



Saint James
Gerrards Cross & Fulmer

PROGRESS AND JOY...

MINISTRY REVIEW | 2023-24



PROGRESS AND JOY...

MINISTRY REVIEW | 2023-24

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RECTOR'S REPORT

Dear Friends,

"Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith..." Phil 1:25

I am always struck by Paul's concern for the Christians in Philippi. In chains for the gospel and facing opposition at every turn, his desire is *"to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far."* Such is his love, however, for this little church, that he resolves to continue in ministry, for the sake of their *"progress and joy in the faith."*

The pages that follow only scratch the surface of what God has been doing in his church over the past 12 months, because so much of gospel ministry is ordinary and – to the human eye – unseen. And everything looks much glossier than it is, because so much of church life is messy. We're a community of sinners after all!

However, as we look back on the past year, we can see countless examples of *"progress and joy in the faith"* here at Saint James.

'Compelled by Love' has been our theme for this year: a reminder from 2 Cor 5:14 that *"the love of Christ compels us"* to pray, to invite, to give and to go...for the sake of the 45,000 on our doorstep – and thousands more further afield – who do not yet know Jesus.

By God's grace, we've made progress in the faith. Many of us have been praying for 3 friends who are not yet saved and it has been

a joy to welcome so many new faces on a Sunday. It is thrilling to read in these pages of people professing faith and discovering life in Christ. It has been a joy to see some of our young people declaring their faith publicly through baptism and confirmation. And some of our 'not-so-young' have also turned to Christ in repentance and faith.

Others are stepping up to serve and emerging into leadership. And as we grow together in wholehearted discipleship, slowly but surely, we make progress in becoming a more Christ-like church.

Alongside the challenges of growth, there are of course, the joys and sorrows that come with church life. We've said farewell to some who have moved away. We've shed tears for others who've gone to be with the Lord. *"Better by far..."* for them, but we miss them dearly and our hearts ache for those who grieve. Some of us are broken-hearted or struggling in other ways as we face trials of various kinds. But at every turn, the Lord Jesus has given us what we need and there is joy amidst the sorrows.

Many of our challenges over the past year have come from 'growing pains.' (As I write, we have run out of beds for The Saint James Weekend!) As we get bigger, we need to get better at integrating newcomers, and we'll need to think about how to maximise our capacity at our different congregations. Above all, we need to keep thinking about what it really looks like to be a welcoming church.

However, as I often remind the staff team; these are good problems to have!

As we celebrate another year and give thanks for our *"progress and joy in the faith"* we want to boast only in Christ Jesus. He is the one who has made it all happen. All the glory goes to him!



With love
in Christ



The new students & 20s group

MAGNIFICATION

LEAD **Josh Lucas**



REPORT

This year has seen The 10:00 firmly established as a new congregation. It has been a real joy to see how we have come together in love and grace and are being built up as God's people. Our regular choir is made up of people from both previous congregations and the way they have embraced singing a broad range of songs has really blessed us and has been a superb example of our unity in the Gospel.

In this same spirit we had two great carol services, both including a range of instrumentation and the combined might of a band, gathered choir and various instruments. Lindsey Mackie and Tish Littlewood both sang beautiful solos and the choir really stepped up in singing a piece written by Sean Groombridge, with solos from Abbie Lovewell, Beth Groombridge and Daf Meirion-Jones! We also



VISION

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



GOAL

... so that GOD is worshipped & glorified

enjoyed a variety of services over Easter, drawing on different styles of music to reflect the journey through the Easter story.

Over this past year we have started meeting regularly as a team to pray, sing and learn from God's word how we can be more effective in our ministry. Bob Kauflin's Worship Matters course has helped us grow in understanding our role leading the congregation in praise as a response the wondrous love of Christ.

Alicia Morrow joined us in February as a Ministry Assistant. It has been a joy to have her with us and seeing her growing in her gifts. The whole team have been a joy to work with and the amount of effort they put in has been evident.

“

I really value Josh as a worship leader, and it is a privilege to play in the music team alongside him.”

“

“It's such a pleasure to be a part of a Worship team growing together in community, giftings and understanding with a shared sense of purpose to help our Church in praise.”





MINISTRY REVIEW MAGNIFICATION

PLANS

We will continue to meet as a team, holding ourselves to the goal of the word of Christ dwelling in us, and in the congregation, richly. We endeavour to deepen our theological understanding of what worship is as well as sharpening our musical skills to help lead the congregation well.

