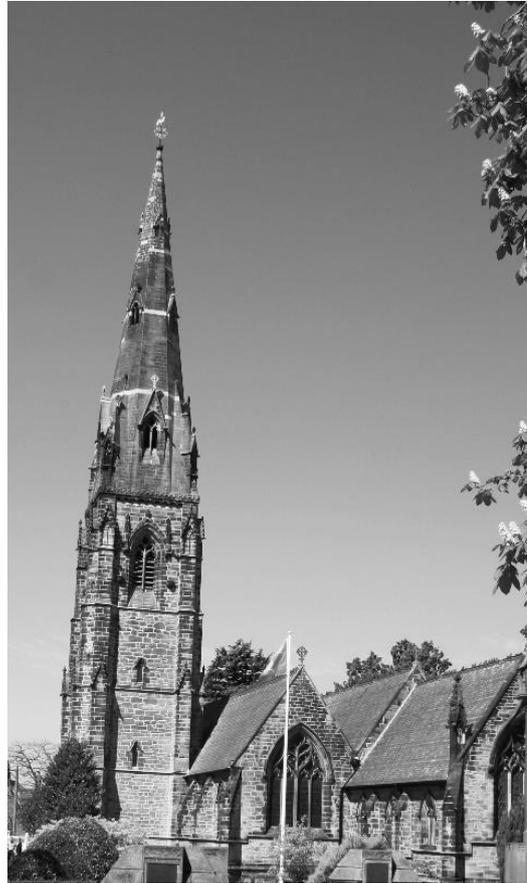




St. Philip & St. James Parish Church, Alderley Edge



Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31st December 2020

The Lord went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so they might travel by day and by night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.

Exodus 13: 21-22

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Ministry Team serving at St. Philip and St. James' during 2020

Rev'd Robin Pye (Vicar)

Rev'd Canon Professor Loveday Alexander (Associate Priest)

Rev'd Linda Lonsdale (Retired Priest)

Mrs Susan Mills (Pastoral Worker)

Mrs Rachel Roberts (Reader)

Mrs Anna Cerval-Peña (Ordinand)

Introduction

At the start of Lent 2021, Loveday made the observation that it feels like Lent has been going on for 12 months, never mind 40 days. Loveday developed this idea, drawing the traditional parallel between Lent and the period the people of Israel spent in the wilderness journeying to the Promised Land. This image stuck with me. Is life during a pandemic like life in the wilderness? A challenge that seems to go on and on and on, making us question whether we can continue, whether we can ever get there? And if life during a pandemic is like life in the wilderness, is it a time for sensing God's presence more keenly in our daily lives and understanding more fully our need for God's love and guidance?

For me the parallel works. This has been an exhausting and challenging time. But also a deeply spiritual time when God has shown me many new things and many other people have shown me things that God has revealed to them.

Here is a quick recap of the year.

Starting with new life

Do you remember that service in January when the Sunday School children walked into church to join the rest of the congregation for communion? And the family communion services with a baptism and the junior choir? We started 2020 full of hope for the future as we saw children joining us for worship who, as somebody else observed. 'assume you can have fun in church.' People like to see children in church because it suggests that a congregation has a future. I think even more important than that is the guidance Jesus gave his disciples that you can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven unless you enter it as a child would. Worshipping alongside children is good for us spiritually. It helps us to worship more fully.

Abandoning the building

Do you remember the first lockdown in March last year? We were given the clear instruction to leave the church building. We must do nothing to encourage people to undermine the lockdown and that included even showing pictures of a priest on his own in church. The lack of traffic noise was eerie. The birdsong was deafening. A fox ambled down the main road past Piccolino's in broad daylight. Undaunted, the vicar's

hens wandered up and down Church Lane and all over the churchyard. I battled with inadequate broadband and even more inadequate IT skills to get services out online. I had to film the Palm Sunday service from the kitchen in five separate films. One communion service was disrupted by my cat which jumped onto the makeshift altar and threatened to pull everything down. And we made an important discovery. Despite the challenges, we wanted to find a way to worship together. And so we did.

Serving each other

In the first few days of lockdown we tried to track down every member of the congregation to make sure that we had a way of communicating with you all and that you all had a network of people to look after and to look after you. Most of you, by the time I had caught up with you and done this for yourselves. In some cases, new groups and networks sprang up and in many cases they are still going.

