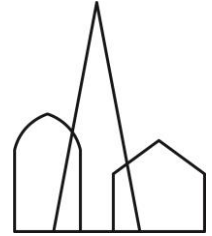


The Parish of Hurstpierpoint

Holy Trinity Church, Hurstpierpoint
Monday 29th April 2024 at 8pm
(Refreshments will be available from 7.45pm)



A Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of minutes of APM held on Monday 15th May 2023 (Copy enclosed)
3. Election of Parish Churchwardens – tenure of 1 year. Nominations to have been received prior to the commencement of the meeting.
4. Any Other Business, of which notice must be given before the commencement of the meeting to the PCC Secretary.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Held in Holy Trinity Church on Monday 29th April after the meeting to elect Churchwardens.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence – refer to above
2. Approval of minutes of APCM held on Monday 15th May 2023
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. **The Reports:**
 - a) Electoral roll report.
 - b) PCC/Churchwardens' annual report
 - c) Trustees Annual Report – the Proceedings of the PCC
 - d) Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023
 - e) Deanery Synod Report
 - f) Safeguarding Report
 - g) Reports on activities and events at Holy Trinity
5. **The Elections and Appointments**
 - a) Election of 6 PCC Members
 - b) To appoint an examiner – tenure 1 year
6. Any Other Business, of which notice must be given before the commencement of the meeting to the PCC Secretary.
7. Closing prayer

Following the APCM there will be a 5 minute meeting of the new PCC.

ELECTORAL ROLL

As at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2024 there are 232 people on our Electoral Roll. During the past year there have been 12 deaths and 35 additions to the roll.

Mary Gibbens

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORTS

Vacancy and Appointment of new Rector.

During the time of vacancy the church wardens were very grateful for the support from the PCC during the time of vacancy and to the Ministry team for continuing to ensure all services were appropriately served.

With support from Bishop Ruth and Archdeacon Angela the advertising and interview schedule was planned for August and September. Many thanks to our Patron Tim Manly for funding the cost of the advertisement in the Church Times.

Two candidates were interviewed on 25th September and it was a unanimous decision to appoint Rev Dr Richard Coldicott as our new Rector. It was a wonderful service on 1st February when Richard was installed as our Rector by Bishop Ruth.

We are so thankful for Richard's appointment and wish him and his family many happy years in Hurstpierpoint.

Administration/Support

After eight years of loyal and valuable service Lizzie Lamont resigned from the position of Church Administrator. The church expressed their thanks to Lizzie for her wonderful contribution to the smooth running of the office.

We were delighted to appoint Claire Levin to the position of Church Administrator from 1st February.

This left a vacancy for the Site coordinator/verger position and again we were delighted to appoint Lucy Winters to this position from 1st February.

As the church continues to grow, so does the amount of work and this is reflected in the increase in hours allocated to these positions.

Church internal & external repairs

The quinquennial report was completed, submitted, and presented to the PCC. There is considerable work to be done the most urgent issue being the continuing roof leaks.

2 roofing companies have been contacted for estimates to resolve the current issues as yet we have not received estimates for the work.

We have been granted permission to add an additional screen to the pillar nearest the dais to enable the person presenting to see what is on the main screen without having to turnaround.

We have recently had new microphones installed and look forward to better sound clarity as a result.

The bell tower had become a concern, the high louvres have been breached and birds are taking up residence in the spire. We have contracted for a platform to be erected inside the spire to protect the bells mechanism which suffers from sand dropping on them from the inside of the spire. The new high platform will enable us to replace the covers on the high louvres and exclude birds from the spire.

We have purchased Pro-presenter software to make the most of the screen this will initially be primarily for use at the 11.00am service.

Rectory

During vacancy we were responsible for the rectory and carried out the following work in advance of Richard's arrival. Basement, sheds & garage cleared of rubbish and old office equipment. The garden was regularly maintained, the basement brambles removed, and the wisteria & shrubs cut back.

We had several rooms redecorated, and finally had house & carpets thoroughly cleaned.

Hurst Community Charity

The shop continues to do well with average sales of over £1,000 per week. We are very grateful to all the volunteers who give up their time to enable us to continue to support local projects.

In 2023 we have supported Hurst Festival, Hurst Folk, Santa Sunday, St Lawrence Fair, Hurst Scouts, Hurst cricket club to name a few. There were no significant amounts given to Holy Trinity this year.

St Christophers Charity

In the year of vacancy we were very grateful to Rev Michael Maine for Chairing the board of Trustees until Rev Dr Richard Coldicott was installed in February.

Sadly Michael Barnes, one of the long standing trustees, passed away. The trustees expressed their gratitude for Michael's long standing commitment.

St Christopher's has completely recovered from the fire damage and all insurance claims and repairs have been completed. All flats in the home are occupied and St Christopher's is in a sound financial position.

Pat Johns and Tim Leech, Churchwardens

DEANERY SYNOD

Chichester Diocese is divided into 21 deaneries (groups of parishes). Each deanery has its own Synod which is made up of the clergy of the area and lay members elected by each parish. In 2023 Holy Trinity was entitled to five lay representatives who were Claire Levin Carolyn Bentley, Victoria Hall-Smith, Margaret Carey and Lesley Webster.

