

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

2024 / 2025



St Nicolas, Great Bookham
Building Faith in the Community

INTRODUCTION

This Church Activities booklet is a celebration of the exciting things happening in the various groups at St Nicolas over the last year. We hope you find it interesting and encouraging to discover all that is going on in our church and that it will lead you to give thanks and pray for all the ongoing activities.

If having read a report you would like to join a group, or feel the Lord prompting you to start serving in that ministry, then why not step out in faith and see what happens? Any of the groups would love to hear from you and would welcome new members. Your first point of contact is the person named at the bottom of the report and you can get in touch with them via the parish office on email: office@stnicolasbookham.org.uk or phone: 01372 450709.

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ACTS PUPPETEERS

The has been a year of change for the ACTS group. After 45 years involvement Jane Bishop has retired from ACTS. She, Wiebke Smith and others from Bookham Baptist Church started the group. Not only did Jane write the scripts but was deeply involved in every production. We miss her guidance and wisdom.

We have continued to perform in infant and junior schools in Bookham, Fetcham, Effingham and Downside, visiting each school once a term. In the Summer Term 2024 we did the story of “The Prodigal Son”, in the Autumn Term we performed “Saul on the Road to Damascus”. This term we are doing a play called “Pancake Day”, where we look at what Lent means to us. After doing the play there is a short explanation, drawing out what we would like the children to think about.

The ACTS puppet group come from four local churches. We have five puppeteers, a narrator and a musician. We always have live music and this is greatly appreciated by the schools. Our musician not only composes her own music but also writes the words for each song. Every song is written specifically for the play performed.

Chloe Adie on behalf of the team

AV TEAM

The AV Team at St Nicolas bless us in so many ways, not just managing the sound and visuals during our main Sunday services, but also the edited video stream on YouTube Sunday by Sunday. We also play a key role in supporting the school services, Remembrance Day service and Christmas Services each year, with occasional support for Funerals and Weddings.

AV is one of those roles that go unnoticed in the background, supporting and enhancing our worship at St Nicolas. Unnoticed but certainly not unappreciated! However, when AV goes wrong, it becomes very obvious. It is at just such times when the AV operators need everybody’s understanding and encouragement as they work hard to get things back on track.

At St Nicolas, we are greatly blessed with a dedicated team of 7 operators, but this past year it has been a shrinking team. During 2024 we have lost two members for different reasons, and this has of course put extra burden on the remaining team (which includes a musician, two church wardens and a lay minister each juggling their other responsibilities). We already know that in

2025 another member of the team will be standing down as they leave St Nicolas.

I look on the AV Team with enormous gratitude. They deserve one big thankyou from us all. Thank you!

Chris Holloway

BARNABAS MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The Men's Fellowship of St Barnabas the Encourager:

There have been a few changes during this year in the Barnabas men's fellowship group. We are now meeting in the Pastoral Centre at 8.30am, discussing various topics of religious, social, general interest.

Many thanks to David Wall, we are now having a light breakfast of rolls and buns, with tea & coffee; thus, giving us more time for socialising & discussion.

From the nineteen or more members, there are a number who are members of other churches. Each month a member may take a turn to present a thought for discussion.

The subjects discussed in 2024/25 have included: -

How should the Church involve itself in helping Refugees and Asylum Seekers find Sanctuary? We discussed the war in the Middle East and its effects, we had an amusing discussion on the topic "Trust your Gut/Instinct" followed the following month by the question – was there a difference between "A Sin or a Crime?" the next month's discussion was "what piece of advice or secret did your parents give you that you follow today?" In October - "don't forget the simplest rule for success is 'be kind'", next we considered "what were the concerns of the Nation that were effecting us?" We also heard about St Edmund, who some say, should really be the patron of England and in January, - "Do we have hope of eternal life?"

We have also had two very sociable breakfast meetings in the Vineries Garden Centre, our Christmas breakfast included wives and partners.

Our purpose is best described by - "Faith invites discussion, requires our exploration, embraces doubt, and sets all in the context of the faithfulness of God."

David King

BEREAVEMENT TEAM

The team consists of Jean Forward (co-ordinator), Chloe Adie, Sylvia Solarski and Julia Watts. Throughout the year we write to the relatives of all who have died and whose funerals have been taken by our Clergy and Lay Ministers. We also enclose a leaflet giving details of the twice yearly Remembrance Services, plus an invitation to contact us for a chat or help, if these are needed. Within the parish these letters are delivered personally and often include a visit; those outside the parish are sent by post. During 2024 we sent 19 letters to next-of-kin, 8 of these were within the parish and most included a visit. If needed, we will continue to give further support and encouragement.

