

# St Peter's 2023 Annual Reports to the AGM

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## 1. Churchwarden's Report

St Peter's has had another good year. We continue to meet at 9am for our main service, but the Wednesday lunchtime services have been appreciated and well attended, so have now happen every week, alternating the Holy Communion with either Celtic Prayer or Morning Prayer. Thank you to the Revd Graham Perryman, Revd Laurence Meering, Margaret Hamilton and Kristi Baker for leading these. We had our second Carol Service at Christmas time which seemed popular with church members and the community. Another popular event was the Christmas morning Carols followed by a Christmas Dinner feeding forty-one.

Our children's area continues to prove invaluable both during the week and on a Sunday morning. Junel Harris or Laura Broome are with us most Sundays to provide activities for any children that might come. This can be up to 8 on occasions.

We have had one baptism this last year. This was the family of one of our regular attenders in the Community Centre. It was wonderful to welcome this family into the church.

St Peter's hosted the parish Lent course again this year.

The church has continued to be open every weekday as an extension to the Westfield Warm Hub. It provides a quieter space for people to come and sit quietly, pray, do a jigsaw or play a board game. It continues to host Flexercise, Knit and Natter, and Happy Café. When there has been a council Holiday Club, or double booking in the Hall, the church has also been drafted in for use for other activities. So, we have also had the Balsam Group which provides support for Autistic young adults, the Take Art Dementia support group and the Abri slow cooker course for instance. All this in addition to regular bookings such as The People's Choir, Westfield Community Association open meetings, Prayers for Westfield, Polling Station, Deanery Synod, and Retired Clergy get-togethers, The Sunday evening church youth Group, LIFT, has also moved to the church as most of the children that attend live in the locality.

We have been encouraged by the number of people who do want to come into the church to pray during the week, when the centre is open to the public, and try to keep an obvious prominent prayer area with varied prayer resources. However, it can be a challenge when the church is used so much for other activities.

Ian Croxford & Caroline Turner, Churchwardens

## 2. Community Coffee

Community Coffee continues to meet every week on a Monday morning (even on Christmas Day). It continues to be popular with both church members and people from the community. Thank you to the wonderful team of volunteers who make the drinks and act as welcoming. Of course, we could always do with more people on the rota to serve the coffee. The hope for the future is that the church itself will be used more for those that find the hubbub in the Centre a little too much!

Caroline Turner, Churchwarden

## 3. Parish Men's Group

The Parish Men's group has continued to meet on a monthly basis with an evening meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday and a daytime meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of each month.

The evening meetings are just about viable with the numbers attending but the daytime group has gradually diminished and is no longer serving the purpose or cadre at which it was aimed.

The meetings have no particular format or agenda but are instead a place for conversation and mutual support so perhaps a more structured approach would appeal to the men folk of both churches?

A new Men's Breakfast group will be starting at St Peter's in 2024 using the resources of the Community Centre there, so that may well become the successor to the current daytime group and broaden the appeal.

The evening group will carry on, but if there is anyone out there with a heart for working with men or ideas to revitalise the group, then now would be a good time to step up.

Chris Harris, Lay Reader

#### 4. Volunteers at St Peter's

St Peter's continues to depend on a large number of volunteers, filling a wide variety of roles, both visible and behind the scenes, on Sundays and during the rest of the week.

Volunteers are wonderful! They act as Warm Hub hosts and on reception in the Centre, help run the Warm Hub and the Pantry and Centre Library, maintain the prayer chain and the prayer table, provide coffee on Sundays, for Monday Community Coffee and for other events, bake cakes, open up the church, take Sunday services, welcome the congregation, take communion services in care homes and midweek, take the collection plate round when we have Sunday communion services, count and bank the money, move chairs, keep track of finances, keep on top of the administration, help unofficially with transport, organise occasional flower displays, play the electronic piano, help with Messy Church, other children's and youth groups and events, help with children attending church on Sundays, run cell groups and prayer groups, organise Bingo and Beetle Drives and occasional other special events, lead intercessions and help with the chalice when needed, do running repairs, read the lessons in church, help set up the laptops, projector and microphones, register church attendance, change and wash dishcloths, altar linen and communion cloths, deal with PowerPoint notices and service booklets, hymn numbers and the noticeboards, look after the garden, clean the brass, take donated food to the Gateway for the Lord's Larder, serve on committees and as Church Wardens, Verger, LWA's (Lay Worship Assistants) and LPA's (Lay Pastoral Assistants), look after the training and safeguarding and serve in many other ways. They give regularly and generously, whether in time and talents, money or goods etc - all are vital.

