



Activities Report for 2021

BAPTISMS

Lizzie Ogden

After 2020 it was really nice to be able to offer baptisms again in 2021, although as it turned out it was only since September. We had about 13 children baptized, which was amazing considering how challenging the times. The restrictions meant some families felt unable to go ahead as planned and have deferred, picking up again in 2022.

We countered the unused months, and the need to keep numbers down, by offering more dates to families – in other words, we had more baptism services: eight in the three months to Christmas.

It is brilliant that families are still seeking to baptize their children. Please pray for those who have yet to reschedule their baptisms as well as for all the children who have become part of our church in the last year.

A huge thank you to everyone who has contributed to organizing baptisms this last year.

BELLRINGERS

Andrew Spencer

Working within the recommendations of the Central Council of Church Bellringers meant limited bellringing during 2021 and restrictions for our activities have been quite onerous because of the ringing room environment.

We restarted ringing as a group in August after more than a year's absence, although I did ring a single bell for Prince Philip's funeral in April.

We have continued ringing for services on a rota by sharing our bellringers with Maids Moreton and Stowe, also ringing for a few weddings and University ceremonies during the last few months of 2021. We are finding it difficult to get enough ringers now, often only managing to ring 5 or 6 bells.

New bellropes arrived 2 years after ordering, the lockdowns having affected ropemakers too. New ropes are stretchy and can make ringing difficult for less experienced ringers so I am introducing them slowly over several months.

BITTERNES AFLOAT

Will Trevitt

Bitternes Afloat is a Christian Sailing Cruise for 11-18 year olds, run every Easter on the Norfolk Broads and we take young people primarily from our 5 partner churches of which Buckingham Parish Church is one. Each day of the week we aim to encounter God through morning bible study and evening activities and to learn how to sail on the waterways of the Broads.

Due to the ongoing COVID restrictions in 2021 we did not manage to go sailing at Easter but we ran a weeklong online event in the evenings with 25 youth participants and about

15 adults involved in various parts. It featured a number of fun segments and a talk by one of the leaders followed by discussion groups for different ages.

We did manage to run the young adults' cruise that happens each July, which is for those who are too old to attend at Easter and also gives training to our younger leaders. We explored the topic of what is normal for God (and therefore should be for us too).

We also managed to run a shorter cruise for the 11-18 year olds in the October half term, which was 4 days of sailing and time with God, focussing on life and how it all comes down to Him.

BPC CHILDREN and FAMILIES

Revd Kate Pellereau and Jayde Crouch

Reaching out to children, youth and families is seen as a key area of mission activity. A wide variety of groups and activities are organised by a growing number of volunteers resulting in many new children, youth and families attending.

CHILDREN

BPC Kids Groups caters for children from Age 3 years to School Year 6 during the 11am Family Service in appropriate age groups - Stepping Stones (3-Reception), Sparks (Years 1-2), and Dynamite (Years 3-6). Trail Blazers continues to run; this is a group that caters for children in school Years 3 to 6 at the 6pm service.

We introduced the All Age Service on the 3rd Sunday of the month at 11am. This is like previous 'Big Story Sundays' and includes all age worship, a bible story/sermon that has something for each age group, family games and communion.

Annual Events

Our Light Party happened inside this year, as an alternative to last year's outdoor Light Trail. This event is open to families with children and young people of all ages, and still comes under the Buckingham Churches Together banner, involving a team from the Holiday Club volunteers list.

The Crib Service went ahead in person in 2021 and, although quiet, still involved the dressing up and narrating aspect from previous years. It was great to see the families and young children joining in with up front service activities again after a tough year.

FAMILIES

The Ark continued to meet, at a new time of 10-11:30am (to suit volunteer needs). The morning consists of craft time, free play with the Ark cupboard toys, story time and a time of singing to end. The Ark team has grown in number and there are faithful weekly attendees who are on team. The attendance from families has also grown, and we have begun to reuse the Ark Facebook page to reach as many people as possible (which has proven successful).

Messy Church restarted with a launch in October. The team for this has been rebuilt and it has been well attended by the Buckingham Community. The running remains the same as previous years - free flow craft and activities, leading into a time of worship and sermon/story, finishing with a shared meal together. Donations for Messy Church have

been at an all-time low as we are now reaching out to more and more families in need, who may not be able to offer a financial contribution. However, the budget remains at a good level and is sufficient to cover the Messy Church expenses in this respect.

