

## 2025 APCM Rector's Report

I know that a new rector may well want to change some things about the way Saint Matthias runs but I doubt we will be moving very far away from the calling we have here

### TO WORSHIP GOD

**TO MAKE DISCIPLES** - new ones and better disciples of ourselves

**TO TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES**, working with the Lord to bring in his Kingdom both here in this church community, to our homes, our local community and beyond.

As each year goes by I am full of wonder about how many different ways we are able to do these things

and I'm very grateful to everyone for putting together the two sections of this amazing and encouraging annual report – which make very encouraging reading.

I'm also full of delight that we are called to do **this together** as the people of God in this place

It will not surprise you that, the 12th and last of my annual meetings, I draw your attention to the Bible text engraved in stone on the outside of this building, the Bible text of 1 Peter 2:4 used when this church was opened in 1858.

*<sup>4</sup>As you come to him, the living Stone – rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him – <sup>5</sup>you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house<sup>[a]</sup> to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup>*

### St. Peter continues this theme a few verses later

*<sup>9</sup>But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

So it is **together** as a chosen people that we come to Jesus the Living stone

**Together** in humility we use our gifts and **together** as we love one another we reveal Jesus to the world

**Together** we share energy and time and finances to build God's Kingdom here and it's an exciting calling.

So how do we go about living that out?

A new rector may also want to reassess the values that we have been wanting to live by in this particular community of faith, but the values still have value, for now at least!

I rejoice that we continue to want to be

### GENEROUS LIKE JESUS

We have been generous with our finances, well God's finances really – offering support to the wider church in Devon though our contribution to the Common Fund, as well as our mission tithe supporting kingdom work beyond this community.

A small number of people have been generous over and above their general giving to the church by enabling a fund to be built up to enable us to employ Helen – who we are thrilled to have join the leadership team – and by the way, many thanks to Tessa for persevering with advertising and contracts work needed to find her!

The challenge to all of us now is how can we fund this very key role from our general giving in the future?

But at the heart of the desire to be generous like Jesus lies at the heart of the gospel – we want to be vehicles of God's own hospitality – as Jesus declares 'whoever comes to me I will never turn away.'

I thank God that we are able to offer that in many ways, whether that is with welcome space, coffee box; our regular services or enabling the church centre to be home for 78 different community organisations including the wonderful preschool; mummy and me; school services.

(noting a particular thanks to Sue Davies as Safeguarding Lead, have been enabled to offer all hospitality of Jesus safely.)

Moving on, there are two of our four values that relate to our being God's people rooted in this place yet at the same time on a journey :

We want to be **GOING JESUS WAY**: Following him, seeking to live holy and obedient lives and **GROWING ON THE JOURNEY**:

growing in number and to discover more and more of what God has in store for us

Helping us to do both of these are our **regular worship services so**, thank you to everyone who enables our these to happen including Paul Sherriff and the small 'Facilities Management Action Group' along with Pere and Mike Biden for working to keep the buildings in good shape to allow that worship to happen.

We are thankful that the **8:00 am** congregation continues faithfully; it's really encouraging to see **the 9:30 Explore** start to grow once more and we are particularly excited that several new family are now coming regularly having invested in running Explore every week for the past 9 months or so.

**The 11:00 congregation** is at least holding its own too and it's wonderful to see the growth and energy in the monthly **youth led 5:30 praise services** – a delight to see the confidence of the young people as they grow in their gifts and faith and the associated growth in the youth club - so well done to Ali, Linda, Claire, Hannah and a whole host of extra adults who have recently joined the crew **Home groups** and other life groups remind key to help us grow as disciples is we cannot expect to do that very well if we only come on a Sunday.

That's why things like the Lent courses are so valuable and last year as we explored Mark's gospel, with the extraordinary read through of the whole of the gospel in Holy Week

**The action groups** continued to function well enabling more people to use their gifts to serve in different ways – thank you to those who lead these vital groups and I believe **we have grown in number** of people who belong as living stones here.

Thanks to Paulina's persistence and Pere's help in organising our electoral roll revision there are now 174 names on the roll. You may think that's disappointing given there were 180 at the start of this year but when we look at the names in detail we discover that 25 of those 180 have either died or moved away so by my reckoning 174 indicates a net growth of 20 or so people! And up from 143 in 2015.

