

**1 CHURCH
FAMILY**



'I came that they may have
and enjoy life, and have it
in abundance.'

JOHN 10:10

Benefice of Blagdon with Charterhouse, Compton Martin and Ubley



ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

For the year ended 31 December 2020
- the year the pandemic started -

of The Parochial Church Council of
St Michael's Church, Compton Martin

CONTENTS

Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council

- 1 Introduction**
- 2 Reference and Administrative Information**
 - 1 Geography of the Parish
 - 2 Correspondence
 - 3 Parish Reference
 - 4 Parish Personnel
 - 5 External Organisation
 - 6 Electoral Roll
 - 7 PCC Membership
- 3 Structure, Governance and Management**
 - 1 Parochial Church Council
 - 2 Charity Accounting
- 4 Aims and Purposes**
- 5 Achievements and Performance**
 - 1 Worship Ministry
 - 2 Contemplative Ministry
 - 3 Growing Ministry
 - 4 Serving Ministry
 - 5 Church Management Ministry
- 6 Looking to the Future**
- 7 Deanery Synod**
- 8 Finances**

The accounts for 2020 have not yet been approved by the External Examiner. The Diocesan Secretary has advised that the Annual Parochial Church Meeting should proceed without them and they be circulated to PCC members as soon as possible.

I INTRODUCTION

As the Church family of St Michael's, and integral part of the Benefice of Blagdon, Compton Martin and Ubley, we continue to be a Christian presence in our village and surrounding area. Through our Church-Life we seek to tell and live God's story in our neighbourhood and beyond. We have done this through *worship, growing and nurturing* faith, and *service*, not only in this part of Somerset, but also much further afield through giving to charitable organisations.

The heart of who we are is our exploration and expression of what it means to love God and encounter God in the life we live as a Church, in our homes, in our leisure time, in our retirement, and when we are at work. This Annual Report is our telling of the story of our Church life through 2020; a year during which we face the COVID-19 Pandemic. It represents an enormous amount of commitment and effort from all involved. We thank everyone who have contributed to the life of St Michael's, during 2020, including those who have now moved away from the area but who have worshipped here and throughout the Benefice and given so much to this Church family.

As a part of the Benefice of Blagdon, Compton Martin and Ubley, this Parish continues to work with our other partner parishes at achieving our hopes for the future as we move to becoming one parish at the end of 2021. We will always be extremely grateful to God for the countless blessings and challenges (especially the pandemic) they has guided us through. We are a Church family guided by God to be a healthy church that is faithful to God, that shares with those in need and is caring for one another. We know we don't always get it right, but we seek God's grace to fulfil God's mission.

Revd. Simon Lewis
Priest & Rector

2 REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

2.1 Geography of the Parish

1. The ecclesiastical Parish of Compton Martin constitutes the village of Compton Martin and is in the County of Bath and North East Somerset.
2. There are two buildings belonging to the parish, The Parish Church of St Michael's, situated in Compton Martin and The Old School Room situated next to the church.
3. The Parish is in the Diocese of Bath & Wells, a part of the Church of England.

2.2 Correspondance

A: The Church Office, Easton House, Church Street, Blagdon, Bristol, BS40 7SJ

E: benefice.bcmu@gmail.com

T: 01761 463205

2.3 Parish Reference

| | |
|--|---|
| Full name of the PCC | The Parochial Church Council of St Michael's Church, Compton Martin |
| Benefice | Benefice of Blagdon, Compton Martin and Ubley |
| Deanery | Chew Magna |
| Archdeaconary | Bath |
| Diocese | Bath & Wells |
| Church building address | St Michael's Church, The Batch, Compton Martin, BS40 6JQ |
| Church of England Church Building reference | St Michael's Church - 510296 |

2.4 Parish Personnel

| | | From October APCM onwards |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Incumbent | The Reverend Simon Lewis | |
| Curate (<i>until February</i>) | The Reverend Alex Holmes | |
| Churchwardens | Mr James Bragg | Mrs Kate Reynolds |
| | Mrs Helen Palmer | Mr Jonathon Reynolds |
| Reader | Mr Gene Joyner | |
| Church Administrator | Mrs Laura Williams | |
| PCC Treasurer | Mrs Gill Durbin | |
| PCC Secretary | Mrs Sue Owst | |

| | | |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| Music, Arts and Drama Director | Mrs Rachel Branston | |
| Benefice Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Officer | Mrs Tricia Murphy | Mrs Kate Reynolds |

2.5 External Organisation

For Buildings and Grounds

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Diocesan Architect | Mr George Chedburn |
| Address | Chedburn Ltd, Glove Factory Studios, Holt, Bradford-on-Avon, BA14 6RL |

For Finances

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Bank | Natwest |
| Address | Knowle, Bristol (B) Branch, PO Box 3235, 290 Wells Road, Knowle, Bristol, BS4 9GB |
| Bank | Santander |
| Address | Customer Service Centre, Bootle, Merseyside, L30 4GB |
| Bank | West Country Savings and Loans |
| Address | Kestrel Court, Harbour Road, Portishead, North Somerset, BS20 7AN |
| Independent Examiner | Mr Chris Ball |
| Address | The Outlook, Ellick Road, Blagdon, Bristol, BS40 7TU |

