

HOLY TRINITY

Potten End

*The Church at the
Heart of the Community*



ANNUAL REPORT

Year ending 31st December 2023

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH OFFICERS

Vicar: *Position vacant*

Churchwardens: Julie Griffiths and Andrew Smith

Deputy Churchwarden: Nigel Chadwick

Deanery Synod Representatives: Julie Griffiths, Jane Drake and Mike Wallis

Team Council Representatives: Julie Griffiths and Andy Smith

Treasurer: Katie Bett

Sacristan: *Position vacant*

Verger: Daniel King Smith

Music: Richard King, Daniel King Smith and Andy Smith

Members of the Parochial Church Council:

the Vicar, Churchwardens, Deputy Churchwardens and Deanery Synod representatives; Simon Barnard; Katie Bett (Treasurer); Ann Charlton; Emma Harris; Esther King-Smith (Electoral Roll officer); Bev Hamilton (Safeguarding officer – co-opted); Hilary Matheson (Secretary); Sara Raybould; Chris Sharpe; Ken Walker; Claire Wallis; Revd John Russell (ex-officio); Revd Stuart Owen (ex-officio).

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation and Ministers Measure 2020) and a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

Holy Trinity is one of five parishes which together constitute the Berkhamsted Team Ministry.

Stewards:

Anna & Simon Barnard, Bett family, Ray Bull, Robin Charlton, Julie Griffiths, Harris family, Carole Harrison, King Smith family, Hilary Matheson, Michael & Barbara Mitchell, Chris Normann, Sara Raybould, Roberts family, Andy Smith.

Vicar's Introduction

Due to us being in Interregnum since September, there is no Vicar's Report this year, however, in this report we are trying to tell the story of what the church has done over the past year, providing a vision of what the church is here to do, how it has been managed and held to account by the PCC.

Financial Review

Total incoming resources from unrestricted funds were £94,197 (2022 £90,011), of which £45,522 (2022 £48,172) were giving and associated gift aid, £3,975 (2022 £6,873) were PCC fees received, £13,325 (2022 £12,728) related to income received from letting the Church Room and Newsletter adverts and donations, and £30,099 (2022 £17,102) related to legacies received. Use of the Church Room continued to increase in 2023 contributing a surplus of revenue over cost of £5,898 (2022 £3,349).

Total planned giving through the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), envelopes and standing orders was £26,445 which was a decrease of 7% from the previous year (£28,513). In addition to this, we also saw a reduction in plate collections and gift aid envelopes of 28% to £6,487 (2022 £9,033).

£78,322 (2022 £79,259) was spent from unrestricted funds, this is an overall reduction of 1%. In 2023 the PCC agreed to return its level of giving to our Outreach aim of 10% from 9%. This was a result of the improved financial position during the year. Our Parish Share contribution, which we continue to pay in full, remains to be a significant cost for Holy Trinity and this year accounted for 65% (2022 64%) of the total expenses relating to the work of the Church.

The net movement in unrestricted funds was an increase of £15,875 (2022 £10,752 increase).

Total incoming resources from designated funds in 2023 was £5,797 (2022 £152,658), which relates to income earned on our investments. We continue to depreciate assets capitalised in 2022 and 2023 that have been funded through our designated funds. Total depreciation in relation to these assets was £7,461 (2022 £5,231).

Overall, the net movement in total funds for the Holy Trinity was an increase of £25,681 (2022 £145,222 increase).

During the year we invested £50,000 from the legacy income received in 2022 into our CBF Investment Funds. Our investments performed well in 2023 and we recognised an unrealised gain of £11,490 (2022 £10,435 unrealised loss).

Katie Bett

Churchwardens' Report

Since Joe left to join the Army in September, as promised we have continued with the help of various visiting clergy, readers, our Verger, Daniel King Smith and Sara Raybould, we have continued his amazing work in driving our church forward.

We would like to thank Bishop Jane and Archdeacon Charles for their support during this interregnum and their quick response in us finding our new Vicar, Revd Ben Brady who will join us in June this year.

This has been a very quick turnaround and we thank God for his wisdom in sending Ben to spiritually lead us in the future.

