

Annual Report 2022



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Alpha

The Alpha Course ran on Wednesday evenings in the church during the summer term. We hosted 2 groups, treating them to our traditional St Giles Alpha hospitality. Using the church worked well as it provides plenty of space for groups to disperse into for discussion as well as welcoming people into the church building itself. We hope to run another Alpha Course later in the year and are hoping to develop an 'after Alpha' strategy in order to better support people once the course itself has finished.

Vikki Beale

Audio Visual & Production

2022 was the year of live-streaming. I would like to thank the team for their patience as we introduced and seek to improve this. It's taken some work but it has been great sending God's word outside the walls.

From the commissioning of Street Pastors to the Every Nation Bible School graduation, various women's events and Northampton Male Voice Choir, weddings, baptisms, and funerals, and finally the Carol Service we are fortunate in the AV team to help bring God's blessing to many groups both inside and outside the church. I am very thankful for all the members of the AV team as they continue to faithfully serve in this way.

We rarely get to meet as a group, so this year we joined forces to conquer some escape rooms. This was great fun, but as only one group managed to escape, if you are looking for somewhere to serve feel free to join us at the back.

Stephen Hewitson

Bereavement Journey Course

Having run three previous courses online using Zoom we were delighted that in spring 2022 we were able to put on our first course in person in an actual location.

The course was a joint project involving both St Giles Church and St Columba Collingtree. The venue was the Church Room opposite the pub in the High Street at Collingtree. We had six guests and a valued team of helpers.

Meeting in person was a great advantage and helped the two small groups and their facilitators bond more easily. The ages of the guests ranged from late twenties through to ninety years of age! A reminder that bereavement can affect us all.

The feedback from the guests was both very positive and appreciative.

We have already planned another course for 2023 in The Church Centre beginning on the 21st February.

Simon and Denise Bridgens

Children and Families

Our children's and families work has seen a number of changes in 2022, with Jo stepping down in April.

Toddle In is continuing to meet two days a week, and is now growing again, after shrinking for a time following COVID lockdowns.

Our Sunday morning groups have been combined to make one big primary school group, which has been working through the Old Testament stories during 2022.

Unfortunately we have not been able to re-open our Sunday morning group for pre-school children since the end of COVID restrictions. We would love to do this, and will need two or three leaders to make this possible.

Beth Whaites

Churchwardens

This last year has been a challenge and a learning curve for us as the two newly elected Church Wardens with the Vicar leaving and now navigating our way through this vacancy period to appoint a new Vicar.

As Church Wardens we are elected by the church members. We are responsible to the Bishop and for maintaining the delivery of regular church services.

Thank you to our Curate Ali whom we are seeking to support during this time of Vacancy.

We are especially grateful to our PCC and Deputy Wardens for their support in helping services run smoothly.

Thank you to everyone who serves in any group or ministry, whether leader or helper, seen or unseen to serve, care for, teach, minister to others or care for our buildings and grounds. Thank you to the office staff. We appreciate you all.

Please know that we are available to hear your views, thoughts and feedback.

We are looking for more Deputy Wardens. Please have a chat with us if you would like to serve and support us in this way.

Jacqueline Wienkamp and Jess Newlove

Creation Care and Renewal

The young adults have helped to plant drifts of snowdrops in the churchyard and helped to fix one of the vandalised tree guards. We were gifted a large amount of Galanthus elwesii which have been planted.

Lots of work has been put in behind the scenes within the churchyard, so much so we achieved Bronze status from the wildlife trust for the churchyard conservation scheme this autumn, valid for three years.

With outside funding and working with our neighbours at the community group and partners we have also successfully:

*Planted 6 standard trees (Circa £3k)

*Created a meadow strip alongside the tombstone wall

*Restored the Brown memorial by the vestry door (Circa £2.5k)

This year we also will be installing 20 swift boxes into the belfry alongside the councils contractors idverde and the RSPB.

We are wanting to do regular litter pics in the churchyard going forward and maintenance sessions so if you can help let Rocky know.