All who have been bereaved are invited by letter to the next two Remembrance Services, held each year in April/May and October/November. Anyone who has been bereaved is most welcome to come to these, no matter how long ago a loved one died, or whether they lived locally. These services are well attended and are much appreciated by those who come. The names of all who are being remembered are noted down and read out, then there is the chance to light a candle. It is pleasing to notice that some who do not regularly attend church, continue to come and remember for quite some years. Afterwards refreshments are served in the Church Room, with the chance of a chat to a team member. Very many thanks to Valerie Newman, who continues to help at the services, those who organise and serve the refreshments, the sacristy team for their support, Peter Lutton for playing the organ, and to John Adie for always coming along and helping us.

Visiting and supporting those who have been bereaved is not an easy task, and is often quite upsetting. I am so grateful to all who help in this way - please remember us in your prayers.

Jean Forward

BLOOM

Bloom continues to provide a chance for women in the church to meet and chat and get to know each other better, and to bring along friends and neighbours. Once or twice a term we gather in the Pastoral Centre on a Saturday morning for a delicious breakfast and a short talk. We try to make it a treat - fruit salad, cereals, pastries, toast, yoghurts and breakfast muffins are all available. Flowers on the tables and bunting across the room help to make it feel special.

Bloom was started to bring women of all ages together, to get to know each other better, support one another and hear something of the Christian message in a very accessible way. Younger or older, single or married, Christian or not, all women are welcome. Many of those who come are part of our extended church family, but we are really pleased that they feel able to bring along friends, neighbours, daughters, sisters and mothers. It's a very gentle introduction to the fellowship and friendship we enjoy in the church.

Each time we have a theme, and a speaker talks for just 10 minutes sharing something of their personal journey, faith and life experience. Over the past year among other topics we heard about the work of a local councillor as we thought about how we can make a difference in the world. In the New Year we thought about the gifts we receive from God and the gifts we can offer to him and others. There are usually some discussion questions on the tables to get us talking and often a take home bookmark or bible verse, sometimes a simple craft activity to make.

Five of us organise the breakfasts, Ali, Celeste, Gill, Barbara and Sue, but we are much helped by others who come to set up and, very importantly, clear up and wash up at the end. Thank you to all of those who have offered their help over the past year, particularly when two of our team have been absent due to operations.

We would love to see more and more women join us. If you would like to come along to a Bloom breakfast then watch out for the advertisement in the weekly newsletter and book your place.

Barbara McDonald

CHURCH BUILDINGS AND FABRIC REPORT

In addition to the general maintenance works the following specific larger projects were completed in 2024:

- The re-roofing and insulating of the new boiler house roof (previously known as the Sexton's shed).
- Re-roofing of the leaking gardener's shed which replaced the asbestos cement roof with new profiled metal sheet roofing.
- With the Archdeacon's permission, the installation of a new oak cash donation box in the tower.
- The leaning brick wall on the pastoral centre was partially demolished and a new brick pier/buttress built to stabilise any further movement.

In addition to this the owner of the neighbouring flats and car park removed a large ash tree (whose roots had undermined the foundations of the brick wall) and trimmed back two other trees, at his own expense.

- Three new cupboards have been fitted in the choir vestry to replace the old work top and drawers and to “tidy up” the accumulation of wires, chargers etc.
- The damaged fence panels behind the parish office have been replaced together with six new panels being fitted between the rectory and a neighbouring garden. This replaced the Leylandii trees.
- The electric motor for the central screen in the church has been replaced.

A faculty has been obtained to upgrade and refurbish the toilets in the Church Room and grant has been obtained from Guildford Diocese in addition to the small grant given by The Jane Austen Society of North America. In addition, a significant grant from Surrey County Council, sponsored by Cllr Clare Curran, has also now been received. Work is now ongoing to enable the work to commence.

In 2024 we also considered as a PCC and Fabric Committee various projects for 2025:

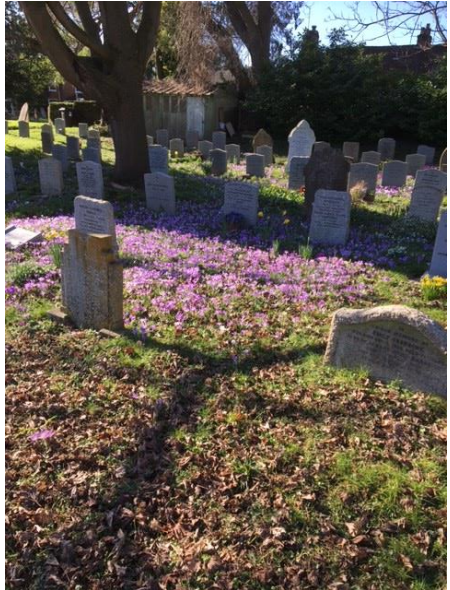
- Repair to deal with damp patch on north wall of church
- New gardener’s shed door
- Pastoral Centre carpet clean
- Church Room chair storage cupboard

The churchwardens and other members of the PCC are very grateful to the volunteers making up the Fabric Committee who oversee this work and also carry out the more routine tasks. We would particularly like to thank David Wall and David Barnes for their valued contribution in masterminding most of this vital work. The PCC is thankful for the continued support of Mole Valley District Council for the maintenance of the churchyard.

