



St James

Hemingford Grey

Year in Review 2019 - 2020



Introduction

This last year it has been so encouraging to see so many of you taking initiatives with different aspects of the life of the church, whether those who worship regularly or others feeling their way in from the edges.

Thank you for what you do is not unnoticed, and if it is, that your Heavenly Father does notice and rejoices over you with singing.

Thank you, whether that is cutting grass, weeding the garden, painting windows, fixing plumbing or putting out and taking back the bins!

Thank you to the craftsmen who made us a new lectern and font and repaired various wooden things in church that we take for granted.

Thank you to all the contractors who keep the organ tuned, the lights on, the boilers serviced, the Parish Centre cleaned, and the rain from coming through the roof.

Thank you to all who come to church early and turn on the heating or get things ready the night before.

Thank you to all who share their faith with others and disciple those young in faith; to Small Group

leaders walking with so many on the long road of obedience.

Thank you to pavement walkers, crèche corner dwellers, book stackers, screen haulers, coffee pourers and music makers, and many more besides.

Thank you to those who have gone before us, those who we see no longer but dance in the courts of our King.

Thank you for sharing your hopes and struggles, joys and tears, for looking up and aiming high.

Thank you.

Revd Peter Cunliffe

Churchwarden

I continue to try to meet with Peter once a month, to attend to routine items and to fulfil the CW's role "*in representing the laity and in co-operating with the incumbent*". I feel well supported by the PCC in addressing issues within my remit, many thanks to all who serve in that way. In the last month of this reporting period the coronavirus situation developed very rapidly – at one stage we had almost daily changes of guidance from the diocese and the government. We will have shared a sense of loss at not being able to meet in church; but it has been a blessing to see the joy evident in

people being able to see each other through our “virtual” church meetings. Profound thanks to Peter, Mark Enzer and Gair Matthews for responding so readily to our need.

Until recent events, Rachel and Joanne have continued their excellent work in developing the Parish Centre as the hospitality hub we had envisioned, together with the volunteers who help at events such as the monthly Parish Lunch. Many thanks to them and all who work and volunteer in the coffee shop.

The church building needs some substantial work in the coming year(s) and we have had an initial meeting with our church architect to start on this. Some of the boundary walls need repointing or rebuilding, but the most substantial work will be on a new heating system. This will take a lot of careful consideration and planning in order to reduce our energy derived from fossil fuels. To this end we have had an energy audit completed, under the C of E’s “Green Energy” scheme, providing a starting point for our decisions.

Last year’s report identified the hazard posed by the vestry steps, and noted several accidents. I must apologise to you for the delay in rectifying this, the faculty order

required before the work could start was a very protracted procedure (but I now know how to make it work quicker!). As I write, Stephen Terrell and Don Wright have the new steps ready to fit in the church and I am extremely grateful to them for their work on this. Don’s superb craftsmanship is evident in many parts of the church, including the new readers lectern and stand for the baptism bowl. I would also like to record the work of Clive Joseph and Steve Moller in maintaining the other church properties – it’s been a great help to me knowing that it has been in very vigilant and capable hands.

As always, if you have concerns about any aspect of the church’s life please speak to me. Most Sunday’s I am usually in church from 10 am to 1 pm but can also be contacted via e-mail at mike.pinnock@talktalk.net

If the above seems like a set of challenges, let me say that when I meet with other churchwardens at the annual Archdeacons gathering of CWs I am made profoundly grateful for how well supported I am by you. For some of the very rural parishes, the role of CW can be a heavy, lonely burden, please pray for those people.

Mike Pinnock

Families, Children & Youth

The youth, children's and families ministry at St James has one aim; to proclaim the good news of Jesus so that all who hear will come to put their hope in him.

Look at what Paul says to the church in Corinth (2 Cor 4:5-6).

“For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord...For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.”

The principle is clear. Our job is to share the truth about Jesus (v5), and then trust that God will work in the hearts of everyone who hears the message and come to him (v6). It is such a relief that our forgiveness relies only on the work of Jesus on the cross, his rising from the dead, and God's work in us. In our ministry to young people, families and children, this is the hope we are privileged to proclaim, that he who had no sin, became sin for us, so we would become righteous.

In March earlier this year it was a real blessing to have Mel Lacy, from Growing Young Disciples, come and speak at our All Together service and lead a seminar. She spoke clearly about

how to reach out and disciple ‘Generation Z’. All those who attended came away with a fresh insight on this important task.

In September a decision was made that Kings Kids would stop meeting. This has played a significant part, not just in our church but in the life of the village. I'm sure you will join me in saying a massive thank you to Chris Clarkson, Anne Johnson and Barbara Butler for their hard work and faithful ministry to the young children who have passed through this group over many years.

