

# ANNUAL REVIEW

May 2022 – May 2023 | St James Church | Devizes



**LOVE GOD LOVE NEIGHBOUR**  
**GO OUT MAKE DISCIPLES**



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Social Service



AV Volunteers

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Friday Toddlers



Spa Social



Community Games Night



# From Richard & Keith

At last year's APCM we presented our continuing *Vision for Growth and Mission* characterised by the cycle of *breathing in and breathing out*; a desire to grow, develop, and deepen our faith and discipleship whilst simultaneously investing in the community of Devizes and beyond, sharing the good news of God's love for his creation. Part of this vision was the decision to increase our investment in Children & Young People (CYP) by recruiting Bethany as our CYP Worker and to look to retain Richard after his curacy in a shared leadership role with Keith.

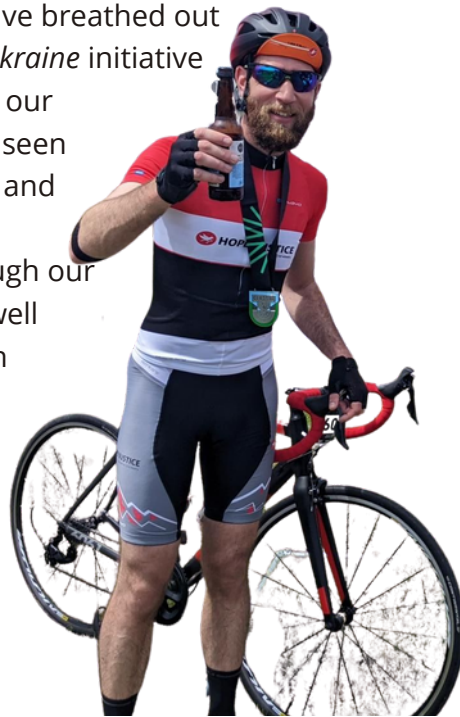
It is wonderful, a year later, to be able to see the fruit of this vision and these decisions made in faith. We have secured funding and approval for Richard to continue as "the other vicar" of St James, and Bethany's post has been funded for 3 years. But it is not only these posts that have demonstrated our desire to breathe in and breathe out.

This year, as a church family, we have breathed in and grown in our discipleship as we have studied what it means to be a church and the different ways we each can connect with God. We have supported each other through the difficulties and challenges of life. We have also breathed out as we have continued our outdoor community services at Easter and Christmas, including our inaugural *Devizes Advent[ure]* on the Green throughout Advent. We have breathed out as we supported the *LoveUkraine* initiative welcoming and supporting our Ukrainian guests. We have seen our church family increase and it has been a delight to welcome new people through our *Newcomers Gatherings*, as well as catch up with the church family through *Lunch with the Vicars* held at the end of 2022.

We have also sought to engage more deeply with the people of our parish through our *Parish Survey* which showed the good reputation St James has in its community, but also revealed that people considered their own spiritual health to be lower than either their mental or physical. Of note was that 85% of people who responded demonstrated an openness to there being something greater than, and outside of, themselves. Only 17% would definitely not turn to spirituality to help them deal with the challenges of life. The results of this survey will be integral to our thinking as we continue to prayerfully consider how to continue breathing out in the year ahead.

It has been a full year, and within this review we only have space to cover a few aspects of the life and faith of St James. However, every day, as the vicars of St James, we are reminded how blessed we are by the prayerful, faithful, eager, and passionate church family that we are part of. It is a joy to travel the journey of faith with you and we, the church staff, the Church Wardens, and the PCC are excited to see where God leads us in the year to come.

God bless.



