



**Year in Review
2018 – 2019**

**Annual Report of
St James' Church
Hemingford Grey**

Introduction

During the last year the LORD has blessed us in so many ways.

Members of the church family have given of their particular gifts and talents, stepping into new responsibilities, and others have joined us to help allow those who have served for many years to step down. To that end we give thanks to Clive Sprawson for many years serving as our treasurer (and Jan's patience) and for the provision of Karen Timmins as our bookkeeper. As so often is the case we see God provide for us at just the right time.

I want to thank all those, often getting on with their *work of service* in quiet and unseen faithfulness, and who have served the church family over the past year in so many ways; in particular our churchwardens who have complimented one another with their different skills, practical help and diligence.

I'm thankful for Clive Joseph, Mandy Latimer and Steve Moller's work in the Parish Centre. We all, I'm sure, appreciate the splendid outcome of this. Mike Pinnock has quietly got on with roof alarms and other practical matters regarding the fabric of the church building and the sound system.

Rachel's management of admin and the coffee shop deserves a notable accolade and thanks for the many *extra miles* she goes.

And thank you to you too. It's such a joy when the whole church family are together in worship. Christmas day is a particular highlight, and I really appreciate the encouragement of all that each of you are by just being there – however young or old.

The small but faithful visiting team have been warmly welcomed by so many and we seen connections made with opportunities to share the love of God. It has been a blessing to have Canon Mike and Liz Booker come to live in the Rectory at Hemingford Abbots and lead an Alpha Course in their home.

Seeing a significant group of 30s+ get together on Sundays and meet one a month and get stuck into the life of the church is a wonderful blessing to the church family.

As you read through this report I hope you will stop and give God thanks and praise.

Revd Peter Cunliffe

Judith Bolton

I worked as usual for the first 5 months of the church year and

then in September I retired from my post as associate minister/priest, called to work mainly at St Margaret's, but at St James too. Last year there was much funeral ministry, and especially sad as those dying now are often quite well known to me, I have lived here for 38 years. I love the other parts of the work, the leading of services and the preparation for preaching, and I truly value my colleagues.

I now have permission to officiate, a PTO, from Bishop Stephen and can support the ministry where needful, as holiday relief or at other services. I continue with some pastoral work, and spiritual direction.

I have been at the front of the church, that is including my training as a Reader/LLM, for 25 years, and was privileged to be ordained nearly six years ago. I need now more free time at home.

I give thanks to God for all that I have learnt from others, for their teaching and faithful encouraging witness. I give thanks for these churches that have been continually challenged over time, in different ways, to continue their walk of faith to meet the new era. I give thanks for our continuing to identify and enable others for ministry of all kinds, that is vital,

and what a joy it is to see the fruit of this.

Revd. Judith Bolton

Churchwardens

Mandy Latimer and Mike Pinnock have been your churchwardens for the year. We meet with Peter, usually once a month, to attend to routine items and to fulfil our role "in representing the laity and in co-operating with the incumbent".

This is in addition to attending the PCC meetings and some of the sub-committees. As you will know only too well, it's easy to let the "housekeeping" duties crowd out the important, foundation, activities in life. So, we would like to stress this year our role in representing the laity in the church. We try to speak to as many of you as possible, but please don't hesitate to raise with us any concerns you have about the church and our practice as Christians in the parish. We are frequently available in the period between the end of the 9 am and setting up for the 11 am service.

The PCC has had some weighty matters to discuss and pray about this year, concerning deanery, diocese and national church issues. We mention this to stress that the PCC deals with core issues of our

faith, it's not all buildings, finance and rotas! People who trust in God's word and guidance are needed to serve on the PCC.

We would like to thank Rachel and Joanne for all their hard work this year serving St James and St Margaret's in the Parish Centre. They are key to making this building in the centre of our parish a warm, welcoming place and have been the driving force in developing it into a hospitality hub in line with St James' vision. We are delighted that the Parish Centre refurbishment works have been completed over the course of the year. The final phase completed in November has provided us with a stylish, remodelled coffee shop servery that operates so well in unison with the professional kitchen. Thank you to all the staff and volunteers who use these facilities in order to serve others and provide such a high standard of hospitality.

We continue to be blessed with volunteers who give freely, willingly and in the true spirit of Christ's command to love one another. We see this in activities such as Breakfast Church, Junior Church, Parish Lunches, Dad's breakfast, flower decorations, churchyard maintenance and the worship

group musicians, to name but a few. All this contributes to the vibrant worship that takes place at St James and the witness to the parish. In the report from the strategy working group you will hear about the significant task they faced in capturing all these activities. Thank you for your support to us as Churchwardens during this year.

