



Holy Trinity
Combe Down



St Andrew's
Community Church

Annual Report of Holy Trinity and St Andrew's Churches Combe Down for the year to April 2023

This has been a very encouraging year. We continue to have many people joining the church. Regularly we have Sundays when HTCD and StACC are near capacity. The various ministries of the church are a regular source of joy as they move forward, and God uses them. I write this as we have just had the coronation celebrations with over 300 people coming to the street party at Holy Trinity. In December we started raising money to purchase the St Andrews Community Centre, amid a cost of living and heating crisis, and yet raised the money needed by the end of the month! The many new staff appointments have been a great blessing as they each bring their own strengths to the roles they fill. Combe Down Primary received an excellent SIAMS report (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) with the ministry of the church being often cited. We have had a well-attended group for newcomers, an increase in many midweek groups, and many other encouragements.

CLERGY REPORTS:

Tim Lewis – Associate Minister writes:

What a fantastic year this has been! I continue to be very grateful to God for his kindness towards us as a church. Some highlights for me include:

Growth. There is something very exciting about seeing people flooding into church for the 10:45 at around 10:46. We have seen numerical growth. We have also seen growth in our roots – my perception has been a genuine spiritual hunger for meaty teaching.

Equipping. I LOVED sharing a couple of evenings looking at Apologetics with around 50 in person and dozens more catching up online as we engaged some of the most difficult questions our faith wrestles with. It felt good to air those questions and many of us felt a little braver to share with our friends and family.

Pastoral Evangelism. I have been reminded of the power that showing love for others can lend to our witness. I have seen one or two folks come to faith or return to church through funeral ministry; loads of opportunities in preparing couples for marriage; and our seniors team continue to show great love to those on the fringes of church due to age-related difficulties.

Blessing. Whether grant applications, or the miraculously quick purchase of the Community Centre, God seems to be blessing when we ask Him for stuff. As the Psalmist says: 'Lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing' (Ps.34:10) – may we continue to seek the Lord!

Malc Morgan – Senior Associate Minister for St Andrews Community Church writes:

It has been a year of growth at St Andrews. Weekly attendance on Sundays has averaged over 55 adults. The development of the worship teams and the continued service and steadfastness of volunteers to help the marginalized in our community have both been significant factors in this growth. The building is being used daily either by church initiatives such as Toddlers groups; Kids Matter; Focus lunches; Youth work, Bible studies and our Sunday gatherings or by outside agencies booking the venue. Outreaches at Easter and Christmas have been very successful again and a new initiative to reach out to every home in the Foxhill estate started in September and will continue in 2023. The children's work on Sunday was re-started and has helped young families feel more a part of the church.

Katy Partridge – Curate writes:

I am around two years into my curacy and feel so grateful to have been placed in such a vibrant, loving church. My particular areas of ministry (in addition to regular leading, preaching and pastoral ministry) are:

18-30s: Sunday lunch and Bible study as well as 1-1 discipleship. This is by nature a transient group, but with a committed core.

Youth Homegroup: Exciting to see these young people going deeper in their faith.

Prayer ministry at HTCD: This is slowly becoming more established with a growing team.

Pioneer Ministry:

Pilates and Poetry: This has become a committed, caring community of church and non-church goers. The group have raised over £400 for Hope into Action.

Her Audio Bible UK: this is the first NIV audio Bible voiced fully by women from across the UK from a wide range of backgrounds.

Part time MA in Theology Ministry and Mission with CMS, with a particular focus on Pioneer Ministry.

Chris Absolon – Curate writes:

During the past year the main focus of my ministry has been at St James the Great in South Stoke. I do help to lead the 9 o'clock service at Holy Trinity, and preach occasionally at HTCD, but many of you will wonder where I am most of the time!

I usually go to St James on the first and third Sundays of the month, and also go to preach at St Michael's in Monkton Combe on the first Sunday. I have really appreciated getting to know both people in the St James congregation and the people in the village who do not regularly attend church. A recent highlight has been leading a small group in the Packhorse pub. We are doing a course that is an overview of the whole Bible in 8 weeks and have been made very welcome by the pub team.

I will complete my Curacy this year, and will remain serving in our Benefice, particularly at St James, and I look forward very much to what the Lord has in store!

