

# St Philip and St James Parish Church Alderley Edge



## Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025

*“Whatever you do, in word or deed, do  
everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
giving thanks to God through him.”*

*Colossians 4.17.*

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St Philip and St James Church, Church Lane, Alderley Edge SK9 7UZ  
Knutsford Deanery (Ref 1403), Diocese of Chester  
Registered Charity Number 1131416

## REVIEW OF THE YEAR

*Ministry Team serving at St. Philip and St. James' during 2025*

Rev'd Robin Pye (Vicar)

Rev'd Canon Professor Loveday Alexander (Associate Priest)

Rev'd Linda Lonsdale (Retired Priest)

Rev'd Amy Ruston (Curate)

Ms Rhona Dalziel (Ordinand)

Mrs Susan Mills (Pastoral Worker)

Mrs Clare Wearne (Baptism Visitor)

Mrs Rachel Roberts (Reader)

Mr Peter Spooner (Organist)

Mrs Maria Byrom (Administrator)

Mr Stuart Rippon (Verger)

Mrs Diane Rippon and Miss Anais Shenton (Cleaners)

### Introduction

It is a great pleasure to report on an active and fruitful year in the life of our church.

As detailed later in the report, our congregation continues to grow and our ministry as a traditional parish church is fruitful with many people coming to us for baptisms, weddings and funerals, for support through our foodbank and engagement with Tuesday Tots, Voices Together, Café Church and the After School Club. We remain the beating heart of this community.

Critical to much of this activity has been the contribution of our curate, Rev'd Amy Ruston. Amy returned from maternity leave in April this year and you will see below the almost immediate impact her ministry had on our attendance figures!

We were also delighted that Rhona Dalziel was accepted for ordination training and, furthermore, it was decided that she would have our church as her placement church during training.

### **Café Church**

Inspired in part by the Diocesan Vision, we established a new worshipping community in Lily and Rose Café and we called it café church. The format follows the lectio divina format we used in church in 2024. We buy everybody who comes a brew and we read a passage of scripture together, leaving some minutes of silence for reflection before we ask questions and talk about the passage. The session ends in prayer. We try and finish in half an hour.

Café Church has been an extraordinary success. It has been supported by members of our congregation as well as people who worship in other churches of different denominations. But, as well as that, people who do not attend church have felt comfortable in joining the group and attending on a regular basis.

### **After School Club**

Our After School Clubs have continued apart from a break in the autumn during the vicar's sabbatical. They are effectively another congregation within our church but also come along to occasional services in church at more conventional times.

### **Building Strategy Sub Committee**

The Building Strategy Sub Committee has continued its very important and very difficult work. The task was to map out a route to a point where we could heat our church building while producing zero carbon emissions.

A major step forward was the commissioning of a study by TGA Consultants who came to study our church building and the way we used it and came up with a three phase plan to get us to net zero.

The net zero officer at Chester Diocese commented,

*'I've read the report this morning, it is very much the most thorough example I've seen so far, and I am impressed by TGA's approach... I am happy with the approach you are taking, and I hope that national church/DAC will be, the level of due regard to net zero is exemplary.'*

The challenges before us remain significant.

Very sincere thanks go to Kate Downes, Brian Thompson, Bev Hartland, Wendy Davies and Bob Tuffin for their hard work.

### **Vicar's Sabbatical**

I took a three-month sabbatical in the autumn of 2025. I am very grateful to the churchwardens and the ministry team for the hard work they did in my absence in order to make this possible.

During my sabbatical I spent some time travelling and studying. The theme of my sabbatical was Remembrance. I wrote up my studies and reflections on a blog called Martinmas.org.

I had a chance to visit all sorts of different churches and to join them for worship.

### **Members of our Church Community who have died**

We lost seven members of our congregation this year.

Helen Binder is the dearly loved wife of Peter Binder. Helen, who was born and grew up in Utah, had been very ill for many years. She was recently baptised at home by Loveday.

Jeremy Cleverly made his mark in our congregation as an enthusiastic supporter of the Book of Common Prayer and the King James Bible, both of which he read using his remarkable talent for drama and projection. He will be especially missed from his place in the left-hand front pew.

David Williams became a regular worshipper at our midweek service in recent years and was greatly valued by the Warm Wednesday community for his stories of his time in the merchant navy and his great appreciation of Pam Ward's cakes.

Anne Smith was well known to our congregation and she became a regular at our midweek services for a while following the death of her husband, Peter.

Douglas Beresford was the best dressed gentleman in the congregation when I first came to Alderley Edge. He would always raise his hat to me and give me a smile as he hurried out of church to spend time with his beloved grandchildren. In recent years he went to live in the Belong Carehome in Macclesfield and became part of our small congregation there.

Elizabeth Haworth moved to Alderley Edge to live with family and joined our congregation. She was the daughter of a minister and was therefore able to give an inexperienced vicar some valuable advice in my early days here.

Geoff Crozier became a regular attender at our 8am service a few years ago. He was already very seriously ill by then but was always smiling as he considered every day to be a miracle in itself. He is one of those worshippers who makes leading worship such a joy, even at 8am on a Sunday morning.

### Normal Pattern of Worship

#### **Sundays**

8.00am Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel using Common Worship Order One using traditional language.

10.00am Choral Eucharist using Common Worship Order One and Seasonal Material

6.30pm Evening Prayer, generally alternating every week between evensong or Taizé style service and online service using zoom.

#### **Wednesdays**

11.30am Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel following the Book of Common Prayer.

#### **Variations**

On the first Sunday of every month at 11.45am we hold an additional service for toddlers and their families which is known as 'Pipnjay'.

On the third Sunday of the month the main 10am service is a shorter 'Family Communion' service using a simpler liturgy.

On the fifth Sunday of the month the main 10am choral eucharist service follows the Book of Common Prayer.

### Morning and Evening Prayer

The vicar says Morning Prayer at 8.15 every weekday morning and is joined online by the ministry team on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

The vicar says evening prayer at 5.30pm every weekday evening and is joined online by members of the congregation. When other matters call the vicar away, these prayers are still said by the congregation in his absence.

### Meditation

From time to time, the vicar runs a series of early morning meditation sessions in church.

