

Annual Report 2023



Vicar's Report



When I locked up the church on Christmas Day there was a huge smile on my face as I reflected on the joy and beauty of celebrating with our St Chads family. That memory captures something of the whole of 2023, it was a good year of growth and hope in St Chads, surrounded by a world, which seems to have lost its hope. In 2023 there was so much which expressed our goals of glorifying God, loving community and following Jesus.

That isn't to say there weren't challenges, pain and loss. We will always seek to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice.

The overall picture of growth and hope is seen weekly on Sundays and in midweek groups, in our welcome lunches, new people joining, Alpha courses running and small groups forming. One highlight which captured the joy and love in our church was ReSet Sunday in September. As we gathered as one church of all generations there was a powerful sense of God's Spirit with us.

Looking back over the year I've realised how many new things we started. Before looking at key moments and new initiatives I want to celebrate the consistency and faithfulness of our regular ministries. Oasis, Prampushers, Just4Dads and the LifeCentre continue to connect with remarkable numbers of people every week, and other ministries you'll read about continue to grow. I am hugely grateful to all our youth and children's teams on Sundays and midweek. After Elle moved in 2022, it has been excellent to see the momentum of our work continue with teams serving so beautifully. In March we held an evening to appreciate and thank our volunteers. The guest list was more than 150 people, (and the LifeCentre includes many more volunteers than that). This is something to be celebrated; your time and investment glorifies God, serving alongside one another builds a loving community and leads to some of our volunteers starting to follow Jesus.

A key part of 2023 was completing the restructure process that we began in January 2022. During 2023 this included forming a "Ministry Leadership Team", taking on Vicky Reedy and Zeke Watts in paid employed roles and revitalising small groups. It also led to the decision to recruit our new Associate Vicar and leader of the Ministry of the LifeCentre and we are delighted that Katie Wade is soon going to take on those two roles. The PCC has made the bold and faith-filled decision to step out in trusting God for the finances for these roles. We value all that you give and invite you to prayerfully consider what God is asking you to contribute financially to support the ongoing growth of St Chads and new opportunities to grow Jesus' kingdom in Romiley.

When praying about revitalising small groups, I decided that this needed doing on a firm shared foundation of Biblical vision for building intentional fellowship. This was done through Chads Central in the autumn, a deep dive into Ephesians and opportunity to discuss building trusting, committed, honest friendships and belonging. I am delighted that we have seen many join groups and new groups form and very grateful to all who put so much time, love and wisdom into leading those.

In the first paragraph of this report I mentioned the growth and life of St Chads in contrast to a wider sense of malaise and decline in the world and the wider Church. There might be all sorts of reasons for this, but I'm convinced it's due to the priority we place on prayer. For the first half of the year we found our regular rhythm of monthly prayer events and daily prayer in the LifeCentre (9am in Sanctuary - all are welcome). We also have weekly pastoral prayers and monthly prayer for healing, as well as prayer being a priority in both services on Sunday and at Wednesday communion.

I believe our prayer life underpins all that we do and encourages us to keep committing to grow in prayer. This was helped through reading and discussing our Lent book for 2023, 'Praying Like Monks, Living like Fools'. We had record numbers of people buying, reading and reflecting on the book. I hope it continues to inspire and resource us to be a praying people.

I want to celebrate a few more highlights here. It's impossible to capture everything here, but we've attempted to share as much as we can through this report.

Zeke led a youth weekend away in May, which was a huge success, enabling our young people to grow deeper in their faith and build friendships. It is a huge joy to see so many young people in our church following Jesus and our midweek discipleship groups are growing and flourishing. We are so grateful to God for calling Zeke to Romiley to take the lead on this as well as serving at Cherry Tree and in other ways.

In late 2022 the PCC made the decision to appoint a young families outreach worker and we were delighted that Vicky Reedy has taken that role on. Being in a paid role gives Vicky more capacity to invest in this ministry and that has been really fruitful. We're seeing some of those connections leading to young families attending on Sundays and doing Alpha and we pray for more. By this move, Vicky vacated her paid role as cafe assistant at the LifeCentre. We were delighted to appoint Natalie to that role and it is brilliant to see them both flourish in their calling.

