

# ALL SAINTS' PRESTON-ON-TEES

ANNUAL REPORTS 2016

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# ***Introduction***

## ***Chairman's Report***

As I look back at 2016, the standout things for me were:

- A Vision Day in February 2016 on potential reordering following a week of prayer and fasting
- A series of excellent training evenings on dementia awareness
- A packed adult baptism service in May with 7 candidates
- The Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations
- A weekend visit from Bishop Mark
- The Life Exhibition
- Sending Mark Harrison out to commence training for ordination
- New Wine Inspire conference at Hollybush
- A fun Auction of Promises for Mexico
- An outstanding Carol Service

Church growth experts say that when a church reaches 80% of its seating capacity it is full. This is because a family of four or five arriving late are unlikely to find seats together, which is awkward and a disincentive to return. According to our records, in 2013, 2014 and 2015 there were four services in each year where we were over 80% of our capacity. Last year, there were 11. We give thanks for the numerical growth that God has given us and trust that this is matched by growth in discipleship and love for the Lord.

Not long ago, we decided that All Saints' should aspire to be "praying always, serving together to share Jesus' love in our communities." This short statement sums up the atmosphere at All Saints' so well for me. Prayer seems to be ever more at the heart of what we do; well over half the posts in the church Facebook group are requests for prayer, we have half-nights of prayer, prayer breakfasts, weeks of prayer and fasting, prayer walks, Morning Prayer and Ablaze prayer, and numbers are up for these events – a really good sign. Despite many of us having busy lives with so little spare time, we have dozens of willing, cheerful, servant-hearted volunteers giving sacrificially of their precious free hours in all our ministries. Many are unseen and get no applause – God sees it all though. None of our ministries could function without such enthusiasm or dedication. And our outreach isn't just social work, community spirit or doing good – such things are vital for society but anyone can do that. What we have to share at the heart of our community outreach is the love of God in Jesus Christ. None of our many ministries are shy to talk about the difference the Lord can make in anyone's life.

As we head into 2017 All Saints' seems in good shape. There are remarkably few relational niggles given a membership of over 220 which is almost miraculous. The finances are sound. The church is growing and continues to be outward-looking. Those who have joined us recently from other places tell me that All Saints' feels like home, a safe place, and somewhere where

they feel they will be challenged to grow in their faith. There is much to be thankful for. Let's love one another, love our communities, keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and give God all the glory.

*John Lambert*

## **Treasurer's Report**

I would like to begin this report with a myriad of "thankyous". Firstly, thank you to you as a church for entrusting me with this role as Treasurer. I certainly do not have a background in finance and am only used to working out our family budget in an exercise book. It has been a risk, but with God's help and certainly that of the finance team we have come to the end of the year with bills paid and money in the bank! I am so grateful to have experts working along with me in this. Margaret Vaughan, Gill Wake, Craig Aston, Terry Doyle and Jennifer Brown have literally been Godsend's in their own ways. Outgoing Treasurer Stuart Main was always on hand to help with any queries. John Belmont has been able to set me straight on many an occasion when I have had glitches with the incredibly comprehensive and clever Excel spreadsheet that he has devised.

God has blessed us mightily this year in the finances of the church. I fully believe that his abundant provision is to be used generously for His glory. We began the year 2016 with a deficit budget of nearly £500. In fact, due to the generosity of church members and the very careful spending of everyone (it helps to turn off the lights when we are not using them), we have ended the year with a surplus of just over £2,000 on the general fund. This resulted in our having a balance across all our funds of just over £44,000 at the year end.

We are blessed to live in a country that incentivises charitable giving through Gift Aid. This means that charities can claim back from the Inland Revenue 25% of every pound given by taxpayers. Last year this enabled us to increase our income by more than £34,000.

As a church, we must share all that God blesses us with and All Saints' has been able to do that again during the year. It is a biblical principle that we follow in that 10% of all the church's voluntary giving is given to outside mission organisations (in the UK and overseas). Malachi 3:10 encourages us to "bring the whole tithe in to the storehouse..." and God has blessed us as we have been obedient to His word. Due to the fact that the giving has increased in 2016, God has given us more money to give away.

One of the exciting things we have been able to fund in 2016 was the Life Exhibition which cost the church in terms of money and man power – but this was such a blessing and the story of Jesus was declared to literally hundreds of children from local schools along with many of their teachers.