Celebrating Communion on-line

From the beginning I celebrated communion on-line. It was strange at first learning to focus on the little black dot of a camera on my laptop or telephone. Celebrating communion was an instinctive thing. Only later did I realise that many churches had decided not to celebrate communion on-line. Some felt that it wasn't fair if only the priest could eat and drink the body and blood. Others just felt that worship could proceed perfectly well without communion. For me, our decision to continue to celebrate communion meant that the death and resurrection of Christ remained at the centre of our worship week in week out and although most of my thinking about has taken place after the decision was made, I am glad we made the decision that we did.

Discovering Facebook and YouTube

I knew that some people would broadcast things live on Facebook and YouTube but I had assumed it was complicated and difficult. Actually, it turned out to be pretty easy. Or rather, easy to do badly. But gradually we learned. And so we began to develop congregations online. In the case of Facebook this meant that all sorts of people who hadn't worshipped in our church before began to join us. Some have joined us indefinitely.

Discovering Zoom

It took us a while to appreciate the full potential of zoom. At first the feeling of looking at all those faces while you prayed was rather daunting. And it took us a while to find the mute button, didn't it? But then we learned about sharing power point and including YouTube clips so that now we can worship from our own homes, see the words, look at pictures, join in with the music, invite people who live hundreds if not thousands of miles away to join us and now that everybody has learned how it works, we can even enjoy looking at a sea of faces, our brothers and sisters in Christ and be joyful. Our evening services on zoom normally have 35 people or so in attendance and I suspect worshipping on zoom may survive the end of lockdowns.

What about the children?

There is a separate report on children but after our wonderful start to the year (see above), it was even more wonderful to see how children's ministry could thrive and grow using zoom.

Loving our Neighbour

Back to the first few days of lockdown. How would all the people who had to self-isolate do their shopping? How would people suddenly made unemployed be able to eat given the way that Universal Credit has been structured? We put out an appeal for volunteers and over 40 people signed up and were DBS checked by Sue Mills. That gave us a volunteer group to meet any challenges our community might face. Word spread. Phone calls came into the vicarage offering help or asking for it. Our church became this community's centre for help, support and love during the pandemic. It was the heart of the community as the notice in our porch proclaims us to be.

Broadcasting from church

And then the priest was allowed to go back into church to broadcast services from there and so he did. And when it was allowed the organist and then individual soloists followed by small groups of choir members joined him. And we had to learn a lot more about sound recording.

Worshipping Together in Church

This was permitted from July onwards and soon after we began to worship together in the church building. It was really hard work to think through how we could go about this safely. And having worked it out it was quite a commitment to maintain the systems required to keep everybody safe. And we had to review them and adjust them constantly. But we did it and we began to worship together in the building once again.

Rachel is a Reader

Rachel's licensing as a reader at Chester Cathedral should have been a great day out for our congregation. In the event the service was something that a few of us watched online. But Rachel's licensing is a key milestone for our church. She has engaged with her studies confidently and imaginatively and has been commended by her tutors. She preaches with extraordinary power. She has a prophetic voice within our church; she is never afraid to be in a minority of one if she has something important to say. And she cares very much for our church as a whole. She will play an important role in our future as will several others who may have watched her respond to God's call on her life and begin to wonder what God is calling them to do.

Summer Picnics

We really missed the tots sessions and the families of tots missed them too. And we were worried about some of the families we were supporting from the foodbank. How would they last the summer without the replacement free school meals? (Thankfully, Marcus Rashford scored a tap in to address that issue). But by then we had applied for a

grant for food which we proposed to share at a series of summer picnics. The picnics went ahead and were really well supported. Families of all sorts of shapes and sizes gathered in the church grounds. The gazebos and the outdoor furniture that Martin Steiger has donated to us took a bit of a battering. Literally hundreds of people joined us at some point. Once again we were the heart of this community.

Financial Appeal

But by October we knew we were way behind our budget. Well £10,000 behind anyway which is a lot for us. Weddings and baptisms had been cancelled. There had been months of services without collection plates. Even funerals were well down. And other fund-raising activities were prevented from happening. So, we just appealed for money. And we had a wonderful response. So, in this extraordinary year, amazingly we broke even.

The November Circuit Breaker

In the autumn the infection rates began to rise again. And so, we spent November worshipping online. Lockdown wasn't as much fun when it was cold and dark. We began to see people's resilience weakening and the pastoral demands on us began to grow.

Advent in Church and Online

We were allowed back into church for Advent but we knew that all the big services involving children would not go ahead. And so, we conceived a bold plan to celebrate Advent online as well as in church using our own Advent calendar as a framework to hold it together. Every child in the primary school was given a free advent calendar and others were distributed elsewhere in the community. Every day you could open that day's window in the physical advent calendar and that was supposed to remind you to look at the online Advent calendar to watch a craft or cookery activity being demonstrated, a song being sung and a story being told. It was hard work but we had a lot of fun and people really got into it. On Christmas Eve I received a very nice email from a lady in New Brunswick in Canada who had received her copy of our advent calendar from a friend in the isle of Wight who had in turn received it from her friend in Alderley Edge. Maybe this is another lockdown innovation that will survive lockdown.