### Café Church

Café Church meets every Thursday at 10.30am in the Lily and Rose Café.

### After School Club

We run an after-school club for children aged 5-8 for a number of weeks per year. These offer children a route into getting involved in our family communion services from time to time.

### Occasional Services

We conducted 14 baptisms in 2025, of which 1 was an adult baptism.

2025	14
2024	15
2023	19
2022	20
2021	25
2020	6
2019	13
2018	14
2017	16

We conducted 7 weddings in 2025, which feels like a normal year. However, we only have three weddings and a marriage blessing booked in for 2026.

2025	7
2024	7
2023	4
2022	6
2021	6
2020	1
2019	8
2018	7
2017	11

Three of the weddings were for members of the church family, starting in May with the marriage of Sarah Johnston and Christopher Walker who both sing in our choir. Then we celebrated the marriage of Harriet Nimmo and Henry Offer. Harriet was baptised and confirmed in our church having started to worship with us soon after she moved into the area as an adult. And finally, in August, we welcomed Rev'd Jane Parry back to St Philip & St James to conduct the wedding of Joanna Wearne and Andrew Henshall.

We held 12 funeral services in church this year and our ministry team conducted other funeral services elsewhere.

2025	12
2024	13
2023	11
2022	17
2021	17
2020	3
2019	14
2018	22
2017	18

These included the services for Helen Binder, Jeremy Cleverley, David Williams, Anne Smith, Douglas Beresford, Elizabeth Haworth and Geoff Crozier. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Thought for the Day

Loveday coordinate and sent out a Thought for the Day by email during Lent.

Average Attendance at Services by Month

2024	10am	8am	Evening	Wednesday
January	56	10	16	16
February	65	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>	19
March	70	<b>11</b>	14	<b>18</b>
April	75	8	20	21
May	57	<b>11</b>	<b>21</b>	20
June	<b>70</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>22</b>
July	<b>86</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>21</b>
August	<b>65</b>	8	-	<b>19</b>
September	<b>69</b>	9	11	<b>18</b>
October	<b>69</b>	10	15	17
November	63	<b>9</b>	15	18
December	<b>84</b>	10	15	<b>18</b>

Special services have been excluded from these figures.

Figures in bold represent an increase on the equivalent figure for 2024.

These figures suggest that:

1. We saw five months of declining year-on-year attendance at our main Sunday services at the start of the year. This may have been precipitated by a very cold January and the inability of our heating system to make much impact on that. We were, therefore, very gratified to see attendances rise in the second half of the year compared to last year so that, overall, we may say that the active worshipping component of our congregation has continued to grow.
2. The 8am Sunday service saw a slight increase in attendance.
3. Evening services saw a very slight increase in attendance.
4. Midweek services have maintained their numbers which grew so quickly in 2023.

### Special Services and Events through the Year

#### **January**

We joined other churches in Alderley Edge for a special service of prayers for Christian Unity at St Mary's Alderley.

#### **February**

Easter was very late this year, so we had a longer than usual gap between Epiphany and Lent.

#### **March**

Lent began with our Ash Wednesday services, attended by 60 people.

The annual service for the World Day of Prayer took place at Alderley Edge Methodist Church. This year's service has been prepared by the women of the Cook Islands.

#### **April**

Our deanery was visited by Bishop Mark during Holy Week and services during Holy Week were shared with Holy Cross Knutsford, High Legh and St John's Lindow.

The Maundy Thursday service was back at our church and was attended by 42

As usual we held a Walk of Witness service and Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, an Easter Vigil service on Saturday and a Sunrise service at 5.30am on Easter Sunday. We had 148 people at the main 10am service which represented an increase on last year.

#### **May**

A parish pilgrimage to Northern Ireland was organised by Mandy Parr, building on links that a number of members of our congregation have with that part of the world. The pilgrimage focussed on following in the footsteps of St Patrick and it was a great experience. We were especially grateful for the hospitality and welcome provided by the priest and congregation at St Columba's Church in Belfast.

We held a special service for Ascension Day with 22 people in attendance,

#### **June**

We had a special service for Corpus Christi with 20 people in attendance.

## **July**

A confirmation service was held on 6<sup>th</sup> July and was led by the Sam, Bishop of Stockport. Four members of our congregation were confirmed (Will Lomas, Charlotte Buckley, Lilly Taylor and Harriet Offer) and another member of our congregation was welcomed into the Church of England (Margaret Woodall). In addition, a member of the congregation at St Catherine's Birtles was confirmed in the same service.

## **August**

Like last year, we agreed to suspend evening services for the month of August.

## **September**

Harvest festival took place on 28th September and the service included a baptism. There were 90 people in attendance, an increase from last year.

## **October**

Amy led a lovely animal blessing service.

## **November**

The All Souls Requiem Service was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November. The choir sang Faure's Requiem and 70 people came which represented a decrease compared to last year.

On Remembrance Sunday, the Parish Council asked to move the community act of remembrance from 3pm to 11am and we accommodated this by having a very short service in church before going out to join the community at the war memorial.

The Christmas Fair was held on the last Saturday in November and was once again a resounding success.

## **December**

Christmas services were held as follows:

- 4th December Christingle Service with folk musicians, uniformed youth groups and the primary school choir
- 9<sup>th</sup> December Mothers Union and Toddler Advent Service followed later by the Girls School Carol Service
- 11<sup>th</sup> December Ryleys School Carol Service
- 16<sup>th</sup> December Girls School End of Term Services
- 18<sup>th</sup> December Primary School Nativity Play and Carol Service
- 21st December 9 Lessons and Carols Service was at the Methodist Church.
- 24<sup>th</sup> December 4pm Donkey service
- 24<sup>th</sup> December 6pm Nativity Play Service (this time with donkey)
- 24<sup>th</sup> December 11.15pm Midnight Mass
- 25<sup>th</sup> December 9am Holy Communion
- 25<sup>th</sup> December 11am Family Communion

The numbers attending the second service on Christmas Eve showed a significant increase on last year, possibly because of the advertised attendance of a donkey (who then didn't show up). The 4pm service was absolutely packed out.

Numbers attending Christmas services varied significantly compared to last year.