A new initiative in 2023 was the formation of our Eco-Church group and two Sundays with a focus on our care of creation and climate justice. We are grateful to Clare Warburton and the team for taking the lead on this, as we believe this is a subject God is calling us all to engage with and act upon.

The rise in fuel costs and government grants for Warm Spaces enabled us to use the Guywood as a warm space in the winter months. Rachel and the team have embraced that and the community forming on Thursdays includes opportunities to share Jesus and we look to develop that further, alongside the ongoing work of hosting the food provision at the Guywood.

I hope you are as encouraged as I am as you reflect on 2023 in this report. There has been loss and some things have come to an end and some of our church family have experienced significant difficulties. Our celebration of the encouragements doesn't minimise any of that. It also highlights the immeasurable amount of behind-the-scenes care, love and support which is expressed in the St Chads family. Pastoral care is more than something we form an institutional structure for, it is an expression of loving community which breaks into every generation in every season.

It has brought me real joy to reflect on 2023 and the many times we sensed the joyful, life-giving presence of God with us. We are seeing more people, more like Jesus and as we pray and seek him I believe we'll see even more in 2024.

Richard



PCC

Report

PCC

St Chads PCC is a registered charity with the responsibility of cooperating with the Incumbent in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church – pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. (The PCC (Powers) Measure 1956).

The PCC is responsible for the oversight of St Chads: budgeting and finances, the management of our buildings and facilities, health and safety, safeguarding, employment and recruitment, volunteers, policy matters and ecumenical and diocesan engagement.

PCC members and Deanery Synod Representatives are elected for three year terms. Officers to the PCC (e.g. Treasurer) and the Standing Committee (SC) are elected annually following the annual meeting. The Standing Committee meets regularly and can make decisions and discharge business between PCC meetings where necessary.

St Chads PCC has adopted the Church of England's Safeguarding policy, Promoting a Safer Church and has complied with its duty under section five of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. All staff and volunteers in roles which involve working with children or vulnerable adults are recruited according to the House of Bishops Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance and training is followed under Church of England requirements.



Main items of governance and discussion in 2023:

- Recruitment of Associate Vicar and Leader of Ministry, LifeCentre
- Repair and repointing of The Guywood external walls
- Compliance review of all St Chads policies and procedures
- Governance and stewardship of St Chads financial resources
- Ongoing oversight of the fabric of our buildings, including faculty agreement for repair to the two quatrefoils on the south facing roof of church (where the roof has been leaking). To be completed in quarter one of 2024.

2023 PCC

Paul Adshead	2024	Lay	
Hilary Bentley	2025	Lay	
Helen Bray *	2026	Deanery Synod	Treasurer
Robert Bucknall	2025	Lay	
George Burghel	2026	Lay	
Molly Dow		Lay	Reader
Craig Fairfield	2026	Lay	
Jan Ford *	Annual	Deanery Synod	Warden
Kirstie Goddard	2026	Lay	
Andrew Goddard *	Annual		Warden
Marilyn Gregory	2025	Lay	
Carl Grimsditch	2025	Lay	
Jane Higginbottom *	Annual		Secretary
John Macaulay	2026	Lay	
Ruth Otto	2026	Deanery Synod	
Richard Pennystan *		Clergy	
Jeanette Simpson	2026	Lay	
Mark Warburton	2026	Lay	
Rob Williams	2024	Lay	

*Standing Committee Member



Sidespersons

Church Representation Rules mean Sidespersons are elected by the PCC following the APCM.

Thank you to Malcolm Booker, Frank Moseley, Craig Fairfield and Geoff Walton for their service during 2023.

Fabric and Facilities

A huge thank you to Ian Otto for all that he does, seen and unseen, ensuring that our buildings are in good working order.

Ongoing upkeep of our buildings including: PAT testing, fire safety, lightening conductor inspections, piano and organ tuning, gas safety checks, air-conditioning and insurance.

