

**Report on Regular Church Activities in 2024
for presentation at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting
17 March 2025**

Bell Ringers - Peter Sanderson, Ringing Master

The bellringing team remains in pretty good shape and has rung the bells for every Sunday 10.30am service at All Saints throughout the year and practiced each Wednesday evening. We have also rung for weddings as requested and for other services and ensured the traditional ringing-in of the New Year. Our two youngest ringers both recently rang their first quarter peals (approx. 40 minutes non-stop ringing requiring much concentration) whilst at the other end of the age range, Doreen Sanderson completed a similar “quarter” to mark her 95th birthday.

The bells are in a good state of repair (next servicing is due in 2027) although the fly infestation, whilst somewhat abated, is not yet solved. A deep clean of the belfry would seem to be the next step in tackling the issue.

The local team of ringers are a committed and happy group, ranging in age from 12 to 95. If anyone would like to learn to ring the bells, then please do get in touch.

The Besom in York & The Island Charity - Peter Aspin

The Besom is a national charity with bases all around the country and which exists to be a bridge between those in the Church who want to give and those who need support. The Besom has helped Christians in York to give to those in need in our city, through gifts of items, money and time.

The Co-ordinator at The Besom is Becky Watson. She and her team operate from their offices at The Living Word Church on Huntington Road. The best way to make contact is by email at info@thebesominyork.co.uk Otherwise by telephone: 07927 873407 or see the website: www.thebesominyork.co.uk

This year more than 80 individuals and families have been helped, for example, finding new homes for pre-loved beds, tables and chairs, bought white goods and delivered new home packs. They have helped with fuel payments and supported 12 projects to decorate houses and do garden makeovers. It was also busy at Bundles of Joy with over 500 families being blessed with a baby bundle or baby items.

In December, members of our Church, particularly the Small Groups, responded again to the call from Besom to all York Churches, to put together Christmas Gift Hampers. In total 87 individuals or families received a Christmas Hamper this year. These were delivered out to families by several volunteers from this and other York churches when Besom struggled with the demand.

The Island York – Peter Aspin

Both All Saints and St. Andrew's held annual Toy Services in December. We received a large gift of toys which were collected and taken to the Island Charity on New Lane in Huntington. The Island, led by Nigel Poulton MBE, is embarking on an exciting future, bringing essential early help and support for young people in York through a new bespoke Young People's Hub. With planning for the new Hub Development on New Lane now approved, they are looking forward to a future filled with hope, enthusiasm and, most importantly, collaboration with many amazing services across the City of York.

Cake and Company - Joan Sargent and Heather Richardson

This year, 2024, we have continued to build our Cake and Company ministry. We provide a social space for two-hour sessions fortnightly, particularly aimed at adults.

We are delighted to report that numbers have kept up and, as in previous years, those who come include members of the wider community as well as those who are part of our church family, including those with disabilities and their carers.

We have a good reputation in the community, and it's been lovely to see new people arrive because we have been recommended. We also have good links with the local community police support officer and the local area co-ordinator from the City of York Council.

The team of helpers are wonderful with setting up, preparing food, collecting folk, participating in one-to-one chats and listening at the tables and with other activities. It has been especially good to have additional contributors to the 'thoughts for the day' – it's been really great to share this ministry together. An important time for us is the time prior to the meeting when we pray together. Prayer, we believe, needs to underpin all that we do.

This year we have focussed on safeguarding, holding safeguarding 'parties' to encourage all our leaders and volunteers to do the modular training.

All the team who help at Cake and Company have passed and we are grateful to Dot Bevington, our new safeguarding officer, for her support.

In our 10th year we are aware that we need to keep things fresh, and we know that succession planning is important for the future.

Please continue to pray for Cake and Company, for the opportunities it provides to share the love of Jesus with those who come. We see it as an intentional outreach activity with a pastoral heart. Thank you.

Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade – Robbie and Sarah O'Brien

2024 was another exciting year for Brigade. This has been a year of continual growth and settling down into routine after restarting in 2023.

For the Band, spring term was quieter after our busy Christmas period. We spent the time preparing for St George's Day, where we paraded through the centre of York. This was supported by our sister company in Beverley and went very well. The band sounded great and looked smart.

Our first summer concert was joint with Beverley company, supporting their annual Proms concert. The bands sounded absolutely fantastic together. Our second performance was at the CLCGB Festival of Music and Drill, a successor to the annual band competition. This allows companies from across the country to get together to show off what they have been up to, before performing as a massed band. This year we performed in the centre of Beverley for Armed Forces Day. This concert was a good outing for some of the music we were preparing for our final concert of the summer, which was our 'Night at the Movies' concert in August.

The 'Night at the Movies' concert was a major fundraiser in the year for us and was supported by an audience of almost 120! It contained fun, quizzes, a Dinosaur costume (thanks Aimee) and music from some great composers. It was also a great opportunity to show off our new learners in a few of our pieces. This concert also attracted some new members to the band, and some new learners who started up lessons in September, which was great!

