



St Mary's Acton

Annual Report

2022

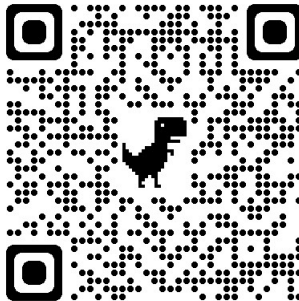


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Services at St Marys



Sunday Services

1st Sunday

11am *Holy Communion*

6-30pm These services, usually *Evening Prayer*, offer a calm and reflective end to Sunday's.

2nd & 4th Sunday

8am *Holy Communion* - Everyone is welcome to join our regular cohort – the more the merrier. It is a spoken service, quiet and contemplative, much enjoyed by our regular congregation.

11am *Morning Prayer*

3rd Sunday

Messy Church - A service for **all** the family with- songs, crafts, drama, an informal study group ... and lots of toast!

5th Sunday

A Combined Service in the CrossCountry Parishes

Wednesday

10-30am A Service of *Holy Communion*. This is followed by fellowship with tea/coffee and cakes/biscuits and a glass of sherry on special occasions.

Please check our Website or Newsletter for details of different or special Services and times of worship that take place regularly during the course of the year. For details of other activities please see our website.

Growing closer to God, each other and the community we serve.

St. Mary's Church, Monks Lane, Acton, Cheshire CW5 8LE
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crosscountryparishes@outlook.com

Vicar's Report

It is hard to remember that at the beginning of 2022, we were still experiencing restrictions as we continued to attempt to limit the spread of Covid. Whilst Covid has not disappeared, it was good to see a growing sense of normality and a return to confidence, ending the year with all the usual activities taking place in ways which were entirely normal pre-pandemic. I want to record my thanks again to all those who enabled worship and other activities to continue to operate safely during an extended period of ever-changing restrictions.



As always, I wish to thank our Churchwardens, Penni Doyle and Joyce Percival, without whose support and wisdom, my task would be considerably harder. I wish to thank, too, the myriad of volunteers who support the life of St Mary's; from cleaning to bell ringing, Tea at the Tower to leading worship, serving tea and coffee to preparing for worship, and undertaking many other tasks which enable church life to run smoothly, let alone those who plan and deliver special events such as concerts, Platinum Jubilee celebrations and the Christmas Festival, our life together would be significantly poorer, and would run a great deal less smoothly.

Of particular note in 2022 were the celebrations of the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, which we marked not only in worship, but in displays and a 'Street Party' in the church in early June. Later, in September 2022, we also held services to mark the death of Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

Locally, a major focus for the PCC this year has been the exploration of a possible merger of Acton Parish with Worleston Parish, as it became clear that it was no longer possible to find churchwardens and PCC members to enable Worleston to remain an independent Parish. The care and concern expressed towards Worleston as these discussions began and progressed was heartening and greatly appreciated by the worshipping congregation at Worleston. Due diligence has been carried out at every stage, to ensure that the proposed merger does not negatively impact Acton in anyway. At the time of compiling this report, a Public Consultation is currently open to enable anyone who wishes to comment on the proposed merger to do so.

Another welcome achievement has been the re-uniting of Acton into the Worleston and Wettenhall magazine, and thanks are due to the enthusiasm of those who continue to contribute and edit this as part of a team from the other parishes.

Finally, but certainly not least, I wish to express gratitude to God for his faithfulness in continuing to bless the life of St Mary's Acton over the past year.



S Anne Lawson
Vicar

Churchwarden's Report

Another busy year where many of us saw our Christian lives return to a welcome fellowship of activity in and around the church.

Statistics for Mission were completed early in the year demonstrating that our worshipping community had marginally increased last year to an average 121 worshippers. We had a slight increase in baptisms (9); a decrease in weddings (10); and a decrease in funerals (20).

Mike Holston will give an update regarding the Church Building in his Fabric report. Once again, many thanks to Mike for the huge amount of time and effort given to taking care of our church building. Further thanks go to Sandra and her team of industrious cleaners who keep our beautiful church spick and span throughout the year.

