

Christ Church Eaton

Here for Christ – here for you

ANNUAL REVIEW OF 2024

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PART ONE - CHRIST CHURCH REPORTS

VICAR'S REPORT ON 2024

Thank you to all those who sent in their reports for this annual review. I remain deeply grateful to Ruth Thorp in the Parishes Office for collating the material and to Catherine Richmond for her meticulous work in formatting. It is my sincere prayer that as you read this report, you are both informed and inspired to grow in faith, hope and love.

Growth in Discipleship, Service, Invitation and Welcome

Since the pandemic, we have actively fostered a Culture of Growth. Building on the momentum from last year's initiatives, the new Growth Group has become a vital part of our ministry. Its focus spans three dimensions:

- **Upwards:** growing our commitment to God through public and personal prayer and worship.
- **Inwards:** Strengthening fellowship, pastoral care and discipleship within our congregation.
- **Outwards:** growing our community outreach, invitation and welcome, through events like Talks@2 and Chat over a Cuppa.

In 2024, our APCM affirmed initiatives from our 2023 away day, and our 2024 away day at St John's Cathedral on 15th June, themed "Come and See", served as both an inspirational gathering and a practical exercise in inviting and welcoming new members into our fold. Our Praying for Growth group met regularly, praying for both numerical increase and spiritual deepening—a testimony to our collective resolve to live as a vibrant, growing church, here for Christ and for all those we come into contact with.

Special Services and Worship

This year, as in previous years, we marked a wealth of special occasions throughout the liturgical calendar. We celebrated Candlemas, an all-age Mothering Sunday service, and dramatised passion readings on Palm Sunday and Good Friday. Our special communions on Maundy Thursday, Easter Day, were complemented by a Joint Ascension Day Communion here at Christ Church, Eaton, as well as marking Pentecost, Trinity Sunday,

and enjoying several Choral Evensongs in July, September, and October. Producing a special booklet for each Matins service has made the service more accessible to those unused to the prayer books.

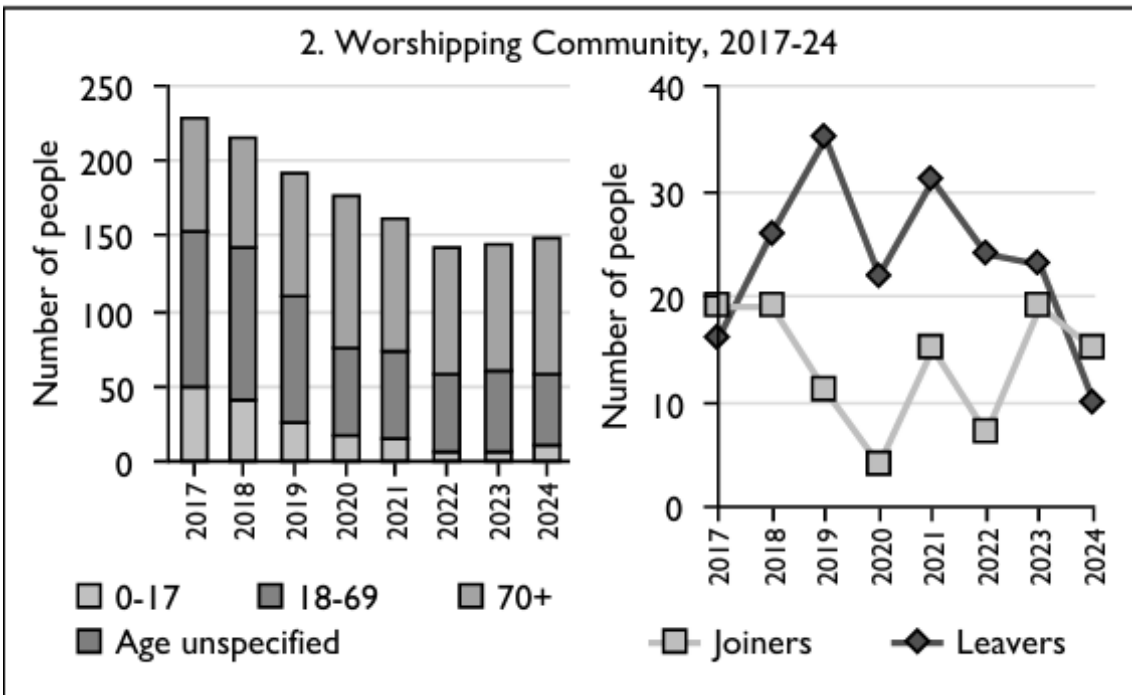
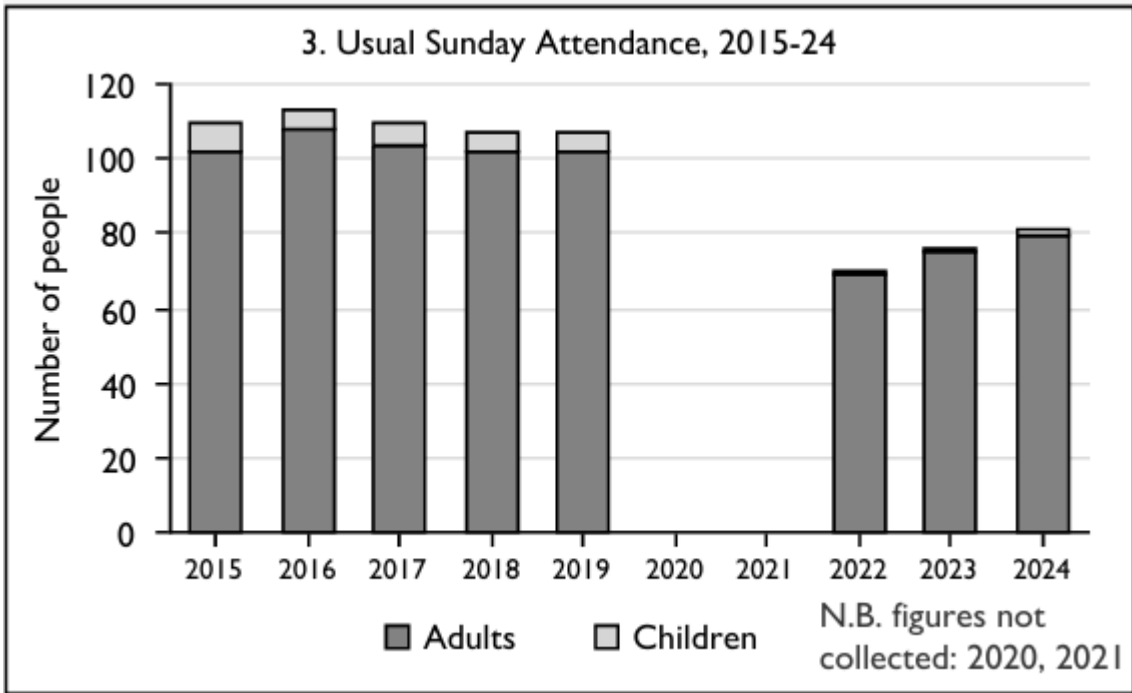
Our Harvest Festival, Remembrance Sunday, and the Advent Memorial service invited and attracted several visitors. This year saw a **significant increase in Advent attendance**, rising from 265 in 2023 to 310. We also saw the returning engagement of local schools, The Claire School, Town Close Pre-prep, and Norwich High School for Girls, causing our school Advent service attendance to soar from 328 last year to **760 in 2024**, rebuilding ties with the wider community. Please pray we can reforge our links with the Colman Schools, too. We again held a joint workshop with a Christingle service at St Andrew's, and this time I played a Darth Vader-like character - the Darkness - as I tried and failed to master the light of Christ! Special mention should be made of Caroline Gibbs leading another successful Crib service and nativity play on Christmas Eve, which, despite our small Sunday School, had lots of involvement by the young and was widely appreciated. Additionally, we marked Giving for Growth Sunday, encouraging use of the Parish Giving Scheme PGS, and held a dedicated godparent service with special invitations in June, connecting with our vision for growth.

