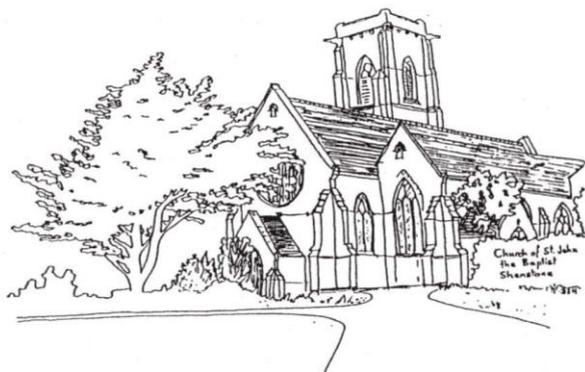


St John the Baptist, Shenstone

*Following Jesus, sharing His love
and building His Kingdom together*



**Reports of our Church Activities
during 2013
presented to the
Annual Parochial Church Meeting on
Wednesday, 26th. March, 2014
in St. John's Hall**

CONTENTS

Introduction from the Associate Minister.....	1
Churchwardens' Report.....	2
Music Group.....	7
St John's Singers.....	7
Shenstone Churches Choir and Orchestra.....	7
Flower Arrangers.....	8
Bell Ringers.....	9
Church Cleaning.....	10
Once a Month House Group.....	10
Tuesday Evening House Group.....	11
Alpha House Group.....	11
Ladies Prayer Breakfast.....	12
Early Birds.....	13
Come Together.....	14
1 st Shenstone (St John's) Rainbow Guides.....	14
'Open the Book' Assembly Team.....	16
Church Library.....	17
Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection.....	18
Magazine.....	18
Social Events.....	19
Marriage Preparation.....	19
Shenstone & Stonnall Men's Group.....	20
Ladies Group.....	21
Footherley Hall, Shenstone Hall, Home Communion.....	21/22
Prayer Ministry Team.....	23
Monday Morning Prayers.....	23
Swinfen Prayer Group.....	23
Deanery Synod.....	24
Electoral Roll.....	25
Mission Giving 2013.....	25

Introduction from the Associate Minister

As Rev. Fred Olney left us for parishes in Kent in October, it falls to me to write a short introduction to the reports of our Church Activities for 2013.

It could easily be said that vicars come and vicars go but the Church goes on. We are very fortunate to have so many members of our Church family who keep things going, whether they are on a formal list or not. Much of what they do is noticeable, but a lot more is done quietly, though as an essential part of reaching out to many in the parish and beyond. Truly the left hand does not always know what the right is doing! So our grateful thanks are due to everyone in our Church family for all that is done. Our Lord knows all about it.

This interregnum is different from the other six I have been around for as the Archdeacon, Ven Simon Baker, has arranged for us to have an Interim Minister, Rev Viv Hatton, essentially to take over what would have been Fred's duties. Her appointment started in November and is likely to be for six months. We are so grateful to Viv for the care she is taking of us, both here and at Stonnall, especially as she is living over at Great Wyrley.

So, please read on to find out what we have been doing – and then “keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord's service is ever useless”.

(I Corinthians 15 v.58)

Thank you again.

Rev John Aston

Wardens' Report

In October we entered an Interregnum when Fred and Angela left to take up Fred's new role as Rector of Sissinghurst with Frittenden in Kent, after 6 ½ years. During their time in Shenstone we have seen the re-ordering of the Nave, the restoration of the Tower Clock, the creation of the Greysbrooke School Choir, The Open the Book Assembly Team, the formation of Rainbow Guides and more. We wish them both every happiness and success in their new ministry.

When Bishop Clive offered us the opportunity to have Rev. Vivienne Hatton as our Interim Minister we were only too pleased to accept. Vivienne has quickly made herself a valued part of the church and we are very happy to have her ministry. As a result we have been able to continue with our existing service pattern, with only one change over the busy Christmas period for logistical reasons.

Interregnum or not, St. John's church life has continued, with Lent Meetings and Lunches, concerts, a Celtic Worship evening 'in the round', the Village Festival, Harvest, Carols by Candlelight, Marriage Preparation Course, Walk of Witness and much more. Early Birds continues to thrive. A new church website: www.stjohnthebaptistshenstone.org.uk has been created by Ian Law, and Tricia Glover has done an excellent job with the weekly newsletter.

