



# Annual Report of Church Activities and Groups 2018

BPC is a thriving and active church and these reports highlight the many varied activities that take place across all the ages. I am immensely grateful to the many people in our church family who lead and help run these activities.

I do hope as you read this report you may find activities and ministries that you might feel called to support whether through prayer or becoming involved with. I strongly encourage you to read this cover to cover so that you might be thankful for how God is blessing us, you might discern where you might become involved and that you might pray for a specific ministry that you are touched by through the year.



Revd Will Pearson-Gee

Rector

## **BAPTISMS**

*Lizzie Ogden*

Baptism is an important start for babies, children and adults on their journey of faith and I am pleased to report that 2 adults (one man, one woman) and 20 children (ten boys, ten girls) were baptised in 2018 - over twice the number of last year and we pray this keeps on growing.

Baptism preparation sessions are delivered by Lynne Legrove, supported by her husband Bob, and Revd Danny Rodgers. This invaluable service helps families who are new or less familiar with church to understand baptism and ask any questions, and we are very thankful for their faithful leadership in this area.

Being a Baptism host involves delivering a baptism preparation session lasting about an hour once a month. This explains the meaning and responsibilities of baptism, and a host is present at each baptism to welcome the family and organise as necessary.

If you feel that you would be able to help in this important ministry please contact Lynne or the Church office.

## **BELLRINGERS**

*Andrew Spencer*

We have continued our arrangements ringing for services on a rota by sharing our bellringers with Maids Moreton and Stowe. We have also rung the bells for many weddings during the year along with University ceremonies. Our Wednesday practices have been used to train new ringers and develop improved skills for the more experienced ringers.

Ringers social activities this year have included a breakfast, a summer afternoon event and a Christmas party.

The bellropes are showing signs of wear, I am working through a programme of removing worn sections and splicing the rope to extend their life.

## **BITTERNES AFLOAT**

*Will Trevitt*

Bitternes Afloat is a Christian Sailing Cruise for 11-18 year olds, run every Easter on the Norfolk Broads. We take young people primarily from our 5 partner churches of which Buckingham Parish Church is one. Each day of the week we aim to encounter God through morning bible study and evening activities and to learn how to sail on the waterways of the Broads.

In 2018 we took the theme of “The Winning Team”, which looked at our life as Christians as being part of a team with many parts but one overall purpose. We discussed how we play our part in Christ’s team, how we improve, how we help others to improve and what our purpose is (both individually and as the body of Christ).

We took 24 young people from Buckingham and 7 adults, 5 of whom grew up in Buckingham going on the cruise and now returning as leaders. It was a week of great sailing, powerful encounters with God and great fellowship with some of His friends.

## **BOOKSTALL**

*Zena Greig*

The bookstall had five different selections of books available during 2018, the bulk of which were obtained on a sale or return basis from St. Andrews Bookshop in Oxford. Other books have been specifically ordered when requested, prices comparing favourably with those of a well-known on-line retailer.

Sales were slightly down compared with 2017 but included children's books, Bibles, biographies, books on prayer and bible study, current issues, apologetics and marriage and family life. A selection of CDs of hymns and worship songs has also been introduced. The bookstall was open for the three main Sunday services and the autumn Alpha course, also supplying books for some Connect group courses.

A small profit is made on the sale or return books and this is used to cover any damaged books and to occasionally gift books or bibles

on special occasions or to those who would otherwise find it difficult to buy them.

The long-term viability of church bookstalls is in question due to the increase of on-line sales and e-books. I believe they still have a role to play in show-casing the wide range of excellent Christian books available which can challenge and encourage us in our discipleship.

## **BPC FAMILIES**

*Jo Brice*

### **Ark**

Ark is a fun, thriving, relaxed and exciting place to be for all who attend from within Buckingham and the wider areas. It continues to reach on average 70 babies and toddlers each week and about 50 parents. The Ark has a very committed and efficient team of volunteers who ensure the running of Ark is like clockwork. The team has grown through people wanting to join to be a part of the team.

In January 2018, Jo Brice took over as Families Team Leader and re-introduced a Christian themed, Bible-based story time. The weekly theme that the story and craft are based on links to BPC Kids termly topics bringing greater continuity, especially for Ark families that might visit our Sunday services.

The team continues to offer varied support through building relationships with the parents, to playing with the children and also welcoming and befriending all who attend.

We have run a parenting course and Alpha alongside Ark this year. This has worked well as some of the parents from Ark have been able to attend through supervision of their children within Ark the same time. It has been so important to offer this opportunity.

### **Messy Church**

Messy Church is a great place where families can come together and attend church in a creative way. The first 40 minutes are a time

where families can have fun together exploring the theme through crafts, games and activities. There is then a short celebration involving singing with actions and a short talk. Following this we enjoy discussing the theme and spending time chatting over a delicious home cooked meal. In January 2018, Jo Brice began as Families Team Leader and worked with the team to try and engage families with older children and more boys and dads.

During 2018 Messy Church continued to grow seeing initial numbers on average of 80 grow to 90 plus. This then grew to between 100 and 120 from September to December. The team has also needed to grow as a result and done so effectively, with more activities being made available for a wider age range. The banner in town has helped encourage people to come and the invitations sent through schools has also been effective. Many Ark families have joined and families with older children (particularly boys and dads) have begun coming too. We have many regular families and always see new people come along.