Family Fun Day was unable to happen for a second year in a row. However we tied some elements of this into our Messy Church re-launch in October (games, advertising).

Holiday Club returned in person in 2021 and was well attended by about 100 children across the week. COVID restrictions were still in place, so we kept measures such as rigorous cleaning and one way systems in place. The community supported the return, and donations remained consistent with previous years in relation to the number of children attending.

Schools Ministry continued with our online presence into the primary schools for Christmas Unwrapped and Easter Cracked. We used the videos the Churches Together team created, and hand delivered craft to the schools.

Jayde continues to work with Wendy Edworthy to plan and organise these events and the links with schools remains strong-despite the lack of availability to visit in person to deliver assemblies and afterschool clubs, the plan for which is to restart in 2022.

Kate attends Chackmore village school every week for an assembly and is currently building up a relationship with them. She spoke at the Christingle service in December and will be speaking at the Easter service for both sites on April 4th.

YOUTH & STUDENTS

Sam Graham

I took over the Youth & Student ministries in mid-August 2021 and immediately began work on moving the ministries out of the pandemic and back to face-to-face working. In my first term I have seen the two youth connect groups (Fuel & Vision) grow and the launch of the new outreach project – The Youth Café.

Students Connect Group got off to a good start for the academic year, meeting fortnightly at Kate's house for dinner and bible study. A small sub-group of girls was also started with Kate, to read 'Gentle and Lowly' together.

As the year progressed the group met less frequently due to exam season.

The Way provides the youth provision for the 9am and 6pm services for those in school years 7-13. The groups follow the teaching plan of the 11am & 6pm services to encourage young people and parents to be disciplined together and encourage family discussions. At the 9am traditional service we mainly work with the five young people in the choir. They have a good foundation of biblical understanding and a hunger to know more. Using the *Discovery Bible Study* method has created great questions and enthusiasm. The 6pm service has attracted up to fourteen young people each week. There is a lot of laughter and good discussion of the weekly topic.

Fuel is a connect group for those in school years 10-13. Fuel started off meeting back in person at The Centre. However, it quickly moved to the North Room at BPC for the

more homely feel of sofas and small room. The group is continuing to grow closer together and understand what it means to be a young Christian in their culture.

Vision is a connect group for young people in school years 7-9 and began the academic year by completing the Youth Alpha Series. This was a success and brought the young people of the group to an equal level of understanding. The group has bonded well and continues to deepen their knowledge of scripture.

The Youth Café launched in October 2021 and quickly attracted up to 60 young people weekly. Most young people will come for a free toastie and milkshake and leave. However, a core group of regular young people now come and stay to hang out and chat to us. The project is looking at ways to encourage young people to stay longer while also continuing to grow the current relationships. The aim for 2022 is to develop some form of evangelistic element to the space that encourages conversation that leads to Jesus.

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Brian and Tracey Roskell

We have encouraged regular giving in particular through standing orders. We made it easier for occasional giving with the installation of a contactless payment machine in the church. We updated our legacy information, website and email communications as required. We have successfully pursued grant funding. This helped us meet our budgeted average monthly income in 2021.

Observations

1. A fairly steady year for income from regular giving, including gift aid recovered, accounting for 78% of our annual income; with virtually no change in the amount from last year.
2. Across the year we gained 9 new regular givers and lost 8; 10 people increased their giving and 3 reduced theirs.
3. The last four months saw the positive impact of grant funding received including specific support for our new youth worker.
4. We received a single legacy donation, our first for some years.
5. Income from use of our facilities and church groups picked up compared to last year as activities have resumed.
6. Our contactless payment machine is now generating around £500 per month.
7. Gift Aid has reverted to 16% of our income, (was 20% in 2020) and reduced to average £4,231 a month compared to £4,890 last year.

Thank you to all those who currently give financially to our church, we couldn't deliver the great services, facilities and support that we provide without you.

For those who haven't yet got round to setting up regular giving, talk to Brian or Tracy Roskell in person, via stewardship@bpchurch.uk or visit the giving section of our website for full information.

