

# Holy Trinity Church

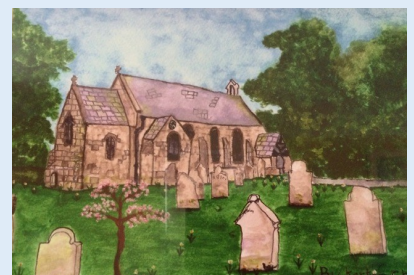


**Bickerton**

# Our Parish

## Profile

A complementary document to the Parish Fact Sheet



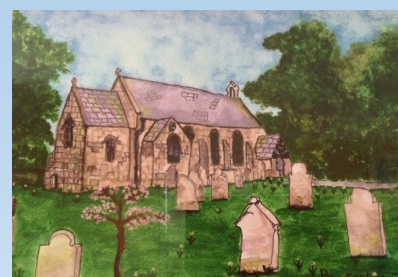
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## THE VILLAGE



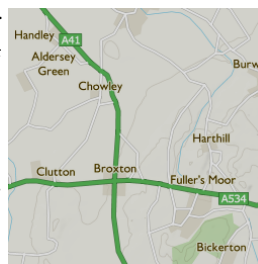
VILLAGE HALL      CHURCH      SCHOOL

Bickerton is set in one of the most beautiful rural landscapes of Cheshire. The 'centre' of the village comprises Holy Trinity Church, Bickerton Village Hall, Bickerton C of E Primary School and the Scout Hut, though even these require a short walk from one to the other. Residences are scattered throughout the Parish (which includes the adjacent hamlet of Egerton); according to the 2011 census, there were some 278 residents. Our demography is mixed, but this is pre-dominantly a farming area—arable, dairy and beef cattle, and sheep over-wintering. Equestrian stables and studs also feature. Many of the farming families and agricultural support workers have lived on this land for generations and are well-known names in the area, but they are fewer in number than in former times. The country estates of Bolesworth, to the north, and Cholmondeley, to the south are a defining presence in the area, with much of the land and properties tenanted by them.

There are more 'incomers' to Bickerton nowadays, both more recently and others who have made their home here for decades – a mix of commuting households and retirees. It is a desirable place to live and housing stock is at a premium; there is very little in the way of 'development' in Bickerton and its immediate environs to date.

## THE SURROUNDING AREA

The very busy A534 runs through our communities – from Wrexham in the west to Congleton, south of Manchester in the east. The A41, a trunk road from London to Birkenhead, crosses the A534 at Broxton. The A49 crosses the A534 at Ridley and runs from Ross-on-Wye to near the junctions of the M6, M65 and M61 near Manchester.

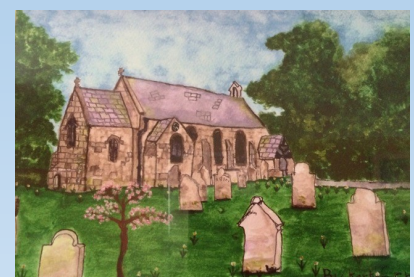


These days Holy Trinity Church draws in worshippers from other villages nearby – Ridley and Bulkeley, Broxton and Brown Knowl. These are joint civil parishes like Bickerton and Egerton and the three total c1200 souls. Some of our congregation come from even further afield – Hampton, Barton, Tattenhall and No Man's Heath. However, all are situated in the ceremonial county of Cheshire, all in the Eddisbury Constituency but divided between the local authorities of Cheshire East and Cheshire West.

Although there are few amenities in our communities, the larger centres of



Our Parish



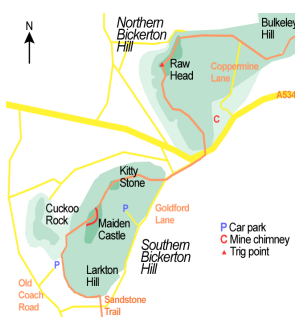
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Looking out to Harthill from Bickerton Hill



Malpas and Tattenhall are 10 minutes by car; the towns of Whitchurch and Nantwich, and the city of Chester 20 minutes.

Public transport is minimal.