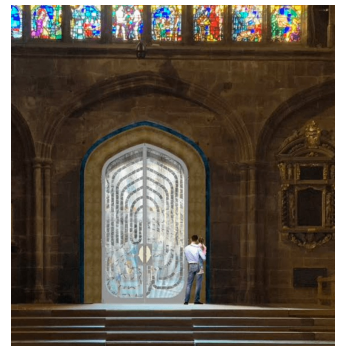
Once again Acton United Charity were able to distribute the annual financial gratuity to those eligible in the parish – thank you to Gill Evans for helping me with this task. There is still an opportunity to receive this gratuity if applicable.

Thank you to Charles Hull who continued to coordinate the Brindley and Faddiley Trust which supported, amongst others, Messy Church, Ukrainian Refugees and Acton C of E Primary Academy.

The newly appointed safeguarding officer, Tom Doyle, attended the Safeguarding Leadership training sessions on November 8th and 15th.

Tom has now visited all four parishes in his safeguarding role. The Archdeacon conducted his inspection on the 26th June; he found all goods and documentation in good order.

As parishioners we voted the Saxon Stones to be the most popular choice for the Chester Cathedral Pilgrim Porch project to mark the Queen's jubilee; the beautiful glass doors are now in place in the Cathedral and create quite a challenge in finding our choice!



We continued to encourage links with Acton C of E Primary Academy offering the popular Advent Trail early on in the year which was well attended – thanks to Tracey and Joyce who organised and set up this important opportunity for our younger community to explore the true meaning of Christmas. The school held their Harvest Festival in our church bringing together parents and the community in an uplifting celebration of God's gifts.

And talking of Harvest.....! Rev Anne achieved an incredible feat of organisation and faith in coordinating the National Harvest Festival in Chester Cathedral on the 25th September. Thanks to Claire Lewis-Jones for organising the car share to transport our parishioners to the Cathedral where we could celebrate in worship on this wonderful occasion.

The sun shone on our church tent at the Cheshire Show in June where we had a steady stream of visitors joining in with prayer, hymn singing and tea and cake! We are showcasing our Forest Church at the Cheshire Show this year so please put 20th and 21st June in your diaries.

Throughout the year Forest Church continued to prepare for its launch in the Spring of 2023. It has been a truly enjoyable experience working with Sue Hull and such a positive and enthusiastic group preparing and trying out activities to explore this fresh expression of worship.

On the 14th September a small group set off to the Everyday Faith workshop in Elworth Church Hall; it was a very enjoyable and constructive evening reflecting on how Christians are called to follow Jesus every day, wherever we are – in our homes, workplaces and neighbourhoods, as well as in church and we hope to implement some of the practical activities in our own congregations next year.

During 2022 Carol Thayer introduced Cursillo to our parish, "a space to explore what being a Christian means in a modern world and specifically what it means to me." Personally, it has given me the opportunity to ask questions about my faith and its relevance in my life. Carol runs two Cursillo groups and would welcome newcomers if you feel you may be interested.



November saw St. Mary's, Acton, team up with The Cross Country Parishes joint magazine with St. David's Wettenhall, and St. Oswald's Worleston. This venture has been well received with positive comments and feedback from a number of people across the country parishes. Thank you to those who have submitted articles.

Thank you to Philip Percival for overseeing Dave and Scott in their excellent management of the churchyard, it is often complimented upon. We must also thank Philip for organising the bulb planting day in November and look forward to seeing 'a host, of golden daffodils' this autumn!

The Social Committee report will cover the many wonderful and uplifting events that took place in 2022 but a huge thank you must be given to all those who tirelessly work behind the scenes to welcome people into our church community.

On a personal note I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to all those who stepped in last year when I was unavoidably detained in Cumbria; and a huge welcome to Joyce!!



Penni Doyle

Safeguarding

SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Thomas M. Doyle (Tom Doyle)

Please see below the various requirements for Safeguarding; Best Practice

The Safeguarding Officer should know (and does):

* The current law and guidance of safeguarding practice for children and young adults and vulnerable people.

*The common types of abuse which may occur and the signs to look for to recognize abuse.

*How to build and ensure a safe space for all members of the parish/parishes based upon mutual respect and Christian Principles.

* How to build a safe space for children and young and vulnerable people so that they feel safe, looked after, and willing to share any concerns they may have.

* How to recruit new staff members in a safe way and prevent future safeguarding issues.

* Excellent listening and empathy skills to properly listen to and support anyone expresses a concern.

*Exploring the barriers to disclosure and the recognition of any safeguarding concerns.

It's important to recognize that the role of a Safeguarding Officer is constantly changing, and it's vital to keep up to date with the latest developments in safeguarding rules and regulations.