Looking to the future and the appointment of a new vicar, a team has been busily working behind the scenes to produce a Parish Profile for our two churches. Two St. John's Parish Representatives have been chosen to take part in the interview process. By the time of the APCM the vacancy will have been

advertised. The date for interview has been set for 21 May 2014. If all goes well, our new Vicar should be with us in August.

Sadly, from a pastoral view, 2013 has been a difficult year for St. John's as we have lost several greatly loved and valued members of the congregation. They are much missed and our thoughts and prayers are with their families. We are grateful to the Church family, with special thanks to John and Ann Aston, for keeping in touch with those in need –whether by visits or by telephone. Full use was made of the Prayer Chain which now circulates by e-mail.

Veronica is looking at a more coordinated approach to our pastoral care. The 'Welcome Pack' for people new to Shenstone is now in use but needs a 'push' this year. The Shenstone Magazine, a wonderful opportunity for outreach, continued without a regular editor. Volunteers to edit an occasional issue are urgently needed. Please speak to us. Help and guidance will be given.

Your wardens would like to reiterate John Aston's comments and to thank all those who are involved in "keeping things going". Some things are obvious, others much less so but all are essential to the life of the Church and allow us to worship the Lord and minister in his name. 'Many hands make light work' and extra volunteers are always needed!

The Church Buildings and Assets

As stated in the 2011 Quinquennial Report, repointing work at high level and at the base of the Tower and guttering repairs are urgently needed to avoid long term and expensive water and frost damage to the building. Quotes are yet to be obtained but are likely to run to several thousand pounds. In the medium term, repair and redecoration of interior plasterwork is needed,

together with expensive restoration of the stained glass windows.

Additionally there are drainage problems, with the main rainwater drains being blocked below ground. So far we have not been able to ascertain whether the drainage pipes run to mains drainage or to a soakaway, or indeed how to deal with the problem.

A survey of the Bell Frame undertaken in 2012 is under consideration, but as ever there are potentially large cost implications. We are likely to need a project to seek grants and raise funds, as we did with the Church Clock in 2012. It is pleasing to note that, after 'teething troubles' the clock is working well and chiming out the presence of the church to our village.

A replacement audio system, using the latest technology, and upgradeable to incorporate video projection, is becoming an urgent need. Quotes will be obtained during 2014. Again, there are serious cost implications.

With the approval of the PCC and Diocese, the Essington portrait, long neglected and badly damaged, was returned to the Essington family in November. It was originally commissioned as a gift to the Essington family, before returning to St. Johns in the 1930s. Plans are in hand to replace the ancient church safe.

The Vicarage

Responsibility for the Vicarage passes to the Wardens and PCC during the interregnum. It is generally in good order. Like the church, the Vicarage has a 5 yearly 'quinquennial' inspection, which was conducted in 2013. Remedial works are planned for

2014, arranged by the Diocese. Viv Hatton is using the vicarage office, and we are considering using the lounge for meetings.

The Churchyard and Glebe

Memorial benches for Janet Hickie and Angela Beddard were placed near the south door during the year, funded by their families.

Further discussions were held with the Parish Council over the amount of self-set trees and shrubs/undergrowth in the churchyard and the need for a proper management. A tree specialist has reported to the Council, and clearance of the lower growth was commenced during the year. Some larger trees will be felled in 2014. We are grateful to the Parish Council for committing substantial funds to this work. It is worth restating here that records of burials in the graveyard are either poor or non-existent. The Wardens would welcome help in creating such a record, through a survey of the graveyard and search of available records.

The tree specialist has also recommended that the cherry trees along the vicarage access driveway should be removed to restore the vista to the magnificent Cedar of Lebanon tree and the church beyond. Planning permission and funds (!) are required, however. The trees around the Glebe have yet to be professionally inspected.

The Church driveway continues to deteriorate. A section was replaced in January 2013 at a cost of c. £3,000. Consolidation of adjacent parking areas and the approach to the Hall is needed.

