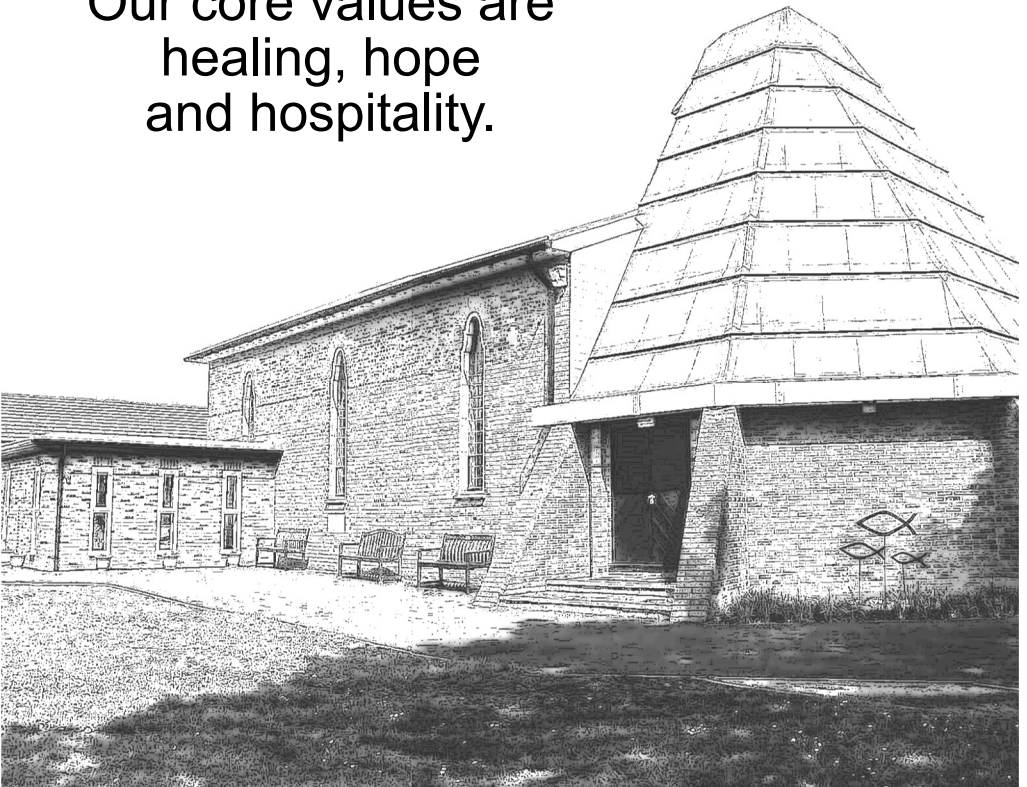


The Parish of Tilehurst St Catherine and Calcot St Birinus 2023 - a review

Our Parish purpose is
to worship God and show that
Jesus makes a difference
in reaching, serving and caring.

Our core values are
healing, hope
and hospitality.



This booklet contains information and a review of church activities in the parish during 2023.

It is in two parts:

- Pages 3 to 25
Reports on the running of St Catherine's
beginning with the Churchwardens report.
- pages 26 to 34
Reports on activities managed by St Catherine's

The annual meeting
is on Sunday 28th April
and follows the 10.00 am Service.

The meeting consists of two parts:

- The Annual Parish Meeting to elect
Churchwardens to which anyone living in the
parish is entitled to attend and vote.
- The APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting)
to conduct other parish business
only those on the Church electoral roll may vote.

Reports on the Running of St Catherine's

<u>Report</u>	<u>Page number</u>
Vicar	4
Churchwardens	5
Buildings and Equipment	8
Café Siena	10
Centre Manager	11
Ecumenical	11
Electoral roll	13
Finance Action group	13
GDPR	14
Grounds	14
Leaders & Preachers Action group	16
Missions giving	18
Music group & singers	19
PCC	20
Parish administrator	21
Prayer Ministry	22
RG31	9
Reading Deanery Synod	23
Safeguarding	25

Vicar

Just a short Vicar's Report for this year because I only arrived at St Catherine's at the very end of November 2023.

I would like to say "thank you" again to all of you for a warm welcome to St Catherine's. Thank you for all the time and energy that went into arranging and hosting my Induction service on November 29th.

Paul and I, and all of our friends who attended the service could clearly see the welcome and hospitality which St Catherine's is so good at giving.

It was also good to see how hard people from the congregation had worked during the vacancy so the ministry and outreach here at St Catherine's could continue. An amazing job and great team work by so many.

Christmas was a busy time here. It was encouraging to see the church being used by the local scouts and Birch Copse School for their carol/nativity services as well as all the Christmas services here. It is good to continue building up links with others in the community.

There were good numbers at all the Christmas services, especially at the Carols Under the Oak Tree and the Carol Service in church. I was encouraged to see churches working together with the carols at Tilehurst Triangle.



We look forward during 2024 to continue building links with and reaching out to people in our parish and community.

We are seeing signs of God at work and are excited to see where He will be leading us this year. We are praying especially that more younger families and children will come to be a part of the congregation at St Catherine's

Rev Jackie Fountain

Jackie

Churchwardens

Phew!! With God's help we got through 2023 together!

2023 has been for us a year to remember – for many reasons! Gill Rowell when she left us on 30th November 2022 gave us the words from Philippians 4: *Keep on doing the things that you have learnt and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.* And as we have journeyed through 2023 and all it has brought us, that has been what all of us have sought to do.

WORKING TOWARDS A FUTURE WITH A VICAR

A dominant activity throughout 2023 was the search to identify God's chosen person for our vacant post of vicar. God has been faithful, and our vacancy ended just 2 days short of a year, when Jackie Fountain was instituted and inducted as our vicar on 28th November 2023!

The diocesan process formed the backbone of the activities undertaken. On February 23rd, the PCC appointed the churchwardens as the two parish representatives to participate in the formal activities to appoint the new vicar. The hard graft of producing the profile, a document for potential candidates to understand what the parish is looking for as it seeks to serve God, its community and church, started with a listening exercise to identify who we at St Catherine's are and the direction we are headed.

A big thank you to all those who participated in this listening and ensured that we had a good representation of questionnaire responses – over 50 church members and over 20 from church groups, church/hall hirers and shops and schools in the area.

The responses were analysed at a parish meeting facilitated by Rhodri Bowen, the Diocesan Development Advisor in March, and this led to the production of the profile – with some very significant effort! – which the PCC and the diocese approved on 6th May.

The post was then advertised following which the diocese and the two St Catherine's PCC representatives agreed to take forward one candidate, Jackie Fountain, to interview on 13th July.

The day went smoothly thanks to many of you helping in organising and participating in the interview activities (Bible study with 9 church members; talk including a group of Birch Copse Primary School pupils; parish tour and interview). The thrilling result was the appointment of Jackie as our new vicar.

