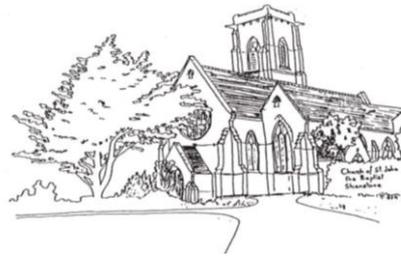


# **St John the Baptist, Shenstone**

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



**Reports of our Church Activities  
during 2015  
presented to the  
Annual Parochial Church Meeting on  
Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2016  
7.30pm in St. John the Baptist  
Church, Shenstone**



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## **Vicar's Report**

There's a saying isn't there 'doesn't time fly?', I know it's a year since the last APCM but in all honestly it doesn't feel like a year at all. If I'm perfectly honest this year has flown by in the blink of an eye, with a year of firsts and new experiences. During this year I've experienced my first full year with you, my first Shenstone festival and my first Shenstone Remembrance. These two large events show village life at its best.

It's been a great year for St John the Baptist and we've seen new growth in our church community, particularly at Early Birds and the launch of Messy Church which took place in September. This new growth should be a source of encouragement for us all, and it comes after faithful and sustained prayer from our Church family. We've been regularly praying together as a Church family since September, and as prayer is the engine room of any Church we shouldn't be surprised when the Spirit moves and 'things start to happen!'. Let's keep praying together in 2016.

Our Church and Village community has enormous potential for growth, in numbers and more importantly in discipleship. As we journey together it's important we keep listening to the Spirit for guidance and leadership. The question 'where is the Lord leading us?' needs to be the first thing we ask ourselves each and every day. Being Vicar of two very different parishes brings both joys and challenges; the joys, Praise the Lord, outweighing the challenges. Ensuring the needs of both parishes are met, involves creative diary and time management and a large amount of chocolate. I find myself asking 'does this further the kingdom?' each and every day, often more than once in a day. My promise to you is that furthering the kingdom will always be my priority for both parishes.

What then does 2016 have in store for us? Our parish profile listed a number of challenges and for 2016 we'll continue to look at those challenges and decide as a Church how we will address them. This will of course be a whole Church challenge, so my challenge to you is 'what is the Lord calling you to do for Him in 2016?'

In closing, I would like to thank Veronica Raybould and Bill Whitney, our Church Wardens for their amazing support and encouragement in this last year, the whole of our PCC and our Lay Chapter whose work and ministry is vital to Church life and ministry.

May God bless you and your family this year.

Rev Liz

### **Wardens' Report**

2015 saw Liz's first full year with us – and a very full, interesting and productive year it has been. Fairly early on the PCC held an "awayday" (though only as far away as the Village Hall!) to develop our Mission Action Plan (MAP). This was a major priority in the Parish Profile which we developed for the recruitment of our new vicar. The "awayday" proved to be extremely stimulating and productive – by the end of the day and with a very high degree of consensus, we had a MAP which, while achievable, would allow us to move towards our aim of being a beacon of Christ's light within our community. We have made significant progress in most areas and some of these are included in this report.

Perhaps the most obvious area has been the upgrading of our audio system and the introduction of a new visual system, giving us thoroughly modern audio/visuals. Although we are still in the early stages of its use, we have already been able to transfer our worship onto screen – no longer having to juggle with service books, hymn books, notice sheets etc. It has also enabled us to introduce new and innovative features into our worship.

Thanks are due to Alan Bateman and Ray Chamberlain for all their work on this project and also to those from St. Matthew's, Walsall whom gave freely of their expertise and time to help us. Thanks also to those who are operating the new system at our services and at weddings and funerals.