## TOURISM



Bickerton Hill

The beauty of our environment and its history attract many visitors to the area. Our communities nestle at the feet of two hills – Bulkeley Hill (at the southern end of the Peckforton Hills) and Bickerton Hill, to the north and south of the A534 respectively. Both hills, managed by the

## Rawhead, Bulkeley Hill

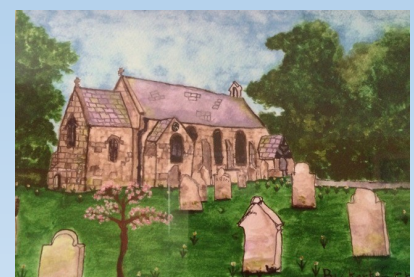
National Trust, command, at various points, long views across the Cheshire plain – Liverpool, Wirral Peninsula and North Wales to the north – the Welsh hills to the west – Shropshire and the Long Mynd to the south – Staffordshire and the Peak District to the east. The National Trust conserves our ancient woodlands and heathland, designated areas of Special Scientific Interest. Bickerton is situated almost at the mid-point of one of the North West’s most popular middle distance footpaths – The Sandstone Trail - which covers some 34 miles from Frodsham to Whitchurch and is overseen by the Sandstone Ridge Trust.

## ATTRACTIONS

Some of the historical highlights in our area are to be found along the Sandstone Trail – the evidence of Maiden Castle, an ancient iron age fort atop Bickerton Hill; the disused coppermine chimney (listed building) at the foot of Bulkeley Hill; and Beeston Castle (English Heritage) at the north end of the Peckforton Hills. Other attractions in the area include the Ice Cream Farm at Tattenhall; the Candle Factory at Burwardsley; and Cholmondeley Castle Garden and Grounds; and newly opened is the Cholmondeley BeWILderwood, a green family attraction. The Bolesworth Estate hosts both



Our Parish





a world renowned International Horse Show and CarFest. Each attract many thousands of visitors every year. And last, but by no means least, we are still fortunate to have The Egerton Arms at Broxton on the A41 and The Bickerton Poacher pubs. The latter is very popular with both locals and visitors and the 'last man standing' along our stretch of the A534. It provides accommodation and has a small campsite, as well as good food and a welcoming atmosphere. Inside is an historic well, actually an air-shaft for an old coppermine, and skittle-alley.



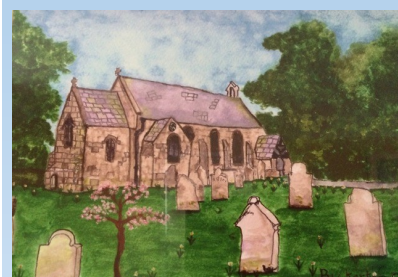
**Our Parish**



**Parishioners enjoy an afternoon at the Smiths' vineyard on the southern slopes of Bickerton Hill.**



**The Rector's Ramble — walks taking in the 3 parishes of Bickerton, Malpas and Threapwood.**



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**Aspects of Holy Trinity**



# Our Church and Parishioners

## **OUR CHURCH TODAY**

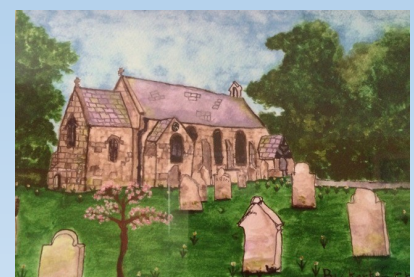
Since 2011, Holy Trinity has been united with St Oswald & St John in the Benefice of Malpas & Threapwood—3 churches serving 2 parishes.

The retirement of the Rev'd Canon Ian Davenport has proved cathartic. It has forced us to dig into our history, look at our present and think about our future. Above all, it makes us more mindful that what binds us together is our Faith. It is comfortable to listen to a familiar voice take the Sunday Service. It is easy to drift along in the familiar patterns of worship and carry out our church duties each week or month. A Sunday is an hour or so to be peaceful and also to bring our hearts and minds closer to God. But we have, perhaps, taken the focal point of our faith, the church, for granted. We look around and realise that we are the same familiar faces gathering each Sunday and some of those, sadly, departed. What we have is precious, but we must reach out into the uncomfortable places in 'thought and word and deed', to secure our churches for future generations. We have ideas for the occasional, less prescribed services, at times other than Sunday morning, and to utilise the church building for activities to attract the wider parish through our doors. We look forward to someone who will lead, guide, mentor and support us in our endeavours.

