



Saint James
Gerrards Cross & Fulmer

THE GRACIOUS HAND OF OUR GOD...

MINISTRY REVIEW | 2022-23



THE GRACIOUS HAND OF OUR GOD...

MINISTRY REVIEW | 2022-23

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RECTOR'S REPORT

Dear Friends,

"And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me..." (Neh 2:8) Have you ever wondered why it is our flawed attempts at evangelism bear fruit? How is that sinners like us, with our mixed motives and our constant struggles are somehow useful in building God's kingdom? What is it that enables our ministries – with their many imperfections – to grow disciples?

The answer: God is gracious.

We were reminded of that earlier this year in our sermon series from the book of Nehemiah, as he rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah was bold, brave and shrewd. He was also a man of faith. And a man of prayer. From the outset, he knew he could only succeed if "the gracious hand" of God was upon him.

He was quick to attribute his success, therefore, to God's kindness. And we want to do the same.

As you thumb through these pages, you'll get a taste of what God has been doing amongst us here at Saint James. It's only a taste – and God is often at work in ways we cannot see – but it should prompt us to give thanks, as we look back and see the gracious hand of God at work in our church.

As well as building God's kingdom, we must also be ready to defend it, when the need arises. That's why Nehemiah's men worked with the sword as well as the trowel. As the Church of England continues to walk away from the truth, we're having to give careful thought and much prayer to how we respond. We will not, however, be distracted from our vision to see: every life transformed.

Our theme for this year has been 'Treasuring Christ Together' as we taste and enjoy the living water of eternal life that Jesus offers us (Jn 4:14). Our prayer is that as we do that, Sunday-by-Sunday and throughout the week, our love for Jesus will overflow to the people around us.

And what an urgent need there is! There are 45,000 people on our doorstep who don't yet know Christ – and that's just within 5 miles of Gerrards Cross. That is why we cannot stand still as a church family. And we haven't.

As I write, we've just launched The 10:00 – a new congregation in Gerrards Cross, integrating The 9:15 and The 11:00 – in which young and old are "being built together" (Eph 2:22). We want each of our congregations to be healthy, united, and outward looking and our hope is that we'll soon be running out of space and having to think again about our Sunday mornings.

In all that we do, we'll continue to pray for the gracious hand of our God to be upon us.



With love
in Christ

Matt.



MAGNIFICATION

LEAD **Josh Lucas**



REPORT

I arrived towards the end of the summer ready to get stuck into life here at Saint James. It was a delight to discover a wealth of established talent and I continue to make new discoveries and help people use their gifts to the glory of God. We have seen new people coming forward to join the music group and choirs.

Sean Groombridge joined us in the summer to step into the breach left by Iain Ledingham following his departure. It has been a real joy to team up and to gather people from across the whole church for a series of key events. We started with the Gerrards Cross Christmas Extravaganza, serenading visitors to the street market with the good news of the gospel. This first event generated such enthusiasm for singing together that it helped launch us into two brilliant choir-led carol services with a broad range of material and style. This collaboration and large participation then flowed on into a joyful Easter Day service, that I'm sure many of us will fondly remember. It



VISION

Rejoicing in God with all our hearts and in all of our lives...



GOAL

... so that GOD is worshipped & glorified

was fantastic to work together on singing the truth in the word and sharing the message with our voices and faces. There was a palpable sense of excitement and community amongst members of the choir, and we enjoyed praying for each other in our rehearsals.

We have bolstered our singing at Prayer Central by expanding the music group which has led to some really precious times of praise with saints from across the whole church.

Many thanks again to Lindsey Mackie and Ian Mitton for their work sustaining the ministry last summer and for their warm welcome and generous support as I have got started. We also must thank Pete Budd for blessing us with his skills, knowledge and time, faithfully serving us in the tech ministry and our prayers go with him as he moves to pastures new.





MINISTRY REVIEW MAGNIFICATION

PLANS

As we launch The 10:00 congregation, it is really exciting to be united together, to see a bit more of the breadth of God's people and to use the best of 'old' and 'new', biblically rich songs. We expect that the truths therein would help the word of the Lord to dwell in us richly.