# The Last 12 Months



CHURCH FAMILY

236



YOUTUBE SUBSCRIBERS

266



FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

872



NEW TO CHURCH FAMILY

54



IN CONNECT GROUPS

115



ST JAMES FESTIVAL

144



REGULAR GIVERS

160



VOLUNTEERS

119



BAPTISMS

9



WEDDINGS

5

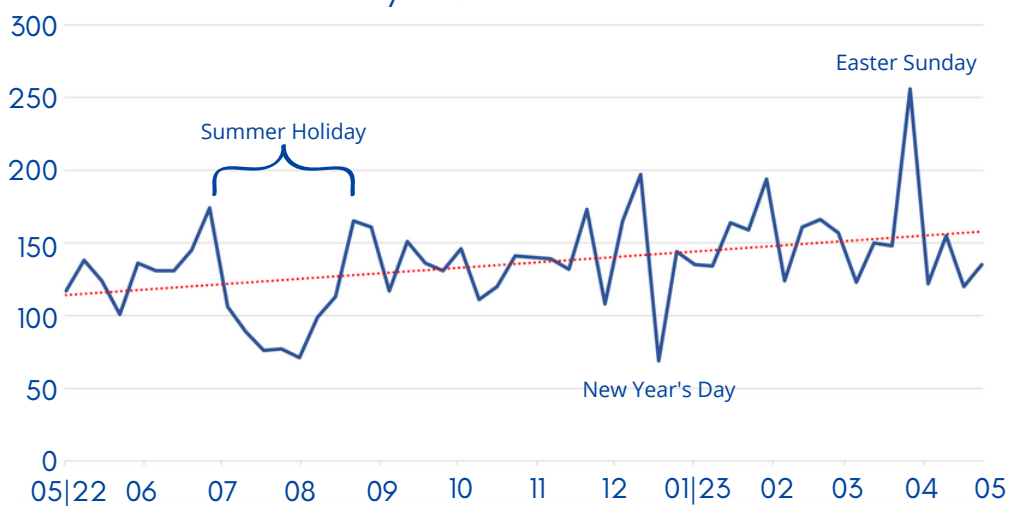


FUNERALS

27

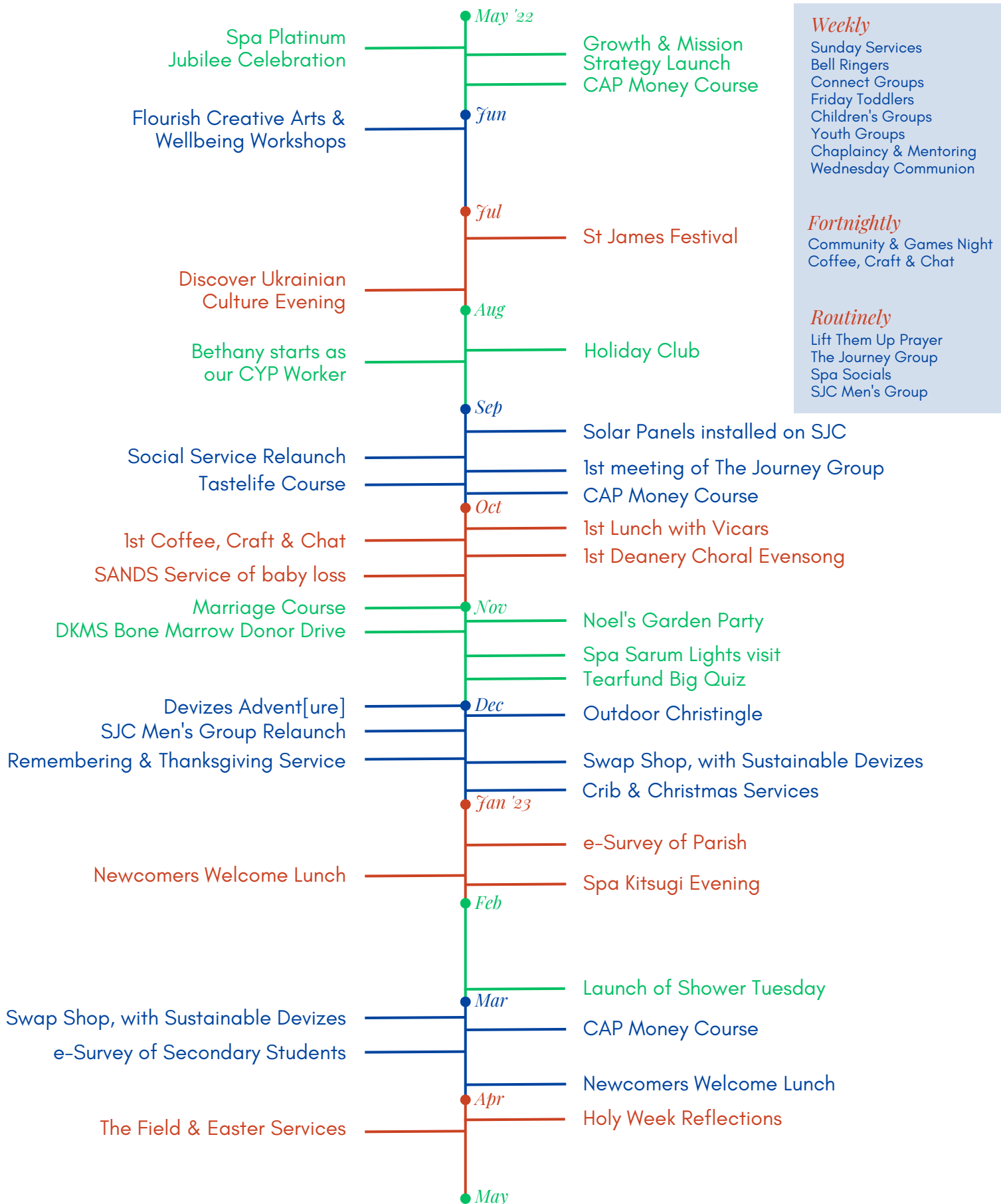


Sunday Service Attendance





# The Last 12 Months





# Church Life

Richard



Devizes Police at Advent[ure]

If I was to attempt to succinctly describe the *Church Life* of St James I would have to start with the phrase, 'passionately and actively diverse'. Our shared *Church Life* embraces so much that it is impossible to summarise it all. Furthermore, as this whole review is about the life of St James these two pages are just an excuse to include some facets of church life that have not been covered elsewhere.

Family is what, at its heart, St James is called to be and what we strive to be. As with any family, life is not always easy, but we endeavour to 'be there' for each other offering support and encouragement allowing each of us, and those in our community, to know we are not alone. Often this support is informal and unstructured like a shared conversation and a cup of coffee or a quiet walk side by side. Our Lay Pastoral Assistants (LPAs) also do phenomenal work, quietly engaging with those who need a conversation and to know they are loved. Working alongside these informal

conversations are many groups and activities that seek to provide the space for family to be family.

This year we have also appointed Kirsty Wilmott as our new Pastoral Coordinator with the objective of identifying where people may have fallen through the cracks of our structured support. Kirsty said, "there are numerous people at St James who visit, phone, and walk alongside the folk they come across in their daily lives. There is a tremendous amount of prayer, love and compassion already being shown. It's wonderful. I hear so many lovely stories of kindness and love."



