



ANNUAL REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

For the year ended 31st December 2024

INCUMBENT:

The Revd Jun Kim
The Rectory
15 Honeysuckle Way, Northampton NN3 3QE

**THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST PETER & ST PAUL,
ABINGTON, NORTHAMPTON**

Charity Registration Number: 1131414

BANK:

Lloyds TSB, George Row, Northampton
Natwest, The Drapery, Northampton

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER:

Mr Keith Loader
149 Park Avenue North
Northampton
NN3 2HY

St Peter & St Paul Abington – Annual Report 2024

Background

Abington PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, The Revd Jun Kim in promoting the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, the pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical. It also has the maintenance responsibilities for the Parish Church, the Parish Rooms in Ashburnham Road and a curate's house at 21 Lime Avenue. The incumbent is chaplain of, and has pastoral responsibility for, St Christopher's Home within the Parish.

Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

During the year, the following served as members of the PCC:

Incumbent: The Revd Jun Kim

Curate: Rev Tracy Pegram

Readers: Mrs Alison Barnes
Mr Prester Coleman

Lay Pastoral Ministers: Mrs Elizabeth Kelly

Wardens: Mr Jim Mercer
Mr Donald Loe

Treasurer: Mrs Susannah McKay

Secretary: Mrs Melissa Tallack

Mr Bob Purser (Co Chair)
Mrs Esme Cushing (Safeguarding Officer)
Mrs Cathy Tinsley
Mr Damian Pickard
Mr Douglas Rutherford
Mrs Elizabeth Loe
Mr Andrew Munns
Mrs Jane Evans
Miss Dianne Ward
Mrs Susan Harrison
Mr Chris Waters
Mr John Wishart
Mr Matthew George

ABINGTON ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

Sunday 18th May 2025

To be held in Church after morning service

The meeting consists of the Annual Meeting of the Parishioners, to which all parishioners are welcome and eligible to vote, and the Annual Church Meeting, at which all are welcome but only those on the Electoral Roll of the Parish are eligible to vote.

AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISHIONERS

1. Minutes of the Meeting held on Sunday 28th April 2024
2. Apologies for absence
3. Election of Churchwardens
(Nominations must be received in writing before the meeting)
4. To receive both the Fabric and Churchwardens' report

AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

1. Minutes of the Meeting held on Sunday 28th April 2024
2. Apologies for absence
3. Rectors Report and Opening Remarks
4. Electoral Roll
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Appointment of Independent Examiners
7. Election of Deanery Synod members
8. Election of members to serve on the PCC
9. Reports – included with this agenda – please read before attending – the reports will not be given at the meeting, but questions about them will be received
10. Question Time

MINUTES OF ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

Held on Sunday 28 April 2024

11.30am in Church

Present: Fr Jun Kim (joint chair), Bob Purser (joint chair), Shirralee Smith, Amanda Burrell, Meryl Nicholls, Sandy Lewis, Jackie Harris, Joanne Ellison, Ella Tinsley, John Cumberpatch, Cathy Tinsley, Dorothy Bonsall, Jenny Parkin, John Parkin, Chris Waters, Jane Waters, Jenny Mercer, Jim Mercer, Alan Sutton, Alison Barnes, Dianne Ward, Kenneth Hunter, Sandra Francis, Rev Tracy Pegram, Jane Evans, Douglas Rutherford, Elisabeth Townsend, John Wishart, Sue Lett, Liz Kelly, Claudia Martinez, Gladys Higueros, Kate Murdoch, Charlotte Hodge, Hilary Hodge, Rhiannon George, Tim Dolan, Owen Warr, John Langley, John Knight, Melissa Tallack (minutes)

Apologies: Prester Coleman, Elizabeth Coleman, Elaine Davies, Rachel Menzies, Sue Harrison, Lawrence Hodge, Matthew George, Damian Pickard, Jill Pickard

1 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Minutes were unanimously approved by all present.

2 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising

3 ELECTION OF CHURCH WARDENS

Two written nominations were received

Donald Loe: Proposed by Douglas Rutherford, Seconded by John Langley

Jim Mercer: Proposed by John Langley and seconded by Prester Coleman

Both were elected as Churchwardens for the Parish and we wish them every prayer and blessing for their forthcoming year in office. No other nominations were received. Deputy Churchwardens will be elected at the first PCC meeting following the APCM.

4 FABRIC AND CHURCHWARDENS REPORT

Donald Loe presented the Churchwardens report (as contained within the Annual Report) and gave thanks for Jun and his family and for Tracy's ministry. Dianne Ward proposed acceptance of the Churchwarden's report and this was seconded by Alan Sutton.

Next Annual Meeting of Parishioners after 10 o'clock service – Date TBC

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

Held on Sunday 28 April 2024

11.40 am in Church

Present: Fr Jun Kim (joint chair), Bob Purser (joint chair), Shirralee Smith, Amanda Burrell, Meryl Nicholls, Sandy Lewis, Jackie Harris, Joanne Ellison, Ella Tinsley, John Cumberpatch, Cathy Tinsley, Dorothy Bonsall, Jenny Parkin, John Parkin, Chris Waters, Jane Waters, Jenny Mercer, Jim Mercer, Alan Sutton, Alison Barnes, Dianne Ward, Kenneth Hunter, Sandra Francis, Rev Tracy Pegram, Jane Evans, Douglas Rutherford, Elisabeth Townsend, John Wishart, Sue Lett, Liz Kelly, Claudia Martinez, Gladys Higueros, Kate Murdoch, Charlotte Hodge, Hilary Hodge, Rhiannon George, Tim Dolan, Owen Warr, John Langley, John Knight, Melissa Tallack (minutes)

1 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Minutes were proposed and unanimously accepted by all present. Thank you to Sue Harrison for standing in for Melissa last year.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from : Prester Coleman, Elizabeth Coleman, Elaine Davies, Rachel Menzies, Sue Harrison, Lawrence Hodge, Matthew George, Damian Pickard, Jill Pickard

3 RECTORS REPORT AND OPENING REMARKS

It's been 5 years since I arrived in Abington. Can you believe? 5 years already. My eldest son Emmanuel was 8 months old when we came. He will be 6 next week!