The Safeguarding Officer is required by law and best practice to inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor regarding any matters relating to a Safeguarding Issue.

As of April 20,2023, any safeguarding issues/matters have been directed &/or reported to the appropriate person/persons or managing body related to the Cross Country Parishes (Diocese of Chester).

As well as attending safeguarding training, it is my responsibility as the Safeguarding Officer to ensure everyone in our organization is up to date on the latest safeguarding information and are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.

It is also my responsibility to recommend the different training sessions that everyone needs to attend and why each training session is vital to their job. The Safeguarding Officer will also oversee keeping abreast of any changes in law or regulations to ensure that our community has the knowledge and is updated as soon as possible. In this regard I have recently completed the Lead Safeguarding Training to be able to provide the necessary/required/recommended training/updates for our parishioners who play a significant role within the parishes or act as a volunteer for any of the many activities that occur within the parishes.

I have been liaising with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor with a plan to update all those interested and involved in the Cross Country Parishes in an effort to update and upskill our training needs and certifications.

On Monday, May 15, 2023 I shall be meeting/Zooming with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team in an effort to ensure that all relevant Safeguarding Training will be delivered for all those parishioners who have responsibilities across the Cross Country Parishes. Many may prefer and welcome the return of face-to-face training. It is our intention to provide the style of training preferred by individuals and/or small groups. As soon as the decision/opportunity arises I shall communicate the outcome via email and specific PCC meetings.

Thank you!

Thomas M. Doyle (Safeguarding Officer, Cross Country Parishes)

Tom Doyle



Electoral Roll

The numbers on St. Mary's Electoral Role, as at the end of 2022, were 120. This includes zero additions and 2 deletions from the 2021 total of 122.

Charles Hull

Secretary's Report

In 2022 there were 10 PCC meetings this included 3 extraordinary meetings that were solely concerned with the merger of St Mary's Acton and St Oswald's Worlestone parishes. The main other topics were looking at the viability of our services, the platinum jubilees and the ongoing possibility of installing Wi-Fi into the church.

Ann Williams

Fabric Report

The programme of repair continues, notably with repairs to the leadwork on the nave roof. The clock has been removed and is being repaired prior to reinstallation.

The repair to the stonework and other work on the tower top are however presently on hold pending results of grant applications.



Michael Houlston.

Churchyard Report

The Churchyard continues to be loved and looked after by Dave Whitmarsh and some help painting by Scott.

Mr Brookfield returned the South Gates, now beautifully cleaned and painted. He has used a powder coating process which will make the gates weather proof for many years to come. We all appreciate his generous gift of the refurbishment of all the gates on the south side of the church.



No new machinery has been required this year but a new mower will be needed next year.

The Parish Council has 10 small trees for us to plant around the churchyard in the new year.

With Rosemary Shaw's help and support there has been a bulb planting day, at the far end of the old graveyard, when 2000 Snowdrops and Daffodil bulbs were planted in heart shapes. These will look beautiful in the spring and for many years to come.

As in other reports it is good to be able to report many positive and appreciative comments on the way the church yard is kept and looked after.

Phillip Percival

Deanery Synod

Brief highlights from the meetings held in 2022 are as follows and further details can be obtained from Sue Hull :-

February 2022 at St. Mary's, Wistaston

Members spent time talking with each other about their hopes and plans for the Deanery Synod in the future. Members also talked with each other for a short while on developing a Deanery Prayer along the lines of thanksgiving and asking.

Revd. Alison Fulford spoke about "Everyday Faith".

June 2022 at St. Bartholomew's, Church Minshull

The MP for Crewe and Nantwich, Dr Kieran Mullen talked about his life and path to becoming an MP. He made it clear that he didn't have a faith but that he recognised the importance of the Church's role in bringing people together and in demonstrating practical care for others in their community. He spoke about his involvement in education and highlighted the Lifetime Skills Guarantee to support adults to upskill and retrain. He didn't support food voucher for children from families that struggle to feed their children in school holidays, but preferred to see children having access to groups that could enable them and parents to learn to cook. He did support more sustainable funding for social care.

September 2022 at St. Peter's, Elworth

"Everyday Faith" was discussed which is a project to encourage all to evangelise through the challenge of daily discipleship in the places where we, as ordinary Christians operate: workplaces, local community groups, our recreation, our clubs and groups. There were opportunities to discuss in parish groups the practical outworking of this challenge. Parishes and their life, spirituality and worship should support and fuel the individual to do this.