CHURCH CHOIR

Robert Tucker

We are a highly motivated team of children and adults, dedicated to supporting worship. The choir also provides a strong musical education; instilling and shaping invaluable qualities. The choir show an extraordinary level of commitment, and support for one another; both long-serving and new choristers become able leaders and role models. There are many special experiences such as in our prayer and fellowship together, and through wide-ranging musical achievements. We give thanks this year for Bethia's outstanding service to the choir over eleven years, and as Head Chorister. She is standing down to focus on A-levels.

We welcomed three new choristers and created new recruitment materials, which Jayde kindly delivered to primary schools. Recruitment, however, continues to be an issue and we look for your support. We give thanks for everyone's fine contribution, particularly singing through the COVID restrictions.

CHURCH FLOWERS

Susan Mileham

It is a privilege and joy to decorate our church with flowers and foliage. A team of 20 ladies* work on a rota to create lovely displays in the chancel and on the dais. At festival times most of the team is involved in decorating every convenient space! Valerie Hirons co-ordinated the team for 14 years and in November 2021 stepped back to just enjoy making her own beautiful arrangements for church. The team and the church are grateful for her service.

We are working on making displays without floral foam. The foam makes the worker's job much easier but is very harmful for the environment, our next report will tell how we are getting on.

*New members, including gentlemen, are welcome and it was lovely to add to the team in 2021.

CHURCH OFFICE

Jan Ballantyne

The church office staff resumed normal working hours with "Focus At the Farm" and the Big Church Day In requiring much administrative support and organisation.

Lara Burt put in place a new centralised church information area on the Welcome notice board and continues to lead on all church publicity and media projects.

Thanks to Ann Exelby, Ray Mitchell and Gill Stopps who returned to provide greatly appreciated and valuable assistance in the office every week.

Church Suite

Andrew Gibson

BPC has had computerised management systems operating for the last 12 years and moved to Church Suite in 2018; it is a UK designed whole church system that meets all our needs, is easy to use, and is the ideal way to help our community to stay connected to one another and keep up to date with all that's going on in the life of our church.

MyChurchSuite is the member-facing side, accessible to church members who can log in securely, and manage their own personal and children's details, view and manage rotas, engage with our events and small groups, as well as their own finances and giving.

Access is to church members, who log in securely with their email address and password.

Using an efficient IT system is inevitably a learning curve for most people and requires patience in adapting to the changes that may be involved.

CONNECT GROUPS

Revd Michael Greig

Throughout 2021 BPC had 21 Connect Groups with around 200 members of the church involved.

Thanks to the dedication and commitment of the group leaders, despite COVID restrictions, most groups managed to meet regularly on-line and keep in touch via WhatsApp and email.

Group leaders have met three times during the year to share news and support one another.

Connect Groups play an important role in church life. They are the basis of pastoral care and of ensuring that every member is cared for, supported and nurtured. Groups provide a safe place to study and discuss the Bible, using a variety of resources, and to grow as disciples of Jesus.

We aim to start one or two new groups each year, to cater for those joining the church or completing Alpha courses. My role is to ensure that group leaders are trained, equipped and well supported.

CREATED CREATIVE

Emma Cottrell

Created Creative is a Christian creativity charity working in partnership with BPC. We have had a busy and fruitful time over the last year.

Creativity sessions have run both online and physically (when COVID allowed) at BPC and further afield. It has been exciting to see how online sessions have reached people in the UK and worldwide, including South Africa, Netherlands, and Romania.

We have had the privilege of visiting churches to offer training and creativity times to help reach out to those struggling and in need. At St Mary's, Bletchley we were asked to speak on creativity and the benefits of this on mental health and wellbeing at their volunteers' leaders training day. This topic continues to be in the forefront in sessions, for example at BPC and in Southampton.

The current needs seem to be around re-evaluating how best to look after ourselves and those around us as we come out of lockdown but still have to live with COVID and the implications of this on our lives.

God uses creativity in beautiful and often simplistic yet, powerful ways to bring His healing and wholeness to lives and bring us into a deeper relationship with Him. We have a team of 8 facilitators who run these sessions.

Created Creative thanks BPC for their prayers and support of this ministry.

For more information about this ministry please see the website:
www.createdcreative.co.uk

FOCUS AT THE FARM

Revd Will Pearson Gee

With HTB Focus cancelled we planned a long weekend of camping at Stampwell Farm in Gerrard's Cross at the end of July.

