

**Anglican Diocese of Chester – Middlewich Deanery  
Mid Cheshire Circuit of the Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District of the Methodist Church**

**St Mary's Church, Weaverham**



**Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Ecumenical Church Council  
for the year ended 31 December 2022**

**Incumbent**

Reverend Paul Withington, The Vicarage, Church Street, Weaverham, NORTHWICH,  
CW8 3NJ

**Minister**

Reverend Chris Pritchard 38 Earls Way, Kingsmead, Northwich, CW9 8GQ  
Reverend Janet Aspey, [as above]

**Curate**

Reverend Phil Bishop, 272 Chester Road, Hartford, Northwich CW8 1QW

**Secretary**

Jules Sanders, 2 Valley Road, Weaverham, NORTHWICH, CW8 3PP

**Treasurer**

John J C Freeman, Stable Court, 20a Leigh Way, Weaverham, NORTHWICH, CW8 3PR

**Banks**

Santander, Bridle Road, BOOTLE, L30 4GB  
CCLA Investment Management Ltd., Senator House, 85 Queen Victoria Street, LONDON, EC4V 4ET

**Honorary Independent Examiner**

Kevin D Pickering, 5 Withens Close, Weaverham, NORTHWICH, CW8 3JJ

**Registered Charity Number: 1135093**

**ST. MARY'S CHURCH, WEAVERHAM ANNUAL REPORT FOR  
THE ECUMENICAL CHURCH COUNCIL [ECC] FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

St. Mary's Church is situated in Church Street, Weaverham. It is a Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) between the parish church of the Church of England in the parish of St Mary in the Middlewich Deanery and Chester Diocese and the Methodist Church within the Mid Cheshire Circuit of the Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District. The partnership looks for support, encouragement, advice and overview to the relevant denominations, the Diocese and the Methodist District. The correspondence address is St Mary's Lighthouse Centre, Church Lane, Weaverham, NORTHWICH, CW8 3NN.

ECC members who have served in the year are: -

<i>Incumbent:</i>	Revd. Paul Withington	Chairman
<i>Curate</i>	Revd. Phil Bishop	
<i>Methodist Minister:</i>	Revd. Chris Pritchard	To July 2022
	Revd. Janet Aspey	from September 2022
<i>Wardens:</i>	Vicky Rushton	
	Colin Weeks	
<i>Representatives on the Deanery Synod: elected 2020</i>	John Freeman	Treasurer
	David Whitfield	
	Gillian Edwards	from APCM
<i>Methodist Stewards:</i>	David Whitfield	
	Mike Hornby	
<i>Representatives from lay church roles:</i>	Gilly Latham	
	Linda Jones	
	Jules Sanders	Secretary
	Mike Sanders	
<i>Elected members:</i>		
Carol Johnson – (elected 2020)	Mike Hornby – (elected 2021)	
Chris Hornby – (elected 2022)	Sue Winnington – (elected 2020)	
Gillian Edwards (elected 2020)	Jerry Marshall – (elected 2022)	
Jonathan Gore (elected 2021 from APCM)	Marion Wilson (elected 2022)	
William Travis (elected 2021 from APCM) Deceased 14 <sup>th</sup> May 22	Pam Thomson (elected 2022)	

### **Structure, governance and management**

The method of appointment of ECC members (trustees) is set out in the Constitution of the Local Ecumenical Partnership signed in November 2009. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the ECC.

## **Objectives and activities**

St Mary's ECC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Revd. Paul Withington and Methodist Minister the Revd. Janet Aspey in promoting the whole mission of the Church: pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical in the ecclesiastical parish. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the buildings associated with the church.

St Mary's is fully integrated as an LEP between the Anglican and Methodist Churches in Weaverham. We worship at the Anglican Church building with our services varied between Anglican and Methodist styles and leadership.

The vision statement for St Mary's Ecumenical Church, Weaverham is as follows:

***St Mary's Church Weaverham, sharing the light and hope of Jesus with our community.***

## **Achievements and performance**

### ***Church attendance***

The current electoral roll has 130 members. We have a duality of Anglican and Methodist members; members can be either or both. Attendance varied during the year, with an average attendance on a usual Sunday at 84 [79 adults and 5 children]

Funerals 36

Baptisms 7

Weddings 4

### ***Review of the year***

The ECC met eight times during the year with Standing Committee meetings between when needed. The ACM was held on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022

The New Year started with some Covid restrictions still in place. All Covid restrictions were finally lifted in May but we continued to take precautions eg. in the distribution of Holy Communion.

The church started a review of all its activities to help us make a new start after the last two years disruption. This took the form of a process known as the 7 Marks of a Healthy Church, which in fact is still ongoing. This process aims to give the church new priorities for the future with every member getting the opportunity to contribute. One of the outcomes was a look at improving our welcome and facilities for children in the service at 10.30.

The Lent course this year was called Talking Jesus and was well attended.

