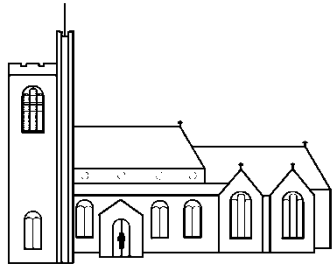


The Parish of
St Mary the Virgin, Welwyn,
with St Michael and All Angels,
Woolmer Green



St Mary's, Welwyn



St Michael's, Woolmer Green

Annual Parochial
Church Meeting
(APCM)

Wednesday 3rd May 2023
in Church House

Holy Communion – 7.15pm
Meeting Commences – 8.00pm

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NOTICE OF A MEETING FOR THE ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

A meeting of parishioners for the election of churchwardens is to be held
on Wednesday 3rd May 2023 at 7:55 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Opening prayer.
2. Minutes of meeting held on 25th May 2022.
3. Election of churchwardens.

NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) to be held on Wednesday 3rd May 2023 at 8:00
p.m. following the meeting for election of churchwardens.

AGENDA

1. Chairman's welcome and opening remarks.
2. Attendance list and apologies for absence.
3. Minutes of APCM meeting held on 25th May 2022.
4. Matters arising.
5. Presentation of electoral roll – Diane Jenkin
6. Elections.
 - i) Lay members to the Deanery Synod
 - ii) Lay members to the PCC.
 - iii) Sidespersons.
7. Finance report and appointment of independent examiner of accounts – Maggie Varco
8. Team Rector's report.
9. Other Primary reports
 - i) PCC Secretaries' report
 - ii) Welwyn Hatfield Deanery Synod Report
 - iii) Team Council Report
 - iv) St Mary's Fabric Report
 - v) St Mary's Safeguarding Report
 - vi) St Michael's Church, Woolmer Green Report
10. Other reports.
11. Any other business.
12. Closing prayers.

Notes relating to the 2023 Parochial Church Council

Candidates nominated for election to the Parochial Church Council must:

- 1* be on the Electoral Roll
- 2* be 16 years of age or more
- 3* have taken communion at least three times in the past year

It is the practice in this Parish:

- 4* to obtain the express consent of the candidate
- 5* to complete a nomination form, signed by the proposer and seconder

Make up of PCC as at eve of APCM 2023

Ex-officio: Clergy: Christie Gilfeather Ex-officio: Church Wardens: Diane Jenkin Sue Keach Stuart Westley	Nominated	Seconded
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Representatives to the Welwyn Hatfield Deanery Synod

Ex-officio: Deanery Synod: (Should be 3) Vernonne Allan Colin Hull Shoena Eggington	Standing down for 2023	
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Readers on the Parochial Church Council

Readers: (Does not mean they are not members of deanery synod) John Burnapp Colin Hull Usha Hull		
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Election of Lay members to the Parochial Church Council

Elected PCC members (12)	Notes / Position	Term from APCM 2022
Crystal Lam		2 years to go
Liz Hesketh		2 years to go
Jackie Davis (WG)	Treasurer St Michael's	1 year to go
Geoffrey (Geoff) Cummings		End of term
Georgina Beck		End of term
Maggie Varco	Treasurer	End of term
Stuart Jenkin	Fabric	End of term
Joan Shelley		End of term

There are therefore three places available on the PCC for a 3-year term.

Appointment of Sidespersons for St Mary's and St Michael's church

Vernonne Allan
Peter and Patricia Brattle
Martin & Liz Browne
Alice Burnapp
Rose Cantillon Webber
Michael & Gay Carpenter
John Constable
Geoff Cummings
Joyce Davis
Jim Evans
Heather Knappett
Diane Petty
Bill & Pat Morris
Jane Robson
Keith Thompson
Roger & Carole Trigg
Ann Harper

St Michael's Church sidespersons:

Christine Allday
Gill & Simon Blewett
Doreen Croft
Lurline Champagnie
Shoena Eggington
Nita Gowans
Betty Hodge
Margaret Holdcroft
Susan Keach
Janet & Rob Slater
Margaret Paterson

Primary Reports

Team Rector's Report – *The Rev'd Dr David Munchin*

This will be read aloud; copies to be made available at the meeting.

PCC Secretaries' Report – *Louise and David Hughes*

As is normal there were meetings of the PCC every alternate month during the year to discuss and make decisions concerning all aspects of church life including its people, its property and finances.

It is pleasing to be able to report that all meetings took place in person in Church House in the twelve months covered by this report with no interference from Covid-19 or lockdowns.

The one thing that is a big issue for both St Mary's and St Michael's, as it is for many households, is the huge increase in the cost of gas (for heating) and electricity. This is a matter that has occupied a good deal of the time of the PCC treasurer and others over the past six to nine months. The hard call, of course, is whether it is better to stick to fixed rate contracts which are usually more expensive but mean that the cost is known or whether to contract on variable rate tariffs which are less expensive to start with but give no certainty as to what the cost could be in future months. Time has shown that the PCC treasurer has made good decisions.

Early in 2022 the rector was approached by a priest from the Romanian Orthodox Church asking whether their congregation could hire St Michael's Church in order to hold their own services. A contract was signed in April 2022 and this has been, and hopefully continues to be, a welcome source of income.

