



Annual Report of Church Activities and Groups 2019

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will", with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Revd Will Pearson-Gee
Rector

BAPTISMS

Lizzie Ogden

Baptism is an important start for babies, children and adults on their journey of faith and I am pleased to report that we had 26 baptisms in calendar year 2019. There were eight adults, seven boys and eleven girls (the children of varying ages from infant up). This is, again, an increase on the year before, and we pray the church keeps on growing in this way.

We reserve the first Sunday of each month, at 12.30, for a dedicated baptismal service, although a number of families opt to have their child/children baptised during a service that they regularly attend.

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

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

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

BELLRINGERS

Andrew Spencer

We have continued our arrangements ringing for services on a rota by sharing our bellringers with Maids Moreton and Stowe. We have also rung the bells for many weddings during the year along with University ceremonies.

Our Wednesday practices have been used to train new ringers and develop improved skills for the more experienced ringers.

Ringers non-bellringing social activities this year have included a breakfast, a summer afternoon event and a Christmas party. We have also had 2 bellringing outings, to Hertfordshire in May and to Northants in November where we visit other churches and ring on different bells.

We have now ordered new bellropes, I have spliced worn sections on every rope and have carried out second splices on some, the ropes are made by a few specialised suppliers with 6 months delivery time.

BITTERNES AFLOAT

Will Trevitt

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

In 2019 we had the theme of “Meeting People” and looked at how the qualities we find attractive or interesting in other people are really reflections of what we find in relationship with God. In the morning bible studies we looked at some of the people who had met Jesus and what each encounter tells us about what Jesus is like.

We took 20 young people from Buckingham and 6 adults, 4 of whom grew up in Buckingham going on the cruise and now return as leaders. It was a wonderful week spent connecting with God on and off the water.

BOOKSTALL

Zena Greig

The bookstall had six different selections of books available during 2019, the bulk of which are obtained on a sale or return basis from St. Andrews Bookshop in Oxford. Other books have been specifically ordered when requested, prices comparing favourably with those of a well-known on-line retailer.

About 130 books were sold and included children's books, Bibles, biographies, books on prayer and bible study, current issues, apologetics and marriage and family life. The bookstall was open for the three main Sunday services and also supplied books for some Youth and Connect group courses.

A small profit is made on the sale or return books and this is used to cover any damaged books and to occasionally gift books or bibles on special occasions or to those who would otherwise find it difficult to buy them.

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

BPC FAMILIES

Jo Brice

Ark

Ark is a fun, thriving, relaxed and exciting place to be for all who attend from within Buckingham and the wider areas. It continues to reach on average 70 babies and toddlers each week and about 60 parents. The Ark has a very committed and efficient team of volunteers who ensure the running of Ark is like clockwork. The team has grown through people wanting to join to be a part of the team.

Each week in term time has a Christian themed, Bible-based story time and craft. A sensory area was introduced in September which links with the theme.

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

We have run an Alpha course for some of the Ark team this year and these parents have become more involved in church life and attend church services. We continue to invite parents and carers to the Alpha and Parenting courses.

Messy Church

Messy Church is a great place where families can come together and attend church in a creative way. The first 40 minutes are a time where families can have fun together exploring the theme through crafts, games and activities. There is then a short celebration involving singing with actions and a short talk. Following this we enjoy discussing the theme and spending time chatting over a delicious home cooked meal.

During 2019 Messy Church continued to grow seeing initial numbers on average of 100 grow to 125 plus. The team has also needed to grow as a result and done so effectively, with more activities being made available for a wider age range. The banner in town has helped encourage people to come and the invitations sent through schools, has also been effective. Many Ark families have

joined and families with older children (particularly boys and dads) have begun coming too. We have many regular families and always see new people come along.

As the year has progressed we have been thinking more about how we could begin to disciple our families better and we have been more intentional about our message in our talks being gospel based. We have started sending home discipleship 'take home' gifts that encourages families to pray, worship and read the bible together at home between Messy Church services.

Family Fun Day

Family Fun Day is an annual event for families within the town that happens annually. It was well attended with approximately 350 people coming over the course of the afternoon. We had wide variety of activities like; coconut shy, bouncy castle, face painting, crafts, BBQ. This free event is an important outreach opportunity and a great way to serve our town.

