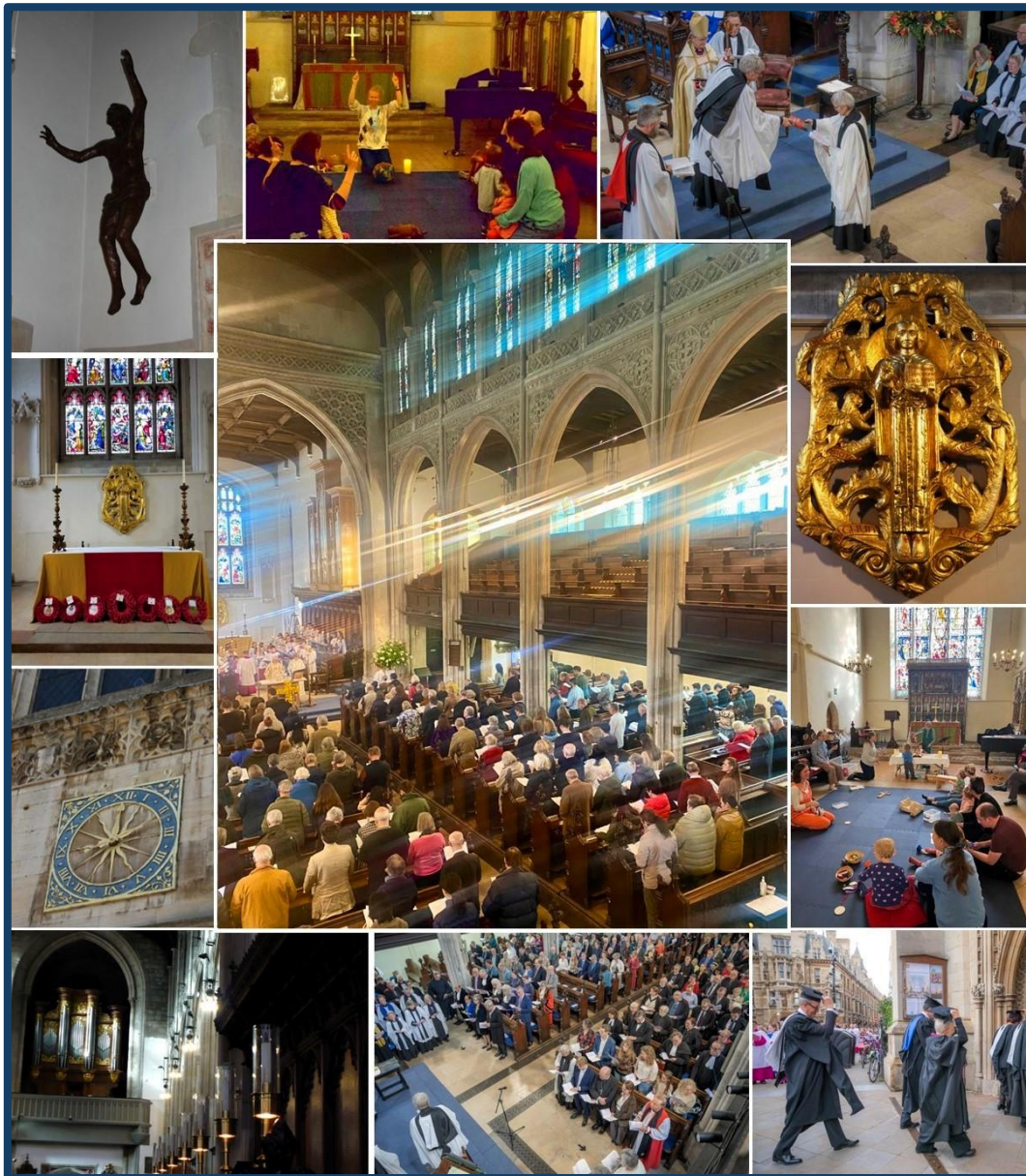




Great St Mary's  
THE UNIVERSITY CHURCH CAMBRIDGE

# GREAT ST MARY'S AND MICHAELHOUSE ANNUAL REVIEW 2023



# ANNUAL REVIEW 2023

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This document provides a full picture of the many ministries of Great St. Mary's, the University Church, and Michaelhouse from January to December 2023.

The PCC met regularly throughout the year with signed Minutes stored both in paper archives and electronically in the church Cloud. Copies are available on request. A summary of discussions is published in eMag following each PCC meeting.



*Marion Cobby, PCC Secretary and Vestry Clerk*

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## INDEX

		<i>page</i>
Introduction	Revd Canon Jutta Brueck	3
Churchwardens	Dr Fiona Cornish and Margaret Johnston	4
Electoral Roll	Joanna Womack	5
Deanery Synod	Andrew Dobson	5
Finance	Graham Day	6
Safeguarding	Dr Julie Crockford	7

As a matter of interest and historic record, reports are also included, in alphabetical order, from:

		<i>page</i>
Bellringers	David Richards	7
Bookstall and Brass Band	Lorna Atwell	8
eMag	Andrew Dobson	8
Environment Group	Andrew Dobson	9
Flowers	Lee Browne	10
Friends of Michaelhouse	Fiona Cornish	10
Front Of Church and Church Operations	Marianne Hirtzel	11
Music:	Alexander Berry	12
Choirs, Academy of Great St Mary's and Friday Lunchtime Concerts		
Park Street Church of England Primary School	Sarah Hawker	14
Pastoral Work	Revd Ceri Payne	15
Sacristan's Report	Catherine Smart	16
Servers	Gillian Crossan	16
Small Groups	Revd Shirley Holder	17
Stewardship:	Lorna Atwell	17
Time and Talents and Parish Giving Scheme		
Wednesdays in Michaelhouse and Welcome Lunches	Lorna Atwell	18
Wider Concerns	Margaret Johnston	18
Youth and Children's Ministry	Dafydd Russell-Jones	20

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## INTRODUCTION



May I commend this annual review to you and express my sincere thanks to everyone who gives so generously of their time and talents in the service of Great St Mary's Church. I was delighted to be appointed Vicar, following the ten months as Interim Priest in Charge, and look back with much gratitude to the amazing Institution Service on 24 September which was a reflection of our wonderful congregations and the diverse constituencies that we are called to serve.

This annual review covers the calendar year 2023, and therefore spans the time I served as Interim until I became Vicar.

