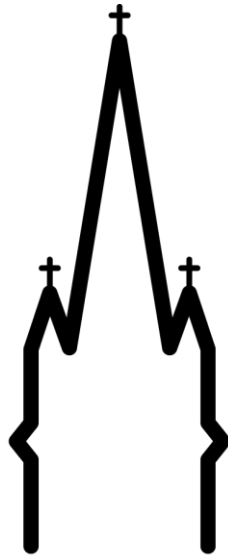


# ST JUDE'S CHURCH, PLYMOUTH

Annual Report for the Year ending  
31 December 2023



## ST JUDES

PLYMOUTH

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL  
FOR THE APCM 28 APRIL 2024

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## Administrative Information

St Jude's Church is situated on a site it shares with its Upper Hall, Lower Hall, Church Cottage and Vicarage, on the corner of Beaumont Road and Tothill Road. It is part of the Diocese of Exeter within the Church of England. The Vicarage part of the site is the responsibility of the Diocese of Exeter. The correspondence address is: The Vicarage, Knighton Road, Plymouth PL4 9BU.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Jude is registered with the Charity Commission No. 1134316.

SPECIAL NOTES ON CHANGES FROM 2020. The newly revised "Church Representation Rules" on elections were formally adopted (Recorded in the October 2020 APCM Minutes) and relevant items on elections are below:

- i. That Churchwardens will be elected once for a maximum period of service of 6 years, previously 5 years, after which they must step down for at least 1 year.
- ii. That PCC members will be elected once for a maximum period of service of 3 years, previously annually for a maximum of 3 years, after which they must step down for at least 1 year.
- iii. That Deanery Synod Representatives are elected once for the three-year term of the Synod (i.e. a 'Trimester' which re-starts in 2023), being able to serve the Parish for two consecutive terms, after which they must step down for at least 1 Trimester.

Church Members who served on the PCC for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2023 were:

Incumbent:	Revd Timothy Smith	<i>Chairman from Sept 2006</i>
Curate:	Vacant	

Wardens:	Susan Turner	<i>From April 2018</i>
(Max 2)	Rob Ponsford	<i>From April 2023</i>

*Churchwardens are now elected once for a maximum term of 6 years, after which they must step down for at least one year.*

Deanery Synod Representatives: Jean Roper	<i>From April 2023</i>
(Max 2 with Electoral Roll below 100)	

*Deanery Synod members are now elected once for the fixed 3 year term of the Deanery Synod being replaced every 3 years. The current trimester began in 2023 and will renew in 2026. They must stand down for 1 Trimester following two served.*

PCC Elected Members:	Gloria Prout	<i>From April 2021</i>
(Max 9 APCM to APCM)	Denise Horne	<i>From April 2021</i>
	Elizabeth Hardinge	<i>From April 2021</i>
	Selina Tyrrell	<i>From April 2021</i>
	Robert Ponsford	<i>From April 2022</i>
		<i>Churchwarden from April 2023</i>
	Paul Weekes	<i>From April 2022</i>
	Colin Macleod	<i>From April 2023</i>
	Debbie Macleod	<i>From April 2023</i>

*Elected PCC Members are now elected once for 3 years, after which they must step down for at least one year.*

Co-opted PCC members (Max 2): None

Others entitled to attend and vote:

Licensed Clergy:	None	Licensed Readers:	None
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## **Structure, Governance and Management**

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the current edition of the Church Representation Rules. All church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC under these same rules.

## **Objectives and Activities**

St Jude's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting, in the ecclesiastical parish and into the City of Plymouth, the whole mission of the Church: pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has the maintenance responsibilities for the Church, Upper Hall, Lower Hall and Church Cottage on the St Jude's site.

## **Church Electoral Roll**

There were 65 members on the Church Electoral Roll at the 2023 APCM, 48 of whom were non-resident in the parish, 17 resident. (At the 2022 APCM there were 67 members on the Church Electoral Roll, 48 of whom are non-resident in the parish, 19 resident)

## **Safeguarding**

With a long-history of an OFSTED approved Pre-School, that sadly after decades closed in December 2021 and many young people utilising our site, as well as adults with learning difficulties, St Jude's has always taken great care in ensuring it has had more than just a 'due regard' for safeguarding both children and vulnerable adults. The Parochial Church Council, its employees and officers have always been required to adapt to bring into operation current safeguarding good practice direction from statutory bodies such as the Church of England's House of Bishops guidance through the Diocese of Exeter Safeguarding Officers. Safeguarding is a standing item at every PCC meeting.

## **Review of the Parochial Church Council Year**

The full PCC met six times during the year. The meetings were on the 10 January, 7 March, 16 May, 11 July, 12 September and 14 November. There were also two 'email' meetings on the 4 April and 23 April. All meetings had an average attendance by the Vicar and elected members (PCC, Deanery Synod representatives and Church Wardens) of 91%. There were no Standing Committee meetings.

PCC minutes were publicly available throughout the year once approved at the subsequent meeting. Simplified agreed summaries of items of interest are produced soon after each meeting for distribution in the Church. At each meeting of the PCC, previous minutes are checked and approved and running accounts are presented by the Treasurer. Safeguarding is a standing item as well as a Health & Safety report, Human Resources and Sustainability.

