

THE BENEFICE OF AVENING WITH CHERINGTON

Parish Profile

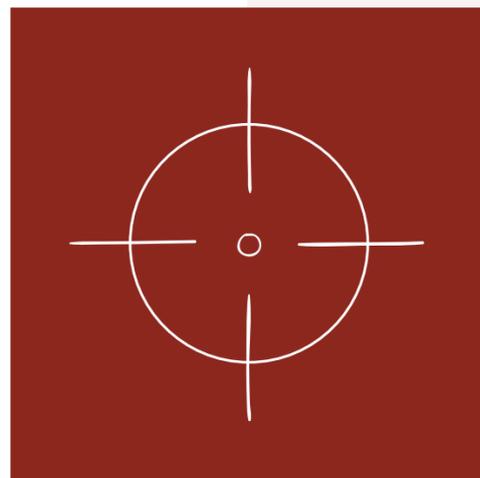




WELCOME TO THE BENEFICE OF EVENING WITH CHERINGTON!

We are the parishes of the Church of the Holy Cross in Avening and St Nicholas in Cherington.

Our parishes lie in the rural southern Cotswolds, between the town of Stroud in the north, the Roman-built Cirencester in the east, and the market towns of Minchinhampton in the west and Tetbury in the south.



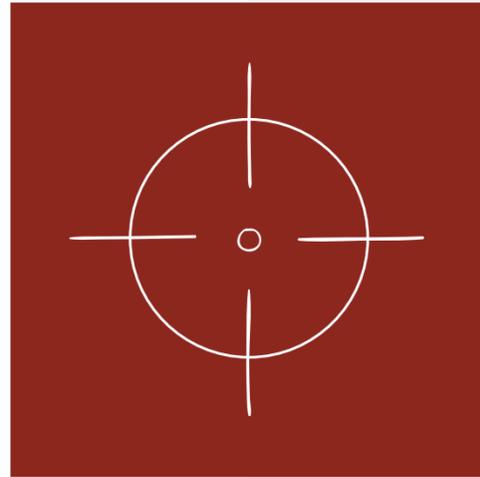
OUR AIM FOR THE INTERIM MINISTRY

We are exploring what an enlarged benefice would look like and how it might work joining in with Minchinhampton.

As both Avening and Cherington parishes adjoin the parish of Minchinhampton and both are less than three miles from Minchinhampton, conversations have been underway with the wardens of both parishes and the Archdeacons of Gloucester and Cheltenham exploring the possibility of combining these parishes and the Benefice of Minchinhampton with Box and Amberley.

The parishes of Amberley and Minchinhampton with Box were joined together as a benefice around twelve years ago and their benefice works on four levels:

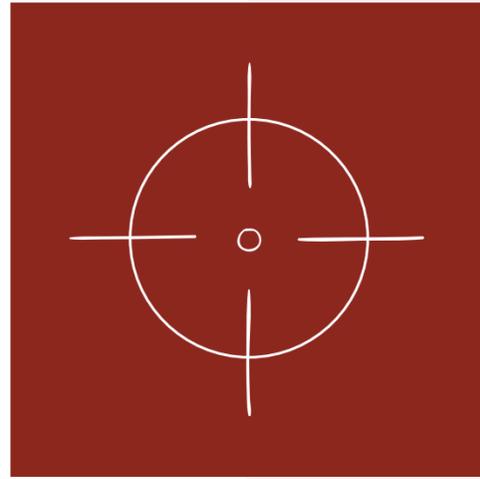
- Ministerial support: They have a supportive group of active and retired clergy and a lay reader. This is invaluable as being a priest in a parish or benefice on one's own can be stressful and demanding.
- Administrative support: Having one administrator who is available four days a week is helpful as it reduces workload on the ministry team.
- Shared resources: running joint Lent courses, retreats, and borrowed equipment from each other.
- Joint services: Prior to the pandemic they had shared two services a year; Harvest evensong and Trinity Sunday evensong. It is hoped that this will resume in 2022.



OUR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

We are striving to maintain and strengthen our churches' presence at the heart of our sociable communities, assisting as many people as possible in our Parish to come to experience the presence and love of God.

- More effectively harness our gifts, talents and skills across the benefice to build new relationships and better help each other
- Continue our worship, nurturing our congregations while also finding imaginative ways to reach out into our parishes to ensure that all feel included in the consolation, strengthening and uplifting power of Christianity.
 - E.g. the Apple Harvest and juice production during the pandemic
- Progress our community engagement in a number of ways, including further strengthening links with Avening School and our connection with teenagers
- Finding our place in the diocese - either "on our own" or by joining with another benefice
- Improve our overall Communications with people in and beyond our congregations



OUR CHALLENGES

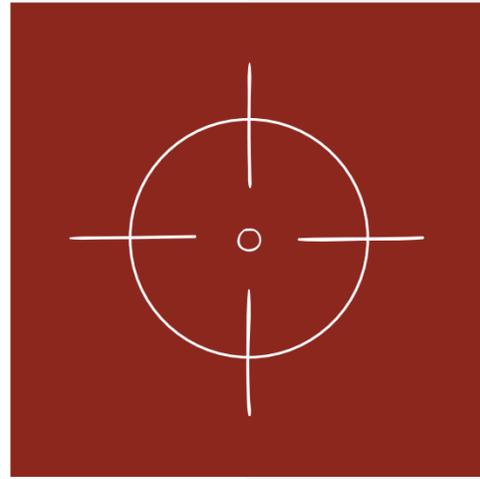
This is what we look to change and overcome – with your help