I used to go to church ages ago, but now, for the first time in my life, God is real to me. Having a faith means something to me and I want to know more about Jesus.  
*Angie, new church member*



# Church Life

Richard

Throughout this year we have offered spaces for people to be themselves such as *Community & Games Night*, *Men's Socials*, *SPA Ladies Socials*, and the new *Coffee Craft and Chat*. All these are not only for our church family but for our wider community and provide that opportunity to tackle loneliness, isolation, and anxiety. For those facing particularly challenging circumstances, our *Lift Them Up* services provide an opportunity to bring our lives before God and seek his intervention and peace, and *The Journey Group* continues to provide a safe place for those living with life-changing health or wellbeing conditions and those supporting them.

Some parts of our *Church Life* recognise and seek to address the particular needs of specific groups. *LoveUkraine* has continued to support Ukrainian families in our community, providing English lessons, funding, advice, SIM cards, a venue for socials, and more. Another new initiative, *Shower Tuesday*, uses SJC to provide facilities for those living on the canal.

We know that at the centre of family life is the God of relationships and so, as a family, we try to keep God's love for all as the foundation of all we do. As such we try to explore and investigate faith and life together through weekly *Connect Groups*, church services, and our annual *St James Festival*, which is always an amazing opportunity to gather as family and deepen our relationships with each other and with God.



I thank God for you – you are very kind, helpful and generous people. I am happy to be with you at this time.  
*Viktoriya, Ukrainian church member*



Coffee, Craft & Chat

## TEACHING SERIES

**Empowered by Example** | Apr-Jul '22 | A closer look at the women found in the Bible; inspiring us and empowering our own faith by their examples of faith, character, and action.

