



Christ Church Alsager
Loving Worshipping Serving

Annual Report for 2022

**For the
Annual Parochial Church Meeting
30 April 2023**

Vicar's Report on 2022

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me... to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. (Isaiah 61:1a, 3b)

The first day of the year started with 162,572 new covid cases for England, the highest daily figure reported. A stark reminder that we were still living with covid. Fortunately, the omicron variant proved to be relatively mild for most adults. On 27th January the 'Plan B' measures were lifted in England bringing an end to the mask mandate.

Meanwhile our church services were relocated into the Church Hall while the Church was being decorated following water damage. Thanks go to Mark Holland who took the lead in organising and monitoring the contractors involved; and also to Geoff Chatterley and the team of volunteers who emptied the church in preparation the decoration; and upon completion, cleaned the church and returned the contents afterwards. We moved back into the church building on 30th January.

In March 2022 the cost of living crisis started to bite and we began to consider what else we could do support our community. Phrases like "heating or eating" and "warm spaces" became commonplace. Christ Church has a fantastic hospitality team which was already doing great work providing hot meals and warm spaces through Big Breakfast and Messy Church. Imogen came up with the idea of Tea on Tuesday which started on 26th April. It's gone from strength to strength since then.

It's great to be able to start new initiatives but they need funding, so I'm very grateful for the work of the grants team: Mike Askew, Geoff and Andrea Chatterley. With so many organisations chasing the same pots of money it can sometimes feel like a thankless task.

We said a fond farewell to Imogen, our Children and Families Leader, who left to take up a teaching assistant post at St Gabriel's School. At the services on 4th September, we thanked Imogen and Kristian (her husband) for their ministry at Christ Church and asked for the Lord's blessing as they went on to do new things.

I was pleased that we were able to appoint Jennifer Follet as our new Children and Families Leader and she started work on 5th October 2022. Jen has quickly settled in her role and the staff team.

I want to give a special mention to Dave Fidal who completes his six-year term as churchwarden at this year's APCM. Dave's term encompassed the interregnum and the Covid years. Dave was part of the team that interviewed me, and he has been a constant support ever since, both in very visible ministry roles (e.g. preaching) and hidden behind the scenes roles (e.g. sorting our techie stuff).

According to the recent Church of England report, 'Church Attendance in October 2022: Post-Covid-19 trends, patterns and possibilities', the decline in church attendance of almost one quarter between 2019 and 2022 may be the result of cutting services. The report, published on the website of Oxford diocese, draws on data from five dioceses including Chester diocese. I'm pleased to be able to say that we have kept all our services going throughout the pandemic unless the law prohibited us to do so.

As expected, our Statistics for Mission comparison between 2019 and 2022 shows our numbers are down. The size of our Worshipping Community only reduced by 16% from 312 to 262. That said, the proportion of our Worshipping Community that are children held up well (34% in 2019 and 31% in 2022) and our Electoral Roll has grown by 15% (from 119 to 137).

Once again, this year's annual report gives an insight into the breadth and depth of the mission and ministry of Christ Church. It needs to be acknowledged that we couldn't do all the things mentioned without the support of our volunteer workforce. Many thanks to every one of you.

Through the ups and downs of 2022 and in the early months of 2023 we are starting to glimpse the Lord's gift of 'beauty instead of ashes', with many new faces arriving at Christ Church and joining in with the life of the church. There is new anticipation of 'the oil of joy' being poured out on our community.

Daran Ward, vicar

Churchwardens Report

“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.”

“Come and see”, said Philip.

(John 1.46)

For us, these three words that Philip spoke to his sceptical friend, in many ways sum up what was happening at Christ Church in 2022. **“Come and see”**. When we started the year meeting in the Church Hall whilst the Church was being redecorated Jane remembers meeting someone who said she had come to see what we do at one of the ‘Together’ services during those three weeks. Later, when we were able to return to worshipping in the church, many came to see the newly decorated church and worship there.

We have lost count of the times we have spoken to someone at services, Cherubs, Messy Church, BB@C and Prayer@6 who has said they came along to see what we do because they had heard about it from a friend, on the website, on Facebook ...

We probably all thought that things might be easier as we moved on from Covid and things returned to ‘normal’, but that has been so far from reality. The world looks so different, yet whilst the ‘new normal’ that is emerging is clearly different to the ‘old one’, in that change we also see God at work, and in that, we can all rejoice. “I am doing a new thing” says God in Isaiah 43.19, and during 2022 we have wonderfully seen God doing exactly that at Christ Church. Chat’n’Chill and Tea on Tuesday have both started in the Church Hall offering a meeting place for young people and families to come and see what we do, have fellowship and share food together. Both are being very well attended thanks to Imi, Jen and Sam who have pioneered and established them. Previously established things such as Coffee and Communion have also shown growth and new life, which is great. Whilst the ‘restart’ after Covid has not been easy, we have both felt a strong sense of new life this last year as God works through us at Christ Church and what we do.

Our prayer, therefore, for the year ahead at Christ Church, is that despite differences in outlook, war, disaster, sickness, economic challenges... we will continue, as individuals and as a church, to invite people to come and see and be a part of what is going on here and that we will grow in respect for one another and love for Jesus, just as Nathanael did when he accepted Philip’s invitation.