2.6 Electoral Roll

1. The Electoral Roll (ER) is the official membership list of local Church of England congregations. Signing the roll means that you want to belong and shows a sign of your commitment to the Church of England via this parish. Only those on the ER may stand for election as a member of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of this parish, as a Churchwarden of this parish, or member of the Deanery Synod representing this parish; membership also allows you to vote at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)
2. You need to be 16 years or over and be a baptised member of the Church of England either living within the geographical parish of St Michael, or if you live outside the parish but fulfil these requirements and have habitually attended worship for six months then you may also join. Additionally, those who fulfil all of the above but were baptised into another Christian community (e.g. Methodist or Roman Catholic) but who have made the Church of England at St Michael, your home, may also join.
3. The ER Numbers for our Parish is: 39

2.7a St Michael PCC Membership - Until October APCM

| Title | Name | Position | Elected/ Co-opted | Term Ends |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Ex-officio | | | | |
| Incumbent | Revd Simon Lewis | Chair | | Indefinite |
| Curate (<i>until February</i>) | Revd Alex Holmes | Curate | 2016 | 2020 |
| Reader | Mr Gene Joyner | Reader | | Indefinite |
| Churchwarden (Term: Five years) | | | | |
| | Mr James Bragg | | 2019 | 2020 |
| | Mrs Helen Palmer | | 2019 | 2020 |
| Deanery Synod Representative (Term: Three years) | | | | |
| | Mrs Jean Luckett | | 2016 | 2020 |
| Elected (Term: Three years) | | | | |
| | Mrs Sue Owst | Secretary | 2017 | 2020 |
| | Mrs Gill Durbin | Treasurer | 2018 | 2021 |
| | Mr John Reynolds | | 2017 | 2020 |
| | Mrs Julia Halling-Brown | | 2017 | 2020 |
| | Mr John Allen | | 2017 | 2020 |
| Co-opted (Term: One year unless stated) | | | | |
| | Mrs Laura Williams | Church Administrator | | Indefinite |
| | Mrs Lucy Hemsley | Replacement | 2019 | 2020 |

2.7b St Michael current PCC Membership - From October APCM onwards

| Title | Name | Position | Elected/ Co-opted | Term Ends |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Ex-officio | | | | |
| Incumbent | Revd Simon Lewis | Chair | | Indefinite |
| Reader | Mr Gene Joyner | Reader | | Indefinite |
| Churchwarden (Term: Five years) | | | | |
| | Mrs Kate Reynolds | | 2020 | 2021 |
| | Mr Jonathon Reynolds | | 2020 | 2021 |
| Deanery Synod Representative (Term: Three years) | | | | |
| | Mrs Jean Lockett | | 2020 | 2023 |
| Elected (Term: Three years) | | | | |
| | Mrs Sue Owst | Secretary | 2020 | 2023 |
| | Mrs Gill Durbin | | 2018 | 2021 |
| | Mr John Allen | | 2020 | 2023 |
| | Mrs Lucy Hemsley | | 2020 | 2023 |
| Co-opted (Term: One year unless stated) | | | | |
| | Mrs Laura Williams | Church Administrator | | Indefinite |

3 *Structure, governance and management*

3.1 **Parochial Church Council**

1. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a corporate body established by the Church of England; it operates under the Parochial Church Court.
2. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules.
3. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.
4. Each elected PCC member is encouraged to be a member of a PCC Team. Ex-officio members (excluding Deanery Synod Representatives) may sit on any Team.
5. Non-PCC members invited to join PCC Teams are co-opted members. They are invited to join because of the gifts and expertise they have. Their term on a Team might be short-term (for example, the duration of a particular project) or long-term.

3.2 **Charity Accounting**

1. **From the Charities Act** “Charities have a major impact on our society, funding or supporting community work that otherwise, if it would seem to be outside the total responsibility of government, would not happen! So it is easy to see why governments are interested in all charities. They want to ensure that money given to charities is spent on the charity's aims and not wasted, so that people will keep giving.
2. “To achieve this aim successive UK governments have been developing charity law for more than 400 years. They have made charity trustees more and more responsible for the work and finances of the charity. **The members of the PCC are charity trustees.** The Charities Act (2011) defines charities as organisations that aim to provide 'public benefit' in one or more charitable areas or 'purposes'. It has also reinforced the Charity Commission's legal powers to be able to support and regulate charities.
3. “The Charity Commission created the Charities SORP ('Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice'), to give us clear guidelines on what information to keep and what reports to produce to meet our legal obligations. The Church of England has adopted the SORP as its standard basis for annual financial reporting by parishes, so that now we can provide the same information to both the government (for the general public) and the wider Church.
4. “What does this mean for you as a parish? As PCC members we are the charity trustees of the parish. We therefore need to understand what money is coming into the church, how we are spending it and why. In order to give a clear account of how the money has been received and spent, each parish has to produce the reports required by law.
5. “These accounts and reports help us to tell people how their money supports the mission of the church. They will also help us to show that the money given to us for running the parish or for specific aims such as youth or building work was used for those purposes. As PCC members we are responsible for the money, how it is looked after and for providing clear information about all of the money that belongs to the church.”

*[The above is from The Charities Act and the PCC. Church House, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3AZ;
ISBN 978-0-7151-1112-3; First published 2006 by Church House Publishing.
Fifth edition published in 2017 for the House of Bishops of the General Synod of the Church of England.
Copyright © The Archbishops' Council 2006, 2017]*

4 *Aims and Purpose (how our Church operates and its intentions)*

1. The primary purpose of St Michael's PCC, along with all parishes across our nation, is stated in The PCC (Powers) Measure of 1956. It is promotion of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England. We do this in 'co-operation with our minister', the Reverend Simon Lewis, by 'promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical'. The PCC is also responsible for the maintenance of St Michael's Church, and The Old School Room, Compton Martin, as a resource to help achieve the primary aim.
2. **From The Charities Act** "Although all charities have always had to meet the public benefit requirement, the Charities Act highlights it by requiring all charities to demonstrate, explicitly, that their aims are for the public benefit, including charities advancing education or religion or relieving poverty, which were previously presumed to be for the public benefit. Public benefit is assessed by two key principles:
 - a. There must be an identifiable benefit or benefits.
 - b. The benefit must be to the public, or section of the public."