Christmas is not cancelled

On 21st December with news that the virus was 'out of control' but without clear guidance from the government or the church, we had an emergency meeting of the PCC subcommittee responsible and decided we had to move all our Christmas worship online. We took that decision a few days before a planned 'Stations of the Nativity' service planned to take place in our church yard which would have been wonderful and also would have been a potential super-spreading event. If we had not been so active and innovative over the previous 9 months, this would have been a very tough decision to make, especially as other churches nearby were continuing to worship in the church building in a limited way. After the momentum we had built up in 2020, it was difficult

to see how we could worship in the building in a limited way and instead we threw our energy into making online worship possible. At the time I was very conflicted about this decision but in retrospect I am satisfied we made the right decision.

THANKS

I don't dare start a list of names of people who deserve our thanks. There are so many of you and I don't want to miss anybody out.

I feel I ought to mention though that Anna Cerval-Pena is going to be ordained on 4th July 2021 and her last Sunday with us is 6th June. Similarly, we are expecting Kate Pwaisiho to finish her placement with us at around that time. Kate and Anna are working for our congregation more or less full-time and have brought a wide range of skills to their work. Their contribution has done a lot to sustain our ministry during a very challenging year and the congregation will immediately feel the impact of their departure.

However, I am confident that we will cope with losing their contributions. This has been the most extraordinary collective effort I have ever been involved in. I couldn't wish to be lost in the wilderness with a finer group of people. You are a channel of God's grace to me. Through you, I have faith that we will reach the Promised Land.

Revd Robin Pye

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

St Philip & St James during 2020 (by Anna)

Some have said that training for ordination in 2020 has been a washout! and others have said it has been a unique opportunity for formation for us as individuals and for understanding what it means to be a church and to be in church leadership. I am definitely on the side of the latter. This year has shown me what a supportive, energetic, and adaptive church looks like and it has been a pleasure to be a part of it.

For me, it began with the ministry team praying morning prayer on Zoom 3 times a week. It was (and still is) a time while reading and praying, new ideas were born, issues discussed and support given. I truly believe all the ministry team did during 2020 was supported and sustained by those prayer meetings.

Out of all the changes that happened during 2020 my favourite has been the evening services on Zoom. I think they were at their best when we had a live choir, but even with recorded music, I feel those services are often very special and I am still amazed how I can feel part of a community worshipping even if they are on my computer screen and I am sitting at home. I think all the different voices involved in the services help (even the interruptions).

I think 2020 was a year of sadness and fear but also of challenge, community and love. I think collectively St. Philip and St. James stepped up to the challenges, supported each other and the community and really demonstrated God's love. It has been great to be a part of this church in 2020.

Anna Cerval-Peña

From Sonrise to Jackanory (by Naomi and Graeme)

Owing to health problems, for most of the last twelve months we have been either self isolating or in lockdown. In consequence St. Philips on Facebook has been a great innovation. Naturally we have missed the fellowship and friendship of our group of 8 o'clockers. Also the main services over Christmas, Lent and Easter. We have tuned into services from the vicarage, its garden, the Church and Sonrise on the Edge. We also greatly enjoyed Robin's auditions for Jackanory with his stories to the tots. Over the year we have lost several of our friends and relatives (none to Covid) but because of the virus have been unable to attend their funerals. It has therefore been a great comfort to hear Robin including their names during the intercessions. When everything returns to 'normal' and the church is running fully, we believe it would be a good part of the outreach mission to keep at least one service a week on line for those unable, for whatever reason, to get to the Church.

Naomi and Graeme Simister

Our Thoughts about Lockdown (by Margaret and Richard)

We've really appreciated the daily Thought-For-The-Day emails. They've given us a sense of togetherness and belonging to a community despite us having to remain physically separated. I usually feel I've learned something new in the daily bible passages. The passages that stick in my memory have been the story of Ruth, and the full story of the Acts of the Apostles. We've all listened to excerpts from these stories throughout the years on Sundays. But the fact that we've gone through the chapters consecutively and without missing any verses, means we've obtained a deeper understanding. We've been surprised how the clergy have applied the words from the bible to our everyday lockdown situation.

Throughout lockdown we've found ourselves looking forward to the Sunday Evensong services on Zoom. We've seen how much work the clergy have put into these services. They've helped with our sense of togetherness as we've been able to meet, albeit virtually, members of our own and other local congregations.

