2018
Children and Families Worker	Sam Toseland
Deanery Synod	Brian Simister elected 2019 Lynda Simister elected 2019
Honorary Examiner	Malcolm Rowland
Banker	National Westminster Bank plc

### PCC members

Graham Sollars	2020 – 2023
Jonathan Nicholls	2021 – 2024
Loreen Tabard	2021 – 2024
Dave Sheffield	2022 – 2025
Martin Hargreaves	2022 – 2025
Mark Eddon	2022 – 2025

## Sharnbrook Deanery Synod



Sharnbrook Deanery consists of 30 parish churches in North Bedfordshire, which has a total population of around 30,000 people including around 8,000 under 18 years old. The Deanery Synod normally meets four times a year and consists of all members of the clergy and lay representatives from the churches, elected for a 3-year term. During 2022 the lay representatives for 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 last year, with a particular focus on growing our mission and ministry to children, young people and families. The Listening to Young People initiative started five years ago and led to establishment of the Our Voice youth group. This met every month during 2022 and enjoyed a residential weekend at the Chellington Centre in September attended by 17 young people, including five from Riseley and Bletsoe.

During 2022 The Resources Cupboard was commissioned to review work with children, young people and families (CYF) across all the churches in the Deanery. This work was funded by a grant from the St Albans Diocese 'Reaching New People' team and highlighted the need for urgent action to achieve our vision - 'To share the Good News of Jesus with all children in North Bedfordshire, engaging mind, body and spirit.' This review identified some immediate needs and opportunities; helped the Steering Group to develop a strategy and action plan to support individual churches; and launched Deanery-wide initiatives in schools (led by Rev James Isaacs) and youth outreach (led by Keith Williams).

In 2023 a CYF support hub has been established with funding from personal donations; Deanery reserves; and a grant from Verulam House Fund Trust. This enables us to move forward with all these opportunities, with continuing support from The Resources Cupboard and others. Three top priorities are to:

- Deliver an Emerging Leaders course for young people in school years 10+ during summer half term, leading to a youth-led service on Saturday 10th June
- Develop a joined-up approach to growing Christian work in schools with other partners e.g., IMPACT and Good News for Everyone
- Create a mobile centre for youth outreach in smaller villages using a donated caravan; building on the experience of running Bus Stop Café in Riseley; and supported by Angler's Rest CYC

Please pray for God's continued provision and blessing, and particularly for volunteers to engage in these initiatives – And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2 ESV)

***Keith Williams***

## Safeguarding

The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults in our Church family is the responsibility of all who participate in the life of the church. In November we held a Safeguarding Sunday when we were reminded of our commitments to one another as stated in our Safeguarding policy.

- 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

To help us to understand how we should respond if we have any concerns that someone is at risk, or is being abused or presents a risk to others we are advised by the diocese to do an online Basic awareness course. This can be found at <https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/> We hope, in the near future, to have an opportunity for people to do this course together.

The PCC have complied with the rules under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 concerning the mandatory training for clergy and they are all completed and in date.

If you do have safeguarding concerns, please speak to the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Lynda Simister. More information is displayed on a poster in Church and on our website.

On Safeguarding Sunday, we talked about our church being a safe place for everyone and we talked about ways that we try to ensure that this is true. We were encouraged by children who said that they did feel safe in church but they did know who to talk to if they had any worries. We pray that All Saints will indeed be a safe place for everyone but if there are any issues that they will be dealt with sensitivity following all the correct guidelines.

***Lynda Simister, Safeguarding Officer***



## Church as a Refuge

'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](http://www.dianelangberg.com)



*Diane Langberg, PHD*

The original conference became a two-day on-line 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.

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' with keynote speaker, Rachael Denhollander. They spoke about 'Survivors' perspectives and a call to action'. You can access the presentation here <https://youtu.be/0YzIkli5XNY>

In July 2022, Jacqui and Cliff spoke at the Wales Leadership Forum Soul Care Day with keynote speaker, Dr Diane Langberg. You can access the presentation here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHxPD5EUzCo>

Church as a Refuge current activities include:

1. Regular international 'think tanks' for Bible colleges, church leaders, and counsellors on raising awareness of the abuse of power in churches and Christian organisations, and healing trauma.
2. 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](mailto:info@churchasarefuge.com)
3. The 'think tank' has been working on Pastoral Care for survivors and understanding trauma. Currently, we have experts coming to speak to us about issues relating to the oppression of women in Christian environments.
4. Developing some questions based on Prof Scot 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.
5. We have a bi-monthly meeting to help counsellors and therapists become trauma informed.
6. Listening to survivors of abuse in their search for safety and healing.
7. We have a monthly Monday evening online prayer meeting to pray about these issues in the church and our projects.