Heather Gerrard on behalf of the churchwardens

CHURCHYARD

The churchyard provides an area of quiet to the many people who visit it every day whether they are paying their respects to a loved one buried in the grounds or just enjoying the flowers. There are many thousands of parishioners in these church grounds and many stories can be read on the headstones. I would like to highlight that the safety and repair of the headstones is the responsibility of the family.



The beautiful and ECO friendly area - remember the Award- is tended by a few who see a job that requires doing and then get on with it. I know that I can ask for help with a task and it will be carried out. We are very grateful to the ECO team for their support as well as Stephanie Tod, Nick Garrett, and the Fabric Committee and many others.

The contracted monthly mow of the grass makes the churchyard a safe area as well as helping in the identification of the graves. I am very grateful to Rick for his care of the grass areas.

There should also be a mention of the new roof on the Gardeners shed following a branch damaging it during one of the many storms.

Angela Stevens

DEANERY SYNOD

The Deanery Synod had three interesting and engaging meetings in 2024.

The first was a Zoom meeting at the end of February where Bishop Paul began by summarising episcopal ministry and 'loving God and those committed to our care'. He then went on to describe his work as an episcopal champion in three main areas:

1. Children and Young People

Without children and young people, our churches lose something indispensable. There is a current crisis exacerbated since Covid. Two areas

he is excited about are: 22,000 children in 83 church schools; and Emma Coy's research into the ways in which schools, churches, and households can work together to grow discipleship.

2. Vocations

Everyone is blessed with gifts from God. However, we need to be intentional in identifying what people's gifts are; and how this is not simply about those called to ordained ministry.

3. Environment

The impact of environmental change was brought home to Bishop Paul when he recently met with other new bishops from around the world at Canterbury. The goal is for churches to be carbon neutral by 2030. He noted that the A Rocha Eco scheme has been very successful.

The June meeting led by Rev Andrew Winter (Chaplain at Reed's School) and Tristan Stone (lay minister for young people at Leatherhead Parish Church) focused on the mission of the church in our Deanery. There were break out groups to discuss mission statements provided for either Families and Children's Ministry or Community Fridge and focusing on proclaiming the Gospel. The second activity was to discuss, in the same groups, missional activities that are going well in parishes, reaching out to those who do not come to church. There was a common theme that reaching out to families is an area that needs much prayer.

Rev Andy Winter then talked to the way we can help those in our communities in their journey toward/in faith using an image of a river with stepping stones across. Many different models of stepping stones are possible to get from one side to the other and a discussion followed around how we as churches move people across, which ministries were on which stepping stones and where the biggest challenges occur.

In the October meeting Archdeacon Martin Breadmore agreed to answer questions from Deanery Synod members collated by Rev Renos Pittarides. He described his early experience in rural Essex and the subsequent move to Fetcham at the age of 12 where he became involved in the Christian Union, and eventually the Scripture Union camp where, in his words 'I wrote in ink what I had once written in pencil.'

After ordination, he spent 17 years in parish ministry but then was called as Diocesan Director of Ordinands in Kensington Episcopal area. He was then called to his current role as Archdeacon where his key roles and responsibilities include Archdeacon visitations, safeguarding issues, involvement in vacancy

process, revitalisation of struggling churches, and a pastoral role for clergy and church wardens.

He talked to mission in the church and what is successful. He indicated that the Parish Needs Process highlighted that parishes didn't understand what community needs are. But as a result a plethora of ways to address these have sprung up. There were also questions about vacancy and parish share; Living in Love and Faith and the next steps; and the Youth Catalyst project which is progressing well.

In response to what is the most challenging aspect of the job he replied, dealing with complaints where there is pastoral breakdown; safeguarding incidents; and the relentless nature of the job. What brings him most joy is revitalisation of parishes and making good appointments to fill vacancies.

Heather Gerrard

ECO TEAM

The main focus of our work in the first part of 2024 was working on the submission for our Gold Eco Church Award. Following an assessment process, we received it in September, becoming only the second church in Guildford Diocese to receive the Gold Award. The team put a lot of effort into the research and documentation required - we enjoyed doing it, but it certainly was hard work.

