

The Minster with St Matthews Church Annual Report 2019

Welcome from the Rector

At the APCM in April 2019, I launched a new vision for The Minster and St Matthew's, rather earlier than I was intending to, because of the budget deficit that the church was facing. It has been so encouraging to see how the church has risen to the challenge and, in particular, the response to our Vision Express giving campaign which was 'far more than I could have asked for or imagined'!

Our new vision is to be a church that is 'Passionate about Jesus.' If we are gripped by Jesus' passionate love for us then we will be passionate about him. This will be expressed in our four ministry commitments: Discipleship, Prayer and Worship, Mission and Community. All of our ministries are now being directed by these four commitments.

As well as launching a new vision, I also presented some strategic priorities. The first was **to grow our 20s-30s ministry and work amongst young families**. To achieve this we committed to releasing Patrick Wheaton from his responsibilities for the 6.30pm service and Central Small Groups and replace him with Simon Phillips as a full time Associate Minister with responsibility for 20s-30s. St Luke's committed to increasing their contribution to the Benefice parish share which would partly fund Simon's salary but it would require an increase in the church's giving to fund the balance. I am very pleased to be able to report that Simon's salary has been fully funded. He has taken over the 6.30pm service, Central Small Groups and is also covering the Youth Work during Annie's maternity leave. St Luke's is growing under Patrick's full-time leadership and a building project to improve their facilities is under way. I continue to meet regularly with Patrick and he attends a staff lunch and meeting once a month. It has been particularly encouraging to see a growth in our ministry to young families. The Sunday Club is growing, many of the parents come Pre-school praise and to the Thursday morning Bible study.

The second priority was **to make the church more outward looking**. This is a longer-term strategic aim but it has been encouraging to see a number of initiatives that are reaching outsiders. Uncover groups have met during the year and a few new people have joined the church as a result. We have run a Christianity Explored Course. There were many more guests at Minister Merriment and our carol services and there was a successful Advent wreath making guest event. We held an 'evangelism brunch' on a Saturday morning to brainstorm ideas for outreach and a live showing of one of the Rugby World Cup matches with breakfast attracted a number of guests. We have done some research on provision for the homeless in Cheltenham and have investigated a number of ways in which we could be more involved. We are planning to form a small group of people to plan our outreach programme and take some of these ideas forward. The key to outreach is that we are all passionate about Jesus and therefore passionate about sharing our faith.

The third strategic priority was **to replace the kitchen at St Matthews**. I am delighted to report that the work has now been completed on time and on budget thanks to the planning and hard work of a great team headed by Valarie Waller and Henry and Kathy Williams. We hope very much that this wonderful new facility will be used to reach out and serve our community.

In order to fund these plans and cover our budget deficit a '**Vision Express**' giving campaign was launched in June supported by preaching from 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9. The response was magnificent. Our target for the kitchen was £40,000, £105,000 was raised. Our target for the increase in regular giving was £50,000 per year, £61,000 per year was raised. This has not only secured our ministry for the future and enabled us to replace the kitchen but has enabled us to improve some of our other facilities such as the office phone system and our audio visual system. The increase in our regular giving is also enabling us to give more away to other Christian ministries.

I would like to thank our wonderful staff team; they have been a joy to work with and incredibly committed and hardworking, often working far longer than their contracted hours. We meet together every morning to pray and for lunch and a staff meeting every Tuesday. We have also had two overnight prayer and planning days. We have grown to love and trust each other and to bear one another's burdens. We are so pleased for Annie and Simon with the arrival of Beth and are looking forward to Annie's return from maternity leave.

Finally, I would like to thank the many, many people who work so hard to support the many ministries of The

Minster and St Matthew's. There are far too many of you to thank in person but I do want you to know how grateful I am and how impressed I am by how many people are involved in different ways. There are, however, three people who I must mention: our new treasurer, Adrian Bowcher who has taken on the task of updating our financial systems and a major giving campaign on top of a very busy day job and our two churchwardens, Bill Harvey and Clare Salisbury, who have been a huge support to me, have done a lot of practical work in the background and have given me very helpful and wise advice and prevented me from making even more mistakes than I have made!

As I said at the APCM last year, we don't build the church. We preach, teach, pray, bear witness and serve as we are able to but Jesus builds his church: 'I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it' (Matthew 16:18).