The rhythm of our church life continued as always and included Sunday Serenades, Celtic Worship, Harvest Supper, Carols by Candlelight, Marriage Preparation course, Walk of Witness etc. We also saw some new additions:

The children of Greysbrooke school came to the church for a "Baptism Day" when Liz was able to show what happens at a baptism and explain its deeper meaning. Confirmation classes were held for Mark White and Muni Cook (who attends St. Peter's) and we were delighted to see them confirmed in the Cathedral.

Our Lent course was a little different as we welcomed George Fisher who introduced us to "Everybody Welcome". Over a number of weeks we came to understand that there is much more to being a welcoming church than a smiling face at the door (important as that is). Since then we have formed a Welcome Team who will be working together and with the wider church family to make us as welcoming a church as possible.

A Healing Service was held in September.

2015 also saw the Village Festival held in June. As usual, it was a delight to see St. John's festooned with flowers as part of the Flower festival. Many people came to the church to see the flowers or to have tea and cakes or lunch. The church was also full for the Songs of Praise service which traditionally ends the festival. It was particularly encouraging to see the number of villagers who joined the choir and orchestra which perform at this service.

As part of our desire to have the church open at all times, Liz started “More Tea Vicar” sessions which are held in the church on a monthly basis. This is a drop in session for enquiries about weddings or baptisms; a chat with the vicar; or to just sit and “be”. Tea and coffee is served. Numbers attending have been good and are increasing. As usual when the church is open, there are always those who like to just pop in and look around.

Monthly prayer meetings in church have been started to enhance our communal prayer life. These are led by members of the Lay Chapter and provide the opportunity for the church family to pray together for the many issues facing the world and our community. Our MAP said we would hold “Messy Church” events three times a year. In fact, they are being held on a monthly basis and are going from strength to strength. Much fun is had by all, both children and adults and it really is a wonderful way to bring the word of the Lord to the children – and their parents too.

We also offer thanks to the Lord for those at the Early Birds service, where numbers have increased greatly since earlier in the year. There is a considerable amount of administration arising from the many and varied aspects associated with a church. Much of this was falling on Liz – and this was not what any of us wanted our Vicar to be doing. It was therefore with particular pleasure that we welcomed a new administrator, Mary Wilson, who took up appointment in September. Mary’s appointment is part time but has already made a huge difference to Liz.

We were also delighted to welcome a new Reader, Ray Chamberlain, who was licensed in the cathedral to both St. John’s and St. Peter’s. With regard to pastoral matters, we have seen a good number of baptisms but rather fewer weddings.

This may be due to the interregnum and it is likely we will see an increase in wedding bookings now we have a permanent vicar. This may take time given

how far ahead most weddings are booked. There continued to be a high number of funerals. We are grateful to all those in the church family who keep in touch with the ill and bereaved. Particular thanks go to John and Ann Aston for all they do.

The Shenstone Magazine still continues with volunteers editing individual issues. It is delivered to some 600 homes in the village and is a wonderful opportunity for outreach. If you feel you could edit an issue (with help and guidance available and no commitment to do further issues) please speak to Graham Birt. Our gratitude goes to Graham for overseeing the production of the magazine and for the considerable time and effort he has spent reviewing and updating the advertiser.

Your wardens are only too well aware of all the work which is needed to keep the church running smoothly. Some is obvious, much is less so but all is essential to the life of St. John the Baptist if our church is to continue to flourish. Our grateful thanks go to all those in the church family for all that is done- there are too many to mention by name but they know who they are - and so does the Lord.

Bill and Veronica, Wardens

**The Church Building, Churchyard and Glebe, Old Tower and St. John's Hall.**

Maintenance of our physical assets is ongoing and generally expensive! Last year's report referred to the need for restoration of the Bell Frame at an estimated cost of £1500. Unfortunately, further examination showed that restoration would be a short term solution and that what is really required is a new Bell Frame.

This is likely to cost in the region of £80,000. Church funds of around £25000 are available for this project and grants are now being sought for the remainder of the cost.

