

Christ Church Warley



Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council

for the year ended 31st December 2025

**Incumbent: Revd Dawn Butcher
79 Mount Crescent Warley Brentwood CM14 5DD**

**Bankers: NatWest
46 High Street Brentwood CM14 4AL**

CHRIST CHURCH REPORTS FOR 2025 WARLEY ACTIVITY

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1. Vicar's Report

The gift of pausing and reflecting is precious. As I looked back over all the activities we engaged in last year (see Activities Report), there emerged a one word to cover all, discipleship. Our activities are an expression of who we are, and who we are is a church seeking to love God and love others. In each of the activities is a step of discipleship, whether that is in our services, or social times where we come together as community, or midweek groups or courses or community outreach – all our activities happen because we come together centred around Jesus.

One of the Proper Prefaces for the Eucharistic Prayer during Lent includes these words, “*through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline we may grow in grace and learn to be your people once again.*” We are continually called to remember what God has done in Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit and to remember that we are his people – we gather to remember this in our worship and to be built up to be sent out to live this wherever we go.

This year, the Ministry Team welcomed two new(ish) members. Annie Fraser was licensed as a Licensed Lay Minister on 28th June (Annie is not new to the Benefice but steps into a new role). And Revd Neil Barrett was welcomed as Associate Priest on 13th July and formally licensed on 5th August. It is a joy to have a Ministry Team which is as diverse in vocations as well as in character - Revd Rachel Pennant, Revd Neil Barrett and myself as ordained clergy, Julian Pennant and Annie Fraser as Licensed Lay Ministers, and John Kettlewell and Olive Law as Authorised Local Preachers. We each bring something different to the ministry within the Benefice, which I hope you agree is beneficial for us all.

We have also been blessed this year through our music group, which is still expanding welcoming David this year who is learning to play the cajon. There is always room for more! It is a joy to see our younger musicians grow in confidence in their musical abilities as they add a richness to the already multitalented team. The music group has worked hard this year to develop a blend of traditional hymns and newer worship songs to offer something for everyone and my thanks to Ellie, Ruth, Ash and Heather for planning and executing this blend so well. And of course, our wonderful benefice choir has gone from strength to strength this year. At Easter, they sang the poignant *Prayer at Gethsemane* as well as the Gospel classic *Joyful, Joyful*. At Christmas, they sang the *Carol of the Bells* as well as *Love is Born*, in addition to leading the congregational singing and giving the rest of us a little

confidence to sing out. The mix of pieces and the help to hold the appropriate theme of each service is wonderful.

One bigger piece of work that began in 2025, and continues in 2026, is the Growing Together programme. I was invited to join the Incumbent's Leadership Programme for growing young discipleships, which is a national church programme, involving two residential blocks and two single teaching days at Ridley Hall in Cambridge. But the majority of the work has been undertaken by the Growing Together group made up of members of the Kidzone and Youth Group leadership and a number of our young people. We are meeting for an academic year approximately monthly with the aim of doing 'one big thing' in the summer of 2026. We are only part way through this process, so watch out for more news later in the year!

The core of this course is that our young people grow as disciples through truly being part of the church and knowing they belong here as much as the older folk. It is recognising that church is meant to be intergenerational; we are the body of Christ and if young people are missing, the body is incomplete. Whilst this is a longer project, we did trial as part of this programme having all four Advent services in 2025 as all age. There were some important lessons learnt but, overall, it was successful. It was a joy to see our young people participate in our Advent journey and contribute to our worship. Our worship was expanded to include dramatised interpretations of Isaiah, dance and creative decorations to bring the themes of light and joy to life.

There is so much to reflect on from 2025 and I commend this whole report to you. You may not be aware of all the different aspects of our church life and all the different activities that happen behind the scenes to keep our life together moving forward. If God calls you to notice something in particular, take note, don't rush part. This community of Christ Church works because of each one of you. And maybe God is calling you in 2026 into a new season of discipleship.

Revd Dawn Butcher

2. Electoral Roll

There are 89 people on the Electoral Roll (90 last year), 33 of whom do not live in the Parish.

Jan Broderick

3. Safeguarding

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy Christ Church is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others

During 2025 we experienced no safeguarding issues.

Safer recruiting processes are in place with job descriptions and training defined for all roles, at end-2025 we had 29 voluntary workers covering 47 roles and a further 6 Youth Workers (under 16's) supporting church activities. The Diocese has, this year, launched a new dashboard we are using as a church to ensure compliance with our safeguarding policies and procedures.

We again ran a 'Safeguarding Sunday' service on 16th November to update the congregation as a whole of our work in this space, this is now a regular annual event in the church calendar. We have a regular agenda item on Safeguarding in every PCC meeting to maintain our focus on this important area of the church.

Christ Church takes the safety of everyone within the church very seriously and expects that everyone will work within the church safeguarding policy. In particular, Christ Church expects anyone who becomes aware of a safeguarding risk or of actual abuse, to immediately report it. If you have any questions or concerns regarding safeguarding at Christ Church please contact Brendon Horrocks, Revd Dawn Butcher or one of our Churchwardens.

