

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL REPORT 2024



KINDNESS COMPASSION COMMUNITY
IN CHRIST'S LOVE

St Giles Church
Exhall
CV7 9GZ

www.stgileschurhexhall.info

Memorable Moments from 2024



Our Church Family



Rev Jo's curacy came to an end and she left us to become Rector of Arden Valley in south Warwickshire but we made sure she had an excellent send off

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8. Financial Report (separate document)

Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday May 10th at 10.30 am
St Giles Main Hall

This meeting includes the Annual Meeting of Parishioners (APM) and the Annual Parish Church Meeting (APCM).

We begin with a time of prayer and worship.

Minutes of last year's meetings are available in this Annual Report

AGENDA

Annual Meeting of Parishioners (APM)

1. Opening Prayer
2. Appointment of Secretary for the APM and APCM
3. Apologies for Absence
4. Approval of Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners 2024
5. Election of Churchwardens
6. Thanks and Closing Prayer

AGENDA

Annual Parish Church Meeting (APCM)

1. Minutes of APCM 2024
2. Matters arising
3. Presentation of Electoral Roll
4. Elections to:
 - Parochial Church Council – up to 4 to be elected
 - Deanery Synod Representatives – 3 vacant places
 - Ex-officio Lay Reader Representative(s)
5. Appointment of PCC Secretary and Treasurer
6. Appointment of External Examiner (auditor)
7. Presentation of Annual Reports
(These to be distributed in the APCM Annual Report and read prior to the meeting)
 - Reports on the activities of the PCC and the parish generally
 - Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church
 - Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod
 - Financial Report
 - Safeguarding Report
8. Matters arising from Annual Reports
9. Vicar's Remarks
10. Any other business (Chair to be notified at least 24 hours before the meeting)
11. Closing Prayer

1. Vicar's Reflections

*'When Jesus had finished speaking, he said to Simon,
'Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.'
(Luke 5: 4)*

This has been a year of putting out into deeper water for us at St Giles, extending our reach, experimenting and being creative, in our worship, in our mission, in our welcome and inclusivity, and in our wider relationships. Our more regular joint services, combining the best of both our 10.00 am and 11.45am worship styles are just one example. How wonderful to celebrate Communion together as one family, forge new relationships across our different worshipping communities and welcome a wider cross-section of people!

Soon after our last APCM, the PCC worked hard to identify Focus Areas in the life of our church, which appears on page 6, and some core objectives in each area. A number of these objectives have already been achieved this year, most notably new initiatives to work with young people and receiving our EcoChurch Bronze Award. We have joined the Leading Your Church into Growth Network, with a core team attending training in October.

We have already begun to implement some of the learning around Prayer, Presence, Proclamation and Persuasion (The 4 Ps) and are sharing this more widely through our current Lent Programme. Bell Tower repairs are now complete and an Accessibility Audit has recently been carried out. We achieved a Bronze Award from this audit and will be studying the feedback carefully to form an action plan to improve our provision, welcome and inclusion for those wishing to join us who have a diverse range of needs.

Following on from the Living in Love and Faith Course offered during Lent 2024, we held a number of open meetings to discuss the Prayers of Love and Faith, now approved by the Church of England for use in private prayer and/or public worship for same-sex couples and others. After an extensive period of learning, listening, prayer, discussion and discernment, the PCC voted unanimously to approve the use of Prayers of Love and Faith at St Giles, following the guidance provided for their use and where considered pastorally appropriate. This was a significant step for us and demonstrated a strong commitment to both inclusivity and unity. I am deeply grateful to all those who engaged with this process, from a range of different perspectives and in such a positive way.

In September we said a very fond farewell to our amazing Curate, Rev Jo Parker, who was licensed to her first incumbency post in the Arden Valley Parishes in November. Our profound thanks go to Rev Jo for all the ways in which she enhanced and enriched our ministry here at St Giles and we continue to pray for her and wish her well in her new post.

Rev Jo's ministry, together with very generous support from the St Giles family, allowed me, over a period of eighteen months, to support the wider diocese through a placement as Associate Archdeacon and to support the deanery by becoming Priest-in-Charge of the Ley Group of Churches, providing oversight through the interim appointment of Rev Steve Medley as Associate Minister. It has been a real delight to see Rev Steve and the Ley Group flourish through this period, supported by the mission and ministry partnership with St Giles. This culminated in the appointment and licensing of Rev Steve as Priest-in-Charge of the Ley Group in March 2025, allowing me to step back from that role.

With Rev Jo moving on to pastures new, I brought my placement as Associate Archdeacon to an end in Nov 2024, in order to be able to focus more fully on mission and ministry here at St Giles.

I am very grateful to the whole St Giles family for enabling me to offer support more widely over this period and am really looking forward to continuing our intentional and creative journey of growth together - let's continue to listen to Jesus, let down our nets and be prepared for a great catch!

Rev Gail Phillip

FOCUS AREAS

2024/2025

Growing in God - Seeking and Sharing Life in all its Fullness

WORSHIP

- Celebrating diversity of styles
- Prayerfully exploring creative opportunities – outdoor, use of halls, new worshipping communities

MISSION & OUTREACH

- Engagement with youth
- Making connections with new housing estates
- Faith enquiry course
- Leading Your Church into Growth (LYCiG)

PASTORAL CARE

- Identifying support networks
- Worship from home prayer partners

DISCIPLESHIP

- Learning together as a whole church
- Inclusivity & diversity
- Faith sharing culture
- Social/Global Justice focus

GROWING GREENER

- Achieving EcoChurch Bronze Status
- Identifying NetZero next steps

PRAYER

- Monthly Prayer Focus
- PCC Praying Electoral Roll
- Parish Quiet Day

SAFEGUARDING

- Consolidating safer recruitment
- Safeguarding Sunday

FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP

- Teaching on planned giving
- Regular updates on giving
- Legacy giving leaflet

BUILDINGS & MAINTENANCE

- Accessibility audit & advice
- Completion of Bell Tower Repairs
- Planning for redecoration

2. Minutes of 2024 Annual Parochial Meeting (28th April 2024)

This meeting commenced at 11.30am and was held in the Main Church Hall following a short service of worship with 50 attendees in total.