Jane Askew and Dave Fidal

Fabric Report.

They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built (Luke 6.48)

Since the last APCM there is not a great deal to report on the upkeep of the fabric at Christ Church.

The good news is that the new cameras on the Church roof are a success and allow us to monitor the condition of the roof (leaf, twig and seed fall etc.) and Dave White and I have frequently cleared the roof over the year. It is the general opinion that blocked roof drainage in heavy storm conditions is the main cause of leaks into the Church.

Other good News - the Community Service Team throughout 2022 have maintained our church yard and kept the driveway and carpark free of leaves during autumn. Without them we would have big problems! Please continue to pray that they come to work at Christ Church.

It is almost 3 years since our last 5-year Quinquennial Inspection and Report carried out in June 2020 from our Architect. Our next inspection is due in 2025. Progress in tackling the recommendations made in the Report has been slow, partly due to the Pandemic and partly due to financial pressures on the Church finances and therefore we have pushed back some of the intended, albeit not critical/essential remedial works. Significant matters raised that we have not yet examined in detail include:

- Commission a report into the condition of the nave stain glass windows and ferramenta
- Action on the aforementioned report
- Reform catch pit outlets on the church roof
- Replace damaged/spalling stones to the church walls, repoint poor areas of pointing generally.
- Improve guarding height to bell ringing gallery

The above will require specialist trades to complete and we may not have completed these works by the next Quinquennial Inspection. There are many other items that we can carry out ourselves as a Church body and hopefully people will step forward if we can arrange a series of work-days. I will also try to convene a review meeting with the Church Wardens and Daran after his sabbatical to agree a list of priorities to put to the PCC

Geoff Chatterley

Curate's Report

I waited patiently for the Lord ; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. Psalms 40:1-2

January - June

This year has very mixed - a bit like a curate's egg it's been good in parts!

After Christmas I knew that I was struggling again with depression and so I decided to step back for a while from ministry in order to pay attention to my mental health. I have learned over the past 20 years that pressing the pause button is the best way for me to have time to heal and mend. I'm grateful again to the diocesan counselling service for their support; I've always found talking therapies to be helpful. I'm happy to chat to anyone who wants to know further details particularly if they are walking through season of difficulty themselves.

June – December

By this summer I was able to begin to take up the reins again, for which I give glory and thanks to God and to all those who supported me especially the staff team and my family. It was agreed to extend my curacy until the end of January 2023 to take account of the first half of the year when I had stepped back.

I have really enjoyed leading Morning Prayer in church at 8:30 on Mondays and Fridays, talking to those who come to Big Breakfast, and supporting young mums who stay to Parents Chat. I have led the Space Growth Group and co-led the Thursday evening group with Alan. I've had the privilege of visiting some of our housebound church members to take them communion along with the love and prayers of our church family. I've conducted five funerals in this period, and it is always humbling to be asked to step in and support a family as they journey with their grief.

It was really encouraging to see the numbers attending our Christmas services beginning to rise again. I thoroughly enjoyed supporting Jen with our Messy Nativity and leading our first Crib Service on Christmas Eve. It was great to see so many young families come and for Jen and I to connect with him.

In Christ,

Heather Kemball

PCC Report

May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us, establish the work of our hands for us. (Psalm 90, v17)

PCC Members

Ex-officio members: Daran Ward (Vicar and Chairman); Dave Fidal, Jane Askew (Wardens); Heather Kemball (Curate)

Ex-officio Deanery Synod reps, Shirley Jones, Aly Ward , Jonathan Masters until March 2022, Debbie Preston from May 2022

Elected members: Geoff Chatterley, Mark Holland, Joelle Warren, Sam Parnell and the following from May 2022 : Steve Roberts, Beverly Steel (treasurer), Rachel White, Julie Newman (secretary), Colin Follet, Krystian Belicki (until September 2022) and Gillian Bowers. Graham Mason and Ros Davies served until February 2022

Co-opted members: Molly Johnson (youth rep), Imi Belicki (until September 2022), Rachel white (secretary) until May 2022

May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us, establish the work of our hands for us.

PCC Discussions

- During the last year we sadly said goodbye to two of our younger members Imi and Krystian as Imi moved to a new job and resigned as Children's worker.
- We have been kept up to date on finances, safeguarding, children's work and youth work and Geoff Chatterley has kept us informed on the grant applications he works on with Andrea and Mike Askew. We regularly voice our deep gratitude to the people who contribute many hours on these matters.
- We have approved expenditure on such items as drums, audio-visual upgrades and a defibrillator and have given thanks for the generosity of the congregation in its giving which enables this and other spending.
- We reviewed our far out giving and have agreed that every 3 years we will review the organisations that receive donations from us.
- At each meeting there is an update or discussion on the Church's Smart Actions and we endeavour to plan socials and outreach events at regular intervals.
- A sub committee was created to look into a satisfactory resolution for the future of the disused St Lukes Church at Oakhanger, the ownership of which is contested. The matter remains under discussion with the involvement of the Diocesan Boards and Ven Ian Bishop Archdeacon of Macclesfield.

Julie Newman, PCC Secretary

Vergers' Report

Baptisms	6
Thanksgivings	0
Weddings	2
Funerals	11
Burials	58
Confirmations	0

Electoral Roll Report

134 (of which 56 non resident)
18 additions.
12 removed by request.
6 moved away.
3 deceased.