Following the very important maxim that the church is not the building, we have continued to 'live stream' Services from the Church. Thanks once again to the very generous donation from the Churchwomen's Fellowship, the broadcast quality video and audio equipment continues to provide quality streaming. The numbers of people from far and near, including as far away as Greece and Japan who join us online has been remarkable. The talented people who have worked with us has been wonderful. Every week, we are constantly reminded just how as a Church, we are extremely blessed by the creative talent we have in our Parish.

We would also like to thank those whose very generous legacies over the past year has helped us improve/upgrade our facilities in both the Church and Church Room.

Since the retirement of Frank and Mary Mitchell we are still without a Sacristan (a position that involves coordinating the altar frontals, arranging washing of linen and ordering church requisites) but Daniel King Smith continues to be our Verger, for which we are extremely grateful.

During 2023, Church business continued as usual. This included:

- Churchwarden's routine visual inspection of the church buildings & grounds
- Maintenance of the church logbook and inventory
- Annual maintenance of the boiler and required Gas Certificates
- Annual testing of fire appliances and electrical apparatus
- Maintenance of the Churchyard
- Further development of the Parish Giving Scheme
- Coverage of the role of Sacristan coordinating the altar frontals, arranging washing of linen and ordering church requisites

The Garden of Remembrance is now finished and sadly starting to fill up.

The Church remains open every day for private prayer and remains a place of calm serenity. This is down to many members of the congregation, and we all owe them a huge debt of thanks:

- the Church cleaning team
- the flower arranging team
- all the stewards, readers and intercessors
- the volunteers who help to maintain our Churchyard
- the volunteers who unlock and lock the Church
- all those who freely give of their talents and time to make Holy Trinity the place it is today

We would like to thank Lucy Green who after 11 years stepped down from looking after the bookings for the Church Room and a big thank you to Jean Sudbury for agreeing to take over this valuable and important role. Also, thanks to Sharon Miller, who keeps the Church Room spic and span.

The Newsletter continues to support the community and likewise the community supports the Newsletter, with donations (for which we are most grateful) which helps towards the rising production costs. However, we could do with more advertisers, as quite a few of our long-term advertisers have either retired or closed their businesses. We would also like to say a big thank you to Michael Drake and his distribution team for their excellent work in distributing the Newsletter.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all during the interregnum as without your tremendous support, donations, practical help and good humour, we would have struggled. As we move towards an exciting new era, we count our blessings and rejoice that Ben and his family have been sent to minister to us and we look forward to welcoming them in June.

Julie Griffiths and Andy Smith

Safeguarding Report

Our aim as a PCC is to keep the children and vulnerable adults in our community safe from harm. I hope that people in our village and the community of Holy Trinity, Potten End, feel safe and supported by our church, and although it has been hard during the recent interregnum, not to have a figurehead, we have been able to turn to the Churchwardens and PCC members for advice and support. We also have the security of knowing that there are appropriate policies in place to ensure that we keep all of the congregation and local community safe.

As required to report, Holy Trinity Potten End PCC have complied with their duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding & Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. This refers to our duty to have due regard for the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding

children and vulnerable adults, and that all persons named are familiar with key documents, “Protecting all God’s Children” and “Promoting a Safer Church”.

Over the past year there have been no serious incidents to report to the Charity Commission (all PCC’s are answerable to the Charity Commission).

We continue to receive regular updates from ThirtyOne:Eight (The Churches’ Child Protection Advisory Service) in the form of an electronic newsletter sent to Andy and Bev. This keeps us informed of National developments and gives help and advice to us as a church community. We also have regular Safeguarding Bulletins from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, Jez Hurst, to ensure that we are complying with guidance etc. Jez, and his team, are extremely helpful should we have any queries. There is also an on-line ‘drop in’ for Parish Safeguarding Officers monthly should Bev wish to discuss any issues. Andy and Bev have looked at the Parish Dashboard, which is the online check to ensure that we are compliant with all recommended safeguarding, and this will be updated once the new Vicar is in post.

There is an updated Safeguarding website for the Diocese too which can be found at <https://www.stalbansdiocese.org/safeguarding/>.

All PCC members and those with roles that have direct contact with children have to be DBS checked (to an ‘Enhanced’ level) and from March 2023 – March 2024 13 new DBS checks have been carried out, with 11 being renewals of previous PCC members and two new checks. One of the new checks was an enhanced DBS check for a youth leader to support ‘Rooted’, and the other was a Basic DBS check for our verger, as ThirtyONE:Eight advised that an enhanced check was not necessary for this role. All of these checks are now valid for three years.

