

Report from St Mary's Church to Willand Parish Council

It has been a joy to be in this part of Devon and serve the people of Willand - both those inside and outside the Church - over the last year.

At St Mary's, we continue to hold regular services each week on a Sunday morning, starting at 9:45. Three times a month, on the 1st, 3rd and 4th Sunday, we meet in the church. On the 2nd Sunday, we hold a service in the Church Hall. Whilst we welcome families to all our services, the service in the Hall is the most family friendly. Our congregation are a very friendly and welcoming community who love Jesus and seek to follow his commands. Our services continue to be lively and seek to be relevant, helping people to understand and orientate themselves in the unique time in which we live.

It has been a joy to hold a few baptism services over the last year. It has also been a privilege to support people at the other end of life by providing caring and compassionate funeral care. It is lovely to see that many people still see the church as an important centre for those big life moments.

I have grown in my appreciation for how important the historic Church building is for so many people. Even for those who do not attend Church regularly, it brings a sense of rootedness as well as a symbol of hope. Looking after this building is a constant challenge but we have an amazing congregation who get stuck in when a job needs doing. This year we have upgraded our lighting, had some repairs done to the walls and we have also set in motion a bigger kitchen and toilet upgrade plan for the Church Hall. Our hope is to make this a high-quality resource for both the church and the wider community.

As well as in-church activities, we have continued to run our popular Toddler group, Rockers, which takes place on a Monday morning and draws in lots of families from the local community.

We have also begun running Open the Book in Willand Primary School. This involves members of the church heading into school where they dress up as Bible characters, retelling some of the most iconic Bible stories. The best part is that the children get to participate as well. This has been well received by the school.

These are some of the highlights of the last year, that I hope gives you a bit of a flavour of the things going on at St Mary's, Willand.

Reverend Ben Maynard