



# Christ Church | High Harrogate

## Annual Report 2025



# Welcome

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## Table of Contents

1	Vicars Report .....	1
2	WORSHIP & LEARNING .....	2
2.1	Baptism Group .....	2
2.2	Junior Church .....	2
2.3	Choir and Music .....	3
2.4	Sacristan and Serving Team .....	4
2.5	Sidespeople .....	4
2.6	Harrogate School of Theology and Mission (HSTM).....	4
2.7	Lent Courses.....	5
2.8	Flower Arrangements .....	5
2.9	Sunday Morning Refreshments.....	6
3	PEOPLE .....	6
3.1	Revd Caroline Taylor - Curate .....	6
3.2	Pastoral Care Team .....	7
3.3	Bereavement Support Group.....	7
3.4	Welcome, Inclusion and Respect .....	8
3.5	Safeguarding .....	8
3.6	Health, Safety and Environmental Activities.....	9
4	OUTREACH & COMMUNICATION .....	10
4.1	Parish Clerk's Report .....	10
4.2	Deanery Synod .....	11
4.3	"Meet and Eat" .....	11
4.4	Charitable Giving.....	11
4.5	Tools With A Mission (TWAM).....	12
4.6	Children's Society.....	12
4.7	Happy Wanderer Bus .....	12
4.8	Church Wardens Report.....	13
4.9	Parish Centre.....	13
4.10	Buildings Maintenance.....	15
4.11	Gardening Team.....	15
4.12	Reflections on the workings of the PCC.....	15

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# 1 Vicars Report

Welcome to our Annual Report for our life at Christ Church over 2025.

I wish to say Thank You.

No surprise there maybe.

I do so without having read the reports contained here.

'Bit of a risk', you might say, 'what about the negative bits - the mistakes, the failings, the hiccups, the 'undone' things ?

Definitely Thank You.

In so many ways 'Church' and 'Faith' (and perhaps even more so, 'Religion') have very bad image problems: some, sadly, all-too deserved; some acquired undeservedly, through the possible ignorance or bias of others. These are probably too many and too varied for us to counter and work-through systematically; but we do try to be aware, and we do try both to respond and proactively address - this year, last year, next year, on.

We do not, in any way, under any circumstances or by any definition, claim to be perfect. We might not even claim to be right. We leave that to God - and we, individually but even more together, aim to seek-out, search-for, trust and follow God; and for that we seek to Welcome All, because 'the more the merrier' and 'the more we are the more we may see the path in the wisdom and clear sight of others'.

So, whilst we are genuinely truly chuffed and delighted to see and receive thanks and positives and successes and hurray's - so do we say a very genuine Thank You for highlighting the 'oops', the 'not yet's', the 'this didn't work' and the 'we still keep trying', and more. We will keep trying. We will try to keep listening and looking to each other and beyond and to God. We will celebrate doing so, knowing that to do so is in God's strength and grace and presence - and that is good company, in any success and any task.

Thank You.

Thank you for helping and enabling this to happen. Thank you for, knowingly or unknowingly, sharing this and your insight and your grace with a whole world which you meet. Don't be surprised by the wealth of activity and people and achievement mentioned in these pages, not to be taken for granted; don't be disheartened by the mistakes or failings, if they induce a sigh, let it be one which allows for a new breath, a new resolve, and a new trust - not our power, but God - we just need to trust, receive and live to follow. It is a little bit easier said than done, but these pages and your part within them show how you have already done more than you might think. Thank You and thank you for thanking each other.

Our annual report: we live, we strive, we learn, we follow; we apologise, we try again; we say Thank You, and we mean it deeply. A whole Community within these pages, and behind them, and around them. The whole grace of God in these pages, and behind them and beyond them - enough to make us breathe in, open our eyes, and go out to live and see - in the company of God, his promise, and his people. Thank You.

Thank you.

