

## Churchwardens' Report

March 2022

2021 was a strange year, again, for so many parishes and congregations and ours at Aston le Walls was no exception. We had three months with no services – from Epiphany to Good Friday but we (legally or illegally) kept our church firmly unlocked and that was appreciated by many in the village. At Easter, it was a huge joy to start services again, albeit with strict rules and regulations. Our new Rector, Revd Paul Trathen, was in post and it must have been a difficult start for him: we would have liked to welcome him, and Carole his wife, to our parish less quietly and with more of a celebration. We feel fortunate that we have started a new pattern of services and that we are beginning to get back to “normal”.

### Special services:

We had no baptisms at St Leonards this past year. We had one funeral, for Philip Astley Jones, though two other parishioners from Aston le Walls died in the year (Alexander Thorneycroft and Peter Gibson). The happiest service was for our Rector Paul and his new wife Carole who chose St Leonard's as the church to celebrate the Service of Blessing for their marriage. We were able this year to have a Remembrance Service (with special thanks as always to Eoin Beevers for playing his bugle so very movingly), an Advent Carol service for the Benefice which was well attended and a Service of Carols and Readings on Christmas Day which, sadly, was not well attended. A lot of people were away catching up with their families but it was sad that the church, which in the past has been full to capacity, only had 17 in the congregation. There was no Palm Sunday service which is normally held jointly with our Catholic friends from Sacred Heart but we started our “normal” life back with a special time of prayer on Good Friday followed by an Easter celebration service.

### Events:

We, again, were unable to have our annual Village Fete and very little fundraising activities for the church, though we did have a small

Christmas Fair in the Village Hall and a very well attended Nativity Walk. This really does seem to be a terrific coming together of so many families in the village.

### **Upkeep:**

We are very grateful as always for the kind people who are on the Cleaning Rota for the church. And on the Flower Rota. And we thank Ali Hawkins for her help in organising these rotas. The Taylor Family and Dick and Marcella Stephen help in many ways and we thank them too. We use the good services of Michael Maslin to do a serious clean 3 or 4 times a year which helps us enormously. Even though we may have not had as many services as we would like, nor as many participants in the some of the larger services, we take pride in the fact that our church is always open and always clean and, we hope, welcoming. We thank Steve Bates for caring for the upkeep of the churchyard and Richard from Plowden Close has taken on the hedge cutting – and very neatly too! The organ is not in the best of health but it has been serviced, as has the speaker system.

### **Summary:**

As always, we are incredibly grateful to those who help us keep our church operating. Bishop Ed and Lesley Palmer have both continued to help us in our worship and we enjoy their being with us very much.

Last but no means least, Mike and I would be useless and hopeless without the care and efficiency of our treasurer Susan Fagg and we are enormously grateful for her prodding and her baking and her reminding! St. Leonard's and the whole village owe her a very great deal.

Mike Beevers  
Lloyd Morgan.

Johnnie