New fire alarm and smoke detection systems have been installed at St Mary's at considerable expense. This was part of a large project to update fire safety and make St Mary's compliant with current regulations for which thanks are due to Stuart Jenkin.

On the weekend of the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations early in June a social event was held in Church House that included cake and a sing-song with piano accompaniment.

Also, in June the new curates, Ryan and Christie Gilfeather, moved in to St Michael's House in Woolmer Green.

In September Mr Robert Milner was appointed as Director of Music at St Mary's in place of Mr Triantaris. By all accounts the choir is flourishing under Mr Milner's direction. He and the rector have introduced a music scholarship.

At the September meeting the possibility of offering Church House as a 'warm space' during the winter was discussed and agreed. Accordingly, Church House was opened on 24th October from 9 am to 2 pm Monday to Friday to members of the public who were invited to join in or co-exist with church events that were taking place at the time and included use of the kitchen for tea or coffee.

It is pleasing to report that during the year three new recruits were welcomed to the PCC. They are Crystal Lam, Christie Gilfeather and Liz Hesketh. This means that there are now nineteen members on the Church Council including the Chairman (The Rector). The secretaries' responsibilities include ensuring that correct procedure is followed, issuing notices of meetings in good time, ensuring that reports are prepared on time, preparing the agenda for meetings, dealing with correspondence, preparing the minutes of meetings, keeping a check on the parish diary and knowing what is going on in the life of the church generally.

During the year five school governors were appointed. They are Gail Lumsden, Debbie May, Christie Gilfeather and Karen Tasker to St Michael's School, Woolmer Green and Evelyn Welch to St Mary's, Welwyn.

Please contact me if you have any questions relating to the PCC at louise@elhughes37.plus.com

Welwyn Hatfield Deanery Synod Report – *Vernonne Allan*

St Mary's Church is a member of the Welwyn Hatfield Deanery. Deanery Synod Meetings bring together all Anglican clergy of Welwyn and Hatfield as well as all Readers and laity representatives from the churches.

Currently I am the laity member representing St Mary's Welwyn. Shoena Eggington has represented St Michael's and All Angels, Woolmer Green. Colin Hull also attends as a Reader.

The synod received reports on General Synod matters and meetings, diocesan synod meetings and the work of the Diocesan Board of Finance and its various committees. The Synod also considered safeguarding and data protection issues at each meeting. In addition, the pastoral committee of the deanery synod had regard to the wellbeing of the clergy.

The synod reviewed the parish share factors for the deanery and gave recommendations to the diocesan authorities.

The parishes' responses to topical issues were discussed, for example the platinum jubilee celebrations and the welfare of refugees.

Three meetings take place each year in churches across the deanery: in February, May and October. The PCC received reports on these meetings.

At each meeting we discussed a particular issue after hearing from an invited speaker. In February 2022 we discussed the Living in Love and Faith process. In May 2022 the meeting was here at St Mary's Welwyn when David White, the then new Diocesan Secretary, was our guest speaker. He told us of his past roles within the church as well as how he saw his future role in the diocese and mission of the Church today. Colin wrote a report for PCC as I was preoccupied with supplying refreshments etc as we were the hosts.

In October 2022 the Deanery Synod meeting was at St Michael's Church, Hatfield. The guest speaker was Madeline Russell from the Herts and Beds Historic Churches Fund which has provided grants for our churches in the past (roof repairs for St Michael's, Woolmer Green). Founded in 1991, the Fund has provided £3.8 million in grants over 20 years, the maximum grant being £10,000. All present were encouraged to continue to support the annual 'Bike and Hike' event. Shoena wrote a report of the whole meeting for the PCC as I was unable to attend.

The latest Deanery Synod as reported to the PCC (although beyond the year covered by this APCM report) was on March 7, 2023 at St Ethelreda's in Hatfield, when after hearing from The Revd David Kesterton about the very topical subject of Asylum and Refugee Seekers we had a full discussion. In addition, Rev Rachel Wakefield reported back from the recent controversial General Synod meeting which voted in favour of blessings for same-sex unions.

Deanery Synod gives all who attend a wider view of the C of E today and an opportunity to share our concerns and ideas.

Team Council Report – *The Rev'd Dr David Munchin*

The Team Council met on three occasions in 2022 – 16th February, 15th June and 28th September

The Team Council consists of the Team Rector, five representatives of the Ministry Team, two lay representatives from each church.

The purposes and tasks of the Team Council are laid out in its constitution.

Matters discussed in these meeting included:

- Safeguarding (Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection)
- Team events and activities (e.g., Summer Evensongs)

St Mary's Safeguarding Report – *Vicky Jenkin*

A few incidents were reported and submitted to the Diocese Safeguarding department. No official actions were taken but any measures advised were dealt with by David Munchin.

