ACCOUNTS & REPORTS
FOR THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HOLY SAVIOUR CHURCH, HITCHIN
1ST JANUARY – 31ST DECEMBER 2025

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VICAR'S STATEMENT

I am writing this in the absence of our Team Vicar, Father Ian.

Unfortunately, Holy Saviour Church has been without Father Ian for the best part of a year due to his Extended Study Leave and since November, on long term sick leave. We as a church family have continued in fellowship with worship and social events. Our main event of the year was the successful Christmas Tree Festival in December, which involves the community as well as church members. Social events have been organised by the Social Committee. All of these bring the community together.

Our Welcome Space on Wednesday mornings continued with reduced hours, and computer help and training sessions were offered by Gavin.

In the absence of Father Ian, I would like to thank all the priests who have covered our services, and the Readers, who have taken on extra responsibilities in Holy Saviour and taking services at St Faith's.

As from September, it was a diocesan decision that Holy Saviour should share a priest with St Faith's (this decision was subsequently reversed in March 2026).

My thanks go to all who have helped and supported Holy Saviour through a difficult time, by keeping it clean and tidy, inside and out, people serving, pastoral care given to those in need, the choir and organist who enhance our services.

Our thanks to Kirsty for keeping our finances in order and Liana who every week produces the weekly sheet and PCC administration. We thank the Churchwardens for the work and support they have provided during the year. Thank you all once again for making Holy Saviour a welcoming church family.

Gwen Allen
Father Ian's Secretary
March 2026

AIM AND PURPOSES

Holy Saviour Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Ian Todd, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at Holy Saviour. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit, and particularly the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.

Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.

Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of Holy Saviour Church and Church Hall.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

GOVERNANCE

Holy Saviour is a parish within the Benefice of Hitchin and St Paul's Walden with Preston. The parish is registered as a charity (No 1205456), the trustees being the members of the Holy Saviour PCC.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

The church offers a range of services which vary in their liturgical style from the traditional 9.45am Common Worship Eucharist with music led by an excellent choir, through to the very informal Children's Praise which seeks to reach out to younger children and their parents by way of bible stories accompanied by lively modern songs. We seek to bring the whole church family together at least once a month through our All-Age Family Communion as well as joining together in the great festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. Through baptism we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and to commend the person into God's keeping.

ELECTORAL ROLL

Dan Morris, Electoral Roll Officer, reports that the number on the electoral roll after the revision published in April 2026 is **56**, an increase of 7 from last year.

STATISTICS FOR MISSION

Usual Sunday attendance has been 40 adults and 14 children & young people for regular Sunday services.

Total attendance at Christmas was 118

Total attendance at the Easter Day service was 82

Church at home services (all services offered remotely) were offered weekly.

The worshipping community numbers reported at the end of 2025:

Children	(0-17 years)	15
Adults	(18 to 69 years)	44
Adults	(70+)	31
Joiners		3
Leavers		2
	Total:	90

There were 4 baptisms, 1 marriage and 6 funerals.

Numbers do vary for 2025 as our priest has been on extended study leave and is on long-term sick leave at present.

Since October, Holy Saviour has shared a priest with St. Faith's church, therefore reducing Eucharistic services to twice a month and two non-Eucharistic services for a high Anglo Catholic church. This has resulted in some members going elsewhere for worship.

Midnight Mass was cancelled due to the priest being off sick and no other priest could be found. Christmas Day, we had communion by extension as no other priest was found.

The Parish school did attend the church for services four times in the year, but due to the priest being on extended study leave and long-term sickness, the school now attends another church in the benefice.

Gwen Allen
Vicar's Secretary

DEANERY AND DIOCESAN SYNODS

The Vicar, a Lay Reader and a member of the congregation sit on the Deanery Synod and the Vicar is also an elected member of the Diocesan Synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church.

PASTORAL CARE

Some members of our parish are unable to attend church due to sickness or age. The Vicar and Lay Readers visit church members who request it and where appropriate celebrate communion with them either in their homes or in hospital.

MISSION AND EVANGELISM

Holy Saviour Church tries to encourage an outlook on mission which is focussed both locally and globally. This year, we have focussed our Mission Action Plan on ministry to children and young people and recruited Mike Kershaw to be our children's minister. He has been the driving force behind *Grace, Love and Fellowship,* our popular monthly family holy communion service which encourages the active participation of children in the services.