We are looking into how to better interconnect the music and tech teams, that each would help the other flourish as a cohesive whole.

It was wonderful to have Alicia sing 'Nineveh', as part of Our Jonah series. We are thinking through how we can effectively use solos and other special music to help us reflect on the truth of God's word.

THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

- ▶ A successful launch of The 10:00, God's great kindness to us with a smooth transition.
- ▶ A tangible sense of joy in the Lord as we gather every Sunday.
- ▶ The new team gatherings with the musicians have enjoyed.
- ▶ The fellowship and unity felt amongst musicians and members of various choirs.
- ▶ The Lord bringing Alicia here to serve and grow.

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

- ▶ The team, as we gather, to look at God's word and grow in our knowledge and love of Christ.
- ▶ That we would never lose sight of the truth that we are singing but that we would be treasuring Christ and overflowing with joy in him.
- ▶ That people with gifts would feel able to come forward and compelled to do so.
- ▶ The Tech Team would be strengthened, that technology would serve our goal of the word of Christ dwelling in us richly.

38
PEOPLE

part of a
Christmas or
Easter choir



24
MUSICIANS

regularly
serving



Our Spotify playlists
tinyurl.com/SJCSpotify



THINGS WE'RE THINKING ABOUT

- ▶ How to effectively use solos and other special music to help us reflect on the truth of God's word.
- ▶ How to further improve Music and Tech team cohesion.
- ▶ How to help people develop and build on their skills in music and sound.
- ▶ How to train more leaders of sung worship and strengthen those who already do.
- ▶ How can music help us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus in everyday life.

MISSION

LEAD **Craig Larner**



REPORT

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you..." Matt 28:19-20.

As I've picked up the reigns of the Mission ministry from James Forward, working alongside a wonderfully committed Mission team, it has been hugely encouraging to look back over the past year and see God at work in people's lives.

Joyfully, week by week, at all three of our congregations, there are people coming to Saint James to investigate the Christian faith. We have seen first-hand that 'the harvest is plentiful!' Some come via a personal invite, others come of their own initiative, but a common theme is that all come intrigued to know more about the claims of Jesus.

“

Before I attended Saint James, and the Explore Sessions, I thought I was a Christian, but now I really understand what Jesus has done for me, and I've put my faith in Him.”



VISION

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



GOAL

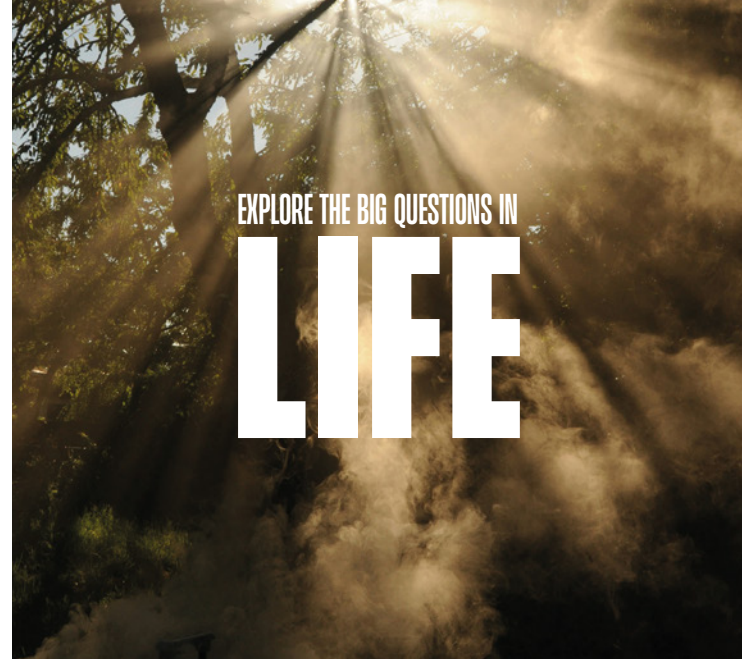
... so that our COMMUNITY is engaged & evangelised

Over the past year we've continued with a variety of midweek courses, such as *Christianity Explored*, *Alpha*, and *Explore: John*. In God's kindness, we've seen some fruit from these ministries, with people putting their faith in Christ, and many more seemingly close to doing the same.

