

St Giles Church Northampton

Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens held 24th April 2022 in church (and livestreamed on YouTube)

1. The meeting began at 10.25am.
2. Ali Wagner, the Chair, explained the purpose of the vestry meeting for the appointment of churchwardens. David Lidbetter, having completed 5 years, and Alison Steele, having completed 4 years, did not put themselves forward again this year to be churchwardens but have agreed to be available to support the new wardens.
3. Jessica Newlove and Jacqueline Wienkamp were proposed and seconded as our new churchwardens. There being no other nominations, they were therefore duly appointed and there was no need for an election.
4. Ali invited Alison and David up to the front of church so that we could offer our thanks and we gave them some gifts. Ali prayed a prayer of thanks for their service. Alison and David then prayed for Jessica and Jacqueline as they take on their new roles.
5. There was no other vestry business.

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 24th April in church (and livestreamed on YouTube)

1. Apologies were received from Helen Hayward, Christopher Stobart, Rocky Coles, Sarah Alexander, Keith Davidson, Catherine Nichol, Jen and Mike Cope, Thirty Roberts, Marian Thomas, Jenny McCluskey, James Howson, Alan Sizer, Steve and Jane Cloverdale, Richard Deacon, Sylvia Freeman, Jacqueline Wienkamp and Angela Garrod.
2. **Electoral Roll**
The electoral roll stands at 202 of whom 7 are resident in the parish.
3. **Minutes of the Annual Meeting 25th April 2021**
It was proposed by Maggie Kelly that the minutes, as previously made available in the church and on the website, be accepted as a true record. This was seconded by David Lidbetter and the minutes were agreed and signed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.
4. **Thank you**
Ali explained the role of Deputy Warden and thanked all those who serve us in this role. She invited the congregation to consider if they could serve us in this role as it would be helpful to have some more volunteers. Thanks were recorded to Tim Dixon and David Hunter, who are stepping down as Deputy Wardens.

Thanks was also given to Jo Smith, who is stepping down from her role as Children's and Families Worker at the end of April 2022 and to Nicola Aylett who is stepping down from her role as Associate Minister at the end of June 2022.

5. **Elections**
Nomination of PCC Representatives

6 people were nominated for 6 vacancies, 5 for three years, and 1 for 1 year (David Lidbetter). There being no other nominations, there was therefore no need for an election.

The following people were duly elected:

Duncan Halliday, Anne Jackson (Treasurer), Steve Pentland, Paul Ritchie, Louise Whaites- 3 years.

David Lidbetter- 1 year.

Each nominee had previously provided a brief paragraph about themselves. Ali reminded the congregation that the PCC represent the congregation and that the PCC would love to hear from them with their views and ideas over the next year.

Nomination of Deanery Synod Representatives

Keith Davidson stepped down from his role as Deanery Synod Representative.

Stephen Hewitson was nominated as Deanery Synod Representative. There being no other nominations, Stephen was duly elected for the period of one year.

6. Annual Financial Accounts for 2021 and Budget for 2022

Anne Jackson, our Treasurer, joined the meeting via zoom and presented the slides together with Steve.

The presentation started with a 3 year overview of our income and expenditure in 2019, 2020 and 2021. In 2019 we had income of £385k and expenditure of £424k, making a deficit of £39k. In 2020, we had income of £389k and expenditure of £362k, making a surplus of £27k and in 2021 we had income of £407k and expenditure of £328k, making a surplus of £78k. The accounts can be found on the St Giles website. We are incredibly grateful for the Lord's provision over a difficult couple of years (1 Chronicles 16 v 34).

As we look at 2022, we once again commit our plans to the Lord (Proverbs 16 v 3).

The PCC agreed the budget for 2022 in November 2021 as follows:

Sources of Income	£	Expense Category	£
Gift aided donations	190,000	Property costs incl. utilities	34,990
Gift aid/ tax back	47,500	Staff salary costs	124,135
Non gift aided donations	90,000	Parish share to the diocese	111,579
Grants/ student fund	16,500	'Ministry' and outreach budgets	16,500
Lettings and fees	5,000	Mission giving (home and abroad)	47,572
Total	349,000	Office costs	15,700
		Total	350,476

The income budget is a prudent and cautious budget reflecting our careful analysis of giving patterns. Anne reiterated the importance of gift aiding giving if people can. With regards to expenditure, mission giving to partners and parish share have not been reduced. The budget was agreed with a small deficit of **£1,476**. Anne is confident that we can catch up this small deficit.