Brendon Horrocks, Parish Safeguarding Officer

4. Activities

PCC

The PCC met on 6 occasions in 2025, in addition to a PCC away-day at Pilgrims Hall in September. This was an opportunity for prayer, reflection and discussion

about our mission and priorities as a church going forward. Our regular meetings have focussed on the required business of PCC (monitoring finances and safeguarding, building issues and various reports) as well as the licensing of Revd Neil Barrett as Associate Priest, to the Benefice in July.

Services

Services have been held every Sunday maintaining a mix of Holy Communion and Service of the Word, clergy and lay-led, with evening services on two Sundays a month (apart from during August). Our average attendance was around 65 adults and 14 children for morning services and around 10 adults for evening services.

We are grateful to the whole ministry team for leading and preaching at services alongside our Vicar, Revd Dawn Butcher; Revd Rachel Pennant, Revd Neil Barrett, our Licensed Lay Ministers, Julian Pennant and Annie Fraser, as well as our Authorised Local Preachers, Olive Law and John Kettlewell.

Lent services began with a Communion service with 'ashing' for Ash Wednesday. Our Holy Week journey was guided by Maundy Thursday Communion service and on Good Friday we gathered for Morning Prayer before opening the church for a time for private prayer and reflection guided by stations at the Cross leading to a 2pm service with pieces sung by the choir. Easter Sunday began with a Welcome the Morning service followed by breakfast and then our all-age Communion service followed by an Easter Egg hunt organised by Kidzone leaders.

On Sunday 13th July we held a special joint afternoon service with St Mary's for Revd Neil Barrett's licensing as Associate Priest to the Benefice of Christ Church Warley & St Mary the Virgin Great Warley. We were delighted to welcome Archdeacon Jonathan Croucher as well as Neil's guests and many members of St Mary's to a very moving service followed by refreshments.

We marked Back to School Sunday in September, and in November Safeguarding Sunday.

Our Christmas giving was kindly coordinated by Liz Edwin. It was decided that this year we would support two local charities; special needs charity 'SNAP' as well as 'Changing Pathways', a charity which works to support adults and children who escape abusive relationships, helping them in rebuilding their lives. We were delighted with the generosity of our members who donated a large number of suitable new books and games to SNAP as well as toiletry items, warm throws and cosy pyjamas for Changing Pathways. Both charities were

extremely grateful, and our own Fiona Townsend of SNAP came to speak to the congregation to express thanks on behalf of the families who received our gifts.

Harvest was celebrated on Saturday 11th October with a Harvest Supper then on Sunday 12th October, at our Harvest Festival service, donations of non-perishable food items were collected for Brentwood Food Bank as well as monetary donations for Tear Fund.

On Saturday 1st November, for All Soul's Day, we held a bereavement service followed by refreshments in the hall, which gave people a chance to chat.

On 2nd November we held a Baptism for two adult members of our congregation during the morning service, at which they both shared their very moving testimonies with us. Then on 23rd November, they were both Confirmed at Chelmsford Cathedral by Bishop Guli after attending their Baptism & Confirmation Preparation with Revd Dawn.

Advent and Christmas included our evening carol service on 21st December with 123 attending, a Christingle service on 24th December with 195 attending (including pupils, parents and staff from Warley Primary School) and a Christmas Day Holy Communion service with 57 attending.

This year our Kidzone and Youth Group were involved in leading a portion of our morning worship on every Sunday throughout Advent, on the theme of "joy". Their teamwork, enthusiasm and creativity were indeed a joy to behold as they expressed their faith by crafting beautiful hand-made decorations to display in Church, led the congregation in prayer, led the worship through song and worshipful dance and were involved in Bible readings and drama. Everyone was inspired and encouraged by our young people's participation in the services and we are delighted to see them continue to grow in confidence and deepen their faith.

Occasional Services

In 2025, we held 1 wedding blessing for Natasha McKinnon and Ben Lindsay, 1 funeral service for Sheila Stimpson, and held 6 baptisms, including for 2 adults prior to their Confirmation (as detailed above).

Mid-Week Groups

Our midweek groups continued with Bible Explored on a Tuesday evening (at the Vicarage), aimed at those who are new to reading the Bible, Wednesday morning Bible Study (now held in the Centre), Thursday afternoon fellowship

group (held fortnightly in the Centre) and Thursday evening fellowship group (also in the Centre).

We also met for prayer together via Zoom on Mondays (9am) and Thursdays (7pm) and in-person on the final Saturday of the month in the Centre.

During Lent, we followed the Church of England's course titled 'Living Hope' over 6 weeks, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. These sessions were well attended and were felt to be very beneficial, deepening our understanding of the significance of Lent as well as drawing us closer as a community.

In June & July, to mark the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed, we held a short course called 'We Believe' exploring the Nicene Creed in detail.

