



The Church @ the Pines is an Anglican/Methodist Local Ecumenical Partnership

We are a community of Christians who meet together to worship God. We hold a weekly service of worship, with house groups and other meetings during the week. Our aim is to do this in a way that is meaningful, informal and friendly, discovering the relevance of faith in life today.

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 was Churches Together in Berkshire, but as this no longer exists, this was under review during the year, with responsibility falling to the current Anglican and Methodist ministers, acting as representatives from the Oxford Diocese for the Church of England and the local 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 alternate months.

The Leadership team during 2024-25 consisted of Rev'd Gareth Morley, Rev'd Soba Sinnathamby, Alison Evans, Ben Spain, Prof Brian Gennery, Nicky Hartley, Hazel Gennery (ex officio), Kate Richens, Linda Lewis, Pauline Matondo, Sarah Cooper and Steven Dickinson.

The Pines Support Group (which was meeting twice a year to provide oversight from the Parish, Circuit and Sponsoring Body) is currently paused whilst a review is taking place. Going forward it was agreed to seek new members of the team.

Worship Report

Sarah Cooper

Please note: This report would normally be written by a minister, but as Rev'd Soba Sinnathamby retired in August 2025 and Rev'd Gareth Morley was in a period of ill health during the report writing, Sarah Cooper has written on their behalf.

We usually have two services of Holy Communion every month one led by Rev'd Gareth Morley, the Anglican Vicar from the Easthampstead Parish and the other by Rev'd Soba Sinnathamby, the Methodist Minister from the Circuit. Prof Brian Gennery usually leads a monthly All Age Worship which is much appreciated by the congregation. Other services are led by a team of Methodist Local Preachers and ministers. Contribution to worship by members of the congregation 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 Festival and Easter and special services like the Baptism of Christ (Anglican) and the Covenant Service (Methodist) are key to keeping our traditions. Other services like the Carol service and Christmas Day Worship are joyfully and faithfully well attended.

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. They are also involved in all age worship, reading from the Bible, leading prayers of intercession and taking part in the reflections along with the rest of the congregation.

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 Methodist conference Rev'd Helen Cameron gave us an uplifting sermon. Enriched by the music provided by a music group and supported by the attendance of members from across the circuit and parish, it was a fitting and enjoyable way to commemorate the occasion.

With Rev'd Soba Sinnathamby retiring in August 2025, Rev'd Wesley Hampton has been appointed in his place. We pray Rev'd Soba and his wife Nava as they move away from the area, that their new beginning may bring many blessings and joy. We also pray for Rev'd Wesley Hampton, and his wife Cherry, as they make the move to the area and Rev'd Wes begins his ministry within the Circuit.

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

At the beginning of the reporting year (September 2024) the membership of the Leadership Team was Rev'd Gareth Morley, Rev'd Soba Sinnathamby, Alison Evans, Ben Spain, Prof Brian

Gennery, Nicky Hartley, Hazel Gennery (ex officio), Kate Richens, Pauline Matondo and Sarah Cooper. On 3rd October 2024 Alison stepped down and on 8th November 2024 Nicky stepped down. In an answer to prayer, Linda Lewis and Steven Dickinson joined the Leadership Team in November 2024, with Steven stepping down on 15th March 2025. Rev'd Soba retired in August 2025, therefore leaving the Leadership Team.

The team continued to meet on alternate months, with a mix of in person and Zoom meetings. A large focus for the year was the Church Review, required by the Anglican church to ensure that the Anglican and Methodist Partnership is still an ongoing concern. This required a review team (consisting of Alison Noakes (Methodist Church), Rev'd Ainsley Swift (Church of England) and Rev'd Mike Thomason (United Reformed Church), who met with the Leadership Team, members of the congregation and considered our existing worship, church work and leadership, aided by a review document kindly drafted by Gavin Handford and approved by the Leadership Team.

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).

