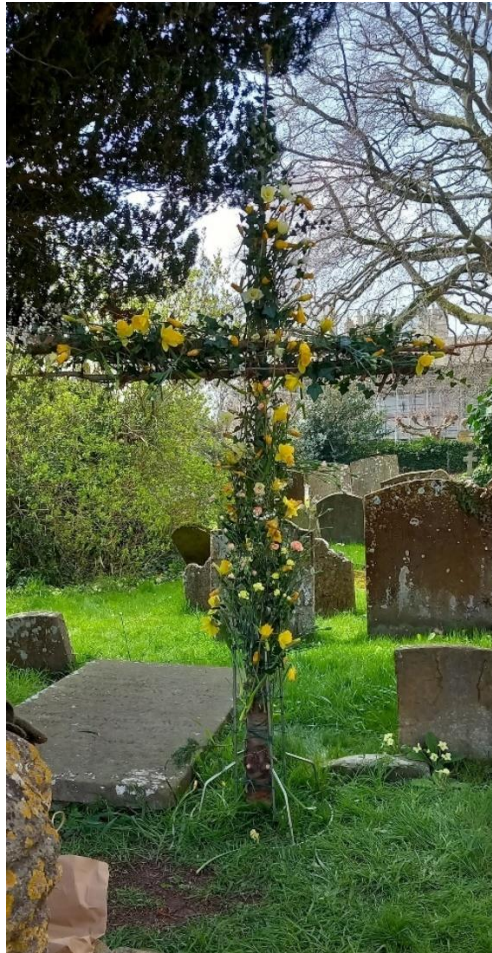


St Bartholomew's Church Yarnton



Annual Parish Report 2022

Aims and purposes

St Bartholomew's, Yarnton Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Oliver Petter, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

Introduction

Thank you to all who have continued to support St Bartholomew's. We are so grateful to all those whose hard work and commitment enabled us to sustain the church's ministry in new as well as familiar ways, and to maintain our central offering of worship and prayer, and pastoral care in our community. We are blessed by all our congregation and friends. Particular thanks must go to our excellent and dedicated PCC led by our churchwardens Paul Tweddle and John Appleton, Treasurer Gary Brewerton, 2022 Secretaries Penny Small then Alison Riggs, and Safeguarding Officer Charlotte Rayner.

Objectives and activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at St Bartholomew's. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish.

Diocesan and Benefice vision

St Bartholomew's is the only physical Christian presence in our parishes and we welcome all denominations to join our worship. Our tradition is simple, traditional worship, although we are open to change. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament. We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

The Parish profile published previously in April 2018 reflected an awareness of the “the need to contact and involve new residents of the parish.” This has remained a priority in the current Rector’s ministry thus far. We face the challenge of being physically located on the edge of the village which we serve, so there is little visibility of the church for village residents.

The PCC has expressed a commitment to the Diocesan Vision, of which four points continue to have great resonance.

- To make a bigger difference in the world and serve the poor.
- To share our faith with adults, children and young people and grow the church in every place; rural, urban and suburban.
- To serve every school in our community.
- To put the discipleship of all at the heart of our common life and set God’s people free.

To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of St Bartholomew’s church.

PCC

PCC members in 2022 were: : Rev. Oliver Petter (Incumbent), John Appleton (Churchwarden), Paul Tweddle (Churchwarden), Gary Brewerton (Treasurer) Charlotte Rayner (Parish Safeguarding officer), Douglas Fairhurst, Neil Small, Penny Small (PCC Secretary until July and Deanery Synod representative), Rachel Woods, Rosie Hilliard and Jill Rowbotham, Alison Riggs (PCC Secretary from July). Thank you to all our PCC.

Review of 2022 *(Achievements and performance)*

Early months

We began 2022, with the challenges of the pandemic ongoing. The principal pattern of worship continued to be the 8am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) and Parish Communion at 11am on Sundays. Alongside this we continued to hold a Wednesday morning 9.30am Holy Communion Service. Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer were said from Monday -Friday.