Someone told me, days go by slowly but years go very quickly.

Some of you may have seen the churchwarden's very thorough report. It just reminds us of just how full last 12 months have been.

When I said, 'full' I don't mean just busy. Yes we have been very busy indeed but by 'full' I mean the sense of fullness in everything we did and shared in the name of Christ. We have seen the generosity of people of God in its fullness through donations and giving for others. We have seen the dedication towards service of others in its fullness through all mission initiatives we do for children and young people, for the elderly, for babies and mums in need, for nurturing disciples. Susie our treasurer can explain to you further about just how effective we have been in those areas. We have seen the kindness of the people of God in its fullness through the welcome and the outreach. And finally, we have seen and experienced the richness of God's blessing in its fullness through all wonderful and encouraging signs of growth in our numbers, in our mission and in our communal life as a church.

It has been another very, very full year. In fact, when I look back the past 5 years, there hasn't been a single year that didn't feel full.

Jesus said, in John 10, "I came to you give you life, life in all its fullness."

The fullness that we have seen and shared in the last 5 years is itself clear evidence of Christ's presence in our midst, in our lives and in this church.

I am immensely grateful to every single one of you. You are truly inspiring people. And I am so grateful and proud to be part of Abington.

Since I have become one of the assistant Rural deans, I have had more chances to see and visit other churches. There is a saying in Korea, that it's when you come out of your home and live in other places, you realise how sweet and precious your home is. The same way, seeing those other churches, just made me realise just how blessed we are. And I am not just talking about our finance. Because there are churches that has no problem with their finance but is struggling with their identity or their mission.

I think we are so blessed because the people of Abington Church themselves are the blessing to this community. Your generosity, your kindness but most of all, your faith and love for Christ is the true blessing to this community and it is making difference in places that are visible but also in places that are not visible.

The figures I present are not just numbers. Each of them is person with dreams, with hopes, with sorrows and joys. Each of them created by God with a purpose. And God chose you and me to be here in this place which he chose to be the centre of his Kingdom 800 years ago, to make his love and grace visible to others.

So, thank you. Having said this, I realise we still have got work to do. It's not like we are all so perfect. Of course we are not. I am not perfect. But that should encourage us rather than disappoint us. Because that means God has got more for us. After 800 years, his plans are still unfolding. Plans to make us flourish and be more like Christ. The journey doesn't end until God says it's over. Until then, we shall keep going, keep loving and keep sharing what we receive within God's grace and love and in all its fullness.

Thank you for making the love and grace of Christ visible for me. And I pray that I may be like Christ to you too.

Bob thanked Jun for his ministry over the past 5 years. We have been truly blessed to have Jun and his family with us.

4 ELECTORAL ROLL

Douglas Rutherford advised the meeting of the most up to date figures: 135 on the Electoral Roll, comprising of 79 non Residents and 56 Residents. This has increased from 132 last year, with 7 new members, 2 who have passed away and 2 who have moved away. If anyone would like to be added to the electoral rolls, please speak with Douglas. Every 6th year a completely new electoral roll has to be prepared and 2025 is the next year that this is due. Thanks to Douglas for his work as our Electoral Roll Officer.

5 TREASURERS REPORT

Overall, the church received £167,957 in income last year and we spent £168,202. This means we spent just £245 more than our income – effectively a break-even position. This was a really good result as although our budget was to break even, this was set before we knew the full extent of rising energy costs – particularly electricity that is used to heat the rooms.

Our main source of income is the committed giving through the Parish Giving Scheme and envelopes. In 2023 this raised just over £77,700, 1.5% higher than the prior year. Together with the Gift Aid we reclaimed on our donations this made up 60% of our total income.

Fundraising brought in £6,310 – a fantastic result and over £1,200 higher than 2022. We also received rent from hiring out our rooms, and the house we own in Lime Avenue, both of which increased last year. The Ekins Trust also generously provided funding again for Cathy and her team's work with our families and young people.

The other types of income we receive are more variable and unpredictable, but every bit as valued. This includes amounts given outside of the planned giving scheme (including online donations, those through our card terminal, cash donated at services etc). It also includes legacies left to the church and income on our investments - that performed very well last year.

Our recent Giving Campaign.

Everyone hopefully received a letter as part of this, inviting you to either review your current pledge or join our regular giving scheme. I am so pleased to say that we had a very generous response to this campaign.

At the end of December there were 77 individuals and families registered with Parish Giving Scheme - at the start of April this had increased to 84. We have also had 11 donors increase their giving to us. I would like to really thank everyone who gives to the church, every gift is extremely valued.

We really could not continue to do all that we do without your support.

Turning now to look at our expense. The largest cost to us is our parish share and fees paid to the diocese. This was almost half of all our costs at just over £78,200.

The next largest area of spend is on maintaining and running our buildings –that is this church and our parish rooms. 30% of our costs last year (almost £49,000) related to our buildings.

22% is all other expenditure and this totalled £37,000. This includes everything from our office costs (renting our photocopier and hosting our website etc) to the music that makes our worship and other events so special, and everything we do both in the parish and the wider community - from discipleship groups to family fun days, from our Anna Chaplaincy to our fete, from churchyard trails to our trip to the Charterhouse.

The spend on our buildings is split between the costs of maintaining the structure of both the church and the rooms - and the day-to-day running costs of each building.

The higher energy costs we have all seen over the last year, had a very significant impact on us and especially on the cost of running our church rooms. Our electricity bill for the year for the rooms doubled last year to £9,100.