Jackie completed her curacy at St Nicholas, Newbury, before she and her husband, Paul, moved into the vicarage a few weeks ahead of the induction and institution service. And what a service!

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

A huge amount of planning and preparation was required by so many as we hosted over 150 people at this service taken by the Bishop Olivia, Rev Liz Jackson and Rev Liz Ratcliffe – those involved included car park attendants, Bishop's Chaplain, those preparing and serving refreshments, readers, those providing tech support, furniture movers, presenters of the symbols and much more besides!

Be warned – it could just happen that we have similar numbers at our regular services! And so, we look forward in anticipation and excitement as to where God will now take us.

WORSHIP & OUR WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY

We have continued to enjoy worshipping together as one fellowship at 10.00am each Sunday, following the monthly pattern of 4 different styled services, guided by the Leaders and Preachers Action Group, with online streaming available for those who cannot join us in person.

We are aware that the service pattern is in need of review when Jackie Fountain can work together with us on this. Wednesday morning communion has continued with a committed group. Throughout the year we have been blessed with the support of local clergy providing us with such a rich variety of teaching.

Our Easter and Christmas services followed a similar pattern to previous

years, including a Family Activity Service on Good Friday and Carols Under the Oak Tree at Christmas – both attracting visitors into a more familiar space than our usual services.

Tots Praise has continued throughout the year on a weekly term time basis as well as the monthly York House communion. The Lifegroups, following their 2022 reorganisation, have continued to provide a much-valued opportunity for church members to share fellowship and to grow in faith.

We miss Beryl Nunn, who died in July, just before her 92nd birthday – a long standing, faithful member of the St Birinus and St Catherine's fellowship. And on a happier note, we welcomed the opportunity to celebrate Andrea Ragoobar and Matti Swallow's wedding in October!

CENTRE

We continue to be incredibly blessed by our centre, including the hall and café, which enable us to show God's love, share hospitality and make friendships with those both in and outside our worshipping community. All made possible by our hard-working volunteer team, centre manager, café manager and bookings clerk.

We said goodbye to Karen Patrick our café manager for over six years as she left us in July, wishing her all the best for the future. Due to the sterling efforts of the volunteers, the café remained open, albeit with a sometimes-reduced menu.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

A new manager, Karen Fountaine, joined us in September, but unfortunately due to personal circumstances, she left us in early 2024. Despite all these challenges, the volunteers continue to provide a friendly service!

This time last year we were concerned about the potential adverse financial impact of the loss of the pre-school. God has been faithful, and He has helped us to achieve sufficient financial funds through the year, as our financial reports evidence.

ACTIVITIES

The activity groups organised by the church fellowship are a very important part of who we are. They are too numerous to list here and are detailed elsewhere in the APCM reports. Note that the Lifegroups, following their 2022 reorganisation, have continued to provide a much valued opportunity for church members to share fellowship and grow in faith. Pick'n'Mix sadly ended, as the group became unviable with the move away from Reading as some entered the next stage of their education.

COMMUNITY LINKS

Our links with Birch Copse School have continued. We were thrilled that a group from Birch Copse actively participated in our interview activities for our new vicar! As in 2022, they used our church for their Christmas 2023 7 services, and occasionally Birch Copse

have asked a church member to join them in a class discussion. The music group also enjoyed playing and singing carols at their very busy Christmas fair in December!

The Scouts organisation held their Christmas service at St Catherine's, and we also enjoyed their parade at our Coronation service.

We are looking to further strengthen and extend these community links going forward.

HAVING FUN

The opportunities to have fun are too numerous to provide anything here but a flavour!

The Coronation weekend brought two days of celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III. This culminated in having fun and games in sunshine in the church grounds on the Sunday afternoon. Impossible not to have fun with the following on offer: selfie photos with the King and Queen, delicious homemade cakes, country dancing with our live band, treasure hunt, quizzes, children's activities and the afternoon rounded off with the unveiling of the beautifully crafted commemorative throne complete with Stone of Scone! Lots of laughter had by all!

A very enjoyable fund-raising Italian evening was held on St Catherine's Day, April 29th. The Italian theme was prevalent in the delicious 3 course menu provided by our Café Manager,

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

Karen Patrick, an Italian wine tasting, an Italian quiz and the opportunity to sing Happy Birthday in Italian – a feat most struggled with!

Our heavily oversubscribed quiz evening at the end of September and our Spring and Christmas fairs all provided us with the opportunity to enjoy time together with the community and to raise funds for the work of St Catherine's.

THANK YOU

A huge thank you to all of you who so freely give of your time, talents and money to the work of St Catherine's in so many ways.

A very big thank you. Without your contribution all that has and will be achieved would not be possible.

FINALLY....

This has been a year in which we have clearly seen come to fruition the words in Deuteronomy 31:8 *It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not fail you or forsake you, Do not be afraid or dismayed.*

We look with excitement and anticipation for all that God has in store for us as we go into the next year with our new vicar, Jackie Fountain.

Lynn Stevens and Caroline Heron,
Churchwardens

Buildings & Equipment

This group is responsible for making sure that everything in the Centre, i.e. the Church, Hall and narthex, works and is regularly serviced, and also for keeping an eye on our overall carbon footprint.

Following our five-yearly inspection (Quinquennial no 9) carried out last year, we have concentrated on how we might insulate the Sanctuary but have not so far found an economic solution. Most of the heat there goes straight up the “chimney” and it is not economic to insulate above the ring beam (about 3m high).

We continued to spend too much money (over £3k) on our boilers. Our new maintenance contractor,

Advanced Maintenance Ltd (AML), proved to be expensive and unreliable so we reverted to the original boiler manufacturer, MHG, to adjust the control system by installing simpler thermostats in the church and hall.

With a lot of subsequent monitoring by Chris Addison, this appears to have done the trick and we finally think we know how the system works.

We finalised fixed-rate two-year contracts with Parish Buying for our supply of gas and electricity at approximately double the previous cost. Our electricity comes from renewable sources but our gas does

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

not and this poses a significant threat to our aim of being carbon neutral by 2030.

We continue to investigate renewable energy sources, such as solar power but the capital cost is significant and it is hard to see how we will be able to afford this.

All our day-to-day maintenance is designed to reduce our carbon footprint, e.g. replacing spent light bulbs with LED equivalents and minimising heating and lighting periods.

Other tasks undertaken this year include

- Roof repairs to the Hall,
- Tap replacement and macerator service in the accessible toilets,

- Glass repairs in the church and hall,
- Regular maintenance of the building, including fire safety equipment, emergency lighting, kitchen equipment and waste disposal
- Regular testing of the fire alarm system and emergency lighting.

As usual, we are blessed to have Chris Addison keeping an eye on things in and around the building and putting them right.