Our thanks to all the clergy for all their work. Your efforts have been much appreciated in our household.

Margaret Seddon & Richard Barraclough

Thoughts to add to the mix (by Jean)

I think you asked people to write and tell you of their experience of lockdown services. I have certainly had two very positive experiences.

Firstly, I have sometimes 'attended' Choral Eucharist at the cathedral, including hearing our new Bishop preach, without having to travel to Chester! I don't feel qualified to say anything about St Philips services because, as you know, I have had a hearing problem with them.

Secondly, I have found the telephone services surprisingly rewarding. There is something very immediate about hearing just one voice speaking directly into one's ears. Also it enables people who wouldn't otherwise be able to join a service, to be included. I have specially valued being able to share Communion with Hazel Highton and feel I have been in contact with her in a way that is impossible otherwise. Greeting each other before the service means you know who else is sharing the service, and that makes me feel close to them all in a real sense of communion, "united in prayer" if you like.

Jean Wearne

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY 2020-2021

With the sudden imposition of lockdown in March 2020, it became clear that we needed a simple way to keep in touch with one another and to encourage patterns of daily Bible reading and reflection. With the help of the Ministry Team and colleagues from other churches, we were able to establish a daily “Thought for the Day” sent out by email, with fresh personal reflections on Bible passages.

This has continued to flourish and now goes out to 160+ people across the parish and beyond. The daily Bible passages follow the RCL lectionary for Morning Prayer, interleaved with special series on Acts (May-June 2020); Ruth (July 2020); 1 Corinthians (September 2020); and Mark (Lent 2021).

A special highlight was the Advent Calendar (December 2020), which provided a daily reflection on the meaning of Christmas linked with a song, a craft activity, and a children’s story on the website.

This has grown from small beginnings to a huge collaborative project: my thanks are due to Robin Pye and the Revd Rod Hill (AEMC), who have anchored the whole project, together with regular contributions from the Revd Pam Butler (AEMC); the Revd Linda Lonsdale; Rachel Roberts; Anna Cerval-Peña; Kate Komepawisiho; and guest contributions from Liz Shercliff, Meg Warner, Robert Evans, Michael Pye, the Bishop of Chester, and Readers from Chester Diocese.

Loveday Alexander, TFTD co-ordinator

BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The Alderley Edge Bible Study meets once a month to read the Bible together (normally on the first Monday at 7.30 pm). Over the past couple of years we have welcomed a good contingent from the Methodist Church in Alderley Edge. From September 2019 we moved to the West End of church and began studying the Book of Revelation, a strange book that often seems disturbingly relevant to our own day. Since the first lockdown in March 2020, meetings have continued on Zoom, and we continue to meet regularly as a varied group of around 20-25 people. During the current year (2020-21) we are reading the Book of Psalms with the help of Prof Philip Alexander.

Revd Canon Loveday Alexander, Bible Study Leader

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Part of The Diocese of Chester (ref 1403) in Knutsford Deanery;
The Parish Church of St Philip and St James Alderley Edge
Church Lane, Alderley Edge SK9 7UZ

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a Charity (No 1131416) within the authority of the Charity Commission.

Bank Account held: Barclays plc London Rd Alderley Edge

The Parish Room adjacent to the Church is also the responsibility of the PCC

MEMBERS OF THE PCC 2020

Ex Officio:

Clergy: Revd Robin Pye; Revd Canon Loveday Alexander.

Reader: Mrs Rachael Roberts (co-opted in November 2020)

Deanery Synod Representatives: Miss Celia Berent; Mr Michael Scaife;

Mrs Sandra Thompson (from the APCM October 2020)

Pastoral Worker and Safeguarding Officer: Mrs Sue Mills.

Elected Churchwardens: Mrs Wendy Davies (from the APCM October 2020); Mr Stuart Rippon (until the APCM October 2020); Mr Martin Sinker.

Elected Members:

Mrs Wendy Davies **Secretary** (until the APCM October 2020)

Miss Rebecca Dean (until the APCM October 2020)

Ms Rhona Dalziel (from the APCM October 2020)

Ms Sarah Magee (from the APCM October 2020)

Mrs Amanda Parr

Mrs Sue Pawsey

Mrs Jenny Pound

Mrs Margaret Seddon

Mr Peter Spooner (co-opted until APCM October 2020)

Secretary (from the APCM October 2020)

Non-member of PCC from the APCM

Mr Ian Standen

Treasurer

Ms Gillian Swain (from the APCM October 2020)

Mr Brian Thompson

Health & Safety Officer

(co-opted until the APCM October 2020, then member)

Mrs Sandra Thompson (until the APCM October 2020)

Mr Bob Tuffin

(until the APCM October 2020, then co-opted in November)

Mr Ian Wilson

The PCC met for 6 full meetings with overall average attendance at 83%.

