

## **note from Clive Grinham for APCM 12-5-2024**

This is the one opportunity that we have to give our wholehearted thanks to so many people who have served St. Paul's so faithfully throughout the past year. We start by thanking our two churchwardens - Anne and Anthea - who have been our eyes and ears discerning jobs that needed to be done. The church clean was one such, and proved very successful with a large number of volunteers who did a magnificent job with much laughter at times on one Saturday! Then we need to express our appreciation to Sarah, our Licensed Lay Minister, and David our Licensed Evangelist, for all they have done in leading and preaching throughout the year, with the able assistance of Keith and help from Clive. We will also have the opportunity to thank Paul Wright for presiding and preaching at many services of Holy Communion throughout the Vacancy.

We give praise to God for both the spiritual and numerical growth we have witnessed during the Vacancy. We are greatly encouraged to have had several baptisms and confirmations over the past year, which have included adults as well as children/young people.

How much we have to give thanks for our wonderful musicians each Sunday - Marion, John, David, and Pete & Ingrid's team. We thank those who have read the scriptures and led our intercessions. We give thanks for a great team of leaders and helpers who have worked so hard with our children and young people who are the "Church of today" (not tomorrow) and mean so much to us all. Whatever would we do without our excellent PCC, who have overseen the work and ministry at St. Paul's with such care throughout another year. Thank you. Then there is Rosemary Dear, our treasurer without whom we would have been in serious financial trouble, we feel sure!

We also know how much the Home Groups mean to those who belong to them, and give thanks for the leaders who nurture them as they study the Bible together and enjoy the fellowship these groups provide. And we don't forget their provision and serving of refreshments at the end of each morning service. Then, how much we value the Friendship Group meeting nearly every Thursday afternoon. Judith and Anne care so much for the senior members who come, together with the sixth Formers from a local school who also come each week. The planning of an interesting programme takes much thought and time. The catering team turn up trumps on numerous social occasions.

Saturday Connect Cafe has been valued greatly by all who come to savour bacon butties! It is also proving an effective part of our outreach into the community. The same is also true of our popular Babies & Toddler group that meets every Thursday during termtime, and our thanks go to Anthea, Jill and Marion for their dedication to this group. Many people comment on the lovely grounds we have, and thanks to Moreen and Ann and the team of garden volunteers who keep it so tidy for all of us to enjoy its beauty.

There is one special person to thank for all her work in the office. Stephanie is a gem and always keen to help in any way she can. Her admin skills are brilliant, and her production of the weekly notice sheet each week is so appreciated. So much of her work is unseen by most of us. Thank you, Stephanie.

We are sure we have missed people we should have thanked, for which we ask your forgiveness. We thank you too.

All this work is done joyfully because we look to Christ and because we are all working together for God's Kingdom. We journey together as a fellowship; as our Vision Statement says:

"Growing together in Christ, one step at a time".