



**St Matthias', St Mark and Holy Trinity Church
Reports for the
Annual Parochial Church Meeting
12 May 2024**

You will find within this booklet reports from many of the 'activities' or ways we seek to serve God and His kingdom. We've listed them broadly under the umbrellas of each of the 'Action Groups' who help shape and lead what is going on at St Matthias. You can find more information about these groups in the main Annual Report.

Section 1: Social Action

1. St Matthias Pre-School and Childcare Centre



THE CHILDREN: It is a real privilege to be involved in the Pre-School and currently there are 43 children attending – 8 of these are 2 year olds. There is so much for these little ones to learn about, and the world is an exciting place!

One parent brought in some chicks for the children to see and they have been watching tadpoles turn into frogs! it has been great to have Laura with us each week for half a term teaching the



children to explore music. They celebrated World Book Day, St David's Day looking at daffodils and making Welsh cakes, and learned about love and kindness in Friendship week.



Members and clergy of the church continue to have an input with a bible story and activities taking place in the church each week together with end of term services to which the family are invited to attend – always a great occasion!

Pre-school never stays the same for long! We were very sorry to lose Kate from our staff after Christmas, but we did persuade her to join the Management Committee! We are very pleased to have her and value her insight in supporting and making decisions for the Pre-School. Since our last report, we have welcomed Jaimee and Jessica on to our staff – Jessica has come to us having had experience of working with children with additional needs (of which we have 5 this term), and Jaimee is studying for her Foundation Degree in Early Years Education. Laura completed her Forest School training during the year and on-going training remains a priority for all our staff. All the staff have been actively fundraising to help maintain the forest school structures which we really appreciate!



As many of you may have heard on the news, the Government are expanding the grant entitlement for Pre-School children, so, as from April 2024, parents who are working will be entitled to 15 hours funding for their 2 year olds, which will increase in September 2025 to 30 hours fully funded. Although we take a small number of 2 year olds currently the number looking for a Pre-School place is likely to increase, so there are many decisions to be made in the very near future in view of this change.

The Management Committee continues to meet once a term (more if needed) with each one taking part in Pre-School activities from time to time. We have 6 members and we are grateful to each one for the support and experience that they bring to this group.



Thank you for reading our report and if you should feel you could help in any way or have a hobby that you think the children might enjoy, or if you feel like attending our end of term services, please do get in touch with us!

*Sylvia, Liz, Andrea, Kevin, Nick and Kate
Pre-School Management Committee*

I couldn't resist sharing this photo with you!

2. Welcome Space

Welcome Space continues to provide a warm atmosphere for people from the community or church to drop in on a Wednesday between 12noon-2pm so they can connect with one another or talk about their experiences and enjoy drinks and refreshments. Several people are regulars who come week by week, but others come from time to time – all receive a welcome! We have also enjoyed having the Ukrainian group who often join us following their session in the church.

We have been able to help some people from the Hardship Fund, set up by the church for those in need and to which we have received donations from the winter fuel payment given by church members. We do appreciate the kindness of all who have given so generously, and it has been really appreciated by those who have received help. We continue to encourage people towards the foodbanks for additional support.

We are only a small group catering and chatting to people. We appreciate the help of the Lions Club of Babbacombe who cater once a month. However, we still need people who will draw alongside and listen to and chat to our visitors who attend. If you feel able to do this, we would love to hear from you. However, we would value your prayers for all who attend as well as our team – thank you.

Sylvia, Mike & Suzy, Sue and Carol

3. The Church Centre

The church centre continues to be a popular space for our local community and is used by many groups for exercise, social groups, management meetings, counselling sessions, a choir and more and we are usually open as a polling station for our local elections. During 2023 we welcomed 82 different hirers/groups into the building some on a weekly basis, some once a month and some come for one-off events. Our new hirers in 2023 included a dementia support group, a local housing management association, a group of ballroom dancers, 2 new exercise classes and a pop-up book shop. Many of our long-standing groups continued to use our facilities and the Friday keep-fit class has been coming here since the Centre was built in 1985!

We have also been able to offer the church building for use by The Big Noise Choir (weekly sessions plus an upcoming concert in 2024) and for concerts (Torbay Singers and South Devon Choir). We are told that the acoustics are lovely!

If you would like to see what is going on or would like to join a group please pick up a leaflet for further information.

As mentioned elsewhere in this booklet, we are very happy to know that the toilet on the upper ground floor is due to be refurbished in May 2024 both to make it more accessible and to update the facilities. No more blocked toilets we hope!

We are lucky to have the services of a keen DIY-er who it seems can fix most things and usually at a moment's notice – thank you!