As Interim Priest in Charge, I concentrated on providing leadership and stability for the ministry team, lay leadership and staff teams, and continuity in the provision of worship, pastoral care and outreach. We started the year with a very productive PCC away day, to work on the vision and priorities for Great St Mary's in the years ahead, that would inform the parish profile for the recruitment of the new vicar.

The worship and congregational life of the parish has flourished and grown in 2023, and we continue to fulfil our role as University and Civic Church in Cambridge. Highlights include a very special Holy Week, with Bishop Stephen Conway as our preacher, and the Coronation weekend, during which we screened the Coronation service from Westminster Abbey on the Saturday and held a special Service on the Sunday, with many Civic and University representatives in attendance. We were delighted to welcome the new Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, Professor Debbie Prentice, on several occasions, including my institution. As part of our contribution to the civic life of the city and county, we have been hosting British Empire Medal presentations, led by the Lord Lieutenant.

I am extremely grateful to my ministry team colleagues, the staff, the churchwardens' team, other lay leaders and the many faithful and generous volunteers, who support our worship and enable the many varied activities to take place that enrich our lives and build community. At the start of the year, a small PCC working group explored how we may better connect people and build community. As a result, several new groups have started up, including a youth group, and in the autumn, we introduced welcome lunches, something for us to build on in the future.

During the year, we saw major staff changes in the clergy and staff teams. The Revd David Bagnall, having completed his curacy, moved on to take up the post of Associate Rector at St. John's Church, Edinburgh; Revd Shirley Holder completed her curacy and continues as Assistant Priest (retired) with reduced hours, still overseeing the pastoral care of the parish. We were delighted to welcome the Revd Ceri Payne in September, a third-year Assistant Curate seconded from St. John the Evangelist, Cambridge. Her gifts and ministry are greatly valued. The Revd Alison Kennedy, Chaplain at Anglia Ruskin University, became an Associate Priest in October, regularly contributing to our worship and ministry team. I am also grateful to the Revd Andrew Day and Dr David Grumett for their contribution to the life of Great St Mary's as study group leaders and assisting with worship, and to Dafydd Russell-Jones and Rebekah Perez for their excellent work with children and young people.

Following a substantial music review, which recommended making the Director of Music post full-time, we undertook a nationwide search for a new Director of Music. We were delighted to appoint Alex Berry, Director of Music at Bradford Cathedral, who started in September. We are much indebted to our Interim Director of Music, Benedict Todd, Organist and Assistant Director of Music at Great St Mary's since 2016, who provided continuity after Sam Hayes' departure in July 2022 and led the choirs and music with great dedication and care. He was assisted by Mark Zang and Oscar Simms, who both left in the summer. Benedict left us at the beginning of January 2024, to take up the post of Director of Music at All Saints, Stamford. We were sorry to say good-bye to Benedict and his wife, Lucy, who had been part of the Great St Mary's community for over seven years.



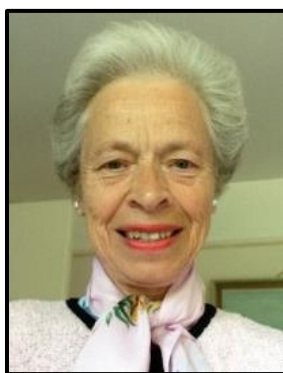
The operations team, too, saw significant change in 2023, which included the departure of our head verger and maintenance manager, Robert Smyth, in August. A restructuring of the operations department led to the promotion of Marianne Hirtzel, our church administrator, to operations manager in September 2023. We are grateful to Richard Summers and all the staff for their sterling work, keeping the church open seven days a week, enabling around 300,000 visitors to visit the church and go up the tower, looking after our buildings and general operations. During the autumn, they did so while also working to replace the head verger role and other administrative roles that had become vacant.

I look forward to serving you as Vicar in the years ahead, as we develop and grow our church's mission and ministry in Cambridge. Everyone who is part of our church has a unique contribution to make. Together, we make up the Body of Christ, blessed, broken and sent to be God's presence in the world. Thank you to everyone who is part of Great St Mary's, for your presence, your prayer and your service enabling us to be this welcoming and vibrant church in the centre of Cambridge. Thanks be to God.

*Reverend Canon Jutta Brueck, Vicar*

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## CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT



2023 has brought welcome leadership and stability to Great St Mary's after a year of change and interim staff in 2022.

Jutta Brueck did a sterling job as Interim Priest in Charge from the end of October 2022. Much work was done by members of the PCC to write a new parish profile, and after a robust interview process, we were delighted that Jutta was appointed as the Vicar of Great St Mary's in June 2023.

Jutta's Induction and Institution Service in September 2023 was a splendid event, attended by crowds of clergy from the diocese, Jutta's family, friends and colleagues, and members of our congregation. We had a lively reception afterwards at St Catharine's. Soon after this, Jutta and her husband, Martin, moved into the new vicarage in Perry Court.

We have been lucky to have Ceri Payne at Great St Mary's as Assistant Curate. With her background as a barrister, Ceri has brought many talents to her role, and contributed fully to the life of the church. Her sermons have been thought-provoking and well researched. We are delighted that she has completed all her training requirements. We give special thanks to Shirley, who throughout the year has given so generously of her time and energy in services and in leading our pastoral ministry. We are also most grateful to Andrew Day and Alison Kennedy for the invaluable leading of services during the year.

On the music front, following Sam Hayes' departure in 2022, a very thorough review and consultation process took place. The PCC decided to make the post of Director of Music a full time one, to expand and develop the music at Great St Mary's. Applications were high calibre and we were delighted that Alex Berry took up the post in September. Music at Great St Mary's is thriving and the quality goes from strength to strength.

Benedict Todd, who had been with us for seven years as Assistant Director of Music, and then for several months as Interim Director of Music, took up a post at All Saints' Church in Stamford early in the New Year 2024. Two parties were arranged to bid Benedict and Lucy (married in August at Great St Mary's) farewell and to express our warmest appreciation for his wonderful years with us, and especially during the time he held the fort as Interim Director of Music.

King Charles's Coronation service in Westminster Abbey on 6 May 2023 was live-streamed on a big screen in Great St Mary's and watched by a large congregation including many visitors, followed by celebratory refreshments. Great St Mary's held a special service on 7 May to mark the Coronation, with the University and the Civic Dignitaries. The church again was packed, and we were delighted that representatives from so many groups were able to attend, followed by a Reception in Michaelhouse.