Alpha has again been an important investment in 2016. People have joyfully given to this and we have been able to share Jesus with those who are seeking Him.

We have much more we want to do in 2017, so please consider being even more generous so we can carry out the projects God has place on our hearts.

Thank you.

*Kathie Lambert*

## ***PCC Report***

The PCC comprised 12 members elected from among the congregations, the clergy and churchwardens, lay members of the Diocesan and Deanery Synods who represent All Saints'. The PCC are trustees of All Saints' (a registered charity) and are responsible for financial affairs, and for the care and maintenance of the church fabric and its contents. In 2016, the year finished with a surplus of the order of £3,000, but the coming year will place considerably greater demands on our finances, for various reasons. Other matters dealt with at the PCC during 2016 have been:

- Routine but important formalities such as the drivers' bank and the children's activities and leaders;
- Consideration of reports from the Diocesan and Deanery Synods;
- Monthly consideration of Safeguarding issues, which have assumed a much greater importance in our thinking, and monthly reports from the MDT;
- Attention to the maintenance need of the church and centre, and of the properties 558a and 558b.
- Consideration of the possibility of a church re-ordering, with a sub-group devoting a great deal of work to this issue.

There will be some vacancies arising at the elections to be held at the APCM: please consider offering yourself for election too this important ministry, and please pray for our new PCC during the coming year.

*John Littlehales*

## ***MDT (Ministry Development Team) Report***

The MDT prayerfully considers what God is calling All Saints' to do, encourages every-member ministry and thinks strategically about refocusing or resourcing existing ministries.

Last year the MDT:

- Reviewed Connect and offered ideas about managing increasing numbers
- Decided to rename Small Groups as 'Life Groups' to better reflect what they are there for
- Measured our effectiveness at praying always, serving together to share Jesus' love in our communities
- Critiqued the potential reordering plans from a ministry point of view

- Thoroughly reviewed the various ministries under Jan Peters' leadership (Sunday Xplore, Messy Church, school assemblies, Play and Praise, Toddlers and special events like the Glow Party)
- Worked through a book called *What Makes Churches Grow?* by Bob Jackson, identifying areas where we can learn as a church
- Identified key people and ideas for the 2017 *Talking Jesus* mission

I would like to express my thanks to those who serve on the MDT (currently Erin Bunford, Shiromi Davison, Matt Falcus, Peter Gray, Sue Ireland and Donna Levin). Thanks to John Belmont, Chris Peters and Chris Vass who stepped down in 2016 after a very valued tour of duty - with a special mention for Gillian Davison who also took care of the minutes every month).

*John Lambert*

## **Deanery Synod**

The Deanery Synod meets every other month and is made up of representatives from the PCCs of all the Church of England churches in our deanery which stretches from Billingham to the boundary of the parish of St John's Egglecliffe. We meet to discuss matters affecting the local church, and over the past year the main focus has been on the Deanery Plan – how we look to organise the Deanery in the coming years to sustain and grow the churches involved. The current representatives from All Saints' are Margaret Vaughan, Bruce Merrick and Lucy Falcus, and members of the Deanery Synod automatically receive a place on the church PCC. Elections take place every three years, and if anyone would be interested in standing for the next cycle please speak to one of the current members.

*Lucy Falcus*

## **Diocesan Synod**

There have been two meetings of Diocesan Synod in 2016.

Items at the May meeting included approving the Diocesan Accounts. Bishop Mark used his presidential address to talk about "putting ourselves in other peoples' shoes". The meeting started with worship led by children from a local school, and the children from the recently formed "children's council" introducing themselves.

The November meeting included the Diocesan Youth Adviser sharing reflections from his first six months in post. A short update on the "Talking Jesus" mission was given. There was a substantial item regarding Education and the role of the Church in this (and the fast changing backdrop for education – formation of multi-academy trust etc). The diocese's budget for 2017 was endorsed –this included details of the shortfall in 2017 parish share pledge that would result in the number of stipendiary posts being reduced over the next few years. Bishop Paul's

presidential address reflected on his initial conclusions from his recent sabbatical considering childhood poverty.

*Margaret Vaughan*

## **Administration**

A recent visiting speaker complemented us on our good united working of teams of people who each are passionate about their own field of excellence. (we had had a few technical problems that day which were quickly solved).

