



Activities Report for 2022

BAPTISMS

Lizzie Ogden

Baptisms, mostly of infants and children but with some adults too, continued steadily throughout the year, averaging just over one a month, and there were also a couple of dedications/thanksgiving for infants.

It is nice to see couples married at BPC bringing their children to be baptized, as well as newcomers.

Timings for 'routine' baptism provision changed in 2022 both to reserve space and to avoid clashes in a busy church for such an important introduction to the church family.

Our approach now provides either for baptisms to be held during a regular Sunday service, usually the 11.00 All-age Service on the third Sunday of a month, or at a dedicated service held at 12.45 normally on the first or fourth Sunday of a month.

Ope Ayileye now takes the clergy lead on baptisms and, of course, much thanks is due to everyone helping to organize baptisms at BPC.

BELLRINGERS

Andrew Spencer

We have continued our arrangements ringing the bells for services on a rota by sharing our bellringers with Maids Moreton and Stowe. We have also rung the bells for many weddings during the year along with University ceremonies. The lockdowns have resulted in some loss of skills so our Wednesday practices have been used to try and get back to our previous standards.

In September we rang the bells muffled in memoriam HM Queen Elizabeth II and then open for the proclamation of HM King Charles III in September in accordance with traditions.

We have been fortunate to have 5 new volunteers come forward to learn to ring during 2022, three of these are currently continuing and should start to contribute to our service ringing during 2023.

BITTERNES AFLOAT

Will Trevitt

Bitternes Afloat is a Christian Sailing Cruise for 11-18 year olds, run every Easter on the Norfolk Broads. We take young people primarily from our partner churches of which Buckingham Parish Church is one.

Each day of the week we aim to encounter God through morning bible study and evening activities and to learn how to sail on the waterways of the Broads.

In 2022 we had reduced numbers due to the effects of Covid and also Easter holiday dates not lining up for some young people but we still took 9 young people from Buckingham and the surrounding area.

In our morning bible studies we looked at some of the stories of God helping His people in surprising ways and in the evenings we looked at the gospel message through the lens of Secret Agents.

We also ran our young adults cruise and started with the question “Where is God?” looking at some of the most difficult questions including unanswered prayer and why God doesn’t stop disasters. It was a challenging week but one that ultimately built faith

BPC CHILDREN and FAMILIES

BPC YOUTH & STUDENTS

Sam Graham

The Youth ministry took a slight rebrand in 2022 to help us fulfil our vision of encouraging young people to **Know** God, **Love** God & **Live for** God. This took the shape of reshuffling the age brackets of some of our projects.

The **Students Connect Group** had a relaunch due to graduating students leaving. After connecting with a number of students during the January freshers week, we started a small group for bible study. This met weekly and we saw great spiritual growth. Some of these students have moved on again but a few still remain and meet with us regularly. Our vision is to support these students in forming this group into a Christian Union for the University.

The Way provides the youth provision for the 9am and 6pm services for those in school years 7-13. The groups follow the teaching plan of the 11am & 6pm services to encourage young people and parents to be discipled together and encourage family discussions. At the 9am traditional service we mainly work with four young people in the choir, though more began to attend towards the end of the year.

The 6pm service has seen up to twenty young people on a Sunday night. We have seen a growth in the interest of biblical topics and a desire to ask questions and share answers.

Fuel started 2022 as a connect group for those in school years 10-13 before being moved to school years 12-13. This change was due to gap in ages from the top to the bottom ends of the group. Fuel also began to meet monthly at the Youth Pastors house for dinner. This saw a good growth in relationships.

Vision is a connect group for young people in school years 7-9 which then became aimed at school years 7-11 under the name **Youth Hub**. Through 2022 the number of young people attending Vision/Youth Hub has increased as has the spiritual hunger and understanding. Monthly dinners have been held at the Youth Pastors house and seen good relationships grow.

The Youth Café has had a successful 2022 seeing up to 60 young people come in to hang out. We have seen the number of young people increase and therefore the conversations about faith and Jesus grow. Some of these young people attended Youth Night in the summer.