There was one extra-ordinary meeting (in June: attendance 74%) to approve the re-opening of the church for private prayer.

Delegated from the PCC were the Standing Committee and the Fabric Committee. There are also the 'Mission Groups': West End and Reach Out (including Pastoral Care); Outreach to Youth and Children; Outreach through Music; and Training and Discipleship. All continued to report to the PCC throughout 2020. There is no separate update on training and discipleship in this annual report as these activities were incorporated in the other groups.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Health & Safety Officer Mr Brian Thompson continues regular assessments and inspections and reports back to the PCC. This year was a particularly difficult and busy year in which Brian was instrumental in enabling the safe use of the church whenever possible, interpreting all the appropriate and constantly changing guidelines, and carrying out the necessary risk assessments throughout the pandemic.

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding Officer Mrs Sue Mills reports to the PCC on any issues that may arise, and ensures that DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) procedures are up to date. In 2020, because of the increase in volunteers, Sue had a busy year for completing DBSs and we are grateful to her for her time and effort in ensuring the safety of our processes in this respect.

There were no formal "safeguarding" issues reported in 2020. Sue Mills and Rev Robin Pye have a working relationship with the Chester Diocese Safeguarding Team.

ELECTORAL ROLL

Electoral Roll Officer: Mrs Elaine Ockelton.

Following the review in March 2020, before the delay of the APCM, the number on the roll was 123. At the time of the delayed APCM in October, in spite of much of the year being spent in 'lockdown', our electoral roll had increased to 128 people. 44 of these were non-resident in the parish.

This year, at the PCC meeting closest to the planned date of the APCM (March 18th 2021), the total on the electoral roll was 130 with 44 non-resident.

THE CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

The January 2020 PCC meeting minutes required a separate page for 30 events we had planned for that year. Instead, we postponed or changed everything, and did something completely different! The amazing work of everyone who stepped up to support the church's activities, help the local community, and do something new, is documented in the various contributions to this annual report. The Churchwardens are deeply grateful for this and the support of so many members of our St Philip and St James' community. In addition, we are grateful for the continued support from so many members of our church and community towards our charity and special appeals throughout this financially challenging year. This prevented us from ending the year in deficit and gave us confidence in our new ways of working.

From the perspective of a new churchwarden, it was a slightly daunting time to take on the role, although most rule books seemed to be in the ether last year - so why not that of the churchwarden? But there were big acts to follow and responsibilities to take seriously, and in this context both Martin and Wendy would like to sincerely thank Stuart Rippon for his six dedicated years of service as Churchwarden. His contribution to the smooth running of the church and his unassuming approach will be missed.

Special thanks also to Robin for his unstinting and enthusiastic leadership, encouraging us all to think differently and to try our best – from the dedicated ministry team, the PCC and church officials, Peter and the choir, the support and foodbank team, the fabric and gardening teams, through to the people who pick up the phone to call someone in need. Many of us volunteers may feel that we reinvented ourselves last year, and although most things were different and sometimes difficult, we are all the same people and members of the same church family. Thankyou from the Churchwardens.

THE CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT ON THE FABRIC AND PROPERTY

After a gap during the run-up to Christmas, Sixsmiths returned in January 2020 to continue with the organ rebuild. Meanwhile the fully reconditioned air blower was reinstalled in the basement. Our Organ Consultant Mr Paul Hale duly checked and approved the organ restoration on 2nd March but sadly plans for him to return and play at a recommissioning recital had to be postponed because of the arrival of Covid 19 restrictions.

The long-running battle to persuade Orange and then EE to rectify the damage being caused by their rusting bolts in the spire stonework, finally reached fruition in January. EE's contractors Balfour Beattie, working via the hatches over the South Porch, duly extracted all the galvanised bolts and replaced them with stainless. The work was inspected and approved by our Engineer Charles Blackett-Ord, and all costs were covered by EE.

During January it became apparent that one of the two Hamworthy gas boilers was out of action and that its heat exchanger was leaking badly and beyond repair. The Diocesan Heating Consultant Mr John Book was commissioned to investigate and report on possible ways forward for heating the Church. Meanwhile General Synod decided that all Churches should aim to be carbon neutral by 2045, then amended to 2030, with the implication that buying new gas boilers would not be a good solution. During the year it was decided to keep going with the Hamworthy boilers while researching longer term technologies, and in due course the two boilers were fully serviced and the failed heat exchanger replaced.