This led me to thank God for the commitment of each person who work together each week, for the glory of God. Also, I'd like to thank everyone for making me look like a really organised and efficient administrator, when really I am in awe most of the time at the expertise and commitment of so many people who make this church run well week by week.

Even though we all have human flaws, I think we can celebrate 1 Corinthians 12.27 and say we are the Body of Christ and each one of us is a part of it.

*Sandra Griffiths*

## **Churchwardens' Report**

This was a very busy year for repair, refurbishment and replacement projects at All Saints. Early in the year consultation with church members led to the replacement of chairs in the church centre in April, including chairs with arms for the coffee lounge. The new purple fabric looks very smart. The church centre hall floor was fully refurbished with cleaning, sanding and resealing. The lower portion of the wall in the centre hall was repainted, church members being consulted on the replacement colour. We are very grateful to our partners, the Kirklevington Task Force, for their help with this work. The Task Force also undertook maintenance and tidying of the church grounds. As part of our commitment to become a dementia-friendly church, following an audit of the premises, we have improved visibility of steps with the recommended strips and stripes. A defibrillator has been installed at the church centre entrance. Two wasps' nests were removed from the roof on the south side of the building. Following storm damage, the boundary fence on the north side of the church site was fully replaced. A lightning protection inspection of our current system in the church tower was commissioned and the report and recommendations will be taken forward.

Many other repair and maintenance tasks have been undertaken during the year by Peter, our caretaker, who completed his first year with us. Some examples of this work include: replacement of external lights with solar lights, new smoke alarms, new window locks in the church centre hall, installing a new sensor system for the gents' toilets and recommending a much-needed replacement computer for our administrator, Sandra. Peter has also qualified as a PAT tester for our many electrical items so this function is now being carried out in-house.

The tenants in 558A Church House gave notice to move on from the office premises with effect from the end of October. We took the opportunity to replace the carpet almost throughout the office and deep clean the premises before a new tenant, Jason McKay, took up residence in December.

Following the Vision Day in February a Church Reordering Steering Group has been set up to oversee development and consultation on the project working with the Diocesan architect. The perennial issue of keeping the church boilers functioning has become a steadily losing battle with three of the four boilers now deemed to need replacing as soon as possible. Quotes for replacement have been obtained and are being appraised by the Steering Group. Work will be integrated with the reordering project as far as possible.

Jenny Lewis will step down from her post as Churchwarden at this year's APCM after three years in the role. She would like to thank John, the staff team, Standing Committee and PCC for their advice and support to the wardens and in helping to keep All Saints the happy, thriving, growing church it is – to God's glory.

*Jenny Lewis and Karen Killick*

## **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is regarded as one of the PCC priorities and time is made on the agenda for this at every meeting. Contact has been kept up with Beth Miller the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer this year as I take over the role of Safeguarding at All Saints'.

There has been a change of procedures for the Xplore children's ministry after a minor incident, to help with transfer of responsibility of children from Xplore to Parent at the end of the service. We are also seeking information on a new lock for the main hall double doors to help with the security of our children during all children's ministry.

Safeguarding covers children, youth and vulnerable adults here at All Saints' and we are grateful to God that there has been no major issues this year.

*Jennifer Brown*

## **Health and Safety**

I am delighted and privileged to take over the role of overseeing Health and Safety matters within the church from Mark Harrison. I put in record my thanks for the work he had previously done in this area and the well organised information he left me. As my work takes me away for months at a time, I have not as yet had much time to identify areas that need attention but over the next few weeks I intend to speak with church leadership, and the people who use the facilities heavily such as the kitchen team, youth and children's leaders etc to identify areas that need attention or revise procedures. I am also liaising with Sandra as church administrator and



Peter (caretaker) as I seek to tighten up the procedures and routines for Electrical Appliance testing and Fire Risk Assessment. It is my hope that church users and members see the importance of having a good Health and Safety culture and I welcome any suggestions or assistance from people. Please speak to me directly with any observations or concerns, or leave details with Sandra.

*Kevin Webster*

## ***Publicity, Communications and Website***

The past year saw the launch of the successor to In Touch. The new bi-monthly glossy leaflet covers a programme of dates and times of all events, services, meetings and courses at All Saints', or relevant to its members. It also includes a message from a member of clergy or ministry leader. We also produced a special glossy Community In Touch for the Christmas period which was delivered to all houses in our Parish. Both of these are professionally printed.

