



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. Do we have a sponsoring body any longer?

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 2024 consisted of Revd Soba Sinnathamby, Revd Gareth Morley, Mr Ben Spain, Ms Alison Evans, Mrs Nicky Hartley, Ms Sarah Cooper, Ms Kate Richens, 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

Sunday worship continues to be the primary focus at the church at the Pines. Members of our church faithfully attend our services and help sustain our identity as a welcoming, loving and caring Christian community.

We usually have two services of Holy Communion every month once led by Revd Soba Sinnathamby, the Methodist Minister and the other by Rev Gareth Morley, the new Rector Brian Gennery leads a monthly All Age Worship which is 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.

The form of worship is varied with traditional and informal services. All major church festivals like Harvest Thanksgiving and Easter and special services like the Covenant Service are key to keeping our traditions, Carol service and Christmas Day Worship are joyfully and faithfully attended well.

The contribution of the Junior Church to Sunday worship is significant. Regular teaching based on the lectionary readings and activities based on special themes, provide a firm foundation for 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 congregation for the rest of worship.

Perhaps the most memorable worshipping experience this year was on the 8th of December when we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the church. The president of the conference Rev Helen Cameron gave us an uplifting sermon. Enriched by the music provided by an orchestra and supported by the attendance of members from across the circuit, it was a fitting and enjoyable way to commemorate the occasion.

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

Sarah Cooper

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

The team continued to meet on Zoom, which made it more accessible for those with family commitments and saved on travel and petrol for all.

Whilst finances continued to be of concern, with a deficit noted, the card reader, now well established within the Church has seen an increase in weekly giving and has been a real success for times when we ask for extraordinary giving (such as in response to crisis around the world, Harvest donations and extra need within the Church and its community).

We made significant improvements in our relationship with the Pines School, with input to school assemblies, a financial contribution (of £395) to a family that was struggling in March 2024 and the introduction of collections for the school's foodbank also in early 2024. We continue to pray for the relationship with the school and continued opportunities for outreach and demonstration of God's love and the Holy Spirit at work.

In September 2023 we held a Circuit Service, with the congregation made up from members of our Church and churches across the circuit. It was a fantastic occasion and helped us think about how we could celebrate our 30th anniversary, with plans continuing to form throughout 2024.

Lay Pastor Report

Pauline Matondo

It is with deep gratitude and joy that I present my annual report as lay pastor of Church @ The Pines. This marks my sixth year serving as lay pastor, and I am continually humbled by how God has allowed me to witness the church flourish, growing both in number and in spiritual depth. The joys of being a lay pastor to this great congregation are truly a blessing and a joy. To God be the glory!

One of the most significant highlights of the year was our 30th Anniversary Celebration. Marking three decades of God's faithfulness was a truly special occasion, and it was a privilege to contribute to this milestone by writing the anniversary song. Hearing the congregation lift their voices in praise to celebrate our journey and future was a deeply moving and memorable experience.

Our Sunday School continues to thrive, serving as a beacon of hope and joy for our church. Watching our children and young people learn about God's love and grow in their faith fills me with immense gratitude. Their energy and curiosity are constant reminders of the importance of investing in the next generation.

Beyond the church walls, we have strengthened our connection with the community. Through coffee mornings at the local school, we've created spaces for meaningful conversations and outreach, building relationships with those who may not yet feel ready to step into a church. Our Bible studies have been another source of encouragement, providing opportunities for deeper reflection and fostering spiritual maturity among participants.

Looking back on this past year, I am amazed at how God has worked in and through us. Looking forward, I feel hopeful and expectant about the ways He will continue to lead us as we build on our strong foundation. Together, we are called to live out our mission to share the love of Christ, offer a warm welcome to all, and serve as a light in our community.

As we enter another year, let us remain faithful to God's calling. May we continue to see the fruits of our labour in His name and bring glory to Him in all we do. Thank you all for your encouragement, support, and prayers as we move forward together as a church family.

2024 has been another successful year for our Sunday School. We have had children from some new families joining us along with the children of our core families attending regularly. I would like to take this opportunity to be thankful for our wonderful children who inspire us with their thoughtful discussions each week. I would also like to thank all of our Sunday School leaders and helpers, whom without our Sunday School sessions could not run. A specific thank you to Aggie and Linda, who have joined the team. We are always grateful for assistance to help spread the load, so if you would like to be part of the team in a supportive or leadership role then please speak with either Sarah or myself.

In December the children performed the nativity. With the rearrangement of the narrator's script, by Linda, this was one of the best yet! A huge thank you to everyone who helped and took part. Especially to Katie who stepped in at the last minute to play Joseph. Everyone played their part brilliantly 😊.

Music Report

Sarah Cooper

Once again we have enjoyed worshipping God through traditional hymns, newer worship songs and Taizé chants. We tried to introduce new music by playing it before the services so that the congregation could become familiar with the tune.