We would like to thank all the volunteers, the committee, PCC and Deanery Synod members, the church wardens and treasurer, the clergy, and everyone who helps with the smooth running of our church and its outreach, whether their service is visible or behind the scenes and invisible. We would especially like to acknowledge and thank those who quietly and faithfully pray for our church and community, share encouraging and loving messages on our church WhatsApp group, and visit and help others in the congregation and at the Centre as needed. We especially thank Margaret Hamilton who is stepping down from leading the 9am services but continuing in her many other roles.

More volunteers are always welcome. If you think you could help in any way, please let one of us know.

Kristi Baker, Verger

#### **List of Rota Volunteers: (as of April 2024)**

**Churchwardens:** Caroline Turner & Ian Croxford

#### **St Peter's Committee:**

Rev David Keen, Caroline Turner (Church Warden and LWA), Ian Croxford (Church Warden), Margaret Hamilton (Deanery Synod Representative and LWA), Frances Croxford (Treasurer and Parochial Church Council representative), Kristina Baker (PCC representative, LWA and Verger), Rhoda Wilson (PCC and Deanery Synod Representative), Hugh McFadden (Lay

Pastoral Assistant), Tracey Taylor (fundraising/ social), Trish Quigley (Messy Church), Sue McFadden (PCC, Assistant Safeguarding officer, LWA), Phillida Patman (PCC)

#### **Leading Services:**

Caroline Turner LWA, Kristina Baker LWA, Sue McFadden LWA, Rev Laurence Meering, Rev Graham Perryman, Rev David Keen, John Hanson, Caryl Plewes, Chris Harris, Margaret Hamilton LWA (not 9am)

#### **Unlocking/Preparing for Services/Locking Up:**

Caroline Turner, Ian Croxford, Kristina Baker

#### **Lesson Readers:**

Jenny Jeannes, Ian Croxford, Alannah Boyt, Stephen Baker, Kristina Baker, Caroline Turner, Margaret Hamilton, Eileen Bangay, Janet Burt, Olive Heenan, Tracey Taylor, Mary Strong, Rhoda Wilson, Hugh McFadden, Rev Laurence Meering, Cathie Meering, Sarah Hiscott, Jess Taylor, Dee Trott, Sue McFadden, Rev Graham Perryman, Frances Croxford, Phillida Patman, Oyinda Otutuloro

#### **Prayer Leaders:**

Ian Croxford, Kristina Baker, Margaret Hamilton, Stephen Baker, Rev Laurence Meering, Cathie Meering, Rhoda Wilson, Hugh McFadden, Rev Graham Perryman, Eileen Bangay

**Welcomers/Sidespersons:**

Jenny Jeannes, Alannah Boyt, Esme Sims, Sarah Hiscott, Rosie Keynes, Mary Strong, Tracey Taylor, Michael Gillingham, Phillida Patman, Jess Taylor, Stephen Baker, Janet Burt, Dawn Dexter, Dee Trott, Kristi Baker, Oyinda Otutuloro, Caroline Turner

**Coffee:**

Alannah Boyt, Janet Burt, Jenny Jeannes, Tracey Taylor, Eileen Bangay, Kristina Baker, Stephen Baker, Frances Croxford, Sarah Hiscott, Michael Gillingham, Phillida Patman, Dee Trott, Jess Taylor, Rosie Keynes, Sue McFadden, Hugh McFadden, Oyinda Otutuloro, Caroline Turner

**Chalice Assistants:**

Stephen Baker, Rosie Keynes, Kristina Baker, Margaret Hamilton, Alannah Boyt, Ian Croxford, Sue McFadden, Dawn Dexter

**Church Flowers (Special Occasions), Front Flowerbeds & Baskets:**

Kristina Baker, Alannah Boyt, Olive Heenan, Sue McFadden, Esme Sims, Kristina Baker, Lucy Daniels