## **CONGREGATION AND WORSHIP**

We come together to worship every Sunday and through the rhythm of the Church year and at each service we are reminded and renewed in some aspect of our Faith. Beyond that, however, we have love for one another and each of us has found something to contribute which together make a remarkable whole. It is as we are told in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians Chapter 12 v1 – v31.

With the average age of the congregation c70, the services are middle-ground traditional with Holy Communion administered every Sunday



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# Our Church and Parishioners

from Common Worship or the Book of Common Prayer, supported by Hymns Old and New. We celebrate Festive Occasions, e.g. Plough, Candlemas, Easter, Rogation, Harvest, Christingle, Christmas, and particularly at Christmas and Easter enjoy the attendance of more people from our community bringing in a wider mix of ages. The Remembrance Sunday Service is well-attended as well as other commemorative occasions, for example, special services to celebrate significant stages in the Queen's reign.



**Remembrance**

Newcomers to the congregation often remark later that they were made to feel instantly at home in Holy Trinity. Perhaps, because we are small (the average congregation is c25), it is easy to spot a stranger in our midst and we want to make them feel welcome. If they come a second and third time, they will find themselves already absorbed into the Holy Trinity family and quickly participating in the jobs and routines needed to keep a church open for worship.



**Remembrance Day Service at the War memorial with the local scout troops.**

## ORGANISATION

There are 98 names on our Electoral Roll, 13 of whom serve on the PCC. Others in the Congregation participate in various rotas – readings, flowers, cleaning, gardening, bellringing, sidepersons and assisting the Wardens. It is a tribute to the careful management of our Wardens and Treasurers, past and present, that Holy Trinity (despite the difficulties of the past year) remains financially robust – we have reserves to support our day-to-day activities and unexpected expenditure on the fabric of our building. However, it should not be forgotten that our savings have been built up over many years through the generosity and hard work of our parishioners.

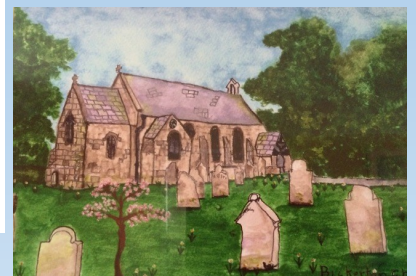
## COMMUNICATION

Information about services and church events is displayed in the church porch, on the notice board, on the weekly joint Benefice pew sheet and in the bi-monthly Benefice Parish Magazine. 100 copies of the magazine are distributed in our Parish and to Bickerton School. The magazine is also available on the Benefice website and on social media.

**Parish News**  
For Masps (Berkhamstead and Bickerton)  
June 2020



Follow us on  
Twitter @maspsbenefice, Facebook via 'St Oswald's with St John's Berkhamstead & Holy Trinity Bickerton' or  
[www.maspsbenefice.co.uk](http://www.maspsbenefice.co.uk)





## INTERACTION

Since Holy Trinity was joined with St Oswald's, Malpas & St John's, Threapwood in 2011, our rector has been even-handed in his approach to the three churches. Each is always aware, through the Parish Magazine and the Pew Sheets, of what is going on in the other parish. Our rector has also invited and encouraged us all to participate and support the others' services, activities or fundraising. There are some joint services during the year. The All Souls' Tide Service held in the evening at St Oswald's is a particularly beautiful and poignant one. And St Oswald's particularly lends itself to concerts; there have been some memorable occasions from inspiring church music involving its splendid choir and organ to secular operatic arias.

There are also occasional joint services with Brown Knowl Methodist Chapel, either at our Church or their Chapel.

## SOME HISTORY

A History of the Parish covering its first 150 years was produced in 1990. To celebrate, there was a flower festival in Holy Trinity and proceeds from it were used to install a wrought iron memorial panel above the vestry door.

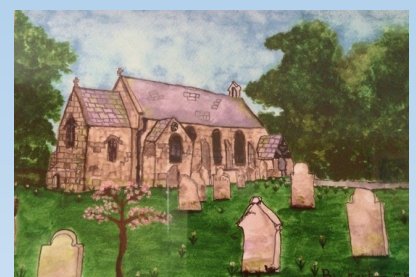
Holy Trinity, Bickerton, now Grade II listed, was built of stone in 1839/40, on land donated by Sir Philip le Belward Grey Egerton and from subscriptions of 7 local Estate owners of the area. It was originally built as a chapel of ease within the larger Parish of Malpas to enable the local farm workers and their families to worship without the long walk/ ride to Malpas.