*Jacqui Wright*

Churches need to learn how to be a refuge for traumatised people. This includes not only 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

### Roots and Shoots



*Roots learning and joy*

Our aim is to make Sunday mornings somewhere the children love to come and would want to invite friends. We now have 3 groups, for Early years, KS1 and 2, and then KS3. We have a wonderful team of leaders and helpers who serve once a month. Let me know if you would like to join the team. It's a great opportunity to be with our Church family children week by week and watching them grow physically and spiritually. We want to teach the Bible faithfully and creatively so that they learn more about knowing Jesus, whilst having a joyful time together. Finding material that suits our setting is always a challenge, ideally, I would love to write sessions for our children on the sermon themes, so all ages learn the same thing each week, please pray this may become a possibility.

Please give thanks and pray for:

- Partnering with parents each week to support and help them raise children who stick with Jesus.
- Faithful and fun teaching.
- A team that loves to serve and sharpen skills.

***Sam Toseland***

### Youth Club



*Having fun together*

We have been encouraged this year with a steady growth in numbers and now have about 10 young people on our books, especially among the year 4 girls. We meet every other Friday during term time and play games (a highlight was dropping eggs off the balcony), do crafts, and have a short bible talk and discussion. Recently we have looked at John's Gospel and Gideon.

Give thanks for a growth in numbers and building relationships with the young people.

Pray that we continue to faithfully share the Gospel relevantly and to



*Refreshments time*

continue to grow in number.

If you would like to join the team, we are in need of another female leader – speak to Dave Sheffield.

***Dave Sheffield***

## Junior Jivers



*Building friendships and having fun*

We are encouraged and give thanks for good contact and building relationships with parents, carers and grandparents - especially long-term Junior Jivers, and throughout the week at the 'school gate'.

Lots of lovely children who happily and enthusiastically join in with the singing, dancing, actions, games and stories in the Junior Jivers sessions!

Theme based crafts, beautiful music, home-made cakes and cookies, set up and pack away help, it's a real blessing to have everything prepared and ready

each week. Not forgetting the monthly Bacon Butty Team!

That we have been able to teach about God's love and hear His word every week and be His ambassadors at All Saints Junior Jivers.

We ask for your prayers:

Prayers:

- With growing Junior Jivers numbers, we value praying for more hands and feet to help to help with building friendships with parents/carers, refreshments/stay and play - could be a ministry you would like to be involved with?
- For continued energy, enthusiasm and passion to share the gospel through Junior Jivers with these families every week.
- For relationships to deepen as we chat and support families at stay and play, and to see fruit for God's Kingdom.



*Actions and singing*

***Sam Toseland on behalf of the ASJJ Team***

## Souls 11-14s Bible Study



*Souls bible study and games*

Every Sunday evening during term-time, a group of 11-14's meet up at Rotten Row for an hour and a half of games, chats, food, laughter and most importantly- a Bible study. The group chose SOUL as the name because the first study we completed together was called SOUL, it was unanimously agreed upon! We have been blessed to have some consistent members who have really grown in confidence and seem willing to ask important questions and think more deeply about the topic for each study session. Using resources suited to this age group, we have looked at the amazing stories about the miracles Jesus performed and also teachings and references in the Bible to help us discuss some of the big issues that have an effect on today's youth.

As the weather gets warmer, we hope to spend more time in the garden and possibly even fit in a BBQ with families invited. We would appreciate prayers for the continued enthusiasm from those who currently attend and also that they can convince some of their friends who live locally to join them so that the group can grow.



### Holiday Club Summer 2022 and Easter 2023

Holiday Clubs are a lot of work but worth every minute, not only is it fulfilling work but also fun. There are many ways to serve, from behind the scenes to upfront teaching. Holiday Club All Saints needs you next year!

Last summer saw the first holiday club for several years. What a joy to be fully booked with children from School, our Church and Sharnbrook Evangelical. We learnt about the life of Jesus from Luke's gospel, birth to resurrection – "For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost". The week ended with a BBQ and an invite to Sundays All Age. We praise God for the chance to share the gospel with children and build up relationships with their parents.

This Easter we went overboard with Jonah but saw the bible book is all about our awesome God. Excitingly we were fully booked again and had mostly returning children. Praise God for learning together "All who call on the name of the LORD will be saved."! We saw lots of families come to the culmination Good Friday All Age at the end of the club week. We are hugely grateful for the team, this year and last, writing music to Bible truths, creating fun activities, sharing lives with the children, striving to share the amazing news of God's Rule, Rescue, and Relenting, preparing outstanding props and crafts, decorating, and not least taking cream pies in the face.

We pray on for continued links with families in annual events for families, and for the memories of the fellowship and Good News to stay with us all!

