

Churchwardens Report 2023

Reflection on the year

We were once again privileged to be elected as your Churchwardens at the APCM. We were both able to attend the Archdeacons Visitation in June in St John's Hartley Whitney where we were officially admitted as Churchwardens by The Venerable Richard Brand, Archdeacon of Winchester.

Marion has continued her pastoral care work, making home visits in support of those in need in our community. This is a vital part of the ministry at St. Gabriel's it is hoped that this will continue to develop as people attend the BCM course for pastoral care.

Both Kelvin and Marion have continued in the role of Treasurer for the last year working together to ensure that the money the church has is spent wisely to further our works in the community.

A very large change for the church and the parish this year was on May 1st 2022 when Rev Arthur Botham retired after eighteen years at St Gabriel's. Among his legacies will be his work with the local schools, the building project and his time as Area Dean and mayor's chaplain. A celebration weekend was organized for Arthur and Marilyn, including an evening disco, an afternoon tea and a fantastic BBQ after his last service at St Gabriel's. All of these different events gave numerous people, that have known Arthur throughout his ministry a chance to say goodbye and wish him good luck in his new venture of retirement. While some church members have struggled with the adjustments, we have mostly come together as a church family to support each other through this time of change.

During a Vacancy much more responsibilities fall on the Church Wardens. We have both been involved with meetings with the Archdeacon, Area Deans and the Bishop of Basingstoke, David.

The PCC had involvement in creating the "Parish Profile" and discussions on "The suspension of the presentation". This has meant that as yet we have not widely advertised for a new incumbent to take over here at St. Gabriel's instead we have been hoping to find someone new from within the Diocese through the Bishop's recommendation.

Kelvin and Marion have liaised with the diocesan registry to ensure cover for our Sunday services. During the year of vacancy we have had fifteen different individuals lead us in very varied worship. This number includes The Living God Church, who has led us on three occasions – and even the church wardens have had to stand at the front and lead! This year has also seen Denise grow and develop her skills in leading worship, and we are very grateful that she has taken on this role. We thank all the people who have covered our Sunday services. We have been able to continue with our seasonal services from Remembrance Sunday, Christingles, Nine Lessons and Carols and all of our Easter services even if they might have been slightly different.

Slowly the Log Book and Terrier are being recreated after they were both destroyed when the safe was taken during the break in 2019.

We would both like to pay a special thank you to Rev Bob and Rev Mandy Bowskill and Rev Denis and Priscilla Smith for their pastoral care and support during this first year of vacancy.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Looking forward

A big part of the coming year will be looking for a replacement leader for St Gabriel's Church.

We are encouraged to give time, skills and money to support the work of St Gabriel's Church and that of other charities that build God's Kingdom. Deciding how we give/use our time, skills and money in thanksgiving to all that God has provided. Much of this giving may be regular giving from our income, but we should also consider what we will do with the wealth we accumulate.

We are asking everyone here at St. Gabriel's to search their hearts and find the best way they can give to the family life of St. Gabriel's. Whether it is time to help out, tea making, flower arranging, grass cutting, painting, cleaning, helping with children's activities, or supporting others in need. Giving doesn't have to be just about the money, and we are sure that everyone has a talent to offer to St. Gabriel's.

While this report is a reflection on the year ending 2022 we are still feeling the effects of coming out of the pandemic and all of the restrictions placed upon us

during this time. 2022 has turned out to be a difficult year for many, and a very different year to the one we were expecting and wishing for.

We know that for many 2023 may bring further challenges and difficulties and we hope and pray that we at St. Gabriel's will continue to help and support each other with love and care.

³⁴ 'So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.'

Marion Davies and Kelvin Lewington

Churchwardens for St. Gabriel's Church