



Report of St Andrew's Parochial Church Council 2022-23

In our first full year as the pattern of church worship assumed a kind of normality we bought a dairy goat, enjoyed a Gin and Sing and became a Warm Space as well as lost our Team Rector.

The Rev'd Simon Pitcher's departure to become the rector of the parish of Lavenham and Preston St Mary's after over 12 years leaves us in a period of inter regnum. Together the eight churches which comprise the Sole Bay Team Ministry have compiled a job specification and advertisement and pray this will be successful in attracting the right candidates for interviews in June.

We are grateful for the service Simon gave to St Andrews and his enthusiasm and support to the church and community. While the recruitment process continues, we are thankful for our assistant and non-stipendiary ministers who ensure continuity of services and visits with enthusiasm and commitment.

Weekly service attendance is between 15-30 people. Very sadly several of the older members on our church electoral role died this year, but we have been pleased to welcome new village residents, as well as holiday makers and our second home owners.

For a relatively small rural church St Andrews offers a diversity of monthly services from a morning Eucharist, sung choral evensong, all-age informal family service preceded by coffee, pastries and a chat, as well as a quiet mid-week Wednesday morning service using the Book of Common Prayer. We like to think there is something for everyone's need and preference.

Congregations are largest at the services marking key dates in the Christian calendar. The Christmas services saw our church literally packed with people. At the Carols by Candlelight Service there was literally no room at the inn and regretfully latecomers had to stand in the porch. We are enormously grateful to Julia Josephs for the amount of time and effort she devotes to this service and also to the choir, drawn from around the village and wider, for leading our singing to create a truly celebratory occasion.

By contrast, two Marys, three donkeys and a colourful tableau of young nativity characters animatedly brought the joy of the birth of a new baby to a packed church at the Crib Service on Christmas Eve.

We have also enjoyed opportunities to join with other churches of the team: Lent courses, lectures and the Lent lunch supporting Ukranian charities were very well attended.

We are very mindful of our role in the community and grateful to the Women's Fellowship group who had the vision to open the church every Wednesday afternoon to offer a Warm Space for anyone. The cakes were plentiful and delicious and the opportunity to meet and chat enthusiastically received. This initiative will now be held on the first Wednesday of the month from 2.30p-4pm and be called the Community Café.

The PCC has almost completed the schedule of works outlined in the latest Quinquennial Review and looking at other areas for maintenance and improvement.

Sadly, many of our Graveyard Angels, the wonder workers who have cleared gravestones, have flown, so if anyone would like to join a small team responsible for tidying this much-loved area please do get in touch.

Our thanks go to the dedicated team of flower arrangers and cleaners who ensure our church always looks so welcoming to visitors and to Mark and Jackie Almond who daily unlock the church. The Visitor's Book speaks to the pleasure many people have of visiting an open church.

Finance: While our planned giving has slightly reduced, donations given via the Good Box, enabling payment by debit or credit card, have gradually filled the gap. The technology can be rather intermittent so please bear with.

Increased utility costs are a concern and we are grateful for the significant substantial gift from the Village Fete to assist in our various annual payments. Kevin Murphy should be commended for his meticulous management of the accounts which will be presented at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting at 12 noon on Sunday 21 May. All are welcome to join us in the church for a pre-meeting glass of wine.

A generous collection at the Harvest Festival Service enabled us to buy a Dairy Goat for an African community and to donate to the Suffolk Food Bank.

Friends of St. Andrews:

We are delighted that Gordon Beard, Clive Brynley-Jones and Nat Le Roux have secured Charity Commission Status for the Friends of St Andrew's Church, which is a stand-alone charity to support the fabric and refurbishment of the church and thank them in advance for their support.