*Sam Toseland*



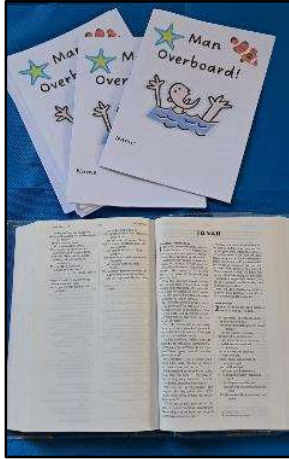
*"For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost"*







Going "Overboard" with Jonah





Fellowship

## Fellowship

### Prayer Meeting

Our church prayer meetings are perhaps the most important meetings that takes place 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!

I always find prayer so encouraging and so much easier when praying alongside other people. 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 to our loving God our hopes, dreams, wants and needs as we pray for our church, our communities and our world.

We currently have two church prayer meeting that take place every month. We meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 8pm in the Vicarage Extension, and again on the fourth Wednesday at 11am inside All Saints Church. If you do not yet regularly come to a prayer meeting, can I gently encourage you this year to give it a go and try to attend one of these monthly meetings, as we look to grow in our dependence on the Lord.

*James Isaacs*

### Homegroups

Homegroups provide a "home within a home" at All Saints. As small groups of Christians who regularly come together to study God's word and pray for one another, they offer an opportunity to develop deeper friendship and fellowship than our Sunday morning meetings alone usually afford. In many ways, homegroups are the 'front-line' for discipling Christians, supporting them through life's challenges and equipping them to be sent out as stronger believers.

Over this past year, the homegroups have worked their way through the letter of James, the Whole Life Worship course, produced by the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity and the opening chapters of the Bible in Genesis 1-11. These series have often (but not always) dovetailed with our sermon series, allowing people the chance to explore and apply what we have been thinking about on a Sunday in a more personal and profound way.

We currently have seven different homegroups that meet fortnightly across the benefice on different days and at different times. These are friendly who are always up for welcoming new members. If you are not yet part of a homegroup and would like to join one, please speak to James for more information.

Please give thanks for the many ways which our homegroups help us as Christians to serve and equip one another. Pray too for the homegroups as they meet this coming year, that they would continue to help us in our discipleship as followers of Jesus.

*James Isaacs*

### Coffee Morning Services

This service is normally held at 10.30 am on the second Wednesday of the month. It is primarily for older members of the church, but ages range from pre-school to ninety-five. So, if you fall within that range, you will feel welcome. Do come and join us. The service was originally held in the main body of the church but is now held in the chancel where we used to meet pre covid. The service normally lasts about half an hour and is followed by tea or coffee with homemade scones and cake. This has proved successful and normally fifteen to twenty people attend. We are very grateful to Sally Eddon for playing the keyboard for us.

It is good to sing Gods praises, bring our prayers to him and hear him speak to us through his word.

*Phillip & Margaret Nicholls*



## Fellowship

### Brook House Services

On what is usually the third Thursday of the month, a team from All Saints Church hold a service in the lounge at Brook House – the residential care home on the High Street in Riseley. We sing some hymns, say some prayers and listen to a short reflection from the Bible, followed by a chance to talk to the residents.

It's been delightful to see this ministry start up again, having had to cease for a significant period due to COVID, and we have been warmly welcomed by staff and residents alike. A number of residents have a Christian faith or have had some experience of church at various stages of life, and many find the familiarity of the hymns and liturgy that we follow a great comfort and encouragement.

At some point during COVID the Brook House piano was accidentally damaged and subsequently removed. We are so grateful to John and Mary Skevington who on hearing this news responded by kindly donating their piano which Sally plays so beautifully and which really helps to lift our singing and fill the room with joy!

Please give thanks for the resumption of these services, a wonderful team and pray for the ongoing work of this ministry.

*James Isaacs*

**Psalm 98**

*<sup>1</sup> Sing to the Lord a new song,  
for he has done marvellous things;  
his right hand and his holy arm  
have worked salvation for him.*

*<sup>2</sup> The Lord has made his salvation known  
and revealed his righteousness to the nations.*

*<sup>3</sup> He has remembered his love  
and his faithfulness to Israel;  
all the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation of our God.*

*<sup>4</sup> Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth,  
burst into jubilant song with music;*

*<sup>5</sup> make music to the Lord with the harp,  
with the harp and the sound of singing,*

*<sup>6</sup> with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn —  
shout for joy before the Lord, the King.*

*<sup>7</sup> Let the sea resound, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it.*

*<sup>8</sup> Let the rivers clap their hands,  
let the mountains sing together for joy;*

*<sup>9</sup> let them sing before the Lord,  
for he comes to judge the earth.*

*He will judge the world in righteousness  
and the peoples with equity.*

You and I are created to worship God! I wonder if our understanding of worship can be seen through C.S. Lewis's explanation in his Reflections on the Psalms.