November 2022 at St. Peter's, Minshull Vernon

Revd. Sarah Fenby talked about "Growing Vocations" and how the Diocese sought to nurture vocations by encouraging stepping outside our comfort zones. She encouraged us all to listen to ourselves, to offer what we have to God, so that we test out our own or other's vocations. There are many vocations – so not all with dog collars - and possibly more than one vocation for some.

Crewe Community Development Worker Becky Hurst

The Deanery continues to support our Crewe Community Worker. The initial project ended in June 2022. The Deanery will cover Becky's salary until May 2023 when the Project will be taken on by Caritas, the Catholic charity. Becky will be employed as an Ecumenical Worker for four days per week.

Sue Hull/Brenda Brockbank

Churches Together in Nantwich

The Churches together in Nantwich meet 4 or 5 times a year to build relationships between the Christian church communities in our town and area. We are involved with some of these but being part of the Cross Country parishes group and just out of town we do not benefit from all the planned events.

For the last two years we have not paid any subscriptions to the CTinN due to COVID and this last year they were given a generous donation from the Nantwich Show Charity.

The activities we are involved in are the Foodbank, 698 food parcels have recently been needed, feeding 1935 people. 500 Christmas hampers were put together.

The Christmas Day lunches which this year fed 36 elderly or lonely people, who enjoyed the hospitality, company and entertainment.

Plus 12 lunches delivered to those who could not get to the Chapel venue. There are usually lots of volunteers for this event, and the volunteers benefit as much as the guests. A coordinator of drivers, chauffeuring people into the Chapel is needed!

The Easter and Christmas services are advertised in The Link, for all the member Churches. We do not partake in the Good Friday service on the square as we have our own service, but we could!

The Acton team came a close second at the Tearfund quiz last Autumn, the date this year is 7th of October.

Unfortunately the group of Street Pastors could not find enough manpower to continue the wonderful work they did amongst the nightlife youngsters in the town, and disbanded two years ago, there is now the chance a group of Street Angels will serve the town in a similar way.

Probably we take the biggest interest in the CTinN presence at Nantwich Show, newly relaunched last year we helped with litter picking and a baby changing area on the showground. The volunteers, who were not all sure if this was the best way to show God's love on the showground, all had a great experience as they chatted to people and everyone appreciated the service we gave. Plus the free entry to the show.

The Chairman is Andrew Spiers who worships at St Mary's Nantwich, Treasurer Jackie Holland who is a member of the Methodist Church and after 12 years of service to the CTinN Simon Bowen, from the Baptist Church, Simon stood down as Secretary. Please consider whether you would be interested in this secretarial role, come to a meeting with Rev Anne or I to see if you could serve the churches in this way.

The meetings start and finish with prayer and as well as the meeting agenda each Church reports of their hopes and concerns, events and activities.

Joyce Percival

St Mary's Church,
Acton

25th April 2022

7pm

Annual Meeting of Parishioners



Opening Reading John 20: 19-31

Prayers

Present

Rev Anne Lawson AL

Penni Doyle PD

Gill Evans GE

Ena Furber EF

Joyce Percival JP

Ann Williams AW

Elizabeth Bull EB

Deana Emerton DE

Peter Foster PF

Mike Houlston MH

Phillip Percival PP

Helen Wood HW

Stephan Davies SD

Clive Evans CE

Tracey Foster TF

Miriam Harvey MHa

Carol Thayer CT

Apologies

Kath Edwards

Charles Hull

Rosemary Shaw

Jackie Hatton

Sue Hull

Sue Stott

James Hickie

Claire Lewis-Jones

Minutes of Annual Meetings 18th May 2021

Motion to accept the minutes; Proposed DE, seconded MH. All agreed.

Matters Arising

No matters arising

Election of Churchwardens

PD was thanked for her service for past year especially in the continuing difficult circumstances and as our only Church warden. PD thanked all those who had helped her.

Nominations for Church Warden:

Penni Doyle Proposed PP Seconded GE

Joyce Percival Proposed DE Seconded SD

All in favour, PD and JP were elected.

The Archdeacon Visitation Services to swear Churchwardens in to post this year are on June 15th at Christchurch, Alsager.