In following the requirement for all PCC members to have a greater depth of Safeguarding training, we are pleased to say that PCC members have now completed the required training. All PCC members have now completed Basic Awareness training and Foundations training, with two last members of the PCC finishing this during the last year. This will now be valid for three years.

Eight further members of the PCC have now completed the final training module on Domestic Violence, meaning that we are happy to report that we are compliant with the latest guidance.

As Safeguarding Officer, I am very happy to discuss matters individually with people whether personal or to share concerns about the welfare of others. My details can be found in the Porch and I am happy to meet with individuals to offer support.

Beverley Hamilton

Worship and Prayer

Well what a year!

We have continued to be the beating heart of Holy Trinity for all our parishioners, whether old or young and especially all those who are young at heart! Even in the interregnum we have continued to grow and adapt our Services to make sure they are still attractive to all.

We said a sad farewell to Joe, Jaime, Felicity and Matilda. Joe's last few Services were very well attended.

On to the interregnum.

We have to say a huge thank you to all our visiting clergy and lay preachers who have stood in to help us to keep our worship and prayer going. Special thanks to Father Chris Rogers and Revd Miranda Seldon. And a big shout out to Daniel King-Smith and Sara Raybould who have led our All Age Worship services in the main.

We have continued to live stream our Sunday morning and Evening Services. Our pattern of Services are as follows:-

- 1st Sunday – Family Holy Communion (FHC)
- 2nd Sunday – Holy Communion (Red Book)
- 3rd Sunday – All Age Worship – 3rd Sunday Praise
- 4th Sunday – Holy Communion (Red Book)
- 5th Sunday – Holy Communion (Red Book)

In the evenings we have Book of Common Prayer Evensong Services. We have been able to continue our Celtic Service – thank you to Andy and Sara for leading these.

Rooted has continued with thanks to Emma Harris for organising this.

At the school, we have been blessed with a number of visiting clergy from Berkhamsted leading worship for the children at our Church school.

Claire Wallis has also led the lunchtime Spiritual Reflections Group at the School. The School has attended Services in Church including a special Christmas Service and more of this is expected in the future with our new vicar.

All the key Festival days of the Church calendar have been celebrated with special Services, aimed at children and adults as appropriate, including Lent, Easter, Harvest, and Christmas. Special thanks goes to Richard King for his organisation of the annual Nine Lessons and Carols Service in December and also to Richard Hackworth for our Service of Memories.

Alongside the normal seasonal Services we continued to hold our outdoor Remembrance Service (with the main road outside the church closed to allow for a larger community event) and Community Carols on the Green. We celebrated the King's Coronation with a special Sunday Service and for which there was special music composed by Andy and Daniel.

Our commitment to worship continues to thrive and remain at the heart of our Church. For it is our worship that we are energised, refreshed, fed and commissioned to be able to serve as the body of Christ in the world.

We look forward to giving a huge welcome to our new vicar, Revd Ben Brady and his family in June.

Claire Wallis

Nigh on all our liturgy/readings/hymns for our Sunday morning/special Services can be found regularly uploaded to our website and available through our weekly email. This is no mean feat and so huge thanks must be given to Claire Wallis who works tirelessly to ensure that this happens. Claire also creates the PowerPoint slides for our worship using the projector screen. This is greatly appreciated – thank you so much!

Mission and Discipleship

At Holy Trinity there are different ways in which people can deepen their own faith and also participate in the mission of God's church.

During the interregnum most of our projects had to be put on hold. During Lent our Stations of the Cross series was once again successful, but we were unable to hold our usual Advent course. However, it is great that the bible group has resumed at David and Yvonne Neville-Rolfe's house, as is the monthly prayer meeting in church.

If deepening our faith through study, reflection and fellowship, is a key component of our Christian living, it seems that finding a suitable time as to when this takes place and choosing the 'right' resource to engage with, must be taken into serious consideration going into the future. As is the person(s) able to lead it.

Special mention must be made to our important social media presence, especially through our website and Facebook. This has continued to not just be a good tool to advertise what we do, but also has allowed us to help people in their own faith journeys and relationship with God. Through various posts, prayers, videos, etc. Facebook has without a doubt increased our 'reach' and is a subtle way to grow engagement. We have also been blessed with Daniel King Smith taking on the role of collating and sending out the weekly email. This goes out to not just those in the congregation, but anyone who signs up to receives it. We know it is used by people in following along with the readings and hymns, even if they are at church or not.