Social

Social events this year included a games evening, a quiz evening, film nights, family rambles, a mini book club session, a summer barbecue (held after our Sunday morning service this time), an afternoon tea, and a Harvest supper. We continue to believe these opportunities to socially meet together are important and the PCC always welcomes new volunteers and suggestions for these occasions. A survey of the congregation was conducted towards the end of the year and next year's events planning will take account of views expressed.

Our popular Social Sundays have continued on the 1st Sunday of each month, with many of the congregation taking the time to sit down around tables after church to enjoy tea, coffee and tasty treats, whilst getting to know one another, often engaging in some sort of quiz or survey.

The Men's Curry Nights continued to be popular, while the ladies have also begun to meet occasionally for a meal out.

Community Outreach

The Pop-Up Café, which started in 2022, continued to flourish in 2025, thanks to a wonderful team of volunteers, with regular visitors as well as new people coming along to enjoy a chat over coffee and cakes or tea and bacon rolls on a Thursday morning. In this welcoming and relaxed atmosphere, many friendships are made and the café is much appreciated.

A group has continued to regularly visit Winifred Dell Care Home to take services monthly, with some services (at Christmas and Easter) taking place in church. The residents enjoy the chance to sing familiar hymns, hear a bible reading and short talk and have the opportunity to receive Communion.

Revd Dawn was invited to the Marillac during Advent to preside at Communion for residents, their families and staff. It is hoped this is the start of reconnecting our links with the Marillac.

The Brentwood District Scouts held their carol service at Christ Church on 8th December, with 30 attending. We again welcomed Warley Primary (Years 5 & 6) into Church for their carol service with 180 people present. Holly Trees Year 2 visited for a morning celebration of Christmas, with 60 children and their teachers present, and Warley Primary Year 1 also came this year for an afternoon celebration of Christmas (see School's Link Report for more detail). As per previous years, we hosted a carol service for the staff and clients from the Walter Boyce centre on 19th December, followed by a tea which was much appreciated.

Eco Church

Christ Church achieved the bronze eco award from A Rocha in 2024. We seek to continue our focus on caring for the whole of creation and raising awareness of our stewardship of our planet as Christians, with efforts to reduce our use of paper, avoiding wasting energy and ensuring we are recycling as much as possible. We continue to encourage groups who use the centre to use our clearly labelled recycling bins. Some of our Kidzone sessions have included a focus on caring for the natural environment. Looking to the future, research is commencing to investigate the feasibility and likely cost of more sustainable heating options for the church.

We are immensely grateful for the contribution of all who give so generously of their time, talents and dedication in so many ways to serve God (often behind the scenes) by supporting our worship, young people's groups, social events, outreach and use of the hall space by community groups.

Sylvia Partridge and Jane Montaigu, Church Wardens

5. Finance

Please see attached document.

John Kettlewell

6. Fabric Report including Buildings Group Report

Fabric Report (Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018: Section 50 Compliant)

This year our buildings team have worked hard to continue to maintain the church buildings and grounds, along with additional help from volunteers.

Some tree safety work on one of the tall Chestnut trees was undertaken by Brentwood Tree Care on 11th November in addition to the routine tree inspection.

Tarmac repairs were carried out by Elite Asphalt Ltd on 14th March 2025.

Stonework repairs specified in the last Quinquennial Inspection report were completed by Bakers of Danbury in November.

Condition of the Church Building

The exterior of the church is generally in good condition and gutters are cleared out at regular intervals as required during each working party. Some erosion of stonework can be seen but inspection has not thus far given rise to any safety concerns.

The interior of the church is in good condition (apart from the office outside wall, the back wall by the sound desk and vestry where recurrent damp is damaging some of the plasterwork and paintwork). Some splits in the church carpet have been taped over for the time being to avoid them being a trip hazard. The lighting, heating and electrics are sound. Volunteers assist with the upkeep and cleaning of the church interior, especially during working parties. The Church Centre carpet was shampooed in August by Olive Law as agreed with the PCC.

The church is fully accessible for wheelchair users via both the West door and South entrance (via the Centre). Three fire exits are clearly marked and doors are unlocked while the building is occupied.

One of the louvre openings in the bell tower has deteriorated and needs replacing – quotes are being sought.

Condition of the Churchyard

The church grounds are in good condition and are maintained regularly by the buildings team, with additional help from members of the congregation at working party sessions.

Trees are generally in good condition and are inspected annually and pruned as recommended in the report by the arborist (see 'works completed' section below for more detail).

Boundaries and paths are in good condition. The wicket gates on the East side have deteriorated somewhat.

No safety concerns have been raised.

Condition of the Contents

All the items listed in the inventory are in good condition; however, a minor repair was necessary to the legs of the baby grand piano due to it being moved. As a result, the PCC decided to order an A-frame on castors to enable the piano to be repositioned as necessary without causing damage.

The projector in the Chancel broke down in July and had to be replaced (see 'works completed' section below).