Yet another cause for delight is that as a people of God here we have steadily developed an outward looking focus, impelled to share something of our 4th value to be **KNOWING GOD'S JOY:**

We had another periods of visiting homes in the parish ; and held events like the Ceilidh, picnics and the pet service;  
Girls Allowed, the Gospel Choir and Matts Knits continue to be places where people can be welcomed in gentle ways.

**On the journey theme** I can't help looking back a little over the last 11 years Ruth and I have sought to go Jesus way and to grow on the journey with you – weathering covid along the way

**on the practical side** we now have

- a car park,
- the forest school area,
- the whole wellspring project,
- have more LED lights everywhere and more to come
- a refurbished loo,
- and are looking to add more solar panels to the centre roof with battery storage,

Many of these developments have been helped significantly by the **Friends of Saint Matthias** so a big thank you to you is due.

**Moving on** from the more practical matters of running the church, I'm sure you'll be encouraged to recall how

A together we have enabled several new church leaders to follow their calling to ordination and reader ministry:

- Beginning with Mark Lord-Lear
- followed swiftly by Paul Barton, Steve vans Colina – now a Reader in Paignton
- Steven Yates and Pete Norris had been curates here
- Lindsey Glazebrook left to return to Bath and is now ordained herself
- Ruth Beckett has followed the same trajectory; with Claire Reynolds joining us as curate and Sharon Hiley enroute.

It seems an appropriate point to remind us of the wonderful ways that Brian and Norma Gerry have served us over many years as they officially retired this year; and how grateful we are for the ministry of Andrew Green, Dallas Ayling, & David Hodson, with that team now enhanced with Helen Baker's arrival.

B There are new ministries that have developed over the last few years some of which we already mentioned:

- prayer ministry runs regularly
- we are able to stream services
- there is a weekly 930 congregation grown from the early days of the once a month Prayzone
- the website has had a number of new incarnations
- with Susy Wrights' work Facebook and Instagram now have significant followers but that ministry really needs more support and interest please

So be encouraged - God is still using you and me! We're still on the journey, and still belong as God's people to Him and to one another

#### So what next...

It's not easy leaving. It has been our home for more than 11 years and we've enjoyed living here.

It's a place where we have been loved and supported by the people of God here. It's not easy leaving knowing of the increase in work that will be needed to cover some of the gaps that I will temporarily leave, so please remember:

- The challenge to find the money to pay for Helen's role with youth and children from our general giving and also to fund some extra office support.
- But also note how our needs are often less about money, but more about committed help for often unglamorous work like sorting the fabric of the building; setting up for services and running the AV, supporting the preschool...So please do pray about where your gifts can best be used to support one another as the vacancy unfolds.

But coming into land, I need to briefly offer heartfelt thanks to a few other people

- I know we will all want to thank Cliff for always being there ahead of us.
- To Valerie and all of our musicians and singers.
- To Ruth for supporting me during what has not been an easy year for us with having to move out of the Rectory.
- Thanks to Ester as Secretary, and Margaret as Treasurer and the whole PCC
- And the Staff Team who are owed particular thanks, who include:

- Clare and Cheryl, you are wonderfully wise and prayerful sisters to us;
- Pere as administrator and church centre manager, great support to me personally;
- Sylvia as ops coordinator who continues to serve in that role despite life being so much more demanding for her;
- I've already mentioned Dallas and Sharon;
- thanks to Claire Reynolds for your energetic serving and caring, and to Al for your regular help too;
- and last but by no means least, to Paul Barton for countless hours of energetic work for and with all of us – and to Tessa for putting up with that!

I hope you know how special it is to belong to this set of living stones in this place.

I hope you believe as I do that God has more for you here, a bigger vision for what we are called to become

I hope that you find a new rector who helps you continue be

**GENEROUS LIKE JESUS,  
TO GROW ON THE JOURNEY BY  
GOING JESUS WAY  
KNOWING GOD'S JOY as you do.**

One more thing I hope might be a bit of a legacy, to encourage you to pray like this:

**'Three fold hand prayer'**

Hands Up  
Surrender



Hands Out  
Generosity



Hands Forward  
Mission

