

Parish of Yeovil with Kingston Pitney

Annual Report of St John the Baptist Church for the Year ended 31st December 2017

Administrative Information
Structure, governance and management
Objectives and Activities
Achievements and Performance
Report on the PCC Meetings
St John's Wardens Report
St John's Sidespersons Report
Report on the Electoral Roll
St John's Finance Report – Accounts to 31st December 2017
Gift Aid Officer's Report
St John's Fabric Report
St John's Bell Ringers
St John's 18-30s Group
Youth Ministry Report
Junior Church
Tiny Toes
Footprints
St John's and St Andrew's Holiday Club
Pastoral Care
Parish Prayer Chain
Fellowship Groups
Genesis
TCP
Craft Fellowship
Together on Tuesday
Men's Prayer Breakfast
Men's and Women's Breakfasts
SALT (St Andrew's at Lunch Time)
St John's Music Group
St John's Floral Group Report
St John's Model Railway Group
The Friends of St John's
Focus Magazine
Bookstall
Yeovil College Chaplaincy
Deanery Synod Report
Yeovil CAP Centre Annual Report
Yeovil Street Pastors
The Lords Larder (Yeovil Christian Support Trust)

Appendix: Summary of St John's Annual Accounts

Structure, Governance and Management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church attendees are encouraged to join the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC at the time of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. They have prime responsibility for managing the affairs of the church. Members from St Andrew's Church Council are also invited to attend PCC meetings.

Objectives and Activities

St John's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, Revd James Dudley-Smith, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has responsibility for St John's Schoolrooms and St Andrew's Church Hall.

Achievements and Performance

This report covers the activities of St John's Church. St Andrew's Church produces its own report.

- 2017 has continued to be a year of good progress under James Dudley-Smith's steadfast leadership.
- The Church Wardens are to be particularly commended: their report is a very positive statement of all that is happening at St John's.
- The financial affairs of the church are in good order.
- The Quinquennial Report was duly carried out in April
- Congregations at our services continue to grow, with **6.30@St John's** now an established part of our worship with a good size congregation coming from a wide geographical area.
- The popularity and success of The Gone Fishing Café on Thursday mornings
- Youth activities continue to thrive and Holiday Club in the Summer was once again a great success.
- Fellowship groups continue to flourish and have increased in number
- Tiny Toes, for mums and babies, and Footprints, for mums and toddlers, are an on-going success
- Christians Against Poverty continues to provide a vital service for increasing numbers of people having problems with unmanageable debt. Of these, some have become debt-free and have accepted Jesus into their lives.

There is, therefore, a tremendous amount going on in the life of the Church and we are indeed blessed by the number of people willing to get involved but we always need more. It is only by volunteering with other Christians that we become a real community of Christians serving Christ in Yeovil.

Janet Dean, PCC Secretary

Report on PCC Meetings

The PCC met on four occasions during the year and these were generally well attended. The minutes of all PCC Meetings can be viewed on the St John's parish website.

Apart from the routine business of finance, services and fabric matters, much of which is covered in other sections of this annual report, the following items were discussed.

- The continued burden of paying the Parish Share
- The updating of the audio-visual equipment
- The refurbishment of St Andrew's kitchen
- How best to use the Peter Wakely legacy
- Whether to abandon the circulation of collection plates during services
- The report after the Quinquennial survey
- The future reordering of St John's
- The importance of on-going mission and evangelism
- A motion on the importance of heterosexual marriage
- To investigate the possibility of a Youth and Children's Minister

Janet Dean, PCC Secretary

St John's Warden's Report

Fabric

Halfway through last year the five-yearly 'quinquennial' inspection was completed by our surveying architect. A copy of this was sent to our Archdeacon, the Venerable Anne Gell. She wrote to James:

"Dear James

Benjamin and Beauchamp Architects Ltd have sent me the Quinquennial report for Yeovil St John the Baptist. It was good to read about the excellent work which has been carried out since the last Quinquennial in 2012, especially with regard to the tower masonry, belfry repairs and rehangng of the bells. I would be grateful if you could pass on my thanks to the churchwardens and the PCC for all they have done.

With best wishes and prayers

Anne

The Ven Anne Gell

Archdeacon of Wells"

It is always encouraging to receive praise and acknowledgment for work completed. Many people are involved in looking after our church and I should like to highlight the Fabric Committee Team, chaired by Phil Juggins and supported by Eddie Brookes, Terry Bush, Les Whittle and Bob Banfield. Thank you, men, for all the hard work that you do and being willing to roll up your sleeves and complete the many jobs that often go unnoticed by many.

The report highlights areas that need attention immediately, in the next eighteen months and within the next five years, and the team are making good progress. These range from stone repairs and re-pointing, mainly to window surrounds; repairs and preservation of rain-water goods; the organ which soldiers on despite its age; to general gutter cleaning, buddleia removal and woodworm treatment! Generally, the building is in good shape.

People

There are many other people involved in so many ministries within the church who help Jennifer and me as church wardens. Roger Fox, our tower Captain, continues to work tirelessly recruiting and training potential bell -ringers, returning the Victorian chiming clock to its former glory; Colin Dore has a monumental task in recording and photographing all the inventory of the church contents Bibles, furniture, clothing valuables, electronics. A huge job well done.

We acknowledge the work of Jane Maclean as 'Safeguarding Officer' as she has now passed on responsibility to Ros Bush: with over 60 members of our church under 18 years of age and modern legislation and record keeping it is another 'big' job and we are well served, thank you.

The craft ladies and their beautiful banners, sidespeople, assistant wardens, Elaine Mitchell who every month produces an award winning, informative and interesting magazine; the Flower team lead by Mary Brookes, and of course, Shona and Terry for all that they achieve. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Finance

Another team that completes a huge amount of work are the members of the Finance Committee: Alan Irwin has relieved Roger as our Stewardship Secretary ensuring that all the gift aid is properly recorded and claimed, Anne Wickes in charge of the envelope scheme and of course John Brookes, our treasurer, the only one I know who takes his laptop on holiday to keep his finger on the pulse. I am always amazed by the times that John sends his emails. He works very hard for the church, work that is greatly appreciated. Please pray for him and that soon there will be a member of the church family suitably qualified who one day will take over from him.

As I reported last year, 'The most pressing and important need is financial'. People and running costs are expensive and as we hear and read below the church needs over £4000 per week to cover salaries, our share of diocesan expenses (clergy salary, housing and diocese running costs and advice), heating, lighting, insurance, repairs, office supplies, licences and so on and so on. Nothing is wasted, but the fact remains that the order of magnitude of need is on average about £20 per person per week and why the church really needs reliable, long-term, regular, substantial donations. It cannot survive and go forward on the loose change in pockets and purses!

Standing Committee and PCC

It is a privilege to be part of this group of willing people who have important responsibilities as trustees of the church and employers of our staff. A glance at the PCC minutes reveals the diverse nature of the subjects discussed. The secretary is pretty special too.

Rob Dean, Churchwarden

St John's Sidespersons' Report

God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. Hebrews 6:10

- 20 helpful, smiley, welcoming servants of the church.
- They meet you and greet you, they pass you the service books and notice sheet.
- If you look lost they kindly direct you.
- If you need help, they help you or pass you to someone who can.
- Should you be new, they will show you where to sit.
- They open and close the door.
- They may ask after your relatives, or if you've had a good week, or check that you are feeling better when you've been unwell.
- If the warden on duty looks confused they point us in the right direction and kindly do not point out our failings or omissions.

20 helpful, smiley, welcoming people who are the hosts at the door each Sunday inviting all into the Lord's presence, on behalf of our church. Thank you sidespeople, each and every one of you, but especially those who have stepped down in the past year after many years of sterling service, and have passed on their mantle to the newbies at the door of God's house.

God is not unjust and he will not forget their work or the love that they have shown him as they help his people Sunday by Sunday.

Jennifer Matthew, Churchwarden

Report on the Electoral Roll

Following the 2017 annual revision of the electoral roll for St John's, the total on the roll currently stands at 211

Kath Upton

Finance Report on the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2017

The statutory accounts of St John's also include the accounts of St Andrew's however this report just covers the activities of St John's. A separate report covering St Andrew's follows the St John's report.