Another outcome of the church review was the start of Café Church on the first Sunday of the month at 10.15am in the Lighthouse. This consists of much less formal approach including drinks and breakfast food before and during the service. This new service started in July and has been a great success which will be reviewed in January.

The Lighthouse Café on Tuesdays continues to be very well attended by both church members and a significant number of people who don't come to church but find a warm welcome.

The Queens Jubilee celebrations included a combined churches service which would have been on Lakehouse Field in the centre of the village but had to be moved into the Community Centre due to bad weather. The church was opened for tours with queues for tower tours, and stalls on Lakehouse Field supporting the dog show and family fun day. This also deepened our ecumenical links – prayer

walking and working with both St Bede's and the Stronghold during the year, including supporting the Rose Fete.

The Revd Chris Pritchard left us in July for a new post and we welcomed his replacement, the Revd Janet Aspey, who arrived in September.

The Wednesday food distribution continues in the Lighthouse in partnership with Northwich Community Support

During the year various church activities have returned and these are summarised as follows:-

Sticky Fingers - Toddlers group that runs every Monday during term time.

YPF - Young People's Fellowship [YPF] meets on Sunday evenings and is aimed at children in school years 7 to 11.

Home Groups - We have a good number of Home Groups who meet around the village on different days, times and places.

Rambling Group - Meets for occasional Saturday morning walks of 3-4 miles.

Upcycling Shed - Meets on Thursdays in the Lighthouse Annexe.

Mothers' Union - Meet every second Thursday of the month in the Lighthouse

Men's Breakfasts – 8.00am on occasional Saturday mornings – Full English and a speaker on a variety of topics.

Bell Ringing - Ring regularly for most Sunday services, weddings and other special services and national events.

We ran 3 courses for Baptism preparation/enquirers' courses during the year: 2 x Start and 1 x Alpha both on Zoom and in person.

At Easter we offered a combination of reflective, formal and innovative services and interactive prayer stations.

We supported the community playscheme in the summer holidays providing crafts activities, games and stories.

The church also holds various social activities for church members and the wider community.

The ECC formed an ECO team to look at ways of making the church and its congregation more aware of and to take action towards the goal of being carbon neutral. Having made changes in the operation of the church we achieved a Bronze Standard Award from A Rocha [which provides a framework to support to churches and its leadership to take practical action on caring for God's earth]. During December a specialist Energy Survey was carried out and we await the report which should inform our future decisions and actions.

Following the Quinquennial Inspection in June 2021 there are two problems that need addressing with some urgency, part of the roof and some of the pointing. The church needs to raise additional funds for this purpose and the ECC have formed a small Fundraising Group for this purpose.

Harvest was celebrated in October and there was a with a Service of Light held at the end of the month for which Bishop Julie joined us.

We were back to a normal format for our Remembrance Day services held in November, with uniformed groups filling the church in the afternoon.

Various Christmas services were held from the start of Advent. Christmas without a Loved One was well attended as was the Carol Service with a Brass group consisting of local students and their tutors. Sticky Fingers held their Nativity before they finished for the holidays, and Simply Nativity was held on Christmas Eve afternoon. Lots of local people came to this. Midnight Communion was followed by Family Worship on Christmas Day. We have renewed links with local schools so that there were 2 x Weaverham High School Christmas Services and 1 x Forest School Nativity plus visits to church or assemblies with Weaverham Academy, Russet and Forest schools

The Children's Space at the back of church is growing in popularity.

During the year several faithful members of the congregation died and they will be greatly missed.

As we come out of the last year that has seen a slow, but steady recovery from the pandemic, we look forward with hope and optimism to the new year and new beginnings led by God.

## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS'S REPORT TO THE ECUMENICAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN, WEAVERHAM**

This report on the accounts of the ECC for the year ended 31 December 2022 is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church of England Accounting Regulations 2006 (the Regulations) and Section 3 of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act). As members of the ECC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirements of the Regulations and Section 43(2) of the Act do not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those accounts in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 43(7)(b) of the Act and to be found in the Church of England Guidance, 2006 edition. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the ECC and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given on the accounts.

In accordance with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 41 of the Act, to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirement of the Act and the Regulations have not been met; or to which, in my opinion attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Kevin D Pickering – Hon Independent Examiner – January 2023

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

There was an overall excess of expenditure of £4721 and an investment loss of £202 that were exasperated by us being behind with our gift aid repayments otherwise a surplus would have been made on the year. Work progresses with catching up with our gift aid claim. There was a welcome increase in pledged giving at the year end, however most of it was one off gifts. We received donations of £6000 towards PA improvements in the Church and Lighthouse of which around half remains to be spent. We received 2 grants during the year of £300 for the Queen's Jubilee book and the other from the Diocese of £1089 towards heating costs. The Lighthouse produced an operating surplus on the year, the first since the Covid epidemic as activities increased. The Men's Society ceased operating during the year and its modest remaining funds were donated to the Church. It has been succeeded by periodic Men's Saturday morning breakfasts.