*Revd Matthew Evans*

## 2 WORSHIP & LEARNING

### 2.1 Baptism Group

In 2025 the Baptism Team continued to support both the Clergy and the respective eighteen Baptismal candidates and their parents, at the preparation sessions (held two weeks prior to the actual Baptism) in Church/Parish Centre. Then once again, at the actual Baptism ceremony, held two weeks later in Church with their extended family and friends in attendance. This takes place at 11:30 on the first Sunday of most months.

The Baptism Team leader works in close collaboration with both:-

- a) Jill Walters, the Parish Administrator (who interfaces with the Candidates / Parents of candidates) on scheduling dates and associated documentation.
- b) The dedicated team of six members, who attend both preparation and Baptism services.

The team members, working in pairs, attend and support candidates at both their Baptism preparation session and Baptism Service, to ensure a continuity of connection and to reinforce the relationship with Christ Church, sharing their wider knowledge. It is to this team that I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for their committed support of this essential ministry.

If you would like to learn more about this essential and delightful outreach work please speak to Elizabeth, Jill or Matthew.

***Elizabeth Mottershead / Baptism team lead***

### 2.2 Junior Church

This year has seen Junior Church continue to thrive. We have a marvellous team of leaders who are dedicated to providing a welcoming, safe and faith-filled environment. It is down to their skill, kindness and commitment that we can provide such an opportunity for our young people within Christ Church.

We now operate three groups: the youngest children in the lounge, the older children in the Concourse, and all those in between in the Hall. The structure of the Hall group has been developed allowing for children to learn in smaller groups through their desired medium. All the activities are connected to the readings and themes but allow for children to explore their faith in a way that engages them.

To ensure safety for our young people we now have lanyards to indicate all leaders and we have implemented a portable doorbell system on the Concourse door. These new measures seem to be working well. Thank you to the wider congregation for supporting this.

We have continued to enjoy fund raising as part of our mission for Junior Church, with Cake Stalls and our annual Mothering Sunday Tombola, raising funds for 'Girl Guide Birk Crag Build', 'Open Arms Malawi', and 'H.E.L.P' (Harrogate Easy Living Project). Our main outreach continues to be the Christingle Party hosted for all after the Christingle Service and we are deeply grateful to all who support and help with this event.

We as the Junior Church are aware of the huge support offered by the whole community of Christ Church and are deeply grateful for all the prayers and encouragement given.

***Alison Evans, Junior Church Leadership Team Member***

## 2.3 Choir and Music

Music is always at the forefront of our worship, and we were very fortunate to welcome six new singers into our choir early in the year – young choristers Isla, Amelia and Ella, along with adults Lorna, Kevin and Gill. In addition to singing tenor, Kevin has kindly undertaken many of the instrumental arrangements which we are all benefitting from at the monthly All-age worship. With increased numbers, the choir has enjoyed expanding its repertoire of anthems, hymns and psalm chants, the Sopranos in particular rising to the challenge of several new descants to the congregational hymns.

Bethany and Hannah achieved notable placings in vocal solo classes at the Harrogate Competitive Festival, and Voice for Life medals were awarded to Charlotte, Grace and Isla to represent their progress as singers and musicians. In September I had the great pleasure of appointing Bethany as Head Chorister, and this was followed quickly by the announcement that Bethany had also won a place for 2026 in the National Youth Choir of Great Britain. Congratulations to all our choristers for these notable achievements.

The Choir and Music Group marked the end of the summer term before a well-deserved holiday with a meal out at a local restaurant, which was very much enjoyed by everyone. My sincere thanks to all the choir for their support and dedication in contributing to uplifting our worship throughout the year. Possibly the highlight of the year for many of our musicians (and hopefully for those who were present at the service) was the Choral Evensong in October to celebrate the culmination of the Creation season, our church's Dedication Sunday and World Chorister Day, when we were joined by over sixty singers from other local churches to sing a wonderful array of choral music, some of which would have been difficult to sing with each church's smaller resources. The planning and execution of this programme was a joy to be part of...and we must not forget the truly splendid meal which matched the quality of the music in every respect! To prepare the way for this wonderful occasion, Matthew had interviewed three of our young choristers, Charlotte, Grace and Hannah about their life and interests as choristers at the morning service earlier that day.