As the year has progressed we have been thinking more about how we could begin to disciple our families better and we have been more intentional about our message in our talks being gospel based. We are exploring ideas on how to grow deeper in discipleship opportunities from within the community and style of Messy Church itself and there are exciting ideas in store for 2019.

### **Holiday Club Children's Venue**

In August 2018 Jo and Tom Brice were overall leaders of the children's venue for Buckingham Churches Holiday Club. The theme for the year was aptly named Team Builders where the vision is: Christians from churches in Buckingham, working together delivering a safe and fun-packed Holiday Club where children are welcomed and introduced to a real and living God who loves them and knows them each by name. This really was a fantastic event and thoroughly enjoyed by all the volunteers and children.

We saw the church transformed into a football locker room and stadium and plenty of cheering, dancing, singing and learning about

our Great Big God went on. We had 180 children register to be with us and there were 60 adult volunteers and for the first time 25 young leaders who were remarkable role models. There were 7 churches represented it was a wonderful collaboration concluded by a celebration service which saw many parents come and learn about what their children had been learning. About 20 children made first time commitments and we gave away a record number of Bibles. There has been a lot to celebrate and a huge thanks to all you helped to make it happen.

## **Parenting Course**

We ran a Parenting Teenagers Course, led by Lucia and Will Pearson-Gee and Gabi Holland. This ran for 6 weeks and saw 15 people attend. Parents found the course really helped them to see their teenagers differently, open up deeper discussion opportunities, bring about calmer home environments and empowered parents to feel they understood more of the issues that face teenagers today. We will be looking to carry out another Parenting Children and Parenting Teenager course in 2019 with a new resource from Care for the Family.

## **BPC KIDS**

*Tom Brice & Jayde Crouch*

2018 has been a year of great consolidation and BPC Kids continues to be a place where children can grow more deeply in their personal faith journeys with God through fun, interactive and creative sessions.

Tom Brice developed the planning of the sessions through the use of a great resource called Energize. The team and children have loved this and greater connection between the groups has had a great impact on families having conversations about what the children are learning. The themes covered this year have been: God's nature; bible characters; miracles of Jesus and God made me to be... where greater connection has also been made between what is covered in The Ark and Messy Church themes too.

Instead of Big Story Sundays, the children had the chance to build deeper relationships with each other by joining together to take part in whole groups sessions, re-capping all they have been learning over the term through quizzes and games.

The team have been amazingly supportive in the transition of leadership and continued to grow in number and involvement. A small planning team gather every 6 weeks to plan the topics and activities covered in all sessions. Jayde Crouch began overseeing the role of Acting Kids Team Leader in December and was formally appointed into the role in early January 2019. More exciting plans will certainly come in 2019.

### **BPC KIDS EVENTS**

**Glow Party** – Due to a transition period between BPC Kids Team Leaders, we were unable to carry out a Glow Party this year. It is very much a priority for 2019 and was missed by many church families.

**Crib Service** – This was another fantastic and successful opportunity for families to come together to share in the excitement of the build up to Christmas and for the children to play an active part in the nativity story. We had approximately 45 children there with the stage filling up beautifully with shepherds, angels, kings and animals. It drew in many families connected with Messy Church and Ark which was great to see.

### **Schools Ministry**

In January 2018 the Schools Ministry saw significant changes under the leadership of Jo and Tom Brice. A fresh vision was cast, to expand and deepen the work in each school in a personal and mutually effective way, expanding beyond assemblies through seeking to introduce After School's Clubs and other exciting possibilities. School assemblies have continued to be carried out across three schools 6 times a year. The introduction of an After School Club called Mission Possible has also been implemented following a successful pilot. This involves two, six-week blocks in three schools throughout the year where fun-packed activities,



bible-based stories, crafts and snacks help to build deeper relationships with the children in our community that may connect in with other areas of our ministry.

Alongside this, with Well Street Church, we put on two events, Easter Cracked and Christmas Unwrapped. This is where the schools bring a year group into both churches to learn more about the real Easter and Christmas stories. This is done using creative stations, crafts and games. Again, this is a really important part of our ministry and such an amazing opportunity to get to meet with the children in our town. There is a great team of volunteers who enjoy getting really involved in the dramas in each station.

In October 2018, Jo Brice took over the responsibility for Schools Ministry and continues to work closely with the schools in the town developing relationships and tailoring our support provided there.

## **BPC MISSION PARTNERS**

*Zena Greig*

### **Emma Cottrell**

During 2018 Emma set up a charity called Created Creative, in partnership with BPC that supports Gods healing through Creativity in churches, mission situations and communities. Her ministry includes discipleship, mentoring and training of teams both in the UK and overseas. She and a growing team share God's love and healing with those affected by traumatic events, conflict and difficult life situations.

She continues to support churches and groups in the Middle East and Eastern Europe and this year has begun to work with other churches in the UK too. Over the last 6 months she has started a monthly Monday creativity evening at BPC for anyone within our congregation or local community.

### **The Courtman Family**

The Courtman family served for two years in Arequipa, Peru where they were involved in a wide range of ministries including Alpha

courses, Bible studies in English and Spanish, knitting workshops and a social enterprise with differently abled adults and young people.