St Mary's Fabric Report – Stuart Jenkin

1. Heating - Both the church and church house have been kept at a comfortable level of heating through the cold period. We continue to experience control problems, but it is hoped that this will be resolved in the near future.
2. The Eastern Cemetery Wall - The Eastern wall that fell down in Feb 2020 is now in the course of being rebuilt. The Parish Council has engaged a local architect and a building contractor. It was hoped that the work would be finished before the year end but due to the adverse weather conditions and the specialist nature of the brick work has been delayed.
3. Fire Alarm -To comply with current requirements a new fire alarm system was installed in June. The system provides a wireless link to fire sensors and alarm buttons located throughout the Church, Church House and the Bell ringers room in the Tower. The system is also linked to a 24-hour monitoring service.
4. Sustainability -The Church of England in February 2020, in response to the Climate emergency, has brought in a policy for all churches to reduce their emissions year on year aiming for a target of net zero by 2030. The PCC is keen to explore initiatives wherever possible to strive to meet this requirement. It was agreed to carry out an energy audit with the aid of a grant from the Diocese. Unfortunately, when we applied, they had run out of grant money but when they are back in funds this is something that will be carried out. The PCC has examined the "A practical path to "net zero carbon" for churches" published by the Church of England and looked at areas recommended. Most of these initiatives are being undertaken where practicable and of course we do have the benefit of the Ground Source heat pumps and an energy efficient new gas boiler. Investigation will be carried out as to when, where and when economical to replace existing lights with LED lights.
5. Electrical - Some of the external floodlights are out of commission. However, enough lighting is being provided and the replacement is being kept under review.
6. St. Michael's House, Woolmer Green - A new PVC back door has been installed as the existing one was in very poor condition and did not offer suitable level of security or thermal properties.
7. Gardening - During the year the brambles were cleared around the Memorial Garden and behind Church House. We have some volunteers for gardening for the Memorial Garden and by the main church door but more would be welcome.
8. Compliance - During the year the following have been completed • Gas safety certificate for boiler • Lightning Conductor testing • Roof Safety inspection • Fire Extinguishers inspection • Lift Service Church House • Mansafe roof system • Roof Alarm testing • Insurance Engineering Report on Lift & Boiler • St. Michael's House – Gas safety • Gutter Cleaning • Kitchen Deep clean and grease extractor clean

St Michael's Church, Woolmer Green Fabric Report – Sue Keach

This has been a relatively peaceful year fabric wise for Woolmer Green but maybe it is the calm before the storm. Our quinquennial is due in October 2023 and that inspection usually throws up all manner of work to be done.

All routine electrical tests have been completed and no problems highlighted. The gutters have been cleaned and the rainwater goods are sound with the exception of the gutter on the north facing side of the church which needs attention. Sadly, a number of the tiles on the north side of the church are flaking so in the New Year these will need replacing.

We have been badly let down by the contractor we employ to maintain the church yard. All year they only appeared to do routine tasks after persistent nagging and much of the work necessary to keep the church yard tidy just was not done. Fortunately, we have a very helpful friend of St. Michael's who has stepped into the breach, but it has been a trying time and we were not surprised to hear that the company is to cease trading at the end of March 2023.

On a happier note, we are employing a cleaner for a few hours each month. We are all getting a little elderly to do this and Penny (Gillibrand) does a very good job, leaving the church looking dust free and loved.

We have had the organ tuned and have accepted a quote from the organ restorers to have work done on the organ in the New Year. We are grateful for the gift of a piano to replace one which had done very good service over the years.

St Michael's remains well cared for and as visitors to the church often remark 'It is a lovely church.'

Secondary Reports

Arpeggios – Pauline Anderson

If you should stray into Church House at 2.00pm on a Thursday afternoon you will hear the harmonious sound of hand bells. We, 'The Arpeggios' meet each week and practice playing a wide variety of music especially arranged for a small bell choir. During the year we were invited to join the Wednesday Community Group in Potters Bar which made for a nice outing. We have recently recruited one new member, but there is room for more, so if you would care to join us do drop by or contact Pauline Anderson on 01438 716783

Bible Discovery – Gay and Mike Carpenter

We know from our own experience that the best way to learn, and enjoy learning, is in a group of fellow explorers where there is mutual respect and a growing fellowship which is never exclusive but open and welcoming to newcomers. Our aim is to try and provide this at Bible Discovery.

At the beginning of the year, we found we had 4 sessions before stopping to join in with the Lent course. We invited people to choose a person from the Bible, or elsewhere, and choices included Daniel, David, Ruth, Susannah from the Apocrypha and St. Bernadette of Lourdes.

In 2021, we had begun an exploration of St. Luke's Gospel which we planned to resume in the summer term, but, due to illness, we only managed one session. To try and make up for this big hole in our fellowship, we organized a summer tea party on our lawn for September 7th so we could meet up and enjoy Katie's wonderful spread.

Then back to St. Luke in the autumn term. Two things that stood out for us as we pored over the Gospel were Luke's special concern for the marginalized which directed him to record such incidents notable in the parables as The Good Samaritan and Prodigal Son. And the other was how easy it is to misinterpret a passage because we don't know the 1st century setting.

At Christmas, we all decided we'd like to do something for charity and we chose to support Tina Banks of ALFS. Tina suggested we might like to fill shoe boxes for a community she was supporting where bereaved wives and their children were living together. We had a wonderful evening cramming all sorts of gifts into 64 boxes, and later received a video of the children opening them looking so happy and excited. That was like a Christmas present to all of us.

Bible Breakfast Study – The Rev'd Dr David Munchin

Every Wednesday morning a group meets in Church House from 8am – 9am with breakfast provided from Katie's. We study the bible by looking at the three readings for the following Sunday. We use a version of *lectio divina* before meandering off to whatever takes our fancy. All are welcome, breakfast is free, you can say what you want and get the drop on the Sunday preacher.