A few of us experienced the thrill of joining with the choir of St. Robert's, Pannal to sing Choral Evensong in Ripon Cathedral, and a few weeks later, we enjoyed performing Part 1 of Handel's Messiah in Pannal. We were delighted to reciprocate by inviting some singers from Pannal and Beckwithshaw to join us for our Advent

Carol Service at Christ Church, when we explored the varied acoustics afforded us by the building to very good effect. The Christmas season was marked by some lovely music for both choir and congregation to enjoy at our Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, and we were very grateful to welcome Lorna's whole family to augment our choir for our First Eucharist of Christmas on Christmas Eve. Earlier that evening many of our choristers helped bring Christmas cheer to the residents of the Old Swan Hotel, an annual event very much enjoyed by our singers.

The 2025 Wednesday Lunchtime Recital Series was a huge success, with our faithful regular audience enjoying varied programmes of music on instruments such as Flute, Guitar, Organ and Harp. My thanks to John and Denise for providing us with such tasty lunches to follow the music every month. Money raised from these recitals and from external singing events helps to provide much needed funds to maintain a high standard of music at Christ Church.

Looking forward, the door is always open for enthusiastic singers and instrumentalists to become part of a friendly, welcoming and lovely ensemble, and to make a valuable contribution to the worship of the Christ Church community.

**David Darling (Director of Music)**

## 2.4 Sacristan and Serving Team

The Serving Team supports the clergy at each Eucharistic service, they prepare the altar for Communion, ensure the altar fabrics reflect the correct liturgical colour and season, set up the candles on all altars, prepare the font when needed and incense if required. Servers lead processions at the start and end of services, process the Gospel and provide focus at the Act of Remembrance and other special services. At the end of a service, it is Servers who clear all altar goods, clean and secure the silverware and ensure all is left ready for the next service.



This is all achieved with a small team of adults and young people who give their time to learn the services, why we do certain things and when, the names and locations of many items and be prepared to assist the clergy at any time.

During 2025, as part of the post-COVID growth of the team, a new award was introduced. Now, once a young server has demonstrated sufficient knowledge, initiative and reliability and are deemed 'qualified' they are entitled to wear a new 'Acolyte Cross'. Two of our team of five young servers have achieved this award with the others working towards it.



Being a server is an excellent way of learning more about our worship at Christ Church and the opportunity to take part at the heart of our services. For younger people it is an opportunity to develop skills such as initiative, communication and teamwork all within a friendly, safe and structured environment - new members, young or not so young always welcome (see Paul or Matthew).

***Paul Mottershead - Head Server/Sunday Sacristan***

## 2.5 Sidespeople

The year saw considerable change for the sides-people team. Firstly, we must thank Karen Baker for managing the team for so many years and team members who retired from the duties in the year.

During the summer several members of the congregation volunteered to join the team and by September had familiarized themselves with the role. We now have an enthusiastic team ready to give an appropriate welcome and any advice necessary to worshippers whether they be familiar faces or visitors.

***John Woolliscroft***

## 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.

HSTM was founded because there seemed to be no provision in Harrogate for Christian teaching beyond the comparatively brief Sunday Sermon. So if you feel our sermons are inadequate, or if, more positively, they have inspired you to want to know, more let me encourage you to try the HSTM programme. Lectures cost £8.00 each but that includes a light continental breakfast. The seminars cost just £5 including breakfast.

