

St Christopher's Church

Saffron Lane, Leicester

Report on 2023



Presented at the
Annual General Meeting

Sunday 17th March 2024

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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## 95<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meetings

to be held on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Opening Prayer

**Numbers present**

**Apologies**

## Agenda for the Parishioners' Meeting

1. Minutes of the Parishioner's meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2023
2. Matters Arising
3. Confirmation of Rob Pike as churchwarden.

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Agenda for the 95th Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 26th March, 2023
2. Matters Arising
3. Electoral Roll Report - Rita Early
4. Secretary's Report - Rita Early
5. Vicar's Remarks - Mr Chris Collins
6. Churchwarden's Report - Rob Pike

7. Safeguarding Officer's Report - Neil Tansley
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 2024/25
11. Election of Deanery Synod Rep
12. Date of next APCM (2025) - Suggested date either Sunday 23rd March or Sunday 6th April, (note Mothering Sunday is 30th March and Easter is 20th April).

Closing Prayers



Minutes of the 94th Annual Parochial Church Meetings

Sunday 26th March 2023

Chris opened in prayer.

For both meetings

Present: Chris Collins (Chair) and Charles Ndigirwa

Electoral members: Mike Early, Sarah Collins, George Donnelly, Linda Halaczkiwicz, Ann Kilbourne, Robert Pike, Paul Robison, Neil Tansley, Jayne Tansley, Jenny Mann, Pauline Ndigirwa, Olive Okan and Rita Early (Minutes).

Non Electoral Roll Attendees: Malcolm Joyce, James Martin, Amy Martin,

Apologies: Roger Burdett

PARISHONERS' MEETING

1. **The Minutes of the Parishioners' Meeting** held on 3rd April, 2022 were accepted and signed by the chair.
2. **Matters Arising** - none
3. **Confirmation of Rob Pike as church warden.** All were in favour that Rob should continue and he was thanked for the hard work he does.

Signed.....

Date.....

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. **The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting** held on 3rd April, 2022 were accepted as accurate and signed by the chair.

2. **Matters Arising**- None

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

The electoral roll had been updated in March. This had seen an increase of two to 31 on the roll; Sandra Akubue and Olive Okan had been added to the roll and there had been no deletions.

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

This year has not been easy; not just for Covid, but for people losing loved ones.

Chris has found there have been real challenges, but the Lord has remained faithful.

But it has also been a year of encouragement:

- i. **Growth** - it has been fantastic to welcome new members to the family
- ii. **Healing** - there has been a real sense of God's presence in our worship and Jesus walking among us. A number of people have been healed.
- iii. **A sense of hunger** and a desire to go deeper with God. First with the '*Saints Alive*' course and now with this year's course of '*Fruitfulness on the Frontline*'.

Charles and Chris have been able to have greater access to the school this year and have been regularly having lunch in the cafeteria, where pupils and staff come to talk to them.

Numbers and growth are important, but God being present is more important,

God can do more in 5 years than a person can in 50 years.

We need to be people of prayer and for that reason Chris and Charles are now meeting weekly for an hour to pray in church, anyone can join them.

Chris again re-iterated the importance of both the *Gathered and the Scattered church*. It is just as important to God whether we are scattered or gathered. The commitment to this has been shown by the introduction of '*This time tomorrow*'.

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

The PCC agendas had reflected:

- a) Life returning to normal! We have been able to restart most of our previous activities and all restrictions to our worship other than how we administer communion have been lifted.
- b) The legacy left to the church by Olive has meant that we are able to plan for a new sound system and work is ongoing on an improved web page.
- c) That we have spent a lot of our time bringing our safeguarding up to date.

6. **Churchwarden's Report** - Rob Pike

Rob likened our church to a football team, when we get new signings (new people joining) it gives us more energy.

Our church is like a big team and we all get stuck in and Rob is really grateful to all who help in so many ways.

7. **Safeguarding Officer's Report** - Neil Tansley

It is now mandatory that the Safeguarding Officer gives an annual report at the APCM.

There are some Christians who will see this as another reason to hold the view that Safeguarding is a series of administrative hoops that need to be jumped through. There's lots of paper work, training and

meetings to attend for things that we may never have to deal with. Some would say isn't it all just common sense - we managed without it before.

However, the experience of the church as a whole tells us that this attitude is at best unhelpful and at worst dangerous,

Chris thanked Neil for his report and emphasised that it was easy to say '*well that's Neil's or Chris's or Charles's job*' when it was everyone's responsibility.

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

Since resuming in person meetings giving in the Offertory Box and Missionary Tin had gone back up to pre-Covid levels.

Interest levels have gone up and this is reflected in our accounts.

Towards the end of the year we have received an energy grant of £1,087 from the diocese. At present we haven't heard how much we need to pay Samworth for our energy so we are not sure how much of this we will use.

We have paid out for the microphones for our new sound system, but because of the shortage of semi-conductors we are still awaiting the delivery.

If we strip out the legacy from Olive Sullivan and the donation from the diocese our underlying trend is still downward with a deficit of about £2,000. I'm not too pessimistic about this as many good things have been happening in the church this year.

Chris commented that there will be a series on the wider topic of generosity after Easter.

9. **Reports of activities** Chris asked people to only comment if there was additional information from what they had written in their report.