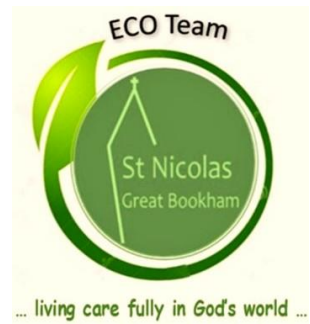


We celebrated by organising a “soup and pud” Harvest Lunch. This was a time of good fellowship for the church family with the additional benefit of being able to contribute the surplus of approximately £500 to church funds towards the refurbishment of the Church Room toilets.

We continued to maintain the Pastoral Centre garden, adding various new features to the wildlife area all aimed at increasing biodiversity. We did the RSPB Birdwatch in the Pastoral Centre garden and churchyard.

We carried on with our unusual recycling initiatives - empty medicine blister packs in particular were received in great numbers. We arranged a stall featuring the Fairtrade products in local supermarkets each month, along with offering upcycled greetings cards for sale. We held our annual Coffee Morning in the church in February and were able to send £377 to Transform Trade. When one of our Outward Giving charities (Mission to Seafarers) requested

unwanted knitting wool we promoted that locally. We gave an ECO talk at Bloom Women's Fellowship Group. We put up a display at 'The Spirit of Christmas event' in December and once again put up the communal Christmas card trellis which was well used. We helped to decorate the church at Harvest and Christmas with handmade creative wreaths and recycled materials.



In the village, we took part in the Bookham Community Clean-Up organised by The Grange for Earth Day, and in the Big Plastic Count, recording plastic items for a week. We promoted the Plastic Free Bookham project and attended Surrey Wildlife Trust's 'Celebrating Surrey's Communities': a focus on saving nature. We joined with Bookham Baptist Church Eco Team's Walk to mark Big Green Week and attended their Creation Care service which had an A Rocha speaker.

The team meet regularly and are Jacqy Faull, Sarah Heafield, Fiona Jones, Val Lambert, Joy Lord and Zena Rose. All are welcome to join us – please talk to any of us if you'd like to know more.

Margaret Hibbert and team

FAMILIES AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

We have had an amazing year with our ministry to families and children. Some of the highlights are set out below.

Tots Alive

This group has flourished throughout the year, with parents and carers valuing the opportunity to connect, have fun, and learn about the gospel. Weekly attendance varies, but typically includes around 30 parents, carers, and children.

Glow

Our children's church has seen steady growth, both in numbers and in their understanding of God. We explored themes such as Lent, Easter, "The In-Between Time," Pentecost, "On Jesus' Team," Advent, and "Jesus is God's Gift."

Community Outreach

We organized various events, including Craft Clubs during school holidays, Easter Family Fun, and Summer Fun activities in local parks. These events

provided fantastic opportunities to meet new people, offer a range of activities, and share the gospel with our community. Additionally, we participated in community events like Village Day and Spirit of Christmas. Our Families' and Children's Minister continued to offer Rhyme Time at the library every fortnight, which has been warmly received by families with young children in our wider community.

Schools

We maintained our engagement with three local schools by delivering assemblies on their premises and welcoming them to our church for RE lessons. We also held special services for occasions such as Easter, Harvest, and Christingles. In 2024, the Christingle services organized by our team and two local schools, held at St. Nicolas, saw an attendance of 898 community members.

Uniformed Groups

Scouts and Guide groups visited us and enjoyed the activities we provided, particularly the scavenger hunts in our church building and garden. They also contributed to our Remembrance service by preparing art pieces that were displayed in the church.

We are immensely grateful to the wonderful team of helpers who make all these activities possible and would appreciate your prayers for all the exciting projects and events planned for 2025.

Celeste Rios

FLOWER ARRANGERS

The group of ladies who week by week provide and arrange flowers always willingly give their time to this task. As with all groups we are fewer in number this year following the death of Tina Lamborn and Mary Easun moving into Liberham Lodge. Both were valued and skilled members of our group.

We delight in our involvement in Wedding flowers due to the quantities of blooms that we arrange. It is such a pleasure to help in the bride's day and



we always hope that you as church members enjoy our arrangements on the following Sunday. (The bride pays the bill).

I have two requests - Do you enjoy arranging flowers and could you be available on a Friday to offer help to the group?

The second request is - Would you like to have flowers in church for your loved ones? If so, you could donate towards the cost of the week's flowers.

Angela Stevens, Coordinator

FOCUS ON PRAYER TEAM AND PRAYER STATIONS

The Focus on Prayer team design, produce and display a range of prayer stations in church throughout the year. They help provide a focus for quiet prayer and reflection, welcoming all to St Nicolas - whether regular or occasional attenders or just visiting; for services, private prayer, special events or any other reason.