In response to this, we replaced some of the wall panels in the small hall with more thermally efficient ones. This work was completed in December at a cost of £5,100 and this cost is included in the rooms maintenance costs.

Our church utility bills were not as severely impacted as we were still on a fixed price energy tariff. The church running costs also includes the costs of worship materials such as candles and altar requisites, together with the costs of maintaining the technology for our streaming and online services.

The balance sheet lists all our assets (everything we own) and if you take away the amounts we owed others at year end (for bills we received after the year-end) you get our total reserves.

At the start of the year, we increased our investment holdings. We can access our money by selling these if we need to, but until then we are earning good returns on them. All our investments are managed through CCLA in Church of England funds, which means our investments are all aligned to the Church's ethics and values. At the year-end our investments were worth just over £105,000. (Having increased in value almost £5,500 and paid dividends of £2,300 last year).

At the end of December we had just over £56, 000 of cash, across our current and deposit accounts, which is more than adequate to cover our day-to-day needs.

During the year, we decided to create a designated fund for the future repair costs of our organ. Our organ is currently in a good state of repair, but it is 25 years old and at some point in the future (hopefully at least 10 years time) it will need a major overhaul and this will be expensive.

So we are starting to build up a fund for this. £10,000 was transferred into this last year with the intention to add to it every year. Think of it as a separate savings pot.

Overall, we are in a fortunate position as we have a strong and stable balance sheet.

Collections to help others.

We had four collections in 2023 for those in need.

- Our Lent campaign to support Baby Basics and Open Doors, raised in total £1,402.
- Abington Wind Band held a concert in church, where entrance was by donation to Christian Aid, the total amount raised was £500.
- Our nominated harvest charity was USPG and we raised £650 for their work.
- Our Christmas collections were shared between Read Easy and Christians Against Poverty. Your generosity meant we were able to donate £2,300 in total.
- Our Christingle service raised a total of £62 for the Children's Society
- And finally, along with many practical gifts we gave £100 to Baby Basics as part of our reverse advent calendar.

This brought the total amount raised to £5,014. A great result and all of the charities have been very thankful for our support.

I would like to thank everyone for their continued support to the church and to the other campaigns we have run.

Donald asked Susie to explain to the meeting what a fixed asset was and Susie explained it was something that is held for the long term, such as the parish rooms or the house on Lime Avenue.

The financial reports were proposed as accepted by Chris Waters and seconded by John Parkin.

Bob thanked Susie for all her hard work throughout the year and also to Damian Pickard for his support.

6 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER.

Susie recommended Keith Loader to continue as our Independent Examiner and this was unanimously agreed by those present. Thank you to Keith for his review of the set of accounts.

7 ELECTION OF DEANERY SYNOD MEMBERS

Bob reported that we are not electing Deanery Synod members as this was done last year.

8 ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO SERVE ON THE PCC

There were six nominations for the vacancies on the PCC for 2024. The following nominations were received.

Andrew Munns, proposed by Sandra Francis and seconded by Cathy Tinsley
Dianne Ward, proposed by Alan Sutton and seconded by Pat Going
Susannah McKay, proposed by Simon McKay and seconded by Melissa Tallack
Douglas Rutherford, proposed by Dianne Ward and seconded by Donald Loe
Elizabeth Loe, proposed by Melissa Tallack and seconded by Dianne Ward
Susanne Harrison, proposed by Melissa Tallack and seconded by Dianne Ward

There were no other nominations received and all were duly elected. Gratitude was expressed to all those who serve on the PCC.

9 REPORTS

Bob explained that the reports were taken as read but not taken for granted. We are moving towards the idea that every member of church is involved in some way. There is a great breadth to the work we are doing. We give thanks for our curate, our bell ringers, our choir, our weekly meetings of Guides, Brownies and Rainbows, for our safeguarding work and the work of all our committees. Thank you also from the parish to Cathy Tinsley and Dorothy Bonsall for all their years of support for the Mothers Union.

Thank you also to Melissa for her work as our Secretary.

The reports were proposed as accepted by Bob and seconded by Hilary Hodge.

10 QUESTION TIME

There were no questions. Bob thanks all those who had attended and Jun thanked Bob for chairing.

Jun closed the meeting with the Grace.

Next APCM meeting – Sunday after 10 o'clock service – Date TBC

ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2024

1. Curate's Report
2. Churchwarden's Report
3. Lay Pastoral Report
4. Greater Northampton Deanery Synod Report
5. Buildings, Health and Safety Report
6. Choir and Music Report
7. Stewardship Report
8. Children and Youth Missioner Report
9. Tower Captain Report
10. Community and Outreach Report
11. Guides Report
12. Brownies Report
13. Safeguarding Report
14. Discipleship and Learning Report

1. CURATE'S REPORT

Before I arrived in Abington, I was part of an 800th Anniversary Planning Team at a church in Kettering. We had much planned to celebrate our important milestone, all of which was cancelled as Covid took hold. So, I was delighted to be a part of Abington's 800th celebrations, to see plans develop and, this time, become reality.

A special highlight was our patronal festival with outdoor, full immersion baptisms – what a glorious day that was! And this memory nestles between Family Fun Days, welcoming new families into the church and churchyard, Forest Church meet ups, musical extravaganzas, and of course dressing up for the Summer Fair, amongst many other wonderful events. So much celebration, not only of 800 years, but of the life that is overflowing here and now.

I have spent a number of weeks away from the parish in this, my final curacy year. A placement in a gym in Corby showed me just how relevant the message of Christ is outside the boundaries of what we think of as 'church', and two placements in Peterborough Cathedral took my soul to new heights. But in the end, I found that God's call to me is as a parish incumbent. To be based in churches rooted in a place, and to discover what God's plan is for the people there is a wonderful thing, and I am thankful to have had the wisdom and generosity of Revd. Jun to be a shining example of what this can look like. And I am thankful to have been a part of the church here in this place, in Abington Park, to see the fruit of 800 years of faithfulness, and the promise of many, many more to come.