Holiday Club Children's Venue

In August 2019 Jo Brice lead the children's venue for Buckingham Churches Holiday Club where the overall vision was Christians from churches in Buckingham, working together delivering a safe and fun-packed Holiday Club where children are welcomed and introduced to a real and living God who loves them and knows them each by name. This really was a fantastic event and thoroughly enjoyed by all the volunteers and children.

The theme for the year was Back Packers. We saw the church transformed each day into a new destination exploring Holy Week. We had 200 children register to be with us and there were 65 adult volunteers and 30 young leaders who were remarkable role models. There were 7 churches represented it was a wonderful collaboration concluded by a celebration service which saw many parents come and learn about what their children had been

learning. About 25 children made first time commitments and we gave away lots of Bibles. There has been a lot to celebrate and a huge thanks to all you helped to make it happen.

Our new website shares the work we do at our summer club but also signposts parents to other opportunities throughout the year through schools work and highlighting other church events.

Schools Ministry

In October 2018, Jo Brice took over the responsibility for Schools Ministry and continues to work closely with the schools in the town developing relationships and tailoring our support provided there. In 2019 Jo connected four of the churches involved in Buckingham Churches Holiday Club within the schools' ministry in order to see continued discipleship opportunities extend throughout the year for children who attend our summer club. Collectively we are excited about serving our town.

School assemblies have continued to be carried out across three schools 6 times a year. The After School Club called Mission Possible has also been running and is a popular option for the children who attend. This involves two, six-week blocks in three schools throughout the year where fun-packed activities, bible-based stories, crafts and snacks help to build deeper relationships with the children in our community that may connect in with other areas of our ministry. Towards the end of 2019 we began discussions with two other schools to begin our work there.

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

BPC KIDS

Jade Crouch

Groups

2019 was a great year for growth among the children's groups, with numbers of children on the books falling upwards of 70+. This means that strong relationships and friendships have been forming among the children.

Jayde plans each series together with the BPC Kids team, and then each session through the use of a mix of resources. Commonly used is Energize, Ministry-To-Children, and Bible4Kidz. The team has enjoyed having an active input towards session content, as well as involvement in planning all things BPC Kids. The themes covered this year have been: *Testament Treasures (O.T&N.T)*, *Fruits of the Spirit (which led to a redesigning of a notice board in the south room)*, *I am... (loved/chosen etc.)*, *Friends of Jesus*, *Church Values* and *finally Psalms*.

The children had three 'all-together' sessions, in which they recapped the previous series in groups of mixed ages, through craft and storytelling. This was a success and both the children and volunteers enjoyed these sessions

The team has been incredible in supporting rota gaps, as toward the end of 2019 we saw team numbers dwindle due to other commitments. Often, we have been combining the two younger groups (Stepping Stones and Sparks) into one large group and the children and leaders enjoy this very much. We have also seen four new team members join.

Events

Glow Party – This year's Glow Party came under the 'Buckingham Churches Together' umbrella, now including input from surrounding churches other than BPC. This meant there was more

team available to volunteer, which was a great help in organising the event. We have also seen a development of Young Leaders joining the teams in 2019, and they were on board for the Glow Party in 2019. We saw over 100 children and family members come through, and it was a great success.

Crib Service – This was another fantastic and successful opportunity for families to come together to share in the excitement of the build up to Christmas and for the children to play an active part in the nativity story. We had approximately 50 children there with the stage filling up beautifully with shepherds, angels, kings and animals. It drew in many families connected with Messy Church and Ark which was great to see.

Christmas Party- In 2019, Jayde introduced a BPC Kids Christmas Party. This ran during the time that kid's groups normally run and was held on the Sunday before Christmas Eve. However, the invite was extended to the children's unchurched friends and made it more of an 'event', with goody bags and games etc. The vision for 2020 is to style this similarly to the Glow Party and open up the church for families to come along.

BPC MISSION PARTNERS

Created Creative

Emma Cottrell

Emma leads the work of Created Creative and is one of our Mission Partners.

She travels to places in the Middle East and Eastern Europe to draw alongside the people there. She is involved in discipleship and mentoring and facilitating times of creativity and training to

teams looking to use creativity within their ministry areas to reach out to the broken and those in need.

With the trustees of Created Creative and in partnership with BPC they have been working on gaining charity registration over this last two and a half years which was given in December 2019 and are now operating as a CIO (charitable incorporated organisation) to enable the further development and growth of this work.