Rocky Coles and Ali Wagner

House of Prayer

We continue with our zoom prayers in the week day mornings and Thursday evening for which we thank a good core group. We have also introduced an in-person meeting every other Wednesday in the centre, and for the duration of the search for a new vicar, a Saturday afternoon once a month. Attendance varies, but there is a sense that intercession is very important at this transitional time. All sessions are largely intercessory, although we always take time to praise God, remembering who it is we are there for.

We continue to thank God for answers to prayer, large and small. Our prayers range from the personal (those who are poorly) to the global.

Any thoughts or ideas to the team who are Rachel White, Denise Bridgens, Carole Dexter, Helen Hewitson and Dave Allen. Immense thanks to the team and to all those who have led our prayers, or prayed in any way. God is good!

Rachel White

Men @ St Giles

Men's Ministry at St Giles had a great year in 2022 putting on a variety of events through the year for Men to attend; these events have included a Boys and toys night, Men's Breakfast; Hymns, Tins & Testimonies night round the firepit and a prayer walk to the Balti King! We've tried to create a space where Men can build strong friendships, where we can offer prayer and support to one another. We also had a group of Men attending The Gathering, a Christian Men's festival in a field near Swindon with bible teaching, prayer, worship and loads of fun activities.

We also said goodbye to Richard Poole who decided to take a step back from the leadership team. Thanks for all your efforts Richard!

As we look forward to 2023 we have some exciting events lined up and look to take an even bigger contingent to the The Gathering this year. Do get in touch with Peter or Mike if you are interested in coming along in June.

Pete Day

Mission on our Doorstep

MOOD aims to keep local mission needs in the congregation's minds as well as supporting (by prayer and financial gifts) a number of national organisations which we have contact with as a church and who supply us with support and resources.

We seek to encourage the regular collections for the University Foodbank via FISH. We have also had a Harvest collection for Foodbank and collections for Eve (toys and toiletries) and Baby Basics (Supplies for new babies and their mums) at Mothering Sunday and Christmas which have been much appreciated. We continue to explore practical ways of supporting the local organisations we have contact with.

We hope to encourage more practical service to local organisations we have links with as a church.

Carol Halliday

Music and Worship

God is good and the Music and Worship Team have continued to work together in leading the St Giles flock in sung worship to Him. This has involved the developing of new groups, particularly in the evenings where our worship is often more contemplative. We have been able to get back into a routine finally following the pandemic. We have Phil, Sachie and the All Age Worship Band covering Sunday mornings, and varying groups led by Ali, Tracey and Antonello, Penny B. and myself covering the evenings, though there are still times when we use the excellent video resources available to the church when we are short on worship group members.

We always welcome new members to the team and if you feel the Lord calling you to offer your musical gifts, please to talk to myself or any of the current members of the team. Through 2023 may we continue to “speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs [and] make music in your heart to the Lord.” Ephesians 5:19

Elizabeth Allenby

Pastoral Prayer

Since February 2022 we have offered prayer ministry regularly as part of our morning communion services twice a month, and at other services when appropriate. During the pandemic, people emailed prayer requests to the team so that we could pray confidentially, and this is still used regularly. We are also available to offer more in depth prayer ministry in the week.

The leadership hub of the team, Denise Bridgens, Mike Kingman and Serena Yong meet up regularly to plan and pray. We are very grateful to Brenda Anderton who until summer 2022 was part of the hub. The PPT team meet each month for fellowship and prayer. We also meet up for prayer, prior to a service when the focus is specifically on healing or a related topic.

It is a privilege to pray for people and we are grateful for the support of Steve Kelly and more recently Ali Wagner in the ministry.