Now in my final year, most of the 'big' things are the last things. Having just presided at my last Easter Sunday service here, the reality of my curacy coming to a close is feeling very real. This will (probably) be my last APCM report, and so I take the opportunity to thank Revd. Jun for being a wonderful Training Incumbent over the last three years, and to thank everyone for their support, prayers and love.

Understandably, people are curious about my next steps and to be honest, I don't fully know where they will lead, as yet, but for now I rejoice that I am here, in Abington, a place which has meant so much and will remain firmly in my heart, wherever I go.

Yours in Christ,

Tracy Pegram

2. CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT

In this year we have celebrated 800 years since a Rector was appointed in 1224, he was Peter de Irchester.



To mark this year events took place within in the church including art installations such as the new icon and the decoration of the church by old and young alike from within the church and from the community. This logo was painted by Katie McKay. The year was celebrated with a special Celebration Service in June with full immersion baptisms in the church yard. Followed by a fancy dress anniversary fete in July and a Renewal Dedication and confirmation service led by Bishop Debbie in September.



Parishioners and the whole community were invited to decorate card butterflies to adorn the church interior one for each of the 800 years, in the end there were about 1400.

In March 2024, we celebrated five years of the ministry of our Rector the Reverend Byung Jun Kim and his family in our midst and we continue to be very thankful for his spirituality, his dedication, his organisation, his compassion, and his faith in Christ which he shares with all who meet him.

We have also been blessed to experience another year of the ministry of the Reverend Tracy Pegram who was ordained Deacon on 3 July 2022. We will not have the benefit of her ministry for much longer, but I am sure we will be always grateful for her faithful, skilful, and loving contribution to the Parish in many spheres. We pray that God will continue to bless her and her family and for others to be benefit from her ministry.

We are thankful for and blessed by those who assist in the Parish with services and learning, calling to mind our assistant priests Jenny and Bishop Andrew, readers Alison and Prester, and our Anna Chaplain Liz Kelly.

Our church service attendance has continued to increase at 10.00am and the 8.15am Sunday service has continued. Our Thursday morning service has continued to flourish.

It is appropriate here to give thanks to all those involved in the Pastoral work in the Parish.



Lent Groups met and pastoral visits continued including at Abington Park View Care Home and our ministry there, through the Anna Chaplain, Liz Kelly, has developed into a wider involvement including the provision of the Eucharist and other craft and social events.



Lent lunches were held in the church rooms to raise money for charity.

The link with Park Avenue Methodist Church has developed with Rev Jun meeting with their Superintendent David on occasions at the Methodist Church. The purpose was always to forge closer ties with them, this has occurred, and joint services and other meetings have been held.

In the Autumn we spent six weekends taking part in Under the Oak sessions in the church rooms where we discerned and prayed together about where God might lead us to be on this 800th anniversary.

Liz Kelly has also continued to be fully involved at St Christopher's Home and for this we are really grateful for her visiting and her part in the Friday services in St Ragener's Chapel.

Throughout 2024 St Christopher's Home continued to hold a Communion service on a Friday morning at St Ragener's Chapel with local priests taking the services on a rota. Evening prayer at St Christopher's has been led by Rev Rachel and Father Peter Gompertz and Father Hugh Kent. On Sunday mornings the Abington Eucharist is streamed to the Homes and residents can follow the service online.

Sadly, this year we mourned the loss of our sisters Margaret Frost and Hilary Kent. We thank God for their lives in the service of the church.

Recitals returned to church on Sunday afternoons, and we are grateful to all those who worked to make those happen and provide the enjoyment.

Once again, the church was made available to local schools for the Christmas concerts and plays.

The team of volunteers who help to keep the churchyard have expanded and worked hard to keep the church yard tidy. We are grateful for all those who volunteer and help in the churchyard.

As you would have seen there has been a huge effort by the congregation to maintain the church rooms and the church and its surroundings.

Sadly, the Robinia tree to the west of the church tower is diseased and will need to be taken down. The tree has not been taken down during 2024.

The prayer ribbon and heart outreach project has continued to be an outreach success. The ribbons have been a great way to bring attention to the church, to bring people together and the passing world to look and partake with this initiative. A special area was created for those who had lost children.

The PCC has continued to look at the Church rooms future. The PCC concluded that the rooms are a valuable asset and whilst we have them, we should look after them properly but for the future we must look at any opportunities that may arise for improvement.

The children and public have been treated to several trails this year in the church yard, the Easter and Christmas ones being examples. We thank Cathy and Susannah for these and the enjoyment they brought.

In July we had a successful fete in the churchyard our grateful thanks for all who enabled this to happen.

Tots and Teddies, now known as Little Fishes – Cathy Tinsley celebrated three years in post in November. The outreach to the community has been very encouraging and we are indebted to her and her helpers for the dedicated and professional work being done to welcome in young families to our church community. Also, Abington Youth church started in the church rooms on Sunday afternoons with fun, food and faith.



A small team also began re-opening the church on Wednesday afternoons and we thank them for it.

We again benefited from some splendid church yard artwork created by Celia and Derek Irwin.

On 14 September the Ride and Stride Day was supported by our church and thanks go to the volunteers who sat to welcome people who travelled from church to church raising money

for the NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST.

We continued to support the St Albans Foodbank with a special effort at Harvest Time. We should mention Malcolm and Jill Ward and their tireless service to the hungry.

We have also continued to work with the Charity called Baby Basics bringing much needed contributions of clothing and baby needs to mothers who would otherwise not have coped. We became an Emergency Pack distributor. Thanks to Melissa and all those who contributed and those who knitted so beautifully.