In Buckingham and within the UK Emma and the team are involved in ministry and outreach work locally in churches and organisations with ongoing overseas ministry trips.

Created Creative thank BPC for their prayers and support of this ministry.

BPC YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

Lara Burt

What a busy year! Sadly Emma left in January and amazing youth volunteers stepped up until Lara arrived in May.

The year began with a youth weekend away to the Frontier Centre and the theme was the fruits of the spirit. The youth had a great time learning about their spiritual gifts, grew together as a group and put their gifts into action. There were 20 young people who went away and are closer as a result!

Junior Church

This group provides youth teaching during the 11.15am Communion service for school years 7-13. Although a small group of 5 it does not lack energy, enthusiasm and a great understanding of the Bible. Many topics have been covered this year and currently they are looking at the Bible Course.

Lunch club is a drop-in club in Buckingham Secondary School held every Monday in term time. Students come along to eat their lunch, play cards and spend time with their peers. Though this group

currently has little structure there are great conversations with individuals in between games of UNO and real relationships are being formed and strengthened here.

Blaze (Years 7-9 youth group) meets on Tuesday evenings at church. They have themed weeks on alternate weeks, and teaching weeks on the other. Various topics have included friendship, bullying and others. The structure and timings of Blaze has changed, it starts earlier so people who go to Refresh can go to Blaze straight after and part of the evening is cooking and eating a meal together. We still go out together and trips to Soul Survivor Saturday Celebrations in Watford are very popular.

Fuel (Years 10-13 youth group) meets at Lara's house on Wednesday evenings, for a connect group feel. Focus is on fellowship and faith with dessert, teaching and prayer. This group has grown considerably but somehow everyone still manages to squeeze in to Lara and Ali's living room. Every summer we go to a youth festival for 5 days where young people grow in their faith. 2019 was the last year of the Soul Survivor Festivals and next year in 2020 we are going to Focus Alive which many have already signed up for!

The Way (Years 7-13)

The Way meets alongside the 6pm service after worship. Young people catch up over snacks, have bible and faith based discussion and pray for each other. This is the highest attended youth group, with numbers near 20 on a regular basis.

As the parable of the talents tells us, God expects much of those to whom much is given.

We are blessed with an impressive church building for worship and for serving the local community and a growing congregation with a wide range of talents. We have much to be thankful for.

2019 saw continued growth in our activities, our membership and resources, and our staff team. This was all made possible through the stewardship of our Church family, whether financial, spiritual, practical, or, more likely, by a combination of all three. Our Annual Reports are full of accounts of our stewardship of our time and talents. This report focuses on our Financial Stewardship.

Here at the Parish Church we encourage and facilitate regular giving for the general expenses of the Church's mission and ministry.

By deciding to give regularly:

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

In 2019 the number of individuals/ family units who gave regularly to the General Fund was 178 (174 in 2018) contributing £207,474 (£180,776 in 2018). Gift Aid increased our 2019 giving by a further £51,030. This included £7,958 received since April through the Small Donations Gift Aid (GASD) scheme for anonymous cash donations but this is limited to £8,000 in a tax year.

Thank you to all who regularly and generously contribute to our church funds. If you don't already do so or would like to make changes by

- starting to give regularly or
- changing your contributions, or
- adding gift aid to your giving

Please pick up a Giving form or contact stewardship@bpchurch.uk

CHURCH CHOIR

Robert Tucker

We are a flourishing group of children and adults, dedicated to supporting worship. The choir also provides an extremely sound music education; nurturing and instilling many qualities which become invaluable through life: musical, social awareness, motivation, care with detail; the determination to prepare well. And there are the many inner feelings of a young chorister experiencing such a fantastic range of church music for the first time.

This year we have welcomed new choristers. During the year the choir sang for various occasions such as Advent Carols at Thornborough, Florence Nightingale Hospice, and at Villiers Hotel. With thanks to Ray our assistant organist; Brian (candles); Neil, our support officer (who kindly organised the children's bowling trip and the choir's outing to Christ Church, Oxford); to Val Hiron for researching choir prayers; and to Gill for seamlessly adjusting choir robes!

CHURCH FLOWERS

Valerie Hiron

We have had a busy year with lovely displays of flowers to beautify the church. Thank you so much to everyone on the team for rising to the challenge of flowers for Sundays, weddings, special occasions and particularly Church Festivals.