Richard Coombs

Churchwardens report

We succeeded Charlotte Jamieson and Paul Collacott in April. They had a particularly challenging tenure, including a long interregnum as well as the complex process of appointing of a new Rector. We are grateful for their perseverance and for handing on a number of projects which we have since managed on behalf of the PCC, although we are grateful to Paul who is still dealing with the issues of moving the new organ in the Minster. The building work around the church continues to be a challenge. Most significantly, we have been seeing through the Kitchen project which began with a working party under Charlotte's leadership. The generosity of financial support, as well as the immense commitment of those dealing with the execution of the project, speak volumes for everyone's shared commitment to serving the Lord with a unity of purpose. We are grateful to all those who 'volunteer' in many and different ways, but all valued.

Phil Andrew, the Archdeacon, addressed the new set of Church Wardens in May and emphasised that whatever else we did our most significant role was to take good care of our Rector. This we have tried to do by meeting on a fortnightly basis with Richard, sometimes with Adrian, the Treasurer. We have certainly valued these occasions. Our other roles include being a conduit between the fellowship and the Rector, and being the Bishop's representatives in our church.

It is a great privilege to serve in these ways. And to those of you who encourage us and pray for us we are very grateful.

Clare and Bill

Report from PCC

The Council met on six occasions during the year and the following is a selection of the issues covered at each meeting, 'Safeguarding' always being an Agenda item. Detail in the Standing and Finance Report is not repeated.

- January: Discussions on the Vision, Strategy and Structure document. Initial plans for the Kitchen refurbishment discussed. Agreement to reduce the numbers of elected councillors from the current 18 to 15, each for a three year term which could be repeated once on re-election.
- March: The Accounts for 2018 were approved and the Treasurer reported that they would show a deficit of £52000. It was agreed to submit a Faculty application for the Kitchen plans. Approval was given for Simon Phillips to be appointed from 1st September to lead on ministry to 20-30 year olds.
- May: A Giving campaign, 'Vision Express', would take place in June, supported by a short sermon series. The twin objectives were to raise the funds needed to pay for the Kitchen and to increase regular giving to avoid further deficits. Ministry Team members had written reports on their current work, highlighting issues which were discussed in small groups.

- July: The update on 'Vision Express' showed that the responses were positive and generous. There were further discussions on the current Ministry Reports from staff. As we no longer had a connection with the farm project instigated by Mike Workman it was agreed that this should cease to be a Mission Partner. It was also agreed to support UCCF by partnering with Nicola Coombs who would be beginning to work in our local university and colleges, supporting Christian groups.
- September: A Faculty application had been granted to purchase the digital organ at the Minster, and iron gates were needed to protect wooden doors on the north side where repeated vandalism was an issue. Annie Phillips would begin her maternity leave in December. Simon would have oversight of the youth work during her absence. The plans for the Kitchen, coordinated by Valerie Waller, would enable work to begin after Christmas. Henry Williams had agreed to manage the project which would take six weeks.
- November: The revised policies for Safeguarding (Adults and Children) were presented and approved. These included more some more specific requirements, for example, the need for some volunteers to be subject to interview procedures. It was agreed to upgrade the audio-visuals system in St Matthews to improve quality and meet current specifications at a cost of a maximum of £15000. It was agreed that this year's Christmas Appeal would support Samara's Aid. A project to appoint a Director of Music was discussed and agreed following a paper from Richard. The financial situation had dramatically improved following the 'Vision Express' appeal.

Bill Harvey

Standing and Finance report

The S and F Committee met in the months when the PCC didn't meet. The Committee monitored the church's financial situation at each meeting, received reports from the Building and Fabrics Committee, scrutinised proposals for the PCC and used its authority to action spending up to a limited ceiling. Staffing issues were discussed including the change to Clare Dyson's role, so that she could be the Minister at the Minster in addition to her work as Pastoral Minister across all congregations.

Most of the work done by the Committee is referenced in the PCC Report.

The year ended with a Report on the 'Vision Express' appeal. At that point there had been 120 responses, including 23 new members in regular giving schemes. The increase in regular giving amounted to c. £60,000, including Gift Aid, and in excess of £100,000, including Gift Aid, in 'one-off' gifts pledged to the Kitchen refurbishment project. Thanks be to God !