Highlights and some significant areas of the Church's life covered during the year by the PCC on behalf of the Church are overleaf.

## **10 JANUARY 2023**

The Diocese informed us of the change of title of Readers to Licensed lay Ministers (LLM's) and that they would normally be expected to step down at 80. The need for us to encourage more in this ministry for the future was noted. The Church's finances were healthy and the Budget anticipated income at £91,835 and expenditure budgeted at £89,835. The Next Era Church re-ordering project had costs being defined and the Diocese had affirmed they would support cashflow by loaning the VAT element until it could be reclaimed.

## **7 MARCH 2023**

The draft of the 2022 Annual Report was accepted by the PCC. The need for an additional Churchwarden to ensure there would be handover continuity was also re-iterated. There had been some progress in the funding for the Next Era Project after a visit by a major potential Trust. The Church's Building management Group submitted a report on works being carried out and our Churchwarden presented their 'Calendar of Care' plan for the year's site maintenance along with the Annual Fabric Report. The inventory check had taken place and all items recorded were in place. Our Mission Partners Group confirmed a shared lunch was being planned to welcome our new CMS link missionary, who will be serving in Kenya and that we had donated £400 to the Disasters Emergency Committee Turkey/Syria earthquake appeal. The return for our Worshipping Community 'number' had been submitted, confirming it stood at 85 people – not all of whom are on the Electoral Roll but are regular worshippers with us. Plans were at an early stage for some form of event to enable individuals to come together to watch the King's coronation.

## **4 APRIL 2023 (EMAIL MEETING)**

This was a single item email request to the PCC to vote on supporting one of our congregation's application to the Diocese for selection and training as a Licensed Local Minister (Reader). Agreed unanimously.

## **23 APRIL 2023 (EMAIL MEETING)**

Following the Annual Meeting that morning and news that we were within £15,000 of the anticipated budget for the Next Era Project, the PCC were approached by email to see if they would agree to instruct all our professionals (Architect, Quantity Surveyor etc) to take the project to tender. There were two questions – the first whether or not they felt they had enough information to take this decision by email. If not, a meeting was planned for the 25 April. All agreed a decision now was straight forward. The second decision was whether or not to then give instructions to get to tender – and that was also unanimously agreed.

## **16 MAY 2023**

The new PCC was formed with a new Deanery Synod member, a new PCC member as well as a new Churchwarden to serve alongside our experienced Churchwarden of five years for their last year. PCC Officers were also appointed. Within the Finance part of the meeting, extending the life of the Air Purifiers in the Upper Hall by arranging servicing was agreed and the very large increases, particularly in electrical standing charges for the Church was discussed and agreed options would begin to be sought as well as confirming the purchase of a new laptop and replacement larger screen TV for the Upper Hall. The Next Era Project team were still liaising with local authority Building Control Officers and forming a list of work we could do ourselves outside of a main contract. We also heard of a single large donation of £25,000 from a very generous church family member. Within the Safeguarding section of the meeting we heard that advice had been sought regarding a potential vulnerable adult when appropriate checks happened and advice was helpfully given. This was not an 'incident', rather a check. Our Young People enjoy a regular Summer week away and the PCC agreed to help fund the time in August to keep individual's costs down. There had been a lot of 'fulsome messages of thanks' from many who attended our Lord Mayor's Service on the 30<sup>th</sup> April as the Vicar completed his year as the Lord Mayor's Chaplain.

### **11 JULY 2023**

The PCC agreed to formally approach the Diocese to see if they would affirm their informal offer to support the Next Era Project cashflow with a loan for the VAT element that needed to be paid during the project but that could largely be reclaimed via the Listed Places of Worship scheme. Both full Faculty and Planning Permissions were now in place. We had a short report from the prior Deanery Synod and agreed to accept an offer of a free Ecological Survey by Devon Living Churchyards. We began the process of forming a group, the “Joshua Group”, to begin planning how we move out of the Church, as and when it happens, to begin to worship ‘in exile’ in the Upper Hall.

### **12 SEPTEMBER 2023**

We heard about our church finances still being strong and that we had received a gift of £3,000 from a past parishioner from many years prior. The Church’s Finance Policy was renewed and accepted with a minor amendment. Full Building Control Approval has now been resolved for the Next Era Project and that a pre-contract asbestos survey showed none to be present. The previously mentioned Ecological Survey of the site is now booked for mid-September. The Summer week away for the young people got great feedback with all costs met. Still no date for a start on the Next Era Project yet, but provisional planning for Christmas that may be out of the Church and in the Halls is underway.

### **14 NOVEMBER 2023**

The Parish’s Safeguarding Officer brought the updated Safeguarding Action Plan from the Parish Dashboard system with several existing policies being reviewed and re-accepted with a new one on Safeguarding Data Protection and Retention being accepted and approved also along with our activities being placed within the dashboard system and renewed agreement on Safer Recruitment processes for church roles.

