

# St Christopher's Church

## Saffron Lane, Leicester

### Report on 2020



Presented at the

## Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021

## Our Mission

### St Christopher's Church - Mission Statement

We, the people of St Christopher's, believe that Jesus Christ has called us to share our faith by carrying out God's mission to serve our neighbouring community, by word and deed.



To fulfil our mission we will need:

- To be effective Christians who are open, welcoming, caring and committed to working and praying together as members of the body of Christ;
- To identify, affirm and bring to fruition the gifts of each member to encourage all in service and witness.

This service should spring from corporate worship and growth in our personal relationships with God.

### St Christopher's Church - Mission Action Plan

We believe that God wants us to reach out with his love to:

- children and young people
- parents, carers and families
- staff of the Academy
- older and isolated people

by **being** a reliable community who can be trusted;

by **welcoming** people, treating them with love and respect;

by **encouraging** growth and enabling change in people's lives;

by **befriending** people and providing a safe place for all;

by **sharing** our love for Jesus and putting him first in our lives.



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## Agenda for the ninety-second Annual General Meeting

St Christopher's Church 50 Trenant Road, Leicester

to be held on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021

**Opening Prayer**

## PARISHIONERS' MEETING

Numbers present:

Apologies:

1. The Minutes of Parishioners' Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2020
  2. Matters Arising
  3. Election of Churchwardens
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# AGENDA 92<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Numbers present:

Apologies:

1. The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2020
2. Matters Arising
3. Electoral Roll Report - Rita Early
4. Secretary's Report - Rita Early
5. Vicar's Remarks - Revd Chris Collins
6. Churchwardens' Report - Rob Pike and Mark Edwards
7. Safeguarding Officer's Report - Rob Pike
8. Treasurer's Report - Mike Early
9. Reports of activities  
(for full list see contents page)

**Time of prayer for these activities**

## Appointments and Elections

10. Appointment of Examiner for 2021/2
11. Election of PCC members
12. Date of next AGM (2022) - (Suggested dates either Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March or Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April - note Mothering Sunday is 27<sup>th</sup> March and Easter is 17<sup>th</sup> April.)

## Closing Prayers

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## Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2020

The following two meetings were originally planned for Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March, but because of the Coronavirus pandemic were delayed and took place on-line.

**For both meetings**

**Present:** Revd Chris Collins (Chair),

**Electoral members:** Charles Ndigirwa, Beverly Carr, Sarah Collins, Mike Early, Chantal Griffin, Ann Kilbourne, Robert Pike, Neil Tansley, Jenny Mann, Jayne Tansley, Mark Edwards, Louise Warner, Rita Early (Minutes).

**Apologies:** Steve Joyce

## PARISHONERS' MEETING

1. **The Minutes of the Parishioners' Meeting** held on 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2019 were accepted and signed.
2. **Matters Arising** - none
3. **Election of Churchwardens:** Rob Pike and Mark Edwards were unanimously elected.

Signed.....

Date.....

## ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. **The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting** held on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2019 were unanimously accepted.

2. **Matters Arising**- none

3. **Electoral Roll Report** - Rita Early

The electoral roll had been updated in March. There are still 32 on the electoral roll, one new member had been added and one had been deleted, 15 are resident in the parish and 17 outside.

4. **Vicar's Remarks** - Revd Chris Collins

Thinking of what he wanted to share Chris felt that it was very important for us to continue to commit all of our days to the Lord, not just the big things, but the many really mundane everyday things.

**1 Peter 5:7** - 'Cast all your anxiety on him because He cares for you.' When we are struggling we need to depend on God for everything we do however mundane these seem. The Lord is not getting bored of those who keep saying to Him 'this is hard'.

Chris then read **Philippians 2:1-13**, concentrating on the last few verses.

**V12** 'work out your salvation... for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose'.

God is at work in His people. Why is this such a big thing? God can be at work in our building and activities, but **the main place He is at work is in us**, in my and your lives and when we are in Him then this will work out into our activities,

Do not lose this promise whatever happens in the next months for as long as we are alive, God is at work in and through us.



*Revd Chris Collins*

5. **Secretary's Report** - Rita Early

Rita highlighted '*Imagine Church*' which the PCC had been reading one or two chapters before each meeting and then discussed. They were challenged on how they should use the 110 hours when not at sleep or at church. To reflect this, leaders of morning worship were asked to include, where possible, a question of a practical nature connected with everyday life.

6. **Churchwardens' Report** - Rob Pike and Mark Edwards

Rob highlighted the need to sand the church floor, which could not be done at present. Mike mentioned that the last time this was done was when the Academy did their floor and this made it a lot cheaper. Rob would ask Craig to inform us when this may happen.

The inventory needs checking, but this is on hold at present.

Rob thanked the congregation for their patience for when getting the church (ie the sports hall) ready for worship on Sundays,

7. **Safeguarding Officer's Report** - Rob Pike

No concerns.

Roger Burdett's DBS has been renewed.

Terry Needham's DBS has expired, but will not be needed until Little Angels can start up.

