



PARISH CHURCH OF  
**ST LUKE**  
HOLMES CHAPEL

***Come to Christ, love to learn, learn to love!***

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## **Annual Parochial Church Meeting - 8<sup>th</sup> May 2022 Report for 2021**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Under the Church Representation Rules (2020), every parish must hold an Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) before the 31<sup>st</sup> May each year. Last year, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent restrictions on holding public meetings, our APCM and the Annual Meeting to elect Churchwardens (AMP) was held by Zoom telecommunications on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021 from 11.00am.

The pandemic is declining in the UK, so it is now possible to hold our Annual Church Meetings together in person and it will be held in Church.

For the APCM, the PCC must provide a report which has to include information about the Church Electoral Roll, details of proceedings of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and parish activities generally, information about Church fabric, goods and ornaments, details of proceedings of the Deanery Synod, and a statement about compliance with Safeguarding. This document forms the required Annual Report for the past calendar year: 2021. Some individual sections may also include information about activities since the last APCM on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021. Advance copies of the Annual Report are available on our website (<https://stlukesholmeschapel.uk>) and in the church porch from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2022.

**The PCC also must provide for the APCM independently examined financial statements for the calendar year 2021. Copies of a summary of these financial statements are available on our website and in the church porch from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2022. Copies of the full financial statements are available on request from the Hon. Treasurer, William Hall (HC 535497).**

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### **VICAR'S REPORT**

My second full year in Holmes Chapel has been a time to try to re-establish good patterns in church life after the severe disruptions of the Covid pandemic.

We considered the weekly services in church and asked the Lord if we could regain momentum. In September 2021 our response to the late- July loosening of restrictions by Government was to restart our main Sunday mid-morning service at 10.30 in church, together with Genesis back in the church hall. At the same time, we stopped the Sunday 10.30 Zoom service which had been a help to many through the lockdowns. We called it BACK TO CHURCH September and saw a reasonable number of people return, but certainly not all of those who had been with us in March 2020. We restarted the singing of hymns, while encouraging the wearing of masks. Singing in a mask makes me feel a bit like Darth Vader, but it was a great encouragement to many that we were singing Christian hymns and songs together again. All the way through this time of disruption, we have chosen to provide the services in

church that we can, while reducing the risks through social distancing measures. This has at least minimised our loss of momentum and allowed us to see a little growth in newcomers at the same time as the loss of non-returners.

We considered our finances and sought the Lord that we might make positive progress. After a year of lockdowns in which our income fell faster than our costs, and we made a deficit of over £6,000 on our general account, it was important to bounce back. Church members responded very helpfully to our calls to get back on track, and cover our expected shortfall, such that we saw a heartening growth in income to help achieve a surplus on the general account to help offset last year's deficit. At the same time, there was much gracious generosity towards our Organ & Lighting Appeal, which exceeded its £80,000 target in early 2022. October 2021 started with a special concert on the newly installed organ and resulted in much thanksgiving for its pleasing qualities. At the same time, there was a surprise gift to help us start to refurbish our hall for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and generosity towards our regional mission partners at Barnabus and Brinnington, plus our sister churches in Salta, NW Argentina. We are making positive progress with our finances, which is timely given the present inflation pressures.

We have started to make longer term plans. After working hard at our services, it is important to establish more effective Outreach and Evangelism. Knitted Bible was a good project to spread the Bible's good news. We plan to do it again in 2023. Fellowship is a key priority and Rob is hoping to expand good opportunities for fellowship in the coming months. We do hope that the Lord's gracious hand will allow us to make significant strides in 2022/3. Please pray with us and work with us in the Lord's harvest-field.

Yours in Christ,

**Rob**

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**CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL 2022 REVISION** - The Church Electoral Roll for the period 2019-2025 was established for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in April 2019. Each year there is a required annual revision of the Roll by the PCC. The 2022 revision took place from Sunday 13th March to Monday 18th April, ready for the APCM on 8th May 2022.

The revised Roll is being published as a list of names on the noticeboard in the Church porch and website for information and checking from Sunday 24th April. No address or email details are permitted to appear in the published Roll.

After the 2022 revision, there are now **221** members (**214 in 2021**) on the Church Electoral Roll, there having been 12 additions and 5 deletions.

**Steve Smith - Electoral Roll Officer**

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## **FABRIC GOODS AND ORNAMENTS**

### Fabric, Goods and Ornaments

Our Grade I listed church building and the church goods and ornaments are in reasonable condition, given their general age. The church inventory has been reviewed and all items were accounted for. The required annual maintenance has been carried out to the church clock, fire extinguishers, lightning conductors and

the two church boilers. All portable electrical appliances in Church and in the Church Hall have again been tested for electrical safety and either approved for use or replaced with new appliances

**Organ.** As documented last year, the Organ and Lighting fundraising project was launched, and our replacement Organ was installed and commissioned in 2021. Regular maintenance and bedding-in adjustments are being made by Philip Cartwright who installed this organ and will continue to provide our organ support services. Many thanks to Steve Smith for managing this project on our behalf.