- Draw a broader community of worshippers at regular services.
- Explore new ways to serve God and our community.
- Encourage more family participation, fresh energetic engagement.
- New ways to make use of our wonderful church buildings.
- Occasions for families to meet and pray together.
- To keep the church in touch with older people and the housebound, making God's love more accessible to them.
- Explaining the Christian faith clearly and convincingly.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE A
MEMBER OF THIS VIBRANT
RURAL COMMUNITY...**

...this could be the opportunity for you.





WE'RE LOOKING FOR A SPIRITUAL LEADER WHO IS PRAYERFUL AND GROUNDED IN GOD'S WORD; WHO WILL MOVE PEOPLE TO EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE; WHO CAN WORK WITH US TO DELIVER OUR AMBITIONS, AND PARTICULARLY TO:

- Proudly champion the ministry, building a strong pastoral presence throughout our benefice (warning: this may involve enjoying a lot of food, particularly cake and wine!).
- Embrace, develop and enhance our worship styles.
- Promote collaborative leadership and oversight, building fruitful relationships and drawing our communities closer together.
 - Who will welcome all Christian denominations in our services.
- Inspire us and others to grow with you in faith and discipleship.
- Lead the development of our benefice vision, helping us plan for the years ahead - and where we'll fit in.
- The presence of a priest in the villages is important. Not only at services, but around and about too.

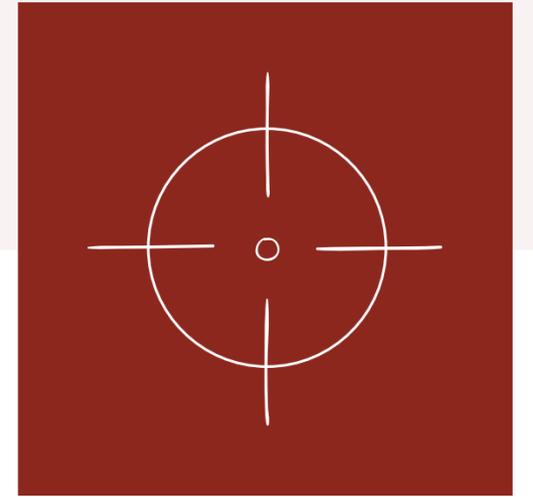
WE WILL ENDEAVOUR TO:

- 1 Support you as an individual, across all the varied groups within the churches and PCCs
- 2 Work to move forward and create a church for future generations
- 3 Provide administrative support for you and the benefice
- 4 Sustain our efforts to raise funds to meet our financial obligations
- 5 Work with you to develop a strategic plan that will deliver our shared targets and vision



IN THIS PROFILE WE HAVE SOUGHT TO GIVE YOU A FLAVOUR OF OUR BENEFICE LIFE IN RECENT YEARS.

Clearly the last two years have been different due to the pandemic, but we have used many examples of 'normal life' to show you all that we nurture, cherish and pray for. We hope you find it exciting and useful, and we look forward to meeting you soon.



WORSHIP

Since the pandemic, we have reduced the numbers of Sunday morning services to one Eucharist service alternating between Cherington and Avening, and a service of Morning Prayer in Avening when the Eucharist is in Cherington. There is also a Zoom service of Evening prayer on Thursdays.



WORSHIP

Prior to Covid-19, we held Common Worship Eucharist services on the 1st and 3rd Sundays (9.30am at Cherington and 11.00am at Avening): on the on 2nd Sunday there was 8.00am Eucharist at Avening, 10.30 All Age Service at Cherington and 5.30pm Evening Prayer at Avening and on the 4th Sunday there was 9.30 Morning Prayer at Cherington and 11.00am Eucharist at Avening. Refreshments were served after most services.

We now regularly see members of Avening's congregation in Cherington - and vice versa. Whenever possible, we opted to hold services outside in the church yard, especially since being allowed to sing again. Although we do not have children in the congregation every week, we are 'child friendly'. Other services such as a Pet Service and Lammastide have taken place on Sunday afternoons.

THE MINISTRY TEAM

We are fortunate to have a Reader in Derrick Pierce. There are no other members of clergy allocated to the benefice, although we are being supported by the Benefice of Minchinhampton and their team especially to help us through this time of change. Rector Howard Gilbert was licensed as Priest in Charge in March '22.

We enjoy lay participation in the intercessions, readings, administration of Holy Communion and service preparation as well as organ playing and music.

Each church has a separate PCC, and their own Deanery Synod representatives: they share a Safeguarding Officer.



THE RECTORY



The rectory is a modern 1980s detached property on a small development close to the church in Avening.

The accommodation comprises: 4 bedrooms, bathroom, WC and separate shower, 2 halls, study, living room, dining room, kitchen, utility, and cloakroom, garage.