The Synod usually meets three times a year, and the parishes in the deanery take turns in hosting the meeting. The year started off with a meeting in St John's Church Burgess Hill with an interesting presentation from Dr Emma Arbuthnot, the Diocesan Senior Church Buildings and Pastoral Reorganization Officer and Revd. Paul Doick who is also the Chair of the Diocesan Advisory Committee. They spoke about the Faculty Process and the many changes to church buildings regulations in recent years.

In May we welcomed a new Rural Dean, Revd. Rachel Cornish from ASCAT parishes. The presentation in Pyecombe Church was by Steve Argent, the Assistant Warden for Lay Ministry in Horsham Archdeaconry, who spoke about the various Diocesan training courses. Thanks were given to the outgoing Rural Dean, Revd. Paul Doick.

The final session in the year was hosted by the Beacon Parishes at Ditchling and was devoted to the ecological aspirations of the Deanery Mission Action Plan. The Rural Dean gave an encouraging presentation on Eco Church Awards. At this meeting, a presentation was made to Lesley Webster on her retirement as Deanery Lay Chair and a welcome was given to Claire Levin who is the new Lay Chair.

Deaneries are also responsible for collecting the money pledges from the local parishes to cover their parish ministry costs (i.e., for clergy stipends, pensions, and housing; for training costs; for diocesan church house; national church responsibilities). Clergy fees from weddings and funerals also go into this joint deanery pot. In 2023 Hurst Deanery was able to cover 91% of their costs.

Every Autumn a finance meeting is held for all the treasurers, incumbents and anyone else interested in Diocesan finances, parish shares and ministry costs. Information was given at the meeting at St Andrews Burgess Hill in October 2023 on the diocesan draft budget for 2024. The Diocesan Secretary reported that unfortunately, with the cost-of-living crisis and inflation, it would be extremely unlikely that the Diocese would be able to sustain present commitments into the future as an extra £1.5million would be needed in 2024 and the expected forecast for 2023 was a deficit of £1million. She expected that 2024 would be a transitory year. The work of God would continue but there would be re-adjustments to the Diocesan expenditure, so that the Diocese would be in a stronger position in 2025.

Lesley Webster

MINISTRY TEAM

2023 saw changes in the Ministry Team, the greatest being our sad goodbye in mid-January 2023 to Revd Jane and Gerry Willis as they left us for their new life and ministry in Dorchester-on-Thames. Claire and Debbie were among those from Holy Trinity who were able to express our deep appreciation of Jane and Gerry's ministry at Holy Trinity

by attending Jane's licensing service in February. In practical terms the transition was made a little easier by Jane kindly organising for us the services rota for the first four months of the year.

This major gap in our personnel necessitated a change in our way of working, and the team met regularly approximately every two months during the year, with some additional ad hoc sub-groups, focusing mainly on the practical - especially planning and arrangements for the 'big' services, and on issues and challenges related to worship. We continued to offer a diverse ministry, appropriate for our diverse church, with a combination of lay and ordained in a variety of roles. We operated as an expanded team, blessed by the arrival of Sarah Steel as Children and Families Leader, by the granting of Permission to Officiate to Revd Christine Ostler, and by the increased involvement of Revd Dr Janneke Blokland, Chaplain of Hurst College. From July to mid-September we were further greatly blessed by the gifts and leadership of Revd Thea Edwards, seconded to us as temporary interim Priest-in-Charge.

Tom completed his pre-ordination studies at St Mellitus, and having deferred ordination for a year, was licensed as a lay worker. He continued, with Jenny, to lead and oversee the Sunday 11am service and its expanding team and activities, as it grew joyfully and amazingly. Necessarily they preached less frequently than before at the 8am and 9.30 services, but the rest of the team, thanks to Christine, Janneke and Thea, were well able to cover these, and also some special services. As well as sharing the demands of the Holy Week with myself, Jenny and Kevin, Janneke led and preached for us at our Coronation Celebration Service and Mid Sussex District Council's Carol Service, and preached and assisted on Remembrance Sunday. Revd Christine joined Debbie and Claire in providing the team for the mid-week monthly Wednesday 11am Communion service. We were also very grateful for the help of Revd Canon Dr Peter Sills, who preached and assisted at the annual 'Time to Remember' All Souls service.

Those of us who could be available early on Tuesdays continued to meet and pray together regularly at 9am Morning Prayer, which is open to everyone. Beyond our services, our ministry team have continued to serve in many ways - leading house groups, home communions, pastoral visiting, conducting funerals and more. Together with Vicky Macken, Janneke contributed significantly to preparing a group of our young people for confirmation in June.

Kevin completed his part-time studies at St Augustine's College, and was awarded the MA in Theology and Ministry by the University of Durham. He also published a new short book of poems *Life Travels*, of which he kindly offered a free copy to everyone contributing to our Harvest collection for Christian Aid. Jenny was one of the six authors of a major new book of reflections published by the Bible Reading Fellowship, *Knowing You, Jesus, 365 Devotional: Following Jesus through the Gospels in a Year*, for which we held a local launch in November.

Despite the vacancy, some of our ministry team also supported the worshipping life of other churches. Kevin continued to lead and preach at evensong at Holy Trinity, Cuckfield, and Claire to preach occasionally at Hassocks United Reform Church, and to be a volunteer Day Chaplain at Chichester Cathedral approximately once a month.