Midnight Mass numbers remained steady but attendance on Christmas day itself was significantly down on last year.

### THANKS

My thanks this year focus especially on all those people who made my sabbatical possible.

The two main groups to mention here are the ministry team who all took on significantly more work over the three months. So special thanks to Loveday, Linda, Amy, Rachel, Rhona and Sue.

Our two churchwardens also worked very hard to keep things going and I hope Charles doesn't mind if I especially mention Wendy who took on some key additional tasks alongside her responsibilities as Chair of School Governors.

I would also like to thank Tony Snape for stepping into the Fabric Coordinator role. He follows in the footsteps of Martin Sinker who has done such astonishing work for our church over a number of years.

I have already mentioned the Building Sub Committee who have worked very hard. They have now been joined by another subcommittee of fundraisers. They have been gelling as a team in 2025 and we will see great things from them in 2026. They are Amanda Brabban-Brown, Cathy Mandry, Marian Sudbury, Andy Scott, Jeremy Banks and Maxine Drabble.

Our church has a strong focus on mission on this relies on the steady work of many volunteers who keep the Tuesday Tots and the Foodbank and the Warm Wednesday activities going.

To these we can now add two more regular activities:

- The After School Club which relies on the support of volunteers Liz Wilson, Kate Downes and Gaynor Rea.
- Café Church which is also supported on a regular basis by Brian and Sandra Thompson, Liz Wilson, Margaret Seddon, Wendy Walker, Margaret Woodall and Linda Robinson.

As usual, at this point I am trying to remember who I have forgotten this year!

New people who join our church always tell me when I ask them why they joined our church that the people they met here were so friendly. We all play a part in providing that welcome. Jesus said his followers would be known in the world by the fact that they had love for one another. I think people recognise that in us which is why some people want to be a part of it.

*Revd Robin Pye*

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Part of The Diocese of Chester (ref 1403) in Knutsford Deanery;  
The Parish Church of St Philip and St James Alderley Edge  
Church Lane, Alderley Edge SK9 7UZ

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a Charity (No 1131416) within the authority of the Charity Commission.

*Bank Account held:* Barclays plc

The Parish Room adjacent to the Church is also the responsibility of the PCC

### MEMBERS OF THE PCC YEAR 2025/6

*Clergy:* Revd Robin Pye  
Revd Canon Loveday Alexander  
Revd Amy Ruston  
*Reader:* Mrs Rachel Roberts (*Approved member of PCC at APCM 2025*)  
*Pastoral Worker:* Mrs Sue Mills  
*Ordinand:* Miss Rhona Dalziel  
*Churchwardens:* Mrs Wendy Davies  
Mr Charles Rogers

*Deanery Synod Representatives:* Mrs Mandy Parr  
Mr Martin Steiger  
Mrs Sandra Thompson

#### *Members:*

Mrs Amanda Brabban-Brown  
Mrs Maxine Drabble  
Mrs Heather Jobling  
Mrs Margaret Seddon  
Miss Rhona Dalziel  
Mrs Kate Downes  
Mr Bob Tuffin  
Mrs Bethan Weston  
Mr Simon Caporn  
Mr Brian Thompson  
Mr Rupert Downes  
Mr Ian Standen

**Safeguarding Officer**

**Ordinand in training**

**Health & Safety Officer**

**Gift Aid Officer**

**Treasurer**

#### *Non-members fulfilling roles:*

Mrs Gill Shone  
Mr Martin Sinker  
Mr Tony Snape  
Mr Peter Spooner  
Ms Gillian Swain

**Electoral Roll Officer**

**Fabric Committee Chair**

**Building Maintenance**

**Secretary**

**Mothers Union Liaison**

The PCC met on 8 occasions with overall average attendance at 62.5%

Of the 8 meetings, 6 were ordinary and the other 2 were to appoint officers following the APCM and an emergency meeting to commission a report on the church's heating/insulation needs.

Delegated from the PCC were the Standing Committee, the Fabric Committee, Eco Church Committee, Buildings Strategy Committee and Worship Space Committee.

The following 'Mission Groups' reported to the PCC: Pastoral Care; Youth and Children; Music; Training and Discipleship; Worship Space Group.

## **SIDESPEOPLE**

At the year end the list of Sidespeople contained 18 names, as follows:

Amanda Brabban-Brown	Sheila Brown	Josie Dawes
Stuart Heaviside	Frankie Mulcahy	George Munro
Anna Nicholson	Elaine Ockelton	Mandy Parr
Nick Parr	Sue Pawsey	Alan Robinson
Martin Sinker	Linda Snape	Tony Snape
Martin Steiger	Brian Thompson	Sandra Thompson
Bob Tuffin	Wendy Walker	Ian Wilson
Margaret Woodall	Zoe Theofilopoulos	

## **ELECTORAL ROLL**

At the start of the year there were 140 names on the previous Roll of whom 59 were non-resident.

A new Roll was then prepared for 2025 as required by the Church Representation Rules 2025 Edition.

At the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2025, there were 141 members of whom 68 were non-resident. At the end of the year there were 146 names on the Roll of whom 68 were non-resident.

*Mrs Gill Shone, Electoral Roll Officer*

## **CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT**

A mark of a successful and cohesive church is how it stays positive and growing in times of national uncertainties whilst still forging its own strategies for the way ahead. More than ever over the past drawn-out winter, St Philip and St James has become not only a strong and growing centre of worship, but a social hub for Alderley Edge.

Since the introduction of Warm Wednesdays following Covid, the popularity of this mix of a Communion Service, a community lunch, followed by a group sing-song of popular songs old and new, has proved a valuable link and social event. This is very much a part of our church's outreach. For many of those attending, Wednesday has increasingly become a weekly highlight, as numbers continue to grow.

Early in 2025, the Clergy and the PCC together made a decision to keep St Philip and St James a warm and welcoming environment and to protect our building as a beacon in Alderley Edge for generations to come. We agreed, together with the congregation, to face up to the challenges presented by climate

change with a way of maintaining the building, whilst formulating a plan towards a carbon neutral environment. We aimed to show a lead to the local community and to the wider church.