Birds and Pray – Colin Hull (Birds and Wildlife Group)

There were legends of Francis of Assisi preaching to bird and pacifying a wolf. One of his great followers was St Bonaventure an eminent theologian of the time and a later leader of the Franciscan Friars. One of his devotional works was *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (The Soul's Journey to God). It sets out a path of various kinds of meditative prayer that starts with the known external world, like Francis seeing God in all the creatures. To examine nature and enjoy the wonder of it and seeing God as its author and lover. God has left imprints of the divine nature within nature and so we can meet the divine fellowship there as we gaze and enjoy it.

In November I started a small group of people who wished to go out and enjoy birds and wildlife together and including some prayer for the environment we walk in and the things we see. We meet each month mainly on a Saturday morning going out to local places that have included Singlers Marsh, Digswell Lake and parts of Ayot St Peter.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact me.

Colin Hull

The St Mary's Book Group – Joan Spruce

We gather on the second Wednesday of the Month in Church House at 2.45pm. We read a wide variety of books, some recommend by members, and some chosen by the Library Service. Of course, you cannot please all of the people all of the time, but a disagreement, now and then, over a book's merit, leads to a lively discussion. We were pleased to welcome two new members that brings our regular attendance to around ten people.

If you would like to join please contact Joan Spruce on 01438 840821

St Mary's book/card stall – Pat Brooks

The bookstall has a wide range of reasonably priced greetings cards and cards with biblical texts suitable for most occasions. There is also a small selection of mainly children's books suitable as gifts for baptisms and other occasions and some books of local interest.

Orders for Christian books and daily Bible study notes (samples are available) can be placed by contacting Pat Brooks 01438 715811. All profits from the bookstall go to church funds.

Church Wardens' Report, St Mary's, Welwyn – Diane Jenkin and Stuart Westley

It was pleasing to note that in 2022, following the pandemic, our worship has largely returned to pre-Covid normal. More church external activities have returned to normal such as the Community café, prayer groups etc. The hiring of Church House has steadily increased over the year and the number of people worshipping at the main Sunday service has gone from circa 50+ to over 100. Also, our Christmas services were very well attended. Along with the nation we were very saddened by death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. A book of remembrance was placed in the Church and it was very gratifying to see so many people signing it. We were delighted to welcome our new Curate, Christie Gilfeather and her husband Ryan to the Church and Parish. She has already made a great impact upon the Church.

Church Warden's Report, St Michael and All Angels, Woolmer Green – Sue Keach

During the first half of the year things were quite difficult. We were still suffering from the effect of Covid on congregation numbers and were in an interregnum which seemed particularly long because before Dominic moved on to his new post he had been furloughed. I should like to thank David for despite being short of a staff member he ensured that every week there was service at 11.15 at St Michael's.

This all changed when in July our new curate, Christie Gilfeather, arrived. She has been a breath of fresh air. From our first St Michael's meeting, to which she brought chocolate brownies, we realised she is just what we need to invigorate our church. She preaches a mean sermon, has remarkable knowledge of the Old Testament and was able to take over the children's holiday club at the drop of a hat (The Rector developed Covid at the last minute.) Christie is truly a gift from God and we must be prepared to move out of our comfort zone and give her all our support.

Another good thing to happen this year is our link with the Romanian church. David was asked if he would be willing to allow the Romanian community to use a church in the Welwyn team. To fit in with existing service times St. Michael's seemed the obvious solution. They hold their Mass at 6.00 in the morning and finish at 10.00 just in time for our service which begins at 11.15. They celebrate Easter a week after ours, so there is no clashing when extra services are held. It has been such a joy to get to know this community which gather from the four corners of Mid Herts. We have learnt about their liturgy. They have offered to help us should we need assistance in church maintenance etc. and have taken care to cause no disruption to our church life. To be in contact with a different form of Christianity has reminded us that on important issues of faith we are united and the things that divide us are not important.

We have spent the rest of the year getting back to normal. We manned (or womanned) the tea tent at Woolmer Green Village Day. It was a cold, miserable afternoon. Instead of spending the afternoon visiting the beer tent people felt the need of a good cup of tea and a piece of cake, so we did a roaring trade. In September Judith Watson organised a delightful musical evening, where very tasteful refreshments were provided by Tom Blackman who won the Welwyn and Hatfield 'Young Chef of the Year' competition. We celebrated the feast of St. Michael with a Taizé service and enjoyed a 'bring and share lunch' after our Harvest Festival service. We celebrated Christmas with four lovely services.

Church Warden's Report, St Michael and All Angels, Woolmer Green cont..... – Sue Keach

Children and adults alike enjoyed the Christingle service. The carol service (moved from its afternoon slot to the evening so that it didn't clash with the football world cup!) was a beautiful occasion. Thanks go to Penny and our small choir who proved that with the right music and the right singers it is possible to create a truly memorable candle lit carol service.

By contrast the crib service which was very well attended was its usual noisy and somewhat chaotic occasion, but seeing children form a Christmas tableau is always tear jerking, and it was good to see that we had attracted people from babies in arms to grandparents. It had a wonderful feeling of celebration and at one point some little girls joined in one of the hymns by dancing in the aisle! Christmas day, the last of the four was also a joyful occasion and we left church feeling that Christ had been well welcomed in Woolmer Green.