We are immensely grateful to all the staff who contribute to the running of our busy church, and all the accompanying activities. Our many volunteers are also a vital part of the church, and we appreciate their contributions of time and talents, together with those of the PCC. We are delighted that the congregation continues to grow and appreciate their strong support and financial generosity. Our children's, youth and creche ministry continues to flourish with Dafydd and Rebekah.

We continue to develop our relationship with the University, and in 2023 held the usual five University Sermons with eminent visiting preachers.

Joye Rosenstiel completed her time as Churchwarden after seven years. A party of appreciation was held in May. In December there was a wonderful service of blessing and celebration for the marriage of Joye to Mick Taylor. They now spend much of their time in Greece!

*Dr Fiona Cornish and Margaret Johnston, Churchwardens*

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## ELECTORAL ROLL



The number of electors entered on the Church Electoral Roll for the Parish of St Mary the Great with St Michael, Cambridge, as revised in preparation for the 2024 Annual Meeting, was 235. 22 new electors joined the list during the period ended 28 April 2024 and 29 names were removed from the list, including 5 deceased.

*Joanna Womack, Electoral Roll Officer*

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## DEANERY SYNOD



Three North Cambridge Deanery Meetings were held in 2023. The Great St Mary's elected representatives were Andrew Dobson, Aishwarya Jacob, Thomas Ware (to May 2023), Kirsten Watson (from May 2023).

The March meeting at St. Luke's, Chesterton discussed the Deanery Development Plan. The exercise is about seeing the opportunities that are there, especially with a growing Cambridge population. There were representations from four parishes: Christ the Redeemer, Barnwell; St. George's, Chesterton; St. John's, Orchard Park; and the combined churches at Fen Ditton, Horningsea and Teversham.

The June meeting at Michaelhouse focused on the Living in Love and Faith debate that had taken place at the General Synod. Although Deanery members recognised the importance of speaking to issues of gender,

sexuality and identity, there was considerable differing opinion amongst members with churches unable to ‘walk together’.

The November meeting at Christ the Redeemer, Barnwell continued the discussion of the Deanery Development Plan with reports from: St Andrews Chesterton; St Matthews, Cambridge; the Ascension Parish; and the Good Shepherd. There was a report back from the Diocesan Synod on LLF concerns. *“The Bishop’s Staff and Bishop’s Council are listening carefully to the various arguments made .... as yet quite unclear and undecided, what shape the ‘pastoral reassurance’ will take. It will certainly not be decided by the Diocese of Ely but this Diocese will take its direction from the House of Bishops and the General Synod. The Bishop’s Staff in Ely Diocese are unanimous in respecting and defending freedom of conscience in the contended issues at hand. However, we know we are far from unanimity in the diocese with a wide spectrum of views held concerning the LLF proposals”.*

*Andrew Dobson, North Cambridge Deanery Representative*

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## FINANCE



The income dependent on visitors, which in 2022 had bounced back to pre-pandemic levels, increased by 5%, principally in the shop. Unrestricted pledged giving and donations were encouragingly up by £14,000 but restricted donations were down by a similar amount, which demonstrates the volatile nature of such donations. The cost of running the church increased by over a quarter during the year, principally staff costs and maintenance. There was an unrestricted surplus for the year of £95,069 excluding designated funds, which enabled us to transfer £40,000 to the designated fabric fund. During the year we disposed of one of our investment properties under a compulsory purchase, which generated a surplus of £65,500 over its balance sheet valuation and

we have transferred the proceeds of £350,000 into a designated fund as we have reinvested them into another property since the year end. This sale also enabled us to fully repay the mortgage taken out to fund the re-roofing of the South Aisle. Overall, our free reserves went down by £21,933 leaving a total of £275,891 towards our target free reserves of £425,000.

The PCC agreed to pay the higher amount for Ministry Share requested. Fundraising continued for the South Aisle Roof and we transferred £41,667 from unrestricted funds, an amount equal to the mortgage repayment.

There were no significant expenditures on repairs or improvements during the year, which enabled the designated Fabric Fund to again remain unused. As mentioned in previous years we are aware that over the next 4-5 years we will have to spend several hundred thousand pounds on repairs to the tower and North Aisle roof.

This year’s accounts again include the trading subsidiary set up to run the café in Michaelhouse, which contributed £45,883 to the church.

*Graham Day, Treasurer*

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## SAFEGUARDING



Safeguarding at Great St Mary's is committed to maintaining the highest possible standards in its ministry to children and young people, and vulnerable adults.

During 2023 the Safeguarding team looked at ways to more smoothly enact the necessary admin for children and young persons' activities, moving from a largely paper-based systems to online systems (while maintaining due regard for best practice in data protection, privacy, and record retention). There was an additional focus on making the coverage of volunteers and staff working with Children's Church and Choir activities to have a sustainable base of volunteers and staff on a weekly and long-term basis.

We implemented the roll-out of the new recommendation for all people working with children and young people, and vulnerable adults (not just those in a position of leadership) to undertake the Church of England safeguarding training course on Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse.

Safeguarding also focussed on the widening provision being made for vulnerable adults, ensuring these activities were developed and carried out with due regard to Church of England Safeguarding regulations for the protection of those benefiting from the programmes and those running them.

*Dr Julie Crockford, Safeguarding Officer*

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## BELLRINGERS



The Society of Cambridge Youths, the group responsible for bell ringing at Great St Mary's, has grown in strength in the past year. By most metrics the band continues to flourish with morning service attendance, numbers at practice nights, and the overall standard of ringing being back to or ahead of pre-pandemic levels.

It is particularly pleasing to note that we continue to enjoy having a contingent of younger ringers join us; our focus on those developing ringing skills rapidly is paying dividends and a number of relatively new ringers to Great St Mary's have become Society members. They make a welcome and valued contribution, and many are capable of ringing the most advanced and difficult touches. This is good for Great St

Mary's and healthy for the exercise more broadly.

The number of peals and quarter peals rung has increased (a peal is a continuous piece of ringing lasting more than 3 hours), and the numbers are now similar to pre-pandemic levels. There has been a steady uplift in the number of other ringing events taking place at Great St Mary's, such as training sessions and for special occasions. Great St Mary's is a popular ringing venue with a first-class ring of bells, and its popularity means that demand for ringing slots can outstrip supply.