He wrote: 'The most obvious fact about praise... strangely escaped me... I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise... the world rings with praise... walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favourite game – praise of weather, wines, dishes, actors, horses, colleges, countries, historical personages, children, flowers, mountains, rare stamps, rare books, even sometimes politicians and scholars...

'I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It's not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed.'

In other words, worship is the consummation of joy. Our joy is not complete until it is expressed in worship. It is out of his love for you that God created you to worship. According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism, humankind's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever!

## Fellowship

We give thanks at All Saints for the commitment, skill and service of each member of the band who give up their time every week to lead the congregation in worshipping our awesome and amazing God. We continue to be committed to glorify God's name through worship and to enjoy His presence.

Let us all give thanks for the wealth of Christian songwriters and songs available to us, from the old to the new, and sometimes even a combination of the two. Isn't it fantastic that our great provider God enables us all to keep our worship fresh whilst firmly focusing on glorifying Him and singing His gospel truths. A great deal of prayerful consideration and time goes into carefully planning the songs and sorting out the practicalities of music arrangements and words for the band and AS congregation each week.



*Contemporary Carol Service*

Several band members have had serious health issues to contend with this year but we continue to love, pray for and support each other through these difficult times and give thanks for the love and support of the AS family - thank you!

### **Music Group prayer**

Lord, I worship you. Thank you for saving me. Thank you for your love and faithfulness. Thank you that I can worship you with joy, jubilant songs, music and praise in every circumstance of life. Amen

*Jo Nicholls & Sally Eddon, on behalf of the AS Band*

## Weekend at Home

### **All Saints, Riseley and St Mary's Bletsoe together – Saturday 22nd October 2022**

Three years had passed since the last 'weekend away day' curtesy of our 'friend' Covid!

This time there was to be no tiring driving into the next county to Kimbolton.... rather this was to be the first church event in our very own Riseley C of E Primary School in the new hall.

Preparations were made a long way out under the leadership of James, Kathryn Staniforth and Verena Pentlow. The guest speaker, in the form of Giles Walter, a recently retired vicar with an excellent reputation was booked early, with encouragingly nearly 70 adults and children from All Saints and St Mary's signing up in advance for the big day.

We were also very fortunate to have Emma Hearn with us. Emma is the Youth and Children's Worker at St Mary's Church, Wootton and she energetically took on the lead of the children's work with the 15 children on the day.

With the Music Group mainly setting up the night before, the welcome on the day was ready from 0900 hours with coffee and biscuits. For those of us who had never been in the new school hall, it turned out to be an excellent large very light and airy venue with the kitchen handily placed through hatches at the back.

The 'action' started at 9.30am with, during the course of the day three big worship and teaching sessions – wonderful times all together worshipping God and then being challenged with great talks from Giles. The worship had an interesting extra twist, in that the screen with all the words on was at a suitable height for primary school pupils ... but proved a challenge to fully grown adults, so those standing sang from the sides so that those remaining seated could still see – it made no difference in the big scheme of things!!!

The teaching for the weekend was entitled 'This is our God' and the teaching by Giles was based on Psalm 18 over two sessions entitled 'Experiencing God's Rescue' and a final session on Psalm 73 entitled 'Doubting God's Goodness'. All the talks were illustrated with great anecdotes by Giles.... but also 'packed a punch' in terms of making us all really think of the reality of our faith in our Saviour. Looking back at some notes from the time, in Psalm 18 God hears our little and big cries, He hears us when our circumstances and people around us are hindering us, He rescues us - with Him we can always handle life! In Psalm 73, Giles drew out how life around us

## Fellowship

can often seem unfair, with those far from God being very 'successful'.... Yet we are called to concentrate on our promised final destiny with God – maybe a harder road than some, but we will Always have Glory Forever!!

Other great memories from the day included that the weather was so nice that every time we had a break, we could all spread out including out into the school yard and on to the apparatus – with physical activity even being spotted among a few adults in amongst the 'whizzing' children!

The lunch too deserves special mention! Kathryn Staniforth organised a feast! The delivery of lunch was cleverly delayed by a few nervous minutes to get our anticipation up..... but when the fish and chips started arriving, it just kept on coming. I wasn't around for the famous feeding of the 5000, but on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2022 I got a feeling of what it must have been like – so much food that absolutely no-one went hungry!

After lunch was the 'Not too Serious Quiz'.... normal great fun (+ challenges!) ensued with a lot of laughter. The youngsters were taking in a film instead... but were suddenly back when the afternoon cakes appeared!

It was a great day for all who attended, with the togetherness summed up with everyone helping with the clearing up and putting the school back together again at the end of the day.

On the Sunday morning, Giles and his wife Sarah were still with us at a Joint Service at All Saints Riseley, with over 70 of us listening again to further wisdom from Giles and then enjoying more time all together as we stuck around chatting at the 'bring and share pate and cheese lunch' which followed.