Schools work at the beginning of 2022 we aimed to start a Christian lunch club at the Royal Latin Grammar School in Buckingham. This took a good start after February half term. However, after Easter the school field opened and we had to compete with sports and the outdoors. After some empty weeks we rethought our approach and began taking a chalk board onto the school field with an Alpha style question. This was hugely successful in attracting young people as we saw up to 80 young people every week.

DTI or Dreaming the Impossible is a youth festival similar to the now closed Soul Survivor. In 2022 we took a group of young people to DTI for the first time. This was a new experience for this generation of young people in our youth ministry. The young people encountered God by his Holy Spirit and the six days away saw great growth in our relationships. They came back hungry to know more about God and who he is.

Youth Nights was a great follow up to DTI as all the young people who went to the festival attended. Youth Nights took a more Christian teaching focus in 2022 with worship, teaching and responses as well as the big activities. Youth Nights saw 30 young people sign up while some were not Christian and attended the whole week. A number of young people, including a non-Christian said that they encountered God in the week.

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Brian and Tracy Roskell

Significant Actions

We have encouraged people to review their giving and successfully pursued grant funding. People have responded generously to support specific requirements, in particular a new boiler, a replacement minibus, our youth work and community lunches. Significant one off donations helped us more than meet our budgeted average monthly income in 2022. However, replacement boiler and minibus had not been budgeted so were additional costs.

Observations

1. Average monthly income from all sources was nearly £10k above 2021 amount.
2. One off donations, including gift aid applied, accounted for over 25% of income.
3. Income from grants more than doubled accounting for 5% of income.
4. Regular giving through standing orders saw a modest increase of 4% representing 45% of income.
5. Income from increased activities for church groups and external users grew by 72% now 9% of income.
6. Our contactless payment machine generated £686 per month.
7. Across the year we gained 5 regular givers and lost 8; 23 people increased giving and 5 reduced theirs.

Thank you to those who currently give financially to our church, we couldn't deliver the great services, facilities and support without you. For those who haven't yet got round to setting up regular giving, talk to Brian or Tracy Roskell in person, via stewardship@bpchurch.uk or visit the giving section of our website for full information.

CHURCH CHOIR

Robert Tucker

Let us give thanks to God for the gift of music and to the dedicated choristers who help to lead worship. We are a highly motivated team of children and adults. Singing in the church choir is spiritually enriching, rewarding and enjoyable, providing a strong musical education instilling life skills, and for considerable pastoral support that choristers give one another.

Most recently we welcomed four new young choristers. Emmeline stepped up to Head Chorister and Sebastian as organ scholar and librarian. We give thanks for everyone's fine contribution, particularly at the Christmas services, including singing at Villiers Hotel. Thanks to Brian for organising slightly more than four candles, Gill (robes), Neil (Children's officer) and Ray, both in the choir and organ playing and deputising for practices. We all held our annual dinner at The Old Thatch in the summer.

CHURCH FLOWERS

Susan Mileham

The Flower Team has embraced the challenge of making arrangements without floral foam. After a cautious start many ladies are now enjoying using the 'flower pillows' which can be washed and reused many times.

The Team met on Saturday mornings in February, July and again in December to share ideas, plan rotas and get to know one another better over coffee and cake, most enjoyable! We were asked to arrange special flowers for several weddings and made a small profit most times to be added to our finances which remain healthy.

A couple of ladies have had to step down from the Team and we are always pleased to welcome new members. Everyone is invited, those without experience in working with flowers can be paired with a confident worker (though they will claim they are not very good!) and learn on the job.

CHURCH OFFICE

Jan Ballantyne

The church office continues to thrive. In addition to routine office duties we spent a large proportion of time managing logistics and administration for the Church weekend away at High Leigh.

Lara Burt continues to work hard on developing church publicity and social media presence. A special thanks to Ann Exelby, Ray Mitchell, Gill Stopps and Ibbby Marshall who continue to provide greatly appreciated and valuable assistance in the office every week.