We are working on a programme of building maintenance for Church and the Guywood, including in 2023 fixing the heating in the Guywood and some major repointing and structural works to rectify the damp. Over the summer we also welcomed a charity team led by a dad from Just4Dads who alongside Ian repainted all of the area in the wooden end and gave the kitchen a very deep clean. Thank you to all involved. In church we saw the installation of the new boilers.

We are still awaiting the report on our five year church building inspection, the Quinquennial, that took place in 2020. All major works highlighted in the last report have been completed and the Diocese is pleased with our stewardship of St Chads.

Deanery Synod

The Deanery Synod is the group of our 10 local Anglican churches that provides an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church. The Deanery Synod met four times this year across our Deanery. Three members of the PCC currently sit on Deanery Synod.

Electoral Roll

In 2019 the roll was fully revised. Following our 2024 review; we currently have 253 people on the Electoral Roll of St Chads.

During this last year 1 person has died, 2 people have moved away and 11 people have joined the Roll. The roll is due to be revised again next year in 2025.

The PCC employs five part time members of staff:

Head of Operations:	Jane Higginbottom
Facilities Manager:	Ian Otto
Operations Assistant:	Alys Bassett
Youth Ministry Assistant:	Zeke Watts
Families & Preschool	
Outreach Worker:	Vicky Reedy
Verger:	Ernie Cooper (unpaid)

We are looking forward to welcoming Katie Wade onto team as Associate Vicar on 10th April and Dave Hill as our new curate in July this year.

There are also many, many volunteers across all areas of church life. Thank you to EVERYONE who serves.

Financial Report – Helen Bray

We continue to thank God for his ongoing provision to us through the generosity of our church family by way of regular giving, donations and legacies. A summary can be found on the Finance page of this report. Full accounts are available in church or by request to Jane in the church office.

The PCC set the annual budget in faith and monitor both the budget comparison and cashflow regularly.

We thank Jane Higginbottom, who manages the daily financial affairs of our church and John Simpson, our Independent Examiner.

Wardens' Report



As always, we want to start our report by giving thanks for God's faithfulness. Following on from the review we undertook in 2022, this year has been a year of prayer, waiting on God and beginning to implement what we believe God has planned for St Chads. We are grateful for Richard and Nells' leadership and hard work in keeping us faithful to God's calling.

We are thrilled that Vicky Reedy joined the staff team in June in order to concentrate on our work among young families. We are also delighted that Katie Wade has been appointed as Associate Vicar and will be licensed on the 10th April 2024.

Our two Sunday Services (9.15am Parish Communion and 11am Informal Worship) and our mid-week communion (Wednesday 11am) have continued to flourish, providing our parish with diverse ways to worship and meet together. The Sanctuary continues to provide a special place for personal or corporate prayer; a place where members of the public can experience God's presence. We have regular prayer times weekdays from 9.00 – 9.20am plus 2 zoom prayer times – Monday and Thursday at 7am.

As the Anglican Parish Church in Romiley we welcomed those from our local community and beyond for infant baptisms, weddings and funerals.

We are blessed that so many of our church family serve across the week and on Sundays in order to bless our church and local community through our many varied ministries. We thank all those who lead and serve week in, week out, to make these happen. Our volunteer evenings have also been a real encouragement to all who came.

Oasis (Monday lunchtime) continues to meet a real need in our community for those who are lonely. Thank you Ken and team for serving this community. Molly Dow has continued to offer Later Life Issues bi-monthly on Thursday mornings. Kirstie Goddard and team led an Alpha Course after Easter which was partly run by participants from the previous year; a wonderful example of our church family serving and blessing each other.

Our thanks go to Vicky Reedy and her teams for all they do to serve the young families in our community at Prampushers, Snowdrops, baby groups and Just4Dads.

Our thanks also go to Rachel Dixon and team for running Schools Out (reception upwards) on Mondays after school. Zeke and team have overseen TBN (older youth discipleship) on Monday evenings, and our new group TNT (for those in years 7-10) on Thursday evenings.

The Pantry/Food provision, Warm Spaces and The Cherry Tree Project continue to serve the community in wonderful ways.

Please read the separate reports to see details of all these ministries. It is sometimes a challenge to fill all of our volunteer spaces and if you feel you can help serve on any of our teams please contact the church office.