Meeting Closed

St Mary's Church,
Acton
25th April 2022

Annual Parochial Church Meeting



Opening Prayers Present

Rev Anne Lawson AL
Penni Doyle PD
Gill Evans GE
Ena Furber EF
Joyce Percival JP
Ann Williams AW

Elizabeth Bull EB
Deana Emerton DE
Peter Foster PF
Mike Houlston MH
Phillip Percival PP
Helen Wood HW

Stephan Davies SD
Clive Evans CE
Tracey Foster TF
Miriam Harvey MHa
Carol Thayer CT

Apologies

Kath Edwards
Charles Hull
Rosemary Shaw

Jackie Hatton
Sue Hull
Sue Stott

James Hickie
Claire Lewis-Jones

Minutes of Annual Meetings 18th May 2021

Motion to accept the minutes; Proposed TF, seconded GE. All agreed

Matters Arising

No matters arising

Report of changes in the Electoral Roll

There are 122 on the electoral roll. CH was thanked for his continuing work.

Report on the Proceedings of the PCC and other activities in the parish.

The annual report has been widely available, and 45 have been printed. AL thanked everyone who submitted, contributed reports and did things in 2020 and especially Miriam Harvey for assembling the booklet.

AL also commented that there was a lot of content in the annual report, and St Mary's was sustaining and even growing in areas such as Church cleaning and Tea at the tower. It is heartening that so much is going on.

Report on Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults

St Mary's Acton PCC has complied with the duty under section 5

of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Tom Doyle was thanked for his dedication to a very complex role. AL reminded the PCC that they all must have a DBS check at some point.

Financial Statements of the PCC for the year ending 31st December 2021

JH was thanked for taking over the treasurer post in such difficult circumstance. He has an incredible eye for detail and is getting everything in order. The accounts for this year are still ongoing, the Diocese have given St Mary's time to get their accounts in order and audited. When they are ready the PCC will accept the, and they will be posted on the website. They are already available on the charity commission website.

Report on the Fabric of the Church.

AL thanked MH for his hard work during the year. MH had nothing to add to the annual report.

PD read the churchwardens statement on the fabric of the church. "The goods, ornaments and fabric of the church is in good condition."

Report on the Proceedings of the Deanery Synod.

AL said there was nothing to add to the Annual Report.

AL thanked DE, SH and EB for serving the past year on the deanery synod.

Elections

The deanery representatives were elected for 3 years in 2020

PCC members

There are 4 spaces on the PCC.

	Standing	Proposed	Seconded	
3 years	Jackie Hatton	PD	EB	Elected
3 years	Claire Lewis Jones	JP	GE	Elected

PP, MH agreed to be co-opted onto the PCC again. Sue Stott and Charles Hull were also co-opted.

Appointment of the Independent Examiner

AL proposed to remain with Lyon Griffith as the Independent Examiner

GE proposed, HW seconded. Passed unanimously.

Any Other Business

None

Meeting Closed 7-47pm





Acton

CE Primary Academy

Developing the learners of tomorrow and equipping them with the skills to flourish and succeed, for “Nothing is impossible with God.” (Luke 1:37)

‘We are all very proud of our wonderful school, ensuring that we provide a curriculum that upholds our strong vision and values that every child achieves and succeeds. We have a strong Christian ethos, which allows us to carry out our Christian vision and values throughout all we do..’



Acton School has a new head teacher called Chris Priddey. He has worked in schools for over 25 years in a mixture of rural and town schools in Cheshire West & Chester and Cheshire East. He is now proud to be part of the team at Acton CE Primary Academy.

Chris says, ‘During the course of this year we have been looking at our curriculum, making sure that the children receive an exciting and relevant curriculum that is special to them as a child at Acton CE Primary Academy. We have been focusing on high expectations from the children, taking pride in their work and doing their very best: this closely links with our vision that ‘...nothing is impossible with God’. Our collective worship this year has followed a number of themes, including bravery, forgiveness and friendship. We would like our children to follow these examples in their work in and around school. We have enjoyed celebrating harvest, Christmas and Easter in Church where we were joined by many of our parents and members of the school community.’

There are 172 children in school.