Also in last year's report was reference to the removal of a cast iron lamp post to a better position by the gateway to the churchyard. We are pleased to report that this year we have been able to move an identical lamp post to the other side of the gateway. These two lamp posts give a really welcoming and much improved lighting to an area which was otherwise hazardous in the dark winter nights.

The long awaited removal of the portacabin and the erection of two sheds in its place has now taken place. The sheds definitely look much better than the portacabin.

Additional radiators have been installed in St. John's Hall. This means that the heating is now entirely a gas central heating system which should be both more efficient and reliable. Grateful thanks go to the Parish Council for the grant allocated to this.

Heating in the church continues to be problematic and will require further work.

2016 will see our next Quinquennial report which will prioritise the maintenance work required on the church building. Whilst much from the last report has been carried out, other areas such as the redecoration of the interior plasterwork and the expensive restoration of the stained glass windows remains to be done.

Bill and Veronica, Wardens

### **Music Group**

2015 has seen two significant items for the Music Group:

Firstly, Cherry decided to step down from the leadership role in September after many years of loyal and effective service and asked me to take on the role.

I would like to thank Cherry for her dedication to the Group over the years and look forward to her continued support with the group as musician in the future years.

The second item is one which will certainly help the music group to grow and benefit the Church as a whole and that was the installation of the new sound and visual system at the end of October. There have been a few teething problems however we have had some really positive messages of support for the system and its capability. Familiarisation with the new technology is ongoing and anyone who would like to be involved with operating the sound desk or the computer for the visual display should make it known to myself or Rev Liz.

My hopes for 2016 are to see the development of the music group with continued use of our existing songs and group members but also to see the growth in new songs introduced and also any new members to join the group. If anyone would like to join, please let either myself or any of the team know.

I look forward to leading the group and Church in musical praise and worship through the coming year.

Ray Chamberlain

### **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: the Service of Celtic Worship, Easter Day Celebration, the Songs of Praise Service which closes the Village Festival, Remembrance Day, and Carols by Candlelight.

Our Celtic Service in March was ably led by a small group of instrumentalists and singers performing music of a more intimate nature whilst the Songs of Praise Service in June was a joyful conclusion to our Festival weekend.

The Christmas choir numbered 26 this year and, once again, included an impressive line-up of tenors and basses! Five contrasted choir items were sung as part of the Carols by Candlelight service.

15 of our talented instrumentalists played in the orchestra (some musicians are so versatile they do both!) with ages ranging from 8 to ..., well, let's just say 'older'.

The orchestra did a sterling job of introducing the service with 'Ding, Dong Christmas' and then accompanying the congregational carols. We were delighted to welcome a number of new singers and instrumentalists who joined us for the Carol Service.

We once again enjoyed a New Year Party together. The occasion has become something of a tradition with a bring and share feast and home-grown entertainment to follow.

Both the choir and orchestra provide an easy opportunity to invite musical friends and acquaintances to cross the threshold of St. John's Church, and, we hope, to encounter the love of God and his people.

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

### **Church Flowers**

Once again many thanks to everyone who helped with the flowers at Easter, Christmas and Harvest, especially to Sue Petridge for her beautiful silk arrangements and Mary Jones for her delightful porch displays.

As we do not have flowers in church for Lent and Advent, we still have opportunities for flowers to be included, and they need not necessarily be large arrangements, small arrangements can be very pretty, tucked in a small place.

Offers of help are much appreciated, please see me if you would like to help.

Pauline Sampson

### **Bell Ringers**

Over the past 12 months we have carried out our normal duties of ringing for the main morning services, the Christmas Carol Service and weddings. This year we had the additional ringing for the Village Festival and opened the ringing room for an hour on the Saturday of that weekend.

At present we have 11 ringers one of which is just at the learning to handle the bell stage. Ideally we need at least 16 to reduce the number of times we meet short. Bell ringing is open to anyone so if you are interested come along to one of the practice evenings to find out more.