We held a Benefice service on Epiphany. This was an atmospheric occasion. We celebrated the Baptism of Christ on Sunday 9th January, with reaffirmation of baptismal promises.

January saw us reach our pre pandemic attendance for the first time on a 'normal' Sunday. This was a reminder of the challenging journey of the pandemic. We were blessed that our congregation continued to grow during 2022.

The period leading from Epiphany through Lent to Holy Week and Easter was one in which external circumstances were particularly significant. Covid was rife in our communities and for the first time many in our church were infected. There was the reality of rising fuel prices and the rising cost of living, and the chilling advent of the war in Ukraine. This was a period where many people felt weary, whilst spring brought some energy. As we moved into spring, our Holy Week and Easter celebrations brought encouragement and good attendance.



Parish life at St Bartholomew's in the spring gained momentum, with several baptisms. However it was also a period of notable sorrow with significant bereavement in the community. Our church community is a place where support and comfort are shared, and we were grateful for the kindness and care in evidence in the community.

As we moved into late spring and summer we had some very special celebrations in the church. On Ascension day in May we said farewell to Jonathan Roberts, our ordinand on placement over two years. We held a special service and party. Jonathan made a significant and much valued contribution to our Benefice, and went on to be made deacon in June in the Diocese of Hereford.

Platinum Jubilee



In June we celebrated the Platinum Jubilee with a special, memorable service on Coronation Day. Many village organisations were involved over the evening. We began with the planting of a tree at Rutten Lane Memorial Green, as part of the Queen's Canopy. Among the organisations who were represented by those adding a trowel full of soil to plant the tree were the uniformed

organisations, Yarnton Band, the RBL, William Fletcher School, Yarnton Pre-school, The Red Lion, St Bartholomew's and the Parish Council. This ceremony was followed by a procession to the church for a Service of Thanksgiving, accompanied by Yarnton Band, and with prayers from representatives of village organisations. It was wonderful to have a full church with people of all ages and many village groups represented. The final part of the evening was a party in the churchyard on a perfect summer evening. We were very grateful for the grant from the Parish Council towards the cost of hospitality, and to Yarnton Manor for their sponsorship of the tree and the orders of service.



Flower Festival and Nature Count

The Flower Festival and Nature Count was a very enjoyable weekend, and we welcomed a lot of visitors over the two days. It was good to bring together many people from the village over the weekend, and to give an opportunity to enjoy the festival and atmosphere, and to give space for some relaxed conversations after so much restriction in recent times. We were very pleased to raise just over £400, shared between The DEC Ukraine Appeal and some urgent church funds.



The Flower festival displays were wonderful, and visitors commented on their beauty and the attention to details, as well as the humour and joy that were evident. They all worked so well together and the church looked stunning. We were grateful to all the participants: William Fletcher School, Yarnton Pre-School, Yarnton Band, Yarnton Blues, Brownies and Guides, Scouts, Cubs and Beavers, Royal British Legion, Lunch Club, Help Hub, Book Reading Club, The Lanier Foundation at Yarnton Manor, The Sanctuary, Gardening Club, Yarnton WI, Erdington House Residents, Silver Birch Café at Erdington House, St Bartholomew's Bellringers, Churchwardens, Church cleaners, Eco Action Group, Little Sheep, Junior Church. Thank you to all who participated, and to our excellent team of bakers! We must record huge thanks to Jill Rowbotham for her expert co-ordination of the Flower Festival.

The nature count activities and exploration of the church yard outside was part of the national 'Churches Count on Nature' event. These activities appealed to all ages, and the formal recording was logged with the national count. Our intention was to develop this nature count and make it a yearly event.

St Bartholomew's Day

Our Service was followed by an enjoyable bring and share party at the Rectory.

The death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

The early autumn marked the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II, and was an extraordinary and sad time for our nation. The church was a significant place of remembering and mourning within our village, with two special services during the period of national mourning. The Book of Condolences was signed by quite a large number of people. Our church bells rang on the morning after the Queen had died, and on the morning of her funeral service. The church was involved in a short ceremony at the Rutten Lane Memorial Green on the eve of the funeral, which included the national minute of silence.