We continue to reach out to our local community, especially through our weekly Welcome Space initiative which offers free refreshments and a friendly listening ear as well free comprehensive IT support and advice to any who may need it.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS

The church is a member of Churches Together in Hitchin. Rachel Thomson and Mike Kershaw are the CTH representatives for Holy Saviour. We hosted a Lent Bible Study course and alongside the churches of other denominations shared the good news of the Gospel of Christ across the whole of the town, not least through outdoor worship in Hitchin's Market Square at Christmas and Easter.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Holy Saviour Church is situated in Radcliffe Road, Hitchin. It is part of the Diocese of St Albans within the Church of England. The correspondence address is Holy Saviour Vicarage, St Annes Road, Hitchin. The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2011) and a charity registered with the Charity Commission under No 1205456. PCC members who have served at any time from 1st January 2025 until 31st December 2025 are:

Ex Officio members:
Incumbent: The Reverend Ian Todd (Chairman)
Readers: Martin Allen; Jean Boothby; Mike Kershaw
Wardens: David Parsons; Brian Caswell

Elected members:
Pam Thomas; Gwen Allen; Gill Chidgey, David Bunyan; Kirsty Martindale; Leigh Dooley, Dan Morris and Liana Beckford

STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At Holy Saviour the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our vicar), churchwardens, the readers, and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services as members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC, particularly younger members of the congregation. The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

The Parish is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and to supporting those who have been victims of abuse, as well as those who may present a risk to others. The PCC has complied with the duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to the House of Bishop's guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults). The PCC have adopted all the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policies and Practice Guidance, as well as "Promoting a Safer Church" (child protection and vulnerable adults policy) and the Domestic Abuse statement. The latter two documents are displayed in the church porch and the church hall. We have a Parish Safeguarding Officer. Those who work with vulnerable groups in the Parish are recruited in accordance with the Practice Guidance Safer Recruitment July 2021. DBS checks are renewed every three years and all those who have been safely recruited and all members of the PCC, have undertaken the appropriate safeguarding training within the last 3 years. Safeguarding information is displayed in the porch and on the church website. There is adequate insurance cover for all activities involving children or adults undertaken in the name of the Parish.

MINUTES OF THE APCM 2025

Apologies
Apologies were received from Sheila and David Daw, Rachel Thomson, Rhona and Graeme Auld, Martin Pascal and Mark Massie.

Minutes of APCM 2024
The minutes of the APCM held in 2024 were approved by all present and were duly signed by the Chairman of the APCM Reverend Ian Todd.

Matters Arising
There were no matters arising from the minutes of the 2024 APCM.

Electoral Roll Report
Since the APCM in 2024, the final number for the complete renewal of the electoral roll is 49. This is a decrease of 15 from last year.

Annual Reports
The annual report for the church, the Treasurer's report on the church finances, the audited accounts, the Churchwardens' reports on the fabric of the church, the report from the Deanery Synod and reports from church groups and associated groups were circulated to members of the church in advance of the APCM. No questions were raised about the contents of any of these reports. The meeting attendees approved all the reports.

Elections and Appointments

Appointment of an Independent Examiner of the PCC
Mr. Jim Weist, Treasurer of St Mark's Church, Hitchin has agreed to act as Independent Examiner for the 2025 Holy Saviour accounts. The meeting approved his appointment.

Election of lay representatives to the PCC

The following nominations were received.

Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
Pam Thomas	Kirsty Martindale	Pauline Caswell
David Bunyan	Martin Allen	Frances Williams
Gwen Allen	Anne Exall	Dan Morris
Leigh Dooley	Kirsty Martindale	Dan Morris
Kirsty Martindale	Brian Caswell	David Parsons
Dan Morris	Kirsty Martindale	Leigh Dooley
Liana Beckford	Anne Exall	Dan Morris

The nominees were elected by the meeting.

Deanery Synod Representatives

Mike Kershaw and Mark Massie remain in place as Deanery Synod Representatives for the final year of their three-year term.

Churches Together in Hitchin Representatives

Rachel Thomson and Mike Kershaw were elected as the representatives of Holy Saviour to Churches Together in Hitchin.

Agreements and Acknowledgements on PCC Representation
The meeting agreed to the annual election of PCC members
The meeting agreed to the inclusion of deacons and readers on the PCC
The meeting acknowledged that the team vicar, churchwardens and Deanery Synod representative sit on the PCC. A question was raised about whether the vicar of Holy Saviour Hitchin is still a team vicar following the division of the Hitchin Parish. The vicar believed that this term is still correct, and this has been confirmed since the meeting.

Vicar's Comments
It's been a very full and very busy year in the life of our prayer community here at Holy Saviour, I always say every year that at the heart of everything we do is our worship. And I do think that's very true, and I'm really encouraged that, though we are a very small church, we managed to have quite a rich, diverse range of worship, varying from the quiet, quite thoughtful reflection of our mid-week early communion service to the rich and strong choral tradition that lies at the heart of our main 9:45 worship through to the much more informal and I think, really rather creative offering that we have once a month at Children's praise, and our Warm Space is, I think, quite well established.

Community Outreach
It's a great witness that we run Warm Welcome Space, which offers delicious hot food, and, more importantly, the chance of company, and very practically, it offers the opportunity for tech support, for I.T. support, and we know several people have been coming along specifically for that alone. And I think we can say there's a whole range of people who might not come across our doors.

Were it not for such things as our Christmas Tree Festival, which continues to grow from strength to strength for 30 years now, also through the rich and educative range of talks that are provided in the *Talk and Teas* offered by the Friends of Holy Saviour, and through a diverse calendar of events put together by our very active and creative Social Committee.

