

Bodiam Parish Assembly – St Giles’ Churchwardens’ Report 2022-2023

There are now 47 people on the recently updated St Giles’ church electoral roll. We currently hold two Sunday services each month, Parish Communion on the third Sunday of the month which attracts around 12 worshippers and the much less formal Family Service, on the first Sunday, which is attended by an average of about 16. Both services start at 11.15am. At the end of the Family Service, there is the opportunity for fellowship and a chat over refreshments. There is also a weekly service of Evening Prayer held in St Giles’ by Canon Christopher on Thursday evenings at 5.30pm.

Attendance at the major festivals is strong and is gradually returning to pre-Covid levels. Last year we had 56 on Easter Sunday and 61 on Christmas Day. Email reminders of services are sent to parishioners who have requested them and have proved a useful reminder. Do please let me or Graham know if you'd like to go on the St Giles’ emailing list.

Bodiam CE Primary School holds Harvest Festival and Christmas services and also occasional concert style services in the church. Canon Christopher holds monthly assemblies in the school.

Over the course of the last year there have been many vibrant events and services organised at or by St Giles’ including a fabulous Flower Festival held over the late Queen’s Platinum Jubilee weekend involving the school, parishioners, local groups and businesses; the Harvest Supper at The Hub: the sell-out Pub Quiz at the Castle Inn; the atmospheric Carols by Candlelight service and not least, this year’s Palm Sunday service starring not one but two donkeys, who were walked over from Sandhurst for the occasion. Apparently they have an aversion to travel by horsebox!

While it is encouraging to see the wide participation in these special events and services, it remains a constant challenge to maintain and increase numbers at the regular services.

We very much appreciate the financial support we get from our parishioners particularly those who are not regular worshippers but who do appreciate that the church is very much a parish church and in many ways the centre of the village. It is still the place of choice for many to get married, christened and buried and Canon Christopher is always please to receive enquiries about christenings, weddings and funerals. We are very aware too that the churchyard in particular, is a place of special importance to both current and previous parishioners. In light of the importance of St Giles’ within the village, please don't rely on just the congregation to keep St Giles’ alive and available for the whole village and the school.