May I also 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 faithfulness and dedication to the stewardship and spiritual well-being of our children and young people. Without this small army of volunteers our ministry among, children, families and young people would not be able to function.

Please pray that we would, as Paul instructs us, proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, faithfully and clearly for God's word and trust that God will work in the lives of all those who come into our care.

Ben Pearson, Youth & Children's Minister

First Steps

First Steps is St James' Baby, Toddler and Preschool group (0-4 years old), run by volunteers and headed up by Steve Moller, which meets every Tuesday morning during term time.

We also provide a craft activity alongside free play, which usually consists of painting, drawing, sticking and decorating items. Ben has recently started story time for the pre-schoolers at 10.30 which works really well and then at 11.15 Steve leads the children in singing time and finishes with church notices.

A particular highlight from the year was the First Steps Christmas Celebration, which was held at St James' Church. As well as the usual toys and craft for the children, they were also able to dress up in costumes from the *Nativity Story* and listen to the story of the birth of Jesus. This year the story was told by a very entertaining puppet show! It was wonderful to see the parents/carers with whom we have built up a relationship with during the first term, coming to St James Church. A few of them mentioned it was their first time at St James' and the children enjoyed exploring church. We were able to provide all children with an age-appropriate biblical gift from First Steps; a real

blessing and a way to ensure The Word is in all homes of First Steps children.

Steve, Zoe, Ben, Alison, Mandy, James, Shirley and Gemma

Tots Praise

It is wonderful to see a high energy distracted 3 year-old sit still for a few moments and recite the 23rd Psalm to actions, or the adult ask for prayer for a family member, the anticipation as we begin singing *The Grace* to one another in a circle, and the delight as the chancel is filled with bubbles.

At the end of each term the children take home a small book telling the familiar stories they have heard over the year or telling again the Christmas and Easter stories. The two-year curriculum begins with telling the Creation Story and the summer picnic on the vicarage lawn is always a treat.

Peter, Rosie, Di and Steve

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.

Blaze

Blaze is a group for 7-11 year olds held at the Parish Centre each Thursday during term time. We have been really encouraged the last term to be able to have enough leaders to run the group. Our aim at Blaze is to teach children the truth about the good news of Jesus in a safe, fun and enjoyable environment. During the group we have a food craft, games, talks from the bible and time spent in small groups. This term we have been looking at the big claims and big actions of Jesus. This has been a really encouraging time for us in John's gospel digging deeper into the truth about who Jesus is and what this means in the lives of the children.

A highlight of blaze has been knowing that children really look forward to coming along each week and as a result they are feeling confident to invite friends.

Please pray or consider joining this exciting group as a leader as currently we won't have enough to continue in September.

Junior Church

Junior Church (for 3-11s) has had another dynamic year as the team has sought through various means to bring the good news of Jesus to the hearts and minds of our 3-11 year-olds. New, willing volunteers have joined our number, bringing a wealth of skills and new energy to bear on our twice-monthly sessions. This has helped to fill the gap vacated by Kate Lee and Louise Morris, whom we thank gratefully for their dedicated service to the children over the years.

Moving onward and upwards, we have also had the benefit of Ben's experience and expertise for the past two terms and his leadership has been of great value. The Scramblers (the 3-4 year-olds), the Adventurers (5-7 year olds) and the Trail-Blazers (8-11 year olds) have been on an exciting mission to discover who Jesus is, making crafts, playing games, learning memory verses from the Bible and sustaining themselves on the ever-popular Haribos.

It remains as ever, a privilege to work with the children of the church family and we pray that God will continue to guide us to teach them faithfully. We remain committed to providing a safe, fun environment at the Parish Centre

for the children to learn and grow in their understanding of Christ.

We don't yet know what the next few months will look like but are grateful to Ben for creating the opportunity for the children to continue meeting and learning together via the internet. We pray for resilience amongst the children and leaders and an unshakeable faith that, despite the challenges of the World, God is always working for our good.

Sarah Worsley, Children's Team

Youth

Youth on Sundays

Youth on Sundays is for young people aged 11-15. We meet regularly on the 2nd and 4th (& 5th) Sunday of the month. We are grateful to Mandy and Mark Latimer for allowing us to meet in their home and for creating a warm and safe environment in which we can play games, bake, and learn from God's word together.

The aim is 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 have looked at: the nature of God, the

"I am Sayings" of Jesus from John's gospel, linking together the big claims and the miracles Jesus performed. We have just finished a series on the beginnings, the first 11 chapters of Genesis. For me (Ben), I have been excited to look at the awesome nature of who God is what it means for the creator of the universe to know me, love me and rescue me through the death and resurrection of his son Jesus.