St Andrew's School
I also want to acknowledge our strong relationship, which we've had for a long time, with our church school, the centenary school, and in case people are not aware, they do come together as a whole school, and they worship here five or six times all throughout the school year.

St. Faith's Church
This year we're going to face quite an interesting and potentially challenging 12 months ahead of us. My good friend and colleague, the Reverend Melanie Crowley, is going to be stepping down soon as the vicar of St Faith. And many of you here will know that St. Faith was historically the daughter Church of Holy Saviour. I'm afraid to say it's almost certain that Melanie will not be replaced, and that therefore, Holy Saviour will be asked to share the same parish priest.
This coming Tuesday evening, our newly elected PCC and the St. Faith PCC are going to be having a joint meeting together, which will be chaired by Rector, Reverend Chris Bunce. And at that meeting, we hope we will begin to determine what the future may look like, practically, for all of us. But what we can say is that in the future, both now very well-established church families, will have to work more closely together, and very much in support of each other.

Acknowledgements
This is always an appropriate and a right time for me to say thank you for the incredible work so that people do in this church family. I always worry about this, because I feel I'm sure I'm about to miss one or two people out. But anyway, can I just say an enormous thank you, first, to **Brian** and to **David**, who really are an excellent pair of church wardens. And I think the two of them complement each other really, wonderfully. And I'm so thankful to them for all that they do and on all our behalf. It's a joy to work with them.

I thank my ministerial colleagues, **Martin**, **Jean** and **Mike**, for their friendship and for their support and for their encouragement.

I thank **Liana** for the fantastic job that she does for us as our PCC secretary and for the way that she's taken over in the last few years on the notice sheet, and many people have commented to me on how it's improved under her organisation.

It's an important moment to notice that having retired in 2022 **Trevor** then having come back to help us in the years since, has, in the end of February this year, has finally taken a step back. We owe a huge gratitude to him. I can't overstate what he has done for us, for the music and the worship of Holy Saviour church over essentially three decades, over 30 years; he leaves an extraordinary legacy. I want to thank **Ken**, who's stepped in recently and has been helping a lot and has agreed to continue as our organist and leading the choir as well. So, we're really grateful to him.

Thank you to our brilliant Treasury pair, **Kirsty** and to **David**, for the lovely way that you work together and the fantastic job you do; we're grateful to you.

Thank you to **Ann** for the for the quietly efficient job that she does in sacristy, and for the way that she leads her ministry of hospitality with the Welcome Space, but also that big operation of catering for the Christmas Tree Festival. Because year after year, people say that the excellent catering is a big part of what we offer, so big thanks to her.

Thanks to **Brian**, **Gavin** and **Lucy** for the excellent online provision that they coordinate between them, week in, week out. It's very important in terms of the face that we offer as a church to the world, that we have a strong online presence. So, thanks to them, and thanks to Gavin as well for the tech support that he's doing at Warm Welcome Space every Wednesday - it's a valuable ministry.

I want to acknowledge the part that **Claire Nellis** has been playing since she's got involved in the social committee. People have noticed the huge difference that she's brought.

Thank you to **Franie** and all the other people who keep our church looking nice and shining week by week. You don't always notice the work that cleaners are doing, but you would notice if they weren't there. It is an important part of our welcome, the fact that it's a nice, clean space. Thank you to all of them.

Thanks to **Chris** and all the Servers for the quiet, efficient way in which they all go about their business.

Thanks to **Gill**. It's thanks to her and all the people who are part of the Friends Committee. It really is an excellent part of what we offer as a church.

Thanks to **Sheila**, who still after all these years, is quietly keeping the grounds looking lovely. The grounds look nice, and the flowers are beautiful outside, it's terribly important part of our welcome.

Thank you to **Pauline** and to **Diane** and to others who work with them for the provision of beautiful flowers. Flowers are especially lovely today. So, thank you.

David Daw, I think, stepped down as hall manager about 10 years ago, but still, nonetheless, seems to be doing an awful lot. So, I want to just thank him for what he does.

Clare Fleck. Thank you for all the different ways you're so active in the life of this church, and particularly the hall, because it's such a fantastic resource, and I know you put an awful lot of time into that. So, thank you.

And I say a huge thank you to **Gwen**. I know she will have a special place in heaven, but with my upcoming study leave, she's done an extraordinary job finding cover for services. This is very much all down to Gwen. So huge thanks. And honestly, you have no idea how many hours Gwen puts in working for all of you and with me, so a massive thank you, Gwen, for everything.

And then the last thing I wanted to say is that I am thankful for the opportunity that you've given me to have this bit of time off. This summer marks 20 years since I was ordained priest, so it feels like an appropriate moment to step back, but also in view of the upcoming changes, which will be significant, it does feel like the right moment for me to take some time out. I'm looking forward to some long coastal walks and a bit of space to think. Thank you very much for allowing me to do that. I know that lots of people in all kinds of careers never have the opportunity to take a sabbatical. So, I'm, I'm very grateful.