They returned to the UK in July 2018 and Chris is now working as operations manager at Cranmer Hall in Durham. They are grateful for the support and prayers of the church during their time in Peru and their return to the UK.

## **BPC YOUTH**

*Emma King*

2018 was such an exciting year for BPC Youth, we saw incredible growth both numerically and in the faith of our young people.

To start the New Year off, BPC Youth launched their fundraising events, raising money for bursaries for young people to come along to Soul Survivor in 2018. In January, we had a sponsored Lock-In where twenty young people spent the night in church. In February, the youth groups planned and led our annual Pancake Party which saw loads of people from Buckingham enjoy and celebrate Shrove Tuesday in the church. The young people did an incredible job leading this event.

2018 also marked our first ever BPC Youth Weekend Away. Thirty of us went to The Frontier Centre in Northampton for the weekend in March. The theme of the weekend was finding our Identity in Christ and the young people spent time connecting with God through worship, talks, activities and fun. We hope this weekend away to become an annual event!

Other highlights for 2018 include Soul Survivor where over thirty young people spent five days camping and meeting with Jesus in amazing ways, starting our Lunch Club at Buckingham School, Young Leaders at Holiday Club, seeing new young people every week at youth groups, young people coming along to church on a Sunday for the first time and finishing off the year with a great BPC Youth Christmas Party!

## **Blaze (Year 7-9 Youth Group)**

Blaze has had a great year with lots of fun for everyone! Every other week we have a theme night, including Hawaiian night, chocolate party, water fight, Mexican night, TV show night and many more! On the other weeks, we followed different themes and explored God and faith in creative ways. Some themes from the past year include: Serving, Living like Jesus and Undercover Christian. During the autumn term, we were seeing new young people come along every week, which was amazing and such a blessing!

## **Fuel (Year 9-13 Youth Group)**

To start 2018 off, we focused on 'Big Questions' with Fuel, which followed on really well from Youth Alpha. We met on Wednesday evenings at Emma's house for where we would have dinner together, have fellowship, teaching, discussion and prayer. It's been great to see this group really grow and step out in faith, especially at Soul Survivor in August. The group came home from Soul Survivor with really strong friendships, a real passion and excitement to see God move back home at BPC. We have had some really special evenings together where God has really spoken to us using pictures and words, it was awesome! For the final part of 2018 Fuel spent some time having separate session for the guys and girls so they could really delve into some challenging topics!

## **The Way**

The Way has had a great year, seeing lots of new faces. The Way meets during the 6pm service for fellowship, snacks, teaching, discussion and prayer. One highlight for the group was leading a 9.30 Youth Take Over Service at the beginning of the year, where they shared their thoughts on the Fruits of the Spirit in creative ways. This year we also introduced Serving Sunday on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month, where the group would stay in the service instead of going up to their group. The young people would then serve on all the 6pm teams, which has been a huge success.

## **Holiday Club Youth**

Holiday Club was a huge highlight for our young people in 2018. This year the Youth Provision was a little different than it has been in past years, with young people serving on team in the morning and an outreach focused evening session called Youth Nights for Year 7-10. It was amazing to see the young people growing in faith, serving on team, having opportunities to use their God-given gifts and skills and inviting their friends to Youth Nights.

## **CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP**

*Judith Bundock*

We have much to thank God for and to offer in our stewardship of our time, our talents and our financial resources. As we say every week, 'all things come from you and of your own do we give you'.

We are blessed with an impressive church building for worship and for serving the local community, a growing congregation with a wide range of talents, and compared with large areas of this country and the wider world, we have vast resources both individually and corporately. Christian Stewardship is all about how we use this abundance that we have been given, both individually and as the church. Our Annual Reports are full of accounts of our stewardship of our time and talents. This report focuses on our financial stewardship.

Here at the Parish Church we encourage and facilitate regular giving to support our mission and ministry. By giving regularly:

- we acknowledge that our giving is an important part of our personal life, budget and Christian Discipleship.
- we enable the PCC to budget for the church's expenses and new opportunities.
- we enable and simplify the process of claiming gift aid, where appropriate, which adds 25% to the gifts from taxpayers.

In 2018 the number of individuals or family units who gave regularly to the General Fund was 174 (166 in 2017) contributing in the year £180,776 (£177,103 in 2017). Gift Aid increased our 2018 regular giving by a further £42,879.

Thank you to all who regularly and generously contribute to our church funds. If you would like to start giving regularly or wish to change your contributions please contact me on: [stewardship@buckinghamparishchurch.org.uk](mailto:stewardship@buckinghamparishchurch.org.uk)

## **CHURCH CHOIR**

*Robert Tucker*

We are a welcoming, thriving group of children and adults, who sing a wide variety of music to enrich worship. During the year the choir has sung for various occasions including Benefice 'Songs of Praise', Ascension, Civic service, Weddings, Advent Carols at Thornborough, Christmas Carols at Thornton, Florence Nightingale Hospice, and Villiers Hotel. Choir numbers have remained constant. This situation can be challenging at times, however, especially if some members are unable to attend on a Sunday. But we continue to meet these challenges and remain optimistic. The children particularly continue to make excellent progress. Our aim for 2019 is to continue with our recruitment plans. We have also commissioned sets of prayers for the church year. Thanks as always to everyone, noting Ray Mitchell, our assistant organist.