To keep providing fresh flowers every fortnight takes organization and commitment, so your wonderful flower arranging throughout the year is much appreciated.

CHURCH OFFICE

Jan Ballantyne

The work of the church office work continues to be very variable and demands many skills and attributes from the much appreciated team who volunteer to work in the office every week and also those who have taken on various projects throughout the year. My thanks go to all the members of the team, to Ann Bursnall, Anne Exelby, Jean Froude, Helen Grimditch, Karin Lorenti, Leonie Jeanneret, Ray Mitchell and Gill Stopps for their commitment and dedication.

CONNECT GROUPS

Revd Michael Greig

At the end of 2019 BPC had 21 Connect Groups and about 6 other small groups (Prayer Groups, Theology Group, Greek & Hebrew Groups etc.). Group leaders met three times during the year to share news and support one another. Around 200 members of the church are involved.

Connect Groups plays an important role in church life. They are the basis of pastoral care and of ensuring that every member is cared for, supported and nurtured. Groups are running Alpha courses, helping to lead services and provide a safe place to study and discuss the Bible and the Sunday sermons and to grow as disciples of Jesus.

My role is to ensure that group leaders are trained, equipped and well supported. We have a close link with the Alpha courses to encourage those who have attended to join a Connect Group.

COURSES

Alpha

Revd Michael Greig

The focus in 2019 has been on running Alpha for those who may never have had the opportunity to think seriously about Jesus and life with him. It has involved re-thinking how people are invited, how courses are run and how people can be integrated into church life and grow as disciples of Jesus following the course. There has been close cooperation in this with Connect Groups (CGs)

Three courses were held. A day-time one was run by Jacqui Cooke, Alex Morten & Alexandra Lee's CG in the North Room. One evening one was run by the CG led by Tony & Hazel Allen at the Centre@VerneyClose and the other by Brian & Tracey Roskell in their home. All those who attended have been encouraged to attend church and join a Connect Group.

Thanks to everyone who has helped to make this happen.

CAP Life Skills

Brian & Ann Hubbard

Life Skills is a programme developed by Christians Against Poverty. It's a friendly group where people can gain practical skills and discover new ways to live for a brighter future. If you want to see your money go further, have more time and less hassle in your day-to-day life, improve your health and wellbeing and much more, then Life Skills is for you.

Life skills launched at BPC in September 2019 but got off to a faltering start so we just had to trust in the Lord, that we would know when it was His time for us to relaunch.

The plan for 2020 is to meet regularly at The Centre on Tuesday mornings starting in the New Year and learn how to eat well, stick to a budget and improve relationships. At its core will be a free 8-week course but equally important will be the opportunity to meet with a group of like-minded people to share tips and make friends. We are blessed with 4 dedicated helpers from BPC who will support

the programme participants, and who will also be learning new skills along the way. We even plan to provide a free lunch.

CAP Life Skills falls under the umbrella of BPC Mission and Outreach group (MOG) as it is intentionally evangelistic, reaching those who have little or no contact with church. We seek to reflect God's love by modelling Jesus' compassion for the disadvantaged and marginalised in society, with the aim that they will one day accept and welcome Jesus as their saviour.

Parenting

Jo Brice

We ran a Parenting Children Course, led by Alexandra Lee and Helen Grimditch. This ran for 6 weeks and saw 5 people attend. Parents found the course really helped them to see their children differently, open up deeper discussion opportunities, bring about calmer home environments and empowered parents to feel they understood more of the issues that face teenagers today.

DEANERY

Paul Hiron

Little has been achieved this year in the Deanery as two of the benefices are in interregnum (ie recruiting new vicars). One is the Buckingham Benefice which is splitting into the Blackthorn Chase Benefice (no vicar yet recruited) and the Buckingham & Radclive Benefice.

The West Buckingham Benefice is also recruiting. Unfortunately there have been no applicants for this post (& only one for the Blackthorn Chase Benefice).

One of the high points is the collection of Deaneries that have come together to operate a refreshment tent at the Bucks County Show, a very successful enterprise with the tent full most of the day.

FABRIC

Tim Jones

The Fabric Committee is responsible for fabric of the Parish Church. In 2019 the Church car park was re-surfaced. The 5 yearly Quinquennial report was completed indicating various areas for improvement and repair.