[The Charities Act and the PCC. Church House, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3AZ;
ISBN 978-0-7151-1112-3; First published 2006 by Church House Publishing.
Fifth edition published in 2017 for the House of Bishops of the General Synod of the Church of England.
Copyright © The Archbishops' Council 2006, 2017]

3. How we achieve the purpose stated above is articulated in our current vision for the parish, established in the Benefice Profile of October 2017, which states: *'Working together, we will seek to nurture and grow our worshipping communities through living and telling the story of a God who loves, inspires, empowers and transforms us. We will seek to share God's love with all; reaching out to those in need; prioritising young families and their children and helping our Church members to live out the gospel in their daily lives.'*
4. Following on from 2018 our aim this year has been to continue laying the foundations for this vision. These foundations have been in the nature of transforming our Church structure, the way we organise ourselves to be God's presence here on earth: in particular in this Benefice.
5. At the heart of who we are is our unity as the Body of Christ. This is paramount to our identity as a parish within a Benefice. Our Worship Ministry, Growing Ministry and Serving Ministry and the way we manage and administrate our Church-Life, is based on a model of being Church called the Tambourine. This model enables us to share our resources, particularly people, without being held to geographical and hierarchical boundaries.

5 *Achievements and performance (how our aims are fulfilled)*

5.1 **Worship Ministry**

1. **Worship throughout the year** Prior to the Lockdown our Worship Steering Group were working toward a new pattern of worship across the Benefice.

In April, in response to the closure of church buildings we moved to one worship per week online. This was positively received. We also added a chat by Zoom after the morning worship to enable our Church family to stay in touch. Important worship which attract the wider community were filmed in our church buildings increasing the number of households engaging. Christingle was also presented online via Zoom and enjoyed by many families. A number of the Church family have been involved in leading our online worship with intercessions, readings and talks. Our grateful thanks goes to them all. We were able to enjoy face-2-face worship at Christmas with Midnight Mass held at St Andrews, and outdoor worship in all three parishes, enabling the Christmas story to be shared and carols to be sung on Christmas Day.

Outside of Lockdown, midweek worship increased with Morning Prayer at St Michael's, Iona Worship at St Bartholomew's and both Sung and Said Evening Worship at St Andrews'.

Early on in the pandemic Simon was approached by Miles Leonard, who had just started Isolation Station, to give a Christian talk and prayer for their listeners. During 2020 there were 40 talks given.

(Simon Lewis)

2. **Music in Worship** It has been the most peculiar year with very little singing being allowed within the churches. When the first lockdown started, I did practices or some kind of fun activity each night of the week with religious and secular singing, games on a Saturday and a type of Songs of Praise, choosing hymns from Youtube, on a Sunday. When Evensongs began, I wrote a setting which the choir learnt and sang confidently until the next lockdown occurred.

We have unfortunately lost Tricia Murphy and Sue Edney because they've moved away from the area for family reasons and Chris Burton will be moving very soon. I have advertised for new members but we have not had any response and I fear that the choir will be weaker when it returns.

The Lockdown has allowed us to try out new hymns and arrangements which I have recorded and Simon has used in the online worship. It would be good to think that such music could be developed in the months and years to come. I will be advertising for instrumentalists in the May edition of the magazines. I am hoping that some people will come forward to support music in the benefice, either in a singing or a playing capacity.

(Rachel Branston - Music Director)

3. **Individual & Private Prayer** During Lockdown our church buildings were open at advertised times for private prayer with appropriate precautions in place. Our priest Alex Holmes prepared a series of meditations and prayer trees that could be used by people at home or in church.

(Simon Lewis)

4. **Thank You** to everyone who has enriched our worship.

5. Attendance Figures for Festival Worship Throughout the Benefice

| NR = Not recorded LD = Lockdown | St Andrew's | | St Hugh's | | St Michael's | | St Bartholomew's | | Benefice Total | | 2020 online |
|------------------------------------|-------------|------|-----------|------|--------------|------|------------------|------|----------------|------------|-------------|
| | 2019 | 2020 | 2019 | 2020 | 2019 | 2020 | 2019 | 2020 | 2019 | | |
| Lent - Mothering Sunday | 46 | LD | | LD | | LD | 23 | LD | 69 | LD | - |
| Palm Sunday | 59 | LD | | LD | | LD | | LD | 59 | LD | - |
| Good Friday | | LD | | LD | | LD | | LD | | LD | 31 |
| Easter Sunday | 95 | LD | | LD | 70 | LD | 47 | LD | 212 | LD | 42 |
| Remembrance Services | 239 | LD | | LD | 46 | LD | 36 | LD | 321 | LD | 94 |
| Lights of Love (All Souls) | | LD | | LD | | LD | 38 | LD | 38 | LD | 44 |
| Harvest Festival | | 34 | 39 | LD | 32 | LD | 31 | LD | 102 | 34 | 21 |
| Carols for Advent | 29 | LD | | LD | | LD | | LD | 29 | LD | - |
| Carols by Candlelight | | LD | 128 | LD | 110 | LD | | LD | | LD | - |
| Christingle | | LD | | LD | | LD | 75 | LD | 75 | LD | 18 |
| Blessing of Crib | 119 | LD | | LD | 105 | LD | | LD | 224 | LD | - |
| Midnight Mass | | 47 | | | 38 | | | | 38 | 47 | - |
| Christmas Thanksgiving | 70 | 24 | | | 74 | 63 | 84 | 51 | 228 | 138 | 138 |

5.2 Contemplative Ministry

1. **Intercession Group** Every Monday a group meets to pray for all the Benefice and especially those individuals who have asked for our prayers and are named in Church Link. Prayers are also offered for circumstances that affect people locally, nationally and worldwide. At the beginning of the year and in the summer we were able to meet in St Bartholomew's. However for the rest of the year we continued to pray on a Monday morning but remotely in our own homes.