We are also grateful to Paddy Barrett, Roy Walklate and Stuart Poore for the weekly testing of the fire alarm system and emergency lighting, and to Peter Broomfield for all things electrical.

Richard Canning

RG31

Again, four seasonal editions in full colour. Whilst I need to print at least 120 each time, there were fewer than 100 paid up subscribers in 2023. Of the remainder, some are given to newcomers and visitors and I'm happy that they can be used in this way.

The accounts will show that income from sales in 2023 was £620 and from advertisers £317 whereas the cost of production was £1,352.

This apparent disparity is due to the cost of leasing the printer; this is a fixed charge but the lease is due for review

in 2024, the printer is beyond its designed life, and we will be researching for a replacement.

This is in addition to the supplier's charge per colour copy (ten times the cost of a Black & White copy) and of course the cost of the paper to print it.

Whilst the magazine and APCM materials are normally the biggest printing jobs, there were the service sheets for Jackie's Induction in November.

Tony Bartlett

Café Siena

Café Siena continues to provide a warm, welcoming space on Thursdays and Fridays for everyone in the community. We have many regular customers whom we know well, as well as customers who visit just occasionally. They all can enjoy freshly made drinks, home made cakes and during the lunch period hot snacks or a home-cooked meal.

The Book Club continues to meet monthly in the café as well as groups from both the Afternoon and Evening WI's. The Children's corner is also well used with mums and carers being able to enjoy a coffee whilst the little ones enjoy the toys and books on the carpet.

We continue to source much of our food through the Fare Share Scheme, a charity which provides employment opportunities for young people with additional needs but also works to reduce food poverty and food waste. We make every effort to minimise wastage in the café and compost and recycle as much as we can.

The Café could not operate without the willing help of all our volunteers, both from the church and the community. We are a very "mixed bunch" with different skills but together we make a friendly team - some are excellent with veg preparation and soup making, whilst others are a dab hand with making coffees, or cakes, not to mention the servers, money counters and cleaner uppers! Mustn't forget

those on the washing up and laundry rotas either. The Café Siena WhatsApp group has been very helpful in sending the rotas to everyone but also to appeal for anyone who can help when we are short staffed.

Karen joined us in September 2023 as Cafe Siena Manager, working to build on the Cafe's success. Karen, together with the volunteers Steph and Maureen, were undaunted when the Environment Health Officer visited unexpectedly to inspect the kitchen. They took her through our standard practices and we were again awarded a 5 star rating. A fantastic and well deserved achievement! Unfortunately Karen resigned in January 2024 due to personal circumstances. We wish her all the very best for the future.

We thank God for the ongoing work of our volunteers who are continuing to provide the cafe services that are so appreciated by our customers, albeit that these may sometimes of necessity be more limited, especially as in the next few months several volunteers will be taking extended breaks or holidays. We have been fortunate to have some young people helping for a day or two during school holidays and we hope this is something we can continue.

Recruitment for a new cafe manager is in progress and we pray that God will lead us to appoint his chosen person.

Sonia Ludford Café Line Manager

Centre Manager

It has again been another busy year in managing bookings for both the hall and church spaces. Breakfast Club now use the hall for three early morning sessions a week and after school meets four times a week.

We have regular weekly bookings from a variety of exercise groups, meeting during the day and in the evenings and also monthly bookings from the two WI's, Vivace Voices and the Trefoil Guild. Enquiries for children's party bookings are frequent and feedback from party bookers about our facilities has been very positive.

Eve Combes, our hall bookings manager, is doing a great job, fielding lots of enquiries and subsequent questions from hirers. She also sends out the necessary paperwork and issues the monthly calendars for both Church and Hall users.

Thanks also to Jean Almond who does all our invoicing and checks that all the payments are in order.

We continue to try and minimise our energy use, both for financial reasons and care for the planet. Chris Addison has worked hard to timetable the heating to suit the variety of bookings we have and monitors this regularly to ensure every group has a comfortable temperature when meeting.

In addition, a lot of research and time has gone into making our internet connection more reliable for live streaming our services.

St Catherine's Church and hall are busy spaces but so many different people also work hard to make this happen- the gardeners, the building and maintenance volunteers, volunteer cleaners and so many more. A great team!

Sonia Ludford, Centre Manager

Ecumenical

Our local focus is Churches Together in Tilehurst and West Reading.

Ministers in that grouping continued to meet in an informal setting for lunch but finding a day that suits everyone proved impossible to attendance has been low, but it is a good time for fellowship, exchanging news and prayer.

On a more formal basis ministers and 11 ecumenical reps meet in January and

September to plan three regular ecumenical events.

The week of Prayer for Christian Unity service on 21st January was hosted by Rev Robert Barthram at Grange URC Southcote with visiting preacher; Pastor Henry Ohakah from Southcote family church; most appropriate because the service had been prepared by an ecumenical team in Burkina Faso and that is where he came from.

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

The Good Friday Act of Witness was led by Led by Siobhan Antoniou (a trainee Minister) and Rev Robert Barthram from URC. Around 100 attended from local churches.

Carol singing at The Triangle was again in conjunction with Pangbourne Rotary club who were there all day with 'Santa' in his sleigh. Rev Liz had arranged that they would pause for us to lead carol singing. The musicians were from St Catherine's with two guests from the WI and we were sheltered under Gazebos.

Whilst we used the same carol sheets as before, we reflected that we could add more carols next time. There was a large crowd at 12noon and getting on for 300 at 4.00pm.

Positive comments on Tilehurst Village Community website included *'Thank you for bringing this to the Triangle and I hope the tradition carries on for many more years to come. Thank you, Liz Ratcliffe, for adding something else to your busiest time of year'*. The 'Fun 'n' Frolic' shop donated 100 Glow-sticks all of which went. Pangbourne Rotary served Mulled wine and mince pies.

We are booked to repeat in 2024 on Monday 23rd December.

The Link (see below) is always in need of new volunteers and it is regretted that not all the local churches feel able to support it.

Transform Reading is a network of churches and Christian organisations;

part of God's story in our town that works with many organisations and agencies for the common good of all people. Its aim is to encourage and enable the Christian community of Reading to bring social transformation and renewal through prayer, unity, and sacrificial service and action.

I used to attend the weekly ministers' Prayer meeting at 8am on Wednesday mornings when it was at Greyfriars Church but it has now moved to Reading Family Church premises off the Basingstoke Road.

Tony Bartlett

Link Report.

The Link continues to serve the community in Tilehurst despite a small reduction in daily opening hours and sadly not being able to open on a Saturday. That is because the young people who volunteer need to have a couple of responsible adults on the team.

We are grateful to Tony who, as treasurer, has announced that a proportion of any profit made will go to CIRDIC as agreed by the management committee as they are particularly needy at present.

A big thank you to all members of our congregation who bake cakes and make soup, wash laundry and give their time to help at the Link – you are appreciated and there is always room for more!