Denise Bridgens

PCC

The PCC met formally eight times during 2022, including an extraordinary meeting in relation to the 2023 Budget, and a vacancy meeting where they met with the Archdeacon and one of the Simeons Trustees, our church patron, in relation to the vacancy process. Meetings were held in church. Issues discussed and dealt with at these meetings included:

- Student and Young Adult Ministry
- Livestreaming our services
- Green Church- how we can be more environmentally friendly
- Children and Families Ministry
- Home Groups and Pastoral Care
- Property Maintenance
- House of Prayer
- Support of mission partners
- 2023 Budget

2022 was a time of change for our church and this was reflected at PCC. Alison Steele and David Lidbetter were succeeded as churchwardens by Jacqueline Wienkamp and Jessica Newlove following the APCM in April. Ali took over the chairing of PCC following Steve's departure in September.

The most recent PCC minutes are displayed on the notice board in church.

We give thanks to God for all PCC members who give their time to PCC business.

Helen Hewitson

Property Committee

This has been a year without any major property projects, but simply keeping on top of maintenance issues. We are grateful to God for the provision of our buildings which provide flexible spaces for use by many different groups.

A scope of work has been prepared in respect of the remaining items to be addressed from the last Quinquennial report. This work has been tendered and should commence shortly.

As ever we are grateful to Rob and Janet who clean and take care of our buildings on a day to day basis and to Mike Holmes who has faithfully undertaken maintenance works for many years.

Duncan Halliday

Schools

In June I was able to support Lighthouse trust in running transition workshops and prayer spaces for year six children in a number of primary schools again.

I have also been doing regular assemblies in Abington Vale and All Saints this year.

Our Partnership with Lighthouse trust has continued to grow through this year. We have a number of plans to develop our work in schools in 2023. These plans include improved transitions workshops for year 6, and after-school wellbeing club, and a new look Christmas Experience.

Beth Whaites

Seniors Ministry

Senior Fellowship has continued to meet fortnightly in the church centre, with around 15 people attending regularly. Doreen and Michael Mabbutt have led this group faithfully for many years, with visiting speakers on a wide range of subjects providing input during the year. They would love to see more seniors attending, and the group growing.

Ministry to Care Homes resumed with Christmas Services at Spencer House, Cliftonville Care and The Angela Grace care home. These were much appreciated, and both Spencer House and Cliftonville requested that we re-start monthly services, as residents have been missing them greatly.

In January 2023, we led a communion service at Spencer House. 20 residents attended, and it was very moving to see how much it meant to those who came, to be able to receive communion. In February, a similar service will be held at Cliftonville Care. The hope is to continue monthly services in both, and to offer the same at The Angela Grace.

We hope to grow the Care Home team, so that we can continue to offer a monthly service.

Nicola Aylett

Home Groups

Home Groups are a vital part of a thriving church - providing fellowship, support, opportunity to dig deeper into God's Word and grow in prayer together, as disciples of Jesus.

Some Home Groups resumed meeting in 2022, others did not. Some people were left without a group; others new to St Giles were looking for a group to join.

During 2022, Ali and Nicola spent many hours working on ways to address the need, with the specific hope to create some new 'geographically based' groups. So far, two groups have re-formed; one new group has started; three others are 'in process' and it is hoped they will start soon.

It has not been easy to match days and times, leaders and hosts, as well as geography! But progress is being made. The hope is to increase the number and scope of groups on offer, so everyone can find a group reasonably close to home, at a time they can attend.

We currently have 7 active groups, and are very thankful for all those who faithfully lead and host.

Nicola Aylett and Alison Wagner

St Columba, Collingtree

It was good to resume worship in church after lockdown with essentially the same congregation we had when we went into it. There has been some modest growth with new people joining from the village and Collingtree Park as well as St Giles; sadly some no longer worship with us regularly due to ill health. In addition to Sunday worship we hold a Wednesday morning prayer and a Tuesday morning fellowship. I am grateful to Marian Thomas and Simon Bridgens for help with Sunday worship. I continue to visit our school for Collective Worship and our relationship with Collingtree Park Care Home has much improved. In the future we need to look at developing our provision for families and children.

We have applied for a faculty for a new sound and visual system. My thanks to Paul Cooper for his guidance with this. We also have plans for a small extension with a servery and toilet.

We are grateful for the support we receive from St Giles and look forward to the partnership growing in the future.