Holy Cross, Avening

AVENING

Avening is a country village with an industrial past. The mills in our steep valley would have relied on the water source running down through the village towards Nailsworth. The village has been extended a few times since 1970, onto Sandford Leaze from the main road and up on to The Sunground. These newer homes have brought more young families in to the village, adding to the excitement and diversity of our community.

We are fortunate to have a small and excellent primary school with a vibrant group of supportive parents, who organise wonderful fundraising family events throughout the year. There is a strong church presence in the school, where much of their ethos is about Christian values and the children run services for Harvest, Remembrance, Easter and Christmas. There is also a popular and active playgroup in the village, which has a real family feel about it and is open in the mornings for children over the age of 2 years.

Our play park is a popular area for joggers, dog walkers and meet ups with friends. It also hosts many of the school's sports clubs and annual sports day event. It has a small football pitch and play area for children, including a very good zip wire! Older children can enjoy exploring in the wooded area at the back of the park. The north-west end of the park is home to our community orchard, which has indeed been contributed to by 'the community.'

AVENING

Two friendly pubs serve the village, one of which serves Indian meals while the other is more traditional and provides 'luxury rooms' for bed and breakfast visitors. The Social Club has good beer and the committee there organise the skittles and line dancing. It is also the home of The Community Café, which provides a meeting place with fine coffee and homemade cakes every Tuesday morning. (Over Lockdowns the café spirit continued, organising small coffee mornings in private gardens, then walks for six people together and, later, walks two by two in the beautiful lanes surrounding the village).

The Social Club as well as our Village Memorial Hall, can be hired out and are often bustling with events or parties (COVID excepting). The nearby towns of Nailsworth, Minchinhampton and Tetbury offer shops and services and Minchinhampton Common is a wonderful, wide space to fill the lungs with fresh air, play a game of golf or fly a kite. There is an abundance of lovely walks both in and around Avening and, indeed, further afield for the more adventurous.

HOLY CROSS AVENING

Our church dates from about 1080, the only church in England to be commissioned by a Queen. Holy Cross Church is well-preserved and full of interesting details. It has been extended and parts have been replaced over the centuries, but many of its original details are still intact and clearly visible with replacements carefully and lovingly restored. We hold regular weekly services and, since the Pandemic, we have alternated our Eucharistic services with Cherington, benefiting from the support and friendships that have been built up between us. When possible, these services have been held in the churchyard. Now that the pandemic is easing a bit, we look forward to running workshops in the church for families and children.



HOLY CROSS AVENING

Now that the pandemic is easing a bit, we look forward to doing more for families and children. In the past we have enjoyed the informality of 'Forest Church' and 'Café Church,' which we hope to repeat in the future and 'Messy Church' is something we'd like to also work towards.

We are fortunate to have a Reader in Derrick Pierce, and a Pastoral Carer, Cas Boddam-Whetham. Our Advent and Lent meetings give us a chance to explore our faith together. We have an average of 20 in our regular congregation with a committed nucleus of 40. This increases by around 65 for Festivals. The Church and Churchyard are well-maintained by a dedicated team of people giving their time and skills for the glory of God.

The Church has a peel of 6 bells, which, before COVID, used to ring out over the village every Tuesday on practice night. We look forward to their return.

The Church has always played a significant role in the life of our village and we seek to continue to keep its presence alive by making it more welcoming and accessible for our visitors and regular congregation, both during and outside of our service times. We have recently experimented with a different layout in the church in an attempt to improve accessibility for all and maintain a flexible space for a broader use of the church.

AVENING LIVING COMMUNITY

Our Summer Fete is a big fundraiser and is well supported by the villagers, both in preparation and on the day itself. Our Duck Races are renowned and even this last year, with little water in the stream, ducks swam on to victory!

The Community choir, the 'Avening Angels' meet regularly in the Church and often enrich our services at Easter, Harvest and Christmas as well as entertaining the village at wider community events. The Church has also hosted the weekly Avening Art Group mornings and we get to see some of their best work at the annual Art exhibition. We also use the church for occasions such as a 'Tea and Tissues' morning on the first day of term in September, where parents are welcomed in the church, after dropping off their children at school or playgroup. There our pastoral carer is handy for some good advice or otherwise it's a welcome opportunity for parents to have a good chat, celebrate or commiserate, over coffee, biscuits and cake. Similarly, the church also hosts an annual MacMillan coffee morning. In the past, music concerts have been enjoyed in the church and now a more flexible space makes this even more possible for future events.

AVENING LIVING COMMUNITY

Many of our Avening families have benefited from the support of the Avening Church of England Educational Fund. The ACEEF supports the educational development of children and young people under the age of 25, in the Avening parish, by making grants for transport, books, equipment or courses. With the help of the Parish Council, the charity also supports a Youth Club which, before Covid, met once a week, sometimes in the church. The incumbent and wardens of Avening Church are its trustees.