There are often multiple times throughout the week for which we use the building, other than for worship. In fact, there are many times when we use our building for one event or another almost every day. Such multiple usage is absolutely in line with Diocesan objectives and our own Church's mission.

Heating a poorly insulated Victorian church poses many problems in reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, for example Natural Gas. As for many similar Victorian buildings, the journey will be expensive and may take several years, but in the short term with the Winters of 2025/6 approaching and both our main and auxiliary gas boilers failing beyond economical repair, we needed to buy some time in order to keep heating the church.

The PCC gave our Building Strategy Group headed by Brian Thompson permission to approach Consulting Engineers TGA to conduct an energy needs and options assessment. Following their extensive and detailed report, which includes insulating the roof and the future addition of Air/Ground Source heating, as an initial stage in November 2025 TGA were asked to produce a boiler replacement performance specification, consistent with a move to reduce and eventually replace our carbon footprint.

An unexpected change in direction from the Diocese over the speed of movement towards carbon zero has temporarily confused the issue, but our fundraising plans to initiate boiler replacement (to keep us going whilst alternative sources of energy are improved) are still in place.

Part of retaining as much heat in our building, might also be reconstructing the South Porch entrance, incorporating glass doors to better seal the frequent comings and goings through existing porch doors and to eliminate draughts at the rear of the church. Our Church Architect Mark Pearce produced some draft proposals, which are being considered in the light of currently available resources.

In September, Robin embarked on his planned three-month sabbatical and the Wardens wish to express their sincere gratitude to the remaining ministry team, both at St Philip and St James and St Catherine's, together with those who also stepped in to help. It was a testing and exhausting time for all concerned, but their dedication was so much valued and appreciated.

During last Summer, the old inefficient external church flood lights were replaced by modern LED units and a special more focused high beam lamp was installed to illuminate the East Window from the outside. Grateful thanks to Bob Tuffin for his expert involvement in this project. Lighting the East Window for evening services during the dark winter months gave a meaningful addition to worship such as a Winter Evensong, Carol Service and Christmas Eve.

In December we hosted Alderley and Wilmslow Theatre Company for an excellently attended Christmas presentation and at the end of November we repeated our annual Christmas Fair where our visitors were extraordinarily generous.

Many thanks go to our Worship Space Committee, who have provided a beautiful carpet and renewed Welcome Bags with an ingenious stand from which to hang and display them.

We were delighted to host last year's annual Alderley Edge Music Festival, highlighting local young performers and we are similarly delighted to be hosting it once more in April 2026.

During the year a conservation survey was undertaken for our church windows and thanks to Bob Tuffin for his efforts over this.

Additionally, our Roof Camera security system was updated; the connection link to the operator upgraded from analogue to a digital connection, which added the benefit of a more stable link.

Choral music remains a strong mainstay of the worship at St Philip and St James and is much appreciated and well supported by our Congregation and Ministry Team. Monthly Choral Evensongs continue as The Deanery Choir, in which we welcome singers from other churches in the Deanery.

Many thanks go to Martin Steiger for all his past efforts in maintaining the grounds and flower beds around the church, and appreciation too for the contributions of Margaret Seddon, Richard Barraclough and Diana Boswell.

Shiela Rayner and The Mothers Union continue to regularly provide Macclesfield District General Hospital with knitted clothing and blankets for their Neonatal Unit, together with toiletry bags for those admitted with urgent need, whilst Jen Pound should take credit and thanks for her continuing work in looking after the increasingly vital Foodbank project. All these contributions to our outreach are important and very much appreciated.

A very successful part of our church's outreach is the growing popularity of a weekly Cafe Church, meeting at the Lilly and Rose Cafe in Alderley Edge and held each Thursday morning at half past ten and led by our ministry team. The mixture of prayers, discussion, chat and of course Coffee is proving a very popular mix as numbers continue to grow.

Our boundary wall facing the petrol station, was damaged by a motor collision. At the expense of the motor insurer NFU, it was repaired (in 2026) avoiding any possible footpath access safety issues and the Wardens thank Tony Snape for organizing this, and the excellent way he has engaged with ongoing church fabric issues. Huge thanks also go to Martin Sinker for all the fabric projects he has undertaken over the past years.

Thanks also go to all those unnamed, who provide flowers, cakes, teas and coffees, clean and care for the church. They are often unsung, but most kindly appreciated and valued.

And finally, and most importantly, huge thanks go to Wendy Davies for her fantastic work as Church Warden as she steps back in 2026 after six years dedicated and tireless work. It has been a great pleasure to have worked alongside Wendy and I as Church Warden will miss her knowledge and insight very much indeed. Thank you Wendy!

*Charles Rogers and Wendy Davies, Churchwardens*

## **FABRIC REPORT**

### **Quinquennial Inspection Report**

As required every five years by the diocese- this inspection took place in 2025 by our architect Mark Pearce. The items in the report are being progressed. All urgent items have been completed.

### **Heating**

There is only one gas boiler working and the other is in danger of failing as parts are no longer available. A substantial report was received from TGA, our consultant, about the future of the heating and the options. Our plan is to replace the gas boiler before insulating the roof and installing air source heat pumps. Many thanks to Brian Thompson who has spent a great deal of time working out the best solution. A faculty is needed before any new system can be installed. There is still a great deal of work to do. Fundraising for the new boiler is being planned.

### **Work to the grounds**

Many thanks to all those who have been working outside in all sorts of areas of the grounds. An arboricultural report was suggested in the quinquennial report to consider how best to manage the trees in and adjacent the churchyard.

### **North Porch Handrail**

A design was done by our architect and DAC and Cheshire East planning approval was applied for and granted.

### **Windows**

Bob Tuffin instigated a report on the windows. Various repairs and cleaning are needed when funds permit. Repairs to stonework around windows highlighted in the report are to be coordinated with stonework repairs identified in the Quinquennial Inspection.

### **Dampness and cracks adjacent windows**

This may have been caused by blocked downspouts. An extra visit for gutter clearance was arranged and this is being monitored as paint was coming off round some windows internally. Cracks and dampness to be monitored.

### **South Porch Door**

Some options were received from the architect to substantially cut down on the heat loss from the South Porch Door. The costs are prohibitive at the present time.