The accounts consist of three different sorts of funds. The General Fund which can be spent at the discretion of the PCC and mostly covers the day-to-day running costs of the church. There are Designated Funds where money is set aside for specific purposes such as the Fabric Fund and Restricted Funds which can only be spent for the purposes for which they were set up such as the Christians Against Poverty Fund.

The General Fund

We set an ambitious budget for 2017 requiring an increase in our income of 13.7% if we were to breakeven on the General Fund. In the event, we increased our income by 6.4% from collections, pledged giving and legacies. This meant that we had to charge the full costs of the Pastoral Care Coordinator amounting to £10,084 net of £2,108 raised from the Gone Fishing Café, to the Peter Wakely Community Fund. This still left a deficit of £933 which reduced our General Fund to £31,355.

Overall the total income was £184,883 excluding special charitable collections which are paid out in their entirety. This is an increase of £8,674 (4.9%). Expenditure on a similar basis was £195,900 an increase of £15,211 (8.4%). Our biggest expense was the Parish Share of £119,447 which took 65.4% of our income. Compared with this the actual costs of running the church are relatively modest. In 2017 we continued to support our Missionary links and other good causes by giving away £18,488 which was 10% of our income.

At the end of 2017 we are left with a general reserve balance of £31,355 which represents under 2 month's expenditure.

Designated Funds

The Schoolrooms had a deficit of £300. The rent received of £5,803 was £1,161 less than 2016. A major refurbishment was carried out during the year at a cost of £28,935. This was paid for by donations of £3,950 including £2,500 from the Feeofees of Yeovil Church Lands and a grant from the Fabric Fund of £25,000. Operating costs were about the same as in 2016. The end of year balance was £11,522.

There are two Fabric Funds, a Fabric Investment Fund and a Fabric Fund used to cover non-routine repairs and enhancements. The total income was £2,554 excluding a revaluation of £4,723 on the underlying investment. As noted above £25,000 was paid to the Schoolrooms towards their refurbishment costs. Other expenditure amounted to £2,296 leaving a year end combined balance of £69,831.

The Youth Development Fund had income from pledged giving, tax reclaimed and interest of £82. There was no expenditure and the balance at the end of the year amounted to £8,589.

There were only very small movements on the other designated funds.

Restricted Funds

There are four funds categorised as restricted:

The Restoration Fund. Work on the tower restoration was completed in April 2015 at a total cost of nearly £300,000. During 2017 we claimed the final grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund amounting to £13,790 and reclaimed VAT of £1,083. At the end of 2017 there was a balance remaining of £15,786.

The Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Fund raises and spends money in support of the Yeovil CAP Centre managed by Steve Hart. A total of £32,077 was given to support this ministry and this was a increase of £10,259 compared with 2016. In addition £2,759 gift aid tax was reclaimed and fundraising raised £1,092. The expenditure comprising the salary of the manager and debt coach, a payment to CAP HQ and other operating expenses amounted to £33,260 leaving a surplus of £2,728 which when added to the amount brought forward left a balance on the fund of £26,960.

The Peter Wakely Community Fund. This fund was set up with the proceeds of the legacy received from Peter Wakely amounting to £189,655. The £180,000 received in 2015 is invested in a unit trust administered by CCLA on behalf of the Church Commissioners. During the year we sold shares amounting to £15,467 to meet the cost of the Pastoral Care coordinator and make a contribution of £10,000 towards St. Andrew's Hall kitchen refurbishment. At the year end the amount invested in shares was revalued and they had grown by £27,163 to £235,352 but the value is subject to the ups and downs of the stock market but we hope will give a better return than a straightforward deposit which currently only earns less than 1/2%. As stated previously £10,084 was transferred to the general fund to meet the costs of the Pastoral Care Coordinator. We have transferred a total of £18,596 to the General Fund over 3 years.

The Tom Setter Belfry Fund paid for the enhancement of the bells largely completed in 2014. However in 2017 work was started on the repair of the clock in the tower. Donations of £5,450 were received in the year and expenditure incurred, mostly on the clock amounted to £7,650. The balance carried forward is £2,272. It is hoped to complete work on the clock in 2018 and donations and grants will cover the cost.

The Balance Sheet

The balance sheet shows where are total funds of £400,288 are invested. Most of this is accounted for by designated or restricted funds with a relatively modest £31,355 represented by the general fund. A total of £294,020 is invested in unit trusts administered by CCLA on behalf of the Church Commissioners, £41,513 is on deposit with CCLA, £54,839 is in three current accounts with NatWest bank and £6,000 in National Savings. Unfortunately, with interest

rates at record lows we do not get much benefit from money on deposit but we know that it will not depreciate if the stock market falls.

Our 2018 Budget

James Dudley-Smith, our rector, has spoken about the challenge that we face in 2018 when we need to increase our income by nearly £29,000 in order to have a balanced budget. This assumes that we meet the costs of the Pastoral Care Coordinator in full from general fund income. The fall-back position is that we can take the net cost of this appointment estimated at £10,500 from the Peter Wakely Community Fund.

The Parish Share which we have to pay to the Diocese is up by £12,053 to £131,500 and based upon an estimated 233 church members works out at about £11 per person per week before we meet any of the costs of running our church estimated at £3 per person per week.

The challenge we all face in 2018 is to review our level of giving, commit to regular giving preferably by standing order directly to the church's bank account or through the envelope scheme, and to make sure that the church can reclaim as much tax as possible on our giving by signing a gift aid form.

Whilst regular planned giving out of income meets our day to day running costs a legacy gives us the opportunity to give to the church out of our estate for specific purposes without reducing our income and is always welcome. We did not receive any legacies in 2017 however, the largest legacy that we have received in the last few years is £189,895 from Peter Wakely. If you are considering leaving a legacy to the church please discuss this with the treasurer who will advise you on the specific needs of the church.

John Brookes – Treasurer of St John's

Finance Report on St Andrew's Yeovil Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2017

The Accounts consist of two different funds :-

1. The General Fund which can be spent at the discretion of the DCC and mostly cover day-to-day running costs of the church.
2. The Restricted Funds where money has been set aside for specific purposes. Allocation from the Restricted Funds are approved by the DCC.

General Fund

The General Fund Income was £25,926, which represented a 9.2% reduction from 2016. There was also an unrestricted bequest of £15,808 received during the year.

The General Fund Expenditure of £30,770 was 1.0% more than 2016.

The 2017 Diocesan Parish Share of £18,200 related to 70.2% of the General Fund Income.

In addition to the day to day expenditure, there were essential major repairs to the Church Guttering, totalling £5,159.

As the Hall window frames were showing significant signs of wood rot, they were replaced of £4,111.

St Andrew's received a grant of £10,000 from the Peter Wakely Community Fund, which is administered by St John's. This grant was used to upgrade the kitchen.

Balance Sheet Reserves

The Balance Sheet shows Reserves totalling £40,938.

The majority of the General Fund Reserve (£38,642) is managed in a NatWest Business Account which keeps it safe from the potential impact of market fluctuations, whilst at the same time earning a modest amount of interest.

The balance (£687) is administered by CCLA on behalf of the Church.

General Summary

The current financial status of St Andrew's Church is stable, but indications are that the Reserves will be reduced in the near future. The DCC will be closely and diligently monitoring the situation.

Les Jackson – Treasurer of St Andrew's

Gift Aid Officer's Report for 2017

This is my first report as Gift Aid Officer after taking over from Roger Fox during the year. Having now gone through the process of reclaiming tax from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs myself, I can appreciate the debt of gratitude that we all owe to Roger for managing this job for 40 years! The claim process itself is quick and efficient in these days of online applications and electronic banking. The most time consuming part of the job is processing the data to add up all of your contributions to our General Church funds, CAP, or other specific projects; and this reflects your enormous generosity in giving your hard-taxed money to the work of St John's.