Treasurers report

Total receipts on unrestricted funds were £184,492. Unrestricted means the PCC can choose how they spend the money, whereas restricted funds have to be spent in a specific way

Unrestricted congregational giving was £123,514. A further £24,350 came from reclaimed Gift Aid. Restricted donations of £5,957 were also received as well as Grants of £25,496.

A very generous response was made to the Giving day, which is so very much appreciated, and turned the predicted deficit into a positive outcome for the year end.

The total expenditure of £217,062 was slightly lower than anticipated, the main area to note was in repair & maintenance of the Church and Church hall. This work is now planned into 2023.

It is PCC policy to try to maintain a balance which equates to at least three months' expenditure. This is normally equivalent to about £55,000, an increase of £5k to the figure quoted in previous years.

On behalf of the PCC, I would like to thank everyone who gives financially to support the work of the church. There are many activities highly valued by or parishioners and the wider community of Alsager. We thank God for your generosity and continued commitment to his work within Christ Church.

On a personal note I would like to thank Dave White who carries out the role of Treasurer alongside me. He has provided invaluable support and partnership.

I would also like to thank Mark Holland (Covenant Secretary), Derek Nyland (examiner of the accounts) and Debbie Preston who provides invaluable support to all.

Beverly Steel

Children and Families Ministry Report, January-August 2022

I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:16)

Our vision is that children and families experience God's love through all we are and do, that they come to know Jesus for themselves, grow deeper in their love for Jesus, and are equipped and excited to share this with others.

We ended 2021 getting back to a new normal, one without COVID19, lockdowns and social distancing. We now had the ability to meet together and plan ahead. This enabled a return, not only to pre-pandemic activities but also the introduction of new initiatives. I want to say thank you to all those involved in the children and families ministry be that prayerfully, practically or financially. The ministry could not have grown and developed without your collective support.

As I reflect on the past season this Bible verse comes to mind,

Amidst the new rhythm of life and the challenges that post-pandemic living has brought; mental health issues, financial crisis and social anxieties, knowing that Jesus is the one who holds us through whatever we face has been a great comfort.

In September 2022, I move on to a local school continuing to teach children but in a new capacity. I leave Christ Church, thankful for all that God has done. It has been a privilege to freely share faith and the love of God with the young and old of our community. I've not taken for granted the blessing that we have in this country to share our faith so openly. I pray that God will continue to move and for a peaceful season for Christ Church. Thank you to those in the Church and community who have supported me and held me in prayer.

Sunday Worship

From January onwards we have been able to regularly meet as Kids for God (KFG). We have explored a range of biblical themes from Creation to Lazarus and lots in between. We have developed prayer with creative prayer being a core element of KFG. For example using 'Bubble Prayers' to let go of fears

and concerns in prayer. We have worshipped collectively in movement through age-appropriate songs such as those by Nick and Becky Drake. We have also had All Age Services where we meet all together in the main Church building.

Tea on Tuesday

In April we were able to start a new initiative - Tea on Tuesday; a tea time club providing families with a meal and games on a Tuesday evening. This was not only an opportunity to get a free meal but to socialise together after having so long apart. It was great to see children playing together and parents and carers supporting each other as a community.

Messy Church

We've been able to meet monthly since February as a Messy Church. We have eight different activities, all with one theme. We have explored the life of Moses, the parable of the two builders and many other key Bible stories. New families have attended Messy Church alongside many returning after the pandemic. It's also great to share a meal as a community.

Parent Chat

During term time we have met weekly as a group to share time together talking through the highs and the lows of family life. We've been able to support and encourage each other.

Babies and Toddlers

Each Monday afternoon during term time, Cherubs has been able to take place. Where children have had a safe environment to play, develop and be inspired and parents and carers could socialise together. On the final summer session we shared a Teddy Bears Picnic.

Schools Work

Daran and I have been able to deliver regular assemblies in three schools. We've covered a wide range of biblical topics. I have included visual demonstrations, drama and games. Alongside Jonny Newbould we've delivered weekly craft clubs in two local schools where we share a story and crafts. At the end of term Sam and I went into three primary schools and delivered transition sessions called 'It's your move' to Year 6 students.

Events

At the start of the year Sam and I supported Jonny at the Wesley Place Methodist Church Pancake Party. It was great to share food and pancake together with the Alsager community. On Good Friday we hosted Easter Detectives, a holiday club where children could learn more about the true Easter story through games and art. This was followed by an Easter Sunday Service and Egg Hunt. Following on from having a stall at Alsager Carnival, before the Summer Holidays we had a Noah's Ark Family Fun Day. There was Facepainting, crafts, cake, decorating biscuits and painting a large-scale ark. They all took away a Noah's Ark colour in story book and an animal toy as a reminder of that day.

Finally, as I move on to pasture's new, I am thankful for the time I have spent at Christ Church and have lots of precious memories to take with me as I leave.

Imogen Belicki, Children and Families Leader

Children and Families Report, October to December 2022

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

October marked the beginning of a very exciting era as I stepped up to the role of the new Children and Families Leader. It was also tinged with sadness at the departure of Imi and Krystian, who had become good friends. I would like to thank Imi for all her hard work over the last year with our children and families, and for enabling a smooth transition as she passed on the baton.

