



St Mary's Church

At the heart of the community

Annual Review

2022-2023



Vicar's Message

Welcome to our Annual Review of life at Saint Mary's Wendover for 2022-2023. This is the first review since the pandemic which started in March 2020 and there is much to celebrate but we also acknowledge that our church looks a little different and what we're able to offer has changed. I hope the photographs that are included in this can remind you of the great celebrations that we have had over the last year and who has been able to join us.



Thank you is the main word I wish to say; to all of those who helped to make things run smoothly in the life of our church almost all of whom are volunteers. To Pete Dean who was elected as churchwarden in May 2022; to the PCC and those who sit on the various committees we have.

Each Sunday many people are involved in making a service happen; our musicians led by Edward Blakeman, those who get everything ready especially the sacristans, those who welcome, those who clean, those who serve, read and pray, those who arrange the beautiful flowers, those who live stream, those who bell ring and those who prepare refreshments afterwards. An enormous thank you to each one of you doing these roles now and to those who have done so over the last few years and have now stood down. Thank you as well to our ministry team who support and preach and much more!

St Mary's Wendover is a special place of prayer for so many people that live in our village and who visit. So often we hear compliments of 'what a beautiful church St Mary's is', 'how peaceful it is' and 'how it holds so many memories'. Let us thank God for all he has provided in this place.

Sally



Church life

Ministry Team

The ministry team of St Mary's brings together both clergy and laity with varying experiences. We celebrated with Matthew Routledge as he was ordained deacon in July last year and 're-joined' the team as Rev'd Routledge; we also said thank you and goodbye to Sally Prendergast as she finished her curacy and moved onto Monks Risborough. We have



heard many challenging sermons and been led through thought provoking services by our Licensed Lay Ministers David Blackmore and Ian Sansbury, Michelle Fotherby (who has been with us as an ordinand training at Wycliffe College) and Sarah Frost. Rev'd Nadine Rose, our associate priest has a focus of working with children, young people and families and has been able to draw many to have a deepening relationship with God through the work of Sparklers and baptisms. Rev'd Sally Moring, our vicar is also the Area Dean of Wendover giving support and guidance to other parishes in the area.

Weekly Worship

Our regular pattern of Sunday services is now:

8am on the first Sunday of the month
9am Sung Holy Communion
10.45am Sunday worship (2nd & 4th Sundays with Holy Communion)

This pattern is now well established and gives opportunity for different ways of worshipping and including a variety of themes. We have Joint services on special occasions such as marking the death of Queen Elizabeth II and through the summer; an opportunity for the two congregations to come together and get to know each other a little better.



Thursday Morning 10am Service

This service of Holy communion started in September 2021 and has grown in popularity. There is a short sermon during the service and then coffee and tea are served, giving those present an opportunity to share together. During Lent 2023 the 'Come and See' materials were used and much appreciated. In April 2022 Bishop Alan joined us at the 10am service to confirm Zoe Bailey, a regular member of this congregation.



Festivals

We have continued to work with *Churches Together* to offer a wide range of activities through Lent and Holy Week including the beautiful service of Sung Compline, a walk of witness and then reflective service on Good Friday and Easter Day starting with the 6am dawn vigil with the new fire being brought into the church.

At Christmas our *Christmas Carols by Candlelight* was back up to a full church with wonderfully sung beautiful and varied music from our music group. The Covid pandemic brought an end to our huge crib services; instead we held an out door Crib Service with glow sticks, costumes, mince pies and mulled wine. We were excited that over 300 children and their families joined us to hear the Christmas story and sing traditional carols.



Children, Families and Young People's Ministry

Sparklers, our baby and toddler group continues to be really popular in the community. This group meets weekly on a Monday morning during term time and is run by a very dedicated and enthusiastic group of people. Sparklers was established to offer somewhere in the community which did not involve a financial cost to parents, somewhere warm, comfortable and fun for all. The idea was to also ensure parents, babies and children felt at home in St Mary's Church and this seems to be happening if we look at the number of Baptisms that have arisen from this group!



Ignite (2nd and 4th Sundays of the month) is our primary and junior school aged children. Due to lack of volunteers which coincided with a reduced number of children of this age the group for now has suspended. This will be reignited!

Pre-School Children (Sunday morning) We have had and continue to have a growing number of babies and toddlers coming along with their parents on a Sunday morning. This instigated a review of the children's area. This area has been revamped and there are some more ideas being worked on and which will appear in the next few weeks. The children's area is used regularly by parents and toddlers popping into the church during the week.



Schools Work Sally, Remco and I conduct weekly collective worship assemblies at Wendover Junior School. It was wonderful to see the Junior School at Church for their Christmas Services. Sadly, the weather prohibited them coming for their Easter Services, however, Sally and I went to the school instead.

Light Party and Pancake Party Both these events proved popular again. The Pancake numbers were slightly down on the previous year but this we think was due to it being half term and families being away.