**Music & AV:**

Rev'd Graham Perryman, Caroline Turner, Kristina Baker, Ian Croxford, Frances Croxford

**Counting & Banking Money:**

Church Wardens, Stephen Baker, Alannah Boyt, Frances Croxford (treasurer), Sandy Wood, Rosie Keynes

**Lay Pastoral Assistants:**

Alannah Boyt

**Brass Cleaning:**

Janet Burt

**5. Children and Families****a. Junior Church at St James' and St Peter's**

Junior Church meets on Sundays during the morning services. It can vary week to week how many children we have at both churches. The age range can be anywhere between 3 years old - 12 years old! This can be a challenge when planning the sessions, but overall, the groups work well, with the older children helping the younger ones with the activities. It gives a nice family feel having the different ages together. We tend to follow the same themes/Bible stories as the adults in church, but with a few more games and crafts!

**b. Abbey Manor Toddlers and St Peter's Toddler's**

Abbey Manor Toddlers and St Peter's Toddler Group both run on a Wednesday morning. I tend to be at Abbey Toddlers and Junel at St Peter's, so that we can support both groups. Abbey Toddlers is a large, lively group for children under 5 years old, and their parents/carers. We have 20-30 families at Abbey Community Centre so it can get very busy! It is a similar set up at St Peter's, though this is a smaller group with 5-10 families attending.

Both groups are great places to chat with families and build friendships while the children play. Families who attend have also come to other activities such as Messy Church, and Christmas and Easter events, which has been encouraging to see.

**c. Tots and Toys**

Tots and Toys began as a small baby group, meeting at St James on a Thursday morning. Over the last year, the group has grown and we have opened the age range up to under 5s.

We have 8 - 10 regular families, and the group is very welcoming and supportive of each other. As it is a smaller group, we have been able to have some deeper conversations with the mums and grandparents who attend. A couple of the families have started coming to Messy Church regularly.

#### **d. Mums' Bible Study and Prayer Group**

A few months ago, I started a mums' bible study group with Junel, and three other mums, who wanted to go deeper in their faith. The initial plan was to meet at St Peter's on a Tuesday. However, it has been tricky to meet regularly, due to mums juggling work commitments, and their little ones' nap times! We changed the time of the group, but this still wasn't working. So, the group has become more of an online group for now. We share encouraging bible verses, prayers, and any prayer requests on our WhatsApp group. This way we can still support each other in our faith, and occasionally I have been able to meet mums 1:1, at a time that works better for them.

#### **e. Messy Church**

Messy Church is held at St Peter's on the second Saturday of the month. It is a fun, creative way of doing church that particularly works well for families.

We have had lots of families coming along to join in. We have some regular families, and some that come now and then, then we always seem to have new faces each month too! Numbers can vary with an average of fifteen families. It can be challenging not knowing how many families we will have when planning the activities, and the food! However, we have a great team in the kitchen, and a team helping with the activities in the hall, so it always seems to come together well on the day! We always welcome more helpers at Messy Church as there is a lot going on!

Messy Church is a wonderful opportunity to share God's love with families, many of whom have no church background, and learn more about faith together.

Laura Broome, Children and Families Worker

Messy Church continues to do well with regular families attending each month and a few new families have joined us. Our average numbers each month are between 40-50 people.

Bible themes we have looked at from September 2023 - April 2024 have included The Parable of the Sower, Jesus our Light, The Parable of the Hidden Treasure, Christmas, The Wise and Foolish Builders, Love (John15:12), Easter and God's Creation and caring for our World.

Future themes are for May - Pentecost, June and July are to be confirmed.

Although we have a wonderful team of helpers, we are still looking for more volunteers to join our team.

Trish Quigley

#### **f. Primary Schools**

We continue to have a strong connection with Preston Primary Academy, our church school on Abbey Manor. The school has a strong Christian ethos, and under the Headteacher Claire Hodgson this continues to develop. A focus in 2023 was on creating and improving displays in each classroom so that there is a Christian focus, with Christian symbols, prayers, and scriptures. The school motto is changing from 'work together, learn together, grow together' to 'let your light shine', which enables us to be clearer about the Christian basis and vision for the school.