Works Completed During the Year

Fallen tree removed from Warley Hill, grounds and neighbouring property.
Repairs to neighbouring garage wall undertaken (January)

Gathering space roof window replaced 14th March (Brentwood Glass Limited)

Repair to degraded tarmac on drive 14th March (Elite Asphalt Ltd)

Hall boiler pump replaced 7th March (K.F. Services)

Key safe installed on outside wall 8th July (Buildings team)

Trees survey 17th April (Brentwood Tree Care)

Tree work identified in survey 4th July (Brentwood Tree Care)

Smart meter installed by EON for electricity supply located in cupboard at base of tower, 19th August

Chestnut tree cavity additional inspection and height reduction work completed 11th November (Brentwood Tree Care)

Hall heating servicing August 2025 (K.F. Services)

Several visits for diagnostics to the Hall boiler controls with eventually a replacement pump fitted under guarantee in July/August (Vaillant, TPS services, K.F. Services)

List B works

New TV screen mounted (to replace defunct projector with screen) 1st November (Buildings team)

Stonework repairs as per Quinquennial Inspection completed 20th November (Bakers of Danbury Heritage Ltd)

Works Required or Planned

The most recent Quinquennial Inspection took place on 3rd September 2021.

Outstanding items from the Quinquennial Inspection:

- Treating external doors (Bakers could not undertake this as planned in November due to adverse weather conditions)

There are no urgent or emerging issues.

The next Quinquennial Inspection is booked for 31st July 2026.

Planned works: Hive controls to be fitted for both the Church boiler and Hall boiler to facilitate accurate and timely programming according to weather conditions and needs of the community.

Planned projects awaiting permission: replacement of one damaged timbered louvre in Tower.

Logbook and Inventory

The Church Wardens confirm that the logbook and inventory have been maintained and updated during the year and are available for inspection.

Items removed or added: The projector in the chancel failed and was removed for potential repair. As it was not repairable, it has been removed from the inventory and replaced by a large TV monitor installed above the pulpit on 1st November (as per List B application granted October 2025)

There have been no insurance claims relating to contents or fabric this year.

Health & Safety and Security

Fire safety equipment (alarm, emergency lighting and extinguishers) tested and updated by City Fire Protection 14th August and 11th September.

Electrical testing – lightning protection tested by PTSG Electrical Services.

Fire safety inspection carried out monthly by Brendon Horrocks – register in Fire Safety folder.

Risk assessment carried out prior to reintroduction of Christingle service in December. Agreed by PCC to be reviewed again for next year.

One minor accident (a fall from a chair) duly reported and signage put in place to emphasise the requirement for anyone needing to access items from high shelves or cupboards to use the available stepladder for better stability.

Environmental Considerations

Diocesan Heating Advisory Report received in July and discussed at PCC. Investigations have commenced to research potential heating solutions which would be more energy efficient but also affordable for the congregation. Ideally, PCC would like to see examples in similar churches and obtain information on effectiveness and any drawbacks or other considerations.

Recycling and energy saving measures continue.

Acknowledgements

A huge thank you to our Buildings Group members for their time and dedication in monitoring and maintaining the Church buildings and grounds, as well as to all who help at our regular working party sessions. Special thanks to Mark Townsend, Brendon Horrocks and Ian Double for all their hard work in managing the buildings group and undertaking the majority of the necessary work. We are also grateful to the PCC and others who offer practical help and technical knowledge regarding the buildings and their equipment, to all our Church and Centre cleaning volunteers, as well as to the various contractors whose services we have called upon to enable us to maintain the buildings and grounds in good order.

Sylvia Partridge and Jane Montaigu, Church Wardens

7. Admin & Communication

Up until November 2025, Brendon Horrocks published our pew sheet with services, notices and prayer page, with Gemma Butfield adding any additional information that Revd Dawn and the Church Wardens wished to highlight. Since November, Gemma has taken ownership of creating the pew sheet with Suzanne Galliers continuing to produce the prayer page. 25 pew sheets are printed ready for Sunday services (increased to 30 for Parade services) and the sheets are also distributed electronically via mail chimp by Gemma. To be included please email admin@christchurchwarley.org.

Centre/Church bookings and calendar are administered by Gemma. Wedding, funeral and baptism administration is carried out by Gemma, with stocks of certificates etc. being maintained. Our Church Website and Church Near You are both updated on a regular basis and are a first point of call for those wanting to find out about our worship schedule and the activities and groups associated with Christ Church. All songs used for Services and Choir are reported on a regular basis to CCLI. Gemma organises and publishes the rota for refreshments, readings, prayers, communion assistants & staffing of the audio & visual tech during the services. Thank you to all those involved in keeping our church family and the local community informed of our beliefs, our services and our other activities.

Gemma Butfield

8. Pastoral Report

Pastoral ministry continues; Louise, as Pastoral Assistant, and Revd Dawn offer our more formal pastoral ministry, but significant pastoral care is given at Christ Church by every member of the Church family. Support and care given and received by our understanding that we are the body of Christ – when one member is in need, we are all in need. We laugh together and we cry together and everything in between.