Being new to this role, I have also realised how valuable this reclaimed tax is to our church. If you are a taxpayer, every regular or one-off donation to St John's can be boosted by 25% if you complete a Gift Aid Declaration confirming that you authorise us to reclaim tax. Please come and speak to me or our Treasurer, John Brookes, if you wish to become a tax-efficient donor. I would be perfectly happy for this task to take longer and longer in the future.

In closing, I would like to thank the volunteers who count up the cash gifts and weekly envelope donations. They do a sterling job.

Alan Irwin

St John's Fabric Report

The Fabric Committee has continued to meet and coordinate progress against the plan for maintenance and improvement activities, including a significant injection of new activities in the plan from the Quinquennial Inspection on 18th May 2017.

2017 Quinquennial Inspection – The “MOT” inspection for the church building, carried out every 5 years by the church architect (John Beauchamp) resulted in a 35-page report (with pictures) detailing the condition of the building inside and out. In the Summary of Structural Condition, we were very pleased to read that **“the PCC, bell-ringers and congregation are very attentive to the fabric and the church is generally in excellent condition throughout”**. Nevertheless, the report includes a section called Recommendations in Order of Priority, which includes 9 “Items for Immediate Action”, 7 “Items for Attention within 18 Months”, 5 “Items for Attention within the Quinquennial”, 4 “Desirable Improvements” and 10 “Maintenance” items. These are all listed with an estimated cost, which adds up to a total around £25k, or if expressed across the 5 years to the next Quinquennial, around £5k a year to look after our unique 14th century building – not too bad!

The Fabric Committee – The Quinquennial items have all been added to the plan and the Fabric Committee meets in the church every 2 to 3 months, using a comprehensive Project Plan spreadsheet to track all the items that need doing. Jobs big and small get progressed, using handyman skills or professional help if required. Our Facility Coordinator Terry Bush plays an important role, particularly in arranging outside assistance, and Eddy Brooks is our key maintenance man, with Les Whittle alongside, Bob Banfield adding his experience as ex-verger and Rob Dean keeping us on track. Many tasks and items of regular maintenance in both the church and the schoolrooms are completed (thank you team!), including the “to-do-list” from the architect.

Progression of Quinquennial Items – Several items have already been completed, with the larger ones being the replacement of five broken and corroded protective window grills (cost £948), a survey of requirements for a package of stone repair and re-pointing activities by Sally Strachey Historic Conservation (who were our contractors for the tower restoration), identifying work to be done (to cost £6234), and another survey by A2M Safety for a safe-working restraint system on the vestry roof (quote to be confirmed).

Other Projects –

The Clock – The repair of the historic (faceless) bell-chiming clock within the tower has been progressed by Roger Fox (see Bellringers' Report).

Car Park Extension – A project to extend the hard-standing for the St John's car park (mentioned in the last ACPM report) was assessed for feasibility and not progressed.

Re-Ordering - A sub-committee of the PCC was formed to consider the initial scoping of potential future re-ordering options, leading to an architect's study, which was reported to the PCC in March 2018, with a preliminary drawing presented by Rob Dean to the meeting. The main aim is to improve the seating capacity and the flexibility of use. This project is being progressed outside of the Fabric Committee.

Audio System - A proposal from David Matthew regarding the replacement of the current sound desk with a digital system was approved by the PCC in January. This also removes the ageing (sometimes temperamental) Edvicron system for the radio microphones, which has been run in parallel with the sound desk in recent years.

Phil Juggins (Fabric Committee Chair)

Bell Ringers' Report

Thanks to our regular band of ringers and friends from other churches, we have managed to ring the bells for the 10.30 Sunday morning services throughout the year, and for other special occasions. This has been possible by having attracted several new ringers, as a result of our holding tower open days for the last few years. With only one exception these new ringers have come from outside the church family – which is a shame. But it does show that even though some ringers come regularly but may not stay to the service, they do contribute to church life and that of the community which expects bells to be rung.

Nevertheless, we do need to recruit new ringers as the majority of ringers are over 60! **So, if you like to hear bells being rung please do something about it** – age is no barrier, but the younger learners are, the sooner they become proficient. This is an activity which we would like to see members of the junior church involved in. The D of E Awards Scheme recognises it as a form of service. The teaching of youngsters is supervised by DBS cleared instructors in our tower.

In 2018 a national recruiting programme supported by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government aims to attract at least 1400 new ringers to “replace” the number of ringers known to have been lost in the First World War. It is hoped that these new ringers will be able to take part in special ringing on 11th November 2018, the centenary of the Armistice. They (YOU!) will need to start learning soon!

Our Monday evening practices have been very busy lately, as many as 15 ringers/learners, many from other towers come help us or to improve their own performance, although it may not sound like that all the time! Increasingly we are finding that combining with other bands provides the “critical number” needed to make progress. Some of our ringers go to other local towers for their practices.

My report for 2016 mentioned that a satisfactory means of evacuation from the Ringing Room of a sick or injured person was needed. There is a “trap door” in the floor but the way it opens needs to be made easier. It was opened up when the bells were taken out, but it was a hazardous process. Improvement would not be a DIY job! I would like to be given the opportunity to discuss what needs to be done with the Church Architect.

The Clock which is now owned by the PCC is soon to be set working and striking again in mid-2018. The work may prevent ringing for a few weeks.

Roger Fox, Tower Captain, March 2018

St John's 18-30s

We meet every Wednesday, either to pray at first Wednesday, or for the rest of the month we usually meet at 9 Park Gardens. We enjoy meeting weekly as it helps us to make sure we cross paths during busy lives!

On any given week there may be anywhere between 8 and 16 of us. We have followed a course called “6 Steps to Loving your Church” which challenged us to be involved more in the wider life of the church family and it has borne some fruit. We’ve studied the book of James, the Reformation, and followed a series on the nature, power and sufficiency of God’s word for all of life.

We’ve also had a number of opportunities to meet socially, and had some great prayer nights together – and the group does a really good job at looking after each other. We’ve also rejoiced with Andy and Becky at the birth of their daughter Grace, and are looking forward to the Marriage of Calum and Emma.

Our prayer is that as a group we might be encouraged to love Jesus Christ more, and become like him.

Tom Putt

St John’s Youth Ministry

Friday Night Youth continues to meet every Friday during term time from 7:15-9:00pm. The purpose of the meetings is to open up the Bible and listen as God speak into the lives of the young people. We also have some meetings before the Church on a Sunday morning to read the Bible and pray together in a local coffee shop.

We have around 15 young people who meet every week from 11-18 years of age. Last year we had some new Pathfinders join us which has been lovely and have added to the group. We have looked at the life of Martin Luther and the great truths he taught and defended during the Reformation. We also ran series looking at the life of Jesus and how he changes the lives of his followers.

We said goodbye to a group of older youth as they headed off to University, travelling the world and other adventures. We keep in contact with them, praying and encouraging them to keep trusting in the Lord Jesus.

In the year ahead we are going to run a Thursday night Bible study for 15-18 year olds who have stopped coming on a Friday night.

We have an amazing team who faithfully teach the Bible and serve our young people. Huge thanks to Lin Hann (who sadly stepped down last year), Clare Irwin (now in Australia), Hannah Peace, Stefan and Charlotte Davies, Chris Blackburn, Louise Sanders and Chris Frazer.

James Maitland

Junior Church Report 2017-2018

In the Autumn term **Scramblers** (three year olds to Reception) were learning about Jesus and what He said about His Kingdom from the Gospels. The children learnt that Jesus is the King of Kings, that His Kingdom is more wonderful than we can imagine and that Jesus is a King worth knowing and worshipping. Following on from that the Scramblers have been looking at ways of responding to Jesus, by focusing on the book of John. The children were encouraged to trust Jesus and look forward to His return. Next term they will be looking at the Psalms to see that our God is the King of creation and worthy of honour and praise.

Climbers (Years 1 – 3) began this academic year by looking at the book of Matthew and learning about living in God’s family. As they largely studied the Sermon on the Mount, the children learnt about Jesus’ teaching on how to live as members of God’s family in our relationships with God and with others. This last term they have looked at what God has done for his people from Luke. The children found out about Jesus’ claim to be God’s promised messiah and how this claim was confirmed by miracles showing His power and authority over sin and death. Next term the Climbers will be focusing on the power and authority of God by tracing the movement of His people from Egypt to the Promised Land from Exodus to Joshua.