**Church: It's Something More** | Sep-Nov '22 | Is going to church just something more to do in the week, or is it the *something more* that sets us up for the week ahead?

**Connecting with God** | Jan-Apr '23 | We are all different, and we each connect with God differently. For some of us it's all about the sung worship. There is no one-size-fits-all path to connect with God. This series looks at 9 distinctly different ways that we can connect with God.

**What has Romans Ever Done for us** | Apr-July '23 | Part 1: Chapters 1-8. This dive into Paul's letter to the early church in Rome unpicks the complex language and ideas in it, to show just how much it has done for us. Part 2, which will cover the final 8 chapters, will happen in 2024.

**MISSED ONE !** All our teaching series can be found on our *ViralStJames* Youtube Channel.



# Bethany *Children, Youth & Families*

At St James we believe that everyone is part of the family, and this includes our children and young people (CYP) just as much as anyone else. Because of our heart for CYP, we provide loads of regular ways for them to connect with God and grow in faith.

In Aug '22, as part of our *Growth and Mission Vision* I was appointed as the churches full-time CYP worker.

One of the first things I did was visit the amazing *Summer Holiday Club*, where Primary School aged children from across the town spent a week hearing the Good News of Jesus. The days were full of fun, drama, games, and crafts. It was also great to see many of our church youth volunteering, and growing in faith as they did.

In Sep '22 our CYP groups restarted. The heart of St James to support CYP was evident by new volunteers coming forward, as well as those who had tirelessly given years to support the growing faith of young followers of Jesus.

## CHILDREN & YOUTH ACTIVITIES

**Sunday Creche** | *weekly, term time* | 0-5 yrs

**Friday Toddlers** | *weekly, term time* | 0-5 yrs

**Sunday Impact & Rollercoasters** | *weekly, term time* | Primary

**Friday Impact & Rollercoasters** | *fortnightly, term time* | Primary

**Sunday 10:10** | *weekly, term time* | Secondary

**Wednesday 10:10** | *weekly, term time* | Secondary

**Vision** | *Weekly, term time, Tues* | 6th Form - 21yrs

**Holiday Club** | *Annually, Aug* | Primary

**Crib Service (nativity)** | *Annually, Dec* | All-age





# Children, Youth & Families Bethany

Over the last few months *Sunday Impact & Rollercoasters* (for Primary School children) has engaged with Jesus' Parables, Jesus' Miracles, and The Fruit of the Spirit. We have also learnt lots of new songs and actions (although all are fond of *Jesus, You're My Superhero* and *My Lighthouse* remains the clear favourite). Each week there are lots of different activities - some enjoy re-enacting Bible stories; others get their energy out with football prayers; whilst others enjoy the chats we have. We've also baked bread, grown cress, and been wrapped up in toilet paper.

Up until Oct '22 there had been nothing for teenagers on a Sunday for a few years. However, thanks to a new cohort of volunteers, *Sunday 10:10* was launched to provide a space for our teenagers to grow in faith. Acting a bit like a youth *Connect Group*, we've been able to look at the big questions around life and faith. *Sunday 10:10* continues to evolve and become the space the teenagers most need. Much like *Wednesday 10:10*, the faith and wisdom of our youth is an example to us all: This Easter some of them took part in the *Holy Week Reflections*.

It has also been great to see teenagers who have no church connection coming to *Wednesday 10:10* wanting to learn more about Jesus.