During the summer we were able to offer a band tour, again with Beverley company. This was to Edinburgh. We saw the sights, had a great time with friends, and played two concerts in the centre of Edinburgh.

We spent our Autumn term preparing for the Annual Christmas Concert which was held in St Andrews. It was a good job Keith had built the extension as we supported an audience of over 130. Our Christmas was finished off with the

Carol Service at All Saints, a beautiful service in candlelight which is a lovely way to end the Brigade year!

For the company, Spring and Summer term were used to continue to grow the youth side of the company after opening in September 2023. This allowed the leaders and young people to get into a routine. The members performed in both our 'Night at the Movies' concert and our Christmas concert.

September saw the opening of our JTC and Senior section (ages 10-16). This is being run by Grace Birch and Jack Eshelby. One of the things they did in their sessions was start learning drill, which allowed them to record a drill display for our Christmas concert! JTC and Seniors grew to 6 members by the end of the year.

As a company we were invited to support the "Generation Groove" remembrance event again. This saw some of our youth members and leaders creating a drumhead altar for the book of remembrance. Some of our leaders also supported the national remembrance events by attending the cenotaph in London on Remembrance Sunday.

As always, we need to thank our leaders and members who make Brigade such a brilliant place to be. We were able to celebrate these after our Night at the Movies concert where we held our first annual awards evening! We were also able to promote Jack and Grace (for their work with JTC and Seniors) and Katy (for her work with Martins and Y-Team) to warrant officers! In our Christmas concert we were also able to celebrate some of our longer serving leaders with both long service medals, but also exemplary service medals for Jan, June and Clair.

February saw a number of our members attending the annual Brigade training day in Manchester. Courses were undertaken from First Aid and Safeguarding, to Drill and Special Educational Needs. These courses are great to help our leaders continue learning and improving their skills. We also had Katy complete her young leaders training course.

We have lots of exciting activities planned for 2025 and we can't wait to tell you about them all in next year's report! If anyone would like further information, please drop us a message at Brigade@Huntingtonparish.org.uk

Foodbank - Liz Barker and Janet Stephen

Our parish continued to support the vital work of the York Foodbank during 2024. Church members have given generous donations of food, household essentials and financial support throughout another challenging year when

many people are experiencing difficulties due to the economic crisis. The parish has also given financially as part of our annual church tithe. The total amount of food we donated this year was approx. 1973kg which is nearly 55kg more than the previous year. The harvest donation this year was 254kg, lower than previously as the donations from Huntington Primary School were taken directly to the warehouse and not to All Saints Church. They did include other church groups though.

Janet Stephen collects the donations from each church building and takes them to the warehouse where she volunteers. At the warehouse, all donations are sorted by date and stored prior to being allocated to the six distribution centres around York to be issued to clients. Over the last year we identified a gradual decline in donations against an increasing request for help. Increased donations at specific times like Harvest, the Tesco and Asda Donation Drives and Christmas help to keep our stocks at a reasonable level but during the past year we have had to resort to topping them up by buying some stock.

Liz, Joy and Sheila volunteer at our local distribution centre on Wednesday afternoons at the Living Word Church. David Chettle also joined the team towards the end of 2024. This centre has continued to be one of the busiest in the city and in 2024 we processed 665 vouchers which fed 968 adults and 638 children.

As well as the practical support of food and household items, clients can also access expert advice from two support workers who work for York Foodbank in conjunction with the Peaseholme Charity and the Citizens Advice Bureau. We also continue to give clients cash vouchers for the Co-op so that they can top up their tins and packets with fresh produce, this amount was increased due to the rise in the cost of shopping.

At the Living Word Foodbank clients are all welcome to use the Hub cafe and are given free hot drinks and cake or even a light meal and a voucher for a future occasion. Members of the Living Word Church are also around to chat and welcome them which creates a lovely welcoming atmosphere and chance to share our faith in a more natural relaxed setting. We are very grateful for all donations, large or small, and thank everyone who has donated either at church, via one of the supermarket collection points or financially. We know that some give very generously and some, every week. We can testify that your donations are very much needed and very much appreciated.

Messy Church – Dot Bevington

Another year of Messy church sees us continuing to flourish and welcome in new and regular families. There are more links with tots' families (past and

present) and KidzKlub families which is a great joy. People are happy to join in with clearing up and treat one another as family. We never know who or how many folks will come, so the team faithfully keep providing and enjoying whoever comes and sharing the love of Jesus with them. Our team now incorporates a significant number of teenagers which is wonderful – they help on the tables and enjoy socialising. There is always room for more adults to help – especially cooks! Team need time out so can't come each month, so having a good number to draw on is essential.