Bill Harvey

Electoral Roll Report for the year 2019

At the Annual Parochial Church Meeting last year, it was reported that there were 247 names on the Electoral Roll, with 17 of these people living within the Parish boundaries.

This year the roll was amended only. There are 256 names on the new electoral roll with 18 in all living within the parish boundaries.

Chris Chadwick

Electoral Roll Officer

Planned Giving

Andy Ponting

Planned Giving Report 2019

How we gave



What we gave	Annual Total
Parish Giving	£226,388
Planned Giving	£44,983
Envelope scheme	£11,954
Gift Aid	£18,275
Services	£6,009

Regular gifts

Parish gifts per month	96
Planned gifts per month	40
Envelope gifts per month	10

Summary:

146 regular gifts received per month
 £307,609 received in 2019
13% increase on 2018

Deanery Synod

The full Synod met three times during the year.

In June Synod met at Emmanuel and Catherine Berry gave a talk on Mental Health, followed by another on "Caring for Creation" by Revd Arthur Champion.

In November at the Rock Andy Macaulay gave a presentation on their work. Later, Julie Ridgeway spoke about Diocesan finance, commenting that Cheltenham deanery had met its target.

In February we heard a talk at Holy Apostles on The Resource Church by the Revd Andrew Blyth. This was followed by Revd Brian Dunlop on the proposal of an "Anna Chaplaincy" across denominations for Cheltenham and Bishops Cleeve.

Please continue to support the work of Synod and Gary Grady, as the Area Dean, in prayer.

If anyone has any questions about Deanery Synod, please speak to a member of the clergy or one of the lay representatives.

Chris Chadwick

Buildings and Fabrics

We are thankful that both Cheltenham Minister and St Matthew's Church are in relatively good shape and that there were no major issues in the Quinquennial report. Thus it has been another year of keeping the two churches in good order and planning for future improvements.

At the Minster, we have fixed a leak in the tower and some loose masonry as well as planning to replace the external doors and install some protective wrought iron gates for security. We have also made plans to move the Magnus Organ and replace the bollards.

At St Matthews' Church, the landscaping of the car park was completed, the new kitchen approved and money raised to pay for it. The cycle rack was installed and the macerator pump in the North aisle WC was replaced.

Both churches have had their gutters regularly cleaned by Gooch and there have been a myriad of other small (and some larger!) jobs ably carried out by our wonderful team of volunteers, mainly comprising Roger

Abbott, Chris Pinnington, Roger Stephens and Henry Williams, whose dedication and expertise we are immensely grateful for. Thanks must also go to Peter Ormerod and Ken Symes for keeping such a careful eye on the Minster and all the members of the Building and Fabrics committee.

Godfrey Tarling

Admin

The Church Office is a happy place to be for the Admin Team of Jayne Seward and Luke Blackburn. There have been some significant changes recently which have much improved office efficiency and working conditions, causing our joy. We have a new telephone system and faster broadband. This has helped all the staff. No longer does a download from the Internet put out a computer 'out of action' for lengthy periods. The church answerphone can now be accessed from Jayne's laptop whereas previously we had to be physically standing by the answerphone listening to crackly messages. (This remote access is a godsend in the current crisis.)

The digital files have now all moved to OneDrive which is far better system. In readiness for the move we streamlined the system so that items are filed in a more systematic way. With sterling help from Gill Sage who is the Rector's PA and PCC Secretary, we have gone through the filing cabinets and so now the physical files are also in far better shape. Gone are copies of rotas from 20 years ago! Both these tasks have been extremely time consuming but it was time well spent.

We continue with the usual weekly tasks (as outlined last year) but this year have been able to spend more time producing publicity and posters for our many services and events allowed Luke to develop his creative skills.

Thanks are due to the many volunteers who help the Office whether on Reception, folding leaflets, or bagging up and delivering the Parish Mailing. Thanks are also owed to the practical team: to Sarah Brown for setting up the many and varied events we hold each week and to Jenny Aldridge for cleaning both our buildings.

Jayne Seward

Prayer and Worship

10 o'clock

Music: We have all been delighted at the growth in numbers attending the 10.00, and I would venture that people are becoming more regular in their attendance. This growth seems to have been across the whole age range with quite a few newborns. In turn we have had more baptismal services which are 'visitor events'. Often it is visitors who are most encouraging of our singers and musicians.