Attendance and Worshipping Community

In 2024, the attendance figures show encouraging growth:

- The 8am communion averaged about 15 participants (up from 13 in 2023).
- The regular 10am service saw around 59 adults with 2 under-16s, compared to 55 and 1 respectively last year.
- Evening attendance has not changed much, with non-choral evensongs averaging 14 and Zoom Evening Prayers averaging 7, reflecting that many evensong regulars prefer to attend when it is still light, for safety and comfort.

Our overall “worshipping community” - roughly those who attend at least monthly - has grown modestly from 144 to 148. This pattern of growth is hopeful and includes new people, but we are still fewer in numbers than before the pandemic.



Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals

Our community has experienced both joy and sorrow this year. We celebrated:

- **4 Baptisms:** and 1 thanksgiving for a child’s birth.
- **3 Weddings:** each a joyous celebration of union and love.
- **21 Funerals:** a solemn reminder of our mortality and the hope of

resurrection in Christ. Among these, we remembered cherished members of our congregation, such as Carmela Furniss, Mary Sword, Tony Sims (former Warden), Michael Denny, Anne Millett, and Beryl Watkins. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Educational and Environmental Initiatives

This year we ran two significant courses that enriched our collective understanding and stewardship of God's world to help us grow in discipleship and service:

- **Lent Course:** Using Tearfund's "Christianity and Climate Change" film series featuring climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe, we explored biblical perspectives on creation, the relationship between climate change and poverty, and practical church responses. We were aided by David Thompson, on placement from Costessey as part of his training to be a Lay Licensed Minister (LLM, formerly Reader). As a result, we committed to pray for breakthroughs in tackling climate change, and this remains a regular feature of our Morning Prayer together on Zoom.
- **Advent Course:** Titled "Science and Faith: the Big Questions," this course - co-led by ordinand Ros Wright - used ECLAS's "Where Science Meets Faith" material by Professor Tom McLeish. It spurred enlightening dialogue on the interplay between scientific inquiry and our Christian witness, noting that the Biblical idea of "Wisdom" integrates knowledge, practice and justice, science, technology and ethics.

A Heartfelt Thank You

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the many people who contribute so much to our church life:

- **Church Wardens:**
 - **Ruth Vaughan**, for her amazing service as senior Church Warden—she will retire at the APCM, and we pray for her and her replacement.
 - **Colin McLean**, whose dedication continues to bless our ministry.

- **Building and Fabric Care:**
 - **Chris Mitchell**, who has overseen Kinchen Hall and the cottage maintenance, dealing with serious leaks and issues at the hall. He is also stepping down at the APCM—please pray for him and his replacement.
- **Worship & Music:**
 - **Matt Wright**, our organist and choir director, for his dedicated leadership of our worship as he prepares for a well-earned sabbatical in the summer.
 - **Ros Wright**, our ordinand and choir member, for her invaluable ministry in preaching, visiting, leading intercessions, reading, organising communion visits to residential homes, teaching, and leading study groups.
- **Clergy and Lay Ministry:**
 - **Alistair Bolt** (LLM)
 - **John Harrison** (retired and active LLM),
 - **Robin Quine** (Authorised Worship Assistant),
 - The Reverends **Maggie Diffey, Andrew Parsons, and Kate Belcher**, who have kindly taken on 8am services, and
 - The Rev'd **Colin Way**, who celebrated his Ruby Anniversary of ordination at Petertide 2024.
- **Service Coordination:**
 - **Richard Rivett** (10am reader rota),
 - **Jeff Arden** (10am intercessor rota and now taking over card distribution), and
 - **David Edmonds** (8am rotas).
- **Youth & Children:**
 - **Caroline Gibbs**, who leads Sunday School and safeguarding. I am especially grateful for her team's flexibility in tailoring sessions, which has helped increase the number of children attending and

make them feel valued.

- **Communication, Outreach & Hospitality:**

- To the **magazine team, editors**, and everyone who distributes magazines to local subscribers.
- **Steph Brookes**, for leading Chat over a Cuppa—a valued ministry that continues despite the loss of a Norfolk Community Fund grant for heating.
- **Roger Glenwright**, for his years of faithful service organising card and flyer distribution. Thank you, Roger, for your dedication! We are grateful to **Jeff Arden** for taking on this role going forward.
- **Geraldine Verschoor**, for her leading role in the Growth Group, Praying for Growth Group, and The Chosen discussion groups, and
- **Catherine Richmond**, for her work on the parish website, notice and service sheets, and social media (with our Facebook followers increasing from 335 to 347).

- **Administration & Governance**

- **Ian Parkes**, our PCC Secretary, along with all who kindly serve on the PCC.
- **Tony Grubb** (Treasurer), for his astute contributions to the PCC and promotion of the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS),
- **Catherine Jeffries**, who continues to claim Gift Aid on donations outside the PGS, and
- **Everyone** who gives money to the Church. Your generosity enables us to maintain our building and grounds, support our staff, pay the parish share, and contribute to various charities and causes—even as costs rise with inflation, your faithful giving remains the backbone of our ministry.

- **Pastoral Care & Community:**

- **Vivien Humber**, for her compassionate and thoughtful pastoral ministry—taking notes for various committees, leading the Mothers' Union and Magazine Team, organising 6pm Evensong

rotas, and supporting the Friends of Christ Church,

- **Jacky Sutcliffe, Anna MacDougall**, and all who have helped with pastoral care, phone calls and visits.
- **Maintenance, Cleaning and gardening:**
 - To **Bridget Archer**, for her excellent and professional work as Church Cleaner, and starting Talks@2 with Julie Bolt, and **Carrie Phoenix**, who is nurturing our grounds and the Garden of Remembrance.
- **Friends of Christ Church:**
 - Thank you to the Friends of Christ Church group for their fundraising efforts for the maintenance and improvement of our church. It is wonderful to see the new path by the Garden of Remembrance being actively used.
- **Group Ministry:**
 - **James Cook**, now the new vicar of St Andrew's, Eaton, who is also a great help to me as Rural Dean in his role as Deanery Chapter Clerk, and
 - The **Group Council**, especially its chair **John Ladd**, for their oversight and direction of our joint vision and mission with St Andrew's, as well as the **youth and children's** team that organises workshops attended by around 30 children each session.
- **Parishes Office:**
 - **Kyla Price**, who began as our Finance Officer in early 2024 and has done an excellent job, and Ruth Thorp, our Administrator, for her outstanding dedication.

Wider Ministry Beyond Eaton

I continue to serve as Rural Dean of Norwich South and remain an active member of General Synod. I was re-elected in November 2024 as Chair of the House of Clergy of Diocesan Synod, securing my place on the Bishop's Council of Trustees. Additionally, I authored a book review for Science and Christian Belief and led a seminar on Science and Faith for clergy in September.

Looking Forward

As we prepare for 2025, our vision remains clear: to cultivate a church where discipleship, service and outreach grow. With new leadership in key roles, ongoing initiatives to deepen our worship, and renewed efforts in community engagement, we move forward with hope and determination. May our collective prayers and actions pave the way for continued spiritual growth as a warm, welcoming, invitational community.

Once again, thank you all for your inspiring support, generosity, and faithfulness. I pray that together we will keep seeking God's kingdom, grow in faith, hope and love, and invite many more to join us in the light of Christ.



The Rev'd Dr Patrick Richmond - Vicar

REPORT OF PCC SECRETARY FOR 2024

Christ Church's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of working co-operatively with the vicar to promote in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the church building, Kinchen Hall and The Cottage.

The PCC has considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and tries to help people in the parish grow as disciples of Jesus Christ and in service to others. It maintains and develops the building and keeps it open to the public throughout the year, subject to Church of England guidance.

The PCC met seven times in 2024 in the south aisle of the Church but retreating to the schoolroom when it was particularly cold. The average PCC attendance at meetings throughout the year was 9 out of 13 members (69%). Most of the absences were mainly due to health issues.