**Lighting.** A revised faculty was submitted in June 2021 and following further feedback from Chester DAC, additional information has been requested. This information has been received from our Lighting Contractor and has been consolidated with other clarification questions and sent to Chester DAC in March 2022. The Organ and Lighting fundraising has reached its target and has enabled full funding of this project. We await a response from Chester DAC.

**Land maintenance.** Clive Nash Landscapes continue to maintain the main churchyard, the border outside the church hall and the Knutsford Road churchyard to a high standard. A group of volunteers normally meet to tidy the area around the cremated remains on a regular basis. The volunteers managed to meet in May, July and September.

**Churchyard extension.** The newly extended churchyard (at the Knutsford Road site) is now in full use for both Burials and interment of cremated remains although further development and maturing of this area is needed and this work started in late 2021.

**Quinquennial Inspection.** The latest Quinquennial Inspection report has been completed and submitted to Chester Diocese. This report provides a critical analysis of the items needing repair/attention within the Church Building and Knutsford Road Mausoleum. The QI report was created by our Architects (Bench Architects) and the Wardens team will be reviewing the content to build a schedule of works for the coming years.

**Big project.** We have previously mentioned our high-level plans for a Big Project that would develop the church building to make it more accessible/useable for the future. Covid had restricted our ability to meet and move this forward, and although some plans have been created, no tangible progress has been made this year. Our focus has been on the Organ and Lighting projects. Once these projects have been fully completed, we will revisit our original aims for this project. Whatever changes may be planned, will require extensive fund raising to enable the project to proceed.

**Alastair Cragg, Jayne Weaver – Churchwardens**

**Yvonne Janvier, Stephen Haigh, Peter Cotton – Assistant Churchwardens**

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## **CHURCHWARDENS REPORT ON GENERAL PARISH MATTERS**

**Covid 19.** This year has seen us continue to adapt to changing guidelines and advice from our Diocese. We have been able to build back up to a regular pattern of services throughout the year. We have adopted, to a varying degree, restrictions such as socially distanced services, maximum congregation capacity, sign in sheets, closure of whole building, single use service sheets, opening church for private prayer, no singing, communion wafers distributed in pews and cessation of communion wine.

At this time, we will continue to monitor the situation carefully and adjust our restrictions as necessary.

**Churchwardens.** We were pleased that Yvonne Janvier was able to join the Wardens team as Assistant Warden. We have continued to meet fortnightly/monthly using a combination of face-to-face and Zoom meetings. We are all well aware that we could not fulfil our duties without the support we each receive from so many people throughout the church and beyond.

**Sidesmen.** The team have always provided a warm welcome and support through all our services. With the changes to our worshipping pattern/timings and style of services, we have not yet confirmed our requirements for the new sidemen rota. We expect a new rota to be compiled within the next six months. John Jack has been one of our main stalwarts on the rota and his recent passing will be deeply felt by us all. He will be greatly missed by his fellow Sidesmen and the whole Wardens team. We would like to thank John for all his years of dedicated service and being a supportive mentor to our younger sidesmen.

Owing to changing in personal circumstances a few of our Sidemen have moved away from Holmes Chapel and so we would like to thank Darren Cottier for his support at our early Sunday services and to Lew and Pat Riches who have provided support at our later Sunday services.

**Church Hall Committee.** Our Church Hall has always provided an important resource for Church activities and valuable income from use by external lettings. The Church Hall was closed during the pandemic but was re-opened this year. The Church Hall committee planned for this and reviewed all necessary health and safety issues. Judith and Derek Copley are acting as joint Interim Chair of the committee and Mike and Barbara Street are jointly acting as interim booking secretary.

**Major Contributors.** We would like to express our thanks to Wendy Bond as she stood down from being our Electoral Roll Officer last year after many years of diligent service in this role. We would like to thank Steve Smith for accepting the role of our new Electoral Roll Officer and the work he has already done this year and also to Janet Chettle as she completes her first year as PCC Secretary.

This year has felt a little more normal than last year and we would like to thank everyone who provides their time and efforts to maintain the church to such a high standard – Jean Paton for the beautiful, laundered linen; Michelle Carter, our cleaner; our teams of brass-cleaners and flower-arrangers; Wendy Macdonald, our Music Director; our singers and musicians; our bell ringers and our Sacristan team.

We have relied heavily on digital communications this year and we would like to specifically thank our Communications team - Trevor Jenkins and Steve Smith for all their hard work. Judith Hall, in her Networking capacity, has also been a valuable asset to keep us all updated with news from around the community.