St. John's Hall

Our thanks again go to Rosemary Lawrence for her dedication to maintaining and improving the Hall and its grounds, in addition to managing bookings. During the year a partial radiator system was installed, following the failure of a gas heater. It is hoped to continue this process in the future, funds permitting.

Planning permission for the 'portakabin' expired and in October we were presented with an ultimatum from the District Council to remove it from site within 4 weeks. The building was cut up on site and removed at a cost to the Church of £1000. Thank you, Paul Glover, for arranging that. The Baby and Toddler Group materials have been moved temporarily to the shed behind the Hall (repaired for the purpose by John Beattie -thank you, John). The Church materials, consisting mainly of games etc from the time of the Millenium Club and The Vibe youth groups, have been placed in the Vicarage garage pending a decision on a replacement store.

The Old Tower

In the short term we need to repair the compound fence around the tower to keep youngsters away, clear undergrowth to enhance visibility/security and improve the security of the Old Tower door. A plan for the future management of this Grade II (*) listed ancient monument, preferably taking it out of PCC responsibility, is urgently needed. A meeting with the District Council and representatives of the Diocese was held on site in September with the hope that the Council would take some responsibility for the maintenance of the Old Tower but this has yet to lead anywhere.

Veronica and Graham, Wardens

Music Group

Thank you to our regular members, Martin Rowley (guitar), Keith Sydenham and Sarah Williams (singing) and the help we receive from Paul and Tricia Glover, David Tocknell and Lizzie Farrow. We play for all hymns/songs on the first Sunday in the month and for some of the hymns/songs on the third Sunday, both preceded by a short practice. We miss Angela Olney's committed contribution to our musical efforts and would welcome all offers of musical help!

Cherry Tocknell

St. John's Singers

... is a small group of mixed voices who aim to contribute a short choral item during the second Sunday Communion service each month whenever possible. If you enjoy singing in parts – and can read music reasonably well (as we only have one brief rehearsal), then please consider joining the group. You would be very welcome.

Paul Glover

Shenstone Churches Choir and Orchestra

The Choir and Orchestra draw their members from St. John's, Trinity and the village community and enhance our worship at the major church events of the year: Easter Day Celebration, the Songs of Praise service which closes the Village Festival, Remembrance Day, and Carols by Candlelight.

We were pleased to welcome several new singers and instrumentalists both for the Songs of Praise Service and the Carol Service. The orchestra did their usual sterling service in accompanying the congregational hymns and carols in these

respective services and in their performance of the carol compilation which opened the Carol service. The choir – which just seems to keep on growing – sang three pieces during the Songs of Praise service including the African song *Amani utupe* – complete with actions! Five contrasted choir items were sung as part of the Carols by Candlelight service.

The Musicians' New Year Party has become something of a tradition with a bring and share feast and home-grown entertainment to follow.

My thanks to all our musicians; I am sure you will agree that we are richly blessed with so many capable singers and instrumentalists in Shenstone.

Paul Glover

Flower Arranging

The ordinary arrangements for church are done by two ladies in turn, but fortunately we have a further seven who help out for the special services - for Christmas, Easter and Harvest.

We invite groups to take part the Village Flower Festival and the results are always splendid. To see Stan Hickie, who had done displays for all of our Festivals since they started in 1993, doing "The Surrey with the Fringe on Top" (with the help of his daughter Kate) just two months before he died was amazing, but he always loved taking part.

We do need some new helpers. It gives so much pleasure to complete an arrangement, and shows the beauty of God's world. They need not be expensive, and the silk flowers in our cupboard look good with fresh greenery.

The flowers from our Easter lily donations are a reminder of our lost loved one.

Thank you to all of our friends who help in any way.

Pauline Sampson

Bell Ringers

The bells have been rung regularly for the Morning service and for the seven weddings held in 2013. For the Village Festival the bells were rung on the Saturday morning at the opening of the Festival and again on the Sunday evening for the closing Songs of Praise service. We decorated one of the windows for the Festival flower display; our theme was 'Music of the Night' from Phantom of the Opera. As it was the first opportunity to let the public see the newly restored church clock we opened the tower for a short time on the Saturday morning.

In July, together with other towers in the district, we rang for the start of the Lichfield Festival and in December we decorated a Christmas tree at Trinity Methodist Church on behalf of St. John's.