Our annual Light Party, held on 31st October, was very well attended. The children enjoyed fun games and activities with a strong message that Jesus is the light of the world.

Tea on Tuesday returned in October, after a break. This group, initiated by Imi, provides a warm space for families, games and crafts, and a two-course hot meal cooked by a dedicated team. At the start, helpers were few but have steadily increased. With the rising costs of food and heating, funding applications continue to be sought which has enabled its continuation and I am very thankful for that.

Cherubs has continued to be popular for our toddlers and the Christmas party brought delight to the children with a visit from Santa. Parent Chat had become a small group at the start of the Autumn, possibly due to the absence of a Children's Leader. Although, I am happy to report that numbers increased as Christmas approached.

Messy Church was held in October and November with attendance figures returning to pre-Covid levels. In December, we held our Messy Nativity. The pop-up theme allowed the children to choose their favourite character and decorate their costumes before walking up to the church for the play. Our very first Crib Service on Christmas Eve, was enjoyed by many of our children and families, and it would be great to see this become a tradition.

Craft club, ran by myself and Jonny from the local Methodist Church, is loved by many children from Cranberry and Pikemere Primary Schools. Daran, Heather and I were welcomed into both schools to give Christmas assemblies and we were able to welcome them into our church for their annual Christmas Carol concerts.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to all our volunteers, who offer their time and support in a variety of ways. You are an amazing team and a valuable gem in furthering God's kingdom.

Jen Follett, Children and Families Leader

Youth Report

Spring Term

At the beginning on 2022 we were part way through our first Youth Alpha Course, which went really well, and saw around 10 young people regularly attending, eating together, growing together, and having an opportunity to discuss questions that they had about faith. As part of Alpha, we ran an 'away day' to Astbury Mere, which featured some times of sung worship and prayer which young people enjoyed and engaged with well.

During the Spring term, we were finally able to start up our after-school club Chat & Chill, which proved popular with students, and quickly grew into a popular & safe space for young people to gather in on Fridays after school. We initially struggled to find volunteers to run Chat & Chill, but volunteer numbers, as well as numbers of young people attending, grew over the course of the year.

We also continued to support the school's Eco Club and garden project, and helped a small group of students to transform the space outside the Elkin building into a vibrant and thriving space where students could engage with nature and creation.

We were also able to support the school when tragically a Year 11 student named Calvin suddenly passed away. We were able to host a prayer/reflection space in the school's Learner Resource Centre for Calvin's friends and teachers to remember him in different ways, including through some interactive prayer stations, and students and staff commented that this was a very helpful part of the process of grieving for Calvin. A section of the Eco Garden has also been converted into a permanent memorial space for Calvin.

Summer Term

After the conclusion of our Alpha course, we helped the young people who came through a review & reflection process to help shape what the group should become. We formalised the name Ablaze for

the group, and have continued to focus on discipleship with the group, whilst including different fun elements like games, trips, social activities, and food as a regular part of the group. The makeup of the group changed slightly in the Summer term, with some of the older young people who had attended the Alpha course moving on as they focused on exams and getting ready for University, and a new group of young people from the Radway estate with very little knowledge of faith starting to come more frequently, and slowly integrating with the existing group.

Over the Summer term we also started some regular Detached youth work, talking to young people around the area on Friday nights, and gauging interest in a longer term youth project. Although we did have some good conversations as part of this work, it was difficult to maintain regular contact with young people as we struggled to find volunteers, and some weeks we found very few young people to engage with. We plan to revisit this work in the future provided we can find appropriate volunteers.

Sam and Imi were also able to deliver 'It's Your Move' transitions workshops to students in Cranberry and Excalibur schools, helping Year 6 students get ready to go to secondary school. These sessions were well received, and we hope to build on these to offer them to the other primary schools again in the future.

Throughout the Summer term, Sam continued to support the work of the Oakhanger Project, volunteering in his spare time to help children, families and young people learn to kayak and canoe, whilst building confidence and introducing faith through conversations, prayers and devotions. Whilst this does not technically fall within the scope of Sam's job description, we do support Oakhanger as part of our far-out giving, and this is a great way of engaging with families who may be on the fringes of faith/church and building relationships with them.

Summer Holidays

At the beginning of the summer holidays, we held a Youth BBQ, and invited all of the young people who had engaged with us at Ablaze or Youth Alpha over the course of the year, as well as those who had joined us at 3Generate from other local towns. This was very well attended, and a good time of fellowship, encouragement, and catching up with some young people we hadn't seen for a few months.

Over the Summer we also held 2 Fun Days in Wood Park. The Childrens & Families fun day was very well attended, with over 120 people attending in the afternoon, and we received very good feedback from parents and children. The Youth fun day the following day fell on a day with poor weather, and attendance was very poor despite advertising through local businesses, on Facebook, Instagram, through the Alsager Partnership and through the school. Next year we plan to run two 'Community Fun Days' instead, with activities for both children and young people.

Sam also continued to support the Oakhanger Project occasionally over the summer, assisting with taster days for children and families from Alsager, as well as facilitating activity days for other local churches.

