

Report to the 2024 APCM from the Norton Parish choir

Over the past year the choir has continued to sing at the main 9:30 service at St George's on the 2nd, 3rd & 4th Sundays of each month during term time. As with most of the groups in the parish, we have faced some difficulties with the falling attendance of parishioners making recruitment of new singers difficult. We have also been struggling with some longer-term absences due to illness.

Over the past year we have had the pleasure of singing services and helping to lead the congregation in song especially at the big festivals of Christmas and Easter along with their preparation time of Advent and Lent. The Advent Sunday evening service along with the 9 lessons and carols service are always poignant as we prepare for the coming of Christ's birth and the services during holy week including compline allow us to reflect on the coming death and resurrection. There was also the special service to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III.

The big highlight of last year was singing a joint choral evensong with the choir of St Andrew's, Biggleswade at St Andrew's last July. This link was made through Peter Giles who now lives in Biggleswade and sings in St Andrew's choir. I was invited to conduct the service and we were accompanied on the organ by Justin Waters. The music for this service included Stanford's evening setting in B flat and S.S. Wesley's anthem Blessed be the God and Father. We are looking to arrange a 'return fixture' at the end of July as a part of the celebrations for St George's 60th anniversary of consecration.

Over the course of the past year at St George's we have sung 202 different hymns on Sunday mornings which reflect on the readings and themes of each Sunday.

We are always looking for new singers of all parts to come and join us, so if you know of anyone who can sing and would like to sing regularly on Sundays, please let me know or point them in my direction.

I would like to finish this report by saying a huge thank you to all the members of the choir and in particular to Keith Sparrow for their dedication and support, without whom we could not make such a contribution to the life of the parish.

Tim Croot

Director of Music, Norton Parish