**St Giles in the Wood**

Annual Report and Financial statements

of the Parochial Church Council

for the year ended 31st December 2022

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Rector: Reverend Gary Owen

Focal Minister: Jennifer Steele

Bankers: Lloyds Bank Plc, Torrington mobile hub or Bideford, Devon

Independent examiner:

David Large

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The Parochial Church Council is an Excepted Charity

**The Parochial Church Council of St Giles in the Wood**

**Annual report**

**For the year ended 31st December 2022**

**Aim and Purposes**

St Giles in the WoodParochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Rev Gary Owen, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the church building and surrounding churchyard.

**Objectives and Activities**

St Gilesis part of the Two Rivers Mission Community, an area of 56 square miles between Barnstaple, Bideford, Torrington and Atherington. The Mission Community aims to build a Christian community in each village, which will worship, pray, grow and reach out with the Gospel.

We recognise that we exist to serve and bless the whole parish and to grow and make visible the kingdom of God. Our building and churchyard are valuable community resources and we value the support of parishioners in maintaining and utilising these for the benefit of the community.

**Achievement and Performance**

At present there are 33 on the electoral roll, 24 who live in the parish - 9 were recently added. The average Sunday attendance was 15. The number of participants was 19. No weddings took place although 3 baptisms were held along with 2 funeral services and 1 burial of ashes. Easter service had 42 attendants and 25 at Christmas Eve/Day services. Christmas Carol service had 70 attendants and the Christingle service/baptism also around 70.

St Giles was delighted to be able to distribute flower posies to most households in the parish on Mothering Sunday in March. We were blessed to have church bells ring out on Easter Sunday having undertaken a Prayer Walk around the village at the beginning of April Easter celebrations. The church looked lovely with its spring flower decorations. In early May, St Giles hosted a Confirmation Service led by Bishop Jackie which saw a number of St Giles congregation make their commitments and brought others from the Mission Community into our Church for cake and fizz!

Healing Services were held in May and October. In early June, a service was held to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee followed by afternoon tea, of course! A Songs of Praise in late August followed by a Pet Service in early September. After the sad death of Queen Elizabeth II the Church opened a book of condolence.

Harvest Service has returned to late September slot and, as always, the church was beautifully decorated and the Torrington Food Bank well provided for with donations of foodstuffs.

Remembrance Service was commemorated both inside church with displays of hand crafted poppies and outside at War Memorial. The first Bereavement Service was held in November remembering those whom we have loved and lost amidst compassion and candlelight. Also in November and still on display is the Exhibition of Biblical illustrations and paintings by Elsie Anna Wood.

A busy Christmas saw a Christingle Service with baptisms, Shoebox Service, Stars of Love and, of course, Carol Service with the Two Rivers Mission Community Choir and mince pie refreshments. It always gives joy to see the church looking so lovely with flowers and baubles. After a long absence, a service was held on both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Coffee, Cake, Company continued on a monthly basis being well received by the community. This has been supplemented by weekly Souper Fridays whereby warm welcoming space is offered along with soup, roll, tea/coffee and company. Commenced in November and will run until late March 2023. As the ‘cost of living’ bites, St Giles has set up a community food pantry to take and donate items on an ‘as needed’ basis.

Fundraising events included Soup & Pudding Evening/Quiz in January, Great Big Afternoon Tea in a sweltering August weekend and Harvest Supper (mostly a pastoral service) in September with little appetite for the Oggle Band ceilidh subsequently cancelled. Of note, St Giles Church has opted to support an international charity known as The Ripple Effect and collection proceeds are offered on a monthly basis, the finances being handled separately from that of St Giles Church.

St Giles is working to fulfil its Mission Community promise in building a ‘Christian community in the village, which will worship, pray, grow and reach out with the Gospel.’ As a result, St Giles has a valued pastoral care team led by Sharon for those in need of private support and friendship. Members of St Giles are very much involved with the Youth Groups for which we give thanks and continue to pray. Links are building with the local Toddler Group coming to special event services at Christmas and Easter. For information about achievements and performance as part of the Two Rivers Mission Community see appendix.

**Deanery Synod**

Rev Tracey Doyle is the rural dean. The synod met three times during the year and discussed Net Zero Carbon/environmental issues, Next Steps for Mission Communities, Festival of Faith Summer 2023, Synods/Rural Ministry led by Archdeacon Verena.

**Church Fabric**

Following Quinquennial Inspection dated Autumn 2020, urgent sections of the Report were addressed to include checking and clearing roof gulleys, securing roofing slates, repairing damage after a storm and general preparation for Winter 2022 along with some re-pointing of North wall. The replacement of interior and exterior light fixtures was undertaken in January 2022, re-glazing of broken windows undertaken in Spring 2022 but due to contractors’ illness and subsequent Church events, the project of interior rendering and painting has been postponed until Summer 2023. Quotes have been obtained for audio/visual equipment.