Any Other Business

St Faith's Church

Many of those present at the meeting expressed concern over the proposed pastoral order which would entail sharing a vicar and services with St. Faith's and reducing the number of eucharistic services at Holy Saviour. A question was raised as to whether the parish share will be adjusted to reflect the situation. The Treasurer is looking into this. Some were worried about the difference in style of worship between the two churches. The vicar confirmed that the bishop has the final decision.

David Parsons has liaised with Doug Mitchell, Churchwarden of St. Faith's to receive comments from the congregation, who feel that one minister is insufficient for two churches, and many are concerned about the distance and parking issues between sites.

Fr. Ian reassured the meeting that he will endeavour to keep the congregation updated on all developments.

Concerns were raised about the integrity of the vestry ceiling and repairs were called for. A request was made for a sensor light to be installed at the front porch. These were noted by the churchwardens.

Thanks were given to the vicar for his ministry.

The meeting ended at 11:50 with a prayer.

TREASURER'S REPORT PRESENTED BY KIRSTY MARTINDALE

This financial year has seen our accounts with a surplus of £5,280 (£5,806 in prior year). This was driven by the agreed underpayment of our Parish Share to reflect the sharing of Father Ian with St Faith in the last quarter.

Pledges and donations from individuals are down on the previous year, there has not been the take up of the Parish Giving Scheme as we would have hoped to boost regular income, this is something to be addressed going forward. The demographic of our regular givers leans more to older more established parishioners and we need to ask more of our younger congregation, mindful of their circumstances.

Bookings for the year in the Church Hall have been healthy and we have a steady stream of income from regular users. Due to an issue with our card payment facility (which is now resolved), the income stated here is down on last year, as we report on a cash received basis. Had that issue not occurred, our income would be comparable with the prior year.

The Christmas Tree Festival continues to be a great fundraiser for us. This made a profit of £13,500 which is similar to previous years.

The Social Committee have continued to create a programme of enjoyable, and profitable, events which has seen a positive impact on our fundraising.

There have been significant increases to our costs in the year due to the economic environment and we endeavour to source the most cost-effective providers for our services during the year.

Our support of other local organisations continues including our £1,000 donation to the Phase School Worker's Project.

I would like to take this opportunity to note with great sadness the passing of David Bunyan, who served the PCC with dedication and distinction as Treasurer for many years. His careful stewardship of our finances was invaluable, and those who had the privilege of working alongside him will know how much he gave in service to our church. I am personally deeply grateful for his contribution and assistance in recent years, and I extend my sincere condolences to his family.

The report should be read in conjunction with the financial statements for the full year to 31st December 2025.

HOLY SAVIOUR PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL CHURCH BALANCE SHEET

HOLY SAVIOUR PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL			
CHURCH BALANCE SHEET			
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2025			
	2025 Closing 31/12/2025		**2024 Closing 31/12/2024**
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors and prepayments	-		-
Bank current accounts (Hall + Steward)	15,171		12,440
Bank deposit accounts	22,474		23,996
C.B.F. deposit accounts	94,032		89,960
	131,676		126,396
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
PAYABLE WITHIN ONE YEAR			
Creditors	-		-
Accruals	-		-
	-		-
NET CURRENT ASSETS	131,676		126,396
FUNDS			
Restricted funds (CBF)	53,916		53,916
Unrestricted funds (CBF)	22,000		22,000
General fund	40,587		39,367
Hall Fund (restricted)	15,173		11,113
	131,676		126,396

Fixed assets are held under trust by the churchwardens on behalf of the District Church Council of Holy Saviour and have not been valued according to provisions of the Charities Act 1993. An inventory of the fixed assets is mantained by the churchwardens and is available for inspection on request.

Signed K Martindale, Treasurer

HOLY SAVIOUR PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL CHURCH INCOME STATEMENT

HOLY SAVIOUR PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL					
CHURCH INCOME STATEMENT					
1/1/25 - 31/12/25					
			2025 FY		**2024 FY**
	General fund	**Hall Fund**	**Total**		**Total**
INCOME					
Pledges/Donations	43,273		43,273		51,861
Collections	1,448		1,448		2,547
Tax Refund	10,015		10,015		10,320
Fundraising Events and Appeals	19,402		19,402		21,017
Hall Rent		7,978	7,978		9,022
Fees Receivable	3,170		3,170		1,772
Interest Receivable	4,330		4,330		4,902
Other Income	-		-		250
Appeals	-		-		15,570
TOTAL INCOME	81,639	7,978	89,617		117,259
			-		-
EXPENDITURE			-		-
Parish share	52,620		52,620		56,850
Charitable Giving	1,273		1,273		1,600
Maintenance of services	1,449		1,449		2,974
Organist, choir and organ	5,060		5,060		5,830
Maintenance of buildings	3,974		3,974		8,047
Insurance	4,377		4,377		3,916
Light and heat, Internet	5,621	117	5,738		8,212
Cleaning and waste disposal		3,801	3,801		3,946
Office Expenses/Small Items	1,444		1,444		2,059
Fundraising and publicity	4,601		4,601		3,893
Sound System Appeal	-		-		14,126
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	80,419	3,918	84,337		111,454
NET INCOME	1,220	4,060	5,280		5,806
CLOSING RESERVES	**1,220**	**4,060**	**5,280**		**5,806**

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Holy Saviour Church Hitchin

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31st December 2025.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Name: JAMES WEIST TREASURER, ST. MARK'S CHURCH, H

Address: 17, BEARTON AVENUE, HITCHIN, SG5 1NZ

Date: 17/3/26 Signed:

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

As churchwardens, our responsibilities are to represent the laity; to co-operate with the incumbent to ensure the smooth running of the church; and to safeguard the building and its contents.