The young people now meet up on a Sunday evening. In this new way we are coming up with new games to play, including a new favourite "higher or lower". We will continue to look at God's word together and in these uncertain times look to God as our rock and our salvation.

Ben Pearson, Youth Team

Monday Night Youth

Monday Night Youth is for 15 -18 year olds and takes place weekly in term-time at Ben and Grace's home. Over the last few months, we have met earlier to share a home-cooked meal together before Bible study and prayer.

Recently, we studied the book of Esther and looked at how God works out His plans for the good of His people. It has been encouraging seeing the young

people growing in confidence with how to engage with the text, draw out key messages and write short prayers that thank God for the truths they have learnt.

Last term, we studied the book of Mark, focusing on Jesus' identity, mission and call. When learning about Jesus as the Son of God, we made links between what is written in the New and Old Testament about who God is. At the end of each session, there are opportunities for the young people to pray for and support each other in their shared experiences, for example, working hard for exams or applying to Sixth Form.

We are particularly mindful that the future looks uncertain for our young people during the lockdown and school closures. In these uncertain times, God has brought to my mind verses that really resonated with the young people last summer term: 2 Corinthians 4: 7 - 9 *"But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed."*

Ruth Barber, Youth Team

Friday Night Youth Events

New for January 2020, Friday Night Youth Events aim to encourage the young people of St James' to bring their friends to a well-run event and act as an opportunity to reach out to young people around us. We hope to provide about 5 big events throughout the year. In the past we have hosted inflatable assault courses, games nights and riverside BBQ's.

The indoor Laser Tag event for April this year, has been rescheduled for next Spring.

At these events we include a short talk from the Bible where a topic or issue is discussed and the gospel proclaimed by asking the important questions about life.

Ben Pearson, Youth minister

Lay Ministers

As part of the 'ministry team', the Lay Ministers meet monthly to eat, talk and pray together.

LLM's have had to undergo more advanced and detailed Safeguarding courses this year that we have all completed.

This year we have been engaged with the Strategy Review process and it has been both challenging and invigorating as we look afresh

at what this means in terms of ministry.

Gerald Barrett has continued to lead services and preach at both St James' and St Margaret's. As ever, he is particularly grateful to both Judith Hall and Charles Beresford for their support and encouragement.

He has continued as a Day Chaplain at Ely Cathedral and has attended 'Living Word' sessions at Field Lodge under the leadership of Judith Hall. He has continued his responsibility for organising the rota of speakers for the "Thought for the Day' at the monthly Parish Lunch and expresses his thanks to all who have contributed throughout the year.

He writes that, "opportunities for ministerial development began with a stimulating School of Theology day at Oak Hill Theological College during the summer. Amongst other opportunities for learning were a series of seminars providing a Christian perspective on the influence of technology on the various stages of life which was fascinating and frightening in equal measure and, by way of contrast, two lectures on the distorted view of Christ held by some female African theologians."

Judith Hall prepares and leads occasional 9am services and

continues to bring to our attention the work of many modern hymn and liturgical writers who use language and imagery relevant to today's world. Her appreciation of words and music that span many centuries is evident at the St James' Carol Services that she puts together. She expresses how blessed we are by each one who comes to sing, play or read each year. This year's 'icing on the cake', just when the expected band had shrunk, was adding Liz Booker's flute to the other instruments and voices. The choir had a great age range, a real joy, and worked incredibly hard in preparation, as did the players.

Judith is a regular instrumentalist in Ian Cook's monthly *9 o'clock band* and occasionally at the I I am too. A highlight this year was a day course in London on Disability in Church. Each speaker, both well-known experts in their fields, also had lived experience of a challenging condition.

Judith co-ordinates ministry at the Field Lodge Care Home (see separate report). She receives regular updates from 'Faith in Later Life' and 'Anna Chaplaincy' and loves their advocacy work.

Trish Latimer continued 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 Hemingford School. As well as running a Small Group, they run 'Joyful Praise' at Field Lodge with John and Di Tuttlebee.

Liz Pinnock completed her final year as Chair of Ely Diocesan Board of Readers (Licensed Lay Ministers) in May. She continues as a Selection Advisor for those coming forward for selection to train as LLMs. Numbers exploring this vocation continue to rise and last year there were three full Selection Days (the interview stage). The Diocesan Director of Vocations has created a Wider Vocations Team which includes all those involved in exploring vocation for both ordination and Lay Ministry pathways. Liz is part of this team, which meets regularly for lunch with invited speakers. In the last year, this included the National Officer for Young Vocations who gave us a helpful insight into nurturing vocation amongst the younger generations. Liz has written for the Diocesan Sunday Resources - a resource for churches without anyone to lead worship. The Disability Advisory Group on which she served is currently without a leader so is in abeyance.