Sunday Operations

Andrew Gibson

I supervise the rotas for Sunday Services and manage a few myself, to ensure the smooth running of services. There are a lot of people working behind the scenes and most operations at BPC are now managed within Church Suite.

Volunteers are always needed, especially with children's work and hospitality. If you can help please contact me at operations@bpchurch.uk

CONNECT GROUPS

Mandy Hagon

Connect Groups have continued to thrive during the past 12 months with over 22 groups currently running.

The structure of support for leaders and groups has become a shared responsibility. Kate facilitates leaders and groups and care for CG leaders. Mandy and Keith take responsibility for termly leaders' meetings with input on discipling groups whilst Heidi manages group administration. Our joint responsibility is to ensure that leaders are trained, equipped and well supported.

Connect Groups play an important role in church life. They are the basis of pastoral care and of ensuring that every member is cared for, supported and nurtured.

Groups provide a safe place to study and discuss the Bible, using a variety of resources, and give encouragement to grow as disciples of Jesus. The aim is to start new groups each year, to cater for those joining the church or completing Alpha courses.

Over the last year, following feedback from group leaders, we have tried to always share the preaching programme for the church and offer suggestions of courses which could be run alongside it. We have managed to set up two new groups during 2022 as there are always people who are keen to join.

We'd like to take this opportunity to be thankful for all the work and love that Michael Greig put into looking after leaders and groups, and to thank the Connect Group leaders for their dedication and commitment in this very vital ministry.

CREATED CREATIVE

Emma Elias

Created Creative is a Christian creativity charity working in partnership with BPC.

It has been a privilege to see the Lord ministering to hearts and bringing His healing through creativity in a variety of situations over 2022.

These have included:

Weekend afternoon sessions at the Centre where we have provided an array of creative starting points for people to engage through as well as facilitating sessions for CAPS life skills group.

Training sessions online with a new ministry in Romania that reaches out to families struggling with cancer. A ministry trip to visit them is planned for 2023.

Training with a new church in Oxfordshire who will begin monthly creativity sessions for their local congregation and community in early 2023.

Monthly online creativity sessions for people in the UK and overseas. A session includes worship, sharing of scripture, creative starting points, creativity time, feedback, and prayer time.

Created Creative thanks BPC for their prayers and support of this ministry.

For more information about this ministry please see the website:
www.createdcreative.co.uk or contact Emma info@createdcreative.co.uk

GREEK, HEBREW, LATIN & THEOLOGY

+Andrew Shergold, Steve Watkins

Greek

We now have:

- An Advanced Greek Group
- An Intermediate Greek Group

There are 12 students in the two groups and since April 2020 we have met via zoom on Monday evenings from 5:45pm – 8:15pm with a short break at 7:00pm. These have worked very well and enable students to take the lessons remotely; this is especially useful as we now have students from Wales and Scotland.

The Intermediate Group is engaged in learning the language; it is expected that this will be complete before the end of the year.

The Advanced Group study a particular book; over the past year we have studied Ephesians from the New Testament and Lamentations from the Septuagint.

In order to enable 'face to face' meetings we have started to run a 'Symposium' once per term. The format is that we gather on Saturday afternoon, we have two sessions on Saturday followed by a restaurant meal and then have one session on Sunday afternoon.

Hebrew

We meet on Friday evenings at the Centre from 5:00pm – 7:00pm.

There are three groups:

- Intermediate II (more advanced) meeting at the Centre on Friday at 5:00pm
- Intermediate I meeting at the Centre on Friday at 6:00pm
- Hebrew Reading Group meeting on alternate Wednesdays at 7:00pm via Zoom reading Isaiah in Hebrew, Greek and Latin

We use one of two books for learning Hebrew:

- Weingreen – A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew
- Pratico and Van Walt – Basics of Biblical Hebrew

Latin

We meet via zoom on Friday afternoons from 4:00pm – 6:00pm

There is one group: Advanced from 4:00pm – 6:00pm

The Advanced group reads through two of the following in a session:

- ‘Unseens’ – selected short passages from various Latin Authors
- Latin Prose Composition by North & Hillard
- Vergil or Ovid.

