



Annual Report
and
Financial Statements
of the
Parochial Church Council
For the year end 31st December 2023



Rectors Report 2024

If we were to look at the headlines of the years news we should be worried about our future. Falling numbers in the Church of England, increasing costs and the declining number of clergy who will not be able to fill future vacancies and it would be easy to say that we have no hope for the future. I want to say with what I have seen God doing in our community I believe that we are on the preface of a seeing God do some incredible things in our church.

As 1 Peter tells us “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.’ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 14b-15)”

Why do I hold out hope for the future the first reason is history. In its 2000 year history there have been many moments when it seemed the Church was out for the count, with no future, but God pulled it up from the canvas and revived it by the Holy Spirit. Our job is to honour the one who formed the Church and “revere Christ as Lord”.

The second reason is because Jesus promised Peter that “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” History shows us that God has kept his promises even when humanity hasn’t. We should be confident if we continue to proclaim the truth that Jesus is Lord then we will see growth.

This requires us to be attentive in prayer and openness in what God wants us to do in the future. There are many changes for us we now have a new Bishop and I look forward to working with Bishop Debbie and her support team to build the Church up. The future will also require us to be creative in the ways that we engage our community with the Gospel.

In 2024 we are embarking as a PCC to look at how we can make the church building suitable and sustainable for the future and we will be seeking support for this. We have been blessed by the many people before us who have ensured we have such an amazing space to worship.

I want to thank all who have been diligently working away enabling the missional work of the church in our community can happen. That includes those who tirelessly ensure the church is clean, the people who make the church look beautiful with the flowers and the people who volunteer to make

sure the various groups we run can happen. You are all making a big difference and are an encouragement to us all.

I want to acknowledge and thank Emma Kirby for the hard work that she had put in during her four years with us as a mission enabler and wish her God's blessings in her new role at Souster Youth.

At the end of 2023 I was tasked with the role as Rural and it is a huge privilege to serve the local clergy and care for them in their ministry in and around Corby. As a result of my new role we were able to employ a part time PA and I have been hugely grateful that Christine has joined our team to support me in the new role. I also want to thank those who have upped and continued in their support for me making the increased work load much easier to bear.

I have hope for our future, but we need to remember who it is that provides the hope, and be like children dependent on God for our future. To quote our new Bishop at her installation "If you are up for it, so am I"

Blessings

Kane

Churchwarden's Report 2024

Another busy year working as a single Churchwarden. I would like to record my thanks for the support I have received from the PCC. I also want to particularly thank, Chris Bream for his professional expertise and practical help with various issues with the church building, Janet Player for her help with correspondence and paperwork, Sandra Whitlam for her careful management and day to day running of the church, and Lloyd Greenwood for his generous help with tree work.

As before I acknowledge the faithful service of Sue Lawson our organist. Weldon is fortunate indeed to have a regular organist who is willing to play every week and for weddings and funerals.

I would like to acknowledge Rev. Kane's continuing ministry and also to congratulate him on his appointment as Rural Dean. This will, of course, entail much more work and to assist him with the increased workload an administrative assistant has been appointed.

The pattern of two services per week with a joint service on the first Sunday of the month is embedded but numbers attending the joint service are disappointing. Perhaps it is time to look again at this.

As ever, finance is an issue. With rising costs there is a need to raise more money to fund the day to day running of the church. The PCC continue to look for ways to raise funds and it is hoped to run more fundraising activities. It should be noted that our Parish Share this year which we have to pay to Peterborough is £27516. (£100 per month more than last year) This has to be paid before we can "open the doors and turn on the lights". Suggestions are always welcome and support is vital.

As the year of office comes to an end I thank everyone who has supported Weldon church in any way and despite the challenges I look to the future with encouragement.

Nick Sansom

Treasurer's Report 2024.

Firstly, I should explain that the general account surplus should not be viewed without reference to the notes supporting the accounts. Transfers between accounts and a payment owing to a local charity could not be made before 31st December and the events have an impact on the final position as shown in these accounts.

HM Revenue and Customs took 8 months to issue a charity reference number which caused a delay before we could apply for the gift aid uplift on the plate collection and the regular giving outside of the PGS.(Parish Giving Scheme) £8,208 was received and is included in the Church Collection figure in the accounts. If this figure is substituted for the more normal annual figure the Church Collection figure would be £13,043 compared to £12,941 in 2022(adjusted for gift aid) so has remained static. Regular donations under the PGS have increased by 8% to £15,746.

Fundraising has also remained static at under £2,500.

Peterborough Diocese have advised that the cost of a parish priest to include housing, pension etc is £73,884 and our Parish Share has been lifted to £27,516 towards this. The regular giving and plate collections cover this with little to spare. Therefore the maintenance, insurance, light and heating costs are left to be funded by service fees, fundraising, investment income and grants.

It becomes more urgent therefore that we seek to increase our regular giving to maintain our beautiful village church and we welcome anyone who is interested to assist with this to contact us.

Ann Burns

Report of Mission Group Meeting held on Tuesday 30 January 2024

Present: Rev. Fliss Iliffe, Janet Robertson, John Duffield, Angela Lloyd.