Sheila Bryant (St Catherine's rep)

Electoral Roll

The church's Electoral Roll is a list of those who may vote at the APCM. At St Catherine's, votes rarely take place, so being on the roll is mainly a way of indicating your membership and commitment to St Catherine's.

Each year, in the weeks before the APCM takes place, the church's Electoral Roll is formally updated. This means that as this report goes to press, that process has only just started - and

thus I will only be able to give a final figure at the APCM itself.

Last years (2023) roll was 119, an increase of 12 over 2022. While I don't expect numbers to increase by that much for 2024, I am confident that our numbers will continue to slowly but surely increase for 2024.

Stuart Poore
Electoral Roll Officer

Finance Action Group

The Finance Action Group exists to help and support the Treasurer with the financial running of the Church. The group met on four occasions in 2023, all of which took place in the church building. We start each meeting with an opening prayer before discussing both the current and the projected year end bank balances. During the year we also discuss the rates for both the hall rent and for advertising in the RG31 magazine, wage increases for the hall cleaner and the café manager, fund raising, the draft budget for the following year, the contents of the Annual Financial Report and of course any unexpected / unplanned expenses.

In 2023 we also discussed how to cope with managing our banking when the local branch of the Nat West at the Triangle closed. We recommended that the PCC bought an online version of our Finance Computer package thus making it both possible to share the treasurer job if needed and for others

to view the financial data held. We also recommended that we open two new bank accounts which would enable the PCC to earn interest on any surplus funds. The Finance Action Group is unable to make decisions. It can only recommend a course of action to the PCC at their next meeting.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped in the Finance Action Group both this past year and over the previous twelve years, without this help and encouragement, I would not have been able to do the job.

Finally, I resigned from the job of treasurer to the PCC at the start of 2024 with Sean East taking over from me. The presentation of the 2023 Accounts at the APCM will be my last job as the old treasurer. I am sure that Sean will also receive support from everyone in his position as the new treasurer.

Joanne Freeman Treasurer to the PCC

GDPR

GDPR (the General Data Protection Regulations) covers how we obtain (i.e. get consent), store and use individual's data (personal details).

When the regulation came into force, the Church of England provided specimen consent forms which I have adapted for our use. In every case written consent is given to communicate for some or all of the normal ways; post, telephone, or email. Any paperwork is held under lock and key.

At its simplest we have a small one-sided contact card for church members which allows me to email out the Notice Sheet each week. The data is stored in a password protected piece of software 'in the cloud' called ChurchSuite. This software is a powerful tool with many options, but has a cost depending on the number of names and options.

We currently only subscribe to the basic address list module, amongst other uses it generates labels for magazine subscribers. Additional

modules can cover production of rotas and service planning.

Some churches use the facility for individual church members to have access to their data and how it is used, e.g. availability on a rota, again there is a cost as well as necessary computer literacy of users.

A more detailed consent card is used for activities involving non-church members which in addition allows people to choose what it is that we can contact them about; the particular activity (e.g. Tots Praise, Cornwell 0-5s' or Holiday Club), any activity concerning families, or any church activity.

This data is stored on a password protected spreadsheet with currently over 400 names. This dates back to pre -ChurchSuite days and to migrate the data there would involve considerable difficulty and cost.

Tony Bartlett

Grounds

This past year we have: -

- Done our best to maintain the grounds looking as good as possible.
- Continued work on the wild flower¹⁴ meadow area on the north lawn.

- Created a new and better insect hotel with a living roof, using discarded items from the preschool playground.

(Continued on page 15)

(Continued from page 14)

- Cleared weeds from some flower beds, and planted ground cover plants to inhibit weed growth.
- Dead headed and pruned the roses.
- Planted a few more plants and bulbs.
- Kept the corner bed on the North lawn looking beautiful.
- Kept the lawns well mown.
- Kept the car parks free from litter, leaves and weeds.
- Carried out necessary maintenance on the outside seating and tables.
- Used the buttress bed next to the door to the sanctuary again for an Easter Garden and a Nativity scene.
- Trimmed the perimeter and internal hedges and shrubs.
- Put up a splendid Christmas tree and lights.

We would like to: -

- Bring the circular bed on the South lawn into better shape, with little pathways between the shrubs for children to run through, so that it needs minimal maintenance.
- Improve the East facing buttress bed and replace the Pieris which died after the extreme temperatures and drought in summer 2022, and the deep frosts in the following winter.
- Improve the North East facing buttress which is extremely 15 overgrown.

- Replace one or two of the clematis growing on the fence at the back of the North lawn, which have died.
- Prune the Field Maple on the corner of the church hall and the South lawn, to keep it from damaging our neighbour's property and the church hall roof.
- Maintain and improve our eco church status by taking more care of all the wild life living in or visiting our church garden. Anyone with knowledge and enthusiasm in this field will be joyfully welcomed into our team!
- Keep the bird feeders on the silver birch on the South lawn outside the church hall clean and topped up.
- Manually remove all the thick stems in the perimeter and internal hedges, so that Darren will be able to bring the height of the hedge back to its original height when it is cut in the autumn.

To achieve these aims we would appreciate: -

- Prayers for existing gardeners, Hazel, Jo, Paddy, Richard Childs and Chris, to keep us as fit and able, so we can continue to work in the church grounds.
- Prayers for one or two more volunteers to share the work.
- Prayers to thank God for a willing apprentice who has offered to help Paddy with the lawn mowing.

Jo Day

Leaders & Preachers Action Group

The work of the Leaders & Preachers Action Group has had special focus during 2023 during the vacancy, organising services that assist us in worshipping and serving God, and help us to grow in our faith, to increase our love for one another and to grow God's kingdom here in Tilehurst.

The monthly cycle of 4 different types of services (Traditional Holy Communion, All Age Worship, Family Communion, Word & Worship and the opportunity to do something different on a 5th Sunday), based on templates that our previous vicar, Gill Rowell, helpfully left us with, continued.

Whilst this has acted as a firm foundation for us as a church in vacancy and gone some way to address the varied personal preferences of church members, the Leaders and Preachers Action Group have been very aware that a review is needed.

A number of factors need to be investigated, including:

- the complexity of the cycle,
- the slightly uncomfortable positioning of communion after the service on the 2nd and 4th Sunday,
- the ease with which newcomers can navigate the cycle,
- the extent to which it delivers St Catherine's approach to both embody the traditional service elements as well as encouraging a free response to God's love.

However, the Leaders and Preachers group determined to leave this review until it could be undertaken with our new vicar, Jackie Fountain.

We have been blessed through the year with support and encouragement from local clergy – no less than seventeen during the year! – who blessed us with a huge variety of styles, sharing with us a glimpse of God working through their lives and ministry.

Their support was so fantastic that there was not one Sunday in 2023 that we were without a member of clergy! Furthermore, there were only a few Wednesday services that were held as Morning Prayer rather than Holy Communion due to the lack of availability of a member of clergy.