Ever since Covid we have had a food table at the back of the church. This is open to all in need and is very well supported by church and village people. If the table becomes too full the excess is collected by Codicote food bank who deliver to people in need in all the surrounding villages including Woolmer Green.

We have supported Christie in her initiative to provide a 'warm welcome'. The Parish Council kindly agreed to us using their committee room once a week free of charge. Knebworth Co-op have provided surplus Danish pastries and a rota of volunteers has been drawn up. Christie has done a leaflet drop. All we are short of are clients. We have been visited by a few delightful ladies who are more in need of a chat than warmth. It is good to know that people in Woolmer Green do not need this service but sad to think this is not quite what anyone who is in difficulties would find helpful. With our rather small and rather old congregation we are doing our best to serve Woolmer Green. In this we are supported by the Rev. Susanna Underwood, The Rev. Cannon Dr. David Munchin and Christie Gilfeather. They really are a dream team. I should like to thank them for always being there, offering help and advice with wisdom and good humour. I also would like to mention all the members of the St. Michael's congregation who give so much help with the running of the church.

Community Lunch – Mavis Francis

There has been no **Community Lunch** in 2022 because of Covid but has now restarted for 2023.

The Fellowship – Marjorie Lyon

At the beginning of 2022 COVID was a problem. Our New Year lunch had to be cancelled and the continuation of the meetings was at risk. However, by observing all the health precautions we did proceed.

During the year we had some very interesting meetings with a variety of good speakers. Because of the reduced meetings our funds were low so we have had to increase the attendance payment at each meeting to £2.

We have donated £200.00 to St. Mary's Fabric Fund in recognition of our use of Church House.

After 8 years of Leadership of the Fellowship Mavis Francis has retired. Marcia Khan is her replacement.

The Fellowship membership increases and we welcome all.

Fairtrade – Maggie Varco and the Fairtrade team

The St. Mary's fairtrade café and stall is open on Saturday mornings in Church House, run by our team of volunteers. The drop-in café is a popular meeting place, and offers a warm welcome to newcomers to the church.

Thankfully we were able to get back to normal in 2022, following the COVID-19 restrictions in the previous two years.

Our turnover during the year was £6,700, and a surplus of £485 was generated which was donated as part of the church's charitable giving programme to Transform Trade (formerly known as Traidcraft Exchange), a charity supporting people to trade their way out of poverty.

Giving Action Group – Jo Fozzard

The role of GAG is twofold: -

Stewardship: to look at strategies to motivate people, as they are able, to give of their time, talents and their money to the church.

Charitable: to facilitate charitable giving by St Mary's to achieve a target equivalent to at least 15% of planned and plate giving on a rolling three year average.

There is a sense in which giving to St Mary's and giving support to the charitable causes promoted through our church in Welwyn, are one and the same. If we, as a church, are to honour our commitment to give a proportion of income to other charities, we, as individuals, are supporting our church by organising and responding to activities for the benefit of those charities, be they special collections, social events (coffee mornings, quizzes), or produce stalls such as Fairtrade, to mention but a few.

With life returning much more to "normal" post pandemic, GAG are happy to report a total of £17,036 donated to 17 different charities and organisations during 2022. Further details can be seen on the chart below. In response to the ongoing financial crisis, we have also launched our Open Table, (Food Bank) project and large amounts of food have been donated. We plan to continue this for the foreseeable future. Taking into account the total amount of funds donated and "gifts in kind" given in response to the Open Table project we have not had to request any top up from the PCC this year to hit the 15% target. What a fantastic response following a couple of challenging years.

Thank you for continuing to support the church in maintaining its mission and commitment to supporting numerous very worthy causes.

ST. MARY'S CHURCH CHARITABLE GIVING 2022

Total	£17,036
Local charities	£4,130
United Response	£2,665
Home-Start Hertfordshire	£506
Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust	£453
Welwyn Festival Charities	£411
Isabel Hospic3	£95
National charities	£1,257
The Bike Project	£905
The Children's Society	£173
Rett UK	£80
Parkinson's UK	£74
Royal British Legion	£25
International charities	£11,650
Christian Aid	£4,059
Red Cross Ukraine appeal	£3,529
ALFS Herts for Ukraine	£1,950
Transform Trade (Traidcraft Exchange)	£837
Tearfund	£740
Seeds for Development	£350
World Day of Prayer	£185

Lent Courses – *The Rev'd Dr David Munchin*

Lent courses followed a book by the former Bishop of Norwich 'A Place for God.' Seven groups met around the team, and were well attended. It was good in a time post COVID to at least be able to explore in our minds places far and near.

St Mary's Bellringing Band – *John Williams*

In 2022 St Mary's Ringing Band rang regularly before Sunday Services from 9.00 - 9.30am (every Sunday) and if enough ringers were available 6.00 - 6.30pm (2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays). Unfortunately, due to a reduction in band members, ringing for these Sunday Evening Services became very infrequent. We were usually able to ring at least six of the eight bells for services.

The band practised on Tuesdays from 7.45 to 9.00pm. In addition, the band rang a standard 6 bells for weddings when booked and 8 for special services when requested, the latter dependent band member availability. The band also maintained the clock, hoisted and lowered flags on the Tower when required and looked after visiting bands.