The Church clock will shortly be removed for repair and refurbishment, the work is due to be completed in 2020. The wooden flooring areas have all been repaired and treated with preservatives, the surrounding marble areas have received localised repairs.

Approval for commissioning of a large painting in the Chancel has been granted for completion in 2020. Plans to restore the St. Peter & Paul stained glass window to the original position in the Lady Chapel have been submitted to Oxford Diocese.

'FOCUS' Church Summer Holiday

Revd Will Pearson-Gee

Once again members of the Church joined other Network churches at the Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB) annual church summer holiday at 'FOCUS'.

FOCUS is our annual church getaway, in the gorgeous Somerley Estate in the New Forest. Every year we go away as a church to recharge our batteries and build community.

For 51 weeks a year, we're a mission station to Buckingham, but for a few days each year, we shut up shop here, kick back, fire up the BBQs, light the firepit and spend quality time connecting with one another and to God. Someone saying that at Focus they made 4 years of friendships in 4 days.

The weather was at one stage pretty wet but we all managed to enjoy a wonderful week of fellowship and inspiring worship and teaching.

MISSION and OUTREACH

Keith Croxton

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

It oversees the following:

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

The Centre

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Church Tithe

The tithe for 2019 was £25,000 and this was fully distributed to the following recipients

Mission Partners

Emma Cottrell

India : Mukti Mission, Union Biblical Seminar, Street Orphans

Persecuted Church

Open Doors

Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East

Others

Children's Home in India Trust

Compassion

CAP Life Skills

Mercy Ships

Holiday Club.

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

Coffee Service

The Coffee Service continues to run on Saturday mornings between 10.30 am and 12 noon. The numbers have gradually grown over the past year and there is now a sizeable group of regulars. It provides a place for the church family to drop in and have a relaxing

time together over coffee. It also provided a warm welcome to visitors who often call on a Saturday morning.

Community (Tuesday) Lunch

Sheila Handley

The Community Lunch has been running for over 6 years and continues to serve around 70 people from all walks of life in the town.

We have welcomed a number of new helpers who replace those who have moved on, and we are always glad to add more to our number. We have again had help from Hagarty CIA staff performing their corporate charity work with us.

We now have a regular arrangement to collect Lidl's surplus fruit and veg and Sainsbury's surplus bakery goods. Some is used for the lunch and the rest is given away to the diners.

Donations continue to be healthy, covering costs and allowing surplus to be used for kitchen equipment and other related needs.

Christmas lunch was again enjoyed by 90+ and the community singing with Brian Roskell was enjoyed immensely.

Thank you again to everyone for your continued support.

Kit Cat Club

Christine Barrell

Since forming in August 2012, we have continued to meet on Thursday afternoons in the school holidays for a meal, craft, games and a place where the children can just be.

We had our annual visit to the Community Pantomime in January 2019 and in the summer we had a fantastic day out with a Guide at Stowe Gardens, hearing the children's laughter as they made their garden crowns, hearing their echoes in the Temples and watching them roll down hills (not big ones) made us all feel that the simple things in life are the best.

We were thrilled that over two thirds of the Kit Cat children attended Holiday Club 2019 and in the October half term we joined with the Lite Night party.

As ever I am hugely grateful to the team of helpers who so willingly give of their love, time and resources to make Kit Cat Club work.

Men's Ministry

Olly Holland

I am very passionate about this area of ministry! Over the past 12 months I have experienced being both a consumer and leader of Men's Ministry.

I have found that there have been both successful and not so successful events! I have been blessed with a small but very capable team of men who are just as passionate as I am in this area! We have had to make ourselves transparent and vulnerable, we have learnt along the way and adjusted where necessary.

Last years **Men's BBQ** was a success but low on numbers, as a result of that we are looking to address this with a view to appeal to all congregations as a priority! The **Men's Curry nights** have been a success and we have managed to get some great deals with different restaurants.

We plan to hold a BPC Pub night in January, which will be predominantly an outreach event where church members can feel comfortable to bring non-Christians and enjoy a social evening.

Our biggest hope as a team this year is that we achieve a successful turnout for the Men's annual BBQ across all congregations, with a view to building genuine relationships whereby a discipleship process will naturally start to take place with Jesus at the centre!