- **School's Ministry** - this is really good at the moment and we are taking regular assemblies for the Secondary Section and also telling Bible Stories to Primary Section. We have taken very occasional assemblies at Marriott. Neil is now Chair of Governors. Jayne is involved in both schools where she feels showing consistency and reliability are important.

We have good relationships with Christian staff at Samworth and also one Christian teacher at Holy Cross.

Schools work is very much '*on the front line*'.

- **Craft Café** this is now taking place every 6-8 weeks. About 25 people come and many are regular, so relationships are being built up. Sarah and Simon Jordan are looking to join the team, when their safeguarding has been sorted.
- **Investigators** - we have seen a big growth in our numbers with up to 14 on one occasion, instead of just 3 for most of last year. They are a good bunch of children and we have some lovely times. We have lost Elaine as a leader, but gained Pauline. Flora is also hoping to join the team.
- **Men's ministry men's - football**, we have not played for some time, but hope to start again this week. We play either 5 or 6 aside. The group is quite small, so please bring your neighbour! We have a prayer both before and after playing.
- **Women's ministry** - the younger group meet in the evening and the older group in the morning. More women welcome!
- **Stonesby Lodge Group** - Because this group can't come to any of our other activities other than the Sunday service, this relatively new group now meets once a month on a Sunday afternoon, We look at something that we have been studying on a Sunday morning.
- **Food Poverty Response** - this is for people who are going through difficult times. We have a box

to collect food, which then goes to Open Hands who then give us food parcels. The last 3 to 4 months have been the busiest ever, with many of our referrals coming through the school.

- **Book Club** - numbers fluctuate round 7 or 8. It would be good to have some men!
- **Door to Door Ministry** - this had not happened over the winter, but will be re-starting soon. New people would be very welcome to join the team.
- **Alpha** - A group had started in September with only two people consistently attending, one of these has started to pray.

This course can be helpful for Church members to attend as a refresher course.

This term the two shorter Hope Explored courses have been running.

- **Little Angels** - we have some great times and numbers remain high. If anyone feels they have the ministry of washing-up they would be very welcome!
- **Scouts** - the Scout group were away at camp this weekend.
- **Deanery Synod** - there is an open evening on the 27th March at St Andrew's Aylestone at 7.30pm focusing on the Finances of the Diocese.

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### **Appointments and Elections**

**10. Appointment of Examiner for 2023/24**

Rosemary Hall was willing to examine the accounts for 2022. Electoral Roll members agreed to this arrangement.

Rita would write to thank her for examining the accounts this year.

**11. Election of Deanery Synod Rep**

No new person was willing to take on this position, so Rob would continue although he often has to miss meetings.

**12. Date of next APCM - Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2024.**

**Chris thanked everyone who had attended the meeting.**

The meeting closed with a prayer.

Signed.....

Date.....



## Secretary's Report on 2023

St Christopher's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with **the incumbent, Mr 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.

**Mr Charles Ndigirwa** was ordained priest on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2022. It is noted, with thanks, the considerable contribution Charles had made to the church during Chris's illness. As Charles is now authorised to administer communion we had not had to bring in other ministers for these services.

**Church Attendance** - Average 24 adults - an increase from 21 last year, children have also gone up from 5 to 9.

**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, Rita Early and Steve Joyce. It had met 6 times, mainly to plan for the next PCC meeting and to review the action points and what matters arising should be discussed. All meetings have been by Zoom.

### Roles and Responsibilities:

- **Safeguarding Officer** - Neil Tansley - issues raised are included in a separate report.
- **DBS checks** - Neil Tansley is also responsible for keeping these up to date.
- **Health and safety** - Paul Robinson.
- **Disability** - Roger Burdett.

### Proceedings of the PCC

The PCC has met for 5 ordinary meetings

- **23<sup>rd</sup> January**
  - **Warm spaces initiative** - uptake had been very low.
  - **Introducing New Wine 'Raising Generations' pilot scheme** - through this scheme bigger churches are to resource

smaller churches. Holy Trinity is bidding to be one of these churches and has invited St C's to be one of the churches supported by the scheme.

- **20<sup>th</sup> March** (by Zoom)
  - The **Financial Accounts** were approved for the APCM
- **17<sup>th</sup> May** - chaired by Charles as Chris on sick leave
  - **Review of Lent/Easter Study - 'Living out your faith - Fruitfulness on the frontline'** - an 8 week course which had been attended by 10 regular people with an additional 2 or 3 attending on line. People expressed their enjoyment of this course, which had a variety of activities including videos.
- **27<sup>th</sup> June** - (By Zoom) chaired by Charles as Chris on sick leave.
  - **28<sup>th</sup> September** - this meeting was cancelled as few people were able to attend,
- **21<sup>st</sup> November** - this was the first full PCC meeting Chris had chaired since March.
  - **Finance** Mike submitted a **budget for 2024**. This was very much in line with 2023 and unless giving increased would again result in a deficit.

Our **Mission Allocations** would be the same as last year (£1,000) and the missions for 2024 would also remain the same.

A three week **Sermon Series on giving** was underway, as it was felt that the financial position of the church needed explaining to all members.