Every church was required to submit the names of any minister who had a safe-guarding issue in the past. (There are none from the parish,)

8. **Treasurer's Report** - Mike Early

When the accounts were presented to the PCC in March they had not been examined, but with a combination of 'snail mail' and e-mail Rosemary Hall signed the accounts on 28<sup>th</sup> September.

The General Fund accounts were similar to Mike's anticipated budget.

As predicted, the **Income** had been approximately £3k lower than the previous year, but the **Expenditure** had also been about £3k lower. This was almost entirely due to a reduction in **Missionary Giving**. The previous year £2.2k had been given to SEMP Edge project, which had now closed. PCC allocation to Missions had also been reduced from £2k to £1k.

Payment went up on **Publicity** which included posters, fliers and St C's T-shirts, mainly for Craft Café. The accounts now identified **Craft Café** separately.

**Evangelism** includes expenses for things like Experience Christmas and the Glowsticks for '*Angels and Heroes*'.

The **actual deficit** was in the order of £2,900, which is slightly better (by £450) than what was predicted.

Chris thanked Mike for all his hard work and said that St C's has a fairly unique set up as our finances do not give us such big headache as is the case with many churches at the moment.

9. **Reports of activities**

Looking back at the report of last year, Jenny was amazed at the wide range of activities we'd been involved in, for such a small church. People generally felt a great sadness that these had so suddenly stopped in March, especially for all the contacts which were being nurtured. Chris, for example, was about to start a new Alpha Course.

Chris referred back to the '110 hours' we all have each week and as long as we are alive God can still use us, even if it is not in the ways we were planning.

**Scouts** were now classed as an essential service, but because of Leicester's extended lockdown they still could not meet in person. Explorer Scouts were meeting most weeks by Zoom. This was a social time and as most of them were now in Year 11 we could lose them before they can meet in person again. Mark commented that some of the Cubs were about to go up to Scouts. He hoped to contact the families and give the cubs a little gift and do a Zoom meeting.

Rita was saddened by our lack of support in recent months for our missions (through Mission of the month) as they were often working in situations which were made even worse by Coronavirus.

**This was followed by a time of prayer for our activities.**

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**Appointments and Elections**

10. **Appointment of Examiner**- Rita would write and thank Rosemary Hall for auditing our accounts and ask her if she was willing to do them again for 2020.

11. **Election of PCC** - No election for PCC members was needed,

12. **Appointment of Deputy Warden** - This position is not strictly needed in a church of our size. Roger

Burdett had filled this role for many years, but was currently being very careful because of his wife's health. It was decided that we would not make this appointment this year.

13. **Date of next AGM** Sunday 21<sup>th</sup> March 2021. (Dependent on the Coronavirus situation.)

**The meeting was closed in prayer**

Signed.....

Date.....

## Secretary's Report on 2020

St Christopher's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Revd Chris Collins in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

St Christopher's Church has been located within The Tudor Grange Samworth Academy since September 2007. St Christopher's serves both the local community and the children and staff of the Academy.

**Charles Ndigirwa** is on a 3 year training placement for the ministry. (Started September 2018.)

**Revd J Tonkin** - retired member of the congregation. John moved into Wyggestons Sheltered accommodation in August 2020.

**Safeguarding** - Rob Pike is the Child and Adult Safeguarding Officer who ensures the necessary registration takes place and Ann Kilbourne is the Independent person required by the policy.

**DBS checks** - Rob Pike is responsible for keeping these up to date.

**Church Attendance** -

21 adults and 4 children.

Figures are not very meaningful this year as they combine the attendance from January to mid-March with those after the re-opening of the church in the autumn, when many people still felt unable to attend physically.

**Standing Committee:** this is the only committee required by law. It has the power to transact the business of the PCC, between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council.

**Members** - Chris Collins, Rob Pike, Mark Edwards, Rita Early and Ann Kilbourne.

It met 5 times, mainly to plan for the next PCC meeting and to review the action points and what matters arising should be discussed.

**Roles and Responsibilities** - a comprehensive list for Sunday duties continued to include a good number of the congregation, until the church had to go on-line at the end of March. From then onward no rotas have been necessary.

In addition various individuals have a watching brief for:

- health and safety (Paul Robinson)
- disability (Roger Burdett).

## Proceedings of the PCC during 2020

The PCC met 5 times

### Meetings of the 2019/20 cycle

We continued discussing a chapter of the book 'Imagine Church' by Neil Hudson at both of the first two meetings of the year. It was considered what small changes (1<sup>o</sup> shifts) we might make, so as to make a difference to our fellowship. The balance of the two parts of the Morning Worship service was questioned. The second part of Morning Worship was a key opportunity to get to know people and to discuss and pray for each other, but it was thought that we no longer had enough time in our groups to do this satisfactorily. It was therefore decided to cut the length of the first part of the service,

- **20<sup>th</sup> January**
  - **Children's Admission to Communion** - Chris had written 4 short sessions for the child to do with their parent or guardian. It was noted that the minimum age for a

child to be admitted to communion in the diocese was 7 years.

- **Ash Wednesday**, 26<sup>th</sup> February - as not everyone was happy about the imposition of ashes, Chris had decided not to use them this year.
- **Saffron Young People Project (SYPP) against Knife Crime** - the diocese had given the full amount of £8,900 that had been requested.