The final two months of the year saw the team excitedly anticipating the arrival in early 2024 of our new Rector, Revd Dr Richard Coldicott, and starting to prepare for this, very much helped by Richard's visit to all our Sunday services on 5th November. One sadness at the end of the year was the resignation of Lizzie Lamont, our Church Administrator, who for the past seven years has been a huge and vital support to the ministry team, and to the whole life of Holy Trinity. As we go forward in 2024, we are very thankful for past blessings, for Claire as our new Administrator, for Lucy our new Site Coordinator, for Richard our new Rector, and for our diverse ministry team - and for all that each offers so faithfully to the life of the church.

Revd Debbie Beer

SUNDAY SERVICES

During 2023 our monthly 8am Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion services, and our 9.30 weekly Common Worship Communion services, broadly sustained their attendance, with the numbers joining us or returning balancing those who became too unwell to come. At 9.30am we continued to be blessed by excellent music and by a great team of intercessors, readers, chalice assistants, welcomers, and audio-visual operators. Our average age tends to the more mature, but we include a sprinkling of babies and young people. We had the joy of three baptisms in 9.30 services. We were very grateful for some occasional special speakers, including Martin Auton-Lloyd, the CEO of Family Support Work and, on Christian Aid Sunday, our very own Tim Moulds. Mothering Sunday was very special, with Bishop Ruth presiding and preaching at 9.30 and 11am.

Inspired by the 2022 joint Harvest Service, and the leaving service for Jane and Gerry, all three congregations joined together in combined services on Easter Day, for the St Lawrence Fair service in July, and again at Harvest. At Easter particularly it was immensely powerful to see the church bursting at the seams and needing to delay the start as more and more people kept arriving. Reflecting on those services later, however, it was apparent that at Easter and Harvest

they were not the best way of bringing our different congregations together, and the numbers involved made for much longer services (and so on Easter Day 2024 we had separate 8am, 9.30 and 11am services). The 9.30 and 11am congregations continued to meet over refreshments between the services, although much limited by time constraints. It was a great joy for me to work with Sarah on the combined 10am Christmas Day service.

Revd Debbie Beer

The 11am service has been a source of great joy. In 2023 and early 2024 we have seen our fellowship grow, both in depth and in numbers. In particular we are finding that many in Hurstpierpoint and adjoining villages are welcoming the chance to worship locally and to be involved in community work here. We are a church with lots of children. Our adult:child ratio tends to sit at around 4:3, which is very encouraging for the future of the church. Many have commented that the work with children and youth has been their reason for joining. Nonetheless all ages are represented, with many grandparents and empty-nesters also joining us. For much of 2023 we would typically worship with between 55 and 85 people, and numbers have continued to increase in 2024, with 180 worshipping at 11am on Easter Day.

During the vacancy we have been blessed by the preaching of several visiting ministers. Revd David Ingall, Revd John Irvine, Revd Simon Braid and Revd Steve Nichols have given their time to preach for us. Revd Simon Braid baptised his twin grandchildren at the same service. Occasional speakers from our own congregation have included Tim Moulds, Josh Winter and Revd Janneke. In particular we were greatly blessed by Revd Thea Edwards' stint with us as Priest-in-charge, the interim leadership she gave us, and her musical gifts as a worship leader.

We experimented with hosting shorter, low-key services in August, dubbing them '11am Connect.' This allowed us to give our kids' team a break, while still giving a chance for weekly worship at 11am. Judging these a success we repeated the pattern on New Year's Eve.

Our growth in numbers and in the development of our teams has continued wonderfully in the first part of 2024, the appointment of Jake Stimson as our worship pastor bringing especial blessing. We are developing our hospitality, moving from brunches off-site to hot food on-site. This is exciting for welcome and mission. It is an exciting time, and each week God seems to do something new. Personally, I feel like there is a gap if something has caused me to miss our service. I pray God continues to bless us this way.

Tom Dare, Licensed Lay Worker

MIDWEEK COMMUNION SERVICES

Our regular monthly Wednesday service of Holy Communion at 11am, followed by coffee or tea, has continued to be a safe space for those needing to take care about their health. Numbers attending each service have been around the low to mid-teens. It continues to be very much valued as a safe and quiet reflective space for worship, and for the relaxed fellowship afterwards. Sadly 2023 saw the deaths of five of our regular or occasional attenders, but we have been blessed by some new members. Particular thanks are due to Christine, for sharing the presiding and preaching in 2023, and to Claire, Veronica and Peter Aldridge, and Chris and Fred Cutler, for forming the core of the support team. We are very glad of Richard's commitment to this service as we go forward.

Revd Debbie Beer

ST LAWRENCE SCHOOL

School Life

Key priorities in the school improvement have underpinned activity for this year.

1. To ensure the needs of all children are met, particularly the most vulnerable.
Embracing quality first teaching, with training of staff and curriculum development in all areas, enables a strong emphasis on inclusivity, to keep all pupils in the classroom and provide appropriate and suitably challenging activities for all.
2. To raise achievement in maths.
Both the curriculum and resources having been revised this year by the maths team and implemented to good effect throughout the school.
3. To develop effective assessment procedures that have a positive impact on learning.
Assessment is ongoing. New tracking software has been implemented for this year and is proving useful and beneficial in identifying where intervention and support may be needed.
4. To embed and develop key priorities from previous years.