The church website underwent a revamp in 2016, simplifying the design and making it suitable for use on smartphones and tablets. It is now easier to find the information you need about what is happening at All Saints'. We also continue to maintain our presence on sites such as A Church Near You.

Finally, All Saints' launched its own podcast on Apple iTunes during the past year. Members can easily subscribe to receive and listen to sermon recordings from our Sunday services through this podcast.

*Matt Falcus*

## ***This Church Exists to: Worship God***

### **9.00am Worship**

The nine o'clock service continues to worship with a mix of traditional and new songs, from the Mission Praise collection. The Choral Group leads services once or twice per term and the other services are led from the keyboard by Janet Smith, Pamela Rushton and Lucy Falcus. Andrew Killick and Matt Falcus also play on a regular basis on guitar or violin. The worship often has a reflective or contemplative feel along with the more celebratory services such as Advent or Palm Sunday.

*Lucy Falcus*

### **10.30am Worship**

Sunday 10.30am...Hymns, Carols, old songs, new songs, "loud-in-your-face" praise songs, "quiet intimate soaking in God's Spirit" songs, "cry out to Yahweh" songs, "listening to Jesus" songs, "spirit stirring" songs, "calming soothing" songs, "heart felt" songs, "heart squeezing" songs, "broken heart" songs, "heart mending" songs, "reflective" songs, "declaring the awesome power of God" songs, "dancing and clapping" songs, "kneeling and praying" songs...Guitars, keyboard, drums, bass, violin, trumpet, harmonies, male voices, female voices....."Call to Worship", "Communion participation Worship", "Responsive Worship", "Leave -the-Church-building-and-tell-others Worship" . All this = 10.30am Worship at All Saints 2016 / 17. Our congregation is diverse, so is our Worship in song to Our God. When we come to Him just as we are, being true and honest before Him.... this is where we meet Him, thank Him, stand in awe of Him, cry out to Him, Worship Him (John 4:23-24 TM)...and this is where He meets us, frees us, heals us, rescues us, saves us, restores us and loves us! (Genesis – Revelation!)

*Deb Hird*

### **Midweek Worship**

Midweek worship has been a significant growth area in the Church of England over the last decade; services in retirement homes, school services and other 'Fresh Expressions' as they are known have proved popular across the land whilst, nationally, Sunday worship is just about holding its own.

At All Saints' we worship together midweek with Morning Prayer (daily), informal Holy Communion and Play and Praise (weekly), Treasure Seekers and Lunch Club services (monthly). Then there are groups meeting in homes in their various forms. Finally, there are short three-minute reflections at Seated Exercise and Youth Club. Most of this is covered elsewhere in this report.

Morning Prayer (30 minutes) is usually quite traditional though somewhat less so on Thursdays. It draws a handful each day. The midweek Communion service (also 30 minutes) is much less formal, with an open discussion on a Bible passage - last year covered the end of Matthew's gospel, highlights from 1 and 2 Kings and Philippians - a short/simplified Eucharistic prayer and time for tea or coffee afterwards for those who stay. This service attracts about 20 people, sometimes more, from both the 9am and 10.30am congregations.

*John Lambert*

## **Choral Group**

The choral group have had a busy year having sung at 19 Church services, plus 4 funerals, 7 weddings and an infant baptism.

We have been happy to help St John's Church, Egglecliffe, by singing at 6 weddings when their church choir was unavailable.

We also paid a return visit to Preston Hall to sing carols in the Victorian street in December, which luckily was not on such a windy day as the previous year!

Some of our group were also able to visit Oak Road to help swell the residents' voices when they had a carol service.

We are thankful to be able to call on Isaac Conroy who is currently studying in Durham University but is able to accompany us on the organ or piano for our services. Ann Wade, our accompanist for rehearsals, unfortunately had a broken wrist and was thus unable to play for several weeks and we are very grateful to Janet Smith and Mike Shaw who have played for us during this time.

We meet weekly at the Wilson Centre on Friday evenings and would welcome anyone who would like to join us. It does not matter if you cannot read music, there are no auditions, and we are a friendly group. Why not give it a try?