During the year we have had 3 quotations for the urgent work required to our bell frame.

Out of the 3 the most cost effective one came to £77,000 incl. V.A.T., (quote valid to April 2016) of which £11,000 was for work unrelated to the bells themselves but needs doing at the same time to minimise the substantial additional cost involved of removing the bells etc. for access if carried out at any other time.

The raising of the money for this work started back at the time of the Village Festival with fund raising events held in the church and donations given by Village groups and individuals.

Vic Holland

### **Church Cleaning**

This has been carried out as efficiently as it always has been, and my thanks go out to all who keep the church looking spick and span. If you are not a member of this hard working team and would like to join us, you would be very welcome.

Di Proctor

### **Once-a-month House Group**

Our original Monday night meeting time now seems to have been moved to a Sunday tea-time, 5 – 7 pm slot, which always seems ideal for toasted tea-cakes and something chocolaty!

We do precede this with a time of mutual encouragement which usually involves some Mission news from around the world, a 'look through the Bible' on a specific topic, and watching a video clip, as well as praying for our own and others' needs.

It has been a joy that David and Frank have been able to bring Audrey on most occasions, and all our members come very faithfully. Our loving companionship in Christ along 'the journey of life' is very rewarding.

Tricia Glover

### **Tuesday House Group**

What a privilege to have Muni join the ten of us. She has brought with her the joy and enthusiasm of a new Christian and has asked questions that get us thinking.

We continue to use teaching materials from Spring Harvest, this year the theme of 'Immeasurably More', taken from Ephesians 3:14-21 – Paul's prayer for the Ephesians. We were reminded that God's love is total it covers the width, length, height and depth of all our experiences. We can never be lost from God's love. The power of the Holy Spirit is needed to fill us with every breath that we breathe.

We have watched David Suchet as he followed 'In the footsteps of St Peter', Prayers from the St Chad Community have been very beneficial. Lent meetings and 'A Time to Pray' have been supported. Meals, games, prayers, laughter and tears have all been shared. Once again the traditional Christmas trip to The George to watch the hilarious 'Intimate Theatre' perform 'Christmas Voices' was enjoyed by everyone. Praise the Lord for Tuesday house group.

Margaret Birt

### **Alpha Housegroup**

Three years on from the Alpha 'Class of 2012' the friendships and bonds of love and support continue to grow and strengthen.

During 2015 we continued to meet on a weekly basis, using a variety of different materials.

As all our members are very busy people we usually start our sessions with either a DVD based course or by downloading some of the excellent material now available free of charge via the Internet and Youtube. The conversation that follows is always lively, often unpredictable, but always God centred.

Sadly, although we boast of two of St John's musical giants (Paul & Tricia Glover) in our group, our singing attempts leave a lot to be desired and therefore listening to music is sometimes the better option.

During the year we became very concerned about the falling numbers at services and decided that as a group we should start praying on a daily basis that God would send new families to worship with us – we called it 'Heaven at Eleven' – and we have been thrilled to see God answering our prayers, particularly through Early Birds and Messy Church. But the job is not done and we will continue to pray – we're greedy for more!

For some of our members 2015 was a year of challenge, which as a group we have prayed through and offered one another practical love and support.

We were particularly devastated by the untimely death of Tim Lawrence the day before our Christmas party, which we immediately cancelled in order to hold a prayer vigil in church in support of the Lawrence family. The postponed meal was held at the beginning of January, at which Rosemary and Peter were able to share some of their memories of Tim, and the many tributes they have received.

I'm sure I speak for us all when I say that we thank God for each other, for our different personalities and the unique qualities we each bring to the table.

Carol Law

### **Early Birds**

Early Birds began in 2000 when our children's groups who met during the morning service ceased. Over the past 15 years it has gone through a familiar cycle of growth and shrinkage.

Families become regular members of Early Birds until it seems that their children feel 'too old' for the services and the families stop coming.

