

CHURCH WARDEN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2025

The year started in an unusual way with Amanda advising us that she would be retiring in April.!

A farewell service was held with 130 people attending – a truly wonderful service, followed by a buffet reception. A great occasion with Amanda's family and friends from both churches and previous clergy from St Paul's.

There followed 8 months in vacancy which kept the church wardens busy!

We were grateful that the benefice was able to cover a good percentage of the Sundays during the vacancy period, and were particularly grateful to Jess Batten and Nick Smith, who in addition to coming to us, were also having to cover for Jeni who had a three-month sabbatical at the same time.

It was great to have John Parsons with us for several Sundays, also Elizabeth Bunker, plus several other visiting clergy most of whom came to us without charging which was very kind of them.

On May 29th we, together with Marlene and Wendy from St Marys , Jeni and Archdeacon Charles, first met Gail and we unanimously agreed that she was the person for us and haven't we proved since that was the right decision! We were able to formally welcome Gail at a crowded and very happy service at St Pauls (neither All Saints nor St Mary's would have been big enough) on November 12th.

Despite our not having a vicar for much of 2025 we very pleased that our weekly Sunday congregations kept up to between 40 – 50 on a regular basis. The well-established mid-week activities, grief café, and food hub, continued without interruption.

The church is now open daily to give people in the community the opportunity to come inside to reflect, leave their written prayers when they are in need.

We are grateful for the folks that help us with opening and locking the church.

During Advent a Christmas tree was erected outside with stars provided for people to write their prayers on. This facility was well used.

Hilary Drinkall held a concert on 29th March in aid of the Restoration Fund,

A "Pimms and Hymns" afternoon was held on 3rd May –A very successful occasion was enjoyed by many people. Thanks to Emma McKenzie for organising and all the people who helped at this event.

On September 28th we held our Harvest Festival service which was followed a bring and share lunch. A nice occasion with fellowship and food, very much appreciated by all who attended.

Large numbers of people attended the Carol Service and the Christingle Service. And again a choir was formed for the carol service. Many thanks to Hilary for leading the choir so effectively.

The fortnightly serving of coffee after Sunday Service has continued this year which is very popular, a good opportunity for fellowship.

We held a fire practice in the autumn which worked very well and building was fully evacuated in under 2 minutes.

FABRIC

The Quinquennial Report in 2024 revealed that extensive restoration and repairs are required on the exterior of the church.

The cost of these works is approximately £112,000 pounds. During this year we have been actively trying to raise funds through grants. A total of £35,500 grants and promises have been received, however, approximately £25,000 still needs to be raised.

Fund raising was halted in the autumn, awaiting Gail's arrival and settling in.

It is hoped that we will have full funds available to enable work to start August 2026. Please continue to pray that these funds will become available either from the generosity of members of the congregation and / or further grants.

A new regulator to the tower clock was fitted in early in the year and it's kept good time keeping ever since.

Damp was identified above chancel area where the two roof levels meet, and this was corrected in June.

In September we arranged for the windows to be cleaned, now an annual event.

A successful Autumn Clean of the church by volunteers was held to make the church ready for Gail's arrival and Christmas.

We would like to thank everybody who volunteers and helps in the many requirements of our parish here at All Saints Church. All help is greatly appreciated by all of us.

Tony and Margaret