Autumn Term

Shortly after the start of the new academic year, we took a group of young people to 3Generate - the Methodist children & youth weekend away. This was attended by 12 young people, including some from Christ Church and Ablaze, and was a great time of fellowship and relationship building where young people were encouraged to explore how they best 'tune in' to God as individuals. Our young people engaged well with this, and we followed up with further teaching along the same theme at Ablaze for those who were unable to make it.

In the autumn term, Sam also ran a set of 'GSUS Live' lessons in the school, a resource that uses technology to engage secondary school students through RE lessons themed around Fear, Rejection and Forgiveness. These lessons were delivered to over 250 Year 7 students, and provided us with a great opportunity to get to know the new intake at the school and invite them along to other groups that we run.

Whilst it started before the Summer holidays with very low numbers, the autumn term saw a re-launch of The Space, a multi-faith prayer space at Alsager School led by Sam alongside a Christian teacher in the school. The Space grew in number quickly through advertising in the GSUS Live lessons, and we were regularly seeing around 30 students every fortnight by the Christmas break. The Space allows us to explore big questions about life and faith with students, as well as providing creative and engaging ways for them to try praying.

Ablaze also continued to grow over the Autumn term, with a number of harder to reach young people from the Radway estate with no connections to local churches starting to come along and engage with our 'Big Questions' series, as well as enjoying playing games and getting to know new people. We finished the year with an Ablaze Christmas Party, which was also attended by a number of young people who have started to transition from Chat & Chill.

Finally, shortly before Christmas we were able to start up a University support ministry - maintaining contact with young adults who have moved on from Alsager to university or to a gap-year. We have continued to encourage and pray for and with these young people, and send them occasional support packages to let them know that we're thinking of them.

Overall, whilst the beginning of 2022 was a little more difficult, with many young people still experiencing anxiety around COVID-19 and choosing not to engage with youth activities for various reasons, it has been great to see significant growth across many of our ministries through this year, and we hope and pray that God will continue to bless us with seeing growth both in numbers of young people attending, and growth in their relationships with him into the future. It was also a massive encouragement to see the door start to open to working with the RE department at Alsager School more regularly, and we are excited to see what other doors God will open for us as we join him in his mission to reach the young people of Alsager in 2023.

Sam Parnell, Youth Leader

Prayer Report

Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. (Ephesians 6:18)

The prayer life of our church is at the centre of who we are and what we do as a body of Christ. God is speaking and working through us!

Another successful prayer away day was held in September of 2022 in the beautiful surroundings of Rudyard Lake led by Mark Edwards and Andrea Chatterley. Time was spent praying for each other, God's direction for our church, for our community and our world, and it was a blessed time in His presence.

PRAYER @ 6 has continued to take place every Sunday evening between 6pm and 7pm. The meetings are led by a core group of people and offer time to worship and to enter into God's presence. We spend time listening to God and interceding for our church, community, country, and world. We would love for people to join us.

PRAYER @7.14 this monthly prayer meeting continues to meet on the first Monday of each month under the lead of Mark Holland and **MORNING PRAYERS** on Monday, Wednesday and Friday continue to be led by Reverend Heather Kemball.

THE PROPHETIC and PRAYER MINISTRY

Since the pandemic it has been difficult to re-establish prayer ministry and the team has become depleted. In attempt to reignite this ministry a group of us travelled to a New Wine event on the Wirral where we listened to testimonies, received teaching and had the chance to put what we had learned into practice through a time of praying for each other. However, we still need more people to be willing to use their gifts in this ministry so that we can ensure that there are always people to meet to listen to

God before and during the services and to ensure that there are people available to pray with others each week.

As we pray in this way, we are showing our love for members of the body here at Christ Church and our aim is to create safe spaces for people to encounter and draw nearer to God. We have in the past offered Prayer ministry within services as requested by the service leader and it would be good to offer Holy Spirit blessing prayers during communion at 11am more often when able. We do however still need to work out how to develop opportunities for prayer ministry in Messy Church.

If you feel called to use your gifts and serve on the Prayer Ministry team, please do let Daran or myself know. You will be part of a team and will always be praying with others. There are guidelines which each member of the team follows, and we are exploring the possibilities of further training in healing ministries later this year.

Praying for and asking God to bless others through His Holy Spirit is both a joy and privilege. It's His work, not ours and we would love to see this ministry grow!

The dedicated church email address which enables people to request confidential prayer continues. All requests are shared within the team on a dedicated confidential WhatsApp group.

Andrea Chatterley

Music Report

Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. (Romans 12:1)

It has been good to gradually return to normal service without sheltering behind the Perspex screens! Once again a dedicated group of musicians (organ, keyboards, drums, guitars, saxophone, french horn, singers) have made a joyful noise, helping to lift our voices and minds to God.

We were particularly pleased to be able to lead worship at the Carol services and the Blessing that we sang at the end of the service touched us as much as other people. Once again, my thanks to everyone involved. It has been a lot of hard work, much of it unseen, but I am so grateful for your hard work in practising and playing Sunday by Sunday.

The more observant members of the congregation may have noticed that we have a new drum kit in the church – the old one was slowly but surely falling apart (literally) and needed replacing. We have also upgraded the way in which we hear the sound that we're making, replacing the bulky fold-back speakers with in-your-ear monitors, all of which makes the band area considerably less cluttered. My thanks to Sam Parnell, Glyn Mellor and the PC for bringing these plans to reality.