The whole weekend was terrific... make sure the next weekend on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> October 2023 is in your diaries!

***Mark Eddon***

## Bell Ringing

Greetings from the enthusiastic band of Riseley bell ringers who have rung for many services and weddings throughout the last year, which we hope was a joy to those who heard us.

Unfortunately, we lack the numbers to be able ring all the bells on many of the occasions due to the lack of our own ringers and we have had to rely on the willingness of ringers from other towers to help us for weddings etc.

We are looking for volunteers to join our group of ringers, who would like to learn to ring and be able to join us in ringing for Sunday services, weddings etc.

If you are between 12 and 80 years of age, and have a reasonable fitness and hand/eye co-ordination, we can teach you the technique to handle the bells safely and to learn the centuries old skill of campanology.

We pray that sufficient people will come forward to join our group of ringers to ensure that the bells of All Saints Church Riseley will be rung for many years to come.

Looking forward to seeing lots volunteers

***David Shaw, Tower Captain***

## Ladies Lunch

The ladies' lunch has now been running for a year. Established, to help the ladies of the church get to know one another better it certainly seems to be fulfilling its aim. We meet on the second Friday of the month at the Fox and Hounds at 12.30. We have 24 ladies who have attended at least one lunch. Numbers fluctuate but each lunch has been a lively event. Please do pray for the group and do join us if you are around, you will be very welcome.

***Lynda Simister***

## Fellowship

### Men's Group

The Men's Group has been running for many years seeking to build genuine friendships between men inside and outside of All Saints. It is very much valued by lots of people and strong friendships have been forged. We are conscious that the group is ageing and many of the more active things we used to do are more difficult for many and several of the group are caring for partners who need more support. However, we still try to meet up roughly once a month and engage in a range of social and community-based activities.

Numbers have been steadily growing again over the last year and some activities such as our annual Grafham walk and skittles evenings prove very popular indeed. Two of the group



*Skittles evening*



*Grafham walk*

are drivers for the Village Community Bus (new bus on the way) and most people are willingly seeking ways to volunteer their time to help others who are in need of practical help and support.

As most of the group are now retired, more of our meetings will be steadily moving from Tuesday evenings to daytime activities.

This group has always positioned itself to support each other whether or not we are Christians. For those of us who are, we would keep asking for prayer to continue running a programme that is both attractive and enjoyable, providing clear opportunities to gently evangelise and for anybody to ask

questions about what it means to live as a Christian.

***Dudley Ferdinando***

### Bus Stop Café



*"Chilling out" at the Bus Stop Café*

The Bus Stop Café was launched on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023 but the idea was floated, and all the preparatory work completed, in 2022.

The cafe provides a safe space for young people (year 7+) to meet after school on Thursday afternoons in the Village Hall Lounge - with food/drink, activities/games, music and an environment to get together and generally 'chill out'.

The initiative is run as a partnership between All Saints Church; Riseley Children's Centre & Community Hub (the Hub); and Riseley Parish Council - with each contributing financially and represented on the leadership team. All the necessary policies, procedures and risk assessments have been developed by the

team and the finances are managed and accounted for by the Hub as a registered charity.

By the end of March, the Café had been attended by 27 different young people. There are 12 volunteers on a rota as leaders/helpers (4 for each session) and all of them have had DBS clearance through the Hub, with Loreen Shelford acting as Safeguarding Officer.

A huge 'thank you' to all the volunteers (8 from All Saints) and all those who have supported this initiative. It provides us with an opportunity to demonstrate God's love in service to the community and get to know the young people in our village.



## Fellowship

Please pray that positive relationships will develop with the young people and other members of the community involved, and that there will be opportunities to share our faith through words and actions.

**Keith Williams**

## Serving one another

### Refreshments

We have been blessed to have a great team of people to make tea and coffee every Sunday this past year

We managed to serve outside as much as possible, the weather being very kind to us most of the time with the congregation being well wrapped up for the icy conditions due to the covid restrictions. Thankfully, we are now able to enjoy tea, coffee and conversation in the church with our friends during the



*... catching up*

winter months in a warm and relaxed atmosphere



*Tea and ...*

The introduction of disposable paper cups has made the task much simpler, no more washing up!

We will welcome any additional volunteers who would like to join the rota. Currently, it requires serving tea, coffee and biscuits about every six weeks

Our thanks to everyone for their support

**Robin & Jane Rhodes**

## Cleaning



*Would you be able to help?*

We are thankful that we have been blessed with more volunteers since the pandemic which has enabled us to clean the church weekly again. At the moment the commitment is once in six weeks. With two people it takes one and a half to two hours and there is one stalwart person (who I will not embarrass by naming!) who does the cleaning alone!