Rev Gail welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded us that we are meeting to elect our churchwardens, to appoint PCC members, to review our activities over the past twelve months and to review our finances for 2023. The meeting consists of two parts the first being the Annual Meeting of Parishioners (AMP) and the second the Annual Parish Church Meeting (APCM). The meeting opened with prayer.

Annual Meeting of Parishioners (AMP)

The meeting opened with prayer.

- 1) Appointment of Secretary for the APM and APCM – Rev Gail proposed that Carol Gough be appointed to act as Secretary for both meetings. This was seconded by Muriel Ganley and accepted unanimously by the meeting.
- 2) Apologies for absence – Cynthia Cogley and Stella Bunting.
- 3) Minutes of the AMP for 2023 – There were no amendments. The minutes were proposed by Neil Harris and seconded by Tina Watkins and accepted unanimously by the meeting.
- 4) Matters arising – There were no matters arising.
- 5) Election of Churchwardens – Neil Harris is willing to continue as our Churchwarden for the coming year and we are grateful to him for his continuing service.
- 6) It is already known that Andy Clark has stepped down as Churchwarden due to work commitments and his service was recognised and appreciation was shown at recent church services. No other nominations have been received for Churchwarden and so we will continue with the one appointed Churchwarden and the vacancy will be left open until filled. This was proposed by Rev Gail and seconded by Sam Jones. The meeting expressed its thanks to Neil.

- 7) Thanks and closing prayer - Rev Gail gave thanks to the members of the Churchwardens team for their support throughout the year – Mandy Williams, Yvonne Knowles, Denise Crampsie and Sue Barnes. If anyone is interested in joining this team please speak with Rev Gail, Rev Jo or any member of the team for details. Sam Jones volunteered to join the team and was duly thanked for offering his time and was accepted onto the team.

The AMP closed with prayer.

Annual Parish Church Meeting (APCM)

- 1) Minutes of APCM 2023 – There were no amendments and the minutes were accepted unanimously by the meeting.
- 2) Matters arising – There were no matters arising.
- 3) **Presentation of Electoral Roll** – Beryl Owen referred to her report on page 11 which shows the electoral roll stands at 162 which is slightly down from the previous year, with 85 members living in the parish and 75 who reside in a different parish but attend St Giles, together with 2 who are attending but were confirmed in another church. We remember at this time those of our church community who have sadly died - June Plumb, Betty Laidler, Ron Bruce, Roy Cogley, Marion Biddle, John Wetherby and Richard Cross.

Thanks, were given to Beryl for keeping this important document and all related information up to date. Her time and dedication are very much appreciated.

4) Elections to:

Parochial Church Council – There are five vacancies for PCC members to serve for the following three years. Nominations have been received from Nikki Smith, Paul Lanchbury, Mandy Williams, Brian Inott and Carol Gough. Rev Gail thanked the PCC members whose term of office has just ended for their time attending meetings and their dedication and commitment to service over the past three years, namely – James Harden, Kathryn Unsworth, Tina Watkins and Steve Watkins.

The meeting was informed that Brian Inott has not been on the Electoral Roll for the qualifying period of six months but is willing to stand as a PCC member. Rev Gail proposed that Brian was co-opted to the PCC until he has been on the electoral roll for the required six months and then he can be formally elected. The meeting voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.

Ex-Officio Reader Representative(s) – Chris Wilson and John Owen are our two Readers. John Owen is willing to continue in the Reader Representative

role on PCC and was proposed by Rev Gail and seconded by Kate Coyle and unanimously accepted by the meeting.

Deanery Synod Representative – There are two vacancies to join Gwyneth Carter and Viv Hopkins in attending Deanery Synod meetings. There are no nominations but if anyone is interested then please speak with either Gwyneth, Viv or Rev Gail.

Appointment of PCC Secretary and Treasurer – Carol Gough and Stephen Carter were nominated respectively by Rev Gail and seconded by Kathryn Unsworth. The meeting voted unanimously in favour.

Stephen would be very willing to train up someone with a finance background to take on the role of Treasurer and the meeting was asked to take this into consideration.

Appointment of External Examiner (auditor) - Gavin Kibble has kindly agreed to continue to be our Independent Examiner. This appointment was proposed by Rev Gail and seconded by Mandy Williams with the meeting voting unanimously in favour.

5) Presentation of Annual Reports

Report on the activities of the PCC and the parish generally – these are recorded on page 10 of the report.

Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church – this report, written by Andy Clark, can be found on page 12 of the report

Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod - this report from Viv Hopkins and Gwyneth Carter can be found on page 18.

Financial Report – Stephen Carter referred to the report for year ending 31st December 2023, which had been distributed before the meeting for all to read. The financial situation of the church has deteriorated during the year and this is evident in the report. We are thankful for the increase in regular giving of approximately £955 for the year, but our unrestricted income has fallen by £4,934 year on year.

Overall expenditure has increased slightly by £138 year on year. We were left with a deficit of £10,480 for the year. This deficit has been covered by drawing money from our reserves, which are also diminishing. The meeting was asked to take account of these figures and, where possible, increase the amount of regular giving whenever we can. We know that God is good and will provide as we have seen God do in the past. The meeting was asked if there were any questions.

The following questions were asked:

- 1) If we continue with this trend how long will we remain in a viable financial position? We are only three to four months away from hitting the bottom line below which we would not want our General Fund reserves to fall. Our General Fund reserves are set at two months unrestricted expenditure plus one month's cover for Parish Administrator salary. We dipped last year but we managed to rise again above the threshold.
- 2) Is there any assistance from the diocese? Rev Gail explained that the diocese already subsidises the actual costs of ministry across the diocese to a significant extent but, like us, they have limited resources and reserves. The parish is ultimately responsible for its own finances and must continue to work at managing these well.