Some 60 adults and children were joined by 20 from Holy Trinity Barnes who assisted with worship and also contributed financially. A further 50 joined for Sunday's service and BBQ lunch.

We secured two of the best speakers the UK has to offer (Amy Orr-Ewing and Simon Ponsonby) and enjoyed a terrific weekend of teaching, worship, prayer, good food and fellowship.

Whilst exhausting for the team it was all well worthwhile in particular seeing people from across the congregation get to know one another round the camp fire.

MISSION & OUTREACH

Keith Croxton

Mission and Outreach is a sub group of the PCC mandated to discern and respond to the spiritual and social needs in the community: reaching out to share God's love and compassion with others as well as supporting the wider mission of the church.

It oversees the following:

- The Centre
- Distribution of the Tithe supporting our Mission Partners
- CAP Life Skills
- Bradford Link
- SOS Room
- Men's Ministry
- Buckingham Food Bank
- Tuesday Lunch
- Saturday Morning Coffee Service
- Hot Dog Wednesday

Whilst many activities were curtailed during the year owing to COVID it is a joy to see they are all now up and running again.

Owing to the ever growing activities, two new groups were spawned by MOG at the end of 2021, a Discipleship Group and a Pastoral Ministry Group so greater focus could be given to these important areas.

CAP Life Skills

Brian Hubbard

BPC's Christians Against Poverty (CAP) ministries in early 2021 revolved around their video-based KickStart material. This online-only resource temporarily replaced CAP

Life Skills, which would normally have met face-to-face but was of course not possible under COVID rules.

KickStart attracted a small number of participants, mostly church members, following much-appreciated efforts by the wider congregation to publicise the service.

Then in May the BPC team conceived Rebound; a community of local people whom we often encountered initially through Foodbank deliveries. They enjoyed social time together as lockdown eased. Later we introduced KickStart video material looking at Taking Control of your Money, Finding Work and Health & Wellbeing. Rebound was much better attended, especially by a loyal core group.

By autumn we discerned the time was right to plan a relaunch of face-to-face Life Skills, with the Rebound cohort being the first to be invited.

Community (Tuesday)Lunch

Sheila Handley

Having been closed for nearly 18 months due to Covid, the Community Lunch opened its doors again on Sep 7th 2021. It took a few weeks for numbers to return to their pre-COVID levels, but we now have over 80 people registered, with about 60 of them dining each week.

We have introduced a weekly register for safeguarding purposes. We have welcomed a number of new helpers who replace those who have moved on, and we are always glad to add more to our number.

We have again had help from Hagarty CIA staff performing their corporate charity work with us. We continue to have a regular arrangement to collect Aldi's surplus fruit and veg and Sainsbury's surplus bakery goods. Some is used for the lunch and the rest is given away to the diners.

Donations continue to be healthy, covering costs and allowing surplus to be used for kitchen equipment and other related needs, such as supporting the minibus.

Before Christmas we were given a large donation as Sainsburys' chosen charity. Christmas lunch was again enjoyed by 100+ and the U3A recorder group and community singing with Brian Roskell was enjoyed immensely.

Thank you again to everyone for your continued support.

Kit Cat Club

Christine Barrell

During 2021 we continued to support our Kit Cat Families and were finally able to start meeting again at The Centre for the 5 weeks of the summer holidays. Our final session was a day out at 360 Play in Milton Keynes, which for young children with a lot of energy was an ideal treat. Dodgems, climbing walls, paddle boats, giant slides & swings were just a few of the activities. A great day was had by all.

Our families also went to the Community Pantomime production of The Snow Queen as an after Christmas treat.

By the time we started back some of our helpers had decided it was time to withdraw and my circumstances have now changed, in the late autumn, following a lot of prayer, I advised our helpers that I would unfortunately not be able to continue into 2022.

It was felt that with other options now available to families, especially Hot Dog Wednesdays, which runs every week, not just in the holidays and with the introduction of Buckingham Free Meals and other free activities in the summer holidays, the families we were catering for now have much more provision available to them.

It is with a sad heart that all connected with Kit Cat Club say farewell, but we lay this aside knowing that its 'season' has ended and in the knowledge that we have each shared God's love, compassion, hospitality and friendship towards many families in Buckingham and the surrounding villages.

We have asked the PCC to split the remaining funds in the Kit Cat Club account amongst Hot Dog Wednesdays, Messy Church and the new Youth Cafe, as these all fall under 'Outreach' projects for our wider community.

