



## Activities Report for 2024

## **ALPHA**

*Revd Jo Wigley*

We have run two daytime Alpha courses and two evening Alpha courses over the year. They were very different from each other, but God was moving in all of them. The January course was run by Will and Lucia at The Rectory and Jo Wigley and Joe Bickerton ran the summer course which was particularly well attended and had to be split into 2 groups. More helpers had to be recruited (thank you Jen, Zena, Gwil, Pam, Jen and Jim) and had a number of people come to faith, who are now very much plugged in to the church family serving and in connect groups.

A number of that group were baptised at the wonderful service at our final 'Summer Sunday' service. Another course was run by Max and Judith Wigley on Sunday afternoons that evolved into a lovely new connect group. The fourth course was run on a Friday morning at The Centre and although small was useful to those who attended, some of whom already had a faith that grew deeper through the course.

## **BAPTISMS**

*Tosin Ayileye*

At BPC, we have the privilege and joy of offering Baptisms to church members and the local community.

In 2024, we held 7 infant baptisms across our 3 regular services and standalone baptism services at 12.30pm on a Sunday and in the mid-week. During these baptisms, we welcomed hundreds of friends and family members into our church, some of whom were visiting a church for the first time, or for the first time in a long time.

We also had 28 adult baptisms during special services like Easter Sunday, Pentecost Sunday, the last Summer Sunday Service. A few of those baptised had been on an Alpha Course and on completion of the course they wanted to affirm their faith through this act of immersive baptism.

## **BELLRINGERS**

***Ibby Marshall***

In the days when church going was normal practice for the majority of the population, each village and town church would have had its own band of bellringers. However, times change and today there is a national shortage of church bell ringers. Buckingham is served by the band of ringers who also cover Maids Moreton and Stowe and ringing for Sunday Services are split across the month with Buckingham ringing taking place every third Sunday.

We are also called upon to sound the bells for special services like Remembrance Day, or for special occasions. Requests for such ringing often come either via our Guild – Oxfordshire – or from the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCCBR) which was founded in 1891. Sometimes we are requested to ring for local events and provided enough of us are available at the requested time we do our best to oblige.

From time to time, we get requests from Bands of visiting Ringers who wish to sound our bells or host a North Bucks Branch Practice. Occasionally we might be requested to ring for a funeral but most regularly we ring for weddings.

Buckingham is unusual in that we are involved in the Graduation Ceremonies for Buckingham University.

Buckingham hosts an evening practice session 1/month on the last Wednesday, with Maids Moreton used otherwise. Our senior folk, like Laurence Gibson who is the main man at Stowe, do a sterling job of organising our practices, honing existing skills and teaching new members how to ring. Beginners work on bell handling and intermediates progress into method ringing – the patterns you hear where the bells change order.

Bell ringing often runs in families and our youngest participant is in primary school whilst our oldest ringer who helps out occasionally is now over 90. We're a sociable bunch and have benefitted from the attendance at practice of two younger but experienced ringers from Bicester who were seeking a welcoming and active band to ring with and looked us up. We look forward to another active year ahead.

### **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 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 2024 we took 8 young people from Buckingham and the surrounding area.

The entire week looked at being made in the image of God, covering what He is like, the image of the Creator, the image of the Saviour and the image of the Holy. These topics led us to also talk about how God does relationship and how He does Reconciliation.

We also ran our young adults cruise and looked at 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ they are a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

### **BPC YOUTH & STUDENTS**

***Sam Graham***

The Youth ministry had a great year in 2024 as we looked to fulfil our vision of encouraging young people to **Know God, Love God and Live for God**.

The **Students Connect Group** had a good year of growth. We saw up to 15 students join us for bible study, dinner and fellowship. Amongst these students were non-Christian students who had been invited by a friend and became regular members of the group as well as exploring church.

**The Way** is the youth groups for the 9am and 6pm services for those in school years 7-13. In 2024 we also launched a monthly youth group at the 11am service. The 6pm has seen significant growth in 2024, doubling in size. By Christmas we had split into two groups based on age group (Younger: school years 7-9 & Older: school years 10-13).

**Youth Hub** is our youth connect group. As well as bible studies and prayer evenings, we have also hosted themed

activity evenings that have attracted new young people to join the group. We have also hosted bigger activities such as “The Monopoly Challenge” in which we saw the relationships between the young people and leaders grow. We also saw a growing hunger to explore faith and scripture at a deeper level with young people active in bible reading, prayer and asking questions.