In the past the Advanced group have read through Vergil Aeneid Books II, III and IV, Ovid Metamorphoses Book XIV and some poems from Catullus. We are now reading Vergil Aeneid Book V.

We are able to have a Latin Session at the Symposia.

Theology

Over the past year we have met via Zoom on the second Thursday of the month. We now meet in person at 72, Embleton Way and have a stable membership of 8 members.

As from November 2018 we are now discussing papers presented by individual members.

Thus far we have had:

- A comparison of Roman Catholic and Anglican Catechisms
- New Testament Manuscripts
- Jesus and Women
- The Fall in Genesis – An interpretation
- All about the Resurrection
- The Origin of Religion
- The Trinity
- New Testament manuscripts
- The Septuagint
- John Chrysostom

By mutual agreement we have now suspended our group until September to allow time for refreshment.

PARISH WEEKEND AWAY **HIGH LEIGH**

Revd Will Pearson Gee

The High Leigh Conference Centre was booked over two year's previous for full occupancy meaning that we needed to take a significant number of people to cover our costs. It was a big risk but in the end we were blessed with almost 200 people attending. We enjoyed great weather in the excellent venue under the teaching of Canon John Bavington the Rector of St John's, Great Horton, Bradford. A team from Bradford came to help us run some of the children's groups which included three of the youth team who also helped in the band. Apart from the excellent teaching and worship, there were many highlights but the quiz and karaoke on the Saturday night were the most talked about. We were joined by a small group from the wider Deanery and they fitted in seamlessly and had a great time. It was a greater success than we could have imagined and everyone agreed that we should repeat it biannually.

MISSION & OUTREACH

Keith Croxton

Mission and Outreach is a sub group of the PCC mandated to discern and respond to the spiritual and social needs in the community: reaching out to share God's love and compassion with others as well as supporting the wider mission of the church.

It oversees the following:

- The Centre
- Distribution of the Tithe supporting our Mission Partners
- CAP Life Skills
- Bradford Link
- SOS Room
- Men's Ministry
- Buckingham Food Bank
- Tuesday Lunch
- Saturday Morning Coffee Service
- Hot Dog Wednesday

The Centre seeks to provide is a sacred place in the heart of the town where the church seeks to reach out and support the community. The following Church groups have used The Centre during 2022:

- Coffee and Company
- Tea and Chat
- Alpha Courses
- Hot Dog Wednesday
- Youth Cafe
- Sew Lovely
- Greek/Hebrew sessions
- CAP Life Skills course
- 9 am Congregational Lunches

In addition a variety of community groups who are serving the community use The Centre, the full list is on The Centre web site.

Alpha

Andrew Walmsley

Over the last year we ran a small Alpha course with four people from February to April. This was the last of our online provision.

The group continued until September to go through other aspects of faith. We were also able to purchase a new Alpha banner that we have put at the back of church.

Please pray that we can continue to attract people to join the Alpha courses that we run as this is a good way of allowing people to journey into faith.

CAP Life Skills

Brian Hubbard

In the Spring of 2022, BPC's Christians Against Poverty (CAP) team ran our most effective programme so far. 11 people attended at least some of the 10 weekly sessions. We covered topics including budgeting, shopping wisely, economising and dealing with life issues such as anxiety and forgiveness. We also developed friendships, drank coffee, and ate pastries together, demonstrating that Life Skills is more than just a course.

Later we reinstated Rebound group to follow-on from Life Skills and preserve some of the relationships we'd made. Created Creative ran 3 creativity sessions which were much enjoyed.

Despite our best efforts to reach new people in the town, through advertising and contact with local referral agencies, we were unable to attract sufficient interest to warrant another Life Skills programme, but we pray regularly as a team that this will bear fruit soon.

Community (Tuesday)Lunch

Sheila Handley

The Community Lunch has gone from strength to strength. Our weekly numbers are now topping 90, with the addition of our asylum seeker friends and other new local attendees. The weekly register has shown that 959 meals were served in the 3 months up to Christmas.

We have welcomed new helpers and soup makers but we are always glad to add more to our number.