At the beginning of this year **Explorers** (Years 4 – 6) were studying Elijah and Elisha from 1 and 2 Kings, looking at how God spoke through his prophets and how He is faithful to his promises and plans for his people both then and today. This term they have been studying Luke's gospel and the Easter story and looking at evidence from the Bible that points to Jesus as the promised Saviour. Next term the Explorers are studying 1 and 2 Samuel and learning that it is only in the birth of Jesus that God's promise to send a perfect King is fulfilled.

Altogether at the beginning of each session the children have been learning songs from Awesome Cutlery, amongst other bands and we have been very grateful to use the projector in the School Rooms so we can learn from videos. We have also introduced a question and prayer box so that the children can write a question for a leader to answer or write down the name of someone they would like prayer for. We go through this box on the second Sunday of each month.

Our numbers have fluctuated, but we have 35 currently on our registers and we regularly welcome visitors.

In the Autumn term we held a Christmas craft afternoon and a party for the children on Christmas Eve. This term we have had a children's breakfast at the beginning of March and are holding an Easter craft morning after the Good Friday service.

It has been tricky to resource this work as a number of wonderful long-serving leaders have stepped down in the past year. We are so grateful to God for his continued provision for this work as a number of new leaders have stepped forward and we are asking God for more to replace some helpers who would like to stop. Many thanks to all our leaders and helpers for all their hard work, and to the parents for their support.

Melissa Cary

"Tiny Toes" @ St John's

Tiny Toes @ St John's is a group for parents and their babies (aged up to approximately 1 year old). We meet every Thursday morning, during term-time, from 10-11.15 in the Schoolrooms (downstairs), with lots of bright and colourful toys, and soft play-mats for the babies to lie on. The aim is to offer support and friendship for the parents, in a relaxed environment, with coffee and cake and a short time of singing and nursery rhymes part way through the morning.

There is a regular turnover in the group members as some babies reach 1 year old, some move on to Footprints (our toddler group) or mothers return to work, and new babies and their mums join us. Numbers currently vary between about 6 – 12 parents, with a more usual average of 10. People recommend the group to their friends and give positive feedback about how friendly and welcoming the group is. The group is currently a mixture of two or three parents from other churches and a majority with no regular church link. We hope and pray that this group will be a way of building relationships and showing the love of Christ in action.

Tiny Toes has now been running for 5 years and during that time over 150 different babies have been to the group – some for only a week or two, whilst others have come for a number of months and we have been able to develop a relationship with their parents.

A small team of people are involved in running this group, some helping once or twice a month, others each week, and there are a number of other church members who support this work by making delicious cakes. Grateful thanks to all those who are involved on a regular or occasional basis, to those who bake cakes for us and also to all those who pray faithfully for this work.

One or two team members have recently had to step back from helping, and we would really appreciate one or two more helpers. If you might be willing to join the team and help on a rota basis, serving drinks and chatting to the mums, either regularly or to be called on when needed, please do contact Joy Neville. Please continue to pray for us, as we develop relationships with the mums, and pray that Christ's love would be noticeable in all we do.

Joy Neville

Footprints Toddler Group

Footprints Toddler Group meets every Monday morning, during term-time in St John's Schoolrooms (downstairs). The group is run for the benefit of parents/carers and their pre-school age children. Our sessions involve lots of toys, a craft or playdough activity, a short story time with a bible story, songs and prayer, snack-time (with a healthy snack for the children and cake for the mums!!) and a final "goodbye" song time.

Due to the large number of children in the group, a large waiting list and new families joining the church wanting to come, we decided to run a second session which was started after October half term. We now have 21 in the first group (9.30am-10.45am) with an average of 15 coming each week and 15 in the second group (11am-12.15pm) with an average of 10 attending each week.

The aim of the group is to offer a fun and friendly session for parents / carers to come and enjoy time with their child, whilst also offering support and friendship. We also want to make the group as evangelistic as possible - taking every opportunity to point people to Jesus. Once a term we have a social for the parents/carers and their children to come along, eg picnic in park, and a social for the parent/carers, eg meal or dessert out.

About half of the group came to "Tiny Toes" when their children were babies and have "moved-up" to Footprints now that their children are older - it is fantastic to be able to offer this continuity and maintain contact with some of the families. A few of the parents who come regularly are St John's members. The majority, however, do not seem to have any links with church at present and we hope and pray that this group will be a way of building relationships and showing the love of Christ in action.

There is a small teams of people currently involved in running these groups, some helping once or twice a month, others each week, and a number of other church members who are supporting this work by making delicious cakes on a rota basis. We are extremely grateful to all those who are involved on a regular or occasional basis, to those who bake cakes for us and to all those of you who pray faithfully for this work. If you might be willing to join the Footprints team and help on a rota basis, serving drinks and chatting to the mums, either regularly or to be called on when needed, please do contact Anna Putt or Doreen Maitland - we are always open to offers of help!

Please continue to pray for us, as we develop relationships with the mums, and pray that Christ's love would be noticeable in all we do.

Doreen Maitland and Anna Putt

Holiday Club 2017

Holiday Club 2017 found us in the most amazing castle as "Knights of the King". The way the church was decorated took the children's breath away as they arrived. How do Jennifer and her team do it year on year? We thank God for the wonderful creative gifts in the church family, given so graciously each summer.

We welcomed around 70 children each day and again quite a number had not been to holiday club before. It is always such a joy to be telling the story of Jesus to children who may not have heard it clearly before. Much prayer goes on behind the scenes which we appreciate so much. Jon did another amazing job of taking the upfront role. His love of children and his humble servant hood shines through the crazy costumes he comes up with.

We had around 50 helpers, many of whom were behind the scenes but nonetheless played invaluable parts in what seemed to be a very enjoyable and successful week. We especially appreciated our young helpers, many of whom are developing into very competent young people ready to take on leadership roles in the very near future. Holiday club is also a wonderful demonstration of different generations coming together to serve God. We have many helpers who have been at holiday club for more than a decade.

We ended the week with a holiday club Sunday service followed by coffee and cake and it was a real privilege to welcome so many guests. Many parents came this year which provide another opportunity to speak of the King of all Kings.

Lin Hann

Pastoral Care Report

It is hard to sum up a whole year of pastoral work that is so evident in our churches – praise God that it is exactly that ... evident! Thank you to all members of the church family for your love and support for one another, through home groups, through church activities, TCP, breakfasts, craft groups, toddler groups - to name but a few of them. Thank you to those whom I have called upon specifically to help others, such as accompanying to an appointment, visiting, or providing practical help and care such as a meal. Thank you to those I have not organised, but who have helped their family in loving, practical and kind ways. Rotas have been in place for those with new babies (providing meals), those who have had operations, and those in need of company following a fall, for help in moving to a new flat ...and so on and so on

Pastoral Team: Thank you to the Pastoral Team who have worked so hard across this year. Our Lay Pastoral Assistants (LPAs) are: Jenny Jones and Beth Farrington – who largely oversee the work at St Andrew’s Church family, and Jenny Salberg, Chris Salberg, Gil Ovenden, Helen Truett, Pauline Kibblewhite and Phil Juggins at St John’s. We have met regularly across the year, supporting each other and looking at ways to best help and care for those in our church family. This team of volunteers is doing an amazing job, for which we are all grateful. Pray that they keep their focus on God and know His help and strength in all they do.

Training: Several of us attended training this year on ‘Wholeness and Mental Health’, and ‘Biblical Counselling’. I attended a day course on ‘Self-esteem and Addiction’ and undertook an online course on ‘Finding Moments of Joy in Dementia’. It has been helpful for us as a team to think through different issues, and as we meet and pray for different people and situations across the year, this training has been useful.

New member to the team: One exciting addition to the Pastoral Team is Bella, Phil’s delightful cocker spaniel. Bella is especially popular in Ivelhurst Care Home where she meets with Geoffrey Tolchard and has made many new friends.