1. The mission group were tasked by the Rector to consider the format of the All Together Family Communion Service with a view to drawing new families to the church so that they might hear about Jesus whilst also satisfying that part of the regular congregation who prefer the traditional service of Holy Communion with hymns.
2. JR had asked one mother with young children, who is known to the church but is not a regular attender, for her thoughts. She said three things: (1) there should be greater interaction with the children during the service, (2) easy places to sit with a pushchair and somewhere to park them if child(ren) did not require them during the service, (3) the toy area was a good thing.
3. The group judged there were three aspects to consider:
 - (1) Carrying on the monthly All Together service with a few tweaks,
 - (2) Whether the fusing together of a less formal approach with the traditional communion service was feasible in reality.
 - (3) Doing something quite different.
4. The unanimous view was that whilst the theory of a unified service was a good one, the reality was the current All Together service was serving neither those preferring a traditional Eucharist nor those seeking more open worship. Further, it was neither uniting the two congregations, as there were otherwise regular attendees who were not coming to it, nor was it attracting new families or even retaining existing ones.
5. Reluctantly, the group unanimously concluded a fusion of the 9:00 and 10:15 services was not working and recommend that there should be two services every week:-

9:00 Holy Communion with Hymns Traditional

10:15 Family Service (to include a more informal Communion once a month)

One service on major Christian festivals.
6. To keep the 9:00 and 10:15 congregations connected to one another there might be quarterly gatherings of a more social nature outside of the church services, plus occasional additional or substitute missional services.
7. The group went on to discuss the possible format of the weekly Family Services to make them child inclusive, more flexible and lead to increased open worship and participation. This discussion included the need for Sunday School/Children's Work/Kids' Work and possible ways that this could be accommodated in the church building rather than the walk across the Oundle Road to the rectory and changing the location of the creche within the church building.

Fabric Report 2024

The following areas have addressed in the year since the last report.

- New electricity boxes have been fitted in the vestry.
- The wiring and sockets around the church have been updated.
- New switches with covers to combat the damp have been installed.
- New junction box fitted by electricity company.
- New wiring installed in the belfry.
- New light in the cupola.
- New safety light in the belfry.
- The down pipe on the NE wall has been repaired (by Cole Sansom)
- The tree growing out of the gutter has been removed (by Nick and Cole Sansom)
- The boiler. The clock. The organ. The alarm system have all been regularly serviced.
- All electrical appliances have been PAT tested.
- The lime trees have been trimmed.
- The kissing gate on Church Street needs a new post. This work is in hand.

The rural dean Rev. Ian Pullinger has visited and inspected all the registers.

N. Sansom & S. Whitlam. March 2024

Electoral Roll Report 2023 – 2024.

During the year there have been no additions but sadly three deletions of parishioners who have died.

Anyone wishing to have their name on the Church Electoral Roll should contact the Electoral Roll Officer for more information and application forms.

The roll currently stands at 67.

J. Player Electoral Roll Officer. March 2024

Proceedings Report to the Annual Church Meeting April 2024.

During the time since the last APCM there have been 6 full PCC meetings , and 1 standing committee meeting.

The main focus of the work of the PCC has been the development of mission and outreach, managing church finances and the maintenance of the church and churchyard. A new service pattern has been established but the "All Together Service is not attracting the numbers that were anticipated. Reduced Covid procedures remain in place. The attendance at PCC meetings is regularly high.

J. Player PCC Secretary April 2024

Report to APCM from Deanery Synod Representative 2024

The synod has met three times since our last APCM at St Columba Corby, St Peter's Stanion and St Mary's Weston by Welland.

The meeting at St Columba focused on Anglican giving with a talk by Pete Squires and Paul Adams who spoke about electronic giving. And Rev. Haydon Spenceley talked about his role as Diocesan Director of Vocation and Formation.

The meeting at St Peter's Stanion was addressed by Chad (Stephen Chadwick) the Youth Mission Enabler and Charlotte Nobbs the Children's Mission Enabler

The meeting at Weston By Welland was addressed by the "new" Archdeacon of Oakham the Ven Alison Booker. She gave an illuminating account of her Christian background and path to becoming Archdeacon. She also talked about the role of Archdeacon and was happy to answer questions about her work.

During the Autumn Rev. Ian Pullinger stepped down from the role of Rural Dean. This position is now held by Rev. Kane for an initial period of five years.

Weldon parish is entitled to two representatives on the synod but at present I am the only one carrying the role. In these circumstances a member of the PCC has attended but a regular representative would be welcome. Could you who are reading this consider serving in this way?

Sandra Whitlam

Bell Tower Report 2024

There is still a shortage of bell ringers locally and when we are able to ring for the Joint service, we don't have enough capable ringers to do our job properly, Darren Binley as ever is a stalwart on these occasions and we are grateful for the time he takes each Sunday to ring the call-bell too.

2024 saw several visiting bands as ringing finally returned to normal following Covid. This included a visit from the Rutland and Kettering Branch ringers in September.

In May we rang to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III and several past ringers turned out to assist and get their names in the records.

July saw the 40th anniversary of former Weldon bell ringers Sue (nee Fitton) and Derek Jones who were also married in St Mary's in 1973. As a compliment, a full peal lasting several hours was rung by their friends and was also rung as a compliment to Pam and David Groom who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary also.

We had a few weddings for which we've had to call on ringers from local churches and would like to record their support here.

St Andrews – Brigstock

St John the Baptist – Corby

St Mary Magdalene - Geddington

St Peter's - Stanion

Gordon Brown –Tower Captain