Our financial year coincides with the calendar year, and 2025 was the second complete year since the reorganisation of the former parish of Hitchin, and the restoration of Holy Saviour as a separate parish and charity. Holy Saviour now has its own Parochial Church Council; the PCC members are the trustees of the charity; the parishioners elect rather than nominate the churchwardens; and the trustees are required to file the annual report and accounts with the Charity Commission.

Our care for the fabric of the church is guided by the results of the Quinquennial Inspection by the church architect, the latest of which was completed in February 2023. In general, considering its age, the building is in reasonable shape, but weathering in the external brickwork and pointing continues to be monitored and repairs effected where most urgent.

The church roofs continue to be a concern because of the age of the slates. We have four main roofs: nave, chancel, north aisle, south aisle. Following the roofer's inspection and the drone survey carried out in 2023, our conclusion that for their age the roofs were in fair condition and were not in need of any emergency work still appears valid. We do expect however that in the medium-term complete reroofing will be required, a major undertaking both practically and financially.

Our church building has been heated by a system of large-bore pipes and a coal-fired boiler, subsequently converted to oil-fired and then to gas-fired. We believe that the boiler is at least 80 years old. As winter approached, we were advised that it was no longer possible to service the boiler safely, so without a gas-safety certificate we could no longer run it. This meant that the congregation had to cope with a cold building through the winter; on the coldest days we transferred services to the church hall, which is independently heated.

Coincidentally, in October we were offered an energy audit, paid for by the national church as part of a drive to encourage parishes to work towards a net zero carbon energy use. We received the inspector's report in December, and it has helped our research into possible replacements for our antique heating installation.

As well as meeting church use, the hall is a valuable asset for community outreach and continues to be well-used by community groups. During the year, appropriate maintenance was carried out where necessary.

Routine maintenance of the church buildings also continued throughout the year, and general servicing of the hall boiler, kitchen equipment, and lighting was carried out. The annual fire extinguisher inspection and servicing took place in November. We continue our attempts to keep on top of the accumulation of unwanted clutter.

We would like to thank most sincerely all those who work tirelessly behind the scenes to maintain our beautiful church, hall and grounds.

David Parsons & Brian Caswell

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Rural Dean: Revd Christopher Bunce; Deputy **Rural Dean:** Revd Maxine Howarth and Revd Jenni McQuaid; **Lay Chair:** Neil Greatorex; **Treasurer:** Alison Collis; **Deanery Synod Secretary:** Elizabeth Cranfield; **Deanery Eco Representative:** Revd Mary de Salis
Revd Bill Britt stood down as Rural Dean in April and was succeeded by Revd Christopher Bunce, previously Deputy Rural Dean. Revd Maxine Howarth and Revd Jenni McQuaid were appointed as the new Deputy Rural Deans.

There were five Deanery Synod meetings in 2025.
6th Feb 2025 at St Mary's, Hitchin: David White, Diocesan Secretary, gave an interesting talk on the process for selecting a new Bishop. There were a number of similarities with selecting a new vicar, and differences in that there are a number of bodies within Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire that ae consulted. The process is long.

28th April 2025 at St George's, Norton: Rev Nick Smith, Diocesan Church Growth Officer for Bedfordshire, spoke on the use and benefits of developing a MAP, allowing, amongst other things, a church to define its direction and how this would be achieved.

1st July 2025 at St Ippolyts: There was no open meeting at this synod. As this was the first synod with Revd Chris Bunce as Rural Dean, he and Neil Greatorex gave a joint presentation on what a deanery and a deanery synod are and how they fit into the diocese structure. Synod members then discussed, in small groups, how we move forward to make Hitchin Deanery Synod more exciting and relevant to the needs of the constituent Parishes.

24th September 2025, Holy Saviour, Hitchin: There was no open meeting at this synod. Instead, members of synod got to know one another through a 'speed dating' exercise.

4th December 2025, St Mark's, Hitchin: Joseph Davies from Ecclesiastical Insurance gave a very informative presentation, giving details on the various types of support for churches on the company's website. They are also happy to provide presentations on a number of topics.

At each synod meeting various churches gave good news stories from their parish.