Our APCM was held during a joint Sunday morning service. The PCC met bi monthly and held 2 vision mornings, to pray and think through God's vision for St Chads. We have also started MLT (Ministry Leadership Team) for those who lead ministries attached to St Chads. MLT meets 5 times a year to receive teaching, share vision and hear from each other about what God is doing. The MLT also joined the PCC on one of the away mornings.

In the summer, New Wine United was an opportunity for many of the church family to spend quality time together, enjoy worshipping with thousands and receive great teaching. Many of our church family served on team. In November, a group of mainly young families returned to Bassenfell for a weekend away enjoying fellowship and fun in the beautiful surroundings of the lake district.

The Eco Church group have begun to consider how we can be good stewards as a Church and have led services to help us all think more about how we care for creation. We have set aside part of church yard for a wild flower garden to encourage bees and other wildlife.

Our thanks also go to Jane, Ian and Alys for serving us in so many ways, much of what they do is in the background, but we couldn't operate without them.

Reports on finances, facilities and other changes are covered elsewhere but we close by thanking God for everyone at St Chads who has furthered God's Kingdom here in Romiley.

Jan Ford & Andrew Goddard



Jan Ford



Andrew Goddard



Finance



Missional Giving

Each year the PCC sets a Mission budget based on 10% of the full income of the previous account year. This is given to missionary organisations, activities and individuals at home and overseas. The Missions Committee oversees how we distribute these funds, together with PCC.

The majority of the Mission Budget is given as regular support to organisations and individuals where there is a link with St Chads. As a general rule, we review this regular giving on a two yearly basis, unless something significant changes.

Each year we retain a smaller part of our Mission budget to be used flexibly during the year. This fund has been used to support members of the church family who are undertaking short term mission trips. The fund also supports local community needs and occasional gifts to other charities.

This year we were delighted to support both local and worldwide charities with gifts at Christmas. Below are the full 2023 details of our regular support and one-off gifts.

Mission Partners

TEAR FUND	£2,000
CMS & SAMS	£1,500
MESSAGE TRUST	£1,000
BIBLE SOCIETY	£1,000
ALEXANDRIA LIBRARY	£1,000
NEW WINE	£2,000
THE HAMILTONS	£2,000
OPEN DOORS	£1,200
FUSION	£1,000
CHRISTIANS AGAINST POVERTY	£1,200
NAKED TRUTH	£1,000
NORA STURGES HEALTH CENTRE	£1,000
CHRISTIANS IN SCHOOLS	£2,500
GLO	£3,000
AMAR	£2,000
TOTAL	£ 23,400

Christmas Generosity

We have seen people filled with overjoyed generosity support our church family this year; contributing abundantly in both money and time.

Your Christmas generosity was again overwhelming with over £3000 given in support of our initiatives.

Your giving enabled us to buy gifts and provide support to bless both our church family and the wider community, including families highlighted through our local schools. Together with the Cherry Tree Project we delivered 146 Christmas hampers.

Money has been more than matched with people's time and prayer on Sundays and so many different mid-week outreach activities. We could not demonstrate Loving Community in action without it.

THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU

One Off Gifts

Acorn Alternative Provision	£310
Embrace the Middle East	£500
Emma Goddard	£250
Growing Hope	£400
Hamiltons	£500
International Justice Mission	£1,000
Jack Pennystan	£250
Lebanon school (through CMS)	£500
Mechanics for Africa	£500
Stockport Refugees	£310
	£4,520

Headline Figures

Income 2023	
Donations & Legacies	£ 306,858
Other Income	£ 20,407
	£ 327,265
Expenditure 2023	
Grants & World Mission	£ 26,711
Church Activities	£ 119,667
Church Running Costs	£ 133,026
	£ 279,404
Surplus of Income over Expenditure	£ 47,861

Glorifying God

Mini Church – Jan Ford

We have enjoyed meeting with the mini churchers again this year. They may only be 3–5 but they love to learn about Jesus. We have a cohort of around 4 – 8 children each week with a team of 9 adults (3 for each session). We love finding creative ways to share the Bible and special truths with them through games, craft activities and play. It is fantastic to see them grow in confidence week by week and to listen to all they have to share with us. We encourage them to listen to God and engage with Him in prayer, through relevant activities, and believe that the truth we share with them now will grow and develop with them.