We have a good 'reserves' position. Our reserves are where we would turn if we had unexpected costs and we aim to keep 5-6 months of operating costs in our 'reserves'. In March 2021 we had £175k in reserves. As at March 2022 we have £178k in reserves and in addition to this we have c.£100k in our NatWest account, this provides an additional 2-3 extra months of reserves in practice.

It was proposed by Steve Kelly that DNG Dove Naish accountants be reappointed as auditors. This was seconded by Steve Pentland and agreed unanimously.

Thanks were recorded to Anne for all of her work as Treasurer and to Serena for her assistance.

7. Safeguarding

St Giles adopts and supports the safeguarding policy employed by Peterborough Diocese and the Church of England. The recruitment policy at St Giles follows Safer Recruitment Guidelines for both paid and voluntary roles. All volunteers and church officers are required to undertake the appropriate safeguarding training. Our safeguarding officer is Louise Whaites and she can be contacted with any concern over the safety of children or vulnerable adults. We review our policy annually and the safeguarding team meet once a month to review current safeguarding concerns and more regularly if needed. We take safeguarding very seriously at St Giles because it matters that everyone can thrive in this place. Ali reminded us that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

8. Questions on church matters

- **How can we see who is on the PCC?**

Ali explained that the list and photographs of PCC members can be viewed on the noticeboard next to the north door. PCC members present in church were also asked to stand up.

- **Do we give only 15% to mission activities? Should we give more to mission and tithing?**

Steve explained that we give 10% to overseas mission and 5% to mission here in the UK but then a further 5% is used for our ministry here at St Giles (e.g. Alpha, the Wellbeing Café etc.)

9. Church Attendance and Alpha

The following stats were shared

	Online.church	YouTube	In Person (am)	In person (pm)	In person (am+pm)
April/May 2021 snapshot	80-100	117	48	0	48
2021 overall	26	115	65	31	96
Since Sept 2021	22	93	84	31	115
Since Jan 2022	22	105	90	30	120

In person attendance has gradually been growing again. 95 people were present at the APCM, on Easter Sunday we had 220 people at the morning service.

Steve explained that the story about why people are here or not here is quite a complicated story, everybody has a story to tell. Steve encouraged and challenged us to each have a coffee with someone we haven't seen for a while, or invite someone back to church who hasn't been for years, or invite someone on an Alpha course. Steve shared an encouraging short video interview with Lois Clark and a gentleman who attended our last Alpha course at her invite.

Renee Dixon gave an update to the congregation on the latest Alpha course which launched on Wednesday. There were 12 visitors and all of them have signed up to do the course. She also encouraged us that it is not too late to invite people to Alpha.

10. Vicar's message and prayer for the year ahead

Commit to the LORD whatever you do and he will establish your plan (Proverbs 16 v 3)

In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps (Proverbs 16 v 9)

It is good to have a plan but they must always be tentative plans because God is in charge. We are a church, not a business; the Lord directs our steps and we should always hold our plans lightly.

Steve shared the news that he is going to be retiring from full time parish ministry and will be leaving St Giles at the end of September 2022. A letter to the congregation is attached.

Steve reassured the congregation that the Archdeacon Richard Ormston is not a fan of long interregnums and that Richard and the Simeon Trustees will shortly be gathering the PCC to embark upon the process of recruiting a new vicar.

Steve expressed his gratitude to Ali.

11. **Any Other Business-** None
12. The meeting closed with prayer.

DRAFT

In October 2021, after almost a year of study and preparation, I took a vow *to be true to Christ* and joined the *Order of the Mustard Seed*. It was a commitment to be more intentional in following Jesus with a renewed emphasis on *prayer and mission*. For the last 17 years it has been a privilege to be in so-called *full time ministry* and to encourage others to be wholehearted disciples in prayerful communities with a heart for mission. But, as a leader, I have never forgotten the personal commitment I made to Jesus as a teenager and the simplicity of offering your life to Jesus. For me that means allowing Him to lead you and, as best you can discern it, to faithfully follow where He asks you to go. The OMS vow has this simplicity at its heart and there was a fresh joy in making that commitment with others.