Our involvement in the school over the year includes a weekly prayer meeting first thing on Monday, regular assemblies, input into RE (e.g. on baptism, marriage, the Lords Supper, and a Q&A with older students), and church visits. We are working with YCC and school staff to support a new Christian lunch club for students.

We are grateful to Amanda Skeats for serving as a Foundation Governor on the school governing body for several years, and to Liz Wilson-Chalon who is taking on this role – the other Foundation Governor is the Vicar.

We also do termly assemblies at 2 other local primaries, Kingfisher and Oaklands, and host them for visits to the church. One highlight of 2023 was a 'Schools Day' for our Knitted Bible Stories exhibition. As we took round a group from Oaklands and explained about prayer, a large number of the students spontaneously started writing out prayers and using the prayer chapel. Our schools work gives us contact with over 1000 children on a regular basis, most of whom have no Christian input at home, and (in the non-church schools) limited input at school. This is a tremendous privilege and opportunity.

Revd David Keen, Vicar

## 6. Youth

Since our last AGM report we have worked with around 170 young people through our weekly groups, as well as those who I have mentored over the last year through Westfield school. This does not include the young people we work with through our detached work at Preston School, Movement and other events I have helped run such as SWYM's Live Football camp. This last year has been a big year for us - we started two new groups, made the very difficult decision around 'Drop In', then relaunched with new visions. We moved Lift and saw prayers answered by doors opening on things such as getting back into Preston School.

### a. Tea and Toast

This year we have seen Tea and Toast grow, partly as we have allowed a few younger ones to attend this group as many of the young people had stopped attending for a while. They have now returned and we have a group of 13-18 who attend each week. Recently we have focused on mental health, using dance and crafts. We also ran a 'Tea and Toast has talent' and saw a number of good dances and singing from all involved. As the age range is vast, we did worry how this group would go especially as older young people returned, however, the majority are getting along and we are seeing a number of young "leaders" emerge which we hope to work on with them. It has been great to see them all join in and help each other with different activities.

### b. The Hangout

'The Hangout', which is split into two, with the first for school years 4-7 and the second for year 7+. The younger group started very well with 10+ young people attending weekly, but the older group took a little longer to take off with only 3/4 young people attending regularly. Over the 2023 summer holidays we ran activities under 'The Hangout' name, with two sessions a week for 4 of the 6 weeks. Over those sessions we had 50+ children and young people attend the activities with at least 15-20 a session. A lot continued to attend after the holidays, and we now have a good core group of 15-16 at the younger group and 8-10 at the older group.

The younger group is more structured with the young people having half an hour free time at the beginning and end to do craft, gaming, board games, table tennis, pool etc. then half an hour of a set activity for them to join in with. Some of these activities have included Lego competitions, pizza making, 'The Apprentice' night etc. We have also had a few outside organisations come into run sessions such as Helen Hawke from the Wildlife Trust, a speaker from South Africa showing us his conservation work with wild animals and recently Yeovil Art getting the young people involved in their Taste of Yeovil event. The older group is more relaxed and unstructured, designed to give the young people a space to hang out with different activities available if they wish to join in.

### c. Drop In/Drop Into

Drop In has seen significant changes in the last 6 months. Despite some gradual progress with this group, we continued to witness an escalation in anti-social behaviours during sessions and outside of them. This progressively worsened with verbal abuse towards leaders and several incidents within the building. Threats were also made to staff and other centre users outside of session times. Therefore, we decided to take a break over the summer to implement relevant measures to run the group safely.

The group continued up to Christmas with very few young people attending and we found they continued to cause issues within the centre and be abusive towards each other. After a lot of thought and advice from outside organisations such as the police, we felt it best to move on from running for that specific group of young people, but still run a Thursday session that would be reshaped to make it more accessible for other young people. We rebranded it to 'Drop Into', with a focus on a different activity each week. This has quickly taken off and is well attended by a core group of 10-15 young people (who also attend the Hangout). A structure of beginning with food and conversations, leading into the main activity, and ending with a game of dodgeball has naturally been established and is working well. We are looking forward to continuing this great start with our various planned activities.

We are also seeing the core group of young people mix between the different sessions, happily getting on with each other and developing a bond with each

other and with us as the youth workers. We are already seeing a keen interest from some in attending the forthcoming Spree event in June.