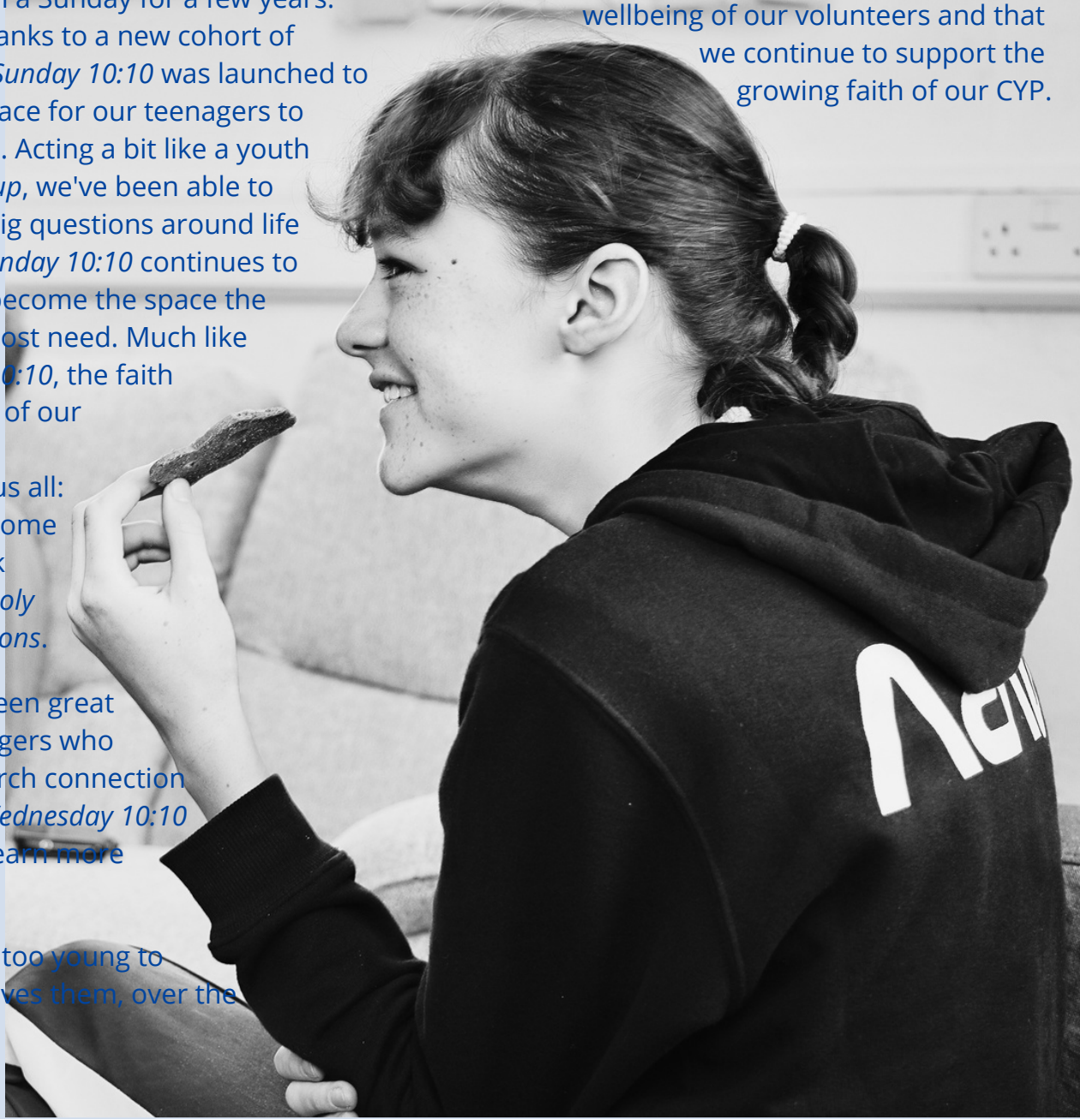
As no one is too young to know God loves them, over the



Bethany is amazing. She is a fantastic listener, understanding, caring, and has a lot of love to give to the young people and families of Devizes. Bethany is brilliant with children of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. *Becky, mum of 3*

last year, we've refocused on this at *Friday Toddlers*. For example, over Christmas, 40+ toddlers took part in our mini-Christingle, each receiving the *The Story of Christmas* book, which we read from over Christmas.

Please pray for the continued energy and wellbeing of our volunteers and that we continue to support the growing faith of our CYP.



# Primary Schools

Richard

After the successful launch of the *Love Language* course last year, 2023 saw a growth of this provision. In collaboration with Rob Jackson (The Bridge Project), we took the course into the two primary schools St James is linked with; The Trinity Primary Academy (Trinity) and Southbroom St James Academy (SSJA).

The course introduces children to the primary ways that we all show and receive love. The course recognizes that each of us has a preferred way of receiving love. Over the course, Keith led collective worship at SSJA, whilst Richard led them at Trinity. At each session everyone was introduced to one of the five love languages, showing how God is love, and that Jesus is the ultimate example of how to love each other. The schools were encouraged to consider how they could show each other love through that week's love language in an intentional way.