During the year:
Canon Stephen Fielding, Revd Amanda Ferris, Revd Melanie Crowley retired

Revd Katy Little was Installed and Inducted as Rector of King's Walden and Offley with Lilley

Revd Emma-Jane Wilkinson was appointed as Vicar of King Charles the Martyr, Potters Bar

Revd Gail Adcock was licenced as curate in charge at St Mary's, Old Letchworth and All Saints', Willian

Revd Ian Todd, Revd Mary De Salis, Revd Ginni Dear and Revd Jenni McQuaid took sabbaticals

Adrian Grove was licensed as a Reader for St Mark's, Hitchin

Dates for Deanery Synod meetings in 2026:

- 9th February 2026, St Mary Magdalene, Great Offley - Topic: Diocesan Strategy for Ministry
- 14th April 2026, St Ippolyts – Topic: Diocesan Board of Finance
- 24th June 2026, St Mary the Virgin, Stotfold – Topic: Changes to the structure of Mothers' Union
- 24th September 2026, St Katharine's, Ickleford – Topic: Needham House and supporting asylum seekers locally TBC
- 1st December 2026, St George's, Norton – Topic: TBD

GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES REPORTS

HOLY SAVIOUR MUSIC

Following a long period of transition following the departure of Trevor Hughes, Ken Bradbury took over as organist from Easter 2025.

The church choir practises every Thursday evening from 7:30pm in church for typically 1 1/4- 1 1/2 hours. We sing an anthem every Sunday morning in the 9:45am service from existing repertoire but also work up new music both 2 part and 4 voice part anthems.

In November we were delighted to be asked to sing for the wedding of Rachel Auld (who first joined the choir at the age of 7!) and Cosmo Murray, in St Mary's. In December we made our customary contribution to the music at the Christmas Tree Festival.

We are typically 8-12 in number most Sundays and currently are at a critically low level in numbers. New members in all voice parts welcome particularly altos.

Ken Bradbury

CHURCH GARDEN

Firstly, many thanks to those who have helped during the year, Jonathan Renney for keeping the grass areas looking good for our church and hall users. Also to those who came along to trim bushes.

We managed to have flowers blooming throughout the year and even a display of nerines for the Christmas Tree festival.

The old lilac is just a stump and work has begun cutting back the ivy hedge near the mortuary. Help will be required to remove all the stumps so that these areas can be put to grass. With reference to the mortuary – the doors are in need of paint! In fact, parts are showing bare wood so they will need rubbing down and a primer coat first.

If anyone has a spare half hour, there are always weeds which need removing.

Sheila Daw

KNIT, STITCH AND SEW

The Knit, Stitch and Sew group met on most Wednesday mornings throughout 2025. As always, a wide variety of craft projects were worked on and many fascinating discussions held. Over the summer we were hosted by Bob and Franie in their garden and we would like to thank them for their generous hospitality. Thanks also to Martin who has worked tirelessly mending the church kneelers and stitching new ones for us to enhance our collection. Also, thanks to Clare who crocheted a range of Christmas Tree table decorations which were sold in aid of the Christmas Tree Festival.

Newcomers to the group are always welcome. We are usually to be found in the Vicar’s Room in the Cloisters between 10 and 12 on a Wednesday morning. Please bring along any craft project or just join us for a cup of tea or coffee and a lively debate!

Pam Thomas

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The year began with our main event – the long awaited and hugely popular **'Burn's Supper',** held on Friday 24th January. We welcomed over 80 guests to a church hall transformed by soft lighting, tartan and fairy lights. The haggis was piped in with Honours by Piper Linton Stutely and a wonderful 'address to the Haggis' given by Rhona Auld. A four course supper was enjoyed – terrine of smoked salmon, haggis with neeps and tatties, sticky toffee pudding and cheese and biscuits. Entertainment was provided by the various speakers, Rachel Auld, James Ridson and Derek Boothby and a Scottish themed raffle was held. The event raised a total of £1,280. This event took a huge amount of organization and was extremely hard work for the committee. A special thanks to Graeme and Rhona Auld who bore the brunt of the organization.

In February we held a **Beetle Drive**. This event was intended as a 'fellowship' rather than fundraising occasion and was well attended by young and old alike, who made up tables of 4, with 2 pairs competing against each other and the winning pair rotating around the hall. It was great fun and excellently organized by David and Sheila Daw. £30 was raised.

Our next event was a **VE Day Family Afternoon Teaparty**, on Sunday 4th May, marking the 80th anniversary of VE Day in Europe. Another well attended event with around 50 guests, including a number of children. Lots of guests dressed in 1940s clothes, we served food from the era, such as jelly and blancmange well as a selection of sandwiches, cakes and scones, all made by members of the committee. A war themed tombola was held, which caused lots of amusement and we finished the event with a group rendition of the 'hokey cokey'! A total of £350 was raised.

31st August saw our **Family BBQ**. We were once again blessed with the weather and were able to enjoy the church garden for this event. The garden was festooned with bunting, trestle tables laden with salads and desserts (provided by both committee members and some guests) and meat cooked across several BBQs by our team of volunteer chefs. The event raised a total of £332.

We finished the year with **'Traveller's Tales'** on 22nd November. 40 guests listened to a variety of talks given by members of our congregation from Japan to Greenland, Italy to Barbados and others in between. Pizza and garlic bread were provided and a licensed bar was provided. Unfortunately I cannot find a record of the total raised at this event.