Grateful thanks also go to Mike and Barbara Street for providing our Harvest Sheaf and to Ann and Alan Lane for our Christmas tree.

Alan Rickards does a wonderful job as Editor of our excellent Church Magazine which provides a valuable and enjoyable read.

We are fortunate to have so many people serving in Church committees and groups, volunteering for specific tasks or working on ecumenical groups like Churches Together and Christian Aid.

**Registered Charity.** The PCC is a registered charity and must operate within statutory controls. Following the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) rules in May 2018, our Data Privacy Notice was published and is on display on the church website and in the church porch.

Thank you to everybody who gives their time, knowledge and enthusiasm to make St Luke's an active and caring Church within our local community.

**Alastair Cragg, Jayne Weaver, Stephen Haigh, Peter Cotton, Yvonne Janvier – Churchwardens and Assistant Churchwardens**

## **SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

In the light of the recent independent report on the failure of policy and practices of the Church of England in relation to safeguarding issues, particularly those of child abuse, our continued vigilance at St Luke's in relation to these matters is vital. We are reminded that the responsibility for providing a safe environment for parishioners is one that involves us all and not just those appointed to particular offices.

The provision of care and safety for the community at St Luke's over time has been excellent as required checks are in place for those directly involved with our children, young people and the vulnerable and safe practices are in place and reviewed. Members of our PCC and those responsible for our children and youth groups have completed the appropriate levels of online safeguarding training via the Church of England portal. All documentation and certificates are held in a secure electronic file.

**Reporting any concern is necessary and information about how to this is posted in the church porch, in the Church Hall and on our website at:**

<https://stlukesholmeschapel.uk/safeguarding/>

While the current pandemic restricts the Church meeting as normal, it does not restrict the ways in which the internet may be used for sending messages and images for grooming the vulnerable and for bullying and intimidation. Social media sites which are used particularly by the younger generation may be a source of abuse in this way and we need to be aware of this possibility. Maintaining good relationships with each other provides the trust to report any concerns and, should this be necessary, any matter will be dealt with speedily and in confidence to effect a resolution.

**Lee Hardy – Safeguarding Officer for St Luke's**

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## **CHURCH COUNCIL**

**Council proceedings** – In 2021/22 the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of Church Hulme met six times to conduct general business and financial matters in support of the vicar and Churchwardens. During this business, the Council received and discussed reports from the Churchwardens, Treasurer, Deanery Synod representatives and other Church officials on a variety of issues, including those summarised in the Fabric Goods and Ornaments and Churchwardens' Reports above.

Because of the COVID-19 restrictions, first introduced in April 2020, the PCC meetings have been a mix of being held in church and on Zoom communications. The PCC Standing Committee has similarly met regularly using a mix of Zoom and in person between full Council meetings to ensure parish business and church services were maintained.

**Safeguarding** - The Council continues to comply with the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and follows the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy it adopted in September 2018. Paula Lavin resigned as the Council's Safeguarding Officer at the Council meeting on 10 January 2022, and she was replaced on a temporary basis by Lee Hardy due to his experience in this area. However, a permanent replacement needs to be appointed.

At the end of December 2021, the Council had 22 members (including 13 elected lay members listed on the noticeboard in the church porch). Council meetings were chaired by the Vicar, Canon Rob McLaren. Agendas and Minutes of meetings have been published on the PCC page of the church website (<https://stlukesholmeschapel.uk>) and a paper copy can be supplied on request to the Secretary.

**Annual Parish Meetings** – This year these are being held in Church. The Annual Meeting to elect Churchwardens for 2022/23 and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to elect lay representatives to the PCC and conduct other business, are being held from 10.30am on Sunday 8th May 2022, along with a short service of Morning Worship.

**Financial Statements (Annual Accounts)** - A summary of the PCC's independently examined financial statements for the calendar year 2021, prepared by the Council's Hon. Treasurer, William Hall, is available for inspection on the church website from Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2022. Paper copies of the summary accounts are also available in the church porch from Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2022. A copy of the full Church Accounts will be supplied on request to the Treasurer (tel. HC 535497) or Secretary ([pcc@stlukesholmeschapel.uk](mailto:pcc@stlukesholmeschapel.uk)).

**Janet Chettle – Hon. Secretary, St Luke's PCC**

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## **DEANERY SYNOD**

After a long break for Covid reasons the Synod met at Christ Church Alsager on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021 and the meeting was presided over by the Rural Dean, Steve Clapham. A few minutes silence was observed to remember Joice Nixon, the former Synod Secretary who died of Covid last year. Elections took place for officers of the Synod. The secretary, Shirley and treasurer, Albert were re-elected for another term, but both indicated that they would retire in 18 months' time when their 3-year term expired.