We have an active and dedicated parish council, who are committed to the overall safety and wellbeing of our village. The team organise our Parish event and fun awards for the Villagers of the year. There is a Film Club, which shows movies in the Memorial Hall every month, a Book Swap on the steps of one house and, during the Spring and Summer, a Plant Swap on the wall of a house on the High Street. During Lockdowns, children delighted passers-by by making things for them to take home and played their part in displaying bears and cheerful pictures in their windows. The older children wrote letters to residents who were housebound. We are fortunate to have our very own magazine for Avening and Cherington; 'The Villager' where much of community life is advertised and recorded.



Avening Picture Impressions



Avening Picture Impressions



St Nicholas, Cherington

CHERINGTON

Cherington is a small Cotswold village 3 miles from Minchinhampton, and one mile from the larger village of Avening. There are some 50 cottages and houses in and around the village (which effectively has one street which includes the lovely cottages in Pear Tree Row), a village green with its 19th century well-head, our Church and a village hall with the allotments behind, and the 'Cherington Lake' a very short throw away. It is a very friendly, supportive community, with an active village WhatsApp group; we have families, retirees and working professionals and artists, and possibly more dogs than humans!

We are in wonderful walking and riding country, close to Gatcombe for horsey events, and Westonbirt Arboretum for summer musical events, and only 15 minutes from Cirencester with its Roman history and Stroud with its vibrant ethical food and Arts scene (voted best place to live in Britain in 2021 in the Sunday Times) and just 45 minutes from Bath, Bristol and Cheltenham. We are lucky to have terrific local schools and NHS services all within a few miles of the village.

The Parish Council has recently launched its website, which is steadily being enlarged - <https://cheringtonpc.org.uk/>

ST NICHOLAS CHERINGTON

Our Grade I listed church dates from the 12th century, is generally in a good state of repair with only minor repairs required in the quinquennial inspection, and it has been the 'hub' of the village for many years. There are 36 on our Electoral Roll. We have a committed nucleus of about 20, and our congregation is, on average, 16 for our bi-weekly 10.00 am service, with a substantial increase to 70 or more for Festivals.

Although we do not have children in the congregation every week, we are 'child friendly' and our Christingle service, the candle-lit Christmas Carol Service and Mothering Sunday services draw in a good number of children each year, their activities being co-ordinated by a remarkable villager who ran a nursery school for many years.



ST NICHOLAS CHERINGTON

We are surrounded by a number of large farms, and our Harvest Festival is very well supported, with a 'bring & share' supper afterwards.

We have two churchwardens, supported by an active PCC. The wardens have, when necessary, led services on occasion, and our Treasurer has kept our heads well above water. We have a dedicated organist who is also our PCC Secretary. We have willing readers and Welcomers.

Our team of bell ringers has been below strength in recent years, so the ringers from Avening and elsewhere visit us for special occasions. We hope to rebuild our own team in the future to ring our 5 bells. There is a talented Flower Team and an efficient churchyard 'tendress', and a cleaner rota. Our Visitors' Book records many compliments on the way in which the church is kept open each day and looked after.

CHERINGTON LIVING COMMUNITY

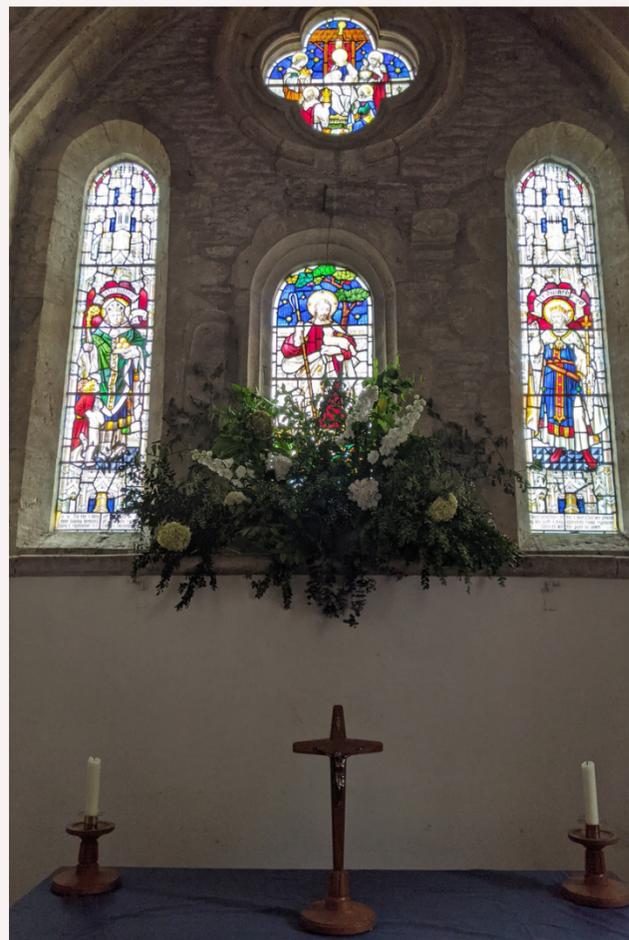
A highlight of the Cherington year, and a major contributor towards Church and Village Hall finances, is the long established Cherington Flower Show and Fete, usually held towards the end of July - and almost every villager plays an important part in making the event a great success. The day ends with a special short thanksgiving service followed by a village supper.