Prayer requests are included in our weekly pew sheet where permission is given for requests to be 'public', and Louise and Revd Dawn also pray for those confidential requests that are made. Do continue to forward any prayer requests.

In December, we again welcomed Walter Boyce clients and staff into church for a carol service, and we also held a carol service for Winifred Dell residents, staff and families. Both services were followed by afternoon tea and thanks go to Sylvia, Roanne and team for providing the refreshments. It has also been a joy to welcome Walter Boyce clients and staff most weeks to the Pop-Up Café. It is wonderful that links with Walter Boyce and Winifred Dell are growing stronger, and we pray this will continue into next year.

Revd Dawn visits one parishioner regularly taking home Communion to them. Both Revd Dawn and Louise have continued hospital visiting when this has been appropriate. If you know of anyone in the parish who would appreciate a visit, please let Revd Dawn or Louise know.

Bereavement Group (New Era)

Bennetts Funeral Directors have run a Bereavement Group in Brentwood for many years. In July, St George's church hall was no longer available to the group, so Christ Church was pleased to host the meetings in the Centre.

The group meets once a month with approximately 25 - 30 regular members. Those attending have all lost a loved one, some very recently whilst others several years' ago. The meetings provide an opportunity to share their experiences, enjoy some social time and exchange useful practical information, including other relevant groups and useful tips for those who are now living alone. Activities at the meeting include quizzes, visiting speakers, crafts and even wine tasting!

Louise supports the meetings, serving refreshments and providing a listening ear for anyone who wishes to talk one-to-one and offering prayer support if requested.

The group is appreciated very much by those who attend, and it has been great to see longer-established members welcoming and caring for those who are new to the group (and therefore newly bereaved). Some of the gentlemen members now attend the Pop-Up cafe and regularly invite others to join them.

Louise Kearns

9. Walter Boyce Gardening Project

Beginning in June, a small project began to work with the Walter Boyce Learning Disabilities Day Centre located across the road from the church. In discussion with one of the centre managers, it was decided to run a session for roughly an hour on a Thursday morning, during the time that the Pop-up Café operates. This would be for a regular group of four centre customers accompanied by a member of staff from the centre. Julian Pennant and Glen Armstrong have been the core church volunteers with help from others on an occasional basis. We have used the courtyard area behind the main church entrance and spent our weekly sessions planting up pots of flowers and bulbs, sowing seeds and taking cuttings. Over the winter we have completed mosaics. It has been a very rewarding experience - do get in touch if you might like to be involved at all, or just have a chat to the group about what they are doing if you are around on a Thursday morning.

Julian Pennant

10. Kidzone Report

As Psalm 78 proclaims "We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord", so we feel the importance of ministry to our youngest members of the Church.

Our Kidzone sessions welcome children, principally of primary school age, to come and explore their faith and understanding of the bible, whilst getting to build up friendships within the Church. Sessions take place on the 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays of the month, with on average 13 children attending each session and roughly 30 regular children on the register.

We meet as one big group, bringing children across all primary school years together. We continue to provide slightly different materials suitable for the different age ranges. We usually include a bible reading, prayer, games, crafts and open discussions. We have started to use a new resource during 2025, called Roots on the Web. This links through to the bible passages used within the main church service and it has been fun explaining to the main congregation how we have been learning about the same passages.

This year we tried something different during the Advent period, with the Kidzone children participating in all the main Sunday morning services through a variety of mediums including readings, song, dance and prayer. The children also crafted a variety of joyful decorations that were used to bring this year's theme of joy into the church. This was well received by the congregation and the children enjoyed being able to share things they had been learning.

Outside of Sundays, we held team planning meetings where we focused on continuing to work together as a new team.

We thank all the Kidzone families for their support and we thank God for the blessing of families and children.

Liz Edwin

11. Youth Groups

Youth Group 11-18s

All 11–18-year-olds from Christ Church, St Mary's and beyond are welcome at Sunday evening Youth Group, which sees attendance of up to 15. It is held roughly monthly, and led by a willing and growing team who enjoy it just as much as the young people. It begins with a choice of activities and a vast array of snacks, followed by an all-together time which includes ice breakers (these are important because as well as the wide age range, around eight different schools are represented), games and some Christian input and discussion.

Fun highlights of 2025 included table tennis, biscuit icing, 'dips' evening, 'four square' games outside, a summer meal (supplemented by church BBQ leftovers) together at 97 Sawyers Grove, kubb garden game, baking and other contributions by the young people (e.g. telling everyone about summer Christian events they had attended), shell craft, pizza evening, bulb pot painting, lots of silly games, Dawn being repeatedly targeted, and dying in a variety of dramatic ways, in wink murder, and (repetition intended as it's so popular, indeed several come along with their own bat) table tennis.

Topics in the 'input' time ranged from peer pressure to 'moving on', 'lost and found' parables, and a helpful visit from Millie Double to tell us her faith story including challenges to faith upon moving away from home. We also began a scheme to offer each young person a Christian book, bible or bible reading aid of their choice, to help them on their faith journey.