Open Church The church is open for visitors or for those wanting a quiet space or for prayer during the Welcome Space group on Wednesdays from 12-2pm. We have a very small team of stewards to help with this – thank you - but if anyone would like to join the team please get in touch.

Office The office is open weekdays from 9-12.30 and 2-4pm (but not on Tuesday mornings) and so if you have any queries please do not hesitate to get in touch - either pop in, drop me an email or give me a call. You will be very welcome.

Pere Snow, Church Administrator/Centre Manager

Section 2: Schools, Children and Young People

Whilst there is a drop in children and young families attending on Sundays since Covid, there is still plenty of encouraging work going on during the week for the children in our Parish and beyond.

We had hoped to appoint an 'Emerging Generations Leader' but despite some hopeful leads it did not work out. We remain committed to finding the right person to lead us in this essential work. The funding is in place but we do need to find the right person. In the meantime, we are employing Hannah Aske from Riviera Life church to help us lead our young people on a Friday evening. Lena Fearnley has also made Mummy and Me a charity and uses the church on a Friday morning to provide a much appreciated resource for young parents and their babies. With the help of teams of dedicated volunteers we have continued to engage children, young people and families in various ways. These include:

Messy Church

Messy Church runs most months on a Tuesday afternoon after school. This is a great time for families to hear Bible stories, take part in some worship songs, enjoy making crafts to illustrate the story and share a meal. Christmas Messy Church is extremely popular.

Open House Toddler Group

We meet in the church building on Tuesday mornings 0900-1130 during term time, we vary in number between 12 and 24 children accompanied by mums, dads, childminders, grandmas and one great grandma! It is a lovely space and much enjoyed by the children and their carers, although it does involve a lot of chair moving! The morning provides a safe environment for the children to play together and also provides a support and friendship group especially for the young mums. The morning follows a simple routine where children are free to play on "ride ons" in one section of the church or with cars, bricks, trains or floor puzzles to name a few, in another area throughout the morning.

We have coffee and snack time at about 1015, which is immediately followed by story time and often a simple craft activity - you may have noticed some examples on our "Toddlers board". The morning closes with a very popular singing and marching session.

Elaine Biden, Diane Francis, Christine Sherriff, Clare Whittaker, Amanda Stephenson.

Church/School Links with Ilsham and Warberry Academies

Collective Worship:

A team of four continue to visit both schools on a weekly basis. The teaching used is from the Bible Society's Open the Book guidance and covers the Old and New Testament stories. At present we are working on a two year rolling programme. New material is coming out for which we will need training planned for the summer term. Our team include Rev. John, Rev Claire, Sue Davies and Monica Rook. We are well received in both schools.

School visits to St Matthias:

At the end of every term a service is held in church for school and parents. These events are always very well attended and the church is full to overflowing. The services reinforce the links of church/school and community, giving parents, grandparents and carers the opportunity to see how the Christian story and values influence their child's education.

We did not hold an Easter Experience in 2023 but welcomed Year 2 children into the church to guide them through the Easter Story. This involved the washing of feet of some volunteers!

Towards the end of the summer term 2023 St Matthias hosted an afternoon tea for Reception Parents to outline our links with Ilsham Primary School. We were able to share our involvement in various aspects of RE plus proposed visits from children to the church.

Children from Ilsham were involved with the St Matthias Eco Fest event in early December.

Governorship:

Sue Davies is Chair, along with members Rev John and Jane Risness.

Monica Rook

Youth

The Youth Club at St Matthias on Friday evenings continued to thrive throughout 2023. Under the leadership of Hannah Aske from Riviera Life Church and supported by Linda Townsend and Ali Buckley, there would regularly be 12-15 young people attending, the vast majority not being from church families. It has been a great privilege to see many of the group grow on their Christian journey with weekly teaching sessions using Urban Saints material.

The termly programmes were carefully planned with some of the young people being involved in this. Some of the most popular sessions included: black out nights in church, baking, nerf wars, scavenger hunts, pancake madness and games nights. The church outside space was used in the summer for messy games and in the winter for Bonfire Night celebrations using the fire pit. There was also a sponsored event for the Tearfund bin twinning campaign with a silent disco. This was well supported by church members and over £300 was raised.

In terms of outings, the weather was kind enough to permit two trips to Ilsham Green for games and a BBQ, crazy golf, termly bowling trips and in December to the Riviera Centre to listen to J John. During that night, many of the group put their hands up to follow Jesus.

Building relationships with the young people has meant that they have been willing to take part in some church services especially at Easter and Christmas. In early December, the first youth-led service in a while took place with many of the group taking part in a drama, quiz, readings, talks, singing and prayers.