We will be exploring how we can help people to be involved whatever their current skill level and develop people's gifts to enrich the worshipping life of our church and the wider church, all to the glory of our Lord.

THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

- ▶ A tangible sense of joy in the Lord as we gather.
- ▶ New people coming forward to use the gifts God has given them for His glory.
- ▶ The fellowship and unity felt amongst musicians and members of various choirs.
- ▶ A warm welcome and strong support for Josh as he has begun his ministry here.
- ▶ Pete Budd's tireless service in so many technical areas.
- ▶ Sean Groombridge joining us and his heart to use music to deepen our roots in Jesus Christ.

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

- ▶ That people with gifts would feel able to come forward and compelled to do so.
- ▶ The 10:00, for wisdom in all things and that grace would abound.
- ▶ That every person serving in this area would be treasuring Christ and overflowing with joy in him.
- ▶ The tech team would be strengthened, that technology would serve our goal of the word of Christ dwelling in us richly.

THINGS WE'RE THINKING ABOUT

- ▶ How to help people develop and build on their skills in music and sound.
- ▶ How to raise up people to take a lead in worship and strengthen those who do.
- ▶ Can we strengthen team camaraderie and think more deeply about our role?
- ▶ How can music be a tool to help us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus in everyday life.

38
PEOPLE

part of a
Christmas or
Easter choir



7 NEW
MUSICIANS

regularly
involved in
bands on Sundays



Our Spotify playlists
tinyurl.com/SJCSpotify

MISSION

LEAD **James Forward**



REPORT

"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."
Matt 9:38-39.

At the start of the year, we were given a number. Forty-five thousand. That is the number of people who live within a five-mile radius of Saint James that are not in a Bible teaching church. It is five thousand more people than can fit into Chelsea's Stamford Bridge stadium.

The number represents a challenge to us. Will we share the life-saving news of Jesus with these people? Will we build our lives around this goal?

Over the past year it has felt like a regular pattern of mission has begun to form. Each term we want to offer an open door for newcomers to discover who Jesus is. We have run six Explore Groups this year; Alpha in the Autumn, Christianity Explored in the



VISION

Living to see God's kingdom grow as more people are saved...



GOAL

... so that our COMMUNITY is engaged & evangelised

Spring, and Explore: John in the Summer. My prayer each year is that these will be a place where we can do our evangelism together. A central resource, where we can bring our friends and neighbours, as we seek to share Christ with them.

Advent Wreath Making, Christmas Carols, Quiz Night, Whisky Tasting, Friendship Lunch, Saint James Football Club – we've had lots of fun on mission this year! Our aim for these evangelistic events is always "What is the easiest invite for our friends where they will hear the good news of Jesus?"

As Jesus says, the harvest is plentiful. The challenge for us as we picture a stadium full of people who don't know the saving power of Christ is, will we be the workers who bring them in?

SJFC Awards





Whisky Tasting



Christingle Carols

MINISTRY REVIEW MISSION

PLANS

As I hand over the care of the Mission 'M' to Craig Larnier in the weeks ahead, I'm excited to see our regular pattern of mission become firmly established and thrive. I'd love for us to be thinking as a church "There is always an Explore Group coming next term, who amongst my friends should I be bringing to that?"

I'd also love to see the Word 1-2-1 resources being used more widely. It is a brilliantly laid-back way to read through John's Gospel with a non-Christian friend. It was wonderful to see so many people buying the books from the bookstall last Autumn. If everyone was trying to read 1-2-1 with their friends, I think we'd soon see Saint James full to bursting each Sunday!

THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

- ▶ The people who've come through Explore this year and put their faith in Christ.
- ▶ Every time someone has been bold to speak of Christ to someone they love.
- ▶ Huge opportunities for the gospel at Christmas.
- ▶ People reading through Word 1-2-1 with their friends.
- ▶ Our regular connections to our community through the the Gerrards Cross C.E. School, football club & Friendship Lunch.