Remembrance Sunday

A Village Act of Remembrance took place at the Rutten Lane War Memorial. Those in attendance represented a cross section of our village, with many children from the uniformed organisations, and wreaths laid by those organisations, as well as the War Memorial Committee WI, Yarnton Blues, Parish Council, Church and Gardening Club. Yarnton Band played as the full band this year, which had been their decision. This was a great blessing for the

Act of Remembrance. There were over 200 people present, with a lot of young people.

Advent and Christmas.

Advent Carol Service This Service went well, with about 20 people on a very cold night. Mulled wine followed in the vicarage.

Christingle Service This was offered in the Little Sheep format, and proved popular with 50 people coming, half of them children. We attracted regulars from Little Sheep, as well as former Little Sheep attendees and some villagers who had not come to church services (other than Christenings.)

Village Carols This was one of the coldest days of December, and the World Cup Final! We were grateful to have Yarnton Band visiting and they played wonderfully as ever.

Crib Service The Crib service went well and was a lovely occasion. We had over 100 in church, with almost half being children – as well as roughly 15 from Yarnton band – and it was the first Christmas service to feel quite full since the pandemic.

Midnight Mass/Christmas Morning – 85 people attended our Christmas worship.

Occasional Offices in 2022– Weddings, Baptisms, Funerals

Weddings

Five Weddings took place in St Bartholomew's.

Baptisms

We held seven Baptisms in 2022, and one Service of Dedication.

Funerals

There were 13 Funerals of parishioners over 2022, 10 of which were in church.

Parish Life



Electoral Roll

In 2022 we revised our electoral roll. The number on it increased to 53 , from in 2021.

Deanery Synod

Penny Small was re-elected as Deanery Synod representative at the APCM in 2022. The Synod provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church.

Safeguarding

The PCC adopted the new Safeguarding Policy in January. Members of the PCC completed online safeguarding training as required by the Diocese. Thank you to Charlotte Rayner for her work as Safeguarding Officer.

Ministry

The Vicar continued to be supported by Rev'd Jim Turner and Canon Barbara Doubtfire in leading worship. We were also blessed by the provision of ministry from Rev'd Dr Richard Armitage, who joined our rota during the latter part of 2022.

We are grateful to our regular intercessors and readers for their contribution to our worshipping life, and to our welcomers. Thank you to Charlotte Rayner for co-ordinating the rota of volunteers.

Jonathan Roberts continued in his two year placement in the Benefice, running from the academic years 2020-1 and 2021-2. He was a regular participant in worship at St Bartholomew's assisting in many roles. He also assisted with pastoral visiting in the parish.

Music

We were once again grateful to Malcolm Hawkins for playing for us throughout the year.

Pastoral Care

Reverend Oliver Petter and Reverend Jim Turner visited all church members who requested it, to celebrate communion with them either at their homes or in hospital. After the long gap caused by the Pandemic, visits to the Sanctuary care home resumed, and a monthly service of Holy Communion for residents was re-established. We were thankful to the Activity co-ordinators at the Sanctuary who facilitated these visits. There were also ad hoc pastoral visits to Erdington house.

Thanks are due to Jim Turner for his dedicated pastoral ministry and telephone ministry. We are grateful to the ways in which members of our community care for one another and support in pastoral and practical ways.

Our PCC resolved to form a 'Pastoral Team' to support the pastoral ministry of St Bartholomew's, and the work of our clergy.

Mission and Evangelism

Caring for God's creation



Our Eco Action group continued to work towards the Bronze award and received this in spring 2022. We have since sought to work towards the silver award. The Eco Church awards set a programme of work to foster a more sustainable church life, working on: worship and teaching, management of church buildings, management of churchyard, community and global engagement, lifestyle. This is in every sense a vital part of our mission.

Our second annual Climate Sunday service took place on Sunday 9th October.

Junior Church

Our Junior Church ran at our 11am Parish Communion on a weekly basis. A small, but growing community of local families have become involved in the Junior Church. We are very grateful to Rachel Gardner for leading this central aspect of our ministry to children and young people.