To everyone who has been connected with Kit Cat Club, all I can say is Thank You. Your support, fellowship, prayers and friendship has meant so much to me.

Outreach

Jo Wigley (for Olly Holland)

2021 saw the arrival of a new ministry, Hot Dog Wednesdays, born of a casual meeting in The Centre. It immediately became bigger than we had anticipated as the need for somewhere for young families to meet with others and enjoy some food and a drink became evident.

It has provided a safe space and an after-school snack for many families, with games and activities for the children. We have a wonderful team and are an established part of the week for many families and some teens. We run weekly, all year round, dishing up over 100 hot dogs most weeks. Our aim is to introduce people to Jesus in a very gentle way with the next step being Messy Church.

At Christmas we organised a Christmas Meal which we had at church. We fed over 100 people a full Christmas dinner, had a visit from Santa and some games. It was wonderful!

Olly has supported a number of men who were living in difficult situations, some homeless. One has been supported in our SOS room and Olly evangelised to them all, managing to share some of the Alpha course with them.

Once the various restrictions allowed, Olly organised for Men's Ministry, a curry night, a breakfast and a film night, all of which were a great success.

Women's Heaven

Lucia Pearson-Gee

Women's Heaven is a ministry that runs on Tuesday morning and which aims to draw alongside women who are either struggling with life or just enjoy time away from their busy schedules.

This year we have cut back on certain activities we used to provide such as the pampering hand massage, due to COVID restrictions and regulations.

We always serve a delicious amount of various hot pastries with fresh coffee and tea and always offer fruit for the children!

Women's Heaven re-started in September and numbers quickly returned to pre-pandemic levels. In the autumn term we saw on average of 8 women and 5 children each week.

Women's Heaven continues to be an important safe space for women to meet and be ministered to, away from the stresses and strains of the outside world.

Women's Ministry

Anke Stolze

I've been leading the Women's Ministry for two years and it was an interesting start for me. I pre-planned the whole of 2020 and then the pandemic stopped everything. Half way through 2021 we managed to run some events again.

We kicked off with a Creative Walk in Evenley Woods together with Created Creative. We had a good number of ladies and men signing up but unfortunately due to the weather, many had cancelled. God spoke to many through nature and we had the opportunity to share this with the group.

In September we had a bowling evening in MK. It was a lovely evening together with some ladies. Our best attended event was our Wreath Making Workshop in November. The ladies had a wonderful time and their end products were beautiful...all uniquely done!

I pray that we will have a successful 2022 together, where we can bless the ladies and share God's love with them.

PASTORAL

Jo Wigley

2021 was a year of constant change and with that came many pastoral issues as members of the church family and the wider community struggled with isolation, illness, mental health, and financial issues. I worked with numerous individuals on a one-to-one basis, signposting many to professional agencies, praying with people and listening.

Working with Olly in the Hot Dog Wednesday ministry brought with it many blessings and also many more people who need support. I have had regular and varied dealings with our safeguarding team as situations have arisen and thank God for their wisdom.

During the early part of the year, as we went into another lockdown, I set up, as a temporary measure, an emergency food bank at The Centre that offered a 'no questions asked' food parcel to those in need.

Community Lunch started back in September and I work with Andrew Gibson to organise the collection of people in the minibus and build relationships with those who attend and gave a short talk at their Christmas meal.

I have had some involvement with the SOS room as I supported Olly. Christmas was very busy as I worked with the Salvation Army and Well Street Church in organising the Christmas lunch that was delivered on Christmas Day. I also worked with the Salvation Army on the Toy Appeal.

It is a privilege and joy every day to serve God and play a small part in His mission in our town.

PRAYER & PRAISE

Paul Wallace

Prayer and Praise has continued to take place throughout the Pandemic, whether it be in the building or online through Zoom. We meet on the first Monday of each month to worship, to give thanks, and to pray for the needs of the ministries within BPC and for the needs of the World.

Each month a leaflet with a list of our prayer needs is prepared, for people can take home and use as a guide for prayer during the month.

Prayer and Praise has a growing group of intercessors, and we would love others to join us. There is also a group which meets every Friday evening on Zoom, for half an hour only, to pray specifically for the services taking place on the following Sunday. As ever we would welcome others to join us.

