

St Michael's Church, Boldmere

Annual Report

2024



ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH REPORT 2023-2024

AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING – 30th MAY 2024

7.00pm in St Michael's Church

1. Welcome and opening prayers.
2. Minutes of previous APCM (these are in the Annual Report and will be taken as read.)
3. Matters arising from minutes.
4. Vicar's Address
5. Election of two Churchwardens
6. Presentation of Electoral Roll
7. Election of up to four members for the PCC
8. Elections to the Deanery Synod – none required this year.
9. Appointment of Sunday Duty Wardens/Sides people/Welcomers
10. Statement and presentation of Accounts
11. Appointment of Independent Examiner of 2024 Accounts
12. Safeguarding report
13. Receiving of Annual Report (circulated in advance and will be taken as read).
14. St Michael's Church Building update.
15. Question Time
16. Closing Prayers

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING - 14th MAY 2023

11.25am following Holy Communion in St Michael's Church

1. **Welcome and opening prayers** – Rev'd Gary Birchall welcomed everyone to the APCM and opened with prayer, using the Anima Christi.
2. **Minutes of previous APCM** – These were accepted unanimously.
3. **Matters arising from minutes of 2022 APCM** – It was reported that the monthly St Michael's Herald had replaced the previous weekly notice sheet. It was reported that members of the congregation were once again leading prayers of intercession in the 10.00am service.

- 4. Election of two Churchwardens** – The Annual Meeting agreed to override the Churchwardens Measure in order for Peter Swaine to be nominated for Churchwarden. Rev'd Gary Birchall thanked Peter Swaine and Debbie Tye for their service as Churchwardens for the previous year.

Peter Swaine (nominated by Margaret Smoldon and seconded by Mark Edmonds) and Pam Baxter (nominated by Pat Tennant and seconded by Margaret Smoldon) were elected as Churchwardens.

- 5. Presentation of Electoral Roll** – The Electoral Roll as of the APCM stood at 142. Fifteen people had come off the Electoral Roll since the last APCM. Eight had died and seven no longer qualified for the Electoral Roll.

- 6. Election of up to nine members for the PCC –**

Name	Nominated	Seconded
Elaine Riley	Edwina Connell	Gary Connell
Gary Connell	Elaine Riley	Trudy Walsh
Margaret Smoldon	Edwina Connell	Trudy Walsh
Michael David	Margaret Smoldon	Mark Edmonds
Hilary Harrison	Michael David	Margaret Smoldon
Matthew Lumley	Gary Connell	Gail Adams
Diana Boateng	Judith Leonard	Viv Poniatowska

The above were all elected to the PCC for a period of three years.

- 7. Elections to the Deanery Synod – Four vacancies**

Jan Peel (nominated by Mark Edmonds and seconded by Kevin Dunnington) was elected to the Aston and Sutton Coldfield Deanery Synod for a period of three years.

- 8. Appointment of Deputy Wardens/Sides people/Welcomers**

- 9. Statement and presentation of Accounts** – The Accounts for 2022 had been circulated by email and Facebook, and paper copies were available in church. A summary presentation of the Accounts was made by the Treasurer, Edwina Connell. David Newsome asked about how the amount contributed to Common Fund had been decided. Diana Boateng asked a question regarding the CCLA investments. The treasurer replied to both questions.

The 2022 accounts were accepted unanimously. The Treasurer and the Finance Committee were thanked for their work throughout the year.

- 10. Appointment of Independent Examiner of 2023 Accounts** – Date Development were approved to be the Independent Examiner for the 2023 accounts.

- 11. Safeguarding report**

St Michael's uses the Parish Dashboard approach for safeguarding and by following all of the actions on the dashboard we can be sure that we are keeping up to date and attending to all of the diocesan safeguarding requirements.

This year the PCC has adopted the new Responding to Concerns and Allegations policy.

Due to covid, our volunteers had not all received the right training on safeguarding for their role. Therefore, this year, we have made a concerted effort to ensure that all appropriate volunteers have undertaken the required training. This is not yet complete however huge progress has been made.

Most of our volunteers have been DBS checked as appropriate. Church Members should note that the diocese has decided that renewals should be done every 3 years rather than every 5 years by the end of 2023. Gail Adams and Elaine Riley undertake the DBS checks for St Michaels and will therefore be contacting those who need a renewal later in the year.

The church took part in Safeguarding Sunday on 20th November 2022, when the issue was central to the church service with a number of people saying how helpful this had been.