**The Project Street Life Youth Café** has been led by Project Street Life since 2023. However, BPC still supports the project as a ministry opportunity. In 2024, a group of young people began to ask questions about faith and the bible. We were able to provide them with their own bibles and hosted a Youth Alpha Course for them under our BPC ministry. Two of these young people were baptised at Pentecost.

**Schools’ work** in 2024 saw the start of a new mentoring project in Buckingham Secondary and supported the launch of a new Christian Union at the Royal Latin Grammar School. Through the mentoring scheme, students are referred for mentoring for pastoral support for mental health (self-harm, anxiety, depression), and behaviour management. Stories are confidential; however, we have seen good success in supporting these young people.

At the end of DTI, a young person asked if we could begin some work with the Christians at the Royal Latin. Sadly, the school had rejected our request to provide something within the school. Therefore, I challenged the student to start a group. Within two week, 30 students were gathering for bible study, prayer and worship. This group

is supported by Christian staff, and we now have access as a guest (rather than leader) to help facilitate this Christian Union.

**DTI (Dreaming the Impossible)** is a youth Festival. In 2024 we took a group of young people to DTI for the third time. This year 14 young people joined us for camping, worship, teaching and many activities. The young people encountered God by his Holy Spirit and the six days away saw great growth in their relationships together and with God. They came back hungry to know more about God and who he is.

**Youth Nights** continued a Christian teaching focus in 2024 with worship, teaching and responses as well as the big activities. Youth Nights 2024 saw 30 young people sign up. At the end of the week, we hosted an evangelistic event at Coffee#1 including a silent disco. This event saw the young people invite non-Christian friends. After the summer the team reflected back over the previous years and saw a great foundation to grow and develop Youth Nights further into an outreach opportunity. Seeing that young people are open to inviting friends, the team has made the decision to not host a weeklong event in the summer of 2025, instead opting to host a one-night event every two months throughout the year. These events began in 2024 and saw a large number of non-Christians attend and hearing the gospel.

## **CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

*Lucia Pearson-Gee*

We have continued to see an increase of children attending the 11am family service which provides four separate teaching groups:

**Bubbles:** (age 0-3) held in the Tower room and is mainly parent led with an overseer.

There is an average of 5 children each week, peaking in June with 7 attending.

**Splash:** (ages 3-5yrs) the first half of the year saw an average of 8 children which peaked in June with 15 attending but has since decreased to 8 children regularly coming each week.

**Streams:** (School Year groups 1,2and3) has had a steady increase to 12-14 children each week with evenly matched numbers of boys and girls attending.

**Waves:** (School Year group. 4,5 and 6) Average weekly attendance is 15-17 children. Peaking at 19 children in October. It is a very boy heavy group with 14 boys regularly coming each week and 2/3 girls! The challenge is the small room with the sofa's in and so not much space for activities for this number of boys!

**Oceans:** (School Years 2-6) runs in the 6pm service, with an average of 8 girls regularly attending each week. Occasionally we have one or two boys, but it is rare! We peaked in November and February with 11 children attending.



**Lighthouse Monthly Messy Church** provides many structured crafts with a theme and interactive talk and worship followed by a two-course free meal seeing an average of 38 Children and 18-20 parents each month. Moving this ministry to once a month has enabled us to have a fantastic team of volunteers who do a great job in getting alongside the families that attend, and we have seen a real sense of a close family forming and being nurtured at these services, which is enjoyed by many in the community and who are increasingly bringing their friends and neighbours along.

**The Ark:** We have seen a huge increase in the numbers of mums and toddlers attending as well as many new-borns coming. The introduction of the monthly Health Visitors 'baby weigh in and check' has been greatly appreciated by the mums and in the last couple of months we have introduced a monthly Chiropractor visiting, treating Mums and babies alongside the Ark sessions. On average we have 54 under 4's attending but have seen some weeks, with as many as 65 under 4's! It is a fun and busy vibrant atmosphere with a huge number of activities and toys to entertain, there is a time of tidying up and ending the morning in a story, singing, parachute games and bubbles with The Blessing song being played as they leave. The atmosphere is electric, and great friendships have been formed.