Each week, Rob then took the children from Years 5 & 6 into greater depth of each love language giving them the opportunity to discover what their preferred love language is and how they can serve each other in friendships and their relationships with teachers and family alike.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

**Foundation Governor** | Trinity, SSJA

**Faith Days** | SSJA | Introducing the mutual interaction of faith and science

**Eco-Christingle & Carols Services** | Trinity, SSJA, Southbroom Infants

**Devizes Advent[ure]** | Trinity, SSJA

**The Field & Easter Services** | Trinity, SSJA

The course culminated with the children joining our Wednesday Communion congregation for their weekday service. At this service the children were introduced to how a communion service helps us to remember how much we are loved by God, and many of the strange or unusual parts of the service were explained (which was also appreciated by many of our regular congregation). As part of the service children, teachers, and parents were invited to receive a blessing, which many present accepted.

“St James were incredibly welcoming. The children enjoyed a great service about *Hope*, and took a moment to think about this while they laid their crosses at the altar.  
*Assistant Principal, Southbroom Infants*





# Secondary Schools Bethany

Building on my involvement in Devizes School last year, I have continued in my role as School Chaplain, spending my Tuesdays in school. I am available to students during a drop-in when they need a listening ear. I also run weekly 1-2-1 sessions for students who have been identified as needing extra support. These can be self-referrals or following on from a conversation with the school's Pastoral Team. I am also in and around school to chat with students, their families and school staff.

In May '22 I supported several students through exam stress.

I welcomed in Year 6 students during the school's Induction Days. This helped to ease the nerves of some students, as they were passed on from the Primary School Chaplain (Rob Jackson) to me; which as one former Trinity student said



It helped me to feel there was someone I could trust and talk to when I was struggling, as I already knew Bethany

At the start of the new academic year I meet the new Year 7 students who I'd met with whilst they were at Primary School. I also caught up with a lot of the older students who needed someone to speak to after difficult summers, some having been affected by violence and/or bereavement for the first time. I was able to help them work through their grief compassionately and, as a Christian, I could speak about their loss.

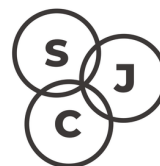
At the start of the year my role as Chaplain involved welcoming the new Principal, whilst supporting students and staff as they adapted to the changes new leadership brings.

After a 2 year pause due to the pandemic it was great to see *Crammer Cafe*, our afterschool club, restarted in Dec '22. *Crammer Cafe* is a safe space afterschool each Thursday for students to chat, play games, talk about life and God, and eat toast. We have a kindhearted bunch who come each week; many of whom lack confidence and self-esteem. For them, knowing that someone will listen makes a huge difference. Recently, one of them told me that they are going to help make the hot chocolate because they wanted to talk to the lovely volunteer in the kitchen.

In Feb '23, we surveyed students at both Devizes and Lavington Schools, asking questions about their Christian experiences, their opinions on Christianity, faith position, and how they may want to explore faith further. We had an overwhelming response, with more than 1000 students responding from both schools. The findings from this survey will help us refine what we do in the coming year. Please pray as we react to the needs of young people and how they could best encounter Jesus.

## ACTIVITIES

- 1-2-1 Mentoring
- Student & Staff Support
- Year 6 Transition
- Crammer Cafe
- Supporting the School's Student Council
- 6th Form Volunteering
- Student Survey
- Remembrance Service



## SJC Usage Church

Church Office & Administration  
CAP Debt Centre  
Sunday Impact & Rollercoasters  
Sunday 10:10  
Vision (Tuesdays)  
Shower Tuesday  
Wednesday 10:10  
The Journey Group  
Coffee, Craft & Chat  
Community Games Night  
Marriage Course  
Spa Group Socials  
Connect Groups  
Flourish  
Lunch with the Vicars  
Newcomers Welcome Lunches  
Church Meetings (PCC, Advent[ure], etc)

## Community

Devizes & District Foodbank  
Devizes OpenDoors  
DOCA  
Fun Art  
Historical Society  
LoveUkraine  
National Citizen Service  
Salisbury Diocese Courses  
SANDS  
Spurgeons  
Stroke Association  
Turning Point  
Wiltshire Council Youth Service  
Wiltshire Council Youth Offending Team  
Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living  
Wiltshire Mental Health Inclusion Services  
Wiltshire Mind  
Wiltshire Youth for Christ

The range of charitable organisations using SJC continues to grow, with users' recommendations driving new interest. The vast majority of external bookings are by local charities and several departments of Wiltshire Council, which is fulfilling our primary aim of serving the community, building relationships and enabling the people of Devizes to flourish, as we prayed it would.