Little Sheep

Charlotte Rayner continued to lead our Little Sheep group until the summer, when she stepped back due to increasing work commitments. Little Sheep has much appreciated by many families in our village. Craft activities, songs, games are offered, as well as short time of prayer. The group was led by Charlotte for 12 years, and we are extremely grateful to Charlotte for all the time and care she brings to this ministry. It is a testament to her leadership that the group continued into a new school year and has thrived, following the pattern she has set.

Café Create

Café Create had developed during 2019 in Yarnton Village Hall. This was offered as an all-age event, offering craft activities and reflections to explore Christianity, with a café style setting. The aim of reaching out in the heart of our village, and offering hospitality and a gentle introduction to Christian fellowship and spirituality remained a priority. We ran sessions in early 2022, whilst this provision was left on hold for the rest of the year.

Study Group

Our study group continued to be an important part of our learning, prayer and fellowship with 5 series through the year:

In February we offered a 6 week online Pilgrim Course exploring the promises of Baptism.

In Lent we held a 6 week series looking at the final days of the life of Christ and the journey of Holy Week.

A 3 week study group exploring Paul's letter to the Colossians ran in June and July

A 6 week series looking at the early chapters of the Gospel of Matthew ran in October and November

In Advent we held three sessions reflecting on Advent hymns and reading.

This group is a central part of our mission and formation as disciples of Christ, and of our parish learning.

The church in the community

William Fletcher School

We have been thankful for our relationship with the school, and for the support of their headteacher, Mrs Deborah Nind. The school visited for their traditional services for Founders day , Harvest Festival and Christmas. The Rector led one assembly each term in school.

Rev'd Oliver Petter is a school governor along with one member of our PCC who sits on the School Governing Body. Both were regularly involved as welcomers/stewards on the school gate to oversee the one-way entry system to the school under Covid-19 protocol.

Community Drop in

Following a period of discernment, a Community Drop in was launched in December to provide a weekly 'warm space' alongside the long running aim to offer a point of contact and friendship in the community. The Rector and a large team of volunteers partnered with Mary Clarke, who had co-led the Help Hub and the Drop in launched successfully.

Village News

We continue to be grateful for our page in Yarnton Village News, and the possibilities of publicising church activities through it. This was helpful as we were able to keep villagers in touch with the church during lockdown and to continue to offer Christian reflections.



Church Life



Open church Keeping the church open is a valuable and cherished part of our ministry. We were grateful for all those who kept the church open.

Foodbank The Foodbank collection point continued to be heavily used, and we held a special collection for North Oxfordshire Community Foodbank at Harvest.

Church cleaning Thanks are due to all those who cleaned St Bartholomew's church during 2022, and especially to Jill Rowbotham for co-ordinating the monthly Saturday morning cleaning session.

Bell ringers We continue to be grateful to our band of bellringers for their superb ringing. We were especially grateful for their ringing within the period of national mourning in September.

Tea & coffee Thanks to our rota of volunteers who served refreshments after Sunday services. This was much appreciated by regulars and visitors alike.

Flowers We were grateful to Rachel Woods, Pauline Watt Smith and Sarah Eaton for their floristry in the church.

Fundraising

We also owe great thanks to Pauline Franklin who once again completed the annual Ride and Stride raising money for St Bartholomew's and for the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust.

Ordinands in Training

The parish remains committed to supporting the learning and formation of future clergy, and it was a blessing to have two ordinands spending time in the parish during a 2022. Jonathan Roberts concluded his two-year placement as part of a Context Based Training pathway at Ripon College, Cuddesdon, from October 2020- June 2022. Jonathan spent 2 days each week in the Benefice – being involved in the full range of parish activities both in person and online, and made a considerable contribution. Tim Davies finished a two term placement and ably assisted with our study group programme.



Almighty God, we give you thanks for our parish, and for all your people. We give thanks for all that is done in your name, and for your love shared among us. Give us wisdom to discern your will, courage to follow you, and joy in serving you and our neighbours. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.