At this stage it was a simple chapel structure designed by the architect Edmund Sharpe who practised some distance away in Lancashire. The total cost of building the chapel was in the region of £700 and the small organ cost £26.15p.

In 1869 the district of Bickerton became a Parish in its own right, separate from Malpas and its first Vicar was Revd F.W. Parry, living in the large Vicarage adjacent to the churchyard. The congregation grew and the church was enlarged in 1875/76. The small chancel, sanctuary, vestry and organ chamber were added, necessitating the removal of a gallery from the West end of the church where a wooden porch was added. Further alterations were made over the years and in 1911 the baptistry was added and the church door and porch were moved to their present location.



# Our Church and Parishioners



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The congregation of Holy Trinity expanded during this period and in 1891 proposals were put forward to build a Mission Room in nearby Bulkeley. An appeal for subscriptions was made and the Mission room opened in 1893 having been licensed for Public Worship. Records remain silent after 1970 when it appears to have closed and been decommissioned.

Records also show that following the end of the First World War when 32 of the local men and boys lost their lives, the oak furnishings were added (1919/20) along with the installation of a new Conacher piped organ, as a memorial to them.

The churchyard surrounding Holy Trinity ceased to be used in 1881 but the burial grounds opposite the church, on the other side of Goldford Lane, continue to serve as the local cemetery, maintained by the Bickerton Burial Board.

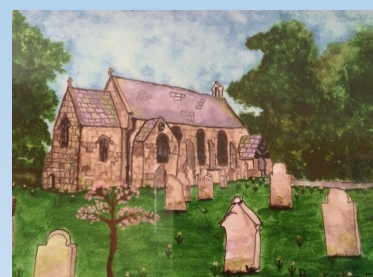
At the corner of the cemetery, at the junction of Golford Lane and Long Lane is the War Memorial dedicated to the men and boys of Bickerton who died in the World Wars.

Holy Trinity has seen many changes over the years both physical and spiritual. In the late 1940s it joined with St Wenefrede's, Bickley, and Cholmondeley Chapel. In 1992 it became one of the four churches on the Sandstone Trail with St John's Burwardsley, St Wenefride's, Bickley and All Saints at Harthill, sharing a minister. The grouping of these rural parishes (though All Saints closed in 2003) ceased in 2011 but their closeness continues to this day. Holy Trinity then returned to its Mother Church, St Oswald's, Malpas & St John's, Threapwood, once again sharing a Minister.

Holy Trinity and its grounds are beautiful in their simplicity and emanate a sense of peace and the presence of the Lord to all who enter.



## Our Church and Parishioners



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**SOME HIGHLIGHTS**



**Our Church and Parishioners**



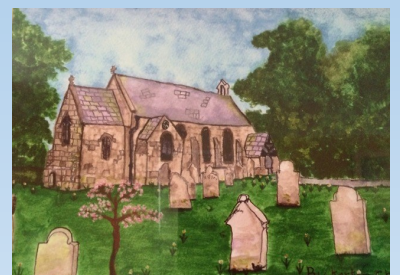
**Decorating the Church with flowers for Festivals and Special services is a glorious tradition at Holy Trinity. The congregation and parishioners who contribute create some truly wonderful displays. The church is open to visitors, apart from Sunday, on these special occasions.**



**Confirmation Service**



**Our Easter Cross**





## IN THE COMMUNITY

We have good relationships with other community institutions – Bickerton Village Hall, Bickerton Holy Trinity Primary School, the Women’s Institute, the Scouting organisation which has premises in the village ‘centre’; Brown Knowl Methodist Chapel and St Oswald’s, Malpas and their Mothers’ Union - all of which we can build on in the future. All attract, to different degrees, people in the wider community. The more we interact with these organisations, the higher the Holy Trinity profile becomes.



**Bickerton and Bickley Mothers’ Union (its members have recently joined with the Malpas branch)** was part of our Church Family for many years. Mrs Brenda Harvey was a tireless and generous supporter of the Mothers’ Union, our Church and Bickerton Village Hall all her life. Her lunches and afternoon teas are legend.