A few lines introduce the meaning of each theme, accompanied by a prayer and complementary activity designed to engage people of all ages and abilities.

All are invited to take a few minutes to sit, contemplate, reflect and pray in different ways, helping mindfulness in prayer. For example, plaiting a few strands of coloured wool or colouring a paper butterfly. You are also invited to write a prayer on shapes to hang on our prayer tree. In addition, a series of attractive prayer bookmarks and cards (pictured) are available to take.



On the prayer table opposite the prayer station, prayers can also be requested confidentially. These are included in St Nicolas' prayer meetings held on Mondays and Wednesdays. Complimentary prayer cards are also available there.

Our first station in 2021, focused on the Lord's Prayer, complementing the national 'Thy Kingdom Come' initiative. New themes have been introduced

each year since, including Lent and Holy Week, Advent and Christmas, Fruit of the Spirit and seasons of the year. The latest series introduced in 2024, focuses on 'The I am Sayings of Jesus'. Each set now forms a programme of stations throughout the year, which we hope people will take a few minutes to look at.

As always, my thanks are extended to the Focus on Prayer Team, namely Julia Watts, Veronica Taylor and Carole Vaux for continuing to support and assist the development of new prayer stations and also to Wendy Hoare and Zena Rose for preparing shapes for the prayer tree.

Vicki Dixon

HEARING CHAMPION

During 2024 I have held 7 clinics and I have assisted with the maintenance of 113 hearing aids. I have seen 5 clients in their home or at my house to help them when they have had a problem.

I seek to give support to hearing aid users by providing batteries, cleaning hearing aids, trouble shooting and changing tubes.

I hope I also provide a friendly welcome and an opportunity for a conversation. It's an opportunity for me to signpost people to our other local services.

The clinics are monthly and are held in the Meeting Place so the clients can also use the coffee shop facilities.

I have a set of regular users and this year I've had more new clients.

It is a rewarding task and the users are very grateful not to have to travel further for assistance. Usually this would also necessitate leaving their hearing aid at the site and having to manage without them. Due to our geography, hearing aid users can obtain their hearing aids from Epsom, Guildford or Specsavers in Leatherhead, all of these services provide different hearing aids and different accessories. I need to use a bit of detective work to be sure I use the right equipment!

Hearing loss can be very isolating and research has highlighted that it contributes towards cognitive decline so I try to encourage clients to get used to their hearing aids and not leave them safely in a box.

Ali Sangwine

HOUSEGROUPS

During the last year the Monday Morning Group, which had been meeting for many years, originally on Thursdays, came to an end, leaving eight groups meeting regularly. Two meet in the morning, one in the afternoon and five in the evening; some meet weekly, others fortnightly or monthly. One of the groups meets for silent prayer, but all of the others follow studies based on the bible, often using one of the range of study guides which are available. About 60 people attend the various groups, and new members are always welcome, details are on the housegroup leaflet, available in the tower.

If you have never joined a housegroup, why not give it a try? It's quite alright to join on a trial basis, or to change groups if your first choice doesn't work for you; groups, and the individuals in them, vary and what helps one person might not help another. Fellowship and support are important aspects of all groups and the friendships formed with other members are strong and supportive. Most members agree that being part of a group is a tremendous help in the challenge of living out our faith in everyday life.

Jean Forward

INCLUSION AMBASSADOR

Our Inclusion Ambassador, Zena Rose, gave an engaging presentation on the subject of Neurodiversity, interviewing a member of the church who has experience of a child with autism and related conditions. The interview was heartfelt and very honest about some of the challenges involved in responding to the needs of a child with autism and how the congregation could help. Zena was able to add her own experience as a person with learning disabilities to this informative presentation.

Gill Caldwell

MOTHERS' UNION

What is Mothers' Union all about?

Chris: Mothers' Union is the largest Christian Charity in the world with over four million members and it works with people of all faiths and none in over 83 countries to promote stable marriage, family life and the protection of children, through prayer, enabling and campaigning. At grass roots level we work

towards ending poverty, inequality and injustice by providing parenting, literacy and community development programmes.

Vivien: Over many years I have enjoyed many thought-provoking meetings and social times with members of the MU, and it has become a large part of my life. I would like to see it continue in some form at St Nicolas during the years to come, and we all pray that younger members of the congregation will feel encouraged to join MU to form part of what is an important world wide organisation.

Dawn: What it means to me – Fellowship, commitment to the Church, caring, loyal and helpful to others in any way in need.