A slide was shown relating to the 2023/24 Parish Share which is currently set at £55k. This is 15% lower than the actual cost of ministry to reflect the work Rev Gail is doing in the Associate Archdeacon role for the diocese.

Our reserves mainly come from legacies which have been generous and cover repairs to the church building and churchyard. The Audio-Visual upgrade project was covered by a restricted fund from a generous legacy donation.

We are thankful that giving has increased, but our expenditure still exceeds our income by £2k per month. The meeting was asked to note that there will be an increase in our Parish Administrator and Cleaner salaries of 10% from April, in line with increases to the National Minimum Wage and, consequently, the Real Living Wage.

- 3) Is this situation common across the deanery? Rev Gail answered that our Parish Share contribution has historically been one of the highest in the Nuneaton deanery. We have been generous in our giving and, for many years, gave over and above the actual cost of ministry. Sadly, we are no longer in position to do this. Many churches and parishes in our deanery and beyond are in a much more precarious financial position. Generous giving is an important aspect of discipleship and an expression of worship and faith. We should continue to be prayerful about our financial position and seek to support where we can.

No further questions were asked.

At this point Neva Khan approached Rev Gail and handed her a note. Rev Gail read the note and informed the meeting that Neva had offered her services to stand as churchwarden. This was an answer to prayer and a huge thank you was given to Neva for this offer. An Extra APCM would be held after the conclusion of this meeting to follow due process and elect Neva as churchwarden.

Rev Gail gave thanks to everyone who had prepared and submitted a report for the Annual Meeting. The ministry and work undertaken within our parish community and the life of our church is very much appreciated. Appreciation was shown by the meeting with applause.

Rev Gail informed the meeting that 70 thank you cards were being distributed to all our willing band of regular volunteers. This represents an amazing 75% of our regular church membership who are volunteering, often in more than one area of ministry. We appreciate every member of our church and especially our children. Andy Clark, on behalf of the meeting, thanked Rev Gail for her hard work, her openness and for listening to each and every one of us when we speak.

In response Rev Gail said that it was a pleasure and a joy, and she was truly blessed to be able to serve in this wonderful place.

AOB – there were no other matters for the meeting.

This concluded the 2024 APCM.

The brief Extraordinary APCM immediately followed.

The meeting was informed that Neva Khan had offered to serve as a churchwarden for the coming year. This wonderful offer and answer to prayer was proposed by Rev Gail and seconded by Anna Standing for approval. The meeting voted unanimously in favour and applauded the nomination. All relevant documents will be completed after the meeting.

The meeting ended at 12.15pm with a closing prayer and the singing of a hymn.

Carol Gough
PCC Secretary

3. Structure, Governance and Management

There are nineteen serving members on the PCC. These have included twelve elected members and seven ex-officio members. Two ex-officio members, Revd Jo Parker and Neva Kahn, left the PCC over the course of the year to move on to pastures new. Our Safeguarding Officer Muriel Ganley and Honorary Treasurer Stephen Carter attend meetings but have no voting rights. This year we held eight full PCC meetings and two Standing Committee meetings.

Four elected members are standing down this year as their three-year term of office comes to an end. These are Helen Anderson, Roy Edwards, Sam Jones and Eddie Lanteri. We thank them all for their time, contributions at meetings and their dedication to this role over the past three years. We now look forward to welcoming four new members at the APCM. If you are interested and willing to stand for election you will find nomination forms on the church noticeboard or you can ask Carol Gough, our PCC secretary for one.

PCC meetings have regular agenda items. These include updates on Mission and Ministry, Finance and Stewardship reports, Safeguarding updates and Buildings and Maintenance reports. Individual reports from all of these groups can be found within the body of the Annual Report. The current PCC began its term by identifying key Focus Areas in the life and ministry of St Giles and some core objectives in each of these areas. More detail about this is included in the Vicar's report.

Prayers of Love and Faith was an agenda item for PCC consideration with dedicated open meetings being held to introduce them as part of a process of listening and discernment which included the Living and Love and Faith Course, open for all church members to attend, during Lent 2024. In November, the PCC, with the agreement of our Incumbent, voted unanimously to approve the use of Prayers of Love and Faith at St Giles, as authorised by the Church of England for use in private prayer and/or public worship, in situations where this is considered pastorally appropriate and according to the pastoral guidance for their use.

Leading your Church into Growth. This network has been running for more than thirty years offering support and help for local churches to grow and bring people to faith. In October they held their annual residential conference, providing training and networking opportunities for Clergy and Lay Leaders. This was attended by six members linked to St Giles, with most places being kindly funded by the diocese. The feedback from the conference was that it had been very worthwhile with ideas brought back for implementation in our own church. Weekly 'Leading your church into Growth Local' sessions are being held throughout Lent 2025 for our church community to share this learning more widely in order to encourage further growth at St Giles. The principles involved will continue to shape our strategy and planning over the coming months and years.

Youth Ministry has also been at the forefront of PCC discussions. With the support of our Mission Hub Church at Bedworth Parish, we now have a designated Youth Worker, Kat Beedie. With the support of other youth workers from Bedworth Parish, she is connecting with young people in our area through twice weekly visits to Ash Green

school and through a weekly hot chocolate give away, followed by a Youth Impact club in the Main Hall from 4 – 6 pm. Attendance at the club has been growing gradually. Further work with a focus within our senior school is also going very well. We as a church are becoming more visible to children and youth within our community.

At every PCC meeting we pray the Leading Your Church into Growth prayer, and have also included a prayer, written by our own Sam Jones at our Vision Day in January 2024, led by Rev Clive Hicks, the diocesan Healthy Church Enabler with a theme of Rewilding the Church.

Sam's prayer seems a fitting way to end this report:

Father, we pray for courage to take bold steps and to not be afraid to try new ideas, to welcome others and be able to encounter others as we embark on a journey together as one church, one community, with the environment at the forefront of our hearts and minds. May St Giles grow to be an environment and community hub both now and in the years to come. Amen.