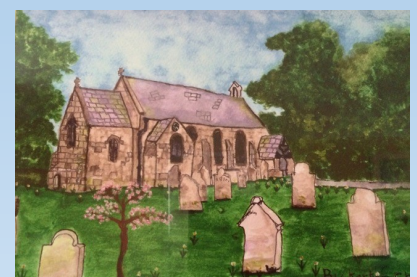
## HOLY TRINITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bickerton Holy Trinity Primary School is a ‘Church of England Voluntary Controlled primary school where the Christian ethos can be felt in everything.’ It is well subscribed (149 children on roll) attracting pupils from a wide catchment area. Our incumbents, past and present, have maintained good, healthy relations with its Headteacher, staff, pupils and parents. Our incumbent is the ex-officio foundation governor and an important part of the school. The Rev’d Canon Ian Davenport, and in recent times, his curate, Rev’d Helen Molesworth paid weekly visits to the school. It was lovely to see how well the children have got to know them when they and their families, as well as their Headteacher and staff, attended special services at Holy Trinity.

It is not surprising that we can number a bare handful of those families at regular services. Parents have to transport their children to school every day, many from quite a distance. Many of those parents are working full-time and weekends are precious for family time and other activities. The days of automatic church attendance on Sunday in



Outside Our Church



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communities are long gone. We would love to see more of them but we are happy we do share special times in the Christian calendar with them.

## FROM THE HEADTEACHER

*Over recent years, the considerable contribution which the Vicar makes to our school has been very much appreciated by the head teacher and staff. The vicar is the ex officio member of the governing body who brings a great deal of understanding of the mission of our school and of the way we live out that mission with the children in our care.*

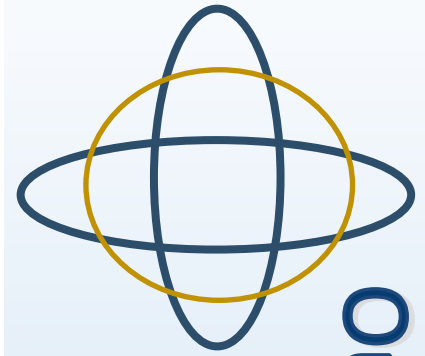
*We would like the prospective incumbent to be someone who wants to get to know the children and the school really well, who would understand the way that we help the children to live life in all its fullness and who would want to help us to deepen the Christian nature of our school; someone who will lead the development of our spirituality and prayer through innovative and appealing collective worship which is accessible to children and staff. We love singing. We would like to be introduced to new and beautiful songs for worship for the children to sing in their inimitable style which touches everyone.*

*We very much hope that the new vicar will play an active part on the governing body, helping us to shape our ethos, supporting our staff, involving us in the life of the church and making links with the local community. Respecting others and ourselves, and valuing diversity are fundamental to our school. We would hope that this person will be able to challenge stereotypes and help us to embrace new ways to develop this ethos.*

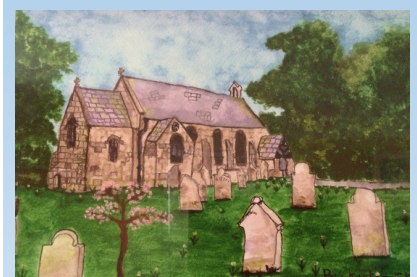
## EVENTS

Over the years, there have been many diverse events organised with Holy Trinity at their heart, which is a tribute to the commitment of our relatively small church community. Some have been instigated by individuals, others by groups but always with the support and help of Holy Trinity's congregation and parishioners – Whist Drives and Bridge Drives; Church Lunches and Afternoon Teas; Walks; Bingo and Quizzes; the Church Lottery; Crafts and Christmas Wreathmaking; Flower Festivals and Open gardens; Talks and Concerts, Open Air Good Friday re-enactments; Home Groups and Alpha Courses. Before the Covid pandemic interrupted us, many of these activities were still happening.

Although many events are also fundraisers for our Church and for charities both at home and abroad, they are also delightful reasons to get together. The events themselves bring community together, of course, but working together in their preparation also engenders a spirit of fellowship.