The 30th Anniversary Service in December 2024 was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the life, work, teaching and fellowship of the Church @ the Pines. Regular members of the congregation, along with visitors from across the Parish and Circuit, and some special guests, ensured the occasion was truly marked, reminding us all of God's good work. The service was followed by a bring and share lunch, with a delicious cake made by Kate Richens. We give thanks for the Church @ the Pines, all who worship here and all who have enabled worship to continue here for the last 30 years. We now look forward to another 30!

The relationship with the Pines School continued to be positive, with input to school assemblies, monthly collections for the school's foodbank and attendance at some of the school's coffee mornings for parents. 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.

Sunday School Report

Nicky Hartley

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 Beth and Linda who both agreed to step up from assisting with Sunday School to leading.

In October, a group of 16 young people from the Church @ the Pines and Bracknell Methodist Church attended 3Generate, the Methodist Youth Conference, for the first time. We thought about being wrapped up in God, had meaningful, prayerful moments, made new friends, learnt new things, sang new songs, the list goes on! The young people had a fantastic time and were delighted to report back to the congregation all they had discovered and thought about over the weekend.

In December we had another fantastic Nativity service, led by our children and young people. 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.

In April 15 young people attended our second Good Friday Workshop. We started by listening to the story of Good Friday, spoke about why we call it Good Friday and then prayed for our time together. Then we enjoyed a stained glass craft, biscuit decorating and Easter garden making together. We even had time to play outside and lots of snacks! Thank you to Willow, EJ, Gavin, Kate, Ash and Sarah for their help in bringing the reflection and fun together.

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 and Sarah Cooper playing on other Sundays and videos used at least once a month for All Age Worship and whenever else needed.

Alison Evans and Sarah Cooper continued to accompany on the flute when available, both enjoying also being part of the Circuit Music Group for Circuit services. 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 Church @ the Pines 30th Anniversary service, in December 2024, gave us an opportunity to bring together again the Circuit Music Group, a small group of musicians from across the circuit, making a fantastic sound which helped raise the roof with the boosted congregation which joined for the special service.

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 with music recordings being used. Indira and Rev'd Soba crafted a beautiful Carol service, with all the traditional Carols we expect at that time of year.

We are looking forward to the music we shall make together, to worship God, over the coming year.

Church/School Liaison

Linda Lewis

Over the past year we have continued to make links between the Church and the school. We have continued with our monthly foodbank donations which are always welcomed and well received. The school are always grateful for anything we give but are always in need of items such as tea, coffee and pasta. These donations greatly help both staff and families at the school.

Brian and Rev'd Soba have continued to lead assemblies at school to mark Christian festivals - Christmas, Easter, Harvest, and also Remembrance Day. These assemblies are always well received. Brian is handing over his role as school link to Linda in the coming year and we look forward to continuing to support the school and show a Christian presence with Rev'd Wes taking over from Soba leading assemblies.

Fellowship Groups Report

We have several groups that meet outside of the usual Sunday service meeting. We are limited, as a church, in not having a church building in which to meet regularly during the week, so these groups are important to continue fellowship, prayer, bible study and worship of God. Some groups meet weekly, with others meeting monthly, or less frequently.

Wednesday Home Group

Linda Lewis

Home group meets on a Wednesday evening, usually at Linda and Reg's house. We have a time of fellowship over a drink and biscuits, a bible study and end with a time of prayer. We have followed several bible study books over the last year. We are currently studying John and have in the past year studied Galatians, Great Prayers of the Bible during Advent and the Coming of the Saviour.

We are currently a small group of 4 or 5 and would love to welcome others to our group. The group is regularly advertised in the weekly newsletter and during services.

Ladies Thursday morning House Group

Hazel Gennery

A small house group that continued to meet 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 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 as membership numbers have been affected by illness within the group.

Walk and Talk Group

Sarah Cooper

In response to recognising we needed more ways for members of the congregation to meet in fellowship outside of Sunday services, we introduced a new 'walk and talk' group, which had its first meeting in May 2024. We started small with a small gathering, completing a short walk around the lakes at South Hill Park, followed by drinks in the café there. We hope this group will be an opportunity for conversation, support and might encourage those new to our worshipping with us to build connections within the congregation.

