



The Church @ the Pines is an Anglican/Methodist

Local Ecumenical Partnership

Our aim is to be a Christian Community in today's world serving and worshipping God in a user-friendly style, welcoming those exploring or returning to faith.

We meet each Sunday morning for worship at 11am in the Lower School Building on The Pines School site, Hanworth Road, Bracknell

Governance

The Sponsoring Body for The Church @ the Pines is Churches Together in Berkshire.

The Church @ the Pines is responsible to the Parish of Easthampstead and the Berkshire Surrey Borders Methodist Circuit.

Members of the Church @ the Pines sit on the PCC and the Circuit Meeting.

There is a Church @ the Pines meeting held every four months to which all members of the church are invited.

The Annual Church Meeting is held in the first quarter of the year at which elections are held for Church officers and members of the Leadership Team.

The Leadership Team meets on the first Sunday of alternate months.

The Leadership team for 2023 consisted of Revd Soba Sinnathamby, Mr Ben Spain, Ms Alison Evans, Mrs Nicky Hartley, Ms Sarah Cooper, Pauline Matondo, Prof Brian Gennery and Mrs Hazel Gennery (ex officio)

The Pines Support Group meets twice a year to provide oversight from the Parish, Circuit and Sponsoring Body.

Going forward it was agreed to seek new members of the team.

Worship Report

Soba Sinnathamby

Our Sunday worship has always been the primary focus in the life and witness of our church. Members of our church faithfully attend our services and help sustain our identity as a welcoming, loving and caring Christian community. In the recent months we have seen a few new members joining us.

Perhaps the only active and lively Junior Church in the whole of the Methodist circuit, our young members and their teachers are a great blessing for the congregation as well as the children and their families. Regular teaching, usually based on the lectionary readings, and activities based on special themes, provide a firm foundation on the spiritual and religious journey of the children. Whatever the children learn and do, they share with the congregation as they return from their activities and join the rest of worship. Monthly All Age Worship are both enjoyable and inspiring.

All major church festivals like Harvest Thanksgiving and Easter and special services like the Covenant Service, Carols and Christmas Day Worship went on well.

We usually have two services of Holy Communion every month. Revd Soba Sinnathamby, our Methodist Minister leads worship once every month which is intended to be a communion service. In the recent months Rev Gareth Morley, the new rector has been leading worship once a month with communion. We are thankful to Rev Roy Burgess and Rev Carol Dunk who have supported us in the past. Brian Gennery leads All Age Worship and these are much appreciated by the congregation. Other services are led by our team of Methodist Local Preachers and ministers. Contribution to worship by members in ways of leading prayers, reading the Bible, producing and operating the AV and playing in the Music group, make them both lively and enriching.

We thank God for the past year. God has blessed and enriched our lives through our worshipping together as a gathered congregation at the Church at the Pines. With God's grace, we remain in this place faithfully and continue to be a worshipping and witnessing community.

Leadership Report

Brian Gennery

The membership of the Leadership Team was Revd Soba Sinnathamby, Ben Spain, Alison Evans, Nicky Hartley, Pauline Matondo, Sarah Cooper, Kate Richens, Hazel Gennery and Brian Gennery.

We welcomed Revd Gareth Morley and Kate Richens to the team this year.

The team continued to find it easier to meet on Zoom and did so throughout 2023. This made better use of people's time and saved on petrol.

Financial issues continue to be of concern. We now have three ways of giving, standing orders, response box and the card reader. There has been some increase in giving on standing orders, and it will be interesting to see whether the recently acquired card reader adds to the Church income.

The team continued to keep track of issues with GDPR and safeguarding, but nothing of significance was noted. There is to be a District audit of safeguarding, how this is to be run is not yet known.

The team were challenged to think of ways to developing a new vision for mission and this was referred to the Church meeting to action further.

This year the team organised two social events, a Circuit picnic and a quiz night, both of which were a success.

Lay Pastor Report

Pauline Matondo

As I look back on the events and growth of the past year, it brings me great joy to present the year-end pastoral report. This year has been a remarkable journey filled with vibrant worship, spiritual enrichment, and the nurturing of all age groups within our community.

Worship and Spiritual Growth:

Our Sunday worship services have continued to be a source of inspiration and renewal for our congregation. Throughout the year, we have witnessed the power of God's presence as we've gathered in unity, lifting our voices in praise and seeking His wisdom and guidance.