Looking forward to 2024, there are many events planned to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the Society. The primary objective is to create a lasting memory of the Society's long and distinguished heritage, and a key constituent of this is to strengthen the excellent bond the Society has with the church. The highlight of the year is the weekend of the 21st September when, amongst other festivities, a dinner will take place in the Great Hall at Trinity College; a fitting venue given the enduring links Trinity has with Great St Mary's church through its patronage.

*David Richards, Ringing Master, Society of Cambridge Youths*

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## BOOKSTALL and BRASS BAND

### Bookstall



The main news for 2023 is that we are now a 'two bookcase franchise'. Having discovered an unused bookcase in Michaelhouse, this was filled ready for the summer holidays and did remarkably well, alongside the Narthex bookcase and the outside sales. Over £1,600 was collected during the course of the year, which is used to pay off the loans made towards the south roof repairs and the solar panels (the mortgage is now paid off). Thank you to all who donate books – paperback novels are especially needed – and to those who buy them. It is much appreciated.

### Brass Band

Our small group of polishers come together to make the brasses sparkle before major festivals and special events such as the Vicar's Induction. With five pairs of willing hands it does not take long to do the work and the refreshments afterwards probably last longer than the actual cleaning. It is very satisfying work because you can see the results immediately and hopefully helps to give the church a 'cared for' feel.

*Lorna Atwell*

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### eMAG



The Great St Mary's eMag appeared at the beginning of each month throughout 2023. The number of recipients increased from 429 in January to 455 in December. The publication has become a useful and very necessary method of communicating church news.

As well as the regular calendar of services, concerts, bible studies and breakfasts, readers learnt about the focus of the Wider Concerns group and other fundraising activities. For those who made it to the end of the eMag there was always a monthly Eco Tip. The eMag provided the opportunity to recognise the comings and goings of church personnel in 2023: clergy and organists, churchwardens and vergers.

Recognizing that a few parishioners may prefer a printed copy, there are always some copies available by the West Door.

I would like to offer my thanks to all those who contribute items in a timely manner and make my work much easier. A particular thank you to Lynne Broughton for her excellent series of articles on features to be found in Great St Mary's; to Marianne Hirtzel and the office staff; and especially to Lorna Atwell for all her support and proofreading.

*Andrew Dobson (Editor)*



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## ENVIRONMENT GROUP



The Great St Mary's Environment Group (EG) continues its aim to educate the congregation and wider community about environmental concerns and the need to live more sustainable lives.

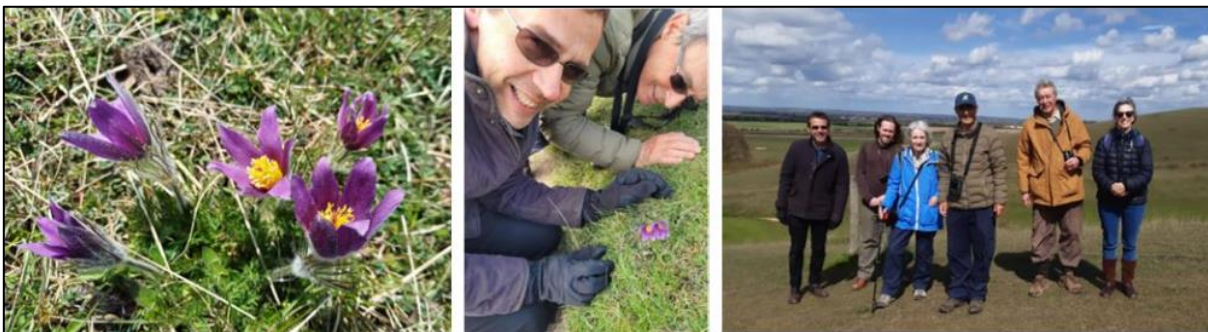
Hannah Harrison completed her time in June on the Equipping Christian Leadership in an Age of Science (ECLAS) project, building excellent resources and website. We are delighted that a new Education programme will start in January 2024 building on these resources together with those of the earlier heritage project to develop a programme on Christian heritage and Sustainability – being good stewards of God's creation. The programme will have wide outreach to schools and the community,

with an Education Officer part-funded by the Church Schools of Cambridge.

The EG welcomed several new members including the recently appointed Education and Heritage Officer Natalie Lealand. She continues the work started by Hannah Harrison.

Monthly Eco Tips were included in the eMag, with widely ranging advice from making homes more energy-efficient, to sustainable gardening, and methods to support wildlife. A fundraising campaign raised sufficient money to sponsor the building of four latrines in Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal and Tanzania, through the Toilet Twinning charity.

In February and March, we encouraged church members to think about ways in which they can look after our planet and act in a socially responsible way. The EG publicised the Fair Trade Fortnight, Plant a Flower Day, the Great British Spring Clean, World Water Day and Earth Hour. In April we held a fieldtrip open to all church members to a nature reserve at Therfield Heath, Hertfordshire to see Pasque Flowers.



In June, The EG organised a poster exhibition in Michaelhouse in conjunction with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). Extracts were reproduced from a recently published report: *A World Richer in Nature* - where nature and people can thrive. The exhibition was seen by hundreds of members of the public while visiting the café. Also in June, the EG publicised 'The Great Big Green Week', the UK's biggest annual call for action on climate change and nature, organised by the Climate Coalition of which A Rocha UK (Eco Church) is a member.

Several members of the EG attended an Environmental Open Synod in September at the Over Conference and Community Centre. Members of the Nordkirche Group (from Germany) shared some of their impressive work on Climate Change and how it is part of their faith commitment.

My grateful thanks to those who have served on the Environment Group.

*Andrew Dobson, Chair*

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## FLOWERS



It has been a very good year for the flower committee in that we have been able to recruit some new energetic members who are proving to be both talented and enthusiastic. We are now able to run a healthy weekly rota which has spread the responsibility and hopefully means the flowers will look fresh all week.

Each member supplies fresh foliage each week and fresh seasonal flowers from the market. Great St Mary's has an account with Peter Graves of Girton who have the stall in the market. They have been very helpful and we can also easily order in advance for special occasions like weddings or university events etc.

We are always eager to welcome any new members who think they might enjoy flower arranging. Great St Mary's is a wonderful venue to show flowers and foliage at their best. We on the committee all feel privileged to have the opportunity to practise our skills and help to enhance the glories of the magical interior of Great St Mary's.