Other events are held from time to time. Throughout the pandemic we raised our game by coming together (as best as possible) harvesting apples and producing our own apple juice; having 25 households light up their decorated windows for Advent '20 (one day at a time, of course), held a plant sale on the Village Green and a fundraiser for the charity "Mind" with our pre-recorded 9 Lessons and Carols Service, which included Christmas greetings from notable local celebrities and, much to our wonder, Dame Judi Dench.

For the last 2 years a Christmas Fair has been held at a local farm to raise funds for carpets and a craftsman made curtain rail for the church, and a mobile access ramp for the village hall.

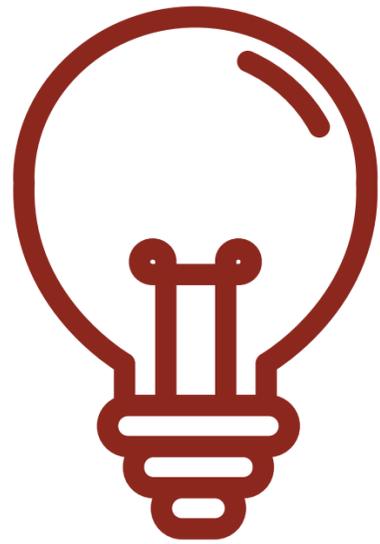


Cherington Picture Impressions



Cherington Picture Impressions

APPENDIX 1



Parish Electoral Role:

Avening: 41 Cherington: 36

Average Sunday attendance (pre-Covid average):

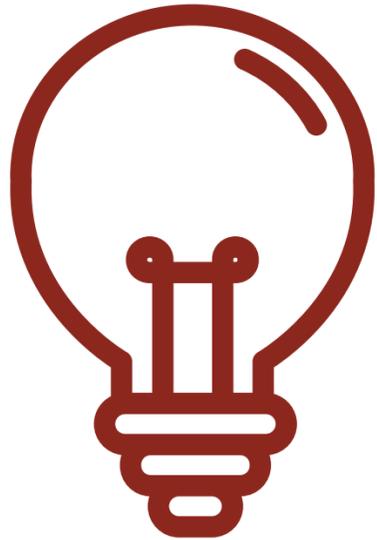
Avening: 25 Cherington: 20

Annual event services across the Benefice (pre-COVID average):

Weddings: 5 Funerals: 6 Baptisms: 5

APPENDIX 2

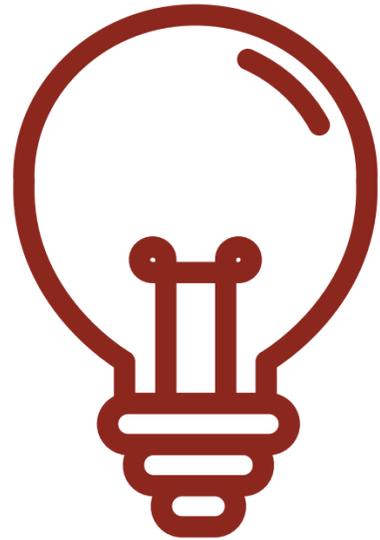
Useful websites



- <http://www.cheringtonshow.com>
- <https://cheringtonpc.org.uk/>
- <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/14319/>
- <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/14317/>