Vibrant Sunday School:

Our Sunday School program has flourished, providing a nurturing environment for our children to grow in their understanding of the Word of God. Our dedicated team of teachers has worked diligently to create engaging lessons and foster meaningful connections with our students. We have seen our young ones blossom in their faith and develop a deeper understanding of God's love. We've also celebrated milestones such as our youths entering university and our children transitioning from primary school to high school.

Social Media Engagement:

It's heartening to see our Sunday school actively engaging with social media to promote our church. The kids have come up with fantastic ideas on how we can use social platforms for church advertising. This is just the beginning, and it looks very promising. Every young person I've spoken to has contributed brilliant ideas!

Adult Discipleship:

Recognizing the importance of lifelong learning and spiritual growth, we have continued to offer various discipleship opportunities for our adult members. Bible studies and prayer groups have provided avenues for deepening our faith, fostering authentic relationships, and equipping individuals to live out their calling as disciples of Christ. While we've encountered some health challenges with a few of our senior members, we are grateful to the Lord for seeing us through these trials.

New Bible Study Group:

In 2024, we're excited to launch a new Bible study group at one of our church family's homes. We believe this initiative will encourage more people to join the group, and I eagerly look forward to participating.

Community Engagement:

Our church remains committed to serving and engaging with the wider community. Through outreach programs, volunteer efforts, and partnerships with local organizations, we have extended God's love and compassion to those in need. Our congregation has generously contributed to the local food bank, embodying the spirit of being the hands and feet of Jesus. We have also fostered partnerships with Pines Primary School and the Church of England, embracing our ecumenical identity. Additionally, we warmly welcomed Rev'd Gareth Morley, who has joined the local parish and will be serving with Church @ The Pines.

Looking Ahead

As we anticipate the year ahead, we are filled with hope and excitement. We will continue to seek God's guidance as we strive to deepen our spiritual journey individually and as a community. We are committed to nurturing the faith of our children, empowering our youth, and providing opportunities for growth and fellowship for all ages.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to each one of our church members for their unwavering support, dedication, and love for Church @ The Pines. Together, we have seen several new members join the leadership team, and through our collective efforts, we have created a vibrant and nurturing space where God's presence is felt, lives are transformed, and His Kingdom is advanced. Special thanks to Brian and Hazel, who have been steadfast guides as we move forward.

May God's grace and blessings continue to guide us as we embark on the next chapter of our spiritual journey. Let us move forward with faith, hope, and love, knowing that we are called to be the light of Christ in our community and beyond.

Sunday School

Nicky Hartley

We have had another healthy year in Sunday School with attendance not often lower than 6, as high as 16, and often around 12. Sunday School sessions and cupboard sorting has been supported by Jack Spain as part of his DofE volunteering and also now Katie Bridgland. We are very thankful of their help.

Our nativity was a great success with Megan as our fabulous narrator. The children created props and wore their new costumes with pride. A big thank you to everyone for taking part, especially those who stepped into parts at the very last minute. Jack Spain helped out with the presentation and the additional adult help from Beth, Sarah, and Linda was most welcome and helped to enable the children and myself to enjoy the experience more.

I would like to thank our regular Sunday School leaders Sarah and EJ who have created brilliant lessons and activities for our young people. A big thank you to Kate who has started to lead some Sunday School sessions as well as being a brilliant helper. A thank you to our other Sunday School helpers Rachel, Billie, Sue as well as EJ and Sarah who have also supported other leaders. If I have missed anyone out then thank you to you too!

If anyone would like to help out in a supportive or leading role in Sunday School you would be most welcome. Our Sunday School leaders also play other important roles within the Church @ The Pines so another regular or occasional leader would be a great help.

We are so fortunate to have such wonderful young people in our church. They are a blessing and I look forward to working with them to help develop an online presence in the coming year.

Music Report

Alison Evans

Once again we have had a busy musical year but this is a shorter report than usual as we have far less to report. We now have a rota for piano playing so while Indira Lewis has played the piano for many of our services we now also welcome EJ and Sarah to play and sometimes Sarah's Mum, ably accompanied by Alison Evans and Sarah Cooper on the flute. We also give thanks to God that we can still make live music for His glory.

Hazel sang a solo verse of 'Once in Royal David's City' along with Kate who also sang a solo verse, which was lovely while Alison sang 'In The Bleak Mid-Winter', for the carol service last Christmas. The very small, female choir, sang 'Angels from the realms of glory' which was well received.

We have learned new music, listened to music and look forward to the challenges and new musical opportunities of the coming year as we seek to glorify God through our musical worship in the company of each other.