We thank Matthew George, Richard White, Andrew Munns, Liam Menzies, and John Knight whose efforts, together with our truly knowledgeable Rector, who have continued to stream our Sunday service, and which continues to be accessible on YouTube and Facebook and enhance the worship experience.

The services continued to be graced with music, and we thank our Choir master and the choir for their dedication and consummate skill in leading our worship in church. We are also grateful for those who stand in for Tim.

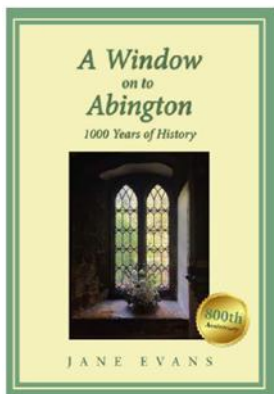
As last year the services have been topped and tailed with notices, different people doing the intros and outros by Tim or other music recitals. All this adds to the whole worship experience for which we are grateful. The on-line service has brought creativity from different people within the Parish, thanks to you all.

One of the great blessings of Reverend Jun's ministry has been the strengthening of our connections with St Christopher's Home and this continues. We know this has been a blessing to the staff and residents. Services in St Ragener's chapel continue. Although Reverend Rachel is no longer employed by the Home she still assists voluntarily.

We have referred to the Rev Jun's efforts earlier and we must applaud our Rector for his work in our midst and in the Diocese and nationally as a Bishops' Advisor for the National Selection Process. He is also the Assistant Rural Dean.

We have been blessed that he brought Simona and Emmanuel and Elijah into our midst. The young family is a joy to us, and we thank God for them. Rev Jun's work in the spiritual life of the church has been, once again, inspiring, and skilful. He has co-ordinated a team that has brought new people and children into the church environment, and we thank all of those who have been working with the children especially Cathy Tinsley, our Children and Youth Missioner. Rev Jun has been supported by Rev Tracy our Curate, Rev. Jenny Parkin, Bishop Andrew and by a team of preachers, including our Readers Alison and Prester and our Pastoral Minister and Anna Chaplain Liz Kelly. We have enjoyed the variety of delivery and the knowledge that has flowed through to us in church, together with the team of Junior Church helpers. Cathy's work continues to bear much fruit.

One of our Parishioners, Jane Evans, has written a book about the first 1000 years of the parish it is called *A Window on to Abington*.



The work of the PCC and the Standing Committee has continued throughout this time. We thank all the officers and PCC with their committees for their dedication throughout the year. We must mark the service and dedication of our churchwarden Jim Mercer who is to stand down this after 17 to 18 years being on the PCC and churchwarden from time to time.

We must not forget those who have been keeping the church clean throughout this period and those raising money through our Antiques Fairs, quizzes and concerts, we give our thanks to them.

Donald Loe & Jim Mercer

3. LAY PASTORAL REPORT

Home Communion. Monthly visits to take Home Communion were made to three parishioners.

Anna Chaplaincy. The ministry at Abington Park View continues to thrive. Every two months many residents, and some staff, receive Holy Communion, which is celebrated by Revd Jun or Revd Tracy. Messy Vintage is great fun, and everyone enjoys the craft activities. The monthly Songs of Praise afternoons gives those who come the opportunity to sing some of their favourite hymns and hear well-known stories from the Bible. Several family members or friends have begun to come and take part in our services too, which is greatly appreciated. I am also grateful for the support of a number of members of the church who help at these sessions.

I attend the Friday morning Eucharist at St Christopher's on alternate weeks and lead the intercessions. Interest in studying the bible remains high and during Lent we considered several images of Christ that are presented in the bible. In the autumn we joined the rest of Abington Church in using the Pilgrim Course, 'Church and Kingdom' Both studies proved popular and were very well attended.

Visiting individuals in their own homes, in care homes, or in hospital is another part of my pastoral and Anna Chaplaincy ministry.

Funeral Ministry. I took two funerals for residents at Abington Park View Care Home and was privileged to assist at four more for long-standing members of our congregation.

Zoom Compline. This takes place on a weekly basis and is an opportunity to share prayer requests and to support each other virtually, as well as enjoying this beautiful service at the end of the day.

As well as the above, I try to make myself available to anyone who needs support in the form of a listening ear or prayer support.

Liz Kelly



4. GREATER NORTHAMPTON DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Deanery Synod representatives have been: Matthew George Damian Pickard Bob Purser Rev Byung Jun Kim Rev Tracy Pegram.

Synod received a visit from Bishop Debbie, who answered a range of questions on her vision for the Diocese. Synod also a presentation of the Hope Centre, and chaplaincy in our prisons and the implications of the General Synod consideration of Living in Live and Faith. It also noted the gap between requests and payments from parishes for the Diocesan as parish share.



5. BUILDINGS, HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT

Church

The ineffective lighting on the balcony has been replaced with new wall-mounted low energy LED fittings. The lighting the choir and in the area between the pulpit and the lectern has been improved, with increased light levels. New low energy LED light fittings have been used.

The projector screen had to be re-fixed after the fixings of one bracket became loose and caused the screen to partially collapse.

The Quinquennial survey was carried out by the Architect in July. There are several items that need attention, including the metal roof of the tower and the metal roof of the vestry.

As part of the QQR, electrical testing of the church wiring indicated several items that needed attention. PAT testing of portable items has also been carried out.

Following the repairs to the pipe under the vestry floor, the wooden blocks of the floor have been problematic. A de-humidifier has been installed to try to dry out the damp blocks. In due course these blocks will be re-laid and the floor properly re-instated.

The church clock needed several visits from the clock specialists in order to get it repaired

A specially commissioned Icon to celebrate the 800th anniversary has been placed in the Lady Chapel, on the altar.