PRAYER MINISTRY

Revd Chris Murray

As you may remember, like a lot of activities, we were not allowed to minister after services for many months, which was very frustrating for us and for those who would have liked to have prayer. If I remember correctly, we were only able to start again in September.

The team consists of 24 members, of whom only 6 are males. Clearly, we need more, in order to be able to have one female and one male ministering together, which is the ideal.

We manage well for the 9am and 6pm service, but for the 11am service have to rely on a very small group. We need more volunteers from that congregation, and more members of our present team to be available for services other than the one they usually attend.

People come to us for a wide variety of needs, some physical, others regarding a problem in a relationship, or to ask us for prayer regarding a work situation or for guidance in some area. It is a huge blessing and encouragement when people are healed, strengthened, experience peace and/or are touched by the Holy Spirit in some other way. Nearly all feel a real sense of peace, at the very least. It also encourages the team when someone comes and tell us, at a later date, that a prayer has been answered.

We are encouraging those who experience any sort of healing to let us know, so we can share with Will and encourage testimonies, to prompt more people to come forward to receive this precious ministry, to be a factor in bringing people to faith in Jesus, and to increase the faith-level of all of us.

It is significant that healings were a major factor in conversion for the first four centuries of the Church, and are today in places, like China, where the church is growing fastest.

Please pray for more members of our beautiful, caring church to be called to this vital, rewarding work.

PRODUCTION & WORSHIP

Ali Burt and Mike Roskell

During 2021 the production team was busy as ever, the team lost some people but also gained lots of new volunteers for who we are extremely grateful.

We stepped up and committed ourselves to resourcing Production at all of our services, meaning that we streamed approximately 151 Sunday services and 52 Wednesday services throughout 2021!

At Easter we ran Easter Alive; Ken Piper put in an enormous amount of work to the lighting system, particularly with respect to this service, before stepping down from many years serving on Production at BPC. We are hugely grateful for his gifts and service.

We have continued to build partnerships with people including the University of Buckingham, working with them on numerous events over the year.

We helped run the gatherings at the church weekend away, and also helped a Romanian church run their service on the Sunday of the weekend away which was good fun. Mark Chapman was invaluable.

December brought additional concerns about the pandemic and many of the usual school carol services were cancelled, but even still we provided audio and video recording for two schools and production for one carol concert. On top of this we ran all of the BPC Christmas services, with 5 of them happening across a 48 hour period, which were well received!

The worship team have rebuilt from the limiting restrictions of 2020 to resource a band at almost all of the 6pm services. An enormous thanks must go to Brian Roskell, Chris and Cheryl Murray, and Mel Brewer who have all sacrificially committed time so that we can have music led by a small band at the Family Service every week.

The Camping Weekend provided an opportunity for the worship team to lead alongside musicians from HTBarnes which was a great experience for all involved.

SACRISTAN & SIDESPERSONS

Gerry Causer

Sacristan, Servers and Chalice Assistants

A big thank you to all the Chalice Assistants and Servers – not only for turning up and participating, but also for your forbearance with the numerous changes in procedure which we have made as the COVID rules and our response have changed. When we returned to church all the servers made themselves available, but for quite valid reasons some of the chalice assistants have not done so yet.

Preparing for the communion services using the individual cups is time consuming and the permanent change to 9am for the Sunday service means quite an early start- so well done all! Fortunately, a few new volunteers have come forward, which has been welcome as the 10am Wednesday service has flourished and it is now necessary to provide someone to set up for that as well. As always if you would like to be more involved, please let me know.

Sidespersons

Preparing rotas is not my favourite task! This has been challenging as the rules and our responses have changed several times. The uncertainty of the pandemic saw a number of stalwarts in the team reluctant to attend church, but fortunately other members of the congregation stepped in.

We have moved away from issuing hymn and service books, and taking the collection during the service, but the role now includes welcoming (which it had many years ago).

I am looking forward to the time when everything is settled and I can allocate the Sidespeople into set teams again and prepare the rota for a year instead of 2 months at a time.

The communion service has always been one with a high level of participation by the congregation and a big thank you to all my Sidespeople, but as always, a few more would be welcome.

SERVICES

Rev Will Pearson Gee

Due to a combination of the pandemic, the trial timing of the 9am service and low attendance, the 8am BCP Communion service did not take place in 2021. A BCP service was however held at St John the Evangelist, Radclive once a month.