Choir singing is very enjoyable, especially when there are plenty of singers. We would certainly welcome anyone who would like to join us. The ability to read music would be an advantage but is by no means essential.

## **CHURCH FLOWERS**

*Valerie Hiron*

Let me take the opportunity to thank all the dedicated members of the Flower Rota for their hard work and support over the last year. We have covered all the festivals with lovely window displays and have continued to provide colour with our flower arrangements on the Dais and at the High altar.

In a church of this size it takes quite some management to continue doing flower arrangements and keeping them fresh so I much appreciate your commitment.

## **CHURCH OFFICE**

*Jan Ballantyne*

The work of the church office is very variable and demands many skills and attributes from the small team who volunteer to work in the office every week throughout the year. My thanks go to all the members of the team, to Ann Bursnall, Anne Exelby, Jean Froude, Karin Lorenti, Leonie Jeanneret, Ray Mitchell and Gill Stopps for their commitment and dedication.

## **CONNECT GROUPS**

*Revd Michael Greig*

BPC has a network of 20 Connect Groups and about 6 other small groups (Prayer Groups, Theology Group etc.). Group leaders met three times during the year to share news and support one another. Around 180 members of the church are involved.

With a growing church and the need for more and more people willing and able to serve on various teams the importance of the Connect Group network is becoming ever more apparent. Connect Groups ensure that everyone is cared for, supported and nurtured. Groups are running Alpha courses, helping to lead services and provide a safe place to study and discuss the Bible and the Sunday sermons and to grow as disciples of Jesus. My role is to ensure that group leaders are trained, equipped and well supported. We have a close link with the Alpha courses to encourage those who have attended to join a Connect Group.

## **Fishers Field Connect Group**

*Gill & Keith Croxton*

The group meets fortnightly on Monday mornings from 10.45 am to 12 noon at the home of Mary Melluish.

There are 11 members in the group. During the year we tackled the Paracletus course and are currently studying John's gospel.

We enjoy discussing the Bible passage, finding new truths and insights, and sharing what God's word says to us as we seek to deepen our faith together. Fellowship, supporting and praying for each other and having fun are also important parts of our time together.

## **Tuesday Afternoon House Group**

*Valerie Hiron*

We continue to meet in the afternoon and start our meetings with a short relaxation and meditation exercise. We then look at a Bible passage for study and discussion, largely trying to understand how it was for people in those days and relating the passage to our everyday lives. We then stop for fellowship and refreshment.

## **Tudor Meadows Connect Group**

*Gill & Keith Croxton*

The group meets fortnightly on Monday evenings from 7.30pm to 9pm.

There are 10 members in the group. We start our evening with refreshments and a time of sharing. We then move on to Bible teaching/study (which invariably includes lively discussions), prayer and fellowship. We are currently studying the book of Hebrews which is challenging but worthwhile. Previously we looked at some of the parables Jesus told.

Connect Groups are about building relationships and friendships, supporting each other in prayer and practical ways, developing and deepening our faith together and having fun. We try, as best we can, to embrace all these.

## **COURSES**

### **Alpha**

*Revd Michael Greig*

The Alpha Course is a key activity at BPC, as a means to help people explore the Christian faith; to refresh and encourage those who are on a journey of faith and to help those joining the church to understand the core theological values of the church.

We ran 3 courses in 2018, two evening and one day-time, resulting in several people coming to faith and others growing in their understanding of life with Jesus. The Thursday morning course was supported by Ark. The Spring course was run by Danny & Alison in their home. We are exploring how to develop links with Ark & also using Connect Groups to run courses in homes.

All participants were encouraged to join a Connect Group, with two new groups resulting from this and we have gained a better understanding of how to help people to grow as disciples of Jesus and become integrated into church life.

Thanks to everyone who has helped to make this happen.

## **DEANERY SYNOD**

*Paul Hiron*

The main issue for the Buckingham Deanery has been the departure of Rev. Gussie Walsh from Thornborough.

The opportunity has been taken to reorganise the Deanery & its benefices. It is proposed that Stowe will be looked after, as an independent church under Rev. Hans Taling of Maids Moreton.

Discussions are still continuing concerning Radclive cum Chackmore. It looks as if Radclive will come under the Rector of Buckingham, whilst Chackmore (which does not have a parish church) will join Stowe. The remaining parishes will form a new benefice. Currently it is too small to be a viable benefice but it is expected that several thousand houses will be built in Whaddon parish, which will completely change the situation and require a radically new mission approach.



Apart from this there have been the following activities:

- ⤴ Lent Evensongs
- ⤴ County Show representation
- ⤴ A Mission Action Plan was produced.
- ⤴ A presentation on a new scheme for giving was held, to help cash flow by having more frequent claiming of tax rebates.

The lay representatives on the Deanery were Pauline Stanton-Saringer, Ruth Newall & Paul Hiron. The Deanery Reps on the Diocesan Synod were Rev. Will Person Gee, Rev Ros. Roberts, Georgie Christopher and Paul Hiron.