Ladies Thursday morning House Group

Hazel Gennery

The Thursday morning Ladies House Group continues to meet on the third Thursday of each month. It is a time of fellowship, sharing and bible study led by Jeannie and hosted by Hazel

We are a small group at the present time but always ready to welcome new members.

We give thanks that a new weekly evening House Group has recently started led by Linda & Reg and hosted in their home. A warm welcome awaits to any of our congregation who would like to join them.

Safeguarding

Beth Spain

Church Safeguarding Policy

We have a policy which is in line with the Bracknell Methodist policy.

DBS Checks: -

All Sunday school teachers/volunteers have current DBS checks.

Safeguarding Training

Most people have attended recently and the circuit is looking to organise some more sessions in the coming months so I will disseminate the details once these are sent to me.

General reminder

I am always available to discuss any matters that are of concern and that could indicate a safeguarding issue.

1. The accounts have been finalised and agreed by the church and are currently undergoing independent examination (a new examiner had to be sought which delayed this process). The final position for the 2022/2023 year stands as a deficit of £1,122.25. The primary reason for this deficit was an increase to the assessment payments of £2,646 from the previous year.
1. At 31 August 2023, the bank account balance was £7,466.63 (including uncashed cheques), the Church had £7,869.55 in the savings account and £646.58 in cash.
2. Monthly standing order contributions have increased from circa. £820 to circa. £1020, however cash collections continue to be reduced from £1,349.50 in the pre-COVID 2018/2019 year to £629.09 in 2022/2023.
3. The Church @ the Pines donated £1,224 to six different charities in the 2022/23 financial year.
4. Over the past 3 financial years, we have shown a surplus of £1,309.18 as shown below:
 - a. 2020/2021 £3,387.59 (reduction in Methodist and Anglican shares)
 - b. 2021/2022 -£956.16
 - c. 2022/2023 -£1,122.25

Looking forward to the 2024/2025 financial year, the total amount annually payable to the Methodist circuit and Anglican parish has increased to £14,300, an increase of £1,060 from the 2022/2023 year (£3,706 from the 2021/22 year).

As such we may have to consider making significant reductions in expenditure (e.g. charity giving) if we can not raise income to offset this.

| 2021/2022 | | 2022/2023 |
|----------------|---|--------------------|
| Actual | | Actual |
| | Income | |
| £9,790.00 | Standing orders/Gift Aid | £11,596.27 |
| £793.71 | Response box | £629.90 |
| | Collections | |
| | Youth worker refund | |
| £735.67 | Fund raising | £252.00 |
| | Youth club contribution | |
| | Mix-it contribution | |
| £31.66 | Bank interest | £264.30 |
| | Book shop | |
| £150.00 | Uncashed Cheques | |
| £2,431.35 | Tax refund | £2,990.74 |
| | Social events | |
| | | |
| 13,932.39 | | £15,733.21 |
| | Expenditure | |
| 5,297.00 | Methodist assessment | 6,620.00 |
| 5,297.00 | Anglican share | 6,620.00 |
| 880.00 | Rent | 1,320.00 |
| | Gifts | |
| 342.66 | Copyright license | 361.89 |
| 207.89 | Insurance | 227.05 |
| 171.11 | Equipment & materials | 120.58 |
| 260.99 | Maintenance & Replacements | |
| 6.00 | Refreshments | 4.30 |
| 1,185.00 | Cheques for cash collections | |
| 900.00 | Nominated charities | 1,224.00 |
| | Courses | |
| | Bookshop | |
| | Sundries | |
| 53.06 | Bank Charges | 71.48 |
| | Youth worker | |
| 287.84 | Web site | 286.16 |
| | | £ |
| 14,888.55 | | 16,855.46 |
| | | |
| -956.16 | Excess/deficit income/expenditure | -£ 1,122.25 |
| | | |
| 17,105.01 | Balances at 31 August | £ 15,982.76 |
| | | £ |
| 18,061.17 | Balances at 1 September (pr. year) | 17,105.01 |
| | | -£ 1,122.25 |
| | | |
| | Closing balances comprise | |
| | 61337653 Community account | |
| | Statement @ 31.08.22 | 8,366.63 |
| | Ddt uncashed cheques | -900.00 |
| | CFB account | 7,869.55 |
| | Cash in hand | 646.58 |
| | | 15,982.76 |
| | | |
| | NOTES 3 charitycheques (£300 each) sent out late Aug | |

1

1

|

|