We have said goodbye (ish – see on) to two departing for university, and also welcomed new joiners. The atmosphere is always welcoming and supportive and we encourage all 11–18-year-olds to give Youth Group a try. The all-age church, and the ongoing journeying of each Christian family comes first, but focused teaching (also see Youth bible studies below) can provide a real boost, along with the joy of acceptance, fun and friendship.

Youth Group 16-20 somethings

Moving away to university or similar is a transitional time which can bring both joys and challenges. We therefore keep in touch with students and those in their twenties, and offer social gatherings for their age group (together with upper school years who may soon also be in this position) in the holidays. In April, the '16-20 somethings' met for a bring and share lunch at church, as well as an evening meal at 97 Sawyers Grove. They were invited to join in youth bible studies in the summer, and in December came together for a brunch and some silly get-to-know-you games. These activities hopefully help students to integrate more quickly back into the wider church community each time they return for a break. Thank you to all who helped with these events (but as with youth group helpers, I suspect they had a great time!)

Youth Bible Studies

New for 2025 was the introduction of regular Youth Bible Studies. These are held on Sunday afternoons around once a month. We experimented with age range and (due to popular demand) settled on the full 11-18 range, with students welcome when at home. Around five young people (not necessarily the same ones!) attend each time for a chat, hot chocolate and an in-depth look at a bible

passage. We started with a bible overview and timeline activity, then went to Jonah and Daniel (re standing firm in danger, and the power of God despite the messiness of life). After that we rewound to Genesis, and spent several sessions on Abraham (which generated lots of questions), Ishmael ('don't force God's plan'), Isaac and Rebekah. Thank you to Dawn for leading these studies. It is great for the young people to have an opportunity for a deep dive into some challenging but very rewarding parts of God's word, for them to feed together in their walks with God. Anyone who's not tried a Youth Bible Study before, do come along to the next one – no prior knowledge of the bible is expected.

Heather Bradshaw

12. Uniformed Organisations

1st Warley Rainbows

Warley Rainbows has continued to be a very popular, we have sixteen girls meeting each week, but a healthy waiting list!

We completed many activities during the year and six girls receiving Gold and two Silver awards upon leaving us. This shows girls commitment to the unit at home as well as at meetings.

For the spring term we completed our Explorer badge and held one evening where we managed to jet off to Antarctica, Brazil, USA and China, zooming off with teddy bear passports.

During the Summer the Rainbows met at The Pines a local Girlguiding site and held an ice cream night where we made sundaes with sprinkles and cream.

We held a small bonfire party and had s'mores by candlelight and learnt to sign campfire songs.

To celebrate a successful year, we went to Queens Theatre to watch Jack and the Beanstalk entertainer which was very popular.

Nichola Webber

1st Warley Brownies

At 1st Warley Brownies this year we worked on doing our First Aid Badge and the Brownies learnt about how to do bandaging and they learnt CPR and how to put someone in the recovery position. We also worked on a Challenge Badge relating to the Women's Rugby World Cup and we made yummy oat, banana

and chocolate chips bites as a healthy snack. In October we celebrated our 102nd Birthday with an octopus themed party as it was also World Octopus Day. The Brownies enjoyed collecting the conkers in the grounds of the church. In November at Brownies, we had a packing party to put together 35 shoeboxes for the Samaritan's Purse shoebox appeal.

Hannah Keely

1st Warley Guides

2025 was again a busy year with the girls taking part in lots of activities and gaining badges and awards.

During the year numbers remained stable with some leaving and some joining us. We continue to follow the guiding programme and balance this with outside activities of camp-fire cooking, treasure hunts and adventurous.

3 of our Younger Leaders completed their A levels in the summer and left us for university. We congratulated them on their success but miss them at the Guide meetings.

During the year we held two sleepovers in the Hall. In February we celebrated Thinking Day on 22nd February and joined other Girlguiding members in Anglia Region, all completing the same activities and games. In December, we enjoyed a Christmas themed sleepover. The girls made a variety of Christmas cards, a chocolate log, tried glass engraving and made a reindeer using a plastic piping bag and hot chocolate powder. The girls watched a Christmas movie before settling down for some sleep!

Four girls gained their Jack Petchey award, and these were presented at a special evening held at The Queens Theatre, Hornchurch. We were really proud of them all.

We took part in local and county events. Probably the most popular were the Mud run and paddleboarding.

Sylvia Partridge

13. Deanery Synod Report

The Brentwood Deanery Synod met three times in 2025 with the January meeting cancelled due to illness of both Area Dean and Lay Chair.

8th April 2025 the synod met at St George's, Brentwood, for the 6th meeting of the triennium, and Reverend Justin Hutcherson led opening worship.

Ian Kemble BSCWT addressed the meeting and talked about the work of BSCWT and his involvement over the last 19 years. Parishes were encouraged to see BSCWT as a resource to help them reach out to schools. For more information on the work of BSCWT see the regular newsletters or go to BSCWT.org.