Church-yard

The large Robinia tree next to the tower was felled as it was diseased with honey fungus. It was in danger of falling. Another smaller Robinia tree beside the east path fell down on its own and was cleared away.

The church is lucky to have a team of dedicated volunteers who keep the church-yard looking beautiful.

Thanks are due to them.

Following a theft, two replacement mowers were obtained, as well as various new hand-tools.

Plans are in hand to re-lay the south path which is uneven and presents a slip/trip hazard, especially when the weather is icy.

Church Rooms

We still benefit from a long-term tenant who runs a nursery.

The outside of the main hall has been re-decorated in some areas. Also the outside of the kitchen door and nearby panels have been re-painted.

Five of the poorly insulated panels on the east side have been replaced with double glazed units by Ryan Clayson. These will reduce heating costs associated with the area used by the nursery.. The “wi-fi” internet connection has been improved.

Lime Ave

We have a long-standing tenant for this house. A new lease has been agreed. A new fence panel has been fitted at the bottom of the garden.

The committee met 7 times in 2024.

Andrew Munns



6. CHOIR AND MUSIC REPORT

The choir continues to provide an anthem and lead hymns for each service, and we very much hope that the choice of music serves to enhance the quality of the worship here at Abington. We try to include a number of good quality worship songs to complement the traditional hymns and the repertoire of worship songs has expanded again in 2024.

We have continued to draw on our talented pool of instrumentalists to contribute to our services by providing instrumental accompaniments to the singing and music to close the service.

Sunday afternoon recitals in 2024 highlighted music as part of our 800-year celebrations. We had two afternoons of home-grown music from the George, Hodge, Jones and May families. We held a Songs of Praise afternoon when we learned a little bit about the history of hymns over the centuries. In December, the church choir and the Watling Singers closed the celebrations with the Christmas music from Handel’s “Messiah” accompanied by a small orchestra.

As always, I wish to record a great debt of gratitude to the choir and instrumentalists for all their hard work during the year. Roger Palmer has continued to deputise regularly with Matthew George always on hand to help at short notice, often having to juggle his other responsibilities to be able to assist.

I am excited to report that during the year we were lucky to attract Paul Nathan to join us as Assistant Director of Music. Paul is a very talented pianist and general musician and is embarking upon a “conversion” to playing the organ. He has already played for a number of services and taken choir practices, and he will continue to develop and learn about the specific needs of church music here at Abington as time goes by.

People continue to take the trouble to say that they have appreciated the musical contributions to our worship and these words of encouragement are very much appreciated.

Tim Dolan, Director of Music



7. STEWARDSHIP REPORT

During the year we ran a Stewardship renewal campaign during February. This consisted of an individualised letter, a leaflet outlining our stewardship scheme and a form to join the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) where appropriate.

The campaign was aimed at three different groups;

- 1) A letter of thanks and leaflet to committed givers through the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) who inflation proof their gift.
- 2) A letter of thanks and leaflet to committed givers through the PGS who do not inflation proof their gift, asking them to review how much they give.
- 3) An appeal to uncommitted givers to join our Christian Giving Scheme and sign up to PGS.

Overall the campaign was a success, with 13 existing givers increasing their monthly gift and 10 new pledges. This means we now have 88 pledged givers committed to giving £86,000 a year. With the addition of the gift aid refund, this gives our Church a pledged income of over £100,000 a year which is very commendable.

Thank you to everyone for your generosity – it allows us to do all the good things that are happening in our church and community. If anybody missed the campaign or forgot to alter their gift, please contact me so I can help you.

Damian Pickard, Chair of finance Committee

Aims of The Stewardship Sub-committee

- Regular teaching on Christian giving
- Following the Church of England guidelines of giving to God 10% of our income of which half should be for the local church.
- Establishing a standing Stewardship sub-committee who will:
 - Providing regular reports to the PCC and congregation on our level of giving
 - Ensuring all members of the church understand and have the opportunity to join the Christian Giving Scheme
 - Thanking members of the Christian Giving Scheme annually
- Exploring how to promote giving by legacy



8. CHILDREN AND YOUTH MISSIONER REPORT

Dear God, Thank you for the children and young people in our families, our church and our community. Together we are your family. As friends of Jesus, help us to grow in faith and to love each other, now and in the years to come.

Amen.

Highlights of 2024 – times of many blessings and joys.

1. **Baptisms –11 children and young people were baptised.** We thank God for all those who were baptised – Evgenii, Alyosha, Peter, Paul, Dace, Maeva, Leon, Andrew, Evie, Eloise and Grace.
2. **Admission to Holy Communion – 3 children were admitted to Holy Communion.** Please continue to pray for Evgenii, Alyosha and Katie.
3. **Confirmation – 5 young people were confirmed.** We thank God for Liam, Louis, Peter, Paul and Billie.
4. **Junior Church** – children enjoy coming to JC. We learn about Jesus and other people in the bible and how important it is to have a faith, to grow as a Christian and to be part of the church family. We have fun, share stories, pray, make things and generally enjoy our time together. Thank you for all the volunteers, especially Simona, Jane and Val who have joined the team during the year.
5. **All Age Services** – it is important that, on a regular basis, we all join together in worship on a Sunday morning. It has been lovely to see the children grow in confidence as they take part in the services.
6. **Abington Youth Church** – this began at the end of 2024, in recognition that we have a number of teenagers in our church family. We wanted to provide something on a regular basis to allow them to develop fellowship and to grow in faith. Thank you to everyone who has made Abington Youth Church possible and we look forward to more opportunities to meet in the coming year.
7. **Little Fishes** – our Baby and Toddler Group meets on a Monday morning at the Church Rooms and over the past 12 months the number of families has increased so that we often have nearly 30 children attending with their parents, grandparents and carers. Thank you to all the committed helpers from the church who support and nurture these families.
8. **Forest Church** – thank you to Revd. Tracy for leading these opportunities to welcome young families to the church, to explore God’s creation and to wonder at our place in it. Little Fishes families have been particularly enthusiastic about Forest Church.
9. **Family Fun Afternoons** – We organised two events for families and friends during the year. These continue to be very successful and they provide opportunities to welcome people to the church for a time of fun and fellowship. On each occasion over 150 people attended these free events.