The constant challenge for our Service leaders and Music leaders is the choice of music that spans the age range, is accessible to all and allows each one of us to worship God individually, as well as bringing us together as the family of God. We all try to do this with sensitivity using a mix of old and new material and a range of instruments around a core modern band of keyboard, guitar, drums and bass.

As ever, some people have moved on during the year and some new people have taken their place. Within our church family we have a relatively large number of people with musical gifts. Richard Tilson is taking over responsibility as St Matthews Director of Music from April 2020 and he would welcome people to join the rotas, particularly some more drummers.

For the present we still meet as musicians on a Friday evening to practice, which is a great place for anyone new to come and try out singing or playing in a group. Do please contact Richard, Paul Collacott or myself.

Ian Perry

11 o'clock

The Minster service continues at 11 am alternating Communion with Morning Worship. In November new service books were introduced in draft form. These bring the services in line with Common Worship, this makes the services familiar for newcomers and visitors. At Easter the hymn books were replaced with Anglican Hymns Old and New, this was made possible by a generous donation from a church family and helps to expand our sung worship.

In February Revd Andy Hall went on sabbatical having cared for The Minster through the vacancy. After discussion with Bishop Robert Andy retired from the Ministry Team. Revd Clare Dyson took over from Andy in caring for The Minster and its congregation. Clare has brought together a team from the church family known as Minster Matters to support and assist her in caring for the Minster.

Thanks go to Gordon Gruenberg for all the time, thought and effort he put in to managing the Minster Welcomers team. Gordon handed the batten on in the summer and Margaret Failes has picked it up. A few people have stood down from Minster Welcoming meaning there has been a time when it has been difficult to keep the Minster open 4 hours each day. On average The Minster sees 30 visitors a day.

In July we held our first Summer Merriment in The Minster grounds with a barbeque, music, games and crafts. The event was well attended. Minster Merriment at Christmas saw 300 people come into the church who were new to us and we served 450 hog roasts.

Clare Dyson

“Bell ringing at the Minster is in consolidation mode. Our novice ringers are coming along nicely and the experienced ringers have been testing themselves by learning new things. We have now paid for the bells and they are being rung more than three times a week. If anyone would like to learn please get in touch.” *Liz Coke*

“Flower arranging. The Minster. We are still struggling with our flower arranging as we have fewer members in our team than ever. The ones we have are very committed and some how we get by. Any helpful suggestions appreciated.” *Jean Playfair*

6.30 service

The past year has seen some small changes to the 6.30 service. The biggest change was that Patrick Wheaton was released to spend all of his time at St Luke's. Simon Phillips took on overall responsibility for the 6.30 service from September 2019. One of the challenges has been recruiting team to make sure the service run smoothly after a number of people have moved out of the area for various reasons. While the set-up and welcome team is still slightly stretched, we have been more successful in other areas such as visuals, the music group, and those leading intercessions.

Some of the other changes have included the use of more testimony, reviews of Christian resources, and Q&A after some sermons. This has been driven by a vision to build on Patrick's legacy of expository preaching with the inclusion of more opportunities at other points in the service to equip the congregation for applying the Gospel to their daily life. In addition to this, we have been extending our fellowship time with a meal after the service on a monthly basis. This has proved a great way to get to know one another and strengthen our church family. We have also made some changes to the music playlist, in particular, we have reduced the number of songs we use to ensure they are all known and sung well. We are continually encouraged by the involvement of the youth group in 6.30 music, as well as other musicians who give their time and energy week-in-week-out. Special thanks to Holly Cupper who organises the rota and oversees the music.

Over the past year, we have had sermon series' looking at James, the Gospel of Luke, Acts, and Judges, to name a few. Some of the highlights of these include 'Travels with Jesus' in the summer, where we changed the format to include spending a longer period of time watching a larger chunk of a video version of the gospel of Luke, followed by a short talk and time to discuss questions and pray in groups. Our recent 'Big Questions' series was also a great success, drawing larger numbers from other services, as well as some guests exploring faith, some of whom have continued coming. We discussed various 'hot topics' with the opportunity for Q&A after each talk, which proved to be engaging, encouraging and thought provoking. We will perhaps see a return to some more 'Big Questions' later this year.

As we look to the future, we hope to build on these things, while looking for creative, engaging and fresh ways to equip the congregation to live for Jesus, and to worship him in this informal setting, and all week long.