The PCC identified all the church activity where we needed to undertake checks on the safety of those who take part. More work is required on this over the coming months.

GAIL ADAMS - 14th May 2023

12. Receiving of Annual Report – The Annual Report had been circulated by email and Facebook and paper copies were available in church. There were no questions asked regarding the Annual Report. In addition to the Annual Report Rev'd Gary Birchall spoke of the retirement of Liz Claybrook as Parish Administrator and Michelle Johnson as Verger. He reported that Danielle Woolaston had been appointed as Parish Administrator and that a cleaner was contracted for the cleaning of the Church and Church Hall.

13. Mark Edmonds gave a report on the work of the Building Working Group regarding the four buildings that St Michael's Church has care of. The APCM attendees formed groups to look closer at proposed plans for the development of St Michael's Church building and offer suggestions on what else could possibly be included. Each group was facilitated by a member of the Building Working Group, and they would draw these suggestions together for consideration at future meetings of the group.

BUILDINGS WORKING GROUP REPORT

Thank you, Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen

I am going to give a brief report giving the current progress made by the Group, and the immediate plans for the future. I do not intend to backtrack on the original discussions for the reasons behind the plan, but I will answer any queries at the end of my report.

It hardly seems only 12 months ago that my original suggestion was made at the APCM to review our buildings. Furthermore, the group has only been set up for about 6 months. The progress made is well beyond our wildest expectations. But as adverts say, past achievements are no guide to the future performance.

I will deal with our four properties in order.

The first at Southam Drive, there are no current plans to sell. This is continuing to be let. There may be some works to bring it up to standard in next year or so, but these are not expected to be consequential.

The second at Moorfield Court. The current tenant has vacated the property, minor repairs undertaken, a valuation received which has been approved by the Diocese, and the property is up for sale at £155,000 or above.

Thirdly, it was formally decided by the PCC to sell the Church Hall, as a result of an earlier report on the future of the Hall. This was put on the market at £850,000 in April. The Group did not know how quickly any offers would be made. The Group had many discussions about the users of the Hall, and in particular, the Church users comprising the Guide groups, Luncheon Club and Place of Welcome. The Church Groups were advised

that full support would be given to ensure that they could operate on an interim and final way without interruption, and this is still the intention, if the groups want this help.

There has been considerable interest to purchase the Hall, but not by residential or commercial developers. The highest bid made at £1.1M is by the Little Ripley Childcare Group, who appear very keen to purchase. This offer has been accepted and is now in the hands of solicitors to complete the sale. The projected completion date is the end of June, but it is possible this might extend a couple of weeks. We have now had a major exercise of notifying the users and clearing the Hall of all its stored materials. We plan to be ruthless and get much sent to the tip, but a balance will be stored at the church for future use.

Lastly the Church itself. We are planning to use the funds raised to develop the Church into a place of worship and a Community Hub for future use. This is very exciting, and hopefully will be beneficial for the next generation, and will be hopefully financially viable. Much time has been taken by the Group to consider alternatives, and a detailed proposal was put to the PCC, and congregation some several months ago. These details have been displayed on the back wall for the last 6 weeks or so. These details have been discussed with Diocese and in principle approved. The details have now been submitted formally to the Diocese, together with a schedule of work, and a Statement of Needs. A meeting is scheduled with the Diocese on 2nd June.

Part of the proposal is to have a new car park on the churchyard to the East of the Church. We have submitted a pre-planning application to the Council and expect to have a response any day now. We have applied to remove 3 trees along the entrance walkway and have a guide quotation. Ongoing issues include liaison with the Archdeacon and the removal of the gravestones. It is possible that this element of work might be dealt with as a separate contract.

On the main work within the church, we are interviewing this week a potential consultant to work with us and the architect to advise on heat pumps, possible underfloor heating, solar panels and insulation. We have some proposals from interested architects, and more will be forthcoming. We would hope to be in a position to appoint an architect soon after DAC preliminary approval.

We have a new Communications committee working with us. They are fairly newly formed and have already shown full commitment to the work of our Group.

You will appreciate that much work has been done, and I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the members of our group, the communications committee, and Rev Gary, for their commitment and hard work. However, we are very well aware what we have ahead of us, and we are all getting older! So, there is no time to waste.

Shortly there will be an opportunity for all you to review the current proposals and make any suggestions or recommendations for changes or modifications that you want to put forward for consideration. The Group will review anything put forward, since this must be a scheme that the whole congregation fully support. It is going to cost a lot of money! Although there will still be an opportunity to make changes, The Group are wanting to ensure that these are kept to a minimum after the architects are appointed, to avoid claims for added fees.