- **Review of 'Summer Book' Study - Generous Justice (Tim Keller)** - an 8 week study which didn't start until 12<sup>th</sup> September and continued into November. This study had been delayed because of Chris's illness. Attendance averaged around 6 in person and 4 on-line each week. It had been quite a challenging read and it was felt that we needed a more accessible book for our congregation, more in line with our Lent course.
- **TGSA Outdoor redevelopment** - an exciting redevelopment plan of the Academy's outside space.
- **New Wine 'Raising Generations'** Amy Martin had agreed to be trained for St C's. This is a three year course.
- **What does the Future hold for your church?** Leaflets about the **Minster**



**Project** were distributed with spare copies available for other members of the congregation. This will be a major topic in the coming year.

### Recurring Topics

- **Safeguarding** - an item on all PCC agendas. Neil continues to be busy to make us as compliant as possible (See his report for more details.)
- **Arrangements for communion** - reviewed regularly as we have slowly adapted our procedures. No longer do we have the outside door to the Junior Hall open to let in fresh air during the service, although the interconnecting door to the hall is open. Bread is no longer distributed in cup cake cases, but is passed straight to the recipient. However, wine is still circulated in individual cups as some people are wary of returning to the shared cup.
- **Sound System** - new microphones finally installed for Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> August,
- **Web site** - slow progress is being made, but we have got the domain sorted from Karl to Mike, who has also taken over ownership as this is the cheapest option. Designing the new web site is ongoing.
- **Living in Love and Faith** - this has been a major topic on **General Synod** this year, Chris has stated that he has a very traditional biblical view on the topic and would not be using any of the blessings. The PCC thought we should discuss the topic, perhaps on a Saturday morning.
- **Appointment of a Data Protection Officer** - an ongoing agenda item, but the position is yet to be filled.
- **Church cleaning** - attempts have been made to make the **Meeting Room** a pleasanter room. Neil has purchased larger bins as they were often overflowing and to encourage more re-cycling. The vestry has also been cleared up, but it soon seems to return to its chaotic state. A paper dispenser has been purchased to try to improve the amount of litter on the toilet floor. (Unfortunately the new blue towels do not fit as well as the old white ones.) The Academy has been asked about their cleaning regime and since then at least the toilet has been cleaned more regularly.
- **Dominion Church meeting at the TGSA** - as this church meets at the same time as St C's some safeguarding issues have had to be addressed. Their church members now

enter through the Sports Hall. It is reported that a third church is to start meeting in the Academy!

**Events** - one of the functions of the PCC is to plan for upcoming events and then to assess how they went.

**Bring and Eat** - 15<sup>th</sup> January

**Tearfund Sunday** - 5<sup>th</sup> March - a presentation of Tearfund's work in the Ivory Coast, followed by a soup and bread lunch.

**Bring and Share lunch 26<sup>th</sup> March** - after the **APCM**.

**Coronation Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May** - the morning service was followed by an extended refreshment break of cakes and scones.

**Thy Kingdom Come** - a three day event during the 10 days between Ascension Day and Pentecost, with individual prayer slots and two prayer Zooms on Friday and Sunday evenings. An interactive Prayer event on the Saturday afternoon had been well organised, but only 13 people attended. This event was at the start of the May half-term, when many people were away.

**Treasure Hunt**, Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July - around Blaby, followed by Fish and Chips - an enjoyable event, but no central location for us to eat our fish and chips together.

**BBQ**, Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> August - after church.



Charles at the BBQ

**Bring and Eat lunch**, Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

**Bring and Share Lunch**, Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October - to follow our Harvest Thanksgiving Service -this was cancelled as too few people were available.

**Angels and Heroes** - Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October - about 300 glow sticks had been distributed.

**Advent Meditations** - three sessions with a short Bible Study preceding the meditations.

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December - **Carol Service**.

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December - Carol Singing at **Stonesby Lodge**.

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December - **Carol Singing** outside Iceland - next year it was felt that this should be before the Carol Service, so invitations could be given out.

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Extraordinary meetings

- **29th August - Extraordinary meeting** - to decide our **Parish Contribution for 2024**. (Information needed by the diocese by the end of August.) The diocese had sent out a letter explaining the current situation of their finances and hoping that parishes would increase their giving. As we were running at a deficit budget we felt that we could not increase it in line with the diocese recommendations, and after much discussion agreed on a total of £17,600.

National Church Fuel Grant

In the winter we had received from the Diocese a grant of £1,087 towards anticipated increased energy costs to be returned or passed on to a needy church if

not required, As the Academy had not increased our energy costs, we needed to pass on the energy grant. This was sent to St Peter's Church Braunstone, an old and very large church in a deprived parish, who were very appreciative.

- **9th November - Extraordinary meeting on Finance (Zoom)**

The deficit in our income in recent years is around £2,500-£3,000 and without the legacy of Olive Sullivan our reserves would now be very low.

This situation is unsustainable and ways of giving to the church need to be made clearer, including Gift Aid and setting up a QR Code, so people could give via their phone.

12 copies of *'The Shortfall'* had been acquired to be shared round the congregation, which incorporated John Stott's short book - *'The Grace of Giving'*.

It was agreed that on Sunday 19th November instead of group time a presentation on giving to the church to explain our financial situation would be given.