It has been a very successful year for the Social Committee who have raised over £2,000, as well as providing several opportunities for fellowship for congregation members (plus guests from further afield).

Claire Nellis

Chair

11TH HITCHIN HOLY SAVIOUR GUIDES AND RANGERS

We started 2025 as normal with our annual trip to the panto with Guides & Rangers ~ always a fun night & enjoyed by all who attended. Guides celebrated national puzzle day with a inter patrol competition to complete a jigsaw, points were awarded for completion but also teamwork & strategy. We celebrated all things international for World Thinking day with games, food & crafts from a variety of counties. Food featured highly through the term as it's so popular with both Guides & Rangers so as well as our international cooking we also had Rangers cooking, tea tasting & making pancakes. Guides & Rangers made soda bread as part of our St Patricks Day activities, we also did some origami around an Irish legend & made Irish blessing frames. We had a visitor come in to make beautiful roses with the Guides for Mother's Day which looked so pretty.

We put in a joint team for the Hertfordshire Scouts Monopoly challenge this year ~ it's a long & tiring day but really great fun & the team did really well in their section too, coming 2nd overall out of over 80 teams. We held a quiz night to help raise funds for our Guide unit & also the two Rangers attending international trips this summer to The Azores & the Guiding World Centre in India ~ Sangam. Everyone who came said they enjoyed it & it was very successful on the fundraising front too. Our term ended with our twice-yearly community service to clear The Dell as part of Hitchin Forum's Spring litter pick. As always we had fun whilst clearly up & The Dell looked great after all our efforts.

As always our summer term saw us enjoying the great outdoors with a range of activities to enjoy. The term started by celebrating St George's Day with Hitchin Scouting ~ it's always so lovely to see just how many adults & children are involved in our two organisations in Hitchin. Our young leader Ruby carried the district flag at the front of the parade which was fantastic & made for a very family event as her twin brother was carrying the St George's flag on behalf of the Scouts.

One of our mum's came & ran a fantastic evening sharing her photography skills with the Guides & Rangers. She ran a small session at the hall first then we walked into town & the girls played with light. They took some really lovely photos & are now working on their photography badges ~ we have an evening planned in Autumn & are looking forward to see the results of their efforts.

Four Guides, one Ranger & 2 adults took part in Letchworth & Baldock Scouts Greenway walk day. We had a lovely day it was dry but not too hot & all of us managed the 14.24 miles, which is a great achievement. We look forward to taking part again next year.

Badge work continued with a continuation of our Backwoods cooking badge. The Guides enjoyed cooking tin can noodles from a range of ingredients & then devising their own menus for cooking in the embers.

We visited Hitchin Youth allotment & enjoyed a hike to one of our ex~members farm, where we recovered from our walk with a Cream tea to celebrate National Cream day.

We had a brilliant weekend camp with Guides & Rangers. One of the leader team was celebrating her 21st birthday that week so we made that our theme & made a wide game based on her favourite things. Everyone took part in lots of adventurous activities through the weekend & also enjoyed traditional camp activities, cooking, campfires & just being in the natural chilled out camping environment.

The Rangers ran a lovely evening for the Guides based on India & The Azores where two of the Rangers were visiting this summer on Girlguiding County & Region trips. They made Rangoli patterns, sampled food from both countries & learnt some Portuguese. The Rangers then had time afterwards to enjoy Mehndi art & we wished Rebecca & Lilybet well for their travels ~ we are looking forward to hearing all about their trips.

Our end of term evening was our very own Hitchin Monopoly ~ a fun night playing a game based loosely on the original but with a Jo twist. We have even designed & made our own unit badge to award to all the members who take part in this as we run it every other year ~ albeit slightly developed each time.

We returned after the summer break & enjoyed some fun teambuilding activities to get all our new patrols working together.