The number of ringers has remained constant over the year, but we are unable to ring all eight bells regularly and still rely on outside help for weddings.

We are all getting older! In the past ringers have traditionally been recruited from the church membership, however today this is difficult to do. To try to overcome this we are looking for teenagers and adults in their 20s and 30s who may be interested in becoming ringers. (This doesn't rule out older age groups, of course.) If this problem is not addressed we shall soon be unable to ring the bells and the first casualty will be weddings – a great shame.

Ringling could also come to an abrupt halt if the necessary work mentioned in last year's report is not soon put in hand.

Vic Holland

Church Cleaning

What can I say that I haven't said for the last few years? A heartfelt 'thank you' to all who have worked to keep the church looking so clean. This year I was taken by surprise by an offer of help without me having to ask for more volunteers! That really made my day and I am very grateful to the person concerned. Any other volunteers?

Di Proctor

Once-a-month House Group

There was sadness among our members at the death of Peter Jones last spring. Several of us were able to be at his funeral in Aston Cantlow. Then in August we had a day out together for a meal (in Aston Cantlow again) before visiting Millie in the Nursing Home in Stratford.

In the summer we enjoyed a return visit of friends from Lozells who came to join our morning worship, and enriched us greatly. We hope to make another reciprocal visit to them soon.

Our monthly meetings have continued to be the usual mix of listening, watching, laughing, reading, talking, praying, eating and drinking together. On December 1st we all went to the Advent Carol Service at the Cathedral to lose and find ourselves in the great mysteries of God's purposes.

As all long-standing House Groups find, there is a strong and deep sense of fellowship which develops as we continue to share our lives with each other, for which we thank God.

Tricia Glover

Tuesday House Group

Thank you, Lord, for helping us along our way as we studied your word.

Our Bible studies for this year have included: 1 John – we used an excellent teaching DVD from Spring Harvest, this was very thought provoking, inspirational and challenging. A study book guided us through the lives of Old Testament Women, sessions included; Hannah's journey from misery to praise, Naomi's hard life of famine, refugee and the deaths of her husband and two sons! Miriam - a warning about the dangers of criticism. Abigail's courage and insightfulness prevented a massacre. Esther a disadvantaged young woman with inner strength. Rahab, Ruth, Eve, Sarah were also studied. These ladies did much to further God's Kingdom and, with that in mind, Fred came and gave us a helpful and interesting discussion on Women Bishops.

The putting together of the new song books provided us with the chance to catch up with each other and soon became an evening of fun and hilarity, we finished them in under an hour. Well done team! It's not all work, our social evenings have included 'Christmas voices' an evening of comedy and mirth, an uplifting Stuart Townend concert, we've also shared meals together. Praise the Lord for Tuesday house group.

Margaret Birt

Alpha Housegroup

Although the Alpha Course finished in 2012 we are still very aware of where we've come from and the teaching that has provided the background for our continuing study. During 2013 we have used different styles of study material – from Spring Harvest Bible study DVDs requiring us to stay awake and alert for

up to 45 minutes at a time, to the more relaxed – but just as challenging – style of the 15 minute Nooma DVDs. We have studied in depth the life of David and are currently finding an 8-week course by Timothy Keller called ‘Gospel in Life – Grace Changes Everything’ very testing. It is challenging us to live out our faith in every aspect of our lives – and sometimes it is very uncomfortable!

All sounds very serious, doesn’t it – and often it is – but no matter how serious it gets we always seem to end up having plenty of fun and laughter and enjoying each other’s company.

But not just that, during the past 12 months we have got to know each other much better, and have become a very supportive group, learning much about the need to pray together – and often being surprised by the different ways in which God chooses to answer our prayers.

We finished up in 2013 by trying to ‘live out our faith’ by handing out mince pies on Christmas Eve to people queuing for their turkeys outside Russell’s – not a resounding success as most people had collected them the day before! Oh well, at least we tried!

Carol Law

Ladies Prayer Breakfast

We arrange these occasions once every two or three months, and usually there are a dozen or so of us present. It is a happy mixture of ladies from St. John’s and Trinity. After sharing breakfast together, we bring our concerns to God in prayer – though not as you know it. Sometimes we just talk about things in his presence – you have to be there to understand it!