Carol Gough

PCC Secretary

Electoral Roll

At the end of 2024 there were 169 people on the Electoral Roll, 86 living in the parish, 81 living in other parishes who are regular attenders and two attending having been confirmed within another church.

We remember those who were on the ER and have sadly died and are greatly missed, Edna Leighton, Joyce Bruce, Henry Wagstaff, Denise Riley, Derek Wetherill and Brian Leivers. We are pleased to have welcomed 10 new members. Under the Church Representation Rules the ER is set aside every six years and that revision has taken place in 2025.

Beryl Owen

Fabric Goods and Ornaments

During work carried out on the church tower, a number of issues arose with the architect who worked with the contractor to ensure work was completed to the standard required by our architect. The bell tower clock was serviced again with no issues found.

Stepladders were purchased for the small hall for access to the higher level of some of the storage as it was noticed that chairs were being used, which was a serious health and safety issue. Discussions are underway to try and remove the hazard altogether by using only the lower cupboards where possible.

The winter storms managed to bring down a small tree near the old garden of rest behind the church. Volunteers were called for and a merry band arrived and removed the dead wood and cleared the area around the graves where the tree had fallen. A number of trees in the garden of rest at the front near St Giles Road have been trimmed and made safe where growth had started to present a problem.

Neil Harris

Finance and Stewardship

The purpose of the Finance and Stewardship Committee is to assist the PCC and the incumbent in the responsible management and stewardship of the church's financial resources.

The Finance and Stewardship Committee held regular quarterly meetings in 2024. The main focus was to continue to closely monitor income and expenditure and make recommendations to the PCC as to how best to optimise our finances.

After consultation with congregation members we made recommendations to the PCC for our charitable giving.

Our ongoing structural deficit continues to be a significant concern and means continued vigilance is needed in 2025 and beyond. We continue to look to God for guidance and to trust in His abundant grace and goodness.

Committee members: Stephen Carter, Denise Crampsie, Sam Jones, Rev Gail Phillip

Stephen Carter

Safeguarding Report

St Giles Church complies with the Church of England Safeguarding policy *Promoting a Safer Church* which was adopted as our parish policy in December 2018. This was reviewed and re-adopted by PCC in September 2023. The PCC has complied with the duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Our Safeguarding Action Plan is reviewed annually and is kept up to date with the help of the Safeguarding Dashboard. Safeguarding is included as an item on the PCC agenda at each meeting and our Parish Safeguarding Officer Muriel attends whenever possible to provide an update and highlight any aspects of the Action Plan we need to address. We have also spent time as a PCC discussing how we can further promote a healthy and safe culture at St Giles, something which is very much at the heart of good safeguarding. As part of our annual service pattern, in November we mark the national Safeguarding Sunday to raise wider awareness across our congregations of the importance of safeguarding and its vital place at the heart of Christian mission and ministry.

We are immensely grateful to all those who volunteer at St Giles and for their willingness to undertake the necessary safeguarding training to make that possible, whether on-line or in person. With permission from our diocesan safeguarding team, in July 2024 we ran a Basic Training Course at St Giles which was very well attended and enabled us to train many new and existing volunteers. For the coming year, we're aware that several volunteers need to renew their training at various levels and we are working with the diocese to explore possibilities of holding more of the training sessions at St Giles.

In August 2024 the new National Church of England Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework was introduced which is built around five key standards:

- Culture, Leadership and Capacity
- Prevention
- Recognising Assessing and Managing Risk
- Victims and Survivors
- Learning, Supervision and Support

Greater emphasis is being given to listening to, and learning from, those who have sadly been victims and survivors of abuse in the church and other settings. Both the Makin Review and the Scolding Review into abuses which have sadly taken place in church settings have highlighted serious failings at senior levels in terms of adequate response to safeguarding concerns raised. In February 2025, General Synod voted in favour of measures to increase more independent scrutiny of the Church of England's safeguarding processes and procedures, though many feel this has still not gone far enough.

What continues to be commended is the excellent work done 'on the ground' in parishes by Parish Safeguarding Officers and others to ensure that all those connecting with the church are well safeguarded. Please do continue to pray for and support Muriel as our PSO in all the work she does so faithfully. Let's also remember that the care and protection of children, young people, vulnerable adults and all involved in church activities is the responsibility of the whole church and that we all have a vital part to play in promoting a safer church for all.

Rev Gail Phillip

Green Genies

We met several times last year to weed the borders and tidy the churchyard removing Christmas wreaths etc. We had a good morning planting out the begonias again grown on and supplied by Stella followed by a break with bacon rolls and drinks cooked by Rev Gail. The roses once again gave a good display.

Unfortunately, we are still having a big problem with moles causing damage to graves and the grassed areas which makes it more difficult for the people who mow the grass. We have a small team of helpers but we always need new members to help in any way they can as it is a large area to keep looking lovely for all to enjoy.

Stella Bunting, Jackie and Robert West

Halls Management

During 2024 most of our regular users have continued with their activities in the main hall, namely Exhall Ringcraft (dog training), Tai Chi, Over 50s, GKR Karate, evening Zumba and children's dance classes. The daytime Zumba class had to close through lack of numbers. The Drama Club also met there between September and February. The small hall is used less often, but Mothers' Union and the Bereavement Drop-in Group along with Chatty Crafters are regular users.

Although several groups are classed as outreach and do not pay a hire charge, these organisations kindly give a donation each year towards the use of the hall.

There has been a steady stream of ad-hoc bookings over the year, ranging from children's parties to a Seed Swap event. Most users treat the hall with respect although one group overran their allotted time by a considerable margin and we had to retain some of their bond.

Unfortunately, the recently installed heaters have proved rather unreliable, with elements needing to be replaced by Steve Carter, Steve Watkins and Andy Clark. Sadly, these have continued to fail and we will need to consider how we manage heating in the hall going forward.