Kids Church – Jan Ford

We are so blessed to be able to meet in the LifeCentre. The 3 teams, made up of 3 adults enjoy getting to know the children. We regularly have between ten to eighteen 6–11 year olds. My thanks go to those who help even if for only a term or step in when we are short of team. We couldn't run the sessions without you.

We spend time playing games, listening to each other, learning from God's word, praying together and exploring different crafts. We are grateful to Elle for leaving us a wealth of material which we can use. This year we have used a variety of film clips to help us understand the Gospel stories and look at the Beatitudes. We have also thought about how we can be good stewards of God's world and helped plant the wild garden plant area in church yard.

Youth Church – Zeke Watts

In the summer, several of our older youth felt that it was time for them to move into the main service. As much as it was a shame to see them move on, it has led to the younger youth really finding their voice in the sessions. We are watching the youth Alpha videos and discussing what we believe and what our faith mean to us.

As well as having a few new year 7s join the group in September, we have also had several other newcomers all of whom have joined the group eager to grow in their faith and learn more about Jesus which is just beautiful to watch. Back in May we also held a youth weekend away in Edale, which 16 of our young people attended. We had a brilliant time filled with activities, good food, and lots of opportunities to bond together as a group as well as diving deeper into God's word.



Following Jesus

SchoolsOUT - Zeke Watts

SchoolsOUT, which is our outreach group for primary school kids in reception to Year 3, has continued to grow with more and more kids coming. All of them are full of energy and eager to get involved and explore their faith from such a young age as well.

TNT - Zeke Watts

TNT launched in September as I felt that we needed greater investment in our younger youth and felt that a mid-week discipleship group was the best option. This gives them a chance to form tighter bonds with one another whilst also exploring their faiths. Since starting we have seen so many fruits forming almost immediately with the group really coming together and forming deeper friendships outside of the sessions which has been amazing to watch. We spent most of last term looking at the Lord's Prayer and discussing how we should pray together. We are looking forward to what the future holds for this group and would love to see the group grow in both size and faith.

TBN - Zeke Watts

TBN continues to go from strength to strength. In July the young people planned and ran a youth takeover with Caleb and Luke leading the service, and Joel, Jack, George and Charlie speaking about what it means to have Freedom in Christ, along with others being involved with worship and prayers.

It was a beautiful Sunday where I felt the young people were able to stand up and express their love of Jesus to the rest of the church family. Since then, we have seen a couple of new people come along and have delved into a variety of topics from "guarding your heart" to looking at the five-fold ministries.

Alpha - Kirstie Goddard

We ran the Alpha course again in the spring of 2023. There is nothing more wonderful than being able to share the love of Jesus with people who are hungry for him.

Having fellowship over a meal each week and then learning together about the good news of Jesus is very special. Lives were changed forever and we have welcomed new members to St Chads.

Thank you to all who were involved from setting up, cooking, washing up and leading groups. What a team!

Small Groups and Later Life Issues

Following Chads Central in the autumn of 2023, (see vicar's report) we relaunched Small Groups. Existing groups re-started, other groups welcomed new people and some new groups were formed. We are so grateful for the love and commitment which is poured into these groups by our large team of small group leaders. This relaunch enabled us to discuss creating safe environments and address how our culture of safeguarding is expressed in small groups. We established core criteria for these groups: regular committed pattern of meeting, centred on discipleship, connected with the church leadership and committed to the Bible and prayer.

In addition to our regular Small Groups, we are grateful to Molly Dow, who following Covid, re-started Later Life Issues bi-monthly on Thursday mornings, with a focus on teaching about discipleship in later life. These sessions are greatly valued by those who attend.



Glorifying God



Worship – Mark Warburton

Our freedom to worship and glorify God is a huge privilege. I'm mindful of places in the world where we'd face oppression if we tried. We've a lot to be thankful for.

9.15

Since last year our Hymns Survey has helped us discover what we all enjoy singing. It doesn't mean we're limited to those hymn choices, but the chances of a favourite cropping up are now higher.

