

## Parish of Yeovil with Kingston Pitney

### Annual Report of St John the Baptist Church for the Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

*At the time of collating this report in April 2020, we are experiencing the effects of Covid 19, an especially virulent disease which is sweeping the world. The United Kingdom is in lockdown, as are many other countries in the world, meaning that we are all isolated in our own homes, allowed out to shop and exercise only. The church is closed, services are relayed online; we are not permitted to visit or meet up with family members or friends, and the only means of contact we have is by telephone or email: all this to prevent the spread of the virus, to protect ourselves, each other and the NHS. Several of the reports that follow do mention these conditions at the time of their writing, even though the reports actually record the business of St John's until December 2019.*

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**Parish of Yeovil with Kingston Pitney**  
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**Administrative Information**

St John's Church is situated in the centre of Yeovil and has a daughter church, St Andrew's, which is about one mile from the centre. They are part of the Diocese of Bath and Wells within the Church of England. The correspondence address is: Church Street, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 1HE. This report covers the activities of St John's church and of the Parish. St Andrew's Church has produced its own report covering its own domestic issues. The Parochial Church Council is registered under the Charity Commission, registration number 1134345.

The PCC comprises members from both churches with the Incumbent, Readers, Wardens and elected representatives to the Deanery Synod. The following members have served on the PCC during the last year.

<b>Incumbent</b>	Revd James Dudley-Smith	<b>Chairman</b>
<b>Associate Minister</b>	Revd Tom Putt (until June 2019)	
<b>Representatives on Deanery Synod</b>	Edward Armitstead Jam Cary Stefan Davies Rob Dean Nick Scorer Beth Farrington	<b>St. Andrew's</b>
<b>Member of General Synod</b>	Jam Cary	
<b>Wardens</b>	Rob Dean Jennifer Matthew	<b>St John's</b>
<b>Deputy Wardens</b>	Sandra Warr David Maynard-Griffin	<b>St Andrew's</b>
<b>Elected Members</b>	Chris Frazer Lin Hann Mary Irwin Caroline Jeeves Phil Juggins Iain Maitland James Maitland Tom Oaks Keith Ovenden Jenny Salberg Jo-Anne Smith Tim Thurgood Helen Truett Kath Upton (Parish Administrator)	
<b>Co-opted Members</b>	<b>St John's</b> Janet Dean      Secretary John Brookes    Treasurer	

## **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. St Andrew's Church has its own Church Council (DCC).

## **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.

- 2019 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.
- Congregations at our services continue to evolve and 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 continues on Thursday mornings
- Youth activities continue to thrive and Holiday Club in the Summer was once again a great success.
- Fellowship groups were revamped in September 2019, and people were allocated to new groups in greater numbers
- 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
- Mission giving
- Data protection
- Safeguarding
- The Associate Minister post
- The updating of the audio-visual equipment
- The fabric and future reordering of St John's
- The importance of on-going mission and evangelism
- Ministering to our young people and the possible future appointment of a Youth and Children's Minister
- Visit in September of 30 Americans descended from Stukeley Westcott who was married in St John's and left England 400 years ago with the Pilgrim Fathers to settle in America.
- The cost of upkeep and possible future refurbishment of the Harrison and Harrison organ
- The future shape of admin provision in the parish

**Janet Dean**  
**PCC Secretary**

### **Warden's Report 2019**

There is always a mix of joy and sadness when good people move from close fellowship to the next important phase of their ministry. St John's experienced this as Tom Putt left his Associate Ministerial post with us in June 2019. What a privilege for Jennifer and me to be church wardens for his entire time in Yeovil; to work closely with such a committed and wise young man and to witness him flourishing in his ministry and as a husband and father. During his time with us Tom became a good friend whose company and conversation I cherish. Janet and I went to Burford with a large group of members of the St John's Church family to witness his licensing at Burford in early July, a special experience at the start of his next challenge.

Our brothers and sisters at All Saints and Holy Trinity Wandsworth have experienced similar emotions as the Reverend Ben Graham and his wife Abi left them to follow Tom as Associate Minister. The continuation of the post was not a foregone conclusion and was a topic about which we prayed much. It was a further privilege to be invited to be a member of the selection panel for his successor and fascinating to be part of and witness the fairness and integrity with which the process was conducted by our Archdeacon. It was a great joy to hear the announcement that "we are pleased to announce that the Bishop has appointed the Reverend Benjamin Graham to the post of Associate Minister of the Benefice of Yeovil with Kingston Pitney".

*[He joined us on 4 April 2020 in very strange circumstances but he will find] a church with a number of ministries that take place within the church family, ministering to mums and dads of young babies and toddlers; a junior church of over 60 young people under the age of 18, (a fifth of our church family), 18-30's, single folk, married couples, families and retired, widowed and some in their nineties; fellowship groups, prayer teams, TCP (Tea, croissants and prayers) and those administering and benefitting from CAP: there are the bell ringers, the flower team, the cleaning team, the admin team, the pastoral care team, the fabric committee, the finance committee, puppeteers, the railway modellers and the sewers (sewing team, that is).*

Phil Juggins will report on the fabric condition of the church, but I should like to thank the congregation, the Friends of St John's and the Feoffees of St John's for their financial help this year. Last summer there were two parallel projects completed to conclude work required as a result the recommendation of our architect (John Beauchamp of benjamin + beauchamp architects of Wedmore) in his Quinquennial Survey of 2017. Both projects together cost over £13,000 and we were also able to improve our AV system,

install better quality speakers for the Viscount digital organ and in early 2020, to re-leather integral parts of our Harrison and Harrison organ as it approaches its centenary year. Thank you.

At the APCM in 2019 I gave a presentation on the status of the church reordering project which continues to make good progress both in planning and obtaining relevant approval from various authorities. *As I write in April 2020 in lockdown we await replies from the latest submission to assess their comments. We are trialling five sorts of chairs that could replace pews and have had a morning of displays and briefings on the state of the project.*

As usual the church was well used in the weeks before Christmas with Carol Services for the town, schools and other organizations but this year the church was also full as we hosted BBC Radio Somerset as they recorded two special Christmas programmes that were broadcast at Christmas.

**Rob Dean, Churchwarden**

### **St John's Sidesperson's Report**

*'You will not fear .....*

*the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.'*

*Psalm 91: 5-6*

*April 2020: Well, strange times might be upon us: our sidespeople are furloughed for the present, but when they were in place smiling and welcoming people into our church, they all did a sterling job week in and week out. And they most certainly had no truck with pestilence or plague either at midday or at 10.30.*

Over this past year we have had 20 volunteers on our Sunday sidespeople rota, as well as a magnificent band of Saturday Stewards (many of whom are the same people). Their roll is invaluable as they show the face of our St John's community to all who pass through our doors on a Saturday or Sunday.