Tina Watkins - Halls Management Group

Meadow Working Group

In the past year we have begun to see the benefit of dividing the car park and so reducing the space in which anti-social behaviour with cars and bikes can take place. The height restrictor has also served its purpose by stopping large vehicles from accessing the area and dumping rubbish.

Early last year we rotovated a sample area and sowed flower seed. At the end of the summer once the meadow had been cut, we raked off the cuttings from the same sample area. We wait to see if that helps flower germination this summer.

The next task is to re-align and tidy the bank of soil along the car park fence so that a better pathway can be made along that edge of the meadow.

Kathryn Unsworth and Steve Watkins

4. Reports on Worship and Prayer

Worship Services

Our regular pattern of services offers both a range of times to worship together and a variety of worship styles to encourage as many as possible, of all ages, to be able to engage in worship in a meaningful way. Our usual Sunday attendance is about 92 over three services so let's be praying specifically that this will grow to be at least 100 over the next year. We have welcomed newer worshippers at all of our services. The 11.45 am Sunday Celebration All Age Worship has seen particular growth over the last year with regular attendance now often reaching over 40! The change of time from 9.30 am to 10 am for our sung Communion service has borne fruit with an increase in regular attendance.

We continue to see encouraging growth in the number of children and young people worshipping with us on a regular basis. Children now make up 13% of our regular worshipping community and take an active part in helping to lead in services.

After a very successful trial period in August 2024, we have increased the number of Joint 10.30 am Services we hold through the year, making the last Sunday of every month (whether 4th or 5th) a combined Communion service. These services have been well attended and provided an excellent opportunity for church family members from different congregations to get to know one another, worship together and linger longer over refreshments after the service as well.

Our services at Christmas and other festivals have been well attended and we are working on better communications around seasonal services to extend the reach of our invitation. It has been particularly encouraging to see a number of people become regular worshippers following attendance at some of our Christmas events.

We continue to offer a Midweek Communion Service on the first Wednesday of each month. Morning Prayer has now returned to its regular pattern of Monday – Thursday at 8 am with a consistent and faithful group gathering each morning. We take this as a particular opportunity to remember by name in prayer all those of our church family who are now housebound or in residential care homes. Compline each Tuesday evening at 7 pm continues to be a valued opportunity for quiet worship and prayer during the week and we are so grateful to Neil and John who lead this so faithfully for us.

In 2024 we ministered at 26 Funerals, 4 Marriages and 7 Baptisms and continue to see on-going links forming with the people we meet and minister to through our occasional offices.

Ministry Leadership Team

The Ministry Leadership Team meets on a regular basis to plan the strategic input into our worship ministry, ensuring that all our various congregations are well represented in our service planning.

The team includes people from all areas of our ministry and they work together to think and plan creatively, particularly around our major festivals throughout the year. They also offer considerable encouragement and support to one another in their differing roles.

It has been a joy to welcome new members to the team who are exploring their vocation in leading and preaching and we would encourage you to pray for the whole team as they work together “to grow” St Giles.

Chris Wilson

Bell Ringers

Bell ringing has a long history at St Giles. Bells were first installed in the 18th century with three bells in the tower. These bells were recast in 1900 and three more were added in 1920 to make a ring of six.

We have a band of seven ringers who meet to ring on Sunday mornings and some weddings throughout the year.

Bell practice normally takes place on Thursdays except the third Thursday of each month due to other commitments.

Bell ringing is an important part of church life as it heralds the start of morning services and other events. New members are always welcome.

Steve Watkins Tower Captain

Choir

As I write this report we are approaching our first anniversary without choirmaster Henry Wagstaff and we remember with love all the wonderful years of music making that we shared with him.

Over the past year the choir has continued to take forward his legacy through the music they offer during our worship and I know he would be delighted that they have continued to sing together joyfully for God’s glory.

He always wanted the music to be respectful, uplifting and enjoyable, so if anyone feels that they might be interested to join us please come along to our practice on a Friday evening at 7pm, you would be very welcome. We prepare music for the weekly Sunday services as well as special pieces for the major church festivals.

Kathryn Unsworth Organist/Choir Leader

Worship Band

We have been praying recently together more openly as a team which proved to be really useful. Being confident in sharing our thoughts, needs and troubles and just giving it to God.

In 2024 we welcomed Garry Griffiths to the team. We are always encouraged by people wanting to use their talent through worship and it’s a huge blessing when they choose to do it within St Giles Church. We hope to include him on Sunday mornings at the 11:45am service very soon.

We have been longing for one or more people to show an interest in managing the AV (Audio Visual) for church. This would involve managing the mixing desk in church during services and also taking control of the live stream we introduced over the last year. It’s been a great outreach for those who can’t make it to the Sunday service. We continue to pray for support and for more people to join the worship team.

We have talked for a long time about a Praise and Worship Evening in the hall and we have all had some great ideas and hope to move ahead with this in the summer. The event will be a space to encounter God through music, perhaps in a different and deeper way.

James Harden and Roy Edwards

Home Groups

There are two Home Groups at St Giles, one held at the Vicarage, led by Rev Gail and the other led by Chris Wilson and hosted by group members. Both meet on Tuesday evenings as their main meeting time on a fortnightly basis. This also enables us to combine the groups at certain points in the year and hold joint sessions in the small hall. Home groups are a great opportunity to 'dig deeper' into scripture and through guided learning material and group discussions to explore our faith. We have welcomed new people into our groups which has brought new ideas and perspectives.

Kay Aldersley

Prayer Chain

The prayer chain consists of a group of 13 people who undertake to pray for people in the church, community or beyond. These are people who have requested prayer for specific reasons, some of which are urgent and others are long term. At present we have over 50 names on our list.

Requests are communicated via e-mail and are treated with the utmost confidentiality. The list is updated fairly regularly and sent out as a reminder, but every individual request is sent out as soon as it comes in. We have had some very heart-rending needs over the past year, but we rejoice that God always hears and answers our prayers.