### ● **16<sup>th</sup> March**

The implications of the outbreak of Coronavirus were discussed.

God may use us to reach out in our daily contexts to those who are not part of the daily life of the church. As one door shuts another one opens. It was agreed that all activities had to be suspended because of the pandemic, other than Church Services. (These were cancelled two days later.)

The **Annual Report** and the **Electoral Roll** had been completed and everything was ready for the APCM on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March, although it was decided to cancel the '*Bring and Share*' lunch. The APCM was later postponed and eventually took place on the 11<sup>th</sup> October.

**Report of Southern Edge Mission Partnership** - with the ending of the Edge Project there didn't seem to be any real reason for a formal partnership to continue. Many churches felt that they now had a greater affinity to their ecumenical partners than to SEMP. If any church in the group organised a big event, the SEMP churches could still all be invited. The annual Treasure Hunt would (it hoped) continue and would be open to all the SEMP Churches.

**Arrangements for communion** - It was agreed to use shot glasses instead of the cup for distributing the wine during the pandemic.

### **Meetings of the 2020/21 cycle**

No PCC meetings took place until 18<sup>th</sup> August and then all the meetings were held on-line.

### ● **18<sup>th</sup> August**

The main purpose of this meeting was to discuss the **re-opening of the church**. A questionnaire

had been filled in by church members to find their preferences.

Based on these findings, the PCC's decision was that the church would re-open on the 6<sup>th</sup> September in the Sports Hall. This was considered the safest option, with two entrances, plenty of room for social distancing and two sets of ventilated toilets. The PCC agreed to let the school use our church building as an extra staff room, during the week.

**Administrating Communion** - the distribution of wine had been discussed in March. It was decided that the bread would be distributed in individual pieces,

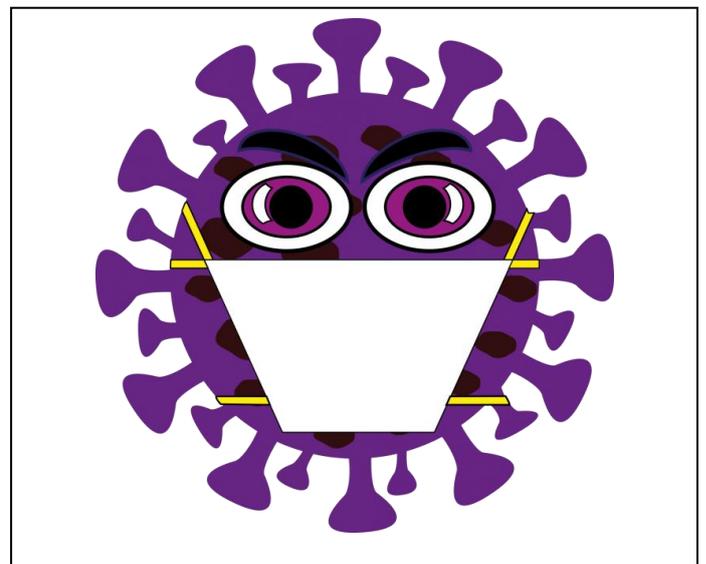
**The Diocese** had suggested that **Charles Ndigirwa** serve his curacy at **St Christophers**. This was warmly welcomed.

### ● **7<sup>th</sup> October**

A short meeting to review how the new arrangements for worship were going. The comments were very positive and people were very pleased to be back worshipping together. A few suggestions of how the services could be made more varied were made.

The arrangement for the school to use our church building was working well.

It was suggested that we could re-start the news sheet for November.



• **16<sup>th</sup> November**

**Finance Giving** had had held up to what had been budgeted, but predictably **payments** were less than in the budget, however not enough to prevent an overall **deficit** on the year, but at least it was less than expected. Expected budgeted deficit £3,910, now predicted to be £2,618.

**Parish Contribution for 2021** - at the March meeting we had decided on £17,000, this was confirmed, although the diocese had given churches the option to revise their figure because of the current economic situation.

**Mission allocation**

£2,000 was allocated to missions, which is double last year. The factors behind this are: reduced giving via the Missions tin, Mission Societies experiencing reduced income during the pandemic, and the anticipation of a legacy from Olive Sullivan.

Scouts had not previously been given an allocation by the PCC, but it was felt that as there had been no collection for them this year, we should give them a small donation.

**Kashenye Water Project**

The PCC agreed to give £1,000 to a project in Charles's home village in Tanzania, where because

of lack of rain, water is scarce. (For further details see section on the project.)

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**Other Matters discussed during the year:**

- The **Alpha Course** planned to start after Easter had to be cancelled.



John and Margret Tonkin moved into the Wyggestons (sheltered accommodation) in August.  
Olive Sullivan (on the right of the picture) sadly died in June, aged 93.