Ruth Vaughan, elected in 2022, has continued in her role as Churchwarden alongside Colin McLean, elected in 2023. Thanks are expressed to both of

them who were re-elected as Churchwardens in May. We much appreciate and thank Tony Grubb for his work as Treasurer for the year. We are also grateful to Kyla Price our Finance Officer who has admirably supported Tony over the year. Caroline Gibbs continued as Safeguarding Officer and regularly reported our progress on the Diocesan Safeguarding Dashboard at PCC meetings which is improving all the time as PCC members complete the mandatory CofE training and submit to DBS checks.

No one retired from the PCC this year, and no entirely new members were elected to the PCC at the APCM in May 2024. However, after completing a year being co-opted on, in order to continue as PCC Secretary, Ian Parkes was re-elected onto the PCC so he could continue as Secretary, a role he commenced in June 2022. We thank all other PCC members as they continue to serve.

At the APCM in 2024 it was reported that there were 153 parishioners on the Electoral Roll which included 7 new members who offset 4 people who had sadly died. The roll will need to be refreshed from scratch again in 2025. The Electoral Roll will be revised for the APCM in May 2025 with an invitation to be sent out in the March magazine requesting people to fill in an Electoral Roll form. We thank David Archer who has served as Electoral Roll Officer this year.

The parish share has once again been paid in full, and early, to assist the diocesan finances. A budget has been prepared and the accounts for 2024 will have been approved by April. The Church Terrier and Inventories will be inspected and presented at the APCM and reports from PCC committees and other groups are in this Parish Review.

The Treasurer, supported by Kyla Price, has submitted regular and detailed updates on the accounts to the 2024 meetings. Unlike 2023, energy costs have reduced this year by almost £2,000, so this has helped our finances in general. This year, unlike the previous 2 years, we were not successful in obtaining an energy grant from the Community Hot-Spot initiative by the Norfolk Community Foundation (NCF), which had contributed towards costs for keeping the Church warm on Mondays for the Chat over a Cuppa community initiative. The numbers of those making regular donations via the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) is slowly increasing. This simplifies the work of the finance team and collects the gift aid automatically.

This year we continued to discuss and develop our growth initiatives at each meeting, and especially at a very successful awayday for the PCC and congregation in the Narthex of St John's Cathedral held on 15 June 2024.

Thanks are due to Chris Mitchell, Ruth Vaughan and Colin McClean for looking after the fabric issues of both the Church and Kinchen Hall. This has included flat roof repairs on Kinchen Hall and items that required immediate attention that were identified in the last Quinquennial (QQ) Inspection of the Church. Chris Mitchell has recently stepped down from this work, and we thank him wholeheartedly for all he has done, sometimes in difficult circumstances due to issues that have arisen with the letting of The Cottage. We pray for a new fabric officer to come forward.

We thank Alistair Bolt for his work on the Eco Church award scheme and his continued efforts in pursuit of the Gold award, which may be quite difficult due to the nature of our Church building. However, water harvesting from run-off from the church may be a way forward for us.

A key area of discussion for the PCC this year has been updating the Ordinary Time green service sheet booklet. Experimental versions have been produced and used with congregation to seek feedback. We hope to finalise this and get the new booklets printed early in 2025.

Minutes and reports were regularly received from the Kinchen Hall Committee, the Donations Committee, Eaton Parishes' Group Council, the Magazine Team, the Worship Committee, the Youth and Children's Committee, Norwich South Deanery Synod and the Diocesan Synod.

Ian Parkes - PCC Secretary

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults at Christ Church is of paramount importance and is the responsibility of everyone. Anyone who becomes aware of a safeguarding concern or allegation involving someone at Christ Church should immediately report it to the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) or vicar, who will then contact the Parish Safeguarding Team.

Our Safeguarding policies and relevant contact numbers are prominently displayed on the church notice board.

The PSO is also responsible for keeping up to date records of DBS checks and training. I have been able to relieve David Hughes this year by taking on the necessary DBS checks which he used to kindly complete for us. All PCC members and leaders of church activities (Sunday School, Chat Over a Cuppa etc) need a DBS check every three years. I am pleased to report that all necessary DBS checks are up to date.

All volunteers who are working with children and young people or with groups which might include vulnerable adults should undertake training every three years. Basic Awareness and Foundation level training is available online on the diocesan website and can be completed in one's own time. PCC members should undertake Basic Awareness and Foundation level training as well as Domestic Abuse Awareness training. Those in positions of responsibility should undertake training up to and including the Leadership training module which the Diocese runs regularly on Zoom. Face to Face training has also become available again recently.

The Parish Safeguarding handbook and information about courses can be found on the Norwich Diocesan Safeguarding website.

Thank you to all those who have co-operated with form completions and training sessions this year. Please remember that safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility.

There are first aid kits located in the kitchen cupboard above the sink unit and in the choir vestry.

Caroline Gibbs - Safeguarding Officer for Christ Church

CHURCH WARDENS' ANNUAL REPORT

Looking back over the previous year's report where we celebrated the 150th Anniversary of the Consecration of the Christ Church, 2024 was considerably quieter but gave us the opportunity to be more invitational not only at services but other events held in the church. We have been delighted to welcome several new people to our congregation and to see the numbers continuing slowly to grow, particularly at the 10am service.

We are delighted to see a growth in families with young children attending on a regular basis, a real answer to prayer. Thank you to Geraldine Verschoor and the Sunday School team for all they do to support this growth.

As a church we are very fortunate to have so many people willing to help in so many ways, not only on a Sunday but at other times as well. Having said that, we are always looking for more help so we are not always calling on the same people. For example, at the 10am service as well as the choir and the wardens, we are assisted by a deputy warden and 2 sides people. There are 3 readers and an intercessor, a sacristan, 2 chalice assistants and 2 people providing refreshments. A very warm thank you to all who provide these ministries as they enrich our worship and strengthen our worshipping community.

The wardens are very well supported by the Deputy wardens, Jeff Arden, Vivien Humber, Catherine Jeffries and David Scott, who assist them with the 10am Service, and we are very grateful for their help. We also greatly appreciate the assistance of Alistair Macdougall and all the sides people at 10am, particularly their ministry of welcome and ensuring that the car parking doesn't interfere with our neighbours. Our thanks also to David Edmunds who organises the rotas for 8am and the sides people for Evensong over the summer months. Also, thanks to those who verge at Weddings, Christenings and Funerals as this is also a very important ministry to those attending a life event and who are often not part of the church community. Our thanks also to Richard Rivett who organises the readers and Jeff Arden the intercessors.

We also wish to thank Jeff Arden, Simon Back, Anthony Colman, Will Colman, Tanya Page and Matt Wright who regularly open or close the church in order for it to be open each day for visits or private prayer.

Our thanks to Carrie and Ian Phoenix who maintain the Garden of Remembrance as well as Richard Rivett and his team who continue to maintain the hedges and church grounds so well. Thanks also to the brass cleaning team, the flower arrangers and the sacristans - all play a vital part in the life of our church.

Thank you also to Caroline Gibbs for organising the rota for the refreshments following the 10am service and all who help with catering at other church events. This is another important ministry of welcome and is greatly valued.

One of the responsibilities of the wardens is the upkeep of the church building and we greatly appreciate the invaluable help we have been given by Chris Mitchell. He has not only undertaken the regular checks required throughout the year but has overseen the repairs required in the Quinquennial Inspection that have taken place. He has also taken responsibility for overseeing repairs and maintenance of Kinchen Hall, but thanks also for responding so quickly to issues reported by the Beehive Nursery. As well as maintaining the church building, the care of the fabric is just as important and we are very thankful to Bridget Archer who cleans the church with such care and attention and also provides a cheerful welcome to those who visit the church while she is there. Our church is beautiful and looks very well cared for, something that is often commented on by those who are visiting for the first time.

As well as the many who work front of house, there are also a few essential people who keep the show on the road. Our thanks to Catherine Richmond for all she does to manage our website, produce the weekly notice sheet, publicity posters and service sheets for special services. These are sent to the office for printing and Jacky Sutcliffe brings them with other post to Christ Church each week. Also Gerald Cooke who takes the cash collections and does the banking for us.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Hugh Back for putting out the bins each week, keeping an eye on the church for any signs of vandalism and keeps us in the loop with any issues concerning the residents of Church Avenue.