A last thank you to those members of the congregation who encourage us and give us helpful feedback. This has been even more appreciated than usual.

One final point, after leading worship in Christ Church for over 27 years, I am taking a "sabbatical" during the summer term and so will not be involved in leading from the front. This will give me a chance to "just be" a member of the congregation, though I will continue to preach as required. I'm planning to be back at the keyboards in September!

Andrew Warren

Coffee & Communion Report 2023

The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. (Numbers 6: 24-26)

2022 saw C & C continuing to thrive as we welcomed a growing congregation of usually 30 - 40, currently even 50. Many are drawn from our Sunday congregations, but an increasing number are from the community of Alsager and beyond, all looking to share a service of HC, fellowship, coffee and cake.

It is also an important service for the residents of Twyford House and New Milton House, who regularly attend in good numbers and bless us with their presence and friendship. It is however a service for all ages, absolutely everyone is given a warm welcome!

As always, our grateful thanks go to Daran and Martin for ministering to us and to our dedicated kitchen team, bakers, drivers and pianists, without whom the service could not operate in its present form. We are urgently looking to recruit more volunteers to ease the pressure on our current team. Alas age and health issues have caught up with us!

Thank you all for making C & C the joyous service it is and if anyone reading this feels they would like to participate in any way, please speak to anyone in the team or Debbie in the office.

Adrienne Whitby

Wycliffe Report

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. (Revelation 7.9a)

The vision of Wycliffe Bible Translators is for a world where everyone can know Jesus through the Bible, yet 1.5 billion people still do not have access to a Bible in their own language. This gets to the heart of the work of Wycliffe which, together with its partner organisations, is actively focused on translating the Bible into languages that currently have no written form, a work that we at Christ Church have supported for many years.

2022 has been a significant year for Wycliffe. 367 new language projects were started whilst at the other end of things the number of languages with a complete Bible rose by 7 to 724. Within this number was the Kera language translation, a version that is very dear to Christ Church owing to us being visited several times in the past by Mary Pearce, who worked in the Kera translation team in the early days. Printing of the Kera Bible is currently being progressed – praise God indeed!

2022 has also seen Wycliffe UK and its partner organisations restarting face-to-face events after two years of 'Zoom'. Sarah and Dave attended the yearly conference of Mission Assist (previously Wycliffe Associates), and Wycliffe UK is cementing their links with supporter churches through the appointment of several regional Church Relations Managers. Paul Moores is the person covering our area, and he is due to visit us in January 2023, but more about that in next year's report! Meantime please do pray for the work of Wycliffe and if you would like to know more about the work that it does, please feel free to ask Sarah or Dave Fidal.

Dave Fidal

Christian Solidarity Worldwide Report

As many of you will know, CSW is a unique human rights organisation, which works in Parliament and at the United Nations to address issues of religious persecution. Founded some 43 years ago, it has consultative status at the UN and is highly regarded in Parliament for how it accurately documents abuses directed towards religious minorities in many countries around the world.

I have been a supporter of CSW for nearly 30 years, but for the last 12 years I have spent a lot of my time visiting churches of many denominations to inform and challenge their members to take seriously what is happening in more than 60 countries in our world today.

Since I took on the role of Ambassador and Speaker I have visited more than 130 churches, mostly in North Staffordshire and South Cheshire, to talk about the work of an organisation which describes itself as a "Voice for the Voiceless." Most recently I have been approaching clergy in the Altrincham and Stockport areas to arrange church visits. It is a rewarding work and one that I see, along with my involvement as a Reader in the Church of England, as my main ministry. Over the years I have met some wonderful committed people, both clerical and lay, through whom the light of Christ truly shines.

Keith Davies

IcFEM Dreamland Mission Report

Here in the UK we are now established as a new CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation). The Charities' Commission recommends this step for charities which have paid staff. Our new Charity number is 1197661. Our focus is the same – to support IcFEM Mission in Kimilili, western Kenya.

Last year (2021) was all about the new X-ray machine and Diagnostic Centre building at **Dream-land Mission Hospital (DMH)**. This year (2022), with the calls on the hospital's maternity services increasing dramatically, a special centre for sickly newborn babies was opened in the oldest (and original) building on the Dreamland site. It needed much renovation and extension. Before the hospital was built in the first decade of this century, the building was simply a dispensary with a small (one room) maternity unit. Later, it became the girls' dormitory for pupils at **Dreamland Education Centre (DEC)** until the girls moved into the new girls' boarding accommodation block on the DEC site which opened 3 years ago. Work is underway now at DEC to install a science lab.

Some of you in our congregation kindly contributed towards the Diagnostic Centre and the New-born Unit. Thank you! Look out for the next DMH project – a new theatre block, increasingly necessary as the only theatre is often at work when an emergency operation space is needed, e.g. for a C-section.... Details are on the website (address below).

Last October our Chair of Trustees, Andrew Cornish and our Operations Manager, Aiden Lugg went out to Kimilili. Andrew had been in discussion with 'Trees for Life Kenya', and he initiated the Mission's own **Trees for Life** participation in this project. To date 5,716 trees have been planted, always on a family's compound after they have had instruction in caring for the trees. They can enjoy fresh fruit from the trees, and after other trees reach maturity, they can be used for firewood, with new saplings planted to replace them. There is great enthusiasm for the project right across the 3 counties in which IcFEM operates.