The church building is generally in good order and we have had one meeting with our church architect in the year. We are in the process of getting approval for modifications to the vestry steps to make them safer. This raises a safety point that needs stressing – accidents in the church should be reported to one of the wardens and entered in our accident book (yes, we have one!). A chance conversation revealed that 4 people had tripped on the vestry steps, only by becoming aware of this could action be initiated. The installation of the roof alarm (anti-metal theft) was concluded and it works well (verified when the gutter clearing party triggered it!). Cambridge Historic Churches Trust funded just over half the costs of this, for which we are very grateful.

Finally, we would like to say thank you to all who teach, preach and

lead worship in St James on Sundays and throughout the week. We hope it has motivated and supported you as it has us.

Mandy Latimer & Mike Pinnock

Families, Children & Youth

In the summer of 2018, eight young people from St James attended week 3 of the Keswick Ministries convention. As well as having lots of fun our youth joined with hundreds of other young people to hear from God's word and to grow in Christ-likeness.

In March 2019, we created a designated crèche area at the back of Church. The aim is to provide a safe and welcoming area for our youngest members and their parents.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a big 'thank you' to all the leaders and helpers of our youth and children's groups. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the stewardship and spiritual well-being of our children and young people who are made to feel welcome to come into our care.

These verses from 2 Tim 3:14-15 are I think are particularly relevant:

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Paul's charge to Timothy is to remain firm in what has been taught to him from a young age, that is the Scriptures, that make you wise for salvation through Jesus Christ. For us we might never realise the eternal impact of what we do, but our role remains the same, to share and teach children and young people about the love of God and the good news of salvation found in Jesus Christ.

I would lastly like to recognise the hard work of Tim and Kate Lee and say 'thank you' for all they have done over the years at Blaze and Junior Church. We wish them and their family every blessing as they move to Malaysia.

Ben Pearson, Youth minister

Children's & Families

First Steps

First Steps provides a much-loved service to the mums, dads, grandparents and childminders, as well as the children, every week during term time. We have an average of 27 adults and 33

children who regularly come into our care. The team is building friendships and deeper relationships with those who come. Our Christmas Celebration in church was enjoyed by all, and this year Nick shared the real message of Christmas and the Good News of Jesus.

Steve, Nick, Alison, Mandy, James, Shirley and now Zoe.

Tots Praise

Meeting on a Thursday afternoon, Tots Praise has become a safe place to ask for and receive prayer, with the children participating in “drainpipe” prayers.

The 2-year curriculum, covering key Bible stories has some fresh activity most terms. We pray with the help of Steve’s rope circle and the much-loved *Prayer Bear*.

This year we updated our prayer song to *prayer is like a mobile-phone*. Peter and Rosie’s first telephone upgrade in 25 years of Tots Praise.

The number of children varies from year to year but some of our child minders have been with us almost since the beginning.

Rosie Cunliffe, Children’s Team, and Peter Cunliffe, Vicar

Dads' Breakfast:

Building relationships with dads (and their children) every month;

usually 10 dads and 15 children. The friendships extend to additional evening events (pub, bowling, etc.), just for the dads. The team (of granddads) have opportunities to share their faith, especially on the Dads' & Kids' Camping weekend, which is the highlight of the year.

Steve, Nick, Allen, Ian S, Ian C, and Mike.

Kings Kids [4-7's]

Kings Kids is an after school club for Key Stage One and Foundation Years (4-7's).

We meet on Mondays from 3.15 to 4.30 pm, in the hall of Hemingford School.

Our aims are:

to teach the children more about Jesus, and encourage them to have their own relationship with Him.

to encourage them to see that Jesus isn't just to be found in church on Sundays, but is very much to be found in their school and home life.

to increase the awareness of Jesus within the school community, and establish a good connection between church and school.

We try to make the sessions good fun and informative.

Our programme consists of bible stories from Old and New Testaments, action songs, craft, dancing (the children have recently been trying to teach us oldies how to floss!), games and prayers.

Over the past year we have looked at the lives of Old Testament characters, prophecies about Jesus, the parables, the beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer and the Christmas and Easter stories.

We very much enjoy working with the children.

Anne, Chris and Barbara, Children's team

Blaze [7-11's]

Blaze is a group for children in years 3-6 (7-11's) and meets every Thursday during term time.

Blaze is a welcoming and engaging group which functions to share with children the amazing news about Jesus in a fun, active and safe environment.