Annual service of fire extinguishers in Summer, PAT and servicing of the heaters in Autumn 2022. Clock servicing and new lighting fixture for the tower stairs in Winter 2022.

**Financial Review**

The Annual Accounts have been independently examined.

Voluntary receipts from donations from collections at services and from regular planned giving showed an increase over the previous year, in turn allowing a greater sum to be claimed from the Government’s Gift Aid and the Small Donations schemes. The difference between £6506 in 2021 and £8496 in 2022 represents a 33% increase.

Lump sums from the Village Autumn Show committee donation, the return of money from excess reserves accumulated in the Two Rivers Mission Community expenses account and fuel support costs from Exeter Diocese added an unexpected total of £1520 to overall receipts.

There was also generous support from individuals who made donations towards the ongoing and planned building projects. This amounted £2250 for the year.

The combined costs of utilities and running the church totalling £10555 was similar to the total for 2021. An additional £8180 was spent on upkeep of the church building and the restoration and upgrade projects that were completed.

It is noted that the quoted costs for the remedial work to internal rendering on the walls and repainting were included in the 2022 budget and were to be drawn partially or totally from reserve funds. However, the work has been deferred until 2023. Thus, at the end of the year the reserves remain healthy as shown on the balance sheet.

The PCC would like to thank everyone who contributed to church finances. Regular donations by the Parish Giving Scheme or standing order are particularly appreciated as they provide a regular income regardless of whether the building is open for worship and enable the PCC to manage a budget effectively.

**Safeguarding**

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to the House of Bishops’ guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults). The PCC gives positive consideration to the possibility that activities may have safeguarding implications. To this end, the following have undertaken safeguarding training:

Anne Hammerton & Sally Carey – basic C0 training summer 2020

Julia Ward & Jennifer Steele – undertook C1/2 training summer 2020

Steve & Sharon Tavener – basic C0 training early spring 2021, C1 spring 2022

Katherine Luck – basic C0 training summer 2021

Lorraine Huxtable – basic C0 training early spring 2022

Bellringers x 3 – C0 training summer 2020

The safeguarding officer is Mr Derek Birch.

**Structure, Governance and Management**

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The council comprises the incumbent, licensed clergy, churchwardens, readers appointed by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, those elected to the deanery synod and other members elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, by those on the electoral roll.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish and for all financial matters. Two representatives of the PCC were elected by the PCC to serve on the Two Rivers Mission Community Council. The PCC has delegated responsibility for mission community matters to the Joint Council as outlined in the Joint Council constitution.

From 1st January 2022 a new legally constituted Two Rivers Mission Community Joint Council has been in existence. The focal minister of each church and two elected representatives from each PCC will represent each PCC on the council.

**Administrative information**

The church is situated in centre of St Giles village, Torrington, Devon, EX38 7JL. The parish is in the deanery of Torrington, archdeaconry of Barnstaple and Diocese of Exeter. The correspondence address is The Rectory, High Bickington, Umberleigh, EX37 9AY.

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956 and the Church Representation Rules 2020) and a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission. The PCC met January, March (APCM), April, June and September.

PCC members who have served since 1st January 2022 until the date this report was approved were:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The incumbent | Rev Gary Owen | Chair |
| Licensed clergy | Rev Tracey Doyle  Rev Julia Halpin |  |
| Focal minister | Jennifer Steele | |
| Deanery synod rep | Sharon Tavener | |
| Church wardens | Jennifer Steele/Stephen Tavener |  |

Elected Julia Ward

Katherine Luck

Lorraine Huxtable

Christopher Seymour

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Sally Carey (Secretary) | |
|  | Anne Hammerton (Honorary Treasurer) |  |
|  |  |  |

**Approved by the PCC on 26 March 2023 and signed on its behalf by:**

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**Rev Gary Owen Jennifer Steele, Vice chair**

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**Appendix 1**

**Two Rivers Mission Community Annual Report for the year**

**ended 31st December 2022**

2022 has been a year of consolidation and growth. On Sunday 9th January Bishop Jackie led a mission community service in Tawstock to launch our mission action plan, and commission our new joint council and focal ministers. As the year has progressed, we’ve worked hard on building the mission and ministry of the church in each parish, as well as strengthening our collective work as a mission community. The removal of the last covid restrictions and increased confidence of people to mix has helped tremendously.