In an exciting development, SJC will be hosting a collaboration between the Devizes and District Food Bank, Citizens Advice and Christians Against Poverty, which will support members of the community with both food and advice, for at least the next 12 months.

For both the St James congregation and members of the local community, SJC hosts Games Nights and Coffee, Craft & Chat drop-in sessions. Numbers have grown for both events, with word of mouth encouraging new attendees. As a result, St James Church and SJC were able to register as a 'Warm Space' with Devizes Town Council.

Over the last year, we have taken steps to reduce our costs and help tackle climate change with the installation of solar roof panels on the SJC roof.

We all feel very privileged to be able to welcome such a variety of guests into SJC on behalf of St James Church and look forward to greeting many more in the months and years to come.





# CAP Debt Centre *Kate*

I have the privilege of managing our CAP Debt Centre, funded by the generosity of members of our church, and supported by a small number of amazing befrienders and a faithful prayer team. Our main aim is to help families struggling with the burden of debt, to provide them with advice tailored to their situation, and to walk alongside them for as long as it takes for them to become debt-free. However, as we've continued to see over the last few years, debt is usually only one factor for people amidst a far more complex set of struggles, and therefore in practice, our role is far more challenging and varied. In addition to debt advice, this year we have provided practical support in the form of food boxes, fresh fruit and vegetables, fuel payments, phone top-up vouchers, furniture, a cooker, a washing machine, and work clothing, on top of our regular Christmas gifts, hampers, and Easter eggs. Clients have received support in house clearance, applying for certain benefits, attending meetings and making difficult phone calls, as well as just having someone to take them out for coffee and chat with them. Some have been brave enough to come along to church events and it's great to see how they have grown in confidence and self-esteem as they build relationships with us.

As the cost-of-living crisis has taken hold over the last year, we are now faced with a situation where some households simply don't have enough income to make ends meet; repaying their debts is, therefore, impossible, and while their debts could be cleared through insolvency, they are unable to prevent themselves from falling straight back into debt. The picture is bleak and our work all the more challenging. Others find

the expectations of debt repayment too demanding or restrictive and only manage to get so far. While this year has seen some households fall away, a small number who had struggled previously have returned to CAP with a renewed determination to deal with debts, which is great to see. We have certainly been very busy, with a waiting list for appointments of several months at times. There's no magic wand to wave to resolve debt, and there are times when, to be honest, I've felt totally helpless, frustrated and at a loss, but that's when I just have to turn to prayer, and the joy of this job is that you get to see God's miracles daily, in the small stuff and the big things: a debt balance reduced by a creditor from over £800 to £80, a court case for eviction dropped or a new job out of the blue for someone who'd been made redundant. When I feel like throwing in the towel, I just have to remember the stories of my clients, many of which are harrowing, and keep fighting; as one put it, 'It was like my life was in darkness and you turned on a light. If I hadn't met you, I don't think I'd still be here'.

Thank you for all your support. You are literally saving lives.

## CAP ACTIVITIES

40 households supported  
29 new client bookings

3 CAP Money Courses

56 food boxes  
10 fuel payments  
23 Christmas hampers  
60 Christmas gifts  
116 Easter eggs

# Friends & Partners



Wiltshire Council



## Mission Partners



Our Mission Partners are local, national, and international charities we work closely with. Every partner has a champion at St James. Each year we give 10% of all we receive from donations to our partners. We review who we partner with every 3-5 years; always seeking to join others sharing the Gospel and bringing about the flourishing of humanity and all of creation.



