

2026 AGM Pastoral Report (21st April 2026)

Over the past 12 months, we have been blessed by a period of stability and growth across our two Parish Churches with some notable highlights across the way, with some busy times too, and with moments of sadness also as we celebrated the lives of many who have now gone before us.

We owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to Father Frank, who continues as our Chief Shepherd and Spiritual Guide, ably assisted by our two Deacons Kingsley and Lawrence. 2025 was a milestone year for all three: Kingsley and Lawrence celebrated their 20th year of ordination on the 16th of July; Father Frank celebrated his 60th year of religious profession on the 6th of September.

Above all, through God's grace and thanks to the Parishioners within our two Parish Churches at Christ the King and Holy Cross, we continue to be places and people where all are welcomed and made to feel part of "one family", recognising where differences exist but sharing in things that are most important. This is demonstrated by the many comments and feedback received by visitors to our two Churches, and through the many celebrations that have taken place throughout the year. This feeling of sharing and community is also echoed by the Head, Teachers and Staff at our local Primary School (which will be covered separately in the School report) which we are also proud and thankful to God for in terms of the "Full School" and "Class" Masses and Services that continue throughout the year.

The past year has also seen three changes in our "Church leadership": on the 8th May 2025, Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost became the 267th successor to St Peter on his appointment as Pope Leo XIV; in January 2026, Father Paul Harris SDS was appointed as the Provincial Superior of the Salvatorians here in the UK; and in February 2026, Archbishop Richard Moth was installed as the new Archbishop of Westminster. We pray for all. We also said goodbye to one Jubilee Year, the 2025 "*Jubilee Year of Hope*" and welcomed in two others: the 2026 "*Franciscan Jubilee Year*" (the 800th Anniversary of the death of St Francis of Assisi) and the 2026 "*SDS Jubilee Year*" (125 years of the Salvatorians in UK and Ireland). Two of the undoubted highlights for our Parish were linked to the 2025 Jubilee: the coach trip to Glastonbury in September 2025 during "biblical proportions" rain (!) and the Clifton Cathedral Pilgrimage in October 2025, shared by and remembered fondly by the 34 Parishioners who travelled there.

Looking briefly at some of the pastoral highlights over the past 12 months away from the above, in chronological order:

We were thankful for fine weather on Sunday 11th May 2025, when we celebrated the 80th Anniversary of VE day in the garden at CTK after the 10.30am Mass. This was a fun and poignant event for all who attended.

On Wed 9th July, we hosted a Diocesan Pastoral Ministry Information evening (which was to be the first of two Diocesan events held at CTK Church). This was well attended and led to two of our Parishioners embarking upon a Lay Ministers' catechesis programme, which I feel sure we will reap the benefits from in the years ahead.

On the 21st of October 2025, we welcomed back Bishop Bosco who celebrated Confirmations at CTK Church for 18 young adults, 12 of whom came from our two Churches and an additional 6 from St Teresa's in Filton, which we were most happy to share with. This was a wonderful evening.

Our Christ the King weekend celebrations, on the 22nd and 23rd November this year were another great success when we "switched" the Saturday night entertainment: led this time by "Vital Signs" with a short interlude quiz, which was very well received and attended. The returning children's entertainer and "wine and nibbles" event that followed the Sunday morning masses were also very well received.

In November also, our RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) Programme commenced. For most of the time this was attended by two candidates, but we were delighted to welcome a third shortly before the Easter Vigil. In total, we received 4 people into full communion with the Church at CTK during 2026 (included a candidate from the previous year's RCIA Programme) and a 5th at EWP. Our congratulations, prayers and best wishes go out to them all.

During Advent and Christmas, the warm heartedness of all Parishioners came to the fore through “Operation Elf” (children’s gifts donations for HMP Eastwood Park and Leyhill) and the Christmas Tree gifts at CTK Church. Notable highlights during this period were the CTK School Christmas Concert at the Church, the two Masses on Christmas Day at CTK and, with grateful thanks to Canon Michael Fitzpatrick, a 10.00am Mass at Holy Cross. We also held a very successful “Christmas Nativity Display” over two weeks in Advent from the Repository Group.

In January 2026, our First Holy Communion Group met for the first time. This year we have 12 young people who will be making their First Holy Communion at the 10.30am Mass on Sunday 10th May. A day that we will all look forward to. The children make their First Reconciliation on the 7th of March and will be returning for their final session and then practice shortly after the end of the Easter holidays.

In February 2026, following the visit by two Parishioners at Holy Cross to see Bishop Lazarus in Morogoro, a fund-raising event was held at Holy Cross Church to provide funds for new entrance doors at the Cathedral. The fun “Tanzanian Evening” was held on Saturday 21 st February and thanks to the generosity of Parishioners from both Churches (and donations from the Teas and Coffee events held throughout 2025), the event and appeal was a big success.

In March 2026, following public demand, a Taizé service was held at CTK on the 11th of March. On the 24th March, we were honoured to host a Diocesan Lent Reconciliation Service at CTK which was celebrated by Bishop Bosco together with Father Paul Harris SDS, our new Provincial, and three visiting Priests – Father Gary and Father Stephen from the Pastoral Area of St Wulstan (our “home” Pastoral Area) and Father James from St Teresa’s (who we will continue to collaborate with in future shared celebrations).

In April 2026, we celebrated together the Easter Triduum and Easter services. As was the case at Christmas, our attendance numbers for all services were higher than in previous years and were a great success – with many thanks to all who attended and took some part in the proceedings.

The above provides a chronological summary, what it fails to include is the magnificent work that a small number of volunteers perform in terms of taking communion to the sick and house-bound in both Churches, the on-going commitment to Eastwood Park Prison, the Thornbury and Wotton Care Homes, the Churches Together movements (including the Good Friday Walks of Witness). We would also like to pay tribute to the work done by other Parishioner groups at both Churches – members of the PPC, our Catechists, Choir and Folk Group, Readers, Altar Servers, Eucharistic Ministers, Cleaners, Gardeners, Flower Teams, all who help with the maintenance of our Church and Parish owned Buildings plus all others who work “behind the scenes” to get things done, both big and small, on a regular and ongoing basis.

Sadly, since the last AGM, we have celebrated the lives of Cora Mason, Michael Setter, Pam Smith, Len Crayston, Kenneth Gradwell, Sue Hollis, Father Duncan Ferguson, Mary McKeown, Daniel O’Reilly, Marlene King, Mario Vuolo, Mary Wadley, Maureen Fawcett, Jacqueline Davies, Mary McCoy, Barbara Godman, Edna Parker, Michael Bishop, Jane Bradshaw, Eddie Murphy and Theresa Mockett. We remember them fondly and they will be greatly missed. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.

At the opposite end of life’s journey, we also celebrated 16 Baptisms and are in the process of helping 6 couples with marriage preparations for celebrations taking place in CTK or elsewhere. We pray for them also.

A final word of thanks is reserved for Debbie Nicholls who from the 1st of July 2025 officially joined the Pastoral support team and we are so glad that she did! We are so grateful too (in no particular order and apologies if anyone has been inadvertently missed!) for the massive help and support from Maria, Margaret, Heather, Chris, Graham, Dianne, Lawrence (the other one!), Sue, Judith, Mark, Jean, Frances, Jane, Hazel, Megan, Kate and John. May God bless you all!

Deacon Lawrence