### **CHURCH CHOIR**

***Robert Tucker***

Our vibrant choir, young and seasoned, elevates our 9am worship through the gift of music. We celebrate the choir's dedication and spiritual enrichment, fostering both their musical education and our fellowship together.

We thank the choir for all they contribute to our Sunday services and weddings.

We continue to be successful recruiting to the choir, though would appreciate additional help to further our long-term objective. Recent highlights include welcoming new choristers, entering them for the Voice for Life training scheme, and the resurrection of the choir tuck shop! We also enjoyed a bowling trip for the children, and the annual choir dinner.

Special thanks to our Head Chorister, Harry; Brian for looking after the candles; Gill for continuing robe management; Neil for his valuable support officer role; Ruth for taking the registers; Sebastian as organ scholar and librarian.

### **CHURCH FLOWERS**

*Susan Mileham*

Numbers continue at around 20 faithful ladies, yes, still all ladies, who value the assistance of the men, helpful finders and tidiers, who fetch and carry especially as we decorate for the major festivals. We're grateful too to those who supply refreshments when we're meeting to plan rotas and enjoy catching up with one another.

The team is a very friendly and encouraging group, ready to help one another and share ideas. We look forward to welcoming anyone who'd like to have a go! Do come along to our next coffee morning, probably on a Saturday morning at the end of July or beginning of August, when we'll be planning for Harvest.

## **CHURCH OFFICE**

*Divya Jacob*

Since I joined in March 2024, the office team has seen many changes, yet the spirit of dedication and service remains strong.

Anne Exelby stepped down alongside Jan but continues to volunteer whenever possible, her willingness to help is always appreciated. Gill Stopps has been an incredible support, a treasure trove of church knowledge, who carries out so much independently. Ibby Graham still assists once a week, helping with attendance figures and supporting various mini projects.

Heidi Buchanan offered valuable help, especially with data collation for the Church Weekend Away at Kents Hill. She continues to help with the church electoral roll. Nigel continues to oversee the church fabric and is in the office once a week or more, especially when coordinating with external contractors. Andrew Matthews joined us for a brief time and helped Nigel with the church fabric. Lynne supports weekly cleaning supplies and general purchasing, while Anke Stolze ensures the "A Church Near You" website stays updated.

Vicky Hughes was especially supportive during my early months, guiding me through HR processes. Paddy has been a dependable problem-solver—his help with the curate's house and locking the church during odd hours has been a real blessing.

We were deeply saddened to lose Ray Mitchell in July; until then, he faithfully assisted with notice sheets and invoices and a lot more. Alan Edmondson has since taken

over notice sheet responsibilities, which has been immensely helpful.

I am also grateful to the various volunteers who have stepped up to help when I have sent out a request for special events, especially Glynnis and her team for helping during APCM and Christmas.

I am so grateful to this growing and generous team of volunteers, whose commitment and contributions are vital to meeting our increasing administrative demands and supporting the church's mission in Buckingham. Their dedication reflects the heart of our church community.

### **CONNECT GROUPS**

***Mandy & Keith Hagon***

Connect Groups have continued to thrive, with about 20 groups running. The structure of support for leaders and groups has been a shared responsibility between Keith and Mandy Hagon, Jo Wigley and Heidi Buchan. Keith and Mandy stood down from this ministry this year, pending a move away from Buckingham. Jo continues to deal with placing people into groups, identifying new leaders and care responsibilities whilst Heidi looks after the administration. Connect Groups play an important role in church life and often follow Sunday themes in their study material. They are the basis of pastoral care, discipleship and growth, nurturing and prayer. With the growth of the church over the past twelve months, the aim is to train new leaders and start more groups. We'd like to take this

opportunity to thank the Connect Group leaders for their dedication and commitment in this vital ministry.

### **CREATED CREATIVE**

***Emma Elias***

Created Creative is a Christian creativity charity working in partnership with BPC.

2024 has been a busy year. We have been involved with:

- Monthly online creativity sessions for people in the UK and overseas. A session includes worship, sharing of scripture, creative starting points, creativity time, feedback, and prayer time.
- Creativity sessions at Buckingham Parish Church – small group outreach sessions, parish weekend away and Christmas creativity craft morning.
- Creativity sessions at The Centre– small group outreach sessions.
- Continuing to train and encourage other churches to run creativity times.
- Creativity sessions at the Oxford Diocese Lay Ministers conference, and retreat days at Stanton House, Oxfordshire.