*Kate Pickover*

## **Prayer**

I took over the role of prayer coordinator in September 2016 following the departure of Mark Harrison. The prayer team has continued to build on the sound foundation of activities laid by

Mark. The “Ablaze” monthly meeting has seen a gradual growth in numbers, and we have spent a number of events focused on specific needs and areas. Similarly, the prayer breakfasts have been “themed” and have been times of fervent praying and good fellowship. Our prayer coordination team has met twice since September to review activities and consider new initiatives. The current “fan fold” daily prayer diary is current in the final stages of a revamp, with a view to creating a better-focused thirty-day cycle of prayer covering church members and activities. A new initiative was a half-night of prayer held in February, with encouraging attendance and a sense of sound spiritual work having been done. Overall, we are heartened by the increased realisation among the church of the need to under-gird all our activities with prayer. We continue to both facilitate and encourage effective prayer within All Saints, especially so as we face the challenges of growth and reordering.

*Rob Govier*

## **Puppets**

This last year the puppet team have continued to take part in regular commitments in Messy Church and Engage services. In addition, in May last year we led a puppet workshop for 3G. Following the workshop members of 3G and the team performed a puppet song in the service led by 3G.

We were asked by Darlington Churches Together to help with an open-air event they were holding in the town centre in September last year and we performed two 20 minute sets.

Following on from the success of the Life Exhibition and the continued links with the schools, we invited 3 of the local primary schools to a special Christmas puppet event which we held in church and was very well received. We have put together an Easter one which the same schools will be coming to in March.

The other main thing we have been able to do this year is help the Parish Church set up their own puppet team. We have carried out training with them and helped them perform songs in two family services.

*Chris Peters*

## **Church Flowers**

I have just started doing the Church Flowers this year. I source the flowers from many places, not only to keep costs down, but also to get the best flowers which will last.

The weekly cost is between £10 and £20, but I do also get donations of flowers from the gardens of members of the congregation and foliage from my own garden or from the church garden.

Any contributions of flowers from the congregation will always be welcome.

*Kathryn Hutton*

# ***This Church Exists to: Make Disciples***

## ***Sunday Children's Ministry***

Over the past year we have sought to creatively explore biblical themes, characters and faith issues relevant to the children's lives. One highlight has been running a teaching programme based on the life of Joseph with workshops in drama, puppetry and art included. This led to the children leading a whole service in November based on that theme. They did brilliantly and it was a great opportunity for them to practice using their gifts and talents in worship. Our little ones (Gems) have settled well this year and we enjoy playtime followed by God time with Bible stories, craft, song time, creative prayer etc. More good news is that the numbers of children coming along has grown again this year and it has been a joy to welcome a number of new families. The Sunday teaching team has grown a bit this past year but we still need more helpers. At present we can only run two Sunday groups and some activities have been limited but our prayer is more people will join the team asap so we can continue to develop. A huge Thank you to the wonderful team who lead and help.

*Jan Peters*

## ***Youth Church and Refresh***

Youth Church is a great time of meeting together and meeting with God. We have an amazing group of young people who attend and it feels like a family! We eat breakfast together (often hot chocolate and brioche) and enjoy meeting with God at the same time. A standout teaching series was based on the book 'Everyday Supernatural' where we learned how the Holy Spirit can be part of life every single day. We currently have different adults from church being interviewed and sharing their own testimony and God-given passions.

It has been such an exciting year for Refresh! We had a big 5<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration service in October with Christian DJ Galactus Jack playing. We currently have young people from 10 different churches attending and it is such an exciting atmosphere when that many young people come together! Please pray for vision for the team as we seek God moving forward. We have very kindly been supported by The Rose Education Foundation again which, amongst other things, has helped us to invite some incredible speakers including Mike Pilavachi who will join us in September! We believe God is going to do amazing things!

*Kathryn Belmont*

## **Young Adults**

The Young Adults group continues to enjoy meeting as a supportive, encouraging community of people in their 20s and 30s who seek to learn more about God and get to know Him better. We have continued to alternate between meeting socially (which we feel is important for building relationships within the group) and meeting for Going Deeper evenings, where we come specifically to study the Bible, pray for each other and be challenged to live out what we have learned. Over the past year we have continued to meet in people's homes, and most members of the group have contributed to leading sessions.