We are now rejoicing in a significant growth period, with its parallel challenge of providing some meaningful teaching, activities and worship for those children who have been coming for several years. Numbers at Early Birds often match the numbers at the 10.45 service, and most of our families are happy to stay and chat over coffee. The majority of our Early Birds families also enjoy Messy Church, and some are involved in the planning and preparation for Sunday afternoons.

The new AV system has meant that as well as having songs on the screen we can also easily show video clips of Bible stories to match the theme and Ray has initiated one member into the mysteries of the control desk at the back of church.

We thank God for the current development and growing commitment of parents and pray for wisdom for the future. Our leadership remains the same: Liz and Ray Chamberlain, Ian and Carol Law, Lesley Matile and Tricia Glover.

Tricia Glover

### **Come Together**

This quiet service continues with its faithful few, but please note that from the beginning of April, it will be held on the first Sunday of the month so as not to coincide with "Messy Church".

Di Proctor

### **1<sup>st</sup> Shenstone (St John's) Rainbow Guides**

1<sup>st</sup> Shenstone Rainbows continues to run with a full complement of sixteen girls, three Leaders and two Young Unit Helpers. We are still oversubscribed, but do our best to accommodate all those wishing to join.

Two of our young Leaders, Jess and Amber have now moved on, as school and University commitments have taken priority, and we thank them for all their hard work in supporting the girls. We are very grateful to welcome Margaret Birt, who joined us in October, as a Rainbow helper.

Our program for the spring term was "Rainbows Around The World". We played games and sang songs from many different countries and joined in the Staffordshire Girl guiding 'Rainbows World Tour' event at Trentham Gardens.

The summer term's theme was "All About Me". Everyone gained their special Rainbow badge, having learned about keeping themselves fit, healthy and happy. We enjoyed playing outdoor games, and found out lots of interesting things about our village when we completed our Village Photo Trail. In July, we ended the term with a Family Sausage Sizzle in the grounds of St John's Hall.

The Rainbows chose 'Pets' as their focus for the Autumn Term. This included animal quizzes, horse races (on space-hoppers) around the hall, and a dog obedience class, where the girls paired up as dog and owner-and imaginations went wild! Our project ended with a trip to 'Pets At Home' in Tamworth, where we were able to handle lots of different animals. During this term, we also went 'bouldering' (indoor rock climbing) at 1<sup>st</sup> Lichfield Scout Hut, and on 5<sup>th</sup> November, organised another sausage sizzle, complete with bonfire, Guy and sparklers for parents with their children. Special thanks to Ray, our resident fire-fighter!

As usual, Rainbows took part in Harvest, and Remembrance Day services at St John's, and a few Rainbow families attended Messy Carols. We have also been pleased to welcome some Rainbow families to St John's Messy Church sessions.

A huge 'Thank you' to all those parents and friends, who have given so freely of their time and energy, to ensure that St John's Rainbows continues to provide Guiding opportunities for girls in our village.

Rosemary Lawrence

### **Open the Book**

"Samson", "The Story of Ruth", "David and Goliath", "The Wise King", "Elijah and the Ravens", "The Helpful Servant", "The Good Shepherd", "The Centurion's Servant" .....

These are just some of the wonderful Bible stories the Open the Book Team have brought to life for the children of Greysbrooke school in 2015. I'm not really sure who enjoys it the most – the team or the children! I do know that the children listen with real enjoyment and attentiveness. I never cease to be amazed by how much they remember – even if one small boy had not remembered quite right when he told us that he really enjoyed Open the Book and his favourite story was when the baby was cut in half!

Grateful thanks go once again to John Beattie who this year made us a whole array of swords, spears and shields. It is simply amazing how often soldiers appear in Biblical stories.

Thanks go to the permanent team stalwarts – David Roper, David Tocknell, Mike Raybould and Liz and Ray. Without them there would be no Open the Book. Thanks also to those willing volunteers who help out when a larger cast is required.