25
PEOPLE
engaged with
Explore Groups



80
PEOPLE
at the Saint James
Quiz Night

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

- ▶ Our harvest field, the 45,000.
- ▶ A growing confidence in the power of the gospel to save.
- ▶ A deeper love for the lost.
- ▶ The Explore Groups every term.
- ▶ To make the most of every opportunity we have with our community.

THINGS WE'RE THINKING ABOUT

- ▶ What kind of training could equip us best for reaching our harvest field of the 45,000 ?
- ▶ How do we reach the growing Asian-heritage population in Gerrards Cross with the hope of life in Christ?
- ▶ Could a week of mission spur us onto sharing our faith with our friends?

MEMBERSHIP

LEAD **Daf Meirion-Jones**



REPORT

It is always a joy to see new people join Saint James, and whilst there have been many new faces over the last year, it has been the way that people have thrown themselves into the life of the church family that has been most encouraging.

The Connect course has felt a little more haphazard, with smaller numbers and people's increased post pandemic commitments making attendance harder, however, we have enjoyed both getting to know each other and finding out about the DNA of the church. Undoubtedly a highlight for many is the weekly guest appearance from a member of the Ministry Team, which affords an opportunity to hear how team members came to Christ and what their role in the church is.



VISION

Welcoming people in to a family that cares for each other...



GOAL

... so that EVERYONE is connected & cared for

The Hosting Teams have continued not just to provide a smiling face on the door, but to really ensure that newcomers are made to feel at home. There are over 30 people on our 3 Hosting Teams, who faithfully arrive early and leave late Sunday by Sunday.

The year has seen both our *Food for the Body & Soul* meals together in the Saint James Centre and Link Lunches in people's homes. Many people have commented on how they have been so encouraged by having the opportunity to spend more relaxed time with folk they didn't know quite as well. The "Bring & Share" style of the lunches and suppers have led to a relaxed family feel. We long to be a church of people whose house is not our castle but rather a gift from God to use for the welcoming of angels (Hebrews 13:2!)





MINISTRY REVIEW

MEMBERSHIP

PLANS

We're looking forward to making the new 10am service as welcoming as possible!

We're hoping to recruit a Pastoral Care Team of a few people for each of our services.

We'd love to see more spontaneous hospitality grow out of our Church Meals and Link Lunches. Wouldn't it be great to be a church where each newcomer was invited round to someone's home within the first couple of times of attending Saint James?

We'd love to see a team who are so passionate about connecting newcomers that they saw them from first handshake, through hospitality and the Connect Course and into the heart of the life of the church.

THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

- ▶ Each new church member.
- ▶ New people serving in Hosting, Music, Children, Youth, and Coffee teams, and more!
- ▶ Vibrant, joyful church meals with lots of scrummy food!
- ▶ Hosting Teams well stocked with willing servants who have smiling faces.
- ▶ Caring Growth Groups and a dedicated Pastoral Care Team.

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

- ▶ Homes open for spontaneous hospitality.
- ▶ Hearts open to new friendships with brothers and sisters.
- ▶ No one to be missed at the larger new morning service.
- ▶ A team to run the Connect Course
- ▶ Pastoral Care Teams for each service.

THINGS WE'RE THINKING ABOUT

- ▶ How to be a genuinely inclusive church that provides Christian love and friendship to everyone.
- ▶ How to grow Teams who own integration into church life, rather than simply Sunday hosting.
- ▶ How to revitalise our Pastoral Care Team(s).



MATURITY

LEAD **Ben Clarke**



REPORT

One of the key places the Maturity vision; to be growing in the likeness of Christ..., is expressed in the life of our Church family is in Growth Groups. We are convinced that as God's word is preached on a Sunday his voice is heard, and his voice always brings transformation and life! We've been trying to live out that reality as our groups meet week by week. We've prayerfully applied what God has been saying to us through John's gospel and the book of Nehemiah.

More recently we have deliberately paused from our Sunday sermons in order to think more deeply about Contentment in the Christian life as we seek to understand the way in which Jesus satisfies us as the bread of life.