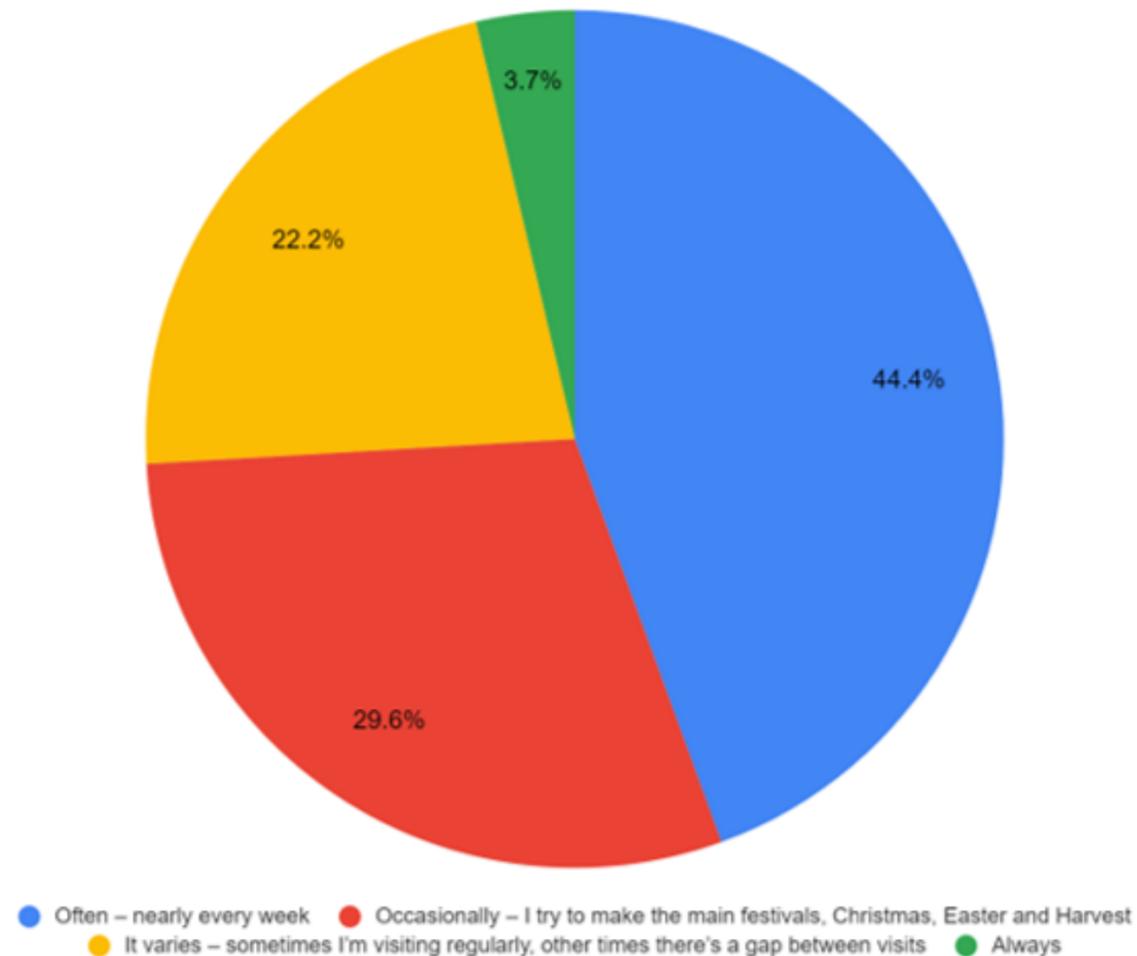
APPENDIX 3

Benefice Survey Results



In 2021 we conducted a Survey across our Benefice and are happy to share the results on the following pages.