Another legal responsibility is for all the property and movable goods belonging to the church and its buildings and the Terrier and inventory will be updated before the APCM in May.

Of course, there are many other events and occasions during the course of a busy year, all of which call on many of the kind volunteers mentioned as well as many others. Without compiling an exhaustive list these include

choir practices, Harvest supper, Lent lunches, exhibitions, school and other concerts, viewings of 'The Chosen', music lessons, singing and organ practice – at least some of which are recorded or, as with our regular Sunday services, live streamed. That's a lot of organising and managing!

As with any family we have seen some changes through the year and as well as welcoming new members we have sadly said goodbye to others. Carmela Furniss was a key person in the musical life of the church for many, many years, not only singing in the choir but also organising and playing in the orchestra at the Parish Choir concerts and before the Christmas Carol Service. Another faithful member particularly at 10am and Chat over a Cuppa was Anne Millett. Our thanks to all who make our church such a successful welcoming community, often behind the scenes. It is a pleasure to serve the church in this way and we are very grateful to have the continued support from the congregation.

Ruth Vaughan and Colin McLean - Church Wardens

TREASURER'S REPORT

This report will be provided with the accounts.

MUSIC AND CHOIR REPORT

I think I must be getting old as time seems to fly by and it doesn't seem long since I last put fingers to keyboard to write this annual digest of choir and musical activities at Christ Church. 2024 has been busy again and in July I marked the 20th anniversary of my appointment to Christ Church.

We continued with a mix of Friday evening and Saturday morning rehearsals during the year, with the latter particularly popular, especially the extended coffee & cake breaks! Our main 'purpose' is to help lead and enhance services at Christ Church, but this report tends to concentrate on the extra-curricular activities. We returned to St Peter's Sheringham for a Choral Evensong in June and to St Mark's Lakenham in July as their vicar prepared for retirement. Tea & cake was an added attraction after both services as always! I had invited St Peter's to us for the 'away fixture' after we visited them in 2023, but they'd just restarted their monthly Evensongs,

so their organist suggested we enhance one of their services instead. I'm very much hoping some of their choir can come to Eaton next time maybe at one of our re-established first Sunday Choral Evensongs.

Our post-Christmas meal took place at The Eagle, and as well as the occasional post-rehearsal Beehive visit (the Friday pizzas are very good), the annual carol-singing there seemed to be very well-received.

David Uden has been a great help as always, covering for my holidays and sharing the playing of Evensong as well as liaising with the organ tuners plus doing much to organise the Lakenham service. Dave Ballard played on Good Friday and for the Advent & Christmas Carol Services with his usual aplomb. It was also good to see Nora Rechel at Christmas (our first and so far, only organ scholar) and I'm glad that she and many others will be covering for my sabbatical in 2025.

The choir is a close-knit team, friendly and welcoming to all and whilst we work hard at perfecting music (and sometimes even processions), we have a good laugh too. We've seen many comings and goings over the years, and we were pleased to welcome Eve Stebbing & her son Edwin this year, contributing from the stalls as well with instruments at our occasional less formal festival services too. Though many find it hard to commit to regular Sunday attendance, and it can be frustrating trying to plan music at times, we can usually deliver the goods when it matters. I'm always on the lookout for new members to continue our choral tradition, so please spread the word. I'd like to thank all the choir members for all their hard work and commitment, Patrick for his support and trust plus everybody who values our efforts – Christ Church has always been a musical church and it's always been that reputation I've tried to enhance, develop and maintain.

At the start of the year, we were all very sad to hear of the passing of Carmela Furniss. I played for the funeral at Earlham and there was a musical extravaganza of a memorial at Christ Church in September. Carmela had done so much for music in the parish and in Norwich and beyond for over 40 years - a singer, player, librarian, fixer, cook and someone who nurtured and cared deeply for young musicians. I'm personally very grateful to her as she 'auditioned' me when I first came to Christ Church, which I vaguely remember involved playing some Bach and checking if I could play a psalm! One autumn she also offered me work

assisting at Associated Board exams when I was between jobs. Her husband Patrick (who we've been delighted to have back with us regularly) did much to care for her during her illness and it was such a shame that they only spent a couple of months together at Daisy Hill Court after their move from Mile End Road. RIP Carmela and thank you.

Matt Wright - Organist and Choirmaster at Christ Church

SUNDAY SCHOOL & YOUTH GROUP

Thanks to a group of willing volunteers there is Sunday School for children of primary school age in termtime during the 10am service in the Children's Room at Christ Church. Usually, the sessions feature the New Testament reading for the week, and activities include artwork, craft, games, singing and storytelling.

Geraldine Verschoor and Tanya Page ran several extra sessions during the summer holidays for various children visiting. Geraldine also offers activities for under-fives when possible. After a couple of years of having only two regular attenders at Sunday School, we have been glad to welcome four new families in recent months, which is most encouraging.

One of our most regular attenders took the role of the narrator at our Nativity Service on Christmas Eve. She told the story from the donkey's point of view confidently and clearly from the pulpit, wearing a cardboard donkey head, while other members mimed the main scenes of the Christmas story with plentiful support from the young audience as extra Shepherds and Wise Men.

The Youth Group for young people of secondary school age meets two or three times a term, and they continue to watch and discuss episodes of the wonderful 'The Chosen'. Thank you to Geraldine Verschoor and her helpers for running these sessions.

We have been glad to welcome two new helpers recently and would be delighted if anyone else was interested in joining the Sunday School Team.

Caroline Gibbs

CHAT OVER A CUPPA

Chat over a Cuppa meets every Monday at 2pm. During the year we have sadly lost some of the regulars but normally have 15-20 people. However, for the 2 celebration teas, there are 30 plus. A team of volunteers run the kitchen and offer a warm welcome.

Stephanie Brookes

PASTORAL CARE AT CHRIST CHURCH

At major church festivals, gifts are taken to those in the community who are frail or housebound, unwell or lonely, and to residents of local care homes and hostels. At Easter, Harvest and Christmas a plant and card are delivered to local residents by church members.

At Harvest an appeal is made for donations of Foodbank-type items, and these are taken to four local hostels (Leeway, YMCA My Place, Archway and St Martin's Housing Trust). Similarly at Christmas, presents are donated for adults and children. All these hostels have a particular focus on homelessness and/or domestic violence and our aim is to highlight their work, as well as providing assistance to residents.

The men's fellowship group, set up in 2020, continues to meet fortnightly for fellowship. All are warmly invited to come along.

Our pastoral and community care work are only possible because of the contribution of many in the church family.

Particular thanks are due to members of the Christ Church Pastoral Care Team and those who helped prepare and distribute gifts. I am also grateful to the team members at St Andrew's with whom we work so happily collecting, sorting and delivering the Harvest and Christmas gifts to local hostels.

Vivien Humber - for The Pastoral Care Team

PRAYING FOR GROWTH GROUP

The Praying for Growth group was set up in May 2023 after the APCM meeting which revealed how few people under the age of 60 there were at Christ Church. We meet weekly on a Tuesday or Thursday evening and pray for anything related to growth in numbers, spiritual growth and discipleship. For example, in 2024 we prayed regularly for the Away day, special services, children's/youth work, outreach events, plus many more things. We have been encouraged to notice many of our prayers being answered, sometimes in unexpected or miraculous ways. This of course is in conjunction with the prayers of many others in the congregation, and our intercessory prayers during the service.

Geraldine Verschoor

CHARITABLE GIVING 2024

In 2024 this joined with St Andrew's Donations Committee as a joint venture, so this report can be found in the Section 2 of the review.

ADDITIONAL CHARITABLE GIVING 2024

As well as giving to the Charity of the Month, the congregation at Christ Church make generous donations for hot drinks after our 10am services. These are sent alternately to WaterAid and Toilet Twinning. Ruth Vaughan was able to send two donations of £250 to WaterAid this year, £500 in all, and two donations of £240 to Toilet Twinning, totalling £480. Our toilet has now been twinned eight times!