We continue our usual pattern of four main lectures and less formal seminars. This year our main lectures were:

Isabelle Hamley – "Happy are those': happiness, wellbeing and the life of faith in the Psalms"  
– January 2026



Guy Donegen-Cross – “Discipleship: So What?” November 2025

David Ford – “St. John’s Gospel: A Lifetime’s Study” September 2025

Nicola Slee – “Abba Amma: Improvisations on the Lord’s Prayer” March 2025

Our seminars have mined a rich seam of local talent able to provide input and guide discussion. Our subjects were:

**Another Advocate:** The Emergence of the Holy Spirit in the Writings of the New Testament: Rev Dr Claire Honess October 25, 2025. An imaginative and highly interactive session on what the New Testament tells us about the Holy Spirit and the Spirit’s work and, of course, how that might inform how we see the Spirit as active in our lives and in our churches today.

The Words we use for Worship: Andrew Brown, Methodist local preacher and hymnwriter. December 2025’ How do the words that we use influence the way in which we approach God and think about ourselves? Andrew introduced us to some unusual expressions. Eg. God at the eternal itch.

**Unlocking the wisdom of John’s Gospel.** An introduction to David Ford’s Theological Commentary on John’s Gospel. Revd Ian Johnston. February 2026. Ian has masterminded our discussion groups based on Ford’s commentary. We explored John further by looking at his shorter work the third epistle.

**Revd Dr Geoff Turner**

## 2.7 Lent Courses

During Lent, our group studies were based on a book entitled God of Surprises by Gerard W. Hughes. The course had a gentle and accessible invitation to encounter God in unexpected places and provided a rich theological and spiritual foundation for our sessions. Together, we explored themes of stillness, attentive prayer, discernment, and the courage to notice God’s presence within the ordinary rhythms of daily life. For some of us, the course offered the first experience of prayer in this contemplative style, and it was encouraging to see a growing confidence and openness emerging over the weeks. As one of the course facilitators, I noticed an ability from participants to share honestly about their experiences, discovering that God’s quiet work is often subtle, relational, and deeply personal. The course certainly enabled us to develop an awareness of God’s presence beyond formal worship, with an added encouragement to continue these practices beyond Lent. Hughes’ writing asserts the value of contemplative approaches within parish life and reinforces the value of creating space for stillness and reflection which can be both pastoral and transformative.

Thank you to all who opened their homes and offered leadership ensuring a comfortable and safe space for fellowship, friendship, and spiritual growth.

**Caroline Taylor (Curate)**

## 2.8 Flower Arrangements

In 2025 the Ladies did a wonderful job decorating the church throughout the year. We continue to try and be as sustainable as possible. We continued with decorating for Easter with pretty Easter gardens in the windows. Harvest was decorated with local flowers that I picked from a farm near Aberford. It’s lovely to support local growers if they have flowers available. At Christmas we have to purchase flowers from a wholesaler, but we still manage a lovely display.

We are always looking for new flower arrangers contact Jill in the office if you’re interested. No experience needed.

If anyone would like any special flowers in church for a specific date let Jill know we are happy to do arrangements for a donation to the flower fund. Donations to the general flower fund are also greatly appreciated.

***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 11 people on the reserves list. If anyone can help on an occasional basis on the fifth Sunday, 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**

Over the past year, one of the most formative elements of my ministry has been leading our Lent Course based on *God of Surprises* by Gerard W. Hughes. The book's gentle invitation to encounter God in unexpected places provided a rich foundation for our sessions. Together, we explored themes of stillness, attentive prayer, and the courage to notice God's presence in the ordinary. The group engaged deeply with the reflective practices, and it was a privilege to witness participants grow in confidence in silence, contemplative prayer, and personal spiritual awareness. Facilitating the course strengthened not only their discipleship but also my own understanding of God's quiet work within community.

Following Lent, my ministry entered a particularly full and stretching period as I undertook Matthew's three-month sabbatical cover. This season offered significant opportunities for growth in leadership, pastoral oversight, and the wider rhythms of parish life. From service planning and preaching to pastoral visits and community engagement, the experience was both intense and enriching. It helped to develop my confidence, practical skills, and resilience as I stepped more fully into the responsibilities of parish ministry. During this time, I was particularly glad of the support from Jill, Alison, the wardens, the retired clergy, and serving team - reminding me that ministry is not a solo endeavour.