Visiting

It has been an immense privilege to visit people in their homes or in residential care homes, in hospital, or to have people for lunch or coffee at my home, or to meet folk in town. There is a wealth of pastoral work going on through visits to people in these places, which is both a responsibility and a joy. It is not all about what we can bring to people on a visit, but more about how God can use us, and how we can foster faith and encourage others to ‘press on’ with Jesus. I am reminded recently of the verse from Colossians 1:23 about **continuing in our faith, established and firm and not being moved from the hope held out in the gospel** – and it is this hope and encouragement that we desire to bring on our visits. Thank you to Beth and Keith and Ruth Stevens for taking Home Communion to many of our housebound parishioners and those in residential homes.

Yeovil District Hospital

It is great to work in partnership with Lin Hann, the Chaplain of YDH. I much appreciate her support of the pastoral work in our churches, and it is great to be able to liaise with her when visiting in hospital and in praying for people there. She does an amazing job and works in all kinds of challenging and often emotional situations. Keep praying for Lin and her work at YDH and the team of volunteers at YDH.

Gone Fishing Café:

We are celebrating the second anniversary in April 2018 of the Gone Fishing Cafe, and there is much to be thankful for. The cafe is a great resource, and we continue to ask God to use us to bring His hope and light into our town by sharing His love with those we meet. Do come along – Thursday mornings 10am to 12 noon! Thanks to those who bake cakes for the café, and to those who serve the drinks. It is wonderful to work in partnership with CAP, and having Steve and Mary present each week is great as so many people come in needing advice from CAP. It is a place where all are welcome, and CAP clients are often in the café: it would be fair to say there are many who are regulars at the café and now at church – whether here at St John’s or at the Gateway. We start each session with prayer, asking that God will use us in his service, to bring kindness and companionship and a sense of His presence and love to all we meet... and God has done amazing things at the café and people have come to know Jesus through this ministry. We depend on God and we ask that you pray for this work. What a privilege it is to serve our church family and local community, and what opportunity there is for the extension of God’s kingdom through this work. Please continue to pray for it!



At Christmas we raised £400 in our charity morning supporting the work of **TEARFUND**, which the government matched pound for pound. The regular proceeds from the café are added to the church General Fund – and a substantial amount is contributed across the year (£2,500 - £3,000).

‘Christianity Explored’ starts this month in the daytime on Thursdays after café, so pray that many will want to stay on and study the Bible together.

‘Holiday at Home’: this took place in August 2017, with a trip to Italy (at St Andrew’s Hall), with Italian food, teaching, quiz and crostini for 40 senior citizens, a mix of both church and community. There are plans afoot for another Holiday at Home in August 2018 – but where to this time? We also ran a follow-up called ‘Christmas Festive Fun’ in December 2017, to which many came and enjoyed activities, magic, festive food and a talk about the greatest gift of Christmas, Jesus Christ our Lord. Pastoral care and evangelism working side by side, caring for the elderly of our parish and reaching out to our community, bringing the good news of Jesus Christ.

Events: There have been many fun, family and evangelistic events across the year: Ham Hill walk and picnic, Hospitality Sundays, ‘newcomers evenings’ at the Rectory, shared lunches in the Schoolrooms, the Christmas Lights-on event, Pancakes and this year the introduction of the BIG EASTER BREAKFAST on Bank Holiday Monday. A card given to me read **‘Thank you so much for the lovely ‘Big Breakfast’! It was so great to enjoy fellowship with the church family, and it was especially wonderful to be served; we felt like we were in a restaurant! Thank you for your hard work to make it memorable!’**; and another wrote **‘it was great fun and nice to be with people on a bank holiday!’**. Thank you so much to all who give their time to enable these events to take place.

Brunel Manor: The weekend away planning is well under way – and 120 of us are off to Brunel Manor, near Torquay in September 2018.

Caring for the Carers: a new group has formed this year, meeting every couple of months at my home, with the aim of supporting one another in the role of care-givers and was set up for those who look after elderly relatives – both near or far. There have been invaluable times of sharing together the highs and lows of caring, and special times of praying together, lifting our concerns, decision making and difficulties to the Lord. How great is his care for us as he asks us to bring all our cares to him (1 Peter 5:7).

New for 2018:

Super Saturday – this is a town-wide event, with activities and fun for all ages in our town centre. It would be fantastic to engage with our town community in a more intentional way at this event this year. Super Saturday takes place at the end of September. Look out for details of how you can be involved!

Wednesday Kitchen Live! Do you know how to cook from scratch? Cooking on a budget? Can’t cook, won’t cook? Want to find out about Jesus and his meeting with people over meals? Look out for more details of Wednesday Kitchen Live over the next few months!

Thank you to all the church staff team: our meetings on Monday start with Bible study, and are encouraging, prayerful and not lacking in humour. I value the support and commitment of the church leadership team to the pastoral work and its importance for us all in our church life together. Please continue to pray and be involved.

‘Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers’. Galatians 6:9-10

Helen Peace, Pastoral Care Co-ordinator

Parish Prayer Chain

Twelve people from St John’s and St Andrew’s make up the Parish Prayer Chain, who are willing to provide prayer support for the specific needs of church family members as and when they arise. This chain is used regularly, and all

requests are dealt with in a sensitive manner. Prayers are offered to the Lord in faith and we leave both people and different situations in His loving care.

If you have a request for prayer, perhaps for yourself or a loved one who is undergoing surgery or has an emergency of some sort, then you can contact me (Helen Peace) and I will set the Parish Prayer Chain in motion. The people on it will pass the message along the chain and pray for your situation, bringing it to the Lord and asking for His help and strength. The request needs to be made in a short concise way, enabling those on the chain to pass the message on without losing or adding information or distorting the original message.

Each request made is treated confidentially within the boundaries of the prayer chain, and there is no 'follow-up' or further contact with you to find out the outcome. The person on the prayer chain contacts and informs the next person on the list and so it goes on until it reaches the beginning again.

Philippians reminds us "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God".

Helen Peace

Fellowship Groups

Fellowship Groups meet fortnightly, usually in the 2nd and 4th weeks of each month. There are three principal aims for a Fellowship Group: Bible Study, Prayer, and Friendship. These groups are a vital aspect of our church life. They help us to grow in the knowledge of God, to support one another in prayer for particular concerns, and to foster real, deep, caring Christian friendships. Please pray for the group leaders. They serve their group members, pray for them, care for them, and oversee the three aims above in a variety of ways.

Fellowship Groups do not meet in the week when the First Wednesday prayer meeting occurs. This is deliberate, because we would love all who belong to a group to come along to First Wednesday, and pray with us for God's work in our churches and further afield.

Tom Putt and I wrote Bible Study materials on the Old Testament book of Joshua for the Fellowship Groups this year. It's full of exciting stories and amazing events, as Moses dies and Joshua takes over the leadership of the people of Israel, and has to lead them into the Promised Land. God commands them to take the land by force, so they cross the Jordan and make a start with the battle of Jericho. There they learn the vital lesson: it's not their skills or tactics or numbers or greatness that is going to win the land for them. It is the power of God. He (not they) brings the walls down, and gives the victory. That sets the tone for how the land is conquered, so that by the end of the battles, we learn: 'Not one of the Lord's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled' (Joshua 21:45).

So for us, God is the one who wins our salvation: we do not gain it by our own strength or skill. And all that he has promised is given to us: all the great benefits of Christian life and hope. The name 'Jesus' is another form of the name 'Joshua', and Jesus is our leader who wins our victories, giving his life and rising in victory.

I know that all group members would want to thank their leaders, and all leaders would want to thank their group members. I too am grateful to all for making these groups function, for the good of our church and the glory of God.

James Dudley-Smith

Genesis Report 2018

Several ladies take it in turns to lead the bible study and our studies have led us through a DVD parenting course run by Care for the Family, as well as the books of Exodus and Ephesians, and we have just begun a series in Judges.

We have eleven ladies attending, in different combinations, on a Wednesday morning with five children in crèche and two babies. We are grateful for our crèche helpers Roby, Jenny, Anne, Ann F, Paula and Elaine who tirelessly serve each month.