A retiring collection on Mothering Sunday in March raised a contribution to the Mothers' Union 'Away from It All' fund, helping towards holiday breaks for families under stress.

The collections at our Christmas services (Carol, Nativity, Midnight and Christmas morning) were shared between the Church Urban Fund and Embrace the Middle East, each receiving £422.

Caroline Gibbs

FRIENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH

For the past seven years the Friends of Christ Church, Eaton have been raising money for projects related to the fabric of the church building and its surrounds; these are subject to the approval of the Parochial Church Council. Money is paid into a separate Friends' fund (and may not be used for the church's general running costs). The funds help towards meeting the cost of preserving the fabric of the church, necessary repairs and the replacement of major items.

The Friends' Management Team met three times during the year - in February, July and November, when the 2024 project and the programme for the year were discussed.

2022/24 project: the project (a permeable, hard-standing path to facilitate mobility access such as wheelchairs and walkers to the Garden of Remembrance) was extended into 2024 because of the lengthy delays as a result of Anglian/WAVE's slow response in dealing with issues arising before work could commence. The cost of the new pathway was originally £6,474 (including VAT) but due to the very considerable delay, rose to £8,515. The project has finally been signed off and the garden attractively landscaped. It makes a pleasant place for people to sit and reflect.

Events: the Team continues to reaffirm the Friends' important role in offering friendship and fellowship to the local community. Our goal is always to draw Friends and Team members from the community and the church. Our programme of events therefore has a dual function - community outreach and fundraising.

Quiz and Chips was held at 7.30pm on 16th March at Eaton Park Community Hall, South Park Avenue. Once again, this popular event was very well attended and £650 was raised.

Witchert Concert: a wonderful concert by the Witchert Chorale, directed by David Quinn, took place at 6.30pm on 23rd March in Christ Church. We were delighted that this was such a popular and well-attended event. A magnificent £1,405.75 was raised.

5th Annual Meeting and Summer Party: took place on 6 September at 383 Unthank Road when members were updated on the work of the Friends this year and were able to socialise in very pleasant surroundings.

Finance: all the monies (fundraising, subscriptions, Gift Aid reclaim) have been released from restricted funds for Friends' projects - the objective had always been to spend these monies on the purposes for which they were raised, not to hold them for any longer than was necessary.

We are very grateful to all our Friends for continuing to support us in the vital work of maintaining this much loved and valued building.

Membership of the Friends numbers remained steady throughout the year, with some new members added. There are now more than 66 officially recorded "Friends of Christ Church".

Communication: throughout the year members were kept updated through newsletters and letters and we are grateful to John Ladd for leading on media relations.

Patrons: as ever, grateful thanks to our wonderful Patrons, David Walker, David Taylor, Mark Jeffries and Rachel Hore.

Management Team members, 2024

David Scott (Chair)	Alison Court	Roger Glenwright
Vivien Humber (Secretary)	Catherine Jeffries	John Ladd
Carrie Phoenix		

David Scott - Chair of the Management Team, Friends of Christ Church, Eaton

FABRIC REPORTS

Firstly, thank you to Chris Mitchell for continuing to support the Churchwardens by overseeing the care and maintenance of the church and Kinchen Hall over the past year. Chris has completed the regular checks required and overseen the necessary work when an outside contractor is on site. Our Church Architect for many years, David Lemon, who carried out the last Quinquennial Inspection in July 2023, retired in February and a new architect, Iain Walker, was appointed and approved by the PCC in June.

Church

The church building continues to be kept in good order and the only repairs that have taken place are the ones that were identified in the Quinquennial Inspection and required attention within 12 months. Only one item is outstanding, the redecoration of the past damp staining to the southeast corner of the ceiling and walls in the Sunday School room, which requires further drying out.

The two lights in the choir vestry were replaced with LED lights.

A new emergency light and tap were installed in the disabled access toilet.

In the summer the closing mechanism on the West door failed, leading to it slamming, which in turn led to the paint and plaster above the door cracking. The company which fitted the mechanism was no longer in business, so we had to find an alternative which was identified by our architect. The mechanism was replaced in November. The door now closes very quietly but requires further attention as the door isn't fully closing with the latch.

A majority of the emergency lighting failed the annual 3 hour drain test in February and replacement batteries are no longer available. Replacing the lights would be extremely costly, including scaffolding, for only a very few occasions a year when it might be needed. It is not a legal requirement to have emergency lighting as long as there is a clear evacuation procedure in the Health & Safety Policy. The PCC agreed not to replace the emergency lighting. The emergency exit signs are still working.

Though not specifically a repair, approval has been sought to repaint the west wall in the disabled toilet, ensuring that it looks more finished.

Kinchen Hall

The Front flat roof has been insulated and re-felted with felt waterproofing, as has the Rear flat roof.

The valley at the rear of the hall has been re-leaded.

The light in each toilet has been replaced with an LED light.

Colman Road Cottage

The only issues with the cottage that have been brought to our attention are a replacement hob and a new fan required for the boiler.

Ruth Vaughan - Church Warden

NORWICH FOOD BANK

We continue to collect for Foodbank on the first Sunday of the month, although donations at any time are gratefully received and added to our deliveries to the Foodbank warehouse. We donate 3 - 4 bags a month. In response to the Christmas appeal, we donated 14 bags of food in December 2024. One of our parishioners also gave a generous cheque to the Foodbank, which they greatly appreciated.

Thank you to all who donated this past year. Please continue to support Norwich Foodbank in the service they provide to our neighbours in need.

Anna MacDougall & Jacky Sutcliffe

CLEANER'S REPORT

I have been cleaning the church now for over two years following the sad death of Sue Harris.

Each week I ensure all basic cleaning is completed - the main cloakroom at the back of the church and the cloakroom in the choir vestry; cleaning and hoovering the children's corner, wardens vestry choir vestry prayer corner and Sunday School room; hoovering the carpet at the high altar and the mats at the front of the door; emptying bins in all areas and replacing bin liners; checking and tidying all pews including the choir stalls; and a quick clean of the kitchen area.

With time left over, I rotate various tasks which I am unable to complete every week. These include washing the wooden floor and the floors in both cloakrooms; dusting the pews and sweeping the floor in all pews; removing cobwebs! I try to complete a small new task each week, such as cleaning a shelf or polishing wood in various parts of the church. I still have tasks I

wish to complete but at present don't have time. My aim for this year is to turn the cushions over in all pews and remove debris underneath!

Over the past few weeks in liaison with St Andrews, the church office and Alistair Bolt, I have been working on making our church more ecofriendly. The aim is to buy plant-based products with no toxic chemicals and also to reuse plastic bottles. I am trying to refill bottles when empty, from the greengrocers at Earham Shops. The church office has been investigating a change of toilet roll, from Nicky to Waitrose and Partners EcoLogical brand. This product is made in the UK with 100% recycled paper and works out more cost effective. The wrapping on the outside can be recycled in big stores. Over the next few months this toilet roll will be introduced to Christ Church.

Following some discussion it has been decided to keep ordering white paper towels, which are more absorbent and the correct width for the dispenser. A gentle tug will ensure they come out of the dispenser whole!

It has been agreed by the PCC that with Colin McLean's support, I can paint the area around the main cloakroom toilet. It has become rather stained and grubby looking and a haven for spiders. I think that this will make a great difference to this area as it will look and feel cleaner and fresher.

I have become accustomed to working in the church on my own and to experience the change of the seasons, from being huddled up in layers of warm clothes during the winter months to working recently in the streaming sunshine. I am in fact very seldom on my own the whole time. I meet a variety of people who come into the church, some who just want to sit for a short time in prayer, quite a few couples who have been married in the church and are celebrating a wedding anniversary, some who are just walking by and have never been in the church and want to investigate further. It is also nice to see people I know from our church family and stop for a while for a chat. I have also got into a habit of writing a different Bible verse on the choir noticeboard after every clean, which Matt has allowed (once he knew who they were from!). Choir members, I am told, look forward to reading them and find them quite inspiring!