We continue to have a regular arrangement to collect Aldi's surplus fruit and veg, Lidl frozen surplus and Sainsbury's surplus bakery goods. Some is used for the lunch and the rest is given away to the diners.

Donations continue to be healthy, covering costs and allowing surplus to be used for kitchen equipment and other related needs, such as supporting the minibus, and we have received a generous donation from Anchor butter.

Christmas lunch was again enjoyed by 110, plus the 20 helpers, with the U3A recorder group leading the community singing.

Thank you again to everyone for your continued support.

Men's Ministry

Andrew Gibson

Men's Ministry provide events through the year to create opportunities for men to meet and support each other, and to bring non-Christian friends to occasional outreach events. Generally these involve food, as in curry nights, breakfasts and film nights. If you are able to help manage this important ministry or have ideas for future events, please contact me.

Women's Heaven

Lucia Pearson-Gee

Women's Heaven is the ministry aimed mainly to provide a space for any woman needing some time out.

We provide a safe space with coffee, tea and croissant every Tuesday morning. There is a craft activity with a biblical theme and an opportunity to chat, offer mutual support and encouragement and also most importantly prayer.

This year we did not offer a formal creche due to a lack of helpers but children were included and provided for under the supervision of their parents.

Relationships have been built up over the year but the ministry has been hampered by a lack of team. It was decided to lay the ministry down at Christmas in order to pray and discern where the Lord wants to take it next.

PASTORAL

Jo Wigley

Much of the pastoral work is responding to individual needs and supporting those in difficult circumstances.

In the spring a Pastoral Steering Group was created, a small group who meet every other month. In August they hosted a Listening Day led by Margaret Whipp which was very well attended and helpful.

We have provided meals to people who have needed them and organised for hospital visits and home communion.

A team has provided support to asylum seekers housed in Buckingham and we have collected for and distributed to the asylum seekers as well as running an Alpha Course for them.

We have a strong presence at the Community Lunch each week and have worked alongside the Salvation Army in running the Toy Event in December.

In September we suffered the huge loss of Michael Greig who had very much been involved with the Pastoral Care at BPC for many years.

PRAYER & PRAISE

Paul Wallace

Prayer and Praise takes place on the first Monday of each month to worship, to give thanks, and to pray for the needs of the ministries within BPC and for the needs of the World.

Every month two leaflets are prepared outlining the prayer needs of the Church and of the Mission and Outreach Group, which is responsible for looking after our wider mission and pastoral activities. Copies are available in church. They are also on the Church website. People value them as a guide for prayer during the month.

Prayer and Praise is a relaxed informal time where we worship God and pray. We are a committed group of intercessors, and we would love others to join us. There is also a group which meets every Friday evening on Zoom, for half an hour only, to pray specifically for the services taking place on the following Sunday. As ever we would welcome others to join us.

PRAYER MINISTRY

Revd Chris Murray

The team consists of 18 ladies and 4 men, which makes the ideal situation of one male and one female ministering together, quite infrequent.

There are 2 members available after each service to pray with anyone who asks.

We cover the 9 and 6 o'clock services reasonably well, but struggle with the 11, after which people are beginning to come up for prayer.

With our growing congregation, we really could do with more on the team, especially men.

At our meetings this year, we revised some of the basics we had covered in a course we have been studying, called 'In His Name,' by Alison Morgan and John Woolmer, practised 'Listening' to God for words of knowledge, and looked at the subject, 'How Can We Be More Effective?'

Our greatest encouragement came at the parish weekend, where we ministered to considerable numbers after each main meeting.

I would encourage anyone who loves Jesus and has a compassionate heart for those in need of a listening ear and prayer, to seriously consider coming on team, and to speak to Cheryl and/or me.

PRODUCTION & WORSHIP

Ali Burt and Mike Roskell

The team continued to work closely to provide “business as usual” for all services. This included a large increase in Christmas and external events compared to 2021 as confidence returned after covid.

We helped Deanshanger church to install a new system and provided training for them. We also finished installing a new sound desk in BPC which has improved the sound and stream quality.

We supported the Church weekend away to great success.