What most visitors take away with them will, in large part, be influenced by the welcome they received from the person who greets them. As a church community we cannot underestimate the contribution of the sidespeople and welcomers to our mission and outreach. Or indeed to our own church family, as they greet the loner, the shy, the uncomfortable, the socially awkward, and spend time helping people with queries and concerns.

On behalf of the church I would like to thank them all for their contribution. And anyone who is interested in joining this merry band of fearless folk, please do speak to me or email... offers always gladly welcomed.

**Jennifer Matthew, Churchwarden**

### **Report on the Electoral Roll**

Following the 2020 revision of the electoral roll for St John's, the total on the roll currently stands at 177. Since the 2019 revision, 4 have died, 6 have moved away and 5 have joined.

**Kath Upton  
Parish Secretary**

### **Finance Report on the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019**

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 Schoolrooms and the Fabric

Fund and Restricted Funds which can only be spent for the purposes for which they were set up such as the Peter Wakely Community Fund and the Christians Against Poverty Fund.

### **The General Fund**

We set an ambitious budget for 2019 requiring an increase in our income of 7.7% but still taking £12,655 from the Peter Wakely Community Fund. Fortunately, our expenditure was £4,181 below budget which reduced the amount taken from the Peter Wakely Community Fund to £11,529. In the event, we increased our income by 5.9% from collections and pledged giving but still short of the budget by £2,654.

The transfer from the Peter Wakely Community Fund meant that we balanced our accounts and our General Reserve remained at £30,380.

Overall the total income was £212,446 excluding special charitable collections which are paid out in their entirety. This is an increase of 6.2%. Expenditure on a similar basis was £223,975 an increase of £10,891 (5.1%). Our biggest expense was the Parish Share of £140,946 which took (66.3%) of our income. Compared with this the actual costs of running the church, excluding money given to Missions and Charities, were £61,934 an increase of (0.3%) and are relatively modest. In 2019 we continued to support our Missionary links and other good causes by giving away £21,095 which was 10% of our income.

At the end of 2019 we are left with a general reserve balance of £30,380 which represents under two month's expenditure.

### **Designated Funds**

The Schoolrooms had a deficit of £5,454. The rent received of £5,573 was £153 less than in 2018. The main reason for the deficit was having to pay £200 per month towards the cost of external repairs and renegotiating our lease. Operating costs were £1,276, excluding legal costs, were higher than in 2018. The end of year balance was £7,355.

The two Fabric Funds have been combined in the accounts. The total income was £16,719 and included a repayment of VAT amounting to £1,139, a £4,250 donation from the Friends of St John's and £8,600 from the Feeofees. Expenditure amounted to £24,495 and included speakers for the electronic organ £5,050, work identified at the last quinquennial survey £6,235 and £10,620 architect's fees in connection with the proposed reordering of the interior of the church. There was an increase in the value of the underlying investments of £7,865. The combined balance at the end of the year amounted to £66,548.

The Youth Development Fund had income from interest of £39 and an anonymous donation of £20,000. We spent £1,209 on furniture for the Schoolrooms. The balance at the end of the year amounted to £26,695.

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. Apart from interest received of £73 there were no other movements. The balance at the end of the year amounted to £13,380.

The Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Fund raises and spends money in support of the Yeovil CAP Debt Centre, managed by Steve Hart. A total of £44,372 was given and raised to support this ministry, some of which included money raised at a very successful Vintage Tea Party, Art for CAP pop-up shop in the Quedam, and Coffee Shop Charity Day. It also included £3,680 gift aid tax reclaimed. The expenditure, comprising the monthly salaries of the manager and debt coach, a monthly payment to CAP HQ, and other operating expenses, amounted to £39,641. There was a surplus in the year of £5,091 and the balance carried forward to next year was £34,563.

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 £12,995 and £11,529 was transferred to the General Fund. At the year end the amount invested in shares was revalued and they had grown by £37,858 to £253,785 compared with the cost of the original investment of £151,329 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%. We have transferred a total of £42,206 to the General Fund over 5 years and £10,000 has been paid to St Andrew's towards their kitchen refurbishment.

The Tom Setter Belfry Fund paid for the enhancement of the bells largely completed in 2014. However, in 2018 work was started on the repair of the clock in the tower. Donations of £12,500 were received in the year and expenditure incurred on the clock amounted to £2,675. The balance carried forward is £17,065. Work on the clock was mostly completed in 2018 but there remains a small amount of work still to do in 2020 and further work to do on the bells.

### **The Balance Sheet**

The balance sheet shows where are total funds of £452,346 are invested. Most of this is accounted for by designated or restricted funds with a relatively modest £30,380 represented by the General Fund. A total of £304,909 is invested in unit trusts administered by CCLA on behalf of the Church Commissioners, £46,011 is on deposit with CCLA, £95,606 is in three current accounts with NatWest bank, which pay interest, and £6,000 in National Savings.

### **Our 2020 Budget**

James Dudley-Smith, our rector, has spoken about the challenge that we face in 2020 when we need to increase our income. The PCC have agreed that we should appoint a person to manage our young people and this is likely to cost £30,000 for a full time person.

The Parish Share which we have to pay to the Diocese is increased to £145,000 and based upon an estimated 237 church members works out at nearly £12 per person per week or £50 per month before we meet any of the costs of running our church estimated at £7 per person per week.

The challenge we all face in 2020 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. Last year we reclaimed £33,087 tax and could not have managed without it.

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 received a legacy of £250 in 2019. However, the largest legacy that we have received in the last few years is £189,895 from Peter Wakely. We have produced a leaflet about legacies and a copy is available by the door in St John's. If you are considering leaving a legacy to the church, please discuss this with the treasurer or a warden who will advise you on the specific needs of the church.

***John Brookes***  
***Treasurer of St John's***

### **Finance Report on St Andrew's Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2019.**

#### Income (all unrestricted)

The General Fund Income totalled £27,834, which included Funeral Fees of £481, and specific collections and donations of £958. The trading activities income of £5,637 relates to the rental of the church and hall.

#### Expenditure (all unrestricted)

The General Fund Expenditure totalled £33,482 which included £274 being the balance for the replacement of the obsolete sound system and £1,440 for the reduction of a large cedar tree.

Key Point regarding Expenditure: The major item of expenditure was the parish share contribution at £19,057. This equates to 88% of the total voluntary giving in 2019.