I have come a long way from being a Lay Reader in the church to becoming the cleaner. I don't see this as being a drop in status because I feel that any role I become involved with provides me with an opportunity for ministry.

I hope that this report gives you an insight into what I try to do as the cleaner for Christ Church. I am very open to people asking me to complete certain tasks which maybe irritate them, such as them seeing a large cobweb somewhere each week. Just let me know and I will do my best to rectify.

Bridget Archer - Bridget's Brooms

GLASSES FOR AFRICA

This year I have taken 91 pairs of old or broken glasses to Specsavers, up from last year which was 68 pairs.

After repairing the glasses Specsavers send them to Zambia to the training school which they set up many years ago. These are then given to the disadvantaged with poor vision, many of whom live in isolated communities. Specsavers also regularly send optometrists to Africa to give eye tests and care.

Please continue to put your old glasses in the box at the back of the Church. Thank you.

Jacky Sutcliffe

STAMPS FOR EMBRACE THE MIDDLE EAST

This is an ecumenical Christian charity which works to help marginalised and vulnerable people in communities in the Middle East.

We support this charity with used stamps, and it was also one of our Charities of the Month.

This year we collected 425gms of stamps (down from last year which was 701gms). These stamps are sold in bundles of British Stamps (£10 per kg) and Foreign Stamps (£15 per kg). 1 kg is approximately 6,000 stamps.

Fewer stamps were donated by the congregation this year, probably due to the cost of stamps rising and many do not send cards and letters as they used to do. Please do save your stamps and put them in the box at the back of the Church because every single one helps. Thank you.

Jacky Sutcliffe

THE CHOSEN

At Christ Church a group of us are watching the “The Chosen”, a multi-season TV series dramatizing the life of Christ. We are currently half-way through Season 3. We watch the first and last episode of each season together at Christ Church, and the other episodes we watch at home. However, to keep this as a communal activity, we get together after watching 2 episodes at home to discuss the episodes. In 2024 we had several taster sessions after Easter and one in Advent so that more people in the congregation could experience the Chosen. These were also good opportunities for us to invite friends of any faith or none to experience the Gospel brought to life.

Geraldine Verschoor

MEN’S GROUP

A regular group of eight to nine men meet every two to three weeks on a Saturday morning discussing a range of topics from theology to current affairs.

John Ladd

PART TWO - REPORTS COVERING JOINT ACTIVITIES WITH ST ANDREW'S

EATON PARISHES GROUP COUNCIL

Mission Statement:

'The Group Ministry of St Andrew's and Christ Church seeks to Collaborate, Cooperate and Communicate in the Eaton Community.'

The Diocese established a Group Ministry for the Parishes of St Andrew's and Christ Church in 2007 when the old parish of Eaton was divided into two.

Its Group Council is the vehicle by which they "consult together on any matter of common concern". It has no decision-making power and acts in a consultative and advisory role to the two PCCs.

In 2010 the then Bishop of Norwich said that the Group Ministry should, firstly, facilitate what the people involved wanted to do to benefit and develop church mission in Eaton and, secondly, serve the future development of both churches.

Ongoing activities within the Group Ministry include:

- communications such as the parishes' magazine
- Christmas and Easter cards
- supporting Mission Partners, through prayer and fund-raising events
- joint children and youth activities including Children's Workshops
- events such as the Summer Fair, Remembrance Day, and Lent Lunches
- the Joint Parishes' Office
- Groups, including the Mothers' Union and the Julian Group.

These feature regularly on the agenda of Group Council's quarterly meetings and the minutes of its meetings are circulated to both PCCs for report and/or response.

The Lent Lunches (19 February to 25 March 2024) were well attended. As usual monies are raised for two charities – in 2024 these were:

- the Bishop's Lent Appeal for water tanks for Ordinands' Homes in Papua New Guinea (£570) and
- Tearfund's East Africa Hunger Crisis Appeal (£750), meaning that a total of £1,320 was raised for these worthy causes.

The Annual Garden Party (now re-titled the Summer Fair, as it is no longer held in the garden of 210 Newmarket Road) took place on 8th June at St Andrew's Church, Hall, and car park. A sum of £2,038.58 was raised for children and youth work in the parishes.

Eaton's Mission Partners, Dick and Caroline Seed in South Africa and Mirna Paulo in Argentina, continued to be supported by prayers and fundraising. The Spring Coffee Morning (20th April) raised £1,110 and the Autumn Fair (2nd November) £1,159.30. As usual CMS divided this sum between the Seeds and Mirna Paulo.

The Seeds visited Eaton on the 21st July, preaching at both churches' morning services and joining St Andrews for a parish lunch: 47 people attended, including 11 from Christ Church. After lunch they spoke of their plans for the future. Information about Mirna's work comes through CMS News.

We continued to communicate with a growing number of children in Eaton. Activity workshops for primary school-aged children took place at Easter (on the theme of the events of Holy Week), the summer holidays (the story of Moses), autumn half-term (St Peter – a friend of Jesus) and concluded with a Christingle-themed workshop at Christmas. All the workshops have a mini drama (which has made a very significant contribution to these workshops), crafts, games, songs and refreshments.

The joint parishes' Remembrance Service was held at the War Memorial on Monday, 11th November with a very encouraging attendance, including some local schoolchildren. We are grateful to David Scott for continuing to organise these services and for the clergy from the two parishes who lead them. Thanks must also be recorded to the War Memorial Trustees for their continuing loving care of this historic monument.

The Parishes' magazine continues to run successfully with its team of volunteer editors and magazine advertising secretary. As usual Easter and

Christmas cards, with a message from the two vicars, were delivered to every home in Eaton.

More detailed reports on joint activities e.g. Mission Support, children and youth work, the Office and the magazine, can be found in other reports.

The following were elected or re-elected to Group Council at the APCMs: Jane Carey, Chris Smith, Douglas Durand, Jane Scott and Alison Black (St Andrew's), John Ladd, Vivien Humber (Secretary), David Archer and Tony Grubb (Christ Church). Rachel Taylor was elected for Christ Church and Jane Scott for St Andrew's representative at the 2024 APCM. Alistair Bolt (Reader, Christ Church) also joined the team. My thanks also to all Group Council members - whether continuing, retired or new to the Group - for their continued enthusiasm and support.

John Ladd - Chair, Group Council

CHARITABLE GIVING 2024

Donations Team Report 2024

In October 2023 the two parishes' Donations Teams merged and have been happily working together during 2024.

On behalf of the two congregations of St Andrew's and Christ Church, the Team continues to support twelve Christian-based international, national and local charities. In 2024 these ranged from the essential work of Bible translation (Wycliffe Bible Translators) internationally, through to the Matthew Project working in East Anglia, which helps people recover from drug and alcohol abuse.

Information on the charities is circulated through news sheets and the Parishes' magazine to raise awareness and encourage support.

Totals raised in 2024 were as follows:

- Wycliffe Bible Translators (£440)
- John Aves Education Project (£738)
- Mission Geeks – Zambian Education and Medical Support (£528)
- the Magdalen Group (£400)

- Christian Aid (£949)
- the Matthew Project (£371)
- the Mission to Seafarers (£215)
- Break (£345)
- the Leprosy Mission (£730)
- Tearfund (£1,000)
- Daylight Christian Prison Trust (£473) and
- Norwich Youth for Christ (£273)
- giving a total of £6,422.60 for the year.

The Team is very grateful to the congregations for their continued support.

Two charities are also supported each year through the Lent Lunches; in 2024 they were

- the Bishop's Lent Appeal for water tanks for Ordinands' Homes in Papua New Guinea (£570), and
- Tearfund's East Africa Hunger Crisis Appeal (£750), raising a total of £1,320.

Membership

The Team is grateful to all its members and for the congregations' continuing support for this important work.

We would like to pay a particular tribute to Neil Rout, chair of the St Andrew's Donations Team for many years, who chaired our first joint meeting in 2024. We are pleased to hear he is making a slow but steady recovery to good health.