Churchwarden's Report on condition of buildings by Robert Pike

After the last 3 years when our worship has been affected by Covid it was good to report that Covid did not affect our coming together for worship during the whole of 2023. Admittedly there were occasions when members of our church did get Covid during the year but this meant that they were not with us for one or two Sundays and for them it was just like getting flu like symptoms.

Some of the practices implemented with the Pandemic are still in place such as ensuring the room is ventilated and using sanitisers before administering communion. Individual cups for everyone continues for the foreseeable future although it is hoped that one day we may return to sharing one cup.

It is very good to see new people come to our church and during 2023 we did see a fair number of new faces come to join us. Some of these new people have children and as a result of which, on a few occasions, nearly half the attendance at Church on Sunday have been children. I am pleased to report that our average attendance throughout the year has shown an increase in adults from 21 to 24 and the number of children increased from 5 to 9.

One of the main issues affecting our worship in previous years has been our sound system and it was good that new equipment was installed during the year and is working well. Although we do not attract many visitors it is good to report that we have set up a system so that people can now give financially to the church by using a QR code. Our website is also going to be revamped within the next few months.

All valuable items are accounted for and stored securely in the vestry safe. The rewriting of the inventory is on hold as is another tidy up of the vestry. This will need to be carried out ideally in the next few months together with a good spring clean.

Finally I would like to thank all those who help in whatever way to support what goes on in the church on Sunday. Particularly like to mention those who run the Investigators especially with such increased numbers they have had to deal with. Also, like to thank those who do the little jobs which are not on a rota such as setting up for Little Angels, putting out the Welcome sign, distributing bibles onto the seats, picking up any rubbish at the front of the school, in the foyer on the way in or in the church itself. People do these jobs without being asked and are greatly appreciated.

Safeguarding Report by Neil Tansley (Safeguarding co-ordinator)

I am pleased to report that in all areas of church activity that have needed attention and 'catching up' due to the pandemic, we are almost fully compliant with just one or two individuals still requiring completion of training. All DBS checks for adults working with children are now completed and none require updating until the end of 2025. From now on, I am encouraging all applicants to subscribe to the update service which will mean we won't have to go through the full application process every three years.

It is important that as a church community we continue to take responsibility for ensuring that we operate in a way that ensures safety for all. It is important therefore, that for all roles within church life, both paid and voluntary the safeguarding requirements for that post are made clear to applicants - I think this is particularly important where future PCC members are concerned. All roles in

leadership or that involve working with children or vulnerable adults require safe recruitment, DBS Checks and/ or the relevant Diocesan training. We only have to look at recent high profile cases within the church to realise how important safe practice for all is.

Personally, I receive regular updates from the Diocese on changes to practice and initiatives around safeguarding. I also attend, where possible, the Diocesan forum for Safeguarding Co-ordinators

To end on a positive note, I can report that we have had no major safeguarding concerns reported over the past year. This is definitely, something to give thanks for. However, it is important that we shouldn't become complacent and if we are concerned about anything or anyone, then there is a clear reporting procedure laid out on the safeguarding section of the church noticeboard.

Music by Neil Tansley

Not much to report for the past year as there have been no changes. We will continue to keep trying to expand our catalogue of songs and hymns and if we are learning something new we will post it on St Christopher's whats app group before the Sunday Service. We always welcome your feedback, encouragement and suggestions and who knows, one day we may see some new musicians swelling the ranks. (Prayers please!)



St Christopher's Church

LEICESTER

Statement of Accounts

2023

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31 December 2023

	General Fund	Maintenance Fund	Mission Fund	Little Angels	Building/Equipment Fund	Total 2023
	(includes legacy)					
Assets	£	£	£	£	£	£
Current account	6,695.38	500.00	0.09	396.55	434.00	8,026.02
Board of Finance deposit	21,302.54	1,589.47	0.00	9,163.29	7,007.22	39,062.53
Cash in hand	113.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	113.10
Total	28,111.02	2,089.47	0.09	9,559.85	7,441.22	47,201.65
Debtors						
Liabilities						

Rottall
21/2/24

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**ST CHRISTOPHER'S CHURCH
GENERAL FUND RECEIPTS 2023**

	2023		2022
	£		£
Offertories etc			
Sunday Services	488.43		545.47
Sunday Services (non Gift Aid)	816.99		250.00
Offertories at Marriages, Funerals etc			
Fees for Marriages, Banns, Funerals etc	0.00		316.00
Planned Giving	1075.00		0.00
Gift Aided giving	14465.00		15085.00
Other Tax efficient giving	220.00		240.00
Income Tax recovered on Gift Aided giving	3928.76	20994.18	3586.30
	<u> </u>		<u>20022.77</u>
 Donations - for general use			
Other Donations		0.00	0.00
	<u> </u>		<u> </u>
Use of premises	0.00		
Scouts	0.00		
	<u> </u>	0.00	0.00
Insurance claims			
Legacy			15519.55
Other sundry receipts	49.79		103.01
	<u> </u>	49.79	<u>15622.56</u>
 Interest from			
deposit with Central Board of Finance	934.68	934.68	264.42
	<u> </u>		<u>264.42</u>
Total of above		21978.65	35909.75
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"Restricted" items			
Clergy/Organist fees	0.00		47.00
Diocesan grant for 'Thy Kingdom Come'			
Diocesan grant for increase in energy costs			1087.00
Fees for diocese			224.00
	<u> </u>	0.00	<u>1358.00</u>
Total Receipts into General Fund		<u>21978.65</u>	<u>37267.75</u>