# Finance & Giving

The best way to give,  
especially by PGS.  
(see below)

Regular Giving, 45%

Investments, 1%

Fees, 2%

Lettings, 2%

Other Misc, 5%

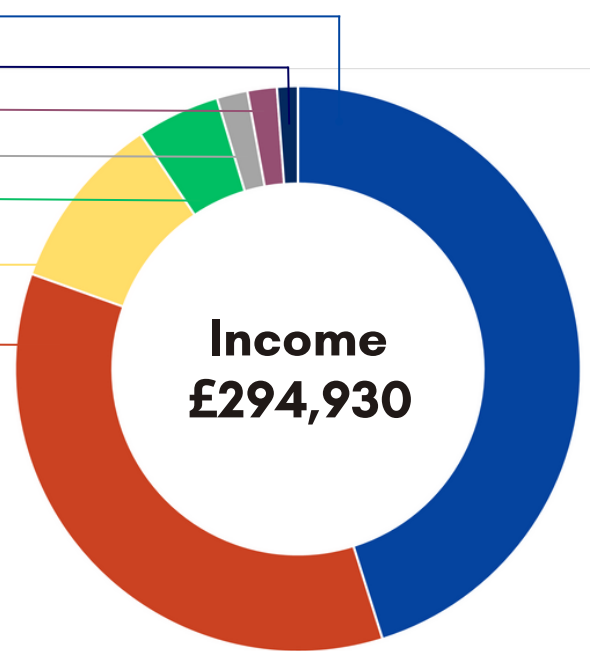
Makes such a huge difference.  
If you can, please do it.

Gift Aid, 10%

Other Donations, 35%

Includes significant one-off donations allocated  
to *Growth & Mission Vision* for next 3 years,  
of circa £40,000, hence surplus

Income & Expenditure 2022  
Actual Operating Surplus £33,570



Paid to Diocese to cover  
clergy stipend, housing,  
curacy training, services, &  
to fund struggling churches

Parish Share, 44%

Other, 2%

Children & Young People, 4%

Church Costs, 7%

See page 12

Mission Partners, 8%

Includes CAP Debt Centre

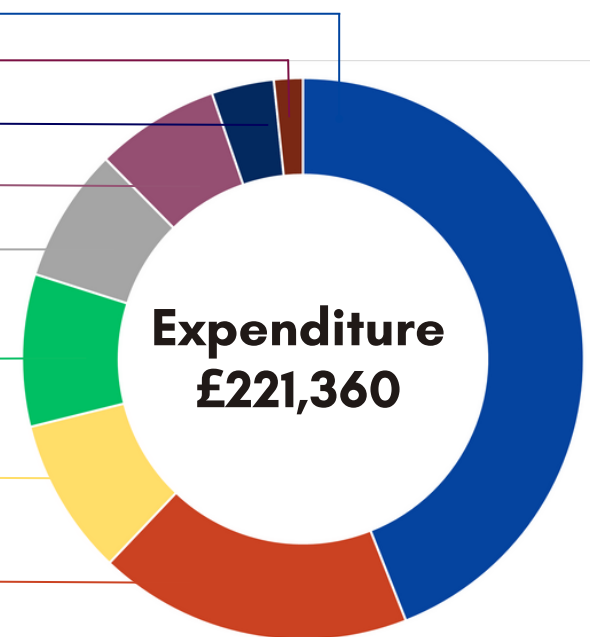
Local Mission, 9%

Office costs and salary  
of P/T administrator

Office & Admin, 9%

Includes installing of solar  
panels & external repairs

St James Centre, 18%



Over 90% of our income comes from the church family. That is all of us giving so that we and others can experience and be transformed by the love of Jesus. It is an amazing and wonderful thing to be a part of. Giving to God's Kingdom and for the glory of Jesus, whether in prayer, time, creativity or finances, is something St James, us lot, have always done intentionally, joyfully, and generously.



Giving regularly means that we are better able to plan for the future, and deliver on the Vision we are called to as a church family.

The best, most secure, and easiest, way to give is via the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS).

Scan the QR code or use the link to find out more / register:  
[tinyurl.com/stjamespgs](https://tinyurl.com/stjamespgs)



LOVE GOD  
LOVE NEIGHBOUR  
GO OUT  
MAKE DISCIPLES



St James Festival '22 (& front cover)

# ST JAMES CHURCH

[stjamesdevizes.org](http://stjamesdevizes.org)  
[stjamescentredevizes.org](http://stjamescentredevizes.org)

 StJamesDevizes  
 @ViralStJames

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