James Howson

Student and Young Adults Ministry

During this year we have helped about 150/170 international students through the platform of FISH. At St Giles we have been connected with 35 students and young adults. We also connect with about 10/20 students and staff members per week through handing out free tea and coffee with the Chaplain of the University. We also connected with the Multi-Faith centre and fed 40-50 students each week with free lunch over the summer. Each fortnight from October we did the same, feeding on average 30 people per week. Through our foodbank at the University we have fed 200 students from March 2022 – October 2022. We also have connected with 27 churches and ministries in the Northampton area to work alongside with their student and young adult ministries.

Since Sept 2022 we have seen our Student and Young Adult group grow dramatically, going from an average of 8 people each Wednesday night to 18 people. We have a monthly rotation of weekly topics that are missions, worship, teaching and guest speaker. It has been great to have some people from the congregation come and share on a Wednesday night!

Ruth Alexander

Thursday Communion Service and Fellowship

The Thursday Communion service has been growing over the past year, as new friends have joined us! In the winter months we re-located to the church centre and have continued to see new people coming. We now usually have 24-32 attending. Since the New Year we have reverted to following the Sunday lectionary, and have enjoyed a number of different people sharing in preaching.

Special thanks to Revd Peter Allen who has kindly led and preached as needed; and also to Liz Kitwood, Marian Thomas and Bob Steele, who have all preached occasionally. Their ministry has been much appreciated.

Since September, Lunch Club has resumed, on a monthly basis, and are very grateful to Val and Mike Holmes who cook and serve delicious meals each time, as well as to Rob Brown who deals with the washing up! The lunches are always great times of fellowship as well as good food!

Nicola Aylett

Treasurer

Regular income for 2022 was some £26K below that budgeted for; however, expenditure was also below budget. This has led to an overall deficit of £37K, which is £13K more than budgeted. The deficit has come out of reserves that, due to the generosity of members in 2021, were at a high level and remain as such into the start of 2023. God continues to bless St Giles with many generous donors; however, the challenge going forward is to try to match regular giving and income to necessary expenditure in order to maintain reserves as an acceptable level. The audited accounts will be available to view on the St Giles website as soon as the audit is completed.

*Derek Bish
(Acting Treasurer)*

Uniformed Organisations - Scouts

St Giles Scout group continues to face severe difficulties. Our current head count numbers 2 beavers, 7 cubs and 8 Scouts.

We are in the unusual position of having volunteers but not attendance. The most critical area is beavers with not just the lowest numbers, but without Beavers we do not have a feed into the older groups.

We estimate that, if we do not get more members into our groups we will shut our doors in two years' time, which would be a shame for Northampton's oldest scout group.

If you know anyone who would be interested in joining us the age groups are

Beavers 6-8

Cubs 8 - 10 ½

Scouts 10 ½ - 14

Please contact myself, Josh Richards or Mark Cookman (details on church suite) for more details, or see our website <https://sites.google.com/site/stgilesnorthamptonscoutgroup>

Highlights of the year include the family camp in Milton Keynes, Escape rooms in the hall, and the return of the pinewood derby.

Thanks to all the volunteers who give their time to keep this group running.

Craig Macpherson

Uniformed Organisations – 19th Northampton St Giles Guiding

Each section has completed Skill builder at age-appropriate levels, which they then build on. Unit Meeting Activities and interest badges completed. This has led to girls receiving their Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards.

The girls have had the opportunity for holidays and camps this year, the highlight being the County trip to Hautbois in Norfolk for 3 nights, brownies in Reed cutters huts and the Guides and Rangers in Bell tents of bright colours. The girls had a go at lots of challenging outdoor activities, on water, climbing and building. They came home very tired and smelly!! Well, it was camp!!

Leaders have gained Going Away with Licences and 2 have gained their Queens Guide Award.

I got to meet the prince Charles and shake his hand at the Queens Platinum Big Lunch at The Oval and have been on a trip to Kenya with Trefoil Guild.

We offer around 30 girls a great programme, around the Promise, to develop and grow into young women of the future.