Liz has served on St James' PCC Strategic Review Working Group in addition to usual pastoral work, funerals, leading and preaching at services and singing in the I I am band. She enjoyed preparing and delivering the All Souls Service at St Margaret's this year. Liz hosts the monthly 'ministry team' lunch each month.

Ruth Terrell reports that Breakfast Church has continued on a monthly basis (excepting August). She says, "in recent months it has been good to have Tim Wetherfield join me in taking Breakfast Church services.

Huge thanks must go to all the helpers who continue to set up, shop, cook, serve and clear up, as well as our dedicated musicians. Without this monthly commitment Breakfast Church would not be possible."

In Holy Week (April) 2019, Ruth facilitated, alongside husband Stephen, a week of prayer, using the 24/7 platform with online sign-up, in the Parish Centre Prayer Room. The reflections were designed to help us think about Christ's journey through Holy Week and what this means for each of us. In November, she created another event in the same format. The theme was 'The Vine' in John's gospel with an invitation

to reflect on our part and how this might impact our church, community and world.

Although access was short-lived, Ruth set up Prayer Stations in the Church building to enable visitors to have time and space to pause and pray about the current crisis with Covid-19.

On a personal note, Ruth decided for a number of reasons not to be relicensed as a Lay Minister from October 2019.

Stephen Terrell (ALM Worship Leader) currently leads the worship band at Breakfast Church and one of the I I am services each month. He is a member of the PCC, has been on the Strategy Review Group and now serves on the Strategy Implementation Team.

Tim Wetherfield has been broadening his experience this year by leading and preaching at the various services at St Margaret's and has really valued these opportunities. Tim has relished the opportunity to preach three times during the recent sermon series at St James' on Nehemiah. He has been assisting Ruth Terrell with Breakfast Church, occasionally leading these services. He has really engaged with our Vision and Strategy and has brought his professional skills to bear in his

input as this has been developed with the PCC.

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

We continually give thanks for God's call to work amongst you and this community.

Liz Pinnock

Deaf Church

We thank God that Deaf Church has been growing both numerically and spiritually during the past year.

There are about 30 core members, who regularly attend our monthly BSL Café Church and BSL Bible groups. In January 2019, we moved our BSL Café Church from the Parish Centre to All Saints Church in Huntingdon, since we out-grew the space in the Parish Centre. However, we maintain a strong connection to St. James'; around 10 -12 deaf people regularly attend the BSL Interpreted All-age service, and they feel part of the Body of Christ at St. James', as well as the

wider Deaf Church, so I thank you for welcoming them.

In November, the Deaf Church led a Saturday morning workshop to teach Deaf awareness and basic BSL, to members of St. James' and other churches in which we interpret services, it was well attended and a valuable time of breaking down barriers and getting to know each other. We would like to do this again in future.

In January, Jane Scott and Tony Vanterpool, were baptised by Peter at All Saints in Huntingdon during our BSL Café Church; they were then confirmed the following week at St. James' along with Lionel Harvey, and hearing members of St. James'. The Deaf Church continue to teach and encourage them in their faith.

We pray for and reach out to the wider Deaf Community, and have a good relationship with Cambridgeshire Deaf Association based in Huntingdon.

Deaf Church very quickly adapted to Zoom Church in March, and although, sadly there are some we cannot contact, except by letter, we thank God that many others are growing in their faith and confidence in prayer at this time.

I continue my studies with Eastern Region Ministry Course, while my

ordination as Deacon on July 5th, and proposed curacy at St. James, has been postponed due to the pandemic.

Jan Smith

PCC Report

The PCC met ten times during the year. The Standing Committee met on one occasion.

The following committees also met at various times throughout the year: Personnel; Property; Finance; Children and Youth; World Mission; and the Strategy Review Working Group (SRWG); the latter to rethink the whole area of discipleship and evangelism in the church.

The SRWG met with the PCC in May to give an interim report and to gain support and for a framework based on 4 Es – engaging, evangelising, establishing, equipping, and again in June for an Away Day. In September a half-day was held to communicate the 'Strategy Plan' to the ministry team and Small Group leaders.

The World Mission Sub committee met in October to agree the mission budget for 2020.

The PCC receive an excellent Youth and Children's ministry report each month.

After falls on the vestry steps over a number of years, the PCC obtained permission to install new vestry steps after advice from our architect as to the best way to rectify this health and safety hazard.

We are grateful to our faithful Churchwarden, Mike Pinnock, Tim Drye, our Treasurer and Karen Timmins, our accounts manager, 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, as their term of office is extended by Bishop's Instrument until October.

Elections to the PCC and Deanery Synod, God willing, will be held later in the year. May all grasp the significance of the work of PCC in our life as those called to be disciple-making disciples.