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

Miss R C Hall OBE (Hon Examiner)

2024

**ST CHRISTOPHER'S CHURCH
GENERAL FUND PAYMENTS 2023**

	2023 £		2022 £
Costs of raising funds			
applying for grants			
Charitable activities			
PCC Mission Allocations	1000.00		1000.00
		1000.00	1000.00
Ministry costs			
parish contribution	17000.00		18550.00
wages/honoraria	17000.00		18550.00
		17000.00	18550.00
Staff costs			
allowances	436.94		366.64
travel	531.40		545.01
phone	304.00	1272.34	301.06
			1212.71
Church running expenses			
office, insurance	520.96		475.36
Gifts	37.56		63.00
publicity, hospitality	10.80	569.32	110.20
			648.56
Church maintainence			
repairs & renewals	37.93	37.93	0.00
			0.00
Upkeep of services			
craft materials	45.72		
other items	396.50	442.22	304.77
			304.77
Utilities			
cleaning, gas, electricity	1989.96	1989.96	1989.96
			1989.96
Training & Education			
Craft Cafe	276.49		125.17
Evangelism	246.98	523.47	121.57
			246.74
Other payments - From General Fund			
Investments, deposits			338.33
Sundries	186.90		2204.40
Wireless microphones	186.90	186.90	2542.73
			2542.73
Governance costs			
PCC expenses			
Major Capital expenditure			
Repairs / Redecoration / New building			
Total of above	23022.14		26495.47
Other 'Restricted' payments - through General Fund			
Energy grant passed on	1087.00		
Fees to Diocese	0.00		1104.50
			1104.50
Transfers	-		-
Total Payments from General Fund	24109.14		27599.97
Excess of Receipts over Payments	-2130.49		9667.78
Held in current & deposit accounts 1st January	30241.52 **		20555.14
Held in current & deposit accounts 31st December	28111.02		30222.92 **

** Discrepancy due to unclaimed cheque £18.60 (see Notes)

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ST CHRISTOPHER'S CHURCH 2023

		2023		2022	
		£		£	
Missionary and Charitable payments from General Fund					
CrossLinks		100.00		100.00	
Church Pastoral Aid Society (inc Falcon Camps)		150.00		150.00	
Evangelical Alliance		80.00		80.00	
Tearfund		150.00		150.00	
Arab World Ministries		200.00		200.00	
Christian Vision for Men		100.00		100.00	
Open Hands		120.00		120.00	
Scouts		100.00	1000.00	100.00	1000.00
Missionary and Charitable giving (restricted)					
CrossLinks		52.02		60.00	
Church Pastoral Aid Society (inc Falcon Camps)		95.00		65.00	
Tearfund		251.00		215.18	
Arab World Ministries		106.50		112.00	
Christian Vision for Men		32.09		40.00	
Open Hands		90.51		124.42	
Scouts		60.00	687.12	63.20	679.80
<hr/>					
Little Angels					
Receipts	Weekly donations [R]	581.47		572.31	
	Interest [R]	402.05	983.52	113.74	686.05
Payments	Consumables	568.61	568.61	460.66	460.66
Excess of Receipts over Payments			414.91		225.39
Held in current & deposit accounts					
	at 01 January		9144.94		8919.53
	at 31 December		9559.85		9144.94
			Restricted: £9163.29		Restricted: £8761.24
			Designated: £396.55		Designated: £383.69
<hr/>					
Building/Equipment (restricted)					
Receipts	Donations			0.00	
	Other (Interest)	307.45	307.45	86.98	86.98
Payments		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Excess of Receipts over Payments			307.45		86.98
Held in current & deposit accounts					
	at 01 January		7133.77		7046.79
	at 31 December		7441.22		7133.77
<hr/>					
Maintenance (Designated)					
Receipts	Transfers	0.00		0.00	
	Other (Interest)	69.74	69.74	19.73	19.73
Payments		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Excess of Receipts over Payments			69.74		19.73
Held in current & deposit accounts					
	at 01 January		2019.73		2000.00
	at 31 December		2089.47		2019.73

Report of Church Activities

Schools ministry by Chris Collins

Chris and Charles both do termly assemblies for TGSA primary children, and also continue to read Bible stories once per term with Early Years pupils. Furthermore, the Reception children missed their visit to St Christopher's in the summer term. Chris or Charles continue to deliver talks at termly Whole School assemblies, though a speaker from another church was invited to do the one at the end of summer term 2023. This year also saw secondary age assemblies hosted and delivered by Chris or Charles for TGSA students restart, with one teacher commenting how much he appreciated these assemblies!

The 2-3 times per year chat, snacks and prayer session for Christian staff has continued and these always seem to be appreciated by staff at TGSA. Charles has recently taken over responsibility for termly 'cake drops' and prayer box; we received some heartfelt prayer requests before Christmas and it was lovely to see that people were willing to be open with us in requesting prayer (even if it was anonymous).

There was no visiting of Marriott Primary School in 2023 - hoping to reconnect with them in 2024.

Please pray for the development of relationships with both staff and pupils, and for openness to the gospel.