(Judith Longhurst)

2. **Contemplative Prayer Group** For some years Contemplative Prayer Group has been a monthly event at St Andrews only. At the beginning of April last year, we moved our meetings to Zoom on a weekly basis and at the same time encouraged participation from members of all the churches in the Benefice and indeed elsewhere. We now have a regular group of 15-20 people from as far away as Northumberland, Leeds and Oxford. Our regular practice is to meditate on a passage of Scripture either using Lectio Divina or Ignatian imaginative prayer. We have also introduced themes, such as seasonal themes for Advent, Lent and Pentecost or scriptural themes such as the Beatitudes on which we meditated for a number of weeks in the summer of 2020.

Our main aim is to approach the living Word of God ready to hear the Lord speak to us, anticipating that the historical and inspired text will be freshly applied by the Holy Spirit to the personal text of our lives today. The underlying process is to engage the whole person before Christ as we slowly read, silently reflect, prayerfully respond, and simply rest in God's presence.

For the future, we obviously hope to be able to meet physically and pray together in the flesh but the existence of the wider group means that we would also like to continue online.

(Nick Jarrett-Kerr)

3. **Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer (known as The Occasional Offices)** The existence of Morning and Evening prayer daily prayer has been in existence throughout Christendom for hundreds of years - it has formed the rhythm of prayer for many. Due to our churches being closed we have not sustained this rhythm of prayer for anyone to share. But it has been continued in the Church Office by our priest.

(Simon Lewis)

5.3 Growing Ministry

1. **Lent Forum** Our Lent Forum was a course called *Fit for Purpose*, which was an opportunity for us to reflect on what we do as a Church. There were four sessions: a) We are a 'priesthood of all believers', what does this mean?; b) What is community?; c) Worship and the role of us and the building; and d) What is mission: not ours but God's? We managed one session, attended by 17 people, before we went into Lockdown.

(Simon Lewis)

2. **Emmaus Groups** Having started our Emmaus groups in October 2019 and taken a Christmas break, we were just getting back into the swing of them when Lockdown was upon us. Sadly, we were not able to continue them online.

Emmaus groups meet to grow and nurture our relationship with God (our faith); this is at the heart of them. Gathered together, time is spent listening, asking very deep and challenging questions, and exploring life's purpose and meaning in relation to God. The intention is to embed *Emmaus* Groups in the culture of our Church-Life as the years go on.

(Simon Lewis)

5.4 Serving Ministry (Community Outreach)

1. **Baptisms** - One baptism took place during 2020 before the lockdown. During the remainder of the year severe restrictions were placed on the numbers of people allowed to attend ceremonies and the six families who had approached us to baptise their children, felt that it was better to postpone until the end of the pandemic.
2. **Funerals** - During the lockdown, we were able to continue to conduct funerals and interments, with restrictions placed on the number of people permitted to attend inside the church buildings. As a Benefice we were fortunate that the number of funerals conducted did not sharply increase. We engaged with new technology and were able to live-stream funerals to relatives unable to travel to funerals held in St Andrew's. As funerals were required to be 'simple' (with several held at the graveside only) some families plan to hold a Thanksgiving service for their loved ones after the end of the pandemic.
3. **Weddings** - Despite restrictions, weddings were conducted in St Andrew's, St Michael's and St Hugh's during 2020. Due to the closure of churches during the pandemic most chose to delay their big day until 2021 to allow families and friends to attend. For others we sought a Common Marriage License or Special Marriage License, as banns were unable to be read and qualifying connections through worship could not be formed through regular attendance. We also moved our marriage preparation online and a group of couples met monthly with Simon and Nick and Sarah Jarrett-Kerr via zoom. Feedback showed this to be very successful, with the wedding couples engaging more fully and it will be continued during 2021.

4. Rites of Passage throughout the Benefice

| | St Andrew | St Michael | St Bartholomew | Crematorium | Benefice Total |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| Baptisms | 1 | 0 | 0 | | 1 |
| Weddings | 4 | 1 | 0 | | 5 |
| Funeral Ceremony | 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 10 |
| Burial & Interment | 2 | 2 | 3 | | 7 |

5. Local-Community Publications

- 5.1. **The Link** Twelve issues of The Link were produced in the past year (rather than the usual ten), to help morale and encourage people to feel that there is a strong sense of community.

The editor of the Blagdon magazine, Ken Parsons, has supported The Link by contributing articles and I have given him some in return. We have been trying to bring the two magazines closer, to reflect the wholeness of the Benefice. Contributions on a monthly basis covering a wide variety of topics are received from many people in both Ubley and Compton Martin. As editor, I have tried to include some articles that will cause people to stop and think and some have attracted national attention, such as the article on badger culling. I include information from B&NES which has been particularly important over the past twelve month and always support the parish councils, making space for anything that they want to publicise. There are also various incentives that are happening within our community such as the Compton Martin Climate Project, which is hopefully spreading to Ubley and Blagdon, has been brought to people's attention. The centre of the magazine, however, remains Church news, giving information from the Benefice and Diocesan points of view.