- A new **Health and Safety Policy** has been written, including an appendix to be compliant with the Covid situation.
- The overhaul of the **Sound System** has not yet taken place
- No further progress had been made on the **Fire Door**
- A visit from **Bishop Martyn** had been postponed
- The **Youth Bus Project**, which we were hoping to be part of, has been cancelled by the diocese (to cut expenses)
- The **Diocesan Growth Fund** which we have used (eg for the Saltmine theatre production) has been paused.
- Mike is able to publish new material to the church **web site**
- A **Thanksgiving Service** for Olive Sullivan may take place around the anniversary of her death in June



Karl-Craig West has been a valued member of the church, contributing as a Scout leader and member of the music group. He redesigned the churches web site and for a short time was the church treasurer. Karl left the church in March with his wife Emma and daughter Tilly to go to New Zealand. But because of the Coronavirus they were delayed in England until New Year's Day.

## Sunday Worship by Mike and Rita Early

One of the biggest changes this year has been Sunday worship; from 22<sup>nd</sup> March until the start of September and again from 8<sup>th</sup> November for four weeks during the second lockdown, services went on line.

Unlike many churches we did not have a complete videoed service, but were provided with a guide to worship. The exact time and how we arranged our worship was by individual choice.

Links were provided for us to choose opening prayers, confessions, the creed, the collect for the day and up to 5 or 6 songs/hymns. A video version of the sermon was posted on the church's YouTube and Facebook pages and we were given the appropriate Bible passages to read. A Word version of the sermon was also e-mailed out and printed copies distributed to those who could not access the sermon on-line. Prayer topics were suggested and it was recommended that we always used the Lord's Prayer. We found that our service lasted about one and a quarter hours.

Children were sent sheets of activities each week.

We finally returned to live services on 6<sup>th</sup> September and although it was wonderful to be back with the church family we found the first services were very different to our usual services. As we entered the Sports Hall our temperature was taken and there was gel to wash our hands. We were so spread out in the vast hall and we all looked so different with our face masks on.

The first services lacked variety as only one person took the whole service (to minimise infection from the microphone). We particularly missed being able to sing and got very stiff sitting still for a whole hour. Later we did stand for the creed. Slowly more variety was introduced into these services and more music and worship songs included, but still no singing was allowed. On 27<sup>th</sup> September we had our first communion service since March. The wine was distributed in individual shot glasses and the bread on individual plates.

After the services we did chat outside, but as the year progressed the weather got colder and people didn't stay around so long.

We particularly missed not being able to sing carols this year and not having a Carol Service. At least we were able to have a live service on Christmas Day. The only decoration for Christmas was the Advent Ring.

We are very grateful for all the hard work put in by Chris, Charles and Chantal who have led our services and also to our church wardens for the work in setting up the Sports Hall for worship and cleaning it afterwards.

As we entered 2021 another lockdown came into place....

**Please pray** for the right time to re-start life worship and when we can get back to using our church building.

## SAFEGUARDING REPORT by Rob Pike

For the past year no issues have been recorded as far as St Christopher's Church is concerned under Safeguarding. Our church continues to be vigilant regarding safeguarding especially with so many children in our care or in our building.

For the majority of 2020 the church services were being held in the school Sports Hall and families sat together. On occasions during the sermon the children were taken out of the hall into the school playground but if that occurred there were always two adults out there with them. On the DBS front there were 5 people up for renewal in 2020. Of these 1 person has been renewed, another is in abeyance until things start up again and 3 were not required as they no longer attend the church.

# St Christopher's Church

## LEICESTER

### Statement of Accounts

2020

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#### Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31 December 2020

	General Fund	Maintenance Fund	Mission Fund	Little Angels	Building/ Equipment Fund	Total end 2020
<b>Assets</b>	£			£	£	£
Current account	1,188.21	2,000.00	0.00	314.98	434.00	3,937.19
Board of Finance deposit	21,592.20	0.00	0.00	8,643.00	6,609.35	36,844.55
Cash in hand	29.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	29.48
Total	22,809.89	2,000.00	0.00	8,957.98	7043.35	40,811.22
<b>Debtors</b>						
<b>Liabilities</b>						

**ST CHRISTOPHER'S CHURCH  
GENERAL FUND RECEIPTS 2020**

	2020		2019
	£		£
<b>Offertories etc</b>			
Sunday Services	191.61		539.40
Occasional Services	464.16		0.00
Offertories at Marriages, Funerals etc			
Fees for Marriages, Banns, Funerals etc	50.00		179.00
Free Will Offering Envelopes etc	0.00		0.00
Covenants and Gift Aid	15126.00		15390.00
Other Tax efficient giving	240.00		120.00
Income Tax recovered on Covenants and Gift Aid	3998.26	20070.03	<u>4406.21</u>
			20634.61
 <b>Donations - for general use</b>			
 Other Donations		0.00	<u>0.00</u>
 Use of premises	0.00		0.00
Scouts		0.00	<u>100.00</u>
			100.00
 Insurance claims			
Other sundry receipts	1591.45	1591.45	<u>88.71</u>
			88.71
 <b>Interest from</b>			
deposit with Central Board of Finance	91.30	91.30	<u>160.42</u>
			<u>160.42</u>
		21752.78	20983.74
 <b>"Restricted" items</b>			
Clergy/Organist fees	0.00		107.20
Fees for diocese	199.00		26.80
Diocesan grant 'Follow the Star'			250.00
Other	0.00	199.00	<u>0.00</u>
			<u>384.00</u>
 <b>Total Receipts into General Fund</b>		<u>21951.78</u>	<u>21367.74</u>

