

St John Baptist Church, Marldon

Annual Report

And

Financial Statements

For the year ended 31st December 2023

Rector: The Reverend James Barlow

House for Duty Priest: Reverend Jane Frost

Bank:

Barclays Bank, Victoria Street, Paignton

Independent Examiner:

Michael W Pipe,

Farthing Cross

Farthing Lane

Marldon

Paignton

TQ3 1RR

Website:

www.marldonchurch.co.uk

The Parochial Church Council of St John Baptist, Marldon

Annual Report: For the year ended 31st December 2023

St John Baptist's Parochial Church Council cooperates with the Team Rector the Revd James Barlow and minister Revd Jane Frost in promoting the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical. The PCC offers a warm welcome to all: to the parish church and to community outreach. The appointment and licensing of Revd Jane in 2023 has given us our own priest living in the vicarage again, as well as husband Richard, a Licensed Reader.

Electoral Roll Officer's report 2024

"Since last year's revision, we have sadly lost two members from the Electoral Roll, including Gwen Pullé, who was such a huge part of our Church Family. However, we are very pleased to have welcomed 3 new members onto the Roll. At last year's Presentation of the Electoral Roll there were 71 members, and our number is currently 72 members on the Electoral Roll." **Debbie Cook**
Electoral Roll Officer.

Rector's Report to Annual Parish Meetings

During the year, the Totnes Team was able to begin implementing its strategy for 'focal ministry', with two new house-for-duty appointments to Marldon and Stoke Gabriel, the Revd Jane Frost and the Revd Chris Martin respectively. This has been a very positive step forwards and I am delighted to have Jane and Chris on the team, not to mention Richard Frost as a very active LLM. The challenge now is to show that having a minister embedded in the community is the best way to halt decline and start growing the church. We still have one house for duty post to fill for Cornworthy and Ashprington but agreed to hold off a final attempt to recruit until early 2024.

In August 2023 the Revd Emma Dornan finished her extended curate placement with us. Though she was only with us a short time she made a very good impression, and we wish her well in Guildford Diocese. We unexpectedly acquired an additional curate in December, the Revd Frances French, who will be with us for the next two years. With the Marldon appointment, Revd Canon Deborah Parsons has been able to take a more pastoral role team wide. We have also been delighted to welcome Alison Fisher as a newly Licensed Lay Minister. Gill Still having retired and moved to Ashprington now has a PTO and will be shaping a new ministry in 2024.

All of this means that the team is now at its largest size for some years. This has implications for my time commitments in terms of people management but puts us in a strong position both to implement our strategy and to weather what will undoubtedly be difficult times ahead.

Administrative support to the ministry team continues to be problematic. Liz Waterson has very kindly taken on more of the admin of weddings and funerals, in addition to sorting out the fees. Church Suite has allowed us to manage contacts and bookings better but there needs to be a more integrated system.

There have been a number of memorable team services throughout the year, both on 5th Sundays and at the monthly choral evensong. Through the monthly and weekly newsletters, we continue to inform people about events in other parishes.

I know Common Fund continues to be a bone of contention, especially in financially straitened times. However, I would ask parishioners to consider one question. If we were paying clergy and ministers directly (rather than via the Diocese) – as happens in the free churches and the American Episcopal Church – how much do you feel they are worth and how many of our churches would be able to afford even a part time post? The one advantage of our current system is that the larger congregations support the smaller ones, which surely embodies the teaching of Jesus and the apostles.

My thanks to all the members of the ministry team, lay and ordained, and to all exercising lay leadership in the parishes. It continues to be a joy to lead the Totnes Team and thank you for all the support and encouragement you have given me over the past twelve months. God bless,

Fr. Jim

Worship, Prayer and Outreach : The church is open for visitors every day and we often find prayers left on the prayer tree and names in the book. The PCC offers Eucharistic services on 3 Sundays and on days such as Remembrance Sunday, Mothering Sunday, Christmas and Easter. We were especially encouraged to see so many families attending our Christingle service. During 2023 there have been 6 Baptisms, 1 Marriage Blessing and 16 Funerals.

In addition, as **Stephanie Webb** writes: “ **Village Worship** is held on the second Sunday of the month; it has been running for about 18 months and is regularly attended by around 20 people. It is an informal mix of music, prayers and reflection, Tony Gregg is an invaluable help, especially when he has to play, deliver the reflection, and lead the prayers!”