There are also special church cleaning days about twice a year when a deeper clean is done. Windows are polished, cobwebs removed and ladders are sometimes employed for hard-to-reach places. There is a thriving environment of wildlife, spiders and I believe bats, in the building which do no harm to us but sometimes the evidence has to be cleared up!

We are always grateful for more volunteers for cleaning as it would mean a less frequent commitment for all. Please contact James or me if you can spare a few hours. If a regular commitment isn't possible, we'd love to see you at one of the church cleaning days just for a couple of hours.

We thank God for our church building and for those who help to keep it in good order for us all to use.

**Alison Blanchard**



## Fellowship

### Delight Night and Gingerbread Event

As a church we have been fortunate to spend so much time together in worship, friendship and fellowship. Here are a couple of other highlights from this year.



*Delight Night*



*Gingerbread event*



Do you know someone, a friend or neighbour that might like to join us?

## Training and Development

### Hope Explored



Hope, Peace and Purpose; I think this is something we are all looking for on Gods earthly plane but for me I needed to know and understand the path that God has for me and for me the Hope Explored Course did this for me. Each of the components of the 3-week course I have found have provided me with understanding and a new warmth and strength in my faith and each component speaks to us as individuals.

For me, I found that Hope gave me the strength to Hope for a future I never thought possible for me; to know that my values and strength of character is what God has given me through my life experiences and he has brought me to this point in my life

where I have hope for the future not only for my family, my friends and myself but for the people, strangers whom I come into contact with every day. I found that Peace though we live in a chaotic world that is often at conflict with itself – there is beauty, compassion and love within it; we just need to look to the people we have around us. Jesus gave his life for us and there in this travesty and heartbreak was pure unconditional love. Through becoming a Christian and allowing him to come into my life I have reconnected with my Mum on a different level, this is the Peace that God has brought into my life. I found a sense of Purpose is the path that God has for me and all I need to do is have faith in him. I pray to him every day, to give me strength, to give me the words and to keep me safe – every day he answers my prayers even though at times what happens doesn't make sense – give God time and all will become clear.

I think to take this course, listen and read from the bible and discuss with others on the course is something that this course needs you to take time out to do. You get out what you put in; I feel more in love and committed to my faith than I thought I ever could. The people around me and my church family support, love and give me a strength to feel that every day I can continue on this path that God has for me.

***Loreen Shelford***

Hope keeps us alive and will not disappoint us! Hope is true and delivers what it promises.

We learnt in our first session that hope changes nothing but everything. We learnt that God is an everlasting father, someone coming to bring us out of darkness into light. The light is God himself who comes to restore us. God hates the darkness in the world even more than we do.

Through reading Luke 1:4 we have certainty of what is taught about Jesus. Jesus promises justice among the people, he heals us, he restores us and Jesus's invitation is for everyone.

In session 2 we learnt that peace comes from God. In order to find peace, we have to put God at the centre. Only by Grace can we enter into the kingdom of God.

Our last session taught is that we need to deal with the reality of death. If we repent and believe the good news, it gives us a sense of purpose. Everything we do leads us one step closer to Jesus in Heaven.

***Emily Hermon***

*Do you have questions, would you like to join a Hope Explored course? Please contact James Isaacs to find out more.*



## Riseley Primary School



It's been another busy year at the school, which has seen many developments including the implementation of a new curriculum and new structures for subject leadership. A nurture group has been established within the school to help with some of the issues arising from Covid pandemic. Our partnership with Wilden Primary has continued to develop and we are seeing the benefits of this closer working relationship both in terms of finance and sharing of resources and expertise across the two schools. It has been

great to see that outings and residential are happening again after they were put on hold during Covid times. They are so important in developing our children both in academic and personal development.

Just before Christmas we had a visit from Ofsted for an ungraded inspection. We were extremely pleased to keep our good grade and they will be visiting us again in the next 1-2 years to see how the curriculum and leadership changes have embedded.

It was great to see the new playground equipment arrive at the beginning of the academic year followed later by outdoor table tennis tables. The children love them and they certainly enhance playtimes.



*New playground equipment*

Our close relationship with the Church continues with Sam, Lynda and James conducting weekly assemblies as well as services in the school and Church for Christmas, Harvest etc. Sam and her helpers also run Aslan Club on Wednesday lunch times and classes visit the Church as part of their curriculum. We had a Faith Week where every class was involved in different Christian activities linked to the theme of prayer either in School or at the Church.



*School service*

Please give thanks for Leigh Pointon, our Executive Headteacher Teacher, for his vision, commitment and hard work in moving the school forward. Give thanks to the Leadership team and staff for all their commitment in ensuring our children flourish fully in life and learning. Give thanks to God also for all the school governors particularly our Foundation governors- Samantha Toseland, Jamie Wyatt, James Isaacs, Richard Carter, Catherine Veitch and also for Loreen Shefford, who has recently joined us. The demands of being a school governor seem to increase as each year goes by and we are very grateful for all they do.