Reverend Justin has put together a Facebook page for the deanery. Father Andy Smith led closing prayers.

9th July 2025 Christchurch, Warley for the 7th of this triennium

Opening worship was led by Olive Law and Louise Kearns.

The Area Dean, Revd Andy Smith, gave a presentation on “The Quiet Revival” - an analysis and the potential for parish churches.

- 1) A recent Report, commissioned by the Bible Society, gives statistical information that on the face of it suggests growth in church attendance that is very encouraging.
 - from 2018 to 2024 overall monthly church attendance has increased by 56%
 - under 35's attendance has increased from 4% to 16% from 2018 to 2024
 - for the same period young men's attendance has increased by 21%
 - Bible Reading - in 2018 50% of churchgoers, now 66%
 - under 35's most eager readers, weekly reading common.
 - among non-attenders 33% would be willing to go if specifically invited
 - 66% would be happy for a Christian friend to pray for them.

The Bible Society concludes that we are witnessing growth in church attendance and a greater spiritual openness. The young are enthusiastic but in need of mature guidance.

- 2) Father Andy commented that the challenge in the parishes is to grow and encourage this, promoting discipleship, a sense of well-being and belonging, particularly for young people. How can the disillusioned find answers post atheism? Atheistic culture lacks hope, the pandemic, austerity and the threat of war all have an effect.
- 3) Father Andy reported that there was healthy scepticism from The Church Mouse.

The Church Mouse is an anonymous blog, recently broadcasting Confessions of a Quiet Revival Sceptic. It questioned:

- How accurate was the survey? Did attendance figures include baptisms, funerals and other occasions?
- How can conclusions be drawn from such small sample sizes?
- Why is this not reflected in Church of England data?
- Why is this not yet fully felt on the ground?

Church Mouse suggests that the claims be taken with a pinch of salt.

1) How can we nurture signs of revival in the Parishes?

Father Andy commented that nevertheless some signs of spiritual openness are present, and we should not ignore any sign of hope. We need to be attentive and responsive and lay the groundwork for any change. He pointed out that the life experience of Generation Z is very different to ours,

- 2 years of schooling were lost due to the pandemic
- young people cannot afford to buy or rent locally
- impact of social media
- rapidly changing world events

Anglicanism can help raise social awareness, promote wellbeing and a sense of belonging.

1) Clergy well-being is now a topic of great importance. Clergy increasingly struggle to fulfil their roles with such a decrease in resources. Numbers of clergy, self-supporting and lay ministers are all reduced thus creating increased demands. Stipends are not keeping up.

2) The deanery shortfall on parish share has an impact as financial sustainability of stipendiary posts is linked to shortfall. If the Deanery paid 100%, we could have a conversation about more posts. **The Deanery paid 77% of Parish Share last year. The current number of stipendiary priests, 8, is only sustainable if the Deanery pays 93%.** The Deanery is vulnerable now. At what point do we stop being a going concern? We do not want to be managing decline but committing to growth. How do we Sustain Ministry?

3) Tying Revival and Reality Together

There are signs of hope but fiscal strain. We are all facing similar challenges and must seek God's direction. Revival doesn't require perfect finances. Financial challenges call us to prayer, generosity and creative mission-not despair.

1) Practical responses

- a) Mutual support-Pray for the Deanery. Share gifts and resources. Work more collaboratively across Parish boundaries
- b) Cultivate generosity through stewardship campaigns, digital giving, talking
- c) Deepen discipleship with fresh Bible sessions, discussion groups, mentoring.
- d) Be alert to vocation and where God is at work. We need to look for the next generation of ministers.
- e) Innovate missionally. Are there places in the Deanery we can re-imagine? Use empty buildings creatively; community cafes, Youth spaces. Align small-scale mission with revival themes such as belonging, meaning and community.

The meeting was closed in prayer.

We prayed for careful discernment and stewardship and wisdom for finances and mission together, giving thanks for signs of renewal.

Revival is quietly coming but we have work to do. Positive vision “We are ready.....ready to receive, to care, to invest.”

Closing prayer from DB

Tuesday 9th October 2025 the synod met at the Belli Centre, St. Peter’s Church, S. Weald for the 8th meeting of the triennium.

Opening Worship was led by Reverend Justin Hutcherson.

Reverend Darren Barlow, welcomed members of Synod and introduced Belinda Ramsey, Children, Youth and Families Advisor of the Bradwell Area, who gave a presentation.

- 1) The team, known as the Mustard Seed Team and consisting of 4 members, can be described as like the A Team, rather than Ofsted. This means the team is there to help, advise and support rather than inspect and judge.
- 2) The young have inquisitive hope, 0–25-year-olds are more spiritually aware than in the past, the Quiet Revival indicating that they want to know about God.

We need to provide a home, a welcome, a safe place. Church can become family. The wisdom of older people is invaluable, but it is a two-way process with the young challenging older people.

- 1) There are lots of training programmes for those who wish to work with children.
- Anne specialises in work with the under-fives.