M Y Early (Hon Treasurer)  
R A Pike (Churchwarden)  
M Edwards (Churchwarden)

Miss R C Hall OBE (Hon Examiner)

*RCHall* date 17/2/21

**ST CHRISTOPHER'S CHURCH  
GENERAL FUND PAYMENTS 2020**

	2020 £		2019 £
<b>Costs of raising funds</b>			
applying for grants			
stewardship envelopes	0.00		0.00
<b>Charitable activities</b>			
PCC Mission Allocations	2000.00		1000.00
	2000.00		1000.00
<b>Ministry costs</b>			
parish share	17000.00		17000.00
wages/honoraria	17000.00		17000.00
<b>Staff costs</b>			
allowances	188.34		237.94
travel	93.27		623.40
phone	132.36	413.97	135.87
			997.21
<b>Church running expenses</b>			
office, insurance	469.72		572.10
Gifts	102.38		8.47
publicity, hospitality	94.59	666.69	567.79
			1148.36
<b>Church maintenance</b>			
repairs & renewals	0.00	0.00	33.73
			33.73
<b>Upkeep of services</b>			
craft materials			479.28
other items	278.91	278.91	479.28
<b>Utilities</b>			
cleaning, gas, electricity	1833.32	1833.32	1866.64
			1866.64
<b>Training &amp; Education</b>			
Craft Cafe	270.97		780.00
Evangelism	360.00	630.97	482.71
			1262.71
<b>Other payments - From General Fund</b>			
Investments, deposits			
Sundries	826.84		295.93
Kashenye Water Project	1000.00	1826.84	295.93
			295.93
<b>Governance costs</b>			
PCC expenses			
<b>Major Capital expenditure</b>			
Repairs			
Redecoration			
<b>Total of above</b>	24650.70		24083.86
<b>Other 'Restricted' payments - through General Fund</b>			
Miscellaneous	0.00		107.20
The Star' DVDs (from Dio grant)			75.00
Fees to Diocese	0.00	0.00	182.20
<b>Transfers</b>			
<b>Total Payments from General Fund</b>	24650.70		24266.06
<b>Excess of Receipts over Payments</b>	-2698.92		-2898.32
Held in current & deposit accounts 1st January	25508.81	*	28257.98
Held in current & deposit accounts 31st December	22809.89		25359.66

\* The reason these two amounts are different is that a cheque for £149.15 recorded in the 2019 accounts as being paid, was in fact later cancelled. Thus the current account actually started in 2020 with £149.15 more than originally thought.

## ST CHRISTOPHER'S CHURCH 2020

		2020		2019	
		£		£	
<b>Missionary and Charitable payments from General Fund</b>					
CrossLinks		200.00		100.00	
Church Pastoral Aid Society (inc Falcon Camps)		400.00		200.00	
Evangelical Alliance		80.00		80.00	
Tearfund		400.00		150.00	
Arab World Ministries		400.00		200.00	
Christian Vision for Men		200.00		170.00	
Open Hands		220.00		100.00	
Scouts		<u>100.00</u>	2000.00	<u>1000.00</u>	
<b>Missionary and Charitable giving (restricted)</b>					
CrossLinks		0.00		36.41	
Church Pastoral Aid Society (inc Falcon Camps)		34.24		66.40	
Tearfund		90.01		293.63	
Arab World Ministries		33.17		68.90	
Christian Vision for Men		0.00		34.20	
Open Hands		0.00		111.82	
Scouts		<u>0.00</u>	157.42	<u>131.70</u>	743.06
<hr/>					
<b>Little Angels</b>					
Receipts	Weekly donations [R]	98.49		427.73	
	Interest [R]	<u>36.55</u>	135.04	<u>64.21</u>	491.94
Payments	Consumables	<u>83.76</u>	<u>83.76</u>	<u>435.91</u>	<u>435.91</u>
Excess of Receipts over Payments			51.28		56.03
Held in current & deposit accounts					
	at 01 January		8906.70		8850.67
	at 31 December		8957.97		8906.70
			Restricted: £8643.00		Restricted: £8606.45
			Designated: £314.97		Designated: £300.25
<hr/>					
<b>Building/Equipment (restricted)</b>					
Receipts	Donations	0.00			
	Other (Interest)	<u>27.95</u>	27.95	<u>49.10</u>	49.10
Payments		<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Excess of Receipts over Payments			27.95		49.10
Held in current & deposit accounts					
	at 01 January		6976.52		6955.26
	at 31 December		7004.46		6976.52
<hr/>					
<b>Maintenance (Designated)</b>					
Receipts	Transfers	0.00		0.00	
	Other (Interest)	<u>0.00</u>	0.00	0.00	0.00
Payments		<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	0.00	0.00
Excess of Receipts over Payments			0.00		0.00
Held in current & deposit accounts					
	at 01 January		2000.00		2000.00
	at 31 December		2000.00		2000.00

## Churchwardens' Report on condition of buildings

by Rob Pike and Mark Edwards



Since 6<sup>th</sup> September our 'live' services have been held in the Academy's Sports Hall

Not long after writing the report last year the Country was hit by a national Pandemic which is still very much in evidence as we write this report. Due to Government restrictions to save lives and protect the NHS the City and Country have been in lockdowns to stem the rate of infections. When the first lockdown was started in March 2020 the use of church buildings for worship was not allowed and therefore home worship took the order of the day. When restrictions were gradually eased during the summer the church was assessed if it could be used for worship under the government guidelines. However, the requirements of a 2 metre rule between people meant that it would have been difficult seating everybody within our space. An arrangement was then agreed with the School whereas worship on a Sunday morning was carried out in the Sports Hall and the church was used by the School during the week as an area for staff to relax in.