The most recent Community Project is the **Bees Project**. This makes locally made beehives available to families, with education on beekeeping in order to supplement the family's income with honey, which can be sold to open up opportunities, e.g. for children to go to school. Again, this project is being enthusiastically embraced by many families.

A group of us is going to visit Kimilili this October. We will bring back the latest news from our partners in Kenya.

To find out more, do visit our website, www.icfemdreamlandmission, which is updated regularly. There you can find out all you need to know about the work. And please keep IcFEM Dreamland Mission in your prayers. You can sign up for the monthly prayer letter on the website. We hope to have a visit from the Director, Solomon Nabie and his wife in June or July.

Martin Oram

Oakhanger Project Report

The Lord said to Ananias Go, this man is my chosen instrument to carry my message (Acts 9:15-16)

Paul has ruthlessly persecuted the Christians and Ananias was understandably reluctant to approach him. The story shows how God often calls us out of our comfort zone to situations that may appear unrealistic and even unsafe. The call to Go challenges us to make a difference in the world around us no matter what the cost.

Oakhanger Project continues to develop and manage active operations and over the past 12 months the call to "Go" has included a wide range of activities in the busy schedule. Staffing remains a challenge in view of increased work and family commitments of volunteers.

Since they were constituted in May 2020 the Trustees Team have continued to complete a full review of the Policy and Procedures for the organisation and operations of Oakhanger Project. The Core Vision and Purpose remains central to the work and future development of Oakhanger and helps to maintain a consistent focus in what are rapidly changing times. Trustees are aware of the many challenges that face us in a changing environment and are committed to a sustainable future for Oakhanger Project.

Activities over the past year included Activity and Adventure days at Brereton Nature Reserve and Oakhanger, Canoe/Kayak sessions with Cheshire Buddies, Inclusive Activity days for All (A4A) at Brereton plus river and sea kayak trips.

Residential Family Activity weekends proved popular at Rhos-on-Sea in June and at Trearddur Bay, Anglesey in August, with opportunities for Sea kayaking, walking, games, family fun activities and the popular Saturday Barbecue and Sunday worship.

Canoe and Kayak activity sessions continued throughout the summer with Alsager Scouts and other groups at Brereton and Safety and Rescue Training and Assessment enabled more leaders to support the Oakhanger Team.

As we enter 2023 we remain grateful for all the support from churches and individuals and remain aware of the importance of providing positive experiences that support and encourage personal and social growth. The Oakhanger Team will work together alongside other groups to provide a program that is linked to the message of Hope and Future opportunity that remains central to the work of Oakhanger.

The Project has an exciting and refreshing approach built on a clear Vision, with a firm foundation reflected in positive Values. These are demonstrated in a program of activities that are challenging and inspirational with a clear opportunity to have fun and learn together. The life Changing message of the Gospel underpins all we do and say and Jesus remains our guide and inspiration.

For further details contact

Graham Bushill

Community workers Report

Community workers continue to be thankful for the constant flow of coffee and tea and biscuits that is now a routine part of most Sundays.

We planned four 'meals' in 2022 but one lunch had to be cancelled. So burgers and baps were served in Spring and Summer with a hot dinner served at the start of December.

The latter provides an opportunity to more easily engage and share faith both in practical 'doing' ways as well as 'words' when we acknowledge to the workers that the benefit to us and the community of what they do is immense.

I am always touched by the comments we get from most of the workers, who in some cases are amazed that we would 'serve' them in such simple ways.

Thank you to all for the help given - whether making up a coffee tray on Sunday or chatting to the workers in the yard or helping cook or wash up on the Sundays, we make them a meal. It is really appreciated.

Mark Edwards

Christ Church Bellringers' Report

O go your way into his courts with thanksgiving (Jubilate Deo Psalm 100:3)

Ringling has been maintained, post Covid, on a slightly depleted level but nevertheless successfully throughout the year. Thank you to the ringers who are able to attend.

The local band rang for the Platinum Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth and sadly a few months later upon the passing of Her Majesty and upon the day of her funeral the bells were rung half muffled. There was also ringing upon the Accession of HM King Charles at the appropriate time.

Mary Pickstone, a regular ringer at Alsager since she came to work at Crewe + Alsager College in 1989 has now retired and moved to Cumbria. We thank her for services and wish her well.

Chris Lovatt, Tower Captain

Admin and Church Hall Report

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain. (1 Cor 15:58)

2022 started completely differently to 2021!

We no longer had to book for normal Services, and most of our pre – covid activities were back up and running.

In January we had the decorators in to repaint the whole church. This was funded from an insurance claim due to water damage from a leak on the roof. During this time, we held both the 9am and 11am services in the church hall.

The year then proceeded speedily onwards with lots of activities resuming and socials starting up again.

It was lovely to again host in person activities, to name a few: Easter Detectives in the hall; A couple of games evenings; Platinum pudding party; Mamma Mia singalong; and the Alpha Course.

The regular hall bookings resumed and where we lost one or two, we have had some new ones. The hall is now busier than pre covid times, which is very good for our income.

The office was much busier with additional admin needed to support the extra activities, clubs and services.