### **FABRIC COMMITTEE**

*Tim Jones*

The Fabric Committee is responsible for fabric of the Parish Church. The glass front doors were engraved and plans to replace and relocate the outside notice board were approved. Updating of the production desk, and restoration of the Church parquet floor were all completed. Approval for introduction of a full immersion baptistery was secured and will be in use during 2019. Reorganising the Lady Chapel to accommodate opening up of the blocked windows and relocate the stained glass windows currently in the kitchen was deferred to 2019.

### **'FOCUS' Church Summer Holiday**

*Rev. Will Pearson-Gee*

Once again members of the Church joined the Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB) annual church summer holiday at 'FOCUS'. It was our third year at the glorious 7,500 acre Somerley estate near Ringwood in Hampshire. Of the 7,500 people attending 43 were from BPC. The weather was at one stage pretty horrendous but none of our tents were blown away or flooded and we all managed to enjoy a wonderful week of fellowship and inspiring worship and teaching.

## **MISSION and OUTREACH**

*Keith Croxton*

Mission and Outreach is a sub group of the PCC mandated to discern and respond to the spiritual and social needs in the community: reaching out to share God's love and compassion with others.

It oversees the following:

- The Centre
- Distribution of the Tithe
- Parish Weekends
- Alpha
- SOS Room
- Men's Ministry
- Women's' Ministry
- Buckingham Food Bank
- Tuesday Lunch
- Kit Cat Club
- Coffee Service

A number of Mission and Outreach initiatives are covered in separate reports. I will cover just the following this year:

### **Coffee Service**

The Coffee Service continues to run on Saturday mornings between 10.30 am and 12 noon. The numbers have gradually grown over the past year and there is now a sizeable group of regulars. It provides a place for the church family to drop in and have a relaxing time together over coffee. It also provided a warm welcome to visitors who often call on a Saturday morning.

## **Church Tithe**

The tithe for 2018 was £24,800 and this was fully distributed.

The recipients were:

Mission Partners (Emma Cottrell and the Courtman family)	Children's Homes in India Trust
Compassion	Christian Concern
Open Doors	Holiday Club
Mukti Mission - India	Children's' Homes Indian Trust
Union Biblical Seminar - India	Indonesians Appeal
Street Orphans - India	Prison Fellowship
Jel al Amel Orphanage and School	

Decisions on the distribution of the tithe are taken in accordance within the tithe strategy/guidelines agreed by the PCC.

## **COMMUNITY LUNCH**

*Sheila Handley*

The Community Lunch has been running for over 5 years. Since last year the number of attendees has remained steady at between 65 and 70 people. We have several rotas running: minibus drivers, table and chair 'putters-back', regulars who set the tables, serve the folks, clear and wash up, soup makers, pud makers and myself who usually cooks the main courses. Elaine Heaven and Carol Lindsay are able to step in to cook in my absence.

Donations have been excellent, with a surplus of just over £800. We have been able to give money towards the new crockery, the running of the minibus, 2 more medicals for drivers reaching 70, and towards the new kitchen. We wish to highlight how delighted we are with the kitchen and wish to thank Alex and Jacqui for their hard work in achieving this.

We served a full Christmas lunch to 80 people and 20 helpers, offering a present and entertainment by the Ukelele group. We have had additional help from Hagarty CIA staff performing their corporate charity work with us in October.

There are so many people we thank for their continued support from the office, rota organisers and those who come to sit alongside our diners, offering a friendly face and a listening ear.

### **KIT CAT CLUB**

*Christine Barrell*

2018 came and went, once again we started the year with a trip to the Buckingham Community Pantomime, with all 27 of us enjoying fish & chips at The Centre beforehand.

During the year we held 10 Thursday afternoon sessions, meeting over the half terms and summer holidays. During the summer we completed both Bertie's Walk & the Railway Walk, ending up in Chandos Park. We also had a wonderful day out at Cotswolds Wildlife Park, the weather was superb and we all laughed, when we were chased by a very enthusiastic Pelican.

Numbers range around 20 and for all of the helpers, it is a real privilege to build relationships, with both children and parents alike. Grateful thanks to all those who have given of their time to help at sessions and to those who have made monetary donations, which enables us to provide the children with a hot meal, games, crafts and a safe environment - just to be. If you would like to be involved with Kit Cat Club, please make contact with me, Christine Barrell.

### **MEN'S MINISTRY**

*Revd Danny Rodgers*

2018 was another fantastic year for BPC Men's Ministry with lots of activities and events taking place throughout the year. Curry nights continue to be an excellent means of fulfilling the 'Making Friends'

part of the church's vision, with up to 30 men attending each of the 5 very enjoyable meals in town.

The summer BBQ is always a highlight in the calendar and once again we had a great night in June with a speaker who shared his powerful story of God's transformational power in his life.

The men also enjoyed several breakfasts with guest speakers, including Jacob Ash's excellent talk on the relationship between science and faith and Will's presentation on his time visiting India.

At the end of 2018, Mike Roskell has taken on the leadership of Men's Ministry, so we look forward to supporting him and his team as we seek to enable men in the church to continue to build deeper relationships with one another and grow in their faith as well as seeing new men welcomed into the church family.

Huge thanks to all who have served on team in this vital ministry.