Field Lodge

Field Lodge care home for the elderly is situated within our parish on London Road.

A dozen or so people from St James' have been regularly involved in bringing three services to Field Lodge each month, each with its own style and focus:

Holy Communion with a shorter liturgy, a hymn, short address and prayer. Administering communion to those who wish to receive it, led by Peter or sometimes Judith Bolton

Joyful Praise an informal service with hymns, prayer and thoughts from God's word.

Living Word a thematic focus with conversation, Bible reading, prayer and a hymn.

Some residents have also enjoyed coming to St James' for *Songs of Praise* and a few, occasionally, to Sunday worship when their health and transport allow.

It is a privilege to bring something of the love of God to the residents of Field Lodge on a regular basis. Some express their appreciation that coming into care has not totally separated them from shared worship.

We were invited to offer a service in the autumn at which past residents were remembered. Peter led a gentle, reflective time, attended by relatives, with a few residents and members of staff. We have been asked to do something similar this year.

A carol service has also become an annual feature, attended by many more than the 15 or so regulars, and well supported by extra people

from St James'. Thank you all for your support.

*Peter Cunliffe, Judith Hall,
John & Di Tuttlebee, and Trish & Ray
Latimer*

Music – Worship

First a big thank you to all in our music/worship team: leaders, instrumentalists, vocalists, PA sound and AV operators, and to Susan Cooke who keeps us in order with the music rota.

Elaine Gunn, Peter Allen and occasionally Alwyn Frost accompany the 9 am services on the organ, while the 9 am band is still in trio mode, under the leadership of Ian Cooke, playing once a month. It's good to have such a variety at the early service.

It has been great this year to have our youth minister Ben lead worship at the Family Services with Grace joining the now fairly established music band. Breakfast Church continues to go well, even when as last month we had to forego the breakfast part! The turn out and fellowship was still good. It has been good also to have John Tuttlebee join the band as keyboard player and Grace singing with Stephen Terrell leading.

The 11 am band continues to play at the other morning services

usually under the leadership of Stephen Terrell, Alwyn Frost or Ian Cooke. It has proved increasingly difficult to have enough instrumentalists to form a band each week. We would like to encourage more of you to use your musical gifts in this way.

As always, our roles do not stop at Sunday morning services. The Songs of Praise services each term have proved to be a popular again this year. Looking outwards, members of the team play/lead services at Field Lodge Care Home, Hemingford School assemblies and school services at Easter and Christmas, not forgetting our annual carol singing at 'The Axe and Compass'.

During advent we also help with worship at Christingle, nativity and carol services with special thanks to Judith Hall for all her work on the Christmas services.

We are all greatly blessed when our gifts are made available for the church fellowship.

At this difficult time for us all, especially to 'do church', it makes us realise how much we need to meet together for worship, fellowship and teaching. This time gives each of us a fresh opportunity to think about what part we can play. May God give us a new appreciation of the blessing He

gives when we meet together in His name.

Ian Cook, Alwyn Frost and Stephen Terrell

Flowers

We have been a small but enthusiastic team this year as many of our arrangers have retired. Thank you Anne and Sue for the many years of service you have given to creating flower arrangements in church. We also took the decision to be more sustainable and environmentally conscious in our working, by reducing the use of floral foam and switching to vases and other devices for supporting flowers. All of this has resulted in a change of direction for the arrangements you see in church, but it is a work in progress and we are experimenting with different ideas as we continue to decorate the church building for congregation and visitors. We would welcome any comments or ideas. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the existing team - Christine, June, Rosemary and Sandra for their hard work, and to welcome Zoe, Ranjini and Aline, who have recently joined us.

Elaine Lee

Safeguarding

I am happy, and relieved, to report that there have been no safeguarding concerns or disclosures in the last year.

The Church of England takes its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and over the last couple of years has significantly ramped up its safeguarding regulation and organisation. In the last 12 months in particular there has been a plethora of new Statements from the House of Bishops, National and Diocesan policies and detailed Practice Guidelines, all of which the PCC is required to follow.

Accordingly, the PCC has issued and complied with the following Parish policy statements:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Statement on Domestic Abuse
- Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

The policy having the most immediate and practical change is the Safer Recruitment Policy. The Safer Recruitment procedure, which is applicable for all appointments, both paid and volunteer, made under the auspices of the PCC of St James' Church Hemingford Grey, can be summarised as follows:

1. A Role description defined by line manager and PSO for all employees / volunteers.
2. The DBS requirement defined in the role description by PSO.
3. Application form completed by employee / volunteer.
4. Two satisfactory references, approved by line manager and PSO.
5. Confidential declaration completed by employee / volunteer and approved by line manager and PSO.
6. Interview / informal discussion of employee / volunteer by at least 2 people.
7. DBS check (as required, according to role).
8. Appointment letter from appropriate appointing authority.
9. Induction by line manager.
10. Training and support as required organised by line manager.