In 2022 we rang for nine weddings, two funerals, hosted three district practices and the Kimpton Cup striking competition. We hosted three visiting bands who rang quarter peals (45 – 60 minutes of continuous ringing). We also hosted a visiting band from Somerset on holiday.

The band rang to mark the accession of King Charles III, and rang half-muffled bells on the death of the late Queen and tolled for her funeral.

We have lost two ringers and currently have only 11 regular ringers. Only 3 are Church members so St. Mary's owes a debt of gratitude to all the band for turning out for Sunday and special service ringing so reliably – unlike so many towers where service ringing is occasional, not regular.

It takes quite a while to become a competent ringer so it needs determination, but we do have an enjoyable time on the way. Please consider whether you might like to learn to ring and enjoy the gentle aerobic exercise (and the not so healthy – but optional - social activity after the practice). We always welcome learners, especially as several of us are in our 70s!

For more information contact the Tower Secretary John Williams, on 01438 715679 or email bells@welwyn.org.uk. It's one person on each rope, so to ring all our 8 bells we need 8 ringers. It goes without saying that if you have rung in the past and are not currently part of a band that rings on Sundays, you would be very welcome at St Mary's, Welwyn.

St Mary's Evening Reading Group – *Wendy Lawrence*

The St Mary's Reading Group meets at 8pm on the second Thursday of each month to discuss a book chosen by agreement. We have read a wide variety of books, both fiction and non-fiction. We gather in each other's homes and we always have an interesting and thought-provoking evening. The group is open to all members of St Mary's

St Mary's Flower Team – *Jenny Wiseman*

The Flower Team got together to decorate St Mary's, as it does each year, for the three major festivals, Easter, Harvest and Christmas. Ayletts dahlias were available in October, as there had been no early frost. However, the weather did impact on our plans for Christmas arrangements. We had to delay our original day for getting together as any greenery in our gardens or hedgerows was either blackened by frost or so completely covered with snow and ice, it would have been impossible to cut. It was relief just a few days before Christmas to be able to go out and pick holly and ivy and other surviving and appropriate shrubs. The church looked wonderfully festive.

As in previous years, people were very generous in their donations for Easter lilies to remember loved ones. There were 75 names on the list and the white lilies supplied by Suzie's Florist were beautiful. They are at the heart of the Easter flowers in St Mary's Church. It is always a privilege to arrange them. We are conscious of what each bloom represents.

We decorated the chapel of repose for Maundy Thursday. David requests that it looks "wild". I think I know what he means – and we try to fulfil that wish. It would be so very lovely if we could transport several large olive trees into that space – but I haven't yet worked out the logistics for that!

St Mary's Flower Team cont.....– Jenny Wiseman

We were responsible for the flowers for 5 weddings during 2022. It is a pleasure to meet with couples and their families to discuss their requirements. In addition, we arranged flowers to celebrate the golden wedding and the renewal of vows of Richard and Isobel Darby in October.

The flowers for the main altar pedestal arrangement are frequently donated in loving memory of someone. We arranged flowers for Beryl Hammond's funeral in February.

It was a privilege to be able to choose colours for an arrangement in memory of Her Late Majesty the Queen at the time of her funeral. A generous donation had been made to the Flower Account to support this.

Mothering Sunday daffodil posies were produced by the team and other volunteers. They are such a joyful flower and it is lovely to give them to everyone.

Thank you very much Flower Team – not just those on the rota who are confident to do the main altar pedestal, but to all of you who give your time, your skills and creativity to enhance our beautiful building for those special occasions.

Your contribution is very much appreciated. We were able to transfer £1000 to the main PCC account for 2022.

Therefore, we've made a financial contribution too.

St Mary's Theatre Group – Sue Knowles

On a wet and windy evening, a group, largely of ladies, boarded a coach in Welwyn to travel to Milton Keynes to see a production of Matthew Bourne's Choreography of the Nutcracker. Despite the terrible weather and heavy traffic, the pleasant coach driver got to the theatre in good time so that the group could enjoy a drink, before taking their places. As is usual on such occasions the well-chosen seats in the circle gave a wonderful view of the stage and everyone settled back to be entertained.

Those who had come to expect the Sugar Plum Fairy were doomed to disappointment. This take on the ballet told quite a different story and followed the fate of a girl from a workhouse. The music was familiar. There was a 'Land of Candy' but it was all very fresh and new.

It was a lovely evening and despite having to queue to show covid passes, it felt like getting back to normal.

It is so very good of Sue to book the seats and make all the necessary arrangements for the smooth running of such a trip, so that the punters just have to up for the coach and sit back and enjoy themselves. Through it all Sue keeps smiling and even provides chocolates on the journey. Many thanks to Sue Knowles.

Written by Sue Keach

Having moved away from Welwyn Sue Knowles no longer runs the theatre club but she's willing to assist anyone who would like to take on the job. Do contact Sue

Email: Susie-q1@hotmail.com

Mob: 07940 320298

St Mary's Walking Group – David and Louise Hughes

During 2022 five people joined and another five withdrew from this group so that there are now approximately 65 in total that receive the email circulars inviting members to join the walks.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the following for volunteering to lead walks in 2022; Barry Northrop (January), Marianne Hawes and Barbara Walker (February), Louise Hughes and Hyacinth Cudjoe (March), Jill Allen and Janet Coates (April), Joany and Dominic Cox (May), Geoff Cummings (June), Richard Darby (July – cancelled due to heatwave), Shirley Barker (August), Robin Whitten (September), Ammar Al-Baldawi (October), Jill Allen and Janet Coates (November). December – no walks in any December.