Our stories come from The Lion Storyteller Bible by Bob Hartman and Krisztina Nagy. In his introduction Bob finishes with these words;

*“My hope, as a Christian, is that, having seen God in these stories, the children will learn to trust God and to listen to God’s voice. And to love God in return”*

This is our hope too

Veronica Raybould

### **Shenstone Magazine**

Production of the Magazine is a major cottage industry, with no permanent editor, as many as 10 different people are involved in compiling and editing the Magazine each year.

Each month the magazine is then sent for printing on the 21st. Helen Goldsworthy then collects it and a dedicated team of 32 volunteers deliver the Magazine to more than 600 homes in Shenstone and Little Hay. Collecting subscriptions is sometimes the most frustrating part for them.

The Magazine gives us a unique outreach opportunity, keeps villagers up to date with news and events in the Village and is a handy directory of local trade and service providers. We have about 50 local advertisers, helping to offset the cost of the Magazine to subscribers. Over the last year we have tried to improve the look of the adverts, whilst standardizing the sizes (either a sixth or a third of a page) and the charges. I wish to register my thanks to Keith Jones for his skill and hard work in this respect. Several new advertisers have joined us over recent months, replacing previous ones. We are making good progress in getting paid!

We have seen a slight increase in subscribers in 2015 and would like this to continue through:

- The 'Welcome Pack', which includes a free copy of the Magazine
- A reference to the Magazine in the Parish Council and Church websites
- Word of mouth

We will invite the Parish Council to use the Magazine to provide local news (in lieu of the increasingly rare Parish Council Newsletter). MP Christopher Pincher has already committed to write occasional (non-partly political) articles.

By an informal consultation with volunteer deliverers we also hope to get a better understanding of our readers (age ranges, families, singles, couples etc.) and to respond accordingly.

May I take this opportunity to thank our large team of volunteer editors, distributors and supporters for keeping the flame alive.

Graham Birt

### **Marriage Preparation**

In February 2015 the Marriage Preparation day was back on track following the interregnum, when 8 couples from Shenstone and 3 from Stonnall gave up a Saturday in order to think through what getting married is all about.

The now familiar pattern of serving up teaching sessions interspersed with food continues to work well. Therefore, the first session 'Love, commitment and communication', led by Carol Law, was followed by a light buffet, before Ian Law led the couples through the tricky subjects of 'Conflict and Debt' – after which they were treated to home-made puddings, which are always a big hit.

For the afternoon session we transferred to church, which started with an hilarious attempt by the couples to make bridal gowns and bow ties out of toilet rolls, after which Liz took the couples through the wedding service step by step.

It was a great help to have Mo & Rob Williams from Stonnall as part of the team, to represent St Peter's.

As always the feedback was extremely positive, and the day provides an excellent opportunity for both the couples and the team to break down some of the misconceptions about church and Christians and to replace it with understanding and friendship.

Carol Law

### **Shenstone and Stonnall Men's Group**

This year was much the same as last year. We had five meetings with interesting speakers, and a Ladies' night at which we were entertained by Ray Chamberlain. All were very enjoyable, and the good news is that have increased by an average of five men.

Bill Proctor

### **Ladies Group.**

Our group began in 1959, originally called Young Wives, but in order to keep going, and also to include single ladies it became Ladies Group. We continue to thrive and now have 23 members who have enjoyed 11 meetings. Two of these are usually open meetings to which men are invited.

Everyone enjoyed seeing Ken Petches beautiful Photographs of Papua New Guinea. Other topics and speakers included the Gideons, PC Brian Harbon, the life of a Volunteer, Festivals, Flowers and France, Spring miscellany, and the Variety of Life, to name but a few. Certainly something to interest most tastes.

We meet in each other's homes, sometimes rather a squash, but we have never had to turn anyone away. Our meetings are very friendly and our members supportive, all ladies are welcome, details are in the magazine and newsletter.