In the last year we have worked through the prophecy series on DVD by Cath Livesy, who leads prophetic ministry at St Thomas' Church Philadelphia in Sheffield. Following this series, we felt we needed to strengthen our other spiritual gifts, especially fellowship and evangelism. This has been done by reading the book and following the DVD series of "Fruitfulness on the Frontline" by Mark Greene, who is an executive director of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity.

*Euan Gordon*

## **Life Groups**

There are now two Life Groups that meet during the day. The one that started as a Post Alpha Group is led by Dawn Wheeldon and Anne Wildsmith and the second group is led by Sue Levan.

There are five evening groups including a group for those with young families. The group that started as a post Alpha Group is now led by Geoff and Sandra Jowett. All the groups meet once every two weeks and include opportunities for study, deepening fellowship and prayer. Resources for study have included "Fruitfulness on the Front Line" and the Prophecy Course. New members have joined the groups over the last year. Those in the Life Groups have found them to be helpful and supportive. We encourage others in the Church to consider joining Life Groups and helping with their leadership.

*David and Linda Emerton*

## **3G**

Had a bad day / week? Feeling alone in your walk with God? Got unanswered questions? Don't know many people from All Saints? New to the Church? Need a laugh? Enjoy cake / sweets / FOOD! Got a free Mon Eve? Well...3G is continuing to meet the needs of anyone who answers "YES" to the previous questions! Since the last report "3G-ers" have; experienced all things

“Cake”, prayer walked, asked and discussed life’s “Difficult questions”, hunted for treasure, shared and encouraged each other in our faith. We’ve led and run the entire 10.30am Pentecost Service, dressed up for 70’s/80’s Nite, “called each other’s bluffs”, led and experienced our very first Christmas Labyrinth, over eaten at our Christmas bring-and-share turkey dinner and “kazoo-ed” our way through a Bible Fun Nite. New members have joined and are loving the relaxed atmosphere, fun and encouraging nature of our 3G family. All our sessions are member led, empowering people to test and use their God-given gifts and skills. A *huge* thank you to God for continuing to bless this group.

*Deb and Duncan Hird*

## **Church Library**

The library has undergone some changes this year. John Lambert and I went through the books, rationalising those we wished to keep and either discarding or donating those which were out of date or duplicates. A part of the library consisting of certain categories has been moved to the coffee lounge for easier access and this does seem to have resulted in increased borrowing. We have a great many books including some on Christian Living, Discipleship, The Holy Spirit and Bible commentaries, and a lot more. Borrowing is easy! Please take advantage of this great resource.

*Sue Levan*

## **Sozo**

Since Mark Harrison left our church, Karen Snowden and I have jointly led the passionate and dedicated team of people who feel Sozo ministry is a helpful prayer tool in our Christian walk.

We have offered Sozo ministry to members of our church, and people have had some really amazing breakthroughs and transformations in their spiritual lives, through this gentle Holy Spirit led Ministry.

We have worked more with Kings Church in Darlington (our resource church) and Tees Valley Community Church to forward our training and spiritual growth, it has been very rewarding and unity between churches is a very lovely spin off also.

We did a group Sozo meditation at the New Year’s Day service and also in Staff Team which has helped people to meet with the Holy Spirit and gain better understanding of what the ministry is about. Karen and I hope to come to Life Groups this year to explain further.

*Sandra Griffiths*



# ***This Church Exists to: Share Good News of Jesus***

## ***Treasure Seekers***

This is an outreach to a small group of adults with learning difficulties and their carers, who live in our parish. Two members of the team visit once a month to chat, sing, listen to a story from the Bible, do a craft activity and pray.

Our visits are always appreciated by the residents and carers and are a real blessing to those of us on the team.

On our team at present are: Karen Snowden, Evelyn Leadbetter and Jenny Scaife. Many thanks to Bruce Merrick who has recently stepped down from the team.

*Karen Snowden*

## ***Toddlers / Play and Praise***

In May the Wednesday toddler group closed to make way for other ministry, but our busy Thursday Toddler group and Play and Praise sessions on a Friday have continued to be very popular this year with approx. 100 people attending each session, providing lots of fun activities for the toddlers, important spiritual input for families, and time for carers to meet new friends and feel supported. One of the encouragements has been the many opportunities we have to share faith and particularly the openness from some people to allow us to pray with them and to support them pastorally. Over the year we have seen a number of wonderful answers to our prayers and have seen people move forward positively in their lives and be more positive about God and the church as a result. Quite a lot of families who attend Messy church are from these groups which has been encouraging as well. I have really appreciated the support of my wonderful teams this year and it has been great to have the help of a few parents/ grandmas who have stayed in the groups to help even after their little ones have gone to school.