The team has grown, we welcomed a number of youth onto the team and Sally Cooper has stepped up and helped take on the lighting role from Ken Piper.

Both worship and production teams have had a number of internal and external training events.

The successes with streaming have continued and our online numbers have remained high even after people have returned in person to church, with Easter Sunday being the most highly viewed services of the year.

We have had over 20,000 views of our BPC YouTube channel over the year.

We started Open Worship.

SERVICE ASSISTANTS

Gerry Causer

This year I have combined the reports for the Sidespeople, Chalice Assistants and Servers into one. This reflects the fact, that particularly at the traditional Communion Services, there is a true spirit of serving and participation within these teams (and the prayer, readers and refreshments teams) being very much involved.

The team also supports the 10am Wednesday service which regularly now attracts 25 to 30 in the congregation (more on the first Wednesday of the month as there is coffee and tea afterwards!).

I know I am always seeking more volunteers to reduce the load, but as I look around the congregation, I see many who are otherwise involved or probably not able, to participate more. But if you are able to help, I would love to hear from you.

Again, the year has been marked by changes in what we do and how Communion is administered, due to our response to Covid safety. I have avoided changing the instructions too many times, although many of the team might disagree. When I have suggested we should be ceasing the use of the individual cups I have had a few strong

objections – usually by people who haven't had to get to church early to fill them or undertake the fiddly task of cleaning them afterwards.

The Planning Group for the Traditional Eucharistic Services is focusing on celebrating more of the key festivals during the year, as these remind us of the key events of the bible. The service assistants have been very adaptive to the small tweaks to the processes for these special services – although we may not have always got it right!

I realise I have now been Sacristan for 10 years – anyone want a job?!

SERVICES

Revd Will Pearson Gee

9am Service

The 9am traditional service has bedded in to the new time of 9am. The small handful of folk who find it too difficult to get to at this earlier time have migrated to the midweek 10am service which has benefitted from the growth in numbers. The 9am Planning Team has continued to meet and has planned a variety of healing services as well as occasional 1st Sunday Celtic services that make great use of lay leaders. We agreed to make every 9am service Eucharistic. All services were live-streamed to a high standard and to enable this to continue we continued to rely on screens and not to reintroduce service booklets and hymnals.

Of note has been the influx of over a dozen mainly Iranian asylum-seekers who have made the 9am their spiritual home and who have brought a missional edge to the service.

One innovation has been the introduction of occasional shared lunches which have been well attended. Over the summer holidays we planned a bespoke sermon series and included discussion periods and lunches after the services which were very well received.

In summary the 9am has grown and thrived throughout the year and remains a life-giving congregation that welcomes all who appreciate tradition liturgy, great music and inspiring teaching. The fact that we still have one family in Florida USA regularly watching online is testament to how good the services are.

11am Service

The 11am is now firmly established at its new time and has been in steady growth and for most of the year we were seeing a new family each Sunday morning. The congregation size ebbs and flows throughout the year which is something of a mystery but there is a loyal core of loyal families who attend most Sundays.

The 11am follows a set pattern of children's groups on all Sundays except the 3rd Sunday when there is AAW. Holy Communion is celebrated on the 2nd Sunday. All services were live-streamed to a high standard.

6pm Service

The 6pm service experienced steady growth throughout the year. Holy Communion continues to be celebrated on the 1st Sunday. The longer talks and extended worship are as popular as ever and we seek to 'lean in' to the Holy Spirit more and more as people get used to prayer ministry. The worship band continued to improve and learned new songs.

All services were live-streamed to a high standard and the quality of production has increased. There was a healthy online participation which has dwindled as more and more have returned to physical worship. The YouTube recordings are well viewed as people catch-up on the teaching.

10am Midweek Service

The 10am Wednesday service experienced steady growth throughout the year. The move into the Chancel has created a more intimate and beautiful setting which has attracted new worshippers. The early start of the 9am has meant that some have left that congregation to join this service. The services are usually led by the retired clergy who love the service and the fellowship amongst the 30 strong congregation is strong. On the 1st Wednesday refreshments are served after the service.