Ali Buckley

Mummy and Me

Mummy and Me has continued to meet every Friday morning, during term time, in Church. We are regularly welcoming between 35 and 45 mums, and sometimes dads, and their babies each week. We are continuously extending our varied programme of post-natal education, delivered by professionals, in a fun, friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Examples of our new offerings this year are weaning, mental health and general well-being sessions.

A huge objective for Mummy and Me is to enable the Church to develop links with the mums and their families into the wider church community including Toddlers, Messy Church and, of course, Sunday worship and baptisms. This year, one mum's older children have joined the Youth Group.

We are very, very grateful to Sue Newman for baby weigh and Christine Sherriff for refreshments and more!

Lena Fearnley – Leader

Section 3: Mission and Outreach Action Group

1. Coffee Box

Coffee Box is an outreach initiative held on the piazza on one Saturday morning each month between April and September. It began in 2022, continued successfully in 2023, and is running again this year. Our team of church members seeks to engage with people passing by, who include parents bringing children to attend 11+ practice sessions in the hall. We offer friendly conversation, a listening ear, prayer if desired, and free refreshments. In these ways, we aim to make gentle connections with people as an expression of love from our church to the local community. Being out of doors enables us to interact with people who might not choose to come into a church building, but who can be open to talking about matters of faith and belief. Many thanks to all team members - if you would like to join us, please speak to Joanna.

Joanna Wilkinson

2. Missions Action Group

In accordance with the biblical principle of tithing, St Matthias donates annually 10% of its regular voluntary income to Christian charities. I am grateful to the committed members of the Missions Action Group, meeting several times a year to discuss which charities to recommend to the PCC for our Mission Tithes. These charities fall under four broad headings: Local Mission, World Mission, Poverty Relief and Supporting Churches. In 2022 St Matthias donated £14,550, which rose in 2023 to £14,765. This was a great blessing in view of the financial shortfall that St Matthias had faced in summer 2023, which was however overcome in the autumn thanks to church members' generous response to the appeal that was made to consider - if possible - increasing their giving.

Six main charities are supported by St Matthias with substantial donations every year: Church Army, Church Mission Society, Church Pastoral Aid Society, Linx, Mission to Seafarers and Tearfund. In 2023, the other charities chosen for support were: Bible Society, Christian Response to Eastern Europe, Compass Braille, Mercy Ships, Mission Aviation Fellowship, Open Doors, Scripture Union and WorldShare. A donation is also made each year in response to an emergency situation; in 2023 the charity chosen was Christians Against Poverty,

as they were struggling with a large increase in the number of people needing debt counselling due to the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. Thank you to all at St Matthias for your faithful giving to the church, enabling us to support many Christian charities, each doing vital work for God's Kingdom on Earth.

Joanna Wilkinson

3. Girls Allowed

Girls Allowed is a group open to all ladies linked with St Matthias and their friends. We aim to meet monthly on different days of the week and times of day so that no-one is excluded due to involvement in other activities, to have fun together and to encourage each other in our faith.

2023 started with getting together for a breakfast of coffee, fruit and delicious croissants (provided by a local deli). It was a lovely start to the year but tinged with sadness as we briefly celebrated the life of one of our regular and much-loved members, Jenny Lane.

Sharing a meal is a great way of relaxing together and over the year we have met to enjoy a cream tea at a local hotel and a Chinese meal (from a local restaurant). We also had a wonderful talk about lacemaking (with a demonstration) from Jennifer Lawrence, an evening playing Table Talk, followed by a short talk by Clare Whittaker who shared something of her life and faith, a quiz night with Ruth Beckett and some ladies from St Paul's and Christchurch, when Dallas shared something of her calling to ministry, a film night, a couple of craft sessions and coffee and cake hosted by members in their gardens.

Early in the year, Marjorie Broadhead, one of the founder members of Girls Allowed, stepped down from the leadership team and we would like to thank her for everything she has given to the group.

We ask for a donation of £3 per person for meetings, occasionally more for a meal, but this is voluntary. If you would like to find out more, please ask us!

Sue Day, Elaine Biden, Susie Higgins, Andrea Crump, Judi Stannard

4. St Matts Gospel Singers

St Matts Gospel Singers, part of GGCC (Gospel Generation Community Choirs) had a great year building a new repertoire and strength in vocals. We continue to rehearse fortnightly on Wednesdays in the church. We enjoy singing traditional gospel songs and spirituals from our well-established repertoire as

well as learning modern Christian and new gospel songs. We always look to improve and learn new vocal techniques and experiment with our voices and harmonies. This year, as well as taking part in some of the church services, we are planning to participate in singing events at St Matthias and with our partners GGCC choirs in Bristol. New singers are welcome! Although we don't hold official auditions, we particularly welcome those with singing experience and/or musicality.