*Jan Peters*

## ***Schools Ministry***

Schools ministry has continued to provide an important opportunity to share faith with hundreds of children in our community.

Assemblies have taken place at St Mary's and Preston primary. I have loved giving groups of excited children tours around church and answering their many great questions, as well as providing faith lessons in Teesside high.

A highlight was running the Life exhibition about the life of Jesus in June. Children from seven schools came along and the feedback was very positive.

In December the puppet team helped me provide a special Christmas gospel event. 270 children attended and loved it.

*Jan Peters*

It has been an exciting year for us at Eggescliffe School. Braden, Deb and I do 4 assemblies there per fortnight, taking God's love and hope with us every time.

Alongside TVCC we run The Hub (a new Christian Union) there on Tuesday lunchtimes and see 20-25 young people attend! The Head Teacher recently visited The Hub where one student told him that he loves attending because "some people cannot get to church on Sundays and therefore The Hub is their opportunity to have fun and meet with God". Mr. White (the Head Teacher) has asked if I would consider taking a group of students to Mexico next year which I have agreed to.

*Kathryn Belmont*

## **Messy Church**

God has been blessing our Messy Church and it has been a joy to meet so many lovely families who say they love coming along. Numbers vary with the average being 120 people. A lot of the families wouldn't otherwise have any links with a church, so it has been an important opportunity to provide spiritual input, share faith, and build relationships with the children and adults alike.

Messy church provides a next step after Toddler group/ Play and Praise for families to come closer in their relationship with God and with us as a church. God's presence is very evident during the event and we pray that many seeds of faith are being sown. Each month we explore a Biblical theme through lots of fun crafts and a worship time, followed by time to share tea together.

A highlight was the joint Messy Church / Queen's Street party. On a practical level it has been a challenge due to the high level of planning/prep needed and the need for a larger core team, but worth it. A huge thank you to my wonderful core team and our amazing large team who help on the day.

*Jan Peters*

## **Family Outreach Events**

Queen's Street Party. A great, fun, opportunity to bring together Messy church families, neighbours and our church people

Camp of Champions in July. It was a great way to connect with local families

Glow Party. Our Glow party in October was great fun with a circus skills entertainer being a big hit. As always it was an important opportunity to provide a safe, family fun time in a Christian setting, as an alternative to Halloween activities. It attracted over 200 people and the feedback was very positive.

*Jan Peters*

## **Choose Life Midweek Discipleship**

It has been amazing to see many of our young people move forward in their relationship with God this year. Life Groups are a great place to enjoy meeting with Christian friends, study the Bible, have many discussions and go deeper in faith. This year we split Life Groups in two (Y7-9 and Y10-13) to build up each age group. Recently we finished studying a series on The Beatitudes with the older group and life's big questions with the younger group and have had some amazing conversations, equipping our young people to handle questions that friends ask them.

Many of our older youth are part of Doulos and are enjoying meeting with young people from across Teesside, learning about servant leadership and being taught by some of the most inspirational teachers around.

As always, Soul Survivor was a highlight as we joined The Vine and SPC youth to meet with God! We saw one of our young people become a Christian there as well as others recommit their lives to God, pray for healing and worship God wholeheartedly.

Rebuild Mexico has been a big focus this year and we are excited to serve God there in a few weeks' time.

*Kathryn Belmont*

## **Choose Life (Midweek Outreach)**

We love to share our faith with as many young people as possible and it has been amazing doing that through the Skate Park ministry this year. Our team was there regularly throughout the Spring/Summer months, serving hot chocolate or ice lollies to the young people. We had some amazing conversations there and are expectant that God will move in this ministry when we return to the skate park soon.

We have many young people from our community who attend Youth Club on Friday nights. It has been good to build relationships with these young people, share our faith with them every week, and be an encouragement to them.

Yarm Café Church is an amazing opportunity for young people to bring friends to something where they can discover God in a relaxed environment. The Costa staff have been continually supportive, staying open late for us every month, and we have seen many young people attend throughout the year and meet with God. Ben and Danny are part of the leadership team and have done an incredible job! Our work at school is also an important part of our outreach – please see the Schools Ministry report for an update on that.