In March this year, all Growth Groups paused to meet centrally on Wednesday evenings or Thursday mornings for God's Big Picture. These four midweek seminars helped us see the height and width



VISION

Growing in the likeness of Christ through the gospel and by his Spirit...



GOAL

... so that our CONGREGATIONS are established & growing

and depth of God's love for his people as Daf traced through the storyline of the Bible for us. It was our prayer that as we saw all of human history leading up to and flowing out from the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, we might be moved to worship and adore him.

Growth Groups are obvious and visible, but most of the discipleship in the church family is organic and hidden. Whether it is people reading the Bible 1:1, or meeting in Prayer Triplets, or walking side-by-side with one another through the stresses and strains of the Christian life.

Alongside our Growth Groups we've run some one-off events. In the Autumn we ran a Marriage MOT evening and morning, and more recently we put on a seminar about Hospitality. Our bookshop in the Saint James Centre is well stocked and our hope is that it would help us get useful resources into people's hands.





MINISTRY REVIEW MATURITY

PLANS

Over the next year we hope to repeat our Lent course in March. An opportunity for Growth Groups to join together in the Saint James Centre for 3-weeks, receiving some interactive teaching about a relevant topic for the Christian life. We will also continue to run one-off discipleship events to help us grow to be more like Christ in every area of our lives.

24
Growth Groups
WITH
231
members

212
PEOPLE
at God's
Big Picture

THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

- ▶ Our Growth Groups and the way the Lord has used them to deepen our relationships with one another enabling us to 'speak the truth in love' (Eph. 4:15).
- ▶ The God's Big Picture series during Lent.
- ▶ All of the unseen and informal 1:1s, prayer triplets and discipling relationships in the church family.

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

- ▶ God would give the Ministry Team overseeing the Maturity ministry his Spirit of wisdom and revelation as they lead the church family.
- ▶ We'd all be part of discipling relationships at church.
- ▶ God would help us to see that all of Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).
- ▶ Growth Group leaders as they seek to love, teach and care for the groups God has entrusted to them.

THINGS WE'RE THINKING ABOUT

- ▶ How can we help one another experience Sundays, our worship in church, and our fellowship with brothers & sisters as a foretaste of heaven and our greatest earthly joy?
- ▶ How can we better equip people for leading in prayer both in our Sunday services, smaller groups, at home and on our own?
- ▶ How can we make it easier for people to connect with the Maturity ministry, in particular for those who are unable to make a Growth Group?

REPORT

"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."
Eph 4:11-13

We're convinced that, as a people who know Jesus intensely sacrificial love for us, it is our sacrificial service for one another that builds us into a mature body in Christ.

Much service in our church goes unseen; the day-long care of loved ones suffering with ill health, or the evenings spent praying for the young people in our families. But there are also plenty of formal opportunities to serve at church. And it's often the specific roles at church that help us to grow as servants and equip us to serve in more informal ways in our families and in our local community.



VISION

Serving God with the gifts
His Spirit has given us...



GOAL

... so that we're ALL
equipped & serving

A huge thank you, to everyone who's served in any formal capacity at church. Whether seen or unseen by human eyes, God knows your labours and you're playing your part in building the body of Christ.

As we look forward to the year ahead there are many opportunities to get involved. Perhaps now might be the time to join a team, do read the other reports to see how others are serving. Do chat to anyone on the team to start a conversation about how you might get involved. If you have time during the week, whether regular or occasional, please let someone in the office know.





MINISTRY REVIEW MINISTRY

PLANS

We would love to see more and more team leaders emerging from within the church family to take responsibility for different areas of ministry, moving us away from rota filling duties to passionate teams.

THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

- ▶ Those who've completed the Equip course and moved on into roles in church life.
- ▶ Many who sacrificially serve in unseen ways.

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

- ▶ That Teams at The 5:30 would become established in all areas.
- ▶ That joy would be a hallmark of our serving.
- ▶ That we would serve with a prayerful dependence on God.