We've also introduced some of the hymn-like and gentle worship songs from 11am, to narrow the differences between the two services' music and to aid those times when we gather jointly. We're still experimenting with the 'flow' of music during communion. I hope you agree it helps us fix our eyes on Jesus.

We're so grateful for the ongoing service of Judith and Audrey as pianists & organists, and a special thanks to Craig for manning the 9.15 sound desk most Sundays.

11.00

Our team has flexed – some moved on, others joined! Thanks especially to Adrian and Alys who've taken us on lovely new worship journeys, and to those who periodically pop back from uni. A huge thank you to the young people in the teams who expect to leave for university in the autumn: Joel, George, Jack, Charlie, and Emma. Special mention to Josh Reedy who led our Youth worship band so brilliantly back in July. By the time everyone reads this we'll have had a further youth-led service in March.

Last July we gathered together with worship, sound and visuals teams to share an informal meal, learn new songs, worship and pray together – for the first time in years. It felt good, and we hope to do it again before too long.

We have Youtube & Spotify playlists of all our regular songs, and those we hope to introduce. If you haven't got the playlists already, do drop me a line. And we're always on the lookout for new songs – if you hear a lovely one send it to me, Richard or the worship leaders.

Finally thank you to the amazing Rota Expert that is Kirsty Pitt, who somehow relishes the impossible jigsaw challenge of everyone's dates. We really appreciate it, Kirsty!

General

We replaced the Loop System amplifier recently – my thanks to Geoff Walton for help with testing. If you are a hearing aid user do please let me know if it works for you – we want to refine and improve it.

I'm always on the lookout for new musicians, singers, and sound operators whether 9.15 or 11am. The musical standard (and technical standard for sound) needs to be on the high side, as well as you feeling like you're already a part of the church family. Contact me for an exploratory chat! I'd especially love to find the next generation of young musicians and tech experts. So parents, if you've spotted that passion in your children, let me know!

As we continue through 2024 we thank God for the worshipping life of St Chads and pray fervently to see even more signs of the Holy Spirit at work, changing hearts and lives.

Loving Community

Prampushers – Vicky Reedy

2023 has been another incredible year at Prampushers. Our numbers have remained the same with approx. 40-50 families at each session on a Wednesday morning and 76 mums on a Friday at the baby group. We currently have a waiting list for the baby group for mums who aren't due to give birth until the summer! We are getting lots of mums returning who joined us through covid, so they are able to enjoy being in a proper baby group, where you sit close to each other, the babies can touch each other and they can have a piece of cake rather than a wrapped biscuit!

Our teams at both the Wednesday and Friday group are incredible; Adele does a fantastic job of telling the Bible stories and teaching us new songs, and Heather creates a new craft to link with the story each week. We have had many volunteers join us from the community which we are very thankful for.

We provided an evening for mums near Mothers Day last year – a pamper night where the mums paid for a massage, but we provided free hand massages, or foot spas. It was a lovely evening, with some Grandmas being treated by their daughter for looking after the grandkids!

We also provided the mums meal in summer and winter, which continues to be a successful night. The mums are always so grateful to possibly have their first night out.

The team are always helping in the background with some of the mums they befriend, keeping in contact with WhatsApp, offering practical support, visiting at hospital, meeting up for playdates – all of this is deepening relationships. One highlight for me this year was bringing other church baby and toddler groups in Stockport together for an evening of encouragement. We had 16 churches represented and had a time for sharing, connecting and praying.

A second meeting took place in another church, which reached different groups and was such an encouragement. I also compiled a directory of church groups (with the help of Alys) so families can see what groups are available on certain days, this has worked a bit too well, with a local group saying their attendance increased from 5 families to 21! We are hoping to continue meeting this year to support each other.

Snowdrops – Vicky Reedy

This continues to be an invaluable group for mums who are struggling with their mental health, or anxiety surrounding being a mum. Approximately 5-7 mums attend each week. They are a support to each other through sharing their situations. I am very grateful for a local mum, Bina, who has taken over the running of Snowdrops, as she has lived experience of post natal depression and can really understand the mums.