BENEFICE SURVEY

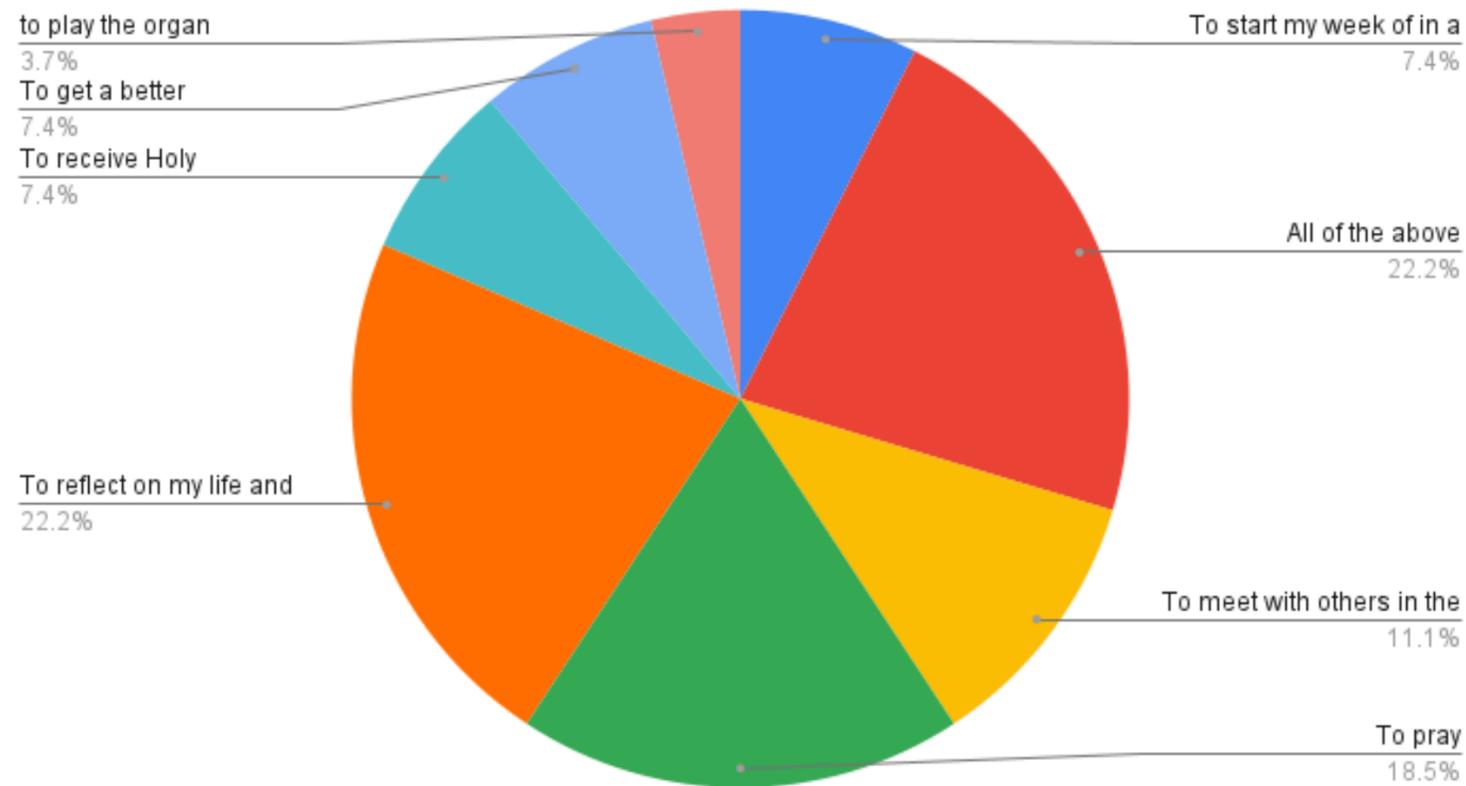


How often we go to church

- Always
- Often – nearly every week
- It varies – sometimes I'm visiting regularly, other times there's a gap between visits
- Occasionally – I try to make the main festivals, Christmas, Easter and Harvest
- Never

BENEFICE SURVEY

Why do you go to church?



Why we go to church

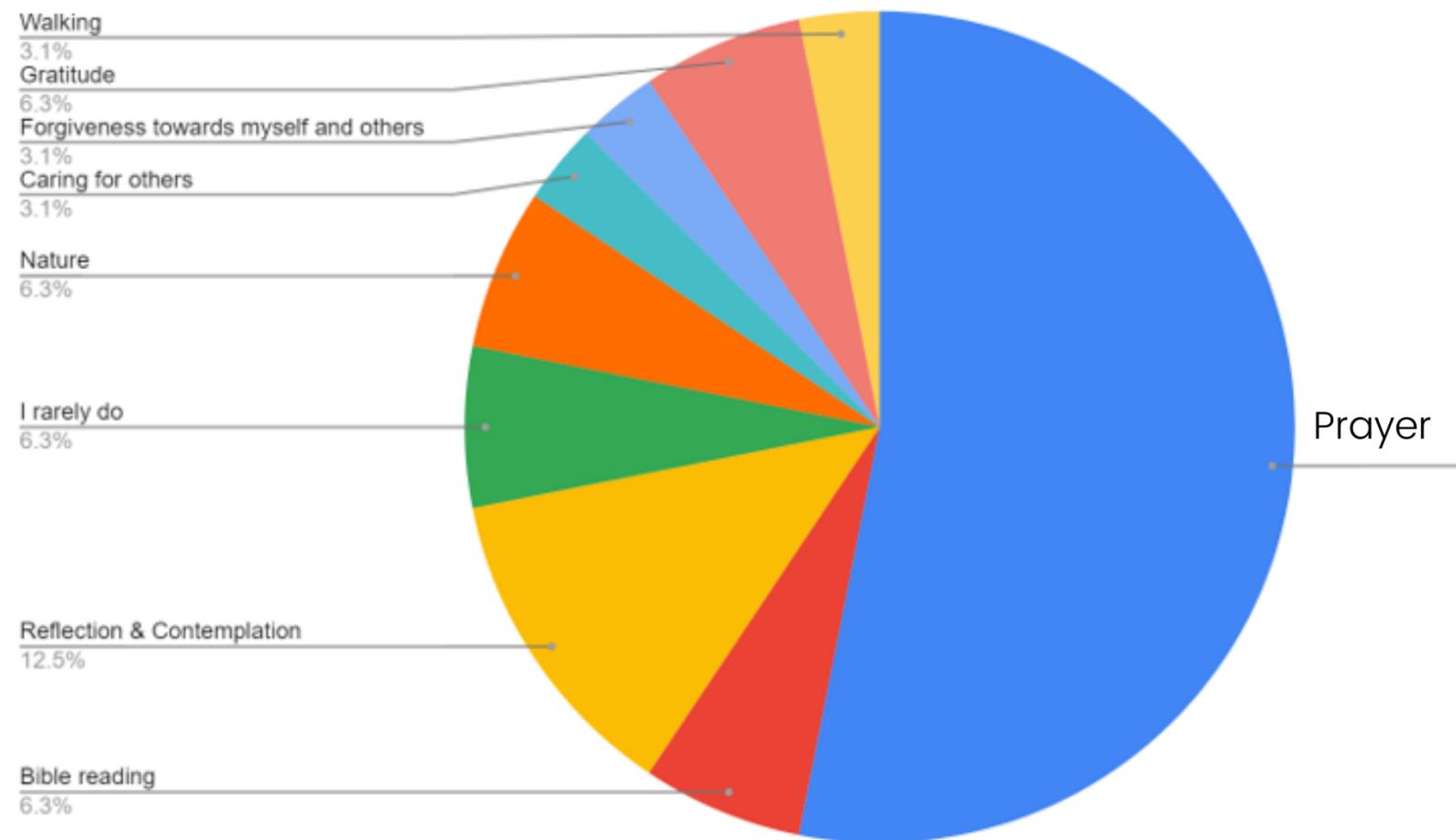
- To start my week of in a good way
- All of the above
- To meet with others in the community
- To pray
- To reflect on my life and actions
- To receive Holy Communion
- To get a better understanding of the bible
- to play the organ

BENEFICE SURVEY

**What church
means to us**



BENEFICE SURVEY



How we communicate with God (outside of services)