Over the last term, as well as playing lots of fun games, and making cool stuff, we have been looking at 'Big People in the Bible'. Beginning in Genesis we have been looking at who these people are and how they fit into God's big picture. We have been using these stories to focus on the truth that

“God always keeps his promises to those who love him”.

On every fourth week we have a specific games evening with an extended time sharing and praying together (usually in the company of teddy bears!).

Blaze would not be able to continue without a key group of volunteers who give up their time each week to help lead this group.

Grace Pearson, Children's team

Junior Church [3-11's]

Junior Church meets on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month in term time for children up to Year 6 in school. We are learning to develop our relationship with Jesus by learning to know, trust and love our Lord Jesus through age appropriate worship, activities, study and prayer. The early years group have their own special program following the Big Bible Storybook. In the two older groups, we studied Acts in the autumn term, this term we are studying the acts and wonders of Jesus in the book of John and in summer term we are going to look at the question "Who is God?".

Ed Nevill, Jr Church team

Youth

Youth on Sundays [11-15's]

Youth on Sundays is for young people aged 11-15. We meet regularly on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month and we are grateful to Mandy and Mark Latimer for hosting us in their home.

We aim to teach the Good News of Christ from the bible so that we can give young people the opportunity to come to know and love Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Over the last 12 months we've had some exciting developments in Sunday Youth. A slight adjustment to the age range means that this group is specifically catered to those who are 11-15, with fun games as well as relevant and engaging bible studies that can help us think about what it means to follow Jesus wherever we are. Topics over the last year have included 'the identity of who Jesus is' from Mark's gospel, 'what is the gospel' and the summer term will look at 'the awesome nature of who God is'.

Ben Pearson, Youth minister

Monday Night Youth [15-18 yrs]

Monday Night Youth is a group of young people, aged 15 – 18, who meet together to study the Bible, have fun and eat (lots of!) cake. Last summer, we discussed Big

Issues such as baptism, suffering and how to prepare for university. It's been encouraging that those who left in July are now settled in new churches and serving God elsewhere.

In the autumn term, we studied Jesus' life, death and resurrection, as recorded in John's gospel. We thought about what the gospel means for us today, and the difference it makes when we believe in Jesus as Saviour and Lord. We learnt more about life with Jesus from the testimonies of church members. In the spring, we followed God's Big Picture by Vaughn Roberts. Through a series of videos and Bible studies we have seen how the whole Bible works together as one story of God's people, in God's place, under His rule and enjoying His blessing. At Monday Night Youth socials, the young people have played card games, watched football, ice-skated and baked. These socials provide space for friendship and laughter and time for prayer.

Ben Pearson & Ruth Barber, Youth team

Friday Night Youth Café [11-18 yrs]

New for September 2018, Friday Night Youth Café meets on the last Friday of the month from 6:30-

8:30pm, for anyone aged 11-18, at St James' Parish Centre coffee shop.

The Youth Café aims to create a safe space for young people to come and enjoy a café style environment with everything from lattes to chocolate ice cream milkshakes, as well as table tennis, games console, tuck shop, the amazing £1 bookstall, and finishes with a short talk from the Bible where a topic or issue relating to God is discussed and the gospel proclaimed through asking the important questions about life.

Over the year at the Youth Café we have had bonfire night, pizza making and more recently a special bounce night with a huge inflatable assault course. Come and check us out on the last Friday of the month!

Ben Pearson, Youth minister

Licensed Lay Ministers

We were delighted that Tim Wetherfield completed his training as a Licensed Lay Minister and was licensed in October 2018. He is currently developing a broad range of experience in leading worship and preaching in the variety of contexts offered by St James' and St Margaret's. He states that he has felt welcomed, supported and

encouraged by the team and it has been a joy to see him developing greater confidence and competence.

Ruth and Stephen Terrell have fully established Breakfast Church - café style in presentation but with all the recognisable elements of a traditional service. Well into its second year, it is proving immensely popular across a broad spectrum of the church family (and visitors) for whom it provides a sense of community as all ages come together to share, worship and discuss over bacon rolls and coffee. Ruth & Stephen envisage further creative opportunities including drama and puppetry, and more musicians to accompany sung worship.

Ruth would like to thank everyone for the huge amount of help and support they give to make BC possible each month and would welcome more helpers to spread the workload for their faithful team.

In addition, Ruth is a volunteer for GenR8, a local mission partner of Scripture Union - on the team who create Prayer Spaces in Primary Schools. She describes the joy and privilege of seeing children respond to these vibrant areas where they can reflect and pray- often on a theme suggested by the school. She

experiences both staff and pupils taking time out of busy days to reflect on all that life brings, taking time to think of others as well as their own challenges. Both staff and pupils often note how peaceful they feel after a Prayer Spaces Day.