Outreach

Olly Holland

The outreach ministry is very active and enters in-to many different ministries, some regular slots are:

School lunch club on Monday afternoons: This is a very exciting opportunity where I have often had fruitful conversations with Youth, Subjects ranging from their beliefs to the struggles they are facing with their friends, also family issues. This is also a great platform to invite the Youth to Blaze on a Tuesday so I can continue to Minister to them step by Step where I have experienced some exciting encounters with their interest in who Jesus is, but it is a gentle and lengthy process.

The Centre: is another area where I find I get opportunities to sit and listen to people and engage with them. It is a perfect place to find common ground with people and then invite them to events such as Community lunch. Again the process is long because I often find I'm working alongside trust issues.

There are many other areas where I find Outreach opportunities such as walking through the town and working in the church and sitting next to someone at the Tuesday Community Lunch! I find the biggest opportunities come from Just stopping and taking the time to speak with people and listening to them!

This has brought me to an area where we are in the process of setting up Street Healing and Prayer Ministry in Buckingham. We are prayerfully Building up to this and preparing to step out into the town, some other key members in the church have expressed interest! This is my biggest goal for 2020, to follow the Holy Spirit into this area and ask Jesus to bring Salvation then healing to all who want it.

We tried an outreach in The Three Cups Pub in Buckingham but it just didn't seem to take off. Nothing ventured, nothing gained!

Women's Ministry

Hannah Roskell

There have been some well-attended events as part of the women's ministry this year, and we have been able to welcome new members of the church at many of them. We have had various social meals and worked with the men's ministry team to organise a joint breakfast earlier in the year, which was a huge success. A planned walk around Buckingham was great for women to get to know each other better, and the women's breakfasts have given a much-needed opportunity for outreach.

The women's ministry team has now grown and is being led by Anke, supported by myself (Hannah Roskell), Jo Brice and Emma Cottrell.

Women's Heaven

Lucia Pearson-Gee

"Women's Heaven" is a new ministry that started in April 2019. The aim is to draw alongside women (mainly single mothers) who are struggling in life. We do this by providing a haven of peace and tranquillity for two hours where they can get away from the daily treadmill of life and enjoy pampering with arm/hand massages, coffee, tea & croissants. As we minister we seek to speak the good news of Jesus into their lives, encouraging them to seek prayer and a relationship with Jesus.

We have up to 9 volunteers and offer a crèche for those who still have little ones. We provide a different creative craft each week making something new that can be taken home and treasured. The Clothes Bank has also given many ladies a new set of outfits for themselves and their children.

We have seen up to 11 women coming regularly each week.

PASTORAL CARE

Jo Wigley

The past year has been very busy and varied. The Pastoral needs at BPC involve providing practical, emotional and spiritual support and usually fall into 1 of 3 categories

1. Crisis - This needs immediate attention and is often something that requires ongoing support. Sometimes we need to involve outside agencies.
2. Long term and ongoing - Usually elderly, lonely or ill people who need visits, shopping, lifts, encouragement and love.
3. Short term - People who have been in hospital, unwell or find themselves in a difficult situation and need help perhaps with family or meals providing for a short period of time.

Much is done by church family looking after each other. We have a small team who will visit the elderly and also a team who provide wonderful meals when needed. Many aspects of pastoral care overlap with other ministries, so communication has played a big part in finding ways to support people effectively.

The Centre and the Community Lunch are fringe groups of mainly elderly people who love feeling part of the community. They often have pastoral needs and it's so important that we have members of the church who serve and attend at both, which we do. Praise God for those who serve in this way, often quietly and generously.

The pastoral ministry is complex and demanding, and much of it goes on unseen as it is confidential in nature. However, we try and have a visible presence to enable church members and those in

need to know who to contact if they have a need or know of someone who has. The structure of this is evolving and ongoing.

PRAYER & PRAISE

Paul Wallace

Prayer and Praise is a meeting on the first Monday of each month to worship and to pray for the needs of the ministries within BPC and the needs of the world. We worship, give thanks to God and pray in small groups, sometimes we pray on our own for those ministries which are of particular concern to us. Every month a leaflet with a list of our prayer needs is prepared, which people can take home and use as a guide to pray during the month for the ministries taking place.

Prayer and Praise is a growing group of intercessors, and we would love others to join us. In addition, a smaller group meets every Friday evening in the Tower Room to pray specifically for the services taking place on the following Sunday. As ever we would love others to join us.

PRAYER MINISTRY

Revd Chris Murray

We have a wonderful team of faithful prayer ministers, who are passionate about Jesus and this ministry, to which He has guided them.