9am Service

The 9am traditional service (formerly the 11.15am) continued in its trial time slot. Due to the pandemic it was impossible to conduct a meaningful trial with no hospitality in between service but with the easing of restrictions in September PCC agreed to make a decision so that a new pattern was agreed for the New Year.

The congregation was stoic and the first to really come back to church in numbers partly due to the fact that the elderly were the first to receive vaccinations. By September we were at 85% of pre-COVID attendance and by the end of the year 95%.

The PCC viewed these encouraging figures as evidence that the 9am timing was working and so this new time has been agreed. The 9am Planning Team has continued to assist and advise me on improvements and we are continually seeking to be more creative with content and liturgy. All services were live-streamed to a high standard.

11am Service

Having swapped positions in the morning with the traditional service we re-launched as an All Age worship service in the Spring and numbers gently increased.

Once restrictions permitted we re-started the children's groups whilst being very dependent on a much reduced team of helpers. We then moved to a monthly celebration of Holy Communion as part of an AAW service.

Numbers have continued to grow steadily and for most of the year we were seeing a new family each Sunday morning. The 11am has now settled in and follows a set pattern. There is a need to grow the teams for the groups in order to accommodate further growth. A great encouragement has been the growth in size of type of band which has made the sung worship more vibrant. All services were live-streamed to a high standard.

6pm Service

The 6pm service was unaffected by the trial timings for the two morning services and people have steadily returned to live worship although more slowly than the 9am congregation.

The longer talks and extended worship are as popular as ever and we seek to 'lean in' to the Holy Spirit more and more as people get used to prayer ministry.

All services were live-streamed to a high standard and there was a healthy online participation which has dwindled as more and more have returned to physical worship.

SMALL GROUPS

Theology Group

+ *Andrew Shergold and Steve Watkins*

Over the past year we have met via Zoom on the second Thursday of the month. We now meet in person at 72, Embleton Way. We have a stable membership of 8 members.

As from November 2018 we are now discussing papers presented by individual members. Thus far we have had:

A comparison of Roman Catholic and Anglican Catechisms

New Testament Manuscripts

Jesus and Women

The Fall in Genesis – An interpretation

All about the Resurrection

The Origin of Religion

The Trinity

New Testament manuscripts

The Septuagint

John Chrysostom

Greek Group

+ *Andrew Shergold and Steve Watkins*

We now have:

- An Advanced Greek Group
- An Intermediate Greek Group

There are 12 students in the two groups and since April 2020 we have met via zoom on Monday evenings from 5:45pm – 8:15pm with a short break at 7:00pm. These have worked very well and it enables students to take the lessons remotely; this is especially useful as we now have students from Wales and Scotland.

The Intermediate Group is engaged in learning the language; it is expected that this will be complete before the end of the year.

The Advanced Group study a particular book; over the past year we have studied Ephesians from the New Testament and Lamentations from the Septuagint.

In order to enable ‘face to face’ meetings we have started to run a ‘Symposium’ once per term. The format is that we gather on Saturday afternoon, we have two sessions on Saturday followed by a restaurant meal and then have one session on Sunday afternoon.

Hebrew Group + **Andrew Shergold and Steve Watkins**

We meet on Friday evenings at the Centre from 5:00pm – 7:00pm.

There are three groups:

Intermediate II (more advanced) meeting at the Centre on Friday at 5:00pm

Intermediate I meeting at the Centre on Friday at 6:00pm

Hebrew Reading Group meeting on alternate Wednesdays at 7:00pm via Zoom reading Isaiah in Hebrew, Greek and Latin.

We use one of two books for learning Hebrew:

Weingreen – A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew

Pratico and Van Welt – Basics of Biblical Hebrew

Latin Group

Steve Watkins

We meet via zoom on Friday afternoons from 4:00pm – 6:00pm

There is one group: Advanced from 4:00pm – 6:00pm

The Advanced group reads through two of the following in a session:

‘Unseens’ – selected short passages from various Latin Authors

Latin Prose Composition by North & Hillard

Vergil or Ovid.

In the past the Advanced group have read through Vergil Aeneid Books II, III and IV, Ovid Metamorphoses Book XIV and some poems from Catullus. We are now reading Vergil Aeneid Book V.

We are able to have a Latin Session at the Symposia.