*Lee Browne*

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## FRIENDS OF MICHAELHOUSE



Since I last reported, Michaelhouse has been thriving. The café remains a very popular meeting place, for regulars and visitors. We are delighted that all the clergy and Great St Mary's team have continued their use of the Michaelhouse chancel, chapel and meeting rooms for a wide variety of activities, including Christmas card sales, Children's Church on Sunday mornings, the Ark service on Tuesdays, University Sermon receptions, men's Communion and breakfast on Saturdays and Lent talks. Sunday morning coffee after the Eucharist Service at Great St Mary's has overflowed into the main café area to accommodate increased numbers. The Friends have continued to put on a good variety of concerts in aid of the Michaelhouse Singers. These take place throughout the year at 1pm on the third Saturday of the month, apart from a short break in August. The musicians perform for free. Donations received at

these concerts in 2023 amounted to just under £1,850, all of which was used to help cover the cost of the Singers' rehearsals and piano tuning. We are most grateful to Marianne Hirtzel for organising these concerts.

The Friends continued to provide some additional support for the Michaelhouse Singers, amounting to £730 over the year. The Singers continue to be very grateful to the Friends for enabling their rehearsals and concerts to go ahead, and to Great St Mary's for providing space for these without charge. At the end of the year responsibility for the Singers was transferred from Arts & Minds to Great St Mary's, under the Director of Music, Alex Berry, and Alison Daniels was appointed as their new conductor.

During the year the Trustees agreed to pay for a new oak leaflet and brochure holder, which was commissioned from Rowan Humberstone, a local arts charity for adults with learning disabilities. This was completed after the end of the year and is now in place in the foyer of St. Michael's Church.

Because of our reduced spending over the past few years we still have a significant sum in our Reserves, invested in a CAF savings account, ready to spend as soon as Michaelhouse needs us, or new projects are developed.

*Fiona Cornish, Chair of The Friends of Michaelhouse Ltd*

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## FRONT OF CHURCH AND CHURCH OPERATIONS



2023 was a busy year for the church, with some special events in addition to Easter, Remembrance and Christmas.

In May we had the weekend of events to mark the Coronation – the big screen and tea in church on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> and the service to mark the Coronation on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup>, followed by a reception in Michaelhouse. All events went very well, despite rain on the Saturday, and with the input of a lot of hard work from the Front of Church team.

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September saw the service for the Institution of the Vicar, again with much organisation and input from the team.

We have also been able to provide a venue for several memorial services and funerals, as well as a few weddings.

In August we said farewell to Robert Smyth, after 8 years as Buildings Manager, and in December to Callum Brittain, a long-serving member of the shop team. Marianne Hirtzel started the role as Church Operations Manager in September, and we recruited for various Front of Church roles towards the end of the year.

The shop and tower have had record-breaking results and thanks are due to Lorraine and the team whose hard work is reflected in this achievement. They continue to make these successful and a pleasant experience for visitors, even when there are crowds in the church at peak times. They also keep the church looking tidy and clean, support events and provide a warm welcome for visitors who come to look around or to sit quietly.

Michaelhouse café continues to be popular with visitors and regulars alike and we continue to use the community spaces in support of our mission and ministry.

There has been much work behind the scenes to keep the infrastructure of our buildings going.

Thank you to everyone in the team for another year of hard work.

*Marianne Hirtzel, Church Operations Manager*

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## MUSIC



2023 was a successful year for music at Great St Mary's. For the first two terms of the year, the music was led by an interim team of musicians following Sam Hayes's departure. Benedict Todd (Assistant Director of Music) stepped up to become Interim Director of Music. He was supported by Mark Zang (Interim Assistant Director of Music) and Oscar Simms (Music Department Administrator).

In addition to preparing music to support the services during Lent, Holy Week and Easter, the choir sang at a service for Ukraine in February, an evensong for the Cambridge Festival in March, and a festal service of choral mattins to celebrate the King's coronation in May.

During the February half-term holiday, the choir went on its first tour since the virus pandemic. A group of 27 children/young people and 13 adults sang a concert at St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury, and a weekend of services at Chester Cathedral. The tour was a great success from a musical, social and organizational perspective, and a testament to the hard work of Benedict Todd and Katharine Rosenstiel (Tour Manager).

In the spring of 2023, the PCC undertook a consultation with the congregation, choir members and families on the appointment of a new Director of Music. The decision was taken to advertise for a full-time appointment, and interviews were held in May. Alexander Berry was appointed as the new Director of Music, having worked as Organist and Director of Music at Bradford Cathedral since 2017.

At the end of the summer term, Mark Zang finished as Interim ADoM, and took up a similar post at Croydon Minster. Oscar Simms left to pursue a freelance career in singing and community music-making, centred in London. The choir bade farewell to a number of longstanding youth choir members who reached the end of school, and a number of choristers and a member of the back row left at the end of the academical year.

Alexander Berry began as Director of Music in September 2023. The highlights of the Michaelmas term included the installation of the Revd Canon Jutta Brueck as Vicar in September, a liturgical performance of Fauré's Requiem with student instrumentalists, and the annual Carols by Candlelight services in December.

It was announced at the end of 2023 that Benedict Todd was to leave Great St Mary's at Epiphany 2024, to take up the position of Director of Music at All Saints' Church, Stamford, Lincolnshire.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to the music at Great St Mary's. We are very fortunate to have a large group of committed and loyal volunteers who make beautiful music as part of worship, and a congregation that values music so much. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to get to know you during my first few months.

*Alexander Berry, Director of Music*



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## Academy of Great St. Mary's Orchestra



2023 was a good year for the orchestra with large appreciative audiences, which also helped the finances! We draw players from across Cambridge and beyond who love the ambience of rehearsing and performing in Great St. Mary's.

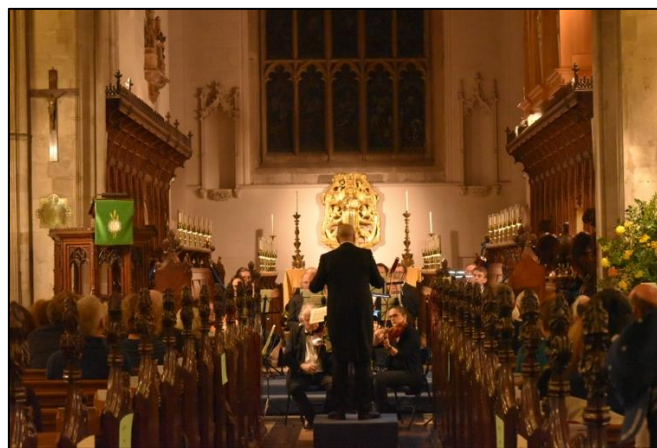
Concerts have included Tchaikovsky's *Symphony no. 5*, Elgar's *Wand of Youth*, Pounds' *A Northern Picture*, Bruckner's *Symphony No. 4*, Dvorak's *Slavonic Dances*, and Beethoven's *Symphony no. 5*.