On the Next Era Project four tenders had been received and depending on how much equipment and work post contract we bought or carried out, there had been a deficit of between £25,000 and £40,000. The Vicar had initiated a “Bridging the Gap” short term appeal and “the PCC was overwhelmed and full of thanksgiving to hear (from the Treasurer) that the total pledged in 2 weeks was £79,725!” Additionally, three grants were all confirmed, and the Diocese had affirmed the availability of a VAT cashflow loan. The Next Era Team had met with the two lowest tenderers (£398,000 and £409,000) and recommended to the PCC the second lowest. After discussion, the PCC gave authority to the Next Era Team to confirm the Church closure on the 2 December 2023 to the Archdeacon, to arrange Insurances and place contracts with the preferred contractor and the associated specialist consultants, all to enable the Next Era Project to proceed to completion within the budgets and parameters set at the meeting. The vote to proceed was unanimous.

In other parts of the meeting, we heard about the Vicar’s plan for a year long New Testament course and that the Bishop of Plymouth had greatly appreciated his time with us at our November Brunch Service. He particularly noted the great intergenerational interactions. Our CMS Mission partner whose commissioning service we had held reported back that his guests had commented on how the church was “friendly and God-filled”. There was a re-iteration of the need for a PCC Secretary and a new Churchwarden to fill the role of our longstanding one who will step down after six years, to both be in place to witness the 2024 APCM process as the Vicar may retire prior to the APCM in 2025. We had the Ecological Site Report back and that will be used in 2024 as a basis for thinking about the wider site. Following the success of our Young People’s week in Slapton this past Summer, similar dates were re-booked for 2024. While the Boys and Girls Brigades are external organisations to the Church and PCC, we are closely connected and we heard that the Girls’ Brigade leader of several decades will be stepping down and that her replacement was named and warmly agreed with. Lastly, we decided to reduce our Christmas Services for this year, only because the Church will have been closed and to avoid drawing large crowds for times such as Carols and not create overcrowding in our Hall within the cold and flu season.

## Finance Summary

Planned giving donations to the General Account through bank standing orders, monthly or weekly envelope scheme and the Parish Giving Scheme has increased by 18% over the last year, to more than £70,700 from £59,800. The Parish Giving Scheme is steadily increasing and provides the largest source of donations and has risen by 28%. The increase is due partly to donors moving to this form of giving and new donors joining the Church and using this scheme. The PGS scheme benefits from reclaiming Income Tax from eligible donations monthly, equating to £14,028 during the year as opposed to the smaller claim made by the Church for Gift Aided donations received outside of the PGS amounting to £4,087. The regular PGS monthly Gift Aid Tax refunds all but eradicates the cash flow difficulties, particularly at the end of the year, that used to occur when waiting for a large Income Tax claim to be paid. This is far more financially efficient and allows the Church to plan and budget more effectively throughout the year.

The financial outturn exceeded our forecast for the year mainly due to the following reasons. Expenditure on general maintenance that would be absorbed within the imminent Next Era project, was not carried out. The PCC did not employ an administrator and therefore did not spend the money set aside in the budget for this. A credit was received from our energy provider, due to historic direct debit overcharging at the time of the energy crisis. Our general expenditure was £81,082 against a forecast of £90,569. Our general income was £111,004 against a budget of £97,440 producing a staggering in-year surplus of c£30,000.

Along with the information shared above about the General Account other unrestricted funds consist of Reserve Account, Special One-off Donation (designated for Next Era project) and Sutton Deanery Grant (designated for youth support).

The contribution to the 2023 Common Fund of £41,711.00 was paid in full, a slight reduction from 2022.

The Church continues to support charitable giving and transfers 8% of our unallocated general income, to our Mission Partners, SOMA, OMF, CMS, MAF and Shekinah. We also supported the Syria/Turkey Earthquake disaster appeal, TEN, through Harvest for the Hungry, University of Plymouth's Student Union, Tea and Toast initiative, CPAS, Devon and Cornwall Refugee Support.

In November, following a shortfall in the restricted Next Era funds, for reordering the Church building, identified at the tendering stage of between £25K the minimum amount needed and £40K which would complete all works within the project, an appeal was made to "Bridge the Gap." The Church family, having waited 14 years, with many setbacks along the way, were resolute in their response and pledged an amazing £80,175 (including Gift Aid). Pledges started to be received immediately and by the end of the year £53,270 (including Gift Aid) had been received.

The restricted funds consist of Next Era project fund and a secondary fund to provide New Chairs for this project, the Community Hub, Vicar's Discretionary Fund and Digital Mission. There was very little movement in these funds apart from the Next Era Project that received donation income of £127,181, some of this was the pledged money, as explained above, and includes two external Grants received totalling £42,550 and interest of £6,161. The Next Era in-year expenditure was £14,700. With other money set aside for this project within the accounts this left £410,200 to start the project in January 2024.

As you can see from the report the Church has been incredibly blessed with extremely generous gifts from our Church family, who faithfully support the life and work of our Church, reflecting God's abundant generosity to us all. As we finally enter the Next Era for St Jude's Church we look to the future and the new opportunities that more appropriate spaces created within the Church building will provide to better meet the needs of our community and grow the Kingdom of God.