While much of the above procedures were already being applied in the recruitment of staff, its applicability to Volunteers is novel and has generated significant workload as we have tried to apply the policy retrospectively.

While the policies make it clear that the responsibility for safeguarding in the parish falls to the Incumbent jointly with the PCC, the PCC has appointed a Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), Ian Sinkinson, to lead on our safeguarding compliance. The new guidance has caused an increase in PSO workload but help has been provided by an updated Diocesan

website containing guidance, tools and templates, as well as the issue of a new Parish Safeguarding Handbook. Another innovation is the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard, a software application which enables the PCC and PSO keep track of outstanding safeguarding compliance actions. This currently shows that we are fully compliant in all urgent and important issues. Some minor actions are outstanding in individual activities, mainly concerning risk assessments and volunteer training.

We currently have 59 people, volunteers and staff, working with children and vulnerable adults, all of whom have been DBS checked and have completed safeguarding training.

Ian Sinkinson

Finances

Results for the Year

Unrestricted Funds

At the year end the General Fund bank balance stood at £96,892 (2018 £71,099).

During the year giving fell to 210k in 2019 from 214k in 2018, primarily due to a very successful one off appeal in 2018 rather than a fall in regular giving.

Other income increased to 25k from 20k.

Costs for the year were 209k.

The coffee shop contributed £2,100 towards utilities, £3,000 towards the administrator's salary and £600 towards repayment of its loan.

A final surplus of £26k was retained for the year.

The Development fund stood at £1989.

Restricted Funds

The Garden Room Fund stood at £20,393 at the year-end. This is mostly in the form of fixed assets with the bank balance being £11.

Balances on the other restricted funds were as follows:

Don Brown Fund £15,771

Bells £713

Repairs £0

Restricted mission £2438.

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, Accounts Manager

Visiting Team

The visiting Team of six people continue to visit homes in Hemingford Grey. They are Allen and Penny Foster, Alan Humphrey, Jan Smith, Nick Greatorex-Davies and Clive Sprawson. We meet for prayer and discussion on a Monday in the Parish Centre at 1.00 pm prior to visiting.

Over the last two years most of Hemingford Grey has been covered so now we are basically returning to those houses where there has been a positive response. The aim is to build up relationships, share the gospel message, pray for those we meet on the doorstep and give them suitable literature if appropriate. One such person has had several visits and has been to St James' and also joined a Christianity Explored course. There are others that are also being visited from time to time.

At each visit we wear name badges, introduce ourselves and say we are from St James'. In a variety of ways, we ask people about their interest in knowing Jesus as their Saviour. A copy of the Good News newspaper is usually offered along with details of church activities. At the end of each conversation, we ask whether they would like a further visit.

At least two members of the team visit nearly every week and there is usually at least one person that will listen to the gospel and even if it goes no further, we believe seeds are being sown that may come to fruition at a later date.

We would love more people to join us; it is a real blessing.

Clive Sprawson

Friday Prayer Group

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, **by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.***

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

*Rejoice always, **pray continually,** give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

We are encouraged in the Scriptures to pray not only on our own but also together and have the promise that when two or three meet together to pray, Christ will be in their midst.

Some years ago Nick G-D started a prayer meeting for the church. On Friday evenings at 7pm a group

of people from St James' Church met for an hour of prayer, mostly in the Parish Centre. The meetings were not structured and we prayed, as well as sang, as the Spirit led. Concerns of the church, especially Sunday services and youth and children's work; the local community, government and the wider world were often topics that came up in prayer.

The group consists of about 10 people who regularly attend, and we would love to see more people from the church come to pray with us.

Ute Mokros

Deanery Synod

Rev Peter Cunliffe, Alison Craven, Martin Johnson and Ian Sinkinson represent St James' Church Hemingford Grey on the Huntingdon Deanery Synod.

In the last twelve months the Synod has met on two occasions. A further meeting, scheduled for March 2020, was cancelled due to the Coronavirus lockdown.

As well as witnessing the Licensing of our new Rural Dean, Rev Ian Brennand, on 22nd October 2019, Synod was addressed by the Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech, the Ven. Hugh McCurdy. He was pleased that the deanery

now has no clerical vacancies, and went on to explain the latest situation on the Market Towns Initiative, for which the diocese had submitted to the Church Commissioners a £3m bid for a second phase to broaden the geographical scope. He assured Synod that no parish share was used to fund the initiative, which was financed mainly by the Church Commissioners, with some funding from the sale of diocesan assets.