We meet approximately bi-monthly to study a course, called 'In His Name,' written by Alison Morgan and John Woolmer.

Cheryl very kindly puts together a rota for every Sunday, and two prayer ministers are assigned to be available after each service.

Recently, Will has asked that any additional members of the team present at the 6pm service would also come to the front to minister, if needed, when prompted by the service leader or the preacher.

At H.C. services, prayer ministers are in place to pray after worshippers have received Communion.

Numbers in the team are growing slowly, but more are required, particularly for the morning services.

A greater number are coming forward for prayer, especially at the 6pm, and answers to prayer are being shared with those praying with them.

We pray for and look forward to more being healed and testifying to God's love and power.

SACRISTAN & SIDESPERSONS

Gerry Causer

Sacristan, Servers and Chalice Assistants

During the year Geoff Shaw sadly and unexpectedly died. Geoff had already been Sacristan for some time when he recruited me as a Server 20 years ago.

Many of you may not have realised that when the Nave Altar was replaced with the Baptistry, the size was completely different and the altar cloths no longer fitted. I am extremely grateful to Lynne and Bob Legrove for making up two new sets of the white cloths, and to Christine Dines for altering the gold under cloth (I'm sure there is a proper term for it).

A big thankyou to all the team for their support over the year and for ensuring the services over the busy Christmas period went well.

We welcome Nigel Collison as a Server. We could do with a couple more. I am always looking round the congregation for likely candidates – please don't wait to be asked!

Sidespersons

2019 saw the declining health of Derek Lohman, a stalwart of the 8am team. Derek sadly died just into the new year. His place however has been taken by Val Shaw.

To members of our church for whom the 8am 1662 Prayer Book service is a complete mystery I would urge you to try it one Sunday, and feel the connection with those who have kept the Christian Faith alive over the last few centuries.

I am pleased to have welcomed Bob and Nat Wilson to the 11.15am team. With the return of Sarah and Elaine, we now have 8 teams available, therefore barring the special services, everyone has a duty only once every two months. But please don't let that stop you from volunteering – we can always do with more.

Again a big thank you all the Sidespeople for the contribution to the life of our church.

SERVICES

Revd Will Pearson-Gee

8am BCP Service

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

10am Midweek Communion Service

The midweek communion service (using our new Common Worship service booklet) has continued to grow and attendance is

around 25. We have welcomed younger members to preach in this encouraging context. The serving of refreshments on the 1st Wednesday continues to be a great success and provides welcome fellowship. This service continues to offer a spiritual interlude in a busy week and is a great alternative to those who find the Sunday 11.15am difficult to get to.

9.30am Service

The 9.30am service has continued to see new families joining although overall numbers seem steady. Some families (for example my own) have moved to the 6pm where there is provision for older children. We continue to see 40-50 children and 50-60 adults. The delayed start of the 11am service has allowed for more time for fellowship and a less frenzied cross-over between services. The service provides a relaxed environment with outstanding children's groups as well as solid adult teaching (which is shared with the evening congregation). The service is live-streamed via YouTube and the sermon remains on YouTube for viewing at a later date.

11.15am 'Traditional' Parish Communion Service

In order to alleviate the crush between the end of the 9.30 service at the start of the 11am, this service embarked on a post-Easter trial with a start at 11.15am. A shorter sermon means that the end time is only slightly later than was previously. This change was unpopular but accepted with good grace. The trial came to an end with the advent of 'summer Sundays' and extensive feedback was taken. As a result of this feedback a Traditional Eucharistic Service Group (TESG) was established to make recommendations as to how the traditional service might be made more missional. Whilst the review was in progress the trial period was extended. The non-Eucharistic 1st Sunday service with a less formal style remains popular and connect groups have been encouraged to help take some of these services. Numbers have remained steady and we

look forward to implementing the recommendations of the report of the TESG so can grow this congregation.

6pm Contemporary Evening Service

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

SMALL GROUPS

Greek Group

+ Andrew Shergold and Steve Watkins

We now have:

- An Advanced Greek Group
- An Intermediate Greek Group

There are 13 students in the two groups and we meet at the Centre on Saturday mornings.

As from Trinity Term (see below we will meet at the University of Buckingham on Monday evenings). The format of each lesson is that a language hour is followed by a 'Theological' or 'New Testament' hour.