Prayers for the coming year-

- Continuing and further development of the close relationship between All Saints and the school.
- Wisdom for Leigh, the leadership team and all the governors as they navigate the many pressures currently placed on schools not least on finances.
- That our whole school community will continue to flourish in line with our vision.
- For our partnership with Wilden to continue to grow to the benefit of both schools.

***Catherine Veitch & Richard Carter***

## Mission Support

### Milsons – Valencia, Spain



*Nicky, Jemima, Julian and Theo Milson*

Julian and Nicky Milson are missionaries in Valencia, Spain, along with Jemima (17) and Theo (15) their children. They have now been in Valencia for five 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.

Jim and Tanja French, Australian CMS Missionaries who run a theological training course called MOCLAM are part of the church family (and their two children) and they support us very

much as a family. Julian shares an office space with them and a local Spanish Christian journalist. In July, Chris and Rosy Redfearn and their daughter Lydia, a new Missionary family with Crosslinks, joined us. Chris is acting in the role of an informal Curate. Rosy now runs the Sunday School and closely supports individuals within the church.

The past year has been a good one for us as a church and we saw growth at both the beginning and end of the year after the decline in attendance as a result of the pandemic. At times we have been very close to capacity, which has been an enormous encouragement to us all. Weekly attendance does tend to fluctuate but the trajectory appears to be upwards. Our Sunday School group consists of around 6 children. Most Sundays after the service there is an open invitation to join together to eat at a local (cheap!) pizzeria which helps us to continue fellowship late into the afternoon.

When people ask what our church is like, we usually describe it as a little taste of heaven. One of the reasons we say that is that there is a real sense of love and care for each other in our church family here. It is a true blessing from God and in the midst of lives full of various struggles; meeting on Sundays is a foretaste of the joy that awaits us in eternity. But another reason why our church is a glimpse of heaven is because we are so diverse. Old and young, men and women from at least 12 different countries come together to worship God and sing his praises.

In last year's report we mentioned how we had recently started a Youth Group and asked you pray for it. Thank you for praying! The group has worked really well with 8-12 young people attending. Recently we have moved to weekly meetings instead of fortnightly, one of the many things having the Redfearns here has given us the capacity to do.

In the Autumn term we tried a new evangelistic initiative to try to connect with people in the neighbourhood. We opened the church on Monday mornings, with a sign outside, to see if people would come in for coffee and a chat. Only one person came who was not already a member of our church family. So, we changed the time and day to try to connect with the people who were using the playground after school. Nobody came to the park! We decided to wait until the weather improves and there is more light in the afternoons. We plan to try again after Easter.

In December we had Christmas Carol services by candlelight. There were two services – one in English and one in Spanish. We had a good number of visitors to both services and there was little space for more people. It's always a very good opportunity to invite people and for the first time this year our next-door neighbours came!

Nicky's main role is to care for and support Jemima full time, and she is also continuing to learn Spanish when she has the time. She leads the music each week at church and plays the piano, is involved in planning All-Age services, leading the Youth Group, and hosting our mid-week bible study group.

## Mission Support

Theo is studying hard at GCSEs (he is in Y10) and Spanish Studies at the British School and both children seem to be very settled. Jemima is learning 'life skills' and she spends a couple of hours per week with Rosy Redfearn.

Please pray:

- For plans to visit the UK this July, including a visit to Riseley.
- 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 the Sunday School will grow.
- That our Gospel witness would produce fruit.
- That people would make meeting together a priority whether it be Sundays or mid-week.

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 & Nicky Milson**

Facebook: Iglesia Anglicana Valencia

## Festive



*Festive out and about*

Over the last year, Festive has seen a huge growth in our Student Network, which is the key area of our ministry. Pre-pandemic, we were reaching around 390 sixth form and college students across England and Wales. This number took a significant hit during the pandemic down to 200, as we were unable to meet with students at summer events. Fast forward to summer 2022 and we were involved in 5 different youth festivals where we met with hundreds of young people, resulting in us recruiting to our biggest student network yet at around 450 students.

Thankfully, by God's grace, he knew ahead of time the growth we'd experience and provided us with more recruits to our

Student Engagement (SE) Team than we've ever seen in one summer! Karen Jones does an incredible job managing our SE Team, a wonderful bunch of 15 volunteers. She keeps them motivated, encourages them in their own walk with Jesus and generally makes sure that they feel a part of Festive's mission when they write to and pray for the young people on their contact list.

But why is this growth so exciting? It means we are able to equip and inspire so many more sixth form and college students to live for Jesus, share the Good News and generally be shining lights where they study. The students in our network represent around 320 different sixth forms and colleges and we pray that each one would be impacted by the life of the one or two bold Christians who are praying and doing



*Some of the team*



## Mission Support

mission there. It's been amazing to meet a number of these students in person and online at evangelism training events that we've run (Scattered [www.festive.org.uk/scattered](http://www.festive.org.uk/scattered)) and been a part of (Amplify [www.amplifyacademy.co.uk](http://www.amplifyacademy.co.uk)).