Simon Phillips

Sound and Visuals

There are teams of volunteer visual and sound operators supporting both the services and a growing number of events and outside bookings in St Matthew's. The sound team is overseen by Clive Horne who also provides new volunteers with training. The Loop for those with hearing aids has caused problems over the past year. Thank you for your patience as this was tricky to identify but this has now been resolved by Clive.

The visuals team is also aided by Luke who loads all the material for services on to the system. Technical support is given by Andrew Jack who has advised us about upgrading the visuals and sourced the equipment. We now have a new main projector in St. Matthew's replacing what had become a very creaky piece of kit. The new one also enables us to cope with wide-screen. A new screen is also ready to be fitted. Both Clive and Andrew are often to be found in the building ensuring the tech runs smoothly. Thank you to them and all the operators.

The new visuals equipment has arrived and stage one will be installed as soon as possible as the main projector is now very creaky. Many thanks to Andrew Jack for all the time he has given to this project.

Prayer and Intercessors

Prayer Ministry continues to be an integral part of our church's prayer life. It is an opportunity to seek prayer for oneself or on behalf of another. It is a short time of prayer, not in-depth counselling. Confidentiality is paramount. It is offered every Sunday at the end of the 10 am service in St. Matthew's. Since October 2019, it has been available at several prayer stations after the monthly communion service. At The Minster, Prayer Ministry is offered every second and fourth Sunday, at the end of the 11 am service.. Over the past year, Prayer Ministers have engaged in regular ongoing training, often with Richard present. The number of Ministers has increased. Under Richard's leadership Prayer Ministry has taken on a higher profile and has been greatly encouraged at both churches. *Judith Wynn*

During the last year the Intercessor Ministry has continued to receive regular prayer requests from Church Members. In the light of several factors we are in the process of reviewing the Ministry, to ensure it develops in the most appropriate and supportive way for all Church members.

Margaret Failes

Ministry outside the Parish

During the year, Andy Hall took the following services in the Coln River Benefice:

Holy Communion:

- St Michaels - Dowdeswell
- St Michael and All Angels – Withington
- St Andrews – Sevenhampton

Morning Prayer:

- All Saints - Salperton
- St Michael and All Angels - Withington

Rod Pellereau led and preached at Evening Prayer once a month in the various churches in the 7 Towers Benefice. He also conducted the Act of Remembrance at Norton Church and assisted with the Benefice Alpha Course, at which Caroline was chief cook.

Rachel Tarling took services in the South Cheltenham Team of Churches.

Richard Coombs

Discipleship

Children's Ministry

Standing in front of the empty tomb – a beach tent covered in grey cloth – one little boy looked in and declared loudly, in case we hadn't yet grasped it, that, 'Jesus really is alive'.

Our Children's Ministry is an exciting place to be. On Sundays, no-one can have failed to see the numerical increase in families, especially those with younger ones, at the Ten O'clock. The Creche, Sparklers (Preschoolers), Rockets (Reception to Year 2) and Lasers (Years 3-6) are all busy. There is a real buzz in the sessions as we explore the Bible together, play games and have fun. However, it is not just numerical growth for faith is flourishing at all levels. One 2 year old noticed the tiny plastic cross-shaped tile spaces dropped by

the kitchen tiler in the street outside St. Matt's and said, 'Cross, Jesus died'. An eight year old shared their excitement at taking Communion for the first time and clearly understood the wonder of it all. One child commented that they are the only one in their class who is 'passionate about Jesus' which reminded us of the vital nature of this Ministry in enabling children to grow and then live out their faith in a world that may be disinterested or mocking.

Midweek, sees Preschool Praise continuing to meet twice a month bringing the Bible stories and the love of Jesus to newborn babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers.

7Up Club on Fridays has not yet taken off. In principle, families are behind it but our children in this age group are often tied up with other activities to be able to commit regularly or just shattered at the end of a busy school week. So, for the time being, we are offering one-off events such as our recent trip to Hollywood Bowl which is growing relationships between the children and their friends. We hope to build on this and have one-off sessions about following Jesus.

Holiday Club, 'Awesome: The Big Adventure', returned in October after a year's sabbatical. The large team needed to deliver this was enthusiastic and it was a great opportunity to present a clear message about Jesus. Numbers were down on previous years but those who came, which included a high proportion of friends, were thoroughly engaged. Some who were only booked for one day insisted to parents that they came for the other mornings. The Celebration Service led by Adventurers Holly Cupper and Paul Chesworth was truly inspired and appreciated by people of all ages and stages of faith. Families have joined us on Sundays as a result of the club. Planning starts soon for the coming year.