Outside Our Church



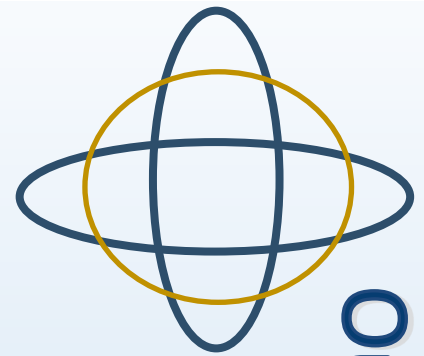
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Open garden 2015



Outside Our Church

**Bickerton Village Hall**

(Long Lane, Bickerton ST54 8AU)

**CHRISTMAS WREATH WORKSHOP**

From three o'clock, among friends, listening to Christmas music, you will be making beautiful Christmas wreaths. Choose from a range of festive and traditional designs. You'll receive plenty of advice and support from the staff. The workshop is a great chance to meet other people in the area. The workshop will be held in the Village Hall, Long Lane, Bickerton, ST54 8AU. Tickets are £15.00.

With expert guidance through every step of the workshop, you will receive a beautiful Christmas wreath to take home with you. Materials are included in the price.

All you need to bring are a pair of scissors and an apron to protect your clothes.

Friday 1 December 2017  
at 1.15 for a prompt 1.30 p.m. start  
£25.00 inclusive of all materials  
To reserve your place, please call  
Mrs Val Capewell 01829 782 345

Cheques in advance please made payable to Bickerton Village Hall. Please place in an envelope marked 'Wreath Workshop' and post in the Village Hall letterbox in the door at the main entrance.



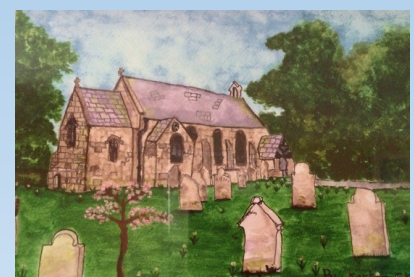
Christmas Wreathmaking

**HOME GROUP**

The thriving Home Group is the result of various Church members embracing the Alpha Movement and joining courses which have been run in the local area. The Home Group helps to fulfil the teaching aspect that is one of the Church's Five Marks of Mission - Telling, Teaching, Tending, Transforming and Treasuring.

**BREAKFAST CLUB**

Before a Parochial Church Council meeting in 2014, a group of parishioners were commenting about the number of homeless people on the streets of Chester and it was suggested that, rather than just talking about it, we should actually do something about it. So was launched the Bickerton Church Breakfast Club, whereby we would raise funds to buy provisions to provide breakfasts five days a week at the premises of Chester Aid to the Homeless (or CATH as it is known). It is a very long established charity in Chester and, as its



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name implies, helps homeless people in a variety of ways.

Over the years Peter and Joan Sharman, two parishioners, became heavily involved and bought provisions on behalf of the Church to provide breakfasts five days a week and on one day a week cooked and served breakfast themselves as volunteers. On an average day breakfasts were served to between 39 and 60 homeless people totalling over 8,000 breakfasts per year. At Christmas time we were able to provide a special festive buffet lunch and funds raised enabled us to buy a microwave, fridge, toasters and a hot water boiler.

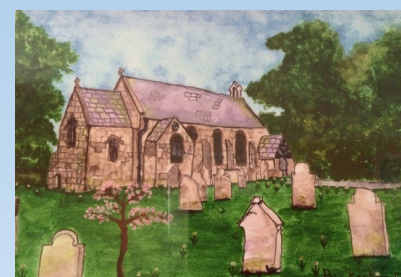
At first we weren't at all sure we could raise enough money and whether the idea would work, but nearly 7 years later an amazing amount of over £25,000 has been raised from kindly, generous people almost exclusively, but not entirely, from parishioners. From these beginnings a wider Church community became involved whereby people from St. Oswald's, Malpas and St John's, Threapwood provided tinned food and clothing in considerable volumes. In addition to donations, funds were raised not just from individual donations but via a series of fund raising events over the years. These embraced providing soup lunches, organised by our parishioners, a special lunch in memory of one of our stalwart parishioners who had recently died, a Christmas wreath making event and a bingo night. Several local Societies gave help, both financial and otherwise, whilst friends at Brown Knowl Methodist Church provided huge volumes of food and clothing, and children and staff of our local school in Bickerton donated masses of tinned food.