We've also sought to encourage a culture of regular church attendance as well as attending a mid-week course, and many have fed back how blessed they've been by Sunday preaching and fellowship as they consider following Christ. Anecdotally, it would seem that those that regularly attend Sunday gatherings alongside mid-week Explore sessions more quickly grasp the gospel, as they not only *hear* it preached and sung, but also *experience* it in the fellowship they witness and enjoy. This is certainly true of the 8 people who are discovering the joy of new life in Christ this past year – all have been regular attendees at our Sunday Gatherings, as well as Explore sessions.

“

I enjoyed discussing big questions, and learning more about different views, but mainly I loved discussing Jesus' teaching in the Bible – that's what keeps me coming back.”



EXPLORE THE BIG QUESTIONS IN

LIFE





Questions for table discussion

1. What prevents us being content with our function within 'the body' of church?
2. How can we show that we value and appreciate the less obvious functions of 'the body' of church?

MINISTRY REVIEW MISSION

PLANS

We're working hard to develop our own evangelistic course to launch in September 2024, taking the best bits from elsewhere, and contextualising it for "the 45,000" on our doorstep. We'll run a 6-week series of 'Explore' sessions at the start of each school term, which leads into a year's worth of 6 week 'More to Explore' courses. These can be done with others on Thursday mornings or evenings, or 1-2-1, as we make the material available on the bookstall, in time.

We've also been asking the important question 'what does fruitful mission look like?' We concluded - Jesus commands us to make disciples, not attract crowds, and we've been challenged to assess our Mission activities by his definitions, not our own. Of courses, we can be incredibly encouraged that 50+ unbelievers have attended Explore sessions this past year, but ultimately we join heaven in rejoicing when someone turns from the world to Christ.

THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

- ▶ Those who have come to faith in Jesus this year.
- ▶ Many faithful Christians sharing the gospel and their lives with unbelievers.
- ▶ A church family committed to reaching the 45,000.
- ▶ So many coming to Saint James intrigued to find out more about Jesus.

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

- ▶ Those who are close to coming to Christ, that they would repent and believe.
- ▶ Our perseverance alongside others investigating Jesus, that they would keep exploring and find true life in Christ.
- ▶ The ongoing development of our 'Explore' and 'More to Explore' material.
- ▶ Wisdom on how best to utilise our existing outreach ministries, such as Friendship Lunch, Tiny Tots, and the Saint James Football Club to make disciples for Christ.

THINGS WE'RE THINKING ABOUT

- ▶ How can we best train and equip our church family to reach the 45,000?
- ▶ How many outreach initiatives can we do well and sustainably?
- ▶ How can we improve Sunday Gatherings and Explore sessions, to make them accessible to guests?
- ▶ How can we be more intentional as a church in inviting people to join u son a Sunday?



50+ attended an Explore Session
40 regularly attended Explore Sessions

36 
of these have repeatedly attended Sunday Services

8 
are now discovering the joy of new life in Christ

Saint James
Gerrards Cross & Fulmer

EXPLORE

LIFE'S BIGGEST QUESTIONS

Thursday mornings **OR** Thursday evenings
9.30-11.00am **8.00-9.30pm**
(with creche)



STARTING 21 SEPTEMBER

AT The Saint James Centre, Oxford Rd, Gerrards Cross, SL9 7DJ

saintjames.org.uk/explore



#AskAtAlpha

MEMBERSHIP

JOINTLY WRITTEN BY

**Daf Meirion-Jones
& Dan Hubbard**



REPORT

We have continued to be encouraged by a steady flow of new people joining Saint James, some as they move into the area, some as they explore Christianity and some inevitably as they decide that they need to change church.

They have been wonderfully welcomed by Hosting Teams in Gerrards Cross and Fulmer – who always have a smile and can mostly point people in the right direction.

Though less staff input has been possible, with Daf taking on the Maturity role as well, the warmth of our Sunday gatherings and the relational generosity of many of our church family has meant that new people have continued to feel quickly settled. Though we have been unable to run our termly Connect Group, we have enjoyed a Newcomers Tea at the Rectory, where people enjoyed meeting Ministry Team members and hearing about the vision of Saint James



VISION

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



GOAL

... so that **EVERYONE** is connected & cared for

form Matt. The arrival of Dan Hubbard will mean that pace will pick up again on integrating people.