## **SOS EMERGENCY SHELTER**

*Paul Burgess*

The Emergency Shelter was opened at The Centre, Verney Close in November 2016 in response to the number of requests that BPC were receiving for help from homeless people. It consists of a small bed room with an external door, linked to an adjacent toilet and shower. It is isolated from and can function independently from the Centre.

Run by the 'Church SOS team' which consists of 7 volunteers who share the task of welcoming and settling the guest, ensuring the room is clean and tidy, with food supplies and clean clothes if needed - providing emergency accommodation for up to 3 nights offering security, warmth, love and prayer during their stay. We aim to point them to professional organisations which could provide long term support.

## **THE CENTRE**

*Keith Croxton*

At the heart of The Centre's work is to be a presence and sacred space in the heart of the town where God's love and compassion can be experienced as the church responds to the needs in the community. It is run by The Centre Management Committee who report on the work of The Centre to MOG and the PCC.

The following events run by the church take place in The Centre:

- Coffee and Company
- Tea and Chat
- Alpha
- Freedom in Christ
- Greek/Hebrew/Latin classes

We do have some spaces for anyone who wants to run an outreach and/or community activity. Do get in touch with The Centre if you want to explore this possibility.

We also work with our hiring partners to provide important services and activities to the people of Buckingham and surrounding villages. Our partners include:

Oasis Partnership	Ingeus
Chronic Pain Group	Open House
Action for Children	Swan Community Hub
Swan Practice	Children's Choir
Community Care North Bucks	Specsavers
Gentle Exercise Group	U3A
Bridge Club	Gardening Club

The garden at The Centre provided a steady supply of fresh vegetables to the Tuesday Lunch. The BBQ area is now complete and is available for use by church groups. If you wish to make use of this facility please book via The Centre.

Our grateful thanks to Bob Johnstone, our Caretaker/Manager and the team of 30 volunteers who ensure The Centre is a place of welcome and support.

## **WOMEN'S MINISTRY**

*Hannah Roskell*

We have run some great events as part of the women's ministry this year, and it has been fantastic to see fellowship and new friendships made between the ladies at church.

We had a social meal at Prego, a film night showing 'The Shack', the very popular Christmas craft evening and the women's breakfasts have also been well attended, with some great speakers.

In this coming year, I'm also hoping to organise more social meals and lunches, another women's film night and a wider variety of activities such as walks together and cake decorating classes. I hope that these will enable more women to come along and help them to grow in their faith and their friendships with one another. In due course I would still love to see mentoring and prayer triplets as part of the women's ministry.

## **PASTORAL CARE**

*Jo Ash*

The pastoral ministry at BPC is busy and diverse, with many situations arising that present us with challenges not encountered before. It is a learning process for us all and we endeavour to provide love and support in a Spirit-led, biblically based way, with kindness and plenty of prayer.

Much of the church family are pastorally supported initially by their Connect Groups, which are lead by mature Christians who can

always refer back to myself or other staff members if they require any extra support. This works well and we encourage anyone who is not connected to a group, to try and join one for their own spiritual growth as well as the groups providing a support network and fellowship.

There are many fringe groups such as the Centre and The Community Lunch where we encounter people who are lonely and in need of support. We have created links with various agencies and services in order to be able to support these people and in turn, the agencies encourage people who they see to connect into these activities. It is exciting to see that BPC is really actively part of our local community and being God's hands and feet in this thriving and growing town.

As the town grows we come across more and more people who are in need, families who are struggling financially and need a food parcel, people facing homelessness and those in abusive relationships. BPC and The Centre are a real haven for these people and more and more people are reaching out to us when they feel they have no-where to turn. This is such an amazing opportunity for us as Christians to witness to these people and encourage, love and support them.

Within the church family, as our numbers increase, we face a growing number of pastoral issues, most of which are sensitive, confidential and often challenging. We pray continuously for guidance and wisdom as we support and love those suffering. We have many church members who suffer with their health both physically and mentally and as a church we must gather around these people with prayer and support.

I am so thankful that we have such an amazing family here at BPC. We are all involved pastorally in one way or another, in supporting and encouraging each other. We are all responsible for loving each other and I feel we do this very well. In this sense the whole church is the pastoral team and I encourage us all to continue to look out for one another.     1 John 4: 11-12



## **PRAYER & PRAISE**

*Paul Wallace*

Prayer and Praise is our monthly opportunity to come together, on the first Monday of each month, as a church to worship and to pray for our needs and the needs of the world. The meeting lasts only an hour, but in that time, we worship, give thanks to God, pray in small groups and sometimes we pray on our own in the building for those ministries which are a particular concern to us. We publish, every month, a leaflet which has a list of our prayer needs, which people can take home and use as a guide to pray during the month for the ministries taking place.

Prayer and Praise has a small committed group of intercessors, and we would love others to join us.

## **PRAYER MINISTRY**

*Revd Chris Murray*

There are 25 on the prayer ministry team, 17 ladies and 8 men.

We meet bi-monthly for training, and are using an excellent course, called, 'In His Name,' written by Alison Morgan and John Woolmer.

It is a wonderful privilege to be called to this ministry. We see the Holy Spirit ministering, usually very gently. Those who come forward nearly always sense His presence, sometimes clearly experiencing healing and, at the very least, a sense of peace.