It was also a joy to conduct two weddings over the summer—occasions filled with celebration, love, and the privilege of guiding couples through one of life's most meaningful commitments. In contrast, I was honoured to take the funeral of a longstanding member of Christ Church, a moment of deep pastoral significance which reminded me again of the trust placed in us as ministers at life's most tender thresholds.

In the autumn, I had the joy of conducting my first adult baptism—an occasion that was inspiring for everyone involved. Witnessing the depth of faith and the courage of publicly committing to a life in Christ was profoundly moving, and it remains one of the highlights of my year.

Unfortunately, my Advent and Christmas were overshadowed by a particularly persistent cough that lasted several weeks, limiting what I was able to take on. Even so, I was glad to manage my first BCP

Holy Communion just after Christmas, allowing me to add another valued experience to my curacy journey.

In summary, 2025 was another rich and rewarding year of curacy, enabling me to broaden my skills and deepen my understanding through a wide range of ministerial duties and experiences. I am continually grateful for all your support, encouragement, and patience as I now enter the final stage of my curacy.

***Revd Caroline (Curate)***

### **3.2 Pastoral Care Team**

We seek to maintain a Church community and character which looks-out for all and is welcoming beyond its bounds in looking to the wellbeing of its community ; and although we fall short of this, it remains our aim. Informal conversations over times of tea & coffee after worship are a key part, as also the opportunity through the Church Office of making direct requests for assistance, visits, Holy Communion at Home, or prayer. Visits happen informally as well as by deliberate plan, these latter co-ordinated to a great part by a member of our retired clergy (the Revd Linda Potter). The monthly 'Lunchtime Recitals', 'Meet & Eat' and 'Connect Wednesday' times are intended to offer fellowship, support and opportunity, not least to those of the wider community, and an opportunity for that community to 'cross-the threshold' more easily as well as the opportunity provided by annual occasions such as the Candlemas Pantomime, Jumble Sale, Summer Garden Party, Harvest Service & Supper, and Christmas Fair. Weekly the Wednesday 'Intercessory Prayers', and the information and prayer intentions within our 'Weekly Bulletin' are offered as a means of prayerful support for those however near or far, alongside 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 provision, which we hope makes 'crossing the threshold' more comfortable and welcoming. We seek to maintain and develop all these. It is an aim to renew and revitalise our more formal Pastoral Care provision and Team within this coming year.

***Revd Matthew Evans***

### **3.3 Bereavement Support Group**

The aim of the Bereavement Group is to try to provide a link between the worshipping community of Christ Church and the next of kin/bereaved family member, of anyone for whom a funeral/interment/memorial services is held at Christ Church.

Information about funeral/memorial services presided over by Christ Church clergy are shared with the group lead when arrangements have been confirmed or after funerals have taken place. The office provides details about family and next of kin contact information so that it is possible to reach out briefly to the bereaved as representatives of the worshipping community of our church. Once a year the same individuals are contacted again to make them aware of the annual All Souls Service in November, inviting them to attend. In addition, when a calendar year has passed after a funeral or memorial service has taken place another card is sent to the bereaved next of kin to share that they are remembered in prayers at this anniversary time.

Matthew presided again over the All Souls Service in November 2025. This was a moving and gentle service that allowed for contemplation, remembrance and reflection. It was followed by coffee and a chance to chat with others in the parish centre. In 2025 it was as well attended as the previous year, with comments received from those who attended sharing their appreciation of the positive opportunity it afforded them in their journey of bereavement and grief. Many thanks are extended to all who volunteered their time and their support to help with the organisation and delivery of this service again last November.

