



Churches of North Bradford on Avon and Villages

Christ Church, Bradford on Avon, St Peter's Church, Monkton Farleigh
St James' Church, South Wraxall, St Nicholas Church, Winsley

Annual Report from the Rector 2022 - 2023

Introduction

The past year in many ways has been a rather strange one as much of my time has been spent putting in place new structures that will support you following my retirement in May, as well as continuing with day-to-day ministry and helping to lead our churches to flourish and reach out in love and care to our respective communities. I want to leave the Benefice in as strong a position as possible to support our ministry team and churchwardens who will hold the fort during the vacancy.

With the ministry team, I have been succession planning so that hopefully when I leave, there will be a smooth handover of responsibilities. None of us knows what the future holds for our Diocese, and future recruitment, but we do know that there will be a strategic review of the Benefice, and there are ways we can show that we are well organised, joyful worshipping communities, working together as a Benefice.

Looking back.....

Looking back over the past year, there is so much to be thankful for, to name one item from each church:

- the successful funding bids for Christ Church's *Discover Christ Church!* project and the *Future for Christ Church* project
- the completion of the bells restoration project at St James
- the underpew heaters in St Peter's
- the *Soups Up* initiative in St Nicholas.

Dozens of loaves of bread have been baked, and litres of soup have been lovingly made for our 'warm spaces' projects, hundreds of cakes have been baked, bears have been knitted for our baptised babies, and angels knitted for all our children at Christmas.

Our Four Churches Forum, open to anyone who wishes to come, was launched in October, and has proved to be an excellent way of worshipping together and improving communication.

Each week, on a Thursday morning, members of our ministry team, church leaders and supporters meet in St Nicholas Church Hall at 9.30 for Morning Prayer, followed by croissants and coffee. We then review the past week's services and events, have items for discussion; we share knowledge and information, pastoral issues and discuss future services, projects, and fund-raising initiatives. Notes are taken and distributed, including to all PCC members.

Regular meetings of our ministry team take place and I am indebted to our ministers Tessa, Paul, Tim, Bernard, Rachel, Penny and Cedric who bring their wisdom, experience, and creativity to take our worship and Benefice forward. Supported by our Benefice Administrator Bridge, our Children's and Families Worker Zoe, our *Thrive* members, our *Open the Book* and Collective Worship groups, our Housegroups, our Safeguarding Group, our Lay Worship Leaders and our Lay Pastoral Assistants as well as so many who support behind the scenes, we are able to help our churches to blossom and to reach out to our different communities and schools.

Thanks also need to be given to our eight hardworking and dedicated Churchwardens, our wonderful musicians, our Treasurers and PCC members and to all who help to maintain our buildings, to decorate our porches and churches with seasonal prayer stations, to those who clean the brass and decorate the churches with flowers and those who continue to pray for our churches and communities.

We said farewell to Keith Charnley at Christmas, giving thanks for his ministry and praying that he will continue to enjoy his retirement spending more time with family, and to Caroline in our Benefice Office for all she contributed to NewsLink and the website. This year we have welcomed Bridge as our new Administrator, Zoe and Alison as newly licensed Lay Worship Leaders, Richard on the organ, David on the piano and Gillian and Becky who join us in April as employees working on the *Discover Christ Church!* project.

Looking forward.....

Looking forward, as members of our churches pray for the future and discern what they need in a new Rector, I hope you attract just the person you need to take our Benefice forward into its next phase of exciting ministry. With an inspirational ministry team and eight churchwardens leading our churches, with parishes who pay their share, and with so much happening, this should be an attractive post for those seeking a new opportunity for ministry.

It has been a privilege to serve you over the past almost ten years and I wish you every success in the future.

God Bless you all.
Ann, Rector