In the first part of 2024, we looked at Jesus, following on from his birth and why he was so special continuing to Easter and Pentecost. We then took our planned break over the summer and on our return our numbers were still healthy, and people were eager to return to a series, "Making sense of God" which used the senses to explore who God was – great fun! And then it was Christmas again!!!

Please pray for the team that their faith will grow and that they will become bolder, talking about their craft and going on to share their faith in this friendly context. Pray for families to be touched by God's Spirit and understand how all this is relevant to life in 2025.

We are always open to new ideas – maybe extra activities in summer so pray for our planning that we will be following Jesus as he leads us.

Mission Prayer/Activity - Janet Stephen

The group continues to meet monthly. Numbers have increased this year, but more people would always be welcome! Also, during the year, the venue changed to being held at All Saints Church.

Each month we pray for our local mission activities carried out by our church, supported with reports about youth, children and family activities and our links with local schools. We pray for our overseas mission partners which are Tearfund, Open Doors, IJM and ReVive, (CMS) and Ollie and Hailie Wright. Ollie is now working for JVI, a similar mission to IJM with whom he worked previously.

The local partners are York Foodbank, Reflect, Family Matters and YoYo. Several church members are involved in these organisations in various ways. In the autumn one of the midweek Deeper sessions focused on the work of Open Doors. Lee Proudlove, who is the Open Doors Church Relationship Manager for the North of England, gave us a challenging interactive presentation.

Tots Group Annual report for 2024 – Liz Barker / Joy Tiffin

On Wednesday mornings St Andrew's church is full of families, toys, noise and lots of fun. During 2024 we had a weekly attendance of 30 plus children with lots more on our register. We continued to run a programme of fun activities with sensory trays, playdough, crafts and different toys out each week to fit a theme which is then drawn together by the story time and songs. Our themes this year have included Old Testament animal stories, Colours, Senses and People Jesus Met. During the summer half term, we held a few sessions outside but mostly the weather was not suitable for outdoor play this year. We also celebrated Mother's Day, Easter, Harvest and Christmas and had a fun morning for Children in Need. Our group donated food to add to our church harvest appeal for the Foodbank and money to Children in Need.

Throughout the year the building work to extend the church carried on and we often heard the work happening behind the scenes during our sessions. In September it was such a pleasure and a real blessing to expand our activities into the new north aisle which provides more carpeted flooring, comfy bench seating with toy storage, a small kitchen to serve drinks from and best of all lots of daylight through the new windows and roof lights. Our refreshment team are now able to feel fully included and they are a vital part of providing a warm welcome to families.

We have a large team of helpers, and we work well together to cover the different tasks each week. The Tots team also worked together to run a fundraising Crafternoon to raise money for the family of one of our little ones who is currently being treated for leukaemia. We are trying to support her family as best we can during this difficult time through prayer, practical support, friendship and raising awareness.

Relationships are thriving between our parents and between parents and ourselves. We are finding that many parents of young babies are now returning to work sooner than they would wish due mainly to the rising cost of living. Whilst they are sad to have to go back to work many are keen to stay in touch and join us for other church activities like Messy Church or Forest Church, as their children grow older. We have been keen to let them know we are still here for them and that our relationships with them are ongoing. Tots is a place where we welcome our local community into our church, talk about God, tell stories from the bible, offer to pray for each other and share our faith, in a very gentle way. We have fun together, but really it's all about building relationships with the children and their grownups. Please keep praying for our families and for our team as we play our part in "knowing Jesus and making him known in our community".

52nd York Brownies & 18th York Guides (Friday meetings)

Sally Jackson, Brownie & Guide Leader

2024 saw our membership across both units continue to grow.

Brownies completed their inventing and zero waste badges. We celebrated Chinese New Year and the Dragon. Decorated photo frames for Mother's Day and chocolate eggs at Easter. We also celebrated Diwali, made poppy wreaths, and did a Pudsey bear Trail.

We completed an Autumn themed challenge called Squirrels and Acorns. Did Finger paint Christmas cards and a mosaic decoration. They also enjoyed making armpit fudge and s'mores on homemade barbecues. We had a great adventure day out at Williams Den.

Guides marked International Women's Day focussing on influential females past and present. They made Pizza's, cheesecake easter eggs, outdoor cooking. They completed their personal safety & financial management badges. They also enjoyed a Taylor Swift themed evening and Karaoke.

Both units throughout the year made food hampers at Harvest for the local foodbank. Completed a swish challenge based on Fashion, design, recycling, upcycling, accessories including jewellery making. They also did an Olympic themed challenge and created new sports from everyday items, looked at sporting heroes, designed sportswear, held a mini-Olympics. We also had an opportunity to be part of Girlguiding's consultation on the new uniform design for 2026 by submitting our own ideas.

Both Units helped to run a Tombola Stall for our unit funds at the local Parish Gala. We attended an exclusive viewing of Wish2 at the cinema and had a residential in September with an Asian theme.