The PCC believes that, especially with Revd Jane’s arrival, community impact is growing; we offer Open the Book to reach out to young people at the primary school, and Revds. Jane and Chris lead sessions for reception groups 6 times a year. We were thrilled to see the school choir singing so beautifully at our Christmas fair – proceedings stopped so that we could listen!

Sarah Cain has initiated a Toddler group and writes: “**Toddler Group** is meeting weekly on a Wednesday morning 9.30 till 11.30 during term time. Brilliantly supported by Hilary & Lorraine, we provide a safe fun space for parents (and carers) to bring their little ones to play, stopping for very popular snack time where they all sit and share a snack and finishing with some singing and musical instruments. It has been very well attended on the whole, the first few weeks being very full. It is probably time to advertise again as some of the little ones are now attending preschool so there are some vacancies . It was lovely to see many of the Toddler Group faces at the Christingle Service and the Star Crafts. We have had lovely feedback from parents and the provision is clearly valued.”

Sarah continues: “**Sunday School** continues to run during Term Time with a regular couple of attendees - I feel it has been tricky to grow further as there are clashes with many sports on a Sunday morning and families are torn. However, the provision is clearly valued and the scripture-related crafts and activities that are produced I hope also give pleasure to the congregation when shared.”

We are also fortunate in that local uniformed youth groups join us to help in special services. For older friends, Revd Jane and Richard Frost have re-started the **Marldon House Group** which meets monthly for bible study, shared conversation & prayer in the home of a church member. Team Sacred Space, courses, contemplative worship, and Quiet mornings are also offered, while Home Communion are taken out monthly on request. In addition, a Gathered Communion meets at Linden Lea once every 6 weeks: grateful thanks to Sarah Cain for her hospitality.

Connections have also been formed with the **Community Choir**, who joined us for Revd Jane’s inauguration as Associate Minister; they continue to appreciate the use of the church for their Christmas Concert, while a new ‘**Sing with the Spirit**’ group has been ‘birthed’ by Vanessa Rowe, open to all. Our Christmas and Spring fairs also have stalls provided by members but also by friends of the church.

Lorraine Tucker adds: “As a new addition to our outreach activities, we have run several children and families craft mornings at the church. These have been well attended and children, parents and helpers alike had great fun. Before Christmas we also had an adult craft and social event to

make stars for decorating the church. All of this is in addition to several craft days run at Linden Lea, with many thanks to Sarah Cain.”

We are very grateful for all those involved in the pastoral care of our community, while PCC members are keen to play our part in the community as well, with many of us involved in its clubs as well as the annual panto and seasonal events such as the Apple Pie Fair, further strengthening links with the village. We are also indebted to **Pam and John Mallett** of Marldon Cards and News who willingly sell books, raffle tickets, etc in support of the church.

Mission and Evangelism: The Church website has been refreshed by Richard & we continue to receive contact through this.

Donations have been sent to Rowcroft Hospice, Nightstop South Devon, (an emergency accommodation service delivered by a local charity which covers Torbay), Christian Aid, and in response to the Israeli/Gaza appeal.

Revd Jane Frost organised ‘This is my Story’, an inspiring and thought-provoking photographic display in church during the summer. With Richard, in the Autumn she also facilitated Marldon’s reflective morning for the Team entitled, ‘Lead Kindly Light: Faith in Times of Struggle & Loss’ with Revd David Runcorn as speaker.

Music Report: Lorraine Tucker explains: “Over the last 12 months Music has continued to play a key role in our church with many of the congregation actively involved. John Blamey, Sandra Webb and Lorraine Tucker take it in turns to choose hymns to fit our services. Vanessa Rowe, Jess Osbourne and Tony Gregg all play for us, and cover the majority of services, with John Blamey producing a CD when no-one was available. On 13th August we held a ‘Songs of Praise’ style service with hymns chosen by members of the congregation. This was very popular and we plan to do this again. This year, for the first time since Covid, we held our traditional Christmas carol singing at the Marldon Top Shops. We were joined by people from around the village and raised £85 for Rowcroft Hospice.

The biggest new addition to the music of the church was the formation of ‘Sing with the Spirit’, led by Vanessa Rowe. This well-supported group meets twice a month to sing pieces from our extensive music collection. It comprises both members of the congregation and others from the wider community. The new group performed at our Christmas Carol Service and on Easter Sunday. Members also support congregational singing and singing during communion. As one of our members recently commented, singing together ‘brings us joy’ and this is shared by the whole church community.”