As always, our Church Newsletter is a fantastic way for us to keep parishioners informed of the important matters affecting our church and our community and includes articles that help develop people's knowledge and to grow in their faith. A huge thanks to Andy Smith who edits it, and to all who contribute and distribute it around the parish and beyond.

Helping those in need is a demonstration of our faith and it should be noted that while our collections at Holy Trinity are not what they were, we have supported financially various mission and charitable works such as St. Francis Hospice, DENS, the Red Cross and Christian Aid to name but a few.

Regarding our community outreach, Tuesday Gathering continues to be the only stay and play/coffee morning in the village. It demonstrates our mission to serve and shows compassion to all in providing a safe space for anyone to come along. We also were able to register Tuesday Gathering and Tuesday Lunches as a Warm Space over the winter, which while we inundated by volunteers, we weren't by clients attending. Sadly, Tuesday Gathering came to an end in its current format over the Spring – has it just wasn't sustainable. However, it was always just going to be a temporary initiative and had gone on longer than we envisaged.

This brings us full circle to the immense importance of practically serving and responding missionally, in being 'the Church of the Heart of the Community'. Living God's love through generosity, prayer, service and the deepening of faith, can have not just a significant impact on our own lives but also upon others. Let us all play our part as members of the body of the Church.

Julie Griffiths, Andy Smith

Families and Young People at Holy Trinity

Even prior to our interregnum we had begun to see a significant decline in our young people coming to services and the future of Trinity Kids was under review.

Wild Church had also seen a decline in numbers but that may have been as much to do with the weather as the demand from families!

Prior to their departure, Jaime kindly overhauled our activity bags which are held in the Choir vestry and brought out to provide interest for children in services. We are now using sturdy bookbags rather than the handmade drawstring bags we had used previously.

Interestingly we have seen a steady number of families attend services over the last few 6-9 months and this has been a real blessing, we pray as Revd Ben settles in there will be a renewed interest and energy among our families to join us in worship.

One area that was a real success and one that was acknowledged as a particular strength for Holy Trinity by the Diocese, was our Rooted group for ages 9-13 (Yrs 5-9) where these children come together in fellowship, fun and food to explore their faith and relax with like-minded peers in a safe space for them all. Such was the popularity that Joe needed to split the group into two age ranges to cope! In his absence we have worked hard to try to maintain this community of passionate children and their parents/carers.

We have a well-established WhatsApp group with parents regularly committing to support and have been fortunate to secure a temporary Youth Worker, Ben from St Mary's, Northchurch to be able to run this (alongside myself).

Whilst we have not been able to run this every month, our bi-monthly sessions have been well attended using the Church Rooms rather than the Vicarage and the children who are there come with huge energy, humour & passion. Our numbers continue to grow and we look forward to Revd Ben being able to put his own stamp on this special group.

Emma Harris

Potten End Church of England Primary School

Another busy year in the life of the school with lots of learning, laughter and fun along the way.

We saw our old Year 6 cohort happily move up to Secondary in July with a large proportion of them moving to Ashlyns, this year however with Ashlyns' change to their admission criteria, the majority of our children will be continuing their education at JFK Catholic School - a testimony to the appeal of their desire to continue in their journey of faith.

Having had our Ofsted inspection in 2022 we were nervously anticipating our SIAMS inspection (Inspection of Church Schools) and the long-awaited call came in January 2024. As a school and as a Governing Board we had been prepared and ready for this for some time but once again the nerves kicked in for us as we were to be inspected within a new framework.

We were delighted to see that the Inspector was able to observe all of the hard work we have put in to developing our confidence and clarity around being a faith school and for the whole community to be able to understand & live our vision - "Rooted in Faith, we nurture, grow and flourish" - whilst the Inspector gave us some valuable feedback on development points we were reassured that there were no surprises and indeed we were overjoyed to receive J1/Outstanding "The [school] is living up to it's

foundation as a Church School" which is the best possible outcome and a real reflection of the passion & commitment we see from all members of the staff but especially from Denise Kennedy, our Headteacher.