The Lay Chair, Bill Ball was required to retire at the meeting and a replacement was sought from those present. Unfortunately, no one volunteered so the position remains vacant for now. The treasurer, Albert Crew gave his financial report for 2020 which showed that the Deanery's cash assets now stand at £3,515 so no parish contributions will be required in 2021. There are deanery funds available for deanery events and grants to pastoral workers and Lay Readers, so parishes are invited to apply if appropriate.

In autumn 2019 the motion proposed by Rev Jeff Cuttell to abolish faculty fees was forwarded to the Diocesan Synod for approval. This was accepted on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 which is welcome news. The Synod members carried out an exercise to consider the positives and negatives that arose from our periods of Covid lockdown. Some of the comments are set out below:-

- The elderly have been unable to communicate with the clergy if they were not on the internet.
- Zoom was a lifeline for communication as well as services. Some clergy found it difficult preaching to an empty church.
- Vulnerable people found it difficult to return to church – some still not back.
- Quizzes – many were fun but depressing when they were too hard.
- Parish Share still increasing even though there was very little income coming in.
- Some people want masks etc to stay in place even though official restrictions have been relaxed.

Some concern was raised over the ban on dispensing the wine at Communion. Whilst everyone realised the need to change the way it was served several present accepted that the "Methodist" way was not appropriate for the C of E. The synod officials were asked to provide recommendations for next meeting.

A Young Priests Theological Forum has been established to encourage those over 40 to undertake roles in the church. Jenny Masters is running a 5-week course called "Living among Faith" covering human identity, marriage, sexuality and relationships. Several parishes from the deanery are taking the course.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Our finances in 2021 really resembled the traditional curate's egg, namely "good in parts".

At the start of the year, we experienced a further period of lockdown which severely restricted our day-to-day income. This was followed by a return to worship with weddings and funerals again taking place. Despite the welcome return of services our expenses have continued to rise and by the summer it became clear that an appeal for funds would be required if we were to avoid another annual deficit. The result of this appeal was extra donations of over £11,000 in August which were very welcome.

The annual rate of increase in our Parish Share was reduced in the first few months of 2021 but has since resumed its upward path rising by 2% to £82,936 this year. For many years we have paid 25% more than the basic share because our parish is one of the 25% of parishes in the Diocese with the greatest ability to pay and we thereby support a quarter of parishes with the least ability to do so. We are fortunate to be able to assist our Christian brothers and sisters in this way.

Following the sale of the Old Vicarage at 74 London Road we were fortunate in obtaining a one-off grant of £16,459 from the sale proceeds. This sum is not intended to meet our day-to-day expenditure but to support future church projects.

### **Fabric matters**

In October 2020 we opened an appeal fund to raise £80,000 to enable us to replace our pipe organ and upgrade our church lighting system. By the end of the year we had raised over £75,000 and expect to reach our target early in 2022. The completion of the new organ was celebrated in early October with a splendid recital by Dr Ian Tracey, of Liverpool Cathedral.

Our lighting project continues, and we anticipate receiving official approval enabling us to carry out the work next year.

In 2022 we will be carrying out some improvements to the entry system, windows and seating in our church hall. To enable us to do this we have received a generous donation from one of our members.

Finally, we are grateful for the efforts of Mr Jeremy Bostock in examining our 2021 accounts.

**William M Hall – Hon. Treasurer, St Luke's PCC**

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## **CHURCH HALL**

The Church Hall remained closed for most of the year owing to restrictions imposed by Covid rules.

In May the Hall committee met to investigate the re-commissioning of the Hall facilities and which groups would be able to use the Hall for their meetings. The kitchen and the toilet facilities were checked over and brought up to a standard ready for use.

Groups re-started using the hall in August and most previous users of the hall were back by the end of September.

Our long-standing caretaker, Greta Broderick, retired this year. She had for many years opened and closed the hall for users as well as regular cleaning. She was thanked by the committee for her service and John Murfin, Mike Street, Judith Copley and Derek Copley visited her at home to present a bouquet of flowers. The hall is now cleaned by contract cleaners and members of the committee supervise the security.

While the hall remained closed with no income for most of the year payments, although reduced, still had to be made. Gas, electricity, water, rates, insurance etc still had to be met. This resulted in a deficit for the year of £1669.46

The committee is relatively small, and we would welcome new members with new ideas and skills. Bookings are organised by Barbara and Mike Street, and they welcome all enquiries. Trevor Jenkins is the secretary; Judith Copley is the treasurer and Derek Copley the chairperson.

We are looking forward to 2022 when we hope the use of the hall will approach the pre-covid levels.

### ***Church Hall Committee***

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## **THURSDAY MORNING COFFEE**

The weekly coffee mornings in the Church Hall on Thursdays had to close down due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, we have been able to open up again and they are now well attended.

Music has been provided some weeks by a group of volunteers which is much appreciated by those attending the coffee mornings.

We would like to thank all the volunteers for their help. If anyone is interested in helping, please contact either Anne or Sue.