In the matter of the Diocesan Strategy, the Archdeacon assured Synod that Ely recognised the differences not only between Cambridge and deprived areas of Peterborough, but also between urban, market town and rural parishes – and the lack of similarity between small rural parishes in Norfolk, those in Huntingdonshire and others in the Fens, all of which faced different challenges.

Nonetheless, the ‘five levers’ of the strategy were relevant to helping all parishes consider how they might engage more effectively with the communities in which they were embedded. Archdeacon Hugh urged all parishes to ‘breathe life’ into the strategy.

The Deanery Treasurer circulated a draft ministry share proposal for 2020. He thanked all parishes that had already paid their 2019

ministry share in full or had promised to do so by the end of November. The overall increase for 2020 had been set by the diocesan board of finance, and the deanery was looking to reduce the disparity between those parishes that met their ministry costs and those that did not, which implied for some parishes a £3,000 surcharge in 2020 that might or might not be ‘one-off’. He offered to visit PCCs to explain, if asked, and to enter discussions with individual parish treasurers if they would find that helpful.

The importance of Safeguarding was reiterated at Synod. The Rural Dean urged Synod to understand that, given the damage already done to the reputation of churches, including the C of E, safeguarding must be actively pursued by every parish. He reminded parishes that their websites must show details of parish safeguarding officers, adding that he believed the deanery should appoint its own safeguarding officer to provide additional support to parishes.

Over the course of the year, the Synod heard talks from Lucie Foice-Beard, the Operations Manager of the churches in Wisbech under the Market Towns Initiative; from the Torch Trust,

the only Christian charity working with people with sight loss; from Rosie Tallowin who outlined how her parish, Fen Drayton with Fenstanton, had been successful in attracting families, and from Geoffrey Hunter and Timur Alexandrov who spoke on “Re-imagining our church buildings”, a three year project, now into the second phase after an audit to find out how people saw their churches.

Ian Sinkinson

Open The Book

Aims to present the Bible in primary schools in an accessible and enjoyable way.

A group of about six of us go into the village school, using the Lion Storyteller Bible as our script, tell the Bible story. We use dressing up clothes, various props and live music led by guitar and flute, and projected scenes and songs to bring the story to life.

The whole school attend the assembly, from Reception to Year 6, and six times during the school year.

The school says that the children enjoy the OTB performances and that the staff appreciates our visits too.

Ian Cooke, Ute Mokros, Barbara Butler, Clive Sprawson, Ray and Trish Latimer

World Mission

It has been an exciting year for our church’s involvement in World Mission. We have seen God at work speaking to church members, providing for and equipping them, and then seen them moving out into mission in different parts of the world. In July the Lee family moved to Kuala Lumpur, Kate to teach in an international school, Tim to work on support of international missionaries with CMS Asia. He continues to support and handover his role in Jigsaw. James has a GAP year with organisations in Malaysia and Grace continues her schooling.

In August Anbu Hoole moved to South Asia, firstly to look at mission possibilities for a young doctor in Afghanistan, then to work at Bach Christian Hospital in northern Pakistan.

During the year two of our partners finished their service. Richard and Susanne Cunliffe returned to UK from Nepal and Rebekah Lee completed her GAP year with Fellowship Afloat.

We have also continued our regular financial and prayer support

of our partners. A mission prayer meeting is held each month, to which all are welcome. In addition to our support of the Lees, Jigsaw and Anbu we have supported:

- the **Frésard family** now based in Switzerland, as Pascal has leads the work of Bible translation teams in francophone West Africa and Janet continues to support the Karoninka team.
- the work of **Seeta Gurung** with DAI, training and equipping young Christians to manage, lead and live out their faith in their work and daily lives.
- the work of **Baldaeus Theological College** in Sri Lanka, training church leaders and workers to minister in remote and rural areas of the north.
- **Mission Possible UK** as Richard and Ruth Wallis have worked through it to meet needs in Eastern Europe and East Africa. These needs range from providing training and Christian literature for church workers, to community development, children's education and support of families in need

Two other partners, **CBM** (and Helen Sinkinson working in their international office in Germany) and **Tearfund** have been supported in prayer and occasional

giving. The Christmas collections were given to CBM for their work with disabled people in countries around the world and a special collection was made for the victims of typhoons in Southern Africa through Tearfund. In all, including regular giving and special collections, our giving to our overseas mission partners in 2019 amounted to nearly £30,000. Praise God we were able to help others see lives transformed by Jesus through this and our prayer.

Alison Craven

Tower

Support from a dedicated band of ringers has enabled the bells to be rung for morning services on every other Sunday (alternating with at St Margaret's Hemingford Abbots), for weddings and for special services. On 18th April 2019 a bell was tolled for 7 minutes along-side others across the country in solidarity following the fire at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris on 15th April.