It is a privilege to be a part of this ministry and if you feel you would like to join us please get in touch with Chris Wilson. Please don't be put off by the length of the list; one extra prayer for just one person is of great value and the initial, combined first response to a request is of the utmost importance.

Many thanks to this faithful band of pray-ers who pray wherever they are and whenever they can.

Also please make use of the prayer board in church on which written requests can be added on a post-it and then maybe spend a moment praying for these as you pass by.

Chris Wilson

Deanery Synod

Three meetings were held during 2024, in February at St Paul's Stockingford, in June at St Nicolas Nuneaton and in November at St Giles. The meetings were well attended and the topics covered were varied and interesting.

February Meeting The main topic at this meeting concerned the Pathway to Net Zero Carbon. Colin Angus outlined resources available from the Diocese which are available to help churches reduce their carbon footprint.

Details of the visit of Bishop Ruth to the Deanery were given – Bishop Ruth would be Acting Bishop of Coventry during the vacancy-in-see.

All Saints Bedworth is the Deanery's Mission Hub church and information was shared on various activities which are happening around the Deanery.

June Meeting Members spent some time discussing *Mission to New Housing* in their parishes, sharing ideas and experiences. An update on Mission Hub activities and events was given.

November Meeting A presentation on AI was given by Professor Maggi Savin-Baden and Zak Savin-Baden. This outlined some of the ways AI works and some of the challenges that using AI brings. The usual update on the Mission Hub was given.

More information on the meetings and the Mission Hub activities can be found at nuneaton-deanery.org.uk/2023-26.

Gwyneth Carter and Viv Hopkins - Deanery Synod Reps

5. Reports on Pastoral Care

Bereavement Drop-in

Once again, I am delighted to report that this group is growing with over 25 members regularly attending meetings. We enjoy a good natter, a cup of tea and of course home-made cakes made by members of the group. John Owen sets a quiz for our meetings, which is very popular, and good fun is had with some of the answers to the questions!

On alternate Thursdays most of the membership go out to lunch and we still like to try new pubs and restaurants in the area. This is always a very pleasant and social occasion. We share contact details and we know that we can contact each other for a friendly chat if we find ourselves at a loose end.

Michael still brings his dog and sometimes Mandy and Gary bring their little dog along too. Grandchildren occasionally turn up, depending on school holidays and child-minding duties. It's quite a wonderful bunch of people and I am so very proud to be small part of it. It always offers a warm and welcoming place to be for a couple of hours on a Thursday afternoon.

So, if you feel the need of a shoulder to cry on or an understanding ear to listen, where it is safe to talk in confidence, St Giles small hall 2pm to 4pm on Thursday is the place to be. We pray that our group continues to thrive and go from strength to strength offering love and support to everyone who comes along.

Sue Barnes

Hospice Support Group

The Hospice Support Group has been raising funds for the Mary Ann Evans Hospice for over 35 years. During 2024 we held six coffee mornings which were well supported by the local community.

We raised £1418.20 during the year and handed over to the Hospice representative at our January 2025 Coffee Morning. Our efforts are very much appreciated by the Hospice and there is usually one of the Trustees at each event and we have now been awarded a SUPER GROUP CERTIFICATE.

Everyone is welcome at these events. We make a small charge for entry (no charge for children) which covers the cost of drinks and cakes. There is also a raffle and a sales table. Thanks must go to all our supporters but especially those who volunteer on the day and everyone who makes cakes and provide raffle prizes.

Coffee Mornings take place bi – monthly on the third Saturday of the month from 10am–12pm in the small hall. If you would like to help at this event, please do not hesitate to contact Viv or Jackie.

Viv Hopkins and Jackie West

Pastoral Care Team

Pastoral care is at the heart of our ministry at St Giles. We aim to maintain contact with, and offer support to, members of the church and community in as many ways as possible.

During 2024 we have been carrying this out in a number of ways, by personal visits, and telephone calls. Holy Communion has been given to members in their own homes and in Care Homes.

All requests and visits are treated with confidentiality and all members of the team have received the required safeguarding training.

If you know of anyone who would appreciate a visit, or if you feel you would like to join us in this Ministry please contact a member of the team, or the Parish Office.

Vivien Hopkins

6. Mission and Outreach

Children and Families Ministry

Much of our Children and Families ministry takes place through our 11.45 am Sunday Celebration which provides a space for regular and consistent contact with families. We often find children encouraging their parents to come along to church and families really appreciate the opportunity to worship and grow in faith together, alongside their children and with people of all generations. The children participate very enthusiastically and are growing in confidence to lead different aspects of the service.

We are so grateful to our young families who are now taking the lead in organising and running events for children and families in school holidays, such as regular Movie Mornings, All Hallows' Eve Party and activities at Easter, Christmas and other times.

In November 2024, through our Super Sunday School Project together with Bedworth and Bulkington parishes, we put in a bid for funding for three Growing Faith Workers, one for each parish. This was successful and we will soon be advertising this post for St Giles. The main aim of the role is to develop stronger links with children and families between home, school and church. Please do pray for this appointment.

Rev Gail Phillip

Schools Ministry

We are so blessed to have seven schools in the parish, including four primary schools, Ash Green Secondary School, Exhall Grange and the Warwickshire Academy – both special education schools. We continue to work hard to establish and maintain good links with all of these.

I regularly go into our various primary schools to lead assemblies. These often link Bible stories to the school values, such as kindness, resilience, honesty etc. Schools invite me to go in for key festivals of the year, such as Harvest and Easter. Our primary schools love to visit the church, particularly at Christmas, but also for remembrance or as part of their Religious Education Curriculum.

Bedworth Parish and the Nicholas Chamberlaine Trust have kindly extended the reach of the annual 'Bun Day' which is a further opportunity to share the Christian faith that inspired Nicholas Chamberlaine. This year Wheelwright Lane and Exhall Grange were added to the list of schools invited to take part, in addition to Goodyers End Lane and Exhall Cedars.

