

ARMATHWAITE, CHRIST AND ST MARY ANNUAL REPORT 2023

1. BACKGROUND

The vision of Armathwaite Church is to be a welcoming and inclusive family sharing God's love with all by building on the commitment of the people of God in the parish, living the Gospel by word and deed and growing in fellowship.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Christ and St Mary's Armathwaite is in the Diocese of Carlisle within the Church of England. The correspondence address is: 8 Mill Brow, Armathwaite, Carlisle. CA4 9PJ

PCC members who have served from 9 March 2023 until the date of this report were approved as follows:

Rector: Revd Mark Houston

Associate Priest Canon Brian Dawson

Church Wardens Ken Bonsor
Jenny Roscoe

Deanery Synod Members

Felicity Ecroyd
Charles Ecroyd (Vice Chair)

Elected Members Susan Bonsor (Treasurer and temporary secretary)
Sian Banks
Jonathan Rhodes
June Robley

Non elected member Vacant (Secretary)

The PCC met five times during the year.

3. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

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

4. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Armathwaite PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Revd. Mark Houston, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

5. CHURCH ATTENDANCE

In accordance with legislation the Church Electoral Roll has 31 parishioners. The average attendance for Sunday services is 17. The pattern of two Sunday services per month continues, with the first of the month being Holy Communion celebrated by Revd Mark Houston and the third Sunday being a lay led Morning Prayer service. Tuesday Morning Prayer continues on Zoom, attracting an average congregation of about 9.

6. ANNUAL REVIEW

During the year there were 0 baptisms, 0 marriages and 3 funerals in church.

The replastering and redecoration was completed in April and it was good to be back worshipping in the church building once again.

Jenny and Richard Roscoe kindly opened their home and hosted a coffee morning in aid of Christian Aid and £326 was raised as a result. A very convivial morning was had by the many who supported the event.

It was good to be able to hold the Harvest Supper once again and fifty people attended. The food was as amazing as ever and £566 was raised for the Bishop's Harvest Appeal.

Open Gardens was held again and was well attended. The event raised over £2,300 which was divided between the Old School Hall and the Church. The weather was favourable for most of the weekend and there were twelve gardens open for the visitors to enjoy. The event came to an abrupt end on the Sunday due to torrential rain. Thanks are due to all those who contributed to the weekend in any way.

The new style all age worship which was started in 2022 ran until the summer when it was decided that we should take a break from this type of service and hopefully find another way of attracting a younger age group to join us for worship.

The Christmas Fair took place at Low House and was very well supported and much enjoyed by all. Our thanks to Sara and Charles Ecroyd for their hospitality.

Carol singing was held at the Dukes Head and there was a good turn out on a very wet and cold evening. All who bravely turned up were rewarded by singing inside and we are grateful to Tom for his hospitality. A very festive evening was had by everyone and it is hoped to run the event in 2024 but unfortunately without the guitar skills and banter of Mark Houston who will have left for South Cumbria.

We continue to make links with the school and were most appreciative of them allowing us to use the hall whilst the church and Old School Hall were both out of action due to remedial work being carried out. Goodies/cakes were taken for the school staff at the end of each term in appreciation of all that they do for the children in the village.

Our thanks to Sian, our organist, for leading the choral part of our worship and to all those who regularly clean the church and provide flowers. All these contribute much to enhance and beautify our worship.

7. FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Parish Offering has once again been paid in full without have to use reserves. There was a shortfall of £13858 which was due largely due to the replastering and redecoration work which was carried out at a cost of £14424. There was also extraordinary expenditure totalling £1380 which included £610 for the quinquennial report, £650 for the removal of two trees and £120 for rebuilding a wall.

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The was also exceptional income of £3548 due to a refund of our contribution to the JCC account, funeral fees and a late payment of a contribution towards the upkeep of the churchyard. We hope that we will be able to balance the books in 2024 but this is becoming increasingly difficult in view of fewer regular donors.

The PCC is very appreciative of the generous giving of many of the congregation and parishioners without which it would be unable to support ministry in the village.

8. INGLEWOOD BENEFICE

All seven churches maintained at least one service of Holy Communion each month. On the five Sundays Mark was able to take off his services were covered by the Bishop of Penrith, Rev Julia Powley and Rev Allison Fenton.

We had four **benefice services** across the year - Jan (Skelton), April (Hutton in the Forest), October (Calthwaite) & December (High Hesket)

The **Something New** service met in the afternoon of the 2nd Sunday most months. This service draws people from across the seven churches together and we are joined by our Methodist friends. Some months we invite a guest speaker or organization to share with us what God is doing. This year we were joined by:

Jan	Rev Keith Speck
Mar	Adopt A Child
May	Compassion
June	Anna Chaplaincy licensing service & celebration
Sept	NISCU
November	Safe Families

Morning Prayer: To 'boost' the number of services I was able to take in each church I tried to visit every building on at least one further occasion. This usually resulted in a service of Morning Prayer and it also allowed a time for fellowship and chat. It was warmly received by those who attended.

Funerals: Across the benefice there were 27 funeral services (which include services at a crematorium and/or interment of ashes). Mark took most of these services.

Christenings: Across the benefice there were eight christenings.

Weddings: Across the benefice there were nine weddings (including one wedding blessing). Again, Mark took most of these.

In January we launched a **Men's Prayer group** which met on Zoom. Four or five chaps would meet every couple of weeks on a Sunday evening to share joys and struggles and to pray for God's church in the world.

Anna Chaplain & Tea service. Jim and Kathryn Mills trained as Anna Chaplains. We held a licensing service in June and they have launched their ministry of visiting & caring the

elderly. In October they launched monthly Tea Service which happens in Skelton Methodist church and is a lovely service with hymns, readings, tea and cake, open to everyone.

Lent groups During Lent two groups met. An evening group met in Calthwaite and a daytime group met in Armathwaite. The groups spent their time looking at a selection of Bible readings from the Sacred Space Lent book. Fellowship was good. There was a follow on group who met (eventually settling in Armathwaite) most weeks to study a Bible passage and to encourage each other in prayer and fellowship.

Church Warden service. In June eleven Church Wardens attended a service in St Andrews, Penrith, to promise to work with the Bishop and vicar to help make church a place for everyone.

In the summer we said goodbye to **Bishop James** who has served the diocese, firstly as the Bishop of Penrith and then Bishop of Carlisle since moving to Cumbria in 2002. Unfortunately we have been unable to find a permanent successor for James so please keep Bishop Rob in your prayers as he seeks to lead the diocese in the interim.

Mission Community open air service As last year the Blencathra Mission Community (Inglewood Benefice, Greystoke Benefice and the local Methodist circuit) planned and delivered an excellent open air Communion service on the football field in Calthwaite. It was great to see so many people from across the churches pulling together to make this a special event.

Reader Mike In November Mike Hall 'shifted his allegiance' by saying farewell to the churches in the Dalston benefice and moving to be part of church life locally in Skelton. Please keep Mike in your prayers as he works out how best to serve in this new context.

It was announced in October that Rev'd Mark Houston would be leaving his position as Priest in Charge of the Inglewood Benefice early in 2024 to take up the position of Team Vicar in the Benefice of St Mary's, Allithwaite and St John the Baptist, Flookburgh which is part of the Cartmel Peninsula in south Cumbria.

*The Revd Mark Houston
Priest-in-Charge
Inglewood Group of Churches!*

January 2024