Data from the information collected shows that in 2025-6 there were 15 funeral services/interment services conducted by clergy at Christ Church from April 2025 to 15th February 2026. The services held were mainly funeral services but this figure also includes a burial of ashes in our graveyard following a funeral service that had taken place in St Marks Church. I feel it is timely in 2026 to refresh details of anyone who volunteers and gives their support with this activity undertaken by Christ Church. It would be lovely to welcome new volunteers to build the team. Please contact Liz Leatherbarrow if you can help or if you already do so to update the contact information of helpers. Thank you.

***Liz Leatherbarrow (Chair of the Bereavement Support Group)***

### **3.4 Welcome, Inclusion and Respect**

We continue to keep our attention 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 to be 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 each week. Where possible (and requested) we seek to make this provision available to assist with Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals. Matters of Welcome, Inclusion and Respect are always considered and included within planning and provision of social and fundraising events.

With our tightly constrained financial position, 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 ideas towards 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' (Happy Wanderer). 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 us aware and informed, both of opportunities and of mistakes.

***Revd Matthew Evans (Vicar)***

### **3.5 Safeguarding**

Safeguarding continues to be central to the life of Christ Church, underpinning all that we do with children, young people, and vulnerable adults. Throughout the year, the church has continued to review and strengthen its safeguarding practice, ensuring that safety, care, and accountability remain a shared responsibility.

This year the focus has been on maintaining robust safeguarding systems here at Christ church. This has included overseeing DBS checks and ensuring that safeguarding training remains up to date for PCC members and volunteers, in line with safeguarding policies.

Online Church of England safeguarding courses, continue to be available to all church members and Support is available for anyone who would value help accessing or completing the training. Please hesitate to email me on '[safeguarding@christchurchharrogate.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@christchurchharrogate.org.uk)'.

Over the past year, DBS drop-in sessions were introduced and have proved effective in supporting volunteers to complete and renew DBS checks in a timely and accessible way. In addition, a lanyard system was introduced within Junior Church to clearly identify safeguarding status. Green lanyards are worn by those holding a current Christ Church DBS check, with some also displaying a First Aider symbol to indicate that a trained First Aider is present on site. Blue lanyards are worn by those who are willing to help but do not hold a DBS check. These measures have improved clarity, compliance, and confidence in safeguarding arrangements.

I can be contacted via the Church Office or by email above and church members are encouraged to make contact with any safeguarding questions or concerns. Open conversation is welcomed and no concern is considered too small.

I would like to thank the congregation for their ongoing support and for their continued commitment to ensuring that Christ Church remains a safe, caring, and welcoming community 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. Also regularly inspected and serviced are the: church organ, tower clock, church lightning conductors; along with ongoing resting under our Water Compliance Risk Assessment. The church roof, gutters and downpipes are cleared of leaves, though this continues to be an ongoing problem due to the trees around the building. The drive and side pathway are regularly checked and power-washed to create as safe and non-slippery a surface as possible. 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 continue with 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'; a 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'. ( See also 'Tools with a Mission' , through which we are a 'hub' for the gathering, servicing, and re-distribution of tools and equipment.) Used candle wax from services and votive candle stands is gathered, melted and remoulded to be used for votive, acolyte, small altar, Peace, and other occasional worship candles. We also continue to assess a use of our printed materials, seeking to balance use of resources with ease of use and welcome for worshippers, and attendees (at social or fellowship events).

We continue to monitor our use of gas and electricity and to 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; including updating and replacing lights within the Parish Centre. 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 those without sufficient warmth at home or elsewhere. We have made alterations to the building for better safety provision and access / egress provision, both on external (Main) and internal (Ramp to church) doors.(Other matters relating to buildings will be covered elsewhere in this report).

We continue towards 'Carbon Net Zero' through making assessments of our buildings, activities and lifestyles (weaknesses, opportunities, small & major projects) (Carbon Net Zero Team). 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 (Creation Care Team). We continue to pay for Carbon Offsets for the carbon usage we currently create. We continue to make awareness of the natural world a regular part of our prayer - in appreciation and concern.

We would welcome the insight and input of a Health & Safety Lead, to oversee and guide our provision.