### **Spire Telecoms Equipment**

A new agreement was completed but the income received will be reduced.

### **Lighting**

Some new LED lights and floodlights were installed.  
Various lights were improved during the year.

### **Generally**

Thanks to everyone who has helped with different aspects of fabric over the year.  
Huge thanks to Martin Sinker who has done a fantastic job dealing with fabric for many years.  
Tony Snape will now coordinate fabric issues together with the help of others. Particular thanks to Wendy Davies and Martin who have helped Tony begin the process of understanding all that is fabric.

*Tony Snape, Chair of the Fabric Committee*

## HEALTH & SAFETY

The main role of the Health & Safety Officer (HSO) is to reduce the chance of anything causing harm to people at our church or on church business. In 2025 a few minor accidents occurred causing personal injury but fortunately these were of the ‘slips and trips’ variety with none resulting in serious harm, as far as we know. Each incident is looked at, and we try to continually improve to minimize future similar incidents.

Over the years the Health and Safety role at our church has broadened to cover some aspects of fabric maintenance. In late 2025 we made changes to the church roof camera system to improve online communication with the company who keep an eye out for lead-stripping burglars. In September, all portable electrical appliances were safety tested (PAT test). In February we invited a Fire safety specialist to comment on our safety measures. As a result, improvements have been made, including extra fire blankets and extinguishers. Other changes are being considered for implementation.

A regular feature of the role of the HSO and helpers is to ensure that processions, along with outdoor and indoor gatherings, are safe. These include the Good Friday walk of witness, the Palm Sunday procession, the Christmas ‘Donkey service’, and the Remembrance service at the war memorial. Regarding the latter, responding to a letter in October from the Diocese asking churches to ‘maintaining awareness and vigilance during services and memorial events’ we increased stewarding of the Sunday morning Remembrance service and co-ordinated our activities with staff from the Parish Council. I wish to thank all those who regularly don the high-visibility vest to give assistance to keep these events safe, especially to Chris Wearne who I’m sure knows every step and pot-hole of the Good Friday walk with his eyes closed!

*Simon Caporn, Health & Safety Officer*

## SAFEGUARDING

There have been no formal internal safeguarding issues arising from within our church community. There are no internal safeguarding cases to currently report.

A spreadsheet of all members of the Church community who are required to undertake safeguarding training is maintained and monitored.

Last year Chester Diocese introduced Parish Safeguarding Dashboards. The aim is to unify and simplify the way information around safeguarding is collected, monitored and stored. This covers all areas from policies and action plans, necessary training key roles and who holds them to learning and development. Their purpose is to provide a unified approach to safeguarding across all churches and to support the Safeguarding officer in understanding what actions are required and when these should take place. During this year we have moved from a Level 1 dashboard to a Level 2 dashboard, which means we are fulfilling a significant number of the requirements set in front of us.

Over the last year we have introduced a Lone Worker Policy and a policy on the employment of ex-offenders, both of which have been approved by the PCC.

We know have a small agreed and DBS approved group of people who share information about vulnerable people who may require support, from our ministry team, our food bank team, our pastoral support team and our safeguarding team. This is making intervention and support timelier and more efficient.

*Amanda Brabban-Brown, Safeguarding Officer*

## MISSION GROUPS AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

### WELCOME

*Romans 15:7 commands believers to "accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God"*

The Welcome Team have continued to work hard to ensure anyone entering our church, whether a new or existing worshipper can depend on a warm, smiley and inclusive welcome. Our team is there to ensure any act of worship or visit is an experience which reflects Gods love. We have continued to grow the team and have 40 active Welcomers, and this year managed to recruit 7 new people to join us. We are pleased that this is a growing ministry which has grown since we adopted the process of using two welcomers instead of one in 2009.

The role involves being present at Sunday Services and Special events with the duty performed on a rota basis, with each team member doing up to 3 duties spread over the year.

The role is varied and we:

- Offer Welcome Cards to new visitors which are usually completed before leaving the service. Often a completed card will lead to the subsequent completion of an electoral role application.
- Ensure visitors are escorted to a seat of their choice if required with disabled visitors receiving attention according to their needs.
- Are an initial referral point of contact for Weddings, Christenings, Funerals and request for prayer or Pastoral needs.
- Ensure visitors with young children are 'taken through' the amenities available to them.
- Ensure our process for Communion is offered and explained and that we also provide assistance up and down the Chancel steps, if needed.
- Offer an invitation for tea and coffee in the West End at the end of the service.

Welcomers often develop the confidence to take on roles as, Sides Persons, Readers, Intercessors, Coffee servers, on Streaming set up, PCC Members, Wardens, Deanery Synod and Pastoral Carers. Anyone can join the Welcome Team which provides a crucial contribution to the ministry of St Philip and St James Church where we practice being friendly and not invasive, by contacting either Robin or Sandra.

*Sandra Thompson, Welcome Committee*

## A TRAINING PARISH: TRAINING AND DISCIPLESHIP in the life of our church

Training and discipleship are integral to the life of our church, and all contribute to the overall aim of ‘making disciples’ (Matt 28.20, Acts 2.42). In this report I have tried to pull together all the information I have on training in different aspects of church life. If I’ve missed anything out, please let me know!