After an hour or so we leave having been nourished in all senses of the word: by food, friendship and the love of God.

Tricia Glover

Early Birds

We have continued our pattern of a service at 9.30 am followed by refreshments, and have realised that the time afterwards, which lasts for as long, if not longer than the 'service' is just as important in 'building the Kingdom'! It also allows parents to chat to members of the next service which is such a valuable link.

Our major loss in 2013 was in saying 'Thank you and Goodbye' to Angela Olney, whose boundless enthusiasm and creativity with children and families was an inspiration. She is much missed, but we have been so grateful to Viv for coming to take a turn in leading.

We were pleased to be able to give a good quantity of Christmas presents to the women at the Lichfield Refuge, which Lesley Matile arranged. Thank you for the many gifts donated by others at St. John's. Particular thanks go to Carol Law for leading the joint services at Christmas and Easter. The Big Breakfast, which rounds off the Summer Term, has settled into a new home down beside St. John's Hall. The grass at the side provides just the right area for a mini 'Sports Day' and Bill and Elaine Whitney kindly cooked our sausage and bacon buns for us.

We sometimes begin with 'Come, now is the time to worship', and our worship is expressed through as many different ways as we (or should that be God?) can think of. We always love to welcome other people to Early Birds – it is not obligatory to come with children! Thank you for all your support.

Tricia Glover

Come Together

The same faithful group of five or six people have attended this informal service throughout last year and we have been pleased to welcome our friends from Trinity as well as folk from St. John's. We may have been few in number, but have all enjoyed these short services and would love you to join us.

Di Proctor

1st Shenstone (St John's) Rainbow Guides

This year's programme began with a new Rainbow challenge, *Global Adventure*.

We "travelled around the world in 10 meetings", having lots of fun experiencing the cultures, traditions and crafts of different countries. During the summer term, we completed our *Rainbows Get Healthy* challenge. We made fruit smoothies, pizzas and healthy energy bars, followed a Village Trail, which took us to the Village Hall, where we tested out the new play equipment (rating it 10 out of 10!), and held our Sports Day on the Glebe. In the autumn term, we enjoyed paper weaving, making leaf-rubbing fairies, bead bracelets and singing songs around the "campfire" – in the dark!

In October, we said goodbye to Angela Olney, as she and Fred moved to their new parish, but we did it in true Rainbow style! Angela received a leaving badge, a special card from all the girls, and a gift from all the Rainbow families. Then, and as is the custom for those leaving Rainbows, she skipped under the Rainbow arch to reach her Pot of Gold, as we waved her off and

wished her well! We are still missing her very much, but remain in contact, and keep her up-to-date with all our activities.

In December, we said goodbye and thank you to Margaret Green, who has supported us at our meetings from the outset. Although she has moved away from Shenstone, we are hoping that when the better weather arrives, she may visit from time to time.

During the autumn term, we joined in the Harvest and Christmas celebrations at St John's, and in November, Rainbow families supported us to achieved 100% attendance at the Remembrance Day Parade, and we all felt very proud!

2013 has been a time of change for 1st Shenstone Rainbow Guides. In September, Girl Guiding took the decision to review and amend the Promise which all girls make when they join Guiding. The words of the Rainbow Promise "to love my god" have been substituted with the words "to think about my beliefs". Girl Guiding states that, contrary to popular belief, it is not a Christian organisation, and as such, welcomes girls from all faiths or none. We have had to accept the wording of the new promise, but as 1st Shenstone Rainbows is run and supported by members of St John's and St Peter's Churches; we continue to incorporate Christian values, stories and songs into our work. This information is included in our Starter Pack for all prospective Rainbow parents.

Following *Angela's* departure, we had only 1 Leader, Rosemary Lawrence, to run the unit. Despite our best efforts over the previous year, we had been unable to recruit any new Leaders. Thankfully, just as it looked as if we would have to close in mid-October, two Rainbow parents, Jo Luckhurst and Sarah Bradley,

offered to join us as Leaders. During an extended half term break, we managed to complete all the paperwork and clearance checks and attend a Rainbow Training Course, enabling us to remain open.