Julia: The work of the Mothers' Union is grounded in prayer and it gives hope to countless people throughout the world. Next year will be the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Mothers' Union by Mary Sumner, wife of the Bishop of Winchester, our branch here at St Nicolas was founded in 1902. That is surely a reason for rejoicing – from little acorns mighty oaks grow.

Julia Watts

OPENING AND CLOSING TEAM

There are many people in our congregation who quietly help behind the scenes at St Nicolas and the small team that opens and closes our church is one example.

Thanks to the team, St Nicolas church has been open to visitors almost every day during the past year and you may be surprised to learn just how busy it can be. People of all ages and walks of life come to visit for a variety of reasons: some to light a candle in memory of a loved one; some to remember an event in their life, such as a wedding, baptism or funeral; some return to visit the church that was part of their life when they lived in Bookham; some to appreciate the building or research their family history; and some simply to pray. Many from our community also come in to deposit their unusual recycling, a facility provided by the Eco Team.

The gates to the south porch are now routinely open, although entry is still via the west door and this gives the church a more welcoming and accessible look when viewed from the village centre.

The Opening and Closing team make all this possible and the Churchwardens are very grateful for their help in this way.

Joy Lord on behalf of the churchwardens

OUTWARD GIVING

Through our outward giving, the church models good practice for Christians. In doing so collectively as a church, we are able to build links in ways that individuals may not be able to on their own.

Our regular giving is planned, with six charities being supported each year from 2022 to 2025. This helps them in their financial planning and for us to build meaningful relationships. We do not simply give financially. We support the chosen charities in other ways, particularly prayer and to help raise awareness about their work. Our Parish links with each charity help with this and we enjoy welcoming representatives who come to tell us about their work. We also benefit from a range of resources for worship made available by mission organisations.

Each year, we aspire to give 10% of each year's regular giving, including tax recovery, to charitable causes. Regular giving includes money received from standing orders, planned giving, cash placed in collection plates and envelopes, online giving and through cashless card transfers. It also includes Gift Aid recovered on donations. All contributions are very much appreciated.

The charities chosen represent a spread of local, national and international beneficiaries, with a focus on issues prioritised by our congregation, namely: relief of poverty and persecution; the Bible and discipleship; supporting people who are disadvantaged, oppressed or homeless; children and young people. They are also selected for their Christian ethos and good governance.

In 2024, St Nicolas Church gave the following sums to our chosen charities, amounting to £13,750.

Charity	Parish Links	Sum donated 2024
Bible Society	Alan & Suzie Jenkins	£2750
Christians Against Poverty (CAP)	Val Lomax & Catherine Clark	£2750
Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW)	Val Lambert & Jenny Evans	£2750
Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF)	Julia Watts & Sue White	£1375
Mission to Seafarers	John Adie & Eldred Clark	£1375
Oasis – Hadley Project (North London)	Gill Caldwell & Celeste Rios	£2750
TOTAL:		£13,750

St Nicolas also continues to support other charities in bespoke ways. In particular, through food donations to LeatherHEAD Start, fund raising and other activities for Fairtrade, The Meeting Place and Christian Aid, plus special toy collections for The Childrens Trust in Tadworth. We also help raise money for occasional special appeals.

You can find out more about each of the charities supported on our Outward Giving noticeboards in the Pastoral Centre and in church or on our website at <https://www.stnicolasbookham.org.uk/giving>

Vicki Dixon, Outward Giving Coordinator

PASTORAL TEAM

We have seven pastoral assistants and pastoral visitors on the team: Ali Sangwine, Chris Bridges, Heather Gerrard, Jan Williamson, Margaret Hibbert, Sylvia Solarski and Valerie Lomax. All have received training from the diocese in pastoral care. We meet together about twice a term with Alan, Gill and Barbara from the ministry team, and Jean Forward representing the bereavement team, to support and encourage one another, to share news, (if appropriate of course) and to pray for each other and those we visit. The team keep up to date with safeguarding training and attending other courses to continue learning and developing their skills.

The pastoral team members visit both members of the congregation and others in the wider community on behalf of all of us at St Nicolas. They come alongside, listen to their concerns, offer friendship and comfort, pray with them or for them. Sometimes they point the way to other sources of help and advice. Issues include bereavement, illness, family problems, anxiety and loneliness, sometimes just needing a friendly face and someone to chat to. There have been many visits to individuals at home and in care homes or hospital, and regular phone calls help to keep in touch with others. Three of the team take home communion to some no longer able to get to church. One is involved in welcoming and preparing families for the baptism of their child.

The team members also use their pastoral skills in many other church and community activities. Some are involved with Tuesday and Thursday coffee mornings, the Friendship Lunch, the Meeting Place and Community Fridge, the Anna Chaplaincy, Golden Years, Liberham Lodge care home, Tots Alive and other children's and families activities. With the increasing numbers of very elderly and frail in our congregation and in the community we are kept very busy.