However, before this, I ask if there are any questions to be put to me, or the Group, on any matter that I have mentioned, or not mentioned, and we will try to respond.

MARK EDMONDS

14. Closing Prayers were led by Rev'd Simon Cocks.

VICAR'S COMMENTS

This year I am marking my tenth year as Vicar of St Michael's Church, Boldmere. Maggie and I moved to Boldmere in May 2014, and I was licensed and inducted as Vicar on 4th June 2024. Bishop David was the Bishop of Birmingham at the time, Jan Peel and Gary Connell were Churchwardens, Liz Claybrook was Parish Administrator, Rev'd Manda Howett (now Featherstone) was curate. Now the Right Rev'd Michael Volland is Bishop of Birmingham, Peter Swaine and Pam Baxter are churchwardens, Danielle Woollaston is Parish Administrator and Rev'd Simon Cocks and Rev'd Matt Mason are curates here.

The life of God's faithful community in the Anglican tradition in Boldmere never stands still. It is exhilarating and exhausting – sometimes in equal measure. What has not changed is that we are still a community of people who pray, worship, share in companionship in communion, show compassion and give comfort. We gather around the Lord's table and around scripture. We sing together in praise and lament.

This last year we have seen the significant change in the life of the church in the sale of the Church Hall and preparations for the Church building to become an increasingly multi-purpose building to continue to serve the parish. These are big changes and have not come easy, but people have worked hard to oversee that they have been managed to the best of their abilities.

I have been delighted in many things in the life of the church this year and that has grown out of the faithful, prayerful commitment of the people of this church. The contents of the report are a snapshot of that dedication and Holy Spirit inspired stuff that people do in the name of Jesus.

One of the painful things about remaining in a parish church for a significant period of time is that more and more people that you have come to know, die. It has always been the way of things. It is a privilege and a sadness to officiate at the funerals of people who have served this church for much of their lives. I am reassured by the promise that we have shared our lives in Christ in this life and will continue to share our lives in Christ in eternity as members of the community of saints gathered around the throne of God, past, present and future.

My hope is for this church community to continue to flourish, to embrace change with trepidation and anticipation, to look for and participate in what God is doing amongst us, to be one in Christ, but not to be unquestioning automatons in Christ, to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep. What God is doing now amongst, not all of us will see the fruits of it in the future – at least not until we look back from glory.

If you are reading this report and want to get more involved just have a word with me. All of us are welcome.

So, thank you everyone for the faith and hope we share. Thank you for all that you do. Thank you for who you are.

REV'D GARY BIRCHALL - 10th April 2024



READER MINISTRY

Readers in Birmingham diocese undergo three- or four-years training and are licensed by the bishop as lay ministers – in other dioceses we are known as ‘Licensed Lay Ministers’ (LLMs).

The focus in Reader ministry is on teaching and preaching in a pastoral context – but each and every Reader is different. We are worshippers, bringing different skills and life experiences. Most importantly, we are servants of God.

The three current Readers at St Michael’s – Elaine Riley, Gary Connell, Rob Rolfe – continue to contribute in several ways. Here are some of the things we have been doing:

Devising, celebrating and preaching at Sunday evening services.

Preaching, leading prayers and reading at online Morning Prayer on Wednesday mornings.

Contributing to the ‘Celebrate’ services, providing story bags.

Being a mentor for trainee Readers

Acting as Communion Assistants

Running services at the Village, as part of Churches Together

Acting as an Authorised Lay Ministry Enabler

Sermon series on ‘I am’, Advent and others.

Meeting weekly as part of the St. Michael’s ministry team

Organising and leading monthly services, including Remembrance, Christmas and Easter, in a local nursing home; regular pastoral visits and end-of-life ministry.

Being part of bible study groups and home groups

Conducting funerals in different churches, and the associated pastoral work with bereaved families

Devising and facilitating our online course on Mark’s Gospel – with 25+ participants

Attending Continuing Ministry Education diocesan courses

Attending Bishop’s Study days

Organising and leading the ‘breath’ services on Sunday evenings

Serving as part of the Diocesan Reader Discernment Panels

Leading worship and preaching on Sunday mornings at St. Michael's

Readers teach the faith; enable mission; lead in Church and society.

Every Reader is different. We are servant leaders.