MINISTRY REPORTS

Worship:

It has been great to move back to live worship after Covid. It seems like a distant memory needing to not sing, use masks, or pre-record each worship set. It is a great joy to hear the congregation giving God His proper place in how we worship each week. We have had some great new additions to the worship team this year, but we always welcome new people. We especially need more help with sound and visuals. All in all, this has been an encouraging year as the worship ministry continues to develop. We are hugely thankful to our worship leaders Dan and Lydia Collison.

Pastoral and Families Minister – Sharon Blair writes:

Newcomers: It's lovely to see the way that our churches have grown over the past year with people of all ages arriving and finding a home in our church families. Praise the Lord.

Tuesday Toddlers: We are still the 'best toddler group in the area' according to the mums. We now have a very strong team on the ground with the toddlers and mums and also great cooks and sous chefs who prepare the meal!

Family Support Crew: this is still small but runs well. We have Glam-ma's and Parent Buddy's who give practical and spiritual help to families both inside and outside the church. Please let me know of any needs or if you'd like to join.

Cake Ministry: I now have a great team of 4-6 people making cakes once a month to bless families both from our churches and in our area.

Parenting Courses – Lizzie Guillebaud has run 3 Kids Matter parenting courses since last year which has reached parents having a hard time and who live in the Foxhill area. She's had good support from a lovely team but please pray for mums to attend regularly. We have also had three Parenting Teenagers evenings which have brought together parents of teenagers to share their ups and downs.

Church Family Events (Street food after church, Family Holiday Clubs, The Big Welcome service) These are really important for us to get to know the whole church family of all generations AND to invite others to hear the good news of Jesus. Let's make these a priority. The Combe Down Platinum Jubilee

Celebration was a massive success joining with the village to produce an event to celebrate the Queen and bring us all together – thank you to the many, many of you who helped make it so.

Pastoral Support Many of you take great care of church family members but we are not perfect. Please let me know of people in church or in our neighborhood who are struggling, and whose needs you are unable to meet yourself.

Children's Minister – Claire Morrish writes:

We continue to be blessed with an ever-growing number of children. We now average 37 under 11's on Sundays at 10.45am! Our children's ministry team and physical space is not growing at quite the same rate and some of our rooms are beginning to feel squashed. My constant prayer is more help please, do email children@htcd.church if you could serve in anyway with our children's ministry.

Our ministry to Combe Down School was recognised in the recent SIAMS inspection report for which the school was awarded Excellent. Our Open the Book collective worship was mentioned as a highlight of the school's week! Mulberry Park School joined us for the Christmas Experience this year too.

Thankful Thursday continues to be a joyful highlight of the week. Thanks to the new regular Thankful team that was able to continue when I had covid. The Wonderful Family Fridays last Summer were great fun, as was the Light Party, The Nativity Trail. The Easter Adventure this year was in the city in collaboration with 4 other churches. All these events were more intergenerational than pre-covid which has made for a true sense of church family fellowship.

I have started my MA in Theology, Mission and Ministry for Children's Specialists and it is a great source of inspiration.

Youth Minister – Stuart McLachlan, writes:

We now have a regular once-a-month outreach to the young people of Foxhill called Explore, which has been successful so far. We also have older youth home group sessions once a month. Attendance for Foxhill Youth Group has been steady and has grown in numbers. Holy Trinity youth has been steady in church on Sundays and on Friday evenings. We also have four young people helping to lead at StACC.

Senior's Minister (role vacant):

Our Seniors' Minister stepped down in August, but the seniors' work was overseen by Tim Lewis and the Seniors' Pastoral Care Team, who kept in touch with our senior members. The Thursday traditional service at Holy Trinity continues to flourish, with increasing numbers and a regular communion service on the first Thursday of the month. A Dementia friendly carol service was held in December in conjunction with the Peggy Dodd centre.

Small Group Coordinators – Mark and Rebecca Hannan write:

Home Groups remain a hugely important part of Church family life, serving to provide a place for worship, pastoral care, prayer support, spiritual strengthening, and growth. There are 250 church members in 19 Groups. In the last twice yearly HG Leaders meeting it was identified that all the Groups are contending with challenges such as dementia, loneliness, chronic illness, strained family dynamics. Battles and blessings go side by side in each group.