In October 2020 CATH had to change its modus operandi due to Covid and the fact that many homeless people were accommodated in local hotels. Also, CATH received some considerable donations and legacies, which materially contributed to the organisation's financial stability and viability. Now that CATH's need is nowhere near as great, it was decided to cease the Church's formal assistance to CATH although several supporters from the Church continue to donate.

During the years Bickerton Church has been leading the CATH initiative, we have had many happy and fulfilling events which have helped bring the community closer and, of course, we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to all the kind people who have contributed most generously to a worthy cause. Our efforts have made a real difference to CATH and the homeless in Chester and environs.



## Outside our Church



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**ABROAD**

As an example, two of our congregation, Kate and John Holland, have had a long association with projects in the Gambia. They have dedicated many years to improving the facilities for the education of children at two schools there. Because they know people in situ, the money and equipment donated is assured of being put to good use for the most urgent projects. Although the money raised for the recent building of a toilet block in Sangyang village, was through local Rotary Clubs, parishioners supported their fundraising events.



**Before and After—the new toilet block in Sangyang**



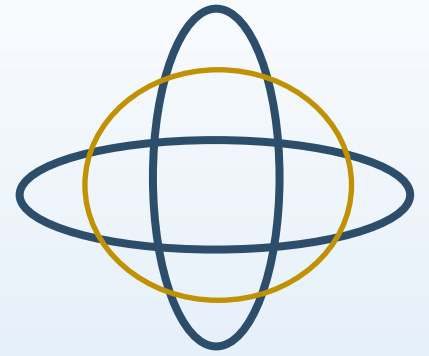
**Reusable sanitary packs destined for Sanyang from monies raised and the people on the ground at Sanyang.**



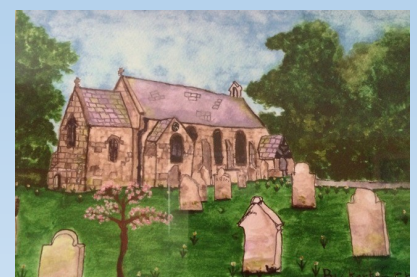
**Update: Due to the Pandemic, the packs finally arrived April 2021!**



**Clothes were also collected for the nursery school**



**Outside our Church**



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## ART EXHIBITION

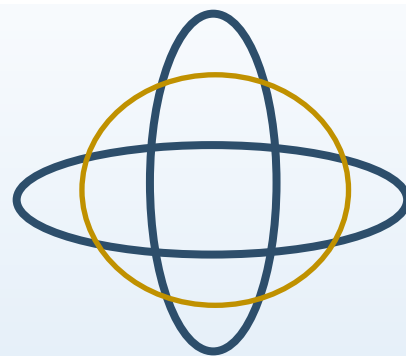
Each year, an Art Exhibition is held at Bickerton Village Hall during the last week of July. Some 150 local artists display and sell their work—600 original works of art! Now in its 15th year, it attracts around 800 visitors from far and wide during the 8-day event. It is a huge project which involves many, many of our parishioners both as exhibitors and in the large band of helpers needed. However, it is another example of what brings us together in the shared life of our close-knit parishes.



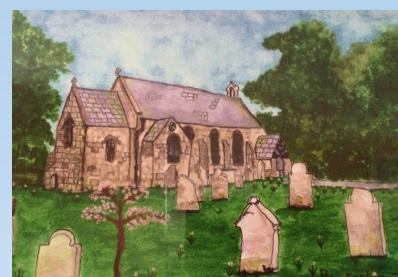
The Art Exhibition with its very popular café serving a wide range of home-made cakes.



The Baptistry during a Flower Festival



Outside our Church



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## OUR FUTURE

Like many churches, we must honestly admit that we are struggling to maintain numbers in our regular congregation. Our predominant age group is made up of retired people. Therefore, we worry about the future and our focus going forward will be to build up security for worship at Holy Trinity in the years to come. This means attracting new people into our church family, and particularly younger generations. Our faith is strong, and although we are relatively small in number, we have an unusually good bond of mutual support and fellowship. We need to show that being a member of our church brings structure to our lives through its services and provides space to contemplate our Christian Faith. And, importantly, it also brings us strength in difficult times and shared joy and laughter in the good. Our Faith and spirit will guide us in future actions.