Reception	19	8 girls	11 boys
Year 1	21	8 girls	14 boys
Year 2	30	11 girls	19 boys
Year 3	26	11 girls	15 boys
Year 4	18	8 girls	10 boys
Year 5	26	13 girls	13 boys
Year 6	31	17 girls	14 boys

Acton has been awarded a decarbonisation bid from the Government. Work will be undertaken to install a ground source heat pump and insulation upgrades through the coming months. Ultimately, this will mean that the school no longer relies on oil for heating, having a positive impact environmentally, and should also lead to costs savings for the school in the longer term. This is an exciting project for the school to be involved in – with the children being able to see, first-hand, some of the technology that will be used. It is planned for the work to start in the middle of this summer term, so it will only disrupt the latter part of the year.

My final comment has to be that I really love visiting the school; every time I go there all the children and staff are very friendly and welcoming.

Lesley Latronico



Bellringers Report

Hello Report time is here again

There have been changes again this year in the belfry but unfortunately due to lack of numbers we have not been able to ring for Sunday services. However, due to the new ringers Vicki and John Batchelor from the parish we are hopeful that ringing on a Sunday morning will recommence in the near future.

Practice night on a Tuesday 8pm to 9pm has helped the new ringers improvement and excellent help of David Allman which is much appreciated. Ringers from Nantwich and Wrenbury and occasionally other towers come to help which is very helpful to us all.

If there is anyone interested in learning to ring or just coming to see us ring please feel free to join us on a Tuesday evening.

There was an increase in weddings this year which we were able to ring for with the help of Nantwich, Wrenbury and various ringers from other towers which I'd like to thank for their help.

We were pleased to welcome visiting bell ringers in February from Pickering and surrounding areas. In June ringers from Shropshire came, which included Mike Carding who was a ringer at Acton in 1997/98. In August Christleton ringers made their usual annual visit and in November a number of roving ringers came from around Yorkshire, Sussex and Ruthin

We were honoured to ring for the Queens Platinum Jubilee in June and made it to front cover of the Ringing World the band of lady ringers being, Leona Edge, Heather Newton, Marian Moulton, Chris Owen-Roberts, Carole Sturgess all from Acton and Fanny Wiess from Nantwich.

On the morning of 30 July there was a 6 bell practice with approximately 22 ringers from the South Cheshire Branch of the Guild and a savory buffet was served which was greatly appreciated by the ringers.

Sadly our next ring in September for the Queen was her funeral another great honour, the ringers on this sad occasion

Chris Owen-Roberts, Carole Sturgess, Leona Edge from Acton and David Allman, Denis Taylor and Fanny Wiess helped us out from Nantwich.

Remembrance Day in November was rung for which is always a privilege. The ringers were Carole Sturgess, Chris Owen-Roberts, Leona Edge and Marian Moulton from Acton Denis Taylor from Nantwich and Steve Pugh a visiting ringer who was passing on a canal boat.

The Christmas tree festival was a success and we again enjoyed decorating our tree, it was lovely to see so many trees and visitors in church, the theme was a challenge! !!

Christmas morning ringing was a first for John and Vicki Batchelor our newest ringers who live in the parish. Other ringers that morning were Carole Sturgess, Leona Edge, Heather Newton from Acton, Denis Taylor and David Allman from Nantwich, Bill Humphries a roaming ringer in Guild and Paul Lucas a visiting ringer from Oxford who was on a canal boat and wanted a Christmas Day ring.

David Allman did his utmost to keep the clock going for the parishioners of Acton but unfortunately it gave up and has been taken away for repair. Hopefully it will be back in the not too distant future.

Once again many thanks to the PCC for payment of the bell-ringers subscriptions.

Lastly, I'd personally like to thank all the ringers who have helped us out over the year, your assistance is greatly appreciated and it has managed to keep the bells ringing in Acton.



Carole Sturgess

Bible Readers

Thursday Bible Study

This year our group has held three sessions, meeting in the home of Deana and Gerald Emerton, to whom we are very grateful for their hospitality and warm welcome.

The first session was held in September/October when we started looking at the Psalms. We continued the theme in January/February and then went on to look at St Paul's letter to the Colossians - four chapters in four weeks in March. It was interesting to note how Paul used teaching about the Person of Jesus Christ as the basis for Christian conduct. The session on human relationships provided much food for thought

Our group consists of 14 or 15 who attend whenever possible, and by popular demand have asked for more studies in the coming months. Therefore we are pleased to say that on 18th May we shall begin our next session, looking at the Gospel and Epistle for the following Sunday. Everyone is welcome at 10am at Glebe House, Acton.

We begin with tea, coffee and chat, then have a study of the subject with much interaction, questions and laughter. Please come and join us.