The parish share contribution is set to increase to £20,094 in 2020. Assuming a similar level of Total voluntary giving in 2020, the parish share contribution equates to 93% of it.

#### Balance Sheet Reserves (all unrestricted)

The Balance Sheet shows Reserves totalling £20,877 (2018 was £26,525).

The majority of the Reserves are 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.

A sum of £696 is administered by CCLA on behalf of the Church.

#### General Summary

St Andrew's Church continues to benefit from generous bequests that have been made in the last few years. As stated earlier the ever increasing parish share contribution together with potential necessary maintenance costs will further reduce the reserves during 2020. The DCC will be closely and diligently monitoring the situation.

*Les W Jackson*  
*St Andrew's Church Treasurer*

#### **Gift Aid Officer's Report for 2019**

The past year has demonstrated once again the value of tax recovery to the sound finances of the church. All donations from UK taxpayers can be boosted by 25% by recovering tax from the government. However, we are only able to do this if we have a valid Gift Aid Declaration from each donor giving their permission for the church to do this.

Tax recovery brought in around £37,000 in 2019. So, please, if you are a taxpayer, give regularly to St John's and have not completed a Gift Aid Declaration, speak to me about that. Any one-off donations can also be Gift Aided by using the Yellow Envelopes available in the church, and these can also be given to a specific area of church funds by writing an instruction on the back.

I would like to take this chance to thank those who count up cash donations and record weekly envelope contributions each week. Without good quality records, the Gift Aid scheme would not be so valuable.

Thank you especially to all of you who give generously and selflessly to the work of the church in Yeovil, the surrounding area and further afield.

*Alan Irwin*  
*Gift Aid Officer*

#### **St John's Fabric Report and Statement 2019**

The 'Fabric Committee' is a sub-committee of the PCC. It met five times in 2019 to coordinate and report on the state of the church fabric and to monitor the planned regular maintenance and repairs and other work stipulated in the Quinquennial Survey of 2017.



The church is generally in good material condition. However, there were two areas requiring attention addressed with significant packages of work during 2019.

The first was a series of mortar repairs on the main roof and around the base of the east end of the building. This included replacing a temporary mortar repair in the seam with the main roof around the north east side of the tower with lime mortar and also repairing cappings and filling cracks in the 1940s concrete lining on the south parapet of the roof. The work done extended further to vegetation and debris removal, with cleaning and painting on the organ loft and vestry roofs. This was completed in September by Pete Davies and his team from Happy2HelpU.

Also in September, contractor Sally Strachey (SSHC), who completed the tower repair in 2014, completed a series of mortar repairs on the stonework of the building, mainly in the sills of the main windows, as specified in the quinquennial survey.

It should also be noted that at the beginning of 2020, the storms of February resulted in damp finding its way inside the building in a number of places, notably in the Edwardian Vestry and the South Turret Tower. When the current pandemic crisis is over, significant remedial work will be required. Protective measures are also in hand, following a recent spate of lead thefts from church roofs locally.

***Phil Juggins***  
***Fabric Committee Chair***

### **St John's Ringers**

It is pleasing to report we have managed to ring the bells prior to every Sunday Morning Service throughout the year with only one or two exceptions. This is thanks to our regular St John's ringers: Alistair Bartlett, Brian Dodd, John Foster, Brian Hinder, Annette Organ, Colin Reston, Jean Reston, and **new learner** Davina Bakam who is doing bell ringing for her Duke of Edinburgh Award and a member of a church family. We also welcome David Neal (West Coker) and Tim Edmunds (East Coker) on most Sundays, and occasionally three or four of my 'Ringing Remembers (2018)' recruits from Odcombe join us. Practices have taken place on Monday evenings since the WW2 ban on ringing was lifted (1943) but lately have been poorly attended. There is a trend nowadays for bands from several towers combining for sharing training expertise, so our pattern of practices may change in 2020.

It's not only here that the majority of ringers are over 60 so if bell ringing, like the Church, is to exist in the future we need to recruit. Mature learners are most welcome, but it's about time some of the youngsters attending the various groups we have in St John's were encouraged to take up this activity. A recent report on the provision St John's makes for young people suggests that they should be more involved in serving the church as well as being served. I'm hopeful that when we have a Youth Minister this is one aspect they could develop. Ringing serves the community as well as the church.

Besides ringing for Sunday services, during 2019 we rang for Lord Paddy Ashdown's Memorial Service and for a party visiting from the USA commemorating their ancestors' wedding St John's 400 years ago. We did not just ring for the Stukely Westcotts, but many of the group came up the tower to watch and were impressed. A letter from one of the ladies said that as they walked to attend the following Sunday Service, hearing the bells was so evocative that it brought tears to her eyes! Sometimes our ringing does that to me, but for a different reason! We never know what effect our ringing has on those who hear it. Most comments are of the "nice to hear the bells" type, and recently a visitor in the church, whilst stressing she was "not at all religious", said that hearing the bells on that weekday had removed all negative thoughts from her head.

I am pleased to say that at long last the Clock, which strikes the quarters and hours on our bells, is now working properly. I would welcome introducing at least one other person to our clock to look after it. It is

a good example of Victorian engineering, but, like a steam locomotive, needs TLC. And then, there is adjusting the hour for “summertime” twice a year, but I will not always be around!

**Roger Fox, Tower Captain**

### **St John’s Young Adults**

St John’s Young Adults (SJYA) is a social group for young adults in the church and is held on the third Wednesday of the month. SJYA replaces the original 18-30’s group, which folded following the departure of Tom Putt in June 2019. Whereas the previous group used to meet weekly for bible study we now meet monthly for a social. A greater number of the young adults were able to access biblical teaching following the restructure of the home groups last autumn so we felt it would be useful to have another focus. In addition, we wanted to provide something that had fellowship but wasn't too faith focused, so that we could also invite along other non-Christian friends.

The new group has approximately twenty members with an average of ten attending each month. To date we have met for a games night, arranged a walk, played pool and gone for drinks at one of the pubs in town. We also encourage attendees to participate in the monthly prayer meeting.

A strong friendship network has emerged as a result of this group and several of the members have taken ownership of activities, which we pray would continue.

*Postscript, April 2020: Due to Covid-19, SJYA is currently on hold but we are continuing to communicate with all members via Facebook and a quiz took place over the Easter weekend via Zoom. Looking forward, we plan to arrange a game of skittles and also organise a Praise and Prayer night for the whole church.*

**Emma McFarlane**

### **Youth Report**

Friday Night Youth Group continues to thrive. We have about 30 young people on our books and we normally see around 18 young people each week. We have an amazing group of faithful and loving leaders - Hannah Peace, Judith Brookes, Chris Frazer and Tim Osborn. Our priority, as we meet each week, is to open up the Bible and show Jesus to the young people.