The concert in December jointly with the choirs is always a highlight of the year. The orchestra welcomed Alex Berry as new Director of Music to conduct choral works by Handel from *Messiah*. The premiere of my 4<sup>th</sup> symphony was given and the concert concluded with the *Nutcracker Suite* by Tchaikovsky, which is great fun for a Christmas concert.

The Academy orchestra as usual accompanied the Stapleford Choral Society for four concerts which included the Vivaldi *Gloria*, Faure *Requiem*, Pounds' *London Cantata* and excerpts from Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*. A joint concert was held at St. Philip's Church, performing the Vivaldi *Gloria*, as part of the Romsey Music Project concert series and our outreach.

In May, we again welcomed 45 children and their parents from Classical Conversations Cambridge led by Rebekah Perez for a 'young person's guide to the orchestra'. They sat in rapt attention and then disappeared into the orchestra, particularly to see the largest instruments and many wanting to play the 'cello which was almost twice their size! We look forward to their annual time with us.

*Adam Pounds – Conductor, Academy of Great St. Mary's Orchestra*



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## Friday Lunchtime Concerts

Over the course of 2023, twenty-six Friday Lunchtime Concerts took place (with a break during Advent, Lent and August) and over £3,000 was raised towards our music outreach work with local school children and the Michaelhouse Singers. We have some regular performers and then introduce others where space permits. We

have enjoyed performances from Bermuda, Spain and the United States and have been entertained by Girton College and The Schola Cantorum of King's College School for the first time.

The audience consists of some regulars and many visitors and it is good to welcome all of them.

Having set the series up, and managed it for almost four years, I have prepared the programme through to the summer of 2024 but have now handed over responsibility to the Music Department as they have a full-time Director of Music and an Administrator. They are far better qualified to expand the music network than I am and I know that it will be in good hands. This does not mean that I shan't be happy to occasionally step in when there is nobody else around though and I do thoroughly recommend the concerts: 1-2pm on most Fridays.

*Lorna Atwell*

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## **PARK STREET CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**



We have had a very successful year at Park Street, with many interesting and exciting opportunities for the children to develop their learning. If you would like to see any photographs of all we have been doing, please have a look on the 'news' page of our website:

<https://parkstreet.cambs.sch.uk/online-news/>

We have developed a regular pattern of church services, at Great St Mary's for Harvest (October), Key Stage Two Christingle (December), and Leavers (July), with an Easter Service, this year including a communion service, at St Clement's. Thank you so much to all the staff at both churches, especially Andrew Day, for their support with this. Andrew has this year set up a rota of staff from Great St Mary's to lead Collective Worship. Thank you to all those who have volunteered for this. We are hoping to expand it further in the coming year.

The children have been able to experience a wide variety of trips and cultural experiences over this year, both local and further away. The older children were fortunate to experience a residential trip to London, staying on HMS Belfast for two nights and visiting the Imperial War Museum and St Paul's Cathedral, as well as taking part in activities on the ship. This was a marvellous opportunity for them, and greatly enhanced their learning about World War Two. This term they will visit Wicken Fen and Grafham Water, as well as taking part in a Mayan outdoor cooking day!

We have been taking part in a 'Commando Joe' programme this year, funded by CSOC, where an ex-service person comes to school one day per week, leading activities to develop the children's 'RESPECT' characteristics. These are resilience, empathy, self-awareness, positivity, excellence, communication and teamwork – all very important aspects of learning. If you are interested, you can find out more on their website here: <https://commandojoes.co.uk/> The children have really enjoyed and really benefitted from the programme. We are hoping next year to continue this, and to also develop our curriculum to include more outdoor learning.

Mr Sharpe, the Eagle Class teacher (Year 5 and 6) directed a hugely successful production of 'The Tempest' which was performed on Jesus Green, with a thunderstorm threatening around us! Fortunately the rain held off, and all was well. This year, we are planning 'Twelfth Night', to take place at 6.30pm on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July, again weather permitting!

Our Nativity play took place in December, and the younger children had their chance to shine. As usual, this was a triumph!

Our PTA have continued to be amazingly supportive – they are providing chromebooks for the Class Two children, and new furniture for Class Three. They have organized discos, Summer and Christmas Fairs, and tomorrow we have a quiz evening in the Maypole!

Kings College School have also continued to support us this year, by enabling our Year 5 and 6 class to be taught Physical Education in their amazing sports hall, by one of their specialist teachers. They have learned so much and developed their skills in many areas of physical education. We also managed a football fixture again – our A team lost but the B team won this time.

I would also mention that our governors continue to be extremely supportive; Lorna Atwell, Andrew Day and I have just written our Parish School Covenant Plan together, which will be available for you to see soon. We are hoping to develop our relationship further, so that the children have more regular opportunities to visit the church, and continue to develop their spirituality through our wider curriculum, not just in RE lessons.

We are always happy to welcome volunteers in school, (subject to checks and references) if anybody would like to come; a particular thank you to Paula Corby who has been a very popular and regular addition to our school community!

*Sarah Hawker, Headteacher*

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## **PASTORAL WORK**



Pastoral care at Great St Mary's happens in many different ways and in a variety of settings, including the conversations over coffee after services on Sundays and at the Ark, at the men's and women's breakfasts that happen on Saturday mornings, and at choir rehearsals. Thinking about what others need and about how we can meet their needs is all part of how we love our neighbours as ourselves.

The particular responsibility of the Great St Mary's Pastoral Care Group is to co-ordinate the pastoral care provided at Great St Mary's to the housebound and the unwell. It is a very small group comprising Ruth Bridgen, Gordon Campbell, David Grumett, Margaret Johnston, Andrew Watson, Shirley Holder and Ceri Payne. The group aims to ensure that people in the Great St Mary's community receive the practical and spiritual help that they need. This involves keeping in touch with people when they become housebound, and being ready to respond when members of the community of Great St Mary's (or their families) fall ill, or are injured, or are otherwise in need of healthcare.