The setting up of the Sports Hall was carried out usually on a Saturday morning and to ensure safety for worshippers the positioning of chairs had to be measured exactly so that nobody was within 2 metres of another person. On Sunday mornings all the chairs provided by the school had to be sanitised before use and the heating put on to warm the building up. This meant that Chris, Charles and the two wardens arriving early to enable this to take place. To ensure ventilation the entrance and exit doors of the sports hall had to be open so heating the building prior was essential. Due to government restrictions again singing was not allowed so no music group or hymn books required. However, a projector, screen and tables had to be transported from the school to the hall every week. We would like to thank everybody for being patient whilst we got used to everything.

Due to increasing cases of the virus being reported a second lockdown meant that once again the church had to close on 8<sup>th</sup> November for four weeks and revert back to home worship.

The pandemic has affected our average attendance as some of our church members are shielding and not coming to church when it has been open. Taking the figures only from when the church or Sports Hall has been in use our average attendance on a Sunday is 21 adults and 4 children.

All valuable items are accounted for and stored securely in the vestry safe. The rewriting of the inventory is obviously on hold as is the tidy up of the vestry until such time the church building is brought back into normal use again.

## Reports of Church Activities by Chris Collins

### Craft Café

Craft Cafe is a monthly craft-based activity which has become a good place to develop relationships with people, and to introduce them to the Christian faith through short talks, books and prayer activities. Only 2 sessions were possible in 2020: January and February. Attendance is variable, perhaps averaging around 20 guests. Since the first lockdown in March 2020 Craft Cafe has not taken place. Indeed, the library (our venue) has been closed for room bookings for some time during the pandemic.

**Prayers** for the families who attend are appreciated, and for God's purposes for Craft Cafe to be worked out into the future.

### Brightstars

Brightstars is a Tuesday lunchtime club for year 5 and 6 pupils at TGSA. The pupils get to choose between craft activities and games, sometimes based around the theme for the term and sometimes not. Attendance is variable, but perhaps averages around 20 pupils. We finish with a short message which sometimes includes drama. Brightstars took place as per usual between January and early March, but then stopped due to the pandemic. There are at least two factors re: the group re-starting: (from our perspective) the safety of the Church building and (from the Academy's perspective) entering and exiting protocols during the pandemic.

**Prayers** appreciated for the continued Christian witness to TGSA pupils, and to see God's purposes worked out for Brightstars into the future.

### 'Experience' Events

Experience Christmas / Easter are interactive school-based activities, which tell the story of the birth / death+resurrection of Jesus using a number of stations which the participants rotate around. One session lasts around an hour (or a little less). There were plans to host an Experience Easter at Marriott Road Primary School in 2020, but lockdown began not long before it was due to happen. Therefore no Experience events took place in 2020.

**Please pray** for the continued Christian witness to all parish pupils and staff into the future and to see God's purposes worked out for the Experience events.

### Assemblies

Chris and Charles were part way through a series of 8 church assemblies for TGSA Secondary pupils in March 2020, when lockdown began (though even before lockdown the school had already started cancelling assemblies). As such this assembly series was not completed. However, since TGSA pupils returned to school in 2020, pre-recorded Primary assemblies were produced on a weekly basis by teachers / support staff. As part of these, Chris pre-recorded part of a Primary Advent assembly, and then later pre-recorded a short talk for the End-of-Term Whole School assembly. It is expected this input into pre-recorded assemblies will continue into 2021.

**Please pray** for positive Christian input into pupils' lives in future, whether from St C's persons, Christian staff or outside visitors.

### Door-to-door Visiting

This ministry involves St C's members knocking on doors and conducting a simple two question survey with people, as well as handing over a flyer with information about some of St Christopher's ministries. The aim

is to find people who are receptive, and door knocking has led to some in-depth faith conversations with people in the past. The team does not tend to go out in the 'darker' months and so with lockdown also beginning in March, no door-to-door visiting took place in 2020.

**Please pray** for the people of our parish as we continue in this lockdown situation, and for God's purposes to be worked out for our door-to-door visiting into the future.

## St Christopher's Foodbank (a branch of Open Hands)

Our Food Bank had a quiet year in 2020. Whilst some referrals came our way, they were few in number. A couple of reasons might perhaps help explain this. Firstly, many referrals come through local schools, and for part of 2020 the schools were largely closed. Secondly, Gold Hill Adventure Playground became a local food support 'hub' during the pandemic; their team tirelessly giving away food to local people (without referral). It might be that some who in 'normal' times might have come to St Christopher's have gone straight to Gold Hill.