Thank you to all of you who have supported the children’s and young people’s ministry during the year. We couldn’t do it without your support, prayers and enthusiasm.

Cathy Tinsley, Children and Youth Missioner



9. TOWER CAPTAIN REPORT

The year 2024 began in a similar way to last year. We focused on our Saturday morning practices and our Sunday morning ringing prior to the church services. Our numbers swelled for Saturday but our Sunday ringing remained a bit intermittent.

Abington Church celebrated its 800th anniversary this year and we talked about how the bell ringers could mark this event. Maybe a Quarter peel – but that may be a bit ambitious.

Sadly during March Selwyn Griffiths became quite poorly with his heart and with great shock to all of us on the 30th April 2024 he passed away. He was an enormous character within our group and for a while we were lost without him. Nick Parsons stepped into his shoes and despite his own health problems, he has continued to lead our practices and occasionally come on Sundays.

Our numbers became quite low for the rest of the year and we have struggled to progress. Even if we only have 5 ringers we will continue to have a practice. We ring before the service as often as our numbers allow us to, but that is not very often.

For 800 years celebration we managed to ring before the service and make a joyful sound.

10. COMMUNITY AND OUTREACH REPORT

We hoped that our 800th Anniversary year was going to be a special year and it certainly didn't disappoint. We came together for events many times throughout 2024, not just within our own congregation, but with other churches and members of our wider community too.

We held many open and visible events that enabled us to connect with people who have not been part of our church historically. These powerful moments of witness demonstrate the life, joy and love within our church and we are grateful to everyone who helped organise and run them as well as those who turned up to support them.

We also held events that celebrated the many talents we are blessed with within our congregation and enjoyed many moments of fellowship, including our Parish BBQ which Jill and Damian Pickard so generously hosted again.

2024 was also a year of reflection. The Under the Oak series enabled us to take a much-needed step back, to reflect on what role God is calling us to play within our community. The sessions were very well attended, and three key words emerged from our discussions: **Feeding, Individual and Community**. These three words, and the people who felt a strong connection to these words, will help guide our plans in the coming years.

We continued to hold some of our usual events throughout the year including the two, increasingly popular, Family Fun Days. It is so lovely to see the front lawn and church filled with families from our community having a wonderful time, enjoying the free activities and food we provide.

The summer fete and the seven antiques fairs we ran through the year were responsible for raising the vast majority of our fundraising income in 2024, raising £2,419.99 and £3,288.67 respectively. We extend a huge thank you to the Menzies family for all that they do to support these events.

Some of our other events, trialled for the first time in 2024, such as the Tea and Talk series proved to be a big success, and enabled us to raise funds for several charities. We will aim to run more of these in the future.

We also continued to provide support to Baby Basics throughout the year. Sadly, the numbers of mothers and families in Northampton who are needing to rely on this service do not decrease and so the work we do to support the charity is more important than ever. Thankfully we have a very generous congregation who are prepared to give up time and money to buy or make items needed by the charity. We are frequently faced with a parish office that is *full* with donations and I think we all agree that this is a nice problem to have. Baby Basics continue to be incredibly grateful for our support.

As always, the list of people to thank is incredibly long as we benefit from such amazing and regular support from so many of our congregation and beyond. Without the help and support of everyone, we would not be able to achieve the reach and impact we have for people within our congregation and community. I would like to extend a huge and heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped make 2024 such a special and impactful year, especially the very hardworking and dedicated members of the community and outreach committee.

Melissa Tallack

11. GUIDES REPORT

Abington Guides & Rangers have enjoyed another busy year, trying new activities and skills, from making 3D pop-up cards and attempting nail art (hammer & nails, NOT finger nails), to making fresh pasta and a lovely evening with our very own Revd Tracey Pegram. We also continue to do lots of programme work - Unit Meeting activities and Skill Builders - so that our girls can earn Bronze, Silver and Gold awards.

During the winter term, we focused on the World Association of Girl Guides & Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) World Centres - Our Chalet in Switzerland, Our Cabana in Mexico, Pax Lodge In London, Sangam in India and Kusafiri in Africa. Our Rangers, who have all visited Our Chalet, ran a Swiss evening to celebrate World Thinking Day in February.

During the spring and summer, we made the most of taking the girls outdoors, from team games on Abington Park, to a picnic at Brixworth Country Park and helping weed and plant out at Abington Park's Community garden. We also ran activities in Abington Churchyard and organised a Silly Olympics session at Jubilee camp site, Castle Ashby. Unfortunately, our end of term Chip Butty walk had to be cancelled, due to torrential rain, so we played games and had chips in the guide rooms.

Some of the girls favourite evenings include our Dark evening, where our Patrols are given time to make a den, before the lights go off. Girls are then given one torch per group as they complete individual and group tasks in the dark, in their dens! Another favourite is cooking with Jilly D, this time making pizzas. We also love our campfires at Jubilee campsite. And at Christmas, we rounded off the year with Santa's craft Workshop one week and a North Pole Party another week.

Early on in the year, we joined Grand Union District for a sleepover at Jump In trampoline Park, near Leamington Spa. Our girls had the best time running, jumping and bouncing around, before quietening down with a film before bed. The girls were treated to another bounce on the trampolines before breakfast and home.

In August, we ran a 3 night camp at Jubilee, on a 'Wide West' theme, with outlaws, stick on moustaches, hobby horses, native American teepees, archery and lots of laughs.