We have a debt of gratitude to all the local clergy who supported us, including Alan Gates who almost exclusively presided over our Wednesday Holy Communion services and Liz Ratcliffe who responded so effectively to our cries for help when we struggled to find someone.

During July and August, we repeated the practise of recent years, and held our services outside to facilitate reaching those that do not normally attend church services.

Well, that was the intention! Our wet and windy weather had a different idea and drove us inside for the majority of services!

(Continued on page 17)

(Continued from page 16)

We have for the most part followed the lectionary for our 2023 services, not least because that simplified the organisation of the services.

July and August brought something different – we studied various Old and New Testament Kings, a theme appropriate to a coronation year! And as we heard of a wide range of Kings, previously unknown to many of us (e.g. Ahab, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat....!), what a lot we learnt.

Our Easter and Christmas services followed the pattern of previous years. It was thrilling to enjoy the buzz of an action-packed family service on Good Friday, attended by a number of local families.

Christmas was particularly busy, with a Monday Christmas Day bringing together both regular Sunday as well as Christmas services. However, we navigated through it, grateful for the leadership of our new vicar, Jackie Fountain, who by the time Christmas arrived had been in post barely a month!

The services included Carols under the Oak Tree which again was popular with local people.

Jackie Fountain's service of Institution, Induction and Installation as our new vicar on November 28th, attended by Bishop Olivia, Rev Liz Jackson, the Associate Archdeacon of Berkshire, Rev Liz Ratcliffe, Associate Area Dean of¹⁷ Reading, as well as over 150 other

people, is without doubt one of the major highlights of the year!

The service was an inspiration and was the culmination of significant effort from very many of you – tech team, musicians, car park attendants, refreshment making and serving, furniture movers, readers as well as those playing a part in the service.

The church was overflowing – we look forward to the day when the church is buzzing with that number again!

We thank God for the LPAG members who have contributed so much during 2023, in the giving of their time, talents and energy.

Sadly, Richard Yates left the Leaders and Preachers Group, as he and Katrina focus on their lives in Bromley and we thank him for all he has done for us over the years and wish him well on his ongoing journey.

And a special mention must go to our youngest member, Aaron Devaney. It has been thrilling to learn and be challenged by Aaron as he has preached on a few occasions and shared with us a little of his personal journey with Christ. Well done and thank you Aaron!

Tony Bartlett, Aaron Devaney,
Jackie Fountain, Mike Heather,
Caroline Heron, Sonia Ludford,
Bill Martin, Stuart Poore,
Lynn Stevens

Missions Giving

As a church we continue to support our four chosen missions, The Children's Society, CCA, The Leprosy Mission and Novimost.

At the monthly Saturday Prayer meetings one of our charities is highlighted and prayed for by Paddy Barrett – CCA, Hilary Smee- The Children's Society, Lorraine Roberts – The Leprosy Mission and Heather Addison – Novimost. You can also find prayers for our chosen charities on the weekly pew sheet and articles in RG31.

Additional donations were collected at our Christingle service for The Children's Society and by giving envelopes for Christian Aid and The Leprosy Mission.

We have also had special collections for Emergency Appeals through Christian Aid.

We continue to collect food and other items throughout the year for the ReadFood food bank including special items at Christmas and Easter. We also supported Ripple Effect (Formally Send a Cow) at our Harvest service and filled shoe boxes for Samaritan's Purse.

Through Compassion some members continue to support Ashini in Sri Lanka and through Tearfund the World of Difference project.

We have also collected a variety of items including paracetamol, candles, knitted goods and Easter chocolates for Ukraine on an ongoing basis. Cornwell Community Crafts continue to raise funds for Ripple Effect.

A huge thank you to everyone for their generosity and on- going support of all our missions through prayer and financial giving helping to make a difference to the lives of others.

Hilary Smee

Music group & Singers

St Catherine's music group supports and enhances worship at the Sunday services, baptisms, Holiday Club and special services, both indoors and outdoors. We are very fortunate to have an enthusiastic group of singers and musicians who together, when needed, can raise the roof!

Being part of this group is both enjoyable and rewarding and we would encourage anyone who can sing or play an instrument to join us. Coming along to a practice is an easy first step.

Until recently, the musical worship leaders were Tony Bartlett, Richard Yates and me. We are grateful to Carol Charles, Caroline Herron and David Stevens who have also led the worship from time to time.

Sadly, Richard Yates has left St Catherine's to live near his family and now worships in Bromley. We miss his musicianship, singing and thoughtful leadership and thank him for all he has done for us over the years and wish him well on his ongoing journey.

Now, it looks like I will be leaving too. Lotte and I are moving to Clitheroe in Lancashire to live nearer to our daughters.

Over thirty years ago Tony made a path for me to develop both musically and spiritually and it has been both a

privilege and a pleasure to have worshiped with you all in this special place.

Essentially, for any given Sunday, our role is to agree songs with the service organiser and the preacher, assemble a group of singers and musicians, hold a practice (so we know which of the many versions of songs we are using), and deliver the songs when needed.

Given our different styles of playing, availability of musicians and singers, choice of songs both old and new, there is a healthy variety to the songs we sing and the way we present them.

St Catherine's has a digital mixer desk which enables our operators to control the sound effectively. The desk offers a flexibility which meets our varied needs and we are most grateful to the expanding group of volunteers who operate the AV desk on a Sunday morning and also attend practices.

At this tricky time, we would encourage others to come forward and see if they, too, have a musical path to explore. Your contribution, however big or small, as a singer or as a musician, will be very welcome. As I said, coming along to a practice is an easy first step.

Bill Martin

PCC

The PCC had 6 formal meetings in 2023 and once the minutes have been approved, they are displayed on the Noticeboard for all to see.

Each meeting begins with prayer and then 'Dwelling in the Word' where we read a passage of scripture, then each share with one another what in the passage has drawn our attention.

We have a time of sharing where we have seen God at work. This first 30 minutes sets the context and purpose of our meeting. In 2023 all our meetings were chaired by Caroline Heron.

We began 2023, as you will read from the treasurer's reports, faced with an anticipated shortfall, and planned a Lent appeal and fundraising events.

In February a separate meeting was held to appoint who was to be on the interview panel for the new incumbent. Caroline and Lynn, our churchwardens, were unanimously elected for this.

At each meeting written, or sometimes verbal, reports are received on behalf of various activities of church life and business:

Finance, Vicar, Churchwardens, Leaders & Preachers Action group, Buildings & Equipment, Safeguarding, GDPR, and news from Deanery Synod.

Other issues are discussed, and if necessary voted on; opening a high interest investment account, Hall hirer rates, rates of pay for cleaner & café manager, service planning, updating signing instructions at the Bank, updated accounts package, new treasurer, arrangements for the interview and later Jackie's Induction service.