Over the years many things have been tried — and re-tried — in the hope of bringing new members into the congregation. Some activities have worked well and, though perhaps unsuccessful in swelling the numbers in our congregation, cannot be discounted because they have widened our presence and interaction with the wider community.

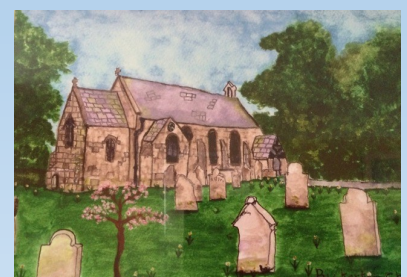
Holy Trinity comes alive in the presence of families who come to worship on the high Holy Days – Christmas and Easter. It is also a popular venue for weddings and christenings – small and intimate, and pretty. It is also a joyous occasion when local children are confirmed in our church. We must be more pro-active in building on these.

It is a tribute to our congregation that we are eager to start again, once Covid restrictions are eased or lifted. Many familiar activities will resume in time - Spring and Harvest lunches, Bingo, Quizzes, Coffee mornings, Afternoon teas, Flower Festivals and Open gardens. Fundraisers – of course, but also delightful excuses to get more people in the community together.

Many suggestions for new activities and use of the building and grounds have been made. For example, opening our Church to visitors on other occasions by creating a peaceful garden in the small plot of land behind the Church and occasionally having a 'pop-up' café. We might explore alternative services at different times and to widening our lay pastoral care and community outreach. The church building could be used for talks and for informal meeting for exploring our Christian heritage and faith; for musical evenings and perhaps starting a community choir; we could involve children in craft sessions and plays enacting the nativity and other stories from the Bible. We should also build on our links and have more joint activities with the Village Hall, Brown Knowl Chapel, Holy Trinity School and the local Scout organisation. It is also important that we become more pro-active in advertising ourselves. There is a happy, willing and hard-working team at Holy Trinity. The way forward will not be easy but we are undaunted and with the right leadership, we CAN move mountains!



# Our Future



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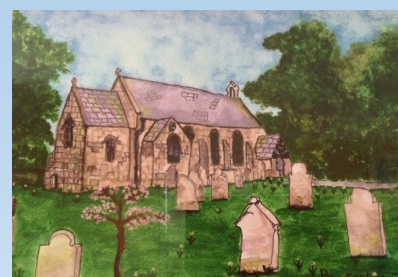
2021

## PRESENT AND FUTURE PROJECTS

- encouraging visitors by creating a peaceful garden on a small plot behind the Church
- on occasions offering refreshments at a "pop-up" cafe
- exploring alternative services at different times to attract new people to worship
- using the Church for talks and informal gatherings to explore our Christian heritage and faith
- raising interest in a community choir
- involving children in drama activities with a Christian base
- building on existing links with Bickerton Village Hall, Brown Knowl Methodist Chapel, Bickerton School and the local Scout organisation



**Our Future**



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**2021**





# Our Future

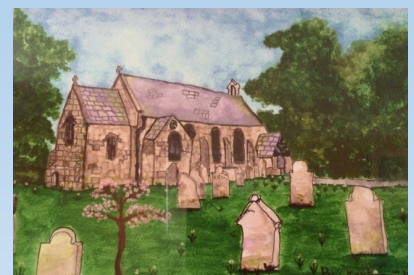
## MOVING FORWARD WITH OUR NEW RECTOR

One of our parishioners said, “Someone with humility, sincerity, vision, energy, compassion and communication, management and leadership skills! – not asking much are we?” Of course, we take their faith for granted but it must shine through and inspire us, beyond the day to day and official routines that come with the job. Someone who is unafraid and with the energy to help us tackle the tasks ahead.

### We seek a person who will

- encourage and support the congregation in their Christian faith at all times, not just in Sunday worship
- relate well to different generations, with teaching gifts that will inspire new worshippers to join us
- visit and bring hope to those in our community who are struggling - the sick and the hurting
- help to maintain financial stability at Holy Trinity by supporting and encouraging fund-raising activities which will supplement our existing assets
- be a confident leader, able to help us move forward and embrace new ideas
- encourage us to put into practice plans for widening our out-reach
- be mindful of our traditions but forward-looking, so that our church reflects not just the needs of today but those of the community in future years.

A warm welcome awaits anyone who feels called to this beautiful area of God’s Kingdom.



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