We are currently planning a 'Superheroes' themed camp at Youlbury, a scout activity site near Oxford.

County events offer different experiences for units, such as an energetic visit to the Ninja Warrior Adventure park in Milton Keynes; an evening at FlipOut trampoline centre in Rushden Lakes; an exciting After Dark night hike around Twywell, and a trip to the cinema to watch Moana 2. All enjoyed by so many girls from around Northamptonshire.

With Abingtons Rainbows and Brownies, we had a really lovely day out at The Black Country museum and ran a joint Coffee evening, in aid of Macmillan Cancer support, raising nearly £500! Thanks to Sandy for organising.

Throughout the year, we have attended a few church services including Mothering Sunday, Harvest Festival and a special service with Bishop Debbie. Abington Guides also made the posies given out on Mothering Sunday service and helped run a stall at the Church fete. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Abington Church and the PCC for allowing us to use the Parish rooms.

We now have 20 girls, who are committed, keen and enthusiastic about Girlguiding, but we would welcome any girl, age 10 - 18 to join us on a Monday evening, in the Parish Rooms.

Abington guides continue to provide a girls only safe space, allowing them to discover and grow, whilst having lots of fun and making new friends.

Alison Comery, Abington Guides and Rangers Leader



12. BROWNIES REPORT

The Brownies and Rainbows have been very busy over the last 12 months, they have achieved numerous badges, with many gaining gold and silver awards. We have been on sleepovers, had a day out at Black Country Museum, had a coffee evening for Macmillan cancer, celebrated Thinking Day at the Saints Rugby Ground, helped in the community by spring cleaning the church, had a fun 'chip shop' walk, eating chips while walking back to the rooms, made pancakes at Gallones ice cream parlour.

We have had some joint meetings together playing games and crafting our way through all the various seasons and celebrations of the year and organising children's games for the fete.

We are fortunate in the leaders we currently have, committing many hours to our girls, but we would love to recruit another adult leader to our Rainbow unit, someone who could commit a couple of hours a week, occasional day trip out, and want to become warranted. Anyone bursting to join us, please speak to Sandy.

We would like to thank the Church for all the help and support they give us throughout the year.

Abington Brownie and Rainbow Leaders



13. SAFEGUARDING REPORT

Safeguarding is the action the Church takes to promote and protect the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and to prevent abuse from occurring. Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in promoting safeguarding.

The Church of England's 'Promoting a Safer Church' calls all churches to share their commitments to safeguarding. Those commitments are:

- Promote a safer environment and culture
- Safely recruit and support all those with responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults
- Respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- Care pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse or other affected persons
- Care pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns/allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Respond to those who may pose a present risk.

The PCC has a legal requirement to report on safeguarding progress and it remains a high priority. Safeguarding is a standing item on the agenda of the PCC. In July 2024, the independent Makin report was published, an independent review into the Church of England's handling of allegations of serious abuse by the late John Smyth.

In light of this report, a safeguarding audit has been commissioned by the Archbishop's Council to conduct an independent and comprehensive audit of all Church of England dioceses and cathedrals.

We continue to monitor that our safeguarding practices are in line with the advice given by the National Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) group, using the Parish Dashboard system to audit how we are performing. Regular updates are provided at the safeguarding agenda item at PCC.

Safeguarding concerns

There were three safeguarding concerns reported between January and December 2024. These have been managed with support and advice from the Diocese.

DBS checks

I continue to act as Lead Recruiter and undertake Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for people holding key roles working with children and vulnerable adults in the church. 12 DBS checks were carried out between January and December 2024.

Safeguarding training

The training page on the diocese webpage has a clear table of what training people should complete <https://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/events-training/training/safeguarding-training.php> and I would urge everyone to check what their role requires. The majority of the modules can be accessed online. When you have completed your training please do let me know so that I can keep the training log up-to-date.

I would like to thank everyone for their cooperation and assistance in this vitally important area of church life. Please do not hesitate to contact me at safeguarding@abingtonchurch.org.uk if you have any questions or concerns.

Esme Cushing, Parish and Safeguarding Officer.



14. DISCIPLESHIP AND LEARNING REPORT

This year the committee organised two main teaching series and fully supported the “Under the Oak” initiative organised by Bishop Andrew (to be fully reported elsewhere.)

In **Lent** we obtained sufficient copies of the Church House booklet “Watch and Pray” to make one available for each person in the congregation. In addition, 30 people signed up to meet in small groups to study the weekly themes from the booklet more closely. This included some newcomers to our groups.

Although there were some negative comments – in particular, many felt that the stress on black spirituality was exclusive and divisive – nevertheless the sessions produced good discussions and fellowship, and an opportunity to pray together.

At St Christopher’s, Liz Kelly led a separate course, the Lifebuilder “Images of Christ” course by Dale and Sandy Larsen. An average of 15 people attended the 4 sessions, with 22 attending in all. It was well received and participants enjoyed the discussions.

The “**Under the Oak**” sessions were held in the Church Rooms in June – July. To tie in with its emphasis on building the Kingdom in Abington, it was decided that our Autumn course would be “**Church and Kingdom**,” the last in the series of the Church of England’s Pilgrim course study guides.

Groups met in homes on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, and Thursday mornings at church. Around 26 attended these groups. In addition, a group was held on Tuesday afternoons at St Christopher’s. Typically, around 17 attended these, although on one occasion the number attending was 27! A couple of people were unable to attend a group, but followed the studies at home.

Each session offered prayers, reflections, a Bible study using the *lectio divina* method (with which some were unfamiliar), opportunities for discussion, and selected helpful quotations. Overall, the course was viewed as a helpful follow-on from the summer’s “Under the Oak” series.

Thanks go to all who attended and especially to those who helped by leading sessions and / or hosting them in their homes.

Prester Coleman