With the 2020 Quinquennial due, the PCC (and then the Diocese) approved the appointment of Mr Mark Pearce as Architect, Mr John Prichard having retired. His full Quinquennial Inspection took place on 12th June and the Report reached us electronically in late August, also including the John Book Heating Report as an appendix. The Fabric Committee reviewed the Quinquennial via Zoom and presented recommendations to the 12th November Zoom PCC meeting. These included setting about urgent roof maintenance work as soon as possible, and researching heating solutions, also new low-energy lighting and perhaps interior redecoration. It was hoped that full re-roofing and ceiling plastering could be put off for some years, subject to further inspection.

In September EE renewed their request for a new rental agreement in line with recent legislation covering telecoms equipment on Church property. However their offer was derisory when compared with the existing rental income based on the original 1995 license agreement. With considerable difficulty it was discovered that negotiations between the CofE and telecoms providers were in progress; the outcome is due early in 2021 but there will inevitably be a substantial drop in rental income.

Use of the Parish Rooms has changed considerably as the result of Covid, the main room becoming the hub of the Food Bank. Externally, mowing the grass, trimming the hedges and maintaining the flowerbeds has continued unabated, also the lych gate seating and a memorial bench have been repaired. During the year a new ride-on mower was purchased, also a new tool-shed, the cost of each being covered by donations. Various outdoor activities took place under Covid rules, some of these using somewhat wind-vulnerable gazebos. Revd Robin Pye applied for and won a Community Fund grant in excess of £7000, partly to cover the cost of buying a heavy-duty 12x6 metre marquee with floor and lighting; this will be put up early in 2021.

The Churchwardens have carried out the annual check of silverware and valuables, and have made a new photographic record for comparison purposes. And finally we are most grateful to all the volunteers who help to maintain our beloved Church and its grounds in so many ways.

Wendy Davies and Martin Sinker, Churchwardens

THE MISSION GROUPS AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

PASTORAL CARE, REACH OUT and the WEST END

Pastoral Care:

Our main aim is to make sure that someone in the congregation is able to respond to those who need a bit of extra support. This could be support from one of the Care Group members, or that we ask among the congregation to provide a cheery voice, listening ear, or practical support. This was all the more important in 2020 !

Home or Hospital and Care Home Visits:

Services and visits continued in January and February, with visitors going into nursing homes and providing communion, but this was not possible for the remainder of the year. Care group members used traditional and more innovative ways of keeping in touch: telephone calls, Zoom calls, e-mailing, door visits and walking. Limited home visits were possible with risk assessment approval by Robin and Brian Thompson.

Transport: Jenny Pound continued to coordinate the transport requests – hospital appointments for those who couldn't drive a distance, and lifts to and from church. However, this was limited in 2020 due to the restrictions.

Volunteer Shopping scheme: (Sue Mills, Wendy Davies, Ian Standen)

This was set up at the beginning of Lockdown 1, incorporating shopping for the local community and one-off tasks. In the region of 40 people volunteered and supported the vulnerable in many different ways. The cashless shopping scheme was a rapid response set up by the church in March and kindly supported by a loan from the parish council. More than £8500 worth of shopping was done throughout the year! During the first lockdown, volunteers delivered Foster's fish and chips to some of our congregation, again supported by the parish council.

'Reach Out'

Sunday Events:

Church Welcome (Sandra Thompson): This continued before the ten o'clock service on a Sunday when we were able to hold our church services, with additional health and safety responsibilities due to the pandemic.

Wednesday Events:

The Art Group, Lunch and Voices Together (Sue Mills, Gillian Swain and Robin Pye) continued in January and February but were suspended in March. We're intending to review these activities in 2021.

Film Club (Andrew Smith)

Showing of films began bimonthly from the beginning of 2020 prior to the Covid Pandemic.

Sue Mills: Pastoral Worker

Alderley Edge Food Bank based at St P&J

At the beginning of the pandemic, we increased the size of our Foodbank and moved it to the Parish Rooms. We opened it every Sunday morning for people to collect their own food, and volunteers prepared and delivered bags for those who were unable to come in person. Deliveries were also made on other days as required. The Foodbank was stocked from donations from the church family and the community, to whom we are most grateful. The Foodbank was manned by a team of 10 from our church family and the community.

We continued to collect perishable foods from Tesco and Waitrose daily and delivered to ROAR, a rehabilitation centre in Macclesfield and to Hope Central Foodbank in Handforth. We also collected from Grantham's on a Saturday when the food was taken to our Foodbank for the following day's open session. We had a team of 10 volunteers, 7 from our church family and 3 from within the community.