It has been a hard year for the Pastoral Care Team, with many of them suffering personal tragedy. The loss of Ann Stewart, who was a driving force in the team, in May was deeply sad. Ann had an incredible capacity for compassion and a determination to act to care for people personally and practically. We rejoice she is with the Lord, but miss her greatly. Growth Groups continue to be outstanding as the first port of call for those in need and the Ministry Team visit and take communion to the housebound. However, our ageing population will mean that we will need to consider how to be a genuine community of care in the future.





MINISTRY REVIEW MEMBERSHIP

PLANS

We're seeking to develop existing pathways to help newcomers connect with life here at Saint James.

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

We'd love to see our hospitality to one another growing and growing. 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 making newcomers feel at home here at Saint James. A welcome that extends beyond just the first handshake at the door, but all the way through to newcomers feeling part of the Saint James family.

THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

- ▶ Every week, we're welcoming newcomers to Saint James.
- ▶ Many new church members settled and serving.
- ▶ Hosting Teams continue to make Sunday services places of warm welcome.
- ▶ The growth of our coffee times after the service, an invaluable time of fellowship together.
- ▶ The life and ministry of Ann Stewart on the Pastoral Care Team.

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

- ▶ For those who come to find a home within the Saint James family.
- ▶ Homes open for spontaneous hospitality.
- ▶ Hearts open to new friendships with brothers and sisters.
- ▶ A continued sense of being church family at each congregation.
- ▶ Pastoral Care Teams for each service.



are starting to settle in
at Saint James after arriving
in the last year



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 **Daf Meirion-Jones**



REPORT

The apostle Paul prays for the Philippians that their *"love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight so that [they] may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ..."* This is longing is at the heart of Christian "Maturity". It's why we come each week to hear God's word read, preached and studied together.

This year we've had sermon series from Ephesians, John, Jonah and 1 Peter – as well as a short series on what the Bible says about what we are as humans. Many people have remarked at how they have been encouraged, challenged and drawn to Christ through our Sunday sermons.

One of the highlights of my year has been the twice termly Growth Group Leaders meetings where we have looked at Bible books, thought about how to understand the Bible for ourselves and prayed for our groups. The hunger to learn and the willingness to laugh have made these special times which have benefitted Growth Groups as they have met week by week. It has been so encouraging



VISION

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



GOAL

... so that our CONGREGATIONS are established & growing

to meet with leaders and hear of their love and care for their group members.

In Lent we gathered centrally to be encouraged by Amy Orr-Ewing and Graham Daniels in our efforts to share the gospel with the 45,000 people within 5 miles of Saint James who don't appear to know Christ. In different ways they equipped us to engage with our culture and have confidence that Jesus would work through us to grow his kingdom.

Prayer Central continues to ebb and flow in attendance. It will always be the hardest meeting to get to as our enemy, the devil, will stop at nothing to keep us from praying! However, the first Wednesday of each month has seen many encouraged and rejoicing in worship and prayer. The fight goes on!

Men's and Women's Breakfasts have started with great numbers attending both. Looking at the topics of: Integrity, Masculinity, Who am I, and Difficult Experiences, they have encouraged many and led to excellent conversations round tables.



Vision Dinners



Lent Talks

Persuading Others

Amy Orr-Ewing
March 13th, 7.45pm

[Book](#)

Compelled by Love

Graham Daniels
March 20th, 7.45pm & March 21st, 9.30am

[Book \(evening\)](#)

[Book \(daytime\)](#)



Women's Breakfast

Saint James
Gerardo Cross & Funnell



COMPELLED BY LOVE

THE YEAR AHEAD 2023-24

MINISTRY REVIEW MATURITY

PLANS

It's been great to see Men's and Women's Breakfasts get started in recent months, we'll be exploring how best to establish those in the regular rhythm of church life.

We plan to keep running our Lent Talks. 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're looking forward to Jenny Williams joining the team as Associate Pastor for Women and seeing how ministry amongst women and more widely across church grows because of her involvement.

THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

- ▶ Tangible engagement with, and encouragement from, weekly preaching.
- ▶ Growth Group leaders growing confidence in leading Bible studies.
- ▶ New church members joining Growth Groups.
- ▶ Well attended and received Lent Talks.

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

- ▶ A greater proportion of the church in Growth Groups.
- ▶ Wisdom and love for new Growth Group Leaders.
- ▶ It to be as natural to come to Prayer Central as it is to attend our Growth Group.
- ▶ The recruitment of an Associate Pastor to share in the Maturity ministry.