The Blairs' Newcomers Group provided a good introduction to people fresh to the church who were thinking about joining a Home Group. All those who decided to go forward to a Group have been placed. It is noteworthy that there remain a few longer-term members of HTCD who have not yet made such a commitment.

To be honest, what is missing is spiritually and emotionally mature church family members of all ages willing to step up to lead or support leadership of Home Groups, as well as a preparedness by church members to move into Groups where not everyone is the same age or stage of life as they are. It would be good to see Home Groups being more representative of 'family life' with older members able to pray, support and share life experience with younger members and couples and younger folk being able to share the task of leadership and bible study preparation as well as support in some physical areas of need for older folk. This is our prayer.

Women's Ministry – Penny Williams writes:

Our focus is to make know the Name of Jesus and encourage women to have a deeper walk with Him. We've had a good year with new members of the church developing relationships and many visitors coming to the events. As always this is made possible by the support of my fantastic team.

Clothes Sale: Very well attended and a great buzz. Lots of positive feedback. Also, a great way to recycle and raise funds for our Mission Partners.

Evening Supper: Mammoth 4 course supper with Jo talking about her new book Place at the Table. The church was packed with a fab atmosphere.

Christmas Craft Sale: Great outreach event with many stallholders and punters from the local community.

Grow for Good: Breakfast at StACC with Suzanne Addicott from Root Connections. Inspirational speaker.

Ammerdown Weekend: will appear in next year's report.

Delighted to have some new members on the planning team including Lucia Baggott who will help foster closer links with StACC. Also going to meet the younger women to make sure we are meeting their needs.

Men's Ministry – Jon Williams writes:

We are now up and running again with a range of well-publicized activities and events. It was good to have nearly 30 guys on the Lee Abbey weekend in September and the Curry Night was well attended. This year there are a few more “active” options which we hope have the potential to attract more from outside the church. However, the standard wine tasting, BBQ, etc. still remain. Still looking at how to involve, excite and motivate the under 40's!! John Moore and I are always open to ideas.

Mother's Union – Elizabeth Perrott, writes:

Transformation now! Was the theme for Mother's Union 2022 and as ever it was a joy to share it together with prayer, worship and fellowship. However, it was a real joy to be able to share it with return to our monthly meetings with good speakers. Much of our focus in 2022 was raising awareness of violence and abuse against women and girls both here in the UK and our projects in Africa.

Another important focus was a care for the environment and the dangers inherent in climate change, again both in the UK, and especially Africa where droughts and floods are having dire effects on income and family life.

During covid we worked much more closely with likeminded charities such as Women's Refuge and foodbank, supporting with funds and goods. We also expanded our Student Cookery book to make it more family friendly and it is hoped we can put it into boxes for families. The student version is now available online as well as a hard copy.

We continue our support for Period Poverty and Three Ways School and are hoping to develop our recent involvement in supporting child carers in our schools by helping to provide funds for trips and treats. We look forward to continuing our work to support and uphold families, and as ever prayer will be the heartbeat of all our activities.

PRAYER

We place a high value on Prayer in both the churches in our parish, for personal, local and international needs. The prayer groups are:

Morning Prayer on zoom on Monday and Friday morning at 8:50 which covers personal needs, Church matters and events, and local and international topics, along with a lot of laughter, before we start praying! About 16 devices join which is about 18 people.

Thursday 7AM Prayer Group lifts the needs of our mission partners both in the UK and abroad.
Prayer at St Andrews for the needs of the church, held fortnightly with 8-10 attendees.

Worship and Prayer for Revival held at St Andrew's in Lent about 50 attendees. Prayer for the Persecuted Church which is a zoom meeting held monthly. Prayer for Revival – a monthly prayer meeting held on zoom with about 10 attendees.

Prayer for work issues held in person.

There are other prayer meetings supporting particular ministries and initiatives and the situation is a dynamic one.