The improvements achieved in both reading and writing over the last two years, and RE, continue to be embraced and developed further throughout the school.

Well-being and emotional of both pupils and staff remain a focus.

A number of new TA's have been employed to help deliver the increased level of 1:1 support throughout the school. Though it is noticeable that the low pay rates, as set by WSCC, does not make these positions financially attractive, and we have also lost some existing TA's who have a need to increase their family income in these challenging times. So the vacancy advert for TA's remains open as we seek to recruit more still.

Connection with Holy Trinity

We are delighted to welcome into the school Rev Richard Coldicott, who became the new Rector in February. Richard has already engaged positively with both his role as a Governor and as Rector coming in to observe and lead collective worship.

This relationship will no doubt continue to develop as he settles into the village.

Pupil Numbers Review

The Foundation Stage intake numbers continue to be a concern. Whilst Sep 2024 is looking not too bad, with potentially 80 starting; the earliest indicators for Sep 2025 would show numbers being lower once again. This reflects the demographics of the area rather than personal choice, with neighbouring schools below capacity too, and remains a concern for Governors. Governors retain the right to review, reduce the PAN for future years.

Website

The new school website was published this year, and is bright, clear, engaging and now being used as a source of communication, drawing parents and stakeholders into the website regularly.

Ian McBain, Chair of Governors

SAFEGUARDING

As a church we follow the safeguarding recommendations of the diocese for children and vulnerable adults. We participate in SQP, Simple Quality Protects, a resource designed to help achieve high standards of safeguarding across the diocese inclusive of all aspects of health and safety. It aims to ensure we protect all that visit or contribute to the life of the church in any aspect. If you ever have any concerns please don't hesitate to contact the Safeguarding Officer or Rector.

The PCC has complied with section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.

There were no safeguarding incidents in 2023.

Victoria Hall-Smith, Safeguarding Officer

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WORK

It has been really exciting to see growth on Sunday mornings over the past year. The average number of under 16s attending our 11am service has risen over the past year, from around 15-20 per week in Jan 23 to 40-60 per week in Jan 24. We now have three different age groups for children (under 4s, School Years R-2 and Years 3-5). We have an amazing team of volunteers who enable these groups to happen each week. It has also been great to do some social events with our primary-aged children, such as pizza nights and bowling. These have been really helpful for growing friendships among the children.

Since January '24 we have taken over leadership of The Sanctuary toddler group, alongside the Good News Church. We currently have over 150 families (including child minders/nannies) on our books, meaning they have come since September 23, and regularly have around 60 children, plus their parents/carers, attending each week.

It has been wonderful to be involved in leading assemblies regularly in St Lawrence School and there is currently a team of three of us who take turns in leading these every Tuesday. We also hosted the school's Harvest and Easter assemblies in church which were a real joy to be part of.

Our "Summer Fun" events were really successful, with around 250 people attending the first and 300 at the second. We also had a wonderful time at our Light Party on 31st October, with 108 primary-aged children attending. These were both great opportunities for building links with those who wouldn't usually come to church. Our relationships with families at The Sanctuary, Fairfield Toddlers and St Lawrence School seemed to be key factors in the popularity of these events. The Summer Fun mornings and Light Party were facilitated by brilliant volunteer teams from across both services, and we had lots of positive feedback from the families who came along. It was wonderful to be able to offer these events for free, as a way of blessing the community.

We are so thankful to God for all he is doing in our Children & Families ministry at Holy Trinity!

Sarah Steel

YOUTH AT HOLY TRINITY

We have regular young people attending our 9.30am service and they engage with the adult teaching. We have managed one meeting to discuss Friday night sessions of more in depth teaching and fellowship. As they are all doing GCSEs right now this will be starting later in 2024.

At the 11am service the young people in school years 6 to 13 are invited to meet and have teaching in the area by the parish office. We have a team of Mark Queen, Josh Winter and myself running the sessions.

Our young people are also invited and attend sessions run by other churches mid week.

Vicki Macken

LAY MINISTERS OF COMMUNION

Early in 2023 we delivered practical training sessions to the new members of our expanded lay ministers of Communion team, who during the year all grew in knowledge and experience in serving and in administering at our services. Throughout the year, the lay ministers who are also trained to offer home communion (to those for health reasons unable to get to church services) continued in this vital ministry, with Lesley Webster coordinating this team. We are so grateful for all our lay ministers, both those who have more recently joined the team, and those with many years' experience; and for Jenny's, Christine's and Lesley's contributions to training and supporting them.

Debbie Beer

CHOIR

The choir were pleased to be back to 'normal', relatively speaking during 2022, singing at the weekly 9.30am Eucharist accompanied by Neil Morris at the organ, and occasional evening services as required. It is a privilege to sing at Weddings and Funerals as required.

The junior choir continues under the leadership of Dena Mynett currently with six young people of primary school age, all of whom joined the choir in the last year. The children are working hard on their medals and continue to grow in enthusiasm and confidence. In addition, we were delighted to welcome back Lucy after she completed her GCSE's. The highlight of the year was the service of nine lessons and carols with a choir of over 20 singers and a very full church.

New members are always welcome, both young and not so young, in all voice parts. Once again we thank the congregation and wider community for their support of the choir and the encouraging response to our contribution in Sunday Services.

Claire Levin

BELLRINGERS

Ringling for services, weddings (3), and special occasions (St. Lawrence Fair, Hurst Festival, Santa's Super Sunday) has continued as usual. Special ringling in 2023 also included ringling for the coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

Our chimers have continued to ring tunes for the now-monthly 8.00 service on Sundays and for the weekly vibrant all-age service at 11.00.

Six quarter peals were rung at Holy Trinity in 2023:-

Plain Bob Doubles on 9 Feb in thanksgiving for Revd. Jane Willis' 8 year ministry at Hurst,
Grandsire Triples on 1st April in memory of Hamish McNaughton, a ringer at Walberton and former ringer at Hurst,

Grandsire & Plain Bob Doubles on 6th May for the coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla,
Cambridge Minor on 7th September, an 18th birthday compliment to Hurst ringer Jonathan Martin and congratulations on gaining a place at Cambridge University,

Plain Bob Doubles on 21st September, a first quarter peal for Hurst young ringer Sophia Walters,
Grandsire Doubles on 12th November for Remembrance Sunday.

There was no attempt in 2023 for a full peal, sadly the third year in succession without a peal attempt at Holy Trinity. It is hoped to remedy this before too long with an attempt for the 100th peal on the bells.

Our young ringers at University and beyond continue to promote ringing and share their skills in the wider world, while here in Hurst our newest young recruit, 12 year old Oscar Winter, is making good progress.

Jonathan Martin, now at Cambridge, was a member of the Sussex young ringers team that were placed 2nd out of 16 teams in the National Youth Contest at York in July 2023.

If the above seems too much like a success story, please bear in mind that the situation is far from rosy. As we wrote last year, we are dwindling in numbers and expertise and if ringing is to continue at Holy Trinity we badly need more recruits, including youngsters who learn so quickly and can help to secure the long term future of ringing. Don't just take the continuance of ringing for granted. If you think you might be interested why not visit the belfry on a Thursday evening, when we practise from 7.30 p.m. until 9.00, and see what goes on? You might be tempted to join us! There are also possible opportunities for chiming and for handbell ringing.

Contact details and further information about our activities can be found at www.hurstpierpointbells.org.uk

John Norris & Sue Elrick, joint acting Tower Captains

FLOWER ARRANGERS

Throughout 2023 the team of six flower arrangers (Judy Leech, Liz Flight, Dena Mynett, Pat Keans and Martin Hall Smith) led by June Kentsley provided and maintained arrangements each week except for Lent and Advent up until the Christmas carol service. For special occasions, we had additional help from Zoe Cornwell and Christine Sadler. In July, Liz and Dena attended a demonstration in Chichester Cathedral of flower arranging without using oasis (which is environmentally damaging). We brought back a sample of an alternative material but are continuing to use the oasis we had in stock for now, taking care to filter the water before pouring it into the drain. Where appropriate we are using vases that don't need oasis.

Arranging flowers is an enjoyable occupation and we would love to welcome more members to the team, either on a regular basis or to help out for special occasions. You don't need to be a professional – none of us are!

Dena Mynett

PASTORAL CARE TEAM

Pastoral Care is provided within the Parish by many people from the congregation (and beyond) both informally and upon request, out of friendship and as part of our Christian Faith. We respond to requests which usually come from people in the church community who are concerned about someone they know, whether or not they attend church. People welcome support for different reasons: they may be just out of hospital and want help with practical things while they recover. Or they may feel that it is helpful to have someone to talk to. We may not be able to respond to everyone's needs, but we often know someone who can help.

Typical activities in 2023 have included visits to the elderly, isolated, bereaved, unwell or infirm whether at home, in hospital or care homes; plus providing transport for, and accompaniment to, hospital and dental appointments when needed.

If you know of anyone who would welcome our support, or if you would like to join the pastoral care team, please contact:

Mary Gibbens, on 01273-833162 or 07775 894202 marygibbens@doctors.org.uk

Mary Gibbens

HOUSE GROUPS

Growing Together

Growing Together met 36 times in 2023 with an average attendance (in person and on Zoom) of 12; following Covid we have continued to use the hybrid format which works well.

The bulk of our sessions (21) covered the first 12 Chapters of the Gospel of John and led to some wide ranging and deep discussions. In other sessions, we discussed the causes and ethics of economic inequality, justice between generations, just war theory and pacifism, and Christian unity.

Kevin Carey

Room2Grow

We meet on three out of four Thursdays at 8.00pm and our aim is to develop our understanding through friendly and open discussion, relating real life to the scriptures.

Our house group has continued to flourish and we have been particularly thankful to Vicki for hosting many sessions at her home this year. We are holding all our sessions in person, although we do have some members join via zoom on occasions but we are enjoying each other's company as well as Vicki's generous hospitality.

Sadly we have lost three of our precious members – Michael Barnes, Eileen Clark and Fran Dowsett as they are now in the hands of our Lord. We remember them with great fondness and love.

This year we have studied the Romans Course, narrated by Andrew Ollerton for the Bible Society. This has been a fabulous course over 10 sessions, with some marvellous videos and views of Rome – we have all enjoyed this very much and have had thoughts of a Room 2 Grow "Road Trip"! Romans is a tricky book and this course tackles ten big themes found in the book which are key to understanding the Christian faith.

If you are thinking of joining a House Group and would like to know more about Room 2 Grow, please contact Vicki or Pat.

Pat Johns & Vicki Macken

Olive Branch

We have met regularly on a Tuesday evening over the past year and are grateful to our regular host for her hospitality. We share our personal challenges, pray and support each other. The group studied "The Bible for Grown ups" by Simon Lovett and "Deeper" by Dane Ortlund, both works proved to be difficult and a test of our beliefs.

Unfortunately, we lost Michael Barnes & more recently Fran Dowsett, both of whom were enthusiastic contributors and will be sorely missed.

Tim Leech

11am Service - Midweek Groups

Mid-week small groups at Holy Trinity provide an excellent opportunity to meet together with the aims of building our faith and church community. We gather informally in peoples' homes, meeting every fortnight, alternating between men's and women's groups. We typically have between 8 and 12 people at each meeting and have enjoyed evenings of Bible study, prayer and some socials too.

The groups provide valuable opportunities to support one another through the ups and downs of our daily lives by sharing experiences and deepening our understanding of God's word. A regular evening meet would see us gather for a cuppa and a brief catch-up, before studying a bible passage or resource video which would form the basis for discussion, followed by a short time of prayer. We've recently been following an eight session prayer course produced by 24-7 covering topics such as listening, contemplation and unanswered prayer.

So, if you'd like to grow in your faith, build friendship and grow in your experience of church community then please come along.

Anna McDougall

MOTHERS' UNION – HURSTPIERPOINT BRANCH

As a Christian membership charity, we demonstrate our faith in action. This happens as we work towards stopping poverty, inequality and stopping injustice. Our members work at grassroots level around the world. They bring hope and practical support to millions of people every year through parenting, literacy and community development programmes. We have 4 million members in 84 countries.

Here in Hurstpierpoint I am pleased to report that we continue to meet twice a month and this year have welcomed many visitors. We continue to provide emergency toiletries to the Princess Royal, run our Toddler Group, visit the sick, deliver Baptism cards and support premature babies.

We are so sad to have lost some of our most faithful members this year Marianne Richardson, Pam Slater, Brenda Duggan and Marilyn Hills. We give thanks for all they did for, and in the name of the Mothers Union. May they rest in peace.

This year we have welcomed many familiar faces from our own church community and discovered so many interesting facts including the history of our tower bells, how to use our hands in prayer and that STEM is not gardening!

We were extremely blessed to have welcomed Archdeacon Angela to our Ladies Breakfast.

I would like to thank my wonderful committee who have continued to be the best support any branch Leader needs, they always are one step ahead of me and are as passionate about Mothers Union as I am. This year we say goodbye and a huge thank you to Debbie Carter who is stepping down from the committee. Debbie has supported in so many ways but in particular ensures there is a raffle at each meeting. We will miss her.

Victoria and I continue to represent our Branch at the District meetings where we make plans together and get to keep up with what is going on in the Diocese.

As a charity the Mothers Union is looking at its future something we have started discussing in meetings. I am so proud of all our members and the way they continue to be amazing at supporting each other and the wider community through prayer and practical support.

Love and blessings to you all

Alison Dewdney

OUR PARTNER CHARITIES AND OUR OUTWARD GIVING

The Gospels ask us and inspire us as Christians to do all sorts of important work, especially for those most disadvantaged in our world. For some areas of work, it is hard for a parish church to make a useful contribution. So we have partnerships with six charities who do respond to these gospel needs.

We give money to all six charities, and we help them to raise funds. We pray for their work, their staff and volunteers, and the people that they support. We inform our church members about the good work that we support through these charities.

We have advocates for each of our partner charities. Please contact them if you would like to know more.

Bible Society: Keith Birtles

Christian Aid: Tim Moulds

Family Support Work: Margaret Hall

Friends International: Jenny Brown

Off the Fence: Tom Dare

Sussex Pathways: George Baxter

The Bible Society says of itself:

“When we read the Bible we find out more about God, more about ourselves and more about the world. That’s why we want to share it. We invite people to discover the Bible’s message for themselves, even if they’ve never thought the Bible was for them. We want them to read it, be excited by it and find their lives changed by it.

“The Bible is God's gift to the world. We want everyone to discover its message for themselves. We translate the Bible and make it accessible in people's heart languages. We bring it into public spaces where its voice can be heard. We tell its stories, for instance through the Open the Book programme with primary-age children.”

Christian Aid is a partnership of people, churches and local organisations committed to ending poverty worldwide. It is the official relief and development agency of the Church of England. It works where the need is greatest, regardless of religion or race. It campaigns to change the rules that make people poor. It works with churches in the UK, helping us to pray, act and give for the benefit of people in poor communities and in poor countries.

The main focus of its campaign work is for climate justice. Rich countries, who cause over 90% of climate change, are encouraged to support poor countries who have to deal with the damage.

Family Support Work helps families in Sussex to overcome their difficulties and prevent crisis. It works with families struggling with issues such as poverty, ill health, learning difficulties, bereavement, family break-up and domestic abuse. It offers intensive one-to-one support for individuals and their families. It provides support groups, day centre drop-ins, play opportunities for children, and supported family breaks with community workers. It offers a range of school holiday activities to engage children and help them to grow, and to support their families. We collect food in church every week for FSW.

Marilyn Hills was a committed advocate and fundraiser for FSW and her energy and capable work for them will be hard to follow. We are grateful to Margie Hall for taking over the as the link person with FSW for our church.

Friends International is a Christian charity seeking to grow friendship and faith with international students in the UK & Ireland. Over one million international students study at UK universities and language schools each year. As they return to their countries after studies, many will contribute to the shaping of their societies. Friends International says of its work:

“We want to give as many as we can a warm welcome, support as they enter a new culture, and opportunities to hear the Christian message. Our activities are open to those of all faiths and none.

We equip churches and volunteers to serve, minister, and engage with international students, caring for them holistically. Through a range of social activities and Bible discussions we seek to grow friendship and faith.

Last year FI partnered with 299 churches and 1,290 active volunteers to support 11,900 international students across 45 towns and cities across the UK and Ireland.

T. from India, is just one example: She joined a Christian couple in Norwich for Christmas day through our hospitality scheme. After her experience, she emailed to say thank you and said this had been the best experience she had had in UK so far.

Robert is an Apprentice staff worker in Glasgow. On Thursdays he invites students to his flat for supper and a Bible discussion. Before Easter 13 came - from China, Taiwan, India, Trinidad - to consider the resurrection of Jesus.

Jenny Brown works with Friends International developing the Apprentice staff training programme, and overseeing the provision for Staff Care and Wellbeing: *"Thank you, Holy Trinity, for your generous partnership with FI, and with me as I play my part in it"*

Off the Fence works in Brighton and Hove, to restore the lives and the hopes of the homeless, of women in difficulty, and of vulnerable school children. It works with and for the disadvantaged: resisting poverty, empowering people, and restoring hope. Three project areas:

‘Project Antifreeze’ provides food, hot drinks, sleeping bags and hygiene items to the homeless through evening outreach teams and a daycentre.

‘Gateway Women’s Centre’ provides a welcoming, safe space for women going through a time of crisis or emotional difficulty.

The Schools Team works in five schools in the area: delivering weekly clubs, workshops, individual support, prayer and reflection spaces.

Sussex Pathways is a criminal justice charity based in Lewes. It works with volunteers and staff, who support people in prison and in the community. It offers 'through the gate' support to people leaving prison and returning to Sussex. It works with them to develop plans for their release, and then to lead constructive lives after their prison sentence. It builds on any signs of genuine remorse, offering restorative justice to those who have harmed and been harmed through crime, and so rebuilding lives and communities. It reduces the offending behaviour of prison leavers and empowers them to make positive life choices.

Tim Moulds

ECO CHURCH

The vacancy has delayed progress on our efforts to grow and develop as an Eco Church. We have continued to enter the church building's electricity and gas usage data for the previous year into the Church of England Energy Footprint Tool (which has been designed to support local churches, dioceses and the Church of England nationally, in reducing our carbon footprint, by gathering and analysing data). The report of this year's Quinquennial Inspection, together with the report of the energy audit carried out in 2022, provide us with the information to make progress in 2024 on making our building's energy usage more efficient and reduce its carbon footprint. We look forward to making substantial progress on Eco Church in 2024, very much encouraged by Richard's commitment to this.

Revd Debbie Beer

HOUSEKEEPING TEAM (formerly MML GUILD)

Our team of volunteers have been doing a marvellous job of keeping the church clean, providing a more welcoming space for our regular congregation and visitors alike. Each of the team works on a particular area of the church approximately once a fortnight, on a flexible basis.

We had a 'spring cleaning' morning in September which was well attended and resulted in the church having a much needed thorough clean

We are extremely grateful for all the housekeeping team do to keep our church clean and welcoming, but have space for more volunteers if you would like to assist, so if you are interested in helping to clean our beautiful Church, even for just an hour a month, you would be made very welcome. Why not volunteer with a friend and have a natter as you help keep our Church clean and safe for everyone to enjoy? Please email siteco.holytrinityhpp@gmail.com if you can help.

Claire Levin

MUSIC AND WINE IN HOLY TRINITY

We are now in our eighth season of music performed on the third Saturday of each month for ten months of each year. The events meet two aims: to encourage wider use of the church for arts events, and to raise general funding for church running costs. The 6 pm to 7.30 pm timing means that people can go on to other events afterwards. The ticket price was increased to £8 with no reduction in attendance. Indeed, attendance has increased this year with audience numbers sometimes reaching fifty or more. I am regularly contacted by musicians with a wide variety of music styles, some local and others from further away, who would like to perform and who readily agree to the 50/50 split of the ticket price between performer and venue.

Margaret Carey

CAFÉ IN THE CHURCH

We held four events in the church this year, with a variety of stalls selling locally made jams, chutneys, jewellery, and various arts/crafts including colourful knitted items and paintings sold to support a church in Ukraine. Church

members continued to generously support with donations for the bric-a-brac, books, raffle and tombola stalls, as well as baking delicious home-made cakes which are always very popular.

Special events included for the first time the newly formed hand-bells group from Sayers Common, live music performed on organ and piano by Ray Carpenter and Stephen Ostler, and a Christian Aid presentation by Tim Moulds. To them, and to all the stall holders, helpers and wonderful coffee makers, grateful thanks are due. These events usually raise between £150-£300, but it is the welcoming into church of visitors that makes these events so valuable. It provides a relaxing space for friends old and new to socialise over a welcome cup of coffee, and to have the opportunity to support local craft makers. And we usually we spot several visitors who are not church attenders, so welcoming them into our church is the most special thing of all.

A final thanks to those who help to set up the tables and chairs on a Friday night after choir practice – essential for an early start on Saturday morning!

Catherine Thompson

CHURCH BOOKINGS

We have continued to welcome a number of bookings of the church in the past year. We have been pleased to welcome occasional bookings from Brighton Consort and Mid Sussex Sinfonia. Mid Sussex Sinfonia have made us their home venue, and we are delighted to be building up a good relationship with them.

We once again welcomed Hurst Festival with a number of varied concerts, performances and exhibition throughout the Festival fortnight, and the monthly Music and Wine concerts (formerly known as West Gallery Concerts) have continued. The support for all of these events is increasing and we are pleased to have a full church for a number of these events throughout the year, bringing more people into our church.

We were delighted to have the children and staff of St Lawrence School in church for their harvest services and various Nativity and carol services. For harvest, we had 600 children in church across two back to back services. The Christmas Carol services for KS2 took place over 3 days, welcoming about 300 children into the church, but this time, along with their parents and other family members. It was a delight to see so many children taking part in delivering the good news of the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

We have also been very pleased to welcome our Ukrainian friends into the church on a regular basis for Orthodox services.

If anyone is interested in booking the church, please email siteco.holytrinityhpp@gmail.com for more information.

Claire Levin

ST CHRISTOPHER'S HOME REPORT

St. Christopher's Home has emerged from a difficult period when the insurance repairs following a resident setting her kitchen on fire with a chip pan in May 2022 were being undertaken. These repairs were protracted and involved a lot of time and effort with continuous meetings and correspondence with the insurance company, loss adjusters, surveyors, and many contractors. The work was concluded successfully in 2023 and the final retention period inspections and repair rectifications are just being completed to allow us to satisfactorily sign-off the fire repair exercise. Chip pans have since been banned from use within the building.

While this work was being undertaken normal activities were continued. The fire risk assessment recommendations to keep abreast with constantly changing regulations, which had ironically been initiated prior to the fire, had been halted when the incident occurred. The contractor who had been employed to segregate the roof into sections with fire partitions, had to wait a year for the work to be resumed while fire repairs were undertaken. Fortunately, the lack of completion of the assessor's measures had not played any part in the fire or resulting damage, as the building was previously already well-protected and checked regularly.

Once completed. the newly partitioned roof had to have the existing fire-alarm installation upgraded to provide sensors in each of the roof sections. This opportunity was taken to upgrade the fire alarm panel and circuitry to

conform to the latest standard revisions. These have now been completed and all the previous assessor's recommendations have been concluded satisfactorily.

The patio paving around the building has been re-cemented for the safety of the residents and all defects in the building's brickwork cement have been re-pointed as necessary.

Following an incident with a stubbornly blocked drain, a contractor was employed to unblock it. An opportunity was taken to get a CCTV building drain survey undertaken at the same time and all defects found repaired. This has been completed satisfactorily. The building is now in very good condition generally with all regular safety and building checks, equipment servicing and regular maintenance keeping it operating smoothly.

Following the death of a resident and the vacation of the fire-affected flat by the person who caused it, we had two flat vacancies resulting within the building. After two of the residents had upgraded themselves from studio to one-bedroom flats, we were left with two studio flat vacancies which initially proved difficult to fill. Most applicants found the reduction in size from their existing accommodation to a studio flat difficult to accommodate all their belongings. Following much advertising in local media, we eventually filled the vacancies, and now the home is completely occupied and flourishing nicely with all residents appearing contented.

Michael Nailard

THE HENRY SMITH CHARITY

This charity, which was founded in 1628 by Henry Smith, a business man in the City of London, has made a grant to the Churchwardens each year to provide people on low incomes with funding to help them with their winter expenses. For nearly 400 years, the trustees have honoured the spirit of his will, working to combat disadvantage. Recommendations for people in the Parish of Hurstpierpoint to receive grants are made in confidence and decisions are made by a small committee of the Churchwardens, with representatives from the Village Trust and the Parish Council. Our parish has received a grant for 100 years and back then the amount was £10. This year's generous grant was £2,200 and has funded 23 grants as there was a small balance in hand from last year. Originally, this bought bags of logs for open fires; now, of course, it is largely used for central heating bills. Response from people who receive these grants confirms how valuable this is. We are exceedingly grateful to the trustees of the Henry Smith Charity for their continued generosity. Margaret Carey, Clerk to the Committee

*Margaret Carey
Clerk to the Committee*