*In these strange times we have continued to meet using Zoom. This has worked well and has enabled us to keep in contact. Our Youth Weekend Away 2020 was sadly cancelled but we are looking forward to going away with the youth in 2021.*

**James Maitland**

### **Junior Church**

We began the academic year by trying something a bit different in Junior Church. We changed our material, from *Click* produced by The Good Book Company to *Mustard Seeds* produced by TNT Ministries. This allowed us all to study the same part of the Bible and then offered age-differentiated activities and questions for each group. Also the material is online so it is easier to make sure everyone has the lesson plans. For the first time we were studying the same part of the Bible and were spending the first part of each lesson together in one big group.

There are many advantages to all learning the same thing, not least of which is that families with more than one child in Junior Church are able to talk more meaningfully with their children about what they have been learning.

There are also advantages to being together for part of the morning, such as having a bigger group of children to play games and to learn the memory verse, which makes it more fun. We found this particularly valuable as some families have moved away and several children moved up to the Pathfinders group which has meant that our numbers have been much lower than we are used to. We average about 16 regulars each week, although there are 22 on the register and we still have many visitors join us.

Everyone from Scramblers to Explorers spent the first part of the autumn term learning about the King of God's Kingdom from Mark chapters 1 to 3. We then looked at the Christmas story from Luke, and in January we learnt about Parables of the Kingdom from Matthew, finishing off the term by learning about the Easter story again from Luke.

We have been following a four-year programme set out by Mustard Seeds to ensure that we cover the whole Bible and are planning to learn about the growth of the early Church in Acts during the summer term. Given that we will probably still be in lockdown then, after Easter I plan to send the material to parents so they are able to teach their children at home, including some song suggestions. Thankfully that will be more straightforward now that our material is online.

In the last year we have had a small change of personnel as the Putt family moved away, but thankfully Rowena Murray and her daughter Anna have stepped into their places. We are conscious that sadly Pete and Rebecca Howarth will be moving away at the end of the summer term. They have been such dedicated and enthusiastic leaders and we will miss them hugely, but we continue to trust God for his continued provision for this work. Many thanks to all our leaders and helpers for all they do to share the gospel with the children at St John's, and to the parents for their support of this work.

Looking ahead, as a team, we are all excited about the prospect of a full-time Children's and Families Minister – someone who can support this work, building on all that we have been doing for children at St John's, not just on Sunday mornings, but throughout the year, and reach out to the many families with young children in Yeovil who do not know Jesus.

*Melissa Cary*

### **Tiny Toes Report**

The group meets on a Thursday morning during school term time in the downstairs Schoolrooms between 10.00 and 11.15. The aim is to provide a space for parents/carers of children from birth to approximately twelve months, when people are often adapting to the challenges of family life and also looking to form friendships with others in a similar family situation. The group normally has between 8 and 12 people attending, most of whom have no other church connection.

The volunteers aim to provide a welcoming environment for both parents and children by laying out the room with soft play mats and appropriate toys, but also by offering drinks and homemade cake. There are a group of about six helpers, who work on a rota basis with three people attending at any one session, and seek to ensure everyone is included in conversation and to help friendships to form. During the session there is a singing session, using songs with lots of physical interaction between parent and child, and includes traditional nursery rhymes, well-known children's songs and some with a biblical message. The parent/carers are told about any church activities and events.

It is made clear to the parent/carers from their first attendance that the group is run by the church, that the helpers pray before and after the session for the individuals who attend, and that they are welcome to

share any specific prayer requests. This has happened several times when people have shared very specific and challenging situations that they have faced, and it has been a privilege to be able to pray for them.

The greatest change to the group this year has been a change in the leadership. Joy Neville, who started the group, resigned at the end of November when she started a new job. We would like our thanks to be noted for her faithfulness and dedication to this work over the years. Jo-Anne Smith and Ann Thurgood therefore agreed to lead the group. However, Jo-Anne has since resigned, so our thanks go to her too.

When they first come to the group, many parent/carers say that there are few groups purely for babies and also that they have heard good reports about the group. Please pray that the Tiny Toes team are able to maintain this good reputation, and that they will be able to share the Gospel message as they meet with these parents.

***Ann Thurgood***

### **Footprints Toddler Group**

Footprints Toddler Group meets every Monday morning 9.30-11am during term-time in St John's Schoolrooms (upstairs). The group is run for the benefit of parents/carers and their pre-school age children. Our sessions involve playing, craft, songs, bible stories and snack time.

We have 21 children on the list (usually 14-17 children per 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. Once a term we have a social for the parents/carers and their children to come along, for example a picnic in park, and a social for the parent/carers, such as a meal or dessert out.

There is a small team 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.

*Currently during this lock down period we are posting videos on the footprints toddler group homepage. This includes a craft, song and story, to provide the children with some continuity and routine. Please continue to pray for us, as we try to reach mums and toddlers through social media, and pray that this may be a time where many turn to Christ.*

***Doreen Maitland and the Footprints Team***

### **Holiday Club**

Holiday Club 2019 found us way out west with amazing scenery and even a life-size wagon. It is wonderful to see the faces of the children as they arrive on the first day to see such an amazing stage set.

This year we made a number of significant changes as a trial. Although the previous model worked really well we were keen to see if we could accommodate more children in the future by making the changes. We had about 55 helpers who adapted amazingly to these changes, as did the children who were familiar with the old model.

We welcomed around 65 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 negotiating us through the changes from up front, even adding things to the programme as we went.

We ended the week with all 65 children and 50 helpers having a party outside to celebrate the return of the prodigal son. We weren't sure whether having Keith Stevens lead us in barn dancing all together was a little ambitious but it went brilliantly. 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 always end 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 God's love to all of us.

**Lin Hann**

## **Pastoral Care**

*The words 'pastoral care' have taken on new meaning at this time in which I am writing (April 2020). Pastoral care across our church families has had to adapt to lockdown, so no face to face visits of folk in their homes, hospital or care homes. There have been new and creative ways of providing care and support in this time of social distancing – which have been practical, spiritual and social. Practical – shopping, pharmacy trips, making meals; spiritual – zoom meetings, prayers over the phone/internet; social – keeping in touch using the phone, Whatsapp messages, text, email, even good old-fashioned letter writing!*

### **John 13: 34-35**

***"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."***

The central vision of The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator 'is to support and develop the Christian pastoral care of our congregations, enabling all to care for each, in different kinds of need, working alongside a team of volunteers'.