REPORTS FROM THE PCC SUBCOMMITTEES

Chair of the Staffing Committee – Keith Reynolds writes:

During the year since the last APCM in May 2022 we have seen various staff movements including the following:-

After four years of faithful service Polly Andrews stepped down from her role as Seniors Minister. We are hugely grateful for Polly's commitment, energy and enthusiasm in this role and the impact she has had on a great many lives both within and outside the church in this vital ministry. As this position became vacant Tim Lewis has covered and coordinated the Seniors Ministry. Thank you, Tim., We are pleased and grateful that Sharon Blair has recently accepted an extension to her role as Families Minister to now be Associate Minister for Pastoral Care and Families. In this capacity Sharon will incorporate much of the coordinating of team members with the pastoral care needs of our congregations.

Anna Evans stepped down from her role as Finance Officer and we thank her for commitment and service to our church. After a considerable search to recruit, we are delighted to confirm that Jacqui Bates is returning to this role (Jacqui had previously provided maternity leave cover for this position). Jacqui's planned commencement date is in May. Welcome back Jacqui! Whilst this role has been vacant others have stepped up to cover and we particularly thank Katie and John Talbot and Liz Hume for the significant additional load they have carried during this time.

Kate Winchester stepped down from her role as St Andrew's Centre Manager and we thank Kate for her diligent service and contributions. Peter Watt was subsequently appointed to this position and is of great support to Malcolm and the team at St Andrews.

After eight years in the role Amanda Wetton retired as Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Centre Manager in February, coinciding with the decision of the PCC to discontinue the provision of a CAP ministry in its current form. We are hugely grateful for Amanda's dedication to this critical role and ministry over the years and the great number of people that she and the team have supported and impacted.

Sophie Teasdale was appointed Communications Officer on a short-term contract in the year. We thank Sophie for the support she has provided.

During the year we have been able to appoint an intern, Anthony Walton. We are grateful for the assistance he is able to provide to the team, particularly working with Children and youth and in the area of administration.

As most will be aware, Shawn Swinney took a sabbatical during the summer of last year and was blessed with much nourishment and rejuvenation during this time. Shawn and the PCC are indebted to Tim Lewis for stepping up and ably covering as acting Vicar through this period.

We are currently recruiting for a new position of Worship and Discipleship Leader.

In addition to those listed above the Staffing Committee would like to recognise and thank each of the following staff members who so tirelessly support our churches at Holy Trinity and St Andrew's:-

- Liz Hume, Operations Manager
- Jane Bradby, Church Administrator
- Chris Stone, Caretaker
- Claire Morrish, Children's Minister
- Stuart McLachlan, Youth Minister
- Dan & Lydia Collison, Worship Leaders
- Chris Absolon, Curate
- Katy Partridge, Curate
- Malcolm Morgan, Senior Associate Minister – St Andrew's
- Tim Lewis, Senior Associate Minister for Growth
- and, steering the ship, our Vicar, Shawn Swinney

A heart-felt thanks to each of you for your commitment and dedication to our church family. I'd like to conclude with a big shout out for our incredible team of volunteers! We are blessed to be members of thriving churches, and in no small measure is this due to the many servant-hearted volunteers who work, often behind the scenes, to support the various ministries and effective operation of the church. The Staffing Committee extends a huge thank you to each of you for all you do.

Chair of the Buildings Committee – Howard Jones writes:

The building committee have recently met and reviewed all property maintenance items, a great deal has been completed in the last 12 months but of note was the work to ensure St Andrews Community Centre was ready for use in January. Special thanks to Chris Stone, David Le Tall, Peter Cooke and the contractors who helped to meet this ambitious target.

Our church architect has commenced the 2023 Quinquennial Inspection of Holy Trinity which is required to meet Diocesan standards. There is a persistent minor leak in the corner of the south aisle which requires further investigation, it is possible that this section of roofing may need to be replaced and a budget has been allocated for this purpose. Otherwise, Holy Trinity is in good condition.

We also appointed our church architect to prepare sketch plans of possible internal re-ordering and external additions to illustrate how we could best meet the needs of a growing congregation. Our vision is to create some additional space for the Sunday services and new rooms for a lively creche which could also be used as a church lounge and kitchen to replace the small beverage point. It is very early stages in this project with much to do.