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

The Joint Parishes' Donations Team

Marilyn Evans, Caroline Gibbs, John Harrison, David Hughes, Vivien Humber and Neil Rout

PARISHES MAGAZINE TEAM

The magazine is an important part of the Eaton Churches communications package, offering an accessible Christian message to its broadly-based readership. It contains articles on subjects ranging from church events to local community matters, together with information on the goods and services of local advertisers.

The Magazine Team supports the magazine editors and the advertising secretary by reviewing contents, production, circulation and revenues at its two meetings held in the spring and autumn of each year. The Vicars are ex-officio members.

At the two meetings held in 2024 members reviewed the existing and potential future editorial content, including possible articles on walks, pilgrimages and holy places, Christian composers and Eaton residents. They were pleased to welcome a new gardening series by “Penelope Plant” in addition to longer running series such as the saint of the month and the bird report. “Picture a Psalm” finally concluded - all the psalms had been celebrated. This had been an interesting and worthwhile series.

The magazine team is grateful to all those who contributed, with particular thanks to regular columnists who were able to pick up key topics in the year whilst maintaining the local flavour which is so important in a parishes magazine.

I would like to thank all members of the team for their enthusiasm and commitment during the year.

The magazine could not function without its advertising secretary, so thanks are due to Christine Mortimer, who works so efficiently with the advertisers and printers. We are also most grateful for the sterling work of those unsung heroes, the magazine distributors and the Office staff, who have worked seamlessly with them. Thanks also to the printers, BD&H, who continue to maintain their excellent service.

Finally, the magazine continues to generate a surplus which is used to support the work of the two churches. We are grateful to the staff in the Parishes Office for financial updates, which inform the Magazine Team meetings.

Vivien Humber - Chair

EATON PARISHES OFFICE

Following the challenges faced by the Office during 2023, with a change in personnel meaning that from April onwards, there was only temporary cover for the financial side of things, 2024 got off to a flying start when Kyla Price started as our new Finance Officer. She hit the ground running, being experienced not only in the realm of church office finances but also being a former church administrator and a church treasurer! This meant that when she started, she was already familiar with the complexities of Church of England finances, processes and structures, so that she simply had to learn how we at Eaton do our admin, rather than having to start from scratch. Grateful thanks are once again due to Mark Jones, who was able to induct Kyla to our systems and processes.

I'm happy to report that Kyla quickly settled into life in the Eaton Parishes Office, and we have developed a good working relationship.

I have said before that working in administration is a journey, not a destination. To that end, in April, Kyla and I both attended training sessions from a national organisation, with sessions conveniently held in Norwich. I have also done a couple of online training sessions put on by UCAN (the UK Church Administrator's Network). These sessions are helpful, giving ideas about how to do things more efficiently, and giving further opportunities to meet with other administrators to learn together, and share experiences and ideas.

There is an annual pattern of work which gives an underlying rhythm to life in the office. These things are in addition to the routine things which happen week in, week out. The following list gives you a flavour of what happens in the office which you may not be aware of, some done by the administrator, others by the finance officer:

- preparing the Parish Reviews beginning in January
- year-end accounting to enable the auditing process
- monthly batching and distribution of the Parishes Magazine
- seasonal printing required for Lent and Easter
- month end accounting

- paying staff members
- St Andrew's Hall bookings management
- children's activity sessions throughout the year, requiring printing of activity packs
- Magazine Subscription Renewals in October
- Invoicing for funerals and weddings
- Liaising with churchwardens over church bookings (at both churches)
- Settling invoices for expenses incurred by the churches, such as for Christmas cards, or for 'requisites' such as Baptism Bibles, communion wine, etc.
- the issuing of invitations to each church's annual 'Memorial Service'
- additional Christmas printing
- ...to name but a few!

As you can see, we carry out a wide variety of tasks, so we appreciate being given plenty of notice for the additional tasks you may need us to carry out, so that we can plan our time and fit the extra things in and around the routine ones. Thank you.

Kyla and I continue to work hard in the office to try to ensure the smooth running of both churches. Thank you for your continued support – it really is very much appreciated. We see it as our job to do the behind-the-scenes stuff, so that others in the churches can get on with the mission and ministry.

Ruth Thorp - Parishes Administrator

EATON MOTHERS' UNION

Mothers' Union Norwich is a part of a worldwide fellowship. Through programmes, campaigning, community outreach and prayer, Mothers' Union promotes stable marriage and family life. It works through local volunteer members to create lasting change for families and their

communities. Members are driven by their faith but work with people of all faiths and none.

Its programme includes:

- Refugee Resettlement: members from our Branch are involved in refugee resettlement, including raising funds and buy new bedding, as well as making up beds.
- Away From It All (A.F.I.A) holidays: a MU project to provide holidays for disadvantage children in the UK.
- Angel Tree: a MU project connected with a local prison, enabling children of prisoners to receive Christmas gifts from their absent parent.
- Cathedral Prayers: on 1st Thursday of every month MU Norwich meets in the Jesus Chapel at Norwich Cathedral for Midday Prayers, each time hosted by a different MU group.
- RISE UP against domestic abuse: this Mothers' Union campaign was launched in 2024 to raise awareness of domestic abuse (the letters stand for Respond, Inform, Support, Empower, Unite and Pray).
- Domestic abuse can happen to anyone from any walk of life. Mothers' Union members and churches worked together to be part of the change and in 2024 Eaton Branch had displays ("*Souls of our Shoes*") to raise awareness in both churches, while some members also took part in a larger, manned, exhibition at St Peter Mancroft in the city centre.

Branch news: we were able to offer a full programme of meetings in 2024; these continued to be in large, airy, well-ventilated spaces during the day, rather than evening meetings in members' houses, as was the case before the pandemic, because of issues around subsequent COVID-19 outbreaks.

The Rev'd Graham Wilkins, Rector of Cringleford and Colney, led us in an Advent Reflection on 28th February.

During the year we welcomed speakers including Andrew Frere-Smith, Development Worker of Imagine Norwich Together, speaking on Modern

Slavery, and Councillor James Wright and Caroline Ackroyd on A Year in Office.

We held a very successful Open Garden with strawberry tea on 28th June, raising £890.50 for AFIA.

The Eaton Branch members had an enjoyable social event in the summer - a meal at the Marsh Harrier, on 24th July.

We took part in the Annual Festival Service at the Cathedral on 1st October.

We led the Mothers Union prayers in the Jesus Chapel of the Cathedral on 3rd October.

On 27th November Ros Wright, priest-in-training at Christ Church, led our Advent Reflection.

Our thanks to our clergy, who take the Holy Communion Service at 10am on the 3rd Thursday of the month.

Angel Tree: we were also able to support the annual collection for the Angel Tree through which, working alongside The Prison Fellowship, Mothers' Union members buy Christmas gifts for children of parents in prison, raising £120 in 2024.

Refugee Resettlement: some Branch members helped sort and store bedding and make up beds.

Branch vision for the future:

- to continue to work for all that Mother's Union represents supporting families and marriage.
- to provide inspiration for members in the year ahead.

We continue to maintain contact with Branch members and to disseminate useful information and news through emails and letters.

In the autumn of 2024 I announced that I was standing down as Branch Leader at the end of the year – it has been an interesting and humbling experience to lead the members through the COVID-19 lockdowns and I believe we rose to the occasion with the usual resilience that should be expected of the members of the Mothers' Union.

Vivien Humber - Branch Leader

YOUTH & CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE

The purpose of the committee is to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with children and young people in relevant ways while coordinating and expanding this vital work. It meets termly and oversees and receives reports from the Action Team that plans specific events like the workshops throughout the year.