Helen Hayward

Welcome and Hospitality

It was so lovely to welcome new people and some familiar faces back to St Giles during the morning and evening services in 2022. We've had some dedicated newcomer events like the pancake party and the soup lunch which was a great opportunity to get to know newer faces and talk about the work God is doing through us at St Giles.

Thank you so much to everyone who continues to serve on the welcome teams at our Sunday services, personally it's such a blessing to be a part of this and always getting to meet new people. We always welcome new volunteers though.

We have started giving out 'welcome bags' to new people that come into the church with lots of details about what's going on and a snapshot of all the areas of ministry happening at St Giles.

We feel the whole church has a role to play in welcoming new people so do look out for anyone with a welcome bag and do say hello!

Pete Day and Alle Dekenah

Wellbeing Cafe

Wellbeing Café is has become an integral part of the weekly calendar of the church. We seek to offer hospitality, a sense of belonging and acceptance to everyone who comes into the space. We run on Monday afternoon between 1 and 4pm where we open up the church centre (sometimes the church), and create a welcoming safe space. Those who come wish to spend time with others either doing an activity together, talking or sitting quietly alongside the group. It is open to anyone but particularly created for those amongst us who are experiencing emotional upheaval, mental health illness or spiritual struggle. We offer drinks and snacks for those who come and though the atmosphere is quiet and contemplative it is also friendly and warm. Every hour is an optional contemplative prayer and meditation run by one of the members and offered to all who come.

Sine Cookman

Women @ St Giles

In women's ministry our primary focus has remained on fellowship and relationships as we continue to try to counter the legacy of covid isolation and loneliness. To this end we have reintroduced our monthly pub nights (2nd Thursday of every month) and have upgraded our Wednesday daytime meetings to include 'Tea and Toast'! We also have a small BookGroup meeting monthly to discuss and share together thoughts on the book of the month. It is so valuable to share spiritual insight, gain a wider perspective and learn from each others faith experience in this way. We always welcome new members for any of our groups or meetings - the more the merrier.

In terms of larger events most memorably this year we held a 'Games Night' to raise money for Ukraine. It was an evening of laughter, fellowship and remarkable competitiveness- not least in the tic tac and tweezer race and most particularly in the 'dress up a team member as a Disney princess' round!

We also welcomed Charlotte Nobbs for our summer 'Retreat Day', held here in church, who led us with her customary flair and skill as we explored the parable of the lost sheep together.

Vikki Beale

World Mission

Our Mission Partners all remained in situ, continuing with their ministries during the year. Ann welcomed her long awaited team to help develop her outreach. Izaias and Ruth spent several weeks here, Peter and Gill visited briefly. Alf, while studying in Oxford, preached one Sunday. We are delighted that in November PCC agreed that Graham and Nicola Aylett be adopted as official mission partners as they continue to work from home to support theological education in Asia.

Our support for Tearfund's work in Kitgum diocese of Uganda has continued, and as agreed we transferred our support for persecuted Christians to Open Doors.

A Lent project with Barnabas Fund for Christians in Afghanistan raised £3K. This was preceded by an emergency appeal for Ukraine which raised £2K

A budget of £33,572, enabled us to maintain our existing commitments, with a modest increase in support payments for Mission partners. A small reserve covered a £50 gift for a short term mission venture and a gift to Nicola and Graham.

WMG met periodically for prayer and planning.

Mission Partners have been included in the House of Prayer initiative, and in the monthly prayer diary.

Liz Kitwood

Youth Work

Our Youth work in 2022 has seen some changes to the way we work.

Just Girls has become 'youth club' open to both girls and boys in secondary school, and is now regularly attended by a number of boys.

Our Sunday morning youth provision continues for all young people in secondary school and is lead by a wonderful team of youth workers. Each week we spend time exploring questions from our young people, some of our topics have included 'are humans above animals?', 'should we pay taxes?' and 'is world peace achievable?'

We would love to be able to grow our youth work with social and trips, but will need more leaders in order to make this happen.

Beth Whaites