REPORT

Jesus teaches us, "...whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all." Mark 10:43-44

We know that when we see Jesus, laying aside the comfort of heaven, persevering through life in a fallen world, and suffering persecution and death at the hands of his creatures, we are seeing the perfect embodiment of true greatness as Christ served us. Our hope for each other is that as we grow more and more mature as Christians so we would be more and more ready to roll up our sleeves for the benefit of others.

How marvellous then to see lots of people joining a new serving team in the last year. Each time a new team member joins it thrills those around them, it better helps us as a church family to meet the needs of each other and those around us, and it brings glory to the Lord Jesus.



VISION

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



GOAL

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

We always want to give thanks to God at this point in the year for all of the seen and unseen acts of humble service going on around church life. God knows your labours.

For each of us, the summer might be a good time to review our involvement in serving in more formal ways at church. For some of us, we might be doing too much, and it might be best for you and for the body of Christ to take a step back. For others of us, now might be the right moment to take a step forward in serving. If you're already involved, do talk to your team leader about a way you might be able to take more responsibility. Or if you're not yet involved, have a look at the serving opportunities listed on our website (see link on the following page).

Team supper before
Food For Thought





Tiny Tots

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, please don't be shy to ask if you can help.

59 people stepping in to new roles on Sunday or midweek



LOADS OF OPPORTUNITIES TO JOIN A TEAM



Kids & Youth



Worship & Music



Comms & Media



Welcome & Hosting

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

THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

- ▶ 59 people stepping into new serving roles.
- ▶ Starting to see teams becoming established at The 5:30.
- ▶ 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 we'd aspire more and more to the servant hearted greatness that we see in Jesus.
- ▶ That joy would be a hallmark of our serving.
- ▶ That we would serve with a prayerful dependence on God.

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?

FULMER

LEAD **Jill Roth**



REPORT

We have had many blessings in this past year as church life continues, as well as the usual challenges. We are celebrating our organist, Stephanos Karageorgi, joining us in September and the enthusiasm he has brought to the role. A choir has been drawn from the congregation which he has expertly coached.

Of course, much blessing comes in the regular ministry within the church. Sunday by Sunday there has been real joy as we've gathered each week, been challenged from the scriptures, and then discussed what it means to follow Christ over coffee afterwards. Every Thursday we've continued to host Coffee & Chat for parents and carers of children at the infant school. We've loved building friendships with them and have been greatly encouraged when some have accepted our invitation and come along to one of our Sunday services. Many at The 11:15 have continued to step up and serve in a variety of ways, for which we are grateful.

Within the parish we've celebrated two weddings! We continue to extend a welcome to the village and it's always good to see fruit from this. Again we have lost some dear elderly sisters and brothers, several of whom demonstrated a quiet and sincere faith throughout their lives. They are missed.



VISION

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



GOAL

... so that lives are transformed through the gospel

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

- ▶ An Afternoon Cream Tea for all, in the church grounds on a beautiful sunny day in August with an opportunity to think about the goodness of God.
- ▶ We began our celebrations for Christmas with our wreath making event at Thursday's Coffee & Chat, on Dec 7th.
- ▶ Stephanos and Josh Lucas kicked off Fulmer Christmas events with "Carols at the Pub" providing an upbeat 'vibe' to well-known carols, with Daf Meirion-Jones sharing a Christmas message
- ▶ At Carols by Candlelight we had our first performance of our Congregation Choir, a joyous event with a very full Church.
- ▶ Our Christingle Carol service saw the church bulging with families eagerly anticipating hearing the Christmas story once again.
- ▶ In May we set up a gazebo at the Fulmer Family Fun Day, with faith related family activities, a great opportunity for outreach to the local community.
- ▶ The same weekend a few of our choir members sang at "Prom Praise" in the Royal Albert Hall.
- ▶ Some of us continue with learning British Sign Language which has been very helpful for a deaf member of the congregation. One couple are studying for an exam and certification in BSL!

Fulmer Wreath Making



Fun Day in the rain





Fulmer Tea



MINISTRY REVIEW FULMER

PLANS

We'd love to add another Growth Group where we can go deeper in God's word together and support each other in our Christian walk. We need to identify and train leaders for this group.