Just4Dads – Vicky Reedy

Numbers have stayed between 30-50 dads every Saturday. By running the group weekly we have definitely seen dads making stronger friendships as they recognise each other, as do the children. Barry organises a monthly Curry Night, and we have had several social nights in the Guywood, and these have provided opportunities for deeper connection between the dads. Several of them have told me that the group has helped them make some great friendships that continue outside of the group, helping with their mental health and their families.



Loving Community



Phil and Rob ran the Men Behaving Dadly course last year and that was very good. Again the dads who attended the course, have all kept in touch with each other and I know it has helped their relationships with their children. I provided a baby change facility at Marple Carnival last summer which was a big blessing to families.

Phil and Helen hung up their aprons in December, after serving on the team for several years. I would like to give them a big thanks for all their hard work. Phil spoils the dads by making stuffing to go with their sausage butties!

One activity that was a great success was a dad's hairstyle workshop; a Stockport children's hairdresser taught the dads how to brush their child's hair and put it into a pony tail or plait.

This year we have started a new group for dads with newborn to crawling stage babies, so dads have a quieter space to sit and chat with other dads and the babies are safe to lie on the floor without wobbly toddlers around! We are also helping with a dads festival in Tintwistle called DadFest in July, a weekend where dad and child can enjoy camping and outdoor activities, creating lasting memories, and spending quality time together.

I was invited to share about running dads groups at the Care for the Family playtime conference last September, and I attended a Who Let the Dads Out mini conference at Care for the Family headquarters. Momentum in other churches opening up their doors to dads and their children is growing, and it's great to be helping other churches and other leaders.

Oasis - Ken Earith

Oasis continues to be a blessing for so many people. We now regularly have between 70 to 80+ people joining us each week. The piece below was written by one of the ladies who is a regular member of Oasis.

"Oasis is so aptly named! Outside, it may be cold and unfriendly, outside we may be experiencing some of the difficulties that come with older age - loneliness, anxieties and health problems. But once a week we can leave them behind for a few hours. Step inside, and there is our oasis. A refuge, a relief, rest, good food and great company."

There are smiles everywhere, it's warm, it's comfortable and it's welcoming. There are smiles if we choose to play table games, do crosswords, jig saws or colouring - smiles and groans when we work out at the keep fit sessions, there are smiles if we simply listen to the piano playing or choose to sit and chat.

Guywood is such a pleasant place to be, and the lunch is always so delicious, home-made soup, crusty bread, cake and another hot drink. There is always our thought for the day, a quiet reflective time, followed by grace before our meal where we give thanks. We give special thanks for those who care for us and make us feel special, nurtured and valued.

Other people have said -

"Oasis is a lifeline"

"Oasis is something to look forward to at the beginning of each week"

"I live alone and it keeps me going"

"I feel that Oasis has saved my life by meeting other people who are going through the same problems. I know now that I'm not alone"

"It's opened a new door into my life"

"Oasis has given me a new lease of life after losing my husband"

As with so many ministries one of the key elements is the faithfulness and dedication of the wonderful Oasis volunteers who do an amazing job each week. But with increased numbers and some of us beginning to feel our age, it would be good to have new volunteers to join the team.

Loving Community



Pastoral Visiting – Irene & John Rockley

God's love in action

St Chads is a church where many people show the love of Jesus by caring for each other in all sorts of ways. The Pastoral Visiting team faithfully visit some 15 people on a regular basis who are housebound or in care homes. We are grateful to every member of the team for their continuing support, wisdom, ideas and willingness to share experiences.

Being family

The team have started sending cards on behalf of the church to those who are shut-in to assure them that they are not forgotten. And thanks to our TBN young people who sang Christmas carols at the homes of some who are unable to get to church as frequently as they once did.

Care Home Services

The team have been praying for opportunity to conduct regular services in local care homes and God opened the way for a carol service at Silverdale Care Home in Bredbury; thanks to everyone involved.