3 new teams of cooks
for Friendship Lunch

LOADS OF OPPORTUNITIES AT THE 10:00 SERVICE



Kids &
Youth



Worship &
Music



Comms &
Media



Welcome &
Hosting

...and lots more at saintjames.org.uk/serving

THINGS WE'RE THINKING ABOUT

- ▶ How do we get more effective at helping newcomers to start serving?
- ▶ What might a team concerned about leadership and service at each congregation look like?

LEAD **Jill Roth**



REPORT

It has been a privilege to serve as Pastor in Fulmer for almost 7 years, leading and encouraging people on their faith journeys with God, both from the congregation and the village of Fulmer.

Church life inevitably is one of highs and lows. We have mourned the loss of faithful saints, whilst having the chance to celebrate their lives lived well for Christ. We have been challenged by the loss of organist and choir, and yet have been generously served by talented musicians filling the breach and our congregation's voice swelling to fill any gaps.

And through it all God has continued to be at work; teaching us wonderful truths from Luke's Gospel and Acts that we seek to encourage one another in over coffee, drawing new younger folk into our fellowship (some in their 40s and 50s – I call them my youth group!), and seeing a number in our congregations stepping up to serve in some way.

I'm excited to say that I believe we're entering a new season in the life of the Fulmer congregation and church at the heart of the village.



VISION

A Christ-centred community in the heart of Fulmer village...



GOAL

... so that lives are transformed through the gospel

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

- ▶ Carols in the Pub – an upbeat carols vibe, with a poignant Christmas message presentation
- ▶ Christingle Carols – a jam-packed church full of village families eagerly hearing the Christmas story
- ▶ Coronation Celebrations – a service in the church, and a great Saint James team offering family-friendly activities at the Fulmer Coronation Community Lunch
- ▶ Greater inclusivity – as a number of members learn British Sign Language together to help a deaf member in their worship
- ▶ Outreach – we held an Afternoon Cream Tea and explored the goodness of God, and we continue to run Coffee & Chat for parents after school drop-off



Coronation Celebration Service



Coffee & Chat



Wreath Making Event



MINISTRY REVIEW FULMER

PLANS

A priority for us in the near future is to develop inter-generational services, with great music. We want the church family of Saint James Fulmer to be a place where anyone in the village can discover the life changing good news of Jesus, and grow in Christian maturity.

We'd therefore love to think about how to harness the effectiveness of our outreach activities, and to launch more Growth Groups where we can go deeper in God's word together and support each other in our Christian walk.

THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

- ▶ Great conversations flowing from the sermon over coffee after the service.
- ▶ Those who've served so faithfully for many years...
- ▶ ...and for those who've joined a serving team more recently.
- ▶ God sustaining us as a congregation through the last year.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR



Carols in the Pub



Christingle Carols



Coronation Celebrations



Greater inclusivity



Afternoon Cream Tea OUTREACH EVENT

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

- ▶ Wisdom for the Fulmer Ministry Team in discerning God's vision for us for the coming years.
- ▶ Boldness to tell the gospel to the village, and...
- ▶ ...openness to the gospel in the village.
- ▶ New Growth Group leaders to be raised up.
- ▶ Christ-focussed hearts in all that we do as a church.

THINGS WE'RE THINKING ABOUT

- ▶ How do we strengthen our relationship with the Gerrards Cross congregations so that we, more and more, enjoy being one church?
- ▶ How do we maximise the links we have in the village for the proclamation of the gospel?
- ▶ What might we have to change about what we do to enable families to come regularly and join our congregation?

KIDS

LEAD **Anna Barrett**



REPORT

As we work to grow young disciples it often looks like planting lots of gospel seeds and praying they will grow. As I reflect on the last year, I have seen shoots of spiritual growth in pre-schoolers up to the older kids. I saw a leader tell a pre-schooler for the first time that God is always with her. And heard another toddler pray, thanking God for being with him. Another leader got the children excited about the prospect of eternal life with Jesus. And I got to share the precious moment a child asked to pray for Jesus to be her Lord and friend. We've still got lots of challenges in kids ministry, but we're praying for more growth!