Social Report: “The year got off to a wonderful start with the licensing of Revd Jane in June; the service, conducted by the Bishop of Plymouth, was a fantastic event and attended by over 150 people, who all enjoyed a buffet reception afterwards in the Village Hall. As well as the annual Spring Fair and Christmas Fair we have seen the return of the monthly cake stall; this has been running for the past 2 months now and any offers of cakes or savouries would be welcome. The tea and coffee after church continues to be popular, with some new faces joining us for continued fellowship each week. The monthly Lunch Club also continues to meet regularly.

I would like to thank everyone who helps at social events to make them such a success; special thanks must go to Sarah & Teresa who do most of the hard work getting everything organised while I’m flitting about!” **Stephanie**

Church Fabric

Maintenance has continued on the church building and graveyard. The fire extinguishers were tested and new ones installed with plans to add more next year. The gutters have been cleared out

and further attempts made to stop the leakages of rainwater through the roof in various places. Our noticeboards have been spruced up and now display clear and attractive information for all. The maintenance of the existing churchyard was transferred by the Parish Council to South Hams Council. The PCC has continued to ask the Parish Council to clarify their plans for the extension of the burial ground on land purchased for that purpose many years ago. We hope that the council might agree to at least a Garden of Rest for ashes on this land so that parishioners still have a resting place in this village.

PCC report

We were very sad to lose some longstanding members of our congregation, including Gwen Pullé, who had served the whole church with such compassion, energy and inspiration for so many years, and especially as a member of our PCC.

The PCC currently has 12 members including ministers, lay reader, and 2 churchwardens; we met five times this year at Marldon Primary School, thanks to Jon Arnold. We discussed various maintenance issues including heating and leaks, use of the building, the proposed burial ground, and the sound system. We are concerned about the difference between income and expenditure. However, we remain hopeful for the future of our church, especially in the light of increased community engagement; we publish the monthly Marldon Magazine with informative articles written by and for all residents of the village (with grateful thanks to the tireless Editor **John Arscott**). Richard Frost has also instituted a weekly newsletter and we have purchased a card reader to enable people to donate on visiting the church, and for use at community events. The PCC would like to thank all volunteers who work so tirelessly with special thanks to churchwardens Stephanie and Frederick Webb and to all volunteers who keep the church and churchyard so well-tended.

Financial Report

Total receipts for 2023 were £31991.36 while expenses amounted to £44850.80 leaving us a loss again at the end of the year of £12859.44.

Income from collections, free will offerings and donations has remained stable, and the Parish Giving Scheme continues to bring in regular, reliable income although we have been unable to increase our giver numbers.

Income through fund raising activities has proved invaluable although the Spring Fair had a disappointing result.

We stopped short of paying our Common Fund in full and fell victim to Barclays Bank fraud checks resulting in our accounts being shut down at the end of the year.

Reserves: The PCC hold several reserve funds and investments, but our current account has been steadily reducing during this time and we need to look at how we can level out our income and expenditure.

Deanery Synod Report

Deanery Synod has continued to meet with Archdeacon Douglas Dettmer as its chair. A new Area Dean has now been appointed: Revd Marisa Cockfield. Under her auspices, Woodleigh & Totnes Deaneries are looking to explore common ground in the future.

Safeguarding Report: “The PCC has complied with their duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding & Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. There is still an ongoing safeguarding issue which is under the jurisdiction of West Mercia police and due in court at the end of April.

The PCC has adopted the Domestic Abuse Policy & PCC members undergo training on Domestic Abuse & Safeguarding, online as required.

DBS checks are up to date, Liz Waterson is invaluable at assisting with these.

Photographs containing children on the Church website are only uploaded with the

parents' consent. Consent forms have been completed by junior church parents to cover activities and transportation to church." **Stephanie Webb**

PCC Structure, Governance and Management

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions of general concern and importance in the parish and for all financial matters. PCC members who have served from 1st January 2023 until the date this report was approved were;

The Incumbent	Revd James Barlow	Chair
	Revd Jane Frost	Ex officio Vice Chair
Churchwardens	Mr Frederick Webb	
	Mrs Stephanie Webb	
Deanery Synod Rep	Mr Frederick Webb	
Elected members	Mr John Birch	
	Ms Ailsa Comley	Treasurer
	Mrs Isla Taylor	
	Mr John Taylor	
	Mrs Lorraine Tucker	
	Mrs Joan Veale	Secretary
	Mrs Teresa Woodcock	
	Richard Frost	Ex officio member

Approved by the PCC onand signed on its behalf by:

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