*Jill Walters & Revd Matthew*

## **4 OUTREACH & COMMUNICATION**

### **4.1 Parish Clerk's Report**

#### **Weddings**

During 2025 we welcomed a total of 3 weddings in church. There were no Wedding Blessings or Renewals of Vows this year. We also read the Banns of Marriage for 4 couples who lived in the Parish but who chose to marry at other churches. Of the 3 weddings at Christ Church, every couple lived within the Harrogate area. A Marriage Measure Qualifying Connection was needed for two of the local couples to create their qualification for marrying here at Christ Church. All 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**

Baptism Services continued on the first Sunday of most months of 2025 at 11.30am. There were no baptisms in July or August. This year, 18 candidates were baptised : 5 candidates under 1 year old, 8 candidates between 1 and 4 years of age, 4 candidates aged between 5 and 10 years of age and 1 candidate over 18 years of age. We also had 1 thanksgiving service for the gift of a child.

Thanks go to David Darling for playing the organ at most of the services and to Adam Martin who played when David was unavailable. Thanks also to the Elizabeth Mottershead and her 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 6 baptism services, Revd Caroline Taylor presided at 3 baptism services and Revd Chris Parkin presided at 1 service.

#### **Funerals**

In 2025, 11 Funerals/Memorial Services/Thanksgiving Services were held within the church, and 1 funeral service was 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 Dr Geoff Turner, Canon Michael Hunter and Revd David Hoskins assisting on occasion. David Darling played the organ for these services.

*Jill Walters Parish Clerk*

## 4.2 Deanery Synod

This report covers the central work covered by HDS, from January to December 2025. 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 Christ Church PCC.

Creation Care and Eco Church remain as a regular synod agenda item and the Eco Church slide is 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. Encouraging Lay Ministry (ELM) was the focus for the year's synods. Financial support has been offered to churches, especially rural churches, to invest in the development of lay ministry in the life and worship of our churches. ELM is an ongoing project which comprises several roles and priorities. These are quite detailed and can be unpacked for the PCC at a designated meeting.

***Christine Jack & Beth Hamer***

## 4.3 "Meet and Eat"

Meet and Eat continues to run on the third Wednesday of the month. We serve soup and a roll, followed by a dessert, coffee or tea and a chocolate.

We usually welcome about 30 guests and although the food is important it is also lovely that people can get together for a chat. We try to make the Christmas one a little special with a few extra bits and a delicious Christmas cake handmade by one of the volunteers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the helpers and to the guests that support us and a big thank you to Emma from Huttons in Knaresborough who provide homemade soup each month.

Anyone is welcome to come along whether to help or to have a bit of food and a chat.

***Susan Braithwaite***

## 4.4 Charitable Giving

The Christ Church congregation continued to be very generous throughout 2025. 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 St. Michael's Hospice, The Ellen McArthur Cancer Trust, Médecins Sans Frontières were selected in addition to Christ Church. The collections and donations this year totalled £1938.08p from a total of 6 services which was divided between the four chosen charities each receiving £484.52p.

Despite the ever increasing 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 £511.65p. 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, this was greatly appreciated by both organisations. In addition to this, Christ Church continues to provide fantastic support for the Foodbank on a regular basis. Our Foodbank supported a total of 3595 people in 2025, and this required over 30 tons of supplies. I am happy to report that the donations from Christ Church amounted to almost 10% of the total. Thank you for all the donations of goods and the 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)**

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 2025 we had 3 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**

At Christ Church we continue to support The Children's Society through house boxes. A total of £103 has been paid in to the Children's Society this year. Thank you to everyone who supports the charity in this way. People are encouraged to return their boxes to the parish office if they are no longer required and to enable us to update our list of supporters.

***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, for each driver, means driving for one Sunday in six and, as we don't offer the bus service on Bank Holiday weekends (to ensure drivers do not miss holiday time with their families), it works out that each driver has roughly eight duties in a calendar year. So, if there are others who feel they could help, we would be very grateful for extra drivers as this would further reduce the commitment for all drivers.