The bittersweet highlight for the Sunday kids team was handing over a wonderful bunch of year 6 children to our youth ministry. We're sad to see them go, because they loved studying the bible and were always engaged, and desperate to know more. As they join Younger Youth we look forward to seeing them grow into resilient young disciples who go the distance with Jesus.



VISION

Partnering with parents to grow young disciples...



GOAL

... so that our children are rooted and growing

Our midweek children's ministries have continued to grow, and Ignite has now been running for a year and has seen up to 40 children attending monthly. Most children who attend are from The Gerrards Cross C.E. School or live in the community. Our Tiny Tots group continues to welcome many parents and carers who appreciate the space to meet others. This has given the Tiny Tots Extra team the chance to explore John's gospel with a handful of parents who stay behind every week.

I thank God for his faithfulness and pray he will continue to grow the kids ministry!

“

We love to hear the children praying and are amazed at their prayers.”

KIDS LEADER

“

Tiny Tots is the best group in GX. Best toys, best room and the best welcome.”

MUM FROM TT

Ignite



Sunday Kids @ The 5.30



Sunday Kids @ The 11



Tiny Tots Christmas Special





Ignite: Lego Party!



Christingle



Scratch Nativity

MINISTRY REVIEW KIDS

PLANS

We would love to continue reaching the community through Ignite and helping families work together to evangelise their friends. An exciting opportunity could be to run a bible holiday club as a church family next year, pooling together our resources to invite primary school children to hear about Jesus.

PRAISE & PRAYER

- ▶ Praise God for the 16 year 6's who moved up to younger youth and their desire to know more of Jesus.
- ▶ Praise God for the growing number of under 5's we get to teach each Sunday.
- ▶ Praise God for the 34 people who serve in the kids work.
- ▶ Praise God for Tiny Tots Extra and the opportunities we have to share the gospel with parents and carers.
- ▶ Praise God for Ignite and the many children we have welcomed into the church.



Tiny Tots Nativity



Sunday Creche @ The 11



Year 6 Move up Sunday @ The 11



Tiny Tots
Christmas
Special

YOUTH

LEAD **Ross Mungavin**



REPORT

"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ."
Ephesians 4:15, NIV

As I reflect on the last year of youth ministry, one word came to mind: growth. God has been very graciously giving us numerical and spiritual growth this year.

Our Younger Youth Sunday groups have almost doubled in size over the past year. This is partly because we had a large group of year 6s who 'graduated' from our kids ministry, but it's also a sign that young people are coming to church with increasing regularity, which is a huge indication that they are growing in their faith.

This year, God gave me a big problem related to Reach (our monthly evangelistic activity): it grew too big to meet in my house! At the last Reach we had 28 Younger Youth shooting each other with Nerf Bullets and happily hearing about Jesus in the Saint James Centre – about half of them were guests who had been invited by their friends.

It was a joy to go back to the Big Weekend this year, and to partner with other churches to help grow young disciples. Last year we took 12 young people and leaders, and this year we took 35!



VISION

To partner with parents to grow resilient disciples...



GOAL

... so that our youth are disciples who go the distance.

But our groups haven't just been growing in size. I believe they have also been growing in spiritual maturity as well. In Older Youth on Sundays, there is an increasing appetite to ask questions and get into the Bible. Some of our young people are considering doing the MA scheme, and possibly studying at theological college. In our midweek discipleship groups (Rooted and Rooted+) I've noticed a change in the kinds of questions that young people ask: going from just clarifying questions to how the Bible changes our lives.

All this growth is encouraging, and although youth ministry is not without its challenges (we could really do with more leaders on the team!) I'm grateful to God that for my last annual report as Youth Pastor I can say that as we work to sow the seed of the Word, God has been faithful in giving the growth. Please do join me in praying that this growth will continue for many years to come!



The support I feel from coming to youth is amazing and when I came to Christ the amazing support I had was great!"