John Malbon

Church Cleaning

This year 25 ladies have helped to clean the church. They are Jennifer Bolton, Elizabeth Bull, Julie Cope, Chris Cundall, Jan Dobson, Penni Doyle, Kath Edwards, Gill Evans, Liz Ford, Tracy Foster, Ena Furber, Angela Gray, Sandra Houlston, Sue Hull, Lesley Latronico, Janet Malbon, Ann McMillan, Judith Merrin, Sarah Potts, Mary Rees, Rosemary Shaw, Vivienne Turner, Brenda Wilson, Helen Wood and Jill Wright.



Sadly, Maggie Harper left in 2021 and Wendy Coxhill in February 2022, moving to Surrey, both after many years of service for which I thank them. However Rosemary kindly joined us in November 2022 and Sarah, who was helping occasionally due to work commitments, has since August 2022 been able to come more regularly. Both are very welcome additions.

We still clean fortnightly with Monday and Tuesday teams and still have an annual social get-together, now held in the summer months as the preference is to travel in day light. I thank everyone for their hard work and dedication as we endeavour to keep St. Mary's a clean and welcoming church.

Sandra Houlston.

Messy Church

The effects of the pandemic were still in evidence during the early months of 2022 as families succumbed once more to Covid (and chicken pox but that's a given!). The Christingle in January was particularly subdued but as spring moved on we invariably had children to act out whatever story we had chosen and we can always rely on our "older children" to do their bit. We had a new start with Noah filling the beautifully knitted ark on loan from St Mary's Nantwich, celebrated at a wedding in Cana for Mothering Sunday and were "on a special journey" at Easter. We explored Jesus as the water of life and Christian Aid in May as well as planting sunflowers for the Sustainable Nantwich project which later made a lovely show round the Ukraine "flag" outside despite the hot weather and the determined efforts of a mole!



Crowns made for Christ the King came in handy for our display for Queen Elizabeth's Jubilee in June. Over the summer we acted and sang our way through the epic saga of Joseph who really had a multicoloured coat to wear courtesy of Janet!

We made peg dolls, Egyptian headdresses, bread and a frieze of the whole story to be displayed in Church. We had the "word of the Lord planted in our hearts" in September, felt sorry for Zacchaeus in October and saw Jesus as a light in the darkness as we made sparkly lanterns for our Messy Church Christmas tree. In December there was a Christmas "tree" of shiny parcels containing the whole cast of the nativity story knitted by Janet so we could all be involved in the telling of the story - a lovely friendly morning together.

It has been great to welcome families new to the area and to Acton School, and the poster on the corner has done its job on occasion which is good to know. We keep in touch via email and remember the children's birthdays - we know it is appreciated.

The team includes Pete and Tracey Foster, Janet and John Malbon, Miriam Harvey, Lesley Latronico, Sarah Thomas, Grace Tripp, Kath Edwards and the tea and toast team, with Emily Davies playing in the band when available and Simon Davies happy to do the tech stuff or be Jesus if asked! Thanks to Gill Evans who is always there to welcome everyone and support the team. All our thanks as always to our friends in the congregation who get involved with a will and support the discussion at the "top end".



Sidespeople

The PCC agreed in 2022 to changes to the frequency of the Evening Services to one a month and further agreed that, as a result of the low attendance at these Services, nominated Sidespersons would no longer be required. The duties of the Sidespersons for these evening services would thus be carried out by the appropriate Churchwarden as is done for the Wednesday Communion Service.

The names of those who served on the Sidesperson's Rota in 2022 for the 11.00 o'clock service are listed below. Each and everyone of you is thanked for the splendid service that you have given to St. Mary's throughout the years, always giving a warm welcome to those attending our Services.

Our church has a fine reputation for being a "friendly one" and the job you all do forms a major part of this. Thank you all and keep up the good work!

Chris & Christine Barratt
Kitty Boot
Elizabeth Bull
Robert Darlington
Stephan Davies
Kath Edwards
Gill Evans
Poppy Emery
Ena Furber
Peter & Tracey Foster

Mike & Sandra Houlston
Charles & Susan Hull
Stephen & Linda Jones
Peter & Lesley Latronico
Lewis-Jones Family
Philip & Joyce Percival
Ricky & Charles Roundell
Fred West
Miriam Harvey

Social Committee

I am pleased to report that the social committee continues to be a strong team of ladies and gentleman who are a powerhouse behind many of the activities that happen at St Mary's, Acton. Our aim is to promote Christian fellowship amongst our congregation and encourage and welcome newcomers.