Safeguarding – Viv Quick, Safeguarding Officer for HT writes:

As in the same vein as last year's report, we in line with House of bishops we are taking the issue of Safeguarding very seriously here at HT

So how are we doing? Everyone who is in any position of helping, children, young people, seniors and the vulnerable have a current DBS in place. I must thank Jane Bradby for the sterling work she does in keeping us up to date with the Diocesan requirements of 3 yearly updates for people who are in a position where a DBS is required. Please when you are asked to renew do it ASAP.

We continue to have discussions about how to keep some of our most vulnerable seniors safe, with Polly standing aside Tim is now helping with the senior's team who are as ever alert and pro-active. We wish again to thank Polly for all the work she has done to help keep our seniors safe.

I think that we must never forget the impact that the hidden Sexual abuse has had on the survivors and realise anew that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The diocese would like as many of the congregation do the basic level safeguarding training, so please everyone think about it and we will be giving out further information in the next few weeks

Cath Winchcombe has now left StACC. so I have stood in to cover, but now Mark Baggot is taking over and we will continue to liaise about the relevant issues.

Thankfully we haven't had any huge concerns in either church, but we have had issues that we have needed to discuss to keep people safe. If any issues or concerns do arise, they are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

My contact details are on the poster so please contact me if any concerns at all. Thank you.

MISSION

Missions Team Leaders – William Challis (International) and Sue Budd (UK) write:

HTCD allocates 10% of its annual budget for 'mission' work outside the parish. This is managed by the International Mission Team (IMT) and the UK Mission Team (UKMT), who divide this figure 2:1.

William writes: We thank God for the generosity of our Church, which enables us to support Mission Partners in Romania, Albania, Kenya, Zambia and Tanzania. In 2022 Tim & Christian West and their family have become full Mission Partners, and we have been able to offer extra gifts to our MPs at Christmas time and, following the death of Christian West's brother-in law, Craig, to contribute to the cost of her flight to New Zealand to be with her sister for the funeral. We had a very enjoyable Mission Weekend in November, and our thanks go to our preachers and visitors: Steve & Katie Machell, Gerard & Sarah Charles, & especially Pastor Otto & Pastor Attila from Romania. Thanks to everyone who helped, not least with the Mission Café. We are delighted also that some of our young people are planning a trip to Albania this summer and are glad that we have been able to contribute to the costs of the travel.

Sue writes: We are grateful for the financial support for our 6 local, 2 other missions and a short term in the UK. We were so pleased to take your gifts to our partners in Bradford at the Anchor Project and the Charles's, both working with refugees and to 2nd year Alice Pymmer at the Oakes before she goes on to university. We attended fundraising events with the Life Project and I joined several people who abseiled from Bath Abbey in support of Genesis Trust. We are pleased that Peggy Dodd has received an award for its work with families coping with Dementia and that the weekly service has restarted. The family Mission Café event introduced Good News for Everyone, Bath City Pastors, Bath Youth for Christ and Bridgemoor and was much enjoyed. We catered for over 80 at St Andrew's and thank everyone for their support. Prayer updates continue through the Monthly Monday Zoom Meeting for all partners, the quarterly Prayer Diary and the weekly notice sheet. Copies of newsletters are at the back of the church. My thanks to Jane Butterworth and Sue Crookes for their support.

ST ANDREW'S COMMUNITY CHURCH

Peter Watt – Centre Manager writes:

It is such fun working with Malc and the incredible team of volunteers that come through the doors. The number of groups using both the Church and the Community Centre continues to grow each month, which is very exciting. So many people enter through the doors each week and we pray that they are touched by Jesus in a special way. What a privilege!

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH DECORATION

Flower Arranging team – Julie McPhee writes:

During the past year our talented team of ladies have faithfully provided beautiful flower arrangements. In addition, our combined team have been involved with decorating Holy Trinity for Christmas, Easter, Harvest Festival combined with Wild about Bath and the special displays for the late Queen's Jubilee in June, wonderful! It has been lovely to welcome some new members to the team but there is always room for more so if you are interested, please do get in touch.

We are very grateful to the Lord for all he has and is doing amongst us and give him all the glory! We are also thankful to our staff team and everyone who plays their part in our church families and to Shawn for his leadership. We look forward to the next season in our church life with anticipation.

Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Romans 12:10-12

Anthony Walton
April 2023