It has been particularly encouraging to re-establish closer links with Ash Green School through some very positive meetings with the Head and other staff. Two youth workers now go into the school each Weds and Thurs to offer pastoral support, particularly to those students who may be struggling to engage with lessons. The school would also appreciate help to involve groups of students in a gardening project and we are currently forming a group of volunteers to assist with this.

Liaising with the Family Link Worker at Goodyers End Lane, at Christmas this year we were able to provide 46 Hampers to families in need and are grateful for all donations received towards this and to those who helped put the hampers together and deliver them. We would like to form a stronger team around this going forward.

Rev Gail Phillip

Youth Ministry

A key objective from our Mission and Outreach Focus Area was engagement with youth, particularly as this is an age group almost entirely missing from our regular worship activities. The support of Bedworth Parish as our Mission Hub Church has been vital in enabling us to have a designated Youth Worker for St Giles and we were delighted to welcome Kat Beedie into this post in January 2025.

Kat, together with other youth workers from the Mission Hub, is now running a weekly Hot Chocolate give away on Thursdays as an initial point of contact with Ash Green students on their way home from school. This is followed by a Youth Impact club in the main hall from 4 – 6 pm which is gradually building momentum as the young people get to know the youth workers better and feel more confident to come along.

Kat is also building relationships with the children and young people who regularly attend the 11.45 am service and we are looking at further opportunities to support them to grow in their faith, particularly as several prepare to move on to secondary school.

Rev Gail Phillip

Residential Care Homes

We're so grateful to our Curate, Rev Jo Parker, who undertook much of this ministry in 2024 whilst Rev Gail was undertaking additional roles as Associate Archdeacon and Priest-in-Charge of the Ley Group of Churches.

We continue to lead a monthly Communion service at Bede Village on a Tuesday morning, followed by a worship service for those in the nursing care part of the home. This also usually includes visits to some individual residents who have links to St Giles and who are now unable to get to the services in the communal areas. We lead a monthly service at Fairfield Care Home which is well attended. It's a particular joy to see faces light up as we sing familiar hymns. It has been great to welcome Mandy Williams and Andy Clark to be part of the team in leading these services.

In August 2024 it was agreed that monthly services at Platinum Care Home, which Rev Jo had been leading, would come to an end as less of the residents were able to engage with this. We have offered though to go in on a seasonal basis if the home would find this helpful.

A newer development this year was leading a monthly service at Bede Village on a Sunday afternoon. We were asked to take this on from Sheila, our local Methodist minister, who sadly had to retire due to ill health. We're very grateful to Chris Wilson for leading this service and to Stewart Wilson for his help and support each month.

I'm also very grateful to those who regularly go in to visit members of our church family who are now in local care homes. Maintaining this contact and connection is so important to assure people that they are still so loved, remembered and cared for by St Giles.

Rev Gail Phillip

Coffee Craft and Conversation

Our group has become affectionately known as the *Chatty Crafters* and currently has a total of 27 members. We meet three times a month on a Wednesday and generally have 18-20 members at each session.

The group continues to fulfil different needs for members and as well as participating in craft activities we have met up for shows at the Belgrade Theatre and the Civic Hall and there are more evenings out planned for 2025.

Last year we made blankets and small clothing items for the special care baby unit at George Eliot Hospital, and teddy bears for the charity Simba which supports families who have lost a baby, as well as crafting hats and blankets for Ukraine.

One of the notice boards and the windowsills in the small hall have had some fantastic displays this year- all designed and created by members. We made beautiful daffodils from pipe cleaners to decorate the church at Easter as well as creating an Easter Garden in the old font outside church. In November, we used poppies made by the group and other people in the community to make St Giles look stunning for Remembrance Sunday.

A tree was put together from pallets and decorated with handmade decorations for the annual Christmas Tree Festival and our talented member, June Edwards, once again hosted a Christmas Wreath Making session where really professional looking wreaths were created and a Bring and Share Lunch was enjoyed by all.

Many of the group were involved in decorating the large hall for Rev Jo's leaving party in September and what an amazing job they did! The cost of the decorations came entirely from the group funds and several members spent their own money and their time and talents to help make this event such a memorable one by decorating the hall so beautifully with handmade creations including a balloon arch, bunting, a selfie photo frame and a beautiful cake - I must add here that several husbands and a daughter came along to help set up, so a big thank you to them. We made items to sell at the Christmas Bazaar and a wonderful array of items were sold on the day including some fantastic table decorations.

We held our first Christmas Party where we made table decorations and our lovely member Sue Barnes, along with Roy Edwards, entertained us with Christmas music and a singalong. We enjoyed a Christmas themed quiz, shared a buffet lunch and drank mulled wine and hot chocolate while we pulled crackers that had been made by the group.

One of our members celebrated her 90th birthday recently and we put on a surprise party morning for her with members bringing along an array of food donations - another lovely morning was enjoyed by all.

Following on from the success of last year's D Day Coffee Morning, where over £700 was raised for Combat Stress (a charity that supports servicemen and women who need emotional or mental health support) the group is planning to host another event to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

I am constantly blown away by the enthusiasm and generosity of this God inspired group. They continue to be a real blessing to St Giles Church and to the local community and the friendship, kindness and compassion is always evident. The group has increased in number this past year with new members joining and sharing their talents with us. We continue to ask for God's blessing and guidance along with your prayers to help us discern and navigate what lies ahead for us.

Karen White

Community Partnership Group

As numbers have dwindled, the Community Partnership Group no longer exists as an organizing body going forward but we do have a number of highlights from 2024 and hope to continue with some events.

Harvest Supper and Barn Dance - numbers were slightly down this year but everyone had fun trying to get the dances right, not always successfully despite the caller's best efforts. The simple ploughman's supper went down well and the music provided by *The Cat's Whiskers* was just right – we have already booked them for 2025!

Christmas Tree Festival Another successful event, with a good number of trees displayed.