Looking ahead a Fund Raising group has been set up with the aim of increasing usage of the Church and Lighthouse to produce a new income generating stream. None the less giving from our existing congregation and users still need to carry on increasing. Our energy contracts are not due for renewal until 2024. It is likely there will be a significant increase going forward.

Energy usage for the year was as follows, 2021 figures in brackets. Gas, church 77 580 kWh (81 136), Lighthouse 14 997 kWh (14 315 kWh) and electricity, church 3852 kWh (3631 kWh), Lighthouse 7284 kWh (3703 kWh). An energy survey of the Church was carried out in December with the results expected in early 2023.

## **RESERVES POLICY**

Reserves policy remains to hold at least £25 000 to cover three months of normal church activities and £10 000 against any urgent repairs. They are currently above this as some money is held against the Lighthouse Annexe project completion and a possible VAT liability of £29 677. They are currently below plan but should recover on receipt of gift aid repayment.

## **ACCOUNTING POLICY**

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Church of England Accounting Regulations taking into account the SORP 2005 revisions on a receipts and payments basis including as far as possible most Church activities being reported on a gross basis. Movable church furnishings are held on trust for the Council by the Churchwardens and would require faculty approval before removal. The Mothers Union accounts are not included as they respond to their headquarters for accounting purposes.

## ACCOUNTS FOR THE 12 MONTHS ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	2021
		£	£	£	£
<b>RECEIPTS</b>					
Voluntary income	A	93248		93248	94148
Church activities	B	14509		14509	8732
Fund raising					
Income from investments	C	<u>621</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>679</u>	<u>80</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>108378</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>108436</b>	<b>102960</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>					
Church activities	D	111982		111982	105006
Fund raising					
Salaries		<u>1175</u>		<u>1175</u>	<u>2080</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>113157</b>		<b>113157</b>	<b>107086</b>
NET INCOMING RES.		-4779	58	-4721	-4126
Losses on investments		<u>-</u>	<u>-202</u>	<u>-202</u>	<u>217</u>
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>		<b>-4779</b>	<b>-144</b>	<b>-4923</b>	<b>-3909</b>
BALANCES AT 1 JANUARY		<u>752087</u>	<u>2685</u>	<u>754772</u>	<u>758681</u>
<b>BALANCES AT 31 DEC</b>		<b>747308</b>	<b>2541</b>	<b>749849</b>	<b>754772</b>

### BALANCE SHEET 31 DECEMBER 2022

<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>					
Tangible asset – Lighthouse		684440		684440	684440
Investment assets			1529	1529	1731
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Short term deposits	E	44622	1013	45635	52976
Cash at banks	E	<u>18245</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>18245</u>	<u>15625</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>747307</b>	<b>2542</b>	<b>749849</b>	<b>754772</b>

The notes A to F form part of the accounts

#### A Voluntary income

Planned giving					
Gift aid		66562		66562	63295
Tax recovered					14363
Other		5247		5247	6365
Collections		3780		3780	1771
Donations	general	7443		7443	2054
	Curate	3160		3160	4300
Grants	Jubilee book	300		300	
	Fuel	1089		1089	
Legacy		<u>5667</u>		<u>5667</u>	<u>2000</u>
		93248		93248	94148

#### B Church activities

Lighthouse		6377		6377	2267
Food sales		1409		1409	785
Fees		<u>6723</u>		<u>6723</u>	<u>5680</u>
		14509		14509	8732



C Income from investments	£	£	£	£
Deposit account	601		601	27
Wayleave	20		20	20
War Memorial	<u>    </u>	<u>58</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>33</u>
	621	58	679	80

#### D Church activities

Giving				
Overseas missions	1000		1000	1000
Overseas development	2000		2000	3000
Home missions	2025		2025	2025
Ministry				
Parish share	62991		62991	61653
Circuit fee	5738		5738	4340
Other ministry costs	6082		6082	5663
Curate	5962		5962	4850
Church heat, light and water	7310		7310	3702
Church running and maint.	10505		10505	11001
Training	353		353	470
Lighthouse	5747		5747	4618
Food				14
Administration	<u>2269</u>		<u>2269</u>	<u>2670</u>
	111982		111982	105006

During the year the ECC employed a verger and relied on casual organists. The organists deal with their own tax liabilities and payments to the verger are too small to attract social security payments. Reimbursement of out of pocket expenses were made to some members of the ECC, all supported by the necessary invoices.

#### E Cash balances at 31 December

Current account	6153		6153	6439
Deposit account	44622		44622	52022
Lighthouse	12092		12092	9186
War Memorial deposit		1013	1013	954
War Memorial 74 CBF shares	<u>    </u>	<u>1529</u>	<u>1529</u>	<u>1731</u>
	<b>62867</b>	<b>2542</b>	<b>65409</b>	<b>70332</b>

Approved by the Ecumenical Church Council at its meeting held on

Reverend Paul Withington  
Incumbent

John J C Freeman  
Hon treasurer