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

For more information about this ministry please see the website: [www.createdcreative.co.uk](http://www.createdcreative.co.uk) or contact Emma [info@createdcreative.co.uk](mailto:info@createdcreative.co.uk)

## **MISSION & OUTREACH**

***Keith Croxton***

Mission and Outreach is a subgroup 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 as well as supporting the wider mission of the church.

It oversees the following:

- The Centre
- Distribution of the Tithe supporting our Mission Partners
- Bradford Link
- Men's Ministry
- Buckingham Food Bank (delivering food parcels to those in need of urgent food)
- Tuesday Lunch
- Saturday Morning Coffee Service
- Mission to the Elderly (a weekly visit/service at Clarendon House)
- Alpha
- Minibus
- Parish Weekends

The Centre is in Verney Close in the centre of the town and the lease on the building runs to June 2027. The Centre seeks to provide a sacred place in the heart of the town where the love of Jesus can be experienced, and activities take place providing support to the community.

The following Church groups have used The Centre during 2024:

- Coffee and Company
- Tea and Chat
- Food Bank
- Alpha Courses
- Project Street Life Youth Café
- Sew Lovely
- 9am congregational lunches
- Mighty Men of Valour monthly meetings

In addition, a variety of community groups who are serving the community use The Centre, the full list is on The Centre web site.

### **Community (Tuesday)Lunch**

***Sheila Handley***

The Community Lunch continues to thrive. Our weekly numbers now average 70, with many regular attenders. We continue to collect surplus fruit and veg from Aldi and Lidl, 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, such as supporting the minibus. In August we took 55 of our diners on a coach trip to Woburn Safari Park, and we again provided a Christmas lunch to 95, plus 25 helpers. We are very grateful to the Church for the continued use of its facilities and to everyone for your continued support.

## **Men's Ministry**

***Andrew Gibson***

Last year I called for some new blood and new inspiration to keep the men's ministry going and I'm delighted that we have had a response. While the year had been relatively quiet, we had a men's breakfast with an inspirational talk. We also had fun bundling up daffodils for Mothering Sunday the following day!

This is such an important ministry for the men of BPC, to encourage each other in their spiritual walk. It is not always easy to get men together, but food and some activity seems to be good starting points!

New, younger leadership with fresh inspiration is still required. If you would like to get involved with suggestions and ideas do feel free to come and have a chat.

## **Women's Fellowship**

***Nicky Bereit & Flo Thornton***

The aim of this group is to provide mutual encouragement, fellowship and getting to know folk who attend other services and fulfil other roles. Getting to know folk within the church family is crucial.

An early spring walk around Stowe to view the snowdrops assured us of God's wonderful provision of bringing life back even in nature and a wonderful walk around Evenley Woods to see the bluebells, was delightful.

A Beetle Drive caused much chatter and even chaos as we aimed to win our game together with the men joining us. We enjoyed snacks and much fellowship with others.



We run two Book Club groups

One group meets in the evening which brings much debate. This group looks at a variety of books and brings a lively discussion.

The other group meets during the day and discusses books that have a Christian theme. They meet to review the book and debate the theme, its message and the challenges it brings to us, the readers.

Debbie's Discussion dinners have continued to be popular and a fantastic way to explore how Christianity can be applied in our everyday lives.

There is a big contribution that women can give to each other within the body of the church, together with much fellowship, mutual encouragement and understanding.

## **PASTORAL**

***Revd Jo Wigley***

The pastoral support within the church has evolved as the congregations have grown. The Connect groups have become more and more important in the care and support of individuals, as keeping track of individuals who are not plugged in to a group is almost impossible unless they are brought to the attention of the team. The 9am service and midweek communion congregations have a wonderful sense of family, and it is unlikely that anyone would not feel supported.

There are a number of people who give generously of their time in supporting those who struggle with illness and mobility and the connect groups running within this congregation are wonderfully supportive. There are

people being regularly visited who are housebound or in care homes and the team of retired clergy and LLMs do a wonderful job of taking home communion and making visits.