**Anne Lane and Sue Shorrock**

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## **CHURCH GROUPS**

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### **GROUPS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

#### ***A note from our Vicar, Canon Rob McLaren***

As part of our strategy to follow through our Church strap line, '**Come to Christ, love to learn, learn to love**', in 2021 we have more small groups with people loving to learn more from Jesus, with short studies based on our Sunday Bible teaching, with encouragement to pray, and a chance to share experiences.

We have not been able to launch a new Christianity Explored group this year, but the Sunday evening Jesus-100 group has continued to thrive with Rob leading and Yvonne assisting.

Two new Growth Groups on Zoom have been set up: Rob's Tuesday group which Lee has been leading too, and Rob's Monday group most recently. Tim's Growth Group continues happily. The Thursday morning Growth Group in church stopped due to Covid-19 restrictions but we hope that it might

reconvene as a women's Growth Group under Yvonne's leadership. The Tuesday Exodus Group on Zoom led by Rob and Rachel Copley is like a Youth Growth Group.

In a time when the opportunity for congregations to meet was severely curtailed, the valuable fellowship of Growth Groups became even more important.

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## **BELL RINGING**

Covid has had a huge impact on our ability to ring the bells due to the confined space in the ringing room and the relative proximity of the ringers. This has been the case in practically every church throughout the country.

Consequently, there is very little to report this year.

As I write we are beginning to get back to something like normal, but our numbers are slightly reduced which sometimes makes it difficult to muster a full team to ring all the bells. Thanks go however to those who remain dedicated to ensuring the sound of our bells rings out over the village. It is quite heartening to hear people comment on the pleasure they have from hearing the sound again after so long.

If you have missed the sound of the bells remember that it only happens when there is a team of dedicated ringers and, to repeat appeals from many previous reports, we need new blood. This silence could so easily be a foretaste of the not-too-distant future without it.

**Mervyn Harrison - *Tower Captain***

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## **FAIRTRADE**

The year got off to a slow start as we emerged from lockdown. However, since it became possible to restart our stand, we have had one at least once a month - usually the third Sunday of the month in the church hall. We now set up at 9am so the congregation from the earlier service have the opportunity to buy as well.

There are also regular stands at the Methodist and St Luke's Church in Goostrey. They are set up and run by Angela Gilmore and Pauline Whitehurst.

The total value of goods ordered from Tradecraft for the year was just over £1600.

My sincere thanks to everyone who supported us during the year by buying from the stands. Special thanks to Angela, Pauline, Ann Jack, Jan Rayner, Martin Thompson, and Alan Rickards without whom Fairtrade activity would be more restricted and less well organised

**Gareth Griffin - *Fairtrade Co-ordinator***

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## **FLORISTRY – ALTAR FLOWERS**

The Altar flowers have continued to be arranged by volunteers for the weeks the church has been open this last year. We have been able to celebrate Harvest, Remembrance Sunday, Christmas, and Easter with more floral arrangements.

The flower rota for the Altar flowers is now in the porch for volunteers to sign up for a two-week slot. No special flower- arranging skills are needed and new people are very welcome.

I would like to thank all the people who have helped with the Altar flowers and for the main festivals.

**Anne Lane**

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## **GENESIS – SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Genesis continued to meet weekly on Zoom from April to July 2021 but then happily resumed meeting in person, in the Church Hall, from September 2021.

- ✓ Within Church services ,Genesis have contributed Bible readings, prayers and have shared weekly learning with the congregation about their Genesis sessions. Our nativity 'The Star that couldn't twinkle' was performed in Church and involved all 11 children in regular attendance at Genesis and we have supported Rob in planning and leading the Christingle and Crib Christmas Eve services.
- ✓ Outside Church services, Genesis led the collection for the 'Storehouse Food Bank' at the New Life Church in Congleton through our harvest giving appeal, coordinated boxes and back packs to be gifted and delivered for Operation Christmas Child and Mary's meals and hosted an open Church serving refreshments and children's activities at the village Christmas fair. In addition, Genesis enjoyed organising the knitted Bible event bringing the Good News of Jesus into sharp focus for the community of Holmes Chapel.
- ✓ Genesis continues to support the pastoral networking team. We network the children in Genesis and their families as well as each other.

Thank you to the team of teachers, children and parents that inspire us and the Church congregation and leaders for their encouragement.

Let us now continue to look forward and embrace our Church mission to bring people closer to Christ.

**Fiona Pullé - on behalf of Genesis**

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## **EXODUS**

Exodus for 11s-15s has been a pleasure to lead. 3 or 4 regulars has become 5 or 6 regulars, doing games, quizzes, Bible Studies, seasonal specials, mainly on Zoom but also in the Church Hall or Vicarage Garden, with the encouragement of Rachel Copley and myself. There are many activities for younger High School students in our village, so it is even more important that we give an opportunity for Christian witness, study, prayer, easy-to-join activities and a bit of a good laugh on Tuesday evenings at 7.15pm. Please pray for us and our work in Jesus' name.