We continue to be challenged and encouraged by God's word, and pray for one another.

Becky Dudley-Smith

TCP (*Tea, coffee, croissants and prayer*)

This is an informal fellowship group for ladies which meets for breakfast on the fourth Saturday of the month in the upper schoolroom 9.00 -10.30 am. There are generally around 12-15 ladies present from St John's, St Andrew's and St Peter's. There is no charge (donations only) and not everyone comes regularly or for the whole session.

Roz Chatwin

Crafty Ladies (Craft Fellowship)

This is not exclusively a group for ladies, but appears to have evolved as such. The group has about ten members, but not everyone attends every meeting and not all members are from our church family. We meet in the downstairs room at the schoolrooms fortnightly on Thursdays from 7.30 - 9.00 pm (non-fellowship group week); we stitch, have a cup of tea/coffee and chat. Sometimes people come just come for the latter, the relaxed atmosphere and a lot of laughter.

To date, we have made the banners which hang on the nave pillars and the Christmas banners that are displayed through December; and more recently hangings for the music group's stands which are on a smaller scale.

Anyone is welcome to join us. All the materials are supplied and there is simply no level of skill required, just the ability to thread a needle, enthusiasm and a sense of humour. It would be lovely to have some new members join us.

Roz Chatwin

Together on Tuesday

We meet downstairs in the schoolrooms on the first and third Tuesdays of each month, 2.30–4.00pm in the summer, or 2.00–3.30pm in the winter. We have joined with the Princes Street URC and take it in turns to arrange a speaker.

We are grateful to a variety of speakers who give their time to share with us. We currently average 12 -16 in the group. All are most welcome to join us.

Pat Legg

Men's Prayer Breakfast

The Men's Prayer Breakfast started in May 2008 and has continued to meet on the second Saturday of the month until the end of last year. Several of the men who regularly attend these opportunities to share in fellowship and prayer were finding it difficult to meet on Saturday mornings so we decided to disband the breakfast gatherings and we now meet either for lunch or afternoon tea from time to time. Anyone who would like to join this group of about eight men is most welcome to contact me.

Keith Stevens

Men about Yeovil Men's Breakfasts

Five have been held this year in alternate months except July. The breakfasts are intentionally evangelistic and those who attend are from a variety of churches besides St John's. Our speakers have been from very different walks of life but all have challenged those attending to consider the claim that Jesus has on their life. Attendance at the breakfasts has seen a steady increase in the year for which we give thanks to God.

Edward Armitstead

Women's Breakfasts

We have had four breakfasts this year, all at the Yeovil Court Hotel. The attendance has been consistently good and we have welcomed a variety of speakers all of whom have testified to the sufficiency of Jesus Christ in their different lives. Those attending have expressed appreciation not just for the talk but also for the fellowship – and a very good breakfast! Many new friendships have been forged and, for some, the breakfasts have given opportunities to invite friends along so that they too may hear the good news of Jesus.

Caroline Armitstead

SALT (St Andrew's at lunch time)

This began as a shared meal for the lonely people in our parishes but has widened to include others from outside the church and people referred by social services. Beth Farrington has been running this for 23 years and feels it is time for someone else to take over. It is currently staffed by about six people aged 75 and upwards, the oldest being near 90, and new younger blood is urgently needed to take this forward.

This is God's work and we are asked to pray about it. Finding the right person to lead is the main and most urgent priority so that Beth is able to step down.

From PCC Minutes March 2018

St John's Music Group

The Band continues to lead worship in song each Sunday evening, and Together for Worship first and Communion fourth Sundays. Numbers currently stand at fifteen using our gifts of singing and playing a variety of instruments. Our Tech Team, ably led by David and Matt with four others, work hard to enable sound and vision to come to us all. If on reading this you have an interest in playing, singing or tech please come and speak to one of us.

There have been a few highlights over the year including: being part of the CAP event at the Gateway in October – lots of work but a wonderful evening - playing Christian folk carols at the Christmas Town Lights On event in St John's, back to back carol services, etc. Our practices continue on a Monday evening in the church building, a time to encourage each other, learn new and old songs and pray together. We also arrive an hour before each service to again practise but also to sound check.

Jesus is the centre and in Him we trust.

Jane Hiscock

St John's Floral Group

2017 turned out to be a fairly routine year: Easter was quite late so most of the Spring flowers were over.

I had suggested a garden visit to Burrows Farm Gardens near Axminster. In the event, Miriam was the only member free and we went on Saturday 13th May. The gardens didn't disappoint as all the rhododendrons and azalias were out along with masses of wild bluebells.

On the fundraising front, we held a cake stall in St John's on 6th August and made £85.50. The flower guild account stood at £423.27 at the end of December.

Decorating at harvest and Christmas went well as usual with enough members being available to ensure a good display.

In February this year, we were asked to do eleven table centres for a fundraising dinner in aid of CAP at Bruton School for Girls. Ann Court, Jenny Salberg and Rosemary Shire joined me at my home to make them using roses, tulips, chrysanthemums and dianthus in spring colours. I brought them back to St John's until Lent started, then distributed them to friends and church members.

I thank all those on the rota for their continued help and commitment, and the congregation at St John's for their encouragement.

Mary Brooks (Chairperson)

St Johns Model Railway Group

The MRG is now in its third year. We meet upstairs in the Schoolrooms on the Thursday evening of the third week of the month and provide an environment for like-minded people to come and enjoy a cup of tea and fellowship. Entertainment normally consists of a video revealing some fascinating aspect of railway history, a couple of simple model railway tracks to play with, and work on the main project, "Yeovil Junction". Attendance is normally around the 10 to 14 mark and there is usually a nice buzz. One of our aims is to make links with people who are not necessarily part of St John's or St Andrew's and it is good to have some people from other churches and with no church links getting involved.

We love to welcome visitors so if you want to know what we're up to, please do drop in. *For more information talk to Tim Neville, Eddie Brooks or Terry Bush*

Tim Neville

Friends of St John's Report

Since being established in 1994, The Friends of St John's have raised more than £84,000 for the upkeep and improvement of the church fabric, seeking to draw support from the wider town community as well as the church membership. Highlights of our activities in this last year have included:

Fund-Raising Events. After starting off 2017 with fun for all at the Barn Dance in February, we followed this up with a number of events during the year. There were very successful Bric-a-Brac sales in July and September. The first was the day of the Yeovil Show (so fewer people around) while the second happily coincided with the council's Super Saturday event in the Town Centre (so lots of people and even a T-Rex!). Together they raised £525 and a great deal of surplus stock, which we were able to donate to charity shops in the town. In October we were very pleased to welcome the Phoenix Brass Band from Crewkerne for a concert in the church – a magnificent stirring evening, well-attended and enjoyed by all. Rounding off the events for 2017 was a very interesting talk from the church architect, John Beauchamp, in November, delivered in a café-style setting at the back of the church.

Grants – We are seeking to support the church with grants as needs arise, particularly those identified in the May 2017 Quinquennial Inspection of the church building. To this end, a grant of £948 to replace five broken and corroded protective window grills has been provided. Other potential future items for support include up-coming audio system improvements and, from the Quinquennial recommendations, equipment for a Vestry Roof Safe Working System and a package of stone repair and re-pointing activities by Sally Strachey Historic Conservation (who were our contractors for the tower restoration).

Newsletter - We have introduced a periodic newsletter (circulated by email) to provide news of events and of specific needs regarding the maintenance of the fabric of the church. Five editions of this were produced in 2017 and one to date in 2018. If you do not already receive these and would like to, please contact the Friends by email at friends@sjyeovil.org.uk

Future Events - Our plans so far for fund-raising events for the rest of 2018 include:

- The **SPRING SING** Strobe Musical Theatre Society (SMuTS) choir concert at 7.30pm in the church on 21st April (just 3 days after the APCM – tickets still available!), bringing a wide repertoire of songs from stage and screen to entertain us. Tickets are £5 in advance, £6 on the door, including refreshments. Under-16s free.
- **Agatha Christie Swan Theatre Play “And Then There were None”** 12th November. Tickets are £12 (£11 concessions), including wine and nibbles!
- And by popular demand, invited back to St John’s, **The Phoenix Brass Band**, with a new programme of stirring tunes! Later in 2018... Date and details still to be confirmed.
- The Friends AGM will take place at 7.30pm on 30th May in the Church – all are welcome.