14 YEAR OLD GIRL



I have really enjoyed the youth preaching during the service and the groups during the week. It has made me come to know Jesus. The teachings of the youth leaders was so good that it convinced me to get confirmed and devote my life to God." **13 YEAR OLD BOY**





MINISTRY REVIEW YOUTH

PLANS

We'd love to be able to push on with the vision and goals we've set for next year. Some things that we're looking forward to in particular are:

- ▶ Creating a group within church to pray specifically for young people and their spiritual growth.
- ▶ Encouraging our young people to think about how they can engage with God's mission in their schools and clubs.
- ▶ Continuing to build a team who love our young people, and want to see them go the distance with Jesus.

THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

- ▶ Young people who see the Bible as the Word of God, and who want to know it better.
- ▶ Parents who are committed to seeing their young people put Christ first.
- ▶ The ten young people who were baptised or confirmed this year.
- ▶ Supportive parents whose top priority is for their young people to follow Jesus.



“

I can't say enough positive things about the youth ministry at Saint James. From our first day arriving... our children felt welcome and a part of the Christian community. We have truly appreciated the activities, weekends away, and opportunities for our children to meet and share with everyone since.” **PARENT**



Sunday Youth

Part of church service, discipling young people



Rooted/Rooted+

Midweek Bible study groups, discipling young people



Reach/Reach+

Once a month social to engage disconnected youth



Summer Camps

Going away to grow in Christ



10 young people baptised or confirmed this year



Sorted Nano & Sorted

Two days out in London for Younger and Older Youth – we took 22 young people across the two events



The Big Weekend

A weekend away in January 2023 – we took 35 people!



The Deeper Weekend

A weekend away for Older Youth in March 2023 – we partnered with St. Mary's Maidenhead

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

- ▶ For Luke Douglas as he takes up his role as the new Youth Worker.
- ▶ Deeper spiritual maturity for our young people
- ▶ For new young people who have moved into the groups (or who will)
- ▶ God's blessing on future ministry plans.
- ▶ For the young people going on camps this summer.
- ▶ For the teams running youth ministry in the gap between Ross' departure and Luke's arrival.

THINGS WE'RE THINKING ABOUT

- ▶ How can we engage young people from other cultural demographics in our area?
- ▶ How can we make the youth ministry more sustainable in the long term?
- ▶ How can the church family support our young people?
- ▶ How can parents play a greater role in our ministry to young people?

OPERATIONS

LEAD Mark Nicholas



REPORT

I'm enormously grateful for the hard work of my colleagues in the Ops Team. It's been a complete joy to see God putting their gifts to use in the support of the work of the harvest field. Otto joined us, in the Autumn, as a ministry trainee seeking to gain experience across all of church life. We said farewell with much gratitude to Rachel, Simi, Tara and Kirsty. It's hard to see much loved colleagues moving on to new opportunities, however, Rachel's arrival has significantly strengthened us.

THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

- ▶ A greater sense of a rhythm to church life (not everything feels new!)
- ▶ God sustaining us through change.
- ▶ Faithful service of those on the Welcome Desk.

Our constant feeling is that there's more to do than we have the capacity to deliver. We would love to add at least one more member of the team. There are also many opportunities, either regularly or for short periods, to come and volunteer. If you have some time, and a willingness to be involved, please let us know.

There's much going on behind the scenes as the PCC work through the recommendations of the Governance Review.

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

- ▶ New member(s) to join our wonderful team.
- ▶ Clarity about what we can and can't do with the capacity we have.
- ▶ PCC members and committees working to improve our governance so that ministry at Saint James is supported and protected.



FINANCE

BACKGROUND

The General Fund represents the “pot” available for the day to day running of all the ministries here at Saint James. All church family giving, that is not for a specific purpose, goes into this fund; all the staff costs and other general running costs of all our ministries are paid for using this giving. Any legacies that are not made for specific purposes also pass into this fund (which can vary dramatically in both size and frequency), as do the other, much smaller, sources of income including the bookshop, increases in the value of any investments, church run events and fees for weddings and funerals.