Unfortunately, this year we have also lost one of the members of our congregation who was on our pick-up list 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 eight members of the congregation on our pick-up list, though not all will request a pick-up each Sunday, and therefore spaces remain for any members of the congregation who would find it helpful to have support to attend the 10am service.

The Happy Wanderers is a Harrogate based charity which offers the minibuses free of charge, though Christ Church does, 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 2025 and we were very pleased to welcome Anna Harrison into the team as a Warden in July, to bring the number back to four.

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

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, and supper, thoroughly enjoyed by all. Our thanks go to Matthew, in his flamboyant role as Toto, Dorothy's Dog, and also his 'Players' and supporting team.

The now annual Jumble Sale followed - piles of goods, seemingly unwanted, but selling to bring a very useful £1890 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 wonderful building, for Nativities, and 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, including our retired members who covered for Matthew during his Sabbatical, To Jill and David in the office, to 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 for us, your Wardens – Thank You.

***The Wardens***

#### **4.9 Parish Centre**

2025 saw another busy year in the Parish Centre.

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, 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 enjoyed the two annual visits from St Aidan's Y7 pupils. We welcomed a new group - the Harrogate Branch of the Parkinson's Society - who now meet monthly in the concourse.

We continued to welcome the occasional one-off events such as family birthday and baptism parties (5 in total), meetings, funeral teas (2 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 1 very successful candlelit concert in church with Ignite Concerts who ran their refreshments stall in the main hall during their intermission. We were also a venue for one of the Harrogate International Festival classes and for the Harrogate Music School Summer Concert.

We were used as a Polling Station once in May 2025 for the Town Council Elections where 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 hold the Wednesday morning Holy Communion service in the main hall each week. We also see our facilities used by 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.

Christ Church Market Place continued to be popular with everyone helping to support our policy of reduce, reuse and recycle. Good quality unwanted items were once again donated to the table for others to purchase. Since its inception in April 2024 we have raised over £3000 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.

We were thrilled to finally be able to install the new Automatic Entrance Doors in May and after a few teething problems they have now settled in well and have been enjoyed by everyone.

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, the service sheet collating team, our Foodbank collectors and deliverers. Here's to our continued success into 2026.

***Jill Walters***

#### **4.10 Buildings Maintenance**

The South Transept, Lady Chapel & both Vestries continue to be monitored for ground movement. We have cordoned off the Lady Chapel for safety reasons, to avoid any likelihood of injury; whilst a suitable reconstruction project is evaluated, with all the proper permissions in place. We now have the temporary faculty in place to allow us to undertake some limited excavation work as directed by the structural engineer. We are seeking costs for the works.

The door from the parish centre through to church has been repositioned, so that egress from the centre via the fire exit is unhindered without having to continually close & open the door. Some finishing-off work is required for the frame & door.

The roof over the parish centre entrance had been leaking, which was discovered when the new entrance doors were fitted. Remedial work has now been undertaken.

Comments have been made historically about the lack of lighting in the choir. We now have a cost for improving this and await PCC comment.

Historically we have had difficulty in sourcing a spread of quotes for our electrical supply due to the complications around having two separate supplies. We have a cost for consolidating our electricity use onto one supply and await PCC comment.

The architect has picked up on some splits to some of the timbers in the belfry roof. The structural engineer has inspected and has commented that whilst not of immediate concern, it would be prudent to undertake some strengthening work to the timbers. We have sourced one quote for this, but we will need a second quote, perhaps from a steeple jack due to the difficulties of access.

***David Burns***

#### **4.11 Gardening Team**

The Gardening team in 2025 kept the grounds tidy including the garden boarders. There was an upgrade to the path that goes round to the graves at the rear of the church paid for by a grant.

I would like to thank all the helpers for their time including Jill and David for sorting the bins been emptied and brought back in. The grass did not require cutting quite as much due to the hot & dry weather which curtailed its growth.

***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"*