As an overview, during the last the year we have continued to not only be involved in leading large annual events such as the Christmas Tree Festival,



but also providing support to regular services by providing refreshments and fellowship encouraging all services to be times when visitors and regulars can be guaranteed Christian Community Warmth; something much needed and brought to the fore after many people's lonely experiences during COVID times.

We have hosted many fabulous concerts organised by Stephan Davies. Stephan's involvement is thorough, from finding and booking musicians and choirs, helping them choose a suitable programme, organising their rehearsals, designing and promoting ticket sales and promotion to organising refreshments and draw prizes.



Stephan also compares the shows. Could we ask for anything more from one person – a huge thank you.

Nantwich Band and Jessica Thayer both performed at The Last Night of the Proms in Acton in November, proceeds from this concert went to the British Legion Poppy Appeal.

The Christmas concert was one of the final performances of our good friends the FunkyChoir.com. We are very grateful for their support over the last few years and we wish Brent a happy retirement. The Spring Concert is on 13th May and will be performed by Acton Operatic Society who are performing a selection of songs from Westend shows.

The mainstay of our social contribution to Christian life in our community is our weekly Tea@Tower event lead by Stephan Davies and Deana Emerton. Together with a dedicated team of bakers and servers, this service provides a warm welcome to so many every week which is a huge commitment. This event has been recognised across the diocese and we are proud and grateful to all involved. This year we even opened our doors on Christmas Day.



Each month we have held a ladies lunches lead by Joyce Percival who organises venues and often organises lifts. Joyce also coordinates the summer lunches that are held in the gardens of different parishioners across the four parishes.

This year we have started a new activity, providing trips out to places of interest. So far, we have visited Chester Cathedral where we enjoyed a tour and light lunch. Further trips will be organised in the autumn.

*Claire Lewis-Jones
Chair Social Committee*

Sunday Refreshments

'Sunday morning refreshments runs like clockwork' is the official view of the Social Committee, so that's good enough for me. But like everything that runs well it relies on good team work and enthusiasm and we certainly have that. The opportunity to chat and enjoy a hot drink and biscuits following the 11 o'clock service is very much appreciated and the children particularly enjoy the endless supply of toast at Messy Church.

Many thanks to all who help to provide the fellowship, friendship and fun, as well as the refreshments and doing the washing up.

New recruits always welcome.

Kath Edwards

Tea at the Tower

Tea at the Tower - A reflection of the past year!

Tea at the tower was set up in March 2017 with the aim to establish a weekly café facility - providing an opportunity for people to come together and enjoy some refreshments within a caring community environment. We called our café "Tea at The Tower". Our purpose was simply to establish a vehicle for outreach and pastoral care and an environment whereby a compassionate community could grow.



We had no idea that we would still be serving tea today! As you would expect - we don't take this success lightly, we continue to work hard to remain relevant and wanted by the community we serve.

Our monthly walks continue to be a great success - and we love to meet the many new people who decide to stretch their walking boots in our direction!

We are proud to say, that we were able to serve a special 'Platinum - Tea at the Tower' to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's remarkable achievement (We even received an acknowledgement to our 'best wishes letter' from Buckingham Palace!).

Recently, we held a 'Royal Afternoon Tea at the Tower' to mark the coronation of King Charles. A band played at both occasions and Jessica Thayer treated us to an impromptu performance which made the occasion even more special.

Our treasurer informs us that 'Tea at the Tower' makes an impressive impact upon the finances of Acton Church. Indeed, £11,517.40 was raised in 2022; £4512.05 has been raised so far in 2023.

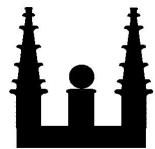
Non of this could have been achieved without the selfless support from our many helpers - who have contributed so much to make Tea at the Tower what it is today. We extend a heartfelt 'thank you'.

Stephan & Deana



Website Report

The website continues to be maintained by Ann and David Williams.



Thank you to all our regular contributors especially Tracey Foster for the monthly Messy Church report and Stephan Davies for regular copy, we do rely on the material sent to keep it up to date and informative.

We do appeal for future event dates and reports of those past, to include and keep the site relevant. Please send any information and good quality pictures to church@stmarysacton.org

Ann and David Williams