To date we have:

- A Pastoral Care Team of 9 trained Lay Pastoral Assistants
- A church wide network of practical help
- A café which supports the pastoral needs of those who come
- A Carers Support Group which meets every few months
- A network of people visiting those in residential homes or who are housebound
- Events for our elderly folk, such as Holiday at Home and Christmas Festive Fun
- A church family weekend away planned at Brunel Manor in September 2020
- Many new and varied fellowship groups this year

**The pastoral team** is made up of nine people: Beth Farrington, Jenny Jones, Phil Juggins, Helen Peace, Chris Salberg, Jenny Salberg, Ann Thurgood, Helen Truett and Heather Voizey. Thank you to each one for their amazing service to God and to the church family – I am delighted to report that the commitment and love shown by this team has had far-reaching consequences to so many people – for which we, as church families at St John's and St Andrew's, are all grateful. Pray that they keep their focus on God and know His help and strength in all they do. Some of us have attended training on the Principles of Pastoral Care (run by the Diocese), Bereavement Care (run by Biblical Counselling UK), mental health awareness training and dementia care training (both diocesan led).

## **Fellowship Groups**

Change is never easy or welcome – so a big thank you to you all for your patience and willingness to move around, in order to re-arrange the fellowship groups this year, so each group started afresh in September 2019, some with new hosts and leaders, and all with new and varied groups of people. It has been a real joy to hear of the successes of the groups, with new friendships quickly forming as we meet and study God's word and pray together. We now have 150 people in fellowship groups – with 3 additional groups being formed. CAP Alpha was run by the Irwins and the Matthews – thank you for your ongoing commitment to this, and the discipling of many new Christians, who are now enjoying being part of their new fellowship group.

*2 Peter 3:18 Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to him be glory both now and for ever! Amen.*

## **Gone Fishing Café:**

This has continued to thrive across the year and we are sorry to be shut at the current time. The cafe is a place of acceptance and care – and there is so much ministry taking place across the tables (as well as consumption of tea and cake). It is wonderful to work in partnership with CAP, and having Steve and Mary present each week to meet with people who come in with debt/money troubles. Thanks to all those who volunteer to serve, bake, set up/clear away chairs etc. One thing that often strikes me about the café is the abundance of men present there, who are able to chat and minister to fellow men, from inside and outside the church. There is a strong emphasis on team – and God has been faithfully answering prayers as we meet week by week. From it we are able to promote all the different activities that are taking place: breakfasts, TCP, shared lunches, church services, children's work and encourage others to find out more and join in.

**Events:** There have been many fun, family and evangelistic events across the year: one that immediately springs to mind was the Putt family's farewell party – what a happy glorious day it was – lovely sunshine as we gathered the church families at Pendomer for a hog roast, speeches and fabulous food. Easter breakfast, 'newcomers evenings' at the Rectory, shared lunches in the Schoolrooms, the Christmas Lights-on event, 'Super Saturday', pancakes and much more. Thank you so much to all who give their time to enable these events to take place.

**'Holiday at Home':** This took place in August 2019, with a trip to Ghana (at St Andrew's Hall), with bobotie (food), African quizzes, language and not to mention our first ever African drumming workshop, which was awesome and enjoyed by all. There are plans afoot for another Holiday at Home in August 2020 – but where to this time? We also ran a follow-up called **'Christmas Festive Fun'** in December 2019, to which many came and enjoyed activities, festive food and a talk about the greatest gift of Christmas, Jesus Christ our Lord, from Jennifer Matthew. 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.

## **Christmas Kitchen Live!**

Following on from Kitchen Live where different cooking skills were taught 'live', we ventured into new territory of doing 'Christmas Live'. What a great evening it was with so many people involved coming along – young, old, male, female, families – with Christmas drink and nibbles, quizzes, demonstrations of food and flowers, icing cakes to name a few, sharing good ideas for gifts for Christmas which could be home-made. There was a festive talk about the greatest gift of Christmas – our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Thank you to all who helped organise this great event.

**Caring for the Carers:** This group has met 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 and far. By God's grace, this group has flourished with invaluable times of sharing together the highs and

lows of caring, 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).*

In conclusion, it is a joy to see so much pastoral care taking place in our churches, proactive and reactive, organised, planned and ad hoc. Thank you to all those who have taken time to respond to the needs of others in our church family in loving, practical and kind ways.

We have lost some dear church family members this year: Anne Bailie, Roger and Edward Ball, Kath Wilkins, Doris Pryke and John Talbot. We have said a warm 'hello' to baby Oliver Pavey (son of Katie and Chris Pavey), and supported them with meals and care in the early days of a new baby in the home.

May we seek to serve the Lord for the good of others with his compassion over the coming year.

**Galatians 6:9-10 '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'.**

***Helen Peace***  
***Pastoral Care Co-ordinator***

### **Parish Prayer Chain**

Thirteen 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. 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, and 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**

2019 was a big year for Fellowship Groups! We started the year with eleven groups, and ended it with fifteen groups.

The groups followed study material in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and some studies in 'What a Christian really is' – with topics like: A soldier in Christ's army, a child in God's family, a member in Christ's body, an ambassador in God's kingdom ...

September 2019 saw a relaunch of our Fellowship Groups. All groups disbanded, which was very hard for many people, sometimes after many years of being together. But then new groups were formed, with Helen Peace and James working to invite previous members of groups to join a group, along with others who had never been in a group before. We needed several new leaders as well.

Sorting out who should be in which group was not easy ... some live in outlying villages or Sherborne, some want a day-time group, some can only manage Wednesdays, some have no means of transport, etc, etc. We ended up with fifteen groups made up of 158 adult church members.

A massive thanks to Helen Peace who did a huge job on this. Thank you to everyone for being patient with us while we ironed out the wrinkles, and thanks also to those who have either continued with leading a group, and to those who have been willing to step into leadership for the first time.

We have two daytime groups, one St Andrew's group, three groups meeting in Sherborne, five Tuesday groups, ten Wednesday groups. It is very exciting to have stepped forward in this ministry, after some years of little numerical growth.

We really pray that these groups will help members grow in Christ. There is Bible study, as we feed on God's word. There is prayer, as we support each other in the struggles of life. And there is real Christian friendship and love as groups do stuff together and care for each other.

At a leaders' meeting recently we looked at Mark 3, where Jesus picks his 'Fellowship Group', made up of a tax-collector, a zealot, sons of Thunder, a doubter, a betrayer, and a rock! Our groups too are usually a fine old mix of people – but in Christ we are united, we are one, we are family. Thanks to all for making these groups so valuable.