Developing and increasing the number of members on our Pastoral Care team and encouraging all congregation members to engage in caring for one another.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR



**Carols
at the Pub**



**Christingle
Carols**



**Wreath
Making**



**Afternoon
Cream Tea**
OUTREACH EVENT



**Family
Fun Day**

THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

- ▶ Lives being changed, engaging more and more with the gospel of our Lord Jesus, learning and sharing our understanding of Christ together as a congregation.
- ▶ Those who've served so faithfully for many years...
- ▶ ...and for those who've joined a serving team more recently.
- ▶ Great music in our services in the last year, including the contributions of the choir.

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

- ▶ Wisdom for the Fulmer Ministry Team in discerning God's vision for us for the coming years.
- ▶ For hearts to be Christ-focused in all that we do as Christ's church in Fulmer.
- ▶ Boldness to tell the gospel to the village, and...
- ▶ ...openness to the gospel in the village.
- ▶ For joyful servant hearts, willing to step out in faith in proclaiming the gospel in Fulmer and beyond.

THINGS WE'RE THINKING ABOUT

- ▶ How do we continue to welcome families with children to our seasonal services and make provision for them in our regular weekly services so that they come back?
- ▶ 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?
- ▶ Can we encourage more lay involvement and training in leading intercessions and services?

KIDS

LEAD **Anna Barrett**



REPORT

"We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done." Psalm 78:4

As we continue to see steady growth in the kids work, I'm thankful to God for so many opportunities to tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord. We continue to deliver weekly school assemblies which in turn has led to an increased number of school children attending Ignite. Small groups after the talk have become a highlight due to so many questions being asked of the passage! But with growth comes change as we think through the best way to plant and water gospel seeds in partnership with parents. We would love to start seeing Ignite children and their families attending church on a Sunday.

“

What a terrific way to not only spend time with other Dads and my child, but to also celebrate Jesus.”

DAD SPEAKING ABOUT DANGEROUS CAMPING

“

In this cynical age it's so encouraging to see young people open to reading God's word, believing in Christ and so keen to pray.”

KIDS TEAM LEADER



VISION

Partnering with parents to grow young disciples...



GOAL

... so that our children are rooted and growing

The Kids team on Sundays have faithfully served for another year. A particular highlight for me has been to watch them become better equipped to teach the bible to children who in turn have grown in prayer and their understanding of God.

The highlight of the year though has to be Dangerous Camping! It provided so many moments for dads to grow in their relationships with one another, but it also encouraged dads to think about family discipleship and how to raise their kids to love Jesus. Watching dads being intentional with their kids, praying with them and reading the bible together was precious. It's my prayer that dads will continue to take the spiritual lead in raising families to get stuck into the bible, raising children to become young disciples.

I thank God for his faithfulness and pray he will continue to see growth in the Kids ministry!



Kids & Youth Team Training



Parenting the hearts of our children, Training



Christingle 2023



Tiny Tots



Bible by the Beach 2024



Sunday Kids



Ignite: Rock Out!



Ignite: Lego Party!

MINISTRY REVIEW KIDS

PLANS

We would love to continue partnering with parents, helping them to teach and disciple kids in the ways of the Lord. It's exciting to think though how we can engage families through training evenings, bible resources and a growing relational network amongst parents.

THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

- ▶ The 9 dads and 11 kids who went Dangerous Camping and the time to build relationships and grow in discipleship.
- ▶ The growing number of families joining Saint James.
- ▶ The 30 people who serve in the kids work.
- ▶ Ignite and the many children we have welcomed to the sessions.

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

- ▶ Us to build links with parents whose children are coming to Ignite.
- ▶ Good plans for next year's Dangerous Camping in partnership with Emmanuel Chesham..
- ▶ Spiritual growth in our children who long to learn more each week.
- ▶ God's sustaining of the teams involved with Sunday groups, Ignite and Tiny Tots.



Dangerous Camping!

YOUTH

LEAD **Luke Douglas**



REPORT

"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good." 1 Peter 2:2-3

This year in our youth work I have been really encouraged to see a growing hunger for God's Word. The young people have strong friendships at church, but the thing that has been changing them and growing them is their real hunger for God's Word!

Our Younger Youth have been hungry for God's word both on Sundays and at our midweek bible group, Rooted. I have been encouraged that the young people have increasingly been looking carefully at the passages and asking questions about things they understand. It has also been great to see them growing in their friendships with each other as we study God's word and spend time together. Also, through our monthly evangelistic event, Reach, the young people have been inviting their friends to have fun and hear



VISION

To partner with parents to grow resilient disciples...