As well as our SE Team, the other way we invest in these students is by producing Jesus-focused, practical, relevant and top-quality resources. Over the last year, we've wanted to acknowledge the pressure so many students of this age face in terms of exam stress, concerns about their futures and general mental health concerns. With this in mind, we have developed a new suite of stress-related resources that bring Jesus right to the heart of both their own worries and how to point their troubled friends to the provider of perfect peace. As we launch these, please pray with us they'd be a really valuable resource to these young people.

We look forward to and pray boldly for yet further growth this summer and thank you for your ongoing prayerful and financial support allowing us to continue this ministry.

***Festive update***

[www.festive.org.uk](http://www.festive.org.uk)

## The Stables Christian Centre



The Stables Christian Centre was established in 1984 by John and Ali Wood in buildings and the grounds of the Old Rectory in Bolnhurst. Over these many years the Stables has continuously offered a positive and practical working experience to adults on the margins of society, in particular those with learning disabilities, mental health problems and ex-offenders. The Seed Sowers Project offers work-based experience in small caring groups to adults with various needs who find an ordinary workplace too difficult.

During the past year a new Business Manager (*Sean Watkiss*) has been appointed and a new site manager (*Mark Allright*) has also made significant inroads.

All Saints Church has long supported this charity both financially and with people giving their time. In our congregation, Karen, Emily and Verena are all staff members and I am a trustee.

Many of our congregation support the monthly Coffee Shop afternoons and various sale events. The 2023 Coffee Shop afternoons will start on Saturday 6th May from 2.00-4.30pm. If you haven't been along before, come and try some homemade cakes, produce and gifts created at the Stables. It will then be held on the first Saturday afternoon of each month through to the autumn.

Prayer requests are for more successful funding/grant applications for financial health of the Stables and for the clients attending to feel settled and happy. Pray for the staff team that they would continue to be shining lights in all that they do.

Above all we pray that God's presence will always be felt there and all involved will continue to honour Him in everything that happens at the Stables in 2023 and beyond.

***Dudley Ferdinando, Trustee***

We have really enjoyed being together onsite again during the past year or so and spending our time with our clients in the kitchen, craft room and out in the gardens. We have had some really successful Coffee Shops and good sales at both the Stables and at a couple of external events.



*Working in the greenhouse*



*Wreath making*

At Christmas our clients had a lot of fun at their respective get togethers and our Tuesday clients took home the Christmas trees, wreaths and decorative reindeer they made in the last few weeks before Christmas.

In 2022 we said goodbye to staff members Elizabeth and Jan and welcomed two new staff members - Sean, our new Business Manager and Mark who manages some outdoor activities and the buildings and grounds. We also had to say goodbye to a couple of our long-term clients and we are now working with our contacts to fill the places with new faces who we hope will really benefit from the project.

Like all small charities we are feeling the effect of rising costs and are now competing with charities small and large for the limited grant funding available to support projects such as ours.

We are all looking forward to seeing what the rest of this year brings with hope and we give thanks to God for his support and send our grateful thanks to you for yours.

Please give thanks for the enjoyment we see in our clients each week, for the facilities that we have and for the staff and trustee team. Please pray that new clients will be found that will benefit from the project and that we find sufficient financial provision to meet our ongoing project costs.



*Happy workers*

***Karen Houck, Finance Manager***

@stableschristiancentre

Facebook: Stables Christian Centre, Bolnhurst

[www.stableschristiancentre.co.uk](http://www.stableschristiancentre.co.uk)

## The Queen's Jubilee Celebration



*Getting ready*

It was a privilege to be a part of the village festivities organised to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and we were thrilled to be involved in the "Platinum Parade" which assembled at the primary school and made its way to the Village Hall. An enthusiastic team was gathered a few weeks before the parade and it was decided that the float could be used to advertise the "Diary of a Disciple" holiday club by linking it to the Queen's own life of faith and service. A special note of thanks must go to those involved in making the crown - it was amazing!



*The Queen*

Unfortunately, the weather forecast for the Sunday morning wasn't good and so a decision was made, on Saturday evening, to move the Special Service of Thanksgiving from the playing field to the church. A disappointing but sensible decision.

We then congregated at the school. Children from our church groups travelled on the trailer with their "Queen" and waved flags. Members of the congregation walked behind, also waving flags, and our own "James Bond" drove the tractor. Even James had a temporary

"promotion"! Much fun was had by all and we were warmly received by the village.



*Promoted for the day*



*Following the float*

**Kathryn Staniforth**





**KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN**