

Christ Church High Harrogate

Annual Report 2024



Welcome

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1 Vicars Report

From 'God Of Surprises' by Gerard Hughes, our 2025 Lent Course:

'A feature common to our Gospels' resurrection accounts is the slowness of those to whom Christ appears to recognise that it is the risen Christ. The disciples on the road to Emmaus have walked several miles with him before they recognise him, and Mary Magdalen mistakes the risen Christ for the gardener. This is also a feature common to our own faith in his resurrection, a slow dawning of the truth that he is a living presence in every detail of our lives.'

At first the resurrection is presented to us as an event outside ourselves, something which happened two thousand years ago. Slowly ... we come to know the resurrection as something which is happening to us now. The risen Christ is continuously coming through the closed doors of our minds and imagination as he came through the doors of the room where the disciples were gathered for fear.... He enters our consciousness, closed through fear of ourselves and our fear of other people, and says to us, 'Peace be to you.'

The power of his resurrection gives us hope in a situation where before we felt it was hopeless, gives us courage to face a task when before we wanted to run away, gives us the ability and strength to be open and vulnerable when before we could think of nothing but our own protection and security.

A (further) feature common to the resurrection accounts is that those to whom Christ appears are commissioned to go and tell others. ... The Acts of the Apostles is an account of the resurrection, of the Spirit of the risen Christ at work in the early Christian communities, a Spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation, a Spirit of joy and peace even in the midst of conflict and persecution, a Spirit which breaks down the barriers between Jew and Gentile, slave and free, men and women.'

God of Surprises: Study Course (c) 1999, Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd.

Why all this, quoted from our 2025 Lent Course? - Because this is what is true for us, this is the community we are not merely called, but fully and entirely equipped and enabled to be - and this is the community witnessed and evidenced - as it grows, and succeeds, and tries - in these pages and all the many activities and people behind them. As commented within a Lent Group meeting...

"The more we go on, the more I see Christianity to be the answer."

'As the Father has sent me, so am I sending you' (John 20:21) 'Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19).

Thank you.

Revd Matthew Evans

2 WORSHIP & LEARNING

2.1 Baptism Group

In 2024 the Baptism team Lead was Amanda Parry along with a small but diligent team of three other members (following the sad loss of a much loved and committed fifth team member, Yvonne Hutchings, in November 2023). The role of the Baptism Team is to provide support both to the Clergy and the Baptism Candidate/s and their parents.

The two elements of Baptism support are:

The Preparation Session, held usually on the third Sunday of the month at 11:30 am, in Church and led by the Vicar/Curate. The vicar takes the family through the service booklet and explains each aspect in detail. Refreshments are provided (by team members) in the parish centre where the family can choose hymns and request the naming of other family members unable to attend. It also facilitates an opportunity to familiarise the family with the building facilities.

At the Baptism ceremony, on the first Sunday of the month, the two team members provide a welcome for all those attending, give out booklets and help where necessary. At the end we return the church to be ready for the next service.

In December I took over from Amanda to whom we are all grateful for her time with this ministry. Since beginning my tenure, I am delighted to have welcomed two new members (Jan Price and Anna Harrison), joining Jane Freeman and Judy Hardy, plus the happy return of Frances Clement to the team.

Elizabeth Mottershead / Baptism team lead

2.2 Junior Church

Junior Church has enjoyed another positive year. We continue to operate with four groups, allowing us to provide for ages ranging between 0-15 years. Patterns have now been established, and children enjoy sharing the work they have created from their age-appropriate groups with the whole Junior Church during our Collective Worship time just before gathering with the whole Church family for Communion.

Huge thanks must go to all the helpers and leaders who give their time so generously and freely to provide a welcoming, safe and faith filled environment for the children. The amazing Leadership Team formed in 2023 has remained in place and is very active and effective, each member having developed their role allowing for the smooth running of the whole Junior Church. We are truly grateful that so many people go above and beyond, to give the best to our children.

Junior Church has had a wonderful year of fund raising, with Cake Stalls and our annual Mothering Sunday Tombola, raising funds for 'The Yorkshire Air Ambulance', 'Open Arms Malawi', and 'H.E.L.P' (Harrogate Easy Living Project). We have also delighted in many social and spiritual events which also offer outreach, with an Easter Holiday Club, Christian Aid "Wear Red" Sunday, Summer Party, Christingle Party hosted for all after the Christingle Service, and involvement in the Candlemas Pantomime.

As a Junior Church we feel very supported and upheld by the whole community of Christ Church, knowing that the success is down to the prayers and encouragement given by all, thank you.

Alison Evans, Junior Church Leadership Team Member

2.3 Choir and Music

(Christine) Music has continued to flourish and prosper at Christ Church throughout 2024. The junior choristers have worked hard and increased in skill and confidence. In March both Hannah and Bethany participated in Harrogate Music Festival in solo classes with very good results, and the junior choristers sang together to win the Vocal Group class with an excellent performance of two sacred songs. In June 3 choristers took RSCM exams, and many congratulations to Fran (Bronze, Distinction), Hannah (Bronze, merit), and Bethany (Silver).

The choir's main function is of course to lead the music at the 10 am Sunday service, supported on first Sundays by the music group on the balcony. Apart from our commitments at Christ Church the

choir joined forces with other local churches to sing evensong at St. Robert's, Pannal in June, singing some interesting and challenging repertoire. A big thank you to all the musicians for their hard work and commitment throughout the year.

We have continued the lunchtime recital series on the first Wednesday of the month with performances on piano, clarinet, organ, cello, singing, recorders and guitar. Please do come along and listen for some excellent musical entertainment! Thank you to all the performers and also to John and Denise on once again providing lunch for us afterwards.

On a sad note, my sister and our alto Janet lost her battle with cancer in February. We were very sorry to lose her, but I take great comfort from the number of people who attended her funeral, including most of the choir who kindly sang at the service, together with many guest singers.

It was with mixed feelings that I left my position as organist and Director of Music in September 2024, as I spent many happy and musical years at Christ Church. I am, however, delighted that music is continuing to prosper under David's leadership, and I look forward to hearing how everything progresses.

(David) I was very happy to be appointed as the Director of Music in succession to Christine, who left the music in a very healthy state, and I am looking forward to maintaining this high standard and hopefully enabling the music to grow further. My thanks also to Adam who kept things ticking over so successfully through the autumn months.

Talk about being thrown in at the deep end! I arrived mid-November to the warmest of welcomes from the parish and the choir, with a fortnight to go until the Advent Carol Service, and a further three weeks until Christmas. The choir responded admirably to the challenge, and we successfully presented a good balance of old favourites and new music at both Carol Services before taking a welcome post-Christmas break. Thank you to everyone who has supported me through the busy season. I am very much looking forward to building on this in 2025.

Christine Alp & David Darling (Director of Music)

2.4 Sacristan and Serving Team

I was very pleased that 2024 saw two additional young people step up to join the Serving Team. They joined the 4 regular adults and two teenage helpers who together provide support to the clergy at eucharistic services throughout the year.



We managed to support all the Sunday 10am Communion services and the additional services of Christmas Eve, Holy Week, Maundy Thursday and Easter morn 6am. As Servers we help ensure that services run smoothly by preparing and clearing the Altar, leading processions, and helping with any issues that may occur during the service.

Anyone can be a server and we strive to have a mix of young people and those a bit older! Being a Server is great for young people, it provides a meaningful and responsible role in church, gaining valuable experience in teamwork, independence, and communication - plus a good dose of fun! For adults it provides a unique opportunity to deepen your understanding of, and to take a part in, the communion service, learning more of its background and meaning.

So, if you'd like to know the difference between a corporal and a pall, which is the Gospel candle, what happens to the wafers and wine at the end of the service or which liturgical colour to wear then maybe you should think about being a server!

2.5 Sidespeople

The sidespeople team continues to perform a valuable role, working, alongside others, to welcome our congregation into church each week. We are presently extremely short-staffed. We have some team members covering more than one session per month and we have very little flexibility for holiday and sickness cover and/or to cover special services. We thank all our valued members of the team for their ongoing support and look forward to welcoming and hope we will be able to welcome additional members of the team during 2025.

Karen Baker

2.6 Harrogate School of Theology and Mission (HSTM)

Christ Church was one of HSTM's founding Churches and I continue to represent us on its committee. We continue our usual pattern of four main lectures and four less formal seminars. This year our main lectures were:



Dr. David Moffitt on the Epistle to the Hebrews. Possibly the most academic lecture we have had. Some people found it a bit heavy. However, if you could cope it was insightful and illuminating. Hebrews itself is not easy, but Dr. Moffitt opened up its complexities with faithful scholarship.

Alan Garrow, Vicar of St. Peter's Harrogate has made a prolonged study of The Didache one of the first Christian writings after the New Testament. In doing so he has not only opened up the book itself but also thrown extra light on parts of the New Testament particularly the Acts of the Apostles. Fortunately, Alan is able to communicate abstruse ideas lucidly.

Rt. Rev Alan Arora is Bishop of Kirkstall in our wider diocese. He gave us an uplifting talk on spirituality, based on the writings of the much-loved former archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey.

Professor Nicola Slee talked on the Lord's Prayer. She emphasised how unfamiliar approaches can bring out surprising aspects of the familiar text. We say it so glibly it is worth stopping and pondering.

Our seminars have changed in form. They have been using CD based teaching courses but the supply ran out and we have found that there is a rich pool of local scholarship able to provide input and guide discussion.

Rachel Crossley pointed out the importance of women in planting the earliest churches. Think of Lydia in Acts 16 and work on from there.

Jon Reynolds opened our minds to the wonders of Modern Physics. The world is stranger than we imagined and in ways that make theological responses much more interesting.

Dr. David Hanson talked from years of clinical experience and deep study on the problem of Assisted Dying. This was a highly topical subject and attracted our biggest ever seminar attendance.

Penny Pullen talked on the Body of Christ. How do we involve people who are disabled? But in particular those whose disabilities may not be immediately obvious or needs simple. She spoke out of family experience of ME.

We also have also run online discussion groups working through Professor David Ford's masterly commentary on St. John's Gospel. Our series for the next academic year will start off with him giving our first live lecture.

Visit us on our Web Site: hstm.org.uk to see more of what we have to offer or to listen to our past lectures.

Revd Dr Geoff Turner

2.7 Lent Courses

For our 2024 gathered study through Lent, we chose a course written by Bishop Nick Baines, Bishop of Leeds, entitled *Daring to See God Now*. This is one of many courses available as part of the York Courses series. Groups met at three separate home locations over five weeks, covering the following themes -

- The Good News of God
- The time is now
- God is present
- Change your mind
- Live it!

Participants followed a booklet and listened to lively discussions and insights from four contributors: Keith Ward, an Anglican Priest; Cathy Galvin, a journalist and poet; David Wilbourne, an author and former Bishop of Llandaff; and Rachel Lampard MBE, a former Methodist vice-president. Based on Mark's Gospel, the course enabled us to consider how we could 'proclaim the Good News of God' in our lives whilst challenging us to articulate 'what the Good News is' and raising questions about change, repentance, and how we can evidence the changes that the Gospel brings to each of us. Throughout each week, we enjoyed meeting and sharing personal stories and testimonies, taking time to worship and pray together. My group enjoyed sharing a glass of wine and toasted hot cross buns on the final evening and rounded off the session with Compline.

Many thanks to Noreen, the McMasters, and the Mottersheads for their hospitality and to Tony and Elizabeth for joining me in leading the groups.

Caroline Taylor (Curate)

2.8 Flower Arrangements

In 2024 the flower team continued to be as sustainable as possible. When haven't used any florists foam for two years and the Ladies have adapted to using chicken wire to hold the structure of their flowers.

Easter last year we decided to create planted gardens in the windows as our local growers didn't have many flowers available. Once Easter was over the plants were then put in the border outside church. Each of the gardens were different. The ladies are always free to create whatever they like with the resources provided to them.

We used a local grower for Harvest and there were so many beautiful dahlia arrangements the church looked stunning.

Unfortunately, at Christmas the flowers have to come from a supplier however we managed to choose as many seasonal varieties as possible.

Donations to the floral fund are always welcome. As are new helpers, no experience is necessary just contact the office if you would like to join in.

Tara Sagar

2.9 Sunday Morning Refreshments

Thank you to all those who serve refreshments and wash up after the Sunday morning services. There are currently 13 people on the rota and a further 10 people on the reserves list. We are

needing a couple of extra helpers. If anyone can help either on a regular monthly basis or on the reserve list, please could you leave your details with the office.

Fairtrade coffee and tea products are used so we are helping other communities. A special thank you for the kind weekly biscuit donations.

Christine Lofthouse

3 PEOPLE

3.1 Revd Caroline Taylor - Curate

Firstly, I would like to thank you all for your continued support, prayers, and encouragement. As I write this report, I've almost completed year three of my curacy and will soon embark on my fourth and final year. The last year has been one of more 'first' experiences, which included conducting a burial of ashes and a wedding. Both were very moving occasions for different reasons, and it's a tremendous privilege and honour to serve in this way. I also enjoy the weekly rhythm of life at Christ Church, especially getting to know you all more and making new connections and friendships.

As part of my curacy training, I had the opportunity to visit HMP Leeds, a category B men's prison, as part of a group of curates. Father Roger, the Anglican Chaplain, arranged a full tour for us, including the library, kitchens, gym, chapel, isolation unit, hospital, and many prison wings. We were able to meet prisoners first-hand and hear about their life inside. Many of the prisoners we spoke to had earned the right to hold roles and responsibilities, enabling them to learn new skills and confidence. The experience gave me hope for their future following release or resettlement. On the whole, I found the experience challenging but profoundly moving.

As many of you will know, I'm not a full-time paid priest but a self-supporting minister, meaning I have another vocation and paid role that I carry out over three days. I work as a Rehabilitation Officer for people with sight loss as part of Health and Adult Services in North Yorkshire Council. My role is very varied, and no two days are the same. A typical day involves contact and visits with those people allocated to me, requiring a specialist assessment. Most people need support and guidance to learn to use new equipment and skills to help them maximise their independence and well-being. So, one day I might help someone learn to use a magnifier or an app on their smart phone, the next, I might be teaching someone to use a long cane to enable them to navigate a route safely.

How might I blend these two vocations? Most of the time, they are separate roles, but recently, two exciting opportunities have arisen for me. Firstly, I have started to lead a few services at Vision Support Harrogate District, including Harvest and Christmas services. Up to now, about thirty of us have gathered to worship, followed by refreshments and lots of chat!

I'm looking forward to presiding over more services for them. Secondly, I will speak with another work colleague (a member of the Sikh community) about the importance of faith in the workplace as part of the council's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion programme. I'm not entirely sure what will come of this, but discussing faith in a secular space is undoubtedly refreshing.

Revd Caroline (Curate)

3.2 Pastoral Care Team

Provision of Pastoral Care continues in a deliberate informal and formal combination. We seek to maintain a Church community and character which looks out for all and is welcoming beyond its bounds; and although we fall short of this, such remains our intention and aim. Informal conversations over times of tea & coffee after worship are a key part, as also the availability through

the Office of making direct requests for assistance, visits, Holy Communion at Home, or prayer. Visits happen informally and by deliberate plan, these latter co-ordinated to a great part by a member of our retired clergy (the Revd Linda Potter), and these include visits to Care or Residential Homes and to the homes of individuals. The monthly 'Lunchtime Recitals', 'Meet & Eat' and 'Connect Wednesday' times are intended to offer fellowship, support and opportunity, as well as the provision of annual occasions such as the Candlemas Pantomime and the Summer Garden Party ; weekly the Wednesday 'Intercessory Prayers' and information and prayer intentions within the 'Weekly Bulletin' are also offered as a means of prayerful support for those however near or far, as well as the daily (weekdays) 'Christ at Work' prayer link. The presence of a careful warm welcome (at the door for worship, or in the Office on weekdays) is a vital part of offering pastoral care, which we hope makes 'crossing the threshold' more comfortable and welcoming. We seek to maintain and develop all these.

Revd Matthew Evans

3.3 Bereavement Support Group

A member of the group reaches out to the family/next of kin after a funeral at Christ Church. Information is shared about how to contact a family member/next of kin when Jill completes a funeral form for the admin of the church.

From April 2024 up to April 9th 2025 there have been 15 funeral services in Christ Church. The majority have been officiated by Matthew.

The bereavement group co-ordinator is now Liz Leatherbarrow. Gratitude is extended to Noreen Abell for her organisation and tenure in the role previously as the co-ordinator, Noreen has continued helping as a valued member in the group.

The November All Souls service was a moving, peaceful service that was well attended by bereaved individuals remembering their loved ones. Thanks are extended to all who helped organise and assist with this annual service of remembrance.

Liz Leatherbarrow (Chair of the Bereavement Support Group)

3.4 Welcome, Inclusion and Respect

We continue to keep a focus upon 'Welcome, Inclusion and Respect' in all that we seek to offer, to be and do. In our Service provision we continue to seek to make acts of worship accessible in format and planning, and respectful to all, as well as inclusive in nature and delivery. We continue to provide Zoom video links to the 10am Service each Sunday and to Evening Prayer services through the week. Where possible (and requested) we seek to make this provision available to assist with Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals.

With our constrained current financial situation, we do not know if or when further progress may be able to be made on the '2020 Vision: Welcome & Access' Project, but we continue to develop a reasonable and as effective as possible a solution to improve all access - including physical - into opportunities for worship, community, and fellowship, including through the use of the 'Little red Bus'. We strive not to allow welcome, inclusion or respect to be lost amid financial or administrative pressures, nor through complacency. We welcome insight and assistance with this, and with keeping our sight and vision clear.

Revd Matthew Evans (Vicar)

3.5 Safeguarding

At Christ Church our culture has always been that the safety and well-being of all people, especially children and vulnerable adults, is taken seriously. This year we have continued to hold ourselves to that standard and to prioritise safeguarding.

As most of you are aware Jane Boyd, our previous safeguarding officer stepped down from the role within the last year. We wanted to take this opportunity to thank Jane for all her valuable hard work and commitment to this role over the years. Jane's experience and expertise as been valuable and we thank Jane for supporting Carla in the new role.

Carla Baranovsky, who is currently completing DBS checks for the junior church has taken on the role of Safeguarding Officer for the church.

At Christ Church we continue to ensure that all PCC members and those volunteering with the Junior Church and various roles, have current safeguarding training and DBS checks in place (renewed every three years).

As safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, we encourage all Church members to inform the Safeguarding Officer and/or clergy of any concerns, however big or small. If we are not able to help at a local level, we consult with the Safeguarding team at Leeds Diocese for advice.

The Church of England run online safeguarding courses concerning basic safeguarding in a Church environment and domestic abuse awareness - these are available to any Church Member at (safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org). If you have difficulties accessing the course on your own Carla can also sit alongside whilst you complete.

Carla can be contacted at (carlawebb46@gmail.com) or via the Church Office. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you need to talk through any concerns. There is no such thing as 'a silly safeguarding question'.

Carla would like to thank everyone for the support that she has received starting in this role. Carla would like to also thank everyone's commitment over the last year to ensure that Christ Church remains a safe and welcoming place for all.

Carla Baranovsky (Safeguarding Officer)

3.6 Health, Safety and Environmental Activities

We continue to take Health, Safety and Environment very seriously, both in the Parish Centre and within the Church itself. Our inspections and service contracts cover the boilers, intruder and fire alarms, fire extinguishers, kitchen equipment and garden equipment. The church roof, gutters and downpipes are cleared of leaves, though this continues to be an ongoing problem due to the significant trees around the building. The drive and side pathway is regularly checked and power-washed to create as safe and non-slippery surface as possible; during this past year the path around the Parish Centre has been extended and re-laid, and significantly improved at the rear, through a Council Community Grant. All trees within the church curtilage are checked according to regulation (and perceived need) for health, and action taken; accordingly, these, as well as the shrubs, close-mown and deliberately wilder grass of the churchyard, are all managed with regard to environmental care as well as good land management (see Gardening Team report).

We have a strong recycling programme within the Parish Centre which greatly reduces our 'general rubbish'. David Convery, the Parish Centre Steward, separates plastics, tins, bottles, paper and cardboard, taken to the Wetherby Road Recycling Centre once a week. We also collect used stamps for Harrogate Easier Living Project, and unwanted spectacles for a charity. Jane Boyd does a great job selling unwanted DVDs, CDs and mobile phones to raise funds for the church; we also thank Jane for reviewing our First Aid boxes, and the local Community Responders who check the defibrillator on a regular basis. As part of a deliberate attitude towards 'Reduce, Reuse & Recycle' we maintain our 'Christ Church Marketplace' to offer all sorts of items that parishioners wish to 'rehome'; vast array of items is sold for donations to the church, and anything that does not sell goes to charity or is sold on 'Vinted'. Especial thanks to Tessa Bendelow for her help and support with this project. See also 'Tools With A Mission' (4.5)

We continue to be aware of our use of gas and electricity use and ensure heating and lighting are used only as needed, including reducing the underlying temperature set for the church and the length of time given for heating for services, whilst still trying to ensure we preserve the fabric of building, organ and ornaments. The Gardening Team equipment is all electric powered, and the majority of our lights are LED or low energy. We submit our energy usage statistics under the National Church 'Energy Footprint Tool' which provides a benchmark for future decisions and action on energy use reduction and insulation improvements; and are part of a national church project to help us identify and reduce our energy uses. In seeking to maximise the heating and energy used we offer times, across the winter months, when the partly occupied Parish Centre can provide a 'Warm Welcome Space' to others without sufficient warmth at home or elsewhere.

We continue towards 'Carbon Net Zero' through making assessments of our buildings, activities and lifestyles (weaknesses, opportunities, small & major projects). A noticeboard of information on environmental care and sustainability is supported with regular articles in Grapevine, with thanks to Christine Jack for these. We have set our path towards the Arocha 'Gold Award' with its focus of encouraging and enabling full Creation Care; this covers all aspects of our buildings, lifestyle, worship and teaching, both as a gathered and scattered community, with the intention of establishing sustainably changed life patterns. We offer thanks to Christine Jack, Shirley Morris and David Burns for their insight and drive with these actions. We continue to pay for Carbon Offsets for the carbon usage we do currently create. We continue to make awareness of the natural world a regular part of our prayer - in appreciation and concern.

Jill Walters & Revd Matthew

4 OUTREACH & COMMUNICATION

4.1 Parish Clerk's Report

Weddings

During 2024 we welcomed a total of 4 weddings in church and 1 Renewal of Vows. We also read the Banns of Marriage for 10 couples who lived in the Parish but who chose to marry at other churches. Of the 4 weddings at Christ Church, 2 couples lived within the Harrogate area, 1 couple lived in Bradford and 1 couple lived in Nottinghamshire. The Qualifying Connection for both of the couples living outside the parish was 6 months or more of regular worship. Most of the couples favoured mixed music for their weddings using the church organ and multi-media music to enhance their service.

The weekday (non-clergy) Wedding Team consisted of David Convery and Jill Walters whilst the weekend Wedding Team consisted of Kate Jones, Kath Barff and Jill Walters with two of the three being present on rota at every wedding. Their job was to make sure the services ran smoothly by assisting with the families, administration and sound system.

Baptisms

Baptisms continued on the first Sunday of each month at the new earlier time of 11.30am with an unrestricted number of guests. This year, 18 candidates were baptised: 9 candidates under 1 year old, 8 candidates between 1 and 4 years of age and 1 candidate over 18 years of age.

Thanks go to Christine Alp for playing the organ at most of the services and to Adrian Selway who played when Christine was unavailable. Thanks also to the Baptism Support Team who were on hand at each baptism preparation meeting and each baptism service to welcome the families. Revd Matthew Evans presided at 5 baptism services and Revd Caroline Taylor presided at 4.

Funerals

Twenty on Funerals/Memorial Services/Thanksgiving Services were held within the church, and four funeral services were held at Stonefall Crematorium. We also interred 4 sets of ashes within the churchyard. Services were conducted in the main by Revd Matthew Evans with Revd Caroline Taylor, Revd Chris Parkin, Revd Dr Geoff Turner, Revd Tony Callan-Travis, Canon Michael Hunter and Revd Gordon Hay assisting on occasion. Christine Alp played the organ for most of the services with Adrian Selway, David Darling and Andrew Roberts substituting when Christine was unavailable.

I would like to conclude this 2024 report by thanking most sincerely our former Director of Music, Christine Alp, for her organ playing during these services. Wedding and Funeral services in particular could require Christine to play all manner of pieces of music – some well-known to her and others completely new. We could always rely on her to support the families with whatever they required with huge professionalism and skill. We shall greatly miss Christine and her wonderful organ playing here at Christ Church as she takes up her new role as Organist and Director of Music at St John the Evangelist, Burgess Hill, West Sussex. We join together to wish her every good luck and much happiness in her new home.

Jill Walters Parish Clerk

4.2 Deanery Synod

This report is not about the structure or general workings of Harrogate Deanery Synod (HDS). Please refer to the website for further information in these areas (<http://www.harrogatedeanery.org/>)

This report covers the central work covered by HDS, from January to December 2024. Your two representatives from Christ Church are Christine Jack and Beth Hamer; if you wish to know more about your representatives, do please ask. Both are coopted onto the Christ Church PCC for this purpose.

The year kicked off in January, with a visit from the Rt. Rev. Anna Eltringham, Bishop of Ripon, who set the goals for this year firmly in the court of Creation Care and Climate Change. She asked us to consider what we can do, and how we can engage and encourage others to take care of and protect our environment. The Eco Church (ARocha) project is the recommended pathway, a scheme which covers five categories:

- 1) Worship and teaching
- 2) Management of church buildings
- 3) Management of church land
- 4) Community and global engagement
- 5) Lifestyle

At the next meeting in March, which was held at St. John's Church Bilton, Rev. Dr. Alan Garrow, the Area Dean, explained that all the synods this year are focused on the Eco Church programme.

This will be **The Harrogate Deanery Synod Eco Church Year**. Each synod will look at a different section of the journey. The first focus was on **Buildings, and Energy** use. He showed a slide to show the progress that churches are making, and Christ Church has the ARocha Silver Award. To understand the award scheme, please consult the Eco Church (Arocha) website. The Dean encouraged the churches to work towards these so that Harrogate Deanery can be awarded Eco Deanery status, which contributes to the Eco Diocese status nationwide.

The June meeting was held at the Washburn Heritage Centre in Fewston, where the guest speaker was Rev. Ben Askew, Pioneer Minister, from Kairos Network Church. The focus was on church networking and the work of Kairos Church, which has pioneered Forest Church, and **Community Walks** through the Valley Cardens and Pinewoods.

In November, Synod met at St. James' Church in Wetherby. Jemima Parker, the Diocesan Environment Officer, spoke on '**Eco Church Lifestyle**'. Mrs Deborah Booth, **Harrogate Area Environment Champion**, spoke of the need to continue our 'Green Journey' and offered her support by answering queries and helping to deal with problems. The Area Dean informed the Synod that the Harrogate Deanery Synod Eco Church Year will conclude on 21st January 2025.

The Area Dean also advised that the focus of the Synods in 2025 will be **Encouraging Lay Ministry** (ELM), but **Eco Church** will remain as a regular synod agenda item and the Eco Church slide will be updated with new information as Churches progress their Eco journey. The Area Dean reinforced the message that it is hoped that every Parish/Benefice will register as an Eco Church, and that as a Synod we will continue to encourage Parishes on their Eco journey.

Christine Jack & Beth Hamer

4.3 "Meet and Eat"

Meet and Eat continues to run very similar to last year. The aim of it is for anyone to join us for a light lunch and a chat with friends. We serve soup and a roll, followed by a dessert then tea or coffee.

We serve approximately 30 guests. We do ask guests to sign up if they are coming, just for an idea of numbers and food allergies but there is usually plenty if anyone just pops in. We do not charge but guests can make a small donation if they wish to cover costs.

In December we did try to create a festive theme, with crackers, mince pies and a Christmas cake baked by one of our volunteers. The volunteers also spent a morning creating snowmen decorations to give as presents to the guests.

We would just like to say thank you to those who help run the session each month and make the guests feel so welcome.

Susan Braithwaite

4.4 Charitable Giving

The Christ Church congregation continued to be very generous throughout 2024. Here are some details of the good causes that we supported.

This year the congregation were asked to nominate charities to benefit from the Christmas collections. The PCC made the final decision and Martin House, WaterAid and MND (the motor neurone disease charity) were selected in addition to Christ Church. The collections and donations

this year totalled £2529.06p from a total of 6 services which was divided between the four chosen charities.

Despite the cost of postage, Denise and John Lynn once again sold many Christmas Cards in aid of Martin House Children's Hospice raising a fantastic total of £624.20p.

As usual, the Happy Wanderer organisation received an annual donation as thanks for the regular use of a bus.

All the goods collected at our Harvest service were equally divided between the Harrogate Homeless Project and the Harrogate and District Foodbank. In addition to this, Christ Church continues to provide fantastic support for the Foodbank on a regular basis, totalling over 2.6 tonnes of goods. Thank you for all the donations of goods and also a total of £3300 in financial support which enabled me to buy the Foodbanks "urgent needs".

Various other charities have benefitted from retiring collections at funerals.

The charitable collections by Junior Church, The Children's Society, Christian Aid and TWAM are covered elsewhere in this report.

Thank you everybody for your continuing generosity!

Kath Barff

4.5 Tools With A Mission (TWAM)

"If you go down in the crypt today your sure of a big surprise,
for every tool you ever did see is lying there pile on pile .
And pretty soon a great big van will ship them off to T-W-A-M"

Tools with a mission is a National Charity that gathers discarded tools refurbishes them and sends them by the container load to third world countries. "Tools" is a broad term; we have shipped sowing machines and knitting machines as well as drills, saws and spades.

Christ Church is the collection point for the area and in 2024 we had 2 full van collections for TWAM. Where they all come from is a mystery known only to God, but when they are a worthwhile load I ring up TWAM's local transport team and a van arrives and ships them down to the Refurbishment centre in Rugby. All we must do is get them from the crypt to the van. That is hard and heavy work, but thanks to an initiative by Jill Walters and a Big Big thank you to Anna Glazier and her amazing band of Community Fit helpers (a team of community runners) who finish their work-out by bringing the tools as far as the Narthex. All we have to do is provide a much less athletic crew to load them into the van. This usually happens on a Thursday morning. No great strength is required but many hands make light work and the more people who will turn up when a notice goes out the better. If you wish to help regularly (about once a quarter) let Geoff Turner known. Finally, we also thank David Convery who oversees most of the tool deliveries and takes them down into the crypt for storage. No mean feat with some of the items that we receive!

Revd Geoff Turner/Gill Walters, Coordinators.

4.6 Children's Society

We continue to raise money for the Children's Society through house boxes. Thank you to everyone who supports the charity in this way. The next planned collection of the boxes will be in September. If your box is full before then, please speak to Rachel Lachmann.

Rachel Lachmann

4.7 Happy Wanderer Bus

As I am sure most members of Christ Church know, we organise a minibus to collect and return people within Harrogate who wish to attend the 10am Sunday service but require transport assistance. This service could not survive without the volunteer drivers who offer their time to drive the minibus, and I will start this report with a sincere thank you to each and every one of them. **Let me add that we are always looking for drivers to join the rota and so if you are able to give an hour of your time either side of the 10am service, then we would love to hear from you. Please contact either the church office or me on my number below.**

We have six terrific volunteer drivers which means doing one Sunday so, if there are others who feel they could help, we would be very grateful for extra drivers. This year we said goodbye to Simon Rollinson who has done a sterling job as one of our drivers for a very long time, we are very grateful for his support over the years. We have a keen replacement in Jan Price who has other roles at church and has fitted in well to the team so we are back to 6 volunteer drivers but always looking for succession planning if there are any volunteers who wish to put themselves forward, they should contact the parish office.

Unfortunately, have also lost some very dear members of the parish this year who journeyed with us, we pray for them, and are glad that we could be of help to them in these final years.

As things stand, we have had a full bus for most of the year, which has had a real sense of community. This has reduced due to loss and also some members not being well enough in mind or body to attend. We have been able to ask the church to visit them for communion which has been organised through the parish office.

We do not provide the service on bank holiday weekends to ensure there is no obligation for drivers to miss holiday time with their families. The Happy Wanderers is a Harrogate based charity which offers the minibuses free of charge, though Christ Church do, typically, pay a donation to the charity once a year. In addition, a number of us volunteer to raise money for them through cash collections during the year. We are lucky to have the use of these minibuses and our thanks must also go to Les and others at Happy Wanderers who work so hard running the charity to keep these vehicles on the road. God Bless

Rowena Wright (Mobile Number 07986 817217)

4.8 Church Wardens Report

One of the jobs of the Wardens is to ensure the maintenance of the fabric of the building. Throughout the last year work has been undertaken to maintain our beautiful church and full details are reported in the Building Maintenance Report. The wardens would like to thank everyone who has supported and assisted with this work over the past year. The Church Wardens team of Tim, Shirley and Norman continued in office during 2024 and we hope to recruit another warden, to bring the number back to four. We must also say a huge thank you to Kath Barff for all her hard work as a Warden over the last year.

The inventory and terrier are largely up to date, with few changes since last year and a review of policies has begun that cover the various aspects of church governance that we have responsibility for - from Health & Safety to Safeguarding, Lone Working to Parish Centre management.

Twelve months seems to have flown by with a fantastic array of services and different types of worship offered to journey through the church year. The year started with our Candlemas Pantomime, Rapunzel and supper. I think the word would be "unforgettable"!

The now annual Jumble Sale followed - piles of goods, seemingly unwanted, but selling to bring a useful income for the church.

We have experienced quiet times such as the wonderful reflective Holy Week services and extremely busy times such as the St George's Day and St Aidan's carol service. Christmas services commenced with the Advent Carol service, followed, very quickly, with our regular Christmas services of the Nine Lessons and Carols, Christingle Service and party for Junior Church, The Journey to Bethlehem, where we welcomed many families to Church and the candlelit Midnight Mass. This was as usual a busy time for the clergy. We have welcomed many groups who have shared our beautiful building, for nativities, carol services, We have also shared some amazing social activities as a church family like the fantastic garden party and the Harvest Supper.

There are not enough words to begin to thank you all for every part you play in supporting our Church and making Christ Church the fantastic place that it is. To all the Clergy, numerous volunteers and teams who rise to every challenge, be it cleaning, maintaining, serving, collating, printing, counting, laundering, musical, catering, moving, fixing – thank you. For your financial support – thank you. Most importantly for your love, prayers and support – thank you.

The Wardens

4.9 Parish Centre

2024 saw the Parish Centre return to full opening with bookings increasing post Covid.

We continued to be home to many regular bookers including Keep Fit (twice weekly), Dementia Forward (twice weekly), Spa Sweethearts WI, 'Songbirds' Children's Music classes, Brownies and Guides, RSPB (Harrogate), Harrogate Choral Society, National Association of Decorative Fine Art Societies (NADFAS), Alzheimer's Society 'Singing for the Brain', Jonothan Potter's twice weekly Art classes, Pilates class with Mojo Fitness, Betjemen Society meetings, Harrogate Retired Clergy meetings, Harrogate & Knaresborough Conservative Association Supper Clubs and the two annual visits from St Aidan's Y7 pupils. We also welcomed 3 new regular classes – Robert Hemmings with his weekly Literature Classes, Anna McIntee with her weekly Yoga Class and Debbie Moloney with her twice monthly 'Joined by a Thread' Sewing Class and regular Saturday workshops. We also welcomed new groups Chub Club, Julie Cooper with her 'Gong Bath' Class and The Sibling Group but sadly these three ventures did not remain with us in the Parish Centre due to either dwindling group numbers or space and storage constraints.

We continued to welcome the occasional one-off events such as family birthday and baptism parties (5 in total), meetings, funeral teas (4 in total), social gatherings, corporate and charity events, AGMs, sports and educational awards nights and choir 'away' days. We were also used on occasion for Diocesan and Deanery meetings and gatherings. We had 3 very successful candlelit concerts in church with Ignite Concerts who ran their refreshments stall in the main hall during their intermission and we were also host to the Royal School of Church Music 'Voices for Life' examinations.

Saturday bookings began to increase in popularity and in total we hired out 17 Saturdays which was a big increase on 2023.

The Parish Centre although remaining open for business was hit with a week of road closures around Church Square and Park Parade for resurfacing at the end of May. During that week all of our user groups had to cancel their classes as members were unable to navigate the closed roads around the church.

We were used as a Polling Station twice in 2024. Once in May for the Mayoral Election and of course again in July for the General Election. On both occasions we were asked to accommodate 2 electoral wards due to the lack of available venues.

The Parish Centre was also widely used for church activities. We continued to be home to Junior Church, Meet & Eat, Recital lunches, Connect Wednesday, Baptism Preparation, PCC Meetings, Standing Committee Meetings, Collating, the Creche, Good Friday lunch, Easter Breakfast, fundraising activities (tombolas, cake stalls, the Candlemas Panto, Jumble Sale, Christmas Fair and the Christingle Party) , the Annual Memorial Tea, APCM/APM and of course any clergy / administrative meetings that needed to take place.

We remained the local collection point for Tools with a Mission. Tools were delivered into the concourse and Steward, David Convery relocated them into the crypt until it was time for the TWAM van to come and collect the tools to deliver to the refurbishing centres in Rugby and Ipswich. On the night before the van collection, we were supported by Community Fit who, coordinated by Geoff Turner, then brought all of the tools up from the crypt into the Narthex of the church in readiness for their transfer into the TWAM van first thing next morning.

We continued to recycle as much as we could within the Parish Centre – collecting plastic, glass, tin cans/foil, paper and cardboard. Thank you to Parish Centre Steward David Convery for undertaking the weekly recycling trip to the Harrogate Household Recycling Centre for us. We also acted as a collection point for Foodbank donations, stamps and unwanted spectacles.

We introduced a new fundraising venture in 2024 in the shape of Christ Church Market Place. Supporting our policy of reduce, reuse and recycle, unwanted items have been donated to the table for others to purchase. Since its inception in April 2024, we have raised over £1600 for church funds. Thank you to everyone who has supported this venture.

On the maintenance side of the Parish Centre, numerous inspections have been carried out including those for the boiler, the fire and intruder alarm systems, kitchen equipment and fire extinguishers.

As in previous years, I must once again issue a big thank you to our many unsung heroes. These include the volunteers who undertake food and beverage service support, those who wash the kitchen cloths to keep everything nice and clean, our secret shoppers who keep an eye out for bargains for our consumables to help keep our costs down and of course to our keyholders who come out late at night or at weekends to open up and lock up the premises for our many user groups; our office helpers, our service sheet collators, our Foodbank collectors and deliverers. Here's to our continued success into 2025.

Jill Walters

4.10 Buildings Maintenance

The major work undertaken during 2024 was that of the Clock Faces restoration, carried out by Terry Hill of Hill's Tower Clocks.

A new, raised, wider & level path around the parish centre - provided by a Community Grant, has been built, to allow for wheelchair, walkers & pushchairs access / egress through the rear fire-door. Further movement in the east elevation of the Choir Vestry wall is being monitored and advice being sought from a structural engineer.

Stephenson's Stonemason's carried out a survey of the gravestones within the churchyard.

The Quinquennial has been undertaken and we await the results before we assess what repairs or other work may be required.

Tim Bendelow & David Burns

4.11 Gardening Team

The Christ Church gardening operation is now fully electric which has dramatically reduced the cost of maintaining our mowers and strimmer as well as eliminating the adverse environmental impact of

petrol-driven equipment. During the year we did experience the failure of one of our biggest battery packs (list price £350) which was fortunately replaced by the manufacturer as it was within its 3-year warranty period. Otherwise, all our "Ego " brand equipment is performing very reliably (touch wood) and occasional repairs needed after " arguments with gravestones" have been completed at very reasonable cost. Although a small team we try to keep the grounds tidy and accessible for all who visit. I would like to thank Jill and David for their help in getting the bins emptied. A big thank you to the others who give their time to help. We are always looking for volunteers!

Victor Skaife-Clarke

4.12 Reflections on the workings of the PCC

The PCC meets 6 times a year and act as the managing body for the church. All important decisions and financial commitments are presented to, discussed and agreed by the PCC. Members are also Trustees for Christ Church and are registered with the Charity Commission.

The PCC is made up of different representatives of our church community, Clergy, Church Wardens, Readers, Safeguarding Officer and elected members of the congregation. The total number of PCC members is governed by the number on our electoral roll. Currently we should have a PCC of 20 members though we currently have 16, so there are some vacancies.

Our PCC is well run and structured with clear areas of focus to ensure the wide range of activities that ensure a functioning church that meets its obligations to the Diocese and cares for its congregation.

Being on the PCC is not onerous, the meetings lively, but the impact is profound and meaningful – maybe you should consider joining us?

Paul Mottershead - PCC Secretary



God of Mission

Who alone brings growth to your Church,
Send your Holy Spirit to give
Vision to our planning,
Wisdom to our actions,
And power to our witness.
Help our Church to grow
in numbers
in spiritual commitment to you,
and in service
to our local community,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

A prayer from "Leading Your Church Into Growth"