Sundays are the main focus of our lives together as Christians. Seven churches have met weekly and two others twice per month. Sunday services give us chance to worship together, pray, grow as disciples, and plan outreach. Importantly they are also a time for fellowship as Christians and mutual support. We normally follow the lectionary readings from Advent to Trinity Sunday, to focus on life of Jesus and then take a more flexible approach for the remainder of the year. At the beginning of the year, we preached a series looking at our Mission Community values of love, faith, Word and Spirit, generosity and joy. During the season of Trinity, we preached sermon series on the biblical books of Colossians and Esther, and a short series on Psalms quoted by Jesus. Seven of our churches now hold a monthly family service, including a new café church service in Yarnscombe which makes use of the warmth and facilities of the village hall. Festivals and ‘special’ services are used as an opportunity to invite people to church and agricultural festivals are important in many parishes.

Opportunities for adults to grow as disciples have been provided by homegroups, with 6 running during the year. An Autumn weekend away at Lee Abbey proved inspiring for the 15 adults and 2 children who attended. In the Autumn two church members commenced the Diocesan Foundations in Christian ministry course.

Our commitment to helping children respond to the gospel and grow as disciples as part of the church has been worked out in a number of ways. The out of school club in High Bickington and youth group in Newton Tracey continued and a new youth group and kids club launched in Beaford in May and September respectively. We still have no provision for pre-school children, but our parish nurse is a regular visitor to most local toddler groups and a Christmas visit to church was enjoyed by the toddler group in Beaford and at Christmas and Easter to St Giles. There is scope for more work with this important group, especially as we baptise 10 – 15 babies or young children each year.

We are blessed with a good working relationship with our four local primary schools; with collective worship conducted weekly in High Bickington and approximately twice per half term in the others. Open the Book collective worship runs in High Bickington and has recently restarted in HNTPS. All the schools make use of the clergy and churches for RE lessons when appropriate topics allow.

Evangelism, sharing the good news of Jesus and inviting people to enter a relationship with God through him, remains a priority for us. We encourage church members to share the Gospel with friends and neighbours and to invite them to church services and events where they can learn more and experience Christian community. We ran two Alpha courses in the Autumn, one in Beaford and one in Tawstock, with around a dozen guests in total. We also ran a youth Alpha course during the Autumn in Beaford village hall.

Our churches have continued to help members care for each other, largely through informal relationships and through the pastoral care offered by ministers. Care for the wider community has been expressed through coffee mornings and other opportunities to gather, and increasingly as the cost of living has risen, the provision of free meals, food banks and warm spaces. St Giles church are operating a much-valued pastoral care team, which offers friendship to those who need it.

Julia, our parish nurse, and now deacon, provides more specialist pastoral care, visiting the sick and housebound, accompanying parishioners to medical appointments and offering support on medical issues. She visits toddler groups and offers baby weighing and general advice. Julia has begun to officiate at funerals for those she has been supporting through end of life care.

During the year we conducted 14 baptism, 15 weddings and 34 funerals/burial of ashes across the mission community. 22 weddings are booked so far for 2023. These pastoral offices are a wonderful opportunity to share God’s love and the good news of Jesus with people at both the high and low points of life.

During the year Rob Pearce was appointed as focal minister for Beaford and joined the Leadership team. As the church in Beaford has grown and church members stepped further into ministry, Rev Gary has been able to step back a little. He has begun to work with the parish of Huntshaw to see if progress can be made in re-establishing a regular worshipping community there.

We seek to play an active part in the life of the Diocese and wider church. Rev Tracey has served throughout the year as rural dean. She and Derek Birch have served as co-chairs of deanery synod and other church members have served as deanery synod officers. We have provided a placement for a licenced lay minister trainee, who in turn blessed us with her enthusiasm and ideas.

We are delighted that a new curate has been appointed to join us in July 2023. We failed to appoint a new team vicar during 2022 and this has put a certain amount of pressure on the clergy. We continue to pray that someone will join us in 2023.

All our churches have maintained their common fund payments throughout the year – a wonderful achievement. Our common fund request will increase in 2023 due to our increasing participant numbers. This is only fair, not least because we remain heavily subsidised by the Diocese. Church members giving regularly and generously (ideally by direct debit or the parish giving scheme) helps ensure that we can meet our bills. Churches have worked hard to maintain their buildings and to improve them to better serve the mission of the church and local community.

As a mission community we are blessed with many people who play their part in making the mission and ministry of our parishes possible. We thank our focal ministers, wardens, PCC members and all who contribute their gifts of time, talent and money to our churches. Retired clergy have been invaluable in ensuring that priestly ministry has been available in each parish. Janette has provided administrative support. We are what we are because of you all.

We do not know what will occur during the year ahead, but we look forward to joining in with God as he fulfils his promise to build his church and kingdom. “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

Rev Gary (Rector)