Door-to-door by Chris Collins

There was no door-to-door visiting done by St Christopher's in 2023. It is planned to restart in Spring 2024, with Chris taking over leadership from Charles.

Please pray for protection and God's guidance to lead the team to the right houses where God has already started his work and that people will happily open their doors to hear what we feel God through us wants to share with them. Please walk with us in prayer for this ministry.

Men's Ministry by Charles Ndigirwa

Football

At the moment, the Men's ministry is primarily based around the weekly football group. It is encouraging that attendance has increased for non-church members and we have a regular, enthusiastic group coming along. However our church member's attendance seems to be declining a bit. We are really beginning to build up relationships with those with no church contact but need a consistent group of church members for this. Therefore, can you please pray for wisdom and guidance so that this doesn't become just about football but a mission field as well.

We have continued to pray just before and after each game, this is to show that even though this is football, but God is in it and can use it for his kingdom.

The social event for the Men's ministry took place on 2nd of December and we had Skittles night with limitless BBQ.

This was a fun and enjoyable evening. It was lovely to see people laughing, joking, and chatting as well as enjoying being together. This was an evening that was arranged with a view of inviting all men who

play football but do not come to church or have faith. Even though some men expressed their desire to come, none of them was able to attend for various reasons.

On reflection - it is possible that because of the age gap (young men) they wanted to do something energetic sport such as Go-carting, but I don't think this is suitable for some of our more senior people. Please pray that we find the balance of what kind of social gathering will work for us all so that we can find the best way to reach these young men.

If you have any suggestion or question, please contact Charles on Mobile: 07459737473 or Email: cndigirwa@gmail.com

Women's Ministries by Sarah Collins and Rita Early

St C's Sisters is a group of women from St C's who support each other in prayer and meet once a month for fellowship.

We have a WhatsApp group where people can share prayer requests, news and words of encouragement.

There is a monthly Monday Meet-up hosted by Linda where we can meet to pray, share and read the Bible together.

The day-time group met just twice at the start of the year, continuing with our studies in Judges by Tim Keller. After the Lent/Easter studies break we have not met because of personal reasons, but we hope to re-start later in 2024 with an easier study.

Craft Café by Chris Collins

Craft Cafe continues to be a joy! It is a community group primarily for non-church members, involving craft activities or challenges based around a Bible theme, opportunity for chat, a talk based on the same theme and food at the end. Our numbers vary each time, but we tend to have perhaps 20-30 visitors at a typical session (team members not included). Our team has changed also, with the addition of Simon and Sarah and with Elaine stepping down.

This group has become a genuinely lovely group, with people feeling comfortable together as they do the crafts and eat together afterwards. The relatively large team also means that we have capacity for team members to chat with those who come.

One setback was the non-use of the school kitchens: having got permission from the TGSA Principal to use these to prepare food (and having used them once), the Trust informed us that it actually wasn't allowable due to safety reasons. This is an issue, but Neil and Jayne have soldiered on and prepare lovely food which they bring from home.

Please pray for people to be genuinely open to the gospel, and for relationships to develop.

Encouragingly, a couple of mums made the transition from Craft Cafe to the Fish and Chip Supper this year! We hope others can move onto such 'stepping stones' on a journey towards the Lord.

Investigators by Sarah Collins

Investigators have been meeting on a Sunday Morning. We have around 17 children who attend regularly so our group can be anywhere between 3 and 17, depending on who is there. We have 3 regular leaders and others who help out as required.

Our Sunday morning activities have been based on Bible Characters. We enjoy playing games, learning from the Bible and doing craft activities. We find creative ways to pray including bouncy balls, fidget spinners and playdough.

Little Angels by Rita Early

We've had another very busy year! On average we've had 75 people attending each week. Although our attendance can vary considerably with the weather; a very snowy morning on the 10th March saw just one mother and child! Our highest attendance was for the Christmas Party with 34 children and 29 adults. That's a lot of presents for Santa to distribute!



Busy with craft at the Christmas Party

As usual we have celebrated the major Christian festivals. In May we celebrated the Coronation with a special morning making crowns, a coronation treasure hunt and decorating cup cakes with red, white and blue icing and lots of sprinkles!

Our one charity event of the year is in November for Children in Need when we hold a Teddy Bears' Picnic. This year we raised £70.



Poppies for Remembrance Day

We are getting an increasing number of grandparents bringing their grandchildren as mothers return to the work place. We have got carers from an increasing mix of countries; new this year have been people from the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Bangladesh and Iran. We've also had three pairs of twins and our first a set of triplets!

We did have one Safeguarding issue, when a domestic issue spilled over into Little Angels. It was a family known to the Academy and they were very supportive.

We ask for prayers for a replacement for Charles when he leaves us - probably sometime in the next 12 months.

The Team

Charles continues to help on a Monday morning, and just occasionally when he is unavailable Chris has stepped in. One morning, when my sister was having a cataract operation, the club was run by the two men! Is this a first for a Toddler group? Sarah continues to be an energetic helper on Friday mornings.

We continue to be very grateful to church members for putting the heavy equipment out on a Sunday morning and Chris and Charles for the Friday session.

Mike also assists with washing up if Chris is on duty and when we have a 'big' event, like the party. He frequently mends broken toys.



