

Children's and Family Report May 2024 – May 2025

Whilst hard work at some times, and not always knowing who or how many people to expect to our events, services and activities it continues to be a privilege to work with the children, young people and families across our villages. The work continues to evolve as we seek to reach out to those of faith and those searching. Working across the two churches it is great to see families engaging in the events, activities and services we offer, enabling them and us to create and develop relationships, explore faith, and see lives changed as people choose to follow Jesus.

Here is a run down of some of the key moments and information from the last year.

Sundays

We have now been doing Families at 3.30pm for 18 months. Numbers are small but those who come enjoy it. This gathering is accessible to some of our families with children with additional needs and it's lovely to welcome them into church and for them to feel at home here. Some of our regular families also come to Fun and Faith hosted at SGBC, which continues on the 4th Sunday of the month. We are thinking about how we see this group develop for the coming year.

Our Harvest, Christingle and Easter Services have been opportunities to see families engage with the rest of the congregation in a church service setting and we will continue to work on how we grow our Sunday interactions with busy families.

Toddlers in the woods *(written by Ali)*

TODDLERS IN THE WOODS turns 4 in July!

It thrives under the amazing leadership of Bridget Day - responsible for all the singing and band - Nora Bennett and Rachel Gibson.

Without them it would be a shadow of the vibrant group it is today. It is a privilege to head up this Team.

The core group of families turning out early on a Friday morning regardless of the weather conditions, grows year by year. As we always have, we welcome all families from Jordans and Seer Green or having close connections with our villages, each week whether joining us on a regular basis or just from time to time.

This year we introduced FAMILIES IN THE WOODS - an event so well supported by our present families and those who have now outgrown us and this we will repeat.

Our commitment to our faith is apparent every week and we will continue to encourage all to join in the services and activities in Holy Trinity our host Church.

How grateful the TODDLERS IN THE WOODS Team are for the ongoing support from all concerned with Holy Trinity.

Connect +

This is a new youth group for children in Years 7-9, running once a month, based at SGBC. We have a delightful group of around 8 young people each time and have so far enjoyed 6 sessions exploring spirituality and what it means to them. They come out with insightful comments and questions, and it excites me to see how this group develops.

In my work with SGBC I am involved with Baby Group, Little Blessings Tinies and Toddler Group, Torchlight, Connect, Who Let the Dads out and Fun and Faith. All of these provided valuable opportunities to engage with the children, young people and families.

Special Events

During the Summer, October and Easter holidays many families from the two villages enjoyed our children's and family activities, including Messy Crafternoons (creative messy play for 2-10s) and Family Fun (for 0-8s with their parents/carers), all giving opportunities to continue to develop our relationships with the children and their families.

Once again, our popular event of Fun, Food and Fireworks took place in November and tickets more than sold out quickly to this joint churches event, held at The Jubilee Hall. I am very grateful thanks to my friend Andy (who professionally lights fireworks) for being in charge of setting off the fireworks and to all those who volunteer to help enable us to run such a large event.

At Harvest we once again joined with the village street heroes and collected a large number of items to support One Can. We held an afternoon harvest service with a number of our connected families in attendance along with many of our congregation.

Our Advent and Christmas season provided us with numerous opportunities to engage with our congregation. Christingle was held in our 3.30pm slot with families and regular church congregation mixing, like harvest.

For the third year we held 'Sing into Christmas' and Rev Jez and I worked closely with Jane Smith and Seer Green Singers (men's choir) for this joyful event combining carols, readings and festive songs.

Cookies and Carols returned as many families descended on our building post school pick up and enjoyed snacks and singing their favourite Christmas carols / songs. This is a firm favourite for many in the festive season.

Our crib services were once again very well attended, with (free) tickets selling out. 2024 we heard the Christmas story with the help of lots of chocolates and sweet treats. It is always a wonderful opportunity to help families journey through the events of that first Christmas through our crib service and great to see multiple generations joining in together.

With Easter being at the end of the school holidays we fitted in a Messy Crafternoon, Family Fun and Explore Easter events over the fortnight, which were popular. Explore Easter particularly gave families the opportunity to spend time together, the children enjoyed the bouncy castle and activities and then we finished with a short service style gathering.

On Easter Saturday the Great Seer Green Easter Egg Hunt took place. This event was more popular than ever, and I nearly ran out of chocolate! Over 400 people took part, wandering around the village solving clues, collecting eggs, finding cheeky chicks and winning chocolate! I'm very grateful to 3 teenagers from the village (and the Easter bunny) for their help with the day. This is one of my favourite days of the year and as always it was great to interact with so many people and share the Easter story with them. Many people commented on how lovely it was to see so many families and friends wandering round the village enjoying the Easter Egg Hunt.

Schools Work

Open the Book has continued to share God's big story with the children at Seer Green CE School each Tuesday morning and it is such a privilege to be welcomed into the school and be able share God's big story with them. The team are fantastic and a huge thankyou to their enthusiasm and

commitment to this. We are looking for more team members so if you are free on a Tuesday morning from 8.15 – 9.15am and would like more information about getting involved please speak to me.

Rev Jez and Rev Jenny also take collective worship at Seer Green school regularly on a Thursday.

In July, the Year 6 children at SGCE school received a Bible as a gift from Holy Trinity. We hope and pray that they will enjoy finding the stories that have learnt at school in it and will discover more as they read.

In November European Prayday was marked in Holy Trinity Church with the children walking up to Holy Trinity and interacted with creative prayer activities spread out around the church building on different themes of prayer, such as thankfulness, confession, praying for other people and being still. Once again this provided a worthwhile opportunity to encourage the children to pause, reflect and pray in our beautiful building.

Throughout the year I have visited Jordans Infant school to take their Tuesday afternoon every 3/4 weeks and have enjoyed joining the children and parents to celebrate key festivals in school.

I also have contact with Seer Green Preschool and Little Ducklings Nursery, joining them at Christmas time and at other opportunities as they arise. Little Ducklings have come to church for activities at Harvest and Christmas.

This year I welcomed Monkey Puzzle day nursery to Holy Trinity as I shared the nativity story with them, and the children sang some Christmas songs. The church was filled with parents, grandparents and carers coming to watch. I also did an Easter event for them in Holy Trinity too where 20 of the toddlers and preschoolers came to hear about the good news of new life at Easter.

Thank you to everyone who is involved in our ministry with children, young people and their families. Very little could happen without the time, effort, resources, prayer and finance that you bring to this vital work, which is so appreciated.

If you would like to know any more about the work we are doing, please do come and have a chat with me.

Janna Holder Children and Families Minister.
29 April 2025