We hold regular Wednesday evening practices welcoming visitors from neighbouring towers and we continue to share some practices with the Godmanchester ringers. We were fortunate to be able to welcome a ringer who relocated into the village and who

now regularly joins us on Sunday mornings and for practices. During the year our two new recruits were taught how to handle a bell. One has since given up but the other has made good progress and is now ringing for Sunday services at St Margaret's. Initially the bell clappers were tied to enable a 'silent' practice but now that the learner can ring unaided he is benefitting from a short learners' practice held prior to the general Wednesday evening practice. This has allowed him, and other learners from local towers, to ring in 'rounds' alongside other ringers. We are pleased to have recently gained another new recruit who I hope will enjoy ringing and become a regular member of our band.

More experienced ringers in the area have again benefited from several Saturday morning and Friday evening advanced 'Surprise' ringing practices. In January ringers from all over the area came to try our bells as we were hosts to the Huntingdon District of the Ely Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers Annual District Meeting, which was held after a Communion service and tea in the church.

Our bells are always popular with visiting ringers and 5 peals (each taking over 3 hours to complete)

along with 9 quarter-peals have been rung throughout the year. Visitors are not always local but come from across the country. One group even brought along their dogs as they completed a dog walking ringing tour of the local area!

The installation of a bell simulator, which will enable ringers to improve their style and repertoire, has taken longer than planned but is now almost complete. 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 enabling them to improve their striking.

Work in the tower has included the on-going general rope and bell maintenance needed to ensure the continued safe ringing of the bells and the fitting of two ceiling bosses in the clock room to enable the bell ropes to run more smoothly. The bells are in good working order. The west tower louvers have been measured in preparation for the fitting of swift nesting boxes due to be installed this springtime.

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

Parish Centre

This past year we have realized our vision of establishing the Parish Centre as a hospitality hub – we continue to serve 50 + people at our popular monthly Parish Lunch, in addition to this we cater for special church events, such as funerals, family seminars and quizzes. We can even boast that we offer the best Christmas lunch in the local area! (According to our U3A customers).

In order to do this we rely on the commitment of volunteers. This year we have established a group of catering volunteers from church family members, who are willing to help at these events that often fall outside of coffee shop hours, so we cannot expect to utilise members of the coffee shop team.

We have trained approximately 15 people to date so they can help serve and wash up in our new kitchen. Again, a big thank you to those people who have come forward so far; if you think this might suit you then please speak to Rachel or Jacqui Joseph for more information about how you can help serve at one off church events.

Outside of these activities we continue to cater for our regular groups such as HEMLOCS, U3A,

Acorn Cancer and large numbers visiting The Manor House.

The coffee shop is in its 9th year of service to the community and I am pleased to say it continues to be a thriving and popular meeting place for many from the village and surrounding areas. During this year, after various appeals, we have welcomed 6 new coffee shop volunteers and sadly lost our longest serving volunteer too.

We are so grateful for the contribution and continued support of all our volunteers – without them the coffee shop would not survive so thank you to you all – servers, bakers, cooks, drivers, cleaners, gardeners and handymen, you are amazing and we appreciate you. We can all feel deeply satisfied that together we have created a place where people want to come because they are assured of a warm welcome. It is a safe and comfortable place to be, and we show unconditional love without exception.

Being part of this team is a privilege because we have been given the opportunity to build relationships and form friendships in an everyday environment. We do understand that you may not have time to volunteer, but why not pop in for a coffee, chat to people in the village and get to

know our volunteers, as the majority of them are not from church, become a familiar St James' face – we would love to see you.

During this this year we have come to realise that the work being done at the Parish Centre/Coffee Shop every day is an important part of our home mission, we are at the forefront of St James' presence in the village – indeed for many it is their only contact. Without this active Hospitality Hub at the center of our village our church outreach and the community would be significantly poorer.

Rachel Winton

In Conclusion

During the year it was a joy to welcome the Ager family as new believers and to baptise them all. Then to bring for confirmation Steve and Donna, along with Claire Beyeler and those in the Deaf Church – Jane, Lionel and Tony.

As we look ahead to becoming more intentional as those who follow the great commission of our Lord Jesus, may we grasp hold of what we're learning in these 'lockdown days'. I'm experiencing a greater closeness with the church family, our neighbours in the community, and a greater desire to worship together by whatever

means are available. As we discover new ways of being and what it means to be connected as the body of Christ lets not loose sight of these and re-enter with more purposeful desires to make Christ known, our hope and our salvation.

Thank you for reading to the end,
May God bless you and keep you,
the Lord turn his face towards you,
the light of his countenance shine
on you, and his peace fill you.

Peter