Early in the term a group of Guides & Rangers enjoyed a day organised by Girlguiding Hertfordshire taking part in the London Bridges Walk. We started at Vauxhall Bridge & criss~crossed The Thames ending on Tower Bridge. It was an early start, but we had great fun, we got 2 flybys from a set 4 chinooks (which Jo was very excited about) & as it had been her birthday that week we celebrated finishing our walk with birthday cake. The walking continued with the Guides & Rangers doing a penny hike around the town to test the various chip shops to complete the important task of finding out who makes the best chips in Hitchin.
We took part again in Hitchin Forum's twice yearly litter pick giving The Dell a good clear up ~ although there was still lots of litter collected it was good to note that the litter was generally less than we have found in the past.
A group of our younger guides took part in The Great Patrol Hunt & had a fun day with other Guides across Hertfordshire ~ they are looking forward to Round 2.
We held a smore off with each patrol designing a new smore, there were some fabulous combinations of biscuits & fillings ~ they all tasted delicious.
Half term saw some of the Rangers spending a mystery day in Cambridge. They did a mystery challenge finding parts of the city that they may otherwise have missed. After lunch on the green they enjoyed a little retail therapy before ending our day being punted along The Cam. It was a really lovely day & the weather was generally kind although chilly & we were very happy to have some blankets for our use on the punt whilst someone else did the hard & slightly wet work.
Our entry for the Christmas Tree festival was all a little different this year with groups that had an idea for the tree pitching to the unit to advertise their concept. 3 of our older Guides design was picked & they completely organised everything ~ they gave Amelia & Jo a shopping list of what was required, organised the 2 evenings set aside for making the decorations & then came to decorate the tree itself. Sadly, it wasn't picked by the judges but we felt so proud to see these 3 guides take this project on & lead it all the way through ~ the way we see these young guides gradually grow & develop is a joy to see.
We took part in 2 very different parades in Hitchin in 1 week. The first was Remembrance Sunday & it was lovely to see so many of the Guides & Rangers come to mark this special event & pay their respects for those who gave so much to our country. The second parade couldn't have been more different ~ Hitchin Town Centre Christmas lights switch on. It was the first year we have been asked to be involved & it was great fun to take part. The Guides & Rangers loved being part of it & counted down with great enthusiasm, they then sung along & enjoyed the snow too.
We finished off the photography badge with an exhibition of all the girls' photos. They were all projected on a screen & they all got to explain their favourite shots. Massive thanks to Jo Q for all her help with this project.
As always both Guides & Rangers completed some Guiding unit meeting & skills builder activities which the girls plan & run themselves during the term & a number of Guides have completed interest badges too, so we have had a good a number of Guides completing theme & section awards.
For the end of term we took the Guides & Rangers to Ninja Warrior UK. They had a great night & I only wish I could bottle their energy! A large number of the Guides also used the evening to make their Guide promise for the first time too.
Our last event of the year was helping at the Holy Saviour Church Christmas Tree Festival. Guides & Rangers helped brilliantly in both the café & in the Church. There were so many lovely compliments about them all as people left the festival & from the organisers.
As always, we lost a few of our members at the end of term & a few Guides are now moving up to Rangers but we look forward to new Guides joining us in January.
As ever running Guides & Rangers is a great privilege & although often quite tiring to do with admin & organising it's great fun. Our unit would not be what it is without all our fantastic Guides & Rangers who turn up every week with energy & enthusiasm so thank you to all of you as you are what makes our unit so great. Running our unit is a team effort & I am very lucky that we have a great leader team so thank you to Amelia, Gwynne, Andy, Ruby & Lauren for everything you do to make our unit a success I really couldn't do it without you.

We would also like to thank everyone at Holy Saviour for making us a part of your community too, Ian for being so supportive of having Guides & Rangers as part of the church, Clare for being on hand if we have any hall issues, the choir who meet at the same time always inquisitive about our evenings & what we are getting up to & being so loving in their praise of what we are doing. Everyone who runs the Tree Festival who welcome us to help with open arms. We really appreciate being part of your community.

Jo Clinch
UNIT LEADER
11th Hitchin (Holy Saviour) Guides & Rangers

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

The 29th festival took place from Friday 12th – Sunday 14th and saw a great number of our local community coming to enjoy the beautiful trees and taste the delights of the café. Alongside familiar faces, it was pleasing to see new exhibitors from a variety of backgrounds thanks to Gemma's work on our social media platforms and word of mouth amongst our congregation.

Jakins, our long serving tree supplier decided to retire in 2025, so we tried a new company called Premier Christmas Trees. We were delighted with the quality of trees we received and intend to use this new supplier next year. Delivery was a bright and early 8am and as if by magic, the wonderful tree trimming team appeared and prepared them for the exhibitors.

A highlight of the festival was Joana Gil's pew-filling singalong session, enjoyed by children and adults alike. With scheduling organised by Brian Caswell, there was lovely music from local school choirs, musicians and performances by Trevor Hughes and the Holy Saviour Choir.

Grateful thanks to **everyone** who contributed and volunteered this year, the festival is a whole church effort, and it simply wouldn't be possible without you. Please volunteer next year if you can!

Call to Action from the Catering Team

The festival catering organisers have been running the café since the festival began in 1997 and would like to find some enthusiastic and reliable new people to train up so that they can have a well-earned rest! If you are interested in learning about the catering side of the festival with a view to taking over the planning and running of the festival café, please speak to Ann Parsons, Rachel Thomson, Pauline Caswell and Debbie Stalkartt. They would like to know that this fantastic event can continue long into the future.

A request has also been made to reinstate post festival meetings to discuss how we can continue to improve our working processes and make the festival even better. I'm sorry I couldn't organise a meeting after the last festival, but in the meantime, please email any feedback to Liana.

Next year will be the 30th anniversary of the festival. Gemma has suggested putting together a special Hitchin themed hamper to raffle. If you can contribute an item to the hamper or have other ideas about how we can celebrate this landmark anniversary, please let us know. If you would like to exhibit a tree at the 2026 festival, please email us or speak to Liana in church.

Liana Liana.beckford@gmail.com and Gemma hitchinchristmastreefestival@gmail.com

Approved by the PCC on 21st April 2026 and signed on 17th May 2026 by the Deputy Chairman Mr. Brian Caswell



Signed.....Dated 17th May 2026.