We also reached out to our own families and friends through the Light Party and the Craft Afternoons all of which proclaimed Jesus. Fifteen families came to a Preschoolers' Easter Activity morning which we held for the first time in 2019 and again this included a good proportion of folk not normally here on Sundays.

Supporting parents is a vital part of our mission and so Annie and I held our second 'Cheese and Wine' evening for parents which was well attended and appreciated. We discussed the joys and difficulties of bringing our families to know Jesus and looked at resources to encourage parents. Practical steps to support parents include Sunday Creche and also Midweek Creche for the Thursday Bible Study. There has been such a demand for the latter that we have had to recruit a raft of new helpers.

Bright Lights Toddler Group on a Monday is a support group for young families but our aim is also to share Jesus. This is done on a weekly basis through individual conversations over tea or at the craft table as well as storytime, and the giving of Bible story books at Christmas, Easter and the summer. Special events at Christmas, Harvest and a 'Mothering Monday service for those unable to come on the Sunday are well attended.

Bringing children and their families to know Jesus as their Lord is not just a matter for the Children's Ministry teams, it is the responsibility of all the Church Family. So thank you to all of you who are playing your part whether as a Group or Creche leader, a coffee maker, a welcomer, a crafter, a smiler, a prayer warrior, or as a parent hanging on in there with Jesus when family life gets tough. Your faithfulness and your practical love and care changes lives.

Jayne Seward

Youth Ministry

Ignite Sunday has a solid group of between 10 and 14 young people (age 11-15) each week, and over the year we have done series on Colossians, Daniel, Romans, Jonah, Proverbs (including 'hot topics'), and basics of faith from the gospel of Mark. This group has also led 2 Ten O'clock services which have been great highlights, and with the older youth leading the sung worship too.

Ignite Friday has been a lot of fun, especially with the team leading more of the activities, and has included a few trips, and combined nights with Cambray Baptist Church after camping next to them at Soul Survivor. The 'Big Moment' (monthly youth worship, talk and prayer) has been a great new venture developed from the weekly 'Movie Moment', with more space to share the gospel and a great opportunity for young people to be more involved in worship and drama.

Youth Small Group on Wednesdays has 5-10 young people (age 14-18) meeting each week for dinner, Bible study and prayer. This moved to Bill Harvey's in the Autumn which worked really well, enabling a smooth transition after Christmas when I went on Maternity Leave.

Friday Fun Club has been a relaxed space for the older youth, taking a leading part in the 'Big Moments' with Ignite, and planning the whole youth parties. But since January, FFC has joined with Ignite to become Friday Night Youth.

The older youth are also fully involved in the 6.30 service with monthly set-up and coffee, leading prayers, playing in the worship band and serving on the sound team.

Residentials:

Youth Weekend Away – 17 young people went to Gaines Manor Activity Centre in February 2020 to have fun, build friendships, take part in outdoor activities and most of all, get to know and worship Jesus. Gaines provided all the teaching and worship, activities and food – it was such a blessing to the leaders and the young people, who all had such a great weekend and enabled the leaders to invest in the young people without needing to be in the kitchen for example.

Soul Survivor (13-18s) – 22 young people came from St Matts and The Minster (including a couple of friends of regular members) together with 5 leaders, had a great time and grew in faith.

Penrhos@Brymore Venture (11-14s) – 1 year 8 and 2 leaders from St Matts went to Brymore and had a great time of discipleship, worship and fun. This camp will run online in a very different way due to lockdown, this summer.

Treginnis Falcon – 2 youth served alongside other leaders from St Matts, leading children aged 8-11 from disadvantaged backgrounds. Really encouraging to see their faith outworked and grow through serving these children.

Schools work

Leading up to my Maternity Leave, I was able to hand over Bournside Christian Union aka 'FAB Club' (Faith At Bournside) to YFC, and Balcarras Christian Union to 2 other church youth workers.

I gradually reduced mentoring at All Saints Academy, coming to a natural end with each of the girls and handing over to the school's pastoral team. I also helped lead the ASA Year 7 'Retreat Days' at The Rock in Autumn Term and The Minster hosted the school's Carol Service at Christmas.