It has been tricky over the past year as none of the usual activities have been running and I was afraid that the magazine would become unimportant to people but it seems the reverse has happened. I conducted a survey and was amazed that so many people bothered to respond. In fact, it was free from Survey Monkey which gave us the possibility of assessing up to 70 replies. We actually had over one hundred and so I was unable to see the extra 30 but the overall response was very positive, although it was interesting that very few people use the Issuu software.

(Rachel Branstons)

5.2. The Blagdon Newsletter

Covid lockdown restrictions meant that the printed parish magazine for April 2020 was the last that we could distribute door-to-door. We decided that it was important to maintain this link between the Church and the community and to continue to publish the magazine in electronic form.

We decided to give the publication a new title, to emphasise that this was going to be different from the printed version and to avoid confusion. Over the past year the magazine has evolved considerably. Its lifeblood, news of local events, had suddenly ceased. Instead, the Newsletter rapidly became a more general publication, providing information and interesting articles on Blagdon. Initially there was news about lockdown arrangements but later we could feature some 'Zoom' local events, and articles about local organisations, people and topics of local interest. Without the constraint of printing costs, we have included far more colour and illustrations.

We have built up an e-mail list of about 200 households, who receive the Newsletter monthly. We also publish the magazine on an online platform called Issuu. At peak, we have had 350 people accessing the online newsletter (not all from Blagdon), although it does need constant effort and publicity to achieve this. The feedback we have received (unsolicited) from our readers has been very positive, with most enjoying our range of articles and the better formats.

Although many enjoy reading the newsletter electronically, many people have commented that they are looking forward to getting a printed copy again. We will be reviewing how the newsletter/magazine will be published in 2021.

(Ken Parsons)

- 5.3. **Church Link** When our church buildings were closed we realised that we needed an efficient way of communicating with our church family, particularly as we decided that we would need to move to an online provision for worship. Initially working with our existing email list of electoral roll members, Church Link was first issued on 21st March and thereafter weekly. As well as keeping the community updated about the times of worship on our website and opening times of churches when permitted, it also contained links to online worship (in our Benefice, Diocese and nationally) prayer resources, the weekly Gospel reading with a reflection, Diocesan news, and occasional extras such as features about music, quizzes, or relevant newspaper articles. Readership has grown and now incorporates those outside our Benefice and many of our wedding couples. It is also an important means of communicating the most up-to-date Covid restrictions and providing access to online booking forms for worship in our buildings.

(Laura Williams)

- 5.4. **Website** Prior to 2020 our website was not used extensively. The range and amount of material hosted there has increased enormously over the past year and it is now updated at least every week. In the absence of face-to-face contact, this became our principle means of communication and hosted our weekly online worship, links to Zoom chats, meetings and latterly worship, the audio files of Simon's Isolation Station talks, and the weekly newsletter for those who did not receive it via email. Traffic has significantly increased from less than 20 visits per week to more than 50 and often well over one hundred.

(Laura Williams)

6. **Extending our Welcoming** The COVID pandemic caused us to overhaul our welcoming as we were required to take bookings from those wishing to attend services and to keep records of those attending for track and trace purposes. Before and after the start of the pandemic people received a warm welcome when arriving for worship and at all the events in our church buildings. Up until mid-March, our teams of Refreshers - members of our congregations designated for each worship - prepared and served Fairtrade drinks, biscuits and cake after worship. During the pandemic we were not permitted to serve refreshments but we continued to have welcomers at all in person services. The burden of ensuring compliance with the new laws and regulations around keeping people safe from COVID fell largely on our Church Administrator and we are so grateful to Laura for working out seating plans, taking bookings from those attending, keeping records, ordering hand-gel and ensuring that people who came into our places of worship did so as safely as possible. From March until the heating broke down in December, our Sunday Benefice worship was held in St. Andrew's as it is our largest building. For several months, no in-person-worship were permitted.

(The Churchwardens of the Benefice)

7. **Church Local-Community Events during the pandemic**

- 7.1. **Foodbank** We continue to support the Foodbank at Withywood and donations were even more vital to clients in South Bristol, during the pandemic. A collection box is located in the church porch and when it is full it is delivered to the Foodbank.
- 7.2. **Pandemic response group** This was led by Jean Luckett in partnership with the Parish Council to provide a support network throughout the village during the Lockdowns.
- 7.3. **Thank you** To everyone involved in leading and organising these events our grateful thanks. Your gifting of time and talents helps your local Church - its people and its building - tell its story and live its story.

(Churchwardens)

8. **Thank you Alex Holmes** At the beginning of the year Alex left us to be an Associate Priest and Rode Rural Pioneer, in the Pairsh of Hardington Vale.

The first time I met Alex, I knew I was about to work with a wonderful Priest and colleague: someone who walks with God; lives her calling to be a Priest amongst people; who would support my calling as priest here in this Benefice; and who has a superb sense of humour. Many of you valued Alex's ministry in our three parishes particularly her, listening, establishment of a contemplative culture of listening to God, and her pastoral care for the community.

We thank Alex for all the Godly love and care she gave this Benefice and continue to pray for her in her new ministry. At her leaving celebration we prayed the follow prayer for Alex.

A Prayer for a Pilgrim

Mother, Father God of our beginning and our end,
be with Alex as she makes her pilgrimage into the future.