GOAL

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

from the bible. We have even had people start coming on Sundays because they want to hear more from God's word and get to know his people better than they could at Reach!

Our Older Youth have also been hungry for God's Word. At our midweek group, Rooted+, we have seen young people come along to learn from God's word. I have been amazed by how the young people have been willing to sit under God's word and learn from it. Similarly on Sundays, we have seen real growth with the young people coming to church to hear the sermon and staying afterwards to discuss it. The youth have been really thinking deeply about what they have heard and show a hunger to be taught by God's word. Through this some have invited their friends on Sundays. We have even seen some of these friends come back again and again because they also have been hungry for God's word!



The Big Weekend



Reach



The Big Weekend



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:

- ▶ Better equipping those serving on the youth team so they can disciple the young people.
- ▶ Encouraging more older youth to come to a group midweek to get stuck into God's word.
- ▶ Helping our younger youth to invite their friends to something where they can hear more about Jesus and get more of a taste of what church is.
- ▶ Continuing to disciple our younger people and going deeper into God's word.
- ▶ Helping the church family know how they can best pray for young people.



Sunday Youth

Part of church service, discipling young people.



Rooted

Midweek Bible study group, discipling our younger youth. This year we have been looking at 1 Samuel.



Rooted+

Midweek Bible study groups, discipling our older youth. This year we have been looking at Romans.



Reach

Once a month evangelistic event to help our youth invite their friends to church.



10 young people baptised or confirmed this year



Summer Camps

August 2024



The Deeper Weekend

a weekend away for Older Youth in March 2024 – we partnered with St. Mary's Maidenhead



The Big Weekend

A weekend away in January 2024

THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

- ▶ That our young people are genuinely hungry for his word.
- ▶ For young people who have started coming to church because they have felt a need for Jesus.
- ▶ For our youth team who have been faithfully serving our young people.

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

- ▶ Our young people will increasingly see the value of coming to church on Sundays.
- ▶ Our young people as they live the Christian life at school and with their friends.
- ▶ That more and more that the young people are built into resilient disciples who go the distance with Jesus.

OPERATIONS

LEAD Mark Nicholas



REPORT

This year it's exciting to look back and celebrate the Lord's provision in a number of ways.

As the PCC have worked through implementing the recommendations from the Governance Review we've seen new committees becoming established: the Risk Audit and Finance Team and People and Culture Team. Both are working to ensure that good policies, processes and structures are in place that will support and enable healthy gospel work to happen. It feels like we're seeing good, ministry-orientated governance.

It's been exciting to announce the appointment of Otto as a full member of the Ops Team from the start of July. It feels like we've had to be very patient as he finishes his second year on the Ministry Training Course and his time with us as a Ministry Assistant. We're

THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR

- ▶ God's constant provision for all our needs throughout the year.
- ▶ Anne Scott's labours as Kitchen Manager for the last 18 months.
- ▶ Good ministry-orientated governance.

enormously grateful for the seven years of service that Hazel has given as Finance Manager, and we're delighted that Shakira Armstrong has joined the team to take over the role. Dan Hubbard has also joined us (part-time Comms Lead alongside being Membership Lead), we're looking forward to how he'll help us to better communicate the gospel, and all that's going on in the life of the church, both to the church family and also to our surrounding area.

The challenge for us on the Ops Team is to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus when we're in the detail of reconciling bank accounts, writing #SaintJamesTogether, implementing a new HR policy, supporting a family through a funeral, pulling slides and service sheets together for Sunday, or planning the calendar for the next term. It's a privilege to do what we do.

THINGS TO PRAY FOR

- ▶ Wisdom about what projects to turn our attention to.
- ▶ God's grace to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.
- ▶ We'd be able to grow our capacity for ministry-specific support.



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 2023

We started the year with a PCC approved budget deficit of £177,100 and as a result of another year of God’s provision through the generous giving of the Church family and good cost controls we have ended up reporting a deficit of only £2,508 (after fund transfers).

The “headline” total income figure of £796,356 was 16% down on the 2022 equivalent income of £945,813. However, included in the 2022 figure was £19,037 received from church family members attending the Ashburnham weekend away (zero in 2023) with a legacy of £2,000 being received this year (zero in 2022). Excluding these two “one off” shows a 14% reduction in underlying income.