**Rob McLaren, Rachel Copley.**

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## **GROWTH GROUPS**

The Four Growth Groups have continued helpfully this year, meeting mainly on Zoom, studying the Bible passage preached the previous Sunday, building our fellowship in Christ, inspiring one another to pray. Rob's Sunday Jesus-100 group has been a good place to ask questions about the Lord, his Word and his world. We have neared the end of the E-100 material, with 100 Bible passages, essential for understanding Jesus. We have grown by a couple of people, making 8 of us.

Rob's Monday Growth Group has had a happy year of fellowship and encouragement, nearly all on Zoom. We have followed the studies based on Sunday sermons and enjoyed our time in the books of Samuel, John and Philippians.

**Rob**

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## **MOTHERS' UNION**

The Mothers' Union is a worldwide Christian organisation of 4 million members whose aim is helping families around the world.

Here at St Luke's we are successfully run by a committee and have 30 members who now meet together on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month and this is working well. We have a Prayer Circle so that if any members are ill or need our prayers the Committee is able to contact all members to let them know. As well as this we all have prayer Partners who we pray for throughout the year, and at Christmas we buy a card and present for them.

We aim to help families in our own diocese in as many ways as possible

- Some members help in the baby changing tent at the Cheshire Show which we hope will return again this year
- Others knit premature baby items for the Neo-natal department at Leighton Hospital

We are a charitable organisation and also raise money for our National and Overseas MU charities through collection boxes and our annual Strawberry Supper in June. We sell books and usually have cake stalls to raise money for Away From It All holidays for families who cannot afford a holiday.

The year of 2021 presented more Covid pandemic lockdowns and periods of time of trying to keep members safe. Due to this we didn't get together to meet until October 2021. We have now started to make use of our local resources as much as possible – Ellie Dick from the Community Centre, Lisa Collis from ANSA recycling, Tina Cartlidge, our Clerk to the Parish Council all came to talk to us.

If anyone is interested in joining us they will be very welcome to come to any of our meetings.

**Carole Elliott and Dorothy Wood – *Branch Secretary and Treasurer***

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## **MUSIC**

The church choir had eleven regular members and rehearsed weekly until the pandemic restrictions prevented this in March 2020. Additional singers had joined for services needing a larger choir and the music group of five instrumentalists played at the 10am service on each third Sunday.

Musical activities in the rest of year and into 2021 have been severely limited by the continuing pandemic restrictions. We have been fortunate to have a few members of the church choir to sing at the restricted services in church and are grateful to those who have participated.

The St Luke's Community Choir has continued meeting weekly through Zoom with about 25 people.

The project to remove our failing church organ and replace it with a refurbished instrument is well underway and we expect the replacement organ to be installed and commissioned during July this year.

**Wendy Macdonald - Director of Music**

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## **NETWORKING**

Lockdown periods and challenging circumstances affecting many of our church family impacted the efficiency of our Prayer Networking scheme which ran for over ten years, embracing about 200 people. GENESIS staff wholeheartedly supported the scheme, the staff praying for the children in their classes together with their parents. Following lockdown, several faithful Networkers found they had to cease serving the Lord and his church in this particular way. As a consequence, many of our people no longer had the daily support of someone to pray for them.

Thanks to the deep faith, practical skills, and experience of our vicar, Canon Rob McLaren, our team of Churchwardens, Electoral Roll Officer and many other very committed PCC members and others, a more practical and far more comprehensive way forward is being prepared.

Once up and running, this new Prayer Ministry will support not only our own church family but also our growing community in this area.

Watch this space!

**Judith Hall and Jean Paton - Network Leader and Co-ordinator**

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## **SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

The Social Committee consists of five members who serve the membership of the whole congregation. Unfortunately, because of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic during 2021, it has not been possible to hold any of our usual range of social activities in the parish. However, we look forward to organising future events once restrictions are lifted and it is safe to do so.

**Carole Elliott - on behalf of the Social Committee**

## ECUMENICAL GROUPS

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### CHRISTIAN AID

The Holmes Chapel Christian Aid Committee have not been very active over the last twelve months because of Covid 19. We did host the Coffee Morning and Christmas Card Sale on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2021 and raised £568. We sold quiz sheets with questions about rivers around the world.

We didn't run the house-to-house collection in Christian Aid Week of 2021 but did fundraise in other ways. We put Christian Aid envelopes in pews in the churches to return in church or to collection points. We will be doing the same this year. Last year we asked for donations online, and by phone to Christian Aid. We also asked for donations to say thank you for our Covid vaccines.