An additional informal meeting for PCC members was held in December to meet and get to know Jackie Fountain.

The Annual Report and Financial Statements booklet has a full and formal report on behalf of the PCC and contains the names of all those who served on the PCC.

There are vacancies for new members who can offer their time to support our work and witness in this way.

Tony Bartlett PCC Secretary

Parish Administrator

The main purpose of the Parish Administrator role is to alleviate Jackie and the Church Wardens from many of the routine admin tasks.

This includes: -

- Being one of the first points of contact for enquires from the public or external organisations – mainly by mail, both physical and electronic.
- Handling banns of marriage and baptism enquiries as well as some funeral arrangements.
- Assisting in obtaining or preparation of service & course materials - such as printed service booklets, on screen slides or course handouts.
- Updating web sites & social media feeds - both our own, and where our details appear on other people's web sites.
- Designing & printing of posters, banners, flyers & tickets.
- Keeping noticeboards up to date with both our own and external material.
- Updating, returning and generally keeping track of the ever-increasing amount of bureaucratic paperwork generated by any modern organisation.

All these tasks, and many more, are often shared with other hard-working members of our congregation. However, if any of them fall ill, or need a break, then I need to ensure all the essential administrative tasks are still completed.

Even though the bulk of 2023 was an interregnum, this made little difference to the day-to-day list of administration tasks. However, some of 2023's more unusual tasks included helping the Church Wardens with ...

- Liaising with visiting clergy and their required Sunday service material.
- Preparation of the Parish Profile, including interviewing the community.
- Handling the interview and appointment of our new Vicar - Jackie.
- Jackie's Induction Service – including formal invitations and service booklet.
- Advertise and handle applications for the role of Café Manager.

All in all, a pretty busy 2023. Somehow, I don't think 2024 will be much quieter!

Stuart Poore
Parish Administrator

Prayer Ministry

The Prayer Ministry Team offer prayer for healing for everyone who asks, and the prayer session is confidential.

Prayer Ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit is an important part of life at St Catherine's, and has been for many years, and the team are keen for it to continue to be so.

The team offer prayer after the Sunday service to anyone who needs it and this is open to all, and much appreciated by those who receive prayer. Prayer is offered on other occasions, and from time to time Healing Services are held on Sunday evenings.

The following are comments and ideas from team members:

- New members would be very welcome to join the team, following appropriate training. The team would particularly welcome younger people to join the team.
- It would be good to have some feedback from people who receive prayer, especially so that thanks to God can be given for prayers answered.
- It would be good to meet with Jackie to discuss with her how she sees the future for the team developing, and for the team to receive prayer, teaching and mutual support.
- When someone experiences the power of the Holy Spirit during prayer ministry, it lights a fire, sows a seed which will then grow in God's time, allowing the person to experience the fullness of life as Jesus promised.
- The purpose of praying in the church after the service is so that prayer ministry can be seen to be happening, and when testimonies are given, others may be encouraged to come for prayer.

Carol Charles

Reading Deanery Synod

March Meeting at St Barnabas Church, Emmer Green

Revd Mike Smith (Area Dean – Caversham, Thameside and Mapledurham) presented an update of the Reading Resource Hub saying that the Standing and Mission and Pastoral Committee of the Deanery (SMPC) had recommended to the Bishop of Reading the following priorities for 2023-2026:-

- Green Park.
 - The Town Centre where 6,000 accommodations are being made available.
 - Loddon Reach where around 12,000 new residents are expected.
- with the priority being Green Park.

Joan Walker (Reading Gateway) said that their PCC had obtained funding to employ another part-time Parish Nurse, Jill Anders.

Members split into area groups to discuss what is going well / not so well, new opportunities and resourcing.

Revd Mike Smith outlined the discussions arising from the draft publication of Prayers of Love and Faith by the House of Bishops and said PCCs will need to find appropriate ways to determine whether they are used in parishes.

June Meeting at Reading Gateway St Agnes Church, South Reading

Sue Mott (Associate Lay Chair Central –

St Giles) led a discussion on where we have seen God at work in our churches.

The revised Parish Share Committee (PSC) terms of reference were approved.

Mark Burton (Lay Chair & Treasurer, St Barnabas) presented the principles and process of the draft scheme for allocating the 2024 Parish Share and the 3% increase draft 2024 Parish Share, which would meet the Deanery's current commitments excluding funding for Green Park.

Voting was as follows -

that this Synod:

- a) agrees the Parish Share Principles for 2024,
- b) agrees the 2024 draft Parish Share proposals,
- c) agrees that a 6% increase, on average, in Parish Share is not affordable for parishes to fund new ministry in Green Park,
- d) invites the Deanery Leadership Team to bring forward alternative funding options for Green Park ministry.

September Meeting at Earley St Peter Church Hall

As this was the first synod meeting of the 2023-2026 Triennium, the Area Dean oversaw the re-election of Mark Burton as Lay Chair by the House of Laity.

(Continued on page 24)

(Continued from page 23)

Katherine Shepherd presented an overview of the origins and aims of The Mustard Tree.

Sue Mott updated the new synod on their responsibilities.

The following were elected as Deanery Officers:

- Roger Moore (St Barnabas), Sue

Mott and Alan Cross (Greyfriars) were re-elected unopposed as Associate Lay Chairs.

- Mark Burton was re-elected unopposed as Treasurer.
- Richard Canning (St Catherine) was re-elected unopposed as Secretary.
- Joan Walker was re-elected unopposed as Assistant Secretary.

Terms of reference for the SMPC were agreed and the following were elected as members –

Region	Clergy	Laity
North	Vacant	Richard Purkis (CTM)
West	Fr Desmond Banister (Holy Trinity)	Jane Masson (St Michael)
Central	Revd Nick Hill (Reading Gateway)	Mary Morrey (Reading Gateway)
East/south	Revd Nigel Beer (Loddon Reach)	Jane Fulford (St James)

Members of the PSC were elected as follows -

Size	Clergy	Laity
Large	Revd Tracy Watkins (St Michael)	Peter Stratton (CTM)
Medium	Vacant	Joan Walker
Small	Revd Chris Leslie (PTO, Shinfield)	Bridget Britton (St George)

(Continued on page 25)

(Continued from page 24)

Tuesday 5th December 2023 at Reading University

Revd Polly Falconer (St George) gave a presentation of her role as Diocesan Racial Justice Advisor.

The 2024 Parish Share Scheme was formally adopted.

Mark Burton presented options for paying for Quinquennial Inspections but no vote was taken to allow PCCs time to consider.

Revd Liz Ratcliffe (Associate Area Dean West, St Michael) reported that Citizens UK was successfully launched on Wednesday 22nd November 2023, and will start with Migration Justice and Street Justice as its main briefs.