- 13th February 2024:
 - The committee discussed promoting “Thy Kingdom Come 2024,” an initiative focused on praying for work with children, families, and young people.
 - They also explored ways to strengthen ties with local schools and reviewed the involvement of children and families in church events.
 - The committee agreed to aim for organic growth by building on current opportunities, like inviting schools to our events.
- 30th April 2024:
 - The committee reviewed the Easter workshop, which had a good attendance, and planned for summer and autumn workshops.
 - They discussed increasing contact with families where English is a second language and involving the University Chaplain.
 - The committee also emphasised the importance of children and youth work being a regular item at PCC meetings.
 - They also discussed safeguarding and the importance of having up-to-date training.
- 24th September 2024:
 - The committee discussed making better use of available resources, involving the wider church community, and building on opportunities like Eco-Church.
 - They reviewed the summer workshop, planned for the autumn and Christmas workshops, and discussed ways to improve booking processes and outreach.

The committee also discussed strengthening links with local schools, Scouts, Brownies, and pre-school groups, as well as encouraging attendance at events like Harvest and Christmas.

Patrick Richmond - Vicar of Christ Church

EATON EAGLES

Eaton Eagles, the men's football team sponsored by Christ Church, enjoyed a triumphant 2023/24 season in the Norfolk Christian League. After several years of incremental progress, the team succeeded in winning the league title and reaching the final of the cup competition, where they were narrowly defeated by arch-rivals Heigham Park Rangers. Club captain Henry Aspin comments: 'This has been a memorable year in the life of the Eagles, and our victory in the league is a tribute to the tremendous spirit in which the players approached the challenge. Since the start of the 2024/25 season we've experienced a period of transition, with players who have been with us for many years leaving and new members coming in. This has meant indifferent form and a few poor results, but things are on the up and we are currently unbeaten since November, in the semi-final of the cup and looking forward to our remaining matches.'

Home games take place at Sloughbottom Park, and the fixture list and league table can be consulted on the FA Full-time website. David Taylor liaises between the church and the club and is happy to supply further details on 01603 501411.

David Taylor - Club Welfare Officer

OVERSEAS MISSION SUPPORT

The Mission Focus Team, (which this year had six members, five from St Andrew's and one from Christ Church) met every month except August and December to support in prayer our Link Missionaries - Dick and Caroline Seed, based at the George Whitefield College in Cape Town and, this year, Mirna Paulo, a local leader from the Witchi indigenous tribe of North Argentina, who replaced the Local Leaders we supported previously.

We met alternately in Christ Church Vestry children's room and Jane Carey's home. (Venues may change in 2025).

Dick and Caroline Seed have been sending Newsletters every few months, which now go direct to the Office and are printed, with copies left at the back of both churches.

In the summer we had the pleasure of welcoming Dick and Caroline Seed again when they visited both churches in July. Dick preached at St Andrew's and Caroline at Christ Church. Afterwards there was lunch in St Andrew's Church Hall attended by members of both congregations, to hear a presentation from Dick and Caroline about their work and their forthcoming travels to Indonesia, Australia, South Korea and Papua New Guinea.

A donation of over £235 was given to them from the collection after the lunch.

Instead of Newsletters from Mirna Paulo, apart from an initial introductory one, which outlined her prayer requests and which was translated from the Spanish for us, CMS occasionally update us with the work she is involved in with the Prayerlines booklets (at the back of the Churches) and other updates.

As well as supporting the Missionaries in prayer, the Mission Focus team, with help from members of both churches, held two fund-raising events for them in the Church Hall – the Spring Coffee Morning in April which raised £1,110 and the Autumn Fair in November which raised £1,159.30. This is extra for them, on top of the money sent each year to CMS for them from both St Andrew's and Christ Church's funds.

Last year we felt that the congregations of St Andrews and Christ Church needed to be reminded more often to pray for our missionaries, so now prayer is included for them most weeks in the intercessions - as well as their names often being included in the News sheets with lists of those in our congregations who are prayed for.

As well as in the prayers in the services, there is a reminder of them in most issues of the monthly Parishes Magazine, even if it is only an invitation to pick up the latest newsletter.

In 2025 we will continue to hold the two fundraising events, and to meet regularly to pray for the missionaries.

Maureen Blandford - Mission Focus Team

NORWICH SOUTH DEANERY SYNOD

The Deanery Synod is a meeting where clergy and non-ordained members from the churches in our deanery of Norwich South, our local area, come together to discuss and make decisions about matters affecting our local churches together. The Deanery Synod connects our various Churches' PCCs to each other and to the central Diocesan Synod. It is a legally required part of how the Church of England works and meets two or three times a year.

The Norwich South Deanery Synod held two meetings, on June 12th, 2024, and November 12th, 2024, focusing on community support and church updates.

Key discussions included setting up a Community Money Advice Connect Service to help those with financial difficulties, with a talk in June from Naomi Tuma, and in November a discussion of tackling poverty.

The synods also discussed the Church of England's Living in Love and Faith (LLF) proposals, with members agreeing to forward a motion to the Diocesan Synod asking for further discussion of the stressful impact the LLF process was having on clergy, parishes and the deanery.

Other topics included safeguarding, environmental concern, support for refugees and immigrants, and parish updates.

We do not have an official deanery synod secretary but I'm grateful to Vivien Humber for taking minutes, and for Sandra Isaac, lay chair, and James Cook, clergy chapter clerk.

Patrick Richmond - Rural Dean of Norwich South

NORWICH DIOCESAN SYNOD

The Diocesan Synod in the Church of England serves as a representative body responsible for governance and decision-making within each diocese. It addresses various matters concerning the diocese, including mission strategy, financial management, clergy appointments, and policy formation, while also liaising with the General Synod at the national level and Deanery Synods at the local level. It usually meets three times a year.

In March, Synod approved an updated Environmental Policy for Net Zero Carbon targets and considered the 18% clergy vacancy rate, recruitment improvements and lay ministry development. The Synod also acknowledged parish banking difficulties with Barclays and approved the 2024 election timetable.

In June, Synod approved the 2023 financial reports and reappointed Lovewell Blake as auditors. The session focused significantly on modern slavery, with presentations from the Anti-Slavery Commissioner and Norfolk's Chief Constable highlighting its prevalence locally. Members were encouraged to look for signs of exploitation and abuse and utilize available resources to help victims.

In November, the newly elected synod met for the first time. I was narrowly re-elected as Chair of the House of clergy and the Chair of the House of Laity was re-elected unopposed. Presentations included Church Commissioner Gareth Mostyn on financial support and investments, and an update on the Net Zero Carbon Action Plan. The 2025 budget with a £356,000 deficit was approved. A motion supporting the Listed Places of Worship grant scheme was passed.

Patrick Richmond - Diocesan Synod member for Norwich South and General Synod, and Chair of the Diocesan House of Clergy

GENERAL SYNOD

The General Synod is the Church of England's governing body, responsible for making decisions on doctrine, worship, mission, and policy. It consists of bishops, clergy, and lay representatives who meet two or three times a year to debate and shape the Church's direction.

A major focus of 2024 was the ongoing Living in Love and Faith (LLF) project, where discussions centred on how the Church might better welcome LGBTQIA+ individuals while remaining true to its foundational teachings. A motion from the Bishop of Leicester, the new lead on LLF, was debated but Synod decided not to vote on it, mainly because the details were not yet clear. Safeguarding reform was high on the agenda. Members examined reports such as those from Professor Alexis Jay and Sarah Wilkinson, seeking ways to enhance accountability and better protect vulnerable people, and, since there had been little time to digest them, disagreement over them and Wilkinson had included a warning not to rush things, opted for further study and discussion, and to apologise to survivors and the former Independent Safeguarding Board, but the delay frustrated some.

The July 2024 sessions, held in York, built on these discussions while adding more detail. Notably, debates over safeguarding intensified with motions to boost oversight of abuse claims and to refine procedures for safeguarding at both national and diocesan levels. Members also wrestled with the Church's financial challenges, including contentious discussions on clergy pensions, workload, and administrative duplication. The Synod's narrow vote to support "stand-alone" blessing services for same-sex couples on a trial basis while also asking for more theological work to be done further underscored the tension between traditional and progressive perspectives within the Church, despite the Bishop of Leicester's desire for bridge building.

Patrick Richmond - member of the House of Clergy of General Synod