- Emma in Godly Play (she is an ex-teacher)
 - Matt in Youth work and mentoring
 - Belinda in additional needs and chaplaincy
- ‘Launchpad’ programme is a 5-session bespoke course for clergy.
‘Catalyst’ is a basic Youth and Child Training baseline.

- 1) There followed a Question-and-Answer session, the topics including Communion in schools, the transition from Yr.6 to Yr.7 and the importance of growing more Leaders. Belinda reiterated that information was available on the website and that the team could be contacted by email for individual advice.

Business meeting:

- 1) Parish Share 2025/6 – information was distributed and briefly discussed.
- 2) Net Zero, Eco-church awards

There are 3 levels, bronze, silver and gold. The bronze is not hard to obtain. Warley, Gt. Warley, Shenfield and St. Paul’s Doddinghurst have bronze, South Weald has silver, The Cathedral has gold.

The Church of England is still pushing for net-zero by 2030. The DAC are not approving Faculties for replacement gas boilers. Reverend Justin Hutcherson pointed out that alternative systems were not suitable for some churches. Christ Church Warley are looking for a new system but the DAC have not provided much help or support.

- 1) Deanery Synod Triennium 2026 Elections

Reverend Darren Barlow is now Assistant Area Dean.

It is suggested that we also elect an Assistant Lay Chair. This will provide a broader view and help. It is planned to implement this in 2026, with an Election in July.

If anyone is interested, please contact Paul Betts.

- 1) Reports

- a. Still a long way to go on parish share payments
- b. General Synod Report included: No money from the dioceses from the Church Commissioners, who feel they have poured in money without change. An interim agreement to replace “Issues in Human Sexuality (1991)” with a requirement that that ordination candidates live consistently within the Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy.

- 2) Reverend Julie Hardy has been appointed Deanery Vocations Advisor,

Closing Prayer was led by Reverend Justin Hutcherson.

Olive Law and Louise Kearns

14. Schools Link Report

We enjoyed another good year building on our links with not only our parish schools but other links as well.

Holly Trees Primary school has been particularly open to Revd Dawn visiting. January included a visit to Year 2 on the topic of belonging, exploring how we show we belong to the church. In October, Year 3 invited Revd Dawn to talk about baptism, what it is, what it means and how we practice baptism at Christ Church. November saw Revd Dawn invited to Year 1 to tell the Christmas story and then to watch the Year 1 Nativity play in December. Also in November, Year 3 held a session on the Trinity where Revd Dawn helped to explore this more difficult of Christianity theology!

On 9th December, we welcomed Year 2 from Holly Trees (morning) and Year 1 from Warley Primary (afternoon) in to Christ Church to explore the Nativity. As well as thinking about each part of the Biblical account (Gabriel visiting Mary, the shepherds, the wise men, the courage of Joseph and Jesus' birth in the stable), the children sang carols (ably accompanied and led by Heather) and produced crafts on Christmas. It was a busy day in church where 120 children held the true Christmas story from the Bible.

Warley Primary Years 5 & 6 held their carol service in Christ Church again this December and it was a joy to welcome children, families and staff in to church to celebrate the Nativity. We were also pleased to invite Warley Primary school choir to our Christingle service. These opportunities to build links with our parish schools are important and the invitation was well received. It also meant our Christingle service was very well attended and a packed church heard Revd Rachel speak about Jesus, the Light of the World.

We continue to value our link with the Brentwood Schools Christian Worker Trust. A few of us went to the end of year celebration at Trinity Church in July. Olive Law is our link representative with BSCWT

In the Autumn term, I joined the governing body at Becket Keys Church of England Secondary school. Whilst not in our parish, Becket Keys is a Church of England school and values its links with the Deanery of Brentwood and the

Diocese of Chelmsford and ensures a number of local clergy are invited to participate as governors. I will be looking forward to what this opportunity brings in the coming years.

Revd Dawn

15. Pop Up Café

The past year has been a busy one for café. We have seen an increase of people who visit café every Thursday and our numbers tend to be between 35-45 visitors.

We have welcomed 3 new helpers this year – Carol, Helen and Sara who have been a great addition to our team.

We continue to serve sandwiches, bacon rolls, toasted teacakes, beans and/or cheese on toast and homemade cakes along with a selection of teas, coffees, hot chocolate and juices.

A selection of Walter Boyce clients come over every week for gardening club with Julian & Glenn and we provide a piece of cake and hot drink afterwards for them as a reward for their work.

In October we held our annual Macmillan coffee morning and raised £500. In May for our 3rd anniversary and the last Thursday before Christmas we had a party where drinks and cakes were free for all. This is our opportunity to say 'thank you' to those who come on a weekly basis and support the Pop-Up Café.

We feel café has a real happy buzz and an environment where friendships have been formed and a weekly opportunity for people to catch up and enjoy being together.

Please continue to share the word about Pop-Up Cafe on a Thursday because everyone is welcome.

Roanne, Jo & Sylvia.