Members enjoyed walking in the different seasons and appreciated the changes in the flora and fauna that went with them, not to mention the pub lunches that followed.

Membership of the group is now about 65 persons although only between 12 and 20 turn out for the walks.

Please contact me if you are interested in joining this group at louise@elhughes37.plus.com

St Mary's Welcome Team – Jenny Wiseman

Since before the Covid pandemic there has not been an official welcome “Team”. We used to have a specific group of people responsible for Welcome. The church pews were divided into groups and a member of the team would take on responsibility for newcomers in that area and introducing themselves to those they didn't know.

This worked up to a point, but I found it a bit restrictive, formal and for me diluted the principle that everyone of us is responsible for the ministry of welcome in whatever context we were in, in all church activities – not just the main 9.30 service.

We all experienced the feeling of loss when we were unable to meet as a church community due to Covid restrictions. When these restrictions were eased, it seemed that our awareness of each other had increased. We had learned, or at least I hope we had, never to take anyone for granted and to try and be alongside others, be they new to St Mary's or long-standing attendees.

It is quite common for me to hear at events at church now “Have you met so and so?” followed by, for example “They've just moved into the village”. This is encouraging and is evidence of our worshipping community being committed to making others feel comfortable, confident and welcome.

If anyone feels that we should go back to having a more formal and identified “Team”, then do please talk to me with your ideas of how this might work.

Time for God – Mavis Francis

This group meets in Church House on the third Friday of the month except when we meet weekly for the Lent Course. Our topics are very varied and have included a look at the prose poem "Desiderata"; a flower arranging demonstration and talk about the flowers mentioned in the Bible; a visit to Codicote Church; a musical session and Bring and Share Lunch which was postponed until a few days after Christmas because of the bad weather. This year we have a full and interesting programme. We always welcome anyone who would like to join us.

Care Homes – Usha Hull

The team ministry has a number of care homes where regular monthly services are held. These are Monread, Knebworth Care Home, Autumn Vale, Heath Lodge and Three Oaks. The Christmas of 2022 saw large gatherings at each care home for informal services of carols and poems. Thanks are due to those who volunteered to sing and read a poem.

For more information, please contact Usha on usha.hull@me.com

Drama Group – Usha Hull

Staging the first pantomime since lockdown proved a successful venture for the Drama Group in 2022, with ‘Cinderella and her Fella’ raising more than £1,950 for ALFS. This is a charity raising food parcels for families with pets as well as sending regular truckloads of donations to the people of Ukraine. ALFS has earmarked the amount raised for a much-needed ambulance.

The Drama Group has a number of committed members and thanks are due to them for their hard work and dedication. We are, however, always looking for new members to join us, both to take part as well as help generally. Rehearsals for each pantomime begin in August and continue weekly on Tuesday nights until the middle of November.

As well as pantomime the Drama Group organises other projects such as the dramatised readings at Easter.

For more information, please contact Usha on usha.hull@me.com

Welwyn Magazine – Jane Carr

It transpired we had more money in the magazine bank account than we thought at the end of 2021 and consequently with the funds generated during 2022 the **Magazine Team is happy to be able to donate £15,500**, split £7,750 to St Mary's and £7,750 to St Michael's which hopefully will provide some help towards the increasing energy bills.

We have retained enough working capital in the magazine account for this year and many thanks go to Sue Muncer who has been Treasurer for a very long time. This is a time-consuming role made more difficult as the subs come in in dribs and drabs and now have to be banked in Welwyn Garden City.

We have lost two pages of advertising but continue to get some enquiries so will resurrect any that we can this coming year. Despite moving to Grafham last January Helen Thompsett has kindly continued to manage the advertising. She does this in conjunction with Nigel Howes who creates the advertising pages in the magazine each month. This produces an important part of the revenue and we are grateful to both.

Once again subscriber numbers are down but we are also selling on average 150 copies per issue through the various outlets and churches. When the advertising round starts in April, we will have to disclose to advertisers that our average circulation is now 800, which may affect renewals.

We are grateful to Joy and Robin Whitten who organise the bundling of each issue and the 50 people who distribute the magazine in Welwyn, Woolmer Green and Ayot Green. Overall, it's a big team of volunteers.

In particular we thank Tony Keach, Evelyne Welch and Rita McNeil who physically create the Magazine three or four times each in the year, along with other members of the team who help chase, write and generally offer wise counsel. These are Joyce Davis, Peter Branchflower, Nita Gowans and Daphne Skinner. I'm starting my 26th year as a member of the team, time flies.