Like most of us, the older people in our community who are unable to come to church still value company and conversation and appreciate knowing that other people have not forgotten them. We would love to be able to increase the size of the Pastoral Care Group so that the older housebound people in our community could be visited more frequently.

Sometimes people are discouraged from the idea of getting involved in pastoral care by the thought of having to undertake the safeguarding training required to maintain a safe environment. The training, which can easily be done online either at home or in the vestry in Great St Mary's, generally involves becoming more aware of what people might need and anticipating situations and thinking ahead about the common-sense response to them. It is not especially onerous. If you think that you would like to get involved with this very rewarding ministry, do contact Shirley Holder.

*Revd Ceri Payne, Assistant Curate*

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## SACRISTAN'S REPORT



As I have stated in previous Annual Reports, the work of the Sacristan should not be noticed. The aim is to prepare for worship and to aid worship but not distract from it. So, if it is noticed, it has, to some extent failed. It is in that spirit that the work has been done in this last year.

I would like to thank Ruth Bridgen and the vergers for their help and Gillian Crossan, Head Server for her co-operation.

*Catherine Smart, Sacristan*

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## SERVERS



As Head Server, I would like to thank all the Servers in the team, for their dedication and endless patience as we adapted to new procedures during the past year. Sincere thank yous also to Catherine, our Sacristan, and Philip, who guide us and help us to get it right!

Serving at Great St Mary's is a great privilege, as well as a great responsibility, and Servers are a central part of the smooth running of services. I am sure that all the current Serving Team feel this, and it has been a pleasure to be part of the team, and to have made new friends in the process. We have had a couple of social events this year which have, I hope, bonded us even more, and I thank Great St Mary's for the trip to the Arts Cinema to see a screening from Covent Garden, which so many of us enjoyed, and even introduced a few people to the experience of ballet!

Our Servers are always a mixture of volunteers from the congregation, together with the Ordinands who join us every year as part of their training. We are so fortunate to have these dedicated people with us, and it is always sad when they leave to move on to roles within the Church of England.

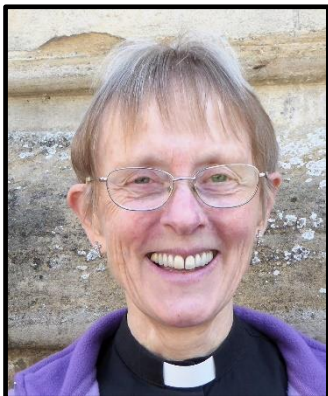
My main message therefore, is to thank everyone for their amazing work and co-operation, and to wish the Ordinands, who are leaving us, well in their future ministries. It will be a while before we know how many new Ordinands join us in October, and we are also short of volunteers from the congregation, so please could anyone who would like to know about Serving at Great St Mary's contact me (or of course the Clergy), and I'd be delighted to have a chat and explain what is involved in terms of training, and time/availability. We have been particularly short of junior members in this past year, so if any young people in Church (aged over 11) would be interested in becoming Servers, please don't hesitate to get in touch through your parents, on [gillcrossan@hotmail.com](mailto:gillcrossan@hotmail.com).

*Gillian Crossan, Head Server*



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## SMALL GROUPS



A number of small groups meet during the week, which enhance our life in the body of Christ in a variety of ways. Monthly on Saturdays there are groups of men and women meeting for Communion, prayer, friendship, and support over breakfast in Michaelhouse. A meditation prayer group meets on Mondays in Michaelhouse and four Bible study groups meet each week, in homes and online, usually studying the Bible, but supplementing this with seasonal material. No previous experience of the Bible is necessary, and any comments or questions are encouraged, as well as just being there and listening.

During the past year two interest groups have begun, 'All Things Bright and Beautiful', the Great St Mary's gardening group, and 'Something Understood', the Great St Mary's poetry group. The gardening group meet for events and garden tours, enjoying informal chat, whilst celebrating the beauty of God's creation. 'Something Understood' meets monthly, with 8-10 regular participants focussing on a topic suitable for the liturgical or natural season and discussing how faith grows through the use of the poems shared.

Groups are open to everyone and are a special way of forming friendships and building up our common life. We encourage more people to join in and be enriched thereby.

*Revd Shirley Holder*

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## STEWARDSHIP

### Time and Talents



There has not been a major stewardship campaign during the course of this year, but the yellow Time and Talent forms are still about and if you would like to make an offer to participate in any of our activities or wish to find out more about what is going on, do please ask for a form and all offers and requests will be forwarded to the appropriate organisers. This year we have gained two servers, a few musicians, a live-streamer and every single offer of help is appreciated. We do give the forms out at the Welcome Lunches and they give a good idea of what opportunities are available for all ages at Great St Mary's.

### Parish Giving Scheme

The Diocese of Ely has subscribed all of its parishes to the Parish Giving Scheme which enables us to have all regular giving collated, with Gift Aid administration covered, and forwarded to the church's bank account once a month. Newcomers are especially invited to use this method for their donations but others, who may have standing orders already in place or who have never got round to organizing themselves (!), are very welcome to transfer or to join. It makes life much easier for the Finance Manager and it is just a case of filling in a simple form which I can let you have.

For further information about the Time and Talents forms or the Parish Giving Scheme, feel free to email [lorna\\_atwell@hotmail.com](mailto:lorna_atwell@hotmail.com)

*Lorna Atwell*

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## WEDNESDAYS IN MICHAELHOUSE and WELCOME LUNCHESES

### Wednesdays in Michaelhouse

'First Wednesday Lunches' comprise a simple 'soup, fruit and home-made cake' meal with the opportunity to sit and chat. It follows on from the 12.30pm midweek service in Great St Mary's, but attendance at that is not obligatory! It has been good to welcome long-standing members of the congregation alongside visitors and newcomers and affords an opportunity to relax and relate in a way that is not so easy on a Sunday morning. I am very grateful to the Café for providing the soup and hot drinks and to the half dozen volunteers who kindly bake the cakes and biscuits for pudding. If you are in town on a first Wednesday, do come and join us.

### Welcome Lunches

A new initiative in 2023 has been the inauguration of Welcome Lunches on occasional Sundays. This is an opportunity to invite newcomers to meet a member of the clergy and other recent arrivals and to find out what goes on at Great St Mary's. Invitations are given out and numbers have ranged between half a dozen and fourteen (upstairs in the Montefiore Room). Hopefully it helps to make people feel welcome and gives them an opportunity to ask questions and to recognize some faces the next time that they come to church.