The youth team has really strengthened over the last year, which will provide a strong platform for moving forward when we go back into church after lockdown.

Annie Phillips

Central Small Groups

Central Small Groups has been through a slight transition period over the past year, largely due to quite a hefty turnover in group members. The 20's-30's age group can be quite transient, and we have felt the force of that keenly in the past year with a few members moving on to pastures new, including some group leaders Gareth Griffith and Patrick Wheaton. That said, we have also seen a few new faces and the group is beginning to grow and stabilise once more. We continue with a pattern of three weeks of Bible study and then a week off for a social. Some of these socials have included meeting at various pubs around the town, going bowling, as well as hosting games nights, quizzes, and even a 'pop-up escape room' at church. Each week we meet before our Bible study to eat together.

Over the past year we have worked through a number of New Testament letters, including 1 & 2 Thessalonians, James, 1 Peter, as well as some of the Gospel of Luke. Most recently we have finished 1 John and have started the 'God's Big Picture' Bible overview course. After Easter we will be moving on to Exodus.

Simon Phillips

Pastoral activities

The pastoral visiting team remains strong and active, it now has 16 members. We have been meeting on a monthly basis to keep me up to date with pastoral visits and for support and learning. In the New Year, the meetings will take on a new format as the increased membership makes the old model unworkable. Two of our new members have completed the Diocesan Pastoral Assistants Course. At Home Church continues under the care of Brenda Commons. Small groups, CAMEO and Barnabas are all ways in which pastoral concerns are shared and through which people are offered help. I know a great deal of pastoral care happens on an informal basis and my thanks go to each one of you who shows their Christian faith in this way.

Mission

Mission partners working group

The group changed title early in 2020.

The group's remit is:

- i. maintain an overview of the church's Mission Partners and the church's relationship as an institution with each;
- ii. encouragement of being a sending church;
- iii. promotion of missional awareness in all aspects of church.

As a church, we adopted two new Mission Partners during 2019. First, SAT-7 was adopted early in the year. Second, UCCF followed in September when Nicola Coombs took up the post of CU Staff Worker for Gloucestershire.

A full list of our church's Mission Partners can be found on the Prayer Diary and the website.

We remain committed to supporting all Mission Partners in prayer as well as volunteers where appropriate and financial support where applicable.

At present, 8 Mission Partners received monthly financial support from us. Payment is not made directly to individuals; it is paid to the organisations of which they are members. Decision making on financial matters rests with S&F and PCC; the group's remit being to make recommendations.

Ian Davies

Christmas Appeal



As a Church community we have been supporting the work of Samara's Aid, a charity that has been working tirelessly in Syria since 2014. The charity's focus has moved from humanitarian aid to re-building the infrastructure in this war damaged country. Our Christmas Appeal centred on helping with the running costs of an **Outreach Centre**. In particular, to cover the salaries for a children's worker to run the safe space for children who have lost one or both parents, a counsellor to provide trauma and bereavement therapy to these children, and a third worker to manage the food bank and projects working with widows.



Samara is delighted and humbled by the response of our church community who raised a total of £9,225.

Ceri Settatree and Claire Chesworth

Community

Cameo

"CAMEO continues to be popular with senior ladies and gentlemen on Thursday mornings in the Wesley Room. They come to meet friends, to make friends, to hear about God, to be entertained, to be informed, to knit and play games, to eat, to discuss books they have read, to study Luke's gospel with Uncover, to watch films and to support each other. We have a great team of people who help with refreshments, cooking and washing up, making sandwiches and giving a Thought for the Day. The highlight of year was our trip to STEAM, the railway museum in Swindon, and the neighbouring outlet village. Please pray for any of our members who are not yet Christians."

Valerie Waller

Barnabas group

The Barnabas Group continues to meet on the morning of the second Tuesday of each month at St Matthew's Church, Cheltenham.

On average 32 people attend the meetings, some are members of our church, some attend other churches, and some have no church connection. There have been some new members over the past year. The average age of members is not getting younger, and several are in their 90s.

As well as interesting talks at each meeting, we had a very enjoyable outing in May, taking 31 people by coach to Hereford. We had lunch at Café @ All Saints. In the afternoon there were tours of the Cathedral, seeing the Mappa Mundi, and looking round the market and shops.