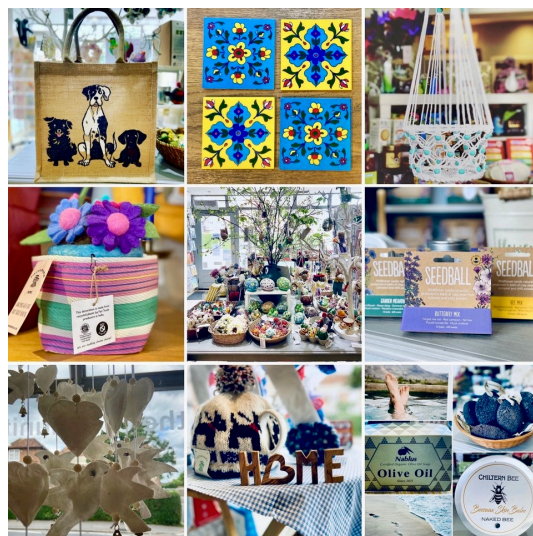
Easter Games and Crafts Morning Parents, grandparents and children, enjoyed making their Easter gardens, decorating biscuits, a scavenger hunt to decorate the cross and listening to the Easter story.

Thank you for all your prayers and practical support. Thank you for welcoming and taking an interest in the children and their families.

Nadine

JUST

The JUST shop has continued to be an important presence on the High Street over the past year maintaining a strong focus on ethically traded goods. As businesses struggle to rally in the aftermath of the pandemic, with many feeling the effects of the current cost of living crisis, sales continue to be lower than pre-pandemic levels, but careful purchasing, maintenance of stable running costs and the dedication of the wonderful team of volunteers who run the shop has meant that once again JUST made an enormous difference to our income as it donated over £15,500 from profits and contributed £9,187 towards running costs.



JUST has suffered with supply difficulties like many other businesses, post Brexit. The collapse of Traidcraft earlier this year was a severe blow and meant our buying team had to work extra hard to identify alternative sources of supply that met with our ethical ethos and hit a sensible price-point. Sales of ECO products remain strong and alongside the staple offerings, the buying team has also introduced some new and unusual ethical gift ranges which have proved popular with customers. The stock is of course shown off to best advantage by the wonderfully creative window displays put together by the team that continue to be the talk of the town! Highlights this year have included magnificent Christmas, Easter and Coronation themed windows. We have also taken part in the annual Fairtrade Fortnight and the Late Night Christmas Shopping Evening where shoppers were welcomed with mulled wine and mince pies.



Having lost some of our long-standing volunteers for various reasons towards the end of last year we have been pleased to welcome some new members to the team and at the beginning of March we all got together for a social which was kindly hosted by Sally O'Halloran. This was a perfect opportunity to thank existing volunteers and to welcome new ones without whose hard work, enthusiasm, energy and commitment there would simply be no JUST.

Julie

Pastoral Care



Since reopening in 2020 we have worked hard to make our church a welcoming place and indeed many have told us they do feel welcome when they go into St Mary's. This can be because they are attending a Sunday service or one of our baptisms, weddings or funerals; others come in because they are walking in the area and are drawn to see the historic building or people come in for quiet prayer often having visited a loved one in the churchyard. You will often find children and parents in the area which has been developed for children and which has lots of activities for them - we want everyone to feel welcome in our church.

We have regular Newcomers teas for those who are new to our church and are grateful to those who host them. These are an opportunity

to meet others who are new to St Mary's and to meet other members of the church and hear something of what goes on!

Our weekly update is the way that lots of information is shared across our church community and we encourage as many as possible to sign up for that and to contribute to the email.

Pastoral visiting by the clergy and many others takes place regularly on behalf of the church. This is often during periods of illness or bereavement - we are grateful that so many take an interest in their neighbours and take time to support them. Our annual memorial service is also a time when those bereaved can come to remember and be supported.



Community In and Out

In the autumn we used a sermon series to explore what it means to be the Body of Christ in this place; considering who is welcome, how we can serve one another and how we play vital roles in being the body and that there is a place for everyone. At St Mary's we have many volunteers who contribute to this life - perhaps you could be one of them?



Celebrations around the Platinum Jubilee in September 2022, Matthew's ordination in July 2022 and other occasions are a great opportunity for people to come together. Our Barn dance in February 2023 was great fun and appreciated by many.

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Throughout the year we collect for the Chiltern Foodbank and have joined together with the rest of the village on the Foodbank collection week coordinated by the Wendover Youth Centre. We have also worked with *Churches Together* and *Wendover Parish Council* to make a Warm Welcome space at the Christian centre; quite a number of the volunteers were from St Mary's. We also liaise with Wendover Dementia Support, another activity in our community where many volunteers are also members of St Mary's. A number of Tea Dances have been held in St Mary's and enjoyed by the many who attended some of whom have dementia. There is now a Dementia trail around our church with music boxes available to create memories of church visits in years gone by.

St Mary's Wendover

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