*Lorna Atwell*

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## WIDER CONCERNS COMMITTEE



**Theme: *Bringing new life and hope***

**Thank you tremendously for the record collections in 2023 for Wider Concerns projects and special appeals which totalled £19,172.**

Last year, a main concern has been with the devastating war in Ukraine and the flood last June. As well as funds, we have sent medical and other supplies to Ukraine including books for children as many libraries and schools have been destroyed. We have been supporting a number of families in Cambridge including arranging donated bikes (a number from the congregation). Making them mobile transforms their lives here and is in collaboration with the Cambridge Refugee Resettlement Campaign. We have held three tea parties and thus established many contacts. We have much fun with the children playing games whilst the mothers enjoy relaxing and love spending the whole afternoon with us. We give small presents to the children on leaving and flowers to the mothers who are carrying such a heavy load, establishing their families in Cambridge alongside the anxiety for the safety of their husbands and relatives back in Ukraine. Our thoughts and prayers are very much with those affected by the conflict.

Funds were raised for the Turkey/Syrian Earthquake. We have supported the work of theological colleges in Kagera and Kigali, training pastors for leadership in very poor communities.

The main collections at Easter and Harvest were for Christian Blind Mission (CBM) doing inspirational work in very poor countries (and which was price-matched by the UK Government), and for Kids for Kids North Darfur, again working with some of the poorest communities in the world, giving new life and hope.

We continue to support those working with the homeless in Cambridge, particularly through Cambridge Aid who provide emergency grants to help people avoid becoming destitute, Women's Aid, Whitworth House and Emmaus. We provided suppers for homeless guests at Crossways in January and February 2023 in collaboration with Corpus, Caius and St. Catharine's colleges. The staff at Crossways do remarkable work and, with

professional advisers to help people to sort out their problems, obtain jobs and their own accommodation. On Poverty and Homelessness Sundays, Andrew Connell and the Revd Danny Driver, respectively, preached.

Christmas cards were sold by Lorna Atwell in aid of the remarkable school in Zimbabwe we support, for their nutritious life-saving e-pap porridge urgently needed in drought conditions and raised £169 (+ donations early in 2024). Lorna also arranged our support for **Christian Aid** week particularly promoting fund-raising coffee/tea parties which totalled £627 and were very enjoyable occasions.

Thank you to everyone for the magnificent support for the Cambridge Food Bank throughout the year, including a seed sale arranged by the Great St Mary's garden club, and lots of Christmas treats which the Children's Church brought.

A list of funds raised and allocations made is given below.

*Margaret Johnston, Chair, Wider Concerns Committee*

### **Wider Concerns Committee allocations 2023**

£255	Advent Carols for Cambridge Street Aid (+£253 for Great St Mary's) (2022)
£620	Princess Basma Centre, Jerusalem – Crib service (2022)
£1,500	Ukraine via UNHCR (+£1,488 for Great St Mary's) Christmas carols (2022)
£2,180	WCC Christmas envelopes for Whitworth House Cambridge and Partners for Change, Ethiopia
£411	Church Action on Poverty (+£50 donated direct on-line to them)
£1,381	Turkey/Syria Earthquake via DEC
£820	Special Ukraine service for Cambridge4Ukraine and Cambridge Refugee Resettlement Campaign
£2,690	Easter – Christian Blind Mission (matched by the Government) and Cambridge Women's Aid
£627	Christian Aid collection
£2,000	Peter-tide - Kagera Christian Theological College in Tanzania
£2,000	Ukraine flood disaster via Red Cross – coffee mornings
£700	Ukraine children via UNICEF – piano recital by Pavlo Petrychenko
£100	Foodbank – seed sale – Great St Mary's gardening club
£912	Harvest Foodbank cheques - + much produce
£1,630	Harvest envelopes – Kids for Kids N. Darfur and Emmaus UK
£800	Kigali Diocesan Mission Fund (Canon Jutta's induction service)
£546	Remembrance Sunday, Royal British Legion

**£19,172 Total**



Christian Blind Mission – giving sight to a blind child



At the Theological College in Kagera

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## YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



2023 saw a range of new services for children and young people including *Creche* run by Rebekah alongside Children's Church, *Ignite Youth Group* for 14-18 year olds, *Chat-Play-Sing* toddler group on Thursday mornings since February and *Craft Breakfast* that took place termly.

With Children's Church and creche running together, we have seen consistent attendance of 18 children from a core group of families every Sunday morning. Children from these families have had the opportunity to serve in all-age services that took place at least once a term.

The formation of Ignite Youth Group for 14-18 year olds was exciting as this had not been offered on a regular basis in our church. We had to end this group near the start of the new academic year as all the young people were busy studying for A levels and GCSE's. Attempts were made to collaborate with youth leaders from St Bene't's Church to strengthen numbers and create a larger critical mass, however this was not as fruitful as we hoped for. Plans were made to start a new group for 10-16 year olds in 2024.

The Ark weekly eucharist continued to flourish in 2023, thanks to the help of Ruth Bridgen, Paula Corby and Jo Hall and one of the highlights was the end of year celebration in Juliet Jackson's delightful garden where we enjoyed a picnic and songs in the heights of summer. Thanks to the support of Ruth, I was able to start Chat-Play-Sing in February on Thursday mornings a time when energy prices were extremely expensive. Several of the families who came to this group also started coming to the Ark and other church events that I organised such as the Pancake Party and decorating the Easter Garden.

With the help of Margaret Johnston, I was able to create an office space in Michaelhouse for the Children's and Youth Minister and the new Education Officer, Natalie Lealand, who started in Jan 2024. Margaret also helped me to provide two family activity mornings during the summer holidays as part of summer at the museums, one of which involved blasting 'rockets' up into the nave as part of a science experiment. I also attempted plan a picnic and games event but unfortunately this had to be cancelled last minute due to bizarre and hazardous wind and rain.

Year 2 pupils from Heritage School visited to learn about our worshipping community and ask the question: 'What is in a Church?' At Christmas, year 2 pupils from Ridgefield primary school enjoyed dressing up and acting out the Christmas story to learn about what Christians believe about Jesus at Christmas. Colin the Camel was able to attract over 550 people to the crib service once again and this service helped to raise a significant amount of money for Zimbabwe school charity which was fantastic.

*Dafydd Russell-Jones, Youth and Children Minister*