In addition, Ruth continues to attend 'Living Word' at Field Lodge whenever possible.

Stephen has joined the PCC this year and played a key role in the Strategy Review Working Group which is on-going. He continues to serve us well as a musician leading sung worship.

Both continue to provide 'fresh eyes' and invaluable professional expertise and input to the Ministry Team.

Liz Pinnock is in her final year as Chair of Ely Diocesan Board of Readers (Licensed Lay Ministers) which continues to delight and challenge in equal measure. This team continues to have strategic input in the life of the Church in the Diocese and nationally. She continues as a Selection Advisor for those coming forward for selection to train as LLMs. There are now a number of specialisms for lay ministry with different training pathways. Numbers seeking vocation continue to rise. Liz led a creative quiet morning for candidates prior to their licensing

service which, this year, was conducted by Bishop Rowan Williams.

She still pursues her interest in funerals ministry with further conferences attended. She continues pastoral visiting, remains on the ministry-among-seniors Pastoral Team and assists at the parish lunches when possible. She has stepped down from the Open the Book Team this year (as they are managing just fine without her) and has temporarily suspended the Create Space group that met at her home. She has joined the newly formed Diocesan Disability Advisory Group and is a member of the St James' PCC Strategic Review Working Group.

Gerald Barrett has continued to lead services and preach at both St James' and St Margaret's and is particularly grateful for support from Judith Hall and Charles Beresford in the choice of music. He has continued in his role as Lay Day Chaplain at Ely Cathedral and is also responsible for organising the rota of speakers for the *Thought for the Day* at the monthly parish lunch. He is grateful to all those who have contributed throughout the year.

As ever, his attendance at the first week of the Keswick Convention in July was both inspiring and

challenging. He has completed a six-week on-line course entitled *Spiritually Formed* run by Westminster Theological Centre. A one-day course on ministering to those living with dementia was moving and inspiring in equal measure and as a result he is now a *Dementia Friend*.

Trish Latimer continues to lead, preach and conduct funerals on a regular basis and leads, alongside her husband Ray, the Open the Book Team of volunteers that act out bible stories at the primary school. As well as running a Small Group, they run *Joyful Praise* at Field Lodge with John and Di Tuttlebee.

Judith Hall is involved regularly with two of the three different monthly services for the interdenominational 'church' of about a dozen residents at Field Lodge, some of whom have also enjoyed coming to St James' for *Songs of Praise* or to Sunday worship. She led a carol service at Field Lodge in December and a good number from St James' added to their regular congregation that day. Judith writes that, "*our prayer is that we will create a safe place within the love of God for the residents to know he is there and that he loves each one very deeply and never forgets them. We see*

unexpected smiles lighting sad faces, singing of hymns remembered from long ago, laughter as we talk together, and thoughtful reflections. 'I decided it was about time I gave God more attention!' someone there said to me recently."

Judith continues to make a very valuable contribution to the Ministry Team by reviewing and bringing to our attention the work of many modern hymn and liturgical writers to keep services fresh and relevant to today's world - so makes no apology for those extra bits of paper at the 9am service! She remains the lynchpin of music for the Christmas Carol Service and facilitated an extended, mixed-age choir and orchestra. She occasionally plays for the I am band as well as in Ian Cook's monthly 9 o'clock band. She was particularly delighted to lead an Epiphany service on Jan 6th.

The Lay Ministers acknowledge that we minister together with others and would like to praise the dedication of the teams involved at Field Lodge, Open the Book, Cathedral Chaplaincy, Ministry Among Seniors and Parish Lunches and are grateful to Rachel and Joanne for admin support.

The Ministry Team meet monthly to eat, talk and pray together. We continually give thanks for God's

call to work amongst you and this community.

Liz Pinnock

Deaf Church

Jan Smith has continued to sign several of our services with BSL and on special occasions supported by other signers. Those of us who are hearing have been blessed by all that BSL adds to our expression of worshipping with our whole body, and having those in the deaf community find a welcome and a place within St James'.

Deaf Café Church has met on a Sunday afternoon in the coffee shop and Parish Centre doing Bible study together and enjoying fellowship. This attracts some from the deaf community who are yet to become Believers and others through Jan's one-to-one sharing of Jesus is seeing some respond to the gospel.

After a period of discernment and selection Jan Smith began training with the Eastern Regional Training Course. Please pray for Jan as she experiences widely differing theological views and praxis, and as she gets to grips with the demands of reading and assignments.

At the end of this St James' will be Jan's base, but she will become an

ordained chaplain to the deaf community in the diocese.