Barbara stepped down from organising the team at the end of 2024 and Ali Sanguine has kindly now taken this on. If you, or someone you know, would like a visit or a phone call please contact them through the parish office.

Barbara McDonald

PCC

This is the principal governing committee and board of trustees at St. Nicolas. It works with the Rector to guide the church through its key plans and projects as well as its general operations. The PCC comprises the ordained clergy, the church wardens, Deanery Synod representatives and a number of elected

members of our congregation. Together they are responsible for the overall wellbeing of the church members and the church buildings. The PCC also has a duty to promote the mission of the church within the wider community.

The committee is often involved in key decisions and members work together to oversee the many and varied areas in the church that need to run effectively and safely. Individuals are encouraged to lead oversight of one of these areas to enable the PCC to understand better any issues or points of interest, and to become a point of contact and support for the church family.

Heather Gerrard on behalf of the churchwardens

SACRISTAN TEAM

We are a small group of volunteers, made up of Acolytes (more commonly known as servers) and Chalice Assistants. Acolytes wear white robes called albs and Chalice Assistants wear cassocks. Some of us cover both roles.

Our most visible job is to assist the clergy at every service, whether it be for our regular congregation on Sundays and Thursdays, or for other church users such as at Weddings and the twice yearly Memorial Service. We dress the altars, prepare the sacraments and ensure our ministers are equipped. We then clear away after the service, washing the silverware in hot soapy water. What you may not know is that we're also responsible for changing the altar colours in line with the Liturgical calendar and for laundering the linen items.

It is a real privilege and joy to serve in this way. Do speak to me if you'd like to join the team; we are especially short at this time.

Joy Lord

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is a fundamental part of culture and practice at St Nicolas' and is something to be celebrated. The PCC has Safeguarding as a standing agenda item at each of their meetings and receive a report from the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) when there is business to report. In recent months, there has been little or nothing to report to the PCC regarding safeguarding concerns but we all remain vigilant. There have not been any concerns raised since the last report which have met threshold for reporting to the Diocese. Often, concerns raised are not actually Safeguarding matters but the PSO welcomes these as it seems to be a positive thing that members of the Church

are inclined to raise concerns; it means that Safeguarding is high on their agenda!

St Nicolas works in accordance with the guidance given by the Church of England and the PSO has completed all training in that regard. The PCC has complied with its duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and clergy discipline measure 2016, duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. All policies are reviewed in accordance with the Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook which is well known to the Officers in the Church. It is an expectation that members of the PCC – as well as Church Clergy and Officers – complete the relevant training and records are kept by the PSO.

The PCC Safeguarding Lead is Anne Shears; the Parish Safeguarding Officer is Roland Martin; the DBS Recruiter and Verifier is Ruth Dyson.

The Parish Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed during the course of the last twelve months and is available on the Parish website. The Parish Dashboard has been reviewed by the PCC this year though there are still some actions to carry forward. The PCC Safeguarding Lead, PSO and the incumbent met with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser over the Summer for what could be called an M.O.T!

Now that the Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance has been fully absorbed by the Church, the PCC Safeguarding Lead and the PSO insist that the policy is followed. PCC are well-aware of the risk associated with not following guidance and policy.

St Nicolas must continue to retain strong focus on ensuring that safer recruitment processes are followed correctly and the PCC Lead is very happy to help and guide those recruiting into roles.

Roland Martin, Parish Safeguarding Officer

THE MEETING PLACE

The Meeting Place is a small local charity based in Bookham, set up in 2011 by members of the three local churches. Our aim is to offer a wide variety of activities that build up our community and make a positive difference in reducing isolation.

On Saturday mornings we offer a Coffee Shop in Bookham Baptist Church Hall. This operates



A place for all, time for all

throughout the year and offers a warm welcome plus refreshments including cakes baked by The Grange Centre. The Community Fridge also runs “help yourself” tables on a Saturday morning at Bookham Baptist Church. Supermarkets donate surplus food that would otherwise be wasted, and the Community Fridge team makes it available to anyone who can use it on Saturday, Tuesday and Friday mornings.

The Meeting Place also offers services to support those experiencing Hearing loss – Lip Reading classes are taught on zoom by a professionally qualified teacher, and Ali, our Hearing Champion is available approximately once a month at the Coffee Shop on Saturday mornings. Hearing Champions is a free (drop-in) service for the best operation and maintenance of NHS hearing aids, as well as signposting to other services and equipment. Hearing Champions is a Guildford Diocese initiative in partnership with the NHS and St Nicolas.