Revd Mike Smith noted that General Synod has agreed to trial some Living in Love & Faith services from March 2024, and that Deanery Synod will be asked to examine the impact of this decision in a spirit of inclusiveness and understanding some time in 2024.

Richard Canning

Safeguarding

Generally there hasn't been much activity in this area for some time.

In February I attended a Zoom meeting for Parish Safeguarding Officers to be reminded about "Risk Assessments and Safeguarding Agreements." The learning centred around putting in place an agreement with a person who has been convicted of a crime (or not been convicted) that would pose risks to the congregation where this person has chosen to worship.

There is a face to face meeting at St Birinus House in Theale for all PSOs.

At this type of meeting we get to hear all the latest news and discuss issues with each other and the Safeguarding lead, Charlotte who works at Church House.

Our next job, as a team, (Stuart and me) will be working to update Safeguarding training and DBS clearances for the people who have volunteered at the Holiday Club that is being held in August this year.

Hazel Newman.
Parish Safeguarding Officer

The next pages contain reports on activities managed by St Catherine's

<u>Report</u>	<u>Page number</u>
Café Siena Book club	27
Carpet Bowls club	27
Community Prayer Group	27
Cornwell 0-5s	28
Cornwell Charity Crafts	29
Crafty Space	29
Friday Friends	34
Green Team	30
Life groups	31
Mothers' Union	32
Tots' Praise	33
Tuesday Get-together	34
Youth work	34

Café Siena Book Club

We meet monthly and currently have nine members. We all like different types of books so there is always plenty of discussion about the book which we have chosen for a particular month.

Books which we have read in the past year include “Shades of Grey” by Jasper Fforde which is about a fictional world where people are put into categories according to the colours that they can see, “Lessons in Chemistry” by Bonnie Garmus which is

about the struggles of a woman in the 1950s and 60s to achieve her ambition of working in chemistry regardless of her sex and “A man called Ove” by Fredrik Backman which is about a grumpy man who has had a tough life but who gradually helps and is helped by his neighbours.

As well as discussion of the chosen books, we share friendship in the convivial setting of the church cafe.

Rosemary Cunningham

Carpet Bowls Club

This year the bowls club has been able to have a full year of normal bowls and competitions. The starting time of our Saturday session of 7.00pm has been successful and allows the members to be away by 9.00pm.

We have had 2 new members join us who are husband and wife who have recently moved into Pegasus Court. However due to arthritis two of our ladies have become non-playing

members but still come along every week to watch and enjoy companionship. We are therefore still looking for new members especially men, anyone interested please just pop in on a Saturday evening and see us or contact Anne Soley.

Information regarding our programme and contacts can be found on the hall notice board.

Paddy Barrett

Community Prayer Group

We continue to meet every Thursday in the Garden Room at 2.00pm. We pray for the world, the Church and the way forward now we have a new vicar, our local community, our Church Family 27

and prayer requests and have seen many answers to prayers.

Please feel free to join us you do not have to commit to every week.

Anne Soley

Cornwell 0-5s

This toddler group has been running for over 32 years and pre-dates formation of Cornwell Community Church.

We thought that its future was assured when, in 2019, it was in danger of closing and St Catherine's took it over. In terms of number attending and 'profitability' it is a success.

The accounts will show that in 2023 income at £3.50 per session for family groups or childminders was £3,376 and costs (rent of Cornwell Centre and refreshments) was only £2,435; a substantial contribution to church finances.

In addition, we have reserves of £1,069 remaining of the 'dowry' given to the church along with all the toys and equipment when the charity was wound up.

There is a 'BUT' and that is the ageing pool of volunteers that run the two sessions each week, spending 30 minutes setting up; moving chairs and tables along with about half the contents of our four cupboards, then there's admin; registration, GDPR, buying & serving refreshments, washing up, then clearing it all away after the two-hour session.

That all gets in the way of what we think is the most important thing we can do, and that is to show our care and friendship and the love of God to 28a make the sessions warm and

welcoming places. Not only talking to those attending but listening.

Before each session we pray and the singing time includes several Christian/Bible songs, the children like it when Tony is there to play guitar.

The Tuesday session is for family groups (we allow up to 25); Mothers, Fathers, Grandparents with one or two children each.

At 'Snack time' there's tea, coffee, and good quality biscuits, we provide 'healthy snacks' – predominately fruit, for the children. Doreen Farmer and Liz Gulley will have prepared craft and Liz oversees.

Caroline O'Sullivan will have bought, prepared, and serves refreshments, Evelyn & Tony Bartlett & Stuart Poore set up, do registration, and try to chat to those attending.

At the end of the session there's washing up to do. If Stuart or Evelyn & Tony are away Hilary Smee is usually able to cover.

With children moving on to Nursery or school by age 4, there's quite a turnover of the families attending, but it's always good when mum returns with a new baby.

The Thursday session is for childminders (we allow up to 15 but each will have up to 4 children) and it's a fairly stable group. Whilst they bring

(Continued on page 29)

(Continued from page 28)

their own 'snacks' there is a considerable amount of washing up with over 40 children attending.

Running the session will be Tony, Evelyn, Stuart and either Doreen or Lynn Stevens. If Tony & Evelyn are away Caroline O'Sullivan can cover, but that leaves us with the minimum of 3 with a huge amount to do.

The childminders are appreciative of all we do for them and very generous with their Christmas gifts to us.

Our dilemma is that the group has a good reputation, is filling a clear need, and is in demand (attendance is by prior booking through 'Eventbrite' and we are often fully booked). We need more helpers, particularly when one of the team is away, if only to do the washing up.

Would moving the group to St Catherine's gain more helpers? That's a question we are asking and praying about for 2024.

The Cornwell 0-5s Team

Cornwell Charity Crafts

In 2023 to 2024 we continued to raise money for Ripple Effect, formerly Send a Cow.

In January we donated £414 which was used to send 9 Gardening kits costing £26 each and 9 Cookery Lessons costing £20 each.

We only sold items at one fair last year - St. Catherine's Christmas Fair.

This year we will continue to raise money to donate cookery lessons and Gardening kits for farming families in Africa with Ripple Effect.

Thank you for all your support.

Valerie Poore, Caroline O'Sullivan,
& the rest of you!

Crafty Space

Crafty Space has met 13 times over the last year usually on the 2nd Saturday of the month from 1.30pm to 5.30pm. Also, Crafty space extra met during July and August on Friday Mornings at the back of Café Siena.

We regularly have 16 people or more who join us for drinks, cake, crafting₂₉ and chat!

The swap box is as popular as ever for re-homing craft supplies. Folk sew, knit, colour, paint, draw, arrange flowers or create interesting things with sheep's' wool, buttons, crystals or anything else you can imagine. Come and join the fun, there's always room for one more!

Valerie Poore & Caroline O'Sullivan

Green Team

2023's climate was the warmest on record, with record low Antarctic ice, record sea surface temperatures and levels, increasing greenhouse gas levels, and extreme flooding impacting our UK communities. A year that highlighted the urgent need for us all to take action to curb global warming, despite the size of the problem.