Peter Cunliffe. Vicar

PCC Report

The PCC met ten times during the year. A standing committee has met between meetings to discuss certain issues, and implement PCC decisions.

Various people are appointed each year to take care of Fire, Health & Safety, Safeguarding, and the Bells. There are also various sub-committees for Personnel, Property, Finance, Children and Youth, Church Life, and World Mission.

During this year a Strategic Review Working Group was set up in place of the Church Life committee and met several times to rethink the whole area of discipleship and evangelism in the church.

The work in the Parish Centre, to fit this fully as a "hospitality hub", was completed during the year and a Giving Day was held to support World Mission.

There is an on-going discussion re. the possibility of merging St James and St Margaret's into a United Benefice.

Peter attended the GAFCON Conference in June with the

encouragement of the PCC, and the issues in the Church of England re. the nature of the gospel, the identity and purpose of Jesus and his Cross, and human identity as taught in the Scriptures that arose, have been discussed.

We are grateful to our faithful Churchwardens, Mike Pinnock and Mandy Latimer, Tim Drye our Treasurer, and Karen Timmins our bookkeeper, for all their hard work.

Please continue to pray for the PCC that they will know God's wisdom in thinking through issues and in implementing them in the life of the church.

John Tuttlebee, PCC Secretary

Music – Worship

Thank you to everyone who has supported our music team this year. Special thanks to Susan Cooke who manages the I I am band rota, and to our faithful Sound Team under the leadership of Mike Pinnock, and the equally faithful AV Team under the leadership of Gair Matthews. We are also grateful to the families of musicians, PA and AV operators for their behind the scenes support.

The 9 o'clock services are usually accompanied on the organ by Elaine Gunn or Peter Allen, and the 9am band continues to contribute once a month, under the leadership of Ian Cooke. The band are still hoping for a tenor or bass to join them to enable them to resume SATB harmony. If you could help, please contact Ian.

The Breakfast Church band plays once a month under the leadership of Stephen Terrell and they are looking for another keyboard player to help when necessary. If you could help, please contact Stephen.

The ukulele band, under the leadership of Ian Cooke, continues to play at all-age services, and it is good to see younger members of the congregation joining with the not so young to enhance our worship. If there are other ukulelists of any age in the congregation, Ian would love to hear from you.

The I I am band continues to play three/four times a month, usually under the leadership on a rota basis, of Ian Cooke, Stephen Terrell and Alwyn Frost. Special thanks to John Tuttlebee and/or Elaine Gunn who step in to lead when necessary. We are grateful to all the musicians, both the vocalists and the instrumentalists

who add colour and variety to the music despite the fact that there is usually a band on Sundays, we are in need of someone else to volunteer to lead the band, on the once a month rota. If you would like to volunteer please speak to Ian, Steve, or Alwyn.

As always, our roles do not stop at Sunday services. Members of the team have played for services at Field Lodge Care Home and Hemingford Grey school, as well as school services in church.

Our Christmas worship is always enhanced by the music at the Christingle, Nativity and Carol services. Special thanks to Judith Hall for all her work on the Carol Service. The Christmas Eve Carols at the Axe and Compass, and the Village Christmas Market give opportunities for us to reach out to those who do not choose to come to the church.

This is a huge task, but it does not have to be huge commitment. There is an ongoing need for singers and instrumentalists to volunteer their time on maybe a once a month basis. Please pray about how you can use your talents to help us this year.

Ian Cooke, Alwyn Frost Elaine Gunn, Stephen Terrell, John Tuttlebee.

Flowers

We have a small and dedicated team of flower arrangers who faithfully give time and finances to making the church building beautiful and welcoming for visitors. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all and bring them to your attention: Christine Andrews, Ann Ashmore, Rosemary Davern, June Humphrey, Sue Rook, Sandra Tremlett and Joan Bagley who has this year decided to retire from the Flower Team. She worked as my arranging partner for many years and has been a huge support both practically and spiritually and she will be missed. Thank you Joan for your service.

Elaine Lee

World Mission

The church has continued to give generously to the growth of the church around the world as well as to Christian organisations involved in development and service to the poorest in many countries, whilst still working in the same ways through its programmes for all ages and its support of local initiatives such as the St Ives food bank. The harvest collection of £4500 was divided between three of our partners, Jigsaw, Mission Possible

and the Frésard family as extra giving.

Information on mission partners is given at Sunday morning services about once a month and there is also a sharing and prayer evening for one of the partners, with special events when our more remote partners visit us, as the Frésards did in February. A leaflet with details of our partners is available on request.