The 11am and 6pm services present a different dynamic and numbers are larger which means the connect groups are even more important in the involvement of pastoral care and support. The increased numbers of people engaging with the prayer ministry in and after the services gives us another opportunity to support people and engage with those in need of extra support.

There is a growing awareness of mental health struggles, and we are navigating new situations created by these issues. There was a Mental Health Awareness Day in January that was very helpful and well attended. Following the 'Bootcamp' series we are much more aware of how the spiritual dimension affects our wellbeing and we have spent more time in prayer and praying around homes and specific situations following this series.

We are all called to care for one another:

*'Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.'* 1 John 4:11

### **PRAYER & PRAISE**

***Paul Wallace***

Prayer and Praise continues to take place on the first Monday of each month, to worship, to give thanks, and to pray for the needs of the ministries within Buckingham Parish Church and of the World.

I am very grateful for the help of Lorna Piper, who each month, prepares the two leaflets outlining the prayer needs of the Church and of the Mission and Outreach Group (responsible for looking after our wider mission and pastoral activities.). Copies are also on the Church website and in church as a guide for prayer during the month.

Prayer and Praise is a relaxed informal time where we worship God and pray. We are a committed group of intercessors, and we would love others to join us. There is also a group which meets every Friday evening on Zoom, for half an hour only, to pray specifically for the services taking place on the following Sunday. As ever we would welcome others to join us.

### **PRAYER MINISTRY**

***Revd Chris Murray***

The prayer ministry team remains a fairly constant 21, consisting of 16 ladies and 5 gentlemen.

It is so helpful to have team members at the 6 pm service, who are happy to join in the ministry when not on duty.

This is happening more and more, which clearly demonstrates a greater openness to be prayed with, recognition of the value of this ministry, people acknowledging needs, and that the level of faith in our church is rising.

At the 9 and 11am services, also, people are making more use of this opportunity.

People react in different ways to receiving prayer, as might be expected, and even if nothing obvious is

happening, people frequently feel God's peace and reassurance.

Of course, it is wonderful when someone is clearly healed, physically or emotionally, and encouraging when someone tells us later on, of a positive outcome.

If anyone feels God may be nudging them towards this precious work, do speak to Cherryl or me, particularly if you attend the 11am.

Thank you for your prayers and encouragement.

## **PRODUCTION**

***Mike Roskell***

2024 was another busy year for the production team. We have continued to support multiple services and events each week. The average Sunday requires around 30 hours of volunteer time to provide our normal provision. We have also had a steady increase in the numbers watching our live stream provision, including people from across the country. The weekly average views across all of our YouTube channel is around 2.8K.

We have had a large increase in the number of youth joining the team and serving, particularly at the family service with that service being almost fully run by youth which is amazing. This has brought its own challenge when it comes to training people up which is a challenge that we will continue to work on into 2025.

Of note we would like to thank Ken Piper for all his support and investment into the lighting in church. This has been particularly supportive of the 6pm service. Ken

has decided to step back after Easter 2025, his support will be greatly missed.

We are now 10 years on from the production system install, and starting to notice some of the kit is starting to fail. This will again be something that we will need to keep under review going into 2025 so we can ensure that we keep a fully functioning system to enable us to keep providing the level of support to all the services and events in church.

Overall, another great year and Ali and I just want to thank our volunteers again for all their hard work, without them services in church would look and sound very different!

### **SERVICE ASSISTANTS**

*Gerry Causer*

(Sides People, Chalice Assistants, Servers, and Service Wardens)

These teams primarily assist in the smooth running of the 9am Sunday and 10am Wednesday communion services. But they are responsible for looking after items used at the other services.

When I took on the role of Church Warden a couple of years ago I had hoped to step down from the role of Sacristan, but this wasn't to be. Thankfully however, three people have come forward to help with key aspects of the role. Jane Wardale has taken on the rotas – although prepared only once every three months, this is not as straightforward as you may imagine and there are always changes to manage. Lynne Legrove has taken on

ensuring that supplies of candles, tapers, oil, wine, wafers and other miscellaneous items are kept in stock. Susan Mileham has taken on ensuring the oil candles are kept filled and the altar frontals are changed as required. For cover and support it is useful to have a small team, rather than just one person.

Between us we keep the altar linen cleaned. Last time we had this professionally done (about 10 years ago) each cloth cost nearly £30, so this effort saves the church considerably. You can however imagine how dispiriting it can be when newly laundered cloths are spilt on or are screwed up when the Nave altar is being moved.