- Through prayer.
- I rarely do.
- Nature
- Bible reading and prayer
- Reflection & Contemplation
- By caring for my neighbours and friends and for my family; by showing forgiveness towards others and myself.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Known to Me

- Community café (13)
- Avening Angels Choir (14)
- Cherington Show (15)
- Pastoral visiting service (8)
- Lent and Advent groups (14)
- Line Dancing (8)
- Bell Ringing (15)
- Avening Youth Club (13)
- Over 60s Lunch Club (8)
- Avening Cinema Club (12)
- Avening W.I. (14)
- Summer Skittles (6)
- Charity Quiz (8)

Participate in

- Community café (12)
- Avening Angels Choir (3)
- Cherington Show (14)
- Pastoral visiting service (3)
- Lent and Advent groups (8)
- Line Dancing (1)
- Bell Ringing (0)
- Avening Youth Club (0)
- Over 60s Lunch Club (2)
- Avening Cinema Club (5)
- Avening W.I. (3)
- Summer Skittles (0)
- Charity Quiz (1)

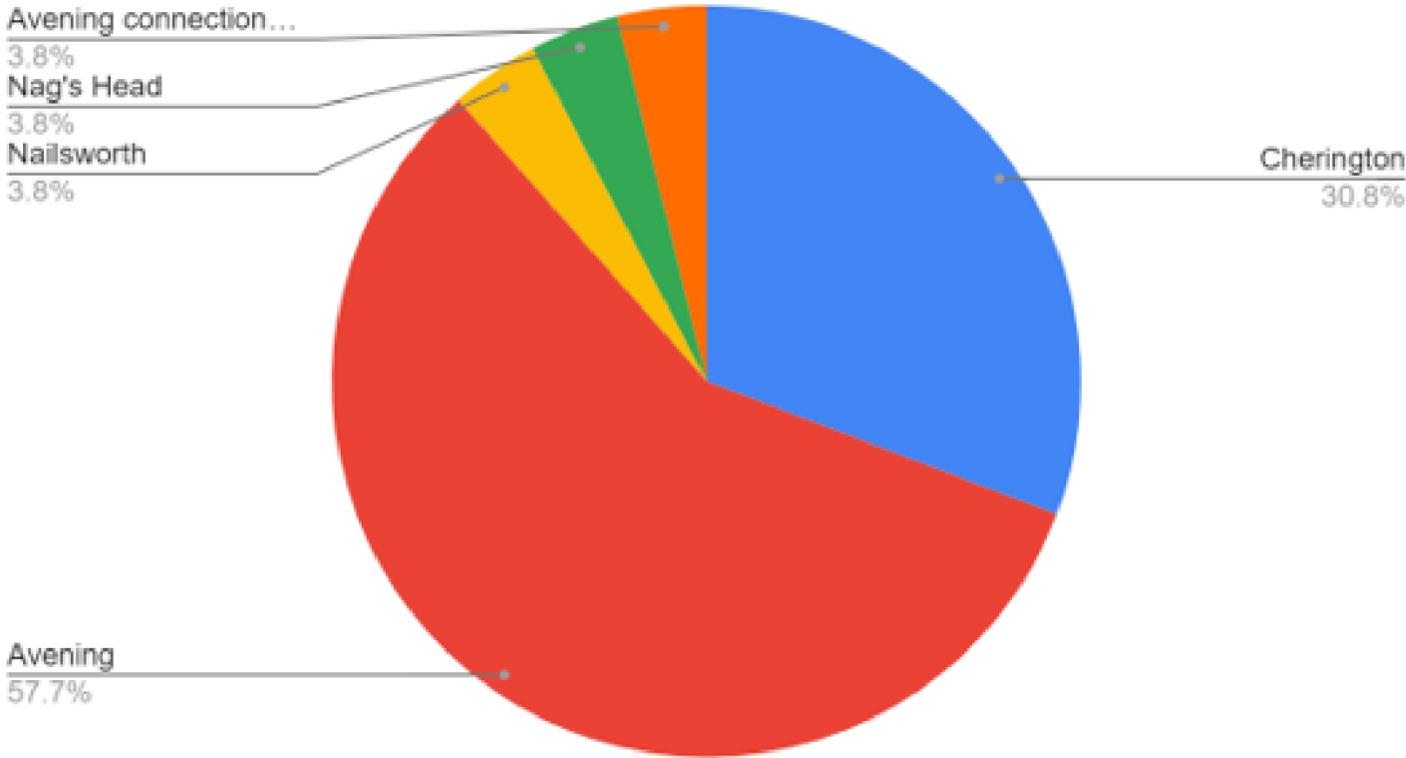
ACTIVITY WISHLIST

- Events in the Church
- A better system of pastoral visiting
- I've often thought that I'd like to meet in a small informal group sometimes to share and explore communicating with God, and the meaning of God and to try to resolve my belief
- Exercise, dance club etc
- To use the church building and spaces for other activities, fitness classes, meetings, music, art and craft classes
- I would like to see a focus on worship and prayer and, in particular, more frequent use of the 1662 service.
- More use of the village hall as a casual get together space in winter evenings

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Only 4 survey participants are younger than 60

Where do you live?



What Age are You?