We rejoice that we have been able to support the worldwide church through our prayer, giving and the practical helps many give to mission as volunteers through administrative support, board membership, hospitality, production and sale or giving of craft items and in other ways.

During the year Rebecca Lee has been added to the mission partner list as she volunteers for a year with Fellowship Afloat in Essex and it has been agreed that Anbu Hoole will be added to the list if he gets his visa and is able to go to Pakistan to work in Bach Christian Hospital for a year from July.

Our current Partners are:

Baldaeus Theological College, Sri Lanka, where church workers for northern and central Sri Lanka are trained. It has been through a difficult year, but in early 2019 a

new board was formed and a new principal was appointed and we look forward to seeing it flourish again.

CBM and Helen Sinkinson.

CBM works through partners in many countries with those with disabilities. Helen works in the International Office in Germany. Our Christmas giving of £834.07 was sent to CBM.

Pascal and Janet Frésard.

They work with Wycliffe Bible Translators. During the year they moved to Switzerland for family reasons. Pascal continues his work as regional director for West Africa and Janet supports the ongoing scripture translation into the Karoninka language.

Jigsaw Kids Ministries and Tim Lee through CMS.

Jigsaw is a ministry to children and families in the slums in the Manila area of the Philippines. Tim is running the UK support office and visits and advises the work in Jigsaw. The family are expecting to move to Kuala Lumpur in the next few months where Tim will work part time in the local CMS Asia office supporting cross cultural mission and continue his part time work with Jigsaw.

Mission Possible UK. Richard Wallis runs this, supporting work through partners in Eastern Europe

and the great lakes region of East Africa. Richard published *The Essentials of Excellent Christian Leadership* during the year and it was well received in many countries. New initiatives in Burundi are developing, Theo Mbazutima (from the MPUK partner ARM in Burundi) visited the UK in November.

Rebekah Lee and Fellowship Afloat. She (and Peter Flach) have been working at FACT, supporting its work introducing sailing and other outdoor activities for many children and young people and sharing the Christian message with them.

Richard and Susanne Cunliffe worked for 14 months in Tansen Nepal with Interserve and UMN and have just returned to UK. Richard's work on equipment, systems maintenance and repair, and the development of a hospital-wide assets database along with an App available to use on 'smart pones', was highly appreciated.

Seeta Gurung leads Faith@Work training for young Christians in Nepal through DAI, encouraging them to live out their Christian faith at work and to teach that to their peers and youth groups.

Tearfund. St James' is a TF partner and gives through TF at

times of disasters or other emergency appeals.

Alison Craven

Deanery Synod

Since the last APCM the Deanery Synod had met three times, in July, November and February. In the course of the year, in an endeavour to make meetings more participatory and effective, the format of Deanery Synod meetings was changed to follow the pattern set by Diocesan Synod. We now meet around small tables to better facilitate discussions, use a PA system to improve audibility (some of us are getting on a bit!) and we start each meeting with spent time at the outset *Dwelling in the Word*.

The Deanery elected representatives to Diocesan Synod, including Janine Hamilton, David Wordsworth and Ian Sinkinson as lay representatives and Rev Peter Cunliffe as a clergy representative.

Synod discussed such topics as 'the value and effectiveness of Synod' and 'options for sustainable ministry in the coming years'. However, the most contentious issue discussed was the Deanery Budget for 2019. This had been drawn up without discussion with Parishes and presented as a fait

accomplish at the November meeting.

Concern was expressed by the Hemingford representatives both about the process and about the size of the joint Hemingford Grey/Hemingford Abbots share, which was by some margin the largest in the Deanery. The budget was passed but with votes against and abstentions. There was a meeting in March with the Deanery Treasurer and parish Treasurers, to discuss the budget process for 2020.

There are casual vacancies for two additional Deanery Synod Representatives from the parish. Do please prayerfully consider taking up this role: Your Deanery needs YOU!

Ian Sinkinson, Representative

Tower

Support from a dedicated band of ringers has enabled the bells to be rung for morning services on every other Sunday (alternating with St Margaret's Hemingford Abbots), for weddings and for special services. We hold regular Wednesday evening practices welcoming visitors from neighbouring towers and we share some practices with the

Godmanchester ringers. This year we have started a monthly Wednesday evening learners' practice for members of the Huntingdon District of the Ely Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers thus helping new ringers in the area to progress. More experienced ringers have benefited from several Saturday morning advanced 'Surprise' ringing practices.