The Advanced Group, having studied Galatians, Philippians and some of the Apostolic Fathers, is now studying Colossians and Acts. The Intermediate group is progressing through the course.

Hebrew Group + *Andrew Shergold and Steve Watkins*

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

We use one of two books for learning Hebrew:

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

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

We have recently welcomed two new members to our group, so that we now run two groups; a Beginners' Group and a more Advanced Group.

Latin Group *Steve Watkins*

We meet at the Centre on Friday afternoons at the Centre from 3:30pm – 5:00pm

There is one group:

- Advanced from 3:30pm – 5:30pm

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

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

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

It is hoped to start a new Beginners' Latin Group in Trinity Term.

Theology Group

Steve Watkins

We now meet on the second Thursday of the month at 72, Embleton Way. We have a stable membership of 8 members. As from November 2018 we are now discussing papers presented by individual members. Thus far we have had:

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

Further papers include:

- All about the Resurrection
- The Origin of Religion
- The Trinity
- New Testament manuscripts

New members are always welcome.

THE PARISH 'STAYCATION'

Revd Will Pearson-Gee

The main event of 2019 was what should have been a Parish weekend away but turned into a 'staycation'.

The planned venue was deemed too inhospitable so we decided to do the weekend in Buckingham. We had a problem which was that a wedding was booked but God was sovereign and we used the Royal Latin as a venue when we couldn't be in church.

Some 140 people and children were signed up – significantly more than the number who would have attended a weekend away. We all enjoyed excellent teaching from Paul and Christine Perkin and some excellent food courtesy of various outside caterers.

The highpoint was a combined service on the Sunday with a church packed-out with all three congregations as we bade farewell to

Danny our curate. Such was the positive feedback that we will do another in Autumn 2021

TRAIDCRAFT & FAIRTRADE

Tina Mitchell

Our Church supports farmers in developing countries by using Fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar for refreshments. A Traidcraft stall runs on Saturdays and Sundays, selling Fairtrade foods, cards and gifts. Much of the produce is organic, enabling farmers to take care of their environments. The Fairtrade premium is owned by farming cooperatives who have a direct say in how it should be used to help their communities to improve. For instance, sales of 90 1kg bags of rice enable a farmer in Malawi to send one child to secondary school for a year.

Traidcraft sales to December 2019 were £2164.83 from the stall or through visits to schools and community events. £390 was sent to Traidcraft Exchange. The Community lunch supported Fairtrade Fortnight in 2019 with menus designed by Sheila Handley to include Fairtrade ingredients. Ark had Traidcraft items, Easter Eggs and cards on sale.

Thank you to all who use the stall or place orders or buy Fairtrade products elsewhere as part of their regular shop.

Can we do more to support farmers in the developing world? Does your Connect Group use Fairtrade tea and coffee? Can we change just one more item in our shopping baskets to a Fairtrade product? Each of these small actions will make a huge difference.

WORSHIP TEAM

Ali Burt

Worship

2019 was a year of change for the worship team, with Tim King moving away at the start of the year, followed by a period where

the amazing worship team continued growing and leading the church in sung worship, which concluded as I joined the team at the middle of May. A big thank you to all who were involved in the period between Tim and I, as I was able to hit the ground running due to everyone's hard work. It's enormously appreciated.

We have seen astonishing growth in congregational engagement over 2019; when you can hear the congregation sing through sound isolating in-ear monitors it's obvious that people are singing their hearts out for Jesus!

The worship team has had several socials over the last year in order to deepen our relationships, usually revolving around food. We also bought (upgraded to!) a new keyboard just before Christmas.

Production

Ali Burt & Mike Roskell

The last year has been a very busy but successful year for the production team. We have worked alongside the worship team in particular and had some amazing results, the Easter Alive, Christmas contemporary carol service and the church staycation weekend are just a few examples of some fantastic events where we have really stretched ourselves and achieved some really positive work.

As with all teams we are in real need of more volunteers, we rely on a small number of people to cover all aspects of production in the church. To emphasise this, over the last year amongst other things we covered: 152 Sunday services, 29 weddings and funerals, 10 university events as well as a whole host of concerts. This equates to just under 1500 Production Team hours over the course of the year (that's equivalent to 1 person working 4 days a week!)

If you want to find out more about what we do or why we do it,
then please speak to Ali Burt or Mike Roskell at
production@bpchurch.uk