The carol service was very special for everyone; *"Carols lift Jesus. Jesus dives into our spirits without us needing our brains."* – Jill Hookway

"It was lovely to see all the residents joining in and singing carols. I was in bits at the back of the room".
– Silverdale staff member

Warm Spaces – Vicky Reedy

We are thankful to Stockport council again for providing us with a grant to provide refreshments and activities for families between November and March. We were able to provide the Wednesday afternoon group free of charge, and we have a run an afternoon group every other Saturday from January to March, providing space to play, refreshments and company for the adults. This saw 15–20 families attend each time, the place is so peaceful, not quiet!! But there was a relaxed feel as children watched short films and played while the adults talked.

Everyone has been very grateful for somewhere to come on a Saturday afternoon to provide play for the children and warmth and company.

Early Essentials – Sally King

We have had another busy year thanks so many generous donations. Our small team of volunteers have worked very hard. We have provided 105 baskets which contain nearly 100 items to mums in need across Stockport. We are grateful that we are always able to respond and we have not had to turn away a single referral. We would like to thank St Chads and The LifeCentre for their ongoing support. We were blessed to be given a donation from the "tips" given to The LifeCentre to buy books, toys, snowsuits, coats and lots of shower gel and toothpaste! Many of our St Chads family support us by knitting/crocheting beautiful blankets to go into the baskets. It is extra special to include them knowing they have been handmade with love especially for these babies.

A couple of recent comments from midwives to remind us that what we do makes a difference.

"Thanks, it made a big difference, the baby was not in safe sleeping conditions and the family were so grateful for the support"

"Thank you to you all, I don't know what we would do without you"

As a team we will continue to do all that we can to meet as much need as possible. Our search for bigger premises has not yet been successful, if you have any suggestions please let us know. Thank you for supporting us and surrounding our project in prayer.

Loving Community



Cherry Tree Project & Food provision – Rachel Bresnahan

This year has been a busy one on Cherry Tree. With the loss of our food storage we have had to streamline our services and really focus on what's important – Jesus!

We are still running the food hub from the Guywood, our weekly youth groups and a lunch club. Our school holiday provisions are busier than ever and we've had teenagers from all over Stockport coming to join us. We also fundraised over £10,000 to purchase slow cookers for The Stockport Food Network.

In addition we have started to embrace a call to ministry with a weekly youth church and 2 Warm Spaces, one at the Hub and one at the Guywood where we get to eat breakfast whilst talking about Jesus (please keep praying!).

Thank you to everyone who has supported us, we love our church family and are very grateful!

The LifeCentre – Lesley Cranwell

Although a separate charity, the Romiley LifeCentre is a key part of our ministry and mission to Romiley. Set up to bless our community, the LifeCentre continues to go from strength to strength, staffed almost entirely by a team of over 80 volunteers. Thank you!

The café is busier than ever. The shop is stocked with gifts, cards, Christian books and a range of babywear; so the shop now offers something for every user of the LifeCentre. In 2023 we have begun to research local suppliers of gifts and cards so we can support local businesses and makers.

The conference facilities on the upper floor of the LifeCentre continue to be a popular venue for local institutions and businesses, in addition to being a valued asset acting as a home to several St Chads ministries. It also provides a meeting point for local groups that support the wellbeing of our community.

Christians Against Poverty – a Christian Debt Counselling Service – who, together with Stockport Credit Union also make use of these facilities for various meetings bringing valuable support and advice to our community. Other users include Hear & Now – a free listening service – which is now held weekly and run in tandem with Stockport Christian Counselling (SCC) – all our listeners are volunteers who have been trained and who are supported by SCC. SCC have been also granted greater use of the counselling room during 2023 whilst they search for a new home from which to run their counselling services. We support the local Foodbank by collecting & delivering donations and issuing vouchers. We are the HQ of Early Essentials, who work with professionals and volunteers distributing hampers of essential items to new mums and their babies in need within our local community.

Knit & Gather continues to use the LifeCentre as a meeting point and encourages the acquisition of new skills whilst building community. This group encourages diverse age groups, enriching the collective creativity of our community and has been an invaluable support network for the community.

The Sanctuary, our prayer room, is for anyone looking for a quiet space, as well as for St Chads prayer groups who meet there weekly.

AI Anon continue to use the Sanctuary as a meeting space.



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