Let every moment of every day be an opportunity for grace to flow;
let every day

be a chance for love to be put into practice;
let her humanity with all its imperfections
be your human face.

Help Alex to continue to support and guide others
in their lives
in their prayer
and in their journeys,
that together she and they may walk with joy.

And sustained by your love
may Alex be brought to the place of arrival
you have prepared for her and us all with Jesus,
with whom we pray.
Amen.

(Simon Lewis)

5.5 Church Management Ministry

- I. **Administration** Laura has continued to work in the Church Office for 16 hours per week. Her time is divided between administering 'life events' in the Benefice (principally weddings during 2020), the Benefice website, Church Link newsletter, ordering supplies, ensuring that we have remained Covid compliant and general office management. In the absence of a PCC secretary, and a Treasurer since October 2020, Laura has also taken on many additional PCC duties, including attending all meetings, typing and distributing minutes, monitoring bank accounts and paying invoices. Laura has done way, way, way beyond the expectation of the work she is enumerated for.

(Simon Lewis)

2. **Fabric**

To facilitate God's mission in our villages we maintain the fabric of our church buildings and churchyards, and develop them to make them fit for the purpose God intends for them.

Inventory The Churchwarden/s confirm that the *Terrier* and *Logbook* have been checked and are accurate.

Building

2.1. **Maintenance** Following the Quinquennial Report 2019 St Michael's was considered to be in a generally good condition. Immediate repairs recommended by the report included:

- The clearing of the gullies to the north and south side of the church which was completed.
- The Cleaning of debris, plant growth and leaves from ground gutters and culverts, completed in 2020 and due to be reinspected by the Churchwardens in 2021.
- Annual maintenance of the fire-extinguishers (ongoing).

Work still to be done on the fabric of the church is included:

Roof

- Repoint flashings to the east side of the chancel roof.
- Undertake monitoring of the movement to the north wall and buttress of the chancel.
- Undertake minor patch pointing in three locations to the chancel and north aisle.

Tower

- Obtain a specialist survey on the condition of the bells.
- Undertake careful patch pointing of pierced stone parapet at top of stone stair tower.

Ground gutters and drains

- Undertake minor repair to culvert at north east corner of chancel.

Doors and windows

- Repoint movement to jamb to east window on north side of chancel.
- Undertake conservation repairs to western most window of north aisle.
- Repoint open joints to doorway to north side of chancel.

Internal Ceilings

- Obtain further advice from a suitably qualified structural engineer in relation to structural movement of the stone vaulted ceiling of the sanctuary.
- Undertake further inspection of the ceilings of the nave, tower and north aisle to assess the integrity of the structure and amount of beetle infestation.

Internal Floors

- Open up and inspect the timber pew platform to the south isle.
- Undertake isolated timber treatment to the timber boarding of the pew platforms towards the west end of the church.

Internal fixtures and fittings

- Undertake timber treatment to alter, chancel/organ chamber screen, organ plinth, north western pews.

Electrical installation

- Obtain a survey of the electrical installation by a suitably qualified electrical engineer. (Lucas Alarms are due to provide an electrical report and this will be followed up in May 2021).

- 2.2. **Cleaning** The Church and Old School Room were cleaned by a cleaner who was employed on a weekly basis. She continued to be paid for throughout the COVID-19 lockdown periods.
- 2.3. **Organ and Piano** The last inspection of the church organ was the 24th July 2019. The structure of the organ is sound. The conclusion notes that the sound board is the main area of concern at present and that the work outlined in the report is taken as soon as possible. This would include a comprehensive overhaul which is estimated to cost £9,262.00 (at 2019 prices) which could be reclaimed under the Listed Places of Worship grant scheme. This matter will be discussed with the PCC including a new electronic organ substitute as one option.
- 2.4. **Bells** The quinquennial inspection report September 2019 recommended an inspection on the condition of the bells which is now due. An average cost estimated at £400.

Churchyard

- 2.5. **Maintenance** The churchyard grounds are maintained during the summer months to an excellent standard thanks to the hard work of John Prosser and the kind funding by Richard Curry. The condition of monuments was checked in the quinquennial survey and described as 'generally in a safe condition'. As recommended the monuments are checked at least once a year as part of the clean up churchyard party.
- 2.6. **Clearing** The church tidy up is an annual event led by Andrew Owst. The clearance of the grass cuttings could not be done during 2020 but will be organised in 2021 liaising with the landowner and David Gibbons.

Old School Room

Building

- 2.7. **Maintenance** The disabled accessway was completed and paid for. The disabled toilet conversion has had building regulation consent organised by Andrew Owst.
- 2.8. **Cleaning** The Old School Room is cleaned by Carol Robertson.

(Churchwarden)

6 Looking to the Future

1. Pathway 1 - Seven Marks of a Healthy Church

As a Benefice we are committed to listening to God and listening to each other through the pathway of Healthy Churches. Essentially the healthy Churches journey is a process for strengthening the vitality of a Church. This journey is sometimes likened to a pilgrimage, and we hope it is one full of self discovery and adventure!

We have started to explore what this means for us, building on our vision and the *Five Marks of Mission* (which are the worldwide Anglican Communion's mission statement for the Anglican Church), these are:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers.
3. To respond to human need by loving service.
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society.
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

We have established a working group and meet regularly to plan strategically and to see how this calling fits with our Church community and wider community. Our underpinning principles are *engaging, exploring* and *experiencing* together with God, based on the two great commandments of Loving God and Loving our Neighbour.