Your green team remain passionate about taking action, although have not achieved the visibility they would have liked in 2023 due to other demands for time!

The gardening team work hard to care for the environment through activities such as no-mow May, avoiding using pesticides, composting, and the provision of a bug hotel. St Catherine's Centre endeavour to use eco products and recycle where feasible.

The timings for the heating in the church and hall are carefully monitored and changed as appropriate to reduce the heating used. The possibility of solar panels has been investigated, and is an ambition, though the funding required is a challenge.

The optimum way to increase our awareness at St Catherine's of climate change and the need for each one of us, individually and corporately, to take action is still being sought.

Initiatives included publishing suggested actions for each one of us in the weekly notice sheets which were summarised in the Spring RG31 edition (do look again if you still have that copy and take one more action!), advertising local and diocesan talks on the challenge and taking part in the 2023 RSPB bird survey.

As we journey through 2024, let's all pray with listening ears as to the actions we will take so that the aspiration in Psalm 96 can be realised: *Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy (v 11-12).*

Green Team: Chris Addison,
Richard Canning, Jo Day,
Caroline Heron, Sonia Ludford,
Hazel Newman

Life Groups

We are encouraged that we have 7 lifegroups at St Catherine's and approx. 48 people attend a lifegroup. These are either weekly or fortnightly. Some meet mornings, afternoons or evenings these allow for different lifestyles.

Lifegroups bring much valued worship, fellowship, prayer and support. As well as friendships encouraging and supporting one another. Most groups discuss the sermon notes from the week and go deeper into the bible passage then answer the questions. Then it is a time of prayer for each other or things in the wider community.

Pastoral care is very much integral to lifegroups. This means that in addition to caring for those within your group, each lifegroup has a list of people who currently do not belong to a lifegroup. This enables everyone associated with the worshipping life at St Catherine's to feel loved and supported.

We are currently all meeting together for the Lent course "Come and See" on a Monday evening or Thursday afternoon. This has been very popular and an opportunity to mix with different members of the congregation. We read a bible passage together, watch a video and answer questions in small groups. Then we finish by praying for each other.

Lifegroup leaders meet every 3 months to pray together and review the groups.

There are still spaces available to join a lifegroup, with various options of mornings, afternoon or evenings. Please come and chat with me if you are interested.

Emma Deacon

Mothers' Union

Sadly, with the death of Beryl Nunn this year, membership of St Catherine's MU has reduced slightly and now stands at 40.

We continue with our prayer chain, regular monthly bible study and fellowship meetings, and our members also take on many other voluntary roles within the church.

We have also made-up emergency toiletry bags for the Royal Berkshire Hospital and knitted Easter Chicks and Christmas stockings for the Children Seen and Heard project. Sales of excess Chicks and stockings raised £60 for the MU General Fund.

Our monthly evening meetings have had a varied programme including talks on Readifood, Reading Abbey and Yeomanry House.

In addition, we also held our annual Quiz evening, meal at Toby Carvery, August Afternoon Tea, and Beetle Drive.

The Quiz and Afternoon Tea raised £250 which was donated to the MU Summer of Hope appeal. The Memorial service in October and the ever-popular Christmas Carols and Readings were both well attended.

Unfortunately, the Christmas Flower Arranging demonstration in November could not take place but we were lucky to get a representative from Englefield 5-a-Day to come along and demonstrate the art of making Christmas Willow Wreaths instead.

In February we attended the Ash Wednesday evening service and in March we are again hosting a World Day of Prayer service to which we have invited other local churches.

In the coming year we hope to continue to find a variety of speakers to entertain and inspire us at our monthly meetings and to reach out further into the community.

Steph Walklate

Tot's Praise

Tot's Praise is a service that is aimed at Pre-school children and their carers. It happens at 9.15am every Friday during term time at the front of the church on the red carpet.

Our numbers are variable between 4 and 10 children, along with their mums, dads, grandparents, or childminders.

We start with singing 3 to 5 songs, many of which have movements (which we all do), involve shaking the musical instruments and even involve some of the toy animals from the children's corner at the back of the church.

We then have a story from the Bible read by one of the helpers, there are pictures to look at. We then celebrate any birthdays and say our prayer.

We then move near to the children's area where there is a craft activity followed by play in the children's area while the adults have a drink and a chat.

We remember the children's birthdays by giving them a card and a book, have a party at Christmas and at Christmas and Easter we give all of them a book telling them the appropriate Christian Story.

Stuart leads the singing section.

In 2023 the story was read by either Anna, Hilary or Sonia and the craft sessions led by Doreen or Joanne. We try to have 3 helpers at each session though we do occasionally have only 2.

From September our numbers were stretched as Anna stopped helping at Tots because both of her girls are now at primary school, however Anna still finds time to pop in to help set up after dropping them both off at school, for which we are very grateful.

Evelyn started coming once a month to offer support and Joanne started to read the story. Then at the end of November Joanne had to stop doing everything for a couple of months. Fortunately, Doreen took over all the craft work and Jackie joined us. Despite this we would really appreciate some extra help to lighten the load.

We never know which children will turn up or how many or how old. It is great fun and rewarding as you get to know the children and their carers.

If you would like to join us, please come and have a word with one of us or just turn up. You will be very welcome.

Doreen, Evelyn, Hilary, Jackie, Joanne,
Sonia and Stuart.

Tuesday get Together

Tuesday Get Together makes an important contribution to the surrounding community, providing a warm welcome and a safe space for all who attend.

The average attendance each week is 25 visitors, along with a team of 3 volunteers. Many old friendships are rekindled, along with the formation of newfound companionship.

The team of volunteers is on hand to welcome visitors, old and new.

A suggested donation of £1.00 helps towards the provision of tea, coffee and biscuits.

New volunteers are always welcome. If you have two hours to spare, either every Tuesday or one Tuesday every month, we would love to hear from you. More information is available office@stcatherines-tilehurst.org.uk

Tuesday get Together Team

Friday Friends

Friday Friends meet every week in the Church Hall starting at 2.00pm and finishing at 4.00pm.

Several people enjoy a lunch in the Cafe before joining the activities offered each week.

The programme includes a variety of activities and fellowship is shared during refreshment time.

A warm space for everyone and their carers.

Anne Soley

Youth work

Pick N Mix was our young people's group that met on every other Friday evening during term time.

Numbers had stayed at a core of six and activities included board games, craft, films, chip shop walk and barbecue.

Our last meeting was at the end of July 2023, with the majority of the group³⁴ going off to university in September.

It was decided to close Pick N Mix and to pray about what to do in the future.

No other planned youth activities took place.

Some young people have taken part in the Sunday Morning Service on an ad-hoc basis.

Lynn Stevens