We are currently asking for donations for Ukraine. The web address for this is:  
<https://giving.give-star.com/online/christian-aid/holmes-chapel-dec-ukraine-appeal>  
There are posters in St. Luke's, and on the Village Notice Board with a QR code.

Our very popular Quiz Night had to be cancelled a number of times, but we are hoping to hold it in May.

**Margaret Thompson, Sue Wood, and Steph Haigh –St Luke's members**

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### CHURCHES TOGETHER

2021 was another year when we were limited by what we could do. However, the Christmas Card delivery to all homes in Holmes Chapel & Cranage went ahead some 3,500 drops in total.

We also had a stall right outside the Church for the Village Christmas Fair and had a good response from those attending. We focussed on a game for children with sweet prizes.

**Pete Shackleton - Co-ordinator for St. Luke's**

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### **FOCUS** - *note: see substitute Focus Group report at end of document*

We thank God for His continued blessing on the fellowship group throughout the past forty years and look to Him for the future.

This past year has been unprecedented as the coronavirus pandemic and repeated lockdowns have prevented us from meeting in the Methodist Church Hall. We are very grateful to Brian Donlon, Tim Fryer and Will Litchfield for hosting presentations on Zoom and to David Carr for managing our finances under challenging conditions. For the first time in our history, we have not printed a programme as meetings have evolved from month to month.

We commenced on Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> September 2020 with a socially distanced treasure hunt, devised by Rodney Smith, around the centre of the village, which Pat Macmaster won by a narrow margin. In October, Trish and Will Litchfield described their journey from Santiago to the Atacama Desert, Patagonia and Punta Arenas. We also flew with them to Easter Island and viewed the remarkable statues erected by Polynesian settlers in honour of their ancestors.

The following month, Tim Fryer updated us on the relationship that Terra Nova School had established with survivors of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami in Sri Lanka. The school had supplied smart uniforms and essential equipment to St Joseph's School, Colombo since its opening in 2006. We were delighted to meet some of the teachers and pupils from St Joseph's via Zoom. In December, Carole and Martin Elliott shared their amazing experience of a cruise across the South Atlantic from Auckland to San Diego during March 2020. Although the itinerary promised calls at several exotic islands en route, the arrival of Covid-19 turned the Elliotts into refugees at sea, anxious about reaching the American coast or securing homebound flights.

Our plans for enjoying a New Year's meal at the George and Dragon were defeated by the January lockdown. Following a chance meeting with Rodney in Waitrose, Stephen and Judith Coyne rescued us with an apt presentation of an Arctic cruise encompassing Northern Norway, Svalbard, Iceland and southern Greenland, illustrated by their customary stunning photographs. Paul Redfern, Chair of Blood Bikes Manchester inspired us in February by describing how volunteer bikers had been delivering blood, platelets, medical samples and milk to hospitals and rescue helicopters since 2011. Following Mr Redfern's presentation, our group donated £185 to the charity.

In March, Julian and Wendy Bond led us on a small group journey from Chennai to Kochin in Southern India giving us an in-depth view of the temples and religions they experienced and the people they met along the way. Many people were still engaged in manual labour with salt, sand and rock extraction or with basket making or tailoring.

We look forward to Lee Hardy's presentation on Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> April on 'Grace that Leads' and our May and June meetings. Focus meets monthly on Fridays at 8.00pm between September and June inclusive. Barbara Smith (537301) or David Carr (532412) are happy to supply further details about our meetings. You may join any session – there is no formal membership.

**Barbara Smith – Group Secretary**

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## **CHURCH PUBLICATIONS**

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### **COMMS TEAM**

The Comms Team (Trevor Jenkins, Alan Rickards and Steve Smith, in conjunction with our vicar Rob) looks after publications within the parish, selecting the most appropriate publication route (paper, on-line and/or email) depending on the content and urgency of the information. Our aim is to make the best use of our different publications to inform the widest number of Church members about parish activities and news whilst recognising the increasing reliance on on-line information. ***So that the whole Team is aware of important notices or proposed publications, it's important for you to send them by email to [media@stlukesholmeschapel.uk](mailto:media@stlukesholmeschapel.uk) rather to any individual Comms Team member. Alternatively, you can leave a brief message on 01477 571872 and one of the Team will call you back.***

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**PARISH MAGAZINE** - Thank you for the positive comments received in respect of the magazine, which helps to make the late nights over the deadline weekends worthwhile! Did you know that the Parish Magazine is delivered every month to addresses in Holmes Chapel and Cranage at no extra charge? If you live in these areas and have been buying your magazine in church, please consider having your copy delivered to your door so that you will never miss an edition! More details in the May magazine!