***James Dudley-Smith***

### **Genesis Report 2020**

We have had an encouraging year reading, studying and praying through God's word. We have been challenged to be content in our circumstances and with all that God has given us, as well as being just, kind and humble through looking at the book of Micah.

We pray too for our needs and concerns, giving thanks to God for answered prayers, his grace, mercy, forgiveness, sustaining and life through Jesus Christ.

Over the year, we have met fortnightly at 41 The Park (*and latterly through Zoom,*) numbering between 3 and 12 ladies, up to five children and eight crèche helpers.

We have had to say goodbye to several ladies as they started new jobs; and have welcomed some new members.

Our grateful thanks to our crèche helpers: Anne Unwin, Jenny Jones, Roby Maitland, Elaine Penny, Paula Rollason; and also Ann and Sarah Francis who have since returned to work and started college respectively.

***Becky Dudley-Smith***



### **TCP (Tea, Coffee/Croissants & Prayer)**

TCP breakfast fellowship and prayer group has been well attended again this year. I was surprised to find when looking through the group's prayer diary that we have been meeting on the fourth Saturday of the month since September 2013.

The group was set up as a place for ladies to connect with one another through fellowship and prayer. The antiseptic connotations of the name are often commented on and it could be argued that sharing and praying are a great healer for some of the ailments of a busy world.

There are now more than thirty on the contact list and we generally have at least a dozen of those people (and often more), present each month. There is a core of regulars and many of them tell me that they try hard to ensure they do not miss if at all possible. There is no charge for breakfast, but any donations are always welcome. New members are most welcome to turn up and join us,

We meet upstairs in the Schoolrooms from 9-10.30am, although not everyone arrives at the same time. Breakfast is eaten and always accompanied by much chat and laughter. We then move to a time of prayer at around 10am, for about 20 mins, or until all needs have been covered.

*Roz Chatwin*

### **Crafty Ladies Fellowship Group**

The group of around ten members meets fortnightly downstairs in the Schoolrooms from 7.30-9pm on a Thursday. We would welcome any new members.

In the last year the group has been involved in the creating a further two Christmas banners for the church and we are particularly grateful for the intricate stars which adorn the top of all four banners, stitched patiently by Rose Hodges.

The group enjoys the fellowship of working together on projects sharing much chat and laughter as we create. We are currently working on a new banner, at present on hold and are very much missing our meetings.

*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 Breakfasts**

Five breakfasts were held in 2019 in alternate months except July. The breakfasts are intentionally evangelistic and those who attend are from a number of churches including St John's and St Andrew'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 been consistent and has included a number of newcomers for which we give thanks to God.

**Edward Armitstead**

### **Women's Breakfasts**

We have had four breakfasts in 2019, 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**

### **St John's Music Group**

The Band continues to grow in number, repertoire and technical knowledge. Jesus is the centre and in Him we trust.

We practise on a Monday evening in the church building and an hour before each morning and evening service. We have worked through new songs with different band combinations which then enables us to include different songs in services.

We are currently eighteen in number using varying skills of: keyboard, acoustic/electric/bass guitar, saxophone, flute, recorder, drums and voices in different parts.

We are moving forward with the use of technology and are encouraged to use in-ears as much as possible: this helps us as individuals and leads to a better overall sound and mix. Sometimes this is a trial but with the help of David and his team, we are getting there. It also enables us to gradually have fewer wires, etc, on the floor.

*April 2020: Since the Virus has prevented us meeting, we have been able to use Zoom on a Monday evening to talk, share ideas and support each other. Also we are starting to record ourselves at home for the Tech team to put together to give them more songs to choose for the current online services. We are all on a huge learning curve.*

If on reading this you feel able to give your time and gift please speak to Keith, Becky, Judy or myself.

**Jane Hiscock**

### **St John's Floral Group**

Apart from the usual week by week floral decorations of the church:

- We decorated the church for a later than usual Easter in 2019 on 21<sup>st</sup> April
- On Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June, we held a fundraising cream tea at John and Shirley Mitchell's home: the weather was not too kind and it was fortunate that they have a large kitchen and a veranda. We had good support from church members and raised £126.30 for group funds.
- On Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July we held a cake stall after the morning service and made £117.30 thanks again to wonderful support from the church family.
- We did wedding flowers for Maisie and Dan Kelly on 24<sup>th</sup> August with a colour scheme of white, cream and silvery green.

- On Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September we were asked to do two pedestals for the Vintage Tea in aid of CAP in the school rooms. Jennifer Matthew and team did a wonderful job in transforming the upper room into a 'palm court' complete with quartet, and a sumptuous tea was provided.
- On Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October we had fun decorating the church with the vivid colours of harvest – reds, oranges and golds.
- Caroline Armitstead once again did the arrangements for Remembrance Sunday on 9<sup>th</sup> November.
- On 14<sup>th</sup> December we decorated for Christmas, reverting to a red, green and gold theme which everyone seemed to appreciate. Roz Chatwin and Miriam Berry-Sims have decorated the pulpit at each festival with skill and imagination and made it their own.

My thanks go to each member of my energetic and committed team: Ann B, Ann C, Anne J and Ann T, Pauline Davy, Maggie Butler, Rose Shire, Jenny, Grace, Shirley M, Jane H, Tricia, Caroline A, Roz and Miriam, and Gill Allen.

**Mary Brooks**

### **St Johns Model Railway Group**

Now into our fifth year, we continue to meet in the Schoolrooms on the Thursday of the third week in the month. Our original vision remains unchanged, namely to provide a place where like-minded folks can come to enjoy our God given creativity and to enjoy time together. There is always a nice buzz in the room when we meet. We welcome all, and have members from other churches in Yeovil and with no church background. Our main project – to build a reasonably accurate model of Yeovil Junction is still a work in progress, and will be for some time to come. Please pray that we would honour God with our use of this club and that he would be able to use it to draw all of us into a deeper relationship with him.

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 £90,000 for the upkeep and improvement of the church fabric, seeking to draw support from the wider town community as well as the church membership.

Our activities in this last year started with the Friends AGM on 15<sup>th</sup> May in the Church, held in a café setting with refreshments and a fascinating talk by James Dudley-Smith about the history of the church with reference to three anniversaries: 15<sup>th</sup> May 1367, when King Edward III wrote to the troublesome townfolk of Yeovil, 5<sup>th</sup> October 1619, when Stukely and Julianna Westcott were married in St John's, later in 1635 sailing with the Puritans to America, and 15<sup>th</sup> April 1919, when the cathedral of Notre Dame was in flames in Paris.