Anya Jones

5. Matts Knits

Knits is a social group set up 7 years ago, and continues to grow in number. We seek to bless others whilst we knit and natter over a cup of tea or coffee, providing a friendship group as well as supporting various projects. We meet on Tuesday lunchtime from 12:00-13:30 in the church and welcome new members to join us at any time, to knit, crochet, sew or just natter!



We have had a busy year starting with knitting Easter bunnies for the children at our Pre-School.



The summer term saw us busy with a crochet hook creating bookworms for all the leavers at Pre-School.

We continue to support Potters Village Uganda although our mission partner Nicci Maxwell is no longer there, she said our parcels of matinee jackets and hats sent out in time for Christmas would be much appreciated.

Our final projects for the year were creating items for our stall at the Friends of St Matthias Christmas Market and angel tree decorations for all the children at Pre-School. *Elaine Biden*



Section 4: Pastoral Care Action Group

We continue to make visits and keep in touch with people who are unwell or unable to attend church. We also visit and take Holy Communion to several Nursing and Care Homes in the parish. If you or someone you know has a Pastoral Care need please get in touch with one of us.

Sadly during 2023 we lost Rob Day, Bernard Johnson, Bob Clee, Ena Hocking, Gerry Thomas and Les Noakes.

If anyone would like to know more about joining the pastoral care team, please speak to the clergy or either Maureen or myself. We know that many of you who are not on the team, do visit people in their own homes as friends especially members of your home groups, thank you.

Elaine Biden and Maureen Purdy - Pastoral Care Coordinators

Section 5: Facilities Management Action Group

The following information includes tasks carried out during 2023 and early 2024 and tasks scheduled for later on in 2024:

Re-roofing Hall - tenders have been obtained and Diocesan approval applied for. It is expected that the work will be done in late summer/autumn 2024.

Solar panels on south facing roof of Hall - a preferred tender from a local company has been submitted for Diocesan and Electricity Supplier approval.

Upgrading the disabled WC in the entrance hall - a tender from South West Plumbing in the sum of £5,540.00 (zero rated for vat) has been accepted and the work will be done commencing Tuesday 28 May 2024 and completed by Tuesday 4 June. Pere has contacted hirers who may be affected by the works.

Leaking taps - we had trouble with leaks on a number of taps, particularly in the Pre-School. The discovery of a third mains stop enabled all the problems to be fixed.

Combination lock on door between entrance and church. This work has been completed at a cost of £525.

Sliding folding doors in church kitchen - on hold pending decision on availability of funding. (Quotation for £1,600 received.)

Parking in disabled spaces by those not entitled - I am currently seeking a quotation to mark the two disabled parking spaces in the proper way and to hatch the area at the bottom of the car park outside the pre-school as a designated no parking area.

Lighting issues - I am seeking quotations for replacing 21 light bulbs in the Hall and 30 in the church with LED bulbs. The cost according to the Diocese would be about £1,700 which would be saved in the first year after installation with an ongoing saving of £1,700 per annum.

Faulty emergency lights along the rear of the church have been replaced.

Tree Pruning - Teign Tree Surgeons came on 17th January 2024 for the annual tree prune. Cost was £2,052 including vat.

Emergency gate to the lane at the rear of the church - this had become very difficult to open and lock so the posts, concrete foundations and hinges have been replaced and additional braces added. It is now in good working order. This cost £681.90 including vat.

Heating Installation - Issues with controls in the church are ongoing at the time of writing this report but we have a meeting with the controls expert next week to try to finally sort it out.

Paul Sherriff

Section 6: Comms Action group

To identify and manage the implementation of all communication and publicity requirements for the Church and the Church Centre, liaising with other groups as necessary and utilising the most appropriate and up-to-date tools, ranging from hard copy publications such as the church Welcome Booklet, to online and social media platforms which include the Facebook and Instagram pages. Recent developments include the long overdue refresh of the church website.

Chair: Suzy Wright

Section 7: Eco Action Group

St Matthias EcoAction: the climate and environmental awareness

In our 2nd year, the group has developed and we have been delighted at progress made. We are now the St Matthias EcoAction group for matters within our church and are running Torbay Christian EcoAction for Christians and others around Torbay and South Devon concerned about climate and environmental awareness. We produce a monthly newsletter of news and resources and if anyone would like to receive it, do get in touch. Our developing experience is that there is a network of organisations across Torbay working in different ways and we are playing our part including as a Christian witness.