#### **d. Secondary Schools**

Westfield Christian Union continues to be a strong group, despite losing our group of year 11's who made up the majority of the group we had, as they left school. We had one of our own young people bring their group of friends, and other young people connected to YCC come. We have between 15-20 attending each week, many of whom are not Christians and come to learn more. 2-4 of them attend church or Christian groups with us or YCC. I have continued to mentor either groups or individuals at Westfield, mainly year 7's or 8's who have either asked for extra support/ someone to chat to, or have been highlighted by staff at needing a bit of extra support. Some of these have been young people struggling with mental health issues, with the move to secondary school, or anything in between.

We have been praying for the door at Preston School to be open, so that we can start being a presence in the school. After a few attempts, we finally got there and started to run two CU's due to the way they did lunch times - at both we were having around 5+ young people. A couple of weeks later, we were asked to meet with the behaviour and inclusion support worker, who wanted to see if we had the capacity to help support staff at lunchtimes. Preston also changed their lunchtimes from two to one, which helped us and we now have 6 of us in weekly, 4 doing detached work, 2 running the CU. There is scope to do more in Preston - these are conversations that are in the early stages and both YCC and I need to work out our capacity.

#### **e. Lift**

Lift, like many of our groups, has grown this year. This is partly due to the fact that we have moved from St James' to St Peter's. We had to do this as we noticed that all our young people attending lived closer to St Peter's, we also knew of a couple of young people who wanted to attend the group but couldn't due to transport. We also gained a few through running a confirmation class for young people, who came to us as they wanted to make that commitment and heard we were running a course specifically for youth. Three of these young people made the decision to be confirmed this year, with our whole group attending the

service and supporting them on their journey. We now have a good group of 7/8 who attend most weeks, wanting to learn more about God and improve their faith. Despite not knowing each other for very long, they have all bonded very well and are communicating and praying for each other outside the group which is great to see.

#### **f. Events**

This year, I have taken part in a few events helping to lead as well as taking young people to. One of these is Movement, which is a worship night here in Yeovil run by the Movement team at the Diocese. These are held once a term and are a great place for all our young people to meet together and worship God. We take our Lift group each time and then take them to McDonalds afterwards to chat through the talk etc. As a team, we try to get the various churches to help out and be part of the service to show that we are all working together and no matter what church you are from we are all here to worship God together. The last two times we have been heavily involved as two of us have spoken. I went first speaking on "when things go wrong" where I had the privilege to share my testimony and show how no matter what happens God is with us and has a plan even if it doesn't match ours. The time just gone we had three young people speak, one of which was one of ours who spoke on one of the Psalms and how worship is important and how it helps them in their day-to-day life.

Another place I helped to lead and take young people to was SWYM's camp 'Live football' which as you can guess is a football camp, where, for three days, we have a little football tournament. We also talk to them about God, usually with a football theme within it. This last year was the second year that they have allowed girls to attend the camp and we took three girls who attend both our groups and YCC's. The camp is aimed mainly at those exploring faith or who are new to it, but we do find we have some who have faith bringing their friends along. I have asked to attend again this year and look forward to representing women's/girls' football.

Lastly, last year we took a group to Spree, which wasn't a total success, but was very worthwhile for our Lift group and a handful of other young people, who had a great time. They enjoyed the various activities and, on the last night, we had a great night eating lots of cake, playing games and hanging out as a group. One

young person said they came back feeling spiritually refreshed and was the thing that helped them decide to get confirmed which was great. We are aiming to take a group this year from Lift, Hangout and Drop Into - we hope to have a better year and that it will be a good experience for all involved.

Ruth Glendinning, Youth Worker & Karl Goodman

## 7. St Peter's Sowers

We are a small, friendly group who, over the past year have creatively produced hand-sewn altar cloths and banners for the Church. These include a Pentecost banner 'Come Holy Spirit', and a purple banner and altar cloth for the Easter season.

Anyone is welcome to join the group however much sewing experience you have.

Rhoda Wilson

## 8. Cell Groups

83 church members from both of our churches belong to one of our 9 cell groups. The groups provide fellowship, pastoral care, prayer support and a chance to go deeper into the Bible together. There is a new fortnightly women's group, which uses material from Joyce Meyer, alternating with craft & creativity evenings, and the beginnings of a daytime mums group run by Laura, our Children and Families worker.