Order of the Mustard Seed

Also in 2021, I received an unexpected *prophetic word* which signalled that God was preparing something new for me. There were no details but the prophecy spoke of a change of responsibilities and new opportunities to give myself to God's mission. Over the last 6 months, Maggie and I have weighed that word, we've talked to our children and trusted Christian friends and of course we have prayed. My recent sabbatical has been a welcome time of rest and refreshment but it has also given me the opportunity to stand back and to pray and wait on the Lord. In January I wrote to the church, "*As I prepare to take time out with the Lord, I am seeking to be renewed again in my love for Jesus and the call to follow Him. To simply be with Him and then to be obedient to all that He asks me to do.*" I praise God for the opportunity afforded to do so.

Maggie and I now know that God is asking me to lay down my responsibilities as the vicar and leader of St Giles and to give ourselves wholeheartedly to prayer and mission. In stepping back from *parish ministry and paid work*, we place ourselves again in God's hands. With all of you, we can say and sing... "*trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey!*" We trust in His provision, His guidance, His timing and His loving purposes. We plan to finish in **September 2022** and we trust in all the good plans and purposes He has for St Giles including the timely provision of a new vicar to lead you forward into new things.

For a few years we have been planning to retire to **Stratford upon Avon**. It's a place which holds joyful memories especially the times when we had 4 young children at home. We used to cram 6 of us into the car with bikes strapped to the back and a trailer full of worn out camping gear! And it's close to Coventry where we lived when we were first married. We feel it's right to bring those plans forward, to sell our house in Rugby and to buy a property in Stratford. We plan to join and support a local church, to get to know the area again and to work out our calling to prayer and mission with those who share that passion.



DIOCESE OF COVENTRY

In recent months we have been renewing old friendships, finding out more about what God is doing in Stratford and making connections with the Coventry Diocese. As we have done so, we can see opportunities to serve the wider vision in the area and to encourage and nurture the kind of **discipleship** which will overflow in joyful evangelism and service.

We prayed the **Methodist Covenant Prayer** with the St Giles congregation in January and we said, "*I am no longer my own but yours; put me to what You will, rank me with whom you will... let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you... I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal*". We truly meant it so there is now a sense of **adventure** as we plan to move house and develop new friendships alongside those which go back to the late 80's.

Maggie's 1-1 coaching and mentoring role continues to grow. She has also connected with organisations and groups supporting clergy and Christian leaders. This too has been a stepping out in faith with a willingness to trust God in something new. We are both feeling encouraged that we have experience and learning to offer to others. We have been at St Giles for almost 9 years and these years have been a joy. We

St Giles Church APCM #####

Signed

have learned so much; our lives have been so enriched and our brothers and sisters in Christ have encouraged and blessed us. Many of the initiatives, courses and projects (and the mistakes we've made along the way) have taught us the value of pursuing the call of God in community and the importance of reliance on the Holy Spirit. We hope we can continue to do that in the years ahead and we trust that the tentative opportunities and connections for mission will develop and bear fruit in Stratford, Coventry and the wider Diocese.

Whether the next few years will feel like *retirement* or not remains to be seen! We certainly hope to have more time for our children and grandchildren. We hope to support Tom and Jenni as Tom embarks on his curacy in Southampton this summer and we pray for them to have the joy in ministry together which we have known. It will be a joy and privilege to be more available to our grandson Finn and his family and we hope we may be able to support the charities which support children living with long term disability. This is all to be worked out in the Lord's timing. We shall never retire from **loving and serving Jesus** and we ask for His strength and grace to be able to continue to do so with energy, passion and devotion.

Many of you will know how we appreciate the music of **Keith and Kristyn Getty**. They come from the north of Ireland and their music is deeply rooted in the Scriptures with a gentle simplicity and Christ-centredness. The words below express our *thanks to God* for all He has done in our lives and our desire to *offer ourselves afresh* to Him. May each of you know His peace and love in the coming days and be able to entrust yourselves afresh into His loving care as you seek to love and follow Him.

My heart is filled with thankfulness
To him who reigns above,
Whose wisdom is my perfect peace,
Whose ev'ry thought is love.
For ev'ry day I have on earth
Is given by the King;
So I will give my life, my all,
To love and follow him.

Steve and Maggie
St Giles Vicarage
31st March 2022