Our voluntary donations were given this year to The Gideons, The Chernobyl Holiday Fund, and St John's Bell Fund. Do join us, you will be very welcome.

Pauline Sampson

### **Shenstone Hall**

Currently there are no residents who need to receive Holy Communion, but the person in charge of activities, Kate (who lives in the village) has undertaken to let us know if the situation changes.

The Carol Service in December went well, though many residents now choose to stay in their rooms. Previous communicants who had been referred to us have either died or have been moved elsewhere to be nearer family.

Rev John Aston.

### **Footherley Hall**

A warm welcome is always assured at Footherley Hall and our monthly Songs of Praise in the main lounge at 11 am on the second Tuesday of the month is well attended by residents, care staff and Sisters along with an increasing number of family members of the residents. Standing room only for the Carol Service! It would be lovely to have members of our Church family joining us on any of our visits – please have a word with us about this.

The monthly Communion Service for non-Catholic residents, usually on the 4th Tuesday of the month, is now held in the room next to the Chapel, giving us more room for wheelchairs. The service is now shared with Rev Jo Thornton from Trinity Methodist Church – alternate months.

Rev John and Ann Aston

### **Home Communions**

John aims to take Communion to those unable to get to Church at least six times a year. Visits have fluctuated more during 2015 because of illness and hospital visits.

The list of those needing Communion at home is becoming shorter – Joan Spurgin died in January 2016, Eileen Eburah is now enjoying residing at Footherley Hall, Thora Horton is at Vicarage Court Nursing Home in Chasetown.

Ken Noble is about to go into a residential home in Aldridge. Audrey Roper soldiers on at home, likewise Brenda Lloyd, who is shortly to have her pacemaker fitted. Please let John know if he needs to add anyone else to his list, even if only temporarily.

Rev John Aston

### **Prayer Ministry**

The Team have continued to offer prayer, in confidence, in the chancel at each Communion Service during the year. There is still limited take up of this facility. Team members on duty are now wearing badges to encourage a wider recognition of their availability. During the Year an evening service of prayer for healing was held and on two occasions, at morning services, all team members were augmented by other members of the congregation seeking the Lord's healing for two officers of the P.C.C. who have serious health issues

David Roper

### **Swinfen Prison Prayer Group**

It is the aim of P.F. (Prison Fellowship), a national Christian Organisation, to encourage every prison to have a supportive group, to pray for the Chaplaincy, the Governor, Prison Staff and of course the prisoners and their families. And this aim is nearly achieved. They also run Angel Tree, the voluntary scheme to get Christmas presents to children of prisoners, and now gifts for Mothers' Day.

Another important part of their work is running Sycamore Tree, a restorative justice course, and training the volunteers for this. So we have much, and more to pray for!

Our Group is led by Angie Lovell, who is trained to help lead Alpha and Sycamore Tree courses, and Bereavement Care. It is an eclectic group, some of whom go into Swinfen to help with the Crèche at Visitors' time, tea- bar, etc, newcomers' groups, Sunday Services and so much more. So there is always plenty of news, and needy young men on our minds.

Brenda Butler

### **Deanery Synod**

The Deanery met 4 times during 2015: -

February (Brownhills). A presentation was given on the subject of Reaching New Generations was given by Revds Rod Clark, and Josh Penduck and St Chad's Youth and Community Worker, focussing on their work in their local Primary School.

May (Farewell). A presentation was given by Kristina Williamson, Secretary to the DAC on Church Buildings and Opportunities for Mission. In this presentation it was affirmed that our buildings are usually focal points for our communities and advice given how we could best use them for Mission purposes. The usual annual elections to Diocese Synod also took place in this meeting.

September (Lichfield). Revd Philip Moon, spoke about SACRED a discipleship course aimed at anyone who would like to know their Bible better but doesn't know where to start. The course is suitable for individuals and for small groups.