It is important that more men offer themselves for this ministry, so that we can generally have a woman and a man praying for each person who comes forward. We will be recruiting.

We really look forward to more people giving testimonies to healing in our services and regular opportunities to do so.

We long and pray for more of God's power for His healing work, which, I feel sure, will come as we who minister gain a deeper understanding and learn to open ourselves more deeply to The Spirit.

**Sacristan, Servers and Chalice Assistants**

I am really grateful for the support of the team of Servers and Chalice Assistants, but I dread every time it comes around to preparing the rotas. I feel I am imposing on a very small group of people, most of whom are already involved in other aspects of Church life, and like me I am sure would like occasionally to 'just' be in the congregation.

There have been no changes in the overall number in the team, but Lynne Legrove has taken on Serving as well as Chalice. Once again, the services over the busy Christmas period went well, and I believe that our collective efforts will have given a good impression to visitors and occasional attendees. Please consider prayerfully whether you could be a Chalice Assistant or Server as we really do need the team to be larger.

**Sidespersons**

Once again, a huge thank you to everyone who served as a Sidesperson during the year. Like many of the roles fulfilled by members of the congregation, this is not difficult or onerous, but really important to ensure the congregation are welcomed, and the services run smoothly. Also, once again thank you all for your support over the busy Christmas period. We have many visitors and 'occasionals' at these services and your support really helps to give a good welcoming impression. And as ever we really could do with more on the team – if you are willing to join or can identify someone who is too shy to put themselves forward please let me know.

## **SAFEGUARDING**

*Jane Wardale and Denise Evans*

The church has a particular responsibility to safeguard the welfare of those who are vulnerable – this includes both the young, and adults who have particular needs. Our Safeguarding Officers, Denise Evans and Jane Wardale, are appointed by the PCC to oversee parish safeguarding procedures and arrangements, and advise on safeguarding issues that may arise.

Safeguarding includes ensuring that volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are recruited safely and properly, so that they can be appointed to suitable roles. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates are obtained where these are required. There are currently a total of 53 people who have been approved by the PCC to work as volunteers with children, young people and vulnerable adults within the parish.

Training is an important part of safeguarding work. Volunteers working with the young and vulnerable need to be equipped to understand and take action where there may be cause for concern. We provide face to face training, approved by the Church of England, on a regular basis, which our volunteers are asked to undertake, and to renew every three years. This training is also available on-line, for those who prefer to access it electronically. In addition, an on-line Basic Awareness course is offered, and is open to any member of the church to complete. It is recommended for anyone who would like to understand more about how the church can protect the young and vulnerable from harm. The PCC has agreed that completion of this Basic Awareness course should be mandatory for all PCC members.

Further information is available on the Safeguarding page of the parish website. The Safeguarding officers are also happy to provide information or answer questions. They can be contacted via [safeguarding@bpchurch.uk](mailto:safeguarding@bpchurch.uk).

## **SERVICES**

*Revd Will Pearson-Gee*

### **8am BCP Service**

Numbers at the 8am congregation have continued to decline slowly and between 5 and 10 now attend regularly. Numbers at festival services were also down which was disappointing. We are extremely grateful to the retired clergy who take many of these services and ensure its continued existence.

### **10am Midweek Communion Service**

The midweek communion service (using our new Common Worship service booklet) has continued to grow and attendance is hitting 25. We have welcomed younger members to preach in this encouraging context. The serving of refreshments on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday continues to be a great success and provides welcome fellowship. This service continues to offer a spiritual interlude in a busy week and is a great alternative to those who find the Sunday 11am difficult to get to.

### **9.30am Service**

The 9.30am service has continued to see new families joining although overall numbers seem steady. Some families (for example my own) have moved to the 6pm where there is provision for older children. We continue to see 40-50 children and 50-60 adults but the limited time at the end of the service for fellowship is a problem that needs solving. The service provides a relaxed environment with outstanding children's groups as well as solid adult teaching (which is shared with the evening congregation). The service is live-streamed via YouTube and the sermon remains on YouTube for viewing at a later date.

### **11am Parish Communion Service**

The 11am Parish Communion service has remained unchanged and the service booklet has been replaced with a new 'final' version which has been warmly received. The provision of different Eucharistic prayers provides a welcome variety and seasonal liturgy is very popular.

The non-Eucharistic 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday service with a less formal style remains popular and connect groups have been encouraged to help take some of these services. Numbers have remained steady and we will need to look at how to grow this congregation.

### **6pm Contemporary Evening Service**

'The 6 o'clock' as it is known continues to offer solid worship and teaching. The trajectory to develop a more charismatic service has continued and times of Spirit-led ministry have increased. The teaching has continued to be challenging and accessible. Numbers over the year have increased but there is room for more people still. The addition of some provision for children has been a great success and has led to growth. The service is live-streamed via YouTube and the sermon remains on YouTube for viewing at a later date.

### **SMALL GROUPS**

**Greek Group** + *Andrew Shergold and Steve Watkins*

We now have:

- An Advanced Greek Group
- An Intermediate Greek Group
- An Intermediate Greek Group at Milton Keynes
- A Beginner's Greek Group

There are 13 students in the four groups and (except for the Milton Keynes Group) we meet at the Centre on Saturday mornings.