It would be really helpful if the issue of each new magazine could be mentioned in the church emails and notices in both Welwyn and Woolmer Green on the Friday of publication. For the Magazine to continue to thrive for as long as possible we need all support we can get! The publication dates are as follows if these could be diary-noted please:

27-Jan
24-Feb
24-Mar
28-Apr
26-May
23-Jun
25-Aug
22-Sep
27-Oct
24-Nov



**Draft Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Mary's, Welwyn
with St Michael's, Woolmer Green at Church House on Wednesday 25th May 2022**

	Names
Attendees	David Munchin (DM) host, Susan Keach (SK), Maggie Varco (MV), Stuart Jenkin (SJ), Diane Jenkin (DJ), Vernonne Allan, (VA), Stuart Westley (SW), Joyce Davis, Jackie Davis (JD), Colin Hull (CH), Jenny Wiseman, Mavis Francis, Geoff Cummings(CG), Crystal Lam, Jane Bacon (JB), Ann Harper, John Swift, Linda Dobbs, Beth Bates, Rowena and Fiona McDonald, Louise & David Hughes (Secretaries).
Apologies & Absences	Shoena Eggington, Gina Beck, Daphne Skinner, Usha Hull, Stephen Jupp, Mike and Gay Carpenter, Val Steadham, Rod and Pip Dowdell, Simon and Gill Blewett
Minute taker	Louise Hughes (LH)

Meeting 1 – Election of Churchwardens

No.	Agenda Item	Notes	Who	When
1	Welcome and opening prayer At 19:58	The Rector opened the meeting with a welcome and a prayer for all who live, work and serve in the parishes of St Mary's and St Michael's.		
2	Election of Churchwardens	The Rector thanked the present churchwardens for their continued ministry. There were no nominations of persons not already acting as churchwardens. In the circumstances the incumbents were duly re-elected and approved by the meeting. Diane Jenkin was nominated by Diane Petty and seconded by Ann Harper. Stuart Westley was nominated by Michael Carpenter and seconded by Vikki Jenkin. Susan Keach was nominated by Maggie Varco and seconded by Diane Jenkin.		

**Meeting 2 – The Annual Parochial Church Meeting –
immediately followed the election of churchwardens**

No.	Agenda Item	Notes	Who	When
1	Chairman's welcome and opening remarks	During the meeting reference will be made to the agenda, the reports and the financial accounts.		
2	Attendance and apologies for absence	As meeting 1 above.		
3	Review of minutes of APCM 28/04/2021	Approved by all and to be signed.	DM	
4	Matters arising	None		
5	Presentation of the electoral roll	Diane Jenkin reported that there were 252 on the electoral roll with two more application forms to be returned.		

		DM asked those present to encourage others to join the electoral roll as it can be useful to have parishioners' addresses available.		
6i	Lay members to PCC.	Crystal Lam offered to join the PCC. She was nominated by Maggie Varco, seconded by Diane Jenkin and was therefore duly elected. There remain up to five vacancies to be filled. DM thanked members for their service to the PCC.		
6ii	Sidespersons.	Removed from the St Mary's list are Joyce Davis, Jim Evans, Bill and Pat Morris. Anne Symonds joined. Christine Allday was removed from the St Michael's list.		
7	Financial reports and re-appointment of the independent examiner. Printed copies were available at the meeting	The Treasurer, MV, gave a summary of her report and accounts covering 2021. It was unanimously approved as was the re-appointment of Chris Burton as the independent examiner of accounts who kindly provides his services free of charge. Hard copies of the report and accounts are available in church. It is also available on St Mary's website. Jane Bacon asked how the Parish Giving Scheme differed from previous standing order donations. MV advised that the main advantage of the PGS is that its managers handle the gift aid claims and this is done en bloc thus saving a great deal of work. Maggie Varco responded to queries from JW, JB and CH concerning the quota (parish share) by advising that it had gone down but, this year it has gone back up a few percentage points. The quota is calculated by a complex equation based on the number of parishioners on the electoral roll but the calculations are too complicated and not relevant to detail in the PCC meeting. It was also noted that the costs attributable to the (new) curate are not paid for out of the quota.		
8	Team Rector's report Printed copy available at the meeting	The Rector gave a very full report of the exceptional year that 2021 had been due to the coronavirus pandemic in its second year which had once again affected the Christmas services. DM also looked to the future with hope for ordinations, celebrations, activities and renewed ministry but not forgetting the challenges of the Ukraine war and the cost-of-living crisis. Following the meeting the Rector's report can be found in full on St Mary's website. John Swift voiced the appreciation of the congregation to DM for keeping the services going during the last two difficult years.		
9	Primary reports	i) PCC secretaries' report – no queries.		

		<p>iv) Jenny Wiseman asked about the possibility of setting up a Friends of St Mary's group to foster the relationship between the church and the village community more widely. JW also mentioned that The Welwyn Magazine is now striking a good balance of interest between the church and the local community. DM thought this a good suggestion and agreed to try and move it up the list of priorities. Sue Keach remarked that she had £1000 in the kitty to set up a friends organization at St Michael's. Mavis Francis added that their Fellowship Group included many village members not from the church. The Welwyn Magazine is also sent to former residents, thereby maintaining a link with the village and the church.</p> <p>v) Crystal Lam had attended Mary Gregory's funeral and noted that most other members of the congregation were elderly. This caused her to ask what provisions are available in terms of care homes and at-home care and how is one to know the wishes of their loved ones with regard to their care in their final years. She wished that a speaker could be found to discuss this topic. Jenny Wiseman saw death preparation as a last great gift to be discussed.</p>		
	Closing prayers at 21:05	The grace prayer was said by all.		
	Thank yous	Throughout the meeting there were many thank yous and expressions of appreciation for work done by the Rector, his team, members of the PCC and activity groups committee work and all who contribute to the work of the two churches. These were all appreciated but are too numerous to itemise in these minutes.		