November (Chasetown) – Revd David Bishop outlined the Bishop's guidelines on admitting Children before Confirmation. There are to be seminars held throughout the Diocese giving more details.

The Deanery Mission statement is –

OUR MISSION IS TO SECURE A GROWING, WORSHIPPING,  
CELEBRATING, PROCLAIMING AND LOVING CHRISTIAN  
PRESENCE IN EACH COMMUNITY OF OUR DEANERY.

Rev Liz

### **Electoral Roll**

The following names were removed from the Electoral Roll (due to death): - Timothy Lawrence and Joan Spurgin

The following names were removed for other reasons: - Nil

Total deletions 2

The following names were added: - Craig Alford and Joleen Easterbrook

Total additions 2

The revised total for the Electoral Roll for 2016 is 82

Elaine Whitney

### **CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING**

The PCC is responsible for ensuring the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults for whom it bears responsibility.

To this end, members of PCC have received training via a DVD.

They have adopted a Policy for Safeguarding which includes the procedures to be followed.

A copy of the Diocesan Safe Guarding Flow Chart is displayed on the Notice Board in Church. Each person is encouraged to read this. It will be noted that the first point of contact is myself, as Child Protection Officer.

The Church operates Safer Recruitment which means that before appointment or the continuation of any appointment, appointees may need to apply for and supply clearance from the Disclosure & Barring Service.

The appropriate Disclosures are all up-to-date for the relevant persons within the Church, this does not, of course, guarantee that no issues of child protection will arise. If anyone has any concerns about possible abuse (including allegations), the Minister and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinator should be alerted.

There have been no incidents reported within the last twelve months.

The Minister and the Child Protection Officer received training last year and will update this training later this year, If anyone has any questions, they should contact the Minister or myself.

Elaine Whitney

### **Mission Giving 2015**

As in 2014, St John's has given away a proportion of its General Income to Missionary Societies both in England and abroad. We support core societies to whom we are committed long term, so money was given to CPAS (Church Pastoral Aid Society – our Patrons), Scripture Union, Bible Society and Tearfund. In addition we support our CMS partners Mark and Jess Simpson in Rio de Janeiro and Wies Landheer in Rwanda. Also, to ICS

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

A very generous collection was taken at the Christingle Service which was donated to The Children's Society.

We added two more charities to our giving in 2015, the first is the Uganda Childbirth Injuries Fund.

In Uganda, as in other poor countries, many women deliver at home or far from any medical help. If a woman develops obstruction in labour she needs an emergency caesarean section. If this can't be done she may die of a ruptured uterus or deliver a stillbirth after

days of agony in labour. If this were not enough she may find that she has no control of her bladder or even her bowel. The prolonged pressure of the baby's head against the bony pelvis wears a hole between the bladder and vagina and sometimes the rectum.

This is called a vesico-vaginal fistula. This will never heal, so she will be incontinent for life unless she can find someone to perform a surgical repair. Women with this condition will visit any hospital they can but rarely find anyone who can help so they return home to a life of misery and rejection. A team of medical experts from the UK fly out three times a year to perform this life changing surgery and we are very proud to have a member of the team in our congregation, Brenda Gray who is a theatre nurse.

The second charity is the Barnabas Fund, the main ministry of Barnabas Fund is to send financial support to projects which help Christians where they suffer discrimination, oppression and persecution as a consequence of their faith. The projects aim to strengthen Christian individuals, churches and their communities by providing material and spiritual support in response to needs identified by local Christian leaders.

Finally, through collections made in Church, we support local foodbanks for which demand seems ever increasing.

The mission committee will be meeting shortly to determine the allocation of giving for this year.

We pray to God that we may continue to be blessed with members of the congregation who are able and, more importantly, willing to give both of their time and money to ensure we can serve God's Church here and overseas.

Paul Harris

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# **St John the Baptist Church Shenstone**

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