On 10 December 41 people came to our Christmas Lunch at The Royal Oak in Prestbury which was much enjoyed, finishing with singing Christmas Carols.

There is a small team to run the group: Clare Dyson, Moira Johnson, Graham & Viv Larner, David & Margaret Towers. In 2020, Julie Brown has joined the team.

The Barnabas Group self-funds with donations from those attending the meetings.

David and Margaret Towers



Barnabas group enjoying their trip to Hereford in 2019



Street Pastors

Cheltenham Street Pastors celebrated their tenth anniversary in December 2019. The Reverend Canon Andrew Dow who was our Rector at the time played a key role in establishing the scheme in Cheltenham as the first chairman of the Cheltenham Street Pastors Association and a speaker on the training course for volunteers.

The church has continued to support Street Pastors through individual volunteers serving as pastors and prayer pastors, and hosting the monthly prayer meeting for Street Pastors (10.30 a.m. on the second Tuesday of the month).

During the year the pastors continued their ministry of caring, listening and helping people in town between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. on Friday and Saturday nights. The newly acquired 'safe space' (converted horse box parked in Ormond Place) has proved popular and invaluable at times but difficult to staff with volunteers.

During 2019 pastors gave out 1,136 Bottles of water, 920 pairs of Flip Flops, and 4,400 lollipops. They supported 164 vulnerable people, gave 30 people first aid, and made the streets safer by collecting 2,358 bottles!

David Hunt



New Street Pastors being Commissioned at the 10th Anniversary Service at Cambray Baptist Church, December 2019

Minster Singers 2019

Minster Singers is an all-comers choir with no auditions that meets once a month for two hours in the Minster to practise sacred and secular works, largely from a classical repertoire. If everyone came at once, we would

have between 50 and 60 singers. New people join the choir regularly and some drop out for various reasons, so numbers are pretty stable. We have excellent fun at practices, but a choir really needs to perform in order to show what it can do, so we usually sing in public 4 or 5 times a year. We have been running since May 2013 and have built up a considerable repertoire in that time though it takes us a long time to be able to perform a major work. 2019 was one such year, as we were able to perform the Vivaldi Gloria during the Christian Arts Festival in May. On that occasion, we benefited from having our three regular soloists perform with us – Emily Campbell, Holly Cupper and Imogen Easton. The other concerts of 2019 were our annual Minster “Birthday Anniversary” concert in February, the summer strawberries and cream concert, which, this year, was part of the Summer Merriment at the Minster and we closed the Christmas Merriment with a concert of unusual Christmas items. Michael Barrett continues to be the most wonderful and patient accompanist for us. We’re looking forward to being able to resume practices when it’s safe to do so.

Paul Collacott

Finance

Treasurer’s Report on 2019 Financial Year

The most important matter for me as the new Treasurer this year was to have the income and expenditure in balance. One simply has to live within ones means or increase the income.

The Vision Express appeal dominated the year from a financial perspective.

INCOME

There were two elements to the appeal.

1. To raise £40k for the refurbishment of our kitchen, with any surplus over the refurbishment costs being added to general funds
2. To increase the regular giving to a level which covered our regular expenditure.

Total income for the year was £441k (£380k in 2018) this was a healthy £60k increase compared with prior year total income.

1. The campaign raised over £111k in lump sum donations with £89k collected in the year and a further £22k in gift aid not actually received in 2019 but will show in 2020 accounts.
2. Increase to regular monthly giving will show through in 2020 but pledges indicate an effective £50k increase in regular giving which will put the regular income and expenditure in a surplus position for 2020.

I am particularly pleased with the rise in regular giving and the widespread participation from the whole church family. Over 100 separate gifts were made to the one off campaign and over 110 pledges made to the regular giving campaign.

EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure was £403k - a reduction from 2018 which totalled £429k.

Largest costs were the parish share £137k (143k), staff £128k (£122k) and church building maintenance costs of £72k (£57k)

CASH

Cash balances at year end were £107k up from £87k in 2018. Cash is held in HSBC or CCLA accounts only.

SYSTEMS

We improved functionality and security by upgrading the accounting system (SAGE) and moving it to the Cloud so it is constantly maintained and protected by SAGE themselves. We have, for 2020, delegated many budgets to designated budget holders and a two part authorisation system, albeit rather frustrated and delayed by the 2020 Pandemic.

Adrian Bowcher