ROB ROLFE

FABRIC COMMITTEE

Much of the work of the committee during the last 12 months has been closely linked to the work of the Buildings Committee, particularly regarding the sale of the Church Hall and 7 Moorfield Drive. The details of these sales can be found in their report. However, the Fabric Committee has met regularly to discuss and progress other necessary works to the Church & 19 Southam Drive

Church

The following necessary works which were identified in the 2021 Quinquennial Report have now been carried out:

- I. Minor pitched roof repairs parapet copings and the lead flashings on the tower over slates.
- II. Repairs to the tower stonework and other external stonework.
- III. Although not part of the report, a large buddleia growing in the parapet above the West Door was also removed at the same time.

The report also recommended that consideration should be given to insulation to the roof space above the Nave and to decorative work on the frames of the North Wall windows. These two are items which will be considered as part of the future development of the church.

A quote has been received for necessary works to the bell frame, but this work has yet to be carried out.

19 Southam Drive

The property continues to be generally well maintained and Preferential Properties are overseeing and rectifying minor issues as they arise. PCC approved the quote of £1390 for redecoration of the hall, stairs and landing, and this work has been carried out. The current tenant seems very happy with the property and his tenancy continues to be renewed every six months.

I would like to thank all members of the Fabric Committee for their support and hard work in maintaining the fabric of the Church and its properties. Their efforts over the years in maintaining acceptable working buildings is very much appreciated by the Wardens and the PCC.

PETE SWAINE



St. Michael's Church, Boldmere

PCC Annual Report 2023-24

Successful Move

The last 12 months have witnessed Place of Welcome's move to the South Aisle following the sale of the Church Hall. We are delighted to be able report that it has created a very comfortable, welcoming new venue. The numbers of people coming each week suggest we haven't lost people through the move, despite it being a less central and visible location than previously.

Places of Welcome (PoW) are a UK wide initiative, to address the issue of loneliness in our society. Research reveals that loneliness is no respecter of wealth, privilege or education and this underlines the importance of St. Michael's ministry as a PoW.

Developments this Year:

1. Since last year St. Michael's PoW has been a designated 'Warm Space', registered with the City Council. This is a place where people struggling to heat their homes know that they can come on a certain day, at a certain time and be warm, welcomed, with free refreshments and opportunity to charge their phone too.
2. We have designated a table *Crafting in Company* which means people can bring their craft projects and sit together to work on them.
3. We now offer a weekly service of Holy Communion at 11am, the Epiphany Chapel provides a good venue, although access for people with mobility issues is challenging. The glass doors are largely soundproof but enable people to see what's happening and encourages those, who want to do so, to be part of it.

Thank You!

To our team of 14 volunteers who so cheerfully and faithfully keep PoW running through all 52 weeks of the year. We are very grateful to the team enabling that to happen. Thank you too to the team of clergy and Readers who have maintained worship each week as well.

We are grateful to the many members of St. Michael's congregation who support PoW by coming each week providing a 'critical mass' so that when someone attends for the first time it feels like a place to be a part of. When PoW is truly welcoming and the lonely can find company, we are reflecting the God who welcomes us and calls us friends.

Please Get the Word Out!

We need every member of St. Michael's to get the word out to neighbours and friends, anyone you think might appreciate a friendly place of welcome.

St. Michael's Place of Welcome & Warm Space is open every Friday 10am-12 noon.

DAVID & JANE NEWSOME

PASTORAL CARE TEAM

Our team comprises seven people, four of which make visits to private homes, care/nursing homes and hospitals and are happy to take communion to those who are no longer able to attend church. These seem to be well received and appreciated.

Trudy Walsh links with families having their baptisms at St Michael's and has formed a strong connection with younger families and children through services and activities. Peter volunteers with the local Parkinson's UK

group, which includes some of our church members. Helen and Peter are trustees of Glover's Trust almshouses on the Chester Road and have links with the residents there.

We meet almost every month to keep up with what each one is doing and discuss how we can best help others having pastoral needs. Team members attend the Place of Welcome on Fridays when they can, so they are available for contact with church members and the local community.

We sometimes have whole team meetings with Rev Gary and with our team adviser from the Diocese. Each year the Diocese arranges a Pastoral Training Day for all the teams across Birmingham, where there are talks and workshops on relevant topics, and other pastoral events are available for us to attend.

We are an active group and are here to help! Please contact any member of the team (see below) if you know of any way in which we can assist.