In November we were contacted by Waitrose to say we were one of their chosen charities and we were presented with a cheque in the sum of £333. They also very kindly gave us a voucher for £150 to be used in the Alderley Edge store which we used to make up Christmas hampers with some great Christmas goodies. We had a small team to make up and deliver 15 hampers to our regular Foodbank recipients, and we also provided 4 Christmas Dinner Hampers, three of which were kindly donated by a member of our church family and one by Granthams.

Jenny Pound and Sarah Magee

The History Group based at StP&J

2020 was a historic year for the group. Our group like many others discovered Zoom and had three meetings digitally. In May at our first Zoom meeting, John Wallace gave his entertaining talk, Alderley Edge- 10,000 years of Bling. In June Graham Dilliway Zoomed in from Sussex, and presented his research on the Pilkington Family who lived at Firwood on Woodbrook Road (now the Cedars). He then returned in November to tell us about the legacy and houses that the Crewdson Family lived in around the village in early 1900s.

We also gained a wider following through social media and were able to advertise our Heritage centre in the Westend of the church.

We acquired more archives, as many people had more time to find long lost photos and treasures and have delighted, that there is a communal place for everyone to visit.

Once the church is fully open, we plan an exhibition of stories and photos found during lockdown, and to work on our archives.

We look forward to meeting our members in real life again and having our meetings back in the Westend.

Mandy Parr, Group Secretary

OUTREACH TO YOUTH AND CHILDREN

Sunday School goes live

2020 was the year we re-started the Sunday School. In the lead-up to Christmas 2019, Robin and Anna ran a very successful after-school drama club with children mainly from Alderley Edge Community Primary School. For many of us, their performance of the nativity on Christmas Eve was a highlight of the festive season.

Several children decided that if church could be this much fun then they would give Sunday School a go. We were very encouraged when seven children and some parents joined us for our first re-vamped Sunday School in January. The plan was to have just one Sunday School per month but then lockdown happened. So, we moved Sunday School onto a weekly session on zoom. Numbers grew beyond a manageable size and we spilt the group into two: one session for the younger ones and one for the older children.

In June, the older children, led by Anna and Mandy recorded a re-enactment of the book of Acts on zoom. It is on our Facebook page and you should watch it if you have not done so before.

The Sunday School is led by The Ministry Team with the valiant support of Mandy Parr and Rhona Dalziel. I calculated that in 2020, we ran over two and half times more Sunday School sessions than we had envisaged at the start of the year. So whatever next?

Rachel Roberts

THE CHOIR AND OPALS and OUTREACH THROUGH MUSIC

Despite Covid, music remained an important part of our worship and outreach throughout the year, albeit limited by necessity. Membership of the Choir grew by one tenor at the beginning of the year and by the end there were:

- 9 Sopranos
- 4 Altos
- 2 Tenors
- 4 Basses

Up to the first lockdown in March, the Choir was able to sing Choral Evensong on five occasions but sadly this was not possible since then. When lockdowns eased we were able to provide a reduced choir for our 10.00 am Sunday morning Eucharists. The choir were spaced out in the north aisle to achieve safest social distancing from the congregation who occupied the nave. Choir members provided live music for online services whenever possible.

We were able to sing a Requiem for All Souls on 1st November in church. This involved 18 choir members split into two forces occupying the north and south aisles, each group singing some of the movements of Fauré's Requiem.

Whenever it was permitted to rehearse the choir did so. There were frequently about 20 members present spread out in the nave. On these occasions we were able to record some music for use in online worship, culminating in choir and congregational carols for our annual Service of Lessons and Carols.

Sadly we were not able to maintain OPALS presence leading any services after the first lockdown. This also affected the recorder group.

Mr. Peter Spooner (Organist and Choirmaster)

THE MOTHERS' UNION

Well, what a year it has been – interesting and challenging.

In January we held our AGM.

In February we welcomed Gary Holt as our speaker. He was the manager of the Wilmslow Housing Project and gave an interesting insight into their work.

In March our Lent meeting led by our Vicar and then lockdown We were unable to meet and also support our projects as they themselves were in the same situation. We did however respond to an appeal for fabric for “scrubs”.

The Easter Eggs and Bunnies could not be distributed and at a later date were given to our Food Bank as was the non-perishable food we originally purchased for the food starter packs for Wilmslow Housing Project, as this was closed and the residents re-housed elsewhere.

During the easing of restrictions the Vicar conducted/compiled three monthly Communion Services for us in church. Very much appreciated and enjoyed by members and friends able to be there.