This year's Santa was a volunteer from the Academy! He enjoyed it so much he has volunteered for next year!



Posies for Mothering Sunday



51st Leicester (St Christopher's) Scout Group

by Roger Burdett

The biggest change until recently was the re-establishment of the Cub Section (7.5 - 10/10.5yrs) at the end of August, with Mark Edwards taking the lead and Amy Martin coming on board as a leader for which many thanks. Growth in the section was disappointingly slow however until our Cub Open Day which saw numbers jump from 4 to 17 'overnight'. This highlighting, as was noted in last year's report, our need to 'put ourselves out there'. So far there has been only one absence so we are hopeful that they are enjoying Cubs and continue to come. Our sensible limit in the church space is about twenty and as interest has continued we may well end up with a waiting list! It is interesting to note here that 30% of the new cub faces come from our immediate area which the Scouts leafleted in 15 minutes on the meeting night previous to the open day although parents would perhaps have heard from other sources too.

The Scout Section (10/10.5-14.5yrs) remains very small and largely unchanged with all being 12yrs plus with a part pandemic related total absence of 10/10.5-11yr olds. Two are not far from having to go into Explorer Scouting elsewhere although we are planning a strategy to keep them connected to the Group as 'Young Leaders' whether they latch onto an Explorer Unit or not. One of them through turning up early has latched onto the Cub Section already, he is well liked and has been constructively helpful. Some creative 'Young Leader Training' might form the basis eventually of a re-established Explorer Unit here if the Scout District can be persuaded. When the oldest pair make the jump falls neatly at the point where the oldest of the Cubs can come up into Scouts, meanwhile we are going to concentrate on the awards intended for older scouts such as the 'Expedition Challenge' and the 'World Challenge' that includes an element of community service. We will consider too a professional door leaflet to advertise the Scout Section to 10-11yr olds!

Of course all our activities have continued, building life skills throughout the year, with an overall emphasis on the 'Teamwork Challenges' in both sections. We list below some of the other significant and high points.

Scouts...Bunkhouse Camp Field Head March, backwoods cooking John's Lee, wide game Bagworth Heath, day hike Lathkilldale, lightweight camp Oaks in Charnwood September, Fire Station visit and Santa's Workshop 'mass producing our old friend Tommy the Tugboat. Second Bunkhouse Cabin Camp January



Artist badge

Cubs...Emergency Aid Badge, Fire station visit, Artist Badge

Now working on the Entertainer Badge and planning the first camp 'back' for June.

Many thanks to the Church for your support, donations and help. Please remember us in prayer often, particularly regarding our relationships with the new children and their parents and for the leadership's sustained enthusiasm and encouragement.



First Aid badge level 1

Alpha and Hope Explored by Charles Ndigirwa

We didn't run an Alpha Course in 2023, but we ran Hope Explored in February. We had some good encouraging conversations and are keeping in touch with the people who attended to continue to encourage them in their faith journey. We also had a social meal in June 2023 for people who attended the Alpha course in 2022 and those who attended Hope Explored in February 2023. It felt a natural thing to combine these two groups since many people who attended Alpha course, attended Hope Explored as well. This social meal was kindly hosted by Neil and Jayne, and we had a fantastic time for those who were able to make it.

Please pray for all the individuals who attended that they will reflect on the messages they heard and continue to think about what might be their next step. Pray for the team as we keep in touch with individuals, for sensitive conversations but to be bold about continuing to challenge people to consider faith.

We are currently advertising for Hope Explored. Pray that people will want to come along.

Food Poverty Response by Charles Ndigirwa

The increase of prices of food, gas, electricity, fuel has continued to affect everyone especially those who were already financially struggling.

Last year we saw an increase in demand for food parcels which is not a surprise at all, but this year the demand hasn't been as high as last year. My suspicion is that because Open Hands have reduced how many times you can have food parcels from 12 to 6 times. This has made people think carefully about when they should come for food parcels and therefore the frequency of collection has reduced significantly.

The system used is that; normally we receive referrals from the school (both secondary and primary). Once a referral has been received, I contact the individual concerned and arrange a date and time for when these parcels can be collected.

Thank you to everyone who has supported this ministry either by giving unperishable food items to church and those who have volunteered to help.

I still have a sense that being seen to collect food parcels at School is a difficult thing to do for many people due to the stigma associated with it. Consequently, more people are not willing to come forward and get the support they need. Please pray for wisdom around this.

Just in case some people are not aware - (St Christophers members) bring unperishable food item/s to church and put it in our collection bin. Once we have collected enough, we take the whole collection to Open Hands. In return, whenever we want some food parcels we will go and collect for about 10 families or more and distribute it until it is almost finished and go back to collect more. Therefore, as a church we always have some food parcels to give away to people in need.

This service is not limited to anyone, so in case you are struggling to make ends meet, please confidentially come and speak to Charles or Chris.