The groups have followed a variety of materials and courses over the year, including home-grown material on 'The Names of God', and the Fruitfulness on the Frontline course from the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity. For Lent we joined together as cell groups to watch and discuss Series 2 of 'The Chosen'.

We are immensely grateful to all the cell leaders and hosts, for their care, commitment and devotion to this key part of our church life.

Revd David Keen, Vicar

## 9. Prayer

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

A number of church members connect with our interdenominational Virtual Prayer Room, which has been a Facebook group for four years. If you'd like to join, please contact Mark.

People have also contacted the confidential 'prayer chain' by phone or email or left a prayer request in the prayer requests box. Since January, church members have been distributing 'Say One For Me' prayer request postcards throughout the parish, with specific streets allocated each week, and we have had a number of positive responses to these cards.

English evangelist Leonard Ravenhill (1907-1994) challenged the contemporary church in his book, *Why Revival Tarries* (1959) with these words on prayer:

"The two prerequisites to successful Christian living are vision and passion, both of which are born in and maintained by prayer. The ministry of preaching is open to few; the ministry of prayer - the highest ministry of all human offices - is open to all..."

"Can any deny that in the modern church setup the main cause of anxiety is money? Yet that which tries the modern churches the most, troubled the New Testament church the least. Our accent is on paying, theirs was on praying. When we have paid, the place is taken; when they had prayed, the place was shaken!"

Mark Felstead, Lay Worship Assistant & Prayer Coordinator

### a. Prayers for Wider Westfield

The 'Prayers for Wider Westfield' group has been meeting monthly for around 17 years. We meet on the second Monday of each month at St Peter's Church, at 6.30pm for supper, and then for a brief time of reflection/ worship followed by open prayer especially for our area of Yeovil. We also pray for any special prayer requests, and usually end around 8pm. The group is open to all Christians and is currently administered by Sue Chapman (YCC) and Kristi Baker (St Peter's). We



would love more people who share the vision of God at work in wider Westfield to join us- the next meeting will be on May 13th at 6.30pm at St Peter's Church. Do let me know if you want to be on the email list for invitations!

Kristi Baker

### **b. Prayer Chain**

We would appreciate some more people to pray at present there are six of us.

Alannah Boyt

### **10. Pastoral Care**

Cookson Court is doing well and at present we are doing two home communions visits.

Alannah Boyt

### **11. Mission Partners**

Compassion UK and Prison Fellowship were chosen at our 2023 AGM to be mission partners alongside Open Doors and Counselling 4 Yeovil. We give 2.5% of our general fund income, plus special collections at Christmas and Lent, to our 4 Mission Partners. In 2023 that meant we were able to give £1000 to each charity. Sadly Counselling 4 Yeovil, our 4th mission partner, ceased operation in 2023, so the PCC decided to set their donation aside as seed funding for our new outreach in Augusta Park estate.

We will be voting for a local charity in the 2024 AGM for a fourth Mission Partner to replace Counselling 4 Yeovil.

Revd David Keen

### **12. Parish Office**

The Parish Office is open in St James' Church in termtime from 8.30-4.30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays and 10 hours per week in school holidays.

As Parish Administrator, I deal with e-mails, telephone calls and visitors on a variety of subjects including baptisms, weddings and funerals.

I compile the monthly church calendar (which is on the back of the Prayer Diary), for both churches, manage the monthly church bookings calendar and report the music used in services to Christian Copyright Licensing International.

In addition, I assist the treasurer with reconciliation of the bank accounts, pay invoices, liaise with Ivor about room bookings and payments and order church supplies such as paper and stationery, candles, Palm Crosses, Remembrance wreath, baptism cards etc.

I also update both the church websites and our pages on the [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com) website for Anglican Churches and the Facebook pages.

In September, I took on additional admin responsibilities for the Deanery and now compile a quarterly 'What's On' Guide for the 25 churches in Yeovil Deanery and assist David in admin relating to the 17 of these currently in vacancy, including the reading of Banns in those churches and burials in their churchyards.

Joanna Newton, Parish Administrator