Tina Watkins

Drama Club

Our pantomime for 2024 was *Lucy Locket*, another original script written by Ian Cartwright. The show was great fun to perform and was very well received by all of our audiences. We had 24 people on stage, ranging in age from 8 to 82 years old. As an added bonus we were able to give the church £1250 towards the cost of our use of the hall.

We must thank all of those from the St Giles family who supported us by coming to see the show, and also those who helped serve refreshments and chaperone the children in the dressing room.

Those involved in the show consider it to be the “panto family” and enjoy getting together on the Sunday evening after the run to enjoy a meal together and generally let off steam! We also get together around April to watch the DVD recorded during the week, an occasion of great hilarity and good-natured banter.

Tina Watkins

Exhall Over 50s Club

As we approach our 15th anniversary, the club continues to be well supported with average weekly attendance between 50 and 55.

We endeavour to provide a variety of activities for our weekly meetings including bingo, quizzes, guest speakers and entertainers. During the year we introduced our own versions of *Blankety Blank* and *Play Your Cards Right* which were much enjoyed. We also aim for one day trip and one pub lunch each month.

Our group is an important community facility providing opportunities to meet and enjoy the company of friends old and new. If you would like more information please contact Tricia Munro on 024 7664 4507.

Committee: Sarita Cooper, Sue Cooper-Williams, Mary Brown, Julie Jones and Iris Pead.
Tricia Munro - Chair

Mothers' Union Exhall

Mothers' Union is a Worldwide Christian Organisation active in 82 Countries around the World. We meet in the small hall on the 3rd Thursday each month to share Prayers, fellowship and usually a speaker.

We currently have 18 members, and one diocesan member. We are a very friendly group and have been pleased to welcome a few new faces and look forward to seeing more. We held a social evening in January.

Speakers included: Mandy Williams updating us on her experiences in Azerbaijan; The Friendship Project; MU former Diocesan President Felicity Hawke; Paul Morris (husband of our present Deanery President) on his work with the homeless; Sharon Roberts explaining her advocacy service and Judith Warner from Zoe's Place. We had a great evening with various degrees of success with the Church Hand Bells. Our meal out was held at The Bull & Butcher, Corley Moor. At the Christmas Bazaar we were helping in the kitchen.

We have supported all events in the Deanery including Candlemas at Fillongley and our own Mothering Sunday Service, Deanery Service at Mancetter; the RISE UP challenge against domestic abuse and gender-based violence and the Advent service held at Coventry Cathedral.

We raised £80 at our Cake Table for the Summer of Hope Appeal and £403 at our Books for Bibles event. We have an ongoing commitment to present Bibles to those Baptised at St Giles. All are welcome to join our Meetings. For more information check the Parish Magazine each month or speak to Viv Hopkins, Yvonne Knowles, Mandy Williams or Cynthia Cogley.

Yvonne Knowles

Parish Magazine

We continue to print and distribute around 250 copies of our Parish Magazine. Some are posted to those unable to attend services and a good number are delivered by our faithful band of deliverers – many thanks to you all. A couple of people have felt they can no longer deliver so thank you to those who have stepped up to take over their rounds. The remainder are collected in church. The cost remains at 50p per copy – a bargain and an excellent means of outreach! Some readers voluntarily pay a little more and contribute to postage, which is most welcome.

As ever, articles from our regular contributors are very much appreciated and continue to be provided with great reliability. One-off items are most welcome too!

We receive some income towards production costs from advertisers and would love to welcome more. Prices range from £100 to £400 per year, depending on the size of the advert so if you know any individuals or small businesses that would find our magazine a good medium to promote their services, please direct them to me.

Tina Watkins

Parish communications

Our weekly e-newsletter and website continue to form the backbone of our communications although we are using Facebook more regularly to publicise events, particularly things like All Hallows and movie mornings. It is proving an effective way to reach young families.

As in previous years, we still need to improve and upgrade our website but this remains a time/skills/financial resources issue. This is the same for other social media like Instagram X and TikTok.

Despite efforts to reduce waste, in line with our bronze Eco Church award, some people struggle with rota being sent by email so a number of spare hard copies are in church every month.

For church family who don't have access to email, information is regularly posted out including our Parish Magazine as well as the *Live your Faith* prayer, praise and worship sheets. Regular feedback reassures us that these are very much appreciated.

Penny Pallett

7. Ecumenical Relationships

Bedworth Churches Together

Monthly meetings are held at All Saints Bedworth as an opportunity for Ministers and lay leaders to share news, to pray together and to plan joint events through the year. These meetings have proved to be a particular support when sadly Ministers have been unwell for significant periods of time and there is a need to help with cover for services and other events.

We continue to make the most of joint outreach opportunities, particularly a joint Good Friday service and a Christmas outreach, both in the town centre. Please do support these events wherever possible. In January each year, we mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with opportunities for prayer offered throughout the week at different churches. This culminates with a joint worship service on the Sunday which different churches take turns to host.

Rev Gail Phillip

Ash Green Residents Association (AGRA)

Unfortunately, due to the failing health of three senior members of our Committee AGRA held their last meeting in May, 2024. We would like to say thank you for the help received from Irene, Jane, Jan, Suzanne, Lorraine, Chris, Diane and especially David Parr who sadly passed away several months ago.

Thanks also to St Giles Church for allowing us to use the small hall and to the members of the community who have supported us, along with our Councillors Damon and Pete. Ash Green Residents Association are now amalgamated with Exhall and there are meetings once a month in the Community Centre, School Lane, on the second Tuesday of each month at 7.00pm. All the very best for our future.

Kate Coyle and Isobel Jacques

8. Financial Report (separate document)

Our wonderful *Chatty Crafters* put on an impressive coffee morning to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day and raised more than £700 for veterans' charity *Combat Stress* and created our amazing Remembrance Sunday display



St Giles Drama Group annual panto never fails to delight and now includes many of our own young people



Valete

We said a sad farewell to our much-loved and missed organist Henry Wagstaff as well as Edna Leighton, Joyce Bruce, Denise Riley, Derek Wetherill and Brian Leivers