There are currently 28 people in the Service Assistants team. The average attendance at the 9am service is 84. If you consider the choir, hospitality, prayer ministry and Flower arrangers then you can see a very high level of participation by the congregation in this service. Over the year a few new members have joined the team, but then a few have also left. If you are relatively new to the church the role of Sidesperson / Welcomer is not too onerous and is a great way of getting to know more people.

I am very grateful for the support and effort by each and every one in these teams.

## **SERVICES**

*Revd Will Pearson- Gee*

### **9am Service**

Despite the loss of almost all of our asylum seekers early in the year, the 9am traditional service enjoyed numerical growth (although the attendance on first Sundays when there is no choir did not grow). The 9am Planning Team continued to meet and planned a variety of healing services as well as occasional 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Celtic services. All services were live streamed to a high standard and enjoyed by many from the comfort of their homes. We ceased to offer communion by intinction.

The shared lunches which have been much appreciated and well attended. A highlight was a visit from John Bell of the Iona Community who spent a morning talking about the psalms. Over the summer holidays we planned a bespoke sermon series and included discussion periods and lunches after the services which were well received.

In summary the 9am has thrived and remains a life-giving congregation that welcomes all who appreciate tradition liturgy, great music and inspiring teaching.

### **11am Service**

The 11am has experienced steady growth and has become a far more diverse congregation. The 11am follows a set pattern of children's groups on all Sundays except the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday when there is an 'All Together Service'. This now follows a tried and tested pattern with two talks – one all-age and then while the children do a craft activity – another aimed at the adults. Attendance has grown showing that this is a popular service. Holy Communion is celebrated on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday. The band is

well resourced, and all services were live streamed to a high standard.

#### 6pm Service

The 6pm service has enjoyed consistent growth. Holy Communion continues to be celebrated on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday. The longer talks and extended worship are as popular as ever and we seek to 'lean in' to the Holy Spirit more and more as people get used to prayer ministry. The worship band continued to improve and has learned many new songs.

All services were live streamed to a high standard and the quality of production has increased. There is online participation which those travelling and stuck at home value highly. The YouTube recordings are well viewed as people catch-up on the teaching.

#### 10am Midweek Service

The 10am Wednesday service continues to thrive. The Chancel remains a beautiful setting which has attracted new worshippers. The services are usually led by the retired clergy who love the service and the fellowship amongst the 30 strong congregation is strong. On the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday refreshments are served after the service.

### **SUNDAY OPERATIONS**

***Andrew Gibson***

My role as Sunday Operations Coordinator involves networking and nudging, and a nimble use of our church database ChurchSuite.

All of our Sunday operations require people to manage and be in a variety of rotas, and every aspect of our



Sunday offering at all services needs willing church members to step up and serve. My experience is that most Church members are willing to serve but not all are always free; some are massively willing to help while others need a little nudging!

I am indebted to a large team of Church members who manage individual rotas, and to all those who have served within those rotas over the past year. Inevitably we are always short of volunteers to serve their fellow church members, so if you feel able to offer some time to the church do come and have a chat.

## **WORSHIP**

***Ali Burt & Sam Graham***

For 2024 we introduced a new approach to scheduling worship volunteers, providing greater consistency with which musicians would be playing together week to week, and enabling them to know when they may be on a rota much further in advance. Although not all plain sailing, there has been a clear improvement due to team members playing with an almost consistent band every time they are leading our sung worship.

We welcomed a team from Bradford leading our worship at the 11am in January, and new people joined the team. For the first time, we switched from having traditional style music at the CTIB service on Good Friday to a more modern style, which was warmly received and more in-line with how other churches in town engage in sung worship.

In the early part of the summer Ali Burt sadly stepped down from his role as Worship Pastor. Phil Cowley took on the role in the interim for a few months before an injury meant that this wasn't viable. In his time, he organised and led the worship at the Kents Hill weekend away brilliantly alongside Mandy Lambert. The worship was a highlight to many at the weekend.

Since November Sam have overseen the worship team alongside his Youth & Students role. We have taken a more collaborative approach with the volunteer worship leaders. We have seen them grow in confidence. We have also successfully introduced a number of new songs at the end of 2024 and led a well-received Contemporary Carols service.