The big event was our EcoFest in early December. Modestly, this was an outstanding success. We had many local and national organisations exhibiting with stands in the church itself, with demonstrations and a contribution from local children. In parallel we had some fascinating talks in the church hall on our local environment, and now we all know about the ecological importance of our seagrass, the international scene and the work being done by our local authority. It was a major networking event and we were delighted. Thank you for everyone who contributed. In the evening we had the Tear Fund big quiz raising funds for Tear Fund.

Having acquired the bronze accreditation as a green church, we are working solidly for our silver accreditation and will need help from the congregation in various ways to achieve this. More later...

We had planned an event on ecological aspects of gardening but this will now be in early 2025.

Before the general election in 2024, very probably in the autumn, we intend to host a green hustings event with the election candidates, just about environmental and climate issues. We have approached some of the candidates already who are supportive. Watch this space. If you have questions to put to them, let us know.

We seek continued involvement of anyone in the church interested in this work for the many different projects that we would like to take on.

David Hodson and Clare Whitaker

Section 8: Stepping Stones

Home Groups

Home Groups provide wonderful support to their members and an opportunity for all of us to grow in faith in a variety of ways and to pray together. Please make it part of your mission to invite newcomers and those not currently in a group to join one. Please give them a Home Group leaflet (available at the back of church) which has our contact details and details of the groups, or let us have their name, contact details and their permission to contact them to invite them. This year has seen considerable change in the makeup of groups, with some coming to a natural end and others starting.

Most groups meet fortnightly, with a break in spring so all church members can attend the Lent course, and in the summer. Some meet in homes and others in the Church Centre.

We are grateful as ever to the leaders and hosts for their pastoral care to all who are in their group.

*Norman and Lindsay Doidge, 01626 210427 or 07968 375528,
norman.doidge@hotmail.com*

Section 9: Services



1. Sound and Visual

A small but dedicated team supports worship, operating audio and video in church. We continue to livestream 11.00 services and are frequently asked to stream weddings and funerals. This is appreciated by families as it allows any who are unable to travel to the church to be part of these important occasions. Also our local schools make good use of the A/V provision when they celebrate major Christian festivals and end of term

services in church.

The preparation of PowerPoints falls mainly on the clergy; could you help with this? Similarly could you support the small A/V team by helping out on an occasional but regular basis? Full training and support are offered. Finally, thank you to all who play a part in making our worship accessible.

David and Joanna Wilkinson

2. Church Flowers



We continue to arrange flowers regularly in church and have been pleased to decorate fully for all the main festivals; Harvest, Remembrance Sunday, Christmas and Easter. We have been mindful of the “Green” agenda and have moved to use artificial flowers with fresh greenery and eco-friendly oasis (flower arrangers’ foam). We are very happy to fulfil special requests with fresh flowers for birthdays and funerals and in memory of friends or family. Please let us know if you would like us to do this. We are a small but friendly group and would love any budding flower arrangers in the church to think about joining us. No qualifications necessary! You would be warmly welcomed.

Sue Newman

Section 10: Prayer

The Prayer Ministry Team

The prayer team continues to encourage prayer in the life of the church. We aspire to make prayer part of the DNA of the church. Primarily we provide an opportunity to pray after every Sunday morning service, but we do more! We have initiated the prayer triplet scheme, we are supporting the “try praying” campaign and we are there offering prayer at healing services. We meet for prayer at 10.30 each Sunday morning but we are hoping to give regular prayer support to every aspect of church life by getting Small Groups to “adopt” an area of church life and pray for it regularly. We also hope we can revive a monthly prayer meeting.

Andrew Green

And a report from the Friends of St Matthias

The Friends supported two maintenance projects during the year - boiler repairs at £1767 and roof repairs costing £1406. Fewer projects and a lower payment than the previous year but this will all change in the near future as we have agreed to support two important new projects.



- The much-needed repair and refurbishment of the accessible toilet in the Linkway will start in May 2024.
- The complete replacement of the Church Centre roof, although work will not begin until later in 2024.

We maintained a full and successful programme of events during the year, ranging from Christmas and New Year meals, a summer Cream Tea, our regular theatre evening at the Little Theatre (Dad's Army) and a memorable Open Mic Evening. And of course, the ever-popular Christmas Market. (2024 date: 16th November.)

We are grateful to our members and supporters for making it all possible. New members are welcome - do speak to me if you would like to know more. And you can learn more about the Friends' plans for the coming year at our AGM after the morning service on Sunday 23rd June.

Rob Newman Chairman