The Seven Marks, we believe, will guide us in who we are as a church and give us a framework for transformation. The characteristics of a healthy church are as follows:

1. Energised by Faith
2. Outward Looking
3. Seeks to find out what God wants
4. Faces the cost of change and growth
5. Operates as a community
6. Makes room for all
7. Does a few things and does them well

The reason that these characteristics are so powerful is that they reflect the very values that Christ himself expressed in His life and which we as disciples are called to live out in ours.

We have started to share information and learning at our Benefice Partnership meetings to engage our Church family. We can already see positive shoots in terms of practical outreach work in the community, building on the partnerships established during the pandemic. We are also determined to look outwards building relationships in the wider community to grow this process.

As we move forward, we will be holding a day of Gathering, when we complete a Church Profile exercise. This will give us a good idea collectively of our strengths and areas for development, and where we feel called to take action. This process will continue to grow and be monitored over the next 18 – 24 months.

(Helen Fenn)

2. Pathway 2 - One Family One Church becoming one parish

During 2020 discussions commenced on how we might take forward our mission to our communities and Church management within the present Benefice. Those discussions involved a small planning group to define a pathway to the future. It was decided that, with the approval of PCCs, we should seek to pool our resources and become one parish.

Having concluded that this was both practical and missional, a presentation was given to each Annual Parochial Church Meeting in October, with an opportunity, for those present, to comment and discern what might happen across the benefice. Subsequently, a resolution was placed before the PCCs at the Benefice

Partnership Meeting on 23 November, committing to the pursuit of the Pathways Project to include a concurrent implementation of the Healthy Church Pathway. That resolution was passed unanimously.

Discussions opened with the Assistant Diocesan Secretary regarding the legal requirements, methodology and timing of this transition. Proposed timings were defined as, approval in 2021 of the submission document by individual PCCs, oversight and approval by each of Deanery Synod Mission and Pastoral Group, Bath Archdeaconry, Bishop's Council and Church Commissioners. The plan being to conclude the process by the end of 2021. Although several benefices within the Diocese have become single parishes in the past, we are the first benefice to move forward in this manner under the new Church Representation Rules 2020, so there is yet to be a certainty on timescale, although an anticipation that it can be achieved during 2021.

The planning group have met monthly for discussion, via Zoom, and have been active in pursuing this agenda. There will be further involvement with PCCs, the church family and community as we progress.

(Nigel Crocker)

3. **Pathway 3 - Business Plan**

Principally, this is a pathway that will become most active once the One Church One Family Pathway has been completed and resources have been pooled, although it would be wrong to leave any forward planning and thinking until we reach that point.

Consequently, some forward planning was undertaken during 2020 to scope the nature of our future new parish structure in all aspects of ministry and mission. Much of this will be built on and expanded from what currently exists in the present structure, although each area will be challenged and reviewed to consider what improvements might be made to make them fit for purpose for our transformed fellowship.

Not only is the structure important but most of all there is a vital requirement to meet the needs of the church family and the wider community in which we live and interact, to communicate widely, to interact with those who are already intrinsically linked to the church family and those in the wider community, and to meet people where they are, to understand their needs so that we can be able to Tell the Story and Live the Story in the life of our community. Being a Healthy Church will assist with this process as we consider what God wants and as we become more outward looking and inclusive.

So, this is not just about running the finances and fabric etc. but projecting our faith in Jesus and showing who we are as a community energised by faith.

(Nigel Crocker)

4. **Pathway 4 - Focal Ministry**

During 2020 the Diocese finished a report on a strategy for the deployment of people and resources around the Diocese. The pandemic has had a dramatic impact on the Church of England throughout the country and the Anglican Church across the world both in terms of its worshipping life, and its financial health. What has emerged is a new vision for ministry in the Diocese, based on the following principles.

- There is mutuality (the sharing of certain roles and responsibilities) between lay and ordained so that their 'callings' (vocations) can be expressed in a variety of ways.
- The different needs and responses in different contexts are recognised; including different types of leadership and manifestations of being a Church which are all to be valued equally.
- The principle of 'No one alone', for both laity and clergy is essential. In other words, mutual care and support in leadership is important and the building and sustaining of teams is imperative.
- That each ministerial post should be one where it is possible to 'serve with joy'.
- There is a commitment to learn from experimentation and put this learning into practice. The fear of failure should not inhibit experimentation.
- Deployment decisions will contain an element of being responsive and flexible and not excessively constrained by guidelines.
- Support will be provided to help people inhabit new focused roles and there is attentiveness to safeguarding.
- There will be support with "change management".

These principles, at heart of the Diocese's discernment of God's call, are to ensure a Christian presence far and wide and that every person is equipped for the ministry and mission to which God is calling them, regardless of whether they are lay, ordained, part-time or full-time. A huge amount of contemplative prayer is taking place to listen to God.

This is about a commitment to local ministry in a way that being Church focusses on communities and allows Church leaders to have roles that fit their calling and gifts and are not burdensome. There is a deep hope to liberate people and Churches to respond to God's love and call in their own community.

Because of this you will soon be hearing the phrases 'Focal Ministry', 'Focal Ministers', 'Focal Teams'. Focal Ministers are local leaders of their Churches, usually ministering as part of a small team. As local representatives, they provide a focus for both the local congregation and the wider community. Focal Ministers are the 'go to' people in a particular local congregation who, supported by an ordained minister, provide leadership and oversee the mission and pastoral care in each Church family. The detailed nature of their role will vary from place to place and will be contextually appropriate, reflecting the nature of both the Church family and its community in this place.