**Please pray** that we are able to support any people the Lord brings across our path.

**Pray** that if there are ways church members could/should support Gold Hill then these come to fruition; also for God's purposes to be worked out for our Food bank into the future.

## Angels and Heroes

Angels and Heroes took place as per usual on 31<sup>st</sup> October, between the more extensive lockdowns. The team implemented Covid-secure precautions, including social distancing from those they met, passing on glo-sticks without touching them, and wearing St Christopher's bespoke Covid masks! However, it was noticed that there were far less trick and treaters out on the estate this time around, due to the pandemic. We interacted with perhaps 30-40 people.

**Please pray** for our continued presence out in the community to be fruitful in future, and for God's purposes to be worked out for Angels and Heroes in future.

## Men's ministry

Having worked through Francis Chan's 'Crazy Love' book in 2019, the men next met up for a meal and bowling in early March. This was an enjoyable night with around 12 in attendance, including one member of our 'fringe'. Obviously lockdown occurred swiftly after this, meaning that Men's ministry meetings did not take place for the remainder of the year.

**Please pray** that God shapes St Christopher's men into servant-hearted, loving followers of Jesus, and for God's purposes to be worked out in this area in future.

**COVID-responsive activity** Along with the usual activities, there were things St Christopher's did in 2020 which came about in response to the pandemic. In undertaking these activities we were not seeking to help one particular group, but people on our 'fringe' and beyond. These are listed below:

- Many 'fringe' persons were communicated with during the pandemic via 1-minute videos / WhatsApp messages / Emails
- Links to St Christopher's Youtube videos were posted on our Facebook page
- Craft Cafe contacts were invited to the online Holiday Club run by Holy Trinity church Leicester, with a couple of St Christopher's members volunteering as leaders for this to create a Holiday Club discussion group for St Christopher's-connected families (Louise Warner was also involved centrally).

- At Christmas time cards and small gifts were hand-delivered to many people on our 'fringe' (whether Food bank, Craft Cafe or Door-to-door contacts). This meant perhaps 25-30 gift bags being delivered.
- Also at Christmas, Chris worked with Saffron Young People's Project (SYPP) to deliver 10 Christmas hampers to local families. As one of their 'satellite' Food Bank outlets, these hampers were gifted to St Christopher's by Open Hands Highfields.
- A number of St Christopher's members linked in with the City Council ward-based emergency help network. Whilst in the end this did not result in much activity, St Christopher's members helped at least a couple of households with emergency food supplies.



The Christmas card delivered to fringe members with a small gift

## Women's Ministry by Sarah Collins

The **daytime women's Bible Study group** were able to meet twice in early 2020 for our studies on the Psalms. We have enjoyed Margaret's hospitality and are grateful to her for hosting us over many preceding months. Since social distancing restrictions have prevented us from meeting, members of the group have been calling each other by phone or joining in with wider church zoom meetings to keep in touch and share prayer requests.

The **evening group**, St C's Sisters, were able to meet in January 2020 for one of our studies looking at Women in the Bible. Bev has kindly hosted us many times for these meetings. Since social distancing restrictions we have been able to meet on Zoom occasionally for a Bible Study or to catch up with each other and share prayer requests. We have an active WhatsApp group which we use to share encouragements, prayer requests or just to share something funny to cheer each other up. Members of the group have also been able to join in with wider church Zoom meetings.

**Please pray** that we continue to care for and encourage each other in these difficult times.

## Investigators by Sarah Collins

Investigators met as usual in January, February and early March 2020. Since social distancing measures were introduced we have tried to ensure that children have had appropriate activities whether we are physically meeting or worshipping from home.

When we have met at the Sports Hall children have had an individual pack containing pencils, colouring sheets and activity sheets relating to the Bible passage for the morning as well as a fiddle toy. They have sat with their family group to complete the activities. When weather has allowed and there has been a big enough group we have gone outside to play team games within family groups. Some Leaders have also planned craft activities for children which fit with the theme of the service.

When we have been worshipping from home a specific Investigators sheet has been sent by email with ideas for an opening game, Bible reading (matching that for adults), ideas for discussion around the reading, craft activity and ideas for prayer.

**Please pray** for our Children as they grow in their relationship with Jesus and for their parents who teach and encourage them.

## Little Angels Report by Rita Early

Our spring term was going really well and attendance had remained high - there had been very little bad weather. There were even comments that we hadn't had any snow and so the youngest children didn't know what it was when we did our snowy pictures! We celebrated the Chinese New Year with making lanterns and pictures of pandas - it was the year of the rat, but I didn't have a craft for a rat!

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March was a normal meeting, a painting session before we expected to embark on the Friday with flowers for Mothering Sunday and then our Easter programme. BUT at our PCC meeting, that evening Chris cancelled all further activities for the foreseeable future. We had no idea that this would mean that this was the last meeting of 2020 and even now we have no plans for when we can re-open. At first we thought it would be after the summer, then after Christmas and now ?

On my daily walks I have met many parents and the question is always *'when will we re-open?'* Because nurseries are able to open parents think we should be allowed to open, but our building is not suitable to allow for social distancing of parents. And there are many other requirements we would have to fulfil, eg *'each household or parent should bring toys etc. for their own children, which should not be shared!'* This just would not work!!