Many thanks to all who work to make our events a success and to all supporters!

Phil Juggins (Chair)

Focus Magazine

‘There are so many magazines and so many editors out there that you have to be different’ - Carine Roitfeld (former editor-in-chief of Vogue Paris)

Focus magazine continues to strive to be different from all other Christian publications. Does it succeed in doing this? Please let me know. Its objective has always been to inform, to challenge people into action, to inspire the people of St John’s and St Andrew’s churches and to make you think...and laugh. Is there still a need for such a publication? Is the format still working or needing a refresh? Is it time now to pass the Editor’s hat on to someone else?

I am grateful for all those who have contributed regularly or even just once. I wish more of you would share with all of us something that we can all learn from. If you have never written an article or item for Focus Magazine, why not give it a try.

Elaine Mitchell

Bookstall

In 2017 the bookstall continued to be well used by the church family and those visiting the church. On average we sold more than £100 worth of books each month and the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 year meant that we sold a lot of books in the Autumn.

We continue to take orders from people and for events, and are very happy to help out. We can often get books at a discounted rate, so please ask.

The bookstall is used by a variety of people:

1. Christians who want to buy resources to help them understand the Bible.
2. Those who want to pass on books about the gospel to others.
3. Folk who aren't Christian but want to find out more.

Our titles are from a variety of publishers, but are sourced from The Good Book Company and 10ofthose.

Special thanks to those who help staff the bookstall- Doug Johnson, Roby and Iain Maitland, Alex Irwin and David Preston.

James Maitland

Yeovil College Chaplaincy

The College has seemed to have a good year, with an improved Ofstead Report, a more positive outlook, and some development going on. The team of which I am a part has pretty much been the same for the whole year and they’ve

done a great job caring and supporting the learners. I have had a number of opportunities to invite them to events at church, and share something of the gospel with them all.

September began with a good opportunity for me to meet the new intake of students, but sadly, despite initial interest this has not resulted in being able to find a group of students who are interested in meeting to form a CU. Please pray that in the next academic year I might be able to do so – I have met one to one occasionally with a few Christians and sought to encourage them.

I have had a few opportunities in this last term to run tutorials on “Faith.” This has helped me gauge how little understanding the majority of young people have about why people have any faith at all. They were surprised to hear that the reason I was a Christian was because I believed it was true! We had some great conversations as a result.

I spend most of my time in the student common room with 50-100 learners in it at any one time. Daily we have conversations about life, and about the struggles and pressures the young people face. There are many confusions, pressures and often a crisis of identity with a number having difficult home-life situations. Alongside that opportunity to listen, I have been able to share something of the hope, joy and fulfilment that the Lord Jesus brings. Do please pray as this is a slow work, but I pray that seeds sown may produce fruit in much more abundance than I could ever expect.

Tom Putt

Yeovil Deanery Synod Report

Two meetings of the Deanery Synod took place in 2017: at St James Preston Plunknett in June and St Michael’s Church in October. Meetings begin with an act of worship or reflection before discussing the agenda items.

Bishops Peter and Ruth came to St John’s Church, Yeovil, on 2nd April as part of their ‘Community Conversations’ within the Diocese. It was an encouraging gathering and good to see the enthusiasm they both have for mission and evangelism.

Legacies Andrew Rainsford, Lead Parish Resources and Development Adviser at the Diocese, gave a presentation on the promotion of legacies to our churches. Of the number of people who give regularly to their church, only 7% leave a gift to the church in their will. He stressed the importance of a legacy policy and marketing material to encourage people to leave their gift to the General Fund where it can be used when and where it is most needed.

The Yeovil Show. Rev Gaenor Hockey (Holy Trinity Church) organised a presence at the Show in 2017 which proved a great success. More than 30 volunteers from Deanery churches made themselves available to at least one of the four areas: to welcome, pray, serve refreshments or help with children’s activities. There are already plans to participate at the 2018 Show so please consider if you are able to help.

Deanery Mission Planning (DMP). Mission and evangelism should be at the heart of all we do. The diocesan strategy aims to equip all God’s people in our churches to live and tell the story of Jesus. Each deanery has a key part to play in this and is to set out its own mission plan, at our first meeting we discussed: How we currently engage with the wider community and what we would like to be doing?

From this the four main priorities as identified within the Deanery, namely:

- a) Mission in the new housing estates and a hope to see an increase in church membership across the Deanery.
- b) Lay training. General and Diocesan Synods have discussed the need to make greater use of people’s gifts by increasing the numbers of lay people and this is something we must endeavour to do.
- c) Sustainability. To better resource growing churches and to better support those in charge of smaller churches.
- d) Communication. If improved, this could greatly enhance the life of the Deanery.

Preston Plucknett Associate Vicar/Deanery Mission Enabler

The role of Deanery Mission Enabler (DME) is now vacant. This has been a 50:50 post with Associate Vicar of Preston Plucknett but it is proposed that the new role should become 80:20, thus giving the DME 1½ days to carry out Deanery work. The job description would include encouraging mission across the Deanery; supporting outreach to new housing estates; working with clergy and PCCs to establish mission priorities; discerning and providing opportunities for lay training and promoting the use of lay leadership courses.

St Michael's Parish and the requirement for an Associate/Mission Priest.

Fr David Anderson presented his parish which, with 18,000 inhabitants, is the largest parish in the Wells Archdeaconry, and the most deprived parish in Yeovil. It contains ten schools and only nine shops, along with three other churches - the Methodist, Elim Pentecostal and Community churches. There are large numbers of underprivileged people within the parish, many of whom have drug and alcohol problems. He concluded that there is only so much that one person can do and that the bid for a Pioneer Priest is an essential part of the Deanery Mission Plan.

Communication

Val Barker talked of the need to improve communication within the Deanery and her hope that people will step forward to help. She suggested the creation of a regular prayer diary, a Deanery events calendar, a leaflet to communicate to the local area via Tourist Information and other local churches and the continuation of a regular mission newsletter.

Smaller Churches

The number of clergy working in parishes has been cut by two-thirds in the last one hundred years and that church membership is acknowledged to be in decline. Within the Deanery which contains 25 churches, eight have a declared membership in single figures – so resources are stretched. It was argued that the church must be about mission and not about the maintenance of buildings. Many are concerned that there should be a presence in every community and work on the plan continues.

General Synod Report. The Synod met in February and discussed such matters as the anniversary of the Reformation and should banns of marriage be abolished, to which the response was 'no'. With regard to marriage and same sex relationships, there is no change to our doctrine on marriage but there is a new tone of welcome and inclusion within our churches. The conversations continue. At the next General Synod meeting in July, there were, among other matters, two controversial debates on marriage and a vote that the House of Bishops should draw up liturgy to welcome transgender people.

Rob Dean

Yeovil CAP Debt Centre Report – 2017

Now into our seventh year, both debt coaches Steve Hart, who works three days per week, and Mary Irwin, who works two days per week, continue to annually visit approximately 50 people between them, where the church is throwing a lifeline to people with unmanageable debt. They find that people with anxiety, depression, and other psychological conditions more often run together with financial difficulties. More recently the money saving expert Martin Lewis said, "There are a few free services that will help you go debt free, but if you want someone to *hold your hand*, I cannot recommend CAP highly enough."

In 2017 we've seen 15 individuals/families go debt free. Since the Centre started, the 300 people who have contacted CAP from the Yeovil area will always remain at the heart of who we are and what we do. Whilst we aim to connect a befriender to each client, we continue to struggle in this area of our work. Thankfully befrienders have started to come forward from several new churches in our area and we continue to provide befriending training and investment in our Yeovil CAP Team.

CAP Money courses, continue to be part of the Centre, with William Webbe, our Community Links Co-ordinator, taking the lead role. Five courses took place during the year, which enabled people to learn how to budget.