Also during this brief window we delivered to:

- Macclesfield Hospital 35 toilet bags, 20 fiddle muffs, 8 knee blankets
- Tiny garments and blankets for the S.C.B.U. units of Macclesfield, Wythenshawe and Stepping Hill hospitals
- 50 Selection Boxes, Christmas gifts, towels, toiletries and sundry items to Cheshire Without Abuse Centre, which supports the victims of domestic abuse.

Anna, our ordinand, was also able to make a delivery to the Hope Centre in Macclesfield for us. We subsequently responded to an appeal by Oasis, via our Methodist friends, donating male toiletries, socks, scarves, hats for homeless folk being re-housed in a hotel near their centre. Miniature toiletries were included with their food bank parcels.

And then another lockdown.

We were not able to hold our annual Bridge Drive, which is our main fundraising activity, neither were we able to promote our Lent Project as we had done previously.

No diocesan or deanery meetings or services have taken place.

No baby boxes have been delivered to HMP Styal.

Members have kept in touch by phone, letters, emails and the occasional wave when we were able to worship in church.

Linda has continued doing sterling work contacting members. She provides a listening ear for “fedupness”. Josie and Sandra have continued with their responsibilities for social concern, faith and policy.

A big “thank you” to everybody – clergy, church family and wider community for their support.

The committee thanks everyone who has contributed in any way at all during this extraordinary year.

Mrs Sheila Rayner; Mothers’ Union

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ALDERLEY

CTIA began its usual programme in 2020 with Lent study groups on “Witness” led by Anna Cerval-Peña. Sadly, these had to be abandoned halfway through Lent, as did the normal Good Friday Walk of Witness. However, the Committee has continued to meet via Zoom, and organised (with Anna’s help) a very successful Christian Aid Quiz Night in October (Zoom plus chips!). The Zoom format has proved a fruitful way of meeting regularly for Evening Prayer with friends from other churches, including ecumenical evening services for Advent and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January 2021).

Loveday Alexander, Chair, Churches Together in Alderley

KNUTSFORD DEANERY SYNOD ANNUAL REPORT

As part of the Knutsford Deanery it is important that the sixteen parish groups work together for the common aim of proclaiming the Gospel in this area, sharing good practice, faith experience and together embracing the issues of the wider Church. We gain support and great collegiality from our association with our neighbouring parishes.

Rural Dean: Revd Canon Ian Blay, Mobberley

Lay Chair: Mr John Grainger, Mobberley

There were two meetings in 2020, both on zoom:

May Meeting: Loveday made a presentation on Calling All God’s People: everyday faith in every day life. The Rural Dean informed the meeting that the new Bishop of Chester would be the Rt Rev Mark Tanner but he did not know when he would be inducted. He gave advice about several issues facing churches in response to the coronavirus crisis.

November Meeting: Rev David Page (St Peters Elworth) gave a talk on funeral ministry. The Treasurer reported that, as the Synod had £3500 in its account, there would be a subscription holiday for parishes in 2021. The rural dean reported on responses to the coronavirus crisis, clergy changes in the deanery and diocesan finances.

Celia Berent, Michael Scaife, Sandra Thompson; Deanery Synod Representatives

THANKSGIVING REVIEW

Thanksgiving Sunday 2020 was held on 16th February. Prior to the day the Vicar wrote to members of the congregation thanking them for “all the ways in which you support the mission of this church; for all the sacrifices made financially and in terms of time and effort”. He reported that giving increased in 2019 – “a great achievement [which] meant that ... we were able to break even for the first time for a few years”. The budget for 2020 assumed an increase in regular giving of 5% and he therefore asked regular givers to consider increasing their contributions bearing this in mind. 42 pledge cards were returned on or after Thanksgiving Sunday, 24 of them promising an increase in regular giving. This represented an increase of about 4%. The PCC is most grateful for the generosity of our donors.

Michael Scaife, Planned Giving Secretary

CHARITABLE DONATIONS

The church raised money for different charities in various ways and this is summarised below:

Charitable Donations

Friends of Chester Cathedral	£25.00	St P&J Annual donation
Christian Aid	£69.44	Votive Candle Money
St P&J Food Bank	£303.02	continuous donations
The Booth Centre	£544.26	Christmas Appeal
Embrace the Middle East	£710.00	General Appeal
Toilet Twinning	£843.00	General Appeal
The 0161 Community	£856.79	Christmas Appeal
The Boaz Trust	£856.79	Christmas Appeal
The Mother's Union charities	£856.79	Christmas Appeal
Christian Aid	£856.79	Christmas Appeal
East Cheshire Hospice	£856.79	Christmas Appeal
The Children's Society	£856.79	Christmas Appeal
Total	£7,635.46	