We are delighted to report, that under their new names of *Robin* and *Raven*, our two new Leaders have quickly found their wings, and have brought fresh energy and ideas to our meetings. We are extremely grateful to them both, and wish them success in gaining their Leadership qualifications during the year ahead. We are also very grateful to Amber Towers and Jessica Lane our two young helpers, who turn up almost every week to help us, and without whom meetings would be far more chaotic!

Due to Leaders' work commitments, we have changed our meeting day from Wednesday to Thursday. Stonnall now has its own Rainbow unit, but with 16 girls on role we are still full and continue to have a waiting list of girls wishing to join.

Rosemary Lawrence

Open the Book

Once again we have had a wonderful year taking "Open the Book" into Greysbrooke School in Shenstone and St. Peter's School in Stonnall. We were in the final year of a three year cycle and we finished the academic year in July with, appropriately, "The Big Party".

The beginning of the next academic year in September was also the start of the seventh year that we have been "Opening the Book" in these schools. Each cycle of biblical stories takes three years to complete, starting at the beginning with creation and ending on the road to Damascus. Thus September saw us beginning our third cycle. It also saw us doing it without Fred and

Angela. This was a great loss as Angela had been very much the moving force behind everything we did and narrated the stories as well as providing the music, while Fred generally introduced the stories, acted and finished with prayer. They obviously were leaving some very big holes to fill.

We felt very strongly that Open the Book should continue if at all possible. We know how much the children enjoy it and we hope and believe that we are sowing seeds for the future. Our prayers were answered and we have been able to continue thanks to Vivienne Hatton who is introducing, narrating, following up and praying and to David Tocknell who is providing the music at Greysbrooke.

Thanks also have to go to the other members of the “permanent” team at Greysbrooke, Mike Raybould and David Roper who take part in the majority of the stories. Without them Open the Book would not be possible. Last , but by no means least, I wish to thank those who take part on a more ad hoc basis, often stepping in at short notice and with little in the way of rehearsal - those who have helped out include Graham and Margaret Birt, Vera Heard, Ella Mulligan, Bill Whitney and John Beattie.

I know that all those who take part consider it a great privilege and a joy to try to bring the Lord’s word to life for a new generation. It is also great fun. If you would like to take part, even just now and again, please just let me know.

Veronica Raybould

Church Library

Did you know that there are over 150 books in the church library? Take a look through the shelves where you will find

books that will amuse, charm and engross you, and maybe learn more about our Lord. Biographies, books on prayer, praise, devotion, Bible study and humour – all are waiting for you to borrow them!

Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection (formerly 'CPS')

In recent times this essential work has been undertaken by Margaret Green. Our grateful thanks and good wishes go to her.

The rules have been simplified in recent times but we still urgently need someone to take Margaret's place- is this a role you could take on?

Graham Birt

Magazine

The Magazine continued to prosper (more than 600 copies per edition) under the stewardship of 7 different 'guest editors', to whom we send our grateful thanks. A permanent 'supervising editor' is still needed, however, to coordinate, guide and occasionally edit. Also more 'Guest Editors'. Help and guidance will be given.

Thank you also to everyone who helped to produce the ten editions of the magazine during the year and to those who contributed articles (please keep them coming). To Ann Toley, who works tirelessly behind the scenes, dealing with advertisements, printings and distribution. A final 'thank you' to the loyal band of distributors whose help is greatly appreciated.

Graham Birt

Social Events

The Accordion Orchestra Concert was held in April and was a great success, well supported and enjoyed by all. The church organised the concert by the Lichfield Gospel Choir for the Village Festival in June, and it was wonderful to hear the sound of almost 100 voices. The proceeds from these two events raised almost £1,000 for church funds.

The Sunday Serenade Concerts have been delightful, what a talented village we have.

Social events are really worth the effort - both for the enjoyment and outreach – and, of course, the income!!!

Pauline Sampson

Marriage Preparation

The 2013 Marriage Preparation Course for couples planning to be married at St John's, Shenstone, or St Peter's, Stonnall during the year was held on a Saturday at the beginning of the year.