Plans were also discussed to introduce a Men's Breakfast, due to begin meeting later in the year.

Church Safeguarding Policy

We have a policy which is in line with the Methodist Circuit policy and Bracknell Methodist Church's policy. This is reviewed annually.

DBS Checks

All Sunday school teachers/volunteers have current DBS checks.

Safeguarding Training

Details are disseminated when received from the circuit and individuals are advised when their training needs renewing.

General reminder

Beth is always available to discuss any matters that are of concern and that could indicate an adult or child safeguarding issue.

Pastoral Care Team

In June 2025 we introduced a new Pastoral Care Team. This was in response to suggestions from the congregation that it wasn't always clear who to go to with any pastoral needs. The Pastoral Care Team consists of both the Anglican and Methodist ministers, currently Rev'd Gareth Morley and Rev'd Soba Sinnathamby, the church lay pastor Pauline Matondo, Ben Spain, Jeannie Rymill and Linda Lewis. Email and phone contact details are shared in our weekly newsletter and the congregation are reminded they can contact the team with concerns for themselves and others.

Treasurer's Report 2024-2025

Ben Spain

1. The accounts have been finalised and pending agreement by the church. Once agreed they will undergo independent examination. The final position for the 2024/2025 year stands as a deficit of £115.89
2. At 31 August 2023, the bank account balance was £7,513.03 (including uncashed cheques), the Church had £8657.49 in the savings account and £458.30 in cash.
3. Standing order contributions totalled £12,437.92 and have remained relatively 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 £3,666.45.
5. Our largest outgoings are the stipends at £15,000 and rent at £1,452. CCLI, Insurance and website together total £935.88.
6. The Church @ the Pines donated £1,050 to four different charities in the 2024/25 financial year.
7. Over the past 3 financial years, we have shown a deficit of £476.19 as shown below:
 - 2022/2023 -£1,122.25

- 2023/2024 £761.95
- 2024/2025 -£115.89

8. Looking forward to the 2025/2026 financial year, our key incomes and expenditures are set to remain relatively static so we expect a similar final position to 2024/2025.

2023/2024			2024/2025	
Actual			Actual	
£12,447.26		Income		
£728.65		Standing orders/Gift Aid	£12,437.92	
		Response box	£993.40	
		Collections		
£1,305.25		Sum Up	£1,477.93	
£305.45		Fund raising	£225.39	
		Youth club contribution		
		Mix-it contribution		
£412.21		Bank interest	£372.73	
		Book shop		
		Uncashed Cheques		
£3,549.07		Tax refund	£3,666.45	
		Social events		
£18,747.89			£19,173.82	
		Expenditure		
	7,150.00	Methodist assessment		7,500.00
	7,150.00	Anglican share		7,500.00
	1,028.50	Rent		1,452.00
		Gifts		
	390.30	Copyright license		413.72
	228.20	Insurance		234.32
	229.33	Equipment & materials		717.03
		Maintenance & Replacements		
	95.50	Refreshments		60.72
		Cheques for cash collections		
	1,353.27	Nominated charities		1,050.00
		Courses		
		Bookshop		
		Sundries		
	73.00	Bank Charges		74.08
		Youth worker		
	287.84	Web site		287.84
	£ 17,985.94			£ 19,289.71
	£ 761.95	Excess/deficit income/expenditure		-£ 115.89
	16,744.71	Balances at 31 August	£ 16,628.82	
	15,982.76	Balances at 1 September (pr. year)	£ 16,744.71	
			-£ 115.89	
		Closing balances comprise		
		61337653 Community account		
		Statement @ 31.08.22	8,513.03	
		Ddt uncashed cheques	-1,000.00	

CFB account	8,657.49
Cash in hand	<u>458.30</u>
	<u>16,628.82</u>

NOTES

- 1) 4 charity cheques (£200 each) dated 31 August
- 2) £200 cheque for Bracknell PCC replaced 31 Aug 2025