*Kathryn Belmont*

## **Connect**

Connect 2016 has been brilliant with countless highlights as we continue to engage with more people from our community. Tuesday lunch club continues to attract 65 – 75 people (with about  $\frac{3}{4}$  attending the church service) we've enjoyed forging friendships based on unconditional love and support. Weekly chair aerobics has continued to be greatly enjoyed. In June we celebrated Her Majesty's special birthday. We hung up bunting, served afternoon tea, sang songs from the queen's lifetime and enjoyed an enormous celebration. Following this we had an incredible day at Raby Castle, the sun shone, our beautifully prepared picnic was the envy of other visitors and the compliment '*I thought my days of things like this were over*' made it all worthwhile.

A combined event with the youth and connect was hugely successful and enjoyed by both generations – two coffee events and entertainment. Cross generational evangelism!

All Saints' Church has been recognised as being dementia friendly and registered with Stockton Dementia friendly initiative, with 25 people having completed training and changes being made to the Centre to make it more accessible. Connect ministry is a gift, a passion, a calling, an area where God is moving greatly.

*Dawn Wheeldon*

## **Walkers**

In November 2016, a meeting was convened to discuss all things pertaining to the Walking Group and this was open to anyone who had walked with us in the past. It was noted that joint long/short walks were better attended and decided to go ahead with 3 combined walks a year, whilst three more short walks would be held. There is more availability of leaders for long walks and consequently there will be more long walks during 2017. It was noted that publicity of walks may have been poor and so all known walkers will be emailed several weeks beforehand and also walks will be notified in the notice sheet. The Walkers Rota will be available on the church Website and on the Church Facebook Page with leaders phone details. Weekends away

continue in Spring and Autumn. If you would like to join us or lead a walk, long or short do let us know.

*Bruce Merrick*

## ***Introduction to Faith Courses***

From October to December 2016 we ran an *Alpha* Course on Thursday nights in the Centre. *Alpha* is an excellent and proven discovery course that explores questions of faith through a shared meal, well-structured presentations, discussion groups and a day away on the Holy Spirit. The course attracted about a dozen guests, plus an excellent team, including the kitchen angels who served up really tasty suppers on beautifully arranged candlelit tables.

One guest dropped out half way. Most of the others who attended the course have popped into church at least once since it ended. We must leave the ongoing work of growth in faith to the Holy Spirit and pray that the fruit will be ongoing and abundant.

*John Lambert*

## ***This Church Exists to: Care for Those in Need***

### ***Pastoral Care and Home Visiting***

'The best teams are made up of a bunch of nobodies, who love everybody and serve anybody and don't care about becoming somebody' (*Mike Pilavachi*). I feel this describes our pastoral team and many others in church who listen and pray and give practical help to others.

The pastoral team members at present are :- Karen Snowden APA, Jayne Davies APA, Chris Vass APA, Craig Aston, Rona Aston, Gill Clayton, Peter Gray, Karen Killick, Evelyn Leadbetter and Dawn Wheeldon. Val Pritchard, Jane Harmer and Kathie Lambert have stepped down from the team and I would like to thank them for their caring hearts.

This year we have developed stronger links between the Connect ministry and Parent and Toddler groups. We have also taken part in Dementia training which has improved our understanding of this condition.

I continue to thank God for our pastoral team and thank them for their support and for being a wonderful "bunch of nobodies."

*Karen Snowden*

### ***Mission Giving and Support***

I took over from Bruce Merrick as Chair of the Mission Support Group in the middle of the year. We continue to meet twice yearly to allocate funds which are a tithe of the total income of All Saints. About half of this money is given to our Mission partners, Hugh and Debbie Skeil, Carolyn Kemp, Mark and Gill Newham, Mark and Anna Burgess and Dave Stedman. We were glad to welcome both the Skeils and Geoff Holder from APF as visitors last year and Mark and Gill Newham were able to Skype with us from Mongolia at a recent service. Other allocations are made to more local projects and other organisations, and we have been able to support the work of Sarah Peters in Romania as well as the Rebuild Mexico project undertaken by our own young people and Stuart and Nichola Main's work in Sunderland. Up to date news from Mission partners can always be found on the notice board.

*Sue Levan*