The format of each lesson is that a language hour is followed by a 'Theological' or 'New Testament' hour.

The Advanced Group, having studied Galatians, is now studying Philippians. The Intermediate and Beginner's groups are progressing through the course.

## **Hebrew Group** + *Andrew Shergold and Steve Watkins*

We meet at the Centre on Friday evenings from 6:00pm – 8:00pm.

We use one of two books for learning Hebrew:

- Weingreen – A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew
- Pratico and Van Welt – Basics of Biblical Hebrew

We hope to commence a study on Leviticus, particularly chapters 18 – 19.

New members will be very welcome.

## **Latin Group** *Steve Watkins*

We meet at the Centre on Friday afternoons from 1:30pm – 5:00pm.

There are two groups:

- Beginner's from 1:30pm – 2:45pm
- Advanced from 3:00pm – 5:00pm

The Beginners' group uses a series of books by N. R. R. Oulton called 'So you *really* want to learn Latin?'

The Advanced group reads through two of the following in a session:

- 'Unseens' – selected short passages from various Latin Authors
- Latin Prose Composition by North & Hillard
- Vergil or Ovid.

In the past the Advanced group have read through Vergil Aeneid Books II and III, Ovid Metamorphoses Book XIV and some poems from Catullus. We are now reading Vergil Aeneid Book IV.

## **Greek And Hebrew Conference 2018**

Eleven members from all of the Groups attended a conference at High Leigh in Hertfordshire from Friday 4<sup>th</sup> May to Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

Each day began with Morning Prayer and concluded with Compline; there was a Communion Service on Sunday Morning including readings in Hebrew, Greek and English.

The Conference was much appreciated by all attendees and another conference (our 5<sup>th</sup>) has been scheduled for Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May to Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019.

## **THEOLOGY GROUP**

*Steve Watkins*

We now meet on the second Thursday of the month at 72, Embleton Way. We have a stable membership of 8 members.

In October of last year we completed the book 'Anglicanism' an SCM study guide by Stephen Spencer.

As from November 2018 we are now discussing papers presented by individual members. Thus far we have had:

- A comparison of Roman Catholic and Anglican Catechisms
- New Testament Manuscripts
- Jesus and Women
- The Fall in Genesis – An interpretation

Further papers include:

- All about the Resurrection
- The Origin of Religion
- The Trinity

New members are always welcome.

## **MUSICA EMBLETONENSIS**

*Steve Watkins*

We meet on the fourth Thursday in the month (except August and December) at 72, Embleton Way. The format is very straightforward: one of us chooses a theme and selects some CDs or LPs and we then listen to them. We have an interval at which we have a glass of wine and some nibbles.

For several reasons our meetings have been rather intermittent over the past year but we hope to make meet more regularly during the course of this year.

We also hope to resume our Opera evenings as well.

## **TRAIDCRAFT & FAIRTRADE**

*Tina Mitchell*

Towards the end of the 2018, after several years of poor results, Traidcraft plc nearly closed as a business, despite really good Autumn sales. However, some of the staff felt there was still a case for Traidcraft to continue and formulated a new business plan for a sleeker model. So it is good that celebrating its 40th anniversary the restructured company will still continue and aim to make the Traidcraft brand the ultimate in fair and ethical trade.

The sister charity, Traidcraft Exchange is unaffected and continues to fight for a world where all trade is fair.

Support for Fairtrade in our town remains strong. £304 in donations at our Big Brew and anniversary events was sent to Traidcraft Exchange. Turnover of Traidcraft from BPC was some £2500 in the year, including stalls held at outside venues.

Please pray for Traidcraft team as they rebuild and carry forward their pioneering spirit to make fairness the norm.



## **WEBSITE & DATA BASE**

*Revd Will Pearson-Gee*

The website had a facelift but the biggest change was that we moved to a new database called ChurchSuite. This took place over a prolonged period and by the autumn all the staff were using it. GDPR complicated matters and we still miss out on being able to contact quite a few church members who have not given their consent to be emailed.

## **WORSHIP**

### **Worship Team**

*Tim King*

2018 has been a great year for the worship team. We have continued to grow spiritually in both the 9.30 & 6pm congregations through worship. Introducing 'Unhindered worship' was fantastic. It has been great to have a dedicated time to worship with no time restraints.

I constantly receive positive feedback about the musical provision at both services. If there weren't the time constraints, I would love to do more at the 9.30, it is just simply too much with setup and pack down, and the 11am after. It has been so good to see more ministry and by intentionally planning for it, I feel we are allowing God more room in both services to minister to people. I feel like the musical worship really helps in getting people to the place where they feel open to receiving from God.

### **Production**

We are very blessed with the equipment we have in church, which enables us to do so much of what we do.

Having a reliable and current system has helped enhance weddings and funerals, our Sunday services, courses such as the marriage and alpha course and also external bookings from schools and the university and also charities. We constantly get complimented from

people who come in and are impressed with the quality of sound and visuals we can provide.

We successfully removed the big cabinet on the gallery this year and replaced it with two long desks. This has significantly improved the useable working space and actually allows the people on production to see the stage. It has helped us in communicating to the stage and enables the teams to feel more included in what's going on.