We continue to have a rota for piano playing, with EJ Handford usually playing two Sundays a month, Indira Lewis playing one or two Sundays a month. We introduced having videos for hymns for the first Sunday of the month, which is All Age Worship. We continue to work on this format, making slight improvements to the sound quality and listening to feedback. Alison Evans and Sarah Cooper continued to accompany on the flute, with Sarah also sometimes playing the piano when needed. We give thanks for the use of talents for God's glory and pray for continued stability in the team of musicians making this possible. The Circuit service gave us the opportunity to form a "Circuit Orchestra", really a small music group of musicians from across the circuit, but making a fantastic sound which helped raise the roof with the boosted congregation which joined for the special service. Our Harvest Festival service in October 2023 sadly did not have a choir, as in previous years, but we enjoyed a solo of the first verse of 'For the fruits of his creation' sung by Hazel.

The first of our Christmas services gave us the opportunity to enjoy the Christingle song, ably played by EJ, for our Christingle Service. Our Nativity Service was a great success, with our young people helping us to learn some more modern songs – 'There were shepherds'! Indira and Rev'd Soba crafted a beautiful Carol service, with a solo verse of 'Once in Royal David's City' sung by Hazel, Alison singing 'In the Bleak Mid-Winter, the choir singing 'Angels from the realms of glory' and our Sunday School delighting us with the first verse of 'Away in a Manger.'

The summer of 2024 saw us prepare for the 30th Anniversary service, due to be in December of 2024. We have plans to form the "Circuit Orchestra" again and are looking forward to the music we shall make together, to worship God, over the coming year.

Wednesday evening Home Group

Linda Lewis

In February 24 we started an evening homegroup which meets at Reg and Linda's house. We are a small group who meet on Wednesday evenings for fellowship, worship, bible study and prayer. We began with a lent study based on the film The King's Speech. We studied Genesis in July along with the rest of the church for bible month. We have also studied Philippines. This year we are beginning with studies on prayer. We would love for more people to join us any questions speak to Linda or Reg.

Ladies Thursday morning House Group

Jeannie Rymill

We are a small house group meeting once on the third Thursday of each month from 10am to 12 midday.

The session begins with tea/coffee and time for chat and catch up. We then turn our thoughts to bible study. We are currently following a Life Builder study on the twelve disciples.

We end the session with a time of prayer thinking of all those who have asked for prayers and those personally known to us, plus world situations. At our December meeting we focus on Christmas readings and poems with some festive treats. Please keep this group in your prayers.

Safeguarding

Beth Spain

Church Safeguarding Policy

- We have a policy which is in line with the Methodist Circuit 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. The final position for the 2023/2024 year stands as a surplus of £761.95
2. At 31 August 2023, the bank account balance was £7,915.67 (including uncashed cheques), the Church had £8281.76 in the savings account and £547.28 in cash.
3. Standing order contributions totalled £12,447 and have remained consistent at circa. £1040 per month. Cash collections were £729 in total for the year and the card reader, first used in November 2023, raised £1305.
4. Gift aid tax refund totalled £3,961.
5. Our largest outgoings are the stipends at £14,300 and rent at £1,029. CCLI, Insurance and website together total £906.
6. The Church @ the Pines donated £1,353 to seven different charities in the 2023/24 financial year.
7. Over the past 3 financial years, we have shown a deficit of £1,316.46 as shown below:
 - . 2021/2022 -£956.16
 - a. 2022/2023 -£1,122.25
 - b. 2023/2024 £761.95
8. Looking forward to the 2024/2025 financial year, although the stipends are increasing by £700, due to the additional funds raised via the card reader and the church showing a surplus for the 2023/24 year, we are expecting to return a surplus.

2022/2023		2023/2024
Actual		Actual
	Income	
£11,596.27	Standing orders/Gift Aid	£12,447.26
£629.90	Response box	£728.65
	Collections	
	Sum Up	£1,305.25
£252.00	Fund raising	£305.45
	Youth club contribution	
	Mix-it contribution	
£264.30	Bank interest	£412.21
	Book shop	
	Uncashed Cheques	
£2,990.74	Tax refund	£3,549.07
	Social events	
		£18,747.89
	Expenditure	
	Methodist assessment	7,150.00
6,620.00	Anglican share	7,150.00
6,620.00		
£15,733.21		

1,320.00	Rent	1,028.50
	Gifts	
361.89	Copyright license	390.30
227.05	Insurance	228.20
120.58	Equipment & materials	229.33
	Maintenance & Replacements	
4.30	Refreshments	95.50
	Cheques for cash collections	
1,224.00	Nominated charities	1,353.27
	Courses	
	Bookshop	
	Sundries	
71.48	Bank Charges	73.00
	Youth worker	
286.16	Web site	287.84
£		£
16,855.46		17,985.94
-£		£
1,122.25	Excess/deficit income/expenditure	761.95
15,982.76	Balances at 31 August	£
	Balances at 1 September (pr.	16,744.71
17,105.01	year)	£
		15,982.76
		£
		761.95
	Closing balances comprise	
	61337653 Community account	
	Statement @ 31.08.22	8,715.67
	Ddt uncashed cheques	-800.00
	CFB account	8,281.76
	Cash in hand	547.28
		<u>16,744.71</u>
	NOTES	
	1) 4 charity cheques (£200 each) sent out late	
	Aug	