This leads on to our fourth Pathway; as a newly formed one parish, *The Parish of All Saint's, Mendip Hills*, we will grow and nurture what is to be called **Focal Ministry**. We will seek people whose God given ministry is focused on either or both, one particular Church family; for example in Ubley, in Blagdon, in Compton Martin and in Charterhouse, or on the networks that shape peoples lives, for example focusing on schools. The ultimate aim of this is that every Church would have an identified Focal Minister who provides the ministry presence in that place.

There are two reasons this is necessary: first, although the Church is genuinely listening to God it has become too hierarchical in its culture; parishes are too dependent on their priest being the 'professional Christian' who is rolled out to tell and live their Christian faith in public, while the 'non-professional' Christian keeps their faith privatised. This leads to many 'lay' people of faith, gifted in the so many ways, not listening/hearing God's 'calling'; second, there are less and less people being called to be priests - and this is not due to poor marketing by the Church, in anyway state or form.

Focal Ministry mutually 'calls' people to different roles and responsibilities, not jobs and statuses. It relieves the pressure on a system that otherwise is dependent on increasingly stretched parish priests. It builds on the strong ties that parish Church families have to their local community and networks by offering an identified person for ministry; it provides a dedicated ministry at a very local level to complement the oversight ministry of a priest.

As you will have gathered, this vision for Focal Ministry goes beyond the geographical communities of local parishes and benefices and encompasses "non-geographical communities" – *the networks* that shape people's day to day lives, for example: schools, business, hospitals, care homes, toddler groups, young peoples groups, U3A groups, Messy Church, Café Church. All of these can be understood as a focal ministry.

There is a new emerging vision for the Church of England that talks about a "mixed ecology" of Church. This encourages all ministries from priest and other parochial roles, chaplaincy, pioneering to lay-pastoral and lay-worship, to be seen as part of God's spectrum of ministry.

Appropriate for us all at this time is the Kairos Prayer. It enables us to ask God about our time and place to do as God hopes we will do. Please pray it regularly over the coming year.

Kairos Prayer

God of all time,
God beyond and behind time;
may we know what is too late
and what is too soon.
May we always recognise the right time
in the light of your timeless love.
Amen.

(Simon Lewis)

7 Deanery Synod

There were 3 meetings of Deanery Synod in 2020

1. The first being on Tuesdays 21st January 2020 at St Bartholomew's, Ubley.
 - Archdeacon Adrian attended the meeting and licensed Simon Lewis to the position of Assistant Area Dean.
 - Jill Perrett and Mike James from the Diocese spoke on Lay Ministry and took the theme of *God's Calling*. They emphasised that we all have spiritual gifts and need to recognise and use them to reach out to others. 98% of the Church is made up of lay people – *who have equal worth and status* – they are a valuable resource which needs to be recognised.
 - A video was shown from the Tone Deanery, which showed examples of lay people using their individual gifts within their communities.
 - Mike gave information on Diocesan courses which are available eg Exploring Christianity, Spirituality, Worship and Pastoral Care. Details of all courses are available on the Diocesan website.
 - The Archdeaconry Days (eg 22nd February at Clevedon) would roll out new ideas and pathways for people.
2. The second DS meeting took place in July via Zoom owing to the Covid pandemic. The meeting divided into groups to discuss the highs and lows of the last few months in lockdown and any hopes, dreams and concerns for the future.

Highs

- Increase in village and community spirit;
- Using technology effectively for services and meetings;
- Good quality services can be found on-line;
- Can engage with some who don't normally attend church;
- Churches re-opening (at time only for private prayer);
- Increased awareness of our environment.

Lows

- Some parishes in vacancy felt a lack of spiritual leadership;
- Some felt lack of communication and dictates of C of E not always relevant to smaller churches;
- Difficulties for those holding funerals and cancellation of weddings;
- Events cancelled;
- Missing face to face contact with congregation, communion and singing;
- Lack of IT knowledge;
- Online services don't suit all;
- Financial difficulties.

Hopes and dreams and concerns

- Hearing church bells and singing together;
 - Continuation of some on-line services;
 - Embracing new ways to be church – what to keep and what to drop, eg create virtual home bible study groups;
 - Volunteer spirit continues;
 - Churches open fully;
 - Do we need as many church buildings in future?
 - How do we engage with those beyond our church communities?
 - Balance of on-line and face to face services;
 - Concern some may be excluded from services eg those over 70 may not be able to come into church (or Zoom) or insufficient space in church due to social distancing;
 - Cautious about rushing back to meetings – is it needed, where and how we meet.
3. The third DS meeting took place in October again via Zoom. The main part of the meeting was given over to a talk and discussion on Pioneer Ministry led by Trevor James.

- Trevor had been appointed Pioneer Minister for Keynsham in November 2019. He explained that the majority of his time would be given up to work on the new estates in Keynsham with c10% of his time available for work in the deanery and diocese.
- He described Pioneer Ministry as a fresh and new way of doing church – using the available resources and developing and expanding on them to create and develop a community eg making connections through Churches Together and Who let the Dads Out? and building on them.
- Trevor asked for ideas how he might assist the wider deanery and said he would be willing (when able) to visit parishes to give talks on the subject.
- In the following discussion Trevor was asked how he could share best practice from his role and from other rural pioneers. He offered to attend Chapter to discuss ideas such as visits to parishes and the transfer of pioneering skills to Chapter attendees.

(Jessica McInnes, Deanery Synod Secretary)

8 *Finances*

The accounts for 2020 have not yet been approved by the External Examiner. The Diocesan Secretary has advised that the Annual Parochial Church Meeting should proceed without them and they be circulated to PCC members as soon as possible.