Six families (plus Mary) went on a Discovery Break at Brunel Manor, where they are given a free short holiday break and where a team from CAP head office facilitates the events, including many opportunities where the love of Jesus is shared in so many different ways. Seven people made first time commitments to Jesus and in December two were baptised, following their move to South Chard Church.

The Gone Fishing café, which is open weekly on a Thursday morning in the St Johns' church building, continues to provide a great help. Not only anyone who fancies a coffee and company, can attend, but we find this a great help to encourage CAP clients to connect with the debt coaches before their first home visit. This is very helpful when a client's visit may be 2-3 months away. Helen Peace leads a great team of volunteers to enable this ministry to operate.

Ian Croxford and Ed Brooks continue to lead the Tuesday men's discipleship group, who meet for breakfast from 11.30am to 1pm. Ian cooked a Christmas dinner for 12 men, using the new kitchen in the Schoolrooms.

We saw 35 Christmas hampers made up by local fellowship groups from different churches, including Yeovil Radio Cabs. In addition, Red Berry Recruiting and ASDA donated Christmas foods, which together made up an additional 20 large food bags, distributed to both CAP clients and some who frequent the Gone Fishing café. For space reasons, the Christmas Tea was located upstairs in the Schoolrooms, where we saw our largest number of families and individuals come together, with many staying on to the Carol Service.

We saw a record GateWay coffee shop charity day in March when £1,400 was raised; and in October, the Music for CAP event brought in £1,500. We thank David Upton, who continues to paint on canvas and sell his artwork to raise funds for the Centre: approx. £1,000 has been raised by David so far. Along with the many regular monthly gifts provided by so many in St Johns, we also received a large gift from an individual, which enabled the Centre to nearly break even in 2017.

Steve & Mary spoke at several churches and different types of church groups, plus many organisations in the area, including meeting many individuals working in agencies who are now referring their clients to CAP.

The Lord's Larder continued to be a very important agency working with us, where 91 food parcels had been given to our clients (10% increase on 2016). In addition, we occasionally provide a fresh food shop on top of the non-perishable food provided by the Lord's Larder.

We are pleased to announce that the Management Committee has increased in number with the addition of Jill Martin and Alan Guy; they join Mike Streatfeild and Margaret Hamilton, along with Steve, Mary, and William. We continue to thank Mike for chairing this committee.

In May, Steve started working for CAP head office as an Area Manager, thus stepping down as the Yeovil Street Pastor co-ordinator. In this 2 days per week role, up to December he managed 17 CAP Centres from Bristol down to Weymouth, across to Bournemouth and up to Swindon; since then the number of Centres he manages has changed. In the last few months of 2017, CAP made a top to bottom change in their network management structure, which meant Steve had to take on ½ day extra more important work but give up ½ day work. This meant he handed over 10 Centres in the Bristol and Swindon area and took on 5 Centres closer to Yeovil. He's now pleased that Yeovil is at the centre of the area he manages in his Area Manager role.

We continue to rejoice with the Archbishop of Canterbury as our patron, and in a recent survey, 94% of clients described the CAP service as 'a great help' or even 'life transforming.' In May 2017, MPs in the House of Commons discussed CAP's positive contribution to society.

The church family from St John's continues to show their amazing support and commitment to prayer, giving financially, befriending clients, making and posting Birthday & Christmas cards, taking clients shopping, providing food, helping serve at CAP events and the Thursday Gone Fishing Café. It continues to be a pleasure and a privilege to serve and work with the St Johns' family, in what can only be described as a life transforming ministry where there is ALWAYS HOPE!

One large area of help was focused on getting a client who was homeless, into a housing association flat and providing him with carpet and white goods. He has since helped St Johns with a few items of maintenance, including new doors on the cupboards in the upstairs room in the schoolrooms.

We are always looking for people to support this community transforming work, which can be done in several ways – you can receive the 3-weekly email update, become a befriender and/or commit to praying for the debt coaches going on their every visit, join the management committee, or support the work financially. [If you just want to find out more about this work, just speak to Steve or Mary.](#)

Our ongoing prayer is that God will enable clients to fully engage with the free CAP service to help them journey out of debt, and that both Steve and Mary, along with our befrienders, will make the most of every opportunity to share the good news of Jesus Christ, through words and actions.

We have much to rejoice the Lord for and the importance of what Paul said in Romans 10 v14:

***“And how can they believe in Him if they have never heard about Him?
And how can they hear about Him unless someone tells them?”***

Steve Hart

Yeovil Street Pastors

Street Pastors was pioneered in London in 2003 by Les Isaac. On that first night, 18 volunteers took to the streets of Brixton – 15 women and 3 men. Since then over 12,000 street and prayer pastors have been trained and currently, more than 300 towns and cities around the UK have a Street Pastors team. When you add prayer pastors, management teams and trustees, this means that there are over 20,000 volunteers in total associated with the Street Pastors network. We work alongside the Police and the Council, and I have the great privilege of co-ordinating the Yeovil Street Pastor initiative.

It is exactly nine years since Christians from Churches in Yeovil and surrounding villages were commissioned in St. John’s Church, to be street and prayer pastors by the former Bishop of Taunton. This God-given initiative of caring, listening, and helping has continued almost every Friday and Saturday night on the streets in our town centre showing and sharing the love of God. We engaged in general with over 3000 people in 2017, giving out 273 pairs of flip-flops, 184 bottles of water and numerous lollipops.

At present, we have 46 Street Pastors and 17 Prayer Pastors from 26 churches in Yeovil and the surrounding area. We are excited to have six new SPs and two new PPs being commissioned on 12th April 2018.

Jesus calls each one of us to be his disciples and to follow as he leads. Discipleship is about how we live. In the Gospels we read that where Jesus goes is very frequently not where we would have thought of going, or would have wanted to go. Street Pastors try to help people to understand that they do not have to become victims of their own circumstances.

COULD I BE A STREET PASTOR?

Street Pastors come from right across the Christian community and can be anyone who has been committed to a church fellowship for more than one year, with a personal reference from their minister or church leader and is over the age of 18.

If you would like to know more or possibly feel God is calling you to discipleship on the streets or supporting in prayer, then please contact yeovil@streetpastors.org.uk

*Christine Thomas
Co-ordinator Yeovil Street Pastors*

The Lords Larder

Thank you so much for all your support of the work of Yeovil Christian Support Trust. The past year was the busiest year the Lord's Larder has ever had, helping more people than ever before; and a sad year for the King's Place Charity Shop as the store became increasingly unprofitable due to increased competition and fewer customers. The shop closed on the 1st September after 20 years of serving the local community.

I would like to share with you how your donations from St John's have helped the Food Bank give out over 82,000 items of food which went into the 2,243 emergency food parcels. With your support we were able to help a total of 5,193 (4,195 last year) local people:-

- 3245 adults
- 1948 children
- 834 families

Through December The Lord's Larder was, with your help, also able to give out 300 Christmas Parcels, requested by agencies for their most needy clients, helping 414 adults and 426 children at Christmas time.

The King's Place Social Fund

The King's Place Social Fund is still operational and making a huge difference to people's lives using monies generated from one off KPSF donations. It was used to provide small grants for fifty people last year who have no other way of buying essential household items like beds, washing machines and cookers. These included families and single people whose only option would be to go to loan sharks or Bright House to obtain these goods. In 2017, by using the fund wisely we were able to purchase the following:

- 15 Beds,
- 3 Chest of Drawers,
- 4 Dining Tables,
- 7 Sofas,
- 3 Washing Machines,
- 2 Cookers,
- 1 Fridge.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those in St. John's for choosing to continue to support the valuable work of Yeovil Christian Support Trust (YCST), The Lord's Larder and King's Place Social Fund; and to pass on the heart-felt gratitude from all those we are able to help each year.

May we give thanks to God for his faithfulness; that for over a quarter of a century we have always found we have enough food donated to the Larder, and last year we were given 74,402 items of food, ready to go into food parcels, so that no one goes without food, and no one goes hungry.

Thank you for your continued support.

Mat Callaghan
YCST Operations Manager