Regarding magazine deliveries, many thanks to Sue Wood and her team of deliverers, without whom, you would not be receiving your monthly magazine through your door! Thanks also to all those who contribute articles, news and announcements each month, without whom compiling the magazine would be much more difficult. Finally, many thanks are due to David at The Print Room for efficiently producing the magazine each month, particularly for his patience when I notice errors in my original Publisher files after he has provided me with a proof copy to check.

**Alan Rickards - Magazine Editor**

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**FACEBOOK PAGE - [www.facebook.com/holmeschapelchurch](https://www.facebook.com/holmeschapelchurch)**

Our Facebook page, which includes summary details of services and other information at St Luke's, continues to be widely viewed. If you use Facebook, then please be sure to follow our page!

Almost 400 people from the UK and around the world have "liked" the St Luke's Facebook Page. Not surprisingly, 95.9% are from the UK, with the remainder spread across the USA, Australia, Spain, Gibraltar, India, Pakistan and The Philippines!

**Alan Rickards - Facebook Page Administrator**

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## **CHURCH WEBSITES**

Site visits to <https://stlukesholmeschapel.uk/> increased by just over 12% in 2021 compared to 2020. Visits increased in the build up to Easter before dropping off over the summer months and then increasing steadily again prior to Christmas. On average we recorded 1000 page views per month.

Links to downloads (PDF's) were accessed 342 times and there were 257 links made to other websites such as our appeal website. Equal numbers (45%) of visitors accessed our website using desktops or mobile devices - the remaining 10% used tablets.

**APPEAL WEBSITE** - 317 users visited the appeal website in 2021 with 20 linking to secure online donations on our Total Giving appeal page (<https://www.totalgiving.co.uk/donate/the-parochial-church-council-of-the-ecclesiastical-parish-of-church-hulme>).

**Steve Smith and Trevor Jenkins - Web Admin team**

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**A CHURCH NEAR YOU** - This website is managed by the Church of England to allow people not yet connected to a church to find details of CofE churches and services in their locality. The Comms Team updated our basic information on this site during the year and is maintaining a regular list of services as well as on our own website.

**LINK SHEET** - During 2021, the Link Sheet from St Luke's was reintroduced as an occasional, rather than weekly, publication. It is compiled by Rob with a short introduction and headline material about parish activities and some key contact detail. Everyone attending church services receives a copy as do Genesis. The content is also available on the Church website for those unable to attend services in person.

**E-MAILS** - There are now 159 email addresses in the secure Church database enabling us to reach about 170 individual Church members. The Comms Team sends out periodic emails to all these addresses with important updates and notices. The messages are sent on a blind copy basis so that individual addresses are not communicated to others.

## **APCM 8<sup>th</sup> May 2022 – Report for 2021**

### **Replacement Focus Group report**

Last September, we celebrated forty years of the Focus fellowship with a celebratory dinner at the George and Dragon. We thank God for His blessing on the group and look to Him for the future.

We were delighted to resume meeting face-to-face in the Methodist Church Hall from October, with the exception of the January meeting when the omicron variant struck and Brian Donlon kindly hosted Stephen and Judith Coyne's second consecutive presentation via Zoom. Illustrated by their usual stunning photographs and videos, the Coynes focused on Madagascar and treated us to a 'spot the camouflaged wildlife' quiz in addition to highlighting the differences between lemurs and sifakas.

October found us attending Anne Vaughan's twice postponed 'Amazing Morocco'. Her comprehensive slides illustrated the fascinating history, culture, natural history and diversity of the country and its people. The following month, Yvonne Janvier, shared her testimony 'From Darkness to Light', reflecting on how she had come to Christ and how her faith had supported her through multiple personal tragedies – her joy shone through.

In November, Julian Bond shared the account of his parents' escape from British Burma in 1942, during the Japanese invasion, their meeting, marriage and separation in Myanmar and subsequent miraculous reunion in India, after his father had scarcely survived a 200-mile trek through inhospitable terrain during which he had contracted malaria. In February, recently ordained Rev. Nicola Langton-Miller shared her testimony 'Walking by Faith, and not by Sight' using her eclectic shoe collection as a visual aid.

Owing to a Covid-19 outbreak amongst the Englesea Brook Chapel decorators, our March and April meetings had to be switched. Councillor Brian Bath addressed us in March on the diverse and extensive 'Work and Role of Holmes Chapel Parish Council'. His interesting presentation attracted many questions.

We look forward to our visit to Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum followed by lunch at The Broughton in April and to our excursion by train to Manchester with visits to the People's History and Science and Industry Museums in May. During our June meeting, John and Romila Newton will lead us on a 'Cruise on the Nile'.

We are very grateful to David Carr for his meticulous management of the Focus accounts and to Brian Donlon for his technical expertise and support. Focus meets monthly on Fridays at 8pm between September and June inclusive. Barbara Smith (537301) and David Carr (532412) are happy to supply further details. You may join us at any session – there is no formal membership.

**Barbara Smith**  
**Group Secretary**