With 7 couples from Shenstone and 5 from Stonnall, the day was broken down into three specific sessions interspersed with a cold buffet, the ever popular home-made puddings and a glass of wine.

The first session, 'Love, Commitment and Communication', was led by Carol Law, and the second on 'Finance' and 'Dealing with Conflict' by Ian Law - incorporating DVD material taken from the Care for the Family Marriage Course with Rob Parsons to illustrate important issues.

After lunch the couples were treated to a full blown wedding run-through (with Di & John Gavin playing the major parts!) by the vicar.

These occasions are always very light-hearted and fun, providing an opportunity to break down some of the pre-conceived ideas of what Christians and church are like. During the day friendships are formed and it is always a delight to be able to go along to support them on their special day, and welcome them back later when they return with their babies for baptism.

Carol Law

Shenstone and Stonnall Men's Group

The Men's Group continues to interest about 20 to 28 men. Once again we had five meetings in 2013 and a Ladies' Night. Talks included Experiences in the Aviation Industry, Walks in the Pyrenees, Organ Building and Experiences in Southern Africa. In addition there was an excellent report on the history and effectiveness of the Alpha Course given by Carol Law. Ladies' Night included a meal and choral entertainment at the Fotherley Working Men's Club.

It was an enjoyable year with lots of fellowship with an average attendance of 24. We would be delighted to welcome new members so please do join us for our meetings this year.

Bill Proctor

Ladies Group

Another year of interesting monthly meetings for our group which are mostly held in members' homes. With 24 members it can occasionally be a tight fit!

We began with an informative talk on "The Lichfield Heritage Centre" followed by "Desert Island Discs", "Water Babies", "Amsterdam to Budapest," "A Garden in Wales", "Sir Robert Peel, Statesman and Art Collector", "The Vicars of Shenstone" and "A Polish Odyssey". So - a wonderful variety of topics completed by a visit from our ornithological friends from Australia, Pat and Clive Minton (who used to live in Shenstone); they gave us a fascinating illustrated talk on "The Wonders of Bird Migration".

We held our usual Christmas party and had a summer meal out at The Bull.

We have made our usual generous donations to the Chernobyl Fund and to Acorns Children's Hospice.

Grateful thanks to Ann Aston for doing our programme on her computer.

All ladies are welcome to our meetings.

Pauline Sampson

Shenstone Hall

The number of residents at Shenstone Hall decreased considerably in 2013 and the Home is now under new management. By December, largely because of deaths and moves, only one resident needed Communion in her room. A more informal style of Carol Service was held in the lounge and was appreciated by residents and staff.

John and Ann

Footherley Hall

A warm welcome is always assured at Footherley Hall and our monthly **Songs of Praise** (a short inter-denominational service in the main lounge at 11 am on the 2nd Tuesday), is well attended by residents, care staff and Sisters. Increasing numbers of family members are joining us for this special time of praise, which is lovely. Standing room only again for the Carol Service! There is opportunity to chat or pray with residents individually afterwards.

The monthly **Holy Communion** service for non-Catholic residents, usually the 4th Tuesday, is held in one of the small lounges. Numbers average 7/8. Rev John Davies (retired Methodist minister), who shared this service, alternating with John, has had to give up.

The Sisters extend **Hospitality on Christmas Day** for those who would otherwise be alone at home. This has been the first time we know of the offer being accepted. By all accounts, the visit was much enjoyed! Please let us know of anyone who might benefit from this offer next time and have a word with us if you would like to join us on any of our visits.

John and Ann

Home Communions

John aims to take Communion to those unable to get to Church at least six times a year. Numbers have decreased this year because of several deaths. Please let John know if he needs to add anyone to his list. Apart from this, John has made over 100 pastoral visits to church members during 2013 and well over 100 telephone calls.

John and Ann

Prayer Ministry

This ministry has been offered and provided by two of the ten-member healing team at each of the 10.45.p.m. communion services, during the year. Despite the low uptake, those who come to receive prayer have often found blessing and reassurance. Team members have also been available to pray individually in the pews after any service and are willing to pray with people in their homes if so requested.

The team comprises Viv Hatton, John & Ann Aston, Bill & Di Proctor, Margaret Birt, Vera Heard, Brenda Butler & David Roper. Pat Evans was previously a member, but moved away to Warwickshire in the summer; we thank God for her ministry among us.