On 11th November for morning service we took part in the Central Council of Church Bell ringers' Campaign 'Ringing Remembers' to mark the Armistice Centenary. Later at 7:05pm we joined over 1000 other churches ringing in celebration of the declaration of peace as part of the nationwide Day of Commemorative Events.

Our bells are always popular with visiting bands of ringers and eight peals (each taking over 3 hours to complete) along with 13 quarter peals (including one to celebrate the centenary year of the RAF) have been rung throughout the year.

General maintenance has seen a tidying up of the clock room and replacement of the old carpet floor covering. The makeshift stair rope up the tower steps was becoming unsafe and has now been replaced with a new purpose made one. The

bells themselves are in good general working order. However two cracked bell stays (pieces of wood at the top of the bell which prevent the bell from rotating more than one revolution in either direction) have been replaced, the tenor wheel has been repaired and adjustments have been made to the running gear to improve bell handling. The bell muffles (used to deaden the sound of the clapper striking the bell at Remembrance services) have also been modified to allow easier fitting onto the clappers. The clock continues to be somewhat temperamental requiring frequent adjusting to keep the correct time. A broken component which prevents the clock chiming through the night has meant that the chiming mechanism has had to be turned off for a while.

In August we attended a Teaching Bell Handling Training course run by the Association of Teaching at Stretham Ringing Centre. With the generous financial aid from St Margaret's we are in the process of buying and putting together the parts needed to install a bell simulator. This will enable ringers to improve their style and increase their repertoire especially those who are new to ringing. It will be a great teaching aid. A simulator allows a ringer to ring a 'silenced

bell' and doesn't need several more people present to ring the other bells. A computer generates the sound of simulated bells which ring in perfect time, so the trainee only has to worry about their own mistakes. This helps a ringer to develop a rhythmic style of ringing, and the ability to listen as the main feedback for accurate striking and it will be very useful for our two latest recruits who started to learn to ring in December.

Sharon (Tower Captain) and Martin Williams (Steeple Keeper)

Finances

After years of dedicated work Clive Sprawson's retirement has seen Tim Drye step up to Treasurer supported by Karen Timmins who is a Chartered Accountant.

Results for the Year

Unrestricted Funds

At the year end the General Fund bank balance stood at £72,325.

During the year giving increased to 198k compared to 194k in 2017 and Income increased to 20k from 16k.

Costs for the year were 168k including 30k given to mission.

The coffee shop contributed £2,100 towards utilities, £3,000

towards the administrator's salary and £600 towards repayment of its loan.

After transfers to the Garden Room and Repairs Fund a final surplus of £8k remained on the General Fund.

The Development fund stood at £2792.

Restricted Funds

The Garden Room Fund stood at £928 at the year-end.

£70,369 was spent on the new kitchen and upgrade of the existing serving area coordinated and overseen by Clive Joseph.

Balances on the other restricted funds were as follows:

Don Brown Fund £16,206

Bells £342

Repairs £0

Reserves Policy

It is the policy of the PCC to maintain a balance in the General Fund to cover at least 3 months salaries in case of unavoidable redundancies and emergency situations.

Karen Timmins, Bookkeeper

Visiting Team

St James Community Visiting Team (SJCVT) – Sharing Good News

“The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few, therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest” (Luke 10:2).

The aim of the visiting team is to visit every house in the Parish (on a rotation basis) and make contact with at least one of the residents in each house where possible.

We look for opportunities to share the gospel with the help of personal testimony and appropriate literature (and of course the Holy Spirit!), with anyone who will listen to us and engage with us. If we feel it is appropriate, we offer to pray for people and quite often they have responded positively to this offer. As a result of the visiting we have also been able to offer more regular pastoral support to a few. We have a card to give to people, as appropriate, with information on St James church services, groups and activities.

We have been operating as the SJCVT since the spring of 2015 and are currently a team of six who go visiting door to door around the parish in teams of two.

We meet to pray in the Parish Centre in the upstairs prayer room on Mondays at 13.00, and then go out visiting. Usually at least one team goes out every week as and when people are available, and at different times in order to find people in (for example occasionally on Saturday mornings or weekdays when it is light in the evenings), revisiting homes where there was no reply previously. It seems to take at least two years to visit every house in the parish. The vast majority of people we meet are at least polite, and the Lord has given us many opportunities to plainly share the gospel.

Two valued members of the visiting team, Becca Pluke (who initiated the current visiting programme) and Lorna Grounsell (who formerly co-ordinated the team) have both now left St James and are no longer part of the team. Current team members of the team are shown below but we urgently need more people - especially ladies, as it is good to visit as a 'mixed' team! If you think this is something the Lord might be prompting you to do please speak to any one of the team to find out more; you do not have to be 'able' just available and interested!