OVERVIEW OF 2022

We started the year with a PCC approved budget deficit of £157k and as a result of another year of God’s provision through the generous giving of the Church family we ended up reporting a surplus of £3k (after fund transfers).

The “headline” total income figure of £945k was 7% down on the 2021 equivalent income of £1,012k. Included in this figure was £19k received from church family members attending the Ashburnham weekend away (not run in 2022), whereas £14k was received in legacies during 2021 (zero in 2022). Excluding these “one off” shows a similar 7% reduction in underlying income.

Voluntary income, being the income received directly from the members of the church family, fell 15% from £962k in 2021 to £816k

in 2022. In addition to the extremely generous level of giving seen in December 2021, another factor behind this decrease, but one difficult to measure accurately, was the impact of the “cost of living crisis” on church family personal finances during 2022.

There was no impact on the General Fund of the volatility in the stock exchange index during 2022 due to the reduction in the holding value of our index related investment. The total reduction in the value of this investment was £27k (2021: increase of £29k), however, this was charged to the related Designated Fund created to protect the General Fund from such fluctuations. The remaining balance of this fund as at 31 December 2022 was £18k.

Total expenditure for the year at £933k was 3% higher than 2021 (£908k). The “core” expenditure of running all our ministries and other activities (excluding outside giving, governance costs and the costs of Ashburnham) at £837k was up 2% from the equivalent £824k in 2021. Despite savings from the vacancy gap between Worship Pastors during the year, there were underlying cost pressures in such areas as increased organist fees, cleaning and utility costs. The parish share contribution of £209k is included within this figure and was down 3% on 2021, as savings at both Deanery and Diocese spending was passed down to the parishes. In 2022 the grants to organisations outside the church (allocated by the Mission Committee) totaled £71k, down 9% on the 2021 equivalent. This reflected the change in church family giving as it is calculated at 10% of the actual giving during the 12 months to 31 September of the previous year.

During 2022 there was a net transfer of £9k out of the General Fund to the Church and Centre replacement and maintenance funds.



OVERVIEW OF 2023 TO DATE

We started 2023 with a PCC approved general fund budget deficit of £177k. The trend of regular giving so far this year is, encouragingly, ahead of budget. However, there are still pressures on our underlying cost base, so my full year forecast is still a deficit of £177k. Further updates will be given to the church family during the remainder of this year.

Please pray that we would all be giving joyfully and sacrificially to enable the work of the gospel at Saint James.

If you'd like to review your giving, or start giving to Saint James, you'll find all you need at saintjames.org.uk/giving

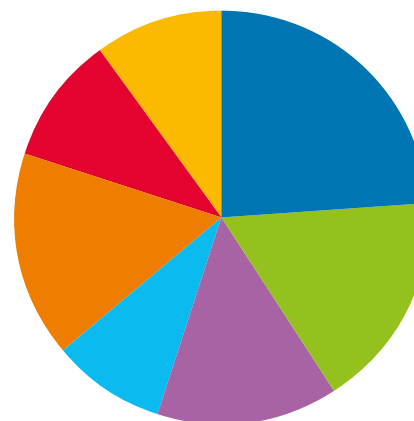
OUR BUDGET FOR 2023

- ▶ Our current reliance on one off giving is still heavier than we would like.
- ▶ We want to enable better planning and more generous external giving.
- ▶ We need to increase our regular giving to meet the budgeted shortfall.

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Regular Giving | 567,000 |
| One off giving | 80,000 |
| Collections | 17,000 |
| Other income | 34,300 |
| Total income | 698,300 |
| Expenditure & transfers | (875,400) |
| Total deficit | (177,100) |

BREAKDOWN OF COSTS

- ▶ Most of our expenditure (55%) goes towards funding the staff team: salaries & accommodation.
- ▶ We are investing to grow disciples whilst raising up leaders for the wider church.
- ▶ As a church we want to give generously to mission in the UK and abroad.







Saint James
Gerrards Cross & Fulmer

www.saintjames.org.uk