**Please pray** for the right time to re-start the club and for the parents and carers who have been finding the lockdowns so very difficult.

## Tea, Chat and Pray (TCP)

We could only meet on three occasions this year and then we followed our usual pattern of meeting on the second Sunday of the month at 5pm. We met in three different homes and started with an excellent tea and lots of chat before praying for about an hour. We pray about local and church issues and people and also world issues often highlighted by Tearfund. We also included updates from our two *'home grown'* missionaries both working in challenging areas.

Sadly, March was the last time we were able to meet before lockdown restrictions came into force.

**Please pray** that this important prayer meeting will soon be able to meet again,

## Mission Report by Rita Early

Our mission support was limited this year, because of Covid; our newsletter which gives the Mission of the Month was not produced from April until November and no collections were made in the Pringle Tins after the March lockdown.

However, the PCC decided to give £2,000 to missions (see the financial report for the actual amounts to each mission) as it was thought that they were suffering a fall in income because of the pandemic.

### Home Missions

We have continued to supporting **Open Hands**, a local charity which reaches out to the disadvantaged in Leicester. This is the organisation which supports our own **Food Bank** (see separate report).

We continue to support our **Scout Group** and **Christian Vision for Men**, through our local link with Paul Gask.

We support **Church Pastoral Aid Society**

(our patrons) in their work with disadvantaged children through their **Falcon Holidays**. Sadly no residential holidays were able to take place this year although CPAS did organise virtual activities.

### World Missions

Two of the young people, who grew up in our church, continue working in sensitive areas and are supported by **Arab World Ministries** and **Cross Links**. Both have found that their work has been limited to mainly working on-line because of the pandemic.



*Hunger lunch in aid of Tearfund*

Our annual Hunger Lunch for **Tearfund** took place as usual in March. It was based around a debate about a Ugandan village deciding whether they should build a church or provide a well for their village.

### Kashenye Water Project

The PCC decided to support this project by donating £1,000.

Kashenye is Charles's home village in NW Tanzania and the project is needed because the water source in the village had dried up and villagers had to walk miles to collect their water from an intermittent dirty source.

Water was struck at 185 metres down and there is a good supply and good pressure, but a further survey showed that although the water flow was completely fine the water quality wasn't. An intense flushing of the well to rectify the problem was recommended.

These additional processes mean that the costs has increased significantly, but so far there has been enough money to cover them. Everyone is very excited. We are now continuing to fundraise to put in a water tank and taps and in Phase 2 to lay down pipes to distribute water to different parts of the village.

The people of Kashenye say '*Tasing muno*' - thank you very much!



*Water is struck!*



## 51st Leicester (St Christopher's) Scout Group in partnership with the 'Area 51' Explorer Scout Unit

Report to St. Christopher's Church AGM 2021

Not a lot of activity to report!

Chantal has worked hard and stayed engaged with the Explorer Unit members via a regular Zoom meeting; mainly just keeping up with each other and a few fun activities. They are keen to meet up at Bradgate as soon as it is possible and we have submitted a Covid inclusive risk assessment to the Scout District in readiness. The Zoom was available to the scout section but we had no take up from them. We have been remiss in not keeping in touch with the younger members although the older cubs and scouts did receive an activity sheet during the first lockdown. However across the Group and Unit most parents have continued to donate £1 monthly by standing order, one or two more, registering their continued commitment.

The three Chief Scouts Gold Awards were presented at a Zoom meeting having got the certificates and badges to parents surreptitiously. About the same time James received his Wood Badge denoting his completion of the extensive training associated with his role, and we received recognition of service awards for Chantal, James, Jehanne, Mark and Rob.

Financially we are ok for now, although we will still have to pay the annual subscription to the Scout Association in March which amounts this year to £1,236 about 40% of our total assets so the longer the situation continues the more finance will be a concern. Neither has our need for more 'front of house' adult support gone away, some serious thinking may be necessary at 'take off'. I personally suspect it may well be like starting from scratch.

We do however look forward to things returning to something like normal, Scouting will have been missed by the young people and equally has been by the Leaders.

**Please pray** for the continuation of the Group after 92 years of giving young people skills for life, opening their eyes to matters of faith with the opportunity for witness to them and their families.

Rog Burdett

## Deanery Synod Report by Robert Pike



**City of Leicester Deanery**  
Supporting Church of England Parishes across the city

There have been 2 meetings of the Deanery Synod in the past year in May and November. Due to Covid19 restrictions both of these were on line. A further meeting was arranged but cancelled again due to lockdown restrictions. Although we didn't have as many meetings as usual we did during the course of the year receive e-mails and newsletters from the Diocese on items of interest.

### **14<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

This was a zoom meeting led by Bishop Guli. We discussed the current situation that existed at the time and how it was affecting the churches in the Diocese.

### **19<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

This was also a zoom meeting led by Anthony Lees-Smith, vicar of St Denys Church Evington. At this meeting there were stories from lockdown with City Pioneers which was followed by us being split into breakout groups to discuss how the lockdowns were affecting the churches that we belonged to. Following this we had a presentation from Richard Pickering of the Climate Action Group looking at the Leicester Local Plan.