Voluntary income, being the income received directly from the members of the church family, fell from £816,070 in 2022 (excluding

Ashburnham) to £733,176 in 2023. Whilst the 10% reduction seems rather worrying, the reduction is primarily due to a high level of “one off” giving in 2022. The “bedrock” monthly regularly giving actually went up 13% to £418,924 with this element representing 57% of the total, whereas in 2022 this type of giving represented 46% of the total. This is an encouraging trend, as moving away from the “one off” type of giving enables the church to plan with a greater level of certainty.

The General Fund benefited from a healthy London stock exchange performance during 2023, with a corresponding increase in the holding value of our index related investment. The total increase in the value of this investment was £19,412 (2022: decrease of £27,153; however, this was charged to the related Designated Fund created to protect the General Fund from such fluctuations). The remaining balance of this Designated Fund as at 31 December 2023 was £18,316.

Total expenditure for the year at £811,958 was 13% lower than 2022 (£933,087). The “core” 2023 expenditure of running all our ministries and other activities (excluding outside giving, governance costs) at £728,360 was down 13% from the equivalent £836,592 in 2022 (excluding the costs of Ashburnham). The major savings were in the Operations area where there were savings in staff costs and maintaining/running both the two church buildings and the Church Centre. The savings due to the Maturity Lead’s post being vacant in the second half of 2023 was, to some extent, countered by having the Magnification Lead’s post filled for the whole of 2023; there being a vacancy gap in 2022. These “core” costs included the parish share contribution of £203,955 down 3% on 2022, with savings at both Deanery and Diocese spending being passed down to the parishes. In 2023 the grants to organisations outside the church (allocated by the Global Mission Team) totalled £77,098, up 9% on the 2022 equivalent. This reflected the high level in church family giving during the 12 months to 31 September of the previous year which forms the basis of the 10% giving calculation.

During 2023 there was a net transfer of £6,318 out of the General Fund to the various designated funds.



OVERVIEW OF 2024 TO DATE

We started 2024 with a PCC approved general fund budget deficit of £189k. The trend of giving so far this year is behind both the budget and where we were this time last year. This means we face a challenge, but with so many new people arriving, it is one we should be able to meet. Whilst there are still pressures on our underlying cost base, to date our costs are in line with budget. Taking both the above and indications for the remaining part of 2024, the current full year forecast is a deficit of just over £200k. 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

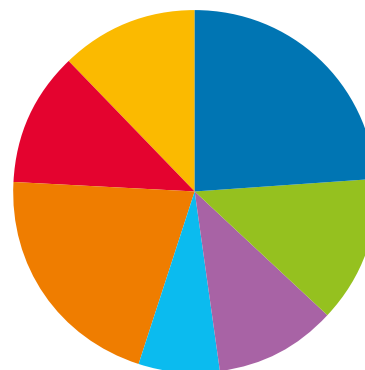
OUR BUDGET FOR 2024

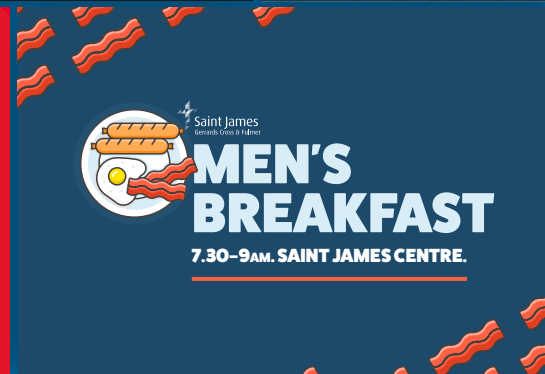
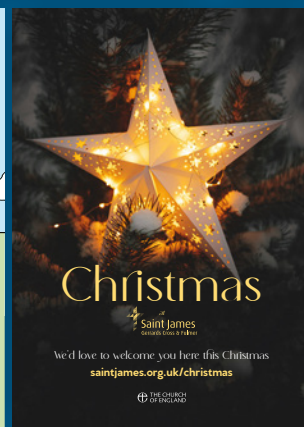
- ▶ Our current reliance on one-off giving is still heavier than we would like.
- ▶ We want to enable better planning and more generous external giving.
- ▶ We need to increase our regular giving to meet the budgeted shortfall.

Regular Giving	581,000
One off giving	75,000
Collections	5,000
Other income	56,000
Total income	717,000
Expenditure & transfers	(930,600)
Transfers	25,000
Total deficit	(188,600)

BREAKDOWN OF COSTS

- ▶ The largest element of our expenditure (48%) 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