Lin Benson, Liz Carr, Helen Menniss, Peter Edmonds, Trudy Walsh, Fran Lumley and Margaret Smoldon

PETER EDMONDS

SOUTH AISLE SAINTS

South Aisle Saints has continued to be a constant in our St Michael's fellowship groups.

It caters for all pre-school children (as appropriate for each child) and feeds them into the next age group, Flok, (infant and junior) and into Flok +secondary)

Numbers have fluctuated enormously and can vary between 1 and 9 or 10!! depending on the attendance of their respective families.

The structure of the worship time starts usually with welcome songs with which the children become familiar and join in happily. Then a story, with a song and craft linked with the story/ theme. There are plenty of toys, books and activities to enjoy until it is time to re-join the rest of the congregation or stay and play till it's time for a drink and a biscuit!

We make sure there is something for the children every week, whoever comes, and visiting children are made very welcome and enjoy the activities. They all must be accompanied by a parent/ carer or other adult.

Themes covered this year include Christmas, Palm Sunday, the Easter story, Jesus appearing to His disciples after He has risen. The sending out of the disciples, the Servant King - liked this year with the Coronation-Stories / parables such as Jesus' healing people, Jesus walks on the water, the Prodigal Son, the Invitation to the Feast,

Also, some Old Testament stories: Daniel in the Lion's Den, Noah's Ark,

The children are always given age- appropriate understanding of these teachings.

Several families come every single week, whilst others come irregularly, but all are made welcome and enjoy familiar songs, stories, crafts and toys.

Many thanks to all the children's leaders' team for all support and sharing of ideas and willingness to step in to help when needed.

Special thanks go to Viv Poniatowska and Jan Peel for heading up the South Aisle Saints. 😊

JAN PEEL

SOCIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE ANNUAL

Committee Members:

Margaret Smoldon, Helen Menniss, Rose Smith, Debbie

Swaine, Tusheeta David, Jan Peel.

Events we have been able to organise Include The Coronation celebrations, a Royal Party with bunting, biscuits and of course CAKE!!!

The regular shared lunch and Breakfasts continue to be popular events and are well supported. This past year saw a first Summer Craft Fair featuring stalls run by members.

of the community as well as St Michaels folk. It was fairly quiet, and a few regulations lessons were learned but it was an event designed to bring church and community together as well as raise funds although this was a secondary purpose. It is hoped to repeat this event this year if there is sufficient interest.

The curry night was a great success especially as by then (October) had been sold, and all events must be planned to be run at the church.

This year saw the return of the Christmas Market which was well supported by the community and ran smoothly thanks to the hard work and willingness of so many St Michael's folk. A huge thank you to you all! The theme, the Christmas Tree, enabled Revd. Gary to enjoy yet another fancy dress costume! This coming year will include old favourites like Bring and Share lunch, Quiz and curry night, Breakfasts, a Family Picnic, a Beetle Drive, Summer Craft Fair and the Christmas Market. So here's to a new year of fun, food and fellowship. Anyone interested in helping to support this important part of this valuable part of our church life, providing fun, fellowship and friendship, or have any ideas for activities please get in touch with any of the committee members.

Finance information:

In 2023, the Social Events Team generated funds from the sale of cakes, two breakfast cafes, and a wonderful curry night with raffle. This enabled a contribution to fund the Iranian meal in November.

The net surplus of income over expenditure for the year was £335. The challenge for 2024 is to compensate for the loss of cake sales at Lunch Club by additional events and possible cake sales at special services or individual requests to Margaret.

NEW OSCOTT VILLAGE SERVICE

Services in 2023:

The services at New Oscott Village take place on a Tuesday evening at 6:00pm for approximately 45 minutes. The services are taken by Churches Together, at the beginning of the year there were five of our local churches taking part, but from September it went down to four churches, after the URC decided they no longer wanted to be a part.

Each Church takes regular services with St Michael's doing a service about once every five weeks, and each church takes the service in their own way. We are asked that the service is designed for the Village. The services are interdenominational, so services can be very different each week depending on which church is leading.

The services St Michael's lead contains hymns, prayers, bible readings, reflections, and a talk.

7th February 2023

Jesus in the Temple: Letting go. Luke 2:41-52

14th March 2023

St Chad: March 2nd. Matthew 7:7-12

18th April 2023

The road to Emmaus – The three mile an hour God. Luke 24:13-35

4th July 2023

Dr Barnardo: a man of vision and compassion. Matthew 18:2-5 and Matthew 19: 13-15

28th November 2023

Advent: told through three reflections – Among the poor, He will come and Advent hands.