**Fund-Raising Events** – In June we enjoyed a very successful Barn Dance at Abbey Community Centre, with our superb caller, Keith Stevens, excellent entertainment from the Yeovil Ukulele Club band and ploughman's suppers for all, raising £345 for funds. Later, in September on Yeovil's Super Saturday, our stall selling second-hand books, CDs and DVDs raised another £173. This was followed in October with the magnificent sound of the Phoenix Brass Band in the church, back by popular demand for the third year, with £376 raised.

**Income** – Our net income for 2019 was £3235.30, including the funds raised at the events and the generous donations of our supporters.

**Grants** – We made grants to St John’s totaling £4425.00, including partial funding for improvements to the audio system for the digital organ and replacement of pneumatic components in the church’s historic Harrison & Harrison organ.

**Newsletter** – In 2019 we produced three issues of our newsletter (circulated by email) to provide news of events and of specific needs regarding the maintenance of the fabric of the church. If you do not already receive these and would like to, please contact the Friends by email at [friends@siyeovil.org.uk](mailto:friends@siyeovil.org.uk)

**Future Events** - Our plans for fund-raising events for 2020 have been constrained by the current need for social distancing to fight the pandemic. We were expecting to hold an Annual General Meeting in May and now expect it to be postponed and will confirm the date when we can. For later in the year, subject to confirmation, we plan to have a bookstall again at the church on Super Saturday (19<sup>th</sup> September) and then on 9<sup>th</sup> November an evening at the Swan Theatre for the play “Handbagged” by Moira Buffini. This promises to be most entertaining, with the play billed as: “a hilarious comedy said to be inspired by true events involving The Monarch and her most powerful subject, Mrs Thatcher. One believed there was no such thing as society, the other had vowed to serve it. The play opens the clasp on the antipathy between two giants of the twentieth century, and hilarity ensues.”

The need to support work on the magnificent St John’s building continues. The storms of February resulted in damp finding its way inside the building in a number of places, notably in the Edwardian Vestry. When the current pandemic crisis is over, significant remedial work will be required which the Friends are hoping to fund at least in part.

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

*Phil Juggins (Chair)*

### **Bookstall**

St Johns Bookstall is a regularly used resource in the church. We have supplied and sold over 200 books for Men’s and Women’s Breakfasts this last year. The bookstall in church is often used after Sunday meetings and during the week. Our most popular book this last year was John Lennox’s “Can Science Explain Everything.” Please do remember to order books via the bookstall - we benefit from discounts and will happily help resource various groups.

*James Maitland*

### **Yeovil College Chaplaincy**

The position of Chaplain at Yeovil College has been gapped since the departure of Tom Putt early in the Summer 2019. Rev Ben Graham will be taking on this part-time appointment on his arrival in Yeovil as St John’s Associate Minister in April 2020. JD

### **Deanery Synod Report**

As always there have been a number of interesting visitors and speakers to the Deanery Synod many of which reflect the diversity of general church life in both the deanery and the diocese. We met the new mission enabler in the deanery The Rev Ruth Chapman recently appointed to St James’ Church and attended a seminar on leading intercessions that she led in November and at an open meeting shared experiences of being church wardens with others and those considering that role.

1. **Our Deanery Accompanier**, David Maggs was introduced to the meeting. His official title is Team Leader for Mission, and he will be responsible to the Yeovil Deanery in particular as a point of contact and facilitator within the Diocese. He has already attended a meeting of the DMPG and will in future attend some of our deanery synod meetings.
2. **Deanery Pastoral Minister**. Fr David Anderson spoke of the need for a pioneer within the parish of St Michael's, Yeovil, which is a disadvantaged area with a lot of new housing and young people who need to be reached. He is delighted to report that Farhad Chermahini has been appointed and will move with his wife and young family to start work in late May/early June 2020. This is a five year project in the first instance and the hope is that further funding will be found to maintain this role for a further five years.
3. **Modern Slavery/County Lines**. David Maggs gave an educational introduction to the various kinds of slavery that come under this umbrella terminology. People from overseas come to this country in search of a better life but are often sold a lie with little or no pay: they are tricked, trapped and traded. The police need people on the ground to help identify the various forms of exploitation such as, in rural areas, on farms.

Regarding county lines, he then showed a short film recorded using the words of Psalm 10 which describe very succinctly how evil people can entrap and use those weaker than themselves for their own advantage: this psalm has a particularly contemporary resonance. Slavery is everywhere and is not just an urban problem.

4. **New Monastic Communities**. Colin Simpson returned from his 2019 Sabbatical which he used for reading, praying, travel and thought. Now he is back, refreshed, and is encouraged that corporate prayer @Coker Ridge now has between eight and ten regular attendees which he hopes to grow into a new monastic style community with a rule of life.
5. **Stewardship of Creation**: Julian Brooks works as an Environmental Consultant and is currently Lay Dean in the Crewkerne Deanery. He informed us that a climate emergency and ecological crisis have been declared locally and he listed some of the reasons for this as: carbon dioxide emissions, rising sea levels, species extinction, global warming, deforestation, fossil fuels, and the use of pesticides and insecticides. Dr Rowan Williams and David Attenborough have both been very vocal on this subject, calling for urgent action. Archbishop Justin Welby and Bishop Peter Hancock are both now on board too, as are many Christian organisations. We are asked to look at our own churches to see what we can do to be more environmentally aware and he asked us to take a look at the Eco Church website: [www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk](http://www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk). God made the world, loves it and entrusts it to our care.
6. **Thy Kingdom Come**. Rev David Keen and Rev Ruth Chapman spoke enthusiastically about the ten days of prayer initiative at St James', Preston Plucknett. Many churches throughout the world joined the initiative, praying for 24 hours a day for the ten days between Ascension and Pentecost. St James made 12 stations for prayer and people prayed for Yeovil, the church and the world we live in. They also held short services of Morning and Evening prayer daily.
7. **Diocesan Giving and Funding Advisor** Gary Watson was with us to explain his role as Diocesan Giving and Funding Adviser. He is the main point of contact regarding fundraising for church wardens and parishes in general and spoke at length regarding his work and the different ways he is able to help. Of particular interest to many was the notion of sponsored contactless donations using a card reader and he advised that the Diocese had a number of these available to parishes who wished to trial this method of donations for their church. Afterwards, he answered a number

of questions and encouraged us to contact him or anyone in his department if experiencing problems of a financial/fundraising nature.