Emma Harris

Pastoral Care

The Pastoral Care Team is a small group of volunteers who visit those from the church and wider community who are struggling with being housebound, sick, bereaved or just need a friendly chat over a cup of tea.

The team has continued its work during a year visiting people where appropriate. However, sending cards and telephone calls have been the most frequent forms of contact.

We send birthday cards to all those we know about in the community who reach 90 and above. We would be grateful if anyone reading this report who knows of someone in this age group whom we might have missed could let us know. Cards are also sent to people who are new to the village as well as those who are unwell or recently bereaved. Again, please let us know if you know of anyone in these categories who should be sent a card.

The Revd Joe took Holy Communion to some of those on our pastoral care list who are housebound as well visiting residents in Annett House and Castle Village.

All those on the pastoral care list were taken a posy on Mothering Sunday and at Christmas time cards were distributed.

All those who had been recently bereaved and had had services at Holy Trinity were sent personal letters of invitation by Revd Joe to a Service of Memories. The Service was well attended and refreshments were provided after the Service.

I would like to thank the six members of the Pastoral Care Team for their valuable contribution to our work in the community. If anyone would like to join the Pastoral Care Team or is aware of someone who might appreciate a visit from a member of the team, please let me know.

Ann Charlton

Social Committee

I would like to thank all members of the Social Committee for their commitment and hard work this year. We have not had as many events this year as we have all been busy with additional duties during the interregnum.

I would like to make mention of all of the willing volunteers that do coffee after church. It has been most heartening to see that we need more coffee every week

and people stay much longer. I think this has become a very important social activity for many, particularly those who live alone. However, we do seem to have large gaps every now and then and occasions where we have little donations.

Major events since our last APCM have been:

2nd June – Patronal event in the Church Room

18th August – Rev Joe’s leaving party

29th October - refreshments for the Service of Memories

12th November - refreshments for after Remembrance Day Service

2nd December - Dance with Village Hall - joint event - **raised £115**

10th December – Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols - refreshments after Service

16th December - Xmas Open Day and Carols on the Green - raised around **£420 and a bucket collection for Dens of £183**

15th March - Quiz and Curry - **raised £400**. Huge thanks to Daniel King Smith for making the curries.

31st March, Easter Sunday - Easter Egg Hunt and Bubbles for the adults

27th April - Bluebell Walk and refreshments - thanks to Ann and Robin Charlton’s and Lucy Green for the amazing Soup

Coming up - 31st May - Chilli and Quiz and 15th June - Licensing of the Revd Ben.

We were hoping to host a Film Night with the Village Hall and perhaps organise some concerts, however life just got too busy... maybe this year?. We are also planning another ‘Would I Lie About Wine To You’ by popular request, a Race Night, and a Film Night.

I want to say all those members of the Social Committee that help keep these events going and at times have to keep me going also. We really need to ask our church community to commit to supporting these events over the next year and let’s show Ben what we can do as a community.

Sara Raybould

Church Women's Fellowship (CWF)

The Churchwomen's Fellowship continue to meet on the fourth Monday in the month from 2.00pm. This provides essential fellowship for those who attend.

Toni Butler/Jane Hazard

Churchyard

Yet again I am pleased to report that, thanks to excellent care from our loyal band of volunteers (and with some welcome newcomers), our churchyard continues to be a peaceful and treasured sanctuary for us all.

This year's cutting and strimming rota has now commenced and will continue through to October when, like last year, it will culminate in a general leaf pick and tidy up in time for Remembrance Sunday. Our thanks also go to the wider community - including the Scouts - for their help with this.

As always, any new volunteers would be welcomed. The graveyard is divided into four sections, and there is a choice of either mowing or strimming (or preferably both!) one or more of these sections at regular intervals throughout the grass growing season. We were lucky during the summer last year, as the lack of rain reduced the need for regular cutting; let's hope it is the same this year!

Our new mower and strimmer which operate with rechargeable batteries rather than petrol, appear to be working well and assist with the CofE commitment to be as 'Green' as possible.

James Bett

Living God, draw us deeper into your love;
Jesus our Lord, send us to care and serve;
Holy Spirit, make us heralds of good news.
Stir us, strengthen us, teach and inspire us to live your love
with generosity and joy, imagination and courage;
for the sake of your world and in the name of Jesus,
Amen.