19th December 2023

Christmas: telling the Christmas story through seven readings, reflections, and poetry.

St Michael's is represented at New Oscott Village by a team, made up of me, Ian, Trudy Walsh, Michael Stallard and Rev Simon Cox. It is a joy for all of us to be a part of the worship there on a Tuesday evening. I am very grateful to Trudy, as she will happily do the reading and a big thank you goes to Rev Simon who brings live music to the evening. Both Trudy and Rev Simon spend time talking to the people who come, and they really

appreciate that. Having both Rev Simon, Stan and Trudy is a real bonus to us and a great support to both Ian and me.

Since lockdown, the numbers attending the services have gone down. We now have approximately 12-15 people attending the services of which 3 are members of St Michael's. However, there is still a wonderful atmosphere and warmth at these services.

We are very encouraged by the positive messages of support we are given by the people who attend. Some of this congregation are still able to attend St Michael's, but there are a few, who for various reasons are unable to. But they still have a link and lifeline to the church, which means they still feel connected. These services I feel are very important for many who attend.

I feel privileged and honoured that I can represent St Michael's and lead the services at New Oscott Village. I look forward to what the next twelve months holds in store.

ELAINE RILEY.

CELEBRATE

We have continued to welcome families to 'Celebrate Jesus at the Centre' at church on the 2nd Sunday each month, during the afternoon. However, this year we have been fortunate to be invited by the Rev'd Gary Birchall to plan and lead a 10am Celebrate service instead, creating an all-age service. The latest was on Mothering Sunday with a theme of Mothers Love / Gods Love.

Over the last year many different families have been welcomed to enjoy the stories, singing, craft and worship time. It has been encouraging to have families who now come along regularly and express their appreciation.

The games zone for young people age 9+ has proved popular and several of our young people now come along with obvious pleasure to meet their friends and relax in a 'cool' space.

No report about Celebrate would be complete without mentioning the importance of combining handicraft skills with refreshments. Getting stuck in over glue, chocolate brownies, felt tip pens and crispy cakes is the perfect recipe for conversation and laughter. Our family times are organised and led by a dedicated team without whom it would not happen – and Jesus is always at the centre.

TRUDY WALSH

FLOK

FLOK leaders continue to welcome children from reception to year 5.

This year our weekly programmes have been following the lectionary using 'Roots on the Web' programmes which were developed by Churches together for specific age groups.

This allows the learning in the group to follow the teaching in Church and although the number of children in the age range has diminished at present, those who attend, through stories, craft and talking, can share in their family's worship.

We see God at work through the knowledge and understanding of the bible stories that the children have when talking to them about the subject of the day.

TRUDY WALSH

MONDAY MORNING PILGRIM GROUP

For the past year, our Pilgrim group has continued to meet on Monday mornings at the Harvester, not for breakfast, just coffee and iced water, but we are always hungry to explore God's word.

As people arrive and we wait for our drinks there is a chance to share news, both personal and church based. There is a strong sense of fellowship and trust in the group which influences the depth of our studies each week. We use published study notes, which we have found ideally suited to our group, with thought provoking questions for discussion.

Following on from last year, our group has been really interested in exploring the Old Testament. We began with Daniel, then Nehemiah, finding the details and historical facts fascinating. This led onto in-depth studies of Joshua and Judges - it never fails to amaze us how much we learn in one hour.

For each individual member Pilgrim group has become a very important and rewarding focus of every week

TRUDY WALSH

FLOWER GUILD

FLOWERS IN CHURCH LIFT THE SPIRITS

Not only for anyone coming into Church but also for the people who arrange them. It is a quiet prayerful activity.

The Harvest Festival displays are always a highlight of our year before the dark days of winter. All our festivals are a welcome chance to meet as a group and work together while on a weekly basis small teams keep the flowers looking good for the rest of the year.

CHRIS REEVES

BELLRINGING

We had four prospective ringers join the band as learners during the year. However, after some training, two of them decided that they would not continue. The remaining two have made good progress and are set to become regular ringers. One of them is an eleven-year-old boy and a member of the congregation.

Good relationships with the ringers at St Barnabas, Erdington continue to benefit both towers.

A thorough examination of the bells has been carried out by Taylors Bell Foundry including the painting of the bell frame. Their report on the state of the installation is due in the new year.

DAVID REEVES, RINGING MASTER