The Language Hub offers English lessons for anyone for whom English is not their first language. Classes run in term time and are organised in two groups - Beginners and Intermediate level.

Our Community Chaplaincy aims to nurture and develop the spiritual lives of older people (whether they are living at home or in a care home) and their relatives, friends and carers. The Anna Chaplain and team of Anna Friends and volunteers organise activities for those who have lived long and experienced much. Anna Chaplaincy is a national network licensed through the Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF).

All these activities are intended to complement the offerings of local churches and in no sense compete with what is offered by their pastoral teams. We are very grateful that our local churches work so well together and are generous in their varied support of The Meeting Place’s activities.

For more information about all our activities, please see our website <http://themeetingplace.org.uk> where you will also find contact details.

Margaret Hibbert

TUESDAY COFFEE

For our Guests, each Tuesday morning brings an important event to their lives. Around 18 people come to the Pastoral Centre regularly, where they enjoy coffee or tea and biscuits, as well as good conversation. We are always particularly pleased when new people come – and come again – so the

numbers gradually increase. The object of the Tuesday Coffee is to promote fellowship and friendship amongst all who come.

However, it would be good to welcome more people from our immediate Church family. If you are in the village on a Tuesday morning, why not join us? We should be delighted to welcome you.

There are nine of us who make up the Team, plus two invaluable reserves. Margaret, Sylvia, Romey, Wendy, Carole, Jinny, Jenny and Carolyn do a sterling job, with Chloe and Chris as invaluable back-ups; we all enjoy this role and feel glad to be able to give something to our faithful guests. Long may it continue.

Julia Watts

WELCOME TEAM - SIDESMEN, WELCOMERS AND REFRESHMENTS

When entering our church for a service, you are more than likely first welcomed by one of our 36+ Sidesmen and Welcomers. Whether the 8am, 10am, Evensong, special services or perhaps a wedding, baptism or funeral, members of our teams will be there to greet and help. We are thankful for their dedication throughout the year and especially the flexibility.



“Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.” (Matthew 10:40)

Whether regulars, occasional or new to St Nicolas, all are warmly welcomed to join us for complimentary refreshments after 10am Sunday services and Thursday morning communion. We are thankful to all those on our teams who serve refreshments including freshly made filter coffee, a selection of teas, biscuits and occasional home-made cakes. We also try to use fairtrade products and to recycle waste wherever possible. The flexible area in the south aisle and church room each provide good spaces for catching up and making new acquaintances by many people each week.

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35)

Vicki Dixon, Rota Coordinator for Sidesmen, Welcomers and Sunday Refreshment teams

YOUTH WORK

Leatherhead Youth Project (LYP) is a local charity which supports young people to be safe, happy, resilient and able to make positive changes in their lives and communities. We offer youth services in Leatherhead, Bookham and across Mole Valley.

BYouth is LYP's open-access youth café. It is held in St Nicolas Pastoral Centre on Mondays and Fridays after-school for local young people aged 11-17. The youth café provides a safe, positive space for young people to have fun, develop friendships with one another, and get to know our youth workers. Through attending BYouth, young people are also offered opportunities to take part in other projects run by LYP, such as residential during school holidays and social action projects.

Throughout 2024 we had 112 different young people attend LYP's projects in Bookham.



On Monday evenings, after BYouth, we provide dinner for the young people and discuss a topic related to general well-being or to faith. This gives the young people the opportunity to build deeper relationships with one another and the youth workers, creating a safe space to talk about issues relevant to their lives.

We also have a Young Leaders programme where some of the older young people take a more active role in shaping BYouth. They run the kitchen, prepare drinks and snacks for everyone and attend Youth Board meetings every half term, to reflect on the last few weeks and help plan for upcoming sessions.

LYP co-leads a Christian Union at the Howard of Effingham with Bookham Baptist Church. We are currently doing a series on the fruits of the Spirit and have a regular group of young people attending each week, some from a church background and some not.

Our Counselling and Emotional Well-Being team provide early intervention support through Mindworks Surrey referrals and local schools. In 2024 they provided 836 hours of counselling and emotional well-being sessions in Bookham, Leatherhead and across Mole Valley.



Charis Jenkins is continuing as Bookham's Sessional Worker alongside studying for her degree, and in September Lucy Hicks joined LYP as the Bookham Lead.



Over the upcoming months, LYP will continue offering a variety of youth services including an Easter residential, supporting young people transitioning from primary to secondary school and an outdoor camping trip with orienteering and a self-led expedition.

Lucy Hicks, Leatherhead Youth Project, Bookham

Thank you to all
who contributed
to the 2024 / 2025
Church Activities
Booklet

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