As well as giving food the contact with families allows an opportunity to listen to people talk about their situation, offer support and prayer. Sometimes prayers hasn't been possible because some of

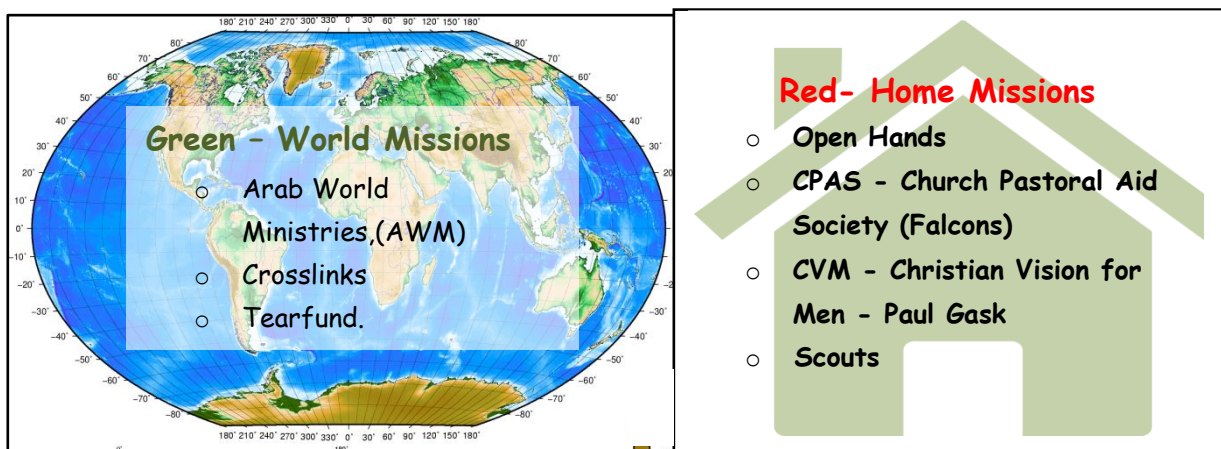
these people comes with young children, therefore becomes difficult to pray. This is a vital part of the ministry. Please pray

Prayer request

Please pray for wisdom and guidance on what to do next after people have collected their last food parcels (6th). How we can keep in contact or what kind of support or help we can offer to these individuals and families as St Christophers Church/Community.

Mission by Rita Early

Our Mission support is balanced between our support of Home and World missions



We support a mission each month, which is explained in the monthly news sheet and on the mission noticeboard.

Most of the missions we support have a direct connection with our church.

Contributions towards the mission are collected in the 'Pringles' Tin.

The PCC also gives a contribution to these missions.

This is a summary of our support in 2023

January AWM Focus on Morocco	February CPAS CPAS is patron to nearly 700 parishes, including St C's	March Tearfund Our annual hunger lunch focused on the Ivory Coast
April AWM Reasons why Muslims observe Ramadan	May Crosslinks Celebrating their 100 th birthday	June Scouts Planning for an adventurous summer
July Open Hands The cost of living crisis is putting more pressure on our Food Banks	August CPAS Falcons For many these holidays are their first ever and many have never seen the sea before	September Tearfund Speaking out for how injustice is affecting the lives of the poorest
October Open Hands Showing compassion to all sections of our community	November CVM 150 men met with Jesus at their annual summer event	December Tearfund The environmental impact of Christmas

Tea, Chat and Pray by Rita Early

We have continued to meet bi-monthly on the second Sunday of the month, other than July when we met a week earlier to avoid the school holiday. We meet at Mike and Rita's house and start with tea and chat for an hour and then we pray for an hour.

We always pray for the mission of the month and any update from our two missionary partners who grew up in our church and now serve in sensitive areas. We also include current world issues and any events highlighted by Tearfund. We finish with any UK issues and some diocesan news - if we have time!

Our total numbers have ranged from 5-8, so we have plenty of room for more! One of our regular members isn't even a member of our church!



A Chinese evening

St Christopher's Book Club by Jenny Mann

We have continued to meet on the first Friday of each month in a community/meeting room at the Pork Pie Library. The staff are hospitable, efficient and very helpful. We select the books each month from a long list of available library books so we don't have to worry about getting our own books.

We now have 10 members, which is about right as not everyone can make every meeting. The discussion seems to be lively and interesting, obviously with differing set of views and opinions on each book.

We stray off-topic to films, plays and TV programmes we have seen, other books we have read, and to our own personal joys and sadnesses. I think people enjoy it!



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 March and July. A further one was planned to take place in November but unfortunately this was cancelled for some reason prior to the event. There was also a Social get together in early September but I was on holiday at this time so could not attend. Besides the meetings there have been numerous emails throughout the year publicising events which may be of interest and information what is happening in the Diocese which have been useful.

27th March 2023

At this meeting which was open to all church members the Finance team from the Diocese attended looking at the issues that the Finance team are faced with in that Expenditure has exceeded Income for several years now which is not a good position to be in. Generally Income from Parishes has been decreasing year on year and to offset this the Diocesan Finance team has been selling off Assets which cannot continue. There was a Question and Answer session with the audience looking how to resolve this issue. The bottom line being if funding not increased in the next 5 years then the number of paid clergy will have to be significantly reduced. This was followed by a parish update on the St Andrews Parish.

5th July 2023

At this meeting which again was open to all church members we looked at the Climate Crisis and the Church. We were presented initially with lots of information about how Climate Change is happening. There then followed some case studies and quick wins what some churches were doing to introduce green polices to offset Climate change. We also had a speaker from Climate Action Leicester looking at what plans the Council are doing to offset climate change and also pushing them to stop using fossil fuels.