- 1. Ministry training creates two-way links with Chester Diocese and with the wider church.** We continue to benefit from being known as a “Training Parish”, i.e. a parish which encourages vocations and a fruitful location for training placements for ordained and lay ministry.
  - During 2025 our Curate **Amy Ruston** came back from maternity leave after Easter and has been playing an increasingly important leadership role in the life of our church.
  - Amy’s leadership was especially important during **Robin’s** sabbatical leave (August-November 2025), giving Robin the opportunity for travel and extended study on the theology of Remembrance (see Robin’s Martinmas blog at <https://martinmas.org/remembering-the-first-world-war/>).
  - **Rachel Roberts** continues to serve as Reader and worship leader at St Catherine’s Birtles, and is continuing to follow the Master’s programme in Theology, Mission and Ministry at the Luther King Centre for Theological Education in Manchester.
  - **Rhona Dalziel** was accepted for training for ordained ministry on the Emmanuel training course based at the Nazarene College in Didsbury, and in September 2025 began an extended training placement based at St Philip’s and St Catherine’s.
  - **Loveday Alexander** continues to be involved with continuing theological education in the cathedral, the diocese and the wider church, leading Bible Talks at Chester Cathedral and training events for Readers and Curates at Foxhill. In Feb 2025 she was invited to speak at the annual Priests’ and Deacons’ retreat at the Anglican Shrine at Walsingham.
- 2. Study groups and digital communications**
  - The ecumenical **Bible Study Group** meets monthly in the Parish Rooms (normally on the first Monday of the month) and welcomes around 20 people from SPJ and other local churches. In the first part of 2025 we completed a series on the Ten Commandments. In autumn 2025 we launched a new series on the Nicene Creed in celebration of the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea. Both series have benefitted from the leadership of a variety of local clergy, including (besides our own ministry team) Tom Ruston, John Murray, Nathan Jarvis, and Eddie Roberts.
  - The **Churches Together Lent** programme in 2025 included Bible Studies led by Nick Thompson at AEMC, meditations and Café church led by Robin at SPJ.
  - A **Thought for the Day (TFTD)** was sent out electronically during Lent 2025 to 300+ people on the database. The 2025 Lenten TFTD was based on the Gospel of Luke. TFTD is co-ordinated and sent out by Loveday, ably supported by a team of local clergy and Readers.
  - A **Confirmation** service was held in July.
- 3. Practical training**

During 2025 Bob Tuffin and Amy recruited and trained a new team of lay volunteers to assist in setting up the altar for the 10 am service. This is a great way to get involved in our worship and their services are much appreciated.

#### **4. To be a pilgrim: pilgrimages and retreats**

A highlight of 2025 was the parish pilgrimage *In the Steps of St Patrick* based in Belfast over the May Bank Holiday weekend, led by Mandy, Robin and Loveday. The pilgrimage was based at St Columba's Church (Knock, Belfast). After exploring Belfast on the Friday, we were welcomed to St Columba's by the Rector, the Revd John Auchmuty, and introduced to our local hosts. On the Saturday we visited the Cathedral at Downpatrick (built by monks from Chester!), where we had a talk from John Auchmuty and visited the St Patrick Centre. We then visited the site of St Patrick's first church in Ireland at Saul, then climbed St Patrick's Mount for a stunning view of Lecale and Strangford Lough, where Patrick's mission to Ireland began. On the Sunday morning Robin preached at the family service at St Columba's church, then parties of pilgrims visited Slemish Mountain (traditional site where the young Patrick served as a slave after being kidnapped by pirates) and Nendrum monastic site on Strangford Lough (founded by Patrick's disciple Mahee). The pilgrimage closed with a splendid meal served by the ladies of St Columba's in the church hall. A fabulous experience of Irish hospitality and great way of forging links with another church.

*Rev'd Cannon Professor Loveday Alexander*

## **PASTORAL CARE**

The main aim of the Pastoral Care ministry is to make sure that our congregation and local community can respond to those who need a bit of extra support. This could be support from one of the Pastoral Care team, or that we ask among the congregation to provide a listening ear, prayer and practical support. From being a listening ear, we are often able to signpost to more specialised service provision, such as Age UK, CAB, Social Services and GP practice.

### **Home or Hospital and Care Home Visits**

Services and visits to Nursing homes are now well established and shared out with other local Churches. This is always dependent upon individual homes policies. Home visits were carried out on an individual basis, taking into account vulnerability, government and Church of England Guidelines, and need. Care group visitors continued to use traditional and more innovative ways of keeping in touch: telephone calls, Zoom calls, e-mailing, coffee shop visits and walking. Over the last year we have also supported family members to visit their loved ones.

### **Transport and one off tasks**

We have a WhatsApp "Transport and Pastoral Care" which has 22 volunteers (down 5), willing to take people to appointments for those who couldn't drive a distance, and lifts to and from church. This also encompasses those who we support for one-off tasks and using this system we continue with connections in the local community. Requests for transport to the 10.00 service have increased, as some members of the congregation give up driving, and we are always looking for new volunteers. As our volunteer pool has decreased, we are looking at different ways of assisting, such as supporting with booking taxis.

### **Warm Wednesdays**

This is a big part of our Pastoral Care Mission, and continues weekly, with a short break in August and over Christmas.

The activities include:

**Art and Craft group:** making a children’s banner at present. The group is very supportive to each other, and is a great opportunity to stop and listen.

**Lunch:** The Parable of “The Loaves and Fishes” comes to mind each week, as there is always sufficient to eat at lunchtime. Numbers reach 20 some weeks.

**“Voices Together” :** We have a very regular attendance in the region of 20. Thanks go to the musicians, tea makers, IT, and lift givers.

*Sue Mills, Lay Pastoral Worker*

## FOODBANK

We continue to support several families and single people within the community on a regular basis. Several folk have been referred to the St Elizabeth Fund and other agencies to help with financial, emotional and mental health difficulties. We are very grateful for all donations of food, cleaning/laundry and personal hygiene items given to us and without these we would be unable to carry on this vital support in the community. Many, many thanks to all who contribute.

*Jen Pound, Foodbank Coordinator*

## THE CHOIR, OPALS AND OUTREACH THROUGH MUSIC

The choir has continued to flourish throughout the year. Membership of the Choir includes those who ordinarily sing for Sunday morning services and those who join with our ordinary members to sing as part of the Deanery Choir. By the year end the total membership was:

Ordinary Members		Deanery Choir	
Soprano	11		13
Alto	6		7
Tenor	2		4
Bass	6		7
Total	25		31
Increased by	2		Increased by 1

Locally, the choir has been pleased to provide a strong choral input to our regular 10am Sunday services plus other occasional services. These included:

- Service marking the Week of prayer for Christian Unity at St Mary Alderley
- Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance
- 3 weddings, including the marriages of choir member Chris Walker to Sarah Johnston, and former choir member Joanna Wearne to Andrew Henshall
- 10 Funerals, including that of former choir member Elizabeth Haworth, and including services at St Mary Alderley, St Pius X Alderley Edge and St John Lindow
- Requiem for All Souls
- Nine Lessons and Carols

The Deanery Choir has sung choral evensong at:

- St Oswald Bollington
- St Philip & St James Alderley Edge
- Christ Church West Didsbury
- St Paul Macclesfield
- St Cross Knutsford
- St Mary Alderley
- St Mary Rostherne
- St James Sutton

We are fortunate to have several members who are multi-talented, being able to conduct, accompany and to cover other voice parts as required. This has given us greater flexibility to achieve a well balanced choir.