Allen and Penny Foster, Alan Humphrey, Clive Sprawson, Ian

Sinkinson, Jan Smith and Nick Greatorex-Davies.

Parish Centre

This year has been a particularly exciting time in the Parish Centre with the realisation of the vision to establish the facility as a hospitality hub. Integral to this was the completion of our long awaited professional kitchen – and how beautiful it is! What an absolute delight to prepare and cook food in this area. The coffee shop serving area has also received a face-lift with changes to the layout, some new appliances and non-slip flooring. We would like to thank Clive, Mandy, Steve, Jacqui and Tim for their commitment and enthusiasm, which ensured this project was completed on time and to an amazing standard.

The Parish Lunch continues to be a much loved community event with food being cooked in our new kitchen. We recently had 60 people on our list of attendees – we can only seat 56! Once again we would like to thank our faithful volunteers who help make this a massive success.

The coffee shop, in its 8th year of service to the community, is a thriving and popular meeting place for many from the village and

surrounding areas. This year we have welcomed some new members to our team and are, as ever, grateful to our supporters who serve tirelessly on a weekly basis, baking lovely cakes, cooking, shopping, delivering and maintaining things. I would like to recognise the support of Penny Foster and Ann Johnson who stepped down as soup/quiche makers after many years service – thank you to all our volunteers for your part in making the coffee shop a success, a place where St James can practically demonstrate unconditional love to the community.

Our new facilities mean we can provide home cooked food for church events, in particular, this year, a church quiz and family seminar. Outside of church activities we have catered for Acorn Cancer Support Group, U3A Christmas Lunch and HEMLOCS to name a few. The Parish Centre really has become a hospitality hub this year and it has been a pleasure to serve the village and wider community in this way. If you would like to get involved in this part of St James mission then please come and talk to us, we would love to hear from you.

Along side this we continue to be challenged by our ever-increasing

weekly administration tasks such as church services, Hemingford Abbots Parish Magazine and photocopying services. Once again we would like to make a special plea for volunteers to get involved with various church rotas – we need helpers to ensure the church is kept open for visitors to enjoy, coffee is served at the end of services, wardens and sides people - to name a few. Please prayerfully consider how you can get involved in the life of St James.

Please continue to drop your used ink cartridges into us, over the last five years we have raised £150 for charity, plus food bank donations.

Rachel Winton & Joanne Drye

Other things Peter has been up to...

Here's little snapshot: During the last academic year I had two ordinands at Ridley Hall I met on a six-weekly basis for Spiritual Direction. After ordination one of those now a curate in Cambridge has continued to meet with me on the same basis. We are reading 'Praying through Life' together.

As a signatory of the Jerusalem Declaration of 2008 I was invited as a delegate to GAFCON 2018. This global Anglican fellowship,

representing the majority of the world's Anglicans seeks to remain faithful to the teaching of Scripture. Our brothers and sisters in Christ are finding it painful when those who brought them the gospel in the first place are departing from the church's teaching and doctrine.

The time in Jerusalem was a wonderful opportunity to be together with others and catch up with Bp Nathan Amooti from Rwanda, as well as other friends from home and abroad. On the last morning I had an impromptu walking tour through the city led by the Rev Dr Peter Walker an lively teacher with a special interest in Jerusalem.

During the last year I have continued as secretary to the Ely Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship (DEF) that gathers together a large number of clergy for mutual support, teaching, encouragement and prayer. We had a study day in March theologian Ian Paul on Revelation. You might like to read some of his materials on www.psephizo.com.

I am an elected member of the Diocesan Synod which meet three times during the year.

In Conclusion

It has been a blessing to see and to hear what God is doing in

individual lives. I'm sure many of those stories could be shared to bless others too.

There have been times of sadness when a number of our faithful brothers and sisters have joined 'the saints in glory' but, having the hope of eternal glory, we press on towards the goal that is ours in Christ Jesus.

Looking back to see God's blessing is good but let's be encouraged to become both confident and holy people who look outward and forwards to follow in the footsteps of our Saviour.

My prayer is that as we go forward we'll all be able to tell our story of meeting with God, receiving the forgiveness that Jesus won for us, and growing as disciples of Jesus who encourage others to become His disciples too.

As the PCC's Strategy Review Group does its work so we will all find our place in the church family. We'll be celebrating together in worship, growing and bearing fruit, and living together on the solid foundation, which is Jesus. As we experience the blessing of living under the rule and reign of God we'll realise that God's kingdom is already among us and see others coming to faith in Christ.

Revd Peter Cunliffe