I would like to say a huge thank you to all our volunteer teams, without them we wouldn't be able to do nearly as much. A special mention to Ainsley and his team who do a fabulous amount behind the scenes. Also, to Nicole our cleaner who does a great job around the church and hall.

Debbie Preston, Administrator

Minutes of Annual General Meeting reporting on 2021

Held Sunday 8th May 2022 at 2pm in Church Hall

Annual Parish Meeting (APM)

Welcome and Prayer

Daran welcomed church members and asked them to share some of their best memories from 2021. People remembered such highlights as reopening of the church and activities following COVID restrictions, praying for others, welcoming new members and the prayer away day. Daran shared that he was happy and encouraged to be ministering at Dennis Round Court again.

Apologies for Absence

These were received from Martin and Buff Oram, Graham Bushill, Andrew Warren and Sam Parnell.

Approval of minutes of the APM 20th May 2021

Proposed Debbie Preston, seconded Jane Askew, duly approved.

Election of Two Churchwardens

David Fidal proposed by Debbie Preston and seconded Imogen Belicki, duly elected

Jane Askew nominated by Debbie Preston and seconded by Alyson Ward, duly elected

Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

Approval of minutes of APM 23rd May 2021

Amendment - addition of Sam Parnell's surname to a report.

Gill Bowers proposed approval, seconded by Heather Kemball, duly approved

Matters Arising from the Minutes - None

Notification of Any Other Business- None

Electoral Roll Officer's Report - Debbie Preston informed the meeting that there had been 8 additions to the roll, one removal by request, 4 moved away and one deceased

Annual Reports

Churchwardens Report - no additions.

Treasurers Report - Thanks were given to Sarah Fidal, Beverly Steel and Alan Kemball for their collaborative work. Nothing to add to the report.

Report on the Proceedings of The PCC - By request, Daran outlined the role of the Deanery Synod, highlighting the valuable channel that it provides between parishes and diocese, with communication going in both directions. Nothing to add to the report.

Deanery Synod Report - Shirley Jones said that the Deanery Synod had only met once in the year. There was nothing to add to the report.

Other Ministry Reports - Comments and questions.

Mark Edwards made the point that number of people on the electoral roll did not reflect the true number of people benefiting and touched by the church, its associated groups and activities. It was stated that there are 435 family contact emails. Daran expressed his wish to see Churches Together become active. Nothing additional to report.

Comment that Youth work was not picking up at the same rate as children's work. Daran said that was a national picture. He was encouraged by results in youth work but said that lack of volunteers was a limiting factor on growth. Daran explained that the Methodist church was used as a venue for some youth work because of town centre location and sometimes Christ Church hall was not available. Kingdom building is the focus.

Vicar's Report

Daran said that he was grateful for those doing hidden jobs in the church and he talked about the Vision Day and ministry going into the next year. The question was put to him that church attendance seemed down. Daran agreed saying that some people would have left due to the disagreement over LLF at Christ Church. Alyson Ward said that not coming to church during covid had led to intermittent attendance when churches reopened. Daran said he had heard that church attendance was down nationally by about half following covid closures.

It was suggested that leaders within the church could set objectives. Daran said that this was already part of the plan because the work on vision will be followed up with Mission Action Planning (MAP). It was stated that this already happens for youth work and is due for children's work. Daran said that the PCC will track MAP targets.

Daran said that the new bishops were a good team. He also confirmed that he had a three-month sabbatical planned starting in June 2023.

Appointment of Tellers - None required.

Election of one Deanery Synod Representative

Debbie Preston nominated by Sam Parnell seconded by Imogen Belicki, duly elected.

Elections of Seven Parochial Church Council Members

Imogen Belicki withdrew her nomination

members elected were:

Colin Follett nominated by Steve Bloor seconded by Geoff Chatterley

Julie Newman nominated by Daran Ward seconded by John Dunn

Krystian Belicki nominated by Andrea Chatterley seconded by Geoff Chatterley

Gillian Bowers nominated by Betty Lowe seconded by Derek Wyland

Beverly Steel nominated by Debbie Preston seconded by Imogen Belicki

Rachel White nominated by Andrew Warren seconded by Sue Farrington

Stephen Roberts nominated by Debbie Preston seconded by Ruth Taylor

All duly elected

Appointment of an Independent Examiner

Derek Nyland proposed by Daran ward seconded by Geoff Chatterley, all in favour, duly appointed.

Any Other Business - None

Closing Prayer - Daran gave a blessing.

Parochial Church Council Meeting

Elections of PCC roles

Vice chair - Dave Fidal proposed by Daran Ward seconded Geoff Chatterley. All in favour

Secretary - Julie Newman proposed Daran Ward seconded by Joelle Warren. All in favour

Treasurer - Beverly Steel proposed Daran Ward seconded Jane Askew. All in favour

Electoral Roll Officer - Debbie Preston proposed by Daran Ward, seconded by Joelle Warren. All in favour

Standing Committee - Daran proposed that it be made up of the vicar, churchwardens, treasurer, secretary and building manager (Geoff Chatterley). All in favour.

Co-opt – Daran proposal we co-opt Imogen Belicki and Molly Johnson onto PCC. All in favour

Date of Next PCC Meeting - 23rd May 2022