OPALS have continued to sing for Taizé services once a month and have boosted choir numbers at weddings and funerals. There are four members. Several choir members have joined with OPALS to lead singing and provide cantor parts and harmony at the Taizé services.

*Peter Spooner, Organist and Choirmaster*

## **MOTHERS' UNION**

During 2025 members enjoyed presentations by  
Mr E Rae (Religious Broadcasts)  
PCSO J Thorley (Personal Safety)  
Mrs S Mills (Banner Update)

Our Lent Reflection was led by Rev'd Robin and Rev'd Amy conducted the Wave of Prayer in May. As usual members prepared posies for Mothering Sunday.

At our June meeting we welcomed our Diocesan President Mrs D Waller, and she presented the Bronze Certificate for our work and commitment to the national Mothers' Union campaign to support victims of domestic violence. The campaign is known as 'Rise Up' and it stands for **R**espond, **I**nform, **E**mpower, **U**nite and **P**ray.

An enjoyable Strawberry Tea was held in July. In November we hosted a coffee morning which included our Deanery friends and wider community. As this coincided with Remembrance Day the 2 minute silence was observed with the Last Post Reveille and Prayer. Several people found this emotional. Our Alternative Carol Service included our Tuesday Tots families and was enjoyed by all. The wonder on the faces of the tots during Robin's Christmas Story is always a delight.

Mary Sumner Day was observed with a small exhibition of Projects at the back of church. Rev'd Robin referenced in our Sunday Service.

Our landmark anniversary (125 years) was recognized during the 10am service on 16<sup>th</sup> November by Rev'd Loveday.

We continued to support:

C.W.A (Cheshire Without Abuse) – providing 50 Easter Bunnies and 50 Christmas Santa's.  
The S.C.B.U. Units at Wythenshawe, Stepping Hill and Macclesfield Hospitals – tiny garments and blankets.

Macclesfield Hospital - 50 emergency toilet bags and 10 knee blankets.

Ukraine – 10 Bags of Education

ROAR – 8 emergency toilet bags and assorted toiletries and Christmas gift items.

HMP Styal – for the Mums/Babies small knitted items and 12 cookery books.

### **Cheshire Show**

The Mothers' Union were awarded a Rosette from the show organisers for being a much needed service on site and kindness. We provide a comfortable and private space for carers to feed and change their babies when visiting the Show. This year 207 babies used the facility.

Clare has continued her work as contact for Baptism Families. Josie and Sandra have continued with responsibilities for social concern, faith and policy. Linda provides a listening ear for “fedup-ness” and does sterling work contacting members.

A big ‘Thank You’ to everybody – clergy, church family and wider community for their support. The Committee thanks everyone who has contributed in any way at all during the year.

*Mrs Sheila Rayner, Mothers' Union*

## **CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ALDERLEY 2025**

Churches Together in Alderley seeks to model an active and practical ecumenism through regular activities throughout the year. In July we bade farewell to Revd Nick Thompson of AEMC and to Pam Thompson, who made a huge contribution to the ecumenical life of the village as CTIA secretary and as Traidcraft rep. In September we were pleased to welcome the Revd Pete Brazier as the new Minister at AEMC. We continue to work closely with the Revd Nathan Jarvis (St Mary's Alderley), and with Fr Anthony McGrath and Fr Moses Ibeh (St Pius).

- In 2025 the annual service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was held at St Mary's at 5.00 PM. Nathan led our worship and reflections on the theme of “Do you believe this?” celebrating the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Nicene Creed. The service was preceded by the Churches Together AGM at 4 pm.
- The World Day of Prayer service in March was held at AEMC. The service was prepared by the women of the Cook Islands.
- The monthly Bible Studies at SPJ, open to all the member churches of CTIA, explored the Ten Commandments with the aid of an ecumenical team of leaders.
- The CTIA Lent programme included meditation sessions at SPJ (Tues & Thurs), Café church at the Lily and Rose café (Thurs), Bible studies at AEMC on the Lucan parables (Weds), and a daily Thought for the Day on the Gospel of Luke, sent out by email.
- Wednesday evening services exploring the parables of St Luke were led by an ecumenical team at different rural churches: Marton, Marthall, Siddington, Mottram Methodist, Birtles and Gawsworth.

- Holy Week services were held in various churches around the Deanery. The CTIA Good Friday Walk of Witness and the Son Rise service on the Edge were well attended and much appreciated. A highlight for many was the public performance of the Wilmslow Passion Play on the Saturday.
- The Christian Aid week collection in May was ably co-ordinated by Ian Wilson and his team. Ian also organised a Christian Aid walk.
- The Christian Aid Quiz Night in October was successfully organised by Chris Wearne, Judy Povey, Stephen Stewart and LA.
- The Parish Council took the decision to hold the annual Remembrance Sunday ceremony at the War Memorial at 11 am rather than the previous 3 pm. The 11 am ceremony was co-ordinated and led by the Revd Amy Ruston, preceded by an ecumenical service at SPJ starting at 10 am.
- Advent 2025 was celebrated in style with the annual CTIA candlelit service for Advent Sunday at St Mary's Alderley, followed by enthusiastic carol-singing at Waitrose (invited inside this year!) and the annual Carol Service at AEMC.
- The St Elizabeth Fund, an ecumenical initiative for relieving local hardship, is administered by St Philip & St James Church and is overseen by three trustees: Rev'd Pete Brazier (AEMC); Sue Mills, pastoral worker; and Rev'd Robin Pye, Chair of CTIA and vicar of St Philip & St James and St Catherine's.

Thanks are due to the Chair (Revd Robin Pye); the Secretary (Pam Thompson succeeded by LA); and to the loyal CTIA reps from SPJ (Rhona Dalziel, Pam Higham and Sandra Thompson).