**Rob Dean**

### **Yeovil CAP Debt Centre Report - 2019**

By the end of 2019, the Yeovil CAP Debt Centre had visited 406 households, of which 91 had gone debt free! A truly staggering work carried out over that period by six different debt coaches and over 40 different befrienders; we currently have three debt coaches from three different church families and 25 befrienders from ten different church families. So, we are making headway in our vision to see 'The Church' in the Yeovil and surrounding area, showing their commitment and support of this amazing ministry.

The three debt coaches – Mary Irwin, Anne-Charlotte, and Steve Hart – up until early August, between them were seeing five new clients per month, but then due to a large backlog of clients in the Insolvency system at head office, CAP took the very difficult and reluctant decision to close the helpline. This enabled a 6-month period, until the end of January 2020, where Debt Ops could catch up and reduce this back log, hence giving frontline staff a period of not seeing new clients. In the Yeovil centre clients were already booked into August, September and October – being booked three months in advance has been the norm for Yeovil – and so our centre had a 3-month rest period of seeing no new clients.

Fifteen households went debt free and five individuals made a response to Jesus, some taking their very first steps in a relationship with Him.

Two families 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 and frontline staff facilitates the events, including many opportunities where the love of Jesus is shared in so many different ways. Three clients made responses to Jesus.

The Gone Fishing café continues to provide help to encourage CAP clients to connect with the debt coaches before their first home visit, and any time afterwards. This is very helpful when a client's visit may be 2-3 months away. Helen Peace leads a brilliant team of volunteers to enable this town centre ministry to operate, and we say a huge thank you for their ministry.

As a result of Ian Croxford stepping down in October from leading the Tuesday men's breakfast/discipleship group for the past seven years, several men have now dropped off the radar screen, where previously at this gathering they were receiving encouragement and spiritual input. Ed Brooks served alongside Ian, so we thank both Ian and Ed for their sterling service over the years. "Is there a need for a day-time men's group by way of an access point to faith, church and social contact?"

Again, Christmas hampers were made up by fellowship groups from different congregations across the town, including Yeovil Radio Cabs. We thank Ann Johnson for co-ordinating this work. The Christmas Tea was located upstairs in the Schoolrooms, and we continue to see large numbers of families and individuals coming together, with several staying on for the Carol Service.

In addition to over 40 monthly financial givers, without whom we couldn't budget each year, in 2019 there were several astonishing fundraising events – in September Jennifer Matthew organised a team of bakers, musicians, waitresses and scene-stagers from St Johns, creating a vintage style Parlour in the Schoolrooms, putting together what can only be described as an opulent event where people were invited to donate £30 towards a ticket for their Vintage Afternoon Tea that raised nearly £3,000; in October-November David Upton spearheaded another Art for CAP pop-up shop and this time it raised a staggering £5,000; in November we had another GateWay coffee shop charity day where a record £1,600 was raised.

**In April 2021 we will be celebrating our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary by having a party, so please watch this space.**

The Lord's Larder food bank continues to play a very important role in our support, where 125 food parcels were distributed; one every other working day!

Jennifer Matthew spearheads the leadership of the CAP Management Committee, with Jill Martin, Margaret Hamilton, and Alan Guy the other members of the team: representatives from three different church families.

Working three days per week as the Yeovil Debt Centre Manager and two days per week as a CAP Area Manager – covering Dorset and South Somerset – my role in CAP is full-time and varies from visiting clients via our centre, to supporting and challenging other CAP centre managers in my area, and influencing new ways of operating in CAP.

We continue to seek people who will support this life and, therefore, community transforming work, and you can do this in the following ways – receive a 3-weekly update; become a befriender where you can support clients on their debt and faith journey; pray for the debt coaches as they go out with befrienders on their client visits; support the work financially. If you want to find out more about this work, please contact Steve on [stevehart@capuk.org](mailto:stevehart@capuk.org) or Mary on [maryirwin@capuk.org](mailto:maryirwin@capuk.org)

We still long to make the most of every opportunity to pray with people and share the love of Jesus, and as there's always hope, we long to see more responses to the Good News of having a loving and eternal relationship with our Lord Jesus.

Finally, the church family in St Johns continues to show their amazing support and commitment to prayer, financial giving, befriending clients, and 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' church family in what can only be described as a life transforming ministry, where there is ALWAYS HOPE! Thank you, St John's, for your dedication to serving the poor and helping to lift them out of poverty.

Our mission is to **save the lost, serve the poor, with the church, across the nation** and our new CEO Paula Stringer will never compromise this as she brings a new culture and rhythm to how we operate in CAP, so that it is fit for the future.

*Steve Hart*  
*Yeovil CAP Debt Centre Manager*

### **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 eleven 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 2019, giving out numerous pairs of flip-flops, bottles of water and lollipops.

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.

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](mailto:yeovil@streetpastors.org.uk)

*Christine Thomas  
Co-ordinator Yeovil Street Pastors*

### **The Lord's Larder**

Thank you so much for all your support of Yeovil Christian Support Trust. The past year was a busy year for the Lord's Larder, helping over 6,000 people within our local community, with emergency food parcels, a 21% increase on the previous year.

I would like to share with you how your support has helped people in South Somerset. Last year we **gave out over 91,000 items of food** which went into the **2,838 emergency food parcels** to help a total of **6,231 local people:-**

**3,715 adults**  
**2,316 children**  
**1,070 families**

Through last December The Lord's Larder, alongside our standard parcel requests, we had 300 Christmas Parcels requested by agencies for their most needy clients, helping 380 adults and 407 children over Christmas 2019.

As a quick update over the summer, we experienced a marked increase in families needing the services of the Food Bank. We had a 20% increase in families needing food support over 2019. This is due in part to children who would normally receive free school lunches during term time not having this available to them over the summer holidays. This trend continued over August with 6669 items of food going into parcels to help local people in need.

Each day we receive telephone requests for emergency food parcels from agencies for their clients in need when they are in crisis, single people and families who may have lost their jobs, lost a loved one, or experience sickness making them unable to work. We know that every parcel we send out is truly appreciated by those who receive them making a huge difference to them when they are in need.

May we give thanks: that for 29 years we have always found we have enough food donated to the Larder, and last year, the Lord's Larder were given 91,243 items of food, ready to go into food parcels, so that we can ensure no-one goes without food, and no-one goes hungry.

It is only with your generous donations, that we are able to help so many people. Thank you, St John's PCC and the St John's congregation for all your support, without which we would not be able to help so many people.

*Thank you, too, for all your support recently during the Covid-19 crisis: it has been much appreciated when during March 2020 we helped over 1,100 people sending out over 15,000 items of food in one month, thank you.*

***Mat Callaghan  
YCST Operations Manager for Lord's Larder and The Lord's Larder Community Fund***