David Roper

Monday Prayers

We usually meet at 9.30am at Tim Cox' s house. This has taken a dip since Tim went away, but it is good that he wants to revive it. It is a good time to catch up on things for some in-depth prayer. We aim to finish by 10.30 and if anyone wants to come from time to time, even for half an hour, please do.

Brenda Butler

Swinfen Prayer Group

You may remember Angie Lovell (who leads the prayer group) when she spoke to us last November as part of Prisons Week about the work Prison Fellowship is doing nationally and beyond. As she is involved in Sycamore Tree courses (about restorative justice) and Alpha at Swinfen Prison she was able to give some wonderful examples of changes in the lives of some of the young

men there and their turning to the Lord Jesus. And so we are able to hold them in our prayers, and the many others, often with great problems. Prayers are needed too for the Chaplains, all the staff, victims, and the many aspects of prison life, families, and those being released. Praise the Lord for the valuable work being done around here to rehabilitate prisoners. Our group goes from strength to strength!

Brenda Butler

Deanery Synod

Please read this with care as this is the first year of a 3-year commitment to serve God, through Christ, representing your church and parish on the Deanery Synod - an important part of the wider church supporting your priest and parish.

With Fred having moved on and Brenda Butler finishing her long stint, two new, fresh people will be needed to represent St. John's. This is an interesting ministry, not too demanding at all, giving an opportunity to speak out about various issues and meet other people with their ideas and opinions. It can widen your perception.

The meetings, about 5 a year, held in the different churches of the deanery, are always well-organised, very well-chaired, open and friendly, and the topics varied. Some of the subjects are 'church-political' by necessity, but still interesting, and others can be about new ideas and 'fresh expressions' in our mission and ministry. The last speaker, you will know, was Rev. George Fisher, engaging us on 'Growing Disciples', which is part of 'Going for Growth' – the Diocesan initiative. He is very keen on 'Messy Church', a bit – but only a bit – like our Early Birds service. I have notes of these meetings for anyone to see.

The main business topic at the moment is preparing us for the future as numbers of clergy will be diminishing gradually. So there is much discussion about shared ministry in all ways. There is always an inspiring time of worship before the meeting, and refreshments before that! Please do speak to me if you think you might be interested in filling one of these vacancies.

Brenda Butler

Electoral Roll

The following names were removed from the Electoral Roll (due to their death): -

Stan Hickie, Peter Jones, Gordon Walford and Gwenda Walford

The following names were removed for other reasons: -

Patricia Evans, Margaret Green, Mildred Jones and Angela Olney

Total deletions: 8

The following names were added: -

David Norton, Joan Norton (their forms having been received post compilation of the 2013 roll)

Total additions: 2

The revised total for the Electoral Roll for 2014 is therefore **81**.

Elaine Whitney

Mission Giving 2013

For many years St John's has supported the work of the Church overseas both by prayer, interest and finance and has given away a proportion of its General Income to Missionaries Societies both in England and abroad. We support core societies to whom we are committed long term so £4,000 was given in total to CPAS (Church Pastoral Aid Society – our Patrons), Scripture Union, Bible Society, Tearfund and ICS (Intercontinental Church Society).

In addition we support Mark and Jess Simpson in Rio de Janeiro and Wies Landheer in Rwanda and gave £1,200 to each of these our CMS partners.

Further gifts were sent to individuals connected to St John's: £250 to Rachel Olney (Operation Mobilisation in Vienna) and £400 to Paul and Kathy Middleton (Mercy Air in South Africa).

We have previously supported The Lozells project in Birmingham. Their financing has changed but our link with the church there continues and a special collection was made which resulted in £1,000 being given to enable their Holiday Club to happen last August.

Our church giving has not been limited to that planned: there has been extra money given to Tearfund, Bible Society, The Bishop's Lent Appeal, Angel Tree and others.

This all amounts to close to £10,000, not counting what I am sure is a considerable amount given by individuals directly to projects where they have an interest. Members of the church have also given their time and help in a number of areas. We praise God that we have the resources to give help to the church worldwide.

Ann Toley

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