*Rev'd Cannon Professor Loveday Alexander*

## **THE ALDERLEY HISTORY GROUP BASED AT ST PHILIP & ST JAMES**

We continue to meet every Wednesday, as part of the Warm Wednesday initiative. People regularly come down to pursue, research and catalogue our archives - several of our group have joined the singing group and a couple have been proactive in the craft group creating a magnificent banner. We have 14/16 people regularly meeting.

We held four members meetings in the Westend this year during 2025, including a display and concert.

**27<sup>th</sup> April** Displayed research and information re the lives of the service men who died during **WW2**. This was carrying on the work by Michael Scaife, who did the research for the WW1 men. We invited the Primary School in to see the display, and the Gaiger family members came too. A super morning. Thank you to Robin for contributing to this event.

**21<sup>st</sup> May**. 5 of us were invited to Gatley Synagogue, to give a talk to the coffee & bagel lunch. The title was "**4000yrs of Alderley history in 40mins**". It was well received and we all had a delicious lunch.

**30<sup>th</sup> May. Concert Legends of the Edge**. St Philip & St James Church. A unique project with music and narration, with the legends, myths, legends, lives and stories from The Edge of Alderley. Joe Beard and his friends performed this folk fantasia, which was performed first in 1984. Money raised at this evening, went to help maintain a defibrillator up at the café behind the Wizard Pub on the Edge.

**20<sup>th</sup> July Date** Summer Social, Show & Tell. **20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.** St P & St J Church. Lots of stories and memories of our 20 years as a group, remembering our founding members.

**29<sup>th</sup> September. David Briggs** (chairman of Wilmslow History group) took us on a virtual walk around historic Wilmslow using slides and photos.

**November.** We **published the new WW2 book**, recalling the lives of the men whose names are on the War Memorial. We thank David Briggs and Denise Psailia for their research, and our Hon. Patron John Wallace for writing the book.

The Alderley History Group wish to thank the church for its continued support.

*Mandy Parr, Secretary AHG*

## **TREASURER'S REPORT      FINANCIAL REVIEW FOR 2025**

Our surplus in 2025 was £2,203.18. In 2024 we had a deficit of £9,757.92 and a surplus in £13,051.43 in 2023.

Planned Giving was £76,896.94 and we also received £609.10 in Gift Aid envelopes, giving a total of £77,506.04. In 2024 we received £85,551.10 and £651.00 in Gift Aid envelopes. This gives a total (both subject to Gift Aid) of £86,202.10. In 2023 we received a total of £81,559.50. In 2025 we allocated the cheques from two generous donors to Other Donations rather than Planned Giving.

In 2025 we received legacies of £124.39, compared to £2,000.00 in 2024 and £15,189.75 in 2023.

During 2025 we donated £3,960.65 from the St Elizabeth Fund and were left with a balance of £5,809.35. In 2024 we donated £3,091.54 and the year-end balance was £6,045.00.

For the Conservation Fund, where, for a donation of £5 per month (or £60 p.a.) participants are entered into a monthly draw and the surplus at the end of 12 months is put towards the church fabric, we had a balance at the end of 2025 of £4,277.90. There were 33 members. £226.25 was paid out in prize money and at the end of the first 12 months £2,868.75 had accrued to the church.

Via Christingle we donated £327.79 to The Children's Society. We gave £512.95 from Votive Candle donations to Wilmslow Youth and £75.00 from the Christian Unity walk to Christians Aid. We donated £176.00 to The Farming Community Network from the Harvest Festival. The Food Bank distributions continued.

As usual, our largest item of expenditure was the Parish Share (which funds our vicar and the vicarage). In 2022 because we created a benefice with St Catherine's, Over Alderley our Parish Share was reduced. The savings have been used to fund a part-time administrator. Our Parish Share was £73,909.32 in 2025, compared to £83,237.64 in 2024. The next largest items were the Administrator at £17,350.06 (including expenses and pension), Major Repairs at £16,779.00 for a heating survey, General PCC Expenditure at £14,732.15 (including rent for the curate's house), Utilities (including a boiler repairs) at £11,248.32, General Repairs at £8,684.81 and Insurance at £7,165.79.

Gift Aid payments received from HMRC, based on Pledged Giving and Gift Aided donations in 2025 were £29,988.12, compared to £ 22,590.26. In 2023 they were £22,518.07

Apart from Planned Giving, Regular Donations and the associated Gift Aid, the largest income category this year was the Everything Everywhere Transmitter at £16,115.70 (compared to £14,687.92 in 2023). However, income will reduce sharply now that the new contract has been implemented. The next largest category was Church Collections. We received £7,534.89 which is slightly lower than the £8,434.29 received in 2024. The amount was boosted by the Sum-Up card readers.

£5,475.03 of Endowment Income was received (compared to £7,202.44 in 2024) and is 'Unrestricted'. Our book value of the relevant Endowments is £6,975.00. Accounting regulations do not require us to obtain a current valuation. However, the two components depreciated by 4.00% compared to a 2.3% increase in the previous year. At the end of 2025, the main Endowment Fund was valued at £184,334.68 (£192,010.90 at end of 2024) and the McElfrick Fund was valued at £ 70,457.40 (£73,391.45 at the end of 2024). The former cannot be accessed since it arose from investments to pay the stipend before the Diocese assumed responsibility, but the latter can be spent as the PCC sees fit (but it does provide an extremely useful income).

We hold two accounts with Church Board of Finance Deposit Fund (CCLA). The balances at the end of 2025 were £49,462.43 and £39,958.77. Interest is paid quarterly.

*Ian Standen, Treasurer*

## HOW TO GIVE TO THE CHURCH

We are always very grateful for donations to our Church which help us continue our work and enable us to maintain our building. Below there are details of how to donate which can also be found on our website [www.stphilipandstjames.co.uk](http://www.stphilipandstjames.co.uk)

By Bank Transfer to our main church account

Barclays Bank

The Parochial Church Council of St Philip & St James

Account Number: 40696668

Sort Code: 20-53-77

By Bank Transfer to the St Elizabeth Fund

Barclays Bank

The Parochial Church Council of St Philip & St James

Account Number: 33999939

Sort Code: 20-53-77

Or via this QR code

